

THE EPIC CYCLE AND THE UNIQUENESS OF HOMER

Dass die Griechen selbst die anderen homerischen Epen früh verkommen lassen konnten, kann ich ihnen auch heute nicht vergeben—Wilamowitz.¹

Es ist kein qualitativer Unterschied zwischen 'Ομηρικὸν und κυκλικὸν—Wilamowitz.²

THE Homeric poems are the subject of such a flood of print that a definite justification is needed by one who adds to it. Especially perhaps is this so if the Epic Cycle is to be involved; 'enough and too much has been written about the Epic Cycle', said T. W. Allen in 1908.³ My argument will be that the Cycle has still not been fully exploited as a source to show, by comparison and contrast, the particular character and style of the two great epics, particularly the *Iliad*. With the domination of Homeric scholarship in English by formulaic studies on the one hand and archaeology on the other, the poems themselves have perhaps been less discussed than might have been expected, and the uniqueness of the Homeric style and picture of the world has not been fully brought out. Most treatments of the Cycle⁴ have been concerned to assert or to deny that it contained poems or incidents earlier than the surviving epics,⁵ a question which will not be raised here. Most recent writers on Homer have more or less ignored the Cycle; even Hermann Fränkel, the first part of whose book *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums* (2nd edition 1962; now available in English, *Poetry and Philosophy in Early Greece* [1975]), is perhaps the most illuminating single work to have appeared on Homer in this century,⁶ does not discuss it, although it could have been made to support many of his arguments. No inferences are based on it, for example, in Wace and Stubbings, *Companion to Homer*, nor by Sir Maurice Bowra in his posthumous *Homer*. 'My remarks are restricted to the two epics', says J. B. Hainsworth in his short account;⁷ and G. S. Kirk, who does refer to the style of the fragments, does so summarily and without quotation.⁸ Yet after all the Cycle was a large body of early Greek heroic poetry, composed at a time not too far removed from that of the great epics,⁹ and at least passing as being in the same manner. We have some 120 lines quoted in the original, and a good deal of information about the content of the poems. If it proves possible to draw from this material any clear contrast with the *Iliad*, it may be felt that this will bring out the individuality of the latter even more strikingly than does the epic poetry, currently more often invoked, of the ancient Hittites or the modern Yugoslavs.^{9a}

It is at once evident that the Cycle contained a number of things to which the *Iliad*, and to a lesser extent the *Odyssey* also, was inhospitable. Some of these are assembled by

I am greatly indebted for advice to Professor Hugh Lloyd-Jones.

¹ *Erinnerungen* (1928) 58.

² *Homerische Untersuchungen* (1879) 375.

³ *CQ* ii (1908) 64.

⁴ Here cited from vol. v of the Oxford Classical Text of Homer, ed. T. W. Allen, sometimes needing to be supplemented by E. Bethe, *Homer*² ii 2, a fuller collection and discussion of the fragments.

⁵ The attempts by Pestalozzi, Schadewaldt, Kullmann and others to show that various passages in the *Iliad* are derivative from episodes in the Cyclic poems for which we have evidence, seem to me not to have produced a single satisfactory example; see the sceptical discussion by A. Dihle, *Homer-Probleme* (1970) ch. 1. That is not of course to say that other, earlier, poems on such themes did not influence the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

⁶ 'Eine jeweils rechtzeitige Konsultation des

fränkelschen Buches würde wohl überhaupt manche Seite gelehrter Literatur ungeschrieben lassen'. Dihle, *Homer-Probleme* 15 n.13.

⁷ J. B. Hainsworth, *Homer = New Surveys* iii (1969) 3.

⁸ See below, p. 51.

⁹ It is not really possible to date these lost poems. If, as we are told (Paus. ix 9.5), Callinus ascribed the *Thebais* to Homer, that implies a very early date for that poem; A. Severyns, *Le Cycle épique dans l'école d'Aristarque* 313, puts the *Aethiopsis* as early as the eighth century. But forms like 'Ιλιακοῖο and αἰδοῖ in the *Cypria* point to a considerably later date; Wilamowitz, *Hom. Untersuchungen* 367, J. Wackernagel, *Sprachliche Untersuchungen zu Homer* 182. Probably A. Lesky is right (*Geschichte der gr. Lit.*³ [1971] 104) to put the composition of the Cyclic epics in general in the late seventh century.

^{9a} Interesting material and reservations on this:

D. B. Monro in *JHS* v (1884) 1 ff.,¹⁰ and by Rzach in his valuable article *Kyklos* in *RE*. The fantastic, the miraculous, and the romantic, all exceeded in the *Cycle* the austere limits to which the *Iliad* confines them.¹¹ Under the heading of the fantastic we may list: the fabulous eye-sight of Lynceus (*Cypria* fr. xi), who could survey the whole Peloponnese at one glance and descry Castor and Polydeuces hiding in a hollow tree; the snow-white Cycnus (*Cypria*) and the black Memnon (*Aethiopsis*), both slain by Achilles; the valuable daughters of Anius, Oeno Spermo and Elais (Wine-girl, Seed-girl, Oil-girl), who could produce at will the commodities of which they were eponymous, and who fed the Achaeans at Troy for nine years (*Cypria* fr. xx); the transformations of Nemesis and Zeus, she fleeing his advances through a chain of metamorphoses, he pursuing in the same manner and possessing her, it seems, in the form of a bird¹² (*Cypria* fr. vii). Closely akin is the notion of certain people or things possessing magical powers, so that Troy could not fall unless the Palladium were removed (*Iliou Persis* fr. i), or Philoctetes and his bow and arrows were brought to Troy (*Ilias Parva*); while the wound of Telephus could be cured only by the weapon which made it (*Cypria*). We observe by contrast that in the *Iliad* there is no hint of any talisman for Troy, not even in connection with Rhesus and his horses in the eccentric Book x; the entry of Odysseus into Troy reported at *Od.* iv 242 ff. was apparently motivated only by the purely 'natural' motive of killing and plundering the enemy.

The *Iliad* is notably more cautious with the fantastic. Aristotle¹³ pointed out that Homer puts many things into the mouths of his characters, when he himself does not wish to vouch for their truth, most notably in the stories told by Odysseus in the *Odyssey* and Glaucus' reminiscences of Bellerophon in *Iliad* vi. Such exotic types as Amazons and Ethiops are in Homer kept to transient and distant allusions,¹⁴ in contrast with the *Aethiopsis*, central characters in which were Memnon the Ethiop and Penthesilea the Amazon. It has been shown¹⁵ that behind the *Iliad* and known to it is the story that the armour of Achilles was impenetrable (the original reason why it must be knocked off Patroclus in *Iliad* xvi by Apollo before he can be killed); but the *Iliad* has suppressed this, which would place the wearer of the armour in a position incompatible with the serious concern of the poem with death. The *Iliad* prefers to say, with pregnant irony, only that it is 'not easy' for mortal men to break the works of gods, xx 265. An un-killable warrior in the *Iliad* is an absurdity, and the uniqueness of the armour is its beauty alone. Invulnerability, too, is un-Homeric; but it seems that Ajax was invulnerable in the *Aethiopsis*.¹⁶ Other sources ascribed invulnerability also to Achilles,^{16a} and also such swiftness at running that he could catch deer (Pindar *Nem.* iii 51), while his leap ashore from his ship at Troy was so mighty that it produced a fountain (Antimachus fr. 84W), but in the *Iliad* we have only the formulaic expression *πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς*, and when he pursues Hector in Book xxii no miraculous speed allows him to catch him up. Superhuman fleetness of foot, like the superhuman vision of Lynceus, is not allowed in the Homeric vision of the world.^{16b} Like the story that in childhood Achilles was fed on the raw entrails of wild beasts,¹⁷ these bizarre

F. Dirlmeier, *Das serbokroatische Heldenlied und Homer*, S. B. Heidelberg 1971.

¹⁰ It is a pity that Monro rather played down this aspect of the matter in his Appendix on 'Homer and the Cyclic Poets' in his edition of the *Odyssey*, ii (1901) 340-84; pp. 352 f., contain a little on it.

¹¹ V. Magnien, *La discrétion homérique*, *RÉG* 37 (1924) 141-63. E.g. 'Il a évité de décrire les êtres trop différents de . . . cette humanité idéale qu'est la divinité', p. 142.

¹² A goose, not a swan, according to W. Luppe, *Philologus* 118 (1974) 193 ff.

¹³ Fr. 163R = *ST* in *Il.* xix 108: see also *ST* in *Il.* xx 234. Another application of the distinction: what the poet himself says must be self-consistent, but what his characters are made to say need not: Eustath. 640. 50; Porphyry, *Quaest. ad Hom. Il.* ed. Schrader p.99. 22 ff.

¹⁴ Amazons: *Il.* iii 189 (a reminiscence of Priam), vi 196 (family history of Glaucus). Ethiops: *Il.* i 423, xxxiii 206 (gods go off to see them): *Od.* iv 84 (a reminiscence of Menelaus).

¹⁵ P. J. Kakridis, *Achilles' Rüstung*, *Hermes* 89 (1961) 288-97.

¹⁶ See A. Severyns, *Le cycle épique* 328.

^{16a} Discussed judiciously by E. Drerup, *Das Homerproblem in der Gegenwart* (1921) 231 n. 3, who thinks the motif pre-Homeric.

^{16b} On *Il.* xx 226 ff. see below, p. 41.

¹⁷ D. S. Robertson, 'The food of Achilles', *CR* 54 (1940) 177-80. The transformation by Homer of the wholly superhuman heroes of older belief is eloquently described by P. Von der Mühl, *Der grosse Aias* (1930) 40 ff. As he puts it, "Herosen sind die Helden Homers in einem neuen, menschlicheren Sinn".

features are not tolerated in Homer, where real humanity is insisted upon for all characters, and as far as possible the tutorship of Achilles by Chiron the centaur is suppressed in favour of the man Phoenix. It is of interest here that in the Argonaut story, which as we know from *Od.* xii 69–72 was very early the subject of epic (*Ἀργῶ πᾶσι μέλουσα*, with Hera as Jason's helping deity), such special endowments were characteristic: Lynceus' eye-sight, the two Boreads who could fly, Orpheus with supernatural music, etc.: the ship, too, could talk.¹⁸ This confirms that it was the *Iliad* which was exceptional in this respect.

The episode of Anius' daughters combines the fantastic with a pedantic desire to work out problems implicit in the *Iliad*. It answers the question how the Achaeans solved the problem of supplies in a ten-year siege, as fragments xviii and xix of the *Cypria* attempt to explain how Chryseis was captured by the Achaeans when her city of Chryse was not (she was on a visit to Thebe at the time). Revealingly, Thucydides tried to answer the same question. His solution is rational (i 11): difficulty of supplies made the Achaeans take a small force to Troy, and even of that force part was always away foraging for food—and so the war lasted ten years. The solution of the *Cypria* is magical, in a way alien to Homer, for whom of course the problem of commissariat is not interesting, except for the good wine which Jason's son sent them from Lesbos, vii 467.

The transformations of Nemesis no doubt derive from the better-known story of the transformations of Thetis,¹⁹ to whom as a sea-nymph this mutability was more appropriate (*cf.* Proteus in Menelaus' story in *Odyssey* IV). The question of Thetis' relationship with Peleus was an ancient difficulty,²⁰ for although the *Iliad* ignores the story that Peleus wrestled with her, held her fast through her metamorphoses, and so won her, but that as soon as she could she escaped back into the sea, yet she says (xviii 434) that she was reluctant to marry a man, and when Achilles calls her, it is from the sea that she comes; while Peleus apparently lives alone. The natural inference is that the poet of the *Iliad* is familiar with the story but has suppressed it²¹—preferring unexplained mystery to the monstrosity of metamorphosis and the ascription to Thetis of an un-human Nixie character. It is thus all the more striking that in the *Cypria* the motif was fully developed in connection with an amour of Zeus. This allows another contrast with the *Iliad*: when Zeus tells Hera of the ladies who have aroused his passion, xiv 315 ff., there is no suggestion that he came to Europa as a bull, or to Danae in a shower of gold. Periclymenus, Nestor's brother, was a shape-changer (*Hesiod fr.* 33MW), but here is no hint of that when the *Odyssey* names him, xi 286, nor when Nestor tells how his brothers were slain by Heracles, *Il.* xi 692. The cyclic *Titanomachia*, *fr.* viii, told the story of Cronos possessing Philyra in stallion-form and so begetting Chiron the centaur, but when the *Iliad* speaks of the fabulous horse Arion we hear only that he *ἐκ θεόφιν γένος ἦεν*, xxiii 347, not that he was begotten by Poseidon in the form of a stallion. The passage in Book xx which tells of Boreas impregnating the mares of Erichthonius *ἵππων εἰσαδάμενος* is in all probability a late Attic interpolation, and in any case is much less striking of a wind than of a great god.²²

That this love of the fantastic was not restricted to the Trojan epics only is clear from the fact that *Epigonoí fr.* ii dealt with the uncatchable Teumesian fox. When pursued by the hound of Cephalus, which nothing could escape, it produced a logical puzzle resolved only when Zeus turned both animals to stone. Uncatchable foxes and inescapable hounds are of course as alien to Homer as impenetrable armour or invulnerable flesh.

¹⁸ Rhys Carpenter, *Folk Tale, Fiction, and Saga in the Homeric Epics* 143–4: R. Roux, *Le Problème des Argonautes* (1949), especially ch. IV, *Les figures Argonautiques*. Among the Argonauts both Iphiclus and Euphemus were gifted with fabulous speed at running.

¹⁹ So Lesky in *RE* s.v. Peleus, xix 298. On the mythical pattern of shape-changers and their defeat, see now M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant, *Les ruses de l'intelligence: La mêtis des Grecs* (1974) esp. 107 ff.

²⁰ E.g. ΣΤ in *Il.* i 396 ἄξιον δὲ τοῦτο παρασημήνασθαι, ὅτι καθ' Ὅμηρον οὐ νεογνὸν κατέλειπεν Ἀχιλλεῖα ἢ Θέτις:

Σ on xviii 434, *καὶ ἔτλην ἀνέρος εὐνήν | πολλὰ μάλ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσα*. Aristarchus denied that Homer knew this story, invented by οἱ νεώτεροι.

²¹ So Lesky *op. cit.*

²² Winds in the form of horses: Call. *fr.* 110. 54: H. Lloyd-Jones in *CQ* n.s. 7 (1957) 24. Erichthonius in *Il.* xx an Attic interpolation: so Fick, Leaf, E. Heitsch, *Aphroditehymnus, Aeneas und Homer* (1965) 124–35. The counter-argument of H. Erbse, *RM* 110 (1967) 24, that Erichthonius may have entered Attica from this passage, seems unlikely for many reasons, not least his importance in the ancient

The cycle also admits miracles of a sort which Homer does not,^{22a} in relation to the most basic conditions of human life. In the *Nostoi fr.* vi Medea magically rejuvenated old Aeson:

αὐτίκα δ' Αἴσωνα θῆκε φίλον κόρον ἠβώοντα
γῆρας ἀποξύσασα ἰδύησι πραπίδεσσι.

These execrable lines (what is the significance of φίλον κόρον?) derive from *Iliad* ix 445, where Phoenix says to Achilles, 'I should not leave you, φίλον τέκος' (the source, I suppose, of the un-Homeric φίλον κόρον)

οὐδ' εἴ κέν μοι ὑποσταίη θεὸς αὐτὸς
γῆρας ἀποξύσας θήσειν νέον ἠβώοντα.

In the *Iliad* of course this is an impossible condition, just as it is when Nestor says, as he so often does say, εἴθ' ὡς ἠβώοιμι . . . The *Odyssey* is a little less unrelenting: old Laertes prays to Athena and is granted one powerful cast of his spear, xxiv 520, the goddess breathing power into him. So in the *Odyssey* we find a remarkable but not unthinkable event, (exaggerated into a miracle for Iolaus by Eur. *Heraclidae* 843 ff.), but in the Cycle a piece of magic.

Even more, in the accommodating world of the Cycle death itself can be evaded. In the *Iliad* no rule is more ineluctable than that expounded by Patroclus' ghost, xxiii 69 ff.: the dead do not return. Even Heracles could not evade death: *Il.* xviii 117 οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ βίη 'Hρακλῆος φύγε κῆρα, | ὅς περ φίλτατος ἔσκε Διὶ Κρονίῳνι ἀνακτι. Hector the favourite of Zeus and Sarpedon his son must die; they can receive no more than the honours of burial. Achilles himself is under the shadow of death, and that fact is vital for the *Iliad*, especially its latter books. Schadewaldt points out that it is essential for the conversation between Achilles and Priam in Book xxiv,²³ which without that background would produce an entirely different and far less tragic effect; also the conduct of Achilles in a scene like that with Lycaon in xxi would be unbearable were it not that he must himself soon die, and that he knows it. Even in the less austere *Odyssey*, where by his own account Menelaus is exempted from death 'because he has Helen and is son-in-law of Zeus', iv 561, Achilles is really dead, and bitterly does he deplore his lot, xi 488 ff. But in the Cycle these things were managed more sympathetically. Unlike Sarpedon and Hector, Memnon in the *Aethiopsis* was given immortality by Zeus after being killed by Achilles, and Achilles himself was taken by his mother to the White Island.²⁴ Again: in the *Iliad* the Dioscuri are dead and buried, iii 243, which allows the poet an unmatched moment of pathos;²⁵ but in the *Cypria* Zeus gave them 'immortality on alternate days' (p. 103.16). In the same poem, Iphigenia was taken to the Taurian land and made immortal by Artemis (p. 104.19). In the *Telegony*, when Odysseus' son Telegonus has unwittingly killed his father, he is married to Penelope and Telemachus to Circe, who made them all immortal (p. 109.26), a resolution rightly called by Severyns 'ce dénouement à la fois romanesque et ridicule'.²⁶ Even in the sombre *Thebaid* Athena was in the act of bringing immortality to the wounded Tydeus when his conduct made her change her mind.^{26a} The significance of this difference is great. For the *Iliad*, human life is defined by the double inevitability of age and death; for the gods, men's opposite, immortality and eternal youth are inseparable.²⁷ Men must die: in youth they must fight, and if they

initiation-festival of the Arrephoria: cf. W. Burkert in *Hermes* 94 (1966) 1-25. *Il.* xvi 150 is rather different, see Leaf *ad loc.*

^{22a} H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie*² 79.

²³ W. Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk*⁴ 261.

²⁴ Bethe, *Homer*² II 248 denies that the translation of Achilles comes from the *Aethiopsis*. His grounds are insufficient: could the poem have allowed Eos to get for her son what Thetis could not get for her incomparable Achilles?

²⁵ See A. Parry in *YCS* xx (1966) 197 ff. It comes as a shock to find that the scholiasts thought the passage 'added nothing to the poetry', *ΣB* in iii 236; οὐδὲ γὰρ πρὸς τὴν ποίησιν πρὸ ἔργου ἦν ἡ τούτων μνήμη.

²⁶ A. Severyns, *Recherches sur la Chrestomathie de Proclus* ii 90.

^{26a} *ΣGen.* in *Il.* v 126 . . . ἡ ἱστορία παρὰ τοῖς κυκλικοῖς: not in Allen; cf. Bethe *Thebanische Heldenlieder* 76, Severyns, *Le Cycle épique* 219.

²⁷ The word ἀγήρωσ occurs nine times in the epics

are not slain they live on only to be old and helpless. The gods remain forever young—*αὐτοὶ δὲ τ' ἀκηδέες εἰσὶν* says Achilles of them without bitterness, xxiv 526. This is what makes the *Iliad* both true and tragic, and the very different procedure of the Cycle indicates profoundly different attitudes to the fundamental nature of human life and death, and consequently to human heroism and the relation of men to the gods.

The attitude towards women and children is also different. Homer is sparing in ascribing offspring to his characters, and also has no penchant for romantic scenes between men and women. For Homer, Helen has only one child, her daughter Hermione by Menelaus; she has no children by Paris.

‘Ἐλένη δὲ θεοὶ γόνον οὐκέτ’ ἔφαινον
ἐπεὶ δὴ τὸ πρῶτον ἐγένετο παῖδ’ ἔρατεινήν,
‘Ἐρμιόνην, ἣ εἶδος ἔχε χρυσῆς Ἀφροδίτης (Od. iv 12–14).

But the *Cypria*, fr. ix, gave her a son by Paris, Aganus by name, as well as a son Pleisthenes by Menelaus: οἱ νεώτεροι gave her other sons by both husbands.²⁸ In the same way the *Telegony* gave Odysseus a son, Telegonus, by Calypso, and a second son by Penelope, Arcesilaus (the poem had a strong Cyrenean colouring), and a son Polypoetes by Callidice the Thesprotian princess. We recall that the Hesiodic poems made him by Circe father of Agrius and Latinus, and by Calypso of Nausinous and Nausithous (*Theog.* 1011 ff.). The hint at *Od.* iii 404 led ‘Hesiod’ to give Telemachus a son by Nestor’s daughter Polycaste (fr. 221 MW); Hellanicus, *FGH* 4 F 156, wrote of a union between Telemachus and Nausicae, which Jacoby *ad loc.* thinks must already have been in the *Nostoi*.

The difference is again not trivial. In the *Iliad* the relationship of Paris and Helen is contrasted with that of Hector and Andromache: the wrong and the right way for husband and wife to live together.²⁹ The virtue of Hector and the devotion of Andromache contrast with Paris’ frivolity and Helen’s contempt; especially *Il.* iii 428 ff., vi 349 ff., and the final scene of Book vi. It is part of such a conception that Andromache should have a child and Helen should not. The union of Helen and Paris is not a real marriage, and the presence of a child would destroy its clearly depicted atmosphere of hedonism and guilt. We have only to imagine the impact of the presence of a baby on the scene at the end of *Iliad* iii, and of the absence of Astyanax from the end of Book vi. All this is thrown away by the Cycle in its indiscriminate passion for elaboration, just as the contrast between Helen’s rightful husband Menelaus and her adultery with Paris, so clear in the *Iliad*, is blurred when the *Ilias Parva* makes her marry Deiphobus after Paris’ death. As for Odysseus, the *Odyssey* makes effective use of the evil fortune by which in each generation of his house only one son was born, xvi 117 ff.: Telemachus, like Odysseus, is alone in the world. The Cyclic conception of a world liberally populated by half-brothers is as different as it is inferior. Again all the outlines are blurred, and the contrast between Odysseus’ dream-like liaisons with distant goddesses and his real γάμος with Penelope is lost. And the cynical misconduct of Odysseus in the *Telegony*, in marrying a Thesprotian princess when there is apparently nothing to stop him going home to Penelope, brings out by contrast the sacrifice and renunciation which he made for her sake in the *Odyssey*.

The surplus children have brought us already to the proliferation of intrigues and episodes of romance. Homer’s treatment of Nausicae, touching and perfect in its inconclusiveness, must be developed into a regular love-affair; so must an incidental reference to Telemachus being bathed by Nestor’s daughter. Far more was it inevitable that Achilles, the most glamorous of heroes, should be given a sex-life richer than the Homeric poems allow him. In the *Iliad* Achilles is always an isolated figure.^{29a} The only woman important to him is his goddess mother, and as for poor Briseis, who had hoped he would marry her

and four times in the *Hymns*, always with the word *ἀθάνατος*. On Homer and death see now *CQ* n.s. 26 (1976) 186.

²⁸ For names see ΣΑ in *Il.* iii 175 as well as *Cypria* fr. ix, and *RE* s.v. Helene, 2830. 48 ff.

²⁹ E.g. Σ in *Il.* vi 492 ἔστι δὲ ἴθνη σκοπεῖν διαφόρα Ἀλεξάνδρον καὶ Ἑκτορος, κτλ.

^{29a} He is eloquently contrasted with Siegfried in this respect by E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman*⁴ 44.

(xix 297), he can say only that it would have been better if she had died before she occasioned his quarrel with Agamemnon (xix 59). Although he claims to 'love' her (ix 342), it is clear that he is anything but romantic about her; she is a possession among others (ix 664), and at the end of the poem his mother is recommending intercourse with a 'woman' to cheer him up (xxiv 130). He has a son, Neoptolemus, who is being brought up on Scyros, 'if he is still alive' (xix 327).³⁰ The mother is not named, and in view of ix 668, where we learn that Achilles captured steep Scyros and took women from it as booty, it seems that she is to be thought of, if thought of at all, as a captive. The scholiasts indeed reject with indignation the tale of Achilles hidden there among women, and insist that for Homer he went to Scyros as a hero, to conquer.³¹ Naturally this did not satisfy the romantic creators of the Cycle, and in the *Cypria* (*fr.* 13.2 in Bethe: not in Allen: from the Scholia Didymi, regrettably not included by Erbse in his edition of the Scholia on the *Iliad*), Achilles *ἐν ταῖς παρθένοις συνδιατρίβων ἔφθειρε Δηιδάμειαν τὴν Λυκομήδους, ἣτις ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐγέννησε Πύρρον*. That is, the *Cypria* told the story not as a 'heroic' one of conquest but as a romantic intrigue.

Then Iphigenia had to be fetched to Aulis for sacrifice, 'on the pretext of a marriage with Achilles' (*Cypria*, p. 104.17). Homer of course is altogether silent about Iphigenia, the great epics relishing neither human sacrifice^{31a} nor killing within the family, whence the silence in the *Odyssey* about the way in which Clytemnestra died.³² A link between Achilles and Helen was naturally too tempting not to be forged. Hesiod, *fr.* 204. 87 ff. MW, explains that she would have married him in the first place, had he not been too young, while late sources make them live together after death on the White Island, cf. *RE*, s.v. 'Helen', 2828.14 ff; the *Cypria* went on (p. 105.7) to tell how Achilles 'desired to see Helen, and Aphrodite and Thetis brought them together';³³ thereafter Achilles restrained the Achaeans when they rushed to sail home.^{33a} Here we have the re-using and transformation of an Iliadic motif. The mutiny of *Iliad* ii and its suppression by Odysseus has been given a romantic and un-Homeric motivation; the army must stay at Troy because Achilles has seen the beauty of Helen. One sees how akin these later epics are to the romantic novel, and is perhaps irreverently reminded of the Duke of Buckingham in *The Three Musketeers*, making war between France and England because of his love for the French queen.

The next lady in the story is the Amazon Penthesileia. Scholars have disagreed on the question whether in the *Aethiopsis* Achilles was represented as loving her, at or after the moment when he slew her; most have agreed with Rohde³⁴ that in an early epic so perverse

³⁰ This line and the attitude it implies shocked the Alexandrians: ΣΑ *ad loc.*, καὶ ταῦτα μηδὲ πόρρω τῆς Σκύρον κειμένης. As usual they resorted to deletion.

³¹ ΣΤ in ix 668: The story of his concealment among women is an invention of the νεώτεροι, ὁ δὲ ποιητὴς ἥρωικῶς πανοπλίαν αὐτὸν ἐνδύσας εἰς τὴν Σκύρον ἀπεβίβασεν οὐ παρθένων ἀλλὰ ἀνδρῶν διαπραξόμενον ἔργα. So too Eustathius 1956.18.

^{31a} G. Murray, *Rise of the Greek Epic*⁴ 130–40.

³² ΣΑ in *Il.* ix 456 ὡς μηδὲ ἄκοντας ἀδικεῖν γονεῖς, διὸ οὐδὲ περὶ τοῦ φόνου τῆς Κλυταιμίστρας φησὶν: Σ in *Od.* xv 248 on the matricide of Alcmaeon. It was surely perverse of Bethe to argue from this silence that in the *Nostoi* she perhaps committed suicide (*Homer*² II 268). The *Odyssey* even pushes this tendency so far as implicitly to deny that Oedipus had children by his mother, xi 271–4:

μητέρα τ' Οἰδιπόδοιο ἴδον καλὴν Ἐπικάστην,
ἧ μέγα ἔργον ἔρεξεν ἀδρεῖησι νόοιο,
γῆμαμένη ᾗ νιεῖ· ὁ δ' ὄν πατέρ' ἐξεναρξίας
γῆμεν ἄφαρ δ' ἀνάπυστα θεοὶ θέσαν ἀνθρώποισιν.

It was pointed out in antiquity (Pausan. ix 5.10) that the word ἄφαρ seems to rule out the production of children. This is the more striking as it has been shown by Deubner, 'Oedipusprobleme', *Abh. Preuss.*

Ak. (1942) 34 ff., that this passage of the *Odyssey* is based on the version of the cyclic *Oedipodeia*, in which Oedipus had by her two sons, Phrastor and Laonytus. Deubner argues that ἄφαρ need not rule out an interval of a year, time enough for twins to be born, cf. *Od.* ii 93, ii 167, and *h. Cer.* 452; I guess that the poet wished to gloss over the incestuous offspring, and so used a phrase which suggested that there was none.

³³ Bethe, p. 243, 'cannot bring himself to accept this romantic story as part of an heroic epic'. It is rather depressing to see how subjectively scholars behave in this matter. Wilamowitz (*Kl. Schr.* iv 364, and *ib.* v 2.77) thought Laius' rape of Chrysisippus and invention of homosexual love was told in the Theban epics; Deubner (*Abh. Preuss. Ak.* (1942) 5) denies this on the ground that such a subject is 'einem alten Epos alles andere als angemessen'. As for Achilles and Helen, it is by no means the only romantic story in the Cycle, and doubtless Rzach (2391. 4–10) and Severyns (*Le cycle épique* 304) are right to accept it.

^{33a} For Bethe, *ib.*, the evidence that Achilles restrained them is of course a 'kaum verständliche Notiz'; as on his anti-romantic assumptions it is bound to be.

³⁴ *Der griechische Roman*⁴ 110 n. 2, (not quite in

a motif is impossible. But it seems clear from Proclus' summary at least that Thersites taunted Achilles with this feeling, and consequently that even if it did not happen in the epic, it was not simply unthinkable—rather as Achilles at *Iliad* i 225 calls Agamemnon *οἰνοβαρές*; of course we never in the epic see a hero drunk, but the idea was not therefore one which could not enter a heroic head. Achilles behaved with chivalry towards her corpse and killed Thersites for abusing it.

After Achilles' death Polyxena was sacrificed at his tomb (*Iliou Persis*). Here too the motivation is hard to discern beneath the rank growth of mythological exuberance (*cf.* the article 'Polyxena' by Wüst in *RE* xxi 1840 ff.).³⁵ Later sources colour the episode with a sinister eroticism: Achilles claimed in death the woman he had desired in life. Probably this was not developed in the Cyclic poem, but we observe the repeated pattern of Achilles being brought into connection with the killing of a young woman—Iphigenia, Penthesileia, Polyxena. In the *Iliad* he slew twelve Trojan youths at the pyre of Patroclus, xxiii 175,³⁶ his motive being revenge (*σέθεν κταμένοιο χολωθεῖς*, xviii 337); this is exceeded and made more exciting by the slaughter of a princess. In the *Iliad* women are not killed, but men are slain and women are enslaved. The *Cycle* was different. Apart from Achilles and the series of his deadly encounters with women, a famous scene in the *Ilias Parva* (*fr.* xvii) told how Menelaus drew his sword to kill Helen but was overcome by her beauty and spared her. The scene must have been striking (Rzach calls it 'ein Glanzpunkt des Epos'³⁷), and again it has the same character: the perverse attraction of the sword drawn against a beautiful woman, and the romantic resolution of the incident. The *Iliad* never talks of killing Helen but rather of 'avenging her cares and groans', *τείσασθαι Ἐλένης ὀρμήματά τε στοναχάς τε*,³⁸ while the *Odyssey* depicts her, once returned to hearth and husband, as dignified and indeed commanding. Her activities in Troy at the time of its fall are left by the *Odyssey* deeply ambiguous,³⁹ but she is far above explicit criticism, let alone physical chastisement. The conception of the hero in the *Iliad* is both more heroic—the warrior does not war on women—and also no doubt more realistic. As in the classical period, it would have been felt as a waste to put perfectly good women to the sword. In the *Cycle* both heroism and realism are rejected in favour of an over-heated taste for sadistically coloured scenes; more striking, even more perverse effects are once again what is desired.

The *Iliad* is also distinguished by the consistency with which it excludes low human types and motives.⁴⁰ Thersites alone contrasts starkly with the heroes; like homosexual love, traitors and cowards are stylised out of existence. Paris is *ἄλκιμος*, although at times he does not exert himself, *Il.* vi 521, and when a hero does not fight the assumption is that the reason will be heroic resentment: *Il.* vi 326 Paris;⁴¹ *Il.* xiii 460 Aeneas—as well as Achilles himself and Meleager in Book ix. By contrast, in the *Cycle* great heroes would do anything to avoid military service. Amphiarus' wife had to be bribed to make him go to Thebes,

agreement with what he said on p. 46 'eine romantische Sehnsucht'). Bethe emphatically rejects it for the *Aethiopsis*.

³⁵ In his view she was originally 'a valkyrie', 1844.29.

³⁶ I do not think the phrase *κακά δὲ φρεσὶ μῆδετο ἔργα* is intended to express explicit condemnation of this act, a view which goes back to antiquity (*ΣΑΤ* ad loc.: *ὡσπερ ἀγανακτῶν ὁ ποιητῆς φησὶ κακά δὲ φρεσὶ μῆδετο ἔργα*) and is still popular; for refs. *cf.* C. Segal, *The Theme of Mutilation of the Corpse in the Iliad*, 13. *Contra, cf.* Bassett in *TAPA* 64 (1933) 41-65; and such passages as *Il.* vii 478 *παννύχιος δὲ σφιν κακά μῆδετο μητίετα Ζεὺς*, and *Od.* viii 273, (Hephaestus plans the net to catch Ares and Aphrodite) *βῆ ῥ' ἴμεν ἐς χαλκεῶνα, κακά φρεσὶ βυσσοδομεύων*. In both cases the phrase means 'evil for the victim'. The same disagreement over the *ἀεικέα ἔργα* to which Achilles subjected Hector's corpse, xxii 395: *cf.* Bassett *loc. cit.* 44.

³⁷ *RE* s.v. 'Kyklos', 2417. 42. He goes on to call

it 'almost romantic', 2419.46; the 'almost' seems to be a bow to the convention among scholars that nothing really romantic is to be allowed to have appeared in the *Cycle*.

³⁸ As the *ΣΑΤ* on *Il.* ii 356 rightly say, *ὡς ἀπτήης ἀκουσίως παρὰ τοῖς πολεμίοις οὐσης, ἴν' ἀξιοχρέως ἦ βοθηεῖσθαι*.

³⁹ Well handled by Cauer, *NJbb.* 12 (1900) 608; more detailed psychological explanations are given by A. Maniet, *L'Ant. Class.* 16 (1947) 37-46; R. Schmiel, *TAPA* 103 (1972) 463-72. Against such psychological elaboration of what Homer does not say about his characters, J. T. Kakridis, *Homer Revisited* (1971) 14 f., and, on Helen, his paper *Dichterische Gestalten und wirkliche Menschen bei Homer in Festschrift Schadewaldt* (1970) 51-64.

⁴⁰ The point is made by K. Reinhardt, *Tradition und Geist* 10.

⁴¹ The speculations based on this by E. Heitsch, 'Der Zorn des Paris', in *Festschrift J. Klein* (1967) 216-47, consequently seem to me unreal.

Achilles was hidden among women, and Odysseus pretended to be mad (*Cypria*, p. 103.25). Unmasked by the clever Palamedes, Odysseus had his revenge, murdering him with Diomedes's help by drowning him while he was fishing (*Cypria fr.* xxi). It is hard to imagine a scene more alien to Homer. Fishing is itself unheroic in Homer, and it was often pointed out in antiquity that his heroes exist exclusively on roast beef, evidently because it was the heroic dish *par excellence*,⁴² while fish are eaten by Odysseus' men only when in desperate straits (ἔπειρε δὲ γαστέρα λιμός). Nor can a great hero in Homer meet so inglorious a death as drowning, which both Achilles in the *Iliad*, xxi 281, and Odysseus in the *Odyssey*, v 312, call λευγάλεος θάνατος and contrast bitterly with a proper heroic death in action. The end of the Locrian Aias, *Od.* iv 499 ff., is clearly exceptional, as he is directly slain by a god, and that after he had succeeded in reaching land; and his is the 'contemptible end of a boastful hero' (Merry and Riddell *ad loc.*). But most un-Homeric of all is the treacherous murder of an ally for selfish reasons. The *Odyssey* does not even mention the attack by Ajax in his madness on the Achaean leaders, *Od.* xi 549 f., which was told in the *Ilias Parva*, but speaks of the contest for the armour of Achilles simply as having cost the life of Ajax. The murder of Palamedes led in the Cycle to his father Nauplius avenging himself on the Greek fleet by luring it on to the rocks (*Nostoi*); this is alien to Homer, who does not mention Palamedes and ascribes the Achaeans' disastrous home-coming to the anger of Athena alone (*Od.* i 327). Treachery and revenge on one's friends are alike excluded by the noble ethos of the *Iliad*.

It seems highly likely that the Cycle contained another incident of treachery. Hesychius and others, *Ilias Parva fr.* ix 2 Bethe (not visible in Allen), tell us of the proverbial expression Διομήδειος ἀνάγκη, of which several explanations were current, that ὁ τὴν μικρὰν Ἰλιάδα <γράψας> φησὶν ἐπὶ τῆς τοῦ Παλλαδίου κλοπῆς γενέσθαι. The story to which this must refer is that as they returned from Troy, having stolen the Palladium on a night expedition, Odysseus tried to kill Diomedes who was walking in front of him, but that Diomedes seeing the shadow of his drawn sword in the moonlight forced him to go in front, tying his hands and driving him with his sword. Bethe indeed rejects this story as incredible for the Cycle ('unmöglich kann die kleine Ilias so erzählt haben . . . ganz und gar ungläublich . . . ' p. 255), but he must admit that if we do not accept the story then the connection of the proverb with the poem is inexplicable, ('die Hauptsache muss fortgefallen sein', he pleads). The parallel of the treacherous killing of Palamedes perhaps obliges us to accept this story, too, especially when we recall that the epic *Alcmaeonis, fr.* I, told of the murder of Phocus by his half-brothers Peleus and Telamon.

On the Trojan side, Helenus when captured by the Greeks tells them what they must do to destroy his own city (*Ilias Parva* p. 106.24).

The absence of individual villains in the *Iliad* (for even the shot of Pandarus at Menelaus in breach of the truce, although it will ensure the fall of Troy as a punishment, is regarded by his enemies as 'glorious for him', τῶ μὲν κλέος, ἄμμι δὲ πένθος, *Il.* iv 197) is accompanied by the treatment of the Trojan enemy as being in no way monstrous or hateful. Homer ensures that the Achaeans regularly have the best of it,⁴³ and the Trojans have certain characteristic defects, especially recklessness, over-confidence, and frivolity;⁴⁴ but only in the *Doloneia* are they cowardly and abject, and that is one of the many ways in which that Book differs from the rest of the *Iliad*.⁴⁵ In the Theban epics, by contrast, the Seven seem to have been presented as monsters.⁴⁶ The blasphemer Capaneus, blasted by Zeus with the thunder-bolt, and the savage Tydeus, from whom Athena turned away in disgust as he gnawed the skull of his dead enemy^{46a}—such persons are in the *Iliad* unthinkable, just like

⁴² Iliadic diet is discussed at length in Athenaeus 8-11, 25; cf. also e.g. ΣΑ in *Il.* xvi 407, 747.

⁴³ M. H. Van der Valk, *Homer's Nationalistic Attitude, L'Ant. Class.* 22 (1953) 5 ff.; J. T. Kakridis, 'Λεὶ φιλέλλην ὁ ποιητής?' *WS* 69 (1956) 26 ff. = *Homer Revisited* 54 ff. The question is much canvassed in the ancient commentaries, e.g. ΣΒΤ in *Il.* viii 78, 274, 487; Eustath. 237. 27, 370.15.

⁴⁴ Paris, Dolon, and Hector are all θρασυδείλοι Σ in *Il.* iii 19; Trojans are boasters, Σ in *Il.* xvii 186.

Cf. W. H. Friedrich, *Verwundung und Tod in der Ilias* (1956) 20 ff.

⁴⁵ Well brought out by K. Reinhardt, *Tradition und Geist* 9. See also F. Klingner, *Hermes* 75 (1940) 346 = *Studien zur gr. und röm. Lit.* 17.

⁴⁶ See K. Reinhardt, *Tradition und Geist* 14 f.

^{46a} Significantly, both Achilles, *Il.* xxii 346, and Hecuba, xxiv 212, express the wish to feast on the enemy's flesh, but this cannot actually happen. Cf. also iv 35.

the family feuds and disasters of the house of Laius and the story of Amphiarauus, his treacherous wife and his avenging son, all of which bring into the centre of the stage horrors which the Homeric poems keep as far as possible out of sight. The saucy Sthenelus, Capaneus' son, who says 'We are better men than our fathers' and is silenced by Diomedes (*Il.* iv 405) shows the modest limits within which the *Iliad* confines blasphemy; nor does Zeus in that poem blast men with his bolt, as he blasted Capaneus and as in the *Cypria* he blasted Idas (*RE* v 1115.12 ff.), but on the contrary he sends it only as a sign and a warning⁴⁷—another way in which the *Iliad* is more urbane and less violent than other early epics.

The heroes of the *Iliad* are not puritans, but they are never shown revelling in the pleasures of the table. Like sex,⁴⁸ eating and drinking are expressed with scrupulous decency; heroes eat only roast beef, and the formulae employed emphasise anything rather than actual ingestion. 'They stretched out their hands to the food which lay ready; and when they had put off their desire for food and drink, then . . .'⁴⁹ The feast is *δαῖς εἴση*, 'evenly shared', a moral not a physical quality. Even the most explicit passage, of which Schmid-Stählin⁵⁰ observe that its frank praise of the table 'falls somewhat outside the spirit of Homer', puts the emphasis at least as much on listening to a singer as on enjoying the food.

οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ γέ τί φημι τέλος χαριέστερον εἶναι
ἢ ὄτ' εὐφροσύνη μὲν ἔχη κατὰ δῆμον ἅπαντα,
δαιτύμονες δ' ἀνὰ δώματ' ἀκούζωνται αἰδοῦ
ἦμενοι ἐξείης, παρὰ δὲ πλήθωσι τράπεζαι
σίτου καὶ κρειῶν, μέθυ δ' ἐκ κρατήρος ἀφύσσω
οἰνοχόος φορέησι καὶ ἐγχείη δεπέεσσιν·
τοῦτό τί μοι κάλλιστον ἐνὶ φρεσὶν εἶδεται εἶναι, *Od.* ix 5–12.

Still more is this true of wine; the heroes are careful with it, and we do not see them the worse for drink. Revealingly un-Homeric is the extra line quoted by Dioscurides at *Il.* ix 119a, where Agamemnon says:

119 ἄλλ' ἐπεὶ ἀσάμην φρεσὶ λευγαλέησι πιθήσας,
119a ἢ οἴνω μεθύων, ἢ μ' ἔβλαψαν θεοὶ αὐτοί,
120 ἄψ' ἐθέλω ἄρεσαι . . .

Uncharacteristically, Wilamowitz⁵¹ hesitated and admitted uncertainty whether the verse was Homeric; but in these severe poems only characters like the Cyclops (*Od.* ix) or the centaur Eurytion (*Od.* xxi 295) can really be drunk. It is out of keeping with all this for Menelaus to be told, as he was in the *Cypria* fr. xiii, that wine exists to cheer up the gloomy:

οἶνόν τοι Μενέλαε θεοὶ ποιήσαν ἄριστον
θνητοῖς ἀνθρώποισιν ἀποσκεδάσαι μελεδῶνας,

just as the praise given by Hesiod to the Aeacidae, fr. 206 MW, that they were 'as fond of fighting as of their dinner', *πολέμῳ κεχαρηότες ἤντε δαιτί*, presents a greatly coarsened version of the Homeric warrior, *ἀκόρητος αὐτῆς*.⁵² Homeric heroes do not revel in their dinner.

⁴⁷ Pointed out by M. P. Nilsson, *Opuscula Selecta* i 359. In *Iliad* viii, and only in that Book, Zeus goes so far as to cast his warning bolts 'among the Achaeans' or before Diomedes's chariot, viii 76, 133.

⁴⁸ J. Wackernagel, *Sprachliche Untersuchungen zu Homer* 224 ff.: in antiquity, e.g. ΣΤ in *Il.* ix 134 *θανμασίως τὴν αἰσχρὰν λέξιν ἐκάλυψε, τὰ τῆς συμπλοκῆς ταπεινὰ καὶ ἀνθρώπινα τιμωτάταις προσηγορίας ἐπισκιάζων*, and Hesiod fr. 208 MW, where the delicate brevity with which Homer describes Antea's attempt to seduce Bellerophon is contrasted with the prurient fullness of the Hesiodic account of the

attempt by Acastus' wife upon the virtue of Peleus.

⁴⁹ It is wrong of Bowra, *Heroic Poetry* 198, to call such accounts of feasts 'perfunctory'. See rather H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie*² 31.

⁵⁰ Schmid-Stählin, *Geschichte der gr. Lit.*, i 1.178.

⁵¹ *Die Ilias und Homer* 66.2. Rightly van der Valk, *Researches on the Text and Scholia of the Iliad* II 486, calls this 'incredible'. In antiquity, when the commentators were looking for a reason why, at *Il.* xiv 75, Agamemnon disgracefully proposed flight, it did not occur to them to mention drink.

⁵² On the eccentric passage *Il.* xiii 613 ff., where

These differences, especially those concerning the basic human issues of age and death, are naturally accompanied by differences in the conception of the gods. We have already seen the importance attached to particular images (Palladium), and the occurrence of human sacrifice (Iphigeneia). Another striking example is provided by fragment v of the *Titanomachia*:

μέσσοισιν δ' ὠρχεῖτο πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.

It is likely⁵³ that the occasion was the first day of Zeus' rule of the world, after the defeat of the Titans. In the *Iliad* no god dances. In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, 188–206, only the younger gods dance while Zeus delights his mighty heart looking on, but in the *Iliad* i 603 with the other gods he listens to the music of Apollo and the song of the Muses. Imagination fails to see the Zeus of the *Iliad* dancing.

We have already mentioned the metamorphoses of Zeus and Nemesis. It can be added that the central importance of a being like Nemesis, a transparent personification, is also un-Homeric; in the *Iliad* such figures as Eris, Deimos and Phobos simply underline what is visibly happening on the human level, while Até and the Litai are expounded at length only in reported speech (ix 502 ff.; xix 91 ff.). Nemesis appears as a goddess not in Homer but in Hesiod (*Theog.* 223, *Erga* 200). Welcker thought⁵⁴ that the un-Homeric conception of Helen as child of Nemesis had a depth of thought behind it, and made Helen's sin 'a breach of law which brought ruin with it', as in the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, but I cannot share this flattering view, nor do I find, as he did, an impressive irony in the idea of Nemesis herself trying to evade Zeus. The pun *Νέμεσις*—*νέμεσις* does not add to the impression of seriousness in the passage, see below p. 50.

In the Cycle, but not in Homer, homicides need to be purified; in the *Aethiopsis* Achilles after killing Thersites had to sail to Lesbos where he sacrificed to Apollo, Artemis and Leto, and was purified (*καθαίρεται*) by Odysseus. The ancients⁵⁵ were aware that this was un-Homeric; what we have in the *Aethiopsis* is presumably the influence of Delphi.⁵⁶

Highly characteristic of the Cycle was the great number of oracles and prophecies it contained. W. Kullmann^{56a} lists 17 recorded in our sources and rightly infers that such a number must have given the Cycle a strongly deterministic character. Perhaps in accordance with this was the development in the *Cypria* of the Iliadic idea of the 'will of Zeus', *Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή*. The prologue to *Iliad* i uses this phrase in such a way as to apply both to the events of the poem as a whole, and also in particular, if pressed, to the plan which Zeus devises with Thetis. Eustathius well observes, 20.5, that in the prologue Homer glorifies his own poem by promising that it will contain *μυρία καὶ ἥρωικά, ἐνταῦθα δὲ κορωνίδα τινὰ ἐπιτιθεῖς αὐξήσεως ἐπάγει 'Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή', ὡς μὴ ἂν τῆς τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως μῆνιδος τοιαῦτα δυνησομένης, εἰ μὴ θεία τις ἦν βουλή*: 'he adds a crowning piece of glorification by adding "and the will of Zeus was fulfilled", suggesting that the anger of Achilles could not have done all this without some divine will.' But the Cyclic poet felt the need to spell out fully the effective Homeric hint, and so the story was told of Zeus planning to reduce the over-population of the world by means of the Trojan war. The idea is of a distressing thinness and flatness, dissolving the *Iliad*'s imposing opaqueness to an all too perspicuous 'rationality'; the whole story is thus made pre-determined, and a sort of unity is imposed upon it, of a rather superficial sort.

* * *

In this second and shorter section I attempt some stylistic comment on the more substantial extant fragments of the Cycle. The identification of un-Homeric and late linguistic features is not what here concerns us; enough work has already been done on this.⁵⁷ After Aristarchus

the Trojans are blamed for this quality, normally a virtue, see B. Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad* (1968) 147, and ΣBT in *Il.* xvi 617: a virtue turned into a reproach in the mouth of a taunting enemy.

⁵³ So W. Kranz in *Studi Castiglioni* 1 (1960) 481.

⁵⁴ *Der epische Cyclus* ii 159.

⁵⁵ ΣT in *Il.* xi 690 παρ' Ὀμήρω οὐκ οἶδαμεν φονέα καθαρόμενον ἀλλὰ ἀντιτίοντα ἢ φυγαδενόμενον.

⁵⁶ E.g. Lesky, *Geschichte der gr. Lit.*³ 104.

^{56a} W. Kullmann, *Die Quellen der Ilias* (1960) 221.

⁵⁷ Wilamowitz, *Homericische Untersuchungen* 366–7; Wackernagel, *Sprachliche Untersuchungen* 181 ff.; Dihle,

the ancients used the word *κυκλικῶς* to convey banality, inexactness, and repetition.⁵⁸ we shall see how just this was.

1. *Thebaid* fr. 11 *αὐτὰρ ὁ διογενὴς ἦρως ξανθὸς Πολυνεΐκης*
πρῶτα μὲν Οἰδιπόδῃ καλὴν παρέθηκε τράπεζαν
ἀργυρέην Κάδμοιο θεόφρονος· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
χρῦσεον ἔμπλησεν καλὸν δέπας ἠδέος οἴνου.
 5 *αὐτὰρ ὁ γ' ὡς φράσθη . . .*

The accumulation of the word *αὐτὰρ* (cf. *Anth. Pal.* xi 130, Pollianus: *τοὺς κυκλίους τούτους, τοὺς 'αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα' λέγοντας | μισῶ*) recalls but exceeds the Homeric passages which Kirk assigns to his 'abbreviated reference style',⁵⁹ such as the Bellerophon narrative in *Iliad* vi 150 ff:

- 154 *Σίσυφος Αἰολίδης· ὁ δ' ἄρα Γλαῦκον τέκεθ' υἱόν,*
αὐτὰρ Γλαῦκος τίκτεν ἀμύμονα Βελλεροφόντην·
τῶ δὲ θεοὶ κάλλος τε καὶ ἡγορέην ἐρατεινὴν
ᾠπασαν· αὐτὰρ οἱ Προῖτος κακὰ μήσατο θυμῶ . . .

There is however an important difference. In the *Iliad* this jerky and concise manner is used for summarising incidental stories, taken presumably from other sources and compressed for the *Iliad's* purposes; but our passage from the *Thebaid* is part of the narration of a high point of the plot, Oedipus' first curse on his sons. It is as if the breaking of the truce in Book iv, say, or the reconciliation of Agamemnon and Achilles in xix, were to be dealt with in that style. The fragment goes on to deal with the content of the curse:

- 5 *αὐτὰρ ὁ γ' ὡς φράσθη παρακείμενα πατρὸς εἰοῖο*
τιμήεντα γέρα, μέγα οἱ κακὸν ἔμπεσε θυμῶ,
αἴψα δὲ παισὶν εἰοῖσι μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἐπαράς
ἀργαλέας ἠρᾶτο· θεῶν δ' οὐ λάνθαν' ἐρινύν·
ὡς οὐδ' οἱ πατρῴϊ' ἐν ἡθείῃ φιλότῃτι
 10 *δάσσαντ', ἀμφοτέροισι δ' αἰεὶ πόλεμοι τε μάχαι τε . . .*

The curse was, it seems, reported in indirect speech, and so was Oedipus' second curse, fr. iii:

- 3 *ᾠμοι ἐγώ, παῖδες μὲν ὄνειδιόντες ἔπεμψαν (lacuna)*
εὐκτο Διὶ βασιλῆι καὶ ἄλλοις ἀθανάτοισι
 5 *χρῶσιν ὑπ' ἀλλήλων καταβήμεναι "Αἴδος εἴσω.*

Again we have the same dry manner of indirect reporting, and the contrast with the *Iliad* seems clear. In that poem, so much of which consists of direct quotation of speeches by the characters, such a scene would have been directly reported in full, as for example is the quarrel of Agamemnon and Achilles in Book i. The treatment by the *Thebaid* recalls Phoenix' report of his father's curse on him:

- πατὴρ δ' ἐμὸς αὐτίκ' οἶσθεῖς*
πολλὰ κατηρᾶτο, στυγεράς δ' ἐπεκέκλετ' Ἐρινυῶς,
μὴ ποτε γούνασιν οἰσιν ἐφέσσεσθαι φίλον υἱόν
ἐξ ἐμέθεν γεγαῶτα· θεοὶ δ' ἐτέλειον ἐπαράς . . . ix 453.

Homer-Probleme 148 f. (not all of whose examples of lateness are convincing); Bethe's commentary on the fragments, *Homer*² II 2. 150 ff., contains useful material.

⁵⁸ Severyns, *Le cycle épique* 155–9.

⁵⁹ *The Songs of Homer* 164. Important reservations about the different styles distinguished by Kirk are expressed by U. Holscher, *Gnomon* 39 (1967) 437–8.

But again the same difference is important. The autobiography of Phoenix is only peripheral to the *Iliad*, and that is why it is reported in this way; when a curse is part of the plot itself it is given in proper form and in direct speech (i. 35–43, prayer of Chryses). The indirect and summary manner in which the *Thebaid* presented the curses of Oedipus (and a glance at the *Oedipus Coloneus* shows how horrifically powerful they could be made) is as undramatic and as unimpressive as possible. It is notable that Apollonius, who is constantly anxious to avoid too close following of the Homeric manner, handles Aeetes' threats in just the same compressed and indirect style: iv 231–5.

2. *Cypria* fr. vii, Nemesis pursued by Zeus:

4 φεῦγε γάρ, οὐδ' ἔθελεν μιχθήμεναι ἐν φιλότῃτι
πατρὶ Διὶ Κρονίωνι· ἐτείρετο γὰρ φρένας αἰδοῖ
καὶ νεμέσει . . .

The expression is doubtless derived from a passage like *Il.* xiii 122, an appeal to warriors to fight:

ἀλλ' ἐν φρεσὶ θέσθε ἕκαστος
αἰδῶ καὶ νέμεσιν,

that is to say both self-respect and respect for the opinion of others. The poet of the *Cypria* applies the words to the feelings of Nemesis herself, producing a sort of pun. One is reminded that Eustathius loves to point out how Homer is careful to avoid the sound-jingles deliberately cultivated by later poets;⁶⁰ such a play on words is hardly in the Homeric manner.

The fragment goes on: 8 ἄλλοτε μὲν κατὰ κῦμα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης
ἰχθύϊ εἰδομένη πόντον πολὺν ἐξορόθουνεν,
10 ἄλλοτ' ἂν ὠκεανὸν ποταμὸν καὶ πείρατα γαίης,
ἄλλοτ' ἂν ἠπειρον πολυβῶλακα· γίγνετο δ' αἰεὶ
θηρί', ὅσ' ἠπειρος αἰνὰ τρέφει, ὄφρα φύγοι νιν.

Here a difficulty is produced by the insertion of line 10. Sometimes she was in the sea (8–9), sometimes on land (11–12), in the form of a fish or an animal; how are we to picture her flight 'in Ocean River and the ends of the earth'? Presumably in Ocean she was a fish, at the ends of the earth an animal, and the intrusion disrupts the context in order to get in the distinct idea that she fled not only in both elements, but to the furthest recesses of them both. The total effect is incoherent.

3. *Cypria* fr. iv, the adorning of a goddess, probably (Welcker) Aphrodite preparing for the Judgment of Paris:

εἴματα μὲν χροὶ ἔστο τά οἱ Χάριτες τε καὶ Ὠραι
ποίησαν καὶ ἔβαψαν ἐν ἄνθεσιν εἰαρινοῖσι,
οἶα φοροῦσ' Ὠραι, ἔν τε κροκῶ ἔν θ' ὑακίνθῳ
ἔν τε ἕω θαλέθοντι ῥόδου τ' ἐνὶ ἄνθει καλῶ
5 ἠδέϊ νεκταρέω, ἔν τ' ἀμβροσίαις καλύκεσσι
ἄνθεσι ναρκίσσου †καλλιρροου† . . .
δ' οἱ (τοῦ Meineke) Ἀφροδίτῃ
ῶραις παντοίαις τεθνωμένα εἴματα ἔστο.

The list of flowers is too long; fewer names would have been more effective. The three epithets ῥόδου τ' ἐνὶ ἄνθει καλῶ ἠδέϊ νεκταρέω is feeble because all three are absolutely general,

⁶⁰ See Eustathius 682.48, 754.7, 995.15, 1031.51, 1042.29, 1107.26, 1634.12.

so that between them they add virtually nothing to the name of the rose. This use of epithets is precisely that branded by the ancient commentators as 'cyclic': a good example is the scholion on *Od.* vii 115, the description of the trees in Alcinous' orchard: οὐ κυκλικῶς τὰ ἐπίθετα προσέρριπται, ἀλλ' ἐκάστον δένδρον τὸ ἰδίωμα διὰ τοῦ ἐπιθέτου προστετήρηται. The contrast with Homer is thus already made. As with Nemesis in fr. vii, a pun is produced between the personified Horae and the impersonal seasons: the Horae made the garments, which Aphrodite wore ὤραις παντοίαις. The word ἄνθος is twice repeated without adding anything, and it appears that this, like the over-long list of flowers, represents a conscious attempt to compose in a richly ornamental manner; compare the 'decorated lyrical style' which Kirk finds characteristic of the Διὸς ἀπάτη, *Iliad* xiii-xv. Homer however avoids such weak repetitions in such a context, see the toilet of Hera, *Il.* xiv 169 ff, and the bathing and adorning of Aphrodite by the Charites, *Od.* viii 364-6. Even the lush manner of the Homeric *Hymn to Aphrodite* is very different: as Aphrodite prepares to seduce Anchises,

ἔνθα δέ μιν Χάριτες λούσαν καὶ χρίσαν ἐλαίῳ
 ἀμβρότῳ, οἷα θεοὺς ἐπενήνοθεν αἰὲν ἔοντας,
 ἀμβροσίῳ ἔδανῳ τό ρά οἱ τεθυωμένον ἦεν.
 ἔσσαμένη δ' εὖ πάντα περὶ χροὶ εἴματα καλὰ
 65 χρυσῶ κοσμηθεῖσα φιλομμειδῆς Ἀφροδίτη
 σεύατ' ἐπὶ Τροίης προλιποῦσ' εὐωδέα Κύπρον
 ὕψι μετὰ νέφεσιν ῥίμφα πρήσσουσα κέλευθον . . .

Here the repetition ἀμβρότῳ . . . ἀμβροσίῳ is open to criticism, but the passage as a whole moves quicker and by suggesting more and listing less is far more effective. What depresses particularly about the *Cypria* passage is that the poet has clearly set himself to excel his models and prided himself on the result.

4. The hasty and undramatic style of number 1 is found again in the account of the great battle of the Dioscuri with Idas and Lynceus, subject of Pindar's wonderful Tenth *Nemean*, (*Cypria* fr. xi:)

αἶμα δὲ Λυγκεὺς
 Ταῦγετον προσέβαινε ποσὶν ταχέεσσι πεποισῶς.
 ἀκρότατον δ' ἀναβὰς διεδέρκετο νῆσον ἅπασαν
 Τανταλίδου Πέλοπος· τάχα δ' εἶσιδε κύνιδιμος ἦρωσ
 5 δεινοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἔσω⁶¹ δρυὸς ἄμφω κοίλης,
 Κάστορά θ' ἵππόδαμον καὶ ἀεθλοφόρον Πολυδεύκεα·
 νύξε δ' ἄρ' ἄγχι στάς . . .

Lynceus runs up Taygetus, spies the hidden heroes in a hollow oak, and next moment he is stabbing at the tree. Pindar shows how the story could be treated; what the *Cypria* seems to have offered was the barest possible narration, again compressed beyond all hope of excitement.

5. Lastly, the only long fragment of the *Ilias Parva*, xix:⁶²

⁶¹ Despite Allen and Welcker, ('dem ἄμφω schein Nachdruck durch die Stellung gegeben zu sein,' ii 516), this metrical monster can hardly be right. κοίλης δρυὸς ἄμφω Gerhard, and so Bethé.

⁶² Tzetzes quotes another six lines as continuous with these five, but they are ascribed to Simmias of Rhodes by the Scholiast on Euripides *Andromache* 10; Allen's arrangement conceals this fact. The authorship of Simmias was rejected implicitly by Allen and explicitly by H. Fränkel, *de Simia Rhodiō* 37 ff.: J. U. Powell printed the lines as by Simmias in *Collectanea Alexandrina* 112, but Diehl omitted them

from his *Anthologia Lyrica Graeca*. Max Schmidt, *Troika*, (Diss. Göttingen 1917) 45 tries to meet the stylistic arguments of Fränkel. The problem is a difficult one. The lines seem to lack all the ingenuity and point we expect from Simmias, but it is hard to know how conclusive that is, in view of our ignorance of most of his work, while Professor Lloyd-Jones observes that the ascription to him, if not correct, is certainly very hard to account for. It seems best to use only the certainly attested lines in the argument here.

αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλῆος μεγαθύμου φαίδιμος υἱὸς
 Ἐκτορέην ἄλοχον κάταγεν κοίλας ἐπὶ νῆας.
 παῖδα δ' ἔλων ἐκ κόλπου ἐυπροκάμοιο τιθήνης
 ῥίψε ποδὸς τεταγὼν ἀπὸ πύργου, τὸν δὲ πεσόντα
 ἔλλαβε πορφύρεος θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή.

Here is described the fate which in the *Iliad* Hector foresees for Andromache, vi 456, and Andromache for her son, xxiv 734. Hector prays that he may be dead and buried before he hears the shrieks of Andromache as she is dragged away to the Achaean ships,

πρὶν γέ τι σῆς τε βοῆς σοῦ θ' ἔλκηθμοῖο πυθέσθαι,

but in this passage no emotion is even hinted at, by Andromache or anyone else. Astyanax' death, his mother predicted, would be at the hands of an Achaean warrior,

χωόμενος, ᾧ δὴ πού ἀδελφεὸν ἔκτανεν Ἐκτωρ
 ἢ πατέρ', ἢ καὶ υἱόν.

In the *Ilias Parva* Neoptolemus the killer has no such ground for anger—Hector did not kill his father—and the child's death is described in a manner so flatly dispassionate, one is tempted to say so uninterested, that we need to remind ourselves that it could be made deeply moving and pathetic. The foreshadowing in the *Iliad* is incomparably more tragic than this narration, and we must turn to the *Troades* to find the event itself worthily handled. The Homeric phrases out of which the passage is built up (listed in the apparatus by Bethe *ad loc.*) combine rather in the manner which Kirk (p. 166) calls the 'tired or second-hand formular style' and exemplifies with *Iliad* i 430–87, the trip to Chryse. But as with numbers (1) and (4) above, we observe the difference: in the *Iliad* such passages form relatively unstressed and relaxing transitions between more highly charged passages (in *Iliad* i, between the quarrel and Thetis' supplication of Zeus). The death of Hector's son, 'Ἐκτορίδην ἀγαπητόν, ἀλγικὸν ἀστέρι καλῶ (*Il.* vi 401), by contrast, would in the *Iliad* certainly have been a high point of drama; and as for the *Ilias Parva*, I suspect that a poem which handled such a scene in such a style as this contained, in Iliadic terms, no high points at all.

It is of course true that we have pitifully few of the thousands of verses which made up the Cycle, and that long epics are bound to contain weak passages. Yet we can form an impression of the treatment of Oedipus' curses, of the adorning of Aphrodite, and of the killing of Astyanax, all of which might reasonably be expected to be striking incidents and to exhibit the poets at their best. The result of our inspection perhaps casts some doubt on the optimistic view which some moderns have taken of these lost epics. When Rzach says both the *Thebais* and the *Cypria* contained 'many poetic beauties',⁶³ and Wilamowitz that the author of the *Iliou Persis* was 'a creative poet of high rank'^{63a} I suspect that in reality, while the opportunity for such beauties was certainly present, in the poems it was generally missed, and that they were very clearly inferior to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. After all, that was the verdict of antiquity.

My purpose in this enquiry has not been the arid one of disparaging lost poems, but rather to use them to illuminate the great epics we have. The tendency of much recent work on Homer has been to suggest that all epics have much the same qualities, and even that out of a well organised formulaic technique a poem like the *Iliad* was more or less bound to appear; sometimes it seems that its appearance is envisaged as almost spontaneous. The Cyclic epics show how remote this is from the truth. Beneath a superficial similarity the style was very different, and so were the attitudes and assumptions embodied in the poems. Wilamowitz⁶⁴ was right to point out that cyclic material has got into the two epics, but over-stated his case when he said that the *Iliad* itself was 'nothing but a κυκλικὸν

⁶³ 'Gar manche dichterische Schönheit', *RE* s.v. 'Kyklos' 2372, 2394.

^{63a} *Die Heimkehr des Odysseus* (1927) 183.

⁶⁴ *Homerische Untersuchungen* 373 ff.

ποίημα, and that there was no distinction between Homeric and Cyclic. Such a distinction did exist, and was due to the exceptional genius which went into the creation of the two Homeric epics, especially the *Iliad*. The strict, radical, and consistently heroic interpretation of the world presented by the *Iliad* made it quite different from the Cycle, still content with monsters, miracles, metamorphoses, and an un-tragic attitude towards mortality, all seasoned with exoticism and romance, and composed in a flatter, looser, less dramatic style. The contrast helps to bring out the greatness and the uniqueness of that achievement.

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