HELP ME TO SING, MUSE, OF PLATAEA

EVA STEHLE

Recovering the opening of Simonides' elegy on the battle of Plataea (frr. 10–17 W²) allows us to see for the first time how a performer of one historical narrative presents his own persona and orients his audience toward the work.[1] The projected attitude of a performer toward his or her material is an important aspect of the audience's reception and interpretation of any poem.[2] In this commemoration of the leaders and contingents that fought at Plataea the performer's account of his poetic stance will also reveal his strategy for converting people and events into narrative and elevating them to glory.

The opening invites comparison with epic. A proem precedes the narrative, evoking Achilles, embedded in which is an account of (perhaps) the death of Achilles and of the fall of Troy, and in which Homer receives credit for granting the race of heroes its glory.[3] The language throughout is reminiscent of epic. M. L. West observes, "The initial hymn to Achilles struck an epic note for the composition and set the conflict against Mardonios upon a heroic plane. It is full of elevated language, Homeric and para-Homeric epithets, and there is even an epic simile (fr. 11.1–3)."[4] In this fashion, the performer suggests that he is another Homer. Yet there are two anomalies in this performer's self-presentation as a heroic singer that show him to be modifying the rules of epic utterance: he invokes Achilles, not a divinity, and he asks the Muse to be "auxiliary," *epikouros* (21),

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1 When I give line numbers without a fragment number preceding I am referring to 11, the longest fragment.
2 See Stehle 1996.
3 See Rutherford, this volume, for description of the restorations.
4 West 1993a.9.

though a moment before he himself had asserted that Homer got the "whole truth" from the Muses (17). Each anomaly has been explained: Achilles is the model for the dead at Plataea, who will be remembered as he is, and the performer needs only help from the Muse because he can supply the content for himself, having witnessed the battle. [5] Thus Antonio Aloni says of the latter, "The reason for the difference between these two positions is to be found in the subject matter of the poems. Homer could not have been a witness to the events at Troy and therefore relied entirely on the Muses for the truth of his account; Simonides, on the other hand, did witness the Greek war against the Persians and so needs the Muses' help only to guarantee the ability of his poetry to render the truth and thus confer lasting fame on those who took part in the events narrated." [6]

Important observations—but their force is to diminish the effect of these aberrations on the meaning of the poem. Instead we could take the deviations as symptomatic. To begin with, the anomalies have not been taken together, though they are juxtaposed in the text. The performer bids farewell to Achilles (χαῖρε, 19) and turns forthwith to call the Muse (19–21). This moment is the high point, in the extant text, of the performer's self-dramatization as a speaker through first- and second-person pronouns. [7] He uses the attention he garners in a peculiar way for one who would be a bard, for the two anomalies reinforce one another. If Achilles is the model for the fallen soldiers at Plataea, why emphasize that the song about them will not come from the same source, the Muses, as the song about Achilles? If the performer wishes to stress his own ability to create heroizing song, why begin with a deviant invocation? It seems that these two features together mark the performer as not-quite-a-bard and the poem as something only *similar* to epic. And these two features are only the most obvious of what I perceive as a systematic countercurrent of dissociation from epic within the epic pretensions of the performer. [8]

Here I will explore these deviations from epic that the performer

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5   Aloni forthcoming.
6   Aloni forthcoming.
7   The opening did not necessarily have a second-person address to Achilles, to judge from the *Homeric Hymns,* which often begin with the god invoked in the third person, followed by χαῖρε at the end. See, e.g., long hymns 4 and 5, shorter hymns 6 and 7.
8   If the performance was in the style of epic performance, that is, by a trained reciter standing on a platform, then the performer will have been working against an *a priori* perception of similarity. The poem may have been sung to the flute, as sympotic elegy was, but its length may have dictated a less heightened delivery.

dramatizes as his own posture. The argument has four parts. I will look at each of the anomalies just mentioned in turn, and at its implications. In the third part I will examine the nature of the *kleos* constructed by this poem and show that it deviates from Homer's conception, and in a final section I will suggest two larger reasons why the performer might have chosen to disavow likeness to Homer while simultaneously presenting the *Iliad* as model and forerunner of this elegy.

I will refer to the speaker throughout as "the performer." His role, of course, was created by Simonides, but the poem was actualized in performance and the performer's role includes presenting himself as if he were the originator of the utterance. Speaking of "the performer" helps to keep in view the context of performance and the purposes it served. We do not know who first performed the poem (which I assume was a solo song), or where, although I find performance at Plataea, perhaps in connection with the tombs set up on the battlefield, the most attractive suggestion—and one that this analysis, though concerned with other issues, will turn out to support. [9] The function of the poem, wherever performed, was to honor the men of those cities that fielded contingents at Plataea, and the Spartans in particular.

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Speaking of the Danaans and Homer the performer says (13–17):

> τοὶ δὲ πόλι]ν πέρσαντες ἀοίδιμον [οἴκαδ᾽ ἵ]κοντο
>   ]ωων ἀγέμαχοι Δαναοί[,
> οἷσιν ἐπ᾽ ἀθά]νατον κέχυται κλέος ἀν[δρὸς] ἕκητι
>   ὃς παρ᾽ ἰοπ]λοκάμων δέξατο Πιερίδ[ων
> πᾶσαν ἀλη]θείην

Of himself, on the other hand, he says (20–22):

> αὐτὰρ ἐγώ[
> κικλήισκω] σ᾽ ἐπίκουρον ἐμοί, π[ολυώνυμ]ε Μοῦσα,
> εἴ πέρ γ᾽ ἀν]θρώπων εὐχομένω[ν μέλεαι·

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9   See Boedeker 1995. Performance at the Eleutheria, the games established at Plataea, has been suggested by Parsons 1992a.6 and others.

The Muses give Homer the "whole truth" (or "divine song"); they provide the narrative already organized by formula and theme, so that form and content are indissoluble.[10] Homer's song is therefore a unity and (if πᾶσαν ἀληθείην is correct) the product of a complete transposition of event into language. The Trojan war exists only in the narrative, but the narrative is adequate for comprehending its occurrence in full.

The performer uses the adjective ἀοίδιμον in line 13 (quoted above) to make the same point. It is well chosen to recall the Trojan war, for it appears only once in the *Iliad*, in the same position in the line, when Helen says that she and Paris will be ἀοίδιμοι to future generations (6.358).[11] But what lies in the future within Homer's narrative, the transposition of the Trojan war to song, has already occurred in this recapitulation, in which the Danaans come home from a "sung-of city." It is as though the song were coeval with the war. The performer goes on to say that *kleos* "has been poured" over the Danaans by Homer. The relationship of the aorist ἵκοντο (13) to the perfect κέχυται (15) is indeterminable, so no sequence of event followed by song is recoverable.

The performer contrasts his own relationship to the Muse with Homer's. He does not invoke his Muse as guarantor of truth, and indeed how could she underwrite the veracity of a poem that did not come from her? The most immediately striking thing about the performer's asking the Muse to be *epikouros* is that he represents his poem as a split production, a composite created between the Muse and himself. To see just how the performer envisages the division of labor we must look more closely at what the term *epikouros* implies. The word is common in the plural in Homer (especially the *Iliad*) and later to mean "foreign military auxilia-ries." In the *Iliad* it designates the non-Trojans, such as Sarpedon and his Lycians, who fight alongside the men from Troy. Later it often means mercenary. Archilochus 15 W is pithy on the subject: Γλαῦκ᾽, ἐπίκουρος ἀνὴρ τόσσον φίλος ἔσκε μάχηται.[12] Herodotus uses the word frequently to designate auxiliaries or mercenaries.[13]

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10 "Divine song," γῆρυν �‿ ˉ]θείην, is an alternative reported by West in his app. crit. But πᾶσαν ἀλη]θείην is better; cf. the same phrase in *Od*. 11.507 at line-beginning.

11 As Lloyd-Jones 1994.1 remarks. It is rare outside the *Iliad* in early hexameter, according to LfgrE s.v., being found only at *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 299, to describe Apollo's temple.

12 Cf. Archilochus 216 W, which refers to mercenaries as foreign and implies disdain.

13 Powell 1938 s.v. records twenty uses of the word and notes that the meaning "mercenaries" is the more usual. Herodotus' only exceptional use of the word is discussed below.

The singular could be generalized to non-military contexts. The performers of Pindar's *Olympian* 13 (for a victory in 464) use the term in connection with the Muses, but each speaker refers to *himself* as the auxiliary (96–97): Μοίσαις γὰρ ἀγλαοθρόνοις ἑκὼν Ὀλιγαιθίδαισίν τ᾽ ἔβαν ἐπίκουρος. Note, however, that a military metaphor hovers, for each speaker has just remarked on his duty to hit the mark with his javelin throws, and the line quoted explains why. This example is relevant also in that it shows us the reverse of the terms found in the Plataea elegy: in Pindar the performer is *epikouros* to the important figures, the house of the victor and the Muses. The passage (among many) confirms that contemporary events like victory in the crown games were within the Muses' purview; they had no trouble poeticizing fresh material to provide to a performer. The fact that the Plataea elegy celebrates a contemporary event would not automatically mean to a Greek poet that the Muses were unnecessary for its production.

A single auxiliary who effectively aids overwhelmed principals can qualify as a rescuer, and use of *epikouros* in Attic drama shows the word shading into that meaning. A tension between the new connotation "rescuer" and the old meaning "subordinate helper" can be seen in Euripides' *Ion*. Creusa, whose husband Xouthos is identified as an *epikouros* to the Athenians, believes that a son of his who inherited would be a usurper of the Athenian royal house; an *epikouros*, she says (1299), "could not be a householder of the land." Ion counters that Xouthos saved the land with weapons, not words. [14] The word is popular with Euripides, in whose plays it ceases to designate an outsider. [15]

Most uses of the word refer to humans. But it could describe a god, usually one god aiding another. In a line from the *Theogony* (815) the Hundred-handed (who live at the roots of Okeanos) are the *epikouroi* (clearly, "military auxiliaries") of Zeus. The Erinyes are *epikouroi* of Dike according to Heraclitus (B 94 DK). [16] But given its meaning "auxiliary" it is not surprising that the word is little used of divine-human relations. [17] I have

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14 In Sophocles' *OT* 487ff. the word still means "auxiliary," but it governs the genitive, taking on the syntax of a word meaning "avenger," as Jebb 1914 notes *ad loc.*

15 Cf., e.g., *Or.* 211, *El.* 138, *IA* 1027, where it takes a genitive; *IA* 1241 and *Ba.* 1367, where a family member is an inadequate "aid." The military force of the metaphor seems to have faded.

16 Cf. also *Il.* 21.431; *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 97.

17 In Euripides' plays humans call on a god to be *epikouros*, usually for special effect, e.g., *Herakleidai* 921, *Or.* 1299–1300, fr. 351.2 N². By the fourth century it was unremarkable

found one instance stemming from before the late fifth century b.c.e. in which a god is *epikouros* to humans.[18] Herodotus reports that the Athenians had received an oracle telling them to take their son-in-law as *epikouros* (7.189). When, therefore, they saw a storm coming up at Artemisium (or before) they sacrificed to Boreas, the North Wind, who had snatched the Erechtheid Oreithuia away to be his wife. In this case the oracle appears, misleadingly, to refer to a human auxiliary from outside, although, rightly interpreted, it turns out to name a divine helper.[19]

In the 470s, therefore, Simonides' appeal to the Muse to be *epikouros* is arresting, even startling. The basic meaning must still be "foreign auxiliary." The Muse in that case should come to a territory that is external to poetry. It follows that the battle of Plataea is not only a new subject but a new sort of subject, one outside her area of normal operation. The performer aims not to reproduce prior poetry but to give shape to a welter of vivid experiences on which no overall perspective exists and to recount an event about which innumerable other stories are already circulating. The distinction between heroic poetry and everyday discourse is partly collapsed in his project to poeticize yesterday's event. The function of the Muse must be to assist the performer with amplification in his foray into the field of retellings. At the same time, the idea of a rescuer may already have been latent, as the reference in the following line to humans praying suggests.[20] By calling for aid, the performer alludes to the danger inherent in the magnitude of his task. The Muse has been demoted, certainly, but like Boreas she can give an essential lift to the performer's efforts.[21]

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to call a god *epikouros* in the sense of "rescuer," sometimes in a medical context. Apollo Epikourios received a temple at Bassai after ending a plague (Pausanias 8.41.8). Plato's Aristophanes (*Symp*. 189d) calls Eros an *epikouros* to humans and a doctor.

18 Based on a search of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* using Pandora. I thank Professor Emmet Robbins and the Classics Department of the University of Toronto for making their program available to me. One could compare another unusual request, Sappho's prayer to Aphrodite in 1.28 V to be her σύμμαχος.

19 On this episode, which Simonides referred to in his poem "The Sea Battle at Artemisium," see Molyneux 1992.158–66 and West 1993a.3. The name Kalais, son of Boreas, may appear in the new papyrus at Sim. 3.5 W².

20 The noun ἐπικουρία meant "help" or "defense" by the early fifth century, e.g., Aeschylus *Pers*. 731, in a military context (and cf. Broadhead 1960 *ad loc*.). The verb ἐπικουρέω is uncommon before the late fifth century.

21 Mimnermus distinguished two generations of Muses in the opening of his historical narrative *Smyrneis* (13 W), perhaps a precedent for this performer's distinguishing himself from Homer. But the older Muses were the daughters of Ouranos, the younger daughters of Zeus and therefore Homer's Muses. Which set did Mimnermus' performer call on?

Lines 23–24, if correctly restored (a very fragile assumption), tell us more about the nature of the Muse's aid:

ἔντυνο]ν καὶ τόνδ[ε μελ]ίφρονα κ[όσμον ἀο]ιδῆς
ἡμετ]έρης [22]

The epic injunction (*Od*. 12.183) is λιγυρὴν δ᾽ ἔντυνον ἀοιδήν (at line-end). [23] Here, however, the Muse's share is the *kosmos* of the performer's song. [24] The split is identified as existing between content and "ornament." The *Odyssey* gives us guidance as to what *kosmos* adds to a song. Odysseus praises Demodocus for telling the fate of the Achaeans λίην . . . κατὰ κόσμον (*Od*. 8.489), all too clearly and flatteringly. *Kosmos* can be both clarity, plausibility, truth in narrative, and tact or positive attitude. [25] Solon, moreover, speaks of his song as κόσμος ἐπέων substituted for prose speech in his Salamis elegy (1 W). [26] Content is again separated from form, for prose would do as well to convey the point, but *kosmos* makes the words more apt to win assent. *Kosmos* is what our performer needs: techniques for making his account clear, so that his hearers can visualize the narrative, and celebratory, so that they feel exalted by it. The audience would have been eager to know how the performer was about to represent a battle of which they would have immediate experience, either as participants or as recipients

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22 The words are not at all secure. The discussion based on them is correspondingly very tentative. See Parsons 1992a.34 for problems and possibilities.

23 Cf. *Homeric Hymn* 6.20: ἐμὴν δ᾽ ἔντυμον ἀοιδήν at line-end. For more on the Sirens' song in this respect cf. Rutherford *ad loc*. in this volume.

24 If ἡμετ]έρης is the correct restoration then "ornament" and "song" are explicitly assigned to the two parties who are already depicted as collaborating. The performer's production will be like the κόσμος ἵππου that Odysseus asks Demodocus to sing (*Od*. 8.492–93). The design of the horse by the mortal Epeios with the help of Athena provides a parallel to the performer creating a persuasive artifact together with the Muse. Cf. LfgrE s.v. κόσμος, where the possibility that the phrase means "song of the horse" is raised.

25 Adkins 1972.13–17 studies the use of *kosmos* to evaluate speech in epic and shows that it refers in the first instance to speaking in such a way as not to impugn the ἀρετή of the ἀγαθοί, then, that criterion met, to the truth of statements. He observes (15): "Speech or behavior which the ἀγαθοί as a group regard as unbeautiful, unpleasing, disorderly, will be stigmatized as οὐ κατὰ κόσμον; and where ἀρετή is affected, its being οὐ κατὰ κόσμον will override the question of its truth."

26 West *ad loc*. thinks that ᾠδήν in the text is a gloss on κόσμον ἐπέων, but the latter is in any case contrasted with ἀγορῆς, which must mean speaking in prose (so Photios *lex*. α 221, quoted by West *ad loc*.). Parmenides B 8.50–52 DK contrasts his πιστὸν λόγον about truth with κόσμον ἐμῶν ἐπέων ἀπατηλόν on human opinions; cf. Democritus B 6 DK for a similar phrase. In *Homeric Hymn* 7.59 the performer cannot κοσμῆσαι ἀοιδήν without Dionysos.

of first-hand accounts; he faced judges with their own ideas about how the victory should be glorified.

Homer's story is wholly contained in his uniquely-authorized song, and the Homeric performer sets himself above his audience by virtue of his access to it. But the Simonidean performer presents his own performance as an effort to join segregated realms of experienced event and heroizing poetry. He acknowledges, indeed dramatizes, the fact that he does not have privileged information.[27] Had he attributed unique "truth" to his poem the audience might have found him merely hubristic. Instead, according to his own representation, his is a different kind of narrative poetry, without the authority of transcendent truth such as Homeric epic claimed to have.

II

Rather than arrogate uniquely veracious speech to himself, the performer authorizes his account by adopting the perspective of a combatant. His narrative could be described as recapitulating the actions and decisions of the Spartan commanders. This stance he reveals when he calls on Achilles, for, singer of κλέα ἀνδρῶν though Achilles is (*Il*. 9.189), he is pre-eminently a fighter. When, after beginning with Achilles, the performer summons the Muse to be *epikouros*, he confirms his underlying persona as a leader marshaling forces.[28] *Kosmos* too, which the performer requests from the Muse, is used to describe military order.[29] Thus we see that the two anomalies with which I began reinforce one another in defining a stance for the performer that shows his "patriotism" and his respect for the audience's knowledge. The performer's choice of Achilles finds echo at the beginning of the main narrative, when the Spartans march out with the Tyndaridae and Menelaus (30–31).[30]

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27 Cf. Bowie 1986.29 on the possibility that Mimnermus 14 W belongs to the *Smyrneis*; it
    shows the performer giving information as his own and making evaluations.

28 Herodotus gives us a line that interestingly, if coincidentally, combines the concepts of
    cult-hero and *epikouros* in a military context (5.80): when the Thebans ask the Aeginetans
    for help against Athens, οἱ δὲ . . . ἐπικουρίην τοὺς Αἰακίδας συμπέμπειν ἔφασαν.

29 Cf. Aesch. *Pers*. 399–400 (with the note in Broadhead 1960 *ad loc*.: *kosmos* is the
    preservation of good order during an advance); Hdt. 8.86, 9.66.3. I owe this point and the
    stimulus to recognize the importance of the military stance of the performer to Alessandro
    Barchiesi.

30 For evidence that Achilles was honored as a hero in Lacedaemon, see Pausanias 3.20.8 and
    3.24.5, Wide 1973 [1893].232–36. Farnell 1921.285–89 and 409 discusses worship of

Because he aligns himself with the Greek forces, especially the Spartans, the performer's narrative point of view is different from Homer's. The *Iliad* opens with the speaker's naming a starting point in a story that must pre-exist the telling, then asking a question of the Muse: "Who of the gods set them to fighting in strife?" The answer is "Apollo," the perspective Olympian; indeed, the whole panorama and the perceptions of both sides in the war, Trojans and Greeks, constitute the range of Homer's interest. Our performer begins with the Spartans leaving their city, showing that he means to cover the whole episode by marching with them, as it were, and reporting their experience of the campaign. He does not distract from his aligning himself with the Spartans even by mentioning the logically prior information that Mardonios was moving south, and of course the shilly-shallying that Herodotus (9.6–9) reports on the Spartan side before they decided to march is suppressed. If M. L. West is right to argue that fragment 14 included the prophecy of the Spartan diviner Teisamenos, then the narrative must have recaptured a critical moment of revelation and decision. [31] In 14.3]ἐγὼ points to direct discourse, which would allow the performer to reproduce the drama. [32] Unfortunately, we cannot tell how the Persians were described, but nothing in the extant fragments suggests that the performer ever switched to their view of the battle. [33]

Invoking Achilles serves in the first instance to endow the performer with a campaigner's voice. But it also opens the dissenting dialogue with Homer. Within the (part of the) proem delimited by naming and bidding farewell to Achilles the performer touches on, probably,

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Achilles as a hero, pointing out that it is well attested in Laconia. Schol. Ap. Rhod. 4.814 cites Anaxagoras as saying that Achilles was honored as a god there (cf. DK 2.420 fin). Cf. also Parsons 1992a.32 for literary evidence. Nagy 1979.342 points out evidence that a cult of Achilles is a submerged motif in the *Iliad*.

31 Cf. Hdt. 9.33–36.

32 So West 1993a.8. He suggests (8–9) that the prophecy ranged over victory and founding of the Delian League. Barchiesi in this volume, n. 20, suggests that the performer may imply an analogy between the prophet who predicts future fame (14.6 with West's restorations), and himself as the preserver of that fame.

33 Fragment 13 contains the section (8–10):

> ὄφρ᾽ ἀπὸ μὲν Μήδ[ων
> καὶ Περσῶν, Δώρου δ[ὲ
> παισὶ καὶ Ἡρακλέος [

which looks as though it represented a Spartan point of view, with its evocation of heroic ancestry. Fragment 17 contains (probably) Demeter's name. Fragments 15 and 16 come from Plutarch and concern the Corinthians, and 12 and 18 are exiguous.

Achilles' death (11.1–8) and certainly the fall of Troy and the return home of the Danaans (9–14).[34] Achilles may thus stand as a prototype of the fallen at Plataea.[35] But the death of mortal warriors is all that epic says about them, and the Cycle ends with the return from Troy. It does not project their continued existence as heroes in the extra-Homeric sense, for epic is concerned only with the *kleos* that it grants, not with the protagonists' *Nachleben* in other media.[36] By enclosing the epic story inside his address to Achilles the performer indicates that to him Achilles' second mode of existence, as daimonic figure, is more important.[37] For him, unlike Homer, Achilles still "lives" outside his narrative: the old warriors who excelled in battle preserved their power after death in a continued existence defined by cult and belief, apart from their role in story.[38] Their *kleos* has two anchors, as it were, one attached to tomb and cult and statue, the other to narrative. Thus, in aligning himself with the Spartans, he also reveals his difference from Homer: his more expansive view of *kleos* and the afterlife of warriors.

When the performer requests that the Muse be *epikouros* he makes explicit what has been implied from the beginning: Homer and epic offer a partial model for the account of the battle of Plataea, but epic language and scene cannot encompass the quality of this battle fought by humans on the real ground of contemporary history. Accordingly, the performer's own self-presentation—his seeking Achilles' patronage and his calling on an auxiliary—is not as a purveyor of pre-formed description, of a formulaic battle, but as a partisan. The daimonic Achilles is parallel to the heroes who

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34 See Rutherford, this volume. Barchiesi in this volume points out that the placement of lines 1–4 is supported by Horace's use of a similar simile for the death of Achilles in *carm.* 4.6.9–12. The "hand of Apollo (?)" in line 8 should refer to his killing of the hero even if lines 1–4 do not belong.

35 If West's speculation that the common burial urn of Achilles and Patroclus is the subject of line 6 is correct (1993a.6) then the parallel to the common grave at Plataea is closer. For Achilles' funeral see *Od.* 24.36–97.

36 Cf. Nagy 1979.114–21.

37 Simonides elsewhere vividly depicted Achilles appearing above his tomb as the Greeks were leaving Troy (557 PMG).

38 Cf. Pritchett 1979.11–46 on epiphanies in war, 23–26 on those attested for the Persian wars; he comments (41–42) that they were especially numerous during the Persian wars and cites (15) Hdt. 8.109 and Xen. *Cyr.* 1.17 on the importance of the heroes in fighting the "barbarian." Kearns 1989.44–56 also discusses protector-heroes; see esp. 44–46 on heroes appearing in battle. In 103–08 she considers the influence of epic on hero-cult, mainly as attested in Attica.

accompany the Spartans as well as a prototype for the fallen. The performer does not, then, simply eschew the claim to have the whole truth, but constructs his authority on the ground of a different persona, one committed to reliving Greek *arete*.

III

Although the performer distinguishes himself from Homer, he hopes to create equal glory for those he praises, as he indicates by parallel statements. In reference to Homer (15—Homer is the "man" at the end of the line):

(Danaans) οἷσιν ἐπ᾽ ἀθά]νατον κέχυται κλέος ἀγ̣ [δρὸς] ἕκητι

The performer's hoped-for result (28):

καὶ κλέος ἀ]νθρώπων̣ [ἔσσετ]αι ἀθάνατο⟨ν⟩.[39]

Despite the parallelism there are differences. In the line about Homer, "undying" is attributive, for Homer's song has already had its effect and, being divine, it has staying power *ex hypothesi*.[40] In the Simonidean performer's case it is predicative, for our performer is reporting *new kleos*, for which he is predicting continued life. Word placement supports the disparity. In Homer's line *kleos* is in the fourth foot, its usual *sedes* in early hexameter verse.[41] In the second instance *kleos* appears in the first foot, a position it holds only once in extant early hexameter.[42] Furthermore, the phrase ἀθάνατον κλέος, not found in extant hexameter poetry, is a variant of Homeric κλέος ἄφθιτον. Finally, Homer's line is a hexameter, appropriately, but the *kleos* to be given by our performer appears in the pentameter, the line that deviates from epic. The pentameter is made to stand for the

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39 For the tenuous reconstruction of this section of the poem see Parsons 1992a.32–34, esp. 34 for discussion of this line; Rutherford, this volume.

40 For the restoration of line 15 and comment on the balance of immortal and mortal see Parsons 1992a.30.

41 See the statistics in LfgrE. s.v.

42 The instance is *Il*. 5.172; see LfgrE. *Kleos* is restored in the elegy, but it seems secure. A scholion in *POxy* 2327 explains ἀ]νθρώπων as equivalent to ἐν ἀνθρώποις. Three syllables are therefore available for a connective plus something that will be undying among humans.

difference from epic, a point whose larger significance I will come back to
in the last section. [43]

Following the hint given by the unorthodox word choice and
placement, let us examine how the performer describes *kleos*. Very little
phraseology in the extant poem can in fact be precisely paralleled in the two
epics, but that is not significant in itself, for other poets played the game of
varying Homeric formulae. But the performer utilizes two types of devia-
tion from Homer that stand out, and both are related to the form his praise
takes. First, the performer moralizes: history is interpreted as judgment. His
attitude is visible in the description of the fall of Troy in the proem, where
it dictates alterations of Homeric language. Paris is κακόφρων (11), a word
not found in epic. The "chariot of divine justice overtook [someone]" (12);
chariots are not driven by abstractions in Homer, and the adjective θεῖος is
not found with δίκη. [44] This set of non-Homeric formulations allows the
performer to adopt a judgmental attitude foreign to the *Iliad,* but one which
assimilates the Trojan expedition to the Greek defense against the Persians.

In expressions concerning fame a move away from physical and
literal meanings can be detected. The phrase ἀθάνατον κλέος has already
been mentioned. In Homer the word ἀθάνατος is used only of living
beings, for it means literally "not dying." In applying it to *kleos* the
performer suggests that fame is a living thing. Homer, he says, granted
"living *kleos*" to his subjects, and they are in a sense still living as heroes
invoked by armies. The participants at Plataea will therefore get the same
potent fame. The adjective οὐρανομήκης (27) modifies what must have
been a word for fame. It is found once in Homer (*Od.* 5.239) of a tree that
will provide wood for Odysseus' raft. The adjective changes fame from
something that travels as far as the heavens (as Odysseus' does, *Od.* 9.20)
into an object tall enough to reach the heavens. [45] The next revision is the
most far-fetched and therefore most noticeable. In the passage on the
Corinthians quoted by Plutarch the performer asserts that they established

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43 There may be another difference. If Goodwin's categorical statement (1890.115) that a
future indicative never stands after ἵνα holds good, then [μνή]σεται (24) must be a short-
vowel subjunctive and lines 27–28 will have been an independent assertion. If so, then the
performer asserts in 28 that the participants at Plataea will have *kleos* apart from any
granted by his song, although his song will stimulate memory too (24).

44 See Parsons 1992a.29 on possible restorations and a variant reading. Parsons points out
that there is no parallel for the chariot of justice in Greek; but cf. Rutherford in this volume.

45 In LSJ the first attested "metaphorical" use, i.e., use with a noun not denoting a physical
object, is in Aristophanes' *Clouds* 357 and 459; the second instance modifies *kleos*.

for their deeds a witness of "honorable gold" in the heavens (16.2), by which he must mean the sun. Gold is also pure, bright, and incorruptible, so the two images coalesce as the most worthy sort of witness. This is one of the noun-epithet phrases found in epic, but there its meaning is always literal.[46] Here most clearly the performer is using Homeric language but wrenching it away to new meanings. In the next line comes the last example: the sun will make grow their "broad notice," where the word for "notice" is κληδών. In Homer κληδών means "a chance remark that is significant as an omen" or, more generally, "report" or "rumor." The performer makes it the equivalent of *kleos*, with which the modifier "broad" is found in Homer. But—this is the critical point—the word is not linked to heroic poetry as *kleos* is. The Corinthians' fame, we are being told, does not rely on epic.

Homeric language is made metaphorical to provide images of fame because the performer needs a variety of ways of depicting the fame won at Plataea. Unlike Homer, the performer does not simply let his story create reputation for his subjects; rather he treats their fame as something existing prior to his poem: like a tree, in the sun's message, in people's speech.[47] It constitutes one of the "facts" that his poem must transpose into poetry, and so he must find language in which to tell its measure and vivify it. Although characters within epic speculate on their own or others' future fame, and Achilles makes the choice of a short life with *kleos*, the epic poet does not assess the quality of his characters' fame directly for his audience. The Plataea elegy presents fame in a new way, as having an almost material existence, a stability not unconnected with the moralizing view of the Trojan war mentioned above or with the stories circulating outside of poetry.

IV

We have now seen two ways in which the performer suggests that the fame of good fighters survives outside narrative poetry: Homeric warriors have an ongoing existence in cult and belief, and *kleos* has a force or materiality that a poem can describe and preserve, but does not create. I also commented earlier that the performer makes the pentameter line a

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46 Cunliffe 1963 s.v. Luppe 1994.23–24 posits a lacuna to avoid the metaphor and cites Simonides 87 W². But there too the sun may be meant.

47 For a wonderful appreciation of Simonides' filling in "absent presences" see Carson 1988.

symbol for the difference between himself and Homer. It is time to bring all these results together. All three signal the place the performer wants to claim for this poem in the field of poetic discourse. Homer is one of his referents, but there is another important one, to which the performer's use of ἀθάνατον κλέος gives us a clue. In an elegy (12 W) that was well known, for Plato paraphrases a long section of it, Tyrtaeus pronounces that any Spartan warrior who dies in battle will be mourned by the whole city and have a prominent tomb and honored descendants thereafter.[48] More-over (31–32):

> οὐδέ ποτε κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἀπόλλυται οὐδ᾽ ὄνομ᾽ αὐτοῦ,
>   ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὸ γῆς περ ἐὼν γίνεται ἀθάνατος

Tyrtaeus promises that each soldier will become a hero in the extra-Homeric sense.[49] I propose that Simonides' poem was meant to fulfil Tyrtaeus' promise for the Spartan soldiers who died at Plataea. Sparta is prominent in the poem; it has been suggested that Pausanias or the Spartans commissioned the poem.[50] The Simonidean performer names the *arete* of each *Spartan* warrior as the basis for the *kleos* to come (25–27). And Tyrtaeus' poetry continued to be performed at the king's tent before battle, according to the Athenian orator Lycurgus.[51] Making good on one of the ideological avowals that grounded their militaristic system would be a priority for Spartan leaders.[52]

The poem could not actually create cult observance for each warrior, for that was a matter of local Spartan practice (and the Spartans did

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48 Plato *Laws* 629a–30b. For defense of its authenticity, which has been questioned, see Jaeger 1966.112–26, Prato 1968.15–19, and Snell 1969.28–36. It is now accepted as Tyrtaeus'.

49 Fuqua 1981.221–25 brings this out very well. He points out (216) that it goes beyond anything else in Tyrtaeus. Snell 1969.33 contrasts *Od*. 24.43–44, in which Agamemnon tells Achilles that he will have good *kleos* forever. In the circularity department, it is to be noted that this line probably influenced the reconstruction of Simonides' line 28; see Parsons 1992a.34.

50 Aloni forthcoming makes this argument at greatest length.

51 *In Leocr*. 107. The passage is quoted at Tyrtaeus 10 W. Cf. Athenaeus 14.630f. where it is said that the Spartans kept their movement rhythmical in war by reciting Tyrtaeus' poems.

52 Cf. Loraux 1982 on the difference between epic glorification of the fallen warrior and that of the Athenian *epitaphios*, the yearly oration in honor of all those who died in battle that year. Simonides' poem is closer to Homer than to Athenian practice, but the idea of state-produced "immortal fame" is common to Simonides and the latter.

not go that far). [53] But Simonides' performer has taken the adjective indicating the soldier's own continued existence and applied it to his *kleos* instead, so that his fame becomes the living thing that represents him. [54] The performer is also careful to place the word so that it echoes Tyrtaeus. The Simonidean line predicting "undying fame," quoted above, is pentameter, like Tyrtaeus' line containing the same word "undying." The adjective falls at the end of the line, as it does in Tyrtaeus' poem, a position that it cannot take in a hexameter line. In both, the adjective is predicative and follows the verb. Tyrtaeus promises in the previous line that *kleos* will never perish. It is easy to think that Spartans would hear an echo of Tyrtaeus in the Plataea elegy.

If this is so, we can understand the performer's stance and his ideas more fully. For Tyrtaeus, *kleos* is perpetuated within the community (12.27–30 W):

> τὸν δ᾽ ὀλοφύρονται μὲν ὁμῶς νέοι ἠδὲ γέροντες,
> ἀργαλέωι δὲ πόθωι πᾶσα κέκηδε πόλις,
> καὶ τύμβος καὶ παῖδες ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἀρίσημοι
> καὶ παίδων παῖδες καὶ γένος ἐξοπίσω·

The παῖδες and the tomb are both reminders of the soldier, and the community will feel longing for him. As Charles Fuqua points out in discussing Tyrtaeus, the Spartans heroized dead kings and others with tombs and offerings. [55] If the tombs of Plataea stood behind the performer as he sang, his invocation of Achilles combined with the visible monument would have been pattern-setting for the treatment of the dead as heroized.

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53 Plutarch *Lyc.* 27.2 records that the Spartans permitted only warriors who had died in battle (and women who had died while holding sacred office) to have their names recorded on their graves.

54 Cf. two less daring epigrams from the Persian War period (if genuine): CEG 2 (= 20a FGE) has κλέ]ος ἄφθι[τον] αἰεί and 9 FGE has ἄσβεστον κλέος. The latter contains the same paradox of life and death as Tyrtaeus 12 W. The adjective ἀθάνατος became popular in this milieu of conflated war dead and heroic dead. CEG 6, a public monument from 447 (?), has ἀθανάτου μνϙμ᾽ ἀρετϙς. Cf. CEG 10. For ἀθάνατος in Attic funeral orations see Jaeger 1966.137, who traces it to Tyrtaeus.

55 Fuqua 1981.224–25. Xenophon, *Resp. Lac.* 15.9, says that Lycurgan laws provide for honoring Spartan kings not as men but as heroes. See also Bowra 1961.346 for other evidence for Spartan heroization. Farnell 1921.362–63 discusses the heroization of historical figures after death, including the dead at Marathon and Plataea.

The performer sings of *kleos* that exists outside the poem because it is bound up with the community-based remembrance. It follows that, aside from the demands of the performance situation, the performer does not have special access to truth because the truth is in the keeping of the Spartan state, the guarantor of *kleos* in Tyrtaeus' model.[56] The collectivity that Theodore Tarkow emphasizes as a feature of the new hoplite warfare and of Tyrtaeus' poems is evident in the Plataea elegy also: except for Pausanias, the only named contemporary in the extant fragments, the performer celebrates only collective groups connected with various cities.[57] This may be the effect of having such a small portion of the poem, but it signals at least a change of emphasis from epic.

We do not know whose idea it was that the poem should be an elegy. The Spartans may have asked for elegy precisely in order to recall Tyrtaeus. Or the poem may have been composed in elegiac verse because it was thought of as lament.[58] Mimnermus set a precedent of narrative elegy with his *Smyrneis*, a poem on struggles with the Lydians in the seventh century.[59] The Athenians, a few years earlier, may have called for an elegy on Marathon, narrative or threnodic.[60] All three genres may have contributed their color. What we can see is Simonides taking advantage of the meter and its associations as he creates a speaking position for his performer.

But the Plataea elegy is not only Spartan. Other states are included in the narrative and praised in turn. Simonides' poem on Thermopylae (531 PMG), which exhibits the marks of a local song for cult performance, shows up the ecumenical character of the Plataea elegy by contrast.[61]

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56 Jaeger 1959.138: "The new thing here is that the country, the community of the polis, takes over, as it were, the function of the Homeric singer who praises the virtue of his heroes."

57 Tarkow 1983.52–56.

58 So Aloni forthcoming.

59 Bowie 1986 argues for an established genre of historical narrative in elegy, but the only certain precedent for Simonides is Mimnermus. Semonides and Xenophanes may have composed such poems, but that either was elegiac is not firm.

60 See Molyneux 1992.148–52 on *Vita Aesch.* 332.5–10 Page. If we throw out the remarks about Aeschylus' state of mind and about competition with Simonides (or think of it as competition for the commission?), we are still left with the possibility that one or the other composed an elegy. Or perhaps an epigram is meant, but it is hard to imagine that anyone could fantasize ill will between major poets over a commission for a four-line epigram. See also Boedeker 1995.

61 Podlecki 1968 discusses Simonides' various poetic projects in the year 480.

Reference to the Spartans' intracommunal formative discourse and to the tombs themselves, it seems, was only part of the poetic task. [62] If this poem was performed at Plataea, as seems plausible, the setting would explain the address to a larger interstate audience and the self-contained praise of all the groups who joined forces. For this quasi-panhellenic aspect Homer is the model. In a larger sense, then, the performer's composite production by Muse and military persona is a way of wedding Homer to Tyrtaeus. [63] In the Plataea elegy the doubleness of elegy—hexameter and pentameter—is turned into an expression of the two sources of inspiration by linking each metrical pattern with a different poet. The idea of extended narrative, along with the Muse, comes from Homer. But the performer's affinity with a hero like Achilles, like his adoption of a military stance, points to Tyrtaeus. The upshot is that Simonides has crafted a kind of panhellenic *epitaphios*, memorializing especially the Spartans, but including all in epic narrative, fit to be performed in the anomalous setting of ceremonies at Plataea and to live on everywhere thereafter. [64]

At another level, partial rejection of Homer may have been motivated by the poet's and performer's needs as well as by the need to incorporate the Tyrtaean construction of heroism. Epic itself posed a problem. There was a great mass of epic, apart from the two great epics, containing tales of battle. The other poems of the Trojan cycle, the Theban epics, and tales about Heracles like the *Meropis* or the *Sack of Oichalia*, all contained combat and exploits. For Simonides' performer to link himself too closely with Homer would be to invite being swept away in the large muddy stream of epic that must have sounded derivative by his time. His subjects too could have been submerged in the stream of secondary characters created by analogy with Homer's vivid heroes.

For a sense of the poet's problem that Simonides has met by distancing himself from Homer we can end by contrasting Choerilus, who composed an epic on the same subject, the *Persica*, later in the fifth century. A quotation from it has been preserved in a commentary on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (2 B, 317 SH):

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62 For rituals at the tombs at Plataea see Thuc. 3.58.4 and Plutarch *Aristides* 21.

63 Tyrtaeus' language is largely epic, as Snell 1969 demonstrates. It is the community-based reverence for lost citizen soldiers that modifies the Homeric attitude in my description.

64 In an analogous way Aloni forthcoming thinks of a combination of historical narrative and *threnos,* but he does not work out how these meld in the text.

> O blessed, whoever was skillful in song at that time, a servant of
> the Muses when the meadow was still unshorn. Now when all has
> been handed out and the arts have reached their limits, we are left
> behind, as if the last in a race, nor is there anywhere, though one
> peer in all directions, to direct a new-yoked chariot.

As a composer of epic Choerilus acknowledges his sense of coming too
late. Simonides avoids such a sentiment for himself and his performer, and
for the subjects of his praise as well. By insisting on difference, by
thematizing his deviations from Homeric epic as the strategy he chooses for
incorporating Spartan views, he creates space for his poetry and his
honorees in the field of heroic narrative.

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