SYMPTOTIC AND RHAPSODIC DISCOURSE
IN THE HOMERIC EPICS

by

Laura Erin Mawhinney

A thesis in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of Classics
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Laura Mawhinney 2012
This dissertation examines the relationship between sympotic and rhapsodic discourses and the Homeric epics and specifically considers how an understanding of sympotic discourse can affect an external audience’s perception of events within the narrative. Heroic feasting is examined and defined as an activity which signifies different attitudes and aesthetics than the symposium. Yet a case is made for the possibility that Greek people are practicing symposia at a time when rhapsodes – the creative composers-in-performance of the epics – would have been freely incorporating material from the contemporary world into their performances. This is a period of time extending over much of the 7th century, and perhaps even into some time before and after. I analyze both the symposium and rhapsodic performances as discourses, using literary, archaeological, epigraphic, and iconographic evidence to define markers – certain signs, gestures, attitudes, accoutrement, and behavior specific to each – of each discourse. By treating the symposium and rhapsodic performances as discourses with their own markers, I establish a methodology with which to examine certain passages of the epics and the implicit meanings conveyed in them. Odysseus is thus shown to be manipulating sympotic discourse in the Phaeacian episodes of the Odyssey in order to win a favorable return home – at least as the contemporary external audience familiar with
symptic conventions of speaking and behaving would have understood it. Achilles too is treated, with specific reference to his behavior in the embassy scene of the *Iliad*. The sympotic discourse conveyed by the actions and attitudes of Achilles and Patroclus can be shown to communicate additional layers of meaning to the external audience and perhaps reference extra-Iliadic motifs concerning Achilles’ behavior at symposia. A proper understanding of rhapsodic and sympotic discourses within the epics not only contributes to a more nuanced understanding of character behavior within the epics and audiences’ perception of such behavior, but also challenges our understanding of the role of archaic social institutions such as the symposium within the epics.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Any attempt to acknowledge everyone to whom I owe gratitude for support and guidance is inadequate. As with any thesis, support came in many forms both academic and personal. Out of these many people I wish to single out a few for particular thanks, without whom this dissertation would still be in its infancy.

I owe my greatest debt of gratitude to my supervisor Jonathan Burgess, who has been a thoughtful and encouraging mentor since my first semester at the University of Toronto. My committee members, Eph Lytle and Dimitri Nakassis, whose critical readings and suggestions were most helpful, have become good friends. I have had the pleasure of working with and getting to know several other professors in the department who have been generous with their time and advice, particularly Ben Akrigg, Jarrett Welsh, and Victoria Wohl. My external examiner, Andrew Ford, was especially helpful with his comments and thoughts on the future directions of my work. The entirety of my graduate studies, like everything else in this department, was made possible by the tireless work and friendliness of Coral Gavrilovic and Ann-Marie Matti.

I had the additional honor of spending my final year of studies at Mt. Allison University as the Crake Doctoral Fellow. There, the collegial atmosphere created by Bruce Robertson, Dustin Heinen, and Ilaria Battiloro gave me the opportunity to complete the final stages of my dissertation. I owe special gratitude to Leslie Shumka and Fiona Black, whose friendship and guidance extended beyond the academic and helped me feel at home in Sackville, NB.

It was an exceptional privilege to be among the graduate students at the University of Toronto. In particular I have drawn endless advice, support, and kind friendship from John Abad, Megan
Campbell, Vicki Ciocani, Jeff Easton, Melissa Goldman, George Kovacs, Kathryn Mattison, Tim Perry, Melanie Racette-Campbell, Lee Sawchuk, Donald Sells, Eirene Seiradaki, and the members of the Classics softball team.

I owe many thanks to far more people, and I wish I could list the ways everyone has encouraged me and shown me patience and kindness throughout this whole process, but I am in especial debt to Caleb Carswell who has given up considerable time and offered unfailing support on many “emergency” phone calls.

Lastly, I wish to express the deep appreciation I have for the love and guidance of my family. My sisters and brothers – Christie, Michael, Liz, both Andys, and Megan – have been unceasingly generous with their positivity and encouragement. My mother- and father-in-law, Caryl and John Hope, often offered kind support. For my own mother and father, Judy and Terry Mawhinney, I cannot adequately convey how much they have done for me. My mother’s insatiable curiosity and my father’s tireless work ethic and patience have affected me profoundly, and their continued and unfaltering guidance, love, and support are part of who I am.

My greatest and deepest thanks go to Carl, who has been instrumental in helping me take this work from seminar paper to dissertation. His unfailing love, undeterred positivity, and keen ability to discern sports metaphors have been invaluable throughout my studies.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**LIST OF FIGURES** viii

**INTRODUCTION** 1

**CHAPTER 1: FEASTING IN THE HOMERIC EPICS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROTO-SYMPOSIUM**
- Introduction 11
- Wine-drinking and feasting in the Homeric epics 15
- Synchronism between the proto-symposium and the performance of the Homeric epics 29
- Nestor’s cup and the proto-symposium 31
- The Date of the Homeric epics 39
- Conclusion 40

**CHAPTER 2: THE SYMPOSIUM: MARKERS AND THEIR EMPLOYMENT**
- Introduction 42
- Markers of the Symposium 46
- Material Culture 46
- Preliminaries 55
- Drinking Games 57
- Circulation and distribution: endexia/epidexia 67
- Aesthetics 71
- The markers of sympotic discourse and the epics 94
- Conclusion 101

**CHAPTER 3: RHAPSODES: MARKERS AND THEIR EMPLOYMENT**
- Introduction 102
- The Rhapsoidos and the Aoidos 104
- The rhapsode 104
- The aoidos 112
- Rhapsodic Discourse 116
- Rhapsoidos: Stitcher of Song 116
- Participatory and Sequential Performance 122
- Conclusion 129

**CHAPTER 4: THE ODYSSEY: ODYSSEUS AS RHAPSODE AND SYMPOSIAST**
- Introduction 132
- Rhapsodic Relay and the Odyssey 132
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Symposium and the Odyssey: The Court of the Phaeacians</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Culture</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking Games</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympotic Discourse and Character Behavior</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous Phaeacians</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympotic competition: Books 8 and 9</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phaeacian youth: competitive performances</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalogues of Women: Odyssey 1</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The catalogue of heroines as a rhapsodic insertion</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The catalogue of heroines and sympotic discourse</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympotic techniques and aesthetics in the contest of the bow and the</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banquet of the suitors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER 5: THE ILLIAD: SYMPOSIUM AND THE SONGS OF ACHILLES AND PATROCLUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Songs of Achilles and Patroclus</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhapsodic technique and relay performance</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markers of Sympotic Discourse in Iliad 9.185-231</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking Games</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminaries</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Culture</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympotic Aesthetics: Achilles at Banquets</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION                                                             | 211  |

APPENDIX 1                                                            | 219  |

APPENDIX 2                                                            | 220  |

APPENDIX 3                                                            | 236  |

BIBLIOGRAPHY                                                          | 238  |
List of Figures

Figure 1. Chronological table of the symposium and epic performance. 41
Figure 2. Red-figure cup, c.480. From Lissarrague (1990a). 53
Figure 3. Red-figure cup, c.500. From Lissarrague (1990a). 53
Figure 4. Beazley, ARV², p. 183, no. 15, c. 490-480 BCE. 111
Figure 5. Madrid No.11267; ARV², 58/59, c. 520 BCE. From Węcowski (2002b). 214
INTRODUCTION

The social context of the Homeric epics is problematic. Crucial evidence is lost. “Homer” has become, in most cases, a moniker for an epic tradition rather than the name of the historical author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The question of *when* such a person or tradition existed and created the epics has largely turned into *for how long or up to what point* were the epics in a state of creation. *How* the Homeric epics came to be has been richly and rewardingly studied from the standpoint of oral composition, but such a standpoint complicates our understanding of *when* the epics came to be written down in the monumental form we have them today.

Context is nevertheless essential to our understanding of the epics. Neoanalytical scholarship has demonstrated the significant contexts of mythological traditions for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.¹ This project will approach the social context of the Homeric epics through an examination of the interaction between the epics and the symposium. The symposium is not an institution readily associated with the Homeric epics. Epic heroes feast by ritually sacrificing and roasting meats. At times they are entertained by performances of professional bards. At first glance such activities may seem to be a far cry from the reclining wine-party of the symposium where participants dine on dainty finger-foods and often perform their own compositions aimed at creating an atmosphere of *euphrosyne* and *charis*.

¹ e.g. Burgess (2001).
Despite superficial inconsistencies in Homeric and sympotic activities and behavior, I argue that the patterns of behavior, rules, and materials of certain homosocial activities found in the Homeric epics are patterns that particular audiences would understand as belonging primarily to the sphere of the symposium rather than the distanced world of heroic epic. In arguing such a position, I aim to challenge the belief that “Homer” did not know the symposium, a belief which was articulated publicly for the first time by Peter Von der Mühll in 1926. Suspicions that the symposium may have been known to the composer of the epics have been growing since the 1940s. Karl Bielohlawek (1940) demonstrated continuities between appropriate behavior at Homeric banquets and symposia. Building on this work, William J. Slater (1990) recognized sympotic aesthetics and ethics in the episodes which take place in Scheria in the Odyssey. Andrew Ford (1999) argued that Odysseus’ behavior at the Phaeacian palace was similar to the behavior of a symposiast. Like Slater, he postulated that Homer likely knew about the symposium, but deliberately suppressed it from the heroic world of his epics (1999: 112). Most recently, Oswyn Murray (2008) has even (and perhaps too ambitiously) attempted to demonstrate that the Odyssey was composed for performance at symposia. Despite the important connections between the Homeric epics and the symposium made by these scholars, no comprehensive attempt has been made to study and analyze traces of the symposium throughout both epics, nor one which considers the more significant ramifications of such a study: what effects do such traces of the symposium within the epics have on our understanding not only of the meanings of the epics but also of what resources performers of the epics drew from and why.

\(^2\) Von der Mühll (1983) 5. The assertion was first made in a lecture entitled “Das griechische Symposion” in 1926 but did not appear in print until 1957 in Xenophon: Das Gasmahl by the same author. I cite the Italian translation found in M. Vetta’s edited volume Poesia e Simposio nella Grecia Antica.

\(^3\) Slater (1990) 213: “An archaizing Homer could have known the habits of the Classical symposion and deliberately concealed them; I should think that a likely but unprovable hypothesis.” See also O. Murray (1991) 95.
INTRODUCTION

This project relies on a flexible understanding of the chronology of two phenomena: the institution of the symposium and the performance of the epics. Studies of the latter, in particular the analyses of Gregory Nagy, who builds upon the pioneering work of Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord, have cast serious doubt on the notion that the epics first appear in fixed form and later performances of them were mere recitals. Nagy has argued that the opposite is the case. Oral theory in particular has shown that epics can exist in fluid form for centuries and do not need a fixed form to survive. Thus for Nagy, a “text” of the epics – that is, an authoritative version (whether written or not) – is the end result of a performance tradition that began as fluid and only gradually becomes rigid over the course of the 8th, 7th, and perhaps the early 6th centuries. “Fluid” performances allow for the incorporation or omission of material – what is somewhat clumsily but nonetheless aptly called “composition-in-performance.” At the other end of the spectrum are “rigid” forms of epics. The “rigid” forms of the epics are our Iliad and Odyssey, or very similar instantiations; other “rigid” forms are lost, such as those belonging to the Cycle. For my own purposes, this spectrum of fluid performances to rigid ones, can be represented by three figures: the aoidos, the creative rhapsodic performer, and the mimetic rhapsode. There is a period of time, reaching into the 7th century and perhaps into the 6th century, when the performers of the epics – what I shall call creative rhapsodic performers (rhapsodes as shorthand) – could perform creatively. It is a natural process for creative rhapsodic performers who compose and recompose as they perform to incorporate material from their contemporary worlds into their works.

4 I use terminology from Nagy who is the leading authority on the “evolutionary model” for the development of the Homeric epics, to be discussed more extensively in the following chapters. For treatment of this topic, see most recently Nagy (2009) 4-5, and for the fullest treatment of the evolutionary model, see (1996a) 29-112.
The symposium too should be understood within a more flexible framework rather than as an institution that appeared *sui generis*, in fixed form, at any one particular point in time. Inscriptional evidence from the Cup of Nestor unearthed in Pithecussae can be used to infer that by the final quarter of the 8th century people were engaging in activities resembling sympotic ones. Such activities are not equal to the formalized symposium of the classical era; they are, nevertheless, activities which begin to take a shape recognizable as “sympotic” – a ‘proto’-sympotic stage which, with time and formalization, becomes the symposium. Such evidence suggests that from the 8th century activities recognizable as sympotic are being performed; concurrently, the epics are in a fluid state of composition-in-performance, with contemporary material being incorporated into them by rhapsodes to suit the needs of a particular performance and/or audience.

It is this intersection in time that I focus on, when the symposium is developing from its proto-stages into a fully-fledged institution, and the epics are undergoing a gradual restriction of fluid performances until certain performances become authoritative and rigid, freezing the creative process of composition-in-performance. In this work, I will demonstrate that it is a function of rhapsodes (creative rhapsodic performers) to incorporate elements from the contemporary world into their epic narratives, “contemporary” defined in this study as the late 8th to early 6th centuries. I will examine two features of this time period evident in the epics: rhapsodic performance and the institution of the symposium.

In order to examine how these two contemporaneous phenomena are evident in the epics, I maintain that each can be described in terms of being thought of as a discourse. A rhapsode for example, can be said to perform a rhapsodic discourse because the ways a
rhapsoide performs are specific to a rhapsode. Similarly, a symposiast can be said to perform a sympotic discourse, because a symposiast interacts with physical objects, talks, and even behaves in a way that is specific to a symposiast. We can identify and analyze these discourses because of the markers that signal them. That is, there are certain signs, gestures, behavior, and/or circumstances – which I label as markers – which are given specific meanings by their context. It is then possible for those observing the performance of a discourse – whether early audiences of rhapsodes or modern scholars reading the Homeric epics – to identify a rhapsodic or sympotic discourse by noting the patterns and identifying the signals of these very markers.

Such a methodology is loosely based on a Foucauldian framework. Foucault maintained that there exists a “rarefaction” of discourse: only certain people in certain situations can use certain discourses. “Not all regions of discourse are equally open and penetrable,” Foucault explains, “some of them are largely forbidden (they are differentiated and differentiating), while others seem to be almost open to all winds and put at the disposal of every speaking object, without prior restrictions.” In the context of my study, this means that some markers of the symposium or rhapsodic performance – words, gestures, and/or accoutrement – are understood differently by different members of the external audience. Some of the audience will recognize a rhapsodic or sympotic discourse. The word ἐνδέξια is an example. This has the generic meaning of “on the right” or “toward the right hand.” For certain audience members, however, there is an alternative, differentiated meaning. For the audience members familiar with the symposium and the gestures characteristically performed there, the term can flag the specific circuit that wine, games, or talk take around the drinking party from left to right.

---

8 LSJ s.v. ἐνδέξια.
9 See discussion in Chapter 2.
rhapsodic and sympotic discourses that I will evaluate are examples of Foucault’s “largely forbidden” regions of discourse. Every audience member understands the primary meaning of certain markers, but ultimately only certain audience members will appreciate the rarefied or differentiated meaning of markers because they have experiences that are not open to others. Only certain sections of the audience, for example, would understand the full range of meanings of ἐνδεξια. Since the rhapsodic and sympotic discourses I examine are only implicitly encoded in the narrative (see below), they do not disrupt the primary or surface meaning of the narrative, which can be understood by the audience. The narrative is open to all, but the discourses implicit in it differentiate certain audience members’ reaction to certain passages.

The symposium can be described as a discourse. A wide array of sources – from the lyric and elegiac poetry of the 7th and 6th centuries, to prose “sympotika” like those of Plato and Xenophon,10 to archaeological realia – provide evidence of the specific types of speech, behavior, and even physical accoutrement which belong to the symposium. This means that certain types of speech, behavior, and physical accoutrement have not only literal meanings which contribute to the main narrative and are open to all, but also differentiated meanings which connect them to the symposium and have been given specific meanings within it. Audience members familiar with the symposium and its habits can negotiate those differentiated meanings, while those not familiar with the symposium are excluded from the secondary or implicit meanings encoded within the narrative.

---

10 Xenophon also contributes to this tradition in parts of the Cyropaedae. Plato’s dramatization of Apollodorus hearing about Socrates’ symposium from another yet unclear (ἀλλὰ γάρ οὐδέν εἶχε σαφές λέγειν, 172b) source may suggest rival symposia by other authors; cf. Hunter (2004) 21-22. On sympotika, see Hunter (2004) 6-7, Tecuşan (1990), and especially J. Martin (1931).
In treating the symposium as a discourse, I do not offer an absolute definition for what a symposium is; rather, I identify the patterns in the speech, behavior, and accoutrement of the symposium – the “markers” of a sympotic discourse, as discussed in Chapter 2 – which flag sympotic activities. Such a view is consistent with that of the ancient sources for the symposium, which tend to treat it as a fluid sum of its parts rather than a monolithic event which adheres to an unchanging transcript of a particular night’s activities. No one symposium described in the ancient sources features every marker for it. Rather, symposia are suggested by parts – reclining, a small gathering of men, cups. Even Plato’s *Symposium* lacks what might be considered necessary constituents of any drinking party. Most importantly very little wine is drunk in the *Symposium* (until Alcibiades’ arrival at least), nor is Dionysus the central divinity of the party as he is for so many other symposia¹¹ – indeed Plato even prefers to term the party a *synousia* - ‘a being together’ rather than ‘a drinking together.’¹² While Plato is manipulating conventions to make a philosophical point, none of these conspicuous inconsistencies with symposia described or referenced elsewhere discourage us from claiming that the get-together at Agathon’s house is a symposium. Each and every constituent of a symposium need not be present to conjure the whole.¹³

Recognition of each discourse, I argue, affects how external audiences perceive character behavior within the epics. Sara Mills, in discussing Foucault’s work, highlights the ability of a discourse to produce an effect:

---

¹¹ Dionysus’ conspicuous absence from Homeric feasts is one of the criteria von der Mühll uses to conclude that the Homeric epics do not include symposia.
¹² e.g. 172a (τὴν Ἀγάθωνος συνουσίαν).
¹³ My view is largely influenced by Marek Węcowski (2002a, 2002b), who examines the synecdochic function of sympotic elements such as *endexia*. The sparse and inconsistent remains of *andrones* in the archaeological record suggest that, in terms of space at least, the symposium is not strictly defined; see Lynch (2007) 244.
One of the most productive ways of thinking about discourse is not as a group of signs or a stretch of text, but as ‘practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak’ (Foucault, 1972:49). In this sense, a discourse is something which produces something else (an utterance, a concept, an effect), rather than something which exists in and of itself and which can be analysed in isolation. A discursive structure can be detected because of the systematicity of the ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are formed within a particular context, and because of the effects of those ways of thinking and behaving. (Mills 2004: 15)

In particular the sympotic discourse in the narrative of the epics creates a framework according to which some external audiences perceive character behavior. The various markers of the symposium create a nexus of rules and standards of speech, behavior, and gestures which work in concert to form an atmosphere of *euphrosyne* and *charis*. Characters properly negotiating such markers establish insider status, while acting outside the proper boundaries betrays one’s outsider status. Certain episodes in the epics are encoded with such a framework, which creates potential expectations on the part of certain external audience members as to how characters within the epics are to behave.

A distinction will be maintained through this study between the literal, surface level meanings of the narrative and the implicit, deep meanings of the epics. Neither symposia nor rhapsodic performances are strongly represented in the epics; the literal, explicit meanings of the narrative do not include either phenomenon. It is not my contention that epic heroes participate in symposia or that some heroic feasts have been mislabelled or misunderstood and are in fact symposia. I am concerned with the implicit meanings communicated between performer and external audience. I argue that external audiences, picking up on sympotic or rhapsodic discourse in certain episodes, may perceive characters to be behaving in certain

---

14 Throughout this study I use the designations literal/explicit/surface and implicit/deep loosely in a literary manner, without adhering to the structuralist theory such terms imply. Instead, I treat the difference between narratives simply as primary (literal, surface) and secondary (implicit, deep), but avoid the terms primary and secondary to clarify from my terminology elsewhere, such as principal and auxiliary markers and primary (=symposium) and secondary (=rhapsodic) discourses, elements which are defined below.
ways. At a literal level, such a perception may not be the case. I will use quotation marks around characters’ names when I treat them as enacting implicit discourses (e.g. “Odysseus”, “Achilles”). To be distinguished from characters enacting implicit discourses are the characters on the surface level, who act in accordance with the dramatic narrative (e.g. Odysseus, Achilles). I treat both the sympotic and rhapsodic discourses in this study, but for my purposes, the sympotic deserves primacy because of the additional meanings it carries for the external audience – it produces expectations of how characters should behave in certain situations.

The first chapter of this study will examine feasting in the Homeric epics. The heroic feast will be seen to have, on a superficial level at least, significant differences from the symposium. Nevertheless, after discussing the chronological overlap between the symposium and fluid performances of the epics, I will argue that because such an overlap exists, finding sympotic elements encoded in the narratives of the epics is not chronologically incorrect or unjustified. In Chapter 2, I turn to the symposium, treating it as a sum of its parts. As such, I examine specific markers of the symposium, using literary, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence. I group markers of the symposium under five headings – material culture, preliminaries, drinking games, circulation and distribution, and aesthetics. A discourse is implicitly conveyed, I argue, when a constellation of these markers occurs in a passage. A justification for this criterion will be discussed at the end of Chapter 2. The third chapter examines the evidence for rhapsodic performances as opposed to aoidic ones. Rhapsodes will be shown to be distinct from aoidoi in terms of the compositional method by which each performs. Understanding how rhapsodic discourse works in the epics is important as an analogy for understanding sympotic discourse. For the purposes of this study, rhapsodic
discourse will be treated as secondary in importance to sympotic discourse because the latter affects how external audiences expect characters within the epics to behave.

With my methodology and evidence for definitions firmly established, I will move on to the implementation of my methodology for selected passages. In Chapter 4, I analyze specific passages of the *Odyssey*, primarily examining Odysseus’ stay at the Phaeacians’ court in books 8, 9, and 11. Odysseus will be shown to engage in and manipulate various sympotic games and verbal strategies in order to win a favorable homecoming from the Phaeacians. Chapter 5 of this study will analyze rhapsodic and sympotic discourses in the embassy scene of *Iliad* 9. The sympotic discourse in this scene will be shown to reference extra-Iliadic myths about Achilles’ behavior at symposia and directs us to alternate interpretations of audience expectations of the outcome of the embassy.

These final two chapters will not merely be an analysis of sympotic themes in the epics, although this topic will be treated. This is a project ultimately concerned with the poetics of the epics – how they were put together by their performers. More important than the acknowledgement that the epics contain vestiges of rhapsodic performances and the proto-symposium or symposium are the conclusions we can draw about how the composition of the epics was influenced by contemporary social institutions and performance cultures. The ultimate goal of this study is to contribute to our understanding of the creative process behind the oral composition of the epics through an analysis of the previously unexplored relationship between creative rhapsodes and contemporary elite audiences of the 8th to the early 6th centuries.
CHAPTER 1:

FEASTING IN THE HOMERIC EPICS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROTO-SYMPOSIUM

οῚ πρὶν μὲν ποτ᾽ ἔναιον ἐν εὔρυχόρῳ ὑπερέιῃ, ἀγχοῦ Κυκλώπων ἀνδρῶν ὑπερηνορεόντων, οἱ σφεας σινέσκοντο, βῆκι ὃ δὲ φέρτεροι ἦσαν. ἔνθεν ἀναστῆσας ἄγε Ναυσίθοος θεοειδής, εἶσον δὲ Σχερίῃ, ἐκάς ἀνδρῶν ἀλφηστάων, ἀμφὶ δὲ τεῖχος ἔλασσε πόλει, καὶ ἐδείματο οἴκους, καὶ νηοὺς ποίησε θεῶν, καὶ ἔδάσσατ’ ἀρούρας.

Who once upon a time dwelt in broad-lawned Hypereia, close by the Cyclopes, overbearing men, who were stronger and used to harass them violently. Getting them to migrate, godlike Nausithous led them from there and settled them in Scheria far from men who work for bread. He drove a wall around the city, had houses built, made temples of the gods, and parcelled out fields.¹

(Od.6.4-10)

The beginning of Odyssey 6 finds Odysseus washed up on the Phaeacian shore. The narrator of the Odyssey describes the people and landscape. Nausithous, the leader of the newly-migrated Phaeacian people, settled them in Scheria. He systematically planned the city by organizing the physical spaces between the private (οἶκους), religious (νηοὺς), and civic (ἀρούρας).² Odysseus’ journey from Calypso’s island to

¹ Unless otherwise noted, translations for the Odyssey and the Iliad are taken from Chicago Homer.
Scheria is the first of his journeys that the audience of the Odyssey encounters. It is not Odysseus’ first, however, and his sojourn among the Phaeacians in Scheria provides a pretext for the tales of his journey homeward and anticipates his final return to Ithaca.

Encoded within the epic narrative of Odysseus’ nostos is the discourse of colonial enterprise. During the 8th to 6th centuries, Greeks established colonies outside of Greece, beginning with Pithecussae in the second quarter of the 8th century. Patterns in the myths and narratives shared by both ancient Greek and New World colonization lead some scholars to argue that colonial enterprises give rise to similar patterns of perception. Such patterns establish a discourse – a particular way of speaking – about colonial activities.

The patterns which establish a colonial discourse are evident in the narrative of Odyssey 6. The character of Nausithous references the figure of the oikistes, the founder to whom the planning and building of a colony was entrusted. Nausithous’ actions are similar to the duties ascribed to other oikists known from narratives about the founding of colonies. Battus, for example, erects altars for the gods and paves a road for Apollonian processions as the oikist of Cyrene. The oikist of Naxos, Thucles, also sets up altars to the gods. Odysseus’ journey to Scheria has no overt connections to colonization on the surface of the narrative. But the colonizing movement of the 8th to

---

1 Archaeological evidence from three different sites indicates that Pithecussae was “fully operational” by 750 BCE (Ridgway 1992: 40-41, 87).
4 On the duties of the oikist in various settlements, see Graham (1964) 29-39.
6 Th.6.3.1.
6th centuries is encoded within the Phaeacian narrative of the *Odyssey* by means of the colonial discourse suggested by the figure of Nausithous and his actions. The *Odyssey* does not provide a strong representation of colonization or of a colony. The poem is concerned with the heroic past, the intersection of cultures, and Odysseus’ arduous travels homeward. It is not explicitly about the foundation of cities or the reconnaissance of fertile lands. Yet there are patterns shared between the passage in *Odyssey* 6 and other Greek and New World myths and narratives of colonization. Such patterns encode a colonial discourse within the beginning of *Odyssey* 6, although such colonization is not explicitly treated. The discourse implicitly communicates colonial attitudes and experiences to the real-world audience.

I introduce the concept of colonial discourse because of some of the similarities in the ways scholars approach that discourse to my own approach. Scholars have recognized patterns in the myths and narratives about both Greek and New World colonization. Similar patterns exist in the narrative of *Odyssey* 6 and can be brought to light when we consider levels of interpretation beyond the literal, surface narrative. Yet scholars, by adducing patterns in the language and experiences of colonization, have been able to identify a discourse which reflects the colonizing movement encoded within the literal meanings of the poems.

---

6 For a reading of colonial discourse in Od.9, see Dougherty (1993) 23, (2001) 127-130, Dench (1995) 33-38 (“discourse of colonization”), Hall (1989) 47-50. Crieelard (1995) 236-239 takes a historical approach to the colonial elements in Od.6, comparing the systematic layout of Scheria to western colonial settlements (which were laid out with a similar eye towards organization) as opposed to eastern settlements in Asia Minor (which were more unstructured and settled at earlier dates with the Ionian migration; contra Finley (1979) 156). My own project is not concerned with making historical claims. For criticism of a discourse of colonization, see Malkin (2004), including an argument to consider the value of the idea of “Middle Ground” approaches to post-colonial theory.

10 See my Introduction for a discussion of my use of “surface” versus “deep” narrative as indicators of primary and secondary narratives without implication of adherence to structuralist theory.
My project takes a similar approach to the work of those scholars who have found evidence of a colonial discourse not readily apparent when only literal, surface meanings are considered. Symptotic gatherings and rhapsodic performances have specific patterns of discourse associated with them. Such patterns exist in the narratives of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*. They can be recognized when we consider meanings that are not strongly conveyed in the narrative, but are rather implicitly conveyed at a deep level – the level negotiated between performer and his real-world audience.

Before identifying such patterns, I shall first consider the literal, surface narrative. Below, I explore heroic feasting as it is represented in the epics. The practices of feasting form a recognizable and recurring type-scene which an audience would expect to contain certain features. Heroic feasting is categorically different than the symposium – it does not have the same “feel” as a symposium. I will then discuss the relationship between the epics and the real-world audience, arguing that fluid performances of the epics and the early developments of the symposium belong to the same chronological context. The surface narrative of the epics depicts heroes feasting in a particular way. The real-world audience, however, is becoming familiar with sympotic practices of commensality. Such “contemporary” habits of eating and drinking are implicitly articulated by performer to audience.

---

11 On my use of the term “contemporary,” see below.
WINE-DRINKING AND FEASTING IN THE HOMERIC EPICS

Wine-drinking for the most part takes place during a feast in the epics. The combined activities of eating and drinking are the basis of heroic homosocial bonding. Commensality – a term which I use to describe the act of gathering to share food and/or drink – plays a key role in the heroic lifestyle as it is represented in the epics: participation at feasts can establish one’s heroic status. Heroes and leaders also establish and solidify bonds over food and wine. Below, in outline form, I explore the commensal activities in which characters in the Homeric epics participate. I do not attempt to be exhaustive in my account, but rather I provide an account of how heroic commensality is regularly represented on the surface level.

Feasting in the epics is “ubiquitous and constant,” as one scholar notes. It occurs with such frequency that it forms a type-scene, defined as a “recurrent block of narrative with an identifiable structure.” Like other type-scenes, the feasting type-scene has what we might call a recognizable shape. Certain actions or gestures or even objects tend to be represented in a certain sequence. Such recurrence aids the bard in his oral composition of the epics. Recurrence, however, does not reduce the meaning of type-scenes to merely mnemonic devices. Verbal repetition may or may not be a shared feature of two separate feasting type-scenes. Variation occurs as the narrative or performance demands, and type-scenes are not simply repeated passages.

12 Exceptions noted and explained below, Chapter 2. Wine-drinking in the epics has been the subject of recent works: Colesanti (1999), Ando (2004), and Papakonstantinou (2009).
16 On this, see Edwards (1992) 285-286 and passim; cf. 287: “Type-scenes may be said to be composed of a structure of certain elements in sequence. But there is no “standard” form of a type-scene from which a given example deviates more or less.” Said (1979) 12-13 also discusses variation in feasting type-scenes. Reece (1993) 42-46 discusses the perils of ‘concordance interpolations’ and type-scenes. Scribes would
Not all feasts represented in the epics will have each of the features explored below. The space given to feasts differs depending on narrative demands. Feasts can last for the narrative of nearly a whole book, as the one in *Odyssey* 1.104-424 does, or they may be described in four lines, such as in *Iliad* 9.89-92. As type-scenes, such feasts, whether long or short in terms of narrative or line-numbers, have certain patterns in them. These patterns allow us to categorize practices of feasting as heroic, as well as to categorize them as not sympotic, as will be discussed in the following chapter.¹⁷

A ‘typical’ feast in the epics takes the following shape:

(i) **Sacrifice:** a sacrifice may precede the feast (e.g. *Od.* 3.418-462, 14.418-452; *Il.* 1.458-466, 2.419-429). There are well-known patterns in narratives about sacrifices (*Il.* 1.458-466):

> αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ὤ ἐυξαντὸ καὶ συλθυτὰς προβάλοντο, αὐέρυσαν μὲν πρῶτα καὶ ἱσφαξαν καὶ ἐδειραν, μηροὺς τ’ ἐξεταμον κατὰ τ’ εὐκισι ἐκάλυψαν δίπτυχα πούσαντες, ἐπ’ αὐτῶν δ’ ὠμοθέτησαν: καὶ δ’ ἐπὶ σχίζης ὁ γέρων, ἐπὶ δ’ αἴθοπα οἶνον λεῖβε: νεόπ ἔδορ νέπον ἔχον πεμπὼβολα χερσίν. αὐτάρ ἐπεὶ κατὰ μῆρα καὶ σπλάγχνα πᾶσαν, μιστολλόν τ’ ἅρα τάλλα καὶ ἀμφ’ ὀβελοσίαν ἐπειραν, ὁπτησάν τ’ περιφραδέως, ἔρυσαντό τ’ πάντα.

And when all had made prayer and flung down the scattering barley
first they drew back the victims' heads and slaughtered them and skinned them,
and cut away the meat from the thighs and wrapped them in fat,
making a double fold, and laid shreds of flesh upon them.
The old man burned these on a cleft stick and poured the gleaming wine over, while the young men with forks in their hands stood about him.
But when they had burned the thigh pieces and tasted the vitals, they cut all the remainder into pieces and spitted them and roasted all carefully and took off the pieces.

---

¹⁷ Treatments of the feasting type-scene include Arend (1933), Edwards (1992) and Reece (1993) 22-25, on which much of what below is based.
(ii) Hand-washing; cereal goods are laid out (e.g. Od.1.136-140, 4.52-56):

A handmaid brought water for washing in a fine golden pitcher and poured it above a silver basin so they could wash, then pulled a polished table beside them. A venerable housekeeper brought bread and set it before them placing many foods on it, pleasuring them from her stores.

(iii) A carver serves platters of meat and a herald pours wine (e.g. Od.1.141-143, cf.15.140-141):

A carver raised and placed before them platters of meats of all kinds and put golden cups beside them. A herald came often and poured wine for them.

(iv) The food and drink are consumed. Two formulae are most common:

They threw their hands on the good things laid ready before them.

They dined, and no heart at all went without an equal meal.

---

18 Reece (1993) 24 notes that the first of these is more common to the Odyssey, while the second is more common to the Iliad. He also distinguishes other formulae which can close feasting: δαίνυντ’ ἐρικυδέα δαίτα (Od.3.66, 13.26, 20.280; Il.24.802), δαίνυνθ’ ἐξομενόι (Od.3.471), πῖνε καὶ ἠθε (Od.5.94, 6.249, 7.177), κρέα τ’ ἠθε πῖνε τε οἶνον (Od.14.109).
Closing formula/the feast concludes. Feasts end with variations of the following formula:

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος καὶ ἐδητύος ἐξ ἔρων ἑντὸ (e.g. Od. 1.150, 3.67, 4.68; Il. 1.469, 2.432, 7.323)\(^{19}\)
Then after they had dispatched desire for food and drink

Often after the feast, the participants return to their homes and retire to sleep:

οἶ μὲν κακκείοντες ἐβαν οἴκόνδε ἐκαστος (e.g. Od. 3.396, 13.17; Il. 1.606, 23.58 [sub κλισίηνδε for οἶκόνδε]).
They each went home to rest.

The frequent recurrence of the features above gives feasting a shape easily recognizable to an audience. Narratives such as those of sacrifice, hand-washing, the laying-out of food, etc. follow the above sequence with regularity in the epics and give the practices of heroic feasting a particular feel. Other features of heroic feasting contribute to the usual representation of commensality in the epics. The habits of heroes at a feast as well as the types of relationships instantiated there add a dimension and dynamic that are, at face value, entirely different from the habits and attitudes of the symposium. Such aspects of heroic feasts include the fact that the participants sit to eat their meal, that feasts take place in the daytime, and the form of the feast itself. Below I examine a number of such aspects to develop fully the idea of what a heroic feast in the epics consisted of, or at least could consist of. Many of these attributes of heroic feasts will be seen to be categorically different from or even entirely opposite to attributes of the symposium, as will be discussed in Chapter 2.

\(^{19}\) For an exhaustive list, see Reece (1993) 24.
An important feature of heroic banquets is that Homeric heroes sit, as opposed to recline, to feast. This is the case for both gods and men. Poseidon takes his delight in the feast which the Ethiopians have prepared for him while sitting (παρήμενος, Od.1.26). The gods, in a time past at least, used to sit (καθήμενοι, Od.7.203) with the Phaeacians at their feasts. In the human realm, guiding a guest to the dining hall and inviting him to sit is a regular feature of the visit type-scene. In the suitors’ feast in Odyssey 1, the first action Telemachus takes when welcoming the disguised Athena inside is to invite her to sit down (Od.1.130-135). Similarly, Achilles invites the embassy to sit and feast in his tent upon their arrival (Il.9.220).

The formulaic phrase “and then they went to their homes and slept” indicates that commensality usually takes place during the day. Feasts can take place in several locations. In the Iliad, the nature of war means feasting often occurs on an ad hoc basis. Some feasts are taken outside among the camp (e.g. 2.398, 7.477), others in the leaders’ tents (e.g. 7.320, 9.179, 23.810). In the Odyssey, in which the narrative commonly takes place within the domestic sphere, feasting frequently occurs within the home in the megaron – the ‘banquet hall’ (e.g. 1.299, 11.420). The seats on which heroes sit line the walls of the megaron in rows (e.g. Od.7.95, ἐν δὲ θρόνοι περὶ τοῖχον ἔρημένατ’ ἐνθα καὶ ἐνθα; cf. 1.145 ἔξεις ἔζοντο κατὰ κλίσμον καὶ τιθέναι τε θρόνον τε).

In most depictions of heroic feasting, food and wine are not consumed in moments distinct from each other. Meat is served with wine, and it is not until both are consumed that the meal reaches an end. The closing formula at the end of feasts emphasizes this aspect: αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος καὶ ἐδητύος ἐξ ἔρον ἐντο. Additionally, neither talk nor entertainment is commonly mixed with eating and drinking. Indeed,
the above formula often signals the closing of feasting activities and the beginning of
the talk and/or entertainment, such as listening to a bard (Od.1.151-152, 8.73), taking
counsel among the elders (Il.7.323), or the questioning of a guest (Od.3.69-71).

Indeed, talk is usually confined to the period of time after meat and wine are
consumed. Much of song, moreover, is entrusted to the professional bards of the
Odyssey. The warring and unstable nature of the camps of the Achaeans and Trojans in
the Iliad precludes the privilege of such entertainment, though it is often the deeds of
these camps which are newest on the tongues of the bards of the Odyssey. Audiences of
bards are not participants in the song. They sit silently and listen to the bard passively
(e.g. Od.1.150-152, 325-326, 8.70, 21.428-429). Sometimes they may suggest certain topics
which they would prefer to hear (Od.1.340-341, 8.492-498).

The terminology of feasting is indicative of the social and heroic significance of
commensality. A meal in the epics has several terms: ἀριστόν (Il.24.124, Od.16.2),
δειελίησας (Od.17.599), δεῖπνον (e.g.Il.2.383, Od.9.155), δόρπον (e.g.II.7.370, 23.55, Od.2.20).
Such meals are nutritive in function. The ariston and deieliesas are so-
named not for any
particular significance of the meal, but rather for the time of day they are taken: early
in the day (i.e. breakfast)\(^{20}\) and midday/evening.\(^{21}\) The deipnon/dorpon (δεῖπνον/δόρπον)
is also a nutritive banquet or meal.\(^{22}\) It is one which “satisfies the heart” (αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ
dείπνησε καὶ ἡράρε θυμόν ἐδωδῆ, Od.5.95, 14.111).\(^{23}\) Soldiers feast on the deipnon before

---

\(^{20}\) ἀριστόν: a combination of locative ἀρι (<*αἰρ-) and ἐδ- ‘to eat’ (Beekes 2010: 131-132).

\(^{21}\) On this point, see Saïd (1979) 14.

\(^{22}\) δόρπον may have a more limited definition as an ‘evening meal’ (Rundin 1996: 185-186), but no social
significance is attributed to this difference between the two; cf. Saïd (1979) 14.

\(^{23}\) Saïd (1979) 14.
going out to battle (I.2.381, 8.53), and without the *deipnon*, a soldier will lack the fuel needed to perform his best and fight the enemy with courage (I.19.167-192).²⁴

The *dais* (δαῖς), on the other hand, is a feast in which important heroic and communal relationships are forged and maintained. A passage from the *Iliad* is illustrative of the differing atmosphere of the *deipnon* versus the *dais* (I.2.398-405, [406-427], 428-433):

> ἀνστάντες δ᾽ ὀρέοντο κεδασθέντες κατὰ νῆας, κάπνισσάν τε κατὰ κλισίας, καὶ δείπνον ἔλοντο. ἄλλος δ᾽ ἄλλω ἔρεζε θεῶν αἰειγενετάων εὐχόμενος θάνατόν τε ὕμνοι καὶ μῶλον Ἄρηος. αὐτάρ δ᾽ ἄρα ψαλλόν ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων πίονα πενταέτηρον ὑπερμενέι Κρονίωνι, κίκλησεν δὲ γέροντας ἀριστάς Παναχαιῶν, Νέστορα μὲν πρώτιστα καὶ Ἰδομενήν ἀνακτα,

[406-427 omitted for space]

> μῖστυλλόν τ᾽ ἄρα τᾶλλα καὶ ἀμφ᾽ ὄβελοίσιν ἐπειραν, ὑπηράμνα τε περιφραδέως, ἐρύσαντο τε πάντα. αὐτάρ ἐπεὶ παύσαντο πόνου τετύκοντο δαίνυντ᾽, οὐδὲ τι θυμὸς ἐδεύετο δαιτὸς ἔσης. αὐτάρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος καὶ ἐδητύος ἐξ ἔρον ἐντο, τοῖς ἄρα μῦθων ἦρχε Γερήνιος ἰππότα Νέστωρ... 

They stood up scattering and made for the ships; they kindled the fires’ smoke along the shelters, and took their dinner (*deipnon*), each man making a sacrifice to some one of the immortal gods, in prayer to escape death and the grind of Ares. But Agamemnon the lord of men dedicated a fat ox five years old to Zeus, all-powerful son of Kronos, and summoned the nobles and the great men of all the Achaians, Nestor before all others, and next the lord Idomeneus, ... they cut all the remainder into pieces and spitted them and roasted all carefully and took off the pieces. Then after they had finished the work and got the feast (*dais*) ready they feasted, nor was any man’s hunger denied a fair portion.

---

But when they had put away their desire for eating and drinking
the Gerenian horseman Nestor began speaking among them . . .

The above passage describes two separate commensal events. The men of the army
prepare a deipnon for themselves. No mention is made of the quantity, quality, or
consumption of the meal. No host is mentioned, and each must prepare his own meal.
Sacrifices are made separately from the meal.

The leaders of the Greek army, on the other hand, dine separately on a dais.25
The narrative space given to the dais attests to its greater significance within the epics.
The army’s feast takes up a narrative space of two lines (with another two for the
sacrifices). The leaders’ feast, on the other hand, spans thirty lines. This feast involves
the sacrifice of a bull to Zeus and further propitiation of him (402-420). The description
of the preparation of the feast is elaborate: victims’ heads are drawn back and throats
slit (422), their meat is flayed, cut up, wrapped in fat, and roasted carefully (423-429).
Wine is not explicitly mentioned as being consumed in this passage, but the formulaic
close “they were sated with food and drink” suggests that wine was present. The
lengthy preparation of the meal gives way to a succinct conclusion: the men feast and
are fully satisfied (431-432). The feast provides the context for the council of elders
which follows—without wine or food.

The dais is a principal locus for the establishment of status and relationships
among Homeric leaders and heroes and provides an alternative space to the battlefield
for the maintenance of homosocial bonds. The term dais in itself is indicative of its
differing and dynamic social function which distinguishes it from other types of

25 A comparable passage in which the men of the army feast on a dorpon while the leaders feast on a dais
can be found at Il.9.88-95, on which see Hainsworth (1993) ad Il.9.90-92.
commensality. The term *dais* comes from the verb δαιώ/δαιομαι/δατέομαι and in its etymological sense means a “division.” In the epics, participation in the division is solely a male activity: the handling, serving, and consumption of meat are left strictly to men. Women may be present at a *dais*, as Helen (4.120-305) and Arete (7.140-347) are, for example, but ‘present’ does not mean ‘participant.’ Women are not depicted as consuming meat at the *dais* in the epics, and are thus left out of the division.

As such, the “division” which takes place at the *dais* is strictly a male activity. Indeed, being a recipient of a distribution of meat is a feature of male heroic life. The infant Achilles sits on Phoenix’ lap eating bite-sized pieces of meat and spilling wine on his tunic in a feast (*Il.* 9.485-491). Andromache laments for her son Astyanax that he shall be deprived of this honor, denied participation in the feast because his deceased father no longer dines among his companions (*Il.* 22.491-501). Honored seats at a feast are sources of encouragement for soldiers fighting in battle (*Il.* 4.257-264, 4.341-346).

---

26 The term δαίς occurs eighty-five times in the epics—thirty in the *Iliad* (or twenty-nine if Zenodotus’ reading is not taken at *Il.* 1.5) and fifty-five in the *Odyssey* (Rundin 1996: 186). For the terminology of feasting in the epics, see especially Said (1979) 14-17 and Rundin (1996) 185-186 and *passim*.

27 Rundin (1996) 189-190. This gender division applies to the servants as well: female servants are regularly shown serving non-meat foods such as bread and dainties, while it is always the male servants who dole out meat (see e.g. *Od.* 1.139-142). Van Wees (1995) 158n.23 extends this gender division further, stating that it seems to be the privilege of free men to distribute meat. In *Od.* 1.141 (cf. 17.331), it is the daitros, the carver, who serves the meat, a person for whom no status is indicated, and thus Van Wees’ conclusion is perhaps overstated. The practice of wine-drinking is also usually a gender differentiator, with a few exceptions: Nausicaa brings a wineskin as one of her provisions for her trip to the river (*Od.* 6.75-78); Aphrodite nourishes the daughters of Pindareus with wine (*Od.* 20.66-69), and Odysseus passes Arete a cup of wine at a *dais* hosted by the Phaeacians (*Od.* 13.53-62) – she does not explicitly drink, but it seems that Odysseus, in the act of handing her the cup, expects her to do so; on these points, see Papakonstantinou (2009) 7-8, esp. n.23.

28 Van Wees (1995) 154-163 discusses the limited role women play at feasts, as well as the one act of participation they may engage in – conversation.

29 It is also worth noting that gods are usually the only other consumer of the *dais*. With the exception of *Il.* 24.43 (Achilles compared to a lion who attacks sheep for a feast) and perhaps *Il.* 1.5 (if Zenodotus’ reading is taken), animals do not consume a *dais* (whereas horses, for example, can have a *deipnon* [*Il.* 2.383; cf. Rundin 1996: 185]). Rundin 1996: 188-189: “In fact, the *dais* is one aspect of a culinary divide that separates humans from animals, who, as Hesiod tells us, not being beholden to human law and *dike* given by Zeus, ‘eat one another because there is no *dike* among them’ (*Op.* 276-279); *dike* and the *dais* are things which associate humans with the gods and as such they specify the human animal.”
Heroes can win seats at the table by demonstrating exceptional heroic prowess (Il.10.217). Thus, participation in a dais recognizes one’s special status and inclusion within the heroic community.\(^{30}\)

The division at a dais reflects both egalitarian and hierarchical social dynamics. Many daita are praised for their equality: a ‘good’ feast is an “equal” feast (δαίς ἐκείνη; see passage above, Il.2.431).\(^{31}\) Although many daita are attended only by men of high rank, feasts described as equal are, without exception, attended by high-ranking men.\(^{32}\) An “equal” feast may therefore plausibly indicate a feast of high-ranking men.\(^{33}\) As a feast among equals, it is reasonable to understand that the “equal” feast denotes one in which the division is equally distributed among each member. Rundin explains, “the equal feast instantiates the relations of equal and balanced reciprocity that characterize exchange among those of high status who are, in some sense, not subordinate to one another.”\(^{34}\) The equal feast recognizes and instantiates egalitarian relationships among men of elevated rank.

Some “equal feasts,” however, do not include an equal distribution of meat to all members. Instead, in these feasts there is a prize portion, the γέρας. The notion of a special portion awarded among an “equal feast” seems paradoxical, as in the following passage (Il.7.319-323):

---

\(^{30}\) Saïd (1979) 17-19, Ando (2004) 89-90. Saïd convincingly correlates the division at the feast with other types of division in the epics, chiefly with the division of spoils.

\(^{31}\) δαίς ἐκείνη: Il.1.468, 602, 2.431, 4.48, 7.320, 9.225, 23.56, 24.69; Od.8.98, 11.185, 16.479, 19.425.

\(^{32}\) Rundin (1996) 195 n.31 rightly justifies the “equal” feast provided for Telemachus and Odysseus by Eumaeus (Od.16.479) as attended by men of high rank due to Eumaeus’ status as a prince at birth (15.412-414).


\(^{34}\) Rundin (1996) 195.
Then after they had finished the work and got the feast ready, they feasted, nor was any man's hunger denied a fair portion; and Atreus' son, the hero wide-ruling Agamemnon, gave to Aias in honour the long cuts of the chine's portion. But when they had put away their desire for eating and drinking . . .

The feast is explicitly equal in this passage (δαιτὸς ἐίσῃς), and yet one participant is singled out with a portion which is choicer than that given to the others. Some participants, it seems, are more equal than others. Thus an “equal” feast does not necessarily denote one in which all portions distributed are strictly equal: in the cases in which a geras is awarded, “equal” can be understood in a broader sense of “equitable” or “fair.” While egalitarian notions of equality are still represented at “equal” feasts, the gifting of portions of honor references possible hierarchical relationships within the egalitarian sphere and reflects potentially conflicting social functions of the feast.

Despite the egalitarian ideals of the divisions at the dais, feasts in the epics are nonetheless largely considered to reflect hierarchical relationships among Homeric heroes, especially in the absence of strong kin-based relationships. The practices of feasting create a social network of reciprocal relationships. Leaders like Agamemnon

---

36 Rundin (1996) 195-196 has a perceptive discussion on the tensions engendered by the equal feast: “The leaders of the Achaeans are all peers – basileis or anaktes. Yet the central conflict in the Iliad between Achilles and Agamemnon involves the right of Agamemnon to assert authority over the other leaders, particularly Achilles. Thus, there is a destabilizing tension between the equal status of the peers and the elevated status of Agamemnon.”
utilize feasting in order to obligate another to reciprocal services. Agamemnon’s rebuke of Odysseus and Menestheus in *Iliad* 4 substantiates this position (341-346):

> ἄρωιν μὲν γ’ ἐπέοικε μετὰ πρῶτοισιν ἔόντας ἐστάμεν ἥδε μάχης καυστείρης ἀντιβολῆσαι: πρῶτω γὰρ καὶ δαίτος ἄκουάζεσθον ἔμειο, ὀπότε δαῖτα γέρουσιν ἐφοπλίζωμεν Ἀχαιοῖ. ἔνθα φιλ’ ὀπταλέα κρέα ἔδομεν ἥδε κυπέλλα ὀίνου πινέμεναι μελιηδέος ὀφρ’ ἐθέλητον:

> For you two it is becoming to stand among the foremost fighters, and endure your share of the blaze of battle; since indeed you two are first to hear of the feasting whenever we Achaians make ready a feast of the princes. There it is your pleasure to eat the roast flesh, to drink as much as you please the cups of the wine that is sweet as honey.

Agamemnon establishes a connection between Odysseus and Menestheus’ status at the feast and their status on the battlefield. They should be first in battle since they are first to attend Agamemnon’s feast. Through feasting, leaders like Agamemnon solidify a base of military support – and this extends even to men of lower rank, as is implied in another of Agamemnon’s rebukes (*Il.*8.228-232):

> αἰδώς Ἀργεῖοι, κάκ’ ἐλέγχεα, εἶδος ἀγητοί: πὴ ἔραν εὐχωλαί, ὅτε δὴ φάμεν εἴναι ἄριστοι, ὡς ὅποτ’ ἐν Λήμνῳ κενεαυχέες ἠγοράσθη, ἔσθοντες κρέα πολλά βοῶν ὀρθοκαιράων πίνοντες κρητῆρας ἐπιστεφέας οἴνοιο...

> Shame, you Argives, poor nonentities splendid to look on. Where are our high words gone, when we said that we were the bravest? Those words you spoke before all in hollow vaunting at Lemnos when you were filled with abundant meat of the high-horned oxen and drank from the great bowls filled to the brim with wine . . .

---

In this passage Agamemnon addresses the Achaean army as a whole without reference to rank. Agamemnon’s rebuke indicates that reciprocity was guaranteed to him at a feast. The men are now not fulfilling their prior obligations as promised, and this becomes a source of shame for them and frustration for Agamemnon.\(^{38}\)

It is evident that such feasting is hierarchical and is used to establish and maintain vertical relationships. According to Murray, “the attracting of support from outside the family was achieved through displays of generosity, and in particular through the use of surplus agricultural produce for the feasting and entertainment of male companions.”\(^{39}\) Another scholar concludes, “accordingly, there is an emphasis on a balanced reciprocity between those feasting one another; guests at a feast were expected in turn to reciprocate in some fashion.”\(^{40}\) In the cases of Odysseus, Menestheus, and the Greek host, Agamemnon expects to earn their military service in repayment for feasting them.

Wine-drinking plays an important role within the aristocratic networks of feasting in the epics.\(^{41}\) The possession of wine serves as a status symbol: Agamemnon’s tents are full of Thracian wine\(^{42}\) which is brought in daily (9.71-72). The Atreidai enjoy wine that is gifted to them, while, in contrast, the rest of the army drinks wine which

---

\(^{38}\) On the correlation between a portion of honor (γέρας) and one’s virtue or excellence (ἄρετή), see Ando (2004) 89.

\(^{39}\) O. Murray (1983) 196.

\(^{40}\) Rundin (1996) 193.

\(^{41}\) Wine-drinking in the epics has recently been treated by Ando (2004), who discusses many of the passages above within a hierarchical framework. While Ando cogently addresses social functions of wine \textit{per se} (distinct from the feast), she neglects to take into account the important works of Van Wees (1995), Rundin (1996), and Sherratt (2004) (to which she may not have had access as it was published in the same year as Ando’s own work), among others, works from which I think the scope of her discussion and analysis would have benefitted.

\(^{42}\) On vintages such as Thracian, Pramnian, and Lemnian in the epics, see Sherratt (2004) 324-325, Papakonstantinou (2009) 13-14.
they must purchase (Il.7.470-474).\footnote{Ando (2004) 88.} Among Odysseus’ treasures in his storeroom in Ithaca are jars of aged sweet wine which contain a divine, unmixed drink (ἄκρατον θείον ποτόν, Od.2.340-342).\footnote{Papakonstantinou (2009) 14.} Wine and drinking accoutrement as objects used in the practice of gift exchange can also signify elite status and instantiate hierarchical relationships in the epics. Elaborate cups and kraters can be given as lavish xenia gifts and tokens of the host’s elite, aristocratic status, such as the drinking cup and krater forged by Hephaestus; they were later gifted to the Sidonian king Phaedimus and eventually given to Telemachus by Menelaus (Od.4.587-619).\footnote{Sherratt (2004) 307-308, Papakonstantinou (2009) 15.} Special vintages can also be uncorked and enjoyed as a symbol of the elevated status of host and/or guest.\footnote{Other gifts, e.g. Od.9.196-205 Odysseus given a silver krater and twelve jars of unmixed wine by Maro; Od.9.347-350 Odysseus gives Polyphemus wine; Od.8.430-431 Odysseus given a golden wine cup (ἄλεισον) by Alcinous; Il.24.234-235 Priam gifted with a very beautiful cup (δέπας περικάλλες). On gift-exchange of drinking accoutrement in the iron age, see Coldstream (1983) (where he calls such vessels “symptic”).} Special vintages can also be uncorked and enjoyed as a symbol of the elevated status of host and/or guest.\footnote{Od.3.390-395 and Il.9.202-204, the latter for which it is potency rather than age which is the focus (on which passage and interpretation, see below); cf. Papakonstantinou (2009) 15.}

The act of drinking of wine shares similar social dynamics to those attributed to the practice of feasting. Wine too can function as an indicator not only of elite status, as indicated above, but also of heroic status. In addition to the choice cuts of meat, heroes may receive extra honors of wine, as does Idomeneus in the Iliad (here again, rebuked by Agamemnon) (4.257-264):

\begin{quote}
'Ιδομενεύ περὶ μὲν σε τίῳ Δαναῶν ταχυψόλων ἠμὲν ἐνὶ πτολέμῳ ἡδ' ἀλλοὶ ἐπὶ ἑργῷ ἡδ' ἐν δαιθ', ὅτε πέρ τε γερούσιον ἀθόπα ὕιν Ἀργείων οἴ οἱ πριστοὶ ἐνὶ κρητῆρι κέρωνται. εἴ περ γάρ τ' ἀλλοι γε κάρη κομώντες Ἀχαιαὶ δαιτὸν πίνωσιν, σὸν δὲ πλείον δέπας αἰεὶ ἐστὶν', ὡς περ ἔμοι, πέειν ὅτε θυμὸς ἀνώγοι. ἀλλ' ὅρσευ πόλεμον δ' ὤις πάρος εὐχειει εἶναι.
\end{quote}
I honour you, Idomeneus, beyond the fast-mounted Danaans whether in battle, or in any action whatever, whether it be at the feast, when the great men of the Argives blend in the mixing bowl the gleaming wine of the princes. Even though all the rest of the flowing-haired Achaians drink out their portion, still your cup stands filled forever even as mine, for you to drink when the pleasure takes you. Rise up then to battle, be such as you claimed in time past.

Agamemnon rewards Ideomeneus with both food and wine, but it is the wine in this passage which reflects Idomeneus’ elevated status and privilege. Even among the elite gathering of the best of the Achaians (Ἀργείων οἱ ἄριστοι), Idomeneus receives a prized portion equal to that of Agamemnon.

Wine-drinking and feasting play an important role in the heroic dynamic. On what portion and by whose generosity one dines reflects one’s status of inclusion within the heroic community. The habits of heroic feasting and wine-drinking and the dynamics they instantiate thus create an atmosphere to heroic commensality that will be shown to be substantially different to the commensality of the symposium. The practices of feasting are not the symposium. Yet encoded within the ‘epic’ narrative of feasting, as I shall argue in subsequent chapters, is the discourse of the symposium.

**Synchronism between the proto-symposium and the performance of the Homeric epics**

It is a standard assumption, based on a macro-view of feasting and wine-drinking in the epics similar to the one above, that the Homeric epics are not aware of the institution of the symposium. Such was the assertion first made by Peter Von der Mühll in 1926. The epics present a form of commensality categorically different than the symposium, as I will explain in Chapter 2. The symposium will be shown to be a
highly stylized form of commensality, one which is differentiated from other forms of commensality or wine-drinking by specific talk, gestures, and accoutrement. Heroic feasting as it is presented in the epics is, at first glance, significantly different. The surface level of the narrative does not present the audience with a symposium.

Rather, it presents us with heroic feasting. The abundance and recurrence of feasting activities in the epics allows the formation of the category “heroic feasting.” It is a type-scene as it reflects certain patterns of narrative which tend to occur in similar sequences, and it is easily recognizable as a category to an audience. As a category, heroic feasting is not the symposium: the two forms of commensality are categorically different.

Viewing the forms of commensality found in the epics and in the real-world symposium as categories is instructive for understanding why heroic feasting is not the symposium. But while the categories of “heroic feasting” and “symposium” afford a macro-view understanding of forms of commensality, such narrowly defined categories can obstruct our ability to recognize subtle patterns at work in the narrative. The inadequacy of categorical definitions was demonstrated in the discussion of Odyssey 6 above. The description of Scheria where Odysseus arrives has no ostensible connections to colonizing narratives. The Odyssey’s ‘epic’ narrative is not a ‘colonial’ narrative. Yet the patterns of colonial discourse are also evident in that passage. It is only when implicit readings are taken into consideration that additional meanings are recognized.

The narrative of heroic feasting can be examined in a similar way. As categories, heroic feasting and the symposium are different practices. Below the level of “category,” however, there are patterns of markers in several episodes in both epics
that suggest a sympotic discourse. Although feasts in the epics are categorically different from symposia, patterns of markers of sympotic discourse apparent in their depiction demand a closer examination. The sympotic discourse implicitly and potentially communicated to the external audience will be explored in subsequent chapters. In the following sections, I outline the historical and chronological evidence for the inclusion of a sympotic discourse within the Homeric epics. My position rests on two main points that will be explored below. Firstly, already in the 8th century, Greek peoples are participating in commensal activities which begin to take a form resembling the symposium itself. Such 'proto'-sympotic activities are evidenced by a graffito on a cup unearthed from the tomb of a teenager. Secondly, the 8th century is the same time period in which performances of the epics only begin to become stabilized, a process of diminishing fluidity of performance which does not stabilize until perhaps as late as the early 6th century.

**Nestor’s cup and the proto-symposium**

The position that the Homeric epics are unaware of the symposium largely rests on chronological assumptions about the date of the symposium in relation to the Homeric epics. The symposium is considered to be a mid- to late 7th-century import from the Near East. The epics are thought to pre-date this time period, having already reached a fixed state in the 8th century. While it is not my intention to reinvigorate debate on the dating of either the epics or the symposium, I shall demonstrate that it is not a foregone conclusion that the epics pre-date the symposium. On the contrary, the epics were in a fluid state of performance precisely at the time when the institution of
Chapter 1: The Homeric Epics and the Proto-Symposium

The symposium was developing from its proto-stages into its more recognizable, classical shape, and the two activities co-existed for a century or more.

The traditional dating and origin for the symposium rest on the assumption that reclining is synonymous with the symposium. Depictions or descriptions of reclining at a banquet are used as evidence for the existence of the symposium. Reclining thus becomes a “tracer” of sorts by which sympotic activities are evidenced. Reclining at a banquet begins to appear in Greek iconography in the late 7th century. Often the so-called “Chest of Cypselus” described by Pausanias (5.19.6-7) is cited as evidence of early reclining symposia. The chest was allegedly the same one in which Cypselus was ensconced as a baby (mid- to late 7th century), while iconographic comparison between Pausanias’ description and realia more securely places the date shortly after 600. According to Pausanias, depicted on it was a reclining banquet with Dionysus, Odysseus, and Circe. A group of Corinthian kraters, the most famous of which is the Eurytios krater, provide the only extant evidence of the reclining banquet. The krater, dating to c. 600-590, depicts Herakles reclining at a banquet. Depictions of reclining are considered to be influenced by art from the Near East, an influence potentially traceable to a relief from Nineveh of c. 640 BCE depicting King Assurbanipal reclining at a banquet.

Descriptions of reclining at a banquet begin to appear in Greek literature at about the same time, if not slightly earlier. Alcman (fr. 19 L.-P., see below, Chapter 2)

---

describes a banquet at which there are “seven couches” amid cakes and cups,\(^{52}\) suggesting a reclining banquet, that is, a symposium. His work is dated to the late 7\(^{th}\) century.\(^{53}\) Alcaeus, working in a slightly later time period, the early 6\(^{th}\) century,\(^{54}\) provides us with our first attestation of the word “symposion.”\(^{55}\) As in iconography, literary descriptions of the reclining banquet in the Near East also pre-date the literary descriptions in Greece. The prophet Amos (fl. first half of 8\(^{th}\) century)\(^{56}\) provides our first literary attestation of reclining at a feast (6.4-7):

Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory,
and lounge on their couches,
and eat lambs from the flock,
and calves from the stall;
who sing idle songs to the sound of the harp,
and like David improvise on instruments of music;
who drink wine from bowls,
and anoint themselves with the finest oils,
but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph!
Therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile,
and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away.\(^{57}\)

The 8\(^{th}\)-century prophet makes explicit references to what could plausibly be described as a symposium. The targets of his reproach recline while feasting, sing while drinking, and enjoy luxurious unguents.

Some scholars take the preceding evidence as grounds for establishing that the symposium was an institution imported from the Near East in the mid-7\(^{th}\) century.

---

\(^{52}\) O. Murray (1994) 48. On the fragment, see below, Chapter 2.

\(^{53}\) New Pauly s.v. “Alcman.”

\(^{54}\) New Pauly s.v. “Alcaeus.”


\(^{56}\) Coogan (2001) 1302.

BCE. The chronology necessary for this conclusion requires a precision in the dating which asks too much of the evidence. It is highly unlikely that the appearance of reclining at a banquet in the literary and iconographic record corresponds to its appearance in the real world. On the contrary, the appearance of depictions of this sort of banquet presumably predicates the fact that the reclining banquet is reasonably diffuse among Greek culture. The representation of a reclining banquet in art or literature can thus only be taken as a terminus ante quem. It is also a flawed assumption that reclining at a banquet is particularly Near Eastern. Before the era of temple construction, Greeks are known to have reclined on stibades - make-shift couches - for religious festivals.

The most convincing evidence to challenge the position that the symposium is a Near Eastern import in the mid- 7th century is a Rhodian kotyle found in Pithecussae known as “Nestor’s Cup.” The cup was unearthed from the grave of an adolescent boy. The grave and its contents are dated to c.720 BCE. The cup is remarkable neither for its craftsmanship nor material, but for a retrograde graffito on it:

Νέστορος : ε[ίμ][έ] : εὕποτ[ον] : ποτέριον :

hός δ’ ἀν τόδε πίεσι : ποτερ[ό] : αὐτίκα κένον

hémeros hαιρέσει : καλλιστε[φά]νο : Ἀφροδίτες

---

60 Burkert (1991) 18. Topper (2009) argues that Athenian vase-painting evidences the belief among Athenians that reclining was indigenous to Greece.
61 Ridgway (1992) 55-57; cf. Jeffrey (1961) 235 for terminus ante quem as 700. The cup and inscription could well be earlier: it has been proposed to move the absolute chronology for Late Geometric settlements in Sicily to 825-750/700. See the brief discussion by De Angelis (2007) 135.
I am the cup of Nestor good for drinking.
Whoever drinks from this cup, desire for beautifully-crowned Aphrodite will seize him instantly.  

Many aspects of the graffito make it an extraordinary find. It is one of the earliest examples of written Greek after the Mycenaean era. The lines are metrical, and, remarkably, are separated at verse-end by a line-break. We can assume that this is deliberate: the lines are so carefully written that they appear stoichemetric.

The cup claims to belong to a Nestor. It is possible that the cup did in fact belong to a person named Nestor, since heroic names are rare but not unheard of for the late 8th century. More probable is that the graffito on the cup intends to allude to the mytho-poetic character Nestor of Pylos. Cups of Nestor are known from both the *Iliad* (1.632-637) and the *Odyssey* (3.51-53), and may be referenced in the *Cypria* (Proclus, cf. fr. 17 Bernabé). It is unlikely that the inscription directly refers to any one of these passages. The appearance of a cup of Nestor in the *Iliad, Odyssey, and Cypria* suggests, rather, that a cup commonly figures in mytho-poetic traditions about Nestor. The graffito from the Pithecussan cup, then, likely references a general tradition rather than any one particular textual instantiation of it.

---

65 The last two verses are hexameters. The first verse has an uncertain meter; it may be a form of iambic trimeter, or it may not be in meter at all. Hansen (1976) 35-40 discusses at length the possibilities of meter (he concludes, followed by Powell (1991) 165 that the first line is probably prose).
66 No mark or punct is apparent to signify verse end.
67 O. Murray (1994) 47 remarks on the neatness of the inscription and Jeffrey (1961) 236 notes that the letters are nearly stoichedon, which, in her view, is more to do with the precision of the inscription rather than a deliberate attempt to adhere to a grid pattern.
68 On which, see Hansen (1976) 33-35.
71 Contra Malkin (1998) 157-159 who readily accepts that the inscription on the cup is a direct allusion to the cup described in the *Iliad*. His position requires that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are fixed texts in the 8th century, a position I do not support; see below.
The verses play on the well-known “I am the cup of so-and-so” ownership formula common on drinking vessels. Several examples provide comparanda of early ownership inscriptions. A lekythos from Cyme, c. 675-650 BCE, for example, bears an inscription which reads:

Ταταίες ἐμὶ λέγοντος ·
ἂς δ' ἂν με κλέψει θυρφλός ἔσται

I am the lekythos of Tataies.
Whoever steals me will go blind.72

Tataies’ cup threatens to blind its thief. The first line of the inscription on Nestor’s cup is similar to that of Tataies’ cup: “I am the cup of Nestor.” The subsequent lines, however, wittily contradict our expectations: the drinker will not go blind but will be struck by sexual desire. The wit plays to the easy-going nature of sympotic activities - an attitude known as euphrosyne which is an aesthetic at the center of sympotic proceedings.73

The unique character of the graffito is clever and unexpected. Often, it is compared to the sympotic game of skolion, in which participants “cap” verses one after the other with witty or amusing verses.74 Thus the cup and its inscription are valued for studies of the symposium because it seems to be the first representation of the sorts of games played at the symposium:

72 Cf. Θεράφος ἐμὶ φύλιζε [Rhodes, ? c. 8th cen.], Θαρίο εἰμὶ ποτέριον [Athens agora, c. 650 BCE], Δολίωνός ἐμὶ φυλίζη [Smyrna, end 7th cen.]; O. Murray (1994) 50.
73 See below, Chapter 2.
74 For the graffito as evidence for sympotic activity in the 8th century: Węcowski (2002a) 633-634, Latacz (1994) 362-365, Danek (1994/1995) 41, O. Murray (1994) 48-51 and passim. On skolion, see below, Chapter 2. It is worthwhile to note that the restoration of ἔστα to the first line would fit the skolion context as well, and is perhaps even more suitable to the types of games played at the symposium. Games such as ti kalliston, discussed in Chapter 2, tend to be impersonal and thus more adaptable to a symposiast’s particular joke. To inscribe a cup with an ephemeral game may seem odd; for comparanda, see Csapo and Miller (1991) on a kottabos-toast inscribed on a red-figured cup, which they take to read: “For whom [shall I toss] the wine lees?” “For Laches!” “For Lykos” “For the handsome Euthymides!”
activities that we know typically happen at symposia. It is perhaps too strong to label the inscription as “sympotic,” but it does exhibit characteristics that might represent nascent stages of “sympotic” attitudes or even games. In fact, when Rhys Carpenter studied the inscription, he wrote: “How an advanced sixth century graffito could appear on a late eighth or early seventh century Aegean vase is anyone’s conjecture. Perhaps Nestor found the skyphos in a family vault . . . and adopted it for his symposia.”

Though Carpenter was interested in the letter shapes and technical aspects of the inscription, that he found the inscription appropriate for a symposium is significant. Despite this statement being somewhat of an afterthought in Carpenter’s review, it leads one to question when something can appropriately be called “sympotic” or not. Arguments and theories about the dating and origin of the symposium presuppose that the symposium somehow appeared in its fully-fledged form ex nihilo at some specific date. The 8th-century graffito cannot establish that aristocrats were participating in a fully-fledged, fully-evolved symposium in 725 BCE in Pithecussae. What it can tell us is that activities reflecting what we understand to be sympotic were taking place at that time.

Thus the inscription on the so-called Nestor’s cup gives us a number of points of information about drinking practices in the mid-8th century. The inscription is different from other ownership inscriptions. It is in meter, which makes it poetical and distinguishes it from other inscriptions on other cups. We know the symposium was the common, though not exclusive, locus for the performance of poetry in later centuries. It is also argued that the inscription could be an early form of the game of

75 Carpenter (1963) 85.
skolion, a game played characteristically at a symposium. Features that suggest this are the line breaks, the surprising wit expressed in the outcome of a possible theft, as well as the mention of Aphrodite, whose relation to Eros cannot be mistaken. Due to the fact that this artefact is unique, we cannot stretch the evidence too far. We can, however, contextualize the inscription within an extraordinary setting. This points to the existence of a separate drinking occasion which may not have been everyday in nature and which may have featured poetic gaming. The inscription does not point to a symposium per se, but does suggest something towards the symposium.

I argue that, based on the evidence above, we should understand the symposium within a more flexible framework. Instead of trying to explain or understand how or when “the symposium” appeared ex nihilo with its concomitant accoutrement and activities (to be explored in Chapter 2), we should rather understand it as an evolving institution which takes shape over several decades or even a century or more. I thus propose “stages” of the symposium. The inscription on the Pithecussan cup represents what I term throughout this study a ‘proto’ stage of the symposium. As early as the 8th century social drinking reaches a state that begins to resemble the symposium. Over the next century, lyric and elegiac poetry, largely accepted to have been composed for performance and re-performance at symposia,76 begins to circulate. By the 6th century, the symposium is undoubtedly a fully-fledged institution, evidenced primarily by the fact that specific drinking practices are now called the “symposium.”77 Of course, the ways in which audiences experience and recognize the symposium from the 8th to 6th

76 See in particular Rösler (1980), Bowie (1986).
77 See discussion on Alcaeus as the first poet to use the term symposion above.
centuries shift over time. I shall address this aspect in Chapter 2 when I have discussed the markers of the symposium.

**The Date of the Homeric Epics**

The date of the Homeric epics is a notoriously controversial issue and I am not concerned with solving it.\(^78\) It will suffice to make a brief methodological statement before moving on to a discussion of sympotic markers and discourse in the following chapter. In my understanding of the “texts” of the Homeric epics, I follow Nagy in his ‘evolutionary’ model. A persistent and major problem facing Homerists is how to reconcile the oral origins of the poems as posited by Parry and Lord with the existence of authoritative texts.\(^79\) That is, how did the oral performances of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* come to be written down? One of the factors in this quandary is performance. The work of Parry and Lord demonstrates that oral performance does not mean the recitation of a memorized text, but rather is to be understood as composition-in-performance.\(^80\) This means that no two performances are exactly the same. A written text, then, would have no purpose or authority.

Nagy bridges the supposed gap between oral theory and written text with his ‘evolutionary’ model.\(^81\) The performance of the epics ‘evolves’\(^82\) or ‘crystallizes’ from oral to written over centuries of performances. This is a process from fluid performances, which allow varying degrees of improvisation, to a rigid one, in which

---

\(^78\) Burgess (2001) 49-53 has a brief yet cogent discussion of the issues surrounding the dating of the epics.
\(^79\) Parry (1971), Lord (1960).
\(^80\) Lord (1960) 13, Nagy (1990a) 19-29.
\(^81\) Discussed most recently in Nagy (2009) 4-5. See also his fullest treatment of his evolutionary model (1996a) 29-112; cf. (1996b) 107-206.
\(^82\) Nagy is careful to avoid any Darwinian sense of progressive superiority in his use of “evolutionary.”
improvisation disappears and the performance becomes a canonical ‘text.’ In Burkert’s words, audiences stop requesting a performance of the “Death of Patroclus” or the “Ransom of Hector,” and begin to ask instead for the Iliad. The ‘evolution’ of some of the epic traditions into the Iliad and the Odyssey, or indeed other epics, may coincide with the reign of the Pisistratids, and specifically the Panathenaic rule, to be discussed in Chapter 3. What is important is that during the 8th, 7th, and even into the 6th centuries, the epics had not yet reached a fully rigid form and thus were not wholly resistant to improvisation. It is therefore likely that elements from archaic society are incorporated in the epics, as noted by Burgess (2001: 52):

... the Homeric poems, whatever their date, cannot be viewed as alien to the Archaic Age. As the Greek renaissance is dated earlier and deemed less dramatic, even those who insist on an eighth-century Homer will have difficulty in portraying such a poet as living in a radically different world than what poets in the seventh and sixth century experienced or working with radically different mythological traditions than those of the Archaic Age.

The performers of the epics are working within a flexible tradition well into the 7th century and perhaps into the 6th century. Performers are “composers-in-performance,” shaping and adapting their craft for audience enjoyment. Overt incorporations of real-world experiences such as colonial enterprise or the symposium would ruin the remote glory of ages past achieved by epic distancing and archaizing. Yet subtle reflections of such real-world experiences (which I argue can be described as

---

83 Nagy (1996b) 107-108.
84 Burkert (1987) 48. See also Cook (1995) 3, although he posits that the Odyssey has reached its fully written form by the mid-6th century.
discourses) reveal that the epics are not fixed rigidly in the past. On the contrary, as long as the flexibility of composition-in-performance allows, the epics are contemporary in their outlook, incorporating contemporary ways of speaking about experiences and giving a rich complexity to an ostensibly archaized narrative.

Thus, “contemporary” is not limited to one performance in the 8th century; rather, for my purposes, it describes the period of fluid composition-in-performance of the epics, from the 8th until perhaps as late as the early 6th centuries. The following is the schematic I propose to describe contemporary interaction between the symposium, from its proto-stages to a fully-evolved form, and the performances of the epics.\footnote{I base the stages of epic performance on the works of Nagy, discussed most recently in Nagy (2009) 4-5. See also his fullest treatment of his evolutionary model (1996a) 29-112; cf. (1996b) 107-206.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Symposium</th>
<th>Epic Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8th century</td>
<td>proto-symposium, evidenced by inscription on Nestor’s cup</td>
<td>fluid; no texts or authoritative performances; performers draw upon contemporary attitudes and practices with reasonable license; aoidei, some creative rhapsodic performers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th century</td>
<td>symposium evolving; lyric poetry of Archilochus and Callinus attest to sympotic activities (see Chapter 2)</td>
<td>fluid state of performances becoming more restricted; texts or authoritative performances possibly in circulation and becoming recognized; contemporary attitudes and practices still incorporated but with less ease; creative rhapsodic performers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th century</td>
<td>symposium is locus of aristocratic commensality; term symposium attested for first time</td>
<td>performances of epics become rigid; specific performances considered authoritative and potentially regulated (i.e. Panathenaic Rule); contemporary attitudes and practices suppressed; mimetic rhapsodes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Figure 1.} Chronological table of the symposium and epic performance.
It is during this “contemporary” time when there is an overlap between the developing symposium and the fluid state of composition-in-performance of the epics. As I label it in my study, this overlap is the time period in which creative rhapsodic performers are composing and recomposing works for various audiences (to be discussed more fully in Chapter 3). For a century or more, the epics are performed to an audience for whom the symposium is becoming a locus of commensality. In the following chapters I explore the traces of the symposium in the epics. An analysis of such traces will not only contribute to our knowledge of the poetics of the epics, but also our knowledge of how character behavior is implicitly constructed within the epics.
CHAPTER 2:

THE SYMPOSIUM:
MARKERS AND THEIR EMPLOYMENT

In the previous chapter I explored the typical shape of heroic feasting. Feasting was seen to instantiate and validate heroic status and thus was an integral and richly symbolic practice for heroic characters. The symposium is categorically different from heroic styles of commensality. In the former, men recline, enjoy wine, and trade poetry and table-talk. The ideal atmosphere is one of egalitarianism, group cohesion, euphrosyne and charis. The ability to navigate the activities of and contribute to the atmosphere of the symposium is restricted to those on the inside. Activities are controlled in their employment and meaning in order to differentiate insiders from outsiders.

As explored in the previous chapter, the patterns in narratives about colonization have allowed scholars to identify discourses not strongly incorporated into the surface narrative of the epics. Similarly, patterns in activities, entertainment, and physical accoutrement of the symposium are evident in the epics, allowing for the examination of sympotic discourse. Within the space of the symposium, aristocrats engage in activities and adhere to aesthetics which make them insiders and differentiate them from outsiders. Words, gestures, attitudes, and even physical objects
may carry a range of meaning outside the symposium which is far wider than the range of meaning they carry within the symposium. The meanings of these markers are limited and controlled by the participants in the symposium in order to include some participants but exclude others. When some of these units of discourse – which alone and unaccompanied by other units can carry a wide range of meaning – appear in constellation with each other, they can implicitly suggest a sympotic discourse recognizable to an external audience.

Below I outline what I define as sympotic discourse. This will primarily be a study of markers – the signs, gestures, behavior, and accoutrement – which in aggregate give rise to a discourse which a contemporary audience would understand as belonging primarily to the symposium rather than the distanced world of heroic epic. The symposium is an evolving institution, not a fully-fledged institution that appeared *ex nihilo* at a specific date. It has its beginnings in the 8th century. In Chapter 1 (see especially Fig.1), this earliest stage was termed the proto-symposium in order to distinguish the ways in which an 8th-century audience would perceive activities of drinking from the ways in which a 6th-century one would. What the latter would identify as a symposium, the former would not recognize as an institution in such a formalized state. The drinking habits of select 8th-century audiences are not equal to the commensal drinking habits of 6th-century elites, where gaming and rules of behavior are highly stylized and more formalized. The way in which audiences experience the symposium from the 8th- to the 6th-centuries shifts over time, from when the symposium is in its ‘proto’ stages to a later, fully-fledged version. With regard

---

1 In Chapter 1, “contemporary” was defined as the 8th to early 6th centuries in order to recognize the fluid status of epic composition-in-performance.
to markers for the activities, gestures, and relationships instantiated at the symposium, however, archaeological and literary evidence from the 8th- to 6th- centuries suggests that these in fact do not shift.

In my explanation of markers, I rely on our lengthiest and most detailed descriptions of early symposia. These are the descriptions found in Xenophanes (fr. 1), Aristophanes (Wasps), Plato (Symposium), and Xenophon (Symposium). The lyric and elegiac poetry of the 7th and 6th centuries, largely accepted to have been created for performance and re-performance in the symposium, offers additional information. I offer text and translation of passages referred to under each sub-heading in Appendix 1. The markers of sympotic discourse are organized under five headings:

1 Material culture
2 Preliminaries
3 Drinking Games
4 Circulation and distribution
5 Aesthetics

The headings 1-5 will be used to create a framework for examining a number of passages in the Iliad and the Odyssey. The headings will be explained in Part I, while the basis for the framework and how I will apply it will be discussed in Part II.

\(^2\) See in particular Rösler (1980) and Bowie (1986).
Markers of the Symposium

1 Material Culture

1.a Space – Exclusive gathering of men, reclining, the andron

Texts: Aristophanes, Wasps 1208-1215; Plato, Symposium 175c-e, 176a, 177d, 213c; Xenophon, Symposium 1.8.

Under the heading of space is the physical space where the symposium took place – the andron, discussed below – as well as two factors influenced by the limits of this space: the exclusive gathering of men and their posture, i.e. reclining. Men recline on their left sides in pairs on banqueting couches (klinai/κλίναι) at a symposium. The number of participants is usually between fourteen and thirty – between seven and fifteen couches – although symposia involving fewer participants are attested. Reclining marks participation in and acceptance within the sympotic group. In Xenophon’s Symposium, for example, the youth Autolycus sits at the drinking party, while the rest of the men recline (1.8). The banqueting couches are placed along the walls of a square or rectangular room. Such an arrangement ensures that no one person has an obstructed view of the rest of the drinking group. As they recline on the couches along the walls, the group also forms a circle in their arrangement, allowing no one participant to have a more prominent position than any other. The placement of the couches thus marks the physical space as egalitarian, an aesthetic reflected in the types of activities performed at symposia, to be explored below.

There are also some indications, however, that participants were seated in such a way as to indicate hierarchies. In Plato’s Symposium, Phaedrus reclines first (πρῶτος κατάκειται, 177d), while Agathon reclines last (ἔσχατον κατακείμενον, 175c), indicating

---

that, at least in some symposia, some seats were considered better than others.4

Reclining arrangements can also be made to accommodate men of different
temperaments or drinking capacities.5 While egalitarianism and group cohesion are
important aesthetics at the symposium, it is misleading to understand that the status
one carries outside the symposium is entirely elided within the space of the
symposium.6

Classical symposia are considered to have taken place in the andron (ἀνδρών), a
room in the house specially designated for men’s drinking activities.7 Andrones have
typical features that make them easy to identify in the archaeological record: an off-
center door to accommodate the arrangement of klinai, a raised surface along the edges
of the room upon which the klinai are placed, and lavish decorations such as floor
mosaics that mark the space off from the rest of the house, which otherwise had little
decoration.8 Some mosaics may have been placed so that the best vantage point for
viewing was from the couch next to the door, suggesting that that specific couch may
have been the “first” place at a symposium, if “first” place was designated at any

---

4 Tomlinson (1970) 309 suggests that the “first” place is next to the door on the basis of Plato’s text, but,
as Westgate (1997-1998) 104 rightly points out, Plato’s text does not support that assumption. See below,
however, where the participant reclining on the couch by the door would have the best view of the
mosaic, suggesting that the couch by the door is a good candidate for “first” position (if one is granted).
5 Plu. Mor. 1.2.618.
6 Davidson (1997) 44: “the arrangement was less a static circle of equality than a dynamic series of
circulations, evolving in time as well as space, with the potential for uncoiling into long journeys,
expeditions, and voyages.”
7 O. Murray (1990) 6. On the various shapes and sizes the andron could take, see Bergquist (1990).
8 On the decoration and lay-out of andrones at Olynthus, see Robinson and Graham (1938) 171-179 (179-
185 on andrones elsewhere), Nevett (1999) 70, and Cahill (2002) 180. In some houses in Olynthus, even the
passage through the house on the way to the andron is richly decorated. For house A.vi.4, for example,
Westgate (1997-1998) 100 describes a “hierarchy” of floor decoration leading up to the andron:
cobblestones for the court, mortar for the anteroom, and decorated pebble mosaic in the andron. On
at Olynthus are the only rooms which consistently have walls of plaster, another indication of the care
and attention paid to andrones as compared to other rooms in the house.
particular drinking party. Windows may have also opened the “inside” space of the andron into the “outside” space of the street, so that sympotic practices, although differentiating and exclusive, were conspicuously so.

Unfortunately, there is very little evidence that can establish that archaic symposia regularly took place in andrones. Houses at Thorikos (8th century) and Vroulia (7th-6th centuries) have been identified as having early forms of andrones, but the evidence for this identification is not strong. The ambiguity among ancient Greeks between public and private (and thus religious and sympotic) makes other spaces where ritual drinking can be demonstrated to have taken place difficult to define as specifically sympotic. In these cases, their designation as andrones can be arbitrary. The justification for making a distinction between men’s and women’s quarters in Greek houses has also come into question. For these reasons, it cannot be said with certainty that the andron is an essential marker for sympotic activities.

---

9 Westgate (1997-1998) 104 leaves open the possibility that this is the case, but does not push her position too far due to lack of any evidential support from the literary record. See above.
10 I avoid the terms “public” and “private” when discussing the Greek home, following Nevett (2010) 6-7, who finds no archaeological evidence for the practice of such a strict division in the Greek home. I prefer instead “inside/r” and “outside/r” which, in terms of the drinking space, speak more to the differentiating function of the space rather than specific types of business (“public” or “private”) that go on there.
11 Windows and proximity to the street: Robinson and Graham (1938) 178-179, Jameson (1990) 99, Cahill (2002) 196, Lynch (2007) 243-244. Nevett (1999) 70: “this is the only room in the house whose location is influenced more by the position of the street than by compass orientation;” she does, however, suspect that the windows would have provided limited light to the room (and therefore limited conspicuousness to the street), suggesting by analogy of houses at other sites that the windows would have been small and high up on the wall (70-71). The proximity of andrones to the street can be contrasted with the placement of kitchen-areas, which were usually located on the side of the house which did not face the street (Cahill 2002: 191-192).
12 On the misleading designations of pre-classical andrones, see Nevett (2010) 50-57.
14 E.g. Nevett (1999) 71, finding no evidence for the existence of a gunaiikon in the archaeological record (as opposed to those found in the literary record, e.g. Xen.Oec.9.2-5, Lys.1.9-10; cf. Nevett (1999) 17-18, 37-39), suggests that the andron could function as women’s quarters during the day. See also Jameson (1990) 99-100, 104.
Nevertheless, reclining while drinking within the company of a few men is an activity that can be defined as specific to the symposium, despite our uncertainty of where such practices of reclining and drinking usually take place. We have already seen in the previous chapter the significance attached to reclining at a symposium. Historians have used the practice as a ‘tracer’ of sympotic activities in order to establish the chronology of the symposium. This is because, in the poetic register at least, reclining on couches can often act as a metonym for the symposium, whether the practice can be historically attested at any particular time or not. *Klinai* can often act to mark out the drinking space in place of an explicit description of the room itself.\(^{15}\) Alcman in the late 7\(^{th}\) or early 6\(^{th}\) century\(^{16}\) is our first explicit attestation of *klinai* at banquets (fr. 19 Page):

\[
\begin{align*}
Κλίναι
μὲν ἑπτὰ ταῖ τόσαι τραπέσδαι
μακωνιάν ἄρτων ἐπιστεφοίσαι
λίνω τε σασάμω τε κῆν πελίχναις
Τπεδεστε† χρυσόλκόλλα.
\end{align*}
\]

Seven klinai and as many tables around
With poppy cakes, linseed, and sesame
And honey cakes for the boys
Amid the bowls.\(^{17}\)

The couches are a defining characteristic of Alcman’s banquet: along with sweet snacks and wine they form a composite picture of his party. That he designates seven in his banquet is significant. Seven is the standard number of *klinai* in later symposia, and it is

\(^{15}\) This is not to say that the drinking space itself is not referred to. Alcaeus (fr.357 L. –P.) famously describes a drinking space which has walls decorated with all sorts of flashing shields and weapons. But the ambiguity of this space as public or private leads to more confusion about the drinking space (Rabinowitz (2009) 138-139).

\(^{16}\) On the date of Alcman’s works, see Chapter 1.

tempting to see in “seven klinai” metonymy for the small drinking group of the symposium.\textsuperscript{18}

References to reclining need not be as explicit as that of Alcman. The metonymic function of couches and reclining is also apparent in other lyric and elegiac poetry and is traceable to poets before Alcman’s time. It has long been argued that when Callinus (c.650 BCE)\textsuperscript{19} incites young men to war with the stirring accusation, “how long will you lie there? when will you have a brave heart?” (μέχρις τέο κατάκεισθε; κότ’ ἀλκίμον ἔξετε θυμόν, ὦ νέοι; fr. 1 W), he is not actually out on the battlefield amid a crowd of soldiers. He is instead speaking to his peers at the symposium, where the poem was likely performed and re-performed, and where men would be reclining while enjoying a drink.\textsuperscript{20} Similar arguments have been made for our understanding of Archilochus (fl. c. 670-640)\textsuperscript{21} fr. 2 W.\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{quote}
ἐν δορὶ μέν μοι μᾶζα μεμαγμένη, ἐν δορὶ δ’ οἶνος Ἰσμαρικός· πίνω δ’ ἐν δορὶ κεκλιμένος.
\end{quote}

On my spear is my kneaded barley bread, on my spear is Ismaric wine; I drink, reclining on my spear.\textsuperscript{23}

The poet’s spear need not be taken literally. It transforms from his weapon to the couch upon which he reclines while drinking. Reclining and drinking are activities of the

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{18} Boardman (1990) 124-125.
\textsuperscript{19} New Pauly s.v. “Callinus.”
\textsuperscript{21} New Pauly s.v. “Archilochus.”
\textsuperscript{22} Rankin (1972) 469-474. Bowie (1986) 18n.24 suggests that a gesture would indicate the transition from literal to figurative meaning.
\textsuperscript{23} Alternatively, Rankin (1972) 471: “My bread depends on my spear; my vintage wine depends on it; so do I myself as I drink, for it is my diner’s couch.”
\end{footnotesize}
\end{flushleft}
symposium, and in their parts can suggest the whole.\textsuperscript{24} We cannot solely use poetic descriptions of reclining to attest to such a practice historically,\textsuperscript{25} but it is evident that in the poetic register at least, reclining marks sympotic activities.

Yet reclining is not a \textit{sine qua non} of a symposium. Phocylides, for example, has his symposiasts sitting upright: χρη δ’ ἐν συμποσίωι κυλίκων περινισομενάων ἢδέα κωτίλλοντα καθήμενον οἴνοποτάζειν (fr. 14 Diehl). The imagined context for this poem is explicit (ἐν συμποσίωι). That the symposiasts are sitting rather than reclining does not ruin the image of the symposium. Reclining is indeed an important feature of the symposium, but men need not explicitly recline to be understood as being participants at a symposium.

1.b. Accoutrement –\textit{krater}, cups

Texts: Xenophanes fr. 1.4; Plato, \textit{Symposium} 176a, 176e, 213e-214c; Xenophon, \textit{Symposium} 2.24-26

Greeks characteristically drink their wine diluted with water. According to Hesiod, the ideal ratio is three parts water to one part wine (\textit{Op.} 596), but there is no absolute standard ratio that had to be followed.\textsuperscript{26} Drinking wine neat is characteristic of

\textsuperscript{24} Especially if, as Gentili (1965) (followed by Vetta (1983) xiv-xv, Bowie (1986) 18) argues, this fragment is joined to fr. 4 W., in which Archilochus highlights the difficulty in staying sober while on watch: ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε σὺν κόψων θοίς διὰ σέλματα νηός φοίτα καὶ κολών πώματ᾽ ἀφελκε κάδων, ἀγρεὶ δ’ οἶνον ἐρυθρόν ἀπὸ τρυγός ὑπὲρ κοίλων πώματ’ ὑδέγατε γὰρ ἡμεῖς νήφειν ἐν φυλακῇ τῆδε δυνησόμεθα.

We need not even assume that a couch is necessary to suggest reclining. Some vase-paintings depict symposiasts reclining on the ground on mattresses or wine-skins; see Lynch (2007) 244-245, Topper (2009).

\textsuperscript{25} O. Murray (1994) 51 tries to make such a connection but is not convincing.

\textsuperscript{26} Lissarrague (1990a) 201. For different ratios of wine to water, see Ath.10.426a-427c. Odysseus reports that Maron’s wine is mixed twenty parts water to one part wine (\textit{Od}.9.209-210).
barbarians, or, as we shall see, is ritualized in order to highlight anti-sympotic behavior.

Drinking wine mixed, on the other hand, is a sign of civilized drinking practices. Greeks mix their wine in kraters, large mixing bowls which stand in the center of the drinking space. Kraters are well-attested in the archaeological record and are known to have been in use as early as the Mycenaean period. In the space of the symposium, their meaning narrows to embody the notion of civilized and specifically sympotic drinking. They become, like the idea of reclining, a *pars pro toto* symbol of the symposium. The images below, on the *tondi* of *kylixes*, illustrate this concept:

---

27 Specifically Scythians. Ath. 10.427a-b reports that when Spartans want to drink stronger wine, they ask the symposiarch to “make it Scythian” (ἐπισκύθισον). See also Anacreon (fr. 63 Bergk *ap. Ath. 427b*) for the contrast between civilized and uncivilized drinking in terms of Scythian practices. Burkert (1991) 19 discusses the lack of evidence for mixed wine in Hebrew and Ugaritic sources.

28 The Spartans reportedly forced the helots to drink unmixed wine and parade around the young boys in order to show them what sort of thing being drunk was (Plu. *Lyc.* 28.4-5). On the ritual drinking of unmixed wine at the Anthesteria, see below.

29 On the higher than usual survival of kraters among archaeological remains, see Rabinowitz (2009) 143. Tablets from Pylos and Knossos record a number of specialized vessels including tripod kettles, bowls, jugs, basins, and kraters; cf. Wright (2004) 151. Luke (1994) 23-25 compellingly discusses kraters as a symbol of power in the Homeric epics, noting different episodes in which the krater is used as an indicator of one’s influence (e.g. Agamemnon uses the krater to reference the fact that he died in his home, *Od.* 11.419, while the suitors plot against Telemachus’ power either by military ambush or by poisoning the krater, *Od.* 2.325-350). See also his discussion (1994: 23-25) on the krater in Dark Age Mediterranean trade.

30 The work of François Lissarrague (1990a, 1990b) has been especially influential in this area. For a cogent discussion of the value of Greek vase painting for our knowledge of the symposium with a good discussion of some of the problems of interpreting such paintings, see Steiner (2007) 231-245.
In the above images, the krater acts as a point of reference for the setting. Both of these images show activities that take place beside the krater: that is, at a symposium. Just as reclining and drinking in their parts suggested the whole of the symposium in the poem of Archilochus above, in these images the krater suggests the whole range of sympotic activities.

The synecdochic function of the krater can be identified in the literary register as well, as in this couplet of Theognis (643-644):31

\[
\text{πολλοὶ πάρ κραητῆρι φίλοι γίνονται ἔταῖροι}
\text{ἐν δὲ σπουδαῖοι πράγματι παιρότεροι.}
\]

Many are your friends and comrades beside the krater, but not so many when the enterprise is serious.32

Our only reference point for the imagined context of Theognis’ couplet is the phrase πάρ κραητῆρι. “Beside the krater” here substitutes for the whole of the symposium. Like the act of reclining, however, this \textit{pars pro toto} function of the krater cannot be pushed too far. Of the references cited above for the mixing of wine, only one – Xenophanes – mentions the actual krater in describing the mixing ritual. The other

---

sources allow the fact that the symposiasts are drinking mixed wine to supply the requisite that the krater is present indirectly. We shall see that its presence is indirectly referenced by many other activities of the symposium.

The mixing of the wine in the krater is left to the master of ceremonies – the symposiarch. He can determine the ratio of wine to water to be mixed and is in charge of the drinking: how many kraters are to be mixed, how big the cups are to be, how often draughts are to be made, and even how many toasts will go around. There does not seem to be a standard set of rules or guidelines for how the symposiarch is chosen. The choice of a participant besides the host for the role of symposiarch downplays potential hierarchical stratifications and adds to the egalitarian atmosphere of the proceedings.

Wine is distributed from the krater – usually by a slave boy, as in Figure 2 above – into a cup or cups for the symposiasts. The type of cup from which one drinks can symbolize the civility of the proceedings. Drinking from a small cup, such as the shallow-bodied kylix, can indicate measured drinking, whereas heavy drinkers such as Boeotians and the wine-god himself Dionysus drink from the deep-bodied kantharos, a vessel which is often filled with akratos – unmixed wine. Some cups are shared by all

33 Of course, wine is mixed at times other than the symposium. Wine was drunk at everyday meals. At Olynthus, the majority of kraters were found in houses without andrones, suggesting that either they were used at less formal, non-andron symposia, or they were used in everyday situations not associated with the symposium (Cahill 2002: 186). See below on how the meaning of the krater is narrowed to indicate specifically sympotic activities.

34 See Plu.CQ 620a–622c on the qualities desirable in a symposiarch. Athenaeus claims that treatises on how the symposiarch ought to behave were written by Xenocrates of Chalcedon, Speusippus of the Academy, and Aristotle (3f). The symposiarch can also be called basileus (Plu.CQ 622a), prytanis (Ion of Chios, fr. 26.14 W.), archon (Pl.Lg.640d, Sym.213e), or potarchon (fr.27.9 W.); cf. Dover (1980) 11, Corner (2005) 56 n.33.

35 Corner (2005) 56. On egalitarian relationships, see below.

36 On cups and their significance for drinking parties, see Ar.fr.225 PCG, X.Sym.2.23-6. For these and other references and discussion, see Davidson (1997) 61-69 and discussion below on toasts.
the participants, such as the toasting cup (μετανιπτρίς/μετάνιπτρον) or the cup of friendship (φιλοτησία). The significance of both cups and kraters and the roles that they play in the symposium will be further examined below.

2 Preliminaries

2.a Separation of symposion from deipnon

Texts: Xenophanes, fr.1.2; Aristophanes, Wasps 1216-1217; Plato, Symposium 176a, 213a-e; Xenophon, Symposium 2.1, 3-5.

A proper symposium starts only after tables of food have been removed, although some relishes and small dishes (τραγήματα) are left out.37 This sets the tone for the whole of the symposium as an event ritually demarcated from eating. The symposium is largely focused on pleasure. The consumption of snacks and wine after the meal itself when nourishment needs have already been met highlights the sumptuous and excessive nature of the proceedings.38 Banqueters can sometimes further demarcate the deipnon from the symposium by anointing themselves with unguents and crowning themselves; again, these are activities which fall predominantly within the realm of pleasure.39

---

37 O. Murray (1990) 6. In addition to the texts referenced above, see also Ath.2.38d, 14.642e. But see also Ath.1.11b: “How was it fitting that a table was placed beside Achilles in his grief as it was for revellers for the whole symposium?” It may possibly be, as Corner (2005) 55 n.32 understands, that descriptions of actually removing the tables from the rooms are a metonymic trope representing the separation of the deipnon/symposion, since iconographical evidence normally depicts the tables as still present. For the types of sweets and cakes offered at symposia, see Ath.14.642e-15.665d.


39 Ath.15.685e-f. Plut. Mor. 3.1.645 discusses some of the antidotal properties that the wearing of crowns of specific leaves bring. See also Corner (2005) 55.
2.b. Initial prayers and libations; toasts and compliments

Texts: Xenophanes fr. 1.13-16; Aristophanes, Wasps 1212-1215, 1217; Plato, Symposium 176a; Xenophon, Symposium 2.1

The symposium is further demarcated from the preceding deipnon by the pouring of libations, the performance of hymns or chanting (ᾁσαντες) to gods, as well as prayers. Toasts are raised and compliments to the host can also be offered at the start of the proceedings. In Aristophanes’ Wasps, for example, Bdelucleon’s instructions to his father Philocleon about becoming ξυμποτικός, a suitable sympotic companion, involve complimenting the host’s provisions. Before anything, Philocleon ought to praise the bronzes, gaze at the ceiling, and admire the furnishings of the room (ἐπειτ’ ἐπαίνεσόν τι τῶν χαλκωμάτων, ὀροφήν θέασαι, κρεκάδι’ αὐλῆς θαύμασον, 1214-1215). Also attested at symposia is the toasting of the agathos daimon and the passing of a cup of unmixed wine to each of the guests. Some accounts suggest that symposiasts repeated the name ‘Zeus Soter’ (Zeus the savior) repeatedly to ensure safe drinking. The cup of unmixed wine which is passed around by symposiasts at the toasting of the agathos daimon is the only unmixed wine drunk, at least at an ideal symposium.

---

40 See also Ath.15.692f-693f.
41 For toasts, see also below.
42 For this point, see Ford (1999) 114. This scene is the beginning of a passage which is integral for our understanding of the symposium where Bdelucleon tries to assimilate his father to the lifestyle of the symposium. See further below.
43 Other deities could be invoked, such as Zeus Soter or Hygieia with the passage of the unmixed wine (Ath.692f-693f).
44 Davidson (1997) 46.
3 Drinking Games
Xenophanes, fr. 1.13-24; Aristophanes, Wasps 1170-1264, 1309-1325; Plato, Symposium, passim; Xenophon, Symposium, passim

When preliminary activities are completed, symposiasts spend the rest of the evening’s wine-drinking enjoying entertainment. Some of these forms of entertainment include hired dancers, flute-girls and -boys, and hetairai – courtesans. Other forms involve entertainment provided by the symposiasts themselves in the form of playing poetic games and the recitation of poetry. Such games and trading of poetry play an integral role in the maintenance of the bonds of the drinking-group. Many of the rules governing the kinds of talk and gestures appropriate at a symposium instantiate and validate the insider status of participants and contribute to the ideal aesthetics of the drinking group.

The symposiasts at Plato’s Symposium emphatically banish their outside entertainment in favor of spending the day in the company of one another’s talk (ἡμῶς δὲ διὰ λόγων ἀλλήλοις συνεῖναι τὸ τήμερον, 176e). Talk, in accompaniment with wine, is the basis of the formation of the homosocial, “insider” bonds of the symposium. Good drinking, according to Athenaeus, is being able to hold conversation over the drink. Only degenerates “take delight in their wine not in their drinking companions.”

The scope of appropriate talk narrows in the symposium. In Aristophanes’ Wasps, for example, a significant portion of Philocleon’s training for the symposium is instruction on how to talk properly there. Saying the wrong thing would betray his outsider status (cf. 1228-1230). Anacreon eschews the man who talks of strife and bloody wars as he drinks beside the krater, and prefers instead the man who focuses on

the euphrosyne of the drinking group (fr. 2 W.). Appropriate talk is not simply a matter of content. Symposiasts have certain ways of speaking and playing games that are concomitant with activities around the krater. The rules and methods for talk and games circulate within the closed space of the symposium and differentiate insiders from outsiders. Being conversant with these rules and methods demonstrates one’s inclusion within or exclusion from a drinking group. Below is an examination of some of the games which are known to have been played in symposia and which differentiate sympotic gaming from other types of play.

3.a. *eikasmos*/eikazein (*eικασμός*/eικάζειν*)

A popular game at drinking parties is *eikasmos*/eikazein: ‘likenesses.’ Lysistratus plays this game in Aristophanes’ *Wasps*, likening Philocleon, who is also present at the drinking party, to a *nouveau riche* teenager. Philocleon retorts with his own *eikasmos* (1309-1313):

```
‘ἔοικας ὃ πρεσβύτα νεοπλούτω τρυγὶ
κλητήρι τ’ εἰς ἀχυρμὸν ἀποδεδρακότι.’
ὁ δ’ ἀνακραγὼν ἀντήκασ’ αὐτὸν πάρνοπι
τὰ θρία τοῦ τρίβωνος ἀποβεβληκότι,
Σθενέλῳ τε τὰ σκευάρια διακεκαρμένῳ.
```

“Old fellow, you’re like a *nouveau riche* teenager, or an ass that’s slipped in a bran pile!”

And he bellowed back with his own comparison of Lysistratus to a locust that’s lost the wings off its cloak, or Sthenelus shorn of his stage props.47

---

46 On *euphrosyne*, see below.
Lysistratus provides an example of what Philocleon may be said to resemble (a *nouveau riche* teenager), and Philocleon responds with an *anteikamos*, an *eikamos* in return (Lysistratus is like a locust, etc.).

A popular comparison may have been of Socrates to the Silenus or satyrs. Alcibiades, for example, makes such a comparison (Pl. *Sym.215a*-b; cf. 215c-217a, 221e-222a):

> Σωκράτη δ᾽ ἐγὼ ἐπαινεῖν, ὡς ἄνδρες, οὕτως ἐπιχειρήσω, δι᾽ εἰκόνων ... φημὶ γὰρ δὴ ὅμοιότατον αὐτὸν εἶναι τοῖς σιληνοῖς τούτοις τοῖς ἐν τοῖς ἀρμογλυφείοις καθημένοις, οὕτως ἐργάζονται οἱ δημιουργοὶ σύριγγας ἢ αὐλοῦς ἐχοντας, οἱ διχάδε διοιχθέντες φαίνονται ἐνδοθεν ἀγάλματα ἐχοντες θεών, καὶ φημὶ αὐτοῦ ἔσικεναι αὐτόν τῷ σατύρῳ τῷ Μαρσύᾳ.

The way I shall take, gentlemen, in my praise of Socrates, is by similitudes . . . For I say that he is likest to the Silenus-figures that sit in the statuaries’ shops; those, I mean, which our craftsmen make with pipes or flutes in their hands: when their two halves are pulled open, they are found to contain images of the gods. And I further suggest that he resembles the satyr Marysas . . .

In Xenophon’s *Symposium*, Critobulus also makes a reference to Socrates’ appearance being similar to that of a Satyr (4.19). An aside after his comment, possibly a later interpolation, informs us that Socrates really does happen to look like one (ὁ δὲ Σωκράτης καὶ ἐτύγχανε προσεμφερῆς τούτοις ὄν, X. *Sym.4.19*; cf. 5.8).

Comparisons of this sort are often in the second-person, and are often skoptic (from σκόπτω ‘jeering’, ‘jesting’), as they are in the example from Aristophanes above.

The game can also incorporate comparisons in the third-person. In these cases the

---


comparisons are commonly to nature and are often more reflective than skeptic, as in
this eikasmos in a fragment of Alexis (46 PMG):

δμοιοτατος άνθρωπος οίνω τήν φύσιν
τρόπον τιν’ έστι. καὶ γάρ οίνον τὸν νέον
πολλῆς’ στ’ ἀνάγκη καὶ τὸν ἄνδρ’ ἀποξέσαι
πρώτοστον ἀμφεβρίσαι τ’, ἀπανθήσαντα δὲ
σκληρὸν γενέσθαι, παρακμάσαντα δ’ ἄν λέγω
tοῦτων ἀπάντων, ἀπαρθόντα τὴν ἄνω
ταύτην ἁμοιαν ἐπιπολάζοσαν, τότε
πότιμον γενέσθαι καὶ καταστήναι πάλιν,
ηδύν θ’ ἀπασι τοιπλοὶ πον διάτελεῖν.

A man is in a way most like wine in nature. It’s inescapable that both
wine and man at first ferment and offend, but then, after the bloom has
gone, turn bitter. Now, though, having peaked out and passed all this
that I mention, and been skimmed free of that stupidity that had risen to
the top, they both calm down and become palatable, and sweet to all for
the future they remain.

Unlike the games of eikasmos played by Philocleon and Lysistratus which are second-
person, this eikasmos is third-person. The comparison is not overtly skeptic. Philocleon
and Lysistratus make ad hominem attacks on each other’s characters. In the fragment
above, the comparison is not critical, but instead more “reflective.” The game of

---

50 On the different types of eikasmos, see Pelliccia (2002) 201-208. While I find Pelliccia’s general
categorization of eikasmos helpful, I hesitate to fully endorse his division of eikasmoi as skeptic/2nd person
and philosophical/3rd person. This categorization of an eikasmos as skeptic vs. philosophical is somewhat
arbitrary and perhaps reflective more of the author’s taste than any real division felt by the ancients.
Alcibiades’ comparison of Socrates to a Silenus in Plato’s Symposium, for example, which is a 2nd person
eikasmos, would be considered skeptic rather than philosophical by Pelliccia (though not explicitly stated,
cf. p. 207), although to me Alcibiades’ comparison of Socrates to a Silenus does not appear to be on a
noticeably different register than the 3rd-person “philosophical” eikasmos in the example from Alexis
below.

eikasmos can take either 2nd or 3rd person form, and is a game typically played at symposia.\(^{52}\)

3.b. *skolion* (σκολιόν)

Another game commonly played at symposia is *skolion*. *Skolion* is a game in which participants “cap” each other with poetic verses. The *locus classicus* for our understanding of the performance of this game is Aristophanes, *Wasps* 1222-1249. In this passage, Bdelucleon tries to assimilate his father Philocleon to the lifestyle of the symposium. In addition to dressing him up properly and teaching him how to recline, Bdelucleon teaches his father how to play *skolion* properly (for translation, see Appendix 2).

---

52 Pelliccia (2002) 204: “so pronounced is the sympotic character of the *ἐικάζειν* that it will often be enlightening to consider the possibility that a given instance occurring outside the symposium is intended to evoke it. We can call this kind of secondary evocation of the symposium ‘parasympotic.’”
Strophes επί τον πόλιν: ἀ δ' ἔχεται ῥοπᾶς.

Βδ. τί δ' ὅταν Θέωρος πρὸς ποδῶν κατακείμενος ἄδη Κλέωνος λαβόμενος τῆς δεξιάς:

‘Ἀδμήτου λόγον ὡταἱρε μαθὼν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς φίλει.’

tοῦτῳ τί λέξεις σκόλιον;

Φι. ώδικώς ἐγώ.

‘οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλωπεκίζειν, οὔδ’ ἀμφοτέροις γίγνεσθαι φίλον.’

Βδ. μετὰ τούτων Αἰσχίνης ὁ Σέλλου δέξεται, ἀνὴρ σοφὸς καὶ μουσικός, κατ’ ἄστεια:

‘χρήματα καὶ βίαν Κλειταγόρα τε κάμοι μετὰ Θετταλῶν’—

Φι. πολλὰ δὴ διεκόμπασας σὺ κάγω.

Skolion in this passage is depicted as a game in which one participant begins a line and another takes it up to complete it. The game can involve both improvised lines of poetry as well as ones memorized from other poets, or popular drinking songs. 53

The Harmodius song appears to be a popular skolion at symposia. Bdelucleon, for example, begins the gaming with Philocleon by prompting him to sing the Harmodius song (Ἀρμοδίου, 1225). Four other Harmodius songs celebrating the tyrannicide are known to us (nos. 893-896 PMG). 54 Like other types of skolion, singing the Harmodius song can, but does not necessarily, involve improvisation. Philocleon caps Bdelucleon’s Harmodius song with an improvised verse intended to provoke his son (“Nowhere was in Athens born” - “A greater liar and a greater thief”). When he takes up Bdelucleon’s

54 Cf. MacDowell (1971) ad V.1225.
song the next time (1234-1235), his response is not fully improvised. Instead, he adapts verses from Alcaeus (141 L.-P.):

ὦνηρ οὕτος ὁ μαίόμενος τὸ μέγα κράτος
ὀντρέψει τάξα τὰν πόλιν ὅ δ’ ἔχεται ῥόπας (Alcaeus)

‘ὦνθρωφ’, οὕτος ὁ μαίόμενος τὸ μέγα κράτος,
ἀντρέψεις ἐτὶ τὰν πόλιν: ὅ δ’ ἔχεται ῥοπᾶς.’ (Philocleon)

Philocleon has altered the first word to ‘νθρωφ’ for ὦνηρ and has changed the person of the verb (ὀντρέψει, ἀντρέψεις) from third to second.55

The game is apparently so popular that “singing the Harmodius song while reclining” can suggest a symposium, as in Aristophanes’ Acharnians. The chorus refuse to let War into their symposium because he is a troublemaker when drunk (979-981):

οὐδέποτ’ ἐγὼ Πόλεμον οἶκοδ’ ύποδέξομαι,
οὐδὲ παρ’ ἐμοί ποτε τὸν Ἀρμόδιον ἄσται
ξυγκατακλινεῖς, ὅτι παροινικὸς ἀνὴρ ἔφυ . . .

I will never welcome the War God into my house,
nor will he ever recline at my side and sing the Harmodius song,
for he is an unruly fellow when he drinks...56

“Singing the Harmodius song reclining next to me” marks activities performed at the symposium. While reclining and singing songs each have a wide range of meaning outside the symposium, the chorus of the Acharnians differentiates specifically sympotic activities with a constellation of both markers.

55 MacDowell (1971) ad V.1232-5. Philocleon may also have altered several of the Aeolic forms in favor of Attic ones, although this type of alteration is often done by later copyists as MacDowell ad loc notes. Performances of the poems of professional poets or lines from plays were common in symposia: see e.g., Ar.Nu.1354-1376 where excerpts from Aeschylus and Euripides are requested. Reitzenstein (1893) 24-32 discusses games of skolion based on the works of Alcman, Simonides, and Stesichorus. Comic poets were also mined for performance: Ar.Eq.529-530, Ath.426a; on these see Collins (2004) 93.

The way in which the game is played is somewhat elusive, but we can analyze
some consistencies in the way in which the game is described. Our best evidence is
from the scholia to Aristophanes’ *Wasps* and the testimonia of later sources. A scholiast
*ad Wasps* 1222 reports that it is the custom at feasts for a man, holding a sprig of laurel
or myrtle, to sing a song following upon where the previous man stopped in sequence
(τὰ ἔξης).57 The one who “takes up” (δεξάμενος) the poem from the first then performs
in sequence (ὁ δεξάμενος παρὰ τοῦ πρῶτου τὰ ἔξης). This particular scholiast is
interested in the etymology of the term *skolion*: the songs have to be sung in sequence
but the difficulty (*dyskolia; τὴν δυσκολίαν*) of the game lies in the random circuit the
game could take around the room. Participants pass the song on to whomever they
wish.58

There is good evidence, however, that the orderly sequence of the game (τὰ
ἔξης) often took the specific form of passing from participant to participant in an
orderly circuit around the room. The scholiast to the *Wasps* gives us the further
information that participants used to sing *skolion* in a circle (ἐν κύκλῳ γὰρ ἔδων τὰ
σκόλια, ἃ εἰσὶ δὲ παροίναια φῶς, *ad* 1222). The circular movement described in this
testimony indicates that in some forms of the game, the passage of poetry was not
random, but from one participant to another around the circular arrangement of the
couches in the room. The Suda confirms this statement: the Suda glosses *σκολιόν*
(= scholia Plato, *Gorgias* *ad* 451e = fr. 88 Wehrli) as a drinking song in which each

57 Αρχαῖον ἔθος ἑστιωμένους ἔδειν ἄκολοθως τῷ πρώτῳ, εἰ παύσαιτο τῆς ωδῆς, τὰ ἔξης, καὶ γὰρ ὁ ἔξ
ἀρχῆς δάφνην ἢ μυρρίνην κατέχων . . . . See also schol. *Ar. Nu.* 1364 (= fr. 89 Wehrli).
58 Although I am sympathetic to and in general agreement with the view of Węcowski (2002b), it is a
stretch of the evidence of this passage to claim that τὰ ἔξης “undoubtedly means here ‘successively from
left to right’” (346). The scholiast expresses exactly the opposite: the symposiast could pass the song (and
branch) to whomever he wished (κἀκεῖνος ἐπεδίδου πάλιν ὑ ἐβούλετο). I do not deny that τὰ ἔξης could
imply orderly movement from left to right in other situations, however. See below.
participant sings each person after the other (τὸ δὲ καθ’ ἑνὸ ἔξης). One final testimonium provides specific terminology for this movement around the room: in symposia in the olden days they used to pass around a lyre, or a myrtle branch, holding which they sang to the right (περιέφερον ἐν τοῖς συμποσίοις ἐπὶ δεξιὰ τὸ πάλαι κιθάραν, εἶτα μυρρίνην, πρὸς ἂν ἰδον, Hesychius s.v. τὴν ἐπιδεξιάν (τ 796)).

It is important to note that the game of skolion can be played in different ways, and no stringent structure can be placed upon the technique of its performance. The consistency of terminology above, however, suggests that “taking up” and passing “in order” or “to the right” were fundamental aspects of the technique of the game.

The terminology for these actions is consistent. “Taking up” poetry is usually conveyed in forms of δέχεσθαι: δέξει καλῶς, Ar.V.1222; δέξεται, Ar.V.1223; δέξαι δὲ σὺ, Ar.V.1225; Αἰσχίνης ὁ Σέλλου δέξεται, Ar.V.1243; δεξάμενος, Sch.ad.V.1222; δέχομαι, Dion.Chal.fr.1.1 W. (see below); δεξάμενος, Eupolis, fr.395 PCG (see below). The game also circulates around the room in an orderly fashion (τὰ ἔξης). Often, the orderly fashion is more specific: ἐπιδεξιά. Within the space of the symposium, the terms of “taking up” and orderly “to the right” movement have a narrowed meaning which specifically indicates sympotic gaming.

59 On these testimonia, see Węcowski (2002b) 345-346, Collins (2004) 86.
60 Lambin (1992) 222. Much weight is given to the testimony of Dicaearchus from his On Musical Contests for our understanding of the game of skolion. His testimony, however, can be plausibly shown to have derived from a prima facie reading of Aristophanes’ Clouds and Wasps rather than any actual understanding of the technique of the game (Collins 2004: 88; Lambin (1992) 222 also disregards Dicaearchus’ testimony as late and unsubstantiated in light of 5th century evidence for skolion). While valuable for our understanding of the game, Dicaearchus’ testimony should not be used to re-construct a definitive set of “rules” by which skolion was played.
3.c. **Superlatives: ti kalliston (τί κάλλιστον) and other games**

A game of superlatives – Fränkel’s κάλλιστον τὸ δεῖνα⁶² - is also often played at symposia. I call this game and its forms ti kalliston since participants seem to be answering an unexpressed question, commonly “what is most noble?” which underlies the game. As one might expect, examples of this game are most plentiful from the lyric and elegiac corpora, e.g. Theognis 255-256:

κάλλιστον τὸ δικαιότατον · λῴστον δι’ ὑγιαίνειν ·
πράγμα δὲ τερπνότατον, τοῦ τις ἔρα τὸ τυχεῖν.

The most just is the most noble; most desirable is to be healthy.
But the most delightful thing is to find the one you love.

The subject of this poem seems to be answering the question “what is most noble?” The answer is not limited to what is most noble, but contains several other superlatives: what is most just is most noble; what is most desirable is to be healthy; the most delightful thing, etc. Indeed, ti kalliston is not the only underlying question to such games; others can include “what is the most delightful” or even “what is worst?”⁶³

On account of the fact that, as in skolion, each participant would make a pronouncement upon what he thought was finest, etc., one’s answer to the game often reflected one’s moral or ethical wisdom.⁶⁴ Other poetic and verbal games existed at the symposium which tested or made a show of one’s wisdom: riddles (γρίφοι) and quotations from tragedy and comedy. Mimes may also have been performed at

---

⁶² Fränkel (1950) 407-408, with several examples from lyric, tragedy, and epigram, among others.
⁶³ Ford (1999) 115-116. Griffith (1990) 203n.25 notes the typical nature of quotations such as τί κάλλιστον, τί τερπνότατον which may be found in other works: PMG 651 (Simonides), PMG 890, Tyrtaeus fr. 12 W, Sappho fr. 16 L.-P., Xenophanes fr. 2 W, Theognis 1063-1068, PMG 542 (Simonides). See also Pelliccia (2002) 210-211.
Chapter 2: The Symposium

symposia, such as Alcibiades’ vivid tales of his attempts to lure Socrates into an erotic relationship (Pl. Sym. 218c-219b).\(^6^5\) Sometimes men performed as women, as in Socrates’ performance of Diotima’s conversation with him or portions of the Theognidean corpus seemingly composed with a female performer in mind.\(^6^6\)

4. Circulation and distribution: *endexia/epidexia* (ἐνδέξια/ἐπιδέξια)

The game of *skolion* is not the only activity which circulates ‘to the right’ among the participants of a symposium. Other games, speeches, and talk, and in fact even the circuit of wine, travel ‘to the right’ at a drinking party. ‘To the right’ is not simply a directional movement. Encoded within and reflected by this directional principle are sympotic aesthetics of order and egalitarianism.

Drinking and speaking go hand in hand at a symposium. A gathering without either is not a symposium. When Alcibiades crashes the dinner party in Plato’s *Symposium* and disrupts the order of the proceedings, Eryximachus protests: are they to say nothing over cups nor sing anything, but really just drink as if they were thirsty? (οὔτως οὔτε τι λέγομεν ἐπὶ τῇ κύλικι οὔτε τι ἄδομεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀτεχνῶς ὑπὲρ οἱ διψώντες πιόμεθα, 214a-b). The thought of drinking without speech or song is unnatural for Eryximachus. Indeed, the symposium finally dissolves when the uproarious behavior of a *komos* (θορύβου, 223b) prevents equal mixture of wine and talk.

Just as wine and talk are requisite partners at the symposium, the way in which each is distributed is also shared. Poetic depictions of the symposium often utilize the

\(^{6^5}\) On this, see Hunter (2004) 13.

\(^{6^6}\) On Socrates performing as a woman, see Hunter (2004) 81; on male symposiasts performing as women, see Bowie (1986) 15-16.
image of cups speeding around or jostling one another, emphasizing the importance of the circuit of wine to the symposium. The circuit of talk mirrors the flow of wine, and the two are often collapsed in meaning in the poetic register. It is not insignificant that the proceedings of the banquet take their name from none other than the wine (-posion) which is distributed among all together (sun-). The proceedings center upon and take their direction from the distribution of both wine and talk at a symposium, a distribution which circulates around the drinking group ‘to the right.’

The distribution of wine from the krater is not a free-for-all, but rather a controlled, orderly procedure of drawing out draughts and passing them ‘to the right’ (endexia/epidexia [ἐνδέξια/ἐπιδέξια]). Critias explains that passage from left to right is common to Athenians, Chians, and Thasians (Critias fr. B 33 Diels-Kranz):

ό μὲν Χίος καὶ Θάσιος ἐκ μεγάλων κυλίκων ἐπὶ δεξία, ὁ δὲ Ἀττικὸς ἐκ μικρῶν ἐπὶ δεξιά

The Chian and Thasian [drink] from large cups [circulated from] left to right, and the Athenian drinks from small cups [circulated from] left to right ...

Critias distinguishes the Athenians as measured drinkers because they drink small quantities of wine. Chians and Thracians, on the other hand, drink from large vessels –

---

69 Węcowski (2002b) 341-342.
70 Węcowski (2002b) 349.
and therefore drink more.\textsuperscript{71} Significantly, Chians, Thasians, and Athenians all drink ‘to the right’ (ἐπὶ δεξιά).

Talk mirrors the flow of wine at a symposium and circulates according to the same principle of ‘to the right.’ We have already seen how the game of skolion characteristically passes ‘to the right’ around the guests of a drinking party. Other verbal activities such as toasting additionally flow to the right (Critias fr.33B Diels-Kranz, Ins. 5-7).\textsuperscript{72}

καὶ προπόσεις ὀρέγειν ἐπιδέξια, καὶ προκαλεῖσθαι
ἐξονομακλήδην ὃ προπεῖν ἐθέλει

. . . extending of toasts to the right, and challenging by name the person to whom one wishes to drink a toast.\textsuperscript{73}

as do hymns among the drinking group (Dion.Chal.fr.4 West):

ὕμνους οἴνοχοεῖν ἐπιδέξια σοὶ τε καὶ ἡμῖν
pour out hymns to the right for both you and us

In the fragment above, the imagery of singing and drinking is mixed into a single phrase (ὕμνους οἴνοχοεῖν). The hymns are not merely poured out, like Hesiodic Muses might sing,\textsuperscript{74} but specifically poured out as wine (οἴνοχοεῖν), so that the distinction between wine and talk collapses. They are linked together as one by the directional movement they share.

\textsuperscript{71} On cups and their significance for drinking parties, see above and Ar.fr.225 PCG, X.Sym.2.23-6; cf. Davidson (1997) 61-69.
\textsuperscript{72} See also Critias (B 6.6) ἄγγεα λυθῇ χεὶρ ἑπὶ ἱπτερ ‘Ἀσιατογενῆς καὶ προπόσεις ὀρέγειν ἐπιδέξια, (B 1.7) προπόσεις ἐπιδέξια νωμῶν.
\textsuperscript{73} Trans. Gulick (1969).
\textsuperscript{74} τῶν δ’ ἀκάματος ῥέει αὐθὴ ἐκ στομάτων ἱδεία, Th.39-40.
The physical accoutrement that is actually passed around the room can also be collapsed into the imagery of wine and talk. Cup, wine, and talk are indistinguishable from each other in the following fragment (Dion.Chal. ap. Ath. 15.669e = fr. 1.1 W.):

δέχου τήνδε προπινομένην
tήν ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ ποίησαν. ἐγὼ δ’ ἐπιδέξια πέμπω
σοὶ πρῶτω Χαρίτων ἑηκεράσας χάριτας.

Receive this poem pledged as a toast from me.
I send it from left to right to thee first of our company,
mixing in the cup of the Grace the graces of friendship.  

The poem-toast transforms into the actual toasting cup that is passed around the room. Here, the image of mixing wine (ἑηκεράσας) blends the poem and toasting cup into one, as the one circulates with the other in a counter-clockwise fashion around the drinking party. A cup is indeed sometimes passed round ‘to the right’ with the poems as they are sung.  A custom similar to this may be alluded to in a fragment of Eupolis, which illustrates the potential for the blending of the imagery of drinking, singing, and passing to the right (fr. 395 PCG):

δεξάμενος δὲ Σωκράτης τὴν ἑπιδέξει’ ἀδίδων
Στησιχόρου πρὸς τὴν λύραν οἶνοχόην ἕκλεψεν

Socrates took up the song and sang Stesichorus’ poem to the right, accompanying the lyre, and stole the wine-jug.

---

76 Pollux, Onomasticon 6.108 records that some sing ‘to the right’ while passing around the myrtle branch, a cup (ἔκπωμα) and a lyre (καὶ μυρίνην ἐπὶ δεξιὰ περιφέροντες καὶ ἔκπωμα καὶ λύραν ἄδειν ἐξίουν).
77 On the sense of this last phrase: Reitzenstein (1893) 31 points us to Athenaeus 11.463f (=Critas 88 B 33 D.-Kr.) in which Critias is said to have explained how it is the Spartan custom for the slave to fill up the cups of wine with the quantity that has been drunk off; R. suggests that Socrates will be the one to fill up his own cup (i.e. Socrates is poor and acts like a slave because of it). Storey (2003) 322-323, however (not citing Reitzenstein), argues that this is a stretch of the evidence and prefers to understand that this fragment portrays Socrates as a typical kolax who steals at a symposium.
Socrates sings a portion of Stesichorus’ poem. In my translation I suggest that he is taking up the song and singing his portion in sequence from left to right. The term δεξάμενος marks the taking up of song in the game of skolion, as we saw above. He ‘takes’ the song from the participant on his left, and will pass it onto the right when he has completed his portion. This translation requires that the article τῆν, which has no noun attached to it, governs an understood noun such as ποίησιν (cf. Dionysius Chalcus above: δέχου τήν δέ προπινομένην τῆν ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ ποίησιν τῆν ἐπιδέξι’). Eupolis may also be blending the imagery of poetry and cup: Socrates ‘takes up’ the song but may simultaneously be understood to receive a cup (e.g. δεξάμενος τῆν ἐπιδέξια [κύλικα]).

The shades of meaning created by the elision of the noun governed by τῆν highlights the polyvalence of many of the markers of sympotic discourse.

5 Aesthetics

5.a. Order

The principle of distributing wine and talk to the right at symposia plays the functional role of ensuring that no one participant is passed over in the drinking group’s activities. In the fragment of Dionysius Chalcus above, passing the toast to a specific person first (οἱ πρῶτῳ) indicates the expectation that each person will participate in succession. We can also observe this participative and sequential function of ‘to the right’ distribution in Plato’s Symposium. Talk to the right in praise of

---

78 This is the sense understood by the editors of PCG, who gloss δεξάμενος as cantu excipere.
79 τῆν ἐπιδέξια (κύλικα) is Reitzestein’s reading (1893: 31). A. Patzer (1994) 69 takes the article τῆν with ἐπιδέξι’ (?as ἐπιδέξιν): “on receiving the right,” but Reitzenstein is right to point us to Eupolis fr.354 PCG (ὅταν δὲ δὴ πίνωσι τῆν ἐπιδέξια) in which ἐπιδέξια takes an adverbial inflection, not a nominal one. With this in mind, I do not think Lambin (1992) 222 is correct in assigning ἐπιδέξια to the name of an actual cup (perhaps he gets the idea from this fragment?).
Eros at Agathon’s symposium begins first with Phaedrus: δοκεῖ γάρ μοι χρήναι ἕκαστον ἠμῶν λόγον εἰπεῖν ἐπαίνον Ἐρώτος ἐπὶ δεξιὰ ὡς ἂν δύνηται κάλλιστον, ἄρχειν δὲ Φαίδρῳ πρῶτον (177d). ‘To the right’ beginning with Phaedrus establishes a sequential order to the encomia on Eros. The ‘to the right’ order to the succession ensures that each participant will give a speech (ἕκαστον ἠμῶν λόγον εἰπεῖν). The adherence to this principle becomes almost comical towards the end of Plato’s Symposium, when Alcibiades and Agathon quibble over who will sit at Socrates’ right and thus receive an encomium (222e).

As a functional activity which ensures sequential participation among each symposiast, ‘to the right’ reflects one of the ultimate goals of the symposium: order.\(^{80}\)

When one passes the cup ‘to the right’ according to the Dionysius Chalcus fragment above (fr.1.1 W.), one “orders” or “adorns” the symposium (συμπόσιον κοσμῶν).\(^{81}\) The designated movement from left to right ensures the ordered distribution of wine and talk, and further ensures that each person take a turn in the consumption and distribution of both. Plato’s Symposium is again instructive for illustration of this point.

After Eryximachus protests that Alcibiades’ raucous entrance has threatened the balance of wine and talk at a symposium, order is restored by Alcibiades’ final acquiescence to this principle of ‘to the right’ (214b-c):

\[
egin{align*}
	ext{ἀκουσον δή, εἰπεῖν τὸν Ἐρυξίμαχον. ἡμῖν πρὶν σὲ εἰσελθεῖν ἐδοξε χρήναι ἐπὶ δεξιὰ ἕκαστον ἐν μέρει λόγον περὶ Ἐρωτος εἰπεῖν ὡς δύναιτο κάλλιστον, καὶ ἕγκωμιάσαι. οἱ μὲν οὖν ἄλλοι πάντες ἁμεῖς εἰρήκαμεν: σὺ δ’ ἐπειδὴ σὺν εἰρήκας καὶ ἐκπέπωκας, δίκαιος εἰ εἰπεῖν, εἰπὼν δὲ ἐπιτάξαι Σωκράτει ὅτι ἂν βούλῃ, καὶ τοῦτον τῷ ἐπὶ δεξιὰ καὶ οὕτω τοὺς ἄλλους.}
\end{align*}
\]


“Then listen,” said Eryximachus. “We resolved, before your arrival, that each in order from the left to right should make the finest speech he could upon Love, and glorify his name. Now all of us here have spoken; so you, since you have made no speech and have drained the cup, must do your duty and speak. This done, you shall prescribe what you like for Socrates, and he for his neighbor on the right, and so on with the rest.”

Order is restored to this symposium when Alcibiades agrees to resume the ‘to the right’ ordering principle. Eryximachus emphasizes that this had been the order before Alcibiades burst into the symposium, and re-states the ‘to the right’ principle in telling Alcibiades how he should proceed. The ‘to the right’ principle ensures that each person speaks in turn around the krater: next he is to give way to Socrates, and he to the one on his right, and each successor similarly. When the komos (223b) proves to be the final disruption that the symposium can tolerate, the drinking party disbands. The proceedings no longer have order (οὐδεν κόσμῳ, 223b). When Aristodemus awakes the next morning, he finds a smaller symposium taking place between Socrates, Agathon, and Aristophanes. Even among a small group of three, the drinking proceeds ‘to the right’ from a large cup (πίνειν ἐκ φιάλης μεγάλης ἐπὶ δεξιά, 223c). The principle of ‘to the right’, thus, not only describes a specifically sympotic way of speaking and drinking, and perhaps gestures or physical accoutrement which attend wine and talk, but also reflects a range of attitudes such as shared participation and order.

---

83 Davidson (1997) 49.
84 On this last point, see Węcowski (2002b) 343.
5.b. **Egalitarianism**

Ultimately, the order and participation which the ‘to the right’ movement of wine and talk imposes give rise to an egalitarian spirit amongst the drinking group. This egalitarianism is reflected in the behavior of participants and the physical space and objects of the symposium. The meaning of patterns of behavior and physical objects is limited within the space of the symposium and flags specifically sympotic behavior or accoutrement. Inasmuch as the activities of toasting, playing games, and reclining next to the krater serve as markers of the symposium, the specific ways in which an egalitarian spirit is achieved amongst the drinking group can mark the group aesthetics and dynamics of the symposium.

Plato’s utilization of democratic and tyrannical stereotypes to describe the drinking habits of different participants at Agathon’s symposium illustrates the ideal egalitarianism of the drinking group. The participants of Plato’s *Symposium* begin the night with a discussion about how much they should drink. It is decided in the end to drink moderately since the previous night’s drinking bout had left many of the participants still suffering from the after-effects. Eryximachus agrees: “it has been decided to drink however much one wishes” (τοῦτο μὲν δέδοκται, πίνειν ὅσον ἄν ἔκαστος βούληται, 176ε). The resolution resembles a decree in its diction (τοῦτο μὲν δέδοκται), highlighting the democratic nature of their symposium. Wine and talk is shared ‘to the right’, and order presides over their drinking group.

When Alcibiades interrupts with his drunken revelry, however, the tone changes. The democratic drinking style which has reigned thus far now gives way to

---

Alcibiades’ comically exploited tyrannical tendencies. He elects himself symposiarch (ἄρχοντα οὖν αἱροῦμαι τῆς πόσεως, 213e), drinks unmixed wine from the psykter (the wine-chiller which was likely placed in a krater filled with snow or ice) and challenges Socrates to a one-to-one drinking bout (213e-214a). Eryximachus protests at this point that they should not drink as if they were thirsty, and everyone agrees to return to talk ‘to the ‘right’ (see above).

The description of Alcibiades’ tyrannical style of drinking references (in the negative) the egalitarian atmosphere of the symposium brought about by a range of markers: physical objects, gestures, and attitudes. Alcibiades forgoes the distribution of drink from the krater and instead drinks straight from the psykter. The aesthetic flagged by the psykter is antithetical to the aesthetic reflected in the krater. The psykter is thought to contain unmixed wine. By drinking straight from the psykter, Alcibiades is denying a nexus of aesthetics which are ideal at a symposium. Unmixed wine flags uncivilized drinking, not only for the potency of its draught, but also because the absence of a krater – the mixing mechanism – denotes the absence of shared distribution. While the psykter (for this passage) marks both the uncivilized drink as

---

86 Alcibiades puts on a good show at Plato’s Symposium of “what Alcibiades was like” (Hunter 2004: 10). For Alcibiades’ tyrannical ambitions, see Thuc.6.15.4, Plu, Alc.16.2, 5.
87 From the description in Plato’s Symposium, the psykter seems to contain the wine (cf. e.g. Richter and Milne (1935) 12-13), but others think that it is the psykter which holds the ice or snow, which is then lowered into the krater (containing the wine) in order to cool it (cf. Moignard 2006: 66).
88 Pollux 6.99: ὁ δὲ ψυκτὴρ πολυθρύλητος, ὁν καὶ δίνον ἐκάλουν, ἐν ψήν ἄκρατος: οἱ πολλοὶ δὲ ἄκρατοφόροι αὐτὸν καλὸν. Davidson (1997) 48, understanding that Alcibiades drinks unmixed wine, follows Pollux (cf. Richter and Milne (1935) 12-13), but the Suda glosses a psykter as holding τὴν κρασίν, suggesting mixed rather than unmixed wine (Bury 1932 ad 214a). One wonders, based on the modern Greek term for wine (κρασί), if the Suda, a Byzantine text, is indicating wine in general rather than specifically mixed vs. unmixed wine.
89 The practice of drinking akratos at a symposium was generally accompanied by, as Davidson (1997) 48 explains, the absence of certain steps in the proceedings, such as sympotic paraphernalia being removed or drinking straight from the ladle. Thus there was a general sense within the symposium that these implements had to be present or gestures performed in a certain way; if they were not, the symposium was ruined.
well as uncivilized drinking, the krater stands as a centerpiece at the symposium and above all highlights the egalitarian nature of the proceedings. Its presence connotes that the drink is mixed and shared. Because of its central position within the drinking space, it also flags the gesture of circulation – which we have seen takes place ‘to the right’ – around the room which ensures the wine’s distribution. As the focal point of the symposiasts’ gaze, the krater focuses men’s attention and acts as a marker and reminder of the civilized drinking to take place. The presence of the psykter and Alcibiades’ draught from it denies this range of meanings and stresses the opposite: Alcibiades emphatically does not participate in the egalitarian sharing of wine.

By challenging Socrates to a one-on-one drinking contest, Alcibiades is also denying the additional aspect of shared talk, which, like shared drink, promotes an egalitarian spirit. Talk cannot be shared equally among all when a few symposiasts drink in big gulps to the exclusion of others. Drinking *per se*, as Eryximachus points out, is the same as drinking as if one is merely thirsty – no nexus of meanings or symbols is attached to such everyday drinking. Drink which goes together with talk, however, allows for an egalitarianism and group cohesion to be achieved. Nobody likes a chatterbox (*κωτίλῳ ἀνθρώπῳ*) at a symposium, Theognis (295-298) tells us, but silence is equally inimical. The day of the *Choes* at the Athenian festival of the Anthesteria ritualizes silent drinking, behavior marked as “anti-symptic” by some

---

91 See also Xen. *Sym.*2.26: οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἢ μὲν ἀθρόον τὸ ποτόν ἐγχεώμεθα, ταχὺ ἡμῖν καὶ τὰ σώματα καὶ αὐτοὶ γνώμαι σφαλοῦνται, καὶ οὐδὲ ἀναπνεῖν, μή ὅτι λέγειν τι δυσησίμῳ ἢ ἄρτη παῖδες μικρὰς κύλιζε πυκνὰ ἐπιψακάζων, ἵνα ἄλλα ἐν Φοργείοις ῥήμασιν ἐίπω, οὕτως οὐ βιαζόμενοι ύπὸ τοῦ ὀίνου μεθύον ἄλλ’ ἀναπειθόμενοι πρὸς τὸ παιγνιωδέστερον ἀφιξόμεθα: ‘If we pour ourselves immense draughts, it will be no long time before both our bodies and our minds reel, and we shall not be able even to draw breath, much less to speak sensibly; but if the servants frequently ‘besprinkle’ us – if I too may use a Gorgian expression – with small cups, we shall thus not be driven on by the wine to a state of intoxication, but instead shall be brought by its gentle persuasion to a more sportive mood’ (trans. Todd (1979)).
Chapter 2: The Symposium

By drinking cups of unmixed wine in single gulps as Alcibiades does in Plato’s Symposium, celebrants of the festival take away the possibility of sharing in talk. Celebrants further refrain from establishing the bonds achieved at a symposium by not sharing cups; rather, each brings his own cup to the festival.

The rituals associated with the Choes demonstrate the ways in which Athenians view the commensality of the symposium. The governing principle of sharing wine and talk endexia/epidexia is not arbitrary, but is rather a fundamental principle which gives rise to the ideal egalitarian spirit of the drinking group. The festival of the Anthesteria, like many Athenian festivals, allows for the disruption of societal norms and beliefs in order to explore the liminal status of particular groups. Living and dead, child and adult, slave and master are celebrated together at this festival. On the last day, however, societal norms are restored. Celebrants shout “θύραζε Κάρες,” perhaps a message to slaves to return to their proper societal position and a call for the re-establishment of social norms.

At the Anthesteria, societal bonds are loosened as

---

94 See especially Davidson (1997) 51 n.21 on this point. For the festival in general, see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 1-25 and Parke (1977) 107-124.
95 The reason for the anti-social nature of the these celebrations is traced back to a myth about the Athenians’ ambivalent reception of Orestes after he was polluted by the murder of his mother (E.I.T.949-952):

οἱ δ´ ἔσχον αἰδῶ, ξένια μονοτράπεζά μοι παρέσχον, οἰκὼν ὄντες ἐν ταυτῷ στέγει,
σιγῆ δ´ ἐτεκτήματι ἀπόφθεγμαι μ´, ὅπως 
διατός γενομὴν πώματός τ´ αὐτοῖς δίχα

96 Lonsdale (1993) 130 suggests that the anti-symphotic rituals performed at the Choes – a day which seems to have emphasized the roles of children in Athenian society in particular – prepares young citizens for the proper behavior expected of them when they reach the age to join men’s drinking parties.
97 Lonsdale (1993) 123.
98 Alternatively, they may have shouted “θύραζε Κῆρες, οὐκέτ´ ἀνθεστήριω,” meaning the spirits of the dead rather than slaves. This interpretation, however, may be confused with the expulsion of ghosts at the festival of the Lemuria at Rome; see Pickard-Cambridge (1968) 14-15.
boundaries are explored. The activities of the symposium work in the opposite direction. There, bonds are strengthened and boundaries differentiated by the ritualization of the activities of talk and drink.

5.c. **Insider/outsider status**

The strengthening and differentiation of bonds which could be achieved at a symposium create a demarcation of ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ status. Knowing how to behave and properly utilize the physical accoutrement of the drinking space can mark one as an insider, while not being able to negotiate proper behavior and accoutrement can betray one’s outsider status. The figure of the akletos explores the boundaries between participant/non-participant and inside(r)/outside(r). He is the uninvited guest who, by playing on antitheses and dichotomies, provides an indicator of proper and improper behavior. With his boorish and outlandish behavior, the akletos performs as a foil to a proper symposiast. 99 His first act of anti-sympotic behavior is to arrive uninvited. “I have come here eagerly, thinking it funnier to come to dinner uninvited rather than invited” (γελοιότερον ἢναι τὸ ἄκλετον ἢ τὸ κεκλημένον, Xen. Symp.1.13) Philippos declares in Xenophon’s *Symposium*. 100

Performances such as that of Philippos aim to make a display of the physical and moral inferiority of akletoi in direct antithesis to the superiority of the symposiasts. 101 In Xenophon’s *Symposium*, for example, the hired boy dances in a way which highlights his beauty and gracefulness, as is noted by the symposiasts. In contrast, Philippos dances in

---

99 Fehr (1990).
100 Philippos’ later descriptions of his trade suggest that he is typically invited to dinners: πρόθεν μὲν γὰρ τούτου ἑνεκα ἐκαλούμην ἐπὶ δέεινα ἵνα εὐφραίνοισι οἱ συνόντες δὶ ἐμὲ γελῶντες (1.15).
101 Fehr (1990) 186.
a way that makes his body more grotesque than it actually is (ἀνταπέδειξεν ὅ τι κινοί
tοῦ σώματος ἄπαν τῆς φύσεως γελοιότερον, 2.22). Although he is in the space of the symposium, he is distinctly not a symposiast. When symposia were held in andrones, the drinking-room’s apparent proximity to the street – and possible exposure to it with windows – reflects an antithetical atmosphere of conspicuous privacy. The akletos instantiates and reinforces this dichotomy of insider/outsider by bringing his conspicuous outsider status to the exclusive atmosphere of insiders.

Symposiasts confirm their insider status by means of the kinds of activities performed at the symposium, such their behavior toward the akletos, the conspicuously outsider-figure, whom they watch as a foil to themselves in the inside space of the symposium. The presence of someone who is not acting properly provides a visual reminder of the symposiasts’ shared insider status. Furthermore, the specific ways of gaming (eikasmos, skolion), circulating wine (endexia), and sharing wine and talk (represented in part by the krater), as well as the order and egalitarianism potentially achieved at the drinking party, create a group which differentiates itself by means of these markers from those on the outside. The constitution and cohesion of this group is of utmost importance.

---

102 iβιδ. 186-187.
5.d. **Group cohesion**

The activities of the symposium not only differentiate insiders from outsiders, but they also create and reinforce the homogeneity of those on the inside. At the very outset of symposia, group cohesion is sustained and reinforced. Symposiasts embark on the shared experience of the symposium with initial prayers and toasts. Opening prayers and toasts communicate group values and initiate the standards of how the participants are to behave for the evening’s proceedings.\(^{103}\) The communal nature of these activities is emphasized at times by sharing toasts from the same cup – the μετανιπτρίς/μετάνιπτρον.\(^{104}\) Another cup, the cup of friendship (φιλοτησία), can also be pledged at the symposium.\(^{105}\) Accepting this cup at the symposium expresses one’s willingness to join the drinking group. Conversely, declining this cup sets one outside the drinking group. For instance, the chorus of Aristophanes’ *Acharnians* complain that War would not accept their cup, but instead continues to disrupt the occasion (982-986; cf. 979-981 above):

\[\text{ὅστις ἐπὶ πάντε' ἀγάθ' ἔχοντας ἐπικωμάσας ἥργασατο πάντα κακά, κάνετρε πάντα κάξεις καμάχετο καὶ προσέτι πολλά προκαλομένου 'πίνει κατάκεισο λαβέ τήνδε φιλοτησίαν' τὰς χάρακας ἥπτε πολὺ μᾶλλον ἐν τῷ πυρί, ἐξέχει θ᾽ ἡμῶν βία τὸν οἶνον ἐκ τῶν ἀμπέλων.}\]

\(^{103}\) This element of setting out the rules is addressed further below.


καὶ τὸδ’ ἐθὸς Ἑπάρτη μελέτημα τε κείμενον ἔστε πίνειν τὴν αὐτὴν οἴνοφόρον κύλικα, μηδ’ ἀποδωρεῖσθαι προπόσεις ὀνομαστὶ λέγοντα μηδ’ ἐπὶ δεξιτερὰν χεῖρα κύκλῳ θάσσω

On the metaniptron, see Callis fr. 9 PCG, Antiphanes fr. 135, 147 PCG, referenced in Ath.11.486f-487b. See also above on cups and toasting.

\(^{105}\) e.g. Theognis 489, Ath.11.502b. See Davidson (1997) 49.
When we enjoyed every bounty, he crashed our party and inflicted all kinds of damage, upending, spilling, and fighting; and the more I kept inviting him “to drink, recline, take this cup of fellowship,” the more he kept setting our vine props afire and violently spilling the wine from our vines.106

By not accepting the cup of friendship, War expresses his rejection of the group and is banned from further participation.107

Group cohesion is sustained throughout the proceedings of the symposium by the participation of the drinkers in talk and games. Talk and games such as *eikasmos* and *skolion* often take the form of mockery (*σκώπτειν*) at symposia.108 Mockery can strengthen the social bonds between participants by admitting shared laughter.109

According to Lucian, *σκώμματα* are fundamental to a symposium.110 Other kinds of talk are also aimed at addressing the collective group. Lyric and elegiac poetry is thought to have been produced, with little exception, for performance at symposia. In such poetry, the subject matter is often an expression which is representative of a collective, an expression which will identify the singer with his co-participants in the drinking group.111

An anonymous elegy demonstrates the ideal relationship between the collective group and the kinds of mockery shared at the symposium (fr.27 *IEG*):

---

107 979: οὐδέποτε ἕγετο Πόλεμον οἷκαδ’ ὑποδέξομαι.
It behooves us, when we come together as friends on business such as this, to laugh and sport with excellence, being happy in each other’s company and teasing each other with such jokes as can be borne with a laugh.
Let serious pursuits follow, and let us listen to those who speak in turns; this is excellence in a symposium.
And let us obey the symposiarch; for this is the work of good men, and to contribute fair speech.

The main concern of this elegy is the type of talk that can arise at a symposium: it is the work of good men to contribute fair speech (ἐργ’ ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν, εὐλογίαν τε φέρειν).
As is customary for symposia, each symposiast is a participant in the talk and gets his opportunity to speak (ἐς ἀλλήλους, ἐν μέρει). The kinds of talk are viewed as play and teasing (παίζειν, φλυάρειν) and, most importantly, the types of jokes that can be borne with a laugh (σκωπτεῖν τοιαθ’ οία γέλωτα φέρειν). As is the case for many lyrics and elegies, the authorial “I” is part of the collective: “let us obey the symposiarch” (τοῦ δὲ ποταρχοῦντος πειθώμεθα). The elegy, like improvised jokes, promotes and maintains group cohesion by addressing and being part of the collective whole. The improvised jokes contribute to the collective whole by being light-hearted – the type that can be borne with a laugh.

112 Trans. Ford (2002) 33, with alterations. See also Ford (2002) 33-35, on which much of the following paragraph is based.
The ideal balance of the collective whole can be ruined by an excess of either talk or wine, or both. Mockery can ruin group cohesion if it falls outside the types of laughter which can be shared by all.\textsuperscript{113} If mockery goes too far, the speaker is no longer accepted as part of the drinking group. When PhiloCLEON in Aristophanes’ *Wasps* perverts Bdelucleon’s *skolion* with the cap that Harmodius is a liar and a thief, Bdelucleon warns him that such behavior will have him driven from the symposium (Ar.*V*.1227-1229):

\begin{quote}
τουτὶ σὺ δράσεις; παραπόλει βοώμενος:
φήσει γὰρ ἐξολεῖν σὲ καὶ διαφθερεῖν
\end{quote}

Is this what you’re going to do? You’ll be shouted to death!
He’ll vow to destroy you and annihilate you
and hound you out of the country.\textsuperscript{114}

Philocleon’s perversions of the game of *skolion* do not fall within the acceptable range of “insider” activities and could result in his banishment to the outside. Knowing how to navigate the games and gestures of the symposium and to speak and act in a way that neither causes nor displays offence differentiates insider from outsider status.

Excessive mockery can be brought on by excessive wine-drinking. The interchangeability between drinking and speaking accoutrement and imagery has been emphasized throughout this chapter. It should come as no surprise, then, that rarely is the excess of one not accompanied by the excess of the other. Plutarch addresses moderation and excess at a symposium in terms of both wine and talk (QC 645a):

\textsuperscript{113} On mockery, see esp. Halliwell (1991) and most recently (2008). Collins (2004) 73-83 also addresses how mockery turns to abuse by comparing the attitudes of inner-city youth and their banter, although I find Halliwell’s description of mockery in terms of its context and occasion more applicable to the passages I am examining.

\textsuperscript{114} Trans. Henderson (1998).
Chapter 2: The Symposium

Song, laughter, and dancing are characteristic of men who drink wine in moderation; but babbling and talking about what is better left in silence is at once the work of actual intoxication and drunkenness.\(^{115}\)

The effect of drunkenness, according to Plutarch, is babbling and talking about things better left unsaid. In an often quoted passage about excessive drinking, Theognis also expresses the dangers of drink in terms of what might be said (475-487):

> αὐτάρ ἐγώ, μέτρον γὰρ ἔχω μελιθεός οἶνου,
> ὑπνοῦ λυσικάκου μυμήσομαι οῖκαδ᾽ ἰῶν.
> ἢκω δ᾽ ὡς οἶνος χαριέστατος ἄνδρι πεπόσθαι;
> οὕτε τι γὰρ νήφων οὕτε λίθν μεθύων·
> δς δ᾽ ἄν ὑπερβάλλῃ πόσιος μέτρον, συκέτι κεῖνος
> τῆς αὐτοῦ γλώσσης καρτερὸς οὐδὲ νόσου,
> μυθεῖται δ᾽ ἀπάλαμνα, τὰ νήφοι γίνεται αἰσχρά,
> αἰδεῖται δ᾽ ἐρδών οὐδὲν ὅταν μεθύῃ,
> τὸ πρὶν ἔως σώφρουν, τότε νήπιος, ἀλλὰ σὺ ταῦτα
> γινώσκων μὴ πίν᾽ οἶνον ὑπερβολάδην,
> ἂλλ᾽ ἢ πρὶν μεθύειν ὑπανίστασο—μὴ σε βιάσθω
> γαστήρ ὡστε κακὸν λάτριν ἐφημέριον—
> ἢ παρεών μὴ πίνε.

But I’ll go home – I’ve had my limit of honey-sweet wine – and I’ll take thought for sleep that brings release from ills. I’ve reached the stage where the consumption of wine is most pleasant for a man, since I am neither sober nor too drunk. Whoever exceeds his limit of drink is no longer in command of his tongue or his mind; he says wild things which are disgraceful in the eyes of the sober, and he’s not ashamed of anything he does when he’s drunk. Formerly he was sensible, but then he’s a fool. Aware of this, don’t drink wine to excess, but either rise before you’re

The mixture of wine and talk in disproportionate measures could have very real consequences for the members of the symposium. One host’s house is emptied of its contents when symposiasts imagine they truly are on a ship in a stormy sea: in an effort to keep the “ship” afloat, they purge it of its superfluous contents, i.e., the contents of the home. Excessive drink or talk could also lead to offensive behavior. Skeptic humor could turn to offense (expressed by the verb λοιδορεῖν). Violence could easily erupt at a symposium. Demosthenes (21 Meidias 71-73) describes two separate private banqueting occasions at which a participant was offended and killed the offender. A commentary on Alcaeus’ poetry (P.Oxy.2506) suggests that the poet was involved in the death of a friend or lover, and the context (συμπόταις, fr.S280 Page, line 26) indicates this was at a symposium. The degeneration of talk into personal and, as a result,
violence, becomes a sort of *topos* in Greek literature insult as exemplified by this fragment of Alexis (apud Ath.10.421a).\(^{121}\)

> φιλεὶ γὰρ ἡ μακρὰ συνουσία καὶ τὰ συμπόσια τὰ πολλὰ καὶ καθ’ ἡμέραν ποιεῖν σκῶψιν, ἡ σκῶψις δὲ λυπεῖ πλεῖστον ἡ τέρπει πολὺ τοῦ κακῶς λέγειν γὰρ ἀρχὴ γίνετ’ ἂν δ’ ἐξηπηθεὶς ἀπαξ, εὐθὺς ἀντήκουσας ἢ δὴ λοιποδησθαι λείπεται. . .

The long drawn-out party, the many dinners occurring day after day, give occasion for derision, and derision causes far more pain than pleasure. For it is the beginning of abuse; and once you utter an abuse, you are immediately abused in turn; there’s nothing left but insult. Next blows come to light, and drunken brawling. . . \(^{122}\)

The need to differentiate light-hearted mockery and insult from their more personal and excessive forms thus leads to a general anxiety within sympotic literature about trusting one’s fellow-drinkers and recognizing true intentions.\(^{123}\) Theognis, for example, warns against those who equivocate (91-92):

> ὃς δὲ μὴ γλώσσῃ δίχ’ ἔχῃ νόον, σοῦτος ἐταῖρος δεινός, Κύρν’ ἐχθρὸς βέλτερος ἢ φίλος ὃν.

He who says one thing but thinks another is a dangerous comrade, Cyrnus, better an enemy than a friend.\(^{124}\)

Theognis’ poetry belongs to the corpus of elegiac poetry considered to have been performed and re-performed at symposia. It is thus likely that he is here referring to fellow drinkers who equivocate.

---

\(^{121}\) *e.g.* Epicharmus fr.148, Lys.3.43, Alexis fr.156K, Pl. Leg.934e-935d. For these and other examples, see Halliwell (1991) 284 and 284n.12.


\(^{123}\) Discussed fully in Rabinowitz (2009) 131-132.

Members of the symposium attempt to avoid situations in which wine or talk is excessive by engaging in certain activities. Opening prayers, toasts, and the passing of cups ensure shared participation and foster the spirit of the group. Opening prayers particularly act to establish ground rules for the proceedings. A Theognidean prayer to Apollo outlines regulations for how the night should proceed (759-760; 762-763):

... αὐτὰρ Ἀπόλλων ὀρθώσαι γλώσσαν καὶ νόσον ἡμέτερον.

... ἡμεῖς δὲ σπονδάς θεοίσιν ἀρεσσάμενοι πινώμεν, χαρίεντα μετ’ ἀλλήλοισι λέγοντες

May Apollo make straight our tongue and mind

... and after offering libations satisfying to the gods let us drink, making pleasant conversation with one another...

The elegy references several aspects of the symposium which act as controls for the proceedings. For Theognis, the proper aesthetic of a symposium is brought about in terms of how the group speaks and acts toward one another. That the prayer is addressed to Apollo is significant: Apollo has connections with peaceful and orderly proceedings. Apollo is asked to govern the symposiasts' tongues and minds (γλώσσαν καὶ νόσον). The elegy speaks to the collective group: let us (ἡμεῖς) pour libations to the gods; let us drink while saying pleasant things to one another (πινώμεν, χαρίεντα μετ’ ἀλλήλοισι λέγοντες). The elegy acts as a prescription for how the symposiasts are to behave for the evening. The symposiasts are a collective group with shared goals for the evening’s proceedings. Behavior is to be particularly governed in terms of how one

125 Slater (1981) 207-208
emotionally interacts with his fellow-drinkers (νόον) and in terms of how one speaks to them (γλώσσαν; χαρίεντα μετ’ ἀλλήλοισι λέγοντες).

5.e. **Charis and euphrosyne**

In Theognis’ elegy above, the prescription for how participants speak to one another is defined in terms of “grace” or *charis* (χάρις). The participants are encouraged to drink while making *charis*-like conversation with one another (χαρίεντα μετ’ ἀλλήλοισι λέγοντες). In another Theognidean elegy quoted above, the authorial “I” of the poem was most full of grace (χαριέστατος, 477) when he had reached an ideal balance of drink: he was neither too sober nor too drunk. The imagery of drinking, we have seen, is often blended with the imagery of talking. *Charis* is achieved through moderate consumption and distribution of each. An additional Theognidean elegy addresses how both wine and talk contribute to the *charis* of a symposium (493-496):

> ύμεῖς δ’ εὖ μυθεῖσθε παρὰ κρητήρι μένοντες,
> ἀλλήλων ἔριδας δὴν ἀπερυκόμενοι,
> εἰς τὸ μέσον φωνεῦντες, ὅμως ἐνὶ καὶ συνάπασιν·
> χοῦτως συμπόσιον γίνεται οὖκ ᾖχαρι.

If you stay by the mixing bowl, make good conversation, long avoiding quarrels with one another and speaking in the middle to one and all alike. In this way a symposium is not without grace.

Talk is a significant aspect of Theognis’ understanding of *charis*. A symposium that “is not without grace” (οὐκ ᾖχαρι) is one in which participants make good conversation (εὖ μυθεῖσθε). Significantly, *charis* is envisioned as an outcome of proper behavior at a

---

126 On grace or *charis*, see Biehlohlawek (1940), Slater (1981).
127 Slater (1990)
symposium. Like the opening prayer discussed above, this elegy acts as a prescription for how symposiasts are to behave. The performance and re-performance of the elegy during the symposium’s proceedings acts as a reminder for the good behavior prayed for at the beginning of the night. Making good conversation entails talking “to the middle” and to the collective group (εἰς τὸ μέσον φωνεύντες, ὡμῶς ἐνὶ καὶ συνάπασιν). Speaking “to the middle” references the circular arrangement of reclining at a symposium. A circular arrangement ensures egalitarian participation – no one is left out of the conversation.

Similarly, the centrality of the krater highlights egalitarian wine-drinking. The imagined addressees of this elegy stay “beside the krater” (παρὰ κρητήρι). The placement of the phrase within its verse is important: as in a symposium, the krater is in the middle. The krater, we have seen, marks the drinking as civilized and equally distributed. “Staying beside the krater” references the addressees’ proximity to civilized and egalitarian drinking practices. This elegy, by making reference to the krater, reminds the participants of the proper behavior expected of them: keep the wine mixed, distribute it equally, and share talk among all.

Theognis’ elegies demonstrate the role of the rules and regulations of the symposium. Such rules anticipate and attempt to prevent the dangers associated with consuming too much wine, mocking in excess, or losing control of one’s wits. Drinking mixed wine, passing to the right, and making prayers and toasts for charis, among others, are activities associated with the control of sympotic proceedings. As we have seen, the regulations do not always work and the proceedings are not always civilized. While the rules and regulations aim at controlling potential excess in terms of wine and
talk, they also create a sort of ‘safe-zone’ of behavior. Theognis’ opening prayer entreated Apollo to make straight the participant’s tongues and minds (γλώσσαν καὶ νόον). Apollo is asked not only to control how symposiasts’ talked to one another, but also how they emotionally reacted to the talk shared at the symposium (their νόον). As Ford notes:

Just as athletic games could be symbolic substitutes for warfare, songs at symposia were bracketed and stylized forms of what in other contexts could be serious speech acts: sympotic jesting had to stop short of being real abuse, and the encomia common at symposia tended to focus on the laudandus’ beauty more than his political power. (Ford (2002) 39)

The control one is expected to have over one’s emotions means that the range of acceptable speech is broader in symposia than in other contexts. The ability of speakers or addressees to stay in control of their wits and speech as increasingly more wine is consumed demonstrates self-control. The symposium is thus sometimes viewed as a testing-ground for its members. Individual performances at symposia are thought to reveal the true nature of participants’ character. Alcaeus, for example, states that wine lets us see through into a man (οἶνος γὰρ ἀνθρώπω δίοπτρον, 333).128 Aesop claims that wine unfetters “artificial patterns of behavior” (ἀφαιρῶν τὸ πλάσμα καὶ τὸν σχηματισμόν).129 A Hesiodic skolion conveys a similar idea: “this also is sweet, of all the things the immortals have dispensed to mortals, to discover a clear marker of both the

129 Plut.645b, trans. Clement and Hoffleit (1969). The opening of Book 3 of Plutarch’s “Table-Talk” features a discussion on the effects of wine on revealing one’s disposition. Thus table-talk was encouraged so that members establish a certain level of familiarity with their drinking partners: when Simonides noticed a drinking-mate holding his silence in a drinking party, he said, “Sir, if you are a fool, you are doing a wise thing: but if wise, a foolish thing” (ὦ ἀνθρωπ’, εἰ μὲν ἡλίθιος εἰ, σοφὸν πράγμα ποιεῖς εἰ δὲ σοφός, ἡλίθιον, quoted in Plut.644f, translation by Clement and Hoffleit (1969)).
bad and the good” (ἡδύ δὲ καὶ τὸ πυθέσθαι, ὅσα θητοῖσιν ἐνείμαν ἀθάνατοι, δειλών τε καὶ ἐσθλῶν τέκμαρ ἐναργές, Hes.fr.273 M.-W.). Plato discusses this aspect of wine at length (Laws 650a-b):

And when a man is a slave to the pleasures of sex, is it not a more dangerous test to entrust to him one’s own daughters and sons and wife, and thus imperil one’s own nearest and dearest, in order to discover the disposition of his soul? In fact, one might quote innumerable instances in a vain endeavour to show the full superiority of this playful method of inspection which is without either serious consequence or costly damage. Indeed, so far as that is concerned, neither the Cretans, I imagine, nor any other people would dispute the fact that herein we have a fair test of man by man, and that for cheapness, security and speech it is superior to all other tests.131

For Plato, wine is a “playful method of inspection” which is “without serious consequence or costly damage.” It is, however, a “fair test of a man,” and, in some aspects at least, “superior to all other tests.” The symposium thus becomes a place where participants are tested on attaining moderation and behaving according to a standard of rules which ultimately marks them as insiders.

Finally, charis is one of the fundamental aesthetics of the symposium. Connected to this is dike “justice” and euphrosyne, a term which embraces the sense of “good beauty of the human soul.”

---

cheer,” “sensibility,” and “right-mindedness.”

A combination of charis, dike, and euphrosyne make an ideal symposium. A fragment of Xenophanes is instructive in terms of this ideal combination (fr.1.13-24; translation in Appendix 2):

Xenophanes’ fragment illustrates several of the key actions and themes which lead to an ideal atmosphere of a symposium, many of which have already been discussed.

The addresses of Xenophanes’ elegy are “euphron” – sensible, of good cheer. The following verses describe how euphron men behave. Libations and initial prayers aim at “achieving what is just” (tà δίκαια δύνασθαι πρήσσειν, 15-16). Doing “just acts” is the task at hand (προχειρότερον, 16), not acts of violence (ὕβρεις, 17). As is the case in much sympotic literature, how one behaves is contingent upon both wine and talk. Excessive wine-drinking is eschewed, while talk is to aim at what can help men achieve nobility and excellence (17-20).

Xenophanes indicates to his euphron participants that the subject of their songs is limited. They are not to sing tales of battles of Titans, Giants, or Centaurs, or indeed

---


133 On this fragment and its relation to the symposium, see Ford (2002) Chapter 2, from which I draw much of my discussion.
civil strife. Xenophanes’ admonitions are often thought to be targeted at “epic” themes and have helped to foster the view that Xenophanes is a detractor of Homer. Yet Xenophanes’ concern is not with epic, but with the civil strife and disorder that such songs represent. As Ford has argued:

\[\ldots\] we should think of the Titans and Giants not as tokens of any particular poetic genre, but as stories of superhuman strife that provided a mythic paradigm for destructive aristocratic infighting. \ldots Xenophanes’ songs of war are not allusions to epic but symbols of the intragroup aggressiveness that the ceremony is designed to control. (Ford (2002) 56-57).

Xenophanes is not primarily concerned with attacking epic themes, but with the types of behavior that such songs can encourage. Xenophanes’ elegy acts as a prescription for men who are *euphron* – men who strive for *euphrosyne*. When performed and re-performed at the beginning of symposia, this elegy instructs men on how they should behave, what sorts of topics are conducive to *euphrosyne*, and how an ideal symposium should proceed.

Some of these markers reference what we know to be historical practices, while others are predominantly literary constructs, though these literary constructs may reflect historical realities. Archaeology has yielded evidence for the use of accoutrement such as kraters, wine, and cups. The use of the *andron* as a drinking space and space for beds for reclining can also be evidenced in the archaeological record, however problematic interpretation of the *andron* and its functional uses is. My study, however, is not concerned with using historical practices to establish the existence of a symposium or some of its markers for any chronological period. To be distinguished
from the historical evidence for real practices is the discourse of the symposium and its textual markers. This study is concerned with the discourse of the symposium and how it operates within the epics at an implicit level, but outside the dramatic narrative. The methodology I will use to evaluate this discourse is below.

**The markers of sympotic discourse and the epics**

Above I have indicated several markers that I argue belong to sympotic discourse. When used inside the symposium, these markers – which include physical accoutrement as well as attitudes and atmosphere – are narrowed in the scope of their meaning by the elite participants in the drinking group. By controlling the meaning of these markers within the symposium, the elite strengthen the homosocial bonds of those inside the drinking group while defining themselves as separate from those on the outside. Operating within the discourse means adhering to specific rules and standards of behavior and operating within certain boundaries and expectations. Participating within the discourse can also provide opportunities for types of talk that are elsewhere considered inappropriate or even dangerous.

Even in the world of the Homeric epics in which feasting is the dominant form of homosocial commensality, a constellation of some of these markers that belong to sympotic discourse flags sympotic activities. My study will focus on the markers of sympotic discourse in the Homeric epics. As stated in Chapter 1, over the course of the 8th, 7th, and early 6th centuries, performances of the Homeric epics ‘evolved’ from oral compositions-in-performance to an authoritative text. Fluid performances, which allow for varying degrees of improvisation, became rigid over time. For a time, creative
rhapsodic performers composed and recomposed their works in front of various audiences and naturally incorporated discourses from the contemporary world into their performances. These creative rhapsodic performers eventually became reciters of a canonical text.\textsuperscript{134} During the time in which the performances of the epics were becoming more rigid and therefore less amenable to improvisation, a proto-symposium was emerging, as early as the 8\textsuperscript{th} century on the basis of archaeological finds in Pithecussae. By the 6\textsuperscript{th} century, the symposium was undoubtedly a primary locus of aristocratic commensality. The window of time between the late 8\textsuperscript{th} century to the early 6\textsuperscript{th} century is the subject of this study. During this time, fluid performances of the epics allowed for improvisation and the incorporation of contemporary themes. The symposium was developing into a highly stylized and formalized form and was the principal locus for aristocratic commensality. The surface level of the narrative of the epics has no ostensible references to the contemporary commensal practices of the aristocratic elite. Nevertheless, markers of sympotic discourse identifiable within the narrative indicate that, at a deep level, performers of the epics continue to reference and incorporate contemporary practices for a century or more.

In order to evaluate sympotic discourse within the Homeric epics, I have divided markers under several headings. Some include further subheadings and/or lexical identifiers. I list those subheadings here, and for quick reference have also placed this list in Appendix 1:

\textsuperscript{134} See Chapter 3 for a more in-depth discussion.
1 Material culture  
   a. space – exclusive gathering of men, reclining, the andron  
   b. accoutrement – krater, cups  

2 Preliminaries  
   a. separation of deipnon from symposion  
   b. initial prayers, toasts, compliments  

3 Drinking games  
   a. eikasmos  
   b. skolion (forms of dechesthai)  
   c. superlatives (e.g. ti kalliston)  

4 Circulation and distribution – endexia  

5 Aesthetics  
   a. order  
   b. egalitarianism  
   c. insider/outsider  
   d. group cohesion  
   e. charis and euphrosyne  

I have grouped the above markers under five headings. The headings are not intended to be an exhaustive list of possible markers for the symposium. Nor does a symposium have to contain every element of the above headings – or indeed every heading – to be called a symposium. For example, above I discussed reclining and the krater as markers of a symposium. In the literary register such as in the poems of Theognis, each of the markers could be used to indicate a symposium, functioning pars pro toto. None of the other markers from other headings need to be present for the audience to understand the imagined sympotic context. Equally, I have shown that the krater, in the cases of Plato and Xenophon, does not need to be present in every description of a symposium. Markers can even be directly contradicted. In the example from Phocylides I examined above, the context was explicitly a symposium (ἐν συμποσίῳ) but participants were sitting upright and not reclining (fr. 14 Diehl, quoted above). Therefore, the absence of
some markers or the presence of elements which contradict some markers within the above headings does not prevent the possibility of an audience recognizing sympotic discourse.

The enumeration of the headings is for ease of reference and represents neither a hierarchy of markers nor a set proscription for the format of a symposium. The headings do roughly follow the proceedings that a symposium might take, however; this means that while I have attempted to make the headings as self-contained as possible, some aspects of the headings blend into others. For instance, in my discussion of the krater, I elaborated on how kraters could be used as symbols for orderly proceedings and egalitarianism. The marker endexia/epidexia can also signify some of the broader aesthetics of the symposium. It is my aim to treat these markers as self-contained as possible, while recognizing that some markers of the symposium can be freely blended with others in representations of the symposium.

The above schematic of headings and subheadings of markers of the symposium forms the essential criteria with which I will examine certain passages of the Iliad and the Odyssey. Like the literary and iconographic evidence I have explored above, I do not require that every marker from every heading be present in order for it to be credible that an external audience would understand that sympotic discourse is evident in any passage. Equally, only one marker is not enough for my purposes, since these markers are not limited to their meaning within the symposium. For example, a recent treatment of the symposium in Homer considers the formula αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ σπείσαν τ’ ἔπιον θ’, ὅσον ἦθελε θυμός “when they made libations and drank to their hearts’
content” an indicator of the symposium. This phrase, it is argued, indicates a time-period specifically devoted to drinking in the epics – a marker which I have identified and categorized under heading 2.a. – preliminaries – separation of deipnon from symposion. In turn, the scholar deduces from the observation that drinking separately from feasting is evidenced in the epics that the epics were indeed familiar with a specifically sympotic style of drinking. The act of separating drinking from eating can possibly flag sympotic activities. But for my analysis, this marker does not carry the full nexus of meanings of the symposium in isolation. In the Greek world, the drinking of wine in isolation from food is not solely practiced at symposia. It is no different for the Homeric epics. The workmen on Achilles’ shield, for example, at the completion of the ploughing of each furrow, drink wine. No food is involved. This separation is indeed a marker, but in isolation its meaning is open to a number of interpretations.

The possible meanings and interpretations conveyed by the markers become rarified and differentiated when they appear in constellation with one another. Wine drinking per se is not sympotic; however, when it appears in close context with other markers such as those grouped above – e.g. toasting, playing games, and an interest in order – the interpretation becomes more restrictive. Some audience members, based

---

135 Colesanti (1999), following Vetta (1983). Colesanti’s paper conspicuously lacks a definition for the symposium and, in my opinion, gives far too much weight to the equation of the formula “when they made libation, etc.” to the existence of the symposium. Lacking from his discussion are important works on Homeric/heroic feasting such as Saïd (1979), Rundin (1996), and Van Wees (1995), from which his discussion may have benefitted.

136 First discussed by Bielohlawek (1940) 13 who adds il.9.222, although no correlation to the symposium itself is made based on this observation. Colesanti (1999) 45 and passim also considers il.9.174-177, Od.3.390-395, 7.182-184, 18.423-427, and 21.270-273, all passages which include the formula. To this, we can add Od.6.309, 15.391-392, il.6.258-260, 11.641-643, 14.1-8, 18.541-547; cf. Papakonstantinou (2009) 4 n.10.

137 See my discussion above on the andron.

138 This is presumably for the wine’s nutritive qualities, on which see Papakonstantinou (2009) 3-5. In this category of drinking as a separate activity from feasting we can also place the oinon gerousia (“wine of elders”) which takes place frequently in the Iliad. Although the elders drink after the meal in the oinon gerousia, I consider the markers not strong enough to establish a sympotic discourse.
on their experiences in the symposium, will recognize an alternative, differentiated meaning to a constellation of these markers. For some, wine drinking and playing games such as skolion or eikasmos is not restricted to a particular setting because not everyone can draw on personal experiences related to those activities. But for others, a constellation of some of the markers above indicates the specific discourse of the symposium.

For this reason, not all instances of wine drinking will be considered. It is not my aim to suggest that every instance of wine drinking has been misread and must be re-interpreted as being sympotic. Nor is it my intention to suggest that my criteria, and indeed the passages selected for analysis, are comprehensive. This analysis is not intended to be exhaustive in its treatment of all sympotic themes or traces in the epics; rather, I select the passages that contain the patterns of language, use of objects, and behaviors that belong most strongly to the symposium. It is my hope that by establishing a methodology through which sympotic discourse can be examined in such passages, a framework for analyzing those passages which may have weaker connections can be established by other scholars.

None of the above is meant to suggest that I am finding the actual, historical symposium in the epics. The headings are an analytical tool which I have largely formed from types of evidence which show how the symposium is represented, regardless of historical reality. I distinguish the existence of markers and sympotic discourse from the evidence and actual practice of sympotic activities. Equally, there is no one way to define sympotic discourse. I do not claim that my analytical model for the interpretation of sympotic discourse and its markers is fully aligned with the
interpretation of a sympotic discourse by an ancient audience. My analytical model is
drawn from representations of the symposium, not from historical reality; as such, I do
not aim for exactitude, but rather a reasonable and well-founded framework based on
the best available evidence. We cannot draw any historical conclusions as to the
symposium and its practices from a discourse and its markers. As stated above, some of
the markers I distinguish as belonging to the symposium have been historically or
archaeologically attested. The mention of such markers within the epics may notionally
suggest actual practices in reality, but any evidence of actual practices we can discern
from the epics is not the purpose of this study. My focus lies solely in audience
perception, specifically the perception of the earliest audiences of Homeric poetry from
the 8th century to the 6th century, and how a sympotic discourse encoded within the
deep narrative of the epics implicitly conveys meanings to the external audience,
meanings which have hitherto been unrecognized by modern scholars.

I wish to address one final distinction which I shall make clear before moving to
a discussion of rhapsodes in Chapter 3. This is the distinction between the surface level
of the narrative – the literal, primary narrative – and a deep or implicit narrative – a
narrative negotiated between performer and audience. The characters on the surface
level of the narrative do not engage or recognize a sympotic discourse. The characters
are not aware of the sympotic discourse I suggest exists in the deep narrative of the
epics. I argue that audiences may perceive the characters to be engaging sympotic

139 See further the introduction to this chapter and the Introduction.
140 Pelliccia (2002) confuses the distinction between what characters are doing (or are aware that they are
doing) and what the audience may perceive characters to be doing when he argues that Diomedes and
Glaucus are participating in verbal duelling in the form of sympotic eikasmos. While I do not disagree with
Pelliccia’s assessment of the “parasympotic” powers of eikasmos (which is similar to my argument that
eikasmos is a principal marker of sympotic discourse), I think it is more correct to describe the eikasmos
discourses, but I distinguish audience perception from the literal meaning of the surface level of the narrative.

In this chapter, I have examined the markers – the gestures, behavior, and physical accoutrement – of the symposium based on literary, iconographic, and archaeological evidence. The symposium was seen to be a complex nexus of attitudes, gestures, and games, the negotiation of which solidifies insider or outsider status for participants. I have grouped together markers into five headings: material culture, preliminaries, drinking games, circulation and distribution, and aesthetics. It will be my argument that these markers in constellation implicitly convey a discourse to those members of the audience familiar with the practices and attitudes of the symposium. Recognition of this discourse affects how certain audience members perceive character behavior within the epics. For modern scholars of the epics, an examination of sympotic discourse encoded within the poems reveals important information as to how performances of the epics were kept relevant and contemporary as certain social institutions such as the symposium became popular among audiences.

that Diomedes and Glaucus participate in as conveyed in the deep narrative rather as something that they themselves, as characters within the epics, recognize they are doing. On the surface level, they are introducing themselves in a potentially dangerous battle situation. In the deep level, they are actually engaging in a game of eikasmos recognizable to an external audience as a sympotic activity. It is unlikely that Diomedes and Glaucus are actually participating in sympotic banter when the weight of a battle and possibly death looms over their heads.
CHAPTER 3:

Rhapsodes:
Markers and their Employment

Up to this point in my work I have focused on the commensal habits of Homeric heroes – heroic feasts – and those of contemporary elite audiences in the specific form of symposia. I have outlined markers that in constellation give rise to the discourse of the symposium – the way participants act, speak, and interact with physical objects. Sympotic discourse is not strongly represented in the narrative and is not readily apparent when only the surface, literal meanings of passages are considered. It is, rather, communicated implicitly between performer and his contemporary – 8th-early 6th-century – audience.¹

Scholars have already identified another discourse that I will examine. There are apparent traces of the performance methods of the real-world performers of the Homeric epics – the rhapsodes – within our texts. The rhapsodic discourse evident in our texts substantiates my argument that the attitudes and practices of the contemporary world influence the Homeric epics and this influence can lead to them being identifiable in the deep narrative of the epics.

¹ For this definition of contemporary, see Chapter 1.
Although the focus of this work is primarily sympotic discourse, in this chapter I will examine rhapsodic discourse. Both discourses share markers which relate to how a rhapsode and symposiast perform. The fact that there is an overlap between the markers for the symposium and for rhapsodic performance has been noted and the two have been treated together in other works. An examination of both sympotic and rhapsodic discourses, I argue, contributes to our understanding of how performers incorporated into the epics real-world experiences, practices, and attitudes which are traceable in our texts. Rhapsodic discourse is an important analogy for my project since its presence shows a contemporary discourse at work in the epics. For the purposes of my study, however, I focus on the sympotic discourse, because an analysis of it uncovers additional information about the meanings conveyed between performer and audience. In the following two chapters I explore both discourses, with a focus on sympotic, in several Homeric passages. But first I turn to the markers of rhapsodic discourse – the specific ways in which rhapsodes perform that categorize them as rhapsodes – so that in the two subsequent chapters how this discourse is encoded in the epics may be examined.

In the first chapter, I discussed the fluid nature of epic performance in the 8th, 7th, and perhaps even the early 6th centuries. During this time period, the Homeric poems continue to be publicized by means of composition-in-performance. Every performance is a re-composition of a previous one. It is only over the course of time, and perhaps due to the influence of 'texts' of performance, that the compositional

---

3 I follow Nagy (1996a) 40 (cf.68) in using 'text' in a metaphorical sense, meaning that some performances may have become more authoritative than others, and as the authority of specific performances grows, the ability to perform creative material differing from the authoritative performance narrows. Therefore
aspect of performance becomes restricted and is eventually abandoned. Before compositional freedom is fully restricted, however, the performers of the epics can shape their compositions and, perhaps motivated by audiences’ preferences, implicitly incorporate contemporary discourses into the epics.

A contemporary practice that has been studied by scholars is rhapsodic performance. Rhapsodes have specific ways of performing. The terminology which describes their trade belongs to a discourse specific to rhapsodic styles of performance. The markers of rhapsodic discourse can be observed in the descriptions of performers – of both aoidoi and amateurs – in the Homeric epics. Rhapsodic discourse indicates that the role of the contemporary world in the performance of the epics is not passive. Indeed, contemporary practices such as rhapsodic performance do exist in the narrative, albeit not explicitly. Aoidoi are not rhapsodes, but markers used in descriptions of their activities belong to rhapsodic discourse and direct the attention of contemporary audiences towards real-world performance techniques.

**The Rhapsoidos and the Aoidos**

**The rhapsode (ῥαψῳδός)**

The rhapsode is a relatively late figure in the literary and epigraphic register. There are indirect references to the activities of such performers in the 6th century. Heraclitus may reference rhapsodes in his famous fragment calling for the banishment

---

4 For this ‘evolutionary’ approach to the Homeric poems, see Nagy (1996b) 109-112, discussed more fully in Chapter 1.

of Homer⁴ and Archilochus from contests (fr. 42 DK, see below). Herodotus in the 5th century reports that rhapsodic performances were forbidden by the 6th century tyrant Cleisthenes of Sicyon (quoted fully below). It is not until the 5th century that there is an explicit reference to rhapsodic activities. This is from Oedipus in Sophocles’ Oedipus Tyrannus (390-392):

ἐπεί, φέρ᾽ εἰπέ, ποῦ σὺ μάντις εἶ σαφῆς;  
πῶς οὐκ, ὅθ᾽ ἡ ραψῳδὸς ἐνθάδ᾽ ἦν κύων,  
ηὔδας τι τοίσδ᾽ ἀστοίσιν ἐκλυτήριον.  
καίτοι τό γ᾽ αἴνιγμ᾽ οὐχὶ τοῦπιόντος ἢν  
ἀνδρὸς διειπεῖν, ἄλλα μαντείας ἐδει:

Well, come, tell me, how can you be a true prophet?  
Why when the versifying hound was here,  
did you not speak some word that could release the citizens?  
Indeed, her riddle was not one for the first comer to explain!  
It required prophetic skill . . . ⁷

The Sphinx is specifically called a rhapsode. She gives riddles to her locutors who, in turn, try to match her wisdom.⁸ Lastly, an inscription on a tripod from Dodona possibly provides additional 5th century evidence for rhapsodic activities (GDI 5786):

Τερψικλῆς : τῶι Δὶ : Ναῖωι : ῥαψωιδὸς : ἀνέθηκε

Terpsicles the rhapsode dedicated this to Zeus Naios.

The dating has been recently challenged, however; it may more likely date to the 4th century.⁹

---

⁴ In this section, I use the term “Homer” as a name for the notional author of the Iliad and the Odyssey consistently with the ancient authors’ usage and not as a methodological or ideological reflection of my own approach to Homeric studies. I do not recognize a particular author for the epics.
Rhapsodes perform poetry in public. They do not perform to musical accompaniment: their performances are non-melodic. Some rhapsodes belong to guilds. The Homeridai are one such guild who claim descent from Homer. They are known to have ‘stored-away texts of Homer’ and may produce and preserve biographical stories of Homer. The Kreophyleioi are another rhapsodic guild who are said to have preserved the poems of Homer. They have their origins in Samos and trace their ancestry to a Kreophylos (Plu.Lyc.4.3).

The venue for rhapsodic performance is often a public festival. Rhapsodes perform at the quadrennial festival at Brauron. Plato’s Ion is said to perform both in Epidaurus at a festival of Asclepius and in Athens at the festival of the Panathenaia (Pl.Ion 530a-b). Homer and Hesiod are depicted as performing as rhapsodes at a festival of Apollo in Delos in a Hesiodic or pseudo-Hesiodic fragment (fr.357 M.-W.), which will be referred to elsewhere in this chapter. Indeed, of the most popular Panhellenic festivals, it is only the Olympian for which we have no evidence for rhapsodic

---

12 τινες Ὀμηριδῶν ἐκ τῶν ἀποθέτων ἐπῶν δύο ἔπη, Pl.Phrdr.252b.
13 Allen (1924) 38-41. For example, according to Isocrates (Helen 65), the Homeridai relate the story that it was Helen who instructed Homer to compose a poem about the men who went on an expedition to Troy; cf. Compton (2006) 69.
14 See Appendices I and II in Herington (1985) 161-176 and Mommsen (1898) 61-69 for possible locations and attestations of rhapsodic performances. Less comprehensive but more recent is West (2010).
15 Hesych.β.1067: Βραυρωνίωις τῇ Ἰλιάδα ἠδόν ῥαψῳδοί ἐν Βραυρώνι τῆς Ἀττικῆς. As West (2010) 6 observes, the dative in the lemma suggests that Hesychius is using a scholion from a passage as a source, but the source is unknown. Boyd (1994) 109n.2 calls Hesychius’ reference ‘mysterious’ but tentatively posits that the reference to performance of the Iliad at Brauron may be linked to a story that one of Ajax’ sons moved there from Salamis (Plu.Sol.10.2).
16 cf. H.Hom.Apollo 146-178 for a rhapsode employing the persona of Homer; the two are conflated at Thuc.3.104.
contests.\textsuperscript{17} The tyrant Dionysius in 388 BCE apparently sends rhapsodes to perform at the Olympian games anyway, suggesting the possibility of rhapsodic performance there.\textsuperscript{18}

The rhapsode is an itinerant figure. Numerous inscriptions and testimonia indicate that rhapsodes travel to different festivals.\textsuperscript{19} Ion, mentioned above, travels from Epidaurus to Athens in order to perform. Cynaethus, a rhapsode and member of the Homeridai, is said to travel from his birthplace Chios to Delos in order to compose a hymn to Apollo, and is recorded as being the first to sing the works of Homer rhapsodically in Syracuse.\textsuperscript{20} In the biographical tradition, Homer is depicted as wandering from city to city “rhapsodizing” his works (\textit{Certamen} §5, §16). In order to ensure favorable welcome in their travels, rhapsodes may assume ‘speaking names,’ such as that of the rhapsode Terpsicles, ‘famed for delighting’ in the inscription quoted above.\textsuperscript{21} A rhapsode is unlikely to have family connections in each city in which he travels.\textsuperscript{22} A speaking name, however, would identify him and perhaps suffice for the giving of xenia.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{17} Herington (1985) 164, Shapiro (1992) 27.
\textsuperscript{18} Diod.14.109.2: ὡς δ᾽ ἐπεβάλονθ᾽ οἱ ραψῳδοὶ προφέρεσθαι τὸν Διονυσίου τὰ ποιήματα, κατ᾽ ἀρχὰς μὲν διὰ τὴν εὐφωνίαν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν συνέδραμε τὰ πλῆθη καὶ πάντες ἐθαύμαζον: μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἀναθεωροῦντες τὴν κακίαν τῶν ποιημάτων, διεγέλων τὸν Διονύσιον καὶ κατεγίνωσκον ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον, ὥστε τινὰς τολμῆσαι διαρπάζειν τὰς σκηνὰς. Cf. West (2010) 6-7. Other poetry may have been performed there, but perhaps not under competitive situations: West (2003) 13-14 has proposed that the \textit{Hymn to Hermes} was composed for performance at Olympia. Diogenes Laertius 8.63 (cf. Ath.14.620d) records that a rhapsode by name of Kleomenes rhapsodized (ῥαψῳδεῖ) the \textit{Katharmoi}, a poem by Empedocles, at Olympia.
\textsuperscript{19} West (2010) 12 compiles a list of inscriptions and literary references for such rhapsodes.
\textsuperscript{20} Ἐπιφανείς δὲ ἐγένοντο οἱ περὶ Κύναιθον, οὓς παϊς πολλά τῶν ἐπών ποιησάντας ἐμβαλέν ἑις τὴν Ὁμήρου ποίησιν. ἤν δὲ ὁ Κύναιθος τὸ γένος Χιος, ὡς καὶ τῶν ἐπιγραφομένων Ὁμήρου ποιημάτων τὸν εἰς Ἀπόλλωνα γεγραφόν ὕμνον ἀνατέθεικεν αὐτῷ. οὗτος τὸν Ὁμήρου πρώτος ἐν Συρακούσαις ἐραψῴδησε τὰ Ὁμήρου ἔπη κατὰ τὴν ξθ΄ Ὀλυμπιάδα [504/1 BCE], ὡς Ἰππόστρατος φησιν (scholia to Pindar \textit{Nemean} 2 [2.1c 9-18=FGH 568 F 5]).
\textsuperscript{22} According to Plato, Homer and Hesiod were valued little by their friends and had a difficult time finding respite when they traveled around Greece as rhapsodes (\textit{Rep.}600d); cf. Compton (2006) 70-71.
\textsuperscript{23} Graziosi (2002) 26-27 uses the analogy of actors’ guilds for this interpretation.
Rhapsodes commonly perform in competitive situations. The rhapsodic contests at the Panathenaia in Athens are well-documented. A law was passed that every four years the works of Homer were to be recited at the Panathenaia, according to Lycurgus in the Against Leocrates (102). The pseudo-Platonic dialogue Hipparchus attributes regulations of rhapsodic performances of Homer to Hipparchus (228b–c). Similar regulations are attributed to Pisistratus (Cic. De Or. 3.137; cf. Ael. VH 8.2), Solon (D.L.1.57), or Lycurgus (Plu. Lyc. 4.4; cf. Arist. F 611.10 Rose). An early 4th century inscription (IG II² 2311), which records victors and their prizes at the Panathenaia, attests to rhapsodic and musical competitions at this festival. It is recorded at the top of the list that a crown is awarded to first place. A lacuna prevents certainty for the event to which a crown was given as first prize, but a restoration of “for rhapsodes” is generally accepted. Additional evidence for rhapsodic competition can be found in Heraclitus. He suggests throwing Homer and Archilochus out of contests and “beating” them (τόν τε Ὅμηρον ἔφρασκεν ἄξιον ἐκ τῶν ἀγώνων ἐκβάλλεσθαι καὶ ῥαπίζεσθαι καὶ Ἀρχίλοχον ὁμοίως, fr. 42 DK). That the contests are rhapsodic is not explicitly stated; Heraclitus implies as much, however, with the etymological play on rhapizesthai and rhapsoidos.

24 For sources and testimonia for the Panathenaic festival, see Allen (1924) 226-227, Davison (1955) 7.
25 Shear (2003) 88 dates the inscription to the 380s, with a terminus ante quem at 380/379.
26 The stone on which the inscription is cut is unfortunately missing the top lines of the column which lists the musical contests and prizes. A restoration of ῥαψωιδοῖς is the most likely candidate, first proposed by Mommsen (1898) 65, and upheld in the most recent edition of the inscription by Shear (2003). See also Johnston (1987) and most recently Rotstein (2004). The mousikoi agones, as they were known, were comprised of rhapsodic events, as well as events for kitharodes, kitharists, aulodes, and auletes; on which see Shapiro (1992), Vos (1986).
27 Nagy (1989) 38: “What is really being said is that rhapsodes (as suggested by the playful use of rhapizesthai) should not be allowed to perform Homer and Archilochus.” See also Graziosi (2002) 29 who identifies a further connection with rhapsodic performance in Heraclitus’ use of ἐκβάλλεσθαι: the term may suggest ἀναβάλλω, a term used especially in the hymns to mean ‘strike up a song.’ On the etymology of rhapsoidos, see below.
Rhapsodic contests are not limited to Athens. According to Herodotus, the tyrant Cleisthenes prevents rhapsodes from competing in Sicyon (ῥαψῳδοὺς ἔπαυσε ἐν Σικυώνι ἀγωνίζεσθαι, 5.67.1). In the Platonic dialogue *Ion*, Ion encounters Socrates on his return from a first-prize win at the festival of Asclepius in Epidaurus. Socrates wishes him similar success at the upcoming Panathenaic festival (Pl. *Ion* 530a-b). Above I have already referenced the rhapsode Cynaethus, who is said to travel from Chios to Delos and Syracuse, as well as Homer, who in biographical accounts is depicted as wandering like a rhapsode.

The sources for the Panathenaic rhapsodic contests suggest that it is Homeric material (τὰ Ὅμηρου) that is performed (Lyc.102, [Pl.] *Hipp.* 228b-c, Ael. *V.H.* 8.2, D.L.1.57.6). It was popular to ascribe epics works to ‘Homer.’ This does not prevent the possibility that ‘the works of Homer’ would include what is now considered non-Homeric material. The evidence from sources other than the Panathenaic material in fact makes it clear that a rhapsode’s repertoire is more diverse than consisting merely of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The tyrant Cleisthenes put a stop to rhapsodic performances in Sicyon on account of the “Homeric poems”; Herodotus explains that Cleisthenes did so because he took exception to the primary role which the Argives played in the poetry (5.67.1):

Κλεισθένης γὰρ Ἀργείοις πολεμῆσας τοῦτο μὲν ῥαψῳδοὺς ἔπαυσε ἐν Σικυώνι ἀγωνίζεσθαι τῶν Ὅμηρειῶν ἐπέων εἶνεκα, ὅτι Αργείοι τε καὶ Ἄργος τὰ πολλὰ πάντα ύμνέαται.

---

28 On which see Burgess (2004).
For Cleisthenes, after he declared war on the Argives, in the first place stopped the rhapsodes from competing in Sicyon on account of the works of Homer, since both the Argives and Argos were the topics most often sung.

Despite what seems to be a direct reference to the Homeric epics, the fact that the focus of the poems is on the Argives suggests that the Theban cycle, instead, is meant.\textsuperscript{29} Herodotus’ apparent use of τῶν Ὄμηρειῶν ἐπέων to indicate non-Homeric material strengthens the position that the τὰ Ὅμηρου referenced in the Panathenaic material is not strictly what is now considered Homeric. Other instances of rhapsodic performances of non-Homeric material are attested. Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse in the late 5th century, composed his own works which he sent rhapsodes to Olympia to perform (Diod.14.109.1-2). The Kleophrades painter depicts a rhapsode singing a non-Homeric hexameter on an early 5th century vase (pictured below).\textsuperscript{30} Ion is asked by Socrates if he is equally an expert in Hesiod, Homer, and Archilochus in Plato’s eponymous dialogue.\textsuperscript{31} Socrates’ question implies that Ion as a rhapsode could reasonably be expected to be familiar with Hesiodic and Archilochean material in addition to his knowledge of the Homeric poems. Indeed, the numerous sources attesting to the works of Solon (Pl.Ti.21b-c), Simonides (Lysanias ap.Ath.14.620c), and Empedocles (see above), among others, in connection with rhapsodic performance, suggest that rhapsodes are familiar with and perform a wide range of works.

\textsuperscript{30} Kleophrades vase, London E 270, 490-480; cf. Burgess (2004) 2. Burgess’ position that the Panathenaic festival could include contests for non-Homeric performances problematizes earlier arguments that since the rhapsode on the Kleophrades vase is not singing Homeric verse, he must not be participating in the Panathenaic contest, but perhaps a smaller, more private venue; for the latter position, see Herington (1985) 14, following Davison (1958) 37n.22.
\textsuperscript{31} νῦν δὲ μοι τοσόνδε ἀπόκριναι· πότερον περὶ Ὅμηρου μόνον δεινὸς εἰ ἢ καὶ περὶ Ἡσιοδοῦ καὶ Ἀρχιλόχου; Pl.Ion 531a1-4.
In fact, some rhapsodes perform their own compositions. The Homerid Cynaethus mentioned above was thought to have composed his own hymn to Apollo and to have passed it off as Homer’s (ὅς καὶ τῶν ἐπιγραφομένων Ὁμήρου ποιημάτων τὸν εἰς Ἀπόλλωνα γεγραφὼς ὕμνον ἀνατέθεικεν αὐτῷ, schol.Pi.N.2; quoted in full above). Xenophanes, Homer’s critic, can even be said to ‘rhapsodize.’ He performed his own 2000-line Colonization of Elea rhapsodically (ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς ἔρραψώδει τὰ ἑαυτοῦ, Vors. 21 A 1).\textsuperscript{32} Homer rhapsodizes his own works in the biographical tradition (Certamen §5, §16).

Finally, rhapsodic competitions are participatory.\textsuperscript{33} Rhapsodes are often depicted as performing in groups or succession. The Homeridai, for example, “sang

\textsuperscript{32} Cf. Pfeiffer (1968) 9; on his works, see D.L. 9.18-20.
Homer’s poetry in succession” (οἴ καὶ τὴν ποίησιν αὐτοῦ ἐκ διαδοχῆς ἤδον, scholia Pi.N.2 = 2.1c 9-18 = FGH 568 F 5). Homer and Hesiod perform a hymn to Apollo together (fr. 357 M.-W.). Joint performances are explicitly referenced in the testimonia about performances at the Panathenaic festival, which will be explored below.35

The aoidos (ἀοιδός)

The aoidos has features which both distinguish his role and conflate it with that of the rhapsode. On the one hand, the aoidos is to be distinguished from the rhapsode since he is the performer of song within the narrative of the epics. There are no rhapsodes in the epics. Instead, aoidoi are considered to be their own class of skilled craftsmen, as is indicated by Eumaeus’ description of demiourgoi (Od.17.382-387):

τίς γὰρ δὴ ξείνον καλεῖ ἀλλοθεν αὐτὸς ἐπελθὼν ἀλλον γ’, εἰ μὴ τῶν οἳ δημιουργὸι ἔσσι, μάντιν ἢ ἱητήρα κακών ἢ τέκτονα δούρων, ἢ καὶ θέσπιν ἀοίδον, ὁ κεν τέρπῃσιν ἀείδων; οὕτω γὰρ κλητοί γε βροτῶν ἐπ’ ἀπείρονα γαῖαν: πτωχὸν δ’ οὐκ ἔν τις καλέοι τρύξοντα ἐ αὐτόν.

For who invites a stranger from elsewhere, when he comes upon another, unless he’s one of those who work for the kingdom, a seer, or a healer of evils, or a skilled worker with beams, or even an inspired singer, who would delight with his singing? For these are invited by mortals all over the boundless earth, but no one would invite a beggar who’d consume him.

---

34 Although some have translated διαδοχῆς as “by right of succession” in a genealogical sense or apprenticeship (as in Allen (1907) 137-138), I follow Collins (2004) 183 n.9 in his translation as “by relay.” The term is often used in a military sense as in rowers taking over from one another on a trireme (D.50.1) or relief or relay (X.Cyr.1.4.17). The scholiast ad iliad 1.603 comments that the Muses who sing ἀμειβόμεναι are singing ἐκ διαδοχῆς καὶ παρὰ κόσμος ἤδον; cf. Collins, 183n.9. The use of the term as “successors” seems to be a later use, employed by Plutarch, for example, to describe the Stoic school of philosophy (Plu.2.605b); see LSJ s.v. “διαδοχή.” One might also think of Alexander’s “Diadochoi” or “Successors.”

35 See testimony (D.L. 1.57.6) below.
Like seers, healers, or carpenters, aoidoi are considered to be a distinct group. There is no room in Eumaeus’ configuration for an alternative performer to the aoidos such as the rhapsode. In contrast to the rhapsode’s non-melodic recitation of song, the aoidos plays with the accompaniment of a kithara (Od.1.153, 159, 8.248) or phorminx (e.g.8.105, 254, 261, 21.332). Furthermore, aoidoi sing in front of small audiences at feasts, not at public festivals like rhapsodes.

Whereas rhapsodes are described as performing primarily the works of Homer, Hesiod, Archilochus, or others, aoidoi are depicted as the original composers of their performances.36 Phemius, for example, claims no author for his songs. He sings from where his mind (noos) desires (Od.1.345-352):

\[

tην δ’ αυΤηλέμαχος πεπνυμένος ἀντίον ηδα:
\]

“μητερ ἐμη, τι τ’ άρα φθονειες ερίηρον άοιδον τέρπειν ὅππη οι νόος δρνται; ου νό τ’ άοιδοι αίτιοι, ἀλλα ποθι Ζεὺς αίτιοι, ὡς τε διδωσιν ἀνδράσιν ἀλφηστησιν, ὃπως ἑθελησιν, ἐκάστω.
tούτω δ’ ου νέμεσις Δαναων κακόν οἴτον ἀείδειν: την γάρ άοιδην μάλλον ἑπικλείουσ’ ἀνθρωποι, ἢ τις ἀκουόντεσσι νεωτάτη ἀμψελήται.

Astd Telemachus said back to her in turn:
“My mother, why do you begrudge the trusty singer entertaining whatever way his mind is spurred? Singers are not at fault, but Zeus is probably to blame, who gives to men who work for bread, to each one, however he wishes. This one’s singing Danaans’ evil doom is no cause for reproach, for people more applaud the song that’s newest to float about the hearers.

Demodocus similarly sings according to his own will (8.44-45). Aoidoi can also take suggestions from audience members or be moved to sing a particular song by the

Muses (8.73). Most importantly for the purposes of this study, however, aoidic performances are not participatory. Neither Phemius nor Demodocus are explicitly depicted as sharing the composition of their songs with another performer.

Thus, some scholars distinguish the aoidos from the rhapsode in terms of creativity. These scholars attribute the transition from composition-in-performance to recitation of memorized texts to a shift from creative aoidos to recitative rhapsoïdos.37 The ancient texts are not forthcoming or unanimous on this point. In the Ion, Plato calls Ion a rhapsode, and this seems to be equated to an imitative performer of the Iliad or the Odyssey (Pl. Ion 531a).38 But, Plato also calls Homer and Hesiod rhapsodes in different dialogues – they both rhapsodize their own works (Rep. 600d, Leg. 658d). Similarly Plato says that the bard Phemius rhapsodizes his own work (Ion 533c).39 A pseudo-Hesiodic fragment (fr.357 M.-W.), which often features in discussions about rhapsodes, and which will be discussed below, explicitly calls both Homer and Hesiod aoidoi, but depicts them as performing as rhapsodes.

The lack of clarity about aoidoi and rhapsodes in ancient authors perhaps reflects an attempt to synchronize two extreme stages of the diachronic spectrum from singer to rhapsode.40 The aoidoi depicted in the epics are the original composers of their works. This depiction plausibly reflects a reasonable portrait of the earliest stages of oral epic composition-in-performance. Ion, on the other hand, is undeniably a mimetic performer. In between the two extremes are creative rhapsodic performers. The

37 e.g. Burkert (1987) 22. Kirk (1965) 28-32, cf. 212-217 places rhapsodes at a time coinciding with the rise of literacy: “Thus in Greece the 7th century saw, together with the establishment of literacy and literature, the progressive eclipse of the aoidos with his kitharas and the firm establishment of the trained reciter, the rhapsode” (28).
40 See in particular on this point Nagy (1990a) 21-25, (1996a) 82.
transition from *aoidos* to imitative rhapsode like Ion is not a single event but rather an evolution of the role of the performer and his relationship to texts and/or performance circumstances. Our evidence suggests that rhapsodes perform songs composed by others, but in the transition from *aoidos* to rhapsode, the difference between the composing-in-performance of another’s work and the composing-in-performance of one’s own work would not be readily apparent. Ford addresses this aspect of authorship and composition:

> ... what we have learned since Parry about the dynamics of oral composition and performance suggests that in archaic poetry little premium was placed on separating out the original contributions of a performer from the traditional elements. (Ford 1988: 301)

The *aoidos* and the creative rhapsodic performer cannot be distinguished on the basis of creativity. The continuum of composition-in-performance which over centuries turned the creative performer into a mimetic figure went unnoticed by our ancient sources. Instead, this distinction and the distinction between creative rhapsodic performer and *aoidos* are both collapsed in the ancient sources. As a result, “rhapsodes” presented in our ancient material often encompass characteristics of all three stages: *aoidos*, creative rhapsodic performer, and mimetic rhapsode.

Aspects of the contemporary world are present in the epics. The *aoidos* is presented as the singer on the surface, literal level of the epics. Implicitly, however, rhapsodic methods of composition are encoded in some descriptions of singers. Reflections of the conflation of aoidic and rhapsodic are already apparent under the

---

41 I use the term ‘evolution’ with the same reservations as Nagy, without implication of any Darwinian sense of the superiority of later stages, as noted in Chapter 1, n.82.
surface of the epics. Performers of the epics incorporate contemporary terminology and technique into descriptions of *aoidoi* and other performers in the epics.

My focus will be on the “middle” stage in the evolution of *aoidos* to mimetic rhapsode. These creative rhapsodic performers are not the original composers of the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, nor purely recitative performers of the poems in their final form (mimetic rhapsodes). Such creative rhapsodic performers – for which I will use the word rhapsodes as shorthand in this study – exist in parallel with the evolution of the Homeric epics from oral performances to texts. The crossover of discourses between the contemporary world and the world of the epics, which is the main focus of this study, is a result of the composition-in-performance undertaken by the creative rhapsodic performers. This is not to say that they added specific details intentionally, but that it is a natural process for these creative performers who compose and recompose as they perform to incorporate contemporary discourses into their performances. The texts that we have today exhibit traces of this organic process of composition and recomposition, performance and reperformance.

**Rhpsodic Discourse**

*Rhapsoidos*: Stitcher of Song

Just as symposiasts have a particular way of speaking within and about the symposium and interacting with the physical objects there, rhapsodes have a particular way of performing their poetry. The technique of rhapsodic performance is built into the very name *rhhapsoidos* and distinguishes rhapsodes from other performers of poetry. The ways in which rhapsodes perform may be understood as a discourse. Important
markers of this discourse are the participatory and sequential features of rhapsodic performance. Depictions of song-making within the epics which include these markers seem to betray the existence of contemporary practices of rhapsodic competitive song-making in the deep narrative.

Before examining the testimonia describing rhapsodic performance, the etymology of the term *rhapsoidos* must be considered. Encoded within the name *rhapsoidos* are clues as to how rhapsodes perform. Both ancient and modern scholars are agreed on the derivation of the second half of the word from ἀοἰδή.42 Ancient scholars are split between two derivations for the first half of the word. Some maintain that *rhaps-* derives from *habdos*, the staff which rhapsodes are often depicted as carrying when they recite poetry (see Kleophrades vase above). Such a derivation would align the figure of the *rhapsoidos* with other singers whose names derive from the instruments with which they accompany their song. A *kitharoidos*, for example, accompanies his song with the *kithara*.43 The fragment quoted from Heraclitus above may indicate that Heraclitus was familiar with the deriviation from *habdos*. He suggests that Homer and Archilochus be thrown out of the contests and beaten (ῥαπίζεσθαι), possibly playing on the supposed shared etymology between *habdos* and *rhapizesthai*.44

A second derivation that is widely accepted is also known among the ancients:

*rhaps-* from *rhaptein* ‘to stitch.’ The locus classicus for this derivation is Pindar, *Nemean* 2 (1-3):

---

42 The α and οι in ἀοἰδή contract to ωι; see the discussion of *rhaps-* below and Graziosi (2002) 27 n.48.
43 Else (1957) 28. Such an understanding seems to be behind Pind. Ιst. 4.38 Ὑμηρος...κατά ῥάβδον ἔφρασεν.
Ὅθεν περ καὶ Ὁμηρίδαι
ῥαπτῶν ἐπέων τὰ πόλλα ἀοιδοὶ
ἀρχονταί, Δίος ἐκ προοίμιον

Just as the sons of Homer (Homeridai), those singers of verses stitched together, most often begin with a prelude to Zeus.\(^{45}\)

Pindar references both parts of the etymology of rhapsoidos in his description of the Homeridai’s activities. They are ‘singers’ (ἀοιδοί) of ‘stitched-together utterances’ (ῥαπτῶν ἐπέων). Pindar connects both parts of the etymology – singers (ἀοιδοί which is related to the -ὁδη element) of stitched verses (ῥαπτῶν, indicating the ῥαψ- element). Pindar’s etymology from ῥαψ + ὁδη is generally accepted among modern scholars.\(^{46}\)

Instead of an etymology which incorporates the accompanying instrument of the rhapsodes’ performance (ῥαβδος), the name ‘stitcher of songs’ indicates the method of composition.\(^{47}\) Philochorus appears to be right to point out that rhapsodes are so-called because they put together and stitch song (ἀπὸ τοῦ συντιθέναι καὶ ῥάπτειν τὴν ῥαψῆν, ap.schol.Pind.Nem.2.1c 31.7-9 Drachmann = FGH 328 F 212).\(^{48}\) A testimonium from the scholia to Pindar’s second Nemean is illustrative of how rhapsodes ‘stitch song’ (scholia to Pindar, Nemean 2.1c 30.5-8 Drachmann):

οἱ δὲ φασί τῆς Ὄμηρου ποιήσεως μὴ ὑφ’ ἐν συνηγμένης, σποράδην δὲ ἄλλως καὶ κατὰ μέρη διηρημένης, ὅποτε ῥαψῳδοῖεν αὐτήν, εἰρμῷ τινι καὶ ῥαψῆ παραπλήσιον ποιεῖν, εἰς ἐν αὐτὴν ἀγοντες.

---


\(^{46}\) Else (1957) 27-28, Schmitt (1967) 300-301. It should be noted that in Pindar describes the ἀοιδοί Homeridai as stitching together songs like rhapsodes.

\(^{47}\) Else (1957) 28 calls the -σ- suffix in ῥαπ-σ- a “composition suffix,” analogous to such terms as ῥηξήνωρ and δίψασπις.

But some say that – since the poetry of Homer had not been brought together under one thing, but rather had been scattered about and divided into parts – when they performed it rhapsodically, they would be doing something that is similar to sequencing or sewing, as they produced it into one thing.\(^{49}\)

Rhapsodes stitch pieces of ‘Homer’ (which are believed to have been scattered) into one.

Importantly, the scholia conceive of Homer’s poetry as scattered into “parts” which are sequenced or sewn together. This idea of sewing “parts” together to form a whole has been too rashly conflated with the popular weaving metaphor found elsewhere in poetry.\(^{50}\) Stitching and weaving indicate different refinements of composition: “whereas weaving suggests the joining of small elements in a seamless fashion, stitching suggests the joining together of larger units. As a metaphor, weaving is best linked with the creation of epic at the micro level, whereas stitching well describes epic composition at the macro level – by the joining of epic passages in performance.”\(^{51}\)

Traces of rhapsodic stitching can be found in the epics. The Catalogue of Women begins immediately after the end of the Theogony (Th.1019-1022; 1021-1022=Cat.fr.1.1-2):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{αὕται μὲν θνητοῖς παρ’ ἄνδράσιν ἐὕνηθεῖσαι} \\
\text{ἄθαναται γείναντο θεοῖς ἐπείκελα τέκνα.} \\
\text{νῦν δὲ γυναικῶν φύλον ἄείσατε, ἠδυνέπειαι} \\
\text{Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπιάδες, κούραι Δίος αἰγιόχοιο.}
\end{align*}
\]

These are the immortal women who shared their beds with immortal men and gave birth to offspring like the gods. Now sing of the race of women, sweet-speaking

\(^{49}\) I use the translation of Nagy (1996a) 83.

\(^{50}\) e.g. H. Patzer (1952) 322-323.

Olympian Muses, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus.

The last two lines of this passage are the end of the *Theogony* and double as the first two lines of the *Catalogue of Women*. We may consider the above sequence of lines as a copyist’s error, a “mechanical importation” from one text to another.\(^{52}\) More positively, however, we may view the manuscript tradition of the *Theogony* as one which reflects its performance conditions.\(^{53}\) It may have become a practice to ‘stitch’ the *Catalogue of Women* onto the *Theogony* in performance conditions. As performances become authorized as texts, it is likely that performance traditions would have become incorporated into the texts themselves.

Other epics show traces of rhapsodic stitching. The last line of the *Iliad* reads:

\[
\omega\varsigma\ o\iota\gamma'\ \alpha\mu\phi\iota\epsilon\pi\nu\ \tau\acute{a}f\omicron\ \acute{e}k\tau\omicron\omicron\sigma\ \iota\pi\pi\delta\acute{a}m\omicron\omicron\iota
\]

Thus they busied themselves around the grave of horse-taming Hector

The scholia to the *Aethiopis* record a variant opening which suggests that it was composed to be joined to the *Iliad* (*Aethiopis* fr.1 Bernabé):

\[
\omega\varsigma\ o\iota\ \alpha\mu\phi\iota\epsilon\pi\nu\ \tau\acute{a}f\omicron\ \acute{e}k\tau\omicron\omicron\sigma\ \acute{e}l\lambda\theta\epsilon\ \delta'\ \acute{A}\mu\alpha\zeta\omicron\omicron
\acute{A}r\omicron\mu\sigma\ \acute{t}h\gamma\acute{a}t\eta\rho\ \acute{m}e\gamma\alpha\lambda\iota\tau\omicron\omicron\sigma\ \acute{a}n\acute{d}r\omicron\phi\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron
\]

Thus they busied themselves around the grave of Hector. And an Amazon came, the daughter of great-hearted, man-slaying Ares.

---

52 West (1966) *ad loc.*
Burgess has argued that the join created by the last line of the *Iliad* and the opening of the *Aethiopis* is created by rhapsodes in performance of the two epics. ⁵⁴ We need not view such manuscript traditions as inauthentic; rather, they could be seen to indicate the real-world performance techniques of rhapsodes which became rooted in the textual tradition as alternate beginnings and endings.

The scholia to Pindar quoted above state that rhapsodes stitch the epics “into one thing” or “song” (ἐἰς ἑν αὐτὴν ἁγοντες). The “one thing” which they stitch together is unlikely to be an entire *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, at least in terms of what the Panathenaic material tells us. The Panathenaia is the primary location for performance of the epics, as is evidenced by the material above. Reconstructions and time calculations negate the possibility that entire epics are performed at the festival. The festival lasts eight days, but it appears that only one day is set aside for rhapsodic and musical contests. ⁵⁵ Even if we understand ‘one day’ to mean a 24-hour period, performance of an entire epic is highly improbable. Notopoulos, on the basis of comparative evidence from Cypriot and Cretan singers, has estimated the time of continuous performance of the *Iliad* to be 26.9 hours, while the *Odyssey* might take 20.7. ⁵⁶ The idea that the epics were performed in their entirety does not fit in with our current understanding of the Panathenaic proceedings.

More probable as a model of rhapsodic performance is that rhapsodes stitch portions of narrative together in order to suggest, rather than fully explicate, the

---

⁵⁴ Burgess (2001) 140-142; see also more recently Burgess (2004). On a possible continuation from the *Cypria* to the *Iliad*, see Burgess (2001) 16, (2004) 4-6
whole. Not every episode of either epic need be articulated in order to effect the narrative arch. A passage from Aelian illustrates this idea (VH 13.14-15):

The ancients used to sing the works of Homer which were divided into parts: for example they used to say the Battle over the Ships or the Doloneia and an aristeia of Agamemnon and a Catalogue of Ships ... These were in place of the Iliad ... At a late date, Lycurgus of Sparta was the first to bring the collected poetry of Homer to Greece. He brought this cargo from Ionia, when he traveled there. Later, Peisistratos collected it together and featured it as the Iliad and the Odyssey.

Various episodes such as the Battle of Ships or the aristeia of Agamemnon are performed. Such episodes are performed “in place of the Iliad” (tautē ὑπὲρ τῆς Ἰλιάδος) and, according to Aelian, the Iliad and the Odyssey were only collected together at a later date.

**Participatory and Sequential Performance**

The collection and structuring of the Iliad and the Odyssey are processes attributed to various law-givers and tyrants (sources and testimonia quoted above). The traditional elements in the testimony about law-givers or tyrants regulating the texts of Homer or bringing together their scattered parts suggest that myth and history

---

57 Burgess (2001) 8-9, with reference to Foley (1999) 42-43 on “notional” epic: “Performances from various regions in India and Africa, for example, illustrate how singers in certain traditions never even consider singing the “whole” epic in one sitting. Their practice is rather to perform a representative section or episode that implies the unsung entirety of the poetic tradition, a concrete part that stands for the always immanent whole” (42).

58 Trans. after Nagy (1996a) 78.
are colliding. Tyrants such as Hipparchus have other reported connections with music. Hipparchus is reported to have brought Anacreon and Simonides to Athens, and is called *philomousos* ‘lover of the Muses’ by Aristotle (\textit{Const. of Athen}. 18.1). Law-givers like Solon are often considered the originators of the “sum total of customary law.” The traditional elements in the testimonia prevent us from drawing historical fact from any of these accounts. What does seem to be the case, and what seems to be a common thread in our testimonia, however, is that in the 6\textsuperscript{th} century there is a reorganization or regulation of the rhapsodic contests at the Panathenaia.

Because much of our evidence for rhapsodic performances comes from Panathenaiac material, it is these performances which form the basis of our knowledge of rhapsodic composition and technique. What little comparative evidence we have for rhapsodic technique at other locations does not conflict with our understanding of rhapsodic performances at the Panathenaia. There is no reason to suspect that rhapsodes perform differently at other festivals, at least on the level of technique, and it seems justified to posit that the testimonia of performance methods at the Panathenaia are congruous with rhapsodic performances elsewhere.

The Panathenaic material is especially valuable because it provides us with specific terminology for rhapsodic technique. We have seen that rhapsodes are stitchers of song, and I have aligned myself with those scholars who understand the stitching metaphor to mean that rhapsodes stitch together portions of narrative. In this last section I shall focus on the specific terminology for the stitching together of song.

60 Nagy (1996a) 74, 71-75, 78, 103, (1990b) 21, 71-75, 81, 102, 105.
The two testimonia most frequently quoted in relation to rhapsodic technique are attestations of a regulation or standardization of performance at the Panathenaia:

**Ps.-Plato, Hipparchus 228b-c**

καὶ τὰ Ὄμήρου ἔπη πρῶτος ἐκόμισεν εἰς τὴν γῆν ταυτηνί, καὶ ἦνάγκασε τοὺς ῥαψῳδοὺς Παναθηναίοις ἐξ ὑπολήψεως ἑφεξῆς αὐτὰ διέναι, ὦσπερ νῦν ἐτὶ οἶδε ποιοῦσιν.

[Hipparchus] first brought the works of Homer to this land, and he mandated the rhapsodes in the Panathenaia to go through them by *relay*, *in order*, just as now these still do.

**Diogenes Laertius 1.57.6**

τά τε Ὄμήρου ἔξ ὑποβολῆς γέγραφε ῥαψῳδεῖσθαι, οίνον ὅπου ὁ πρῶτος ἔληξεν, ἐκείθεν ἀρχεῖσθαι τὸν ἑχόμενον.

[Solon] wrote that they performed the works of Homer rhapsodically by *relay*, so that from where the first left off, from that place the next one began.

The *Hipparchus* ascribes a regulation of rhapsodic performance to the tyrant Hipparchus. The attribution of regulations or reorganization to a particular tyrant or law-giver, however, belongs to traditional stories about such figures. The above testimonia thus have little historical value for our understanding of the development of the Homeric works. They are nevertheless integral to our understanding of their performance at the Panathenaia, and by analogy, elsewhere.

Two key elements of rhapsodic technique are highlighted in this material. Firstly, rhapsodes go through the works of Homer ‘by *relay*’ (**ἐξ ὑπολήψεως**, **ἐξ ὑποβολῆς**). The way the two terms are used suggests that they are technical terms for types of singing involving relay. I follow Nagy in his translation of both terms as ‘by
The phrase εξ υποληψεως is from the verb υπολαμβάνω. In dramatized dialogues, forms of the verb υπολαμβάνω mean “in response” or “to reply, make answer.” The phrase εξ υποβολῆς, from the verb υποβάλλω, belongs to the same semantic range. In the Homeric poems, the term is used in a verbal agon between Achilles and Agamemnon (I.19.79-80):

ἔσταότος μὲν καλὸν ἀκούειν, οὐδὲ ἔοικεν ὑββάλλειν.

It is well to listen to the speaker, it is not becoming to break in on him. This will be hard for him, though he be able.

Edwards understands ϑυββάλλειν to mean “interrupting.” Nagy, however, argues that the term has a more nuanced meaning: “Achilles engages in verbal combat with Agamemnon not so much by ‘interrupting’ but by picking up the train of thought exactly where his opponent left off – and out-performing him in the process.” Both terms thus cover the same semantic range of making a reply in response to what has already been said. In this sense, rhapsodes “relay” song back and forth with one another.

---

62 Followed also by Collins (2001) 144-148, Burgess (2004) 111.44. Others (e.g. Else [1957: 33n.2] and Boyd [1994: 115n.16]) have assumed an external judge who gives cues to each performer as to where he should take up. For arguments against an external prompter, see Collins (2004) 195 who, although confusingly adopting the English translation “cue” with the meaning argued for by Nagy, demonstrates that the external prompter theory is unnecessary and anachronistic.


65 Nagy (2002) 21. Here Nagy does not specifically distinguish between what characters are actually doing in the dramatic narrative and what audiences may perceive characters to be doing. Although I agree with Nagy’s interpretation of the translation of υββάλλειν, I distance myself from the parts of his explanation which seem to suggest that characters are consciously trying to out-perform one another. My argument is that audiences can perceive that characters are trying to out-perform one another through the lens of rhapsodic discourse, which is disconnected from the events of the dramatic narrative.
The testimony of Diogenes Laertius illustrates the process of relaying song: where the first one leaves off (ἐληξεν), the second one takes up (ἀρχεσθαι). We can thus see how both phrases ἔξ ὑπολήψεως and ἔξ ὑποβολῆς come to have a similar meaning of ‘relay.’ One rhapsode picks up the thread of the narrative from the other. Importantly, then, when rhapsodes stitch together song into one whole, they are doing so in a participatory manner. At least two, and perhaps more, rhapsodes work together to stitch a song.\(^{66}\) Nagy’s interpretation of the meaning ἔξ ὑποβολῆς carries an additional aspect of rhapsodic stitching: encoded in ἔξ ὑποβολῆς is a sense of trying to out-perform the other rhapsode. Rhapsodes are known to have performed in competitive situations, and indeed our testimony and evidence suggest that rhapsodes rarely performed in non-competitive situations. Thus, while the ‘relay’ technique of rhapsodes describes a method of participatory composition, it may also include a notion of competition.

The second important point to take from our testimony is that rhapsodes go through the works “in order” (ἐφεξῆς).\(^{67}\) Several scholars have understood the ‘order’ in which rhapsodes perform to mean continuous order.\(^{68}\) This denotes that one rhapsode would take up from the very spot where the last one left off in a monostichic fashion. The above conclusion that ‘in order’ means in continuous order does not necessarily predicate the existence of texts. It makes most sense, however, if

---

\(^{66}\) Cf. Burgess (2004) 14 n.54: “evidence that suggests or allows ‘rhapsodizing’ to be simply recitation by a solo performer could result from a secondary, weakened denotation.”

\(^{67}\) Nagy (2002) 10 translates ἐφεξῆς as “in sequence,” using comparanda from Pl.Tim.23d3-4, 24a1-2. My definition of “in order” does not fundamentally differ from Nagy’s conception of “in sequence.” I use “in order” to keep the notion of “order” and “sequence” separate.

\(^{68}\) e.g. Pelliccia (2003) 113-114.
authoritative texts do exist which can act as prescriptions for what line follows the next.

The problem with this analysis is that during the period of time in which performances are fluid such authoritative texts do not exist. Burgess thus makes an important distinction between ‘continuous’ and ‘sequential.’ Sequential performance means that rhapsodes must still perform ‘in order,’ but not necessarily in a continuous, line-by-line fashion. Rather, rhapsodes may pick up the narrative thread of the passage just performed by the other rhapsode. In this way, rhapsodes may suggest the notional narrative of a mythopoetic tradition by stitching together key episodes. The regulation suggested by the testimonia above – a regulation which is sometimes referred to as the “Panathenaic Rule” – may refer to a standardized order in which episodes were to be performed.

The process of stitching together narratives in a discontinuous fashion may be illustrated by a fragment attributed to Hesiod and its possible connection to our Hymn to Apollo. In this pseudo-Hesiodic fragment, Homer and Hesiod stitch together a hymn to Apollo in Delos (fr. 357 M-W):

```
ἐν Δήλωι τότε πρῶτον ἐγὼ καὶ Ὄμηρος ἀοιδοὶ
μέλπομεν, ἐν νεαροῖς ὑμνοῖς ῥάψαντες ἀοιδήν,
Φοῖβον Ἀπόλλωνα χρυσάορον, ὃν τέκε Λητώ
```

In Delos then Homer and I first as singers, stitching together a song in new hymns, sang Phoebus Apollo of the golden sword, whom Leto bore.

---

Homer and Hesiod in this fragment are called *aoidoi*, but they are described as stitching together song (ῥάψαντες ἀοιδήν). As in depictions of other rhapsodes, the stitching-together of song in this fragment is visualized as a process between two singers.\(^{71}\) That they stitch together “new hymns” may suggest the creative license afforded to rhapsodes before the appearance of authoritative texts.\(^{72}\)

The fragment may be referring to a hymn like our own *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*. The author of the fragment may imagine that Homer and Hesiod stitched together the hymn in a participatory, and possibly competitive, manner. The *Hymn to Apollo* is disjointed in nature; often it is divided into Delian and Pythian parts. Yet structurally the Pythian portion does not exhibit what we would normally recognize as proemial material and thus does not seem to be the beginning of a new, separate hymn. Compare the beginnings of the hymns to Demeter, Delian Apollo, and Hermes with the first line to the Pythian hymn:

\begin{verbatim}
Δήμητρ’ ἡύκομον, σεμνὴν θεόν, ἀρχοι’ ἁείδειν, Η.Hom.Dem,1.
Fair-tressed Demeter, hallowed goddess, do I begin to sing ...

Ἐρμῆν ὑμένι, Μοῦσα, Διὸς καὶ Μαιάδος υἱόν, Η.Hom.Herm,1.
Sing Hermes, Muse, and son of Zeus and Maia ...

I shall remember and not forget Apollo the far-shooter ...

O Lord, you hold both Lycia and lovely Maionia and Miletus ...
\end{verbatim}

---


In each of the three first examples the subject of song is expressly named and words specifically referencing the singing or remembering are employed. In the Pythian example none of these invocational indicators are used. Although the Pythian part of our Hymn to Apollo is distinct, it does not seem to exhibit the same invocational force of other beginnings of hymns.

Instead of condemning the hymn for exhibiting a disjointed nature, one could alternatively describe the Pythian material as being stitched onto the Delian material. Hymns, for example, are thought to have been preludes to epics,73 the epic sequel (Pythian) may be stitched onto the hymnic proem (Delian), as Burgess suggests.74 While the seam between the Delian and Pythian narratives is not entirely smooth, the concept of a seamless narrative, as we have seen, is not essential to our understanding of rhapsodic relay.

The way in which rhapsodes perform is unique to them and distinguishes them from aoidoi. I argue that such methods of performances are a discourse. That is, rhapsodes have specific ways of performing which makes them rhapsodes, and not aoidoi, for example. Markers of ‘rhapsodic’ discourse include (possible lexical identifiers listed in the right hand column):

| participatory performance and/or | (λήγειν, forms of δέχεσθαι, εξ ὑποληψεως, εξ υποβολῆς) |
| relay performance | |

73 Thucydides (3.104) and Pindar (Nem.2.1) both call entire hymns proemía, and it is thought that hymns were sung as preludes to epics; see the discussion in Allen, Halliday, and Sikes (1963) xciii-xcv. I use proemial or proemia here to mean elements that occur in invocations, whether in hymns or in epics, not as a synonym for the genre of hymns.
sequential performance of narrative (ἐφεξῆς)
(continuous or discontinuous)

The above markers belong to a specifically rhapsodic method of singing. Just as a constellation of markers of sympotic discourse can suggest sympotic activities, I argue that a constellation of these markers suggest rhapsodic activities. One of these markers, the forms of δέχομαι, is specifically shared between sympotic and rhapsodic discourses. This overlap in discourses demonstrates that we need not view the markers of each discourse as mutually exclusive. I maintain that the two discourses can overlap with each serving its own objective. As such there is no need to restrict markers to one or the other discourses.

If any distinction is to be made between the rhapsode and the aoidos, it is the compositional method by which each performs. Aoidoi are viewed as original composers of their works and perform by themselves at heroic feasts. Rhapsodes, on the other hand, perform publicly at festivals and “stitch-together” narratives which are perceived as being already composed, some of which could be their own works. If any distinction is to be made between the rhapsode and the aoidos, it is the compositional method by which each performs. Aoidoi are viewed as original composers of their works and perform by themselves at heroic feasts. Rhapsodes, on the other hand, perform publicly at festivals and “stitch-together” narratives which are perceived as being already composed, some of which could be their own works. If any distinction is to be made between the rhapsode and the aoidos, it is the compositional method by which each performs. Aoidoi are viewed as original composers of their works and perform by themselves at heroic feasts. Rhapsodes, on the other hand, perform publicly at festivals and “stitch-together” narratives which are perceived as being already composed, some of which could be their own works.75 Rhapsodes are not to be distinguished from aoidoi on the grounds of creative composition, at least until sometime in the 6th century BCE when authorized texts could arguably begin to appear, having the potential to limit the creativity of performances. Because they compose and recompose their performances to various audiences, rhapsodes naturally incorporate elements from the contemporary world into their performances.

---

75 e.g. Xenophanes (Pfeiffer 1968: 9; cf. D. L. 9.18-20), Cynaethus (schol.Pl.N.2), Homer (Certamen §5, §16; cf. Heraclitus fr.42 D.K.), and possibly Archilochus (Heraclitus fr.42 D.K.; see above). In light of this evidence, I do not fully agree with Graziosi (2002) 18-40 that the aoidos is to be distinguished from the rhapsode since the former sings his own songs and the latter sings the songs of another. Graziosi does not address the important evidence of Xenophanes composing and rhapsodizing his own works (it is left in a footnote with no explanation p.33 n.64).
epics. Importantly, rhapsodes perform in a participatory manner – where one leaves off, the other starts up again. They effect a notional narrative by relaying episodes ‘in order,’ which can be viewed as either continuous or discontinuous. I treat rhapsodic discourse as secondary in importance to sympotic discourse in my study. The focus of this work is sympotic discourse because it more directly engages with the external audience: it constructs expectations of how characters within the narrative are to behave. Nevertheless, rhapsodic and sympotic discourses seem to be related. Both rhapsodes and symposiasts are performers – the one performs in public festivals, the other in symposia. The discourse of each also shares markers – for instance forms of dechesthai. Therefore, to fully study sympotic discourse, we need to explore rhapsodic performance in conjunction with it. An examination of both discourses contributes to our understanding of how contemporary real-world experiences, practices, and attitudes form an organic part of epic narrative.
CHAPTER 4

THE ODYSSEY
Odysseus as Rhapsode and Symposiast

The markers of rhapsodic and sympotic discourses which I have identified in Chapters 1-3 work in constellation with one another implicitly in certain episodes of the epics. In this chapter I focus on a number of passages from the Odyssey. While in some cases scholars have already noted the rhapsodic or sympotic elements in the passages that I will discuss, little has been said about what such connections contribute to a contemporary audience’s understanding of this epic, or of epic poetry in general. In this chapter and in the next I will demonstrate that sympotic discourse affects audience perception of certain episodes and is in fact essential to our understanding of the poetics of the epics. Rhapsodic discourse will also be treated where relevant, but since it does not directly affect audience perception of character behavior, it is of secondary concern for the purposes of my study.

Rhapsodic Relay and the Odyssey

The Odyssey is concerned with performance and song. The professional singers hardly mentioned in the Iliad find their home in the more domestically-oriented narrative of the Odyssey. The kingdoms of Ithaca, Phaeacia, and Sparta have aoidoi attached to their courts,
while Odysseus himself is compared an aoidos in passages to be discussed below. Rhapsodic discourse is encoded within the aoidic passages, specifically within the passages in which Demodocus and Odysseus perform. Such a discourse references the real-world circumstances of the performance of the Homeric epics.

Several analogies are made between Odysseus and an aoidos in the later narrative of the Odyssey, though Odysseus could never actually be an aoidos since he does not sing in verse. Eumaeus likens the stories which Odysseus tells to those told by an aoidos (Od.17.512-521):

Eumaeus praises Odysseus for the charm which his story-telling effects (θέλγοιτό, ἱμερόεντα).\(^1\)

For Eumaeus, bards charm their audiences. Similar attitudes about the function of bards are expressed elsewhere in the epics. Telemachus admonishes Penelope for asking Phemius to sing

---

\(^1\) For Odysseus as an aoidos, see also the description of his stringing of the bow as deftly as a lyre player strings his lyre (21.405-407); for more on this description, see below.
a different song. He justifies the rebuke to his mother by stating that a singer brings delight (τέρπειν, 1.347) in whatever way his heart moves him (ὅππῃ οἱ νόος ὄρνυται, 1.347). In the Hesiodic Theogony, bringing delight is a primary function of the Muses (ὑμνεύσαι τέρπουσι, 37). Thus it can be said that bringing delight to an audience appears to be a function of singers generally, and one which connects them with the Muses who inspire them. Odysseus, as one who delights others with song, is in company with such professional bards.

While Odysseus is connected with aoidoi in general in the epics because of the delight his tales can bring, he is explicitly connected with Demodocus beyond their mutual performances because of the specific terms of praise that he and the Phaeacian bard receive. Demodocus and Odysseus are celebrated for their artistry and veracity. It is Odysseus who praises Demodocus for his story of the quarrel between himself and Achilles:

λίην γὰρ κατὰ κόσμον Ἀχαιῶν οἴτον ἄείδεις, ὅσ' ἐρξαν τ' ἐπαθόν τε καὶ ὅσ' ἐμόγησαν Ἀχαιοὶ, ώς τέ που ἦ αὐτὸς παρεῖν ἦ ἄλλου ἀκούσας (8.489-491)

αἲ κεν δὴ μοι ταῦτα κατὰ μοῦ ὑμῖν καταλέξῃς, αὐτίκ' ἐγὼ πᾶσιν μυθήσομαι ἀνθρώποις, ώς ἀρα τοι πρόφρων θεός ὥπασε θέσπιν ἀοιδήν (497-499)

For truly, in due order, you sing the fate of the Achaeans, all they did and experienced, all the Achaeans suffered, as if either you were there yourself or heard it from another.

If you recount these things to me in the proper way, I'll at once declare to all mankind how generously god granted you inspired song.

---

2 Penelope’s request is also relevant: she asks Phemius to change his song, since he knows many other things which charm men (πολλὰ γὰρ ἄλλα βροτῶν θελκτήρια οἴδας, 337).
3 Nagy (1979) 296-297 has argued for an etymological explanation of the name Hesiod as ‘he who emits the voice.’ Such an etymology would connect him to the Muses, since they are repeatedly described with epithets which highlight the beautiful or lovely voice which they emit (Th.10, 43, 65, †67).
4 Consider also the rhapsode Terpsicles (‘famed for delighting’), discussed in the previous chapter.
Similarly, Alcinous compliments Odysseus for his performance:

σοὶ δ’ ἐπὶ μὲν μορφὴ ἐπέων, ἔνι δὲ φρένες ἐσθλαί
μυθὸν δ’ ὦς ὅτ’ ἀοιδὸς ἐπισταμένως κατέλεξας,
πάντων τ’ Ἀργείων σέο τ’ αὐτοῦ κήδεα λυγρά (11.367-369).

But the grace of words is upon you, and a good heart in you,
and you’ve told your story skillfully, as when a singer does,
the wretched woes of yourself and all the Argives.

The acclamations that Demodocus and Odysseus receive for their storytelling further connect
the two characters as masterful bards of song and contribute to the analogy that Odysseus, like
Demodocus, is a performer of song. The link between Odysseus and a bard is explicit, but he is
linked to Demodocus specifically through praise. Both sing authoritatively: Demodocus as if he
himself had been at the sack of Troy (8.491), and Odysseus as if he himself were an aoidos
(11.368). By employing similar compliments in the praise of both Odysseus and Demodocus, the
Odyssey connects Odysseus to Demodocus more closely than to other bards in general.

Odysseus and Demodocus are furthermore praised for specific criteria not used of other
bards in the Odyssey. Odysseus applauds Demodocus’ performances because he sang κατὰ
κόσμον (8.489), and next promises that he will celebrate Demodocus among all men should he
recount (καταλέξῃς) a tale κατὰ μοῖραν (8.497). Alcinous’ praise corresponds in terminology:
he commends Odysseus because he recounted (κατέλεξας) his tale ἐπισταμένως (11.368). The
two phrases - κατὰ μοῖραν καταλέξῃς (8.497) and ἐπισταμένως κατέλεξας (11.368) – occupy the
same position within their lines and have identical metrical structure. The isometric phrases
are furthermore isosemantic: both Alcinous and Odysseus in their praise give prominence to
the method of delivery rather than the content of the tale itself. As distinguished from praise for recounting tales (again, forms of καταλέγω) for their indices of truth (ἀτρεκέως, ἀληθείη); cf. Finkelberg (1987) 136.

5
for being told truthfully (μάλ’ ἀτρεκέως or ἀληθείη), but, as Finkelberg has delineated, the phrases ἐπισταμένως and κατὰ μοῖραν occur at specific occasions when a listener applauds a story only after it has been told. The phrase κατὰ μοῖραν in particular, when it precedes forms of καταλέγειν, is both metrically and semantically distinct from its use as a descriptor of speech-making elsewhere in the epics. The use with a form of καταλέγειν, Finkelberg argues, aligns the term with uses indicative of actions that occur in a successive order: equipping a ship (Od.4.743, 8.54) or milking sheep (Od.9.245, 309, 342), for example. The metrical interchangeability between ἐπισταμένως and κατὰ μοῖραν suggests that the two phrases carry similar meanings, ones which we can identify as conveying the sense of an ordered succession of the performance. Such a conclusion fits well with Krischer’s analysis of the use of καταλέγειν as a term which specifically designates “point by point” narration.

Both Krischer and Finkelberg construct an analogy between the orderly performance of a song and its truth content. For my purposes, however, it is the delivery itself which is significant: Finkelberg in particular demonstrates that a criterion for correct performance of epic narrative is ordered succession or sequence. Such an analysis is attractive especially in light of the “sequence” of narratives that we find in the performances of Odysseus and Demodocus.

The close connection established and maintained between Odysseus and Demodocus encourages us to consider their actions and performances as parts of a whole and perhaps
even view their individual performances as contributions to one larger song.\textsuperscript{11} This is significant because their combined performances form a narrative whole spanning much of the Trojan War. Demodocus’ song of the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles is an episode thought to have occurred at some point at the beginning of the war, perhaps contemporary with the events in the \textit{Cypria}.\textsuperscript{12} Demodocus’ song of the Trojan horse tells of events at the end of the war, also known from the \textit{Iliou Persis}. Odysseus’ tales of his travels form his own \textit{nostos}, which follows the end of the war, as did the \textit{Nostoi} in the Epic Cycle. We might add to the sequence of \textit{Cypria – Iliou Persis – Nostoi} the footrace in which Odysseus participates at Scheria. The footrace has thematic parallels with the footrace at Patroclus’ funeral games found in the \textit{Iliad} (which comes between the \textit{Cypria} and \textit{Iliou Persis} in the Trojan cycle of events).\textsuperscript{13} In total, the performances of Demodocus and Odysseus thus would form a notional narrative of the Trojan cycle of events that we know through the traditions of the \textit{Cypria}, \textit{Iliad}, \textit{Iliou Persis}, and \textit{Nostoi}. At a macro-scale level, Demodocus and Odysseus can be described as stitching together a discontinuous narrative whole by relay.\textsuperscript{14}

Odysseus can be perceived to emphasize the sequence of the discontinuous Trojan War narrative. In the sequence of Trojan events I have outlined above, Demodocus interrupts the

\textsuperscript{11} Ford (1992: 111): “Odysseus’ performance is not simply juxtaposed to that of Demodocus but so intertwined with it that the two nearly meld together as if they were the offerings of two poets.”

\textsuperscript{12} The quarrel is not known from the cyclic material, although some scholars link the quarrel with a quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles referenced by Proclus in his summary of the \textit{Cypria} (καὶ Ἀχιλλεὺς ὑστερὸν κληθεὶς διαφέρεται πρὸς Ἀγαμέμνονα, p.104.20 Allen). On the link between the quarrel in the \textit{Odyssey} and the \textit{Cypria}, see Pagliaro (1951) 17-20, Kullmann (1960) 100, 272. The formulation of Nagy (1979) 22-25, 42-58 that the tale is an independent tradition does not affect my argument: he still locates it in the narrative time preceding the \textit{Iliad} when Odysseus and Achilles may have argued whether Troy would be taken by cunning (Odyssean \textit{metis}) or force (Achillean \textit{bie}); on this see Ford (1992) 112 n.28. The frequency with which the quarrel (and ones similar to it) appears in the mythopoetic tradition (see below) makes the position of Hainsworth (1993) \textit{ad ll}. 8.75 that the story was an \textit{ad hoc} invention of the poet unlikely.

\textsuperscript{13} Cook (1999) 159 n.29.

\textsuperscript{14} Cook (1999) 159 n.29, Ford (1992) 114-115; see also Burgess (2009) 96 for a similar sequence of Trojan episodes in the \textit{Aeneid}. Pelliccia (2003) 113 n.35 takes issue with the position that there is sequencing between Demodocus and Odysseus, arguing that the sequence of Trojan events is “lacunose” and not continuous (and therefore not rhapsodic). As we have seen in Chapter 3, however, a continuous narrative is not necessary for rhapsodic performance.
Trojan narrative with a song about Ares and Aphrodite. The song has noted hymnic qualities and can be linked to traditional seduction narratives such as those told in the *Hymn to Aphrodite* and *Iliad* 14. In theme (divine material), the song does not accord with the sequence of heroic narrative relayed between Demodocus and Odysseus. In other words, Demodocus seems to have switched genres from the heroic to the hymnic.

Odysseus’ praise of Demodocus immediately following the performance appears to overlook the hymnic song: “For truly, in due order, you sing the fate of the Achaeans!” (λίην γὰρ κατὰ κόσμον Ἀχαιῶν οἶτον ἀείδεις, 489). Odysseus then requests that Demodocus sing another song connected to the Trojan narrative: “Come now, change your path and sing of the construction of the wooden horse” (ἀλλ’ ἄγε δὴ μετάβηθι καὶ ἵππου κόσμον ἀείσον δουρατέου, 492). The “fate of the Achaeans” points us not to the hymnic material but back to the “heroic” narrative such as the audience heard earlier in Demodocus’ song of the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles. Odysseus prompts Demodocus to return to material more suited to his earlier heroic narrative – a song about the construction of the wooden horse. Odysseus “realigns” Demodocus’ path of song from the tangential hymnic genre to the heroic genre that is more suited to follow upon the earlier tales of the Achaeans.

Thus, not only is Odysseus appearing to want Demodocus to focus on heroic tales, but he is also, on a macro-scale, asking Demodocus to keep the sequence of the Trojan narrative in order, from an external audience’s perspective at least. He first praises Demodocus for singing κατὰ κόσμον, and then promises him his own fame should he sing the tale of the Trojan horse κατὰ μοῖραν. As discussed above, this last phrase highlights the ordered sequence of the narrative, while κατὰ κόσμον surely shares a similar semantic relationship. An external

---

audience may understand that Odysseus underscores the sequential narrative of the Trojan story by prompting Demodocus to return to Trojan material after his performance of seemingly tangential hymnic material.

The sequential narration of episodes characterizes the figure of the rhapsode. Rhapsodes stitch together portions of narrative into an organic whole. The Panathenaic material, as well as fragmentary evidence about the performance of a potential hymn to Apollo (fr. 357 M.-W.), suggests that this stitching of narrative requires at least two rhapsodes who, according to Diogenes Laertius, perform from where each leave off. Such relay of performance is often competitive. The commensurate praise which Odysseus and Demodocus receive illustrates that they are composing under the same criteria for praise. Other elements point to a competition between the two. The performance of a hymn amidst athletic contests, the presence of judges, and the description of the arena for the hymnic performance specifically as an agon rather than a choron all contribute to a competitive framework for the singing.¹⁶ This type of relaying or sequencing of large chunks of narrative to compose a Trojan narrative also exists on the micro-scale level of technique in the scenes involving Odysseus and Demodocus.

The narrative draws attention to the macro-scale sequencing by re-using terminology usually reserved for the beginning and ending of songs.¹⁷ When Odysseus suggests a change in topic to Demodocus, together they participate in performing a proemial introduction to Demodocus’ song (Od.8.492-494, 499-502):

```
ἀλλ’ ἄγε δὴ μετάβηθι καὶ ἱππὸν κόσμον ἀείσον
dουρατέου, τὸν Ἑπείος ἐποίησεν σὺν Ἀθήνῃ,
ὅν ποτ’ ἐς ἀκρόπολιν δόλον ἠγαγεῖ δῖος Ὅδυσσεὺς
...
ὡς φάθ’, ὦ δ’ ὀρμηθεὶς θεοῦ ἥρχετο, φαῖνε δ’ ἀοιδήν,
```

¹⁶ As noted by Ford (1992) 113-114.
¹⁷ See a full discussion of the emphasis on “formal breaks” in the narrative in Ford (1992) 111-118.
Odysseus requests that Demodocus sing about the building of the wooden horse and the Phaeacian minstrel complies. Odysseus’ suggestion to Demodocus and Demodocus’ response belong to the marked language of epic *proemia*. Especially characteristic of proemial language is the identification of the general outline of the upcoming narrative through the use of an imperative to sing a specific subject – a single noun – and relative clause which expands upon this subject. Additionally, it is normal to find in agreement with the noun a descriptor, one which is characteristically four syllables. The poet of the *Iliad*, for example, begins μήνιν ἄειδε...οὐλομένην, ἥ μυρὶ’ Ἀχαιοῖς ἁλγε’ ἔθηκε, etc. “Sing O Muse of the destructive anger, which brought many sorrows upon the Achaeans ...” (*Il.*1.1-2). Similarly, the poet of the *Odyssey* first identifies the subject of the song, commands the Muse to sing, and then expands upon this subject with a relative clause: ἄνδρα μοι ἐννεπε ...πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλά πλάγχθη “the man of many wiles who ...” (*Od.*1.1-2). Odysseus’ prompt follows this same pattern: ἵππου κόσμον ἄεισον δουρατέου, τὸν Ἐπειδὸς ἐποίησεν “sing the artifice of the wooden horse, that Epeius made.” Odysseus varies the grammatical cases of the invocational language in his periphrastic

---

18 We might also note the first verse of the *Thebaid*: Ἄργος ἄειδε, θεά, πολυδίψιον, ἐνθεὶν ἄνακτες. Consider also hymnic invocations, e.g. *H.Hom.Aph.* 1-2: ἐννεπε ἔργα πολύτροπον Ἀφροδίτης ... ἐνθεὶ ... Bassett (1923) remains a standard work on invocation language.
description of the antecedent: the horse, in the genitive case, is modified by the four-syllable adjective δουρατέου and is the antecedent of the relative τον.

Temporal markers are also characteristic of invocational language. The Iliadic poet asks the Muse to sing “from the time when” Achilles and Agamemnon first quarreled (ἐξ οὗ, 6). The Odyssean poet commands the Muse to sing from wherever she wishes (ἀμόθεν, 10), and, as if choosing a point from where she commands, begins “from that point” (ἐνθέν, 11) when all the others had escaped.19 Likewise, Demodocus begins his song with temporal markers: after Odysseus prompts him with the general subject, Demodocus begins his song (ἡρχετο, 8.499) and takes it up from the very point which Odysseus suggests (ἐνθέν ἐλὼν, 8.500).20

The specific method of taking up song from where another leaves off points to rhapsodic song-making. Demodocus “began” (ἡρχετο) from the very spot (ἐνθέν) from which Odysseus left off. Similarly do rhapsodes “sequence” episodes of narrative together according to Diogenes Laertius: οἷον ὅπου ὁ πρῶτος ἐληξέν, ἐκεῖθεν ἀρχεσθαι τὸν ἐχόμενον.21 Like rhapsodes at the Panathanaic festival, Odysseus and Demodocus are relaying narratives about the Trojan War back and forth, taking up and leaving off and stitching together a narrative. This is also done in a specific order, just as the pseudo-Hipparchus asserts that rhapsodes are to sing their songs “in order” (ἐφεξης). Although in this passage neither Odysseus nor Demodocus formally “leave off” in the same terms as described in the Panathenaic material, when Demodocus “starts up” and “leaves off” elsewhere, the same technical language as found in the

---

19 Pedrick (1992) analyzes the opening of the Odyssey as a dialogue between poet and Muse and perhaps too extremely concludes that the Muse is correcting the Odyssean poet when his proposed subject matter (lines 1-10) is unsuitable. Walsh (1995) 398-403 provides a detailed discussion on temporal markers in the proem and convincingly demonstrates their integral role in relation to the whole of the poet’s project.

20 The verb ἡρχετο (used in this passage in the phrase θεοῦ ἡρχετο) especially marks hymnic invocations, which often start, “I sing, beginning from the god” (e.g. H.Hom.2-1, 9.7, 11.1, etc.; Hes.Theog.1).

21 Demodocus’ first song exhibits similar invocational and temporal markers: the Muse compels the singer to sing the quarrel (νεῖκος, 75) between Odysseus and Achilles, when once (ὡς ποτε, 76) they strove against each other at a feast; cf. Walsh (1995) 403 n.69.

Panathenaic material is used: he leaves off (λῆξειν, 8.87) and starts up (ἀρχοῖτο, 8.90) as Odysseus starts and stops weeping, for example.

In reflection of performance circumstances, performers recomposing a fluid _Odyssey_ performance tradition would naturally describe activities of song-making in the terms of their own trade, especially in passages involving the exchange of song as in _Odyssey_ Books 8–9. This is a clear indication of the creative performer at work. This type of argument has its critics, and I shall let criticism of some of the scholars’ work that I have built upon segue my argument into my larger claims. In opposition to the rhapsodic sequencing model advanced by Nagy and Cook, Hayden Pelliccia argues:

> But here as elsewhere Nagy, like Cook, has overlooked another obvious model for the sequential ordering of competing performers – what we might call the Panhellenic Rule of Sympotic Sequencing, ἐπὶ δέξιά. We are given a good glimpse of this rule in another dialogue of Plato’s, the _Symposium_, where explicit reference is made to the “sequencing” of the speakers, and to its consequences: the later speakers have a more difficult task than the earlier ones because the obvious material has already been used up. What is more, sympotic performances here, as elsewhere, are spoken of in explicitly “agonistic” language, the occurrence of which elsewhere Nagy assumes must refer to the contests of the Panathenaia. (Pelliccia 2003 113-114n.35)²³

Pelliccia criticizes Nagy and Cook for drawing an analogy between the exchange of talk in Platonic dialogues and the exchange of song at rhapsodic contests, claiming that they have overlooked what is a characteristically sympotic custom: the movement of wine and talk around the krater ἐπὶ δέξια. Pelliccia’s claim is that since this type of order belongs to the symposium, it cannot simultaneously characterize the order in which rhapsodes perform.

But as we have seen in Chapter 3, sympotic and rhapsodic discourses share certain markers and, contrary to Pelliccia’s viewpoint, do not have to be mutually exclusive. It is my

---

²³ I have omitted Pelliccia’s internal line references.
contention that these discourses can overlap, with each serving its own objective. If so, we should not restrict their use to either sympotic or rhapsodic. The rhapsodic discourse in these passages connects the performers within the epics to the real-world performers. Through this connection, the real-world singer shares in the praise which singers within the epics receive for their cunning and orderly performances. The sympotic discourse, on the other hand, also evident in these passages, serves a different purpose: it affects how audiences perceive character behavior.


Odysseus’ “proem” to his nostos incorporates several markers of sympotic discourse. I address these markers below before discussing the significance of the sympotic atmosphere of the passage. I will argue that Odysseus’ words in the Phaeacian episode are part of a discourse unrecognized by modern critics. In my following remarks, I will refer to Odysseus as “Odysseus” where he is enacting sympotic and/or rhapsodic discourse. This is in order to distinguish between two versions of Odysseus: Odysseus the character, who is part of the dramatic narrative and whose intentions align with the events of the explicit narrative, and “Odysseus”. For my purposes, this “Odysseus” can enact sympotic or rhapsodic discourse that is perceptible to external audiences as implicit discourses and can be perceived as intentionally doing so. “Odysseus” is the creation of creative rhapsodic performers recomposing and reperforming the epics over a long period of time. Odysseus, on the other hand, is a heroic character in the epics and is not shown to be aware of sympotic or rhapsodic discourse and thus cannot enact either. I will use “Odysseus” as shorthand where the character’s intentionality or external audience perception of him is unclear. Where
intentionality or external audience perception is not at issue, I will simply refer to the
cracter as Odysseus. As discussed earlier, throughout my study I limit my discussion to the
implicit meaning – not the surface, literal meaning – conveyed within particular episodes and
make no claims for how the internal audience interprets these passages.

“Odysseus” can be perceived by an external audience as referencing several sympotic
markers in his speech to the Phaeacians. The beginning of Odysseus’ speech is well known to
audiences of the Odyssey, both ancient and modern (Od.9.2-11):

"Alkínoe krēion, pántwn árideíkete lawôn,
ē toî mên tódê kalôn ákouémov ëstîn áoidou
toiou’d’ òiòs òd’ ëstî, òtheîs énaliýkios aúdhîn.
oû gâr égw ñô tî fêmi têlos xaríestepon ënva
ë’ òt’ ënphresýnn mèn êxî kàtâ dêmîn ãpantâa,
dáitumônës ð’ ána ñôma’t’ ákouázwntâi áoidoû
ëmënoi ézëîshì, para’d’ ñê plêthwøi trápezâi
sitou kài krêîwôn, méðû ð’ êk krêthìròs ëphûsouñ
óinóchoû fôréîshì kài êgëshì dêpáésì:
totó tî moî kâlìstôn ënì fressôn eîðêtaî ënva.

Your majesty Alcinous, most exalted of all men,
it's surely a fine thing, listening to a singer
such as this one is, in voice just like the gods.
For I say that no occasion is in any way more pleasant
than when merriment takes hold, throughout the whole kingdom,
and guests, throughout the house, sit in rows
listening to a singer, while beside them tables are full
of bread and meat, and, drawing wine from the mixing bowl,
the wine bearer brings and pours it into goblets.
In a way, this seems to my mind the finest thing there is.

These lines were so popular in antiquity that they were called “golden” and sung at the
beginning of symposia.24 This is hardly a surprise: the lines have a decidedly sympotic tone. For
the purposes of this study, the passage includes elements from four of the five headings of my

24 Cert.§8 West.


1  Material culture
   a. space – exclusive gathering of men
   b. accoutrement – krater

2  Preliminaries
   b. compliments

3  Drinking games
   c. superlatives (ti kalliston)

5  Aesthetics
   e. charis and euphrosyne

Markers under heading 4 are not explicitly present in the passage.

**Material culture – space and accoutrement (Headings 1.a. and 1.b.)**

The banquet that the Phaeacians hold for Odysseus has exclusive attendance. It appears that only the leaders and counselors of the Phaeacians are present (8.387). More specifically, it is the Phaeacian elite, the thirteen kings who rule over the Phaeacian lands (8.390-391) who are invited to the feast. These elites, however, are not all male. Queen Arete is also present at the Phaeacian feast. Her presence poses a potential problem to my evaluation of this scene. Women, of course, are not present at symposia unless they are hetairai, a class of women to which Queen Arete certainly does not belong. Her presence, however, is an important reminder that my argument applies only to implicit meanings, not those conveyed on the surface level of the narrative. Queen Arete’s presence at the banquet is at the center of a matrix of overlapping narrative strategies in which sympotic discourse is sometimes secondary to other implicit narratives, such as a potential wedding motif encoded in the
As explained in Chapter 2, not all markers need to be present in order to bring a sympotic discourse to light – this is not surprising because the surface level of the narrative has its own requirements. One missing or incomplete marker, such as an all-male drinking party, does not ruin the effect of the constellation of other markers.

Besides the marker of exclusive gathering of men (1.a.), the accoutrement in the specific form of the krater is also emphasized (1.b.). Odysseus calls attention to the movement of wine from krater to cups (μέθυ δ’ εκ κρητήρος ἄφυσον οίνοχος φορέησι καὶ ἐγχείη δεπάζοι, 9-10). Significantly, Odysseus singles out the static placement of the food which contrasts with the movement of the wine. Wine, a staple of the symposium, is emphasized at the expense of the food even though on the surface level of the narrative Odysseus and the Phaeacians are at a heroic feast. The focus on the wine and its movement – three verbs in two lines connected with the distribution and pouring of wine (ἄφυσον, φορέησι, ἐγχείη, 9-10) – around the room suggest that Odysseus is concerned primarily with this aspect of the commensal activities. These verbs describe how the wine, unlike the food, goes around the room and is distributed: the wine-pourer draws it from the krater and distributes it to each cup. The centrality of the krater drives home the sympotic references of Odysseus’ speech and the scene. The distribution of wine around the krater hints at egalitarianism, furthering the sympotic aesthetic.

**Preliminaries – toasts and compliments to the host** (Heading 2.b.)

Complimenting the host belongs to the preliminaries of a symposium. In the preamble to his nostos, Odysseus in his formal address to Alcinous compliments the king through his appreciation of the king’s employment of a divine minstrel such as Demodocus (9.3-4). As cited
in Chapter 2, complimenting the host in some way can initiate sympotic proceedings. For example, in Bdelucleon’s instructions to his father Philocleon in Aristophanes’ *Wasps*, the young man reminds his father that the first thing he should do upon entering the symposium is to “extend your legs and pour yourself out on the coverlets in a fluid, athletic way. Then, praise one of the bronzes, gaze at the ceiling, admire the room’s curtains” (*Wasps* 1212-1215). Odysseus’ compliment to Alcinous references a sympotic aesthetic underlying this scene.

**Drinking games – superlatives (ti kalliston) (Heading 3.d.)**

The beginning and the end of Odysseus’ preamble to his nostos incorporates the “superlative” game. In closing his preamble and moving onto his nostos, Odysseus declares that the elements in the speech he has just made are finest to him in his heart/mind (τοῦτό τί μοι κάλλιστον ἐνὶ φρεσὶν εἴδεται εἶναι, 12). “Odysseus”, as an external audience would perceive it, seems to be answering the implied question “what is most noble?,” just as symposiasts were known to do, and as Theognis does in his elegy quoted in Chapter 2 (κάλλιστον τό δικαιότατον, κτλ. 255-256). The game, as was discussed in Chapter 2, could reflect one’s moral or ethical wisdom. In *Odyssey* 9, Odysseus’ words would be understood by the audience as evoking sympotic discourse, here in the specific form of the superlative game and the moral or ethical wisdom it can reference. When Odysseus states that “this is what seems to me in my phren (heart/mind),” an audience familiar with sympotic discourse would likely understand him to be referencing the potential this particular game has in connection to one’s sophia. In light of the *ti kalliston* game referenced at the end of Odysseus’ speech, the audience might re-contextualize the beginning as well. Odysseus says that “indeed this is noble” (ἡ τοι μὲν τόδε

---

26 See discussion in Chapter 2.
καλὸν, 9.3); although this phrase lacks the superlative forms associated with the *ti kalliston* games, the close proximity and repetition of a form of καλός suggests that both should be taken together and represent sympotic aesthetics.

**Aesthetics – *charis* and *euphrosyne* (Heading 5.e.)**

In his preamble, “Odysseus” can be perceived by external audiences to reference two sympotic aesthetics – *charis* and *euphrosyne* – directly. As has been discussed, the aesthetics of *charis* and *euphrosyne* are achieved by a combination of various types of behavior, speech, and use of objects. For example, in a Theognidean elegy (493-496; see Chapter 2), a symposium which was “not without *charis*” (οὐκ ἄχαρι, 496) is one in which participants make good conversation (εὖ μυθεῖσθε, 493) while staying by the krater (παρὰ κρητήρι μένοντες, 493). Making good conversation according to this elegy entails talking “to the middle” and to the collective group (εἰς τὸ μέσον φωνεῦντες, ὡς ἑνὶ καὶ συνάπασιν, 495). Thus *charis* can make multiple references to several aspects of sympotic behavior – how to speak, what to speak, and how to drink (next to the krater, which carries its own polyvalence). Similarly *euphrosyne* can embody several different aspects of sympotic behavior and accoutrement, as was emphasized in Xenophanes fr.1, discussed in Chapter 2. For Odysseus, nothing brings more *charis* to a feast than *euphrosyne* (οὐ γὰρ ἔγῳ γέ τί φημι τέλος χαριέστερον εἶναι ἢ ὅτε ἐγγίζεται ἐν ἑξην, 5-6).

In making reference to these two qualities in particular, Odysseus’ words strongly incorporate a matrix of sympotic aesthetics. These markers I have discussed above create a framework within which the external audience perceives the events of the episode to unfold. The precise function of this framework is explained further below.
The sympotic discourse in the Phaeacian episode is not simply of academic interest, a phenomenon which can and should be analyzed in isolation. An understanding of sympotic discourse has important consequences for how contemporary audiences interpret specific passages in the epics. In particular, sympotic discourse influences the way in which the audience perceives character behavior. The collocation of markers establishes an implicit pattern in the narrative which corresponds to the discourse of the symposium and conveys a specifically sympotic atmosphere to the external audience. Such a discourse, as discussed in the Introduction, has an effect – it produces expectations about how the characters are to behave. Each element of sympotic proceedings – toasts, cups, kraters, songs, etc. – is carefully controlled and/or employed in order to frame sympotic behavior. Symposiasts negotiate the kinds of talk, accoutrement, and behavior of the symposium in order to assert insider or outsider status (see Chapter 2). Because Odysseus implicitly uses sympotic accoutrement and speaks sympotic commonplaces, the external audience can understand that he is within a sympotic framework. “Odysseus” by his speech thereby attempts to control the way that the Phaeacians welcome him as an insider and award him with a send-off. This is not to say that Odysseus the hero of the Odyssey is employing this narrative strategy himself, but that audiences aware of the discourse might construe “Odysseus” as a sympotic actor.

28 Again, I maintain that the protagonists within the epics are unlikely to be aware that they are using markers for the symposium, or any proto-stage of it. There is no intentionality on their behalf, but the discourses I am discussing are organic to the narrative and encourage audiences to perceive that the characters are aware of them. Instead, the characters are participating in a lavish banquet of the Homeric style as described in Chapter 1.
Dangerous Phaeacians

Scheria is the last stop on Odysseus’ journey homeward, although in the chronology of the narrative it is the destination of his first journey from Ogygia. Many ancient audiences, like those of today, would surely listen to the Odyssey with foreknowledge of the sufferings Odysseus endures as he describes them in the Apologoi. Audiences would be aware of dangerous and even lethal encounters such as those with the Cyclopes and Laestrygonians. Indeed such encounters rehearse Odysseus’ final return to Ithaca, since they prepare him to deal with hostile people and situations such as he will encounter when he returns to the suitors in Ithaca. The narrative patterning that shows Odysseus encountering foreign peoples allows the audience to visit and re-visit themes important to the Odyssey. Each visit is viewed within the context of all visits – a type of “Odyssean” referentiality. The external audience can reasonably be expected to know of Odysseus’ travels, if not the actual details of them. Odysseus himself has already experienced the hardships and loss of his entire crew that he will narrate. Having already encountered dangerous foes and experiencing numerous sufferings, he is likely to be wary of his encounter with the Phaeacians. He does not know, as we do, that the Phaeacians will give him conveyance homeward. Odysseus would encounter the Phaeacians with no less suspicion than any other of the peoples or lands he has already come upon. Odysseus is trying to win a homecoming by himself, with no crew left to help him. It is in such a context that we, the external audience – and I include contemporary, archaic audiences – interpret the events of Odysseus’ visit to Phaeacia.

Thus, Odysseus, by now a savvy and seasoned traveller, has much cause to be suspicious of the Phaeacians. Although Odysseus’ visit to the Phaeacians ultimately wins him a homecoming, it is not entirely clear from the outset that he will acquire such favorable
welcome (and indeed farewell). Odysseus arrives in Scheria in a precarious and vulnerable position. He is unclothed, alone, and unsure of his surroundings. His frequent propositions of what course of action he should take as to various matters (5.465-473, 6.141-144) underscore the uncertainty of the situation. Athena’s words to him do not inspire confidence or assurance: the Phaeacians do not tolerate foreigners nor do they welcome anyone who reaches their land with open arms (7.32-33). In fact, as Odysseus learns, the Phaeacians have ties of kinship with the tribes of the Giants and Cyclopes (7.56-63, 206). What is more, the Phaeacians and the Cyclopes share a similar, violently arrogant character trait: both races are ὑπερφίαλοι (Phaeacians: 6.274; Cyclopes: 9.106). The connections between the Phaeacians and the Cyclopes must have been frightening for Odysseus. The implications behind Athena’s admonitions have already been actualized with disastrous consequences elsewhere. For both the external audience and for Odysseus himself, then, the situation as it is presented in Scheria is a precarious one, one which has played out in other situations in other contexts with lethal consequences.

We cannot disregard all of these perceived dangers for Odysseus when he sits down for a meal with the Phaeacians. He has already lost his crew to peoples not unlike the Phaeacians. When Alcinous begins his formal questioning of Odysseus – who he is, where he comes from, etc. – he hints at the suspicion with which the Phaeacians view foreigners (8.548-549):

τῷ νῦν μηδὲ σὺ κεῦθε νοήμασι κερδαλέοισιν
ὁττι κέ σ’ εἴρωμαι: φάσθαι δέ σε κάλλιόν ἐστιν.

29 On the character of the Phaeacians and Odysseus’ reaction to them, see especially G. Rose (1969).
30 The Phaeacians also used to live close to the Cyclopes but moved away to avoid their continual plundering (6.4-6); on the Cyclopes, see Nieto Hernández (2011).
31 The term is reserved for lawless characters: Locrian Ajax (4.503) and Telemachus (4.663, 16.346), “one of those instances in which the suitors ascribe to others what in reality fits themselves” (G. Rose (1969) 390).
Therefore, don’t, with cunning designs, conceal what I ask you. It’s better you reveal it.

Alcinous tells Odysseus that he suspects what men say. Although Alcinous’ words may reference suspicions of foreigners generally, his words can also be interpreted as referencing the sympotic commonplace of being suspicious of one’s fellow-drinkers and their true intentions. “Odysseus”’ reply – the preamble to his nostos – “picks up” on Alcinous’ sympotic warning. Although “Odysseus”’ preamble to his apologos is neither a toast nor a prayer, his reflections upon sympotic commonplaces like suspicion effect similar aesthetics to those brought about by toasts or prayers. Initial toasts and prayers at a symposium establish “ground rules” for the proceedings. Acknowledgment of and the ability to participate within such rules establishes one’s insider status. Disregard for the rules, on the other hand, can flag one’s outsider status. In the manner of a symposiast who toasts his fellow drinkers in an expression of group cohesion and an assent to rules, “Odysseus” references the sympotic aesthetics of charis and euphrosyne as a guide for the type of atmosphere he hopes will reign at the banquet.

A comparison with Xenophanes’ elegy (fr.1), discussed in Chapter 2, is instructive for our understanding of Odysseus’ strategy. In that elegy, the authorial voice references many of the key actions and themes which contribute to an ideal atmosphere of a symposium. Men who are euphron – that is, who are characterized by euphrosyne – are to behave by making libations and praying to do what is just (σπείσαντάς τε καὶ εὐξαμένους τὰ δίκαια δύνασθαι πρήσσειν, fr.1.15-16). They are to avoid topics which, being violent in content, can engender violence in terms of how symposiasts behave towards one another. Instead, like wine, talk is to be diluted in content: euphron men are to praise the men who “makes a good show of himself” while

---

32 See esp. Nausicaa’s instructions to Odysseus which he must follow carefully in order to win a homecoming (6.289-315; cf. 8.564-571).
33 For this point, see my discussion in Chapter 2.
drinking (ἄνδρῳ δ᾽ αἰνεῖν τοῦτον ὃς ἐσθλὰ πιὼν ἀναφαίνει, 19). Such a man is the one who
recalls virtue (ἀρετῆς, 20) in his speech. Although not a formal toast or prayer, the elegy
instantiates and reinforces the shared goals of the drinking group. When performed and re-
performed at symposia, Xenophanes’ elegy acts as a prescription for how men are to behave.

Similarly, as Andrew Ford puts it, “Odysseus”34 “makes a good show of himself” in his
speech by employing strategies of sympotic table-talk. In doing so, “Odysseus” marks his status
as an insider in order to win his homecoming from the Phaeacians.35 Games such as the
superlatives game (τι καλλιστον) and the recognition and use of key sympotic aesthetics such as
charis and euphrosyne mark Odysseus as an insider in sympotic games and atmosphere. By
demonstrating his ability to negotiate proper sympotic discourse, “Odysseus” identifies
himself with others who have the authority to speak within this discourse – that is, the
Phaeacian nobles. As a sympotic insider, “Odysseus” can identify himself as one who is noble
and worthy of inclusion among the elite of the Phaeacians. Alcinous has no need to be
suspicious of Odysseus’ intentions – for “Odysseus” responds to Alcinous in the same coded
language with which he was addressed. “Odysseus” shows himself to be aware of sympotic
rules and one who is aware of how to achieve proper aesthetics.

The Phaeacian reaction to Odysseus’ speech confirms that they too participate in
“Odysseus”’ sympotic speech, at least as an external audience would perceive it. As we have
seen in Chapter 2, symposia are sometimes viewed as testing-grounds for their members.
Individual performances at symposia are thought to reveal the true nature of a participant’s
character. Plato, for example, considered wine a “fair test of a man,” and, in some aspects as

34 “Odysseus” in quotations marks is mine. It is unclear whether Ford distinguishes between an Odysseus and
“Odysseus” – that is, an Odysseus who is the hero of the epic and part of the heroic narrative, and “Odysseus” the
character as the external audience perceives him. I continue to use “Odysseus” where confusion between the two
may arise. Odysseus does not enact sympotic discourse, but the audience may perceive that “Odysseus” is.
least, “superior to all other tests” (Laws 650a-b). Odysseus’ speech references the sympotic commonplace which connects one’s speech with one’s inner nobility, evidenced by the Phaeacian reaction to his words. Part of the test as to whether Odysseus should be given a homecoming or not is how well he speaks. Queen Arete’s question to her people illustrates the criteria by which the Phaeacians test the stranger: “Phaeacians, what kind of man does this man appear to you to be in terms of his looks and his stature and indeed in terms of his noble mind within?” (Φαίηκες, πώς ὃμιμον ἄνηρ ὃδε φαίνεται εἶναι εἶδός τε μέγεθός τε ἰδὲ φρένας ἔνδον ἐίσας; Od.11.336-337). Alcinous’ subsequent pronouncement on the substance of Odysseus’ preamble and nostos confirms that Odysseus’ strategy worked. Based on this tale and its delivery contextualized by the preamble, Alcinous judges Odysseus’ words to be shapely, and his mind noble (σοὶ δ’ ἐπὶ μὲν μορφὴ ἐπέων, ἐνι δὲ φρένες ἐσλαί, 11.367).

**Sympotic competition: Books 8 and 9**

Odysseus’ preamble in Odyssey 9 is part of a larger narrative strategy which contextualizes the whole of his visit to Scheria. Just as the narrative patterning in Odysseus’ encounters with foreign peoples establishes an Odyssean referentiality by which we encounter each episode within the context of all episodes, the evidence for sympotic discourse in Books 8 and 11 to be discussed below creates a narrative patterning of sympotic discourse. We see how “Odysseus” can be perceived as using a sympotic strategy to gain insider status and win a homecoming for himself. In the Phaeacian games in Book 8 and the nekyia scene in Book 11, “Odysseus” can be understood to be an adept sympotic performer just as he seems to be in his preamble. It is my contention that exploration of sympotic themes in each of these episodes

---


ties them together thematically for the external audience. Because neither of the episodes in Book 8 nor in Book 11 strongly reflect a sympotic discourse, I do not argue that they convey a sympotic discourse independently. Nevertheless, a discussion of the sympotic elements in Books 8 and 11 is important. The revisiting of sympotic themes in Book 8, Book 9, and in Book 11 establishes a paratactic pattern which I argue connects the episodes and the narratives conveyed in them. A recognition of the sympotic discourse in Book 11 is particularly important because it allows us to see how the sympotic discourse is not always aligned with the main narrative strategy.

**Phaeacian youth: competitive performances**

After Odysseus has been received into this perceived hostile land, the Phaeacians hold games to make a trial of different sports (8.145-149). In the end, however, they make a trial of the stranger Odysseus. The songs of Demodocus are punctuated by wrestling, jumping, and discus throwing, among other sports, at Alcinous’ request (8.100-103):

> νῦν δ᾽ ἐξέλθωμεν καὶ ἀέθλων πειρηθῶμεν πάντων, ὥς χ’ ὁ ξεῖνος ἐνίσπῃ οἷσι φίλοισιν οἶκαδε νοστήσας, ὅσσον περιγιγνόμεθ᾽ ἄλλων πῦς τε παλαιμοσύνη τε καὶ ἅλμασιν ἠδὲ πόδεσσιν.

Let’s go out now and make a try at all the games, so the stranger can tell his loved ones, on his return home, how much we surpass others in boxing, wrestling, jumping, and running.

The games proceed in the spirit in which they were first begun – as showcases of the abilities of the Phaeacian youth at various gymnastic and athletic contests.
But the competition of the games soon gives way to verbal competition between the stranger Odysseus and his Phaeacian hosts. The Phaeacian youth Laodamas – Alcinous’ most beloved son (7.170-171) – proposes to challenge Odysseus in order to get him to compete in the games (8.133-139):

δεῦτε, φίλοι, τὸν ξεῖνον ἐρώμεθα εἴ τιν᾽ ἄεθλον οἶδε τε καὶ δεδάηκε. φυήν γε μὲν οὐ κακός ἐστι, μηρούς τε κνήμας τε καὶ ἄμφω χεῖρας ὑπεθεν αὐχένα τε στιβαρὸν μέγα τε σθένος: οὐδέ τι ἥβης δεύεται, ἀλλὰ κακοῖσι συνέρρηκται πολέεσσιν: οὐ γὰρ ἐγώ γέ τι φημι κακώτερον θαλάσσης ἄνδρα γε συγχεῦαι, εἰ καὶ μάλα καρτερός εἶ.

Here, friends, let’s ask the stranger if he has learned and knows some games. In physique he’s not that bad, in thighs, in calves, and, up top, in both arms, sturdy neck, and greatness of strength. Nor does he lack any youthful vigor, though he’s been broken down by many evils. For I say that nothing else confounds a man worse than the sea, even if he’s very strong.

Although Odysseus is not in the internal audience when Laodamas questions the Phaeacians, the words, if overheard by him, would be contentious. As Gottesman points out, there is an antagonistic polarity in Laodamas’ words: words of wonder and even sympathy (Odysseus looks in all wise to be a strong man) turn to a charge that even if he appears to have such faculties, the sea has taken away their vigor.\(^3\) Even if Odysseus does not hear these words, the

\(^3\) Gottesman (2008) 5-6 (see also n.19) takes too much liberty in claiming that συγχεύαι is a *hapax* (grammatically speaking the word does not occur in infinitive form elsewhere in the epics, but the word is common enough in other forms \[e.g. Il.15.364, 9.612, 16.471\] that calling it a *hapax* understates the frequency of its use) to justify his translation as “shrivel up,” but I do not disagree with his overall assessment that the words are taunting in nature. We can compare the tone of this passage to the taunts which pass between Glaucus and Diomedes in Book 6 of the *Iliad*, on which see my discussion in Chapter 2.
external audience, at least, does hear them, and may well understand a taunting or antagonistic tone.\(^\text{39}\)

Laodamas, urged on by other Phaeacian youths, next turns his taunts toward Odysseus in person, antagonizing him in front of all the Phaeacians (145-151):

\[
\text{δεῦρ’ ἄγε καὶ σύ, ξεῖνε πάτερ, πείρησαι ἀέθλων,}
\text{εἴ τινα που δεδάηκας: ἔοικε δέ σ’ ἴδμεν ἀέθλους:}
\text{oú μὲν γὰρ μεῖζον κλέος ἀνέρος ὀφρα κ’ ἔησιν,}
\text{η δ’ ἄριστον τε ἱδρὲ καὶ χερσὶν ἐῇσιν.}
\text{ἀλλ’ ἄγε πείρησαι, σκέδασον δ’ ἀπὸ κῆδεα θυμοῦ.}
\text{σοὶ δ’ ὄδος οὐκέτι δηρὸν ἐπηεύσται, ἀλλά τοι ἣδη}
\text{νηὺς τε κατείρυσται καὶ ἐπαρτέες εἰσίν ἔταίροι.}
\]

Come here, father stranger, you too try the games, if somewhere you learned some, since it's fitting you know games, for, while he's alive, a man's fame is no greater than what he does with his own hands and feet. But come, make a try, and scatter troubles from your heart. Your trip still won't be long far off, for your ship has already been launched and your comrades are ready.

Laodamas’ taunt suggests that Odysseus is not skilled at contests: “if somehow (που) you have learned any....” Laodamas exaggerates the importance of participation in such contests because of the κλέος they can bring – there is none greater as long as a man lives. Odysseus’ response indicates that he recognizes the sneer (153-154):

\[
\text{‘Λαοδάμα, τί με ταῦτα κελεύετε κερτομέοντες;}
\text{κῇδεά μοι καὶ μᾶλλον ἐνὶ φρεσίν ἡ περ ἄεθλοι,}
\]

Laodamas, why bid me do these things and mock me? Troubles are much more on my mind than games.

---

\(^{39}\) Laodamas’ words perhaps even invert the superlative game. Instead of making a declaration of what is best or what is noble (as Odysseus does), Laodamas claims “there is nothing worse than …” (ἐγώ γέ τί φημι κακώτερον), perhaps making him, Odysseus’ antagonist, a symposiast who misses the mark.
The language in Odysseus’ response is curious. The term κερτομέω, as argued by Gottesman, can evoke the types of jaunts and sneers that occur at symposia. Such jeers are oblique assertions of status. Laodamas would have good reason to assert his status: Odysseus took his place at the feast (7.169-170) and potentially rivals him as a future son (-in law) to Alcinous (7.311-315). While there is still work to be done on the specific connections between types of kertomia and the symposium, the verbal banter which follows Laodamas’ taunts is suggestive in its language of gaming which is characteristically sympotic.

Laodamas tries to taunt Odysseus into taking part in the Phaeacans’ physical contests. What follows, however, are contests of words. Laodamas’ young compatriot Euryalus joins in the banter, and elicits an immediate response from Odysseus (158-166):


Euryalus replied back and taunted him to his face: "No, stranger, I don't liken you a man experienced in games, of the many kinds held among men, but as one who is accustomed to a ship with many oarlocks, a captain of sailors who are traders, you’re mindful of cargo and an overseer of freight and greedy gains, but you don't seem like an athlete."

Then adroit Odysseus said to him with a scowl: "You did not speak nobly, stranger. You are like a reckless man."

---

40 See e.g. H.Hom.Hermes 54-56; Gottesman (2008).
42 In particular, Gottesman does not define why kertomia is specifically sympotic.
43 Trans. Chicago Homer, with alterations.
Instead of participating in a physical competition, Odysseus and the Phaeacian youths participate in a verbal competition. This verbal competition takes on a specific shape: it is framed within the popular sympotic game of eikasmos. Odysseus is taunted by Euryalus, who says that he in no way likens Odysseus to a man skilled in contests (οὐ γάρ σ᾽ οὐδέ, ξεῖνε, δαήμονι φωτὶ ἐίσκω, 159). “Odysseus” retorts with an anteikasmos that he judges Euryalus to be like a reckless man (άτασθάλω ἀνδρὶ ἔοικας, 166).

Like his performance of ti kalliston and conjuring of sympotic aesthetics such as charis and euphroyné, “Odysseus’” sympotically-performed eikasmos in this passage serves to demonstrate his cunning and nobility. Alcinous reacts to Odysseus’ behavior and speech specifically in terms of the arête which his speech and actions put on display (8.236-240):

εξεῖν’, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἀχάριστα μεθ᾽ ἡμῖν ταῦτ᾽ ἄγορεύεις, ἀλλ᾽ ἐθέλεις ἄρετὴν σὴν φαινέμεν, ἥ τοι ὀπηδεῖ, χωύμενος ὅτι σ’ οὔτος ἀνὴρ ἐν ἄγωνι παραστὰς νείκεσεν, ὡς ἂν σὴν ἀρετὴν βροτὸς οὐ τις ὄνοιτο, ὅς τις ἐπίστατο ἃσι φρεσὶν ἄρτια βάζειν ·

Stranger, since you say these things not gracelessly among us, but want to show your prowess, which attends you, angered that this man stood at your side and mocked you in the assembly, as no mortal would slur your prowess who knew in his mind how to speak soundly . . .

Alcinous’ perception of Odysseus’ arête through his speech is emphatic. Although Laodamas tried to make light of Odysseus’ virtue in front of the Phaeacians, Alcinous commends him for making a display of his arête (ἀρετὴν σὴν φαινέμεν) and speaking sensibly (ἦσι φρεσὶν ἀρτια βάζειν). An audience perceptive to the ways in which nobles challenge each other in the

---

44 See the comments of Pelliccia (2002) 217-218: “That the exchange does not in fact take place in the dining room, or inside a house at all, makes no difference; on the contrary, that fact brings to light an essential point about the whole phenomenon of parasymphonicism: for Greek aristocrats what conversation and the other convivial arts are to the symposium, athletics and war are to the world outsider. Either of the two spheres can at any time be spoken of in terms borrowed from the other.”
symposium would understand that “Euryalus” challenged Odysseus to a game of eikasmos as a test of his nobility. If “Odysseus” had overreacted and not replied moderately, he would have betrayed his outsider status. Instead, the audience perceive him as picking up “Euryalus”’ eikasmos with a measured reply in the form of anteikasmos. “Odysseus” has picked up on the sympotic elements of Euryalus’ speech and showed himself to be an insider – and thus made a show of his nobility, as Alcinous’ summation of his arête in terms of his speech makes clear.

**Catalogues of Women: Odyssey 11**

In Book 11, Odysseus finishes his nostos (for the first time) with a catalogue of the heroines he met in the Underworld. Scholars as early as Wilamowitz have placed little value on this episode and often considered it irrelevant.\(^{45}\) My analysis of rhapsodic and sympotic discourses, however, challenges such an assumption. When understood in a rhapsodic and sympotic context, we can see that the catalogue of heroines in the Odyssey is very much a part of the narrative. Indeed, the rhapsodic and sympotic features of the catalogue contribute to our understanding of precisely the kinds of poetics I am arguing for throughout the epics. The recognition of rhapsodic and sympotic discourse is essential to our understanding of how and why epics are put together.

**The catalogue of heroines as a rhapsodic insertion**

In Book 11, Odysseus tries to make an end of the tales of his return with a catalogue of the heroines whom he met in the Underworld (Od.11.328-332):\(^{46}\)

---

\(^{45}\) Wilamowitz (1884) 148; cf. R. Martin (2001) 26. See also below.

\(^{46}\) The beginning of the catalogue of heroines is quoted below.
I couldn't name or tell the story of them all, all the heroes' wives and daughters that I saw, before immortal night would wane. But it's now time to sleep, either at my swift ship, going to my comrades, or here where I am. My convoy is up to you and to the gods.

Alcinous, however, is eager to hear more. After promising that Odysseus will get a proper send-off, he prompts him to continue his tales, suggesting the subject of the god-like companions (ἀντιθέων ἑτάρων) Odysseus saw in the Underworld as a suitable starting point (Od. 11.363-372):

Odysseus, looking at you, we in no way think that you're deceptive or dissembling, such as many that the dark earth breeds, men spread all about, who make up lies from what no one can see. But the grace of words is upon you, and a good heart in you, and you've told your story skilfully, as when a singer does, the wretched woes of yourself and all the Argives. But come, tell me this and recount it exactly, whether you saw any of your godlike comrades, who followed along with you to Ilium and met their fate there.
Odysseus complies with Alcinous' request and tells how Penelope scattered the souls of the heroines and the souls of his companions began to appear (11.380-389):

ει δ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἀκουέμεναί γε λιλαίεαι, οὐκ ἂν ἔγώ γε τούτων οι φθονέοιμι καὶ οἰκτρότερ᾽ ἄλλ᾽ ἀγορεύειν, κηδεμοίν έμών έτάρων, οἳ δὴ μετόπισθεν ὄλοντο, οἳ Τρώων μὲν ὑπεξέφυγον στοινόεσσαν ἄνυτην, ἐν νόστῳ δ᾽ ἀπόλοντο κακῆς ἰότητι γυναικός. αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ψυχὰς μὲν ἀπεσκέδασ᾽ ἄλλῳ ἅγνῃ Περσεφόνεια γυναικῶν θηλυτεράων, ἦλθε δ᾽ ἐπὶ ψυχὴ Ἀγαμέμνονος Ἀτρεΐδαο ἀχνυμένη: περὶ δ᾽ ἄλλως ἀγηγέραθ᾽, ὅσσοι ἅμ᾽ αὐτῷ οἴκῳ ἐν Αἰγίσθοιο θάνον καὶ πότμον ἐπέσπον.

If you still desire to listen, I wouldn't begrudge telling you of things even more piteous than these, the troubles of my comrades, who perished afterwards, who escaped the Trojans' woeful battle cry, but were destroyed on their return by an evil woman's will. Then after pure Persephone scattered the souls of the female women to one place and another, the soul of Atreides Agamemnon came near, in grief. Others gathered around him, all who'd died with him and met their fate in Aegisthus' house.

Odysseus was entertaining the Phaeacians with stories of his returns. The thread of the narrative led Odysseus to tell of his arrival to the chasm of the Underworld, where he would meet Tiresias and continue his mission homeward, according to Circe (10.490-495; 503-540). When he tries to finish his tales with a catalogue of heroines (ἡρώων ἰδοὺς ἠδὲ θύγατρας, 11.329; cf.11.227, quoted below), Alcinous urges him to sing more about his god-like companions (ἀντιθέων ἔτάρων, 11.371). Odysseus resumes his narrative following Alcinous’ prompt, obliging Alcinous’ suggestion to tell of his companions (ἐμῶν ἔτάρων, 11.382).

In effect, Alcinous prompts Odysseus to return to (male) heroic material, rather than remain on the path of a catalogue of heroines. As in Book 8 in which Odysseus prompts
Demodocus to “realign” the path of his song back to heroic material instead of singing hymnic material, Alcinous here prompts Odysseus to resume his heroic narrative. This prompt and response between Alcinous and Odysseus uses some of the technical language of rhapsodic relay. When Odysseus finishes the catalogue, he is eager to conclude his stories. Alcinous urges him to proceed, prompting him with a gentle imperative (ἀλλ’ ἄγε μοι τόδε εἴπε, 11.370) and offering the general narrative which he wishes Odysseus to describe: “whether you saw any of your god-like companions” (εἰ τινὰς ἀντιθέων ἔταρῳ ἱδες, 371). Just as Demodocus and Odysseus together composed an epic proemium with imperatives, relative clauses, and time-markers, Odysseus responds to Alcinous in a fashion that creates a prelude to his tales. The audience may perceive that he is stitching the story of the companions he saw onto his catalogue of heroines. Odysseus picks up on Alcinous’ prompt by responding that he shall tell of “the woes of my companions, who afterwards perished” (κῆδε’ ἐμῶν ἔταρων, ὦ δὴ μετόπισθεν ὄλοντο, 382). Having identified the general subject matter of his tale with a line-initial noun and a relative clause expanding upon this subject, Odysseus pinpoints exactly where his narrative will start: “But when Persephone had scattered the souls . . .” (αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ ψυχὰς μὲν ἀπεσκέδασ’, 385). Now Odysseus is responding to Alcinous’ prompt, asked to return to his heroic narrative from where Alcinous suggests.

The prompt and response between Alcinous and Odysseus seems to depict the process of rhapsodic relay. We can see at the end of the catalogue of heroines the process of stitching one song onto another. Odysseus “picks up” the thread of the narrative from where Alcinous suggests. For Alcinous, tales of heroes are more appropriate to Odysseus’ nostos than catalogues of heroines. Just as Odysseus seemed to consider Demodocus’ hymnic material tangential to

---

the Trojan narrative in Book 8, Alcinous in Book 11 seems to want Odysseus to stay on the path of heroic narrative.

The prompt and response relay between Alcinous and Odysseus potentially focuses on the seams that organically arise in creative rhapsodic performance. On the whole, Odysseus’ tales of his interactions with souls of the Underworld – that is, the Nekyia – are often regarded with Analytic suspicion since they are not considered to have obvious relevance to the rest of the narrative. Denys Page holds an often quoted viewpoint: the Nekyia is “irrelevant to Odysseus and his story . . . loosely attached and carelessly adapted to its surroundings.”49 Although Page is heavy-handed in his critique, at first glance he seems to have a point. Although recent scholars have begun to appreciate more subtle connections between the Nekyia and the larger themes of the Odyssey,50 many would not consider the scene, especially the catalogue of heroines within it, essential to the plot of the Odyssey.51 However, Alcinous’ reaction to Odysseus’ catalogue of heroines can be instructive. In terms of content, Alcinous gives Odysseus praise when he has finished the catalogue of heroines. At the same time, he can be perceived as trying to help Odysseus transition back to male heroic narrative. Importantly, the language used to describe the transition appears to belong on a macro-scale to rhapsodic discourse – on the macro-scale because the specific terminology (e.g. dechesthai) is not used.

The way that Alcinous and Odysseus negotiate the transition from the catalogue of heroines to the tales of the (male) souls Odysseus met in the Underworld can give us further information. The transition which on macro-scale reflects rhapsodic behavior may reflect a common practice among creative rhapsodic performers. In the textual tradition, at least, some

49 Page (1955) 38.
50 See, for example, Burgess (2012) on Odysseus’ encounter with Herakles and the belatedness of Odysseus’ travels.
51 e.g. Griffin (2011) expresses a dismissive attitude toward the catalogue of heroines: “first to appear is the most recently dead . . . Less relevantly, there flock up the dead heroines . . .”.
catalogues seem to have “optional” statuses or are used to transition between genres. The end of the *Theogony* may evidence such a practice. There, the manuscripts preserve a transition from the *Theogony* into the *Catalogue of Women* (see above in Chapter 3). The catalogue of ships in the *Iliad* seems to have an “optional” status in the *Iliad*’s manuscript tradition. A few manuscripts omit the catalogue altogether, while others put it at the end of Book 24. Indeed, Richard Martin argues that such variability is a remnant of rhapsodic performance. A rhapsode may perform or leave out a segment of catalogue poetry depending on the needs of his performance. A rhapsode might include a catalogue, for example, to compete with another rhapsode, to join it to another episode, as described above, or to tailor the performance to suit a specific audience. The portability which some catalogues seem to have in the manuscripts may be a preservation of the flexibility of such rhapsodic performances.

In fact, Odysseus’ catalogue of heroines shows greater affinity to other catalogues of women rather than to the scope of the *Odyssey* itself. The Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, for example, provides genealogical catalogues of the children of women and gods or demigods, and even includes several of the same genealogies as those in the catalogue of heroines of *Odyssey* 11, such as Tyro, Chloris, Iphimedeia, Leda, Antiope, and Alcmene. The *Cypria* may also include a catalogue featuring several of these same women. The similarities between the Odyssean catalogue and other catalogues suggest that they stem from a stock epic motif rather

---

53 R. Martin (2001) 28 further argues that “they could well be remnants of rhapsodic practice, the live-performance ‘stitching together’ of songs that is alluded to in the contest of Homer and Hesiod, and to which fr. 357 M.-W. must refer.”
54 West (1985) 32 n.7 references several works that have discussed the catalogue of heroines and the Hesiodic *Catalogue*. See further Tsagarakis (2000) 11-12 and Crane (1988) 96 fn.88 for scholarship on the relationship between the *Nekyia* and Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*.
than being distinct and individual performances. A contemporary audience familiar with the techniques of rhapsodic practice would likely perceive that Odysseus and Alcinous are aware of the rhapsodic nature of the catalogue since they appear to use it as a transition back to heroic narrative, that is, the (male) souls that Odysseus sees in the Underworld. Odysseus can be understood to actively stitched the proceeding narrative onto the catalogue of heroines, while Alcinous can seem to help smooth the transition by helping Odysseus with the proemial language. The catalogue of heroines may be tangentially related to Odysseus’ nostos, but serves as an opportunity for Odysseus to return to the main subject matter of his tale. The catalogue gives us a prime example of the rhapsode – and by extension, Odysseus – at work, stitching together the different pieces of the narrative.

Odysseus’ catalogue of heroines appears as one sequence in several rhapsodic songs. On the rhapsodic song’s inclusion or exclusion, Martin concludes:

Odysseus the performer creates suspense in the midst of Odyssey XI using precisely this kind of catalogue material. The intertextual effect attunes an audience to yet another external resemblance. For at this point in the poem, rather than looking like an itinerant story teller or poet, Odysseus, to an audience that knows rhapsodic repertoires, looks like a rhapsode. If, as seems likely, the performer of our Odyssey was also, at some stage in the transmission, a rhapsode, the ironic mirroring effect would be all the more striking. (R. Martin 2001: 28)

According to Martin, this rhapsodic performance would be symbolically significant to an external audience listening to an actual rhapsoidos. I argue that an additional aspect of discourse is explored in this section in order to demonstrate the thematic links the catalogue has with the rest of the Odysseus’ Phaeacian journey. The catalogue has elements of sympotic

---

discourse which further connect it with Odysseus’ previous verbal competitions in Book 8 and Book 9 which aimed at demonstrating his noble mind within.

The catalogue of heroines and sympotic discourse

In his tale, Odysseus explains that Persephone leads a group of women to meet him after his encounter with Anticleia (Od.11.225-234):

\[
\text{nōi mēn ōs ἐπέεσσιν ἄμειβόμεθ', aī dē γυναῖκες ἡλυθον, ὠτρυνεν γάρ ἀγαυή Περσεφόνεια, ὅσαι ἀριστήων ἁλχοἱ ἔσαν ἥδε θύγατρες. aī d' ἄμφ' αἴμα κελαινὸν ἀολλέες ἔγερθον, αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ βούλευον ὅπως ἐρέοι ἑκάστην. ἥδε δὲ μοι κατὰ θυμὸν ἀρίστη φαίνετο βουλή: σπασάμενος τανύκες ἀορ παχέος παρὰ μηροῦ οὐκ εἰὼν πίνειν ἁμα πάσας αἴμα κελαινόν. aī dē προμηνησίναται ἐπῆσαν, ἥδε ἐκάστη ὅν γόνον ἐξαγόρεων: ἐγὼ δ' ἐρέεινον ἀπάσας.}
\]

So the two of us exchanged words, then the women came, for illustrious Persephone spurred them on, all wives and daughters of aristocrats. They gathered all together around the dark blood, while I considered how I'd question each. And in my heart this plan seemed best, to draw my sharp-edged sword from beside my thick thigh and not let them all drink the dark blood at one time. They came near one after another, and each declared her birth. I questioned each and every one.

Odysseus has already engaged his audience’s attention for a long time before he tells this portion of his story, and for the external audience, the banquet setting has faded into the background in light of Odysseus’ wondrous tales of his travels. But several features of this part of the narrative, particularly the order of the women and the centrality of the blood-drink, reference sympotic practices. Within the referentiality of Odysseus’ Phaeacian journey it is
reasonable to suggest that some audiences would contextualize this passage within the larger framework of the Phaeacian visit. There is not a large constellation of markers in this passage, and I do not argue that this passage in isolation conveys sympotic discourse. Rather, the sympotic elements reference those already established in Books 8 and 9.

The catalogue of heroines plays upon important sympotic elements of order and individual performances. The women in Odysseus’ catalogue gather around the pool of blood all together (αἱ δ’ ἀμφ’ αἷμα κελαινὸν ἀολλέες ἡγερέθοντο, Od.11.228). As if establishing order around an underworld krater, “Odysseus” plays the role of sympsiarch as he guards the pool of blood so that the women would not drink all the blood at once (οὐκ εἴων πιέειν ἀμα πάσοις αἵμα κελαινὸν, Od.11.229). No longer a collective crowd (ἀολλέες), the women step forward in an orderly fashion, one after the other (προμνηστῖναι) and each woman (ἐκάτη) tells her own lineage (ὅν γόνον), each presumably taking a drink of blood with her performance. This process of individual performances, with the pool of blood as the focal point – just as a krater is in a symposium – and with an insistence on the order of these performances, is suggestive of sympotic practices in which individuals recite poetry one by one around the krater.

The women who come forth are furthermore noble women, defined by their marriage to noble men: all who were the best wives and daughters of nobles (ὅσσαι ἀριστήων ἀλοχοὶ ἔσαν ἠδὲ θύγατηρες, 227). Such genealogies are not exclusive to, but are particularly well-suited for, symposia. They lay out hierarchies, marriages, and births which reflect upon and reinforce the social hierarchies inside and outside the symposium. Within the symposium, hierarchies play an important role in determining insider/outsider status. The laying out of

58 By calling them the wives of great men (later called heroes l. 329), Odysseus indicates what type of story is to come, like how Odysseus’ tale about the Cyclopes opens with ὑπερφιάλων ἀθεμίστων. Here, the main topic is the women’s nobility; cf. Tsagarakis (2000) 79, 79 n. 308.
hierarchies gives order to those inside the symposium and justifies and emphasizes those who are outside. Genealogies like the one told in the Nekyia also identify the elite symposiasts with the heroes of the past, from some of whom these elites may have even claimed descent.  

The sympotic elements in the Homeric catalogue are not entirely surprising, since it has been suggested that the Hesiodic Catalogue also incorporates sympotic elements. For example, the ἥ ὀίη formula is thought to be a trace of skolion whereby each symposiast would add a heroine as the poem circulates around the krater. The Catalogue also uses terminology which is reserved for sympotic contexts elsewhere. For example, in fr. 26, the women are called οὐνοπηδοί, a term which may signal “sympotic companions” – that is hetairai. The poem also expresses a sentiment that is hardly distinguishable from elegies composed for performance at the symposium such as those of Theognis. One fragment in particular conjures a specifically sympotic aesthetic (fr.239 M.- W.):

οἷα Διώνυσος δῶκ’ ἀνδράςα χάρμα καὶ ᾠθος. ὡστις ἄδην πίνηι, οἶνος δὲ ὁ ἐπλετο μάργος, σὺν δὲ πόδας χεῖρας τε δέει γλώσσαν τε νόσον τε δεσμοῖς ἀφράστοις, φιλεὶ δὲ ἐ μαλμακὸς ὑπνός.

Such as Dionysus gave to men as a delight and as a burden. Whoever drinks his fill, the wine becomes maddening for him, it binds together his feet and his hands and his tongue and his mind with invisible bonds, and soft sleep leaves him.

---

60 Irwin (2005).
61 Irwin (2005) 58; cf. P. Rose (2009) 294 who, in discussing the Hesiodic Catalogue of Women, remarks that the Catalogue links the rulers of Greece to the rulers of the cosmos and that “probably toward the end of the eighth century, oligarchs began more and more self-consciously to stress birth as a decisive determinant of social status.”
63 Irwin (2005) 46.
64 Trans. West (2007).
The sentiment above is frequently expressed in poetry composed for performance and re-performance in the symposium, such as the following elegy from Theognis (211-212, 477-483):

{oīnόn toι pίneiν pοulόn kακόν, ħn dē tιs αυτόν
pίνη épistaméνως, oú kακός αll' āγαθός.}

…..

ḥkō δ' ħς oíνos xaríēstatoς āndrī pεpόςθαι·
oúte tι gár nήφων oúte lίην mεθύων·
dς δ' ān ὑpεpβάλλη pόsοις μέτρον, ούκετι κείνος
tής αυτόu γλώσσης καρτερός oūδέ νόου,
μυθείται δ' ἀpάλαμνα, τά nήφωsι γίνεται aίσχρά,
aίδειται δ' ēρδων oūδεν āταν mεθύη,
tό prίn ēwν sώφρων, tόte nήπιοκ...

Drinking wine in large quantities is indeed a bane,
but if one drinks it wisely, wine is not a bane but a blessing.

…..

I’ve reached the stage where the consumption of wine is most pleasant for a man, since I am neither sober nor too drunk. Whoever exceeds his limit of drink is no longer in command of his tongue or his mind; he says wild things which are disgraceful in the eyes of the sober, and he’s not ashamed of anything he does when he’s drunk. Formerly he was sensible, but then he’s a fool.  

The sympotic features within the Hesiodic Catalogue of Women do not correspond one-to-one with the catalogue of heroines in the Odyssey. Odysseus’ catalogue, for example, does not preserve the ἥ οὖν formula thought to be a trace of skolion. But we might imagine that Odysseus’ speech references such a formula with the repetitions of τήν δὲ μέτ’ ἵδον, ἰδον, and εἶδον. We might conclude, with Irwin, that sympotic features such as those discussed above suggest that the catalogues were performed at symposia at some stage of their composition.

67 The fragmentary nature of the Hesiodic Catalogue complicates our ability to explicate linguistic or intertextual evidence with full confidence. In particular I disagree with Irwin’s argument that the phrase φῦλον γυναικῶν at the beginning of the poem would reference negative, misogynistic paradigms of races of women known from sympotic poetry such as Semonides 7 and Phocylides 2 (Irwin 2005: 41). Irwin argues that since Semonides and Phocylides’ poetry were known to have been performed in sympotic contexts, poetry on the races of women belongs specifically to that context. While Irwin’s arguments merit further work on the connection between the...
It is my contention, however, that the above attributes do not speak to context but to poetics. Catalogues of women are not composed specifically for the symposium. Instead, they belong to the epic tradition performed by rhapsodes over centuries of time. Catalogues may have become popular sympotic songs because of the social hierarchies they instantiate and reinforce, as well as their potential for reiterating genealogies claimed by real-world aristocrats. The sympotic attributes of the Odyssean catalogue of women may reference such real-world practices in order to engage contemporary audiences and provide a contemporary framework to an archaized dining scene.

As the real-world aristoi listen to the genealogies of women in Odysseus’ catalogue, they perceive the reactions of the Phaeacians to be similar to what their own would be. As “Odysseus” re-performs the noble women’s genealogies to the leaders of the Phaeacians, he produces a genealogy appropriate to his noble audience and also to an audience of symposiasts. The Phaeacians’ judgment on Odysseus’ noble mind comes at the end of this performance. The external audience perceive that the catalogue of women is part of the entire show of nobility which “Odysseus” effects in a sympotic way in order to claim insider status with the Phaeacians.

Not all of the women named by Odysseus would contribute to the charis or euphrosyne of the symposium. Genealogies such as those of Epicaste or Iphimeedia are not the graceful stories one might usually associate with sympotic aesthetics. Rather, such stories may pose a threat to the order of the symposium, especially in a case such as Iphimeedia’s, whose sons threatened the entire cosmos. Here, as in the case of Arete’s presence, we are dealing with an overlap of narrative strategies. Although “Odysseus”’ rhapsodic performance is successfully symposium and catalogues of women, and in particular the highly misogynistic tones of Semonides and Phocylides and their potential relevance to sympotic aesthetics, our evidence is too narrow to draw such specific conclusions.
joined to his previous narrative, as a sympotic piece the aesthetic of the content is inappropriate. Perhaps this is why Odysseus rushes to conclude his catalogue.\textsuperscript{68}

Overall, “Odysseus”’ speech is successful as a showpiece of nobility and the negative paradigms mixed with the positive do not ruin the sympotic aesthetic since the nobility of the women’s ancestry is at the fore and encompasses all the women. Immediately subsequent to this performance by Odysseus are the king and queen’s pronouncements on the noble speech and character of their visitor. Odysseus’ praise and recognition of the proper order of their banquet has highlighted the sympotic context of this after-dinner speech, and the catalogue of heroines which concludes this portion of his tale further indicates his status as noble and his seat at the royal feast as deserved. By confirming the proper hierarchies and unions between noble men and women, Odysseus continues his attempt to display himself as a noble participant in the banquet. It is only after the narrative of the assembly of these women that Queen Arete and King Alcinous make their judgment on Odysseus’ status. Thus the Odyssean catalogue of heroines, rather than being an awkward and ill-fitting segment in Odysseus’ tale, plays a larger role within Odysseus’ narrative. “Odysseus” is depicted as successfully joining the catalogue to his rhapsodic performance. As a sympotic piece, the catalogue continues the thematic thread running through the scene whereby he is attempting to win acceptance and a return to Ithaca by making a noble display. As in the beginning of his speech, here at the end of this segment “Odysseus” can be perceived to be utilizing sympotic aesthetics and performances to display his worthy inclusion in the banquet.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{68} Doherty (1991) 157-159 notes how Helen and Clytemnestra are omitted as daughters of Leda in the Catalogue (11.298-304) and the brevity with which “bad” characters are dealt with. We might also notice, as Doherty does, that Clytemnestra’s “bad” story is left until after Arete’s pronouncement on Odysseus’ nobility.

\textsuperscript{69} See the comments of G. Rose (1969) 397-406.
Chapter 4: Odysseus as Rhapsode and Symposiast

Sympotic Techniques and Aesthetics
In the Contest of the Bow and Banquet of the Suitors

The Odyssey continually visits the theme of hospitality. For the Phaeacian scenes, I argued that “Odysseus” enacts sympotic discourse in order to suspend potential violence in his interaction with his hosts. His speech made him seem like an adept sympotic performer and one worthy of welcome (and send-off). In Ithaca, negative patterns of hospitality reign. Telemachus, for example, cannot establish any sort of “ground rules” for the suitors’ behavior though he uses words very similar to Odysseus’ speech in Scheria (ἐπεὶ τόδε καλὸν ἀκούέμεν ἐστὶν ἀοιδὸν τοιοῦτον ὁ ὃς ὃς ἐστίν, θεοὶς ἐναλήγκιος αὐδῆν, 1.370-371). Although “Odysseus” seems to navigate himself through a dangerous situation in Scheria by means of sympotic discourse, in Ithaca, matters have progressed to such an extent that sympotic ground rules are no longer relevant. It may seem obvious to connect the outrageous behavior of the suitors at the banquet to negative sympotic paradigms, but the analysis here will not solely be a comparative one. We shall see that various elements such as technical terminology and gestures construct a sympotic framework for Odysseus’ final revenge on the suitors.

In particular, the episode of the contest of the bow contains markers of sympotic discourse. The contest of the bow is set up to see who will win Penelope’s hand. Antinous begins the contest with reference to sympotic accoutrement and habits (Od.21.141-142):

όρνυσθ’ ἐξείης ἐπιδέξια πάντες ἑταῖροι,
ἀρξάμενοι τοῦ χώρου ὅθεν τε περ ὁίνοχοεύει

Get up, all you comrades, in a row from left to right, starting from the place where one pours the wine.

70 On this point, see Ford (1999).
The contest is to start “from where one pours the wine” – that is, the krater (Heading 1.b.). The reference is elliptical – the krater is indirectly referenced – but further emphasis is drawn to the krater by the first contestant Leiodes. He first attempts to string the bow and is one who habitually sits by the krater (παρὰ κρητῆρα δὲ καλὸν ἵζε μυχοίτατος αἰείν, 21.145-146). He is the son of Oinops, the wine-faced one, a name which is harmonious with the sympotic undercurrents of the passage. Other accoutrement is mentioned: Antinous is just lifting a goblet of wine to his lips when Odysseus takes his revenge. Odysseus’ arrow pierces Antinous’ throat and emits a jet of blood (22.9-21). That Antinous is still drinking wine when the meal has been removed (21.270-274) suggests the preliminaries of the symposium have taken place – in sympotic terms, the deipnon has been separated from the symposion (Heading 2.a.).

That the contest of the bow takes its directional movement from the krater is important. As was discussed in Chapter 2, the krater is polyvalent. It can reference several aspects of the symposium. For the purposes of my study, this means that it can reference sympotic markers under different Headings. It can reference both the accoutrement of the symposium (Heading 1.b.) and order and egalitarianism (Headings 5.a. and 5.b.). This polyvalent aspect of the krater is further emphasized in our text by the specific way Antinous instructs the suitors to try the bow. They are to try it epidexia (ἐπιδέξια, 141; Heading 4). The word epidexia refers to the specific left-to-right movement that wine and talk take at a symposium. Like the krater, directional movement epidexia can reference additional aspects

---

71 Węcowski (2002a) 631-632 concludes that “in the contemporary world of the poet, it was self-evident that a wine party existed in which agonistic activities were performed to assure the equality and to promote the competitive spirit of the participants.”

72 Węcowski (2002a) 631-632, further noting that the impersonal description of the wine-pourer further attests to the implicit activities performed ἐπιδέξια at the banquet. Węcowski (2002b) in addition links the competition of stringing the bow to the game kottabos (356-361).
of the symposium under several of my Headings, including order and egalitarianism (Headings 5.a. and 5.b.). The order which epidexia can reference is emphasized by the adverb preceding it: ἑξείης (21.141).

The audience may have been alerted to sympotic references underlying the narrative of the contest of the bow. When “Odysseus” first meets the suitors he acts like an akletos. The akletos, as discussed in Chapter 2, is the uninvited, boorish guest at the symposium who performs his own inferior physical and moral qualities as a foil to the elite symposiasts’ own superiority. “Odysseus” acts like an outsider to reaffirm the suitors’ perceived insider status. Emphasis of insider/outsider status belongs in my configuration under Heading 5.c. As an akletos, Odysseus walks around the suitors’ banquet from left to right (ἐνδέξια) begging for scraps (βῆδ᾽ ἵμεν αἰτήσων ἐνδέξια φῶτα ἔκαστον, Od. 17.365). By approaching the suitors endexia, “Odysseus” is adhering to the proper order of the pouring of the wine, and thus the proper order of the symposium (again, Heading 4, with reference to Headings 5.a. and 5.b.). He subverts the propriety of this behavior by not being the proper wine-pourer but a beggar pleading for scraps. The subtle reference to the proper order of the distribution of wine – and the subversion of it – implies an understanding on the part of both the poet and audience concerning the correct way of passing the wine, and thus an understanding of some of the activities of the symposium.

73 Fehr (1990) 185-187. Odysseus’ performance as a beggar is our first performance of an akletos, but, as Fehr points out, Hephaestus’s performance is similar as well: Hephaestus, like Odysseus as beggar, fears being thrown out of the gods’ banquet, and he similarly represents an inferior (here, physically) guest at the banquet, providing entertainment through his physical faults (186). He will again act the part of the akletos when he performs as a drunkard at Eumaios’ hut in order to receive a blanket.

74 Similar left to right ordering principles appear in H.Hom.Hermes: Hermes stands to Apollo’s left when singing on his newly made lyre (424) and Apollo claims that there is nothing like the passing to the right at young men’s feasts (θαλίηις ἐνδέξια) (453-454).

During this wine party – which is separate from the earlier feast – Odysseus declares that he should try the bow as well. Antinous reproaches him with words that presage Xenophanes’ complaints about the symposium (21.293-298):

> οἶνός σε τρώει μελιηδῆς, ὃς τε καὶ ἄλλους βλάπτει, ὃς ἀν μιν χανδόν ἐλη μηδ᾽ αἴσιμα πίνη. οἶνος καὶ Κένταυρον, ἀγακλυτόν Εὐρυτίωνα, ἄασ′ ἐνι μεγάρῳ μεγαθύμῳ Πειριθόοιο, ἐς Λαπίθας ἐλθόνθ᾽: ὥδ᾽ ἔπει φρένας ἀσεν οἶνω, μαινόμενος κάκ᾽ ἔρεξε δόμον κάτα Πειριθόοιο:

The honey-sweet wine wounds you, that distracts others, too, who take it with a mouth wide open but don't drink in due measure. Wine impaired even the Centaur, very famous Eurytion, in great-hearted Peirithous' hall, when he went to the Lapithae. After he impaired his mind with wine, he did evil things in madness throughout Peirithous' home.

Antinous’ rebuke speaks to the larger theme of proper ethics for the symposium. Odysseus’ mendicant status obviously threatens the elite company of the symposium. But it is good order, not Odysseus’ perceived social class, which Antinous focuses on. If “Odysseus” accepts the bow, and thus takes place in the endexia ordering reserved for symposiasts, he will disrupt the order of the symposium. Antinous conveys the potential disruption of order in characteristically sympotic terms: wine has the capability to harm the one who drinks in gulps (χανδόν) and beyond measure (μηδ᾽ αἴσιμα). Antinous’ warning is similar to Xenophanes’ later poetry on moderation in drinking. Xenophanes’ authorial voice warned drinking partners who were full of euphrosyne to only drink as much as would allow them to return home on their own without help (fr. 1.17-18). Such lack of restraint among drinking parties, Antinous cautions, has led to the paradigm of loss of control – the actions of Centaurs against the Lapiths – the same
paradigm referred to by Xenophanes in his invective against “epic” themes of Titans, Giants, or Centaurs (fr. 1.21-23).

Like Xenophanes, Antinous is concerned that violent acts similar to the Centaurs’ will ruin his drinking party. The potential for danger or misbehavior is represented physically in the Odyssey by the removal of the weapons from Odysseus’ megaron. In his preparations for revenge against the suitors, Odysseus orders Telemachus to remove all the arms from his dining hall. If the suitors notice their absence, Odysseus suggests that Telemachus lie and use the pretext that weapons are dangerous companions to commensality: “[I have removed the weapons] in fear that drunk with wine you might raise strife among us, and wound one another and disgrace the feast and wooing” (μή πως οίνωθέντες, ἔριν στήσαντες ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀλλήλους τρώσητε καταισχύνητε τε δαίτα καὶ μνηστύν, Od. 19.11-13; cf. 16.281-298). Antinous’ chiding of Odysseus as beggar recalls this same aesthetic and potential danger that excess of drinking brings to the peaceful order of the symposium. Thus, Antinous’ rebuke to Odysseus references several aspects of sympotic aesthetics I have collected under Heading 5. In particular, it references order (Heading 5.a.) and group cohesion (Heading 5.d.), although many of these aesthetics are intertwined with one another.

The outrageous behavior of the suitors at Ithaca denies the range of controls that the symposium can impose on character behavior. The sympotic discourse is ineffective because the suitors actualize the hubristic behavior that before only words threatened. The violence that excessive talk or wine can bring becomes real – this is no longer a symposium nor indeed is there a sympotic framework to the passage which could be perceived as affecting character behavior. No implicit discourse such as that of the symposium is needed to negotiate subtle

meanings of the narrative. The suitors will be punished. “Odysseus” is no longer an akletos at a symposium, but he is Odysseus – a husband and a king who has returned home and finally becomes reintegrated into his oikos and kingdom through violence. But he is ever the aoidos. When he tries the bow, he is “like a man who knows the lyre and song” (ὡς ὅτ’ ἄνηρ φόρμιγγος ἐπιστάμενος καὶ ἀοιδῆς, 21.406). Odysseus’ bow sings beautifully (καλὸν ἀείσε, 21.411) from beneath his touch as do the lyres of Phemius (Od.1.155) and Demodocus (8.266). The simile, however, is perverted: Odysseus will not pour out sweet delight as an aoidos might, but rather his arrows will pour out bringing death to the suitors. Even in this moment he is aoidic. Odysseus triumphantly preludes his attack on the suitors by praying that Apollo may grant him to hit his mark (ἀἰκε τύχωμι, πόρῃ δέ μοι εὐχος Ἀπόλλων, 22.7). Odysseus’ boast clearly recalls heroes’ gloats and prayers on the battlefield common to the Iliad, but as the aoidos to which he was first compared he speaks like a competitor at a poetic contest who asks for favor or victory from the god whom he is hymning (H.Hom.6.19-20, 10.5, 11.5, 13.3, 15.9, 20.8, etc.).

No discourses are needed to negotiate subtle meanings between audience and singer in the slaughter of the suitors. The symposium and its conventions cannot control the hubristic behavior that has characterized the suitors, nor can it restrain Odysseus’ violent reaction. Yet Odysseus is reintegrated into the heroic world as the king and as the aoidos. Throughout the epic, Odysseus has been seen as a rhapsode and as an aoidos at different times. It is not to a rhapsode that Odysseus is likened in the final moments of the Odyssey, but rather he is explicitly compared to an aoidos – the solitary performer who is depicted in the epics as one who controls the path of songs. An aoidos is an individual who works independently, unlike the

77 Russo et al. (1992) ad loc. note that καλὸν as an adverb is used exclusively to describe the sound of song in the Iliad and Odyssey.
rhapsode who stitches together songs, often prompted by another’s narrative. Odysseus’
reintegration must be his own, and he must control the path to reclaiming his throne.

In this chapter, I have discussed two implicit discourses – the “secondary” discourse of
rhapsodic performance, and the “primary” discourse of the symposium. Demodocus, who is
explicitly an aoidos, was shown to be implicitly represented as a rhapsode. Together he and
Odysseus stitched a notional whole of the Trojan war – at least as some audience members
would understand it. “Odysseus” too could be perceived as performing a rhapsodic insertion in
his performance of the catalogue of heroines in Book 11. Such implied representations of
characters behaving as rhapsodes potentially draw the audience’s attention to the real-world
rhapsode performing before them. When these characters who are implicitly represented as
"rhapsodes" within the epics are praised for their orderly performances, the real-world
rhapsode may be eliciting a similar criterion for his own performance. Because performances
within the narrative are depicted as being well-ordered, the implication is that the actual
performer is doing the same for his own real-world performance. The actual performing
rhapsodes share in the same praise as those they represent as rhapsodes in the epics.
Additionally, they assert authority for their performances by virtue of the fact that their
performances are measured according to the same criterion as those within the epics.

“Odysseus’” speech in Book 9, furthermore, brings to light sympotic discourse. I treat this
as primary because it affects how certain external audiences perceive and lay expectations
upon the behavior of characters within the epics. The Phaeacian narrative was shown to
contain several markers of sympotic discourse. Connected to Odysseus’ speech in Book 9, albeit
loosely, is his sympotic gaming in Book 8 and catalogue performance in Book 11. The latter was
shown to have potential connections to the symposium. Such connections successfully weave this part of his story – which is usually treated as unconnected and irrelevant – to “Odysseus’” overall strategy in using sympotic discourse to win a favorable return home.

The success of the sympotic discourse in Phaeacia is paralleled by its failure in Ithaca. The symposium was shown to be an ineffective tool in negotiating violent character behavior at the banquet of the suitors. In the following chapter, the focus of which is the *Iliad*, sympotic discourse implicitly conveyed in the narrative will be shown to reference additional potential breakdowns of sympotic behavior elsewhere in mythopoetic traditions.
CHAPTER 5

THE ILIAD
SYMPOSIUM AND THE SONGS OF ACHILLES AND PATROCLUS

The analysis of the Odyssean passages in Chapter 4 demonstrates that contemporary social practices have an important role in how external audiences perceive character behavior. A consideration of rhapsodic and sympotic discourses in the Iliad will show that this is not an isolated phenomenon but rather a feature of the poetics of epic narrative – the epics are contemporary in their outlook and reflect, implicitly at least, real-world contemporary social practices.

In this chapter I focus on the embassy scene of Iliad 9, quoted extensively below. Some aspects of this scene have already been described as rhapsodic or sympotic, yet, in my discussion of the Iliad, as with the Odyssey, I will go beyond simply identifying elements as rhapsodic or sympotic. I will address how such features contribute to our overall understanding of contemporary audience reception and the poetics of the epics themselves. As with previous chapters, I will be careful to observe the difference between literal, surface-level meanings and implicit, deep-level meanings – meanings negotiated between performer and audience. Furthermore, I will continue to treat rhapsodic discourse as secondary to that of sympotic, though recognizing that both contribute to our understanding of the poetics of the epics. Sympotic discourse will be
shown to more directly engage the external audience by constructing expectations of how characters within the narrative are to behave. As with Chapter 4, I will use quotation marks (i.e. “Achilles”) on some occasions. This is to distinguish between characters who are part of the dramatic narrative and whose intentions align with the explicit narrative (e.g. Achilles) from those characters who can enact contemporary discourses, sometimes seemingly knowingly (e.g. “Achilles”).

THE SONGS OF ACHILLES AND PATROCLUS

At *Iliad* 9.186-191, Achilles sings κλέα ανδρῶν to his companion Patroclus while an embassy journeys to seek reconciliation with him. As noted already by several previous scholars, this passage seems to reflect rhapsodic activities. But present too are elements that I would identify with sympotic discourse. The passage is first given below in its entirety; subsequently I will discuss rhapsodic and sympotic elements separately. A complete translation can be found in Appendix 3, while individual passages are translated as I treat them within this chapter.

*Il. 9.185-231*

Μυρμιδόνων δ’ ἐπί τε κλισίας καὶ νήας ἰκέσθην, 185
τὸν δ’ ἐγρόν φρένα τερπόμενον φόρμιγγι λιγείη,
καλὴ δαίδαλέη, ἐπὶ δ’ ἀργύρεον ζυγὸν ἦν,
τὴν ἄρετ’ ἐξ ἐνάρων πόλιν Ἱετίωνος ὀλέσσας·
τῇ ὅ γε θυμὸν ἔτερπεν, ἀείδει δ’ ἄρα κλέα ἀνδρῶν.
Πάτροκλος δὲ οἰοὶ ἐναντίος ἢστο σιωπῆ,
ἀφεμένος Αἰακίδην, ὅποτε λήκζειν ἀείδων.
τῷ δὲ βάτῃν προτέρῳ ἦγειτο δὲ διὸς Ὄδυσσεύς,
καὶ δὲ πρόσθ’ αὐτοῦ ἄρσιν δ’ ἄνόρουσεν Ἀχιλλέους
αὐτή σὺν φόρμιγγι λιπὼν ἐδος ἐνθα βάςασσεν.
ὡς δ’ αὐτως Πάτροκλος, ἐπεὶ ἕδε φώτας, ἀνέστη.
190
tῷ καὶ δεικνύμενος προσέφη πόδας ὤκυς Ἀχιλλέους:
χαίρετον ἐκαλὶ δὲς ἰκάνετον· ἤ τι μάλα χρεώ,
Rhapsodic technique and relay performance

In the passage quoted above, Achilles sings κλέα ἀνδρῶν as Patroclus sits opposite him in silence (186-191). The description of Achilles as a singer is consistent
with much of what we know of the aoidos and his trade. His audience is silent (Πάτροκλος δὲ οἱ οἶκος ἐναντίος ἦστο σιωπήν, 190), and Achilles appears to be an individual performer. Phemius and Demodocus both sing under similar conditions. Achilles’ theme is κλέα ἀνδρῶν, and κλέα ἀνδρῶν are likewise the subject of the performances of professional aoidoi like Demodocus (Od.8.73; cf. Hes.Th.100, ll.9.524-525). The poetic traditions which created the Iliad and the Odyssey are themselves referred to as κλέα ἀνδρῶν. Other elements in the passage, however, do not correspond to what we know about the aoidos from the epics. Nowhere else in Homeric poetry does a non-professional singer perform κλέα ἀνδρῶν in a private setting. Additionally, there are indications in the passage that Patroclus is not a passive, silent listener like other audiences of aoidoi. Such may appear his role on the surface of the narrative, but at the deep level of the narrative, Patroclus is rather an active participant in Achilles’ song-making.

The Panathenaic material used to reconstruct rhapsodic technique is informative for our understanding of – and a contemporary, 8th- to 6th-century audience’s perception of – this passage in Iliad 9. As discussed in Chapter 3, the pseudo-Hipparchus records that rhapsodes were mandated to go through the Homeric epics “in order” (ἐφεξῆς, 228b-c; see discussion in Chapter 3). “In order” was shown to indicate order which is either continuous (i.e. line-to-line) or discontinuous (i.e. select episodes in a sequence which suggest a notional whole). Diogenes Laertius records that rhapsodes performed by picking up from where the first left off (Εληξεν, 1.57.6; see

1 See Chapter 3 for a fuller description of the aoidos.
2 See Chapters 3 and 4.
discussion in Chapter 3). The terminology of sequential performance belongs to the discourse of rhapsodic performance. A collocation of markers would plausibly indicate to a contemporary external audience that rhapsodic methods of composition and performances were being employed.⁵

Some of this terminology is incorporated into the description of Achilles singing κλέα ἀνδρῶν. Patroclus waits for Achilles to leave off (λήξειν, 191).⁶ A form of the same verb (λήγειν) is used by Diogenes Laertius to describe rhapsodic relay. The literal, surface level of the narrative describes Patroclus as silently sitting opposite Achilles, suggesting a passive listener. Yet the terminology implies a rhapsodic method of relay performance.⁷ An audience familiar with rhapsodic performance and its discourse would perceive that “Patroclus” is waiting for Achilles to leave off in order to start up from that point. Achilles and Patroclus are competing not unlike rhapsodes.

While a single word like λήγειν cannot establish an entire discourse, the themes of the proceeding narrative of the Iliad add substance to my claim that some audiences, at least, would perceive Achilles’ song-making as part of a rhapsodic, competitive performance with Patroclus. The ensuing narrative depicts Patroclus as a substitute for Achilles, and at times as a character trying to out-perform Achilles in his actions. In a

---

⁵ Nagy is the authority on the rhapsodic undercurrents of this passage. In numerous publications (see esp. [1996b] 70–74, [2003] 43–44), Nagy identifies the connections between this passage in the Iliad and testimonia about the performance of rhapsodes at the Panathenaia. He also argues for evidence of rhapsodic terminology within the language of Plato and his dialogues (2002, esp. chapter 1 and passim).

⁶ Recall from the previous chapter that Demodocus “leaves off” (λήξειν) from singing the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles (Od.8.87). See also H.Dion. 17–18, Hes. fr.305.4 M.-W., Theog. 48; cf. Ford (1992) 115 n. 31.

⁷ This idea is not new. Monro (1884) ad loc presumes that δέγμενος designates that Patroclus is waiting to take up the song, and likens the situation to the Muses singing ἀμειβόμεναι (Il.1.603); see also on this last point Mazon (1948) 232–233, and Tarditi (1968) 140–141 on ἀμειβόμεναι ὀπὶ καλῇ at Od.24.60, H.Hom.Ap.189, and Il.24.718–776. Hainsworth (1993) ad loc entertains the idea that Patroclus is somehow waiting to take up song, but for lack of parallel (he argues the Muses in Book 1 are a choir) in the epics rejects it.
general sense, the embassy scene sets in motion the events that compel Patroclus to fight in the war as a substitute for Achilles. Achilles has “left off” from the fighting, but it will be Patroclus who will “take up” the battle against the Trojans in his stead.

More specifically, Patroclus can be described as a rival performer to Achilles on the battlefield. When the decision is made that it is best for Patroclus to fight in place of Achilles, Achilles expresses concern that Patroclus will overshadow his own actions and, by implication, out-perform him (ll.16.83-90):

But obey to the end this word I put upon your attention so that you can win, for me, great honour and glory in the sight of all the Danaans, so they will bring back to me the lovely girl, and give me shining gifts in addition. When you have driven them from the ships, come back; although later the thunderous lord of Hera might grant you the winning of glory, you must not set your mind on fighting the Trojans, whose delight is in battle, without me. So you will diminish my honour.

Achilles hopes that Patroclus will contribute to his own τιμή and κόδος by beating the Trojans back from the ships and winning glory and honor for himself. If Patroclus goes beyond the limits set for him by Achilles, Achilles reckons he himself will receive less honor and thus be out-performed by Patroclus.

---

6 Zenodotus omits lines 89-90, but Aristarchus defends their inclusion as necessary for Achilles’ purpose. On the issue, see Janko (1992) ad loc.
When Patroclus does “take up” the battle from Achilles, his actions are of the sort that could out-perform, or at least rival, Achilles. Against Achilles’ admonitions, Patroclus is blinded by the furor of battle and performs deeds that can potentially earn τιμή and κῦδος equal to or greater than Achilles’ own renown. Patroclus slays a son of Zeus, Sarpedon (16.502-507). The poet begins to glorify Patroclus’ deeds with a catalogue of other mighty heroes he slays. Other heroes who receive a “slaying-catalogue” are Hector (5.703), Teucer (8.273), Ajax (11.489), and Achilles himself (20.472). Patroclus shares the distinction of receiving a slaying-catalogue with these heroes. The poet rhetorically begins, “Whom first, whom last did you slay, Patroclus?” (ἔνθα τίνα πρῶτον, τίνα δ’ ύστατον ἐξενάριζας, 16.692).

But Patroclus’ slaying-catalogue – and thus the greater τιμή and κῦδος for himself – is cut short, and he is forced to ‘leave off’ from his τιμή- and κῦδος-winning feats. The Greeks are on the brink of breaching the Trojan walls with Patroclus at their lead (Il.16.698-699) when Apollo intervenes (707-709):

χάζεο διογενεῖς Πατρόκλεες: οὐ νῦ τοι αἶσα
σῶ ὑπὸ δουρὶ πόλιν πέρθαι Τρώων ἄγερῳχων,
οὖδ’ ὑπ’ Ἀχιλλῆος, ὡς περ σέο πολλὸν ἀμείνων.

Give way, illustrious Patroklos: it is not destined that the city of the proud Trojans shall fall before your spear nor even at the hand of Achilleus, who is far better than you are.

Apollo’s intervention pierces the illusion that Patroclus can compete with Achilles – fighting in his armor, leading the Greeks, and performing his own acts which could

---

9 I borrow the term “slaying-catalogue” and references from Janko (1992) ad Il.16.692-697.
bring him a τιμή and κόδος similar to that of Achilles. Apollo starkly reminds Patroclus of his subordinate status: he favors Achilles as the better hero. Even in slaying a son of Zeus and battling with the semi-divine Aeneas and the Trojans’ pre-eminent hero Hector, Patroclus still remains merely clothed in Achilles’ armor and is ultimately overshadowed by his stature.

Patroclus can thus be described as one trying to out-perform and rival Achilles when he has “taken up” Achilles’ role. When Patroclus dies, Achilles again “takes up” the fighting from where his companion left off. The combined actions of Achilles and Patroclus can be seen at a macro-level to effect a whole narrative sequence.

Neoanalytical scholarship has demonstrated that Patroclus is a narrative doublet of Achilles. Patroclus’ actions foreshadow much of what will happen to Achilles in extra-Iliadic narratives. Patroclus kills the semi-divine Sarpedon and attacks Troy. These events foreshadow (or “mirror”) Achilles killing Memnon and subsequently attacking the walls of Troy, as related to us in the Aethiopis. The foreshadowing effect which this doublet creates, however, is lost once Patroclus has died.

Burgess has shown how the foreshadowing of future events continues through the figure of Achilles himself: by picking up the narrative sequence of the motifs of his own death, Achilles fills in the gaps in the myth of his death. Thetis and the Nereids mourn him as he grieves at the death of Patroclus as they will do at his own death. He

---

10 Burgess (2009) 76-77: “It is difficult to believe that Patroklos, as the attendant of Achilles, traditionally accomplished [the killing of Sarpedon]. Patroklos seems quite capable of performing chores faithfully, as he does in Book 9, and perhaps fighting beside Achilles, but he should not normally perform the heroic deeds of Book 16.”

11 For a full discussion of the events which constitute the sequence of the fabula of Achilles’ death, see Burgess (2005) 120-121, 123 and now (2009) 27-42, 95-97.
kills Hector as he will kill Memnon.\textsuperscript{12} He considers attacking the walls of Troy in the \textit{Iliad}; in the \textit{Aethiopis}, he will do precisely that. He is continuing to effect, in order, the typical motifs in the narrative of his own death. The figure of Patroclus completes the narrative of Achilles’ demise when the \textit{Iliad} again focuses on his character. His funeral and the games put on for him evoke the funeral and games that will commemorate Achilles’ life and achievements shortly after the narrative of the \textit{Iliad} leaves off.

“Achilles” and “Patroclus” together, Burgess argues, enact a sequence of motifs which, in chronological order, evoke a \textit{fabula} of Achilles’ death. They relay performances in order to effect a notional whole. The effect of the Achilles/Patroclus doublet is to foreshadow a particular moment in the events leading to Achilles’ death. The sequence of events enacted by Achilles and Patroclus as individuals, however, collectively references the larger scope of Achilles’ extra-\textit{Iliadic}, mythopoetic tradition. By taking up and leaving off their respective performances, the one from the other, Patroclus and Achilles together suggest the notional whole of the extra-\textit{Iliadic} narrative of Achilles’ death and funeral. Like the rhapsodic sequencing at the Panathenaia or at the court of Alcinous, only the basic outlines of the story need mentioning to achieve a narrative.

Patroclus, when standing in for Achilles in battle, aims to out-perform him; this form of rivalry carries over into the trading of song. In \textit{Iliad} 9.185-231, δέγμενος and λήξειεν are used to reference their competitive relationship in trading song. These same words have been demonstrated to be descriptive of competitive pursuits and

\textsuperscript{12} See also on this point Burgess (1997).
agonistic behavior in general, such as fighting.\(^{13}\) Here they relate to a rivalry in which Patroclus awaits to “take up” from where Achilles will “leave off.” These terms in this context thus portray Patroclus not as a passive audience member listening to an aoidos. He is an active participant in song-making, waiting for his turn to again attempt to compete with and out-perform his rival. The circumstances surrounding Achilles’ singing and Patroclus’ forthcoming involvement in this performance are characteristic of the competitive performances of rhapsodes. Thus rhapsodic discourse is one aspect of the larger themes of agonistic behavior in the *Iliad*.

**Markers of Sympotic Discourse in *Iliad* 9.185–231**

I will argue that, in *Iliad* 9, contemporary social contexts are additionally reflected in commensal habits and homosocial bonds described in terms that archaic audiences would associate with sympotic discourse. It is clear that the surface level of the narrative refers to an embassy which entreats Achilles after a heroic feast. Markers within the passage form a collocation which suggests sympotic discourse is encoded in the deep narrative. The characters within the epic are unaware of and unaffected by the discourse. The external audience, on the other hand, would plausibly interpret the scene with specific expectations based on their reception of sympotic discourse. I outline the markers evident in this scene below. The embassy scene includes elements from three of the five headings of my framework (specific markers that will be

---

\(^{13}\) Dunkel (1979) 268-269. It is worth noting here Dunkel’s further argument that ἀείδων in this passage is related to the Vedic vad, which is found in terms such as brahmadya- and brahmayadya, often used in the sense of “exchanging verses.” For the relationship between ἀείδω and vad (–PIE H₂wed–), see further Sihler (1995) 56 §61.1.a.
discussed below listed under each heading; numbers and letters correspond to the rubric in Chapter 2 and re-printed in Appendix 1):

1. Material culture
   a. space – exclusive gathering of men
   b. accoutrement – krater, cups

2. Preliminaries
   a. separation of *deipnon* from *symposion*
   b. toasts and compliments

3. Drinking games
   b. *skolion* (*dechesthai*)

I will treat each of these markers as it appears in the narrative with reference to the numbers and letters used in the above schematic.

**Drinking games – *skolion* (*dechesthai*) (Heading 3.b.)**

Patroclus sits alone opposite Achilles. He is “waiting” (δέγμενος) for Achilles to leave off from song (190-191):

Πάτροκλος δέ οί οίος ἐναντίος ἠστο σιωπῆ,
δέγμενος Αἰακίδην ὑπότε λῆξειν ἀείδων,

The word δέγμενος belongs to the *dechesthai* (δέχεσθαι) family and can be placed under the heading “Drinking games.”\(^{14}\) Forms of *dechesthai* are markers for the “taking up” of

---

\(^{14}\) On the overlapping significance of δέχομαι as a marker in both sympotic and rhapsodic discourses, see Chapter 3.
The term can mark sympotic trading of song, games, or accoutrement.

The literal, surface level of the narrative describes Patroclus as simply “waiting” or even “listening.” There is no explicit indication that Patroclus is a participant in the song. Yet the simple, literal meaning is complicated by the existence of elements of sympotic discourse in the deep narrative – the narrative which carries meaning negotiated between performer and audience. The word δέγμενος is but one in a series of markers which, I argue, belong to sympotic discourse and which are evident in this passage from *Iliad* 9.

**Preliminaries - Toasting and separation of deipnon from symposion**
(Headings 2.b. and 2.a.)

When Achilles first notices that the embassy is approaching his tent, he leaps up, lyre in hand, and greets them (196-198):

τῶ καὶ δεικνύμενος προσέφη πόδας ὡκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς.
χαίρετον ἦ φίλοι ἄνδρες ἰκάνετον ἦ τι μάλα χρεώ,
οἱ μοι σκυζομένῳ περ Ἀχαιῶν φίλτατοί ἐστον.

And in greeting Achilles the swift of foot spoke to them: 'Welcome. You are my friends who have come, and greatly I need you, who even to this my anger are dearest of all the Achaians.'

Scholars largely focus on the use of the dual forms (τῶ, χαίρετον, ἰκάνετον) in this passage. Of issue for the purposes of this chapter, however, is the use of δεικνύμενος.

Achilles makes some sort of gesture to the embassy, described as δεικνύμενος.

---

15 E.g., δέξει καλῶς, Ar.V.1222; δέξεται, Ar.V.1223; δέξαι δὲ σύ, Ar.V.1225; Αἰσχίνης ὁ Σέλλου δέξεται, Ar.V.1243; δεξάμενος, Sch.ad.V.1222; δέχου, Dion.Chal.fr.1.1 W. (see below); δεξάμενος, Eupolis, fr.395 PCG (see Chapter 2).
Translations such as those of Murray and Lattimore have understood δεικνύμενος to mean something along the lines of ‘welcoming’ or ‘extending his hand in welcome.’ Edwards follows this sense of the term in his important analysis of hospitality scenes. The use of the term and its derivatives elsewhere in the epics, however, aligns it with the meaning of “toasting.” Toasting is a marker of sympotic discourse and belongs to the preliminaries of the symposium, as I have defined it. This marker contributes to the overall collocations of markers of sympotic discourse which an audience would reasonably perceive in the deep narrative.

One other welcoming scene contains δεικνύμενος in the same form (δεικνύμενος). In Odyssey 4, Menelaus welcomes Telemachus and Pisistratus after the carver has set out platters of meat and cups (Od.4.57-59):

δαιτρὸς δὲ κρειῶν πίνακας παρέθηκεν ἀείρας
παντοίων, παρὰ δέ σφι τίθει χρύσεια κύπελλα.
τὼ καὶ δεικνύμενος προσέφη ξανθὸς Μενέλαος:

A carver raised and placed before them platters of meats of all kinds, and put golden cups beside them. Blond Menelaus toasted the two and spoke:

The same participial form δεικνύμενος is used in this passage to convey a sense of welcome as is used in the passage in Iliad 9. Translators render the usage in this passage with a similar sense to the usage in Iliad 9: “gesturing,” or “with a hospitable

---

16 Edwards (1975) 55, 63.
17 The only other instance of this participial form in the epics is Iliad 23.701 (Πηλείδης δ’ αἴψ’ ἄλλα κατὰ τρίτα θήκεν ἀεθλα δεικνύμενος Δαναοῖς, παλαιοσύνης ἀλεγεινῆς, 700-701), which is not in a welcoming scene and which does not carry the sense of toasting I am arguing for in Iliad 9.
18 Trans. Chicago Homer, with alterations.
gesture.” Such translations may reflect an understanding that the word comes from δείκνυμι. A “gesture,” then, would convey the “showing” aspect of the δεικ- root of the word. The derivation of the word, however, is not clear. It may belong to the δέχομαι family instead of the δείκνυμι family. More importantly for the purposes of this study, such translations fail to recognize the use of the term both in its context and in its usage elsewhere in the epics.

Translations such as “gesturing” or “with a welcoming gesture” do not accurately reflect the full meaning of the word, regardless of whether the term derives from δέχομαι or δείκνυμι. Elsewhere in the epics, this semantic group often means “raise a toast to.” For example, the gods toast each other with golden cups (τοὶ δὲ χρυσέοις δεπάεσσι δειδέχατ᾽ ἀλλήλους, Τρώων πόλιν εἰσορώντες, Il.4.3-4). Nestor’s son Pisistratus toasts Athena in welcome (ἐν δ᾽ οἶνον ἐχευεν χρυσείῳ δεπαί: δειδισκόμενος δὲ προσηύδα Παλλάδ᾽ Ἀθηναίην, Od.3.40-42). The Achaeans will toast the embassy upon their return to the camp (τοὺς μὲν ἀρα χρυσέοις κυπέλλοις υἷς Ἀχαιῶν δειδέχατ᾽ ἀλλοθεν ἀλλος ἀνασταδόν, ll.9.670-671).

---

20 Rieu (1946).
21 Leaf (1886) ad loc: “[this term and its derivatives] seem used specially of pledging with a cup, apparently from the idea of pointing at the person in whose honour the draught is taken.”
22 To this group belong δειδίσκετο, δεικανόωντο, and δειδέχατο. On the forms, see Monro (1891) §23, 6 who argues for derivation from δείκνυμι (see also Beekes [2010] 308 “δειδίσκομαι” for a similar view) despite earlier assertions that this word group belongs to δέχομαι (1884 ad ll.4.4) (he does not include δεικνύμενος in this group). See also Chantraine (1948) 303 n.3, 317-318, 359-360, (1968) 270-271, and Leaf (1886) ad 4.4, although Leaf argues that the idea of the toast is absent from 9.196 (ad loc). For recent overviews of the issues, see Russo and Heubeck (1992) ad Od.18.121, Heubeck et al. (1992) ad Od.3.41.
23 Hainsworth (1993) ad loc reveals his unease when he attempts to gloss over the generality of modern translations of the term: “extending his hand to them in welcome” is perhaps how the poet understood the word, but the underlying root is that of δειδίσκομαι, ‘pledge’, not δείκνυμι, ‘point at.’ See the comments of Russo et al. (1992) ad Od.18.121: “modern translations unfortunately fragment this idea into particular aspects, such as ‘greet’, ‘pledge’, ‘with a gesture’...” See also Willcock (1978) ad ll.9.196, 224.
24 Two usages do not fall into this category: δειδίσκομαι and its forms are used in the formulaic phrase “they received him like a god” (Od.7.72, 22.435), while Telemachus welcomes his father with a clasp of his hand (ὦ καὶ δεξιτέρῃ δειδίσκετο χειρὶ παραστάς, Od.20.197). Other uses of δειδίσκομαι and its forms as “toast”: ll.15.86, Od.18.121. At Od.18.111, the suitors greet the disguised Odysseus “with words” (ἳδον
In each of the examples above, the subject toasts with a golden cup or cups. The golden cups make the specific meaning of δειδισκόμενος in its various forms explicit. Thus, the use of δεικνύμενος in the passage from the Odyssey above possibly falls within the same semantic field. The golden cups laid out for Telemachus and Pisistratus demonstrate Menelaus’ lavish furnishings and his wealth. But audiences may perceive that Menelaus is toasting with one of these or a similar cup on the basis of the audience’s own contemporary practices. The frequent use of the term and its derivatives elsewhere to mean “toast” justifies such a perception. I further suggest that it is plausible that an audience would similarly perceive Achilles’ gesture in the narrow sense of the term as “toast.”

There is a second example of toasting that I will briefly discuss before identifying three further auxiliary markers of sympotic discourse. Toward the end of the passage quoted above, Odysseus toasts Achilles (Il.9.221-228):

οἱ δ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ὀνείαθ᾽ ἑτοῖμα προκείμενα χεῖρας ἰαλλον. αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πόσιος καὶ ἐδητύς εξ ἔρον ἐντο, νεῦσ’ Ἁγαμέμνονος Ἀτρείδαο ἠδὲ καὶ ἐνθάδε νῦν, πάρα γὰρ μενοεικέα πολλὰ δαίνυσθ᾽· ἀλλ᾽ οὐ δαιτὸς ἐπηράτου ἔργα μέμηλεν,

But when they had put aside their desire for eating and drinking, Aias nodded to Phoinix, and brilliant Odysseus saw it, and filled a cup with wine, and lifted it to Achilleus: 'Your health, Achilleus. You have no lack of your equal portion either within the shelter of Atreus' son, Agamemnon, nor here now in your own. We have good things in abundance...
to feast on; here it is not the desirable feast we think of . . .

The toast which Odysseus makes is explicit: he fills up a cup and “toasts” his host Achilles (πλησάμενος δ’ οἴνοιο δέπας δείδεκα τ’ Ἀχιλῆα, 224). It is notable that the term for Odysseus’ toasting (δείδεκτο) is related to δεικνύμενος,25 the word I suggest flags sympotic toasting in the deep narrative of this episode. Odysseus’ toast compliments his host: Achilles’ feast is not lacking and is a bounteous multitude. We observed in Chapter 2 how Aristophanes’ character Bdelukleon encouraged his father to properly toast and compliment his host upon arrival at his symposium. Such compliments may be understood as flagging sympotic behavior. Significantly, Odysseus prepares his toast after the men have already feasted and enjoyed their food (221-222). The toast is made while only wine is present, again a feature of sympotic discourse.

Material culture – krater, cups (Heading 1.c.)

At the point at which I argue “Achilles” is making a toast, there is no drinking accoutrement mentioned in the narrative. Nor is it clear that there is anyone outside of Achilles’ hut enjoying song besides himself and Patroclus. As the narrative unfolds, however, more details of what may have been happening before the arrival of the embassy are given. As the narrative progresses and more details are added, the audience may retroactively fill in missing or additional information.

25 See Willcock (1978) ad loc and above on the term and its derivatives.
When the embassy arrives and finds Achilles singing with Patroclus, as I have suggested the audience would perceive it, there is no indication that wine is being drunk. Achilles’ orders to Patroclus, however, are instructive (ll.9.199-204):

When the embassy arrives and finds Achilles singing with Patroclus, as I have suggested the audience would perceive it, there is no indication that wine is being drunk. Achilles’ orders to Patroclus, however, are instructive (ll.9.199-204):

Ἀχιλλεύς
διος ἔν κλισμοῖσι τάπησί τε πορφυρέοισιν.

αἵψα δὲ Πάτροκλον προσεφώνεεν ἐγγὺς ἐόντα
μείζονα δή κρητῆρα Μενοιτίου υἱὲ καθίστα,
ζωρότερον δὲ κέραιε, δέπας δ᾽ ἔντυνον ἑκάστῳ
οἳ γὰρ φίλτατοι ἄνδρες ἐμῷ ὑπέασι μελάθρῳ.

So brilliant Achilleus spoke, and guided them forward, and caused them to sit down on couches with purple coverlets and at once called over to Patroklos who was not far from him:

'Son of Menoitios, set up a larger krater, and mix us stronger wine, and make ready a cup for each man, since these who have come beneath my roof are the men that I love best.'

Achilles commands Patroclus to set out a larger krater (μείζονα δή κρητῆρα, 202), mix stronger wine (ζωρότερον δὲ κέραιε, 203), and bring out a cup for each man (203). In my translation I have used direct comparisons: larger krater, stronger wine. Such a translation reflects my argument that in the deep narrative there exists the idea that wine, krater, and cups are already present when the embassy arrives.

The comparative need not be direct, meaning “larger” or “stronger.” My translation is not the only one and may not reflect the literal meaning of the passage.

On the surface level of the narrative Achilles simply orders “a rather large krater” or

Danek (1994/1995) 37 n.21 assumes there is and argues that with the arrival of the krater and men, the scene becomes sympotic.

Trans. Chicago Homer, with alterations.

Note that the Chicago Homer translates similarly: “set up a mixing-bowl that is bigger” “mix us stronger drink.”
“rather strong wine.” But an audience is likelier to have understood Achilles’ comparative as direct: he orders a larger krater and stronger wine, an interpretation predicated upon the other markers of sympotic discourse in this passage.

That interpretation is consistent with comparatives used elsewhere in the epics to describe drinking vessels. The Homeric epics nowhere else describe the physical size of a krater: Achilles’ order for a ‘larger krater’ would be unparalleled. The physical size of kraters, rather, is conveyed by their capacity for wine, either in numbers of draughts (Il.23.741), or in terms of how close to the brim the wine flows (e.g. Il.1.470, 8.232, 9.175, Od.2.431). Kraters are also frequently identified by the precious metals from which they are made: silver (Il.23.471, Od.24.275, etc.), gold (Il.23.219), or simply “shiny” (φαεινόν: Il.3.247, Od.15.121). The physical size of the krater is secondary to the quantity of wine which it can feasibly contain. Thus, as far as the audience would interpret the passage, it would be more congruous with the practices of the epics elsewhere for Achilles to specify the volume of wine which his desired krater might hold rather than simply state he would like a “rather large krater.”

By ordering “a larger krater” and “stronger wine,” “Achilles” implies that there is already a krater and wine present. The audience, having now heard that Achilles is singing while Patroclus “waits” (δέγμενος), and that “Achilles” “toasts” (δεικνύμενος) the embassy when they arrive, would logically conclude that wine is present before the embassy arrives.

---

29 Apparently understanding the comparative as direct or not was even a problem in the past: Athenaeus (Ath.10.423) has a long passage about the meaning of zoroteron.
Achilles’ orders are also instructive because he orders only those implements which a symposium would require: krater, wine, and cups. We may compare his orders with orders made in a fragment of Anacreon (fr.396 Page):

φέρ’ ὕδωρ φέρ’ οἶνον ὅ παϊ φέρε <δ’> ἀνθεμόεντας ἡμῖν στεφάνους

Bring water, bring wine, slave, and bring us crowns of blossoms.

“Achilles”, like the subject of Anacreon’s lyric, implies a symposium, even if Patroclus readies none of the accoutrement ordered by Achilles. Instead, he readies what an audience would recognize as a typical heroic feast: the chine of a hog, the rich back fat of a sheep and a goat (207-208). While the audience would understand that the heroes are participating in heroic feasting, they may plausibly interpret a subtext for the passage, suggested by the various markers of sympotic discourse evident in the narrative.

Material culture – space – an exclusive gathering of men (Heading 1.a.)

The last aspect I address is space. The men gathered around Achilles form a small group, an intimate size suitable for a symposium. The toasts and exclusive wine-drinking that occur among these elites suggest sympotic activities.

---

30 In fact, we learn later that Automedon has been present (9.209) before the embassy arrives. Other companions and servants are also in attendance (9.658); cf. Hainsworth (1993) ad ll.9.190.
31 Pelliccia (2002) 225-229 suggests that the sequence of speeches which ensues – each trying to win Achilles over – may equate to table-talk over wine. Phoenix’ speech is particularly instructive for this point. Many editors have considered Phoenix’ speech as a later interpolation because of its disjointedness with the previous speeches. But it may be this feature of disjointedness which marks it as sympotic. Pelliccia has argued that Phoenix’ speech is illustrative of sympotic sophia and displays of one’s ability to pick up speech in manners which are not always obvious. His speech thus continues to pick up
Sympotic Aesthetics: Achilles at Banquets

The collocation of sympotic markers in the embassy scene in *Iliad* 9 and the preceding passages is significant. The sympotic discourse which is communicated between the performer and his real-world audience is not inconsequential. Nor is it an accidental by-product of a performer who confuses the types of archaized and stylized depictions of commensality that we see elsewhere in the epics with contemporary commensal practices. Instead, sympotic discourse in the deep narrative conveys an additional meaning and interpretation of the scene to the external audience.

As we have seen in previous chapters, the symposium itself is a stylized form of commensality. Participants in symposia partake of various activities and games in order to instantiate and maintain homosocial bonds. Many of the activities and games of the symposium are aimed at generating group cohesion and promoting aesthetics such as *charis* and *euphrosyne*. Group participation in such activities creates a sort of “safe-zone” of behavior. Appropriate boundaries of speech are explored and often broadened beyond what they would be outside the symposium. Such license is made possible by an agreement among participants to act according to certain standards of behavior. Activities such as toasting and accoutrement such as kraters contribute to, foster, and maintain such agreements among participants.

I argue that sympotic discourse in *Iliad* 9 constructs a situation in which characters’ behavior is expected to conform to certain standards. The audience, aware of the sympotic discourse suggested by the markers I explored above, would understand the characters to be engaging in sympotic activities. The participation in on the discourse already in circulation earlier in the episode. It is of further note that Pelliccia considers Achilles an adept sympotic speaker, but in a later episode when he tells the tale of Niobe.
such activities would create expectations on the external audience’s part of how the characters should behave. In the previous chapter I explored how the “Odysseus” navigates a potentially dangerous situation by engaging with sympotic discourse. I argue that a similar strategy is effected by sympotic discourse in *Iliad* 9. The embassy is also encountering a dangerous situation and is portrayed as defusing the tension by engaging in sympotic ritual.

The situation facing the embassy is a dangerous one. The departure of the embassy to Achilles is accompanied by prayers and libations to different gods, measures which foreground the danger of its mission. Achilles’ refusal to rejoin the Greeks would mean further destruction of the army, and his wrath could bring physical harm upon the embassy itself. The embassy first prays to Zeus to have pity on their mission (ὀφρα Δι Κρονίδη ἀρησόμεθ’, αἳ κ’ ἐλεήσῃ, 172). Next it pours libations and the members share a drink together (177). Nestor bestows some final advice so that they may successfully persuade the man who represents their last remaining hope of bringing a successful end to the war. As it begins its journey, the embassy makes another prayer, this time to Poseidon, that it may easily persuade Achilles’ great mind (ῥηϊδίως πεπιθεῖν μεγάλας φρένας Αἰακίδαο, 184). The build-up to the actual meeting between the embassy and Achilles highlights the magnitude of apprehension surrounding this last-ditch effort.

The embassy finds Achilles singing to Patroclus outside his tent. As we have seen, there are several markers in this episode which belong to sympotic discourse and their presence flags sympotic activities. An audience may reasonably perceive “Achilles” and “Patroclus” to be taking up song from one another in a sympotic or
rhapsodic fashion. Achilles’ subsequent orders to bring out a larger krater and stronger wine further suggest to the audience that the two were drinking while singing poetry. The embassy, as it plausibly appears to the audience, finds “Achilles” and “Patroclus” engaging in sympotic activities.

This is the context Odysseus engages when he raises a toast and compliments his host’s provisions (9.225-231):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{χαίρ᾽ Ἀχιλεῦ} & \cdot \text{δαιτὸς μὲν ἔσης οὐκ ἔπιδευεῖς} & \text{225} \\
\text{ήμεν ἐνὶ κλισὶ Ἀγαμέμνονος Ἀτρείδαο} & \cdot \text{νῦν, πάρα γὰρ μενοεικέα πολλὰ} \\
\text{δαίνυσθ᾽} & \cdot \text{άλλ᾽ οὐ δαιτὸς ἐπηράτου ἔργα μέμηλεν,} \\
\text{άλλα λίην μέγα πῆμα διοτρεφὲς εἰσορόωντες} & \cdot \text{δείδιμεν} & \text{230} \\
\text{νήςας ἐὐσσέλμους, εἰ μὴ σὺ γε δύσεαι ἀλκῆν.}
\end{align*}
\]

Your health, Achilleus. You have no lack of your equal portion either within the shelter of Atreus’ son, Agamemnon, nor here now in your own. We have good things in abundance to feast on; here it is not the desirable feast we think of, but a trouble all too great, beloved of Zeus, that we look on and are afraid. There is doubt if we save our strong-benched vessels or if they will be destroyed, unless you put on your war strength.

Odysseus’ toast, as discussed above, is a marker of sympotic discourse. The toast is made after food has been put away and is made at a point when only wine is being consumed. Complimenting the host and his provisions can further reflect sympotic activities. Odysseus’ toast and compliments of his host initiate a sequence of speeches made by himself, Ajax, and Phoenix. Symptotic discourse in the deep narrative of this passage adds a further dimension to the speeches. In the symposium and representations of it, symposiasts embark on the shared experience of drinking with initial toasts and prayers. Toasts, like the ones apparently performed by Achilles and
Odysseus, instantiate and promote group cohesion. Accepting toasts indicates one’s willingness to be a participant in the drinking group, and thus one’s agreement to adhere to specific standards of behavior. The range of acceptable speech is broader in a sympotic context than it might be elsewhere because of this group cohesion. When Odysseus toasts Achilles, a contemporary audience would recognize an analogy in the sympotic rules and regulations of speech and reactions to speech. This sympotic discourse in the deep narrative of the passage frames the proceedings within a sympotic context. The embassy is in a dangerous situation, but the sympotic proceedings that the audience perceive to be regulating the speeches create a framework within which characters are expected to behave according to certain standards.

Odysseus’ toast to Achilles and his encouragement to have charis instantiates ground rules for the proceedings, wherein the members of the embassy can give their speeches without concern for danger or harm. The rules and regulations at symposia contribute to group cohesion, egalitarianism, and an overall spirit of “good cheer.” Talk, which often takes the form of mockery or even testing, has broad license in the symposium; overreacting to another’s talk can betray one as an outsider. But overreaction does occur, and violence – sometimes lethal – does erupt at symposia. I argue that the deep narrative of the passage in Iliad 9 reflects the dangerous potential of the perceived sympotic proceedings by referencing extra-Iliadic narratives. Achilles will be shown to have a narrative history of dangerous behavior at banquets. For later audiences, Achilles’ misbehavior takes place at symposia. I argue that the later
interpretations of Achilles’ behavior as sympotic disruption are not purely a reflection of later audiences’ attempts to contextualize Achilles’ behavior within their own contemporary commensal activities. Rather these later audiences, and plausibly those contemporary with fluid performances of the epics, can be understood as recognizing sympotic discourse already present in the epics.

The potential for violence to ruin sympotic proceedings was discussed in Chapter 2. Literature composed for performance and re-performance was shown to reflect at times a general anxiety among symposiasts as to the true intentions of their drinking-mates. I quoted Theognis as an example of this anxiety (91-92):

\[\text{ὃς δὲ μιῆ γλώσσῃ δίχ' ἔχει νόον, οὗτος ἑταῖρος δεινός. Κύρν'· ἐχθρὸς βέλτερος ἢ φίλος ὦν.}\]

He who says one thing but thinks another is a dangerous comrade, Cyrnus, better an enemy than a friend.\(^{32}\)

Theognis’ elegy advises the addressee Cyrnus to avoid deceptive friends. The elegy, which would have been performed and re-performed at symposia, references the concern symposiasts can have for deception. Achilles shares a similar concern to that of symposiasts (9.309, 312-313):

\[\text{χρὴ μὲν δὴ τὸν μῦθον ἀπηλεγέως ἀποειπεῖν,} \]
\[\text{...} \]
\[\text{ἐχθρὸς γὰρ μοι κεῖνος ὁμώς Ἀἴδαο πύλησιν} \]
\[\text{δὲ χ' ἑτερον μὲν κεύθη ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ εἴπῃ} \]

Without consideration for you [Odysseus] I must make my answer, ...

For as I detest the doorways of Death, I detest that man, who hides one thing in the depths of his heart, and speaks forth another.

Like Theognis’ subject, Achilles considers someone who says one thing but does another an enemy (ἐχθρὸς). The audience perceives that sympotic ground rules are being followed. Achilles’ words, however, implicitly reference the potential dangers that could still erupt if group cohesion and the aim for ideal aesthetics dissolve.

Although it is Achilles who expresses anxiety about what other members may do or say, it is he who has a narrative history of violence at symposia.

Achilles misbehaves at banquets. Demodocus famously sings of a quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles at a feast of the gods (Od.8.73-77):

μοῦσ᾽ ἀρ’ ἀοιδὸν ἀνήκεν ἀειδέμεναι κλέα ἀνδρῶν,
οἴμης τῆς τότ’ ἀρα κλέος οὐφανόν εὐρύν ἰκανε,
νείκος Ὀδυσσῆος καὶ Πηλείδεω Ἀχιλῆος,
ὡς ποτε δηρίσαντο θεῶν ἐν δαιτὶ βαλείη
ἐκπάγλοις ἐπέεσσιν

The muse inspired the singer to sing the famous deeds of men, from a song whose fame had then reached wide heaven, the quarrel of Odysseus and Peleides Achilles, how they’d once argued, at a bountiful feast for the gods, with vehement words . . .

A quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles erupts at a δαίς. The quarrel at the feast has noted verbal and thematic parallels to the embassy scene in Iliad 9, similarities which point to the existence of a stock epic tradition about a quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles.33

Other literary traditions also treat the figure of Achilles as someone who does not behave himself. Significantly, these traditions place his misbehavior at symposia,

33 Nagy (1979) 57-58.
rather than heroic feasts (δαίτα). Sophocles’ fragmentary Syndeipnoi depicts the quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles. Commands to bring out cakes and a krater for mixing wine suggest that the setting is sympotic (fr. 563):

φορεῖτε, μασσέτω τις, ἐγχείτω βαθὺν κρατήρ’

Come, let someone knead the barley cakes, and let someone bring a deep krater closer.

The concise, to-the-point order for wine and krater is similar to a command in Anacreon’s lyric quoted above (fr. 396 Page): 34

φέρ’ ὕδωρ φέρ’ οἶνον ὡ παῖ πέρε (δ’ ἀνθεμόεντας ἣμιν στεφάνους

Bring water, bring wine, o slave, bring crowns of blossoms . . .

Both Anacreon and Sophocles let a sampling of sympotic accoutrement suggest the whole of the context. The symposium which Sophocles’ character orders, however, soon degenerates into brawling and a scene of confusion (fr. 565 TGF):

ἀλλ’ ἀμφὶ θυμῷ τὴν κάκοσμον οὐράνην ἔρριψεν οὐδ’ ἔμπροσθεν περὶ δ’ ἐμῷ κάρα κατάγνυται τὸ τεῦχος οὐ μύρου πνέον· ἐξειματούμην δ’ οὐ φίλης ὀσμῆς ὕπο.

But in wrath he hurled his stinking pisspot at me and didn’t miss. The vessel broke over my head—and it didn’t smell like perfume. I was terrified by the hostile odor. 35

34 See also Anacreon 356, 2 West.
Athenaeus (1.17d) in recording this fragment does not indicate the speaker or addressee. But this confused symposium (or recollection of one) is the context for a quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles. As in Demodocus’ song, they trade heated words: Odysseus accuses Achilles of wanting to leave Troy because he is afraid of Hector, and Achilles retorts back by mocking Odysseus’ false lineage to Sisyphus (fr. 567).

A fourth-century Apulian amphora depicts another quarrel at a symposium featuring Achilles. The iconography depicts the remnants of a heated argument with characters such as Poena, Achilles, and Thersites as named members. At the bottom center of the amphora rests Thersites’ bearded head, his arms flailing from his headless body. Strewn around the scene are various implements: a lustral basin, oinochoe, volute krater, among others. The items strewn about are accoutrement that belong to the symposium. Again, just a few items suggest the notional whole of the symposium. Although Achilles and Thersites are epic characters who presumably attend heroic feasts (δαίτα), the depiction of their quarrel on the amphora would indicate to its fourth-century audience that the occasion was a symposium.

---

36 The Sophocles fragment quotes Aeschylus fr. 180 (cf. Ath.1.17c), perhaps from the satyr play Bone-collectors. The speaker in Aeschylus’ play may be Odysseus, the addressee perhaps Ctesippus (Pearson 1917 ad loc) or Eurymachus (Olson 2006 ad loc, pointing to A. fr. 179). Pearson (1917) ad loc, following Weil (1887), identifies the speaker of this Sophocles fragment as Thersites, and Weil further conjectures that it is Odysseus who throws the vessel (341-342). Radt (1977) ad loc follows Welcker’s conjecture that it is Odysseus speaking this fragment.

37 fr. 566 TGF is a dialogue between Odysseus and Achilles; cf. fr. 567 TGF.

38 (ad Ulixem) ὦ πάντα πράσσων, ὡς ὁ Σίσυφος πολὺς ἔνδηλος ἐν σοὶ πάντα χώ μητρὸς πατήρ; cf. Lloyd-Jones (1996) ad loc. On the connection between this fragment and Demodocus’ song, see Nagy (1979) 22-23.


The Apulian amphora may be referencing a story about Achilles known to us from the *Aethiopis*. There, Achilles kills Thersites, the bandy-legged loud-mouth of *Iliad* 2 (Proclus):

\[ Ἀχιλλεὺς Θερσίτην ἀναιρεῖ λοιδορηθεὶς πρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ ὀνειδεισθεὶς τὸν ἐπὶ τῇ Πενθεσιλείᾳ λεγόμενον ἔρωτα. καὶ ἕκ τούτου στάσις γίνεται τοῖς Ἀχαιαῖς περὶ τοῦ θερσίτου φόνου. μετὰ δὲ ταύτα Ἀχιλλεὺς εἰς Λέσβον πλεῖ, καὶ θύσας Ἀπόλλωνι καὶ Άρτέμιδι καθαίρεται τοῦ φόνου ὑπ᾽ Ὀδυσσέως. \]

And Achilles kills Thersites, having been abused by him and angered over his so-called love for Penthesilea. And on account of this, *stasis* arises among the Achaeans concerning the murder of Thersites. After these events, Achilles sails to Lesbos, and after making sacrifices to Apollo and Artemis and Leto, he is purified by Odysseus.

Achilles kills Thersites after the latter mocked him about his love for Penthesilea. The summary Proclus has provided tells us nothing about the context of the quarrel. But the Sophoclean evidence and Apulian vase are suggestive: later audiences, at least, considered it to have happened at a symposium. I am not interested in reconstructing the actual setting of the story nor in retrojecting fifth- or fourth-century evidence of Achilles’ misbehavior at symposia into this scene of the *Aethiopis*. I am, however, interested in what signs may have encouraged audiences to understand that, on some level, the setting was sympotic.

The summary of the scene in the *Aethiopis* uses language suggestive of sympotic mockery. Mockery, as has been discussed, was customary, even encouraged, at symposia. Yet, as I have emphasized, such play must be balanced—too much mockery can turn to insult as exemplified by this fragment of Alexis (*ad Ath*.10.421a):
The long drawn-out party, the many dinners occurring day after day, give occasion for derision, and derision causes far more pain than pleasure. For it is the beginning of abuse; and once you utter an abuse, you are immediately abused in turn; there’s nothing left but insult. Next blows come to light, and drunken brawling . . .

In this fragment, insult (λοιδορία) is the end result of too much bantering, the last step before blows. According to Isocrates, ignoble men at symposia spend their time either insulting one another or being insulted (λοιδοροῦντας ἢ λοιδορουμένους). Significantly, in the Aethiopis, Achilles is offended by Thersites’ mocking, and the same word is used: λοιδορηθεὶς. Later audiences may have picked up on this language connected with insulting at symposia and re-interpreted the passage in terms of their own contemporary commensal practices.

We do not know if the term λοιδορηθεὶς was actually used in the Aethiopis. Proclus, like other audiences, may have picked up on sympotic themes in the passage in the Aethiopis and adopted sympotic language to describe Thersites’ behavior. What I argue goes beyond the use of a term in a lost epic. Later audiences appear to identify Achilles as a character who misbehaves at symposia. I argue that such a

---

42 As Halliwell (1991) 284, 284n.1 notes, the motif of verbal banter degenerating into physical abuse is a topos in Greek literature.
44 Achilles becomes a paradigmatic symposiast in Horace, Epode 13, in which the poet expands upon the theme of a stormy outside and safe haven of drinking inside (13.11-18):

nobilis ut grandi cecinit Centaurus alumnos:
‘invicte, mortalis dea nate puer Thetide,
characterization is referenced already in the *Iliad* and affects how audiences understand the embassy scene. Achilles does not always behave according to sympotic standards. The audience may encounter this scene with a greater sense of apprehension knowing that Achilles has not only refused to participate properly in his heroic obligations, but also will potentially “withdraw” and refuse to behave in accordance with sympotic codes of behavior.

The scene in which Achilles is singing to Patroclus has connections to rhapsodic discourse, some of which have already been noted by scholars. What has gone unnoticed is sympotic discourse implicitly conveyed in the scene in which the embassy arrives at Achilles’ tent. Gestures such as toasts, the ordering of specifically sympotic accoutrement, and potential sympotic trading of song reference the rich and complex dynamic of the symposium. Certain audience members familiar with these practices, and the nexus of expectations of behavior these can imply, are likely to perceive additional layers of meaning in this scene. Significantly, Achilles was shown to have connections with violent behavior specifically at symposia. Just as certain audiences are likely to perceive Odysseus’ behavior and speech as part of a strategy to create a sympotic framework – and thus ground-rules – for his potentially violent encounter with the Phaeacians, here in the *Iliad* external audiences may understand that “Achilles” sets similar ground-rules for the embassy. Such ground-rules could defuse

---

*te manet Assaraci tellus, quam frigida parvi findunt Scamandri flumina lubricus et Simois, unde tibi reditum certo Subtemine Parcae rupere, nec mater domum caerula te revehet. illic omne malum vino cantuque levato, deformis aegrimoniae dulcis adloquis.*
potentially violent behavior which the difficult and tense situation of the embassy, taking place at so crucial a juncture in the Trojan War, could be expected to give rise to. An additional layer of meaning is referenced by sympotic discourse in the embassy scene because of Achilles’ characteristically violent behavior in symposia elsewhere.
CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this work I proposed to study the social context of the epics through rhapsodic and sympotic discourses. These two phenomena are not part of the distanced world of the epics, but rather belong to the audience’s contemporary world of the late 8th to early 6th centuries. My study of the interaction between the epics and these contemporary discourses has important consequences for how we view the epics within their social context; I maintain that they are contemporary in their outlook and contemporary discourses are manipulated to influence audience perception.

In the first two chapters I studied commensality in terms of how it is represented in the epics. Homeric heroes were shown to have categorically different commensal activities and behavior than what symposiasts had. They sat while dining, were entertained by professional singers, and largely instantiated hierarchical relationships through feasting. Wine-drinking was not an activity which was regularly performed in a ritual manner distinct from the feast. Such features may be considered to be antithetical to sympotic practices in which participants recline, often compose extemporaneous poetry, and reinforce egalitarian relationships. Yet, as I have argued, there is no reason to assume that the epics were not performed before reaching a state of fixation to audiences already familiar with the symposium, or at least early stages of it. People were beginning to engage in activities resembling sympotic ones as the epics underwent final stages of fixation. For perhaps a century or more, the epics are in a fluid state
of composition-in-performance, with contemporary material such as the symposium being incorporated into them by rhapsodes to suit the needs of various performances and/or audiences.

I defined the symposium as a sum of its parts rather than a monolithic, inflexible transcript of any given night’s drinking activities, taking my cue from literary and iconographic representations of the symposium. Only a few aspects can conjure the whole. Anacreon, for example, constructs an imaginative symposium with only a fraction of the accoutrements needed for such an occasion (fr. 396 Page):

φέρ’ ὕδωρ φέρ’ οἶνον ὥ παῖ φέρε <δ’> ἀνθεμόεντας ἡμῖν | στεφάνους
Bring water, bring wine, slave, and bring us crowns of blossoms.

This type of synecdochic function of certain attributes of the symposium conjuring the whole is not confined to lyric poetry; comedy too includes such instances, such as in Aristophanes Acharnians. Aristophanes conjures a symposium with reference to the practices of reclining and singing the Harmodius song (Acharnians, 979-981):

οὐδέποτ’ ἐγὼ Πόλεμον οἶκος ὑποδέξομαι,
οὐδὲ παρ’ ἐμοὶ ποτε τὸν Ἀρμόδιον ἀσεταὶ
ξυγκατακλινεῖς, ὧτι παροινικὸς ἀνὴρ ἔφυ...

I will never welcome the War God into my house, nor will he ever recline at my side and sing the Harmodius song, for he is an unruly fellow when he drinks...²

Lastly, in the iconographic register, limited parts can similarly suggest the whole. In the picture below, two women share in a sympotic moment. Wine is passed between them from

¹ For greater detail on the two following excerpts, see Chapter 2.
left to right, *endexia*. The moment belongs to the symposium, though many of the attributes of the symposium are missing, incomplete, or indeed contrary to a definitive symposium. This symposium, for example, has no men, is shared between only two members, and lacks much of the accoutrement or paraphernalia of the symposium such as kraters, embellishments on the walls, or slave-boys who customarily accompany such occasions. Nevertheless, each of these depictions in the literary or iconographic register creates a sympotic moment by singling out only a few features.

**Figure 5.** Madrid No.11267; *ARV*², 58/59, c. 520 BCE. From Węcowski (2002b).

Such features – markers, which in this study I have grouped under five headings – do not lose their potential for creating sympotic moments even within the distanced, heroic past of the epics. The epics are still in a fluid state of composition when drinking practices become narrowly defined and ritualized as the symposium beginning in the 8th century. Activities, gestures, and accoutrement related to sympotic forms of drinking are becoming recognizably differentiated within the symposium from the 8th century onwards. The fluid state of performances allows for the markers of this type of drinking to be incorporated into the epics. Such incorporation, however, does not disrupt the literal meanings of the epics, but rather gives a rich implicit dimension to several episodes. Contemporary audiences of the epics, familiar with the narrowed, differentiated meanings of markers of the symposium, are likely to
associate the markers with the contemporary practices of the symposium rather than the distanced sphere of the heroic world.

Significantly, the symposium is not simply a get-together with drinks. There, important relationships are instantiated and maintained, largely through what is often a complicated nexus of activities and types of talk. The ability to negotiate the specific types of activities and talk of the symposium solidifies insider and outsider status. Participants push the boundaries of speech and self-control. Activities, accoutrement, and games consistently test one’s insider status and one’s ability to navigate the closed atmosphere of the symposium. Such tests simultaneously leave a constant threat of deterioration into violence should one respond improperly to them. The sympotic discourse implicitly conveyed in the epics conjures this whole nexus of attitudes and expectations, and further influences how audiences perceive particular passages of the epics.

The atmosphere of the symposium which is implicitly conveyed between performer and audience has important consequences for our interpretation of certain scenes of the Iliad and the Odyssey. In the Odyssey, Odysseus’ clever manipulation of sympotic discourse – as an external audience would understand it – brings nuance to his Phaeacian visit and creates a shared connection between the narrative and audience. The verbal banter between Odysseus and the Phaeacian youths in Book 8 can be perceived as a form of the sympotic game of eikasmos and foreshadows what will be a sympotic framework for Odysseus’ entire visit. Odysseus’ preamble to his nostos contains several sympotic and rhapsodic elements, some already noted by scholars. But in this study, I have gone beyond identifying these elements; I have collected them and identified a larger context to show that such elements in constellation have force and are not isolated or random. They are part of a larger narrative
strategy which evidences interaction between the social institution of the symposium and the fluid performance culture of the epics. Such interaction not only creates additional layers of meaning for the passages themselves, but also constructs expectations on behalf of the external audience as to how characters within the narrative will behave. The external audience views Odysseus as laying ground rules as if at a symposium. Although the surface narrative is distant in time (heroic past) and location (Scheria), the implicit meanings conveyed establish a close link between those of the audience familiar with the symposium and the characters within the epics. This implicit connection links Odysseus’ expectations of how he and his hosts are to behave with the audience’s own.

The embassy scene in the *Iliad* is also treated in a new light. Achilles can be perceived as engaging in sympotic behavior. He makes toasts, orders specifically sympotic accoutrement for the get-together of the embassy, and can even be perceived as participating in sympotic gaming. Just as Odysseus manipulated different elements of sympotic discourse to lay ground rules for the proceedings with the Phaeacians, Achilles too can be perceived as stipulating expected behavior for the embassy and himself. The sympotic discourse implicitly conveyed frames the proceedings of the embassy within a sympotic context. The embassy is a dangerous situation, but the sympotic proceedings that the audience perceive to be regulating the speeches create a framework within which characters are expected to behave according to specific standards.

In respect to the character of Achilles, however, the sympotic discourse in the embassy scene of the *Iliad* has further meaning. Achilles is notorious for misbehavior at banquets in both Iliadic and non-Iliadic traditions; significantly, later traditions place Achilles’ misbehavior at symposia, rather than heroic feasts. Evidence such as fragments from Sophocles’ *Syndeipnoi*
and a fourth-century Apulian amphora demonstrate that for later audiences at least, Achilles could be violent – and lethally so, in the case of Thersites – specifically at symposia. My study on sympotic discourse in both epics raises the possibility that later audiences are not simply redefining Achilles’ behavior according to their own commensal activities and retrojecting a sympotic context to his rage; rather, I have demonstrated that, at an implicit level, Achilles’ apparent knowledge of proper sympotic behavior is already present in the Iliad and that such apprehension about Achilles’ specifically sympotic behavior is conveyed to the external audience.

A fuller understanding of the social context of the epics does not only enlighten our appreciation of subtle undertones of specific passages. More broadly, the identification and exploration of how contemporary practices and attitudes are incorporated into the epics contributes to some of the core questions of Homeric studies, and in particular by what methods and with what aims in mind the epics are performed. By such examinations we can address and explore the very poetics of the epics – how they are put together at the most fundamental levels.

My examination of rhapsodic and sympotic discourses demonstrates that the epics are contemporary in their outlook, even if contemporary social or performative practices are not strongly incorporated into the surface narrative. What I have shown, rather, is that while not being strongly evident they are nevertheless organically woven into the narrative in a way which certain audience members would have understood and “picked up” on. I have not addressed in this study whether the inclusion of markers signalling contemporary discourses is a subconscious or conscious matter on the part of the rhapsodes; such interpretations belong to another work, but I have shown that it is possible to believe that the inclusion of
contemporary discourses happens at an organic level, downplaying the importance of rhapsodic intentionality. What is of interest, and what I have demonstrated, is that the performers of the epics could manipulate contemporary discourses to appeal to audiences and/or bring alternative meanings or connections to passages. Such interaction between rhapsodes and contemporary discourses reflects the influence of contemporary institutions such as the symposium on the rhapsodes’ methods while the epics were still in a fluid state of performance.
APPENDIX 1

MARKERS OF SYMPTOTIC DISCOURSE

1 Material culture
   a. space – exclusive gathering of men, reclining, the andron
   b. accoutrement – krater, cups

2 Preliminaries
   a. separation of deipnon from symposion
   b. initial prayers, toasts, compliments

3 Drinking games
   a. eikasmos
   b. skolion (forms of dechesthai)
   c. superlatives (e.g. ti kalliston)

4 Circulation and distribution – endexia

5 Aesthetics
   a. order
   b. egalitarianism
   c. insider/outsider
   d. group cohesion
   e. charis and euphrosyne
APPENDIX 2

PASSENGES QUOTED IN CHAPTER 2: TEXT AND TRANSLATION

1. Xenophanes, fr. 1

2. Aristophanes, Wasps 1170-1264; 1309-1325

3. Plato, Symposium 175c-177d; 213a-214c

4. Xenophon, Symposium 1.8, 2.1, 3-5, 24-26

1. Xenophanes, fr. 1

νόν γὰρ δὴ ζάπεδον καθαρὸν καὶ χείρες ἀπάντων καὶ κύλικες· πλεκτοὺς δ' ἀμφιτιθεὶς στεφάνους, ἄλλος δ' εὐόδες μύρον ἐν φιάλῃ παρατείνει· κρητήρ δ' ἐστηκεν μεστὸς ἐυφροσύνης· ἄλλος δ' οἶνος ἐτοίμος, ὡς οὔποτε φησὶ προδώσειν, μείλιχος ἐν κεράμιν, ἀνθεοὶ ὀσδόμενοι· ἐν δὲ μέσοις ἀγνὴν ὀδυνὴν λιβανωτὸς ὑσιν, ψυχρὸν δ' ἐστὶν ὧδωρ καὶ γλυκύ καὶ καθαρὸν πάρκεινται δ' ἄρτοι ξανθοὶ γεραρὴ τε τράπεζα τυρών καὶ μέλιτος πίονος ἀχθομένη· 5

βωμὸς δ' ἄνθεσιν ἃν τὸ μέσον πάντη πεπύκασται, μολὴτ' δ' ἀμφις ἔχει δώματα καὶ θαλήν. χρῆ δὲ πρῶτον μὲν θεὸν ὑμνέν ἐικόναν ναὸς ἐνεστὶν· καὶ ἄρτοι καὶ κυλίκες τυρών καὶ μέλιτος πίονος ἀχθομένη· 10

σπείσαντάς τε καὶ εὐξαμένους τὰ κίκαια δύνασθαι πρήσσειν ταῦτα γὰρ ὃν ἐστὶ προχειρότερον, οὐχ ὦβρεις· πίνειν δ' ὡς ἔχων ἀρίκοιον 15 ὧδωρ καὶ μέλιτος πίονος ἀχθομένη· ταῦτα γὰρ ὃν ἐστὶ προχειρότερον, οὐχ ὦβρεις· πίνειν δ' ὡς ἔχων ἀρίκοιον 20

οὐ τι μάχας διέπειν Τιτήνων οὐδὲ Γιγάντων οὐδὲ (τι) Κενταύρων, πλάσμα (τα) τῶν προτέρων, ἢ στάσιας ὀφελανῶς· τοῖς οὐδὲν χρηστῶν ἐνεστὶν· θεῶν (δὲ) προμηθεῖν αἰνὲν ἤθειν ἀγαθήν.
Translated by Gerber (1999)

For now the floor is clean and clean the hands of everyone and the cups; (one servant) places woven garlands round (the heads of the guests), and another offers sweet-smelling perfume in a saucer; the mixing-bowl stands filled with good cheer; on hand is additional wine, which promises never to run out, mellow in its jars and fragrant with its bouquet; in the middle incense sends forth its pure and holy aroma and there is water, cool, sweet, and clear; nearby are set golden-brown loaves and a magnificent table laden with cheese and thick honey; in the centre an altar is covered all over with flowers, and song and festivity pervade the room. For men of good cheer it is meet first to hymn the god with reverent tales and pure words, after what is right – for in truth this is a more obvious thing to do, not deeds of violence; it is meet to drink as much as you can hold and come home without an attendant unless you are very old, and to praise that man who after drinking reveals noble thoughts, so that there is a recollection of and striving for excellence; it is not meet to make an array of the wars of the Titans or Giants or Centaurs, creations of our predecessors, or violent factions – there is nothing useful in them; and it is meet always to have a good regard for the gods. (Trans. Gerber)

2. Aristophanes, Wasps 1170-1264; 1309-1325

Φιλοκλέων ιδού. θεύ το σχήμα, καὶ σκέψαι μ’ ὅτως μάλιστ’ ἐστὶν τήν βάδισιν τῶν πλουσίων. 1170

Βδελυκλέων ὅτως; Δοθῆνι σκόροδον ἡμφιεσμένως.

Φιλ. καὶ μὴν προθυμοῦμαι γε σαυλοπρωκτιάν.

Βδ. ἄγε νῦν, ἑπιστήσαι λόγους σεμνοὺς λέγειν ἀνδρῶν παρόντων πολυμαθῶν καὶ δεξιῶν; 1175

Φιλ. ἔγγυε.

Βδ. τίνα δῆτ’ ἂν λέγοις;

Φιλ. πολλοὺς πάνυ. πρῶτον μὲν ὡς ἢ Λάμι’ ἄλοου’ ἐπέρδετο, ἐπειτα δ’ ὡς ὁ Καρδοπίων τήν μητέρα.

Βδ. μὴ ’μοί γε μύθους, ἄλλα τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων, οίους λέγομεν μάλιστα τοὺς κατ’ οἰκίαν. 1180
Φι. ἐγὼ δα τοίνυν τῶν γε πάνυ κατ᾽ οἰκίαν ἐκεῖνον ὡς ‘οὔτω ποτ’ ἦν μῦς καὶ γαλῆ.

Βδ. ὡς σκαίε κάπαϊδευτε, Θεογένης ἔφη τῷ κοπρολόγῳ καὶ ταῦτα λοιδοφόμενος, μῦς καὶ γαλᾶς μέλλεις λέγειν ἐν ἀνδράσιν;

Φι. ποίους τινὰς δὲ χρῆ λέγειν;

Βδ. μεγαλοπρεπεῖς, ὡς ξυνεθεώρεις Ἀνδροκλεῖ καὶ Κλεισθένει.

Φι. ἐγὼ δὲ τεθεώρηκα ποώποτ᾽ οὐδαμοῖ πλὴν ἐς Πάρον, καὶ ταῦτα δῦ ὀβολῶ φέρων.

Βδ. ἄλλ᾽ οὖν λέγειν χρῆ σ᾽ ὡς ἐμάχετο γ᾽ αὐτίκα Ἐφουδίων παγκράτιον Ἀσκώνδα καλῶς, ἡδὲ γέρων ὄν καὶ πολιός, ἔχων δὲ τοι πλευράν βαθυτάτην καὶ χέρας καὶ λαγόνα καὶ θώρακ᾽ ἀριστον.

Φι. παῦε παῦ', οὐδὲν λέγεις.

πῶς ἂν μαχέσαιτο παγκράτιον θώρακ᾽ ἔχων;

Βδ. σοφοί οὔτω διηγεῖσθαι νομίζουσιν δ᾽ ὥστε πάντως χάρακας ἀλλ᾽ ἐτερον εἰπέ μοι: παρ᾽ ἀνδρασί ξένοισ πίνων σεαυτοῦ ποίων ἂν λέξαι δοκεῖς ἐπὶ νεότητος ἔργων ἀνδρικώτατον;

Φι. ἐκεῖν᾽ ἐκεῖν᾽ ἀνδρειότατόν γε τῶν ἐμῶν,

ὁτ᾽ Ἐργασίωνος τὰς χάρακας ψφειλόμην.

Βδ. ἀπολεῖς με. ποίας χάρακας; ἀλλ᾽ ὡς ἂν κάπρον ἐδιώκασθες ποτ᾽ ἡ λαγών, ἂν λαμπάδα ἔδραμες, ἀνευρὼν ὃ τι νεανικώτατον.

Φι. ἐγὼ δα τοίνυν τὸ γε νεανικώτατον:

ὅτε τὸν δρομέα Φάυλλον ὡν βούπαις ἑτὶ ἐέλον διώκων λοιδορίας ψήφοιν δυοῖν.
Βδ. παύ: ἀλλὰ δευρὶ κατακλινεῖς προσμάνθανε ἵμπποτικὸς εἶναι καὶ ἵμπποτικός.

Φι. πῶς οὖν κατακλινῶ; φράζ᾽ ἀνύσας. 1210

Βδ. εὐσχημόνως.

Φι. ὡδὶ κελεύεις κατακλινῆναι;

Βδ. μηδαμῶς.

Φι. πῶς δαί;


Φι. πρὸς τῶν θεῶν ἐνύπνιον ἐστιώμεθα;

Βδ. αὐλητρίς ἔνεφυσεν: οἱ δὲ συμπόται εἰσίν Θέωρος Αἰσχίνης Φάνος Κλέων, ξένος τις ἔτερος πρὸς κεφάλης Ἀκέστορος. τοῦτοις ξυνών τὰ σκόλι᾽ ὡς δέξει καλῶς. 1220

Φι. ἀλήθες; ὡς οὗδεὶς Διακρίων δέξεται.

Βδ. ἐγὼ εἰσόμαι: καὶ δὴ γὰρ εἰμ᾽ ἐγὼ Κλέων, ἀδώ δὲ πρῶτος Ἀρμοδίου: δέξαι δὲ σύ. 'οὐδεὶς πώποτ᾽ ἀνήρ ἐγεντ᾽ Ἀθήναις'—

Φι. σύχ σύτων γε πανούργοις οὗδέ κλέπτης.

Βδ. τούτι σὺ δράσεις; παραπολεῖ βοῶμενος: φήσει γὰρ ἐξολεῖσθε καὶ διαφθερεῖν καὶ τήσε τῆς γῆς ἐξελάν. 1225

Φι. ἐγὼ δὲ γε,
ἐὰν ἀπειλη, νῇ Δ᾽ ἔτερ’ ἀντάσομαι:

Φι. ἧν ὑπηρφ, οὖτος ὁ μαίομενος τὸ μέγα κράτος, ἀντρέψεις ἐτὶ τὰν πόλιν: ἀ δ᾽ ἔχεται ῥοπᾶς.’

Βδ. τι δ᾽ ὅταν Θέωρος πρὸς ποδῶν κατακείμενος ἄδη Κλέωνος λαβόμενος τῆς δεξιᾶς:
‘Ἀδμήτου λόγων ὠταῖρε μαθῶν τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς φίλει.’ τούτῳ τί λέξεις σκόλιον;

Φι. ψυκτικῶς ἐγώ.
‘οὖκ ἐστὶν ἀλωπεκίζειν, οὐδ᾽ ἀμφότεροις γίγνεσθαι φίλον.’

Βδ. μετὰ τούτον Αἰσχίνης ὁ Σέλλον δέχεται, ἀνὴρ σοφὸς καὶ μουσικός, κἀτ᾽ ἄστεια:
‘χρήματα καὶ βίαν ὑπένεικας σὺ γ᾽ ἐξεπίστασαι:
Κλειταγόρα τε κάμοι
μετὰ Θετταλῶν’—

Φι. πολλὰ δὴ διεκόμπασας σὺ κάγω.

Βδ. τουτὶ μὲν ἐπιεικὸς σῦ γ᾽ ἐξεπίστασαι:
ὅπως δ᾽ ἐπὶ δέιπνον ἐς Φιλοκτήμονος ἵμεν.
παὶ παῖ, τὸ δεῖπνον Χρυσὸς συσκεύαζε νῦν,
ίνα καὶ μεθυσθῶμεν διὰ χρόνου.

Φι. μηδαμίως.
κακὸν τὸ πίνειν: ἀπὸ γὰρ οὗνου γίγνεται
καὶ θυροκόπησαι καὶ πατάξαι καὶ βαλεῖν,
καὶ ἀποτίνειν ἀργύριον ἐκ κραιπάλης.

Βδ. οὐκ, ἢν ξυνῆς γ᾽ ἀνήρ ποικιλοὶ καλοῖς τε κάγαθοῖς.
ἡ γὰρ παρατήρησαντο τὸν πεπονθότα,
ἡ λόγων ἔλεξα αὐτὸς ἀστειόν τινα,
Αἰσωπικὸν γέλιοιν ἢ Συβαριτικὸν,
ὦν ἐμαθές ἐν τῷ συμποσίῳ: κἀτ᾽ ἐς γέλων.
τὸ πράγμ᾽ ἔτρεψας, ἡστ᾽ ἀφεῖς σ᾽ ἀποιχεῖται.
Φιλαθητέον τάρ’ ἐστι πολλοὺς τῶν λόγων, εἴπερ ἀποτείσω μηδὲν, ἥν τι δρῶ κακόν.

Βδ. ἀγε νυν ἵωμεν: μηδὲν ἡμᾶς ἵσχετο.

---

Χανθίας

... 'ἔσικας ὥ πρεσβύτα νεοπλούτω τρυγι κλητήρι τ’ εἰς ἀχυρμόν ἀποδεδρακότι.'

ο ὅ ἀνακραγὼν ἀντήκασα’ αὐτὸν πάρνοπι τὰ θρία τοῦ τρίβωνος ἀποβεβληκότι,
Σθενέλῳ τε τὰ σκευάσµα διακεκαρµένω.

οι δ’ ἀνεκρότησαν, πλὴν γε Θουφράστου μόνου: οὗτος δὲ διεμύλλατεν ὡς δὴ δεξιός.

ο γέρων δὲ τὸν Θούφραστον ἤρετ: ἐπι’ μοι, ἐπὶ τῷ κοµῆς καὶ κοµψὸς εἶναι προσποιεῖ,
κωµῳδολοιχῶν περὶ τὸν εὖ πράττοντ’ ἄει; τοιαῦτα περιύβριζεν αὐτοῦς ἐν μέρει,
σκώπτων ἀγροίκως καὶ προσέτι λόγους λέγων ἀµαθέστατ’ οὔδὲν εἰκότας τῷ πράγµατι.

ἐπειτ’ ἐπειδὴ ‘μέθυεν, οἴκας ἐρχεται τύπτων ἀπαντας, ἣν τις αὐτῷ ξυντύχη.
ὁδὶ δὲ καὶ δὴ σφαλλόμενος προσέρχεται.

Translated by Henderson (1998)

Philocleon. All right. Watch my gait, and tell me which rich man walks most like it.

Bdelucleon. Which one? Someone who’s dressed a boil with garlic.

Ph. I’m actually trying to do the hoochie-koochie.

Bd. Now then, will you know how to recount impressive stories in the presence of very knowledgeable and intelligent gentlemen?

Ph. Sure I will.

Bd. What story would you tell, then?

Ph. I’ve got lots of stories. First of all, how Lamia farted when captured. Then how Cardopion got hold of his mother and –

Bd. I don’t want fairytales, I want stories with human interest, the sort we most often tell, the ones we tell at home.
Ph. Well, I know one that’s very much about home, the one that goes, “Once there was a mouse and a cat” –

Bd. You ignorant oaf – as Theogenes said to the dung collector, and only while quarrelling. Do you intend to talk about mice and cats in the company of gentlemen?

Ph. What sort of stories should I tell?

Bd. Impressive ones, such as how you went on an official embassy with Androcles and Cleisthenes.

Ph. I’ve never been on an embassy anywhere, except to Paros, and then I was paid only two obols.

Bd. Well, in that case, you should at least tell about Ephudion’s fine battle with Ascondas in the pancration, when he was old and grey but had that deep chest, those hands and flanks, those magnificent arms.

Ph. Hold on now, that’s nonsense! How could he have fought in a pancration armed?

Bd. That’s how sophisticated people typically tell stories. Now tell me something else: if you were drinking with unfamiliar people, what do you think you’d recount as the bravest exploit of your youth?

Ph. I know, I know! The bravest of my exploits: the time I swiped Ergasion’s vine poles.

Bd. You’ll be the death of me! Vine poles? No, tell how you once hunted boar or hare, or ran a torch race. Recall something very lusty.

Ph. Well, I know what was the lustiest: when I was still a young bull and went after the runner Phayllus and beat him – in a lawsuit for defamation, by two votes.

Bd. Stop! Now come over here and recline, and learn how to be symposiastic and convivialistic.

Ph. How do I recline, then? Hurry up and tell me.

Bd. Gracefully.

Ph. You’re telling me to recline like that?

Bd. Not at all.

Ph. Then how?

Bd. Extend your legs and pour yourself out on the coverlets in a fluid, athletic way. Then praise one of the bronzes, gaze at the ceiling, admire the room’s curtains. Water for our hands; serve the tables; now we’re dining; now we’ve cleaned up; now it’s time to pour the wine.

Ph. Good heavens, are we dining on dream food?

Bd. The girl pip has started to play. Your drinking companions are Theorus, Aeschines, Phanus, Cleon, and a second foreigner next to Acestor. When in the company of men like these, be sure you take up the songs in fine fashion.

Ph. Oh really? I’ll do it better than any Diacrian.

Bd. I’ll find out. Suppose I’m Cleon, and I start singing the Harmodius Song, and you’re going to take it up. “Never was there in Athens born…

Ph. “…so great a scoundrel, and such a thief!”

Bd. Is that what you’re going to do? You’ll be shouted to death! He’ll vow to destroy you and annihilate you and hound you out of the country.
Ph. If he threatens me, by god I’ll sing another one: “You there, the fellow who seeks the high authority, you shall upend the city yet; it’s poised to tilt.”

Bd. But what happens when Theorus, reclining at your feet, grasps Cleon’s right hand and sings: “Remember, friend, the story of Admetus, and cherish the good people.” What song will you cap that with?

Ph. I’ll be lyrical: “You cannot be foxy or befriend both sides.”

Bd. After him, Aeschines the son of Hotair will take it up, a sophisticated and cultured gentleman, and he’ll sing: “Money and substance for Clitagora and me midst the Thessalians…”

Ph. … Yes, we did a lot of boasting, you and I!

Bd. This part you seem to understand reasonably well. It’s time we were off to Philoctemon’s for dinner. (calling into the house) Boy, boy! Pack dinner for the two of us, Chrysus, so we can have a real booze-up at long last!

Ph. Oh no! Drinking’s bad. Wine gets you doors broken in, assault and battery, then paying money for the damage while you’re hung over.

Bd. No, not if you’re in the company of fine gentlemen. They’ll beg the victim off, or else you yourself can tell him some witty story, something funny by Aesop or about Sybaris, one of the stories you learned at the party, and then you’ve turned the whole thing into a joke, so he lets you off and goes on his merry way.

Ph. Sure, I’d better learn lots of those stories, if I’m to owe no damages when I do something bad. Come on now, let’s go; let nothing stop us now!

- - - - - - -

Xanthias:
(reporting Philocleon’s behavior):
“Old fellow, you’re like a nouveau riche teenager, or an ass that’s slipped away to a bran pile!” And he bellowed back with his own comparison of Lysistratus to a locust that’s lost the wings off its cloak, or Sthenelus shorn of his stage props. Everyone applauded, with the sole exception of Thuphrastus, who pursed his lips, as being intelligent. Then the old man [Philokleon] asked Thuphrastus, “Say, why do you act the bigwig and pretend to be stylish, when you’re only a clown sucking up to anyone who’s doing well at the moment?” That’s the way he insulted them, one after the other, mocking them like a yokel and also telling stories that were completely inappropriate to the situation. And after he gets drunk, he starts for home, hitting everyone who meets him. Look, here he comes, staggering drunk. I’m going to get out of his way before I start catching punches!
3. Plato, *Symposium* 175c-177d; 213a-214c

μετά ταύτα ἐφή σφάς μὲν δειπνεῖν, τὸν δὲ Σωκράτη οὐκ εἰσίεναι. τὸν οὖν Ἀγάθωνα πολλάκις κελεύειν μεταπέψασθαι τὸν Σωκράτη, ἐ δὲ οὖν ἦν. ἤκειν οὖν αὐτὸν οὐ πολὺν χρόνον ὡς εἰσόδει διατηρήσατα, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον σφάς μεσοῦν δειπνοῦντας. τὸν οὖν Ἀγάθωνα—τυχάνειν γὰρ ἐσχατὸν κατακείμενον μόνον—δεῦρ', ἐφή φάναι, Σώκρατες, παρ' ἐμὲ κατάκεισθο, ἵνα καὶ τοῦ σοφοῦ ἀπτόμενος σοι [175d] ἀπολαύσω, ὅ σοι προσέτῃ ἐν τοῖς προθύροις, δῆλον γὰρ ὅτι ἤπερς αὐτὸ καὶ ἔχεις; οὐ γὰρ ἦν προσάετης.

καὶ τὸν Σωκράτη καθίζεσθαι καὶ εἰπεῖν ὅτι εὔ ἀν ἔχοι, φάναι, ὃ Ἀγάθων, εἰ τοιοῦτον εἰή ὁ σοφία ὡστ' ἐκ τοῦ πληρεστέρου εἰς τὸ κενώτερον μεῖν ἡμῶν, εὖ ἀπτώμεθα ἀλλήλων, ὡσπερ τὸ ἐν ταῖς κύλιζεν ὅδωρ τὸ διὰ τοῦ ἔριου ρέον ἐκ τῆς πληρεστέρας εἰς τὴν κενωτέραν. εἰ γὰρ οὕτως ἔχει καὶ ἡ [175e] σοφία, πολλοῦ τιμῶμαι τὴν παρὰ σοὶ κατάκλισιν: ὁμία γὰρ με παρὰ σοῦ πολλῆς καὶ καλῆς σοφίας πληρωθήσεσθαι. ἣ μὲν γὰρ ἐμὴ φαύλη τις ἄν εἰή, ἤ καὶ ἀμφισβητήσας ὅσπερ ὧν ὧν, ἢ δὲ ὅπλα τε καὶ πολλὴν ἐπίδουσαν ἔχουσα, ἢ γε παρὰ σοῦ νέου ὄντος οὕτω φόδρα ἐξελάμψιν καὶ ἐκφάνης ἐγένετο πρὸς ἐν μάρτυς τῶν Ἑλλήνων πλέον ἄρτι στρομύριος.

ὑβριστής εἰ, ἐφή, ὃ Σωκράτες, ὃ Ἀγάθων. καὶ ταύτα μὲν καὶ ὀλίγον ὑστερον διαδικασόμεθα ἐγὼ τε καὶ οὐ περὶ τῆς σοφίας, δικαστή χρώμειοι τῷ Διονύσῳ: νῦν δὲ πρὸς τὸ δείπνον πρῶτα τρέπου. [176a]

μετὰ ταύτα, ἐφή, κατακλινέντος τοῦ Σωκράτους καὶ δειπνήσαντος καὶ τῶν ἄλλων, σπονδάς τε σφάς ποιήσασθαι, καὶ ἄσαντας τὸν θέων καὶ τᾶλα τὰ νομίζομενα, τρέπεσθαι πρὸς τὸν πότον: τὸν οὖν Παυσανίαν ἐφή λόγου τοιούτου τίνος κατάρχειν. εἰεν, ἀνδρεῖς, φάναι, τίνα τρόπον ῥάστα πιόμεθα; ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν λέγω ὡμὲν ὅτι τῷ ὄντι πάνιν χαλεπός ἔχω ὑπὸ τοῦ χθές πότου καὶ δέομαι ἀνάφυγης τινος—ὅμια δὲ καὶ ύμων τοὺς πολλοὺς; παρῆστε γὰρ χθές—σκοπείσθε [176b] οὖν τίνι τρόπῳ ἂν ὧς ῥάστα πίνομεν.

tὸν οὖν Ἀριστοφάνην εἰπεῖν, τοῦτο μὲντοι εὔ λέγεις, ὃ Παυσανία, τὸ παντὶ τρόπῳ παρασκευάσασθαι ῥαστών τινα τῆς πόσεως: καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς εἰμι τῶν χθές βεβαπτισμένων.

ἀκούσαντα οὖν αὐτῶν ἐφή ἔρυξαμαχον τὸν Ἀκουμενοῦ ἢ καλῶς, φάναι, λέγετε. καὶ ἐτί ἐνὸς δέομαι ύμῶν ἀκούσαι πῶς ἔχει πρὸς τὸ ἐρρώσασθαι πίνειν, Ἀγάθωνος.

οὔδαμως, φάναι, οὔδ’ αὐτὸς ἔρρωμαι. [176c]

"Ερμαιον ἂν εἴη ἡμῖν, ἢ δ’ ὡς, ὡς οἶκεν, ἐμοὶ τέ καὶ Ἀριστοδήμῳ καὶ Φαίδρῳ καὶ τοίσδε, εἰ ὡμεις οἱ δυνατότατοι πίνειν νῦν ἀπείρηκατε: ἡμεῖς μὲν γὰρ ἀεὶ ἄδυνατοι. Σωκράτη δ’ ἐξαιρώ λόγου: ἰκανός γὰρ καὶ ἀμφότερα, ὡς’ ἔξαρκεσιν αὐτῷ ὑπότερ’ ἄν ποιῶμεν. ἐπειδή οὖν μοι δοκεῖ οὐδές τῶν παρόντων προθύμως ἔχειν πρὸς τὸ πολὺν πίνειν οἶμαι, ἵσως ἂν ἐγὼ περὶ τοῦ μεθύσκεσαι οὖν ἓστι τάλληθ λέγων ἤτον ἂν εἴην ἄνδρης, ἐμοὶ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο γε οἶμαι [176d] κατάδηλον γεγονέναι ἐκ τῆς ἰατρικῆς, ὅτι χαλεπὸν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἡ μέθη ἐστίν: καὶ οὔτε αὐτὸς ἐκών εἶναι
πόρρω ἐθελήσαμι ἵνα πείν οὕτε ἄλλως συμβουλεύσαμι, ἄλλως τε καὶ κραταλώντα ἔτι ἐκ τῆς προτεραίας.

ἀλλὰ μὴν, ἐφεφάναι ὑπολαβόντα Φαΐδρον τὸν Μυρρινοῦσιον, ἐγωγῆς οἱ εἰῶθα πείθεσθαι ἄλλως τε καὶ ἀττ' ἐν περὶ ἱστηρίκης λέγῃς: νῦν δ', ἂν εὗ βουλεύσωνται, καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ. [176ε] ταῦτα δὴ ἀκούσαντας συγχωρεῖν πάντας μὴ διὰ μέθες ποιήσασθαι τὴν ἐν τῷ παρόντι συνουσίαν, ἀλλ' οὕτω πίνοντας πρὸς ἡδονῆν.

ἐπειδὴ τοῖνυν, φάναι τὸν Ἐρυξίμαχον, τοῦτο μὲν δεδοκται, πίνειν ὅσον ἂν ἕκαστος βούληται, ἐπάναγκες δὴ μηδὲν εἶναι, τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο ἐισηγοῦμαι τὴν μὲν ἄρτι εἰσελθοῦσαν αὐλητρίδα χαίρειν ἑαν, αὐλοῦσαν ἑαυτῇ ἡ ἂν βούληται ταῖς γυναιξιν ταῖς ἐνδον, ἡμᾶς δὲ διὰ λόγων ἀλλήλως συνεῖναι τὸ τήμερον: καὶ δ' ὄνων λόγων, εἰ βούλεσθε, ἐθέλω ὡμίν εἰσηγήσασθαι. [177α]

φάναι δὴ πάντας καὶ βουλεσθαί καὶ κελεύειν αὐτὸν εἰσηγεῖσθαι. εἰπεῖν οὖν τὸν Ἐρυξίμαχον ὅτι ἢ μὲν μοι ἀρχή τοῦ λόγου ἔστι κατὰ τὴν Εὐριπίδου Μελανίπην: οὐ γὰρ ἔμοι ὁ μύθος, ἀλλὰ Φαΐδρον τουδε, ὃν μέλλω λέγειν. Φαΐδρος γὰρ ἕκαστοτε πρὸς μὲ γανακτῶν λέγει οὐ δείκνουν, φησιν, ὦ Ἐρυξίμαχε, ἄλλοις μὲν τις θεῶν ὑμών καὶ παίωνας εἶναι ὑπὸ τῶν ποιητῶν πεποιημένους, τῷ δὲ Ἐρωτί, τηλικοῦτω ὑντι καὶ τοσοῦτον θεῶ, μηδὲ ἐν πίποτε τοσοῦτον [177β] γεγονότων ποιητῶν πεποιηκέναι μηδὲν ἔγκωμιον; εἰ δὲ βούλεις αὐτὶ σκέψασθαι τοὺς χριστοὺς σοφιστάς, Ἰρακλέους μὲν καὶ ἄλλους ἐπαινοῦς καταλογόδην συγγράφειν, ὡσπερ ὁ βέλλιστος Πρόδικος—καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἢττον καὶ γαμαστόν, ἀλλ' ἔγογκῃ ἡδὶ τινι ἐνετυχον βιβλίῳ ἄνδρος σοφοῦ, ἐν δὲ ἐνήσαν ἄλεξ ἐπαινον θαυμάσιον ἔχοντες πρὸς ὡφελίαν, καὶ ἄλλα τοιαῦτα [177c] συχνὰ ἵδοιν ἂν ἐγκεκωμισμένα—τῷ οὖν τοσοῦτον μὲν πέρι πολλὴν σπουδὴν ποιῆσασθαι, ἔρωτα δὲ μηδένα πο ἀνθρώπων τετολμηκέναι εἰς ταυτην τὴν ἡμέραν ἄξιως ύμιμησαι: ἀλλ' οὕτως ἡμέληται τοσοῦτος θεος. ταῦτα δὴ μοι δοκεῖ εὗ λέγειν Φαΐδρος. ἐγὼ ὡμών ἐπιθυμῶ ἄμα μὲν τοῦτω ἐρανον εἰσενεγακών καὶ χαρίσασθαι, ἁμα δ' ἐν τῷ παρόντι πρέπον μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἡμῖν τοῖς παρόσιοι κοσμήσαι τὸν θεόν. εἰ οὖν [177d] συνδοκεῖ καὶ ύμίν, γένοιτ' ἂν ἡμῖν ἐν λόγωι ἰκανή διατριβή: δοκεῖ γάρ μοι χρῆσαι ἐκαστὸν ἡμῶν λόγων εἰπεῖν Ἐπαινον Ἐρωτος ἐπί δεξιὰ ὡς ἄν δούνηται κάλλιστον, ἀρχεῖν δὲ Φαΐδρον πρῶτον, ἐπειδὴ καὶ πρῶτος κατάκειται καὶ ἐστίν ἄμα πατήρ τοῦ λόγου.

οὔδείς σοι, ὦ Ἐρυξίμαχε, φάναι τὸν Σωκράτη, ἕναντία ψηφιεῖται.

---------------------

πάντας οὖν ἀναθορυβῆσαι καὶ κελεύειν εἰσεῖναι καὶ κατακλίνεσθαι, καὶ τὸν Ἀγάθωνα καλεῖν αὐτὸν. καὶ τὸν ἰέναι ἀγόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ περιαροῦμενον ἀμα τας τανίας ώς ἀναδήσοντα, ἑπίπροσθε τῶν ὑφαλμῶν ἔχοντα οὐ κατιδείν τὸν Σωκράτη, ἀλλὰ καθίζεσθαι παρὰ τὸν Ἀγάθωνα [213b] ἐν μέσῳ Σωκράτους τε καὶ ἐκεῖνου: παραχωρήσαι γάρ τὸν Σωκράτη χως ἐκείνον κατιδείν. παρακαθεξομενον δὲ αὐτὸν ἀσπάζοθαι τε τὸν Ἀγάθωνα καὶ ἀναδείν.

εἰπεῖν οὖν τὸν Ἀγάθωνα Ὑπολύετε, παίδες, Ἀλκιβιάδην, ἵνα ἐκ τρίτων κατακέιται.
πάνυ γε, εἶπεν τὸν Ἀλκιβιάδην: ἀλλὰ τὶς ἡμῖν ὅδε τρίτος συμπότης; καὶ ἃμα μεταστρεφόμενον αὐτὸν ὄραν τὸν Ἦπατον, ἤδηντα δὲ ἀναπηδῆσαι καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Ἡράκλεις, τούτῳ τί ἦν; Ἦπατος ὡς τούτῳ ἔλλοχον αὐτῷ ἐνεπταθή σκέπειο, [2131] ὅσπερ εἰῶθεις ἐξαιρήθησθαι ὅπου ἔγετο ὡμὴν ἥκιστα σε ἔσεσθαι. καὶ νῦν τὸ ἢκείς; καὶ τι νῦν ἐνεπήκατο κατεκλίνης; ὡς οὐ παρὰ Ἀριστοφάνει ὄοδε εἰ τὶς ἄλλος γελοῖος ἔστε τι καὶ βούλεται, ἀλλὰ διεμιμεχάνη ὅπως παρὰ τῷ καλλίστῳ τῶν ἕνδον κατακέρασθαι.

καὶ τὸν Ἦπατον, Ἀγάθων, φάναι, ὥρα εἰ μοι ἐπαμύνεις; ὡς ἐμοὶ ὁ τοῦτον ἔρως τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐ φαίλον πρᾶγμα γέγονεν. ἀπ' ἐκείνου γάρ τὸν χρόνον, ἀρ' ὁ τοῦτον [2132] ἐράσθην, οὐκέτι ἐξετάσθην μοὶ οὔτε προσβλέψαι οὔτε διαλειχθῆναι καλῶς οὖν· ἐνι, ὡς οὖν τοις ζηλουτῶποι με καὶ φθονῶν βαυμαστά ἐργάζεται καὶ λοιδορεῖ ταῦτα καὶ τῷ χείρῳ μόνης ἀπέχεται. ὥρα οὖν μή τι καὶ νῦν ἐργάνηται, ἀλλὰ διάλαλαξον ἑμᾶς, ἢ ἐὰν ἐπιχειρή βιαζεῖται, ἐπάμενε, ὡς ἐγὼ τὴν τοῦτον μανιάν τε καὶ φιλεραστιάν πάνυ ὀρρωδῶ.

ἀλλὰ ὄντες, φάναι τὸν Ἀλκιβιάδην, ἔμοι καὶ σοὶ διαλαγή. ἀλλὰ τοῦτών μὲν εἰς αὐθίς σε τιμωρήσωμαι: νῦν [2133] δὲ μοι, Ἀγάθων, φάναι, μετάδος τῶν ταινίων, ἵνα ἀναδήσῃς καὶ τὴν τοῦτον ταυτῆν τὴν βαυμαστήν κεφαλήν, καὶ μή μοι μεμφηται ὅτι σὲ μὲν ἀνέδοσα, αὐτὸν δὲ νικῶντα ἐν λόγοις πάντας ἀνθρώποις, οὐ μόνον πρώθην ὄσπερ οὗ, ἀλλὰ ἕνε, ἐπείτα ὄοκ ἀνέδοσα. καὶ αὐτὸν λαβόντα τῶν ταινίων ἀνάδεεν τὸν Ἦπατον καὶ κατακλίνεσθαι.


tὸν μὲν ὄν Χριστὸν ἐγχέαντο τοῦ παῖδος πίνειν: τὸν δ' Ἐρεξίμαχον πὼς οὖν, φάναι, ὁ Ἀλκιβιάς, ποιοῦμεν; [214b] οὕτως οὔτε τί λέγομεν ἐπὶ τῇ κύκλικῃ οὔτε τί ἄδομεν, ἀλλ' ἀτεχνίως ὄσπερ οἱ διφώντες πίσμεθα;

tὸν ὄν Ἀλκιβιάδην εἴπειν ὣς Ἐρεξίμαχε, βέλτιστοι πατρὸς καὶ σωφρονεστῶτος, χαῖρε.

καὶ γὰρ σὺ, φάναι τὸν Ἐρεξίμαχον: ἀλλὰ τί ποιῶμεν;

ὅτι ἄν οὐ κελεύῃς, δεῖ γὰρ σοι πείθεσθαι: ἰτρός γὰρ ἀνήρ πολλῶν ἀντάξιος ἄλλων;” ἔπιταττε οὖν ὅτι βούλει.

ἀκουσον δή, εἴπειν τὸν Ἐρεξίμαχον. ἡμῖν πρὶς σὲ εἰσελθεῖν ἔδοξε χρῆναι ἐπὶ δεξιά ἐκαστὸν ἐν μέρει λόγον [214c] περὶ Ερωτοὺς εἰπεῖν ὡς δύνατο κάλλιστον, καὶ ἐγκωμίσαι, οἱ μὲν οὖν ἄλλοι πάντες ἡμεῖς εἰρήκαμεν: οὐ δὲ ἔπιοτε ὡς εἰρήκας καὶ ἐκπέπωκας, δίκαιος εἰ ἐπείκεν, εἰπώς δὲ ἐπιτάξαι Χριστάτει ὅτι ἄν βούλη, καὶ τούτῳ τῷ ἐπὶ δεξιά καὶ οὕτω τούς ἄλλους.
Thereupon, he said, they all began dinner, but Socrates did not arrive; and though Agathon ever and anon gave orders that they should go and fetch him, my friend would not allow it. When he did come, it was after what, for him, was no great delay, as they were only about half-way through dinner. Then Agathon, who happened to be sitting alone in the lowest place, said: “Here, Socrates, come sit by me, so that by contact with you I may have some benefit from that piece of wisdom that occurred to you there in the porch.” Clearly you have made the discovery and got hold of it; for you would not have come away before.” Then Socrates sat down, and—“how fine it would be, Agathon, “he said, “if wisdom were a sort of thing that could flow out of the one of us who is fuller into him who is emptier, by our mere contact with each other, as water will flow through wool from the fuller cup into the emptier. If such is indeed the case with wisdom, I set a great value on my sitting next to you. My own is but meagre, as disputable as a dream; but yours is bright and expansive, as the other day we saw it shining forth from your youth, strong and splendid, in the eyes of more than thirty thousand Greeks.” “You rude mocker, Socrates!” said Agathon. “A little later on you and I shall go to law on this matter of our wisdom, and Dionysus shall be our judge. For the present, let the dinner be your first concern.”

After this, it seems, when Socrates had taken his place and had dined with the rest, they made libation and sand a chant to the god and so forth, as custom bids, till they betook them to drinking. Then Pausanias opened a conversation after this manner: “Well, gentlemen, what mode of drinking will suit us best? For my part, to tell the truth, I am in very poor form as a result of yesterday’s bout, and I claim a little relief; it is so, I believe, with most of you, for you were at yesterday’s party: so consider what method of drinking would suit us best.” On this Aristophanes observed: “Now that, Pausanias, is a good suggestion of yours, that we make a point of consulting our comfort in our cups: for I myself am one of those who got such a soaking yesterday.” When Eryximachus, son of Acumenus, heard this; “You are quite right sirs,” he said; “and there is yet one other question on which I request your opinion, as to what sort of condition Agathon finds himself in for drinking.” “No, no,” said Agathon, “I am not in good condition for it either.” “It would be a piece of luck for us, I take it,” the other went on, “that is, for me, Aristodemus, Phaedrus, and our friends here, if you who are the stoutest drinkers are now feeling exhausted. We, of course, are known weaklings. Socrates I do not count in the matter: he is fit either way, and will be content with whichever choice we make. Now as it appears that nobody here present is eager for copious draughts, perhaps it will be the less irksome to you if I speak of intoxication, and tell you truly what it is. The practice of medicine, I find, has made this clear to me— that drunkenness is harmful to mankind; and neither would I myself agree, if I could help if, to an excess of drinking, nor would I recommend it to another, especially when his head is still heavy from a bout of the day before.” Here Phaedrus of Myrrhinus intervened with these words: “Why, you know I always obey you, above all in medical matters; and so now will the rest of us, if they are well advised.” Then all of them, on hearing this, consented not to make their present meeting a tipsy affair, but to drink just as it might serve their pleasure. “Since it has been resolved, then,” said Eryximachus, “that we are to drink only so much as each desires, with no constraint on any, I next propose that the flute-girl who came in just now be dismissed: let her pipe to herself or, if she likes, to the women-folk within, but let us seek our entertainment to-day in conversation. I am ready, if you so desire, to suggest what sort of discussion it should be.”
Appendix 2

[177a] They all said they did so desire, and bade him make his proposal. So Eryximachus proceeded:  
“[177b] The beginning of what I have to say is in the words of Euripides’ Melanippe, for ‘not mine the tale’ that I 
intend to tell; it comes from Phaedrus here. He is constantly complaining to me and saying, - Is it not a 
curious thing, Eryximachus, that while other gods have hymns and psalms indited in their honour by 
the poets, the god of Love, so ancient and so great, has had no song of praise composed for him 
by a single one of all the many poets that ever have been? And again, pray consider our worthy 
professors, and the eulogies they frame of Hercules and others in prose, - for example, the excellent 
Prodicus. This indeed is not surprising; but I recollect coming across a book by somebody, in which I 
found Satl superbly lauded for its usefulness, and many more such matters I could show you celebrated 
there. [177c] To think of all this bustle about such trifles, and not a single man ever essaying till this day 
to make a fitting hymn to Love! So great a god, and so neglected! Now I think Phaedrus’ protest a very 
proper one. Accordingly I am not only desirous of obliging him with a contribution of my own, but I 
also pronounce the present to be a fitting occasion for us here assembled to honour the god. [177d] So if 
you on your part approve, we might pass the time well enough in discourses; for my opinion is that we 
ought each of us to make a speech in turn, from left to right, praising Love as beautifully as he 
can. Phaedrus shall open first; for he has the topmost place at table, and besides is father of our debate.”

- - - - -

At this they all boisterously acclaimed him, bidding him enter and take a seat, and Agathon also invited 
him. So he came along with the assistance of his people; and while unwinding the ribands for his 
purpose of wreathing his friend he so held them before his eyes that he failed to notice Socrates, and 
actually took a seat next to Agathon, between Socrates and him. [213b] For Socrates had moved up 
when he caught sight of Alcibiades. So there he sat, and he saluted Agathon and began to twine his 
head. Then Agathon said to the servants, “Take off Alcibiades’ shoes, so that he can recline here with us 
two.” “By all means,” said Alcibiades; “but who is our third at table?” With that he turned about and 
saw Socrates, and the same moment leapt up and cried, Save us, what a surprise! Socrates is here! So it 
was to lie in wait for me again that you were sitting there – your old trick of turning up on a 
sudden where least I expected you! Well, what are you after now? Tell me, I say why you took a seat 
here and not by Aristophanes or some one else who is absurd and means to be? Why did you intrigue to 
get a seat beside the handsomest person in the room?” Then Socrates said, “Agathon, do your best to 
protect me, for I have found my love for this fellow no trifling affair. From the time when I fell in love 
with him I have not had a moment’s liberty either to look upon or converse with a single handsome 
person, [213d] but the fellow flies into a spiteful jealousy which makes him treat me in monstrous 
fashion, girding at me and hardly keeping his hands to himself. So take care that he does no mischief 
now: pray reconcile us; or if he sets about using force, protect me, for I shudder with alarm as his 
amorous frenzy.” “No,” said Alcibiades; “no reconciliation for you and me. I will have my revenge on 
you for this another time: for the present, Agathon, give me some of your ribands, [213e] that I may 
also deck this person’s head, this astonishing head. He shall not reproach me with having mad a 
garland for you and then, though he conquers every one in discourse – not once in a while, like you the 
other day, but always – bestowing none upon him.” So saying he took some of the ribands and, after 
decking the head of Socrates, resumed his seat. Reclining there, he proceeded: “now then, gentlemen, 
you look sober: I cannot allow this; you must drink, and fulfil our agreement. So I appoint as president 
of this bout, till you have had a reasonable drink – myself. Agathon, let the boy bring me as large a
goblet as you have. Ah well, do not trouble,” he said; “boy, bring me that cooler there,” [214a] – for he saw it would hold a good half-gallon or more. This he got filled to the brim, and after quaffing it off himself bad them fill up for Socrates, saying, “Against Socrates, sirs, my crafty plan is as nought. However large the bumper you order him, he will quaff it all off and never get tipsy with it.” Socrates drank as soon as the boy had filled: but – “What procedure is this, Alcibiades?” asked Eryximachus. “Are we to have nothing to say [214b] or sing over the cup? Are we going to drink just like any thirsty folk?” To this Alcibiades answered: “Ha, Eryximachus, ‘of noblest, soberest sire most noble son’; all hail!” “And the same to you,” said Eryximachus: “but what are we to do?” “Whatever you command, for we are bound to obey you: One learned leech is worth the multitude. So prescribe what you please.” “Then listen,” said Eryximachus. “We resolved, before your arrival, that each in order from left ot right should make the finest speech he could upon Love, and glorify his name. No wall of us here have spoken; so you, since you have made no speech and have drained the cup, must do your duty and speak. This done, you shall prescribe what you like for Socrates, and he for his neighbour on the right, and so on with the rest.” (Trans. Lamb)

4. Xenophon, Symposium 1.8, 2.1, 3-5, 24-26

1.8 Αὐτόλυκος μὲν οὖν παρὰ τὸν πατέρα ἐκαθέζετο, οἱ δὲ ἄλλοι, ὦσπερ εἰκός, κατεκλίθησαν.

μικρα γνωστα

Translation by Todd (1979)

1.8 Autocylus took a seat by his father’s side; the others, of course, reclined.

2.1, 3–5, 24–26 [1] When the tables have been removed and the guests had poured a libation and sung a hymn, there entered a man from Syracuse, to give them an evening’s merriment. He had with him a fine flute-girl, a dancing-girl – one of those skilled in acrobatic tricks, - and a very handsome boy, who was expert at playing the cither and at dancing; the Syracusan made money by exhibiting their performances as a spectacle. . . . [3] “Supose we go further,” said Callias, “and have some one bring us some perfume, so that we may dine in the midst of pleasant odours, also.” “No indeed!” replied Socrates. “For just as one kind of dress looks well on a woman and another kind on a man, so the odours appropriate to men and to women are diverse. No man, surely, ever uses perfume for aman’s sake. And as for the women, particularly if they chance to be young brides, like the wives of Niceratus here and Critobulus, how can they want any additional perfume? For that is what they are redolent of, themselves. The odour of the olive oil, on the other hand, that is used in the gymnasium is more delightful when you have it on your flesh than perfume is to women, and when you lack it, the want of it is more keenly felt. [4] Indeed, so far as perfume is concerned, when once a man has anointed himself with it, the scent forthwith is all one whether he be slave or free; but the odours that result from the exertions of freemen demand primarily noble pursuits engaged in for many years if they are to be sweet and suggestive of freedom.” “That may do for young fellows,” observed Lycon; “but what of us who no longer exercise in the gymasia? What should be our distinguishing scent?” “Nobility of soul, surely!” replied Socrates. “And where may a person get this ointment?” “Certainly not from the perfumers,” said Socrates. “But where, then?” “Theognis has said: ‘Good men teach good; society with bad will but corrupt the good mind that you had.’” [5] “Do you hear that, my son?” asked Lycon. “Yes, indeed he does,” said Socrates; “and he puts it into practice, too. At any rate, when he desired to become a prize-winner in the pancratium, [he availed himself of your help to discover the champions in that sport and associated with them; and so, if he desires to learn the ways of virtue,]1 he will again with your help seek out the man who seems to him most proficient in this way of life and will associate with him.” . . . [24] “Certainly,” replied Callias; “and the same for us, for we are thirsty with laughing at you.” Here Socrates again interposed. “Well, gentlemen,” said he, “so far as drinking is concerned, you have my hearty approval; for wine does of a truth ‘moisten the soul’ and lull our griefs to sleep just as the mandragora does with men, at the same time awakening kindly feelings as oil quickens a flame. [25] However, I suspect that men’s bodies fare the same as those of plants that grow in the ground. When God gives the plants water in floods to drink, they cannot stand up straight or let the breezes blow through them; but when they drink only as much as they enjoy, they grow up very straight and tall and come to full and abundant fruitage. [26] So it is with us. If we pour ourselves immense draughts, it will be no long time before both our bodies and our minds reel, and we shall not be able even to draw breath, much less to speak sensibly; but if the servants frequently ‘besprinkle’ us—if I too may use a
Gorgian expression—with small cups, we shall thus not be driven on by the wine to a state of intoxication, but instead shall be brought by its gentle persuasion to a more sportive mood.”
APPENDIX 3

PASSAGES QUOTED IN CHAPTER 5: TEXT AND TRANSLATION

Iliad 9.185-231

Μυρμιδόνων δ’ ἐπὶ τε κλισίας καὶ νήσας ἰκέσθην,
tὸν δ’ εὖρον φρένα τερπόμενον φόρμην γιγαντικὴν,
καλὴ δαίδαλε, ἐπὶ δ’ ἀργύρευν ζυγὸν ἦν,
tὴν ἀρετ’ ἐξ ἐνάρῳ πόλιν Ἡντίωνος ὀλέσσας:
tῇ δ’ γε θυμὸν ἔτερπεν, ἀείδε δ’ ἄρα κλέα ἄνδρῶν.
Πάτροκλος δὲ οἱ οἶος ἕναντίος ὁστὸ σιωπῆ,
δέμυμνος Αἰακίδην ὅποτε λήξειν ἀείδων,
tῷ δὲ βάτην προτέρῳ, ἤγείτο δὲ διὸς Ὁδυσσεύς,
στὰν δὲ πρόσθ’ αὐτοῖο: ταφῶν δ’ ἀνόρουσεν Ἀχιλλεύς
αὐτὴ σὺν φόρμῃ γειτών ἔδοξ ἑνθα θάσσεσιν.
ὡς δ’ αὕτως Πάτροκλος, ἐπεὶ ίδε φύτας, ἀνέστη.
tῷ καὶ δεικνύμενος προσέφη πόδας ὑκύῳ Ἀχιλλεύς:
χαίρετον: ἡ φίλοι ἄνδρες ἴκανον ἃ τι μάλα χρεώ,
oἱ μοι σκυζομένῳ περ Ἀχαιῶν φιλτατοί ἐστον.

ὡς ἄρα φωνήσας προτέρῳ ἄγε διὸς Ἀχιλλεύς,
εἶσαν δ’ ἐν κλισισία ὁμόσπουδοι
αὖτα δὲ Πάτροκλον προσεφώνεεν ἐγγος ἐόντα:
μείζονα δὴ κρητῆρα Μενοῖτιον ὑε καθίστα,
ζωρότερον δὲ κέρας, δέπας δ’ ἐνύνυν ἐκάστῳ:
oἱ γάρ φιλτατοί ἄνδρες ἐμφ ὑπέασι μελάθρῳ.

ὡς φάτο, Πάτροκλος δὲ φίλω ἐπεπείθεθ’ ἐταίρῳ.
αὐτάρ ὅ γε κρεῖσον μέγα κάββαλεν ἐν πυρὸς αὐγῆ,
ἐν δ’ ἄρα νῦτον ἐθηκ’ δίος καὶ πίονος αἰγός,
ἐν δὲ σως σύλλοιρ μάχην τεθαλύσαν ἄλοφηρ.
τῷ δ’ ἔχεν Αὐτομεδών, τάμυν δ’ ἄρα διὸς Ἀχιλλεύς.
καὶ τὰ μὲν εὐ μεστύλλα καὶ ἄμφ’ ὀβελοίσιν ἐπειρε,
ποῦ, δὲ Μενοῖτιαδὸς δαίσεν μέγα ἕσθεος φῶς.
αὐτάρ ἐπεὶ κατὰ πῦρ ἐκάθη καὶ φλάξ ἐμαράνθη,
ἄνθρωποθ τοποχώσας ὀβελοῦ ἐφύπερθε τάνυοσσε,
pάσσε δ’ ἄλος θείος κρατευτάτων ἐπαιρας.
αὐτάρ ἐπεὶ β’ ὑπνησε καὶ εἰν ἐλεοῖσιν ἔχευε,
Πάτροκλος μὲν οἶτον ἐλών ἐπένεμε τραπέζη
tοποικ αὐτῶ ϊπτο τοῦ ἔτεροι, θεοῖ δὲ θύσαι ἀνάγει
And they came to the huts and the ships of the Myrmidons, and him they found delighting his mind with a clear-toned lyre, fair and elaborate, and on it was a bridge of silver; this he had taken from the spoil when he destroyed the city of Eëtion. With it hew as delighting his heart, and he sag of the glorious deeds of warriors; and Patroclus alone sat opposite him in silence, waiting until Aeacus’ grandson should cease from singing. But the two came forward and noble Odysseus led the way, and they stood before him; and Achilles leapt up in amazement with the lyre in his hand, and left the seat on which he had been sitting; and in like manner Patroclus when he saw the men rose up. Then swift-footed Achilles greeted the two and spoke, saying: “Welcome, you are friends indeed that have come – the need must surely be great – you who even in my anger are to me the dearest of the Achaeans.”

So saying, noble Achilles led them in and had them sit on couches and rugs of purple; and immediately he spoke to Patroclus who was near: “Set out a larger bowl, son of Menoetius; mix stronger drink, and prepare a cup for each of them, for the men who are most dear are here under my roof.” So he spoke, and Patroclus obeyed his dear comrade. He cast down a great chopping block in the light of the fire and laid on it a sheep’s back and a fat goat’s, and the chine of a great hog, rich with fat. And Automedon held them for him, while noble Achilles carved. Then he cut up the meat with care and spitted it on spits, and the son of Menoetius, a godlike man, made the fire blaze high. But when the fire had burned down and the flame was abated, he scattered the embers and laid the spits over them, and sprinkled the morsels with divine salt when he had set them on the andirons. But when he had roasted the meat and laid it on platters, Patroclus took bread and set it out on the table in fair baskets, while Achilles served the meat. He himself sat down opposite godlike Odysseus by the other wall, and commanded Patroclus, his comrade, to offer sacrifice to the gods; and Patroclus cast burnt offering into the fire. So they set their hands to the good cheer lying ready before them. But when they had put from them the desire of food and drink, Aias nodded to Phoenix; and noble Odysseus took notice, and filling a cup with wine he pledged Achilles: “Greetings, Achilles; of the equal feast we are not lacking, either in the hut of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, or now in yours; for here is abundance that satisfies the heart to feast on. But our minds are not set on matters of the delicious feast, but, Zeus-nurtured one, it is great sorrow that we look on, and are afraid; for it is in doubt whether we save the benched ships or they perish, if you do not clothe yourself in your valor.

Translated by A.T. Murray (1999)
BIBLIOGRAPHY


BIBLIOGRAPHY


Mommsen, T. 1898. Feste der Stadt Athen im Altertum. Leipzig.


