## II GENRE

Is early hexameter poetry a single genre? Would it be useful to refer to the entire corpus as 'epic'?[1] The answer depends on context. The word 'epic' poses problems. This becomes a little clearer if we consider the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition:

> **A.** *adj.* **1.** Pertaining to that species of poetical composition (see EPOS *n.*), represented typically by the Iliad and Odyssey, which celebrates in the form of a continuous narrative the achievements of one or more heroic personages of history or tradition.[2]

Question: what defines Homeric epic as 'epic'? Answer: the fact that it is like Homer. This is a circular definition. That does not make it a bad one; in fact it is a stunningly accurate representation of how the word gets used. But, if we are looking at other poems, it makes no sense to start out with the assumption that they are peripheral.

Is Parmenides' poem somehow less 'hexameterish' than the *Iliad*? Parmenides knew perfectly well how to string six dactyls together. But his poem is less traditional, and for many readers that alone makes it less 'epic'.[3] Quite apart from terminology, it is dangerous to extrapolate from Homer. Ancient literary critics such as Aristotle, Horace, and Proclus draw *contrasts* between Homer and other heroic epics more often than not.[4] Inevitably the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* will be a yardstick in some ways, but we cannot take Homer as the sole archetype for all Archaic epic: it is dangerous to start with Homer and only afterwards transfer our findings to other poems.[5] What is characteristic of Homer is not necessarily characteristic of hexameter poetry taken as a whole.

There are different groups and types of hexameter poetry, but no *firm* boundaries between them, no tidy categories without overlaps. So we have two basic approaches open to us. One is *top-down*: identifying a given poem or idea as archetypal for each 'sub-genre', as the *OED*

[1] Hainsworth 1991: 1–10 gives a superb and undogmatic overview of the various meanings of the word 'epic'; see also Hutchinson 2013: 20–1 on 'hexameters' as a superordinate genre.

[2] Oxford University Press, 2015.

[3] Cf. Arist. *Poet.* 1447b.17–20, treating Empedocles as a φυσιολόγος rather than a ποιητής because his poetry is not imitative.

[4] See pp. 26–7 above.

[5] Cf. Martin 2005, arguing that the *Shield* is more typical of early hexameter poetry than Homer.

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definition does. The other is *bottom-up*: cataloguing the constitutive elements of hexameter poetry. Both have their place. The top-down approach is useful for discussing big ideas. It tends to result in sharp boundaries between sub-genres, since it nudges us towards ignoring grey areas (intermediate types of poetry mess up the nice clean archetypes). The bottom-up approach relates more to compositional techniques and to the cues that ancient audiences used to engage with the poems; it tends to blur different sub-genres together, since it emphasizes a common pool of traditional conventions and stylistic elements.[6]

We have already considered the first of these in the Introduction, where we looked at ancient distinctions between 'Homeric' and 'Hesiodic' poetry as cultural property. In this chapter, we shall take the bottom-up approach: we shall catalogue some common ingredients of hexameter poetry. Tropes that are characteristic of Homer will only be cited if they also appear outside Homer.

## 1. Large-scale: overarching topics and themes

The following are broad themes that pervade entire poems. They cannot easily be analysed in terms of a formal sequence of motifs; if they have structural constraints, they are not strict ones. It is entirely reasonable to treat these themes as genres in their own right. Equally, they can be regarded as 'sub-genres', with hexameter as a superordinate genre.

### *(a) Heroic narrative*

Stories of legendary heroic deeds are the theme most typically associated with 'epic'. This sub-genre includes the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Shield*, and many fragmentary exemplars: the Epic Cycle; the Theban epics; various Heracles epics, including the *Capture of Oichalia*, and epics by Panyassis, Pisander, and perhaps Cinaethon; perhaps multiple Theseids;[7] and probably the *Minyas*, *Wedding of Ceyx*, *Descent of Peirithous*, and *Aegimius*. Ancient writers describe the *Naupactia* as a genealogical poem 'about women', but most surviving fragments relate

[6] For an exemplar of the bottom-up approach see Thalmann 1984; for the top-down approach, Ford 1992 (on Homer), 1997: 399–408 (more general).

[7] Arist. *Poet*. 1451a.20 appears to refer to multiple Theseids, but only two extant fragments are linked to the title.

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to an *Argonautica* narrative.[8] Choerilus' historical epic the *Persica* should also be shelved in this sub-genre.

Aristotle considered the character of heroic narrative to be basically akin to that of tragedy. Some modern literary criticism has followed him in this, seeing in Homer an underlying seriousness, or sense of inexorability, or tragic irony.[9] But many other modern critics have argued that heroic narrative is a descendant of a much older tradition of 'praise poetry', a form of poetry found in diverse cultures, which typically celebrates a living individual or a god.[10] In this view, the true central theme and purpose of heroic narrative is *kleos*, 'fame' or 'renown';[11] and poetry is not just a celebration of a hero's reputation but also a vehicle for reports of the hero, *creating* the hero's reputation. This is most famously illustrated by two Homeric scenes where Achilles (a non-professional singer) and Demodocus (a professional) sing of the *klea andrōn*, the 'glories of men'; the phrase also gets used of one story that is spoken, not sung;[12] and several studies have attached great importance to the use of *kleos* in poetic phrases that may be traceable back to Indo-European roots.[13] However, this interpretation does not always transfer easily to heroic narratives outside Homer. A poem such as the *Shield* is, of course, a vehicle for its hero's reputation in a trivial sense, and the *Theogony* and the *Hymns* are sung in praise of gods and so serve as *kleos*, bringing reports about the divine realm to mortal audiences.[14] But, in Homer, *kleos* is closely intertwined with tragic themes such as mortality, personal identity, and tension between the hero and a surrounding community. That kind of intertwining is not often apparent elsewhere.

Epic poets of the Hellenistic and later ages imitated many Homeric formal elements (invocations to a Muse, similes, combat scenes, and sacrifice scenes), but in the Archaic period there is no reason to assume that any of these was actually obligatory. The most consistent formal

[8] *Argonautica* narrative: frs. 3–9. Genealogical poem 'about women': test. and fr. 11.

[9] Arist. *Poet.* 1449b. See also Kirk 1962: 372–85; Redfield 1975; Griffin 1980; R. Rutherford 1982.

[10] See M. L. West 2007: 63–8, 396–410 on Indo-European praise poetry and heroic narrative.

[11] Nagy 1979: 16–17; Thalmann 1984: 124–31. For contrary views see Ford 1992: 59–67; Olson 1995: 1–23.

[12] *Il.* 9.189–91 (Achilles); *Od.* 8.72–5 (Demodocus); *Il.* 9.524–5 (Phoenix's spoken story of Meleager).

[13] Nagy 1974: 229–65; Watkins 1995: 173–8; Finkelberg 2007. Nagy 1990: 146–52 argues that Homeric epic (κλέος-poetry) and Pindar's epinician verse (αἶνος-poetry) are cognate genres, both descended distantly from praise poetry.

[14] Thus Nagy 1979: 94–7 (on *Theog.*), 181–7 (on *Hymn. Hom. Dem.*).

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feature is the use of third-person narrative, interspersed with direct quotation when characters speak.[15] Only rarely does a narrator make his presence felt in the story, speaking with his own voice, or blurring the distinction between his own voice and that of a character.[16] In the case of Homer, this creates an effect of distance which has often led readers to perceive the narrative as *naïf*, impersonal, and unmediated, even if that *naïveté* is self-conscious and studied.[17] Numerous studies in the last few decades have qualified this interpretation, showing that Archaic poets selected and adopted identifiable personas.[18] Homer, in particular, actively exercises a finely nuanced control over the way in which scenes develop;[19] but it is reasonable to question whether all heroic poets demonstrated the same degree of finesse, or in the same way.

### *(b) Wisdom poetry*

In wisdom poetry a speaker directly imparts insights, instructions, or knowledge, usually to an addressee who is clearly identified. When discussed with a perspective looking to later Greco-Roman poetry such as Aratus or Virgil's *Georgics*, it is more often known as 'didactic poetry'; 'wisdom poetry' looks backwards, to a cross-cultural backdrop of many Near Eastern parallels.[20] Our main exemplar is the Hesiodic *Works and Days*. Several lost Hesiodic poems also fall into this category: the *Precepts of Chiron*, the *Great Works*, the *Bird Omens* (or *Ornithomancy*), and, focusing more on the natural world, the *Astronomy*. When elements of wisdom poetry pop up in other genres, they tend to be in the form of parables and aphorisms (on which see below).

It seems that, in the sixth century, in the hands of poet-philosophers such as Solon and Theognis, moral and political teaching gradually

[15] The seminal analysis is Pl. *Resp*. iii.392c–394c; see also Arist. *Poet*. 1448a.19–29, 1448b.34–8, 1460a.5–11.

[16] See especially S. Richardson 1990: 167–96 on 'self-consciousness' and fourth-wall-breaking in Homer (e.g. when the poet directly addresses a Muse, a character in the story, or the audience; comments on plot developments; etc.).

[17] Lewis 1942: 19–25; Auerbach 2003: 3–23; Ledbetter 2003: 9–39; Beecroft 2010: 61–105.

[18] See pp. vi–x on 'Homer' and 'Hesiod' as personas and their relationship to the narratorial voice.

[19] See especially De Jong 1987, 2001; Minchin 2001. De Jong 2006 argues (*contra* Ford 1992) that Homeric epic creates κλέος for the poet as well as for the heroes.

[20] M. L. West 1997: 306–33; I. Rutherford 2009: 14–19. On the reception of Hesiodic 'didactic poetry' see Hunter 2014: 40–122.

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shifted into elegiac metre. But hexameter remained the metre of choice for discussing the nature of the physical world, most notably for the pre-Socratic poets Parmenides and Empedocles. Xenophanes straddled both genres.[21] Both the elegiac and hexameter offshoots retained the poetic conceit of addressing the poem to a recipient or student. This recipient (in narratological terms, an 'implied narratee') acts as a proxy for the poem's actual (or 'external') audience, allowing them to receive the teachings at the same time as the character in the poem.[22] Thus the *Works and Days* is addressed to Perses, and the *Precepts of Chiron* to Achilles; Theognis instructs his boy beloved Cyrnus; Empedocles addresses *On Nature* to Pausanias (fr. B 1), and another fragment addresses the people of Acragas (fr. B 112). The Derveni *Theogony*, though primarily a cosmogonic poem, has Night instructing Zeus, declaring oracles in her cave (fr. 6 Bernabé). Parmenides adapts this motif from the Hesiodic *Theogony* but reverses the relationship: Hesiod was visited by the Muses and instructed in poetry (*Theog*. 22–34), but Parmenides travels beyond the gate of Day and Night to receive teachings from an unnamed goddess (fr. B 1).

Few historians of ancient philosophy make the mistake of treating Hesiod as something wholly separate from the pre-Socratics. But students of Hesiod sometimes do. Certainly the later philosopher-poets focus more consistently on applying reason to the world around them; but, from a purely poetic perspective, philosophical and literary verse draw on the same tradition. Ancient critics felt the same way. Heracleitus (fr. B 40) categorizes Hesiod as a philosopher along with Pythagoras, Xenophanes, and Hecataeus; and Plato interprets earlier poets as using mythology to represent natural forces, even to the extent of describing Homer, Hesiod, and Simonides as proto-sophists.[23]

### *(c) Cosmogony*

Cosmogonic poetry tells of the origins of the universe, of the establishment of the present cosmic order, and of how the gods use the threat of

[21] M. L. West 1978: 22–5 presents a more detailed overview of Archaic Greek wisdom poetry (but omitting the pre-Socratics).

[22] This can be challenged in specific cases: for example, Schmidt 1986 sees the Perses of the *Works and Days* as a proxy for the kings whom Hesiod criticizes.

[23] For poets as proto-sophists see Pl. *Prt*. 316d. Homer uses divinities to represent natural forces: e.g. *Theaet*. 152e.

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violence to maintain that order. In this sub-genre, parallels from the Near East are especially close: the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, the Ugaritic Baal cycle, and the Hurro-Hittite poems about Kumarbi.[24]

In the Greek tradition, regularly recurring themes include the birth and genealogy of the gods (that is, 'theogony' proper);[25] the apportioning of divine prerogatives; and various battles between gods or against demonic powers so as to establish a stable divine order. Especially prominent are the battles against the monster Typhoeus (or Typhaon) and the Titans (the Titanomachy).

Our main exemplar is the Hesiodic *Theogony*. We have fragments of various other theogonies, usually grouped as 'Orphic' poems: the theogonies of Musaeus and Epimenides, and the Derveni and Eudemian theogonies. These are framed around the Near Eastern succession myth as strongly as Hesiod's, though they are very different in both style and tenets. We also know of various Titanomachies, especially the one attributed to Eumelus. Cosmogonic elements also appear in narrative digressions in the *Works and Days*;[26] the major *Hymns*;[27] and many allusions and echoes throughout Homer. In the *Hymn to Hermes* 417–33, the second ever performance of kitharoidic poetry is a theogony sung by Hermes. And Empedocles' poetry is at least as closely attached to this category as to wisdom literature: he is deeply concerned with the origin and generation of natural forces, often personified, especially Love and Strife; one fragment (B 123) rattles off a list of 'Titans' (Birth, Death, Sleep, etc.) that could easily sit in a theogony.

It has been alleged that Homeric epic has no interest in cosmogony.[28] In fact, the *Iliad* is pervasively flavoured with cosmogonic elements, especially in those parts of the story set on Olympus. A few passages refer to the birth of the gods or apportionment of divine prerogatives;[29] others refer to divine battles and rebellions, including the battle with Typhoeus;[30] and the scenes on Olympus contain frequent reminders

[24] See further M. L. West 1997: 276–305; I. Rutherford 2009: 9–14, 22–35.

[25] Ziegler, in Roscher 1884–1937: v.1469–1554, gives the most detailed account of early Greek theogonic literature, including prose sources.

[26] The births of the Strifes, *WD* 11–26; Prometheus and Pandora, 47–105; the Myth of the Races, 106–201.

[27] See especially Clay 1989 on the major *Hymns*' preoccupation with the establishment of a stable divine order.

[28] Lane Fox 2008: 350.

[29] *Il.* 14.200–4 (cf. 14.246 and 14.302), 15.187–99, 18.394–409.

[30] *Il.* 1.396–406, 2.781–3 (Typhoeomachy), 5.392–4. *Il.* 20.19–74 may echo a Titanomachy or Gigantomachy. See also *Od.* 11.305–20 and *Cat.* frs. 16–17 on the Aloeadae attempting to conquer Olympus.

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of Zeus's maintenance of the divine order by threat of violence, as in the Hesiodic *Theogony*.[31]

## 2. Medium-scale: sub-themes and major structural features

When smaller-scale features are repeated in more than one poem, scholars – especially specialists in Homer – are often tempted to regard one poem as consciously imitating the other. We have no way of ruling out this inference, but in general it is unwarranted, at least prior to the classical period. Elements in this section are best regarded as, not precisely formulaic, but regularized organizational tools that were potentially at any poet's command, whether oral or literate.

For this reason, structural patterns at the 'medium' scale are more obviously characterized by regular sequences of motifs. Attention to motif sequences requires two important caveats. First, formal features are never rigid, and many studies have shown how poets shuffle and adapt seemingly regular patterns in creative ways.[32] Second, there is no one correct way of dissecting such patterns.[33] As such, there is no way of assessing the predictive power of these patterns; they are poor tools for determining authorship or date, for example.

### *(a) Hymn or hymnic prelude*

Poets would regularly begin performances of hexameter poetry – of any kind – with a hymn to one or more gods. This is shown by the testimony of the *Hymn to Hermes*, Pindar, Thucydides, and pseudo-Plutarch,[34] as well as by the closing formulae in many of the *Hymns*, which refer to poems to be performed after the hymn. Pindar and Thucydides call this prelude a *prooimion*. In English it is best to avoid that term, because it creates confusion with the English word

[31] *Il.* 1.565–7, 1.580–1, 1.590–4, 8.7–27, 15.16–24, 15.178–86, 19.126–31. See also *Od.* 5.121–8.

[32] As a recent example see Kelly 2012 (on recognition scenes in *Odyssey* 23).

[33] See Hainsworth 1990: 250 on the *Odyssey*: 'In the most favourable circumstances, when a scene is of a very frequent kind…it is possible to discern the poet's units of composition. Closer analysis, however, is apt to lose its objective character…Analysis into themes, therefore, may legitimately vary from one critic to another.'

[34] *Hymn. Hom. Herm.* 429–30; Pind. *Nem.* 2.1–3; Thuc. 3.104.4; ps.-Plut. *De mus.* 1133c. Cf. *Od.* 8.499, Demodocus beginning his song 'from the god'; see Clay 2011: 238 for discussion.

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'proem', which has deep roots and is conventionally used for opening paragraphs even of modern epics.[35]

We find exemplars not only in the *Hymns* but also in the *Theogony* (a hymn, or rather a pair of hymns, to the Muses, 1–34 and 35–105); *Works and Days* 1–10 (to Zeus); and, in a modified form modelled on the *Theogony*, Parmenides fr. B 1. Hymnic preludes are depicted indirectly in *Odyssey* 8.499–500 (Demodocus' third song) and *Hymn to Hermes* 427–33 (Hermes' hymn-within-a-hymn to Mnemosyne, followed by a theogony). There are only three surviving examples of a hymn that is still attached to its subsequent poem: the two Hesiodic exemplars, and in elegiac verse Simonides' Plataea ode, frs. eleg. 10 and 11.1–20 (a hymn to Achilles).

As we saw in Chapter I, in the Homeric *Hymns* it is traditional to distinguish a group of longer hymns (numbers 1–5), of which the shortest is 293 lines, from the shorter hymns (numbers 6–33), of which the longest is 59 lines. A formal analysis by Janko suggests instead a fourfold grouping: hymns that are based solely on mythical narrative ('purely mythic' hymns); hymns that enumerate the god's attributes without narrative ('attributive'); an intermediate group called 'composite mythic', which contains both attributive and mythic sections; and 'composite prolonged', where there are attributive sections both before and after the mythic section, and where the standard 'farewell' to the god is extended to become in effect a third attributive section. Each group displays a distinct sequence of motifs, in a manner similar to type scenes. The purely mythic, composite, and prolonged groups account for the major hymns. The minor hymns are evenly distributed between the purely mythic and purely attributive groups, though a couple are defective in terms of formal structure.[36]

It is plausible, though uncertain, that at least the shorter hymns served as a corpus of set pieces that any poet could draw on to preface an epic performance. There is some indication that the hymns in the

[35] Προοίμιον also had more than one meaning in antiquity: in Ar. *Eq.* 1343 and Arist. *Rh.* iii.1414b.19–26 it means the opening of a show speech; in Crates of Mallos fr. 1 Broggiato (=*Life of Homer* 10.B.1 West) it means the same as English 'proem'. See also Nagy 2009: 230, who takes -οιμ- < **soim-*, hence προοίμιον = 'pre-threading'.

[36] Janko 1981. Mythic: *Hymns* 2, 4, 6, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 26, 28, 31, 33; composite: *Hymns* 1, 3.179–546, 5, 19, *Theog.* 1–34; prolonged: *Hymn* 3.1–178, *Theog.* 35–105, and add Simonides' hymn to Achilles (frs. eleg. 10 and 11, provided that fr. 10 comes from an attributive section); attributive: *Hymns* 9–12, 14, 21–5, 27, 29, 30, 32, *W&D* 1–10; defective: *Hymns* 12, 13. (See above p. 20 on *Hymn* 8, written over a millennium later.)

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*Theogony* and *Works and Days* were also used this way.[37] The major Homeric *Hymns* are so big that it is doubtful whether they could have been used as preludes, in spite of Thucydides' reference to the *Hymn to Apollo* as a *prooimion*.[38] But that is not to say that the preludic function of hymns had died out: Pindar and Simonides show that this function persisted until at least the 470s.[39]

### *(b) Type scenes*

Type scenes – set-piece episodes with a regular sequence of motifs – are very prominent in Homer, and have been extensively studied.[40] It is generally thought that they have their origins as components in the cognitive toolkit of pre-Homeric oral bards, aiding them in improvisation by providing a continuous flow of cues.[41] In non-Homeric hexameter, type scenes are thinner on the ground and they seem to be motivated more by an awareness of codified forms than by an improvisational function. Some clear exemplars are Heracles' arming scene (*Shield* 122–43);[42] the hospitality scene when Demeter arrives at Keleos' house (*Hymn to Demeter* 105–211);[43] the adornment scenes in *Theogony* 573–84, *Cypria* frs. 5–6, *Hymn to Aphrodite* 60–74, and *Hymn* 6.5–13;[44] and the sacrifice scene in *Hymn to Hermes* 115–37. Divine epiphanies in the *Hymns* also follow patterns that are familiar from Homer.

Although we identify type scenes by their formal structure, they are far from formulaic. Ancient poets routinely adapted them in many ways. For example: in Homeric arming scenes a hero normally dons his gear in the sequence greaves–breastplate–sword–shield–helmet–spear; but, in the *Shield*, Heracles leaves his shield until last, so as to create a clean transition to the extended description of it that dominates

[37] Crates of Mallos fr. 78 Broggiato (Hes. test. 50). See M. L. West 1966: 136–7 on ancient obelization of the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* proems.

[38] Similarly Clay 1997: 498.

[39] Aloni 1980 argues that hymns' preludic function extended into the Hellenistic period.

[40] Arend 1933 is the seminal discussion; Edwards 1992 gives an overview in English, with extensive bibliography.

[41] Minchin 2001: 32–72 discusses type scenes in relation to a performer's cognitive competences.

[42] On arming scenes see Arend 1933: 92–8; Kirk 1985: 313–16.

[43] Reece 1993: 5–46 discusses formal patterns in hospitality scenes, with analysis of *Hymn. Hom. Dem.* at 229–30.

[44] On adornment or beautification scenes see Arend 1933: 97–8 and Table 7.

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the poem. In the *Hymn to Demeter*, where the host would normally provide the guest with a meal, Demeter instead instructs her host on how to prepare a ritual potion, the *kykeōn*, in her honour. And the sacrifice scene in the *Hymn to Hermes* is distorted for humorous effect: Hermes effectively offers a sacrifice to himself (!), and runs into trouble when (in his capacity as sacrificer) he wants to eat the roasted meat but (in his capacity as dedicatee) refuses to swallow it.

### *(c) Genealogy*

Characters in Homer are frequently identified with reference to their parents; but there are also several thorough genealogies, which typically serve to bolster a character's status.[45] In the *Theogony* and *Catalogue of Women* they are more important still. Pausanias informs us that genealogy was also prominent in the *Naupactia*.[46]

The branching nature of genealogy poses a challenge to a poet's narrative strategy. Homer and the *Catalogue* normally begin by reporting all the children of one individual; these children are followed by their descendants, one child at a time, dealing with each genealogical branch fully to the third or fourth generation. West has shown that the *Catalogue* organizes genealogy in manageable chunks, steering a middle course between 'vertical' and 'horizontal' approaches.[47] Homeric genealogies show the same tendency, dealing with genealogical chunks of about the same size. The *Theogony*'s genealogies come in smaller chunks and are less systematic, but still have various organizing principles.[48]

In all of these cases it is normal to find narrative vignettes, containing heroic or divine/cosmogonic material, peppered among the genealogies. The *Iliad* seasons Glaucus' genealogy with the story of Bellerophon, for example; and among the genealogies in the *Catalogue* are sprinkled various deeds of Heracles and the stories of Atalanta, Mestra, and so on.[49] Of the relationship between narrative

[45] Major Homeric genealogies: *Il.* 6.150–211 (Glaucus), 14.110–27 (Diomedes), 20.213–41 (Aeneas); *Od.* 15.225–55 (Theoclymenus). Briefer examples: *Il.* 13.448–54 (Idomeneus), 21.186–91 (Achilles); *Od.* 7.56–66 (Alcinous), 16.115–20 (Odysseus).

[46] *Naupactia* test. and fr. 11.

[47] M. L. West 1985: 46–7.

[48] On these principles see M. L. West 1966: 34–9.

[49] *Il.* 6.156–202 (Bellerophon); *Cat.* frs. 22.20–33, 31.13–33.9, 139–141 (Heracles), frs. 47–51 (Atalanta), frs. 69–71 (Mestra).

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and genealogy, West writes: 'If the Succession Myth is the backbone of the *Theogony*, the genealogies are its flesh and blood'. Muellner, drawing on Vernant, writes of genealogy as itself a form of narrative, while the vignettes are 'nongenealogical [narrative] on the way to becoming genealogical again'.[50]

### *(d) Catalogue*

Catalogues have been extensively studied, largely because of the historical importance of the Iliadic Catalogue of Ships.[51] We can distinguish at least three varieties: 'formal' catalogues, with detailed catalogue entries that follow fairly regular formulae;[52] 'casual' catalogues, simple lists with little ornamentation;[53] and a type that has been called the 'Ehoie tradition' (after the *ē' hoiē* formula used in the *Catalogue of Women*), which consists of catalogues of legendary women and the genealogical relationships between them.[54]

Entries in 'formal' catalogues are linked to specific geographic locations and follow well-defined routes through the landscape of Greece (see below on route descriptions). Our exemplars are, in the *Iliad*, the great Catalogue of Ships, the Trojan Catalogue, and a renewal of the Catalogue of Ships when the Myrmidons enter battle for the first time;[55] and the Catalogue of Helen's Suitors in the *Catalogue of Women* Book 5 (frs. 154, 155.1–75, 156). The catalogue of Trojan allies that appeared in the Cyclic *Cypria* (arg. 12) probably fitted this type. It is also likely that the *Naupactia* had a formal catalogue of Argonauts, which would have served as a model for the one in Apollonius' *Argonautica* (Apollonius' catalogue imitates the 'formal' style).[56] These are major virtuosic set pieces and come with a great deal of dramatic build-up.[57] They also play a preludic role: the catalogues of *Iliad* 2

[50] M. L. West 1966: 31; Muellner 1996: 56.

[51] See especially Visser 1997. See also Sammons 2010, arguing that Homeric catalogues are designed to compete with Hesiodic and Cyclic ones.

[52] On typical elements see especially Edwards 1980; see also Kirk 1985: 170–7 (on the Catalogue of Ships).

[53] On this class of catalogues see Tsagalis 2010.

[54] I. Rutherford 2000.

[55] Catalogue of Ships: *Il.* 2.484–779; Trojan Catalogue: 2.815–77; Myrmidons: 16.112–13 (invocation of Muse) and 168–97 (full catalogue entry).

[56] *Naupactia* fr. 4 states that the poet 'lists all the heroes recognized[?] by him' (πάντας ἀριθμεῖ τοὺς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ φερομένους ἀριστεῖς). ὑπ' αὐτοῦ is an emendation, and the meaning of φερομένους is uncertain. Cf. Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 1.20–233.

[57] On the artistic character of the Catalogue of Ships see especially Minchin 2001: 73–99.

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act as a kind of ceremonial opening of war, the Myrmidon entry in *Iliad* 16 introduces Patroclus' display of heroism, and the list of Helen's suitors announces the contest for her hand in marriage and a subsequent slide into the Trojan War.

Among 'casual' catalogues we have Zeus's list of his former lovers (*Il.* 14.315–28); lists of Nereids (*Il.* 18.39–49; *Theog.* 240–64); the ghosts of dead heroes seen in the underworld (*Od.* 11.566–635; *Returns* frs. 3–9; *Minyas* frs. 2–6); and a few other, briefer, roll calls. Empedocles' list of 'Titans' (fr. B 123) also fits this model well.

The 'Ehoie' type is really a cross between catalogue and genealogy. Like genealogy, it is preoccupied with procreation and the movement from one generation to the next;[58] and it routinely contains vignettes of heroic narrative. The 'Ehoie' type is represented by the bulk of the *Catalogue of Women*; Odysseus' catalogue of dead heroines (*Od.* 11.225–330); and the *Great Ehoiae*. Much of the *Naupactia* also seems to have been occupied with a catalogue of the 'Ehoie' type.[59]

## 3. Small-scale: tropes and stylistic features

### *(a) Proem and invocation of Muse(s)*

'Proem' is used here with its conventional English sense: a brief preface, especially the introductory paragraph to a heroic narrative epic. Following the practice of *The Homer Encyclopedia*, I keep it distinct from the device of the hymnic prelude (see above).[60] Regular formal features of a proem are: (1) introduction of one or more major themes in the first line (e.g. 'anger' in the *Iliad*; 'a man' in the *Odyssey*); (2) an address to the divine Muse(s), praying for inspiration; (3) a relative clause that expands on (1) and leads into a discursive (but not thorough) exploration of the poem's contents. Often a second invocation (4) renews the focus on the highlighted theme, with a further

[58] Northrup 1980: 152 notes the frequent references to children in the *Odyssey*'s catalogue of heroines.

[59] *Naupactia* test. and fr. 11.

[60] On epic proems generally see Bassett 1934; G. Wheeler 2002; Harden and Kelly 2013, with a formal analysis similar to the one given here. To avoid terminological problems Bassett uses the term 'induction', while Wheeler uses 'introit'. There are also many studies especially of the *Odyssey* proem (see Wheeler for bibliography). Confusion arises when hymns are called 'proems', especially in poems that have both, such as the *Theogony*: in the senses used here, the *Theogony*'s opening hymn occupies lines 1–104, while the proem is at 104–15.

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dependent relative clause (5) that leads into the main body of the poem. Most extant poems feature some or all of these elements.[61] But formal proems were not obligatory: the *Works and Days* and *Shield* possess no proems.

Proems of this form are naturally intimately connected to the trope of invoking a Muse. Muse invocations appear in other contexts too, but where they do appear they are still typically introductory, and they often touch on the problem of the relationship between the performer and his poetic persona – the poet's voice as opposed to the Muse's voice.[62] The trope of the Muse invocation is a uniquely Greek invention. It is in turn closely tied to the trope of 'two types of knowledge' (see below).

For most post-Archaic epics the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* proems served as models. But in Archaic poetry, the fullest examples of the pattern are the *Catalogue of Women* fr. 1.1–15:

**(1)** νῦν δὲ γυναικῶν φῦλον ἀείσατε, **(2)** ἡδυέπειαι
Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπιάδες, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο,
**(3)** ᾗ τότ' ἄρισται ἔσαν [...
[...]
**(4)** τ̣ά̣ω̣ν ἔσπετε μ[οι γενεὴν τε καὶ ἀγλαὰ τέκνα,
**(5)** ὅσσ[αι]ς δὴ π̣αρελ[εκτο πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε...

**(1)** *And now sing of the tribe of women,* **(2)** *sweet-voiced*
*Olympian Muses, daughters of aegis-holding Zeus,*
**(3)** *those who were the best at that time...*
[...]
**(4)** *Of these women tell* [*me the race and the splendid children:*
**(5)** *all those with whom lay* [*the father of men and of gods...*

*Theogony* 104–15:

**(2)** χαίρετε τέκνα Διός, δότε δ' ἱμερόεσσαν ἀοιδήν·
**(1)** κλείετε δ' ἀθανάτων ἱερὸν γένος αἰὲν ἐόντων,
**(3)** οἳ Γῆς ἐξεγένοντο καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος...
[...]

[61] Surviving exemplars are: *Il.* 1.1–10ff. (it would be wrong to specify a definite end point because of the way in which the relative clauses expand gradually into the main narrative); *Od.* 1.1–11ff.; *Cat.* fr. 1.1–15ff.; *Theog.* 104–15; *Epigoni* fr. 1; *Little Iliad* frs. 1 and 28 Bernabé (the latter=fr. 1 West); Choerilus, *Persica* frs. 1 and 2 Bernabé. On the *Little Iliad* proem see Scafoglio 2006; on the *Persica* proem see MacFarlane 2009. Harden and Kelly 2013 also interpret Odysseus' request to Demodocus (*Od.* 8.492–9ff.) as a proem of sorts, and Hermes' first song (*Hymn. Hom. Herm.* 52–62) as a blend of hymn and proem.

[62] See especially Pedrick 1992 (on the *Odyssey* proem); G. Wheeler 2002.

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**(4)** ταῦτά μοι ἔσπετε Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι
ἐξ ἀρχῆς, καὶ εἴπαθ', **(5)** ὅτι πρῶτον γένετ' αὐτῶν.

**(2)** Hail, children of Zeus, and give me lovely song; **(1)** glorify the sacred race of the immortals who always are, **(3)** those who were born from Earth and starry Sky...
[...]
**(4)** These things tell me from the beginning, Muses who have your mansions on Olympus, and tell **(5)** which of them was born first. ...

and *Odyssey* 1.1–10:

**(1)** ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, **(2)** Μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, **(3)** ὃς μάλα πολλὰ
πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσε·
πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω...
[...]
**(4)** τῶν ἀμόθεν γε, θεά, θύγατερ Διός, εἰπὲ καὶ ἡμῖν.

**(1)** *Tell me of the man,* **(2)** *Muse, so versatile,* **(3)** *who travelled far and wide, after he sacked the sacred city of Troy;*
*many were the men whose cities he saw and whose minds he knew...*
[...]
**(4)** *Pick a starting point, goddess, daughter of Zeus, and tell us this too.*

The *Iliad* has only a shadow of **(4)** and **(5)**, with a rhetorical question at line 8 and expansion in the relative clause in the following line. Another doubled invocation has been convincingly identified in the fragments of the *Little Iliad* proem.[63] Alongside the fragment given as fr. 1 in West's and Davies' editions ('Of Ilios I sing, and Dardania land of fine colts...'), another line, fr. 1 Bernabé, also contains a Muse invocation ('Muse, tell me of those things that never happened before / and never will again'). Bernabé concluded that the two come from separate poems; Scafoglio rejects this, and draws attention to an imitation in Virgil's *Aeneid*, 1.1–11. But the double invocations in the *Odyssey*, *Theogony*, and *Catalogue of Women* provide even closer parallels.

A proem is closely linked to a hymnic prelude, but the two must not be conflated. Their functional and formal distinctness is especially clear in the way they are joined in Simonides' elegiac Plataea ode. At the end of his hymn to Achilles, Simonides switches to his main narrative as follows (fr. eleg. 11.19–24):

[63] Scafoglio 2006.

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ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲ]ν νῦν χαῖρε, θεᾶς ἐρικυ[δέος υἱέ
κούρης εἰν]αλίου Νηρέος· αὐτὰρ ἐγώ̣ [
κικλήισκω] σ' ἐπίκουρον ἐμοί, π̣[ολυώνυμ]ε Μοῦσα,
εἴ περ γ' ἀν]θρώπων̣ εὐχομένω[ν μέλεαι·
ἔντυνο]ν̣ καὶ τόνδ[ε μελ]ί̣φρονα κ[όσμον ἀο]ιδῆς
ἡμετ]έρης...

[But] farewell to you now, [son] of a very famous goddess,
[the daughter] of the sea-god Nereus; and I
[summon] you as my ally, [famous] Muse,
[if] mortal prayers [are of any concern:]
[prepare] this sweet ornament, too, of our
song...

The 'farewell' in 19–20 is a standard closing for hymns; the summoning in 20–1 signals the transition into a proem; the last phrase, with its reference to the coming song, has the air of a doubled invocation.[64] The *Theogony*'s transition is even more compressed, where Hesiod's farewell to the Muses (*Theog.* 104) also serves as his invocation for the proem. The one other case where a hymnic prelude survives attached to a poem, *Works and Days* 1–10, moves directly from the hymn to the main content without a formal proem. Simonides' poem, though it is elegiac, provides our clearest evidence that proems like those in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* could be preceded by formal hymnic closes. Hymns can themselves open with brief invocations to the Muse: the major *Hymns to Hermes* and *Aphrodite* do so, and so do about a third of the minor hymns.[65]

### *(b) Two types of knowledge: 'truth' vs. 'report'*

In the *Theogony*'s opening hymn the Muses famously declare (*Theog.* 27–8):[66]

ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,
ἴδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.

[W]e know how to say many false things similar to genuine ones, but we know, when we wish, how to proclaim true things.

[64] On this transition see especially I. Rutherford 2001: 44–5.
[65] *Hymns* 9, 14, 17, 19, 20, 31, 32, 33.
[66] For detailed discussion see Clay 2003: 58–67.

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This sentiment is not isolated. It belongs to a tradition of poetic utterances cast in terms of two types of knowledge: one true, the other false; one divine, the other mortal; one authentic, the other mere opinion.[67]

Thus in *Iliad* 2.484–6 the Muses possess divine knowledge which is accurate, while mortal knowledge is mere *kleos* ('report' or 'rumour'), prone to inaccuracy and untruth. A performer or narrator who is divinely favoured may have access to the first type of knowledge: so Odysseus tells the story of his wanderings 'expertly, as a singer would do' and not 'making up lying stories, from which no-one could learn anything' (*Od.* 11.363–9). Penelope's account of the two gates through which dreams come plays on the same trope at a more symbolic level: dreams that come through the gate of ivory are false, while the gate of horn produces dreams that are fulfilled (*Od.* 19.560–9). And this dichotomy is not only about knowledge that is reserved to the gods. Hesiod attributes to the Muses his ability to transmit accurate information about navigation at sea, something of which he has – or claims he has – no first-hand knowledge (*WD* 660–2): here again, the distinction is between direct access to truth and indirect report. When Apollo proclaims his prerogative over oracular knowledge, he warns that some omens are true and some false, and only with self-restraint can a mortal tell which is which (*Hymn. Hom. Herm.* 533–49).

A zenith of abstraction is reached in Parmenides' poem, which relies heavily on a dichotomy between divine *alētheia* ('truth') and mortal *doxa* ('opinion'). In his proem Parmenides evokes both Homeric and Hesiodic models: the gates of Night and Day through which the narrator passes (but in which direction?) echo Penelope's gates of dreams, while the divine instruction he receives from an unnamed goddess evokes the *Theogony*'s visitation of the Muses. The poem goes on to repeat similar imagery elsewhere: truth 'is', and is represented by light or ethereal fire; opinion 'is not', and is represented by dense night (frs. B 8.50–61, B 9.1–5); but, Parmenides argues, both are worthy of study. The themes are philosophical but the tradition is a poetic one. The trope extends through hexameter poetry continuously from Homer to Parmenides. It is a distant ancestor to many philosophical sentiments in Plato: Socrates is surely thinking of it when he asks, in the *Phaedo* (65b), 'Does human sight and hearing possess any truth?

[67] See also Snell 1953: 136–52, who outlines the development of this dichotomy from Homer to Parmenides, adducing Heracleitus and Xenophanes in addition to the texts mentioned here.

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Or is it like the poets are always babbling: that we neither hear nor see anything accurately?'

### *(c) Simile*

It is the Homeric simile that is most familiar to readers of early hexameter, and that served as a model for later epic poets. But they were used independently in other poems too, though typically not very frequently.[68] Similes have an especially prominent role in the *Shield* and in the fragments of Empedocles; and there are a few exemplars in some of the major *Hymns*. A couple of examples will illustrate the basic format. *Hymn to Hermes* 43–6:

> ὡς δ' ὁπότ' ὠκὺ νόημα διὰ στέρνοιο περήσηι
> ἀνέρος ὅν τε θαμειναὶ ἐπιστρωφῶσι μέριμναι,
> ἢ ὅτε δινηθῶσιν ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν ἀμαρυγαί,
> ὣς ἅμ' ἔπος τε καὶ ἔργον ἐμήδετο κύδιμος Ἑρμῆς.

And as when a sudden notion passes through the breast of a man who is constantly visited by thoughts, or when sparkling glances spin from someone's eyes, so glorious Hermes made his action as quick as his word.

And *Shield* 437–42:

> ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀπὸ μεγάλου πέτρη πρηῶνος ὀρούσῃ,
> μακρὰ δ' ἐπιθρώσκουσα κυλίνδεται, ἢ δέ τε ἠχῇ
> ἔρχεται ἐμμεμαυῖα· πάγος δέ οἱ ἀντεβόλησεν
> ὑψηλός, τῷ δὴ συνενείκεται, ἔνθα μιν ἴσχει·
> τὼς <ἄρ'> ὃ μὲν ἰαχῇ βρισάρματος οὔλιος Ἄρης
> κεκληγὼς ἐπόρουσεν...

Just as when from a great cliff a boulder rushes and rolls down, bouncing mightily, and with an echo it goes eagerly along; but it encounters a lofty hill and dashes against it, and it is stopped there; so too chariot-weighting, dire Ares, shouting with a roar, rushed forward...

Similes add layers of meaning. When Heracles and Ares face each other, we already expect their confrontation to be fierce and cataclysmic; by adding the simile, with its imagery of the bouncing boulder, the poet superimposes less direct suggestions of speed, weight, noise,

[68] See M. L. West 2007: 95–9 on the Indo-European background to the Greek simile.

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and a terrific momentum stoppable only by an immovable object. In Hermes' case, the added layers are the whirlwind activity of a volatile mind: the lightning speed of a glance moving from one object to another, or a thought from one place to another.

Similes often appear in isolation, but they may also be used systematically, to add even more significance, in ways that will be familiar to readers of Homer. In the *Iliad*, comparisons of people and phenomena to stars (brightness, burning intensity) or lions (ferocity, violence, strength) indicate development of an ongoing theme (the escalation of violence throughout the *Iliad*). Parallels sometimes pop up in other poems. The pile-up of eight similes in *Shield* 374–442, marking the collisions of Heracles with Cycnus and Ares, embodies that poem's fascination with dense, crowded poetic textures and imagery. In the *Hymn to Demeter*, when Keleos' daughters run to meet Demeter, two similes compare them to deer frisking through a meadow (174–5) and their flying hair to a saffron flower (177–8): juxtaposed, these images evoke the opening of the hymn, where Demeter's daughter Persephone frolics in a meadow gathering flowers, before being kidnapped by Hades. And similes in the *Hymn to Hermes* repeatedly compare Hermes to a baby (151–2, 163–4, 241); ordinarily these would just be platitudes, but since they are literally true (Hermes actually *is* a baby) they become ironic comments, alerting us to Hermes' self-conscious attempts to disarm others by putting on a *show* of being a mere baby.

Comparisons may be more than a stylistic device. Beall argues that ploughing in the *Works and Days* acts as a metaphor for the human condition. Snell sees the history of similes as an integral part of the history of analogical thought.[69] In the fifth century the history of the simile culminates with Empedocles, who uses similes not only to add poetic depth but also as explanatory tools. He often explains one physical process by comparing it to another, as in this passage where he explains the idea of vision rays emitted from the human eye (fr. B 84.1–8):[70]

> ὡς δ' ὅτε τις πρόοδον νοέων ὡπλίσσατο λύχνον
> χειμερίην διὰ νύκτα, πυρὸς σέλας αἰθομένοιο,
> ἄψας παντοίων ἀνέμων λαμπτῆρας ἀμοργούς,
> οἵ τ' ἀνέμων μὲν πνεῦμα διασκιδνᾶσιν ἀέντων,
> φῶς δ' ἔξω διαθρῴσκον, ὅσον ταναώτερον ἦεν,

[69] Beall 2004, esp. 27–9; Snell 1953: 191–226.

[70] See also frs. B 23.1–10 (mixing of paints as an analogy for the blending of the elements), B 100.8–22 (suction in a water clock as an analogy for blood vessels).

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λάμπεσκεν κατὰ βηλὸν ἀτειρέσιν ἀκτίνεσσιν·
ὣς δὲ τότ' ἐν μήνιγξιν ἐεργμένον ὠγύγιον πῦρ
λεπτῆισίν <τ'> ὀθόνηισι λοχάζετο κύκλοπα κούρην...

*As when someone, intending a journey, prepares a lamp,*
*a flame of flashing fire through the winter night,*
*fastening the lantern sides as protection against any winds*
*(they divert the breeze when the winds blow),*
*yet the light leaps through outside, inasmuch as it is finer-textured,*
*and illuminates the ground with its tireless rays:*
*just so then the ancient fire, guarded in the membranes*
*and fine tissues, lies in wait in the round pupil...*

### *(d) Other miscellaneous features*

There is not space to cover every poetic device that is characteristic of early hexameter – at least, not as fully as the accounts given above. So this chapter ends with briefer notes on some further recurring features.

**Oracle.** Oracles are a genre unto themselves with their own set of formal features, whether they are the short poems spuriously attributed to the Delphic Oracle, the surviving fragments of oracle collectors, or prophecies made by legendary figures. The major studies of the Delphic Oracle provide good guides to oracles generally.[71] Fontenrose's formal study characterizes oracles as giving commands, warnings, or factual statements about past, present, and future, either simply or with some condition that has yet to be met.[72] He goes on to analyse oracles as being composed of up to six independent motifs, which may be combined in a manner similar to a type scene: A, a salutation to the person addressed; B, a restatement of the question posed; C, an assertion of mantic authority; D, a condition to be met; E, the core message; and F, a clarification of the message's context.[73] The same analysis can be applied to the oracles in oracle collectors and in purely legendary stories. In Homer, for example, Calchas' oracle to Achilles declaring the reasons for the plague (*Il.* 1.93–100) comprises a message ('here is why Apollo is angry; here is how to appease him') and a condition to be met ('provided we give Chryseis back to

[71] Especially Fontenrose 1978: 11–57, 166–95; also Parke and Wormell 1956: xxi–xxxvi (neither discussion attempts to tie characteristics to specific eras).
[72] Fontenrose 1978: 13–20.
[73] Fontenrose 1978: 177–9.

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her father, and offer a sacrifice'): that is, the motifs ED. By contrast, Teiresias' prophecy to Odysseus (*Od.* 11.100–37) is a long string of conditions and predictions, in the sequence BAFEDEDEDEDECDEC.[74]

The obscurity and animal imagery of oracle collectors such as Epimenides, Musaeus, and Bacis link their oracles closely to the device of the competitive riddle. However, we have only a few riddles couched in hexameter: the famous riddle of the Sphinx (*Oedipodea* fr. 2); Calchas' riddle to Mopsus in the *Melampodia* (Hesiodica fr. 214); a riddle about the lifespan of the Naeads (Hesiodica fr. 254); and the riddle of the lice that presages Homer's death in the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* (*Contest* 18).

**Parable and exemplum.** Aesop's *Fables* are the popular archetype of the Archaic parable, though they do not survive in their original form. But moralizing tales also appear in hexameter in wisdom poetry, and as exempla or mythological paradigms in narrative poetry. The most famous is the parable of the hawk and the nightingale in *Works and Days* 202–12, where the hawk justifies its killing of the nightingale by right of strength: the story uses the hawk's manifest injustice to question the principle of 'might makes right'.[75] Closely related is the device of the mythological paradigm, where a character in a narrative poem tells a story from the past as a model for behaviour in the present: some especially famous examples in Homer are when Phoenix tells the story of Meleager to try and persuade Achilles to relent from his anger, and when Achilles tells the story of Niobe to persuade Priam to eat in spite of his grief.[76] Outside Homer our most extended example comes from the fragments of Panyassis' *Heraclea*, where King Eurytus of Oichalia first encourages his guest Heracles to drink heartily, only to become more hesitant as his guest becomes more drunk and dangerous (fr. 20.1–9):[77]

> 'πρώται μὲν Χάριτές τ' ἔλαχον καὶ ἐύφρονες Ὧραι
> μοῖραν καὶ Διόνυσος ἐρίβρομος, οἵ περ ἔτευξαν·

[74] On the conditionals in Teiresias' prophecy see especially Peradotto 1985: 438–43.

[75] See recently Steiner 2012, with bibliography. Epimenides fr. 45 Bernabé also draws on this fable.

[76] *Il.* 9.527–605, 24.601–20. On parables in Homer generally see Pelliccia in Finkelberg 2011b: ii.622–4; on mythical paradigms or 'para-narratives' see Alden 2000.

[77] Panyassis frs. 19–22. West takes frs. 20–2 as Heracles replying prudently to Eurytus' reckless encouragement. More plausible is Huxley's view (1969: 178–9) that the fragments are all spoken by Eurytus, who begins by enthusing about wine but becomes hesitant as he sees his guest becoming more drunk and more dangerous. On this reading the most likely sequence is: 19, 21, 20, 22 (the pairs 19, 21 and 20, 22 are in any case suggested by their grouping in Athenaeus, our source for the fragments, ii.36d–37d).

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τοῖς δ' ἔπι Κυπρογένεια θεὰ λάχε καὶ Διόνυσος, . . .
. . .εἴ τις μέ<τρα> πίοι καὶ ἀπότροπος οἴκαδ' ἀπέλθοι
δαιτὸς ἀπὸ γλυκερῆς, οὐκ ἄν ποτε πήματι κύρσαι·
ἀλλ' ὅτε τις μοίρης τριτάτης πρὸς μέτρον ἐλαύνοι
πίνων ἀβλεμέως, τότε δ' Ὕβριος αἶσα καὶ Ἄτης
γίγνεται ἀργαλέη, κακὰ δ' ἀνθρώποισιν ὀπάζει.'

'The Graces and the cheerful Horai take the first portion, and Dionysus the mighty roarer, the ones who created it. After them the goddess born in Cyprus takes her share, and Dionysus. . .But when someone drinks heavily and presses to the limit of the third round, then Hybris and Ate take their unlovely turn, which brings trouble.'

Recently a new exemplar was found in an elegiac poem of Archilochus, rediscovered and published in 2005, where an unknown speaker cites the Achaeans' flight from Telephus as a paradigm for giving way to necessity.[78]

**Route description.** Poetry cannot easily portray geography in a two-dimensional map. Early Greek poetry resorts to describing linear routes through a landscape: point A to point B to point C and so on. This poetic device includes not only physical journeys but also the way-points traced by catalogues. The most elaborate map of this kind is the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2.494–759, which follows a route in three parts: first winding clockwise around central and southern Greece, then eastwards through the Dorian islands of the south Aegean, and finally from Phthia northwards through Thessaly.[79] The *Hymn to Apollo* has three journeys: Leto's path clockwise around the Aegean looking for a place to give birth to Apollo (30–49), Apollo's journey from Olympus to Delphi (216–86), and the journey of Apollo's new ministers from Crete to Delphi (409–39).[80] Other, less clear, routes are outlined or implied in the *Odyssey*'s catalogue of dead heroines, the *Catalogue of Women*'s catalogue of Helen's suitors, and the journeys in the *Hymn to Hermes*.[81] Detailed 'maps' also appear in other poetic genres, in Simonides' Plataea ode and Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*.[82]

**Ekphrasis (rhetorical description).** This device is best known from examples in Homer, especially the description of Hephaestus

[78] P.Oxy. 4708; on the new Archilochus as exemplum see especially Swift 2012.
[79] On the route see Kirk 1985: 183–6.
[80] See further N. Richardson 2010: 10–13.
[81] *Od.* 11.225–330 (on the route see Northrup 1980); *Cat.* frs. 154b to 155.64 (M. L. West 1985: 114–19); *Hymn. Hom. Herm.* 68–145, Hermes' odd route from Pieria to Mount Cyllene (Arcadia) via Onchestus (Boeotia) and the river Alpheios (Elis).
[82] Simon. fr. eleg. 11.29–43 (the march from Sparta northward to Plataea); Aesch. *Ag.* 281–311 (Clytemnestra's beacons across the Aegean).

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forging Achilles' new shield (*Il.* 18.478–608). Most of our non-Homeric examples are fragmentary; the great exception is the colossal description of Heracles' eponymous shield in *Shield* 144–319, also made by Hephaestus. Heracles' shield is described in a systematic fashion, starting from a central section filled with monstrous personifications such as Fear, Tumult, and Murder, and working outwards with orientalizing animal motifs, scenes of gods and humans, and finally the river Ocean surrounding everything.[83] It is not simply a cheap copy of the Homeric shield, though it certainly draws on the same set of tropes. Like Achilles' shield it juxtaposes scenes of war and peace, a siege and a wedding; but it gives greater emphasis to divine figures and it appears that a few lines in the Iliadic *ekphrasis* were actually interpolated from the *Shield*.[84]

We have indications of several other *ekphraseis*. (1) Francis argues persuasively that the gods' creation of Pandora (*Theog.* 570–89; *WD* 60–82) is an *ekphrasis* of an artefact, which is subsequently imbued with life.[85] (2) Lesches, *Little Iliad* fr. 5: a description of Achilles' spear (see also *Cypria* fr. 4?), a gift from the gods like his more famous shield. (3) Eugammon, *Telegony* arg. 1: a mixing bowl depicting the story of Trophonius, Agamedes, and Augeas.[86] (4) *Telegony* fr. 5: Hephaestus forges Telegonus' spear from the barb of a stingray (found in Phorcys' lake, near Circe's home in Italy), a tip of adamant, a butt-spike of gold, and a haft of goat's horn.[87] (5) Eumelus, *Titanomachy* fr. 14: probably from a description of a metal cup or jug, featuring as part of its decoration a group of golden-faced mute (or 'scaly'?) fish (χρυσώπιδες ἰχθύες ἐλλοί).[88] (6) It is possible to interpret *Hymn* 7 (to Dionysus) as a narrative based on a pictorial representation: the story of Dionysus turning the Etruscan sailors into dolphins was a popular theme in sixth-century art.[89]

[83] See Myres 1941 for a detailed reconstruction with illustrations. On symbolism in this *ekphrasis* see especially Thalmann 1984: 62–4; Becker 1992.

[84] Lynn-George 1978 makes a compelling argument that *Il.* 18.535–40 is interpolated from *Shield* 156–60.

[85] Francis 2009: 13–17.

[86] The full story appears in Charax *FGrH* 103 fr. 5; see also M. L. West 2003a: 167 n. 69.

[87] *Pace* West, στύραξ='butt-spike' (cf. Xen. *Hell.* 6.2.19; Pl. *Lach.* 184a; Hesych. σ.2092). The detail of the haft appears in sch. Opp. *Hal.* 2.497.

[88] See Davies 2001: 17. The bronze ἔλλοπας ἰχθῦς ('mute fish') in *Shield* 212–13 indicate that this phrase is from an *ekphrasis*; see also M. L. West 2003a: 233 n. 14, arguing that Eumelus' fish are real ones in a lake.

[89] M. L. West 2003b: 16–17.

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**Poet's 'seal' (*sphragis*).** The *sphragis*, or signature left by the poet, is a rare device in hexameter. Where it appears, it usually takes the form of the narrator explicitly adopting a specific persona. At *Theogony* 22–34 the poet explicitly adopts the persona of Hesiod, telling the story of how the Muses personally inspired him with the gift of poetry; the poet of *Works and Days* 646–62 claims to have won a poetry contest at the funeral games of Amphidamas in Euboea, also (implicitly) adopting the persona of Hesiod; and at *Hymn to Apollo* 165–76 Cynaethus famously adopts the persona of Homer as a blind poet from Chios whose songs 'remain supreme'. The device is more common in other genres, with important examples in Archilochus, Sappho, Solon, and Pindar. A notable example in a 'heroic' narrative is the end of Timotheus' *Persae*, fr. 791.229–33 *PMG*, where the narrator compares himself to two semi-mythical hexameter poets, Orpheus and Terpander. This trope tends to gravitate towards the beginning or end of a poem.

**Miscellaneous stylistic devices.** Many features of narrative arrangement, word order, and language that are characteristic of Homer also appear in non-Homeric hexameter. Thalmann gives a good review of some of these, documenting them copiously with non-Homeric examples: parataxis (avoidance of subordinate clauses); *hysteron prōton* (where the chronologically latest event is mentioned first; or an AB–BA arrangement where the first element in one phrase appears last in the answering phrase); ring composition (a more elaborate version of *hysteron prōton*, with multiple concentric layers ABCD...DCBA); 'spiral' composition (like ring composition but the rings interlock with one another); and parallelism (ABC...ABC...).[90] The formulaic style is also a key element of non-Homeric hexameter. It becomes progressively less prominent in fifth-century poetry but some non-Homeric poems display a creative use of the formulaic system, as we shall see in the following chapter.

[90] Thalmann 1984: 4–28. From a narratological perspective see also Minchin 2007: 102–16 on *hysteron prōton*, Minchin 2001: 181–202 on ring composition.

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