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3 Diachronic Shifts between the Epic Past and Future at the Phaeacians

Binding, Chorality, and Fluidity in Demodokos' Song of Ares and Aphrodite in Homer's *Odyssey* (8.266–366)

1 Introduction

All culture develops in an evolutionary process, functioning as interplay between tradition and innovation.¹ Normally we look at things from the perspective of synchrony—i.e. at how realities appear at a given historical moment. Diachronic consciousness permits a view into deeper levels of any phenomenon. Evolutionary awareness always tries to evaluate cultural products as diachrony in synchrony. Exact knowledge of the development of a structure in all minor details would lead to an accurate picture of any synchronically given cross section. In reality this is hardly possible because of the lack of factual evidence, but we can strive for approximate judgments by “building” theoretical “models.”²

Synchronic and diachronic methods, originally derived from linguistics,³ precisely aim at explaining and describing what from the outsider's point of view cannot be seen any more. Applying such perspectives we can analyze given structures and account for how these formations evolve. The terms diachronic and synchronic are not identical with historical and current respectively, as the common use may imply;⁴ rather, a historical fact gives evidence of what actually happened, whereas with the tool of diachrony as a purely theoretical abstraction we can reconstruct realities. Moreover, we can reach not only backward in time in order to describe far reaching phases of an undocumented past but also extrapolate the development of a structure forward in time.⁵

1 The following text corresponds to the keynote address I gave at the *Diachrony* conference at Duke University in October of 2009. I cordially thank José M. González for the kind invitation. Since it was not clear for some time whether the *Acta* would be published, I reused the kernel of my argument for a contribution on the epyllion (Bierl 2012). In elucidating the alleged relations of Demodokos' song as *Einzellied* with the epyllion, it is complementary to this article.

2 Cf. Nagy in this volume, p. 236.

3 Saussure 1916, 117.

4 Cf. Nagy 1990a, 21 n. 18.

5 On the previous two paragraphs, cf. Nagy in this volume §§2–3.

Ancient Greek antiquity evolved over many centuries until it came into being as what we consider and define as Greek civilization. Yet Greek culture as “the closest foreign”⁶ has many unknown roots. It is constituted by a mostly dark past, by all sorts of intercultural developments and exchange. Greek language, literature, and thought therefore cannot be understood as a synchronic and isolated fact. I need only recall the romantic view of Classical Hellenism as the pinnacle of Western civilization, a self-contained miracle in the development of the human intellect. In the same vein, critics still tend to judge Homer as a genius poet as well as the founder of epic and all Western literature.

With a diachronic awareness we begin to see that ‘Homer’ and ‘the epic’ are constructs. There is no such thing as a universalized concept of ‘the epic’ or ‘Homer,’ but at any given moment in time we have a diachronically different picture of the genre and Homer.⁷ Therefore, we must speak of “ages of Homeric reception” or “ages of Homer” as he is manifested in time and space, as Gregory Nagy put it.⁸ Homeric epic is the example *par excellence* to demonstrate how diachrony is present in synchrony. Behind Homer is a long oral past, the dark background of a vivid tradition of *aidoi* of oral songs composed in the very act of performance. This fact has implications for form and content, that is, for the entire starting point and the specific manner of narration as well as for meter and the Homeric *Kunstsprache*. It is a well-known feature that Homeric epic can shift readily between different forms of linguistic development according to the needs of the hexameter. Moreover, it deals with events of a remote and idealized past, of a dark age in the fourteenth/thirteenth centuries BC as told from the perspective of a much later period.

Homer and his monumental epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, only gradually emerged in a long historical process, reaching from a dark Mycenaean past into the sixth and fifth centuries BC over a period of transition in the ninth and eighth centuries. And we also have to reckon with further developments down to the age of Aristarchus. It is attested that Hipparchus regulated the *agôn* of the Panathenaia: in the competition, the two monumental poems of Panhellenic status now had to be performed at full length in alternation, with one rhapsode following the other in a kind of relay (ἐξ ὑπολήψεως ἐφεξῆς, Plat. *Hipp.* 228b). In addition, this agonistic regulation had an impact on the evolution of the text. Now, the oral tradition could be transformed to a continuous narration of enormous size that was then, in the age of writing, transmitted as text in form of a script. Thus, our

⁶ Hölscher 1965, 81.

⁷ Cf. Nagy 1999; 2005, esp. 71, 77–78; 2008/09; 2009/10. Against universalistic generalities regarding the genre ‘epic,’ cf. Martin 2005.

⁸ Cf. Nagy 2008/09, 2 (P§6); 2009/10, 1 (Intro.§1).

‘Homer’ is a snapshot of a historical moment as well as a retrojected biographical construct, and the Homeric epic evolves toward a monumental text of pedagogical purpose for all of Hellas under specific historical circumstances.⁹ By means of ongoing retardations, the elaborate plot is built on much shorter songs that are stitched together on the principle of variation and combination.¹⁰

The Homeric epic can therefore incorporate previous phases of its evolution. Demodokos’ song of Ares and Aphrodite in *Odyssey* 8 (266–366), including its entire setting (8.234–384), represents a good example.¹¹ In order to understand the deeper meaning of this song we have to use diachronic and synchronic perspectives. I will argue that through abstract models reaching backward in time we can reconstruct prehistoric phases of the epic as choral *hymnos*. By applying such a method, I will be able to account for the presence of choral dance in these passages in an unprecedented and innovative manner. It is my contention that chorality is the decisive pattern that determines the framing as well as the inner logic of the song itself. I will argue that the story of adultery and fettering reflects on the evolution of the epic poem from comparatively fluid to rather fixed forms as well as on the development of the plot in metapoetic and self-referential terms.¹²

2 Demodokos’ Song—Old or New, and Historical Prerequisites

On the basis of its burlesque and disruptive ethics, Demodokos’ song of Ares and Aphrodite in the eighth book of the *Odyssey* seems, from a Hellenistic perspective, to be an interpolation, a later addition by a poet already imbued with a new spirit.¹³ Accordingly, the practice of Alexandrian philology that arose at this time athetized the song (scholia to Ar. *Pax* 778). Modern analytic philology follows this view¹⁴ or attributes it to a later or to the last arranger.¹⁵ Other critics regard as central its new morality among men, which the *Odyssey*, as the expres-

⁹ Cf. Nagy 1996a; 1996b; 2002; 2003; 2008/09; 2009/10; Frame 2009, 515–647; Bierl 2015.

¹⁰ Cf. Bierl 2015.

¹¹ For the entire text with a special mark-up of the key motifs, see my Appendix 2.

¹² On the *mise en abyme* in the songs of Demodokos, cf. Rinon 2006; Steiner 2003, esp. 26; Hainsworth 1988, 363.

¹³ References in Burkert 1960, 132 n. 2.

¹⁴ References in Burkert 1960, 132 n. 3.

¹⁵ References in Burkert 1960, 132 n. 4; Schadewaldt 1958, 330 assigns the frame to B, but the song itself to A, without clearly showing how the then independent song must have only served the purpose of amusement.

sion of an emerging individuality, projected into the realm of the Olympian gods where the serious message could be reinforced in a serene manner.¹⁶ Wilamowitz assumes a hypothetically derived Homeric Hymn to Hephaestus, which deals with the binding of mother Hera and the return to Mount Olympus by Dionysus. This hymn would then serve as a model for the *autoskhediasma* of the *Odyssey*.¹⁷ After all, it is no surprise that the song about Ares and Aphrodite was regarded as a digression until *circa* 1970.¹⁸

However, the burlesque story is not proof of a new and younger spirit of the time, but rather is rooted in very old oral traditions. The grotesque and comic narration about gods can already be found in Hittite texts that, as is well known, had a strong influence on the Homeric tradition.¹⁹ Furthermore, the distorting treatment of the realm of the gods had its occasion, its *Sitz im Leben*, in archaic situations of festivity. At least notionally, this is a very old phenomenon, and it can be elucidated by the characterization of the *aoidos* and his performance.²⁰

As I have noted above, in the time of Hipparchus the Homeric tradition underwent regulations and was cleansed of strands that went against a uniform and monumental story. Moreover, Homer was equated with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which were performed in their totality in a relay pattern by alternating rhapsodes. This development had previously begun between the ninth and seventh centuries BC in Panionic performances on a large scale located on the coast of Asia Minor.²¹ This means that epic gradually evolved from small, locally based song performances at aristocratic courts to monumental forms. This Panhellenic tradition was then attributed to a *πρῶτος εὐρετής*, ‘Homer,’ a name coined from *ὁμῶς* and *ἀραρίσκω* (‘to fit together’), and joined to a very long and complex song that aims at instilling new Greek values.²²

This performance practice replaced the former method in which, after a hymnic *prooimion*, one jumped from episode to episode within a large mythic tradition. Again and again one started anew, and the hymn in a way served as a connector which, after the invocation of a god and the appeal to *μεταβαίνειν*, gave way to an epic narration of a section of the entire tradition. This was the way in which the epic cycle was obviously still staged in the sixth century BC. Yet this performance tradition was abandoned after the Panathenaic regulation that

16 Cf. Hölscher 1988, 271: “Was unter Göttern ein Götterspaß ist, ist unter Menschen blutiger Ernst.” (“What is a divine joke among the gods is bloody serious among men.”)

17 Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1895, esp. 223–225 (*Kl. Schr.* V.2, 12–14).

18 Gaisser 1969, 32–34.

19 Burkert 1960, 133 with n. 5 and Burkert 1982.

20 Cf. Nagy 2009/10, 88–89 (1§210).

21 Cf. Frame 2009, esp. 515–647.

22 Cf. Nagy 1996a; 1996b; 2002; 2003; 2008/09; 2009/10; Bierl 2015.

originated in Ionian circles and came via Chios to Athens. Accordingly, the other stories of the *Kyklos*, which narrate the events that chronologically lie before or after the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (*Kypria*, *Aithiopsis*, *Ilioupersis*, *Little Iliad*, *Nostoi*, *Telegonia*), were no longer attributed to Homer but to new authors like Arktinos of Miletus and Lesches of Lesbos. In the case of the *Homeric Hymns*, which during the time of Thucydides were attributed to Homer in an Athenocentric manner—as demonstrated by the fact that Thucydides regards the singing ‘I’ in the *Hymn to Apollo* (3) as Homer (3.104.2–6)—this separation from Homer occurred even later. Before that, the Hesiodic and Orphic traditions had already been detached from the Homeric.²³

Before I embark on my analysis, I would like to preclude a potential misunderstanding: I am decidedly of the opinion that the song of Ares and Aphrodite does not portray a later addition or interpolation after the Pisistratid regulations. Rather, the song already belonged to the epic tradition from a much earlier stage and, after the establishment of the regulation and monumentalization, was perfectly integrated in the plot as a whole. Besides various pragmatic functions in the direct embedding of *Odyssey* 8, it reflects these developments in the use of previous practices of hymnic performance. The narrative thus diachronically shifts backward and then forward in time. The phenomenon analyzed here has been aptly designated as “diachronic skewing.”²⁴

3 The Song of Demodokos As an Ideal Epic Pre-Stage and *hymnos* as Web: Metapoetic Reflections

In the last two decades it became evident that the *Iliad* and, even more so, the *Odyssey* tend to reflect self-referentially on their own poetic tradition.²⁵ In this vein, I contend that Demodokos’ song includes earlier stages of the Homeric epic, even after the introduction of the Panathenaic regulations, and that it helps to shape the plot in a metanarrative way. Just as Penelope’s famous *mekhanêma* of weaving symbolizes the process of textualization,²⁶ so the artful web of invis-

²³ Cf. Nagy 1996b; 2002; 2003; 2008/09, esp. Ch. 2; on Demodokos, 313–353 (2§§274–350) and 2009/10, 79–102 (1§§188–241).

²⁴ Nagy 1990a, 21.

²⁵ Cf. Segal 1994, 85–183; de Jong 2001, 6 and 191–192; Dougherty 2001; Bierl 2004, 105 and 110–111; Clayton 2004; de Jong 2006; Bierl 2015.

²⁶ Cf. Clayton 2004; Bierl 2004, 111; 2015, 6 n. 22.

ble chains produced and installed by the master blacksmith contains metapoetic implications.²⁷

At this crucial stage of the plot, we are at the last location of Odysseus' wanderings, from where he returns after a chain of death experiences with a magical ship back home into the real world. Accordingly, the narrative pauses for a moment in order to mark the crisis of this transition. During his adventures the hero has been reduced to a nobody. In Scheria he is offered the chance to regain his former identity;²⁸ the island of the Phaeacians is described as a utopian nowhere-land of a distant past where *eutopia* threatens to turn into a *dystopia*. Therefore, the new hosts are portrayed in a rather ambivalent way. At the same time, the negative traits of the Phaeacians are carefully covered by a noble, epic atmosphere. However, in the original form of the story—not unlike a simple fairy tale—their ambivalence will have been strongly felt. After all, Scheria, as a land of Hades, is a partially inverted otherworld that simultaneously refers to Greek aristocratic views. It offers the ideal occasion to integrate the primordial and the subversive. As I noted, the divine burlesque is very old and can be found also in Near Eastern cultures, which had a strong influence on Homer.²⁹

Furthermore, it has long been recognized that the three songs of Demodokos represent pre-stages of the monumental epic performed in the regulated, recitative form.³⁰ The Phaeacian singer stands for the *aoidos* of oral poetry who composes and performs short songs accompanied by a mute chorus of dancers. He embodies the singer as a lyric *kitharōidos* whose model is Apollo himself.³¹ In his compositions during performance, Demodokos sings his condensed narrative contents in notionally 'lyric' strophes like Stesichorus. Demodokos thus embeds the lyric prehistory of the hexameter into the *Odyssey*. This verse can be derived from the pherecratean with internal expansion of three dactyls (with the Aeolic basis

²⁷ Briefly suggested by Clayton 2004, 52. On "preregular" vs. "regular" traditions as reflected in *Od.* 8, cf. Nagy 2009/10, 96 (1§231).

²⁸ Cf. Mattes 1958.

²⁹ Cf. Burkert 1992, 88–100.

³⁰ Cf. Gentili in Gentili/Giannini 1977, 7–37 and Gentili 1984, 18–21 (new edition 2006) 31–34. On the singers in Homeric epic in general, cf. references in de Jong 2001, 191 n. 2. On the idealization of the portrayal, e.g. Segal 1994, 116. Lyre players have already been attested for Thebes in Linear B, Th Av 106, 7: *ru-ra-ta-e* "both lyre players" (dual); cf. Aravantinos 1999, 61 and 63 n. 97. I reject the thesis that Demodokos is a "Hofsänger" ("palace-singer") who reflects the poet of the *Odyssey* (as Latacz 1985, 32–42, esp. 40; Engl. 1996, 24–35, esp. 32; similarly Schuol 2006, esp. 141). *Contra* now also Krummen 2008, esp. 12, 34, on Demodokos, 18–23. On "preregular" vs. "regular" traditions as reflected in *Od.* 8, cf. again Nagy 2009/10, 96 (1§231).

³¹ Cf. Calame 1977, 104 n. 126 (Engl. 1997, 50 n. 126) with bibliography; on Apollo as *khōrēgos* and *kitharōidos*, Bierl 2001, 171–173 (Engl. 2009a, 146–148).

normalized to a spondee or dactyl)³²—that is, a glyconeian rhythm, and it might also have originated from a hypothetical *Urvers* of the περίοδος δωδεκάσημος.³³ The ‘lyric’ dimension is underlined by the mute chorus, which accompanies the monodic singer. At the same time, Demodokos functions as its virtual *chorêgos*. I maintain that the chorus and its movements are self-referentially deployed to highlight pivotal developments of the plot and metapoetic messages.³⁴

Gregory Nagy has recently shown that the three songs of Demodokos are an ongoing *hymnos* on a festive occasion, a δαίς (*Od.* 8.76) with sacrifices.³⁵ According to Nagy, *hymnos* is etymologically associated with ὑφαίνω (‘to weave’).³⁶ A singer of hymns thus works on the big web of ‘texts.’ Therefore, a hymn does not mean only ‘cult song in praise of gods’ eventually followed by a narrative portion, but also song in its totality. In addition, it is important that such hymns do not disappear but are still composed parallel to epic in a highly developed and stylized form after the Panathenaic regulation. In a *prooimion*, a god who inspires the singer is addressed.³⁷

In such hymns, one pays attention to the ‘thread’ (οἴμη, *Od.* 8.74) and then, with the help of the transitional form of μεταβαίνειν, one comes to tell a story. Nagy contends that the first and the third song of Demodokos represent a pre-stage of the regulated hexameter. In these songs, the story of Troy is told from the very beginning, the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles (song 1), to its end, the capture of the city (song 3). This is done not in a continuous form but in single sections, each with a new beginning (cf. ἄψ ἄρχοιτο, *Od.* 8.90), by jumping from one portion to the next. This manner of narration corresponds to that of the *Kyklos*. Song 2, on the contrary, is embedded as a further recessed pre-stage. Here we have a hymn as pure *prooimion* without the *pars epica* after the transitional

³² Cf. Nagy 1974, 49–102; and the expansion in Nagy 1990a, 459–464.

³³ Cf. Gentili in Gentili/Giannini 1977, 29–37. On other theories and critical voices, cf. Maslov 2009, 7 with nn. 11 and 13.

³⁴ From the perspective of historical semantics and poetics, Maslov 2009 links *aidos* primarily with “member of the chorus” or “professional (solo) performer” (1), or “(choral) performer” (21). Demodokos’ solo-performance as *phorminx*-player with the accompaniment of a mute chorus is, as pointed out, a return to pre-epic practices of *hymnos* and encompasses both primary meanings of *aidos*. In other words, Demodokos’ emphasis on chorality in his words mirrors the actual performance in its framing.

³⁵ Nagy 2009/10, 79–93 (1§§188–223).

³⁶ Nagy 2008/09, 229 with n. 81 (2§91 with n. 81) and Ch. 4, esp. 546–572 (4§§181–246); cf. also Nagy 2009/10, 278–308 (2§§385–456); 1996a, 64–65. On the connection between pattern-weaving and poetry, cf. Bierl 2001, 230 with n. 345; on its connection with dance, 158 n. 137; 236 n. 362 (Engl. 2009a, 201 with n. 345, 133 n. 137, 207 n. 362).

³⁷ On *hymnos* and the concept of totality, cf. Nagy 2008/09, 189–191, 196–202, 208–246 (2§§8–12, 22–28, 46–117).

formula, as represented in the later *Homeric Hymns*.³⁸ In the epic perspective, however, the three hymns are not integrated in direct speech but are indirectly related by the narrator with an inset and dramatized speech of figures.³⁹ The very old, burlesque story of the gods is thus set in different frames and *en abyme*.

4 The Ongoing *agôn* between Demodokos and Odysseus—the Self-Referential Embedding of Athletics, Footrace, and Dancing

As Nagy further argues—and I concur—the second song of Demodokos is part of an ongoing *agôn* between Odysseus and his potentially dangerous hosts.⁴⁰ Subsumed within the competition of a *hymnos* not only choral dance and song but athletic disciplines too can be staged. In the Delian *Hymn to Apollo*, for example, boxing is mentioned (*Hymn. Hom.* 3.149). This fact is also reflected in the eighth book of the *Odyssey*.⁴¹ The *agôn* between the Phaeacians and Odysseus extends *de facto* from 8.46 until 13.23. Since Odysseus reacts in the first song (8.73–82) with tears instead of happiness and pleasure when he is confronted with himself and his own κλέος ἄφθιτον,⁴² Alkinoos tries to guide the *agôn* to the realm of athletics, of boxing, wrestling, jumping, and racing (*Od.* 8.100–103). At first, Odysseus does not want to compete. Only a severe insult from Euryalos makes him change his mind, and he wins the discus throw. Then, he challenges the young opponent to compete with him also with the fists, hands, and feet (*Od.* 8.205–214). Deeply

38 On this subject, cf. Nagy 2008/09, 313–342 (2§§274–331); 2009/10, 88–102 (1§§210–241). See my Appendix 1.

39 With this arrangement, the Homeric narrator imperceptibly merges with Demodokos, and his report, in turn, merges with his figures. The hymnic structure becomes clear through key words: in the first song, the invocation of the Muses is performed in narration; in the second, the *invocatio* is missing: the *hymnos* is acephalic; however, the hymnic structure is conveyed in narration through the word ἀνεβάλλετο (8.266) (on *anabolê* as a parallel concept to *prooimion*, cf. Nagy 1990, 354 and Egan 2006, esp. 55–57) as well as through the word ἀμφί with genitive (8.267); cf. Nagy 2009/10, 87–88 (1§208). In the third song, the encouragement to μεταβαίνειν (8.492) is acted out in dialogue; the singer begins from Zeus, a periphrasis of the call for inspiration. Although the three songs are recounted indirectly, each time a formula “This sang the singer!” stands at the end, which elsewhere is shown in direct speech. The missing invocation of the Muses is conditioned through the form of a report.

40 On the *agôn* between Demodokos and Odysseus, cf. Nagy 2009/10, 96–102 (1§§232–241); on the dangerous Phaeacians, cf. Rose 1969b. Cf. also Schmidt 1998, 202.

41 Krummen 2008, 20 also references the competitive program of the Pythian Games in Delphi.

42 Cf. Steiner 2003, 25–26.

offended, he even vows to compete with him in archery. The *agôn* is in danger of breaking out in pure violence and revenge.⁴³ Thus Odysseus announces that he will shrink back only from a foot-race because his wandering has enfeebled him too much (*Od.* 8.230–233)—his limbs are too weak and undone (τῷ μοι φίλα γυῖα λέλυνται, *Od.* 8.233).

At this point, Alkinoos tries to relieve the tension and settle the argument. Before, he had praised the Phaeacians' fame in wrestling. Now he changes direction and draws back from this competitive field, where he fears defeat at the hands of Odysseus. Instead, he says they would seek fame in racing—the contest his son Klytoneos just won (8.121–123)—and especially in all cultural refinements and comforts that might impress Odysseus.

- 246 οὐ γὰρ πυγμαῖοι εἰμὲν ἀμύμονες οὐδὲ παλαισταί,
 ἀλλὰ ποσὶ κραιπνῶς θέομεν καὶ νηυσὶν ἄριστοι,
 αἰεὶ δ' ἡμῖν δαῖς τε φίλη κίθαρίς τε χοροὶ τε
εἴματά τ' ἐξήμοιβά λοετρά τε θερμά καὶ εὐναί.
 250 ἀλλ' ἄγε, Φαιήκων βητάρμονες ὅσοι ἄριστοι,
παίσατε, ὥς χ' ὁ ξείνος ἐνίσπη οἴσι φίλοισιν,
 οἴκαδε νοστήσας, ὅσσον περιγινόμεθ' ἄλλων
ναυτιλίῃ καὶ ποσὶ καὶ ὄρχηστῷ καὶ ἀοιδῇ.

For we are not faultless boxers or wrestlers, but in the foot race we run swiftly, and we are the best seamen; and ever to us is the banquet dear, and the lyre, and the dance, and changes of raiment, and warm baths, and the couch. But come now, all ye that are the best dancers of the Phaeacians, make sport, that the stranger may tell his friends on reaching home how far we surpass others in seamanship and in fleetness of foot, and in the dance and in song. (Translation Murray 1919).

Od. 8.246–253

Besides the ship that Odysseus needs for his passage to Ithaca, now arts, performance, and running are highlighted as the domain of Phaeacians, and *khoreia* is the key to understanding the second song of Demodokos that follows.⁴⁴ Racing

⁴³ Only Schmidt 1998, 200–201 views this crisis as similarly dramatic.

⁴⁴ The underlining of the Greek text tracks the key theme of choral self-reference, which has not yet been recognized in this context. Cf. the markings of the entire text in my Appendix 2. I list here the conventions followed: choral and hymnic self-references, performance: underlined; binding and releasing: in dark blue; bed, sexual love, anger, emotion, trickery, casting: in green; seeing and spying: bold only; movement and forms of transition: in red; laughing: in light blue;

and χοροί are often connected in an agonistic context. Swiftmess of the feet, a quality Odysseus obviously lacks, is also fundamental for the χορός. While the *phorminx* of the singer is fetched from the palace, the arena, bearing the same name as the dance itself (ἄγων, χορός, cf. *Od.* 8.259–260), is smoothed by *aisymnêtai* (258), a sort of judge whose designation is normally used for judicial professionals of a court settlement.⁴⁵ Not only does the scene bridge time⁴⁶ but the performance context is also focused by key words.

The dancers are young men, who join the chorus as πρωθῆβαι (263) or ephebes, and experience education in *khoreia*.⁴⁷ Odysseus, on the other hand, is older and reduced to the role of spectator who admires the radiance of the youths' fast feet (265). Demodokos' second song is again embedded in a performative framework (256–265; 367–384) in which the activity of *khoreia* is stressed. At the end, Odysseus pays respect to his host for the performative accomplishment: Alkinoos boasted of it, and this boast was not in vain. Odysseus is deeply impressed (382–384). The presentation of a *hymnos* attains the necessary *τέρψις* and *χάρις* which express reciprocity between singer and public.⁴⁸ By showing the adequate aesthetic reaction, Odysseus is received as guest, and he obtains the warm baths and the delicate garments that the Phaeacians enjoy so much. Through this friendly reception he regains his sex appeal, a fact that Nausicaa will later reconfirm (457–462). After the third song (499–520), Odysseus reacts with open lamentation; now he has completely regained his identity and is opening himself up.

In the lines that follow, Odysseus competes with the Phaeacians in the realm of singing. His *Apologoi* in books 9 to 12 represent an artistic performance which corresponds to the monumental Homeric tradition that developed in the ninth/eighth centuries BC, and came to its final stage in Athens with the reforms of Hip-

judicial terminology: in orange. For further passages linked with the key theme of *khoreia*, see my Appendix 4.

45 As adjudicator and διαλλακτής, Solon, for example, is also an *aisymnêtês* (from αἴσα and μυνήσκω); later in the work of Aristotle, *aisymnêtês* is the designation for a magistrate who, as an elected tyrant, must try to create balance. Elsewhere such “Wieder-ins Lot-Bringer” (“rectifiers”) are also called καταρτιστῆρες or εὐθυντῆρες (cf. Meier 1980, 102 n. 26 and Index s.v. “Wieder-ins Lot-Bringer”). Smoothing out the dance floor (8.260) is the concrete counterpart to settling the dispute.

46 Mattes 1958, 97: “(es entsteht dadurch eine Zwangspause, die mit dem Glätten des Tanzplatzes notdürftig ausgefüllt wird—von den Phäaken, nicht vom Dichter)”. (“[T]hrough this, a mandatory break occurs, which is provisionally filled in with smoothing down the dance floor—by the Phaeacians, not by the poet.”)

47 On this subject, cf. Bierl 2001, esp. 12, 34 and Index (Engl. 2009a, esp. 2, 22).

48 Cf. Bierl 2001, 140–150 (Engl. 2009a, 116–125).

parchus.⁴⁹ After the performance of the third song, he is ready to reveal his identity: “I am Odysseus, son of Laertes!” (9.19). Then he presents his story of adventures ‘like a singer’ (ὡς ὄτ’ αἰιδός 11.368). He is compared to a singer only because his performance takes place in the recitation of the formalized hexameter.

5 The Second Song of Demodokos As Metapoetic Reflection of an *agôn* between an Older and Newer Form of Epic: Fettering, *khoreia*, and Mobility

Finally, we come to the second song of Demodokos.⁵⁰ Here I suggest that Demodokos refers back to the quarrel with Euryalos and to the ill will that developed out of ὕβρις and ἀτιμία immediately before our song. And metapoetically it refers to and anticipates the ongoing *agôn* between the singer Demodokos and Odysseus. Projected onto the mythic burlesque of the gods, it deals with two opposing concepts of narrative poetry. The old form is represented by the Phaeacians in general, who symbolize love and romances (εὐναί), luxury, festivity, music, mobility, χοροί, and swiftness of movement of the feet (8.246–249); these features are personified by Ares and Aphrodite. The newer one is the actual Homeric tradition after the regulation of the Panathenaia, embodied by the old and rather slow Odysseus and, in the story itself, by the lame and ugly Hephaestus.

Furthermore, our song reflects the conflict between two cultural worlds, an older and unregulated one, in terms of anthropology and poetology, and a later, regulated one. In the song, one key motif is enchaining (δεῖν). The fluid form of hymn, which is normally associated with ῥεῖν, ῥόος, and ῥέα and which by functioning as a ‘connector’ establishes the easily flowing link between diverse themes and scenes, is tied up by the more rigid form of a monumental performance in the style of recitation which corresponds to the mode of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as well as of the *Apologoi* of Odysseus.⁵¹ This long, embedded narration in the first person generates an inner epic reflecting the outer frame in the third person.

⁴⁹ Cf. Nagy 2009/10, 96–102 (1§§232–241).

⁵⁰ For a representation of the text with a special mark-up of the key motifs, cf. my Appendix 2; for the structure of the song, cf. my Appendix 3.

⁵¹ For the fluid form, cf. Nagy 2008/09, 191 (2§13). On the *hymnos* as “connector,” cf. Nagy 2008/09, 312 (2§270).

In addition, the poetological discourse in Demodokos' second song is overlaid with anthropological, cultural, and judicial layers. Moreover, the concept of fettered gods is blended into the story.⁵² Ares as well as Aphrodite suffer such a binding in the cultic and mythic context.⁵³ Both usually form a couple, whereas the marriage between Aphrodite and Hephaestus is only rarely documented. From the union of Aphrodite with Ares Harmonia is born, the personification of balance and reconciliation, which should be achieved here also.⁵⁴ Fettering and releasing gods and their statues express the alternation between normality and exceptionality. The dangerous gods are enchained in order to 'bind' or to avert them, while during festivals of exception they are released.⁵⁵ The *utopia* of Hades very often represents the period before civilization in a subversive manner. Accordingly, the idea of an uninhibited love is at least entertained in such a scenario (cf. εὐνάί, *Od.* 8.249).⁵⁶

Freedom is symbolized by the lightness of the feet in the dance of the youths. After the clandestine intercourse with the god of war is announced to Hephaestus, the lame cripple, in due course he invents a ruse: he fabricates invisible chains, which are attached to the bed as a trap. Odysseus also unnoticeably transforms epic poetry into its new and fixed shape later on. Sexual instinct makes the lovers go into the trap after the god of forging has feigned his absence. Now Hephaestus particularly seeks public testimony, and the emerging judicial practice of *μοιχεία* is interwoven into this discourse.⁵⁷ The secret couple is caught in *flagrante delicto* and will be bound naked.

In this web of artificial threads, they are exposed in a kind of fixed *tableau*. Their free mobility is 'frozen' into a close-up, and they cannot move or raise their limbs, a symbol which also refers to *khoreia* and sexuality (298). The cuckold is angry (304), a trait that very well describes Odysseus, the 'angry man' *par excel-*

52 Cf. Meuli 1975; also Merkelbach 1971.

53 Cf. Burkert 1960, 134 n. 9; on Aphrodite, cf. Burkert 1985, 152–156; on Ares, 169–170. *Il.* 5.385–391 recounts how Ares is bound in a bronze jar by Ephialtes and Otos until he is finally freed by Hermes after thirteen months. Incidentally, Hermes himself occasionally adopts the function of binding dangerous gods. In the free, mythic portrayal, he could thus play as meaningful a role here. I thank A. Petrovic for access to the manuscript of his lecture "Images in Chains: the Case of Ares" (2007).

54 Cf. Nagy 1990a, 145 n. 45.

55 On Kronos and Saturnus in myth and cult of the Kronia/Saturnalia in the context of festivals of exception, cf. Versnel 1993, 89–227, esp. 105, 114, 131, 142, 153–154.

56 In the aristocratic, epic version, which elevates everything to the level of the sublime, this trait is largely refracted as romanticism and adoration. Sexual propriety is prevalent in the Phaeacian world too, which Nausicaa especially embodies. The inversion of this theme is exhibited in the form of adultery.

57 Cf. Alden 1997.

lence.⁵⁸ Hephaestus summons the gods and announces that the chains put an end to adultery, and he calls for recompense demanding the dowry back (318–319). Divorce, another judicial procedure, would ordinarily follow this action. Furthermore, fettering implies force that triggers further counter violence. In the regulation of μοιχεία, the cuckold can kill on the spot a rival who has been caught *in flagrante*.

For Hephaestus, the circumstances are ἀγέλαστα, since he has nothing to laugh about (307). All of the manuscripts and Aristarchus have γελαστά, while only one old variant has ἀγέλαστα. In performance, the difference between ἔργ’ ἀγέλαστα and ἔργα γελαστά, if any, would be subtle, and none would exist in *scriptio continua* (ΕΡΓΑΓΕΛΑΣΤΑ), another way to convey the ambivalence.⁵⁹ What is bitter for him offers the public an occasion for laughter, as will be seen later in the analysis. It is a playful laughter, which sometimes targets consequences and can be used to reprehend and to punish.⁶⁰ At the same time, Hephaestus runs the risk of being laughed at himself. The θεοὶ ῥεῖα ζῶντες (*Od.* 4.805 *inter alia*), who have come to serve as the general public, burst into the famous Homeric laughter (*Od.* 8.326)—a feature of the primordial and easy-going world when even laughing has not yet been regulated. Moreover, they formulate a kind of bourgeois morality from which the song has sprung forth according to Uvo Hölscher:⁶¹ “Evil deeds do not lead to any good!” and “The slow gets hold of the fast!” (329). In these gnomic sentences, we again recognize the key themes that could be read as proof of a new and anti-aristocratic attitude.⁶² The swift man is disabled, the slow one catches up with the fast and defeats him in an *agôn*, and the *khoreia*, which constitutes the fluid form of hymn, has to yield to a regulated poetics.

The specifically burlesque scene, the frivolous dialogue between Apollo and Hermes (334–342), is set in a new frame. Hermes, as the phallic trickster god who disrupts and transcends all boundaries, but who as *epitermios* also watches over boundaries and as *katokhos* can bind evil-doers by keeping them beneath the earth via magical spells, fits well here.⁶³ When he is asked whether he would not love to lie, even in chains, with golden Aphrodite in bed (335–337), his answer is more than affirmative: even if three times as many or innumerable chains were to hold him, and all of the gods and goddesses who now stay away out of shame

58 Cf. Bierl 2004, esp. 106–107, 110 with n. 25–26, 115, 120–121.

59 Cf. de Jong 2001, 208.

60 Cf. Halliwell 1991, esp. 282, 286–287.

61 Cf. Hölscher 1988, 271; cf. also Muth 1992, 19.

62 Cf. also Schmidt 1998, who reads the song as “Ausdruck [einer] ‘Theologie im Umbruch’” (“an expression of a theology in upheaval”) (217).

63 Schmidt 1998, 210–211 does not view this second scene of laughter as distinct from the first—here, too, he assumes aggressive mockery of Ares.

were to watch them, he would love to do so (338–342). The result is roaring laughter (343). This means laughter with the exceptional god, a “playful laughter”⁶⁴ which does not do any harm. Only Poseidon, Odysseus’ enemy, tries to achieve Ares’ release by promising that Ares will pay a sum in compensation (344–348). Hephaestus, however, responds that such bails are futile. He wonders how he could ‘bind’ Poseidon (the *terminus* is transferred to the judicial formula) once Ares had escaped the fetters if he should not fulfill Poseidon’s pledge (350–353). Poseidon answers that he would guarantee with his person (355–356). In this story we can see how an archaic judicial system is replaced by a more developed, modern one. Bails can also ‘bind’ or oblige others. As an old father god, Poseidon vouches for a settlement, together with Zeus who stands above all. In this way, the anger too will be bound, that is, a settlement will be achieved by payments.

Then the couple is released (*Od.* 8.359–360)—the danger for both is over. Ares and Aphrodite, the embodiment of Phaeacian life-style, are set free again, the chains are removed from their feet, and the couple goes off in different directions; while Ares goes to Thrace (361), Aphrodite departs to her temple on Paphos. In a long and typical scene, we see how she is bathed, anointed, dressed, and prepared for new adventures of love (362–366).⁶⁵

Demodokos seems to believe that he might still stick to the archaic order with such a solution as put forward by Poseidon.⁶⁶ And in the concrete situation, the story mirrors Alkinoos’ endeavors to reach a settlement.⁶⁷ Odysseus will then defeat him in his regulated long song. Through his recitative mode he fascinates the Phaeacians. Demodokos’ burlesque story seems to refer back to an old fairy tale, in which the wife of a blacksmith cheats on her partner. The cuckold glues them together with magical spell. Then he chases them through the streets.⁶⁸ Moreover, δειν is a *terminus technicus* of magic spells to harm other people. Instead of ‘fixing them down to the Underworld,’ as happens on curse tablets, Hephaestus and the blacksmith of the fairy tale bind them in concrete terms and

⁶⁴ Cf. Halliwell 1991, 282.

⁶⁵ These are the values of the easy-living Phaeacians (8.249). The warm baths and clothes are then granted to Odysseus immediately after the reconciliation (8.438–456). The reference (8.363–366) to the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (58–63) should be evaluated less as marked intertextuality than as a typical and ever recurring scene in the formulaic language of Homer, with which the oral singer describes Aphrodite’s homecoming and new, erotic preparations. On the cluster of references, cf. also Böhme 1970, 440 n. 2 (in relation to *Iliad* 14).

⁶⁶ As in a hymn, the song subtly follows a cyclical logic. Ares and Aphrodite feel no shame whatsoever, nor are they condemned. Both continue acting in accordance with their characters. Some elements suggest that Aphrodite in her radiance is hymnically extolled in the titillating scene.

⁶⁷ Cf. also Schmidt 1998, 211–212.

⁶⁸ Cf. Petersmann 1981, 52.

immobilize them by doing so. In addition, blacksmiths are often associated with gnomes, dactyls, and *telkhines* who are called *goêtes* and *magoi* in numerous instances.⁶⁹ Hephaestus as master blacksmith is one of these. In magical spells found on curse tablets, the victims are bound to Hades, and direct violence is mediated; in our song, we find a sort of aetiology of such a judicial mediation of violence in the presence of *aisymnêtai*.

The hymn triggers happiness in Odysseus, and this is Demodokos' goal (367–369). After the song follows a detailed description of the chorus of ephebes who accompany it. The scene was probably acted out in a mute way. Of Alkinoos' three sons, Klytoneos has already won the foot race (*Od.* 8.123). Now the father calls for Halios and Laodamas to dance a solo, since nobody would wish to compete with them (370–371). They are the chorus leaders, the stars, while the group of young dancers stands around to admire them. Somehow they are analogous to the two prima donnas Hagesichora and Agido in Alcman's great Louvre-Partheneion (fr. 1 Davies = 3 Calame).⁷⁰ And we might wonder whether Halios has something to do with Helios, who serves as a spy and plaintiff. The sun and moon, which symbolize radiance (*Od.* 7.84–85), play an important role among the Phaeacians.

69 In a fragment from the anonymous *Phoronis* (7th/6th cent. BC, fr. 2 Bernabé), the Idaean Dactyls, the inventors of iron and Hephaestus' art of metalworking, are identified as γόητες; ἔνθα γόητες/ Ἰδαῖοι Φρύγες ἄνδρες ὀρέστεροι οἰκί' ἔναιον,/ Κέλμις Δαμναμενούς τε μέγας καὶ ὑπέρβιος Ἄκμων,/ εὐπάλαμοι θεράποντες ὀρείης Ἀδρηστείης,/ οἱ πῶτοι τέχνης πολυμήτιος Ἡφαίστιο/ εὖρον ἐν οὐρείησι νάπαις ἰόντα σίδηρον/ ἐς πῦρ τ' ἤνεγκαν καὶ ἀριπρεπὲς ἔργον ἔτευξαν. "There the Idaean sorcerers, the mountain men of Phrygia, had their housing: Heater, the great Hammerer and the giant Anvil, the skillful servants of Mount Adrasteia, who were the first to find dark iron in the mountainous valleys with the arts of crafty Hephaestus, and threw it into the fire and forged well-finished armor from it." Cf. also Pherecydes *FGrHist* 3 F 47 = scholia to Apoll. Rhod. I 1129: Δάκτυλοι Ἰδαῖοι| ἕξ καὶ πέντε φασὶ τούτους εἶναι, δεξιούς μὲν τοὺς ἄρσενας, ἀριστεροὺς δὲ τὰς θηλείας. Φερεκύδης δὲ τοὺς μὲν δεξιούς εἴκοσι λέγει, τοὺς δὲ εὐνύμους τριάκοντα δύο. γόητες δὲ ἦσαν καὶ φαρμακεῖς· καὶ δημιουργοὶ σιδήρου λέγονται εἶναι πῶτοι καὶ μεταλλεῖς γενέσθαι. ὠνομάσθησαν δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς μητρὸς Ἰδης, ἀριστεροὶ μὲν, ὡς φησι Φερεκύδης, οἱ γόητες αὐτῶν, οἱ δὲ ἀναλύοντες δεξιοί. "The Idaean Dactyls: it is said that there are six and five, the right ones male, the left ones female. Pherecydes says that the right ones are twenty in number, and the left thirty-two. They were *goêtes* and magicians. It is said that they are the first blacksmiths and that they became miners. They were named after their mother Ida; the left ones, as Pherecydes says, are the sorcerers among them, the right ones are the releasers." Cf. Bierl 2009b, 30–31; Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1895, 241–243 (*Kl. Schr.* V.2, 31–33); on the use of καταδεῖν on curse tablets, cf. Graf 1996, 110–111; on love binding-magic, *ibid.* 127, 161. Thus Hephaestus tellingly goes as the 'injured party, who takes revenge' to Lemnos, to the Sintians (8.294), who are labeled *goêtes* and are connected to this archaic world of Hephaestus' magic. According to Eratosthenes (*Scholia* bT *ad Il.* 1.594), the name of the Sintians, who as evil γόητες inflict injuries, comes from σίνειν.

70 Cf. Bierl 2001, 45–54 (Engl. 2009a, 31–38); 2007. On the cosmic dimension of the Partheneion, cf. Ferrari 2008.

Both choral leaders take the ball in alternation and throw it up into the air. One leans backwards and tosses it high up, and the other catches it with ease, still floating, before he reaches the ground (*Od.* 8.372–376). This scene is full of choral self-references. The ball as σφαῖρα symbolizes the φιλότης that has been the focus of the inner tale, and the tossing to the clouds and the floating express the playful freedom of bodily movements.⁷¹ The alternation of throwing and catching the ball could accompany the act of μεταβάλλειν, which is a feature of the old hymnic poetics. One leaps from one action to the next and interweaves the whole into a performance. Finally, both dance on the ground in reciprocal exchanges, while the chorus groups around the dancing floor and rhythmically claps to their movements (377–380).

6 The Song As Visual Node of the Monumental Web of the *Odyssey*

The story of Ares and Aphrodite, which is framed three times, forms a node of all the threads that look backward and forward in the plot; by means of the invisible chains forged by the artisan *par excellence*, the web is woven or knitted together in a kind of visual *tableau* which reflects the total monumental network on the exemplary level of the Olympian gods.

At the decisive point in the narrative, these chains tie up the threads of the epic and arrest the action; thus, this frozen picture of both enfeathered lovers meta-poetically refers to and encompasses the entire *Odyssey*. *Hymnos* means ‘woven texture’ and our ‘performance as text’. In a *mise en abyme*, the plot comes to a standstill and only moves forward in dynamic processes after the release of the couple.

It is well known that Homeric epic connects single scenes into a complex web. Nonetheless, the single passages knitted together in a historical process remain visible by certain breaches and inconsistencies. Moreover, one proceeds along the thread of action from scene to scene according to a visual and associative poetics.⁷² In the form of a diachronic retrojection into the poetic past, such a frozen picture is represented as an immobile artifact that is released again into action immediately.

⁷¹ On the ball game in choral dance, cf. the references in Schuol 2006, 148 n. 22. Likewise, two acrobatic solo-dancers appear in a similar choral configuration in the Iliadic shield’s description of the cosmos (*Il.* 18.593–606).

⁷² Bierl 2004.

Recent research has shown clearly that the song of Ares and Aphrodite has numerous associations to the plot at various levels.⁷³ There are intra- and extra-discursive references to Odysseus. In the direct pragmatic context, the resentment and the quarrel with Euryalos are put on a different level to be acted out and settled.⁷⁴ Laughter resolves the tension and creates reconciliation. The story also foreshadows the themes of compensation and hospitality that are so relevant for the adventure stories as well.⁷⁵

Odysseus accepts the Phaeacian superiority in the realm of the old χοροί (382–384). In return for his compliments he receives compensation from Euryalos in the form of a precious sword (396–415), clothes, and warm baths (387–392, 424–456). These gifts are characteristic of the sensual people of the beyond, and they grant him sex appeal. Nausicaa says farewell to him for the last time (457–468), while her tender love as well as a potential marriage with her have been thematized before. Odysseus is an underdog, an almost lame and stiff person who is in need of mobility. At the very end, he reaches his goal of receiving passage to Ithaca. His previous anger is compensated and sublimated, then eventually played out. At the same time, the stranger will soon bind his hosts in the realm of hospitality. Furthermore, the song anticipates the themes of sex and suitors; most of all, it brings into focus the key motifs of marriage and marital fidelity. According to Froma Zeitlin, the conjugal bed is the decisive symbol in the *Odyssey*.⁷⁶ In a poetics of “traditional referentiality,” this σῆμα plays a central role in the narrative.⁷⁷ Penelope, still faithful to her husband, will act in front of the suitors to some extent like Aphrodite when she tries to elicit gifts from them (*Od.* 18.158–301, esp. 18.189–196 and 18.209–213).

Above all, the judicial crisis of the confused affairs at home is introduced soon thereafter. Penelope might become unfaithful or could remarry, since the time limit Odysseus had set when he left her has been exceeded. In addition, the themes of the bed and conjugal chastity foreshadow the central recognition scene, the τέλος of the whole narration.

⁷³ Rose 1969a lists 17 motifs. Thereafter Braswell 1982; Newton 1987; Brown 1989; Olson 1989; Pötscher 1990; Zeitlin 1995, 128–136; Alden 1997; Schmidt 1998; de Jong 2001, 206–208; Lentini 2006, 76–77; Rinon 2006, 211–212.

⁷⁴ Braswell 1982 and Schmidt 1998.

⁷⁵ Most 1989; Renger 2006, 200–277; Bierl 2008.

⁷⁶ Zeitlin 1995, 128–136.

⁷⁷ Foley 1999. Cf. Nagy 1990b, 203, with the important correction in the online version: between “... same line)” and “specified,” insert “of the marital bed; similarly, she ‘recognizes’ (ἀναγνώσῃ xix 250) as *sēmata* (same line) the clothes....” Neither Foley nor Zeitlin 1995 acknowledge Nagy’s work on σῆμα 1990b, 202–222 (originally published as an article in *Arethusa* 1983, 35–55), except in a most tangential way.

In a simile the suitors, just like the two lovers Ares and Aphrodite, are caught in a net like fish (22.383–389). Moreover, the song deals with a suit, a case of litigation, with self-administered justice as well as with violence and its mediation. In addition, the hymn focuses upon the central motif of potential infidelity, which is also reflected in the foil of Clytemnestra and Helen during the *Odyssey*, and the theme of a contest between a slow and a swift god refers back to the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles narrated in Demodokos' first song. This altercation is reflected in Odysseus' disgruntlement with Euryalos. Furthermore, the net of threads recalls a wedding veil or the fabric that Penelope weaves for Laertes, and the invisible web 'pours' out (cf. χεῖν 8.278, 282) and spreads around the bed like fog or night. As I pointed out, this song deals with the birth of civilization and morality as well.

The hymn of Ares and Aphrodite represents a further step into the past compared to the beginning and end of the Trojan myth, and introduces Odysseus' story and his actual status in an indirect way. Such a fabric is constituted by innumerable threads that lead in all different directions. Moreover, it is well known that in a mythical example the references are rarely unequivocal. Accordingly, our close-up exhibits ambiguous roles and attitudes. Odysseus himself pursues double standards concerning marriage and fidelity. Over a long period of time he has acted like Ares (cf. 8.518) in the realm of war, particularly as a swift-footed hero, as well as *in sexualibus*.

The hymn suggests that Odysseus should not only be paralleled with Hephaestus, but that he stands between Ares and Hephaestus, between βία and τέχνη, honesty and guile, between an old and a new code of ethics, between aristocratic values and profit seeking. After his mental and physical recreation, he aligns himself more with Ares when he slaughters the suitors in an Iliadic passage in the twenty-second book.

Binding will be a further key motif that Odysseus will also use in the regulated form of the epic report of his adventures. To some extent, our song of Ares and Aphrodite integrates Orphic and pre-Homeric traditions that refer to cosmic love and cyclicity.⁷⁸ Moreover, the couple Ares and Aphrodite is not only immobilized by the fetters; also, their love finds its concrete expression in the absolute union of a sphere. Empedocles, who has been associated with Orphic concepts,⁷⁹ will introduce *Philotês* and *Neikos* as the principles of cosmic processes. *Neikos* dissolves the union of love, symbolized in the ball or *sphaira*⁸⁰ until we return to the maximum of *Philotês* and Love after one turn. In the same way, the loosening

⁷⁸ Cf. Nagy 2009/10, 87–88 (1§208).

⁷⁹ Riedweg 1995 and others.

⁸⁰ Cf. Empedocles fr. 27–30 DK.

of the fetters dissolves the total union of a cosmic bond and helps love to begin again on the basis of quarrel. Finally, the story of our song also has aetiological traits.⁸¹

7 *Khoreia* and Mobility—the Last Time

By watching the uninhibited and graceful movements of the young men, the aged Odysseus regains some of his former radiance and youth. Nausicaa, the young girl in the χορός (where she experiences her transition to an adult woman) had helped him already to regain his sexual charisma. The χορός is indeed the domain *par excellence* of the Phaeacians. Thus, Nausicaa and her brothers are constantly associated with it. In the end, the hinted marriage between Nausicaa and Odysseus does not take place, since the young girl would not really suit the non-dancer Odysseus.⁸²

In Odysseus' performance as singer of his own adventures in the diachronically later form, movement is frozen, bound, and formalized. On the contrary, Demodokos, as the ideal model of Homer or the Homeric tradition, thus belongs to a remote past. Only Phemios at Odysseus' home in Ithaca is a similar *aoidos*, who sings to the *phorminx* and leads an accompanying chorus (*Od.* 23.133–134; cf. 1.150–155).⁸³ However, his songs are comparable only to the stage of the first and third songs of Demodokos.⁸⁴

81 Cf. τὰ πρῶτ' ἐμίγησαν *Od.* 8.268; *contra* de Jong 2001, 206: “The story is told *ab ovo* (cf. τὰ πρῶτα) and chronologically.”

82 Cf. the remark by Olga Davidson, cited in Nagy 2009/10, 90 n. 27 (1§216 n. 27).

83 Cf. also *Od.* 1.325–327 and 22.344–353.

84 On Phemios, Demodokos, and Odysseus, cf. also Krummen 2008 from a narratological and ‘poetological’ perspective; the singer scenes would serve the whole narrative for the purpose of broadening the perspective, systematizing, and ranking other narrative strands in the tradition. In her opinion, Demodokos' songs about Troy function as a “Prooimion der Apologoi des Odysseus” (“prologue to the *Apologoi* of Odysseus”) (22). On the second song, cf. *ead.* 20–21. Note her concise conclusion (21): “Insofern die Verführung der Aphrodite durch Ares auf diejenige der Helena durch Paris verweist, die den troianischen Krieg ausgelöst hat, kann das zweite Demodokoslied auch als Fortsetzung des ersten betrachtet werden und hat somit auch eine poetologische Funktion.” (“In so far as the seduction of Aphrodite by Ares refers to that of Helen by Paris, which sparked the Trojan War, the second song of Demodokos can also be viewed as a continuation of the first, and thus has a poetological function too.”) Besides such poetic, narrative, and technical functions, I stress here a simultaneous metapoetic function. Why according to Radke 2007, esp. 43 n. 137 and 66, such a “metareflexive Bezugnahme” (“metareflexive reference”) to the preceding tradition should not be legitimate escapes me, unless one follows a seemingly closed, Aristotelian construct like the one she adopts from her teacher Arbogast Schmitt.

It is interesting how this unusual diachronic permeability comes to an abrupt end at the conclusion of the *Phaiakis*. Despite the exceptional chronotope of the Phaeacians, there is one last time when the archaic freedom of the body and the erotic gaiety of an almost Orphic state of mysteries without restraint are brought to an end. Men from this point on are no longer able to undertake such a journey into the past. The specific marking in the narration serves as proof that the song has to be seen in the diachronic perspective. As I have noted before, the dancing movements of *khoreia* are associated with the mobility of ships that Odysseus needs in order to come home. The description of Odysseus' passage on the Phaeacian vessels with its tragic end is a negative aetiology, just like the replacement of a fluid tradition and chorality.⁸⁵

After Demodokos' third song and the peaceful and gay settlement with the Phaeacians, Alkinoos already hints at the threat of danger from Poseidon, Odysseus' enemy, for he mentions an old prediction that a ship carrying out passage into the historical world would be destroyed by Poseidon out of rage; furthermore, the god would draw high mountains around the city in order to make impossible the transition to life from the nowhere-land of death. Despite these warnings, and under the influence of the new, regulated song of adventures, they run the risk and grant safe conduct to Odysseus. However, after the hero has been dropped off in Ithaca, Poseidon protests, and Zeus is responsive to his pleas.

The ship returns quickly, and when it is already very close to the shore of Scheria turns into an immobile, solid rock for all the Phaeacians to see. In a very visual scene full of theatricality, the gliding boat is petrified (13.155–169).⁸⁶ The language clearly refers back to Demodokos' second song. Poseidon arrives at Scheria in anger, like Hephaestus to the bed—the fast movement is again expressed by the formula βῆ δ' ἵμεναι (13.160; cf. 8.277, 287, 303). After he makes the ship freeze and roots it into the bottom of the sea, the onlookers cry out: “Who has tied up our speedy ship (ἐπέδησεν 13.168)?” Movement congeals into a close-up upon which the gaze of the intra-discursive spectator and the extra-discursive listener focuses, and Zeus grants the embankment with rocks.

Alkinoos still tries hard to avert the inevitable fate by sacrificing bulls to the god in order to appease him. At this point, the narration stops. Yet we can be sure that the second part of the prediction also materialized. The infinitive ἀμφικαλύψειν, which turns up repeatedly at the emphatic position of the end of the verse (13.152, 158, 177, 183), underlines the process of concealment. The unfolding mountains throw themselves around the land like a veil and cast it into oblivion. We become witnesses to the final occurrence of an open passage

⁸⁵ Cf. de Jong 2001, 321.

⁸⁶ Cf. also Nagy 2008/09, 590–592 (C§§4–7).

between the worlds. Accordingly, the long *agôn* of Book 8 shifts backward to a time when people still lived in a primordial existence and both poetry and men were still free and mobile. The boundary between death and life becomes impassable after Odysseus' return, and thus we skew forward in time again. At home, the hero can only tell about the former fluidity, the *khoreia*, and the different poetics, and Homer reports it by envisioning it only in epic breadth, in the new, regulated form of the *Odyssey*. The fame of the Phaeacians thus lives on, as Alkinoos had wished, while the song of Ares and Aphrodite reflects and foreshadows the process of the imminent petrification of epic poetry.

We could speculate about whether the Telchines, who reprehend Kallimachos enviously for not creating a continuous poem of monumental size (ἐν ἄεισμα διηλεκές, Callimachus *Aitia* fr. 1.3 Pf.), are not, as addressed in the song of Ares and Aphrodite by Demodokos, a remote reflection of Hephaestus and his *goês*-like companions. For they try to enchain, domesticate, and 'bind' the fluid hymn with magical spells, and the result is the regulated Homeric epic. Finally this process of fettering might even be equated with the transposition of oral poetry into the new medium of literacy.⁸⁷

8 Conclusion

Homeric poetry is the perfect field for a demonstration of diachronic shifts and anchorings. The example of Demodokos' second song has shown how diachronic perspectives can function in a metapoetic way. The Homeric tradition integrates the hymnic pre-stages of epic to focus on the decisive passage from the primordial past to the present. In a visual poetics, freezing and releasing are at the service of plot progression, and *khoreia*, the quintessential symbol of Greek mobility, is used to convey a sense of fluidity and of bodily freedom. Love, sex, legal practice, and song interact on all levels to produce this diachronic lapse into the remote past.

Diachronic awareness creates a deeper sense of the epic than appears to us merely in synchrony. The self-reference of the epic singer Demodokos can only be explained by a diachronic view, since his choral and citharoedic performance does not comport with the historical reality in synchronic terms. The poem literally skews across the track of time. Since the Phaeacians are the last station in Odysseus' mythic adventure, it is suitable that at this specific point the *Odyssey* shift backward in time to a utopian past and a previous performance practice, as well as forward in time to the present and even the future, when epic is regulated

⁸⁷ Cf. Haase's interpretation 2007, 45–63 on the Sirens, with 55 on binding.

by a fixed hexameter and delivered in a recitative mode. Moreover, in the “diachronic skewing”⁸⁸ the singer produces a visual *tableau* which forms a narrative node of all the threads that look forward and backward. The invisible chains bind the plot in a *hymnos* set apart from the main plot. As in a *mise en abyme*, this intricate network of fetters reflects the web of the rest of the monumental epic poem.

Appendices

1. The Three Songs of Demodokos in a Diachronic Perspective

Level A: <i>Hymnos</i> 1/ Homeric Hymns	2nd Song	
Level B: <i>Hymnos</i> 2/ Epic <i>Kyklos</i>	1st Song	3rd Song
Level C: Regulated Epic	---> <i>Apologoi</i> of Odysseus <i>Od.</i> 9–12	

2. Text Hom. *Od.* 8.234–384: Demodokos’ Second Song and Its Framing

235 ὡς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῆ·
 Ἀλκίνοος δέ μιν οἶος ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπε·
 “ξείν', ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἀχάριστα μεθ' ἡμῖν ταῦτ' ἀγορεύεις,
 ἀλλ' ἐθέλεις ἀρετὴν σὴν φαινέμεν, ἧ τοι ὀπηδεῖ,
χῳόμενος, ὅτι σ' οὔτος ἀνὴρ ἐν ἀγῶνι παραστάς
νεΐκεσεν, ὡς ἂν σὴν ἀρετὴν βροτὸς οὐ τις ὄνοιτο,
 240 ὅς τις ἐπίσταιτο ἧσι φρεσὶν ἄρτια βάζειν·
 ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν ἐμέθεν ξυνίει ἔπος, ὄφρα καὶ ἄλλω
 εἵπης ἠρώων, ὅτε κεν σοῖσ' ἐν μεγάροισι
 δαινύη παρὰ σῆ τ' ἀλόχῳ καὶ σοῖσι τέκεσσι,
 ἡμετέρης ἀρετῆς μεμνημένος, οἷα καὶ ἡμῖν
 245 Ζεὺς ἐπὶ ἔργα τίθησι διαμπερὲς ἐξ ἔτι πατρῶν.
**οὐ γὰρ πυγμάχοι εἰμὲν ἀμύμονες οὐδὲ παλαισταί,
 ἀλλὰ ποσὶ κραιπνῶς θέομεν καὶ νηυσὶν ἄριστοι,
 αἰεὶ δ' ἡμῖν δαῖς τε φίλη κίθαρίς τε χοροὶ τε
 εἵματά τ' ἐξημοιβὰ λοετρά τε θερμὰ καὶ εὐνάι.**
 250 ἀλλ' ἄγε, Φαιήκων βητάρμονες ὅσοι ἄριστοι,

⁸⁸ Nagy 1990a, 21.

παίσατε, ὡς χ' ὁ ξεῖνος ἐνίσπη οἴσι φίλοισιν,
οἴκαδε νοστήσας, ὅσσον περιγινόμεθ' ἄλλων
ναυτιλίῃ καὶ ποσσὶ καὶ ὄρχηστῷ καὶ ἀοιδῇ.
 255 Δημοδόκῳ δέ τις αἶψα κιών φόρμιγγα λίγειαν
οἴσέτω, ἧ που κεῖται ἐν ἡμετέροισι δόμοισιν.”
ὡς ἔφατ' Ἀλκίνοος θεοεἰκελος, ὄρτο δὲ κῆρυξ
οἴσων φόρμιγγα γλαφυρὴν δόμου ἐκ βασιλῆος.
αἰσυνῆται δὲ κριτοὶ ἔννεα πάντες ἀνέσταν,
δῆμοιο, οἳ κατ' ἀγῶνα εὖ πρήσσεσκον ἕκαστα,
 260 λείηναν δὲ χορὸν, καλὸν δ' εὐρυναν ἀγῶνα.
κῆρυξ δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε φέρων φόρμιγγα λίγειαν
Δημοδόκῳ· ὁ δ' ἔπειτα κί' ἐς μέσον· ἀμφὶ δὲ κοῦροι
πρωθῆβαι ἴσταντο, δαήμονες ὄρχηθμοῖο,
πέπληγον δὲ χορὸν θεῖον ποσίν. αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
 265 μαρμαρυγὰς θηεῖτο ποδῶν, θαύμαζε δὲ θυμῷ.

So he spoke and they were all hushed in silence; [235] but Alcinous alone answered him and said: “Stranger, since not ungraciously dost thou speak thus in our midst, but art minded to shew forth the prowess which waits upon thee, in anger that yonder man came up to thee in the lists and taunted thee in a way in which no mortal would make light of thy prowess, [240] who knew in his heart how to speak fitly; come, now, hearken to my words, that thou mayest tell to another hero, when in thy halls thou art feasting with thy wife and children, and rememberest our skill, what feats [245] Zeus has vouchsafed to us from our fathers’ days even until now. For we are not faultless boxers or wrestlers, but in the foot race we run swiftly, and we are the best seamen; and ever to us is the banquet dear, and the lyre, and the dance, and changes of raiment, and warm baths, and the couch. [250] But come now, all ye that are the best dancers of the Phaeacians, make sport, that the stranger may tell his friends on reaching home how far we surpass others in seamanship and in fleetness of foot, and in the dance and in song. And let one go straightway [255] and fetch for Demodocus the clear-toned lyre which lies somewhere in our halls.” So spoke Alcinous the godlike, and the herald rose to fetch the hollow lyre from the palace of the king. Then stood up masters of the lists, nine in all, men chosen from out the people, who in their gatherings were wont to order all things aright. [260] They levelled a place for the dance, and marked out a fair wide ring, and the herald came near, bearing the clear-toned lyre for Demodocus. He then moved into the midst, and around him stood boys in the first bloom of youth, well skilled in the dance, and they smote the goodly dancing floor with their feet. And Odysseus [265] gazed at the twinklings of their feet and marvelled in spirit.

αὐτὰρ ὁ φορμίζων ἀνεβάλλετο καλὸν ἀείδειν
 ἄμφ' Ἄρεος **φιλότητος** εὖστεφάνου τ' Ἄφροδίτης,

ὡς τὰ πρῶτ' **ἐμίγησαν** ἐν Ἡφαιστοιο δόμοισι
λάθρη· πολλὰ δὲ δῶκε, **λέχος** δ' **ἤσχυνε** καὶ **εὐνήν**
 270 Ἡφαιστοιο ἄνακτος. ἄφαρ δέ οἱ ἄγγελος **ἦλθεν**
 Ἥλιος, ὃ σφ' **ἐνόησε** **μιγαζομένους φιλότητι**.

Ἡφαιστος δ' ὡς οὖν **θυμαλγέα μῦθον** ἄκουσε,
βῆ ῥ' ἴμεν ἐς χαλκεῶνα, κακὰ φρεσὶ βυσσοδομεῶν·
 ἐν δ' ἔθετ' ἀκμοθέτῳ μέγαν ἄκμονα, κόπτε δὲ **δεσμούς**
 275 **ἀρρήκτους ἀλύτους**, ὄφρ' **ἔμπεδον** αὐθι **μένειεν**.

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τεῦξε **δόλον κεχολωμένος** Ἄρει,
βῆ ῥ' ἴμεν ἐς **θάλαμον**, ὅθι οἱ φίλα **δέμνια** κεῖτο·
 ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' ἐρμίσιν **χέε δέσματα** κύκλω ἀπάντη,
 280 πολλὰ δὲ καὶ καθύπερθε μελαθρόφιν **ἔξεκέχυντο**,
 ἠΰτ' **ἀράχνια λεπτά**· τὰ γ' οὐ κέ τις **οὐδὲ ἴδοιτο**,
 οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρων· περὶ γὰρ **δολόεντα** τέτυκτο.

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ πάντα **δόλον** περὶ **δέμνια χεῦεν**,
εἶσατ' ἴμεν ἐς Λῆμνον, εὐκτίμενον πτολίεθρον,
 ἧ οἱ γαϊάων πολὺ φιλατὴ ἔστιν ἀπασέων.

285 **οὐδ' ἀλαὸς σκοπιῆν** εἶχε χρυσήνιος Ἄρης,
 ὡς **ἴδεν** Ἡφαιστον **κλυτοτέχνην** νόσφι κίοντα·
βῆ δ' ἴμεναι πρὸς δῶμα περικλυτοῦ Ἡφαιστοιο,
ἰχανῶν φιλότητος εὖστεφάνου Κυθερείης.
 ἧ δὲ νέον παρὰ **πατρὸς ἐρισθενέος Κρονίωνος**
 290 **ἐρχομένην** κατ' ἄρ' ἔξεθ'· ὃ δ' εἶσω δώματος ἦει
 ἔν τ' ἄρα οἱ φῦ χειρὶ ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζε·
 “δεῦρο, φίλη, **λέκτρονδε**, τραπέιομεν **εὐνηθέντε**·
 οὐ γὰρ ἔθ' Ἡφαιστος μεταδήμιος, ἀλλὰ που ἤδη
 οἴχεται ἐς Λῆμνον μετὰ Σίντιας ἀγριοφώνους.”

295 ὡς φάτο, τῇ δ' ἀσπαστὸν εἰείσατο **κοιμηθῆναι**.
 τῷ δ' ἐς **δέμνια βάντε** **κατέδραθον**· ἀμφὶ δὲ **δεσμοὶ**
τεχνήεντες ἔχυντο πολύφρονος Ἡφαιστοιο,
οὐδέ τι κινῆσαι μελέων ἦν οὐδ' ἀναεῖραι.
 καὶ τότε δὴ γίνωσκον, ὃ τ' **οὐκέτι φυκτὰ** πέλοντο.

300 **ἀγχίμολον δέ σφ' ἦλθε** περικλυτὸς ἀμφιγυήεις,
αὐτίς ὑποστρέψας πρὶν Λήμνου γαῖαν **ικέσθαι**·

Ἡέλιος γάρ οἱ **σκοπιήν** ἔχεν εἶπέ τε μῦθον.

[**βῆ δ' ἴμεναι** πρὸς δῶμα, φίλον **τετιμημένος** ἦτορ·]

305 **ἔσθη** δ' ἐν προθύροισι, **χόλος** δέ μιν **ἄγριος** ἦρει·
σμερδαλέον δ' ἐβόησε γέγωνέ τε πᾶσι θεοῖσι·

“Ζεῦ πάτερ ἦδ' ἄλλοι μάκαρες θεοὶ αἰὲν ἐόντες,
δεῦθ', ἴνα **ἔργ' ἀγέλαστα** καὶ οὐκ **ἐπιεικτὰ ἴδησθε**,
ὡς ἐμέ **χωλὸν ἐόντα** Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτη
αἰὲν **ἀτιμάζει**, **φιλέει** δ' αἰδηλὸν Ἄρηα,

310 οὐνεχ' ὁ μὲν καλὸς τε καὶ **ἀρτίπος**, αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ γε
ἠπεδανὸς γενόμην· ἀτὰρ οὐ τί μοι **αἴτιος** ἄλλος,
ἀλλὰ τοκῆε δύω, τῷ μὴ γείνασθαι ὄφελλον.

ἀλλ' **ὄψεσθ'**, ἴνα τῷ γε **καθεύδεται ἐν φιλοτήτι**,
εἰς ἐμὰ **δέμνια βάντες**· ἐγὼ δ' **ὀρόων ἀκάχημαι**.

315 οὐ μὲν σφραεσ ἔτ' ἔολπα μίνυνθά γε **κειέμεν** οὕτω,
καὶ μάλα περ **φιλέοντε**· τάχ' οὐκ ἐθελήσετον ἄμφω
εὔδειν· ἀλλὰ σφωε **δόλος** καὶ **δεσμός ἐρύξει**,

320 εἰς ὃ κέ μοι μάλα πάντα **πατήρ ἀποδῶσιν ἔεδνα**,
ὅσσα οἱ **ἐγγυάλιξα** κυνώπιδος εἵνεκα κούρης,
οὐνεκά οἱ **καλή** θυγάτηρ, ἀτὰρ οὐκ ἐχέθυμος.”

ὡς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' **ἀγέροντο** θεοὶ ποτὶ χαλκοβατῆς δῶ·

ἦλθε Ποσειδάων γαιήοχος, ἦλθ' ἐριοῦνης
Ἑρμείας, **ἦλθεν** δὲ ἄναξ ἐκάεργος Ἀπόλλων.
θηλύτεραι δὲ θεαὶ μένον **αἰδοῖ** οἴκοι ἐκάστη.

325 **ἔσταν** δ' ἐν προθύροισι θεοί, δωτῆρες ἑάων·

ἄσβεστος δ' ἄρ' ἐνώρτο γέλως μακάρεσσι θεοῖσι
τέχνας εἰσορόωσι πολύφρονος Ἡφαίστοιο.

ὦδε δέ τις εἶπεσκεν ἰδὼν ἐς πλησίον ἄλλον·

330 “οὐκ ἀρετᾶ κακὰ ἔργα· κηχάνει τοι **βραδὺς ὠκύν**,

ὡς καὶ νῦν Ἡφαιστος ἐὼν **βραδὺς εἶλεν** Ἄρηα,
ὠκύτατόν περ ἐόντα θεῶν, οἱ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσι,
χωλὸς ἐὼν, τέχνησι· τὸ καὶ **μοιχάγρι' ὀφέλλει**.”

ὡς οἱ μὲν τοιαῦτα πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἀγόρευον·

Ἑρμῆν δὲ προσέειπεν ἄναξ Διὸς υἱὸς Ἀπόλλων·

335 “Ἑρμεία Διὸς υἱέ, διάκτορε, δῶτορ ἑάων,

ἦ ρά κεν **ἐν δεσμοῖσ'** ἐθέλοις **κρατεροῖσι πιεσθεῖς**

εὐδαιν ἐν λέκτροισι παρὰ χρυσηῆ Ἀφροδίτῃ;”
 τὸν δ’ ἠμείβετ’ ἔπειτα διάκτορος Ἀργεῖφόντης·
 “αἶ γὰρ τοῦτο γένοιτο, ἄναξ ἑκατηβόλ’ Ἄπολλον.
 340 **δεσμοὶ** μὲν τρεῖς τόσσοι ἀπείρονες ἀμφὶς ἔχοιεν,
 ὑμεῖς δ’ **εἰσορόωτε** θεοὶ πᾶσαι τε θέαιναι,
 αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν **εὐδοίμι** παρὰ χρυσηῆ Ἀφροδίτῃ.”
 ὡς ἔφατ’, **ἐν δὲ γέλως ὤρτ’** ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν.

οὐδὲ Ποσειδάωνα **γέλως** ἔχε, λίσσето δ’ αἰεὶ
 345 “Ἥφαιστον κλυτοεργόν, ὅπως **λύσειεν** Ἄρηα·
 καὶ μιν φωνήσας ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·
 “**λύσον**· ἐγὼ δέ τοι αὐτὸν ὑπίσχομαι, ὡς σὺ κελεύεις,
τείσειν αἶσιμα πάντα μετ’ ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι.”

τὸν δ’ αὖτε προσέειπε περικλυτὸς ἀμφιγυήεις·
 350 “μή με, Ποσειδάων γαιήοχε, ταῦτα κέλευε·
 δειλαί τοι δειλῶν γε καὶ **ἐγγύαι ἐγγυάσθαι**.
 πῶς ἂν ἐγὼ σε **δέοιμι** μετ’ ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν,
 εἴ κεν Ἄρης οἴχοιτο **χρέος** καὶ **δεσμὸν ἀλύξας;**”

τὸν δ’ αὖτε προσέειπε Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων·
 355 “Ἥφαιστ’, εἴ περ γὰρ κεν Ἄρης **χρεῖος ὑπαλύξας**
 οἴχηται **φεύγων**, αὐτὸς τοι ἐγὼ τάδε **τείσω**.”

τὸν δ’ ἠμείβετ’ ἔπειτα περικλυτὸς ἀμφιγυήεις·
 “οὐκ ἔστ’ οὐδὲ ἔοικε τεὸν ἔπος ἀρνήσασθαι.”

ὡς εἰπὼν **δεσμὸν ἀνίει** μένος Ἥφαιστοιο.
 360 τῷ δ’ ἐπεὶ **ἐκ δεσμοῖο λύθεν**, κρατεροῦ περ ἐόντος,
 αὐτίκ’ **ἀναΐξαντε** ὁ μὲν Θρήκηκνδε **βεβήκει**,
 ἢ δ’ ἄρα Κύπρον **ἴκανε** φιλομμειδῆς Ἀφροδίτη,
 ἐς Πάφον, ἔνθα τέ οἱ τέμενος βωμὸς τε θυήεις.
 365 **ἔνθα δέ μιν Χάριτες λούσαν καὶ χρίσαν ἐλαίῳ,**
ἀμβρότῳ, οἷα θεοὺς ἐπενήνοθεν αἰὲν ἐόντας,
ἀμφὶ δὲ εἴματα ἔσσαν ἐπήρατα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.

But the minstrel struck the chords in prelude to his sweet lay and sang of the love of Ares and Aphrodite of the fair crown, how first they lay together in the house of Hephaestus secretly; and Ares gave her many gifts, and shamed the bed [270] of the lord Hephaestus. But straightway one came to him with tidings, even Helios, who had marked them as they lay together in love. And when Hephaestus heard the grievous tale, he went his way to his smithy, pondering evil in the

deep of his heart, and set on the anvil block the great anvil and forged bonds [275] which might not be broken or loosed, that the lovers might bide fast where they were. But when he had fashioned the snare in his wrath against Ares, he went to his chamber where lay his bed, and everywhere round about the bed-posts he spread the bonds, and many too were hung from above, from the roof-beams, [280] fine as spiders' webs, so that no one even of the blessed gods could see them, so exceeding craftily were they fashioned. But when he had spread all his snare about the couch, he made as though he would go to Lemnos, that well-built citadel, which is in his eyes far the dearest of all lands. [285] And no blind watch did Ares of the golden rein keep, when he saw Hephaestus, famed for his handicraft, departing, but he went his way to the house of famous Hephaestus, eager for the love of Cytherea of the fair crown. Now she had but newly come from the presence of her father, the mighty son of Cronos, [290] and had sat her down. And Ares came into the house and clasped her hand and spoke and addressed her: "Come, love, let us to bed and take our joy, couched together. For Hephaestus is no longer here in the land, but has now gone, I ween, to Lemnos, to visit the Sintians of savage speech."

[295] So he spoke, and a welcome thing it seemed to her to lie with him. So they two went to the couch, and lay them down to sleep, and about them clung the cunning bonds of the wise Hephaestus, nor could they in any wise stir their limbs or raise them up. Then at length they learned that there was no more escaping. [300] And near to them came the famous god of the two strong arms, having turned back before he reached the land of Lemnos; for Helios had kept watch for him and had brought him word. So he went to his house with a heavy heart, and stood at the gateway, and fierce anger seized him. [305] And terribly he cried out and called to all the gods: "Father Zeus, and ye other blessed gods that are forever, come hither that ye may see a laughable matter and a monstrous, even how Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, scorns me for that I am lame and loves destructive Ares [310] because he is comely and strong of limb, whereas I was born misshapen. Yet for this is none other to blame but my two parents—would they had never begotten me! But ye shall see where these two have gone up into my bed and sleep together in love; and I am troubled at the sight. [315] Yet, methinks, they will not wish to lie longer thus, no, not for a moment, how loving soever they are. Soon shall both lose their desire to sleep; but the snare and the bonds shall hold them until her father pays back to me all the gifts of wooing that I gave him for the sake of his shameless girl; [320] for his daughter is fair but bridles not her passion." So he spoke and the gods gathered to the house of the brazen floor. Poseidon came, the earth-enfolder, and the helper Hermes came, and the lord Apollo, the archer god. Now the goddesses abode for shame each in her own

house, [325] but the gods, the givers of good things, stood in the gateway; and unquenchable laughter arose among the blessed gods as they saw the craft of wise Hephaestus. And thus would one speak, with a glance at his neighbor: “Ill deeds thrive not. The slow catches the swift; [330] even as now Hephaestus, slow though he is, has out-stripped Ares for all that he is the swiftest of the gods who hold Olympus. Lame though he is, he has caught him by craft, wherefore Ares owes the fine of the adulterer.” Thus they spoke to one another. But to Hermes the lord Apollo, son of Zeus, said: [335] “Hermes, son of Zeus, messenger, giver of good things, wouldst thou in sooth be willing, even though ensnared with strong bonds, to lie on a couch by the side of golden Aphrodite?” Then the messenger, Argeiphontes, answered him: “Would that this might befall, lord Apollo, thou archer god— [340] that thrice as many bonds inextricable might clasp me about and ye gods, aye, and all the goddesses too might be looking on, but that I might sleep by the side of golden Aphrodite.”

So he spoke and laughter arose among the immortal gods. Yet Poseidon laughed not, but ever besought [345] Hephaestus, the famous craftsman, to set Ares free; and he spoke, and addressed him with winged words: “Loose him, and I promise, as thou biddest me, that he shall himself pay thee all that is right in the presence of the immortal gods.” Then the famous god of the two strong arms answered him: [350] “Ask not this of me, Poseidon, thou earth-enfolder. A sorry thing to be sure of is the surety for a sorry knave. How could I put thee in bonds among the immortal gods, if Ares should avoid both the debt and the bonds and depart?” Then again Poseidon, the earth-shaker, answered him: [355] “Hephaestus, even if Ares shall avoid the debt and flee away, I will myself pay thee this.” Then the famous god of the two strong arms answered him: “It may not be that I should say thee nay, nor were it seemly.” So saying the mighty Hephaestus loosed the bonds [360] and the two, when they were freed from that bond so strong, sprang up straightway. And Ares departed to Thrace, but she, the laughter-loving Aphrodite, went to Cyprus, to Paphos, where is her demesne and fragrant altar. There the Graces bathed her and anointed her with [365] immortal oil, such as gleams upon the gods that are forever. And they clothed her in lovely raiment, a wonder to behold.

ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἀοιδὸς ἄειδε περικλυτός· αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
τέρπετ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶν ἦσιν ἀκούων ἠδὲ καὶ ἄλλοι
 Φαίηκες δολιχῆρετμοι, ναυσικλυτοὶ ἄνδρες.
 370 Ἀλκίνοος δ' Ἄλιον καὶ Λαοδάμαντα κέλευσε
μουνὰξ ὀρχήσασθαι, ἐπεὶ σφισιν οὐ τις ἔριζεν.
 οἱ δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν σφαῖραν καλήν μετὰ χερσὶν ἔλοντο,

πορφυρέην, τήν σφιν Πόλυβος ποιήσε δαΐφρων,
 τήν ἕτερος ρίπτασκε ποτὶ νέφεα σκιδόντα
 375 ιδνωθεὶς ὀπίσω· ὁ δ' ἀπὸ χθονὸς ὑψόσ' ἀερθεὶς
ῥηϊδίως μεθέλεσκε, πάρος ποσὶν οὐδας ἰκέσθαι.
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ σφαίρη ἄν' ἰθὺν πειρήσαντο,
ὀρχείσθην δὴ ἔπειτα ποτὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρη
ταρφέ' ἀμειβομένω· κοῦροι δ' ἐπελήκεον ἄλλοι
 380 ἔσταότες κατ' ἀγῶνα, πολὺς δ' ὑπὸ κόμπος ὀρώρει.
 δὴ τότε ἄρ' Ἀλκίνοον προσεφώνεε διὸς Ὀδυσσεύς·
 “Ἀλκίνοε κρεῖον, πάντων ἀριδείκετε λαῶν,
 ἡμὲν ἀπειλησας βητάρμονας εἶναι ἀρίστους,
 ἢ δ' ἄρ' ἐτοῖμα τέτυκτο· σέβας μ' ἔχει **εἰσορόωντα**.”

This song the famous minstrel sang; and Odysseus was glad at heart as he listened, and so too were the Phaeacians of the long oars, men famed for their ships. [370] Then Alcinoüs bade Halios and Laodamas dance alone, for no one could vie with them. And when they had taken in their hands the beautiful ball of purple, which wise Polybus had made for them, the one [375] would lean backward and toss it toward the shadowy clouds, and the other would leap up from the earth and skilfully catch it before his feet touched the ground again. But when they had tried their skill in throwing the ball straight up, the two fell to dancing on the bounteous earth, ever tossing the ball to and fro, and the other youths [380] stood in the lists and beat time, and thereat a great din arose. Then to Alcinoüs spoke goodly Odysseus: “Lord Alcinoüs, renowned above all men, thou didst boast that thy dancers were the best, and lo, thy words are made good; amazement holds me as I look on them.” (translation Murray 1919)

Choral and hymnic self-references, performance

Expressions of binding and releasing

Bed, sex, love, anger, feeling, ruse, casting

Expressions of seeing and spying

Expressions of movement and forms of transition

Laughter

Legal debate

3. Structure of the Song of Ares and Aphrodite (Hom. *Od.* 8.266–366)

Frame: *Agôn* and Choral Dance

Introduction and Summary 266–271

Hymnic Introduction 266–267

Fact: clandestine intercourse between Ares and Aphrodite, Hephaestus' wife
268–270a

Helios as spy 270b–271 report

Reaction of Hephaestus: Ruse with Chains 272–284

Pain and anger; Hephaestus goes into forge and fabricates fetters
272–275 self-administered justice

He returns to the bedroom: clandestine attachment of fetters/ruse
276–281

Hephaestus pretends to go to Lemnos 282–284

The Date of Ares and Aphrodite 285–299

Ares on watch: he goes into Hephaestus' house, meets Aphrodite, and
talks to her 285–291

Hephaestus is away: 'let us make love' 292–295

Reaction: they go to bed; trap—they are bound 296–299

Hephaestus' Return and Call for Help 300–320

Hephaestus returns 300–301

Helios as spy 302

and calls the gods: anger 300–305

Appeal to Zeus and the gods 306–320

Fact: *atimia*, *moicheia*, explanations. 'Have a look! They will not love
each other like that any more!' they are caught *in flagrante*; public,
witnesses!

'They will be bound until his bride money will be returned.'

Reaction of the Gods 321–343

Male gods come closer, laughter 321–327

Ethics in dialogue 328–333 *gnômai*

Particularly Burlesque Reaction—Insertion 334–342

Apollo to Hermes: 'wouldn't you like to do this?' 334–337

Response: ‘Of course yes, even if the chains were three times as many, and all gods and goddesses were present!’ 338–342

Again, laughter 343

Serious Approach to the Problem by Poseidon 344–358

Only Poseidon does not join in laughter: plea 344–346

‘Release him!’ 347–348

Hephaestus replies: ‘No, how could I make him liable?’ 349–353

Poseidon offers compensation: ‘I will pay for him!’ 354–356

Hephaestus agrees 357–358

End and Consequences 359–366

Release: Poseidon goes to Thrace; Aphrodite to Paphos; preparations of new erotic adventures

Frame: *Agôn* and Choral Dance

4. Further Passages Linked with Choral Dance

a) Hom. *Od.* 8.100–103

νῦν δ' ἐξέλωμεν καὶ ἀέθλων πειρηθῶμεν
πάντων, ὥς χ' ὁ ξεῖνος ἐνίσπη οἴσι φίλοισιν
οἴκαδε νοστήσας, ὅσσον περιγινόμεθ' ἄλλων
πύξ τε παλαμοσύνη τε καὶ ἄλμασιν ἠδὲ πόδεσιν

b) Hom. *Od.* 8.205–207

δεῦρ' ἄγε πειρηθήτω, ἐπεὶ μ' ἐχολώσατε λίην,
ἢ πύξ ἢ ἐπάλῃ ἢ καὶ ποσίν, οὐ τι μεγαίρω,
πάντων Φαιήκων πλήν γ' αὐτοῦ Λαοδάμαντος.

c) Hom. *Od.* 8.230–233

οἴοισιν δειδοῖκα ποσίν μή τις με παρέλθη
Φαιήκων· λίην γὰρ ἀεικελίως ἐδαμάσθην
κύμασιν ἐν πολλοῖσ', ἐπεὶ οὐ κοιμῆδὴ κατὰ νῆα
ἦεν ἐπηετανός: τῷ μοι φίλα γυῖα λέλυνται.

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