Poets in Search of Reality: A Historical Study on How Poets and their Societies Needed the Muses and their Epiphanies in Ancient Greece

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ἐννέα τὰς Μούσας φασίν τινες: ὡς ὀλιγώρως:
ἠνίδε καὶ Σαπφὼ Λεσβόθεν ἡ δεκάτη.

Some say the Muses are nine, but how carelessly! Look at the Tenth, Sappho from Lesbos.

[Plato; *Palatine Anthology* 9.506; transl. W.R. Paton]

Plato refers to Hesiod's *Theogony* which begins with a hymn to the Muses – to the nine immortal daughters of Memory and Zeus (*Theogony*, 1-85). According to this hymn, Hesiod knew the Muses, because they had revealed themselves in epiphany to him. The Muses taught Hesiod to sing praise about them, and about the other immortals (*Theogony*, 25-30). They revealed themselves to him, and claimed authority on the reality of things (*Theogony*, 62-66). Hesiod sings about the past, present and future because the Muses gave him his songs, but the Muses warned Hesiod they told both truths and lies (*Theogony*, 20-25). In contrast to Hesiod's hymn to the Muses, Homer's *Odyssey* puts forward that a poet who's inspired by the Muses always sings truthfully. Homer's *Odyssey* contains several dialogues on whether or not a specific poet is inspired by the Muses. These dialogues are concerned with the nature of divine inspiration, and the manner by which to recognize it. Hesiod was taught to sing by the Muses in Hesiod's hymn, whereas divinely inspired poets are said to never have learned to sing at all in Homer's *Odyssey*. Songs are said to spontaneously well up, in the one who receives the gift of song from the Muses, in the *Odyssey*.

Reflections upon the manifestation [i.e. the epiphany] of the Muses, in relation to poetic authority, appear for the first time in Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days* and in Homer's *Odyssey*. These are the oldest records which contain such reflections and date to the Archaic period. Following upon these poems such reflections appear in many, but not in all, literary evidence from the Archaic and Classical period.[1] The Muses, however, appear in different forms and different shapes in our source material from those time periods. From Hesiod and Homer to Plato and Aristotle we can detect a discourse on the authority and legitimacy of the poetic song of the poet, based on its proximity to the Muses.[2] This discourse reveals a religious dimension in which poets encounter divinities in epiphany.[3]

[1] For example, the Fragments of Alcaeus do not include any reference to the Muses.

[2] Hesiod, *theogony*, 1-97. Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 1-8; 555-59. Unknown, *Hymn* 3, 189-194, 516-21; *Hymn* 4, 1-2, 439-62; *Hymn* 5, 1-2; *Hymn* 9, 1-2; *Hymn* 14, 1-2; *Hymn* 17, 1-2; *Hymn* 19, 1-2; *Hymn* 20, 1-2; *Hymn* 25, 1-5; *Hymn* 31, 1-2; *Hymn* 32, 1-2, 20; *Hymn* 33, 1-2. Homer, *Odyssey*, 1. 1-10, 324-71; 8. 62-82, 476-581; 11. 335-70; 24. 57-70. Pindar, *Nemean 3*, 1-12; *Olympian 1*, 112-18; *Olympian 3*, 1-10; *Olympian 10*, 1-24; *Olympian 24*, 14-24. Sappho, fr. 58. Parmenides, fr. 1. Empedocles, B131.3. Plato, *Ion*. Plato, *Phaedrus*. Aristotle, *Poetics*. Isocrates, *Helen*.

[3] R.L. Fowler, 'Gods in early Greek historiography', in: J.N. Bremmer and A. Erskine ed., *The gods of ancient Greece identities and transformations* (Edinburgh 2010) 318-334. C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian religion* (Boston 2003) 10-12. E. Spentzou, 'Introduction: secularizing the Muse', in: E. Spentzou and D. Fowler ed., *Cultivating the Muse* (Oxford 2002) 1-28, 4-5. P. Murray, 'Plato's Muses: The Goddesses that Endure', in: E. Spentzou and D. Fowler ed., *Cultivating the Muse* (Oxford 2002) 29-46, 33. A. Cavarero, 'The Envied Muse: Plato versus Homer', in: E. Spentzou and D. Fowler ed., *Cultivating the Muse* (Oxford 2002) 47-68, 49-50. I. Lada-Richards, 'Reinscribing the Muse: Greek Drama and the Discourse of Inspired Creativity', in: E. Spentzou

Reflections on the poets in epiphany are known to us as parts of texts, but it is uncertain whether these texts were written down by the composer of the poems or rather by a recorder.[4] The first writings in the Greek alphabet have been dated to the Archaic period, but poetry existed as part of an oral culture. The poems handed down to us were performed to serve a public occasion. Greek literacy developed amidst an oral tradition in which singers traveled around and recited poets' poems before these poems may have been written down. Greek oral culture remained in existence, while literacy developed alongside it.[5] Characteristic to that oral tradition was that there were various poets, performers, and recorders, as well as contradictory mythologies; multiple creation stories and differentiating stories on births and lives of divinities. Poets' reflections on the Muse(s) in epiphany, and their invocations of the Muses, belonged to a literary tradition, but that literary tradition was part of a much wider oral tradition and oral culture. Therefore, we are challenged to investigate the religious history of those reflections and invocations.

The aim of this thesis is to understand the religious history of the Muses in epiphany related to poetry's place and poets' authority in Archaic and Classical Greek societies. But the authority of the Muses was not unchallenged. Even though there is still disagreement amongst historians, it is possible to substantiate arguments which suggest that poets who reflected upon the Muses lived at a time of war and crisis in Greece. Hesiod and Homer lived at a time wherein Greek city-states were at war with each other in what is now called the Lelantine war. Sappho experienced chaos, uncertainty and war in Mytilene (Lesbos) a generation later. Pindar, Empedocles, and Euripides lived through the Persian and Peloponnesian wars a century later, as well as through plagues and revolts. These six poets questioned the Muses' epiphany in their poetry. They performed their poems in front of an audience. There must have been a social demand for their reflections. The main question of this thesis, therefore, is:

Why was it that several Archaic and Classical poets questioned the Muses' epiphany even though their poetry relied on the Muses' epiphany?

Scholars approached these reflections on the Muses' epiphany in a way they solely focused on the nature of text, and the tradition to which it belonged. They did not focus on the historical reality of the poets. Since the authorship and time of origins of Archaic Greek poems were for a long time contested by historians.[6] Consequently, it was problematic to investigate

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and D. Fowler ed., *Cultivating the Muse* (Oxford 2002) 69-92, 72-76. G.M. Ledbetter, *Poetics before Plato: interpretation and authority in early Greek theories of poetry* (Princeton 2003) 17-28, 41-54, 62-68. N. Benzi, 'The Redefinition of Poetic Authority in Early Greek Philosophical Poetry', *Dialogues d'histoire ancienne* 44:2 (2018) 15-41, 15-16. S. Mualem, *Borges and Plato: a Game with shifting Mirrors* (Frankfurt 2019) 155-163.

[4] E.A. Havelock, *The literate revolution in Greece and its cultural consequences* (Princeton 1982) 190.

[5] Havelock, *The literate revolution*, 144-149.

[6] K. Stoddard, *The Narrative Voice in the Theogony of Hesiod* (Leiden 2004) XI-II. R. Blankenborg, *Hesiodos Alle Goden! Theogonie* (Eindhoven 2018) 28-29. G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: concepts of the hero in archaic Greek poetry* (Baltimore 1979) 5-11. N. Boterf, 'Placing the Poet: Topography of Authorship', in: E.J. Bakker ed., *Authorship and Greek Song: Authority, Authenticity and Performance Studies in Archaic and Classical Greek Song* vol. 3 (Leiden 2017) 90-98, 92. R. Scodel, 'The individual Voice in *Works and Days*', in: N.W. Slater ed., *Voice and Voices in Antiquity: Orality and Literacy in the Ancient World* vol. 2 (Leiden 2016) 74-91, 74. J.B. Bury, *A History of Greece* (London 1913) 5, 50. W.A. McDonald and C.G. Thomas, *Progress Into The Past: The rediscovery of Mycenaean Civilization* (Indianapolis 1990) 296-298, 309-311. I. Morris, 'Homer and the Iron

the historical reality of Greek poets and Greek poetry. Significant progress has been made, however, after decades of debate and research. Archaic Greek poets have been dated more accurately and concisely. This has been made possible by comparing evidence from material culture with literary evidence. Historians have come to an agreement. Hesiod and Homer lived in the seventh century BCE.[7] This changes how historians (can) study Archaic Greek poetry. Since historians used to date Hesiod and Homer a couple of centuries earlier than that.[8] Subsequently, these enquiries enable us now to investigate Greek poetry as part of Greek religious history in ways previously not possible.

Theory, and method

An epiphany is a phenomenon which concerns the awareness of a human or humans in which they encounter a deity or deities. Epiphanies are central to religion, because it is through divine-human communication, or interaction, that a god, or gods, is/are, defined as god(s) [i.e. as divine or supernatural or immortal]. In this regard the appearance of a friend in a dream is not regarded to be an epiphany, because the friend is regarded to be human. If, however, Athena appears in a dream, then that appearance is regarded as an epiphany, because it is by appearing that Athena reveals herself as goddess Athena. In other words, humans do not appear in epiphanies, they are witness to the epiphanies of the supernatural.

Georg Wissowa's re-editioned *Paulys Realencyclopädie der Altertumswissenschaft* introduced an entry on *Epiphanie* in a nearly fifty pages long article by Friedrich Pfister. Pfister wrote the first six pages solely on the terminology of *Epiphanie*, for the *Altertumswissenschaft*. He mentioned what the Greek *epiphaneia* meant in Classical and Hellenistic Greece first. The term *epiphaneia*, he said, meant "manifestation" in Classical Greece, but "manifestation or revelation (*Offenbarung*) of a god" in Hellenistic Greece.[9] The term *epiphaneia,* however, appeared to be too diverse in meaning for Pfister to discuss all of the variations. Thus he focused on the specific sense that a person was aware of when a divinity revealed itself to him. [10]

Age', in: I. Morris and B. Powell ed., *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden 1997) 535-559, 536. J. Bennet, 'Homer and the Bronze Age', in: I. Morris and B. Powell ed., *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden 1997) 509-534, 513. J. Latacz, *Homeros: de eerste dichter van het avondland* (Nijmegen 1989) 78-90. A. Heubeck, *Die Homerische Frage* (Darmstadt 1974) 213-228.

[7] M. Koiv, 'A Note On The Dating Of Hesiod', *The Classical Quarterly* 61:2 (2011) 355-377. W. Blümer, *Interpretation Archaischer Dichtung: Die mythologischen Partien der Erga Hesiods* (Münster 2001) 223-225. V. Parker, *Untersuchungen Zum Lelantischen Krieg Und Verwandten Problemen Der Frühgriechischen Geschichte* (Stuttgart 1997) 88-91. J. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth: A History of the City to 338 BC* (Oxford 1984) 67. R. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod, And The Hymns: Diachronic developments in epic diction* (Cambridge 1982) 94-98. A.J. Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets and Their Times* (Vancouver 1984) 20-22. R. Osborne, *Greece in the Making 1200-479 BC* (London and New York 1996) 159. M.L. West, 'The date of the Iliad', *MH* 52 (1995) 203-219, 209, 218-219. W. Burkert, 'Das hunderttorige Theben und die Datierung der *Ilias*', *Wiener Studien* 89 (1976) 5-21. J.M. Hall, *A History of the Archaic Greek World ca. 1200-479 BCE* (Oxford 2007) 25. J.S. Burgess, *The Tradition of the Trojan War in Homer and the Epic Cycle* (Baltimore 2001) 50.

[8] Bury, *A History*, 5, 50. McDonald and Thomas, *Progress Into The Past*, 296-298, 309-311. Morris, 'Homer and the Iron Age', 536. Bennet, 'Homer and the Bronze Age', 513.

[9] F. Pfister, 'Epiphanie', *RE* 4 (1924) 277-323, 277-278.

[10] Pfister, 'Epiphanie', 278.

Moreover, Pfister argued that epiphanies were central to religion in general. He referenced Albrecht Dieterich on the universal tendencies of religious thoughts and ideas.[11] According to Dieterich, all religions share the idea that the divine interacts with humans through revelation. The revelatory capacity of a divinity, Dieterich argued, is precisely what makes a divinity a divinity.[12] In light of this theory, Pfister defined *Epiphanie* as a phenomenon, a personal and visible revelation of a god, a hero, or a spirit of the dead among people.[13] In my own research, I will only focus on Pfister's theoretical approach of defining epiphany, and not on the etymological origins and meaning of *epiphaneia*.

In this investigation I shall define epiphany as a human-divine encounter. An encounter in which a god is known to reveal or have revealed itself to a human or humans. Humans form relationships with divinities because of epiphanies. I will also define religion as a set of relationships which exists between humans and a divine world. I agree with Dieterich that a divinity is known to be a divinity in religion, for the reason that it is known to have revealed itself to be a divinity. Therefore religion consists of relationships humans have with divinities who - according to them - have revealed themselves as divinities. It is not necessary that those divinities revealed themselves directly to humans, for humans to be in a relationship with those divinities.

Furthermore, I owe a lot of my work to the work of Georgia Petridou on Greek epiphanies. According to Georgia Petridou, there is a clear connection between Greek epiphanies and moments of crises. She maintained that epiphanies usually came about in the midst of a crisis, and granted authority to the person who witnessed the epiphany. Petridou mentioned that epiphanies came about in order to resolve the crisis, and were commemorated afterwards. [14] I use her scheme in broad terms only. I have taken the reflections of poets on the Muses' epiphany to be representative of a crisis of poetic authority.

Additionally, I assumed that this was also a religious crisis. Since poetic authority relied on the poet's gift to communicate with the Muses in epiphany. Thus poets questioned the relationship they had with the Muses, and the relationship their audience had with the Muses. Consequently, I have investigated what the origins of such a religious crisis could have been. Besides, I have studied the lives of the poets in order to look into the worlds they lived in.

Poetry was a performative art in ancient Greece, poets composed for the purpose to perform in front of an audience. In that regard, I have investigated the religious crises of poets as

[11] Pfister, 'Epiphanie', 281.

[12] A. Dieterich, 'Volksglaube und Volksbrauch in Altertum und Gegenwart', in: A. Dieterich ed., *Kleine Schriften* (Leipzig 1911) 312-323, 319.

[13] Pfister, 'Epiphanie', 277-278. For further reading on what constitutes an epiphany see also: E. Pax, *Epiphaneia: Ein religionsgeschichtlicher Beitrag zur biblischer Theologie* (Münich 1955) 1-22. H. Versnel, 'What Did Ancient Man See, when He Saw a God? Some Reflections on Graeco-Roman Epiphany', in: D. van der Plas ed., *Effigies Dei: Essays on the history of religions* (Leiden 1987) 42-55. R.L. Cioffi, 'Seeing Gods: Epiphany and Narrative in the Greek Novels', *Ancient Narrative* 11 (2014) 1-42, 3-8. J. Larson, *Understanding Greek Religion a cognitive approach* (New York 2016) 70-73, 88. R. Kochh Piettre, 'Anthropomorphism, theatre, epiphany from Herodotus to Hellenistic historians', *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 20:1 (2018) 189-209, 189-193. K. Schulz, *Recognizing Epiphany exploring the theme of Epiphany in the Epics of Homer, Appollonius and Vergil* (Oxford 2018: dissert.) 1-36. G. Petridou, *Divine Epiphany in Greek Literature and Culture* (Oxford 2015) 1-4.

[14] Petridou, *Divine Epiphany*, 18-19.

communal crises. I do not mean to say that the whole community would have experienced doubts in the same way; I only suggest that the environment at that time enabled poets to doubt and question the Muses' epiphany in front of an audience. Therefore, I have conducted research on the historical reality of poets' performances.

Studying the lives of Greek poets and the historical reality of their poetry is controversial. Ancient biographers and/or ancient commentators have been devalued by some modern scholars.[15] Poets' autobiographical comments have also been devalued by some scholars. The argument was that autobiographical comments were purposely inserted in poems to create a poetic persona.[16] The tradition of ancient biographers was devalued, because it would have created biographies based upon fictitious autobiographical comments. If the autobiographical comments were a-historical then ancient biographical tradition would have to be a-historical as well. In some cases, it was concluded that Hesiod and Homer never actually existed. Instead of historical figures, Hesiod and Homer were types of poetry or rather poetic traditions. Whenever a poet would have called himself 'Hesiod', it meant he performed in the tradition of Hesiodic poetry.[17]

Furthermore, I came to disagree with those scholars who denied the historical reality of Greek poets. A lot of research has been done to evaluate the liability of Greek biographical tradition, and the historical reality of Greek poems. I have discussed the reliability and historical value of the relevant sources for this thesis as well.

Moreover, I have used evidence on poets' lives from ancient biographers, and especially benefited from the research of M. Kivilo.[18] In the last decade Kivilo has done extensive research on the ancient biographical tradition. Her view on this tradition is particularly valuable for historians, because she showed that the biographical tradition did not just come into existence at the advent of writing. On the contrary, she maintained that biographies came into existence as soon as poets became famous for their poetry. In that sense she has treated the biographical tradition from the perspective that they continued an already existing tradition.[19] I have benefited from her approach, because it does not treat orality and literacy as opposite to each other. For this reason I largely stayed away from questions concerning orality and literacy. Such questions have already been discussed in length, and proved difficult to answer, and apart from this, they are not relevant for the subject of this thesis.

In this thesis I am interested to find out why there was a social demand for poets' reflections upon the Muses in epiphany. I have investigated this by focusing on the place of six poets in their societies. In other words, I have focused on the lives of these poets, within the context of their performances, and on the way in which they reflected upon their own task. Their reflections often concern the Muses, because the Muses granted these poets access to the divine poetic art.

[15] See (below) p. 16-17, 25, 50-51.
[16] See (below) p. 16-17, 25, 41, 50-51.
[17] See (below) p. 16-17.
[18] M. Kivilo, *Early Greek Poets' Lives: The Shaping of the Tradition* (Leiden 2010).
[19] Kivilo, *Early Greek Poets*, 4-6.

How can we study the social demands for poets' reflections? Poets lived and performed under specific circumstances. Poetic performance changed throughout time. If we want to know anything about the social demands for poets to reflect upon the Muses, then we must know more about the poets' life circumstances. We must find out when , where and how they lived. Only when we know more about the poets, we can find out why they performed, what they performed and when they performed (that).

Why is it possible to arrive at the social needs for poets' reflections by studying the poems? The poems inform us that these poets reflected, and also how they reflected, upon the Muses in epiphany. These reflections concern the way poets defined their own profession. If we carefully investigate the circumstances of composition and performance, and relate this to the history of performances, then we come closer to understanding the social demands for poets' reflections.

Furthermore, Greek poetry was a performative (performing) art. Studying Greek poems is vital for understanding the function of, the context of, and the social demands for poetic performances in Ancient Greece. Therefore, I have focused on the history and function of Greek poems, but also on the way these six poets describe their own art in their poems.

Additionally, I have approached the historical reality of these poets and their poetry by focusing on historical crises. I did not focus on the mechanism of performance or the technical aspects of Archaic and Classical Greek poetic art. On the contrary, I wanted to know what was going on in the lives of these six poets and their audiences. I have been interested in the relationship between crises and social demands to reflect upon the Muses and their epiphanies.

The state of research

A group of German scholars, led by Hermann Usener, identified Greek poetry as religion proper, at the end of the nineteenth century.[20] Religion, they believed, defined a realm of human experience and thought, wherein divinities revealed themselves in epiphanies. They argued that all religions define(d) that a god is a god, because it revealed itself to be a god. This made them recognize that Greek poems are religious texts. These texts were then studied on how divinities revealed themselves to humans in Greek religion. Subsequently, the revelatory nature of Greek divinities was framed in Friedrich Pfister's article '*Epiphanie*'. This work included an elaborate discussion on how divinities appeared in epiphany in Greek religion, but it excluded the discourse on the Muses in epiphany. According to Pfister, it was only possible to investigate what Greeks thought about the visible manifestations of divinities in epiphany. He focused on the Homeric epics and their accounts on visible divine-human

[20] A. Momigliano, 'Hermann Usener', *History and Theory: New Paths of Classicalism in the Nineteenth Century* 21:4 (1982) 33-48, 46-7. S. Marchand, 'From liberalism to neoromanticism: Albrecht Dieterich and Richard Reitzenstein and the religious turn in *fin de siècle* German classical studies', *Bulletin of the institute of Classical studies: out of arcadia* 46:79 (2003) 129-160. H. Usener, 'Mythologie', in: H. Usener ed., *Vorträge und Aufsatze* (Leipzig 1907) 37-66, 57-59. H. Usener, 'Geburt und Kindheit Christi', in: H. Usener ed., *Vorträge und Aufsatze* (Leipzig 1907) 159-188, 176. A. Dieterich und H. Usener, *Über Wesen und Ziele der Volkskunde* (Leipzig 1902) 7-8, 22-23.

interaction. He related their accounts with iconological evidence from vase depictions. He explicated that Greek poetry showed that Greek worshippers believed that their divinities manifested anthropomorphically. He argued that Greeks believed divinities walked amongst them in antiquity.

Furthermore, Pfister rendered a poet's experience of a divinity, or divinities, in epiphany beyond our grasp. The only thing we could know for sure, Pfister reasoned, was that the poet did have such sort of an experience, and that others believed that the poet's experience had been real. [21] His contemporary, Walter Otto, disagreed with him.[22]

Otto wrote a short study on the Muses. He argued that Greek poets experienced an auditory epiphany of the Muses. Poets heard the Muses' voices and hearing those voices authorized the religiosity of what they heard – memorized and commemorated by their songs. Otto did not mean to say, however, that Greek poets experienced an auditory hallucination. He explicated that Greek poets were unique, for they experienced divine presence at every occasion. He argued that Greek poets equated their gods with the natural course of the world itself. [23] Poets, he argued, felt the spirit of the Greek gods in every *being* and in every process or occurrence. Otto argued that Greek poets experienced the Muses in epiphany as a continual presence. Poets grasped the meaning of the world they lived in, and that's how they experienced the Muses in epiphany. Poets pierced through the reality of things, because they understood its voice. Otto viewed Greek poetry as an embodiment of Greek faith, rather than a literal account of the nature of divinities.[24] He disagreed with Pfister that Greeks believed their gods manifested anthropomorphically in antiquity. He maintained that Greek gods revealed themselves *in* human experience.

Otto was the first scholar who researched the relationship between poets and the Muses from the framework of epiphany. He distinguished two types of Greek religion based on two sorts of divine inspiration. On the one hand, there were rational poets who were inspired by the Muses. On the other hand, there were irrational poets who were inspired by Dionysus. According to Otto, 'rationalistic religion' implies that worshippers were interested in the way things are. Meanwhile, 'irrational religion' means that believers explained the world around them based upon the divine will of divinities. Greek tragic poets, Otto argued, were inspired by Dionysus, while Homer, Hesiod, Sappho and Pindar were inspired by the Muses.[25]

The problem with Otto's research on poets' experiences of the Muses in epiphany, is that he failed to understand Greek poetry as a performative art. He believed that religion was defined by epiphanic religious experiences. He was convinced that religious experiences were

[21] Pfister, 'Epiphanie', 321.
[22] W.F. Otto, *Die Musen und der Göttliche Ursprung des Singens und Sagens* (Tübingen 1955) 88.
[23] W.F. Otto, *Die Götter Griechenlands* (Frankfurt 1929) 218.
[24] Otto, *Die Götter Griechenlands*, 220.
[25] W.F. Otto, *Dionysus, Myth and Cult* (London 1965) 133-142, 209. For literature on the distinction between Dionysian and Olympian religion see also: E. Rohde, *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks* (London 1925) 260. M.P. Nilsson, *A History of Greek Religion* (Oxford 1949) 144-145, 194, 200-201, 205-206. E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley 1951) 68-69.

universal, and, therefore, could be studied by means of comparative analysis.[26] He compared the textual evidence of Greek poets' religious experiences to that of German poets in the nineteenth century, especially Friedrich Hölderlin. German poets, however, composed poems as works of literature. Consequently, Otto did not focus on the historical context of the Greek poets. He neglected the historical reality of Greek poetry.

Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood agreed with Otto that tragic poets were not inspired by the Muses. Contrarily, she disagreed with Otto that there was a type of rational (Olympian) Greek religion and irrational (Dionysian) Greek religion. She maintained that a new type of religion emerged at the beginning of the Classical period (ca. 500 BCE). She argued that religion was intertwined with *polis* organization. Every *polis* had its own local religion, but all *poleis* worshipped Panhellenic sanctuaries. Religious worship was determined by the worshipper's citizenship on a Panhellenic level. She argued there was a religious dimension on every level of *polis* organization. There was a lack of religious dogma and absolute religious authority. Religious authority was always contextual. For example, the religious authority of tragic poets pertained to a religious discourse. Religious authority was sanctioned and mediated by the *polis*.[27]

Sourvinou-Inwood argued that the authority of the Muses belonged to Archaic Greece. The ambiguous nature of the Muses to tell either truths or lies meant that there was not any clear religious authority.[28] She maintained that Athenian tragedy developed out of a need to engage with contradicting mythologies. In this regard, tragic poets functioned as a seer. According to Sourvinou-Inwood tragic poets did not need the authority of the Muses anymore, because their prophetic skills were accepted by their audiences.

The virtue of Sourvinou- Inwood's work has been that she showed that tragedy was part of *polis* religion at Athens. Thereby she opposed the dominant view that Dionysus was worshipped beyond the boundaries of the *polis*. On the other hand, however, she failed to draw attention to the presence of the Muses in Euripidean tragedy. She also neglected the historical reality of tragic plays. She studied tragic plays from the framework that tragic performances were part of ritualistic worship. Therefore, she focused merely on the ritualistic nature of the tragic plays.

Homer and Simonides have been studied in isolation to understand the invocation of the Muses in relation to the structure of the texts. Daniel Turkeltaub argued that Homer constructed a hierarchical model of different types of epiphanies in which the proximity of the hero to the divine determined the status of the hero.[29] This hierarchical structure, he said, was actualized during the performance of the Homeric epics for the reason that the poet's proximity to the divine gave him heroic status, while the audience stood beneath him for not being capable of experiencing the divine from up close. Turkeltaub argued that the Homeric

[26] W.F. Otto, *Die Manen oder Von den Urformen des Totenglaubens. Eine Untersuchung zur Religion der Griechen, Römer und Semiten und zum Volksglauben überhaupt* (Darmstadt 1958) 87-88.
[27] C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'What is Polis Religion?', in: O. Murray and S. Price ed., *The Greek City from Homer to Alexander* (Oxford 1990) 295-323, 295-302.
[28] C. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion* (Boston 2003) 12.
[29] D. Turkeltaub, 'Perceiving Iliadic Gods', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 103 (2007) 51-81, 53.

epics were structured in such a manner that epiphanies transformed the poetic imagination into theology.[30] Similarly Eva Stehle argued that the performer of Homeric poetry placed himself above his audience, but performers of Simonides' poetry did not. She argued that the poet still included the Muse as a poetic device which granted the performer of the poetry authority however, the proximity of the poet to the divine Muses showed more humility and distance according to Stehle.[31] Verity Platt argued in similar lines as well that the invocation of the Muses were artificially created by the poets so that whenever the poems were performed in front of an audience the content of the poem transformed into an account of the reality of things. The audience as witness of the performer's experience communicating with the Muses actualized the epiphanic nature of the performer's experience and transformed the performer into a religious authority.[32]

Turkeltaub, Platt, and Stehle were influenced by Sourvinou-Inwood her approach. They solely focused on the internal structure of Greek poems, and assumed that Greek poetry was always performed in a ritualistic context.

Bernard Dietrich focused on the origins, and external influences, of Greek religious ideas of (poetic) inspiration. He rebuked the view that Dionysian religion was different from Olympian religion. There is not sufficient evidence, he argued, to conclude that Greek religious thought developed from irrational to rational throughout time. [33] He argued, unlike Sourvinou-inwood, that (tragic) poets were inspired by the Muses in the Classical period. Dietrich argued that Hesiod and Homer received their poetry from the Muses as a skill. They received the skill to memorize and recall multiple poetic songs.[34] He argued that ideas on divine inspiration changed during the Classical period.[35] He argued that Plato expresses an idea on divine inspiration, whereby the poet enters a state of madness. Dietrich connected this with ecstatic Dionysian worship, and Pythian oracular inspiration.[36] Dietrich's work has been valuable, but he did not focus on the demand for, and context of, performance. He did not focus on the function poets had in their respective societies.

Moreover, Dietrich's view was directly opposed by a project on the Muses and inspiration, which followed on a conference. This conference led to a bundle of articles published under the name *Cultivating the Muse struggles for Power and Inspiration in Classical Literature*.[37] This project followed the view of Marcel Detienne on divine inspiration. According to Detienne, Greek thought developed from irrational to rational in Archaic and Classical

[30] Turkeltaub, 'Perceiving Iliadic Gods', 75-77.
[31] E. Stehle, 'A Bard of the Iron Age and His Auxiliary Muse', in: D. Boedeker and D. Sider ed., *The New Simonides: Contexts of Praise and Desire* (New York 2001) 106-119, 106-111.
[32] V. Platt, *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Culture: Art, Literature, Religion* (Cambridge 2011) 59-63.
[33] B.C. Dietrich, 'Oracles and Divine Inspiration', *Kernos* 3 (1990) 157-174.
[34] Ibidem, 160-162.
[35] Ibidem, 160.
[36] Dietrich, 'Oracles and Divine Inspiration', 173.
[37] E. Spentzou and D. Fowler ed., *Cultivating the Muse struggles for power and inspiration in classical literature* (Oxford 2002) V-VI.

Greece.[38] Increased bureaucracy would have brought about this change in Greek thought. Hesiod and Homer were said to have been inspired directly by the Muses. They would have merged with the voices of the Muses. They would have been receptive to the Muses in the creative process, rather than active and self-aware participants. According to this view, Greek poets were subjected to the will and authority of the divine. This would have been characteristic for an oral culture. This would have changed, however, when literacy developed in the fifth century BCE. Tragic poets would not have been receptive to the authority of the Muses anymore. They would have been more self-aware than Homer and Hesiod. Meanwhile, Plato would have altered the Muses' personifications. He would have created a divine order in which a philosophical Muse is more inspiring and knowledgeable than all other Muses.[39] This would have been the moment when the Muses became philosophical rather than poetical.

Georgia Petridou argued against the above. She maintained that the Muses became the (Panhellenic) patron deities of poetry, for the first time, in the Hellenistic period. Petridou argued that different deities were associated with poetic inspiration in the Archaic and Classical periods. Petridou studied the context in which poets were said to have received their poetry from the Muses. She argued that poets were said to have received their poetry in isolated places where they encountered the Muses. The Muses gave the gift of song to poets and either manifested themselves auditory or visually to the poets. She maintained that narratives about Greek poets experiencing the Muses in epiphany included liminal spaces. For example, the Muses would often have appeared when a poet was alone on a mountain, or in a cave. In this regard, she did not focus on the historical reality of Greek poetry in Archaic and Classical Greece, but on its reception in Hellenistic and Imperial literary sources.[40] Petridou's research on epiphanies has been valuable. She paved the way for future researchers to explore the connection between Greek epiphanies and moments of crises. Even though she did primarily focus on the narrative structure of epiphanies and crises in Greek literature, rather than the historical reality.

Interestingly, scholars disagree on the moment that the Muses became important deities, as well as on why they were important. The role of the Muses in Greek religion and their relationship to Greek poets remains controversial. Similarly, the position of poets and the function of poetry in Archaic and Classical Greek society remains controversial.

Moreover, I'd like to make a final point in regard to what we have discussed in this section. Scholars interested in Greek epiphanies have consistently, differentiated Greek religious texts, from Greek areligious texts. The so-called Greek philosophical tradition was considered 'secularized' by Pfister, and 'despiritualized' by Otto.[41] The problem with distinguishing rational from irrational Greek thought is that it calls certain texts religious and other texts areligious. This has come to change, however, in the last decade. Several scholars started to

[38] Spentzou, 'Introduction: Secularizing the Muse', 5. M. Detienne, *The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece* (New York 1996) 50-52.
[39] Cavarero, 'The Envied Muse', 64-67. Murray, 'Plato's Muses', 44-46.
[40] Petridou, *Divine Epiphany*, 214-221.
[41] Pfister, 'Epiphanie', 277-280. W.F. Otto, *The Homeric Gods: The Spiritual Significance of Greek Religion* (London 1954) 169.

highlight that the so-called presocratic philosophers would never have identified themselves as philosophers.[42] That label only became relevant in the works of Plato and Aristotle. The so-called presocratic philosophers engaged with Greek poets and with each other. Subsequently, presocratic philosophers should be called 'poets', rather than 'presocratic philosophers'.

Preliminary expectations

Before, I mentioned that reflections on the Muses and their epiphanies have not yet been investigated in relation to poets' lives. Therefore, I want to explore the lives of the poets and find out if we can come to know more about their use of the Muses.

Moreover, I am curious if we can find an explanation why poets reflected on the Muses and their epiphanies. Perhaps there is an explanation which lies in the socio-political sphere? Can we conclude that a reflection on the Muses and their epiphanies was the same thing as reflecting on the divine order of things? Were poets tasked with readdressing the divine order of things whenever society experienced moments of crisis? Was there a social demand to readdress the divine and human world when poets reflected upon the Muses in epiphany during their poetic performance?

[42] Benzi, 'The Redefinition of Poetic Authority', 15-41. Mualem, *Borges and Plato*, 155-163. M.L.G. Marciano, 'Images and Experience: At the Roots of Parmenides' *Aletheia*', *Ancient Philosophy* 28 (2008) 21-48.

Chapter 1

Poets and poetry in Archaic Greece

Archaic source material shows a close connection between poets and the Muses. The Muses however appear in different forms and different shapes in our source material from that period (ca. 700-500 BCE). We can detect a discourse on the authority and legitimacy of the poetic song of the poet, based on its proximity to the Muses.[43]

This current chapter focuses on early Archaic Greek poetic source material, namely Hesiod, Homer and Sappho. These sources reveal that the authority of the poets relied on the epiphanic relationship between the poets and the Muses. The Muses manifested themselves in epiphany to the poets and gifted them with divine speech. The manner in which the Muses revealed themselves in epiphany, however, differed from poet to poet.

Hesiod, Homer, and Sappho are important to understand the culture involved with and revolved around poetry in Ancient Greece. Their accounts on the Muses show light on the occasions at which poetry was performed at that time. Celebratory activities and festivities were intimately connected to the poetic craft as well as to the Muses.[44]

Early Greek poetry was an oral tradition in which poets sang their poems accompanied by the play on a lyre. These poets were called singers (*aoidoi*). Somewhere during the Archaic period, however, poets started to recite their poetry accompanied by the beat of a staff. These poets are called rhapsodists (*rhapsoidoi*) or 'stitchers of songs'.[45]

However there were important changes from Archaic to Classical times. *Poleis* developed themselves and often changed the ways societies used to be organized. The role of poets must have changed alongside these developments as well.

This current chapter will focus on the relationship between poet and Muses in early Archaic poetry. The purpose of this chapter is to understand the role of the poet in Archaic Greek society by looking at the poet's relationship to the Muses, the historical reality of the poets, and the history of their poetry and poetic performances. The question of this chapter is:

What, then, was the place of the servant of the Muses in Archaic Greece?

1.1

Hesiod, Homer, and Sappho

Hesiod is, nowadays, associated with two, sometimes with three, poems which have been preserved up until the present. Two poems self-reference Hesiod. These poems are the *works*

[43] Fowler, 'Gods in early Greek historiography', 318-334. Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy*, 12. Spentzou and Fowler ed., *Cultivating the Muse* (Oxford 2002). Ledbetter, *Poetics before Plato*. Benzi, 'The Redefinition of Poetic Authority', 15-17. Mualem, *Borges and Plato*, 155-163.
[44] D.J. Rayor, *The Homeric Hymns A Translation with Introduction and Notes* (London 2014) 4-6.
[45] Rayor, *The Homeric Hymns*, 4.

and days and the *theogony*. Both poems differ significantly from each other in content. The latter, the *theogony*, is a genealogy of the gods and an account on how Zeus came to rule the Olympus. The former, *works and days*, is a counsel on how to properly run a small estate or household; i.e. an account that contains the do's and don'ts for a full year as an estate owner. The third poem associated with Hesiod by modern day scholars does not self-reference Hesiod. This poem, called the shield of Heracles, has the same sort of poetic style as the other two Hesiodic poems. This chapter will only focus on the poems which self-reference Hesiod for the reason that these contain passages in which Hesiod is said to have met the Muses in epiphany.

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are two epics attributed to Homer. Besides these epics there are thirty-four hymns preserved and attributed to him as well.[46] In this thesis I will only focus on the Homeric epics for the reason that they self-reference Homer as the poet.

In contrast to Hesiodic and Homeric poetry only fragments of Sapphic poetry have survived up until the present.

Hesiod and Homer: poets amidst crisis and war

When did Hesiod and Homer live?

Traditionally, scholars have put Homer before Hesiod. In this chapter I put Hesiod before Homer, because I support the view that Hesiod was somewhat older than Homer. Before continuing to Hesiod's and Homer's date, I should note that some scholars have denied the historical reality of both Hesiod and Homer.[47] Both were considered to be representative of a tradition of poetry, whereby poets would have sung in the voice of either Hesiod or Homer. According to this view autobiographical comments in Hesiodic poetry were historically inaccurate. Poets consciously created a persona which suited the occasion of performance.

[46] Rayor, *Homeric Hymns*, 4-6, argued that the Homeric hymns were composed by many different poets who traveled around from the Archaic period up until the Hellenistic period. P. Green, *The Odyssey a New Translation* (California 2018) 10-11, argued that the world of the *Iliad* represents a different historical world than that of the *Odyssey*. Green argued that although we speak of Homer the *Iliad* was composed by another person than the *Odyssey* as well as long before the *Odyssey*. He argued that the *Odyssey* represented the 7th century BCE, and, therefore, dated the *Odyssey* to that century. B.B. Powell, *The Poems of Hesiod: Theogony, Works and Days, and The Shield of Herakles* (Oakland 2017) 2-8, argued on the contrary that Homer was one person responsible for composing the Homeric epics. M.S. Jensen, *The Homeric Question And The Oral-Formulaic Theory* (Copenhagen 1980) 157, argued that there was an original 'Homer' who was believed to have invented epic poetry, and a second 'Homer' who composed the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* at Athens in the sixth century BCE.

[47] K. Stoddard, *The Narrative Voice in the Theogony of Hesiod* (Leiden 2004) XI-II, argued that the *theogony* was composed by a skilled poet and that the autobiographical account should be taken as a rhetorical device. Blankenborg, *Hesiodos*, 28-29. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans*, 5. T.M. Compton, *Victim of the Muses: Poet as Scapegoat, Warrior and Hero in Greco-Roman And Indo-European Myth and History* (Washington 2006) 70-71. Boterf, 'Placing the Poet', 92, argued that many different poets performed the works of Homer and temporarily resurrected Homer through their performances. Scodel, 'The individual Voice', 74; N.F. Jones, 'Work "In Season," and the Purpose of Hesiod's "Works and Days"', *The Classical Journal* 79:4 (1984) 107-323, 317, 322, argued on the contrary that Hesiod's *Works and Days* revealed a consistent internal structure, which proved it was composed by one person.

According to this view, the audience was well aware of the fictional reality of autobiographical comments.[48] For the reason that autobiographical comments were rendered fiction, the biographical tradition was also discarded.[49] Some scholars argued that Hellenistic writers, were the first to understand autobiographical comments literally. The reason those writers took those comments literally, was that they learned poetry through text rather than by performance. This meant they lacked the capacity to understand the meaning of autobiographical comments. The argument has been made that the act of reading poetry was what motivated Hellenistic writers to compose biographies.[50]

The view that autobiographical comments were only considered to be real by Hellenistic writers can easily be disproved. Herodotus discussed Sappho's sentiments to her brother, and the life of her brother, based upon what she had sung about her brother (Hdt. *Hist*. 2. 135). In other words, autobiographical comments from poems were already discussed, and believed to refer to actual events, in the Classical period.

The ancient biographical tradition on Hesiod and Hesiod's autobiographical comments can be approached from the point of view that it contains historical reality. [51] For that reason it is important to include material evidence. Hesiodic poetry and ancient sources on Hesiod mention events, places, and occupations. With the help of material evidence it is possible to assess whether or not someone may have lived, and something may have happened. In other words, we can assess the historical reality of ancient biographies by looking at the evidence from material culture.

Literary sources which date back to the sixth century BCE discussed the dating of Hesiod and Homer, and especially the matter if both were contemporaries.[52] These matters continued to be discussed far into the Roman period. We can only assume that the sources left to us in the present, are a fraction of what this lively debate encompassed in antiquity. The dates given by ancients range from the twelfth to the seventh century BCE.[53] Failure to conclude an exact date for both poets, probably fueled the discussion for centuries without an end in sight. The ancient sources on the lives of both poets were discussed in length by M. Kivilo and M. Koiv in the last decade.[54] Although I owe significant work to their studies, unlike them, I will not discuss all the different opinions of the ancients. I am not interested in evaluating the liability of all the ancient biographers. I am merely interested in the liable sources and what they can teach us on the lives of Hesiod, Homer, and Sappho. Therefore, I only discuss the biographers who appear liable sources.

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[48] E.L. Bowie, 'Lies fiction and slander in early Greek poetry', in: C. Gill and T.P. Wiseman ed., *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (Exeter 1993) 36.
[49] M.R. Lefkowitz, *The Lives Of The Greek Poets* (Baltimore 1981) 1-24.
[50] Kivilo, *Early Greek Poets*, 4. L. Kurke, 'The strangeness of 'song culture': Archaic Greek poetry', in: O. Taplin ed., *Literature In The Greek And Roman Worlds: A new perspective* (Oxford 2000) 58-87, 59.
[51] Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 209, made a similar point in case of Pindar. A. Dihle, *A History of Greek Literature: From Homer to the Hellenistic Period* (London 1994) 38-56, wrote a history on Archilochus and Sappho by critically assessing the autobiographical comments in comparison to the biographical tradition. Koiv, 'A Note', 355-377; Kivilo, *Early Greek Poets*, 6, 8-61, 167-200, critically assessed the biographical tradition.
[52] M. Koiv, 'A Note', 355-377. Kivilo, *Early Greek Poets*, 45-52.
[53] Koiv, 'A Note', 358-364.
[54] Kivilo, *Early Greek Poets*, 8-61. Koiv, 'A Note', 358-364.

Moreover, a common approach to date Hesiod nowadays, has been to find a date for the Lelantine war.[55] The reason for that is that Hesiod mentions, Hesiod had participated in a funerary musical competition honoring Amphidamas, at Chalcis (*W&D*. 648-659).[56] These autobiographical comments probably are historical facts. For Hesiod mentions he had won a tripod at the contest which he dedicated near mount Helicon. Pausanius informs us that during his lifetime Hesiod's tripod was still there (9.31.3.).

Moreover, Oliver Taplin stated 'it is a fact that bronze tripods (vertical-legged cauldrons) were the prestige prizes and dedications of the time, as is clear from excavations at Olympia'.[57] This is also supported by Homer's *Iliad*.[58] A tripod was the prize to be won at the games at Elis and during the funerary games of Patroklos (*Il*. 11. 696; 22. 160; 23. 510, 700-720).

Additionally, Plutarch informs us that Amphidamas was a warrior who fought and died during the Lelantine war (*Sept*. 10). According to Thucydides the Lelantine war had been another significant war, besides the Peloponnesian war, in which Greeks had fought other Greeks (1.15.2). He mentions that this war initially arose from a land dispute between Chalcis and Eretria, but that other Greek city-states became involved as well. Thucydides mentions that the war started around 740 BCE and continued to 700 BCE. The beginning took place when the Corinthians, allies of Chalcis, forced Eretrians out of Corcyra (1.13.3-4).[59] There has been scholarly disagreement about the duration of the Lelantine war.[60] Most scholars, however, agreed that it started between 730 and 710 BCE.[61] Archaeological evidence suggests that several places in Euboea were damaged, destructed, and abandoned after 710 BCE.[62] A decline in Euboean overseas trade in pottery wares occurred around the same time.[63] Based on the archaeological evidence a start in 710 BCE is more likely.

Furthermore, there is reason to assume that the Lelantine war continued far into the seventh century BCE. Around 690 BCE several warrior graves in Eretria received a *heroön*, a triangular

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[55] Blümer, *Interpretation*, 223-225. Parker, *Untersuchungen*, 88-91. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth*, 67. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod*, 94-98. Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 20-22. Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 159. West, 'The date of the Iliad', 209, 218-219. B.B. Powell, *Homer and the Origin of the Greek Alphabet* (Cambridge 1991) 187-188.

[56] O. Taplin, 'The spring of the Muses: Homer and related poetry', in: O. Taplin ed., *Literature In The Greek And Roman Worlds: A new perspective* (Oxford 2000) 22-57, 25-27, argued in length why Hesiod's autobiographical comments were historical facts. Blümer, *Interpretation*, 223-225; Parker, *Untersuchungen*, 88-91; Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth* 67; Janko, *Homer, Hesiod*, 94-98; Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 20-22; Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 159; West, 'The date of the Iliad', 209, 218-219, accepted Hesiod's autobiographical comments in regard to his victory at Chalcis as historical facts. Bowie, 'Lies fiction and slander', 36-37; Lefkowitz, *The Lives Of The Greek Poets*, 1-2, doubted the historical reality of Hesiod's autobiographical comments.

[57] Taplin, 'The spring of the Muses', 26.

[58] See (below) p. 38 for the date on Homer's *Iliad*.

[59] J.N. Coldstream, *Geometric Greece 900 – 700 BC* (London 1979) 200, argued that it actually begun with a banishment on Sicily (Thuc. VI. 4.1.).

[60] W. Blümer, *Interpretation*, 225; West, 'The date of the Iliad', 218-219; Coldstream, *Geometric Greece*, 200, argued for a short duration of the war. Parker, *Untersuchungen*, 91; Janko, *Homer, Hesiod*, 95-96; Koiv, 'A Note', 375-376, argued for a long duration of the Lelantine war.

[61] Blümer, *Interpretation*, 225; Koiv,'A Note', 375; West, 'The date', 218-219; Coldstream, *Geometric Greece*, 200, argued that the war started around 730 BCE. Parker, *Untersuchungen*, 91; Janko, *Hesiod, Homer*, 95, argued that the war started around 710 BCE.

[62] Janko, *Hesiod, Homer*, 95. Coldstream, *Geometric Greece*, 200.

[63] Coldstream, *Geometric Greece*, 200.

shrine which marked the dead as heroes. The warrior graves date to the late eighth century BCE. Votives dated from the early to the late seventh century BCE were dedicated to the graves of those heroes.[64] This indicates that a hero cult came into existence in Eritrea during the Lelantine war. The fact that worship of these heroes continued to exist for almost a century, makes it likely that the Lelantine war remained relevant to the worshippers for that time period. This does not mean, however, that the Lelantine war continued for so long.

Moreover, Archilochus, who lived between 700 and 650 BCE, mentions that Euboean war lords only fought with their swords, and not with their bows and missiles (fr. 3D).[65] Strabo mentions an inscription in an Eretrian sanctuary about a pact between both sides of the Lelantine war to fight without missiles (10.1.12-13). In light of Strabo's comment on this pact, several historians supported the idea that Archilochus witnessed the Lelantine war.[66] This means that the Lelantine war continued at least up until 660 or 650 BCE.

Plutarch's comment that Amphidamas was a warrior who died during the Lelantine war is convincing. Archaeological evidence supports the idea that hero cults came into existence in Eritrea. Eritrea fought against Chalcis during the Lelantine war. It is likely that hero cults were founded in Chalcis during that time as well. This explains why Hesiod participated in a funerary competition at Chalcis. Taking the above into consideration, it is likely that Hesiod lived during the Lelantine war between 710 and 660/650 BCE.[67]

In contrast to Hesiod's poetry, Homer's poetry does not contain autobiographical data. For information on Homer's life, on when and where he lived, we rely for the most part on what the ancient biographers tell us about his life. However, ancient biographies often contradict each other on Homer's date and place of birth. The ancient biographers alone are not sufficient in providing the answers on Homer's life. In that regard, modern historians have compared the content of the Homeric epics to archaeological, iconological and epigraphic evidence to date the Homeric epics.[68] Comparative analysis between ancient and medieval poetry, revealed that poets described their present worlds from which they drew inspiration. Moses Finley argued that poets cannot separate themselves from certain practices, social relations and material objects which are peculiar to a place in time. He made the argument that poets probably were not even aware that they described elements of their own world.[69] In this regard, Homer's descriptions of events, social relations and objects, have been compared to literary sources and evidence from material culture.

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[64] Ibidem, 196-197.

[65] A. Blakeway, 'The date of Archilochus', in: C. Bailey ed., *Greek poetry and life: Essays presented to Gilbert Murray on his seventieth Birthday* (Oxford 1936), 34-55, 53-54, argued Archilochus flourished around 685 BCE and died around 660 BCE. P. Green, *The Shadow of the Parthenon: Studies in Ancient History and Literature* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 2008) 272-274, argued Archilochus lived from 715 BCE until 651 BCE.

[66] Koiv, 'A Note', 375-376. Parker, *Untersuchungen*, 91; Janko, *Homer, Hesiod*, 95-96. W. Donlan, 'Archilochos, Strabo and the Lelantine War', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 101 (1970) 131-142, 141-142.

[67] See (below) p. 38 for a more specific date on Amphidamas' funeral.

[68] G.S. Kirk, 'Objective dating criteria in Homer', *MH* 17 (1960) 189-205. Powell, *Homer*, 187-220. West, 'The date of the Iliad', 203-219.

[69] M.I. Finley, *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece* (London 1981) 213-214, 218.

Historians agreed that Homer should be dated between the twelfth and eighth centuries BCE, at the beginning of the twentieth century. The idea was that the Homeric epics described the thirteenth century BCE.[70] Scholars started to compare the Homeric epics to material evidence from the eighth, seventh, and sixth century BCE, in the second half of the twentieth century.[71] Several scholars have argued that Homer was younger than Hesiod, and should be placed in the seventh century BCE.[72] Evidence which supports a seventh century BCE date for Homer suggests that Homer was familiar with hoplite warfare. The *Iliad* contains passages which resemble the development of hoplite warfare. The beginning of hoplite warfare dates to the early seventh century BCE.[73]

Moreover, Walter Burkert suggested that the passage in which Archilles mentions that he would not even want to fight if Agamemnon offered him all the riches of Egyptian Thebes may refer to the invasion of Thebes by the Assyrians in 663 BCE. Similarly, Burkert argued that descriptions of the fall of Troy (*Il.* 12.17-32) resemble the Assyrian invasion of Babylon in 689 BCE.[74]

Additionally, Achilles' shield produced by Hephaestus (*Il.* 18.468-608) shows similarities with Cypro-Phoenician metallurgy from the seventh century BCE. Homer's elaborate description of Archilles' shield and Hephaestus metallurgic skills were probably inspired by Cypro-Phoenician metallurgy.[75] Similarly, Homer describes the cup of Nestor in a way which resembles an Eastern Greek *kotyle* dated to the late eighth century BCE (*Il*. 11.632-637).[76] These similarities between descriptions from the *Iliad* and artifacts from the late eighth and early seventh century BCE, suggest that Homer was familiar with those and influenced by those.

Moreover, iconological depictions of the Homeric epics have been attested to appear for the first time on pottery dated to the last quarter of the seventh century BCE and onwards.[77] This suggests that Homer was operative before 625 BCE. Homer's life as an operating poet would

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[70] Bury, *A History*, 5, 50. McDonald and Thomas, *Progress Into The Past*, 296-298, 309-311. Morris, 'Homer and the Iron Age', 536. Bennet, 'Homer and the Bronze Age', 513.

[71] Powell, *Homer*, 218-220. W. Schadewaldt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk* (Stuttgart 1959) 93-96. G.S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge 1962) 282-287. Heubeck, *Die homerische Frage*, 213-228. J.P. Crielaard, 'Homer, history and archaeology: some remarks on the date of the Homeric world', in: J.P. Crielaard ed., *Homeric Questions: Essays in Philology, Ancient History and Archaeology* (Amsterdam 1995) 201-288. Burkert, 'Das hunderttorige Theben', 5-21. Jensen, *The Homeric Question*, 157. A. Snodgrass, 'Homer and Greek Art', in: I. Morris and B. Powell ed., *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden 1997) 560-597, 580. W. Donlan, 'The Homeric Economy', in: I. Morris and B. Powell ed., *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden 1997) 649-667, 651-653. R.M. Rosen, 'Homer and Hesiod', in: I. Morris and B. Powell ed., *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden 1997) 463-488, 465-472. B. Graziosi and J. Haubold, *Homer: The Resonance of Epic* (London 2005) 19-20.

[72] Hall, *A History*, 25. West, 'The Date of the Iliad', 203-219. H. van Wees, 'The Homeric Way of War: the Iliad and the Hoplite Phalanx I', in: I. Mcausland and P. Walcot ed., *Greece and Rome* 41:1 (1994) 1-18, 1,2,14. H. van Wees, 'The Homeric Way of War: the Iliad and the Hoplite Phalanx II', in: I. Mcausland and P. Walcot ed., *Greece and Rome* 41:2 (1994) 131-155, 147-8. Crielaard, 'Homer, history and archaeology', 274.

[73] Hall, *A History*, 25. West, 'The Date of the Iliad', 203-219. Van Wees, 'The Homeric Way of War: the Iliad and the Hoplite Phalanx II', 147-8.

[74] Burkert, 'Das hunderttorige Theben', 16, 20-21. Hall, *A History*, 25; West, 'The Date of the Iliad', 211-218; Crielaard, 'Homer, history and archaeology', 229; made the same point as Burkert.

[75] West, 'The Date of the Iliad', 210. Crielaard, 'Homer, history and archaeology', 218-224.

[76] Hall, *A History*, 25. Crielaard, 'Homer, history and archaeology', 210.

[77] West, 'The Date of the Iliad', 207.

probably have fallen between 675 BCE and 625 BCE. Strabo dated Homer to the seventh century BCE as well (1.2.9).[78] This dating is plausible, and entails that Homer and Hesiod were contemporaries with each other and with Archilochus as well (*Greek Anthology* 7. 674; 11. 20).

Where and how did Hesiod and Homer live?

Hesiod came from Ascra, a village situated near mount Helicon (*W&D* 540). Ascra was a small village, and its inhabitants abandoned it somewhere in the fifth or fourth century BCE.[79] Hesiod mentions that his father had fled from Aiolian Cyme (Asia Minor) to Ascra. He mentions that his father had fled because of poverty (*W&D* 532-542). The fourth century BCE historian, Ephorus of Cyme, gives an alternative explanation. He mentions that Hesiod's father had fled because of a blood feud. According to Ephorus, Hesiod's father had killed someone and successfully escaped his crime by fleeing to Boeotia (70f.100). Ephorus traces Hesiod's ancestry to Chariphemus, the founder of Cyme. He was also said to have descended from Melanopus, a Cymean poet. According to this genealogy, Hesiod was also the cousin and contemporary of Homer. According to Ephorus, Homer was born in Aeolian Cyme. Ephorus mentions that Homer's mother was raped by her uncle, Maion, and that this resulted in her becoming pregnant of Homer. Before Homer was born Maion arranged a marriage for Homer's mother with Phemius of Smyrna. According to Ephorus Homer learned poetry from Phemius (Pseudo-Plutarch, 1. 2-3; 2. 1-2; Anonymous 1, 2 (Vita Romana)); Anonymous 3, 1 (Vita Scorialensis 2). According to Aristotle, however, Homer was a son of divinities which danced with the Muses (probably the Graces). Homer's mother was kidnapped by pirates, while she was pregnant of Homer, and brought to Smyrna where she married the Lydian king, Maion (Pseudo-Plutarch, 1. 3-4). Ephorus and Aristotle, however, agree upon the fact that Homer was born near the river Meles, and given the name Melesigenes at his birth. They also agree upon the fact that Homer's mother was called Critheis.

In consideration of time and place, it is possible that Hesiod and Homer were relatives as Ephorus suggests. An argument which supports Ephorus' account is that poets were often born into aristocratic families in Archaic Greece.[80] Contrarily, Hesiodic and Homeric poetry do not support Ephorus' account. Regardless, Ephorus wrote his history from a localized perspective. He must have been acquainted with localized sources about the background of the poets' families. His own background makes it likely that his interest in these poets was also influenced by local history. If Hesiod and Homer both came from aristocratic families, this would explain why they were accomplished enough to compose famous and influential poems.

According to pseudo-Herodotus Homer lived in Cyme for a while (*Lives of Homer*, 11-16). Pseudo-Herodotus mentions several inscriptions and epigrams credited to Homer. He mentions that an inscription composed by Homer, in which Homer went by Homer's birth name, Melesigenes, still existed when he was alive (epigr. 3). Pseudo-Herodotus mentions that Homer was eventually displeased by the lords of Cyme, because they refused to support him

[78] Hall, *A History*, 25.
[79] A.T. Edwards, *Hesiod's Ascra* (London 2004) 171.
[80] R. Thomas, 'The place of the Poet in Archaic society', in: B.B. Powell ed., *The Greek World* (New York 1995) 104-129.

financially (*Lives of Homer*, 12-15). Subsequently, Homer would have cursed and left Cyme (*Lives of Homer*, 15). According to Pseudo-Herodotus, Homer moved around a lot after that incident at Cyme (*Lives of Homer*, 16-35). Although it is impossible to determine if the story on Homer's connection to Cyme is true, it is likely that Homer moved around a lot in his life. Ancient biographers mention that several cities have stories on how Homer lived and performed there (Anonymous 1, *life of Homer*, 2 (Vita Romana); Pseudo-Plutarch, *On Homer*, 2-3; *Greek Anthology*, 16. 294-299).

In regard to how Hesiod lived scholars rely for the most part on his *Works and Days*. Hesiod mentions there that at the moment he composed his *Works and Days* he had only traveled on a ship once, namely when he had gone to the musical contest at Chalcis (550-555). He did not live from his profession as a poet. His main profession was farming. In *Works and Days* he settles an inheritance dispute with his brother, by teaching him how to become a successful farmer (*W&D* 35-45).

Several scholars have doubted the historical reality of *Works and Days*.[81] There are several reasons, however, why *Works and Days* proves to be a valuable historical source. In contrast to the *Theogony* and the Homeric epics, this poem does not solely focus on a mythological past. This poem concerns itself with Hesiod's present [i.e. a dispute with his brother], and with his brother's future [i.e. how his brother should farm in his future life]. In relation to this dispute, and Hesiod's attempt to settle it, he gives information about the place he lives, how he farms, and how his village relates to Thespia, the nearby town (*W&D* 265-695). In this regard, scholars have investigated the agricultural economy presented by Hesiod's poetry,[82] and concluded that Hesiod's account of farming aligns with Ascra's ecology.[83]

Moreover, Hesiod describes Ascra as 'miserable and wretched'. He mentions it is a poor village with cold winters and insufferable summers (*W&D* 540). Hesiod's negative sentiment towards Ascra may reflect his own struggle, and his family's struggle to keep up their living. In the *theogony* the Muses refer to Hesiod as 'merest bellies'; a farmer herding his sheep in need for food (*Th.*25). In *Works and Days* he mentions that Zeus punished humankind by taking away

[81] Osborne, *Greece In The Making*, 140, 146-147, 156-157. R. Rosen, 'Poetry and Sailing in Hesiod's Works and Days', *Classical Antiquity* 9:1 (1990) 99-113. G. Nagy, 'Theognis and Megara: A Poet's Vision of His City', in: T.J. Figueira and G. Nagy ed., *Theognis of Megara: Poetry and the Polis* (Baltimore 1985) 22-81, 57-58, 62-66. Jones, 'Work', 317.

[82] T.E. Rihll and A.G. Wilson, 'Modelling settlement structures in Ancient Greece: new approaches to the polis', in: J. Rich. A. Wallace-Hadrill ed., *City and Country in the Ancient World* (London 1991) 60-97, 83, 85. A.M. Snodgrass, 'Archaeology and the study of the Greek city', in: J. Rich. A. Wallace-Hadrill ed., *City and Country in the Ancient World* (London 1991) 1-24, 14-15. W.G. Cavanagh, 'Surveys, Cities and Synoecism', in: J. Rich. A. Wallace-Hadrill ed., *City and Country in the Ancient World* (London 1991) 98-119, 99, 105-107. I. Morris, 'The Early Polis as City and State', in: J. Rich. A. Wallace-Hadrill ed., *City and Country in the Ancient World* (London 1991) 25-59, 31, 38-41. V.D. Hanson, *The Other Greeks: The Family Farm and the Agrarian Roots of Western Civilization* (New York 1995) 95-108. I. Morris, *Archaeology as Cultural History: Words and Things in Iron Age Greece* (Malden 2000) 163-168. Edwards, *Hesiod's Ascra*, 132, 156-158. W. Barry, 'Alone in the village: Hesiod and his community in the *Works and Days*', *Classical Philology* 111 (2016) 305-329.

[83] Edwards, *Hesiod's Ascra*, 132, 156-158, provided the lengthiest account of Ascra's ecology in comparison to *Works and Days*' farming cycle. Barry, 'Alone in the village', 305-329, agreed with Edwards that *Works and Days* was performed for an Ascran audience, and that Hesiod had a farm there. Contrarily, Barry argued (against Edwards) that Hesiod's agricultural views about self-sufficiency, prosperity, and inheritance were foreign to Hesiod's Ascran audience, because Hesiod was an immigrant after all. See also: Hanson, *The Other Greeks*, 95.

their sustenance (80-86). Hesiod describes a harsh and poor reality typical of a subsistence economy.[84] In a subsistence economy households are self-sufficient and highly autonomous.

In case of studying Homer's life the lack of autobiographical comments in Homeric poetry, posits a serious challenge to historians. Attempts have been made to study the Homeric world by investigating the social relationships and transactions in the epics.[85] Homer mentions several poets in his epics, and an argument can be made that this would represent his own social standing. What speaks for this is that he consistently describes poets as guests at aristocratic courts. Another aspect to this is that he describes a reality which focuses on towns, rather than on the countryside. According to several historians Homer describes a political economy. Political economies are characterized by the exchange of goods, interdependent relationships between families and/or people, and powerful elites which regulate exchanges and relationships.[86] Political economies became a dominant form of organization in cities during the seventh and sixth century BCE in Greece.[87] For the reason that the *Odyssey* mirrors socio-political developments which occurred in the seventh and sixth century BCE, Homer describes his own experiences up to a point.

In conclusion, Hesiod and Homer were contemporaries. They lived during the Lelantine war. The Lelantine war occurred between 710 and 650 BCE. Hesiod lived as a farmer and as a poet at Ascra. Communication with the outside world was sufficient enough for him to attend a musical contest at Chalcis. Homer remains more elusive as a historical person. It is likely that he traveled from city to city. He probably depended upon the hospitality of his guests, and the willingness of his audiences.

The fact that both Hesiod and Homer lived during the Lelantine war might explain why they questioned the Muses' authority and epiphany. Neighboring towns fought against each other. This might indicate a level of distrust amongst Greek cities in general at that time. Perhaps that level of distrust extended to the divine as well. We will return to this later on in this chapter, when we will discuss the performative context of Hesiod and Homer' poetry.

Sappho's life

When did Sappho live?

The first depictions of Sappho on vase paintings appeared in the late sixth century BCE.[88] This means she lived either before or around that time. For a more specific date on Sappho's life,

[84] Edwards, *Hesiod's Ascra*, 156, 161-162, 164, 166.
[85] Edwards, *Hesiod's Ascra*, 7. M.I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus* (New York 1978) 74-107. M.I. Finley, *Economy and Society in Early Greece* (1981) 213-214, 218. K.A. Raaflaub, 'Homeric Society', in: I. Morris and B. Powell ed., *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden 1997) 624-648. Donlan, 'The Homeric Economy', 665-667.
[86] Finley, *Economy and Society*, 213-214, 218, compared the epics to English medieval poems, and made the case that poets unconsciously reflected the economic conditions of their time in their poetry.
[87] Edwards, *Hesiod's Ascra*, 7; Green, *The Odyssey*, 10-12, argued the epics mirrored the seventh century BCE. Donlan, 'The Homeric Economy', 625, maintained it represented the eighth century BCE. Raaflaub, 'Homeric Society', 628, maintained it represented the eight century BCE. M.I. Finley, *Economy and Society in Early Greece* (1981) 213-214, 218, argued that the Homeric world described the eighth or seventh century BCE.
[88] D.A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric I: Sappho and Alcaeus* (Suffolk 1990) IX-X.

however, historians have depended on the ancient biographical tradition, and on autobiographical comments from Sappho's and Alcaeus' poetry. Aristotle informs us that Alcaeus and Sappho were contemporaries. He accounts for a correspondence between both poets. Alcaeus said to Sappho:

> *I wish to say something to you, but shame prevents me….*
>
> [Arist. *Rhet.* 1.9.20; transl. M. Kivilo]

And Sappho replied:

> *But if you had a desire for what is honorable or good, and your tongue were not stirring up something evil to say, shame would not cover your eyes, but you would state your claim.*
>
> [Arist. *Rhet*. 1.9.21; transl. M. Kivilo]

That Alcaeus and Sappho were contemporaries and that both came from Lesbos, has been accepted by various ancient and modern scholars (Euseb. *Chron*. Ol. 45.1; Str. 13.2.3; Sud. *Sigma* 107; Athen. 13.598bc-599cd).[89] In some of their poems they addressed themselves as Lesbians. They also reference important aristocratic Lesbian families in their poetry (Alc. Fr. 70; 75; 302; Sapph. Fr. 71). The most significant evidence to date Alcaeus comes from the fact that Alcaeus criticized his political opponent, Pittacus (Arist. *Pol*. 1285a; Alc. Fr. 70). Pittacus became known as one of the seven Greek sages in antiquity (Diog. Laert. 1. 4). With the help of Alcaeus' brothers Pittacus deposed of a tyrant in the 42 Olympiad year [i.e. 612-09 BCE] (Suda *Sigma* 107). Alcaeus was too young to participate. He was, however, politically active around 605 BCE. According to Hesiod men were considered adults when they were approximately thirty years old (*W&D* 585). Therefore, it is probable that Alcaeus was born around 635 BCE.[90] Alcaeus lived at least up until the year of 580 BCE. In a poem Alcaeus refers to the war between Medes and Lydians (580 BCE) in which his brother participated. It is likely, however, that he reached at least the age of fifty or sixty. In one of his poems he speaks of his own aging, on how he turned grey.[91] This could indicate that Alcaeus lived somewhere

[89] Campbell, *Greek Lyric*, 2-51, 206-233, translated the *testimonia* on Sappho and Alcaeus from ancient Greek to English. Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 229-230. L.H. Jeffery, *Archaic Greece: The city-states C. 700-500 BC* (London 1976) 238-239. J.P. Crielaard, 'Cities', in: K.A. Raaflaub and H. van Wees ed., *A Companion to Archaic Greece* (Oxford 2009) 349-372, 357-359. R.W. Wallace, 'Charismatic Leaders', in: K.A. Raaflaub and H. van Wees ed., *A Companion to Archaic Greece* (Oxford 2009) 411-426, 412. L. Foxhall, 'Gender', in: K.A. Raaflaub and H. van Wees ed., *A Companion to Archaic Greece* (Oxford 2009) 483-507, 490, 494. J.M. Hall, 'Ethnicity and Cultural Exchange', in: K.A. Raaflaub and H. van Wees ed., *A Companion to Archaic Greece* (Oxford 2009) 604-617, 613. L.V. Kurke, 'Archaic Greek Poetry', in: H. Shapiro ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Archaic Greece* (Cambridge 2007) 141-168, 142. P.O. Bauer, 'Sapphos Verbannung', *Gymnasium* 70 (1963) 1-10, 1.

[90] Podlecki, *The early Greek poets*, 63-64, argued that Alcaeus was born around 625 BCE. I find that unlikely. Men were considered adults when they were twenty in Classical Athens, but not in Archaic Athens. It is likely that this changed due to democratization and organized warfare.

[91] Ibidem, 63-64.

between 635 and 560 BCE, but at least between 635 and 580 BCE.[92] This means that Sappho lived around this time as well.[93]

Although it is common practice to use autobiographical and ancient biographical comments to study the history of Sappho, not every modern scholar has supported this.[94] An argument against the use of ancient biographers has been, that they wrote a long time after Sappho lived.[95] It is not true, however, that ancient biographies only came into existence (long) after the death of Archaic poets. In the introduction and in the section above on Hesiod and Homer's date we already discussed that biographical comments on Sappho's live date to the fifth century BCE. In the introduction we covered that in an oral culture the lives of poets were just as important as poets' poetry. I agree with M. Kivilo that an interest in the lives of poets was as old as poetic performances. This does not mean, however, that ancient biographies on Sappho's life are always correct. Our oldest written sources which comment on the lives of Archaic poets often disagree about certain aspects of poets' lives. These disagreements probably arose out of multiple contradicting stories about the lives of Hesiod, Homer and Sappho. Stories which came into existence in an oral culture, and which were, initially, orally transmitted.

There is an example of oral transmission of Sappho's poetry in the ancient biographical tradition. Sappho's cousin went to Athens where he met Solon. Her cousin recited several poems of Sappho, and eventually taught Solon to memorize these poems as well (Stob. *Anth*. 3. 29. 58). It is likely that an interest in Sappho's poetry would have been accompanied by an interest in Sappho as well. This documentation of oral transmission even already contains information on Sappho's family, namely her cousin.

Moreover, Herodotus discusses the love affair of one of Sappho's brothers in his *histories*. In the section above, it was discussed that Herodotus speaks of Sappho's sentiments in that regard. That is true, but he does not merely discuss Sappho's brother based upon Sappho's poetry. Herodotus engages with others when he speaks about the love affair. He speaks about the woman of the affair, and the actions of Sappho's brother. In that regard, he also makes use of other sources. For example, he discusses dedications and monuments (*Hist*. 2. 135).

Where and how did Sappho live?

Sappho was presumably born into an aristocratic family.[96] Her brother, Larichus, was a wine steward in the town hall of Mytilene (fr. 203). A honorific function fulfilled by aristocratic

[92] Ibidem, 63-64. P. Krentz, 'Warfare and Hoplites', in: H. Shapiro ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Archaic Greece* (Cambridge 2007) 61-84, 67. V. Parker, 'Tyrants and Lawgivers', in: H. Shapiro ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Archaic Greece* (Cambridge 2007) 13-39, 16-17, 31-32.
[93] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 229-230, argued she was one generation younger than Alcaeus and placed her in the sixth century BCE. Bauer, 'Sapphos Verbannung', 1, placed Sappho's birth around 650 BCE.
[94] Hall, *A History*, 23, 282-283, argued that the biographical tradition was unreliable, but that we should study Sappho's and Alcaeus' poetry from the point of view that it was autobiographical. J. Balmer, *Sappho Poems and Fragments* (Glasgow 2018) 17, argued that Sappho's poetry was not autobiographical.
[95] Hall, *A History*, 282-283.
[96] Kivilo, *Early Greek Poets*, 178.

boys.[97] Another brother, Charaxos, was involved in wine trade and often traveled to Egyptian Naucratis (Strab. 17.1.33; Hdt. *Hist*. 2.135; P. Oxy. 1800 fr.1). Lesbos was the only Aeolic town with permission to enter the sanctuary at Naucratis at that time. This meant that only Lesbian traders could go to Naucratis to trade their goods. This privileged position turned Lesbos into an important trading center in the region.[98] Sappho's family profited from this position. However, the family fortune was jeopardized by one of Sappho's brothers. Sappho's brother lost a lot of money to an Egyptian courtesan with whom he had an affair. Apparently, Sappho spoke out against her brother's affair, and scorned him for it. She also scorned the courtesan for robbing her brother's money in her poems (Hdt. *Hist*. 2.135).

From the Parian chronicle we know that Sappho was exiled at some point in her life. She fled towards Sicily and stayed at Syracuse (*Marmor* Ep. 37). The connection between Sappho and Syracuse is also mentioned by Cicero. Cicero reports that a statue of Sappho stood at the market place in Syracuse from at least the fourth century BCE up until his own time (*Or. Verr.* 2.4.126).

According to the Suda, Sappho married a wealthy man from Andros, with whom she had a daughter named Cleis (*Sigma* 107). Not much is known about this husband. According to one view shared amongst modern historians, Sappho and Pittacus belonged to immigrant families at Lesbos. Her father's name, Scamandronymous, and her own name, indicate an eastern (non-Greek) origin. According to this view, Alcaeus belonged to the old nobility, while Sappho and Pittacus were nouveau riche. At first, Alcaeus and his brothers worked together with Pittacus to depose the tyrant Myrsilus. When Pittacus and Alcaeus held power at Mytilene they came entangled in a war with Athens at Sigeum. According to this view, it was during the war with Athens, that the faction of Alcaeus turned against the immigrant families of Mytilene. Consequently, the immigrant families were forced into exile, up until, the moment, when Pittacus seized power again. Then when Pittacus seized power again it was Alcaeus and his brothers who were forced into exile.[99] If this is correct then Sappho fled towards Sicily at the end of the seventh century BCE, and returned approximately a decade later. According to another view, however, Sappho was not exiled between 605 and 595 BCE, but rather in 593 BCE together with Alcaeus and his brothers.[100]

However, there are two main things we can extract from Sappho's poetry in regard to her exile:

First of all, she lived at Lesbos for a considerable time, and composed poems which were performed during religious festivals, weddings and other festivities. Also her poems which concern her brothers seem to have been composed when she stayed at Lesbos. She also composed poems which concern family affairs when she was at Lesbos. These concern the

[97] Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 83.
[98] Ibidem, 63.
[99] Kivilo, *Early Greek Poets*, 178-179, 182-183. Bauer, 'Sapphos Verbannung', 6-10. E. Pallantza, *Der Troische Krieg in der nachhomerischen Literatur bis zum 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Athens 1997: Dissert.) 10-11: fn.2, 51: fn.1.
[100] Kivilo, 182. Kurke, 'Archaic Greek Poetry', 158. D.L. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus: An Introduction to the Study of Ancient Lesbian Poetry* (Oxford 1955) 102. Jeffery, *Archaic Greece*, 239.

welfare of her family. All these poems may have been composed before or after her exile. If they were composed after her exile then we might conclude she returned to Lesbos. If they were composed before her exile, she may or may not have returned to Lesbos.

Secondly, there is a poem which may refer to her state of exile:

> *…. My mother [used to say]*
> *In her youth it was thought to be*
> *Very fine to bind up your hair*
> *With a dark purple [headband] – yes*
> *Extremely fine indeed, although*
> *For a girl whose hair is golden*
> *Like a torch flame [better] to wreathe*
> *In it garlands of fresh flowers;*
> *Recently [I saw] a headband,*
> *Brightly colored, from Sardis……*
> *But for you, Cleïs, I do not have*
> *A brightly colored headband nor*
> *Do I know where I may find one….*
>
> [fragment 98a-b; transl. J. Balmer]

It is likely that she composed this when she was in exile. The poem suggests that she was cut off from her former Lesbian lifestyle. Lesbian aristocratic women focused on Sardis (Lydia) for clothes, foot wear, head wares and other beauty products. If she was exiled and stayed at Syracuse, she would have been cut off from these luxury products. The fact remains, however, that we are left in the dark in regard to *why* she was exiled. Contrarily, it is known to us that she was either exiled by Alcaeus (and/or his brothers) or by Pittacus. If she was exiled by Alcaeus, then she was exiled between the years 605 and 595 BCE.[101] In that case she was allowed to return when Pittacus seized control (593 BCE), and exiled Alcaeus.[102] On the other hand, If she was exiled by Pittacus then she was exiled alongside Alcaeus (593/2 BCE), and allowed to return around 580 BCE.[103]

The political situation on Lesbos was chaotic in general during Sappho's life time.[104] Aristotle informs us that the ruling aristocratic elite, the Penthilidai, were removed from power by a group of wealthy Lesbians around 650 BCE. The reason for this deposition was the brutality used by the Penthilidai to enforce their power upon unwilling subjects (Arist. *Pol*. 5.1311b). According to Strabo, this deposition was followed by a time period in which tyrants succeeded each other in a struggle for power (13.2.3). Alcaeus and his brothers, as well as Pittacus, were part of this struggle for power (Arist. *Pol*. 3.1285a). At the end of the seventh century BCE, Mytilene also waged a war with Athens in which Alcaeus and Pittacus both fought for

[101] Bauer, 'Sapphos Verbannung', 3.
[102] Ibidem, 3.
[103] Jeffery, *Archaic Greece*, 439-440.
[104] Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 64-82. Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 190-192. Hall, *A History*, 130, 137. Wallace, 'Charismatic Leaders', 415-416.

Mytilene. The war effort engaged by the Mytileneans proved unsuccessful in the end, they failed to seize control over Sigeum (Hdt. *Hist*. 5.95).

Fragments of Sappho's poetry reveal that Sappho felt hostile towards the Penthilidai family (fr. 71). A sentiment which she probably shared with many of her contemporaries. It is possible that Sappho's family participated in the deposition of the Penthilidai, but a lack of evidence makes it impossible to substantiate that.

In (the) light of the former, I do think it is likely that Sappho returned to Lesbos when she was in her thirties or possibly her forties. The poems which she composed for a Lesbian audience reveal that she possessed significant poetic and religious influence at that time. A position which seems more suitable to a somewhat older woman rather than a woman in her late teens or early twenties. The fact she had a young daughter when she was in exile suggests that she was in exile somewhere in her twenties or thirties. If she would never have returned to Lesbos then she would have had significant influence when she was still very young - which seems rather unlikely.

Furthermore, I find the idea that she was exiled between 605 and 595 rather plausible for the reason that she would have found herself in a friendly political climate upon her return. Pittacus held public office from 590 to 580 BCE in Mytilene, and he used that time to establish laws in order to stabilize the *polis.*[105] If Sappho would have been sent away alongside Alcaeus, then it is unlikely she would have been on friendly terms with Pittacus. After all, in that case, Sappho and/or her family would have been a threat to Pittacus' rule. On the other hand, if she had been sent away by Alcaeus and/or his brothers, she and/or her family, would not have had any obvious issues with Pittacus. In case of the latter, her position as a well-respected Mytilenean, and acting poet, would have been an acceptable place for her to have held. In case of the former, it would not.

Furthermore, the fact she held a respectable place in Mytilenean society is not only supported by the evidence from her poems, but also by Aristotle. Aristotle informs us that Sappho was held in high esteem by the Mytileneans even though she was a woman. He uses the position of Sappho in Mytilene as an example to support his statement that people value talent. According to him, Sappho held an unlikely position for a woman, but because she was talented she was an esteemed member of the city (*Rhet*. 2.23). I believe that his statement on her position in Mytilene, supports the evidence from her poems. If she were not esteemed she would not have acted as a poet, and exercised religious and moral authority publicly. Therefore, it is likely that she was exiled by Alcaeus and was able to return via Pittacus' rule.

In conclusion, Sappho was younger than Hesiod and Homer. She probably lived in Mytilene around the same time as Alcaeus was alive (ca. 630-580 BCE). She did not live during the Lelantine war. Although she did live through political changes and a war between Mytilene and Athens. She was probably exiled from Mytilene for a few years. Most of her life, however, she spent in Mytilene. She was an important member of her society there. There she was prolific as a poet as well. She definitely belonged to the aristocratic classes. In this

[105] Parker, 'Tyrants and Lawgivers', 16-17, 31-32. Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 196-197. Jeffery, *Archaic Greece*, 240.

regard, she lived a different life from Hesiod and Homer. There is not any reason to believe that Sappho was plagued by hunger and poverty like Hesiod was. She probably only dealt with limited access to objects of high fashion when she was in exile.

It is likely that she reflected upon the Muses for other reasons then Hesiod and Homer did. Since she performed in front of an audience which dealt with an other world. We shall discuss the performative context of Sappho's poetry later on in this chapter.

1.2

The history and context of performance

In the previous section we looked upon the lives of the poets. We looked at the period in which they lived, and the circumstances of their lives. In this current section we are going to take a closer look at their poetry. Since Hesiod, Homer, and Sappho set themselves apart by the way they reflected upon the Muses in epiphany.[106] They occupied themselves to reflect upon their own authority in that regard.

In order to be able to understand the social needs for their poems, and especially the demands for them to reflect upon the Muses, we will focus on their reflections and on the history and the function of (their) poetic performances.

What were the origins and function of archaic poetic performance? Which social needs did they fulfill?

According to a dominant view, Greek poetry developed out of a demand to praise and celebrate fame (*kleos*).[107] There are different interpretations about the meaning of this. According to one version the beginnings of cult worship accompanied that of praise poetry. Whenever a god was believed to have made an appearance in epiphany somewhere, the occasion needed to be remembered and commemorated by means of a religious festival and/or other cult activities. The god that appeared in epiphany needed to be praised for the reasons why it had made an appearance. In that regard the occasion of the epiphany and the preference a god had for a locality was subjected to fame and praise.[108]

According to another view, praise was essential to ancestor/hero worship. The celebration of fame through praise is regarded as a ritual activity by this school of thought. The idea is that remarkable acts needed to be praised and remembered. For example, a hero fights and dies, and his death demanded fame and praise. This need was fulfilled by athletic games held in honor of the deceased. The athletes' struggles in athletic games were a means by which the struggles of the deceased hero could be ritually honored. Similarly, someone fighting in a war had to deal with life and death struggles, and these struggles honored the struggles heroes had to deal with on their heroic quests. Therefore, according to this view, warfare and athletic

[106] For example, the fragments we have from Alcaeus' poetry did not include the Muses even once.
[107] Nagy, 'Early Greek views of Poets and Poetry', *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* volume 1 (1990) 1-77, 9. Thomas, 'The place of the poet in Archaic society', 104.
[108] Pfister, 'Epiphanie', 298-305. Petridou, *Divine Epiphany*, 19. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 117-118.

games were both considered to be ritualistic activities. These activities were considered to be ritualistic, based upon Walter Burkert's definition of what constitutes a ritual. Burkert defined a ritual as (human) activities considered to be sacred and necessary, because deviation was punished.[109] On that note, poetry is regarded as ritualistic activities as well by this school of thought. It was necessary that the sacred activities of athletes and those who died in war were praised, because heroes were praised as well for the struggles they had endured and the victories they had claimed.[110] According to this view, panhellenic athletic games originated from a need to praise a hero, and celebrate a hero's death perpetually. In this regard the origins of the panhellenic games are thought to be connected with funerary activities in Ancient Greece. In the meantime, this school of thought proposed that archaic poetry developed out of many local traditions of poetry and into panhellenic poetry. The institution of panhellenic games, and panhellenic religious festivals, meant that poets needed to praise from a panhellenic perspective. This involved the view that certain gods ruled over all Greeks rather than a specific group of Greeks.[111]

According to another view, poetry was integral to religious festivals either local or panhellenic. This meant that poetry did not as much function as part of funerary rituals, but as celebration in the form of musical contests. Musical contests were regarded as a longstanding Greek tradition, and integral to the celebration of religious festivals. The origins of this are believed to lie in the Greek value for achievement and competitiveness. Meanwhile, the musical contests functioned as a means by which poets and their audiences engaged with different ideas on the divine and human world.[112]

Moreover, some scholars have argued that poetic performances functioned to exist as a religious discourse. Those scholars argued that the absence of a holy scripture in Greek religion, entailed that there was not a clear religious authority. According to this view, it was the absence of such a religious authority, and sacred body of texts, which motivated poets to engage with existing myths and compose their own.[113] According to Sourvinou-Inwood this religious exploration should be regarded as ritualistic acts. She maintained that religious exploration was an integral part of religious festivals.[114] In that regard, she maintained that poetry was ritualistic and integral to the celebration of religious festivals. According to Sourvinou-Inwood, Otto, and Dietrich, poets functioned as interpreters of the divine.[115]

Hesiod, Homer and Sappho' Muses in epiphany

How did Hesiod reflect upon his role as servant of the Muses?

[109] W. Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge 1985) 8. Nagy, 'Early Greek views', 2-3.
[110] Nagy, 'Early Greek views', 13.
[111] Ibidem, 16-17. S. Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar: Historical Narrative and the World of Epinikian Poetry* (Oxford 2004) 5-16.
[112] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 140.
[113] Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy*, 12.
[114] Ibidem, 11-12.
[115] Ibidem, 410. Otto, *The Homeric Gods*, 192, 195-196. Dietrich, 'Oracles', 158-159.

According to the *Theogony* and *Works and Days* Hesiod sings his song because the Muses had set him on the path of singing. The *Theogony* begins with two hymns to the Muses which reflect upon Hesiod's prior encounters with the Muses appearing in epiphany to him.

> *And once they taught Hesiod fine singing, as he tended his lambs below holy Helicon. This is wat the goddesses said to me first, the Olympian Muses, daughters of Zeus the aegis-bearer.*
>
> *"shepherds that camp in the wild, disgraces, merest bellies: we know to tell many lies that sound like truth, but we know to sing reality, when we will."*
>
> *So said mighty Zeus' daughters, the sure of utterance, and they gave me a branch of springing bay to pluck for a staff, a handsome one, and they breathed into me wondrous voice, so that I should celebrate things of the future and things that were aforetime. And they told me to sing of the family of blessed ones who are forever, and first and last always to sing of themselves.*
>
> [Hesiod, *Theogony*, 19-30; transl. M.L. West (1966)]

The interesting thing about Hesiod's reflection on his experience of the Muses in epiphany, is that the Muses tell him that they sometimes tell lies. It seems that Hesiod considered the Muses to be not very trustworthy in that regard.[116]

Somewhat further on in the *Theogony* Hesiod mentions that the Muses sometimes visit future kings (*basileis*), at birth, and give these the gift of speech. The gift of speech received in infancy enables such fortunate kings to make judgements and settle disputes between people. Singers and (some) kings are blessed by the Muses in that way according to the poem (Hes. *Th.* 71-78).

Moreover, the Muses gave Hesiod a purpose, namely to sing. First of all, to sing about the Muses themselves which explains why he begins his songs with the Muses. Secondly, to sing about gods and men. According to the second hymn to the Muses, they sing and dance to celebrate Zeus' power. Besides celebrating Zeus' power, the Muses also celebrate together with Zeus on mount Olympus. The Muses are said to effect Zeus' mind by creating a celebratory atmosphere through song and dance. This effect is also bestowed upon human singers, who by following the path of the Muses create joy and pleasure (Hes. *Th.* 31-46).

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[116] Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy*, 12, supports this interpretation. Petridou, *Divine Epiphany*, 216-217, argued on the other hand that it served to present Hesiod as naïve, and to make clear that only through an epiphany Hesiod became knowledgeable. Petridou argued that the relevance of this passage was to make clear that Hesiod was visited in person by the Muses (visible epiphany), and that his audience believed that because the epiphany occurred in a liminal space. According to Petridou, mount Helicon was the liminal space, because it was outside of *polis* boundaries. I disagree with her on that. Hesiod should be regarded as a farmer who lived in a village, rather than a town. It is far more likely that Hesiod's participation in the funerary contest of Amphidamas, and the Lelantine war itself, were liminal spaces. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 117, argued that Hesiod expressed a 'real experience', an auditory epiphany, which was effected by the terrifying solitude of being alone on a mountain. M. Puelma, 'Der Dichter und die Wahrheit in der griechischen Poetik von Homer bis Aristoteles', *MH* 46:2 (1989) 65-100, 65, 74-76, argued that Hesiod was the first poet to be aware of the fact that his poetry could consist of truths and falsehoods.

According to the hymns, the Muses have an intermediary place between the divine realm and humans. Although the Muses are goddesses themselves, they hold a special place in the divine realm by being the divinities who connect the mortal and immortal realm.[117] First of all, they have the power to create joy both in the divine as in the mortal realm. Second of all, their gift of song enables humans to transcend their limited experiences by revealing parts of the past and the future to them.[118]

Their place is intimately connected to the way they address and even create singers. According to Hesiodic poetry song comes from the Muses as well as from Apollo (Hes. *Th*. 79-86). Apollo, however, seems to be of less importance, and certainly not the god who bestows songs upon humans by means of interacting with them. It seems that, according to Hesiodic poetry humans would not know about the gods and Zeus' power without the Muses. Similarly, the Muses would not be known by humans without the singer. The singer sings about the Muses as the Muses sing about the gods.

How did Homer reflect upon his role as servant of the Muses?

The *Odyssey* consists of several passages in which the connection between a singer and his proximity to the Muses is questioned (*Od.* 1. 1-10, 324-371; 8. 62-82, 476-581; 11. 335-370; 24. 57-70). These passages discuss the effect singers have on the audience. Besides singers, Odysseus himself is also put to the test for his skill of narrating his travels. The authenticity of his story and his identity is questioned by the audience.

Firstly, the singer Phemius who sings at the court of Odysseus is questioned by Penelope. Phemius sings about the problematic return home of Greek heroes which makes Penelope sorrowful. The Muses are generally known to relieve the audience of sorrow rather than to inspire sorrow. Penelope, therefore, asks Phemius to sing another song which does not personally touches Penelope. Telemachus, however, intervenes and says to his mother that Phemius is not responsible for what has happened to the Greeks. Phemius merely sings whatever the gods have made him sing. The loyalty of Phemius lies with the gods first and foremost, and then with the head of the house which hosts the feast (in this case Telemachus). Phemius' loyalty is questioned at the end of the *Odyssey* when Odysseus returned to Ithaca, and begun slaughtering the potential lovers of Penelope. Phemius begs Odysseus for mercy and mentions that he merely sung whatever flowed from his mouth, for he never learned to sing. In both passages, it is Phemius' connection to the divine which protects him from Penelope's and Odysseus' hostility (Hom. *Od*. 1. 324-371).

[117] Ledbetter, *Poetics before Plato,* 74, argued that Hesiod's Muses held an extremely superior position over the poet and the audience. Ledbetter argued that Hesiod's poetry in contrast to Homeric poetry could not function as an intermediary between mortal and immortal. Ledbetter's thesis, however, solely focused on the *theogony* and omitted passages from *works and days* which referred to Hesiod's experience of the Muses in epiphany as well. Hesiod, *works and days*, 555-559, contains a passage in which Hesiod authorized himself to make judgements on how to live and manage an estate because the Muses gave him access to Zeus' mind. In that regard Hesiod did function as an intermediary between mortal and immortal.

[118] Hesiod's *works and days* explicates why humans suffer and have to work so very hard. It also gives advice on how to behave in a manner which pleases the gods so that one will lead a fortunate and wealthy life.

Secondly, the singer Demodocos who sings at the court of the Phaeacians is put to the test by Odysseus. The Phaeacians celebrate feasts and athletic games to honor the presence of their newly arrived guest, Odysseus. The passage begins with a feast during which Demodocos sings about the trojan war. The subject makes Odysseus immensely sorrowful, because it reminds him of his own suffering. The host, king Alcinuous, therefore, orders Demodocos to stop singing, and the party moves onwards from the feast to the games. After the games the party resumes to the feast, while Demodocos sings on his lyre. Subsequently, the importance of singers and their proximity to the Muses is celebrated in this passage. Singers are said to learn their songs from the Muses directly. The fortunate position of singers amidst society is emphasized, by the fact that they are loved and valued wherever they travel to. This fortunate position is said to come from the Muses as well, since the Muses protect singers. Subsequently, Odysseus puts Demodocos to the test. Demodocos is asked to sing about the wooden horse and the fall of Troy. The test is passed, because Demodocos sings, yet again, in a way as if he was actually present at the occasion. Demodocos' gift to sing so accurately about the Trojan war leaves Odysseus in tears. Odysseus's tears, however, are actually a sign of the singer's closeness to the Muses. Like Penelope, Odysseus feels sorrowful because the songs sung by the singer touches him personally (*Od*. 8. 62-82, 476-581).[119]

Thirdly, Odysseus is put to the test when he's asked to reveal his identity, and share with his hosts the reason why Demodocos' song caused him so much grief. Odysseus, as requested, begins his story and reveals his identity to the audience. Alcinuous' wife, Arete, asks the audience for a judgement of Odysseus' storytelling. The king is the one who answers this and proclaims Odysseus to be a proper bard. Odysseus cannot be one of the many travelers who tell lies, because he knows how to move his audience with his words. The proper bard, as Odysseus is judged to be, knows how to speak in a manner that the audience listens spellbound to him (*Od*. 11. 335-370).

[119] Puelma, 'Der Dichter und die Wahrheit', 73, argued that Homer and his audience did not separate between truths and falsehoods. The Homeric poet, Puelma argued, was the only one who had complete access to the divine knowledge of the Muses. According to Puelma poetic knowledge was a kind of historical knowledge, which became more and more sophisticated and eventually developed into the birth of the sciences (fifth century BCE). Benzi, 'The Redefinition of Poetic Authority', 18, argued, in a similar fashion as Puelma, that Homer's account on the Muses in epiphany should be read as an exercise in epistemology. In my view, Puelma and Benzi had read these passages of Homer anachronistically. Both scholars had read Homer (and Hesiod) from the point of view that those poets were part of an intellectual development. According to their view, Archaic poets were naïve, but throughout time they became more critical of their capacity to know as poets, and eventually developed into philosophers, scientists and historians in the fifth and fourth century BCE. Several scholars have projected a nineteenth century conviction on these sources, namely that the use of our capacity to reason eventually culminates in de-spiritualization. For this nineteenth century conviction see: J.A. Josephson-Storm, *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of the Human Sciences* (Chicago 2017) 65-67. Otto, *The Homeric Gods*, 169, argued for example that the use of intellect, critical reasoning, made the divine disappear from human experience. Spentzou, 'Introduction: Secularizing the Muse', 3-6, argued that all Archaic poets were completely depended upon the omnipotence of the Muses, and that this changed with increasing rationality and bureaucracy in the Classical period. This is actually not the case. Alcaeus, for example, did not rely on the authority of the Muses as far as we know. This is also supported by Petridou, *Divine Epiphany*, 214-221, who argued that the Muses were not the only poetic inspiration deities in Archaic Greece. Dietrich, 'Oracles', 158-159, argued against the view that Greek literature developed from irrational ideas to rational ideas. Dietrich maintained, that the poetic craft in Archaic Greece was a prophetic craft. In that regard Homer's Demodocos was an interpreter of the Muses' prophesy.

The relationships between poet and the Muses, poet and the audience, in the *Odyssey* differ from those in the *Iliad*. The *Odyssey* begins with an invocation to the Muses, and the Muses are told there to begin the story wherever they want to. The story is not told chronologically. Contrarily, the story is told chronologically in the *Iliad*.[120]

Furthermore, in the *Odyssey* the Muses are said to create joy and happiness, but they can also cause people to feel sorrowful (*Od*. 1. 1-10). The Muses are, also, described to have lamented the loss of Achilles. They sang so touchingly that the attendees burst into tears (*Od*. 24. 57-70). The role of the Muses differs here from that in Hesiod's poetry. According to Hesiod the Muses solely cause joy, often by relieving pain and grief.

In regard to the subject of this thesis the *Odyssey* stands out in comparison to the *Iliad*. The *Iliad* lacks reflections on the authority of poetic song, while the *Odyssey* does not. The *Odyssey* contains several passages in which the singer's source of inspiration is questioned. In comparison to Hesiodic and Sapphic poetry the *Odyssey* presents a different picture on how to recognize a muse in epiphany.

How did Sappho reflect upon her role as servant of the Muses?

The fragments of Sapphic poetry which survived up until the present contain several lines on Sappho's connection to the Muses. In those fragments the composer does not ask the Muses to tell a story about the gods, like the composers of Hesiodic and Homeric poetry do, but, calls for the presence of the Muses.

> *Come here, to me, rose-like Graces;*
> *Muses, [bind up] your lovely hair*
>
> [Fr. 127; transl. J. Balmer]

Sappho probably began a public performance by calling for the presence of the Muses. Interestingly, the fragment stresses the importance of binding up once hair before one begins to perform. This explicitly refers to a custom of female performers:

> *…… bind together, Dicca, with your slender hands, shoots of dill,*
> *wreathe garlands, around your lovely hair;*
> *for the Graces favor women crowned with blossom*
> *but turn away from those who go ungarlanded….*
>
> [Fr. 81b; transl. J. Balmer]

Considering the fragments above, it seems that the same custom which applied to mortal women applied to the Muses as well.

Furthermore, the Graces return far more prominently in Saphhic poetry than it does in Hesiodic and Homeric poetry. In Hesiodic poetry the Muses as well as Desire (*Eros*) are said to

[120] Benzi, 'The Redefinition of Poetic Authority', 16-18, argued that Hesiod's and Homer's poetic authority depended on their capacity to recall chronological events. It is true that Hesiod's *Theogony* and Homer's *Iliad* give detailed accounts of genealogies and/or catalogues, and, therefore, follow a chronological order. Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Homer's *Odyssey* on the other hand do not.

celebrate together with the Muses, but Sapphic poetry actually calls for both the Muses and the Graces.

The fragments of Sapphic poetry, however, do not necessarily connect Desire with the Muses and with the Graces. According to one fragment, Sappho is a servant of Aphrodite, and Desire is one as well (fr. 159). The fragments on Aphrodite and Desire often translate to experiences of pain, longing, and absence (fr. 1; 33).

[Eros, the god of desire,]
brings pain
weaves tales
[for mortals….]

[Fr. 172 and 188; transl. J. Balmer]

These experiences actually resemble the *Odyssey* which details Penelope's longing for Odysseus, and Odysseus' longing for his homeland. Sappho, however, contrasts these experiences with those brought about by the gifts of the Muses. Sappho attained happiness, because she received the gift of the Muses from them (fr. 193). Besides happiness, she also gained honor or fame because of the Muses (fr. 32).

There is no place for grief, [Cleis,]
in a house which serves the Muse;
our own is no exception

[Fr. 150; transl. J. Balmer]

Sappho's account on the Muses contradicts the *Odyssey*, because she does not allow grief to be connected to the Muses. She connects the Muses with the Graces, and expresses their connection to festivity and joyful celebration. Her subtle language on the appearance and behavior of gods and goddesses dictates the context of performative song. The fact that the Muses bind or tie up their hair as well, entails they please the Graces. The Graces who are identified with joy and celebration cannot be present to perform grievous songs. Hence the Muses cannot be present to perform grievous songs either.

According to the fragments, Sappho served multiple goddesses (fr, 5; 17; 33). More importantly, however, the fragments are clear on the fact that Sappho followed the path of the Muses as a singer and lyre player.

The gifts of the Muses are violet-threaded,
Rare: follow their path, my daughters, pursue
The lyre's clear-voiced, enthralling song.
Once I, too, was in tender bud. Now old age
Is wrinkling my skin and my hair is turning
From black to grey; my heart is weighted,
Knees buckle where I danced like a deer.
Yet what else can I do but complain?
To be human is to grow old. They say

Eös, the rosy-fingered dawn, whispered
Of love to Tithonus, whirled him away
To the very edge of the world, beguiled
By his youth and beauty. Yet still he aged,
Still he withered, despite his immortal wife.

[Cologne fragment; transl. J. Balmer]

Although she served many goddesses, it were the Muses who gave her a voice of authority, bestowed happiness upon her, and granted her the fortune of fame. Apparently, this was a rare place to hold. The Muses did not just gift every human the ability to sing and enchant an audience. The message of Sappho's poet cited above here resembles what Aristotle mentions about Sappho: Sappho held a remarkable place in Mytilenean society, and according to her she did because of the Muses.

In conclusion, early archaic poetry represents an oral culture in which poets possessed the ability to create sense and order by means of singing. Similarly, the Muses are known to create the same sense and order by appraisal of the gods through their births, deeds, and powers. Poets were essential to preserve tradition. Simultaneously, by singing they shaped the present and often reinvented the past. Poets' reflections on the Muses' epiphanies tell a lot about how poets presented themselves to their audiences. In case of Hesiod and Homer there was a clear need to reflect upon the reliability of the Muses' epiphanies. How could the audience make sure that they were not deceived?

According to Hesiod, it was impossible to determine the truth of a song. The Muses decided which humans they favored and which they did not favor. In this regard, Hesiod merely followed the will of the Muses. They chose him to become a poet, and therefore he became a poet. This also applies to Homer. Homer describes poets who are chosen by the Muses. Homer does not, however, describe a visitation of the Muses. The Muses reveal themselves in epiphany when a poet suddenly starts to sing, without having learned it. Sappho also mentions that poets' gifts are rare.

It is likely that Hesiod and Homer responded to a need connected to the Lelantine war. The Lelantine war may have created a need to readdress human abilities to know the nature of the divine. It may also have caused a need for poets to reflect upon their role in situations of war. This may especially have been important, because Greek city states were fighting each other. Perhaps loyalty and human authority were questioned.

Furthermore, Homer might have felt a need to defend his position as a poet. There is a clear focus on safeguarding the position of poets in the *Odyssey*. On the one hand, Homer safeguards Phemius from being killed by Odysseus. Phemius defends himself by explicating that he merely obeys the will of the divine. He claims immunity, and does indeed receive this from Odysseus. For some reason Homer felt a need to defend divinely inspired poets. He may have felt challenged himself. His audience may have expressed confusion about the divine nature of poetic song/storytelling. Homer may have responded to a need to explain

how divinely inspired poets can be distinguished from fakers. He may also have operated at a time when there were several poets operative. The extent to which Hesiod, Homer, and Sappho performed in Greek societies will be discussed in the next section.

The performative context of Hesiod and Homer

There is some disagreement amongst modern historian about the occasions of Hesiod's, Homer's and Sappho's performances. Let us first take a look at Hesiod and Homer.

Why did Hesiod and Homer perform their poetry then and there?

In *Works and Days* Hesiod mentions that he had previously participated in a poetic contest at Amphidamas' funeral at Chalcis. Hesiod also mentions that he received a tripod for his victory which he dedicated to the Muses near mount Helicon. Some modern scholars support the idea that Hesiod performed his *Theogony* at the funeral of Amphidamas (Chalcis), and his *Works and Days* in his village (Ascra).[121] Contrarily, it has been suggested that Hesiod performed solely at religious festivals. The argument was that Hesiod's poems address and praise the divine, especially Zeus, but also other divinities, and therefore fit the occasion of a religious festival.[122]

Moreover, I support the view that Hesiod performed his *Theogony* at Chalcis and his *Works and Days* at Ascra. Although it is true that both the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* are addressed to Zeus and to the Muses, that does not proof these poems were for the first time performed during a religious festival.

According to some ancient biographers both Hesiod and Homer competed at Chalcis (*Greek Anthology* 7. 53). Proclus disagrees, but he does mention a dedication made by Hesiod.

> *Hesiod dedicated this to the Muses of Helicon,*
> *having defeated in song at Chalcis the godly Homer.*
>
> [Procl. *Chres*. 6; transl. M.L. West (2003)]

According to Proclus, this dedication was a fabrication. A fabrication of those people who had argued that Hesiod and Homer were contemporaries, and contestants at Chalcis (*Chres*. 6). Proclus denies that Hesiod and Homer were contemporaries. Contrarily, Plutarch mentions that the poet Lesches of Mytilene witnessed the competition of Hesiod and Homer at Chalcis. Based upon the biographical tradition, it is possible that the contest happened. Ancient biographers mention sources from the seventh, sixth and fifth century BCE.[123]

According to the scholiasts on Hesiod, Plutarch said that Amphidamas died in a sea battle (*Op* 654-656). Thucydides mentions that a sea battle was fought in the Lelantine war around the

[121] Taplin, 'The spring of the Muses', 25-27. Blümer, *Interpretation*, 223-225. Parker, *Untersuchungen*, 88-91. Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth* 67. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod*, 94-98. Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 20-22. West, 'The date of the Iliad', 209, 218-219.
[122] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 140. Bowie, 'Lies fiction and slander', 36-37. Hall, *A History*, 282. Turkeltaub, 'Perceiving Iliadic Gods', 77-76. Platt, *Facing the Gods*, 59-63.
[123] Kivilo, *Early Greek Poets*, 61.

year 664 BCE (1.13.4). The *terminus ante quem* of Homer's *Iliad* is 663 BCE.[124] If, indeed, Amphidamas fought and died in a sea battle, and this battle occurred around 664 BCE, then the funerary games at Chalcis were held around 664 BCE as well. The date Thudydides gives for the sea battle is so close to the *terminus ante quem* of Homer's *Iliad* that it is possible that Homer attended Amphidamas' funeral. The sea battle might have ended after 664 BCE. For Thucydides does not discuss when it ended, only when it began. It is also possible that the funeral was delayed similar to the way Archilles waited to organize a funeral for his friend Patroclus. Hesiod and Homer may both have participated in the contest at Chalcis.[125]

Some modern scholars denied the possibility of both Hesiod and Homer attending the contest at Chalcis. The argument was that Amphidamas' funeral occurred around the same time when Eritrea founded its hero cult (690 BCE).[126] That hero cult in Eritrea, however, remained active up until the end of the seventh century BCE. This means that hero worship was part of Eritrean religious practice for the whole of the seventh century BCE. If we would date Amphidamas' funeral around 663 BCE, it would still have occurred around a time when heroes were worshipped in Eritrea.

Moreover, in case of Hesiod there is a clear connection between hero worship, war, and poetry. The content of the *Theogony* contains the story on how the world of gods and men came to be. In that regard it is a genealogy of whom begot whom, but it is also an account of the "glorious deeds" of gods and men. For example, it tells how Zeus seized power from his father Chronos. The part of the poem which goes on to tell the story of heroes is unfortunately lost to us. The poem goes on to introduce the birth of heroes, but the actual list of heroes born from divine-human intercourse is not included. It seems plausible that Hesiod's complete poem contained the beginnings of aristocratic lines as well, especially since he mentions he will sing about both immortals and mortals at the beginning of his poem. If this were the case, it seems not unthinkable that his poem may have sung about the origins of the universe – both divine and human – which would have included the origins of Amphidamas' lineage. Amphidamas was a Greek aristocrat, and Archaic Greek aristocrats often traced their origins to a divinity or a hero.[127]

In the *Iliad* we learn more about funerary practice. The hero Patroclus died on the battlefield of the Trojan war. Patroclus was a friend of Archilles, and when he died Archilles initially refused to give Patroclus a burial. Archilles held on to the body of Patroclus. Subsequently, Patroclus' spirit made a request to Archilles to give him a proper burial, because Patroclus could not enter Hades without a burial. Consequently, Patroclus received a funeral. His body was cremated, and his death on the battlefield was celebrated by athletic games. Interestingly,

[124] West, 'The date of the Iliad', 211.
[125] Taplin, 'The spring of the Muses', 26-27, supports this view.
[126] Parker, *Untersuchungen*, 90-91, neglects to mention that worshippers dedicated votives to that Eritrean hero cult for almost a century. Although Parker acknowledged Amphidamas could have died around 664 BCE, he found an early date more likely. Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 20, argued the contest was a late fabrication. Kivilo, *Early Greek Poets*, 19-24, argued on the contrary that the story of the contest dates to the Archaic period.
[127] For example, the *Penthilidai*, the ruling family in Mytilene in the seventh century BCE believed they descended from Orestes' son Penthilus.

Homer calls Patroclus the son of Amphidamas (*Il*. 23. 87). I think it is plausible that this means that Homer traces the lineage of Amphidamas of Chalcis to the hero Patroclus.[128] The same names were often given to people from the same family.[129] It is likely that Amphidamas of Chalcis had several forefathers who were also called Amphidamas. In other words, it is probable that Homer attended Amphidamas' funeral, and entered the contest by performing the *Iliad*.

The performance at Chalcis had to do with hero worship at war time. Hesiod defines his purpose as praising glorious deeds, and providing comfort. On the other hand, Homer suggests that a hero needs to be buried, and celebrated to reach the afterlife. Both of them shared in common that they covered the glorious deeds of immortals and mortals, because those explained the way the world was organized. Hesiod, however, maintained that his knowledge was limited. According to Hesiod, the Muses were prone to deceive him. He could not just trust the epiphany of the Muses. In the *Iliad* it is Zeus who deceives Agamemnon. He sends a false prophesy to Agamemnon that he will win the war if he goes to battle the next day (*Il*. 2. 1).

Moreover, Hesiod does not doubt his capacity to know the reality of things in his *Works and Days*. More specifically, he mentions that his victory at Chalcis proves that the Muses gave him the capacity to know Zeus' mind (*W&D* 550-560). He presents himself as a leader, an authority and an educator. The purpose and context of his performance is different. Hesiod addresses his locality and his family (*W&D* 10). He does so because of two concerns. He needs to settle an internal dispute, and defend himself from outside influences.[130] Greece became more populated in the eighth and seventh century BCE. A characteristic of population growth is a transition from a subsistence economy to a political economy.[131] Thespiae, the nearby town, became more densely populated and centralized amidst this transition. Contrarily, Ascra remained to have a small population. Ascra remained a village of farmers who participated in a household economy. Farmers produced for their own survival. At the same time, Thespiae became a political economy, ruled by aristocrats.[132] Hesiod's brother went to the aristocrats in Thespiae in an attempt to get a hold of his inheritance. Hesiod clearly protests to the influence of outside nobles on family, and village affairs (*W&D* 28-41). Hesiod makes it clear that there is only one way towards attaining wealth and that is by embracing rural life (*W&D* 28-35).[133]

[128] West, 'The date of the Iliad', 208-209, argued that Homer was influenced by Hesiod. West argued that Homer thought of Hesiod's *Works and Days* when he composed the part on Patroclus' funeral, and named Patroclus the son of Amphidamas. I disagree with West, the date of the sea battle and Amphidamas' funeral coincides with the compositional date of the Iliad. It is far more likely that Homer calls Patroclus the son of Amphidamas, because he actually performed the *Iliad* at Amphidamas' funeral.

[129] Usually a son received the same name as his grandfather, and a daughter received the same name as her grandmother. For example Sappho's mother and daughter were both named Cleis.

[130] Edwards, *Hesiod's Ascra*, 79, 126.

[131] Ibidem, 17.

[132] Ibidem, 163.

[133] Ibidem, 6-7.

It is difficult to determine what the performative context of Homer's *Odyssey* was. According to the ancient biographers Homer wandered around, from city to city. Their view on Homer's wandering reflects Odysseus' wandering. Did Homer reflect his own world in the *Odyssey*?

The *Iliad* tells the story of the Trojan war. It does not begin from the start of the war, nor does it stop with an ending of the war. It tells about the length of the war, and how the gods are battling each other. The war does not just end, because the gods are divided. The funeral of Patroclus occurs reasonably at the end of the Iliad, but after the funeral the war goes on. If we consider that the *Iliad* was composed during Amphidamas' funeral at Chalcis, then there are similarities between Homer's reality and his epic. A long duration of the war, the funeral celebrated by contest, the difficulty to end the war, were realities of the Lelantine war. If we extent this method to the *Odyssey*, then Homer probably composed his *Odyssey* after the Lelantine war. That would also explain the passage of Demodocos' test. Homer does not dispute the reality of things, or the human ability to know the reality of things. The Trojan war ended, Demodocos sings about it, Odysseus verifies the truth of Demodocos' song because he was there. History is not unknowable as it was in Hesiod's *Theogony*. The Muses are not untrustworthy. The past is clear to Homer, and presumably to his audience as well. The *Odyssey* expresses a need to cover the effects of war on family and city life. The struggles of Odysseus' wife, Penelope, and his son, Telemachus, are spoken of. The effects of Odysseus' absence as aristocrat creates a power vacuum. There are plots and schemes to depose of Telemachus. This resembles the situation in some Greek cities around 650 BCE.[134]

Homer describes poetic performances as part of wedding celebrations, funerary practices, and informal gatherings in the *Odyssey*. These performances primarily occurred in an urban setting. The funeral of Archilles, however, did not occur in a city, but close to the battlefield where Archilles had died.

In conclusion, both Hesiod and Homer probably performed at Chalcis. This performance was closely connected to hero cult worship. It is likely that hero worship was important to both sides fighting each other during the Lelantine war. In this regard, it seems that poetry functioned to ritualistically celebrate the death of heroes. This ritualistic practice may have created a need for Homer's *Odyssey* as well. Homer may have performed his *Odyssey* in ritualistic contexts. Hero worship continued to exist in Eritrea for almost a century. Hero worship may have been important to all cities involved in the Lelantine war.

Furthermore, Hesiod's *Works and Days* did not involve hero worship. He probably performed this poem at Ascra. It may have been common to solve land disputes amongst an audience of villagers.

It was suggested before that Hesiod and Homer's reflections probably connected to social demands during the Lelantine war. This was definitely the case for Hesiod's *Theogony*. The fact he won the contest suggests that he was in touch with the social demands for reflections on the Muses. This demand clearly did not exist when he performed his *Works and Days* locally. He had a different function to fulfill there.

[134] Edwards, *Hesiod's Ascra*, 6-7. Green, *The Odyssey*, 11-12.

Moreover, Homer's *Odyssey* was probably performed at a time when the Lelantine war was already over. Homer's need to defend poets might be connected to the circumstances of poets' lives after the Lelantine war. Perhaps it had become dangerous to sing certain songs. For example, songs which would have glorified the deeds of certain enemies. It is also possible that poets feared for their lives, because they had been on the wrong side of war. Whatever the reason may have been, Homer responded to a situation where the place of poets was challenged. And whenever the place of poets was challenged, the authority of the Muses were challenged as well.

The performative context of Sappho

Historians have disagreed about Sappho's role in Greek society. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff made the argument that Sappho may have been a teacher who taught poetry to women.[135] Several other scholars have supported this view as well, namely that Sappho was the head of a school for young women.[136] According to another view, Sappho performed at religious festivals and/or civic occasions.[137] On the other hand, some have argued that she may have sung at symposia i.e., informal drinking parties.[138]

Can we use Sappho's poems as a historical source? Some scholars denied that Sappho's poems contain historically valid autobiographical data, because she would have consciously created a poetic persona.[139] Contrarily, Jonathan Hall argued that Alcaeus and Sappho' poetry primarily contain personal views, because they solely composed for friends and/or family. Therefore, Hall argued, Sappho's poems should primarily be used for information on herself and her social circle.[140] The reality lies somewhere in the middle. An important aspect is that poets were not limited to one circumscribed role alone in Archaic Greece. Poems had different purposes. We already saw this in case of Hesiod. He participated both locally and internationally. The poem which he composed and performed locally contains autobiographical comments, because he addresses his own family. In other words, different poems have a different historical value. For example, Alcaeus uses his poems to criticize his political rival Pittacus. They reveal how Alcaeus believed Mytilene was worse off, because of Pittacus. He probably performed that for an audience who agreed with his sentiments. According to ancient commentators, Sappho used to praise public officials after they were

[135] U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Sappho und Simonides* (Berlin 1913) 58-59.
[136] C. Calame, 'Sappho's Group: An Initiation into Womanhood', in: E. Greene ed., *Reading Sappho: Contemporary Approaches* (Berkeley 1996) 113-124, 114. R. Merkelbach, 'Sappho und ihr Kreis', *Philologus* 101 (1957) 1-29, 4-6. F. Lasserre, *Sappho une autre lecture* (Padova 1989) 114-117. M.L. West, 'Burning Sappho', *MAIA* 22 (1970) 307-330, 324-327. For criticism of this view see: H. Parker, 'Sappho Schoolmistress', *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 123 (1993) 309-351, 311-325.
[137] Balmer, *Sappho*, 25-26. J.P. Hallet, 'Sappho and Her Social Context: Sense and Sensuality', in: E. Greene ed., *Reading Sappho: Contemporary Approaches* (Berkeley 1996) 125-142, 128. Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 230.
[138] Hall, *A History*, 23. Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 87-88.
[139] Balmer, *Sappho*, 17. Pallantza, *Der Troische Krieg*, 51-54. Hallet, 'Sappho and Her Social Context', 128, 135. Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 229-230.
[140] Hall, *A History*, 23. Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 87-88, made a similar point as Hall. Podlecki argued that Alcaeus and Sappho were completely immersed with their social circles.

elected for their office. For the reason that she probably lived at Lesbos during Pittacus' rule, and was on friendly terms with Pittacus, she may have praised him after he had won the election. Unfortunately, these poems are lost to us now. But they would have had a different historical value, because they served a different purpose.

Sappho's poems are rich with information on her family, on religious practice and on elite culture. Some of her poems mention the occasion of performance, namely religious festivals and cult worship. Sappho sings about ritualistic worship of Aphrodite (fr. 1; 2). She mentions there that Aphrodite once visited her (fr. 1). She sings about the power of Aphrodite to make humans fall in love. The power of Aphrodite is also important to Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. According to Homer, Zeus was not even capable of resisting the power of Aphrodite (*Il*. 14. 193-220). Aphrodite was indirectly the cause of the Trojan war in Homer's *Iliad*. Paris was her favorite mortal, and therefore impossible to resist by Helen (*Il*. 3. 421-460; Sapph. Fr. 16).

There is a poem where she mentions that she is singing at the festival of Hera (fr. 17). She mentions that she sings there, because it pleases people to celebrate and sing praiseful about the gods. Interestingly, she celebrates Hera for a religious festival on Lesbos in connection to the mythical past. Agamemnon and Menelaus would have been stuck at Lesbos after the Trojan war. Since they had received help from Hera to leave Lesbos, there was a festival instituted in honor of Hera. These poems reveal important aspects of religious worship. They reveal how relationships between humans and divinities were maintained by ritualistic acts, and accompanied by singing. The epiphanies of the gods called upon regular celebration.

Moreover, Sappho's poems primarily praise female deities, namely the Muses, the Graces, Aphrodite and Hera. She praises different deities then Alcaeus. Alcaeus' poems primarily praise Athena and Zeus. The content of some of Sappho's poems suggests she performed in front of a female audience. There is a fragment which introduces a rite performed by women during a full moon (fr. 154). Another fragment is of a poem which details how young women performed a rite in honor of Adonis (fr. 140a). Alcaeus' poetry also contains references to Lesbian women performing sacred duties (fr. 130b).

Furthermore, she sung several poems at wedding ceremonies (fr. 30; 107; 108; 109; 111; 112; 113; 115; 153; 185). These wedding ceremonies were a form of pubic celebration. Specific rites were to be performed. These rites included poetic singing.

Furthermore, there are several poems in which she addresses family, friends, or rivals (Fr. 8; 15b; 23; 56; 98a-b; 132). The songs in which she addresses rivals may have been sung at musical contests. The poems in which she addresses family and friends, however, seem more personal. These may have been sung at informal gatherings. The poem (cited above) in which Sappho urges her audience to follow the path of the Muses, suggests she was amongst family and/or friends. There are fragments in which she provides counsel to her family about her brother (fr. 8; 15b). She mentions there that her family should call on her to perform rites to honor Hera, and make sure that her brother comes home safely with a ship filled with riches. She also expresses a wish that her younger brother may start to serve her family better, and thereby relieve her family from worrying about him. This poem shows that Sappho's place in

society as a poet was rather flexible.[141] She was not only a poet who performed a religious function. She was a Lesbian, but also a citizen of Mytilene, and a member of her family.

In conclusion, I agree with Hall that several of Sappho's poems were performed in small circles and do express Sappho's personal attitudes. Contrarily, I disagree with Hall that she always performed at informal gatherings. Her poetry functioned an important part of ritualistic worship. She performed these as a member of Mytilene, but also as a member of Lesbos. There were probably communal religious festivals on Lesbos. Festivals shared by the whole of Lesbos. She may have participated in musical contests there.

Furthermore, I disagree with scholars who argued Sappho's poetry belonged to an institution. Those scholars excluded the fact that Sappho's poems are too various in content. It is unlikely that her autobiographical comments in her poems in which she addresses family were fiction. Her comments about her brother are verified and expanded upon by Herodotus. Hesiod and Sappho' poems reveal how poets exercised power within their families and their communities. Family affairs were public affairs in those cases.

Sappho's place in society as a poet does not seem to have been threatened. It is likely that she reflected upon the Muses, because she gained prestige and influence through her poetic gift. Although she did live through moments of crises, she did not express doubts on her own poetic ability. Instead she doubted the ability of others to access the realm of the Muses. It is probable that she was the most influential poet on Lesbos at that time. Alcaeus was also important of course, but he spent a lot of his time in exile. Perhaps that's why Sappho felt particularly close to the Muses. They had made her famous and influential.

Conclusion

What was the place of the servant of the Muses in Archaic Greece?

Hesiod functioned as a servant of the Muses on two levels, as far as we can speak of 'two levels'. On one level he had a place as a poet amongst his locals in Ascra, which is where he performed his *Works and Days*, but his position there depended on his fame in the larger Greek world. In Chalcis where he performed his *Theogony* he operated on a panhellenic level, for his participation in Amphidamas' funerary poetical contest implies such. For participation there, was not restricted to the deceased's hometown, but accessible to a larger group of contestants. The reason for this was probably that Amphidamas fought in a war, in which many Greek cities fought against, and with, each other. In that regard, it was a panhellenic funeral for a warrior who died in a panhellenic war, celebrated or honored by panhellenic games, athletic and poetic. Hesiod would probably never have had the role as a poet in his local community, if he had not won that funerary contest in Chalcis. His victory proved that the Muses allowed him to pierce through the reality of things.

[141] Parker, 'Sappho Schoolmistress', 343-346, made a similar point, namely that Sappho, like other Archaic poets, fulfilled many different roles and performed at several occasions.

The fact that the funeral functioned on a panhellenic level, explains why Hesiod's *Theogony* lacks local determinants in comparison to his *Works and Days*. It is unfortunate however, that we do not have the complete *Theogony*, for that might have enabled us to understand the relationship between poetry and funerary practice better. There is a case to be made, however, that Hesiod's *Theogony* competed with Homer's *Iliad* during the funerary games of Amphidamas. Besides the fact that ancient biographers were of the opinion that this had occurred, and that Plutarch has referenced Lesches as a witness account, there are other elements which speak for this. The fact that Patroclos is called the son of Amphidamas suggests a connection between the *Iliad* and Amphidamas' funeral. Although Patroclus' funeral was celebrated by athletic games, the prize to be won was also a tripod. However this may have been, the *Iliad* reveals hero worship which was prevalent in Greece during the Lelantine war.

Additionally, the *Theogony* and the *Iliad* both make prominent use of catalogues. Providing extensive genealogies of gods and humans, may have been an essential element to the poetical contest at Chalcis. Anyway, Hesiod's *Theogony* and Homer's *Iliad* represented a panhellenic dimension.

Sappho lived during an age of transition. The political situation at Lesbos changed significantly. The old aristocratic power lost its grip and left a vacuum behind, which would eventually be filled by Pittacus. Pittacus reformed Lesbos and implemented new laws, and public offices. Lesbos became more democratic than it was before. However, women had no role in public life, except for their part in religious festivals, and in marital affairs. Regardless, Sappho was an influential figure, but not because she participated in economic or political affairs directly. She was influential because of her music, and her role in public religious life. In this regard her position as a poet must have strongly enhanced her influence in religious affairs, for she did not just participate in festivals, she actively cultivated these festivals by means of her songs. Although she had no political or economic voice, she did have a musical voice which allowed her to be authoritative because of her proximity to the Muses.

There must have been a demand in Lesbos for a female poet which could provide a consistency, a reliability, otherwise not provided for by the political organization. Sappho performed at festivals which stress the mythical origins of Lesbos. In that regard she was responsible for cultivating a religious identity, set in myth, and reinforced by rituals and songs. The interesting thing about these songs is the way they express unity at a time and a place of political uncertainties and political reforms.

Sappho's aristocratic status surely made it possible for her to reach the position she did. Her family was well-connected through their trade, and had the ability to travel elsewhere. Her songs made an impression on other influential Greeks, such as Solon, and were already sang (by others) in her own life time at symposia. The songs she sang about her exile may have been well received at places where other exiles lived, or colonists had created a new way of life, but also by societies at war. This may be an explanation for the fact that her poetry was so well received at Lesbos and Athens. Both were at war during her lifetime. Her stay at Syracuse may have coincided the migration of Ionian poets who left Asia Minor and traveled to Sicily due to the Persian expansion of power. If this were true, then she might have

performed for a larger group of political refugees then her Lesbian friends alone. It is likely that she would have been acquainted with other aristocratic families in Syracuse as well. Her family connections and husband's wealth must have given her the opportunity to continue to perform even while she was in exile.

There is so much and yet so little we know about the role of poets in Archaic Greece. The biggest challenge remains to understand a world which is both unknown and familiar to us. The strength of the poets discussed in this chapter, was their capacity to narrate experiences which even after more than 2500 years resonate with people. At the same time these poets engage with a world filled with human-divine interaction which alienates the reader, because it reveals an ancient religion which has for a long time been out of practice by now. In that regard we rely on our theoretical framework to understand the religious dimension of these poets' works.

In case of Hesiod, Homer, and Sappho we can conclude that the Muses were important to their profession. Their profession was important to their audience, and as such the Muses were important to their audience as well. The Muses did not only provide a window to the nature of the gods, they also enabled humans to make sense of their own relationships with the gods. Poets provided narratives about human-divine interaction which could have explained the condition humans lived in. In case of Hesiod he explains poverty and suffering as a consequence of Zeus' anger. Sappho and Homer could explain love sickness by virtue of Aphrodite's power to make humans desirable to other humans. Whether people lived or died was completely in the hands of the gods as well, and so was the outcome of war. In case of these relationships there was always a common element. Epiphanies revealed the impact gods had on humans, and humans needed to be respectful of that.

Chapter 2

Poets and poetry in classical Greece

The source material from the Classical period (ca. 500-300 BCE), consists of an abundance of material connected to the panhellenic games and the Great Dionysia. Wealthy and renowned members of Greek *poleis* met each other at these games or festivals.[142] Pindar's odes and Bacchylides' odes were specifically commissioned to celebrate the victories of Athletic games while tragic plays were performed as part of a competition between tragic plays during the Great Dionysia.[143] For the reason that these games and festivities were celebrated multiple days in a row they attracted many different people who offered their qualities and services. For example Herodotus and Empedocles both shared their works publicly during the Olympic games.[144]

In the previous chapter the focus was on Hesiod, Homer, and Sappho. In this current chapter, the focus will be on poets from the fifth century BCE. More specifically, the focus will be on Pindar, Empedocles and Euripides. These poets reflected upon the Muses in epiphany as well. There must have been a demand for these reflections, especially because these poets were influential members of Greek society.

In order to understand the reason why there was a demand for reflections on the Muses, the focus of this chapter will be on the social context of the poets and their poetry.

Their lives as poets are examined in order to understand the historical reality of their poetry. They performed and responded in a specific time set and were confronted with specific challenges. The origin and function of their poetry is treated. They engaged with different traditions and cultural expressions which are all part of Greek history. The history of their poetry is treated in order to gain a better understanding of how these individual poets functioned as part of an already existing tradition. The way in which these poets reflected upon their own profession and on the Muses is treated as well. They expressed a need to address the ability of humans to know anything for certain about the divine. These reflections are informative on how they reacted to historical changes and developments. The main question of this chapter is:

How, then, did Pindar, Empedocles and Euripides function as servants of the Muses?

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[142] A. Verity and S. Instone, *Pindar: The Complete Odes* (Oxford 2007) XI-XIII. A. Aloni, 'The Proem of Simonides' Plataea Elegy and the Circumstances of its Performance', in: D. Boedeker and D. Sider ed., *The New Simonides Contexts of Praise and Desire* (Oxford 2001) 86-105, 104. H. Maehler, *Bacchylides a Selection* (Cambridge 2004) 3-8.

[143] H. Lloyd-Jones, *Sophocles Ajax Electra Oedipus Tyrannus* (Harvard 1997) 8. W. Nickerson Bates, *Sophocles Poet and Dramatist* (Pennsylvania 1940) 6.

[144] Fowler, 'Gods in early Greek historiography', 318-319.

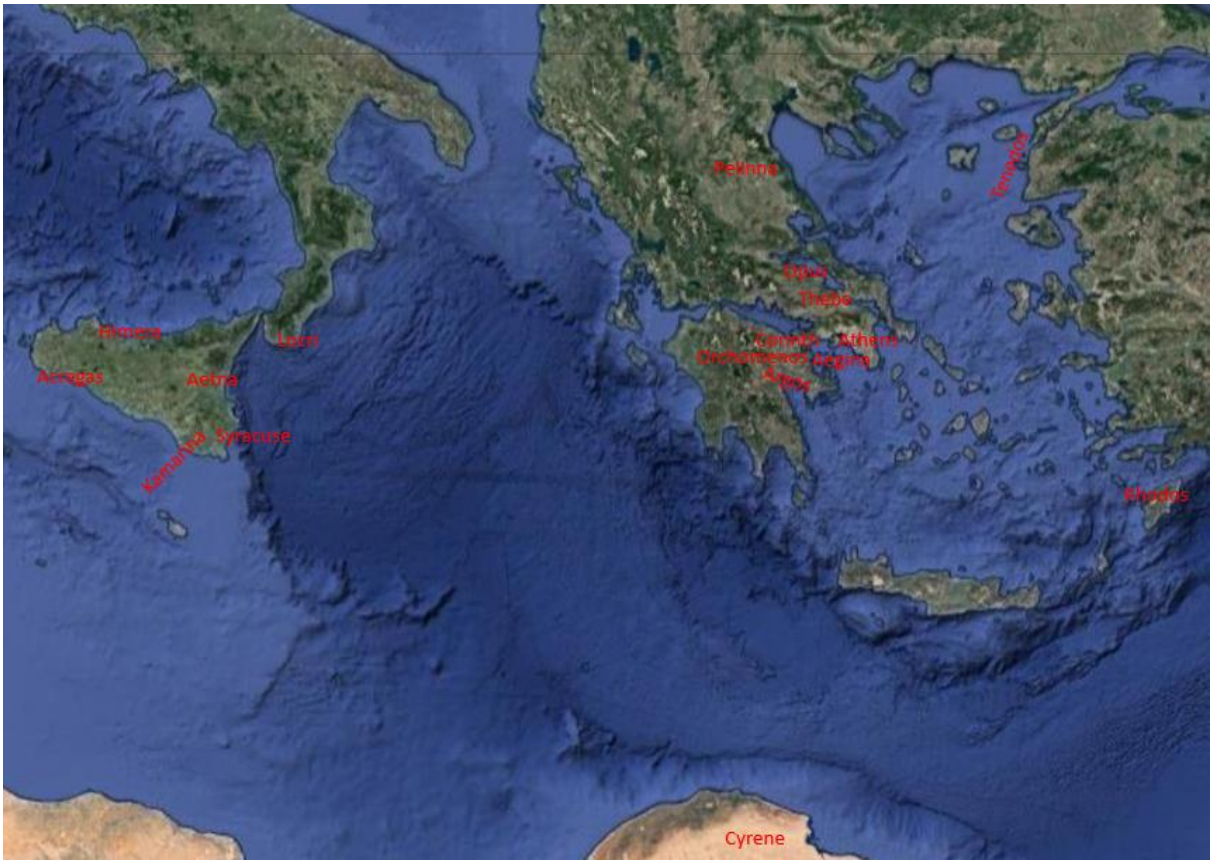
2.1

Pindar

Victory odes

According to ancient biographers Pindar composed several different types of songs. He should have composed songs in honor of religious festivals, as well as songs dedicated to celebrate individuals.[145] Nowadays we know Pindar primarily for his forty-five victory odes (*epinicia*).[146] Victory odes, as textual evidence, are songs which celebrate victors of the Panhellenic games. Mostly, athletic victors, but occasionally musical victors as well (plate 1). These songs were performed by a group of professional singers and dancers.[147]

Plate 1. *All the (seventeen) hometowns of the victors whom Pindar celebrated*



What was the origin and function of victory odes?

Perhaps it is helpful to take a look at the history of athletic games and praise, by means of victory odes, to understand their value in the classical Greek world. There is a lack of agreement amongst historians on the foundation date of the first institutionalized athletic games, the Olympic Games. Initially, modern historians preferred an early dating of the

[145] P. Lateur, *Pindaros Zegezangen* (Amsterdam 1999) 11-12.
[146] Lateur, *Pindaros*, 14-15.
[147] Ibidem, 20-22.

Olympic Games, namely 776 BCE.[148] However, archaeologists have come to doubt this dating in more recent enquiries, for the reason that material evidence suggests a 700 BCE dating.[149] A later date has become more convincing, for this coincides with the latest dating of Hesiod and Homer. If the Olympic Games were founded around 700 BCE, then that date would coincide with the moment poetry has consistently been handed down to us. In this regard, it is plausible to assume that poetry has been successfully preserved up until now, owing to the fact that transmission and codification of poetry was enabled by the celebration of the Olympic games, since the elite of Greek city-states consistently met each other in an Olympic cycle.

The institution of three other Panhellenic games followed more than a century after the foundation of the Olympic Games at Elis. The Pythian games at Delphi and the Nemean games at Nemea were founded around 575 BCE.[150] The Isthmian games at Corinth were founded somewhere between 575 and 550 BCE.[151] All Panhellenic games, except for the Pythian games, honored the death of a hero.[152] Interestingly, Greek cities celebrated their victory in the Persian war by dedicating monuments at Olympia, Isthmia, and Delphi.[153] The origins of Panhellenic games may have been tied to the growing importance of hoplite warfare. Military training often consisted of athletic exercise.[154] Organized warfare demanded that soldiers were physically fit and well trained.[155]

Furthermore, in chapter one we have discussed the connection between athletic games and poetry on one hand and funerary rituals on the other hand. Panhellenic games may also have resulted from the belief that the death of a hero demanded a sacrifice, namely to relive his struggles through athletic contest.[156] In this regard, the Panhellenic games which featured both athletic and musical contests, would have functioned to honor the life and death of heroes.

> *Different rewards bring pleasure to men for different deeds:*
> *The shepherd, the ploughman, the bird-trapper,*
> *The man whose livelihood is in the sea;*
> *For all men strain to keep persistent hunger from their bellies.*

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[148] M. Golden, *Sport and Society in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge 1998) 63-64. D.G. Kyle, *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World* (Oxford 2015) 74. H.M. Lee, 'The 'First' Olympic Games of 776 BCE', in: W.J. Raschke ed., *The Archaeology of the Olympics: The Olympics and Other Festivals in Antiquity* (Madison 1988) 110-120, 110-115.
[149] Golden, *Sport and Society*, 64-65. Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 10.
[150] Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 11.
[151] E.R. Gebhard, 'The Beginning of Panhellenic Games at the Isthmus', in: H. Kyrieleis ed., *Olympia 1875-2000: 125 Jahre Deutsche Ausgrabungen* (Mainz 2002) 221-238, 229. C. Morgan, 'The Origins of the Isthmian Festival', in: H. Kyrieleis ed., *Olympia 1875-2000: 125 Jahre Deutsche Ausgrabungen* (Mainz 2002) 251-272, 265-266.
[152] Gebhard, 'The Beginning of Panhellenic Games', 221. Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 5-13. Kyle, *Sport and Spectacle*, 73.
[153] Hall, *A History*, 267.
[154] Golden, *Sport and Society*, 24. J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: Proeve Eener Bepaling Van Het Spel-element Der Cultuur* (Amsterdam 2008) 124, argued that the Lelantine war was fought like an athletic game. Huizinga argued that warfare and athletics were often ritualistic activities.
[155] Golden, *Sport and Society*, 26-27. H. van Wees, 'The city at War', in: R. Osborne ed., *Classical Greece 500-323 BC* (Cornwall 2000) 81-110, 86-87.
[156] Nagy, 'Early Greek views', 12-13. Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 5-9.

But the greatest profit is earned by the man
Who wins splendid glory in war or in the games,
Through praise, which is the choicest address
From the tongues of citizens and strangers.

[Isthm. 1. 47-52; transl. Instone and Verity]

Pindar puts himself in the tradition of Hesiod In Isthmian 2. He references what the Muses said about Hesiod to Hesiod, namely that as a shepherd he was nothing more than a belly looking for food. Although Pindar emphasizes that warriors and athletic victors are highly esteemed, their status connects to the songs of praise. According to Pindar, victory odes were just as important as warfare and/or athletics.

…. a man who has done noble deeds
And reached the house of Hades without a song to praise him
Has wasted his breath and won but little pleasure from his toil.
But on you the sweet-toned lyre and tuneful pipe are
Shedding fame,
And the Pierian daughters of Zeus spread your glory far afield.

[Olymp. 10. 91-6; transl. Instone and Verity]

Pindar mentions in his odes several times that praise is important in relation to the afterlife. According to Walter Burkert death rituals were important for the identity of a family. These death rituals primarily consisted out of remembering the dead.[157] Leslie Kurke added that striving towards fame was a way to protect the family identity, because fame enabled the family to keep the memory of deceased members of the family alive.[158]

Although death ritual and praise were also connected with each other in the musical contest on Amphidamas' funeral, Pindar expressed its connection differently from Hesiod and Homer. In case of Homer, it was a necessity to be buried to reach the afterlife. Contrarily, Pindar mentions that a victory ode will benefit the victor in Hades. In case of Hesiod, singing songs of praise consoles people, and pleases Zeus. He does not mention that it is necessary to sing praise because the dead needed it.

Moreover, the practice of victory odes did not yet exist when Hesiod and Homer were alive. Ibycus and Simonides were the first to produce victory odes, at the end of the sixth century BCE. Meanwhile, Bacchylides, who was Simonides' nephew, and a contemporary of Pindar, produced alongside Pindar (and for a while alongside Simonides as well). Some scholars have argued that the victory odes ceased to exist after Pindar's life.[159] Those scholars have argued that victory odes arose from an aristocratic demand to legitimize and cultivate their political rule. Many city-states were succumbed by power struggles in the sixth century BCE. Tyrants fought to establish their rule and often succeeded. Victory odes would have been a byproduct of this socio-political development. According to those scholars, victory odes ceased to exist

[157] Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 193.
[158] L. Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise: Pindar and the Poetics of Social Economy* (New York 1991) 62-3.
[159] Instone and Verity, *Pindar*, VIII-X. S.E. Harrel, 'King or Private Citizen: Fifth Century Sicilian Tyrants at Olympia and Delphi', *Mnemosyne* 55:4 (2002) 439-464, 440-3.

at the end of the fifth century BCE, because tyrants and aristocrats started to lose their power in an upcoming democratic world.[160] These scholars, however, mistakenly maintained that victory odes clashed with democratic rule. Their view was also based on the mistaken belief that victory odes were no longer produced after Pindar's death. Nowadays, it is known that victory odes were also composed in the fourth and third centuries BCE. Although victory odes appear less frequent in our source-material from after the fifth century BCE, this decrease in frequency does not have to be representative of its popularity at the time.[161] Another reason why I am convinced that victory odes did not clash with democratic politics, is that Pindar praised several victors from places where a form of democratic government existed (*Ol*. 4; 5; *Pyth*. 7; 9; *Nem*. 10; 11; *Isthm*. 1; 3; 4; 7).[162] He was even commissioned to celebrate an elected official, namely to praise the official and the athletic victories of the elected official's family (*Nem*. 11).

Furthermore, Simon Hornblower proposed that victory odes could have originated from a need which existed in Greek colonies. He argued that victory odes were originally popular in city-states which were colonies. The rulers of these places would have felt a need to create a cult around their rule, and distinguish their colony from the places they originated from.[163] According to Hornblower, victory odes became ritualistic acts as well. Similarly, he considered the Panhellenic games to have been ritualistic acts as well. This explains why victory odes were commissioned by many Greek cities in the fifth century BCE. According to Hornblower, Pindar was motivated by a religious imperative to praise victors.[164]

Pindar's life

Before discussing Pindar's life, it should be mentioned that some scholars argued that the ancient commentators on Pindar, and Pindar's victory odes, cannot be used as historical sources.[165] The ancient commentators on Pindar often commented by seeking historical explanations for the content of the odes.[166] Some modern scholars disregarded their method, because Pindar would have created a poetic persona. According to this view, Pindar did not

[160] P.W. Rose, *Sons of the Gods, Children of Earth: Ideology and Literary Form in Ancient Greece* (New York 1995) 159-160. Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 25-26.
[161] Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 25, 28.
[162] E.W. Robinson, *Democracy Beyond Athens: Popular Government in the Greek Classical Age* (Cambridge 2011) 184-185, 202. L.G. Mitchell, 'Greek Government', in: K.H. Kinzl ed., *A Companion to the Classical Greek World* (Pondicherry 2006) 367-386, 375-378.
[163] Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 26-27.
[164] Ibidem, 28-33.
[165] Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets*, 58. M.R. Lefkowitz, 'Τω και εγω: The First Person in Pindar', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 67 (1963) 177-253, 177-178. M.R. Lefkowitz, 'The Pindar Scholia', *The American Journal of Philology* 106:3 (1985) 269-282, 272. C.O. Pavese, *La Lirica Corale Greda Alcmane, Simonide, Pindaro, Bacchilide* (Roma 1979) 22, argued against this view that the ancient commentators were useful sources, because they gave information about the context of Pindar's performances.
[166] Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets*, 66. T. Phillips, 'Historiography and Ancient Pindaric Scholarship', in: B. Currie and I. Rutherford ed., *The Reception of Greek Lyric Poetry in the Ancient World: Transmission, Canonization and Paratext* (Leiden 2019) 441-460, 446-449.

include personal elements in his odes.[167] I agree that ancient commentators nor Pindar's odes should be read as mere historical facts. On the other hand, Pindar did compose odes which were celebrated at specific places in time. His compositions cannot be separated from his own life nor from the world he lived in. For example, Pindar speaks several times of silvered coins in his odes.[168] That kind of language was not used by Hesiod, Homer, and Sappho, because there was not any silvered coinage in Greece when they were alive.

Alternatively, some scholars argued that Pindar's victory odes represent the audience as a religious community in a divine world. In this regard, the victory odes are said to voice the religious ideas and practices of the audiences.[169]

Moreover, ancient commentators provide information on Pindar's life and on the performative context of Pindar's odes not readily available to us now. They were acquainted with sources which are not preserved up until the present. This is shown by the fact they contextualized the historical setting of the odes. They did not merely base themselves on the content of the odes, but they used historical knowledge to understand the meaning of the odes. It is up to the modern historian to judge whether their comments are verified or falsified by other sources.

Additionally, there were demands for his odes, but these demands differed from place to place and varied throughout time. Even if he created a poetic persona, he still would have reacted to the social demands of his audience. The fact he composed odes for victors from various places makes it likely, that Pindar was talented at responding to the social demands of his audiences.

In a fragment Pindar mentions that he was born in a year which celebrated the Pythian festival (fr. 193). For the reason that the Pythian games were always celebrated in a third year of an Olympiad, he would have been born in a third year of an Olympiad. According to the *Suda* Pindar was born in Olympiad 65 (*Pi*. 1617). Olympiad 65 translates to the period 520 to 517 BCE. If these notes on his birth are correct then he was born in the year 518 BCE.[170] This seems a likely date of birth, because a large part of Pindar's victory odes date to the period 480 to 460 BCE. Assuming that the material we have from him represents the height of his professional career accurately, he would have flourished in his forties and fifties.

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[167] Lefkowitz, 'Τω και εγω: The First Person in Pindar', 177-178. M.R. Lefkowitz, *First-Person Fictions: Pindar's Poetic 'I'* (Bristol 1991) 8-9. C. Lattmann, 'Pindar's Voice(s): The Epinician *Persona* Reconsidered', in: N.W. Slater ed., *Voice and Voices in Antiquity Orality and Literacy in the Ancient World* vol. 2 (Leiden 2016) 123-148, 128-129. M. Anzai, 'First-person forms in Pindar: A re-examination', *BICS* 39 (1994) 141-150, 141, 150.

[168] See (below) p. 56-57.

[169] G.B. D'Alessio, 'First-person problems in Pindar', *BICS* 39 (1994) 117-139, 126-127. N. Demand, 'Pindar's Olympian 2, Theron's faith, and Empedocles' katharmoi', *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 16:4 (1975) 347-357, 353-354. H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des Fruehen Griechentums: Eine Geschichte der Griechischen Literatur von Homer bis Pindar* (New York 1952) 542-544. F.J. Nisetich, *Pindar and Homer* (Baltimore 1989) 28-33, gave a nuanced argument, namely that Pindar voiced the ideas of his audience, but also cultivated his own religious ideas.

[170] Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 52; fn.1, mentioned Olympiad 75 (476 BCE) as the birth date of Pindar. He probably made a mistake, because he still maintained that Pindar was born around 518 BCE. T.E. Page and W.H.D. Rouse ed., *The Odes of Pindar including the Principal Fragments* (London 1915) vii; C. Gasper, *Essai de Chronologie Pindarique* (Brussel 1900) 15-16; U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 60, mentioned Olympiad 65 as the birth date.

Consequently, his birth may very well have been in the year 518 BCE. He lived at least up until 444 BCE and possibly even until a later date.[171]

The fifth century BCE is known for two major wars: the Persian war and the Peloponnesian war. However there were many conflicts going on in the interim period as well.[172] As far as we know, Pindar did not fight in the Persian war. He did, however, compose victory odes for people who had fought and/or suffered in the Persian war.[173]

Moreover, Pindar composed odes for victors from many Greek city-states. The cities of these victors did not always fight on the same side in the Persian war.[174]

The Persian war changed many Greek city-states. A Persian army made its way from Persia towards Attica in 490 BCE. It invaded and looted several Greek islands.[175] The Persian army succeeded to reach Marathon, but the Athenians forced it to retreat there.[176] Greek cities felt distrust towards each other in the period between the first (490 BCE) and second (480 BCE) Persian invasion.[177] For example, Delos was believed to have made a deal with the Persians, because the Persians had abstained from looting on Delos.[178]

Anti-Persian sentiment was especially strong at Athens. Athenian politics became divided on the issue of the Persian invasion. Ostracism was employed for the first time in 488/487 BCE. Hipparkhos, Hippias' grandson, was ostracized, because Hippias had sided with the Persians in 490 BCE. Subsequently, Megakles, an Alkmaionid, was ostracized in the following year. There was a story that an Alkmaionid had signaled the Persians with his shield during the battle of Marathon. Megakles won the chariot race at the Pythian games shortly after he was ostracised. Pindar composed an ode to celebrate Megakles' victory in which he expresses sorrow for Megakles' situation.[179]

> *I am pleased at your recent good fortune,*
> *But grieved that success is repaid with envy.*
>
> [Pindar, *Pyth.*7, 18-20; transl. S. Instone]

Pindar still celebrates the Athletic victory of Megakles by glorifying Athens. Megakles had still been allowed to participate in the Pythian games as a citizen of Athens.

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[171] Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 52, placed his death around 438 BCE.
[172] van Wees, 'The City at War', 82-83. D. Asheri, 'Sicily, 478-431 BC', in: E.W. Robinson ed., *Ancient Greek Democracy: Readings and Sources* (Cornwell 2004) 131-134. S. Berger, 'Revolution and Society in Greek Sicily and Southern Italy', in: E.W. Robinson ed., *Ancient Greek Democracy Readings and Sources* (Cornwell 2004) 135-139. E.W. Robinson, 'Democracy in Syracuse, 466-412 BC', in: E.W. Robinson ed., *Ancient Greek Democracy Readings and Sources* (Cornwell 2004) 140-150.
[173] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 346. Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 218-220, 222-223.
[174] Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 160-162, 190-191, 194.
[175] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 328-329.
[176] Ibidem, 329. Hall, *A History*, 264. L. Kallet, 'The fifth century: political and military narrative', in: R. Osborne ed., *Classical Greece 500-323 BC* (New York 2000) 170-196, 171.
[177] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 328-329. Kallet, 'The fifth century', 172.
[178] Ibidem, 329.
[179] Ibidem, 331-332. S. Forsdyke, *Exile, Ostracism, and Democracy: the Politics of Expulsion in Ancient Greece* (New Jersey 2005) 152. P.J. Rhodes, 'The Non-Literary Written Sources', in: K.H. Kinzl ed., *A Companion to the Classical Greek World* (Pondicherry 2006) 45-63, 57-58.

The second Persian invasion started in 480 BCE. The Persians forced Athenian citizens to abandon Athens, and managed to gain control of the most part of mainland Greece. The weather, however, put an end to the second Persian invasion.[180] The third and last Persian invasion happened the next year. The Persians were then finally defeated at Plataiai (479 BCE).[181]

The second and third Persian invasions had put a strain on the relationships between city-states. It was vital that city-states fought together to defeat the Persian army on mainland Greece. However, the rulers of Argon and Syracuse refused to aid the Greek mainland in this. According to Herodotus, internal struggles revolved around the issue of leadership. Gelon of Syracuse wanted command of the Greek army, but Athenians refused to give it to him (*Hist*. 7. 148-167).[182]

Stories were told about the cowardice of some city-states, after the end of the Persian war. Citizens from Corinth and Thessaly were blamed for having left the battlefield, before battle commenced.[183] Citizens from Thebes, Pindar's hometown, were blamed for even worse.[184] According to Herodotus, Thebans aided the Persians and even fought on the side of the Persians at the battle of Plataiai (*Hist*. 9. 31, 40, 67). Pindar had to deal with this situation in the next decade. In that time-period, he was commissioned to compose four odes for victors whose city had fought against Pindar's hometown (*Isthm*. 5; 8; *Nem*. 3; 4). He also composed three odes for victors from his own hometown (*Pyth*. 11; *Isthm*. 3; 4), and six odes for the allies of Gelon of Syracuse (*Ol*. 1; 2; 3; *Nem*. 1; 9; *Pyth*. 3).

Pindar composed many odes for victors from Sicily and South-Italy in the 70s and 60s of the fifth century BCE. Interestingly, he composed two odes for Syracuse and one for Acragas when both city-states had just gone to war with each other (*Pyth*. 1; *Isthm*. 2; *Ol*. 6) (Diod. 11. 53).[185]

Furthermore, Gelon had seized power in Syracuse, and Theron in Acragas, during the Persian war. Both tyrants fought against any resistance on the peninsula between 490 and 479 BCE. They destroyed several city-states, and they impoverished, and enslaved, large groups of the Sicilian population.[186] Theron and Gelon killed the last Sicilian resistance, near Himera, at the end of the Persian war. Himera's tyrant asked the Carthaginians for help, and the Carthaginians answered his call. Gelon and Theron, however, destroyed the Carthaginian fleet (Diod. 11. 21-24).[187] Consequently, Gelon and Theron managed to become wealthy and powerful rulers on Sicily. Their dynasties controlled the Sicilian peninsula for approximately two decades. They were also tied to each other via intermarriage. Intermarriage, however, did not put a stop to their struggles for power.[188] Their tyrant dynasties lost their popularity after

[180] Hall, *A History*, 266.
[181] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 337-342. Hall, *A History*, 266-267.
[182] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 339.
[183] Hall, *A History*, 265.
[184] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 340-343.
[185] Berger, 'Revolution and Society', 135.
[186] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 344.
[187] Hall, *A History,* 267. Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 345.
[188] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 344-345. Berger, 'Revolution and Society', 136.

two decades of control.[189] Civilians began to rise up and revolt at many places in Sicily.[190] The tyrant dynasties of Gelon and Theron ended in the 70s and 60s of the fifth century BCE. Those previously banished by the tyrant dynasties returned to their properties.[191] Several cities became republican at this time. Parts of Sicily moved towards democratic reforms.[192]

Pindar spent a lot of time living in Sicily in the 70s and 60s of the fifth century BCE.[193] He was on friendly terms with the tyrant dynasties of Syracuse and Acragas. He often stayed there as a guest.[194] He continued to compose odes for victors from Sicily when the tyrant dynasties of Syracuse and Acragas were overthrown (*Ol*. 4; 5; 12). Although Pindar was on close terms with both tyrants, that did not stop him from composing odes for victors of city-states which had suffered under the rule of those tyrants.[195] He composed an ode for a victor from Himera in the 60s of the fifth century BCE (*Ol*. 12). Himera was defeated by Gelon and Theron in 479 BCE.[196] He composed odes for victors from Kamarinna in the 50s of the fifth century BCE (*Ol*. 4; 5). Kamarinna had previously been destroyed by Gelon, but was eventually rebuilt again.[197]

In conclusion, it has become clear that Pindar lived in a period of war and conflict. Identities were shaped and reshaped. Loyalties were questioned. Bravery was tested. At the same time, Greeks did not let war stop them from participating in Panhellenic games. War did not extend to include those moments. The games were considered more important than fighting. The same may extent to the importance of composing victory odes as well. For Pindar composed poems for communities which had fought each other, even destroyed each other on occasion.

Pindar's reflections on his occupation

In this current section the focus will be on Pindar's reflections on what it means to compose victory odes.

How, then, did he define himself as a poet in his odes?

In the sections above we discussed parts of Pindar's odes where it was said that victors of athletic games became famous by being praised through song. Praise by song benefited the victor when he entered the Underworld. In the following citation, however, Pindar casts doubt on his task to praise.

> *So I too, though my heart grieves, am invited to invoke*
> *The golden Muse.*
> *We have been delivered from great distress,*
> *But we must not let ourselves be denied crowns;*

[189] Robinson, 'Democracy in Syracuse', 141. Berger, 'Revolution and Society', 135-136. Asheri, 'Sicily', 131.
[190] Berger, 'Revolution and Society', 136. Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 350.
[191] Berger, 'Revolution and Society', 137.
[192] Asheri, 'Sicily', 131-134. Robinson, 'Democracy in Syracuse', 140, 147-148.
[193] Lateur, *Pindaros*, 12-13.
[194] Ibidem, 12-13. Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 204-207. C.M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford 1964) 118.
[195] Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 190-191.
[196] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 345-346. Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 193-196.
[197] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 344. Asheri, 'Sicily', 131. Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 190-191.

Nor should you nurse your anxieties.
No, now that we are relieved of our intractable troubles
Let us also after labours sing a sweet civic song,
Since tantalus' stone – an intolerable labour for Hellas –
Has been shifted by some god from above our heads.
But fear arising from past events holds back my strong ambition;
It is best to keep one's eyes always on each thing before one's feet,
for over men hangs a deceptive existence, as it unwinds life's path.
Yet even for this mortals may find a cure, if only they have freedom;
[*Isthm.* 8. 5-14; transl. S. Instone.]

Pindar expresses fear to celebrate and crown his victor in Isthmian 8. Isthmian 8 is unique in that Pindar questions whether Pindar should dare to celebrate. This ode is also unique, because it focuses on the shared mythological origins of Aegina and Thebes. Usually, Pindar's odes focus on the mythological origins of the city of the victor, rather than on Pindar's hometown. This ode was the first victory ode Pindar composed after the battle of Plataiai in 479 BCE.[198] The ode celebrates a victor from Aegina. Pindar mentions that Aegina and Thebes are twin cities (*Isthm*. 8. 16-19). In reality, however, Thebes was thought to have sided with the Persians in the Persian war, and therefore against Aegina.[199] There must have been a need to reflect upon the consequences of the war. After all, the war had turned cities against each other, it had caused distrust, and it had culminated in blame.

Moreover, it is likely that Pindar's personal life did influence the way his audience perceived him. Citizenship was important at that time. The case of Megacles showed that already. Citizenship decided who you were and what you could do in the fifth century BCE. Without citizenship it was impossible to participate in athletic games. Only citizens entered Panhellenic sanctuaries. Therefore, it is likely that Pindar's place of birth influenced the content of his compositions.

We already discussed that Pindar lived at a time of war. That may have had an influence on how he reflected upon the Muses. In the following citations he uses language of violence to define his own occupation, and that of the Muses:

For me, the Muse keeps a mighty defensive weapon.
Other men attain greatness in different ways;
the highest peaks are occupied by kings,
so do not look to climb further.
May you walk on high in this reign of yours,
and may I always be the victors' companion,
pre-eminent by my poetry throughout all Hellas.
[*Olympian* 1, 110-5. Translated by Instone and Verity]

I have many swift arrows in the quiver under my arm.

[198] Pindar composed the ode in 478 BCE.
[199] Lateur, *Pindaros*, 262-263.

they speak to those who understand,
but for the most part they require interpreters.
wise is the man who knows much by nature,
while those who have acquired their knowledge
chatter in pointless confusion, just like
a pair of crows against the divine bird of Zeus.
Come, my heart, aim your bow at the mark!
Who are we now to strike, as we shoot fame's arrows
with gentle intent?

[*Olympian* 2, 85-90. Translated by Instone and Verity]

Pindar uses violent language to clarify his position. Perhaps he would not call himself a servant of the Muses, but rather a warrior of the Muses. According to ancient commentators, Pindar's violent language in Olympian 2 was directed at Simonides and Bacchylides (Schol. *Olymp*. 2. 158c-158d). Simonides and Bacchylides were guests at Syracuse around the same time Pindar lived in Sicily.[200] Pindar, however, composed for Hiëron of Syracuse (*Ol*. 1) and for Theron of Acragas (*Ol*. 2) at a time when both tyrants were in conflict with each other. For example, Simonides mediated between Theron and Hïeron, and prevented war between both (Schol. *Olymp*. 2. 29d).[201] War broke out eventually, however, when Theron died and his son succeeded him.[202] Pindar urges both Hiëron and Theron to accept their mortal limits, for they should not anger the gods (*Ol*. 1. 115; 3. 44-46). It may very well be the case that Pindar's violent language in Olympian 1 and 2 reflects the hostile environment at the time of composition.[203]

It was already mentioned that Pindar spoke of money in his odes. The following citations suggest that Pindar earned money for composing victory odes:

Muse, it is your task, since you have agreed to hire out your
voice for silver,
to shift it this way and that – either to his father Pythonicus now
or to Thrasydaeus, since their happiness and glory are
blazing forth.

[*Pyth*. 11. 41-44; transl. Verity and Instone]

When, Thrasybulus, poets of former times took the
splendid lyre

[200] Bowra, *Pindar*, 118. Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 200. P.J. Rhodes, *A History of the Classical Greek World 478-323 BC* (Cornwall 2006) 75.
[201] Rhodes, *A History*, 75.
[202] Berger, 'Revolution and Society', 135. Rhodes, *A History*, 75.
[203] Instone and Verity, *Pindar*, 242, mentioned the aggressive competition between Theron of Acragas and Hïeron of Syracuse, but focused primarily on Pythagorean and Orphic elements. Lefkowitz, *The lives of the Greek Poets*, 57, 66; Lefkowitz, 'The Pindar Scholia', 272, rejected the interpretations of the ancient commentators. Lateur, *Pindaros*, 213; Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 247, agreed with the biographers that Pindar addresses Simonides and Bacchylides.

and mounted the chariot of the golden-circleted Muses,
they would lightly shoot their honey-voiced love songs at
any boy
whose alluring late-summer beauty could woo fair-throned
Aphrodite.
For the Muse was not yet greedy for gain, nor worked for hire,
nor did sweet soft-voiced songs with silvered faces
offer themselves for sale, peddled by honey-voiced Terpsichore.
But today she orders us to bear in mind the Argive's saying,
Which comes very close to the truth:
'Money it is, money that makes the man,'
Said the man deserted by both possessions and friends.

[*Isthmian* 2, 1-11. Translated by Instone and Verity]

Historians have argued about Pindar's references to money.[204] Pindar mentions that the Muse, Terpsichore, became motivated by money and started to work for hire in Isthmian 2 and Pythian 11. Some historians argued that we should understand Pindar's references to money as evidence that Pindar was commissioned and received payment.[205] The ancient biographical tradition supports this view as well. It is mentioned that Simonides had said that he would only praise certain people for a very large fee.[206] Another aspect which supports this view is that in the fifth century BCE many city-states started to mint coins, especially silvered coins.[207] Some historians argued that Greece became a monetarized economy in the fifth century BCE.[208]

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[204] Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 205-206. Bowra, *Pindar*, 125-126. L.V. Kurke, *Coins, Bodies, Games, And Gold: The Politics of Meaning in Archaic Greece* (Princeton 1999) 135-139. Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise*, 240-256. Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 32-33. M. Mauss, *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in Archaic societies* (London 2002) 110: fn. 10. Nagy, 'Early Greek Views', 20-21. Lefkowtiz, 'The Pindar Scholia', 279-280. Lateur, *Pindaros*, 257. D'Alessio, 'First-person problems', 127. E. Stehle, 'The Construction of Authority in Pindar's *Isthmian* 2 in Performance', in: E.J. Bakker ed., *Authorship and Greek Song: Authority, Authenticity, and Performance* (Leiden 2017) 8-33, 19-20, fn. 40.

[205] Podlecki, *The Early Greek Poets*, 205-206. Bowra, *Pindar*, 125-126, argued that Pindar was in financial debt when he composed *Isthmian* 2, and that he demanded to be paid by the Emmenids for odes which he had composed for the tyrants of Acragas in the past. Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise*, 240-256, argued that Pindar tries to normalize the upcoming monetary economy in Isthmian 2. D. Fearn, *Bacchylides: Politics, Performance, Poetic Tradition* (New York 2007) 188-189.

[206] Kurke, *The Traffic in Praise*, 243.

[207] C.M. Kraay, *Archaic and Classical Greek Coins* (London 1976) 57. D.R. Sear, *Greek Coins and Their Values. Volume 1: Europe* (London 1978) 181. Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 253-255.

[208] C. Menger, 'Geld', in: F.A. Hayek ed., *Schriften über Geld und Währungspolitik* (Tübingen 1970) 1-116, 8-9, 47-49, 52-53, argued that money was a consequence of trade, and especially of debts, tributes, and taxes. Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 256-259, gave a nuanced view that coins originated out of a need to exchange goods on an international scale, but that transactions were not limited to the use of coinage. U. Wartenberg, *After Marathon: war, society and money in fifth century Greece* (Dorchester 1995) 15-17, argued that coins were often used in local and international trade in the fifth century BCE. C.G. Starr, *The Economic and Social Growth of Early Greece* (New York 1977) 116; O. Murray, *Early Greece* (Harvard 1993) 238-239, argued that an expanding bureaucratic state apparatus created a need to use money. M.I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley 1972) 23, 166; T.R. Martin, 'Why did the Greek 'Polis' originally need coins?', *Historische Zeitschrift*

Alternatively, some historians maintained that Pindar's references to payments should not be read as references to economic transactions. These historians read Pindar from the framework of gift-exchange and reciprocity. They argued that it was a poet's duty to praise a victor.[209] According to those historians, athletic victories demanded payment by means of praising the victor, because otherwise the divine order would have been disturbed. According to this view it was a ritualistic act to praise victors.[210]

The following citations suggest that Pindar believed he was following a divine imperative:

> *The foundations were laid by the gods*
> *through this man's divinely given talents;*
> *but it is success that marks the peak of supreme glory,*
> *and the Muse loves to commemorate great contests.*
> [*Nemean* 1, 8-11. Translated by Instone and Verity]

> *This is why, I believe, the Muse stood beside me*
> *as I composed in a brilliant new way*
> *to fit my voice of glorious celebration to the Dorian measure,*
> *since the victory wreaths woven in his hair*
> *exact payment from me of this god-inspired debt:*
> *to combine in due harmony the many-voiced lyre, the cry of*
> *pipes,*
> *and the placement of words in honour of Aenesidamus' son.*
> [*Olympian* 3, 5-9. Translated by Instone and Verity]

Pindar mentions that he must compose a brilliant ode, because he needs to repay a debt (*Ol*. 3. 5-9). This is an interesting passage, because he uses economic language to explicate his divine purpose. He speaks about payment and debt, but he also says that he should compose because of the divine. Pindar also expresses that he merely follows a divine order in Nemean 1. This can be read as proof that Pindar believed he should praise athletic victors, because the divine world ordered him to.

In my view, both scholarly interpretations on what motivated Pindar to compose odes have some merit. Athletic games were religious events closely connected to funerary activities. The perpetual cycle of Panhellenic games partially served to honor and remember a Greek heroic past. This was assumed to have been a divine imperative. The language of victory odes is also

für Alte Geschichte 45:3 (1996) 257-283, 259; argued that *poleis* minted coins to advertise political excellence, rather than out of a need to trade goods for money.

[209] Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 32-33. S.J. Harden, 'Embedded Song and Poetic Authority in Pindar and Bacchylides', in: E.J. Bakker ed., *Authorship and Greek Song: Authority, Authenticity, and Performance* (Leiden 2017) 139-160, 157-158. M. Mauss, *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in Archaic societies* (London 2002) 110: fn. 10. Nagy, 'Early Greek Views', 20-21. Lefkowitz, 'The Pindar Scholia', 279-280. Lateur, *Pindaros*, 257. D'Alessio, 'First-person problems', 127. Stehle, 'The Construction of Authority', 19-20, fn. 40.

[210] Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 32-33. Nagy, 'Early Greek Views', 20-21.

religious. Victors are praised because they are favored by the divine. In this sense, Pindar's odes were religious acts as well. The performance of his odes was a payment of respect to the victor, but especially to the divine realm. However, Pindar's odes did not follow the same protocol on each and every occasion. Odes were performed at private banquets, or at public banquets, or at religious festivals.[211]

The best example, however, of not solely being motivated by a divine imperative, is the ode he composed for an elected public official (*Nem*. 11). The reason he composed this ode had nothing to do with athletic victories per se. Athletic victories were only celebrated because it enhanced the status of the elected official.

Moreover, Pindar also composed an ode in honor of a recently deceased person (*Isthm*. 2). He composed an ode to console a terminally ill individual (*Pyth*. 3). Pindar urges his audience to look back at the past, and appreciate a person's glorious deeds in both cases.

Additionally, he composed an ode in which he actually made a political request (*Pyth*. 4). In that case, Pindar presents himself to be nothing more than a messenger of the divine. He asks the ruler of Cyrene to allow a friend of Pindar to return to Cyrene. This friend was exiled from Cyrene, and therefore separated from his wealth.

Furthermore, there were different motives which lead to the composition of each ode. Pindar probably composed the majority of his victory odes on commission. This means that he served the interests of his clientele. Therefore, it is likely that money was part of the equation.

In conclusion of the section on Pindar, it is clear that Pindar was a Panhellenic poet. He traveled around. He was well connected. He composed for many different city-states. He also lived at a time when Panhellenic games were extremely popular. His victory odes testify to that. He composed poetry in connection to the Panhellenic games. Pindar must have been famous all over the Greek world. The popularity of his odes may have been a result from a need to express Greekness, after the Persian war.

Additionally, Pindar's citizenship influenced his relationship with his commissioners after the end of the Persian war. His citizenship explains why he expresses caution to celebrate a victor of Aegina. It also explains why he felt the need to strengthen the ties between Thebes and Aegina. He reacted to an uncomfortable situation: Thebes had been on the wrong side of Greek history.

Moreover, Pindar's life is connected to the lives of his commissioners. To the lives of the athletic victors he celebrated in his odes. He must have had a personal relationship with his commissioners. This was probably possible because they met each other regularly, at the Panhellenic games.

Pindar made use of the poetic traditions before him. He was well versed in Hesiodic and Homeric poetry, and probably many other traditions as well. He did celebrate athletic victors often, as if they were warriors. And often they had been warriors. It has been suggested that

[211] Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 33-36.

it was Pindar's sacred duty to compose victory odes, because athletic games were a sacred duty connected to death ritual. This is, however, too narrow. There was a connection between praising athletic victories and ideas on the afterlife, but victory odes were not part of any institution. Pindar did not compose odes for the same reasons all the time. In the end, he was often commissioned to compose a victory ode. In this regard, his odes served a purpose. And that purpose was not limited to enhancing a victor's status by praising him.

How Pindar defined himself as a poet cannot be answered in a simple manner. He operated on a large scale in a vastly changing world. A world which had been ravished by war, but also characterized by expanding wealth and power. Pindar engages with these developments. On the one hand, he reflects on why it would matter to participate in games and celebrate victors. Since there was not always reason to celebrate. A war torn city-state may not feel so happy when a person from the opposing side shows up to praise an athletic victor. He does not always express in clear manner that the Muses' songs relieve sorrows, like Hesiod used to do in his *Theogony*. On the other hand, Pindar is clear about the fact that it is his occupation to celebrate athletic victors. He is not consistent about the reasons why this was his job. After all he defined himself to praise athletic victors for various reasons.

Finally, it is interesting that Pindar reflected so much upon the Muses. Somehow he felt a need to discuss the nature of the Muses and their epiphanies. Perhaps this was influenced by the fact that he lived in a world which changed rapidly. It is likely that his own occupation would have changed alongside it. He might have felt a need to explicate his divine authority to his audience. It is possible that his occupation was challenged by historical developments. His friendly relations with unfriendly rival states may have influenced his compositions. It is likely that his audiences were aware of his friendly relations with their rivals as well. For some reason he felt the need to reflect upon money as well. It is interesting that he felt the need to say that the Muse chose to work for hire. In that case he denounced his own agency in the matter. In this regard, he may have responded to a challenge to his poetic authority.

2.2

Empedocles

Empedocles's life

Empedocles was a citizen of Acragas and a generation younger then Pindar (Diog. Laert. 8. 51-52;).[212] Empedocles' grandfather, also named Empedocles, won the chariot race in Olympiad 71 (496 BCE).[213] The victors of the chariot race usually were not the individuals who wrote on the chariot, but rather the owner of the horses and the chariot. Therefore, Empedocles, the grandfather, could have won a victory in the chariot race when he was already of an older age then we as moderners imagine athletes to be. This must also have been the case for Empedocles [i.e. the grandfather]. According to Timaeus, Empedocles [i.e. the grandson] was

[212] B. Inwood, *Empedocles: A Text and Translation with an Introduction by Brad Inwood* (Toronto 1992) 145-200, translated all ancient testimonia on Empedocles' life and works.
[213] Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 200.

responsible for dissolving an assembly of oligarchs in Acragas around 468 BCE (Diog. Laert. 8. 63-66).[214] If we assume that Empedocles [i.e. the grandfather] had a son when he was around twenty five, and that his son had a son around twenty five as well, then the grandfather would have been fifty at the birth of his grandson. If Empedocles was in his late twenties when he dissolved the assembly, then his grandfather would have been in his early fifties when he won his Olympic victory. Empedocles, however, may have been a little younger as well. According to Diogenes Laertius, Empedocles was in his prime around 444 BCE (Diog. Laert. 8. 74). This means he would have been either forty or fifty around 444 BCE. Therefore, his birth probably fell somewhere between 495 and 485 BCE.[215]

In his early years, Empedocles may have witnessed how Gelon of Syracuse and Theron of Acragas became the most influential rulers on Sicily.[216] These tyrants seized control of many Sicilian city-states, and destroyed several others.[217] The Sicilian cities Camarina, Euboia, and Megara Hyblaia, were completely destroyed in the period between 491 BCE and 480 BCE.[218] The nobility of these three cities were forced to move to Syracuse. The population of Camarina was forced to move to Syracuse as well.[219] On the other hand, the populations of Euboia and Megara Hyblaia were forced into slavery.[220]

According to Diodorus, Gelon of Syracuse and Theron of Acragas were actually mild rulers who treated their subjects kindly, and were supported and loved by many Sicilians (11. 38). Gelon and Theron probably won the favor of many Sicilians, because they defeated the Carthaginians. After the defeat of the Carthaginians both tyrants spent a lot of their resources on temple-sites, statues, and other art objects (11. 38).[221]

Gelon managed to rule until his death in 478 BCE, and Theron until his death in 473 BCE (Diod. 11. 38. 7; 53. 2).[222] Gelon's successors were his brothers Hieron and Thrasybulus respectively (Diod. 11. 38. 7). According to Diodorus, Hieron was unkind compared to Gelon, and Thrasybulus was unkind compared to Hieron (11. 67. 2-5).[223] In the section on Pindar we have discussed that the relations between Acragas and Syracuse were troubled, and eventually culminated in war. The relationship between both cities became troubled during the reign of Hieron (Diod. 11. 48. 3). Hieron's brother Polyzelus married Gelon's wife, Demarete, after

[214] Asheri, 'Sicily', 134.
[215] W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy Volume 2: The Presocratic Tradition from Parmenides to Democritus* (Cambridge 1969) 128, argued that Empedocles was born in 493 BCE. Inwood, *Empedocles*, 6, argued it it impossible to give an exact date of birth, but that Empedocles was active around 450 BCE. Demand, 'Pindar's Olympian 2', 355, placed Empedocles' birth around 490 BCE. D. Park, *The How and the Why: An Essay on the Origins and Development of Physical Theory* (Princeton 1990) 25, argued Empedocles was born around 500 BCE.
[216] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 344-345. Hall, *A History*, 267.
[217] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 344. D. Asheri, 'Carthaginians and Greeks', in: J. Boardman, N. Hammond, D. Lewis, and M. Ostwald ed., *The Cambridge Ancient History* 4 (Cambridge 1988) 739-790, 768-770.
[218] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 344. Hall, *A History*, 39, 102. Asheri, 'Carthaginians and Greeks', 768-769.
[219] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 344. Asheri, 'Carthaginians and Greeks', 768-769.
[220] Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 344. Asheri, 'Carthaginians and Greeks', 768-769.
[221] Rhodes, *A History*, 73. Osborne, *Greece in the Making*, 345-350.
[222] Rhodes, *A History*, 73, 75.
[223] Asheri, 'Sicily', 131.

Gelon's death. Demarete was the daughter of Theron of Acragas.[224] Before Gelon's death Hieron was the ruler of Gela. After Gelon's death Hieron became ruler of Syracuse and Polyzelus of Gela. A conflict arose between Hieron and Polyzelus after Gelon's death.[225] Subsequently, Polyzelus fled to Theron, his father-in-law, in Acragas (Diod. 11. 48. 3-6). This is when Theron marched towards Syracuse, and Simonides prevented a violent conflict between Theron and Hieron from happening.[226]

Theron and Hieron became focused on expanding their influence on Sicily after the incident with Polyzelus. Theron managed to control several cities on the west coast, while Hieron expanded on the east coast. Hieron forced people from their homes in Naxos and Catana during this time period (Diod. 11. 49). He also confiscated land and wealth. Theron took control of Motya and Egesta, but died in 473/2 BCE.[227] His son, Thrasydaeus, had ruled Himera prior to Theron's death, and now succeeded Theron as ruler of Acragas (Diod. 11. 48. 7-8). This is when war broke out between Syracuse and Acragas.[228] According to Diodorus, Thrasydaeus gathered an army of mercenaries and of the citizens of Acragas and Himera, and marched with an army of cavalry and infantry towards Syracuse. Hiëron also gathered an army and marched towards Acragas. The war was won by Hiëron, and led to Thrasydaeus' exile and eventually his death (Diod. 11. 53). According to Diodorus, Hieron came to an agreement with wealthy citizens of Acragas and Himera. Hieron allowed both cities to become sort of democratic.[229] An assembly of thousand wealthy citizens was established in Acragas in 471 BCE.[230] Empedocles eventually dissolved the assembly in 468 BCE (Diog. Laert. 8. 66; 72). Not much is known about the political system after Empedocles' reforms. What we do know is that there was a council, and there were magistrates. People who held public office were accountable, and could be brought to court. The council decided on public funds and infrastructure.[231] According to Timaeus, Empedocles brought members of the council to court on the charge that they acted as tyrants (Diog. Laert. 8. 64). Empedocles would also have prevented members to erect public monuments honoring their ancestors (Diog. Laert. 8. 65). Hence it is likely that Empedocles was hostile towards the memory of Sicilian tyrants.

In the meantime, Syracuse was still ruled by Gelon's successors. After Hiëron's death in 467 BCE his brother Thrasybulus succeeded him (Diod. 11. 66. 4). According to Diodorus Thrasybulus was guilty of executing and exiling many people, as well as confiscating people' property (11. 67). The citizens of Syracuse became so dissatisfied with the rule of the

[224] Rhodes, *A History*, 73-74.
[225] Ibidem, 73-75. F. de Angelis, *Archaic and Classical Greek Sicily: a Social and Economic History* (New York 2016) 186-188.
[226] Rhodes, *A History*, 75.
[227] Ibidem, 75. de Angelis, *Archaic and Classical Greek Sicily*, 187.
[228] Berger 'Revolution and Society', 135. Rhodes, *A History*, 75. De Angelis, *Archaic and Classical Greek Sicily*, 192.
[229] M.I. Finley, *A History of Sicily: Ancient Sicily to the Arab Conquest* (London 1968) 59.
[230] Rhodes, *A History*, 75. Berger, 'Revolution and Society', 135-136.
[231] Asheri, 'Sicily', 134; Braccesi, 'Agrigento', 18-20; E. de Miro, 'Societa E Arte Nell'Eta Di Empedocle', *Elenchos* 19 (1998) 325-344, 338-339, argued that Empedocles dissolved the oligarchic Assembly. S. Berger, *Revolution and Society in Greek Sicily and Southern Italy* (Stuttgart 1992) 17, maintained that Empedocles was too young to dissolve the assembly. De Angelis, *Archaic and Classical Greek Sicily*, 210-211, said it could or could not have been Empedocles.

Deinomenid family that they called upon Acragas and other cities to help them overthrow their tyrant rule.[232] Acragas as well as the other cities answered their call and put an end to the age of tyranny in Syracuse. Subsequently, other Sicilian cities started to revolt as well against their own tyrants. During the sixties and fifties there were many Sicilian revolts. Syracuse, Catana, Naxus, Leontini, and Camarina became republican cities during this time, and issued new coins.[233] Acragas never reached the same level of democratization as Syracuse whereas other Sicilian cities did.[234]

According to biographical tradition, Empedocles favored political equality (Diog. Laert. 8. 65-66). He is described as one of the few wealthy citizens who cared about the troubles of the poor population. He was said to have helped farmers to protect their crops against storms in Acragas. He was said to have done this by building wind barriers around the fields (Diog. Laert. 8. 60).

Additionally, it was said that Empedocles helped the people of Selinous to protect themselves against a plague. Franco de Angelis mentioned that 'Empedocles, the distinguished philosopher from nearby Akragas, was invited to rid the city of a disease, either malaria or typhus in all probability'.[235] According to biographical tradition, he helped the people of Selinous to purify their contaminated river by diverting the borders of several other rivers (Diog. Laert. 8. 70). Based upon biographical tradition, typhus seems more likely. Since people can be infected with typhus when they have been in contact with contaminated water.[236]

The ancient biographers' comments on Empedocles' political career are liable. They based themselves on sources which have been lost nowadays. For example, they had access to Empedocles' political speeches (Diog. Laert. 8. 57). Besides, their comments on Acragas' democratic constitution were also supported by Diodorus.

Empedocles' Purifications

According to biographical tradition, Empedocles composed several types of poetry. Some mention that he composed tragic plays when he was young. He would have composed hymns to Apollo. He was credited by ancient biographers to have composed many political speeches. He would also have composed a poem on the Persian war (Diog. Laert. 8. 57-58).[237] Unfortunately, there is only one poem, the purifications, left to us now.[238] This poem concerns

[232] Berger, 'Revolution and Society', 135-136. Asheri, 'Sicily', 131.
[233] Asheri, 'Sicily', 131. S. Berger, 'Democracy in the Greek West and the Athenian Example', *Hermes* 117:3 (1989) 303-314, 303, 313-314.
[234] L. Braccesi, 'Agrigento nel suo divenire storico (560 ca. -406 a.C.)', in: V. Greco ed., *Le Necropoli Di Agrigento Mostra Internazionale Agrigento 2 maggio-31 luglio* (Roma 1988) 3-22, 20.
[235] De Angelis, *Archaic and Classical Greek Sicily*, 198. R. Sallares, *Malaria and Rome: A History of Malaria in Ancient Italy* (Oxford 2002) 38, argued that it was malaria. S. Collin- Bouffier, 'Marais et Paludisme en Occident Grec', *BCH* 28 (1994) 321-333, 330-331, argued that Selinous was plagued by Typhus, while Syracuse was plagued by Malaria at that time.
[236] Collin-Bouffier, 'Marais et Paludisme', 330.
[237] Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles*, 11.
[238] Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles*, 9-19; C. Osborne, 'Empedocles Recycled', *Classical Quarterly* 37:1 (1987) 24-50, 27; T. Mackenzie, *Poetry and Poetics in the Presocratic Philosophers: Reading Xenophanes, Parmenides*

itself with the nature of the universe. It concerns itself with the cycle of life and death. It provides an explanation for suffering, a guide for proper behavior, and a tool to improve life circumstances in one's next life.

What was the origin and function of Empedocles' *Purifications*?

In chapter one we have covered what modern scholars think about the origins of poetry. Historians generally agree upon the fact that poetry arose out of a need to praise glorious deeds. For example, athletic victories were considered to be glorious, and there was a need to praise such deeds. We have already covered that historians have connected the origins of athletic games to funerary ritualistic acts. Quite recently, Hornblower placed Empedocles' poem in this same tradition. He argued that Empedocles also connects athletic victory with funerary ritualistic practice.

> *Hail! I, in your eyes a deathless god, no longer mortal,*
> *Go among all, honored, just as I seem:*
> *Wreathed with ribbons and festive garlands.*
>
> [fr. 1/112. 4-6; transl. B. Inwood]

Hornblower argued that Empedocles did precisely that which Pindar vigorously opposed in his victory odes: Empedocles crowned himself as if he were an athletic victor, and proclaimed himself immortal. According to Hornblower, Empedocles used language typical to victors of athletic games. Hornblower argued that athletic victories were particularly important to the people of Acragas. It was not uncommon for a victor, he mentioned, to make a grand entrance on his return home.[239]

Empedocles was particularly interested in the cycle of life [i.e. coming to be] and death [destruction]. In part this can be explained by the fact that the worship of deities connected to the underworld, was pre-eminent on Sicily in the sixth and fifth century BCE. A temple of Persephone was located on the eastside of the river Acragas at that time. [240] Archaeological evidence suggests the existence of different death rites on Sicily, at the beginning of the fifth century BCE. Figurines and/or masks connected to the worship of Demeter and Persephone were placed in graves during the Archaic period. This practice changed at some places, but persisted at other places in the first half of the fifth century BCE. Death rites changed in

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and Empedocles as Literature (Cambridge 2021) 105, maintained that the fragments preserved up until the present belong to one poem. A. Chitwood, *Death by Philosophy: The Biographical Tradition in the Life and Death of the Archaic Philosophers Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Democritus* (Michigan 2004) 12, argued on the contrary that these fragments belong to two poems: the 'purifications' and the 'physics'. D. Sedley, 'The Proems of Empedocles and Lucretius', *Greek Roman and Byzantine studies* 30:2 (1989) 269-287, 270-274, argued there were two poems, and that the purifications consisted of oracles and ritual purifications to get rid of diseases and plagues. I agree with Inwood and Osborne that there was only one poem: the purifications. Empedocles' doctrine on purifying the soul followed from his ideas on what constituted reality.

[239] Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 201, supported his argument by referencing Diodorus (13. 82. 7). Diodorus describes how Exaenetus of Acragas was welcomed back home in a lavish celebration after winning the running event in Olympiad 92 (406 BCE).

[240] Pindar, *Pythian* 12. 1-5. R.R. Holloway, *The Archaeology of Ancient Sicily* (London 1991) 55-60, 63, 86.

Acragas at that time. Athenian vases, rather than masks or figurines, were placed in graves there. These vases sometimes depict musicians and poets at symposia.[241]

According to Nancy Demand, Empedocles' interest in death rituals did not have anything to do with athletic games. She maintained that Empedocles' poem, and Pindar's Olympian 2 (for Theron of Acragas), both concern ideas about the afterlife, because of a local cult in Acragas. Demand argued that the people in Acragas did not worship Olympian Zeus, but Cretan Zeus. Cretan Zeus was a vegetation deity, and worshipped for the cycle of life and death. Cretan colonists first brought this Cretan worship to Sicily when they founded Gela. For the reason that Gela was the mother city of Acragas, it was part of Acragas' worship from the beginning.[242]

Contrarily, some scholars have argued that Empedocles' poem should be regarded as Pythagorean and/or Orphic.[243] Herodotus informs us that Pythagoras maintained that the soul transmigrates, and several ancient scholars believed that Empedocles was a follower of this Pythagorean doctrine (4. 95-97; Aul. Gel. 4. 11. 1-10; Diog. Laert. 8. 50, 55-56).

Moreover, scholars have argued that Empedocles was also influenced by Parmenides and Xenophanes.[244] Pythagoras and Xenophanes had moved from Ionia to Italy at the end of the sixth century BCE. Their migration was a result of Persian expansion.[245] Historians have argued that Ionians engaged with epistemological and metaphysical problems, because they came into contact with different cultures and contradictory world views. When they brought their ideas to Italy they brought their questions and reflections with them, and inspired the local population to reflect on the divine and human world as well.

Additionally, the influence of Orphism on Empedocles was explained by geographic proximity as well.[246] Sourvinou-Inwood investigated the presence of Orphism in the Greek world, and argued that there was an Orphic cult in West-Locris. She came to this conclusion, because a funerary relief from West-Locris (475-450 BCE) depicts a scene in the Underworld where Orpheus is in the presence of Persephone and Aphrodite.[247]

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[241] Holloway, *The Archaeology*, 55-60, 64-66. Camarina and Gela were the other city-states where vases were found buried in the graves of the deceased. V. Greco, *Le Necropoli Di Agrigento Mostra Internazionale Agrigento 2 Maggio - 31 luglio* (Roma 1988) 95-230.

[242] Demand, 'Pindar's *Olympian* 2', 349-351.

[243] J.D. Mikalson, *Greek popular religion in Greek philosophy* (Oxford 2010) 69. Instone and Verity, *Pindar*, 142. Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles*, 20-22. Osborne, 'Empedocles Recycled', 49. Holloway, *The Archaeology*, 104, opposed this view and argued that Empedocles voiced Sicilian religious ideas on dual cosmic forces: Love and Strife. Sedley, 'The Proems of Empedocles', 273, opposed this view and argued that Empedocles was influenced by the healing oracles of Epimenides from Crete.

[244] Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles*, 20-22. Osborne, 'Empedocles Recycled', 49.

[245] Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles*, 20-22.

[246] D. O'Brien, *Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle: A Reconstruction from the Fragments and Secondary Sources* (Cambridge 1969) 228, 352. O. Kern, 'Empedokles und die Orphiker', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 1 (1888) 498-508, 500.

[247] C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'The Boston Relief and the Religion of Locri Epizephyrii', *The Journal of Hellenistic Studies* 94 (1974) 126-37.

Moreover, Empedocles has also been placed in the tradition of Hesiod and Homer.[248] According to this view, poets competed with each other during religious festivals. It was reasoned that, as a consequence of this setting, poets needed to reflect upon their claims to divine wisdom. According to this view, Empedocles participated in poetic competitions, and responded to a need to reflect upon poetic authority.[249]

According to Diogenes Laertius, Empedocles' poem was recited by a rhapsode, Cleomenes, at the Olympic games (8. 63). He also mentions that Empedocles drew a lot of attention to himself at the Olympic games. Unfortunately it is not clear from the comment if Empedocles drew attention, because he performed his poetry or rather because he was already known for his poetry. According to Iamblichus, Empedocles played the lyre at informal gatherings (*Pyth*. 113-114). Philostratus informs us that Empedocles performed his poem on the streets, and that his poem is a hymn of praise in honor of himself, for Empedocles is a god (*Apoll*. 8. 76). According to Menander, Empedocles' poem was also a hymn, but in the sense that it praised the nature of the gods rather than the glorious deeds of the gods (*Rhetor*. 1. 333. 12-15).

Empedocles' reflections

In the previous sections, we looked at Empedocles' life, and the history of his poem. In this current section the focus will be on Empedocles' reflections.

What is the historical value of Empedocles' poem? The external influences of Empedocles' poem can be studied. In addition, the poem provides information on the context of performance. The poem is performed at the Acropolis of Acragas. This suggests that it had to do with local religious worship, for temple sites were built on the Acropolis. Contrarily, the poem addresses Empedocles' friends rather than divinities. This suggests it was not part of ritualistic worship or a religious festival. More importantly, however, Empedocles' poem reveals a completely different world view than his predecessors. Since he performed this in front of an audience, he must have responded to a need to explicate the reality of things.

In the following citation he describes himself to be a famous immortal poet:

> *O friends, who dwell in the great city of the yellow Acragas,*
> *Up in the high parts of the city, concerned with good deeds,*
> *<respectful harbors for strangers, untried by evil,>*
> *Hail! I, in your eyes a deathless god, no longer mortal,*
> *Go among all, honored, just as I seem:*
> *Wreathed with ribbons and festive garlands.*
> *As soon as I arrive in flourishing cities I am revered*
> *By all, men and women. And they follow at once,*
> *In their ten thousands, asking where is the path to gain,*
> *Some in need of divinations, others in all sorts of diseases*
> *Sought to hear a healing oracle,*

[248] Benzi, 'The Redefinition of Poetic Authority', 15-41.
[249] Benzi, 'The Redefinition of Poetic Authority', 31-37. Mackenzie, *Poetry and Poetics*, 113-114.

Having been pierced <about by harsh pains> for too long a time.

[fr. 1/112; transl. B. Inwood]

Empedocles presents himself as blessed, as a god. He must have been revered in his life time to begin his poem with a proclamation that he is praised by many people. According to ancient biographical tradition, his poem functioned as a purification of sorts (Diog. Laert. 8. 63).[250] Empedocles saw himself as a healing poet (Diog. Laert. 8. 61). He might have responded to a need on Sicily. We already mentioned a plague in Selinous. There is also evidence of Malaria in Syracuse.[251] Besides, wars and population movements probably increased the risk for diseases in general.

In the following citations Empedocles reflects upon the ability of humans to understand the reality of things:

O Friends! I know that truth attends the words
which I will speak. But it is very hard indeed
for men, and resented, the flow of persuasion into their thought organ.
But bad men are strongly inclined to disbelieve the strong.
And [you], know in the way that the assurances given by our muse urge,
by dividing up the discourse in your heart.

[fr. 2/114 and 3/4; transl. B. Inwood]

But gods! Turn aside their madness from my tongue and channel a pure stream from holy mouths.
And you, maiden muse of the white arms, much-remembering,
I beseech you: what it is right for ephemeral creatures to hear,
send [to me], driving your well-reined chariot from [the halls of] piety.
For if, immortal muse, for the sake of any ephemeral creature,
<it has pleased you> to let our concerns pass through your thought,
answer my prayers again now, Calliopeia,
as I reveal a good discourse about the blessed gods.

[fr. 9/3 and 10/131; transl. B. Inwood]

According to Empedocles, it are not the Muses who are unreliable, but it are humans. He declares that he speaks the truth. Empedocles is immortal like the Muse who grants him access to the truth. His immortality may be the reason why he is able to understand the truth. He defines himself in opposition to his audience in that regard. Since his audience will need to put in the effort to understand Empedocles' truthful poem. In this regard, the audience needs to follow the path of the Muse as well. If they do not follow the path of the Muse, they will not be able to grasp the truth of the poem. Even though Empedocles is immortal, he still relies on the divine authority of the Muse. In this regard, he places himself in the tradition of Hesiod.

[250] Sedley, 'The Proems of Empedocles', 273, maintained that Empedocles' purifications were healing oracles to cure the sick. Benzi, 'Redefinition of Poetic Authority', 36, argued that Empedocles' poem concerns a path of purification, necessary for one's soul to migrate upwards.
[251] De Angelis, *Archaic and Classical Greek Sicily*, 198-199. Sallares, *Malaria and Rome*, 38.

He also wants to give an account on the reality of things, and relies on the Muse to do such. Contrarily, he comes with a totally different world view than Hesiod.

In the following citation Empedocles' speaks about what he understands to be the cosmic order:

> *There is an oracle of necessity, an ancient decree of the gods,*
> *Eternal, sealed with broad oaths:*
> *Whenever one, in his sins, stains his dear limbs with blood*
> *… [corrupt text] by misdeed swears falsely,*
> *The daimons who have won long-lasting life,*
> *He wanders for thrice ten thousand seasons away from the blessed ones,*
> *Growing to be all sorts of forms of mortal things through time,*
> *Interchanging the hard paths of life.*
> *For the strength of aither pursues him into the sea,*
> *And the sea spits onto the surface of the earth and earth into the beams*
> *Of the blazing sun, and it throws him into the eddies of the air,*
> *And one after another receives, but all hate.*
> *I too am now one of these, an exile from the gods and a wanderer,*
> *trusting in mad strife.*
>
> [fr. 11/115; transl. B. Inwood]

According to Empedocles, there is transmigration of soul. Sinful behavior will force a downward migration, while pure behavior will lead to upward migration. His audience should grasp the truth of his poem, because people will be punished for sinful behavior. The madness which Empedocles aims to avoid comes from those who do not acknowledge that mortals live many lives (23/11; 24/15). According to Empedocles, it is necessary to have lived many lives already, for the soul follows a particular order of transmigration, and one type of life is better suited to arrive at understanding than another type of life (fr. 135/127; 136/147). However, Empedocles argues that all mortals share in the capacity to understand and think (fr. 16/110). They do because they all have a share in Love, Aphrodite. Aphrodite is the creationist force in Empedocles' universe. He puts forward that 'coming-to-be' [i.e. generation] is a result of Aphrodite who moves the realities of the world together, because the realities want to move together for it is their Love which moves them together. The opposite force of Aphrodite is Ares (fr. 25/17; 26/21). According to Empedocles the universe is ruled by both Aphrodite and Ares. Things come into being because of Aphrodite, but things are destroyed because of Ares.

Empedocles addressed his friends at the beginning of his poem, but he also urges Pausanius to listen to him specifically:

> *And Pausanias, son of wise Anchites, you listen!*
>
> [fr. 13/1; transl. Inwood]
>
> *And do not be forced to take from mortals*
> *The flowers of fair-famed honour, on condition that you say more than is holy,*
> *in boldness, and then to sit on the peaks of wisdom.*

But come, consider, by every device, how each thing is clear
not holding any vision as more reliable than what you hear,
nor the echoes of hearing than the clarities of the tongue,
and do not in any way curb the reliability of the other limbs by which
there is a passage for understanding,
but understand each thing in the way that it is clear.

[fr. 14/3; transl. Inwood]

All the potions which there are as a defense against evils and old age,
You shall learn, since for you alone will I accomplish all these things.
You shall put a stop to the strength of tireless winds,
Which rush against the land and wither the fields with their blasts;
And again, if you wish, you shall bring the winds back again;
And you shall make, after dark rain, a drought timely
For men, and after summer drought you shall make
Tree-nourishing streams which dwell in the air'
And you shall bring from Hades the strength of a man who has died.

[fr. 15/111; transl. Inwood]

Empedocles mentions that he is going to teach Pausanius what he can do to avoid sickness and hunger. In this regard, Empedocles' poem mirrors Hesiod's *Works and Days*.[252] Both teach good conduct and a trade. Both poets performed those poems initially at their birthplace. In addition, they performed at a time when they were already internationally famous. Contrarily, Hesiod's *Works and Days* concerned an inheritance dispute, while Empedocles teaches how to heal one's soul and one's environment. It is likely that Empedocles responded to a need specific for a Sicilian audience. He speaks about mortal crises in his poem. We already know that he was involved with improving the living conditions of others. It seems that he voiced a different way of life. Not only did he change the political circumstances in Acragas, he also provided nourishment for the soul.

Interestingly, Empedocles' poem reveals both Empedocles and the Muse, Calliope, in epiphany. The question is, however, did his audience believe he was a god? Parts of his audience must have believed that he was a god. Empedocles was a popular public figure. Someone who gathered a crowd at the Olympic Games. He was internationally famous. This might explain why Empedocles celebrated himself as if he were an athletic victor. After all, athletic victors were internationally celebrated. His popularity makes it likely that parts of his audience did believe he was a god.

In conclusion, both ancient and modern scholars disagree about the origin and therefore also about the function of Empedocles' poem. The problem is that we do not know precisely at

[252] Mackenzie, *Poetry and Poetics*, 114, argued that it resembled Hesiod's *Theogony* rather than *Works and Days*. Mackenzie argued that Pausanius should be compared to Hesiod in Hesiod's *Theogony*. He maintained that the Muses were deceptive, and pupils were divinely chosen in Hesiod's *Theogony* as well as in Empedocles' Poem.

which occasion Empedocles performed his poetry for the first time. He does mention, however, that he performed at the acropolis in Acragas, but at the same time Empedocles mentions in his poem that he also traveled towards other cities. It is likely that he performed his poem at multiple occasions. In this regard it is likely that he also performed his poem at the Olympic Games himself. Regardless, I do agree with Hornblower that Empedocles reveals a connection between athletics, death ritual, and poetry. Besides, Hornblower's evidence of this, Empedocles sets himself in the tradition of Hesiod. Similar to Hesiod he gives an account of the gods i.e., an account of the reality of things. In case of Hesiod there was a direct connection between giving an account on the reality of things, while celebrating the dead through athletic and musical contests. On the other hand, there is not any evidence that Empedocles participated in a musical contest.

In regard to influences, he was influenced by both local and external religious worship and/or poetry. These influences however, were probably not the main reason why he composed his poem then and there. He was an important public figure, who had changed politics in Acragas. He has been credited with helping the poor, healing the sick, and funding essential infrastructure in Acragas. If these stories about him as a person contain fact, then he responded to a demand to change the world he lived in. He must also have responded to a demand to provide an account of how the world worked, and why things happened the way they did.

His reflections upon the Muses are complicated by the fact he declares himself to be a god. Since he declares himself to be a god he places himself far above his audience. This explains why he can simply say that he knows the truth, while his audience is challenged by understanding the truth. He may have responded to a need, however, to re-address the authority of the Muses. It seems that he lived at a time when humans made quite an impact on the worlds they lived in. Empedocles was not an exception. Democracy, environmental control, and organized warfare may have posed a challenge to the authority of the Muses. After all, the line between mortals and immortals became blurred in Empedocles' poem.

2.3

Euripides

Euripides' life

Euripides was an Athenian, and born around 480 BCE.[253] There are multiple contradictory stories about his ancestry, and his career path in the biographical tradition.[254] According to Aristophanes, Euripides had a humble family background. His mother sold vegetables on the market, while his father was an insignificant merchant (Ar. *Ach*. 278; *Frogs* 840, 942-943; *Thesm*. 455-456). However, it is likely that this was actually not the case.[255] The fourth century

[253] I. Torrance, *Euripides* (London 2019) 1.
[254] M.R. Lefkowitz, 'The Euripides "Vita"', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 20:2 (1979) 187-210, 189. R. Scodel, 'The Euripidean Biography', in: L.K. McClure ed., *A Companion to Euripides* (Chichester 2017) 27-41, 30.
[255] Scodel, 'The Euripidean Biography', 30. Torrance, *Euripides*, 2.

BCE, peripatetic, Theophrastus, mentions that Euripides took part in a ritual in honor of Apollo, whereby he poured the wine.[256] This position was traditionally fulfilled by aristocratic boys.[257] It is, therefore, likely that Euripides came from an aristocratic family.[258]

Moreover, the stories on his career mention that he was an athlete first, then a painter, and finally he became a tragic poet. According to biographical tradition, either Archilaus and Anaxagoras, or Prodicus and Socrates, motivated Euripides to become a tragic poet.[259] There may be an element of truth to these stories. They all lived at Athens in the second half of the fifth century BCE.[260]

Athens became an important political, economic and cultural center at the beginning of Euripides' career as a tragic poet (ca. 450 BCE).[261] Athens seized power over the Delian League during that time. The Delian League was a military alliance between Greek city-states founded at the end of the Persian war. The Delian League was probably created because Greek city-states expected another Persian invasion at that time. Members of the League paid annual tribute and contributed to supply ships to the League.[262] The treasury stood at Delos initially, but Athenians moved it towards Athens around 454 BCE.[263] Consequently, Athens took control of membership issues. Athens recorded the payment of tribute, and enforced payments by means of sanctions.[264] Sanctions often involved forced democratization.[265] Consequently, democracy slowly spread amongst the hundreds of member city-states. Athens was by far the most developed democratic system in the Greek world, but many other city states evolved along the same lines[266].

Athens was at its height of power in the third quarter of the fifth century BCE. Democracy at Athens developed further under the rule of Pericles.[267] Pericles also changed the landscape of Attica significantly. There were only a few temples on Attica before 450 BCE.[268] This changed when Pericles convinced the *ecclesia* to spent public funds on grand building projects.[269] Many temples and public buildings were built on Attica in the second half of the fifth century BCE.[270] These projects attracted artists from all over the Greek world to go to Attica, and especially to go to Athens.[271]

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[256] Scodel, 'The Euripidean Biography', 30.
[257] Ibidem, 30.
[258] Ibidem, 30. Torrance, *Euripides*, 2.
[259] Lefkowitz, 'The Euripides "Vita"', 189. Scodel, 'The Euripidean Biography', 30-31.
[260] D. Kagan, *Pericles of Athens and the Birth of Democracy* (New York 1991) 177.
[261] Kagan, *Pericles of Athens*, 151-171.
[262] Rhodes, *A History*, 16-19.
[263] Ibidem, 18. P.J. Rhodes, 'Ancient Athens: democracy and empire', *European Review of History* 16:2 (2009) 201-215, 206.
[264] Rhodes, 'Ancient Athens', 206-208. Rhodes, *A History*, 45-46, 50-51.
[265] Ibidem, 208-209. Rhodes, *A History*, 47, 50-51, 68-69.
[266] Robinson, *Democracy Beyond Athens*, 184-185, 202.
[267] Rhodes, *A History*, 56-62. Rhodes, 'Ancient Athens', 210.
[268] Kagan, *Pericles of Athens*, 162.
[269] Ibidem, 162. Rhodes, *A History*, 62-65.
[270] Rhodes, *A History*, 62-63. Kagan, *Pericles of Athens*, 157.
[271] Kagan, *Pericles of Athens*, 151-152, 169.

Additionally, Pericles was good at public speaking. Oratory became vital to the political landscape of Athens. Public speaking became an art which could be taught. Athens became a popular place for public speakers. Pericles started to surround himself with thinkers of all different kinds during his office as elected general.[272]

Moreover, an important aspect of democratic reforms was a discussion on inclusiveness. Who could access public office? Who could be a member of the council and the assembly? Who could make a complaint in court?

Pericles reformed the citizenry and limited its access to only those who had an Athenian mother and father.[273] During Pericles' age of democratic reforms, people started to question the legitimacy of man-made rule.[274] Reforms in politics were met by a need in educational reform.[275] Public speaking became generally important to democratic cities in the fifth century BCE. In that regard, sophists who were skilled in the art of speech traveled from city to city, and teached public speaking.[276] Euripides witnessed these political and intellectual changes.

This period of Athenian might and wealth was seriously challenged by the Peloponnesian war (431-404 BCE). There had been peace for over thirty years between Sparta and Athens. The relationship between both, however, became pressured when Athens gained more and more international influence (Thuc. 1. 88).[277] There was disagreement about which side started the war in antiquity.[278] Thucydides mentions that the Spartans believed the Athenians began, while the Athenians maintained that the Spartans initiated the war (7. 18. 2).[279]

The war eventually proved disastrous for Athens. Athens was struck by a plague in the second year of the war. This plague disappeared and reappeared at least three times between 430 and 420 BCE.[280] Fear and panic arose during the first outbreak of the plague. There were prosecutions of impiety at that time.[281]

Moreover, Pericles died during the first outbreak of the plague.[282] Attica's population was eventually reduced by half due to those outbreaks.[283] The political body was pressured by population shortages, and limited public funds.[284] Democracy was even overthrown for a short

[272] Rhodes, 'Ancient Athens', 212.
[273] Ibidem, 210-211. Rhodes, *A History*, 55.
[274] Rhodes, 'Ancient Athens', 212. Rhodes, *A History*, 117. J. Ober, 'Political conflicts, political debates, and political thought' In R. Osborne, *Classical Greece* (Cornwall 2000) 111-138, 124-125.
[275] Rhodes, 'Ancient Athens', 212. Ober, 'Political conflicts', 124-125.
[276] Rhodes, 'Ancient Athens', 212.
[277] Rhodes, *A History*, 88.
[278] Ibidem, 86-87.
[279] Ibidem, 86.
[280] Rhodes, *A History*, 112-113. A. Rubel, *Fear and Loathing in Ancient Athens Religion and Politics during the Peloponnesian War* (Bristol 2014) 46-47.
[281] Rubel, *Fear and Loathing*, 62. F.S.J. Garland, 'Religious Authority in Archaic and Classical Athens', *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 79 (1984) 75-123, 79-80.
[282] Kagan, *Pericles of Athens*, 242.
[283] Rhodes, *A History*, 112-113. Rubel, *Fear and Loathing*, 62-63.
[284] Rhodes, *A History*, 163.

while in 411 BCE.[285] Although it was quickly restored again in 410 BCE.[286] Euripides also criticized democracy during the Peloponnesian war (*Suppliants*). There was a political crisis at Athens at that time.

Euripides composed many plays during the Peloponnesian war. His reputation, however, started to receive more negative attention during that time. His relationship with Athenian citizens became strained, and as a result he started to withdraw from public life.[287] The relationship between Euripides and Athenians reached a low point during the final years of Euripides' life (415-406 BCE). In the end, Euripides went (either voluntarily or involuntarily) in exile somewhere after 408 BCE.[288] His last tragic play handed down to us, *the Bacchae*, was composed by him when he was in exile (406 BCE), and performed for the first time by his son after his death.[289]

Tragedy

Tragic plays were produced to enter the musical competition held at the Great Dionysia – an Athenian festival to Dionysus. The performances were an important aspect of the festival. The tragic plays were chosen by the archon and funded by the city-state. A tragic poet needed a chorus and masks to enter the festival.[290]

What was the connection between Dionysus and musical performance? According to two unknown hymns to Dionysus, singers devote themselves to Dionysus and should begin and end each hymn with him (Unknown, *hymn* 1; 7). In those hymns Dionysus plays the part that the Muses play in Hesiod's hymn to the Muses. The date of those hymns is unknown to us, but it is likely that they circulated around the time of the Great Dionysia. In Euripides' *Bacchae* the chorus describes Dionysus as the god who leads the feast – dance and music – and creates enjoyment with his wine (*Bacch*. 380-385).

The content of the plays often concerned themselves with the mythical past. There were many versions of myths in circulation around that time. Stories were often retold and reshaped. This was typical of Greek poetry in general. For example, Sappho told Helen's motives to go to Troy differently than Homer, while Stesichores' poetry puts forward that Helen never went to Troy at all (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 243a-b).[291] Tragic plays engaged with and participated in this poetic tradition. They explored identities of, and relationships between, immortals and mortals.

Unique to tragedy, however, was that it was performed by more than one actor in combination with a chorus of singers. The actors were the speakers, while the chorus primarily

[285] Rhodes, 'Ancient Athens', 213. K.A. Raaflaub, 'Democracy', in: K.H. Kinzl ed., *A Companion to the Classical Greek World* (Pondicherry 2006) 387-415, 402.
[286] Rhodes, *A History*, 165. Raaflaub, 'Democracy', 402-404.
[287] Scodel, 'The Euripidean Biography', 37-38.
[288] Ibidem, 38.
[289] Torrance, *Euripides*, 2-3.
[290] Ibidem, 5.
[291] D.J. Rayor, *Euripides' Medea a new translation* (Cambridge 2013) XVIII.

sung, but sometimes spoke as well. One actor could play different characters by changing masks between scenes. The characters of the play consisted of both immortals and mortals.

What was the origin and function of tragic poetry in Athens?

There was already a poetic competition in Athens at the beginning of the sixth century BCE. Rhapsodes recited the poetry of Homer during the annual festival of Athena, the *Panathenaea*.[292] The rhapsode capable of reciting and explaining the Homeric epics in the best possible way would win the contest.[293] A competition between tragic poets was added for the first time to the Great Dionysia at the end of the sixth century BCE. A competition between comic poets was added soon afterwards. Athenians started to add contests to religious festivals in general around this time. Similarly, contests were added to festivals in other places as well.[294] According to Robert Osborne, tragedy served the same needs as other competitions. Osborne argued that competitions initially functioned to serve the needs of city-states. Athletic victory in panhellenic games brought the city-states as much prestige as the victors themselves. In this regard the victors were perceived to be an extension of the city-states to which they belonged. According to Osborne, tragic poets participated in contests because this increased their status on a local level.

Since the origins of tragedy coincided with the development of democracy in Athens, scholars have argued that tragedy arose from a democratic need to educate the public.[295] According to some scholars, tragedy functioned as a platform where tragic poets addressed Athens' political identity. In this case, tragedy developed from a need to reflect upon the political changes which occurred at Athens, and often served to unite Athenians. In this regard, scholars have interpreted the institution of Athenian tragedy on a socio-political scale, and overlooked the religious nature of tragedy.[296] Contrarily, Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood argued that the origins of tragedy lay in a need to address the lack of a religious authority, and the existence of contradictory stories on the nature and origin of Greek gods. According to Sourvinou-Inwood, the celebration of the Great Dionysia at its earliest form included ritualistic

[292] R. Osborne, 'The Creation of Classical Greece', in: R. Osborne ed., *Classical Greece 500-323 BC* (Cornwall 2000) 1-21, 16. R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford 2005) 256.
[293] Plato, *Ion*, provides the modern reader with an example of how a rhapsode competition functioned.
[294] Hornblower, *Thucydides and Pindar*, 14.
[295] J. Gregory, *Euripides and the instruction of the Athenians* (Ann Arbor 1991) 3-17. S.G. Salkever, 'Tragedy and the education of the Demos: Aristotle's Response to Plato', in: J.P. Euben ed., *Greek Tragedy and Political Theory* (Los Angeles 1986) 274-303, 296-303. C. Meier, *Die politische Kunst der griechischen Tragödie* (Münich 1988) 226-239. N.T. Croally, *Euripidean polemic: The Trojan Women and the Function of Tragedy* (Cambridge 1994) 34-40.
[296] J.F. Finley, 'Politics and Early Attic Tragedy', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 71 (1967) 1-13, 10. W.J. Lane and A.M. Lane, 'The Politics of Antigone', in: J.P. Euben ed., *Greek Tragedy and Political Theory* (Los Angeles 1986) 162-182, 164, 172. M. Davis, 'Politics and Madness', in: J.P. Euben ed., *Greek Tragedy and Political Theory* (Los Angeles 1986) 142-161, 149-150. A.J. Podlecki, 'Polis and Monarch in Early Attic Tragedy', in: J.P. Euben ed., *Greek Tragedy and Political Theory* (Los Angeles 1986) 76-100, 76-77, 86-87. P. Cartledge, '"Deep plays": theatre as process in Greek civic life', in: P.E. Easterling ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge 1997) 3-35, 6. S. Goldhill, 'Civic Ideology and the Problem of Difference: The Politics of Aeschylean Tragedy, Once Again', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 120 (2000) 34-56, 35, argued that the Great Dionysia was a civic festival rather than a religious festival. P.J. Rhodes, 'Nothing to Do with Democracy: Athenian Drama and the Polis', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 123 (2003) 104-119, 118-119, argued that tragedy was civic ideology which should be seen in a *polis* framework rather than a democratic framework.

dinner (*xenismos*) and choral performances. This was the perfect occasion to address and be confronted with inconsistent stories on the gods.[297] This led to a religious discourse which eventually evolved in a poetic contest. She maintained that tragedy functioned in a manner which enabled the audience to ground itself in the present.[298] She was more focused on the need to cultivate religious identities than on political identities. In this regard, she argued that tragedy provided a framework of human-divine relationships and interactions. She maintained that the audience experienced the presence of gods in the plays as actual manifestations of the gods. In that regard, the plays functioned to reveal the nature of the gods, because the gods revealed themselves in epiphany through the plays.[299]

According to Alexander Rudel, tragedy arose from a need to cope with fear, pity, and resentment. By producing these emotions in the audience, tragedy provided a means to mediate such emotions. According to Rudel, tragedy functioned as a purification or a cleansing in that regard. The audience was capable of purifying themselves from sentiments and emotions.[300]

I think Osborne was right to state that the origins of tragic plays were part of a larger historical trend. Competitions were generally important in the fifth century BCE. It is likely that there was a lot of rivalry amongst citizens and city-states. But perhaps also amongst divinities and worshippers. Poetry was a type of worship in general. It concerned itself with the nature of the gods. It concerned itself with human-divine relationships. Tragedy was not any different in that regard. Therefore, tragic plays were religious performances. However, it is likely that fame played a part in this as well. Poetry was also vital for becoming famous. In that way it served both the human and divine world. Since Greek gods also wanted to be famous. On the other hand, tragic plays were performed in front of an Athenian public. In this regard, it was part of Athenian religion and closely connected to politics. There was probably a need to cultivate religion on the level of the city, and strengthen the political body.

Euripides' Muses

How can we use tragic plays as historical sources? Tragic plays are part of Athens' socio-political and religious history. They were performed at a religious festival, but funded by the city-state. The tragic plays, however, do not tell anything about the poets. The plays do not contain autobiographical data. Instead, they reveal human, divine, and human-divine struggles which meant something to the poets and their audiences. The tragic plays are evidence of a peculiar Athenian socio-religious practice. There was a demand for witnessing human-divine interaction. Tragic plays also engaged with contemporary history and political events. For example, Aeschylus composed a play about the Persian war in 472 BCE. The plays must be related to the world in which they were performed for the first time. In other words, to the socio-political situation at Athens. For example, the history of the Persian war, and the

[297] Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy*, 69-75.
[298] Ibidem, 11.
[299] Ibidem, 459-462.
[300] Rubel, *Fear and Loathing*, 169-70.

political struggles in Athens, explain why there was a demand to perform Aeschylus' *Persians*. Meanwhile, Aeschylus' *Persians* reveals how the war was narrated at Athens in a religious context.

There are several examples of Euripides' plays which indicate that he engaged with contemporary politics. Euripides composed his *Medea* in the first year of the Peloponnesian war (431 BCE).[301] The chorus of that play reflects upon whether or not women were inspired by the Muses (*Med*. 1080-1090). Pericles and his intimate partner, Aspasia, were subjected to political opposition at that time. Aspasia came from Miletus, and due to her relationship with Pericles she enjoyed liberties uncommon to Athenian women. She was known for her oratory and poetic skills, and freely engaged with the intellectual circle which revolved around Pericles.[302] However, Pericles' opposition grew in the 30s of the fifth century BCE, and this led to several attempts to disrupt Pericles' circle.[303] Public rejection of the gods and reflections on the nature of the cosmos became prohibited at that time. Both Pericles and Aspasia were charged with impiety.[304] It is likely that Euripides alludes to Aspasia's unique position in Athens in his *Medea*:

> *Often we speak about subjects more subtle*
> *And engage in debates greater*
> *Than womankind should seek.*
> *For the sake of wisdom,*
> *The Muses also speak*
> *With a few of us, not all,*
> *Maybe one among many.*
> *Yet the Muses do inspire*
> *a small group of women.*
>
> [*Medea*, 1080-90. Translated by D.J. Rayor]

According to Plato, Aspasia was good at composing eulogies and political speeches. He mentions that Aspasia even composed speeches for Pericles (*Menex*. 236b). Therefore, it is likely that Euripides thought of Aspasia when he composed his *Medea*. Since she already received a lot of criticism at that time, and also because her place in society was controversial. It is likely that Aspasia's position created a demand to reflect upon the position of women in Athens. Aspasia was also subjected to ridicule by Aristophanes (*Ach*. 496).

Euripides' *Suppliants* also engages with contemporary political problems. He entered the Great Dionysia with *Suppliants* in the year 422 BCE.[305] The situation at Athens was dire at that moment. Multiple outbreaks of the plague had already occurred. According to Thucydides, the Spartans had received an oracle that they would win a war with Athens.[306] The Athenians were aware of this oracle, and some thought that the plague was a sign that that oracle was

[301] Torrance, *Euripides*, 13. Raaflaub, 'Democracy', 392.
[302] Kagan, *Pericles of Athens*, 181-183.
[303] Ibidem, 183-184.
[304] Ibidem, 184, 186.
[305] Torrance, *Euripides*, 13.
[306] Kagan, *Pericles of Athens*, 186. Rhodes, *A History*, 122. Rubel, *Fear and Loathing*, 48-49 52-55.

turning into a reality (Thuc. 2. 54).[307] The words spoken by a herald in Euripides' *Suppliants* capture a negative sentiment on war which mirrors the situation in Athens at that time:

> *Don't trust in hope: it's sent many cities to war*
> *Whipping them into frenzy. Whenever war*
> *Comes up for the people's vote, no one counts on*
> *His own death; each thinks the other man*
> *Will suffer. But if death rose before your eyes*
> *When you cast your vote, Greece in its craze for spears*
> *Would not be destroyed in battle. All men know*
> *Which of two words is better: between peace and war,*
> *Which is evil and which good, and how much more*
> *Peace benefits humankind. She is most dear*
> *To the Muses, hated by Vengeance. She loves*
> *Strong children, she rejoices in wealth. But we*
> *Choose war, in our evil, and enslave the weak,*
> *Man lording it over man, town over town.*
>
> [*suppliant women* 470-80; transl. P. Burian and A. Shapiro]

The *Suppliants* was composed in the ninth year of the Peloponnesian war. A peace treaty was signed shortly after the *Suppliants* was performed. Although it was not officially ended until 414 BCE, the treaty failed to put an end to the fighting. Regardless, Euripides responded to an apparent need to end the Peloponnesian war in his *Suppliants*.

Euripides' final play is *Bacchae*. The play was composed during the final years of his life, and the end stage of the Peloponnesian war.[308] In this play he reflects upon the danger of Dionysian worship. The *Bacchae* – a group of dancing female devotees of Dionysus – worship Dionysus by wearing masks and dancing all night (*Bacch*. 215-255). However, there is a danger to this kind of worship. Dionysus demands to be revered and recognized as the son of Zeus (*Bacch*. 1-42). A Theban king, however, refuses to accept Dionysus and even forbids Dionysian worship (*Bacch*. 42-63). Consequently, Dionysus lures him into a trap to attend the ritualistic dance (*Bacch*. 845-861). Subsequently, the Theban king is killed among others by his own mother. His mother is under the influence of Dionysian worship and kills him in a collective frenzy. According to the play, the king is torn to pieces (*Bacch*. 1043-1150).

> *Where, Dionysus, oh where among Nysa's wilds that breed*
> *Breasts of the wild, there is it now you lead*
> *By a thyrsus hordes of the Bacchae? Where*
> *On Corcycia's summits? Along what glade?*
> *Or perhaps in Olympus' deeply forested glens? For there*
> *By the sound of his lyre once Orpheus made*
> *Those same trees forgather, and savage beasts, to attend the Muse.*
> *O Piera, fortunate land!*

[307] Rubel, *Fear and Loathing*, 53.
[308] Torrance, *Euripides*, 2-3, 13.

Dionysus reveres you and next will choose
You for his dances, soon, and his mysteries!
He will come, leading his Maenads in many a whirling band
[*Bacchae* 555-575; transl. D. Sutherland]

In the fragment above Dionysus and his maenads pose a threat for the Muse. They represent chaos and unpredictability. They can go here and there. They have the capacity to take control of people, and make people lose themselves. Plato described this as a type of madness (*Phaedr.* 265b). It was a general theme in Euripides' plays that bad things happened to humans, because they were tricked by the divine. For example, Euripides composed *Heracles* in 416 BCE. In *Heracles* Hera induced madness in Heracles, which resulted in Heracles killing his own family (*Heracl*. 875-920).[309]

According to Friedrich Nietzsche, Euripides was the first 'rational' tragic poet. Nietzsche argued that Euripides presented the divine as unpredictable and dangerous, because he wanted to convince his audience to reject their religion.[310] It was thought by proponents of this view that Euripides resembled Socrates.[311] It is far more likely, however, that Euripides portrayed the gods in a violent and disregarding manner, because he composed his plays at a time of crisis.[312] The plague broke out during the second year of the Peloponnesian war and struck Attica hard, while it never reached the Peloponnesus (Thuc. 2. 54). Several scholars have suggested that sanctuaries were built as a consequence of the plague, where Athenians dedicated religious objects in an attempt to pacify whichever god was responsible for the plague.[313] Meanwhile, the democratic system was pressured. Euripides describes a chaotic and dangerous divine world in his *Bacchae*, but that kind of world was also felt by Athenians at that time.

In conclusion, Euripides presents an interesting case because his plays were part of institutionalized religion. In this regard, we cannot separate his tragic plays from the socio-political context. It is likely that tragic plays were regarded as a sign of Athens' grandeur. As a sign of divine favor. Even at war time the production of tragic plays continued to exist. This reveals that it was regarded as tremendously important to celebrate the Great Dionysia with

[309] Torrance, *Euripides*, 142, argued that Euripides describes PTSD symptoms when he speaks about divinely inspired madness. Dietrich, 'Oracles', 159-160, argued that these views on divinely inspired madness appeared for the first time at the end of the fifth century BCE.
[310] F.W. Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (Leipzig 1872) 66, distinguished between 'rational' Apollonian religion and 'irrational' Dionysian religion. B. Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes. Studien zur Entstehung des europäischen Denkens bei den Griechen* (Göttingen 1986) 111-126. W. Nestle, *Vom Mythos zum Logos* (Stuttgart 1940) 496. A.N. Michelini, *Euripides and the Tragic Tradition* (Madison 1987) 3-51. A. Henrichs, 'The Last of the Detractors: Friedrich Nietzsche's Condemnation of Euripides', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 27 (1986) 391-395.
[311] Henrichs, 'The Last of the Detractos', 371, 381, 391-395.
[312] Rubel, *Fear and Loathing*, 166.
[313] Rubel, *Fear and Loathing*, 55-57. F. Hildebrandt, *Die attischen Namenstelen. Untersuchungen zu Stelen des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* (Berlin 2006) 183, 210. C.L. Lawton, 'Attic Votive Reliefs and the Peloponnesian War', in: O. Palagia ed., *Art in Athens during the Peloponnesian War* (New York 2009) 66-93, 74-82.

tragic plays. In this regard, it is clear that divine-human relationships were important to Athenian politicians. And to the citizen body as well.

Furthermore, there was a general need to reflect upon human-divine relationships in Greek poetry. Tragic plays were not any different in that regard. Greek poetry was a means by which worshippers were able to make sense of their worlds. This applies to Euripides' plays as well. He reflects upon the place of humans and divinities in the world. He also reflects upon the position of the Muses and their human servants. He probably responded to a need to reflect upon the changes which occurred in Athens at that time. The influence of powerful people, but also the effects of war and chaos.

Conclusion

How did Pindar, Empedocles and Euripides function to exist as poets?

In case of Pindar we are reminded again of the poets Hesiod and Homer and their connection to funerary ritualistic practice and athletic contest. The victory odes were not necessarily performed right after the victory was won by the athletic victor. Athletic success was a reason to praise someone, and when a victor was deceased then there was a reason to praise the deceased for his athletic success. This was what Pindar did in Isthmian 2. He praised the deceased for his athletic success. Another similarity between Pindar and Hesiod and Homer, was that Pindar praised military, athletic, and political success. Contrarily, Pindar praised his contemporaries while Hesiod and Homer praised either gods or heroes from the mythical past. Hesiod and Homer also responded to a need to worship war heroes, because they lived at a time when hero worship was important to the parties fighting in the Lelantine war. Contrarily, Pindar was connected to the celebration of people who participated in institutionalized athletic games.

The Persian war had significantly changed Greece's place in the larger world, city-states started to unite against another Persian threat, Carthage' power over Sicily and South-Italy was effectively diminished. At the same time, there were struggles between city-states, and civil unrest in city-states. Pindar praised both local and panhellenic success. In this case, I consider athletic victories in panhellenic games, and military successes in the Persian war, both panhellenic. Contrarily, I consider the celebration of an elective for a local office to be an example of local success. The status of a person in his own city-state increased whenever he was praised for athletic success. Similarly, the status of a city-state or a family increased whenever one of the members were celebrated for athletic success. In this regard, victory odes were important for the identity of a family and/or a city-state. The identity of Pindar, however, was also important. Praising athletic victors made him become famous as well.

The desire to become famous was probably a consequence of the struggle with the Persians as well. Since the war had killed and destroyed several families and cities, and had dislocated people from their homes. Fame served to protect people from invisibility and disappearance, it created a continuity as well. Athletic victory, and celebration of that victory through a victory ode, would have protected a person's success from withering away.

Empedocles probably responded to a demand on Sicily to guide people in how they should live. This has been a role ascribed to Greek poets in general. In other words, they informed their listeners to 'do this, but not that, or the gods will become angry'. In case of Empedocles, however, there was a clear concern for health issues, and food cultivation. This should not surprise us, Gelon and Theron had destroyed large parts of the infrastructure on Sicily. They had forced people from their homes, and enslaved large parts of the population. There was a tendency amongst the tyrants to hoard money by forcing people to exile, and built noteworthy temple-sites from that money. Besides, there were also diseases going around at that time. People must have suffered from weakened immune systems and/or contaminated living spaces, due to the hostilities. There was chaos on Sicily during Empedocles' life in general. It is likely that Empedocles, however, was regarded as a dependable person, because he tried to stabilize the living conditions on Sicily. He tried to limit an excess of power, but also helped unfortunate people.

According to ancient biographical tradition, Empedocles was many things, but most of all he was famous. I think there is truth to this. In his poem he introduces himself as a leader of the people in a way. He speaks of followers and people who praise him in every city he turns to. The most noteworthy thing however, is that Empedocles proclaimed himself to be a god. It is likely that he gained such popularity, because he dismantled a corrupt oligarchic system.

The relationship between these three Classical poets and the Muses reveals how their occupation has changed. Pindar presents his Muse as a divinity who cares for money. Pindar responds to economic changes in that regard. Money became an important factor in the world he lived in. It probably became important to the way his profession worked as well. Money probably enabled him to produce victory odes on a Panhellenic level. Expenses for traveling were not a problem to him. He was able to reach victors on every corner of the Greek world. Empedocles' Muse shows how poetry became involved with metaphysical and epistemological problems. His Muse was not unreliable, not deceitful, but a source of knowledge. There was not any concern for a mythical past, but an interest in the cosmic order. Empedocles' Muse knew reality, and there was only one reality. Ethical issues, but also ideas on the afterlife, were important to Empedocles' audience. This reveals there was more of a focus on human agency. Humans should learn the path of the Muse, because they should properly behave. This fits a democratic world. It is probable that Empedocles responded to a need to update religious ideas on human-divine realities. He responds to a rapidly changing socio-political world on Sicily. The world Euripides lived in changed as well. Therefore, Euripides reflects upon the role of the Muses in society. Since there were challenges to the authority of the Muses. War was one of these challenges.

The function of classical poetry cannot be pinned down to one thing. In case of Pindar, Empedocles, and Euripides their poetry functioned to exist at different occasions. Although their poems were composed to serve a specific occasion, those were often reperformed. Their poetry was of religious importance to their audiences and to themselves as poets. All three poets expressed a deep fear for the divine realm. In case of Pindar there was a fear to be either too small or too big. A person who lacked fame lost in Hades, but a person who became too famous invoked the anger or jealousy of the gods. In case of Empedocles being devoted to the

wrong things in life culminated in a worse (next) life. Euripides expressed possibly the most frightening reality to his audience; an unpredictable divine realm whereby humans were subjected to divine trickery.

At the same time however, religion was not separated from politics. Politicians were devoted to maintain the relationships between themselves, their cities, and the divine. In the fifth century BCE, politicians like Pericles, Hiëron, and Theron devoted themselves to the construction of temples in honor of their gods. The celebration of festivals were another means by which tyrants, counsels, and those in power maintained their relationships with the gods. Pindar and Euripides functioned to build relationships between the divine and politicians as well. In general however, religion often operated from a human need to connect with a divine realm. The reasons why would have differed from person to person. This aspect however, the ability to connect humans with the divine, was what made Pindar's, Empedocles', and Euripides' poetry religious. They enabled their audience to connect to the divine, because their poetry expressed human-divine connections. They were able to move their audience by addressing the ways in which epiphanies could impact human experiences.

Conclusion

Why was it that several Archaic and Classical poets questioned the Muses' epiphany even though their poetry relied on the Muses' epiphany?

Hesiod is an interesting case because he questions the reliability of his own poetic song in his *Theogony*, while he is certain about his own authority in his *Works and Days*. These songs were performed at different occasions in front of a different audience. The occasion influenced the way he expressed his own poetic authority. There was something about the occasion of Amphidamas' funeral which made him question the trustworthiness of the Muses.

There is a clear connection between poets' reflections on the Muses' epiphany and socio-political unrest. This was especially so in case of Hesiod and Homer. When Hesiod questioned the Muses' epiphany, he performed at a funeral in Chalcis. It is likely that he performed at a moment when the Lelantine war was already going on for a long time, but we should not assume that it was already over at the time of performance. The period of the Lelantine war was a disturbing time. City-states allied together to fight other Greek city-states in a surge for land. Cities were demolished, and abandoned, while people dispersed and found themselves homeless. There was a need to praise Amphidamas, while city-states were divided and friends had become enemies. The occasion was marked by uncertainty.

Poets were responsible for explicating the reality of things. They sang about divine order. They could do so because they were divinely inspired by the Muses. However, Hesiod's Muses were unreliable. He did not know if his songs were truthful or not. He voiced his doubts on the reliability of the Muses' epiphany to a war torn audience. Hesiod presented the world as unpredictable to his audience. A reflection which can be understood in the context of dispute, war, and crisis. War forced people to change perceptions to change the way they perceived themselves and others. Uncertainties, shifting attitudes, and disruption mirrored the unreliability of Hesiod's Muses.

Homer also lived during the Lelantine war. He also questioned the authority of the Muses, but his questioning was more a defense of poetic authority. It is impossible to know for certain when and where he performed his *Odyssey*. He probably performed his *Iliad* at Chalcis, and his *Odyssey* afterwards. Homer describes poets who were threatened by the socio-political situation after the Trojan war. The content of their songs was questioned. The effects they had on the audience was frowned upon. Homer's Muses were not deities who solely created joy, their songs could also move an audience to tears. He makes sure that divinely inspired poets are not responsible for the things they sing about. They are allowed to sing for audiences who are political rivals. Homer makes sure that poets cannot be regarded as people who take sides in human conflict. They merely follow the path of the Muses. It is likely that he responded to a situation where the loyalties of poets were questioned.

There is an interesting aspect about Homer's *Odyssey*. The presence of the Muses can be tested by the content of the songs. The songs are about people who are still alive. They are about war heroes who survived. The hero, Odysseus, can determine the reality of the songs, because the songs are about his war efforts. It is possible that Homer's audience needed to

hear that humans were capable of determining what was real and what was not real. He may have responded to a need to validate war efforts. Hesiod performed his *Theogony* at a time when the Lelantine war hadn't ended yet. But, Homer's *Odyssey* may have been performed when the war had already ended.

However this may have been, it is likely that both Hesiod and Homer responded to war-uncertainty. The fact that the Lelantine war was fought by multiple Greek city-states makes it likely that poets were confronted with this situation as well. Traditional songs and/or stories about the human-divine world may have been challenged by the effects of the Lelantine war. Since the Muses were responsible for creating songs, their reliability was questioned. Similarly, poetic authority was questioned, because they relied on the presence of the Muses. Uncertainty, however, was limited to a Panhellenic level. International relations were uncertain due to war.

Moreover, the relationship between Sappho and the Muses is different from Hesiod and Homer. Sappho urges young women to follow the path of the Muses, because it is a rare gift indeed. She mentions that the Muses gave her fame and honor. They brought her happiness. It is interesting that she motivates her (female) audience to follow the path of the Muses. She probably addressed an intimate circle when she motivated her audience like that. It is likely that she expressed her genuine sentiments when she did such. Sappho's reflections were probably gendered. She lived at a time where politics became more centralized. The role of women was limited to the family, while the family became of lesser importance. On the other hand, religion became intertwined with city life. And women had an important role to play in that.

Sappho and Empedocles both lived at a time and place characterized by political disruptions. Meanwhile, they were wealthy members of their communities. The thing they shared in common was their instructive tone by which they addressed their audience. Both urged their audience to follow the path of the Muses, while they questioned the ability of their audience to receive the Muses' gift. They were regarded as authorities on divine matters in their societies. They responded to a need to guide their audience. On the other hand, Empedocles' poem is very different from Sappho's poems.

Empedocles urges his audience to follow the path of the Muse, because that's necessary to understand reality, and to know how to make their souls migrate upwards. Empedocles' poem was a purification. Besides political unrest, he lived at a time when disease was prevalent. Food shortages were also a problem. Sicily had been ravished by war and revolts.

Moreover, Empedocles' audience felt a need to re-address the order of things. They must also have felt a need to understand the world they lived in. To understand why there was suffering, and how to influence one's living conditions. This was usually the task of poets. They explained the reality of humans by means of divine intervention. These relationships, however, were very different in Empedocles' cosmology. He does not explain the world by looking back at a mythical past. His Muse does not sing about the glorious deeds of gods and heroes. She sings about the nature of life and death, about proper conduct and sinful behavior. Empedocles must have responded to a demand for a way out. A way out of misery, and powerlessness. A

way out of disbelieve and hopelessness. A way out of famine and diseases. A desire to become a god, and be close to the divine. To know what the Muse knows.

The case of Pindar is somewhat more complicated. He addressed the Muses often, and in different ways. His reflections usually concerned themselves with the reasons why he composed a specific ode for a victor. In that regard his various reflections represented various ways in which he described his own profession. His concern with the Muses was probably a response to a complicated panhellenic world. Similarly, Euripides responded to a complicated world characterized by change, war and crisis.

Pindar dealt with the effects of the Persian war. He dealt with an awkward situation, because Thebes had fought alongside the Persians. Although he had not fought in the war himself, his citizenship still influenced his relations on a Panhellenic level. He had to deal with this. That's why he probably expressed doubt to celebrate a victor from Aigina. There was a need to reflect upon the consequences of the Persian war. There was a need to express grief. His role as a poet was questioned, and therefore the role of the Muses as well.

Pindar may have responded to a need to temper the tyrants of Syracuse and Acragas. Their subjects may have felt threatened. The tyrants from Syracuse and Acragas may have been too focused on their own grandeur. They may have created a threat to the perceived human-divine relationships. Pindar clearly felt a need to warn the tyrants not to invoke the anger and jealousy of the gods. This may have been religious crisis, but also a social crisis.

Furthermore, Pindar felt a need to legitimize his profession. He lived at a time when poets were paid for the first time. They were commissioned for the first time. And sometimes they operated on a Panhellenic level.

Moreover, it is peculiar that Pindar reflected on the connection between money and the Muses several time. Coinage became more widely distributed in the Greek world when Pindar was alive. Besides, Pindar was paid for his compositions. The meaning of his reflections on the Muses and money, depends upon the value of money at that time. This remains a challenging issue. What we do know, however, is that Pindar reflects upon the changing role of the Muses, and of poets. He reflects upon the fact that poets receive payment. He does so by making it clear that it is the Muse who chooses this. Clearly, he responded to a need to give a divine justification for working on commissions. Perhaps working for hire posited a challenge for his relationship with the Muses, and the audience' relationship with the Muses. It is interesting that Pindar brings it as if the Muse is the one who works for hire, instead of himself. He seems to give his profession a divine sanction in that way.

Euripides' Muses challenged the place of women in society. They also opposed the realities of war. The connection between poets and the Muses concerns the authority of poets. Therefore, Euripides challenged the authority of female poets. He challenged the place of female poets in society. He must have responded to a need to address the place of women in society. He may have responded to a socio-political situation which came about because of Aspasia. Her oratory and poetic skills may have caused people to question the relationship between women and the Muses. Her position was controversial in Athens. However this may have been, Euripides responded to a need to re-evaluate the relationship between women

and the Muses. He questioned the religious identity of (female) poets and the Muses in that regard.

Moreover, there was a religious crisis in Athens when Euripides was alive. The plague had made many Athenians anxious. They felt a need to appease the gods. There was a fear that the gods caused the plague, because they wanted the Spartans to win from the Athenians. Euripides also doubts war efforts. He expressed doubt in a play which was performed at a time when there was a desire for peace in Athens. Many Athenians must have felt this desire, because the plague had weakened the citizen body. The situation must have felt hopeless. The performance of tragic plays were moments to reflect upon this. There was a need to reflect upon the consequences of war, but also on the nature of peace. The relationship between the Muses and the audience could only prevail when there was peace.

These six poets we have discussed here reflected upon the Muses in different ways. They also responded to different situations, and performed in front of different audiences. Therefore, the social demands differed each time.

However, reflections of poets on the Muses' epiphany always concerned their own place in society. They questioned what their songs could do for their audience. They questioned the relationships their audience had with them and with the Muses. We saw that poets fulfilled different roles in their societies. Euripides was the only poet who was connected to institutionalized religion. Even then the role of poetry was not limited to one thing alone. Social demands changed. The content of poems changed as well. The way poets reflected upon religion differed. There was a general desire to come close to the gods. Poets were capable of connecting their audience to the gods. And sometimes their audience needed to know more about the reliability of poetry. They demanded to know more about the poet's capacity to know the nature of the gods. This often happened during moments of change and/or disruption. Many times, there was a crisis to which a poet responded. A moment whereby divine-human relationships were questioned. Such moments always involved changes in human authority as well.

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