Myth and History: Close Encounters

MythosEikonPoiesis

Herausgegeben von
Anton Bierl

Wissenschaftlicher Beirat:
Gregory Nagy, Richard Martin

Band 14

Myth and History: Close Encounters

Edited by
Menelaos Christopoulos, Athina Papachrysostomou,
Andreas P. Antonopoulos

DE GRUYTER

ISBN 978-3-11-077958-5
e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-078011-6
e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-078023-9
ISSN 1868-5080

Library of Congress Control Number: 2021953233

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at http://dnb.dnb.de.

Typesetting: Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.
Printing and binding: CPI books GmbH, Leck

www.degruyter.com

Contents

Preface

The present volume tackles the twin subject of Myth and History, and engages into rigorous discussions of the emerging manifold interactions between the two spheres and the concomitant intricate contexts of reference. Thus, the volume lands in the very midst of and contributes to the study of a subject that has a long pedigree in the field of Humanities, ever arousing profound interest among classicists, historians, anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers, and even psychologists. Despite appearing as seemingly opposite entities at first sight, the fluidity of both myth and history in antiquity and the ensuing rapidity with which these notions can (and did) infiltrate and cross-fertilize one another is striking and has repeatedly attracted the scholarly interest.

There have been numerous attempts to define myth and history and fully comprehend the internal mechanisms at work, which on occasion make these notions function either in conjunction as inextricably inseparable concepts or in juxtaposition as diametrically antithetical and even mutually exclusive patterns. Simultaneously, equal attention has been paid to a number of germane parameters, such as the social and religious backdrop against which myth and history coexist and coalesce or, on occasion, collide.

To mention but a few conspicuous landmarks in the advancement of the myth-history studies, one strand of research focuses on myth's rationalistic interpretation; the origins of this trend trace back to antiquity already, and in particular to Palaephatus' treatise *Περὶ ἀπίστων* (*ἱστοριῶν*) (*On Incredible Tales*). In modern times Wilhelm Nestle was the first who attempted to systematically register the evolution from myth to rationalized thought in Greek literary tradition, especially in the fields of Greek rhetoric and philosophy, in his monumental monograph *Vom Mythos zum Logos*.[1] As far as history is concerned, Edward Carr's groundbreaking work *What Is History?*[2] still remains a classic and thought-provoking introduction to the subject. Carr engages in incisive discussions about the very essence and the study object of the science of History, its methodological tools, aspirations, and limitations, the role of the historian, while myth occasionally becomes tangentially relevant to his analysis. Another critical milestone is

1 Nestle, W. 1940. *Vom Mythos zum Logos. Die Selbstentfaltung des griechischen Denkens. Selbstentfaltung von Homer bis auf die Sophistik und Sokrates*. Stuttgart. See also Buxton, R. 1999. *From Myth to Reason? Studies in the Development of Greek Thought*. Oxford; Hawes, G. 2014. *Rationalizing Myth in Antiquity*. Oxford.

2 Carr, E.H. 1961. *What Is History?* New York (with a new introduction by R.J. Evans for the 40th anniversary reissue, Basingstoke 2001).

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110780116-203

Jean-Pierre Vernant's *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs*,[3] where the elements of myth, ritual, and society are interpreted against the bigger and convoluted canvas of history. In 1970 Geoffrey Kirk attempted an in-depth exploration and a critical venture into myth, thoroughly studying its nature, meaning, and functions in his epoch-making monograph *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures*.[4] Kirk's research climaxes four years later, when he publishes his work *The Nature of Greek Myths*,[5] where he painstakingly defines, interprets, and categorizes Greek myths of gods and heroes, while he simultaneously discusses interpretation models from the disciplines of anthropology, philosophy, and psychology. Most memorable is Paul Cartledge's monograph *The Greeks*, where the author effectively addresses the idiosyncratic relation between myth and history, under the dual prism of complementarity and antithesis.[6]

The understanding of myth as a phenomenon imbued with primarily social and historical nuances naturally allows for more than one methodological approaches. In this context the myth-and-ritual School of Cambridge (also known as "the Cambridge ritualists") has laboriously studied the inherent relation between myth and ritual, in its various sub-versions and multiple variations. The pioneering figure among these "myth-ritualists" was the nineteenth-century biblical scholar William Robertson Smith, who considered myth to be inferior to ritual. Prominent representatives of the Cambridge School also include James Frazer, Edward Burnett Tylor, and Jane Ellen Harrison, who – despite the slight differentiations in their personal credos – largely upheld that myth was shaped to have one role: to be the verbal accompaniment and complement to ritual. On the other hand, different groups of scholars pursued individualized approaches to myth and ritual, denying and rejecting any alleged interrelation between the two as incidental and/or anomalous (e.g. Walter Burkert and Mircea Eliade). Robert Segal and Robert Ackerman have done an excellent job in condensing, critically assessing, and presenting us with more than a hundred years of scholarship (from all fronts) in their respective works of 1998[7] and 2002.[8]

Special reference is also due to the School of Paris and its outstanding contribution to the analysis of Greek myths against their social network (uses and

3 Vernant, J.-P. 1965. *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs: études de psychologie historique*. Paris.
4 Kirk, G.S. 1970. *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures*. Berkeley.
5 Kirk, G.S. 1974. *The Nature of Greek Myths*. Woodstock, NY.
6 Cartledge, P.A. 1993. *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others*. Oxford (especially chapter 2: "Inventing the Past: History v. Myth", pp. 18–35).
7 Segal, R.A. 1998. *The Myth and Ritual Theory: An Anthology*. Malden, MA.
8 Ackerman, R. 2002. *The Myth and Ritual School. J.G. Frazer and the Cambridge Ritualists*. New York.

needs) and within their original historical milieu. Jean-Pierre Vernant's *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne*[9] inaugurated a whole new research path and laid the foundations for a markedly sociological and historical approach (shared by e.g. Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Nicole Loraux, and Marcel Detienne), which placed special emphasis on the relation developed between the shaping of myth on one hand and the social landscape and historical circumstances of each era on the other, which accommodate, promote, impede, or otherwise affect and mold myth's nature and role.[10]

The individual aspects of myth and history highlighted in all above-mentioned works (and plenty of others) incessantly trigger a series of constructive discussions among those who, in their different approaches to myth, take into account the social and historical parameters.[11] Additionally, most recently, the ways in which myth interacted with physical and conceptual landscapes in antiquity have also been brought to the foreground, especially due to the collected volume edited by Greta Hawes, *Myths on the Map: The Storied Landscapes of Ancient Greece*.[12] All these discussions are carried out on the basis of eclectic methodological tendencies that have emerged in the field of Humanities, springing particularly from the areas of social anthropology, structuralism, the deconstruction theory, and gender studies.

Within the wider context of this ongoing, interdisciplinary exchange of ideas, the present volume on *Myth and History* endeavors to trace and register the association and interaction between myth and history in various literary genres in Greek and Roman antiquity, i.e. an era when the scientific definitions

9 Vernant, J.-P. 1974. *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne*. Paris.

10 For the pertinent theory of the perfusion of society by religion, see Durkheim, E. 1912. *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*. Paris.

11 See e.g. Sebeok, Th.A. (ed.) 1965. *Myth: A Symposium*. Bloomington Ind. (featuring, among others, a chapter on "The Structural Study of Myth" by Claude Lévi-Strauss); Littleton, C.S. 1966. *The New Comparative Mythology: An Anthropological Assessment of the Theories of Georges Dumézil*. Berkeley; Tosh, J. 1984. *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods, and New Directions in the Study of Modern History*. London; Benjamin, J.R. 1998. *A Student's Guide to History*. Boston; Woolf, D.R. (ed.) 1998. *A Global Encyclopedia of Historical Writing* (Garland Reference Library of the Humanities), 2 vols. New York; Evans, J.R. 1999. *In Defense of History*. New York; Csapo, E. 2005. *Theories of Mythology*. Malden, MA; Presnell, J.L. 2007. *The Information-Literate Historian: A Guide to Research for History Students*. New York.

12 Hawes, G. 2017. *Myths on the Map: The Storied Landscapes of Ancient Greece*. Oxford.

of and distinctions between myth and history had not yet been perceived as such, let alone fully shaped and implemented.[13]

This is the fourth collected volume coordinated over the recent years by the Center for the Study of Myth and Religion in Greek and Roman Antiquity, which is affiliated with the Department of Philology, University of Patras. In 2010 the collected volume on *Light and Darkness in Greek Mythology and Religion* was published, edited by M. Christopoulos, E.D. Karakantza, and O. Levaniouk (Lanham: Lexington Books); in 2011 *Reflecting on the Greek Epic Cycle* came out, edited by E.D. Karakantza (as volume 6 of Harvard's electronic journal *Classics@*); in 2017 A. Bierl, M. Christopoulos, and A. Papachrysostomou co-edited the collected volume on *Time and Space in Ancient Myth, Religion and Culture* (Berlin: De Gruyter); and most recently, in 2021, A.P. Antonopoulos, M.M. Christopoulos, and G.W.M. Harrison co-edited the volume on *Reconstructing Satyr Drama* (Berlin: De Gruyter).

Recently, the Center's stated focus on the study of Myth triggered an equally strong and constantly increasing interest in the study of History among the Center's members and followers, since History is variously considered as simultaneously being Myth's antipode and complementary sphere (with further, intricate ramifications ensuing thereof, as discussed in the aforementioned modern scholarship). Hence, the Center resolved on organizing a Conference that would tackle a series of myth-and-history related issues throughout Greek and Roman antiquity and beyond. Indeed, in summer 2019 the Center hosted, on the premises of the University of Patras, a four-day International Conference entitled "Mythical History and Historical Myth: Blurred Boundaries in Antiquity", which brought together some sixty scholars (classicists, historians, and archaeologists) from Europe, the USA, Canada, and South America. Through both a diachronic and a synchronic perspective and adhering to a cross-generic approach, the speakers addressed a great number of challenging topics and incited constructive discussion pertaining to virtually every single literary genre.

Following a scrupulous, double-blind peer-review process, the volume in hand constitutes the elaborate outcome of the above Conference, as it features twenty-four select chapters, which engage in myth-and-history analyses that expand from epos to lyric poetry, historiography, dramatic poetry, and, even beyond, to literary genres of Roman era and late antiquity.

13 To that respect see Calame, C. 1996. *Mythe et histoire dans l'Antiquité grecque: la création symbolique d'une colonie*. Lausanne, where he speaks of modern-day misconceptions and offers a novel perspective into what really ancient Greeks thought of what *we* call *myth*.

It is the editors' hope that this volume will stimulate further discussion and the readers will benefit from original ideas, new interpretations, and (re)evaluations of key texts as well as less well-known passages, close readings, and catholic overviews.

The editors are grateful to Dr Torben Behm (Content Editor Books), Andreas Brandmair (Content Conversion Services), the entire typesetting team of the "MythosEikonPoiesis" series of De Gruyter, and especially to the series editor Professor Dr Anton Bierl, who wholeheartedly endorsed the project from the very beginning.

Special thanks are also due to Yiorgos Charitatos and Panagiota Taktikou (PhD candidates, Department of Philology, University of Patras), and Fay Papadimitriou (MA graduate, Department of Philology, University of Patras) for their invaluable assistance during the editing procedure.

Menelaos Christopoulos
Athina Papachrysostomou
Andreas P. Antonopoulos

Patras, October 2021

Part I: **Epos**

Menelaos Christopoulos

Historicizing Homer's Myth in the Homeric Epigrams

Abstract: In this contribution I focus on some particular aspects of the Homeric Epigrams related to the poetical persona of Homer. By reading the Epigrams one can easily see the care taken by the author of the pseudo-Herodotean *Life of Homer* (in which the Epigrams are included) to give a persuasive association between the poems themselves and the particular circumstances of Homer's life in which they are supposed to have been composed. As the Homeric Epigrams are falsely ascribed to Homer, what they actually do in the history of classical literature is borrow the impact of the greatest Greek poet and in exchange supply their supposed creator with the biographic historical evidence which he lacks.

This contribution advances some thoughts concerning the Homeric Epigrams, a group of short epic poems which have been – falsely – attributed to Homer and are supposed to depict particular moments of his life. The whole corpus of these poems is preserved in a *Life of Homer*, a text dated approximately between the first and the second centuries CE, at least eight centuries later than the historical period in which Homer may have lived;[1] the authorship of this *Life* is (also) falsely ascribed to Herodotus. As noted in the relevant scholarship, some of the poems of this corpus are separately included, sometimes slightly altered, in other sources such as two Plutarchean or pseudo-Plutarchean studies (μελέται), three anonymous *Lives* (*Vita Romana* and *Vitae Scorialenses*), a *Life of Homer* initially incorporated in Proclus' *Chrestomatheia*, the Suda Lexicon (s.v. Homer) and finally the *Certamen* (*Contest between Homer and Hesiod*).[2] It goes without saying that most of these Epigrams are older than the Testimonia in which they are included. Some of them are better known, such as the Epigram for Midas (no. 3), one of the best-known of the collection,[3] the song for

1 On the historical and fictional depiction of Homer's persona in the imperial period, see Kim (2010); see also Skiadas (1965). On the wider theme of history's intricate interrelation with fiction and myth, see the Preface to the present volume.

2 See Gigante (1996); see also West's Introduction in West (2003).

3 See Bassino (2019) 176–180; Livingston and Nisbet (2010) 42–45; Bakker (2016) 195–204. On the way funerary stones or statues address the readers of their engraved epigrams, see Svenbro (1976).

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110780116-001

the pot-makers (no. 14),[4] the longest of all, or the song of Eiresione (no. 15),[5] a folk-song which, together with the other two just mentioned, are less related to the story of the pseudo-Herodotean Life.[6] In this chapter I will try to focus on some particular aspects of the Epigrams which better illustrate their supposed relationship with the poetical persona of Homer**,** who is more often perceived as a mythical figure rather than a historical one.

It should be first recalled that the pseudo-Herodotean *Life of Homer* narrates the birth, the growing up, the coming of age and the many wanderings of the boy who was born in Smyrna by the river Meles and who was for that reason first named Melesigenes; later, once he was definitely blinded, he was given the name Homer (Ὅμηρος), as the inhabitants of Cuma (Κύμη), where he later resided, used to call blind people. According to the *Lives*' narrative, before being struck by blindness, Homer visited Etruria, Spain and mainly Ithaca, where he familiarized himself with the local tradition on Odysseus; when he definitely lost his eyesight, he left Smyrna, where he had already earned a great reputation as a poet, and visited Teichos, Cuma, Phocaea, Erythraea and Chios where he settled, got married and begot two daughters. He then decided to visit the mainland of Greece. He first moved to Samos, then to Ios, hoping to sail from there to the Greek mainland and in particular to Athens; but he never attained this target since he finally succumbed to the illness which was already keeping him in Ios; it is in this island where he was finally buried by the sea-side.

By reading the Epigrams one can easily see the care taken by the author of the *Lives* to give a persuasive relationship between the poems themselves and the particular circumstances of Homer's adventures in which they are supposed to be composed.[7] This involves also the main questions raised already in antiquity concerning Homer's origin, birth and descent. On these precise questions some verses of the fourth Epigram give, perhaps, an interesting response:

> Οἵῃ μ' αἴσῃ δῶκε πατὴρ Ζεὺς κύρμα γενέσθαι
> νήπιον αἰδοίης ἐπὶ γούνασι μητρὸς ἀτάλλων.
> ἦν ποτ' ἐπύργωσαν βουλῇ Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο
> λαοὶ Φρίκωνος, μάργων ἐπιβήτορες ἵππων,
> ὁπλότεροι μαλεροῖο πυρὸς κρίνοντες Ἄρηα, 5
> Αἰολίδα Σμύρνην ἁλιγείτονα ποντοτίνακτον

4 See Compton (2006) 72–74; Day (2019).

5 See Compton (2006) 72–73.

6 For an overall analysis of the Homeric Epigrams, see Markwaldt (1986); Christopoulos (2007).

7 Gregory Nagy discerns three periods in the ongoing reception of the *Life of Homer* tradition (pre-Athenocentric, Athenocentric, post-Athenocentric); see Nagy (2009).

ἦν τε δι' ἀγλαὸν εἶσιν ὕδωρ ἱεροῖο Μέλητος.
ἔνθεν ἀπορνύμεναι κοῦραι Διός, ἀγλαὰ τέκνα,
ἠθελέτην κλῆσαι δῖαν χθόνα καὶ πόλιν ἀνδρῶν
οἱ δ' ἀπανηνάσθην ἱερὴν ὄπα, φῆμιν ἀοιδῆς
ἀφραδίῃ. τῶν μέν τε παθών τις φράσσεται αὖτις
ὅς σφιν ὀνειδείῃσιν ἐμὸν διεμήσατο πότμον.
κῆρα δ' ἐγὼ τήν μοι θεὸς ὤπασε γεινομένῳ περ
τλήσομαι, ἀκράαντα φέρων τετληότι θυμῷ.
οὐδέ τι μοι φίλα γυῖα μένειν ἱεραῖς ἐν ἀγυιαῖς
Κύμης ὀρμαίνουσι, μέγας δέ με θυμὸς ἐπείγει
δῆμον ἐς ἀλλοδαπῶν ἰέναι ὀλίγον περ ἐόντα.

To what a fate did Zeus the Father give me a prey even
while he made me to grow, a babe at my mother's knee!
By the will of Zeus who holds the aegis
the people of Phricon, riders on wanton horses,
more active than raging fire in the test of war,
once built the towers of Aeolian Smyrna, wave-shaken neighbour to the sea,
through which glides the pleasant stream of sacred Meles;
thence arose the daughters of Zeus, glorious children,
and would fain have made famous that fair country and the city of its people.
But in their folly those men scorned the divine voice and renown of song,
and in trouble shall one of them remember this hereafter,
he who with scornful words to them contrived my fate.
Yet I will endure the lot which heaven gave me even at my birth,
bearing my disappointment with a patient heart.
My dear limbs yearn not to stay in the sacred streets of Cyme,
but rather my great heart urges me
to go unto another country, small though I am.[8]

According to the pseudo-Herodotean *Life*, this fourth Epigram was composed in Cuma, where Homer, still named Melisigenes, moved to, hoping to find in this city what he had not found in his birthplace Smyrna: a place to live, to practise his art and to earn his living. And, indeed, as soon as he arrived there, his poetry immediately earned the profound admiration of its listeners. What the poet wished and what the inhabitants asked from the authorities' Council, was to keep Homer there for ever at the city's expense. By offering the wandering artist a home, the city would take advantage of his increasing artistic reputation. But when the issue came to the Assembly, an influential member of the Council strongly objected by arguing that if such petitions were encouraged, the city would soon become full of useless 'homers' (μὴ ὁρῶντας) and the claim was refused. The bitter reception of the news by Homer is reflected in the lines 8–17

8 Transl. by Evelyn-White (1936).

of the Epigram where it is stated that the daughters of Zeus, the Muses, born in Smyrna, wished to glorify Cuma (that is, through his poetry) but the inhabitants refused the Muses' sacred voice, an unwise decision that would soon bring regrets to those who took it and, in particular, to the very one who first advanced it. As for me, says the poet, I'll carry on the fate allotted to me when I was born. By the line 13, the poem runs back to the idea expressed in the two first lines, where there is again question of the fate allotted to the poet when he was yet a baby sitting on his mother's knees. The imagery itself is familiar, almost a frequent commonplace. But, who actually is this mother? What the *Life* says about her[9] and what the Epigram only implies is a very interesting story. According to this story, when the Aeolian Cuma was founded, a young man from Magnesia, Melanopos, moved there, got married and begot a daughter named Cretheis. After her parents' death, Cretheis remained under the tutorship of Cleanax, a trusted friend of her father. In spite of Cleanax' thoughtful surveillance, Cretheis got pregnant by a young man whose identity remained unknown; Cleanax sent her to Smyrna, in the house of Ismenias, a friend of his, and it is in Smyrna that Critheis gave birth to her baby, Melesigenes, named, as mentioned, after the river Meles where the birth took place. Cretheis then married Phemios, a teacher of letters and music, who took excellent care of Melesigenes' inherent talent. After the death of Phemios and, later on of Critheis, Melesigenes, alias Homer, became himself a renowned poet and teacher. This is, briefly, the story told about Homer's mother, Cretheis.

The refusal of the inhabitants of Cuma to accept Homer as the city's guest could indeed be associated with a wider issue concerning social attitude towards poets. According to M. Lefkowitz,[10] this attitude could already be detected in perceptions of the archaic period. This theme is also inserted in various forms in Epigrams 1, 2, 6, 8, 14, some of which could be dated as early as in the fifth century BC.[11]

In the fourth Epigram the idea of the mother advanced in the first two verses leads to the idea of motherland, a frequent association which, however, becomes particularly significant in the case of Homer. In contrast to the usual epic – and Homeric – convention according to which a person is introduced into the narrative through the mention of his paternal descent (patronymic), the origin of Homer is traditionally defined through maternal descent (metronymic); what is more, the identity of his father in the relevant traditions is either

9 *Vita Herodotea* (*Homeri Opera* V, Allen) 5–33.

10 Lefkowitz (1983) 17.

11 For this theme in Greek Literature, see Compton (2006).

persistently silenced or uncritically attributed to the numerous names of a long list of virtual candidates. It is perhaps interesting to mention that in the first of the Plutarchean *Lives* (4), Homer is represented as asking for an oracle revealing his paternal origin; the answer to his quest is quite significant "you seek your fatherland but what you have got is a motherland."[12] The antagonism among the Greek cities claiming the birth of Homer could be one of the reasons explaining why the authors of these sources restrained themselves from choosing a name for the poet's father; as the institutional framework of the archaic cities was more or less patriarchally structured, any paternal identification would be attached to a certain city and voraciously challenged by those favouring a different origin of Homer. Most versions on the identity of Homer's father indicate either a god like Apollo,[13] or an adequate hero such as Orpheus,[14] Musaeus[15] or Thamyris,[16] or the river Meles himself,[17] or even persons issuing from his poems such as Telemachus.[18] The same idea explains the long catalogues of names often cited to reveal Homer's possible father where no conclusive verdict is finally expressed (dozens of possible fathers are listed for instance in the *Certamen* in such a way that any possible choice is condemned in advance). Ephorus' version[19] on the other hand is one of the most unusual ones in that it suggests that Homer is the result of his mother's rape by her uncle who, afterwards, married her to Phemios. However strange this version may be, it is once more stressing the maternal descent in Homer's genealogical tree.

The same maternal-orientated priorities pertain to most versions concerning the poet's offspring. The pseudo-Herodotean *Life* mentions[20] two daughters, of which one died unmarried and the other married a man from Chios, a version which allowed the Homeridae of Chios, the local corporation of singers, to refer to Homer as to their venerated founder. A variant version narrated by Pindar[21] (preserved through Aelian)[22] claims that Homer gave his son-in-law, Stasinus, a whole epic poem, namely the *Cypria*, as an inheritance (dower), a story that ascribes also the *Cypria* to the authorship of Homer; as far as we know this is the

12 Πατρίδα δίζηαι, μητρίς δέ τοι οὐ πατρίς ἐστιν.
13 Suda s.v. Homer.
14 *Certamen* 4.
15 Gorgias 82B 25 DK.
16 *Certamen* 3.
17 EG 3305 / 146 CP.
18 *Certamen* 3, *Anth. Pal.* 14.102; see Bassino (2019) 118–130.
19 Jacoby 70 F 1.
20 §§ 343–345.
21 Fr. 265 Schroeder, 280 Bowra.
22 *VH* 9.15.

only case of spiritual inheritance ever registered in antiquity. In the Suda we read another name for Homer's son-in-law, Creophylus, who, in other versions, is only a friend of the poet.[23] I. Tzetzes[24] names Homer's wife Eurydice and Homer's daughter Arsiphone; he also mentions two sons: Seriphon (Σερίφων) and Theolaos (Θεόλαος). Even if tradition never granted Homer a proper father, his own fatherhood has been solicited retroactively by most archaic epics, either preserved or not.

Coming back to our fourth Epigram, it is interesting to observe that in the same way that the city of Cuma was supposed to become but never became Homer's birthplace, in the same way it was supposed to become but never became his residence and the focus of his poetic glory. Out of the seven cities that claimed to be Homer's birthplace (Smyrna, Chios, Colophon, Pylos, Argos, Athens) the Epigrams and the pseudo-Herodotean *Life* finally made their choice: Smyrna. Pylos, Argos and Colophon are not mentioned at all, Athens remained a prospective destination, whereas Chios earned only the title of the poet's place of residence. This rich topography is further enlarged by the various stop-overs in Homer's wanderings mentioned in the pseudo-Herodotean and the other *Lives*. Many of these places are, of course, involved in the long story of Homer's origins as Markwald's (1986); Graziosi's (2002) works have shown.

The mention of the river Meles in line 7 is a straight reminder of the poet's precise birthplace. The story of Homer's birth by the river and the mention of the Muses in the following line are probably associated (though it is hard to say in what sense) with a Hellenistic idea that Homer is the river of poetry whence all the other streams of poetic speech spring out (Callim. *H. Apoll.* 105–113). As for Homer's identification with the Muses who appear to originate from Smyrna themselves, not only does it convey the idea of the poet's direct inspiration from the Muse but also strengthens the accusation against the Cumaeans who reject not the *poet's* but the *Muses'* intention to glorify the metropolis of Smyrna, since, in historical terms, Smyrna was a Cumaean colony founded by Phricon. By denying Homer, Cuma, the metropolis, denies her own 'children' and with them, also, the glory of the Muses; the idea of the mother in lines 1–2 is now reversely projected in the relationship between the metropolis and the colony.

The Cumaeans' decision belied Homer's expectations to find in Cuma a safe place to live. These expectations were expressed already in the short second Epigram supposedly composed on his way to Cuma. A quick reading of the second

23 See Burkert (1972).
24 *Chil.* 13.636.

Epigram[25] shows its inner poetic relationship with the fourth through the precise virtues expected from the Cumaeans, *aidos*, *thymos prophron*, *metis ariste*. None of them has been found, and this leads not only to the poet's deception but, also, to an idea which makes its entrance in the fourth Epigram (lines 11–12) and ascends further and beyond the others: a reciprocal justice, a somewhat strange *lex talionis*, which announces, through a poetic insight, a severe punishment for the bad behaviour manifested towards the poet.[26] This is the case in Epigram 14, where the potters are threatened with total and vile destruction of their pottery and their furnace if they fail to award the singer for his song,[27] or Epigram 12 where the priestess of Kourotrophos[28] is condemned to a total eclipse of erotic pleasure for her rude and arrogant words to Homer when she met him at a cross road, to cite two examples out of many.

The last picture of Homer given by the pseudo-Herodotean *Life* is at the seaside of Ios where the poet, already sick, is waiting for a boat to sail to Athens. It is in Ios where the author places the well-known episode with the fisher boys who, when asked by the poet what they caught, answered, "what we caught we did let go, what we did not catch we carry" (=not the fish but the lice on their heads).[29] It is obvious, not only by the picture of the hero waiting for a boat at the seaside of an island to sail to Greece, but also from the whole itinerary of the poet related in the text, that the Homer of the *Epigrams* and of the pseudo-Herodotean *Life* is conceived as 'a man of many wanderings' whose encounters, acquaintances and experiences are inspired and sometimes named after the narrative of the Homeric epics and mainly the *Odyssey*. But in contrast to Odysseus who achieves survival and recognition through wanderings which definitely lead him to an irreplaceable homeland, the pseudo-herodotean Homer achieves survival and recognition through many replaceable substitute homelands, which lead him to a definite wandering.

The Homeric Epigrams are not the works of Homer; what they do in the history of classical literature is borrow the impact of the greatest Greek poet and in exchange try to supply their supposed creator with the historical biographic

25 Αἶψα πόδες με φέροιεν ἐς αἰδοίων πόλιν ἀνδρῶν. / τῶν γὰρ καὶ θυμὸς πρόφρων καὶ μῆτις ἀρίστη.

26 The theme of the hostile treatment towards a poet in the Greco-Roman world – but also in the Indo-European tradition – is explored by Compton (2006).

27 See Compton (2006) 72–74; Day (2019).

28 On certain 'matron' aspects of some female deities, including Kourotrophos, see Hadzisteliou-Price (1978); Simon (1987).

29 Ὅσσ' ἕλομεν λιπόμεσθα, ἃ δ' οὐχ ἕλομεν φερόμεσθα. On the general function of riddles in Greek antiquity, see Ohlert (1912); Pucci (1996); Schneider (2020). On this particular riddle, see Pucci (1996) 20–29; Levine (2002/2003).

existence which he lacks. For classicists, the scholarly value of the Homeric Epigrams is taken for granted but their pure literary value is not. The *Epigrams* had to 'lie' about their authorship to be sheltered in a proper *Life of Homer*. To gain respectability, the *Life* itself had to lie about its own authorship and pass as a work of Herodotus. This pair of lies is what I find interesting and, in a way, moving about these texts. If the *Epigrams* and the *Life* had given their not prestigious but real author's name, who knows if they would be today preserved? However dear genuineness may be to us, we must admit it is not the only way to preserve some texts. Sometimes, lies work better.

Bibliography

Allen, T.W. 1912. *Homeri Opera*, V. Oxford.
Bakker, E. 2016. Archaic Epigram and the Seal of Theognis. In *Dialect, Diction, and Style in Greek Literary and Inscribed Epigrams*, eds. Sistakou, E. and Rengakos, A., 195–214. Berlin.
Bassino, P. 2019. *The Certamen Homeri et Hesiodi. A Commentary*. Berlin.
Burkert, W. 1972. Die Leistung eines Kreophylus. *MH* 29: 74–85.
Christopoulos (Χριστόπουλος), M. 2007. *Ομηρικά Επιγράμματα. Εισαγωγή, Μετάφραση, Σχόλια*. Αθήνα.
Compton, T. 2006. *Victim of the Muses. Poet as Scapegoat, Warrior, and Hero in the Greco-Roman World and Indo-European Myth and History*. Washington, DC.
Day, J. 2019. The Origins of Greek Epigram. In *A Companion to Ancient Epigram*, ed. Henriksén, C., 229–247. Hoboken, NJ.
Evelyn-White, H.G. 1936. *Hesiod. The Homeric Hymns and Homerica*. London.
Gigante, C.E.V. 1996. *Vite di Omero*. Naples.
Graziosi, B. 2002. *Inventing Homer: The Early Reception of Epic*. Cambridge.
Hadzisteliou-Price, T. 1978. *Kourotrophos. Cults and Representations of the Greek Nursing Deities*. Leiden.
Jacoby, F. 1926. *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, Teil 2. Berlin.
Kim, L. 2010. *Homer between History and Fiction in Imperial Greek Literature*. Cambridge.
Lefkowitz, M. 1983. *The Lives of the Greek Poets*. London.
Levine, D.B. 2002–2003. Poetic Justice: Homer's Death in the Ancient Biographic Tradition. *CJ* 98: 141–160.
Livindston, N. and Nisbet, G.. (eds.) 2010. *Epigram*. Cambridge.
Markwald, G. 1986. *Die homerischen Epigramme*. Meisenheim.
Nagy, G. 2009. *Homer the Preclassic*. Berkeley (online version: http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.ebook:CHS_Nagy.Homer_the_Preclassic.2009, accessed 12. 02.2021).
Ohlert, K. 1912. *Rätsel und Rätselspiele der Alten Griechen*. Berlin.
Pucci, P. 1996. *Enigma, Segreto, Oracolo*. Pisa.
Schneider, L. 2020. *Untersuchungen zu antiken griechischen Rätseln*. Berlin.

Simon, E. 1987. Griechische Muttergottheiten. In *Matronen und verwandte Gottheiten*, eds. Bauchens, G. and Neumann, G., 157–169. Cologne.
Skiadas, A. 1965. *Homer im griechischen Epigramm*. Athens.
Svenbro, J. 1976. *La parole et le marbre*. Paris.
West, M.L. 2003. *Homeric Hymns, Homeric Apocrypha, Lives of Homer*. London.

Jonathan S. Burgess

The Aristotelian *Constitution of the Ithacans* and Homero-Cyclic Reception of the *Odyssey*

Abstract: Aristotle's *Constitution of the Ithacans* is lost, but testimony of it survives. Most interesting is an account by Plutarch (*Quaest. Graec.* 14; fr. 507 Rose) of the exile of Odysseus after the slaughter of the suitors. In both Aristotle and Apollodorus political intrigue in the area of the Ionian Islands seems to underlie the exile. The acceptance of a story of Odysseus' exile by the *Constitution* suggests that historical Ithacans claimed descent from families of the suitors. Of further interest is reference to clans descended from Eumaeus and Philoetius, which would seem to reference promises by Odysseus at *Odyssey* 21.213–300. The *Constitution* would thus seem to be a historical document that reflects Ithacan historicization of Archaic Age myth and literature, including both Homeric and Cyclic epic.

An intriguing passage in Plutarch, apparently based on the lost Aristotelian *Constitution of the Ithacans*, tells of the exile of Odysseus after the murder of the suitors. This contradicts the establishment of peace on Ithaca at the end of the *Odyssey*. But the Aristotelian *Constitution* also speaks of clans descended from the swineherd Eumaeus and the herdsman Philoetius, which would seem to be based on a brief passage in the *Odyssey*. That Ithacans would make use of the *Odyssey* when recounting their heroic origins is not remarkable; what may seem surprising is the acceptance of the *exile* of Odysseus. But the ancients often mixed and matched Homeric and Cyclic material. The Aristotelian *Constitution* is not 'Cyclic', but its exile narrative suggests that historical Ithacans of the Classical period employed both Homeric and non-Homeric material when constructing their heroic past. I will argue that Ithaca's construction of its mythological past reflects not only contemporary events but also earlier narratives about Odysseus.[1] These narratives reflect long-standing issues for Ithaca and its region, as already apparent in the *Odyssey*. The exile narrative found in Plutarch therefore may, in some flexible, multiform manner, go back to the Archaic Age.

1 On collective construction of the past, see Gehrke (2001); Thomas (2019) 22–28.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110780116-002

Following is the passage by Plutarch, with my translation.[2] Capital letters are inserted before sections for reference in my subsequent argument.

> τίνες οἱ παρ' Ἰθακησίοις Κολιάδαι καὶ τίς ὁ φάγιλος; [A] τῷ Ὀδυσσεῖ μετὰ τὴν μνηστηροφονίαν οἱ ἐπιτήδειοι τῶν τεθνηκότων ἐπανέστησαν, [B] μεταπεμφθεὶς δ' ὑπ' ἀμφοτέρων διαιτητὴς Νεοπτόλεμος [C] ἐδικαίωσε τὸν μὲν Ὀδυσσέα μεταναστῆναι καὶ φεύγειν ἐκ τῆς Κεφαλληνίας καὶ Ζακύνθου καὶ Ἰθάκης ἐφ' αἵματι, τοὺς δὲ τῶν μνηστήρων ἑταίρους καὶ οἰκείους ἀποφέρειν ποινὴν Ὀδυσσεῖ τῶν εἰς τὸν οἶκον ἀδικημάτων καθ' ἕκαστον ἐνιαυτόν. [D] αὐτὸς μὲν οὖν εἰς Ἰταλίαν μετέστη: τὴν δὲ ποινὴν τῷ υἱεῖ καθιερώσας ἀποφέρειν ἐκέλευσε τοὺς Ἰθακησίους. [E] ἦν δὲ ἄλφιτα οἶνος κηρία ἔλαιον ἅλες ἱερεῖα πρεσβύτερα φαγίλων: φάγιλον δὲ φησιν Ἀριστοτέλης τὸν ἀμνὸν εἶναι. [F] τοὺς δὲ περὶ Εὔμαιον ἐλευθερώσας ὁ Τηλέμαχος κατέμιξεν εἰς τοὺς πολίτας, καὶ τὸ γένος ἐστὶ Κολιαδῶν ἀπ' Εὐμαίου καὶ Βουκολιδῶν ἀπὸ Φιλοιτίου.
>
> Who are the Coliadai among Ithacans and what is the phagilos? [A] After the slaughter of the suitors the relatives of the dead rose up against Odysseus, [B] and Neoptolemus, summoned by both sides as arbiter, [C] ruled that Odysseus depart in exile from Cephallenia, Zakynthus, and Ithaca for homicide, and that the companions and the relatives of the suitors convey compensation to Odysseus for wrongs against his household each year. [D] Odysseus himself therefore went away to Italy; sanctifying the compensation for his son, he bid the Ithacans pay it. [E] The compensation consisted of barley, wine, honey, olive-oil, salt, and sacrificial animals older than phagiloi; Aristotle says a phagilos is a lamb. [F] Telemachus freed Eumaeus and his oikos and placed them among the citizens; the clan of the Coliadai stems from Eumaeus and the Boucolidai from Philoetius.

Plutarch's testimony for the Aristotelian *Constitution* has appeared intermittently in Homeric studies. Hartmann discussed it when surveying non-Homeric local legends about Odysseus.[3] More recently the *Constitution* served Malkin's argument for connectivity between Ithaca, the region of the Ionian Islands, and beyond.[4] It was also a key text for Marks' coherent examination of the hero's post-*Odyssey* adventures.[5] The most extensive analysis of the Plutarch passage was made by Halliday.[6] I reject his thesis that the exile story was invented as etiological explanation of cult ritual for Telemachus. A cult of Telemachus is nowhere attested – not even in Plutarch's account. Also, very debatable is the assumption that the exile is necessitated by blood pollution, a concept dubiously dated by Halliday to the Greco-Roman Hellenistic period[7] or at least after Homer.[8]

2 *Moralia*, *Quaest. Graec.* 14; fr. 507 Rose, 511,1 Gigon.
3 Hartmann (1917) 140–144.
4 Malkin (1998a) 101–102, 127–133.
5 Marks (2008) ch. 4.
6 Halliday (1927/1928).
7 See Halliday (1927) 11.
8 See Halliday (1928) 81.

It may be that Ithacan religious officials presiding over an annual rite were a source for details in the Ithacan constitution. Thomas convincingly argues that the lost Aristotelian *Constitutions* reflect such on-site, local information.[9] The verb employed in reference to Odysseus' transfer of payment to Telemachus (D), καθιερόω, has religious implications, though it can be used to indicate public sanctification of an agreement. The compensation paid to Telemachus (E) seems typical for ritual libation and sacrifice. Particularly noticeable is its specificity: Plutarch needs to reference Aristotle (presumably the Aristotelian *Constitution*) to answer his initial question, "What is a *phagilos*?" Such ritual aspects may reflect an annual public remembrance of the exile story; it certainly appears that the compensation in the narrative is correlated to ritual practice. But this need not question the independent and early existence of the story itself.

The cult of Odysseus of Ithaca is well known, but its evidence is rather late.[10] Morgan is skeptical about supposed earlier evidence, including a dozen or so tripods from the so-called cave at Polis Bay that have sometimes been linked to the gifts given to Odysseus by the Phaeacians.[11] As elsewhere, it seems that archaeological work on Ithaca "has been seriously constrained by its Homeric focus."[12] Malkin points out that there is no evidence that Odysseus was believed to be buried in Ithaca.[13] Some sources actually claim that Odysseus was buried on the mainland or in Italy.[14] All this suggests caution should be taken in regard to Halliday's thesis of a cult of Telemachus on Ithaca.

In the *Constitution* a revolt arises against Odysseus after the slaughter of the suitors (A). But this does not turn violent, as in *Odyssey* 24. Ready has demonstrated that the aborted skirmish at the end of the *Odyssey* is idiosyncratic:[15] it is not found in other accounts, including the *Telegony* (according to the summary by Proclus), or in the 'Homecoming Husband' tale type.[16] Perhaps the

9 See Thomas (2019).

10 Coins with Odysseus date to the fourth century BCE; an inscription referencing a festival and sanctuary of Odysseus and the famous sherd inscription 'a prayer to Odysseus' date to the late third or early second century BCE. See Morgan (2007) 75–76; (2016) 39–40; (2018) 237–244.

11 See Morgan (2007) 75–79; (2018) 241–242. Cf. Malkin (1998b) for a trenchant linkage of the tripods to the *Odyssey*, unusual in its claim that a ninth-century *Odyssey* preceded the placement of tripods in the 'cave'.

12 Morgan (2007) 75.

13 Malkin (1998a) 107–108.

14 Cf. Lycophron 799–800, 805–806, with scholia ad 799 = Aristotle fr. 508 Rose, 513 Gigon; ps.-Arist. *Peplos* 12, 13 *lemmata*; Hyg. *Fab.* 127. See in general Phillips (1953).

15 Ready (2019).

16 Hansen (2002) 201–211.

revolt was absent even in early forms of the *Odyssey*. Already in antiquity some (Aristophanes and Aristarchus: schol. 23.296) apparently thought that the *Odyssey* most naturally ends with Odysseus and Penelope happily in bed together.[17] Because the *Telegony* begins with the burial of the suitors, although this also occurs in the *Odyssey* (24.417–419), Davies[18] concludes that the *Telegony* "was intended to follow on from a sequel to an *Odyssey* lacking the Continuation," that is, everything after pillow talk between the reunited couple.[19] Seaford trenchantly argues that reconciliation in the 'continuation' reflects polis culture of the later archaic age.[20] The exile narrative in the *Constitution* arguably does this as well, only more so. Arbitration and exile (C, D) contrast starkly with the divine proclamation of peace and the continuing rule of Odysseus at the end of our *Odyssey*.

An arbitrated exile for Odysseus would not necessarily be post-Homeric. There are multiple examples of exile for murder in the Homeric epics,[21] and the shield of Achilles contains a famous scene of public arbitration for homicide (*Iliad* 18.497–508). Odysseus himself expects that he will need to go into exile after the slaughter of the suitors (*Odyssey* 20.42–43, 23.117–22; cf. 24.430–431, 437). In heroic epic convention the consequence for murder in a domestic, civil environment is exile. But more important than the *date* of different narratives about the consequences of the return of Odysseus is their perspectives. An external – that is, non-Ithacan – narrative might prefer narrative closure, as in the tale type called 'Homecoming Husband'. But an internal or Ithacan perspective would be more attentive to the messiness of real-word conflict. Historical Ithacans probably found a narrative of political arbitration more plausible than divinely inspired forgetting of murder (24.485).

Multiform narratives about the consequences of Odysseus return may stem from relatively local frames of reference. It is especially interesting that both in Plutarch (B) and in Apollodorus (*Epitome* 7.40) Neoptolemus acts as an arbitrator between the hero and the families of the slain suitors. In Apollodorus Neoptolemus is described, rather vaguely, as king of the islands of Epirus.[22] Molossians of

17 Cf. Heubeck (1992) 342–345; Seaford (1994) 38–41, 71–73; Danek (1998) 451, 454, 457, 500–502; Marks (2008) ch. 3; Bakker (2020).

18 Davies (1989) 88.

19 Cf. Hartmann (1917) 144; Danek (1998) 500–502. West (2013) 292, citing analytical scholarship, differently states that "it is unsafe to infer . . . that Eugammon [poet of the *Telegony*] did not know the last portion of our *Odyssey*."

20 Seaford (1994) 38–41, 71–73; See also Bonanni (1992) 173–193 on the political underpinnings of the *Odyssey*.

21 See Perry (2010).

22 Halliday (1927) 5 blames the 'stupidity' of the epitomizer. Cf. Hes. *Theog.* 1013, where the children of Circe and Odysseus, Agrius and Latinus, rule the Tyrsenians in the 'recesses of the holy islands'.

Epirus in the late Classical and Hellenistic periods claimed descendance from Neoptolemus (*Epitome* 6.12–13) and his prominence in the *Constitution* would surely have contemporary significance.

Already in the Archaic Age the *Nosti* of the Epic Cycle has Neoptolemus travel to the Molossians, on the evidence of the very concise summary of the lost poem by Proclus ("Neoptolemus having reached the Molossians is recognized by Peleus"). It is not clear why Neoptolemus passes through northwest Greece before reaching Phthia in the Cyclic *Nosti*. In later accounts, notably in Pindar (Nem. 5.50–52), the return of Neoptolemus variably includes Andromache, Helenus, defense of Peleus and death at the hands of Orestes.[23] A controversial fragment of the Cyclic *Little Iliad* (21 Bernabé) indicates that Neoptolemus chose Andromache as a captive (as well as Aeneas, for whom Epirus was often featured in accounts of his migration westwards).[24]

The key point for my argument is that a connection between Neoptolemus and Epirus apparently did exist in an early Greek epic.[25] That means that the significance of Neoptolemus in the region precedes the expansive role of Molossians at a later date. Epirus in general may have been peripheral in the Greek world, but it was of long-standing and continuing importance. Notable was the very ancient oracle of Dodona, mentioned several times in Homer,[26] and variously linked to Deucalion, the Pelasgi, the first Hellenes, the Argo and the journey of Hyperborean maidens to Delos.[27]

In the *Constitution* (C) and in Apollodorus (*Epitome* 7.40), Neoptolemus decides to exile Odysseus. Of interest are the variant destinations for Odysseus in the *Constitution* and Apollodorus, Italy and Aetolia respectively (D; *Epitome* 7.40). Some, like Hartmann,[28] have wanted to change Italy to Aetolia in Apollodorus' text. Other testimony for the *Constitution* reports an oracle of the hero in Aetolia.[29] But as we saw above, there are connections between Odysseus and Italy,[30] and not just in the localization of the hero's wanderings. The variance

23 On the chronology of the Cycle poem, see Sammons (2019) 49–51; on myth featuring Neoptolemus, cf. Jones (1999) 44–48; Rutherford (2001) 152, 162, 305–306, 313–314.

24 E.g. Hellanicus fr. 84 Fowler: Aeneas went from the Molossians to Italy with Odysseus. See further Fowler (2013) 565–566.

25 Cf. Malkin (1998a) 136–138; Danek (2015) 369–370. West (2013) 264 doubts that Neoptolemus visited the Molossians in the *Nostoi* ("it would be the first appearance of the Molossians in Greek literature").

26 *Il.* 2.749–750, 16.234–235; *Od.* 14.327–328 = 19.296–297.

27 On Molossia, Epirus and Dodona cf. Meyer (2015); Piccinini (2017).

28 Hartmann (1917) 142–144.

29 See schol. Lycophron 799 = fr. 508 Rose, 513 Gigon.

30 Burgess (2017).

in destination for the exiled hero is not surprising given the flexibility of narratives of Odysseus' post-return adventures. The inland journey mandated for Odysseus by Tiresias in the underworld could be seen as a cryptic version of the exile motif, as could Odysseus' travel in the *Telegony* to Thesprotia of Epirus, where he marries the queen and has a child before returning to Ithaca.[31]

The ulterior motivations of Neoptolemus in Apollodorus are of great interest. With Odysseus out of the way, Neoptolemus would be able to take over Cephallenia. Does this mean the *island* Cephallenia, that is, modern Cephalonia?[32] Hartmann thinks so, arguing that Apollodorus simply forgets to mention Ithaca and Zakynthus, from which Odysseus is banned, along with Cephallenia, in the *Constitution*.[33] I think that the wording of Apollodorus reflects the early sense of Cephallenia as broadly regional. In Homer Cephallenia is an ethnym, not a toponym.[34] The Homeric Cephallenians in the Catalogue of Ships (*Iliad* 2.625–637) are led by Odysseus and come from Ithaca, Zakynthus and Samus (probably modern Cephalonia), as well as from a coastal part of the mainland. The *Odyssey* uses Cephallenia several times as an ethnym, as when Laertes claims to have led Cephallenians on a mainland raid (24.378) and when Eupeithes complains that Odysseus has killed the best of the Cephallenians, that is, the suitors from the region of the Ionian Islands (24.429).[35] Cephallenia as an ethnym persisted, no doubt under the influence of epic. For example, in Euripides' *Cyclops* (line 103) Odysseus identifies himself as king of the Cephallenians. Apollodorus might preserve this archaic and broad sense of Cephallenia, perhaps employing an early source for the exile story.

Whatever the motivations of Neoptolemus, his decision is balanced. Odysseus is forced to leave in punishment for the slaughter of the suitors, but the

31 Merkelbach (1969) 147 argued that exile motivated Odysseus' travel to Thesprotia in the *Telegony*, though this required a textual change in Proclus to eliminate a return to Ithaca *after* visiting Elis before proceeding to Thesprotia. Danek (1998) 500–502 is particularly insightful about variant endings/sequels of the *Odyssey*.

32 'Cephallenia' is first used of the island in Thuc. 1.27. See Fowler (2013) 556 for the scholiastic story, attributed to the late sixth-century mythographer Akousilaos, that Ithakos and Neritos, two of the three ancestors of Ithaca mentioned at *Od*. 17.207, are from 'Cephallenia', which I do not take to be the island Cephalonia. I do not see that Bittlestone (2005), which argues that part of Cephalonia was the pre-historic Ithaca, provides any light on this issue.

33 Hartmann (1917) 142–143.

34 Petrakis (2006).

35 Cf. *Od*. 20.209–210 (Philoetius recalls Odysseus having him manage his cattle in the district of the Cephallenians), 24.354–355 (Laertes worries that messages are to be sent by the suitors' relatives to cities of the Cephallenians), 24.378 (Laertes recalls ruling 'Cephallenians' after capturing Nericus on the mainland).

suitors must pay compensation. Whereas the *Odyssey* justifies Odysseus in a heavy-handed manner, the *Constitution*'s exile narrative seems sensitive to conflicting political viewpoints. Homer's Ithaca is portrayed as having hegemonic political and economic power in its region,[36] but the *Constitution* (and especially Apollodorus) suggests an Ithaca that is vulnerable to expansive mainland powers. That may indeed reflect the status of Ithaca in the late Classical period. But Ithaca's vulnerability is an ongoing theme for Ithaca down through time, even as the dynamics of interconnectivity in the region changed. As Morgan well demonstrates on the basis of material culture, Ithaca was long a minor, if plucky, player in the area. Ithaca may seem dominant in the *Odyssey*, but even Odysseus and Telemachus have to concede that their island is small, rocky and limited in resources (4.601–608, 9.27).[37] As Pomponius Mela (2.110) points out, Ithaca was "mainly famous for the name of Ulysses."

Historical Ithacans could not condone monarchal immunity as readily as Homer does. And the *Constitution*'s exile narrative may have found favor among those who claimed genealogical links to the suitors. After all, as Eupeithes points out, Odysseus has wiped out a whole generation of aristocrats (24.429). On the other hand, only twelve of the one hundred and eight suitors were from Ithaca.[38] Ithacans would not necessarily be sympathetic to the genealogical claims of inhabitants of other islands. The *Odyssey*'s story of foreign suitors on Ithaca might have triggered their insecurity as much as the alleged ambitions of a mainland Neoptolemus. Hence the need for a balanced judgment in which the suitors are held accountable for their consumption of goods.

The *Constitution* states that Telemachus will receive the compensation on Ithaca, but it is not stated whether he rules or even stays. There is no clan descended from Telemachus or Odysseus specified in the *Constitution*, or in any ancient sources. Children of Odysseus are reported elsewhere in Italy, Aetolia and Thesprotia, not to mention Telegonus at Aeaea.[39] Even though the *Odyssey* ends with the maintenance of Odysseus' rule and stresses the single-son patriarchal line of Arcesius – Laertes – Odysseus – Telemachus (16.117–120; cf. 14.181–182, 24.514–515), the poem does not quite predict a continuing dynasty. In the *Telegony* Telemachus and Penelope leave Ithaca to reside with Circe and Telegonus at Aeaea (perhaps localized in Italy, where Odyssean progeny like Latinus were to thrive). Eusthathius claimed that the *Constitution of the Ithacans* and Hellanicus

36 Malkin (1998a).

37 See Morgan (2007); (2016); (2018).

38 *Od*. 16.247–251; see also 1.245–248 = 16.122–125 = 19.130–133; 1.394–396; 21.346–347.

39 E.g. Hes. *Theog*. 1011–1016, Apollod. *Epit*. 7.40, *Telegony*, Proclus.

stated that Neoptolemus married Nausicaa,[40] which perhaps indicates a Corcyran claim to Neoptolemus or Athenian interest in the region.[41] In the *Telegony* Odysseus sires a child Polypoites with the Thesprotian queen; Apollodorus (*Epitome* 7.35) adds that Odysseus returned home to Ithaca to discover another son of his by Penelope, Poliporthes. From Eustathius we learn that in the *Telegony* (fr. 3 Bernabé) this extra Ithacan son was called Arcesilas. That name is clearly designed to grant Odyssean lineage to the Battiad dynasty at Cyrene, the homeland of the poet of the Cyclic epic. It seems, then, that this second son of Odysseus led to descendants in Cyrene, not Ithaca. None of this various evidence points to descendants of Odysseus on Ithaca. In fact, it suggests quite the opposite. This is all harmonious with the general tendency in *nostoi* traditions for the Greek heroes to travel elsewhere than home and produce children elsewhere.[42]

If the *Odyssey* is aware of local legends about Odysseus, whether Ithacan, mainland Greek, or Italian, it chooses to mystify them. Removed as it was from epichoric concerns, the Homeric epic may have been happy to leave its audiences with the misleading impression that the Laertid line would continue to thrive on Ithaca. If original audiences knew better, a temporary suspension of disbelief, in a contract between performance and reception, would always be possible.[43] But historical Ithacans apparently did not, or perhaps could not, subscribe *entirely* to the *Odyssey*'s rather forced justification of Odysseus.

Of course, Ithaca would very much want to associate itself with its hero, who eventually was honored by coinage and cult attention in the later classical and Hellenistic periods. One assumes that the *Odyssey* was celebrated at Ithaca, whether in performance, or, to a lesser degree, as a text – much depends on social class and literacy. Some might even suspect that the exile motif found in post-return narratives (like the *Constitution*) is based on minor details found in the *Odyssey*, for example, Odysseus' musings about exile.[44] But current scholarship is less inclined to assume that cyclic poems mined details in the Homeric epics. I would instead argue that the *Odyssey* acknowledges the exile of Odysseus as a pre-Homeric motif. But the *Odyssey* eventually became very influential, which led to reception of it. It is a plausible hypothesis that the *Constitution*'s report of Ithacan clans of Eumaeus and Philoetius (F) is based on a minor passage in the *Odyssey*.

40 Arist. fr. 506 Rose, 512 Gigon; Hellanic. fr. 156 Fowler.
41 Fowler (2013) 557.
42 Malkin (1998a); Hornblower and Biffis (2018).
43 Scodel (2002).
44 See above.

In *Odyssey* 21 (213–216), Odysseus promises the two slaves wives, property and homes centrally located. It is specified that their homes will be near the palace of Odysseus and that the two herdsmen will be 'companions and brothers' of Telemachus. In Book 14 (61–71), Eumaeus claims that Odysseus would have provided him with a home, land and a wife, should he have survived.[45] The short passage in Book 21, which promises spatial and familial integration of the two slaves, is likely the origin of the concept of clans descended from these two characters. It is unlikely that the passages are alluding to pre-Homeric material, or that Eumaeus and Philoetius were even traditional characters.[46] Eumaeus is memorably characterized in the *Odyssey*, but one can imagine versions of Odysseus' return without him. Odysseus' promise to the two slaves is motivated by the need for help against over a hundred suitors. The story of Odysseus' return would make more sense if there were just a dozen Ithacan suitors, as M.L. West suggested.[47]

Does the compensation of the *Constitution* also have roots in the *Odyssey*? Compensation by the suitors is offered spontaneously by Eurymachus when Odysseus reveals himself (22.55–59). Odysseus later (23.356–358) states his intention to seize or receive compensation. But neither scenario involves adjudication and both passages imply forcible taxation of the populace in general. The descendants of Eumaeus and Philoetius, reasonably seen as Homeric inventions, provide a stronger case for reception of the *Odyssey*.

The Homeric epics, with their expansive detail and nuanced approach, were probably more realistic than other early epics. But the *Odyssey*'s unusually favorable view of Odysseus and its insistence on divine justification of his actions produced a conclusion unsuitable for the real world of Ithaca. It is no surprise, then, that the Aristotelian *Constitution*, as manifested in the Plutarch passage, indicates some very non-Homeric conceptions of Ithaca's mythological past. As admirers of the *Odyssey*, we might find this shocking. But my argument also assumes that the *Odyssey* would have also been central to the Ithacan construction of the past, at least as far as was acceptable. On the whole, the *Constitution* seems to have a carefully balanced acceptance of both the Homeric and non-Homeric mythological past. Its spirit of political compromise, with granular detail, is very different from the heavy-handed theological justification of

45 Neither passage specifies freedom: Thalmann (1998) 90–91.

46 See Kanavou (2015) for etymological possibilities of the two names (128–130), with the observation that "Eumaios . . . may have sounded too obscure to be used in name-giving, though it is not entirely unattested" (166). Note is also made of the Coliadai and Boucolidai in the *Constitution* (167).

47 West (2014) 104.

Odysseus in the *Odyssey*. The slaughter of the suitors with impunity leads to punishment of Odysseus, but the suitors must provide restitution. Neoptolemus of Epirus represents even-handed justice but also the threat of mainland encroachment.

If the Aristotelian *Constitution of the Ithacans* represents the perspective of Classical Age inhabitants of the island, they accepted the exile of Odysseus, perhaps because many considered themselves descendants of the families of the suitors. They also would be bound to a civic form of political rule that would favor legal arbitration and not accept murder with impunity. On the other hand, the values of the *Odyssey* are respected to a degree. Compensation is exacted on the heirs of the suitors and freedom is provided to the loyal slaves Eumaeus and Philoetius, with the resulting clans Koliadai and Boukolidai surviving into historical times.[48] For most Ithacans, Homeric reception may have been nothing more than a vague sense that their local hero was celebrated by the famous poet Homer. But the existence of clans descended from Eumaeus and Philoetius suggests that some Ithacans, at least, could employ details of minor episodes in the epic as part of their construction of the past. The balanced mix of Homeric and non-Homeric elements in the *Constitution* indicates that the *Odyssey* was a key part, but just one part, of Ithacan conception of its heroic past.

My argument assumes that the exile motif existed in multiforms that would vary in both spatial and temporal details. In Apollodorus (*Epitome* 7.40) Odysseus is exiled to Aetolia, whereas in Plutarch's account of the *Constitution* he travels to Italy. Tiresias does not specify exile as motivation for the 'inland journey', but I have described it as a reflection of the exile motif, though with the hero eventually returning to Ithaca. The *Telegony* featured an apparently prolonged stay on the mainland, specifically Thesprotia, but Odysseus also here returns to Ithaca. In this respect the Cyclic poem, despite its apparently non-Homeric ideology, corresponds to the *Odyssey*'s 'inland journey'. It should also be noted that in the lying tales told by Odysseus featuring Thesprotia 'Odysseus' is hosted by king Pheidon, whereas in the *Telegony* the hero married Callidice, queen of Thesprotia. Other reports of Odysseus founding cities, dying and becoming an oracle apart from Ithaca[49] provide further incompatible details. Such variances, large and small, cannot be harmonized into a single, unified traditional narrative. What I am calling the 'exile motif' is represented by various

48 The archaeological traveller Le Chevalier, with a pretense that periodically fools readers (1829), employed the pseudonym 'Constantine Koliades' and claimed to be an Ithacan descended from Eumaeus.

49 Notably, Lycophron 799, with scholia.

multiforms involving Odysseus leaving Ithaca after his return to Ithaca, with different motivations, geography and duration.

It is common to view these multiforms as constituting 'Cyclic' reception of the *Odyssey*, that is, inventive sequels that mine the Homeric poem, at times in a perverse fashion. This is a textualist, authorial approach, whereas I prefer to see these post-return narratives as essentially traditional. Their variance suggests local motivation in the arrangement of traditional elements in order to construct the past, which also seems to be at play in the Ithacan constitution. If myth provides a long-standing *langue* out of which historical narratives could be collectively constructed,[50] then we can well view the *Constitution* as a late classical Ithacan narrative that employs aspects of traditional myth, including post-return adventures of Odysseus, to provide a mythological history that speaks to contemporary, as well as long-standing, concerns of the small Ionian island.

Bibliography

Bakker, E.J. 2020. How to End the Odyssey. *Trends in Classics* 12: 48–68.
Bittlestone, R., Diggle, J., and Underhill, J. 2005. *Odysseus Unbound: The Search for Homer's Ithaca*. Cambridge.
Bonanni, M. 1992. *Il cerchio e la piramide: L'epica omerica e le origini del politico*. Bologna.
Burgess, J.S. 2017. Land and Sea in the *Odyssey* and the *Telegony*. In *Time and Space in Ancient Myth, Religion and Culture*, eds. Bierl, A., Christopoulos, M., and Papachrysostomou, A., 27–42. Berlin.
Danek, G. 1998. *Epos und Zitat*. Vienna.
Danek, G. 2015. Nostoi. In *The Greek Epic Cycle and Its Ancient Reception*, eds. Fantuzzi, M. and Tsagalis, C., 355–379. Cambridge.
Davies, M. 1989. *The Greek Epic Cycle*. Bristol.
Fowler, R. 2013. *Early Greek Mythography*, vol. 2. Oxford.
Gehrke, H.-J. 2001. Myth, History and Collective History. In *The Historian's Craft in the Age of Herodotus*, ed. Luraghi, N., 286–313. Oxford.
Hall, J. 2007. Politics and Greek Myth. In *The Cambridge Companion to Mythology*, ed. Woodard, R.D., 331–334. Cambridge.
Halliday, W.R. 1927. A Local Version of a Sequel to the Odyssey and the Cult of Telemachos in Ithaka. *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* 14: 3–12.
Halliday, W.R. 1928. *The Greek Questions of Plutarch*. Oxford.
Hansen, W. 2002. *Ariadne's Thread*. Ithaca, NY.
Hartmann, A. 1917. *Untersuchungen über die Sagen vom Tod des Odysseus*. Munich.

50 Hall (2007) 333.

Heubeck, A. 1992. Books XXIII – XXII. In *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, vol. 3, ed. Heubeck, A. Oxford.
Hornblower, S. and Biffis, G. 2018. *The Returning Hero: Nostoi and Traditions of Mediterranean Settlement*. Oxford.
Jones, C.P. 1999. *Kinship Diplomacy in the Ancient World*. Cambridge, MA.
Kanavou, N. 2015. *The Names of Homeric Heroes: Problems and Interpretations*. Berlin.
Le Chevalier, J.B. 1829. *Ulysses Homer: Or a Discovery of the True Author of the Iliad and Odysssey, by Constantine Koliades*. London.
Malkin, I. 1998a. *The Returns of Odysseus. Colonization and Ethnicity*. Berkeley.
Malkin, I. 1998b. Ithaka, Odysseus and the Euboeans in the Eighth Century. In *Euboica: L'Eubea e la presenza euboica in Calcidica e in Occidente*, eds. Bats, M. and Agostino, B.D., 1–10. Naples.
Marks, J. 2008. *Zeus in the Odyssey*. Washington, DC.
Merkelbach, R. 1969. *Untersuchungen zur Odyssee*. Munich.
Meyer, E.A. 2015. Molossia and Epeiros. In *Federalism in Greek Antiquity*, eds. Beck, H. and Funke, P., 297–318. Cambridge.
Morgan, C. 2007. From Odysseus to Augustus. Ithaka from the Early Iron Age to Roman Times. *Pallas* 73: 71–86.
Morgan, C. 2016. A Closed Sea? Archaeological Evidence for Mobility in the Central Ionian Islands. In *Sulle sponde dello Ionia: Grecia occidentale e greci d'Occidente*, eds. Sestito, G.D.S. and Intrieri, M., 29–47. Pisa.
Morgan, C. 2018. *Nostoi* and Material Culture in the Area of the Classical-Hellenistic Adriatic Seas: Questions and Approaches. In Hornblower and Biffis 213–244.
Perry, T.P.J.P. 2010. *Exile in Homeric Epic*. (Unpubl. Ph.D. Diss. University of Toronto).
Petrakis, V.P. 2006. History versus the Homeric 'Iliad': A View from the Ionian Islands. *CW* 99: 371–396.
Phillips, E.D. 1953. Odysseus in Italy. *JHS* 73: 53–67.
Piccinini, J. 2017. *The Shrine of Dodona in the Archaid and Classical Ages. A History*. Macerata.
Ready, J. 2019. Odysseus and the Suitors' Relatives. In *Yearbook of Ancient Greek Epic* 3, ed. Burgess, J.S., 117–135. Leiden.
Rutherford, I. 2001. *Pindar's Paeans: A Reading of the Fragments with a Survey of the Genre*. Oxford.
Sammons, B. The Space of the Epigone. In *Yearbook of Ancient Greek Epic* 3, ed. Burgess, J.S., 48–66. Leiden.
Scodel, R. 2002. *Listening to Homer*. Ann Arbor.
Seaford, R. 1994. *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State*. Oxford.
Thalmann, W.G. 1998. *The Swineherd and the Bow: Representations of Class in the Odyssey*. Ithaca, NY.
Thomas, R. 2019. *Polis Histories, Collective Memories and the Greek World*. Cambridge.
West, M.L. 2013. *The Epic Cycle. A Commentary on the Lost Troy Epics*. Oxford.
West, M.L. 2014. *The Making of the Odyssey*. Oxford.

Giuseppe Zanetto

"Let Me Tell You an Ancient Deed of the Distant Past": The Epic Hero as a 'Historian'

Abstract: This chapter discusses some passages of the *Iliad* where internal narrators (Agamemnon in Book 4, telling of Tydeus' heroic deeds; Phoenix in Book 9, recounting to Achilles the story of Meleager; Nestor in Book 11, remembering the glorious deeds he accomplished in his youth) open a window on the heroes of the past generations. By inserting these narrations in his poem, the poet of the *Iliad* leads his audience to perceive that the heroic myth has a 'vertical' dimension: the warriors who fight around the walls of Troy belong to the generation of the 'children', but before them there were the generation of the 'fathers' and the generation of the 'grandfathers'. This chronological articulation makes the mythical account sound more credible, because it makes it appear more similar to the historical narration of real deeds.

What elements make a narration 'historical'? There are many, of course, but among them there is surely a sense of continuity.[1] I mean: in order to be 'historical', a narrative must consider the chronological sequence of facts and be aware that there are things that happen before and things that come as a consequence and happen later; moreover, it must be in chronological relation with the time of the narrator, with the *hic et nunc* of his life experience. In other words, the narrator must perceive his narration as something which is concretely connected with his and his audience's environment.

We can speak of an 'internal' continuity (history as a 'vertical' account of more distant and less distant facts) and of an 'external' continuity (history as an account of facts which are 'horizontally' related to the present, to 'now').

If we look at Greek myth, we are confronted with a paradox. Myths are by definition stories of the past; it is exactly its 'pastness' the element which gives myth its strength. In a 'traditional' society such as archaic Greece, the present is thought to be the final result of a long sequence of facts which have their roots in the mythical past.[2] Things are as they are because something that

1 Gentili and Cerri (1983) 5.

2 Zanetto (2019) 10. See also the Preface to the present volume for a synopsis of significant landmarks in myth-history studies.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110780116-003

happened in the past produced a transformation, and this 'novelty' has remained standing ever since, and through an infinite series of repetitions has survived until the present time. Everything in our world is explained by a myth that tells how it came into existence.

Myth is therefore conceptually contiguous to the present, because it is its fundament. But – this is the paradox – there is no continuity ('external' continuity) with the present, because the chronological dimension of the myth is extremely vague.[3] Mythical deeds happened in an undefined past and the myth-teller (i.e. the poet) is not interested in proposing a chronological connection between the 'once upon the time' of his narration and the 'now' of his performance.

This is particularly true for epic poetry. Epic narrates the glorious deeds of the heroes (*ta klea andron*), that is to say of great men who lived before us and were the ancestors of today's people. The foundation of heroic cults and the creation of a heroic mythology are of paramount importance to promote the Greek 'miracle' of the eighth century BC:[4] the heroes are the models at which the Greeks look to construct a new ethnic identity and to start a process of political expansion and economic growth. The *Iliad* is the manifesto of a new Panhellenic consciousness (its meaning being: 'the Greeks are ready to afford new challenges'), whereas the *Odyssey* symbolises the adventure of the colonisation.

But Homer does not provide the heroes with a 'historical' dimension; he does not define the interval which separates their time from his time, nor does he integrate – so to say – their existence into his audience's reality. The only epic passage which 'historicises' the heroic age is the myth of the five generations in Hesiod's *Works and Days*. Taking his cue from his quarrel with his brother Perses, Hesiod tries to explain why the earth gives its fruits only to hard-working people. In the past it was not so: there was a Golden Age in which humans had an easy life and enjoyed almost divine privileges; but then everything changed, and life is now very tough. The explanation is offered by two stories, that of Pandora and that of the five ages. The latter has clearly – like the former – a mythical configuration, but it also has a 'historical' perspective, because it displays a clear relation between past and present.[5] The heroes, who are the protagonists of the fourth generation, lived immediately before today's people, who are the fifth generation: the myth is explicitly linked to today's reality (Hes. *Works and Days*, 156–170):[6]

3 Ercolani (2006) 74.
4 Vetta (2001) 37.
5 Van Noorden (2015) 35–36.
6 Ercolani (2010) 164.

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ καὶ τοῦτο γένος κατὰ γαῖα κάλυψεν,
αὖτις ἔτ' ἄλλο τέταρτον ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ
Ζεὺς Κρονίδης ποίησε, δικαιότερον καὶ ἄρειον,
ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων θεῖον γένος, οἳ καλέονται
ἡμίθεοι, προτέρη γενεὴ κατ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν.
καὶ τοὺς μὲν πόλεμός τε κακὸς καὶ φύλοπις αἰνὴ
τοὺς μὲν ὑφ' ἑπταπύλῳ Θήβῃ, Καδμηίδι γαίῃ,
ὤλεσε μαρναμένους μήλων ἕνεκ' Οἰδιπόδαο,
τοὺς δὲ καὶ ἐν νήεσσιν ὑπὲρ μέγα λαῖτμα θαλάσσης
ἐς Τροίην ἀγαγὼν Ἑλένης ἕνεκ' ἠυκόμοιο.
ἔνθ' ἦ τοι τοὺς μὲν θανάτου τέλος ἀμφεκάλυψε
τοῖς δὲ δίχ' ἀνθρώπων βίοτον καὶ ἤθε' ὀπάσσας
Ζεὺς Κρονίδης κατένασσε πατὴρ ἐς πείρατα γαίης,
τηλοῦ ἀπ' ἀθανάτων · τοῖσιν Κρόνος ἐμβασιλεύει.
καὶ τοὶ μὲν ναίουσιν ἀκηδέα θυμὸν ἔχοντες

But when this generation too was covered over by the earth,
Zeus made yet another generation on earth, which nurtures many, a fourth one.
This one, by contrast, was just. It was better.
It was the godlike generation of men who were heroes, who are called
demigods; they are the previous generation who lived throughout the boundless earth.
These were overcome by evil war and the terrible din of battle.
Some died at the walls of seven-gated Thebes, the land of Cadmus,
as they fought over the sheep of Oedipus.
Others were taken away by war over the great yawning stretches of sea
to Troy, all on account of Helen with the beautiful hair.
Then they were covered over by the finality of death.
But they received, apart from other humans, a life and a place to live
from Zeus the son of Kronos, who translated them to the edges of the earth,
far away from the immortal gods. And Kronos is king over them.
And they live with a carefree heart.[7]

Such an 'external' continuity with the present, which makes the myth 'historical', is hard to find in Homer: a breaking of the fourth wall and an irruption of the poet's age in the indefinite 'yesterday' of the myth are not in tune with the transparency of the Homeric narration. A partial exception is the passages in which the physical exploit of a hero is favourably compared with the feebleness of today's degenerate people: for example, in *Iliad* 5.302–304 Diomedes seizes a large stone 'heavier than any two men of our time might carry, lifting it easily on his own' (similar formulations occur also in other passages):[8]

7 Transl. by Nagy, on the site of the Centre for Hellenic Studies (section 'Primary Texts'; https://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/5290, accessed 11.01.2021).
8 Kirk (1990) 91–92.

ὃ δὲ χερμάδιον λάβε χειρὶ
Τυδεΐδης μέγα ἔργον ὃ οὐ δύο γ' ἄνδρε φέροιεν,
οἷοι νῦν βροτοί εἰσ' · ὃ δέ μιν ῥέα πάλλε καὶ οἷος.

But Tydeus' son in his hand caught
up a stone, a huge thing which no two men could carry
such as men are now, but by himself he lightly hefted it.[9]

Other exceptions can be found in similes or in the long description of Achilles' new shield in *Iliad* 18. On the other hand, if the heroic myth does not 'dialogue' with the present, because it is confined in a remote and historically undefined pastness, it has nevertheless an internal chronology.[10] At the beginning of my chapter I proposed a distinction between a 'vertical' and a 'horizontal' dimension of mythical time. Verticality is a perspective that Homeric poetry knows very well. In the age of the heroes there are different generations: there are fathers, children and children of the children. An exemplary case is the clan of the Aeacids: the founder of the family is Aeacus, his sons are Peleus and Telamon (who conquered Troy for the first time together with Hercules), his grandsons are Achilles and Ajax (who followed Agamemnon in the second campaign against Troy), and his great-grandson is Neoptolemus (who destroyed the city once and for all).[11]

This means that within epic myth there can be a 'today' and a 'yesterday', and this temporal depth is a truth-oriented element. On the one hand, it increases the credibility of the narrative because it gives it the contours of reality; on the other, it offers the characters the opportunity to refer to 'past deeds' that can be seen as useful *exempla*. Thus, within the myth (which belongs to the past, and is therefore the foundation of the present) there is a more remote past – so to say – which is the foundation of a less remote past. In other words, the 'mythical look', which is typical of the epic audience and can be defined as the attitude to look at myth as an exemplary narrative, is shared by the characters of the epos themselves.

We can see all this in the *Iliad*. The *Iliad* – as we all know – is a selective narration: it does not tell the Trojan War from the first to the last day; indeed, it proposes a very partial report, focused on the wrath of Achilles and built on the three major deaths of Sarpedon, Patroclus and Hector. But the major selected episode (Achilles' wrath and its consequences) 'contains' – thanks to a clever play of flashbacks and flashforwards – the history of the entire war, from the beginning to the end. Not only: the poem comes with 'windows' open onto mythical

9 The English translations of the *Iliad* are taken from *The Iliad of Homer*, translated and with an introduction by Lattimore (1951).
10 Ercolani (2006) 73.
11 Pind. *Ol.* 8.45–46; Hubbard (1987) 18.

stories that precede the Trojan War and feature heroes of previous generations. These 'windows' are activated by internal narrators: they are narratives of second degree which depart from the primary narrative and have the function of linking it to a more extended context (more extended in space and time). We are always in the realm of myth, of course: a myth that is able to expand itself.

The character who most clearly embodies the temporal verticality of myth is Nestor. He is a living paradox, because at the time of the Trojan War no one of his generation should be alive; in fact, he belongs to the age of the grandfathers, as Homer says when he introduces Nestor for the first time at the beginning of the poem (*Iliad* 1.247–252):[12]

τοῖσι δὲ Νέστωρ
ἡδυεπὴς ἀνόρουσε λιγὺς Πυλίων ἀγορητής,
τοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ γλώσσης μέλιτος γλυκίων ῥέεν αὐδή ·
τῷ δ' ἤδη δύο μὲν γενεαὶ μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
ἐφθίαθ', οἵ οἱ πρόσθεν ἅμα τράφεν ἠδ' ἐγένοντο
ἐν Πύλῳ ἠγαθέῃ, μετὰ δὲ τριτάτοισιν ἄνασσεν.

and between them Nestor
the fair-spoken rose up, the lucid speaker of Pylos,
from whose lips the streams of words ran sweeter than honey.
In his time two generations of mortal men had perished,
those who had grown up with him and they who had been born to
these in sacred Pylos, and he was king in the third age.[13]

This fantastic longevity makes Nestor capable of mentioning episodes that belong to the entire chronological range of the heroic age. He is well aware of his uniqueness and plays this card when he tries to reconcile Agamemnon and Achilles by appealing to his extraordinary experience. Nestor tells of the mythical battle which opposed Lapiths and Centaurs, naming among others Theseus and Pirithous: an episode that is expected to sound very 'old' to the assembly of the Achaeans and increase Nestor's prestige and credibility.[14] At the end of his report he says that men like those ancient heroes are not to be found now: this 'now' refers to the time of the *Iliad*, the time in which the characters are supposed to act, but it is very likely that the audience of Homer perceived it as a reference to their 'now', connecting the past of the myth with the present of the performance (*Iliad* 1.259–266, 269–272):

12 Kirk (1985) 79.
13 At *Od.* 3.245 Telemachus says that Nestor "has reigned over three generations of men."
14 Schein (1984) 135.

ἀλλὰ πίθεσθ' · ἄμφω δὲ νεωτέρω ἐστὸν ἐμεῖο ·
ἤδη γάρ ποτ' ἐγὼ καὶ ἀρείοσιν ἠέ περ ὑμῖν
ἀνδράσιν ὡμίλησα, καὶ οὔ ποτέ μ' οἵ γ' ἀθέριζον.
οὐ γάρ πω τοίους ἴδον ἀνέρας οὐδὲ ἴδωμαι,
οἷον Πειρίθοόν τε Δρύαντά τε ποιμένα λαῶν
Καινέα τ' Ἐξάδιόν τε καὶ ἀντίθεον Πολύφημον
Θησέα τ' Αἰγεΐδην, ἐπιείκελον ἀθανάτοισιν ·
κάρτιστοι δὴ κεῖνοι ἐπιχθονίων τράφεν ἀνδρῶν
[. . .]
καὶ μὲν τοῖσιν ἐγὼ μεθομίλεον ἐκ Πύλου ἐλθὼν
τηλόθεν ἐξ ἀπίης γαίης · καλέσαντο γὰρ αὐτοί ·
καὶ μαχόμην κατ' ἔμ' αὐτὸν ἐγώ · κείνοισι δ' ἂν οὔ τις
τῶν οἳ νῦν βροτοί εἰσιν ἐπιχθόνιοι μαχέοιτο.

Yet be persuaded. Both of you are younger than I am.
Yes, and in my time I have dealt with better men than
you are, and never once did they disregard me. Never
yet have I seen nor shall see again such men as these were,
men like Peirithoös, and Dryas, shepherd of the people,
Kaineus and Exadios, godlike Polyphemos,
or Theseus, Aigeus' son, in the likeness of the immortals.
These were the strongest generation of earth-born mortals
[. . .]
I was of the company of these men, coming from Pylos,
a long way from a distant land, since they had summoned me.
And I fought single-handed, yet against such men no one
of the mortals now alive upon earth could do battle.

Homer seems to think (but of course we should not expect rigorous control of the chronology) that the age of the heroes embraces three generations. The internal narratives allow the poet to display relationship lines between the 'present' of the Iliadic myth (the Trojan War, fought by the generation of the 'sons', i.e. the second generation) and the 'past' of the other heroic cycles, when the first generation was in action. The 'fathers' are often mentioned, in particular Peleus, Achilles' father. A striking case is *Iliad* 11.765–789, where Nestor reminds Patroclus of the heroic investiture of Achilles: when the Achaean officers were recruiting people for the Trojan expedition, he and Odysseus went to Phthia to invite the young Achilles to join the enterprise; they were received by Peleus who encouraged his son to go to Troy and be always the first in battle (*aristeuein*).[15] This episode focuses on an idea of intergenerational continuity: Peleus 'sends' Achilles

15 Miller (1986) 164 focuses on a fragmentary vase from Olynthos that seems to illustrate this episode.