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The Homerizon: Conceptual Interrogations in Homeric Studies

Cretan Homers: Tradition, Politics, Fieldwork

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Metaphors, as we are increasingly reminded, really matter.¹ In this paper I would like to take seriously the metaphor that punningly underlies our conference title, The Homerizon. The notion of horizon requires us to think of perspective, and that, in turn, means we must consider the place from which one looks. I propose, therefore, to gaze at the distant prospect of Homer—whether that phenomenon "Homer" be a line or an object, a particle or a wave—from one place: Crete.

Let me justify this choice of location—and, *a fortiori*, the very decision to "do Homer" by pinning down a location-- through a brief provocation about methods. It's a trite poststructuralist commonplace, by now, to say that "location" is all important, that all interpretation is relative. In critical practice, this truism is usually itself a product of metaphorical processing, by means of which "location" becomes a way of alluding to-but vaguely avoiding mention of—such things as class, gender, ethnicity or other individualized affiliations of the imagined reader. The over-extension of the word "site" in certain brands of 90's criticism draws on the same metaphorical urge, a very human urge to naturalize one's cultural projections, "place" being the most strikingly inescapable natural category. We should at least be aware that "siting" and "locating" when they do not refer to actual places run the risk of covert and secondary essentializing. That is, the "location" of a reader (middle-aged white, male, Irish Catholic from Boston—let's say for the sake of example) merely represents (that bane of modern life) a statistical averaging. The only possible interest, really, in how such an *individual* reads, from that more or less precise "location", lies in his metonymic status as representative of a larger demographic or ideological group (and note the groups are often assumed to be the same). Literary criticism from this perspective of "location" is no deeper or more interesting than pre-election Gallup polling.

¹ I think of the work of the linguist George Lakoff (1989), as also the anthropological studies by James Fernandez and others (1986, 1991). I have explored the linked role of social and poetic metaphors in the work of Solon in a forthcoming paper ("Solon in No-Man's Land") in the proceedings of the 2003 Soeterbeck Solon conference

But what are the alternatives, if we want to talk about the reception by individuals of a cultural artifact like poetry?

The biographical, for one: how Joyce reads Homer. This option has suffered from not so benign neglect. Books and articles with titles like this nowadays really are using the phrase as shorthand, meaning in fact—"how (the text left by) Joyce "reads" (the text left by) "Homer." Rather than (as Ellmann at his best does) how a particular Dubliner picked up a copy of Charles Lamb's illustrated tales and while in Clongowes Wood had a particular Jesuit who one day taught him the particular phrase para thini poluphloisboio thallases—which Stephen Dedalus will repeat one day on a page in 1904. We know of course how the real biographical-historical method was often overcooked, how it presented itself as just about the only interpretive stance up until the New Criticism, which was largely a violent reaction against this easy and cultivated impressionistic or journalistic varieties of the approach ("Evenings with Longfellow"; "Pindar the Master-Mind" "My Father Tolstoy" etc.). I'll make a case later in this paper for bringing back a more self-aware version of the biographical methOdyssey I think there is still a place for "bi-locating" figures in the critical landscape, so that one produces something more like "How Madame X (critic—see her bio therein) reads Joyce (writer—see his bio) reading Homer." It should be possible to do this without falling back into mere Quellenforschung, on the one hand, and on the other, without extravagant self-conscious gesturing toward the multiple mirrors involved (MTV style "hey let's film ourselves filming a film about film students"). We're over the novelty of relative perspective; can't we just use it, lightly, without fetishization?

Another method, one that has flitted in and out of comparative literary studies since their invention in the early 20th century, we might call the "national". In Homeric studies, we can point to Noémi Hepp's *Homère en France au XVII Siécle* or Thomas Bleicher's *Homer in der deutschen Literatur, 1450-1740,* among others. This approach has the virtue of opening diachronic perspectives as it simultaneously delimits the spatial horizon. The problem of framing, however, inevitably appears: for as we know, what Hepp's French writers were doing with their Homers in 1640 had as much to do with what Bleicher's Germans had done in 1600, or even 1630, as it had to do with what other French men and women had done earlier in the same century. The "national" view in fact is as metaphorical as any other, since it takes the raw fact of national *language* (itself often a modern creation) as indicative of *perspective* (ignoring bilingualism, cross-border communication, dialect resistance, etc.). That's why a regional focus, or concentration on contestation, would offer more of a challenge: how Belgians read Homer; how Spanish speakers (Castilian vs Catalan) receive the text.

Well, you might suggest, we can always get around this narrowness of the "national" by talking about time, not place. The initial circular for this conference asks (among many other questions) "...what does it mean to "do Homer" in different epochs of history?" The risk here, equally obvious, lies in universalizing. Who says any given epoch is a flat meadow, rather than

a terrain of geysers, hillocks and sinkholes? At any given period, some people are running fast, and come out blurry, others are regressing and we see only their foot in the frame, and a few lucky ones, with the gift of standing still, loom larger in the lens (note facial distortions) and get caught on camera. Even choosing your periodization is bound to be tendentious. Georg Finsler's *Homer in der Neuzeit von Dante bis Goethe* is a big rich book, but why not—apart from risking exhaustion—make it bigger? *Bis Longfellow? Bis D'Annunzio?* Not to mention who decides on the start-time for a *Neuzeit*.

Given this spectrum of available strategies, each of which is highly respectable and time-honored in itself, a further approach to literary criticism can still be imagined. I'll call it "geo-hermeneutics". In the present case, I would hope to 1) localize the reception of Homeric poetry on a finer scale than the "national" narrative allows; 2) examine a full diachronic range, rather than privilege certain periods; 3) view the synchronic layers that make up that range as criss-crossed with lines of tension, reaction, and microdivision (rather than as expressions of some sort of *Zeitgeist*); 4) take seriously the role of individual biography in interpretation of Homer-that is to say, of individuality within both performance and (often linked) exegetical traditions. In one way or another, each of these strategies has been operating independently within recent decades of literary criticism. I am not aware that packaging them has been attempted. As for the regional approach, while we are familiar with waves of work on "localism"—almost an interpretive necessity in American studies---the approach I am sketching reverses the terms of such work. Rather than "the literature of the West" or "Los Angeles in fiction" -how writers, native or not, treat locale-- the project I have in mind considers place as the locus (not to say site)for interpretations: how writers, scholars, and others, deal with a tradition that is not of their own place, but from the perspective provided by that place.

So what's a place? And what makes Crete one (rather than many)? This is a harder question than first appears. Apart from artificially carved out quadrangles such as Washington DC, most "places" are combinations of nature and the minds of natives. Cities have the advantage, at least in the ancient Greek world, of generally agreed upon centers and boundaries (though neighboring *poleis* might dispute these). Islands, even more so, are good to think with because they make border problems that much simpler. Using these criteria, one might imagine an investigation of Homer from the point of view of Athens, Sicyon, or Delos, among others. The first two have left traces of localized reception in the historical record (cf. the lore about alleged Peisistratean interpolations such as *Iliad* II.552-55 in the Catalogue of Ships; the story of Cleisthenes of Sicyon banishing Homeric recitation out of enmity for Argos). ² Delos has at least a portion of its reception of Homeric poetry scripted for it by the composer of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, which features (lines 166-76) the careful instructions of a wandering singer to the Delian maidens concerning the commendations they are to make

² Nagy *HQ* 73-75; Hdt.5.67.

about him to future visitors to the island. Of course it is this passage (line 172) that gives us the first localization of the Homeric singer on the island of Chios.

Alluding to such lore is another way of saying that a geo-hermeneutic is an *emic* approach, as already the consumers of Homeric poetry in antiquity operated on this level. Nor should this be surprising. Regionalism is a well-known concomitant oral traditions worldwide.³ Its important role in the development and crystallization of the Homeric text has been recognized by Gregory Nagy in a series of works starting with *Pindar's Homer.*⁴ One revealing, if still controversial, facet of regionalism in Homeric reception is the existence of "city" editions (hai kata poleis, or politikai).⁵ The six mentioned in Homeric scholia are split, with three from cities (Sinope, Massalia, Argos) and three from islands (Khios, Cyprus, Crete)—as I pointed out above, naturally bounded small-scale regions which could plausibly constitute "interpretive communities." Allen pointed out long ago (*Transmission 297*) that city editions offered an older stage of language than the "vulgate" and must have been texts with fewer lines. If we had a full report concerning the readings of any one of these *politikai*, rather than the few dozen mentions existing, our view of the surviving Homeric text would be more like that which is possible in studying medieval and modern oral-derived texts. We would be in a position to see any significant patterns of variation. And differences could be patterned on the basis of such considerations as local politics or powers, occuring even after the establishment of an Alexandrian "vulgate." As Carolyn Higbie concludes in a recent article about genealogical verses in Homer,

"The local antiquarians whom Pausanias and others met in the various sanctuaries and towns of Greece similarly regarded Homer as an authority, though they did so with the bias of hometown pride. Thus they might retain verses that had centuries earlier been athetized or removed by Alexandrian scholars.⁶

As it is, the *Krêtikê* is among the least mentioned polis-texts and patterns are impossible to discern. It is cited (once via the grammarian Seleukos) for an omission of a few lines from a speech in *Iliad* XXI.290-92 and for variant readings at *Iliad* I.381(*ra nu* vs. *mala*) and *Iliad*2.258

³ Among several excellent studies I single out the essays collected in Richman (1991).

⁴ See esp. Nagy *PP* , *HQ* and *HTL*.

⁵ Nagy, *HTL* 20.

⁶ Higbie (2002) 188.

(*en Danaoisi#* vs. *hôs nu per hôde#*). The only discernible connection is that the two latter variants feature addition or admission of the particle *nu*. Could this have been a Cretan dialect matter?

Obviously, these remnants can't bear much critical weight. If we had only such shards of tradition, preserved by scholia, it would make as much sense to talk about Massaliot or Argive Homers. As it is, the reception of Homer in Crete is more complex, and enriched by several key features enabling us to think about broader perspectives. For there are, connected to this island and not to any other place in Greek-speaking lands, traditions of re-imagining, translating, interpreting, and independent but cognate performance modes, all of which constitute—to my mind—a distinct Cretan way of "doing Homer." In what follows I will offer a triptych of tradition. The metaphor is chosen—to complement that of "horizon"—to remind us of the artifactual nature of Cretan homerizing, as a conscious craft; it's also a nod toward the heroization or veneration for which triptych portraits come in handy (perhaps I am influenced here by my own Trinitarian upbringing and/or memories of household triptychs of JFK, flanked by John 23rd and Paul 6th.). "Horizon" can naturalize too much the two and a half millenia I am sketching, making those years look like an unbroken line, whereas the reality is more choppy, broken, and sometimes hard to piece together.

Three aspects of the specific Cretan reception hold together my three panels: variability, alterity, and fictionalization. With these in mind, let me work through, as concisely as possible, the ancient, Renaissance, and modern pictures.

Panel 1: Antiquity:

The Homeric texts are the place to begin the question of reception, since they represent ways of talking about Crete that inevitably affect future Cretan audiences. When it emerges most fully in poetic description (at *Odyssey* XIX.172-180), Crete is already marked as the most multicultural spot, marvelously varied in its peoples and languages:

Κρήτη τις γαῖ' ἔστι μέσω ἐνὶ οἴνοπι πόντω, καλὴ καὶ π¤ειρα, περ¤ρρυτος· ἐν δ' ἄνθρωποι πολλοὶ ἀπειρέσιοι, καὶ ἐννήκοντα πόληες: ἄλλη δ' ἄλλων γλῶσσα μεμιγμένη· ἐν μὲν Ἀχαιο¤, 175 ἐν δ' Ἐτεόκρητες μεγαλήτορες, ἐν δὲ Κύδωνες Δωριέες τε τριχάϊκες δῖο¤ τε Πελασγο¤: τῆσι δ' ἐνὶ Κνωσός, μεγάλη πόλις, ἔνθα τε Μ¤νως ἐννέωρος βασ¤λευε Διὸς μεγάλου ὀαριστής, πατρὸς ἐμοῖο πατήρ, μεγαθύμου Δευκαλ¤ωνος. 180 Δευκαλ¤ων δ' ἐμὲ τ¤κτε καὶ Ἰδομενῆα ἄνακτα· We have to keep in mind, of course, that this is the persuasive rhetoric of Odysseus, who describes the island—his alleged home—in the guise of Aithon, grandson of Minos, as he plays up his foreign character to Penelope during their "interview." The assonance and alliteration of lines 173-74 could be heard as poetic flourishes by a performing wandering bard, embellishing his subject as he creates the *thelxis* of verse. What is more important from our vantage is that Crete, as well as being the locus of such variety of race and language, is also a sort of massive time-capsule. For it boasts at least two, possibly three, strata: indigenous Eteocretans and Pelasgians; Akhaians and Kydones (the latter indigenous, too, according to Strabo 10.4.6-7; see Russo in *CHO* ad loc.); and Dorians—a group which the historical "Homer" is not "supposed" to know about. (That the are *trikhaikes* may allude to their threefold tribal division.) The island, in sum, is the most diverse in terms of peoples and time frames of all the places we know from Homeric epic. We'll return to this passage a bit later. For now, we should note another sort of variation: the *Iliad's* longest passage about Crete stands in contrast as a description of allied forces, without a hint of Odyssean diversity:

- 645 Κρητῶν δ' Ἰδομενεὺς δουρὶ κλυτὸς ἡγεμόνευεν,
 οῦ Κνωσόν τ' εἶχον Γόρτυνά τε τειχιόεσσαν,
 Λύκτον Μ¤λητόν τε καὶ ἀργινόεντα Λύκαστον
 Φαιστόν τε Ῥύτιόν τε, πόλεις εὖ ναιετοώσας,
 ἄλλοι θ' οῦ Κρήτην ἑκατόμπολιν ἀμφενέμοντο.
- 650 τῶν μὲν ἄρ' Ἰδομενεὺς δουρὶ κλυτὸς ἡγεμόνευε Μηριόνης τ' ἀτάλαντος Ἐνυαλ¤ῷ ἀνδρειφόντῃ· τοῖσι δ' ἅμ' ὀγδώκοντα μέλαιναι νῆες ἕποντο.

Instead of far-scattered peoples, known as living in the extremes of the island, or having settled at widely varied times, this passage names a group of cities all concentrated near Mt. Ida, united under the leadership of a hero whose name must be related to the same mountain. They are apparently all Achaioi, just a segment of the population mentioned in the Odyssey; meanwhile Crete itself, by contrast with the picture in *Odyssey* xix.174, has here one hundred cities (II.649) rather than ninety (a variation that the *khorizontes* used in their arguments for separate authorship).We can easily account for such variations in terms of the varied narrative and rhetorical aims of the two descriptive passages. But the most important point is the obvious malleability of Crete as a *topos* in this poetry. Variability seems to reside in it.

Since I do not intend to study Crete in Homer but Homer in Crete, it is not necessary to follow up every reference: suffice it to say the poetry knows a number of exact

spots, including the cave of Eileithuia at Amnisos (*Odyssey* xix.188) and a promontory on the coast southwest of Phaistos (*Odyssey* iii.293-96), and that Idomeneus, the Cretan commander, is one of the primary figures in the action of the *Iliad*.⁷ More relevant to my purpose is the lore not found in Homer connecting certain places within the island with heroes of the Trojan War generation. Velleius Paterculus, Stephanos of Byzantium and Strabo and the Etymologicum Magnum provide evidence that Agamemnon was reputedly the founder of Pergamon, Tegea and Lappa in western Crete and that his Spartan herald Talthybios established a colony from and named for Mykene. The mythistorical details about Spartan and Cretan ties fits with Helen's remark in the *Iliad teikhoskopia* that her husband Menelaus had often hosted Idomeneus on his visits (*Iliad* 3.230-33). What this means from the Cretan perspective, we can imagine, is that at least some segment of ancient audiences for Homer on the island had good political and genealogical grounds for relating to figures commemorated in the epic. Hero-cult, *nostoi* genealogies (to use Malkin's phrase), and poetic performance could have collaborated to cement the ties at a quite early period: we just don't have the evidence.⁸

The Cretan variability I have looked at so far makes an even more surprising appearance in the Odyssey. At Odyssey i.93-94, the manuscript tradition has Athena telling Zeus that she will arrange the journey of Telemachus so that he goes to Sparta and Pylos:

πέμψω δ'
ἐς Σπάρτην τε καὶ ἐς Πύλον ἠμαθόεντα

νόστον πευσόμενον πατρὸς φ¤λου, ἤν που ἀκούσῃ,

But we are told in the scholiast's comment to *Odyssey* iii.313 that the Alexandrian critic Zenodotus at *Odyssey*i.93 (and also i.285) read *Krêtên* instead of *Spartên*. The change implies a radical alternative to the Telemacheia as we have it. The Zenodotean version of *Odyssey* i.285 has Idomeneus as the goal of Telemachus' travels, not an implausible plot-line.

Stephanie West in her commentary asks: "Was Zenodotus perhaps deceived by an alteration designed to gratify a Cretan audience?"⁹ The form of the question assumes a model of canonical text and interpolations thereto, or at least occasional tinkerings. I am more persuaded by the approach outlined in Nagy (*HTL* 39), that what look to be variants or even conjectures are "multiforms stemming from oral traditions localized in Crete." I would only add the further suggestion that the very *Krêtikê* edition, of which we catch glimmers in the scholia, may already have contained poetic versions of such traditions. In any event, it seems clear that there is at work an ongoing interaction between Cretan audiences and the poems they listen to, even in antiquity. Cretan versions or desires affect the reaction-sensitive

⁷ A careful survey of all references is provided by Aposkitou (1960).

⁸ Malkin (1998) offers another approach to thinking about the interaction of Greek poetic and local historical traditions. His analyses have an indirect bearing on my project, although he does not concentrate on " reception" over time.

⁹ West CHO vol. 1.43.

tradition of the *Odyssey*, putting its poets and transmitters in the role of "listeners" as much as producers. The interaction makes a good illustration of the two-way relationship that Lorna Hardwick finds to be the proper object of modern reception studies.¹⁰

Alterity, my second distinctive feature of Cretan reception, clearly is related to variation, but has a broader role in that it offers alternative world-views and sometimes explicit contestation as compared with other "variants". These contestations can occur at the level of cultural, mythological, ritual or linguistic facts. Crete is perhaps best known on the mythic and ritual levels for its very different treatment of the narratives about the father of gods and men. Zeus according to Panhellenic tradition embodied in the Hesiodic Theogony was hidden on Crete as an infant to avoid the threat of his father Kronos (477-84). Minoan cave-cult may underly the picture. But the epichoric treatment of Zeus in Crete extended, notoriously, to stories about his death as well. As Callimachus put it "The Cretans have fashioned a tomb for you. But you have not died, you always exist" (Hymn to Zeus 8-9). Such alternate versions of what would seem to be central mythic narratives give Crete an adversarial but also a superior position, for if Zeus was buried there, he has the status of a hero; the Cretans consequently gain all the ritual benefits of hero-cult, as we see it operating in the case of Herakles and dozens of other figures. In other words, the brilliant Cretan innovation (or retention, if it has Minoan roots) consists precisely of *localizing*. A Zeus living on Mt. Olympus can be claimed to operate at a distance anywhere, but a Zeus buried on Mt. Iuktas (or other Cretan peaks) will never desert his birthplace. Again, getting a Cretan perspective on the Iliad and Odyssey out of these mythic alterities largely means speculating. The resulting "reading" would be highly democratic: Patroklos dies, Zeus allows his son Sarpedon to diebut, to those in the Cretan sphere, this is balanced by the knowledge that Zeus, too, will die (and like the heroes of the *Iliad*, have a famous tomb).¹¹

We can think of Cretan alterity another way, aided by an Athenian 4th century vision of the Cretan reception of Homer. The *Laws* of Plato opens with the Athenian stranger asking the Cretan Klinias if his country's laws are divine, and whether he agrees with the Homeric reference to Minos (*Odyssey* xix.178-79) being the "conversation partner" (*oaristês*) of Zeus every nine years. Without praising Homer, Klinias affirms that Cretans agree. Later during their walk to the shrine of Zeus on Mt. Ida the Athenian stranger brings up the issue of government in the pre-literate age, asserting that the Homeric Cyclops even had a form of patriarchal government: (680b, trans. Bury):

¹⁰ Hardwick (2003) 4

¹¹ Verbruggen (1981) in a useful correction of earlier theorizing notes that most aspects of "Zcretan" Zeus are undeniably Greek, rather than Minoan imports, and that there is evidence for other buried gods (p.68f.)

"Everybody, I believe, gives the name of "headship" to the government which then existed,--and it still continues to exist to-day among both Greeks and barbarians in many quarters. And, of course, Homer mentions its existence in connection with the household system of the Cyclopes, where he says--

No halls of council and no laws are theirs, But within hollow caves on mountain heights Aloft they dwell, each making his own law. For wife and child; of others reck they naught.

(Odyssey ix.112ff.)

τοῖσιν δ' οὔτ' ἀγοραὶ βουληφόροι οὔτε θέμιστες, ἀλλ' οἵ γ' ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων να¤ουσι κάρηνα ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι, θεμιστεύει δὲ ἕκαστος πα¤δων ἠδ' ἀλόχων, οὐδ' ἀλλήλων ἀλέγουσιν.

The response of Klinias is revealing:

^{*}Εοικέν γε ὁ ποιητὴς ὑμῖν οὖτος γεγονέναι χαρ¤εις. καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ ἄλλα αὐτοῦ διεληλύθαμεν μάλ' ἀστεῖα, οὐ μὴν πολλά γε· οὐ γὰρ σφόδρα χρώμεθα οἱ Κρῆτες τοῖς ξενικοῖς ποιήμασιν.

"This poet of yours seems to have been a man of genius. We have also read other verses of his, and they were extremely fine; though in truth we have not read much of him, since we Cretans do not indulge much in foreign poetry."

In contrast to Megillus, the Spartan, who immediately interjects that his countrymen consider Homer the best of poets (although the poet describes Ionian habits), the Cretan takes a noticeably cool stance toward the supposed authority. To characterize the poet as *kharieis* seems more perfunctory than calling him a "man of genius" (despite Bury's translation). It may be a Platonic gibe at the ideology and aesthetics of the Panathenaic festivals, which, as Nagy has shown, he knew well and used for extended metaphorial counterpointing in other dialogues.¹² The word for "extremely fine" (*asteia*) also carries the etymological overtones of "urbane," and so ,too, might point to the Cretan's perception that Athens (*astu* par excellence)

¹² Nagy PR. On *kharis* as a key term in the Panathenaic treatment of Homer, I am recalling portions of Nagy's Sather lectures at Berkeley (forthcoming).

has co-opted the poetry of Homer. It is curious that Klinias describes Cretans' acquaintance with Homer using the verb $\delta_{i\epsilon\lambda\eta\lambda\dot{v}\theta\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu}$, for the same word (in the infinitive *diienai*) is used in the locus classicus that describes Panathenaic rhapsodic practice of "going through" Homer ("Plato" *Hipparchus* 228b-c).¹³ The final remark politely groups Homer with all sorts of "foreign" poetry, none of which Cretans out in the countryside have much use for. In this way, the resistance to his verse is another form of localism: only that poetry which arises, apparently, from their own culture will appeal to Cretans. Homer—shockingly to us—is to an ancient Cretan *xenikos*.

It is worth pushing this line of thought further along generic lines. We are told a few things about Cretan performance practices in the 7th century BC. Thaletas a melic poet, was induced by Lycourgos the lawgiver to migrate to Sparta (Plutarch Lycurgus 4.1-2). There, his compositions put an end to civil strife; in a complementary story, according to ps-Plutarch (*de Musica* 1146) he was brought there at the command of Delphi to put an end to plague with his paeans. The Crete-Delphi connection is worth exploring at greater length in another place. For now, one can note that Pausanias 10.6.7 cites hexameter verses of the prophetess Phêmênoe to the effect that Cretans cleansed Apollo of blood-guilt when he killed a son of local brigand. There is also the story of Apollo's choice of Cretan sailors to be his first priests at Delphi (Hymn to Apollo 388ff). They, too, are described as paean-singers (lines 516-19). And Pausanias also reports (10.7.2) that it was a man of Crete, one Chrysothemis, who won the first musical contest at the Pythian games, composing a hymn to Apollo. His father, Carmanor, was said to have been the Cretan who purified the god himself. The same passage from Pausanias continues (10.7.3) with an explicitly denial to Hesiodic and Homeric poetry of a role in the musical contests at Delphi. This is done through the story that Hesiod was barred from competing becauise he had not learned to sing to the lyre, and Homer, another visitor to the shrine, being blind, found the skill useless. In sum: it is highly likely that Cretan local tradition viewed Homeric poetry as an upstart genre, the produce of less skilled rhapsodes rather than of its own artful citharodes. That kitharoidia seems to have been associated in lore with Cretan paian-singing and purification, reaching back to the early foundations of some communities (Delphi, Sparta), would give Cretans every right to hold this patriotic view. It accorded not only with Delphic propaganda (perhaps another form of resistance to Athenian claims) but also with what we can derive from an honored exponent of Delphic ideology, the poet Pindar, for whom "Homer" represents a slightly suspect, late-coming and competing art-form.¹⁴

Pindar associates Homeric poetry with lies (pseudea) at Nemean 7.20-23:

έγὼ δὲ πλέον' ἔλπομαι

¹³ Nagy PR 43.

¹⁴ Nagy PH. I plan to trace the impact of Pindar's resistance to Homer within Nemean 7 in a later article.

λόγον 'Οδυσσέος ἢ πάθαν διὰ τὸν ἁδυεπῆ γενέσθ' Όμηρον ἐπεὶ ψεύδεσ¤ οἱ ποτανῷ <τε> μαχανῷ σεμνὸν ἔπεστ¤ τι· σοφ¤α δὲ κλέπτει παράγοισα μύθοις.

Cretans, as we have seen, are not fond of Homer, either—or at least, maintain a polite resistance, based on their local pride in older genres of performance. But to the rest of the world, it is Cretans who are liars—a trope employed most markedly within Homer.¹⁵ When Odysseus tells his five major "lies", it is in the persona of a Cretan. We have already seen his most elaborate self-presentation, to Penelope, in which he identifies himself as Aithon, a younger son of the Cretan royal family, a grandson of Minos and brother of Idomeneus. As with all the "lies", fragments of what we recognize as truth gleam through. From the Iliad, it is plausible to associate the real Odysseus with Idomeneus; the two are paired in several episodes. In his other "lies", as Ahl and Roisman point out, Idomeneus is always a point of contact, but in a different relationship each time: at xiii.259, Odysseus tells the disguised Athena that he fled Crete after killing the son of Idomeneus; at xiv.237-39, in his tale to Eumaeus, Odysseus elevates himself to the equal of Idomeneus, chosen to share command of the Cretan forces at Troy.¹⁶ In short, the "lies" of Odysseus are not only explicitly Cretan, but display what I have identified as the Cretan mark of variability. This, and alterity (here, in the primal form of disguise) are thus wrapped up with the third distinguishing mark, fictionalization. I prefer to use this rather than "lie" since the emphasis in the Homeric Odyssey falls on the hero's story-telling ability, whether to the Phaeacians or in his Ithacan encounters. The truth-or-falsity question is not as central as the issue of plausibility, as many have seen, and in that realm Odysseus is king. He knows how to tell pseudea ...etumoisin homoia (xix.203). The parallel to the Muses' self-description (*Theogony* 27-29) always is worth keeping in mind:

"ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι, κάκ' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον, ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα, ἴδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι."

Rather than add to the already full analyses of Odyssean fiction, I will widen the interpretive view a bit. Surely we are dealing with an ethnic characterization that is as much an expression of admiration as it is a slur—and therefore need not have been shunned by

¹⁵ All the more ironic, then, that both *krêtizein* (see below) and *Homeriddein* (Hesychius s.v.) mean "to lie."

¹⁶ For this and other insights about the hero's fictions: Ahl and Roisman (1996) 157-66.

actual Cretans, for whom cunning could be a virtue.¹⁷ And that most likely does not originate with the *Odyssey*, although our testimonia about the Cretan Epimenides and his assertion "All Cretans are Liars" are later. The proverb is quoted without attribution by Callimachus, in the already cited *Hymn to Zeus*. Scholiastic comment on that passage opens yet another perspective. For example, we learn that lying (fiction-making) can be simply called "Cret-izing":

Scholia in Callimachum, Scholia in Hymnos (scholia vetera)

(8a.) παροιμ¤α ἐστὶ 'κρητ¤ζειν' ἐπὶ τοῦ ψεύδεσθαι, ἀπὸ Ἰδομενέως τοῦ Κρητὸς ῥηθεῖσα, ὃς λαχών μερ¤σαι τοῖς Έλλησι τὰ λάφυρα τῆς Ἰλ¤ου τὰ κρε¤σσω ἑαυτῷ περιεποιήσατο.

This aition reveals an Idomeneus more focussed on personal gain than Odysseus, whose Cretan fictions are more of a survival technique. Presumably, the association of improper distribution of goods with lying comes from the verbal contortions Idomeneus used to cover up his deeds.

The story of Zeus' tomb was thus seen as simply another Cretan "lie." It may indeed have been the core fiction which marked Cretans generally as users of "myth" in the modern sense of untruth. We could imagine that local "true" Cretan traditions, once exposed to a wider world through writing, were branded as marginal and therefore characterized as "lies." ¹⁸ This particular *muthos* would have been so significantly out of line with Panhellenic ideas that it led to the general slur. One detail that has not been noticed enough in this connection is the association of Cretan lying with Cretan writing:

(8β.) <<τάφον'>> ἐν Κρήτῃ ἐπὶ τῷ τάφῳ τοῦ Μ¤νωος ἐπεγέγραπτο "Μ¤νωος τοῦ Διὸς τάφος"· τῷ χρόνῳ δὲ τὸ "Μ¤νωος τοῦ" ἀπηλε¤φθη ὥστε περιλειφθῆναι "Διὸς τάφος". ἐκ τούτου οὖν λέγουσι Κρῆτες τὸν τάφον τοῦ Διός. ἢ ὅτι Κορύβαντες λαβόντες αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῷ κρύψαι διὰ τὸν Κρόνον προσεποιήσαντο τάφον αὐτῷ ποιεῖν.

The scholiast is obviously rationalizing and therefore suspect, at least to those who think such interpretive strokes only appeared late in antiquity. It is interesting that an oral alternative (the Korybants' lie) is provided to the "scripsist" story of the timeworn epitaph. These two strands—oral lie and written relic—are combined in the lore concerning Epimenides

¹⁷ Faure (1980) sees in the *Odyssey* a stylization of memories of an historical Ulysses/Odysseus who was in fact from Crete. The analysis is suggestive albeit uncontrolled. The hero's guile, clothing, associations, and so forth stand for Faure as evidence.

¹⁸ On the process as facilitated by writing, see Detienne (1986)

the Cretan, to whom was attributed "All Cretans are liars." Mantis, purifier, and poet, his activity resembled, in his relationship to Solonian Athens, the role of the Cretan Thaletas in Lycurgan Sparta.¹⁹ Epimenides was credited with epic poems about the birth of the Korybants and Kouretes and a Theogony (*Diogenes Laertius* 1.112)--perhaps this Orphic-sounding material constituted another genre competing with Homeric verse in Crete. He also had stranger qualities (*Suda* s.v.):

ἐποποιός· οὖ λόγος, ὡς ἐξ¤οι ἡ ψυχὴ ὁπόσον ἤθελε καιρόν, καὶ πάλιν εἰσήιει ἐν τῶι σώματι· τελευτήσαντος δὲ αὐτοῦ πόρρω χρόνων, τὸ δέρμα εὑρῆσθαι γράμμασι κατάστικτον.

Svenbro's convincing analysis of the tattooed corpse of the shaman connects the "secret things" on his body with the body of verse attributed to him.²⁰ He is his own text. For my purposes, the shaman's corpse offers yet another striking concurrence of alterity (out-of-body tripping) and fiction. Paradoxically, however, it offers a challenge to the third distinctive feature, variability. Preserved in Sparta, Epimenides' skin will not undergo the defacing of time that best (Minos son of) Zeus' "tomb" in Crete. Which may be another way of saying one has to get *out* of Crete to achieve textual fixation.

One final tomb-and-text story gets us out of ancient Crete and its "reception" of Homer—or lack thereof. We have seen that Odyssean fiction goes under the sign of Cretan "lying." Factoring in the facets of Odysseus as wandering poet and Muse-like narrator, we can view his fictions another way, as embedded alternate versions of epic. The *Odyssey* must frame these as "lies" because they do not fit its own narrative arc, but taken on their own, these miniature epic episodes could have featured in independent Cyclic poems. The exclusively Cretan angle in fact makes them close to Cyclic epic, which Nagy and Burgess have identified as relatively local compared with Panhellenic Homeric poetry.²¹

Many centuries after the spread of an authoritative Homeric version of events at Troy and thereafter, an eyewitness turns up who can rival Odysseus in fabulation and has as good or better claims to know Idomeneus. "Dictys of Crete" may in fact preserve authentic information from archaic poetry of the Cycle.²² Yet in the form we have his *Ephemeris* of the Trojan War, the text belongs to the 1st or 2nd centuries AD. It is in Latin; a Greek original, long suspected, was first confirmed by a Tebtunis papyrus fragment published in 1907. The discovery-motif is already encoded in the text in question. As the Preface relates the circumstances, the text we read was transcribed from linden wood tablets that had been written by Dictys and buried with him when he died as an old man. An earthquake in the 13th year of Nero's reign laid open Dictys' tomb. The newly found texts were handed over by the

¹⁹ See Svenbro (1993)135-36.

²⁰ Idem 136-44.

 $^{^{\}rm 21}$ Burgess (2001) 166 with notes.

²² Idem 45.

Roman governor of Crete to Nero himself, whose "Phoenician philologists," we are told" translated them into Greek (they had been written in "Cadmean" letters). "Thus a more accurate text of the Trojan War was made known to all."

The real author of this "eyewitness" account cannot of course be *the* Dictys of Crete, but may have been a Cretan of the Second Sophistic, as R.M.Frazer imagines.²³ Or, perhaps the modern scholar is taken in by the fabulous fiction. Dictys, the confidante of Idomeneus, would obviously be biased in favor of his fellow countrymen as much as would a Cretan author of the Neronian period or later. The narratological labyrinth into which we are led fits the work of a man allegedly from Knossos (the "real" Bronze Age Dictys, that is). One would have thought any late writer who wanted to construct a convincing, Caesarean commentary on the Trojan War would have *avoided* putting his account into the words of a Cretan. But, from what I have sketched so far, the choice makes sense. Not only is this an epistemological sleight-of-hand worthy of Apuleius (in Winkler's brilliant reading of The Golden Ass). The Cretan mark is also the right branding for an account that is sometimes explicitly counter-Homeric, a variant, like Odysseus' own fictions, that proudly bears the mark of its alterity.

Dictys is worth attention in his own right. Earlier neglect of the text has been made up for recently by Stefan Merkle in a series of studies, starting with his 1988 dissertation. I can only point out here one aspect of the text's way of countering Homer not yet examined the demotic viewpoint. Dictys is, after all, just a Cretan grunt, a follower of Idomeneus rather than a noble. He also is naïve enough to follow Odysseus' version of the pre-war events, up to the time he himself joined up.(1.13: dein haud multo post Idomeneus et Meriones, summa inter se iuncti concordia. Eorum ego secutus comitatum ea quidem, quae antea apud Troiam gesta sunt, ab Ulixe cognita quam diligentissime rettuli...).²⁴ Once the narrative gets past the years of preparation for war, retailing all the stories not told in Iliad or Odyssey, we can compare, for the space of about one book, the Homeric with Dictys' point of view. It is like having a personality attached to Homeric "tis"-speeches, those anonymous moments when one of the troops voices mass opinion. So, for instance, when Agamemnon reluctantly agrees to send back Astynome (i.e. Chryseis) and take Achiles' prize Hippodamia (aka Briseis), Dictys comments that "he was flouting everyone's wishes, but since no one openly opposed him, he thought that he had our unanimous approval" (2.33, trans. Frazer). Often this view from the trenches becomes a sort of voice-over for the artfully re-arranged Homeric episodes, providing the rationales or

²³ Frazer (1966) 11.

²⁴ In another clever twist, the Homeric Odyssey adventure stories (Bk. 9-12) in Dictys are narrated in a few sentences to Idomeneus by Odysseus after he lands on Crete at the end of his journey (5.5-6). While Idomeneus thus takes the narrative slot of Alcinoos, compared with the Homeric version, in Dictys it is Alcinoos who becomes the companion of Odysseus in slaughtering the suitors (a role more suitable to his Iliadic companion Idomeneus).

motivations that the archaic composition refuses to reveal. Thus, when Achilles yields to the embassy (another explicit anti-Homeric scenario), Dictys tells us why: "The sight of the representatives, the prayers of his closest friends, and the realization that the army was not to blame had made him change his mind" (2.52).

The complete absence of gods from this Sallustian account goes along with the realistic, rationalizing tone. And so, what I have called the "demotic" might be seen to match up with a broader Cretan characteristic, seen already in epichoric tales of the tomb of Zeus. For Cretans, the gods are different. As a testament to *actual* Cretan reception of what *we* know as Homeric poetry, Dictys is probably not worth much. But—like the *Laws* of Plato—it has great value as a representation of a "Cretan" viewpoint. As we'll see further on, that viewpoint involves ultimately expanding our horizon for heroic poetry beyond "Homer" as we have him.

Panel 2: Renaissance

The first panel of our triptych showed us very little in the way of direct reception but some strong tendencies that affect any reception. A further conclusion must be that these very tendencies—resistance, alterity, variation, fictional embroidery, use of a full range of transformative strategies—are precisely what *militate* against any kind of simple reception of a text. It is why the tendencies are so useful to track. It might seem like I have come up with excuses to explain the absence of a Cretan Homer in antiquity. One could say as well that basic socio-political facts ensured that the greatest Homeric –style poetry was written at Alexandria and Rome (rather than anywhere on the Greek mainland or on Crete). If the story ended here, these might be more valid objections. But production of Homeric-style poems is not the only way to talk of reception, and if the notion is to be expanded fruitfully, we have to think of lateral effects, absences, dry wells as well as obvious *Quellen*. As it is, the story of Cretan wrestling with Homer has more chapters.

Dictys will also make a good reference point for our next stage. But first I must admit I too am responsible for a Cretan lie. My triptych is really more like a diptych with wide hinge down the middle. Or, sticking to the three-piece artifact, let's just say the middle panel has been obscured and cracked. After the Roman period, Crete with the rest of the old empire became Byzantine; a break of a century or so of Saracen rule was ended in 961 by the reconquest of the island engineered by Nicephorus Phocas. His victory was celebrated a year later in a 1039-line, iambic trimeter poem, *Halôsis tês Krêtês* by an obscure author, Theodosius the Deacon.²⁵ I begins with a remarkable apostrophe to "old Rome" which compares—to disadvantage –the victories of the Scipios with the recent Byzantine conquest. The, even more surprisingly, the poet turns to Homer, calling him (as a sort of anti-Muse) to witness how small his subject, the Trojan War, was by comparison (19-35) :

²⁵ See Criscuolo (1979) for text and brief introduction.

Σὺ δὲ κτυπῶν, Ὅμηρε, κομπώδεις κτύπους, ύψῶν τὰ μικρά, δεῦρο, μὴ κλέπτων λόγοις λάλει πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἡσύχως μετ' αἰσχύνης. πορθήσεως γὰρ τῆς δεκαχρόνου κλόνος μικρὸς παρ' ἡμῖν ἄρτι καὶ πλήρης ψόγων. τῆς Ἰλ¤ου γὰρ τοὺς προπυργ¤ους δόμους έκ τῶν ἀπ' αὐτῆς λειψάνων ἐγνωκότες είς θαῦμα καὶ γέλωτα συμπεπτωκότες, πῆ μὲν γελῶμεν τῆ πλοκῆ τῶν ψευσμάτων, πῆ δ' αὖ κροτοῦμεν τῆ στροφῆ τῶν ῥημάτων. άλλ', ὦ στρατηγῶν ὁ κρατήρ, ὁ μιγνύων πράξεις ταπεινὰς εἰς ἐπηρμένους λόγους δ¤κασον αὐτὸς καὶ προσωποληψ¤αν ἀφεὶς παλαιὰν ὡς ζυγὸς γενοῦ στά<θμης>. τοῦ δεσπότου δὲ καὶ θανὼν κρότει λόγοις τὰς παντοπόμπους καὶ σοφὰς στρατηγ¤ας μικρὸς γὰρ ἡμῖν ὁ στρατὸς τῆς Ἑλλάδος,

An even blunter attack on Homer's veracity comes later in the poem (949ff):

ὦ χορὸς νέων, ὅσοις Ὁμήρου φροντὶς ἡ τῶν σκεμμάτων, μὴ τοῖς λόγοις κλέπτεσθε τοῦ γεροντ¤ου, μὴ τοῖς κτύποις θέλγεσθε τοῦ μυθοπλόκου[.] ψευδῆ γὰρ ἱστόρησεν, εἰ καὶ πανσόφως, ὁ πηρὸς ὡς θέλγητρα τοὺς λόγους ἔχων.

The charge that Homer inflated reality through his elevated speech recalls the Pindaric suspicion of the epic poet's "winged device," while the idea that he lied outright recalls Solon (29W) "poets tell many lies". For my argument, of course, it would be ideal if Theodosius came from Crete; unfortunately, we can't be sure, and the Teubner editor suggests that his epithet Diaconus implies an ecclesiastical function in Constantinople itself. This literary –historical difficulty comes up many times in the medieval reception of Homer in Crete. Even if poems are focused on the island (like this one), their authors may not be representative of an epichoric

tradition; or the explicitly Cretan-sourced material may not mention Homer (even, or especially, if resembling it). Evidence is at best circumstantial; moreover, the quest must still swim against the tide of Cretan tendencies seen thus far: a resistance to simple reception. Therefore, I will sketch out some possible links, of a typological nature. I am not interested in constructing a story of continuity, ancient to Byzantine to modern—that well-known bugbear of post—Classical Greek studies.²⁶ I am more interested in curious discontinuities, in what is *not* visible but ultimately can have an effect.

To return to Dictys for a moment, then: his text was available in both Latin West and Greek East in the medieval period (as we know, for the latter, from John Malalas and later, Tzetzes). In its Western career, the story, along with the equally late eyewitness account of "Dares the Phrygian, "reached the hands of Benoit de Ste. Maure, the writer of romances who composed the hugely successful *Roman de Troie* around 1170. It was soon translated into seven Western languages. Of course, in the East—unlike western Europe—the text of Homer was still available and intensely studied. Just around the same time that Benoit was composing his new epic-romance, Eustathius and Tzetzes were compiling their learned commentaries, plotsummaries and allegories (the latter in verse).

The gap between East and West was bridged in an astounding work of translation dating (most likely) to the 14th century, probably in Frankish Greece-that is, after the Crusader's sack of Constantinople (1204) but before the city's fall to the Ottomans (1453). The War of Troy (O Polemos Tês Troados) comprises 14,401 verses. In this curious re-entry into Greece of stories that originated there, no traces are evident that the translator knew the Iliad or *Odyssey* (any more than did his source text). There is another move away from the Homeric texts that turns out to be equally telling: the metre. Throughout, the unrhymed verse is of the fifteen-syllable "political" type, which had been used in Byzantine literature, from at least the 12th century, for popular rather than learned compositions. In other words, it looks as though the translator is consciously making his version fit a pre-existent Greek stylistic model. Even if the Polemos is not conscious of the Homeric texts, it is, paradoxically, more in the spirit of the Homeric tradition, pre- and post-Homer, than something like the consciously Homerizing Aeneid could ever be. The splendid and very large editio princeps of the poem, by Elizabeth Jeffreys and M. Papathomopoulou appeared only as recently as 1996. In her introduction, Prof. Jeffreys sum up the mixed ancient and modern language of the text in terms that will sound familiar to students of Homer: "Perhaps we have here a poetic Kunstsprache which represents no individual's native language, but his response to a tradition of oral poetry in political verse which demanded and used certain forms and patterns of speech while at the same time evolving under the influence of the spoken language of the day."²⁷

 $^{^{\}rm 26}$ On the thorny issue of continuity, see Alexiou (20xx)

²⁷Jeffreys and Papathomopoulou (1996) lxxix.

How does this massive translation fit into the story of Cretan Homers? If in fact it was crafted by a French-speaking Greek in Frankish-held former Byzantine territories, it could hardly have been done in Crete. Nor are there any tell-tale dialect forms. Three features bring it into my narrative (beyond the Dictys connection):typologically, it provides a model of epic length and a recovered oral style; it also offers a paradigm for bringing Western romance into Greek popular verse; and historically, it may have been know to Cretans, despite its provenance. The lattermost depends on a tentative identification of the hand of one of the seven manuscripts of the Polemos, Bologna Univ. Gr.3567 (the best MS of the poem). It has been attributed to Franciscus Vitalis, who was employed in Venice in the late 1490s as a copyist by Marcus Musurus—a Cretan.²⁸

Musurus (1470-1517) had been a student of his countryman Laskaris, in Florence, before he became the invaluable collaborator of Aldus Manutius in Venice, acting as editor for many Greek volumes issuing from that famous press, while holding a professorial post (1512-17). It is important to recall that Crete had been since before the fall of Constantinople a refuge for scholars from the City and home to the most important Greek scriptoria. Cretan recensions of Thucydides and Apollonius are well known.²⁹ Martin Sicherl has shown in great detail that numerous manuscript copies used to produce the Aldine editions were made in Crete by a network of scribes associated with Musurus.³⁰ Crete had been in the possession of Venice since the early 13th century. Although the regime was not always well tolerated by natives, the effect of 400 years of Venetian rule was to establish a cultural pipeline with the West, through which traveled art and literature. (El Greco went this route, from his home in Fodele on the north coast of the island.) As in any vital reception, it was a vigorous two-way exchange. It is the purest speculation to think that Musurus himself either had an earlier MS of the Polemos from Crete, or that he mediated a journey for it to Crete. We do know that he went back to the island at least once in his Italian career.³¹ Even without his direct intervention the more general mix of Venetian and Cretan cultures could easily have led to the poem being known in Cretan circles. The Aldine two-volume octavo edition of Homeric epic was printed in Venice in 1504 (three years after planning for it began). It is pleasant to think that in the same city, perhaps even in the same house, a manuscript of a distant epic relation, (by way of Dictys and Benoit), the Greek Polemos, was being carefully copied.

The "Cretan Renaissance" of the 16th and early 17th century had its seed in the interaction of a still-strong epichoric tradition with Venetian culture. The literary masterpiece of the period is an excellent example of this. The *Erotokritos* is a romance of more than 10,000 lines of political verse—the same metre as the *Polemos*, only , in the Cretan poem, rhyming. Like

²⁸ Idem xciv

²⁹ Sicherl (1997) 191.

³⁰ Sicherl (1997) 191-228.

 $^{^{\}scriptscriptstyle 31}$ Geanakoplos (1962) 111-66 is a full account of his life and work.

the *Polemos*, it seems not to have had any direct relationship with Homeric epic. Again, like the *Polemos*, it is based on a western European model, in this case an Italian version of the French late medieval romance *Paris et Vienne*.³² Some of the long poem's similes can be shown to have come ultimately from Homeric poetry, by way of Virgil and medieval imitations. But the general style is more ballad-like than epic, with alternating chivalric and love interests in a five-part plot . Here at last we have a Cretan poem—though not one immediately "receptive" of Homer. Or is it resistant, or "fictional" or varied from Homer (the trends I have been tracking earlier). It can be an instance of "alterity" only in so far as it (like much else) is not Homer. So is this a dead end?

In what follows—**Panel Three-Modern**, I will give later (live, as befits oral performance) at the Center an explanation of how *Erotokritos* brings us back to Greek epic of the archaic period.

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