

THE RISE OF THE GREEK EPIC

My title is familiar as that of a book, and my subject may be thought to call for one. I hope in due course to explore the genesis of the Homeric poems in that format, and what I have to say here may take its place there in a maturer form (wiser, fatter). For the moment I offer merely a provisional attempt to trace out the stages by which the epic tradition developed, stopping short of any discussion of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* themselves. Any such attempt necessarily involves a certain amount of rehearsal of familiar arguments, and, if it is to be plausible, a fair measure of concurrence in familiar conclusions. But conclusions that are familiar are sometimes also controversial, and can be strengthened against their assailants by a fresh discussion; and I have certain doctrines of my own that are best presented in the context of a broad synthesis.¹

To speak of the rise of the Greek epic presupposes that it did not always exist, at least not in the majestic form in which we see it in the Homeric poems. We know from the Russian *byliny*, the South Slavic epic songs, and other cases that oral traditions of heroic poetry can persist for many centuries.² Almost everyone accepts that the Greek epic tradition goes back at least to late Mycenaean times. In fact, as will be seen, there is reason to assume its existence as early as the fifteenth century, and before that an ancient tradition of poetry, which may have been in some sense heroic, going back to an Indo-European setting. In one sense, then, the rise of the Greek epic will have to be dated no later than the middle of the second millennium. On the other hand it is scarcely to be supposed that the Homeric epics are simply late examples of something that had existed in much the same state for seven or eight hundred years. This is surely a tradition that, however old its roots, burst spectacularly into flower within the last few generations before Homer. It is an Ionian tradition, but it can be shown that the Ionians had not always had it. From about 750 we can see that this Ionian epic began to be widely known. It created a great impression on the Greeks of the mainland, as something to which they had nothing corresponding. It aroused in them an interest in the heroic past which had not been evident before. Bronze Age graves began to be treated with reverence, to be brought offerings, and in some cases to be identified as the graves of particular heroes of legend. Relics of Mycenaean buildings, often secular, became the sites of new shrines. Heroic scenes began to appear in art.³ There can be no doubt that the diffusion of epic poetry of the Homeric type was responsible for this new consciousness of the past. It is reflected too in poetry of other genres. Hesiod, in his mythical scheme of metallic races of men, has to find room for the heroes who fought at Thebes and Troy (*Op.* 156-73); he cannot mention Aulis without adding 'where the Achaeans once gathered their great army against Troy of the fair women' (*Op.* 651-3); his catalogue of rivers includes a group of Trojan ones that he must have learned of from epic about Troy (*Th.* 340-5). Alcman refers to Ajax and Memnon (*PMG* 68-9), Paris (70b, 77) and other Trojans (52, 71), Odysseus, Circe and the Sirens (80),⁴ and perhaps Helen and Nestor (1011). Alcaeus and Sappho show an obsessive preoccupation with the saga of Troy, and in the case of one brief fragment it is evident that Alcaeus had the *Iliad* in mind.⁵

I wish to thank three referees, τῶν ἐγὼ εἰδῶς τὰ ὀνόματα οὐ γράφω, for their expert comments and criticisms.

¹ To some extent I shall be using the same canvas as in an earlier essay, 'Greek poetry 2000-700 BC', *CQ* xxiii (1973) 179-92.

² H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, *The Growth of literature* (Cambridge 1932-40) ii 12 f.; C. M. Bowra, *Heroic poetry* (London 1952) 372 ff.

³ A. M. Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece* (Edinburgh 1971) 192-4, 397 f.; *Archaic Greece* (London 1980) 38-40, 68-78; J. N. Coldstream, *JHS* xcvi (1976) 8-17; *Geometric Greece* (London 1977) 341-57.

⁴ I wonder, however, whether this hexameter fragment should not be attributed rather to the *Kirka* of Alexander Aetolus (Powell, *Collectanea Alexandrina* 122).

⁵ *Fr.* 44.6-8 μάτε[ρ] ἔξονομ]άσδων ἐκάλη νά[ιδ] ὑπερτάταν | νύμφ[αν ἐν]αλίαν. ἃ δὲ γόνων [ἀψαμένα Δίος] | ἰκέτευ['] ἀγαπά]τω τέκεος μᾶνιν [ἀπιστρέφην.] (end of poem). This not only corresponds to events in *Iliad* i but implies the whole framework of the epic: Zeus' response to Thetis' prayer, granting the Trojans increasing success in battle until the Greeks are forced to plead with Achilles for his assistance. I draw attention to this because it is in my opinion the earliest text that

From the middle of the eighth century, then, Greece was captivated by a genre of heroic poetry that had achieved a new splendour from the efforts of Ionian bards. Here again is something that may claim to be regarded as the rise of the Greek epic. The object of inquiry is therefore a complex one. The task is to try to define and describe, so far as the evidence permits, the phases through which the epic tradition passed in the course of its long development.

INDO-EUROPEAN PRAISE POETRY

ákṣiti śrávaḥ, śrávo . . . ákṣitam = κλέφος ἄφθιτον. With that famous equation of a Rigvedic with a Homeric formula, Adalbert Kuhn in 1853 opened the door to a new path in the comparative philologist's garden of delights. In the years that followed he made a few more discoveries of the same sort, and also established a striking correspondence of content and style between certain Germanic incantations for sprains and broken limbs and one in the Atharvaveda. The concept of an Indo-European poetic language was beginning to emerge.⁶

Scholars have continued to add to these phraseological and stylistic comparisons between different IE poetic traditions, especially between the Greek and Vedic, and their findings now make a not inconsiderable collection.⁷ Antoine Meillet in 1923 successfully got on to the track of IE metre and prosody, and this too has proved a fruitful line of research.⁸ Studies of IE social institutions, religion, and mythology have also made intermittent headway, despite the special difficulties that arise in these fields. Philologists imbued with the idea that 'Indo-European' is a purely linguistic term reserved for their own use, and that it cannot meaningfully be applied to anything other than hypothetical, unspeakable language, nowadays find themselves a beleaguered species. In general it is conceded that, as it is certain that an IE parent language existed, it is equally certain that there must have been a historical people who spoke it, and furthermore that this people must have had social forms, poetry, mythology, and so forth, reflexes of which it is legitimate to seek among their heirs' effects.

Efforts to correlate the archaeological data of prehistoric Europe with the progress of the IE peoples towards their historical residences have not so far succeeded in evoking any agreement, either about these peoples' starting-point or about their movements in the fourth and third millennia, though certain models have emerged as the most plausible.⁹ It is generally accepted that the story began somewhere in eastern Europe or the west Asiatic steppe. So far as southern Greece is concerned, there is something approaching a consensus that the first arrival of 'Greek'-speakers in substantial numbers is signalled by the destructions and changes at the end of the EH

clearly attests knowledge of our *Iliad* (as distinct from unidentified epic about the Trojan War). Corresponding evidence from art does not go back before about 630 (K. Friis Johansen, *The Iliad in early Greek art* [Copenhagen 1967]).

⁶ See Rüdiger Schmitt, *Dichtung und Dichtersprache in indogermanischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden 1967) 6 ff., and in the introduction to the collection of articles edited by him under the title *Indogermanische Dichtersprache* (Darmstadt 1968) 2 f.

⁷ Besides the works of Schmitt just cited see M. Durante, *Sulla preistoria della tradizione poetica greca* ii (Rome 1976); E. Campanile, *Ricerche di cultura poetica indoeuropea* (Pisa 1977). (Cited hereafter as 'Durante', 'Campanile'.)

⁸ Meillet, *Les Origines indo-européennes des mètres grecs* (Paris 1923), cf. his *Aperçu d'une histoire de la langue grecque*⁷ (Paris 1965) 145-52; R. Jakobson, *Oxford*

Slavonic Papers iii (1952) 21-66 = *Selected Writings* iv (1966) 414-63; C. Watkins, *Celtica* vi (1963) 194-249; G. B. Pighi, *Studi di ritmica e metrica* (Torino 1970); M. L. West, *Glotta* li (1973) 161-87, cf. *my Greek Metre* (Oxford 1982) 1-4; G. Nagy, *Comparative studies in Greek and Indic meter* (Cambridge Mass. 1974).

⁹ See e.g. V. Gordon Childe, *The Aryans* (London 1926); *Prehistoric migrations in Europe* (Oslo 1950) 146-51; P. Bosch-Gimpera, *El problema indoeuropeo* (Mexico 1960); G. Devoto, *Origini indeuropee* (Florence 1962) 71-156; M. Gimbutas, *American Anthropologist* lxx (1963) 815-36; S. Piggott, *Ancient Europe* (Edinburgh 1965) 78-97; various papers in R. W. Ehrich (ed.), *Chronologies in Old World archaeology* (Chicago 1965) and in G. Cardona et al. (ed.), *Indo-European and Indo-Europeans* (Philadelphia 1970) and in R. A. Crossland and A. Birchall (ed.), *Bronze Age migrations in the Aegean* (London 1973); Crossland in *CAH* i(2) 868-73.

II period (c. 2200 BC);¹⁰ and there is some reason to think that they came from the direction of Albania.¹¹ The initial invasions may have been followed by continuing infiltration during the MH period which does not show up so conspicuously in the archaeological record.

Greek culture and the Greek language were now developing on their own. Yet we cannot say that there was no further input from the Indo-European pool in which the ancestors of the Hellenes had been swimming with those of the Phrygians, Armenians, and Indo-Iranians.¹² The mythical conception that the sun travels in a chariot drawn by horses¹³ cannot have come to Greece earlier than the chariot itself, which first appears in the second half of the sixteenth century. The chariot is a Middle Eastern invention of the early second millennium, thought to have come to Mycenaean Greece by way of Syria and Crete.¹⁴ But the idea of the sun's chariot is Indo-European, in the sense that it achieved a wide currency especially among IE peoples as they became familiar with chariots: it is attested in the R̥gveda and Avesta, the Edda, and Baltic and Slavic folklore, and there is archaeological evidence for its arrival in northern Europe before the end of the second millennium.¹⁵ Apparently there was still a degree of intercommunication across large areas of the eastern and central IE territories that enabled a myth of this kind to spread fairly easily; and it spread to Greece. It follows that when we establish significant correspondences between Homeric and Indo-Iranian poetry, we are not necessarily getting back to something of an earlier date than the Greeks' arrival in Greece. No doubt some of these correspondences do reflect older inheritance, particularly, perhaps, in cases where parallelisms extend to Celtic poetry. But it seems that there were still possibilities of 'horizontal transmission' at a later period.

The ideal of lasting *kléwos* that underlies the Graeco-Aryan κλέος ἄφθιτον/*śrávo ákṣitam* formula was no doubt common to the warrior kings in most parts of the IE territories. Ancient proper-name compounds incorporating the elements *klewes-* or *kluto-* are documented not only in Mycenaean and Homeric Greek (*erikerewe* = *Ερικλέφης, Ἡρακλέης, Κλυτομήδης, etc.) and Indo-Iranian (Vedic *Suśrávas* = Εὐκλήης, *Pṛthusrávas* = Εὐρυκλήης, *Upamásrávas*-, *Śrutárvan*-, Avestan *Haosrauua-*), but also in Slavic (*Svętoslavъ* etc.), Illyric (*Vesclaves*), Runic Norse (*Hlewažastir* = Κλεόξενος), Frankish (*Chlodericus*), and Celtic (British *Clutorix*, Old Irish *Clothchú*).¹⁶ It was the poet who could provide this fame, both during the prince's life and after his death.¹⁷ We should probably envisage the IE poet—besides other functions such as invoking gods at sacrifices, and reciting magical incantations for various community needs—celebrating the noble qualities and heroic enterprises of the king and his ancestors, in the expectation of

¹⁰ J. L. Caskey, *Hesperia* xxix (1960) 302 and *CAH* ii(1) 139; E. Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age* (Chicago and London 1964) 66–72; S. S. Weinberg in Ehrlich (as n. 9) 305; R. J. Howell in Crossland and Birchall (as n. 9) 73–99; F. Schachermayr, *Griechische Frühgeschichte* (Wien 1984) 27, modifying his earlier views.

¹¹ N. G. L. Hammond, *BSA* lxii (1967) 77 f.; *Epirus* (Oxford 1967) 341 f.; *A History of Macedonia* i (Oxford 1972) 252–76, and in Crossland and Birchall (as n. 9) 189–97; R. J. Howell (as n. 10).

¹² These peoples together with the Greeks make up a distinct 'eastern' group within the IE family. Cf. P. Kretschmer, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache* (Göttingen 1896) 169; E. Schwyzer, *Griech. Grammatik* i (München 1939) 56 f.; W. Porzig, *Die Gliederung des indogermanischen Sprachgebiets* (Heidelberg 1954); J. Harmatta, *Annales Universitatis Scientiarum Budapestiniensis*, sect. classica iii (1975) 9; Durante ii 16–87.

¹³ Presumably pre-Homeric, though not mentioned in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* (Dawn's horses: *Od.* xxiii 244–6); it is in several of the Hymns, Mimnermus, other archaic

poets, and in art perhaps from the first half of the seventh century.

¹⁴ J. Wiesner, *Archaeologia Homerica* I F: Fahren und Reiten (Göttingen 1968) 79 f.; R. A. Crossland, *CAH* i(2) 873 f.; J. H. Crouwel, *Chariots and other means of land transport in Bronze Age Greece* (Amsterdam 1981) 148 f. It may be worth recalling that the first chariot mechanic in Greek myth, Myrsilos, has a Hittite name and comes to Greece from the east with Pelops.

¹⁵ I refer to the Trundholm horse and sun-disc group discovered in 1902. See P. Gelling & H. E. Davidson, *The chariot of the sun* (London 1969) 14 ff.; P. V. Glob, *The Mound People* (London 1974) 99–103, who states that the hollow-cast bronze horse has contemporary parallels only in Mycenaean Greece.

¹⁶ Cf. R. Schmitt, *Indogermanische Dichtersprache und Namengebung* (Innsbruck 1973); Durante ii 103; Campanile 82.

¹⁷ As Ibycus frankly explained to Polycrates: κλέος ἄφθιτον ἐξείς ὡς κατ' αἰοιδᾶν καὶ ἐμὸν κλέος, *PMG* 282(a) 47 f.; cf. Pind. *P.* 3.110–5, *Od.* xxiv 196–8, *H. Ap.* 171–5, *Thgn.* 237–52; Durante ii 180 f., who compares some Vedic and Germanic texts.

liberal reward.¹⁸ Recalling famous battles of a previous generation would always provide inspiration if effort was needed in the present, or satisfaction if times were quiet. Tacitus' well-known references to the Germans whose *carmina antiqua* were their only form of history (*Germ.* 2), and who were singing of the deeds of Arminius a century or so after his death (*Ann.* 2.88), are suggestive of the conditions in which IE poets might have celebrated κλέα ἀνδρῶν two thousand years earlier.¹⁹

Singing of heroic deeds by no means implies 'epic'. The Attic skolia on Harmodios and Aristogeiton illustrate the possibilities of minimalism. But comparative arguments imply an IE tradition of poems of somewhat greater substance, in which the ideology of the hero began to crystallize in a form foreshadowing Homeric epic. He is 'man-slaying',²⁰ and 'of the famous spear'.²¹ He stands firm and immovable in battle as a mighty tree;²² he rages like a fire;²³ indeed his fury may manifest itself as a visible flame flaring from his head.²⁴ His weapons themselves are eager and greedy for blood.²⁵ He is the herdsman of his people,²⁶ and their protective enclosure.²⁷ His destiny is spun at his birth by a trio of supernatural spinsters.²⁸

Graeco-Aryan comparisons contribute a series of further details. This may be, at least in part, because the texts available to us are much older (and somewhat more voluminous) than those of the Celtic and Germanic traditions, and accordingly likely to have preserved more in the way of ancient features. But it may also be a question of innovations among the eastern peoples which never reached the western. Here we find that the adversary who stands firm like a tree may also be felled like a tree, whether it is a tree struck by lightning (*Rgv.* ii 14.2, vi 8.5, *Il.* xiv 414) or one chopped down by a joiner (*Rgv.* i 130.4, *Il.* iv 482-7, xiii 178-80, 389-91).²⁹ Darkness comes upon him (*Rgv.* x 113.7, *Il.* v 47, etc.), or he is put away into the darkness (*Rgv.* i 32.10, v 32.5, viii 6.17). To live is to 'see the sunlight' (*Rgv.* i 23.21, *al.*, *Il.* v 120, *al.*), or simply to 'see' (*Rgv.* i 116.25; *Il.* i 88 ἐμέο ζῶντος καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ δερκομένοιο, etc.). But anguish brings darkness upon the spirit (*Rgv.* v 31.9, *Il.* xvii 591, etc.). When he is ready for battle, the hero is 'clothed in valour' (*Rgv.* iv 16.14, ix 7.4, 80.3; *Il.* vii 164 *al.* Αἶαντες θοῦριν ἐπιειμένοι ἀλκήν).³⁰

Verbal as well as conceptual parallels become identifiable. The κλέος ἄφθιτον formula is only one of several to do with fame. μέγα κλέος = Vedic *máhi śrávah* (except for a difference of stem in the adjective); κλέος εὐρύ corresponds to *prthú śrávah* 'broad fame', *prthú* (= Gk. πλατύ) having replaced the more archaic *urú*, which however still appears in this association in the (Purāṇic)

¹⁸ Cf. Campanile 37-47.

¹⁹ One might also refer to the ancient Roman *carmina de clarorum uirorum laudibus* that according to Cato and Varro were once sung at banquets; but these are under suspicion of being a literary fiction. Cf. H. Dahlmann, *Abh. d. Ak. d. Wiss. u. d. Lit. in Mainz*, Geistes- u. sozialw. Kl. 1950, 1191-202.

²⁰ Old Irish *oirgnech*, *oirgnid*, Gk. ἀνδροφόνος; Campanile 118 f. In the Graeco-Aryan tradition the epithet was also applicable to martial gods: Vedic *nṛhán* (= ἀνδροφόνος) of Indra, Gk. Ἐνυσάλῳ ἀνδρείφοντι.

²¹ Irish, Greek (δουρικλυτός etc.), Campanile 122. Again transferable to divinities: Ἀπόλλωνι κλυτοτόξωι. Cf. Vedic *śrutāratha-* 'with famous chariot'.

²² Irish, Welsh, cf. *Il.* xii 131-5; Campanile 119. The motif occurs in the Russian *byliny* in the form that a hero, surprised that a mighty blow has no effect on his adversary, wonders if his strength is failing and tries smiting a tree, which falls. (I am indebted to Dr Paul Foote for this item.)

²³ Irish, Welsh, cf. *Il.* xiii 330 φλογὶ εἴκελον ἀλκήν, xvii 565, xviii 154; Campanile 121.

²⁴ As with CúChulainn in the *Táin Bó Cúalnge*, quoted by R. B. Onians, *The Origins of European thought* (Cambridge 1951) 157 f., in a wider context; *Il.* v 4-7, xviii 205-6.

²⁵ *Bíowulf* 1521, *The Wanderer* 100, cf. *Il.* iv 126, xi 574, xv 542-3, xxi 70, 168; Durante ii 145.

²⁶ *Bíowulf* 610, 1832, *al.*, *folces hyrde*; *Rgv.* iii 43.5 *jánasya gopāh* (cowherd); Gk. ποιμένα λαῶν; also Irish (Campanile 25, 120, and *Études celtiques* xv [1976/7] 18) and Near Eastern (C. J. Gadd, *Ideas of divine rule in the ancient East* [London 1948] 38 f.). Cf. J. Gonda, *Zeitschr. f. vgl. Sprachforschung* lxxiii (1956) 152; Durante ii 111.

²⁷ *Bíowulf* 428, 663 *eodor Scyldinga*, 1044 *eodor Ingwina*; *Fáfnismál* 36.3 *hers iaðarr*, *Helgaqvíða Hundingsbana* ii 42.3 *folces iaðarr*, *Locasenna* 35.6 *ása iaðarr*; ἔρκος Ἀχαιῶν in Homer only of Ajax (but adapted to Achilles with different syntax, *Il.* i 284). Old Irish *fál* 'enclosure' = 'king' (Campanile, *Studi e saggi linguistici* xiv [1974] 207). For Vedic analogues—less exact—see Durante ii 114.

²⁸ The Norns, *Helgaqvíða Hundingsbana* i 2-4; Aisa or Moira, *Il.* xx 127 f., xxiv 209 f.; the (Kata)Klothes, *Od.* vii 197 f.; Durante ii 112, who also cites an Anglo-Saxon echo of the concept.

²⁹ Durante ii 121. In the Vedic passages it is a god who thus fells his enemies.

³⁰ On all this see Durante ii 114-9.

proper name *Uruśravas-* and in the compounded *urugāyām . . . śrávah* ('wide-walking'), vi 65.6.³¹ ὄνομα κλυτός corresponds to *nāma śrútyam* viii 46.14. There is a set of epithets for horses which correspond either etymologically or semantically: swift (ὠκέες ἵπποι = *ásvā . . . āśávaḥ* x 119.3), prize-winning, strong-hoofed; and a god's horses have golden manes. Chariots are well-wheeled (ἔυκυκλος = *su-cakrá-*) or well-running. Of the *Aśvins'* chariot we read that it has a golden seat and golden reins,

Golden is its supporting shaft, the axle also is of gold,
And both the wheels are made of gold

(*Rgv.* viii 5.29, trans. R. T. H. Griffiths). And of Hera's (*Il.* v 724 ff.):

τῶν ἦτοι χρυσή ἵτυς ἄφθιτος . . .
δίφρος δὲ χρυσείοισι καὶ ἀργυρέοισιν ἱμάσιν
ἐντέταται . . .
τοῦ δ' ἐξ ἀργύρεος ῥυμὸς πέλεν, αὐτὰρ ἐπ' ἄκρωι
δῆσεν χρύσειον καλὸν ζυγόν, ἐν δὲ λέπαδνα
κάλ' ἔβαλε χρύσεια.

In the phrase *ἱερῶι ἐνὶ δίφρῳι* (*Il.* xvii 464), *ἱερός* has its primitive sense of 'full of impetus'; the corresponding Vedic word *iśirá-* is applied to the *Aśvins* as charioteers, *Rgv.* v 75.5. Various other archaic uses of *ἱερός* in Homer, including *ἱερόν μένος* (in periphrastic phrases for heroes), have analogues in the *Rgveda*.³²

It may be that a few further traditional elements are preserved in the *Mahābhārata*, much later though it is as a composition. V. Pisani³³ draws attention to an account of a battle in which the warriors fall 'yielding up their dear breath'. This is certainly reminiscent of Homer's characteristic use of *φίλος*, as in *φίλον ὤλεσε θυμόν*. He also compares the death of the Brahman *Droṇa* with that of *Patroklos*. It is accompanied by portents: an earthquake, storm-winds, a meteor; *Droṇa*'s weapons flash with lightning and his chariot thunders, while his horses shed tears. He feels his strength gone, and stands in dismay.³⁴ Perhaps more remarkable than this is the occurrence in the *Mahābhārata* of the myth that the earth once complained to *Brahmā* of the ever-increasing weight of mankind, and *Brahmā* created death to alleviate the problem. Elsewhere 'lightening the earth' stands for war and slaughter. In the *Cypria* a similar reason was given for *Zeus'* decision to bring about the Trojan War.³⁵ However, in this case the motif is established in Babylonian mythology, and common influence from this quarter upon Greece and India in the first millennium BC may be the likeliest hypothesis.³⁶

Before passing on to consider Mycenaean heroic song, I may remark that one or two stylistic patterns that occur from time to time in Homer probably have their roots in IE poetry. One is the verse consisting of three names, the last of which is accompanied by an epithet or other amplification, e.g.

Il. iii 147 Λάμπόν τε Κλυτίον θ' ἴκετάονά τ' ὄζον Ἄρηος.
iv 52 Ἄργός τε Σπάρτη τε καὶ εὐρυάγυια Μυκλήνη.

³¹ After Homer we find *ἄθανατον κλέος* (*Bacch.* 13.65), *κλέος ἀγήρατον* (*Eur. IA* 567, cf. *Pind. P.* 2.52 *κῦδος ἀγήραον*), corresponding to Vedic *śrávo . . . amítam ajuryám* (iii 53.15).

³² On all this, and more, cf. *Durante* ii 93-7. I grant that not all of what I have mentioned need be evidence for heroic as distinct from e.g. hymnic poetry, and I pass over a number of other parallel phrases of which the same is true: immortal gods, immortal and unaging, god(s) giver(s) of blessings, broad heaven, broad earth, boundless earth, *Zeus'* rain, the sun's wheel, the sun that sees all, good disposition (*μένος/mánah*), bold disposition, etc.

³³ *Zeitschr. d. Deutschen Morgenländ. Gesellsch.* N.F.

xxviii (1953) 133 = R. Schmitt (ed.), *Indog. Dichtersprache* 163 f.

³⁴ Cf. *Il.* xvi 459 (raindrops of blood); 805 f. τὸν δ' ἄτη φρένας ἔλε, λύθεν δ' ὑπο φαίδιμα γυῖα, στῆ δὲ ταφών; xvii 426 ff. (*Achilles'* horses weep on learning of *Patroklos'* death); Pisani 130 f. = 159 f. On heroic and lachrymose horses see *Bowra, Heroic poetry* 157-70.

³⁵ The comparison was made by R. Köhler, *Rh. Mus.* xiii (1858) 316 f. Cf. Pisani 127 f. = 156 f.; W. Kullmann, *Philologus* xcix (1955) 186.

³⁶ See W. Burkert, *Die orientalisierende Epoche in der griech. Religion u. Literatur* (Sitz.-Ber. d. Heidelb. Ak., Phil.-hist. Kl. 1984.1) 95-8.

Hyndluljóð 18 Frammarr oc Gyðr oc Frecar báðir,
Ámr oc Iðosurmarr, Álfr inn gamli.
Biowulf 61 Heorogār ond Hrōðgār ond Hālgā til.

This is a special case of O. Behaghel's 'Gesetz der wachsenden Glieder', convenient to the versifier because it gives him some room for manoeuvre in the clausula.³⁷ Then there is the device of pairing (often with asyndeton) adjectives which share the same fore-element, in particular ἀ- privative, εὐ-, or πολυ-. This is closely paralleled in the Veda and Avesta, and evidently an inherited Graeco-Aryan feature:³⁸

Il. ii 447 ἀγήραον ἀθανάτην τε
Rgv. i 113.13 ajārā-(a)mītā (unaging, immortal)
Od. xv 406 εὐβοτος εὐμηλος
i 35.10 sunītháh sumṛīkáh suánān
Il. v 613 πολυκτῆμων πολυλήϊος
vi 34.2 puruhūtó yáh purugūrtá . . . purupraśastáh.

EARLY MYCENAEAN EPIC

It has long been apparent that the Homeric tradition preserves a few reminiscences of early Mycenaean culture, from a period well before the destruction of Troy VIIa.³⁹ The most important items of archaeological evidence are the φάσγανον/ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον, and the tower shield especially associated with Ajax, which would seem to have gone out of use before the end of the fourteenth century.⁴⁰ Since the decipherment of Linear B, the evidence of archaeology has been reinforced by that of language. What is significant here is not so much the appearance in the tablets of elements of 'Homeric' vocabulary and morphology, such as *pakana* φάσγανα or the instrumental plural ending *-pi -φι*, because we do not know how much longer they continued in use. The significant thing is that certain features of the epic language appear to belong to an earlier stage of Greek than the language of the Linear B tablets:

(i) Epic preserves some freedom in the placing of preverbs, as in ἀπὸ θυμὸν ὄλεσεν, πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπεν, λιπὼν κάτα πατρίδα γαῖαν. This does not have its origins in poetic artifice but in the original independence of the preverbs, the situation still prevailing in the Veda. The Mycenaean tablets already show the developed state of dependence that obtains in classical Greek, with the preverb regularly treated as a prefix of the verb.⁴¹

(ii) Certain words and phrases are unmetrical as they stand, but would have been metrical at an earlier stage of Greek when *ɾ* existed as a syllabic vowel: when

Ἔνυαλίωι ἀνδρειφόντηι was *Enūwalīōi anɾq^whóntai,
ἀνδροτήτα καὶ ἦβην was *anɾtát' ide yég^wān,
Νύξ ἀμβρότη was *Núx amɾtā,
ἀμβροτάξομεν was *hamɾtáxomen.⁴²

³⁷ Behaghel, *Indog. Forsch.* xxv (1909) 110 ff. Cf. H. Hirt, *Indog. Grammatik* i (Heidelberg 1927) 126. G. Morgan, *Folklore* xciv (1983) 44–56, has identified a similar triadic pattern as a widespread feature of popular verse, from ancient Irish and Welsh to modern American.

³⁸ Durante ii 151 f.

³⁹ Cf. M. P. Nilsson, *Homer and Mycenae* (London 1933) 158; D. Gray in M. Platnauer (ed.), *Fifty years of classical scholarship* (Oxford 1954) 28 f.; J. V. Luce, *Homer and the Heroic Age* (London 1975) 101–7, 119.

⁴⁰ H. L. Lorimer, *Homer and the monuments* (London 1950) 152 f., 273 f.; D. L. Page, *History and the Homeric*

Iliad (Berkeley & Los Angeles 1959) 232–5; H. Borchardt, *Archaeologia Homerica* I E: Kriegswesen (Göttingen 1977–80) 25 f.; S. Foltiny, *ibid.* 237.

⁴¹ G. C. Horrocks, *Space and time in Homer* (New York 1981). Horrocks shows that the Homeric use, though freer than the Mycenaean, is subject to limitations, only certain types of positioning being admitted. On pp. 153–61 he points out the advantages to bards in preserving the ancient freedom of arrangement in the flexible-formula system which they used.

⁴² J. Wackernagel, *Kleine Schriften* (Göttingen 1953) 1116 n. 1, 1170 n. 1. On the substitution of ἰδέ for καὶ see below, n. 54.

In the Mycenaean tablets that stage is already past; that dialect at least has moved irrevocably towards *or* or *ro*, *topeza* τόπρεζα, *qetoropopi* q^wετρόποπι, *anoqota* Ἄνορα ῥ^wήοντας.⁴³

The phrase ἀσπίδος ἀμφιβρότης is less obviously offensive to the metre. But short scansion before βρ, though admissible at a pinch, is a departure from the epic norm. It is very likely that the epithet was originally **amphimítās*. And here philology chimes nicely with archaeology; for 'shield that encircles a man' can only describe that body shield which had its heyday in the sixteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁴⁴ This provides some confirmation of the antiquity of the phrases which presuppose the sonant *ɾ*. There may well be others wearing the disguise of Attic correption, e.g. δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι (**dweyelóisi mṛtóisi*), ἐπένειμε τραπέζηι (**trpézāi*), κατὰ κλισμούς τε θρόνους τε (**thṛónous q^we*).⁴⁵

Another feature of Homeric versification that presumably goes back to the Mycenaean age, though not necessarily to an earlier stage than the Linear B documents, is the occasional operation of a 'phantom consonant' where once there was an initial *s*- or *ɣ*- (normally leaving an aspirate in classical Greek).

Homeric	Linear B	original
πότνια Ἥρη	<i>Era</i>	* <i>Yérā?</i> * <i>Sérā?</i>
θεὸς ὦς	<i>ɣo(s), o(s)</i>	* <i>ɣós</i>
Διὶ μῆτιν ἄτάλαντος	—	* <i>Diweí métim smṫálanτος</i>

The hiatus in πότνια Ἥρη is anomalous, cf. πότνια μήτηρ, π. Κίρκη, π. νύμφη, π. θηρῶν, and in the Hymns also π. Λητώ, Μαῖα, Ληώ, Δήδη, and in Hesiod π. Τηθύς, Πειθῶ.⁴⁶ It is certain that Hera's name never had a wau. The comparative particle ὦς < **ɣós* is frequently treated as if it had an initial consonant: θεὸς ὦς (υ —), λύκοι ὦς, ὄρνιθες ὦς, etc.⁴⁷ In Διὶ μῆτιν ἄτάλαντος the original **sm*- may have developed to *sa*- or *ha*- before the formula was coined, but it was coined when there was still a consonant there, and apparently when the original dative *Diweí* still existed.⁴⁸ The *h*- which developed from *s*- and from *ɣ*- no doubt retained for a time the prosodic value of a full consonant. (I will indicate this by *h*.) In the tablets forms of the relative stem are written with *ɣo*-, but not consistently. Otherwise both *s*- and *ɣ*- have gone, and *h*- is ignored in the writing system, except that the sign *a*₂ often represents *ha*, and an intervocalic *h* is suggested by spellings such as *pa^wea₂* φάρφεια, *apeeke* (?) ἀπέηηκε (< **éyēke*, cf. Hom. ἔηκε). Homeric compounds such as ἀγχιάλος, ἀμφιάλος (< **-hālos* < **-salos*; Μyc. *apia₂ro*), ἀμφίεπον (< **-heq^won(t)* < **-seq^wont*) besides ἄμφεπον, ἐπιάλμενος (< **-hāl* < **-sāl*-) besides ἐπάλμενος, presumably go back to the same stage of the language.⁴⁹ ὑπεῖρ ἄλα, εἰν ἄλι, εἰνάλιος may do so (*hyper hāla*, *en hālī*),⁵⁰ though here metrical lengthening is available as an alternative explanation.

Ὀδυσσῆς ἱερῆ ἴς in [Hes.] *fr.* 198.2 looks like another example. ἱερός derives from **isirós*,⁵¹ preserving in the formula ἱερῆ ἴς its old sense (above, p. 154). After it became **iḥirós/iḥerós*, the aspirate was transferred to the beginning of the word.⁵² That this had happened before the time of the Linear B tablets is indicated by the regular spelling *i^yero*-, *i^yere*-, since *i^he*- would have

⁴³ C. J. Ruijgh, *Études sur le grammaire et le vocabulaire du grec mycénien* (Amsterdam 1967) 69 f.; P. Wathelot, *Les traits éoliens dans la langue de l'épopée grecque* (Rome 1970) 171 f.; Durante i (1970) 89; Horrocks (as n. 41) 162; H. Mühlestein, *Homeric Name Studies* (Frankfurt am Main 1987) 186 f. For a dissenting view see A. Heubeck, *Acta Mycenaea* ii (= *Minos* xii) (1972) 55–79.

⁴⁴ So W. Helbig, *Das homerische Epos aus den Denkmälern erläutert*² (Leipzig 1887) 315 n. 2; Lorimer (as n. 40) 189; D. H. F. Gray, *CQ* lxi (1947) 120; Durante i 90.

⁴⁵ Cf. E. Crespo, *Elementos antiguos y modernos en la prosodia homérica* (*Minos* Suppl. vii, Salamanca 1977) 24.

⁴⁶ πότνια Ἥρη *Il.* iv 2 and π. Ἡώς *H. Aphr.* 223,

230, were no doubt modelled on π. Ἥρη after the hiatus became accepted, though in principle π. Ἥβη (< **ɣég^wā*) could be as old as π. Ἥρη. Cf. Ruijgh in A. Morpurgo Davies & Y. Duhoux (ed.), *Linear B: a 1984 survey* (Louvain-la-neuve 1985) 155.

⁴⁷ Durante i 82 f.

⁴⁸ Ruijgh (as n. 43) 53. Linear B still for the most part uses *-e* (*-ei*) as the dative ending, though *-i* (originally locative) has begun to make inroads.

⁴⁹ Durante i 85; Crespo (as n. 45) 23.

⁵⁰ Ruijgh (as n. 43) 53 and (as n. 46) 158.

⁵¹ O. Szemerényi, *Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici* xx (1980) 207–11.

⁵² Schwyzler, *Griech. Gramm.* i 219 f.

been represented by *ie-*. Ὀδυσσῆος ἱερὴ ἴς, therefore, although appearing only in an extra-Homeric tradition, has every chance of being a Mycenaean formula, *Oduk'ēwos hierá wís*, and it may have been the primary model for the Odyssean ἱερὴ ἴς Τηλεμάχοιο. It would be a conclusive case of consonantal *h*, as ἱερός never had initial *s-*.⁵³

What inferences can we draw from this little collection of fragments of Mycenaean verse? Firstly that Mycenaean heroic poetry was cast in hexameters from at least as early as the fourteenth century. There is a fair likelihood that such lines as

Αἴας δ' ἐγύθεν ἦλθε φέρων σάκος ἤυτε πύργον

and

Μηριόνης ἀτάλαντος Ἐνυαλίωι ἀνδρειφόντηι

are simply modernized versions of lines that have come down whole from that era:

Aíwans d' engúthen ἔlthe phérōn ssákos (twákos?) ēwúte púrḡon.
Mēriónās ḡatálanτος Enūwallōi anrḡ'hóntāi.

Perhaps the same is true of the remarkable couplet, used only of Patroklos' and Hektor's deaths (*Il.* xvi 856 f., xxii 362 f.), about the soul flying off to Hades from the ῥέθεα (an obscure and clearly very old word):

psúkhá d' ex ḡrethéhōn ptaménā Hāwidósde ḡ'eg'ákē
*ḡwón pótmon ḡowáónsa, liq'óns' anrḡtát' ide ḡéḡ'ān.*⁵⁴

The prosodic rules that obtained at this period were probably more archaic than those prevailing in Homer. Mute and liquid combinations presumably always made position, as in Vedic verse.⁵⁵ Initial *h* made position with a preceding final consonant, or prevented hiatus, as does Vedic *h* (which has a different origin). Final long vowels and short diphthongs commonly suffered correption before an initial vowel, as in Vedic, but long diphthongs did not: the *i-* element became consonantalized and prevented hiatus, just as in Vedic the *-ai* and *-au* of the written text, representing original *-āi* *-āu*, become *-āy* and *-āv* (i.e. *-āw*) in hiatus.

As for the content of this poetry, we can infer that it told of battle and death in battle,⁵⁶ of gods and of heroes with qualities commensurate with the gods'. There were similes at least of the short type ἐναντίον ὄρτο λέων ὦς. (The use of some longer ones is implied by what I have said about the Graeco-Aryan heritage, but is not directly inferable from the Greek evidence.) Of the heroes who figure in the Homeric tradition, Ajax at least has every appearance of belonging to the early Mycenaean age.⁵⁷ To the familiar arguments—his special association with the tower shield; the gigantic aspect which he shares with figures such as the Lapiths, Herakles, Orion, the Gigantes, Hesiod's Bronze Race;⁵⁸ the use of Αἴωντε in certain passages in a way that reflects a very ancient usage, 'the Ajax pair', i.e. Ajax and his brother—we may add the observation that of the six passages in the *Iliad* where his name occurs in the dative, no less than three give it the

⁵³ This assumes that the Homeric licence of lengthening a final syllable such as *-os* in the princeps position before a vowel was a post-Mycenaean development, or at any rate that it would not have been used in a formula.

⁵⁴ The substitution of *idé* for *kai* (Ruijgh [as n. 46] 163) avoids the anomalous correption before *γ/h*.

⁵⁵ Hence the periphrases *ḡ'ia Hērakleweheia*, *Wiphikleweheia* had to be created to stand for unmetrical *Hēraklēs*, *Wiphiklēs*: Durante i 117–9. But when did Klytaimēstra get into the tradition?

⁵⁶ In this connection a further observation may be made. Ruijgh, *L'élément achéen dans la langue épique* (Assen 1957) 74–89 (cf. Wathelet [as n. 43] 307–10; *aliter* M. Peters in *o-o-pe-ro-si* [Festschr. E. Risch, Berlin & New York 1986] 308 n. 20), has made it probable that

-ξω -ξα in the future and aorist of *-ζω* verbs with dental stems is neither Aeolic nor Ionic but goes back to the 'Achaean' phase of the epic language. The ἀμβροτάξομεν which I have mentioned is one example. The other verbs are (ἔξ)αλαπάξω, πτολεμίζω, πελεμίζω, (ἔξ)εναρρίζω, δαίζω, κτερείζω, δνοπαλίζω, ἔγγυαλίζω, στυφερίζω, ἐλελίζω, μερμηρίζω—nearly all verbs of war. The last in the list suggests that the recurrent Homeric motif of pondering alternatives is an early feature.

⁵⁷ So e.g. P. Cauer, *Grundfragen der Homerkritik*³ (Leipzig 1921–3) 263; Page (as n. 40) 234–8; T. B. L. Webster, *From Mycenae to Homer* (London 1958) 101, 115; Durante i 115 f.

⁵⁸ This may also be connected with his status as a cult hero; see P. Von der Mühl, *Der grosse Aias* (Basel 1930).

metrical value — — — with the second syllable in the biceps (xiv 459, xv 674, xvii 123). This must go back to the time when the dative and locative still had their different endings, and the dative of this name was *Aiwánteī*.⁵⁹ It may also be recalled that the very ancient formula ἔρκος Ἀχαιῶν (p. 153) is applied to Ajax alone, and ἐπιειμένοι ἀλκήν (ibid.) only to Αἴαντες.

The two Cretan leaders, Idomeneus and Meriones, have only a slightly less clear claim to great antiquity. They are often associated with Ajax in the narrative, especially Idomeneus, who is six times named in the same line as Ajax or the Αἴαντε. He is a grandson of Minos himself. Meriones, as we have seen, rides about in a formulaic verse of pre-Linear B vintage. He is the owner of the boar's-tusk helmet described in *Il.*x 261 ff., a notoriously Mycenaean piece of headgear, though not exclusively early Mycenaean.⁶⁰ We seem to have here a pair of genuine Minoans from the heyday of Knossos.

Odysseus too would seem to be an early figure. His very name bears the stamp of antiquity.⁶¹ The old formula Διὶ μῆτιν ἀτάλαντος is regularly used of him, except in *Il.* vii 47 = xi 200 where it is used in the vocative of Hektor; we have also referred to Ὀδυσσεύης ἱερὴ ἴς. Like Ajax's brother Teukros, and Meriones, Odysseus is noted as an archer. It is to him that Meriones lends the boar's-tusk helmet. And he is uniquely implicated in the only distinctive episode of Ajax's life: his death.

The network of associations also entangles Meges, Odysseus' neighbour in the western isles. We find him in the company of Ajax (*Il.* xv 516 ff.) and again of Meriones (v 59 ff., xix 239); at xv 301–3 we have practically the whole gang together,

οἱ μὲν ἄρ' ἀμφ' Αἴαντα καὶ Ἰδομενῆα ἄνακτα,
 Τεύκρον Μηριόνην τε Μέγην τ' ἀτάλαντον Ἄρηϊ
 ὑσμίνην ἦρτυνον.

(θοῶϊ) ἀτάλαντος Ἄρηϊ, a variant of ἀτάλαντος Ἐνυαλίῳ ἀνδρειφόντη, is applied both to Meges (twice) and to Meriones (thrice).⁶²

One might continue to build along these lines, but it is a dangerously open-ended game. Perhaps enough has been said to justify the general thesis that the poetry of the high Mycenaean age already featured some of the heroes familiar to us from Homer, with their characteristic epithets and weaponry. It told of warfare involving Minoans: the Mycenaean conquest of Crete? It told of the hulking strength of Ajax and the Zeus-like μῆτις of Odysseus: was their fatal antagonism already a subject of song? For the most part we can only speculate about the stories in which these men played a part.

LATE MYCENAEAN AND AEOIC EPIC

In principle it is only to be expected that what has come down to us as a story about Troy should have absorbed material from other, unrelated sagas of varying antiquity, pre-Trojan and perhaps post-Trojan. The same kind of thing has happened in other epic traditions.⁶³ However, it seems strange that in a poetic tradition inherited from early Mycenaean times the sack of Troy

⁵⁹ P. Wathélet, *L'Antiquité classique* xxxi (1962) 13. The figures for Αἴαντα and Αἴαντε are as follows: Αἴαντα, 17 occurrences, of which 4 scan — — —, but all before πρ- (3) or μ- (1, Αἴαντα μεγαλήτορα adapted from the dative formula?). Αἴαντε, 17 occurrences, of which 4 scan — — —, but all before πρ- (2) or σφ- or ν-.

⁶⁰ Cf. also Webster (as n. 57) 101, 117 f.; Durante i 94.

⁶¹ L. R. Palmer, *Serta philologica Aenipontana* iii (1979) 260 f., derives it from an old prepositional prefix δ- and the obsolete root *deuk/duk = ducere; cf. Polydeukes, and Idomeneus' father Deukalion. He takes no

account of the variant forms Olyseus etc. (common outside the epic tradition), Pol-lux, Leukarion (Epicharmus p. 112 Kaibel); the d/l variation may point rather to a non-IE provenance. Cf. R. Gusmani, *Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici* vi (1968) 16.

⁶² Also to Pylaimenes and Automedon (once each), and predicatively, not as a name-formula, to onsets of Patroklos and Hektor. Hektor is often claimed as another pre-Trojan hero, transferred from a Greek setting: F. Dümmler, *Kleine Schriften* ii (Leipzig 1901) 240–9, and others.

⁶³ Bowra, *Heroic poetry* 519–36.

should play such a prominent part, while the catastrophic destructions of so many major Greek palaces in the thirteenth and twelfth centuries, Thebes, Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos, Iolkos, have scarcely left an echo. There is a celebrated story of an attack on Thebes, but it was an attack that failed; the story of the successful assault by the Epigoni stands very much in the shadow of the other, and has a makeshift and secondary air. The throne of Mycenae is occupied by a usurper for a few years, but there is no damage to buildings. Iolkos is sacked by Peleus. Herakles captures or sacks a number of cities: Troy, Cos, Oichalia, Ephyra, Elis, Pylos, Orchomenos, but these are mere incidents in his career. His sons take all the cities in the Peloponnese (Apollod. ii 169). Some of this may have originated in the prose mythographers without basis in the epic tradition. To the extent that it did have such a basis, one has the impression that the poets responsible, while conscious that certain towns had been sacked, had in most cases no more idea than we have of who sacked them.⁶⁴ They attributed such achievements to the legendary Herakles in the same spirit as the building of massive walls was attributed to the Cyclopes.

In two cases, however, more genuine recollections may be involved. One is the sack of Pylos, in which all the sons of Neleus perish except Nestor. There are fabulous elements in the story: Herakles wounding Hades (*Il.* v 395 ff., cf. Pind. *O.* 9.31–5) and Ares (ps.-Hes. *Scut.* 359–67), the metamorphoses of Periklymenos (ps.-Hes. *fr.* 33–5), the Molione (*Il.* xi 709, 750). But these are merely the embellishments of what seems to have been a substantial saga-cycle on the wars of Neleus' Pylos with its Elean and Arcadian neighbours.⁶⁵ There is surely a historical basis to this material—I hardly think it was all invented by poets for lack of other matter—and the sack of Pylos, although (unavoidably) glossed over by Nestor at *Il.* xi 689–93, was evidently an integral part of it. The other case is the sack of Iolkos by Peleus of Phthia. Peleus' life is a bundle of myth and folktale (Apollod. iii 163–73, after ps.-Hesiod and Pherecydes), but he himself is a man without any supernatural abilities or particular celebrity as a warrior: he was nevertheless remembered as the man who sacked Iolkos, with no large army.⁶⁶ His name looks like a genuine Thessalian one, not related to Pelion (Πάλιον) but to Aeolic πηλ- = τηλ-; cf. names such as Τηλέας, Τηλεκλής, Boeotian Πειλέμαχος, Πειλεκλίδας.

Now between Pylos and Iolkos there is a remarkable mythological connection. Neleus, the king of Pylos in the generation before its fall, and Pelias, the king of Iolkos in the generation before its fall, are *twin brothers*.⁶⁷ What can this mean? It means, I think, that the poetic tradition about the Pylian wars of the thirteenth century later became part of the same wider tradition as the Iolkos cycle. In other words it migrated, by way of Aetolia and the Spercheios valley, to Phthiotis, to join the reservoir of late Mycenaean Thessalian epic which, as will be seen, must be postulated as the main source of the later Ionian tradition. Here poets forged a link between the two unconnected cycles by making Neleus and Pelias the sons of a single mother and of a god. The local Thessalian repertory must have included the war of the Lapiths and Centaurs, whose Thessalian designation φῆρες survives in Homer,⁶⁸ the story of Pelias, Jason, and the Argonauts who sailed from Pagasai; the funeral games for Pelias; the exploits of Peleus. The sack of Iolkos belongs 'at some time during the twelfth century',⁶⁹ so we are now thinking of the period 1150–1050.

The regions through which I have suggested that the Pylian cycle travelled to Phthiotis are

⁶⁴ The sackings may have been done by freebooters who left no visiting cards. Cf. F. J. Tritsch in Crossland & Birchall (as n. 9) 233–8.

⁶⁵ *Il.* vii 133–56; xi 670–762; xxiii 629–42; cf. Paus. vi 25.2.

⁶⁶ Ps.-Hes. *fr.* 211; Pind. *N.* 3.34 μόνος ἄνευ στρατιᾶς cannot be literally true, but could be an exaggerated version of a true coup. Apollodorus iii 173 (Pherec. *FGrH* 3 F 62) does speak of an army.

⁶⁷ *Od.* xi 235–57, ps.-Hes. *fr.* 30.31–33a. They were conceived in the river Enipeus, and there is some confusion about whether it was the Thessalian Enipeus

or the tributary of the Alpheios. See M. L. West, *The Hesiodic Catalogue of Women* (Oxford 1985) 142 f.

⁶⁸ *Il.* i 260–73, ii 743, *Od.* xxi 296–304. We now see that Nestor's participation in the event is not an extravagant autoschediasm of Homer's (D. Mülder, *Die Ilias und ihre Quellen* [Berlin 1910] 47 and others), but a reflex of the Pylian hero's reception into Thessalian poetry. I do not know if it is so significant that at the start of the Trojan War he appears at Peleus' house as a recruiting officer together with Odysseus (*Il.* xi 765 ff.).

⁶⁹ V. R. d'A. Desborough, *The Greek Dark Ages* (London 1972) 100; cf. *CAH*³ ii(2) 666.

themselves rich in epic saga. There was a cycle based in Aetolia which included Oineus' slaughter of the sons of Porthaon, the Calydonian Boar Hunt, the war of the Aitoloi and Kouretes, the story of Meleager, and Herakles' meeting with him in Hades. This led to Herakles' marriage to Meleager's sister Deianeira, to win whom he had to fight the river Acheloos. Then he won Iole by sacking Oichalia, up in the north of Aetolia, and the tale continued inexorably to his death upon Mount Oita. Other stories linked him with Keyx of Trachis. Thus we can map out a more or less continuous swathe of territory, from Pylos up to Aetolia and across to Oitaia, Phthia, and Iolkos, that is characterized by epic saga—saga that was actually treated in epic poems—of a kind that is absent from Arcadia, Laconia, Attica, Euboea, Phocis. I take this to be a swathe of territory in which heroic poetry was actively cultivated in the late Mycenaean age or from which it drifted towards Thessaly. It was by this channel, I suspect, that Odysseus became established in the larger epic tradition; in the twelfth century Cephallenia and Ithaca enjoyed a communion with the Mycenaean cultural world that later lapsed.

The sack of Troy probably became a subject of epic song not later than the middle of the twelfth century, if the usual assumption is correct that the starting-point was the historical destruction of Troy VIIa; it now seems that this should be dated between 1210 and 1170.⁷⁰ Evidence from other traditions tends to show that the commemoration of historical events in epic generally begins soon after they have happened.⁷¹ As Phrynichus and Aeschylus, a few years after Salamis, recognized in the Persian defeat a subject worthy of treatment in tragedy, which normally concerned itself with stories from the remoter past, so, I suppose, some enterprising bard saw the sack of Troy as a worthy and promising new theme, and others took it up. Many of the Homeric formulae for Troy and the Trojans were no doubt created (on older models) within a short time, if not by the first Troy-poet.⁷²

I must leave aside the profound problems of who sacked Troy and by what stages the legend grew. My burden is the evolution of epic as a genre. I will just observe that if we assess the *dramatis personae* on the Achaean side not by their rank or human-interest value in Homer but by whether, taking the cycle as a whole, they are bound up with cardinal events, or make a decisive contribution by reason of distinctive individual qualities, we may consider that the following have the strongest claims to be regarded as 'organic', as belonging to the primary framework of the story:

Critical agents

Protesilaos, the first to land at Troy and the first to be killed.

Philoctetes, without whose bow Troy could not be taken.

Odysseus, who stole the Palladion, who conceived the idea of the wooden horse, and who led its crew.

The Oileian Ajax, who desecrated the sanctuary of Athena.

Providers of useful skills

Calchas as seer.

The two sons of Asklepios as healers.

Nestor as experienced adviser.

⁷⁰ There is a small amount of LH IIIc pottery in Troy VIIa (C. B. Mee in L. Foxhall and J. K. Davies [ed.] *The Trojan War. Its historicity and context* [Bristol 1984] 48). I Cyprus, LH IIIc pottery appears between two destruction levels conjectured to correspond to the Sea Peoples' two attacks on Egypt, which are nowadays dated c. 1209/8 and 1176/5; at Ugarit, on the other hand, where the destruction is associated with the second of these dates, the latest Mycenaean ware is LH IIIb (J. Mellaart in the same volume, 63–6).

⁷¹ J. B. Hainsworth in Foxhall and Davies 114; cf. Durante i 48. An early start is no guarantee of historical reliability. A survey published in the *Sunday Times* for

25 May 1980 revealed that, 35 years after the end of the Second World War, 34 per cent of the public thought that Dunkirk was a British victory; 18 per cent thought that the atom bomb was dropped by Britain, Russia, Germany, or Japan; Montgomery was identified by some as the British Prime Minister or an American soldier, Eisenhower as President of France or a Russian leader, Mussolini as a Russian general, a Czech communist leader, or a Jew.

⁷² They have been studied by Page (as n. 40) 251 f.; Bowra, *JHS* lxxx (1960) 16–23; C. W. Blegen, *Troy and the Trojans* (London 1963) 16–18; J. Pinsent in Foxhall and Davies (as n. 70) 137–62.

The expedition is led by Agamemnon and Menelaos—in response to the abduction of Menelaos' wife—yet they do nothing in particular for the mechanism of the story. Achilles, Diomedes, and the Telamonian Ajax are champion warriors such as every epic needs, but again they seem to have no unique role to fulfil at the 'deep structure' level. Others such as Idomeneus, Meriones, Tlepolemos, have merely supporting parts.

Now of the eight listed here as 'organic', five (Protesilaos, Philoctetes, Ajax the son of Oileus, and the Asklepiadai) belong to Thessaly, or in Ajax's case Locris, forming a group with a striking geographical coherence. For two others, Nestor and Odysseus, I have suggested that Thessalian poetry was the defile through which their fame was channelled to posterity. As for Calchas Thestorides, his origins are obscure in the Homeric tradition, but Thestor was the Argonauts' seer in one version of the story instead of the more familiar Idmon,⁷³ so here again we find a Thessalian connection.

In these eight heroes, I suggest, with their particular talents and particular roles in the saga of Troy, we may identify eight primary members of the personnel of an eleventh-century Thessalian *Iliad*, from which the eighth-century Ionian *Iliaka* developed by the accretion of additional characters, episodes, and sub-plots. We may detect a certain typological similarity between this hypothetical young Troy-epic and the Argonautic saga: an expedition by sea to a land in the east, crowned with success after manifold difficulties, and conducted by a company of heroes endowed with various complementary talents and coming into individual prominence at certain cardinal points in the narrative. The similarity may owe something to common origins in late Mycenaean Thessaly. It may indeed have been in that milieu that Greek bards first advanced from the heroic lay or epyllion of a few hundred lines to the extended epic of several thousand, based on a multiple-episode story.

These conclusions about the role of Thessaly in the development of epic are in happy accord with the well-known fact, deduced from analysis of the Homeric language, that the Ionian phase of the tradition was preceded by an Aeolic phase. This was seen by F. W. Ritschl more than 150 years ago, and substantiated by G. Hinrichs (1875), K. Witte (1913), and others. Perceptions of what are and are not true Aeolisms have become more refined with the passage of time, and some features that were once classified as Aeolic, such as the wau and the genitive ending -οιο, are now recognized as being simply old Greek. Attempts have occasionally been made, as notably by Klaus Strunk in 1957, to dispose of all Homer's Aeolisms by arguing that each of them might be accounted for in some other way. But a good number of them have withstood the severest scrutiny.⁷⁴ From the fact that they do not appear merely as ornamental alternatives to Ionic forms, but either provide useful metrical alternatives (like ἄμμε for ἡμέας, πῶδεσσι for ποσ(σ)ι) or represent non-Ionic vocabulary (like θεά, πεμπῶβολα), it has usually been inferred that they are just a residue left after Ionian poets had adapted an Aeolic poetic language into their own dialect as far as it would go. This is, I have no doubt, the correct interpretation. One or two scholars have wished to make the Aeolic and Ionic traditions not successive but concurrent and continuingly interactive.⁷⁵ On this view the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are representatives of an Ionian tradition (of Mycenaean ancestry) which has borrowed some useful words and morphemes from an Aeolic tradition that was still flourishing next door to it in Asia Minor. Mycenaean tradition is transmitted to Ionia by a direct route: Pylian refugees carry it to Athens, and from there to the new colonies.⁷⁶ But a simple linear development from Mycenaean to Ionian epic is absolutely excluded by certain fundamental features of the Homeric language: the use of -αο -ᾶων and not

⁷³ Sch. A.R. i 139–44a. Pherecydes reconciled the variants by making Thestor Idmon's son; Chamaileon fr. 17 Giordano did so by making Idmon a nickname of Thestor.

⁷⁴ See P. Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique* i³ (Paris 1958) 509–11; A. Hoekstra, *Homeric modifications of formulaic prototypes* (Amsterdam 1965) 147; P. Wathélet (as n. 43) 63–369; Durante i 24–38.

⁷⁵ J. Hooker, *The language and text of the Lesbian poets* (Innsbruck 1977) 70–82; D. G. Miller, *Homer and the Ionian epic tradition* (Innsbruck 1982) 23 f., 75 ff., 147 f.

⁷⁶ Lorimer (as n. 40) 458 f.; Page (as n. 40) 220 with 265 n. 6; Webster (as n. 57) 140 f., 153–5, 159–62; Miller (as n. 75) 22.

-ηο -ήων, of πότι and πρότι not πόσι and *πρόσι, of ἄμμες ὕμμες not ἡμές ὑμές.⁷⁷ These forms make the assumption of an Aeolic phase unavoidable. In a continuous tradition from proto-Ionic, the metrically convenient alternatives to later Ionic -εω -έων, πρόσ, ἡμεῖς, ὑμεῖς would no doubt have been preserved, but in the forms -ηο -ήων, π(ρ)όσι, ἡμές, ὑμές. As it was, spoken Ionic must already have lost those forms by the time the Ionian singers started to compose in the epic language, and they therefore had to adopt the Aeolic forms.

Certain of the Aeolisms in the epic language appear to be specifically Lesbian. I cite the following features, starting with the most probable and going on to some that are more doubtful. In each case I give page-references to Wathelet's survey (see n. 43), where the relevant facts are set out.

(i) ἱρός (W. 356 f.). This is enshrined in the frequent formula Ἴλιος ἱρή/Ἴλιον ἱρήν. Thessalian and Boeotian have ἱερός or ἱαρός. Unless they reverted to trisyllabic forms under North-west Greek influence, this suggests that Aeolic still had uncontracted **ihirós* or **hiirós* at the time when Lesbian split off.

(ii) Genitive -ο(h)ο (W. 239-42). The old ending -οιο persisted longest in Thessaly. Ionic is likely to have already had contracted -ῶ by the time it replaced Aeolic as the dominant constituent of epic, just as it had contracted -εω < -αο. If so, epic -οο (metrically necessary in eighteen places, but restorable in very many⁷⁸) is from Lesbian in its transitional phase between old Aeolic -οιο and historical Lesbian -ω. Again the feature appears in an Ilios formula, Ἴλιόο προπάροιθεν.

(iii) τοῖσδεσσι (W. 293 f.). This monster has its nearest parallel in Alcaeus' τῶνδέων, and seems unlikely to go back to the common Aeolic stage. Its distribution in Homer is limited (*Doloneia*, *Odyssey*).

(iv) Psilosis (W. 218-21). Common to Lesbian and east Ionic, but in the Homeric text associated with Aeolic forms (e.g. ἄμμε, ὕμμε) and in general with poetic forms (ἐπάλμενος, ἠέλιος, etc.); see P. Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique* i 184-8. Apparently the tradition has been through a psilotic phase and then had aspiration selectively restored. But it is hard to prove that the psilotic phase was Aeolic and not Ionic. See J. Wackernagel, *Sprachliche Untersuchungen zu Homer* (Göttingen 1916) 40-52.

(v) Barytonesis (W. 221-8; Chantraine 189-92). The situation resembles that obtaining with psilosis, except that it is even harder to determine when the accentuation of a given form became established in the text. Some cases seem to have been decided by the Alexandrian editors on *a priori* grounds, while others seem to represent genuine rhapsodic tradition from a much earlier time.

(vi) Reflexes of the Lesbian change /CpɪV/ > /CεppV/ (W. 207 f.). Very doubtful.⁷⁹

Some other features are characteristic of Lesbian but may be suspected of having been common Aeolic, either because they look very old or because we cannot show that Thessalian had something different: (vii) infinitive -μεναι (W. 315-24);⁸⁰ (viii) ὀππως, ὀπτι, etc, going

⁷⁷ Cauer (as n. 57) 158 f.; J. Chadwick, *Greece & Rome* iii (1956) 47; C. J. Ruijgh, *Lingua* xviii (1967) 96 f.; Wathelet (as n. 43) 104, 180 f., 290; Durante i 28, 34, 54; R. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns* (Cambridge 1982) 89 f.

⁷⁸ J. La Roche, *Homerische Untersuchungen* ii (Leipzig 1893) 164 f.

⁷⁹ Wackernagel's derivation of the suffix -τεῖρα from Lesbian -τερρα < -τρία is uncertain; and if this change had been accomplished during the Aeolic phase of epic, we should expect to see Πέρραμος or (to preserve the original metre) Πέραμος, as in Sappho and Alcaeus, for how could Ionian poets, without an epic tradition of

their own, have restored Πρίαμος? At most it is conceivable that Ἐκτορι Πριαμίδη, with Πρ failing to make position, reflects the initial stage of the Lesbian shift, i.e. Ἐκτορι Πῖραμιδαῖ or -μίωι (with metrical lengthening of ρ). Ionians would probably have interpreted Πῖραμος as Πρίαμος. But more likely Ἐκτορι Πριαμίδη is an Ionian formula.

⁸⁰ Often explained as a Lesbian innovation, a conflation of -μεν with Ionic -ναι (Porzig). But (a) there are traces of the same ending in Doric areas, (b) the Lesbian restriction to athematic forms with monosyllabic roots agrees with the profile of Vedic *-mane* (Wackernagel).

back to **god-q*^w- (W. 294 f.);⁸¹ (ix) ἐμέθεν, σέθεν, ἔθεν (W. 287 f.); (x) -σθα in the second person singular of the present tense (W. 311 f.).

'Lesbian' is of course a shorthand term for the dialect of all the Aeolic settlements in Asia Minor and adjacent islands. These settlements were multiplying in the Dark Age, down to 1000 or 950 (Smyrna), but it is not clear that they were all new. At Mytilene, at least, occupation may have been continuous from the Mycenaean age.⁸² It is quite conceivable that poetry about Troy took root in that region before the end of the twelfth century and became well established in the course of the eleventh, taking nourishment from other pieces of saga brought in by new colonists from Thessaly, Locris, or other places. We have seen that some of the Ilios (or rather Wilios) formulae appear to be creations of the Lesbian phase. This implies an early beginning for that phase in relation to the Troy tradition as a whole.

It may well have started early enough to overlap with the last few decades of Troy VIIb2, when the city was inhabited by a mixture of the older ('Luvian?') people with a new one, the bringers of the much-derided Knobbed Ware, which has affinities with some local wares of the lower Danube region. I conjecture that these immigrants, who arrived c. 1170–30, were the Illyrian people known as the Dardanoi. Homer speaks constantly of Τρῶες καὶ Δάρδανοι, and it is the Dardanian leader Aeneas whose descendants are to rule in Troy after its sack (*Il.* xx 307 f., *H. Aphr.* 196 f.). These prophecies are usually taken to reflect claims to Aenead lineage by rulers of Troy VIII in the eighth or seventh century, and indeed it is likely that such claims were made. But the legend fits the facts of Troy VIIb so well that it is tempting to trace it back to an eleventh-century origin.⁸³ If Tros, Ilos, and Priam are all made descendants of Dardanos (*Il.* xx 215 ff.; Δαρδανίδης Πρίαμος is formulaic), this may merely reflect the ascendancy which the newcomers had achieved over the old 'Luvian' stock.

Of the heroes to whom I have tentatively assigned roles in the original epic of Troy, several are confirmed by linguistic indicators as going back at least as far as the Aeolic phase of epic. Philoctetes, the Locrian Ajax, and Nestor all appear with patronymics of the Aeolic type, Ποιάντιος, 'Οιλῆιος (or 'Οίλειος? transmitted -λήος), Νηλήϊος; and an adjective Νεστόρεος (with Aeolic ρε from ρι) is used of Nestor's possessions. In the 'Ασκληπιοῦ δύο παῖδε (*Il.* ii 731) we perhaps have a case of Lesbian -οο. Another who must have appeared in the Aeolic tradition is Ajax Major, not so much because of Τελαμώνιος as because of his epithet πελώριος with its initial labial from labiovelar (Wathelet 66). We may probably add Achilles and Agamemnon in view of Πηλείων, 'Ατρείων, and Hektor in view of the possessive adjective 'Εκτόρεος (though this might have been created at any stage on the model of Νεστόρεος—as we must assume for 'Αγαμεμνόνεος with -εος for expected -ιος). Perhaps also Thersites with his Aeolic θερσ- for θαρσ- (W. 357 f.); it may be recalled that after killing him in the *Aethiopsis*, Achilles sailed to Lesbos to be purified.

As regards narrative style, Durante has drawn attention to the evident antiquity of the formulaic line

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος καὶ ἐδητύος ἐξ ἔρον ἔντο,

with its archaic vocabulary, tmesis, and the specifically Aeolic (Lesbian) ἔρος.⁸⁴ He rightly infers from it that the Aeolic poets had already developed an ample manner, a technique of alternating battle scenes with description of routine activities, sacrifices and meals, with whatever came after them, discussions, retirement for the night, etc.

Clearly there was a considerable degree of continuity between the Lesbian epic of the early

⁸¹ C. D. Buck, *The Greek Dialects* (Chicago 1955) 102 § 129.2, mentions a Boeotian ὄπτω, which I cannot trace. Corinna *PMG* 655 i 6 has ὄπτι, for what that is worth.

⁸² J. M. Cook, *CAH* ii(2) 778.

⁸³ Troy VIIb was destroyed (by fire, like its predecessor) sometime between about 1080 and 1020, to

go by the excavators' estimate of the duration of the settlement (C. W. Blegen *et al.*, *Troy* iv (1) [Princeton 1958] 143) in conjunction with the revised date for the end of Troy VIIa (above, n. 70).

⁸⁴ Durante i 55 f. He might have mentioned that the specialized sense borne here by ἔξιμι is paralleled in Sappho 94.23 ἐξίης πόθον.

Dark Age and the Ionian epic of Homer. The language of the early Lesbian epic, however, must still have presented a markedly different appearance, with original $\bar{\alpha}$ unmodified throughout, *wau* stoutly maintaining itself in all positions, and forms such as $\tau\acute{\upsilon}$ for $\sigma\acute{\upsilon}$, $\pi\omicron\tau\acute{\alpha}\upsilon\delta\alpha$ for $\pi\rho\omicron\sigma\eta\acute{\upsilon}\delta\alpha$, $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\varsigma$ for $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, Μόνσα (probably with palatalized *ns*, *Μόνῆσα*) for Μοῦσα , $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omicron\upsilon\tau\iota$ for $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota$. The rules of prosody must have changed in one detail from those of the early Mycenaean period: *h* can no longer have had consonantal value, seeing that it was on the way to disappearing altogether in Lesbian. This change had happened by the time the formulae Φίλιος ἱρά , ποτὶ Φίλιον ἱράν were created. But long diphthongs were still resistant to correption: $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\iota$ Τρῶϊα $\acute{\epsilon}\upsilon\rho\acute{\epsilon}\rho\iota\alpha$, $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ Τρῶϊα $\acute{\epsilon}\rho\iota\beta\acute{\omega}\lambda\alpha\kappa\iota$.⁸⁵ Attic correption was presumably still avoided as strictly as it is in the Lesbian lyricists, except for special cases like $\beta\rho\omicron\tau\omicron\iota\sigma\iota < *m\acute{r}\tau\omicron\iota\sigma\iota$.

What about the musical accompaniment and the manner of delivery? Hard evidence is lacking, but it is reasonable to suppose that here too there was a strong continuity through the Dark Age. The technique of performance cannot be separated from the technique of composition, and when the latter proves to have been so extraordinarily conservative, there is a presumption that the former was likewise. $\acute{\alpha}\text{Φείδω}$ was certainly traditional as the verb for what the bard did,⁸⁶ and his Muses with their Olympian or Pierian location must go back at least to the Thessalian phase of epic. The four-stringed phorminx that was evidently the instrument used by the eighth-century aoidos is a primitive-looking object, and it became obsolescent not much later. It cannot at present be traced in the archaeological record before the late Geometric period;⁸⁷ nor can it be derived from the seven- or eight-stringed Minoan-Mycenaean cithara, which was a much more elegant and sophisticated article.⁸⁸ It does, however, seem to have a forerunner in the seven- or eight-stringed lyre represented by a bronze votive model from a LH IIIc tomb at Amyklai.⁸⁹

IONIAN EPIC

It is convenient to speak in schematic terms of the Aeolic phase being 'succeeded' by the Ionic. Of course this did not happen overnight. There must have been a period of concurrence. Indeed, we can see that a Lesbian tradition of some sort continued long enough, and in sufficient independence from the Ionian, to develop Priam's name into Πέρραμος/Πέραμος , and for these forms to be familiar to Sappho and Alcaeus. On the other hand it is clear that the epic poetry which overran Greece from about 750 was Ionian epic and that it had no serious rival in Lesbian or any other dialect. The one Lesbian epic poet who is named, Lesches of Mytilene, seems to have written in Ionic.⁹⁰

The Ionic element in the epic language tends to be passed over without much reflection. Ionia to most people means Asiatic Ionia, and that is after all where Homer was believed to have come from. Certainly the *Iliad* shows a knowledge of Asia Minor, from the Hellespont to the Cayster, that strongly suggests that its author lived somewhere between those limits. And what could be more natural than the spread of heroic poetry from the Asiatic Aeolians to their southern neighbours?

⁸⁵ Contrast the adaptation Τροίη ἔν εὔρειη *Il.* xxiv 256=494, which is untraditional also in not placing Τροί- (< Τρωί-) in the biceps.

⁸⁶ I have discussed the problem of what this was in *JHS* ci (1981) 113–25.

⁸⁷ The massive three-stringed lyre shown on an early Geometric Cypriot amphora (V. Karageorghis and J. des Gagniers, *La Céramique chypriote de style figuré* [Rome 1974] 97; D. Paquette, *L'Instrument de musique dans la céramique de la Grèce antique* [Paris 1984] 104 f.) has more the structure of a cithara.

⁸⁸ See M. Wegner, *Archaeologia Homerica* III U: Musik und Tanz (Göttingen 1968) 25–7.

⁸⁹ Chr. Tsountas, *Ἐφημ. Ἀρχ.* iii (1892) 14 and pl. 3 no. 5; Lorimer (as n. 40) 456; Vermeule (as n. 10) 308, 312 fig. 49a; Wegner (as n. 88) 15 fig. 31, 27, 82 no. 139. It is not the number of strings that is significant so much as the structure of the frame and sound-box.—On the antiquity and affinities of the word φόρμιγξ cf. Durante i 159.

⁹⁰ It is true that Clement quotes *Il. parva fr.* 12 Allen in the form $\nu\acute{\upsilon}\xi$ $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\xi\eta\nu$ $\mu\epsilon\sigma\acute{\alpha}\tau\alpha$, $\lambda\alpha\mu\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}$ δ' $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\acute{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\lambda\lambda\epsilon$ $\sigma\epsilon\lambda\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha$, but this conflicts with all other evidence for the fragment and for the poem. It is not convincing Aeolic in any case.

But this simple construction ignores a crucial fact about epic-Ionic: it is not East Ionic, it is Central or West Ionic. A clear criterion for differentiating the two is provided by the different treatment of the original labiovelar in ποῦ, πῶς, πότε, ποῖος, etc. In the eastern area these words had κ instead of π, and this is what we find in those elegiac and lyric poets who come from that area (Callinus, Mimnermus, Semonides, Hipponax, Anacreon), as also in Herodotus. Those from further west, writing in the same genres, use π-forms (Archilochus, Euenus, Solon, and the non-Ionian mainland elegists Tyrtaeus and Theognis). The epic language uses only π-forms (Homer, Hesiod, all the Hymns, and the epic parody in Hipponax 128.3, 129 W.). Here it seems not to vary (as in elegy) according to the provenance of the individual poet, but to be a fixed feature. It will not do to say that the Asiatic Ionians simply took it over from Aeolic epic. In all other respects the Ionian poets adapted the epic dialect to the norms of their own speech so far as was possible. If they had been Asiatics, it is inexplicable that this one feature should have been left unchanged.

Two other phenomena support this conclusion. One is the occasional absence of compensatory lengthening following the loss of postconsonantal wau: ἐνάτη for εἰνάτη, ἄνοιτο, ξενίη, etc.⁹¹ This must be either Lesbian or West Ionic (Euboean or Attic). But it is very likely that postconsonantal wau was still maintained throughout the Lesbian phase of the tradition. The instances of short scansion mostly occur in the *Odyssey*, and they are in general non-formulaic, except for the Odyssean μεταλλῆσαι καὶ ἐρέσθαι. Wathelet rightly concludes that they are probably Euboean. The other relevant phenomenon is 'Attic' correption. Its occurrence in Homer is again limited, but it is admitted in formulae such as ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα (replacing Aeolic *ποτᾶύδα), Κρόνου παῖς ἀγκυλομήτεω (with Ionic -εω). The indications are that it is more of a western than an eastern licence. Archilochus, Semonides, and the Lesbians are all stricter in avoiding it than Solon and Theognis—and stricter than Homer.⁹²

The first of these three features is all-pervasive, and the other two are too deeply embedded in the text to be dismissed as surface barnacles (as can be done with most of the sporadic Atticisms that are to be found). Taken together, they point in the direction of Euboea as the area in which the epic language acquired its definitive and normative form. I know of no counter-indications that would favour Asia Minor.⁹³

Over the last twenty or thirty years it has come to be appreciated that for much of the tenth, ninth and eighth centuries Euboea was the most prosperous and progressive region in Greece, with commercial connections extending in many directions. In particular, contacts with the Aeolians to the north and north-east are detectable at an early date. From the second half of the eleventh century down to the ninth there is clear evidence of relations with southern Thessaly, especially the gulf of Pagasai and Iolkos. For a time they form an area of common culture which extends to Skyros (the scene of a well-known Achilles story) and the northern Cyclades, Andros, Tenos, Rheneia and Delos. And in the late tenth and early ninth centuries there are indications of contacts with Lesbos.⁹⁴ Here we have historical conditions that would be thoroughly favourable to the passage of heroic poetry from Thessaly, Skyros and Lesbos down into Euboea. Wealth attracts wandering bards. The anonymous king whose huge hero-shrine (containing *inter alia* weapons, horse remains, and a lady festooned with gold) has been unearthed at Lefkandi⁹⁵ would surely have welcomed into his dining-hall singers who could entertain him and his

⁹¹ Chantraine (as n. 74) i 161–3; Wathelet (as n. 43) 154–7 and *L'Antiquité classique* 1 (1981) 819–33.

⁹² M. L. West, *Studies in Greek elegy and iambus* (Berlin and New York 1974) 113 f. In the later sixth and fifth centuries Attic correption becomes more frequent on both sides of the Aegean.

⁹³ Nothing can be argued from the fact that Euboea, or a part of it, had ρρ and ττ for ρσ and σσ in the classical period (A. Thumb—A. Scherer, *Handbuch der griechischen Dialekte* ii [Heidelberg 1959] 264 f.). The first is an innovation shared with Attic, the second is shared with

Attic and Boeotian; neither need have been tenth- or ninth-century Euboean.

⁹⁴ Desborough (as n. 69) 206–15, 346 f.; Coldstream, *Geometric Greece* 43, 45; M. R. Popham and L. H. Sackett, *Lefkandi* i (London 1980) 360, 362. The statement about Lesbos is based on hearsay and I have not yet been able to obtain confirmation of it.

⁹⁵ M. R. Popham, E. Touloupa and L. H. Sackett, *Antiquity* lvi (1982) 169–74; *Arch. Reports* 1981/2. 15–17 and 1983/4. 12–15; first half of the tenth century.

companions with epic tales of Meleager or Achilles, of the sack of Pylos or Troy. Or the war of the Lapiths and Centaurs: a terracotta centaur, originally carrying a branch, and with a knee wound, also found at Lefkandi, dates from about 925–900.⁹⁶ Or Herakles' capture of Oichalia: at some stage this episode was relocated in Euboea, which makes no sense in terms of the geography of the Deianeira story, but was to be the version followed by Creophylus, Hecataeus, and Sophocles.

Mention of that king of Lefkandi prompts me to note that the notorious discrepancy between Bronze Age and Homeric burial practice—inhumation being as regular in the former as cremation in the latter—is best accounted for if the epic tradition acquired its definitive form in an area where cremation was established relatively early. The areas with the best claim by this criterion are Euboea and Attica, where cremation became the fashion from the eleventh century. The Lefkandi hero was cremated (though his lady was not), and he no doubt expected to hear the same of his epic predecessors.⁹⁷

So far I have spoken as if the whole legacy of Mycenaean epic had gathered itself into Thessaly like a blob of mercury, leaving no remnants in other parts. I believe this to have been the main channel of tradition, and I have ruled out a continuous Ionian tradition. But we cannot by any means exclude the survival of epic poetry at some level in other regions. An important saga zone not yet mentioned is the one connecting Thebes and the Argolid. There is the story of Oedipus and his sons and the attack on Thebes from Argos; there is the story of Herakles' birth at Thebes and his Labours in the Peloponnese for Eurystheus of Mycene; and there is the story of the Pelopids, of Agamemnon's murder and Orestes' revenge. Much of this has its origins in myth and folktale rather than in any historical events, and so may have been 'epicized' only at a comparatively late date.⁹⁸ But it would not be surprising if Boeotia or other parts of central Greece harboured epic bards to some extent during the Dark Age. Here, after the inroads of the Dorians, we might expect the Aeolic poetic language used by such bards (like the ordinary language, but to a much lesser extent) to be open to penetration by a certain number of West Greek elements, just as in the language of Hesiod, which is in principle that of Ionian epic, we find a certain number of non-Homeric Aeolisms and West Greek forms attributable to his personal background. If, now, in the tenth or ninth century such bards participated in the general movement into Euboea, it would be possible for a few convenient linguistic forms of West Greek origin to find their way into the crucible where the language of Homer was being forged.

In fact such forms do occur in Homer, though scholars have persistently closed their eyes to them because on conventional accounts of the development of epic in Asia Minor their presence would be inexplicable.⁹⁹

(i) The second-person pronominal forms τύνη, τεοῖο, τεῖν. These are all based on a strong form of the stem, *tū *tew-, which seems to have been discarded in favour of the weak forms *tū *tw- throughout pre-Dorian Greece but retained in W. Greek, leaving traces in literary Doric and Boeotian.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, the -νη suffix in τύνη, paralleled only in Boeotian τύνει (Schwyzer,

⁹⁶ V. R. d'A. Desborough, R. V. Nicholls and M. R. Popham, *BSA* lxx (1970) 21–30; *Lefkandi* i 168–70, 215–6, 344–5, 362, pl. 169 and frontispiece. Chiron's knee wound: Apollod. ii 85.

⁹⁷ We must infer, however, that references to warriors' burials were not such a firmly entrenched feature of older epic tradition as references to bronze weapons.

⁹⁸ For an (oriental) mythical component in the story of the Seven against Thebes cf. W. Burkert in C. Brillante et al. (ed.), *I poemi epici rapsodici non omerici e la tradizione orale* (Padova 1981) 29–51; *Die orientalisierende Epoche* (as n. 36) 99–106.

⁹⁹ Cf. K. Strunk, *Die sogenannten Aolismen der homerischen Sprache* (Diss. Köln 1957) 111, 'ein Zusam-

menhang des Westgriechischen mit dem epischen εἰσεῖται ist noch nie behauptet worden; und eine solche direkte Beziehung ist wohl zu Recht nicht in Betracht gezogen worden, denn ein dorischer Einfluss auf das Epos ist nicht gut denkbar'; Wathelet (as n. 43) 51 n. 62, 287, 322, 368, *al.* I must except W. F. Wyatt, 'Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς Φιλοσοφ. Σχολῆς τοῦ Ἀριστοτ. Πανεπιστ. Θεσσαλονίκης xiv (1975) 143, 'scholars have not looked for Doric forms, and one or two do exist'.

¹⁰⁰ τέος and τεοῦς in Sophron, τεοῦ and τεῦς in Epicharmus, τίω and τίως in Rhinthon, τεῦς and τεοῦς in Theocritus, τεῦς and τεοῦς and probably τεῖν in Corinna.

Delectus no. 445A) and Laconian τούνη (Hesych.), is an innovation based on ἐγών-η, ἐμίν-η, which are themselves attested only in Doric dialects and Corinna's Boeotian. (Similarly Boeot. τούν after ἐγών.) And the dative ending -ίῃν in τείῃν is a peculiarity of W. Greek dialects (ἐμίν, τίν, 'Fίῃν), unknown in others.

(ii) The reflexive forms ἐέ, ἐοῖ (instead of ἐ, οῖ). These are based on the strong stem **sew-*, and so parallel to the second-person forms discussed above. The only parallels outside epic appear to be ἐοῦς and ἐῖν in Corinna, best interpreted as Boeotisms of W. Greek origin.

(iii) The possessive adjectives ἀμός and ὑμός. These are inherited forms, but they can only have reached Homer by way of W. Greek or Boeotian, because in Ionian tradition ἀμός would have become *ἤμός, and in Aeolic they become ἀμμός ὑμμός.¹⁰¹

(iv) πρότι. This is an inherited form (= Sanskrit *práti*), but it was preserved only in Doric (Argive πρότι, Central Cretan πόρτι), Pamphylian (πέρτι), and proto-Ionic (> *πρόσι > πρόσ); Achaeon and Aeolic discarded it at an early date in favour of its equally ancient rival πότι (> Myc. *posi* > Arc. πός). Either it was preserved in the poetic language from the Middle Helladic era, as a useful metrical alternative, or it entered it in the first millennium from W. Greek.

(v) ἐσσεῖται. A purely W. Greek type of future, apart from a limited group in Attic (πλευσοῦμαι, etc.).¹⁰²

There is no longer any need to deny the W. Greek origin of these Homeric forms *a priori*. Other considerations have led us to establish a model which can accommodate them without difficulty.

One important amplification of the Troy saga that was presumably due to the initiative of poets in or close to Euboea was an account of the gathering of the Achaean fleet at the narrowest point of the Euripus, between Aulis and Chalcis. That it gathered there was a matter of local pride, as we sense from Hesiod (*cf.* above, p. 150), and it is not likely to have been anything but a local invention. The invention included a catalogue of ships and contingents, a later version of which Homer sang and eventually adapted to a Trojan setting in his *Iliad*. The idea that the catalogue goes back to some kind of Mycenaean 'document' is a wistful error. It is an Ionian composition, as the very first name in it suggests (Πηνέλεως, unmetrical in any other dialect) and as the repeated reliance on the form νέες confirms; ἐνεθήκοντα (602) points to Euboean Ionic, as was remarked earlier, and similarly ἐνάτη (313) in a passage that also belongs to the Aulis narrative. And of all the twenty-nine contingents in the catalogue, none is so fully and distinctively characterized as the Euboean (536-44):

μένεα πνεύοντες Ἄβαντες . . .
 θοοί, ὄπιθεν κομόωντες,
 αἰχμηταὶ μεμαῶτες ὀρεκτῆισιν μελίηισιν
 θώρηκας ῥήξειν δηίων ἀμφὶ στήθεσσι.

That the region round Chalcis and Aulis was still an influential centre of poetic activity in the late eighth century can be inferred from analysis of the major genealogies included in the pseudo-Hesiodic *Ehoiai*.¹⁰³ The genealogy of the Atlantids artificially unites in one great family the pedigrees of Helen, the Atreidai, Priam—and the minor local heroes of Chalcis and east Boeotia. In other words it reflects the desire of people in those districts to put themselves in a genealogical relationship with the celebrities of the Trojan War; and the construction achieved

¹⁰¹ Wackernagel, *Sprachl. Unters. zu Homer* 50-2, as he does not consider the possibility of W. Greek, is forced to assume that the text originally had the Aeolic forms. So too Chantraine, *Gramm. hom.* i 272.

¹⁰² Schwyzer, *Griech. Gramm.* i 786 f.; Buck, *Greek Dialects* 115; A. Thumb—E. Kieckers, *Handbuch der griech. Dialekte* i (Heidelberg 1932) 72 f.—An unscrupulous person might add to the above list the adverbs

χαμάδεις, ἄμυδεις and ἄλλυδεις, as the suffix -δεις is otherwise found only in οἰκάδεις Epicharm. 35.13, Ar. *Ach.* 742, 779 (the Megarian), and four other words cited as Doric by Herodian. But the υ of ἄμυδεις and ἄλλυδεις suggests an old Achaean origin; see Strunk (as n. 99) 121-4. Peloponnesian Doric -δεις may be inherited from the Achaean substrate.

¹⁰³ M. L. West (as n. 67) 155-62.

some currency. We can see that there was also Euboean interference in the genealogy of Io.¹⁰⁴ It was at the same period, or a little earlier, that the sons of Amphidamas, king of Chalcis, offered prizes for poetry at his funeral games, and Hesiod competed there with other poets. Though not himself a singer of heroic poetry, he does recommend for diverting the bereaved the bard who sings the κλεία προτέρων ἀνθρώπων (*Th.* 98–103); no doubt these were to be heard in plenty at that Chalcidian gathering.

To the picture that I have been building up of the sources of Homeric poetry, one thrilling pigment is still to be applied. I have to offer some account of those affinities with Near Eastern poetry which have struck many scholars—almost all, in fact, who have cast an eye at the oriental texts—and of which I have recently written that they ‘now clamour for attention from Homerists’.¹⁰⁵

The observed parallels are chiefly with Sumero-Akkadian, Hurrian-Hittite, and Ugaritic narrative poetry. Some of them are of a general character and relate to compositional technique and conventions of style: alternation between the divine world and the human; treating the gods as a corporation who feast and debate together and who argue among themselves with some vigour; large use of direct speech, with formulae for introducing it; messengers who repeat their message in full as they have been given it; appeals by a god to a higher god to take action concerning a hero; dreams and prophecies; similes (including some extended ones), especially from lions, leopards, bulls, etc.¹⁰⁶ Other parallels are more specific, ranging from the formulaic to the thematic level.¹⁰⁷ It is noteworthy that most of them relate to attributes or activities of the gods. It is hardly going too far to say that the whole picture of the gods in the *Iliad* is oriental. At any rate it has far more in common with the picture presented in oriental poetry from the second millennium than with either the religion of the Aryans or that of archaic and classical Greece.

It is not easy to avoid the conclusion that at some stage of its history the Greek epic tradition has been strongly influenced by contacts with the eastern tradition. Suitable historical conditions for such influence to occur would have existed in the Mycenaean age before about 1100, and again in the ninth and eighth centuries. Webster and Stella assumed that it was the Mycenaean period that was decisive. When Webster wrote, it was not appreciated how early Graeco-oriental contacts started to grow again after the Dark Age; the ‘orientalizing period’ seemed to fall too late to be connected with any major reshaping of Homeric epic. This constraint no longer binds us. Even if we suppose the orientalizing of epic to have been completed by 750 (which is not demonstrable), there is still a good century and a half available if we wish to diagnose it as a post-Dark Age development.

Nor is it necessary to opt for one period to the exclusion of the other. Eastern influence may have operated both during the Mycenaean period and after 900. Some things in Homer look both oriental and early. The pattern of speeches with their framing formulae, so like the Hittite

(And) X to Y (words) (again) began to speak . . .
(And) when X (Y’s) words had heard,¹⁰⁸

must be quite an old feature of Greek epic; if προσηύδα in the formula ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα has replaced ποταύδα, that takes us back at least to the Aeolic phase. The antiquity of lion similes, at least of the short type, is implied by the linguistic antiquity of phrases such as ἐν-ἀντίον ὄρτο λέων ὡς, λέων ὡς ἄλτο θύραζε, λέων ὡς ἄλκι πεπιοιθῶς (*cf.* above p. 156 on

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 145 f., 149 f., 153.

¹⁰⁵ In reviewing Burkert (as n. 36), *JHS* cvi (1986) 234.

¹⁰⁶ See L. A. Stella, *Il poema di Ulisse* (Florence 1955) 107–23, 134–47, 157–68, 195–248; *Tradizione micenea e poesia dell’Iliade* (Rome 1978) 88, 362–8, 374–91; Webster (as n. 57) 69–76; Burkert (as n. 36) 106–10.

¹⁰⁷ See (e.g.) C. H. Gordon, *AJA* lvi (1952) 93 f.; Webster 82–8; I. McNeill, *Anatol. Stud.* xiii (1963) 238 f.; E. Ullendorff, *Bull. John Rylands Library* xlvii

(1963/4) 242–7; P. Considine, *Studi micenei ed egeo-anatolici* viii (1969) 85–159; M. Maróth, *Acta antiqua* xxiii (1975) 65–76; Stella, *Trad. mic. e poesia dell’Il.* 96, 122 f.; Miller (as n. 75) 16–21; Burkert in R. Hägg (ed.), *The Greek Renaissance of the eighth century BC* (Stockholm 1983) 51–6, and (as n. 36) 85–99.

¹⁰⁸ McNeill (as n. 107) 238; *cf.* Gordon, *AJA* lvi (1952) 93; Webster 74; Stella, *Trad. mic. e poesia dell’Il.* 363.

ὦς). The formula νεφεληγέρετα Ζεὺς also has an archaic appearance, but the title seems to be borrowed from a title of Baal in Ugaritic epic, *rk̄b 'rpt*, which can be interpreted either as 'cloud-gatherer' or as 'cloud-rider'.¹⁰⁹ 'Father of gods and men' may be a similar case. The Vedic Dyāuh is invoked as 'father', various individual gods are called his son or daughter, and he and Pṛthivī (Earth) are together twice called parents of the gods. But the Greek formula has closer parallels in Sumerian ('father of gods and men', of the moon-god Sin), Hittite ('father of the gods', of Kumarbi), and Ugaritic ('father of gods', 'father of men', both of El).¹¹⁰ 'Broadwayed' (εὐρυάγυια) as an epithet of cities (mostly Troy, also Mycene and Athens) is certainly not Indo-European, as the Indo-Europeans had no cities; it corresponds to *Uruk-rībitim* 'broad-marted Uruk' in *Gilgameš* (Old Babylonian version). Similarly 'wally Tiryns', 'well-walled Ilios' correspond to *Uruk-supūri* 'ramparted Uruk', and 'steep Ilios' to 'steep Wilusa' in a Luvian fragment.¹¹¹ All these formulae must have been established in Greek epic before the Ionian phase.

On the other hand it is hard to believe that the extensive thematic parallels with oriental texts all reflect Mycenaean borrowings that were faithfully preserved through five centuries or so of Greek tradition: the destruction of mankind to relieve the earth from the burden of overpopulation; a debate scene in which an angry hero makes to raise his weapon but is physically restrained by two goddesses; a hero who appeals to his divine mother to intercede with a higher god on his behalf (and she, in doing so, laments her son's danger-courting nature); the goddess of love crying and complaining to her parents, Sky and Mrs Sky, of maltreatment by a mortal, and receiving an unsympathetic response from her father; a goddess dressing up in fine clothes and jewellery made by the gods' smith, in preparation for an amorous encounter; this smith (who uses bellows and tongs, and works with precious metals, and builds houses for the gods) making special weapons for a hero at the request of the hero's parent; the divine messenger who takes his staff in his hand and puts his shoes on his feet; the hero who at the death of his beloved companion tears his hair and clothes and rages in the night 'like a lion deprived of its cubs', and is visited by the companion's spirit coming up from the nether world, and embraces it, and learns the meaning of death. There is a freshness and vividness about all this as it appears in the *Iliad* which suggests that it is comparatively modern material; the analysts in their day classed most of it as 'young'. It is not associated with the 'old' heroes such as Ajax and Nestor but above all with Achilles and Patroklos; in the *Odyssey* also with Odysseus, but in the context of an untraditional set of adventures. I believe that Burkert is right to treat it in the context of an 'orientalizing period' conceived not merely as an archaeological phase but as a time when Greek culture as a whole received important new stimuli from the Levant—new religious ideas and practices, new technical skills, alphabetic writing, and more.

The route is now moderately clear. It was from the shores of Syria and Cilicia by way of Cyprus and either Rhodes or Crete, not to the Ionians of Asia Minor, who lagged behind in oriental contacts, but towards Attica and above all, as we know today, Euboea. From the tenth century onwards oriental artefacts—Assyrian, Syro-Palestinian, Egyptian, Cypriot—were reaching Euboea, and Euboean pottery was arriving in Cyprus. By the late ninth there were apparently Phoenician craftsmen resident in Euboea as well as in Crete and Attica,¹¹² and the trading station at Al Mina had been set up; the earliest pottery from the site is Euboean. After about 760 there is a conspicuous increase in Greek contacts with the east. Euboea is again among the progressive and prosperous regions, importing Cypriot ceramic and Phoenician scarabs, importing or imitating oriental wares, and sending its own merchandise to Cyprus and Al Mina.

If there was anywhere where eastern mythological poetry might have run up against Greek

¹⁰⁹ Ullendorff (as n. 107) 243 f.; S. P. Brock, *Vetus Testamentum* xviii (1968) 395–7; Maróth (as n. 107) 68.

¹¹⁰ McNeill (as n. 107) 239; Ullendorff (as n. 107) 246; Burkert (as n. 36) 107. Óðin is 'father of all gods and men' in Snorri, *Gylfaginning* 9, cf. 20.

¹¹¹ C. Watkins in M. J. Mellink (ed.), *Troy and The Trojan War* (Bryn Mawr 1986) 58–62.

¹¹² J. N. Coldstream, *Geometric Greece* 56, 66, 80, 100, and in H. G. Niemeyer (ed.), *Phönizier im Westen* (= *Madrider Beiträge* viii, Mainz 1982) 261–72.

in the generations before Homer, it was Euboea—just where, as I have argued, the old Greek heroic tradition was entering a marvellous new creative phase between the late tenth and the mid eighth century. The combination becomes yet more compelling when we recall the phenomenon of Hesiod, who, even more than Homer, shows the extraordinary extent to which these oriental currents were able to affect a Greek poet who happened to stand in their way. His whole *Theogony* is built on the framework of an oriental history of the gods, his whole *Works and Days* on the pattern of an oriental wisdom poem, his myth of Ages is oriental (and Iron Age), and so are the calendrical superstitions of his *Days*. In my youthful edition of the *Theogony* I argued that the Succession Myth was a Mycenaean import, but in my middle-aged edition of the *Works and Days* I moved away from this view.¹¹³ I stressed that Hesiod was writing in an Ionian poetic tradition, and I nominated Euboea as the proximate source from which this tradition was likely to become known in Boeotia. The theogonic allusions in the *Iliad*, i 396–406, xiv 201–7, 246, xv 187–93, while differing from Hesiod's account, are equally oriental,¹¹⁴ and to be seen as part of the same wave of cultural influence.

But how was this influence transmitted from one poetic tradition to another across the language barrier? There is no doubt that such transfers can occur between neighbouring traditions, even when the languages involved are not closely related. One may think of the passage of material and motifs from Serbo-Croat to Albanian epic in recent centuries, from German to French in the Middle Ages, from Sumerian to Akkadian to Hurrian to Hittite in the second millennium BC. But how? I see no alternative to the assumption of a certain number of bilingual poets, probably easterners who had settled in Greece and learned to compose epic in the Greek manner. We are after all dealing with the transfer not merely of mythical themes and story patterns but of specific poetic techniques, including verbal formulae and similes embedded in a particular context. The first poet who described Achilles raging over Patroklos' body 'like a lion whose cubs have been stolen', and later embracing his friend's ghost, must surely have been acquainted with the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.¹¹⁵ This poem had been widely known in the Near East for many centuries, and translated into several languages. It also provides the model for the episode in *Iliad* v where Aphrodite complains to Zeus and Dione of her maltreatment by Diomedes.¹¹⁶ In other instances we seem to detect close relationships between Homeric or Hesiodic passages and other 'classic' Babylonian texts such as *Atrahasis* and *Enûma eliš*.¹¹⁷ To account for them we must surely postulate poets educated in the Levant who subsequently became Hellenized and practised in Greece. This is exactly parallel to what a number of archaeologists have been concluding for some time about immigrant Phoenician jewellers and metal-workers in the ninth century. J. N. Coldstream has written:

We need not suppose that these eastern craftsmen dwelt apart from the local population, working in exclusive guilds; on the contrary, to judge from the speed with which their techniques were assimilated in Attica and Crete, there is every reason to think that they at once shared their expertise with their Greek pupils, merging quite quickly with their new environment, and eventually passing on their craft to their Hellenized sons and grandsons.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Hesiod, *Theogony* (Oxford 1966) 28 f., cf. *Early Greek philosophy and the orient* (Oxford 1971) 205; Hesiod, *Works and Days* (Oxford 1978) 27–30, 177; cf. *Actes du X^e congrès de l'assoc. Guillaume Budé, Toulouse 8–12 avril 1978* (Paris 1980) 117 f.

¹¹⁴ Burkert in Hägg (as n. 107) 53–5, and (as n. 36) 86–92, 98.

¹¹⁵ Probably in its Assyrian form, where the narrative that included the ghost episode, originally a separate Sumerian poem, is incorporated with the main epic as Tablet xii.

¹¹⁶ Considine (as n. 107) 88–91, 147; G. K. Gresseth, *CJ* lxx (1975) 14 n. 24; Burkert (as n. 36) 92–5.

Aphrodite, 'the Cyprian', is herself an oriental immigrant in the Homeric pantheon, probably post-Mycenaean. Cf. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge Mass. 1985) 152–4. Hers is one of the few Homeric names that involves Attic corruption.

¹¹⁷ Burkert in Hägg (as n. 107) 53 f., and (as n. 36) 87–9.

¹¹⁸ In Niemeyer (as n. 112) 268. On the same page he refers to a gold diadem from the Teke treasure found in a tomb at Knossos, 'perhaps made locally, but wholly oriental in style and theme: two Mesopotamian heroes, perhaps Gilgamesh and Enkidu, stand back to back as each one slays a lioness' (cf. his pl. 26 f.).

Burkert in *Die orientalisierende Epoche* has enlarged the picture to include seers and healers, priests and charismatics. We need not necessarily set up a separate category of poets. Even a priest or a jeweller might learn how to compose hexameter verse.

We are accustomed to think of the Greek epic tradition as being highly conservative. In many respects it was, as is shown by the numerous features of language, metre, style and content preserved from Mycenaean times and earlier. But we must also reckon with a considerable degree of innovation and transformation, especially, I suggest, in the final Ionian phase that brought the epic to its astonishing acme in the eighth and seventh centuries. Cross-fertilization with oriental poetry brought about a dramatic mutation in the way the gods were handled. Other innovations may have been caused by the new success and popularity of epic itself: I have in mind the epicization of what had been cult myths or folk tales. Legends of heroes overcoming monsters were dressed up in hexameters; travellers' tales from far and wide, of being marooned on an island with a beautiful nymph, of outwitting a one-eyed giant or a brace of seductive Sirens, were not only epicized but attached to a hero of the Trojan War and put in a relationship with that war.

Not all of this development need be thought of as taking place in Euboea. From the mid eighth century the new epic became Panhellenic, its dialect and conventions now fixed and available for imitation by poets everywhere. The *Odyssey* might well be a Euboean poem. (Where else would a poet be likely to imagine *Euboea* as the Phaeacians' furthest horizon, vii 321–6?) But the poet of the *Iliad*, to all appearance, lived in Asia Minor. The *Cypria's* title, τὰ Κύπρια (ἔπη), proclaims it to have come from Cyprus, and a Cypriot was named as its author. Other epics were attributed to poets from Miletus, Mytilene, Corinth, Trozen, Lacedaemon, and elsewhere. Whether the ascriptions can be taken at face value, whether even 'Homer' is the name of a real poet, cannot be considered here. But it is clear that epic was no longer the regional phenomenon that it had been during the Dark Age and the earlier Geometric period. Its final maturity was a national glory.

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