

The Homeric Epics
and the Chinese
Book of Songs

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Foundational Texts Compared

Edited by

Fritz-Heiner Mutschler

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



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This book first published 2018

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-0400-X
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-0400-4

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Acknowledgments

When I look back on the history of this publication persons and institutions come to mind without whose support the whole enterprise could not have been undertaken, let alone brought to fruition.

My first thanks are owed to Peking University which in 2011, following my retirement in Germany, at the suggestion of my colleague and friend Huang Yang offered me a ‘Chair Professorship in the Humanities’, attached to the Department of History in the newly founded Center for Western Classical Studies. This allowed me to return to China and to work for five years in inspiring surroundings with interested and intelligent students.

The generous funding of the chair also gave me the opportunity to consider a larger project. A course on the Homeric epics taught to an open-minded Chinese audience reassured me of the feasibility of a long cherished idea: that it would be worthwhile to compare these fountainheads of Western literature and civilization with their Chinese counterpart, the *Book of Songs*, a text corpus of equal literary influence and cultural significance. Yet there was the problem of competence. I am a Latinist rather than a Hellenist, and I am certainly not a professional Sinologist but at best a very amateurish amateur. So there I was with my wonderful idea but without the professional qualification to put it into reality. The salvation came from TV. Always at pains to improve my Chinese – or that was at least the excuse – I had become a regular watcher of Chinese TV serials, through which one can also learn quite a bit about Chinese culture. Thus, inter alia I began to realize that a social institution which has more or less disappeared in Central Europe is still in existence in China, in particular in the countryside. This institution is match-making. And so it occurred to me that I, the German Latinist teaching in Beijing, might serve as matchmaker between Hellenists and Sinologists as well as between Chinese and Western scholars and bring together a range of specialists for a conference on the Homeric epics and the *Shijing*.

With the expert advice of Øivind Andersen, Martin Kern and Achim Mittag I proceeded to recruit a team of highly competent and interested colleagues and thanks to additional financial help from the university’s Office of Humanities and Social Sciences, under its director Li Qiang, and to the energetic and efficient organizational support of the Center for

Western Classical Studies, with its director Peng Xiaoyu and its then secretary Hui Hui, the conference finally took place in April 2014. Everyone who participated appeared to enjoy it and – what is more important – to be inspired by the comparative approach.

This positive experience led to the decision to attempt publication: a decision which, as it turned out, was more easily taken than implemented. Thus at several points further encouragement and help was needed – and generously provided by several of the colleagues involved, in particular Douglas Cairns. In Cambridge Scholars Publishing an efficient partner was found for publication. As for linguistic support, throughout the whole process I could count on my friend Helen Walimann. To Christian Gliwitzky I am very grateful for advice and help concerning the reproductions of the Homer portraits. Achim Mittag, reliable and selfless as his friends know him, assisted me with the indices. At the very end Stephanie Winder was an energetic and committed editor. Hanna Roszkowska-Mutschler, the most precious gift I owe to China, as ever provided invaluable moral support.

Summer 2017

Fritz-Heiner Mutschler

Conventions and Abbreviations

This volume brings together not only very different subject matter but also contributors of very different linguistic affiliations and academic traditions. With regard to language there was no alternative to everybody using the one tongue spoken – to some extent – by all: English. Apart from this, however, the editor felt that he should prescribe no strict adherence to the conventions of a particular scholarly tradition or even his personal preferences. He has aimed at a certain degree of standardization with the use of Pinyin for the transcription of Chinese terms and names and of Latinized forms of Greek names, but otherwise hopes that readers will not be confused by differences in spelling, punctuation (single vs. double quotation marks, comma/full-stop before quotation marks vs. quotation marks before comma/full-stop, shorter vs. longer hyphens), notation (roman vs. italics, with capital letter vs. without capital letter) and form of bibliographical references. Contributors were asked to strive for consistency within their own papers allowing readers to discern the – hopefully – self-explanatory conventions of each.

Concerning the denotation of the texts dealt with in this volume the following remarks should suffice.

Greek works are identified by author and title, usually in their English form: Homer, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Aristotle, *Poetics* etc. Abbreviations are used for the following collections of fragments:

DK: Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz (eds.), *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker. Griechisch und Deutsch*, 5th ed., Berlin 1934-7.

FGrHist: Felix Jacoby (ed.), *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, Berlin and Leiden 1923ff.

M-W: Reinhold Merkelbach and Martin L. West (eds.), *Fragmenta Hesiodica*, Oxford 1967 (repr. 1999).

West: Martin L. West (ed.), *Greek Epic Fragments*. Cambridge, MA, and London 2003.

With Chinese authors and works things are slightly more complicated. First, for many classical texts there exists no formal title. In these cases it has become customary to use the author's name also for the work. To distinguish work from name in alphabetic writing the former is usually italicized. Thus “Mencius” or “Mengzi” refers to the

author, “*Mencius*” or “*Mengzi*” to the work. The contributors of this volume follow this convention. Second, for the titles of the Chinese foundation text and its parts different translations are in use, in general and in this volume. The following list should help to prevent confusion:

Shijing: *Book of Songs*, *Book of Poetry*, *Classic of Poetry*, *Poetry*,
Book of Odes, *Odes*¹

Guofeng: “Airs of the States”², “Airs of the Domains”, “Airs”

Xiaoya: “Minor Odes”, “Lesser Odes”, “Minor Elegantiae”, “Lesser Elegantiae”, “Minor Court Hymns”, “Lesser Court Hymns”

Daya: “Major Odes”, “Greater Odes”, “Major Elegantiae”, “Greater Elegantiae”, “Major Court Hymns”, “Greater Court Hymns”

Song: “Eulogies”, “Sacrificial Eulogies”, “Hymns”, “Dynastic Hymns”

Toleration of these different denotations is one of the exercises in small-scale empathy which we ask of the reader – just as we offer the whole volume as an opportunity to exercise large-scale empathy in coming to grips with two different cultures.

¹ The situation is further complicated by the fact that there is a second Chinese title: *Shisanbai* which is translated by *The Three Hundred Songs* or *The collection of Three Hundred*.

² I follow here the widely spread practice to give the translated title of a part of a work (as opposed to the whole work) in roman with quotation marks.

Notes on Contributors

Øivind ANDERSEN, Professor Emeritus of Classical Philology at the University of Oslo.

Alexander BEECROFT, Professor of Classics and Comparative Literature at the University of South Carolina.

Douglas CAIRNS, Professor of Classics at the University of Edinburgh.

CHEN Zhi, Professor of Chinese Language and Literature at the University of Macau.

Margalit FINKELBERG, Professor Emerita of Classics at Tel Aviv University.

GAO Fengfeng, Professor of English at Peking University.

Barbara GRAZIOSI, Professor of Classics at Durham University.

HUANG Yang, Professor of Ancient History at Fudan University, Shanghai.

Martin KERN, Greg ('84) and Joanna (P13) Zeluck Professor in Asian Studies at Princeton University.

Wai-yee LI, Professor of Chinese Literature at Harvard University.

LIU Chun, Associate Professor of English at Peking University.

Achim MITTAG, Professor of Chinese Language, Literature and Philosophy at the University of Tübingen.

Glenn W. MOST, Professor of Greek Philology at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa; Visiting Professor in the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago.

Fritz-Heiner MUTSCHLER, Professor Emeritus of Classical Philology at Dresden University; from 2011 to 2016 Professor of Western Classics at Peking University.

Andrew H. PLAKS, Professor Emeritus of East Asian Studies and Comparative Literature at Princeton University; Professor of East Asian Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University.

David SCHABERG, Professor of Asian Languages and Cultures, Dean of the Humanities at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Ernst A. SCHMIDT, Professor Emeritus of Classical Philology at the University of Tübingen.

Nick M. WILLIAMS, Assistant Professor of Chinese Literature at the University of Hongkong.

YAN Shaoxiang, Professor of History at Capital Normal University, Beijing.

ZHANG Longxi, Professor of Comparative Literature and Translation at the City University of Hong Kong.

ZHANG Wei, Professor of Western Classics at Fudan University, Shanghai.

Yiqun ZHOU, Associate Professor of East Asian Languages and Cultures and, by courtesy, Classics at Stanford University.

INTRODUCTION

Fritz-Heiner MUTSCHLER

The comparison between Greco-Roman antiquity and early China has become an attractive field of research. The reasons for this development are obvious. Both Western and Chinese civilizations can lay claim to outstanding longevity and, with the economic and political rise of China in a world that is still very much under Western influence, both can point to their present state as further proof of their vitality. Thus, for those involved in Classical studies, to engage in the comparative investigation of the formative phases of the two civilizations is only natural; and, in the globalized world in which the mutual understanding of its different parts is more important than ever, their observations may be of interest not only to fellow scholars but to the general public as well.

At the moment, two main strands of research can be distinguished. Concerning the more recent of the two, the impact of the present economic and political situation is particularly plain. After the disintegration of the Soviet empire, the doubtful comportment of the US as – for the time being – the only remaining superpower, and the rise of China to the position of a soon-to-be economic and political giant, intercultural “Empire Studies” have come into fashion, and within this evolving field the comparative analysis of the Roman and the Han empires has gained a certain prominence. Apart from a number of individual studies, three major collections of essays have been dedicated to the discussion of different aspects of the topic: from self-awareness and ideology to political organization and the role of the military, to economy and administration.¹ It can be expected that this line of investigation, which is to a large extent carried out by historians, will develop further in the years to come.

The older and richer strand of research does not concern ancient Rome but ancient Greece and China. It does not deal with political but

¹ Mutschler and Mittag 2008, Scheidel 2009 and 2015.

intellectual history and it has developed in four – partly overlapping – sectors.² Given a forerunner like Karl Jaspers,³ it is not surprising that there are by now a large number of studies that discuss philosophical problems.⁴ These studies vary widely in subject matter and approach, but have undoubtedly raised many issues worthy of reflection. Not unrelated to the discussion of philosophical matters is the investigation of the development of science and scientific inquiry in ancient Greece and China, a branch that is above all connected with the name of Geoffrey Lloyd.⁵ Third, one finds studies on similarities and differences of mental structures, behavioral patterns, value orientations, and the like. They touch upon issues also dealt with in some of the aforementioned publications but add others and put all of them in a more general perspective.⁶ Finally, there is the comparison of literary texts, once again a wide and multicolored field concerning both prose genres like historiography and rhetoric and different kinds of poetry together with poetics.⁷

² I follow here partly the excellent survey article by Tanner 2009. Documenting a recent conference on the topic is Lloyd and Zhao, forthcoming.

³ See his theory of the transcendental turn of the Axial Age cultures, first proposed in *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*, Munich, 1949. For the renewed topicality of the idea of the Axial Age, see Bellah and Joas 2012.

⁴ E.g. Bloom 1981; Graham 1986, 1989; Hall and Ames 1987, 1995, 1998; Harbsmeier 1998; Reding 2004; Yu 2007; Pohl and Wöhrle 2011; Chen, Avramidou, and Nikolakopoulos 2011; Zhao 2014, to give only a few examples. The activities in this field are now manifold, cf. e.g. the most recent conference in Sidney: *In Pursuit of Wisdom: Ancient Chinese and Greek Perspectives on Cultivation*, January 15-18, 2016.

⁵ Lloyd 1990, 1996, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2015; Lloyd and Sivin 2002. This is only a selection. For a more complete list of the works of the nineties, see the bibliography in Tanner 2009. There are obviously other scholars working in this field, but Lloyd has become the dominant figure.

⁶ The classic, though only implicitly comparative, is Granet 1934. Most prolific is F. Jullien, who is a philosopher but whose works deal for the most part with general features of Chinese culture. See Jullien 1991, 1992, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2001, 2010, 2014, inter alia. For a fundamental critique of Jullien's approach, see Billeter 2006. Cf. further Raphals 1992, 2002, 2005, 2013, and Nisbet 2003.

⁷ Prusek 1970 (epic, lyric poetry, historiography), Wang 1988 (early poetry), Zhang 1992 (poetics, hermeneutics), Keightley 1993 (early poetry, historiography, art), Mutschler 1997, 2003 (historiography), Lu 1998 (rhetoric), Shankman and Durrant 2000 (early poetry, historiography, philosophy), Cai

The present volume integrates itself into this fourth sector of research. As has been correctly observed, it is here “that one finds the greatest level of experimentation with styles of comparison in Sino-Hellenic studies”.⁸ One could also say that to find an approach by which a study may lead to results of general significance is still a matter of trial and error.

There are, in particular, three problems that have to be solved felicitously: (a) which texts to compare, (b) which of their aspects to describe and analyze, (c) how, in practice, to organize the comparison. Concerning the first point, the difficulty lies in selecting texts that are representative of the two traditions so that the ascertainment of similarities and differences is meaningful beyond the compared works. With respect to the second point, the challenge consists in finding aspects that are equally significant for texts of both traditions. Regarding the third point, the question is how to bring two independent scholarly disciplines, with their possibly different categories of description and tools of analysis, into a fruitful dialogue. In the case of the present collection of essays and the conference from which it has grown,⁹ these problems were approached in the following ways:

For the selection of texts, a look at former studies was of help. For there are two texts, or rather two text corpora, that have attracted attention more frequently than others: the Homeric epics and the *Book of Songs*. David Keightley, in his much discussed essay on the concepts of the hero and heroic action in early Greek and Chinese cultures, based his reflections to a considerable extent on the Homeric epics and the *Book of Songs*.¹⁰ Investigating the role of “Wisdom and Cunning in the Classical Traditions of Greece and China”, Lisa Raphals compared, among other texts, Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* with some of the famous novels of the Ming dynasty.¹¹ In the brief but masterly foreword to the re-edition of Waley’s translation of the *Shijing*, Stephen Owen drew on a comparison with the Homeric epics to bring out more clearly

2002 (poetics, literary criticism), Beecroft 2010 (early poetry, poetics). An assemblage of different topics from all four sections is treated in Shankman and Durrant, 2002.

⁸ Tanner 2009, 101.

⁹ For this conference, see the Acknowledgements, vii-viii.

¹⁰ Keightley 1993.

¹¹ Raphals 1992.

the specific character of the *Book of Songs*.¹² François Jullien juxtaposed the *Book of Songs* with the poetological tradition it entailed, and Homeric poetry with the rhetorical and literary criticism it inspired, in order to contrast “allusive incitement” and “mimetic representation” as dominating concepts in Chinese and Western poetics, respectively;¹³ while Steven Shankman and Stephen Durrant referred, inter alia, to the *Odyssey* and the *Book of Songs* to illustrate the different relation of “intentionalism” and “participation” in Chinese and Greek literature.¹⁴ And more recently, in A.J. Beecroft’s study on “Authorship and Cultural Identity”, it was also, on the Chinese side, the *Book of Songs* and its commentarial tradition and, on the Greek side, the Homeric epics and Homeric scholarship together with early lyrical poetry that formed the basis of the investigation.¹⁵

Thus, even though they were not in each case directly juxtaposed, it is evident that the Homeric epics and the *Book of Songs* are considered to be particularly representative for the Western and the Chinese traditions. Both text corpora clearly qualify as what in recent years has come into the focus of attention under the heading of “cultural texts” or “foundational texts”, that is a class of privileged texts “in which a culture finds the valid expression of its worldview and in the communicative representation of which it confirms this worldview and at the same time itself”.¹⁶ Given this situation, it seemed timely to compare the two text corpora not only in this or that specific respect together with other texts, but systematically and exclusively, in order to test out how far this kind of direct full-scale comparison could enhance our understanding of their particular characters and perhaps even contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultures to which they belong.

But in what respects should the Homeric epics and the *Book of Songs* be described, what aspects should be analyzed and compared? A number of possibilities have already been pursued in the aforementioned studies. Value-laden elements of subject matter (Keightley’s “hero” and “heroic action”,¹⁷ Raphals’ “wisdom and cunning”¹⁸), ways of poetic approach

¹² Owen 1996.

¹³ Jullien 1995 (2000), chapters VII and VIII.

¹⁴ Shankman and Durrant 2000, part I.

¹⁵ Beecroft 2010.

¹⁶ Assmann 1994, 80. Concerning “fundierende Texte”, see already Assmann 1992, 102f., 128, 266f., 291f., 295.

¹⁷ Keightley 1993.

(Jullien's "allusive incitement" and "mimetic representation"¹⁹), general attitudes towards the world, i.e. society and nature (Shankman and Durrant's "intentionalism" and "participation"²⁰), and culturally determined concepts (Beecroft's "authorship"²¹) have been made the objects of investigation. All these are worthy research topics, but at the same time they are of limited scope. In contrast, the purpose of the envisaged enterprise seemed to be better served by starting on a more fundamental level and looking at the texts from a more general point of view. Accordingly, it was decided that, for the time being, two main subjects should be dealt with: on the one hand, the historic embedding of the texts, on the other hand, their basic poetic features.

In consequence, the present collection of essays is made up of two parts: (I) "The History of the Texts and of their Reception" and (II) "The Texts as Poetry". Each of the two parts is subdivided into three sections. Part I starts out with a section on the "Coming into Being" of the texts. As will be seen, this process is equally complicated and disputed for both the Homeric epics and the *Book of Songs*. But even though absolute certainty will probably never be achieved, it seemed necessary to gain an idea of the possible and most probable scenarios. The final phase of the texts' coming into being is, in both cases, closely connected with what can be called their "Philological Reception", i.e. the efforts of intellectual specialists to secure the constitution and transmission of the texts and to explain them to a broader readership. Accordingly, the development of these activities is the subject of the second section. The third section deals with the overall "Cultural Role" of the texts within their traditions and reviews the thesis that this role was indeed that of "cultural texts" or "foundational texts".

Regarding "The Texts as Poetry", it seemed apposite to concentrate on the basics. Thus, in spite of the fact that the opposition may seem simplistic, the first two sections of Part II are dedicated to "Form and Structure" and "Contents". This admittedly crude differentiation nevertheless allows for descriptions of the works that, though well grounded, are accessible not only to the specialist but also to the interested reader from the "other side". The papers of the last section discuss the "Values" the Ho-

¹⁸ Raphals 1992.

¹⁹ Jullien 1995.

²⁰ Shankman and Durrant 2000.

²¹ Beecroft 2010.

meric epics and the *Shijing* convey – a topic of particular importance with respect to their role as “foundational” or “cultural” texts.

The decision about the concrete topics to be discussed, however, clarified only one part of the organizational design. In addition, there was the question of how in practice to organize the comparison proper. Here the factual situation of scholarship had to be taken into account. Though things have started to change and will further change in the years to come, the number of people who can be considered specialists of both the Homeric epics and the *Book of Songs* is extremely small. For this reason, the natural approach was to bring specialists from both sides together and initiate exchange and discussion between them. Thus, for each of the six topics, experts on Homer and experts on the *Book of Songs* were asked to present the state of scholarship – from their personal point of view but without the obligation to be original. The intention was to create in each case a direct juxtaposition and thus an implicit comparison of what can be considered shared knowledge on each side.²² However, in order not to leave it at this level of *implicit* comparison, in addition, colleagues were invited to make the *implicit* comparison *explicit*, i.e. to put the observations made in the two main papers into direct relation to each other. A most welcome and consciously promoted side effect of this organizational scheme was that it led to the cooperation not only of classicists and sinologists but at the same time of scholars from Western countries and from China.

On the whole, it is hoped that the present volume will serve interdisciplinary and intercultural dialogue, and that through the exploratory comparison of Chinese and Western foundational texts it will widen the horizon of readers from either side by opening up their minds to the achievements of a highly important “other culture” and, at the same time, to the particular character of their own.

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²² As the reader will see, the state of scholarship is not the same for all topics. This means that, in some cases, the papers have to present (and possibly argue for) a specific view which cannot (yet) claim to be generally accepted.

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Part I

The History of the Texts and of Their Reception

A. Coming into Being

THE FORMATION OF THE HOMERIC EPICS

Margalit FINKELBERG

Introduction

In the late antique commentary on *The Art of Grammar* of the second-century BCE scholar Dionysius Thrax, we find:

They say that once upon a time Homer's poems were lost – either in fire or because of the influx of water or as a result of an earthquake. And after the scrolls had been scattered in many directions and become extinct, it turned out that one person happened to keep a hundred Homeric verses, another a thousand, yet another two hundred, and someone else as much as he happened to have. Being in a state such as this, Homer's poetry was about to sink into oblivion. Yet Pisistratus, an Athenian leader, wishing both to acquire fame for himself and to restore the poems of Homer, initiated the following. He announced through the whole of Greece that those who have Homeric verses should bring them to him, a fixed price having been established for each verse. ... And after having collected all the verses he summoned seventy-two learned men, in order that each of them should independently assemble the Homeric poems in the way that seems best to him. ... And when each of them assembled the poems according to his best judgement, he convened all the said learned men in one place, etc.¹

This is a late antique resonance of the centuries-long tradition, first attested in the fourth century BCE, about the so-called Pisistratean Recension.² According to the tradition in question, the sixth-century

¹ Schol. Dion. Thrax. *Commentarius Melampodis seu Diomedis* (cod. C), ed. Hilgard, pp. 29-30 = *Scholia Marciana* (VN), ed. Hilgard, p. 316 (my translation). See further Wyrick 2004, 205-20.

² For a detailed account of the sources, see Andersen 2011.

BCE Athenian ruler Pisistratus, or (more likely) his son and successor Hipparchus, or even the early sixth-century Athenian statesman Solon, initiated the establishment of the standard text of the Homeric poems for the sake of their performance at the recently introduced Panathenaic festival (see below). As the passage adduced above demonstrates, the story was eventually cast after a widespread narrative pattern designed to account for the standardization of a canonical text; thus, a remarkably similar story concerning the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek appears in the so-called *Letter of Aristeas*.³ Fictional as it certainly is, the story neatly encapsulates two essential points concerning Homer: (a) the canonical status of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and (b) the important role that sixth-century BCE Athens played in the poems' transmission.

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, two epics about the Trojan War, are the earliest literary texts in the Western tradition. The Greeks believed they were authored by Homer, a blind bard who lived in one of the Ionian Greek cities along the Aegean coast of Asia Minor (today, western Turkey) several generations after the events he described. Since the late Archaic period (sixth century BCE), the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were regularly recited at religious and civic events all over the Greek world, memorized by generations of schoolchildren, and reproduced in numerous copies. Up to the fall of the Byzantine empire (fifteenth century CE), they acted as a cornerstone of Greek education (*paideia*) and a generally recognized hallmark of Greek identity.⁴

A mere outline of the plots of the Homeric epics can hardly reveal their monumental stature. The recital of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* took days, and their printed versions are spread over hundreds of pages. Nevertheless, the plot of each of the poems can be summarized in just a few sentences.

The action of the *Iliad* is set in the tenth year of the Trojan War, whose overall story is taken for granted (see below, on the Epic Cycle). As a result of a quarrel between Agamemnon, the commander-in-chief of the Greek army that has been besieging Troy for ten years, and

³ On the narrative patterns employed in the *Letter of Aristeas*, see Honigman 2003, 41-9. While Honigman draws illuminating parallels between this document and the treatment of Homer by the scholars of Hellenistic Alexandria, she makes no use of later sources, such as the scholia on Dionysius Thrax quoted above. On the latter, see esp. Wyrick (above, n. 1).

⁴ Finkelberg 2003, 91-6; 2012, 16-20.

Achilles, the best of the Achaean (= Greek) warriors, Achilles withdraws from the battle. The Trojan military leader, Hector, the eldest son of king Priam, uses the absence of Achilles to lead his army out of the city walls in order to attack the Achaean camp. Due to the promise that Zeus gave to Achilles' mother, the sea-goddess Thetis, the Trojans enjoy a temporary success. Hector leads a victorious attack and approaches the Achaean ships. Achilles allows his comrade Patroclus to lead a counter-attack in his stead. After the death of Patroclus at the hands of Hector, Achilles returns to the battlefield, defeats the Trojan army, and kills Hector in single combat.

The *Odyssey* narrative begins ten years after the fall of Troy. Again, the overall story of the Trojan War is taken for granted. The poem tells about the wanderings of Odysseus, one of the Achaean leaders in the war, and his eventual return to his native Ithaca, a small island opposite the northwestern coast of mainland Greece. After having visited many fabulous lands and peoples, and having spent time in the company of goddesses, kings, and monsters, Odysseus comes home in disguise, only to find out that his country is immersed in anarchy and his house occupied by the suitors of his faithful wife Penelope. The suitors destroy Odysseus' wealth, undermine the authority of his young son Telemachus and make plans to assassinate the prince. With the assistance of the goddess Athene, Odysseus and Telemachus kill the suitors. Odysseus reunites with Penelope and restores his authority over Ithaca.

Homer elaborated these relatively simple plots in various ways. He added digressions and secondary episodes, introduced extended descriptions, catalogues, reminiscences, similes, and parables, developed the characters and presented their motives in long speeches. This made the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* into monumental epics and, eventually, into what was aptly defined by Eric Havelock as "the tribal encyclopedia" of ancient Greece. Their origins, however, have remained shrouded in mystery, posing a perpetual challenge to generations of scholars both ancient and modern.

Part 1. Recovering the "True Homer"

From Alexandria to the Mid-Twentieth Century. The inquiry into the text of the Homeric poems started already in the fifth century BCE, and it reached its highest point in the third and second centuries, in

Ptolemaic Alexandria. The Alexandrian scholars saw their task as restoration of the original text of Homer, whom they saw as an individual poet who composed his poems in writing. Zenodotus, Aristophanes, Aristarchus, and other representatives of the Alexandrian school developed methods of textual criticism and analysis, and introduced criteria to judge whether or not a given word, phrase or passage should be considered authentic. They also produced the first scholarly editions of Homer and wrote commentaries on the Homeric poems. The Alexandrian practice of philological inquiry continued through the Roman and Byzantine periods and was given new life in the Renaissance era. Here too, Homer was approached as an individual poet whose manner of composition did not differ essentially from that of Virgil or Ariosto.

A paradigm shift occurred in the eighteenth century, and it was closely associated with the rise of historical method in the humanities. Between *Conjectures académiques ou Dissertation sur l'Illiade* (ca. 1670) by Abbé d'Aubignac (1604-1676), the first to make the claim that Homer the man never existed and the poems ascribed to him were nothing more than collections of primitive lays, and the *Essay on the Original Genius of Homer* (1767) by the British diplomat and traveler Robert Wood (1717-1771), the first to argue that Homer was an oral rather than a literate poet, lies a century that radically transformed the perception of the Homeric epics. This change of attitude found its expression in the writings of Richard Bentley (1662-1742), Giambattista Vico (1688-1744), Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729-1812), Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), and others. But it was not until the appearance of the *Prolegomena ad Homerum* in 1795 by Friedrich August Wolf (1759-1824) that the idea that the poems of Homer are possessed of a special status, not identical to that of literary epics, was articulated as a full-fledged scholarly hypothesis.

Wolf made explicit the view of Homer that had been steadily gaining in popularity in the course of the eighteenth century. He was also the first to make use of the recently published marginal notes (scholia) on Homer, which preserved much of the Alexandrians' textual criticism. Proceeding from Wood's insight regarding an oral Homer, Wolf re-assessed the ancient evidence relating to the poet and his age and stated unequivocally that both Homer and Hesiod "were not writers but singers".⁵ Especially significant was his observation that, since the

⁵ Wolf 1985, 92.