

OXFORD



THE AUTHOR'S VOICE

IN CLASSICAL & LATE ANTIQUITY

EDITED BY
ANNA MARMODORO & JONATHAN HILL

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AND LATE ANTIQUITY

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UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Foreword

From Greek wordsmiths' earliest surviving productions their progenitors have left traces of their identity in their works and thereby directed our perceptions—whether as audiences or readers—of their creative role. The trace may be a bare hint—the 'me' of the *Odyssey's* opening words: 'Tell me, Muse, of a man of many turns . . .'—or it may be the seemingly fuller, but not necessarily more informative, elegiac couplet of the mid-seventh-century poet Archilochus to which editor after editor is lured to award programmatic first place among his fragments: 'But I am a servant of the lord of war, Enyalios, and of the Muses: knowing their lovely gift . . .'. Declarations of authorial identity can seem straightforward—'This is the setting out of the investigation of Herodotus of Halicarnassus'—or they can be teasing and ludic, like the prologue of the late second-century CE Platonic philosopher Apuleius' racy novel *Metamorphoses* or (since Augustine) *The golden ass*, a prologue dissected by a Corpus Christi College, Oxford colloquium which gave rise to a volume like this, and revisited in this collection *con brio* by Tim Whitmarsh.

Like that volume on Apuleius' prologue (and like others on metaphor, on Philostratus, on Hellenistic and Roman Syria),¹ this exciting collection edited by Anna Marmodoro and Jonathan Hill was conceived and born in the Corpus Christi College Centre for the study of Greek and Roman antiquity. Many of its papers thus had their first airing in an eight-week Corpus classical seminar, others have been commissioned, one has been reprinted. The outcome is an array of ground-breaking discussions by a team that includes many of anglophone scholarship's most gifted interpreters of Greek and Latin literature, some exploring different modes of authorial voice and self-construction, others investigating claims to authorship as avenues to arrogation of authority. Mutually illuminating

¹ Kahane, A. and Laird, A. (eds) (2001). *A companion to the prologue to Apuleius' Metamorphoses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Boys-Stones, G. (ed.) (2003). *Metaphor, allegory, and the classical tradition: ancient thought and modern revisions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Kaizer, E. (ed.) (2008). *The variety of local religious life in the Near East in the Hellenistic and Roman periods*. Leiden: Brill; Bowie, E. and Elsner, J. (eds) (2009). *Philostratus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

concentration has rightly been given precedence over any attempt to cover every genre, an Icarian ambition bound to fail, not least in a single volume. Thus this is not the book in which to seek elucidation of the first-person in Pindar, a late twentieth-century battleground, or of wider issues of authorship and authority in Greek melic, elegiac, and iambic poetry, recently the subject of a lively conference organized in Yale by Egbert Bakker for the Network for archaic and classical Greek song, soon to be published by Brill. Nor has there been room for pondering the *personae* of Ovid and other heavily-mined Latin elegists, albeit these poets are paraded briefly in Irene Peirano's fascinating exploration of the different impacts of an authorial seal, *sphragis*, principally focussing on the Homeric hymn to Apollo, on Hesiod, and on Vergil. But the riches on offer give no cause for *mempsimoeria*.

The last chapter, 'Ars in their "I"s: authority and authorship in Graeco-Roman visual culture', is the only one to address claims to creative identity in the visual arts. As with Peirano's literary *sphragis*, here too Michael Squire's discussion shows how any attempt by a creator to attach his name to his creation opens up the easy possibility of another arrogating that name fictitiously. After a wide-ranging review of Hellenistic and early imperial privileging of a canon of painters and sculptors and its intersection with a signing habit, an intersection that arguably encouraged pseudonymity, Squire concludes with scrutiny of the 'Theodorean craftsmanship' of six of the early imperial *tabulae Iliacae*—not crafted, he argues, by a contemporary Theodorus, but asserting a claim to stand in the tradition of the famous sixth-century BCE Samian, a claim already documented in the recently published poems on statues by the third-century BCE epigrammatist Posidippus of Pella.

One such *tabula*, the circular *Shield of Achilles*, presents (as well as image and text of the shield in *Iliad* 18) a 'magic' pattern of letters, configured as an altar—the reader should start from an *alpha* in the middle, and whichever way (s)he proceeds will result in the same sequence of letters [Fig. 13.10]. In this volume too the chapters can be read in many different orders, because each has diverse links with its fellows. In what follows, therefore, I find no difficulty in grouping the chapters differently from the editors.

It would have been hard not to open the whole collection, and its first part 'Authors and their manifestations', with Barbara Graziosi's brilliant and fresh voyage of discovery through the landscape of the

anonymous *Iliad*-poet's signposts that direct us how we should understand and admire his near-divine knowledge and creativity. That voyage is well complemented by Peirano's chapter already mentioned, chosen to open the book's second part: 'Authors and authority'.

But if any genre dominates this collection it is epistolography, a genre which might seem paradigmatically to assert authorial identity. 'Real', fictitious, and pseudonymous letters, however, all play the epistolary game by different rules, as the probing interrogations of Rhiannon Ash, A. D. Morrison, and Mark Edwards amply demonstrate. Ash engages us with a close and subtle reading of Pliny's letters concerning the Neronian and Domitianic *delator* Aquilius Regulus, showing how he uses them to build up a picture of himself as an orator skilled in deploying almost all the Ciceronian categories of invective against a rival pleader who, despite his threatening profile, emerges as his inferior. Edwards uses the presence of fourth-century theology and conceptions of a Christian bishop's proper role to flush out later fabrications from the longer recension of the letters purporting to be by the early second-century Antiochene Ignatius. Morrison advances the bold suggestion that 'the whole genre of fictional letters'—among which he scrutinizes the ancient acceptance as authentic of those claiming to be by Plato, Xenophon, Solon, and Euripides—'was partly modelled on the Socratic literature which sprang up after the death of Socrates'.

A similar apparent blindness on the part of *prima facie* sophisticated ancient readers to a writer's creation of a fictional persona provokes Tim Whitmarsh's 'An I for an I', exploiting Augustine's identification of author Apuleius and narrator Lucius as a point of entry into a characteristically nuanced dissection of the ancient 'fictional autobiographer' (his preferred term) who teases us with the illusion that he is identical with his narrating actor.

Like epistles, satires constitute a genre where text might seem destined to mirror autobiography (as of course Horace asserts of Lucilius, *Satires* 2.1.32–4). Here Stephen Harrison teases out the ways that many other characters in Horace *Satires* 2 are in varying degrees assigned the poet's voice and *vita*. An analogous procedure, where characters can speak with the author's voice, is charted in Cicero's progressive theatricalization of his literary and philosophical dialogues by Sarah Culpepper Stroup.

This focus on the dialogic voice can take the volume's roaming reader in two directions—forward to the interpretation of Socrates' voice in Plato's dialogues by neo-Platonic philosophers, discussed by Michael Erler (he demonstrates how there they could have found Socratic authority for their doctrines); or back to the polyphony of fifth-century BCE Attic tragedy, the opening piece in Part 1 Section 2, 'The dialogic voice', where a magisterial duet of voices (those of William Allan and Adrian Kelly) launches a major and hard-hitting contribution to the ever-developing debate on the relation of Athens' unique art-form to its democratic *polis*-culture, insisting that the genre's plurality of voices was crucial to its success in that and in other cultures.

In the editors' arrangement this chapter follows immediately another bearing on both late fifth-century Athens and Ciceronian Rome: the diverse dividends of Caesar's choice of third-person narrative are delicately weighed by that wily old master, Christopher Pelling, as is their contribution to our comprehension of the authorial games being played by Xenophon in his third-person *Anabasis*. Later in the book, but usefully read alongside Pelling, the team's youngest author, Georgina Longley, persuasively explicates the repeatedly didactic persona with which Polybius confronts his readers.

No contributor, I am sure, would venture to claim his or her contribution as the last word. The terms of current debates have been refined, fresh formulations constructed, new and more nuanced angles offered. It will be surprising if there is any one of these chapters that does not stimulate further investigation in the same or even in a quite different field. But for the moment they present a set of provocative glimpses of state-of-the-art scholarship that would have pleased the College's cunning founder, Richard Fox, and would have convinced him he was right to have ensured that it had the first provision for the teaching of Greek in an English renaissance College foundation.

Ewen Bowie

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Introduction

Anna Marmodoro and Jonathan Hill

What significance does the voice, or projected persona, in which a text is written have for our understanding of the meaning of that text?

This is a question that has been central to modern literary analysis. But it is also a question that confronts any reader of ancient texts, which present a dizzying range of authorial voices—some overt and strident, some subtle, and some outright deceptive. Polybius and Pliny carefully construct explicit authorial identities intended to bolster their own authority or reliability, while Plato and Cicero mediate their distinctive philosophical voices through an array of characters. Caesar writes about himself as if in the voice of a third party, while Pseudo-Ignatius appropriates the identity of someone else altogether.

This book takes up the theme of *the persona of the author in antiquity*, and brings together thirteen original chapters on the subject. The period covered by the chapters ranges from the Homeric period to late antiquity, taking in both Latin and Greek authors, from different disciplines. The volume includes chapters on the authorial voice in *literature* (Allan and Kelly; Graziosi; Harrison; Morrison; Peirano; Stroup; Whitmarsh); *history* (Longley; Pelling); *epistolography* (Ash; Edwards); *philosophy* (Erler); and *history of art* (Squire), during the historical period under examination. They attempt to answer the following questions: what forms can the author's voice take in ancient texts? How do authors use different forms to convey their voices in different ways? And how do readers, interpreters, and later authors understand and manipulate the authority they perceive to reside in those voices? Most of the chapters consider particular authors or groups of texts, chosen because they raise these questions in especially compelling ways.

The volume is articulated into two parts. *The first part of the volume focusses on different forms of writing adopted by different ancient authors, and the different ways in which these forms are*

used to present and project an authorial voice. It is divided into three sections, each devoted to one form. The first section considers authors who write in the third person, describing events in the voice of a detached narrator; the second, authors who adopt a dialogic voice (or range of voices); and the third, authors who speak in (what appears to be) their own voice, using the first person. In each section, chapters focus on particular authors, considering the different uses to which these forms are put, and the different ways in which authors construct voices—or readers construct voices for the author.

The second part of the volume considers questions regarding authority and ascription in relation to authorial voice. In particular, it looks at how later readers—and authors of later texts—may understand the authority of a text's author or supposed author. It contains chapters on pseudepigraphy and fictional letters, as well as the use of texts as authorities in philosophical schools, and the ancient ascription of authorship to works of art. These very different topics are united by the common questions: what authority do authors and readers perceive to reside in the author of a text or artefact? And how do they manipulate that authority to their own ends?

The first half of the volume, focussing on different forms of writing adopted by different ancient authors, begins with narratives where the story is told by a narrator who plays no personal role in the action. Barbara Graziosi considers the poet's voice in the *Iliad* and shows how closely it is associated with the gods, a feature that helps explain many peculiarities of the narrative. She then shows how the poet's 'I' in the *Iliad* shapes third-person accounts of the poet Homer in the *Lives*. Christopher Pelling then looks at a very different kind of first- and third-person interaction: that where the narrator is in some sense identical with the protagonist of the narrative, but who chooses to use the third person. He compares Caesar and Xenophon's use of this technique to shed light on the ways in which Caesar not only creates a first-person 'Caesar' persona that is distinct from the third-person 'Caesar' who acts in the story, but uses a subtle and sophisticated interplay between these two personas to create extra impact in his work.

In the second part of the first half of the volume, we move to the *dialogue form*, where multiple voices speak. The characters may, or may not, include one who is identified with the author, explicitly or otherwise. But is the author's voice confined to those parts of the dialogue where he is explicitly presented as speaking? William Allan and Adrian Kelly argue that Athenian tragedy's use of multiple voices

enabled poets to reflect the concerns of large popular audiences, effectively constructing authorial voices that were deliberately ambiguous, offering something to everyone. Sarah Culpepper Stroup then considers Cicero's use of the dialogue form, focussing on his introductions, where he talks about the literary task of creating an authorial voice. We see that, over the course of his literary career, Cicero moved from presenting his dialogues as straightforward historical reports towards a more theatrical approach, where Cicero himself appears as a character participant, creating a more sophisticated authorial voice that shifts from outside to inside the discourse. Finally, Stephen Harrison considers the way in which Horace uses different characters who ostensibly differ from himself, but who present different aspects of the author's own character as also reflected in his first-person voice.

The third part of the first half of the volume deals with uses of the *first person*. In some ways, speaking in the 'I' form seems the most straightforward self-presentation an author can adopt. But in other ways it is anything but straightforward: does the author adopt a fictional persona when speaking in the first person? Is he or she trying to promote a self-image that is at odds with reality? Georgina Longley opens the section with an examination of Polybius' use of the first person to bolster his credentials as a historian, criticize his rivals, and add authority to his historical account. Next, Rhiannon Ash looks at the way Pliny the Younger constructs his authorial voice in his letters, particularly those concerning Regulus, where his normally amiable persona becomes harsh and hostile. She shows how, despite these changes, Pliny creates an overall consistent persona designed to convey a moralizing message. Finally, Tim Whitmarsh considers whether ancient readers had a concept of 'the narrator' as distinct from 'the author' at all. He argues that cases such as Augustine of Hippo's belief that *The golden ass* was a mendacious autobiography rather than a fictional novel indicate that they did not—but rather than impoverishing their reading of such works, this lack of a distinction between narrator and author allowed ancient authors of first-person works to play with their authorial voices in metaleptic ways not available to modern writers.

The second half of the volume builds upon the first by looking at ways in which *the author's identity* is perceived to carry *authority*, and what this means. A particular focus is how the identity of an author—and the corresponding authority—may be ascribed to a text

or artifact. For example, what happens when the real author of a text creates the impression that someone else is the author? What do such cases tell us about how authorship and authority are ascribed and manipulated?

Irene Peirano opens this section with a study of ancient authorial self-ascriptions, particularly *sphragides* or closing authorial statements in Roman poets. She argues that they operated symbolically by inviting readers to ascribe certain levels of authority to the text, but that their own status as part of that text meant that this authority was never absolute, but something that readers chose to ascribe for themselves. Andrew Morrison then considers authorial ascriptions in four pseudonymous letter-collections—those attributed to Plato, Xenophon, Solon, and Euripides—and shows that all of them display features which ostensibly support their authenticity alongside features which undermine it. He argues that these apparent inconsistencies suggest that the letter-collections were not necessarily intended to be taken as really authentic, but that differing reading contexts as time passed led to different ways in which readers understood their authorship.

‘Authority’ is often a religious concept, and in the next chapter Michael Erler looks at the way in which the authority of Socrates in Plato is connected to his presentation as a divinely sent being. He argues that the later neoplatonists retained the key elements of the religious dimension of Plato’s Socrates, so despite the absence of Socrates as a speaker in their works, the distinctive elements of his voice remain present. The voice of religious authority is also the concern of Mark Edwards in his examination of the letters spuriously attributed to Ignatius of Antioch, in which he shows that the author of these letters carefully modified the voice that he inherited from the genuine Ignatius to match what was expected from a fourth-century bishop.

The issue of pseudonymity resurfaces in Michael Squire’s chapter, which examines the hermeneutics of the signature in Greek and Roman visual culture with particular attention to the common practice of craftsmen working under the name of a more celebrated artist. Through a study of the Iliac tablets, he not only argues that they represent a form of pseudonymity in which the artist seeks to appropriate the name and authority of an archaic artist, but ends the volume where it began, in the world—now appropriated by much later artists—of Homeric epic.

Anna Marmodoro and Jonathan Hill

I

Authors and their manifestations

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I.1 The third person

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The poet in the *Iliad*

Barbara Graziosi

This chapter takes its cue from an observation Tim Whitmarsh makes in his contribution to this volume: that antiquity lacked a strong sense of ‘the narrator’ as distinct from ‘the author’.¹ This general observation helps to explain why ancient biographies of the poets were largely based on details contained within their works,² and simultaneously invites us to reconsider, for ourselves, the voice of the author within the ancient text. It is this particular invitation that I intend to take up in this chapter. I focus on a poem which may, at first sight, seem very badly suited to the kind of analysis I wish to pursue. The *Iliad* is often regarded—at times almost like a tragedy—as a window which looks directly onto the events and characters depicted. Arguably, however, the most prominent voice in the poem is that of the poet himself: it is by listening to him that the audience discerns the actions, the speeches, and everything else the *Iliad* contains.³ In the course of this chapter, I attempt to characterize the poet’s voice, and suggest that a better understanding of its tone and perspective helps to explain several distinctive features of Iliadic narrative, such as the relationship between the poet and the Muse, direct apostrophes, Zielinski’s so-called ‘law’, and the spatial coordinates of the poem. Many of these features have puzzled listeners and readers for over 2,500 years: the aim of this chapter is not to solve ancient *zētemata*, but rather to show how they are inextricably linked to the poet’s specific voice and vantage point.

¹ See p. 235, ‘An I for an I: reading fictional autobiography’.

² See Lefkowitz (1981) and, more specifically for Homer, Graziosi (2002).

³ For a similar claim about Virgil in the *Aeneid*, cf. Laird (2009). It is Andrew Laird’s article which, above all, inspired this contribution.

My plan to approach the *Iliad* as a delivery from the mouth of the poet immediately runs into two problems. The first is, as ever, the Homeric question: we do not know how or by whom the *Iliad* was actually composed. Many have argued that the poem evolved over several generations, and that no individual author should be credited with our text of the *Iliad*.⁴ That possibility does not, in my view, pose a problem for the argument I want to pursue here. However the *Iliad* was actually composed, the subject of this enquiry is the audience's perception of the poet as delivered by the poem: not 'the poet of the *Iliad*' then, but rather 'the poet in the *Iliad*'.⁵ My chapter thus contributes to a wider shift of focus from composition to reception in the field of Homeric studies.⁶ One way of posing the question at the heart of this chapter may be this: when Ion recited the *Iliad*, what did his audiences learn about the poet? There is good ancient evidence to suggest that the voice of the rhapsode and that of the poet blended in the ear of ancient audiences.⁷ I discuss some of that evidence at the end of this chapter but, for now, offer what I hope may be an uncontroversial starting point: even if there never was a single composer of the *Iliad* who recited his poem in front of one original audience (i.e. even if the notion of 'the original audience' of the *Iliad* is a scholarly abstraction), the poet's voice was heard through rhapsodic performances in several different cities and contexts. What interests me is that voice: modern distinctions between 'author' and 'narrator' may be used to identify that voice without getting distracted by the Homeric question, but I shall refer to 'the poet' throughout, in order to integrate ancient perspectives into my discussion.⁸

⁴ Nagy (1992: 28–31), for example, goes as far as urging scholars to avoid expressions in which 'Homer' is used as the name of an individual. Though he agrees that such usage corresponds to 'the spirit of conventional Greek references', he claims that the name Homer should not be 'overly personalized', since that usage would encourage incorrect assumptions about the composition of the *Iliad*; see also Nagy (1996).

⁵ Though different in title and approach, Edwards' *Homer: poet of the Iliad* (1987) offers many perceptive observations which are relevant to, and compatible with, the argument presented here. Goldhill's *The poet's voice* (1991), though similar in title, offers a rather different approach to the *Iliad*, based on contrasting and insoluble tensions concerning *philia* and other issues, rather than on the speaking voice of the poet within the poem.

⁶ See also Strauss Clay (2011: 14–15), who notes a similar shift.

⁷ See Burkert (1987), who discusses a specific case, and Nagy (2002), who makes a more general argument to that effect.

⁸ Narratological readings of the *Iliad* pioneered by de Jong (2004, first edition 1987) are very relevant to the approach outlined here, but the challenge now is to

The second problem is, I think, more interesting. The idea that the poet's perspective mediates the narrative in the *Iliad* runs against widespread perceptions of Homeric epic as objective and, indeed, impersonal. Snell famously argued that subjectivity was only invented after Homer: it was the lyric poets who discovered the subjective 'I'.⁹ Snell's views about lyric have been widely challenged, and indeed dismantled piece by piece,¹⁰ but his characterization of Homeric poetry as objective and impersonal still has wide currency today.¹¹ I want to tackle such characterization not by rejecting it, but rather by asking whether objectivity may not in itself be a distinctive feature of the poet's voice. As Don Fowler rightly points out, 'verbal description has to take a stand, however "objective" it attempts to be.'¹² At a fundamental level, a point of view is inscribed in any verbal act, because that is how language works. Accordingly, this chapter pays attention to linguistic features that situate the speaker and that have therefore long been of interest to Homeric audiences and readers: second-person addresses, verbal tenses, and deictic markers reveal to us the poet's voice.

DIVINE INSPIRATION

The *Iliad* starts with an order: 'Sing, goddess, the wrath of Achilles.' Like all second-person addresses, this opening establishes a specific relationship between the speaker and the addressee. The poet asks the

integrate modern narratology with ancient categories of analysis. The voice of the narrator or rather, as I call it, the 'poet in the *Iliad*', influenced ancient conceptions of the poet of the *Iliad*, as presented for example in the *Vita Homeri* (see p. 32). This note answers, I hope, the issues raised by Bär (2011).

⁹ Snell (1953).

¹⁰ For some good demolition work, see, for example, Capra (2009).

¹¹ Carson (1999: 4), for example, sets up a contrast between Stesichorus, whom she describes as a poet interested in capturing the surface of things as they appeared to him, and Homer: 'In the world of the Homeric epic . . . being is stable and particularity is set fast in tradition. When Homer mentions blood, blood is *black*. When women appear, women are *neat-ankled* or *glancing*. Poseidon always has *the blue eyebrows of Poseidon*. Gods' laughter is *unquenchable*. Human knees are *quick*. The sea is *unwearying*. Death is *bad*. Cowards' lives are *white*. Homer's epithets are a fixed diction with which Homer fastens every substance in the world to its aptest attribute and holds them in place for epic consumption.'

¹² Fowler (1991: 29).

goddess to sing and she evidently complies with his request, because what follows is precisely a song about the wrath of Achilles.¹³ After the opening invocation, the poet and the Muse sing in unison: it is no longer possible to distinguish the poet's voice from that of the goddess.¹⁴ At times of exceptional stress, however, the poet seems to become unstuck: he pauses, reflects on the difficulties he faces, and declares them to be too great for an ordinary mortal. One famous example of this momentary separation between the poet and the Muse happens just before the Catalogue of Ships, and serves as a proem to it (2.484–93):

*Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι, Μοῦσαι, Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι—
 ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαί ἐστε πάρεστέ τε ἴστε τε πάντα,
 ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν—
 οἳ τινες ἡγεμόνες Δαναῶν καὶ κοίρανοι ἦσαν.
 πληθὺν δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ μυθήσομαι οὐδ' ὀνομήνω,
 οὐδ' εἴ μοι δέκα μὲν γλώσσαι, δέκα δὲ στόματ' εἶεν,
 φωνὴ δ' ἄρρηκτος, χάλκεον δέ μοι ἦτορ ἐνείη,
 εἰ μὴ Ὀλυμπιάδες Μοῦσαι, Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο
 θυγατέρες, μνησαίαθ' ὅσοι ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθον·
 ἀρχοὺς αὖ νηῶν ἐρέω νῆάς τε προπάσας.*

Tell me now, you Muses who have your homes on Olympus—
 for you are goddesses, are present, and know all things,
 but we have heard only the rumour, and know nothing—
 who were the chief men and lords of the Danaans.
 I could not tell over the multitude of them nor name them,
 not if I had ten tongues and ten mouths, not if I had
 a voice never to be broken, and a heart of bronze within me,
 not unless the Muses of Olympus, daughters
 of Zeus of the aegis, remembered all those who came beneath Ilion;
 now I will tell the lords of the ships, and all the ships in their totality.

Here, the Muses stand on one side of the divide (ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαί ἐστε πάρεστέ τε ἴστε τε πάντα, 'you are goddesses, are present, and know all things'), while the poet and his audience stand on the other (ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκούομεν οὐδέ τι ἴδμεν, 'we have heard only the rumour, and know nothing'). What the poet thus constructs is a simple

¹³ This section expands on Graziosi and Haubold (2010: 1–8), and leads to a new discussion of the Iliadic chronotope.

¹⁴ See Strauss Clay (2011: 15).

hierarchy: vision, knowledge, and divinity ('you') stand above hearing, ignorance, and mortality ('we'). The remarkable thing about this passage is that the poet momentarily places himself among his audience of ordinary mortals. He too claims to be condemned to listening, even if what follows, after line 493, is the most astounding feat of singing. It thus seems that, after putting some distance between himself and the Muses, the poet goes on to demonstrate his closeness to them by delivering the Catalogue of Ships.¹⁵ The Catalogue turns out to be not just a feat of performance but, as I argue below, of visualization.

There are other moments in the *Iliad*, where the poet draws attention to the difficulties he faces. At 12.175–6, for example, he doubts his ability to describe the multiple Trojan attacks on the Achaean wall:

Ἄλλοι δ' ἅμφ' ἄλλησι μάχην ἐμάχοντο πύλῃσι·
ἀργαλέον δέ με ταῦτα θεὸν ὥς πάντ' ἀγορεύσαι.

They were all fighting, each by a different gate, but it would be hard for me to describe all those things, as if I were a god.

As at the beginning of the Catalogue of Ships, here too the poet momentarily yanks us out of the narrative and comments on his own human limitations ('it would be hard for me to describe all these things'). Of course, the poet's difficulties only serve to highlight his achievements for, after acknowledging that he is no god, he goes on to offer us a divine vision, quite literally. Lines 12.179–80 describe the gods' reaction to the battle and, after that, the poet launches into an exceptionally intricate description of how the fighting unfolds, simultaneously, on several different fronts. As Strauss Clay points out, in the complex narrative that follows, the poet always seems to know (or see) the exact location of his characters:

[I]f his attention shifts elsewhere for a while and then returns, he finds them again where they belong, whether in the same place or where they were headed. . . . Over the course of thousands of verses, we find astonishingly little confusion. His remarkable control over the activities of his characters becomes most evident when the narrative splits the fighting into several arenas.¹⁶

¹⁵ On the Catalogue of Ships as a feat of visual poetry, see pp. 29–31.

¹⁶ Strauss Clay (2011: 52).

Strauss Clay can hardly disguise her wonder at the poet's gift of visualization, and his ability to describe simultaneous action: 'How does he do it?' she asks.¹⁷ That sense of wonder is solicited by the poet himself for, at 12.175–6, he suggests that the task he performs is divine.

From the poet's perspective, then, there is a difference between his own mortal self and the Muses, 'who are goddesses, are present, and know all things' (2.485). From the perspective of the audience, however, the poet describes the events at Troy as if he were himself a god: he too seems to be present and know all things. A passage in the *Odyssey* offers some useful commentary on the abilities and limitations of the poet—and on his relationship with the Muse. In *Odyssey* 8, the singer Demodocus performs three songs at the Phaeacian court. The first concerns a quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles (8.62–92); the second is set on Olympus and describes an adulterous love affair between Ares and Aphrodite (8.256–369); and the third celebrates the fall of Troy and Odysseus' stratagem of the Trojan Horse (8.469–520). Demodocus is blind: he does not know that Odysseus, a major character in his own songs, is right there, in front of him. It is Odysseus who recognizes himself in Demodocus' first song: he pulls up his purple mantle, covers his head, and cries (8.83–92). Later, before Demodocus' third song, he praises the singer in these words (8.487–91):

Δημόδοκ', ἔξοχα δὴ σε βροτῶν αἰνίζομ' ἀπάντων·
 ἢ σέ γε Μοῦσ' ἐδίδαξε, Διὸς παῖς, ἢ σέ γ' Ἀπόλλων.
 λίην γὰρ κατὰ κόσμον Ἀχαιῶν οἶτον αἰεῖδεις,
 ὅσσ' ἔρξαν τ' ἔπαθον τε καὶ ὅσσ' ἐμόγησαν Ἀχαιοί,
 ὥς τέ που ἢ αὐτὸς παρεὼν ἢ ἄλλου ἀκούσας.

Demodocus, greatly, above all mortals, I praise you;
 either the Muse taught you, daughter of Zeus, or Apollo.
 You sing the fate of the Achaeans precisely, according to order;
 what they did and endured and all the pains they suffered,
 as if you had been there yourself, or someone had told you.

After paying his compliment to Demodocus, Odysseus asks the bard to sing about the fall of Troy and the stratagem of the Trojan Horse. And it is after that performance that he finally reveals his identity. In books 9–12, Odysseus takes over from Demodocus and tells the

¹⁷ Strauss Clay (2011: 52).

Phaeacians what happened after the fall of Troy. We are told that they believe Odysseus' account because he sounds exactly like a singer (11.363–8); but there are in fact some differences between Odysseus' performance and the songs of Demodocus. For one thing, as Jørgensen pointed out in a famous article, Odysseus does not have the ability to describe the gods.¹⁸ For another, Odysseus offers an actual eyewitness account (or so he claims), whereas Demodocus could never do that, because he is blind. The singer's knowledge of Troy is not based on first-hand experience; it is the gift of the Muse (8.63–4):

Τὸν πέρι Μοῦσ' ἐφίλεσε, δίδου δ' ἀγαθὸν τε κακὸν τε·
ὀφθαλμῶν μὲν ἄμερσε, δίδου δ' ἡδεῖαν ἀοιδήν.

The Muse loved him exceedingly, she gave him a good gift and a bad one: she deprived him of his eyes, but gave him sweet song.

The trade-off outlined in the *Odyssey* is simple: Demodocus enjoys a close relationship with the Muses, but remains visually separated from his audience. He does not see Odysseus in Phaeacia, when he is right in front of him, whereas he can view his past actions at Troy. Ancient audiences thought that Demodocus was an autobiographical character and, as I argue below, they specifically linked Homer's blindness to his ability to see his own characters.¹⁹

Just like Demodocus, the poet of the *Iliad* describes, with eyewitness clarity, remote people, events, and things.²⁰ Several scholars have argued that memory, in the *Iliad*, is not conceptualized as the ability to recollect a place or event belonging to the past, but is rather a specific state of consciousness or, as I would call it, a 'presence of mind'. Ford translates *mnemosynē* as 'mindfulness' rather than memory; Bakker argues that 'memory in Homer . . . is very much a

¹⁸ Jørgensen (1904).

¹⁹ For Demodocus as an autobiographical character, see further Graziosi (2002: 138–42). For the poet's blindness and his ability to see Achilles, in the blinding and bewildering splendour of his divine armour, see pp. 32 f.

²⁰ The Achaean wall, for example, vanishes without a trace. The only way for us to see it is to listen to the poet, who describes both its building and its eventual destruction (12.17–33). Aristotle famously takes the Achaean wall as an example of the poet's fictions: 'what the poet makes he can destroy' (fr. 162 Rose), on which see further Porter (2011)—but, even on a more naïve reading of the *Iliad*, the wall reminds us that the poet can make us see what is no longer there.

matter of the present; it enacts, makes present in the most literal sense'.²¹ My contribution builds on the work of these and other scholars, and asks, more specifically, how the poet conveys a sense of his presence at Troy while simultaneously reminding us that the world of the heroes is remote and, indeed, utterly inaccessible to ordinary mortals. Just like the Muses, who are present at Troy and simultaneously present at the moment of performance, so too the poet performs a complex transaction. What is more, he draws our attention to that transaction by suggesting that divine inspiration concerns, above all, the ability to collapse space and time and 'be present'. Memory becomes, then, an act of presence—an encounter.

In a seminal essay published in 1937, Bakhtin insisted on the interdependence of space and time in the shaping of narrative, and introduced the category of the 'chronotope' as a means of analysing both the spatial and temporal coordinates of a text without privileging either.²² The *Iliad*, 'poem of Troy', presents us with the perfect chronotope: for the poet and his audience, Troy is a space charged with the movements of history or, to put it another way, a city where history can be viewed. In what follows, I consider the poet's relationship to this chronotope, in order better to situate his voice. I start with a discussion of time, and then investigate the poet's handling of space—even though my neat time/space distinction fails both in theory and in practice: spatial considerations seep into my discussion of time and vice versa. Ultimately, I blame the Muses (rather than Bakhtin) for that. As has already emerged, the Muses collapse both time and space in a single act of presence. They sing in unison with the poet, and are simultaneously present at Troy. The poet likewise moves between the here-and-now of his performance and the here-and-now of the action at Troy. Those two modes of presence are hard to reconcile, because the world of the heroes is not only past but also elsewhere. What I aim to investigate in this chapter is how the poet positions himself in relation to both his audience and his subject matter—how he manages to 'be present', while drawing attention to the vast (spatial and temporal) distances he traverses in order to deliver his story.

²¹ Ford (1992: 53); Bakker (2005: 141).

²² Bakhtin (1981: 84–258); for a good discussion, Todorov (1984).

TIME

There is one obvious way in which the poet sets his subject matter in the past: he uses the past tenses—aorist and imperfect—to describe the action at Troy. This is such an obvious feature of Homeric narrative that it often escapes attention, even though many other traditional epics do resort to the present in order to convey the immediacy of the action.²³ Modern versions of the *Iliad* depart from the ancient model in that they often use the present in the main narrative: ‘The two armies, Achaean and Trojan, are locked in what has become a long stalemate’ reports Caroline Alexander, as if broadcasting directly from the front.²⁴ Cook likewise switches to the present when she reaches the climax of the story: ‘Three times they circle the city . . .’²⁵ Miller, in her Patroclean version of the *Iliad*, resorts to the present tense with depressing regularity. Christopher Logue is more versatile. He opens *War Music* with an order—not to the Muse, however, but to his audience:²⁶

Picture the east Aegean sea by night,
And on a beach aslant its shimmering
Upwards of 50,000 men
Asleep like spoons beside their lethal Fleet.
Now look along that beach, and see
Between the keels hatching its western dunes
A ten-foot-high reed wall faced with black clay
Split by a double-doored gate;
Then through the gate a naked man
Run . . .

Logue does not quite use the present in this opening shot, but suggests that his audience may picture the action directly, as it unfolds. The effect is strikingly Homeric; the emphasis on immediacy.²⁷ Later, he switches between the present and the past with energy and skill.²⁸

²³ I owe this point to Strauss Clay (2011: 19). On the present in medieval French epic, see, for example, Fleischman (1990: 273–4).

²⁴ Alexander (2010: 16).

²⁵ Cook (2001: 38).

²⁶ Logue (2001: 7).

²⁷ It seems important that Logue’s *War Music* was originally conceived for radio; see further Greenwood (2009).

²⁸ For example, Logue (2001: 9):

The stars look down.
Troy is a glow behind the dunes.
The camp is dark.
‘Her name was Cryzia,’ Achilles said.

The poet of the *Iliad*, by contrast, always refers to the action in the past. One way to account for this is simply to say that, at the time when the *Iliad* was composed, the historic present had not yet been ‘invented’. But what interests me is not what was available to the actual composer(s) of the *Iliad*, but rather how ancient audiences heard the poet’s voice. Even after ancient authors started using the historic present, Greek poets composing in the Homeric mould refrained from doing so, presumably because the present did not sound Homeric to them.²⁹

It is possible that the past tenses of the *Iliad* struck classical, Hellenistic, and Roman audiences with more force than archaic ones, not only because the absence of the historic present eventually became noticeable, but also because the augment—an extra syllable which characterizes the past tenses in classical Greek, but features only sporadically in Homer—may have lost its original deictic force. Bakker argues that, in Homeric epic, the augment pointed to the enactment of the story in performance.³⁰ This is an interesting suggestion, and perhaps enhances our understanding of some Iliadic passages—but it remains difficult to gauge whether, and if so until what period, the augment actually struck ancient audiences as helping to enact the story in the present. Perhaps rhapsodes played up the deictic force of the augment long after it had become a standard feature of Greek, but it is not easy to see how they would have managed to do that. In any case, even if the augment might have had deictic force, the Homeric aorists and imperfects still anchored the narrative firmly in the past.

Ancient Greek audiences were well aware that those who fought at Troy lived long before their time. For them, the heroes were a different race altogether: stronger, closer to the gods, and also—in some ways—more primitive than ordinary mortals.³¹ Ancient Greek communities worshipped the heroes, sacrificed at their tombs, and asked for their help and protection.³² Although an analogy with the saints is hardly fitting, the heroes were indeed considered an intermediary category of beings, poised between gods and ordinary

²⁹ On Apollonius, see Strauss Clay (2011: 18 n. 11). On Ennius and Virgil, who did import the historic present into epic, see Rossi (2004: 125–49).

³⁰ Bakker (2005: 114–35).

³¹ Here I brutally summarize Graziosi and Haubold (2005).

³² Burkert (1985: 203–8), Ekroth (2002).

mortals. Several pieces of evidence suggest that the Greeks were interested in the precise ontological and even biological status of the heroes. For example, the ancient fascination with their diet—which now seems a most baffling topic of ancient Homeric criticism—has its roots in a simple question: to what extent the heroes were or were not like ordinary human beings. The poet of the *Iliad* occasionally offers an explicit comment on the differences between the protagonists of his story and ‘men such as they are nowadays’.³³ In the similes, he likewise draws comparisons between the heroic world and aspects of life as it is ‘now’ (i.e. in archaic Greece).³⁴ In one famous passage, he even describes those who died at Troy as ‘a race of demi-god men’, *ἡμιθέων γένος ἀνδρῶν*, thus drawing attention to the vast distance between his own time and the age of the heroes.³⁵ Such explicit reflections on the temporal gap between heroes and ordinary mortals are, however, rare in the *Iliad*. For the most part, the poet foregrounds the perspective of gods and heroes, rather than that of his audiences. He hardly refers to hero cult, for example. The point of the narrative is not to emphasize the posthumous honours accorded to the heroes, but rather to dramatize how hard they themselves find the prospect of death.³⁶ To this end, the poet employs many different devices, all of which suggest his closeness to the heroes and his distance from ordinary human audiences ‘such as they are nowadays’.

The impression is that, although the narrative is firmly and uncontroversially set in the past, the poet experiences the past as present. The direct apostrophes that punctuate the narrative are a case in point. The poet never explicitly addresses his audience—in order to flatter, explain things, or ask for attention, for example—but he does talk to the Muses, Apollo, and some of his own characters.³⁷ These apostrophes are so startling that ancient and modern readers have

³³ *Il.* 5.302–4, 12.445–9, 20.285–7; cf. 12.381–3.

³⁴ Cf. Edwards (1991: 35): ‘[The similes] give us a view of the world . . . that existed in the poet’s own day and long after him.’

³⁵ *Iliad* 12.23. Significantly, the expression features in the very passage where the poet claims that the Achaean Wall has vanished without a trace. On the ‘demi-god men’ and their disappearance, see Strauss Clay (2003: 161–74).

³⁶ See further Graziosi and Haubold (2005: 100–1).

³⁷ The closest the poet ever comes to talking to his audience is his use of general expressions such as ‘you would think’, ‘you would say’ (4.429, 15.697, 17.366).

engaged in endless speculation about them.³⁸ Many have argued that the poet feels a special affection for the characters he addresses, or in any case realizes how central they are to his narrative. This may be true for Menelaus and Patroclus, but the case of Melanippus at 15.582–3 seems rather different. There is no reason to suppose an enduring concern for this minor character. The poet addresses Melanippus immediately after he has been killed, and points out that Hector defended his body (15.582–4):

ὥς ἐπὶ σοὶ Μελάνιππε θόρ' Ἀντίλοχος μενεχάρμης
 τεύχεα συλήσων: ἀλλ' οὐ λάθην Ἑκτορα δῖον,
 ὅς ῥά οἱ ἀντίος ἦλθε θεῶν ἀνὰ δηϊοτήτα.

So Antilochus, steadfast in battle, leapt on you, Melanippus,
 intent on stripping your armour. But glorious Hector saw him,
 and came running up through the fighting to meet him.

Rather than directing these lines at his audience, the poet addresses them to Melanippus, who is dead—and indeed long dead. The impression, of course, is that the poet is right there in Troy, when Antilochus leaps on Melanippus' corpse and Hector intervenes. Indeed, the poet lingers behind his own narrative: he still talks to Melanippus moments after he has been killed. That is how involved he is.

The poet's detachment from his audience, and his ability to be right there with his characters, may help to explain another puzzling feature of Homeric narrative. In an influential study of 1899–1901, Theodor Zielinski argued that Homeric narrative always moves forward: as a result, the poet represents simultaneous actions as sequential. Early responses to 'Zielinski's law' took it as evidence for the primitive state of the Homeric mind, which was supposedly unable to grasp the complexities of simultaneity.³⁹ More recent discussions insist that Zielinski was wrong, and that the poet of the *Iliad* does, in fact, represent simultaneous action by several different means.⁴⁰ What seems to me remarkable is that scholars still insist on flogging the dead Zielinski with remarkable elan. The fact that his so-called

³⁸ The passages are collected and discussed in Block (1982), Yamagata (1989), and Richardson (1990: 170–4). For a brief but helpful discussion, see Strauss Clay (2011: 20).

³⁹ See, for example, Fränkel (1955).

⁴⁰ See, for example, De Jong (2007: 30–1), Scodel (2008), and Strauss Clay (2011).

'law' has been on the Homeric agenda for well over a century in itself suggests to me that there might be something to it. As has already emerged, the poet describes events as if he were there, present, like the Muses. Overt references to simultaneity would dispel the impression that he is a direct witness. In order to say that an event was taking place while something else was happening elsewhere, the poet would need to stand back from both events, however briefly, and join his audience in viewing the action from a distance, or with hindsight. That, by and large, he does not do. He often moves from one vision to another, giving little guidance to his audience about the transition. As a result, it is not immediately clear whether the poet is describing simultaneous or consecutive events, whether he has shifted place but stayed within the time flow, or whether he has also gone back in time. In her thought-provoking new book, Strauss Clay maps the battlefield, and how warriors move in it, in books 12–17. She offers a surprisingly coherent vision, which she also expresses by an online simulation.⁴¹ I take issue with some aspects of her reconstruction,⁴² but she certainly shows that the poet repeatedly goes back in time. Still, the question remains whether audiences and readers are encouraged to take notice of this backing-up in time, or whether the emphasis remains on the here and now of the narrative (although it may relate to previous and later 'here and nows'). My own view is that Strauss Clay's simulation very much helps to explain how the composer(s) and, indeed, the rhapsodes mastered the complex battle narrative of books 12–17. Audiences, however, did not need to keep track of the action in quite the same way. Accordingly, the poet makes no special effort to ensure that listeners coordinate what is going on in different sections of the battlefield. There is no explicit, didactic reminder, for example, that while Deiphobus and Meriones are engaged on the left, Teucer fights in the centre (13.156, 13.170). A rhapsode (or a professional reader like Strauss Clay) can work that out—after years of study—

⁴¹ Strauss Clay (2011) with <<http://www.homerstrojantheater.org/>>. Strauss Clay's visual rendering of the poem is, of course, not beyond controversy. I am quite sure, for example, that she misplaces the fig tree.

⁴² I have both specific concerns, for example about the location of the fig tree, which must be closer to the walls of Troy than the diagram in Strauss Clay (2011: 104) suggests, and general reservations about the alleged clarity of the spatial coordinates in the poem. See note 64.

but, for most audiences, it is enough to sense that the poet knows what is going on, in all places, at all times.⁴³

There may be deeper reasons why the poet fails to emphasize the differences between simultaneous and consecutive action. From his divine perspective, it may be that such differences are trivial. The Muses have complete knowledge of what was, is, and shall be; and the poet can similarly survey the past, present, and future of his characters in a single viewing. Timing is sometimes explicitly presented as a mortal concern. When Andromache mourns for Hector before he is actually dead, her behaviour is a scandal, a bad omen. He is still alive, after all, and while he lives she should, as Hector points out, keep calm and carry on.⁴⁴ But when Thetis laments for Achilles before his hour has actually come, that is hardly controversial. Thetis is a goddess, knows for sure that her son is short-lived, and, in her own separate submarine realm, mourns for him already.⁴⁵ Again and again, the poet shows that his characters know very little about the past, the present, and (especially) the future, whereas he has complete, divine control of everything at all times. In many ways, Helen is the character who comes closest to sharing the perspective of the poet on the Trojan War. The first time we encounter her in the *Iliad* she is weaving a great robe depicting 'the struggles of the horse-breaking Trojans and the bronze-shirted Achaeans' (3.125): she can paint the big picture, just like the poet. A little later, Priam asks her to identify the most prominent Achaean warriors on the plain. She complies, thus performing a catalogue of the Achaeans that complements the poet's own earlier Catalogue of Ships. And yet Helen's human limitations soon become apparent. She wonders why she cannot see her two brothers among the Achaeans (3.234–2), and it is precisely at this point that the poet makes his revelation: they are long dead, in fact they died in Sparta before the Trojan expedition even set off (3.243–4). He knows the past far better than Helen, who, although she is a daughter of Zeus like the Muses, still has obvious, mortal limitations.

There are many other occasions when the poet draws attention to the ignorance of his own characters. Most famously, he describes

⁴³ Despite her claims to be shifting focus from composition to reception (2011: 14–15), it seems to me that Strauss Clay still views things from the perspective of composers/performers, rather than audiences.

⁴⁴ *Iliad* 6.485–93, with Graziosi and Haubold (2010) *ad loc.*

⁴⁵ *Iliad* 24.83–6.

Andromache making arrangements for Hector to have a bath, while on the rampart the Trojans are already lamenting his death (22.440–6):

ἀλλ' ἢ γ' ἴστον ὕφαινε μυχῷ δόμου ὑψηλοῖο
 δίπλακα πορφυρέην, ἐν δὲ θρόνα ποικίλ' ἔπασσε.
 κέκλετο δ' ἀμφιπόλοισιν ἐϋπλοκάμοις κατὰ δῶμα
 ἀμφὶ πυρὶ στήσαι τρίποδα μέγαν, ὅφρα πέλοιτο
 Ἑκτορι θερμὰ λοετρὰ μάχης ἐκ νοστήσαντι
 νηπίη, οὐδ' ἐνόησεν ὃ μιν μάλα τῇλε λοετρῶν
 χερσὶν Ἀχιλλῆος δάμασε γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη.

She was at her loom in the tall house's innermost part, weaving
 a red double cloak, and working a pattern of flowers into it.
 She called out through the house to her lovely-haired servants
 to set a great tripod over the fire, so that Hector might have
 a warm bath when he returned from the fighting—poor
 innocent that she was, and did not know that grey-eyed Athena
 had beaten him down at Achilles' hands, far away from baths.

That little authorial comment—*νηπίη*, 'poor innocent'—again draws attention to the distance between the poet's knowledge and the uncertainty of his characters. Andromache behaves like a wife, when in fact she is already a widow.

Even Achilles, who is usually quite aware of his circumstances, refuses to contemplate the details of his impending death. When Hector, moments before drawing his last breath, tells him with prophetic clarity exactly where and how he too will soon be killed, Achilles refuses to engage with that information. He answers curtly that he will die 'whenever', whereas Hector must die 'now' (22.365). That is all that matters to Achilles, and to all of us ordinary mortals: whether we die 'now' or 'whenever'. The perspective of the poet could not be more different. He knows, with equal certainty, the past, present, and future of all his characters. He can survey their entire destiny in a single viewing.

In a famous passage of his *Poetics*, Aristotle commends the *Iliad* because the poet does not try to tell us the whole story of the Trojan War. His plot only concerns a handful of days towards the end of the war and can easily be surveyed in a single act of viewing (1459a30–4):

διὸ ὥσπερ εἴπομεν ἤδη καὶ ταύτῃ θεσπέσιος ἂν φανείη Ὅμηρος παρὰ
 τοὺς ἄλλους, τῷ μὴδὲ τὸν πόλεμον καίπερ ἔχοντα ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος
 ἐπιχειρήσαι ποιεῖν ὅλον· λίαν γὰρ ἂν μέγας καὶ οὐκ εὐσύνοπτος ἔμελλεν
 ἔσεσθαι ὁ μῦθος, ἢ τῷ μεγέθει μετριάζοντα καταπεπλεγμένον τῇ
 ποικιλίᾳ.

Just as we said before, Homer would seem to speak in a divine way compared to the rest, in that he did not attempt to make the war a whole, even though it had a beginning and an end. For the plot would otherwise have been too large and not easily seen at one time, or, if scaled down in length, too closely woven with detail.

In her recent book *Space and time in ancient Greek narrative*, Purves rightly draws attention to the adjective Aristotle uses to characterize the plot of the *Iliad*: εὐσύνοπτος, ‘easily seen at one time’.⁴⁶ But there is another word that, in my view, deserves as much attention: θεσπέσιος, ‘divinely speaking’. Even the technical Aristotle concedes that there is something divine about Homer’s perception of time, or plot, in a single act of seeing.

SPACE

One way of investigating the poet’s relationship to his subject matter is to ask, quite simply, from what point of view he tells his story, or, more concretely, from where he views the action. At the beginning of book 13, the poet describes an arresting sequence of events. Zeus is sitting on top of Mount Ida, observing the action below on the Trojan plain, but, at some point, gets distracted and starts looking further afield, to the northeast of Troy (13.1–10):

Ζεὺς δ’ ἐπεὶ οὖν Τρώας τε καὶ Ἑκτορα νηυσὶ πέλασσε,
τοὺς μὲν ἔα παρὰ τῇσι πόνον τ’ ἐχέμεν καὶ οὔζην
νωλεμέως, αὐτὸς δὲ πάλιν τρέπεν ὅσσε φαεινὴν
νόσφιν ἐφ’ ἵπποπόλων Θρηκῶν καθορώμενος αἶαν
Μυσῶν τ’ ἀγχεμάχων καὶ ἀγαιῶν Ἰππημολγῶν
γλακτοφάγων Ἀβίων τε δικαιοτάτων ἀνθρώπων.
ἐς Τροίην δ’ οὐ πάμπαν ἔτι τρέπεν ὅσσε φαεινῶ:
οὐ γὰρ ὅ γ’ ἀθανάτων τινα ἔλπετο ὃν κατὰ θυμὸν
ἐλθόντ’ ἢ Τρώεσσιν ἀρηξέμεν ἢ Δαναοῖσιν.

Now when Zeus had brought the Trojans and Hector to the ships, he left the fighters beside them to endure toil and misery without ceasing, while he himself turned his shining eyes away, looking far off to the land of the horse-breeding Thracians, and the Mysians, hand-to-hand fighters, and the splendid Hippemolgi,

⁴⁶ Purves (2010: 24–64).

drinkers of mares' milk, and the Abii, most upright of men.
But towards Troy he did not turn his shining eyes at all,
since he did not expect in his heart that any immortal
would come to the help of either Trojans or Danaans.

Poseidon immediately notices Zeus' distraction from his own lookout, a mountain on the island of Samothrace, northwest of Troy (13.12). He leaps down the mountain and into the sea, arms himself in his submarine palace at Aegae, and then goes to help the Achaeans on the battlefield. Meanwhile, Hera has been observing the whole sequence of events from the top of Mount Olympus. In order to help the Achaean cause, she decides to pay Zeus a visit, seduce him, further distract him, and thus let Poseidon get on with his good work down on the Trojan plain. The picture is clear: Poseidon and Zeus have been observing the war seated on opposite mountain tops, while Hera has been observing them and the battlefield from Mount Olympus. The question is: from where is the poet viewing this whole scene? He must enjoy some equally exalted, panoramic viewpoint, even though we are not told exactly where he stands in relation to the other three divine observers perched on mountain tops.

In the course of the narrative, we get more precise indications of the poet's vantage point, specifically in relation to the action on the battlefield. When the poet uses the deictic markers 'left' and 'right' he always looks at the battlefield from the same perspective. He keeps his back to the sea, facing the Trojan plain and the city of Ilion beyond it. The curved coastline, with its beached Achaean ships, is arranged before him 'like a theatre', as an ancient scholar (probably Aristarchus) observed.⁴⁷ When the poet speaks in his own voice, 'left' and 'right' always indicate that he is viewing the action from that position. Although some scholars insist on the poet's even-handed treatment of both Trojans and Achaeans, he is quite literally on the Achaeans' side.⁴⁸ His position anchors the narrative and makes it possible for him, and indeed for us, to gain a picture of how the action on the battlefield unfolds. The poet, however, is not constrained to viewing the action from his standard vantage point, hovering somewhere above the sea and facing Troy. He can zoom in and describe, for example, how Polypoetes' spear breaks through Damasus' forehead,

⁴⁷ Hom. Schol. (Ariston.) *ad* 14.30–6.

⁴⁸ See Cuillandre (1944: 41) who rightly insists on the poet's Hellenic vantage point; for an excellent discussion of 'left' and 'right' in the *Iliad*, see Strauss Clay (2011), esp. 45–9.