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Homer as a Foundation Text

The Greek heroic tradition once embraced a much wider range of epic poems than merely the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* with which it eventually became associated. Side by side with the Trojan cycle, to which the Homeric poems belong, additional heroic subjects were treated in epic cycles such as the Argonautic saga, the Theban cycle, and others, some of them also attributed to Homer. At an early stage, all the traditional poems dealing with the events of the Trojan War were assumed to be authored by Homer; later, only the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* came to be seen as genuinely "Homeric", whereas the other Trojan epics were attributed to other poets and subsumed under the so-called Epic Cycle. A handful of fragments and a brief summary of the contents excerpted from the *Chrestomathy* of Proclus is all that has remained of the Cyclic poems, and even less than that of other epics.[1] Only the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* survived transmission, eventually to form part of the so-called "Western Canon". While it is pretty obvious that this outcome has much to do with the privileged status that the Homeric poems enjoyed in ancient Greece,[2] it is much less obvious how they acquired this status. In what follows, I will argue that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were intended to supersede the other traditional epics from the very beginning and that they achieved this goal by means of a thorough revision of the heroic tradition and

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its deliberate adaptation to the new self-image of Greek civilization that emerged in the early Archaic period.

1. Homer and the Epic Tradition

It is generally recognized today that both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* lean heavily upon the nomenclature of Trojan subjects dealt with in the poems of the Cycle.[3] Take for example Books 2–7 of the *Iliad*, which form a digression from the narrative succession of the story of the Wrath of Achilles. Quite a few episodes in these books are connected with the beginning of the Trojan War, which was the subject of the Cyclic *Cypria*. Odysseus' account of the mustering of the troops at Aulis and the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2; the Teichoscopia, the duel of Paris and Menelaus and the Helen–Paris encounter in *Iliad* 3; Agamemnon's inspection of the troops in *Iliad* 4; the Trojan scenes in *Iliad* 6; the negotiations about the return of Helen and the building of the Achaean wall in *Iliad* 7—each of these offers a retrospective of an initial stage of the war. The beginning of the war may be evoked in a direct reminiscence, as in Odysseus' reminiscence of the Aulis episode in *Iliad* 2 or Anterior's reminiscence of the embassy of Odysseus and Menelaus to Troy in *Iliad* 3, both told in the *Cypria*.[4] But more often than not the *Iliad* adopts a subtler strategy, in that the episodes properly belonging to the beginning of the war are incorporated into the chronological and narrative setting of its last year. Thus, the seduction of Helen by Paris and Aphrodite in *Iliad* 3, rather than being simply a reminiscence, provides, as was aptly put by Mark Edwards, "a reenactment of the original seduction", the proper context of which is again the *Cypria*.[5] In a similar way, the mustering of the troops described in *Iliad* 2 or the negotiations about Helen and the building of the Achaean wall described in *Iliad* 7, properly belonging to the beginning of the war but introduced so as to suit the context of the last year, can hardly be anything else than such "reenactments" of the war's initial stages, again closely parallel to the *Cypria* account.[6]

In fact, what we have here is a narrative technique characteristic of the *Iliad* as a whole, because in the second half of the poem the same strategy of "reenactment" or, to borrow the expression used by Wolfgang Kullmann, "an imitation of a narrative known to us from one of the Cyclic epics", is employed.[7] There, this strategy is used to evoke the last stages of the war which, again, are not described directly in the *Iliad*. It was noticed long ago that the duel between Patroclus and Sarpedon in *Iliad* 16 directly evokes the Achilles–Memnon duel as recounted in the Cyclic *Aethiopis*; again, although the lamentations of Thetis and the Nereids over Achilles in *Iliad* 18.22–72 are prompted by the death of Patroclus, they evoke Thetis' bewailing of

Achilles, also presented in the *Aethiopis*.[8] Likewise, although the Fall of Troy properly belongs with the events described in the Cyclic *Iliu persis*, the death of Hector is represented in *Iliad* 22 as if the city of Troy were already in flames.[9]

What the *Iliad* does for the Trojan War as a whole, the *Odyssey* does for the Fall of Troy and the Returns: the former was the subject of the *Cyclic Aethiopis, Ilias parva* and *Iliu persis* whereas the latter was treated in the Cyclic *Nosti*. The *Aethiopis* is evoked in the story about Achilles' funeral told by Agamemnon in the Underworld; *Ilias parva* in Odysseus' meeting with Ajax in the Underworld described by Odysseus in *Odyssey* 11 and in the story of Odysseus' entering Troy as a spy told by Helen in *Odyssey* 4; *Iliu persis* in the story of the Wooden Horse told by Menelaus in *Odyssey* 4 and by Odysseus in *Odyssey* 11; this same story is also the subject of Demodocus' third song in *Odyssey* 8.[10] The Returns are evoked in Nestor's reminiscences and his story of Agamemnon's death in *Odyssey* 3, in Menelaus' reminiscences in *Odyssey* 4, in Agamemnon's account of his own death in *Odyssey* 11 and, of course, in Odysseus' reminiscences embracing Books 9–12 of the poem; this is also the subject of a song performed by Phemius in *Odyssey* 1.[11] As a result, the *Odyssey*, besides being a poem of the return of the last of the heroes, also acts as a large-scale compendium of the part of the Epic Cycle dealing with the final stages of the Trojan War and the fate of the survivors.

The above seems to indicate that, although they begin *in medias res* and describe two single episodes of the Trojan saga, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* also function as symbolic compendia of the entire history of the Trojan War and the Returns. While the literary merits of this compositional technique were commended as early as Aristotle,[12] it has rarely been taken into account that what is being dealt with is far from purely a matter of composition. As Laura Slatkin and Irad Malkin have shown for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* respectively, Homer not only evokes other traditions but also neutralizes them by adapting them to his own agenda: thus, the traditional theme of the immortality conferred on Achilles by Thetis is turned in the *Iliad* into one of "heroic experience as a metaphor for the condition of mortality, with all its contradictions", whereas the *Odyssey* transforms the tradition of Odysseus' leaving home for foreign lands into a story of homecoming.[13] This strongly suggests that Homer and the Cyclic epics cannot be placed on one plane as if they were variations on the same theme. By the very fact of reinterpreting the other versions of the Trojan saga, Homer signalizes their subordinate status as regards his own poems and privileges the version that he offers.

At some point in the Archaic Age, Homer's narrative of the Trojan War acquired the extraordinary status of the only narrative worthy of being told at all. In the *Odyssey*, where the Trojan War is already viewed as belonging to

the heroic past, "The Doom of the Achaeans and Troy" engages everybody's attention, including that of the gods themselves. The inhabitants of Ithaca, of Phaeacia, of the Island of Aeolia, and even Odysseus himself, are eager to listen to songs and stories about the Trojan War (which, in fact, are the only songs and stories they listen to), and this is the very subject that is included in the Sirens' promise of bestowing a knowledge greater than human—a promise nobody can resist. That only a savage like the Cyclops can remain ignorant of the Trojan War, as well as of any other mark of human civilization, shows clearly enough that acquaintance with the Trojan saga—and, by implication, with the poems of Homer—was envisaged as a cultural code that united the civilized world.[14]

To sum up, the relationship between Homer and the Trojan tradition is anything but symmetrical. Homer both reshapes the tradition he inherited and adapts it to his own agenda, which as a rule do not concur with those of his sources. This would mean that, rather than offering just another variant of the common tradition, Homer turns earlier traditions about the Trojan war and the Returns into raw material for his poems. That he is nevertheless anxious to show his awareness of his sources indicates that he meant the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* not simply to absorb the other traditions but to supersede them, thus claiming for them the unique status of metaepics.[15] Our next task is to see why this claim became universally accepted.

2. The Shaping of Collective Memory

The political and dialectal maps of historic Greece are both the direct outcome of two events that took place at the end of the second—the beginning of the first millennium B.C.E.: the emergence of the Dorians and other northwestern tribes in central Greece and the Peloponnese, and the mass migration of the Mycenaean population to the Aegean shore of Asia Minor and other parts of the Mediterranean. Neither of these events makes an appearance worthy of mention in the Homeric poems.[16] This is not to say that they were not dealt with in the Greek epic tradition as a whole. Thus, it is almost certain that the lost traditional epics *Aegimius* (often ascribed to Hesiod) and *Naupactia* dealt with the coming of the Dorians, whereas the migration to Asia Minor was certainly treated in the lost epic poem *Melampodia*, also ascribed to Hesiod. And, judging by the evidence of literary sources, the Dorian saga of the "Return of the Children of Hercules" gave the Dorians' own distinctive version of the population movements that shook Greece at the end of the Bronze Age.[17] None of these became part of the mainstream epic tradition, which sees the Trojan War as the main if not the only factor that brought about the end of the Heroic Age. Yet, the very fact

that such alternative versions of the end of the Heroic Age did exist strongly suggests that Homer's silence regarding the coming of the Dorians and the subsequent migrations to the East was a matter of deliberate choice.

This is not to say that Homer simply ignored the Dorians. Consider for example the map of Argos as drawn in the Homeric Catalogue of Ships:

> And those who lived in Argos and walled Tiryns, in Hermione and Asine which lie on a deep bay, in Troizen and Eiones and Epidaurus rich in vineyards, and in Aegina and Mases, sons of the Achaeans: these were led by Diomedes, master of the war-cry, and Sthenelus, dear son of the famous Kapaneus.... but the commander of all was Diomedes, master of the war-cry.[18]

The Argos of Diomedes is presented in the Homeric Catalogue as spreading over the entire territory of northeastern Peloponnese and the island of Aegina. This picture is boldly anachronistic, in that it corresponds to what were thought to have been the original domains of Dorian Argos (the so-called "lot of Temenus"), presumably restored under king Pheidon in the seventh century B.C.E.[19] As a result, Heroic Age Argos emerges in Homer as if it had already possessed the political and tribal structure that was associated with it in the Archaic period.

Not only does the Argos of Diomedes reflect the Dorian Argos but the Sparta of Menelaus fairly well corresponds to the Dorian Sparta. However, such geographical entities as Argos or Sparta do not properly belong to the Heroic Age. The centres of the relevant territories were Mycenae, Tiryns, and Amyclae, all of them abundantly represented in Greek legend. Characteristically, Mycenae is the only one of the three whose treatment is historically consistent, in that it was made the capital of the antiquarian kingdom of Agamemnon. Tiryns and Amyclae, whose functions as the administrative and cult centers of pre-Dorian Greece were well known to the Greeks of the Archaic period, were replaced by the more up-to-date Argos and Sparta and, accordingly, marginalized. That is to say, although it was a matter of common knowledge that the Dorians were post-Mycenaean newcomers into the Peloponnese, their descendants could nevertheless easily locate themselves on the map of Heroic Greece that Homer supplied. This suggests that in drawing his picture of Heroic Greece Homer systematically updated the past in such a way that it might fit the present. The most likely motive underlying this practice seems to have been the need to represent the Greece of the Heroic Age as a harmonious Panhellenic whole, already containing the political and ethnic elements present in the Archaic period. Evidently, this could only be done by ignoring the historical facts of the

coming of the Dorians and the mass emigration to Asia Minor that it triggered, and by marginalizing the alternative traditions that accounted for those events.

It is difficult to tell what kind of authority, if any, could have lain behind the strategy of updating the past in accordance with the contemporary agenda that Homer adopted. The only thing that can be said with a considerable degree of certainty is that this strategy cannot be separated from large-scale developments that took place at the same period and that are sometimes given the collective name "the eighth-century Renaissance". The Panhellenic cult of Zeus and other Olympians; the Olympian games and other Panhellenic festivals in which these cults found their fullest expression; the free-standing temple with the cult statue of an Olympian deity within it; the canonic epics of Homer and Hesiod celebrating these very deities;[20] the emergence of the hero-cult, and above all the rise of the city-state itself—all these seem inextricably connected with each other. The emergence of the hero-cult is especially pertinent to the present discussion. This characteristically Greek cult, closely connected with the cult of the dead, consisted in the worship of personages of Greek legend—many of them the same heroes who were celebrated in the poems of Homer and Hesiod—performed at ancient tombs which were supposed to be their burial places. This remarkable coincidence between the traditional poetry on the one hand and the new religious practice on the other has even given rise to the suggestion that the hero-cult developed under the direct influence of the epic tradition, above all of Homer. But it is perhaps more likely that both expressed the same tendency towards establishing a continuity between prehistoric and historic Greece that became dominant at that period.[21]

Since at least 700 B.C.E. the Dorians of Sparta celebrated a cult of Menelaus, who was generally believed to have been king of Sparta at the time of the Trojan War. Some hundred years later, the Spartans made a considerable effort to locate and to bring to their city the bones of Menelaus' son-in-law Orestes, whom they also made the recipient of a hero-cult. For the Spartans, Orestes was first and foremost king of Amyclae, which had by then become part of their territory. But it was the same Orestes who was universally believed to have been the last pre-Dorian ruler of what was to become the territory of Sparta and whose descendants led the Achaeans, whom the Dorians expelled from their lands, to what was to become the district of Achaea in the northern Peloponnese and eventually to Asia Minor.[22] The Spartans' identification with Menelaus and Orestes, the leaders of the population that they replaced, is consistent with the treatment of Sparta in the Homeric epics. Both clearly indicate the direction in which the updating of the past proceeded at this period.[23]

We have seen that Homer marginalized the epic traditions that offered alternative versions of the end of Mycenaean Greece. "There is reason to suppose that at some later stage a similar thing happened both to the tradition represented in the Cyclic epics, which had also once been credited with Homeric authorship,[24] and to the traditional poetry associated with the name of Hesiod. Take for example the theme of the destruction of the Race of Heroes, prominent in the Hesiodic tradition as well as in the poems of the Cycle. According to these sources, the Heroic Age came to an end in two great wars, the Theban and the Trojan, which were especially designed by Zeus to put an end to the Race of Heroes.[25] Although Homer was also engaged in perpetuating the glorious memory of the Trojan War, the theme of the End of Heroes is conspicuously absent in his poems. As Ruth Scodel put it in an important article, "In Homer, the continuity of history from the heroes to the poet's contemporaries is complete."[26] It is clear that Homer's suppressing of the traditional myth of the destruction of the Race of Heroes was again part of a larger strategy purporting to transform the heroic past into one of the main factors in establishing the self-image of the new Greek civilization that replaced Mycenaean Greece at the beginning of the first millennium B.C.E. As a result, it became possible to mention Achilles and Brasidas, Nestor and Pericles in the same breath, as for example in Plato's *Symposium*, simply because they were seen as belonging to the same historical space.[27] Clearly, this could not have been done had the Race of Heroes continued to be envisaged, as in Hesiod and the Cycle, as an extinct race having nothing in common with the degenerate Iron Race of the present.[28]

Let me emphasize again that we have no reason to doubt that Homer and his contemporaries were well aware that the Dorians were not part of the Heroic Age milieu or that the population of historic Greece was distinctly heterogeneous.[29] Yet this awareness did not prevent them from ignoring such facts or moulding them in accordance with their own agenda. As far as I can see, this agenda consisted in answering the need of creating, beyond the differences dividing the heterogeneous tribes that settled in Greece at the beginning of the first millennium B.C.E., the overarching identity of "Hellenes". By modifying the inherited picture of the heroic past, the new Greek civilization not only acquired the unity it initially lacked but also established a continuity between the Greece of the Heroic Age and historical Greece, in that the former was envisaged as already possessed of the ethnic and political structure characteristic of the latter. It is reasonable to suppose that this attitude to the past issued from a cultural strategy which, to borrow the expression used by the biblical scholar Nadav Na'aman, may be defined as "the shaping of collective memory".[30] The Homeric poems were both a by-product of this strategy and its most effective vehicle. The picture of

prehistoric Greece that they promulgated became the standard if not the only account of their past that the later Greeks could imagine. So much so that, in his discussion of the Homeric Catalogue of Ships, even so critically minded an historian as Thucydides took it for granted that the Trojan War was the first genuinely Panhellenic enterprise in Greek history.[31]

3. The Iliad and the Polis

The change of attitude towards the heroic past could of course not be achieved simply by updating the traditional geography or avoiding reference to the destruction of the Race of Heroes. As far as Homer is concerned, the speeches were the main vehicle in carrying his message. Since the traditional subjects dealing with the Heroic Age were not only universally known but also accepted as historical truth, no poet could permit himself to mould them in a free and independent way: the Trojan War will end with the Trojan rather than the Achaean defeat, Hector will be killed by Achilles and not vice versa, and so on. This is why dissonances between the plot of the poems and what is expressed in the speeches are so important: while the plot is fixed in tradition, the content of the speeches is not; accordingly, the speeches are amenable to expressing the poet's reaction to what he had received from his tradition.[32]

The result may be that the same episode is treated from two perspectives, the traditional and the poet's own. Thus, at *Iliad* 14.364–9 the disguised Poseidon says in his exhortation to the heavily pressed Greeks: "Argives, are we once more to yield the victory to Hector, son of Priam, so he can take our ships and win glory for himself? That is what he thinks and prays, because Achilles is staying back by the hollow ships in his heart's anger. But we will not feel his loss too strongly, if the rest of us stir ourselves to support each other." The entire concept of the *Iliad* is based on the premise that without Achilles' individual contribution Achaean victory is impossible, and the weight the poem places on the single combats of other Achaean leaders shows that this is indeed the prevailing attitude. Poseidon's words, in that they give equal weight to the value of the ordinary soldiers' mutual effort, contradict this attitude, and this is why they leave no trace on the development of the action. But the same idea of the importance of mutual effort occasionally emerges again, as for example in a description of the Greek army on the march at the beginning of *Iliad* 3: "But the Achaeans came on in silence, breathing boldness, their hearts intent on supporting each other." This passage, one of the few Homeric passages commended by Plato in the *Republic*, is closer to the spirit of the hoplite phalanx as celebrated in the poems of Tyrtaeus (characteristically,

this is how it was taken by the scholiast) than to the standard behaviour of the Homeric warrior.[33]

The poems of Hesiod contain very little direct speech, and we can actually be sure that the same was true of the poems of the Epic Cycle. In his discussion of epic poetry in *Poetics* 24, Aristotle writes:

> Homer, admirable in all respects, has the special merit of being the only poet who rightly appreciates the part he should take himself. The poet should speak as little as possible in his own person, for it is not this that makes him an imitator (*mimêtês*). Other poets appear themselves upon the scene throughout, and imitate but little and rarely. Homer, after a few prefatory words, at once brings in a man, or woman, or other personage; none of them wanting in characteristic qualities, but each with a character of his own.

Aristotle's remark that poets other than Homer are very rarely engaged in mimesis can only refer to the composers of other epics, which indicates that the narratives of the latter contained practically no direct speech.[34] This would mean, as simply as possible, that the Cyclic poets had very little to add to the traditional material they inherited. Nothing could provide a sharper contrast to Homer, in whose poems speeches constitute about two thirds of the entire text, serving the main means of characterization and providing, so to speak, a running commentary on the plot. I shall use the *Iliad* as an example.[35]

There is little doubt that the *Iliad* originated in the cultural and political milieu of aristocratic chiefdoms which preceded the formation of the city-state. Contrary to the system of values established with the rise of the polis, according to which the distribution of honour should follow personal achievement, the distribution of honour in pre-city-state society corresponded to a person's social status, which was determined by superiority in birth and wealth. Nowhere is this shown more clearly than in the description of the athletic contests held by Achilles at Patroclus' tomb in *Iliad* 23. In the chariot race, Eumelus who lost the competition is offered the second prize because he is "the best", *aristos*, and Menelaus who came third is again offered the second prize on exactly the same grounds, while in the throwing of the spear Agamemnon receives the first prize without even participating in the contest, only because he is *aristos* and superior to all others.[36] "After all," Moses Finley wrote of Homeric society, "the basic values of the society were given, predetermined, and so were a man's place in the society and the privileges and duties that followed from his status".[37] No

wonder, therefore, that the chief motivation behind the Homeric warriors' behaviour was the drive to meet the expectations that ensued from their status. Together with risking one's life in war, these expectations also embraced assistance to and the protection of those to whom the person was tied by the mutual obligations of military alliance, guest-friendship, or vassal relations.[38]

It is however highly symptomatic that the lack of social equality and insufficient recognition of personal merit which directly result from the aristocratic ethos prevailing in the *Iliad* are questioned in the body of the *Iliad* itself. This can be seen first of all in Homer's treatment of the central issue of the poem, the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon. "I have sacked twelve of men's cities from my ships", Achilles says bitterly in *Iliad* 9, "and I claim eleven more by land across the fertile Troad. From all of these I took many fine treasures, and every time I brought them all and gave to Agamemnon son of Atreus: and every time, back there by the fast ships he had never left, he would take them in, share out a few, and keep the most for himself."[39] Homer makes Achilles question the view of honour as bestowed automatically, according to status and birth, and pose the claim of merit as against the claim of rank. "Stay at home or fight your hardest—your share will be the same. Coward and hero are given equal honour", Achilles says elsewhere in the same speech. It is not surprising, therefore, that in his *Politics* Aristotle adduces these Homeric lines in support of the argument that the distribution of honour must be proportionate to one's contribution to the well-being of the community.[40]

But Homer's criticism of aristocratic values goes even further. The main conflict of the *Iliad* is the conflict of honour. It was because of considerations of honour which went against the common interest that Agamemnon took Briseis from Achilles and it was, again, considerations of honour that caused Achilles to withdraw from participation in the Trojan campaign from the moment that his prize of honour, *geras*, was taken from him. The issue of honour is thus woven into the core of the *Iliad* plot. At the same time, it would be wrong to say that the poet of the *Iliad* sides unambiguously with the considerations of personal honour and prestige which move his heroes and the plot of his poem. As I have argued elsewhere, in his treatment of the theme of Achilles' wrath in *Iliad* 11, 16, and 18 Homer criticizes aristocratic individualism and its self-serving value of personal honour, *timê*, and reinterprets the inherited plot of the *Iliad* in the spirit of the city-state value of *aretê*, personal excellence which benefits the entire community.[41] When in *Iliad* 11 Nestor says that Achilles' abstention from participating in the war will result in that he "will be the only one to profit from his excellence", or when in *Iliad* 16 Patroclus asks Achilles "what will

any other man, even yet to be born, profit from you, if you do not save the Argives from shameful destruction?", and, finally, when in *Iliad* 18 Achilles himself comes to the conclusion that his chosen line of behaviour has resulted in that, instead of being "a saving light to Patroclus or many other companions", he has become "a useless burden on the earth", the concept underlying all these utterances is that by keeping his excellence, *aretê*, to himself Achilles has actually invalidated it and thus almost annihilated his own worth as "the best of the Achaeans".[42]

There can be no doubt that this was not the message which originally informed the poem. Consider again Achilles' words of self-reproach in *Iliad* 18: "I have not been a saving light to Patroclus or my many other companions who have been brought down by godlike Hector, but sit here by the ships, a useless burden on the earth." Whereas Achilles' obligations to Patroclus, Achilles' "own" man, are among those values which are seen in terms of the aristocratic code of honour, the very design of the *Iliad* shows that no such terms could originally have been applied to Achilles' attitude to the rest of the Greeks: an aristocratic chieftain is only responsible for his own men and owes nothing to the soldiers led by other chieftains. The clash between the individualistic values of the nobility and the communal values of the city—state produced by this and similar Homeric usages shows that the social perspective adopted in the *Iliad* is a double one.

In his *Reciprocity and Ritual* Richard Seaford defined the *Iliad* situation as Homer's "ideological contradiction", namely, that "aristocratic individualism is on the one hand vital to the community and on the other hand a danger to be controlled by the community". Seaford tends to see this contradiction as reflecting a transitional stage within a single society and thus allows for a degree of historicity in the Homeric poems as we have them; Kurt A. Raaflaub has recently expressed a similar opinion.[43] This, however, is by far not the only contradiction that can be found in the Homeric poems. As A. M. Snodgrass famously argued, the contradictions in Homer's depiction of social institutions cannot be resolved and should be interpreted to the effect that, rather than reflecting a concrete historical society, the Homeric poems offer an amalgam created as a result of centuries-long circulation in oral tradition.[44] Indeed, if we take into account that the language of Homer is a "Kunstsprache" never spoken by any living person; that his formulae for weapons exhibit an impossible combination of military technologies used at different historical periods, and that the same is true of his view of death and the afterlife,[45] we shall see that there is no reason why the situation of Homeric values should be any different.

In so far as the pursuit of the communal values of the polis emerging in *Iliad* 11, 16, and 18 and the pursuit of the individualistic values of the

aristocracy as found in the rest of the poem are mutually irreconcilable, they could not have been held as supreme values at one and the same time. In view of this, it seems wiser to admit that, more than reflecting the state of a concrete historical society, contradictions in Homer's account of values reflect the state of the Homeric text itself. We can suggest, therefore, that at some stage in their history the Homeric poems underwent a thorough reinterpretation which made them relevant to the city-state society. Owing to Homer's extensive use of direct speech, it became possible to incorporate this reinterpretation into the text of the poems without changing their plots. As a result, like the Bible and some other ancient corpora, Homer's became a manifold text, which carried within itself both the original message and its reinterpretation in the vein of later values.

We have seen that the need to consolidate the heterogeneous populations of historic Greece was the most likely reason why the myth of the Heroic Age as delivered by Homer became the foundation myth of the new Greek civilization that replaced Mycenaean Greece at the beginning of the first millennium B.C.E. This however was far from the only function that this myth fulfilled. Greek civilization, perhaps for the first time in history, created a civic society whose ideal of man was not identical to that proposed by religion or philosophy. The Greek concept of human excellence, *aretê*, which embodied this ideal, played a central role in the poems of Homer.[46] No wonder, therefore, that for generations of Greeks the world of Homer became a timeless model against which their own lives were enacted. This is why Plato's Socrates, for example, found it appropriate to account for his position at his trial by comparing his situation with that of Achilles in *Iliad* 18.[47] There was no need for Socrates to embark on a lengthy argument in order to explain why he preferred death to exile. The example of Achilles brought his message home with an efficacy that no argument could ever equal.

4. The Bible of the Greeks

The codification of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in Athens of the sixth century B.C.E. granted the Athenian state a monopoly over the standard text of Homer. The Homeric poems began to be recited at the prestigious Panathenaic festival, which was among the central events of the public life of the city and of the whole of Greece.[48] They also became the basis of elementary education, to be memorized at schools all over the Greek world. This is why the history of the Homeric poems after their fixation in writing is not simply a history of a written text but that of a written text highly privileged in the civilization to which it belonged. In that, its status is closer

to the status of the Bible than to that of other works of literature created in ancient Greece.[49]

Needless to say, the Greek world continued to change also after the codification of Homer. The beliefs and values that informed the Homeric poems altered considerably in the course of time. The Homeric religion especially, with its all too human-like and human behaving gods, soon enough began to be felt inadequate by many. Already in the sixth century B.C.E. Xenophanes accused Homer and Hesiod of having attributed to the gods "everything that is a shame and reproach among men",[50] and Plato's attack on Homer in the *Republic* was very much in the same vein. Nevertheless, in the entire history of Homeric reception, Plato seems to have been the only one who actually recommended systematic censoring of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and even replacing them with hymns to the gods and the praises of good men, which alone would suit the educational reforms he proposed in the *Republic*.[51] It was by interpreting the standard text of the poems rather than by interfering with it that Homer's adaptation to changing circumstances normally proceeded.[52] To borrow the terms introduced by Moshe Halbertal, "textual closure" of the Homeric corpus was accompanied by "hermeneutical openness" towards it—a sure sign of the canonical status that the text of Homer had acquired.[53]

As early as the end of the sixth century B.C.E., Theagenes of Rhegium for the first time applied the method of allegorical interpretation to the Homeric religion. As far as we can judge, Theagenes approached the battle of gods, the Theomachy of *Iliad* 20 and 21, in terms of the conflict of physical and cosmic elements. In the fifth century, Metrodorus of Lampsacus interpreted the whole of the *Iliad* in the vein of the cosmological doctrine of the philosopher Anaxagoras.[54] The allegorical approach was also favoured by the early Stoics: their chief purpose seems to have been the identification of the gods of Homer and Hesiod with cosmic elements and forces. The Neoplatonist and Neopythagorean allegorization of Homer, which explicitly aimed at defending the poet against Plato's criticisms, began to appear in the first centuries C.E. and reached a climax in the fifth century, in the work of Proclus.[55]

Another widespread method of interpretation, closely connected with allegory but not identical with it, was to update Homer by reading into his text the scientific and practical knowledge that accumulated in later epochs, first and foremost after the conquests of Alexander. The Stoics especially were notorious for their attempts to make Homer into an advanced astronomer and geographer. In his readings of Homer, a contemporary of Aristarchus and founder of the Pergamene school, Crates of Mallos, ascribed to the Poet the knowledge of a spherical earth and universe, of the arctic

circle and regions of the Far North, of the Atlantic ocean and the western lands in general, and so on, whereas Strabo tried to adjust the geographical horizons of Augustan Rome to Homer's picture of the world. Strabo's polemics with Eratosthenes and his followers in Book 7 of the *Geography* is a good example of the Stoic exegesis of Homer. Eratosthenes claimed, sensibly enough, that although Homer knew Greece fairly well, he was not acquainted with lands and peoples far away from it. Homer's failure to mention the Scythians served as a conspicuous example of his geographical incompetence. In his defense of Homer, Strabo seeks to rehabilitate the Poet by arguing that the fabulous tribes of Hippemolgi, "mare-milkers", and Galactophagi, "curd-eaters", could be none other than the Scythians in poetic disguise.[56]

Moral and values were perhaps even more difficult to adjust than religion and science. We have seen that before being codified the Homeric poems were brought into correspondence with the values of the city-state, above all the communal value of *aretê*. This guaranteed their relevance to city-state society at least till the time of Aristotle, whose treatment of arete still does not differ essentially from what we find in Homer.[57] Yet the ethical theories of the Hellenistic Age no longer addressed the traditional city-state society. As Joseph M. Bryant puts it, "The retreat from Polis-citizen ideals ... occurred along all philosophical fronts during the Hellenistic period, as the Cynics, Cyrenaics, Skeptics, Epicureans, and Stoics each sought to distance the well-being of the individual from the collapsing Polis framework and to detach arete, or "virtue", from its former dependence on communal service through performance in the roles of warrior and self-governing citizen."[58] This is why Homer's words "Zeus increases and diminishes man's arete"[59] were found inappropriate by Plutarch, who approached them from the standpoint of the second century C.E. In his treatise *How the Young Man Should Study Poetry* Plutarch wrote:

> Particular attention must be paid to the other words also, when their signification is shifted about and changed by the poets according to various circumstances. An example is the word *aretê*. For inasmuch as *aretê* not only renders men sensible, honest, and upright in actions and words, but also often enough secures for them repute and influence, the poets, following this notion, make good repute and influence to be *aretê*.... But when ... in his reading, he finds this line, "Zeus increases and diminishes man's *aretê*," ... let him consider that the poet has employed *aretê* instead of repute, or influence, or good fortune, or the like.[60]

Plutarch's treatise deserves our special attention also because it reveals some of the actual methods of guiding students towards what was envisaged by their tutors as the appropriate reading of a given Homeric passage. Thus, he suggests that where Homer's moral judgment is not made clear enough, "a distinction is to be drawn by directing the young man's attention in some such manner as the following":

> If, on the one hand, Nausicaa, after merely looking at a strange man, Odysseus, and experiencing Calypso's emotions toward him, being, as she was, a wanton [child] and at the age for marriage, utters such foolish words to her maid-servants, "If only such a man as this might come to be called my husband" [*Od.* 6. 244], then are her boldness and lack of restraint to be blamed. But if, on the other hand, she sees into the character of the man from his words, and marvels at his conversation, so full of good sense ... then it is quite right to admire her.[61]

According to the thorough treatment of the Homeric poems as the ultimate source of all knowledge in the anonymous *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer*, which was once believed to be written by Plutarch, the fact that Homer often presents "wicked deeds" should not prevent us from attributing to him every virtue, for owing to the mixture of good and evil that the Homeric poems offer, "the recognition and choice of the better becomes easier."[62]

Contrary to what one might have expected, the transition to Christianity did not bring about a radical change in the Greek attitude to Homer. The Homeric poems and especially the *Iliad* retained their status of school texts till the very end of the Byzantine empire. What is perhaps even more surprising, no serious attempts were made to Christianize them.[63] Offered instead were, again, various methods of interpretation. This for example is how St Basil instructed Christian youths to read pagan texts so as to "accept from them only that which is useful":

> Whenever they [the poets] recount for you the deeds or words of good men, you ought to cherish and emulate these and try to be as far as possible like them; but when they treat of wicked men, you ought to avoid such imitation, stopping your ears no less than Odysseus did, according to what those same poets say, when he avoided the songs of the Sirens.

This meant don't admire the poets "when they depict men engaged in amours or drunken, or when they define happiness in terms of an over-abundant table of dissolute songs", and above all don't pay attention to them "when they narrate anything about the gods, and especially when they speak of them as being many, and these too not even in accord with one another". These reservations aside, Basil, just as generations of pagan interpreters before and Christian interpreters after him, simply took it for granted that "all Homer's poetry is an encomium of virtue" and therefore cannot be easily dispensed with.[64]

The capture of Constantinople in 1453 put an end to two and a half millennia of continuous development of Greek civilization. The epic tradition of the Trojan War, which gradually crystallized into the Homeric poems as we know them, accompanied this civilization through all the stages of its existence, thus fulfilling the function of what the sociology of culture calls "the dominant cultural arbitrary".[65] These poems became the universally accepted frame of reference, in fact, the only frame of reference upon which the cultural language common to all those who belonged to the ancient Greek civilization was formed, and therefore an inseparable part of the identity of those who saw this civilization as their own.[66] This would not only explain why the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* outlived other epics that once circulated in the Greek tradition but also justify treating them on a par with other foundation texts known to us from the history of civilization.

Notes

1. For general collections see G. Kinkel, *Epicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*. Vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1877); M. Davies, *Epicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Göttingen, 1988); A. Bernabé, *Poetarum Epicorum Graecorum Testimonia et Fragmenta*. Vol. 1 (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1996) (henceforth, Bernabé). For the Epic Cycle see T.W. Allen, *Homeri Opera*. Vol. 5 (Oxford, 1912) (henceforth Allen); H. Evelyn-White, *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homerica* (Cambridge, Mass., 1914); E. Bethe, *Homer, Dichtung und Sage* (2nd ed.). Vol. 2 (Leipzig and Berlin, 1929) (reprinted as E. Bethe, *Der Troische Epenkreis* (Stuttgart, 1966)).

2. See M. Finkelberg, "The *Cypria*, the *Iliad*, and the Problem of Multiformity in Oral and Written Tradition", *Classical Philology* 95 (2000), 1–11.

3. The growing recognition of this fact has been one of the major achievements of the Neoanalytic trend in Homeric scholarship. The works most representative of the methods of Neoanalysis are J.T. Kakridis, *Homeric Researches* (Lund, 1949) and W. Kullmann, *Die Quellen der Ilias* (Wiesbaden, 1960); for comprehensive discussions in English see W. Kullmann, "Oral Poetry Theory and Neoanalysis in Homeric Research", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 25 (1984), 307–23; M.W. Edward, "Neoanalysis and Beyond", *Classical Antiquity* 9 (1990), 311–25; L. Slatkin, *The Power of Thetis: Allusion and Interpretation in the Iliad* (Berkeley, 1991), 9–12. I treat the subject in some detail in M. Finkelberg, *The Birth of Literary Fiction in Ancient Greece* (Oxford, 1998), 141–50. See now also J.S. Burgess, *The Tradition of the Trojan War in Homer and the Epic Cycle* (Baltimore and London, 2001).

4. *Il.* 2. 284–332; 3. 204–24; cf. Allen, 104.1–3; 105. 3–5.

5. M.W. Edwards, *Homer: Poet of the Iliad* (Baltimore and London, 1987), 196. Cf. W. Kullmann, "Ergebnisse der motivgeschichtlichen Forschung zu Homer", in J. Latacz, ed., *Zweihundert Jahre Homer-Forschung* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1991), 434. For the *Cypria* episode see Allen 103, 2–10.

6. Allen 105.3–5, 17–18.

7. Kullmann, "Oral Poetry Theory and Neoanalysis", 310.

8. Allen 106. 11–13; the episode is also evoked in *Od.* 24. 36–97.

9. *Il.* 22. 405–411, cf. Allen 108.6–7.

10. Achilles' funeral *Od.* 24. 35–92, cf. Allen, 106. 9–16; Odysseus and Ajax *Il.* 541–64, cf. Allen 106. 20–23; Odysseus the spy 4. 235–64, cf. Allen 107.4–7; the Wooden Horse 4. 265–89; *Il.* 504–37; 8. 499–520, cf. Allen 107. 16–21; 107. 27–108.2.

11. Nestor *Od.* 3. 103–200; 253–312; Menelaus 4. 351–585; Agamemnon 11. 404–34; Phemius' song 1. 325–27; cf. Allen 108–109.

12. *Poet.* 1451a 23–30; 1459a 30–b7.

13. Slatkin, *The Power of Thetis*, 39; I. *Malkin, The Returns of Odysseus. Colonization and Ethnicity* (Berkeley, 1998), 120–55. Cf. M. Finkelberg, "Homer and the Bottomless Well of the Past", *Scripta Classica Israelica* 21 (2002), 243–50 (a review article of Malkin, *The Returns of Odysseus*).

14. *Od.* 12.183–93 (the Sirens); 9. 258–80 (the Cyclops). Cf. Finkelberg, *The Birth of Literary Fiction*, 73–74, 95–98; D. Clay, "The Archaeology of the Temple of Juno in Carthage", *Classical Philology* 83 (1988), 195–205.

15. Cf. R. Martin, "Telemachus and the Last Hero Song", in H.M. Roisman and J. Roisman, eds., "Essays on Homeric Epic", *Colby Quarterly* 29 (1993), 222–40; K. Dowden, "Homer's Sense of Text", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 116 (1996), 47–61; Finkelberg, *The Birth of Literary Fiction*, 154–55. I discuss this issue in greater detail in M. Finkelberg, "The Sources of *Iliad* 7", in H.M. Roisman and J. Roisman, eds., "Essays on Homeric Epic", *Colby Quarterly* 38 (2002), 151–61.

16. The only explicit reference to the Dorians is *Od.* 19.177.

17. On the Dorian charter myth see esp. 1. Malkin, *Myth and Territory in the Spartan Mediterranean* (Cambridge, 1994), 33–45.

18. *Il.* 2.559–567. Tr. M. Hammond.

19. Str. 8.3.33, p. 358; cf. N.G. Hammond in *Cambridge Ancient History* (3rd ed.) 2.2 (1975), 694–5. and *Cambridge Ancient History* (2nd ed.) 3.1 (1982), 715. The pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* gives a different and apparently a more consistent picture of the domains of Heroic Age Argos; see M. Finkelberg, "Ajax's Entry in the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*". *Classical Quarterly* 38 (1988). 38–41.

20. It is noteworthy that, according to some sources, Homer and Hesiod were directly responsible for the introduction of the mythological stories relating to the Olympian gods, their domains of authority, and their very names. See Xenoph. 21 B 11 DK, Hdt. 2.53.

21. See J.N. Coldstream, "Hero-Cults in the Age of Homer", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 96 (1976), 8–17; F. De Polignac, *Cults, Territory, and the Origins of the Greek City-State*, Tr. J. Lloyd (Chicago 1995; French edition 1984) 128–49; J. Whitley, "Early States and Hero Cults: A Reappraisal", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 108 (1988), 173–82; I. Morris, "Tomb Cult and the 'Greek renaissance': the past in the present in the 8th century B.C.E.", *Antiquity* 62 (1988), 750–61.

22. Polybius, himself an Achaean, adduces what was in all probability the standard Achaean version of the events: 'The state of the Achaean nation ... may be summarized as follows. Their first king was Tisamenos, the son of Orestes, who had been expelled from

Sparta on the return of the Heraclidae, and who then proceeded to occupy Achaea.' Polyb. 2.41; cf. Str. 8.7.1 p. 383; Paus. 7.1.2. In addition, the founders of the Aeolian colonies in Asia Minor claimed to be descendants of Orestes' son Penthilos, see Str. 9.2.3, p. 401, 9.2.5, p. 403; 13.1.3, p. 582; Paus. 2.18.6; 3.2.1; cf. 7.6.1–2.

23. Malkin, *Myth and Territory*, 30, interprets, the reburial of the bones of Orestes and other cases of the Spartans' appropriation of the pre-Dorian past as indicative of their 'political use of cult and myth vis-à-vis other Greeks'. Yet, the fact that the same practices are paralleled in the Homeric poems strongly suggests that there was a broad Panhellenic consensus in favour of crediting the Spartans with a Heroic Age past for the sake of their fuller integration into the body of the 'Hellenes'.

24. Cf. G. Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore and London, 1990), 72–3.

25. *Cypria* fr. 1 Bernabé; Hes. *Erga* 159–73; Hes. Fr. 204. 95–105 Merkelbach-West.

26. R. Scodel, "The Achaean Wall and the Myth of Destruction", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 86 (1982), 35. Cf. B. Hainsworth, ed., *The Iliad: A Commentary*. Vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1993), 320; Slatkin, *The Power of Thetis*, 121.

27. Pl. *Symp*. 221.

28. See esp. Hes. *Erga* 174–78: 'Thereafter, would that I were not among the men of the fifth generation, but either had died before or, been born afterwards. For now truly is a race of iron, and men never rest from labour and sorrow by day, and from perishing by night; and the gods shall lay sore trouble upon them.' Tr. H.G. Evelyn-White.

29. Some regions, such as Attica, Arcadia, or Achaea, have never become Dorian, whereas in others the Dorians settled side by side with the former inhabitants to form a symbiosis which often lasted till the end of antiquity. The non-Dorian tribe of Argos, the Hyrnathioi, immediately comes to mind in this connection, but a considerable 'Achaean' population was also present in Triphylia, formally part of Dorian Messenia, and in Laconia itself, where several cities, most notably Amyclae, were captured from 'Achaeans' as late as the beginning of the Archaic Age.

30. N. Na'aman, "Historiography, the Shaping of Collective Memory, and the Creation of Historical Consciousness in the People of Israel at the End of the First Temple Period", *Ziyon*, 1996, 449–72 [Hebrew]. See also N. Na'aman, *The Past that Shapes the Present: The Creation of Biblical Historiography in the Late First Temple Period Jerusalem*, 2002) [Hebrew].

31. Thuc. 1.3.

32. Cf. W. Nicolai, "Rezeptionssteurung in der Ilias", *Philologus* 127, 1983, 1–12, on the distinction between the 'affirmative' and the 'kritische Wirkungsabsicht' in the *Iliad*.

33. *Il*. 14. 364–69; 3. 8–9. Cf. Pl. *Rep*. 389e.

34. *Poet*. 1460a 5–11. Cf. S. Halliwell, *Aristotle's Poetics* (London, 1986), 126; Finkelberg, *The Birth of Literary Fiction*, 155–56.

35. I treat the topic discussed in this and the following section also in M. Finkelberg, "Canon-Replacement Versus Canon-Appropriation: The Case of Homer", forthcoming in H. Vastinphout and G. Dorleijn, eds., *Structure, Function and Dynamics of Cultural Repertories* (Leuven).

36. *Il*. 23. 536–8, 586–96, 884–97.

37. M.I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus* (2nd ed.), (Harmondsworth, 1978), 115.

38. See A.A. Long, "Morals and Values in Homer", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 90 (1970), 123–26. On the values of Greek aristocracy see esp. W. Donlan, *The Aristocratic Ideal in Ancient Greece*, (Wauconda, Illinois [repr. of Coronado Press, 1980], 1999).

39. *Il*. 9. 328–33.

40. *Il*. 9. 318–19; Ar. *Pol*. 1267a1–2.

41. M. Finkelberg, "*Timê* and *Aretê* in Homer", *Classical Quarterly* 48 (1998), 15–28.

42. *Il*. 11. 762–4, 16. 29–32, 18. 98–106.

43. R. Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (Oxford, 1994), 5–6; K.A. Raaflaub, "Homeric Society", in I. Morris and B. Powell, *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden,1997), 646–48.

44. A. Snodgrass, "An Historical Homeric Society?", *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 94 (1974), 114–25.

45. Weapons: D. Gray, "Homeric Epithets for Thing", *Classical Quarterly* 41 (1947), 109–21, reprinted in G.S. Kirk, ed., *The Language and Background of Homer* (Cambridge, 1964), 55–67; death- and afterlife: C. Souivinou-Inwood, *'Reading' Greek Death to the End of the Classical Period* (Oxford, 1995), 12–3, 73–6, 89–92.

46. For the *Odyssey* version of the same ideal see M. Finkelberg, "Odysseus and the Genus 'Hero', *Greece and Rome* 42 (1995), 1–14.

47. Pl. *Ap*. 28cd: 'He [Achilles], if you remember, made light of danger in comparison with incurring disgrace when his goddess mother warned him, eager as he was to kill Hector, you will die yourself—"Next after Hector is thy fate prepared." When he heard this warning, he made light of his death and danger, being much more afraid of living as an unworthy man and of failing to avenge his friends. "Let me die forthwith," said he, "when I have requited the villain, rather than remain here by the beaked ships to be mocked, a burden on the ground." Do you suppose that he gave a thought to death and danger?' Tr. H. Tredennick, with slight changes.

48. While some scholars connect the standardization of the Homeric text with the tradition of the so-called Pisistratean recension, that is, the codification of the Homeric poems in sixth-century Athens, others place it much earlier, in eighth-century Ionia. At the same time, all these scholars share the contention that Athens of the sixth century B.C.E. played a central role in the transmission of the text of Homer.

49. Cf. Finkelberg, "The *Cypria*, the *Iliad*, and the Problem of Multiformity", 11.

50. Xenoph. 21 B I 1 DK (cf. also 21 B 1. 19–23).

51. *Rep*. 607a, 398d–400d. Note, however, that, according to Richard Janko, it is not out of the question that Zenodotus (3rd century B.C.E.), tried to apply Plato's principles in his editorial work; see R. Janko (ed.), *The Iliad: A Commentary*. Vol. IV (Cambridge), 23.

52. According to Plutarch, the great Alexandrian scholar Aristarchus (2nd century B.C.E.) deleted 'out of fear' four lines from Phoenix's speech in *Iliad* 9 (458–61), which described how Phoenix considered killing his father in revenge for the curse put on him. Yet, as far as we know, Aristarchus was mainly preoccupied with the *numerus versuum*, working hard on purging the text of Homer from meaningless repetitions that had accumulated in the course of time, and was not in the habit of deleting Homeric lines on account of their content. When he wanted to cast doubt on a line or a passage he simply athetized them (cf. R. Lamberton, "Homer in Antiquity", in Morris and Powell, *A New Companion to Homer*, 44). This is why I find it more plausible that, as Stephanie West argued in a recent article, the lines in question, known to us only from Plutarch's quotations, should rather be taken as belonging to one of the Cyclic poems. See S. West, "Phoenix's Antecedents: A Note on *Iliad* 9", *Scripta Classica Israelica* 20 (2001), 1–15.

53. M. Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997), 32–40, esp. 32–33: 'Canonizing a text results in increased flexibility in its interpretation, such as the use of complex hermeneutical devices of accommodation to yield the best possible reading.'

54. D-K 8.2; 59 A 1 par. 11. Cf. N. Richardson, "Homer and His Ancient Critics", in N. Richardson. ed., *The Iliad: A Commentary*, Vol. VI (Cambridge, 1993), 27–29.

55. See further R. Lamberton, "The Neoplatonists and the Spiritualization of Homer", in R. Lamberton and J.J. Keaney, *Homer's Ancient Readers: The Hermeneutic of Greek Epic's Earliest Exegetes* (Princeton, 1992), 115–33.

56. Str. 7.3.6–10, pp. 298–303. On Strabo and Homer see now D. Dueck, *Strabo of Amasia: A Greek Man of Letters in Augustan Rome* (London, 2000), 31–40.

57. See Finkelberg, "*Timê* and *Aretê* in Homer", 23–24.

58. J.M. Bryant, *Moral Codes and Social Structure in Ancient Greece: A Sociology of Greek Ethics from Homer to the Epicureans and Stoics* (Albany, 1996), 461. Cf. also M. Finkelberg, "Virtue and Circumstances: on the City-State Concept of Arete," *American Journal of Philology* 123 (2002), 35–49.

59. *Il.* 20. 242.

60. *Mor.* 24 C.E.: tr. F.C. Babbitt.

61. *Mor.* 27 AB.

62. *De Homero* 218, tr. J.J. Keaney and R. Lamberton.

63. See R. Browning, "The Byzantines and Homer", in Lamberton and Keaney, *Homer's Ancient Readers*, 146–47.

64. *Ad adulescentes* 1.5; 5.6; 4.1–2; 4.4. Tr. R.J. Deferrari and M.R.P. McGuire.

65. Cf. P. Bourdieu and J.-C. Passeron. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (2nd ed.), tr. R. Nice (London 1990), 5–11.

66. Cf. Browning, "The Byzantines and Homer", 147: 'The Byzantines were well aware that their own culture and their own peculiar identity had two roots—pagan and Christian.... History and tradition had made Homer the very symbol of a complex and tenacious culture that distinguished the Greek from the barbarian and also from the non-Greek Christian, Orthodox though it might be.'

D. N. MARONITIS

The Space of Homilia *and Its Signs in the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey

I

This essay is based on a more general working hypothesis, the basic propositions of which, very briefly formulated, are as follows:

1. The *Iliad* is constructed around the interplay of two main themes that might, on account of their scope and depth, be termed megathemes of heroic poetry. The first and most obvious one is that of "war," divided into individual and named clashes or into collective and anonymous ones, the result of which is death or injury. The second theme is that of "*homilia*," as this was identified and specified by the Alexandrian scribes in order to characterize corresponding scenes from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*: the *homilia* between Hector and Andromache, Odysseus' *homilia* with Eumaeus, the *homilia* between Odysseus and Penelope.

2. The theme of *homilia* in the *Iliad* exhibits three complementary aspects: the "conjugal," the "extra-conjugal," and the "companionate." All three aspects of the theme of *homilia* are interwoven in an exemplary way into Book VI of the *Iliad*, either set out one after the other or subordinated one to the other. The book begins with the companionate *homilia* between Glaucus and Diomedes, which serves as a preparation for the subsequent

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