



The Philhellenic Horizon: Homeric Prolegomena to the Greek War of Independence

Constanze Güthenke

Based on what Armstrong and Dué, in the invitation to this conference, have termed the Wolfian paradigm of Homeric research and its intersection with the preoccupations of the Romantic period (ballads; nature; language; nation; nostalgia; modernity), this paper examines the role of Homer within the horizon of European Philhellenism (in the sense of a partisan position favorable towards Modern Greece), as much as the impetus of this Philhellenism on approaches to Homer. I will first focus on the case of Wilhelm Müller, who achieved prominence in his own time mainly for his several volumes of *Griechenlieder*, written in support of the Greek War of Independence. In a second part, I want to speculate about the fate of Homeric knowledge and its use in post-independence Greece, whose writers were very highly aware of the Homeric features of the Western philhellenic endeavor.

The overarching research framework behind this paper is the triangle between antiquity, the modern West and modern Greece, and its resulting tensions. The representation of modern Greece by way of a nature discourse is one example; the position of Greece vis-à-vis Europe, trying to reformulate conceptually the refractions and (mis-)representations arising from mutual perception, is another. This is also a question of comparativism, which is currently strongly exercising the Humanities again. Comparative literature is discussing again the notion of “world literature” and its imbalanced axes (see, e.g., Prendergast 2004), while history and the social sciences are continuously looking for new concepts of exchange and interplay as a heuristic method. Since scholarship, and especially classical scholarship – as an institutionalized, professional pursuit with a structure of training and production – arises at the same time as national literatures and their study, does not the same range of questions apply to that field as well?

Two aspects of the “Philhellenic Homerizon” stand out: first, the double, interdependent, function of “nature”: on the one hand the physical-geographical aspects of the “Homerizon”, in the sense of a projection of the Homeric environment as expressive of Homeric poetry, and on the other hand the figurative use of nature, in pervasive imagery such

as Homer as the sea of all knowledge, modern Greece breaking free like a pent-up mountain stream, or the natural expression of a people in song. For this aspect, Germany serves as the main case study. Secondly, the surveying of a Homeric horizon builds just as much on a fundamental ambivalence towards Homer and what, as a model, this horizon stands for. Here Greece is the focus. The search for naturalness, exemplified in Homer and his environment, and the ambivalence towards this 'natural' horizon are ultimately two structurally linked aspects of the act of comparing the Homeric world with one's own.

Vorschule and Prolegomena

In 1824, amid generally flagging enthusiasm for the Greek struggle for independence, the publicist and classicist Wilhelm Müller, otherwise well-known for poetry in support of the Greek effort, turns to his publisher with a suggestion for a volume, *Homerische Vorschule*, that wants to re-popularize F.A. Wolf's *Prolegomena to Homer* (1795). How and why did such an effort come about? Müller (1794-1827), today best known as the author of the Schubert song-cycles, as well as, to a more eclectic audience, the father of the Orientalist scholar Max Müller, had up to this point had a career largely in literary journalism.¹ With the 52 poems of his *Griechenlieder*, published between 1821 and 1827, Müller also appeared as a popular supporter of the Greek cause during Greece's War of Independence. If he has been called "le plus grand philhellène de l'Allemagne" (Caminade 1913:8), it is because he expressed in his work the particular blend of political, religious and artistic concerns, which distinguishes the discourse of German Philhellenism in the 1820s. J.W. Goethe, incidentally, was less complimentary when he sketched him in a letter as "Unangenehme Personnage, süffisant, überdies Brillen tragend" ("unpleasant character, smug, and, what is more, wearing glasses") (von Müller 1982:173), maybe an appraisal not entirely unrelated to Müller's rather unsubtle criticism of Goethe's own translations or, rather, adaptations from Modern Greek folksongs.

Müller himself had a great interest in the manifestations of folk literature and folk song, and in 1825 he edited and translated into German Claude Fauriel's important collection *Chants populaires de la Grèce moderne*, originally published in two volumes with a long introductory essay in 1823/4. As for his philhellenist career, Müller had, in 1817, been given the opportunity to accompany the Prussian Baron von Sack on a trip to Greece. Following his

¹ Most recent scholarly interest in his person was concentrated in German Studies in the GDR from the 1970/80s onward, maybe as part of a general surge of interest in the Romantics as (political) poets between tradition and history. On his publications Gad 1989:57-65, and Maria-Verena Leistner (1994:47-55), who knows of ca. 70 articles until 1826, on subjects ranging from German baroque literature, which he also edited, to Lord Byron and contemporary poetry. Among his pieces are also several reviews of Greek travel accounts and German philhellenic poetry.

classical studies in Berlin, where he was admitted to the circle of the retired (and by all accounts embittered) classical philologist F.A. Wolf and the up-and-coming scholar August Boeckh, he was recommended by the *Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften* as an academic companion for the Baron's intended journey. Despite two months in Vienna in order to establish contact with Greek intellectuals and to learn Modern Greek, Müller never went to Greece. The journey proceeded as far as Rome, where the two men's ways separated, and from where Müller two years later returned to Germany and a ducal librarian's career, juggling a large number of journalistic projects at the same time – among them to write popularly and at length about his Italian experiences (B. Leistner 1994:18-31). During the publication of his *Griechenlieder* Müller kept courting censorship, since some of them attacked very explicitly the Restoration powers, at the time very reluctant to interfere in the Greek conflict. He published mainly with Brockhaus in Leipzig, who dutifully stood by him through the frequent censorship cases (imposed after the very restrictive Karlsbad resolutions of 1815). The poems were a success. The mixture of lightness of song, honest anger, and a compliance with public taste and commercial needs were recognized, not least by Müller himself, who prided himself on hitting the right note (Lohre 1927:141,190). By 1824, however, a tone of pettiness creeps into the editorial correspondence. Brockhaus is reluctant to produce new *Griechenlieder*, sales, first so promising, are flagging, the poetic and political hotcakes (“poetisch-politisch heisse Waare”), as Müller had termed them, are becoming "Makulatur". This is the time when in Germany the original fervor for the Greek cause had slowly diminished, to be re-ignited only after 1826 with the fall of Missolonghi, when the European balance of power was turning in favor of intervention. It was only then that Philhellenism, at least in Germany, became *hoffähig* or politically more acceptable. In 1824, that was still some time off. And it is at this point that Müller submits the new proposal to Brockhaus, for a scholarly work on Homer:

Das vorliegende Werk biete ich aber umso unbefangener an, da ich es für das bedeutendste halten muss, was ich – die nicht in Vergleich tretenden poetischen Versuche abgerechnet – als Schriftsteller bisher geleistet habe. Es verdankt seinen Ursprung der Aufforderung und Anregung des grössten Philologen unserer Zeit, F.A. Wolfs's, meines ehemaligen Lehrers, mit dessen Urtheile über meine homerischen Studien ich Sie jedoch nicht bestechen will. (Müller 1994 5:289)

The present work I offer to you without hesitation, all the more because I consider it the most important I have produced to this day – apart from my poetic endeavors, which are in quite a different category. Its origins lie in the encouragement and suggestions of the greatest philologist of our time, of F.A. Wolf, my former teacher, with whose judgment on my Homeric study I certainly do not want to sway you in any way.

The work, he continues, considered his most important publication yet, is to complement Wolf's scholarly insights, presented in his 1795 *Prolegomena ad Homerum*, and to make them available, in German, to a broader audience. Müller's foray back into classical scholarship

throws light on the question of his own public standing, as much as Wolf's popularity: as a ducal librarian (in the small duchy of Dessau), a school teacher of Greek, and an independent writer and scholar, Müller was caught between a position of great dependence on a ruling aristocracy and the still uncertain status of the writer in the early nineteenth century. While classical scholarship had, with Humboldt's reforms, become a staple of German educational institutionalism, it had also begun to drift away from literary production and its concerns, a field that had still been close to it during its formative period (Most 2004). Müller's ambitions, therefore, seem to put him into the paradoxical position of standing with one leg each on separating floes, in order to gain greater balance. What links those two areas for Müller is an understanding of Greece that taps both into contemporary politics and classical philology; and with the title of his new project, he stood to gain twice, both from Wolf's name and clout and from the reputation of Jean Paul's *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (1804), from which his work borrows its title.

Müller's Homeric publication, then, opens a window onto the interaction between the study of classical Greece and the manifestation of a Modern Greek state in the making. What impact did it have on the map on which classical scholarship had labored so hard the preceding decades to outline a place for itself? What is more, political philhellenism entered the field at a time of growing eclecticism and complacency as far as cultural Hellenism was concerned. The moment of the acutely felt crisis of modernity, of discovering the network that links sciences of all kinds to enable the modern human subject to define and express itself as just that, had waned a little. The quarrel between the ancients and the moderns had been decisively resolved in favor of the moderns some time previously, and the realization that we are emphatically not tied to the ancients by artistic norms, but can now rethink the nature of those ties, had sunk in thoroughly. At the same time, the understanding of the ancients as a self-contained past with a potentially strong effect on the present, was used as a means to enhance modernity, and it had found its reasonably stable place in the institutions of learning.

In what follows I will treat Müller's case as paradigmatic for some of those issues in German Hellenism, and I will ask where he stands in relation to Homeric scholarship, what his own interests are that he expresses in the *Vorschule*, and how they are linked to his role first as a commentator on folk literature and secondly as a writer in support of the Greek War of Independence, with a specific representation of Greece in his writings. What Müller does, I argue, is to rephrase Wolf with a much stronger focus on Homeric practice, as he imagines it, setting it in its quasi-realistic context. Moreover, to describe both song practice and its Greek environment, he liberally employs imagery that recurs in his other writings on the modern use of song and on contemporary, revolutionary Greece, as it seeks to liberate itself.

F.A. Wolf is today largely credited with the institution of *Alttertumswissenschaft* as a term and method, and for his discussion of Homeric epic as a product of oral poetry, doubting a single authorship of both the Iliad and the Odyssey. What Wolf did was to deflect the search for

the earliest and "original" shape of either epic (as impossible), and instead, based on manuscript evidence, focus on the history of textual criticism of the corpus itself, which sets in soon after the Homeric period and is responsible for every known textual form through that very process of criticism. Although he concludes that the oral origins of Homeric epic must refashion the quest for the original textual version significantly, his notion of an oral culture is quite complex. His interest is mainly on the point of view of later, post-Homeric periods that treat the epic as a cultural form that is prior yet relevant to them, and his tools are those of textual criticism as advanced by Biblical scholarship of his time. Grafton has elucidated why Wolf's study, more than any other, so successfully gained a reputation, and, among other things, he points out the elegance of his Latin style (Grafton 1985). What is noticeable, however, about Wolf's choice of figurative speech, when compared both to Müller and to the standard post-Winckelmannian tone, is that it lacks the wealth of organic imagery, especially nature imagery, that is not only a favorite of the period but also of the discourse on Greece from the late eighteenth century onwards more generally. This, of course, in no way detracts from his style, probably quite the contrary, but is worth remembering when we turn to other writing ostensibly indebted to Wolf.

One such case is Herder, who in his several essays on Homer works to a much larger extent with reference to the situated-ness of the Homeric works within their natural environment. I will just mention one exemplary quotation from his essay "Homer und Ossian" (1795), which uses Homer and Ossian as paradigms for the typological difference between ancient and modern poetry. Homer's epos is *rein-objektiv* (purely objective), extensive and southern, while Ossian is *rein-subjektiv*, intensive and northern; in terms of visualizing this purely objective poetry, though, Homer is situated in an environment that is both significant and timeless:

Bei Homer treten alle Gestalten wie unter freiem und heiterm Himmel in hellem Licht hervor; als Statuen stehen sie da, oder vielmehr sie schreiten handelnd fort, leibhaftig in völliger Wahrheit (Herder 1967 18:454).

The figures in Homer appear as if in the light of free and bright sky; they stand like statues, or rather, they move forward in action, in true and complete corporeality.

Müller is clear that his interest is not so much in the history of textual criticism, as in the (pre)history of epic song and performance. To him, the "cradle" of epic stands is Ionia, more specifically the Ionian colonies founded by settlers from Attica and Aeolians from Europe, about a century after the end of the Trojan War. Müller's chronology and his historical categorization of the Homeric period are somewhat shaky and undecided; what is mainly at issue for him is the environment of Homeric epic as one that is mainly of an organic, unbroken immediacy, even if historical consciousness and Asian, weakening, influences alike are

looming at the gates. The production of epic song is still a natural practice in correspondence with the physical world around it. Compared to Wolf himself, and to other Homeric scholarship, Müller noticeably stresses immediacy, untouched by any artistic reflection or development, over the more careful positioning of the developing world of Homer.

Müller, suspicious towards “art” encroaching on nature and towards a dominant focus on writing, pulls out all the stops to present variations on this theme. Thus he opens with the claim that he had the Homeric question illuminated through hearing Wolf himself, who is now being misrepresented over time in writing. Other instances are the complaint that even un-Homeric elements were fixed in later versions through a quasi-religious prejudice creating a *Buchstabenhomeros* (taking up Wolf’s use of the parallel between biblical and Homeric texts and rephrasing it in good Protestant fashion), or the finger-pointing at Aristotle (and his claims for unity) as the main culprit of a warped Homeric reception (including the interesting political metaphor of Aristotle’s *tyrannis*):

Die Gesänge, *Epe*, wurden durch seine Poetik ein episches Gedicht, *Epopoia*, und das Gewächs der Natur ein Werk der Kunst. Und so ist denn derselbe Mann, dessen poetische Kunstgesetze die alte und neue Welt so viele Jahrhunderte lang in tyrannischen Fesseln gehalten haben und zum Theil noch halten, auch der eigentliche Anführer der alten und neuen Mißverständnisse und schiefen Ansichten des homerischen Gesanges. (103)

The epic songs, *epe*, became in his Poetics an epic poem, *epopoia*, and the work grown from nature a work of art. That is the reason why the same man whose poetic laws have held and sometimes still hold the world, ancient and modern, in bonds of tyranny is the true originator of the misunderstandings, old and new, and the skewed views on Homeric song.

Instead, Müller opts for the interpretive angle of elaborating on Homer as a nature poet where the full meaning of nature in its material sense is exploited; at the same time he uses nature metaphor to describe the creative process in question, speaking, for example, of the "pure and strong natural simplicity of Homeric song" and of Homer as the "crown and flower" of the Ionian epos (60). Another instance of how Müller bases himself on Wolf’s text while favoring the side of nature and environment are his references to Robert Wood. Wood was the English traveler whose *Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer with a Comparative View of the Ancient and Present State of the Troade* (London, 1769 and 1775), widely-read in Germany and translated into German in 1773,² proceeded by matching contemporary locality to Homeric description, in what he called his own "poetic geography". His argument that the understanding of classical literature is enhanced by the knowledge and description of the actual locale proved to be a powerful impetus for contemporary Homeric scholarship at home

² Circulated initially by J.D. Michaelis and C.G. Heyne in scholarly and literary circles in Göttingen, it was read by Herder and Goethe amongst others; see Constantine 1988:73f.

and across Europe. Wolf mentions Wood for his claim that Homer was an oral poet, who was not familiar with writing and in this resembled the modern uneducated singers whom Wood encountered on his journey, but Wolf also modifies this claim by making writing, as an immensely resource-consuming technology, simply less available to the epic pursuit. Müller on the other hand throws himself upon Wood's description of Homer as a poet who copied from nature and who, in turn, is now best approached through the natural environment still in place. So he comments on the claims of several towns to be Homer's birthplace:

Eine ewige Bestätigung dieser Ansprüche der Insel Chios oder der benachbarten Küsten von Smyrna ist die weiche Natur dieser Gegenden, der Himmel, die Erde und das Meer, welche sich noch heute als die treu abgeschilderten Originale der homerischen Gemälde zu erkennen geben, und ohne deren Vergleichung manche Züge und Farben derselben unwahr und unnatürlich erscheinen müssen (1824:61).

The claims of Chios or the coast near Smyrna find support in the mellow nature of those areas, in the sky, earth and sea which still today appear as the truthfully represented originals of Homer's paintings, and if they were not at hand for comparison some aspects and colors of those paintings might appear false and artificial.

And:

Was keiner grammatischen Gelehrsamkeit gelungen ist, hat die Natur vollbracht: sie hat den Sänger der Natur lebendig und anschaulich kommentiert (1824:61).

Nature has achieved what no grammarian's studiousness could do: it has provided a commentary on this singer of nature that is both vivid and concrete.

This is then followed by a direct reference to Wood. In other words: while the quality of natural song can be compromised by cultural influence (in Müller's case the influx of weak Asian culture on the Ionians), the authentic natural environment, here somehow exempt from the arcs of progress and decline, remains constant across time: constant physical nature in turn becomes a hermeneutic tool in the study of Homer.

Glenn Most has suggested that Homer, or rather Homeric scholarship, functions as a seismograph for whatever kind of truthfulness Homer is lauded for at the time, in other words, for the question of what nature, to which Homer is thought to be true, in each case is (Most 1991). During the course of the eighteenth century, Homer had been predominantly considered a poet of nature. He becomes the paradigm of the poet representing nature and being inspired by it, he is considered the natural or original genius in the sense of neither being divine, nor of depending on models either.³ It is important to remind ourselves, though,

³ "That Homer's poems are of *Human Composition*; inspired by no other Power than his own natural Faculties, and the Chances of his Education: In a word, That a *Concourse of natural*

that during the same period nature had itself become such a seismographic concept. By the late eighteenth century, nature had become a term charged with a new ambivalence.⁴ In contrast to the variety of meanings nature could take on until the seventeenth century, each meaning clearly defined by opposing nature to something else (e.g. grace or free will), nature now becomes explicitly problematized as a freestanding term. This is contemporary with the growing historicizing of man in relation to nature. Emancipation is now understood as denoting either a return to a natural state or, alternatively, a progressive overcoming of it. *Nature* becomes an essentially ambivalent concept, part of a dialectic where emancipation is "natural liberation, or emancipation, from nature towards nature" (Spaemann 1967:62). Through this awareness of being separate from nature, the sign system of nature can be read. At the same time nature also means the physical, material world, in the still strongly felt tradition of empiricism. Like freedom, nature is one of the terms that are discussed in their moral, political and material shape; what is important is that several of those aspects are often evoked together, reinforcing each other.

Similar to nature as a seismograph, Homer is then another such term to absorb concerns of identity. Both of these terms follow a similar pattern: each features as a lost origin and a formative goal, although in a different shape, and each is seen in relation to the individual, either as within the one (i.e. nature) or producing the other (i.e. epic poetry). What is more, Homer as a poet of nature is described preferably in natural imagery; here the dual function of natural imagery as descriptive and metaphorical suits the imagery of Greece both as something historically specific and as timeless. Greekness, likewise, is historically specific yet also translatable, usable – and visible in the modern landscape of Greece.

One such tool for linking ancient and modern is what we would now call comparative ethnography. Müller refers to modern examples of oral poetry, and specifically he links occurrences of such expression with societies that are both of a different climate and of a stage of civilization that lags behind the modern, Western present:

Unsere Zeit und unser Land, deren Poesie in und auf Papier lebt und stirbt, machen es uns freilich sehr schwer, in die Natur des alten Gesanges mit deutlicher Vorstellung einzugehen. – Indessen hat doch die Bekanntschaft, welche neuere Reisende uns mit den Völkern anderer Zonen, und namentlich mit solchen verschafft haben, die unter einer milden Sonne, berufen zu höherer geistiger Entfaltung, auf der Stufe einer naturgemäßen

Causes, conspired to produce and cultivate that mighty Genius, and gave him the noblest Field to exercise it in, that ever fell to the share of a Poet." (Blackwell 1735:4)

⁴ Spaemann 1967; other useful accounts in Schneider 2000 and Vietta 1995:66-132.

Bildung aus der Rohheit zur Menschlichkeit leben, die Einsicht in die homerische Welt erleichtert (1824:34);

Our times and climes, where poetry lives and dies on paper, make it very difficult for us to enter into the nature of the old songs with a clear concept. – Meanwhile, insights into the Homeric world have been facilitated by the acquaintance which recent travellers have made with peoples from other regions, especially those who live under a gentle sun at the stage of natural *Bildung* from being wild to becoming human, destined for higher spiritual development.

Although nowhere in the *Vorschule* does Müller explicitly refer to the example of contemporary Greece, his translation of Fauriel, his writings on poetry and his *Griechenlieder* suggest an acute interest in the workings of folk poetry. It is particularly instructive to see how, on the heels of the *Vorschule*, Müller subtly alters the edition of Fauriel's Greek folksongs too. In his German version of Fauriel's introduction, the total oppression of the Greek people and their character after antiquity is pronounced, while most of Fauriel's references to the continuous development of Greek art forms, enhanced by the literary models of the Franks, Venetians etc., are pruned and relegated to much less prominent positions.

This allows Müller to frame the case of Modern Greek folksong as something particular, and to set the natural expression of character in song alongside the natural Greek potential for political development. With this attitude he is not alone among the German philhellenes. Let me quote briefly from an 1828 lecture on Greek poetry, *Über die neugriechische Poesie, besonders über ihr rhythmisches und dichterisches Verhältniß zur altgriechischen*, by Friedrich Thiersch, one of the leading figures of the philhellenic movement in Bavaria (and, incidentally, another pupil of Wolf). Thiersch identifies the "Belebung der Natur" (the personification, or revitalization, of nature) as a strong guiding principle of Greek folk poetry and traces it back to the ancient practice of perceiving nature as numinous. Recognizing the regional determination of songs ("they each reflect the character of their people and the landscape from which they originated" (1828:32)) leads Thiersch to conclude:

Was also ist die neugriechische Poesie anderes, als jene, in dem Volke selbst wurzelnde, mit seiner innersten Natur verschmolzene, die Begegnisse des Lebens unmittelbar durchdringende, ursprüngliche Poesie des griechischen Alterthums? [...] waltend und bildend, in einem, der fernsten Zeit analogen Kreise von Ansichten und Phantasien, und doch neu und eigenthümlich. [...] die jüngste Offenbarung des in sich unverwüstbaren und aus jeder Bedrängnis unversehrt hervorbrechenden griechischen Geistes, die sicherste Beglaubigung der Hoffnungen, die sich an die Auferstehung der berühmtesten und ursprünglichsten Nation für die Bildung geknüpft haben (1828:35).

What is Modern Greek poetry then but that poetry which roots in the people itself, welded to its innermost nature and immediately grasping the events of life, that original poetry of Greek antiquity? [...] it is inspiring and creative within a range of views and fantasies analogous to those of the far-away past, yet it is new and peculiar. [...] it is the most recent revelation of the indestructible Greek spirit that breaks forth intact from any misfortune that could befall it, it is the most profound confirmation of the hopes for *Bildung* which were tied to the resurrection of that most famous and most original nation.

The Nature of Folksong

Of course, the terminology of folk song, folk poetry and folk culture is, not only in its eighteenth and nineteenth century context, a loaded one, which requires a careful approach. I use the term folk song therefore not so much to represent the varied popular culture and song practice of Greece (or any other country), with its intricate relationship to both oral and written expression. Instead, I use folk song to indicate the hopes and expectation attached to the practice and the recreation of what were considered paradigms of a native, oral poetic culture. The most cherished aspect of folk songs, after all, was their potential to *evoke* authenticity and immediacy, and it is this awareness of their formal character, as much as of the distance separating them from the modern author, similar to that powering nature imagery, that interests me most.⁵ As in the case of Greek nature, it is neither the reputed "essence" of folk song, nor their constructed character, hidden under an idealist veneer, that would need disclosing, but their enabling and sometimes troubling dynamic – of which the Romantics were all too aware – that is thought to benefit those who care for their survival and experience. And like nature imagery, folk song, as well as romantic poetry reflecting on it, are each a medium of historical cognition. The "discovery" of folk culture and forms as artifacts, in the sense of their being collected in writing or in imitation, involves, and to the Romantics fruitfully so, the distance that separates them from the present literary culture, yet more, it even enhances that rift. The more it is collected, the more it seems endangered. "In other words, the writing of oral genres always results in a residue of lost context and lost presence that literary culture, as we have seen, imbues with a sense of nostalgia and even regret" (Stewart 1991:104). Or even, to take its logic further, of impossibility and grief; Müller, at the end of the trajectory begun in the eighteenth century, proclaims in a review essay on Béranger: "A printed folk song is the grave stone of a dead voice" (1994 3:138). The folk song, the fairy tale and the ballad are examples of what Stewart calls a "distressed genre", reproduced, made antiquated and valorized in the process in order to emphasize their nature as artifacts, and, like nature, threatening, with a strong undercurrent rather than a firm base (Stewart 1991:66-101). The terminology around "folk song" and oral, or naïve, culture, in other words, like the terminology around Homer and nature, rests on a deep and often ambivalent

⁵ On the slippery methodology of authenticity, see recently Alexiou 2002:172-183.

awareness of modernity. And while it had created potential, especially from the late eighteenth century, for a new role of the author as editor, this role, as Susan Stewart so perceptively expresses it, “was destined to collapse into self-parody because of its impossible claims of authenticity” (Stewart 1991:125). This is an effect I want to come back to in the last section on Homer in Modern Greek approaches.

If attention to folk poetry was an emancipatory act of sorts, it carried associations of renewal and education, and of humanity, be it in an artistic, political or individual sense. Müller, in an essay on contemporary German poetry, summarizes the state of affairs as follows:

Ohne Zweifel ist der belebende Strom des ältern deutschen Volksliedes als ein überaus befruchtender Segen zu betrachten, der den trocknen Boden der Reflexion befeuchtet und das Wucherkraut der deklamatorischen Phraseologie auf dem Gebiete der deutschen Lyrik ausgeschwemmt hat.⁶

There is no doubt that we have to view the invigorating stream of the older German folk song as a blessing with a rich yield: it has watered the dry ground of reflection and it has washed out the overgrowth of declamatory phraseology from the soil of German poetry.

The "natural" character of folk poetry, of its "poets" expressing an immediate relation with nature, is carried over into nature metaphor in the description of poetic practice. In an anonymous review of Müller's translation of Fauriel's collection of Greek folksongs, the characteristics of Greek nature reappear as a metaphor to describe the aesthetic process that characterizes the folk song:

Fast durchweg wohnt in diesen Liedern eine Anschauung in den hellsten Farben, es ist als fiele ein ewiges Mittagslicht auf Alles, was diese Menschen sehen.⁷

There lives an imagination of the brightest colors in almost all those songs, as if an eternal midday sun fell on everything those people see.

The close interaction with a natural environment as the basis of free artistic expression thus plays a central role in the perception of Greek folksong. And indeed, in the Greek literature translated as part of the philhellenic endeavor, folk poetry was predominant (Goedeke 1884:713-717).

In the wake of the philhellenic sentiment there emerged a belief that a song tradition and literary form which stresses the immediate analogy or original relation between a people and their environment and which operates with motifs of a personified nature that exerts a

⁶ "Über die neueste lyrische Poesie der Deutschen. Ludwig Uhland und Justinus Kerner" (Müller 1994 4:299-342); originally published in Brockhaus' periodical *Hermes* iv (1827).

⁷ *Literaturblatt des Morgenblattes* 1826, no 20 (10.3. 1826) and 21 (14.3. 1826), p.79.

direct influence on the human agents, was a valuable key to representing the tradition of the fledgling Greek nation state; this belief bore fruit on both the German and the Greek sides. For a state such as Greece, whose territory was still in a process of (re)definition and whose geographical as well as social unity was far from stable, the folk song promised both an identifiable regional origin and an analogous nature unspecific enough to allow for the designation of almost any area as 'Greek'. Müller himself, in his introduction to Fauriel's collection, formulated this particular appeal of the folk songs' setting, when he stresses the strength of their schematic and fragmentary character: "Wir erhalten in diesen Liedern nur Skizzen, aber scharf umzogene Skizzen, mit kräftigen Farbenstrichen, in denen die Lichter und Schatten der griechischen Erde und Sonne sich abspiegeln (Fauriel 1825:lxii)" ("We are given only sketches in those songs, but clearly defined sketches, of intense coloration, which mirror the lights and shadows of the Greek earth and sun"). The appeal of a broadly Greek natural setting, together with attention to significant location was also the principle that organized the representation, and choice, of Greek landscape and locality in Müller's own collections *Lieder der Griechen* (in more detail, see Güthenke 2004).⁸

Müller, emphatically, is not writing folksongs; instead he is playing with the notions of their environment, their settings, and their formal characteristics. In other words, he consciously recreates their performative framework without actually reproducing them. Müller's songs thus consciously evoke formal characteristics of the Greek folksong, e.g. the fifteen-syllable verse. In a review of recent *Griechenlieder*, including his own, Müller points out the exemplary character of his *Lieder* and he claims that "the well-chosen meter is formed after Modern Greek models", which in turn he then likens to the "verses of the *Nibelungen*".⁹ It is worth remembering here that Karl Lachmann, in 1816, had tried to apply Wolf's song theory to the *Nibelungenlied* as well. Müller follows the model of the fifteen-syllable line including a caesura in about half of his *Lieder*, yet without ever fully succeeding in a complete metrical reconstruction. It is also of importance that Müller in the *Lieder* insists on the use of rhyming couplets, which brings his poems closer to European expectations of versification, even if it deviates from the Greek norm of largely unrhymed lines.¹⁰ Instances like this point beyond the accommodation of taste to the establishment of folk songs as an art form, which might link its present-day collector and connoisseur to a more organic and original relation between the

⁸ Such a pattern of the natural setting is somewhat reminiscent of the reception of Ossian and his wild and somber landscape across Europe; here the lack of specificity and the reliance on stock features in descriptions of the natural setting proved a positive advantage for a wide-spread reception, by virtue of its 'compatibility'; see Gaskill 1994:672.

⁹ *Literarisches Conversations-Blatt* 1824:235.

¹⁰ In his translation of Fauriel's collection *Chants populaires de la Grèce* (1824) in 1825, Müller keeps as close as possible to the unrhymed original. His own poetic translations of folk material under the title *Reime aus den Inseln des Archipelagus*, on the other hand, are free adaptations using a standard German rhyme form.

individual (or the group) and its environment, expressed in the songs. The particular predisposition which the German reader might have is hinted at in Müller's assertion, in his review of recent translations of Greek folk songs into French, English and German (namely his own), that the language particularly suited to render the Greek originals is German, "whose nature made it possible to follow the original almost word for word in its peculiar metric form, without deflecting from the natural and free character of the folksong".¹¹

What is illuminating is that this conviction echoes Müller's comments on the metrical problems in translating Homer. In a review of recent Homeric translations, the Greek hexameter becomes the paradigm of natural meter (Müller 1822:320): "Der Ionische Hexameter ist ein reines Naturgewächs, entsprossen und aufgeblüht in einer ihm eigenthümlichen Mundart, deren Bildung ebenso unzertrennlich mit seinem Rhythmus verschlungen ist, wie dieser Rhythmus mit der mundartlichen Sprachbildung" ("The Ionian hexameter is a pure product of nature, sprung and having grown to full bloom from its own proper dialect, whose development is as closely linked to the meter's rhythm, as the rhythm is to the dialect").

As with the understanding of folksong, the question is deliberately not one of imitation but of approximation. In the same review, Müller argues that a successful translation cannot be achieved by slavishly adhering to formal criteria alone, but by translating in spirit. This is in line with the aim to capture the tone, i.e. the simplicity of tone that is characteristic of folk song. Significantly, this is achieved by attention to the imagery, needless to say nature imagery. The regenerative force lies precisely in the use of 'authentic' imagery, not in the emulation of archaizing language or form.¹² The adequate expression of feelings or internal processes through the images provided by nature is not merely artistic practice, but the prerogative of the reflexive poet who has grasped this very relation to nature. While the continuity between the ancient and the contemporary spirit is constantly sought throughout the poems, Müller warns against a false sense of continuity which, like the contrived use of formal aspects of folk poetry, does not recognize that the historical past is beyond retrieval. If continuity is to be established, it is in the memory of the past. The surrounding nature, which provides the locations of memory, is simultaneously the complementary dynamic setting, which reflects the actions of its inhabitants.

In the *Homerische Vorschule* it was the ancient Ionians who are inspired to epic by the presence of the ruins of Troy: "Und in ihrer Nähe liegen die Trümmer von Troja, die Gefilde,

¹¹ *Literarisches Conversations-Blatt* Nr. 122 1825:485. Müller claims that English and French are not suited, nor willing, to break with their strict traditions and render an unrhymed fifteen syllable verse as precisely that.

¹² "Über die neueste lyrische Poesie", 304. Compare also Müller's judgement "Ein gedrucktes Volkslied ist ein Leichenstein des erstorbenen Gesanges" (a printed folk song is a gravestone for dead song), in an essay on Béranger (Müller 1994 3:138)

auf welchen die Heroen kämpften, ihre Trophäen und ihre Grabmäler; um sie schwebt die geflügelte Sage noch mit lebendigem Hauche und begeistert zu Gesängen" (Müller 1824:5) ("Close by are the ruins of Troy, the fields where her heroes fought, their trophies and their tombs; above hovers the winged legend still with a lively breath and inspires song"). The resemblance to the inspiration which drives the contemporary Greek personae of Müller's *Griechenlieder* is clear: the material fragments of the past are set in a natural environment that encourages the development, the unfolding of a natural drive for expression.

There is consensus among Müller's critics and biographers that his *Griechenlieder* thinly veil his own political agenda and that there is a remarkable similarity with the sentiment of his occasional poetry of ten years earlier, written under the impression of the Napoleonic wars: what were the French are now the Turks, and the imagery of rousing battle cries and saber-swinging is little different (Paulin 1997:368). The scene of Greece, however, as opposed to France and Germany, offered a better template for a nation liberating itself; here Germany could rely on an image of a state whose aspirations were founded upon and reflected in its natural habitat, a habitat which at the same time still left enough scope to reflect the German reader's own position in the conservative climate after the Napoleonic Wars.

As German cultural Hellenism developed to include political philhellenism, freedom was localized in Greece in more than one way. From a historical viewpoint it was the place where both political and artistic freedom could and did prosper (and the fact that those works of art, with a canonical tradition, were present and visible distinguished the case of Greece from that of other historical societies). Although as a specific place in time it did not last, its value surpassing the historical moment could be claimed by the present. This Janus-faced character of Greece as both a historical entity and a supra-historical concept is a persistent theme in German writing and it is repeated in the dual strategy by which natural imagery works: it can refer to materiality as much as it is used in a metaphorical way, often in the same context. Friedrich Schlegel's remark from his *Gespräch über die Poesie* (1800), for example, on (ancient) Greece as the "source" of European art is paradigmatic for the attention that is paid to Greek landscape as a natural determinant, while natural setting is also employed as a metaphor:

Für uns Neuere, für Europa liegt diese Quelle in Hellas (...) Eine unversiegbare Quelle allbildsamer Dichtung war es, ein mächtiger Strom der Darstellung, wo eine Woge des Lebens auf die andre rauscht, ein ruhiges Meer, wo sich die Fülle der Erde und der Glanz des Himmels freundlich spiegeln (1956:289).

For us Moderns, for Europe, this source lies in Hellas [...] it was the unquenchable source of all-forming poetry, a mighty stream of representation, where wave follows upon wave of life, a calm sea, where the abundance of the earth and the radiance of heaven reflect each other gently.

In addition, Greece was viewed in terms of a people and culture particularly close to an autonomous nature: that is, as culturally natural and closely linked to their immediate environment. In practice, this finds expression in an increasing interest in the folk element. Cultural and geographical notions of nature thus overlap considerably – and deliberately. To assign the Greeks such a particular relation to nature helped to justify the political events of 1821. Greece was declared different from other, more suspect, national movements and became the template of a natural revolution where nature was liberating itself. In another *Conversations-Blatt* review of 1824 Müller characterized German philhellenic poetry thus: "from the land of reality, German enthusiasm for the freedom of the Greeks took wings toward the higher reaches of poetry" (1824a:233).¹³ But to what extent could not only poetry but classical scholarship contain the appearance of Modern Greece on the political and conceptual map? (Also on the institutional map, which is a different question awaiting analysis.) Both Homeric epic and Modern Greek folksong were by and large conceived as forms of *Naturpoesie*; in consequence, both the ancient and the modern Greek world were approached through similar lenses where similar patterns of analysis applied. Within that framework, an analogous political and cultural dynamism was postulated, based on its privileged relation to nature and then thought to be mirrored in song. What I hope to have shown is that the side of Classical scholarship and philhellenic discourse that was most popular also made most use of organic and nature imagery to convey its reflections on such differentiated terms as nature, freedom and history and the way in which they were linked.

Goethe had one more vitriolic comment to offer about Müller's Greek songs and the doubtful value of occasional political poetry: "'Schlagt ihn tot, schlagt ihn tot! Lorbeern her! Blut! Blut!' (...) das ist noch keine Poesie" ("Beat him! Kill him! Laurels! Blood! Blood!" – This is not enough to be called poetry) (Goethe 1965 3:699). Although I would not argue with Goethe in this case, I hope it has become clear that more is at stake and more is described in Müller's poetry than saber-rattling and a call to arms. I am sure Müller would have wanted to point out how much more important it ought to be that those laurels, as prizes for poets, came from essentially Greek trees.

Homer's Echo

In this last section, I wish to give an overview of the echo of those Homeric prolegomena in Greece itself, that is to say in the newly established nation-state with its precarious and sometimes unusual balance of needs. Homer's voice as it echoes on Greek soil can, we will see, run the gamut from faint and barely audible to threatening, from proper and welcome to the

¹³ The review, of three recent German collections of poetry in support of the Greeks, is not signed, but is almost certainly by Müller, given the comparisons he draws with Müller's poetry, the nature of the comments on meter, and the style of damning with faint praise.

voice of judgment on the present state of the nation. Why, first of all, look at developments in Greece? If Homer and Homeric form are conceived as a paradigm and thinking piece that is appropriate for modern national literatures more generally, it should be particularly relevant for cultural production *in* Greece. What is more, apart from a national interest, Margaret Alexiou has argued the following regarding the value and issues concerning philology more generally:

[t]he relevance of Greece to the current debate concerns the marginalization of its post-classical cultures, which places it at the center of critical discourse. Situated at the intersection of East and West, with a classical heritage appropriated by the West as an idealized image of its own civilized origins, but also with medieval and modern cultures that do not always conform to Western patterns of development, Greece can become a test case for the validity of scholarly assumptions on both sides of the critical fence. (...) Since Greece is a young and developing nation-state, Greek scholars and speakers alike will have a significant voice in shaping the future of Greek philology. In other words, the matter is not one for purely academic debate.

Alexiou 1990:53f

I should make clear that in the following I am not so much concerned with the living practices of Greek oral-related poetry as an object of complex study or a genre with its own no less complex self-understanding (for which see Richard Martin's contribution). Instead, I focus on Greek writing of the nineteenth century that presupposes Homer as already a critically studied and received text; in consequence, this is writing that is specifically conceived of as a public contribution to the national corpus, and that is produced to pass muster before an audience that may well stretch beyond Greece itself.¹⁴

What shape, then, did the study of Homer take in Greece, and does it share some of the features it had in Western Europe? David Ricks, in his immensely useful *The Shade of Homer* (1989), one of the few studies on the Modern Greek Homer in English, and one that includes the early period of the Greek state, comments on the dearth of material to warrant a detailed study of the philological Homer, and he therefore emphasizes reception in and through poetry instead – an statement that is also indicative of the way Modern Greek writing has usually, and often exclusively, been approached. Greek statehood, bestowed by the grace of the foreign protecting powers (Britain, France and Russia) in the early 1830s, arrived at a time when classical scholarship and literary productivity, as we saw, had begun to take different routes, especially in Germany. This is of consequence when the first king of Greece, the Bavarian Prince Otto von Wittelsbach, brought, together with his entourage, much of the German institutional system of higher education to the act of nation-building, and many of the first

¹⁴ On the *Kippfigur* logic of external and internal observation in Greek self-definition and self-criticism, see Herzfeld 1986; 1987; 1996.

generation of Greek post-holders in the academy were German-trained or German themselves.¹⁵

It would be too narrow a focus, though, to concentrate Homeric afterlife in the extremely small circles of Athenian government and higher education. What is crucial to consider for Greece are two mutually compatible features: one is the fact that many strands of European thought, broadly speaking, as they had filiations across Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, were taken up in Greece in the same kind of "telescoping", which the comparatist Virgil Nemoianu has articulated in the case of Eastern Europe. He suggests that the first decades of the nineteenth century, combining the self-awareness of Romanticism with a new conservative political climate in the wake of the Congress of Vienna, develop further a "complex dialectical relationship with romantic ideals" (1984:10) – a dialectical relationship, incidentally, that is already part and parcel of Romanticism, of course; he establishes a sequence in which Romanticism "continued, expanded, diversified its core; it became a weaker and relativized romanticism" (121). This he sees exemplified in England and to a lesser degree in France and Germany. However much one wants to agree or disagree with his grand narrative, what seems useful when thinking about Greece is his comment that "[i]n most other countries one or more stages are missing, or the order seems dislocated, or one stage seems to absorb the others. The last case is most interesting, since it indicates a kind of 'telescoping' (to employ a term used in the social sciences), a simultaneous occurrence of several phases over a relatively short period of time" (128).

The second feature concerns the wealth of rival programs of writing, self-definition and progress that occur in Greece as early as the late eighteenth century. As concerns Homeric reception for example, in Germany we find that many of the current concepts are part of a tightly woven tapestry; in Greece, or rather around the edges of the small territory that becomes the state of Greece proper, that tapestry is much looser, and it is, in addition, easy to overlook just how experimental with finding a tradition the early decades of the Greek nation state are in general. There is, for example, the educational, utilitarian project of Adamantios Korais, which is more than anything else indebted to the ideals and practices of the French *philosophes*; from Paris, where he had lived since the late 1780s, Korais embarked around 1800 on a series of classical text editions, that continued into the 1820. These volumes were fitted out with elaborate prefaces, or *prolegomena*, which offered a running commentary on the educational state of the nation. According to Korais, what Greece as a nation is lacking most and most damagingly is familiarity with its ancient heritage; a first remedy, therefore, is to make (already existing) text editions available to a Greek readership. The series was launched with an edition of Heliodorus' *Aithiopica* (a nod to the current dominance of narrative fiction as a successful modern genre, one may suspect, tracing its ancient lineage and hence Greece's

¹⁵ The best account (in Greek) of the Greek "model kingdom" and its national consequences is still Skopetea 1988.

competitiveness in the congress of reading nations). But editions of four books of the *Iliad* followed (1811-1820), prefaced by Korais with a fictionalized account of the genesis of his pedagogical project, narrated in the figure of a priest thirsty for learning, on Homer's island of Chios – which was also Korais' birthplace. While the affinity of Homeric practice with the natural ground and environment of Homer carries the drift of the argument, it is not the return to a Homeric intimacy with that past and present environment that was at issue (whether as positive, creative nostalgia or negative criticism), but the strong tendency towards the need for enlightenment from the present into the future.¹⁶ A basic classical education, a basic fluency in Homer becomes the prolegomenon to Greece's joining at the table of the nations.

Speaking of rival projects, the national poet is another such preoccupation. The models of poetry, as much as of poets, especially as we move into the 1820s, reach Greece predominantly through Italy and France and, often by way of these, from further afield in England and Germany. Within this network, the role of Homer for that first generation of Greek writers can be summarized as follows: one, in the world of the new state, we are dealing with a firmly post-Ossianic world, as far as approaches to Homer are concerned. Secondly, and maybe surprisingly, Homer is also much less important (in the sense of prominent) than we might assume.

Two examples of national-poet-making (which is no less than what is at stake in Müller), representing two choices within the experimental climate that the political changes inaugurated, are Dionysios Solomos and Alexandros Rizos Rangavis. Solomos (1798-1857), regarded as one of the founding poets of the Greek state, wrote on Greece from the perspective of the Ionian Islands, which, after centuries of influential Venetian rule and a varied history of brief Russian, Ottoman and French interludes, were from 1815 until 1864 a British protectorate.

Since the first publications of Solomos's poems in the 1820s, and certainly since the first posthumous edition of his works by his disciple Iakovos Polylas in 1859, most readings have been shaped by a reading of his artistic personality, and his path from the Italian to the Greek language as his chosen mode of expression.¹⁷ Polylas's edition not only established authoritative versions of the poems from the unpublished and overwhelmingly fragmentary manuscripts;¹⁸ it was also prefaced with a long biographical account – entitled *Prolegomena* and

¹⁶ On the lavish vocabulary and imagery of illumination in the narrative preface, see Paschalis 2004.

¹⁷ That this is not a one-way route, but rather the manifestation of a changing bilingual existence (Solomos reverts to Italian in his latest work) is traced by Mackridge 1994a.

¹⁸ The fragmentation of Solomos has incurred a large range of interpretation, from biographical circumstance, to deliberate Romantic program, to, most recently, Vangelis Calotychos' analysis

offering essentially the structure of artistic education and acculturation familiar from the European *Künstlerroman* (Lambropoulos 1988). Polylas sketches the development of the young poet's sensibility and imagination, from his early Italian education and writings in Italian, while in its overall structure the account is teleologically directed towards Solomos's tentative but determined poetic drafts in Greek and his readings of German thought and literature, those of Schiller (another national poet) in particular. While Homer, in the sense of explicit references to classical antiquity or its manifestation in archaizing language, is conspicuously absent from Solomos' works, Polylas carefully inserts, in key-position, an early little nature poem that makes mention of Homer, and which he frames with the conscious awakening of Solomos' poetic inspiration and its challenge. He introduces the fragment as the resulting illustration when Solomos "imagines that in the wilderness he will hear the voice of Homer, who with his presence at once animates insensate nature:

Every stream in love,
every breeze pure,
every tree inspired
speaks with its rustling.

And when the rocks
are most alone and silent,
you shall hear Mn in êeide
being sung to you by a voice.

And for your part follow the verse
... in order to see,
if the blind poet
knows your voice."

Solomos 1979:16 (transl. Ricks)

With this vignette Polylas tries to nail down Solomos' linguistic homecoming, not only to the Greek language, but to an unimpeded demotic Greek, as opposed to the inherited learned written Greek that originally arose from the Atticist venture; he reads the draft poem as an expression of Solomos' honest doubts and modesty about his poetic vocation and the

of Solomos as a complex "oral", performative poet; a concise summary of the positions in Calotychos 2003:73-87.

undertaking, without many models or predecessors, to cast thought into form. The episode is couched in the somewhat larger framework of Solomos staking out his own territory within the quarrel between classicizing and popular language in Italy, and Polylas seeks to detect Solomos' turning affiliation from the classicism of Monti, the great translator of the *Iliad*, no less, to the popular language of Manzoni. It is therefore no coincidence that it is in quasi-Greek nature, of all places, that Homer's voice should arise. And yet it is an ambivalent voice. Not only is the natural scene too generic to be aligned with Greece; stepping from corresponding, animated nature to the barren, silent rocks, it is here that the opening lines of the *Iliad* are to be heard, while recognition of the singer's echo by Homer, authorization of the new poet, is uncertain. This is a natural world that is suffused with critical reflection and distance, a scene from Schiller's sentimental pastoral (in line with Polylas' trajectory), rather than the rough genius of Homer. The alignment of Solomos with a native voice arising from Greek soil is undermined – just as the relationship between the voice of Homeric nature and the modern poet is a fractured one in European Romanticism too. While Solomos' demotic *Hymn to Freedom* (whose first stanzas later became the Greek national anthem) is included in Fauriel's *Chants populaires*, the folk venture is, as in Europe, the task of the editor. The Solomos whom we receive, the Solomos who appears on the printed page, is always the national poet of the editor, be it Fauriel or Polylas, and so is Solomos' tentative Homeric voice. In fact, Homer is effectively written into Solomos' works, as an editorial feat, by Polylas. A case in point is another early, fragmentary poem, in which the figure of an old, blind man appears to the speaker in an eerie nature at night and draws near. Solomos abandons the draft until it is resurrected by Polylas, who fits it with the highly disputable title "The Shade of Homer".

By the same token, there appear in Polylas' edition Solomos' draft translations of several lines and short passages from *Iliad* book 18. A closer look, however, reveals that the choice is a far cry from the heroic dynamism that had fuelled the Romantic nature of philhellenic poetry elsewhere. Solomos attempts the opening lines, which contrast the blaze of battle with Achilles still barricaded at the ships in angry refusal. Three lines on, the grief of Achilles over the dead Patroclus is followed by a series of fragmentary phrases from the *ekphrasis* of Achilles' shield: mention of the cruelty of battle is mediated through its crafting onto the shield, and it is counterbalanced by the same number of fragments that concern the symmetry of movement and dance that are part of the same work of art. Solomos' selection of reluctant violence, tempered by art, is at a fair remove from the heroic outburst or rough intimacy promised in the folk venture. Similarly, his meter of choice is a flexible eleven-syllable line, which does not carry overtones of folk meter, but has been, for example, the literary standard meter of Italian from Dante onwards (Borisova 2002). The more expected voice of the Greek folk meter and the full range of the heroic associations of Homer are in fact

only later supplied by Polylas in his own work, when he goes on to publish translations of both the *Odyssey* (1875) and the *Iliad* (1890) into a familiar demotic fifteen-syllable line.¹⁹

My second author, Alexandros Rizos Rangavis (1809-1892), writes at the administrative centers of the new state, first in Nafplio and then in Athens, although his education is in many ways typical of the wide arc along the edges of the new territory that characterizes the overwhelming majority of Greek writers and scholars of the period. Born in Constantinople of Phanariot stock, then having moved to Odessa and Romania (i.e. the Danubian principalities), he is educated in Germany (where he boards with Friedrich Thiersch), and arrives for the first time in the new kingdom of Greece at an age when he is a little too young to have actively taken part in the War of Independence, but no less keen to stake out a role for new literature and new poets. In terms of the range of interests and his almost obsessive productivity, he comes close to the much more short-lived Wilhelm Müller: he is a prolific writer, a scholar and academic (he becomes one of the first professors of archaeology at the newly-founded University of Athens), as well as a professional diplomat later in life (including stints as ambassador in Berlin and Washington). After first attempts especially in narrative poetry, which mixes folk-structures with a hybrid and often uneasy Romantic program (Güthenke 2003), he works himself up, in 1840, to a translation of the first book of the *Odyssey*, in hexameter.²⁰ Of greatest interest, again, is his verse preface, another *prolegomenon*, which develops the topos of the Muses' flight from degenerated and occupied Greece in a Homeric key, and combines it with the new remit of the national poet.²¹ Hexameter is, in fact, what is thrown up as the echo of surrounding nature. Overwhelmed by the metrical harmony of the ancients, Rangavis offers an extraordinarily curious register in which the vocabulary of critical study is mixed with a repertoire of Homeric words denoting sensual perception, and the immediacy of nature with the strict precepts of stylistic norms, shot through with the enthusiasm of revolution:

I question the brilliant sky, our blooming nature
I listen to the metrical din of the leaping waterfall,
I study the lowing of the wind that blows through the woods
The trilling bird I hear sharply, the shrieking owl
And the Aegean bellowing as it bellowed before, and I examine
Wherefrom then were taken those heavenly tunes,

¹⁹ On the complex relationship between Solomos and the younger generation of poets on the Ionian Islands, see Garantoudes 2001.

²⁰ Modern Greek hexameter differs from Ancient Greek; using accentual verse, it only employs dactyls, which in turn makes for a highly repetitive hexametric line.

²¹ On the "return of the Muses" as a topos of Greek literature already in the decades preceding the Greek War of Independence, see Mackridge 1994b.

And my soul, all comet, sings forth in hexameter.
Flowing in the wealth of rhythm, the well-varied twists of verse,
Sublime for sublime things and delighted in the face of graceful tunes,
When ancient Greece stands resurrected and with it
Ancient sensibility, with it, too, ancient meter must stand.

Rangavis 1874 2:206f

As the writer-figure next stands confronted with the quasi-Adamic task of renaming his environment in the spirit of the bard, Rangavis is quick to add the twist that Homer is, in fact, once exiled from Greece like his Odysseus, still wandering in foreign climes:

Away from his home grounds, the old man
Has fled, a roamer (*planes*), like his hero, much tossed-about of old.
Wishing elsewhere to find admirers and beating hearts,
He took to colder climes, stringing kitharas tuned in different ways.
The oaks of Teutonia whisper his melodies now,
And Albion understands the bard of soft Ionia,
But in Hellas his voice is silent.

And what is more:

The singer lies before us, but not like a bird of the Graces,
warbling a sweet song, and setting alight and bewitching the mind,
but like a gigantic corpse which a pedant anatomizes
in cold blood, researching dialects and accident and meter.

Rangavis 1874 2:207 (slightly adapted from Ricks 1989:38f)

The verb *planô* also means "to deceive", and so Homer has become an unreliable trickster seeking fame and fortune elsewhere, a revenant straying abroad while his body is dissected at home. Once more, then, scholarship and literature threaten to drift apart in the guise of the national scholar and the national poet. Overall though, as with Solomos, Homer is not a major

player within the literary remit. Sporadic translation, as can be seen with contemporaries of Solomos and Rangavis, is an exercise in expectation – and it usually stays at that.

What, however, happened to the Homeric aspect of War of Independence in the guise of Greece's new ragged heroes? The klefts, the brigands and irregulars intermittently co-opted by or against the Ottoman authorities, who had risen to prominence as local leaders during the uprisings, were the ones who had regularly exercised the philhellenic Western imagination as unstoppable Homeric heroes risen again, impelled by the force of nature (see Müller's poems again).²² Collections of their songs and the songs celebrating their daring had quickly become part of the range of Greek folklore as it moved within the horizon of collectors and editors (Politis 1976; 1984; Beaton 1980; Herzfeld 1982). The link between the world of Homer and the world of the klefts is a trope that certainly continues in the scholarly literature abroad (see Ricks 1989:43 for the German scholar Passow's Homeric research and folk collector's activity in the 1850s and 60s), probably on the back of the identification between the two worlds already by Fauriel.²³ In Greece, while the klefts certainly enjoy poetic longevity and while nods are made to the language of Western philhellenism, it is only in the second half of the century that the Homeric comparison, as a question of cultural continuity, assumes more central prominence.

Compared to the fluidity of the first and second decade of Greek statehood, from the 1850s a harder national rhetoric is forged: national historiography takes shape institutionally, especially in response to claims such as Jakob Phillip Fallmerayer's on the discontinuity of the Greek people from late antiquity. Against the back-drop of the new teleological model that focuses on continuity from antiquity through the Byzantine period, and through dark Ottoman rule (the *Tourkokratia*) into the new light of national reawakening, the heroic-Homeric link gains new valency; how strong that shaping category of cultural as much as natural continuity is, can be seen from its intersection with the other big issue that has defined Greece in the

²² The groups of irregular brigands had, particularly during the last century of Ottoman rule, determined the social structure of areas of Roumeli, Epirus and Thessaly, as well as some of the Morea; see Koliopoulos 1987. The so-called kleftic songs, using the same stylistic and structural elements as other (older) folksongs, take as their topic the fighting of groups of brigands against the Turks and were composed mainly during the course of the eighteenth century, particularly in the area of Roumeli.

²³ Fauriel, in his introduction, refers to the Homeric world, especially in his treatment of the klefts, a number of times. Although never directly identifying them, he spins a dense web of associations and analogy: like rhapsodes at festivals, beggars appear at modern panegyria as oral composers (lii); the physical prowess of the klefts, when exercising, is likened to precedent in ancient gymnastics (xxxvii); like the band of Homeric heroes, their singing is a product of a social context (companionship and feasting) and a beneficial environment (freedom, fresh air) (xlii); the kleftic songs, if collected in their entirety, would form an Iliad of Modern Greece (lxvii). All page numbers refer to Müller's translation of Fauriel's text.

modern period: the language question. To favor either an archaizing purified Greek or a demotic Greek relying on varying models of spoken language and folk literature is a choice that has, in Greece, attached itself historically to different and changing political implications and outlooks. In this light it is remarkable that the Homeric-heroic link to the klefts has been able to co-exist with either extreme position.

George Mistriotis (1871), for example, an editor and university professor himself, and thirty years later, at one of the peaks of the language quarrel, an extreme archaist, writes in 1871, judging an academic poetry competition, that "[e]ach hero of the time of the klefts and each commander of our great Revolution is the most comprehensive and most eloquent scholium on the Homeric epics" (quoted in Ricks 1989:42). By the same token, the equally radical demoticist Alexandros Pallis publishes a complete demotic translation of the *Iliad* in 1904 (after a partial one in two volumes 1892 and 1900), in which Homeric valor is staged not only in an extreme demotic Greek – in the familiar fifteen-syllable line –, but in the strongly inflected vocabulary of the klefts and *pallikária*, the young men with their daring (*leventiá*). I reproduce below the first lines of book I in Pallis' capitalization, which he uses from the 1913 edition onwards in a typeface of his own devising that imitates a mid-Byzantine uncial style; this, in turn, affords him the opportunity to print the text without any form of accentuation and diacritics that might deflect from the immediacy of the spoken idiom. By the same token, Pallis' edition, since 1904 already, goes straight into the translation, with a seemingly deliberate absence of prolegomena, introductory remarks or any other forms of editorial framing:

μουσα, τραγουδα το θυμο του ξακουστου αχιλεα.
τον ερμο ! απ' ολους ποτισε τους αχαιους φαρμακια,
και πληθους εστειλε ψθχεσ λεβεντικεσ στον αδη
οπλαρχηγωνε, κι' εθρεσε με τα κορμια τους σκυλους
και ολα τα ορνια (του διοσ ετσι ειχε η γνωμη ορισει)

Responding to Homer, in the nineteenth-century Greek echo of philhellenism, is largely about fluency, about being conversant both with Homer and with his later reception, and about continuity, with contemporary literate Europe as much as increasingly with the assumed Homeric world. Homer, in other words, is a *prolegomenon* to affirming Greece's standing, a marker of acquaintance with expectation and a constituent part of progress. Greek nature, read in the knowledge of Homer, is a challenge for the future, not a past inspiration. Homer is the instrument for proving modernity and the expectations of the Western world. At the same time, Homer's voice is a voice tempered with the critical tradition, and the world of national poetry is an editors' world, with the full historical anxiety it brings with it; to respond

to Homer is to master him. The Greek reception of Homer in the nineteenth century was strongly a reception of the Homeric tradition in Europe, and for a developing modern Greek literature, and its criticism, mastering Homer is deeply linked to mastering expectations of Homer.

Mostly, Homer is perceived as a part of the Western literary canon already, be he Ossianized or filtered through the French, Italian and German traditions. Still, the figure of Homer is not only a necessary, elusive attribute of the contemporary European writer; there is also the Homer who authored works such as the *Batrachomyomachia*, and who was himself the object of satire: in other words, Homer's shade brings in its wake also both the challenge of satire and the anxiety of parody and redundancy, leaving the Greek authors exposed to a marginality and the threatening "collapse into self-parody", similar to that of the author-editor who in this new role had approached Homer across Europe in the preceding decades.

In his early life as a writer and just arrived in Nafplio, Rangavis tells us in his memoirs how he was advised, by a local notable, to go out and converse with the ancient monuments and write, in this environment, on the recent heroes of the War of Independence. He tries, Rangavis admits, and he fails as all his honest efforts come to naught (Rangavis 1999 1:273f). In his later life as a diplomat, Rangavis once more translates Homer, this time into the idiom of Western industrialization and social progress. In 1867, as ambassador to the United States of America, he finds himself on a tour of Boston's public institutions with the local mayor:

The first establishment which we visited was the Public Hospital, one of twenty-eight in the city, on the foundation of which 200,000 dollars had been spent, while the annual upkeep amounted then 75,000 dollars. From there we went down another 230 feet to stand before a tall chimney, which had been saved, from an old factory, as a ruin that had not been torn down, because the echo, whose precision and clarity of voice was rare, made it a true curiosity. When I walked in with the others, I couldn't confound the chimney at all when I offered her some verses of Homer in Greek, and she answered, not word by word, but verse by verse, as if she was a model pupil and had steadily learned her Greek from the earliest time she was founded.

Rangavis 1999 3:209

Imposing Greek education on the industrial landscape of America, where dereliction and advance sit side by side, and being answered in kind this time, not having to answer himself, Rangavis finally seems to have found the nature that affirms his command of Homer.

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