PERFORMANCE AND THE EPIC CYCLE

It is undoubtedly a challenging task to reconstruct undocumented performance of lost poems. But surviving fragments suggest that the Cycle epics were orally composed, and Cyclic performance culture is suggested by various indications. Biographical anecdotes of Cyclic poets were probably generated by performance traditions that celebrated their legendary founders. The transitions between Epic Cycle poems possibly reflect performance conditions. Descriptions of epic performance within the Homeric poems provide further evidence, especially in reference to material also covered by the Epic Cycle. Even the narrative strategies of artists who constructed "cyclic" iconography are relevant. Performance of non-Homeric epic undeniably existed, and this encourages exploration of different hypothetical scenarios. Most intriguing is the possibility that the performance of cyclic material at the Panathenaic festival underlies ancient reports of a Panathenaic "rule." Here and elsewhere rhapsodes may have used performance techniques to create oral cycles that prefigure the textual Epic Cycle.[2]

A. CYCLIC PERFORMANCE

The Epic Cycle poems must have been publicized by rhapsodes for generations before they were known as texts.[3] Some anecdotal material about Cyclic (and other early epic) poets has been considered indicative of performance culture.[4] For example, the Kreophyloi, who formed a rhapsode guild comparable to the Homerids, were probably responsible for the story that Kreophylos

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[1] Cf. Notopoulos (1964) 18-45; Burkert (1981); Pavese (1998). For opposing views, stressing textual imitation of Homeric verse by Cyclic poets, see Kirk (1976) 183-200; Curti (1993).
[2] I use the terms "Cycle" and "Cyclic" to refer to the Epic Cycle as we know it, including oral prototypes of the poems in it; without capitalization reference is made to epic traditions similar to the Cycle ones, and more generally to the mythological traditions from which they come. Uncapitalized and in quotations, the terms refer to a type of iconography, discussed below.
[3] Nagy (1990b) 70-79 discusses the Cycle poems as longstanding performance traditions.
[4] See Graziosi (2002) 186-190.

received the *Capture of Oichalia* from Homer.[5] The comparable story of Homer bestowing the *Cypria* to his son-in-law Stasinus may stem from an analogous performance tradition.[6] Similarly the anecdote of Lesches and Arctinus competing in a contest may reflect *Little Iliad* and the *Iliou Persis* performance traditions.[7]

  The existence of Cyclic performance traditions is indirectly supported by ancient evidence for non-Homeric performance. The Kreophyloi were apparently responsible for the performance of the *Capture of Oichalia*. Kinaithos, a member of the Homeridae, was said to have passed off non-Homeric verse as Homeric, including the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*.[8] A Hesiodic fragment (fr. 357 M-W) has Hesiod describing himself and Homer as rhapsodes who perform a song about Apollo, perhaps the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*. [9] The Homerids were also known to possess "stored-away" verse that is not to be found in our *Iliad* or *Odyssey*.[10] Herodotus reports that the sixth-century tyrant of Sikyon, Kleisthenes, prevented rhapsodes from performing Homeric epic that celebrated Argos (5.67); Theban war poetry (Cyclic?) must be meant (Cingano [1985]). A well-known vase by the Kleophrades painter depicts a rhapsode performing a hexameter not found in the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*.[11] Phemius of the *Odyssey*, singer of a cyclic *Nostoi* (*Od.* 1.325ff.), could be described as a rhapsode ([Plato] *Ion* 533b-c), as could Xenophanes[12] or the Theban sphinx (Soph. *OT* 391). Non-Homeric material reportedly sung by rhapsodes includes the works of Hesiod, Archilochus, Simonides, and Empedocles. [13] Though rhapsodes are usually discussed in reference to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* exclusively, they certainly

  [5] See test. 1-15 Bernabé; Burkert (1972). On the Homeridae, see Pind. *Nem.* 2.1, Pl. *Phdr.* 252b, *Ion* 530d, and now Graziosi (2002) 208-217.
  [6] *Cypria* test. 1-3, 7 Bernabé.
  [7] *Aethiopis* test. 5, *Little Iliad* test. 4 Bernabé. See Aloni (1986) 120-123; Nagy (1990b) 28 n.61, 75-76.
  [8] *Schol.* Pind. *Nem.* 2.1c, e.
  [9] Burkert (1979) 59-60; Janko (1982) 113-114; the passage is discussed further below.
  [10] Plat. *Phdr.* 252b quotes Homerid verse ἐκ τῶν ἀποθέτων ἐπῶν. See West (2003b) 224, who uses this source as the basis for his term "apocrypha."
  [11] Kleophrades vase, London E 270, 490-480. But Shapiro (1993) 95-97 interprets the singer as an aulode accompanied by the flute player depicted on the other side.
  [12] 21 A 1 DK. Pfeiffer (1968) 8-9 supposes that he was originally a rhapsode before becoming a critic of Homer.
  [13] Cf. Heraclitus 22 B 42 D-K; Plato *Ion* 531a-532a, *Ti.* 21b-c, *Leg.* 2.658b-d; Isocrates *Panathen.* 17-18; Athenaeus 620 a-d; 14.620c-d; Diogenes Laertius 8.63; Diodorus Siculus 14.109; Plutarch *Lys.* 18.4. Anecdotal stories of poets "rhapsodizing" could feature non-Homeric material; see Graziosi (2002) 18-40. On non-epic (but apparently non-melic) rhapsodic performance, see Ford (1988) 302-303; Nagy (2002) 54. Martin (2001) explores the possibilities of Orphic poetic performances. The evidence for types of rhapsodic performance is conveniently collected in Herington (1985), Appendix 2.

performed non-Homeric material, which was often prototypical or analogous to Cyclic epic.

Cyclic performance would have occurred long before the textualization of the Epic Cycle in the early Hellenistic Age, when it appears that a collection of previously independent epic poems were gathered together to form an "Epic Cycle." The Epic Cycle as we know it was manufactured by scholarly activity, quite independently of oral performance culture. Yet the texts used in this Cycle must result from oral poetic traditions of the Archaic Age. [14] From our earliest evidence it is apparent that mythological material was thought to cohere into certain units; a Heroic Age with chronologically arranged groupings of mythological tales, like the Theban wars and the Trojan war, is assumed in Homeric and Hesiodic poetry. So the Epic Cycle is a fixed and literate manifestation of a longstanding oral and notional arrangement of mythological material. Before the textualization of the Epic Cycle, then, oral performance of epic could on any given occasion be organized according to a notional "cycle" of myth. When the mythological cycle was actualized by epic performance, oral prototypes of the Epic Cycle would have resulted.

In my exploration of this possibility below, two major distinctions will be assumed. First, I distinguish between epic and myth. Epic poetry may have played a prominent role in the formation and publication of mythological narrative, but it should not be considered equivalent to it. Epic was rather part of a vast web of fluid yet recognizably stories represented by various media. As a subsidiary part of this web, epic poetry would play off of traditional narratives that were broadly known. It follows that a epic passage of limited scope could nonetheless trigger recognition of a larger storyline. Secondly, I emphasize a distinction between Cyclic poems and the Homeric poems. Wilamowitz elided this distinction,[15] as have many others who have stressed the traditional background of the Homeric epics, especially from analyst or oralist perspectives. It is true that Cylic and Homeric verse come from the same mythological and epic traditions, with similarities in diction, formulae, typology, and narrative. And the ancients did not seem to indicate a clear distinction between them until well into the Classical period; many Cyclic and other non-Homeric poems were ascribed to Homer because the whole epic genre was at first equated with this legendary figure.[16] Nonetheless it must be recognized that there are separate Cyclic and Homeric characteristics. Many have described

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[14] Burgess (2001) 12-18.

[15] Wilamowitz (1884) 374-375; notably "there is no qualitative difference between Ὁμηρικόν and κυκλικόν."

[16] Pfeiffer (1968) 43-44; Burgess (2001) 130.

the differences in aesthetic terms by stressing the inferiority of the Cycle in contrast to Homeric poetry.[17] As satisfying as this may be for us as admirers of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, historical perspectives that stress socio-cultural explanations are also possible.[18] In these terms the qualities of Cyclic poetry need not be judged as failings in comparison to a norm of Homeric poetry. Rather, Cyclic poetry can be seen as representing a type of epic that functioned successfully in its own temporal-local parameters.

For our purposes focus should be directed towards the different narrative strategies of the Cycle poems and the Homeric poems. As Aristotle famously stressed in the *Poetics* (chs. 8, 23), the Cyclic poems cover great expanses of narrative, whereas the Homeric poems expansively explore smaller segments of narrative time. The distinction is valid and should be kept in mind, though it need not lead to condemnation of Cyclic poetics. We may agree with Aristotle on the brilliance of Homeric architectonics and still recognize the need for most epics to chronicle long mythological narratives. It is the Homeric narrative strategy that is unusual, whereas the Cyclic narrative strategy must represent what was common for early Greek epic.[19] In this way Homeric narrative functions through a parasitic relationship to its tradition and cannot be fully comprehended apart from it. We similarly cannot expect to understand the performance of Homeric epic without considering how non-Homeric epic—different from Homeric epic yet much more common at an early date—was performed. Homeric performances must have employed performance techniques long used for non-Homeric epic.

B. CYCLE DIVISION

Eventually the Homeric poems became influential as prized texts at the center of educational and book trade circles, whereas the Cycle epics, though notable as representatives of their tradition, became increasingly marginalized. The Epic Cycle itself was one result, since its collocation of Cyclic verse was a convenience for a world less interested in the individual epics themselves. But even as a

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[17] E.g., Lang (1893); Griffin (1977). Both note their opposition to Wilamowitz's formulation.

[18] Nagy (1979) 5-9, (1990b) 52-115 portrays the Cycle poems as local in nature relatively to the panhellenic status of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

[19] Kakridis (1949) 91-95. See also Jensen (2000) 64-65, who adds the caution that the chronicle nature of the Cycle may be an impression falsely derived from Proclus, since Apollodorus flattens out the narrative strategies of the Homeric poems (as Martin West observed to her). Yet the Proclus summary is explicitly conceived as a resume of poems (with reference to their books), whereas Apollodorus does not claim this for the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

textual relic the Epic Cycle contains hints of an earlier period of performance.[20] Some *testimonia* about the beginnings and endings of the Cycle poems may shed light on how these poems were performed.

Variant lines of Homeric verse may have been designed for the performance of *Iliad* verse in conjunction with Cyclic epic. A different version of the *Iliad*'s proem known to Aristoxenus is more condensed than what has survived (three lines for nine), perhaps to smooth the transition between the *Cypria* and the *Iliad*.[21] And two lines of verse have been viewed as a "join" between the *Iliad* and *Aethiopis*; the last line of the *Iliad* has been changed so as to lead to a line of the *Aethiopis*.[22] This may also be a survival of rhapsodic performance of the *Iliad*, employed to smooth over a transition to performance of the *Aethiopis*. From a textual perspective, such joins might be judged inauthentic, but from a performance perspective, they are simply practical means for presenting verse from different epic sources. If such sources were stabilized as fixed poems, then joins would be secondary additions or changes. But in a performance context they would not have been regarded as intrusive interpolation, since the achievement of a desired performance would have been more important than any sense of textual fidelity. And if performers were performing epic verse that was not fixed, then such joins would have been as equally authentic as the rest of the verse being produced by composition-in-performance.

The summary by Proclus indicates where the poems of the Trojan war section of the Cycle started and finished. Independent *testimonia* often indicate that the poems covered more than what is indicated by Proclus, and it is possible that these divisions have been artificially imposed by editors who created the Epic Cycle, as I have argued before.[23] Yet verse beginnings and endings that arose from the exigencies of rhapsodic performance may have led directly to later textual divisions, just as it is sometimes supposed that performance led to the Homeric book divisions.[24] In this way the Proclus summary, though misleading in its indications of the extent

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[20] Cf. the discussion about recovering the oral nature of ancient texts at Foley (2002) 45-50.

[21] See Burgess (2001) 16. The proem runs: ἔσπετε νῦν μοι, Μοῦσαι, Ὀλύμπια δώματ᾽ ἔχουσαι/ὅππως δὴ μῆνίς τε χόλος θ᾽ ἕλε Πηλείωνα/Λητοῦς τ᾽ ἀγλαὸν υἱόν· ὁ γὰρ Βασιλῆι χολωθείς. The νῦν in the opening line implies continuity from a preceding performance unit. Cf. the opening line of the *Epigoni*, Νῦν αὖθ᾽ ὁπλοτέρων ἀνδρῶν ἀρχώμεθα, Μοῦσαι. Davies (1989) 31 too confidently rejects an indication of continuation here (though what preceded need not have been the *Thebais* specifically, as Bernabé [1987] 30 thinks).

[22] See Burgess (2001) 140-142. The join is found in two manuscripts of the *Iliad*, with slight differences.

[23] See Burgess (2001) 12-33.

[24] Cf. Nagy (1996a) 181-184 and the various perspectives at Jensen et al. (1999).

of the poems in their earlier status outside of the Cycle, can nonetheless reflect performance units of the Cycle poems. For example, the division between the *Aethiopis* and the *Little Iliad* indicated by Proclus is odd; one poem ends with dispute arising over Achilles' arms and the next begins with the judgment on them.[25] The early, independent manifestations of these poems would have not have had such abrupt starts and stops, but rhapsodes performing these portions of each poem together may well have effected such a transition.

Reduplication of material exists at some divisions in the Proclus summary. The *Little Iliad* ends with the Trojans holding a victory feast after having hauled the wooden horse into the city, whereas the *Iliou Persis* begins with this same victory feast. The *Iliou Persis* ends with the Greeks sailing off from Troy, whereas the *Nosti* begins with the Greeks still there. And the *Telegony* seems to overlap with the *Odyssey*: the Cyclic poem opens with the burial of the suitors, though a burial of the suitors occurs in book 24 of the Homeric poem.[26] Such reduplication possibly results from rhapsodic performance, especially if a pause in performance made recapitulation advisable when the presentation began again. One rhapsode might end his performance from a poem with a particular scene that the next rhapsode, performing from a second poem, chose to repeat as an entry point.[27]

Homeric/Cyclic joins and Proclus divisions provide vestigial evidence for performance of Cyclic verse. They need not be thought to indicate the only possible performance divisions, but they may stem from some that were once employed. Perhaps particular rhapsodic performances were recorded or certain performance divisions became traditional. In any event, these performance transitions suggest the continuous performance of the Trojan war story by means of Cyclic verse. Yet it should also be recognized that seen as a whole the Epic Cycle gives a discontinuous account of the mythological past. There are gaps between its main Theogonic, Theban, and Trojan sections, and many sub-cycles that could have potentially been included (say, the deeds of Heracles) have been omitted. In this respect the Epic Cycle may reflect another strategy of presentation, discontinuous performance. Below I will argue that discontinuous performance must have been a method of approximating the basic storyline of a large narrative.

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[25] A *testimonium* indicates that the *Aethiopis* actually continued on through to the suicide of Ajax; see Burgess (2001) 21.

[26] On these divisions, see Burgess (2001) 22-25, 143.

[27] Cf. Jensen et al. (1999), esp. 14-20, on recapitulation in Homeric book division, and Honko (1998) xlii-lv. The repetition in these cases involves a few lines, however, not an episode.

C. PANATHENAIC CYCLE

The Panathenaic festival at Athens provides a possible context for performance of the Cycle poems or similar epics. Ancient *testimonia* refer to the possession and control of Homeric poetry by leaders of Athens (usually Pisistratus or his sons, but even Solon or Pericles).[28] The relevant *testimonia* refer variously to acquisition, performance, interpolation, and/or a "recension." Exploring the potential historical foundation for the performance *testimonia* need not entail crediting the other types of *testimonia*. It is probable that the *testimonia* reflect an important phase in the Homeric performance tradition, not the construction or editing of texts. The *testimonia* begin in the fourth century BCE, and refer directly to Homeric poetry. It has usually been assumed that this means the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Caution is warranted, though: since reference to "Homeric" poetry often indicated the epic genre as a whole well into the Classical Age, one can wonder whether the *testimonia* refer only to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Though it is probable that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* alone are implied,[29] we cannot be certain that the sources for our *testimonia* specified these two poems. Earlier stories may have meant epic poetry in general when it passed on a tradition that "Homeric" poetry was performed. Later this would have been understood to be the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

The issue is important because occasionally it has been supposed that non-Homeric epic was performed at the Panathenaic festival. Some time ago Wolf and later Verrall suggested that the textual Epic Cycle originated with a Pisistratean recension of early epic.[30] This idea has not been accepted, and it is not my intention to revive it. But more recently there have been subtler suggestions that the poems later gathered into the Epic Cycle, or poems like them, at one time had a place in rhapsodic performance at the Panathenaia. A prominent explorer of this idea has been Jensen, who has argued that at first Trojan war material was performed at the Panathenaia, with the field narrowed down to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* only later in the sixth century.[31]

[28] For sources and discussion see especially Merkelbach (1952); Davison (1955); Jensen (1980); Nagy (1996a) 69-71, 77-80, 110-113.

[29] Lycurg. *Leocr.* 102 emphasizes the exclusivity of Homeric performance in Athens; *scholia* Pind. *Nem.* 2.1d specify "each of the two poems" in this context.

[30] Wolf (1985) 146; Verrall (1910) 174-178. Cf. Schwartz (1940) 5-6; Merkelbach (1952) 40. Wilamowitz (1884) 362-364, argued that a Pisistratean recension, which he doubted, would necessarily have involved epic besides the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

[31] Jensen (1980) 147-149, (2000) 64; Jensen et al. (1999) 27, 79. For other speculation about cyclic poetry at Pisistratean Athens, cf. Else (1957) 27; Janko (1992) 30-31; Shapiro (1992) 72-73, (1993) 103; Burgess (1996) 88, (2001) 14-15; Ford (1997) 87-88; Usher (1998) 28. In the nineteenth century it was sometimes supposed that *testimonia* about a certain Κόγκυλος or Ἐπικόγκυλος and three other scholars

But speculation about Panathenaiac performance, whether Homeric or cyclic, must take into account limitations of time. Possibly just one day was accorded to the rhapsodic competition; in the recent reconstruction at Neils (1992) the first day only of an eight-day festival is set aside for musical and rhapsodic contests. It is thus unlikely that the whole of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were performed at the festival, though that is often assumed.[32] One of the Homeric poems alone would require about twenty-four hours for presentation, and competing rhapsodes would have had no motivation to finish all of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in a hurried rush. It is just as unlikely that rhapsodes at the Panathenaic festival could have performed multiple Trojan war poems. The Cyclic poems were relatively short, but the Proclus summary specifies twenty-nine books for the *Cypria* through to the *Telegony*, and even this may not indicate the full extent of the Cycle poems before the manufacture of the Epic Cycle.[33] How then could the Panathenaic festival have accommodated performance of either the long Homeric poems or a series of cyclic epics?

The solution may be that only portions of the epics were performed. It is often supposed that single episodes of the long Homeric poems were performed independently at an early period.[34] It stands to reason that in certain situations a number of Homeric episodes might have been performed, as passages presented in accordance with the overall narrative. Different rhapsodes performing key performance units in sequence could have efficiently suggested the outlines of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, at the Panathenaia and elsewhere. The same performance strategy could have also been applied to any long poem or long narrative. Poems from the Cycle, or poems like them, could have provided episodes that in their totality would indicate the storyline of long narrative—the Trojan war, for instance . Within a relatively short period of time, a lengthy poem or mythological story could be presented, or at least

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composing a recension of Homeric poetry was a garbled reference to the Epic Cycle, but this was refuted by Comparetti (1881). Friis Johansen (1967) 40, 223-243 argued that Athenian knowledge of the full Homeric texts first occurred in the late sixth century, but his correlation of iconography and text is debatable.

[32] Doubts are registered by Mazon (1948) 234-235; Burkert (1987) 49-50, 60 n.44; Taplin (1992) 25; Boyd (1994) 115-116; Dowden (1996) 51; Ford (1997) 88; Jensen et al. (1999) 79. At Notopoulos (1964) 12-15 similar doubts are raised about performance at festivals, though the Panathenaia is implausibly distinguished as a "literary" festival.

[33] See Burgess (1996), (2001) 19-33, 135-148.

[34] As Dowden (1996), Ford (1997) have recently stressed. The performance of Homeric portions is reported at Ael. *VH* 13.14 with a list of tags for the segments (e.g., "The Aristeia of Agamemnon"). Cf. Collins (2001) 13-14 on [Pl]. *Ion* 535b-c, where Socrates identifies a number of Homeric passages that Ion might sing (most apparently brief). The quotations of brief Homeric passages by the character Socrates (537a-b, 538c-d, 539a-d) might reflect rhapsodic technique (Nagy [2002] 23-24); if so, their arbitrary starts and stops support my hypothesis of discontinuous performance.

suggested. Performers would not narrate every detail, but rather skip over large selections of the story when moving from one episode to another. For the Homeric poems, there would be no attempt to perform the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* line by line; instead, an indication of the whole poems would be effected through the use of key episodes. For a narrative like the Trojan war rhapsodes would not present every detail of a narrative comprehensively, but rather proceed through non-conjoining episodes (perhaps from different poems) until the totality of the story was conveyed. The existence of such a technique would explain how verse from a long poem—or a number of poems—could be performed at the Panathenaia. And there is no reason to suppose discontinuous performance could not have been a longstanding technique employed elsewhere in a variety of situations.

From a modern perspective, it is difficult to believe that a narrative performed in such a manner could be successful. It seems characterized by what it lacks, and must seem incomplete, if not incomprehensible. But in the ancient world knowledge of the mythological superstructure would ensure that epic presentation of a part would readily suggest the whole of a larger story.[35] At the mythological level a myth like the Trojan war would have always existed as a loosely unified story, and any epic about the Trojan war inherently belonged to its overarching narrative. By its very nature a Trojan war poem would be amenable to the potential performance of it and other epics to tell the larger story of the war. The link between any performance segment of the Trojan war and the tradition of the Trojan war would be diachronic, but a sequential presentation of performance segments at the same time would result in a synchronic approximation of the total narrative.

By analogy, we might compare the narrative choices of artists who strove to represent extended narrative through "cyclic" or syntagmatic iconography. This type of iconography has often been analyzed and variously defined.[36] Most scholars distinguish "cyclic" iconography from two other main types: that of monoscenic, in which one time and place is represented, and that of synoptic, in which varied time or different actions are seen in a single image. Syntagmatic iconography will offer multiple, independent images that share a common subject. Theseus "cycle" cups, which start at the end of the sixth century and continue on to through the fifth

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[35] See Foley (1991) 11-12, (1999) 42-43, where it is argued that a representative song passage can imply "the unsung entirety of the poetic tradition, a concrete part that stands for the always immanent whole" ([1999] 42).

[36] Notably at Robert (1881) 46-47; Weitzmann (1970) 12-36; Stansbury-O'Donnell (1999) 136-155.

century, are prominent early examples.[37]   Later examples include
Hellenistic "Homeric" bowls, which illustrated scenes from Trojan
war epic or Euripides, and the *Iliacae tabulae*, Roman plaques which
illustrated scenes from Trojan war epic with brief descriptive texts.[38]
Sometimes "cyclic" iconography depicts independent and equally
climactic deeds of the hero. The images share a connection, for
example the protagonist Theseus, but they illustrate separate actions,
with a narrative gap between.   And "cyclic" iconography will
usually show images that follow one another sequentially in time.[39]
The result is that a large narrative is suggested by a collocation of
images arranged in meaningful juxtaposition.   This type of
iconography is analogous to rhapsodes suggesting a large narrative
through the presentation of select episodes in narrative order.
       Scenes viewed by Aeneas on the Juno's temple in the *Aeneid*
(1.450-493) are relevant to my argument. [40] A number of images are
identified: Greeks and Trojans retreating, Rhesus, Troilus, the
supplication of Athena by Trojans, the ransoming of Hector, Aeneas,
Memnon, and Penthesileia. It seems to be a generally chronological
series of select images that convey the sense of the whole war
without trying to narrate every detail.[41] It is not unlikely that this
literary passage reflects the existence of actual artifacts displaying
this type of syntagmatic iconography.[42] The effect well parallels the
type of narrative presentation of the Trojan war that I imagine
rhapsodes and artists must have employed at least occasionally.
       In sixth-century Athens, some testimony indicates, the
performance of epic at the Panathenaic festival was firmly regulated.
In particular, it seems that rhapsodes were required to perform their
passages in a sequential fashion, in what modern scholars call the

[37] For the Theseus "cycle" cups, see Neils (1987), esp. 143-148; Neils and
Woodford (1994), nos. 32-60. Other early examples of this style include vases
featuring deeds of Heracles, and temple metopes featuring deeds of Heracles or
Theseus from the sixth and fifth centuries.

[38] For the *Iliacae tabulae*, see Sadurska (1964), and for Homeric bowls, see Sinn
(1979). On their possible relation to the Epic Cycle, see Kopff (1983).

[39] As Small (1999) emphasizes (with some exaggeration), a rigid sense of
chronology was not always a priority in ancient art. The number and sequence for
deeds of Heracles and Theseus were not canonical at an early date, and were easily
interchangeable when causality was not an active link between them.

[40] See Williams (1960). Barchiesi (1997) 273-274 argues that the images are
explicitly linked to the Cycle by reference to the *orbis* in l. 457, which means "world' in
this context but which is also the Latin equivalent of *kuklos*. Lowenstam (1993)
demonstrates the relevance of the iconography to content of the *Aeneid*.

[41] The scene of Rhesus is usually thought to be out of chronological order. This
may be only a Homer-centric perspective influenced by the *Iliad*, or it may reflect a
less than rigid sense of chronology in ancient iconography. The ecphrasis may also
reflect the focalization of Aeneas (Barchiesi [1997] 275). In any event, the point of my
argument still stands.

[42] Austin (1971) 156.

Panathenaic "rule." Usually it is assumed that the "rule" required continuous, comprehensive performance. But this assumes the presentation of all of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which we have already seen is unlikely because of time limitations. So what is the "rule"? As an alternate interpretation I would link it with discontinuous performance of sequential episodes, from both cyclic and Homeric epic.[43]

Caution is necessary, since our sources are not in exact agreement and should not be forced to conform to a single solution. The *testimonia* may also misrepresent or misunderstand practices of much earlier times; some suggest a Pisistratean "recension," after all, and this has rightly been discounted. For the "rule" itself there are two key statements:

Τά τε Ὁμήρου ἐξ ὑποβολῆς γέγραφε ραψῳδεῖσθαι, οἷον ὅπου ὁ πρῶτος ἔληξεν, ἐκεῖθεν ἄρχεσθαι τὸν ἐχόμενον. (Diog. Laert. 1.57)

[Solon] wrote a law that epic of Homer be performed by rhapsodes by relay, so that where the first left off, from there the next should begin.

τὰ Ὁμήρου ἔπη πρῶτος ἐκόμισεν εἰς τὴν γῆν ταυτηνί, καὶ ἠνάγκασε τοὺς ραψῳδοὺς Παναθηναίοις ἐξ ὑπολήψεως ἐφεξῆς αὐτὰ διιέναι, ὥσπερ νῦν ἔτι οἵδε ποιοῦσιν   ([Plato] *Hipparch.* 228b-c)

[Hipparkhos] first brought epic of Homer to this land, and he required the rhapsodes at the Panathenaia to go through it in order by relay, as indeed now these still do.[44]

The passage in Diogenes Laertius is usually taken to mean that the following rhapsode had to begin his recitation exactly where the preceding rhapsode left off, i.e., the very next line. But it need not suggest more than that a performer pick up the narrative somewhere after the point at which the preceding performer had stopped. The

[43] Jensen (1980) 148, links the "rule" with Homeric epic exclusively after performance of Trojan epic proved too difficult, but her view at (2000) 64 and Jensen et al. (1999) 27, is compatible with my own. I do not agree with Boyd (1994) 115 or Collins (2001) 23 n.50 that the "rule" refers to the sequence of performers instead of the narrative, nor do I agree with Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1988) 810 that it refers to the exclusion of non-Homeric poetry.

[44] In my translations, I follow Nagy in my use of "relay" for ὑποβολή [(2002) 14, 19, 60-61] and ὑπόληψις [(2002) 10, 43], though each has a distinct focalization. The former reflects the perception of one passing on a narrative; the latter of one receiving. The prefix I take to refer to a tacit recognition of cooperative transition in adherence to the "rule" of sequence. For ἐφεξῆς my translation "in order" allows an interpretation of discontinuous recitation. Nagy translates this term in the context of Platonic dialogue as "continuous" [(2002) 10 n.5, 59-60], but the analogy actually helps my interpretation: a dialogue follows a logical order of thought, but is not a comprehensive rendering of a text line by line.

Platonic passage has also been thought to imply continuous recitation (ἐφεξῆς being the key word), but can indicate that passages need to follow one another in a narrative sense, not that they join together. My translations reflect my interpretation, which is not the only possible one. But since continuous recitation of long narratives was impractical at the Panathenaia because of temporal considerations, it is entirely reasonable to suppose that the Panathenaic "rule" required discontinuous episodes to follow the order of the larger narrative being performed.[45]

Even if the testimony seems to refer to the Homeric poems alone, at one time non-Homeric epic may have been performed at the Panathenaia by means of the same "rule." Most scholars conclude, it is true, that our sources indicate the *exclusion* of cyclic poems in sixth-century Athens. That is likely enough, but the exclusion was probably a gradual process that lasted most of the sixth century, and not a one-time event that occurred at the time of the creation of the festival. A Panathenaic "rule" about the presentation of performance units in sequence could have first been applied to the cyclic epics or poems like them, and then in time also applied to the Homeric poems.

Influenced by Plato's *Ion*, critics tend to regard rhapsodes as inherently inferior to creative bards. Their "stitching" is assumed to be the non-creative manipulation of passages that have already been composed. Not only is such a practice denigrated in itself, but it is further damned as leading to the misuse or contamination of fixed texts.[46] But a rigid distinction between the creativity of the bard and the lack of creativity of the rhapsode fails to recognize the complexity and variability of composition and performance in the Archaic Age.[47] The availability of texts, as well as interest in them,

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[45] Cf. Honko (1998) xlix on reduction of minor episodes and details in the case of performing a long text without sufficient time. I would link discontinuous performance with the flexibility of song in terms compression and expansion, on which see Martin (1989) 209-219; Nagy (1996b) 76-77.

[46] E.g., West (2003a) 13-14 portrays the activity of rhapsodes as textually-based, even as early as the late seventh century. The examples of apparent textual conflation that he cites can be seen in a more positive light as stemming from creative performance (see n.56 below).

[47] The distinction is opposed at Sealey (1957); Jensen (1980) 112-124; Jensen et al. (1999) 76; Nagy (1990a) 42-43, (1990b) 21-28, (1996a) 60-74, (1996b) 82-89, (2003) 6-7; Pavese (1998) 64-65. In Nagy's analysis of weaving and stitching metaphors (see n.48 below), the cultural figure "Homer" is seen as a master craftsman or stitcher. Not unrelatedly Nagy argues that the proper name name etymologically signifies "he who fits [the song] together" ([1979] 297-300). West (1999) 375-376 champions the argument of Durante that links the name with an ancient word "for an assembly with which poetic contests were associated." Either way the implication to be reached is that "Homer" was traditionally linked with rhapsodes.

must have at first remained limited.[48] No doubt performance did become more mimetic and less creative as specific texts became more celebrated, and by 400 BCE rhapsodes might have recourse to texts in preparation of their performances.[49] But this development would have been more of a continuum than a distinct shift, as indicated by ancient testimony that conflates the bard with the rhapsode.[50]

In antiquity and in the present day a favored etymological analysis has linked the word "rhapsode" with the root meaning "to stitch." Scholars disagree, however, about whether the stitching involved formulas, lines, or whole passages.[51] In this connection it is best to distinguish between the metaphor of stitching and that of weaving, though the two are commonly conflated.[52] Whereas weaving suggests the joining of small elements in a seamless fashion, stitching suggests the joining together of larger units. This has been the most persuasive description of the stitching of rhapsodes, both in antiquity and in modern times.[53] As a metaphor, weaving is best linked with the creation of epic at the micro level, whereas stitching well describes epic composition at the macro level—by the joining of epic passages in performance.

But it is mistaken to assume that "stitching" rhapsodes necessarily joined fixed texts that had been previously composed and preserved. The essential characteristic of the rhaspsodic craft is that it is participatory—more than one rhapsode is involved in the "stitching" of song, in contrast to performance by a single bard, as in

[48] For the evolutionary approach of Nagy, which does not recognize early Homeric texts, see esp. (1996a) 109-112. Even assuming the possibility of early recording (both means and motivation remain serious issues), I do not agree with West (2003a) that late seventh century texts would instantly influence other texts.

[49] See Xenophon *Mem.* 4.2.10, *Symp.* 3.6. Pelliccia (2003) makes a strong case for the use of memorization by rhapsodes, which is probable enough in the Classical Age. Anecdotes about poets receiving epics from Homer focus on the possession of texts, as Janko (1992) 31 notes, but this may be a late textual conceptualization of early performance traditions.

[50] Homer: Plato *Leg.* 658b, *Resp.* 600d; *Certamen* 5, 15, 17; Hesiod and Homer: Hesiod fr. 357 M-W; Phemius: [Plato] *Ion* 533b-c. Cf. Graziosi (2002) 19-40, where such *testimonia* are challenged through analysis of their context and motivation.

[51] See Ford (1988) 301; Ritoók (1962) 13; Collins (2001) 13. Interpretations that stress the monostichic nature of "stitching" [Patzer (1952); Ford (1988); Collins (2001)] are slightly off the mark, in my opinion. It is not that rhapsodes "stitched" single lines of verse, but rather that passages of monostichic verse could more easily be joined together in performance.

[52] Largely compatible with my argument is the distinction made at Nagy (1996a) 64-76, (1996b) 84-93.

[53] Besides Dionysius of Argos as reported in the *schol.* Pindar *Nem.* 2.1, cf. Meyer (1918); Wade-Gery (1958) 28-29; Schwartz (1940); Else (1957) 30-31; Sealey (1957) 349; Del Grande (1967); Tarditi (1968); Graziosi (2002) 24-25, 32. I do not mean to deny the possibility of variety of method in agonistic performance. For amoebean exchange, see Ritoók (1962); Collins (2001); this would have been unlikely for presentation of lengthy epic, however.

the case of Phemios and Demodocus in the *Odyssey*.[54]   The
performance results from the efforts of a number of performers; as
individuals they might be competing, but as a group they are
adhering to the organizing principle of creating a unified piece of
epic.   The activity of the rhapsode was understood to refer to this
method of performing song, and the issue of creativity was
irrelevant.   Rhapsodes viewed their task as the stitching of a story,
and the material to be stitched need not have been textual at all—it
could have been the notional narrative of traditional myth.[55]   To
effect a performance, rhapsodes might compose the epic verse
needed for the portion of the notional narrative for which they were
responsible.   As time went on, there would be increasing stores of
verse in some form of fixation for a rhapsode to use, especially if
poetic guilds arose around a unified poetic tradition, as seems to be
the case with the Homeridae and the Kreophyloi.[56]   As epic
performance traditions became stabilized, rhapsodes would have
less creative leeway.   But even then they could have been very
creative in the way they "stitched" performance segments together
in order to suggest an overarching narrative.

     An example of creative "stitching" might be indicated by a
Hesiodic fragment (fr. 357 M-W):

> ἐν Δήλωι τότε πρῶτον ἐγὼ καὶ ῞Ομηρος ἀοιδοὶ
> μέλπομεν, ἐν νεαροῖς ὕμνοις ῥάψαντες ἀοιδήν,
> Φοῖβον ᾿Απόλλωνα χρυσάορον, ὃν τέκε Λητώ

> "In Delos then I and Homer first performed as
> singers, stitching a song in new hymns: Phoebus
> Apollo of the golden sword, whom Leto bore"

It is first of all noteworthy that one poem is produced by both
singers (perhaps an allusion to the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* in its

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[54] Pagliaro (1951) 34-44.   The scholion to Pindar *Nem.* 2.1 specifically describes
Homerids as performers who sang in succession. So it is incorrect to conceive of the
"stitching" of a rhapsode as the activity of an individual. Evidence that suggests or
allows "rhapsodizing" to be simply recitation by a solo performer could result from a
secondary, weakened denotation. Reference to the Sphinx as a rhapsode (Soph. *OT*
391) does not imply solo performance but rather agonistic riddling with a locutor (see
Graziosi [2002] 27-29).

[55] Cf. the concept of "mental text" at Honko (1998) x, xlii, (2000) viii, 22-23. For
the application of cognitive science to narrative, see Minchin (2001), esp. 35.   In
discussion of the Panathenaic "rule" Jensen (2000) 64 speculates about rhapsodes
following the storyline of the Trojan war.

[56] It eventually became possible to associate rhapsodes directly with textual
"stitching."   Usher (1998) 24-31 links the late Homeric Centos with rhapsodic
stitching, citing ancient testimony for this analogy, and a scholion to Dionysius Thrax
conceives of the activity of redactors in the Pisistratean recension as stitching, as Nagy
(1996b) 83 points out; for the text, see Allen (1924) 230.

Delian and Pythian parts). It is also remarkable that the two poets, acting as rhapsodes, create a song out of "new hymns."[57] The novelty might be composition-in-performance of verse appropriate for the performance context, or it might refer to episode stitching: creative decisions about where the passages started and stopped and how they were joined so that together somehow form a whole.

The *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* as we know it suggests the technique of discontinuous performance. It has thematic unity but is discontinuous in the sense that it has two distinct parts. We might also consider as a type of discontinuity the transition between a hymnic proem and its epic sequel.[58] There is no ongoing narrative in this situation, but hymn and epic were thought to form an integral performance. In comparison rhapsodic performance of epic passages pertaining to one overarching narrative would hardly be intolerable. In fact early epic is so open-ended and additive in nature that discontinuous joins between subject matter must have been common. The *Theogony* proem proclaims the comprehensive knowledge by the Helicon Muses of a notional sequence (lineage of gods, giants, mortals); from this long path of traditional material the *Theogony* focuses on the lineage of the gods before segueing into a brief catalogue of goddess-mortal unions at its end. The Hesiodic *Catalogue* picks up from there with its account of mortal lineage organized about prominent women of the past. Where the surviving texts begin and end, or who is responsible for these divisions, is a matter of continuing controversy.[59] But whatever textual manifestations resulted, there should be no doubt that these segments always had the potential to lead easily from one to the other.[60]

Epic poetry is intrinsically hardwired for such sequence because of the fundamental framework provided by traditional myth. Myth of gods and mortals was always larger and longer than any single poetic piece of it. This mythological "supertext" (Dowden [1996] 51) or "divinely superintended tale" (Ford 1992:41) did not just provide raw material to be worked up into poetry, it actively organized it. If

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[57] A ὕμνος usually has a religious context, as it seems to have here, but it also apparently can refer to a segment of a larger whole. At *Od.* 8.429 a ὕμνος is part of a ἀοιδή. Cf. Eur. *Tro.* 511-514 (ἀμφί μοι ῎Ιλιον, ὦ Μοῦσα, καινῶν ὕμνων ἀισον...ὠιδάν; "sing me, Muse, a song of new hymns about Troy").

[58] See Allen, Halliday, Sikes (1936) xciii-xcv on the function of hymns as proems for longer epics. On the continuity from hymnic proem to what follows cf. Ford (1992) 46; Nagy (2002) 70-74.

[59] Cf. West (1966) 48-50, (1985) 126-130; Janko (1982) 221-225, 248, (1992) xxv.

[60] Ford (1992) 44-45 comments that the "editorial violence" of joins between Cycle poems or that between the *Theogony* and the Hesiodic *Catalogue* "was only realizing the vision such poetry had of itself." See also Thalmann (1984) 75-77; Martin (2001) 27-28.

a gap resulted when rhapsodes jumped from one episode to another, the whole performance hung together because of the notional mythological cycle.

Different sequences or different leaps across narrative gaps are possible, as long as thematic connections are respected. The *Theogony* leads directly to the Hesiodic *Catalogue*, by internal logic as well as textual form, but the *Theogony* could potentially lead to the *Iliad*.[61] Different narrative strategies would effect different sequences; catalogue poetry arranged by genealogy has an arrangement distinct from narrative of heroic episodes, for instance. And ritual or didactic needs might also take precedent over narrative. Whatever the organizational principle of the material, there existed the possibility of sequential but discontinuous performance of epic passages. Surviving types of joins in early epic suggest that discontinuous performance did not prevent the successful conveyance of thematic unity.

D. HOMERIC SEQUENCING

There seem to be indications of rhapsodic performance within the Homeric poems themselves.[62] In recent work Nagy has argued that the Homeric poems indicate performative techniques comparable to rhapsodic performance, particularly what he terms "rhapsodic sequencing."[63] Nagy's argument focuses on terminology associated with the performance of rhapsodes in the work of Plato, and he points to some apparent instances of this terminology at work in *Iliad*. A key passage for his argument is the scene in Book 9 of the *Iliad* where Achilles sings of heroic *klea* while Patroclus waits for him to leave off (184-191). On the basis of lexical evidence it is argued that this situation is parallel to that of one rhapsode waiting to take up epic performance from another rhapsode.[64] As it turns

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[61] Muellner (1996) 52-93 explores a sequence of *Theogony* to *Iliad* as a "potential performance."

[62] See Pagliaro (1951), esp. 39-46; Tarditi (1968) 140-141; Ford (1992) 110-118. Pagliaro (1951) 39, 43 points out that contemporary performance techniques would not be explicitly cited, since that would contradict the "distancing" manner in which the Homeric world pretends to be portraying a past age. Cf. the proposal at Taplin (1992) 26-32, 151 that breaks in performance time are internalized by the narrative.

[63] See Nagy (1996a) 71-73, (2002), (2003) 43-44. At Nagy (2002) 16, 23 "rhapsodic sequencing" is distinguished but linked with "relay mnemonics" as seen in Homeric poetry; at (2003) 43 the *Iliad* 9 scene discussed below is said to present a "stylized representation of [...] rhapsodic relay performance."

[64] Thus also Mazon (1948) 232-233, who in addition refers to the Muses ἀμειβόμεναι ὀπὶ καλῇ ("taking turns with fine voice"?) at *Il.* 1.604. Cf. the same formula at *Od.* 24.60, *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 189, which Tarditi (1968) 140-141 discusses,

out, the narrative does not allow us to see whether or not Patroclus intends to sing, and so this intriguing interpretation will not persuade everyone.   But there are other Homeric passages that suggest the atmosphere of rhapsodic performance.

Ford has noted that portions of the Trojan war are mentioned in narrative order in the course of several books of the *Odyssey*.[65]   In book 8 Demodocus sings of a quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus, an incident that apparently took place at the beginning of the war and perhaps was narrated in the *Cypria*.[66] Demodocus later sings of the Trojan horse, and then Odysseus himself continues the narrative with an account of his homecoming in a manner comparable to a bard.[67] Cook has argued that further passages suggest other portions of the Trojan war story: the Phaeacian athletic games are comparable to the funeral games for Patroclus in *Iliad* 23, and Demodocus' tale of the Trojan horse is followed by a simile that evokes the fall of the city.[68] This argument involves a very complex mixture of direct and symbolic narration, and deserves further exploration.[69] For my present purposes it is just necessary to note

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along with the sequential laments for Hector at *Il.* 24.718-776, as early examples of the "stitching" of song units.

[65] Ford (1992) 111-114.

[66] See Kullmann (1960) 100. *Scholia* placed it after the death of Hector. For the passage as representative of a traditional theme, see Nagy (1979) 15-65. Others have viewed the story as Homeric invention (see Marg [1956]; Clay [1997] 97-107). Even if it is invented (I suspect it is traditional), it is probably meant to be understood as taking place at the beginning of the war; see Finkelberg (1998) 147-148. Especially notable is the concluding remark about troubles beginning for Greeks and Trojans (ll. 81-82). Commentators seem to understand this as an intruding comment of the main narrator, but the run of passage favors a minority view, that ll. 81-92 refer to part of the oracle (the apodosis, which most supply on the assumption it is unexpressed here!). To paraphrase, Agamemnon rejoices at the quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus because he had heard at Delphi that when the best of the Achaeans quarrelled then trouble would begin for Trojans and Greeks. The oracle reflects the (major) plan of Zeus to destroy both Greeks and Trojans (see Burgess [2001] 149-150) and perhaps refers to a different quarrel, but it is in any event understood by Agamemnon to mean a war that he assumes the Greeks will win; hence his rejoicing at what he believes signals its commencement. For an explanation of how the Greek syntax allows this interpretation, see the comments of Pellicia quoted at Nagy (1998) 82-83, (2003) 14 n.72, 15 n.75.

[67] For the comparison, see Thalmann (1984) 170-179, and for Odysseus as a rhapsode, see Martin (2001) 26-29.

[68] Cook (1999) 159 n.29; see also Nagy (1979) 101. Holmberg (1998) 471 describes Demodocus as a representative of the Epic Cycle, which has been embedded in a victorious Homeric narrative. Cf. Louden (1999) xvi, who suggests that the phrases κατὰ κόσμον and κατὰ μοῖραν at *Od.* 8.489 and 496 can suggest narrative sequence on a large as well as small scale (cf. Finkelberg [1998] 124-129). At *Od.* 10.14-16 we are told that Odysseus took a month telling to Aeolus, κατὰ μοῖραν, everything about Ilion, the ships of the Argives, and their *nostos* (that is, the Trojan cycle).

[69] Such fractured and refracted narrative suits the *Odyssey* perfectly, with its self-conscious meditation on story-telling. The internal audiences are also divided in reaction as the characters, ironically contemporaneous with what the poem's audience

that one way or the other the whole Trojan war narrative is effected. Both Ford and Cook link this phenomenon to the practice of rhapsodes, and Cook explicitly relates this to the concept of rhapsodic "sequencing" as proposed by Nagy.

Pellicia observes that Cook's argument entails a lacunose narrative, and he quite reasonably objects that this is not comparable to the usual understanding of how the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* were presented at the Panathenaia.[70] The "sequence" of narrative within the *Odyssey* is indeed not continuous, and there is no attempt to cover every episode of the Trojan war. Rather, there is a selection of different episodes separated by large gaps of time. The episodes would seem to adhere to the chronology of the larger narrative of the Trojan war, but not every possible episode is elicited. But this is compatible with my suggestion above that rhapsodes approximated a large narrative by presenting episodes separated by gaps in chronological sequence. Homeric "sequencing," then, would seem to provide indirect evidence for the technique of discontinuous performance.

Several passages in early epic suggest the way in which a performer might pick a point to start up from within a larger narrative sequence. At the beginning of the *Iliad* the narrator instructs the goddess to sing the theme of wrath (1.1), and also identifies the larger theme of the plan of Zeus (1.5). A starting point is specified, the moment Achilles and Agamemnon first quarreled (taking ἐξ οὗ in l. 6 with ἄειδε in l. 1). At the beginning of the *Odyssey* the Muse is instructed to sing about Odysseus, and after the narrator suggests several general aspects of his journey, and specifies the incident of the cattle of the sun (none of which is especially pertinent or central to the epic that follows), he allows the Muse to pick any starting point (τῶν ἁμόθεν...εἰπέ; 1.10). At *Odyssey* 1.337-339 Penelope tries to get Phemius to switch to another topic than the return of the heroes, but leaves the choice up to the bard (τῶν ἕν γέ ... ἄειδε). Later in book 8 we are told that the Muse started Demodocus on the general κλέα ἀνδρῶν (73), a particular segment of which becomes specified, the quarrel of Achilles and Odysseus (75). Following this Odysseus asks Demodocus to "change" his topic to the wooden horse (μετάβηθι, 8.492ff.); it has been noticed that this approximates the use of μεταβάλλειν at the conclusion of some Homeric Hymns to announce conjunction with another hymn.[71]

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understands to be the past, either grieve (Penelope), relish (suitors), or receive with detachment (Phaeacians) narrative of Odysseus' hardships. Odysseus grieves but cannot help being fascinated by his own story, eventually trying his hand as author of it.

[70] Pellicia (2003) 113 n.35.

[71] E.g. 5.293; see Thalmann (1984) 124; Ford (1992) 41.

Demodocus begins with some sort of hymnic proem before choosing a starting point within the tale (ἔνθεν ἑλών, 500); Alcinous understands his song to be part of a longer narrative, the destruction of Argives and Greeks (578).

In these situations there exists a large notional narrative (or οἴμη, "path" of song) from which a segment is to be actualized in verse (the ἀοιδή, "song"). There also seems to be negotiation between distinct roles: someone identifies a starting point within the basic traditional material; another begins to perform poetry from there.[72] This all seems remarkably similar to the Panathenaic rule, with an arranger overseeing the performance of rhapsodes. What is especially notable is that these epic passages describe very abrupt starting points. The Panathenaic rule may have involved a sequence of abrupt starting points, organized so the performance segments respected the narrative order.

If the Homeric poems continued to develop in sixth-century Athens, it is possible that reflection of rhapsodic techniques entered into the poems then.[73] But the performance techniques discernible within the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* probably developed generations earlier. Other festivals, such as the Panionia or at Delos, presented arenas for rhapsodic sequencing to develop.[74] And performance of multiple epic passages could have occurred in more informal circumstances. Amateur singers of the type suggested by Achilles in the *Iliad* Book 9, for example, might have cooperated in presenting select episodes to suggest the totality of a large narrative.

Achilles sings from the κλέα ἀνδρῶν (9.189), as does Demodocus (*Od.* 8.73); Phoenix gives a non-verse narration from it (*Il.* 9.524-525). This is the heroic half of the *klea* or *erga* of men and gods, which Phemius (*Od.* 1.338) and the Muse-inspired bard (*Theog.* 99-101) know and which the Epic Cycle in its Theogonic, Theban, and Trojan sections represents. A comprehensive ordering of the divine and heroic past would normally be too large for a single poem.[75] Long epics that staked a large chunk of the notional

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[72] The relationship between narrator and Muse is open to different interpretations; cf. the recent remarks at Ford (1992) 32-34, 77-79; Rabel (1997) 23-25; Finkelberg (1998) 51-53.

[73] For sixth-century Athenian influence on an ongoing, fluid tradition the *Odyssey*, cf. Cook (1995); Seaford (1994). Panathenaic recension or dictation theories have been revived in recent years, most plausibly by Jensen 1980.

[74] Cf. Murray (1934) 191-192; Wade-Gery (1950) 14-17; Webster (1958) 267-275; Ford (1992) 115. Nagy (1990b) 23 n. 27 suggests that the Panathenaic "rule" may have been "a reinforcement or extension of something that might already have been a convention of, say, the Homeridai."

[75] The danger of attempting to actualize a continuous as opposed to discontinuous sequence of even the Trojan section of the cycle of myth is demonstrated by its potentially lengthy performance by Nestor (five or six years, *Od.* 3.113-117) or the Sirens (unending, *Od.* 12.189-190).

continuum of narrative would not be able to be performed by one performer, or even at one time and place.[76] Performance sequencing would have served the function of presenting long narratives, with discontinuous presentation allowing an even greater expanse of narrative to be outlined. The Epic Cycle reflects these circumstances, however distantly. It approximates the comprehensive span of the mythological past, continuous enough (if not seamless) in those portions it covers, discontinuous in failure to cover other sub-cycles (e.g. myth of Heracles). The manner in which the Cycle compiles texts in order to outline the sequence of the mythological past is suggestive of how rhapsodic performance must have accomplished something similar through the presentation of sequential passages.[77]

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[76] Some relatively short epics might quickly cover great spans of narrative through a brisk pace. Fehling (1991) 49 imagines such an epic possible for the Trojan war; Tzetzes told the story of the whole war in less than 2,000 hexameter lines.

[77] Versions of this paper were performed at the CAC annual conference in 2001 and at the Orality and Literacy conference at the University of Melbourne in 2002; I thank the audience members for their interest and helpful comments. Susanne Ebbinghaus and John Foley kindly commented on drafts. I am also grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for financial support.

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