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MEMORY AND MATERIAL OBJECTS IN THE *ILIAD* AND THE *ODYSSEY**

Abstract: Recently, archaeologists have been focusing on material relics as evidence of a historical consciousness. This article examines the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* from the point of view of this 'archaeology of the past'. Various material objects, ranging from tombs to everyday objects, evoke the past in the epic poems, thereby enriching the narrative and providing reflections on the act of memory. In turn, Homeric evidence sheds new light on the hermeneutics of relics in archaic oral society.

In the last decade, archaeologists and pre-historians have come to interpret material relics as evidence of the past's meaning and function in extinct and preliterate cultures. While the earlier *communis opinio* assumed that the development of a historical awareness was dependent on literacy, the advocates of the 'archaeology of the past' make a strong case 'that prehistoric lives would always have been conducted according to an awareness of history, even if it could not be measured in the terms that are used today'.[1] Observations such as the reuse of burial sites[2] and the adjustment of buildings to fit the finds of older buildings[3] are therefore interpreted as indicators for an awareness of the past. Archaeologists and pre-historians further suggest that relics from the past served as powerful tools in political and social struggles.[4]

The idea of the 'archaeology of the past' allows us to take a fresh look at the Homeric poems, since there are many cases in which material objects evoke the past in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Of course, certain objects such as the boar's-tusk helmet or Nestor's cup have been the subject of many studies, but the general relevance of material relics as commemorative objects has not received its due attention. The first three sections of this paper, therefore, set out to highlight the strong material side of the past embedded in the plots of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. As we will see, a great variety of material objects keeps the past alive in the heroic world. I will first examine monuments the primary goal of which is to preserve a particular memory, namely the tombs (section I). I will then inspect the walls, which were built as fortifications, but also serve a commemorative function (section II). Furthermore, there is a great number of everyday goods that evoke stories from the past through their history (section III). We shall see that the epic 'archaeology of the past' enriches the narrative and provides a self-reflection on the epics as an act of memory.[5]

In turn, the epics can help us elucidate the hermeneutics of the 'archaeology of the past'. As critics have not failed to point out, the conclusions of many investigations are highly speculative. It is rather difficult to reconstruct attitudes towards the past on the basis of material relics. In this respect, the early Greek epics offer precious evidence. While it is still hotly debated what role

* The translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are based on Lattimore (1951); (1965). I wish to thank audiences at the University of Freiburg, at the *Deutscher Historikertag* 2006 and at Stanford University for their comments, particularly Sebastian Brather, Ortwin Dally, Hans-Joachim Gehrke, Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp and Matthias Steinhart. I am also most grateful to Angus Bowie and *JHS*'s anonymous referees for their helpful criticism.

[1] Bradley (2002) 53. See the survey of older works by Holtorf (2005). However, there are still scholars who maintain the old evolutionist approach, see, for example, Müller (1997); (2005).

[2] See, for example, Hingley (1996/1997).

[3] See, for example, Bradley (2002) 58-71.

[4] The 'archaeology of the past' approach has also proved fruitful for Classical studies. See, for example, Antonaccio (1995); Alcock (2002); Boardman (2002). Further works dealing with material relics as media of memory include Hainsworth (1987) and Lacroix (1989), both on relics; Mayor (2000) on fossils. Inspired by Halbwachs ('cadre matériel'), Jonker (1995) examines the importance of material relics for memory in ancient Mesopotamia.

[5] Let me briefly point out one limitation of my focus. Within German scholarship especially, attempts to link the epics to ruins have experienced a revival. Latacz (2004), for example, deems it highly likely that the *Iliad* preserves knowledge of an actual war (for a critique, see Ulf (2003)), and even scholars who are critical of this argument claim that the tombs and walls in the *Iliad* correspond to particular objects in Hisarlik that existed when the poem was composed (Hertel (2003) 199-209). I am very sceptical about this (*cf.* Grethlein forthcoming), but, in this paper, I will not raise the question of historical veracity and will focus merely on the way that the narrator and the characters of the *Iliad* construct the past through material remains.

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literacy played for the composition of the epics,[6] only few would deny that the written versions which we have are based on long oral traditions. Therefore, the epics afford instructive examples of which objects evoke the past in an oral culture, which past they refer to and in what ways they do this. In section IV, I will discuss how my reading of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* can offer new insight into memory in archaic Greece and about the 'archaeology of the past' in general.

Instead of a conclusion, I will outline a comparison between the memory based on material relics and the modern interest in old objects. These look rather similar at first sight, but a closer inspection reveals crucial differences (section V). At the end of the article, the readers will find an appendix listing all the old objects in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (section VI).

I. TOMBS AS 'TIMEMARKS'

Graves are the oldest types of monuments found in many cultures. In their attempt to come to grips with the mystery of death, humans install a sign in memory of the dead.[7] As is well known, in eighth- and seventh-century Greece, hero and tomb cults were on the rise,[8] a development that has often been brought into connection with the epic tradition. While it is all too easy to see hero cult as a mere consequence of the epic tradition, they obviously share a parallel interest in a heroic past.[9] This aspect needs no further elaboration here; instead, I would like to turn now to the tombs as seen in Homer.[10]

Particularly in the *Iliad*, tombs are frequently referred to as 'landmarks'; i.e. the narrator and the heroes often use tombs as points of orientation.[11] Landscape studies can deepen our understanding of tombs in the epics. Taking a constructivist approach, Chapman has elaborated that 'space' becomes transformed into 'places' through association with experiences,[12] a process that is socially charged.[13] Thus, in 'places' time has inscribed itself into 'space' in a socially relevant way. In other words, landscapes are time and social dynamics made visible. In reference to this, Chapman has coined the term 'timemark'.[14]

The concept of 'timemarks' is a term that applies very well to the tombs in the Homeric epics. The tombs are not random marks in the landscape, but are rather markers of the past that were made in memory of the dead and are now used as points of orientation.[15] Their social significance lies both in their referring to the past and their geographical use.[16] The size of the tombs and thus their visibility as a 'landmark' correspond with the importance of the dead. For example, the Greeks placed the tomb of Achilles, Patroklos and Antilochos 'on a jutting promontory there by the wide Hellespont,/ so that it can be seen afar from out on the water' (*Od.* 24.82-3). The social

[6] American scholarship tends to emphasize the oral background. See, for example, the complex model developed by Nagy (1996); (2003). European scholarship, on the other hand, is often based on the assumption that the *Iliad* could only have been composed with the help of literacy, see e.g. Reichel (1994); Latacz (2004).

[7] For the mnemonic function of material culture in connection with death, see Wiliams (2003). The memory of the dead often fulfils important social functions. For instance, Chapman (1994) 44 notes that death is 'an opportunity for the re-negation of the social reproduction of the group by making statements about its cultural core and most significant relationships'.

[8] *Cf.* Antonaccio (1995) and the literature given by Mazarakis Ainian (1999) 10 n.1 and Hall (1999) 49 n.2. See also the following footnote.

[9] For example, Farnell (1921); Coldstream (1976); West (1988) 151 argue that hero cult was generated by the epics. However, Snodgrass (1982) draws attention to the difference of burial forms, and Hadzisteliou-Price (1973) points out that hero cult is already presupposed in the *Iliad*. See also Crielaard (1995) 266-73.

[10] For a list of tombs in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, see Pfister (1909) 541-3; Mannsperger (2002) 1076.

[11] *Cf.* e.g. Taplin (1992) 94-6. For the topography of Troy in the *Iliad*, see Cook (1973); Thornton (1984) 150-63.

[12] *Cf.* Tuan (1977); Pred (1986). See also Chapman (1988) on the transformation of 'space' into 'place'. Tilley (1994) replaces the concept of space with the concept of landscape, which concentrates less on single objects and more on their connections and is thus more holistic.

[13] Chapman (1997).

[14] Chapman (1997) 43.

[15] For the link between gravestones and fame see Redfield (1975) 34.

[16] For the social significance of tells, see Chapman (1994) 57-8.

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significance of the tombs is re-enacted in the epics when they serve as the sites of assemblies (*Il.* 2.811-14; 10.414-16). Hence, in the 'timemarks' of the tombs, the temporal and the spatial axes converge in a socially and politically significant way.[17] By marking a place that is relevant in the present, the tomb inscribes the memory of a dead person into everyday reality.

Let us now take a closer look at the tombs as spatially sanctified acts of memory, in particular at their temporal scope, their significance in the narrative, and the characters' reflection on their commemorative function. The 'reach' of the memory preserved by tombs is limited. While we do not know where Aipytos belongs in the epic chronology (*Il.* 2.603-4),[18] Aisyetes, whose tomb Polites uses as a lookout (*Il.* 2.792-3), belongs to the previous generation, if we choose to identify him as the Aisyetes whose son is killed in *Il.* 13.424-44.[19] The tomb of Myrine is likely to be just as old, for the scholion A ad *Il.* 2.814 suggests that Myrine was an Amazon. Scholars have therefore linked Myrine with the Amazons against whom Priam supported the Phrygians (*Il.* 3.184-90).[20] In this case, Myrine's tomb would also date back only one generation.[21]

The scope of memory is somewhat extended in the case of Ilos' tomb, which is mentioned four times (*Il.* 10.414-16; 11.166-8; 369-72; 24.349-51).[22] Ilos is not only called παλαιός (*Il.* 11.166; 372), but as Aineas' genealogy reveals, he is Laomedon's father and thus Priam's grandfather. Given that Priam's sons are the active generation, the 'timemark' of the tomb has preserved Ilos' memory in the public knowledge of Troy for three generations.[23]

Ilos' tomb also illustrates that the tombs, as 'timemarks', can acquire a particular narrative relevance. In *Il.* 11.369-72 Paris is leaning on the *stêlê* of the tomb, when he shoots Diomedes with an arrow. Griffin points out that there is a contrast between the grave and the battle and emphasizes that Diomedes' wound is also superficial. According to this reading, the tomb underscores Paris' less than heroic nature. Thornton, on the other hand, seems to see a rather positive correspondence because Diomedes has to leave the battle, and the Greeks thereby come under pressure.[24] Regardless of which view one favours, it is obvious that the narrator uses the tomb in order to set the present action against the backdrop of the past.

The quality of tombs as 'timemarks' is not something that is difficult to recognize, for it is rather frequently reflected upon by the characters in the *Odyssey*. Telemachos and Eumaios contrast Odysseus' supposed death at sea to the glory a tomb in Troy would have established for him and his son (*Od.* 1.239-41=14.369-71). Similarly, Achilles' ghost in the underworld points out the glory that Agamemnon would have earned for his son through a tomb at Troy (*Od.* 24.32-4), and Agamemnon's ghost praises Achilles for his tomb at the Hellespont that will be there for future generations to see (*Od.* 24.80-4). The *Iliad* provides a particularly interesting example of a

[17] In this article, I focus on the commemorative function of relics. However, tombs and walls, the subject of the next section, not only keep the past alive, but also play an important role in the formation of the *polis*. The commemorative and political aspects of buildings reinforce each other. *Cf.* Hölkeskamp (2002) 320-2; 332.

[18] οἳ δ' ἔχον Ἀρκαδίην ὑπὸ Κυλλήνης ὄρος αἰπύ / Αἰπύτιον παρὰ τύμβον, ἵν' ἀνέρες ἀγχιμαχηταί ... . This is the only time that Aiyptios is mentioned in the *Iliad* (for the later tradition, see Theocr. 1.125-26; Paus. 8.16.2). Kirk ad *Il.* 2.603-4 notes the pun in αἰπύ / Αἰπύτιον, but does not deem it significant. However, it is quite interesting that the epithet of the landscape is picked up by the name of the hero; not only is the place signified by nature, the steep hill, as well as by a human artefact, the tomb, but their linguistic similarity seems to erase the boundary between them.

[19] This identification is supported by the epithet γέρων, which, unlike παλαιός, does not denote someone from the past, but rather an old man.

[20] *Cf.* Pfister (1909) 542; Leaf ad *Il.* 2.812; Ameis-Hentze ad *Il.* 2.814. Kirk ad *Il.* 2.813-14 is more sceptical.

[21] *Cf.* Mannsperger (2002) 1079-81.

[22] For the tomb of Ilos, see also Mannsperger (2002) 1077-8. For references in later literature, see Pfister (1909) 283.

[23] Of course, the relation between the tomb and the dead man is reciprocal: not only does the tomb preserve the fame of Ilos, but the fame of Ilos makes the tomb notable.

[24] Griffin (1980) 23; Thornton (1984) 154 with n.11. While the transmitted text of scholion T ad *Il.* 11.372 prefigures Thornton's interpretation, Erbse's conjecture of ἀν<τ>άξιον for ἀνάξιον suggests Griffin's reading: ἐπὶ δὲ τῶι μνήματι τοῦ παλαιοῦ προγόνου ἐστί, μηδὲν ἀν<τ>άξιον ποιῶν.

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character reflecting on the future that reveals the commemorative relevance of tombs. When Hektor stipulates the conditions for the duel in book 7, he speculates about his victory and says, *Il.* 7.84-91:

> τὸν δὲ νέκυν ἐπὶ νῆας ἐϋσσέλμους ἀποδώσω,
> ὄφρα έ ταρχύσωσι κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοί
> σῆμά τέ οἱ χεύωσιν ἐπὶ πλατεῖ Ἑλλησπόντωι.
> καί ποτέ τις εἴπησι καὶ ὀψιγόνων ἀνθρώπων,
> νηὶ πολυκλήϊδι πλέων ἐπὶ οἴνοπα πόντον·
> ‘ἀνδρὸς μὲν τόδε σῆμα πάλαι κατατεθνηῶτος,
> ὅν ποτ’ ἀριστεύοντα κατέκτανε φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ.’
> ὥς ποτέ τις ἐρέει, τὸ δ’ ἐμὸν κλέος οὔ ποτ’ ὀλεῖται.
>
> But his corpse I will give back among the strong-benched vessels
> so that the flowing-haired Achaians may give him due burial
> and heap up a mound upon him beside the broad passage of Helle.
> And some day one of the men to come will say, as he sees it,
> one who in his benched ship sails on the wine-blue water:
> ‘This is the mound of a man who died long ago in battle,
> who was one of the bravest, and glorious Hektor killed him’.
> So will he speak some day, and my glory will not be forgotten.

Ποτέ and τις ... ὀψιγόνων ἀνθρώπων mark the temporal extension of Hektor’s fame and the claim τὸ δ’ ἐμὸν κλέος οὔ ποτ’ ὀλεῖται shows that Hektor eventually strives for eternal fame. This temporal longevity converges with the spatial extension of his fame: not only does τις ... ἀνθρώπων signify mankind in general, but the seafarer stands for the spreading of his fame all over the world. This commemorative function is underscored by the epigrammatic character of *Il.* 7.89-90.[25] At the same time, Hektor inverts the commemorative function of the tomb which is erected to preserve the memory of the dead, while in his fantasy, stimulated by Helenos’ prediction, the tomb spreads his, the winner’s, fame.[26]

So far, we have seen that in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* tombs are ‘timemarks’. As spatial marks, they preserve the fame of the dead. However, this neat picture becomes blurred in two passages that contain very subtle reflections on the process of signification. The first can be found in *Iliad* 2, where the Trojans are assembled at another striking place, *Il.* 2.811-14:

> ἔστι δέ τις προπάροιθε πόλιος αἰπεῖα κολώνη,
> ἐν πεδίωι ἀπάνευθε, περίδρομος ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα,
> τὴν ἤτοι ἄνδρες Βατίειαν κικλήσκουσιν,
> ἀθάνατοι δέ τε σῆμα πολυσκάρθμοιο Μυρίνης.
>
> Near the city but apart from it there is a steep hill
> in the plain by itself, so you pass one side or the other.
> This men call the Hill of the Thicket, but the immortal
> gods have named it the burial mound of dancing Myrine.

The signification of the hill depends on one’s point of view: while it is known as the ‘Hill of the Thicket’ among men, the gods call it the ‘burial mound of dancing Myrine’.[27] This not only underscores the gap between humans and gods,[28] but it also shows that tombs can slip into oblivion.

[25] *Cf.* Nagy (1990) 19. For a new view on epigrams in the *Iliad*, see Elmer (2005).

[26] One of the referees points out that, like Hektor’s wish, war memorials not only ‘keep alive the fame of the dead but remind people of the existence of the aggressors’.

[27] For divergent divine and human names see also *Il.* 1.403-4; 14.290-1; 20.74 and *Od.* 10.305; 12.61 (only divine names). *Cf.* Kirk ad *Il.* 1.403-4.

[28] Clay (1972) 128 stresses that *dionumia* suggest ‘the relative superiority of divine to human knowledge’.

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For men, the marker of Myrine has turned into merely landscape; artefact has become nature. Only the gods, who are endowed with a better memory, are aware of its original significance. The underlying semiotic process is implied in the Greek word σῆμα, which can signify both 'sign' and 'tomb'.[29] For humans, the 'sign' of Myrine's 'tomb' has lost its original significance and has gained a new one.

While it is the narrator who points out that the original significance of the 'Hill of the Thicket' has become lost to the heroes, in *Iliad* 23 a character reflects on the uncertain significance of material remains for men. Before the chariot race, Nestor instructs his son Antilochus, *Il.* 23.326-33:

> σῆμα δέ τοι ἐρέω μάλ' ἀριφραδές, οὐδέ σε λήσει·
> ἕστηκε ξύλον αὖον ὅσον τ' ὄργυι' ὑπὲρ αἴης,
> ἢ δρυὸς ἢ πεύκης· τὸ μὲν οὐ καταπύθεται ὄμβρωι·
> λᾶε δὲ τοῦ ἑκάτερθεν ἐρηρέδαται δύο λευκώ
> ἐν ξυνοχῆισιν ὁδοῦ, λεῖος δ' ἱππόδρομος ἀμφίς·
> ἤ τεο σῆμα βροτοῖο πάλαι κατατεθνηῶτος
> ἢ τό γε νύσσα τέτυκτο ἐπὶ προτέρων ἀνθρώπων·
> καὶ νῦν τέρματ' ἔθηκε ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.
>
> I will give you a clear mark and you cannot fail to notice it.
> There is a dry stump standing up from the ground about six feet,
> oak, it may be, or pine, and not rotted away by rain-water,
> and two white stones are leaned against it, one on either side,
> at the joining place of the ways, and there is smooth driving around it.
> Either it is the grave-mark of someone who died long ago,
> or was set as a racing goal by men who lived before our time.
> Now swift-footed brilliant Achilleus has made it the turning-post.

The σῆμα has three levels of signification: first, Nestor uses it as a sign for the advice he offers to Antilochus; second, Achilles makes it a turning-post within the race-course; third, Nestor suspects that it has been either a tomb or a turning-post already in the past.[30] This uncertainty is underscored, as Lynn-George and Dickson note, because not even Nestor, who is more or less the embodiment of memory, is able to decipher the sign for sure.[31] To this it can be added that the uncertainty of the past signification is highlighted by the clarity of its signification in the present (*Il.* 23.326: ἀριφραδές).

Moreover, the significance of the material object is also reflected by its representation: in *Il.* 23.326 σῆμα means 'sign', but in *Il.* 23.331 it signifies 'tomb'.[32] The double signification in the secondary sign system of language reflects the ambiguity in the primary sign system of material objects. This subtle semiotic play gains further depth through the fact that the word played with is the word for 'sign'. We can therefore add a fourth level of significance to σῆμα: 'sign' performs the semiotic process that it signifies; the use of σῆμα enacts its meaning.

The instability of the σῆμα gains force from the context depicted above. The ambiguity of the stones' signification clashes with the commemorative function of the games.[33] This is underscored by a reverberation: the epithet ἀριφραδές, which is used for the present signification of the σῆμα

[29] On σῆμα as 'sign' and 'tomb' see Niemeyer (1996) 12-18. *Cf.* also Nagy (1983) 35. Scodel (2002) also discusses different kinds of σήματα in the Homeric epics. On the *Odyssey*, see also Purves (2006).

[30] *Cf.* Dickson (1995) 216-17.

[31] Lynn-George (1988) 266; Dickson (1995) 218-19.

[32] As Nagy (1983) 46 notes, both meanings are linked to each other: 'In this context, the etymology of sema 'sign, tomb' can be brought to bear: as a 'sign' of the dead hero, the 'tomb' is a reminder of the hero and his kleos'. See also Sinos (1980) 48, who points out that some of the race courses in Panhellenic games have been identified as including the tombs of ancient heroes.

[33] *Cf.* Dickson (1995) 217. Sinos (1980) 47, 50-1; Nagy (1983) 46-7 point out that κλέος is already implied in Πατρο-κλέης.

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and thereby throws the obscurity of the past significance into relief, harks back to Achilles' words about Patroklos' tomb, *Il.* 23.238-42:

> … αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
> ὀστέα Πατρόκλοιο Μενοιτιάδαο λέγωμεν
> εὖ διαγινώσκοντες. ἀριφραδέα δὲ τέτυκται·
> ἐν μέσσηι γὰρ ἔκειτο πυρῆι, τοὶ δ' ἄλλοι ἄνευθεν
> ἐσχατιῆι καίοντ' ἐπιμὶξ ἵπποι τε καὶ ἄνδρες.
>
> … and afterwards
> let us gather up the bones of Patroklos, the son of Menoitios,
> which we shall easily tell apart, since they are conspicuous
> where he lay in the middle of the pyre, and the others far from him
> burned at the edge, the men indiscriminately with the horses.

Now, the bones are ἀριφραδέα in the same manner that the present signification of the σῆμα is ἀριφραδές. If we transfer the obscurity of the past signification of the turning-post, which may or may not have been a tomb, to the tomb of Patroklos and project it into the future, it becomes questionable whether his tomb will ensure lasting fame. This also affects Achilles, who has already given the orders to enlarge Patroklos' tomb later so he can be buried there too.

Some scholars have argued that the instability of the σῆμα puts the epic claim of creating κλέος ἄφθιτον into question.[34] The link between tomb and epics is, I think, justified.[35] However, I am inclined to see a contrast, particularly since in *Iliad* 23 tombs are not said to establish κλέος. Both tombs and epic poetry are commemorative media, but semiotic shifts jeopardize the significance of the material monument, while the fame in poetry claims to be eternal.[36]

In sum, tombs not only serve as 'timemarks' in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but their commemorative function is also reflected upon by the heroes. However, the memory does not reach back very far; it spans up to three generations in one case, but it is usually only one generation. While this ties in nicely with assumptions about the extent of memory in oral societies, the implicit reflections on the stability of memory go beyond what most scholars would expect in an oral society.

II. THE WALLS OF TROY AND ITS HISTORY

Monuments, which are built for commemorative reasons, are not the only objects to evoke the memory of the past. In many cases, archaeologists and pre-historians draw on the fact that relics of old buildings were reused, in order to argue that people had an awareness of the past.[37] This indicates that buildings which were not erected for commemorative reasons can also evoke the past. However, it is hard to prove what people in past oral societies actually made of ruins. Here, the Homeric epics offer precious evidence. For example, in the *Odyssey* a bench made of stones prompts the narrator to flash back to Neleus, who used to sit on the bench and was a 'counsellor like the gods' (*Od.* 3.406-10). While in this case a material object evokes only the memory of an

[34] *Cf.* Dickson (1995) 218 with further literature in n.8.

[35] De Certeau (1988) 99-102 compares historiography to tombs.

[36] This is not contradicted by the simile in *Il.* 17.432-7: τὼ δ' οὔτ' ἂψ ἐπὶ νῆας ἐπὶ πλατὺν Ἑλλήσποντον / ἠθελέτην ἰέναι, οὔτ' ἐς πόλεμον μετ' Ἀχαιούς, / ἀλλ' ὥς τε στήλη μένει ἔμπεδον, ἥ τ' ἐπὶ τύμβωι / ἀνέρος ἐστήκηι τεθνηότος ἠὲ γυναικός, / ὣς μένον ἀσφαλέως περικαλλέα δίφρον ἔχοντες, / οὔδει ἐνισκίμψαντε καρήατα... Here, the stillness of the horses is compared to the immobility of a stêlê on a grave. The 'vehicle' of the simile also evokes funeral associations, *cf.* Edwards ad *Il.* 17.434-6. However, the immobility of the stêlê does not say anything about the duration of its existence.

[37] See, for example, Bradley (2002) 58-71 on houses located at the middle and late Bronze age site of Elp.

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individual from the past, a more striking case for how non-monumental relics can document the past are the various walls of Troy in the *Iliad*.

The fortification that the Achaeans build in *Iliad* 7 has attracted much attention,[38] and the question of whether the wall is an interpolation or not has kept many scholars busy.[39] That the Achaean wall could preserve the memory of the Trojan War is suggested by the fact that it is built on the grave of the fallen Greeks. As the previous section has shown, tombs serve a commemorative function, and if we take this spatial contiguity as a characteristic feature at the level of content, it is possible that the wall will bear testimony to the past, even though that is not its primary goal. The commemorative function of walls comes to the fore in Poseidon's complaint in *Il.* 7.451-3:

> τοῦ δ' ἤτοι κλέος ἔσται, ὅσον τ' ἐπικίδναται ἠώς,
> τοῦ δ' ἐπιλήσονται, τὸ ἐγὼ καὶ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων
> ἤρωι Λαομέδοντι πολίσσαμεν ἀθλήσαντε.
>
> Now the fame of this will last as long as dawnlight is scattered,
> and men will forget that wall which I and Phoibos Apollo
> built with our hard work for the hero Laomedon's city.

Poseidon's words reveal that walls were seen as bearers of κλέος. Moreover, they show that walls compete with each other for recognition.[40] Memory, it seems, is reserved only for the most impressive constructions. The new wall threatens to outshine the old wall which evokes the services of Poseidon and Apollo for Laomedon and thus preserves the memory of events that happened two generations ago.[41]

There is yet another wall in Troy, *Il.* 20.144-8:

> ὣς ἄρα φωνήσας ἡγήσατο Κυανοχαίτης
> τεῖχος ἐς ἀμφίχυτον Ἡρακλῆος θείοιο
> ὑψηλόν, τό ῥά οἱ Τρῶες καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη
> ποίεον, ὄφρα τὸ κῆτος ὑπεκπροφυγὼν ἀλέαιτο,
> ὁππότε μιν σεύαιτο ἀπ' ἠϊόνος πεδίονδε.
>
> So he spoke, Poseidon of the dark hair, and led the way
> to the stronghold of godlike Herakles, earth-piled on both sides,
> a high place, which the Trojans and Pallas Athena had built him
> as a place of escape where he could get away from the Sea Beast
> when the charging monster drove him away to the plain from the seashore.

The 'Herakles-wall' evokes another story from the past: that of Herakles and the sea-monster.[42] According to later sources, this monster was sent by Poseidon who had not been paid for his services.[43] Laomedon promised his partly divine horses to the one who would rid Troy of this plague.

[38] In *Il.* 7.333-43, Nestor says that the wall will be built upon the grave-mound for the dead. For the further role of the wall in the *Iliad*, see Thornton (1984) 157-60, who draws attention to its structuring function.

[39] This was argued by Page (1959) 315-24. For an opposing opinion to Page's position, see Tsagarakis (1969); West (1969).

[40] The fame of the wall reminds Scodel (1982) 46 of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11.1-9).

[41] The story is told at greater length by Poseidon in *Il.* 21.441-7. However, as the commentators have not failed to notice, the two accounts of the story are slightly divergent: while in *Il.* 7.451-3 Poseidon says that he and Apollo built the wall together, according to *Il.* 21.446-9 he built the wall alone and Apollo toiled as a herdsman. For different views on this discrepancy, see Kirk ad *Il.* 7.443-64 and Richardson ad *Il.* 21.441-57.

[42] See also *Il.* 5.638-42; 14.250-6; 15.25-30 for glimpses from the same story. Boardman (2002) 36 suggests that the 'Herakles-wall' goes back to a very old tradition.

[43] *Cf.* Apollod. 2.103ff.; Diod. 4.35ff. For further sources, see Gunning (1924) 750-4.

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However, as hinted at by Tlepolemos in *Il.* 5.638-42, Herakles was not given due reward and sacked the city in revenge.[44]

The memories evoked by the walls amount to a history of Troy. The first wall calls to mind Poseidon's and Apollon's servitude to Laomedon. The memory of the revenge of the gods is preserved by the wall from which Herakles fought the sea-monster. Finally, the Achaeans' wall documents the Trojan War. Thus, the series of walls impressively illustrates that material relics were indeed bearers of memories, or, in Chapman's terms, that time has left its imprint on 'space', transforming it into 'places'.

However, the wall of the Achaeans, which is obviously the most striking wall and thus threatens to eclipse the memory of Poseidon's and Apollon's wall, is not only damaged during battle (*Il.* 12.256-62; 14.55-6; 66-8; 15.361-6), but, as the narrator points out, will eventually be annihilated by a major deluge (*Il.* 12.3-33; *cf.* 7.459-63). It has been argued since antiquity that this deluge was introduced to explain why no remains of the wall were visible in the present.[45] Even if we do not subscribe to this theory, the narrator's prolepsis marks that there are limits to memory being preserved by material relics. While the previous section revealed the semiotic ambiguity of monuments, the fate of the Achaean wall shows that even the most impressive material relics can disappear.

Because what appears as natural to later spectators is in fact the result of an intervention, the force of time blurs the boundaries between nature and culture. As in the case of the 'Hill of the thicket', alias the 'tomb of Myrine', it becomes difficult to distinguish between landscape and artefact. This may be best illustrated by another passage that does not involve a wall. In the battle of the gods, Athena hurls a stone at Ares, *Il.* 21.403-6:

> ἣ δ ἀναχασσαμένη λίθον εἵλετο χειρὶ παχείηι
> κείμενον ἐν πεδίωι, μέλανα τρηχύν τε μέγαν τε,
> τόν ῥ' ἄνδρες πρότεροι θέσαν ἔμμεναι οὖρον ἀρούρης·
> τῶι βάλε θοῦρον Ἄρηα κατ' αὐχένα, λῦσε δὲ γυῖα.
>
> But Athena giving back caught up in her heavy hand a stone
> that lay in the plain, black and rugged and huge, one which men
> of a former time had set there as boundary mark of the cornfield.
> With this she hit furious Ares in the neck, and unstrung him.

Ober argues that this description of the stone makes it likely that it was originally more of a natural object than an artefact.[46] The stone is turned into a human artefact in its function as a *horos*. However, the stone fulfils its function only in a certain context, and when Athena removes it, she renders it part of nature again. Both the stone and the Achaean wall show that human artefacts are far from stable, when they are taken from nature and placed in the landscape. They can turn into landscape again, and then their former significance may be irretrievably lost to the human spectator.[47]

[44] The mention of Herakles' fight with the sea-monster could have a further function, as the fight between Achilles and Scamander follows. Because in another passage Achilles draws on Herakles as a great exemplum for himself (*Il.* 18.117-19), it is tempting to read Herakles' fight with the sea-monster as a *mise-en-abyme* of Achilles' fight with Scamander.

[45] Aristotle *fr.* 162 Rose argues that the destruction is mentioned, since no ruins were left to see in Homer's time. *Cf.* Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1916) 210; most recently Bassi (2005) 24. On the other hand, Scodel (1982) argues in favour of an integration of oriental legends about floods. Taking a narratological approach, de Jong (2004) 84 interprets this prolepsis as an attempt to provide the wall with the significance that old objects gain from reviews of their past. I think these interpretations do not necessarily cancel one another out; they simply highlight different aspects.

[46] *Cf.* Ober (1995) 96-100. See also Griffin (1980) 24 for more on the stone. He sees it as a significant detail that reveals 'the chaotic reversal of the order and sense of life in peace'.

[47] For the history of landscapes, see e.g. Nash (1997); for *naturalia* as a testimony to the past in Greece, see Boardman (2002) 103-15.

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Returning to the walls of Troy, I would like to make one final point. Ford has offered a meta-poetic reading of the Achaean wall, arguing that its fragility says something 'about the possibilities of preserving the fame of the Trojan War in physical form'.[48] He sees the wall as 'a figure for a written-down *Iliad*'.[49] According to this interpretation, the orally transmitted poem critically reflects on writing as a new technique. I would like to suggest as an alternative interpretation that there is a juxtaposition here of epic poetry and the 'archaeology of the past' as two different media of memory. The fragility and ambiguity of material relics and the eternity of the poetic tradition highlight each other in their discrepancy. While the wall has evolved from a medium of memory to an object of memory, the epics claim to be κλέος ἄφθιτον. Thus, the *Iliad* not only illustrates that material relics call the past to mind, but it also emphasizes the limitations of this function and uses this as a foil for its own function as a medium of memory.[50]

III. THE BIOGRAPHY OF THINGS

In an article published in 1910, the anthropologist Rivers pointed out that material objects can have biographies and thereby preserve stories.[51] This approach was later taken up and linked to the discussion of different models for the exchange of goods, ranging from gifts and kulas[52] to commodities.[53] Kopytoff, for example, suggests: 'In doing the biography of a thing, one would ask questions similar to those one asks about people: what, sociologically, are the biographical possibilities inherent in its "status" and in the period and culture, and how are these possibilities realized? Where does the thing come from and who made it? What has been its career so far, and what do people consider to be an ideal career for such things? What are the "recognized" ages or periods in the thing's "life", and what are the cultural markers for them? How does the thing's use change with its age, and what happens to it when it reaches the end of its usefulness?'[54]

The biographical nature of material objects depends on their cultural setting. For instance, in a study of the Indonesian Kodi, Hoskins had a hard time eliciting information from the indigenous population about their lives. However, she finally succeeded when she started to ask the Kodi about material goods which are highly personalized and hold numerous stories of their previous owners. While the notion of a 'biography of things' works very well in this case, this model is not as successful when used for western civilisations, which have a rather depersonalized circulation

[48] Ford (1992) 150. A cornerstone of the meta-poetic reading is *Il.* 12.10-12, where the duration of the wall is made co-extensive with the *Iliad* (*cf.* Ford (1992) 151-2). Another passage that seems to have been previously left aside can be adduced as support for the meta-poetic reading of the wall. In the embassy scene, Achilles says in *Il.* 9.348-54: ἦ μὲν δὴ μάλα πολλὰ πονήσατο νόσφιν ἐμεῖο· / καὶ δὴ τεῖχος ἔδειμε, καὶ ἤλασε τάφρον ἐπ' αὐτῶι / εὐρεῖαν μεγάλην, ἐν δὲ σκόλοπας κατέπηξεν· / ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὣς δύναται σθένος Ἕκτορος ἀνδροφόνοιο / ἴσχειν. ὅφρα δ' ἐγὼ μετ' Ἀχαιοῖσιν πολέμιζον, / οὐκ ἐθέλεσκε μάχην ἀπὸ τείχεος ὀρνύμεν Ἕκτωρ, / ἀλλ' ὅσον ἐς Σκαιάς τε πύλας καὶ φηγὸν ἵκανεν. Achilles juxtaposes himself with the wall. Such a comparison is founded on the numerous epic similes and metaphors in which heroes are compared to walls, *cf.* Scully (1990) 58-61. If we see Achilles, the hero of the *Iliad*, as metonymic for the poem, the wall and the *Iliad* are juxtaposed. Such a reading is reinforced by a parallel between Achilles and the wall: not only is the wall obliterated by the deluge, but also the memory of Achilles is threatened by Scamander (*cf.* Scamander's words in *Il.* 21.322-3; the parallel between Achilles and the wall is pointed out by Nagy (1979) 160 §16 n.1; Scodel (1982) 48 n.38). However, the wall is erased and Achilles, on the other hand, escapes the river and gains κλέος ἄφθιτον. While the wall is turned from a medium of memory into an object of memory, the *Iliad* presents itself as a stable medium of memory through the idea of κλέος ἄφθιτον. In addition to Ford (1992) 147-57, see also Lynn-George (1988) 264-5; Taplin (1992) 140.

[49] Ford (1992) 150.

[50] *Cf.* Taplin (1992) 140.

[51] Rivers (1910).

[52] Kulas are shells in Papua New Guinea that are exchanged by people, thereby accumulating the memories of their owners.

[53] For the 'biography of things' see the survey in *World Archaeology* 31 (1999). For gifts and commodity goods see Gregory (1982); Appadurai (1986), who is sceptical about the distinction between gifts and commodity goods; Thomas (1991), who pleads for the maintenance of the distinction; Hoskins (1998) on kula. The 'life of things' is given a philosophical twist by Thomas (1996) 55-82 who draws on Heidegger's concept of 'being in the world'.

[54] Kopytoff (1986) 66-7.

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of objects.[55] Its application to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is very fruitful because many goods are introduced with a flashback to their past.[56]

It is no surprise that weapons figure prominently among the objects with a history in heroic poetry (*Il.* 17.194-7; 18.84-5; 22.322-3), more specifically, a club (*Il.* 7.137-50), a helmet (*Il.* 10.260-71), armour (*Il.* 11.19-28; 15.529-33; 23.560-2), a spear (*Il.* 16.140-4; 19.387-91), a warrior's belt (*Il.* 6.219), a sword (*Il.* 23.807-8), a bow (*Od.* 21.11-41), and a shield (*Od.* 22.184-5). However, there is also a great variety of household goods that have biographies, such as cups (*Il.* 6.220-1; 11.632-7; 24.234-5; *Od.* 4.590-2), *kratêres* (*Il.* 23.741-7; *Od.* 4.615-19=15.115-19), a bowl (*Il.* 23.616-20), an *amphora* (*Od.* 24.74-5), a basket (*Od.* 4.125-7), bathing tubs and tripods (*Od.* 4.128-9). Other goods with biographies include headwear (*Il.* 22.470-2), drugs (*Od.* 4.227-32), a lyre (*Il.* 9.186-9), a discus (*Il.* 23.826-9), wine (*Od.* 9.196-215) and, if we may count them as 'material goods', horses and mules (*Il.* 5.265-72; 16.148-54; 17.443-4; 23.276-8; 291-2; 294-8; 24.277-8). Thus, we find the past inscribed in all kinds of material goods in the heroic world.

I shall show how (a) the biographies of goods resemble the memory provided by memorials and other buildings, then (b) I will discuss the relation between the present and the past as constructed in these biographies, and finally (c) I will touch upon their narrative use.

(a) The history of the walls has revealed that only special relics carry memories. Poseidon is worried that the new fortification built by the Achaeans will eclipse the fame of his wall and thereby the memory of his service to Laomedon. By the same token, many of the goods that evoke past stories are endowed with special features. In the *Iliad* for example, Meriones' boar's-tusk helmet is carefully described (*Il.* 10.261-6), and both cups of Diomedes and Nestor are portrayed as golden (*Il.* 6.220; 11.632-5). In the *Odyssey*, Menelaos calls the *kratêr* that he received from Phaidimos the 'most splendid and esteemed at the highest value' of all the goods stored in his house (*Od.* 4.614). The significance of several objects is even heightened by their divine origin. The *kratêr* which Menelaos gives to Telemachos was made by Hephaistos (*Od.* 4.613-19=15.113-19), as was the *amphora* which Dionysos gave to Thetis and in which Achilles' ashes are stored (*Od.* 24.74-5).

Therefore, biographies seem to be attached only to precious items; inversely, biographies render objects significant. A good case in point is an object I have not yet mentioned: the sceptre of Agamemnon which was made by Hephaistos, given to Hermes by Zeus and then passed on to Pelops, Atreus, Thyestes and finally its present owner (*Il.* 2.100-9).[57] The sceptre further illustrates that the relation between object and owner is reciprocal. Previous owners have lent the sceptre significance, which, in turn, it bestows on its present owner, who relies on the sceptre's authority when he is speaking.[58]

The sceptre is exceptional in having a history that reaches back two generations. Other objects that have such a long past include the cup that Oineus received from Bellerophontes and that Diomedes still has in his house (*Il.* 6.220-1), and the bow which Odysseus received as a young man

[55] Hoskins (1998) 192. However, he is right to qualify this juxtaposition because even in the western world there are goods that tend to accumulate history, old furniture for example. See also Crielaard (2003) 51-3, who discusses the example of the wine. The differences between the status of material goods in western civilizations and goods in the Melanesian society have been a subject of controversy. While Strathern (1988) sees a clear dichotomy, Thomas (1991) argues for similarities.

[56] The 'biography of things' approach has already been applied to the Homeric epics by Crielaard (2003).

[57] For the sceptre in the *Iliad*, see Combellack (1947/1948); Mondi (1980); Griffin (1980) 9-12; Kirk ad *Il.* 2.109; Easterling (1989); H. van Wees (1992) 276-80.

[58] Another example of the reciprocal relation between owner and object is the club of Areithoos (*Il.* 7.137-50), *cf.* Crielaard (2003) 54. When none of the Greeks is willing to accept Hektor's challenge, Nestor delivers a hortatory account of his duel with Ereuthalion, who fought with a club that Areithoos had received from Ares, but then lost to Lykurgos, who in turn passed it on to Ereuthalion. On the one hand, this illustrious series of heroes makes the club a significant object; on the other, this aura is transferred to Ereuthalion. So Nestor tells the club's history in order to emphasize his courage when faced with such a terrible opponent.

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from Iphitos, who had inherited the weapon from his father Eurytos (*Od.* 21.11-41).[59] Particularly interesting is Meriones boar's-tusk helmet which illustrates three different modes of exchange (*Il.* 10.261-70): Autolykos stole the helmet from Amyntor and gave it to his guest-friend Amphidamas, who used it as a present for Polos. Polos eventually passed it on to his son Meriones. In being passed down three generations, the helmet has seen three different modes of exchange: theft, gift and inheritance.[60]

In most cases, however, the biographies of things are similar to the memory established by tombs in that they often reach back only one generation. In some cases, the retrospective does not even go this far. For example, when Menelaos gives Telemachos a tour of his treasure chamber, he only mentions the travels during which he acquired the goods and does not delve into their past (*Od.* 4.81-91). However, this lack of temporal depth is compensated for by spatial reach – Menelaos collected the goods from places as far as Cyprus, Phoenicia, Egypt, Ethiopia and Libya. The emphasis on the exotic origin of goods is not limited to the *Odyssey*, which abounds in travel stories, but can also be found in the *Iliad*, for example, when the narrator describes Agamemnon's armour, *Il.* 11.19-22:

> δεύτερον αὖ θώρηκα περὶ στήθεσσιν ἔδυνεν,
> τόν ποτέ οἱ Κινύρης δῶκε ξεινήϊον εἶναι,
> πεύθετο γὰρ Κύπρονδε μέγα κλέος, οὕνεκ' Ἀχαιοί
> ἐς Τροίην νήεσσιν ἀναπλεύσεσθαι ἔμελλον.
>
> Afterwards he girt on about his chest the corselet
> that Kinyras had given him once, to be a guest present.
> For the great fame and rumour of war had carried to Cyprus
> How the Achaians were to sail against Troy in their vessels.[61]

In one further respect, everyday goods parallel relics. I have discussed Hektor's reflection on the future tomb of his opponent and Nestor's comments on the turning point in the chariot race as examples for the characters' reflections on the commemorative function of relics. The same awareness can be noted with regard to everyday goods. It is striking that, while most modern discussions focus on the social dynamics and hierarchies that are acted out in gift exchange,[62] the epic heroes themselves stress the temporal dimension of the objects and emphasize their commemorative function: in the *Iliad*, Hektor appeals to Ajax after their duel to exchange gifts so that their encounter will be remembered (*Il.* 7.299-302). The *Odyssey*, in which hospitality figures prominently, contains more examples of this than the *Iliad*. Menelaos, for instance, gives Telemachos a cup, and Helen gives him a *peplos* for his future wife, and both point out that these gifts will preserve their memory (*Od.* 4.590-2; 15.125-8). Peisistratos also remarks that 'a guest remembers all his days the man who received him / as a host receives a guest, and gave him the gifts of friendship' (*Od.* 15.54-5), and in a similar vein, Alkinous gives a cup to Odysseus 'so that all

[59] The chronology of this passage is muddled: Herakles, who is normally separated from the heroes of the Trojan War by one or two generations, is made a contemporary of young Odysseus. *Cf.* Galinsky (1972) 12; Clay (1983) 91.

[60] Other ways in which weapons can change their owners are combat, in which the victor strips his opponent, and games, where the participants compete for prizes. Both of these modes of exchange are used in the case of the armour that Achilles takes from Asteropaios in battle and then awards to Eumelos after the chariot race (*Il.* 23.560-2). See also Asteropaios' sword in *Il.* 23.807-8. The sequential exchange of the same good on the battlefield and in the games underscores the similarities between the *Iliad*'s plot and the funeral games that make book 23 into a *mise-en-abyme*. *Cf.* Grethlein (2007) where it is argued that the funeral games not only refract many elements of the *Iliad*'s plot, but that the games also mirror epic poetry as another medium of reflection on death.

[61] See also the first prize for the foot race in the funeral games for Patroklos: a Phoenician *kratêr* (*Il.* 23.740-7), and the cup from Thrace in Priam's treasury (*Il.* 24.234-6).

[62] See the remarks by Finley (1954) 49-66 and also Hooker (1989); Donlan (1989). On gifts in archaic Greece from an archaeological perspective, see, for example, Coldstream (1983); Morris (1986b).

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his days he may remember me / as he makes libation at home to Zeus and the other immortals' (*Od.* 8.431-2).[63]

The heroes also comment on the commemorative function of objects outside the context of hospitality. For example, after the chariot race in *Iliad* 23, Achilles gives the fifth prize 'as a treasure / in memory of the burial of Patroklos' (*Il.* 23.618-19) to Nestor, who is too old to participate in the competition. Since the prizes are supposed to ensure that the commemorative function of the funeral games will be extended in the future, the choice of 'Mister Memory' seems particularly apt.[64]

(b) As we have seen, the biographies of things parallel in many regards the memory evoked by tombs and walls. It is precious items that have biographies; the memory preserved by them rarely reaches back more than one generation and they prompt characters to reflect on commemoration. Everyday goods can also help us to elucidate further the relation that the heroes see between past and present. More specifically, they illustrate that the past is felt to be greater than the present and that the heroes of previous generations tower over the present ones.[65]

At first, it is surprising that Nestor is the only one able to lift the cup he has brought from home (*Il.* 11.632-7). Old Nestor is too frail to join the battle properly and, in the very context of the description of his cup, γεραιός (*Il.* 11.632) and γέρων (*Il.* 11.637) emphasize his age. However, it is Nestor's age, of all things, that makes him capable of lifting the cup. When he tries to persuade Achilles to make peace with Agamemnon, he appeals to them to follow his advice, arguing that, *Il.* 1.260-1:

> ἤδη γάρ ποτ' ἐγὼ καὶ ἀρείοσιν ἠέ περ ὑμῖν
> ἀνδράσιν ὡμίλησα, καὶ οὔ ποτέ μ' οἵ γ' ἀθέριζον.
>
> Yes, and in my time I have dealt with better men than
> you are, and never once did they disregard me.

Thus, it is Nestor's superiority as a member of an earlier, stronger generation that makes him the only one who is able to lift the cup.[66] This interpretation can be backed up by other passages: the narrator states four times that a hero lifts a stone that not one nor even two of the present men could move.[67] The relationship between the heroes' past and their present mirrors the relationship between the epic past and the present of the epic performance.

The same pattern applies to Achilles' spear, *Il.* 16.140-4 (16.141-4=19.388-91):[68]

> ἔγχος δ' οὐχ ἕλετ' οἷον ἀμύμονος Αἰακίδαο
> βριθὺ μέγα στιβαρόν· τὸ μὲν οὐ δύνατ' ἄλλος Ἀχαιῶν
> πάλλειν, ἀλλά μιν οἷος ἐπίστατο πῆλαι Ἀχιλλεύς,
> Πηλιάδα μελίην, τὴν πατρὶ φίλωι πόρε Χείρων
> Πηλίου ἐκ κορυφῆς φόνον ἔμμεναι ἡρώεσσιν.

[63] See also the bow of Iphitos in *Od.* 21.40-1.

[64] And indeed, in his reply, Nestor recalls the funeral games for Amarynkeus (*Il.* 23.626-50). On the commemorative function of the funeral games, see Grethlein (2007).

[65] On the relation between past and present in the *Iliad*, see Grethlein (2006a) 49-58.

[66] Since social ranks were expressed in portions of food and drink (see, for example, *Il.* 4.261-3), the size of Nestor's cup also highlights his standing and reputation in the Greek army. For a parallel in a Ugaritic text, see West (1997) 376.

[67] *Cf. Il.* 5.302-4; 12.381-3; 12.445-9; 20.285-7. Boardman (2002) 34, 190 makes the interesting suggestion that the discovery of mammoth bones contributed to or even generated the idea that the heroes were greater and stronger than present men. For the connection between these finds and the age of heroes, see Mayor (2000) 104-56.

[68] For Achilles' spear, see Shannon (1975) 31-86.

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Only the spear of blameless Aiakides he did not take,
huge, heavy, thick, which no one else of all the Achaians
could handle, but Achilles alone knew how to wield it;
the Pelian ash spear which Cheiron had brought to his father
from high on Pelion to be death for fighters.

Peleus' spear is so heavy that only the strongest hero, Achilles, is able to wield it, making the past appear to be greater than the present. The examples mentioned thus far are from the *Iliad*, but the *Odyssey* also has a formidable object, Odysseus' bow. All who try to string the bow, except Telemachos, lack the strength and therefore fail. Odysseus is the only one who is strong enough to use the bow (and does so with detrimental consequences for the Suitors). The bow is old – as I have already mentioned, it was Eurytos' old weapon (*Od.* 21.11-41) – and when Odysseus holds it, he first inspects it to see if it is still intact (*Od.* 21.393-5). One could argue that Eurytos was an outstanding figure in his own time and that therefore the difficulties of the Suitors do not necessarily imply that previous heroes were stronger. However, in light of Odysseus' statement that he would not dare to compete with the old archers (*Od.* 8.223-5),[69] it is plausible that the Suitors' failure marks the difference between the generations of heroes.

Although the objects mark a gap in generations, they also link past and present together. Odysseus points out that he is weaker than Herakles and Eurytos, but the fact that he still uses Eurytos' bow aligns him with former generations of heroes. The continuity created by material goods is particularly obvious in the case of the sceptre that places Agamemnon in line with his father, great uncle and grandfather (*Il.* 2.100-9), and endows him with the authority accumulated by his ancestors.

That the sceptre not only stands for, but itself embodies the continuity of tradition is highlighted by the description of the sceptre that Achilles gives in order to emphasize the firmness of his decision to withdraw from combat, *Il.* 1.234-9:

ναὶ μὰ τόδε σκῆπτρον· τὸ μὲν οὔ ποτε φύλλα καὶ ὄζους
φύσει, ἐπεὶ δὴ πρῶτα τομὴν ἐν ὄρεσσι λέλοιπεν,
οὐδ' ἀναθηλήσει· περὶ γάρ ῥά ἑ χαλκὸς ἔλεψεν
φύλλά τε καὶ φλοιόν· νῦν αὖτέ μιν υἷες Ἀχαιῶν
ἐν παλάμηις φορέουσι δικασπόλοι, οἵ τε θέμιστας
πρὸς Διὸς εἰρύαται…

In the name of this sceptre, which never again will bear leaf nor
branch, now that it has left behind the cut stump in the mountains,
nor shall it ever blossom again, since the bronze blade stripped
bark and leafage, and now at last the sons of the Achaians
carry it in their hands in state when they administer the justice of Zeus…

When the staff is cut and trimmed by a bronze axe, the wood no longer evolves naturally and becomes an unchanging artefact.[70] Thus, there are two different stories about the origins of sceptres that rely on different discourses, but have similar messages. The continuity, which in temporal terms takes on the form of a genealogy, is also expressed by the sceptre's place in the dichotomy of nature and culture.

[69] On the correspondence between the two passages, see, for example, Louden (1999) xiii-xiv.

[70] *Cf.* Nagy (1979) 180: '…a thing of nature that has been transformed into a thing of culture'. This ties in well with Achilles' description of the sceptre that is called ἄφθιτον αἰεί in *Il.* 2.46 and 186. For the signification of organic processes through the stem φθι-, see Nagy (1979) 176-92. On the sceptre as a mirror of Achilles, see Lynn-George (1989) 48-9.

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(c) In the previous section, I have examined the general relation between the present of material goods and the past they evoke. In this section, I would like to turn to biographies that interact with the present in a more specific way. The presence of the past in material goods is often used by the Homeric narrator to create additional meaning and to highlight the narrative.

In some cases, the stories evoked by material objects serve as an exemplum for the present. I have already mentioned that, for Diomedes, the cup which his grandfather Oineus received from Bellerophontes is a marker of the guest-friendship between the two houses (*Il.* 6.220-1). The exchange of gifts between Oineus and Bellerophontes serves as an exemplum for their grandsons, who exchange gifts themselves. This parallel is further highlighted by one detail: the golden armour that Glaukos gives to Diomedes corresponds to the golden cup that his grandfather, Bellerophontes, gave to Diomedes' grandfather, Oineus.[71]

While the gift exchange between Oineus and Bellerophontes functions as an exemplum at the level of the plot, I would like to argue that the story of Meriones' helmet (*Il.* 10.261-70) serves as an exemplum for the audience. I have already mentioned the three different forms of exchange which the helmet has gone through: theft, gift and inheritance. The first of these, the theft, is the most interesting. Autolykos, who steals the helmet from Amyntor, is the maternal grandfather of Odysseus. Thus, there is a reversal in the history of the helmet: in the same way that the helmet was transferred from Odysseus' grandfather, Autolykos, to Meriones' father, Polos, via Amphidamas, it is now returned to Odysseus from Meriones.

The reference to Autolykos has, I believe, further significance.[72] Not only is Autolykos known for rather non-heroic activities – 'he surpassed all men / in thievery and the art of the oath' (*Od.* 19.395-6) – but the theft of the helmet makes one of his knaveries explicit. Strikingly, the non-heroic act of stealing clashes with the heroic nature of the object being stolen, a warrior's helmet. I suggest that the shady character of Autolykos prefigures Odysseus' less than heroic performance in the *Doloneia*. Odysseus' and Diomedes' enterprise does not really correspond with the heroic ideal that is otherwise prevalent in the *Iliad*. Daytime combat is replaced by the night moves, and instead of open combat there is a silent massacre of people in their sleep.[73] Moreover, Odysseus deceives Dolon when he kills him against his promise (*Il.* 10.383). Thus, in referring to Autolykos, the helmet's biography provides a model for Odysseus' trickster-like character in the *Doloneia*.[74]

Other stories borne by material goods do not prefigure the present situation, but instead contrast with it. As already pointed out, the long genealogy of Agamemnon's sceptre, which even goes back to the gods, radiates regal authority (*Il.* 2.100-9). However, this genealogy is unfolded in the context of the *Peira*, where Agamemnon cuts a sorry figure.[75] First, Agamemnon falsely believes that he will take Troy on the coming day, an illusion that is highlighted when an intended lie, i.e. the claim that Zeus has deceived him, reveals the truth about the present situation. Second, his scheming does not succeed. If it were not for Odysseus' courageous intervention, the army would have retreated from Troy.

The narrator underscores the contrast between Agamemnon's failure and the authority of the sceptre by directly linking the genealogy of the sceptre to Agamemnon's deceitful speech, *Il.* 2.107-9:

[71] *Cf.* Grethlein (2006a) 112-14.

[72] The commentators have not failed to note that Autolykos is Odysseus' grandfather and argue that this relation is not mentioned explicitly as it might detract from Odysseus' appearance, *cf.* Stanford (1954) 11; Hainsworth ad 10.267. However, Odysseus' adventure in the *Doloneia* agrees with Autolykos' heritage.

[73] For the night as a frame for the *Doloneia's* action, see Klingner (1940) 360-2.

[74] On Odysseus as a trickster in the *Doloneia*, see Stanford (1954) 12-13; 15, who notes that this side of Odysseus' personality comes to the fore only twice in the *Iliad*: when he tricks Dolon and when he wrestles with Ajax. For Odysseus as a trickster in general, *cf.* Stanford (1954) 8-24. See also, more recently, Buchan (2004).

[75] For the *Peira*, see Kullmann (1955); Griffin (1980) 9-10; McGlew (1989); Schmidt (2002).

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αὐτὰρ ὃ αὖτε Θυέστ' Ἀγαμέμνονι λεῖπε φορῆναι,
πολλῆισιν νήσοισι καὶ Ἄργεϊ παντὶ ἀνάσσειν.
τῶι ὅ γ' ἐρεισάμενος ἔπε' Ἀργείοισι μετηύδα.

And Thyestes left it in turn to Agamemnon to carry
and to be lord of many islands and over all Argos.
Leaning upon this sceptre he spoke and addressed the Argives.

This does not so much undermine the authority of the sceptre, but rather the solemn tradition embodied by the staff throws into relief the deception of Agamemnon and his failure to live up to the standards of his ancestors.[76] Significantly, Odysseus re-establishes the sceptre when he uses it to discipline the masses and also points out explicitly its authority.[77]

Let us turn to another example. After Hektor has killed Patroklos, he strips off his armour and puts it on himself, *Il.* 17.194-7:

...ὃ δ' ἄμβροτα τεύχεα δῦνεν
Πηλείδεω Ἀχιλῆος, ἃ οἱ θεοὶ οὐρανίωνες
πατρὶ φίλωι ἔπορον, ὃ δ' ἄρα ὧι παιδὶ ὄπασσεν
γηράς· ἀλλ' οὐχ υἱὸς ἐν ἔντεσι πατρὸς ἐγήρα.

…and himself put on that armour immortal
of Peleid Achilleus, which the Uranian gods had given
to his loved father; and he in turn grown old had given it
to his son; but a son who never grew old in his father's armour.

The divine origin of the weapons, which are called ἄμβροτα, contrasts with Achilles' mortality. This tension is then extended to Hektor in *Il.* 17.201-8 who, Zeus points out, has no idea how close he is to his own death. Achilles himself toys with a similar contrast in *Il.* 18.82-90:

...τεύχεα δ' Ἕκτωρ
δηιώσας ἀπέδυσε πελώρια, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι,
καλά· τὰ μὲν Πηλῆϊ θεοὶ δόσαν ἀγλαὰ δῶρα
ἤματι τῶι, ὅτε σὲ βροτοῦ ἀνέρος ἔμβαλον εὐνῆι.
αἴθ' ὄφελες σὺ μὲν αὖθι μετ' ἀθανάτηις ἁλίηισιν
ναίειν, Πηλεὺς δὲ θνητὴν ἀγαγέσθαι ἄκοιτιν·
νῦν δ' ἵνα καὶ σοὶ πένθος ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μυρίον εἴη
παιδὸς ἀποφθιμένοιο, τὸν οὐχ ὑποδέξεαι αὖτις
οἴκαδε νοστήσαντ'...

…and Hektor, who killed him,
has stripped away that gigantic armour, a wonder to look on
and splendid, which the gods gave Peleus, a glorious present,
on that day they drove you to the marriage bed of a mortal.
I wish you had gone on living then with the other goddesses
of the sea, and that Peleus had married some mortal woman.
As it is, there must be in your heart numberless sorrows
for your son's death, since you can never again receive him
home again to his country…

[76] The fact that Agamemnon leans on the sceptre could also be interpreted in another way: Agamemnon who is a rather weak leader has to lean upon the traditional authority embodied by the sceptre.

[77] The contrast between Agamemnon's and Odysseus' uses of the sceptre is underlined by the similarity of *Il.* 2.46-7: εἵλετο δὲ σκῆπτρον πατρώϊον, ἄφθιτον αἰεί· / σὺν τῶι ἔβη κατὰ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων and *Il.* 2.186-7: δέξατό οἱ σκῆπτρον πατρώϊον, ἄφθιτον αἰεί· / σὺν τῶι ἔβη κατὰ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων. In *Il.* 2.198-9, Odysseus takes the sceptre to discipline the masses. Eventually, in *Il.* 2.204-6 he emphasizes its authority: οὐκ

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Achilles juxtaposes the divine origin of his armour with his own impending death. Moreover, the weapons remind him of his parents' wedding and lead him to complain about the pairing of gods and humans. At the same time, the memory of his parents' wedding contrasts with the present situation when the fruit of the liaison, which was sanctified in the wedding, is about to die.

Another passage can be adduced to show that this interpretation is not too fanciful. In *Iliad* 22, Andromache rushes to a tower to see Achilles mutilating the corpse of her husband. When she faints, her head-dress falls down, *Il.* 22.468-72:

> τῆλε δ' ἀπὸ κρατὸς βάλε δέσματα σιγαλόεντα,
> ἄμπυκα κεκρύφαλόν τε ἰδὲ πλεκτὴν ἀναδέσμην
> κρήδεμνόν θ', ὅ ῥά οἱ δῶκε χρυσῆ Ἀφροδίτη
> ἤματι τῶι, ὅτε μιν κορυθαιόλος ἠγάγεθ' Ἕκτωρ
> ἐκ δόμου Ἠετίωνος, ἐπεὶ πόρε μυρία ἕδνα.
>
> And she threw far off from her head the shining gear that ordered her headdress,
> the diadem and the cap, and the holding-band woven together,
> and the circlet, which Aphrodite the golden once had given her
> on that day when Hektor of the shining helmet led her forth
> from the house of Eetion, and gave numberless gifts to win her.

As the scholion bT ad *Il.* 22.468-70 already points out, this reference to earlier happiness highlights the present disaster. As with *Il.* 18.82-90, a material object evokes the happy memory of a wedding that contrasts with the present situation.

The examples that I have discussed so far are from the *Iliad* which is richer in biographies of things, but in the *Odyssey* too there are objects whose past closely interacts with the present. One such case is when Odysseus reports his landing on the island of the Cyclopes. He mentions the wine that he took with him, already hinting at its future relevance (*Od.* 9.213-15), which is to make Polyphemos drunk so that he and his comrades can blind him. Odysseus goes off on a rather long digression about this wine, which he received from Maron, who provided him with ample gifts (*Od.* 9.196-211). Maron's hospitality not only strongly contrasts with Polyphemos' uncivilized reception of Odysseus and his comrades, but also the host's gift ironically plays an important role in what can be understood as the punishment for breaking the laws of hospitality.

Scholars have noted that there is a similar irony regarding Odysseus' bow. Again, a gift from a guest-friend plays a crucial role in the punishment of those who neglect the laws of hospitality.[78] However, the correspondence between the biography of the bow and the *Odyssey*'s plot has more facets. In a circular digression,[79] the narrator reveals that Odysseus and Iphitos exchanged gifts when they met in the house of Ortilochos. They could not, however, further develop their guest-friendship, for Herakles received Iphitos as a guest-friend and killed him in order to get his horses (*Od.* 21.11-41).[80] On the one hand the guest-friendship between Odysseus and Iphitos contrasts with the Suitors' consumption of Odysseus' goods,[81] on the other, Herakles resembles the Suitors at least in so far as they both break the laws of hospitality.[82] At the same time, the murder of Iphitos parallels the impending murder of the Suitors. This parallel, however, throws into relief a crucial difference: while Herakles murders a host, Odysseus kills those who have breached the

ἀγαθὴ πολυκοιρανίη· εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω, / εἷς βασιλεύς, ὧι δῶκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω, / σκῆπτρόν τ' ἠδὲ θέμιστας ἵνά σφισι βουλεύησιν. However, West deletes 206 in his edition.

[78] *Cf.* Reece (1993) 174-5; de Jong ad *Il.* 21.11-41. See also Reece (1993) 173-8 on the Suitors' disregard for hospitality.

[79] On the structure, see Gaisser (1969) 21-3.

[80] On the negative image of Herakles in this context, see Clay (1983) 91.

[81] The repetition of ἀρχή in *Il.* 21.4 and 35 marks the contrast between the guest-friendship and the punishment of the Suitors for their transgression.

[82] *Cf.* Galinsky (1972) 12; de Jong ad 21.11-41.

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rules of hospitality in his house. Taken together, the contrasts and parallels between the past and the present provide a rather interesting juxtaposition of Odysseus and Herakles.[83]

It is tempting to search for further correspondences between the history of the bow and the plot in the *Odyssey*. According to later accounts, Eurytos promised his daughter, Iole, to anyone who could surpass him in arrow-shooting. When Herakles defeated him, but was denied Iole, he sacked Oichalie and killed Eurytos together with his sons. There is no indication that the Homeric bards and their audiences were familiar with this story,[84] but if they were, the bow would evoke an interesting parallel to the bow contest in *Odyssey* 21. This, however, must remain speculation.

It is well known that analepses in the epics often shed light on the main plot in manifold ways, and Griffin has brought the significance of material objects in Homer to our attention,[85] but it is still noteworthy how often flashbacks, which enrich the epic narrative, are presented through the biographies of goods.

IV. READING THE 'ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE PAST'

In the previous sections, I have tried to apply the approach of the 'archaeology of the past' to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. It has emerged that the past in the Homeric epics has a strong material side. Things with and without a commemorative function hold memories of the past: tombs, walls and commodities give temporal depth to the plot. Furthermore, this epic 'archaeology of the past' has narrative and meta-poetic significance: the past evoked by material goods often closely interacts with the plot, and the epic claim to preserve κλέος ἄφθιτον is highlighted by the contrast of the semiotic processes which undermine the significance of material relics. No striking differences between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* could be noted, but, as the Appendix shows, the *Iliad* is richer in old objects with a history. Accordingly, the book with the most biographies of things in the *Odyssey* is book 4, which centres on the Iliadic figure of Menelaos. On the other hand, the *Odyssey* contains more reflections on the memory that material objects are expected to preserve for the future, an observation that ties in well with the *Odyssey's* concern with *kleos*.[86]

It is now time to suggest that the Homeric epics also provide precious evidence for the 'archaeology of the past'. Since most investigations focus on past and illiterate cultures, it is rather difficult to prove in what way material relics evoked the past. Even a pioneer such as Cornelius Holtorf concedes that the ground on which many reconstructions are based is shaky: 'In welchem Umfang die damaligen Menschen ein Bewußtsein ihrer Vergangenheit hatten und ihnen … klar war, daß derartige Objekte von Menschen viel früherer Generationen geschaffen worden waren, ist endgültig nicht zu klären'.[87]

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, on the other hand, are based on oral traditions, and their references to material goods can therefore help us to elucidate the hermeneutics of relics in an oral culture. Of course, we cannot draw definite conclusions, for, after all, the Homeric epics are not simply a mirror, but are poetic constructions which refract reality in complex ways. Even if they do shed new light on memory in archaic Greece, this need not apply to other oral cultures. And yet I believe that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* allow some tentative suggestions for both the 'archaeology of the past' in general and for archaic Greece in particular.

Essentially, my reading corroborates the 'archaeology of the past' and shows that material goods of different kinds can evoke the past. More specifically, it elucidates two aspects that have

[83] The scholion ad *Od.* 21.22 and Eusth. 1899.38 point out that Homer did not know Iole. *Cf.* Galinsky (1972) 11-12; Clay (1983) 93-6. See Davies (1991) xxii-xxxvi for a survey of the mythical tradition.

[84] *Cf.* Clay (1983) 92 n. 70. See, however, Krischer (1992) who takes it for granted that the poet of the *Odyssey* knew the story of Eurytos and argues that he modelled the contest in book 21 after it.

[85] Griffin (1980) 1-49.

[86] See, for example, Macleod (1983) and Segal (1983).

[87] Holtorf (2005) 102.

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been neglected so far. Archaeologists and pre-historians tend to focus on the past as a tool used in power struggles. My examination confirms this aspect: as the sceptre shows, claims to authority are grounded on traditions. However, there is another point that often goes unnoticed, perhaps owing to the focus on social dynamics. There are very subtle reflections on the ambiguity of signs in the epics. Obviously, we have to take into account that already in oral cultures there was an epistemological side to the 'archaeology of the past'. Before material relics can be made the object of social struggle, they must be interpreted. Or, better yet, since both operations go hand in hand, the semantic capital of the past is strongly intertwined with epistemological considerations.

Second, we have seen that a wide range of objects can serve as media for memory, but only particular items have this significance. For example, Poseidon fears that his own wall will sink into oblivion because the new fortification built by the Greeks will outshine it. Moreover a wide array of commodities calls up memories, but all of them are very precious items. This should alert the 'archaeology of the past' to the fact that not every material relic bore memories. For example, it is doubtful that the remains of simple buildings prompted people to reflect in depth on the past.

Reading the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* from the angle of the 'archaeology of the past' can also inspire us to reflect on the role of memory in archaic Greece in a new way. It is well known that in the eighth and seventh centuries, old tombs, often of Mycenean origin, were reused and that old relics, like Mycenean gems, attracted attention.[88] It has always been taken for granted that archaic Greeks associated these items with a time long before them. However, another possibility emerges if we see the relation of the heroes' present to their past as an analogy for the relationship between the narrator's present and the heroic age.

Such a transfer is prompted by a parallel: in the *Iliad*, some relics such as Peleus' spear and Nestor's cup are too heavy to be used in the present. Similarly, the narrator points out four times that heroes are able to lift stones heavier than any man in the present would be able to lift. Here, the relationship between the present of the narrator and the heroic age mirrors the relation between the heroes' present and their past. If we pursue this comparison, then it appears possible that the Greeks did not see the relics as signs of a distant age, but rather attributed them to a recent past, which was felt to be different from the present and at the same time was linked to it by short genealogical ties.

Can we extend this suggestion further and apply it to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*? Is it possible that Greeks in the archaic age thought of the Trojan War as a fairly recent event?[89] This thesis would be supported by the plausible suggestion that the ruins inspired the epic bards. Moreover, the epics show that the very recent past could be seen as rather different from the present,[90] and anthropological studies provide parallels for a 'telescoping' effect that bridges the 'floating gap' so that mythical events directly precede the historical events in oral traditions.[91] However, it is striking that in the Homeric epics the gap between the Trojan War and the present of the narrator is never bridged. There is only the direct juxtaposition of the heroes and men as they are today and, perhaps, the prolepsis of the destruction of the wall in *Il.* 12.3-33, which can be read as an

[88] For the reuse of old tombs, see Antonaccio (1995) and the literature in (1994) 403 n. 73. For old gems in tombs, see Boardman (1970) 107; for old finds in the tombs at Eleusis, see Overbeck (1980) 89-90. See also Boardman (2002) 81-2. However, see Antonaccio's qualification (1994) 404: 'The findspots of relics, when recorded, do not include actual Bronze Age tombs'.

[89] This suggestion is anticipated by Rohde's impression (1898) 103 that the present time of the poet directly follows the heroic age. However, Mazarakis Ainias (1999) 34 voices the *communis opinio* when he emphasizes the distance which the Greeks felt between themselves and the epic heroes. Most suggestions about the dating of the Trojan War in Archaic Greece are based on the five-ages myth in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, where the heroes are the race living before the author's time (160). For example, Antonaccio (1994) 407 concludes her analysis: 'If located in terms of absolute chronology, the heroes lived at the cusp of the historical Iron Age'. Whitley (1994) 222 suggests that Bronze Age graves were identified with Hesiod's silver race. For setting the date of the Trojan War in the classical age see Burkert (1995).

[90] *Cf.* Grethlein (2006a) 55-8.

[91] On 'telescoping' in oral traditions, see, for example, Henige (1974) 27-38; on the 'floating gap' see Vansina (1985) 23-4; 168-9.

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explanation for why there are no relics left in the present. Otherwise, the heroic past unfolds as a past *sui generis*. This clearly undermines the suggestion that archaic Greeks would have located the Trojan War in the recent past. On the other hand, it could be argued that, as with local cults, the epics suppress any references to the present in order to establish a panhellenic appeal. It is also likely that aristocrats tried to establish links with the heroic past through genealogies.[92] No matter how we turn it, the reflection on where in time archaic Greeks located the Mycenaean ruins and the Trojan War remains a 'Gedankenexperiment'; nevertheless, it opens up new possibilities in a discussion that has hitherto been centred on the positivist identification of text and ruin.

V. HEROIC HEIRLOOMS AND MODERN MUSEUMS

Let me conclude this article by looking beyond epic poetry and archaic Greece. The prominence of various material objects ranging from memorials to everyday goods as bearers of memory corresponds with an interest in old material goods in our own time. Nietzsche diagnosed that his age was 'infected with a consuming historical fever',[93] and since his days the efforts to preserve the past have steadily increased in the western world. There are, however, crucial differences between the commemorative function of material items in the epics and our contemporary obsession with memory. It is right that historical awareness does not depend on literacy, but it is equally important to note that the 'grip of the past' in archaic Greece was different from the modern 'historical fever'.

At first glance, the traditions that are inscribed in the material goods in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* may remind us of the current 'heritage crusade'.[94] In our age as well, material relics are more and more valued as testimonies to the past. And yet that is a rather different story. As Lowenthal points out, the concept of heritage has grown, moving 'from the elite and grand to the vernacular and everyday; from the remote to the recent; and from the material to the intangible'.[95] Although the objects in the Homeric poems are goods for everyday use, we could also note that they are special pieces, and while the memory evoked by them does not reach far back, already this fairly recent past is distanced from the present.

Even more important, the current 'heritage crusade' leads to 'musealisation' – objects are taken out of their original contexts, collected and assembled.[96] The Homeric goods, on the other hand, are still in use.[97] To put it bluntly, one could juxtapose the unbroken tradition in the epics with the contemporary interest in the past that is motivated by the breaks in traditions.[98] This difference seems not to be limited to Homeric evidence. There were, as for example the Lindian chronicle reveals, collections of material goods in the temples in ancient Greece.[99] However, they are rather different from modern museums, not least because of their sacral character.

The same difference between ancient and modern *memoria* is borne out by the virtual absence of restoration of buildings in archaic and classical Greece. While the modern interest in the past

[92] *Cf.* Morris (1986a) 129.

[93] Nietzsche (1954) (1873) I 210 (my own translation).

[94] Lowenthal (1996).

[95] Lowenthal (1996) 14.

[96] *Cf.* Preis (1990); Zacharias (1990); Huyssen (1995) 13-35.

[97] There is one exception in the *Odyssey*. Odysseus does not take Eurytos' bow to Troy, but leaves it as a μνῆμα ξείνοιο φίλοιο in his house. However, this should be distinguished from modern museums. The bow is an object with a particular significance for its owner. Moreover, it is used by Odysseus on Ithaca (*Od.* 21.41).

[98] Such a view is indebted to the thesis put forward by Ritter (1974) 105-40 and underlying Nora's concept of *lieux de mémoire* (1984-92), that the modern interest in the past is triggered by the acceleration of changes; thus, the loss of traditions creates the interest in the past. An interesting anthropological argument that parallels my suggestion is offered by Parmentier (1987) 12, who juxtaposes our tendency to put objects from the past 'in hermetically sealed environments – time capsules, archival vaults, guarded museums' with the use of old goods in Belau which 'are extensionally deployed in social action, and by encoding the layered course of historical change … make possible an intensional sense of cultural continuity through time'.

[99] Boardman (2002) 8 (*cf.* 27) speaks of 'museums in temples'. See also Pritchett (1979) 240-8 on the dedication of old weapons, some of them from the Trojan War.

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has initiated countless restoration programmes, a forthcoming study by Ortwin Dally[100] shows that there are only a few signs of deliberate restoration before the Hellenistic Age, and even then buildings were restored not so much as testimonies to the past as to secure the future fame of prominent individuals.

The boom in museums as well as in restoration programmes is grounded in the interest in the past as specifically different from the present. As the comparisons of the heroes of the Trojan War with previous heroes and present men show, the epics also envisage past and present as different from one another, but the difference is rather in quantity than in quality. Most heroes may be too weak to wield ancient weapons, but those who have the strength use them instead of storing them as testimonies to the past. It seems that throughout Greek antiquity, the notion of a past that is radically different from the present has little prominence.[101] Even Thucydides, hailed as the father of critical historiography, directly juxtaposes the Peloponnesian War with the Trojan War in order to reconstruct the latter, implicitly assuming that the character and laws of warfare have not changed much.[102] It is not until the axial age around 1800 AD that the heightened awareness of developments makes the view of the past as a foreign country the dominating concept.[103] Only then does the antiquarianism emerge which made Nietzsche grumble, 'There is a degree of sleeplessness, of ruminating, of historical awareness by which the living is harmed and perishes, be it a man, a people or a culture'.[104]

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[100] See the chapter 'Vorstufen der Denkmalpflege' in Dally (forthcoming). On restoration in ancient Greece, see also Buchert (2000).

[101] This thesis may be supported by archaeological evidence. Hainsworth (1987) 211 notes: 'Apart from the use of bronze (and some details about dress pins and the length of chitons) most Greeks seem to have thought that the material culture of their ancestors was much like their own. The vase painters always depicted Homeric heroes in "modern" dress and gear'. In an unpublished paper, Giuliani uses the depiction of shields to argue that there is no distinction between past and contemporary events in vase paintings.

[102] See, for example, Kallet (2001) 97-115.

[103] On this development, see Koselleck (1975); (1979). For a new approach to 'axial ages', see Arnason et al. (2005). Let me stress that I do not argue that the Greeks had not 'discovered' the idea of development yet, but, whereas around 1800 AD developmental concepts started to dominate historical reconstructions, they did not play a major role in ancient Greece. For a juxtaposition of modern notions of history with the idea of history that underlies the *Iliad*, see Grethlein (2006a) 97-105.

[104] Nietzsche (1954) (1873) I 213 (my own translation).

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VI. APPENDIX: OLD OBJECTS IN THE *ILIAD* AND THE *ODYSSEY*

Passages which are not on old objects but reflect on the commemorative function of objects in the future are indented. Analepses that refer only to the production of an item are not listed.

Iliad

1.234-9: Achilles on sceptre that was cut from tree
2.100-9: narrator on sceptre that was made by Hephaistos and passed on from Zeus to Hermes to Pelops to Atreus to Thyestes to Agamemnon (cf. 2.186)
2.603-4: narrator on tomb of Aipytos
2.792-3: narrator on tomb of Aisyetes
2.811-14: narrator on tomb of Myrine
4.174-82: Agamemnon on tomb of Menelaos (hypothetically)
5.265-72: Diomedes on horses of Aineas, descending from the horses that Zeus gave to Tros
6. 219: Diomedes on warrior belt that Oineus gave to Bellerophontes
6.220-1: Diomedes on cup in his home that Bellerophontes gave to Oineus
6.289-92: narrator on clothes that Alexander brought from Sidonia
7.87-91: Hektor on tomb of his opponent (hypothetically)
7.137-50: Nestor on club that Ereuthalion received from Lykurgos who had taken it from Areithoos
7.299-302: Hektor on gifts that will testify to his duel with Aias
7.451-3: Poseidon on the future glory of the new wall of the Greeks
9.186-9: narrator on Achilles' lyre that he took from Eetion
10.261-70: narrator on Meriones' helmet that went from Amyntor to Autolykos to Amphidamas to Molos to Meriones
10.414-16: Dolon on tomb of Ilos
11.19-28: narrator on Agamemnon's armour that he received from Kinyras
11.166-8: narrator on tomb of Ilos
11.371-2: narrator on tomb of Ilos
11.632-7: narrator on Nestor's cup
12.9-33: narrator on the future of the Greeks' wall
15.529-33: narrator on armour of Meges which his father Phyleus received from Euphetes
16.140-4: narrator on spear of Achilles which Peleus received from Cheiron
16.148-54: narrator on horses of Achilles two of which stem from Zephyros and Podarges and one of which Achilles took from Eetion
16.866-7: narrator on divine horses of Achilles that the gods gave to Peleus
17.194-7: narrator on weapons of Achilles that the gods gave to Peleus
17.443-4: Zeus on horses of Achilles that the gods gave to Peleus
18.84-5: Achilles on his weapons that the gods gave to Peleus for a wedding present
19.387-91: narrator on spear of Achilles that Peleus received from Cheiron
20.144-8: narrator on the wall that the Trojans and Athene built for Poseidon
21.403-6: narrator on stone that was set up as a *horos*
21.446-7: Poseidon on wall that he and Apollo built
22.147-56: narrator on fountains that were used for laundry in peace
22.322-3: narrator on armour of Hektor that he took from Patroklos
22.470-2: narrator on Andromache's headwear that she received as a wedding gift from Aphrodite
23.276-8: Achilles on his horses that the gods gave to Peleus
23.291-2: narrator on horses of Diomedes that he took from Aineas
23.294-8: narrator on horses of Menelaos, one of which belongs to Agamemnon who received it from Echepolos
23.326-32: Nestor on *sêma* in chariot race
23.560-2: Achilles on armour that he took from Asteropaios
23.616-20: Achilles on bowl as prize for Nestor so that he will remember the funeral games
23.741-7: narrator on *kratêr* that Phoinicians gave to Thoas and that Euneos gave to Patroklos for Lykaon
23.807-8: Achilles on sword that he took from Asteropaios
23.826-9: narrator on discus that belonged to Eetion
24.234-5: narrator on cup that Priam received from Thracians
24.277-8: narrator on mules that Priam received from Mysians
24.349: narrator on tomb of Ilos

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Odyssey

1.239-41 (=14.369-71) Telemachos (Eumaios) on tomb that Odysseus would have received had he died at Troy
3.406-10: narrator on seat on which Neleus already sat
4.81-91: Menelaos on the origin of his goods
4.125-32: narrator on basket that Helen received from Alkandre and on bathing-tubs, tripods and gold that Menelaos received from Polybos
4.227-32: narrator on drugs which Helen received from Polydamna
4.590-2: Menelaos on cup that he is giving to Telemachos so that he will remember him
4.613-19 (=15.113-19): Menelaos on *kratêr* that was made by Hephaistos and that he received from Phaidimos
5.308-12: Odysseus on *kleos* that he would have received through funeral goods if he had died at Troy
8.430-2: Alkinous on cup that he is giving to Odysseus so that he will remember him
9.196-215: Odysseus as narrator on the wine that he received from Maron with other guest gifts
11.75-6: ghost of Elpenor asking Odysseus to erect him a tomb so that he will be remembered
15.51-5: Peisistratos on gifts from Menelaos and the memory created by gifts
15.125-8: Helen on *peplos* for future bride of Telemachos as memory of Helen
21.11-41: narrator on bow which Odysseus received from Iphitos
22.184-5: narrator on shield that belonged to Laertios
23.184-205: Odysseus on his bed (see also 19.392-466: narrator on scar of Odysseus)
24.32-4: ghost of Achilles on tomb that Agamemnon would have received had he died at Troy
24.73-5: ghost of Agamemnon on *amphora* for Achilles' bones that was made by Hephaistos and given to Thetis by Dionysos
24.80-4: ghost of Agamemnon on tomb of Achilles, Patroklos and Antilochos as memorial

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