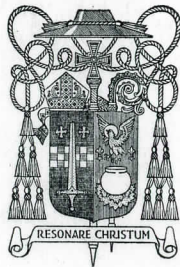


PUBLIC EXAMINATION

Friday evening
April 28, 1967
at 8:00 o'clock

Diocesan Building Auditorium
111 Boulevard of the Allies
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



TELEVISION PRESENTATION

Sunday morning
from 10:00 to 11:00 o'clock
April 30, 1967

WTAE - TV
Channel 4 Pittsburgh

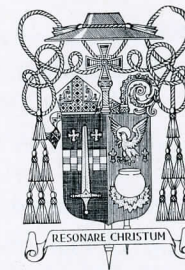
RADIO BROADCAST

Monday evening
from 9:00 to 10:00 o'clock
May 1, 1967

WDUQ - FM
91.5 megacycles Pittsburgh



A LITERARY MAGAZINE



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Dedication

*"A teacher affects eternity;
he can never tell where his
influence stops."*

Henry Adams: *The Education of Henry Adams*

His influence and concern have aided in the progressive formation of each member of the graduating seniors at the Bishop's Latin School. He has shown us the difficult, but rewarding, path to truth and knowledge.

As moderator of the Greek Academy, he has spent endless, but fruitful, hours in guiding the academy in their quest of the Greek epic, especially *The Odyssey*. We are also grateful to him for his advice and cooperation in making so successful this edition of *The Miter*.

Therefore, this special edition of *The Miter* is respectfully dedicated to Rev. Joseph E. Henry, S.J., moderator of the senior class and the Greek Academy.

The Editors

THE GREEK ACADEMY
of
THE BISHOP'S LATIN SCHOOL

presents

The Odyssey of Homer

MEMBERS OF THE ACADEMY

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(*St. Bartholomew's School*)

SCOPE OF THE EXAMINATION

A familiarity with the entire story of the Odyssey is fundamental. Eight books have been studied in the original Greek, namely, books I, V, VI, IX, X, XI, XXII and XXIII. In addition, prescribed critical works have been studied concerning the problem of authorship and the nature of the oral epic. Certain passages have been committed to memory.

PROCEDURE OF THE PUBLIC EXAMINATION

Each examiner will question the panel for a period of fifteen minutes. After the first two examiners have completed their questioning, there will be a ten minute intermission. After the third examiner has finished, members of the audience may direct questions to the panel.

EXAMINERS

REV. FRANCIS R. HAIG, S.J., PH.D.

Father Haig received his doctorate in atomic theoretical physics from the Catholic University of America. After a year of post-doctoral study at the University of Rochester, he taught physics at Wheeling College. Last summer he became President of Wheeling College.

REV. THOMAS R. FITZGERALD, S.J., PH.D.

Father Fitzgerald studied Classics at the University of Chicago, which awarded him his doctorate. He has been Dean of Studies and Professor at the Jesuit Seminary, Wernersville, Pa., and Dean of the College at Georgetown. Last summer he was appointed Academic Vice-President of Georgetown. Father Fitzgerald will examine only on Friday evening.

JAMES A. McCULLOCH, PH.D.

Dr. McCulloch, a graduate of Duquesne, did his doctoral work at the University of Pittsburgh. He received a scholarship to the American School of Classical Studies in Athens and a Lawrence Fellowship for post-doctoral work abroad. He is Chairman of the Department of Classics at Duquesne University. Dr. McCulloch will examine only during the taping of the television presentation.

JAMES J. M. CURRY, PH.D.

Dr. Curry was an undergraduate at Columbia, earned his doctorate at Cornell, and was a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome for two years. He taught at Yale before coming to the University of Pittsburgh two years ago as Assistant Professor of Classics.

PRESIDING AT THE PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HIS EXCELLENCY,
THE MOST REVEREND JOHN J. WRIGHT, S.T.D.
Bishop of Pittsburgh

Foreword

There is a basic need in man for *communication*. Communication is a *practical* necessity because man, as a social being, naturally tends to co-operate with other men to satisfy his needs. Communication is also a *psychological* necessity because, as Fromm points out, man must bridge the gap between himself and other men to overcome the anxiety that arises from his awareness of his aloneness.

One of the basic functions of the Bishop's Latin School is to train men to communicate. Communication has two essentials: expression and comprehension. To communicate, then, a man must not only express himself but also comprehend the expression of others. Our efforts at expression are exemplified by our literary magazine, *The Miter*. Our efforts at comprehension are exemplified by a study group, the Homeric Academy. Thus, it is fitting that the Homeric Academy and *The Miter* combine to produce this special issue, which, as a result, epitomizes the academic life of the school.

It is obvious how the students practice expression through *The Miter*. The Homeric Academy, however, requires some explanation here. We observed that the Academy was an example of our efforts at *communicating through comprehension*. Although speech, art, and music have their place, the chief form of communication practiced at the Latin School is that of the written word. Thus, our efforts at comprehension are aimed primarily at *literature*. First, if not foremost, among the extant literary works of Western civilization are the poems of Homer. Hence, the purpose of the Academy is to study these poems, specifically, the *Odyssey*.

The papers presented here are a result of this study. Each is an individual student's report of his work in a field of Homeric scholarship of interest to him. We hope that you find them indicative of both skill in comprehension and skill in expression.

David H. Carey



The Greek Epic

by Albert J. Shannon

INTRODUCTION

"Epic is the most solemn, stately, and frigid of all kinds of composition."¹ That is, the format of writing is very subtle. It has no dependence on ornament or decoration, but it is frank and flat. The Greek epic, father of them all, is personified in this quotation.

The watchwords of the Greek poets were "clarity and simplicity of statement."² They said what they meant in a direct fashion. They did not hesitate or talk around a subject. In general, the Greek poets were simple. The beauty of their verse shows that, although simple, they found great beauty in the most common things.

The Greeks were not great talkers. They detested exaggeration and despised braggarts. Their motto, *Meden Agan*, is substantiated by their form of poetry. They expressed an undistorted thought in a beautiful way.

The way the Greek poets wrote was also unique. An English translation of Greek verse conveys little thought. The Greek itself must be read to appreciate it and to realize its beauty. The English method of poetry is to fill the mind with unspoiled beauty, but this method would definitely take away value from the Greek verse. The Greek method was to set the mind to work, that is, to present a picture for deep consideration.³ With these methods at extremes, one can see why Greek verse must be read in the original Greek.

This paper will discuss that type of epic presentation while the origin, content, and norms of the epic will be treated individually.

The first division deals with the origin of the Greek epic. The late Mycenaean period will be discussed, but the emphasis will be placed on the formation and development of the Homeric epic since the Homeric Age was the actual start of great heroic poetry.

The section on the content of the epic will involve Homeric themes and heroes. It will show the importance of all the characters, episodes, and plots to the epic audience.

The final section will deal with the norms of the epic. Such things as style, formulae, language, and imagery in the Homeric tradition will be illustrated.

THE ORIGIN OF THE EPIC

The easiest way to discuss the origin of the Greek epic is to give the life cycle of the oral tradition in four stages. The originative stage, the creative stage, the reproductive stage, and the degenerate stage compose this cycle.⁴

The originative stage is the basic part in the development of an epic. This stage contains the Mycenaean period of writing. The themes of this period bear a great importance because they were held on to and developed through the subsequent stages. Although there was little writing of what we would call literature in this Mycenaean period (c. 1400B.C.-1100B.C.), there were themes traced throughout this period. These themes were results of the heroic age of the late Mycenaean period.⁵

This stage also set up a basis for the mode of development for the presentation of the epic. That is, the poems were given orally. The poets in this stage had no use for writing because the audiences were probably all illiterate and would not have understood a written text.

A small discrepancy arises in saying that the Mycenaean age was the first period in the development when the Babylonian period of the third millennium B.C. is mentioned. Even though "Gilgamesh" came from this period, I think it would be fair to begin the life cycle of oral tradition with the Mycenaean period because it is the foundation of the Greek epic.

The creative stage, or Homeric period, is the next stage in the development of oral tradition. The main purpose of this stage was the addition to the old Mycenaean themes. New characters, side-plots, and outcomes were created for the enhancement of old themes. The Mycenaean mimetics (drama in which scenes of life were imitated and generally travestied) and ancient myths were polished and formed into unified stories. The established themes and formulae were compiled by various poets and put into the epic form. Homer was one of these poets.

This stage of the Greek (Homeric) epic developed into its monumental form around the eighth century B.C. The epics of Homer, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, from the creative stage were taken as a basis for all Greek epics to follow.

The third stage seems to be somewhat of a transitional stage. The poets of this stage, through the mid-seventh century, kept the works of the previous epic writers alive. There was no great contribution by these writers. However, during this era (c. 550B.C.-600B.C.), the earliest attempt for a complete and accurate version of the Homeric and earlier-stage epics was made.⁶

The final stage was the degenerate stage. The poets of this stage seem to go against all epic tradition. Their poetry deteriorates, almost before it is written. The language, subjects, and dramatic or rhetorical effect is completely lost with the advent of this era.

Rhapsodists revived the Homeric poems during this stage. The epic tradition was in its darkest hour, and as we see today, only the best of the Greek epics and authors survived.

The development of the epic in this manner has been related briefly, but it does give an over-all view. The path from the laying of the foundation in the originative stage to the climax in the creative stage and through the deterioration in the degenerate stage gives an idea of the resulting product. . .the lasting Greek epic.

THE CONTENT OF THE EPIC

The narrative epic dealt with the time and civilization of the Greek *Heroës*. The themes of most of the ancient epics usually revolved around this hero. The poetry of this classical tradition also involved the fates and gods.

The *Heroës* of this age were a generation of superior beings who sought and usually deserved honor.⁷ Since the Greek poets preferred to write of the past, they idealized these men. The *Heroës* were always the "good guys" of the epic. When the heroic poet chose to write of a man of the past, he would remove all obstacles. In light of this, one can see why expurgations put the epic in a completely Homeric world.

The relations of the gods with these men in the epic is also of some interest. In several of the Greek epics, the hero has a particular god or

goddess at his side at all times. These gods play an intricate part in the epic. There is fate (the will of the gods) involved, but the *Heroës* still possess their own qualities. The gods act as a mediator between the hero and Zeus, and they sometimes act as a supernatural force to save their subject, the hero. It is easy to see from these two examples alone that the gods do have a unique part to play in the content of each Greek epic.

There are other similarities in all the themes of the Greek epic besides the predominate role of the hero. Since the poets like to use established themes, episodes of getting up and going to bed, arriving and departing, heroes or heroines dressing, arming for battle, giving and attending feasts, and sailing from place to place are quite common.⁸ Themes of a more general nature pertain to passionate loves, deaths, curses, blood feuds, battles, and deliverances by the gods.⁹ The heroic poet takes these themes, in their formulaic lines, adds his own ideas and writes them in his own way. This mode of presentation, using established themes, does not detract from the originality when the epic is written properly.

Characters also play an important part in the various themes of the epic. The poet must do more than make the hero an all-powerful, seemingly superhuman, personage of the epic. The roles of the minor characters enter here. These characters, divine or human, must present challenges to the hero, in order that he might prove himself. In the *Odyssey*, for example, the roles of Circe and Calypso are to try to persuade Odysseus, the hero, not to return home. The Laestrygonians, Scylla and Charybdis, and the Cyclops present an evil force trying to prevent Odysseus' homecoming. However, Odysseus must prove himself because the epic demands it, and he alone is the hero.

Another important part in the epic's make-up is the portrayal of common life. This is done very scantily throughout the epic, but it is worth note. The way in which the poet presents this will be brought out in the next chapter.

In general, the above is the constitution of the Greek epic. We can now see of whom the Greeks wrote, what they wrote about, and the periods of time that gave rise to their writing. An impressive quotation from a book by Thomas Green is a fitting ending to this chapter:

"The subject of all epic poetry might thus said to be politics but a politics not limited to society, a politics embracing the natural and fabulous worlds, embracing even the moral or spiritual worlds they sometimes shadow forth, and involving ultimately the divine."

THE NORMS OF THE EPIC

For simplicity in discussing the norms of the epic, it would be best to divide this chapter into three sections. The first section will discuss the structure of the epic. Section two will be concerned with epic style. The final division will deal with the language used in Greek epic poetry.

The structure of the epic is that of narration. There are two kinds of narration: panoramic and scenic.¹¹ The panoramic type of narration surveys the plot development from above, over a period of time. Since the epic hurries through any panoramic style, the second type of narration, scenic narration, will dominate the structure. Scenic narration relates an incident in a given hour and place. It concerns more the individual episode than the panoramic view. Although some modern writers hold that a perfect balance between scenic and panoramic narration is necessary to avert boredom in an epic, I disagree and point to the *Odyssey* as an example. Although the first four books have a panoramic view, the predominating style in the subsequent twenty books is one of scenic narration. Since this is hardly a perfect balance, my point of view is substantiated.

The style of the Greek poets is one of simplicity. Some people say that these poets used almost all formulaic vocabulary, phrases, and themes. The truth of this statement is questionable, since the factor that separates one poet from another is his unique style.

The various styles of poets differ in minor points, but in essence there is agreement in their simplicity of style. An essential element of the Greek style is imagery. Included in imagery is the use of epithets and similes.

Similes are used in the epic to describe scenes or to convey action in the portrayal of the common life of the Homeric peoples.

Epithets summarize the deeds or behavior of a person. Often a hero will possess an epithet, given him by the poet, so that everyone will realize immediately who he is and what he stands for. Epithets form an intricate part of this epic style.

Continuity in epic style is also important. Although the poet does not always follow chronological order or depend a great deal on history, he does have something of a pattern to follow to maintain unity. Each book in the epic sets a scene, foreshadows some action of the book, makes use of dialogue, and through the poet's imagery, describes the various elements in the scene. It is easy to see that the poet has done quite well with the absence of chronological order.

Language is the final norm of the Greek epic. The language of the epic is not that of everyday ancient Greece, but it has its own "higher style" and is sometimes referred to as the "language of awe."¹² The language of the epic, especially in dialogue, can make or break the epic hero. This is the main reason why such a study of dialogue is necessary. Since the dialogue was the chief victim of ancient expurgations, carried out to preserve the hero image, one can see its important role in ancient poetry.

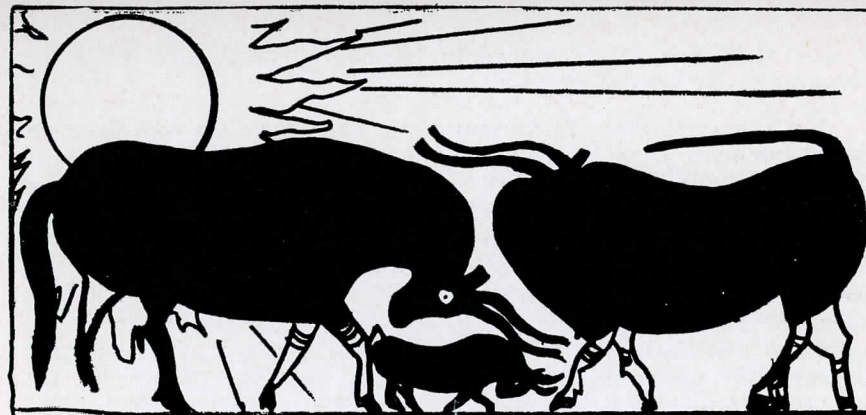
It is now obvious that the norms of the epic take in many elements. The epic structure, style, and language are all taken as one to form an outline of the epic writing tradition.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the objective of this paper, the epic has been discussed, and the final product has been analyzed. We can see now how the origins in the ancient Mycenaean period have contributed to the final presentation. The all-important content with its themes and heroes has been discussed. The final section has put forth the norms which the epic writer has followed. Through this brief study of the Greek epic poem, it is now apparent where and when this poetry originated, who and what is treated in the epic, and how epic poetry was written.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹W. P. Ker, *Epic and Romance, Essays on Medieval Literature* (New York: Dever Publications Inc., 1957), p. 31.
- ²Edith Hamilton, *The Greek Way* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1964), p. 47.
- ³*Ibid.*, p. 53.
- ⁴G. S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge: University Press, 1962), p. 97.
- ⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.
- ⁶Arthur E. Houston and Patricia McCoy, *Epics of the Western World* (Philadelphia and New York: J. D. Lippincott Co., 1954), p. 22.
- ⁷C. M. Bowra, *Heroic Poetry* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1952), p. 1.
- ⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 179-214.
- ⁹Gilbert Murray, *The Classical Tradition in Poetry* (Cambridge: University Press, 1927), pp. 179-180.
- ¹⁰Thomas M. Green, *The Descent from Heaven, A Study on Epic Continuity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 18.
- ¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 19.
- ¹²*Ibid.*, p. 24.



The Gods of Homer

by Daniel N. DiNardo

INTRODUCTION: WHY STUDY THE GODS?

As soon as one attempts to make a study of the developments of the gods throughout the epic cycle culminating in the Homeric Poems, he is obviously inviting difficulties. For nothing is so mysterious as the rise of the Children of Kronos. They are the outgrowths of ancient animal worship as well as combinations of various traditions from all sections of Greece. There is a good example of this in Athena who has superseded other local deities, while taking on their attributes. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to watch their evolution through the ages, and, if possible, in the Homeric songs themselves. My paper will attempt to do two things. First, it will trace the origin of the Olympian gods to their status in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Then, it will attempt to see whether or not the characters of the gods develop in the Homeric compositions. Are the gods dynamic or static in Homer? Now let us begin with some background.

FROM ANIMAL TO GOD

"The things that have misled us moderns in our efforts towards understanding the primitive stage in Greek Religion have been first the widespread and almost inerradicable error of treating Homer as primitive. . . ."¹

Gilbert Murray thus begins his treatment of Greek Religion. He asserts the fact that the notion of a "god" in the beyond for primitive man is very difficult; the concept of "god" comes only with many years of philosophy, and this only a nature god - not one living in the above. The very fact that Homer not only deals with a "god in the beyond", but a sophisticated set of gods, each with his own idiosyncrasies, shows him to be speaking of a very developed form of religion. But, before

we look at Homer, let us study both collectively and individually the evolution of the Olympian gods.

A major celebration in ancient times in Greece was the Diasia, a festival honoring Zeus. He had an epithet, "Zeus of Placation" (Meilichios). "A god with an 'epithet' is always suspicious, like a human being with an 'alias.'" (Almost all of the Olympians have epithets—a generalization that will help the conclusions.) What is interesting is that Zeus plays little or no part in the feast; Meilichios does, however. And, often, he is represented by a large snake. (Most probably the snake was used because he lived so closely to those people under the earth, and because he was so cunning.) At the Diasia, there was a meal in which the people made friendship with the god. Then came the more important part of the celebration, the sacrifice, in which every piece of the victim was consumed in the flames—no one could eat a sliver of it. Mr. Murray points to this kind of offering as placation for the dead, the powers under the earth. (An interesting fact can be seen here. It is common for all ancient peoples to appease the underworld powers, e.g. Egyptians, Babylonians, and to a lesser degree in the Hebrews, as seen in the Book of *Deuteronomy*.) The Diasia appeased the Underworld; the closest it came to naming a person was "he of placation"—a personification of the ritual.² In such a great festival as this, the god fades away at the heart of the sacrifice; a ceremony and a sacred animal remain. But, this is not the only festival where animal and ritual dominate.

The Thesmophoria honored the goddess Demeter. But, if we look closer, we find that there are not too many signs of a personal being in this ancient celebration, but only the personification of the ceremony, a fertility rite. This feast, too, is associated with, though here not represented by an animal—a sow which was honored because of its great fertility. Again, we have a ritual and a sacred animal.

The last feast considered is the Anthesteria, one in honor of Dionysus. The days were all of bad omen. At the center, again, is not a service honoring the god, but rather the dead. Dionysus was only to lead a sacred marriage each year. Where he met his bride was called the Boukolion—the home of a sacred animal, a bull.³

In all three festivals, an animal dominates; all three animals were sacred. The snake's holiness was already mentioned, as was the sow's. The bull was held in honor because he had such great *mana*, strength, power, vitality, and anger. When Arthur Evans went to Crete, he unearthed there the fabulous worship paid there to the Bull of Minos. A bull was not only holy but at Delphi was called the Sanctifier. In some places, the bull was held in such great reverence, that not even Zeus himself could be represented by it. Here is but one example of how much the animal was regarded by the ancient ancestors of the Greeks (indeed, with all ancient people). You revered an animal because of its *mana*, and to obtain this vitality, you ate the animal alive, while its life source was still communicable. Now, all these sacred animals

later became the symbols of the Olympians themselves, but it is important to remember that the individual qualities of the animal existed from very early times. ". . . the safest rule in all these cases is that the attribute is original, and the god is added."⁴

Here is the background for the Olympian gods. But, now we must see how they developed into what they were at Homer's time. Primitive man still identifies himself with the natural world, with the animals and trees. So, his worship deals with these exact same things. He wears animal masks in his most solemn rites. This has been shown by experts to have taken place in Egypt where the priests wore animal masks, and it was also seen in Crete, where King Minos is often depicted wearing a bull's mask. But, man matures as his religious thinking becomes more sophisticated. Ancient peoples began thinking more of the man himself as a god rather than the mask he wore. (King Minos was originally honored as one of those *Kouros* deities, who are born and who die each year.) Then, as thinking matured even more, people saw that these men were not gods at all; they were frauds. Even so, the old superstitions were still strong; so, these people claimed that the priest was only the representative of the god, not the god himself. This god is a human who lives in the beyond, or on the peak of some lofty mountain. When man has reached this stage, he has become very aware of himself, and has discovered himself as the greatest thing in the world. Such is the stage of Homer; his gods are anthropomorphic, and his view of man is one of awe.⁵ And, so we have the origin of the very human Olympian gods who color the epic poems.

FATHER ZEUS

With the preceding view of the Olympians in mind, let us move to the individual gods. Before this, however, there is one prenote.

With all this talk of the gods, it seems imperative that we establish how important the gods are to Homer. It is very interesting that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* both open with an assembly of the gods. Homer introduces each story by showing the importance of gods in dealing with men. *Moirai* is not yet developed so highly as it will be later, so it is the gods who are identified with it and mete it out to each man. Odysseus complains to Ajax that Zeus is to blame for all the trouble that ensued in the battle over Achilles' armour. (Book xi) Zeus weighs out the scales of human destiny, but it is Hera and the other gods who have much to do in influencing him. In the *Odyssey*, Athena is Odysseus' strength; it is she who pleads his case before the gods so that they might allow him to return home, she who guides him to his native land, and she who plans his disguise so he might kill the suitors. In the *Iliad*, Apollo continually helps Hector; often, he hides him in a cloud so his enemies cannot harm him. The very battle of the gods themselves in the *Iliad* shows their interest and control over certain heroes. Evidently, the gods are not passive spectators in these massive epics; they are performers. The monumental composer has painted

their characters (or the oral tradition has painted their characters) very well. It is also very important to realize that the gods were very important to the background of the Homeric poems—Bronze Age Greece.

"It need come as no surprise that some of the names of the divinities at Pylos are those of Olympian gods of historical Greece, many of whom were already known to be of Mycenaean derivation."⁶

Mr. Kirk goes on to mention names such as Zeus, Hera, and Athena. (*Atana Potinija*) These discoveries were found from Linear B tablets, on which also were found regular offerings made to the gods. ". . . the integration of religion with civil life is widely exemplified on the tablets."⁷ Now, these records deal with such common things as wheat, wine and chariot wheels, and they reveal a highly centralized government. That ritual and the gods were also included points to their importance. Seal stones found at Mycenae often show scenes of worship and pictures of gods and goddesses, one of them believed to be "Owl-eyed" Athena. It certainly enforces our argument that Bronze Age Greece is very much concerned with the gods. This, in turn, adds to our previous conclusion that the gods are so crucial to these epic poems.

Let us now move to Zeus. The Heroic Tradition begins in the Bronze Age at Mycenae. So does Zeus.

"He is one of the very few gods with recognizable and undoubted Indo-germanic names. Djēus, the well-attested sky—and rain god of the Aryan race. He is Achaian; he is "Hellanos," the god worshipped by all Hellenes. He is also, curiously enough, Pelasgian. . . ."⁸

Zeus was the god of invading Northmen. Mycenae held him as a rainmaker, the god of the sky, of lightning and of good weather; however, he was not the chief god as he developed into by Homer's time. In Mycenae, Poseidon is the sacred god.⁹ But, from a very early time, Zeus begins to evolve into the sovereign of the *Iliad*. For one thing, he is always pictured majestically, sitting on a throne or standing with "a dignified attitude."¹⁰ Cretan ritual claimed he was reared there. He overcomes his father and sets himself up as king, ruling over heaven and earth. Here is where Homer appeared. As a Northern sky deity, he has evolved to the chief of the Olympians, surpassing such well known gods as Poseidon. But what of Zeus in the Greek Epics?

He seems to be a more important character of the poems; we need only to look at the number of epithets he has. He is "son of Kronos," "cloud gathering," "aegis-bearing" and "great" used only in the genitive and dative cases. By the time of these Homeric poems, Zeus has undergone many changes; from a mere sky-god, he has developed into lord of all gods and political life. Although there are many prominent gods in the epic poems like Athena, Hera, Apollo, and Poseidon, Zeus is the main god because of his sovereignty. Although there are long intervals in the *Iliad* where he does not appear, and though other gods are in the picture more often, Zeus is the omni-present one. All the other gods bring their complaints to him; Homer, himself, always men-

tions whether the prayer of this or that one was heard by Zeus, and in Book XVI, he makes the comment—Zeus grants one prayer, but not the other, thus again referring to the omnipotence of the Great Olympian. At certain points in the book, Hector claims that Zeus panicked him or gave him courage. (XVI) This almighty being is also a great sender of dreams, e.g. Agamemnon, Priam. But, for all these attitudes, there is not much character development of Zeus in this poem. Even when in Book XX he asks the other gods to engage in battle for or against the Trojans or Achaeans, and so seems to take a first hand interest in man, rather than hurling a thunderbolt or sending a dream, he still retains that air of holding man's fate in the beyond than coming right down to the human scene. So, as far as the *Iliad* is concerned, he undergoes rather minor changes, and we leave the work with practically the same notion of the ruler of gods and men.

In the *Odyssey*, Mr. Kirk has remarked that the gods seem more interested in justice than in the *Iliad*. We can notice something of a change in the very first book. Zeus is upset because men are blaming him for all the evils that befall them, even though they are responsible for themselves. He claims that they have troubles beyond their fate (*kata moiran*) because of their greed, etc. He explains evil not in respect to the whim of some god, but what is due man by his good or evil. What he seems to be saying is that every person has a *moiran*, a fate, which no one can escape. But, the gods in justice must pay back those actions that a person performs unjustly, even if this is not in strict accordance with his fate. We have an example in the suitors. They were those haughty men who did not respect the gods or mortals. Although Athena has the most to do with the slaughter, she, nevertheless, must seek the approval of Zeus. He allows these lawless men to be slain because they had no righteousness. They acted beyond their fate, and so received punishment beyond their apportionment. Athena then complains to him that Odysseus who always sacrificed to Zeus in due order is still not at home. Now, the Cloudgatherer replies that he could never forget that godlike Odysseus who always sacrificed duly to him. Odysseus was always upright in his dealings with the gods. In turn, Zeus treats him with respect. He has changed to a somewhat more concerned deity. It is not enough to give out fate on impulses; justice and law must now be taken into due consideration.

Another interesting development of Zeus from the *Iliad* to the *Odyssey* is his sovereignty. Although the Lord in the *Iliad*, he is overly criticized most of the time by three conspirators—Hera, Athena, and Poseidon. "An old legend tells how these three tried to overpower and bind him, from which he was saved by Thetis, who brought to his aid Briareos."¹¹ In the *Iliad*, Poseidon even aids the Greeks in defying the will of his older and more powerful brother. The fact that the gods join the fight for either side in the battle of the gods disregarding Zeus' choice is proof enough. The *Odyssey*, however, reinforces Zeus' command. All the gods, even when complaining, respect his judgment and decisions. Athena has taken on the most friendly relations with her

father in the *Odyssey*. Only Poseidon holds back somewhat although he respects Zeus' wishes. One might get the impression that Zeus gains much power from the lines of one poem to the other; this is not true. He *always* is in command, the chief of the gods. But, we might say that the full and total supremacy of his rule is not realized completely till the *Odyssey* when he takes on the aspects of a dispenser of justice.

Let us review, now, all that we have found about Zeus. First, from his Indo-germanic origins, he rose from a minor sky-god to be the head of the Olympians—all during the time of the Heroic Tradition. Secondly, he goes through slight changes in the Homeric Poems themselves. This examination of Zeus sheds light on the other gods, too, and we can draw conclusions about their evolution in the Epic Tradition and the Homeric Poems themselves. This will be taken up in the next chapter.

ATHENA AND THE OTHER GODS

In the preceding chapter, we looked at the development of one god. In not as much detail, we will look at another god and then reach some conclusions about the gods in general. That goddess is Athena. She is probably the second most important deity in the epic poems.

We will not concern ourselves here with a detailed history of Athena's evolution. Let us look at her as she appears in the *Iliad*. She has an important role in the poem but not one of emphasis. She regularly comes to the aid of certain heroes. Her epithets are "Pallas" and "Owl-faced," and these have most probably come down to us from Mycenaean Times. A Linear B tablet contains the title "a-ta-na-po-ti-ni-ja," and it seems clear that we could interpret it to be Lady Athena; however, Mr. Leonard Palmer declares that the form is for that of a place. So, we must take it to mean the "lady at Atana" which is a shrine located in Crete. But, it does seem reasonable to suppose Athena's existence by at least Post-Mycenaean Times.¹²

"I am inclined to agree with those who believe that our *Odyssey* was very largely composed in Athens, so that in most of the poem Athena is original. In some parts of the *Iliad*, the name Athena may well have been substituted for some Northern goddess whose name is now lost.¹³"

If we continue, now, with our study of Athena in the *Iliad*, keeping both her Mycenaean origin and Gilbert Murray's preceding thesis, we find that even so, she still remains a static character from the time in Book I when she tells Achilles not to harm Agamemnon to her exit before the battle between Hector and Achilles. (Book XXII).

Even the *Odyssey* doesn't alter our conception of Athena. She's still the same crafty goddess who tricked Ares in the *Iliad*, as she figures out schemes to help Odysseus escape and slay the suitors. One slight difference is the sudden closeness she has towards Zeus; she didn't have

such a father-daughter relationship in the *Iliad*. I think this can be explained, as G. S. Kirk says, by the fact that there were two different monumental composers for the separate poems. Thus, the epic tradition would undergo different personal interpretations by two different bards. (The same argument could well be used for Zeus, although I personally don't think it is as valid, since Zeus was so supreme, not too many bards would tamper with him.)

This brief capsule of Athena, coupled with the preceding discussion on Zeus, might help us draw some conclusions on the gods in general. First, there are few if any changes in the characters of the gods in the poems, as they follow the models of Zeus and Athena. Second, the history of each Olympian god would parallel in some fashion the evolution of Zeus i.e., from obscurity to a fully recognized divinity. The first conclusion might have a reason behind it. I conjecture that Homer purposely left their characters undeveloped because he was looking for stability on some level. The age of the Dorian Invasions had just passed, which left behind it destruction and anarchy. If everything was not chaos, there was at least no stability. The Dorians had leveled Mycenae, Pylos, and Knossos as they slew their leaders. Although Homer's home of Ionia was far away from the destruction, it, nevertheless, shared in the lack of leadership; it was a colony and felt the sting of no king guiding it. Since there were no natural leaders, Homer looked to the realm of the supernatural for the unchanging and enduring. He found it in the Olympian gods, whom he perfected. Suffice it to say that this is my own theory on the subject.

Homer's view of the gods will always remain partially hidden, since most of the knowledge we lack concerns that obscure period of the Dark Ages of Greece. But, even if we touched on the Olympians, there will probably be for us a better understanding of epic Greek poetry.

CONCLUSION

This concludes the study made on the evolution and character development made on the Homeric gods. One certain conclusion is that this family is not so simple as we suppose, but, in reality, they are a very complex group—each developing in his own way. Another conclusion is that most of the Homeric gods originated in the Mycenaean period, and Zeus, here, remains as the typical model. Another result of the study is the fact that the gods remain static throughout the epic poems for the most part. The conjectured reason claims that the monumental composer was looking for stability in a world of restlessness made so by invasions. I think other conclusions are suggested such as the oddity of the Olympians merging into one god in later Greek history, but these cannot be established with the evidence presented here.

Homer has managed to live two-thousand years under extensive scrutiny and criticism. He still remains as a superb storyteller and

teacher of human nature. His gods are the coloring to a work great in most aspects. Perhaps, by looking deeper into the various facets of his technique, such as the gods, we might gain a little better understanding of his poetry.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Gilbert Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion* (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1925), p. 9.
²Murray, *op. cit.*, This whole section, including the quote, is taken from p. 15 and the preceding pages.
³This section was compiled from a number of sources, mostly from Gilbert Murray's book. Also used was H. J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology* (London: Methuen and Co. (LTD), 1828), Pages One through Seventy-Eight review the history of the Olypian families.
⁴Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
⁵Eric Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (New York: Bantam Books, 1963), p. 54.
⁶G. S. Kirk, F.B.A., *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1962), p. 34.
⁷*Ibid.*
⁸Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
⁹Murray, Kirk, and Palmer all agree with this hypothesis.
¹⁰Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
¹¹Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
¹²Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
¹³*Ibid.* See also for this same argument Leonard Palmer, *Mycenaeans and Minoans* (New York: Alfre A. Knopf, Inc., 1965), pp. 130-142.



Homer and Virgil: Some Points of Comparison

by David H. Carey

INTRODUCTION

This paper is a view of Homer and Virgil in the light of one another. Each poet chose the same basic form, the epic, for one of his greatest works: Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Thus, there is ample ground for comparison.

Obviously, one cannot even begin to exhaust a subject as vast as this one in a short paper of this type. This paper aims to discuss a few of the ways in which the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid* are alike and a few of the ways in which they differ. It deals with such matters as sources, traditions, central purpose, style, viewpoint, characters, and plot.

As we noted, the basic similarity between the two poems is the fact that they are both epics. What, then, is an "epic"? Like many terms used in literature, this term eludes precise definition. There will probably always be a dispute as to whether a certain work is an epic, and in the end everyone must decide this for himself. It is possible, however, to set

down basic norms which will be generally accepted. E. M. W. Tillyard has listed several characteristics of his concept of the epic. There are four:

1. The epic must have high quality and high seriousness.
2. The epic must have amplitude, breadth, inclusiveness, and so on.
3. The epic must have control commensurate with the amount included.
4. The epic must be choric; the epic writer must express the feelings of a large group of people living in or near his own time.¹

These are norms that we shall follow for the purpose of the paper.

THE AUTHORS AND THEIR PREDECESSORS

Both Homer and Virgil show the strong influence of their predecessors upon their work -- Homer, to the extent that he has been argued out of existence; Virgil, to the extent that he has been accused of outright plagiarism. Let us look at this influence.

The field work of Milman Parry and Albert Bates Lord among the oral poets of Yugoslavia has shed great light on the methods of epic composition. These poets are masters of a system of formula and theme, developed from one generation to the next, by which they can improvise an oral narrative poem thousands of lines long. *Formulae* are relatively fixed expressions for various ideas such as the main quality of a hero, the coming of dawn, or the opening of an oration. *Themes* are "stock subjects like arming or the launching of a ship which can usually be expressed in formulae." The *Odyssey* bears marks of such a manner of composition, and it is probable, but not certain, that Homer composed it in much the same way in which the Yugoslav bards of the present compose their songs.

Since this systematized method of composition can, to a degree, become mechanical, and since the system is developed by succeeding generations of bards, it has been theorized that no one man named Homer ever existed, but that the *Odyssey* slowly grew from a folk tale or group of folk tales, being embellished and developed with each new generation until it was written down in the form that we have today. The *Odyssey*, however, has, for thousands of years, been acclaimed as a work of exceptional genius, and since genius of this sort is usually found in single men rather than collectively in communities, it seems likely that, at one time or another, there was a single man who imparted his genius to this poem.² This man we call "Homer."

Indeed, the method of formulaic composition does not preclude the possibility of creativity or individual style. True, the oral poet thinks in certain patterns and expresses himself in formulae and theme, but he has a basic core of formulae which may differ from that of other singers, and he is always free to create new phrases. Thus, individual style is possible.³ The bard is also free to develop new characters, to add nuances to old, traditional ones, to vary the plot, and to select and arrange his materials as he wishes.

It is also probable that Homer had a vast number of folk tales to rely upon for the contents of his epics. Again, this does not destroy his claim to originality any more than Shakespeare's, who often used previously existing tales as content for his plays (One cannot say that an architect is not original because he does not design his bricks).

Likewise, Virgil made great use of the work of his predecessors. "The connection of the founding of Rome with Trojan refugees is established early in Greek legends."⁴ Stories of Aeneas were found in the works of such authors as Hellanicus, Timaeus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Naevius, and Ennius.⁵ Even as early as the sixth century, a coin of Aeneia in Macedonia pictures Aeneas with his father on his back and his wife and child at one side.⁶ To Greek legends Virgil added the Italian traditions of Alba Longa and Romulus. This blending had been done before him, though, by such men as Varro and Dionysius.⁷ In summary:

"Virgil . . . inherited a flat and disconnected story of Aeneas' wanderings, a legend of his association with the founding of Rome, and a hero with no definite characteristics, except a scrupulous piety."⁸

Of course, the most outstanding of Virgil's models was Homer. As Otis says:

". . . The *Aeneid* is, in one sense, an imitation of Homer: it is based on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* not only in its Homeric plot and incidents but in its choice of an Heroic date and milieu."⁹

The story of Aeneas' wanderings was a rather "prosaic" account, "stimulated, possibly, by practical, religious and commercial interests" in the places visited. By contrast, Odysseus' wanderings were more romantic and fanciful.¹⁰ Virgil improved this dry, historical narrative by the elimination of stops, wanderings, and the like; by adding richer adventure and variety; and by the abandoning of chronological sequence.¹¹ What is significant here is that *Virgil used Homer to enrich and to expand the Aeneas legend* by the use of such devices as battle similes, for example.¹² Moreover, the *Aeneid*, in plot at least, could be considered as a sequel to the *Iliad*, based on the prophecy of Poseidon in Book XX of the *Iliad*, that Aeneas would rule over the Trojans.¹³ Thus, Homer had influenced Virgil tremendously.

Yet, "so far from feeling ashamed of any lack of originality, he (Virgil) glorified in being a *Roman Homer* (italics not in the original)."¹⁴ Virgil stood at the zenith of Roman literature. He had behind him a rich cultural heritage -- the authors of Greece and Italy.¹⁵ His task was the Roman epic. Thus, it was fitting, indeed necessary, that he should speak for the Augustan Age and the Roman Nation (Recall the fourth epic requirement: that it be choric). He does this, partly, by incorporating into his epic the literary heritage that was so much a part of Rome as a nation. As Knight puts it:

". . . The experience which is distilled (in the world-views of the greater poets) may be the experience of many centuries; and it may

be condensed and focused by a single genius in a single poetic statement. That is what Virgil did to the experience of the Greeks and Romans in the *Aeneid*."

Virgil used his books of past poets as the painter might use the earlier portraits. He collected as much as possible but never copied anything exactly and always tried to have more than one influence working at the same time."¹⁶

Thus, the *Aeneid* may be viewed as a national portrait, a "mosaic" of Roman and Greek literature and tradition.¹⁷

By no means, therefore, is the *Aeneid* a mere copy of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. As Otis says:

"Homer gave him (Virgil) a form, something of a style, a great deal of content, but not the essential idea or meaning, not the ideological *truth* he wanted to convey."¹⁸

Moreover, by "imitating" Homer, Virgil succeeded where his predecessors failed. He was, as Otis also says,

". . . the first and only poet truly to re-create the heroic-age epic in an urban civilization. . . . Only the *Aeneid* aspired to be both heroic and civilized, remote and contemporary, Homeric and Augustan."¹⁹

Other authors had tried to rival Homer but failed either because they were imitative but unpoetic or because they were poetic but unable to re-create the Homeric world.²⁰ Otis points out Virgil's problem:

". . . Shakespeare, Sophocles, Homer himself took their form, their *genre* fresh from the hands of a line of predecessors: they added the master's touch, but only to a vital tradition which was in fact ripe for them. Virgil had no such living *genre* to work on."²¹

Thus, "Virgil's achievement was as heroic and unusual as that of his own Aeneas."²²

CENTRAL PURPOSE AND ITS ACHIEVEMENT

This brings us to what is probably the greatest difference between Homer and Virgil: their *purposes*. Let us look at these purposes and how they are achieved.

Although we know nothing for sure about the authorship and composition of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, we can still make reasonable conjectures. Samuel Eliot Bassett, reasoning from the meaning of the Greek word for "bard," *aoidos*, the proems of the two poems, and the discovery of no evidence to the contrary, hypothesizes that "Homer's only poetic purpose was to *make an imagined experience real* (italics not in the original)."²³ In general, Homer seems to have dealt with a single world—that of the Heroic Age. His characters are real people, and they don't seem to be much more.²⁴ There are, however, a few who hold the contrary view, that the *Odyssey* is an allegory, that its characters are symbols, or the like, but, to my knowledge, these people are a minority.

Virgil, on the other hand, dealt with *several* worlds or levels of existence. There seems to be general agreement on this point. Poschl specifies three levels of reality:

1. Cosmos, the sphere of divine order, the world of ideas and law.
2. Myth, the heroic world of poetic persons and destiny.
3. History, the world of historical and political phenomena.²⁵

The myth symbolizes the historical order as well as the human or cosmic. Virgil's characters are symbols as well as persons.²⁶ Virgil, then, is "far more consciously symbolic than is Homer."²⁷

Related to this difference in purpose is the difference in point of view. "Even in a speech, Homer is objective in viewpoint. Even in a narrative, Virgil remains subjective."²⁸

Homer strived to maintain what Bassett calls "The Epic Illusion." This is the bringing to life of the imaginary world of the epic in such a way that the listeners enter into this world and become unconscious of the storyteller. This results from the creation of three minor illusions: (1) The Illusion of Historicity, (2) The Illusion of Vitality, and (3) The Illusion of Personality. *The Illusion of Historicity* is "the removal of all doubt in the hearer that the story is historically true. This is accomplished, partly, at least, by the invocation of the Muse, who in Homer gives *facts*, not inspiration as in Virgil." *The Illusion of Vitality* is "the realism with which the tale corresponds to the characteristics of life." These are progressiveness, continuity, and movement. *The Illusion of Personality*, "the dramatizing of character," results chiefly from the use of direct discourse. This explains why so much of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is dialogue. Thus, Homer's objectivity is due to his efforts to maintain the Epic Illusion.

There are times, however, when this Illusion must be broken. If, for example, all the feelings and background of characters were revealed through their speeches, the poems would be far too long and wearisome. Furthermore, a tale is enjoyed more when it is related to the hearer's own experience.²⁹

This is one of the functions of the Homeric simile. These similes often go beyond what is necessary for the comparison; they have been called "little pictures among the large canvasses."³⁰ In Homer's similes "the action is suspended while the poet pauses to elaborate a point of the story,"³¹ but in Virgil's similes, "the inner action continues in the emotions of the persons involved. To a much greater degree than Homers, Virgil's similes are transparent signs for inner events."³²

This is true of Virgil's style in general. His point of view is subjective. He "yearns over the spectacle which he spreads before us."³³ As Brooks Otis says:

"It is on his 'subjective style' in short that his whole intricate structure of symbols and motifs depends. Without this, his plot *per se* would be a curiously artificial thing, a flimsy paste-and-scissors job that could not create or sustain any sort of poetical illusion."³⁴

Up to this point we have discussed, in somewhat general terms, the sources, styles, and viewpoints of the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*. Let us now illustrate these points by a brief examination of the characters and plots of the two poems.

As announced in its invocation, the *Odyssey* is the story of a man and his experiences. It seems to me that the *Odyssey* has had such a universal appeal for thousands of years because the story is made up of universal elements. Odysseus has characteristics some of which may be found in almost anybody, he is a very complex, human character. Odysseus is a tactful man, as is evidenced by his dealings with Nausicaa, but he can also be quite forceful and violent, as with the suitors. He is a master of deceit, as with Polyphemus, but he can also be frank and honest, as with Aeolus and with the Phaeacians. He can be daring, even reckless, as evidenced by his decision to await the Cyclops; yet, he often shows prudence, as when he remains outside of the Laistrygonian harbor. Although he has slept with the goddesses Circe and Calypso, he is intensely anxious to return home to his wife and family. At times, he is undisputed leader of his crew, as on the voyage to Hades; at times, the crew has its way, as with the cattle of Hyperion. He is shrewd and eloquent, as the entire story shows, but by no means are these his only skills. He can build a ship single-handed, win an athletic contest, and surpass all contenders with the bow. Truly, he is a man for all men.

The plot of the *Odyssey* -- the experiences of Odysseus -- also has the same universal quality. In Book V, for instance, Odysseus experiences both utter boredom and high adventure. Many welcome him and many reject him; Aeolus, for example does both. These examples of the contrasts and complexities of Odysseus and his experiences could go on and on. I hope that these few suffice to demonstrate the universal quality of the story of Odysseus.

Virgil also tells a good story, but, as we noted, his characters are more than people in a story. They are symbols of other levels of existence. As Poschl points out, Aeneas is a symbol of cosmic law and order, discipline and devotion. Turnus is the antithesis of Aeneas. He symbolizes passion, fury, and anarchy. Historically, the battle between Aeneas and Turnus may be seen as a reflection of the Roman civil wars. Dido, you might say, is a "cross" between Aeneas and Turnus; she has devotion for her husband, but in the end she succumbs to her passion. Historically, the final struggle between Aeneas and Dido may be seen in the Punic Wars.³⁵

These three, Aeneas, Turnus, and Dido, are major characters, but are also symbolic. I would now like to discuss briefly the symbolism of Creusa.

Creusa is a symbol of the city of Troy. Although Aeneas is fiercely devoted to her, it is his destiny to leave her behind. So it is with Troy. Once he has lost her, he goes back, retracing his steps and calling for her. So, too, in the first third of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas, mournful and reminiscent, keeps looking back to Troy.³⁶ In a vision Creusa directs

his thoughts away from her and toward his destiny. So, too, in the vision of the Underworld, Aeneas' mind is turned from Troy toward Rome.³⁷ Aeneas finally takes a new bride, Lavinia and, symbolically, Rome.

Again, I hope that few examples have served to illustrate the richness of the *Aeneid*.

We have seen that Homer told a story dealing with a single world or level of existence but that Virgil dealt with several levels of reality. Homer is objective; Virgil is subjective. Thus, as Tillyard warns:

"... If you judge Virgil by Homer, he largely fails in the sense of present life; if you judge Homer by Virgil, he comes out oversimplified and impoverished."³⁸

CONCLUSION

Both Homer and Virgil were epic poets who were greatly influenced by their predecessors. Virgil's relationship with his predecessor Homer, however, made his task difficult. Homer and Virgil differed in their purposes. Homer's purpose was simply to tell a great story, but Virgil's was to tell a story with cosmic and historical implications. Consequently, Homer used the objective viewpoint, Virgil, the subjective. This was reflected in their uses of the simile. It was also reflected in their characters and plots. Homer made his story universal by creating a hero and plot with characteristics found in all men and all human experiences. Virgil portrayed his mythical, cosmic, and historical worlds through symbolic characters.

Thus, we have compared and contrasted Virgil and Homer. We have seen that they were very similar but, also, very different. Indeed, much has gone unsaid and many phases of this subject have been untouched by this short paper. It is hoped that the following bibliography will prove helpful to those wishing to pursue this subject further.

FOOTNOTES

¹E. M. W. Tillyard, *The English Epic and Its Background* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 5 ff.

²Samuel Eliot Bassett, *The Poetry of Homer* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1938), p. 4 ff.

³Albert Bates Lord, "Homer's Originality: Oral Dictated Texts," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 84:124-34, 1953.

⁴Henry Washington Prescott, *The Development of Virgil's Art* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1927), p. 159.

⁵*The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), p. 12.

⁶Prescott, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁸*The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1949), p. 12.

⁹Brooks Otis, *Virgil, A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 2.

- 10 Prescott, *op. cit.*, p. 163.
 11 *Ibid.*, p. 166.
 12 *Ibid.*, p. 167.
 13 *Ibid.*, p. 157.
 14 *Ibid.*, p. 167.
 15 John William Mackail, *Virgil and His Meaning to the World Today* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963), p. 1 ff.
 16 W. F. Jackson Knight (trans.), *Virgil: Aeneid* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, Inc., 1956), pp. 17-18.
 17 Harry Thurston Peck (ed.), *Harper's Dictionary of Classical Literature and Antiquities* (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1962), p. 1646.
 18 Otis, *op. cit.*, p. 384.
 19 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
 20 *Ibid.*, p. 2 ff.
 21 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
 22 *Ibid.*, p. 40.
 23 Bassett, *op. cit.*, p. 1 ff.
 24 Tillyard, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
 25 Viktor Poschl, *The Art of Virgil*, trans. Gerda Seligson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), pp. 23-24.
 26 Tillyard, *loc. cit.*
 27 Poschl, *op. cit.*, p. 1.
 28 *Ibid.*, p. 40.
 29 Bassett, *loc. cit.*
 30 *Ibid.*
 31 Poschl, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
 32 *Ibid.*
 33 Nettleship, *Virgil*, p. 92, cited by Clyde Pharr, *Virgil: Aeneid* (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1964), p. 3.
 34 Otis, *op. cit.*, p. 385.
 35 Poschl, *op. cit.*, p. 34 ff.
 36 *Ibid.*
 37 *Ibid.*
 38 Tillyard, *op. cit.*, p. 72..

Mycenaean Excavations and the Homeric Poems

by William M. Ogrodowski

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this term paper is to investigate the effects that the archaeological excavations at Mycenae have had upon bringing to light the circumstances surrounding the Mycenaean Age and the origin of the Homeric poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In this study, the principal tools will be the writings of archaeologists and those of interested amateurs. Consequently, the major divisions of this paper will be: (1) The Excavations, (2) Their Effect upon the Mycenaean Times, and (3) Their Effect upon the Homeric Poems.

The last point was meant to be the chief concern; however, since these two works are generally believed to represent the perfection of an oral epic tradition, centuries old, which had its birth in Mycenaean society, a firm knowledge of that period is indispensable.

Indeed, aside from its literary contributions, this epoch is highly significant because it greatly influenced the Classical Greeks in the formation of their civilization. Furthermore, all of western man should have an interest in this age when the seeds of his own culture were beginning to take root.

THE EXCAVATIONS

Heinrich Schliemann went to Mycenae in 1876, and within the citadel, he came upon a grave circle, a tremendous find, both artistically and archaeologically priceless. This fine example of shaft graves, Grave Circle A, was dated between 1600 and 1500 B.C. Unfortunately, the importance of the find was only established after Schliemann's death.

A second grave circle, Grave Circle B, was discovered in 1951, and extensive work was done on it by Professor J. Papadimitriou and George E. Mylonas. This find was fixed at 1650 B.C., and chief among its contents were two skeletons with marks from medical operations and a crystal bowl in the shape of a duck, a prize for any collection.¹

Another type of tomb, the tholos or beehive tomb, was found by Dorothy Burr in 1926. Dendra, as it was called, was the only Mycenaean tholos that has come down through the ages intact. It, likewise, was filled with valuable and informative objects. Nevertheless, other examples exist, the "Treasury of Atreus" and "Tomb of Clytemnestra," for instance, which have yielded knowledge on matters of history and architecture. Many archaeologists have probed these tombs.²

The excavations of the tombs have proved fruitful, but an enormous amount of very profitable work has also been done within and around the citadel itself. Most active on this project have been Chrestos Tsountas in the last century and A.J.B. Wace in the present one. Their scholarship has included the Cyclopean walls of Mycenae, palaces, and private residences. Both of these men share the glory for mapping out the history of the Lion Kingdom.³

Since Heinrich Schliemann first arrived at Mycenae, archaeology has been extremely successful in uncovering many of the secrets of this ancient civilization. Nonetheless, the store of knowledge is not in the least exhaustive. Countless archaeologists are still digging, and their efforts are rarely in vain. A great deal of this work is currently being handled by a group of scholars under the sponsorship of the Archaeological Society of Athens.⁴

THE EFFECT OF THE EXCAVATIONS UPON MYCENAEAN HISTORY

The recounting of the relationship between the Mycenaean excavations and the history of Mycenae has proved to be complicated. Therefore, a convenient place to begin would be at Mycenae itself, describing the city's geographical location.

In the northeast Peloponnesus, the citadel of Mycenae stood upon a lofty hill, which overlooked the fertile Argive plain, the city's principal source of food and grazing land. Her position, slightly inland, offered an impregnable defense against pirates and hostile land armies, and she also happened to be situated on a very prosperous trade route, much used by the rest of Greece.

However, the Mycenaean civilization would have been lost to the world if it hadn't been for the poetry of Homer and the faith of Heinrich Schliemann in it. Indeed, when the German revealed his find, the site of Mycenae was construed by contemporary scholars to have been either a Phoenician trading post or a Cretan colony. Schliemann's greatest contribution to archaeology, although he was never aware of it, was the establishment of the fact that the Mycenaean civilization was Greek.⁵

Grave Circle A, Schliemann's discovery, abound in funeral furnishings that told a most interesting tale. This tomb (1600-1500 B. C.), marked the transitional period between Middle Helladic and Late Helladic times. Its contents showed that Mycenae had undergone a very favorable change. There were knives with Egyptian scenes, other pieces with the unmistakable influence of Crete, and amber beads from the Baltic regions. Miss Emily Vermeule stated the case well when she commented on the metalwork on the blade of an obsidian knife found in this grave: "work so excellent it is attributed irrationally to Crete, technique at home in the Levant, and subject matter dear to the Mycenaean."⁶ Grave Circle B, though somewhat earlier and poorer than Grave Circle A, backed up fully the conclusions that had been drawn from Schliemann's find.

These conclusions were, namely, that Mycenae, previous to 1600 B.C., had been a rather humble settlement. The cist graves, the remains of this earlier period, more than attest to that fact. However, the two shaft graves, signs of increased trade and wealth, have definitely shown that Mycenae had taken at that time a relatively rapid leap ahead from her poorer beginnings, for archaeologists have established a direct connection between these two methods of grave construction.⁷

The next great period in Mycenae's history was characterized by the building of the tholos tombs. These beehive-shaped monuments bespeak of a two-hundred year span, (1400-1200 B.C.), that surpassed its predecessor in every aspect. The tholoi's fine style of architecture was a distinct improvement over the somewhat crude technique of the shaft graves. Trade had also increased to a new height. Dendra's Egyptian ostrich egg and solid gold ornaments have more than verified this conclusion. These tombs were, moreover, in continual use during those two centuries. As Couch has pointed out, Mycenae must have been ruled at this time by a very stable and wealthy dynasty.⁸ However, the real importance of this era can be seen in the change that occurred in Mycenae's relationship with Crete.

Previous to 1450 B.C., naval supremacy in the Aegean had been held by Crete. Then, suddenly, Knossos was destroyed, and Mycenae established her power on the island. Moreover, her influence spread into such areas as Cilicia, Syria, Cyprus, and Rhodes, to mention only a few. Her influence on these peoples has been detected in their style of art and architecture.⁹ Also, Mycenaean wares have been found in the regions where Crete once enjoyed a monopoly. Clearly, the Lion Kingdom now held the number one spot in her rather large corner of the world, and she would continue to do so for several more generations.

The Mycenaean were very diligent in providing monuments for the dead. They, likewise, though somewhat later, were just as active in erecting massive structures for the benefit of the living, and, fortunately, Wace and Tsountas have been quite successful in uncovering these. The first palace and walls appeared in 1340 B.C. This was rather surprising, as Emily Vermeule noted, that a high standard of vase painting and minor arts existed for so long until an equally advanced style of architecture showed itself.¹⁰ However, more will be said on this point later. The second palace and series of walls were much larger and more advanced in technique. The former, built in Late Helladic times, was simple in design and made a very effective use of the natural contours of the hill.¹¹ The inside was characterized by a stately and impressive megaron, colorful frescoes, and brightly painted floors.¹² Although these finds have proved themselves truly remarkable, the archaeologist has been more interested in why the Mycenaean began to build so late in their history. Mr. Joseph Alsop, in a most scholarly manner, has attempted to answer this question.

The main contention of this author was that Mycenae only became a tightly controlled bureaucracy, a fact to which the Linear B.

tablets have attested, rather late in her span of existence. He said that the Lion Kingdom began to conceive of her massive construction plans only when her wealth was sufficient to support them. This, more than likely, seems what might have logically happened, considering, of course, the sparse clues that have been left.

As proof for his second point, Mr. Alsop offered the singular experience of Neleus in Pylos. Neleus, a Thessalian, came down into the Peloponnese about 1300 B.C. and encountered no sizable opposition in establishing himself as king there. It appeared as though the original Pylian rulers were something like feudal lords and didn't have the strength to stand up against Neleus' army. In fact, afterwards, the king was so confident of his own security that he didn't bother to build any sort of walls for the purpose of fortification. From this, the author surmised that peace must have reigned for some time in the Mycenaean world. Then, however, very suddenly, something struck terror into the hearts of all the Greeks, since defensive walls went up rather quickly around almost every citadel throughout the land at the same time. This latter fact is especially pertinent now, for the remainder of Mycenae's story is chiefly concerned with her decay and final destruction.¹³

There has also been unearthed on the city's acropolis a number of separate buildings which had served as warehouses for the products that Mycenae exported. In the early 1300's B.C., a great many of these, containing such costly items as oil and ivory, were left standing unprotected outside of the walls. Apparently, the general state of affairs was a peaceful one. However, according to the latest figures of N. Verdelis and Mrs. David French, these same structures were put to the torch before the end of this same period with their wares still within.¹⁴ The reason for this has remained in doubt, but whatever it was, Mycenae never regained her former prestige.

Furthermore, the kings of 1200 B.C. were a very warlike group. In fact, it has been established as fairly plausible that Mycenae waged an aggressive war against Troy because the latter almost completely stopped trade with her. Unfortunately, Mycenae only hastened her own destruction, for the king's long absence from his bureaucracy could merely have served to weaken an already collapsing system.¹⁵ Likewise, Mycenae's enemies had taken advantage of this occurrence to strengthen their own forces, and by 1100 B.C. the citadel had been overrun. With the fall of Mycenae, the Dark Age began on the mainland. The only bright spot in this period was the dawn of epic poetry.

THE EFFECT OF THE EXCAVATIONS UPON THE HOMERIC POEMS

The excavations undertaken at Mycenae have established their importance with regard to the history of that city. However, this storehouse of knowledge has also been tapped for information about the Homeric poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Yet, this second narrative cannot present as flowing a picture as did the first. This is the case be-

cause poetry deals with the human spirit, which at times tends to alter history for literary purposes, and, consequently, seemingly unrelated points have been the keys to very important discoveries. Sometimes, the results have appeared to give negative answers, but, for the most part, there has always been some new find that has vindicated Homer. Indeed, the majority of scholars have identified the "situation" and the civilization of the Homeric epics as Mycenaean.

Owing to the fact that Homer wrote a great deal about war, the subject of armor always has proved to be a fertile point of discussion. Archaeology, however, has backed up the poems in most instances. First, it has established that the Mycenaean definitely used bronze for their weapons. In fact, a recent find at Dendra has revealed a cuirass, very similar to the one described in Homer. This same example has been shown to be much older than a Pylian piece of the 1300's B.C., recorded on a Linear B tablet.

A pair of Homer's famed bronze greaves has also been unearthed, and these add more weight to the historicity of Homer's information.¹⁶ It has likewise been found that bronze was not even used in the Early Iron Age. Therefore, though anachronisms have been cited in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the recollections of epic poetry must have extended back into Mycenaean times.

Another element of the poems has provided, nevertheless, much more concrete evidence on this point. These are the Homeric Catalogues. As has been noted, they serve no dramatic purpose where they are located, and, consequently, these lists must have been indispensable parts of the epic. Moreover, the latest archaeological scholarship has revealed that Homer's figures coincide very neatly with the actual ones they have uncovered. Interpolation has also seemed unlikely since practically all of the later Greeks considered Homer a historically accurate work. Therefore, needless to say, it is a very strong possibility that these Catalogues were composed from records which were made around the time of the Trojan War.¹⁷

So far, the discussion has been limited to mostly objective matters. Now, however, a more subjective angle has been explored by N.G.L. Hammond. This eminent historian has chosen to look back at other civilizations which have produced epic poems, and he has endeavored to investigate the features that these places and Mycenae had in common. First, the general state of the civilizations was well in accord. Both the Mycenaean and, for instance, the Babylonian, at the end of their great periods, were dominated by men who had very war-like tendencies. These societies had seen tremendous heights, but they were now in the process of decay. Principal of this new type of noble in Mycenae was Agamemnon. It has also been noted that these declining worlds were composed of men who had high regard for courage, their gods, and their suppliants. Yet, glory was of prime concern, and there could be no more perfect example of this than Achilles, the hero of the *Iliad*. At first glance this comparison might seem to have been formulated

too easily; nevertheless, nothing has been taken into account over which archaeologists have not painfully pondered for a good many years.¹⁸

Aside from those elements of the Mycenaean culture which can be definitely traced in the Homeric poems, there are several items, like those of cremation and art in the palaces, which have also yielded valuable information of another sort concerning the origin and transmission of the poems, although their connection with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* has often been a point of controversy.

One of the most perplexing problems in Homer has involved the palaces in which Odysseus, Nestor, Menelaus and Alcinous lived. This has been true, most likely, because Homer has furnished only vague details, which have merely succeeded in producing many widely different theories. Nevertheless, one point in particular, that of the frescoes, has given some authors food for thought. One of these, Emily Vermeule, has even noticed a similarity of style between these paintings and the poems. It was, namely, that they blot out the national characteristics of foreigners. The Mycenaeans did this with their enemies and with the peoples whom they encountered in their trading ventures; Homer effected this upon the Trojans.¹⁹ All of these facts have added up to one conclusion, and Emily Vermeule has said it best: "It tempts one to believe that epic only gathered its true strength after the fall of the palaces and discarded elements which had dropped out of real life (p. 307)," when she was speaking of Homer's failure to record the existence of the frescoes. This quotation has brought up the next logical question, namely, of where the epic went when Mycenae was destroyed.²⁰ The following and final consideration, cremation, has seemed to offer a possible answer.

Cremation, undoubtedly, was the regular practice in Homer. On the other hand, Mycenae used it very sparingly. Her custom entailed only burning some personal objects. Yet, such important tombs as Dendra have displayed this partial combustion. Miss H. L. Lorimer held that Mycenae brought back this custom from her war with Troy VIIA. It has been definitely established that Troy VI made use of this method, and current excavations have her successor following suit. However, most astonishing was the discovery that the migrants from the mainland to Ionia around the time of the Dorian Invasion came from regions where evidence of cremation was strongest. These people, mainly nobles, would have been prone to retain this practice since the Ionian natives might have plundered their tombs. This is conjectural, but its highest significance lies in the realization that most scholars now hold that Greek oral poetry gained its greatest force in Ionian surroundings.²¹

With the recounting of these archaeologically based facts, the location of oral poetry's birth has been fixed. Claiming much more than this, however, would not have a very firm foundation. Yet, Miss Lorimer's statement on cremation has seemed to fit the pieces together rather well. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are, doubtless, the finished pro-

ducts of a type of literature that took centuries to perfect. Nonetheless, the narrative must stop at this point, and it can only be accurately resumed when Greece has awoke from her Dark Age and has rediscovered her literary and cultural heritage.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Paul MacKendrick, *The Greek Stones Speak* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962), p. 71.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 68.
- 3 George E. Mylonas, *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 8.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Joseph Alsop, *From the Silent Earth* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 11.
- 6 Emily Vermeule, *Greece in the Bronze Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 98.
- 7 Mylonas, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
- 8 Herbert N. Couch and Russel M. Geer, *Greece* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 74.
- 9 N.G.L. Hammond, *A History of Greece to 322 B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 46-47.
- 10 Emily Vermeule, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-17.
- 11 Mylonas, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
- 12 MacKendrick, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
- 13 Alsop, *op. cit.*, pp. 264 ff.
- 14 Mylonas, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 215.
- 16 Vermeule, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
- 17 Hammond, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-65.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 61.
- 19 Vermeule, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 172.
- 21 H. L. Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments* (London: MacMillan & Co., Ltd., 1950), pp. 107-08.

Mycenaean Influence in the Greek Epic

by Gilbert Z. Puznakoski

THE PROBLEM AND A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to indicate the extreme probability of Mycenaean influence in the composition and transmission of the Greek traditional epics. Due to the excellent work done both in the field of Mycenaean poetry and in the field of "Homeric" tradition, a problem of mutual interdependence has arisen. This paper will attempt to show that such interdependencies did exist on the basis of internal evidence linked to archaeological discoveries. Archaeological advances have, moreover, proven that the first half of the "glory of Greece" was experienced in an age totally suited for such epic poetry as we find in "Homeric" tradition.

True Greek culture did not suddenly spring up around 700 B.C.; it was rooted in an era before a "Dark Age" (much the same as later European history was). While it is generally agreed that about 1100 B.C. there was a certain break all over Greece between Helladic and Hellenic culture, archaeological studies on pottery styles in the area of Athens have shown that -- at least in this one location -- there was a continuous, unbroken development of shapes and designs dating back as far as 1300 B.C. Later Greece, therefore, was a result of Mycenaean culture which, unfortunately for archaeologists, was physically destroyed with the Dorian invasion.

Yet, pottery is not the only evidence for a link in civilization. The Greek epic, the "oral tradition" of Greece, constitutes a major portion of such evidence. According to classical commentators, the traditional epics were written by a blind bard named Homer, an inhabitant of Chios. But, the scholarly work done by Doctor Milman Parry among the bards of the Yugoslav tradition has demonstrated that because of the repeated use of formulae and other metrical, conceptual, and thematic devices, the poems were, in reality, the product of ages of oral transmission. Let it suffice if it is said that today very few scholars are in agreement on this Homeric question.

These oral epics, then, of which the most notable are the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Cypria*, comprised what might be termed "the memory of the Achaeans." If indeed the epic cycle is a memory, of what does it hold recollections? How does one discover the source of this memory? In this paper, two major fields where evidence for Mycenaean influence is likely to be found will be dealt with: language and religion.

A SHORT HISTORY

It has been well-established by noted authors and scientists that the island of Crete had a civilization which predated even that of Egypt. Much cultural interplay was experienced by Crete and Egypt, and economic ties are hardly doubtful. As any good trading centre, however, Crete turned not only south, but also, north to Greece. When the first true Greeks swept over the Neolithic Pelasgians and supplanted the native pottery with their distinctive Grey Minyan ware in 1900 B.C., Crete interested herself in these newcomers. Cultural ideas were certainly exchanged, for Mainland frescoes reflect very sure Cretan affinities. Exchanged also were Cretan products. Many Cretan seals and swords were found in the tholos tombs of the Mainland aristocracy. Around 1400 B.C., however, disaster struck the Cretan thalassocracy; an earthquake severely shattered her trade potential, and after eventual recovery, Greek rulers appeared as the new directors of Cretan policies. Commerce trickled on for a while, then stopped. The fabled Atlantis had sunk.

In the meanwhile, the invaders of the Mainland were building centres of power at Mycenae, Pylos, Lacedaemon, and Corinth. It was from these centres that exports and imports were received, from these centres that trade and military routes were established.

For a time, Greece survived a shaky economy and had, for the most part, friendly relations with both Egypt and the Hittite Empire. But, she, too, fell before the invaders whom we call "Dorians," the ones who began Greece's dark age.

This, then, was the historical background of the Heroic Age, the era recorded in the epics.

LANGUAGE: THE LINEAR B *WANAX* AND THE *TEMENOS*

The modern history of Linear B begins with Sir Arthur Evans, Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. His museum acquired a small, four-sided bead on which were inscribed a few characters which reminded him of Hieroglyphic Hittite. With his interest thus aroused, Evans set out to find the origin of this seal. On his search, he found many such objects scattered about the Aegean lands, and, eventually, he followed their trail to Crete. Convinced that this was their home, Evans informed the Hellenic Society that he had found a system of script distinct from both Egyptian and Hittite.

For further archaeological studies, Evans began to excavate the island of Crete in March, 1900. The first clay tablet appeared on March 30; and on April 5, a whole hoard of tablets was uncovered. The study of what appeared to be a pre-Greek language was thus begun.

Although many scholars believed that the tablets were Aegean or Aryan, there was no tangible proof. Matters were complicated by the fact that not only one form of script was found; there were three. The

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first of these was a hieroglyphic system with close Egyptian overtones. The second was what Evans called Linear A, a script in which the hieroglyphic symbols had taken on a quasi-phonetic value. The third was the famous Linear B, considered the final stage. The earlier symbols and characters became letters and constituted a definite alphabet. Though these facts were confusing, at least they indicated that much of the real glory of Greece and Crete was "prehistoric."

It was not, however, until 1957 that the proof demanded by the *savants* could be given. Michael Ventris and his colleague, John Chadwick, not only catalogued the script as inflective, they deciphered it and pronounced it Greek!

For a while, there was a storm. Some scholars refused to believe that the texts were Greek, others questioned Ventris' methods of decipherment. With the discovery of new texts and their successful decipherment with the Ventris code, most of the flurry died down.

"I quote with full agreement the verdict of a leading authority in the field of Mycenaean archaeology and prehistory. Professor Fritz Schachermeyr of Vienna in a recent appraisal of the decipherment has written: 'All doubts may be set at rest and we may without further ado designate the decipherment of Linear B as one of the most brilliant scholarly achievements of all time.'"²

The tablets themselves were inventories done on clay, dried in the sun. Two interesting facts can be deduced from their condition. One is that the texts were never meant to be permanent. They were dried only in the sun which meant that any amount of moisture could dissolve them again. They were preserved through 3400 years simply because the fires which consumed the palaces were so fierce that the archive room became an oven. Hence, it was merely by accident that records of the Mycenaean economy have come down to us. The second fact is that some of these tablets were done in the last days of the city. At Pylos, tablets were found with a scratch pad and a few extra strips of clay tied to the bottom. These same tablets indicate that the city knew of the advancing invaders, for it tells of the guards set up to watch the coast.

The world of the epics, however, is vastly different. Instead of the highly bureaucratic society found in the tablets, the epics describe a simple society headed by a king and a council (V 55). The army fights in a phalanx in some passages (N 126, 145), but when the real fighting comes, it is a matter of a few *Promachoi* (I 88) and their armed mob behind them (T 2).

Where, then, should proof for Mycenaean influence be sought? The best place is a word which is in a reliable Mycenaean context, concerning a Mycenaean character, one which had become extinct by classical times. Such words would suggest clear Mycenaean echoes. When words are found in the same general context in the Linear B tablets, a valuable cross-reference is established. Such cross-references

show that some kind of oral tradition was carrying on the stories of a Heroic era which grew fainter and fainter with each succeeding generation. And, since no written sources have been found to explain how these stories survived, the epics must be accepted as the authority.

In the course of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, a number of men are described by the term *wanax*. The importance of these epithets need not here be given place). Only one, however, maintains the title exclusively as his own. Agamemnon is consistently referred to as *Wanax Andrón*. Agamemnon it is who holds the supreme command of the Greek forces, he who leads the ships to Troy, he who holds the Achaeans to their oath to avenge any wrong done to Helen or her freely picked husband. He takes on the character of a feudal lord with a large body of holders beneath him. "Homer" himself suggests a significant clue to such a baronial structure in the behaviour of Egeopolos of Sicyon. Who after being called upon to serve in the war by Agamemnon, gave, instead, a mare by the name of Aithe. Sicyon was one of the cities ascribed to Agamemnon in the Catalogue. Then, there was also Euchenor of Corinth. His father was a seer and foretold that if his son stayed at home, he would die of a disease, and that if he went to Troy, he would be killed. Euchenor joined the expedition thus "avoiding a grievous *fine* and a loathsome disease." The word *thoë*, used to mean a legal penalty, implies an obligation to an overlord, and Sicyon, like Corinth, is listed as one of the cities of Agamemnon.

In the Linear B texts many references have been made concerning the *wanax*. He is the unchallenged head of the state and has large holdings of his own. He lives in the central palace and has about him the craftsmen and traders. He hands out land to the *ra-se-ri-jo* or *Basileus* as well as to the *la-fo*, *Laos*, the common people. Interestingly, he holds a private estate called a "*temenos*," a word which in later times was used in reference only to the gods. Further, the divine-king, the "young god," the son and consort of *Wanassa* or *Potnia*, the Earth-Mother-Goddess. This view is supported by Greek tradition. Perhaps, with a greatly strained echo, sounds of this are given place in the epics. Agamemnon is slain by his wife, Clytemnestra, in a silver bath tub with a double axe (the symbol of Cretan power) and is tossed on the floor as Clytemnestra, splattered with blood, rejoices. As Gilbert Murray says:

The old sequence of Ouranos-Gaia-Kronos, Kronos-Rhea-Zeus is repeated in Agamemnon-Clytemnestra-Aigisthos. The old king is slain by the young king, who is helped by the queen and then wed to her: the Old Year is slain by the Young Year, while the same Earth-Mother is wedded to all of them.³

So, the *wanax* appears in the Linear B texts not only as a temporal ruler, but also as a fertility god who makes the fields produce by mating with *Potnia*.

Such, then, was the position of the *wanax* in the world of the Mycenaeans. One other fact comes to mind while speaking of Agamemnon. His brother, Menelaos, is, in reality, the one who conducts the

war. From the Linear B tablets arises the mention of a high-ranking official, second only to the *wanax*: the *Lawegetas* or the Leader of the Host. The duty rested on the Leader to defend the city, and from the last Pylos records his name often stands in reference to the positioning of watchers along the coastland. Perhaps not only the *wanax* but also the *lawegetas* survived the Dark Age through the epic cycle and was finally crystalized in the brother of the king, Menelaos.

Therefore, in the epic cycle we have a king who is described by the Mycenaean term instead of the Attic title *Basileus*. Since there was no written tradition between Late Helladic III and Early Hellenic I, the memory of the Mycenaean must have come down from the Heroic Age in the oral tradition.

One word, of course, not even one phrase, is enough to date a poem. Rather, there must be a reasonably large number of such elements which could clearly relate the poems to a Mycenaean era.

In Book IX of the *Odyssey*, Nausicaa, the daughter of the king of Phaeacia, tells the folk-tale hero Odysseus to wait in the *temenos* of the king near the sacred grove of Athene. The *temenos* is a very important land holding in the Linear B tablets.

The two usual land holdings were the *ki-ti-me-na*, held by a member of the *telestas* class -- the royal ministers -- who were landed by the *wanax* himself, and the *ke-ke-me-na*, always held by the *damos* -- the common people. The most important type of land was the *temenos* which belonged to the king. In the Pylos order, the king's *temenos* was located at a place called *Pa-ki-ja-nes*, the cult centre of the great Earth-Mother-Goddess, Potnia or Wanassa.

Just as the *wanax* of Pylos held a *temenos* in the city of the Goddess, so, too, did Alcinoos hold a *temenos* near the sacred grove of Athene. The epic tradition, then, seems to be implying that Alcinoos is just like any other Mycenaean potentate and therefore has religious as well as secular duties. Even in later literature the link between the *temenos* and religious function is obvious. When dealing with the constitution of the city of Cyrene, Herodotos notes that king Battos was permitted to keep his "temenea and his priesthoods" on the advice of Delphi. Since there was no connexion between king and religion in classical Greece, and since there was one in the Mycenaean age, the story of Alcinoos' estate dates in content to the period before the Invasion and is a definite Mycenaean influence just as *wanax*.

These Mycenaean words, therefore, have been chosen to suffice for the vast store of words in the epics which could be treated. Outstanding are the terms *silver-studded*, *well-greaved*, *bronze-shafted*, and one of the most important, *the Telemonian*, who carries a unique Mycenaean shield. Also, the process of equating Achaia with the Hittite *Ahhiyawa*, a race of sea pirates, could be given. Add to this list the methods of dress of the most traditional personages, the strategems of chariot warfare, and the use of the bow and the armed mob behind a Prodomos,

as well as the list of Mycenaean place names, now verifiable in the Linear B texts, all of which details could not have survived a 300 year Dark Age without an epic tradition nor could have been invented by a post-invasion bard with only accidental, but amazingly close, adherence to now known Mycenaean habits, and the evidence for Mycenaean influence in the epic language is deniable only in minor points of later interpolations.

RELIGION: THE FOUNTAIN OF THE GODS

Just as Mycenaean language and custom found a sounding board in the epic, so did religious beliefs make their own music. Although the epics speak of temples, no archaeological proof can be offered, for none have been unearthed. Names, however, and places famous in cult in the classical age have manifested themselves in the Tradition.

The easiest way to check on the parallels between Helladic and Hellenic cult is to search for the names of late Olympian deities in the Linear B texts.

From Pylos comes a tablet which records votive offerings and the respective divinities. The highest is Potnia, after her Poseidon. It is doubtful whether Potnia was transmitted as a whole deity in later tradition, but her qualities were identified with Zeus, Demeter, and Athene. Her name, Potnia, came to mean "lady," and is used in this sense in the epics. With Poseidon, however, the case is different. He was certainly carried intact into the classical era. Poseidon, as he appears in the Knossos texts, is the guardian of Crete. Furthermore, he is most probably behind the Theseus legend. If any tribute was collected by the Minos (a dynastic name not unlike Pharaoh), it was as an appeasement for the Bull, the Lord of the Earthquake. Minos himself was half-divine. He was an eternal king of Crete, called every nine seasons to give an account of his kingship by the Bull, who oddly bears the same name as Minos' father. Every nine seasons Athens was required to pay the tribute of seven youths and maidens to calm the wrath of the Bull. Poseidon can be broken down to two persons: the lord of the earthquake -- the Bull, and the mate of earth *posis*=husband; *-da-* suffix of root earth: *Demeter*. He retains these characteristics far into classical Greece.

Not only Poseidon, but Hermes, Artemis, and Paian also appear in the Linear B contexts. On a tablet from Knossos (*Documents*, no. 206, Knossos Gg705) is the mention of the goddess Eleuthia at Amnissos. Amnissos is famous as the birthplace of Zeus, and Eleuthia is the later Eileithyia, a female deity concerned with childbirth, familiar from the birth of Herakles. Nearly last come two goddesses and Zeus. It seems that Zeus was the "Young God" in Mycenaean religion, but became the "Wedded Lord" in post-invasion times.

Not only did Crete possess the cave of Amnissos, which from the evidence of votary offerings was held in honour from Helladic II down into classical days, it also had Mount Jutkas where sleeps forever Zeus; celebrated and used by both Mycenaean and Hellenes. Names and some cults, therefore, survived and provided a background for the epics.

"The importance of birds as religious symbols has long been recognized."¹ It could hardly be mere co-incidence that in T of the *Iliad*, Here and Athene descend from Olympos like birds, or that in I of the *Odyssey*, Athene sits in the rafters like a dove. In Cretan excavations, numerous objects have been discovered which show a dove or an owl on the top of a pillar, itself sometimes worshipped, receiving homage. Athene is certainly to be linked up to animal worship, for her epithet, "owl-eyed," belies any social or religious change. Not only is she associated with birds, she is almost always seen with snakes in later tradition. In Linear B texts appears the name of the goddess *Potnia Tharon* the *Lady of Beasts*. Linguistically, this name could evolve into *Potnia Athéné*, and this divinity could well be identified with the "owl-eyed" Athene.

Finally, mention could be made of the underworld of the Cretans. By a stroke of luck exactly as that which had placed in his hands the start of Linear B research, Sir Arthur Evans gained possession of a solid gold ring. From close analysis, he determined that it was a picture of the Land of the Dead. Over the court sits the Griffin-judge, a god with the body of a man and the head of a crested eagle. Behind him stands *Potnia*, and beside her crouches a guardian lion. In counterpart, later Greece transformed the Griffin into a son of Minos, and substituted a direct parallel to the lion in *Cerberos*. Here, then is a memory of religious cult long formally dead, but living on in the traditional epics.

Both language and religion in the epic poems are filled with evidence for Mycenaean influence. The stylized language is a descendant of the pre-Invasion days, and the religion developed in the light of the Dorians. This has been the purpose of this paper: to demonstrate such influences. Through the secular and religious connotations of *wanax* and *temenos*, and through the proof for the existence for cults to gods famous in Olympian theology, this purpose has been satisfied.

Much further work could be done on this subject using the approach of J. M. Chadwick in his "Mycenaean Elements in the Homeric Dialect,"² and perhaps a comprehensive work of this nature will appear. Until then, reasoning of this type must serve. It is as Leonard Palmer quotes Dr. Pendlebury from *Archaeology of Crete*, "As the late Professor T. E. Peet said,

"Any theory is justifiable which agrees with the greatest number of facts known at the time and neither contradicts a vital fact nor human nature and reason." "³

FOOTNOTES

¹Leonard Cottrell, *The Bull of Minds* (London: Evans Brothers, Ltd. 1961); and Agnes Vaughan, *The House of the Double Axe* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1959).

²John Chadwick, *The Decipherment of Linear B* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1960).

³Leonard R. Palmer, *Mycenaeans and Minos* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 74.
⁴Gilbert Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 208-09.
⁵Agnes Vaughan, *The House of the Double Axe* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1959), p. 192.
⁶J. M. Chadwick, "Mycenaean Elements in the Homeric Dialect," G. S. Krik (ed.), *Language and Background of Homer* (Cambridge: University Press, 1962).
⁷Palmer, op. cit., p. 254.



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