

## **Homeric Constructions: The Reception of Homeric Authority**

Andrew Smith

David Schenker, Dissertation Advisor

The purpose of this dissertation is to document the authority of the poems of Homer through the ancient Greek world, with a focus on understanding the changes that authority undergoes as Greek culture moves from being a primarily oral/aural culture to a literary culture. I divide this project into three chapters, Homer Preconstructed, Homer Constructed, and Homer Reconstructed. These sections follow the diachronic development of Homeric poetry and its reception by various stages of Greek culture.

The first chapter, Homer Preconstructed, looks at the background upon which the poems of Homer were created. I look at the development of early cross-cultural interactions between the Mycenaean Greeks and Near Eastern civilizations, and find evidence of borrowing not only of poetic forms, but also the influence of those forms. I also look at the social structures of the Mycenaean and near eastern civilizations, and cross reference them to the society depicted in the Homeric poems, in order to highlight the social and political realities in the texts.

The second chapter, Homer Constructed, looks at the way the character of the oral poet is depicted in recorded Greek literature, starting with Homer and also referencing other early poetry such as Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns, and the epic cycle. Here I find and present the power of speech and oral arts, as they are recorded. This leads to the transition from oral culture to literate culture, and the preservation of various oral forms, including oral epic.

The third chapter follows this thread of tracing the influence of orality and specifically Homeric poetry throughout the recorded literature of ancient Greece, with a brief survey of the archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic periods.