

## PARMENIDES THE LATE ARCHAIC POET

The mid- to late sixth century into which Parmenides was born was a time of profound changes that touched nearly every aspect of society, from poetry to politics, architecture to astronomy, economics to epistemology.<sup>1</sup> During this period and in the decades before it, new settlements, including Parmenides' own Elea,

<sup>1</sup> Parmenides' dates are notoriously controversial. The two main possibilities for his birth are 544–541 or c. 515 BCE, and in many ways the question comes down to whether one finds greater reason to doubt the timeline provided by Diogenes Laertius (9.21–23), likely on the authority of Apollodorus (see e.g. Cordero (2004) 5–6 and footnotes), or Plato in his *Parmenides* (esp. 127a–c).

One can undermine the historical accuracy of both sources with unnerving ease. As has been pointed out, the earlier date creates a suspiciously tidy chronology of events related to Parmenides; thus his birth would coincide neatly with the foundation of Elea and the *floruit* of Xenophanes, and his own *floruit* precisely with Zeno's birth; see e.g. Burnet (1930) 170; Coxon (2009) 40; Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (2007) 240.

On the other hand, if one takes Plato to be a virtuoso dramatist, it is tempting to see motives other than strict historical accuracy behind his account. Plato clearly has much to gain from staging a contest between, for example, a young Socrates, who presents a well-developed Theory of Forms (something which should in itself make us suspicious), and the venerable old master who critiques it; as has been observed (see e.g. Mansfeld (1990) 64–68 and esp. Cordero (2004) 5–8), it is attractive to see Plato as undertaking a (philosophically Parmenidean) revision of his own Theory of Forms by ventriloquizing his self-criticism through the suitably august figure of Parmenides. What is more, the precision of Plato's dating need not imply, as Guthrie had it, that Plato 'had no reason to give such exact information about their ages unless he knew it to be correct' (Guthrie (1965) 2); as Thanassas, who observes that such precise datings are more or less unparalleled in the Platonic corpus, suggests, 'the reverse is actually the case: Plato would have had no reason to provide such trivial details unless he wanted to present as credible something that in reality could not have taken place' (Thanassas (2007) 10 n. 5). There are of course other instances where Plato's dates are notably unreliable; in *Timaeus* 20d, Solon is presented as twenty to thirty years younger than is possible; see Untersteiner (1958) 19.

Finally, scholars of archaic poetry have also found the earlier date attractive for reasons entirely unrelated to doubts about the strict historicity of Plato's account; see here D'Alessio (1995), whose primary interest is Pindar's relationship to Parmenides. Another striking feature of this debate is that some of those who plump for the later date, including West (1983) and West (2011b), still date Parmenides' poem to about 490 BCE on the premise that the figure of the *kouros* is autobiographical and the poem composed shortly after the event it describes. Conversely, if one is inclined to doubt Plato's dating, but sees in the *kouros* nothing more than a literary construction, one easily ends up at a similar date of composition.

continued to spring up all around the Mediterranean and Black Sea;<sup>2</sup> Persian encroachments across the Greek east scattered westward Ionian refugees and their cultural and intellectual traditions; the monumental Greek temple as we know it was coming into its own.<sup>3</sup> Prose was born;<sup>4</sup> so was the map; so, too, was (non-alloyed) money.<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, however, one of the most important developments was the series of fundamental shifts that were playing out in the world of archaic poetry during this era, particularly concerning the social status and conceptualization of Homer. If sections 1.1 and 1.2 of the previous chapter located Parmenides in his physical environment and linguistic milieu, respectively, this chapter will in turn locate him in the world of late archaic poetry in which he worked.

Doing so yields three benefits. The first concerns Homer's position of unparalleled cultural prominence and social prestige in Parmenides' era. In recent decades, scholars have begun assembling a mosaic of evidence that suggests important changes during this time in how Homer and the poems attributed to him were conceptualized and how poets of the day interacted with him. By the late archaic period, thinking one's social and aesthetic values, one's views on the nature of knowledge and poetic craft through, against, or otherwise alongside Homer had become a widespread phenomenon. Moreover, when Parmenides was composing his poem, creative reappropriation of the Homeric poems was becoming an established habit. Just as we would miss something of deep importance were we to fail to appreciate the physical nature of the actual roads with which Parmenides and his audience would have been familiar, or were we to elide the semantic nuances of the road vocabulary that Parmenides makes central to his poem, so must we also grapple with how Parmenides fits into the dynamics that defined the relationship between late archaic poets and the epic poems they used and abused, adapted and critiqued. What, generally speaking, were other poets in Parmenides' era doing?

<sup>2</sup> See Osborne (2009) 117–18.

<sup>3</sup> See Osborne (2009) 249–50.

<sup>4</sup> Usually credited to Anaximander or Pherecydes of Syros. Notable discussions in e.g. Goldhill (2002), Kahn (2003), and Granger (2007); for Pherecydes, see Schibli (1990).

<sup>5</sup> See table at Osborne (2009) 239–41 with accompanying discussion at 237–45, more generally von Reden (1995), Kurke (1999), Schapps (2004), and Seaford (2004).

Working and reworking Homer, and reworking Homer yet again. In this and subsequent chapters of this book, I unquestionably privilege Homer in my reading of Parmenides – perhaps, as scholars with other interpretative perspectives on Parmenides may argue, excessively so. But as scholars of late archaic poetry have recently demonstrated, and as I shall emphasize in this chapter, poets in the late archaic period accorded Homer a place of unusually exalted privilege. Accordingly, our understanding of Parmenides' poem will benefit from incorporating the insights gained by recent scholarship on late archaic poetry generally, and the early reception of Homer more specifically. Put differently, my emphasis on reading Parmenides against Homer is simply a reflection of, and commensurate with, the level of cultural influence Homer had earned in Parmenides' own time.<sup>6</sup>

Second, resituating Parmenides in his time and place will open up new perspectives on the precise nature of Parmenides' engagements with Homer. As so often when discussing both archaic Greek poetry and 'the Presocratics', what appears normal or exceptional often depends on how we narrativize and periodize the development of individual thinkers and patterns of thought, poets and poetic traditions, and alongside whom we do, or do not, place the poet or thinker in question. When Parmenides is viewed not as a successor to Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, or Xenophanes, nor as a predecessor to Zeno, Melissus, Empedocles, or Plato (and, eventually, Aristotle, the Stoics, the Cynics, and, ultimately, as is not uncommon, Russell and Wittgenstein, or Heidegger and Derrida), but rather alongside his late archaic companions in verse such as Ibycus, Simonides, and Pindar, we get a different picture of important features of his poem. This is particularly true concerning his use of dactylic hexameter, the dramatic scenario of his poem, his epistemological orientations and aims, and key words, phrases, and lines in his poem and the 'Route to Truth'.

This brings us to the third, and most consequential, point. Relocating Parmenides in his poetic context will help us

<sup>6</sup> Though I should emphasize that by no means do I wish to minimize the effect of other influences, much less to rule them out entirely; my interest lies in making the case for a significant interaction with Homer, rather than *against* the influence of others.

understand more precisely both the intellectual challenges he faced and the set of cultural and poetic resources he had at his disposal in facing them. Of central importance on this score is the extraordinary epistemological tumult of Parmenides' era and the decades immediately preceding him. One key current in this epistemological fomentation is a poetic and intellectual tradition that runs from Hesiod by way of Xenophanes, two thinkers with whom scholars have often seen Parmenides engaging.<sup>7</sup> I shall thus begin this chapter by building on recent scholarship on this theme to outline the poetic and intellectual state of play that Parmenides would have inherited from these poet-thinkers, and the precise challenges their work would have presented him. Framing the discussion this way does not, however, mean we should understand this Hesiodic-Xenophanean line of thinking as disconnected from the conception of, and engagement with, Homer that seems to have played such an important role in the late archaic poetry of Parmenides' peers and near-contemporaries; rather we must be prepared to see how these two stories intersect and are intertwined. Thus, having proceeded by way of other examples of late and mid- to late archaic engagements with Homer (especially in poems by Ibycus, Pindar, and Simonides) and the epistemological stakes at play in these engagements, I shall ultimately loop back to Parmenides' place in the Hesiodic-Xenophanean tradition armed with fresh insights into Parmenides' strategies for addressing the challenges this tradition presented.

To summarize: three strands of the backdrop to Parmenides must be examined. My argument in this chapter will be as follows. First, I shall set the stage by exploring the challenge to which Parmenides needed to respond and the larger epistemic framework within which he needed to work (in Section 2.1, 'Hesiod's Muses, Xenophanes' Doubt'). Second, I shall look at the late archaic period's interest in Homer, especially the Invocation of the Muses in *Iliad* 2, and the

<sup>7</sup> For Parmenides and Hesiod, see Introduction, n. 80. One of the most important developments in Presocratic scholarship in the last few decades is the rehabilitation of Xenophanes' reputation and the new perspectives this has opened on Parmenides' work; see Introduction, n. 15.

## 2.1 Hesiod's Muses, Xenophanes' Doubt

resources this provided Parmenides in meeting that challenge (in Section 2.2, 'Archaic Receptions of Homer'). Third, I shall consider the larger epistemic-poetic milieu within which Parmenides would have been operating in order to appreciate more fully his response to the Hesiodic-Xenophanean tradition (in Section 2.3, 'Poetics and Epistemology'). Finally, building on these three sections, I shall explore how Parmenides, finding himself in the situation described in the third section, deploys the resources explored in the second to overcome the challenge outlined in the first (in Section 2.4, 'Parmenidean Strategies').

### 2.1 Hesiod's Muses, Xenophanes' Doubt

The best way to establish the larger stakes at play in this chapter, then, is to consider Parmenides' rather more well-established place in the poetic and intellectual tradition that begins with Hesiod and moves primarily by way of Xenophanes. Scholarship on this topic often centres on the infamous lines 27–28 of the *Theogony*. There the Olympian Muses, having withdrawn from their idyllic perch on 'highest Helicon' (*Th.* 25), quite literally condescend to address Hesiod while he tends his flocks in the human world below; underscoring his lowly status (*Th.* 26), they make the following declaration (*Th.* 27–28):

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

We know how to compose many lies indistinguishable from  
things that are real,  
And we know, when we wish, to pronounce things that are true.

Shaul Tor's recent study *Mortal and Divine in Early Greek Epistemology* can help us make sense of the bewildering implications of these lines and the reams of scholarship that they have justifiably provoked.<sup>8</sup> One of the virtues of Tor's analysis is that it

<sup>8</sup> Tor (2017), with 61–103 devoted to Hesiod and an excellent discussion of lines *Th.* 27–28 at pp. 62–64. I will not attempt a bibliography of the vast discussion on these vexed lines, especially since a comprehensive, systematic account can be found at Tor (2017) 62–64, with extensive bibliography in the footnotes, of the 'truths only', 'lying Muses', and 'ambiguous' interpretations. I have also been influenced by Clay (2003) 49–80, and

transcends the usual impasses – do Hesiod’s Muses lie to others but tell the truth to him, and, if so, does he gain knowledge from them? Do Hesiod’s Muses lie to him? Is there any way of knowing? – by reassessing the place of these lines in the Hesiodic corpus more generally. Seen from this perspective, Hesiod’s Muses are not staking out an epistemological position (that Hesiod’s Muses reject Homeric epic, for example, and authorize his own) but rather constructing an epistemological framework.<sup>9</sup> This framework is premised on the idea that only by interacting with the divine is Hesiod’s poetry possible, and can be broken down into three parts.<sup>10</sup> First (i) is the need to assess ‘what mortals and gods are like’, especially by attaining insight into the nature of ‘the epistemic capacities and limitations of mortals’; second (ii), as follows from the limitations of mortals established in the first point, ‘it is only through a special and privileged interaction with the divine that the mortal poet can produce potentially true (since divinely disclosed) accounts of matters that lie beyond human cognition’; finally (iii), ‘the mortal cannot know the truth-value of these accounts’.<sup>11</sup>

There are two fundamental benefits to framing matters this way. First, of use both immediately and later in the chapter, this analysis allows for a concise comparison between the views of Hesiod, Xenophanes, and Parmenides.<sup>12</sup> Following Hesiod, both Xenophanes and Parmenides agree on the importance of point (i). Xenophanes, however, rejects the possibility of point (ii), denying that mortals (poets or otherwise) ‘can produce potentially true (since divinely disclosed) accounts of matters that lie beyond human cognition’; Xenophanes also develops a particularly strong and explicit version of point (iii).<sup>13</sup> This is an excellent starting point for discussing the intellectual state of play Parmenides would have inherited.

I express my gratitude to the author of Vogel (2019) for discussing this passage with me.

For a different view, see e.g. Heiden (2007).

<sup>9</sup> See esp. Tor (2017) 72–94, 102.

<sup>10</sup> Tor (2017) 64.

<sup>11</sup> Tor (2017) 310; see Tor (2017) 83–93 for the *Theogony*, and pp. 97–103 for *Works and Days* and general conclusions.

<sup>12</sup> Tor (2017) 310.

<sup>13</sup> Tor (2017) 310–11.

## 2.1 Hesiod's Muses, Xenophanes' Doubt

Second, of value at the end of this chapter, this perspective helps liberate us from the old dichotomy between rationality and irrationality, between reasoning and divine disclosure. More specifically, we would no longer need to see an incompatibility between the terms that form these traditional dichotomies: the reasoning in Parmenides' poem may be intimately related to, and indeed perhaps made possible by, the fact that it is divinely disclosed.<sup>14</sup>

Xenophanes' rejection of point (ii) and development of point (iii) are particularly apparent in Fragment 34:<sup>15</sup>

καὶ τὸ μὲν οὖν σαφὲς οὔτις ἀνὴρ ἴδεν οὐδέ τις ἔσται  
εἰδὼς ἄμφι θεῶν τε καὶ ἄσσα λέγω περὶ πάντων·  
εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστ' αὖ τῶν τετελεσμένων εἰπὼν,  
αὐτὸς ὅμως οὐκ οἶδε· δόκος δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται.

And indeed that which is clear and certain truth no man has seen  
Nor will there be anyone who knows about the gods and what I say  
about all things;  
For even if, in the best case, someone happened to speak just of what  
has been fulfilled [someone chanced to say the complete truth],  
Still he himself would not know; but opinion/belief is allotted to all.

As has often been remarked, it is precisely the kind of poetic inspiration described in Homer's famous Invocation of the Muses in *Iliad* 2 that must be at least one of the main targets of Xenophanes' critique;<sup>16</sup> whatever the ambiguity embedded in Hesiod's own poetic or theological epistemology, Xenophanes declares the hotline (or, no less importantly, the perceived and socially accredited hotline) to the Muses definitively severed. *Dokos*, 'opinion' or 'belief', is the best that mortals ever get.<sup>17</sup>

Considering matters from this perspective helps us more clearly take stock of the challenges facing Parmenides and the strategies

<sup>14</sup> See Tor (2017) 10–60, esp. 10–19.

<sup>15</sup> Translation mine, influenced by Tor (2017) 128–31; see Leshner (1992) 156–57, Tor (2013) 10 n. 23, Tor (2017) 128–29 and notes. See also Fragment 18.

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. Leshner (1992); Mogyoródi (2006); Leshner (2008); Graziosi and Haubold (2009) 110; also Tor (2017) 130–31, in whose view Xenophanes targets primarily mantic and divinatory practices.

<sup>17</sup> Though, as we shall discuss in Ch. 6 below, Fr. 18 does allow for a temporally extended process by which human understanding can be developed and improved.

he deploys to negotiate and overcome them, a question to which I shall return in the final movement of this chapter ('Parmenidean Strategies'). We can now summarize Parmenides' position *vis-à-vis* this strand of Hesiodic-Xenophanean thinking as follows. In the background stand two Hesiodic premises. Owing to the nature of god and man, truth (because divinely disclosed) can come only via an epistemically significant interaction with the divine; nevertheless, owing to the nature of mortals' own limitations, they cannot be certain of the truth-value of the information they receive in this transaction with divinity. The view Parmenides would oppose is expressed by Xenophanes, who flatly denies the possibility of any unmediated disclosure from divinity, and forcefully underscores the inability of mortals to know the truth (as opposed to merely believing the claims at which they arrive in the course of their inquiries).<sup>18</sup>

In short, and setting the stage for this chapter's final section, meeting the challenge that Xenophanes set down thus involves (a) effecting an encounter with a Muse-like divinity, that she may disclose truth, and (b) finding a way to abolish any doubt as to whether what has been disclosed actually is the truth. I shall return below to Parmenides' strategies for meeting these challenges; in order to understand these strategies, however, it will first be necessary to examine aspects of the archaic reception of Homer (in the next section, 'Archaic Receptions of Homer') and the larger epistemic and poetic context in which Parmenides was working (Section 2.3, 'Poetics and Epistemology').

## 2.2 Archaic Receptions of Homer

As discussed above, with the exception of Havelock and Mourelatos, scholars have often been reluctant to read Parmenides alongside Homer. It is precisely, however, in Parmenides' time that a revolution occurs in the way that Homer is conceptualized and, more pertinently here, that Homer ascends

<sup>18</sup> See above and nn. 15–17 regarding Fragment 18. For the evidence of Parmenides' engagement with Xenophanes, see esp. Bryan (2012) 97–100; for verbal echoes, see discussions in Coxon (2009) [1986] 18–20; Long (1996) 143; Palmer (2009) 329–30; Tor (2017); 314–26.



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to the dominant cultural position with which we now associate him; one might even say that it is in this time that Homer first becomes inescapable.<sup>19</sup> It is during this period that the name ‘Homeros’ first appears – not incidentally, in the mouths of critics like Xenophanes, who could proclaim that ἐξ ἀρχῆς καθ’ Ὀμηρον ἐπεὶ μεμαθήκασι πάντες (‘from the beginning, all have learned from Homer’, B10),<sup>20</sup> or Heraclitus, for whom τὸν τε Ὀμηρον . . . ἄξιον ἐκ τῶν ἀγῶνων ἐκβάλλεσθαι καὶ ῥαπίζεσθαι (‘Homer deserves to be kicked out of the *agōnes* and beaten with a stick’, B42).<sup>21</sup> They would in due course be followed by, among others, Simonides, Pindar, and Bacchylides, though these often took a less acerbic tone.<sup>22</sup> In the fragments of Stesichorus (like Parmenides, a western Greek),<sup>23</sup> scholars now detect a level of detailed interaction with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* qualitatively different from anything that had come before, and *recherché* enough in nature to suggest an intertextual engagement.<sup>24</sup> In the *Hymn to Apollo*, speculated by some to have been performed on Delos in 523/22 BCE,<sup>25</sup> we see in the notorious boast concerning ‘a blind man, living in rocky Chios, all of whose songs are the best among posterity’ (*H.Ap.* 172–73) the first surviving allusion to Homer as the ‘absolute classic’ he has been ever since.<sup>26</sup> The

<sup>19</sup> Depending, of course, on how one dates both Parmenides and certain events in the reception, conceptualization, and performance of Homer; see n. 1 above and the scholarship cited in n. 27 below. More generally, see esp. Burkert (2001), West (1999), Cassio (2002), Graziosi (2002), Graziosi (2013), Graziosi and Haubold (2015). See also remarks in Graziosi (2013) 10 n. 6 and Clay (2011a) 14–15.

<sup>20</sup> See also Xenoph. Fr. 11.

<sup>21</sup> See also Heraclitus B 56. For the implications of these fragments from both Xenophanes and Heraclitus for our understanding of Homer, see esp. Burkert (2001) 45; Graziosi (2002) 57–60; Graziosi (2008) 28.

<sup>22</sup> Simon. 11.15–18 (discussed below), 19.1–2, 20.13–15; *PMG* 564; Pind. frs. 264, 265, *Pyth.* 4.277, 3.112–15, *Nem.* 7.20–23, *Isth.* 4.37–42, *Pae.* 7b.11 (discussed below); Bacchyl. Fr. 48, 1.92. For discussion, see West (1999) 377–82, esp. 378–79; for Pindar and Homer, see Graziosi (2002) 57–60 and West (2011a), esp. 51–56. West also notes an epigram on a herm in the Athenian agora which names Homer; this was set up following the capture of Eion in 475 (Aeschin. *In Ctes.* 183; Plut. *Cim.* 7.6; *FGE*, 257 ll. 841–42).

<sup>23</sup> See discussions in Ercoles (2013) and Finglass and Davies (2014) 6–18 for Stesichorus’ dates and location.

<sup>24</sup> See e.g. Burkert (2001) and Kelly (2015) (the adjective *recherché* is his: p. 39); also, from a slightly different perspective, Carey (2015), esp. 54.

<sup>25</sup> See Burkert (1979), esp. 54–58; Burkert (2001) 110–13, with bibliography on the debate at 110 n. 61; Janko (1982) 109–14; West (2011b) 241; see also further discussion below.

<sup>26</sup> See esp. Burkert (2001) 110–13; Kelly (2015).

establishment of the Great Panathenaea and the institution of regular recitations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (also possibly in 522 BCE) has long been advanced as another seminal moment reflecting (or announcing) the canonicity of Homer, the stabilization of the Homeric text, or both.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps his first out-and-out literary critic, the allegorist Theagenes of Rhegium (a *polis* not far from Elea)<sup>28</sup> seems to date from around this time as well.<sup>29</sup>

The tremendous impact of this shift on late archaic cultural production has been carefully examined in the last several decades. One particularly rich vein of this scholarship explores the relationship between Odysseus' preamble to the Phaeacians at *Od.* 9.2–11, the so-called 'Golden Verses', and different kinds of late archaic poetry and thought, particularly in relation to the symposium.<sup>30</sup> This is not the place to delve into this scholarship, but a few of its key findings, which encompass a range of late archaic poets and thinkers including Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Simonides, Bacchylides, and Pindar, may be listed here. One is that addressing the question of 'what is finest' that Odysseus broaches in *Od.* 9.2–11 became central to the process of self-fashioning in sympotic poetry and its associated cultural milieu.<sup>31</sup> Another, notable in the context of Parmenides' relationship to Homer, is that one strategy for answering this question successfully involved quoting, troping, recontextualizing, and reworking bits of the Homeric text.<sup>32</sup> Finally, this in turn reveals the enormous cultural prestige attached to the lines of Homer; as

<sup>27</sup> The event is given a position of definitive importance by scholars who otherwise find little to agree on in matters Homeric, including e.g. West (1999); Janko (1998) 13; Janko (1992) 29–32; Nagy (1996a) 66–67; and Cassio (2002), esp. 115. See M. Finkelberg (2017) for an up-to-date discussion (with bibliography) of this large and contested topic.

<sup>28</sup> For the interesting possible connections between the Ionic colony of Elea and the Doric outpost of Rhegium, see Cassio (1996) Cassio (2002).

<sup>29</sup> Tatianus, *Ad Gr.* 31 (= DK 8.1). See West (1999) 378 n. 41 for discussion; also Cassio (2002).

<sup>30</sup> See esp. Ford (1999). See also Fränkel (1950) 407–08; Ford (1997) 92–93; Ford (2002) 29–31; and now Hunter (2018), esp. 92–93 and 110–18. For difficulties in tracing this relationship precisely, particularly in the earlier phases of the archaic era, see Slater (1990) 213; Murray (1991) 95; Ford (1999) 12; Ford (2002) 27 n. 9; Murray (2008); Murray (2016); Węcowski (2014) 191–248; Hunter (2018) 97.

<sup>31</sup> See e.g. Ford (1999) 11–12; Ford (1997) 92–101, esp. 92–93; Ford (2002), esp. 41–42; Hunter (2018) 116, 122. See also Ford (1999) 12–15; Ford (2002) 32; Hobden (2013).

<sup>32</sup> See esp. Ford (1997), Ford (1999), and Ford (2002). For similar effects with Hesiod, see Hunter (2014) 123–26 and Hunter (2018) 113.

## 2.2 Archaic Receptions of Homer

Andrew Ford's discussion of the citation of *Il.* 6.146 in Simonides 19 (*IEG*) makes clear, these lines 'draw their authority from being accepted as words said by Homer himself and not by another'.<sup>33</sup> In sum, this strand of scholarship gives us a window onto a cultural milieu where chunks of Homeric text were a kind of precious metal that could be collected, beaten into new forms, recast with one's own visage imprinted on the front, and put into circulation anew. Homerizing, that is, was rampant in the late archaic period.

These well-known points are worth recapitulating here for two reasons. First, my argument in subsequent chapters relies on Parmenides' dealing with something like the *Odyssey* that we have now. I say 'like' because the core of the analysis I shall undertake below does not ultimately hinge on word-by-word intertextual readings.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, there are many features shared by Parmenides' poem and Homer's text (particularly *Odyssey* 12, my main point of comparison in chapters 3–6) that do take place at the level of language; and since Parmenides, if he engaged with Homer's *Odyssey* 12 word by word, line by line,<sup>35</sup> would have had to have done so with *some* version of the *Odyssey*, I shall not shy away from presuming an intertextual relationship between the two poems at times to bolster my case. It is therefore very helpful – though again, in the last analysis, not absolutely necessary – to proceed on the basis that the *Odyssey* 12 that Parmenides would have encountered closely resembled the one we have at our disposal today.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Ford (1997) 101. That is, should a unit of text be 'adduced and accepted as Homer's words', it 'demands attention in itself because of its source'. Notably, this presupposes some kind of fixed and canonical Homeric text.

<sup>34</sup> Rather, I shall claim that certain elements of Parmenides' poem – and, most importantly, its discursive architecture (discussed in Ch. 3) – are inherited from, and rework, *Odyssey* 12. See also discussion above in the 'Aims' section of the Introduction.

<sup>35</sup> For claims that Stesichorus engaged with Homer in this way, see Kelly (2015), esp. 43. For a good discussion of evidence for Pindar's literate engagement with Homer, see e.g. West (2011a) and Spelman (2018a) 101–110 with notes.

<sup>36</sup> Incidentally, one could support this position equally well with an account of the Homeric poems' influence that emphasized either a process of canonicity or a process of textualization, provided one accepted that by the late archaic period this process was already well underway. See Nagy (2014) for a good recent summary of his views; for criticism of Nagy and his school, see e.g. Janko (1998), Finkelberg (2000), Cassio (2002), Graziosi and Haubold (2015), and Ready (2017) 500–04, many of whom focus on increasing canonicity.

Second, that Homer was ascending to a place of unparalleled prestige in the late archaic era is a point that, as we have seen, has been severely underappreciated by scholars of Parmenides. Exploring what this widespread ‘Homerizing’ during the late archaic era meant for Parmenides’ contemporaries, and especially his fellow poets, will provide a crucial context for my own interpretation of Parmenides. With this background in mind, my next goal in this chapter will be to examine a specific example that demonstrates these dynamics at work in the late archaic era. In particular, a brief look at a series of receptions of Homer’s Invocation of the Muses from *Iliad* 12, in Ibycus’ so-called ‘Polycrates Ode’, Pindar’s *Paeon* 6 and *Paeon* 7b, and Simonides’ ‘Plataea Elegy’, will provide powerful evidence of the kind of detailed engagement with a Homeric text very much resembling our own that I think we should see in Parmenides’ poem (Section 2.2.1, ‘Invoking the Muse(s)').<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, juxtaposing the overlaps between Solon’s so-called ‘Eunomia’ (3 G.-P.= 4 W<sup>2</sup>) and Homer and between Parmenides’ poem and Homer (Section 2.2.2, ‘Far from the Beaten Track of Men’), a brief digression from my larger argument, will also bring into sharp focus aspects of Parmenides’ poem that have often been acknowledged but are not always discussed at the length they deserve.

### 2.2.1 *Invoking the Muse(s)*

Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ’ ἔχουσαι –  
 ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαὶ ἐστε πάρεστε τε ἴστέ τε πάντα,  
 ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν.

Tell me now, Muses, who dwell upon Olympus –  
 For you are goddesses, and are present and know everything,  
 While we hear only rumour, and know nothing.

<sup>37</sup> Not coincidentally, Dr Henry Spelman has used these poems by Ibycus, Pindar, and Simonides as case studies for examining late archaic intertextual engagements with Homer; I am most grateful to Dr Spelman for sharing unpublished work with me, and commend to the reader his forthcoming publication on the topic, my debt to which will be very clear.

## 2.2 Archaic Receptions of Homer

So begins one of the most memorable and distinctive passages in the entire Homeric corpus, the Invocation of the Muses (*Il.* 2.484–93) that precedes the Catalogue of Ships (2.494–759).<sup>38</sup>

Although it used to be commonly assumed that poets throughout the archaic period engaged with the Homeric poems in a detailed, textualized way, scholars now take a more cautious view regarding such early archaic poets as Archilochus, Mimnermus, and Alcman.<sup>39</sup> How best to assess the relationship between archaic poetry and Homeric epic remains one of the thornier problems occupying scholars of ancient Greek literature.<sup>40</sup> Even so, with Ibycus' so-called 'Polycrates Ode', almost certain to have been written before Polycrates' demise in 522 BCE (and perhaps dating from as early as c. 560 BCE),<sup>41</sup> even sceptical scholars have found firmer ground upon which to posit an intertextual engagement with Homer.<sup>42</sup> The Invocation of the Muses and Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2 are widely agreed to be a major point of reference;<sup>43</sup> one finds Homeric resonances that run the gamut from Ibycus' use of particles to his compressed treatment of the Catalogue of Ships.<sup>44</sup> Most pertinently here, as in the Invocation of the Muses, Ibycus juxtaposes the limited capabilities of the mortal poet to the superior powers of the Muses.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>38</sup> For the distinctive features of the ten-line invocation, see esp. Krischer (1965) and de Jong (1987).

<sup>39</sup> See comments in e.g. West (1999) and Kelly (2015) for Mimnermus, Swift (2012) and Swift (2019) – where further bibliography can be found – for Archilochus.

<sup>40</sup> For a summary of the current state of play, see e.g. Kelly (2015) and Currie (2016), esp. 33–36.

<sup>41</sup> For the possibility of the early date, see Wilkinson (2013) 8–12, esp. 12. For a date between the late 530s and 522 BCE, see Hutchinson (2001), esp. 231–32, and Hutchinson (2001) 257–59; for an extended discussion of Ibycus' dates in general, see Hutchinson (2001) 228–35.

<sup>42</sup> Notable here are the remarks of Fowler (1987) 36–37.

<sup>43</sup> For detailed analysis of the poem alongside the Catalogue of Ships, see Barron (1969) 133–34; Woodbury (1985); Fowler (1987) 36–37; Goldhill (1991) 116–17; Hutchinson (2001) 235–36, 244–46, 253–56; Wilkinson (2013) 55–58, 71–73; Hardie (2013); Budelmann (2018) 172; and n. 37 above.

<sup>44</sup> See e.g. Budelmann (2018) 172.

<sup>45</sup> This is true whether one takes the first word of line 25 to be *thmatos*, as advocated by Hutchinson (2001) 244–46 and Wilkinson (2013) 71–73, or *autos*, as suggested by West (1966b) 152–53 and West (1975) 307. For further discussion, see Woodbury (1985) 197

Similarly, Pindar's *Paean* 6.50–61 and *Paean* 7b.10–20 seem to interact closely with the *Iliad*'s Invocation of the Muses.<sup>46</sup> Here Pindar, too, mirrors specific features of the Invocation's phraseology and grammar, especially in *Paean* 6.54–57.<sup>47</sup> More notably here, in contrast to the omniscience attributed to the Muses, mortal men are in both cases expressly characterized by their fundamentally limited epistemic status.<sup>48</sup> As Pindar puts it (*Pae.* 6.51–53):<sup>49</sup>

... ταῦτα θεοῖσι [μ]έν  
πιθεῖν σοφοῦ[ς] δυνατόν,  
βροτοῖσιν δ' ἀμάχανο[νεύ]ρήμεν...

... It is possible for the gods  
To persuade wise men of these things,  
But for mortals there is no means to discover them...

n. 10; also Hardie (2013) 10 n. 2. Following Wilkinson (2013) 50–52, the key portion of the text is (lines 23–26):

καὶ τὰ μὲν[ἄν] Μοῖσαι σεσοφί[σμη]μένα  
εὖ Ἑλικωνίδ[ε]ς ἔμβαιεν ἧλόγω[ι],  
θνατ[ό]ς† δ' οὐ κ[ε]ῖν ἀνήρ  
διερ[ός] . . . .]. τὰ ἕκαστα εἴποι . . .

These things the skilled Heliconian Muses could embark upon (?) in speech well,  
but no living mortal man (?) could tell every detail . . .

<sup>46</sup> For *Paean* 6, see Radt (1958) 121–26; Maehler (1963); Ferrari (1992) 145; Rutherford (2001a); Scodel (2001) 123 n. 30; Granger (2008) 410. For *Paean* 7b, see Clay (1983) 12; Woodbury (1985) 197; Ford (1992) 81–82; D'Alessio (1992) 366–67; and Rutherford (2001a).

<sup>47</sup> If one accepts SM ii, 27–32, *Pae.* 6.54–55, ἰσθ' [δ]τ[ι], Μοῖσαι, | πάντα is a clear echo of ἰστέ τε πάντα (*Il.* 2.485). Spelman (n. 37) will provide a detailed analysis of this point, and also grammatical similarities; for a different view on how to punctuate *Pae.* 6.54–57, see Rutherford (2001a) 309 n. 13.

<sup>48</sup> See for now Woodbury (1985) 197–98 for a comparison of these four passages.

<sup>49</sup> Following Rutherford (2001a) 299. The antecedent of *tauta* in line 51 is missing; though supplements have proliferated, what is required of Pindar is to recount an episode from the mythical past, and it is to this – be that the episode itself, or the labour of telling it – that *tauta* almost certainly refers; what is at stake in both cases is the accuracy of the account that follows.

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Similar dynamics define the scenario in *Paean* 7b.15–20.<sup>50</sup>

Scholars have also found much in Simonides' so-called 'Plataea Elegy' that echoes the Invocation of the Muses and the Catalogue of Ships, especially in different aspects of its apparent sequence and structure.<sup>51</sup> Most saliently for the present discussion, much of the oblique reference to Homer in lines 15–18 seems to be a summary of the Invocation of the Muses (15–17):<sup>52</sup>

οἷσιν ἔπ' ἀθά]γατον κέχυται κλέος ἀν[δροῦς] ἔκητι  
ὄς παρ' ἰοπ]λοκάμων δέξατο Πιερίδ[ων]  
πᾶσαν ἀλη]θείην.

On them [sc. 'the Danaan leaders in battle' (14)]  
immortal *kleos* has been poured by the will of a man  
Who received from the violet-tressed Pierians  
The entire truth.

<sup>50</sup> As e.g. West (2011a) does, I follow the text of Rutherford (2001a) 243–45:

ἐ]πεύχο[μαι] δ' Οὐρανοῦ τ' εὐπέπλωι θυγατρὶ  
Μναμ[ο]σύ[ν]αι κόραισί τ' εὐ-  
μαχανίαν διδόμεν.  
τ]υφλα[ῖ] γὰρ ἀνδρῶν φρένες,  
ὄ]στις ἄνευθ' Ἑλικωνιάδων  
βαθεῖαν ε..[.]ων ἐρευνᾷ σοφίας ὁδόν.

I pray to the well-robed daughter of Uranus,  
Mnemosyne, and her girls  
To provide a resource.  
For blind are the minds of men  
Whoever without the Heliconians  
... seeks out the deep path of wisdom.

See discussion of these lines at Rutherford (2001a) 247–49 and Stamatopoulou (2017) 43–45. A primary debt here is to D'Alessio (1992) and D'Alessio (1995), with further debates in Ferrari (2002), Di Benedetto (2003), and D'Alessio (2004).

<sup>51</sup> For the relationship between Simonides' 'Plataea Elegy' and Homer generally, see West (1993), esp. 9; Clay (2001); Stehle (2001); Kowerski (2005) 100–06; Rawles (2018) 78–106; and n. 37 above. For discussions about Homer's Muses and Simonides' Muse: Rutherford (2001b) 45–46; Aloni (2001) 94–95; Stehle (2001); Clay (2001); Kowerski (2005) 123–26. For the 'Plataea Elegy' and *Iliad* 2 in particular, see Obbink (2001), esp. 69; Stehle (2001), esp. 108, 111.

<sup>52</sup> Text from West (1993). The supplement πᾶσαν ἀλη]θείην, offered by Parsons in the *editio princeps*, is widely (though not universally) accepted.

The foregoing cases, however briefly sketched, provide a programmatic set of examples supporting the view that in the late archaic period, poets working across a range of genres, from elegy to epinician to the paean, were engaged in a deep and fine-grained way with what seems to be a fixed text of Homer that resembled our own. More specifically, *Iliad* 2's Invocation of the Muses, one of the very few places in Homer where the poet/narrator *does* identify himself (or herself) in the first person and speak directly in his (or her) own voice, seems to have been an object of unusual fascination for poets in this period.<sup>53</sup> We shall return to this point in the final section of this chapter ('Parmenidean Strategies').

### 2.2.2 *Far from the Beaten Track of Men*

First, however, it will be beneficial to entertain a brief digression contrasting Parmenides' relationship to Homer with that of Solon's so-called 'Eunomia' (3 G.-P.<sup>2</sup> = 4 W<sup>2</sup>) to *Od.* 9.2–11. Most pertinent are lines 7–10:<sup>54</sup>

δήμου θ' ἡγεμόνων ἄδικος νόος, οἷσιν ἔτοῖμον  
 ὕβριος ἐκ μεγάλης ἄλγεα πολλά παθεῖν·  
 οὐ γὰρ ἐπίστανται κατέχειν κόρον οὐδὲ παρούσας  
 εὐφροσύνας κοσμεῖν δαιτὸς ἐν ἡσυχίῃ.

And unjust is the *noos*<sup>55</sup> of the leaders of the *dēmos*, and they are certain  
 To suffer many woes from their great *hybris*:  
 For they do not know how to restrain excess, nor  
 To conduct in an orderly and peaceful manner the festivities  
 of the banquet at hand.

It is not possible to pin down the precise relationship between Solon's poem and the *Odyssey* with much confidence.<sup>56</sup> Be that as it may, the breadth and depth of this poem's parallels with *Od.* 9.2–11 justify its inclusion in this discussion, as does the

<sup>53</sup> Graziosi (2013); also Richardson (1990) 181; de Jong (1987).

<sup>54</sup> Translation adapted from Gerber (1999) 113.

<sup>55</sup> See Noussia-Fantuzzi (2010) 229.

<sup>56</sup> See n. 30 above for scholarship on the larger question of the relationship between elegy and Homer.



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striking way this handful of lines presents many of the paradigmatic items of vocabulary and concerns of elegiac poetry.<sup>57</sup> As Odysseus establishes links between *euphrosynē* (*Od.* 9.6), the *dēmos* (*Od.* 9.6), and the orderliness of the banqueters (*hēmēnoi hekseiēs*, *Od.* 9.8), so Solon's poem links these elements in their absence from the disorderly city (cf. ll. 9–10).<sup>58</sup> In both cases, the feast and feast-like setting of the symposium frame reflections on man's place in the world in respect to material abundance, good governance, society at large, and the question of justice more broadly.<sup>59</sup>

In this, the relationship between these portions of the *Odyssey* and Solon's 'Eunomia' (however we should understand it) provides a striking point of contrast with Parmenides. Too often, perhaps, we are in a hurry to pinpoint – or litigate – connections between passages of archaic poetry and Homer, rather than considering which specific portions of Homer may be connected to these passages – and, most importantly, why.

The similarities between Odysseus' observations at the well-laid table of Alcinous and its negative image in the perverted feasts of the suitors and the disorderly tables of Solon's city in turmoil are in every sense a world apart from Parmenides' poem. This also suggests an important contrast between Parmenides' poem and the genre of elegy of which Solon's is so fine a specimen. With the heroic feast and the institution of the symposium, we arrive at the heart of archaic sites of reflection on well-ordered forms of human society and right relations between men. Unlike epic, elegy takes place not in the distant past of heroes but in the time of men; a common topic is the history of the symposiasts' *polis*, and recounting this in the elite, aristocratic setting of the symposium consolidates a shared class identity by emphasizing the basis on which it is asserted.

<sup>57</sup> Slater (1981); Slater (1990); Murray (1983) 262–65; Ford (2002) 29–30; Hunter (2018) 112 and n. 47.

<sup>58</sup> On similarities between these two passages, see Ford (1999) 9–10; Ford (2002) 35–37; Irwin (2005) 126–32, esp. 126–28.

<sup>59</sup> See e.g. Jaeger (1966), 77–99, esp. 82–90. See also Adkins (1985) 114; Anhalt (1993) 74–78, 110–13; Mulke (2002) ad loc.; Irwin (2005), esp. 113–18; Noussia-Fantuzzi (2010) 226. For the relationship between sympotic and political orderliness more generally, see e.g. Bielohlawek (1940); West (1978) 56; Slater (1981) 205–15; Slater (1990), esp. 216–19; Murray (1983) 262–65; Schmitt-Pantel (1992); Ford (2002) 46–60, esp. 54–58; Hobden (2013); Gagné (2013), esp. 226–249.

One could hardly think of a topic or set of concerns more remote from Parmenides' sphere of interest. His poem is precisely *not* grounded in the time of men; unlike elegiac poetry, its theme has precisely *nothing* to with the common past of any specific class, or any particular *polis*, its history, foundation myths and common heroes, or collective identity.<sup>60</sup> In fact, a considerable portion of the proem's labours are dedicated to distinguishing the nature and context of the poem as emphatically as possible from the world of men in which the civically oriented poetry of the sympotic or 'historical' elegists is embedded. If the city is mentioned (Fr. 1.3), it is left behind immediately;<sup>61</sup> from the opening lines of the proem, the poem is located 'far from the beaten track of men' (ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἔκτος πάτου, Fr. 1.27). Similarly, if any question concerning man's fate arises in the proem, this is only for it to be dismissed quickly by the divinity into whose protective custody the *kouros* is taken (e.g. Fr. 1.26, where it is announced that no 'evil fate' [μοῖρα κακῆ] has brought the *kouros* this far). Similarly, Parmenides' poem is untouched by words of, for example, the semantic fields of *hybris* (cf. 'Eunomia' 8), *euphrosynē* (cf. 'Eunomia' 9), the *atē* family, *habrosynē*, or any of the other terms used so ubiquitously in elegy to invoke the just calibration of cause and effect, behaviour and consequence, action and outcome. Parmenides' grand but static Dike guards the entrance to the goddesses' transcendental Beyond, her agency restricted to the domain of guardswoman and gatekeeper (Fr. 1.14–17) – a far cry from the vast supervisory and regulatory power she is arrogated by Solon, for example.<sup>62</sup> Though the greeting between goddess and mortal is warm, we find no hint of

<sup>60</sup> Also noted by Nightingale (2007) 191, who addresses a similar nexus of topics in classical philosophy in Nightingale (2004). In light of Parmenides' influence on Plato, and thus, at least indirectly, later thinkers, I consider the following paragraphs to have major implications for the later tradition that Nightingale (2004) examines; many aspects of the conceptual footprint of philosophic *theoria* that Plato develops would seem to be a very clear Parmenidean legacy.

<sup>61</sup> For the textual crux at Fr. 1.3, see e.g. Coxon (2009) [1986], Leshner (1994b), Cosgrove (2011), Palmer (2009) 376–78, where further discussion and bibliography can be found, also Ch. 5, n. 8 below.

<sup>62</sup> See Burkert (1969) 13, Furley (1973) 3 n. 10, and, with further bibliography, Bryan (2012) for the former, Nousia-Fantuzzi (2010) 148–49 and Gagné (2013) 238–49 (with good further bibliography) for the latter.

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feasting, the drinking of wine, or anything that hints at sympotic practice or culture.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, there can be no question of the right relations between man and his city, or even man and his fellow man, for it is precisely to leave behind the world of men that the proem marshals its resources. Considering the portions of the *Odyssey* that archaic poets found useful for articulating their perspectives (or at least resembled when they did so) dramatically underscores that, by contrast, the world of Parmenides' poem is a world specifically *devoid* of other men and their institutions, their division of wealth, responsibility in war, or the prerogatives of high status in the social order.

Equally telling is the portion of the *Odyssey* with which Parmenides does engage.<sup>64</sup> This, too, can be found in the stories Odysseus embarks upon in his speech to Alcinous: the first half of *Odyssey* 12, at just the moment when Odysseus finally prepares to depart from Circe's never-never island paradise (to be discussed below in Chapter 4). As scholars have pointed out, this episode in many respects represents a climax of the fairy-tale ambience of the *Apologoi*, the Elsewhere *par excellence* against which the *Odyssey* articulates its conception of normal human relationships.<sup>65</sup> Arguably, no portion of Homer stands more aloof from the *polis* and its metonyms than this divine fantasy.

The inverse point can also be made. Though we are very largely dependent here on what the trash heaps of Egypt disgorge, the evidence we do have suggests that the Circe episode does not seem to have been tremendously popular in the archaic era.<sup>66</sup> Nor does the existing inventory of pottery (again, a regrettably fragmentary source of evidence) suggest that artists working in other media were more enthusiastic. This, too, is instructive. It is not difficult to discern why this passage should have held such little allure for elegiac poets at the same time as Parmenides found it so attractive, just as the reverse is true for *Od.* 9.2–11.

<sup>63</sup> See Ch. 5 n. 35 below for the significance of the hand gesture, which echoes an interaction between divinities and a mortal, not mortals and mortal, in Homer.

<sup>64</sup> See chs. 5 and 6 below for an extended discussion of the similarities between Parmenides' poem and *Odyssey* 12.

<sup>65</sup> E.g. Most (1989), Hartog (1996), Montiglio (2005).

<sup>66</sup> Of course, we must be wary here of the 'what you see is what there is' fallacy discussed by Kelly (2015).

A similar set of points can also be made about Parmenides' engagement with Hesiod.<sup>67</sup> Scholars of elegiac poetry have a long history of examining the importance of Hesiod for elegiac poets.<sup>68</sup> As the 'Golden Verses' of the *Odyssey* and other scenes from the world of mortals, such as Odysseus' interactions with the wicked suitors, provided an appealing intertextual opportunity to reflect on the social order and the nature of justice human and divine, so it is Hesiod's *Works and Days* that accounts for the lion's share of archaic elegy's engagements with Hesiod.

The Hesiod we find in Parmenides, however, is not the stern moralist of the *Works and Days* but the Muse-sponsored conduit of facts about the cosmos we find in the *Theogony*.<sup>69</sup> In the proem especially, scholars have observed a number of striking intertextual links between Parmenides and Hesiod.<sup>70</sup> As has been much discussed, lines 1.11–20 of Parmenides' proem contain many points of contact with *Theogony* 736–66, where Hesiod describes the 'great bronze threshold' that leads to the Underworld.<sup>71</sup> The Hesiod that interests Parmenides, and whose words and images he reworks, is the Hesiod who sings the birth of gods and the structure of the cosmos, not the poet of well-tilled soil and the righteous hearth. What place could a discussion of an Iron Age, or a jeremiad lamenting its arrival, have in Parmenides' poem?

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Homerizing, then, was a widespread phenomenon in the time of Parmenides, but Parmenides' engagements with Homer are

<sup>67</sup> For Parmenides and Hesiod, see n. 8 above.

<sup>68</sup> In addition to such classics as Jaeger (1966), see more recently Koning (2010), Hunter (2014), and Stamatapoulou (2017).

<sup>69</sup> Jaeger (1948) 93: 'That we need consider only the *Theogony* as Parmenides' model, and need not concern ourselves with the *Works and Days*, is evident upon closer comparison.'

<sup>70</sup> See Section 2.4.2, 'Whose Muse', below.

<sup>71</sup> See esp. Pellikaan-Engel (1978) 6–10 (and 51–58 for further discussion) for a catalogue of similar passages in Parmenides' proem and Hesiod's *Theogony*, especially the passage discussed above. See also Morrison (1955) 59–60; Dolin (1962) 96; Schwabl (1963); Burkert (1969) 8, 11–13; Pfeiffer (1975) 52–56; Furlley (1973) 3–4; Tulli (2000); Miller (2006) 7–9; Robbiano (2006) 150–55; Most (2007) 80–84; Mourelatos (2008b) 15; Palmer (2009), esp. 54–55; Kraus (2013) 454; Ranzato (2015); Tor (2017) 254–56, 351–54.

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distinctive in ways that bring into sharp focus defining features of his poem. As we move now towards the larger stakes involved in Parmenides' relationship to Homer, it is important to put the foregoing discussion of the importance of *Iliad* 2 for late archaic moments in its broader social and intellectual context. Of central importance will be the question of what kind of claim to truth – and made by whom – would have been possible in Parmenides' time.

We discussed above the powerful currents of epistemological change, driven in part by thinkers such as Xenophanes, that swept through the mid- to late archaic world.<sup>72</sup> Into this world of changing knowledge entered a dizzying array of new men, each staking their claim to wisdom and the truth – statesman-sages, cosmologists, mythographers, physicians, as well as diviners, prophets, seers, and other clairvoyants claiming insight into the will of the gods.<sup>73</sup> Alongside these social and political developments, the more widespread advent of writing, as well as an increasingly pervasive process of the Panhellenization of myth, may well have resulted in the proliferation of incompatible versions of the same myths, whose differences, now being fixed in writing for comparison, were more conspicuous.<sup>74</sup> In short, Parmenides was born into a time of radical epistemological fomentation.

The various late archaic echoes of the Invocation of the Muses examined above provide a fascinating glimpse (albeit through the distinctive lens of poetry) into this changing conceptualization of knowledge by allowing us to trace the shifting contours of the relationship between poet and Muse. One way to tell the story of these shifting contours requires us to set matters against the backdrop of epic (or at least Homeric epic) as characterized by, and itself embodying, a maximalist conception of truth and

<sup>72</sup> See esp. R. Osborne (1997), also Lloyd (1979), esp. 257–59; Lloyd (1987); and works cited in n. 73 below.

<sup>73</sup> See, alongside Lloyd (1979) and Lloyd (1987) (and earlier classics such as Detienne (1996), Vernant (1982), and Vernant (2006g)), e.g. Kahn (2003); Dillery (2005); and, Granger (2007) 406–11. The point will also be discussed with reference to Xenophanes in Chapter 6 below.

<sup>74</sup> Scodel (2001), esp. 125. For a detailed study of this question in regard to Pindar, see West (2011a). As he concludes: 'Pindar acknowledges that these poetic sources have an authority that he cannot simply ignore but must re-evaluate by insight into the nature of the tradition' (p. 67). Scodel is responding in part to Nagy (1990b) 52–81. See also Finkelberg (1998) 166–67 and Thomas (1992) 115.

truthfulness. Scholars have developed this conception through a variety of rubrics, which include a ‘poetics of truth’, complemented in turn by a ‘rhetoric of traditionality’ (and, alongside this, a ‘rhetoric of universality’ and a ‘rhetoric of indifference’), grounded in part within a ‘semblance of fixity’ of epic language and its status as ‘special speech’, and the ‘traditional referentiality’ characteristic of bardic practice.<sup>75</sup>

According to the notion of a poetics of truth, the Muses are understood very literally to be eyewitnesses who have first-hand knowledge of the events to be narrated, and they convey these accurately, completely, and unproblematically to the bard via divine inspiration; he in turn acts as their mouthpiece, transmitting the information the Muses have witnessed first-hand directly through his song.<sup>76</sup> This poetics of truth is expressed through, and supported and complemented by, the rhetorical stances characteristic of Homeric epic listed above.<sup>77</sup> These stances have been discussed partly in terms of epic’s general reluctance to foreground the persona of the poet. If the poet’s persona is often introduced for the purpose of establishing a relationship with a specific audience, keeping the individual singer out of the picture allows epic to preserve a ‘notional equidistance from all audiences’;<sup>78</sup> by eliding their own presence, bards also emphasize that the song derives directly from the Muses. What is more, any new innovations to the story are added as subtly and discreetly as possible, and are even referred to as if they were already common

<sup>75</sup> For the ‘poetics of truth’, see Finkelberg (1998); for the rhetorics of traditionality, indifference, and universality, Scodel (2002); for the ‘semblance of fixity’, Kahane (1997) and Bakker (1997); for ‘special speech’ see Bakker (2005) 47–55 (who builds on Nagy (1990a)); for ‘traditional referentiality’, esp. Foley (1999).

<sup>76</sup> See esp. Finkelberg (1998) 68–73. (Put differently, ‘for Homer, everything in poetry is truth’: Finkelberg (1998) 73.) As she observes, the seriousness with which we should take idea that the Muses were conceived of as literal eyewitnesses is underscored by the way Hesiod and other theognists handled the issue of describing affairs that occurred before the Muses themselves were born (p. 72). See also e.g. Ford (1992) 80–82; Thomas (1992) 115; Pratt (1993); also discussed in Granger (2007), but with problems – see below.

<sup>77</sup> See esp. Scodel (2002) 65–89 and Scodel (2001) 109–12.

<sup>78</sup> Griffiths (1983) 44; Graziosi and Haubold (2009) 107. This also ensures that what the poet says can be trusted, since it has not been distorted by the pressures of tailoring the story told to this or that specific audience and its social demands (viz. it adheres to ‘a rhetorics of indifference’; see Scodel (2002) 65–89, esp. 70–73). See esp. Nagy (1990b) 52–81, esp. 68–69, for a discussion of this question in terms of rejecting the local and epichoric in favour of the Panhellenic.

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knowledge.<sup>79</sup> The effect is immeasurably heightened for being expressed in the special repertoire of epithets, patronymics, and other formulae that make epic ‘special speech’ and, along with type scenes, familiar tropes, and plot points that are encompassed by the notion of epic traditional referentiality.<sup>80</sup>

If parts of this argument draw heavily on the Invocation of the Muses in *Iliad* 2, this picture of the relationship between bard, Muse, and truth contrasts notably with the relationship to the Muses fashioned in the late archaic poems that, we have seen above, were indebted to this purple passage of the *Iliad*. Remarkably, in his ‘Ode to Polycrates’, Ibycus styles his Muses σεσοφισμέναι, ‘practical, technically skilled/clever’ (23).<sup>81</sup> Questions of truth (or falsity, for that matter) are conspicuously absent from this poem; what matters in the ‘Polycrates Ode’ is precisely that which the poet of the *Iliad* suggests is inferior to the Muses’ knowledge (cf. *Il.* 2.485–6): *kleos* – who gets it, who gives it, and how (46–48).<sup>82</sup> Simonides’ task in the ‘Plataea Elegy’, meanwhile, is not to transmit otherwise-unknowable information about the mythical past, but to transform the facts of a recent event into an account worthy of its magnitude.<sup>83</sup> Accordingly, the poet, who asks his Muse to serve as *epikouros*, a ‘(foreign) auxiliary’ (21), designates her share in the poetic labour as ‘preparing the charming adornment of our song’ (μελίφρονα κόσμον ἀοιδῆς | ἡμετέρης, 23–24).<sup>84</sup> Both poets allude to *Iliad* 2 to draw pointed contrasts that highlight the distinctiveness of their own themes, goals, and modes of expression from the Homeric predecessor whom they glorify at the same moment as they depart from him.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, on the reconstruction of the texts currently favoured, in

<sup>79</sup> Scodel (2001) 111–12. As Scodel (2002) 88 points out, this practice ‘could not be sustained if other versions were directly available for comparison’. See also Scodel (2017); Graziosi and Haubold (2009) 107–08.

<sup>80</sup> For the repertoires, see Kahane (1997), Bakker (1997); for special speech, see Bakker (2005); for traditional referentiality, see esp. Foley (1991) and Foley (1999).

<sup>81</sup> See esp. Woodbury (1985) 200–01, Goldhill (1991), Steiner (2005), Hardie (2013), Stamatopoulou (2017).

<sup>82</sup> For what is at stake in lines 46–48, see esp. Goldhill (1991) 117–19; for a different view, see Spelman (2018a).

<sup>83</sup> See Aloni (2001), esp. 95; Stehle (2001); Obbink (2001); Rutherford (2001b).

<sup>84</sup> For an intriguing comparison with Parmenides Fr. 8.53, see Rutherford (2001b) 46.

<sup>85</sup> See in this vein Barron (1969), Woodbury (1985), and Steiner (2005).

*Paean* 6 and especially 7b, engagement with Homer becomes a site for Pindar to radically refashion his poetic persona.<sup>86</sup> The Invocation of the Muses in *Iliad* 2 seems to have offered later poets a powerful site for expressing claims about their social function and status as poets, articulating their aesthetic and epistemological positions, and crafting their own poetic identities.

This perspective accords with a popular view concerning Pindar's epinicians. As in the case of praising a living patron, or valorizing in song a recent battle of great importance, celebrating a victor and his recent victory would seem to require no recourse to an apparatus of truth-telling – the fact of the victory is self-evident, the accuracy of what is being reported for celebration hardly in question. Even when he recounts myths, however, nowhere in the large corpus of his surviving epinicians does Pindar claim recourse to the Muses to vouchsafe the veracity of the account he provides.<sup>87</sup> Rather, not dissimilar to what we have seen Ibycus and Simonides do, Pindar appeals to them on matters concerning the beauty and propriety of his songs.<sup>88</sup> The late archaic Muses of Ibycus, Simonides, and Pindar's epinicians cut rather a different set of figures from their epic sisters, more honey-voiced technicians or arbiters of propriety than guarantors of truth; their aegis bears the sign of poetic craft and social decorum, not epistemological absolutism.

<sup>86</sup> See esp. D'Alessio (1995) 178–81; 170; Rutherford (2001a) 248–49 (who bases his argument on content, not form); and, from a slightly different angle, Stamatoupolou (2017) 45–47. D'Alessio's interpretation of Pindar's relationship to Homer would take on an ironic cast in light of the relationship between Parmenides and Homer that I propose below. As I shall argue, Parmenides responds to an epistemological crisis, precipitated in part by those who reject Homer as an authoritative source of truth, by – among other things – returning to Homer's epic hexameters, his use of mythical narrative (including specific Homeric dramatic scenarios), and his close relationship to the omniscient Muse(s); on D'Alessio's view ((1992) 369–73; (1995) 178–180), it is precisely Homer's verses that Pindar rejects. Parmenides is 'far from the beaten track of men' in that he rejects the answers offered by e.g. his Milesian predecessors, or perhaps Xenophanes, and partly due to his conservatively rebellious return to Homer; the 'beaten path' Pindar travels far from, by contrast, would be none other than Homer's own. This also highlights the importance of genre and the traditions in which each poet works; the trope by which one poet-thinker cloaks his return to Homer can just as easily be the trope another poet-thinker uses to reject him.

<sup>87</sup> Scodel (2001); nor, for that matter, does he appeal to them regarding any other matter involving truthfulness.

<sup>88</sup> Scodel (2001) 123–37, esp. 123–25 (she cites in particular *Ol.* 6.19–21; one could also look at *N.* 1–19). See also Pratt (1993) 123–28; Finkelberg (1998) 160–71.



## 2.3 Poetics and Epistemology

### 2.3.1 *Diachronic Change or Generic Difference?*

What does this imply for the epistemological milieu within which Parmenides would have been composing his verse? Answering this question depends in part on whether we see the differences between *Iliad* 2 and subsequent reworkings of it as the result of being products of different eras or of different genres.

The former case has found many advocates. It is easy to set the differences between Homer, and Ibycus, Simonides, and Pindar's epinicians against the backdrop of the enormous 'revolution in wisdom' that took place during the archaic period, largely as a result of, and in turn partly as a cause of, the many different features cited in the opening paragraphs of this chapter and this section, respectively.<sup>89</sup> Particularly pertinent would be the question of writing discussed above, whose effects we may already have observed in the discussion of Pindar's *Paeon* 6 and 7b.<sup>90</sup> Thus 'both Pindar and Hecataeus . . . faced with multiple and contradictory versions [of myths] . . . acknowledge the impossibility of believing everything the tradition has handed down . . . Pindar argues for his modifications, while Hecataeus expects the reader to share his understanding of what is likely'.<sup>91</sup> On this view, Pindar 'cannot use the Muse to support the truth of his claims, because poetry has already made claims that he wishes to reject'.<sup>92</sup> That is to say, in the world of late archaic poetry, '[t]he Muses do not bear witness or take an oath. The poet must stand by his own words.'<sup>93</sup>

Not long after Ruth Scodel, an expert on archaic poetry, concluded her study of Pindar's epinicians with the remarks quoted above, a more philosophically oriented scholar could cite the paeans of the same poet to argue for quite a different story of epistemological change in the mid- to late archaic period; thus Herbert Granger claims that 'Pindar never gives up his reliance on

<sup>89</sup> See nn. 2–5, 72–73 above.

<sup>90</sup> See esp. n. 74 above.

<sup>91</sup> Scodel (2001) 136. See also West's study 'Pindar as a Man of Letters' in West (2011a) 66.

<sup>92</sup> Scodel (2001) 125. See also Most (1985) 176–77; Pratt (1993) 123–28; Finkelberg (1998) 170; and West (2011a).

<sup>93</sup> Scodel (2001) 124; the same holds true for other ostensibly truth-seeking and truth-recording endeavours, such as those undertaken by Hecataeus.

the Muses for truths that are difficult to get at'.<sup>94</sup> The incompleteness of our evidence does not allow us to determine whether we should best understand a possible contrast between the Muse of Pindar's epinicians and those of his paeans as a negative statement about the nature of the epinician – that, like the Muse of elegy,<sup>95</sup> the epinician Muse is not there to be a conduit of truth – or a positive statement about the (Pindaric) paean, or perhaps both. With respect to *Paeon* 6 and 7b, at any rate, it is hard to imagine that the holy nature of the performance setting and the poetic genre are not important. The speaker of *Paeon* 6 begins by appealing, by Zeus, to 'Golden Pytho, famed for seers' (1–2), to welcome him, 'a *prophatas* of the Pierians, famed in song' (5–6) in the sacred time (5) of the Delphic *theoxenia* (cf. lines 60–61);<sup>96</sup> this is not the occasion to entertain questions of fictionality, or lying Muses, or anything but the most sombre, most ardent commitment to the truth.<sup>97</sup> One can see why an allusion to the most epistemically aspirational portion of all epic would be valuable.

Even so, the dynamic described by Scodel does not seem to be ameliorated. In fact, the contrary seems to be true – local legends surrounding the origins of the festival apparently create a conflict with the cyclic (i.e. 'Homeric') account, and it is precisely this which appears to precipitate Pindar's appeal to the Muses in the first place<sup>98</sup> – one needs to undertake major strategic manoeuvres if one is to convince the audience to trust an account that contravenes Homer's. Even in this unusually sacred context, however, the best one can do is be persuaded by the Muses and, having been persuaded, persuade other men who, for their part, display (or

<sup>94</sup> Granger (2007) 410; he cites the two paeans discussed above and a non-epinician fragment (Fr. 150 Maehler, also Bacchyl. Fr. 9.1–6).

<sup>95</sup> See discussions in Finkelberg (1998) 160–71; Pratt (1993) 123–28; Ford (2002); Halliwell (2011).

<sup>96</sup> On the Delphic *theoxenia*, a Panhellenic festival for Apollo (cf. lines 60–62) see e.g. Rutherford (2001a) 310–11; Kurke (2005) 97–101, esp. 97 with footnotes.

<sup>97</sup> One could extend the argument to the genre of paeans generally. What little consensus there is suggests that this is an important expression on behalf of society at large; see the slew of excellent studies on the topic since 1990, including Käppel (1992), esp. 13, 34, 62–66, 341–49; Schröder (1999), esp. 22–31; Rutherford (2001b), esp. 85–86, 183–185; Ford (2006). Useful, too, are these scholars' reviews of each other's work, including Rutherford (2001c) on Schröder, and Käppel (2002) on Rutherford; see also D'Alessio (1994) and D'Alessio (2000).

<sup>98</sup> Rutherford (2001a), Kurke (2005); see n. 37 above.

### 2.3 Poetics and Epistemology

prove?) their wisdom by being persuaded in turn. A similar dynamic appears to be in play in *Paeon* 7b. There, the best the speaker can hope for from the Muses is a ‘resource’ or ‘facility’ to ‘seek the deep path of wisdom’ (18–20) – a far cry from the direct transmission of knowledge depicted in *Iliad* 2. The stakes of the matter are brought to the fore clearly in line 42: before introducing two alternative stories concerning the origins of Delos that are hard to reconcile, the speaker of the poem<sup>99</sup> asks: τί πείσομαι[ι]; (‘what will I believe?’).<sup>100</sup> In the end, invoking the Muses cannot resolve the problem of impossibly accreted accounts (some of them in the authoritative name of Homer) or of incompatibilities between local and Panhellenic traditions; all it can do, especially when bolstered by the holiness of time, place, and rite, is endow with a special gravitas the ethical criteria or political motivations that have shaped the poet’s account.<sup>101</sup> On this view, that is, the Muses are a strategy for coping with poetic belatedness and the narrative overdetermination that would be one of its primary symptoms; and, as the question at *Paeon* 7b.42 emphasizes – ‘what will I believe?’ – it is a strategy with clear limits.

If anything, then, the examples of *Paeans* 6 and 7b seem to reveal precisely the limitations of the poet’s recourse to the Muses as guarantors of truth, even in a setting where getting the story right would be a matter of the utmost significance. Even in a poetic genre of direct appeal to a divinity at that divinity’s holy festival, truth is not transmitted directly from the all-knowing Muse but, rather, in the face of multiple and contradictory accounts and with no means to discover it (βροτοῖσιν δ’ ἀμάχανο[ν εὐ]ρέμεν), wise men must be persuaded, that they may in turn persuade others. Whatever μᾶχονία (*Paeon* 7b.18, cf. *Paeon* 6.53) one manages to

<sup>99</sup> Following D’Alessio (1992) 371–72 and Rutherford (2001a) 250–51.

<sup>100</sup> One alternative, involving an attempted rape by Zeus, the speaker quickly deems incredible (ἄπιστά μ[ο]ι, line 45); other details gesturing to another story – one that stands at odds with key portions of the *Hymn to Apollo* – are then asserted, some of them, it would seem, simply on the poet’s own authority. See Rutherford (1988) 68–70 and Rutherford (2001a) 250–52 for analysis of Pindar’s accounts *vis-à-vis* the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*. Just how difficult it is to reconcile the different versions presented by Pindar and the *Hymn to Apollo* is up for debate; see e.g. Rutherford (2001a) 252 and n. 37 above (also pertinent for other matters in this paragraph).

<sup>101</sup> See e.g. Scodel (2001) 133.

get from the Muses, and however one understands this term,<sup>102</sup> the relationship between man and Muse is plainly far more mediated and circuitous than in *Iliad* 2.

More challenging to a strictly diachronic account, according to which a ‘poetics of truth’ was ‘superseded’ by a poetics of some other kind, may be the Homeric Hymns, and especially the *Hymn to Apollo*.<sup>103</sup> The dating of this poem is of course contested, though it is notable that three heavyweights of twentieth-century classical scholarship should converge on an account that would see portions of the *Hymn to Apollo* dated to Parmenides’ lifetime, or merely a handful of years before his birth.<sup>104</sup> As with Pindar’s *Paeon* 6 and Delphi, if one envisions a performance in 523/22 on Delos, are we really to expect that a poem dedicated to the god at a grand festival celebrating him on his own holy isle is best understood within the frame of a ‘poetics of fiction’? This is a doubtful proposition.<sup>105</sup> However clearly self-aware the poem is, and however cleverly the poet constructs, or fabricates, his own identity, in the end this is serious stuff; one can only assume its story was proposed, and intended to be received, as fact.<sup>106</sup>

By the same token, the dynamics of divine interaction and poetic identity in the Homeric Hymns differ fundamentally from

<sup>102</sup> D’Alessio (1995) 170–71 observes the relationship between the εὐμαχονία for which Pindar appeals to the Muses (*Pae.* 7b.16–17, cf. *Pae.* 6.53) and the condition of ἀμηχανία that plagues mortals in Parm. Fr. 6.5 – in both cases, mortals are afflicted by blindness (τυφλοί at Parm. Fr. 6.7; [τ]υφλο[ι] . . . φρένες at *Pae.* 7b.18) and struggle to find the correct *hodos*. See also Ranzato (2015) 128–29, 142 n. 56. Finally, some scholars reject that μαχονία has any epistemological valence; for Stamatopoulou (2017) 47, the term denotes poetic competence instead.

<sup>103</sup> See esp. Rutherford (2000), and also Halliwell (2011), ch. 2. Interestingly, the Homeric Hymns are not discussed by Finkelberg or her critics, such as Rutherford or Halliwell.

<sup>104</sup> Burkert (1979) 62; Burkert (2001) 110–12; Janko (1982) 112–13; West (2003) 9–12; West (2011b) 241. See also Aloni (1989) and Aloni (1998) 65–78. It is striking to see West and Janko so closely in agreement, though they disagree on which portion came first (notably, others, including Clay (1989), assert that the poem was composed all at once; see Chappell (2011) for further discussion). Burkert (1979) 42 points out that the Delian portion of the poem presupposes the construction of a temple to Apollo and Delos, which has been dated to 540–530.

<sup>105</sup> The more so if one accepts the view that the Homeric Hymns fill the gap between Hesiod’s *Theogony* and the age of heroes recounted in Homeric epic and that ‘[e]ach hymn describes an epoch-making moment in the mythic chronology of Olympus and, as such, inaugurates a new era in the divine and human cosmos’ (Clay (1989) 15). For a useful overview of scholarship on this topic, see Chappell (2011).

<sup>106</sup> See further e.g. Burkert (2001), West (2003), Chappell (2011), Spelman (2018b).

### 2.3 Poetics and Epistemology

those in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The Homeric Hymns begin with the speaker's 'I' and close with a farewell to the divinity in the second person, thus 'differentiat[ing] the hymn from epic recitation where the Muse is asked to sing and the speaker appears to submerge or meld his own voice with hers'.<sup>107</sup> A hymn's second-person parting salutation to the divinity hymned contrasts notably with the naming of the god in the third person in the standard opening of the hymns;<sup>108</sup> over the course of a hymn itself, that is to say, the gap between human and divine has been bridged, the bard having 'somehow precipitated an epiphany of the god' in and through the very act of singing.<sup>109</sup> Once again, attention to genre is critical. Where *Paean* 6 and the *Hymn to Apollo* both address the same god at a sacred festival hosted at one of his major hubs of worship, the dactylic hexameter of the hymn goes hand in hand with a far more immediate relationship not only to the divinity, but to truth; the epistemic complexity we find in *Paean* 6.50–58 and *Paean* 7b.15–20 only underscores the immediacy of access presumed – or indeed effected – by the hymn.<sup>110</sup> However epistemically constrained a late archaic composer of paeans or epinicians might have been, a poet roughly contemporary with Parmenides could nevertheless still claim the kind of access to divinity presupposed by a poetics of truth – but only in the specific parameters of the hexameter Homeric hymn.

There is one final consideration to take into account before moving on to Parmenides. If a diachronic story about a 'poetics of truth' giving way to a 'poetics of fiction' has come under fire on the grounds that (in certain genres) a 'poetics of truth' persisted into the late archaic era, so, too, critics have challenged this paradigm from the other direction. As Stephen Halliwell has

<sup>107</sup> Clay (2011b) 235.

<sup>108</sup> Calame (2005) 19–35, Clay (2011b) 235–36; see also Calame (2011) esp. 334–36, also Norden (1913) 168–76.

<sup>109</sup> Clay (2011b) 235. Put differently: 'if epic makes the heroic past present, the *Hymns* make the divine present' (Clay (2011b) 236).

<sup>110</sup> Finally, if the *Hymn to Apollo* we have was formed by merging two pre-existing poems, or by adding a second portion to an older hymn to Apollo, we would see one example of the epic rhetoric of traditionality in action; unlike Pindar, who highlights a number of different versions of the same myth, and then evaluates the veracity, or at least the merits, of each, the poet responsible for the *Hymn to Apollo* would have found an ingenious way of incorporating both into a single, true, whole.

argued, to the extent that we can discern a Homeric poetics, it contains more than just truth.<sup>111</sup> No doubt Halliwell is correct to insist that even as far back as Homer we should see a more complicated dialectic between a ‘poetics of truth’ and an understanding of poetry as ‘a powerfully transformative agency which carries hearers . . . outside of themselves’;<sup>112</sup> indeed his arguments on this score provide an important corrective to the view that the Homeric Muses are *only* there to guarantee the truth of the bard’s story. That is not to say, however, that they cannot do both. Acknowledging the power of the Homeric Muses to ‘transmut[e] even the extremes of human unhappiness into an experience of intense beauty worthy of immortal minds’ need not necessarily imply that the old position – that ‘Homeric epic predicates of itself a mode of truth-telling which amounts to a kind of historical veracity, the full and accurate relating of a heroic past in songs performed by human bards but informed by the divine knowledge of the Muses’ – is in fact ‘far less secure than it is often taken be’.<sup>113</sup> This is a point we shall take up in the next section.

#### 2.4 Parmenidean Strategies: A Culmination

We are now in a position to tie the three threads of the above sections together. As we saw in Section 2.1, in Hesiod’s epistemic framework, truth (because divinely disclosed) can come only as the result of an epistemically significant interaction with the divine; but, owing to the nature of their own limitations, mortals cannot be certain of the truth-value of the information they receive from this divinity. Xenophanes then flatly denies the possibility of any unmediated disclosure from divinity, and forcefully underscores the inability of mortals to know the truth, as opposed to merely believing the claims at which they arrive in the course of their inquiries. Meeting the challenge set down by Xenophanes thus involves, first, effecting an encounter with a Muse-like divinity, that she may disclose truth, and, second, finding a way to

<sup>111</sup> Halliwell (2011) esp. 36–81.

<sup>112</sup> Halliwell (2011) vi and 67, respectively.

<sup>113</sup> Halliwell (2011) 67 and 54, respectively.

abolish any doubt as to whether what has been disclosed actually is the truth.

What resources would Parmenides have had at his disposal to meet these two challenges? In Section 2.3 ('Poetics and Epistemology') we examined the possibility that there was a bardic ideal that, couched in rhetorics of traditionality, universality, and indifference, operated according to a poetics of truth. What might this have meant in Parmenides' time? We saw that Halliwell seemed to question whether there was any such ideal at all. Whether critics today accept this is an open question – but, crucially, that is a separate matter from whether late archaic poets and thinkers would have done so. In essaying an answer to this second question, one may observe that the analyses of Halliwell and Finkelberg suggest that much of one's view of Homeric poetics depends on how much prominence one gives the Invocation of the Muses in *Iliad* 2, which provides the strongest evidence for the position Halliwell finds less secure than is assumed. Though she examines a number of episodes with meta-poetic significance, Finkelberg (as is not uncommon in modern discussions of Homeric poetics)<sup>114</sup> invests *Il.* 2.484–93 with programmatic significance, citing it in full at two pivotal moments in her argument.<sup>115</sup> Halliwell, by contrast, begins his analysis with the opening lines of the *Iliad*, and relegates the Invocation of the Muses in *Iliad* 2 to a footnote.<sup>116</sup>

The claim need not be that one position is correct and the other mistaken with respect to Homeric poetics itself. Rather, what matters, I suggest, appears to be which of the Homeric invocations

<sup>114</sup> The pattern is hardly limited to fellow travellers: see e.g. Ledbetter (2003), who gives the Greek and the English in full twice (pp. 17, 21) and translates the English again at p. 47; likewise Pratt (1993) 47–52. Clay (2011a), who begins her discussion of Homeric poetics by quoting *Il.* 2.484–93 in full, observes that this is the *locus classicus* 'from which every discussion of Homeric poetics takes its start' (16); see, since then, Graziosi (2013) 71–72, and earlier classics such as Nagy (1979) 16, Ford (1992) 60–62, Scodel (2001) 109, and Scodel (2002) 71–72.

<sup>115</sup> Finkelberg (1998) 48, and esp. 71, where *Il.* 2.484–93 provides the foundation for her discussion of Homeric poetics in the crucial third chapter of her book.

<sup>116</sup> Halliwell (2011) 58, and see 61 n. 49 for the sole discussion of *Iliad* 2's Invocation of the Muses in its own right; it is downgraded on Halliwell's telling to one of five 'localized' 'invocations ... tied to particular narrative details' (p. 61). See also 57 n. 39, a section on invocations in general.

to the Muses or other metapoetic moments one makes exemplary in forming one's opinion of Homeric poetics; make *Il.* 2.484–93 your programmatic example, and it is unsurprising if you end up with a poetics of truth (and perhaps it would even be surprising if you did not).

If this is so, there would seem to be important implications for assessing how late archaic poets viewed Homer. Here the discussion in Section 2.2 ('Archaic Receptions of Homer') can help provide us with an answer. The recurring interest in *Iliad* 2's Invocation of the Muses we have observed suggests that the answer to the question 'Is the "poetics of truth" position less secure than thought?' must, for the late archaic period, be at least a qualified 'no'. The qualifications are important. There may indeed be gaps between Homeric theory and practice,<sup>117</sup> and whether the original audiences of Homer deemed all the poetry they heard to be truthful is a separate question. As ever, the patchiness of the evidence we do have, both in terms of the scarcity of poems that remain, and of the fragmentary state of the papyri we are lucky enough to possess, means that any conclusions we reach about them must be tentative. This does not mean, however, that we cannot make good use of the evidence we have. And what we appear to find, particularly in Ibycus' 'Polycrates Ode' and Simonides' 'Plataea Elegy', suggests that these archaic poets did in fact attribute a poetics of truth to Homer, even if – or perhaps precisely because – they wished to forge different generic and poetic paths. As Pindar's reworkings of *Iliad* 2 in his *Paeans* appear to indicate, however, the possibility of realizing this ideal in full in one's own poetry was by this time severely constrained, if not entirely foreclosed. Finally, we have seen that roughly contemporary with Parmenides were at least a few poets who maintained an implicit belief in the power of poetry to effect a more direct, less mediated relationship with the divine: the poets behind the Homeric Hymns, composed in a version of the dactylic hexameter *Kunstsprache*.

<sup>117</sup> Finkelberg (1998) 131–50. See also Rutherford (2000) and Halliwell (2011) 57 n. 40; for bardic practice and bardic self-presentation, see e.g. Ford (1992) 90–130.



## 2.4 Parmenidean Strategies: A Culmination

With this evidence in mind, here is the view of Parmenides' task that I propose. Parmenides, product of the late archaic era, inherited an epistemological framework articulated by Hesiod and further developed by Xenophanes. Alongside this Hesiodic framework there was also an ideal, however inaccessible by this date, of a bardic poetics of truth. Constrained by the Hesiodic-Xenophanean framework but with the resources of the second tradition at his disposal, Parmenides' aim was to reinstall (or even, perhaps, properly to install for the first time) a maximalist epistemological position and stake a credible claim to an iron-clad epic poetics of truth.<sup>118</sup>

### 2.4.1 *Contact with the Divine: Reinstalling the Muse*

Parmenides' proem represents a multipronged strategy designed to fulfil this aim.<sup>119</sup> The first task is to reinitiate contact with the divine, in order that an epistemically significant interaction with this divinity might occur. Hesiod's Muses descended to earth to ambush Hesiod on his own turf. Perhaps this was the first sign of trouble for the poetics of truth – the divine truth-tellers lower themselves to the domain of mortals, 'mere bellies' though they are (cf. *Th.* 26). Not so with Parmenides, who, as we have seen, works overtime to locate his encounter with the divine as far as possible from the world of men, 'far from the beaten track of men' (ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἐκτὸς πάτου ἐστίν, Fr. 1.27). The Homeric Hymns offered a strategy for making not the epic past but rather the divine present; through the hymn itself, the poet would effect an epiphany. But the hymns do so by summoning the gods into the world of men. Parmenides does one better: his proem does not appeal to the

<sup>118</sup> Less pressing would have been the challenges facing Pindar or even Hecataeus, that of being crowded out by competing and incompatible versions of myths, some of them already in Homer's name; rather, it is Xenophanean scepticism, and perhaps Ionian enantiomorphism, that would have provided his chief obstacles and targets. For enantiomorphism and adjacent concepts, see esp. Curd (1998b), also Mourelatos (1973), Mourelatos (1999), Miller (2006), and Tor (2017).

<sup>119</sup> Robbiano (2006) 62–74 makes good use of Genette's notion of a 'paratext' to characterize the proem. A paratext is 'a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*' where one deploys 'pragmatics and a strategy', a '*threshold*', a 'vestibule' or "'undefined zone" between the inside and the outside' (Genette (1997) 1–2; emphasis original). One could hardly find a more apt description of the proem's function.

divine to be present in the world of mortals, but transports the human *kouros* to the extraordinary world of the divine.<sup>120</sup> Scholars have debated whether the proem depicts a *katabasis* or an *anabasis*.<sup>121</sup> As usual with Parmenides, there are reasons to think that the ambiguities are intentional and beneficial.<sup>122</sup> One proposal that has gained favour recently sheds light on the essence of what the journey in the proem accomplishes; namely, that it is best understood as an *apobasis*: a journey that goes not necessarily ‘up nor down, but away from and beyond appearances and the world of the senses’.<sup>123</sup> The proem thus dramatizes a journey to an Elsewhere, a literally transcendental ‘Beyond’ that can serve as the right place for divine disclosure to occur.

#### 2.4.2 *Whose Muse?*

A journey to what kind of divinity? Scholars have long debated the identity of the goddess.<sup>124</sup> Again, one strongly suspects that Parmenides’ ambiguity is strategic.<sup>125</sup> *Functionally*, however, the goddess plays precisely the same role in Parmenides’ poem

<sup>120</sup> Also noted by Tor (2017) 313. For another discussion of Parmenides and the genre of the hymn – with some characteristically sharp insights – see Calame (2013).

<sup>121</sup> See Ch. 5 below, also Tor (2017) 347–59 for a systematic analysis of scholarship on the proem.

<sup>122</sup> See n. 125, also Section 2.4.5 below; for an example of this logic applied to the proem in a fruitful way, see e.g. Miller (2006).

<sup>123</sup> Cosgrove (2011) 38–39. Cosgrove (38 n. 65) attributes the term to Mourelatos, who first suggested a similar interpretation in print in 1970; he also cites approvingly Boeder’s conclusion that the goddess ‘empfängt ihn dem “Jenseits” zu allen Erscheinungen’ ((1962) 121). This view accords with what Tor (2017) 359, following Curd, styles the ‘we’re not in Kansas anymore’ view. Schofield (1987) 357 frames the matter well: ‘[t]he implicit question tackled in Fr. 1 is: “What puts someone in the position to raise and understand the goddess’s questions of Fr. 2?”’

<sup>124</sup> Some of the many possibilities include Night (e.g. Morrison (1955) 60, Palmer (2009) 58–59, Primavesi (2013); see also West (1983) 213–14, Ferrari (2007)); Persephone (e.g. Kingsley (1999) 92–100, Cerri (1995) and (2000) 107–10, Sassi (2018) 156–57); Mnemosyne (e.g. Pugliese Carratelli (1988) and Cassio (1996)); Dike (e.g. Deichgräber (1959) 6–7, Mansfeld (1964) 261–73, and Popper (1998c)); and Peitho (Mourelatos (2008b) 161). For a good discussion of earlier views, see Burkert (1969); see also Tor (2017) 355 n. 25.

<sup>125</sup> See e.g. Tarán (1965) 15–16, 31; Mourelatos (2008b) [1970]; Coxon (2009) 280–81; Floyd (1992) 255; Miller (2006); Tor (2017) 355 n. 25. If, as I shall discuss below, Parmenides’ situation requires him to mobilize as fully as possible the resources of myth, religious ritual, and extended deductive argument, why close doors to any powerful registers of meaning-making and cultural practices that could be of service in this great struggle to announce truth? See also pp. 109–110, 241–47 below.

## 2.4 Parmenidean Strategies: A Culmination

as the Muses do for the poet. That Parmenides' goddess plays a role functionally similar to an epic Muse is not a new idea.<sup>126</sup> But, in contrast to most earlier forms of this claim, I think we should see Parmenides' goddess as much closer in kin, not to Hesiod's cunning Heliconides, but rather, in light of the above discussion, to the Homeric underwriters of an absolute and incontestable epistemological guarantee to a mortal who would otherwise be constrained by crippling epistemic limitations.<sup>127</sup>

Consider the following comparison. Scholars have from time to time remarked on the similarities between *Th.* 27–28 and Parmenides' Fragment 1.29–30.<sup>128</sup> Immediately preceding Fr. 1.29–30, the goddess has graciously received the *kouros*, and after a short preamble observing that the journey was ratified by Themis and Dike, informs him that 'it is right that you should learn all things' (χρεώ δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι, Fr. 1.28). This is elaborated to mean (Fr. 1.29–30):

ἡμὲν ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος<sup>129</sup> ἀτρεμές ἦτορ  
ἡδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, τῆς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθής.

Both the unshaken heart of well-rounded reality  
And the notions of mortals, in which there is no genuine trust.

The Hesiodic passage, which is indeed similar in important ways, is worth repeating (*Th.* 27–28):

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

We know how to compose many lies indistinguishable from  
things that are real,  
And we know, when we wish, to pronounce things that are true.

Finally, consider again the Invocation of the Muses in *Il.* 2.485–86:

<sup>126</sup> See esp. Jaeger (1948) 94; also Gigon (1945) 246–47, Fränkel (1973) 353, Dolin (1962), Guthrie (1965) 10, and Long (1985) 248.

<sup>127</sup> Nightingale (2007) 190, and Granger (2008), to be discussed at greater length below, are welcome exceptions to the tendency to focus solely on Hesiod's Muses at Homer's Muses' expense.

<sup>128</sup> Observed, though for a variety of purposes, by Gigon (1945) 246–47; Dolin (1962) 94; Schwabl (1963); Heitsch (1966) 201; Mourelatos (2008b) 33, 219; Pellikaan-Engel (1978) 6–7; Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (2007) 256 n. 1, 262; Wöhrle (1993) 172–73; Robbiano (2006) 41; Most (2007) 283–84; Tor (2017) 312–13; Guthrie (1965) 10.

<sup>129</sup> See e.g. Palmer (2009) 378–380 for discussion and e.g. Mourelatos (2008b) xxxiv for a counterpoint.

## Parmenides the Late Archaic Poet

ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαὶ ἔστε πάρεστε τε ἴστε τε πάντα,  
ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν.

For you are goddesses, and are present and know everything,  
While we hear only rumour, and know nothing.

Which of these earlier engagements with the epic Muses do Parmenides' lines more closely resemble? Tor's discussion is again instructive, though this time because it embodies the scholarly consensus on the answer to this question. In his discussion of these lines, he observes that 'like Hesiod, and unlike Homer who remains more in the background, Parmenides makes central the figure of the mortal agent who is identified with the poetic voice'.<sup>130</sup> But this is mistaken in two ways: Tor's dismissal of Homer is unjustified, and it is in fact Homer, and not Hesiod, who provides tighter parallels in several important respects.<sup>131</sup>

In fact, as the dichotomy ἡμεῖς.../ὑμεῖς...θεαὶ underscores, we find here precisely in *Il.* 2.485–86 what Tor goes on to claim is missing, on account of which he relegates Homer to the background: namely, 'a first-person encounter with an all-female divine apparatus'.<sup>132</sup> As has been suggested, one reason that *Iliad* 2's Invocation of the Muses proved such a focal point for the early reception of epic is precisely because it is one of the few places in Homer where the poet/narrator *does* identify himself in the first person and speaks directly in his own voice ('Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι Μοῦσαι, *Il.* 2.484);<sup>133</sup> and his addressee is none other than 'an all-female divine apparatus' (ὑμεῖς...θεαὶ). Placing Parmenides' Fr. 1.29–30 alongside *Il.* 2.484–86 shows that the case for relegating Homer to the background is not a strong one.

In fact, the reverse is true: not only should we not relegate Homer to the background, but proper consideration of all three

<sup>130</sup> Tor (2017) 312.

<sup>131</sup> It should be acknowledged that asserting a strong set of links between Hesiod and Parmenides is one of the core planks of Tor's thesis, and it is thus understandable that Hesiod should be the main point of bardic reference (as indeed Homer is in this book). It is nevertheless still wrong to relegate Homer to the background and ignore the closer connections between *Il.* 2.485–86 and *Od.* 12.27–141 and Parm. Fr. 1.29–30 and what follows.

<sup>132</sup> Tor (2017) 312.

<sup>133</sup> See e.g. de Jong (1987) 47–52; Richardson (1990) 181; Graziosi (2013).

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passages makes clear that we must rather place him even more squarely in the foreground than Hesiod. In *Il.* 2.485–86, we find a dichotomy between epistemic extremes (ἴστέ τε πάντα . . . οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν); these are mapped onto an ontological distinction between divine and (by implication) mortal (ὕμεις . . . θεαὶ ἔστε . . . ἡμεῖς). In Hesiod, the first dichotomy is transformed from an epistemological to a discursive statement (i.e. from knowledge of the truth to the accurate or specious communication of this knowledge); the distinction between gods and mortals, meanwhile, is no longer expressed.<sup>134</sup> In Parmenides, as in the Homeric Invocation of the Muse, we find the first dichotomy articulated in epistemic terms once again: the distinction is between true knowledge of reality (ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμές ἦτορ) and a lack, or defectiveness, of knowledge (δόξας, τῆς οὐκ ἐνὶ πίστις ἀληθείης). Likewise, as in *Il.* 2.485–86, this also coincides with, or is mapped onto, a distinction between divine and mortal; the inferior option is expressly linked to the human (βροτῶν δόξας, Fr. 1.30), while, as Tor himself persuasively shows, the epistemically superior option is intimately linked to the divine.<sup>135</sup> The only respect in which Parmenides' account more closely resembles Hesiod's is that it is his unnamed goddess that announces these dichotomies (χρεῶν δέ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι, Fr. 1.28), as do Hesiod's Muses (ἴδμεν ψεύδεα . . . λέγειν . . . ἴδμεν . . . ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι, *Th.* 27–28); in Homer, the narrator speaks in his own voice to appeal to the Muses for the transmission of information (Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι, *Il.* 2.484).

What we find, then, are unquestionable commonalities across all three passages that make it valuable to consider Parmenides' lines as being in dialogue with both his primary epic predecessors. All three passages establish an epistemically charged relationship between a mortal narrator, who speaks in the first person, and an epistemically privileged female divinity or divinities. Like *Th.* 26–28 (but not *Il.* 2.484–86), Parmenides' lines issue from the all-female divine apparatus. What Parmenides' Fr. 1.28–30 and

<sup>134</sup> Of course, the dichotomy between gods and mortals suffuses the general ambience of the opening passage of Hesiod (and may be implied by the derogatory comments of *Th.* 26), but it is not stated, and it is not a constitutive feature of the dichotomy articulated that Hesiod's Muses do articulate.

<sup>135</sup> Tor (2017).

*Il.* 2.484–86 have in common with each other (and not with *Th.* 26–28) is much more extensive, however: each (a) articulates a dichotomy between two epistemic extremes; (b) explicitly affiliates the epistemically inferior term with the mortal, and associates the epistemically superior term with the divine (expressly in the case of the *Iliad*, implicitly in Parmenides’ poem); and (c), grants the mortal, who speaks in the first person, apparently unproblematic access to the privileged divine knowledge of the female divinity/divinities in what follows.

There is in fact another passage of Homer that cements even more firmly the case for bringing Homer from the background to make it the primary intertext for Parmenides; since exploring its connections to Parmenides’ fragments 1.21–8.49 will form much of the remainder of this book, however, I shall only gesture to it here. Comparing Parmenides’ goddess to Hesiod’s Muses, Dolin observes: ‘[t]o replace the specific, well-defined Muses of Hesiod, Parmenides has created an abstract blend of the sun-daughters of Thrinacia and Circe’.<sup>136</sup> Swap ‘Homer’ for ‘Hesiod’ and emphasize Circe a bit more strongly, and the statement captures the scenario masterfully. One hardly needs the semantic acrobatics of the phrase ‘all-female divine apparatus’ to point out that in *Odyssey* 12, and especially lines 27–141, a single female divinity with privileged access to knowledge (Circe) provides an urgently important, true, and trustworthy account of reality to her male, mortal charge (Odysseus).<sup>137</sup> Moreover, as we have also seen above, Odysseus’ speech to Alcinous – and indeed the entire *Apologoi* as a whole, of which *Odyssey* 12 forms so memorable a part – appealed to poets and thinkers over millennia in part for the very reason that ‘the figure of the mortal agent is identified with the poetic voice’.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>136</sup> Dolin (1962) 96.

<sup>137</sup> See esp. Ch. 5, also Ch. 6 for a much deeper elaboration of the many linguistic, dramatic, conceptual, and discursive connections between the tissue of Parmenides’ fragments 1.21–32, 2, 6, 7, and 8.1–49 and *Od.* 12.27–141.

<sup>138</sup> Tor (2017) 312. Some have even gone so far as to suggest that the birth of historiography cannot be understood otherwise; see e.g. Marincola (2007) 35–37, 55–57 for the influence of *Odyssey* 9–12 on historiographers from Hecataeus onwards. See also Granger (2008) 10.

2.4.3 *Crossroads*

There is another major advantage to seeing Parmenides' goddess as resembling not Hesiod's cunning Heliconides but rather a brilliantly crafted fusion of Homer's trustworthy Muses and Circe. Recall point (iii) from Section 2.1 above, namely, that mortals have no way of knowing whether the accounts they get from the Muses are true or not. As *Th.* 27–28 makes clear (especially within the context of Hesiod's conception of man and god, and male and female), mortals cannot ever really know what information they receive from divinity is the truth, and what is merely lies. Reading Parmenides against Homer's Invocation of the Muses rather than *Th.* 27–28 reveals one of his most extraordinary strategies for addressing this issue. All three pairs of lines establish at least one fundamental dichotomy. The (mortal) speaker of the *Iliad* declares an essential distinction between absolute divine knowledge (ὕμεῖς . . . θεαί ἐστε, ἵστέ τε πάντα) and abject human ignorance (ἡμεῖς . . . οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν). Hesiod's Muses cruelly exploit this ignorance by taking the superior information they can offer (ἴδμεν . . . ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι) and a specious lookalike (ἴδμεν ψεύδεα . . . λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα) and mixing them up, polluting with lies like mud in the water of the Olympian spring the Muse-derived bardic poetics of truth. Here, however, Parmenides deploys an ingenious rhetorical stratagem: by rigorously filtering out the truthful distillate (in the 'Route to Truth'), its epistemic purity personally guaranteed by the divine, and leaving the epistemic sludge (*Doxa*) to stand on its own, Parmenides' Muse-like goddess sanitizes epic discourse once more.<sup>139</sup> She can begin her task of abrogating the Heliconian mischief of *Th.* 27–28 and undoing its epistemological damage by restoring the Olympian clarity of the interlinked dichotomies of *Il.* 2.485–86; these neatly differentiate between high and low epistemic positions and map them onto two separate ontological domains, the divine and the human, while giving the human

<sup>139</sup> And, as in Homeric invocation of the Muse, there is one line for the complete truth of the immortals and one for the low ignorance of men. Or as in the cave of the Nymphs, where there are two *hodoi*, one for the immortals, one for men (*Od.* 13.109–12); or as there are two gates for dreams, ivory for the deceptive, horn for the *etuma* (*Od.* 19.560–69).

(who is also the first-person narrator) otherwise-unobtainable access to the divine perspective.

In fact, this is only the first move of a multistep programme that Parmenides' (Homeric-) Muse-like goddess undertakes to smelt out the epistemic alloy Parmenides inherits from Hesiod's mischievous Muses and separate the pure ore of truth (ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος<sup>140</sup> ἀτρεμές ἦτορ) from doxastic slag (βροτῶν δόξας, τῆς οὐκ ἔνι πίστις ἀληθῆς). Unlike Hesiod's Muses, who simply tell Hesiod what they wish and leave it for him to decide what is true and what merely resembles the truth, when she provides the *kouros* her account of reality, Parmenides' goddess makes a point of ring-fencing trustworthy from untrustworthy discourse with a *cordon sanitaire* at Fragment 8.50–52 (cf. esp. Fr. 8.50: 'here I end my *pistis logos*'). What is more, she also has her master manoeuvre: the *hodos*. Or rather, *hodoi*: for she will distribute the two stuffs, one pure and trustworthy, the other bankrupt or mixed (depending on how one interprets their relationship to fragments 6 and 7, and their relationship in turn to *Doxa*) to two different paths, the one no longer able to contaminate the other or confuse mortals as to its status. As we shall explore at length in chapters 4 and 5, the image of the forked *hodos* offers Parmenides' goddess an extraordinary point of conceptual leverage to prise off the doxastic from the true.

#### 2.4.4 Narrators and Voices

As we saw, this analysis does, however, bring to the fore one important distinction between *Il.* 2.484–86 and what follows it, and Parmenides' Fragment 1.29–30 and what follows it. As in *Theogony* 27–28, the goddess(es) speak in her (or their) own voice, while in *Il.* 2.484 and following all we hear is the appeal of the first-person mortal narrator.<sup>141</sup> This only reaffirms the passage's resemblance to Homer, however – though not

<sup>140</sup> See Palmer (2009) 378–80 for discussion; see also e.g. Mourelatos (2008b) xxxiv for a counterpoint.

<sup>141</sup> The Muses are appealed to, but they register no expressly stated presence, be it in bodily or vocal form, in the text; see de Jong (1987), esp. 45–53; Richardson (1990) 181–82.



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necessarily with just *Iliad* 2. In the *Theogony*, all that we hear from the goddesses themselves is their taunt to the first-person narrator, who resumes in his own voice immediately after and in the remainder of what follows. Here again, Odysseus' conversation with Circe at *Od.* 12.27–141 provides a much better parallel.

Even more strikingly, we see yet another benefit of reading Parmenides' against the backdrop of *Odyssey* 12, a comparison that helps us see more clearly one of Parmenides' most dazzling manoeuvres for establishing the trustworthiness of his account, and banishing any uncertainty about its veracity. Πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί, Solon is said to have warned: 'the poets tell many lies' (25 G.-P. = 29 W<sup>2</sup>).<sup>142</sup> And even if a poet can somehow be trusted not to lie, the foregoing discussion of Pindar hints at another major problem. We saw above the great gulf between the direct transmission from Muses to man in *Il.* 2.484–93 and the relationship to the Muses that Pindar depicts in *Pae.* 6.50–58 and *Pae.* 7b.15–20. In a best-case scenario, epistemically speaking, Pindar was to be given *μαχανία* by the Muses (*Pae.* 7b.17, cf. *Pae.* 6.53), but not even this would prevent him from confronting fundamental *apor-iai* (cf. *Pae.* 7b.42–52) which he lacks the resources to surmount beyond what his own moral compass and sense of credibility can provide. The very asking of the question τί πείσομαι; (*Pae.* 7b.42) is deeply telling. Can one imagine the epic bard asking a similar question as he contemplates a dubious account of, say, the effects of Achilles' wrath on the Trojan War? Even were a poet's commitment not to lie were known to be absolute, how could an audience know that he or she, having to ask τί πείσομαι;, really had unmediated access to the truth?

The precise nature of this complex of problems becomes clear when one considers another moment in *Paeian* 6, where the speaker characterizes himself as a *προφάτας* of the Muse (*Pae.* 6.6), and, likewise, when he (or perhaps a character?) declares *μαντεύεο, Μοῖσα, προφατεύσω δ' ἐγώ* (Fr. 150 Maehler).<sup>143</sup> Both passages have provoked a number of

<sup>142</sup> See Noussia-Fantuzzi (2010) 393–98 for a survey of recent interpretations of the line.

<sup>143</sup> See discussion in Maehler (1975), Rutherford (2001a), Ledbetter (2003), and Maslov (2015) 197–200. As we saw above, Fr. 150 is also cited by Granger (2007) in support of his argument. See here also Bacchylides Fr. 9.1–6 (Maehler). How one translates the

interpretations, but even on the most epistemically optimistic reading of these fragmentary texts, such a relationship between poet and Muse would be of little use to someone trying to respond to the challenge set down by Xenophanes in his Fr. 18, which clearly includes a criticism of diviners.<sup>144</sup> This optimistic reading of *Pae.* 6.6 and Fr. 150 posits an analogy between, for example, the Delphic oracle and someone who interprets the meaning of the oracle, and the Muses and Pindar; just as the first ‘are never false . . . and only their interpretations may be true or false’, so the Muse never tells the poets anything false, but the poets sometimes misinterpret them.<sup>145</sup> But how does this guarantee the veracity of what poets say? This reading spares the poet from the accusation of lying, but that is not the same as saying he can always be relied upon to render the correct interpretation. More to the point, if Xenophanes rejects the possibility of precisely this kind of unerring interpretative trenchancy on the part of diviners, how could one hope to counter his critique by offering a model of access to the truth analogous to the very same one he questions?

By contrast, the more ‘humble’ reading of *Pae.* 6.6 and Fr. 150 has it that Pindar is merely the ‘spokesman’ or, quite literally, the mouthpiece of the Muses (viz. ‘one who speaks on behalf of others’) just as the ‘Delphic priests are the spokesman of the Pythia’.<sup>146</sup> Again, however, one must ask how such a relationship between poet and Muse could be of value to someone attempting to respond to Xenophanes’ scepticism. The problems come clearly into view in what remains of the body of the paean. As we saw, Pindar there contradicts the *Odyssey* in his own telling of the story of Neoptolemus; the implication is that the Pindaric speaker, not Homer, is the true ‘spokesman of the Muses’.<sup>147</sup> But what is to stop another poet from coming along

phrase depends in part on how one interprets the relationship in question; Race gives: ‘Give me an oracle, Muse, and I shall be your prophet’, Maslov (2015) 197: ‘Muse, be a seer, and I will be a *prophatas* (“prophet/promulgator”).’

<sup>144</sup> Tor (2017) 104–30, esp. 104–16, for discussions of divination in the time of Xenophanes; Dillery (2005) and Flower (2008) provide an important backdrop here.

<sup>145</sup> Granger (2007) 410, with full argument at 409–11; cf. Pl. *Ap.* 21b.

<sup>146</sup> Maslov (2015) 201, more generally 197–201. Note that this sense of ‘mouthpiece’ is thus very different from e.g. Finkelberg’s discussion of Homer’s Muses.

<sup>147</sup> See Maslov (2015), n. 37 above.

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in the future and playing the same game with Pindar's *Paeon* 6? And how does one know which mortal poet is the true spokesman of the Muses, and which merely a Homeric pretender? If Parmenides' goal is to eradicate completely any confusion, uncertainty, or ambiguity surrounding the epistemic status of his message, being a Pindaric προφάτας of the Muse will not suffice, then, no matter how one interprets the phrase. We are no further than we were in Section 2.3.

Whether Pindar is to be understood as the interpreter of the Muse or her mouthpiece, Parmenides can go one better. His Muse needs no προφάτας: she speaks for herself, directly. We see here what is perhaps the most important upshot of Parmenides' engagement with a portion of the *Apologoi* (viz. *Od.* 12.27–141), the one extended portion of epic narrated in the first person, which thus sits somewhere between the style of character speech and narration, whose speaker occupies a role between 'storyteller and poet', speaker of *epos* and purveyor of *aidos*.<sup>148</sup> Choosing the portion of the *Odyssey* that is presented by a (mortal) internal narrator, Odysseus, who narrates at length his interactions with, *inter alios*, figures with special access to knowledge (such as the divinity Circe or the seer Tiresias), allows Parmenides' *kouros* to speak in the first-person 'I', as Odysseus does, while presenting his divinity in her own words, just as Circe and her epistemically privileged ilk are presented in the *Odyssey*. The result is hard truth presented in direct speech: Parmenides offers us *alētheia* straight from the source. A figure of privileged access to knowledge directly akin to the Muses speaks not through the poet as she might through an epic bard, in his voice and in his words: instead, the privileged source of knowledge is itself *directly quoted* by the speaker, and thus presented, immediately and unmediatedly, to the audience of the poem. The Muse no longer speaks through the mouth of the poet; rather, through an astonishing narratological sleight of hand, the Muse speaks for herself. By making Circe's speech to Odysseus in *Odyssey* 12 the key intertext that he reworks, that is, Parmenides goes beyond the epistemic status implicitly asserted for the

<sup>148</sup> The dichotomies are to be found in de Jong (1992), esp. the concluding remarks on p. 10, with reference to categories explored in the Griffin (1986), Beck (2005), and Bakker (2013).

remainder of the *Iliad* by the Invocation of the Muses. His Muse needs no mouthpiece to give voice to the truth.

#### 2.4.5 *Argument*

The goddess still has a final trump card to play, however. Her *coup de grâce*, an absolute guarantee rebutting Xenophanes and abolishing once and for all any uncertainty about the truth status of his claims, able to withstand the most gruelling and rigorous elenchus (as he puts it in Fr. 7.5) is an extended deductive argument, beginning from a point that all must accept.<sup>149</sup> As we shall see in the following chapters, she begins from a point that must be accepted (for who could reject it? cf. Parm. Fr. 2.7–8); moves on the rut road of argument (and who could swerve from it?); and ends at her fixed, final, ultimate, inevitable destination. Parmenides offers a better criterion for persuasion than the ethical canon of Pindar: iron-clad argument. We might be tempted to see here a Parmenidean version of the classic Homeric idea of ‘double motivation’.<sup>150</sup> On the one hand, the extended deductive argument is the proper complement of the unmediated divine disclosure that the *kouros* – and all of us, future listeners and readers – are party to. On the other, it comes straight from the mouth of the goddess, the very font of truth incarnate. Of late archaic poetry, Scodel wrote, ‘[t]he Muses do not bear witness or take an oath. The poet must stand by his own words’ (which could also be applied to early prose writers, like Hecataeus). In Parmenides’ poem, thanks to his spectacular mythifying (if not versifying) and his breathtaking narratological *pas de deux*, the poet does not need to bear witness or take an oath – the Muse stands by her own words. How could those words fail to persuade, beginning from a point all must accept and moving by way of extended deductive arguments to an inevitable conclusion (delineating, that is, the key outline of a demonstration)?

Incidentally, it bears emphasizing that the interpretation I have sketched out here is entirely compatible – or at least not *a priori*

<sup>149</sup> See Introduction, n. 12.

<sup>150</sup> See Dodds (1951) 1–18 and Lesky (1961).

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incompatible – with readings of Parmenides’ poem that focus on possible links with ritual or initiatory practices, language, or cults that may have been prevalent in Parmenides’ Elea.<sup>151</sup> Here we can benefit from Tor’s explosion of the dichotomy between reasoning and revelation,<sup>152</sup> and also from, for example, Ranzato’s use of Gernet’s notion of the ‘polysemy of myth’.<sup>153</sup> The benefit of these interpretative approaches becomes clear when comparing the conception of Parmenides’ goddess for which I advocate here with the views of, for example, Herbert Granger. As Granger puts it:

Parmenides is endeavoring to reshape the age-old practice of the appeal to a divine Muse into that which he takes to be the real value that lies behind the mythology of the Muse and of the whole tradition of divine revelation. The proem helps prepare us for the appreciation of the goddess as a persona who is symbolic of non-empirically based reason, and Parmenides is engaged in the demythologization of the Muse into a priori reason, the exercise of which yields truths without the aid of evidence provided by our perception.<sup>154</sup>

Some similarities with the arguments made here will be obvious; Parmenides’ goddess is indeed a rhetorical device with the full weight of Homeric authority behind her. But she need not *only* be this. We may therefore part ways with Granger on two fundamental points. First, in keeping with Ranzato, Miller, and others, we should embrace the notion of a Parmenidean poetic discourse that allows for the goddess to occupy more than one role in more than one network of mythical or ritual associations at the same time; this interpretative flexibility would exemplify one kind of major pay-off that comes from reading Parmenides’ poem as a poem. Second, liberated from the need to see a tension between the

<sup>151</sup> E.g. Kingsley (1999) and Kingsley (2003), Robbiano (2006), Gemelli Marciano (2008), Gemelli Marciano (2013), Ranzato (2015), Tor (2017), and earlier proposed or adumbrated by Burkert (1969), Feyerabend (1984), and Sassi (1988). Of course, to the extent that these readings, such as Gemelli Marciano (2013), are deemed to be incompatible with an account of Parmenides that emphasizes the role of extended deductive argumentation, there is indeed *ipso facto* an incompatibility, but this is imposed from the other side, as it were.

<sup>152</sup> Tor (2017), esp. 11–60, 338–46.

<sup>153</sup> Ranzato (2015), esp. 15–16; see Introduction, n. 28 for important predecessors.

<sup>154</sup> Granger (2008) 14; he then goes on to discuss this phenomenon in relation to the Invocation of the Muses in *Iliad* 2 (Granger (2008) 15); see, for similar dynamics, Laks (2013), who differentiates between ‘phenomena’ and ‘references’, and a process of rationalization (an analogue of Granger’s demythologization) in the transition from the first to the second.

goddess's divinely disclosing a revelatory truth *or* making an *a priori* extended deductive argument, we need not be compelled to claim that Parmenides demythologizes anything. Instead, rather than seeing him as stripping old symbols of their meaning, we should see in Parmenides a virtuoso myth-maker who marshals together meaning-making symbols from different discourses and, activating their individual powers at different points and in different ways, harnesses each of these within one supercharged but unified, coherent whole. Parmenides' goddess need not be reducible to any single 'real' value, but can have many different faces that she reveals at different times, or even at the same time depending on where one stands. So (if the historical Parmenides did indeed know the cults he is sometimes claimed to have known, or even if the discourse of his community was strongly affected by them) she can be like Demeter, Persephone, or Mnemosyne, depending on one's preferred ritual context;<sup>155</sup> so she can *also* be like a Homeric Muse guaranteeing the absolute truth of the poem; so she can *also*, as we will discuss in chapters 5 and 6, be like Circe in *Odyssey* 12; and, provided one can make the cases for historical legitimacy and poetic relevancy properly, so can she also, perhaps, be like other characters as well. Parmenides loses nothing on this view except his status as a proto-analytic philosopher, an Enlightenment voice crying out in the archaic wilderness. And what he gains is the power of the poet, a thinker and user of language who taps the power of linguistic polysemy and polyvalence, socially and religiously charged imagery, pre-existing poetic traditions and the cultural institutions of his time and channels them all to the same end.

#### 2.4.6 *Dactylic Hexameter*

Finally, we may also observe that the foregoing discussion also bears on Parmenides' use of verse. As noted above, one consequence of the overwhelming tendency of scholars to read Parmenides as a philosopher rather than a poet – or, to make

<sup>155</sup> See n. 124 above.

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a slightly different point, of the tendency of scholars of ancient philosophy, but not of ancient poetry, to read Parmenides – has been to make it peculiar, at best, and a ‘grievous scandal’, at worst, for him to have composed in verse.<sup>156</sup> It is here that we see clearly how placing Parmenides within a chronology that does not begin with the Milesians, and includes or abuts not only Xenophanes, Heraclitus, or Zeno, but also the likes of Ibycus, Simonides, Pindar, and the *Hymn to Apollo*, grants us access to a new face of the kaleidoscope of his poem.

What has relocating Parmenides in the context of late archaic poetry added to this topic? Three insights. First, we see even more clearly how inappropriate the Muse-less form of prose would have been for his endeavours.<sup>157</sup> If overcoming the obstacles established by Xenophanes was of major importance for Parmenides’ project, and if this in turn required effecting an encounter with the divine, what possible use could prose, the medium of the new men of Ionian empiricism, have been? From this perspective, it would have been no more appropriate for Parmenides to have written in prose, one might think, than for a modern-day logician to undertake a proof in sonnet form.

But, second, and on the one hand, relocating Parmenides in the context of late archaic poetry should also make his choice of dactylic hexameter seem even more radical than has usually been acknowledged. The critics who have denigrated Parmenides’ poetic abilities universally wish he had opted for prose instead. Rowett is right to suggest that verse was the default form for the elevated and authoritative kind of speech act undertaken by Parmenides.<sup>158</sup> However, as the discussion above has also made clear, if by the late archaic period verse was still the authoritative medium in which to convey important ideas of some length, the ‘special speech’ of *dactylic hexameter* does not seem to have been. As we touched on above in our discussion of *Od.* 9.2–11 and later elegiac congeners, elegy seems to have been far and away the preferred medium for examining or

<sup>156</sup> Most (1999a) 350. See discussion in the Introduction, esp. pp. 5–6.

<sup>157</sup> See n. 4 above.

<sup>158</sup> C. Osborne (1997). See also Cherniss (1951) 227; Long (1985) 246, 248–49; Most (1999a) esp. 343, 353–55; Robbiano (2006) esp. 42–45.

announcing vitally important truths during Parmenides' time.<sup>159</sup> It is true, as Sider points out, that Xenophanes, who wrote long compositions in elegy, 'reserves his more scientific and philosophic writings for hexameters'.<sup>160</sup> These are all extremely short, however; whereas his elegiac fragments 1 and 2 clock in at twenty-four and twenty-two lines, respectively, his longest surviving hexameter composition is four lines (Fr. 34), and it does not seem that this was part of a longer continuous treatise.<sup>161</sup> By Parmenides' time, the great boom in hexameter poetry represented not only by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* but also, *inter alia*, the Cyclic Epics, the *Hymn to Aphrodite* and the *Hymn to Demeter*, and other poems such as the *Catalogue of Women* and the *Shield of Heracles*, seems to have slowed to a trickle; this is often taken to go hand in hand with the development of new modes of poetic expression to treat the topics of epic myth, often while making liberal use of epic diction, such as Stesichorean choral lyric.<sup>162</sup> Those who did continue to use dactylic hexameter for compositions of more than just a few lines often seem to have been associated with special guilds of rhapsodes particularly comfortable dealing with the artificial language of epic.<sup>163</sup>

In short, we should entertain the possibility that the gap between the end of the oral hexameter tradition and Parmenides is a chasm more expansive than is often acknowledged; to speak the 'special speech' of epic was neither obvious, nor, I suggest, was it easily

<sup>159</sup> As Kahn (2003) 156 observes in his discussion of Xenophanes' use of verse, '[i]n the sixth century, elegiac verse was used for the pamphleteering function that was served by the funeral oration in Plato's day'; see also e.g. Sider (2006) and Gagné (2009) esp. 28–30.

<sup>160</sup> Sider (2006) 338–39. For reference, West (2015) 66 imagines the length of Mimnermus' elegiac *Smyrneis* and Simonides' elegies on the battles of Artemesium and Plataea to have been of 'considerable length', possibly running into the hundreds of lines; Stesichorus' *Geryoneis* is estimated to be 1,300 lines at a minimum (Finglass and Kelly (2015) 7).

<sup>161</sup> For the debate about whether his histories of the founding of Colophon and Elea are in elegiac or epic metre, see Lulli (2011) 42–46. The key question concerns the best interpretation of *epē* in Diogenes Laertius 9.20. The increasing scholarly interest in elegy has shifted opinion away from the older idea that Xenophanes composed in hexameter to the view the composed in elegiacs; see esp. Bowie (1986) 31–32.

<sup>162</sup> See esp. Burkert (2001), Kelly (2015) in relation to Stesichorus, Bowie (1986) in relation to elegy, and discussion in West (2015).

<sup>163</sup> For discussions of the shadowy guild of bards, such as the Homeridae, see Burkert (2001) 102–03; Cassio (2002). Such figures as Panyassis and Cheorilus, later to be elevated by Hellenistic scholars to the all-star club of epic poets including Homer and Hesiod, should also be taken into account; see here esp. Lulli (2011).



## 2.4 Parmenidean Strategies: A Culmination

accomplished in a socially or intellectually persuasive way. That a thinker should have used verse to express his urgently important ideas in the late archaic period should come as a surprise to no one; that he should have done so in dactylic hexameter – and at such length, and at this late moment in the archaic period – appears bold. Just as for Pindar it was apparently quite a radical act to depart from the authority of the ‘well-trodden track’ of Homer when it came to matters of poetic content, so for Parmenides – who, to the best of our knowledge, was not a member of any kind of rhapsodic guild or the like – to *return* to the authority of Homer’s dactylic hexameters in choosing the poetic form in which to compose a poem of more than 160 lines (and perhaps up to around 500 or 600 lines)<sup>164</sup> was also, so it would seem, quite radical.<sup>165</sup>

Third, and on the other hand, the foregoing discussion should also make dactylic hexameter seem even more desirable for Parmenides’ purposes in ways that extend beyond what the critics mentioned above have already proposed.<sup>166</sup> The discussion of

<sup>164</sup> The most recent edition of Parmenides’s poem includes 161 lines attributed to Parmenides; LM 3–4. Scholars have long imagined *Doxa* to be longer than *Alētheia*; according to Diels’s influential reconstruction, the seventy-eight surviving lines of *Alētheia* represent nine tenths of the whole section, while ‘according to a less certain appraisal, perhaps 1/10 of the *Doxa*’ is represented by the forty-four verses that survive (Diels (1897) 25–26). This adds up to thirty-two lines of the poem, roughly eighty-five lines for *Alētheia*, and ~400–450 for *Doxa*, or around 510–560 lines in total (or perhaps even substantially less: LM 4 reckon the poem’s total length to be 300–400 words). For a different view, see Kurfess (2016).

<sup>165</sup> While it would be an overstatement to compare this act to Pierre Menard’s twentieth-century edition of *Don Quixote* – the lengthy *Hymn to Hermes*, for example, is often dated to ~480 BCE (see e.g. West (2011b)) – it is not unhelpful to spend at least a bit of time examining it in such terms, especially when considering other arguments advanced to explain Parmenides’ use of verse. This is especially true for what we might dub an ‘anchoring innovation’ school who suggest, first, that the perplexities of radical new material are rendered more easily digestible by anchoring it in the familiar old garb of epic; and, second, that the new points thus stand out more clearly, the better to be brought to the audience’s attention for further examination; see here Pfeiffer (1975) 61; Wright (1997); Wöhrle (1993), esp. 173–74; Most (1999a) 355; Granger (2008) 14; and for anchoring innovation, Sluiter (2017). The effect of using dactylic hexameter to expound one’s physical or metaphysical theories will have been far less radical, of course, for anyone (Empedocles, for example) writing in the shadow of Parmenides.

<sup>166</sup> For strong arguments that dactylic hexameter is precisely what one would expect from a Parmenides who puts his message in the mouth of his goddess, see esp. Kahn (2003) 157; Most (1999a) 355; Mansfeld (1964) 273; Tarán (1977) 654; Tor (2017); also Reinhardt (1916) 301–02.

Ibycus, Simonides, Pindar's *Paeon* 6 and 7b, and the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* make clear how much the medium dactylic hexameter had to offer a thinker labouring to respond to Xenophanes' challenge. If in Simonides' day, the bard of the *Iliad* could be said to have 'received the whole truth [πᾶσαν ἀληθειῆν]' from the Muses, what could be more useful to Parmenides' purposes than to assimilate himself to that tradition and claim that same possibility for himself? If, for Ibycus, the Muses could 'embark upon' what 'no living mortal man could tell',<sup>167</sup> what could be more valuable for Parmenides than to reinitiate contact with their kind? Conversely, if the surest connection to the divine that even so grand and numinous a figure as Pindar could claim (and at the Delphic *theoxenia* no less!) is *μαχανία*, and if the most this amounts to is to be persuaded by the Muse (if one is wise) and to persuade other wise men in turn; or to have one's blindness eased (but how much?) as one seeks out the deep paths of wisdom, we see in the gulf between these positions and the scenario depicted in *Il.* 2.484–93 just how much Parmenides had to gain from earning access once again to the use of dactylic hexameter. The one genre that managed to maintain direct, immediate contact of a kind with the divine, the Homeric hymn, pointed to a strategy for reanimating the special speech of epic and reactivating the old rhetorics of traditionality, indifference, and universality *en route* to reclaiming a poetics of truth.

## 2.5 Conclusion

One of Parmenides' most urgent aims was to resurrect (or, depending on how much one wishes to concede to Halliwell's interpretation, properly to install for the first time) a poetics of truth. From the perspective of the late archaic era, at least, *Iliad* 2's Invocation of the Muses was seen to set out an ideal of epistemological absolutism. The deep ambiguities inscribed into the foundations

<sup>167</sup> For this translation of the problematic lines 24–26 of Ibycus' 'Polycrates Ode' and for a discussion of other alternatives, see n. 45 above.

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of Hesiod's epistemology (and indeed his entire conception of the cosmos and the place of mortals within it) both expose the tensions that may always have been inherent in the epic tradition of the bards (otherwise, why should a rhetoric of traditionality have been necessary in the first place?), and also articulate the framework that would define subsequent conceptions of epistemology. The other poets of Parmenides' late archaic era, whether they looked back on the ideal of *Iliad* 2 with nostalgia or playfully rejected it, seem both to have entertained this ideal and accepted that matters of truth and falsity were, in their time at least, more complex. A revanchist Parmenides set out to revitalize – or realize for the first time – an ideal that may or may not ever have been unambiguously in circulation. His Muse would speak the absolute truth – and, like Circe to Odysseus, she would do so directly, in her own voice.

In crafting a socially and intellectually compelling response to Xenophanes' challenge, Parmenides was faced with the task of speaking many languages, telling many stories, producing many texts at the same time. Reinstating a poetics of truth, invested with the extraordinary weight of the epic past and its canonical bard (who had received the whole truth from the violet-tressed Muses) was a task that only the most rarefied maker of myths – a poet in the etymological sense – could tackle. In Parmenides' poem and in his goddess, we can discern a new kind of 'double motivation' (double at the least): to dramatize an effective reunion with an all-knowing divinity, and in her own domain, her own proper and carefully guarded site of truth, that a poetics of truth might be (re)instated once and for all; and, to be absolutely certain, through the Doom-ful, Fate-ful, unyielding power of necessity, movement via the path of argument (no turns, no swerves, no other routes permitted) that no voyager on the 'Route to Truth' could fail to achieve anything short of full knowledge of the truth. The most elegant versifier to have plied hexameter fields Parmenides may not have been. But the foregoing analysis reveals a poet whose dexterous command of mythical and religious imagery can match even the most brilliant of his near contemporaries. In fact, the case

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presents perhaps the finest adjunct of all to the Muses's diadem<sup>168</sup> – not the clear-voiced, honey-tongued Muse of elegy or lyric, but the Muse who speaks an irrefutable truth in her own voice, directly to her audience.

<sup>168</sup> See Introduction, n. 27.