Homeric Constructions: The Reception of Homeric Authority

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

Homeric Constructions: The Reception of Homeric Authority

Presented by Andrew Smith,

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And hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This project has as its goal an understanding of the way in which the Homeric poems became a source of cultural and literary authority and influence in the archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods of Greek history. I have divided this study diachronically into three periods of this cultural construction, which I call the Preconstruction, Construction, and Reconstruction of Homeric authority. In this first chapter I will be analyzing the way that an oral traditional culture can transition to a literary culture, yet retain vestiges of the oral culture in its literary traditions. After surveying the relevant modern scholarship in this quest for Homeric authority, I discuss some of the methodological implications of a study involving oral traditional poetry and its receptions in literature. This chapter will be further broken down into a discussion of the methodological assumptions underlying this discussion of the interaction of oral culture and literary culture, the way an oral tradition creates meaning in context, and the way a traditional culture transmits authority. I also discuss the different types of authority, the related concept of authorship in an oral culture, and the immanence of that authority.

Following the methodological chapter, I turn to *Homer Preconstructed*, which discusses the context of Greece in the Bronze Age

during which I find traces of the earliest influences of oral traditions on Greek culture. This chapter deals in part with the historical and cultural influences of the surrounding Aegean, including the Near East on the Greeks. Following the setting of the context for the earliest Greeks, I analyze the ways in which the Homeric poems discuss the implications of speech, society, and authority in order to establish the fact that in both early Greece and the Aegean as well as in the Homeric poems themselves, cultural authority was derived from speech acts. Chapter 3, *Homer Constructed* discusses specifically the Homeric *aoidos* and his relationship to society and where he derives his authority. This chapter is focused primarily on both the historical character of the *aoidos* as well as his depiction by Homer, Hesiod, and later authors as well as comparanda from other cultures. Chapter 4, *Homer Reconstructed* analyzes the reception and influence of the Homeric poems in archaic, classical, and Hellenistic Greek literature and society. This reception, as I show, illustrates the effect of the immanence of the oral traditional poetry's influence and authority in the earlier two periods of pre-construction and construction on the literary culture of the third period, where the authority is reconstructed in the literary medium and its prevalence in literary culture.

This type of approach builds somewhat on the work of many scholars who have investigated the relationship between an oral Homer and a written Homer in order to set the stage, but differs in that I look

not to politics as the main force behind the authority of Homer, but literary culture as well.[1] I show through the reception of Homer in the literary medium the evidence of the poetic tradition's immanence in the identity of Greek culture.

Part1: The Quest For Homeric Authorship (A History of Modern Homeric Scholarship)

The search for Homer was begun the moment the *Iliad*, *Odyssey,* and various poems of the Epic Cycle and the Hymns were attributed to him. Ancient attributions of authorship to Homer may have been a way to ensure the continued readership of poems whose popularity may have been fading.[2] In antiquity, Homer is not always even explicitly referenced as the poet, but his authorship is often inferred. This makes an understanding of the ancient reception of Homer in any given period particularly troublesome. Various cities had claimed Homer by the fifth century.[3] Homer is often referred to as "a man from Chios",[4] and regardless of any specific geographic location, the composite Greek that is featured in the Homeric poems is Ionic in origin. Much effort has been

[1] Gregory Nagy, in *Homer the Classic*, sets Homer's lasting influence and status as a "Classic" as a result of the Athenian hegemony in the Aegaean, primarily focusing on the Athenian political influence. Additionally, the Panathenaic nature of religious festivals are seen to further contribute to this authority in his formulation. I find this second element to be a useful element as well, because it combines some political power with the idea of collective approval and identity creation and reinforcement.
[2] Burgess 2001.
[3] Davison 1962.
[4] Acusilaus FGH 2F2, *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* and many others.

spent trying to make Homer stand still in time and place, but for the purposes of this investigation, this is not necessary, as I will explain later. Nevertheless, ancient sources and scholarship were full of inconsistencies which would lead one to believe that for each scholar, city, and festival, there must have been a unique Homer. However, none of these inconsistencies "could shake the faith of antiquity in the artistic unity and high quality of the Homeric poems, or in the historical reality of Homer."[5]

In an equally likely scenario to that which Burgess proposes, [6] the poems may have been attributed to Homer simply because he stood symbolically as the oral traditional poet *par excellence*, a situation echoed in modern South Slavic, Mongolian, and medieval English poems.[7] In the latter formulation, Homer metonymically stands for the Greek oral epic tradition itself.

In the 18th century F.A. Wolf, in his *Prolegomena ad Homerum,* asked the "Homeric Question". This question concerned the ability of a single man to write some 27,000 lines of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, as well the other early hexameter poetry often attributed to him, in the Early Archaic period of Greece, when literacy appeared extremely limited and in a much different form than it did in the Classical Period. Wolf found it "impossible to accept the belief …that these two works of a single genius

[5] Davis 1962 :241.
[6] Burgess 2001.
[7] E.g. Foley 2005, A.B Lord 1960.

burst forth suddenly from the darkness in all their brilliance, just as they are, with both the splendor of their parts and the many great virtues of the connected whole."[8] In the first part of the Prolegomena, Wolf suggested that the Homeric poems were first composed orally in around 950 BCE. He argued that the poems were then handed down by non-literate Greeks for approximately four centuries before being committed to writing. Though Wolf's argument was extremely radical in the heavily Unitarian academic community[9], he was not the first to suggest a lack of literacy on the part of Homer. In the first century AD, Josephus claimed that Homer was illiterate[10], making Wolf's theory not the first of its kind. This "Homeric Question" initiated a sort of modern "Homeric Quest" in which Homeric scholars became divided between two academic camps. Analysts, such as Lachman, conversely proposed that the poems ascribed to Homer were made of various chunks of older poems as "stitched together" to form the epics we know from in the time of Pisistratus. Nitzch, in the mid-19th century argued that Homer could have been literate, but that he used older material in his poems, acting

[8] Wolf 1985: 148. Though Wolf's hypothesis, in its original form, began the debate surrounding the Homeric Question, the form of the question is continually in flux. Though Wolf initially suggested that Homer could not have composed the poems in their entirety, scholarship continually developed, with some suggesting that the poems could have been written in the time period Wolf suggested due to findings that literacy was somewhat more widespread than Wolf thought. Albert Lord, for instance, suggested that the poems were written down either by Homer himself or an amanuensis who was recording an initially orally performed poem. For instance, in Lord 1962, suggests that contemporary Homeric scholars are eager to challenge Wolf's hypothesis regarding the influence of literacy and the influence of the written style on what is handed down as "Homeric", whether or not that "Homeric" style is an oral style, an oral style influenced by writing, or a written style influenced by orality.

[9] Davis 1962 p248.

[10] Anthologia Palatina 1.2.12.

as a sort of editor and compiler.[11] The Unitarians advocated that the genius of Homer allowed him to compose and write, or possibly dictate, the entirety of the poems as we have them now. Hermann was an advocate of the so-called "kernel theory" in which there was an original Homer who composed an *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but they were much shorter than our poems. The additional lines were then added by later poets or possibly editors.

These and many other theories have been put forth over the modern period of scholarly research, and the nature of the "Homeric Question" changed with every new theory[12]. The archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann's excavations at Troy began a new period of this "Homeric Quest" when his Unitarian belief in a historical Homer led to the discovery of a historical settlement on the site of Troy. This discovery appeared to reward the Unitarians as well as transferring the poet Homer from the folk society of German analytical thinking into the courts of the kings of Troy and Mycenae.[13] Archaeology now took over briefly from philology and found that elements in the songs of Troy and its heroes represented a mixture of Aegean Bronze Age and Mycenaean culture as

[11] Turner in Morris and Powell 1997. Davison 1962 outrightly denies any validity to the theory; "all the researched into the relative chronology of the various elements in the poems show that 'older'
and 'younger' elements (whether archaeological, linguistic, or social) interlock."
[12] For various other interpretations, see Myres 1958, Davison 1962, and Heubeck 1974. Davison points out that the seemingly literary artistic unity of the Homeric poems confounded both analysts and Unitarians, because of the implied paradox that confronted both schools concerning their central argument. Neoanalaysis provides a solution to the unitarian's and somewhat to the analysts by positing a Homeric figure at the point where the poems were composed in the forms with which we are familiar.
[13] Turner, 139, in Morris and Powell 1997.

well as that of Iron Age and Archaic Greece, thus arguing once more against a unified historical Homer.

The form of the "Homeric Question" changed again with the work of Milman Parry in the 1920s. Parry revealed another option for the debate between the Analysts and the Unitarians. His conception made the whole argument irrelevant. Parry suggested that the Homeric poems are the product of an inherited tradition of orally composing *aoidoi*, or bards. His early works stressed the method of compositional technique in which the poet used recurrent formulae throughout his song to provide a convenient and efficient method of maintaining the meter of the performance.[14] From this study of formulae Parry then incorporated contemporary anthropology with his study of traditional poetry, which led him to the former Yugoslavia to observe the guslari perform their traditional oral epics. This study explained the use of a formular system as being a necessary component for the poet who composes during his performance. This journey to the former Yugoslavia was undertaken together with his assistant Albert Lord, who was to continue the research in the newly-created field of oral traditional studies.[15] Their assistant Nikola Vujnovik also interviewed systematically the guslari and learning how they thought of songs. This further study affirmed and expanded many of the ideas that Parry hinted at. It also led to a widening of the

[14] Parry 1928.
[15] Lord 1960.

concept of oral tradition to include an aspect that would seem implicit in a performance genre, but was not widely stressed: communication. Modern studies in oral traditions reflect this immense step forward in our understanding of how ancient Greeks might have understood the Homeric poems.

For Parry, the existence of the "artificial language" of the Homeric poems was the primary indicator that the poems were composed in a traditional style.[16] The existence of this language had long been used as evidence by analysts that the poems were composed by various people at various times and stitched together. Parry looked at the same data and created a new hypothesis, namely that the nature of the diction indicated that the poet was composing within a system of recurrent traditional forms. This nature of diction included a variety of forms from various dialects of Greek, including Arcado-Cyprian. To Parry, the Arcado-Cyprian elements indicated parts of the poems that went back to before the Dorians came into power[17], a significant antiquity. This is important not just for showing that the poems are old; it shows further that certain elements in an oral traditional style of composition are preserved for long periods of time in traditional formulae alongside newer formulae which may also become traditional. This unique combination of diachrony with synchrony is essential for understanding the authority of the Homeric

[16] Parry 1928a in 1971:6
[17] Parry: ibid.

poems and also a necessary element for understanding the poems themselves.[18] To simply read into them a single moment of composition and reception is to do short shrift to a traditional form of artful communication.

The quantity of traditional formulae was one indicator that the songs were traditional and that they could not have been composed by one single person but rather by a tradition that existed over a long period of time, making the text a diachronic text. The mixed nature of the language, "made up of words and forms taken from the current Ionic, from Aeolic, even from Arcado-Cyprian dialects…could never have existed in the speech of any people,"[19] was a further indicator of the traditional nature of the songs. Parry and Lord's collection of samples of Serbo-Croatian Heroic songs also contained a similar use of an artificial language.[20]

Another such indicator was the quality and quantity of enjambment utilized by the Homeric poet. For Parry, there were two types of enjambment: necessary and unnecessary enjambment. Parry found the instances of necessary enjambment far outweighed by

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[18] Bakker: 2005.
[19] Parry 1930: 135.
[20] Responses to the oral traditional theory promoted initially by Parry and Lord developed from scholars continuing their research into the field of comparative oral traditional studies. Connelly *Arab Folk Epic and Identity*, Berkeley 1986, for instance notes significant differences in style and size between the Homeric poems and other oral traditional epic poems. Lord's theory of oral poetics does posit some level of literacy in the versions which eventually become text.

unnecessary enjambment. For an orally composing poet thinking in terms of constructing verses out of independent sense units, the instances of a syntactical unit extending past the line end created an incomplete rather than complete thought. For the sense of a line to require a portion of the following line created a situation of difficulty for a poet composing in performance, because he then had to fit whatever element was missing into a position in the beginning of the next line. This necessary enjambment was found to be far less frequent in Homeric poetry than in the poetry of literary poets like Apollonius and Virgil. Unnecessary enjambment, however, presented no problem for the bard, but rather could allow for a metrical filler to be inserted into a line that perhaps needed a few more syllables. However, like the use of noun-epithet formulae and type-scenes, scholars believe that these markers of oral-compositional technique have a more communicative and significant meaning. For instance, to summarize Bakker, necessary enjambment tends to occur in groups, especially at highly emotional moments in the poems, which create a "fugal" effect, or a complex polyrhythm overlaid on the standard hexameter. This metrical complexity can be read, but it indicates a primarily performative aspect of the poetry; it was meant to be heard, or as Bakker puts it, "what is important is that we have a text whose essence lies in being performed, and which gives us ample information on its oral conception."[21]

[21] Bakker 2005: 55. This serves to complement Lord's reflection that the situation

Parry did not initially ascribe orality to this traditional method of composition, though the combination of traditional formulae and enjambment certainly suggested a different conception of medium. By 1930 the idea of oral composition arose from the comparison to the Serbo-Croatian songs, which were composed orally and traditionally using many of the same principles which Parry hypothesized in his earlier studies of the epithet and formulaic diction. Lord further showed that the recurrence that was such a benchmark of the Homeric and Serbo-Croatian Heroic Songs existed not only on the level of formulae[22] but also the theme, "groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song."[23] The works of Lord further expanded the field by means of the comparison of the Serbo-Croatian material to Byzantine Greek, Old French, and Old English literatures. The *Singer of Tales* highlighted the comparability of oral literatures across the world and opened the field beyond those classicists attempting to deal with songs of Homer, as well as providing a much wider context for Classicists. Classicists have a better understanding not only of the method of composition of the Homeric poems, but a better idea of the cultural significance and contexts that orally composed and performed songs imply. In Serbo-Croatian epic practice, Lord notes that the singer

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whereby the South Slavic oral epics were recorded by researchers may be similar to the way in which the Homeric poems could have been recorded, that is that possibly the Homeric poems were recorded by an amanuensis from an illiterate poet. Though this is not at all necessary, it does apply some needed depth to the discussion.

[22] Parry defines formulae as "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea".

[23] Lord 1960: 68.

first learns a theme in a specific context, but retains the theme because "they will be useful perhaps in another context later on"[24].

The theme in *The Song of Bagdad* that is analyzed in Lord's work is a council theme, which the singer conceives as a single unit, though through analysis it can be broken down into smaller units, each of which can be recombined in subsequent performances. Another, smaller theme in Serbo-Croatian epic is the arming scene, which nominally consists of description of the garments, they provide the singer with an opportunity to show off their ability to create "ornaments". Lord touches somewhat on issues of mechanism versus innovation in his suggestion that though a poet could make any such arming scene longer to take up time and impress audiences, we in fact see varied lengths in different songs, depending on the emphasis given to a character. However, even this aspect is tradition-dependent: the lengths of some of these ornamental themes do not directly correlate to the importance of the character at that instant, but "there seems to be a deeper significance, perhaps deriving from ritual"[25]. In Homeric epic, an obvious parallel is the arming scene, such as that of Patroclus and then Achilles in the *Iliad*. The descriptions of armor are similarly ornamental instances where a singer can use his knowledge of theme manipulation to create a decorative element containing elements of *ekphrasis*.

[24] Lord 1960: 71.
[25] Lord 1960: 89.

These themes are present among many different versions of the same song and also among different songs. The return song, however, was not simply a creation particular to the Serbo-Croatian heroic song, but is a sub-genre of the epic that spanned millennia and continents. For the Homerists this sub-genre of epic provides an excellent modern analog to the fragmentary *nostoi* and to the *Odyssey*. The *Iliad* follows a different structural pattern and thus any comparison between it and analogs must be along the lines of a similar sub-genre, or necessary changes in the types of comparisons must be recognized. Comparisons *per se* do not necessarily have benefit unless they are illuminating to one or both types of epic. The reading program of Foley takes into account many of the differences as well as similarities and provides a necessary calibration for reading different types of epics side by side. This program emphasizes the importance of recognizing the particulars of genre and tradition that differentiate various oral traditions and create dependencies. By recognizing dependencies, the readings of different traditions' poems can be calibrated to allow for a comparison to be drawn. These readings have profited us greatly by expanding on the way epics generate meaning and communication.

One major opposition to oral traditional composition and its use of formulae involves the dichotomy of mechanism versus art[26]. If the

[26] Foley 1997. The system of traditional referentiality is somewhat like intertextuality, in that works in a particular tradition may reference one another in a way that

aesthetic genius and beauty of the Homeric poems is reduced to a mechanical reusing of lines and half-lines necessary for the on-the-fly composition of the poems, where is the genius and creativity? If a poem is created out of necessity, how is a poem creative? Foley has proposed in various works a system of "traditional referentiality", from which I will be drawing many significant points that attempts in some ways to answer this question. This traditional referentiality "comprises a signifying system with its own brand of referentiality (like language); and it would entrust the process of communication to the performer's and audiences negotiation of what remains unsaid (like language)."[27] One of the most important gains from these studies is the refocusing of the traditional art from the sole agent of the bard to the tradition itself, comprised of the bard *and* his audience. The audience's reactions to the poems are equally important. They are a reception of formular "words" that signify not only their immediate context, but the entire tradition that they represent, conveying more meaning than previously understood. Homeric studies profit from this in various ways. For example, the noun-epithet formula "Swift Footed Achilles" appears to make no sense in situations when Achilles is sitting, or lying in the dirt, or doing anything other than running; the use of the epithet then is merely for metrical convenience.

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significantly builds meaning. In this respect, here a traditional poem, comprised of traditional recurrent units can be creative in the way they are assembled, much like how on a larger scale, poets compose out of pre-assembled words, to create meaning. As Foley suggests, it works like a language, only more so. Further, I would suggest, the creativity lies in the performance and application of those building blocks.

[27] Foley, in Morris and Powell 1997.

The concept of traditional referentiality implies the wider use of the formula, in all of its recurrences, and so references the entire tradition.

For an audience hearing the epithet, it evokes other scenes and even other poems. Each audience member had a different experience of this tradition, and each (re-) performance of a song contributes to this, creating a compounding of receptions for each audience member. In the Homeric tradition then, the web of reception and transmission becomes extremely complex in a way that would have previously seemed mind-boggling. It is to be understood that the oral versions of the poems continued to evolve in ways as complex as the written versions, continually informing and editing one another. In this study, one of my aims is to illustrate how in some cases this traditional referentiality is at play within the poems and how audiences and society react to not only the formulae themselves but the whole concept of oral poetry.

Neoanalysis is another emerging program for the understanding of Homeric traditional poetry. As an analyst school of thought, it attempts to answer some of the difficult questions that analysts, Unitarians and oral traditional schools of thoughts ask each other. This school attempts to show that Homer "consciously or sub-consciously reflects scenes from a broader background."[28] This approach to Homeric poetry is useful here in the way it links references between Homeric poems, for instance the

[28] Willcock 1996 suggests that this approach brings the audience close to the thought processes of the poet, but also allows us to see the composition as a product of an oral traditional school of thought.

scenes of the deaths of Patroclus in the *Iliad* and the death of Achilles in the *Aithiopis.*[29] Pestalozzi suggested that the poet of the *Iliad* was consciously modeling his work after that of another author, and further questioned whether it was necessary to suppose that the poems of the Epic Cycle were composed later than the Homeric poems.[30] One of the greatest contributions from this school of thought is the indication that the poet of the Homeric poems was aware of the stories underlying those poems and was working consciously within a tradition.

There has been movement among Homeric scholars in the latter half of the 20th century to seek a new program to understand the Homeric poems, not from the vantage point of literate scholarship, but in a way that acknowledges their orality and traditionality.[31] With certain calibrations and an understanding of the recoverable aspects of their tradition, readers can "hear" the poems and partake of a virtual performance. Oral songs exist in many forms. Singers must hear and learn their songs from somewhere; the singer also functions as a receiving audience and this fact necessitates a different approach to understanding the tradition and transmission of oral traditional song than does the understanding of a literary tradition, which undergoes editing of a different sort. Oral traditions may undergo quite a great deal

[29] Willcock 1996:176

[30] Pestalozzi, however, does not take into account how we can account for such modeling if we are still to ascribe the *Aithiopis* to Arctinus of Miletus, whom we know to have existed in the sixth century.

[31] For instance, Nagy 1990, Janko 1982, Foley 1990.

of editing or very little. This all depends on the tradition and the purpose of the song. The Greek oral tradition served as a link to a much older culture, even though only a partially remembered one. The Mycenaeans remembered in the poems of the Homeric epics have a relatively modern social system in the epics. This investigation of the oral aspects of the songs will seek to understand both how they create and communicate authority from within the songs themselves as well as how the performances of the songs must also create authority.

Part 2: Methodological assumptions regarding oral cultural and its reception by a literary culture

This section will begin with some implications of the interactions between orality, traditionality, and authority. One major concern that must be voiced here regards the construction of Homeric authority in Greek culture. Studies in oral traditions have their genesis with Parry and Lord, who focused primarily on the *oral* aspect of composition, and this is an obviously important key. My concern here, however, is not as much with the method of the composition in itself, but how that compositional method responds to its audience and how its audience endows it with power to influence. Speech and words are a mysteriously powerful medium.[32] Interactive and two-way communicative

[32] For more on the power of speech see Foley: 1995, Collins: 1996. Collins looks at speech within epic, not necessarily oral epic. He creates a "grammar" of authority by the way the characters within the *Iliad* address one another and the results of those interactions on those surrounding the interaction; that is how an audience, fulfilling the

speech, such as is part of an oral tradition, is a special type of communication by itself. I will be addressing this issue and some implications of a *traditional* speech pattern. An absolutely essential element of this construct of powerful, communicative speech is the part of the receiving audience, which is mute in the earliest part of the Homeric tradition as we have it, but through modern scholarship we are able to give this audience ears and a voice. In essence we must contextualize the performance and the audience, historically and sociologically.[33] Poetry and song naturally provide entertainment as an aesthetic object, they serve as a competitive construct, and they may commemorate events or people or an idealized age and glorify a culture. As Wallace Stevens points out, "poetry is not an unchanging Platonic essence,"[34] but rather a function of the time and place that it exists. Therefore, as much cultural and geographic change has occurred between Homer and Pindar, or Plato, or the Alexandrian critics and editors, so much change is likely to have occurred in the function of poetry. That the songs of Homer are still thought of as songs, fluid and

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third person role, responds to a conversation or interaction between first person speaker and second person addressee.

[33] Ford 1992:173. Ford suggests that a poet's voice is a special type of speech, and is often referred to as a voice, which directly suggests orality, and song as an offshoot. Through the history of the Homeric poems, scholars have consciously and unconsciously privileged the speech over the writing of the poems.

[34] Stevens in Ford 1992: 4. Stevens suggested that poetry needed to be perpetually recreated in order to remain expressive, a conclusion which many have found overly romantic, but which Ford supports, and is useful in its application to oral poetry, which by its recurrence and re-imagination is perpetually recreated, but in a fashion similar enough to still produce standardization.

variable even when fixed in texts, presents a conundrum certainly. A system of poetics can only exist when a tradition exists and recognizes it as such, and a powerfully authoritative poetry only gains that authority when it is bestowed upon it by successors.

Oral traditional poetry takes many forms, from epic song to magic charms and lullabies, each of which fulfills a different function. Epic need not be oral; there are many types of epics that fulfill social functions while being fully written, and there are epics that may exist both orally and in written form. It is difficult to even define what epic is, because any definition is necessarily reductive and will at the end only define one particular epic, or even more tellingly, what the individual defining believes epic to be. Definition itself is an act of reception, where the audience's expectations come into play as much as, if not more than, the source material. These audience expectations are not themselves negative, simply limiting. Therefore I will try to use some of the broadest definitions I can so that I do not limit my material or interpretations unnecessarily. Since I will be dealing primarily with the Homeric epics I will be using a basic working definition of epic as a mythological-historical narrative, extended in length beyond other verbal art forms for a particular culture and using a register that is reserved uniquely for this type of narrative. In respect to Greek epic, definitions are so tied to the persona of Homer that more specific definitions simply make the two synonymous in an extremely circular argument for identification.

Nevertheless, that fact becomes part of the outcome of the investigation: Homer is Greek epic; though there are other bards, they are all in relationship to Homer. Homer, by not naming himself in his poetry, is disconnected from his predecessors, who must have been many for his tradition to have developed to such a point. His connection is abstract and directly to his tradition, and in fact to more ancient traditions of Indo-European and Near- Eastern poetries.

Epic poetry has both a nearness and a farness to it. As a genre, it retells actions from a heroic or idealized past and faraway places. At the same time, it brings the audience closer to those events and their universal truths, truths guaranteed by the poets' connections to the Muse (or tradition). In order to conceive of the Homeric epics properly in this context, their orality, traditionality, and authority must be shown to exist. Unlike some modern, or at least recent, oral epic traditions, we do not have access to the Homeric performances. All we have are texts whose provenance is unknown, that nevertheless demonstrate some aspects of a traditional oral composition. It is impossible to accurately depict how an audience might react to the performance of the poems that inspired and created this text. For our investigation, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* will refer to the fixed texts as we have them, however they are not necessarily synonymous with the poet Homer, who must remain undefined, yet ever present, as suggested above. The texts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* became fixed at some point, though we are not sure what

that point may be. However, understanding this process is important for an investigation of audience reception. The fixation of texts must have played a part in the early, and indeed later as well, Greeks' understanding of Homer, the tradition in which he worked, and the tradition that evolved from his poetry.

Though we start with the premise that the Homeric songs are a part of an oral tradition, as formulated by Parry, this assumption itself must be analyzed to determine what boundaries we set for medium and transmission of the Homeric poems. As was shown above, Byzantine manuscripts are our starting point, a thoroughly "readable" form of text.[35] The songs as we have them are not provably oral, since we cannot hear Homer sing them. They may definitely be said to be oral-derived, bearing indicators that they originated in an oral tradition,[36] which are discussed below. However, the term "oral" can be ambiguous. Oral can refer to something that is spoken, indicating a medium of discourse opposed to writing. Oral can also refer to a conception of discourse, with a different set of strategies for construction.[37] A poem can be composed with writing and then performed aloud, or a poem can be composed in

35 Davison 1964 provides some discussion of the transmission of the texts. The universal issue for scholars of the transmission tradition of the Homeric poems tends to be the apparent artistic unity of the text, which appears to support the Unitarian belief that the poems were composed by a single poetic mind, rather than pieced together from various narratives. Foley discusses artistic unity in *Immanent Art*, as well as other pieces, and uses the mechanism of traditional referentiality to explain how the poems can retain their creative expression and maintain unity while being orally composed.
36 Foley 1990, 1995. “Orally derived” may explain how the poems are related to an oral tradition while still being recorded in textual form.
37 See Bakker 2005 39-40, Oesterreicher 1997, for discussions of this.

performance and then written down. In this sense, much poetry can be both oral and literary. This continuum of conception is important at many stages in the traditions surrounding the Homeric poems, including the generative stage as well as the later receptive stages all the way up to the present. In the early stages of composition during the 9th and 8th centuries, it has been suggested, literacy was not widespread, but the nascent technology was occasionally used to transcribe hexameter poetry.[38] The audience, however, in a context lacking the conception of literacy in composition, would have conceived of the poems as oral and would have delivered them orally, without writing ever entering into the equation.[39] This conception of the poem as oral continued through the Greek tradition's textual receptions, as I suggested above in the previous section. The conception, which we are calling "oral" continued through a change in medium, but I do not see any evidence suggesting that the Greeks thought that the conception of the poetry of Homer changed.[40] Obviously, the classical Greeks were very aware of theoretical approaches to poetry, both written and oral. Much Greek poetry was delivered publicly and orally, though not necessarily following oral-compositional

[38] Powell 1990. His conclusion that the proliferation of writing in archaic Greece was caused by the recording of Homeric poetry does not explain why the oral poet would feel the need to record poetry in textual form, because as an oral poem it flourished, and translating into writing would seem to limit, rather than widen the audience. His suggestion that writing served a mnemonic purpose is not well explained, because by the mechanism of formulaic composition the poems and their tradition have built-in mnemonic devices.

[39] Ford 1992:171.

[40] The issue of how literary epics, such as those of Apollonius or Quintus of Smyrna, conceive of themselves and their relationship to Homeric poetry is a topic for further research, but necessary for our understanding of Greek epic poetry.

techniques in performance like Homer. Nonetheless, it was "written" with the intention of being heard. It is likely that poetry was also written with the intention of being read, though we are aware that most "reading" consisted of sounding out the graphically represented phonemes. In this style of reading, meaning is generated within an aural framework, rather than a visual one. Thus the ambiguity of the terminology of 'oral poetry' extends beyond simply the medium, but also the conception and the reception, the point at which meaning is generated.

As Bakker suggests, "the terms 'oral' and 'orality' are bound up with literate culture...In such a society poets may well exist, but in the absence of literate poets they cannot be oral poets. Nor have people an "oral style" in this society, because there is no literate style to compare their speech with."[41] We must caution ourselves in such a formulation and not equate oral archaic poetry with primitive or simplistic poetry. Our perspective, as Bakker has suggested, evolved from a post-Aristotelian approach to literary criticism. Aristotle comments on the adding style that we see in Homer, calling it the *lexis eiromene*, or running style. The running style, or paratactic adding style, is set in opposition to the periodic style favored by such orators as Isocrates and later, Cicero. The periodic style, Aristotle tells us, is pleasant to listen to

[41] Bakker 2005: *Pointing at the Past*: 42-3s. The suggestion that Bakker makes is that there are some insurmountable issues for us as modern scholars to conceive of an oral poem in its original context, namely because we think of the terms oral and literate as opposites, when in fact there are many degrees of orality.

and easy to learn because its organization or plan gives the listener a sense of place.[42] This formulation of the paratactic style's inferiority to the periodic or hypotactic style comes from a visual reception, rather than an aural reception. The "reader" sees the paratactic or oral style as comprised of various elements loosely connected but not necessarily following an organized plan with a beginning, middle and end. However, as Bakker has shown, a shift in perspective may change the way one thinks about delivery of ideas.[43] If, instead of reading visually a paratactic image, one were to hear a paratactic song, its structure may become clearer.

These are some quagmires into which critics fall regarding Homeric poetry: the formulae were seen as repetitive clichés signifying a lack of originality of Homer, rather than recurrent metonymic symbols evoking a larger picture used in accordance with traditional rules in creative ways. The paratactic style seemed disorganized. Our conception of 'oral' poetry was set in opposition to and defined by literate standards of aesthetics, aesthetics which in reality have little to no bearing to the oral/aural art of Homer. I will proceed to look at elements of the oral art of composition that make up a variant school of aesthetics, primarily following the suggestions of Foley.

[42] Aristotle *Rh.* 1409a29-1409b4, also see Bakker 1997: 37.
[43] Bakker 1997.

Genre- and tradition- dependence are two principles that are important to observe when comparing different traditions and when analyzing the poems in terms of their orality and poetics.[44] Genre-dependence allows a calibration which provides criteria by which epics from different language traditions can be compared, when they fall into the same category. For instance, Lord recognized among Serbo-Croatian epics the recurrent type of the return or *nostos*. The return song featured many similar generically dependent themes and motifs which recur throughout the genre. Lord calls "groups of ideas regularly used in telling a tale in the formulaic style of traditional song the 'themes' of the poetry", following Parry.[45] The *Odyssey* as a return song follows the story-pattern of the *nostos*, which not only dictates form, but in itself creates meaning. As Foley points out, the *Odyssey* is the only fully surviving *nostos* in Greek poetry, though we know that other returns existed as part of the same oral tradition, and were part of what eventually became the *Epic Cycle*.

The oral nature of these epics' conceptions indicates that they may share what Foley calls "traditional referentiality", a way of metonymically referencing the whole of the tradition by the recurrence of the traditional formula.[46] The search for understanding the traditional referentiality of

[44] Foley 1991:22, Foley 1990, Foley 1999.
[45] Lord 1960: 68.
[46] Graziosi proposes the term "resonance", but this applies more to the way the poems are received by subsequent authors than the way the living poems interacted with one

the structure of the poem is hindered by the lack of other surviving return songs: since we do not have an epic chronicling the return of Agamemnon or Menelaus, we cannot directly compare the overall structure of the return of Odysseus. Our summaries of the *nostoi* in Proclus are summaries rather than quotations; they thus provide no comprehensive comparanda for analyzing the poetic functions of traditional referentiality. Since the *Iliad* follows a different story-pattern than the *Odyssey*, this level of comparison does not exist, though other levels, such as type-scenes and formulae do produce referentiality, which is similar to what a literary scholar might call intertextuality.[47] However, the story-pattern of the return, with the calibrations suggested by Foley, can produce meaningful insight by their comparison to other cultures' return-songs. Some of these insights include explanation for the *in medias res* nature of the poems, Penelope's suspicious nature, and the ending of the song.[48] Since our understanding of the structural elements of oral songs can be explained by these comparisons, it is not impossible to suppose that the communicative meanings and the societal importance can also benefit from comparison. Many of these meanings are not made explicit, and we can only reverse engineer them from comparison to other return-songs, but by the nature of traditional

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another. This resonance will be important later, when considering the way that the poems are received by their literate Classical and post-Classical audiences.

[47] Finnegan 1977 also discusses how intertextuality and oral traditions cannot be judged by the same criteria as literary traditions.

[48] Foley 1999.

referentiality, an audience would be aware of the implications of the "blank spaces", or as Foley puts it, they would be able to read the *sema,* to read not only between the lines but behind them. I would add to that metaphor, that they are not only reading, but hearing the resonance of oral epic.

A recognition of tradition-dependence allows for the reader to become acquainted with the tradition well enough to recognize traditional features of the poetry as well as innovations on the regional and even individual level[49]. Tradition-dependence can account for similarities and points of difference between the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* on a linguistic level. This last category also addresses an issue that has concerned Homerists: the dichotomy of tradition versus the individual. If, as Parry proposed, the Homeric poet was composing with formulae in a traditional manner, there seemed no room for freedom of artistic expression and the poems would not feature much variance. Yet, as has been shown by comparison to living oral traditions, the formulaic composition does not limit creativity, rather it can serve to broaden meaning by means of its "register".

The language of Homeric epic, and indeed many other epics, is composed of a variety of unusual forms, regional dialects, archaisms, and other elements that would have been foreign to everyday speech.

[49] For a discussion on innovations, see Fowler 2004 p228.

This unusual mixture of language long puzzled modern audiences of Homer and was sometimes looked at by Unitarians as evidence of interpolation or errors and by analysts as evidence of an amalgamation of various composers. However, oral traditional studies posit a third hypothesis to understanding this particular "epic" language. The epic register, defined by Hymes as "major speech styles associated with recurrent types of situations,"[50] keys the audience into the mode of speech and meaning. The singer is no longer speaking in everyday speech, but has shifted modes into a type of *kunstsprache*, an "artificial form of the general language in question that contains a mélange of morphological and lexical variants that would in normal conversation not constitute a coherent expressive code."[51] This hypothesis is not universally accepted, however, as an indicator of orality.[52] Problems arise, for instance, in the definition of the formula and how much of the texts are formulaic. Parry defined the formula rather strictly in terms of the noun-epithet construction, and Lord's identification of type-scenes and themes seemed to extend the traditional implications of the formula to larger elements. What exactly makes a type-scene or theme a traditional oral element is not clearly agreed upon among scholars, nor is the concept of orality altogether clearly defined. It is usually set in opposition to writing, though, as mentioned above, the differences of

[50] Hymes 1989:440.
[51] Foley 1995:50.
[52] Vivante 1982.

conception and medium must be appreciated as well. Generally well-received is the notion that the Homeric poems are composed in a *kunstsprache*, speech that is seen as crafted or artificial (more on the aspect of artificiality later).

Leaving aside the aspect of orality for the moment, let us consider some implications of a *kunstsprache.* This artificial speech functions as a key or signifier indicating to an audience a shift in the way that the language will construct meaning. The *ways of meaning* are essential elements in the study of oral traditions, because meanings in various modes of communication are not necessarily the same. In some modes of language, for instance, metaphors are meant to take their figurative meaning rather than a literal one. However, to someone uninitiated in that particular mode of communication, who does not recognize the keys to that mode of communication, they would be unaware of the necessity of using a metaphorical meaning rather than a literal one and communication would fail. Thus as Foley suggests "if we are a competent audience, in short, such virtually proverbial nuggets activate networks of immanent meaning to which they are linked by performance fiat and traditional practice."[53]

[53] Foley 1995: 42.

Part 3: Oral Tradition and Ways of Meaning

Homeric epic as the product of an oral tradition takes part in a multi-step cyclical process of (re-)composition, reception, and transmission. By cyclical I mean that this process is recurrent; the transmission stage of this process can in fact consist of recomposition, reception, and simultaneous re-transmission. The various steps of this process can occur at the same time, as well as over a period of time, synchronically or diachronically. Models for understanding aesthetic principles at play in oral traditions exist, and have since Parry's suggestions of formularity reduced, for some, Homer to a mechanical reproduction of his tradition. From the oral-traditional scholar's perspective, and with the critical tools for analyzing meaning-generation, we must shift and recalibrate that interpretation of the tradition, just as our understanding of oral aesthetics shifts and recalibrates. Modern critical methods for understanding meaning and authority are trapped in the literary, and even our application of the term *oral* implies *not literary* in many critics' minds.[54] It is necessary to create a better set of tools and analytical methodology for understanding how oral traditions create meaning and authority. Next I discuss some of the implications of the

[54] See Bakker 1997 for a discussion of problems with some modern approaches to defining and analyzing oral poetry. He addresses the conceptual problems with regarding a poem as orally-derived, as ours is, yet analyzing it from a literary perspective, as the Aristotelian and post-Aristotelian critics have.

oral aspect of oral traditions' impact on meaning, then discuss the diachronic perspective of tradition in the creation of identity.

Oral song, as we must understand it, cannot be heard in the same way that written literature is read. Units of meaning in oral song follow a different pattern from units of meaning in literature. The units of meaning in a literary format follow the periodic style, as Aristotle calls it. This periodic style is suited to the visually graphic medium of writing. The reader is able to focus on particular elements, but has to retain none in their immediate memory, because the medium retains the various elements of the flow of language for them. For an aural audience, however, the same written material, read out loud, would not be able to be understood in the same way as when it is visually read. The focal range of hearing is short. Studies have suggested that the consciousness of the mind can keep seven separate ideas in "working" memory, plus or minus two ideas."[55] Long periodic sentences lose their meaning in this context, and must not be considered a standard against which the Homeric poems fail to measure up. Rather, the aesthetic restraints of a graphic view of literature must be loosened from the Homeric poems, as

[55] Bakker 1997: 45-48. This naturally raises concerns about the mnemonic value of the oral traditional medium altogether. However, this small quantity of "working memory" that an audience may possess is perhaps mitigated by the many poetic devices that the orally composing poet, and audience, have at their disposal. The argument is circular that although the aurally receiving mind can only accommodate a certain, small, amount of information but that these information packets contain more information by the mechanism of referentiality.

well as the restraints on our analysis of meaning and importance, as they likewise follow literary or textual receptionalist constructions.

Since the Homeric poems are understood to follow the conceptual strategies in speech for their structure, then they must also be understood to follow the conceptual strategies of reception of speech. Moreover, this type of speech is not the planned organized occasional speech of Isocrates or Cicero, but it is also not entirely random in its construction. Rather, it adheres to the ideals of the oral tradition. This speech is special and marked, not just in the use of formulae and referential language, but also in its musicality. Oral traditional song contains rhythmic and pitch contours that are not necessarily absent from everyday speech, but certainly less marked. Speech follows different conceptual strategies from the written word, and many of these strategies are apparent in the Homeric poems. Narrative descriptive speech is an immediate act, tied to the present. The period of cognition for individual ideas is short.[56] The linguist Chafe has suggested that units of speech, which he calls "intonation units" and last up to three seconds, are separated by short pauses. These intonation units end in pitch contours, indicating connectedness or disconnectedness from the next intonation unit in sequence[57]. Intonation units correspond to focal

[56] Studies have suggested a three-second period during which a reaction and understanding may take place, Turner 1992: *The Neural Lyre: Poetic Meter, the Brain, and Time* calls this "the fundamental parcel of experience".
[57] Chafe 1980.

points of consciousness, and the short gaps or pauses allow the listener a chance to process and interpret the previous vocalization. These "jumps" from each focal point give rise to an unperiodic, paratactic, style of speech. In terms of Homeric metrics, intonation units correspond to *cola.* Each *colon* "represents a single focus of consciousness" and is often marked by metrical breaks and particles.[58] Oral poetics present a good case study for analyzing the epic as a process, rather than an object.[59] The oral tradition allows for an understanding of this processual aspect from multiple perspectives: the synchronic elements of a speech being composed and understood in an immediate present, as well as the diachronic aspect of how a tradition builds meaning through accretions in time and space. By what Bakker calls the "syntax of movement", I suggest one of the primary reasons for the success and authority of the oral traditional epic is its superiority in regards to its efficiency as a communicative medium. There are many facets of this superiority. An oral tradition is efficient in its meaning-generation; it is durable enough to travel geographically and temporally, yet flexible enough to be relevant in a wide variety of situations. The oral tradition can also connect its audience and its speaker to form community and identity, and it can be utilized as an ad hoc communication medium for many different situations.

[58] Bakker 1997: 50.
[59] Suggested by Bakker 1997, Foley 1991 and elsewhere.

The efficiency of oral traditional language at generating meaning is tied directly to the nature of its traditional register. Tradition has bearing on meaning in oral traditional epic. The meanings of noun-epithet formulae appear only after it can be understood that they do not necessarily only have the significance of identifying a traditional hero, such as “swift footed Achilles”. In addition to indicating in the immediate present of the performance that the son of Thetis is the referent, the entirety of the epic tradition is being summoned and with it are all of the other traditional appearances of Achilles. The traditional formula is not only a convenient tool for the creation of lines of verse, but it has the metonymic power to summon up larger contexts and meanings by means of its tradition. The poet has the ability to create his own story within the conventions of the tradition, and this individualized creation inherently has bearing on meaning. The poet and the tradition, however, are not the only elements on the creation of meaning in any form of verbal art. In oral epic traditions, meaning is generated in a complex way, operating on many different levels. Meaning is created not just in the text or song itself, but in the receiving audience. This audience cooperates with the song that is being performed, and meaning is created during this performance. Oral poetry is dynamic; it, like Homer, cannot be made to stand still, but the audience’s reception of the poetry, for each individual member of the audience, will stand still until the next performance. An oral song-performance, like that of the Homeric songs, will generate an

immediate set of meanings in one context that may differ in a subsequent context.

Formulae, and other keys to the orality of the poems, are only one aspect of oral poetry. There has been a recent shift in emphasis in Homeric studies from the elemental aspects of formulaic construction, which "typifies the production, the composition of the epic tale (and so came to characterize epic as qualitatively different from other, non-formulaic poetry)" to performance, which "is a hermeneutic tool that can be used for the study of the presentation and reception of Homeric narrative and the relation it entertains with the reality it evokes."[60] The audience in an oral traditional culture performs different functions than an audience of a literary work. In oral traditional cultures the audience contributes to the creation of meaning of a work and is the primary mode of transmission. Meaning in a tradition-dependent medium, such as Greek oral epic, can operate on different levels than it does in everyday language. Meaning and language are obviously closely tied in any medium, including everyday speech and oral tradition, but the way an oral tradition constructs meaning varies and must take into account many different perspectives. Oral traditions function diachronically, but this does not mean that they are static. The meaning of formulae in Homer, for instance, are not patently obvious to modern audiences. This lack of clarity is the very reason for our understanding of the poems'

[60] Bakker 2005:xi.

orality, as a consequence of the Homeric Question's investigation into the very fabric of the poetry.

In the Greek oral tradition the audience recognized the formulae and other *keys* of orality and either consciously or subconsciously interpreted their resonance with other epic occurrences of those formulae. Traditional meanings and their changes are subtle for us, but there is evidence available for the careful reader to track them in the Homeric epic. [61]

The epics also may preserve some record of the Mycenaean period contained in various words in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, such as the *basileus* and the *anax*.[62] In the documents from Pylos and other Mycenaean sources, we understand a few basic facts about these two offices, but not much.[63] The *basileus* seemed to be some sort of low-level local administrator while the *anax* was a higher level officer with a

[61] Analysts see the epics as preserving various stages of the construction of epic within specifically identifiable contexts. For instance, the presence of Arcado-Cyprian elements has been taken by some to indicate a Cyprian "phase" of construction, which was then picked up by later Ionian poets or the presence of Mycenaean terminology as an indicator of a Mycenaean phase. However, oral traditional studies suggest other possibilities.

[62] Osborne 2004 discusses some of these preserved forms of words in the Homeric songs, as does Page 1972. Page's analysis also includes numerous geographic locations that are preserved in catalog and formula, only there and abstractly, but not at all in the collective memory of the Greek mind and therefore lost by the time of recorded literacy. This indicates a continuity of at least some form of tradition, presumably oral, from the Mycenaean period until the period during which the songs were converted to texts. This is reinforced by the phonetic similarities between the language the Mycenaean Greek spoke, as inferred from the Linear B tablets, and the language of the Homeric epics, while allowing us to disregard the difference in alphabet and script with no issue.

[63] Calhoun 1964

military retinue.[64] During the Mycenaean period, there was a form of literacy, though it should probably not be called "literature" in the sense that it is a form of verbal art. There are extensive writings in the documents recovered from Pylos containing inventories of various commodities and properties, lists of military and bureaucratic officers, and priests and their sacrificial inventories. Also included are the places where these people and things are located throughout the Greek world of the Bronze Age. Page has illustrated some aspects of continuity between elements in these Mycenaean documents and the Homeric poems, such as the above mentioned officers as well as some of the places mentioned. There are then two ways that this information would have ended up in the Homeric poems. The first, and possibly the simplest, is that during the Mycenaean period there was a flourishing tradition of oral poetry. This oral tradition could have survived for the centuries between the fall of Troy and the time of Homer more or less intact. Since there is no documentary evidence of any writing during the centuries intervening between the fall of the Mycenaean palatial culture and the archaic period it is not likely that any scribal tradition continued to reproduce any texts in Greece. It is unlikely that a scribal tradition would have promoted the reproduction of the types of documents actually found from Pylos, because they would have little value to any culture but the bureaucracy of the Mycenaeans.

[64] Page 1972.

It is possible that knowledge of the Mycenaean cultural customs spread outside the Mycenaean world and re-entered during the Greek dark ages. The Mycenaeans had contact through trade with the Egyptians as well as peoples in Syria and Palestine, who all had contact with the Babylonians and Akkadians.[65] These cultures all had their own particular epic traditions, many of which have been shown to influence early Greek epic in many ways,[66] including themes and motifs. This possibility of influence is not likely in this particular circumstance because there appears nowhere in Near Eastern sources record of any of these Mycenaean elements. It is most probable then that the oral tradition that gave rise to the Homeric epic was the descendant, though how indirect it may be is obscure, of a Mycenaean tradition at least half a millennium old. This Mycenaean oral tradition would have been a stable source of history and entertainment for the Greeks of the period during which the Homeric poems developed, as well as a formative influence.

Traditions build meaning by various ways. One of the ways oral traditions build meaning is by their traditional referentiality. Traditional referentiality involves the activation of various keys within the convention of tradition. Traditional elements that make up register, such as formulae, archaisms, type-scenes and themes, must be understood not simply as repeated phrases or out-of-place words, but as keys to evoking the larger body of tradition. Foley refers to this meaning-generation as

[65] Burkert in Foley 2005.
[66] Burkert 1992.

metonymy because each small part, such as a formula, stands in for a much larger whole. In oral epic poetry, these various keys indicate to the audience linguistically that meaning is shifting from the everyday word meanings to the traditional register. Traditional referentiality introduces an aspect of variability into the reception integer in the meaning-generation cycle of performance, reception, transmission and re-performance. The awareness of the particular tradition upon which a given type of epic depends will unlock different levels of meanings and "horizons of expectations" within the audience. On the level of the traditional awareness, varying levels of skillful listening by cognizant audiences present various indeterminacies. These indeterminacies name "open or "undetermined" space left in the work for the reader or audience to participate in the making of the given work."[67]

So this poetry that we say is conceived of as "orally composed" must also be conceived of as "orally received", and its meaning is created both immediately in the space between the singer and the audience, but also over the centuries that the formulae, type-scenes, themes and so on become the *semata* that are traditional. The act of composition-in-performance that is such an important element of our early understanding of oral poetry, is only a part of the equation. The audience

[67] Foley 1999: 144. Different members of the audience all bring with them differences of experience, both with the particular song, as well as the singer. These factors affect the way that a particular performance is received, and in turn whether or not the way that particular singer chooses to re-perform the same song in the same way, or shifts his strategy to produce a more successful result. Each performance becomes a matrix of various interactions and indeterminacies which ultimately shape the tradition.

constructs meaning in the immediacy of the performance, as well as in their subsequent experiences.[68] An audience member hears each new performance with all the other performances of their lifetime in mind, and it is against these other performances that the immediate one resonates. Their experiences in previous performances need not even be the same song, or a song along similar themes, provided that the song exists in the same tradition, because traditional referentiality can build meaning across songlines. Foley has shown how a traditional register can operate throughout the living South Slavic Epic tradition. Registers, or ways of speaking, differ depending on the type of discourse. Everyday conversation differs from legal speaking, and each register's keys indicate the code-switch that occurs when a speaker begins to use a new register. Some of these keys to Homeric epic have been mentioned above, and include the unnecessary enjambment, the noun-epithet formula, and others. These components of oral epic do conveniently allow a poet to compose while performing, but serve as a signal indicating that the register has shifted, changing the referents for certain components, such as metaphors and formulae.

[68] The recipient of the oral epic was a large public audience, see Currie 2006. This large audience setting would not only provide a convenient method for the dispersion and dissemination of the particular singers song and fame, but also a proper setting for the oral performance to have the largest psychological impact on the formation of group identity, much like a religious festival, of which the performance of oral epic was a large part.

The nature of this register "exerts at least two trademark influences on a system of diction:"[69] it preserves archaisms and promotes dialectical mixing. Parry saw this as an "artificial" language, implying aberrance or unreality,[70] but its very existence suggests otherwise. The epic register exists for a purpose and as a result of various forces, as does any dictional register. These two forces exerting pressure upon the diction, the preservation of archaisms and the geographical diversity, are both the results of a tradition acting upon diction, and should be seen as expected in an oral traditional song-culture. The Homeric poems are composed in a primarily Ionic dialect, though Aeolic and other forms appear frequently. Foley suggests that the use of Aeolic forms are used for compositional needs, just as Slavic *guslari* use alternate dialectical forms metrically often in the same lines and that neither of these multiforms impedes understanding, though they do have distinct geographical provenances. The use of these various forms, and the equality with which they are understood by their audiences is a symptom or indicator of the geographical and chronological factors involved in the construction of the traditions.

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[69] Foley 1999: 74-75.

[70] Ibid 75. Parry did not initially suppose that the elements of this system of recurrent formulae indicated an oral composition, but may have merely indicated a traditional system of speech. It was later that the hypothesis was developed supposing that the recurrent formulae were part of a composition-in-performance genre of poetry, and eventually this led to the investigations into South Slavic living oral traditions.

The *aoidos* and the *guslar* "offer fine-tuned linguistic instruments dedicated to a single purpose: the ready composition of epic verse."[71] They also offer an entrance into the world of traditional referentiality, where the larger whole is implied by the discrete parts. Through these discrete parts, the audience is connected for the duration of the performance to the tradition from which the bard derives his song. This implication of a whole larger than the immediate performance, combined with the audience's understanding of a tradition leads us to the issue of intertextuality. Burgess presents two definitions for intertextuality.[72] Weak intertextuality implies a simple allusion, and is of little use to oral traditional studies.[73]

A more theoretical approach to intertextuality, submitted by Nagy and analyzed by Burgess, "sees long-standing poetic performance

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[71] Foley *Homer's Traditional Art* 89. As many have pointed out the similarities between the *guslar* and the *aoidos*, we come to a point that will be addressed throughout, what exactly is the *aoidos*? He appears within Greek poetry to be a singer, most basically. He can, and does, seem to exist as an attachment to a palace, as Demodokos or Phemius, but he apparently, like Hesiod can also be a shepherd. He is referred to in the archaic period as being of a class of craftsmen, traveling from community to community. The figure is not very concretely defined, and often is dependent on context. The *guslar*, on the other hand, was typically a semi-professional singer of tales who studied his craft since childhood, and performed in community settings such as coffee shops. The *guslari* were very much "of the people" rather than associated with a particular court or king, though particular legendary *guslari* such as Cor Huso, may be sought by royalty for their performances.

[72] Burgess *The Death and Afterlife of Achilles* 2009 : 56.

[73] Currie 2006 also discusses intertextuality and Homer's relationship to the Epic Cycle. He contradicts the concept that there is no possibility for the concept of intertextuality, though presents some of the difficulties in understanding how it might work. In the oral traditional medium, he says, there is no fixed text, which would seem to make difficult the functionality of allusion without reference point. Nevertheless, it is also shown by comparative evidence in the Yugoslavian evidence that oral poetry does achieve a sort of fixity. Finnegan 1977 for instance points out that many shorter oral traditional forms do present quite an element of fixity, though not as much in many of the longer epic recitations or performance.

traditions continuously influencing and reacting to other long-standing yet still evolving poetic traditions."[74] Though, as Burgess makes clear, this formulation is somewhat vague, it shall serve as a starting point. His own approach to intertextuality in ancient Greek epic may seem somewhat counterintuitive, yet it has from a theoretical viewpoint at least accomplished what it set out to do. Burgess' approach to the idea of interactions between other narratives "depends on the assumption of neither a historical master poet nor performance traditions; it focuses only on the Homeric poem's engagement with traditional narratives external to its own."[75] Neo-analysis suggests that there is a relationship of dependence between different exemplars within a tradition; oral theory asserts that there is no "one archetype" on which each individual song is based.[76]

Part 4: Authority and Identity

The process of performance, reception, transmission and re-performance constitutes a "diachronic dialogue", to borrow Kahane's phrase, which results in the cultural identity of the Greeks being inextricably bound in their early oral poets.[77] It created a sense of

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[74] Burgess, ibid, from Nagy 1990a.
[75] Burgess 2009 p58.
[76] Currie 2006:5.
[77] Kahane 2005. This discussion indicates that the Greek identity was built around the lasting legacy of their oral poets. This is similar to the concept of immanence that Foley discusses in *Immanent Art*. The influence of the oral poets becomes immanent on Greek culture in a way that is difficult to define, because it is so omnipresent throughout their history.

identity by its inclusivity, and this identity is essential for its authority. Authority within the epics, as shown in chapter 2, rested on a complex system of interactions between various social rankings. Military leaders appeared to have the greatest authority over their people, but other characters are able to appropriate authority for other ends. These other characters use the power of words and connections to gods and traditions to usurp this power. Bards are necessarily agonistic in their rhetorical world:

> "the invocation of the Muse can be paraphrased "Let me win, outdo all other singers." In the pre-romantic, rhetorical culture, the poet is essentially a contestant.
>
> Ong 1977 224-225

Social authority outside of poetry does not necessarily function by exactly the same rules as it does inside of the Homeric epics, but I suggest that there will be a correlation between the way that speech's power functions within the epic and the way certain types of speech will have power in a cultural context. My aim will be to relate the power of speech as a model of authoritarian hierarchies to the power of Homer within the early Greek verbal arts and then show subsequent receptions on that system within later Greek literature. The above quote from Ong

suggests that all poetry is competitive, and Homer appears to have a nominal place at the head of the competition, though this assertion must be carefully weighed against the fact that the poems themselves show very little trace of competition.[78] The authority of a work of verbal art must also be related to social constructs of authority for the argument in favor of Homer's dominance in the archaic Greek world to be valid.

Next I will address the methodology of how I relate Homeric authority to the relationship between Homeric poetry, the larger epic tradition and its relationship with the Epic Cycle, as well as early Greek lyric. One obstruction we must necessarily experience as modern readers of a tangled ancient tradition concerns the context of the tradition, a social context revolving around cultural institutions, as well as a political context which may make use of those cultural institutions for its own advantage. Since whatever records we do have of archaic Greece are incomplete, there is an inherent impossibility in proving the social and political authority of Homeric poetry. Nevertheless, I believe the pictured society that Homer and Hesiod give us may serve as a valid starting point, especially as analyzed in chapter two, and the composite picture of society given from historical, archaeological and literary sources may serve as a terminus ante quem for the emergence of this authority.

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[78] Ford 1992: 95. Though the poems do not contain direct poetic competitions, of the sorts we imagine to be influential during the Classical period, such as rhapsodic competition, there are nevertheless traces of competition. For instance, the Homeric poet juxtaposes Demodokos's songs with Odysseus's tales of his travels. Interspersed between the songs of Demodokos are athletic competitions, which seem to drive the agonistic nature of the episode home.

Hesiod tells us that during his travels, he won a contest in epic verse-making at the funeral games of Amphidamas, and that as a prize he carried off a tripod.[79] Homer is silent about his accomplishments, though his bards are respected in such a way as to indicate that they are accomplished. Homer tells us that the bards get their inspiration from the gods or the Muses, and somewhat paradoxically are also self-taught. They exist in a matrix where their Muse provides the traditional material, but they use that material for their own creations. *The Contest of Homer and Hesiod* suggests that both poets were part of a competitive tradition though it is not likely that the two competed in the way depicted. Homer does not include much in the way of competitive scenes for his bards, though Andrew Ford does note two applicable scenes.[80] In the *Iliad*, in book two, we are told the story of Thamyris and his fate. Thamyris boasts that he would be able to take on the Muses themselves, who then punish him by maiming him and making him forget how to sing and play the lyre. In the *Odyssey* the competition is not that of a poet, but an athlete: Eurytus, who challenges Apollo to an archery competition and is defeated and destroyed for his boast. The character of Thamyris can be easily seen as analogous to that of the early *aoidos*, a bard who sings while accompanying himself with a lyre.[81] The associations between athlete

[79] *WD* 655.
[80] Ford 1992: 98.
[81] Ford 1992:129. The Thamyris story further implies the agonistic nature of the aoidos's craft. This competition is an essential element to Greek culture, and in some sense the level of

and *aoidos* are more tenuous, but the comparison is still valid. The context for Odysseus recounting the myth of Eurytus is a challenge at the athletic games being hosted by Alkinoos in Scheria. Odysseus boasts that he would challenge any man in Scheria, but would not challenge men of former times, such as Herakles or Eurytus. Both of these stories express hubris of an earlier generation of heroes, but they also suggest the importance of competition and pride in varied aspects of early Greek culture.

The athletic games in Scheria are held simultaneously with performances by Demodokos, the Phaeacian bard. The bard appears to connect various episodic songs together in a space marked out as an *agon*, not simply a *khoron* for dancing and music, but a space set aside for competition (8.259-60). One song of Demodokos, the Affair of Ares and Aphrodite, as Ford has pointed out, sounds like a Homeric Hymn,[82] a genre which may have a performance venue at a celebration that may also feature athletic competition. This particular song does not concern any interactions between gods and mortals, unlike the other songs of Demodokos, or Phemius for that matter. The *Affair* is only concerned with the gods, and appears in abstract context, rather than part of any cycle of material. Many of the other songs appear to be a part of a similar

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competition is definitive to Greek culture, as it exists as a central facet of religious festivals, politics, and all drama.

[82] Ford 1992 : 116. He points out that Hesiod, for instance, explicitly recognizes the cultural institution of poetic competition, though Homer does not. This is partly due to the nature of the unidentified narrator of the Homeric poems and the idyllic world of the past, which do not acknowledge the social institutions that they appear to establish.

tradition of Trojan War songs, but are typically sung in the context of feast entertainment, rather than verbal competition. Competition in both athletics and song appears in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo.

As nearly all the epics tell us, competition and pride are central facets of manhood and identity in archaic Greek culture.[83] The epics, though they take their material from the mythological tradition stretching back to the Bronze Age, must necessarily also explore contemporary concerns, including self-identification. The fact that the bards draw their inspiration from the gods and use the power of words to create authority will serve as a starting point. As I suggest in chapter two, the bards, as they are depicted in the poems, use a powerful form of speech to create authority. In this respect they are similar to various other categories of powerful speakers, such as priests, prophets, and elders. Where elders derive their powerful speech solely from their own experiences, the others primarily draw their authority from the gods. Priests act as the servants of the gods, overseeing sacrifices and rituals to make sure they are properly conducted, as well as advising what is and is not in line with properly pious behavior. Prophets function as a mouthpiece of the gods, supplying the people with information directly

[83] Ford 1992:95, 1988:305-306. His conception of the competitive element includes the drive to record in textual form the versions of the poems which we have. "To write down such a poem is to convert it from a form in which it was comfortably available to a wide range of people and reduce it to a form that only a few could use." This necessarily includes some kind of selection process, indicating by the very act of recording it, that one version must have been superior to another.

from the gods which primarily looks to the future.[84] The audience of the prophet can use this information to benefit them, much in the same way that the audience of the priests may benefit from the information that the priests communicate to the gods on their behalf. The *aoidos* derives his information from the gods, though he primarily looks to the past, rather than the future. In a sense, then the figure of the *aoidos* invests his song with a religious power.

The *aoidos* serves not simply as a bridge between the world of his mortal audience and the immortal gods, but also as a reminder that in their culture's mythological history, there were heroes who also connected the world of men with the gods. Though this may be a function of the aoidos, Andrew Ford asks a valid point: "why rehearse the past?"[85] Though Homer suggests that poetry is enchanting and pleasurable, this speaks more to the form than the content. If poetry is meant to be instructive, then the content here must be a focal point, but then what would necessarily separate the tale from the history?[86] The immediacy of the connection between the audience and the characters

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[84] Keller 1902: 162.
[85] Ford 1992: 49. He offers two possible answers: the pleasure of listening to poetry and to instruct. I find it possible and more likely that both of these possibilities can and do exist simultaneously. Music has the ability to provide a mnemonic device, which allows the content or instruction more easily to be recalled, and in the process of recollection, provides an additional level of pleasure for the listener who is recalling the information.
[86] Ford, Ibid. Ford suggests the vividness, or the sense that the past is somehow present with us, is an element that makes the content of the epic approachable and relevant as well as pleasurable. Ford is also concerned that truth is not mentioned in relation to song other than the muses of Hesiod's claim to know how to tell lies like truth, as well as truth. However, Dodds (1957) points out that all invocations to the muses are essentially requests for information with which the poet can retell the events of the song, and therefore equivocally requests for the truth.

creates an easy bridge for identification of the audience's culture to the culture of the characters in the poem.

The exercise of authority outside of the epics in the larger archaic Greek world in many ways functions similarly to the ways various societal roles exercise authority within the epics. Within the epics there are several different types of authority, but the lines separating them are not always clearly defined. Military authority, such as that which Agamemnon wields, blends into political authority, depending on whether his audience is in battle or at council. Religious authority can be wielded and changed by priests, but is not limited to just priests, since others can make claims and invoke the gods. Poets, such as Homer, Hesiod, Demodokos and Phemius claim Apollo and the muses as sources of their poetic authority, which seems to border on religious authority by nature of the divine association. I propose then that the authority inherent in religious speech is a similar type of authority to speeches made by characters who are not strictly religious leaders, like a priest, but border on religious affiliation by their invocations of gods and muses, as well as using a register that is similar to religious speech. Poetic authorship shifts to poetic authority in an oral tradition, which in turn shifts into cultural authority, which in turn can shift into social or political authority.

Authority naturally shifts over time as well as medium, therefore I shall address the authority of medium, and how it shifts, in respect to the Homeric poems. The Homeric poems were originally orally composed, performed and transmitted. At some point they were written down in various forms. Though the poetry was written, it is likely that the main method of reception was still oral, either by an aoidos or a rhapsode.[87] A select group of rhapsodes, called the Homeridae, is said to have preserved the texts of Homer, and claimed descent from him. [88] Though it is often suggested that the rhapsode simply recited poetry, without creative input, that model may be too simplistic.[89] It is clear from textual variations preserved and documented by the Alexandrian librarians that the poems are still alive and changing, even in Hellenistic times. The poems are most certainly still being performed in the fourth and early third century, and that is most likely the way the majority of their audience received them. However, there is a parallel tradition of written transmission and reception by the scholarly audience as well. This tradition, also shown by Alexandrian critical editions and commentaries, includes variant lines that document a tradition of recomposition according to the techniques demonstrated by oral poets. This will be discussed in greater depth in chapter four.

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[87] Nagy 2011 and 2012.
[88] Fowler in Fowler 2004.
[89] For discussions of the Homeridae and rhapsodes, see Burkert 1972, West 1999, and Graziosi 2002. Most believe that this group was partly responsible for propagating the Homeric poetry and maintaining the fixity of the tradition in the early Classical period, but there are no solid references to the organization in the Hellenistic period.

The audience of an orally performed song is influenced in a different way than an audience of a written poem. Plato, in his criticism of imitative art compares poetry to painting in the way it captures the emotions "through the suggestiveness of rhythm, meter and music", which is likened to the shapes and colors of the painter.[90] Oral poetry is persuasive and powerful because it employs more than one sense in conveying more than just the content. An oral performance involves not just what the audience receives, but how they receive it. Oral song is rhythmic, which can be hypnotic. Pitch changes in the melody not only amplify emotional content, but can convey meaning.[91] The authority of the Homeric poems is a process that changes throughout time and focus, but is ever present in the Greek world, sometimes even just as an idea. I will investigate the genesis of this process, how it transforms throughout time, and the various uses to which it is put by its audience. First, however, I will look at the Aegean world around the time prior to the genesis of the poems in order to understand the conditions preexistant to their composition, in order to demonstrate the influence of context on the poems as well as the necessity of such poems for the archaic Greek people.

[90] Gentili 1988: 38.
[91] Mithen 2006*:* 72. This work discusses the early development of cognition, memory, and influence of music in humans, and explores the way that music can affect the mind of not only the recipient, but the creator as well.

Chapter 2: Homer Preconstructed

In this section, I provide an overview of the conditions in Archaic Greece prior to the emergence of the Homeric poems in the form that they have come down to us. This overview has as its goal an understanding of the influences that have shaped the development of the poems and their influence. An understanding of the conditions pre-existent to our version of the Homeric poems will help to situate the poems themselves in context. To that end I will examine what I feel are some of the most significant factors on this situation, including the connections between the earliest Greek poetry and the "Aegean *koine,*"[92] the implications of an oral traditional poetic form on the chronology of the Homeric traditions, and the state of Iron Age society. Some considerations need to be taken here in order to narrow the focus of this overview and to provide guidelines for what may be deemed relevant in an area of study where the wealth of information and interpretations could hinder rather than help this investigation. Since I am concerned with looking at conditions pre-existent to the textual forms of the Homeric poems to assess influences, a date range for the genesis of those poems is necessary. I am by no means attempting to put a date stamp on

[92] Burkert 1992: 5. Burkert, as well as M West and many others see the earliest Minoan, Mycenaean, and eventually Greek people as closely linked to the influence of outside cultures. Mycenaean palace culture appears to be comparable to Near Eastern cultures, such as the Babylonian and Sumerian palace cultures. This is extremely important for our understanding of the place of song and poem in relationship to culture, as there are a wealth of surviving records in Babylonian, Akkadian, and Ugaritic which preserve not only the songs and literature of these people, but also discuss the social importance of the singer.

the composition of those poems, though many have tried. Instead I am simply seeking to establish a general period before which there would have been the necessary time for a traditional heroic oral poetry to take hold, and to look at influences present in that time period. It does not matter for this investigation precisely when the poems were composed, either their oral traditional origins or the Homeric incarnation of those poems. For the purposes here, I will consider the 9th century the earliest point for an oral traditional poet to have composed something close to our poems[93], and the 7th century as the latest time period of composition.[94] This poetic tradition, however, as research more and more is suggesting, is the heir to a much older tradition, a continuum from the Bronze Age Mycenaean poetic traditions, which are themselves related to and influenced by ancient Near Eastern poetries.[95] Therefore, this earliest period of formative influence will be considered, as well as the later, so-called "Orientalizing Revolution" of the 9th-7th centuries BCE.

[93] Not exactly our poems, which have been shaped by various editors, but the material from which the written texts are based.
[94] Here I have tried to look at the arguments of Janko 1982 and Powell 1991, not for their conclusions, which are extreme, but for establishing a period during which it is linguistically possible and before the literary use of writing was widespread.
[95] Webster 1964: p87.

Part 1: Near Eastern Connections

The *Iliad*, in its description of the conflict between east and west, recognizes the influence that the continent of Asia has on Greek society.[96] The *Odyssey* likewise acknowledges foreign interaction in the form of trade connections. For instance at *Odyssey* 14.199 Odysseus claims to be a merchant from Crete who traveled throughout the eastern Aegean.[97] This influence has often been under-represented by classicists, who tend to look at Greece as the beginning of Western culture polarized against Eastern culture.[98] Though the position of the primacy of Homer to Western culture has been contested by several centuries of scholars, the Homeric *texts* are tenacious and able to withstand criticism. The borrowing of foreign elements in Greek culture is recognized by archaeologists especially, and is not unique as a phenomenon to material culture.[99]

Nonetheless, it is generally accepted now that our poems *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are the products of several centuries of oral tradition in

[96] Stubbings 1960 discusses some of the general technical aspects of trade with the Aegean and Near East, and how some elements are incorporated into the Homeric poems. Page 1972 analyzes in very great detail the influence of the peoples of the northern Turkish peninsula on the depicted societies within the *Iliad*.
[97] Odysseus in disguise claims to have gathered wealth from Troy, Egypt, Phoenicia, and Libya. These areas, during the Bronze Age contained some of the most well-known wealthy trade civilizations, so this reflection by Odysseus is not random, but denotes a well-placed recollection by the oral poet of the wealth of civilizations nearly a millennium older than the time of textual fixation. What this suggests is a very long lived oral tradition that was able to preserve details which were potentially not immediately relevant to the current audience, but seen as a testament to the ability of the poet to include such archaisms. Page 1972 discusses the catalogs in the *Iliad* as historical artifacts in light of how the oral tradition can preserve such information.
[98] Burkert 1992.
[99] Beattie 1964.

Greece.[100] The Greek oral tradition did not form *ex nihilo*, but rather evolved out of native Greek elements and elements from various cultures that had contact with Greeks. There appear to have been two major periods of high cultural exchange; during the second millennium BCE and the early first millennium BCE, or possibly the exchange was the same or very similar with the often mentioned "fall of the bronze age" period intervening. Either way, the Mycenaean civilization of the late Bronze Age is important for being the first definitely Greek speakers and also because it is to this people that the Homeric epics in part look.

In the second millennium BCE, the period I am calling the "pre-construction" of the Homeric poems, there was no unified "Greek" culture,[101] but a series of societies existed in the region we call Greece during the Bronze Age, most notably Minoan and Mycenaean.[102] A more proper term might be "Greek-Speakers", though with some qualifications.[103] We are still somewhat unclear about what language the Early Bronze Age people (3000-2000) spoke, but it has been hypothesized that it was some sort of "Aegean language".[104] It is still a topic of debate whether or not the Minoans were Greek speakers,[105] based on the decipherment of Linear B tablets found at Knossos from around 1375

[100]For instance, Kirk 1962 and Page 1972.
[101] As in fact throughout much of the later Archaic and to some extent Classical and Hellenistic periods as well it is inaccurate to categorize all the Greek speakers as unified in culture.
[102] Beattie 1964.
[103] Hopper 1976.
[104] McDonald 1967.
[105] Macdonald 1967: 364.

BCE. The Linear B tablets appear to be an offshoot of Linear A,[106] which then begs the question of whether the relationship of the script indicates an analogous relationship of spoken languages. Many different languages historically have shared the same script, whether a syllabic, hieroglyphic or alphabetic. I first look at the Mycenaean era influences, because they occur during the time period which formed the ideal time-setting during which the Homeric epics occur, and then I look to later, post-Mycenaean influences in order to illuminate the transition from the Bronze Age civilizations to the Archaic Greek civilization.

Section 1: Mycenaean- Era Influences

As Martin West has pointed out, the routes by which the earliest Greeks made contact with other civilizations tended to follow geographical factors.[107] We know most about the palace culture of Knosos and how this is likely the cultural background against which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are set.[108] The civilizations of Crete were in contact with Egypt from as early as the third millennium, though contact from Crete to mainland Greece was less direct. Coastal trade routes linked Egypt across the Sinai Peninsula to the Levant, primarily with the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon. T.B.L Webster has even hypothesized that the Minoans were themselves an Asiatic people, on the

[106] Hopper 1976: 16.
[107] West 1997: 2. Wide stretches of seas, deserts, and mountains were the greatest hindrance to communication, while islands in close proximity to the coast as well as one another, rivers, and sea roads tended to be the easiest modes of communication.
[108] Osborne 2004.

basis that their language is related to Hittite.[109] If this is a possibility, it closely links the Minoans with Asia Minor, and certainly would suggest that the civilizations on the Anatolian plateau had some influence in the origins of Minoan art and culture, including the cross-cultural transmission of stories and modes of communication.[110]

These links between east and west in the earliest period prefigure the Mycenaeans, whom I am treating as the earliest definably Greek peoples. My rationale for this assertion is linguistic as well as evidenced by cultural inheritance. The Linear B tablets as deciphered by Ventris indicate that the Mycenaeans in the middle of the second millennium composed in Greek.[111] Not only were they composing in Greek, as Ventris suggested, but they were likely composing poetry in Greek. Archaeology can in many ways be useful to corroborate this hypothetical picture of Bronze Age literature. For instance, the "miniature frescoes" or "naval frescoes" at Thera were discovered in the houses of the wealthy, depicting naval scenes and battles. These scenes are very similar to what we later find described in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and has been interpreted by some to indicate the presence of an artistic tradition that paralleled a poetic tradition.[112] These scenes indicate a

[109]Webster, 1964, 66. S Morris 1996 suggests that Hittite and Ugaritic texts suggest a "better bridge from Mesopotamia to the Aegean".
[110] Beattie 1964 p311.
[111] Jeffery 1964.
[112] Sarah P Morris 1989. Sarah Morris that the fleet depicted in one of the frescoes serves as a visual representation of the poetic catalog, such as a catalog of ships as we find in the *Iliad*.

cross-cultural phenomenon, blending Mycenaean and Minoan style artwork in other locations, and including scenes that are familiar from later epic as well as contemporary Near Eastern epic.[113]

These earliest Greeks had cross-cultural communication via trade, colonization, and conquest with the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, the inhabitants of Ugarit, and via the Western coast of Anatolia, the Hittites. From these peoples we have various forms of surviving writings, though not all of it should be properly called literature. Webster notes some of the most relevant Near Eastern poetic traditions: Egyptian (though not in meter, they are thematically relevant), Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, and Ugaritic. These last four traditions he calls "poems, because they are metrical."[114] Meter is a definite indicator that this type of literary form is to be distinguished from the lists and catalogs with which we are familiar from the Near East and from the surviving Mycenaean texts. Other markers that differentiate these arranged words from other unmarked words include the use of formulae in formal situations, internal references to musicality, as well as other markers. The use of formulae in Akkadian, Sumerian, and Ugaritic poetry can do

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She further catalogs other "epic episodes" that are represented in artwork as well, including arming scenes, hunting scenes and feast scenes. These scenes are all formulaic in song, indicating that there may be a relationship between popular scenes in song and visual arts, or at least formulaic scenes that could be just as easily expressed in visual arts as song.

[113] Chapin 2010 has suggested that the inclusion of these formulaic scenes that are also recurrent in Homeric epic may indicate a poetic source from the Bronze Age.

[114]Webster 1964: 68. This use of meter indicates not only that the poems are somehow artistic, but that they were originally designed for performance. Meter in this context would have no function other than as a rhythmic device for a listener.

more than merely mark it as a special form of speech. There is no reason to deny to Ancient Near eastern poetry the same significance of the formula that the American school of oral traditional poetics in the 20th century has ascribed to Homeric poetry and countless other traditional poetics. We find these ancient poems in text form no differently than the Homeric poems, which are fairly certainly orally-derived, and at some point were orally composed. It is also assumed that the earliest Hebrew songs were orally composed and transmitted.[115]

Our knowledge of these literatures come from various media and sources, depending on the particular traditions, though scribal schools and libraries figure prominently in all of the relevant Near Eastern traditions.[116] Texts are preserved in various methods, depending on the sources. Clay tablets were the primary means of preservation for Mesopotamia while Egypt preferred papyrus.[117] It is known that wax tablets were used, though what survives is too fragmentary to be of much use. It has been suggested that the medium is a limiting factor for the composition of the poems. A clay tablet can hold approximately 500 lines, and as Sasson suggests, the Sumerians tended to limit their

[115] S Morris 1996 notes that until the middle of the 20th century, the idea that the Hebrew bible was an oral tradition in the same manner as the Homeric poems was not widespread. The preservation of large scale cultural literary forms such as the bible and the Homeric poems, and even Gilgamesh, for example, in textual form has distorted our openness to think of them as orally conceptualized and executed. "The emancipation of philology from theology dissolved ties between Greek culture and the Bible" (600). This, until recently, kept Greek culture and near eastern culture separate entities.
[116] Beattie 1964.
[117] Bellamy 1989 discusses Near Eastern tablets.

compositions to 500 lines or less in order to only use a single tablet.[118] The Gilgamesh epic, for instance, spanned 12 tablets, or somewhere around 3000 lines, and is a descendant of Sumerian and Babylonian traditions. This would seem to suggest that though particular surviving *exempla* from the Sumerian traditions may span only a single tablet, it is possible that they were thought of as a part of a larger whole, either single episodes in a larger narrative, much like books of the *Iliad* or possibly more like the various epics of the Greek epic cycle. Phoenicians preserved inscriptions on stone, metal or ivory, but longer writings are not preserved, as they were written on perishable materials, such as papyrus.[119]

Different types of influence exist in this scenario, and their effects are presented in various ways. There are thematic, generic, metrical, and even linguistic similarities between the Homeric poems and poetries of the ancient Near East and Bronze Age Aegean. The earliest Near Eastern epic traditions contain a variety of different "sub-epic" genres. Sumerian and Assyrian epic contain mythological stories, clearly demarcated from historical epic and wisdom poetries. The poems of Homer can be classified many ways, some of which have analogues to Near Eastern epic genres, though some other classifications do not.

[118] Sasson: 2005: 217. However, this argument appears to either be lacking foundation completely or only applies to the Sumerians for an as of yet unknown cultural prohibition, because the Akkadians, who were in many ways heirs to the Sumerian literary traditions, had no issue with the use of multiple tablets for a single narrative , indicating that the recording of the narrative was secondary to the composition.
[119] West, 1997: 98.

Hesiod also appears directly related to Near Eastern "wisdom" poetry, though it is also similar to mythical epic. Homeric epic, in contrast, is portrayed as pseudo-historical, as well as mythological, heroic, and has elements of wisdom poetry. The *Iliad* as a siege poem, in basic content, is comparable to *Gilgamesh at Akka*, a Babylonian poem about a besieged city. There is an adaptation of the Akkadian *Gilgamesh* into Hittite, which West supposes suggests a Hurrian intermediary, though it could just as easily be a direct transmission.[120] The relationships between gods and themselves and mankind appears to be the most important theme across the various Near Eastern traditions, and this theme is likewise important to nearly all Greek poetry, regardless of time of composition. Near Eastern poetic traditions borrow freely from one another as well. Hurrian and Hittite poems, such as the *Song of Kumarbi* include the Babylonian gods Ea and Enlil, though modified to fit the particulars of the stories as needed.

Some of these elements bear in my investigation here. Since I am viewing the Homeric poems as a successor to Bronze Age Near Eastern poetry via both direct links and via the Mycenaeans, I also view the connection between poetry and social influence in a similar manner. The second section of this chapter will be concerned with constructing a picture of the society of the Homeric poems and its connections to the reality of the post-Bronze Age Aegean. Similarly, some of the Near

[120] West 1997: 104.

Eastern influences on these constructs shall be forthwith illustrated. The important social constructs that I will describe in the Homeric poems will not necessarily align perfectly with Near Eastern civilizations, but there are certain institutions that are reflected in their poetry and society. These include the relations between gods and each other as well as mortals, kings and heroes, and social authority of speech. The influences are then shown on Mycenaean society.

To illustrate one such element of the authority inherent in song traditions, I will show some of thematic links between the divine in Near Eastern poetry and Archaic Greek poetry. As in early Greek myth, the gods are a part of a society that includes mortals as well. In Sumerian/Babylonian myth, Enki assigns to the gods their portions and functions in the myth *Enki and the World Order* in language very similar to how Hesiod describes Zeus's apportioning to the Greek gods (Hes. *Th. 348) tauten de Dios para moiran exousi.*[121] Throughout Mesopotamia, Anu, Enlil, Shamash, Marduk, and Yaweh are all referred to as "king of the gods" or "king of everything", a title echoed by Zeus's "king of heaven."[122] A similar epithet among Near Eastern gods is "father of gods", in reference to Anu, Anshar, in Akkadian, and in Hittite, Kumarbi is "father of the gods."[123] Webster and West both refer to these titles as epithets and note that they recur throughout various poems, even cross-

[121] West 1997.
[122] Hesiod *Theogony* 71.
[123] West 1997: 108.

culturally. They may then be said to have a greater epic resonance and refer to a larger picture than is immediately presented in each individual text. Though Webster supposes that the use of formular titles merely indicates a higher marked form of speech, it may just as easily indicate any number of other things. For instance, it could serve as an aid for oral composition, and imply a larger traditional referentiality of the type Foley suggests is inherent in formulaic constructions. In the Akkadian epic *Atrahasis*,

> they took the jar by the sides
> they cast the lots, the gods made their division:
> Anu went up to the sky,
> Enlil took the earth for his realm;
> the bolts, the trap bars of the sea
> were established for Enki the wise chieftain[124]

In a parallel fashion, Poseidon tells how "I got the white-flecked sea to be my home/ when lots were cast, Hades the misty dark/ Zeus the wide heaven amid the airy clouds."[125] These gods, in both Near Eastern

[124] *Atrahasis* I.11-16, Bukert 1992, 90.
[125] West 1997: from *Iliad* 15.190. In similar fashion, the principal male gods take their kingdoms and powers by drawing lots. The Akkadian tripartite divine structure does not include any kind of underworld, however, but instead places Enlil as the master of the earth. However, Enlil and Hades do have some other similarities. Though Hades's realm is below the earth, the most direct and common way to gain entrance to Hades realm is by caves in the earth itself. They also have direct contact with the human race in a more involved fashion than the other two major deities.

and Greek myth, have achieved supremacy over a previous generation of gods through warfare. In Greek myth, the Olympians overcame the Titans. In Hesiod, though, they are called the *proteroi theoi*, the former gods, which is the same name they are given in Hittite myth, and in Babylonian, they are called the dead gods[126].

Martin West has shown that the influence of the Standard Babylonian version of the epic of Gilgamesh has most influenced the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*[127]. The Greek poems bear the most similarity to the version of the Assyrian poem from the reign of Sennacherib in the late eighth to early seventh centuries. This suggests influence spanning a long range of time, from the Bronze Age through the archaic period, and further makes reasonable the assertion that there were two distinct periods of Near Eastern influence on Greek oral epic[128], the latter of which will be addressed in the next section.

Ancient stories of various types circulated around the Eastern Aegean during the period of the Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations, and have influenced these civilizations' poetries. This time period, many have hypothesized, is when the source material for the poems of Homer

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[126] West, 1997: 111.
[127] West, 1997: 587.
[128] Though another possibility, to which I subscribe, is that the "break" in cultural continuity between the Bronze Age and the so-called "Dark Ages" was not so much a break as we may think, but rather a period where records were not kept in the same fashion, wealth was rather more conserved and limited, and Greece had reduced ties with other neighboring societies.

originate.[129] It is plausible that the traditions from which the Homeric poems evolved, and the stories they contain, originate from this early date, but not as likely that the material exists in a familiar form to that which existed in the eighth century. It is the influence that Near Eastern poetry exerted on Mycenaean poetry that may have led to some of the shared themes inherited by archaic Greek poetry in the earliest conception. Worth considering here is the importance of oral traditions in the transmission of the material from east to west, and how the oral traditional nature of the material may have endowed those transmitted materials. We know that many of the poems attested from the Ancient Near Eastern traditions were oral in performance yet also were written down by scribes. Obviously our primary sources are written for the most part on clay tablets, otherwise we would not know of their existence. However, references to the poems as songs indicate an oral delivery, and formularity and other type scenes suggest some degree of oral composition existed as well.

Akkadian was the *lingua franca* of the region spanning the southern part of Anatolia along the coast of the Mediterranean all the way to Egypt during the Bronze Age[130]. This did not limit the transmission of Babylonian and Assyrian poetry, which was recorded in

[129] Bennet 1996:512. Oral traditional poetry appears to have existed and lasted for a very long period of time in the Aegean basin. Also see Page 1972 and Kirk 1962 for the longevity of oral traditions that culminated in the Homeric poems.
[130] West, 1997:*592.*

Akkadian, to non-Akkadian speaking regions. As West hints, "The earliest Sumerian poetic texts are written in such an incomplete way that only someone already familiar with their sound could have read them"[131]. This is a suggestion that has ramifications beyond a mere familiarity with the outline of a song, however. This implies that in early Sumerian poetry, not only were the poems delivered via live oral performance, but that they were constructed in such a way that this was their primary means of transmission to everyone but the most educated of scholars and scribes. Sumerian texts go as far as including in a subscription precisely what instruments are meant to accompany such songs, and in the Sumerian tradition epic and mythological songs were accompanied by the lyre. Also, in related Middle Assyrian, a narrative poem describes a method of transmission that is similar, if not identical to the method by which oral traditions transmit song: "*let me ever sing of Assur's strong victory/ may the earlier man hear and repeat it to the later.*"[132] Likewise, praise poetry is commemorated for much the same reason in ancient Near Eastern textual traditions as it is in early Greek material.

Hebrew represents another well attested language tradition that has strong oral traditions. West points out that the oldest known Hebrew

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[131] West 1997: 594. This suggests that the texts may have served as a sort of transcript or short-hand for a performance of a story, or in any case, that the text was not at all the final product, but an aid for the performance of the final product. This fits one of the scenarios that Lord 1960 hypothesized for the transcription of Homeric poetry in text, as well as an observed variant of the South Slavic epic's recording in textual form their performances. These incomplete texts could serve as a guideline or roadmap during performance, but were not considered a poetic work by themselves.

[132] *Enuma elis* VII 145-8; LKA 62 in West 1997: 597.

traditions date from at least the eleventh century BCE, "generations before the oldest detectable Hebrew books and the oldest inscriptions"[133]. Song in Hebrew oral tradition occupies a culturally authoritative position. Song is transmitted orally from one generation to the next as a means of preservation and education. It spanned various social levels as well. For instance, King David was a noted musician, and there were singers of both genders[134]. Most importantly, song was associated with the temple. Messages from god were transmitted in song form through their intermediaries, the prophets.[135] By this same divine mechanism, social authority is imbued in the songs. Not all songs were necessarily messages from god however; Hebrew epic was as complicated as Greek, if not more so and contained many different types of stories that it related in song. Parallelisms between Greek oral tradition and Old Testament oral tradition has shed light on some seemingly out of place generic aspects of Homeric myth. The timing for direct interactions between the Greeks and the Hebrew speaking Israelites most likely falls into the next period of influence, however, during the so-called "Dark Ages"[136], sometime after the fall of the Mycenaeans, but indirect influence may have occurred earlier. Lord suggests, as many after, that the Greeks

[133] West 1997: 605.
[134] West 1997:606.
[135] Keller 1902: 162. This association later in Greece will also become prominent. The ties between the divine will of the gods as conveyed by the speech of priests and the divine inspiration of the singer will be explored further in Homer: Constructed. Religious speech, as a subset of powerful speech is also discussed in the last section in this chapter. Its relationship to authoritative speech in part derives from the role of the divine in its inspiration.
[136] Louden 2011: 318.

acquired the idea to record in writing their epic song in writing from the Near East.[137] Similarities in content between Hebrew and Greek myth, particularly between Genesis and the *Theogony* and Homeric Hymns could be due to direct cultural interaction at an early foundational period.

An interesting example of this earlier indirect influence appears localized around Cyprus, in approximately the 13th century BCE and concerns the Old Testament Philistines. Louden suggests that the influence was more complex than simply being a single directional model, and proposes some reciprocal influence on Hebrew myth via the Greeks. He sees the Philistines, in Old Testament myth as well as Egyptian myth from the Ramesside period as being the Mycenaeans.[138] It would then follow that the Mycenaeans both influenced and were influenced by in a reciprocal fashion near eastern culture over a fairly long period of time. The Bronze Age presents much that provided early influence in the development of the heroic culture that pervades the epics, as well as the organization of palatial civilization, including part of but not all of the language used to describe the socio-political organization of the heroes in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.[139] Much more of those influences occur over a longer period of time, stretching into the

[137] Lord 1960: 156.
[138] Louden1997: 324. Louden suggests that Aegean archaeologists commonly assume that the Philistines were Mycenaean emigrants who settled initially in Cyprus and then in Canaan. Mycenaean ceramic ware found being produced in Canaanite settlements long after they were produced anywhere else indicates this hypothesis as well.
[139] Bennet 1996, Morris 1996, 1986.

first millennium BCE. The influence on the Mycenaeans and the Greeks by their neighboring cultures occurred in waves, causing the Greeks to experience both periods of exposure to outside influence and periods of near-isolation. The alternations of these waves couples with advances in technology was an important element in the development of Greek identity and with it the authority it imbued to the traditions which remained continuous throughout these periods of change.

The social context of this Mycenaean literature is also similar in many ways to its Near Eastern Counterparts. In Babylonian, Akkadian, and Egyptian civilizations the singer was attached to the court of the ruler, and occupied a relatively high status. In Mycenaean civilization, the primary gathering of people during peacetime appears to be the feast. Archaeological finds have shown that Mycenaean feasting was a major social event.[140] Feasting in the Mycenaean world included sacrifice as well, making this a social and religious occasion. It also featured mostly male members. In the Palace of Nestor, we even see two separate feasting locations, one large and public and one small and private. This may indicate that the level of social stratification included an inner circle who

[140] Wright 2004. Wright cites Hayden's list of the social benefits of feasting, which include among them the creation of solidarity among social groups, the creation of labor and cooperative groups, and the solidification or creation of political power through the ostentatious display of wealth and the creation of reciprocal debt. The singer's performance was a part of this display of wealth. Archaeology, however, does rely on Homeric epic to fill in much of the context of feasting, so at certain points this argument becomes circular. Sherrat 2004 argues that the feast scenes in the Homeric epic are archaeologically more similar to early Iron age feasting, but the social elements are in line more with Bronze Age society.

had special access to the king.[141] Nonetheless, during the Bronze Age, feasts were large social gatherings that gave a king or leader the ability to strengthen political power through the distribution of wealth, and could tie in religious power as well, through the act of providing the sacrifice.[142]

So as has been shown here, the Mycenaean Greeks had interaction with near eastern cultures from a very early time. The literature of the Mycenaeans has many similarities to near eastern epic, in terms of both content as well as performance. The surviving texts in Sumerian, Akkadian, Ugaritic and Hebrew suggest that the influence of oral performance played a strong role in their composition. It is also clear that the Mycenaean palace civilization was comparable to near eastern palace civilizations, especially with respect to society's relationship to the person of the singer. The singer occupied a place at the court of the rulers[143] and was inspired to his songs from sometimes divine sources, and sometimes mortal sources. His audience was most likely the male members of the wealthy, warrior classes, but would also have included the court attendants, religious figures, and the royal family. This is very

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[141] Wright 2004. Wright, contra Sherrat, does not see the necessity for suggesting that there is as much variety in feast protocols.

[142] Palaima 2004. The Linear B documents record substantial information about the process of preparing for a Bronze Age Mycenaean feast, including the stage setting and listing of sacrifices. Further, the feast appears to be the most unifying institution in Mycenaean Greece, as we see from the remains at Pylos. There have even been discovered a small chair set back and behind the anax's chair, which is thought to have been for the aoidos. Numerous frescoes at Pylos indicate that the singer was an important character in Mycenaean society (See Davis1998 and younger 1998).

[143] A point that will be significantly discussed later in this chapter and the next especially with regards to the singer in the Homeric poems and how his status related to those around him.

similar to what we see in the *Odyssey* at the court of Alcinous. In the next section, I will show how, although the entire mechanism of Greek civilization changes, the person of the singer retains much of the authority that he had during the Mycenaean period, and that his songs continued to be influenced by external sources. These periods of influence and isolation continued to mold the character of his songs and its relationship to the identity of the Greek people.

Section 2: Post-Mycenaean Influences

Sometime around 1200 BCE much of the evidence from the Mycenaean people in Greece and many other civilizations around the Aegean indicates some sort of collapse or decline in culture and interruption in trade and cultural exchange.[144] The eastern Aegean and Mediterranean was home to many "high" cultures during the second millennium BCE, including Egyptian, Phoenician, and Ugaritic among others. Many of these coastal civilizations in turn were on routes of trade or conquest for more inland cultures like Mesopotamian, Akkadian, Hittite and Hurrite.[145] Crete and Cyprus stand out as important trade centers as well, and artifacts indicating two way trade have been found

[144] Burkert, in Foley 2005.
[145] I Morris 1996 summarizes Snodgrass's model for the collapse in trade as primarily evidenced by a decline and almost total disappearance of Greek objects from near eastern sites. Morris sees the issue as more complex, citing iron as a powerfully Greek symbol, drawn from native Greek soil and possiblyan identity-symbol for the Greeks. Likewise, finds from the eleventh century BCE Lefkandi Toumba include Cypriot bronze from the twelfth century, and Babylonian gold jewelry from the twentieth century BCE, which indicates that trade and wealth likely still existed in a form previously not supposed. .

at many sites. After the period of decline at the end of the Mycenaean period, writing in Greece disappears, for a long time taken to mean that Greek culture disappeared.[146] This is not necessarily the case, especially if one considers that the writing that did exist in Greece prior to this period was mainly used for accounting rather than anything approaching literature.[147] The phenomenon of oral traditional poetry also suggests that an unpreserved high culture likely existed without the aid of writing.[148] We do also know that during this period, from roughly the eleventh century to the beginning of the archaic period, the Greeks had substantial interactions with Near Eastern civilizations throughout the Aegean. These interactions were of a different nature than those of the high Bronze Age, however, and their influence took different forms. West defines this later period of influence as the eighth and seventh centuries, and other than the earlier period in the Bronze Age, approximately 1450-1200, the period of greatest "literary convergence."[149] This later period coincides with the time period that the vague oral traditional poets begin

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[146] Bennet 1996 discusses this transitional period. Though less material evidence remains from this period of time, it is now supposed that assuming a decline in cultural development is not necessarily the only possibility; I Morris 1996, for instance, supposes that, as Snodgrass, it may indicate a primary shift in economy to iron goods. A lessening of trade between Greece and foreign entities occurred as well, which many have interpreted as a sign of poverty, but may also indicate a heightened independence on the part of Greece from both outside powers and the dependence on bronze production.

[147] For a survey of Bronze Age writings, see Webster 1964,pp 7-26, and 64-90 for his discussion of Mycenaean poetry and its relationship to early Greek literature.

[148] Bennet 1996:513, Burkert 1995 discusses the implausibility of the oral tradition to accuratelytransmit such information over such a long period of time, contra Page 1972 an Kirk 1962.

[149] West, 1997: 586.

to be named, poets such as Hesiod, Homer, and the composers of the earliest lyric and cyclic poems.

The Egyptian, Babylonian, and Ugaritic civilizations were no longer dominant influences on the Greeks, who should be properly called Greeks now, rather than Mycenaeans. The picture of the Aegean during this period included much colonization, most notably by the Greeks and the Phoenicians. This period serves as a bridge between Homer and Mycenaean-era culture as well as a period during which the genesis of distinctly Greek culture occurred.[150] Both of these phenomena can be related to the influence of the Near East on Greek culture. The tradition of oral epic is typically referred to as originating in Ionia rather than the mainland of Greece. Webster, however, suggests that Athens played a significant role in the formation of Greek oral poetry. Nagy, in the two book series *Homer the Classic* and *Homer the Preclassic*, looks to varying theories of the formation of the tradition, including an Attic phase as well as an Aeolic phase, though he focuses more on the Attic-Ionic colonies rather than Athens proper. Rather than attempt to assign a geographical origin for a poetic tradition that is impossible to make stand still in time just as much as space, it would seem more profitable to describe the ways in which various locations could have contributed to the tradition.

[150] Archaeology and history are still unsure how to treat this period, whether the Greeks were homogenous and cut off or whether they were still in contact with external influences, and whether civilization was subject to poverty, or whether signs of wealth had simply changed. Archaeologists investigating the Lefkandi Toumba, for instance initially called it the tomb of a hero, simply because of the wealth of grave goods found there.

A tradition whose primary example and main elements are attributed to the Ionic coast of Turkey can hardly avoid Near Eastern influence. The mainland of Greece also saw Near Eastern influence, primarily in the region of Attica.

One of the most important developments in archaic Greek culture is the adoption of the Phoenician alphabet and the advent of writing. Powell's conclusion that the Greeks adopted the Phoenician alphabet solely for the purpose of recording the Homeric poems seems to be rather extreme, though it agrees with Lord's suggestion that the Homeric poet dictated our versions of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to an amanuensis.[151] Powell suggests that the Greeks gained access to the alphabet through somewhere "where there was continuing involvement between the two peoples." [152] Herodotus claimed that Kadmos brought the alphabet from Phoenicia to Thebes, but this appears to be more myth than truth, as there is no evidence in Thebes of Phoenician

[151] Lord 1960. This theory is very two dimensional though, and is far from the only possibility for the transcription of the Homeric poems, yet was most similar to what Lord observed during the investigations into the South Slavic oral poetry. Lord's theory that the poems were recorded in textual form in order to preserve them does not account for the fact that they were part of a living oral tradition that needed no additional means of preservation, unless of course that tradition were in danger of change at this point in time. This is certainly possible, though Lord does not address it. During the late seventh and sixth centuries, literacy had indeed begun to spread, but it does not seem like a likely scenario that nascent literacy would completely wipe out the vernacular oral traditions.

[152] Powell 1990: 13. This could be anywhere in the Aegean, but especially in Attica, because Attica appeared to dominate in terms of trade with Phoenicia, evidenced by Attic finds in Phoenician lands and Phoenician finds Attic lands. Nevertheless, as M West has pointed out numerous times, it could potentially only take a single individual with knowledge of the alphabet and the poems to produce a manuscript.

occupation.[153] Crete, Cyprus, and Al Mina in Syria are possible other locations for the introduction of Phoenician script to Greek speakers in the 9th century. Al Mina is an interesting addition to this list, being outside of Greece and its colonies. However, Euboean pottery finds indicate prolonged contact and cultural exchange during the 8th century between this part of Syria, described by Herodotus as the northern boundary of Phoenicia, and the Greeks.

Likewise, in Aiolic Kyme, near Smyrna, are some of the earliest Ionian inscriptions, from the late 8th century. Powell argues that our earliest Greek literature comes from the very locations where the technology of writing is first introduced. Rather than supposing that writing was introduced primarily to record the songs of these two poets, it seems more likely that these were areas where influence from the Near East was particularly prevalent, and the use of the Phoenician alphabet for the purpose of recording Greek speech was a symptom of Near Eastern influence. If these places are particularly receptive to this type of influence, it stands to reason that the introduction of the alphabetic writing of the Phoenicians is not the only type of influence that occurred in centers of trade during the 10th through the 8th centuries in Greece.[154]

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[153] Ibid. However, it would by Powell's own theory not require that Thebans had any extended occupation with Phoenicians, because he suggests it would require only a single individual who acts as the "informant".

[154] Jeffery1964. We find the influence of the Phoenicians in ceramics as well, and there is no reason to suppose that less tangible influence existed as well, such as song customs and other practices that may not leave any archaeological record.

The Phoenicians, by the 9th century had established prevalent trading centers inside the Greek world, including a cult center in Corinth and an enclave in the Piraeus[155]. The professions of peoples who typically became migrants are significant for the type of cultural transmission under investigation here. Archaeological evidence provides a part of this picture. Artifacts made by foreign manufacturing techniques provide good indications of permanent settlement by outsiders. Iron-working, gold filigree, and inlaying are some types of crafts that appeared from the Near East in the Greek world during the 9th century[156]. As Eumaeus the swineherd points out in the *Odyssey*, there are other types of outsiders that are invited into communities who leave no archaeological evidence; seers, healers, and singers are included in his list of the *demioergoi.*[157] Odysseus occupies the role of singer or bard while visiting the Phaiakians in Scheria when he tells the tales of his travels[158]. Records from Egypt indicate a tribute of singers being sent in 701 BCE to Sennacherib, and Assyrian and Babylonian rulers typically brought singers back after campaigns[159]. This would not only have contributed to

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[155] West 1997: 608.
[156] Ibid, 610.
[157] *Odyssey* 17.382.
[158] This scene will be analyzed in greater detail in chapter 3.
[159] West 1997: 611. This indicates two things of relevance here. Firstly, it indicates that singers were desirable for a ruler to have at their court, in both Egypt and the conquered Assyria and Babylonia, and secondly that there was the potential for much cross-cultural communication and transmission of songs and poems. The first fact becomes less relevant in Greece, which lacked the same kind of despotic rulers, but nonetheless it is not impossible to imagine Agamemnon or Menelaus bringing back a singer with them from their campaign; Agamemnon does in fact bring back the priestess Cassandra after the Trojan War. Though she appears to be a concubine,

some of the common elements and performance means in Homeric poetry and Assyrian, Babylonian, and Hebrew poetry, but also would indicate a probable link between the authority of Near Eastern poetry and Greek poetry. In a period of nascent literacy, for a culture to whom literature becomes a dominant cultural power, those who had the ability to manipulate the word, to persuade by words, and to transmit a society's history and religion by words had a significant authority on the shape of that society.

Society in the Iron Age, from the archaeological remains, must have been different from that of the Bronze Age, though continuity exists and the time period is now being seen as a linkage between the Mycenaeans and the archaic Greeks. One difficulty in applying the Homeric similarities to real society is the uniformity of the Homeric society and the material diversity of the Iron Age in Greece.[160] Social practices varied so much from location to location, and time to time, they can be said to be recurrent. This is one major contributing factor to why so little is able to be discerned about society during this time period from the archaeological record, yet many acknowledge that much of Homer's

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rather than a captive priestess, it is nonetheless important that Agamemnon is seen bringing back a figure with important stature in their native community from a war, and a figure that in fact has divine authority in their speech powers. This makes it highly conceivable that any local chieftains in the Iron Age might similarly bring captive bards from foreign conquests, which would also provide an avenue for outside influence on their internally developing song traditions.

[160] Wright 1991. Regionalism in the material record leaves a very different picture of different sites, in
a way that was not evident during the Bronze Age.

depictions of Ithaca resonate with the picture of Iron Age Greece, while his depiction of Phaeacia appear to resonate more with Bronze Age Mycenaean sites and society. [161] Then, the status of the *aoidos,* following this model, is that of Phemius. Although he is associated with a ruling house, he is not particularly associated with any ruler, and he appears to be under some kind of compulsion from the suitors. He is a *demioergos*, who may travel or be transported from town to town to entertain, but his audience here is restricted to the household of Odysseus. Social organization was nucleated around the *oikos*, but growing into villages of associated families.[162] In many cases, these villages were simply continuations of Bronze Age villages, though not characterized by any central palatial structures. Villages or towns were independent from other towns and generally people were not very mobile, other than those bards, craftsmen, and beggars that travelled from village to village. Fairly prosperous villages eventually became the *poleis* with which we are familiar, around 800-750 BCE.

Here I have shown that the links between the Greeks and their neighbors continued to influence their society's technology and cultural developments, though possibly in a way that was less substantial than

[161] Wright discusses the similarities between Iron Age society and Homeric society as discerned through the archaeological records.
[162] Farenga 1998 discusses the development of social authority and its relationship to the picture of society we see in the Homeric poems. Specifically, it is useful to see the development of social groups in light of the Homeric poems and epic in general, which "used the notion of a "heroic age" to realign the past and the present so that early state citizens might devalue traditional cognitive criteria in favor of criteria suited to an early city-state worldview" (179).

during the Bronze Age. In the next section, I will expand on the societal organization of the Greeks who were the defining generations in the foundation of Greek identity by looking at historical records and most importantly, the way that the Greeks of Homer's age depicted and identified themselves and their predecessors.

Part 2: Homeric History and Society

With the likelihood of a link between the various civilizations termed "Near Eastern" and the Mycenaeans and Greeks in mind, I shall now turn to an analysis of the society of the Homeric poems. I will show that the depicted society contains a refracted view of the poet's own society, with special focus on some members of that society who had authority by means of special powers. Sometimes these powers were divine; one special type of divine authority was granted to those who could invoke the power of words. These words sometimes came from gods, as in the case of seers and priests, and as I suggest, bards as well. I turn to our earliest sources for these authoritative figures: the Homeric poems themselves. I will first show why the poems can be useful as a metonymy for society, then analyze some authoritative figures in society.

The Homeric poems depict a culture of the past, a society of heroes greater than any alive during the narrator's day. This society of the past is an accumulation of societies, not any single snapshot of a particular time. This accretion of time periods contained in the poems

creates several problems for anyone trying to extrapolate a detailed picture of society from the poems. Firstly, is there any benefit to be derived from examining the society in the poems? Are the poems historically reliable, in any sense of the term? Some have looked at certain sections of the poems as representative of a specific cultural event[163], while others see the centuries of oral tradition as an impediment to preserving historical information[164], because of the lack of any "historical" textual corroboration. As the composite nature of language in the Homeric poems offers us little definite for dating the poems, the society's composition and complexity points to a number of different time periods.[165] Archaeological evidence cannot provide definite evidence of social customs, but individual practices that leave behind remnants, such as sacrifice and feasting can be correlated to scenes in art and poetry.[166]

An issue related to dating arises from the epics' views of how particular songs age and exist throughout time. In the *Odyssey* many of the songs are relatively recent, composed within the singers' lifetime, with the exception of the song of the *Love of Ares and Aphrodite* sung by

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[163] See Page: 1972. Page sees in the *Iliad* the preservation of a record of an historical war fought between the Mycenaeans and the Trojans.
[164] See Raaflaub in Foley: 2005. In order to suggest any historical information, a broad time-frame must be proposed, at least in order to set an endpoint in time for depictions of historical events. As Raaflaub has suggested, the poems do not contain anything later than the first half of the seventh century. This is somewhat later than others have suggested, ranging from the Mycenaean period to the seventh century. Nevertheless it is far from a settled issue.
[165] For a general discussion, see Osborne 2004 p216.
[166] See Gould 2001 335-58.

Demodokos. In the *Iliad* the story of Meleager as told by Phoenix is only a generation older than the teller. The unnamed song of Achilles at the beginning of book 9 simply tells of the *klea andron*, which does not indicate any particular age. The poems, however, purport to depict a war that by all accounts took place during the latter part of the Mycenaean period, perhaps sometime in the thirteenth century. However, as these differences do not necessarily create as a rule the epic distance between material and singer, it is possible to analyze their relationship to historical events in a somewhat more open manner.[167] The examples within the songs themselves show that singers are not required by their tradition to sing of an ancient or idealized past, but are free to compose more modern songs at their will or more properly, to appease their audience.[168] Epic poems typically employ an epic age or distance to establish a stronger tradition of authority by the insertion or creation of links between the heroic past and the singer's particular present.

[167] Ford 1992:126-135. Ford suggests that epic serves as a bridge between the past and present, offering a relative vividness to the events of the epic time to the audience. Even contained within the epics we see this relationship between the not quite mortal Phaeacians and the rest of the world: Alcinous and his people live in a world that is full of abundance and free from conflict and in regular intercourse with the gods, while Odysseus's Ithaca is the "reality" of the iron age, much like Hesiod's golden age in the epic past is contrasted within his own epic with the reality of their iron age in which the poet or singer lives.

[168] Osborne 2004. Osborne points out that "Homer", in the sense of the creator(s) of the poems we have do not stand necessarily for the text in the form in which we have it, but the entirety of the tradition. Though this might initially complicate the search for the relationship between the poet's source material and his audience, it can also make it more fluid. Singers can be much freer in their composition of elements of the past and elements of the present.

Nevertheless, the majority of cultural practice in the Homeric poems would be familiar to Greeks of approximately the eighth century BCE.[169]

Another problem that arises in the attempt to use epic as a historical source involves insurmountable cultural differences with regard to what exactly "history" is. Our view of history is obviously different from the Greeks' view of history. The earliest Greek history, the *historia* of Herodotus, differed greatly from that of his immediate intellectual successor, Thucydides, with regards to content and methodology, and the two were likely received by different audiences for different purposes. Herodotus, for example, was a descendant of the same Ionian traditions which created the Homeric epic. His inclusion of stories gleaned from the same tradition suggest that though he may have qualms regarding their sources, they are nevertheless worthy of inclusion in his investigation into the causes of the war. Herodotus must rely on such stories for lack of other sources. Thucydides, on the other hand, is a descendant, though distant, of the Boeotian school that created Hesiodic epic, ever concerned with practicality and verifiability, and his work reflects that. Both historians nevertheless cite Homeric myth in the prefaces of their histories, a testament to the ubiquity of the Homeric poems even in the earliest attempts at a rational and factual recording of events.

[169] Osborne 2004.

We are very concerned with the "truth" of our histories. The truth of our histories means that there is some way to corroborate that an event happened the way that it is described. We concern ourselves with source criticism and analyze the effects of events.[170] Herodotus makes mention of his sources occasionally, though he is not as thorough in investigating them as Thucydides would prefer. Regardless of his criticisms though, Thucydides still accepts the Homeric poems as suitable background sources for his history of the Peloponnesian war. Even to this day, the Homeric poems for many people were factual enough to investigate them for hints to archaeological remains. The most obvious success of this belief was the discovery of two Mycenaean-age cities by Heinrich Schliemann in the nineteenth century based on his readings of the Homeric epics.[171]

There has long been a relationship between epic and archaeology, sometimes cooperative and sometimes not. As Sherrat suggests, archaeology may be able to lead us to an understanding of the "pre-history" of our orally composed epics[172]. I feel that in order to

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[170] Wace 1962. The Alexandrian critics considered Homer's representation of the heroic world that it depicts as accurate. This is obviously at odds with our understanding of the historical setting for the original composition of the poems, but gives us insight into the Alexandrian critics' understanding of the poems. They recognized, whether consciously or not, the orality of the songs as evidenced by various elements including meter and dialect, yet also attributed to them the accuracy of a historical record.
[171] Blegen 1962. Discoveries by Schliemann changed our approach to ancient literature in a profound way. Though his excavations were not necessarily archaeologically sound and his process was questionable, the ultimate fact remains that, led by literature, he was able to coordinate where in the ancient world a seemingly mythological site existed in reality.
[172] Sherrat, in Foley 2005.

construct this pre-history it is necessary to understand how ancient people reacted to various cultural artifacts and interact socially around these cultural artifacts. To this end I shall analyze some of the ways the ancient Greeks depicted the power of speech and song in the Homeric poems. This is, admittedly, a hypothetical inquiry into a past with few records, save archeology and the oral tradition itself that produced the Homeric poems. This will hopefully prove a more useful tool than has been previously assumed, because it will give a better picture of how the archaic Greeks saw their culture through the lens of the oral epic.

This section will be most concerned with social interaction and the depicted history in the Homeric poems as pertains to understanding the age and continued relevance of the poems. Epics are a form of cultural artifact, just as are pot sherds and other archaeological remains. The social background of the epics is of importance here, in order to understand how the epics themselves encapsulate and project a certain image of society. As Raaflaub has suggested, the society depicted within the epics is consistent enough to be regarded as a reflection of historical society. He further suggests that the society is the poets' own, though I feel it is necessary to add some calibration to this assertion. The idea of "the Poet" is incompatible with an oral tradition. Our *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are oral-derived texts which reflect centuries of oral traditional composition. The texts that we have contain many keys to the orality of

the tradition that created them, such as their formulae, ring composition, thematic structures, and many others.

There were most likely many poets spread throughout the Aegean, both on the Greek mainland at the cultural centers of Mycenae and Argos as well as on the Ionian side, all of whom would have contributed to the depiction of society contained within the poems over a period of a few generations.[173] Some scholars have been concerned with trying to identify where particular elements of the poem originated, following in part some of the methodology of the so-called analysts.[174] Some of these studies can be useful as long as they recognize that individual elements are not recoverable from an oral tradition. They can however provide some information with regards to some of the context of particular segments, but must recognize that oral epic has the ability to absorb other genres, including lists and catalogs. The world depicted by

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[173] Understanding the interactions between texts in a text-free world is not as simple as in the textual world. Currie 2006 recognizes three primary challenges: due to the nature of composition-in-performance, having a static "text" or transcript of any given performance is not an option, therefore having something with which to compare to something else is not an option. Secondly, the audience's understanding of conscious interaction between singers across generations would have been so personal and individual as to not be recorded, making it impossible to know where elements of performance may have originated. Thirdly, the fact that all of these traditional songs are part of a tradition employing the referentiality that Foley proposes makes it hard to tell if an element is drawn from a particular poet or region, or is simply referencing the entirety of the tradition.

[174] Osborne 2004, Snodgrass 2000 recognize that the efforts of the analysts to identify individual components is a fruitless cause in many respects due to the homogenous nature of the text and the way it has mixed together so thoroughly various dialects and anachronisms. The neoanalyst school of thought adds an explanation for this homogenization: the poet of our particular songs may have been influenced by variations within the tradition, but composed in a single work the poems that we have. This explanation works somewhat with the oral traditional school of thought, which does not exactly propose how we acquired the textual version of the poems we have now.

the Homeric poems contains "memories" of a Mycenaean Bronze Age, though this Bronze Age of Homer does not correspond to all the aspects of what we now know as the Bronze Age as revealed by Linear B inscriptions and archaeological excavations. These archaeological sources indicate many similarities to Near Eastern society. There is great disagreement among scholars as to whether any of the memories of the Bronze Age in Homer are accurate or whether the break in society during the so-called Dorian invasion was so deep that the Greeks suffered a cultural re-set[175]. The picture of Greece during the proto-Geometric period (11th-10th centuries BCE) appears close to the majority of aspects of society and history as shown in the Homeric poems, but that is perhaps too early for the "collective memory" of the audience, so we will move the date to sometime in the late 9th century.[176]

So, as I have shown, there was significant influence by non-Greek societies during the period of time during which the heroic epic oral tradition developed in Greece, and that these cultures, though they maintained written records, also had a strong performance tradition of

[175] See Vermeule 1964 and Finley 1982.
[176] See Raaflaub in Morris: 1996, Calhoun 1964. Calhoun points out that there are significant parallels between Classical Greek society and that depicted in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* such as the assembly and the importance of the *polis*, yet significant differences, such as the striated structure of society and the inability for lower classes to participate substantially in heroic military action or even be referred to in any other way than simply the *laoi*. The *demioergoi* are an interesting class, however, as they refer to a particular type of craftsman, priest, seer, or singer who performs a useful task "for the people", implying a collective that can benefit from such folk. Raaflaub suggests that many of the small differences in societal types may be indicative of the effort of the singer to add grandeur and glorify the acts of the characters by creating a distance between them and the audience, but retaining the familiar elements to preserve their vividness and thus maximize their impact.

their poetries. These poets stature in society is reflected in their songs, but becomes somewhat confused in the Homeric tradition, which conflates the society of the palatial Bronze Age with the smaller, *oikos* and nascent *polis* society of the iron age. During the earlier period, the singer was the property of the palace, and thus his audience would be the court of the *anax*. He would have had fairly high status during this time period, and his influence would have been great, much as Demodokos at the court of Alcinous. In contrast to this is the case of the Iron Age singer, who is a *demioergos*, who may travel from town to town, or potentially be associated with a powerful family. The Iron Age singer's audience had greater variability, as he would have been seen in settings of public assemble or in the houses of the powerful, yet he himself was not in any particularly authoritative situation, except when he was singing. The house of Odysseus at Ithaca reflects this situation in the person of Phemius, who sings under the compulsion of the suitors, yet when he is begging for his life at the feet of Odysseus points out his ability to glorify the subjects of his songs, and this spares his life. In the next section of this chapter I look more closely to the society depicted in the texts as we have them, in order to focus on the power of speech and the assembly.

Part 3: Social Structure and Authority in the Homeric Poems

Much research has been done concerning *polis* and *oikos* and political power in the Homeric poems[177], for indeed they appear to invite this type of investigation. The *Iliad* shows a heroic society of Argive/Achaean/Danaan soldiers besieging a town occupied by Trojans, whoever they might be. Each side in this war is politically organized in distinct ways.[178] The Achaeans have many regional leaders, or *basileis,* united (or not, sometimes) under one *anax*, who apparently wields power given to him by Zeus, though the "oath of Tyndareus" should appear to bind the men to Menelaus, not Agamemnon.[179] Though the oath is not mentioned in Homer, it does appear in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* in fragmentary form, probably indicating that a short description of the Trojan (and possibly Theban) War would follow[180]. Hesiod probably composed slightly later than Homer, and his society appears more "modern" and probably contemporary to the date of composition, but he does also depict a heroic society at a certain distance from himself, and this heroic society appears to agree with that of Homer.[181] Many of these

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[177] Finley, 1978. Nascent egalitarin *polis* institutions, such as the assembly, exist, but are intermixed with the autocratic Agamemnon, whose power comes from his divine scepter.
[178] Keller 1902.
[179] Osborne 2004: 207. Osborne notes as especially important that the leadership during the Bronze age, as conveyed through our linear B tablets, was split between a *lawagetas* and a *wanax*, the former who was primarily concerned with military affairs and the latter concerned with religious affairs. Agamemnon, as an *anax* in the Homeric poems does in fact draw his authority from his religious connection to the divine, but also obviously serves as a military leader.
[180] H. G. E. White, in LCL 57, p 199-201 notes.
[181] Ford 1992:127.

differences are likely due to the difference in epic genre between the two poets as well as geographic and temporal differences; since Hesiod composed primarily didactic poetry, his primary concern would not be with military exploits or the return of a hero.

These two highest titles, the *(w)anax* and the *basileus*, are some of the very few correspondences between the actual Mycenaean age that has been recorded on the Linear B tablets at Pylos and Cnossos and the Homeric poems. The words themselves appear to have changed context and meaning as well. In the Linear B tablets, the (*w)anax* does appear to be a leader of some sort of ruler, however not enough is known about him to associate him with military leadership.[182] The *basileus*, on the other hand, appears lower on the ranking of bureaucrats than many positions which we know existed, but not what they did. From this, as well as some other remembrances, we can tell that the Homeric poems recall some names, offices, and places from the Mycenaean period, but are unsure in some cases of the specifics, like what exactly the *anax* was.

The war society of the *Iliad* appears somewhat incomplete since it focuses on the necessities of war, rather than the whole society that might sustain such an army.[183] The poet does make reference to raiding

[182] Osborne 2004. As Osborne suggests, the *anax* was primarily a religious leader, and it is possible that the Homeric poet has remembered this in the way that Agamemnon draws his power from his family's divine associations. The other primary Bronze Age leader, the *lawagetas* is not mentioned, but the lesser kings occupy the role of the *basileis*, who are in charge of the individual troops of men.
[183] The depiction of the cities at war and peace on the shield of Achilles are often

parties, which could gather food and goods for their survival, to priests and seers, to slaves and even to craftsmen, usually in the context of weapons or defenses but occasionally to peace-time constructs like houses (*Iliad* 23.712-13). One must keep in mind that the singers of epic are not concerned with laying out all the offices and rules of sociological interaction, he is concerned with creating a work of art. The work of art will conform; it must conform to a society that an audience would recognize. Therefore, if some elements are missing or incomplete, it does not necessarily mean that the society did not exist.[184]

The society depicted is one that involves both *oikos* and *polis*, though not the *polis* of classical Athens.[185] One of the chief struggles in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* concerns the place of the individual and his *oikos* in relation to the societal *polis*. This *polis* is a much earlier stage of the city-state.[186] The government is centered under a head ruler, but often features a council of sorts, such as that of the assemblies in the first and ninth book of the *Iliad* or in the second book of the *Odyssey* when Telemachus requests his ship to search for his father.[187] The *Iliad*

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suggested as a source for the other half of society, as they depict an egalitarian society, including public arbitrators and a council of elders. The countryside in this depiction shows what appear to be tenant farmers working for a king, though this king's relationship to either city is unclear.

[184] Finley 1978 suggests that the society depicted corresponds directly to the time of the poet, Morris 1986 and Van Wees 1992 disagree.

[185] Calhoun 1964: 432. Many see elements of a classical *polis* contained within the assemblies of the *Iliad*, and also on the Shield of Achilles. Finley, however disagrees.

[186] Raaflaub 1996.

[187] Finley 1978 further suggests that "neither poem has any trace of a polis in a political sense. *Polis* in Homer refers to nothing more than a fortified site, a town" p155, but Raaflaub suggests that the "epic world is full of poleis" 1996 : 629.

stresses the heroic code and glory as being one of the prime motivations for warriors to fight, but at the same time the common good hovers just slightly in the background. Though Achilles refrains from fighting because his honor is insulted publicly, he recognizes that the common good of the Achaeans will cause them to come begging for his aid, which he eventually gives. Thus one of the reasons that Achilles returns to battle is to support his *polis*. Hektor likewise recognizes that the women and children of Troy are dependent on him and other warriors. This heroic code also relates to the *oikos*. Odysseus introduces himself by both his patronymic and his home, Ithaca, and throughout the *Odyssey* he longs for his wife, house, and son as well as his homeland.

So if the societies depicted are functionally complete enough to depict a real society, then different aspects of that society can be analyzed to understand how the poet of the Homeric poems (and his audience) understood their traditional society as functioning. The depicted society, like the bards in this society to be addressed later, is not necessarily an ethnographic or anthropological picture that would be acceptable to modern history, but it shows how a culture thought of themselves, which can be just as useful for understanding how authority is constructed and how society reacts to that authority. Power structures in the *Iliad* appear to be regularly centered on an individual leader, but there are distinct checks on this leader's authority. These checks are the trappings of society which serve as a link between the heroic epic world

and the world of the audience in the eighth century BCE. The inclusion of these contemporary elements contribute to the vividness of the songs, and this maximizes the effect that they have on their audience in terms of familiarity and the ability to relate. Next I turn to the specific interactions between various groups in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey.*

Part 4: The *Anax* and the Assembly

In the *Iliad* Agamemnon is the *anax* who wields supreme authority over the other *basileis* and seems to be able to call them to assembly to discuss his plans.[188] We do not see such a supreme ruler in the *Odyssey*, except possibly in the case of the Phaeacians, because the poem exists in a different genre; the return song is not directly concerned with establishing order in society.[189] Alcinous says that there are twelve *basileis* among the people besides himself; though he seems to be superior for our story, we do not know how he interacts with the others. Odysseus's household in Ithaca appears to be the central power, and according to the Iliadic catalogue he holds power over other islands and peoples including the Kephallenians, those who inhabit Ithaca, and Neriton, Krokylia and Aigilipia, Zacynthus and Samos (*Iliad* 2.631-4).

[188] Keller 1902: 256.
[189] Though the situation at Ithaca and the situation at Scheria do present two opposite versions of how society should function. It is my opinion, agreeing with Ford 1992, that Scheria presents in many respects a picture of the Bronze Age as seen through the eyes of the iron age poet, and that the society at Ithaca represents the iron age as the poet saw his own times. This is similar to the scheme of the ages of man from Hesiod.

These leaders are not absolute, and various councils and assemblies have input on their decisions.[190] The relationship between the leader and the assembly is complex for us, since it is presumably not the poet's purpose to illustrate the intricacies of Homeric governance. The assembly does not appear to have a vote, but there are rules that govern the relationship between those assembled and the leader, if there is a leader[191]. At the assembly in book one of the *Iliad*, the men come together at the request of Achilles, not Agamemnon, at the prompting of Hera, who cares for the Greeks. Achilles has as his primary concern the safety of the fighting men, because Hera has planted the concern in his head. Achilles immediately suggests that they should consult a prophet or priest to understand why Apollo is so angry with the Achaeans.

Achilles does not ask Agamemnon for a plan in the assembly in book 1 of the *Iliad*, but simply calls on the prophet, which tells us that perhaps the prophets are endowed with knowledge superior to that of kings.[192] Calchas, the Achaean prophet, is said to know things that were, that are, that will be, by the prophetic powers granted to him by Apollo (*Iliad* 1.70). It would seem doubly relevant here, because Apollo is the one punishing the Greeks, because *his* priest was insulted. Apollo shows that his priests are not to be insulted on pain of death and destruction.

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[190] Calhoun 1964.
[191] Collins 1996: chapter two. Though both have some sort of divinely given authority, the prophet's association with Apollo appears more immediately relevant than the king's association with Zeus. In this situation, then, a different type of authority is felt to be necessary.
[192] Keller 1902:163.

The priest then has a position that in some ways is more important than the will of an *anax*, especially given the conflicts in the past between Calchas and Agamemnon.[193] The prophet, likewise, is called to speak when it is judged that he has the right solution to the problem, a problem which up till now Agamemnon has made no effort to solve. The prophet, then, while fulfilling his duty is able to have more power than even a king. As Haubold points out, after the correct course of action is determined by Calchas, Agamemnon proceeds to fulfill his role as leader by carrying out the suggestions of Calchas[194]. His re-established authority, however, is to be short-lived.

In the second book of the *Iliad* Agamemnon calls an assembly at the prompting of Zeus from his dream. The audience is aware of the folly of Agamemnon in his plan, as the poet calls him a fool *nepios*, in his hopes of conquering the Trojans that day. So Zeus tricks mortals in their visions, even as he grants them their authority. It will remain to be seen whether those who are endowed with Apollonian authority are likewise tricked. At the assembly in book two, Agamemnon first reveals his plan to a council of elders. Nestor speaks up and says that he believes Agamemnon's dream because Agamemnon has claim to the title of best of the Achaeans, a position that seems most bolstered by his association

[193] Agamemnon points out that Calchas has never given him a favorable omen or prediction: Iliad 1.106. This most likely speaks to the ill-fatedness of Agamemnon than to any animosity that the prophet holds toward him.
[194] Haubold 2000:52.

with Zeus[195]. So, in council, association with a god has claim to a superior authority. At *Iliad* 2.101ff the association is made explicit: Hephaestus made a scepter and gave it to Zeus, who delivered it to Pelops and it was handed down through the Pelopids to Agamemnon "in order to rule many islands and all Argos". Odysseus, at the prompting of Athena, prevents the men from leaving, though making no mention of his association with a goddess.

In book nine of the *Iliad* Agamemnon is grieved at the Achaean situation and so calls together an assembly and again proposes that they should flee. After Diomedes rails at the perceived insult, Nestor again takes the stage and speaks his mind. During his speech, Nestor tells Diomedes that he is wise for his age, but that he is young. Nestor appeals to the Achaeans based on his age and says that no one will gainsay him, not even Agamemnon. Further, Nestor calls for a council of elders, implying that their wisdom should lend them greater power to decide what the army must do.[196] At this council Nestor suggests to Agamemnon to reconcile with Achilles and persuade him to rejoin the

[195] Though Agamemnon is not unique in his position to make this claim, see Nagy 1979. The title "Best of the Achaeans" is highly contentious, as many may make that claim on various grounds. Best as a superlative implies that there can be only one person in this role, however as we see in the epic, the position of "best" appears to be more of a process, with various characters aspiring to this position in a continual competition.

[196] Keller 1902:290. The concept of a council of elders exists here in the war councils, as well as on the Shield of Achilles, where a council of elders is sought for arbitration between two families in order to resolve a blood feud.

cause. Agamemnon replies that he committed folly or made a mistake (*aasamen* 9.116, 9.119), and Nestor's proposition wins out.

The *anax* Agamemnon has a leadership position and his *basileis* are meant to support him, as Odysseus and Nestor often do, but his position is dependent on his men. When the *anax* ignores wise advice, he and his army often suffer severe consequences; for example, when Agamemnon refuses the ransom of Chryses in spite of the troops' approval, the plague strikes. When Agamemnon ignores the advice in the assembly in book one to leave Briseis to Achilles, Achilles withdraws from battle and the Achaeans suffer. Agamemnon is then in a position where his power to decide what the Achaeans must do is not absolute, instead it is dependent on several other parties. A council of elders, with Nestor at their head, has the power to make whatever right choice is necessary. The general assembly of troops can also offer their input, which, if ignored, can lead to death and destruction. Agamemnon is not the only Achaean who knows when and how the power of the *anax* can be transferred: Achilles calls out Calchas to tell the men how to appease Apollo and end the plague.

I suggest then that Nestor, as the most vocal of the elders is able to temporarily usurp power from the *anax*[197]. The elders are heeded

[197] But certainly not the only one who persuades or attempts to persuade. For example, Phoenix and even Priam use their age and wisdom to appeal to Achilles.

on the merit of having seen more than a younger man.[198] Priests and prophets are in a separate category of people whose station grants them more authority than Agamemnon, though again it is only a temporary and situationally-based authority. Priests and prophets may be seen as having an even better basis for their seizure of authority than elders.[199] Priests have a direct connection with specific gods and can bring about change that ordinary mortals cannot. Prophets have a different type of connection with the gods, but it is equally, if not more, socially powerful. I would add that the *anax* has no choice in the matter, because if he ignores the prophets, priests and elders, disaster follows. Additionally, these leaders are not usually heroes: Nestor rarely fights, because the role his character plays has shifted.

A further element of this system is the *laoi*, usually translated as "people", and often supposed to be below the heroes, kings, priests and prophets in the hierarchy of authority.[200] This formulation allows for a single agent, the leader, to be concerned with the welfare of the group, the *laos*. The *laos*/*laoi* of epic are generally not developed, for as soon as they exhibit individual characteristics they cease to be the *laos* and become named characters. In Haubold's study, the leaders in epic are seldom ideal and more often are willing to sacrifice their men rather than

[198] Keller 1902: 290.
[199] Keller 1902: 163.
[200] Haubold 2000: 21. Haubold has suggested that, via an investigation of the formula shepherd of the people (*poimen laon*), the job of the leaders was "to look after his group in a manner similar to that of the shepherd of flocks"

sacrifice themselves for their men[201]. In both Homeric poems, Odysseus and Achilles both sacrifice their companions for their own benefit, specifically for their own *kleos*. Often, the *laoi* are in danger of destruction at the hands of their own leaders' poor judgments, but are occasionally saved by some of the various intermediaries, like the prophets, priests, elders or bards. Decision making is a core aspect of authority within the epic world, and many heroes make poor decisions when left to their own, but in the presence of the rest of the community, decisions with disastrous consequences may be mitigated.

The *laoi* as the people form the basis of the community. This community, as the ultimate moderator of the *anax*, must have a set of guiding principles in order to know how and when to counter the directives of the *anax*. During councils and assemblies, various types of speakers voice their consent or dissent, and opinion is swayed or not, depending on factors such as the dissenter's background and speaking ability. Councils and assemblies make up a large portion of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and, as Lord pointed out, they are one of the principal formulaic scene-types[202]. Scene types, as Foley makes clear[203], are much

[201] Haubold 2000: 38.
[202] Lord 1960. Lord's analysis does not include any discussion of the content of the scene types, however, many scene types are socially proscriptive: feasts, assemblies, and religious sacrifices are all settings where the order of events become standardized and institutional, and thus scene types become not only useful for the poet, but instructive for society as they create a sense of shared knowledge about how one is supposed to proceed in a certain situation.
[203] Foley 1995. As pointed out in the previous note, the interrelatedness of scene types causes the audience to interrogate their understanding of cultural practice and in turn

more than recurrent “blocks” of verse. By themselves, they do make convenient blocks for the singer to construct during his performance; they are also metonymically a much more efficient method of conveying meaning than their immediate circumstances might indicate. Formulae, scene and story-types access the whole wealth of the tradition and activate in their audience the recollection of their previous experiences with those elements. The fact that the council-scene recurs in such plentiful manner within the epics indicates to the critic that its meaning should be richer than non-activating scenes.

For instance, when an audience of a “deliberative speech act” signals that the act has achieved its goals, the poet signals with the formula “they heard and obeyed”[204]. Positive response is much easier to identify than negative response, however. Consent is easier to achieve than dissent, but it is often dissent that is more productive to society. Agamemnon's “test” of the troops in book 2 is met with consent and nearly ends their campaign, but Odysseus's dissent from that plan reconstructs the social body of the Achaeans. The poet is able to show not only whether an audience agrees with a speaker, but how strongly they agree. The most forceful show of support is expressed by the

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creates a sense of group identity based on the instruction of the scene types and the evaluative process that they instigate.

[204] Elmer 2011: 24. Elmer has identified in the *Iliad* and to lesser extent in the *Odyssey* what he terms a “grammar of reception” featuring a varying degree of efficiency of consent. Following a speech-act, the receptive audience can show their support or non-support of the speech in responses of varying strength.

formula “thus he spoke, and all the *basilees* expressed *epainos*”[205] and the least is expressed by an audience sitting in silence[206]. The negative response, or lack of response, is still a signal by the singer to the actual audience that the speaker's audience does not approve. It is a pointed sort of negativity, rather than omitting their response all together. In between this lack of response and the most consenting response are varying forms of approval and shouting in response by the Achaeans or Trojans. However, the most agreeable response is the expression of *epainos*, a word that has a wide range of meaning in the *Iliad*, but which David Elmer shows, as a compound of *ainein* to consent and *epi*, comes to mean something along the lines of to consent to a speech act (*muthos*) by a group or assembly[207]. Greek oral tradition encapsulated this grammar of reception, and its singers were able to manipulate it to their audience, who, like the audiences within the songs, would either express their assent or dissent. The dissolution of the Achaean campaign instigated by Agamemnon's speech in book two of the *Iliad* is prevented by Odysseus's speech. Had Odysseus not given such a speech, the Achaeans would have made a *“nostos* contrary to destiny”[208]. Elmer offers this passage as an example of how consent and dissent within the songs impose social order and poetic order at the same time[209]. As the

[205] Ibid, and *Iliad* 7.344, 9.710.
[206] *Iliad* 3.95, 7.398, 8.28, 9.29.
[207] David Elmer 2011: 23.
[208] *Iliad* 2.155.
[209] David Elmer 2011:87.

narrator points out, this *nostos* would be contrary to *moira*, fate. The Homeric poet suggests that to prevent the *Iliad* from prematurely turning into an *Odyssey* Odysseus intervenes with a speech. Had the speech of Agamemnon prevailed, the Homeric poet would have to cease his *Iliad*, because it would have become a *nostos*. In the epic poem the *Cypria*, which immediately precedes the events of the *Iliad*, the troops attempt to abandon the campaign, but are prevented from doing so by Achilles. Putting aside the relative dates of composition[210], the scene of troops abandoning battle may be said to be formulaic and referential of the larger tradition. This social dissent from Agamemnon's speech is initiated by Odysseus and results in the continuation of the *Iliad*, the poem which glorifies not Odysseus, but Achilles.[211]. Acting as a speech agent, Odysseus serves the larger tradition, rather than himself. Hypothetically, a bard performing this song would be presented here with an opportunity to change course, so to speak, and begin the *nostoi* at this point, but the tradition will not allow it, as it requires the *Iliad* to be carried out in full.

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[210] Though we do not know the actual dates of composition for any of the poems in the Cycle, it is typically accepted that they are later than the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in their composition in the form we have them. Nevertheless it is relevant that they are all a part of the same tradition and would therefore be aware of the events of other episodes. This would provide a concrete example of other possibilities for Foley's traditional referentiality to be actualized in context.

[211] Elmer 2011: 89. As Elmer suggests "the background enriches our understanding of the crisis provoked by Agamemnon's test to the extent that it highlights the absence of Achilles, whose role as established by the *Cypria* is now taken over by Odysseus". This also represents an example of the interrelationship between the elements of the oral tradition and how the character roles can be exchanged, with a resultant change in the audience's reactions to those changes occurring.

The act of making speeches in front of the *laoi* is one of the most powerful tools that a Homeric character has at his disposal. The body politic is persuaded, or not, to consent to the proposal, and the speaker's power can overturn that of the *anax*. Typically, a smaller council of *basileis* makes the decisions for the *laoi* based on their dissent or consent to a speech-act. The *laoi* are then guided by this privileged group, who authorize a directive. Our Homeric poet shows his audience an awareness of the traditionality of such decision-making strategy, as well as the outcome of ignorance of such dissent. The poet's tradition serves the purpose of creating, for the audience, a series of situations in which consent and dissent to that which is proposed in speech are able to provide social disorder or order. The tradition itself dictates the speech acts in the *Iliad* that have the ability, through dissent, to change the shape of the song.

Part 5: The *Aoidos* and Speech Power

The *aoidos* should be seen as similar to priests and especially prophets in their ability to temporarily usurp authority from the *basileus*, in the sub-genre of martial epic in the Greek tradition. This will be the subject of the next chapter, so a brief mention will suffice here. The *aoidos*, or bard, is usually a fixture at the court of a *basileus*. The *aoidos* usually receives his livelihood from the *basileus* and the *demos* in exchange for the services he provides. On the surface the *aoidos* sings for

entertainment, in order to enchant the hearts of men. However he does serve a deeper communicative function as well. The *aoidos* is said to be divine and that his knowledge and art are a gift from the muses or Apollo[212]. The connection with the divine serves to grant to his song a level of authenticity and authority not found in the ordinary tales of ordinary people. Apollo, as the god of prophecy and song, provides a unique source of information to prophets, priests and bards. Though Zeus may be the god of justice and ruling, he is not omniscient. Apollo and the muses are able to grant to human beings the ability to see the past, present, and future in a way that Zeus cannot. When in deliberation over the best course of action, the access to knowledge that prophets, priests and bards have is superior to that even of a *basileus* or *(w)anax*. In some situations, as a result of this access to knowledge, various types of powerful speech can overcome other types.

All of these checks on the powers of the *basileis* and *anaktes* are speakers. They not only temporarily usurp the power of the higher leaders, but they do so by words, rather than force. In the Homeric epics, even with all their emphasis on martial might, the power of the word is often greater, and in fact it is sometimes the most powerful tool that a hero can possess. This power of verbiage is embodied by the artfully

[212] For example at Odyssey 8.44 it is said of Demodokos that the god (*theon*) has granted to him the power to entertain men. The narrator of the Iliad at 2.484ff calls on the muses to assist in recounting the catalog of Greeks, because without their aid he could not do it alone.

arranged persuasive speeches, and also in the songs of the bards, which will be analyzed in the next chapter.

Chapter Three: Homer Constructed

In the previous chapter I have shown that the context in which the Greek epic oral tradition developed was influenced by and comparable to many nearby cultures, most notably those in the Near East. I demonstrated that the cultural institution of the singer of heroic tales occupied an important position in these cultures, though in Green culture in the Iron Age this situation changed. I also demonstrated that the identity of the nascent Greek culture and polis was tied to communal ideals propagated in and demonstrated by the epic tradition. In this chapter I have two goals. I firstly look at several passages within the texts of the Homeric poems in order to establish the nature of the *aoidos* as portrayed by an ancient *aoidos* and the way the *aoidos* within the poems viewed his audience and their reception and transmission. Using the poems as a model then I look to the way the poets depicted their role in society. These scenes of performance describe an idealized bardic performance, but they are also prescriptive to their audience. Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns also provide a narrative description of bardic performance, which I use as comparative evidence for the collective cultural view of the bard. I then suggest a model or framework by which the archaic Greek people and their poets interacted, and use the texts as well as other comparanda for corroborating evidence. This model will be built from the depicted performance arena, social status of the *aoidos*, the source of inspiration that the *aoidoi* give us, and the audience responses to these particular songs. Ultimately, the audience and the

aoidos cooperatively create cultural authority. This authority resonates throughout later Greek culture, which will be addressed in the following chapter.

Early Greek poetry was called *mousike* or *aoide,* both terms that involve not just an artful arrangement of words, but "a union of words and music"[213]. This definition gives no priority to the musical element or the verbal element, but suggests that they are both inseparable parts of the totality of the medium. Epic presents us with two apparently different perspectives on the element of musicality. Homeric bards sing their songs to the accompaniment of the lyre, sometimes with percussion and dancing as well[214], and thus in many ways appear a relative of the lyric poets. Hesiod, on the other hand, leans on his *rhabdos*, and declaims his poetry, seemingly without the musicality of Homer's depictions.

Charles Segal has pointed out in multiple works that "ancient readers almost unanimously grant Homer knowledge of words and song, the arts of speech and persuasion"[215]. He proposes that the scenarios that are depicted in the Homeric poems can function as a valid

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[213] Segal 1994: 3. Segal recognizes the cultural importance that was assigned to Homer by the Greeks in the way that most Greek critics, including Plato and Aristotle, looked to Homer and referenced his style in order to make their points regarding the arrangement of words. Not only does Plato recognize Homer as an authority in aesthetics, he recognizes the influence of Homer on contemporary Greek society. For example in the *Ion*, when Plato interrogates Ion, it is entirely based on the premise that Homer is recognized as an expert on military matters, construction, and rhetoric. Though the point is made that Homer is recognized as an expert in things that he may have no firsthand experience in, the recognition of his authority in those areas is the important element in the discussion.

[214] e.g. in *Odyssey* 4.17, the nameless, yet still *theios*, bard is accompanied by dancers.

[215] Segal 1994: 113.

representation of the performance of ancient songs. Performance, then, is also depicted the receptions by the audience which indicates their emotional investment in the song. This investment in the songs will lead to their transmission within the tradition. It is through the interaction between the singer and his audience that ancient Greek oral traditions built the basis for Greek culture. The foundation of Greek culture furthermore, was put to various uses by political organizations, such as various *poleis* and religious cults. This foundation was inherited in the textual traditions of Classical and post-classical Greece[216].

Part One: Bardic Episodes

This section analyzes the ways in which the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* depict the figure of the bard or oral poet in relation to his audience and material. This analysis is aimed at understanding how poets depicted and viewed their role in society. These Homeric poets are the creators and perpetuators of their tradition. One major difference between the singers within the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as we have them is their performance arena.

Though it is difficult to accurately see how early Greek audiences viewed their poets and endowed them with cultural authority, some refracted version of this experience exists in the poets' interpretations of themselves. I am not asserting that the composer has

[216] This tradition of reception will be explored in the subsequent chapter.

inserted himself directly into his poems as the figure of Demodokos or Phemius or even Odysseus. Many scholars have questioned the likelihood of deriving an accurate representation of the *aoidos* and his audience from Homeric descriptions of performances[217]. However, the central point here is not deriving a historically accurate version of the archaic performance. As Thallman suggests, the epics show a representation instead of a reproduction of the historical reality[218]. I hope to show how poets and society viewed the persona of bard, with approval of their audience. To illustrate these views I start within the poems themselves. The traditional characters of the bards reflect centuries of identity-construction which reflect the ideal of the archaic Greek bard, a role which as we will see, can include many different genres of speech. This will give some idea of the bard's status within society and shed light on the process by which he is endowed with certain authority.

There are many instances in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of narrative story-telling to an audience from which I will draw some examples. Story-telling in the poems takes many different forms which exist in a sort of continuum, with explicit song-performances of myth and history to an

[217] Jensen 2011: 148. Jensen supposes that the picture is fabricated and not necessarily an authentic view of the *aoidos,* and examines other comparable oral traditions for the way that their poets depicted themselves. My point is not necessarily that the singer in the 7th century behaves just like Demodokos or Phemius, but that the cultural institution of the singer was widely accepted to be *like* the bard as depicted in the poems, otherwise we would experience the filtering of passive tradition bearers, where the inaccurate or unacceptable elements become eliminated from the tradition, per Elmer's model of passive tradition bearing.
[218] Thallman 1998: 1. This is contra Scodel 1998 and Jensen 2011.

audience at one end and simple narration of mundane events at the other. Since the entirety of the poems is metered, all narration is technically song, though some of these occurrences are more obviously marked as song than others. This analysis will look at several different instances of narrative story-telling and the relationship between the teller and his audience, the source of the story, and whether the teller appropriates any kind of authoritative position by means of his performance. Some may object to the inclusion of other characters[219], such as Odysseus, as bards because of deviations from an imposed standard definition of bard. My investigation will take some of these concerns into consideration by synthesizing our etic definitions of bard with an emic and derivative definition of the bard produced by looking at the actual purposes, contexts, and content of various other narrative performances as they are related in the poems.

To begin, we look at the bards Demodokos and Phemius in the *Odyssey* because they most readily fit a definition of a bard as a singer of tales, performing for an audience and accompanying himself with a lyre. Phemius appears throughout the Ithacan sections singing in the hall of Odysseus at the behest of the suitors. Demodokos appears throughout Odysseus's stay in Phaeacia at the court of King Alcinous. The

[219] Scodel, 1998. She and others have suggested that in order to have any kind of comparative model for Homeric bards, they must fit into the model of bard as presented by those characters who specifically have the noun *aoidos* attached to it, however I propose that rather than looking at the titling of the characters we should look at the role of their performance and their interaction with their audience.

performances of song within the poems take place in front of a much smaller audience than the Panhellenic festivals such as those at Delos and Mycale, at which we know performances of epic song occurred. At these festivals the songs were sung by the *rhapsoidos*, rather than an *aoidos*. The term *rhapsoidos* has a dual etymology, either meaning "one who leans on a *rhabdos",* or staff, or meaning "one who stitches"[220]. Linguists prefer the stitching, which would appear to refer to the act of stitching together *epe*, words, verses, or epics, according to Pindar in Nemean 2.2. This seems to reflect the adding style of oral composition in performance, whether we take the *epe* to mean any of those variants. However, the difference between the rhapsode and the bard is not clearly understood, if there indeed is a difference.[221]

The range of performance arena need not be a hindrance to interpreting the audiences of song in archaic Greece. Lyric poets such as Pindar sang for large court gatherings, to *symposia* and smaller gatherings of the wealthy families. In the *Iliad* we see some version of this range, with the scene of festivity on the shield of Achilles in book 18, which takes place in open air with dancers and acrobats to the solo performance of Achilles in book 9, where Patroclus is in attendance but not an actual audience who pays attention to the song. A singer is also

[220] Jensen 2011:145. This is a common definition of the *rhapsoidos*, but not the only proposed definition.
[221] For a discussion of rhapsodes, see Burkert 1972, West 1999, and Nagy 2011 (who holds a different opinion). The connection between how rhapsodes work cooperatively and a tradition works cooperatively with its audience is also worth considering, see forthcoming Smith: *Periklutos: A Deeper Meaning in a Traditional Epithet*.

mentioned as being housed at the court of Agamemnon who was set to watch over Clytemnestra while Agamemnon is away[222]. The *Iliad* also mentions a traveling bard, Thamyris[223].

Odyssey 1.154 is the first reference to the song of Phemius, which is called sweet (*kalon*). Phemius is being forced by necessity (*ananke*) to sing by the suitors. This situation of compulsion emphasizes the wrongness of the suitors and the situation they have forced upon the house of Odysseus. Phemius is referred to later at 1.325 as very famous (*periklutos*) when he begins to sing the "mournful returns of the Achaeans"[224]. *Periklutos* occurs twelve times throughout the *Iliad* and twelve times throughout the *Odyssey*[225]. It also occurs significantly in Hesiod's *Theogony*, and the *Works and Days,* as well as one time during the Homeric hymns. Otherwise, *periklutos* only occurs 6 other times throughout Greek literature, and all of it much later. This epithet in the Homeric poems, as well as the poems of Hesiod and one of the Homeric Hymns[226], primarily describes bards, cities, and the god Hephaestus, and almost always appears in the same position in the line, which appears to indicate an element of formularity and significance to the oral tradition. This epithet emphasizes the fame of its object, but one may

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[222] *Odyssey* 3.267.
[223] *Iliad* 2.594.
[224] Demodokos is likewise described as *periklutos* at 8.83, 8.357, 8.521 and elsewhere.
[225] *Iliad* 1.568 *Iliad* 6.297, *Iliad* 7.283, *Iliad* 9.114, *Iliad* 11.84, *Iliad* 18.324, *Iliad* 18.360, *Iliad* 18.428, *Iliad* 18.462, *Iliad* 18.561, *Iliad* 18.590, *Odyssey* 1.325, *Odyssey* 4.1, *Odyssey* 8.83, *Odyssey* 8.250, *Odyssey* 8.295, *Odyssey* 8.343, *Odyssey* 8.521, *Odyssey* 16.135, *Odyssey* 24.35, *Odyssey* 24.138.
[226] Homeric Hymn to Apollo 537.

wonder why these three seemingly disparate objects are described as "very famous" in this particular way rather than some other way of approximating famous, since the Homeric vocabulary is full of many different epithets to make an object famous. Hephaestus is the god most closely associated with craft, besides Athena[227]. The cities are the products of physical craftsmanship.

Metaphorically, this epithet describing *aoidoi* emphasizes the physical crafting of their poems from their component parts. This may be interpreted as an early recognition of how the oral tradition works in formulae, by emphasizing the epithet as an essential element of a bard who "builds" a song. As a builder, Phemius is tasked with the construction of the song. The language that the Homeric poet incorporates here implies that he thinks about his songs in a manner similar to how Milman Parry initially suggested[228]. The pieces that the builder-bard puts together are like formulae, scenes, or story patterns. This gives the singer the special control to build his song however he needs, in order to entertain his audience as well as promote himself as a bard.

Phemius in the first book of the *Odyssey* sings the mournful returns of the Achaeans, which likewise is what the composer of the

[227] Hephaestus is more often associated with physical craftsmanship and building things, whereas Athena is associated with military craft as well as what might be called "thought-craft" exemplified in the wiles of Odysseus.
[228] Parry *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry* 1970 edited by Adam Parry.

Odyssey is singing. This is the first of many instances of the self-awareness of epic wherein the composer references his own craft in the poems. Phemius sings for the suitors, who sit in silence listening to the returns. At 1.328 Phemius is described as *thespin*, divinely inspired, a word which in Homer and elsewhere[229] in Greek is used to describe bards or their songs. This noun-epithet forumula recurs two other times in Homer describing the bard Demodokos and then Phemius again in book 17. Penelope objects to the divine (*theion)* bard at 1.356, again allotting to him a special status. Since this song troubles her, affecting her negatively, she suggests that Phemius sing one of the many other charming deeds (*thelkteria erga)* of gods and men that bards make famous. The adjective *thelkteria* connotes charm that has the power of persuasion[230].

Phemius has multiple different audience groups in his performance in book one of the *Odyssey*. We may classify them as individuals, such as Penelope and Telemachus and the collective, which Homer refers to as *toisi'*[231]. The collective group listens in silence, *siope*, as Phemius sings the returns of the Achaeans. This collective is made up primarily of the suitors of Penelope who have invaded the house of Odysseus and are consuming all of the food and drink. They might be

[229] e.g. Odyssey 8.498, 17.385, Euripides Medea 425, Hesiod Theogony 32 (describing a voice, rather than a bard's person), Aelius Aristides *Orationes* 45.23, Anth. Gr. 2.1, Homeric Hymn 4 (Hermes) 408, and Sophocles *Ichneutae* 250 (also describing a voice).
[230] Especially divine persuasion, as with the girdle of Aphrodite in Iliad 14.215.
[231] *Odyssey* 1.325.

considered similar to the audience that we see later in the court of King Alkinoos insofar as they are a group of the local nobility or upper class enjoying a feast in a private home.[232] The bard, to them, should be considered an honored guest or servant, hence their silence denoting respect. This is somewhat contradictory to the situation in Ithaka, however, as we are also told by the Homeric poet that Phemius is being compelled to sing, unlike his depictions of other bards as occupying a space of honor[233]. Though the suitors are initially a rapt audience, their attention span is soon broken by Penelope's interruption at 1.335 and Telemachus's response at 1.346. They do not resume their silence even after Telemachus encourages the bard to continue singing the song he has begun, but rather break into raucous obscenity and attempts to bed Penelope.

Penelope, as a separate audience member, objects emotionally to the song of Phemius because it reminds her of her husband. She bursts into tears, a reaction which is quite similar to Odysseus's reaction to Demodokos's later song about himself. Penelope hears the song all the way from her upper chamber at 1.328 and comes rushing down to break up the song. She beseeches the bard to sing one of the many other

[232] The political situation at Scheria is contested: Alcinous should be a type of *grosskonig*, but actually serves as a sort of magistrate amongst a group of upper class invidivuals who have little power. Calhoun 1964 discusses this.
[233]Phemius, who sang among the suitors by compulsion (*ananke) Odyssey* 22.331 as opposed to the deference that Alcinous shows to Demodokos at 8.43-5.

"*erg'andron te theon te, ta tel kleousin aoidoi*"[234] while the audience should sit in silence. Her admonition to the suitors implies that that is the appropriate way for an audience to act while listening to a bard. Penelope says she among all women has more reason to be sorrowful, because her husband is the longest missing member of the Achaean party. This particular song touches most closely upon her because of her personal connection to the material. Though Homer never makes Phemius specifically tell us who the Achaeans are that he sings, the audience implies, like Penelope, that the chief character is Odysseus.

Telemachus, unlike his mother, is not invested in the same way in the material of the song. His father is missing, it is true, but he never knew his father, so the emotional connection might not be as strong. Telemachus, as a character attempting to assert his manhood in a situation where he has no strong ties to a paternal figure, must attempt to adhere to what social strictures he knows most closely in order to try and assume his position in society. His reaction to Penelope's opposition is that Phemius is not to blame, but Zeus is (1.349-50). His implication is that Zeus, as arbiter of fate, designs all things for mankind, thus absolving Phemius of responsibility for singing of such events.

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[234] *Odyssey* 1.338. The meaning of this line has been interpreted somewhat ambiguously. A.T. Murray's translation holds "the deeds of men and gods that make minstrels famous", while Fagles translates the final clause as "that singers celebrate" Murray 1919, Fagles 1996. The difference suggests that in Murray's translation, the songs make the bards famous but in Fagles' version, the bards make the songs famous. Grammatically, Fagles's translation is more accurate, where the subject, aoidoi, perform the active verb kleiousin, which is active, rather than middle.

When Odysseus returns and has slain many of the suitors in his home, Phemius and Medon are spared because of their positions, bard and herald respectively, in Ithacan society.[235] Phemius beseeches Odysseus as a suppliant, but he is spared for more reason than simple pity; his sales pitch is that he is a mortal worthy of the company of gods as well as men. This claim as well as Telemachus's interjection that Phemius had no choice in entertaining the suitors wins over Odysseus's desire to kill them. Phemius says at 22.347 that he is self-taught *autodidaktos*. This affects the ways that we are to understand how Phemius has become a singer of tales. Phemius himself states nowhere how he came upon his craft, though others have implied it was some sort of divine gift[236]. His claim that he is self-taught means that this ability to persuade through his song-tales is in part his own, that the gods have no actual part in the formation of his tales. Phemius may *appear* to others, even the Homeric poet, to be assisted by the gods, but from his point of view he is self-made, a claim made only under extreme duress. This presents confusion from the point of view of the sources of inspiration for the bard. Telemachus, at 1.349, implies that one of the sources for Phemius's songs is Zeus, though it is somewhat unclear whether he means that Zeus is ultimately the cause of the events that Phemius sings or whether he is the inspiration for that song performance in particular.

[235] Keller 1902:274 discusses heralds as being valuable property, but also *hetairoi* and thus of double value simply in terms of property.
[236] *Odyssey*1.328, 1.371 for instance.

The role of Phemius at Ithaca is like that which we see as typical for Iron Age Greece: he is a dependent in a powerful household, but not necessarily in a position of power, as singers were in the Bronze Age. Phemius is compelled, as a slave or servant, to perform, and does not apparently merit the respect of his audience and social superiors, except by their attention to his song. This is in contrast to the singer Demodocus in the court of king Alcinous.

The passages surrounding the bard Demodokos may be analyzed for even more useful material in understanding how the Homeric poet represents the epic bard in his own poems. Demodokos, unlike Phemius, is summoned respectfully by Alcinous. Demodokos, like Phemius, is called *theion* divine. In a construction very similar to the way Phemius was described in book 1, Alcinous says that "for him especially has the god granted the song to entertain in whatever way his spirit (*thumos*) incites him to sing"(8.44-5).[237]

As the Phaeacians prepare their sacrifice and feast as a demonstration of *xenia* for the yet-unnamed stranger Odysseus, a herald leads the blind bard Demodokos into the midst of the celebration. The scene unfolds with the sacrifice and cooking, following traditional typical

[237] There are both similarities and differences from Phemius. For Phemius it is the *noo*s, the mind, that determines the song, but for Demodokos it is his spirit, his *thumo*s that determines what he will sing. The distinctions are minor and often the words are used interchangeably, but it appears as though Phemius is more moved by conscious thought and Demodokos by a sort of unconscious inspiration.

patterns[238]. At the center of this feast is Demodokos in a silver chair, and as his audience there are both young and old, who filled the inside and outside of the palace (8.57-8). Demodokos waits until those in attendance have had their fill of food and drink, and then begins his song, the *klea andron*, the sort of deeds of men whose fame reaches heaven[239], namely a quarrel of Achilles and Odysseus. This quarrel is not handed down to us in the tradition, so much more information is not available other than what the Homeric poet has Demodokos sing. The Quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles apparently took place at a feast of the gods and Agamemnon was gladdened by the quarrel because it was foretold by Apollo.

After Demodokos takes a break the audience begs him to begin again. The performance is communicative in the sense that by their rapt silence, the audience is signaling to Demodokos that they approve of his song and are entertained by it, rather than making noise or leaving, which would tell him that they did not approve of his song. Demodokos appears again to sing outdoors at a dance that the Phaeacians perform for Odysseus. This time the bard sings of the love of Aphrodite and Ares. The narrative is far more detailed than any other mimetic song in the epics, spanning nearly a hundred lines. The song appears as an epic of its own, containing primarily narration of action interspersed with some

[238] e.g. as illustrated by Lord 1960, Foley 1999, with all that *traditional* implies.
[239] Odysseus incorporates this very description when at the very beginning of book 9 he introduces himself as the son of Laertes, whose fame reaches the gods.

reflective moments of thought and dialogue. This song is performed outdoors in an arena quite different from the previous song. Whereas Demodokos's first song took place inside the palace of Alkinoos in front of what must be a select audience, the song of Ares and Aphrodite's affair is performed outdoors in a public setting. The performance takes place amidst various athletic competitions, which recess for Demodokos's performance. The performance is also accompanied by a chorus of young men dancing. This "festival" setting is prescriptive of some later historical festivals, such as that of Delian Apollo or the Panathenaia.[240] The importance of the festival and competition will be addressed in the final section of this chapter. The song, however, is highly reminiscent of the Homeric Hymns in several ways. The featured characters are the Olympian gods, the plot follows a trick of one god and a love affair of two others, and the length of the song is similar. It would follow that the story-pattern of the Homeric Hymns might serve as an inset narration inside of a larger narrative framework, such as an epic, or equally likely, that an epic on the scale of the *Odyssey* might be made up of building blocks larger than the formula and even scene, but smaller than the story pattern. The Homeric poet may simply be placing one of these epyllia in the mouth of Demodokos to demonstrate how an epic may

[240] Ford 1992 discusses the setting of the celebration of the Phaeacians as reminiscent of the Panathenaic religious festivals, and that this scene may serve as a guideline for the cultural institution of the festival, in the same way that many of the epic type-scenes serve as reinforcing models for the scenes they depict, like the sacrifice, assembly, and feast.

incorporate other epic tales. The tale ends without any audience interaction, however, and the Phaeakians continue with their athletic games and choral dances, which Odysseus compliments highly.

At *Odyssey* 8.485, Odysseus requests that Demodokos sing of the Wooden Horse at Troy that sacks the citadel. The bard then begins his song, having been moved by the god (*hormetheis theou ercheto*).[241] Demodokos's song is divinely-inspired, even as Odysseus had implied just lines before when he says that "the god has of a ready heart granted thee the gift of divine song"[242]. The Homeric poet suggests the divinity of the bard's inspiration and reinforces it with Odysseus's affirmation that if the bard sings the song correctly, it will prove that the gods have granted him a gift. Demodokos has not observed the events that he is about to sing first hand. The traditional blind bard scenario serves to further enhance the hypothesis that the bard could not in fact observe anything first-hand with the normal senses allotted to mortals, but must have gotten his material from a super-mortal source. Odysseus listens to the song of Demodokos and reacts with weeping, after which Alkinoos requests that Demodokos cease from his song (8.535). This reaction and request is very similar to the request of Penelope in book 1 when Phemius sings of the mournful returns of the Achaeans. Both characters

[241] *Odyssey* 8.499.
[242] *Odyssey* 8.497-8. This situation is nearly unique in the Homeric tradition, because as a first-hand observer and even an agent in the events surrounding the Trojan horse story, Odysseus is in a unique position to confirm or refute the songs of Demodokos

have high emotional stakes in each song being performed and react with weeping. Alkinoos points out at 8.540 that each time the bard has been moved to sing Odysseus has reacted with lamentation.[243]

Audience reactions to performances should be interpreted as a reception of a performed text. Jauss describes the different experiences that affect perceptual and expressive contexts that are brought into play in textual receptions as "horizons of expectations".[244] How characters react to the performance, or text, is determined by their recognition of different textual strategies, or in the case of the performances here familiarity with sung material. Metonymically, because Odysseus is familiar with the unsung elements of the Trojan horse or the Quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles, he derives more meaning from the story. Even though the whole audience hears the same song, the meanings they receive from the songs are different. Inside of the poems, performance and reception follow similar rules to the reception of texts and performances in reality.

The power of performance is shown by the audience's reactions to all of Demodokos's songs. Odysseus, during the two Trojan War songs,

[243]Though it must be pointed out that Odysseus only weeps at the songs Demodokos sings about the Trojan War inside the palace. Alcinous must surely have not forgotten the song of Aphrodite and Ares, at which Odysseus does not weep. This indicates that in his mind, these songs are somehow of a different sort. The performance arena is different for the Trojan songs, as they are sung in the palace at a feast. The song of Aphrodite and Ares, conversely, is sung outside and accompanied by a chorus of dancers. This should indicate that in the mind of the audience, performance arena may serve as a substantial generic differentiator.

[244] Jauss 1982.

is so moved that he must cover his face to hide his tears (8.86, 8.88, 8.92, 8.93, and 8.522). After the third song, which very directly focuses on Odysseus, Odysseus is described as melting or pining away from grief (*teketo*). The rest of the audience, since they were not personally involved in the events described, is less moved than simply entertained. Following the performance of the second song, the deeds of gods rather than men, Odysseus and the Phaeacians are charmed in their *phrenes*, the seat of their thoughts and feelings (8.387-8). Demodokos not only is shown great deference here at the court of the Phaeacians, but their and Odysseus's reactions to his song show the power he has over an audience, to bring both joy and pain, much like later Greek dramatic performances in the theater.

These varied reactions to song indicate an obvious difference on the part of the recipient audiences' experiences. Odysseus, as a veteran of the Trojan War, has experience of these events firsthand. The Phaeacians have only heard of the Trojan War in oral reports, for instance from the song of Demodokos. Their experience is therefore mitigated by the intermediary Demodokos. Demodokos, further, has not seen the events described himself (not simply because he is blind, but because he was not at the Trojan War) but has gathered his songs "from the Muse" in the instances of the *Quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles* and the song *About the Trojan Horse*. This use of the muse as a source of poetic inspiration will be addressed below, but it shall suffice here to say

that it is an infallible source of information from which a bard can sing about things that he has not experienced firsthand.

Odysseus, conversely to the Phaeacian audience, has experienced these events firsthand; both of these songs in fact center on him as the protagonist. His reaction to them is the opposite of the Phaeacians' because of his investment in them. He reacts negatively even to the fact that his fame has reached the other side of the world, because he knows from his own experiences all the sorrows that went into building this fame: the absence from his family and home, the ten-year war at Troy, and the loss of his comrades on their homeward journey.

This difference in reactions can be explained by the major difference between his and the rest of the audience's experiences. If this appears unfounded, one only needs to listen to the reactions of the audience(s) following the second song of Demodokos when he sings about the *Love of Ares and Aphrodite*. Both Odysseus and the Phaeacians are charmed at this song. The positive reaction is evoked, possibly because the song is somewhat bawdy but also because neither party of the audience has had any personal experience with Ares, Aphrodite or Hephaestus. This reaction, on a formal level, may allude also to the fact that Odysseus *will not* ever have any personal experience analogous to the story, like an unfaithful wife. Penelope, likewise upon hearing the song of Phemius in the first book of the poem, is hurt because of her

personal involvement. Penelope asks Phemius to stop singing because the song causes her pain in her heart, because of how it makes her recall her missing husband (1.343). The suitors, on the other hand, are not involved with the returns of the Greek heroes from Troy, though they prosper in the absence of those heroes. These men had no connection with the Trojan War, and so are not affected. Also, Penelope is "reminded" *memnemene* of her husband by the song. She has no choice in the matter and is acted upon by the work of the bard. In instances where the song is familiar to the audience, or members of the audience, it can provoke apparently stronger reactions to the song, in many cases negative. Odysseus does not immediately explain why the songs bother him, but Alcinous makes some assumptions, all of which of course are not as bad as the real fact. Alcinous has also realized that it only seems to be songs about the Trojan War that bother Odysseus, so he figures that Odysseus must have some involvement or connection to the war, either in the form of a legal or blood relative or close friend (8.581). Odysseus and Penelope both react strongly, with grief, to three songs with which they are somehow directly connected.

Up to now, Phemius and Demodokos have been the only bards considered in this analysis, because they are described first and foremost

as *aoidoi*, whatever that may mean in English[245]. The *aoidos* appears to describe a person who, in the Homeric poems, sings a narrative tale to the accompaniment of a lyre. One of the difficulties for the modern reader is the fact that the word is not explicitly defined, so our definition arises from the uses of it in the Homeric text. The verb, to sing, and cognate object noun form, song, *aeido* and *aoide*, are rarely used independently. This both marks the song as a special form of speech differentiated from the everyday, but also because of the formularity of the vocabulary makes independent definition difficult. One instance of the use of the noun *aoidos* that may help explain what this person does appears at *Odyssey* 11.368, when Alkinoos tells Odysseus that he tells his story truthfully, just like a bard (*muthon d'os ote aoidos epistamenos katalexas)*. This section is usually viewed by scholars as separate from the bardic sections[246]. This section, and possibly many others however, should be included as a performance of the sort that activates certain pathways of meaning, dependent on the performer's ability to activate those pathways and the audience's fluency of understanding the various

[245] The *aoidos* and *rhapsoidos* are not necessarily the subject of an either/or situation, see Jensen in Foley 2005: 52. Like the continuum between "oral" and "literate" poetry there must be a similar range between those who compose and those who recite.
[246]Scodel, 1998, Ford 1992. Scodel does not include this as a bardic performance, because Odysseus is not accompanying himself with a lyre, nor being accompanied by one, nor is there any indication that he is singing rather than simply telling the tale. If we ignore the lack of contextual markers, such as references to instruments or song, however, this passage becomes remarkably similar to the songs that Demodocus sings. As Ford 1992:115 also points out, canonical *aoidoi*, such as Demodocus are not limited to use one verb to lead off their song: Demodocus begins his Trojan narrative with *lexeien*, a verb that in later usage comes to be used by the rhapsode to end a section of their performance. This would indicate that a variety of markers can be used within a text indicating context, and may cause us to broaden our views of who should be considered a bard, or at least what kinds of performances could be considered "bardic".

signifying keys that those pathways imply. The section includes extended narrative and interspersed dialogue and simile. The tales of Odysseus's travels are requested by Alcinous and performed before an audience. After Odysseus tells who he is and where his home is, he picks up the narrative of his journey after the fall of Troy. Odysseus gives no background to introduce the topic of his tale. He expects the audience to know the background, and indeed as evidenced by the previous tales, there is an awareness of the oral tradition of the Trojan War at Phaeacia. In fact, his tale begins at the point where Demodokos's tale leaves off. This is reminiscent of the later Panathenaic traditional performances of the Homeric songs, whereby, according to the so-called Panathenaic rule, rhapsodes must perform the Homeric poems beginning where the previous rhapsode left off. [247] Odysseus's tale is his own nostos. It begins with a prologue in which Odysseus compliments his host, identifies himself, and asks where he should begin, and then settles onto his theme, the very same theme as the *Odyssey* itself[248].

There are some differences between the context, or performance arena, of Odysseus's song and that of the *aoidoi*. The *aoidos* is a

[247] Davison 1964 238. This Panathenaic rule, however, is contested because its ascription is late, possibly between the sixth and fourth century. The first suggestion of this rule appears coincidental with the appearance of the *Iliad* in Athens, approximately the late sixth century and due to a Peisistratid reorganization of the Panathenaea. This leads to a discussion of the so-called Peisistratid recension of Homer, which seems to indicate an element of political control. However, it appears that prior to the introduction of the *Iliad* at Athens, singers were not bound by any proscriptions for the order or choice of song at festivals, including the Panathenaea, but after that point the rule limited the choice of song to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and the order was proscribed.
[248] See Ford *Homer: The Poetry of the Past* 1992: 115.

professional singer of tales who performs for a powerful ruler or family in exchange for gifts, shelter, and food. The *aoidos* generally performs to the accompaniment of his lyre. The *aoidos* typically is not involved in his songs; they are not related from any personal experience but are set at some distance. In the case of Phemius's song of the returns of the Achaeans, there is nearly a ten-year gap between when Athena and Poseidon caused the storm that slew so many men. Demodokos sings of the Fall of Troy and the Quarrel of Achilles and Odysseus, events which took place even before those of Phemius's songs. In this context the *Odyssey* serves as an intermediate bridge between the Homeric audience and the distant past. As has been pointed out above, if a song grows too old, the audience loses context for understanding it, because it lacks anything with which they were familiar. To bridge this gap between the extremely ancient subject matter and the more recent audience, the poet chooses to put his subject matter, the context of which he may not even know, into the mouth of a bard. This creates a setting familiar to the audience; in the song the people are listening to a story from the past; therefore the actual audience has a familiar context even if the song is of the distant past. For the singer of this song, by putting the contained story in the mouth of the bard, he legitimates it in a way that he himself perhaps could not have, by saying "this is part of a very old tradition, but a tradition just like what we are now experiencing".

Odysseus's tale, on the other hand, is of recent occurrence. He is in fact still enacting it as he is telling it. Nevertheless, it comes immediately following a tale of the Trojan War, so in a sense it would be one of the next episodes to be sung. The *Nostoi* that Phemius sings are incomplete, because no one knew what happened to Odysseus, but Odysseus's tale is able to fill in that gap. Odysseus can only complete his tale as far as the Phaiakian episode, though, as he has not returned home yet.

Achilles in the beginning of book 9 of the *Iliad* is also a singer on this continuum of performing story-tellers. Achilles has a richly made lyre (9.186) and sings the glories of men, (*klea andron).* Though the content of the song cannot be ascertained, through the work of Nagy, we may make some educated guesses about the song and the singer's attitude towards it.[249] These songs are typically martial epic, and the genre implies a much older tradition than is outwardly indicated by their immediate linguistic contexts. The etymology of fame (*kleos*), meaning "something that is heard" further emphasizes the fact that the very concept of fame cannot exist without the singer of tales. Patroclus listens in silence as Achilles's audience (9.190), much like the suitors at Ithaca or the Phaeacians in Alcinous's palace. Like the performance of

[249] Nagy 1974:248. Nagy has shown the formula eternal fame (*kleos aphthiton*) to be linguistically related to the Indic phrase *sravas aksitam*, meaning the same; it functions similarly metrically as well. This noun-epithet phrase then represents an immemorially old concept in Indo-European epic. These songs typically are "used to designate the songs which he [the aoidos] sang in praise of gods and men"

Odysseus's story the performance arena has again changed. Achilles is not performing for any royal audience or audience of social superiors on whom he depends. The Homeric poet does not tell us where Achilles learned his songs, if they were told by a mortal or divinely inspired by a god. The poet does tell us, however, that Achilles was delighting his soul by means of the song (*te ho ge thumon eterpen)* (9.189), which is what *aoidoi* do with their songs. So an *aoidos* can be any performative narration, whether accompanied or solo and with a variety of different venues.

Phemius and Demodokos are both *aoidoi* who are associated with the royal household of their respective islands. They are not traveling minstrels, but rather an accessory to a royal house. The narrator refers to both of them with the proper respect, though society within the two islands is vastly different. Whereas the Phaiakians seem to serve as the ideal society who respect and honor their bard, the Ithacans have compelled Phemius to sing and interrupt his song with raucous noise. Penelope even interrupts the bard, though she does so in a more respectful manner than the suitors. Odysseus, on the other hand, travels across the mortal and fantastical worlds, bringing news of far-off lands and peoples. His status as the antagonist to the epic plays little part in his status in the various societies he encounters. Among the Phaiakians, Odysseus is a complete stranger, but properly honored as a guest among the people of Alcinous. His status does not even change

when he reveals that he is a Trojan War hero and a story-teller whose abilities parallel those of Demodokos. Among the Ithacans, who do not initially know that he in fact is lord of the island, he is a beggar. He disguises himself, but even with his disguise he is treated far less well than he is at the court of the Phaiakians, though at both locations he in fact does a similarly representative job telling stories of travels. Nevertheless, his itinerant status should win him the honors of a *xenos* at Ithaca just as it did at Phaeacia, but the suitors deny him that status. Achilles performs as a very different type of bard from the highly formalized bards like Phemius and Demodokos, as well as from Odysseus.

The status of the story-teller at Phaeacia is an honored position in society, even if the one telling the story is not well known; Alcinous honors Demodokos and Odysseus similarly.[250] At Ithaca, however, the bard or story-teller is not an honored member of society, but rather treated foully and even abused. This, however, need not be construed as an indication of local differences in the social status of the bard, but rather an indication of the degree of corruption that Ithacan society has undergone during Odysseus's absence.

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[250] West 1999. This honorific position is comparable to Bronze Age Mycenaean, Babylonian, and Sumerian court singers, as compared to the dire situation of Phemius at Ithaca. Again, the differences between the setting in the palace of Alcinous and the home of Odysseus invite us to consider the Phaeacian court as a sort of heroic golden age and Ithaca as a parallel to the Iron Age. Embedded in this comparison then is a highly differentiated status and importance of the character of the singer.

The exploration of a few audience members' reactions to performed song-tales is not a large enough sample to produce a complete synopsis of early audience reception of oral traditions. It does, however indicate a complex level of awareness on the parts of the Homeric composer and the bards and story-tellers in the songs of singer-audience interactions. The Homeric poet uses his song to indicate that he knows how traditional songs can affect and control an audience. As a form of communication, I suggest that the depicted story-singers know that their songs can in effect control their audience; that is, that not only is the Homeric poet aware of the power of song but that also other bards are aware that as soon as they begin their songs they assume an active role in a societal power game. In some cases, they usurp temporarily that power from kings, by the nature of not only what, but how they say or sing their message.

The inspiration for the song about the quarrel of Achilles and Odysseus presumably comes from the gods, since the Homeric poet mentions at the first song of Demodokos that the gods granted him song (8.44) and that the muse took away his vision but granted him the gift of song (8.64). In Demodokos's first song, the muse moves him to sing the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles (8.73). No explicit mention is made of anyone prompting his second song. Demodokos's third song is requested by Odysseus as he heaps praise upon the bard at 8.486ff. Odysseus says that if Demodokos is able to sing the song that he has requested he will

heap the praise on Demodokos that he must have been taught by the Muse or Apollo himself. All these songs, it may be noted, are narrated in various past tenses, just as the narration of the Homeric poet describing the larger mimetic world is largely placed in the past tenses.

Telemachus tells Penelope at 1.346 that the newest songs are the most praised. Bards then could sing of things immemorially old or relatively new things as well. The song that Phemius is singing cannot be more than ten years old at this point in the *Odyssey*, and possibly even younger. The language used to describe Phemius implies that he is divinely inspired in his creation or inspiration of songs, but there must be a human component as well. Telemachus' response to Penelope at 1.347 asks how she can blame the singer for giving delight to his audience "in whatever way his mind is excited (*hope hoi noos hornutai)",* that is by whatever divine inspiration has come to the bard. The fact that Telemachus describes the "mournful return of Achaeans" as *a song* means that the poet thinks of this as a finite entity, with a distinct form and structure, though he may be free to change that structure at his or his audience's choosing. So in this description of an *aoidos* and his song, the Homeric poet has made clear that the bard is thought of by others as divinely-inspired, that his songs can persuade, possibly because of their divine source, and that the bard has the ability to modify or change his choice of material in order to best suit his audience.

It is also useful to look at the purpose a particular song has. Why is one song performed over another, and what is the context of that song? For the bards, the Muse or a god can give them the inspiration, but they may sing in whatever way is pleasing to them, implying choice, possibly even strategic choice (*Odyssey* 1.347 and elsewhere). In the case of Phemius's song of the returns, there are many possibilities. Phemius is being made to sing for the suitors who are trying to marry Penelope, so they might like to hear about how many of the Greeks are unable to return from Troy, because Odysseus could be one of those Greeks. It is possible that the suitors know that he could still be alive, especially since there is no song concerning his death, a song-worthy occasion for Greek heroes. Penelope also implies that this particular song has been performed before (1.343), and also that Phemius knows many other songs (1.356) that he could sing, but for some reason he sings a song that he has sung many times before, even though it produces a negative reaction from an audience member.

Odysseus appeals to tradition to fill in the blanks of his story, in the same way that the *aoidoi* appeal to the muse or the gods to describe things that they could not possibly have seen. Odysseus's firsthand knowledge cannot be enough though to describe some of the things that he does. There is no way, for instance, for Odysseus to know the specific things the Cyclopes lack, like council and laws, just by landing and looking around. Then, in 12.338, he describes the way his men sacrifice

the cattle of Helios in great detail, though he claims right before then that after praying to the gods he was overcome by sleep. The details, for instance, of the sacrifice and feast on the cattle follow with a traditional description of the sacrificial feast scene as appears frequently throughout the Homeric poems.[251]

As I have looked through the Homeric corpus at the way the bards viewed their tradition and performance, I briefly turn to the Hesiodic corpus for the tradition's own view of itself, manifested by the way the corpus depicts traditional poetry's transmission. Hesiod's *Hymn to the Muses*, which serves as the first 103 lines of the *Theogony*, presents his detailed and very self-aware view of his tradition. For Hesiod, his poetry's source is the Muses. Havelock argues that this is "the first documentation we have of the Greek minstrel's conception of himself and his role in society"[252]. This view, nevertheless, discounts the Homeric bards, who by the very nature of the poems, recognize that bards had a conception of their role in society. Homer avoids any particularly detailed first person narrative, other than his appeals to the muses, to which I shall return shortly. In summary, the Homeric poet provides the audience with no biographical information whatsoever. He also does not provide any particularized information about his sources,

[251] See Lord 1960, Foley 1999 and others for these types of scenes. These scenes are forumulaic, which can allow a poet to sing them without having experienced them firsthand. The recurrence of these scenes indicates further that Odysseus is participating in his own epic by his following of the proscribed order of things.
[252] Havelock 1964: 98.

where his poetry may originate, where he learned to perform, in short, any information whatsoever. In many respects, Hesiod is much more informative in relation to his outright statement of his sources. Even though the narrator of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* does not mention his sources, or really anything about his method of transmission, his *aoidoi* do.

According to Hesiod, the Muses are the daughters of Mnemosyne, memory deified. Havelock points out, however, that Mnemosyne is more than just the simple act of remembering; she also encompasses the process of memorization, recall and recording.[253] This technology of communication is contained both in the everyday speech, of which we have no direct access, and also in the formalized set-pieces that are poetic performance, handed down to us as poems recorded in manuscripts. But in Archaic Greece, they were something very different from constructs of words.[254] Songs, as would be more proper to describe archaic verbal artwork, were a living fabric of communication. Songs, for poets like Hesiod, communicate not just narrative stories, but contain an encyclopedia of important information for life in ancient Greece.[255]

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[253] Ibid: 100. At the center of this argument lies a discussion, for Havelock, not of the actual apparatus of society, but "with that technology of communication which sustains it"

[254] Ford 1992:134-136 also discusses the fact that writing is not a neutral technology " but may effect a transformation of consciousness and create a new relationship between speaker and what is spoken".

[255] HGE White 1982. As an encyclopedia, the very issue of recurrence becomes important for the way
the tradition passes down information in an unchanging way. For institutionalized

Homer, on the other hand, is a narrative adventure of sorts, and it hardly seems like the major plot points serve largely any other function than pure entertainment, with a smattering of pseudo-history. Even as the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* pointed out, the ancients themselves were aware of this discrepancy in the relative usefulness of the two giants of Greek epic. The mythical judgment in the *Contest* argued in favor of Hesiod, not on the basis of his virtuosity in composition or his ability to out-do Homer in performance, but because of the content of his poems. They focus on the didactic, on peacetime, on just rule and governance, and order in the universe, whereas the Homeric poems focus on the deeds of great men[256], on the capriciousness of the gods, and on war and death.

The narration in the Hesiodic works proceeds from a first person narrative, with Hesiod named as the speaker, in a sort of autobiographical recounting of his inauguration into the status of an epic singer. In the *Theogony* the Muses grant him a staff (*skeptron,* 30) and a divine voice (*auden thespin* 31-32), which echoes the descriptions of the Homeric bards and their voices and songs (as shown in the previous section). However, some differences are apparent between the narrator of the *Theogony* and Homeric descriptions of his bards. While Demodokos

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processes, having an easily accessible reference point provides guidelines on how to proceed, for instance with sacrifice or feasting.

[256] I will return later for a discussion on the issue *of kleos aphthiton*, the undying glory, of men and gods and its part in epic tradition.

and Phemius sing (e.g. *aeide Odyssey* 1.325, *aeidein* 8.45) Hesiod uses the verb *humnein*, which has the connotation "to celebrate in a hymn, commemorate"[257]. The verb *humnein* also never appears in the Homeric corpus, yet is fairly common subsequently. The *Theogony* has a distinctly religious tone to it, and in many respects serves as a hymn to the muses and Zeus.

Hesiod's performance of the *Theogony* does not appear to take place in any particular time or place, but the bard recounts how and when the muses appeared to him to teach him his art.[258] In his *Works and Days*, we are told by the narrator about a funeral game for a king of Chalcis, Amphidamas, where he competed. His victory in song won him a tripod, which implies that the contest served both to celebrate the death of Amphidamas and also to honor competitors reciprocally for their honoring the dead. Unlike the Homeric bards, Hesiod does not mention musical accompaniment. Hesiod does say that his performance in front of an audience was competitive, and it appears more formally organized than any implied competition present in the Phaeacian episode of the *Odyssey*. If it is to be supposed that the competition might have proceeded from a less formal state to a more formal state, then the later date of composition that Janko suggests would harmonize with the

[257] LSJ.

[258] HGH White 1982. This type of epic is very different in many ways from the Homeric epics. Its conscious self-awareness limits its authorship to a single poet, and in some ways distances itself from the anonymity of tradition.

Hesiodic poetry demonstrating reception of certain elements of the Homeric poems. Equally likely, however, is that there was simply a strong local tradition of competition around Chalcis and that Hesiod, being not so far off in Euboia, might have traveled as an itinerant bard of the sort Eumaeus mentions in the *Odyssey*.

Traditional songs naturally exist over generations of time, yet there is no reason why newer songs cannot be performed in the traditional register. In this way, singers' innovations are generative of the tradition itself. The history of the Homeric poems themselves attests to this from both linguistic and historical perspectives. I have looked at the way traditional poetry attributes agency to both the *aoidos* and the tradition. This complex interaction allows for the individual *aoidos* to mold the tradition while still retaining the authoritative power that a poetic form gains from this particular tradition and method of transmission. Next I shall discuss the way real world audiences receive oral poetry, and how that reception is modeled off of the audiences within the poems. The reception of this oral poetry creates culturally identifying authority and places the composer of the song as a figurehead representative of that cultural authority.

Part Two: Poet, Audience, and Authority

The composer of the Homeric poems was able to paint a detailed picture of an idealized audience and their reception of an idealized *aoidos,* but the depictions within the poems are not the only ones that show us the way audience and poet interact in ancient Greece. Russo defines poet as "anyone who employs speech in an artistic or creative manner[259]". All genres of Greek verbal art are designed for reception by different, but sometimes overlapping types of audiences. Disregarding some of the more purely literary genres, Greek authors, even prose authors, were in some degree influenced by the oral/aural aspect of performative delivery before a live audience. Russo defines performance as both the moment of utterance, a "speech event" shared by all present, and the specific artistic and authoritative "speech act" of someone who utters wisdom in a traditional verbal genre.[260] The *Odyssey,* and to a lesser extent the *Iliad*, is keenly aware of the power of this performance. In this section I break down the relationship between the poet or singer and his audience. This will contribute to our picture of how the power relationship conveys and creates authority.

[259] Russo 1997: 49. By this definition, Odysseus's tale is poetic and can be considered in the same category of Demodocus. On the other hand, Russo's broad definition would include most literature as poetry, so it is perhaps too wide.
[260] Russo ibid. The cultural reverberations of this influence will be discussed more thoroughly in the following chapter, but here we will focus on that moment of performance, the point of contact between the singer and the audience.

Two levels of authority can be said to operate here, social authority, and cultural (poetic) authority. The *aoidos* operates within an overlapping zone of these spheres, having a different status in each one. The social power of the speech act within the poems has been addressed in chapter 2, so I will not go into great depth here, however I will address in some ways how the act of creating speech affects society in Ancient Greece. In Homeric poetry, the spoken word granted and created power. Similarly, in Archaic Greece, the act of speaking had political authority. This is best manifested in the democratic polis of Athens, with its focus on rhetoric and the spoken word. This power comes to be the primary technology for leveraging political authority. Since the spoken word in the Homeric assembly was a primary means of abrogating power from the *anax*, who is granted power from Zeus, the speech act has a traditional role as a fulcrum of political power transferal. Society, for the ancient Greeks, was not only preserved by oral traditions, but its political conventions were created by the technology of speech. Poetry, however, does not operate in a purely political sphere, but a combination of social and cultural authority. Poetry, such as the Homeric poems, is used in political ways by other authors to align themselves with Athens, or set context and discuss the cultural background of the events they are describing. It is also used in ways that might make it culturally or socially authoritative and influential. This will be addressed in the

following chapter. By its political use, however, the poetry also gains cultural importance and this authority resonates between these spheres.

According to Collins' study in *Authority Figures*, authority is derived from speech and communication[261]. In Collins' formulation, authority is derived from a pronominal paradigm: the *I,* the *you,* and the *he/she/it/they* all interact and arrange social authority according to who is speaking. The first person speaker will always have an addressee, the second person audience, as well as a set of uninvolved referents, the third person(s). According to his analysis of the *Iliad*

> "Authority is conveyed by voice. Epic in the Greek tradition is, therefore, a poetry of powerful speech acts- threats, promises, lies, petitions, accusations, messages and the like, addressed to someone to accomplish some purpose"[262]

His study is concerned with speech acts within the society that the *Iliad* constructs, rather than the society that it is performed for. Nevertheless, the metaphor suggested that the primary speaking persons in a social group serve as "shepherds" of the people is apt. As addressed in the previous chapter, the assembly is one of the primary political

[261] Collins 1996.
[262] Collins 1996: 19.

meeting places. Like the assembly, in which a group of leading males listens to a single speaker or a competition of speakers who shape policy, epic performances feature a group, listening to either one or multiple singers creating or shaping their cultural traditions. In Collins' study of the *Odyssey* he further suggests that the epic shows a model for various levels of civilization, authority and society. However, as a reproduction of archaic society, it must also be said that authority is a verbal act.

Socially, in many respects, the bard is similar to the traveling craftsman, the *demioergoi* that Eumaeus the swineherd talks about in book 17 of the *Odyssey*. He serves society as an entertainer and even as a status symbol for his host, but in the poetic sphere he serves as a repository of knowledge and a transmitter of tradition and culture. Though the bard acts as a craftsman of sorts, constructing his songs and stories, he is also conspicuously similar to a beggar, as Segal points out.[263] Odysseus, in his return to Ithaca, begs for a cloak from Eumaeus by singing his false tale. Odysseus, even at the palace of Alcinous, must beg for his food and shelter, but from a different level of society. Nevertheless, he succeeds at both societal extremes, winning from Eumaeus food and shelter the same way he did from the Phaeacians. This serves as a metaphor for the art of the bard himself, who must

[263] Segal 1994: 157. The allusion is that in Ithaca, the bard Phemius has no apparent power. Though the bard is closer to the *demioergos* than a beggar, as he travels from town to town providing services to the people in the form of songs.

adapt his content to the audience for whom he performs if he is to be successful in his performance.

Song has an ability to trigger an emotional response in the audience as well as the performer. For instance, Odysseus's reactions to the songs of the Trojans, though he himself requested them, cause him to react with weeping. Written literature can trigger an emotional response, but not typically with the same sort of intensity of the aural/oral verbal art. There are many elements of song that contribute to the heightened intensity of the response. Rhythm and melody can manipulate the speed at which the mind absorbs information. They can distract the audience so that they may not even be immediately consciously aware of the meaning behind the words they have just heard. As the words are processed, either at the same time or slightly after the immediately absorbed melody and rhythm, they independently can act upon their audience. Later, Greek theater, for instance, takes advantage of this in order to affect the audience and cause them to enter the ecstatic state whereby they may become more susceptible to the messages of the playwright. Hesiod, in the beginning of the *Theogony* relates how the Muses "know how to speak many false things the same as true."[264]. The Muses serve as a metaphor for the tradition itself, both lending it authority and granting it at the same time the freedom to improvise. The power of the muses, or the tradition, then includes the

[264] Hesiod *Theogony* 27.

ability to persuade an otherwise rational audience of false things. The description of the songs of the Muses of Hesiod in the *Theogony* is described in visceral terms as both sweet (*hedeia* 40) and flowing (*reei* 39). This conception of song is similar to ancient descriptions of wine and honey, both of which have enchanting and persuasive properties[265]. The voice of the Muses, then, is the performance of the song, in the scheme of Muse as tradition.

In Russo's discussion of performance and audience interaction, he specifically disregards the poetic genre because of certain formal constraints that something like a poetic performance can induce upon the receiving audience.[266]. Nevertheless, his discussion of performance in relation to wisdom speech provides a useful perspective on Homeric epic. Wisdom speech is defined as an oral tradition which expresses communal beliefs. Ancient Greek epic, as has been discussed in chapter 2, is closely related to ancient Near Eastern oral poetry, specifically heroic epic and wisdom poetry. Russo proceeds to separate wisdom speech from what he calls "literary genres like epic or lyric poetry"[267] in order to focus on the improvisatory nature of the genre. However, he also recognizes that like any genre, there are formal structures to be followed, making its dramatic artistry "subject to audience evaluation because it is

[265] e.g. *Odyssey* 2.350.
[266] Russo, ibid. Poetic meter, he says, may interfere with the "verbal texture" of the speech, and the formal poetic nature of the speech-act creates a similarly formal reception among audience members and cloud the accuracy of response.
[267] Russo, ibid.

based on recognized convention"[268]. Oral epic poetry, likewise, is subject to both formulaic constraints and generic conventions, yet includes an improvisatory element and the flexibility to present the listener with a different experience at each performance.

In any type of performance there are necessarily certain expectations that the audience has, whether they are cognizant or not, regarding what they are hearing. These notions affect how they receive the performance. This is conditioned by their cultural experiences and the context for transmission of information. As a modern reader in a post-Christian society, we often read the Homeric and Hesiodic poems firstly as mythological narratives and marvel at their aesthetic qualities. This is a modern state of mind. To understand how an ancient Greek audience receives their poetry, before the spread of literacy in the Classical period, one must understand what Havelock calls the "Homeric State of Mind"[269]. One of the most important points to recognize is that cultures may have the technology of writing, but do not necessarily use that technology for the same uses we, as a modern visual society, use writing. Havelock does not outright make this qualification, but his analysis seems to imply it, to an extent. More and more we, as critics, are recognizing the complexity of the issue and understanding that it cannot

[268] Russo, ibid.
[269] Havelock 1964: 134ff. Havelock's investigation assumes a vast gulf separating a literate audience from a non-literate audience, though it should be stated at the outset that this statement must be qualified. There are many shades between literate and non-literate culture.

be broken down quite as simply as literate versus non-literate[270]. One must necessarily consider the formal versus the everyday speech types. In the case of oral traditional epic poetry, it is a formalized speech genre, yet other types of oral traditional poetry, such as praise poetry and wisdom poetry in different cultures can be informal or spontaneous[271]. Homeric poetry, as we receive it, appears formalized by institutions such as the Panathenaia[272], yet the descriptions of the bards Demodokos and Phemius appear to be far more spontaneous, not to mention the story of Odysseus, which has all the appearances of a spontaneous event, directed by the audience's desires.

In Havelock's argument, he breaks down communication into two categories: casual or colloquial daily communication and what he calls "preserved communication", or significant communication, which in our culture equates to literature "where the ethos and the technology of the culture is preserved"[273]. For instance, some of the seemingly less narrative portions of preserved epics, such as the catalogs we find in book 2 of the *Iliad* or throughout the *Theogony* may appear as if a narrator was poetizing a list or directive. This would require the intention on the part of the traditional singer to take what is suggested as a prose list or catalog, such as appears in the Mycenaean Linear B scripts, and

[270] Osterreicher 192. Osterreicher notes that medium of presentation and conception of type are wide ranging and can influence not only the composition but the reception.
[271] Jensen, 2011: 197ff.
[272] Nagy 2010 chapter 2.
[273] Havelock 1964: 135. Cultures preserve information and communication that is relevant to the continuation and promulgation of that culture.

fitting it metrically to his song in order to entertain his audience. However, this premise is not easy to support. It supposes that the poet was aware of such a written list and felt that it had entertainment value. This poet would then have had to rework the list from its barest form into a formalized hexameter. This then would be performed for an audience. The problem here then lies in the assumption that the poet could read and had access to a list of a military muster, and felt that an audience needed a catalog in their performance. Another hypothesis that makes much more sense in our understanding of oral poetry is that the lists themselves were originally preserved orally, and became traditional in songs of this nature.

Part 3: Oral Traditional Audiences and Authority

Orally preserved communication has the unique ability to reach the widest possible audience. In a culture where literacy was not a common element of people, the written preservation of culturally significant communication has no place. A poetic list, however, could be transmitted without the need of writing. It could reach a wider audience and thus become more influential. As Havelock says "Homer and Hesiod should be accepted in the first instance not as "poets" in the precious sense of the term but as representing a whole state of the Greek mind."[274]

[274] Havelock 1964: 138.

Elmer identifies two main types of reception audiences that shape the tradition: active tradition bearers and passive tradition bearers[275]. The active tradition bearer's main role in this formulation is that of the *aoidos* and later the *rhapsoidos,* the performer who actively transmits the song. It may also be anyone in the audience who reperforms or transmits the song in another manner[276]. A passive tradition bearer, on the other hand, "refers to those members of a community who, although they may not be competent themselves to perform and transmit to others a given element of tradition (or authorized to do so) are nevertheless knowledgeable about it to a greater or lesser degree, and are therefore able to judge and evaluate the activities of "active tradition bearers," whose competence extends to performance[277]."How passive tradition bearers have an effect on songs via their approval or disapproval also depends on their familiarity with the tradition that is being performed for them. This familiarity depends highly on the particular nature of the tradition, since there is not just one all-encompassing ancient Greek oral tradition, though it might seem like it from our meager surviving samples of epics.

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[275] Elmer 2009:206.

[276] An amanuensis who records the song in writing is also an active tradition bearer, though the dynamics of such are different than one who reperforms the song in the manner in which he heard it, that is in an oral performance setting. The amanuensis's audience might be a literate performer, or it might be his intent to record in writing so that the song might be used later in the same manner.

[277] David Elmer 2009: 206. Though it might seem paradoxical at first, the passive tradition bearers are equally if not more responsible for the shape and preservation of the orally derived traditional poetry. The passive tradition bearers, in the form of the audience, shape the form of the song by their reactions and responses in the moment of performance.

Ultimately, one of the challenges for the Homeric scholar is to identify why, in particular, the Homeric poems become more Panhellenic, while other poems remained *less* Panhellenic. Local traditions would seem to have a stronger force, locally speaking, than any non-local traditions. The Panhellenization of poetry and song would require that the various *poleis* were in such a situation where it would be beneficial to abandon some of their epichoric traditions and replace them with a more generalized tradition. In terms of the literary traditions, we must sort through later receptions, for the most part. In the earliest bodies of archaic Greek poetry, which can be seen as authoritative and influential, the Homeric epics are generally monolithic in their traditions and do not readily present multiforms or any indications of variability in the tradition which they are evoking[278]. Though the Homeric poems appear Panhellenic, there were also more epichoric and localized traditions. Janko has suggested, for example, the case of the Boeotian hero Askalaphos, who in our version of the *Iliad* is killed in book 13. Nevertheless, in a reconstruction of a significant tradition, the Cretan tradition, this hero plays a larger role later in the Trojan War[279]. Dictys of Crete reports that Askalaphos was still alive during events that took

[278] Though careful readings can hint at the multiformity of their expression. For a discussion of multiforms in Homeric poetry, see Foley *Homer's Traditional Art* 1997 and *Immanent Art* `1995. Nagy also suggests some particulars of multiforms in the *Odyssey* in *Homer the Preclassic*, especially chapter 2.
[279] Richard Janko *The "Iliad": A commentary* volume 4 1994: 108.

place during the *Aethiopis*[280]. This later reception, though prose, nevertheless indicates some variability concerning the character's death. Janko suggests that this tale is a carryover from a local Boeotian hero cult surrounding Askalaphos that has somehow made it to Dictys, though by what mechanism is unknown. Nagy has identified some flexibility regarding Odysseus's journey, especially concerning his Cretan Tales, indicating the possibility of a much earlier, Cretan or Minoan tradition, which was yet able to exert influence on epichoric traditions for a very long period of time.[281]

Part 4: The Impact of Competition on Textualization and Stasis

Multiforms in a tradition do not well survive the stasis that time produces, hence our single monolithic Homer emerging out of countless oral traditional composers. Textualization is one of the factors that contributes to our impression of stasis, as does the visual representative media that survive. Two major theories have well accounted or suggested the mechanism by which this stasis occurs. Nagy's theory of crystallization is a primarily performative crystallization where, during the course of successive and successful bardic performances in a festival setting, through the course of audience or judge selection, a particular version of a song becomes prevalent. This song then becomes a standard

[280] Dictys the Cretan *The Trojan War* iv. 2.
[281] Currie 2006:16-18 also discusses an alternate, earlier story of Odysseus's *nostos* and how the *Odyssey* could be said to be quoting from the earlier song, as well as the *Iliad* and an earlier epic concerning Memnon.

version; though still purely oral/aural in its delivery, the song has ceased to be composed-in-performance, and is rather the product of repetition. Albert Lord provides a still valid, and well received theory about this standardizing performance, which involves the dictation of a particular individual *aoidos's* version of their song to an amanuensis.[282] It does not suggest what the impetus for the textualization process was, but suggests that it is for the preservation of the song for later audiences[283]. There is no competitive drive for preservation, nor is there a receptive audience that would see a need for a written version of the song to be published. Ford suggests that "writing would have been antithetical to the oral singer's art in real ways, if less extremely so than Lord suggested"[284]. We have insufficient historical evidence regarding this fixation in text from sources after the fact, but it may be possible to look to the attitude of the *aoidoi* themselves, the historical realities, and our second-hand historical knowledge of the transmission of the songs in order to construct a model of the textualization process. I am not in any way attempting to address the issue of textualization in the exactness that such scholars as Janko or Nagy do, because I do not find it exactly relevant to my search, which is to understand the way that this textualization is used to build authority, both political and cultural.

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[282] Lord 1960. His *aoidos* is illiterate, which accounts for the oral formularity, yet does not suggest by what mechanism this particular *aoidos's* version of the song becomes the "standard" by which all others are measured and which is deserving of textualization.
[283] Lord 1960. The lack of motive for textualization plagues this theory, though.
[284] Ford *Homer: The Poetry of the Past* : 136.

Over a period of time, the Greeks, through a matrix of consensus and the competitive evolution of poetic traditions, formed particular versions of poems, which were localized at first but then eventually achieved some success and acquired a broader Panhellenic audience. Collective decision making plays a large role in Homeric society as well as archaic and classical Greek society[285]. In the poems, the audiences of speakers, performers, and athletes serve as a collective by which decisions are made. The Homeric poet was well aware of the powers of consent and dissent as they were ingrained into his tradition, and his audience was likewise aware. In their role as judge, members of the audience could promote one particular performer, or dissenting, demote the same performer. As judges, the audience functions in part like the council of *basilees* who make decisions that affect the *laoi.* At a festival setting, the particular audience may express consent to a singer's performance and in effect authorize that singer and his rendition, based on their prior experiences. This authorization, in a collective sense, provides a legitimization of a version of a song. This authorized song then might need to be exported in such a way as to avoid corruption, just as a mandate or directive of an *anax* might be carried out. The reward, of course, for the "better" performance of a song, was *kleos*, or fame.

[285] See chapter 2 as well as Elmer 2011: 23.

Part 5: *Kleos, Sema*, and the Shaping of a Tradition

The process by which the Homeric poems preserve significant acts of heroes and peoples also contributes to the cultural authority that it possesses. *Kleos* is of great importance for the study of the Homeric poems in many more ways than are relevant here, but it will suffice to show how the concept of *kleos* builds authority via the oral traditional nature of the poems. The poems themselves, as *semata,* are able to create a reminder to future generations of the deeds that occurred on a spot. *Sema* in Homer regularly refers to a burial mound, but at it can also refers to writings.[286] *Sema* creates a future reminder of past deeds and thus convey *kleos*, literally that which is heard. The glorification of heroes comes not internally from their deeds, but from the reception of those deeds by an audience. Epic, then, is positioned directly as the vehicle for conveying that *kleos* for the hero. But epic is also a way for a tradition to display *kleos*. In the *Iliad*, we see a competition between two traditions' drive to create *kleos* for a *ktisis* or foundation story. The Trojan Walls represent a Panhellenic tradition: the Trojan walls were built by Apollo and Poseidon. They have resonance beyond the scope of the *Iliad* itself and are important for other stories as well. The walls around the Greek camp, however, are purely local.

[286] Ford 1992:141 ff discusses the various uses of *sema* in the ancient world, specifically in reference to this very issue. In near eastern cultures, written words were often referred to as signs, visually recorded signifiers.

The Homeric poems make one single reference to text in the story of Bellerophon, where they are referred to as *semata...lugra,* baneful signs, which are folded up in a tablet[287]. These signs consist of the message to the king of Lydia to kill Bellerophon. The *semata* in the *Iliad* are inscribed on tablets with the verb *graphein*, which is regularly used in Greek to indicate writing, though usually with the cognate noun *grammata*, rather than *sema* as appears in Homer.[288] *Sema* regularly refers to other things in Homeric poetry as well: the monuments to dead heroes, built to preserve their *kleos.*[289] The various other signs to be considered include portents and omens, as well as the burial mounds to heroes. *Semata* have power, in a sense. They are associated with the divine and can be used to predict the future or read more deeply into the meanings of basic events, and they can preserve for eternity the memory of a doer of great deeds. The former category is inscrutable to the mere man, and even to most heroes. They require some sort of interpreter such as a priest or a prophet to make sense of them. *Semata* are highly powerful symbols that very few are able to properly interpret to their advantage.

The geographic context of *sema* is relevant because at the time of composition and influence, we know the area of the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean were inhabited by literate societies who regularly communicated

[287] *Iliad* 6.168.
[288] Ford 1992:132, Bellamy 1989:289-307.
[289] Ford 1992: 137. Ford suggests that there is deeper meaning in Homer's use of the word *sema* rather than *grammata*. He suggests that by this use of *sema* "Homer has aligned writing with many other 'signs' in the poems, a large array of physical objects with varying signifying functions"

trans-lingually via a community of multilingual scribes. The Greeks were a part of this community; though their records did not seem to involve the same type of communication, we have many examples of Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Babylonian and Ugaritic intercommunications. Since the *Iliad* takes place in the Bronze Age, this retrojection is highly appropriate on the part of the poet recognizing that the Near Eastern civilizations knew about and used writing for communication between kings, though apparently the Greeks did not. So the Greeks knew that other cultures were able to use writing to communicate significant information, even across normal linguistic barriers, but chose not to use it themselves for the preservation and transmission of significant information, such as their songs. So then what purpose could the textualization serve, if not for the transmission between creator and audience of the information? One often suggested theory is that it was used by bards for the preservation of a particularly powerful version of their song[290]. However, even this theory is reflective of the attitude of the Homeric poet towards *sema*, where the *sema* is highly meaningful, sometimes divinely-inspired, and a method of preserving *kleos,* but is also not accessible by everyone, only those who are initiated and knowledgeable. An essential part of any verbal art form is the audience, and especially in a performative tradition such as Greek epic. The

[290] e.g. Lord 1960. This would only function if the intended audience was either the bard who put the song into text or a literate bard, because a bard who was illiterate and required an amanuensis to record and read aloud the song would not envision this as an efficient method of preservation. It would require far too many variables and resources.

audience for the oral/aural performance has been addressed as a primary audience so far in this chapter and in most recent research concerning Homeric poetry[291]. In an oral setting, there is no secondary audience who can come to know the songs as they were performed, because if they are absent from the performance, they must wait for another occasion for the epic singer to perform again. Even with the same singer, however, there is no way to capture that specific performance's nuances and idiosyncrasies.

Nevertheless, the poems were written down at some point, probably in the seventh century, for *someone* to read. What has occurred here is a change, or the beginning of a change, in the utilization of the technology of preservation. Greeks were influenced by the Near Eastern cultures with which they had contact, and writing was the result of one of these influences. Nevertheless, just because a technology such as writing exists does not mean the Greeks would have seen the benefit of writing for the recording of their songs. Since many modern singers in oral traditions claim that they are repeating their songs as they learned them, their version of the "same" song is not a literate person's version of the "same", or verbatim repetition.[292] A variation of a song elicited for dictation or recording will necessarily not be the same version that is performed spontaneously. This

[291] The lack of a literate audience was the basis for F.A. Wolf's original form of the Homeric question: If there were no literate audiences, how could a poet have written the *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* and for whom? Nevertheless, as the field progressed, many modifications occurred, which include the possibility that the individual who submitted the poems in a chirographical written form may have done so for a limited audience of other poets or even scribes.

[292] G.S Kirk proposed that the oral poems were handed down verbatim for centuries, but Adam Parry refutes this theory. For a discussion, see Fowler 2004 :224.

has presented some difficulties for scholars of oral epic traditions. Parry's founding theories were in part based on the rigidity of the oral formulaic theory. Parry and Lord's interviews with their South Slavic primary sources even stressed the exactness of their transmission of their traditions and their avoidance of originality as a concept in the performance of their songs[293]. One bard interviewed by Lord, Avdo Mededovic, retold an anecdote about a performance of a song that he learned from a book during which the owner of the book was present and confirmed that the song was performed exactly as the text read[294]. Jensen points out that this is highly reminiscent of the comments of Odysseus to Demodokos in Phaiakia[295]. In this episode, Odysseus praises the bard and offers him a prize cut of meat. He further requests a particular episode of the Trojan War be sung, and if it is sung *moi... kata moiran,* Odysseus will praise the bard as a recipient of a truly divine gift[296]. The phrase that Odysseus uses to judge this is subjective, it is not only to be sung *kata moiran*, correctly, but *moi... kata moiran.* This places Odysseus's involvement in the Trojan War as a referent, because as a participant in the events that are being sung, he is in a primary position to be able to judge their accuracy.

In the Homeric poems, we are not given many opportunities to decide on variants of songs and their impact, but throughout living oral

[293] Lord 1960: 44-5.
[294] *Serbo-Croatian Heroic Songs* 3, 1974, 65-6.
[295] Jensen 2011: 116.
[296] *Odyssey* 8.496.

traditions, there are many examples of the seemingly contradictory concepts of the flexibility of orally transmitted songs and the claims that singers often make of their veracity and accuracy.

Regardless of whether we consider a version or variant noticeably different from one performance to the next, it functionally was not so for an emic oral traditional audience. Ong points out that the oral presentation of material intended for print recording changes the presentation in the mind of the composer, because the composer may be performing for a single immediate audience (hearer) who can then convert that sound to script which is recorded for reading by either a single reader or group of readers[297]. A writer writes for an imaginary audience, a singer sings for an immediately present audience, but the situation of the Homeric poet is like none of these, as it crosses a series of interstices between audience and author, which in turn follows a struggle between performance as well as editing traditions. Changes in the media of communication force changes in the way we think about communication: "when writing began, it certainly did not wipe out talk... It was produced by those in compact settlements who certainly talked more than scattered folk in the countryside did. Once they had writing they were encouraged to talk more, if only because they had more to talk about. But writing not only encouraged talk, it also remade talk"[298].

[297] Ong 1977:85.
[298] Ibid p86.

Writing caused a significant rethinking in communication, as well as forcing a culture to become more analytical of their communication. Homeric poetry betrays this significantly in its self-reflective nature. The Homeric poems exist on the cusp between a fully oral culture and a literate culture, not certainly either yet influenced by both types. Both types of cultures have differing poetics or aesthetic priorities. Ong notes that in more ways than the simple and obvious presence of an audience at the performance of an oral poem, oral poetics are aimed at a sense of community and communication. The poetic is essentially agonistic and competitive.[299] Homer's poetry is self-reflective and highly creative. It acknowledges implicitly that it is aware of how traditions work, and betrays an understanding of a sort of pre-political democracy in the assemblies. Nevertheless it does not glorify its creator at all. There is no Homer within Homer, unlike many subsequent Greek poets, whose persona and identity appear within their works. The poet of the *Odyssey* does not speak for himself, though he does allow his characters to speak for him.

Even Hesiod, who composed either contemporaneously or very slightly later than the traditional date of Homer, knows who he is and what his place is in the poetic milieu. Hesiod tells us that he learned his craft from the muses, which essentially acknowledges that he did *not* learn it

[299]Ong 1977a: 225. A literary aesthetic is, in his terms, romantic and glorifying the poetry in an abstract way. Oral poetics, on the other hand, are rhetorical in the sense that they promote debate in front of an audience as well as in front of other poets, who often learned their skills and materials by being members of audiences

from listening to other singers. Though he composed in an oral manner, his songs are far more similar to a writer. He, like what Ong calls the Romantic, hence literary, poets prized creativity above tradition.[300]

Though the *aoidos* sings the tale according to his ability, it is on the part of the audience to provide approbation. Homer depicts audience's reactions, indicating that they are attentive to the poet, sometimes emotionally involved even. However, what remains to be seen is the level of judgment on the part of the audience that can indicate the success of the performance and guarantee the glory of the singer, a guarantee that ultimately provided the lasting future for Homer's, or any, poet's songs and their authoritative influence in the subsequent generations of singers. It is due to the poet's ability to preserve *kleos* that provides this approval as well as the performance that most activates the oral traditional audience's recognition of their song.

The story singers in the *Odyssey* have their own voice, but they also carry the voice of their narrator, also a bard, who sings with no mention of himself in our preserved versions. I will later address the anonymity of the singer of a written text. The Homeric poet shows his audience a smaller, stylized and idealized version of his song, with a similar performance arena simply idealized into a more "heroic" past. The songs that the *aoidoi* sing are the same kinds of songs that real eighth century

[300]Ong 1977a: 225. In his claim that he relies on no man for his skill: "creativity implies that each poet starts not from a storehouse but ex nihilo, making poems which in principle are unique"

aoidoi sing. For instance, Demodokos's song of the Affair of Ares and Aphrodite sounds just like a Homeric Hymn, and is approximately the same length, introduced in the same fashion, and presumably is performed in a similar setting. The *aoidoi* must be composing in the same manner as the Homeric poet. Homeric poetry, as has been pointed out, is highly paratactic, and later Greek becomes highly hypotactic[301]. Though one might suppose that a strictly paratactic medium could not achieve any of the amount of complexity of a hypotactic structure because of the paratactic composer's constant immediacy, this is not necessarily the case. Our understanding of the ability of the oral composer must not necessarily be subsequently that he is in some way primal and simplistic in comparison to the literate composer. This would deny the oral-traditional singer both his art as well as his authoritative position in the ancient Greek world. John Miles Foley highlights the Homeric poet's use of *sema* as a "sign that points not so much to a specific situation, text, or performance as toward the ambient tradition, which serves as the key to an emergent reality", metonymically linking the immediate present of the performance with a larger, immanent tradition[302]. I am necessarily keeping the comparison between literary and oral poetics just beneath the surface of this discussion, because by highlighting the powers of an oral tradition, it necessarily marks those powers as a benefit that a literary poetic lacks.

[301] e.g. Havelock 1964: chapter 2. This is simplistic, as different varieties of verbal art will require a different style and what is appropriate to deliver orally may differ on a profound structural level when that medium shifts to the visually represented.
[302] Foley, in Bakker and Kahane 1997: 56.

Many have cited the quality of the Homeric epics as evidence of a written process of composition, likening it to such works as the *History* of Herodotus.[303] The gap between the composition of the Homeric poems and the literary age of Herodotus marks a transitional period of time where writing came to be not only a mnemonic, but a system of encoding information markedly to deliver more meaning than its face value. Lord initially asserted that phases of oral to literary transition exist, but transitional texts do not, "because the two techniques are, I submit, contradictory and mutually exclusive"[304]. Nevertheless, there are many examples of singers who are able to orally compose and who also may learn from written sources.[305] The idea that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* exist as a transitional text[306], bridging the gap between the non-literate archaic culture and the literary classical culture of Greece is not without parallel throughout other cultural transitions, but discussion is often tainted by the polemical suggestion that a culture is going from inferior cultural recording to superior cultural recording[307].

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[303] See Jensen 2011: 209 for a discussion of various opinions. Works on such a scale, this argument goes, require the ability to look back over what has been covered and what has not in order to move forward. Very likely, the actual writing was done by an amanuensis, with the composer dictating. He would, however be able to have the scribe go back and repeat material for editing

[304] Lord 1960: 129.

[305] Finnegan 1977: 24 and 2007: 113. Finnegan notes that some singers in Sierra Leone may use written notes during their preparation of their performance and suggests that a looser definition of the term oral is necessitated by current ideologies in the field of oral poetics

[306] Fowler in Fowler 2004 p 226.

[307] Jensen 2011: 182.

Texts that record a particular instance of an oral traditional performance cannot serve as a substitute for a performance, however, and the recordings are typically initiated by one outside of the oral tradition.[308] Even when the fieldworker may seek to preserve a tradition that may be becoming scarce, the recording in an alien format does not produce a noticeable effect on the performing members of the tradition. In the context of a possible transcription that may have recorded Homeric performances as text, the texts themselves would have no effect on either performer or audience, and therefore in no way would they usurp any of the authority that is due to singer connecting with audience.

This is not to say that there are not situations where literacy may be of use in oral traditions. In the case of South Slavic oral traditions, for instance, there are examples of singers who may have learned the basic shape of their songs from texts[309]. In many orally performed epics, literacy is often a virtue that the hero may possess[310]. There are even representatives of the complexity of suggesting universally the opposition of literary cultures versus oral cultures. In South Eastern India, for instance, Blackburn notes a tradition in praise songs where a reader reads a line of verse to a leader, who then sings it to be repeated by a chorus[311]. Some highly literate singers, such as the Xhosa of south Africa, when asked to

[308] Bynum in *SCHS* 14 1979 :4. David Bynum notes that in South Slavic fieldwork, researchers' publications of transcripts taken from performance do not in any notable way influence the tradition
[309] Jensen 2011: 187.
[310] Slyomovics 1987: 49, 129.
[311] Blackburn 1988 pxxi.

perform a praise song according to a text that is written will attempt to follow the text but eventually diverge from it, viewing the text as a hindrance rather than a help, because of the way it limits and stifles the performance[312].

As our understanding of the oral traditional poet's art came at first in the form of a basic construct, like using interchangeable formulae in a metrically standard way, eventually it expanded to see a larger picture of what Lord called *themes* or *story patterns*, as recurrent within a poem[313]. However, there was no reason to limit this poetic vision to single songs and thus isolate them. Foley expanded upon these story patterns by proposing a model for traditional referentiality, where various compositions within the same tradition can refer to one another to build meaning[314]. The nature of such a tradition works forward and backward in time through the tradition, just like the individual singer's influence. I seek to show that the tradition itself is an immanent tradition, not simply the art of the tradition but the functionality of the tradition and the way that it passes information and communicates cultural authority and institutions.

The oral traditional poet is always in contact with his tradition in multiple directions: the tradition he learned from his predecessors constantly exerts influence on him and at the same time he exerts the same

[312] Opland 1983: 90-116.
[313] Lord 1960.
[314] Foley 1997, 1993.

influence on his audience. [315] The *aoidoi* within the songs, however, do not contact other poets. They, like Hesiod, get their inspiration from the Muses. They retain a notion of individual divine inspiration.

This is what oral poets in a pre-literate age maintain, though this does not necessarily invalidate the social context of the singers' performance and transmission. Poets of a later, what Ong calls romantic, literate age depend not on muses or other singers, but their own individual genius and creativity. By their dependence on the muses, the Homeric *aoidoi* acknowledge an outside influence on their composition and performance. The *aoidoi* are always in contact with their tradition in an essential way that a literary poet is not necessarily. The orally performing bard's speech is "irrevocably committed to time", as Ong puts it[316]. It does not last past the instant of its utterance. The written poet's words are visible and can be retraced without the aid of memory, but a performing bard's connection to his tradition is not able to be recorded externally; it must be linked internally. The oral/aural performance is just as elusive and dependent on tradition for the receiving audience, because of the way the performance progresses through time in a more linear way than a graphically recorded reproduction of a performance does. A transcript can be looked at up and down, forward and backward, as the whole object can exist at a single

[315] Ong 1977a*:* 225. The oral traditional poetic is in constant contact with a whole world of other poets with whom he competes and educates, as all his audience members are potential poets, while a literary poet composes in isolation, both from his audience and the influence an oral tradition exerts on the poetics.
[316] Ong 1981: 40.

moment and also for an undefined length of time. Conversely, the individual elements of an oral performance can only exist at the moment of performance and therefore demand a different type of connection between the audience and the words. They must be understood as always going on, without any backtracking.

As words only have meaning in relationship to a social context, song can also have meaning only in a social context. As a result of the New Criticism, we are often presented with a reading of poetry for its own sake, and this falls in line with how Ong describes the literate poet as being a poet who creates his work for its own sake, as a contained object or product, to be admired for its own internal qualities. Oral poetics deny that objectivizing of song into an object that is a closed system that can in essence, not be judged, only admired or ignored. A social context and the immediacy that performance mandates should force us as critics to ask about the setting and function of song. Ancient audiences surely considered those aspects when judging song as being worthy of reperforming or not.

As the oral traditional theory points out, oral traditions are economical. He may have not sensed the implications of this economy, referring as he was to the purely metrical use of recurrent phrases, but Foley certainly has made us aware that this economy is much greater than simply a set of handy tools by which a poet may compose while performing. The poet who is able to make the best use of his traditional formulae creates

more *meaning* than the immediate meaning of the words themselves, and this *best* use is what is most meaningful to his audience, who is also a part of that tradition. Formulae refer not "just- or even principally- to the goddesses' eyes or the ships' hue, but rather the phrases use those characteristic yet nominal details to project holistic traditional concepts"[317]. However, there are variables in this construction, namely how well the poet makes use of his tradition, not just the formulae, but the story patterns and the whole referentiality of the song he sings to an audience to the other songs that they may know. A second variable I just hinted at is the audience's ability to construct referential meaning from the performance of the singer. This will be partly by their own experiences as well as by how well the singer highlights the *sema* in his song. The singer activates the audience to the greater metonymic meaning by three prime aspects of his tradition: performance arena, register, and communicative economy[318]. I have already discussed to some extent the Homeric poet's uses of performance arena in his reenactments of the bardic performance in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*[319]. It is their recognition of register that opens the audience to the full effect of the singer's meaning, and different singers are able to utilize this register to different degrees. It follows then that the singer who best utilizes this register to activate his audience's reception of song will succeed as the best singer. Ultimately, the poet and audience who are

[317]Foley in Bakker and Kahane 1997: 65.
[318]Foley in Bakker and Kahane 1997: 69.
[319]See section 1 of this chapter.

most cognizant of their tradition will succeed, but as audience or poet loses sense of traditionality, the need for other methods of communicating the same information will become necessary. Even while Odysseus tells his tales in Phaeacia, Alcinous is cognizant that Odysseus has activated a traditional register by his way of speaking: "but for you there is a shape of words, and your mind is good, and you go through a *muthos* knowingly, like how an *aoidos* does"[320]. This indicates that there is a *way* that the *aoidos* sings that an audience can recognize, and that to the right audience, this particular way of speaking transcends normal everyday speech, and is also different from the base lies that people speak, even though both sets of tales are equally unprovable. When speaking to Penelope, however, in book 19, the narrator tells us that Odysseus speaks many lies that seemed like the truth[321]. These "lies seeming like truth" are just what Hesiod's Muses are able to sing, and which he in turn learns from them. The archaic *aoidos* is able to convince an audience by the way in which he sings his tale that it is truth, and the audience will recognize certain keys in their tales that, although fantastical, they still believe and consider to be truth. This method of communicating knowledge is only accessible by the mechanism of utterance. In Archaic Greece, knowledge is a cultural property, not an individual one. The knowledge that a culture knows is based on "what people say", which places those people doing the saying in a position of authority. This puts authority directly in the voices of those who serve as

[320] *Odyssey* 11.367-8.
[321] *Odyssey* 19.203.

the mouthpieces for an oral culture, in the case of Archaic Greece, the epic poets. The complexity of the process of social authority in Archaic Greece presents a sort of dual status for the *aoidos* and the poetry in society. The *aoidos* occupies a low place on the social hierarchy in archaic Greece as depicted by the Homeric epics[322], yet the poetry of Homer occupies the highest status among the verbal arts of ancient Greece.

The Homeric poet has shown his audience's recognition of some of the activating keys to oral poetics, namely the way in which a story-singer is persuasive of his tale, but there are other elements of the oral poetics that he incorporates into his *aoidos* who perform before an audience. The *Odyssey* presents us with a number of different story-types, some of which can even be compared. We know that Phemius sings a *nostos,* and, though we do not get to hear his actual words, we know that the song is new, for Telemachus tells us that men most enjoy hearing the newest songs[323]. Demodokos sings the Affair of Ares and Aphrodite, which sounds much like a Homeric Hymn. His other songs are heroic martial epic, the Quarrel of Achilles and Odysseus, and the story of the Trojan Horse. Odysseus tells the Phaiakians his *nostos* and he tells Eumaeus his Cretan Lies, which bear a striking resemblance to the *nostos* story-pattern he tells the Phaiakians. In both cases, he tells a *nostos*, which is fitting in the larger sense of the epic. At the court of Alkinoos, he tells what is purportedly the truth of his

[322] Thallman 1998: 266 and following.
[323] *Odyssey* 1.352.

return from the Trojan War, at least as far as the narrator would have the audience believe. He sets out from Troy and encounters many difficulties on his way home, is received as a *xenios* in the house and tells his tale up to that point. A very similar situation occurs during the so-called "lying tales" that Odysseus tells when he finally reaches home at Ithaca. Dressed as a beggar, Odysseus first encounters Athena and tells her of his journey, also from Troy, where he is on the run after killing a son of Idomeneus, and abandoned by the Phoenicians. His story expands and changes when he tells it to Eumaeus the swineherd, who is at the outset suspicious of Odysseus because of the pressures that poverty can put on a person, making them willing to lie for any type of shelter or support[324]. Eumaeus was also deceived by a wanderer who told a tale of Crete and Idomeneus, so he has prior reason to expect Odysseus to lie. Odysseus' tale expands further and involves an instance where he hears of Odysseus's impending return, which he promises in hopes that Eumaeus will give him a cloak. By the time Odysseus's tale reaches Penelope, Odysseus as the beggar claims to have had direct contact with Odysseus, who will be returning soon to Ithaca. As Odysseus continues to expand on his lies, they become closer and closer to the truth, even if that truth is reached through deception. Nagy, in a recent lecture at the Parry-Lord lecture series at the University of Missouri, suggests that this long "Cretan Odyssey" may be a holdover from a much earlier version of the *Odyssey* in which Odysseus journeyed

[324] *Odyssey* 14.156.

through a more Cretan landscape. This would suggest that the Odyssean story is a very old adaptation of a *nostos* which may have existed at an earlier, Minoan stage of the Bronze Age.

In a post oral-traditional setting, the direct poetic competition is lost. Singers no longer compete in the totality of their composition and performance in front of each other and an audience, but one on one between themselves and a reader. This delayed reception gives them the freedom to a complexity of analytical thought impossible in an oral-traditional setting, essentially the hypotactic versus paratactic nature not of the grammatical structures but of thought processes.

So oral poetics prize competition,[325] and there certainly was competition in the oral traditions of archaic Greece, yet something changed and caused the priorities to change and emphasize verbatim preservation over traditional preservation.[326] One way to account for this textualization/standardization process is an influence outside of the aesthetic of the production and public entertainment venue. This could in part be due to an audience that was no longer able to recognize the oral traditional register and thus be influenced by it or a singer who was no longer able to utilize his *semata* to activate his audience, or we may see a breakdown in tradition for an external reason as well, such as a political or societal reason.

[325] Though as Ford 1992:95 points out that there is little direct trace of competition in the poems.
[326] Kirk 1966, 1985.

By preserving the name of the author and the work, it becomes static. This stasis causes the poetry and poet to become, in a sense, locked together. Preserving communication does not necessarily mean that the communication must remain static, however, as that can defeat the relevance of the communication. What this does, however, is memorialize the poet, rather than the tradition. In this sense, the name Homer became associated with a body of song that was recorded in writing. The poet himself may have had nothing to do with the recording or memorialization, but the Greek people associated the songs that had embodied their traditions in a very real and practical sense with an author, making him in a sense their cultural ancestor. The legacy of the memorialization is felt throughout all of Greek written literature, which could be seen as a struggle to adapt an oral culture to the extremely economical and durable medium of writing. Authors achieve some compromise by their utilization of elements of the Homeric poetry in their own. This combines familiar elements of the oral poetry that initially defined and identified their culture with the innovations that writing allowed them. This reception of Homeric authority will be discussed in the subsequent chapter, Homer Reconstructed, where I will demonstrate how literature adapts the Homeric oral tradition to provide a link to their past while continuing to provide culturally significant communication.

In this chapter we have looked at the ways the bard is depicted in his own singing, and how his songs are received by their audience. This

nexus of composition, reception, and transmission provided the correct environment for an oral society to embed its culturally relevant information in its epics. The nature of oral poetics and the power of speech gave Homeric epics an authority that was immanent on society. This authority, further, is shaped by society's reactions to the songs in the form of active and passive tradition bearers. The inaccurate or unimportant material is filtered out, leaving a perpetually relevant epic for the way society envisions its ideals. This is reflected in the way that the poems themselves treat the subject, and is shown by the way the Homeric poems are received in the subsequent literary traditions in Greece, as will be explored in the final chapter. In Iron Age, Greek villages were growing eventually developing into states, which looked to the epic traditions to link themselves to an idealized past. This would create the situation whereby the poet is essentially in control of the identity of a people.[327]

[327] Also see Farenga 1998 for discussion of the Homeric poems' use in shaping of what he terms "traditional cognitive patterns".

Chapter 4: Homer Reconstructed: The Reception of Homeric Authority

The previous chapter has demonstrated that the archaic Greek bard cooperates with his audience to facilitate the transmission of culturally important stories, information, and song. The entertainment value of the content of the song is not as important: the act of the performance of the song in a social context dictates a social hierarchy where the singer's audience recognizes the importance of the tradition and imbues it with cultural authority.

The Homeric poems were not the only songs that were performed in an oral traditional context; Hesiod and the countless anonymous other bards were not passed on with the same authority and cultural importance as Homer was. The Homeric poems resonate throughout all of recorded Greek literature, art, and history with such complexity that it becomes nearly commonplace to accept their primacy in Greek literature without question. Nevertheless, it is my goal here to investigate the ways in which the authority of Homeric poetry is utilized throughout the subsequent literary tradition. This use by later literary tradition in many ways resembles the way that the Homeric bards make use of their traditions, using them as a mouthpiece and seeking in them a justification of their authority, accuracy and importance.

I shall briefly address the pivotal transition from Archaic Greek culture to Classical Greek culture, with a focus on the adoption of the Greek alphabet and the extensive influence from Near Eastern narrative artwork. Much like

the earliest Bronze Age influences which I addressed in Chapter Two: Homer: Preconstructed, the alphabet and Near Eastern narrative artwork served as indicators of a cultural revolution catalyzed by contact with foreign cultures. Following the material culture, I discuss the textualization of Homeric poetry. Finally I will look at the reception of Homeric poetry in three temporal periods, roughly the Archaic period, the Classical period, and the Hellenistic period.

Foreign, non-Greek influences compel the Greeks to produce highly self-identifying cultural artifacts, such as art and literature. The Greeks themselves were even aware, to some extent, of the influence of external cultures on their own culture. For instance, Hecataeus suggests in the late fifth century BCE that Danaus brought writing from Egypt to Greece.[328] Throughout the archaic period, or the oral/aural period, the Homeric poetry was the Greek's background material for their cultural revolution, and to remain in contact with that background, post-archaic Greek literature and culture utilizes this traditional background and its keys and contexts in radical new ways to create new meaning for new cultural development. The textualization of the Homeric tradition was the first step in this process of textual reception and recreation. I address some issues regarding the current theories of the textualization of Homeric poetry,

[328] Jeffery 1964. Though many other ancient critics had their own ideas, such as Stesichorus, who credits the invention of writing to Palamedes, Hecataeus credits the Egyptians because their writing existed prior to Greek writing. This is a step in the right direction, though Egyptian writing is but one of the external sources that the Greeks had contact with who possessed the technology of writing.

not so much to redefine or present new theories, but to put into context what the textualization of Homeric poetry means to the Greek literary tradition. The Classical Greek literary epoch provides the pivotal point, during which what Nagy calls the Athenian *koine* developed, due in great part to Athens' domination of the eastern Mediterranean following the Persian Wars. Alexandrian scholarship, primarily the work of Aristarchus, provides great insight on how the oral/aural conception of Homeric poetry survives throughout the textualization process centuries after the *aoidos* seems to be a relevant cultural figure.[329]

Part 1: Material Culture and the Invention of the Greek Alphabet

One of the most-discussed problems in the transmission and influence of the Homeric poetry from the earliest days has been the quest to understand how the songs became textualized. Oral cultures have no use for texts for their records, nor do they have any need for a fixed version, so the question of how an oral poet's song-performances became written down has long vexed classicists. Texts of the Homeric poems include many of the tools that an orally composing poet utilizes, tools which a highly literate culture might interpret as out of place in a polished, edited text. We must wonder how the written text came to preserve such oral aspects, and why. Lord has suggested that a performance of the Homeric poems had been dictated at some early stage[330]. One problem with this theory is the diffusion of the Homeric poems in the early seventh century BCE on both

[329] Fowler 2004.
[330] Lord 1953.

sides of the Aegean[331]. As Nagy points out, diffusion presents difficulties to studying the transmission of a text at this time. The manuscript materials themselves were not widely available and the lack of literacy at this time was not enough to make a written copy of Homer worth the trouble.[332] Another problem with this hypothetical dictated text is what will here be referred to as source-selection, or why that particular version of the song was selected over others that were in circulation. This is one of the most relevant problems in my research; why and how was the poetry we call Homeric so powerfully authoritative and influential in ancient Greece? The answer must take into account the multiformity of oral traditions as well as the various methods of transmission of an oral text to an oral-derived text to a written text. One solution to this problem has been suggested by Nagy in his evolutionary model describing the diffusion of early Homeric poetry. According to his hypothesis, "the wider the diffusion...the fewer opportunities for recomposition, so that the widest possible reception entails, teleologically, the strictest possible degree of adherence to a normative and unified version"[333]. This particular type of diffusion coexists with the rising trend of Panhellenism in the late archaic period.

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[331] M.L. West 1990. If the poems were already widespread by the point in time when writing was also becoming a widespread phenomenon, it stands to reason that the poems had already had a long life and thus could not have possibly been recorded at an early point in their respective traditions.

[332] Nagy 1996b:32. As general consensus suggests, a written Homer sill does not make sense, though a static “performance” text would certainly be a possible reason for creating one. Though we have a picture of emerging literacy, it is unclear who had access to literacy; if some rhapsodes were literate, it would possibly indicate a connection to the textualization question. Unfortunately no such data exists.

[333] Nagy 1996a:39-40 and Nagy 1990a.

Panhellenism is described by Snodgrass as a "pattern of intensified intercommunication among the city-states of Hellas, starting in the eighth century BCE[334]". This intensified intercommunication would naturally create pathways for the transmission and proliferation of various types of cultural technology, including oral epic as well as the basic technologies of writing.

The earliest period of recorded literacy in Greece is sometime during the eighth century BCE, however it is impossible to certainly say that the alphabet did not exist prior to this time.[335] During this time, inscriptions appeared on pottery and stones. Powell divides these inscriptions into two types: short and long inscriptions. The shorter inscriptions feature property designations, tombstone markers, dedications, and some short hexametric verse fragments. The longer inscriptions often feature hexametric lines. The most well-known of these inscriptions appears on the Dipylon *oinochoe*, dated from sometime in the middle of the eighth century BCE. This vase contains fragmentary hexametric inscriptions with references to dancers. The metrical portions of this inscription are purely Homeric hexameter, and as Powell has suggested, are possibly the work of an orally composing poet.[336] According to Stesichorus in the early sixth

[334] Snodgrass 1971:421. Unification of the various *poleis* in Greece in the beginning of the eighth century would surely provide an impetus to solidify a uniform identity, and epic has always provided that identity, making the suggestion that the recording of epic in text would provide a unifying force for the early Greek *poleis*.
[335] Jeffery1964.
[336] Powell 1991: 162. However, an equally likely alternative could be that the inscriptions were made by someone under the influence of an orally composing poet. Either way attests to the influence of the oral hexameter on the earliest written Greek.

century, Palamedes is traditionally referred to as inventor of writing, among other things.[337] Nevertheless the hypothesis introduces valid points of exploration, namely the co-eval proliferation of the Greek alphabet via inscriptions of hexametric poetry and the probable composition of an oral poetry that is extremely self-aware. Burgess suggests that one of the primary differences between the Homeric poems and other poems in the epic cycle or stories in the cyclic myths that were popular in archaic Greece is the level of self-awareness of genre and song that the Homeric poems have.[338] This self-awareness could be seen as implication of written composition, while other less complex songs remained purely oral. However, in contrast, other songs such as those in the Epic Cycle, were also recorded in writing but simply did not survive time and tradition in the same way that Homeric poems did. We are left with the conclusion that many different kinds of poems were written down, including a vast selection of orally composed mythological epic.

Though early writing in Greece shows the existence of the technology to record hexameters in fixed form, their earliest manifestations do not suggest the creation of anything close to a definitive textualization of

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Other inscriptions from the archaic period bear witness to the phenomenon of the transcription in writing of hexametric poetry that follows the same conventions as orally composed songs. On this and similar evidence it has been suggested that the "the alphabet developed specifically or largely in order to record hexameter poetry "(Powell 1991:162). This is not the consensus among classical scholars, however, and there are other possible conclusions that could be drawn from his data, such as the pervasive influence of the oral traditional epic poetry in archaic Greek culture prompted early writers to experiment with what they knew best, Homeric epic.

[337] PLG iii, fragment 34.

[338] Burgess 2009.

epic. Even the longest inscriptions in the eighth century BCE are only a few lines. The inscribed texts can stand in for a poetic performance[339], but cannot be used as a transcript of an epic performance. The technology of recording on ceramics is not the technology necessary for recording a manuscript text, even if the intellectual ability to record orally composed poetry existed, and the capability to record a manuscript text does not imply a matching impetus to record a manuscript edition. The ability to record a text, in the mind of the singer, does not provide any advantage. Even if the songs are recorded via dictation, the singer does not suddenly begin to compose differently[340]. Singers in the late eighth century BCE may have had the technology to record their songs, but they would have had little reason to do so; there would have been very little reading audience and the end product would be far more unwieldy than the oral poet's product. Nevertheless, as Powell has proposed, it is possible that an “adapter” has at some point provided the impetus to shape his verses following an oral traditional compositional method yet set them into writing.

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were part of a large tradition, encompassing the whole of the Trojan War, and part of the larger Greek mythological epic tradition that included Theban stories, as well as

[339] Nagy 1996b:65.

[340] Lord 1960: 128.The idea that the poet would draw his inspiration from a transcript rather than from his divine muse, or personal inspiration, would appear to be at odds with the bards we see in the Homeric poems, who are either self-taught or tell their stories according to a sort of divine inspiration. The authority of the medium becomes changed when they rely instead on a transcript rather than their tradition. The insistence on orality and the suppression of the importance of writing in the tradition, even in later time periods, would indicate that the authority of the tradition is in part tied to the orality of the tradition.

Herakles, Jason, and other topics of myth. Since the time of Aristarchus, scholars sought to separate references to other mythological stories from the Homeric poems, arguing that they should be considered interpolations[341], as well as participating in an active debate about the influence of Homer on the Epic Cycle and vice versa. Burgess and others now are beginning to apply some of the ideas about oral traditional song to our models of understanding transmission and influence and, like Milman Parry at the beginning of the twentieth century, making previous models irrelevant. The poems that we know as belonging to the Epic Cycle most likely evolved over a long period of time during the archaic age, just as the Homeric poems did. The term *cycle* is a later imposition, dating from the Hellenistic period. The poems themselves likely did not join together as a matter of practice any more than any other songs, like the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Rather, they were related in the minds of their audience via the phenomenon of traditional referentiality, on which I address more later.

If a culture transmits some items through the visual and static medium of writing, but not other items, choosing rather to transmit them through a dynamic medium such as an oral tradition, do we call this culture a literate one or an oral one? Obviously the question we are asking

[341] Burgess 2001: 48. Burgess recognizes that some sort of filtering occurred, which led to the preservation of the Homeric poems and the loss of the remainder of the epic cycle, other than its summaries by Proclus. Aesthetic reasons are sometimes offered, though this would imply that the poems of the Epic Cycle or other poems within the tradition were not aesthetically pleasing. Aesthetics must play a part in this discussion, however content must also be an element. It is my suggestion then that certain elements of the Iliad and Odyssey were simply more identifiable to the Greeks during the Classical and Hellenistic period.

is incorrect, because a culture is a dynamic and complex collection of norms that cannot be boiled down to such a simple labeling system. A more useful investigation would involve selecting what specific types of culturally defining pieces of knowledge or aspects of communication we are most interested in understanding and then investigating the method of their transmission. The Bronze Age Mycenaeans prove a useful starting point, because we know definitively that they were aware of the technology of writing, because we have numerous preserved Greek documents recorded in the Linear B alphabet, which nonetheless are not literature, or even a communication which we may call culturally defining. What was preserved in written form that survives to this day primarily consists of lists and inventories, some of temples and offerings, others of the properties of the *anax*, and others further still of lists of military musters. These fill in some picture, for us, of what we think the Mycenaeans were about, but not a whole picture. Their "literature" lacks a coherent mythology, a cultural ethos, and while it does give us an idea about their political and religious organization, it sheds little light on the depth or breadth of the cultural influence of the political and religious organizations mentioned in the lists. Nevertheless, and partially from the Homeric epics, as well as archeology and external historical sources, we are able to know more about the Mycenaeans culturally than their lists provided. Interestingly, the syllabic inscriptions in Linear B are noted by some as being rhythmical[342]. In a

[342]Havelock 1964: 136. Page 1972 also notes that the preserved texts indicate a sort of

culture like the Mycenaeans, who preserved no significant written poetry, there must be some other explanation for the rhythmical presentation of ideas. In parallel fashion, many preserved royal correspondent tablets from Ugarit demonstrate a similarly rhythmical arrangement, as do many other Near Eastern writings of a decidedly more poetic nature. This would indicate then that all writings in these cultures were orally shaped or created and then by chance recorded in writing. This, as we shall see, is not the only or even primary method of preserving communication. Early on, literary sources are scarce, but the material record preserves through ceramic and sculptural art a parallel tradition that appears to flourish at the same time as the archaic oral traditional poetry. By turning to the visual arts it is possible to more precisely date and study some of these traditions. Though they cannot, without explicit quotations referencing the Homeric poems, strictly be said to be receptions of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, nevertheless the visual arts exemplify similar trends in theme and proliferation at a similar time period to the traditional oral epic. As Snodgrass has said, "Ever since an approximate historical setting was established for the final form of

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poetry in terms of their rhythm, and recent archaeological corroboration has suggested that a traditional epic poetry likely existed as early as Mycenaean times (Morris 1989 and Younger 1998). These scholars cite frescoes as an indicator that there was a cultural tradition of narrative that included scenes of ships going from place to place, warriors, and images of bards, indicated by their lyres. These associations suggest that the oral epic tradition which brought us the Homeric epics was at least as old as the Bronze Age, and provided an authoritative source of identity for Greeks.

the Homeric poems, it has been natural to look for comparisons with other phenomena of the same era and especially to the visual arts."[343]

The destruction of Troy is one of the most popular mythological scenes to appear in the visual arts in the eighth through the sixth centuries BCE[344]. Artwork, however, has a tendency to confuse various episodes within a single piece, in order to maximize the space available, making it difficult to identify the particulars necessary to determine whether a tradition is localized or PanHellenic in nature. Another difficulty with art of this period is the paucity of source materials, since what survives is not in any way necessarily representative of what was popular, important or influential.[345] Two of the earliest representations of scenes from the mythological tradition of the Trojan War appear on a fibula from the late geometric period and a *pithos* from Mykonos dating to approximately the middle of the seventh century BCE. These traditions coexisted with the authorized, Homeric, tradition yet did not achieve any amount of PanHellenic status.

The archaic tradition of representation in the visual arts of scenes from the Trojan War appear to be limited to these two pieces. Both pieces feature a horse with wheels, by which it was conveyed into the Trojan city, and windows through which can be seen the Greeks inside. As Anderson

[343] Snodgrass 1996 :560. Art historians tend to work under the basis that the geometric period is most likely contemporaneous with the historical setting of the composition of the Homeric poems.
[344]Anderson 1997: 179. This would also suggest that, by its prevalence in two artistic media, these scenes were culturally very important to Greeks during these centuries.
[345] Snodgrass 1996, 1972.

suggests, the "existence of this tradition at such an early date, when mythological representation in Greece was still in its infancy, naturally suggests that the myth of the *Ilioupersis* was prevalent on the mainland and the islands by this time"[346]. Elsewhere on the Mykonos *pithos* is a scene of slaughter similar to that which Priam describes in his vision of the destruction of Troy at *Iliad* 22.62-5, where some Trojans are enslaved and some slaughtered. The illustration in mythological artistic representation does not signify a reliance on a particular poetic tradition, however, as the variety of scene representation suggests.

Attic vase painting features prominently the same scene, the death of Astyanax at the hands of Neoptolemus, but it adapts the tradition with which we are familiar by adding Priam as a secondary victim of Neoptolemus. In the late seventh to early sixth centuries BCE the iconography of the destruction of Troy becomes a prominent mythological topic on both red and black figure Attic vase painting.[347] The iconography in Athens appears to have become quite standardized and recognizable. Even before the Attic period, archaic painting regularly features the two together, though according to our recorded poetic tradition the murders of Astyanax and Priam took place at different locations and times. Astyanax was thrown

[346] Ibid. Some scenes, on both the Mykonos pithos and in other subsequent representations of the Trojan War confuse various episodes together. Another panel on the Mykonos pithos shows what has been identified as the murder of Astyanax by Neoptolemus. Astyanax was killed in the Mikra Ilias by being hurled off the walls of the city by Neoptolemus. Here the child is being thrown or wielded by the warrior in a way that is adapted by Attic vase painting.
[347] Snodgrass 1996: 564.

off the walls in the *Mikra Ilias*, while Priam was killed at the altar of Zeus Herkeios in the *Iliou Persis.*

Various reasons can account for this combination of episodes separated by the Epic Cycle tradition. There is always the economy of the artist who chose to illustrate the two events together. The artist was obviously aware of some mythological traditions surrounding these two events. He may have simply wanted to make the most efficient use of space and combine the two events into one, the result of which appears to feature Neoptolemus wielding Astyanax as a weapon at Priam. This combines the hurling of Astyanax with the slashing motions of the slaying of Priam. This scene is compositionally similar to another popular scene painted from the early to the mid sixth century. The similar scene features Achilles murdering the child Troilus at the altar of Thymbraean Apollo. In this scene a warrior, identified as Achilles, approaches an altar carrying a boy at a group of Trojans[348]. Another possibility, of course, is that there was simply another tradition, localized in nature, where Neoptolemus performed both of these killings at the same time. Evidence of this tradition is lacking in localized Attic poetry, mythology, or ceremony.

A third option is relevant especially to the study of oral traditions. Most of the above-cited theories present a model of transmission of artistic ideas that is rather static and focuses primarily on artistic intent, rather

[348] Dugas 1937: 5-26.

than the reception of the work. If the focus is changed, the same way that oral traditional studies have changed their focus from the perspective of the composition to the perspective of the reception and transmission, we are presented with a much more flexible way to understand the meaning of the stories. Visual representations of mythological scenes suffer from the same stasis that written literature suffers. A visual representation, such as a vase painting, may represent a composite of traditional stories, and be referential to variations and multiforms in the same way that a textual representation may seem static but also may evoke a dynamic recollection on the part of the audience. The artist who painted the above mentioned composite scenes may have been working under the constraints of economy, or may have sought to incorporate an alternate tradition into his work. At the same time, the audience, if they were well versed in the tradition, would be aware of both events either taking place at different times in our version of the Epic Cycle, or were aware of an alternate version of the story in which both events triggered and resonated with each other, creating a larger meaning than either of them singularly could. Visual artistry was constantly in flux, just as the verbal arts were an evolving medium.[349] The proliferation of certain types of artwork was made possible by the popular consensus regarding them, just as in verbal arts. Evolutionarily, the more popular versions become the canonized "best" versions. Artwork may be less susceptible to the constraints that passive tradition bearers may put on

[349] Currie 2006:43.

them, being more highly localized traditions than Panhellenic poetics, at least in the archaic and early classical periods. Visual arts resisted the Pan Hellenizing effect of the Attic supremacy in the classical period more than did the verbal arts. Nevertheless, we are still presented with what became canon in the visual arts similarly to our Homeric poems.

Various studies have sought to identify by linguistic and metrical analyses the approximate dates of the composition of songs of Homer[350] by comparison to other poems. Most notably, Richard Janko (1982) compared the Homeric songs to the Homeric Hymns and the songs of Hesiod. These methods produce a comparative chronology for the songs, arranging the *Iliad* first, then the *Odyssey* after an interval of twenty years, followed shortly after by the *Erga* and then the *Theogony* and the Homeric Hymns. This relative chronology however does not provide us with any absolute dates, and some of the criteria for his arrangement do not take into account the nature of oral traditions. Powell, following the chronology of Janko, has analyzed early instances of Greek alphabetic writing on fragmentary pottery and other places and discovered the above-mentioned hexametric poetry coinciding with the approximate date of the Homeric compositions and concluded that the Greek alphabet was adopted primarily for the recording

[350] As manifested by our preserved versions, not the nascent or ongoing tradition that inevitably occurred prior to the composition of the versions we have, but at the same time not necessarily the date at which they were committed to text, but most likely some form of the songs that had, by a performative tradition that became crystallized, a stable version of the songs.

of Homeric poetry, around 800 BCE[351]. It is certainly possible that the advent of writing in the Greek world coincided with this point in the epic tradition, which was envisioned even by the ancients as a high point in the tradition and the time of Homer[352]. However, this does not preclude other possibilities for early recordings of the songs in writing, nor do the earliest references nor later receptions of the tradition mention the earliest records of Homer or his date of textual recording. It also fails to account for the nature of the oral poet and his lack of motive for the writing of his songs. Internal evidence from the poems, such as technologies and societal functions place a terminus ante quem at approximately 730 BCE[353].

Serious problems arise, however, from any attempt to make Homer stand still in time or place which should beg scholarship to change the way it approaches Homer and the archaic Greek world. The nature of many of these problems originates in the oral-compositional fabric of the songs and the changes which they have undergone in their textualization. Regardless of how the ancients may have viewed (or heard) them, the poems are performative and oral in their essential nature; the textual transmission alongside of oral transmission necessarily affects the songs. Since our only direct access is to a textualized descendant of the Alexandrian editions of the songs, we must seek to understand all those ways in which oral

[351] Powell 1991: 232.
[352] e.g. Herodotus 2.53.
[353] Powell 1991:219. In this, Powell and Janko's conclusions appear in agreement with each other.

traditions interact with texts. What can be concluded here, however, is that the Homeric songs, throughout their ancient receptions, even as written texts, were seen as a performance in textual form or as representative of an oral performance. They were continually recomposed, both in writing and in a living oral tradition according to traditional oral-compositional methods. Their ability and authority to influence existed throughout their ancient life, and society and culture were continually concerned with the preservation of their legacy. They were attributed to a larger-than-life source poet who existed sometime in the early years that formed archaic Greek society. This poet was influential for his innovations which made his poems superior to the myriad of other songs that were part of the same tradition in which he performed[354]. The songs themselves drew from a collective consciousness of mythological traditions that stretched back into times before society had any real reckoning, but were also modern enough to be relevant, or as Egbert Bakker puts it, "The epic events in the past are inseparable from the speech events in the present"[355]

[354] For a discussion of innovations in relationship with traditions see Fowler 2004: 228 and Currie 2006:41.
[355] Bakker 2005: ix.

Part 2: Texts and the Homeric Tradition

There is an obvious “missing link” between the poems we call the products of Homer and the type of composition we see bards like Phemius and Demodokos singing. It is recognized that the poems were orally composed and orally transmitted for an unknown period of time. At some point, however, a performance of the poems became textualized, possibly in many versions. These textual versions necessarily also contributed to the authority of Homer, as did oral versions, but where and how Homer fits into this equation is not entirely clear. The reception of the textual versions constructed authority and meaning in a way different from the oral receptions, yet the divide is not so great in this case, and, as I will show, the textual reception retains many elements indicating that it was still thought of as containing the authority of the original oral compositions. The next section will look at the place of documentary elements of the Homeric tradition, which provide some examples of the transmission of the songs of Homer. Though they are written texts, the reveal a great deal about the Greeks' perceptions of oral nature of the Homeric songs.

To understand how an oral traditional poem becomes a text, some comparison to the textualization of other cultures’ oral traditions is illuminating. The major impetus for the study of the oral-compositional nature of the Homeric poems stemmed from Parry's early studies into their formulaic nature and further by his comparison to the living oral traditions

of the Serbo-Croatian heroic songs. These comparisons were more fully carried out, however, by Albert Lord. The comparisons led to various lines of similarities between not only the individual elements of Homeric poems and the Serbo-Croatian songs, but also types of songs, such as the *Return Song* and the *Odyssey*. Many of these similarities are analyzed and some implications summarized in *The Singer of Tales*. However, differences between the poems of Homer and those of the *guslari* must not be overlooked, otherwise we may draw impossible conclusions and impose upon the Homeric tradition commonplaces particular to whatever traditions to which we compare them.

One of the major differences between the Serbo-Croatian songs and the Homeric songs is the way in which investigators encounter them. The Homeric poems come to us only in manuscript form, while the Serbo-Croatian songs were recorded as sounds and viewed in the context of performance. The Homeric poems can only certainly said be to be *orally derived*[356]. Orally derived songs preserve aspects of orality, that is they are a "text with roots in oral tradition". Whereas Parry and Lord were able to view purely oral performances of the Serbo-Croatian songs, we are faced with a text rather than a performance. Orally derived texts create problems for interpreting them by their comparison to purely oral poems.

[356] Foley 1990: 60.

Orally derived texts give us no indication of how far removed they are from the performance of an oral poem. This distance or interlude between the composition and the manuscript recording of the poem allows for editing and correcting of a sort that cannot exist in a purely oral poem due to the constraints of composition in performance. As Lord showed throughout his study of various methods of recording modern oral poetry, differences in recording methods can produce different results and different types of poems. Some poems were recorded acoustically in performances, some were recorded while the poems were being spoken and a further category were dictated slowly. These steps in the process of transmission are important elements of the context and history of the song and must be considered when attempting to compare purely oral and orally derived poems.

However, even with oral-derived texts, such as our *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, there are ways to "read" elements of them as an oral poem. The primary aim of this section is to demonstrate how receptions of even oral-derived texts can indicate a certain way of thinking about the texts as performances with oral implications and the "rhetorical persistence of traditional forms". Not only do these *keys* to understanding the ancient Greek poems themselves survive in the songs, but I feel that the critical receptions that they underwent in the ancient Greek world indicate a textual reception as well as a sort of aural/oral textual reception that is even present in their transmission and recomposition.

The history of the Homeric poems is not well-documented in the earliest period. It is acknowledged that the Greek oral tradition that produced the Homeric poems stretched as far back as the Mycenaean times[357] that it depicts. Wide ranging comparative evidence of meter and theme indicates that the oral epic genre is connected to some of the very earliest roots of the Indo-European language family[358]. An attempt to understand what came before the Homeric period of the Greek epic oral tradition is just as important for understanding the significance of context as what comes after, because it will instill in the careful reader the greatest understanding of the tradition in which the composer was taking part. In the Greek epic tradition Homer is the earliest named poet, but there are many others after him who take part in the creative and formative aspects of the tradition. The identification of the attitudes of their audiences will help to understand why Homer becomes a poet of such importance.

Greek cultural myth suggests some different versions for the fixation of the form of the songs of Homer (though not necessarily the fixation in textual form). Firstly, the use or purpose of a fixed form must be considered. One suggestion is that the fixation of the poems resulted from the creation of a transcript of a performance, either for use as a mnemonic aid for future performance or as an independent "performance" in itself[359].

[357] Page 1972 and Janko 1982.
[358] Nagy 1974.

[359] Nagy 1996b: 69.

The variants received by the Alexandrian editors must also be considered: *koine* and *politikai* versions appear to stem from traditions that diverged at some point. Nagy's scheme of periodization, or the "five ages of Homer"[360] places a source point of divergence for *koine* versions of the Alexandrian period in period 3, the time during which the Athenian versions began to take the form of the transcript sometime in the middle of the sixth century. This Athenian *koine* is commonly hypothesized, to summarize T.W. Allen, to have originated in the "uncorrected copies produced by the book trade, whose general characteristic was an increasing modernity in syntax, vocabulary and phonetics"[361].

This alternative source for the Athenian *koine* cannot be positively ascertained, however evidence surrounding the performance traditions of Athens abound. In Sparta, Lycurgus is credited with bringing

[360] Nagy 1996a: 110 (1) a relatively most fluid period, with no written texts, extending from the early second millennium into the middle of the eighth century in the first millennium.(2) a more formative or "pan-Hellenic" period, still with no written texts, from the middle of the eighth century to the middle of the sixth. (3) a definitive period, centralized in Athens, with potential texts in the sense of *transcripts*, [17] at any or several points from the middle of the sixth century to the later part of the fourth; this period starts with the reform of Homeric performance traditions in Athens during the régime of the Peisistratidai. (4) a standardizing period, with texts in the sense of transcripts or even *scripts*, [18] from the later part of the fourth century to the middle of the second; this period starts with the reform of Homeric performance traditions in Athens during the régime of Demetrius of Phaleron, which lasted from 317 to 307 BCE. (5) a relatively most rigid period, with texts as *scripture*, [19]from the middle of the second century onward; this period starts with the completion of Aristarchus' editorial work on the Homeric texts, not long after 150 BCE or so, which is a date that also marks the general disappearance of the so-called "eccentric" papyri, to be defined later on in the discussion

[361] Allen, 1924:282. This interpretation, contains problems however. It assumes widespread literacy and book production in the sixth century Athens. It also discounts the variations discovered in the Alexandrian koine which have been re-evaluated as being more archaic. Then, the Athenian koine of the sixth century must come from a source other than the book trade.

to the *polis* the poems of Homer from the performers known as the Kreophyleioi, from Samos[362]. In the report of Plutarch Lycurgus is credited with having the poems written down and then assembling the pieces, which had been scattered (*sporaden*). This represents an instance of a common cultural myth that appears to surround important cultural epics. For instance, in the Persian Book of Kings,

> "a noble vizier assembles mobads, wise men who are experts in the Law of Zoroaster, from all over the empire, and each of these mobad-s brings with him a fragment of a long-lost Book of Kings that had been scattered to the winds;...the vizier reassembles the old book that had been disassembled...we see here paradoxically a myth about the synthesis of oral traditions that is articulated in terms of written traditions"[363]

This myth represents a way that an oral-derived poem can be constructed from an immanent idea of reconstructing a text, supposedly lost. Where the idea of textual fixation arises is still unclear, but certainly references a time lost and previous to the reconstruction. This myth of reconstruction is not the only instance in Greek culture with regards to the

[362] Plutarch *Life of Lycurgus* 4.4.
[363] Nagy 1996b:70.

poetry of Homer. In Aelian, Peisistratos is credited with bringing the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to Athens. Cicero gives us the same story, adding the details that Peisistratos is "the first person ever to arrange the books of Homer, previously scattered about, in the order that we have today" [364]. Peisistratos is given an authoritative credit because of his *restoration* of the songs of Homer to what was perceived as an original state. The myth is repeated in Diogenes Laertius[365], but with the substitution of Solon for Peisistratos as a more appropriate culture hero. In both of these situations, however, the re-creation of the poetry by a lawgiver implies an authoritative original form composed by Homer, a fixed form. It is significant that in these cultural myths the poetry is handed over to the people by a lawgiver and culture-hero. Though the songs of Homer were the common cultural property prior to their handing-over by Solon (or Peisistratos or Lycurgus), the arrangement of their various parts by this source was seen as definitive, because it reconstructed the order that Homer must have originally composed the poems. It is the form of this "text" of the Homeric poems that gives trouble to scholars. Is an authoritative edition a textual transcript or a fixed oral text? There could have existed, in the sixth century BCE a version that was seen as authoritative, but not yet written down in manuscript form.[366] There could have also been written transcripts of performances. It would seem unlikely, given the status of the book trade in Athens in the

[364] *de Oratore*, 3.137, translation: Nagy.
[365] 1.57, with reference to the "panathenaic rule".
366 Powell 1996, 1991, Davison 1964.

sixth century BCE that there could have been any widely known, popular manuscript edition, regardless of possible private ownership of a written "edition", either dictated or transcribed from a performance. Sealey draws the following conclusion by the quotations of Plato's *Hipparchus* and Diogenes Laertius 1.57 with regards to the Panathenaic rule:

> Now the work of Peisistratos and his sons amounts to this, that the episodes of Homeric storytelling were arranged in a constant order for the rhapsodes to follow. This work could hardly be necessary, if the poems had already been reduced to writing and thus it furnishes one more argument against the hypothesis of an early writing down of the poems[367].

If there had been any authoritative written manuscript in circulation, the ordering of the poems would have been set. Since Solon is credited with the ordering, it would appear that any written versions of the poems that did exist were in no way authoritative, so there can be no assumption of any written Athenian *koine* prior.

Nagy, however, suggests that the idea of a recension as an historical event is unnecessary and instead must refer to myths of epic-making, such

[367] Sealey 1957:349.

as in the example of the Persian book of Kings[368]. He further suggests that in the natural evolution of a cultural epic, form becomes relatively stable, and the weighting of various episodes even. This traditional evolution of Homeric song would naturally lead to some fixation of order. The stories crediting various sages or lawgivers with the ordering of the parts of the songs are in effect a recreation of the authority originally attributed to Homer, in the form of a more recent authority figure. This varies slightly from Lord's hypothesis that the poems were dictated sometime during the Panathenaic festival[369], where the poems achieved fixity by their memorialization during the festival. Under Lord's hypothesis, however, there is no reason to assume that the versions fixed in text were necessarily more authoritative than any in the ongoing oral tradition, or that they would even have any effect on the oral tradition. They would simply serve as a fixed example that would survive in textual form and provide material for a future book-trade.

It is during the classical period in Athens that some have supposed that a version of the Homeric poems became fixed in textual form, leading eventually to the city editions on which Aristarchus based his edition[370]. We have no text manuscripts from this early, so other authors' reception of Homeric poetry is often used to attempt to form a picture of the status of Homer and the epics. Comments on epic poetry in the late archaic

[368]Nagy 1996b: 102.
[369] Lord 1953.
[370] Nagy 1996, also Nagy 1979, 1986.

and classical periods generally fall into three categories: philosophy, history, and poetry (usually but not always tragedy). It is during this period that Homer is generally credited with authorship of many of the other "Homeric" poems.

Part 3: Archaic Receptions: A The Epic Cycle

The reception of Homeric epic's influence manifested in subsequent Greek poetry shows how the Greeks used and reused the authority of their earliest poetry; nevertheless it is necessary to understand how other archaic epic poems interacted with the Homeric tradition.[371] Traveling as far back in the tradition earlier than the sixth century becomes more and more hypothetical, because references to a manuscript tradition or even detailed references to any tradition of performance, transmission or reception disappear. However, this is not to say that there are not likely scenarios concerning the origination of this poetry. As Burgess suggests, the Homeric poems appear to be the third step in a series of evolutionary developments in the archaic epic traditions[372]. He posits that in the early archaic period there were three main types of relevant narrative: cyclic myth, cyclic epic, and Homeric epic. The Cyclic epics, as compiled by the Alexandrians, were not synonymous with the cyclic epics of the archaic periods, nor were the cyclic epics that were known by the classical Athenians. The Athenians' epics were a manifestation of a version of what was current oral traditional material. The Homeric poems, he suggests, are

[371] Currie 2006 presents some analysis of hypothetical, pre-Homeric epic songs.
[372]Burgess 2009.

a more complex case because of how much more self-awareness they possess. This issue will be addressed below. The oral epics of the archaic period draw their stories and material from the cyclic myths, stories which include a wide range of raw mythic material that became formalized into the various genres with which we are familiar.

The Epic Cycle is not nearly as well preserved as were the Homeric poems and survive only in fragmentary condition. Most of our knowledge of the poems that contain other episodes of the Trojan War myth come from the summaries of Proclus and from the various epigrams and mock epics attributed to Homer in the vitae. The testimony of Proclus comprises the *chrestomatheia grammatike*, or useful knowledge, collected and edited either in the second or fifth century CE, depending on which Proclus scholars believe composed it[373]. Summaries in the *chrestomatheia* are prose and therefore not a reflection of the language of the cyclic epics, nor can they tell us any of the more detailed information that would be useful for this investigation, such as how they were received, composed, and transmitted, as well as whether they present a level of poetic self-awareness that Homeric poetry exhibits. Nonetheless, they do fill out the fuller picture of the Trojan War poems, which obviously colors the reception and understanding of the Homeric poems. Our impression of the poetic language of the Cycle is provided by Alexandrian scholars, many of whom are highly

[373]Burgess 2001: 12.

critical. Callimachus, for example, describes the Cycle as “hateful”[374]. The Homeric poems by themselves are both too large and only a small part of a larger whole, regardless of the versions that survived in texts. Parry and Lord's investigations revealed variations in performances of songs purportedly about the same heroes, sometimes as sung by the same performers and sometimes as sung by different performers.

Burgess suggests that the poems of the Epic Cycle were likely made public prior to their documentation in textual form, possibly by rhapsodes[375]. As has often been suggested, the creative art of the rhapsode does not compare to that of the orally composing aoidos[376]. However, in a performance tradition in which a series of rhapsodes perform a story of great expanse continuously, the aesthetic and creative exertion is not focused primarily on the individual performer, but on how they are able to “stitch” together the various units of their songs. As the rhapsode is, etymologically, a stitcher, we are then left to ponder what elements it is that he stitches together. They appear to not stitch together formulae or sets of lines, as the *aoidoi* might do, since, as our so called “panathenaic rule” suggests, the rhapsodes sung episodes together beginning where the

[374]Burgess 2001: 19.
[375] Burgess 2004. Though there may be a substantial conceptual difference between the rhapsode and the aoidos, Burgess, in the same article, clarifies that he would consider Phemius likewise a rhapsode, blurring what are, in my conception, discrete professions. Nevertheless, the interpretation suggests that both are performers of the epic oral tradition. Later in the same article, he illuminates a possibility regarding the meaning of the term rhapsode.
[376] E.g. West 2003a. "*Iliad and Aethiopis*." CQ 53:1-14, 13-14, which portrays the rhapsode as performing a text.

previous one left off singing.[377] This presents the possibility of a large cooperative construction project, with the result being as individualized to that particular festival as each performance by an aoidos might be. As Burgess emphatically states, "the Epic Cycle is a fixed and literate manifestation of a longstanding oral and notional arrangement of mythological material"[378]. This conception would seem to indicate a source of material contemporary with that which eventually led to the Homeric poems.

This distinction between the Homeric and Epic Cycle poems has been a point of contention among scholars, however[379]. Some critics, such as Lang (1893) and Griffin (1977) stress the difference in quality as a distinguishing factor between the two traditions. Rather than look to aesthetics in a scheme of superiority versus inferiority, Nagy suggests that the primary difference in both the style and scope of the poems as well as their influence lies in the local/epichoric nature of the Cyclic epics and the relatively PanHellenic nature of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*[380].

Nonetheless, we know from references in Proclus as well as our Alexandrian editors that there was not a consensus about who composed

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[377] Davis 1962 p239.
[378] Ibid, 3.
[379] Wilamowitz 1884 374-375 noted that "there is no qualitative difference between *Homerikon* and *Kuklikon.*
[380] Nagy 1979 p5-9 and 1990 52-115. This universality is important for my argument as well, because it presents a universally identifiable picture of a heroic age that would be desirable to imitate certain aspects of. At the same time, it presented a controllable set of guidelines by which many social and cultural institutions would be able to be governed. For the element of social control and how the poems may be used for political control, see Farenga 1998.

the various songs in the cycle. Early on it is supposed, in what Nagy calls the Pre-Athenocentric period that all the poems that are later known as the Epic Cycle were composed by a single poet named Homer[381] , and that later different poems are attributed to different authors. This is nothing new or noteworthy. However, we see similar attributions in some of the interviews conducted by Parry and Lord's investigations. Many *guslari* claim to have learned their songs from a singer named Cor Huso, who was supposedly the best singer, though none could say for certain where or when he lived, but simply that they were singing his songs. The songs varied, and were only sometimes on the same subject. It is obviously projective and assumptive to presume that the Greek oral tradition functioned in the same way as the modern South Slavic song traditions did, but it is equally assumptive to presume that it did not function in ways similar to many other world song traditions. The same model of possibly mythical attribution must obviously be considered when analyzing our ancient literary critics' attributions of sources.

Stylistically, the Cyclic poems present a very broad scope, in opposition to the Homeric poems' narrow scope of narration. In terms of the commonness of these two seemingly opposite and different narrative strategies, throughout the Greek tradition as well as many world traditions, the broader scope and more vague narration is by far more prevalent[382]. The separation of the poems along Proclus's divisions seems to indicate a

[381]Nagy 2010 *Homer the Preclassic.*
[382] Burgess 2004: 4

performance tradition that existed side by side with the Homeric poems, though the chronology presents a problem. Proclus's divisions of the poems takes place much later than the living tradition would have survived, at least if it is to be supposed that it continued to be performed in the same manner as the Homeric poems. The Homeric performance tradition as a dynamic entity began to lose its relevance gradually through the PanHellenic games that led to the so-called panathenaic rule, by which it became standardized and uniform across the wide regions controlled by the Athenians. Burgess suggests that some of the divisions between the Cyclic poems as well as some variants in the textual tradition of the Homeric poems may be indicative that the two traditions met in performance[383]. This could present the audience with the possibility of a continuous performance of a mythological cycle by fitting together at different times the various traditional performances. Rather than suggest outright that the Homeric poems existed prior to the Cyclic epics and "influenced" them, it seems more appropriate to understand how they co-existed and interacted with each other. Ultimately, the Homeric poems did exert a wider influence, which may very likely be due to their panhellenic nature having a greater audience than the more localized audiences of the Cyclic epics.

The Epic Cycle may, however, be our best representation of the rhapsodic practice, which Jonathan Burgess calls "performance sequencing", a method of "presenting long narratives, with discontinuous

[383] Ibid :6.

presentation allowing an even greater expanse of narrative to be outlined"[384]. To insert the Homeric *Iliad* between the Cyclic *Cypria* and *Aethiopis* seems logical, in such a sequence, as the events appear to take place between the epics, but would not be so. The joining of the Homeric poems in such a sequence actually presents problems of redundancy and repetition, such as the reported catalog of Trojan allies in the *Cypria* being followed by a catalog of Greek allies in the second book of the *Iliad*. This Cyclic catalog from the *Cyrpia* is included in most Cyclic summaries contained within manuscripts of the *Iliad*, but is notably missing in one manuscript.[385] Similarly, Burgess draws the conclusion that, in their fixed (i.e. textual) forms, the *Cypria* was not meant to introduce the *Iliad,* but was part of an independent narrative tradition. In a performance scenario, having such an extensive catalog performed so shortly after a very similar one would not be a display of the rhapsode's ability to join his story (the *Iliad* episode) with the previous rhapsode's story (the *Cypria*) without repetition. Likewise, the connection between the end of the *Iliad* and the beginning of the *Aethiopis* is not entirely linear, except in the scholia's report of a single variant, which Bernabe and Davies consider manufactured to artificially join the poems together[386]. Though the material follows after that of the *Iliad*, it does not appear that they are part of the same tradition.

[384] Ibid: 20.
[385] Huxley *Greek Epic Poetry* 1969 p140-141 A hypothetical explanation for this omission is that someone was concerned with duplication of material from book two of the Iliad
[386] Bernabe *Poetae epici Graeci: Testimonia et fragmenta*: *Aethiopis* fr.1 Bernabe= Davies p48. It is especially unlikely that the Aethiopis would begin without a proem or start as abruptly as the reported lines indicate.

So although there is no clear correlation of influence in our textual compilations of the Epic Cycle that reflect the textual Homeric poems, the two bodies of poetry are inextricably linked in their genesis, but have taken different directions.

Part 3: Archaic Receptions: B

Pre-Socratic Philosophy

Philosophical response to Homer tended to be critical, but not necessarily in any way that appears to provide much information in regards to a recognized orality or performative aspect of his poetry in the classical and archaic periods. Philosophical criticism does, however, recognize a certain authoritative power to persuade in the Homeric poetry. Xenophanes represents one of the earliest Homeric critics, in the mid sixth century. His complaints were purely on the grounds that Homeric poetry, along with Hesiodic poetry, represented the gods as implausible, inaccurate, and immoral[387]. The poems of Homer and Hesiod are grouped together in Xenophanes' criticism, indicating that his criticism is of the epic genre, rather than specifically Homer or Hesiod. Specifically, two quotations of Xenophanes mention Homer, stating that “Homer and Hesiod assign all the things to the gods which are shameful and blameworthy (when done) by men”[388]. This quote indicates that, by the time of Xenophanes, the oral epic tradition was seen as a generic category of song which was capable of

[387] Frs. 11. cf 14, 15, 16.
[388] Xenophanes fr 11.

assigning some of the deepest cultural values and standards, such as religion. In approximately two centuries after the period when the oral traditional poems evolved into our Homeric and Hesiodic poems, the poems become a culturally defining commonplace. Even further, and possibly more specifically, Xenophanes states that "since all at first have learned according to Homer…[389]" indicates that the poetry of Homer was considered didactic. According to Havelock, Hesiod's poem contains obvious didacticisms, in its catalogs of agricultural instructions as well as its theologies of the gods, but Homer's poetry is not so obviously didactic in nature, primarily because of omissions of particulars in many of his "didactic" scenes[390]. This would indicate that Homer and Hesiod were thought of as the teachers of Greece. Regardless of the subjective way that Xenophanes criticizes Homer and Hesiod, one cannot deny that their influence, even at this early stage, had achieved widespread status on both sides of the Aegean.

Another early philosopher also speaks to the influence of the Homeric poems. Heraclitus of Ephesus is quoted saying that "τόν τε Ὅμηρον ἔφασκεν ἄξιον ἐκ τῶν ἀγώνων ἐκβάλλεσθαι καὶ ῥαπίζεσθαι, καὶ Ἀρχίλοχον ὁμοίως/ Homer deserves to be taken out of the contests and beaten with a stick, Archilochus as well"[391]. Heraclitus denounced Homeric and Hesiodic

[389] Xenophanes fr 10.
[390] Havelock *The Literate Revolution in Greece and Its Consequences* :125ff..
[391] DK B42.This suggests that Homeric poetry had an immanent influence on society. Even though some respond critically to this influence, it must be acknowledged that it existed.

poetry, saying that “men make mistakes with reference to the knowledge of manifest things...even Homer, who was the wisest of the Greeks”[392]. Heraclitus's criticism, though negative, represents an early recognition of Homer's authority. Even if that authority was misleading, it was still there and powerful. Interestingly, the first fragment I cite also mentions the fact that Homer was involved in the *agon*. It is unclear from the fragment itself if this is in reference to Homer actually competing in poetic competition or generically to epic poetry in competitions focusing on Homer. Regardless, it brings up an important point, namely that the spread of this Homeric authority or influence is in many parts due to its frequent use in competitions, where the rhapsodes could utilize the Homeric tradition to gain fame for themselves.

During the archaic period, from the surveys taken here, a few important things become apparent. Though the Homeric poems and the Cyclic epics share some similarities, including both content and form, their influence was not the same and it should not be said that they are players within the same tradition. Though both traditions were characterized by heroic epic and, more importantly, both were performed orally by rhapsodes, one cannot be said to exert direct influence on the other. Since we lack the actual text of the Cyclic epics, no comparison on the level on language can support the theory that they were part of the same performance tradition.

[392] fr. 24.

Secondly, the Homeric poems reach widespread reception by the 6th century BCE, on both sides of the Aegean, as noted by both the material evidence of their circulation in inscriptions on pottery, illustrations of scenes in ceramic painting, and textual receptions by some of our earliest critics, Heraclitus and Xenophanes. Though they are not strictly literary critics, these two early philosophers thought quite critically about the status and content of the Homeric poems and their relationship to society. Their criticisms of the influence of the Homeric and Hesiodic material indicates that the nature of the poetry was not merely entertaining, but also highly didactic. By Havelock's formulation, the oral nature of the poetic experience provided a proper medium for communication of cultural *nomoi* and *ethos*.[393] The oral nature of the poetry includes not just the fact that it is delivered orally and received aurally, but also in its conception it is flexible and able to be suited ad hoc to a wide variety of situations. Since all cultures adapt and change, this flexibility curiously enough provides orally conceived poetry the ability to adapt and survive enormous changes, such as the literate revolution that Greece undergoes during the Classical period.

Part Four: Classical Receptions

Here I seek to illustrate, by a selection of texts from the classical period, some of the influence that the Classical Greeks received from the Homeric poems. Specifically I look to those texts that illustrate an

[393] Havelock *1982* :129. As Eric Havelock comments, "the oral enclave of contrived speech therefore constituted a body of general education conserved and transmitted between the generations."

understanding of the Homeric poems' ability to influence by means of its orality and culturally defining content, and the uses to which some of those texts put Homeric poetry. This survey will not be exhaustive, but rather illustrate a few key points. I will first look to the way Pindar's epinician poetry refracts the Homeric *kleos* into a new genre: Pindar's commemorative poetry transforms the martial hero into an agonistic athletic hero, while nodding to Homer in language and references. Secondly I will look at the way the prose historians Herodotus and Thucydides use Homer and his material not only for sources, but as models for how to create a large narrative interspersed with dialog, and how such a narrative may be presented. Thirdly, in this section on classical reception, I explore how Plato's Socratic dialogs treat Homer. This final category has been discussed frequently and quite thoroughly and I do not seek to explore all the possible explanations, but rather use Plato's criticism of oral epic poetry as a signifier of how the tradition's influence pervaded the classical period and specifically how critically Plato discusses why the Homeric poems' influence achieved what it did.

The oral poet of the *Odyssey* was well aware of the ability of his own poetry to influence and control his audience's emotions by means of myth and all the aspects of performance which the oral poet employs (meter/rhythm, melody, musical accompaniment). The *Iliad* points out the ability of poetry to commemorate the deeds of heroes for eternity.

Homer acts as and creates, in his *aoidos*, a prototype for the Greek poet, who is formulated as a member of the small class of *demiourgoi*, or socially mobile craftsmen[394]. The poet of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* creates a model for the tradition of commemorative poetry and its reception; some authors like Pindar appear to recognize this model and function by it. This concept of commemoration needs some elaboration to understand it in the sense that an early oral audience might understand it[395]. Commemoration preserves information for later generations. It is a cooperative act of remembering, and related to the concept of *mnemosune*, both a goddess and the abstract act of remembering. Pindar discusses the influence of commemorative poetry and of mythological stories. In *Olympian 1*, he comments that "in men's talk stories are embellished beyond the true account and deceive by means of elaborate lies"[396]. The *muthoi,* according to Pindar, are able to do this by means of Charis, who by bestowing honor is able to make the unbelievable believable. Pindar recognizes the fact that though the songs may contain lies, they are not only commemorative but also persuasive and influential. Both of these aspects are of special importance for their ability to construct authority.

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[394] *Odyssey* 17.381.
[395] During the early Classical period, though literacy was rising throughout Greece, much of literature was still orally conceived or delivered, and it may be said that culture was in a transitional period during this time. Traditional cultural imperatives would be the most likely to remain orally conceived and delivered, while newer innovations, such as philosophy and historiography might have more of a place in the text.
[396] *Olympian* 1.27-30, translation: Race.

The ability to commemorate a hero, act, or important moment in cultural history gives myths control over the history of a people. The aoidos is the mouthpiece of this commemorative tradition, and though he must operate within the boundaries set forth by the tradition, he himself contributes to that tradition and therefore has a level of influence upon it. The aoidos belongs to the category of *demiourgoi*, communal artisan, and has a high level of social mobility[397]. The poet, as Nagy suggests, is constantly evolving from the aoidos to the rhapsode, while at the same time traveling from community to community. This process contributes to the multiformity of the tradition due to geographic variety, but at the same time contributes to the crystallization of the epic tradition as the orally composing bard becomes a rhapsode (if that process can really be said to occur). This evolving poet confers glory by the illumination or remembering of deeds of the past which would otherwise have been covered up and forgotten[398]. In this respect, epic and the poetry of Pindar especially have much in common.

Olympian 1 was commissioned in 476 BCE by Hieron of Syracuse to commemorate a PanHellenic victory in a horse race. Pindar includes two different myths in this poem, the myth of the cannibalization of Pelops, which he rejects, and the substituted myth of Pelops' abduction

[397] Nagy, 1990: 56.
[398] Fowler in Fowler 2004: 227.

by Poseidon.[399] The context of the poem, as all of Pindar's odes, is a Panhellenic celebration of a communal ritual which is memorialized via mythic narrative poetry. *Ritual* here means a recurrent, formalized process which has a greater implied meaning than the immediate result of those actions. The cause of the action may itself be tied into the myth which is narrated, as an aetiology. The Olympic Games are tied to two myths as compensation for death: either, Pelops' compensation for the death of Oinomaus or Herakles' compensation for the death of Pelops. The other four major Panhellenic games are commemorative of a death-compensation. These athletic games are competitive, in what Karl Meuli has suggested as a mock-battle substituting for combat.[400] The function of Pindar's odes is then commemorative of heroes who compete in a battle of compensation for death, which is an obvious parallel to Homer's epics.

Poetry itself is agonistic. Hesiod mentions that his poems won at contests at a funeral games. Homer's poets, Demodokos and Phemius, are not explicitly competitive, though they are praised as though they are winners. We know that *rhapsoidoi,* such as Ion, competed in contests. Andrew Ford, in the introduction to *Homer: The Poetry of the Past* asks "what did Homer think he was doing?". This question is asked in the context of attempting to understand some of the vast cultural differences between

[399] Nagy 1990 *Pindar's Homer*: 117. As Nagy suggests, Pindar may actually be fusing two variant mythic traditions "where the earlier myth is officially subordinated to but acknowledged by the later myth."

[400] Meuli 1968 *Der griechische Agon*. Pindar's use of the phrase hieros aethlos is applied to both martial mythical heroes and athletes, denoting that they are both participants in ritualistic struggle with similar relevance.

modern literary criticism's understanding of poetry and ancient concepts of poetry. We must ask what bards like Hesiod and Homer, as well as Demodokos, Phemius, Achilles and the like sought to accomplish with their songs, in order to gain some understanding of how and why they became authoritative texts. Pindar's epinician odes provide examples of the reception of oral epic in the lyric genre, and Homer and Hesiod also have something to say about their goals, though it is not explicit but rather encoded.

Just as Pindar treated Homer as a source of inspiration for the preservation of *kleos*, Herodotus also was highly influenced by the Homeric epics, as well as other epic traditions, and was even able to distinguish between the Homeric epics and the Cyclic epics. Herodotus's *Historia* makes use of reported traditions which he cannot absolutely verify, and quite often cites Homeric myth. In 1.3, he briefly summarizes the Trojan War as an essential part of the background to the conflict between the Persians and the Greeks of his time. Herodotus quite regularly cites the reports of what the Greeks say or what the Persians say, rather than what either of these cultures writes. It may seem somewhat inconclusive, but for the nascent field of historiography, the fact that Herodotus relies on oral reports rather than written record speaks quite highly to the value that serious scholars of the Classical period placed on the oral record. Herodotus is, by the

Hellenistic period, called the "prose Homer" [401] because of how he, as an Ionic author" stood as the father of his tradition. Herodotus was even referred to by Longinus as *homerikotatos,* or most Homeric.[402] Even in the proem to his *historia* Herodotus tells his reader that one of his primary motivations in writing down the great deeds of the Greeks and barbarians is so that neither's *kleos* should be lacking (*mete erga megala te kai thomasta, ta men elesi ta de barbarousi apodekthenta, aklea genetai* [403]).[404] In the texture of the *Historia*, the reader is subjected to a mixture of narrative interspersed with dialog, very similarly to the Homeric epics. The author does make his voice known at the beginning, rather unlike Homer. Where the Homeric poet appeals explicitly to the Muses or Apollo as the source for his material, Herodotus appeals to "hearsay", or oral traditions. Herodotus's proem shares many similarities to those of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, including explanation of causation being due in particular to behavior of certain characters.[405]

Herodotus references Homer a total of twelve times throughout his histories, sometimes in quite different contexts. In Herodotus 2.23, while discussing the name of the river Ocean, he attributes the naming of that river to Homer, "or some older poet", because he can find no other

[401] According to the late Hellenistic poem, so-called "Pride of Halicarnassus" Hunter in *Cambridge Companion to Homer* ed. Fowler, 2004 : 241.
[402] Longinus 13.2.
[403] Herodotus *historia* 1.1.0.
[404] Pelling 2006:78 discusses the resonance between Herodotus's and Homer's motivations concerning *kleos* and the desire to avoid becoming *aklea*.
[405] Pelling 2006:82.

grounds for the convention. Similarly, Herodotus attributes to Homer and Hesiod the teachings to the Greek people about the gods and their spheres of influence, at a time about four hundred years prior to his writing[406]. As we saw with Xenophanes, Homer is for Herodotus a source of cultural authority.

Not only does Herodotus attribute a great many tales to Homer which served as background information to his histories[407], but he did not generalize all epic to Homeric tradition. Though the Homeric tradition can potentially become confused with the oral epic or martial epic tradition in general, Herodotus demonstrates that he can differentiate the writings of Homer, Hesiod, and the cyclic epics. He utilizes all of them for source material (least of all Hesiod, due to the apparently more mythological nature of his material and lack of relevance for his politically and culturally minded discussion of the causes of the war with the barbarians), but differentiates between the various sources for his traditions[408]. This implies that Herodotus, and by some extension the literate elite in the Classical period, recognized and sorted according to some type of standard their poetic pre-historical sources for cultural background. It is not merely a matter of influence for Herodotus, nor does he seek to legitimize his work by masking his source as Homer and ultimately the Muses. For Herodotus, Homer is as authentic a source for information as the stories he hears by report from the

[406] Herodotus 2.53.2.
[407] See Herodotus 2.23, 2.53, 2.116, 3.18, 4.32, 4.19, 4.19, 7.161, 9.103.
[408] See Herodotus 2.117, 2.118.

Persians or the Egyptians, who likewise keep reports alive by their own oral and literary traditions for centuries. His histories are also patterned in many ways off of the Homeric poems, including speeches, themes and story patterns.[409]

Thucydides of course is also influenced by and makes use of Homer.As Herodotus did in his proem, Thucydides refers to the Homeric material as the historical background against which Greek culture developed and ultimately led to his narration of the conflict during the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides' first mention of Homer comes in his proem as a source of cultural information specifically regarding the earliest tribes in Hellas, a term which he claims did not come into existence until after Homer's time. Homer calls the various tribes fighting against the Trojans by the names Danaans, Argives, and Achaeans or often by their polis of origin. In Thucydides' history, he interprets this to mean that the Greeks were in no ways united, either politically or culturally[410].

The proem of Thucydides history provides an excellent window into understanding how the authority received from a tradition can shape a "new" work. Like Herodotus, Thucydides makes great use of the traditional Greek worldview as handed down by the epic poets, focusing on the Trojan War and Homeric material, as well as some of the other non-Trojan epics. In

[409] Pelling 2006:83. The discussion of oral sources that Herodotus makes use of should include the influence of oral epic traditions, which flourished in the Ionian region during Herodotus's time.
[410] Thucydides 1.3.3.

his exploration of the relationship between Herodotus and Thucydides, Rogkotis cautions against attempting to interrelate the two historians due to the traditional nature of their sources and "the great influence of Homer, lyric poetry, and tragedy, those inexhaustible and communal "reservoirs" of intellectual and literary debt."[411] Nevertheless, Thucydides claims to avoid reliance on mythological stories due to the inability to verify any of the information contained therein[412]. However, as the archaeology of Thucydides demonstrates, Homer's authority on cultural history is so powerful that the Trojan War in Homeric poetry functions as the historical backdrop against which the Peloponnesian War is measured.

History and epic are significantly similar in their mode of speech in that they both contain what Plato calls the third kind of narration.[413] This type of narration is a mixed narrative which combines direct speech with third person narration of action, and is fairly limited to the genres of epic and historiography. Likewise, the two genres share a preponderance of what Rengakos calls an "almost excessive use of verbs of 'internal processes'"[414]. Thucydides' and Herodotus's choice of an epic-style narrative model was adopted by successive historians, setting the tone and style for a genre. This mode is ultimately inherited from Homer and is a significant departure from some of the two major historians' predecessors, such as

[411] Rogkotis: 2006.
[412] Thudydides 1.21.1, 1.22.4.
[413] Republic 392c-349b.
[414] Rengakos 2006 : 279.

Hecataeus of Hellanicus, who attempt to deliver a more annalistic style which "favors the succinct reporting of the largest possible amount of information"[415]. Thucydides's use of verbs of internal focalization shows heavy influence from traditional epic as well. Like Herodotus, Thucydides often uses verbs of internal thought processes to assign motives and unspoken thoughts to his characters, though there is in most circumstances no way that the either historian could know what the speakers were thinking from the speeches that he has recreated for them. In epic, a narrator has no need to prove his knowledge's source: he has the muse or his tradition. A historian, on the other hand, must explain how he comes to assign such thoughts to his speakers. As Rengakos points out, "two of the main features of Thucydidean narrative are, to put it cautiously, *fictional* to a substantial degree", and in this sense direct borrowings from Homer (and Herodotus).[416]

Early philosophy presents polemic against Homer, and Plato's representation of Socratic criticism is similar, though much more detailed. In the *Republic*, Homer is criticized because of his impact on young minds in the Greek classroom. Plato's Socrates bans Homer because of the way he portrays death as evil, because he presents heroes as unmanly, and for his depictions of the gods, among other things. In the *Ion*, Plato chooses not just the Homeric poetry, but also the performance as a target of criticism,

[415] Rengakos ibid: 280.
[416] Rengakos 2006 : 284.

which illustrates well the authority inherent in an oral traditional performance. Plato's character, Ion, claims to be an expert on Homer, and by extension, on all the things contained within the Homeric poems. Socrates, through the dialog, demonstrates that Ion is in fact not an expert on such things as generalship or statesmanship. Nevertheless, the conception inherent in Ion's argument is that the Homeric poems contain wisdom on all the necessary elements to Greek society. A second, if somewhat less clear, point made by the dialog is the power of the performance of Ion is able to make his audience emotionally respond to his performance. The conventional means of experiencing the poetry of Homer, in the classical period, was still a performative experience, and thereby an emotional experience. This emotional involvement is one of the aspects that Plato argues against in the *Republic* also. The audience at such an event allows the performer to control them, both emotionally and intellectually.

Plato's polemic against Homeric poetry must not be taken too seriously, rather as a sign of Homeric authority. Plato's arguments are indebted to Homer, however critical of the poet he was. For example, in *Theataetus* 152e, Plato has Socrates suggest that the central tenet of Heraclitus's philosophy, *panta rei*, is actually derived from Homer's discussion of Okeanos and Tethys. Plato may suggest that the influence of Homeric poetry is debilitating to an ideal society, but his rejection of Homer

also illustrates how ubiquitous that influence is.[417] Plato's criticism of the effects of Homeric poetry are focused not just on the influence of the verbal element on its audience, but on the performative aspects of poetry. Platonic objections to Homer focus on the influence on the educational system. He opposed the Homeric poems on the grounds that they show heroes overcome with emotion, which would not present an effective lesson for future leaders[418]. The ultimate banishment of Homeric poems from the educational system by Plato's Socrates demonstrates that the Homeric poems did have a powerful influence, not only to entertain, but also to mold and shape society.

Not all Athenian philosophers are concerned with those aspects which they saw as negative in Homeric poetry. Aristotle attributes to Homer the authoritative position of a forefather of early philosophy. Aristotle saw in Homer allegories to later philosophical developments. Following on the work of such philosophers as Theagenes of Rhegium, Aristotle presented a well-documented alternate "redemption" of Homeric poetry in the form of allegorical readings, as well as some theories regarding the origin of Homeric epic. Aristotle thinks quite critically in the *Poetics* about Homeric epic from a literary, rather than philosophical, point of view, especially with regards to form and genre. Aristotle represents the imitation of tune and

[417] Segal 1978:316. Segal points out that both Homeric poetry and Platonic philosophy share "a common, though dissimilar, attempt to comprehend the human condition and a common indebtedness to the patterns crystalized by ancient mythic tradition"
[418] Repubilc 376e-383a.

rhythm (*tou mimesthai kai tes harmonias kai tou rhythmou*) as a natural instinct for humans, and ascribes the origins of poetry (*poesin*) from the improvisation of these instincts[419]. Noteworthy here in this attestation is the association between *musical* elements and poetry. Poetry, as conceived by Aristotle, is musical. It is not simply an artful arrangement of words on a page, but has a performative and aural aspect as well. It is worth noting that "the term *oral poetry* may not fully capture the concept behind it, in view of the semantic difficulties conjured up by both individual words *oral* and poetry[420]". As Aristotle points out, poetry is music even to the fourth century in Athens, where oral traditions and composition in performance appear to give way to fixity and written literature.[421] Unlike his predecessor, Aristotle is primarily concerned with the aesthetics of Homeric poetry rather than the ethical implications of his influence.

This musical arrangement of words, oral song, is recognized as powerful and influential. Our best sources for serious methodical discussion of the influence and power of musical poetry are Plato and Aristotle. Though both of these critics write later than the period of immediate investigation here, it has been suggested that their interpretations "reflect the whole tradition of detailed discussion of the text down to Aristotle's time, as well as his own observations"[422]. Likewise, Stoic philosophers such as Zeno even

[419] Aristotle *poetics* 1448b.20.
[420] Nagy 1996b: 13.
[421] Currie 2006:3.
[422] Richardson 1992.

attempted to make Homer into an early stoic by reading into him many of their own ideas[423].

Even then during the Classical period, as these examples have demonstrated, Homeric poetry was a shaping influence on Greek culture and society. I have not investigated here the influence of Homeric poetry on Greek drama or Classical poetry, but its influence is substantial. As Lamberton points out, the "story of the interaction of Homeric poetry with the other Greek poetic traditions that emerged out of the preliterate past is no longer recoverable in detail"[424] the influence of the heroic epic tradition abounds in lyric as well as dramatic poetry. Famously, Athenaeus says of this influence that it began with Aeschylus borrowing "slices from Homer's banquets".[425] What this amounts to, however, is not saying that dramatic playwrights borrowed specific pieces from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, though they certainly did, but that Classical poets were heavily influenced by the oral epic tradition. The name Homer, rightly or wrongly, came to be synonymous with the poems and rhapsodic traditions that evolved out of the oral epic traditions that, during the archaic period, defined what it meant to be a Greek, and by the Classical period, they not only had their influence on the literary culture, but as we infer from anecdotal evidence, on the educational system as well. Plato's *Republic* makes us well aware of how powerful this influence was felt to be to the point that it must be

[423] Lamberton 1997:38.
[424] Ibid :40.
[425] Athenaeus 8:347.

banished, but this is just one example. Plutarch's *Alcibiades* mentions how Alcibiades asks his teacher for a book of Homer, which is not produced, so Alcibiades to assault the teacher[426]. It must be supposed then that Homer was an expected and essential part of the educational system, for reading and writing[427].

Part Five: Hellenistic Receptions and Alexandrian Scholarship

Our oldest manuscript of Homeric poetry, the Venetus A manuscript, dates from the Byzantine period, approximately in the tenth century.[428] However, this manuscript and the scholia indicate a more open tradition prior to the manuscript and at the same time a "sort of textual standardization, delimiting the contours of the text inasmuch as it stabilized the number and sequence of verses and quite drastically cut down current variants"[429]. This manuscript tradition suggests that the most active period of editing in the transmission process took place in the Alexandrian period, under the Hellenistic scholars

The criticism and editing practices of the Alexandrian period represent one of the most sophisticated and systematic approaches to Homeric scholarship. The scholiastic traditions provide a depth of thematic and topical analyses, while the vitae provide purported details about the life

426 Plutarch *Alcibiades* 7.1.
427 Ibid.
428 Haslam 1996:55.
429 Haslam, in Morris and Powell, 1996:56.

of Homer. Though the accuracy of the *vitae Homeri* are obviously unverifiable in terms of the actual life of any author figure, they do contribute to our understanding of the reception of the works we know as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey.*

The language of the *vitae* contributes to the conceptions that later authors had about the material, composition, performance and transmission, and for the purposes of this investigation, details concerning conception and reception are more important than historical facts about a single poet's life. The poet Homer, according to *vitae* 1 and 2, began his career in Colophon, making *(poiein)* the Margites.[430] Homer then travels throughout Ionia and the Aegean, performing in contests and making poetry. In the earliest phases of the vitae, the verb used to refer to the composition of the songs is *poiein,* to make. According to Nagy, the verb *poiein* is used in both the pre-Athenocentric and post-Athenocentric phases of the *Lives of Homer*, though in the later phase *poiein* appears to be used interchangeably without preference with *graphein*[431]*.* This would seem to indicate literacy on some level for the Homeric character, though the independence of these terms just as easily suggests that the process of composition is independent from the process of physically inscribing the songs to tablet.

Homer is said to have performed his epic songs on other topics than what has become canon, including the Theban cycle, and as at Neon Teikhos,

[430] I here follow Nagy's analysis of the vitae in *Homer the Preclassic* 2010.
[431] Ibid, : 47.

where he also sings *humnoi* to the gods. Following the performance, "by commenting in public concerning what was said by those attending his performances, he appeared to his listeners as someone most worthy of admiration"[432]. Homer's performances in the *vitae* were not recitations of any particular version of the two epics known later as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but other stories as well. Also, in the *vitae*, the songs are referred to by their topics, rather than a title. A title implies a more concrete product than a song, like a text or book, though sometimes he sings more specific songs. In *vita* 2.315, Homer sings the *humnos* to Apollo, for which the *vita* gives the first line, in keeping with the traditional practice of naming a specific instance of a song not by a title, but rather by the proem. The Homer of the vitae is held as the model performer of hymns and songs by all Greeks: "*kai eti kai nun en tais koinais thusiais pro ton deipnon kai spondon prokateuxesthai pantas* (and even now in common sacrifices before feasting and libation all sacrifice [to Homer][433]. Even through the intensely critical scholarship of the Alexandrians, Homer is both a single person who authored a specific set of poems and at the same time metonymically a figurehead for an entire tradition.

Alexandrian scholarship, for Nagy, suggests the "scripturalization" of the text under the editorship of Aristarchus, around 150 BCE[434]. Aristarchus represents one of our most complete textual critics in the

[432] Vita Homeri 1.114-16.
[433]Vita 2.92-4, translation is Nagy's.
[434] Nagy 1996: 110.

ancient world who was searching for a “Homer”. He also is one of our greatest ancient editors of Homer, and likely played a part in the aesthetic decisions in the creation of the texts we have now. Aristarchus represents a search, as Nagy suggests, for a *real* Homer, an authoritative Homer[435]. This scholarly quest is in many ways at odds with the long-standing tradition of assigning all heroic epic poetry to Homer. Aristarchus is referred to in the Homeric scholia in the Venetus A manuscript as the editor of a *hupomnema,* commentary on Aristophanes's *ekdosis,* edition. Aristophanes of Byzantium is another important Alexandrian critic, probably Aristarchus's immediate predecessor. These editions, it is supposed, simply indicate copies of texts to be used at the library of Alexandria, not necessarily authoritative versions of the poems in any sort of widespread transmission.

Aristarchus's manuscript editions were based on the city-editions (*politikai)* stemming from places like Chios, Argos, and others. These texts were culled from other edited versions, and he deemed them most elegant. The inferior and least elegant texts, according to Aristarchus were the so-called popular or *koine* editions. What we must wonder, however, is what the criteria were that Aristarchus used to judge these various sources in his editions. It is supposedly from the grounds of aesthetics, rather than from performative authenticity, but there are reasons to suppose that both elements came into play. The fact that Aristarchus used these city-editions for the basis of his texts shows a trend towards standardization the Homeric poems. City

[435] Ibid.

versions, the *politikai ekdoseis*, that Aristarchus used were the product of a long tradition of scholarly editing, editing which would have been full of conjectures and corrections.

These conjectures made by scholars, Nagy suggests, were not the product of an oral tradition. It is true, nevertheless, if they are conjectures made in the spirit of the compositional texture of the poems, they must necessarily indicate some sort of oral-dependence. It is necessary to inquire on what basis these conjectures are made: are they suggestions, or could they be considered "corrections", *diorthoseis*, and what makes them more correct? Zenodotus is said to be the first *diorthotes*, corrector, or as Nagy suggests, editor of the Homeric poems[436]. Texts that were corrected or edited, by someone such as Zenodotus, would have fallen into the category of the superior text, so though the aesthetics by which they were judged are unclear, we know there was some system that produced an ideal text.[437] One possibility for the nature of these corrections is shown in the *Sophistici Elenchi* of Aristotle, where for instance at *Iliad* 22.328 a circumflex *ou* is substituted for an unaccented *ou*[438]. It does suggest that such marks would be of primary use in indicating performative aspects of the poetry, such as meter and ultimately intonation.

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[436] Nagy 1996 Poetry as Performance 120, further suggesting that Aristarchus had a text edited by Zenodotus, as did Apollonius and Callimachus, contemporaries of Zenodotus.
[437] Fowler 2004 :232.
[438] Aristotle *Sophistici Elenchi* 166b3. Diacritical marks, such as accents and breathing, are commonplaces in modern critical approaches to editing poetry, however our understanding of their position in ancient editions is less clear.

These official editions nevertheless contained elements of performance; even in an age of the written word there are still vestiges of orality. For instance, Nagy points out how Aristarchus preserved anomalous accents in his editions that appear to be archaisms[439]. The anomalous accents "have to do with the inherited melodic contours of the Homeric hexameter[440]", which were preserved in performance traditions of the rhapsodes, similar to the Aristotelian correction mentioned above. These archaisms, which appear throughout our versions, link the written Homeric texts of the Alexandrians to an oral performance tradition. Further, accentual emendations in the *hypomnemata* of Aristarchus run contradictory to Classical Athenian grammatical conventions and instead support the idiosyncrasies of Homeric accentuation.

The Alexandrian editions of editors like Aristarchus were not the only texts in circulation at this time. There were also many of the so-called wild, vulgate, or *koine* papyri in circulation. Though we do not know very much about these papyri fragments, they can tell us about the tradition of the Homeric poetry. Since there are nearly as many *koine* versions as there are city versions, we may assume that there was an unedited and unofficial tradition of Homeric poems in circulation that was nearly as widespread as the official rhapsodic performances of the city texts. As Foley points out, any Panathenaic fixed text would not signal the end of the art of oral

[439] Nagy 1996: 130.
[440] Ibid 131.

versification[441]. Local oral traditions, from which any fixed textual traditions were drawn, would continue to proliferate without granting any definitive qualities to or necessarily recognizing the authority of a fixed text. The *koine* texts feature deviations indeed from the city-editions mostly in the form of additional lines, constructed from formulae and appearing in similar positions to recurrent situations. This represents a still traditional compositional technique, even in a period where those composing could read and write. As Foley argues "only those acquainted with the multiformity of Homeric epic tradition could make "errors" of this sort"[442]. Nagy suggests further that neither reading, a *koine* nor an academic edition, has the "claim to be the original reading"[443]. Instead, they should both be heard as traditional variants or multiforms. One must also wonder which academic edition is to be most trusted as authoritative. Modern readers attempt to seek a "correct" reading of Homeric texts from the Alexandrian editions. This approach presupposes a PanHellenic fixed text with recognized authority, a concept at odds with the way an oral tradition functions. A more useful tool may be not to test for "correctness" of the conjectures of Aristarchus, but to test for authenticity. Correctness implies authoritative texts, but authenticity recognizes the multiform possibilities of an oral tradition and the validity of variants that would have been handed

[441] Foley 1990.
[442] Foley 1990:26.
[443] Nagy:1996:134.

down to Aristarchus.[444] So neither the "edited" versions nor the *koine* versions should be considered more correct than one another, and Aristarchus's aesthetic judgment concerning the "more elegant" *politikai ekdoseis* should not be interpreted to have bearing on the intrinsic authority or more direct connection to a Homeric oral tradition than the *koine* variants.

According to a passage of Athenaeus concerning Demeterius of Phalerum and Homeric traditions, the practice of oral quotations of Homeric poetry were common into the late fourth century BCE and the practice of transcription was the property of few[445]. In the *Ion* of Plato, Ion is equated as similar to an actor and the public performance was still the standard for epic, as well as iambic, with Archilochean poetry in specific. Demetrius of Phaleron in the fourth century BCE is credited with the institutionalization of professional actors, and also with the professionalization of the performers known as *Homeristai,* who performed theatrical versions of the Homeric poems. Even in the Alexandrian period, a period in which the written text predominates, the Homeric poems are still being constructed and reconstructed in a traditional manner. Though they may not be preserved orally, they are still thought of as oral poems and their performative orality dictates their form. These poems, by the Hellenistic

[444] Nagy ibid. A sample case for this type of test has been shown by Muellner and re-evaluated by Nagy in regards to the formulaic phrasing of the phrase elpomai euxomenos I hope, praying, from Iliad 8.526. A variant of this, found in more manuscripts, is euxomai elpomenos, I pray, hoping. Muellner showed that this alternative formulation is attested elsewhere syntactically throughout the Homeric corpus, including in the koine variants

[445] Athenaeus 620b-c.

period, had become ubiquitous and immanent on the fabric of Greek society, from receptions and quotations in authors of many different genres to their use as a school text for learning composition, rhetoric, and meter.

Through the Greek literary tradition, from the archaic through the Classical period and into the Hellenistic times, Greeks adapted their traditions to fit their particular cultural needs at the moment. The Homeric poems provided a constant anchor as well as a Muse-like source of inspiration for other poets. Historically, the person of Homer may have recomposed versions of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, or performed them, or may have never even existed. It is the tradition of the Homeric poems that shaped and influenced Greek culture, and which Greek culture used as a standard, for literature, historical grounding, and even education. Homeric poetry became a PanHellenic tradition at just the time when the Greeks were seeking a unifying tradition by which to identify themselves in the face of expansion and interaction with other Aegean cultures. The cultural practice of passing on knowledge and stories that epitomize the qualities that the Greeks held dear had existed for centuries prior to this period of cultural reflection and definition, giving ample cultural memory of the strength and continuity of a strong oral tradition. Though the poems were committed to texts, the culture retained that conception of them as an oral tradition that defined them, even through the editions of some of the most literary of scholars.

Part 6: Conclusions

Homeric poetry has had an impact on Greek culture that exceeds what one would expect from a written work of literature, and with good cause. It is not simply the impact that an oral traditional poetic form has on a society. The poems that came to be known as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* evolved from a centuries-old tradition of oral poetics that glorified a certain way of thinking and at the same time provided an identity to a people. These songs and themes were ingrained in the mindset of the Greek people through their traditions and became glorified themselves through the process of rhapsodic competition and the later textualization of the poems.[446] The reception of these two different traditions indicates that they had significant influence throughout the cultural fabric of archaic, classical, and Hellenistic Greece. The influence is not merely mythological in nature, but shows how Homeric poetry, and the construct of the character of Homer himself were viewed as an authority on the history and customs of the Greek people by some of the most critical thinkers in Greece, authors such as Plato and Thucydides, who did not idly and without deliberation consider an author a worthy source. I contend that the Homeric poems were the inevitable grandfather of Greek culture not simply due to their oral traditional nature, but because the tradition of which they were a part experienced a culmination at a period critical in the development of ancient Greece, namely the period known as the Orientalizing revolution, where

[446] Ford 1992:94.

expansion and Near Eastern influences forced the Greeks into a period of self-identification and development. This period also introduced the technology of writing to the Greeks, which allowed them new ways of preserving and promulgating culturally relevant information. The Mycenaeans indeed had writing, but it was not of the same sort as the Phoenician influenced alphabet and was not used for the same purpose. Here I have demonstrated that the Mycenaeans oral traditions survived the Mycenaean civilization and provided a link for Iron Age Greeks to an idealized past, which could be manipulated to forge a cultural identity by whatever standards the tradition would allow. The person of the bard in Mycenaean palatial civilization was comparable to court singers in other Near Eastern civilizations, like the Babylonians and Sumerians. He had a wide audience of the wealthy members of the ruler's court, and was a person of respect. This was not necessarily the case during the Iron Age, as we see a less uniform society controlled by more local concerns. Nevertheless, even in the Iron Age the oral epic tradition continued to flourish more or less along the same lines as it did during the Bronze Age.

The adoption of the Phoenician script and the influence of their cultural practice of preserving such relevant things as epic poetry gave the Greeks the necessary materials to preserve various aspects of the cultural revolution that internal developments and external influences provided the drive to produce, such as monumental epic poetry. At the same time, the

Greeks sought to produce a recognizable image of what made them Greeks. This was already embodied in their oral traditional epic poetry.

Greek culture is highly rhetorical, and political and social power are tightly tied to speaking. As I showed in chapters two and three, Homeric characters within the epics are able to seize political and social authority by speech, even from higher ranking leaders. The person of the aoidos is not only able to seize power, but then is able to manipulate his audience, provided that they tacitly approve by their approval of his performance. I suggest that that oral performance, and its seizure of authority, however temporary, is what ultimately gives Homeric epic the cultural and political authority that it comes to enjoy during the Classical period. Homeric poetry becomes such a part of the lives of the Greeks that it is an assumed part of their identity and history.

The medium of oral traditional epic was both flexible and efficient. The flexibility allowed cultural standards to be modified as needed to reflect both current and historical ideals, while the efficiency conveyed a large amount of data through the mechanism of traditional referentiality, making it the perfect combination for the conveyance of information. Though the poetry was made static by the process of textualization, it retained vestiges of orality, both in the transmission and performance at public events. This allowed it to retain some of the essential elements that made it flexible and efficient, yet also to become monolithic in a way that no other poetic forms in ancient Greece could. Through these mechanisms, as reception shows,

the Homeric epics remained one of the most culturally influential poems throughout the long literary history of ancient Greece.

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Vita

Andrew Smith's interest in Homeric studies began with his introduction to Greek in high school. He has always been interested in traditional cultures and the methods by which those cultures transmit information. In the course of his undergraduate career at Kent State University he studied Homer under Rick Newton, who introduced him to the complexity of the issues of textual transmission of an oral art form. At the end of Andrew's undergraduate career, he began looking into graduate programs where he could further study the orality of Homer. The University of Missouri-Columbia housed the Center for Studies of Oral Tradition and after contact with John Miles Foley, Andrew applied and was accepted to the doctoral program in the Classics department. Though his interests were substantially broadened through this program,

including an introduction to reception studies as well as a series of courses on Virgil and various neoteric Latin poets, he always gravitated back to Homeric studies, particularly the authority of Homer in the ancient literary and non-literary world. A course on archaic Greek sanctuaries brought him in contact with Near Eastern studies, and the relationship between Homeric poetry and its predecessors, influences, and tradition was put into perspective. Andrew began studying Near Eastern Mediterranean civilizations for their influence on Homeric society, as well as other comparable oral traditional literatures, including the Sanskrit Ramayana and Mahabarata. This ultimately led to the research project at hand, Homeric Constructions, which combines many approaches from the various fields and disciplines that Andrew came in contact with at the University of Missouri.