A HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE FUNERAL GAMES FOR PATROCLUS IN BOOK XXIII OF HOMER'S *ILIAD*

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A HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE FUNERAL GAMES FOR PATROCLUS IN BOOK XXIII OF HOMER'S *ILIAD*

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I

INTRODUCTION

Of the four great Panhellenic festivals of Greece, at Olympia, Delphi, Nemea and on the Isthmus, three were held in the Dorian Peleponnesus, and all drew the support of the Dorian peoples. Moreover, the Spartans were long considered the most typical of the athletic type. However, the development of organised athletic contests, a practice that has become world-wide today, must have stemmed from some earlier civilisation.

After migrations, conquests, and other population movements, thereby causing a conflux of cultural and racial heritages, the resulting civilisation would naturally contain elements, both adopted and developed, from the major ethnic groups involved. It would therefore seem likely that the Greek athletic tradition probably owes much of its origin to one of the most dominant invaders, the Achaeans, who were represented as the athletes in the Homeric poems. Being closely connected to the condition of the Greek people, the structure of Greek languages, prior to the existence of literature, must also have suffered some changes, resulting in the reconstruction of

a system of dialects, so noted in the Homeric language.[1]

That Homer should write of the Achaean athletes competing in funeral contests for dead warriors, modeled on the oral traditions of both practice and legend, provides an opportunity to reconstruct the early history of Greek athletics.

Statement of the problem

Much of the literature on the history of athletics contains little detailed study on the contributions of ancient civilisations, such as the Achaeans, and what research and documentation there is, seems to be mostly confined to the Greek Olympic tradition and history post-776, B.C. Whilst some authors make passing reference to the funeral games for Patroclus of Homer's *Iliad*, or occasionally those games recorded by Virgil in his *Aeneid*, their work serves to merely chronicle events in a narrative-descriptive manner.[2] Little

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[1] *In Iliad 2.804, and 4.437, mention is made of the variety of dialects among the allies of the Trojans; and in Odyssey 19.175, among the Greek tribes of Crete. Indeed, Homer's poems themselves are a mixture of Aeolian, Ionic, and Attic dialect, cf. G.P. Shipp, Studies in the Language of Homer (Cambridge Classical Studies, 2nd ed.: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 4-5; and P. Baldi, An Introduction to the Indo-European Languages (Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), pp. 67-72.*

[2] *For example, Gardiner is content to simply dismiss the archery contest of the games in Iliad XXIII as a late interpolation, and un-Homeric, because he feels that the prizes of iron axes are "simply ludicrous." In fact, had he analysed the nature of the prizes in question, he would have noticed that the axe-heads described are similar to those depicted on archaeological items of the Mycenaean civilisation. He would also have noted that Meriones, one of the competitors, was a Cretan, again supported by archaeological evidence showing that the Minoans made extensive use of the bow, thus confirming the antiquity of the archery contest. It is entirely possible that the events that Homer describes took place in the transition period between the Bronze and Iron Ages, thus*

or no mention is made of the significance of funeral games in themselves, bearing in mind that it can be contended that each of the four great Panhellenic festivals were derived from funerary celebrations.

This scope of this study will include an exhaustive research of ancient texts, supported, where possible, by limited archaeological evidence. Ancient traditions and legends are notoriously subject to imaginative growth and embellishment, yet their sources are critical for the purpose of this study. In dealing with these and other factors whose evidentiary value is similarly in doubt, it will be necessary to exercise critical caution. Naturally, definite conclusions cannot be drawn from certain items of information, but the cumulative evidence from different sources will be of significance to the problem.

Purpose of the study

The nature of funeral games is more complex than being simply an element of funerary celebrations. An examination of the funeral games held for Patroclus within the context of other funeral games in ancient literature, from both a historical and literary perspective, will be of value. The subtleties of Homer's language within ancient epic tradition tells as much about the reasons for the games and how they were contested, as in providing a historical account of their

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making iron rare and valuable, and worthy as a prize. cf. E.N. Gardiner, Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals (London, 1910).

place within the events of the Trojan War.

Thus, this study will once again investigate the "Homeric Question", seeking to trace the origins of both the author and the subjects about which he composed several thousand verses.

Having critically determined the circumstances of Homer's existence, an examination of the period when, reminiscent of the Mycenaean domination of Greece, the popular legends of heroic exploits and the traditions of the Greek expedition against Troy would have been prevalent, will help in exploring the historical foundations of some of the events related by Homer in his *Iliad*.

Further, through an investigation of literary image and actual practice, this study will attempt to illustrate the historical development of Greek funerary contests, culminating in an analysis of the funeral games for Patroclus in *Iliad* XXIII that discusses the social and cultural nature of the games themselves.

II

THE HOMERIC QUESTION REVISITED

The dispute about the person of Homer and his authorship of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is referred to as the "Homeric Question". To a limited extent, grumbles did exist in antiquity, but the energy with which this question was argued erupted out of the seventeenth century, A.D., thus tainting the value of modern Homeric scholarship. With regard to the obligation towards accurate historical analysis, a successful resolution of some of the pertinent issues on this subject is necessary in order to satisfy the enquiries of external criticism : did Homer really exist, and if he did, was he the legitimate author of these two great epics?

Unfortunately, much of the external evidence relies upon the anecdotal interpretations of the allusions and opinions of others in ancient literature: however, enough historical material exists, which, when considered together with the more plentiful amount of internal evidence from the alleged references to known events, or lack of them, and the political use of mythology, to provide a relatively secure foundation from which to answer these questions with a certain

degree of confidence.

The life of Homer

That at least seven cities lay claim to Homer is enough to cast doubt upon the legitimacy of their testimony.[1] The efforts to resolve the persistent chronological uncertainties of modern scholarship are further clouded by the ancient commentary, which is largely based upon allusions and alleged references. The unwillingness of many to commit themselves to such efforts often leaves them clutching tenuous claims. They choose, as characterised by many an ancient source, to merely mention, and thus avoid any commitment to detail.[2]

Whilst the traditional claims to Homer's birthplace refer to the seven cities,[3] there are in fact several other

[1] *Traditionally, those seven cities are Smyrna, Rhodes, Colophon, Salamis, Ios, Argos, and Athens, but as remarked by Manilius, "the host of claimants for his birthplace, in giving him many, has left him with none." Astronomica 2.7. Seneca, Epistulae Morales 88.37, refers to Didymus the Grammarian, [fl. ca. 65 B.C.], who investigated Homer's birthplace, and who embodied the opinions of Aristarchus, Zenodotus, and Aristophanes concerning the accurate details of Homer's life, extracts of which survive in the Codex Venetus of Homer, the chief source of knowledge for the Alexandrine commentators.*

[2] *Epigram 299 tells that Homer himself denies his birthplace as being Smyrna, Cyme, Colophon, Chios, or Salamis but that he replies to his interrogator, "I know for sure that if I tell the truth, I shall make the other cities my enemy." (Greek Anthology, Vol.5). Antipater of Sidon notes claims by Colophon, Smyrna, Chios, Ios, Salamis, and Thessaly, but concludes "great heaven is thy country." Greek Anthology, Vol.5, 16.296.*

[3] *Ancient authors noting the claim by Smyrna include : Aristides, Panathenaic Oration 326-329, who notes that Homer's dialect came from there; Aulus Gellius, Attic Nights 3.11; Claudian, Carminum Minorum Corpusculum 30.147; Contest of Homer and Hesiod 313; Dio Chrysostom, Discourses 7.119; Juveneus, The Gospel Ethic, Praef.9; Pausanias, Description of Greece 7.5.13; Pseudo-Lucian, In Praise of Demosthenes 9; and Strabo, Geography 14.1.37, who also notes the Homerium, the shrine and*

claims recorded in ancient literature, all with varying degrees of source accuracy, including some simply based on loose interpretations of Homer's own work.[4] For example, the contention of Athenaeus that Homer's country is Syria is based on his quotation of Meleager of Gadara, who mistakenly noted that Homer does not mention the eating of fish in the Homeric poems, and that he represents the Achaeans as actually abstaining from fish.[5] The claim by Chios can be similarly

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statue of Homer, and mentions a bronze coin from Smyrna called a Homereium. In Epigrams 4, Homer himself mentions Smyrna in good terms, but does not actually comment on his roots. Those noting the claim of Colophon include : Aulus Gellius, Attic Nights 3.11; Contest of Homer and Hesiod 313; Dio Chrysostom, Discourses 47.5; Pseudo-Lucian, In Praise of Demosthenes 9; and Strabo, Geography 14.1.28. Authors noting the claim by Ios are : Aulus Gellius, Attic Nights 3.11, who notes that Marcus Varro concurs with Aristotle that Homer was from Ios; Dio Chrysostom, Discourses 47.5; Plutarch, Parallel Lives 3, who notes that Homer's birthplace, Ios, was the same name as a fragrant plant (violet); and Pseudo-Lucian, In Praise of Demosthenes 9. The claim on behalf of Athens is noted once again by Aulus Gellius, Attic Nights 3.11.

[4]*By far the most popular alternative is the claim of Chios : Aristotle, Rhetoric 2.23.11, who is surprised by the Chians as Homer had rendered no public services on their behalf; Contest of Homer and Hesiod 313, remarking also on the existence of the Homeridae on the island; Dio Chrysostom, Discourses 7.119 and 47.5; Hymn to Delian Apollo 171-172, attributed to Homer himself, stating "he is a blind man and dwells on rocky Chios."; Pseudo-Lucian, In Praise of Demosthenes 9; Strabo, Geography 14.1.35, who also supposes their claim is based on the presence of the Homeridae; Theocritus, Idylls and Epigrams 7.17; and Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 3.104.4-6. Other cities mentioned are : Cyme, Pseudo-Lucian, In Praise of Demosthenes 9; and Strabo, Geography 13.3.6; Egyptian Thebes, Aulus Gellius, Attic Nights 3.11; and Pseudo-Lucian, In Praise of Demosthenes 9; Ithaca, Contest of Hesiod and Homer 313; and the Pythian Oracle, Epigrams 14.102, in Greek Anthology Vol. 5; Cyprus, Pausanias, Description of Greece 10.24.2-3, who mentions that Homer's mother Themisto was also a Cypriot; and Syria, Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae 4.157, who quotes Meleager as referring to Homer as Syrian, because he represented the Achaeans as abstaining from fish, and in fact did not represent anyone eating fish in the Iliad.*

[5]*Athenaeus also quotes the orator Hypereides, [b. 389 B.C.], who was also an epicure, "For he's a fish-eater, and will make Syrians of all the seagulls," Deipnosophistae 8.342. In fact, mention is made by Homer of eating fish (Odyssey 12.251 and 12.331), fishing tackle and equipment (Odyssey 12.251; Iliad 16.407 and 24.80), and teeming waters (Iliad 9.4, 9.360, 16.746, 19.378, and 20.390), and in fact Homer recounts how Patroclus taunts Hector's charioteer, Cerebriones, "very nimble is the man; how lightly he diveth! In sooth if he were on the teeming deep, this*

treated with a certain amount of skepticism because it is based solely on the alleged existence of a rhapsodic guild called the *Homeridae*,[6] a society of poets who followed in the style of Homer, preserving his work and therefore reflecting his opinions and beliefs, and from whom they ultimately derived their name.[7]

Also in dispute are other aspects of Homer's life, including his parentage,[8] his travels,[9] and his tomb;[10]

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man would satisfy many by seeking for oysters," Iliad 16.745, (trans. A.T. Murray, 1985). Further, Homer mentions the use of purple and scarlet dye for clothing and equipment, (the manufacturing of which from fish and shellfish is described by Pliny, Natural History 9.60-62), and hence fishing for the appropriate source, in Iliad 3.126, 4.141, 6.219, 9.200, 15.538; Odyssey 4.115, 8.84, 8.373, 10.353, and 23.201. Homer also uses the same tone to describe the colour of blood, in Iliad 16.159, and 23.717, where he mentions the scarlet weals of blood in the wrestling bout between Ajax and Odysseus, one of the contests in the games for Patroclus. Plato also uses errant secondary-source material, because he evidently has come to the same conclusion, Republic 3.404.b-c.

[6]*Sources documenting the existence of the Homeridae include : Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae 1.22 and 15.669; Isocrates, Helen 10.65; Julian, Orations 2.52d, who refers to the Homeridae as writers; Pindar, Nemean Odes 2.1; Plato, Ion 530d, Phaedrus 252b, and Republic 10.599e, who uses the term Homeridae to refer to persons especially devoted to the work of Homer; Plutarch, Moralia 496d, who uses the feminine noun Homerida, perhaps anticipating the claim that Homer was a woman, (cf. S. Butler, The Authoress of the Odyssey [1892;rpt. University of Chicago Press, 1967]); and Strabo, Geography 14.1.35.*

[7]*The evidence for this assertion is discussed by K.O. Muller, A History of the Literature of Ancient Greece (Kennikat Press, 1971). Indeed, the author of Hymn to Delian Apollo, (cf. supra n.3), who writes that he is blind and lives on Chios, may well be one of this clan of rhapsodes, and not Homer himself. Murray explains that many sources, all unconvincing, have attempted to interpret the word "homer". The word itself means "hostage", and it is entirely possible that the Homeridae were descended from hostages. He further adds that others, seeking a different etymology for the word, have maintained that it denotes a "fitter-together" or "harmoniser" of poetic material. cf. Introduction to Loeb translation of Iliad, 1985.*

[8]*Several authors comment on Homer's father, including : Ausonius, Masque 11-12, who calls Homer the son of Maeon; Contest of Homer and Hesiod 313, calling Homer's father either Maeon, the river Meles [in Smyrna], Maesagoras, Daemon, Thamyris [the blinded poet referred to by Homer in Iliad 2.594], Meremachus, and even Telemachus [son of Odysseus]; Moschus, Lament for Bion 2.71, noting Homer as the son of the river Meles;*

however, the great majority of these sources is closely linked with the coast of Asia Minor, thus strengthening the claim that he was from that part.[11] More specifically, the strongest evidence seems to indicate that Homer was from Smyrna, as

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and Pseudo-Lucian, In Praise of Demosthenes 9, who indicates that his father was either Maeon, or a river [ie. the river Meles, or possibly the river Hermus in Lydia], but who calls Homer Melesigenes. It is interesting to note that the description of Homer as Maeonian could also refer to Homer as being from Maeonia, another name for Lydia in Asia Minor, cf.: Horace, Odes 4.9.5; Ovid, Remedia Amoris 373; and Persius, Satires 6.11. Homer's mother is similarly noted : Contest of Homer and Hesiod 313, describing Homer's mother as Metis [first wife of Zeus?], the water-nymph Cretheis, Themista, an Ithacan slave of the Phoenicians called Eugnetho, the Muse Calliope, Polycasta [one of Nestor's daughters], or as related by the Pythian Oracle, Epicasta [another of Nestor's daughters]; Pausanias, Description of Greece 10.24.2, who notes that the people of Ios show not only Homer's tomb but also that of his mother, Clymene; and Pseudo-Lucian, In Praise of Demosthenes 9, who remarks that Homer's mother, for want of human parentage, must have been the daughter of Melanopus [ie. Cretheis].

[9]*Homer has been described as a traveling beggar by ancient sources including : Contest of Homer and Hesiod 324, which documents Homer's wanderings after his defeat by Hesiod in the poetic contest at the funeral games for Amphidamus; Pausanias, Description of Greece 1.2.3, comments of Homer that he was one who refused the help offered by "despots in the acquisition of wealth in comparison with his reputation amongst ordinary men," yet Homer depicts Agamemnon as leaving a poet with his wife (Odyssey 3.267ff.), lets Demodocus live at the court of Alcinous (Odyssey 8.62ff.), and notes also the position of Phemius at the palace of Odysseus (Odyssey 22.330ff.); and Dio Chrysostom, Discourses 11.15 and 47.5, who describes how Homer, constrained by poverty, is forced to travel throughout Greece, and hence has been claimed by so many cities. Reference is also made to Homer's blindness : Contest of Homer and Hesiod 313, notes that Homer was so-named when he became blind, as that is the usual epithet for such people; Pausanias, Description of Greece 2.33.3 and 4.33.7, refers to Homer's loss of sight through disease [perhaps as a similar punishment to Thamyris, who claimed he would overcome the Muses themselves in song, Iliad 2.594]; and Pseudo-Lucian, In Praise of Demosthenes 9.*

[10]*Homer is said to have died at Ios or Smyrna. Aulus Gellius, Attic Nights 3.11, comments on the assertion of Marcus Varro and Aristotle that the inhabitants of Ios pay tribute to Homer's tomb there. Pausanias, Description of Greece 10.24.2, also notes Homer's tomb at Ios, as does Strabo, Geography 10.5.1. Plutarch however, , remarks that Homer died in Smyrna, the name of which is the same as one of the most fragrant plants [ie. myrrh] (Parallel Lives 3) cf. Plutarch supra n.3. (For a discussion on the collection of myrrh, cf. Theophrastus, Enquiry into Plants 9.4.1-10).*

[11]*The strongest claims concern references to Smyrna, Chios, Ios, Colophon, and Cyme, all of which were cities or settlements on the coast of Asia Minor, and to Athens, the major colonising city of Asiatic Greece.*

based upon the following four considerations: first, that the majority of references concerning Smyrna are made by those ancient commentators whose general work has already been attested as historically accurate, including the opinions of the Alexandrine critics, Aristarchus and Pisitratus [*cf. supra* n.3], who note that the Athenians laid claim to Homer only because they were the founders of Smyrna. Second, that even amongst those who were more likely to exercise a certain amount of poetic license, the references to Homer's father as the Smyrnaean river Meles, and to his mother as the water-nymph Cretheis, and that Homer's epithet, perhaps a remnant of a more ancient epic tradition, is *Melesigenes*, all support the notion of the popular myth that he was a divine poet. Third, besides the accurate geography to be found in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the local knowledge reflected by the author, perhaps through personal recollection, appears to be peculiarly accurate concerning northern Ionia, where he remarks upon the river Caystrius with its wildfowl, the Gygaean lake, Mount Timolus, and the stream, Achelous, which runs from Mount Sipylon to Smyrna.[12] Finally, if one were to assume that Smyrna was indeed the centre of Homer's life and work, then the claims of most of the other cities may be simply explained and reconciled through an investigation of

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[12]*The river Caystrius is noted in Iliad 2.866, the Gygaean lake in Iliad 2.865 and 20.390, Mount Timolus in Iliad 20.385, and the Achelous in Iliad 24.615.*

that city's history.[13]

The history of Smyrna in Asia Minor

There appear to be two traditions concerning the founding of Smyrna by a Greek people. The first is the *Ionic* tradition, according to which Smyrna was founded from Ephesus, or an Ephesian village called Smyrna.[14] This colony was also described as an Athenian one, as Ephesus had already been settled by the Ionians under the command of Androclus.[15] The second account is the *Aeolian*, which maintains that it was the Aeolians of Cyme, eighteen years after their own city was founded, that took possession of Smyrna.[16] The Ionian settlement is fixed by the Alexandrine chronologists as 140

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[13] *That Homer writes of Pramnian wine, a vine grown in Smyrna, may add to the Smyrnaean claim (Iliad 11.639 and Odyssey 10.235). Commenting on Iliad 11.639, Athenaeus says that Pramnian wine was heavy and filling and a cure for thirst (Deipnosophistae 1.10), a variety of vine grown in Smyrna that "contracts the eyebrows as well as the bowels" (Deipnosophistae 1.30), and that it is sometimes said to come from a village near Ephesus (Deipnosophistae 1.31). Horace convicts Homer of being a 'wine-bibber, because of his many references to wine and drinking (Epistles 1.19.6), but that it is to his credit as "no poems can please long, nor live, which are written by water-drinkers" (Epistles 1.19.3). For further discussion on Pramnian wine, cf. Pliny, Natural History 14.6.54.*

[14] *Strabo, Geography 14.1.3*

[15] *Strabo, Geography 14.1.3. Pausanias further notes the exploits of Androclus, remarking that he was appointed king of the Ionians and sailed against Ephesus, expelling the Leleges and Lydians who occupied the city, Description of Greece 7.2.8. Aristides, Panathenaic Oration 296d, notes the Athenian colonisation of Smyrna. Herodotus, The Persian Wars 1.146, notes the Attic [ie. Athenian] origins of the Ionians. Further information regarding the Athenian colonisation of the coast of Asia Minor is recorded by Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 1.2.6, 1.12.4, 1.95.1, and 7.57.4, who also remarks that Aeolian history of the area arose shortly after the Trojan war.*

[16] *Arrian, Anabasis 5.6.4; Homer, Epigram 4; Pausanias, Description of Greece 3.2.1; Pseudo-Herodotus, Vita Homeri 2, 14, and 38; and Strabo, Geography 14.1.4.*

years after the destruction of Troy,[17] and the Aeolian foundation of Cyme is recorded as 150 years after the same event,[18] so it is distinctly possible that both peoples arrived in the area at about the same time,[19] or even jointly occupied the city.[20]

It appears however, that the Aeolians dominated Smyrna, as it is described as being one of the twelve cities of the Aeolians,[21] with the Ionic league also comprising twelve cities, but exclusive of Smyrna.[22] As a result, the Ionian inhabitants of Smyrna were forced out by the Aeolians,

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[17]*Pseudo-Plutarch, Vita Homeri 2.2.*

[18]*Herodotus, The Persian Wars 1.149; and Strabo, Geography 13.3.3.*

[19]*Strabo, Geography 13.1.3, notes that the Aeolian colonisation preceded the Ionian, but suffered delays. He records that Orestes, the original leader of the expedition, died, and his son, Penthilus, advanced as far as Thrace ca. 1120 B.C., sixty years after the Trojan war, and that a subdivision of the expedition led by Cleues and Malaus, descendants of king Agamemnon, actually founded Cyme at about the same time as Penthilus made the crossing to Thrace.*

[20]*This notion is not actually stated in the ancient texts, but is proposed by K.O. Muller, A History of the Literature of Ancient Greece (Kennikat Press, 1971), pp.59-60. He also notes that the name of Smyrna is actually based on Ionian dialect.*

[21]*Herodotus, The Persian Wars 149-151, notes the twelve Aeolian cities on the mainland as Cyme, Larissa, Neonteichos, Temnos, Cilla, Notion, Aegiroessa, Pitane, Aegaeae, Myrina, Gryneion, and Smyrna. Hesiod, Works and Days 639, also mentions Aeolian Cyme.*

[22]*Strabo, Geography 8.7.4, records that the twelve Ionian cities of Achaea were Pellene [cf. Iliad 2.574], Aegeira, Aegae [cf. Iliad 8.203], Bura, Helie [cf. Iliad 2.595/8.203], Aegium [cf. Iliad 2.575], Rhypes, Patrae, Pharae [cf. Iliad 2.582], Olenus [cf. Iliad 2.639, described by Homer as Aetolian not Achaean], Dyme and Tritaea. Pausanias, Description of Greece 7.6.1, also lists these twelve cities, but substitutes Ceryneia for Patrae, but adds that a new city called Patrae was founded later. Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca Historica 15.49.1, lists only nine cities.*

and had to withdraw to neighbouring Colophon.[23] Smyrna finally became an Ionian city when the Aeolians, in turn, were later expelled by the exiled Smyrnaeans, now described as Colophonians.[24]

Given the conflux of these different races and their history riddled with wars and counterstrikes,[25] it is not surprising that this a melting pot should stimulate accounts of heroic and legendary deeds, thus giving birth to such works as the Homeric poems. On the one side there were the Ionians from Athens,[26] whose chivalrous and noble-minded notions gave rise to the heroic exploits of the houses of Nestor, the

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[23] *It is entirely possible that the Homeridae were descendants of those expelled from Smyrna who subsequently settled in Chios, an island just off the coast where Smyrna is located.*

[24] *Herodotus, The Persian Wars 1.15; Pausanias, Description of Greece 7.5.1. Herodotus eventually refers to Smyrna as a Colophonian colony, and in his Nanno, Mimnermus, a settler of Colophon, remarks upon the controversy surrounding Smyrna that resulted in the Colophonian takeover. Pausanias, Description of Greece 4.21.5, records that the final invasion of Smyrna by its former occupants was noted historically with pride, probably because the city was razed to the ground in that struggle by the departing Aeolian Lydians, with the 'new' settlers having to live in surrounding villages for about 400 years after, until they were reassembled into a city by Antigonus and Lysimachus, generals of Alexander the Great (Strabo, Geography 14.1.4). The claim of the original Ephesians seems to have tainted the subsequent description of Smyrna, leading to the interchange of names with Ephesus (Pausanias, Description of Greece 1.9.7 and Strabo, Geography 14.1.4).*

[25] *For further discussion by modern historians on this area cf. J. Boardman et al, eds., The Cambridge Ancient History - Persia, Greece and the Western Mediterranean c. 525 to 479 B.C. (Vol. 4, 2nd ed.; Cambridge University Press, 1988); A. Jarde, The Formation of the Greek People (trans. M.R. Dobie; New York : Cooper Square, 1970), esp. pp. 186 ff. on the colonisation of Asiatic Greece; and L.H. Jeffrey, Archaic Greece - the City States c. 700-500 B.C. (New York : St. Martin's Press, 1976), esp. on Achaia pp. 172-173, the Ionic Greeks pp. 207-236, and the Aeolic Greeks pp. 237-243.*

[26] *Homer describes the Ionians with the epithet "of trailing tunics," by which he refers to their Athenian ancestry (Iliad 13.685).*

ancestor of Ephesian and Milesian kings, and of Menelaus, whose wife, Helen, was kidnapped by Paris, thus initiating the legends of the Trojan war. On the other side were the Aeolians, represented in the Homeric poems by their chief tribe, the *Achaeans*, headed by the house of Agamemnon,[27] whose traditions stemmed from the legendary domination of the Peloponnessus by Mycenae, exerting an influence so strong that it rallied the princes of Greece behind Agamemnon in his expedition against Troy.

In reviewing the above evidence, one could surmise that Homer was perhaps an Ionian, maybe even belonging to one of the families who colonised Smyrna from Ephesus, living at a time when Aeolians and Achaeans comprised a major part of the population of the city, and when the traditional exploits of these peoples from the Greek expedition against Troy would have stimulated great interest. Such a climate would have provided the poet with a wealth of material from which to begin composing an epic tale based on the Achaean's history, yet recounted through an Ionian's heart.[28] This notion would

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[27]*Strabo, Geography 8.1.3, notes a king Agamemnon of Cyme.*

[28]*With respect to certain political institutions and political ideology, there are many references and expressions that are purely Athenian in origin, which, when considering the reverence with which Homer depicts the Ionian deities, colours his character as predominantly Ionic. For example, Pallas Athenae is described as the Athenian goddess who loves to dwell in the temple on the Acropolis of Athens, and homesick, hurries from the land of the Phaecians to Marathon and Athens (Iliad 2.547; and Odyssey 7.80). Similarly, Poseidon is presented as the peculiarly Heliconian god, that is the deity of the Ionian league for whom the Ionians celebrated national sacrificial festivals in both the Peloponnesus and Asia Minor (Iliad 8.203 and 20.403).*

support the theory that Homer's time would have been a few generations after the Ionic migration to Asia, and hence after the events of the Trojan war,[29] and this is loosely supported in the testimony of ancient sources who generally place him between 1044 and 884 B.C.[30]

The authorship of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*

The second part of the "Homeric Question" concerns the authorship of the two great epic poems ascribed to Homer, the evidence for which would support the value of an analysis of part of his work as an accurate historical reference.

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were only two of a whole

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[29] *As documented by Schliemann in Troja (New York : Benjamin Blom, 1882), archaeological evidence at the site of Homer's Troy has established that the Greek heroic age was in fact a historical reality, and in concurrence with some of the ancient sources, estimates that the Fall of Troy occurred some eighty years before the Return of the Heraclidae (the descendants of the Mycenaean dynasty) and the Return reckoned through an analysis of Spartan kings, thus dating the Fall of Troy between 1270 and 1135 B.C., with the most generally accepted date being 1183 B.C. This is supported archaeologically with the destructions of sites in the Peloponnesus by the southward incursions of the Dorian Greeks associated with the Return.*

[30] *Pseudo-Lucian states that Homer's time was the age of heroes or the Ionian period when Ionia was colonised by emigrants from Attica, traditionally 140 years after the Trojan war, ie. ca. 1044 B.C. (In Praise of Demosthenes 9); Aulus Gellius places Homer at 160 years after the Trojan war, ie. ca. 1024 B.C. or 160 years before the founding of Rome, which would date him ca. 910 B.C. (Attic Nights 17.21.3); Strabo remarks that Homer probably lived after the Ionian colonisation, but that the Aeolian colonisation preceded the Ionian by four generations [80-100 years?] which was 60 years after the Trojan war at about the same time as the Return of the Heraclidae ca. 1100 B.C. so places Homer no earlier than 1000 B.C. (Geography 8.7.2); Dio Chrysostom, Discourses 11.92, and Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 1.3.3, both remark that Homer composed his poems many generations after the Trojan war, as does Velleius Paterculus, who states that Homer flourished between 962 and 927 B.C., and that is why it is not surprising that Homer often says 'such as men are nowadays' (History of Rome 1.5), obviously referring to Iliad 5.304, 12.383, and 12.449; Herodotus supposes that the time of Homer and Hesiod is no more than 400 years before his own, (Aulus Gellius, Attic Nights 15.23 dates Herodotus ca. 484 B.C.), ie. ca. 884 B.C.*

series of epic poems, mostly lost,[31] known as the *Epic Cycle*. When arranged chronologically, the poems were supposed to provide a history of the world from the marriage of Heaven and Earth down to the end of the age of heroes of the Trojan war.[32] The Trojan section of the Cycle comprised eight epics, including the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The first poem was the *Cypria*, which recounted the events leading up to the Trojan war, including the kidnapping of Helen by Paris and the sailing of the Greek expedition against Troy. The story is taken up by the *Iliad*, and continued in the *Aethiopis*, describing the death of the Amazon queen, Penthesilea, the slaying of the Aethiopian king, Memnon, by Achilles, the death of Achilles at the hands of Paris, and the quarrel of Odysseus and Ajax over his armour. The next chapters were contained in the *Little Iliad*, which continued the story through the construction of the wooden horse, and the *Sack of Ilios*, which described the capture of the city and the Greek departure for home. The *Nostoi* followed, telling of the homeward voyages of Agamemnon, Menelaus and Achilles' son, Neoptolemus, with the

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[31] *Not including the Iliad and Odyssey, much of the Trojan section of the Cycle has been lost, totalling approximately 29 books. If one were to assume that each book contained an average of 500 lines as in the Odyssey (the Iliad averages 650), then the total loss amounts to 14,500 lines, of which only about 120 survive - less than one in a hundred. Sources indicate that the Oedipoedia, Thebaid and Epigoni, making up the Theban section of the Cycle, contained 20,600 verses, of which 23 survive - about one in 900. cf. R. Janko, Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns - Diachronic Development in Epic Tradition (Cambridge University Press, 1982).*

[32] *R. Janko, Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns - Diachronic Development in Epic Tradition (Cambridge Classical Studies : Cambridge University Press, 1982).*

Odyssey telling of Odysseus' travels, and finally the *Telegonia* concerning the death of Odysseus at the hands of Telegonus, his son by Circe.[33] There was also a Theban section of the Cycle, containing the *Oedipodeia*, and the *Thebaid* and *Epigoni* describing the Argive expedition against Thebes.

In ancient times, some of the lost epics were attributed to Homer, including extant portions of the *Cypria* and the *Thebaid*, however, the final result of ancient Greek criticism was that only the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were ascribed to Homer, with the other epics being predominantly associated with various successors such as Lesches and Arctinus.[34] From the time of the ancient critics of Athens of the fifth century, B.C., through the period of the Alexandrine critics of the third century, B.C., though many verses and some longer sections were rejected, no doubts were raised as to the unity of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. It was not until the seventeenth century, A.D., that the theory was voiced that neither of the two epics were the creation of a single author.[35] It was contended that Homer never existed, and that

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[33]*For a more detailed explanation of the Epic Cycle cf. G.S. Kirk, The Songs of Homer (Cambridge university Press, 1962), and especially the introduction by H.G. Evelyn-White to Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homerica (Loeb Classical Library; London : William Heinemann).*

[34]*The Little Iliad is attributed to Lesches, and is actually seen as a post-dated rival to the longer original, the Telegonia to Eugammon of Cyrene, whilst Arctinus of Miletus is now credited with the Aethiopis and the Sack of Ilios (H.G. Evelyn-White's introduction to Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homerica (Loeb Classical Library; London : William Heinemann).*

[35]*The first person to ask the "Homeric Question" was Francois Hedelin, abbe d'Aubignac, who wrote his Conjectures Academiques in 1664,*

the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were actually a number of independent lays first collected by Lycurgus at Sparta in the eighth century' B.C., and later rearranged in their present form by Pisistratus in Athens during the fifth century, B.C.[36]

The second voice elicited a more deeply felt reaction among academic scholars and became the starting point of the present debates on authorship.[37] This argument similarly refuted a single Homer because the poems were composed years before the introduction of writing into Greece,[38] and

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and which were first published in 1715 (cf. J. De Romilly, A Short History of Greek Literature (trans. L. Doherty; University of Chicago Press, 1985).

[36]*On the interpolation and recension of Homer, several ancient authors make note : Ausonius refers to both Aristarchus of Samothrace [fl.ca.156 B.C.], a disciple of Aristophanes famous for his use of critical signs in the text (Masque 11-12), and to Zenodotus of Ephesus [fl.ca.208 B.C.], who was the first head of the Alexandrine library (Epistles 13.29); Tertullian notes that the name of Aristarchus had become a proverb for a shrewd critic due to his recension of Homer's work (Apologeticus 3.6-7); Cicero? relates an epithet concerning the critical work of Aristarchus (Rhetorica ad Herrenium 4.28.39), as does Horace, Epistles 2.1.257); collection of Homer's work by Pisistratus is noted by Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae 1.3, Cicero, De Oratore 3.34.137, Libanius, Orations 12.56; and Pausanias, Description of Greece 7.26.13, who bemoans the perversions caused by his ignorance; Plutarch writes that Pisistratus actually inserted a verse into the Odyssey to gratify the Athenians [cf. Odyssey 11.631] (Parallel Lives 2), and that Solon did the same in the Iliad [cf. Iliad 2,557] (Parallel Lives 10), and Strabo adds further additions of either Pisistratus or Solon [cf. Iliad 4.273, 4.327, and 13.681] (Geography 9.1.10); however Strabo criticises the Homeric criticisms of Aristarchus (Geography 1.2.24, 1.2.27 and 1.2.30), and also the inaccuracies of Zenodotus' emendations of Iliad 2.507 (Geography 9.2.35) and of Iliad 2.851 (Geography 12.3.8). Further evidence of interpolation and recension in Homer's work is provided by G.M. Bolling, The External Evidence for Interpolation in Homer (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1968).*

[37]*F.A. Wolf, Prolegomena to Homer (1795;rpt.; trans. A. Gratton, G.W. Most and J.E.G. Zetzel: Princeton University Press, 1985).*

[38]*Writing consists of both the use of writing implements and the use of some sort of symbolic representation, evidence of both being in fact present in the Iliad. Pliny, Natural History 13.21.68, notes the invention of paper from papyrus after Alexander the Great's victory in Egypt, however points out that the Nile estuary and papyrus swamps did not yet exist in Homer's time. Perhaps a truism, yet Homer actually mentions the*

therefore could not have been created and retained by memory by a single poet, and that they must therefore represent a compilation of the work of many. These contentions developed into the bitter debate between the Unitarians, who grasped onto the image of a single poet, and the Analysts, who found (and contrived) traces everywhere of other peoples "fingers in the pie." It was the scholarly pioneering work of Milman Parry that provided the answer.[39]

Parry showed that the peculiar technique of the Homeric epics, with their recurrent epithets, formulaic phrases and descriptions of situations and scenes,[40] is in reality a means

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use of clay writing tablets (Iliad 6.168) and archaeological excavations at Nestor's palace at Pylus unearthed hundreds of clay tablets inscribed with Linear B script (cf. S. Dow, "The Linear Scripts and the Tablets as historical documents : literacy in Minoan and Mycenaean lands," The Cambridge Ancient History - History of the Middle East and the Aegean Region c. 1800-1380 B.C., eds. I.E.S. Edwards et al (3rd ed.; Cambridge University Press, 1973), 2 (13), 582-608; and D. Young, "Is Linear B deciphered?," rev. of S. Levin, The Linear B Decipherment Controversy Re-Examined (State University of New York, 1964), Arion, 4 (1965), 512-542). In the poems, Homer represents writing by the use of signs (semata) and not the use of letters (grammata), when he tells how the heroes make a sign of their name on the lot when casting lots (Iliad 7.189), and when he relates how the king of Argos, Proetus, corresponds with the king of Lycia by signs on folded slips of wood (Iliad 6.168).

[39] *cf. A. Parry, ed., The Making of Homeric Verse - The Collected Papers of Milman Parry (Oxford University Press, 1987).*

[40] *D.R. Page describes some of the principal characteristics of 'formulaic poetry', noting that the unique language of Greek epic poetry differs from that of all other Greek poetry in that its units are not words, selected by the poet and adjusted to his metre, but that they are formulas, ready-made phrases extending in length from a couple of words to several complete lines, already adapted to the metre, or instantly adaptable by the reciter. The oral poet composes as he recites, and therefore must be able to rely upon his memory, aided by his recitation of these pre-prepared formulas. Page roughly estimates that about a fifth of the Homeric poems is composed of lines wholly repeated from one place to another, and that in those 28,000 lines there are some 25,000 repeated phrases. History and the Homeric Epic (University of California Press, 1959). Further discussion on the Homeric epithets, especially their role in the narrative context, is provided by P. Vivante, The Epithets in Homer (Yale University Press, 1982).*

of protecting the singer from a breakdown in improvisation.[41] For example, it was shown that for each of the thirty-seven main characters in both epics, a stock descriptive phrase of exactly the same length, extending from the caesura to the end of the line, existed for each character.[42] In order to prove that this theory was legitimate, Parry collected a large number of oral epic songs performed by illiterate Serbo-Croat singers, including one that comprised 12,000 lines, comparable to the length of the *Odyssey*, and which was not recited from memory, but re-composed by the singer as an improvisation.

Having critically determined the circumstances of Homer's existence at a period when, reminiscent of the great Mycenaean civilisation, the popular legends of heroic exploits and the traditions of the Greek expedition against Troy would have furnished the mind of an epic poet with a wealth of material, and having noted that it is entirely possible that an individual could have composed and preserved an epic poem

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[41] *Further discussion on the rhapsodic tradition of oral poetry, (in fact admitted by F.A. Wolf as a reality), is presented by M.L. West, "The singing of Homer and the modes of early Greek music," Journal of Hellenic Studies, 101 (1981), 113-129. In the Iliad, and more prominently in the Odyssey, the epic singer appears, in particular Phemius and Demodocus in the latter. Homer portrays them as singing two kinds of songs at celebrations : legends about the gods; and recent exploits about the Trojan heroes. Thus Odysseus asks Demodocus to sing the episode of the Wooden Horse (Odyssey 8.492). Strabo writes, "the fact that the ancients used the verb 'sing' instead of the verb 'tell' bears witness to this very thing, namely, that poetry was the source and origin of style ... for when poetry was recited, it emphasized the assistance of song; this combination formed melodic discourse, or 'ode'; and from 'ode' they began to use the terms rhapsody, tragedy, and comedy." : Geography 1.2.6 (trans. H.L. Jones, 1949) Loeb Classical Library: Harvard University Press.*

[42] *cf. C.A. Trypanis, Greek Poetry - From Homer to Seteris (University of Chicago Press, 1981).*

of several thousand verses based upon this treasure, it is now important to further explore the historical foundations of some of the events as related by Homer in his great epic, the *Iliad*.

III

FUNERAL GAMES IN ANCIENT LITERATURE

Athletic contests held in honour of the dead were a regular part of Greek life and had a lasting effect on several aspects of that society. The best-known funerary contests were those that were celebrated for the heroes in Greek legend,[1] and those that were believed to have originally initiated certain athletic contests held on a regular basis,[2] including of course the four great Panhellenic games,[3] but such

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[1] *For example, some of the funerary contests held in honour of individuals were for Abderus (Philostratus, Imagines 2.25), Achilles (Homer, Odyssey 24.85-92; Arctinus of Miletus, Aethiopis 1), Amaryngeus (Homer, Iliad 23.630; Quintus Smyrnaeus, The Fall of Troy 4.316), Anchises (Hyginus, Fabulae 273), Azan (Pausanias, Description of Greece 8.4.5), Deolycus of Thessaly (Plutarch, Moralia 674f), Hector (Virgil, Aeneid 5.371-374), Kyzikos (Apollonius Rhodius, Argonautica 1.1058), Laius (Apollodorus, Bibliotheca 3.15.7), Oedipus (Homer, Iliad 23.677), Paris (Hyginus, Fabulae 273), Patroclus (Homer, Iliad 23.257-897), Pelias (Pausanias, Description of Greece 5.17.9-11; Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae 4.172e), and Polydectes (Hyginus, Fabulae 273).*

[2] *Regularly celebrated events are believed to have originated at funerary contests held for Adrastus (Pindar, Isthmian Odes 4.25), Aias (Pindar, Olympian Odes 9.112), Amphitryon (Pindar, Nemean Odes 4.20), Iolaus (Pindar, Olympian Odes 9.98), Protesilas (Pindar, Isthmian Odes 1.53-63), and Tlepolemus (Pindar, Olympian Odes 7.80).*

[3] *Athletic contests were believed to have been the origins of the four great Panhellenic Games, for example : the Olympic games in honour of Pelops (Pindar, Olympian Odes 5.90-98; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, The Roman Antiquities 5.17.4: Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Greeks 2.29; Ausonius, Ecloques 19 and 21; Hyginus, Fabulae 273); the Pythian games in honour of the Python (Varro, De Lingua Latina 7.17 ; Ausonius, Ecloques 19 and 22; Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Greeks 2.29); the Isthmian games for Melicertes, deified Palaemon (Pausanias,*

competitions also formed part of the funerary celebrations for actual persons of the historical period, both well-known men and groups of individuals. They were held from at least the late eighth century, B.C., until well into the Hellenistic period,[4] and funerary contests already established continued until late antiquity. Moreover, this custom changed in ways that are paralleled by the literary presentations of funeral games held for mythical figures, suggesting that the representations of funerary athletics in Greek myth may have been more closely connected with actual contemporary practice than presently acknowledged.

Funeral games in early Greek society

The earliest evidence seems to have been found in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, in which he describes his trip to Chalkis in order to compete in a musical contest given there for Amphidamus :

> There I crossed over to Chalkis for the prizes
> in honor of wise Amphidamus, the many prizes
> proclaimed in advance
> by his magnanimous sons. And I claim that there
> I was the victor in a song contest and won an eared
> tripod,
> which I dedicated to the Helikonian Muses,

Description of Greece 1.44.7 and 2.1.3; Hyginus, Fabulae 273; Ausonius, Ecloques 20 and 22 ; Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Greeks 2.29); and the Nemean games to honour Opheltes, deified Archemorus (Statius, Thebaid 5.731-753; Apollodorus, Bibliotheca 3.6.4; Hyginus, Fabulae 273; Ausonius, Ecloques 19 and 22; Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Greeks 2.29).

[4] *L.E. Roller, "Funeral games in Greek literature, art, and life," Unpublished PhD. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1977.*

where they first taught me mastery of flowing song.[5]

This particular passage has attracted a great deal of attention, not just among the ancient literary critics, but also among present scholars. Amphidamus was identified as a warrior killed during the Lelantine War,[6] and the description of his funeral games was expanded into a tale of an epic competition between Hesiod and Homer.[7] Such extra detail has caused some doubt as to the authenticity of the passage and of Amphidamus's games themselves,[8] but if Hesiod's own words are considered, a credible picture of the event emerges. The games were given by members of the deceased's family, who advertised them in order to attract the best competitors, and to whom prizes of value were awarded. Hesiod only mentions the competition in song, but since it is stated that many prizes were awarded, athletic events were probably also included among the contests. Since funerary contests prompted no special comment from the poet, it seems feasible to assume

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[5]*Hesiod, Works and Days 654-659 (trans. R. Lattimore, 1959) University of Michigan Press.*

[6]*Plutarch, Moralia 153f;674f. The war between Chalkis and Eretria on the Lelantine plain was a sea battle, and antedates the earliest sea conflict known to Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 1.13.4.*

[7]*Plutarch, Moralia 675a; Lesches, Little Iliad 10. Note that in Hesiod's work he mentions a competition, but not that it was Homer with whom he competed.*

[8]*Evelyn-White notes that critics have rejected lines 654-622 of Hesiod's Works and Days on the grounds that Hesiod's Amphidamus is probably that described by Plutarch as the hero of the Lelantine War, whose death can be placed ca. 705 B.C., a date which seems too low for the genuine Hesiod. However, it appears that there is nothing in the poem to suggest that they are indeed the same person, and Amphidamus could be an ancestor to Plutarch's subject. H.G. Evelyn-White, trans. 1974 of Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homerica.*

that they were probably an established custom in Hesiod's time.[9]

This passage in Hesiod, together with the archaeological evidence documented on certain bronzes and marble discuses,[10] provides testimony to the practice of holding funeral games for private citizens, especially of aristocratic families; and to its continuation until the early fifth century, B.C. Since the bronze hydria from Lampsakos is the latest evidence for the custom in this form, it may be suggested that this kind of funerary contest ceased to be held during the fifth century B.C. It is therefore possible that the athletic festivals that were formally organised by civic governments and associated with regularly repeated rituals superseded private funeral games, and the few subsequently documented competitions held by aristocratic families had no part in the new pattern of athletics.[11]

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[9]*The practice of paying elaborate funerary honours to contemporaries is further attested at Euboian sites other than at Chalkis, as noted at Eretria by J.N. Coldstream, "Hero cults in the age of Homer," Journal of Hellenic Studies, 96 (1976), 15.*

[10]*Evidence of other apparently similar funerary contests comes from a number of prizes of the early seventh through fifth centuries B.C. including a fragment of a bronze lebes found in Thebes, dated early seventh century B.C., part of a bronze lebes found in Delphi, dated mid-sixth century B.C., and a bronze hydria found in a grave in Notion but evidently a prize for games held in Lampsakos, dated first half of the fifth century B.C., where the inscriptions indicate that games were advertised to attract competitors to the athletic contests, as documented by L.E. Roller, "Funeral games in Greek art," American Journal of Archaeology, 85 (1981), 107-114.*

[11]*Further inspection of the archaeological evidence noted above supports the popular contention that there was a shift early on in the fifth century from the all-round aristocratic athlete to the professional specialist who supported himself on a circuit of local and Panhellenic contests.*

Funeral games for civic heroes

Another type of funerary contest is one that formed part of a civic festival, celebrated at an citizen's funeral and continued afterwards on a regular basis. Such contests are first known from the late sixth century, B.C. and continued to be established until the end of the Hellenistic period.

Athletic festivals were frequently established by Greek cities to honour their founders or benefactors. The earliest such contest was held for Miltiades, founder of an Athenian colony on the Thracian Chersonesos. After his death the people of Chersonesos instituted equestrian and athletic contests in which citizens of neighbouring cities were not allowed to compete.[12] Similar honours were paid to the Spartan general, Brasidas, by the people of Amphipolis. After his death, he was buried as a hero in the city, displacing the original Athenian founder, Hagnon, and annual sacrifices and games were established in his honour.[13] Timotheos, tyrant of Herakleia Pontike, was honoured with equestrian contests at the time of his funeral, and with equestrian, athletic, and dramatic competitions later.[14] The Corinthian, Timoleon, was buried at public expense by the people of Syracuse, who

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[12] *Herodotus, The Persian Wars 6.38.*

[13] *Thucydides, The Peloponnesian Wars 5.11.1.*

[14] *Memnon, Fragmente der Greichisen historiker 3.434, F1.*

established equestrian, athletic, and musical contests for him, which were to be celebrated regularly thereafter.[15] In the second century, B.C., the Messenian, Philopoimen, was also given a lavish funeral at state expense, and regular sacrifices and athletic and equestrian contests were also established in his honour.[16] Pausanias recorded that in his day, annual contests were held for the Spartan kings, Leonidas and Pausanias, in which only Spartans could take part.[17] In each case, the person honoured was being created a hero of the state, and the funeral games were a part of the ritual associated with his cult.[18]

Not only individual citizen's, but also groups of people, were honoured with competitions at public festivals.[19] Several Greek cities held contests of various kinds in order to honour military casualties. One festival,

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[15]*Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca Historica 16.90.1; and Plutarch, Timoleon 39.3.*

[16]*Plutarch, Philopoimen 21.*

[17]*Pausanias, Description of Greece 3.14.1.*

[18]*Further discussion on the administration and historical comment on some of the minor festivals established to honour the dead, during the seventh century B.C. to A.D. 400, is presented by M.F. Sheldon, "Greek athletics in the writings of the Greek historians," Unpublished PhD. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1974.*

[19]*One event tells of Cassander who, returning from Boetia, learns of the deaths of the king and queen at Aegaeae, and honoured them with establishing a contest of single fighters. Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae 4.155; another possible example may be the games recorded by Herodotus, The Persian Wars 1.167, where athletic and equestrian events were established for the Phocaeans, to be performed by the people of Agylla as ordered by the Delphic oracle. Whilst the oracle may not be considered genuine, these games were still taking place in Herodotus's day.*

the *Parponia*, was instituted by the Spartans *ca.* 550 B.C., after a battle fought against the Argives at Paparos in Thyrea, a territory that was frequently the subject of dispute between the two states. The festival celebrated the Spartan victory and honoured the casualties of that battle with contests in athletics and horsemanship for both men and boys.[20] Funeral games also formed part of the honours paid to the men who fell in the battles of Marathon, Salamis, and Plataia, the only conflicts before the fourth century B.C. to be awarded a permanent place on the sacred calendar of Athens.[21] Marathon was commemorated on the eve of *Boedromia*, a festival already heavy with heroic reminiscences of legendary victories against seemingly impossible odds. For Salamis, the annual festival was annexed to the festival of *Artemis Munychia*, at which the highlight was a regatta in memory of the battle.[22] In honour of those who died at Plataia, it is recorded that a decree was proposed by the Athenian Aristeides after the battle, whereby all Greek cities were to send representatives to an annual festival, the *Eleutheria*, and to a more elaborate festival to be held every

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[20]*Herodotus, The Persian Wars 1.82; and Pausanias, Description of Greece 2.38.5.*

[21]*J.P. Barron, "The liberation of Greece," The Cambridge Ancient History- Persia, Greece and the Western Mediterranean c. 525 to 479 BC, eds. J. Boardman et al (2nd. ed.; Cambridge University Press, 1988), 4 (11), 592-622.*

[22]*A ship race is included by Virgil, Aeneid 5.240, in his description of the funeral games for Aeneas' father, Anchises.*

four years that was to include games,[23] of which the principal contest was a hoplite race.[24]

The best-known of such funerary contests was that given by the Athenian state for its citizens who had been killed in battle. In the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. this was simply called the *agon epitaphios*, while later sources give it the more formal name of *Epitaphia*. It was part of an annual ceremony held for the military casualties of the preceding year. One record remarks that the state is required to arrange contests in strength, knowledge, and wealth,[25] whilst another, attributed to Plato, describes the custom as part of an annual ritual preserved by custom, in which athletic, equestrian, and musical contests formed a part.[26] That athletic contests were a fitting means to recognise those who had served the state is a concept also emphasised by Plato in his description of funeral rites for the Examiners of his ideal society, where musical, athletic, and equestrian contests were to be held annually.[27]

On the historical date of the origin of the Athenian rites for the city, Thucydides, in his introduction to the

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[23]*Plutarch, Aristeides 21, ; Strabo, Geography 9.2.31*

[24]*Pausanias, Description of Greece 9.2.5*

[25]*Lysias, Funeral Oration 80.*

[26]*Plato, Menexenus 249b.*

[27]*Plato, Laws 947e.*

logos epitaphios of Perikles in 431 B.C., describes the custom as an ancestral tradition and that its founding dated from a time before the battle of Marathon, although funeral games were not specifically mentioned as part of that tradition.[28] According to Diodorus Siculus, the practice dated from the year of the battle of Plataia.[29] If both these statements are accurate, then one could contend that public burial, which formed the main part of this ritual, took place as early as the sixth century, B.C. , and that funerary contests were added after 479 B.C.[30]

The character of the games seems to have changed over the centuries. The state games, at first simply referred to as the "funeral games for those in the war,"[31] were held every year. This annual athletic festival continued even when Athens was no longer in a position to pursue an active military policy,[32] and presumably there were no longer large numbers of military casualties to be buried and honoured. In the fifth

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[28] *Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 2.34.*

[29] *Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca Historica 11.33.3.*

[30] *The existence of a bronze lebes as a prize from this festival dated 480 B.C., demonstrates that athletic contests formed part of the festival from at least that date. L.E. Roller, "Funeral games in Greek art," American Journal of Archaeology, 85 (1981), 107-114.*

[31] *Aristotle, Athenaion Politeia 58.1.*

[32] *Further discussion concerning the internal affairs of Athens, and their reflection on the civic aspect of athletics, up to the end of Athenian independence in 322 B.C., is provided by D.G. Kyle, "A historical study of athletics in ancient Athens to 322 b.c.", Unpublished PhD. dissertation, McMaster University (Canada), 1981.*

and fourth centuries, B.C. the funerary character would have been evident, but in the second and first centuries, B.C., the festival, now referred to as the *Epitaphia*, must have taken on more of the nature of a national celebration designed to recall past military glories, and moreover it was often linked with the *Theseia*, another festival of strongly nationalistic character.[33]

Funeral games of myth and practice

Reviewing the evidence on funeral games celebrated for the recent dead provides an insight into the changing social fabric of funerary athletics.

The games for Amphidamus mentioned by Hesiod show that the practice already existed in the late eighth century, B.C., and since Hesiod seems not to have specially considered the particulars of the athletic events, the practice of funerary athletic contests may have existed even earlier. Archaeological evidence shows that this practice continued until the early fifth century, B.C. in a similar manner. Such games, whilst privately organised, seem to have been prestigious enough to attract athletes from other cities, implying a leisure-class of athletes willing to compete on short notice, and perhaps also a network of communication

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[33]*It is sometimes stated that the Epitaphia and the Theseia were the same festival, principally because the two are frequently mentioned together in inscriptions; however, the origins of the two are distinctly separarte. The Theseia commemorates the return of Theseus's bones to Athens. Plutarch, Parallel Lives 1.36.1-4.*

among prospective competitors.[34]

From the late sixth century, B.C., funerary contests were associated with continuing celebrations for well-known figures, including a number of military heroes, and later for less prominent persons and groups of men whose valour merited special attention. The individuals and groups thus honoured were considered to be heroes of the state, and the involvement of the community with the athletic contests was often further emphasised by restricting participation to citizens of that particular city.

From the fourth century, B.C., funerary contests seemed to have been designed to bring prestige to the arranger, as much as for the deceased,[35] and some of those holding the games may have followed the Homeric pattern of funerary ritual in order to create greater prestige for themselves and their dead.

Following the changing pattern of funerary celebrations, close parallels exist between the way in which funerary contests were conducted, and the presentation of funeral games in Greek literature. This is particularly evident in the earliest literary descriptions of funeral

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[34]*H.W. Pleket, "Games, prizes, athletes, and ideology," Stadion 1 (1975), 55.*

[35]*In the instances documented about this trend in funerary contests, it appears that the brilliance and pomp provided by the arranger is stressed as much as the remembrance. Arrian, Anabasis 7.14.10; and Diodorus Siculus, Bibliotheca Historica 19.52.5.*

games, those of the Homeric poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.[36] In these poems there are four episodes of funerary contests, the games for Patroclus, Achilles, Amaryngeus, and for Oedipus.[37] Although they are presented in varying amounts of detail, the basic form of the funerary contests is the same in each case. The games were given by a member of the deceased's family, or in Patroclus' case, by a close friend. Valuable prizes were set out as an incentive for competition, the games drew the best contestants from amongst the nobility, and in two instances, the games for Amaryngeus and Oedipus, contestants were attracted to the competition from other cities. It is clear that the Homeric funeral games were prestigious events, for Nestor boasted about his victory in Amaryngeus' games just as Hesiod remarked on his own achievement, and the high regard attached to these games is stressed in both poems.[38] The same format seems to have been followed in another traditional funerary celebration involving athletic contests, the games for Pelias.[39] Although the

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[36]*Whist not described in detail, funeral games of an earlier date are refered to in Iliad 23.331, where Homer remarks upon the convenient existence of a turning-post for the chariot race, indicating that it "haply was made a turning post of a race in days of men of old."*

[37]*The four funeral games mentioned in Homer occur in Iliad 23.257-897 (Patroclus), Odyssey 24.85-92 (Achilles), Iliad 23.629-642 (Amaryngeus), and Iliad 23.677-680 (Oedipus).*

[38]*Homer, Iliad 23.632 and Iliad 22.162-164; and Homer, Odyssey 24.87-89.*

[39]*Athenaios, Deipnosophistae 4.172e; Pausanias, Description of Greece 5.17.9-11; and Quintus Smyrnaeus, Posthomerica 4.307.*

details of these games are much less certain, they also seem to have been contests arranged by the king's sons, that attracted outstanding competitors, and where valuable prizes were again awarded.

The presentation of funeral games in Greek literature of the fifth century, B.C. and later differs from that of the epics. Instead of describing the actual funerary contest held in honour of a hero's recent death, the tendency was to describe a funerary contest of myth that was to form the basis of a permanent athletic festival, or to present a current contest of games as one that was derived from a funerary contest of the imagined past. This is the case in the first known references to the funeral games held for Melicertes-Palaemon and Opheltes-Archemorus,[40] where the emphasis is not on the prowess of the competitors in these contests, but rather on the continuation of the games as the athletic

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[40] *As previously noted supra n.3, the Isthmian games were celebrated in honour of Melicertes. It is recorded that the games were instituted by Sisyphus, Melicertes's uncle and King of Corinth, (Apollodorus, Bibliotheca 3.4.3). The description of his death has been recounted often, as by Euripides, who tells how Ino, wife of king Athamas of Thebes, was punished by Hera and made to kill both her sons, Learchus and Melicertes (Medea 1281-1288); however, most authors differ slightly and maintain that Learchus was actually killed by his father, and Ino killed Melicertes by throwing him, and herself, into the sea (Pausanias, Description of Greece 1.44.7-8; Hyginus, Fabulae 273. Both Ino and Melicertes were made sea-divinities and renamed Leucothea and Palaemon respectively, (Philostratos, Imagines 2.16; Statius, Thebaid 1.12-14), although Palaemon is sometimes referred to as Portumnus (Ovid, Fasti 6.485). Interestingly this myth is referred to indirectly in other epics involving funeral games. For example, Lycophron notes that it was while making a sacrifice to Ino-Leucothea that Helen was originally abducted by Paris, thus causing the Trojan war (Alexandra 107), and in the funeral games for Anchises, Virgil represents the god, Portumnus, who was a genuine Roman god of harbours and gates, as giving a helping nudge to one of the galleys in the ship race (Aeneid 5.241).*

festivals of Isthmia and Nemea.[41] Similarly, in Pindar's odes, mention is made of many sporting competitions that were said to have been derived from funeral games for a particular hero.[42] The athletic competition, which was thought of as part of a larger celebration of funeral rites, finds its counterpart in the use of athletics to honour the newly created heroes of the Greek cities. The third pattern of funerary games, from the fourth century, B.C., in which lavish celebrations were often held in imitation of Homeric ritual, is also paralleled in Greek literature of the Hellenistic period, as documented in the funeral games held in honour of Kyzikos.[43]

Thus, literary image and actual practice combine to illustrate the development of Greek funerary contests. It is argued that not only did the form of Homeric ritual funeral games bring about the development and growth of athletic events throughout Greek history and beyond, but also that the celebration of games in this way formed the origins of all subsequent athletic festivals, including the four Panhellenic games of Olympia, Pythia, Nemea, and Isthmia.

Such importance bears further detailed analysis as to

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[41]*Pindar, frag. 6.5(1) (on Melicertes); and Euripides, Hypsipyle 97-103 (on Opheltes).*

[42]*Supra n.2, the citations from the work of Pindar. A scholiast to Pindar's Isthmian Odes stated that all athletic contests were originally funeral games.*

[43]*Apollonius Rhodius, Argonautica 1.1058.*

the way in which Homeric funerary celebrations, like those held in honour of Patroclus in *Iliad* 23, were organised, and indeed the social and cultural nature of these athletic contests themselves.

IV

THE GAMES FOR PATROCLUS

In all six of the extant epic poems the narrative is interrupted by a long section devoted to an account of funerary athletic contests held for a dead hero.[1] With one exception, it appears as if the games for Patroclus in *Iliad* XXIII are the earliest of these accounts,[2] the remainder being obviously modelled after Homer's contests,[3] thus providing an

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[1] *The six epics comprise : Homer, Iliad XXIII; Quintus Smyrnaeus, Posthomerica IV, with the games for Achilles; Nonnus, Dionysica XXXVII, who presents the games for Opheltes; Virgil, Aeneid V, with the games held in honour of Aeneas's father, Anchises; Statius, Thebaid VI, who also relates the games for Opheltes; and Silius Italicus, Punica XVI, who writes on the games held by Scipio Africanis for his father and uncle, but it should be noted that this was not an actual funeral because the bodies were not there (Punica 16.304). Although not considered one of this group of poems, the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius also contains funeral games, similarly modelled on Homer's account. Further discussion on his work can be found in R.W. Garson, "Homeric echoes on Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica," Classical Philology 67 (1972), 1-9.*

[2] *The games for Achilles in Posthomerica IV of Quintus Smyrnaeus bear little resemblance to those related by Homer in Iliad XXIII. With the loss of much of the Epic Cycle it is not possible to accurately trace his sources but it appears, based upon certain key elements such as the order of athletic events, that Quintus Smyrnaeus followed the archetype of those games mentioned in the Aethiopis and in the Odyssey XXIV. For a more detailed discussion of this notion, cf. W.H. Willis, "Athletic contests in the epic," Transactions. American Philological Association 72 (1941), 392-417.*

[3] *The practice of 'modelling' other authors was an accepted practice in ancient literature, especially integral to oral poetry. Four of the epics bear a marked resemblance to Homer : the Dionysiaca of Nonnos, whose use of Homer is virtually wholesale, and the Latin epics of Virgil, Statius, and Silius Italicus. In modern times imitation of previous*

accurate history of the development of this theme as a literary tradition.

In addition to those for Patroclus, Homer cites other instances of heroic funeral games. Nestor, boasting of the exploits of his younger days, recalls his prowess in the games for Amaryngeus in which he won the boxing, wrestling, foot-race, and spear-cast events, but in which he was unfairly defeated in the chariot race.[4] In the boxing match, Euryalus is introduced as the victor at the funeral games for Oedipus in Thebes[5] although, perhaps because his opponent was later to gain the notoriety as the architect of the wooden horse,[6] he is unceremoniously knocked out by Epeius. When Agamemnon tells Achilles of the games held at his own funeral, it appears that Homer is again drawing on earlier sources.[7] The

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authorities is in keeping with oral tradition. As Williams points out, 'plagiarism' of others' material comes out of a folk culture where one borrows partly because their culture fails to define the word as a commodity, and instead assumes that everyone creates language and no one owns it (J. Williams, "The voice of deliverance," rev. of K.D. Miller, Voice of Deliverance : the Language of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and its Sources (1992), The Washington Post National Weekly Edition, March 30-April 15, 1992. For further work concerning the Afro-Caribbean oral tradition, cf.R. Cobham and M. Collins eds., Watchers and Seekers (London: The Women's Press, 1986); M. Collins, Angel (London : The Women's Press, 1987); and M. Daphinis, "African language influences in Creole," Unpublished PhD. dissertation, University of London School of Oriental and African Studies, 1981.

[4] *Iliad 23.630-642.*

[5] *Iliad 23.679-680.*

[6] *Odyssey 4.391.*

[7] *Odyssey 24.85-94. Perhaps the oldest funeral games of which there is a record are those for Pelias (Pausanias, Description of Greece 5.17.9-11, and Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae 4.172e), as depicted on the Chest of Cypselus at Olympia. Archaeological support for this event is found on a Corinthian vase dated early sixth century, B.C. (Pfuhl, Malerei und*

poet does not specifically tell of the funeral games for Hector, yet in a sense they have already been held during Achilles' chase after
Hector around the walls of Troy,[8] culminating in Achilles, "swift of foot", killing Hector and despoiling his body.

Prize-giving in funeral games

As noted in the *Iliad*, games were held on other occasions besides funerals. The Phaecians held games for the entertainment of Odysseus,[9] and having invited himself to the house of Eteocles, Tydeus challenged the Cadmeans to games and won them all;[10] however, these games did not honour a dead hero, and there were no prizes awarded. Homer speaks of horses that competed for a prize, "a tripod haply or a woman, in honour of a warrior that is dead,"[11] so it may be argued that prize-giving was specific to funeral games and mention of

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Zeichnung der Greichen [Munich, 1923] 3.42, fig. 179). Further study on archaic Corinthian vase-painting, including analysis of the pottery of the eighth and seventh centuries, B.C., is found in J.L. Benson, Earlier Corinthian Workshops : A Study of Corinthian Geometric and Protocorinthian Stylistic Groups (Amsterdam : Allard Pierson, 1989).

[8] *Iliad 22.152-166. Virgil does include the games held by Priam in honour of Hector, in which he describes Dares as the victor in the boxing contest (Aeneid 5.371-374).*

[9] *Odyssey 8.100-234.*

[10] *Iliad 4.385-390.*

[11] *Iliad 22.164 (trans. A.T. Murray, 1985).*

competition for prizes refers to funeral contests.[12]

In all of the established civic funeral games from the late fifth to fourth centuries, B.C., and in many of the minor ones, wreaths were awarded to the victors instead of material prizes,[13] and this tradition was preserved in the later games, such as in the case of the *Actia* and the *Ludi Victoriae Caesaris* instituted by Augustus.[14] Those of the minor local games offering prizes of value provided a single object instead of a wreath, which became typical of that festival. For example, a bronze shield at the *Heraia* and *Hecatombia* in Argos, a silver cup at the Marathonian games, and oil at the *Panathenaia*.[15]

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[12]*For example in Iliad 11.698-702. These instances are fairly common, thus Agamemnon describes his twelve horses as "stout prize-winners, who win prizes when they run. He would not be lacking in spoil, a man who had them, nor lacking in possession of precious gold, so many prizes have these hooved horses won me" (Iliad 9.124-127). Similarly, in describing Achilles's own funeral games in the underworld, Agamemnon says, "already you've been to the funeral of many, of men, of heroes, when a king has died; the young men gird and ready themselves for prizes" (Odyssey 24.87-89).*

[13]*W.H. Willis, "Athletic contests in the epic," Transactions. American Philological Association 72 (1941), p. 409. The wreath motif may also have originated from funerals : Anacreon refers to the wreaths of roses placed upon the corpses in Iliad XXIII, (Anacreontea 55.16); as does Pliny, Natural History 21.10.15.*

[14]*Augustus initiated many reforms aimed to promote a return to the morality of Old Rome coupled with the idealism of Greece, and among these was an attempt to revitalise an interest in athletics. The Actia was celebrated to commemorate his naval victory over Anthony and Cleopatra, intended as a Roman Olympics, where the events and prizes accordingly followed its Greek predecessor (Dio Chrysostom, Discourses 51.22; and Pliny, Natural History 7.159). The Ludi Victoriae Caesaris had been intended by Augustus to celebrate his father's victory at Thapsus, but following Caesar's death they instead became a funerary celebration (Augustus, Res Gestae Divi Augusti 22).*

[15]*Scholiast on Pindar, Olympian Odes 13.148; and Nonnos, Dionysiaca 37.146-151. The Argive shield is mentioned by Hyginus, Fabulae 273.*

The significant fact is that only one prize, that to the victor, was awarded at such a contest. Competitors winning second and lower places usually went unrewarded and unsung. From the instances in the *Iliad* where mention is made of the earlier competition for prizes other than in the contests in Patroclus's games, it seems clear that a single prize for the victor is implied. On the Shield of Heracles, horsemen were represented as contending for a golden tripod, the only prize available.[16] Similarly, in his version of Patroclus's games, Hyginus represents the victor in wrestling as receiving a golden cauldron, and the winner in the javelin contest a golden lance.[17] As Homer and Hesiod constitute the earliest literary evidence of this aspect of funeral contests, and that some of these passages seem to have drawn upon earlier sources, it would appear that it was the custom for competitors to contend for a single prize.[18] Yet in Homer, virtually all the contestants in Patroclus's games receive prizes. Before each contest, Achilles announces not only the first prize for the victor, but the second and lower prizes as well, implying in the number of prizes offered the number of contestants expected to take part. Even those who come in

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[16]*Hesiod, Shield of Heracles 305.*

[17]*Hyginus, Fabulae 273.*

[18]*If one were to assume that Quintus Smyrnaeus used an older tradition than Homer in devising the funeral games for Achilles [cf.supra n.2], it seems natural that he should name only one prize in each of his contests.*

last, or who suffer accidents, and clearly deserve no prize, nevertheless receive them by special dispensation. This creates a certain dilemma concerning the model that Homer must have used. It is possible that these games reflect a later period than originally thought, when the contestants needed more incentive to compete, or perhaps that the author planned the number of rivals in each contest beforehand, and thus could prepare for a sufficient number of prizes.

This model is clearly exemplified in the archery contest[19] in which the mark is a dove tied by a cord to the top of the mast.[20] The first prize is to be awarded to the contestant who hits the dove, but a second prize is set aside for the archer who severs the cord - a shot which would not have been expected in the competition. As argued above, the early prototype of this contest would have provided for only a single prize, however when two first-class shots found their way into the story, a consolation prize had to be included to reward what was actually the better shot. Because Achilles

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[19] *Iliad 23.850-883.*

[20] *As remarked by Athenaeus, the tying of the dove to a mast indicates that this was a normal method of training for bird-shooting (Deipnosophistae 1.25). Perhaps more importantly, the historical significance of this event should be noted. The only competitors were Meriones, a Cretan, and Teucer. The lack of contestants might indicate that the bow was regarded more as a foreign weapon than a Greek one (cf. Iliad 10.428; 13.576-592; 13.712-718), and it is noted that the heroes who used bows were of an older generation than the Trojan war (J. Mouratidis, "Greek sports, games and festivals before the eighth century b.c." Unpublished PhD. dissertation, Ohio State University). Further, that Meriones was a Cretan supports the archaeological evidence that the Minoans, an earlier civilisation, made extensive use of the bow,as represented in Linear A tablets by curved goats' horns (cf. Mouratidis, supra).*

announces beforehand the number of prizes to be awarded, Homer has to introduce an element of surprise, much as employed by Virgil,[21] and has the first shot sever the cord by accident, and the second competitor display greater skill in hitting the dove on the wing. Whilst the latter may claim the first prize, the first shot was too skilful to be ignored, and a second prize is awarded him. The use of the element of surprise indicates that Homer needed to use such a device, as used by later poets, in order to improve upon the story in an earlier original model.[22]

In only one case do the games for Patroclus preserve the principle of the solitary prize. For the winner of the discus, the prize is that same piece of iron to be used in the contest. It is recommended by Achilles as a valuable commodity for the winner's ploughman,[23] and is thus reminiscent of the feudal traditions of older times. The antiquity of this prize

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[21] *In the Aeneid, the archery contest is an enlargement of the Homeric event, but the terms of the contest are the same, with four contestants. The first hits the mast, the second severs the cord, and the third hits the bird on the wing. However the fourth, Acestes, a paragon of the old Roman virtues and son of a god, just shoots his arrow into the sky, whereupon it bursts into flame. Just as Achilles, Aeneas must judge, and awards Acestes the first prize because of the obvious divine intervention.*

[22] *The prizes offered in this archery contest, ten double and ten single axes, are reminiscent of the trial of Odysseus's bow in Odyssey 21, where the feat required was to shoot an arrow 'through' the iron heads of twelve axes lined up in a row. The type of axe-head required is suggested by an inlaid sword, and a gold model of an axe found in Grave IV at Mycenae, thus indicating the antiquity of the archery episodes on both the Iliad and Odyssey. cf. G.C. Mylonas, "Homeric and Mycenaean burial customs," American Journal of Archaeology 52 (1948), 56-81; and G.C. Mylonas, Ancient Mycenae - the Capital City of Agamemnon (Princetown University Press, 1957).*

[23] *Iliad 23.826.*

corroborates the suggestion of the single prize as an early practice and weighs against those critics who would call this passage a late interpolation.[24]

Considering the number of references and traces of early funeral games, it could be argued that Homer did not include the games for Patroclus simply by way of appropriating an older source, but because the prevalence of funerary contests in rhapsodic literature had established a tradition of their inclusion whenever a heroic figure died, as evidenced by the athletic contests described in the other epics [*supra* n.1], and because of their special function in the poetic design of the epic.

The function of the funeral games for Patroclus

The games in *Iliad* XXIII are an effective contrast between the Achilles of *Iliad* XXII and the Achilles of *Iliad* XXIV, showing once again the hero as a respected leader and member of the warrior society from which he had separated himself through much of the poem. Since *Iliad* XXIV is devoted exclusively to Achilles, the gods, and the Trojans, this is the last time that he is seen amongst his peers. This is also

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[24] *cf. P. von der Muhl, Kritisches Hypomnema zur Ilias (Basel, 1952), pp.365-366; and G.M. Bolling, The Athetized Lines of the Iliad (Baltimore, 1944), pp.183-185. In his Loeb translation of the Iliad, Murray notes that the description of the discus event is rejected by both Aristophanes and Aristarchus, and indeed this contest is neither listed by Achilles, (Iliad 23.621 ff.), nor Nestor, (Iliad 23.634 ff.), as one would have expected if it were considered a customary event. A later poet, following the model suggested here, would probably do as Quintus Smyrnaeus, presenting the iron to the victor, but only to play with, as the real prize is Memnon's armour (Quintus Smyrnaeus, Posthomerica 4.463-464).*

the last time that the major Greek heroes, whose exploits dominated *Iliad* II to XVII but of whom little was mentioned after *Iliad* XVIII, are presented in review.[25] Achilles' performance in *Iliad* XXIII paves the way for his return to the expected tradition of his dedication to fight until death, and of the mourning for him as the most valiant of the Achaeans, for it shows Achilles' move from grief for Patroclus to an active attempt at reconciliation with Agamemnon.[26] The tempering of his attitude and redirection of his energies mitigates his past actions, and restores him as an agent of

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[25] *This review, through the events of the games, is seen as geometrically complementing the catalogue of Iliad 2. cf. L.V. Hinckley, "Patroclus' funeral games and Homer's character portrayal," Classical Journal 81 (1986), 209; and C.H. Whitman, The Heroic Paradox (Cornell University Press, 1982).*

[26] *Patroclus' role in the Iliad is regarded by many to be that of Achilles' alter ego, as an expression of the human nature of the godlike hero (cf. C.H. Whitman, Homer and the Heroic Tradition [New York, 1958], pp. 199-202; and J.M. Redfield, Nature and Culture in the Iliad : The Tragedy of Hector [University of Chicago Press, 1975], p. 107), yet the link between Achilles' attitude towards Patroclus and that towards Agamemnon is that of fatherhood. The Iliad is a story of fatherhood - the heroes are frequently identified by their filial status; thus Achilles is Peleides, son of Peleus, and Agamemnon is Atreides, son of Atreus. The patriarchal household was the basic unit of Greek society, with Zeus as the father of the gods (Iliad 1.544), and Agamemnon as the patriarch of the Achaians (Iliad 2.46 and 9.160). The force of paternal affection anchored individual loyalty to communal responsibility, and the sorrow of fatherhood symbolises the tragedy of the Trojan war, thus Zeus weeps for Sarpedon, Neleus is concerned for Nestor, Hector bids farewell to his son, Priam mourns Hector, and Peleus sends Achilles to help the Achaians. Peleus treated Patroclus as not only an older brother to Achilles, but entrusted him with paternal duties in his stead. After his death, Achilles is now forced to act as father for Patroclus (Iliad 23.221-225), and after being implored by Priam to remember his father, Achilles, mindful of filial responsibility, returns Hector's body to his father, "and Achilles wept for his own father, and now again for Patroclus" (Iliad 24.511-512). Further discussion on this notion is provided by R. Finlay, "Patroklos, Achilleus, and Peleus : fathers and sons in the Iliad'" Classical World 73 (1983), 267-273.*

order.[27]

Compared with the surrounding events, the tone of the games certainly provides a much lighter interlude. There is as much laughter and good humour in Patroclus's games as there is in the rest of the *Iliad*.[28] Achilles reacts with a smile at Antilochus' anger at losing the second prize to Eumelus in the chariot race.[29] Later Antilochus smiles in return, and with humour complains of his inability to defeat older men in the foot-race.[30] The audience laughs at Aias after slipping in filth during the foot-race[31] and also at the poor throw of Epeius in the discus event.[32] However, the games do not degenerate into a purely comic episode, for even the most farcical incident, Aias' slipping in bull's filth, has a serious message. His challenge over Idomeneus' judgement earlier in the chariot race and his use of abusive language to that end almost became more serious, and Achilles was forced

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[27]*The concept of order over disorder is further discussed by R. Dunkle, "Some notes on the funeral games : Iliad 23," Prometheus 7 (1981), 11-18. He argues that this is the most prominent theme of the funeral games, when every hero receives his due, thus ensuring that heroic life functions well, and restoring the model world in which the heroic code of behaviour is consistently realised.*

[28]*The only laughter and smiles noted outside of Iliad XXIII occur in Iliad 2.270, when the Achaeans laugh at Thersites' tears; Iliad 6.404, describing Hector as smiling at his son; Iliad 7.212, describing Aias as smiling on his way to battle; and Iliad 11.378, where Paris's marksmanship elicits a merry laugh from the archer.*

[29]*Iliad 23.555.*

[30]*Iliad 23.786-792.*

[31]*Iliad 23.784.*

[32]*Iliad 23.840.*

to intervene, a reflection of the incident where Agamemnon gratuitously insults Achilles, resulting in the latter's refusal to fight.[33] The quarrel is calmed before any harm can be done; however, Aias' ignoble behaviour, in contrast to the heroic courtesy of the games, is corrected comically in the foot-race.[34] This re-establishes a sense of order to the proceedings, thus allowing the Achaeans to be seen as returning to normal life after the gloom of Patroclus' funeral, and providing the heroes the opportunity to resume their pursuit of honour. The only difference is that honour is not won by victory in battle but by success in athletic contests.

Whilst the games are play, they are very much taken seriously by the heroes who compete, and the prizes are coveted with the same emotional intensity as the spoils of battle. The games in fact appear to be an imitation of combat, with the events designed to test the skills of warriors, and for example, like war, the games involve horses, as instruments of competition in the chariot race and as instruments of military strategy.[35] The spoils of war include

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[33] *Iliad 1.173-198.*

[34] *Homer adds another qualification to the episode of Aias' fall in that it is as a result of the sacrificial slaughter of animals at Patroclus' cremation that blood and dung are lying about.*

[35] *cf. Iliad 4.297-309. Further discussion of Homer's military use of horses and chariots is noted in ancient sources : Demosthenes, Erotic Essay 25; and Xenophon, Cyropaedia 7.1 27. Modern discussion this topic can be found in : J.K. Anderson, "Greek chariot-borne and mounted infantry'" American Journal of Archaeology 79 (1975), 175-179; and H.L. Littauer, "The military use of the chariot in the Aegean in the late*

horses, as well as women, tripods, cauldrons, and armour, and the value and history of these spoils are preserved as they become also the prizes in the games.[36] The games provide the heroes with an opportunity to win fame and prizes, and the warrior who receives these spoils through a memorable contest adds them to his heroic biography. In turn the occasion is made famous in the recounting of his feats.[37] The antithesis of the wining of fame is that the prize-giving becomes also a

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bronze age," American Journal of Archaeology 76 (1972), 145-158. G.R. Bugh discusses the topic of cavalry, and whilst the evidence is obscure, argues for the possible existence of an Athenian cavalry in the Archaic period, probably in the form of a standing border or coastal patrol (The Horsemen of Athens (Princeton University Press, 1988). Certainly there is evidence that the dokimasia of the cavalry was in existence by the end of the sixth century, B.C. (Aristotle, Athenaion Politeia 49).

[36] *"From his ships [Achilles] brought forth prizes; cauldrons and tripods and horses and mules and strong oxen and fair-girdled women and grey iron" (Iliad 23.259-262, trans. A.T. Murray, 1985). Horses become prizes in both the chariot race (Iliad 23.265) and the boxing contest (Iliad 23.654). Just as Chryseis was a spoil of war taken by Achilles from the sack of Thebe in Eetion, women are prizes, as in the chariot race (Iliad 23.263) and in the wrestling (Iliad 23.704). Tripods seem to be the earliest prizes on record, thus Neleus' quadriga races for a tripod (Iliad 11.700), and on the Shield of Heracles a golden tripod was set as the winners prize (Hesiod, The Shield of Heracles 305). In the games for Pelias, tripods are depicted on the Chest of Cypselus and on the Corinthian vase both dated sixth century, B.C. [cf. supra n.6] and also on the Francois krater (cf. L.E. Roller, "Funeral games in Greek art'", American Journal of Archaeology 85 (1981), pp. 108-109; and M. Gjodsen, "Greek bronzes, a review article'" American Journal of Archaeology 67 (1963), p.346). Further instances of tripods as prizes in the Iliad include : 22.164, in describing Achilles chasing Hector; 23.264, as part of the first prize in the chariot race; and 23.702, as first prize in the wrestling. (cf. mention of lebes in Ch.3, n.10 supra). Cauldrons, as useful objects in the warriors' camps as well as of intrinsic value, are also given as prizes. Thus Iliad 23.267 in the chariot race, and 23.886 for the javelin contest. Hyginus' representation of the games for Patroclus include a cauldron as Aias' prize in the wrestling (Hyginus, Fabulae 273). The armour of the three most notable Trojans killed since Iliad 16, Lycaon, Sarpedon, and Asteropaios, have been offered as prizes in the games (note also the Argive shield in Hyginus, Fabulae 273; and the prize for winning the discus contest in Quintus Smyrnaeus, Posthomerica 4.464).*

[37] *Indeed, the competitors do not wait for the prizes to be handed to them; their retainers seize them and carry them off just as captured armour or horses are passed to the warriors' retainers on the battlefield. cf. Iliad 23.511-513, and 23.848-849.*

ceremony of despoilment,[38] a notion that would explain why Patroclus was cremated in the *Iliad* and Achilles cremated in the *Odyssey*, as opposed to the more common practice of inhumation. The quick burial and disposing of the body prevents the enemy gaining from the despoilment of the dead warrior. As mentioned above, in combat, as in games, the victor gains honour, but in combat the loser himself becomes the victor's prize, and the honour of one is secured by the dishonour of the other; thus, the shaming and mutilation on the battlefield after defeat secures purification for the victor's camp. In funeral games the heroes celebrate the death of a victim of combat by enacting conflicts in which the loser is not a victim. Thus, they purify the impurity of the dead warrior, not by reforming the situation, which is beyond their control, but by denying it. Throughout the games for Patroclus, Achilles is seen to be the instrument of purification, yet at the same time he continues to inflict impurity upon the body of Hector.[39] How the games serve in this function is exemplified by three of the contests, the chariot race, the *hoplomachia*, and the javelin-throw, thereby re-focussing the warriors to their heroic duties in

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[38] *Note the despoilment of Tydeus' body (Statius, Thebaid 9.177-188) in order to "gain enoblement." Further discussion on the concept of funeral and antifuneral is provided in J. Griffin, Homer on Life and Death (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1980) and in J.M. Redfield, Nature and Culture in the Iliad : The Tragedy of Hector (University of Chicago Press, 1975).*

[39] *Iliad 23.24-25, and 24.14-21. Whilst the games purify combat by enacting it within the boundaries of the community, the defilement of Hector reminds the audience of the reality of the nature of the conflict.*

maintaining the community's honour in battle.

The chariot, *hoplomachia*, and javelin contests

Because of Homer's authority in literature, the order of events in the games have become an accepted model, yet this poses a dilemma. The order in *Iliad* XXIII is chariot race, boxing, wrestling, foot-race, *hoplomachia*, discus, archery, and javelin. Homer begins with the chief event, to which he devotes more space (290 lines) than all the other contests together (249 lines) and each successive contest becomes less important than the preceding. On the other hand, the order in the *Posthomerica* of Quintus Smyrnaeus, more than likely based upon an earlier model as argued above, is quite different, starting with the foot-race, followed by wrestling, boxing, archery, discus, leaping, javelin, *pancration*, chariot race, and horse race. This version develops a crescendo culminating in the chariot and horse races, with the least important events buried in the middle. This order of events parallels the Olympic games, where traditionally the foot-race started the games and the chariot and horse races were the final events.[40] Even Homer follows an apparently different model in the games for Amaryngeus in which Nestor competed, where the order of events was boxing, wrestling, foot-race, spear-cast,

[40]*Pausanias, Description of Greece 5.9.3. Sophocles also describes funeral games as starting with the foot-race and ending with the chariot race (Electra 680-760).*

and finally the chariot race.[41] Similarly the order of events in the games where Odysseus competed with the Phaecians is different to that of the games for Patroclus, in that it too started with the foot-race, and was followed by wrestling, leaping, boxing, and the discus event.[42] After these games Alcinous boasts of the Phaecians' prowess in boat-racing, probably a symbolic equivalent to the chariot race.[43] In the *Shield of Heracles*, Hesiod describes a series of games depicted on the shield in much the same order. First there are men boxing and wrestling, then a chase, and finally a vividly

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[41] *Iliad 23.630 ff.*

[42] *Odyssey 8.118-130.*

[43] *Odyssey 8.246-247. The first contest in Virgil's games for Anchises is a boat race (Aeneid 5.114-285) based upon Homer's chariot race in terms of order of events, length of poem devoted to that event, and that it is the only team event. Virgil even uses a simile comparing the start of the boat race to the start of a chariot race (Aeneid 5.147-149), reinforcing the parallel, and the way in which Cloanthus' boat takes the inside track and overtakes Gyas' boat (Aeneid 5.159-182) reflects the similar strategy of Antilochus in Homer's chariot race. Virgil's innovation may be accounted for by assuming that the Trojans brought no chariots with them from Carthage (Acestes had to supply the horses for the Lusus Troiae), but he may also be playing to the popularity of his own time of the naumachia, or mock sea-battles, or in suggesting a poetic prophesy, when the women attempt to burn the boats. Further discussion on the parallels between these two races is found in : W.W. Briggs, "Augustan athletics and the games of Aeneid V," Classical World 79 (1985), pp. 268-271; and A. Rose, "Vergil's ship-snake simile (Aeneid 5.270-281)," Classical Journal 78 (1982), pp. 115-121. On Virgil's modelling of Homer, and his original epic poetry, cf. E. Henry, The Vigour of Prophecy - A Study of Vergil's Aeneid (Southern Illinois University Press, 1989). It has been argued that Virgil in fact models the Aeneid on the Phaecian games in Odyssey VIII, as opposed to those in Iliad XXIII, because the Odyssey is more concerned with 'good kingship'. In fact there are 334 references to kingship in the Aeneid, one to every 29.63 lines, whereas in the Iliad they occur in the ratio of one to 54.67, and in the Odyssey one to 62.42 lines, so it could actually be contended that the Aeneid was cued by the Iliad, cf. B.W. Boyd, "The public and private lives of Aeneas," rev. of F. Cairns, Virgil's Augustan Epic (Cambridge University Press, 1989), Classical Journal 87 (1992), p. 185.*

described chariot race.[44]

Thus all the evidence for the order of the games outside of those for Patroclus and the epics that model them, is unanimous; though the order of contests is not fixed, nevertheless, in the *Epic Cycle*, as well as in the great national festivals, the foot-race usually began the series, followed by gymnastic events, and finally by the chariot race.

Instead of preserving the normal epic tradition in the order of events, Homer is unique in offering the series in reverse. No reason for this innovation is apparent; however, several critics have yet to explain why Achilles, at the very beginning of *Iliad* XXIII, encourages a massed chariot display in lament of Patroclus' death.[45] It should be noted that it was upon a chariot that Patroclus was sent into battle by Achilles, and that upon this chariot Patroclus' first victory in combat was against Pyraechnes, an expert in chariot tactics. Patroclus displays his own expertise in chariotry by causing havoc amongst the Trojans, and his victory against the great Trojan hero, Sarpedon, was due to his superior tactical prowess. With this evidence, it becomes obvious that Homer would find this a special reason for making chariotry the subject of the first event and for devoting so many lines to its description.[46]

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[44]*Hesiod, The Shield of Heracles 301-313.*

[45]*Iliad 23.6-16.*

[46]*Achilles sends Patroclus into battle on his chariot, driven by*

The chariot race has further thematic significance in that it contains a number of indirect reminiscences of the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon in *Iliad* I. The basic conflicts of this incident are presented in a somewhat altered form, but in a non-tragic context. In addition to the parallel incidents concerning the insults hurled at Idomeneus by Aias in the chariot race,[47] and those voiced by Agamemnon towards Achilles in their dispute over Chryseis, several aspects of the chariot race set the stage for Homer's reflection of *Iliad* I, the most significant issue in the war prior to Patroclus' death, in order to resolve the societal disorder and ill-fortune of the Greeks prior to the push for Troy.

Before the race begins, Nestor advises his son as to the strategy that should be employed,[48] namely that because

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Automedon, yoked with the steeds, Xanthus and Balius, and side-traced by Pedasus (Iliad 16.144 ff.). Patroclus slays Pyraechnes, "that had led the Paeonians, lords of chariots, out of Amydon ...[and who] were driven in rout, even the Paeonians, for upon them all had Patroclus sent panic" (Iliad 16.284-292). In his engagement with Sarpedon, Patroclus first kills the driver, Thrasymelus, thus weakening Sarpedon's fighting ability, ending when "before his horses and chariot he [Sarpedon] lat outstretched" (Iliad 16.462-486). Interestingly, the mortal wound inflicted upon Patroclus by Euphorbus, and the final death-blow by Hector (Iliad 16.806 ff.), occur when he is separated from his chariot.

[47]*It is interesting to note that the elements of a legal system can be detected in the course of the chariot race, particularly concerning the various means by which misconduct was punished and disputes decided - ie. the settling of disputes by appeal to an umpire (Iliad 23.485-487), and by challenging one's opponent to take an oath (Iliad 23.581-585). MacDowell argues that these two procedures were used for two different purposes, the former for settling a dispute of fact, and the latter for avoiding a vendetta, and that the oath too was a means of affirming a fact (Iliad 23.585) and of showing that one's statements were not lies (Iliad 23.570), and that it was used simply as an alternative to an appeal to neutral arbitrators (Iliad 23.573-574). cf. D.M. MacDowell, Law in Homer'" rev. of E. Cantarella, Norma e Sanzione in Omero : Contributo alla Protostoria del Diritto Greco (Universita degli Studi di Milano : Pubblicazioni dell' Instituto di Diritto Romano, 1979), Classical Review 31 (1981), 66-67.*

[48]*A further similarity between the games and combat can be seen in*

Antilochus' horses are slower, he will need to apply skilled horsemanship, particularly around the turn.[49] Nestor already knows the turning-post that Achilles selected for the race, and advises Antilochus to hold a tighter line in the turn in order to secure an unbeatable lead. Nestor's wisdom is ignored, just as it was by Achilles and Agamemnon in their argument, and Antilochus makes the inside pass in the home stretch, not at the turn. Menelaus accuses Antilochus of acting recklessly and reflects Nestor's advice to drive carefully. However, Antilochus, in his youthful impetuosity, forces his way past Menelaus who has to give way in order to avoid a collision.[50] Homer remarks of Antilochus as a typical youth using force instead of skill, comparing him to a young

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Nestor's speech to Antilochus, reminiscent of his long tactical speeches in battle (cf. Iliad 2.362 ff.). Similarly, Epeius employs a euche, or formal boast prior to battle, when he contends for the boxing, "Let him draw nigh, whoso is to bear as his prize the two-handled cup; the mule I deem that none other of the Achaeans shall lead away, by worsting me with his fists, for I avow me to be the best man ... [and] utterly will I rend his flesh and crush his bones. Wherefore let them that be next of kin abide here in a throng, that they may bear him forth when worsted by my hands." (Iliad 23.667-675). Further discussion on Homer's use of battle exhortations is discussed by E. Keitel, "Homeric antecedents to the cohortatio in the ancient historians," Classical World 80 (1987), 153-172.

[49]*According to Dunkle, there are two figures that stand out in the narrative of the funeral games for Patroclus because they display the effectiveness of metis, a word which ranges in meaning from 'wisdom' to the practical use of wisdom as 'skill'. The first is Nestor, who makes two speeches, and the second being Odysseus, who wins the wrestling and foot-race, and who has a significant role in the boxing, being represented by Epeius. The value of metis is not shared by Achilles, who throughout is a hero of bie, or 'force'. The antithesis of metis and bie, as argued by the author, is a central theme to both the games, and the entire poem. cf. R. Dunkle, "Nestor, Odysseus, and the metis-bie antithesis," Classical World 81 (1987), 1-17.*

[50]*For more detailed discussion of Antilochus' tactics in the chariot race, cf. M. Gagarin, Antilochus' strategy : the chariot race in Iliad 23," Classical Philology 78 (1983), 35-38.*

discus thrower testing his strength.[51] As in *Iliad* I, the indiscretion of youth leads to an angry conflict.

At the end of the race Diomedes finishes first, Antilochus second, Menelaus third, Meriones fourth, and Eumelus, who was expected to win, and whom Aias is sure must be winning,[52] finishes last, his chariot broken. Achilles is charged with distributing the prizes, and as a sort of compromise between what was supposed to happen and what did happen, suggests that Eumelus be given the second prize. Only Diomedes, who before the race is called "albeit by far the best",[53] could have been expected to have beaten Eumelus. The decision is approved by all except Antilochus, who protests his loss of the second prize, and challenges Achilles to fight,[54] just as Achilles himself threatened to draw his sword against Agamemnon.[55] Just as Nestor acts as arbitrator in *Iliad* I, Achilles tries to satisfy Antilochus' demand while still recognising Eumelus' station, and accepts the suggestion of Antilochus that he be allowed to retain the second prize, but that Eumelus should get another consolation prize.[56] More notable perhaps, is that the unclaimed fifth

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[51] *Iliad 23.434.*

[52] *Iliad 23.480-481.*

[53] *Iliad 23.356.*

[54] *Iliad 23.553-554.*

[55] *Iliad 1.190-191.*

[56] *Athenaeus remarks that it was appropriate that Eumelus should*

prize is awarded to Nestor since old age prevents him from competing[57] and his athletic prowess is now a thing of the past,[58] so that honour and recognition can be given to him, where it was perhaps not given in *Iliad* I. Nestor expresses his gratitude with another long speech, but in this case the author intends to emphasise the ideal balance of heroic life.[59]

This contest recalls by contrast Agamemnon's rejection of Achilles' suggestion that he wait until the Achaeans sack another town in order to acquire a replacement for Chryseis.[60] Also recalled are both Agamemnon's fear of going prizeless, and Achilles' complaint concerning the unfair

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receive a breast-plate because it is an instrument of safety [Iliad 23.560] and that he had been injured during the race [Iliad 23.394]. Deipnosophistae 10.433.

[57]*The fifth prize is described as "a two-handled urn, yet untouched of fire" (Iliad 23.269-270), presumably unfired for the use of cold drinks. Athenaeus remarks upon the appropriateness of giving Nestor a cup because he is a drinker, (Deipnosophistae 10.433). Nestor is seen to drink the most of all the Homeric heroes, as seen in Iliad 14.1, "and the cry of battle was not unmarked of Nesto, albeit at his wine", and of all the heroes, only Nestor's cup is described (Iliad 11.632). See also Ch.II, n.13 supra, in reference to Homer's own fondness of drink.*

[58]*cf. Iliad 23.626-650.*

[59]*Many have criticised Homer for his 'boring' narrative, especially when he allows Nestor his long-winded speeches, however the importance of this event, together with the literary image that is presented refute this line of thought. This incident is similar to Nestor's long speech of advice to Patroclus in Iliad XI, which led to Patroclus tending for the wounded Eurypylos, and his chastisement of Achilles' behaviour. In this passage, Homer demonstrates a literary cohesion between Nestor's intentions and assumptions with Patroclus' hopes and ideals, thus turning traditional narrative material to communicative advantage. (cf. E. Minchin, "Speaker and listener, text and context'" Classical World 84 (1991), 273-285.*

[60]*Iliad 1.127-129, (trans. A.T. Murray, 1985).*

distribution of spoils after battle.[61] Thus, Achilles makes sure that every competitor receives a prize, and the just dispensation of prizes signifies that order has been restored to the heroic life of the Achaeans.

The fifth contest is the *hoplomachia*,[62] better-known as the armed duel between Telamonian Aias and Diomedes.[63] This contest is unique in that it ends in a draw, just as the wrestling, and is halted by the Achaeans because they fear for

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[61] *Agamemnon, in justifying taking Chryseis from Achilles, argues that it would not be 'seemly' to go prizeless (Iliad 1.119), and Achilles says he would prefer to return home than be dishonoured with petty spoils (Iliad 1.162-168).*

[62] *No explicit definition of hoplomachia can be found in early ancient literature, and modern sources derive their explanations from Hellenistic or Roman practices in which the hoplomachia had become institutionalised for public spectacle. Wheeler notes that a distinction must be drawn between hoplomachia and monomachia, where the former is a ritualised demonstration and the latter denotes a trial of champions or a judicial duel in the sense of trial by combat (E.L. Wheeler, "Hoplomachia and Greek dancers in arms," Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies 23 (1982), 223-234). Plato describes hoplomachia contests of one on one, two against two, and opposing teams of ten, in which the types and numbers of blows were tightly controlled [just as in the martial art of kendo] in Laws 833e, and training for this event is described in Xenophon, Memorabilia 3.1. It is of further interest that hoplomachia should be connected with dance, especially dance of Cretan origins (note especially Homeric references to Cretan dance : Iliad 16.617 and 18.592; and also : Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae 181b; Hesiod, Fragmenta 198; Lucian, Philopseudes sive Incredulus 8; Pausanias, Description of Greece 5.7.6; and Virgil, Aeneid 5.588-591), thus confirming the inclusion of this event as a historically accurate practice. cf. E.L. Wheeler, supra; and L.B. Lawler, "The dance in Ancient Crete," in G. Mylonas ed., Studies Presented to David Moore Robinson (Vol. 1 : Washington University Press, 1951).*

[63] *Iliad 23.798-825. It is worth noting that Nonnos followed Homer's games exclusively, especially the almost identical order of events. However, he omits Homer's javelin-throw, and transposes the hoplomachia to the end. Analysis of the text clearly indicates this divergence. In Homer's games the javelin-throw is aborted. Quite different was the hoplomachia, sometimes described as the spear-cast [perhaps an antecedent to the Zulu's adaptation of a spear to an asegai], and therein lies the confusion. Nonnus evidently confuses the two, because Homer failed to describe that the javelin was thrown for distance, whereas the spear-cast/hoplomachia tested thrusting accuracy. Nonnos further shows his ignorance by describing his contestants as "light-armed' or "javelin-men", who then appear in heavy armour (Dionysiaca 37.750 ff.)*

the life of Aias.[64] There are a number of dilemmas within this event. The terms of the contest are not met, as "whoso of the twain shall first reach the other's fair flesh, and touch the inward parts through armour and dark blood, to him [the first prize]."[65] The three pieces of armour, Sarpedon's spear, shield, and helmet, both warriors should "bear away to hold in common",[66] yet it is not explained exactly how the division of prizes should be made. Further, a dinner is promised, but is forgotten,[67] and this is the only event where the real danger of a fatal result exists. Part of the answer must lie in the same device used by Homer in his portrayal of the chariot race, recalling past incidents in the *Iliad* in order to secure a platform from which to restore balance to the proceedings, by allowing Achilles to act as an umpire, and as an agent to give honour where it is due. In this way, the armed combat recalls an opposition of virtues. Although Aias and Diomedes are relatively equal in terms of name-occurrence in the whole poem,[68] they are distinguished in two kinds of

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[64]*Telamonian Aias was also a contestant in the drawn wrestling contest. It could be argued that in that event, even though Achilles declared it a tie, Odysseus was in fact winning [on points] (Iliad 23.725-732), and in the hoplomachia Aias is on the literal point of being killed by Diomedes, but is rescued once again from defeat (Iliad 23.822).*

[65]*Iliad 23.805-806.*

[66]*Iliad 23.809.*

[67]*Iliad 23.810.*

[68]*Aias has 172 entries, and Diomedes has 157 entries. L.V. Hinkley, "Patroclus' funeral games and Homer's character portrayal," Classical Journal 81 (1986), 209-221.*

fighting. Diomedes' successes are at times of offensive Greek victory[69], whereas Aias is portrayed as being defensive.[70] Further, Aias is often described by certain epithets unique to him, thus as carrying a "shield like a tower", being the "bulwark of the Achaeans", and as "best of the Greeks ... after Achilles."[71]

The contest therefore appears to be set up as one between the two virtues of defense and aggression, with Achilles giving the sword that he took from Asteropaeus to the aggressive warrior, and not to the defensive shield-fighter. That Aias is constantly described as only second-best to Achilles, and Diomedes in effect represents the aggressive Achilles in anticipation of his return to the war, the aggressive warrior is confirmed as being more valuable, and from the author's point of view, that it would be better if the Greek warriors returned to their heroic exploits.

Homer intends to recall the duel between Hector and Aias in *Iliad* VII, and like the wrestling, and *hoplomachia*, with Aias on the verge of defeat, the duel is broken off by two heralds of each army.[72] Whilst he is honoured by the Achaeans for his valour in the duel, Aias' success is limited

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[69] *cf. Iliad 4.365; 5.1; 5.122; 5.286; 5.855.*

[70] *cf. Iliad 17.128 ff.*

[71] *Aias carries a 'shield like a tower' (Iliad 7.219; 11.485; 17.18), is a 'bulwark of the Achaeans (Iliad 3.229; 5.5; 7.211), and is 'best of the Greeks ... after Achilles' (Iliad 2.768; 17.279).*

[72] *Iliad 7.273.*

by Achilles' future role in the poem, however he does receive a feast,[73] while the one promised in the games is forgotten, and he does receive the prize of a sword,[74] while the sword of Asteropaeus goes to Diomedes in the *hoplomachia*. Through the contest of the *hoplomachia*, honour is bestowed to all involved, both immediately and retrospectively.

The final contest, drawing the games to close, is the javelin throw, to which Homer devotes the least amount of space (9 lines) but which signifies perhaps the greatest aspect of the entire episode.

Agamemnon appears for the first time in order to compete against the warrior, Idomeneus. Dramatically, it is fitting that the meeting of these two heroes should occur at the end of the games. Achilles has dealt fairly with the other warriors, but it was Agamemnon who disgraced him and whose ignoble behaviour led to the eventual death of Patroclus, and although Achilles accepted Agamemnon's apology it was somewhat perfunctory.[75] However, Achilles awards him the first prize before the contest can even take place, justifying his action by declaring :

> Son of Atreus, we know far thou excellest all,
> and how thou art the best in might and in the
> casting of the spear; nay, take thou this prize

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[73] *Iliad 7.313-320.*

[74] *Iliad 7.303-304.*

[75] *Iliad 19.146-153.*

and go thy way to the hollow ships.[76]

Achilles shows by example what it is to give due honour to a fellow hero, and Agamemnon, the king of kings, cannot be allowed to risk a loss in this contest to Meriones, a hero of lesser rank. Thus, the final act of reconciliation is sealed, and in the same spirit, Achilles returns Hector's body to Priam, his father. This initiates the return of Achilles to the fight, and Homer thus restores balance to the heroic life of the Greeks whose honourable pursuit of victory now determines the fate of Troy.

[76] *Iliad* 23.890-892.

V

CONCLUSION

As stated in the introduction, it has been the purpose of this study to illustrate the significance of the funeral games for Patroclus within the context of the social and cultural nature of the heroic society of which they were a part. In researching the historical development of Greek funerary contests, it becomes clear that the synthesis of literary image and actual practice in Homer's work was probably a result of his own personal history, one that was influenced by the migrations and conflicts of his time, and by the legends created by the exploits of Mycenaean warriors of his past. That the ancient traditions and legends as related in literature are often contentious, only serves to encourage further research to ascertain their cumulative evidentiary value.

It has been asserted that the games of *Iliad* XXIII depict for the most part, a comparatively early stage of their development, with perhaps interpolations which describe the games as they were known in early historical times. That Homer mentions the use of iron, in fact in a limited way, does not

detract from this assertion as it is entirely possible that the events of which he describes took place in the transition period between the Bronze and Iron Ages.[1] In support, one must note two archaeological items that will further corroborate the likelihood of a Mycenaean influence on Homer's work.

During his description of the games, Homer mentions those contests that were held for Oedipus at Thebes,[2] though later critics would consider his tomb at Athens to be genuine;[3] nevertheless, a seal, which is dated no later than the first half of the fifteenth century, B.C., depicts a scene of a young warrior attacking a Sphinx and it is considered to be a representation of the story of Oedipus, the Mycenaean characteristics of which suggest an origin for the legend of Oedipus.[4] It could therefore be argued that Homer's reference

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[1]*Homer indeed portrays iron as rare and precious (Iliad 23.261, 23.834, 23.850). The common metal described is bronze, yet iron comes up in isolated passages, and in similes, and the heroes are sometimes described as having "hearts of iron", much in the same way that fishing or horse riding are mentioned only in exceptional cases or in similes. On the transition between Bronze and Iron Ages, cf. F.H. Stubbings, "The Aegean bronze age," in I.E.S. Edwards, C.J. Gadd, and N.G.L. Hammond, eds., The Cambridge Ancient History- Prolegomena and Prehistory (3rd ed.; Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 239-247. Along similar lines, the decipherment of Linear B also demonstrates the continuity of the Greek people from Mycenaean times into the Classical period, cf. S. Dow, "The linear scripts and the tablets as historical documents: literacy in Minoan and Mycenaean lands,", in I.E.S. Edwards et al, eds., The Cambridge Ancient History- History of the Middle East and the Aegean Region c. 1800-1380 B.C. (3rd ed.; Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 582-608; and D. Young, "Is linear B deciphered?," rev. of S. Levin, The Linear B Decipherment Controversy Re-Examined (State University of New York, 1964), Arion 4 (1965), 512-542.*

[2]*Iliad 23.677 ff.*

[3]*Pausanias, Description of Greece 1.28.7*

[4]*A. Evans, "The ring of Nestor'" Journal of Hellenic Studies 45 (1925), pp. 27 ff., and figs. 31, 32.*

implies actual funeral games associated with that legend. Similarly, there are fragmentary remains of a steatite pyxis found at Cnossus in Crete, and dated from the Mycenaean era, that show the figure of a typical boxer standing over a fallen adversary,[5] just as in the games for Patroclus, where Epeius would have appeared standing over Euryalus, whose grandfather, incidently, is described as having competed at Oedipus' funeral.[6]

The obligations towards external and internal criticism have been met. One may postulate that Homer did in fact exist, at time when the Achaeans were still embroiled in a period of conquest and migration. Similarly, one may contend that he was the author of the Homeric poems, and that it is feasible to argue that these poems were recordable within the oral tradition. Further, the events, geography, and figures whom he represents are largely a historical reality, sometimes transferred from a historical pretext to a creative art, but nevertheless supported by a certain amount of primary source archaeological evidence and secondary source material discernable from other ancient literature.

As noted by one modern scholar, "the Homeric critic works with uncertainties, where the known is interwoven with ... the unknown, perhaps forever beyond the reappropriation

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[5] *A. Evans, "The palace of Knossus'"* Annual of the British School at Athens *7 (1901), 95 ff. and fig. 31.*

[6] Iliad *23.676-680.*

which makes of history the conquest of time and meaning;"[7] and Aristotle remarks, "the difference between a historian and a poet is not that one writes in prose and the other in verse ... the real difference is this, that one tells what happened and the other what might happen. For this reason poetry is something more scientific and serious than history, because poetry tends to give general truths while history gives particular facts."[8]

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[7] *M. Lynn-George, Epos : Word, Narrative and the Iliad (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey : Humanities Press International, 1988), p. 274.*

[8] *Aristotle, Poetics 9.2-3, (trans. W.H. Fyfe, 1982), Loeb Classical Library, London : William Heinemann.*

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David Hilmy was born on May 18th, 1960 in Aberdeen, Scotland. He graduated from Gordonstoun School, Moray, Scotland in 1978, and joined the British Army in autumn of the same year. After five years as a commissioned officer with the 1st Battalion, The Gordon Highlanders and latterly 45 Commando, Royal Marines, during which time he served in Belize, the Falklands, Hong Kong, Northern Ireland and Norway, he left in order to pursue a teaching career. Whilst studying for a bachelor's degree in education from 1983 to 1987 at the College of St. Paul and St. Mary, in Cheltenham, England, he also completed courses in Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Birmingham, and Human Kinetics at Exeter University. In 1984, he joined the Terpsis Contemporary Dance Company, becoming artistic director and choreographer, and was commissioned to choreograph for the Inside-Out Dance Theatre and the Dance for Africa festival in 1987. During the pursuit of his studies, he won national collegiate gold medals in trampolining, tennis, field hockey, and rugby. In 1986 and 1987, he was selected to play all-England colleges in rugby and all-Britain colleges in field hockey, and was invited to coach at the British Olympic Training Centre. A recipient of the J.B. Priestly Award for academic excellence in 1985, 1986, and 1987, and also of the Principal's Commendation for academic achievement in 1987, he graduated with a first class honours bachelor's degree in physical education and creative arts in the summer of 1987. In the autumn of the same year, after completing a course in Caribbean Studies at North London Polytechnic, he accepted a teaching position at Ramsey School, in London, England, which he held until 1989, when he entered the Graduate School at The University of Texas at El Paso, accepting a teaching assistantship with the Department of Health and Physical Education. In 1990, he was awarded the Phi Delta Kappa scholarship, and has since lectured for the Ysleta School District in El Paso on elementary physical education and curriculum innovation.

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