

LOCAL TRADITION IN EARLY GREEK HEXAMETER*

ABSTRACT

This article discusses local tradition and Panhellenism in early epos. Examination of three characters (Nestor, Iris and Sarpedon) challenges the popular model of isolated local traditions undergoing a Panhellenic synthesis around the eighth century. Instead, it is argued that the supra-local quality of epos is more ancient, reflecting the interconnectivity of the Greek world in the Early Iron Age.

Keywords: local tradition; Panhellenism; Nestor; Iris; Sarpedon

INTRODUCTION

Archaic Greek epos is full of references to different places. Achilles the Phthian, Odysseus the Ithacan, Helen the Spartan . . . nearly every character receives an origin in a particular locality, and the genre abounds in catalogues of different places and peoples, from the *Iliad*'s Catalogue of Ships to the circuitous journeys of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*. An influential theory of Nagy holds that these details derive from local traditions around the Greek world: Homeric epos 'synthesizes the diverse local traditions of each major city-state into a unified Panhellenic model that suits most city-states but corresponds exactly to none'.¹ Nagy attributes this synthesis to a phase of increased intercommunication between Greek states in the eighth century, adducing the rise of the Olympic games, the Delphic oracle and the alphabet. According to this theory, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* poets drew on a number of local traditions in various polities, eliding local details for a wider appeal: city-specific hero cults are suppressed; foundation legends for cities in Asia Minor involving Achilles are omitted; the practice of giving cuts of meat to the gods is ignored, because the choice of cut varied locally.² Following Griffin, the other poems of the Epic Cycle are considered 'radically different' from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, lacking 'a truly Panhellenic status'.³ This approach encourages us to posit local traditions behind particular stories and details in epos—by which the poems themselves may then be interpreted.

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¹ G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore, 1979), 7.

² Nagy (n. 1), 115–17, 140–1, 217 n. 2.

³ Nagy (n. 1), 7 n. 4, building on J. Griffin, 'The Epic Cycle and the uniqueness of Homer', *JHS* 97 (1977), 39–53, who argued for qualitative differences between the Homeric and Cyclic epics. *The Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, however, Nagy (n. 1), 6–7 considers Panhellenic—followed by L.G. Mitchell, *Panhellenism and the Barbarian in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Swansea, 2007), 5–7.

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Nagy's theory has seen widespread—though not uncritical—acceptance; many have enthusiastically posited original local traditions behind epos.⁴ But it raises certain issues. Some are matters of detail. The *Hymn to Apollo* may not be a fusion of Delian and Pythian sections.⁵ Griffin's view that the lost Cyclic poems are utterly unlike the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is controversial,⁶ and surviving evidence shows a similar focus on the 'Panhellenic' Trojan expedition, rather than epichoric stories. Panhellenic ideology is less prominent before the Persian Wars; given the Greek dialects were mutually intelligible, Panhellenic identity may always have existed as a potential,⁷ but the Olympic Games and Delphic oracle are unlikely to have had more than regional significance in the eighth century.⁸

Other problems are more general. A poem can be local (or Panhellenic) in at least three ways: content, origin and intended audience. The content might refer to a certain locality or a 'Panhellenic' combination of different places, or to no particular place. It might originate in one polity, where a poet lives and composes; or in many, if the poet moves around. It might be performed for a purely local audience, or a wider one (as at a regional festival). Certainly, a tradition developing in a particular place may well be

⁴ For engagement with the theory, ranging from critical acceptance to whole-hearted adoption, see e.g. J. Griffin, *Homer: Iliad Book Nine* (Oxford, 1995), 3–4; J.M. Foley, *Homer's Traditional Art* (Philadelphia, 1999), 42 (with n. 14), 58; B. Graziosi, *Inventing Homer: the Early Reception of Epic* (Cambridge, 2002), especially 15 (and index under 'Panhellenism'); E. Kearns, 'The gods in the Homeric epics', in R. Fowler (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (Cambridge, 2004), 59–73, at 61–2; C. Tsagalis, *The Oral Palimpsest* (Washington, DC, 2008), xiii, xix, 111, 149; J.M. González, *The Epic Rhapsode and His Craft* (Washington, DC, 2013); B. Currie, *Homer's Allusive Art* (Oxford, 2016), 99, 202–3; E. Barker and J. Christensen, *Homer's Thebes: Epic Rivalries and the Appropriation of Mythical Pasts* (Washington, DC, 2020), 27–32, 245–74; also collections of essays edited by P. Angeli Bernardini, *Presenza e funzione della città di Tebe nella cultura greca* (Pisa and Rome, 2000) and *L'epos minore, le tradizioni locali e la poesia arcaica* (Pisa and Rome, 2007); by E. Cingano, *Tra panellenismo e tradizioni locali: generi poetici e storiografia* (Alessandria, 2010); and G. Cerri, A.T. Cozzoli and M. Giuseppetti, *Tradizioni mitiche locali nell'epica greca* (Rome, 2012). Particularly clear examples of this methodology, beyond Nagy's work, are O. Levaniouk, 'Odyssean usages of local traditions' (Diss., Harvard University, 2000), and O. Levaniouk, 'οὐ χροόμεθα τοῖς ξενικοῖς ποίημασιν: questions about evolution and fluidity of the *Odyssey*', in F. Montanari, A. Rengakos and C. Tsagalis (edd.), *Homeric Contexts: Neanalysis and the Interpretation of Oral Poetry* (Berlin, 2012), 369–409; cf. C. Faraone, *Hexametrical Genres from Homer to Theocritus* (Oxford, 2021), 51–82, who argues that *Iliad* Book 1 is substantially based on a local cult-hymn to Apollo.

⁵ Favouring unity, see N. Rutherford, *Three Homeric Hymns: to Apollo, Hermes, and Aphrodite* (Cambridge, 2010), especially 9–10, 13, 17.

⁶ More positive assessments of the Cycle, against Griffin's views: e.g. B. Currie, 'Cypria', and A. Kelly, 'Ilias Parva', in M. Fantuzzi and C. Tsagalis (edd.), *The Greek Epic Cycle and Its Ancient Reception: A Companion* (Cambridge, 2015), 281–305, 318–43 (e.g. pages 302, 304, 326–8); B.A. Thomas, 'Characters and characterisation in the Epic Cycle' (Diss., Oxford, 2021), especially 126–7, 129 n. 46.

⁷ Controversy over Panhellenic ideology: E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy* (Oxford, 1989), 7–10, 14–15, 19–21; S. Ross, 'Barbarophonos: language and Panhellenism in the *Iliad*', *CPh* 100 (2005), 299–316; Mitchell (n. 3), 5–8, 42, 44–5, 48–57.

⁸ The Olympian, Delphian, Isthmian and Nemean games were later Panhellenic in that any Greek could enter—L. Drees, *Olympia: Gods, Artists and Athletes* (London, 1968), 41—forming a canonical Panhellenic cycle, see M. Golden, *Sport and Society in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1998), 10–11. But the traditional foundation date for the Olympic games, 776, is of doubtful reliability—A. Mallwitz, 'Cult and competition locations at Olympia', in W.J. Raschke (ed.), *The Archaeology of the Olympics* (Madison, 1988), 79–109, at 98–9; T. Morgan, *Athletes and Oracles: The Transformation of Olympia and Delphi in the Eighth Century B.C.* (Cambridge, 1990), 47–56; P. Christesen, 'The origin of the date for the first Olympiad', in Z. Papakonstantinou (ed.), *Sport in the Cultures of the Ancient World: New Perspectives* (New York, 2010), 13–34; a start around 700 for wider prominence is probable. The other games were not established before the sixth century. Neither games nor oracle have prominence in the *Iliad*.

particularly concerned with local characters,⁹ and a poet performing for a local audience might exploit local material; but nothing prevents a tradition forming in, say, Argos about events in Thebes. For any particularly local-seeming feature—say, the role of Anchises’ descendants in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*—one may hypothesize a local origin in the Troad, or performance to local aristocrats who claimed descent from Anchises.¹⁰ But it would be naive to assume that every element of local content derives straightforwardly from local origin and audience.

Secondly, should we really envisage a number of more-or-less isolated local hexameter traditions in different polities? The surviving poems appear exclusively Panhellenic (featuring characters from around the Greek world);¹¹ evidence for comparable epichoric hexameter is absent.¹² One might argue that truly local hexameter lacked popularity, vanishing without trace; but several early elegiac poems related epichoric history or foundation narratives,¹³ without initially suffering unpopularity. Furthermore, local(ly originating) hexameter traditions imply that bards stayed in particular polities, passing down techniques and stories to successors there; but bards depicted in epos, and the (admittedly not highly reliable) biographical traditions for archaic poets, suggest considerable mobility.¹⁴ In the *Odyssey*, although Demodocus and Phemius stay in particular locations (Phaeacia, Ithaca), at 17.380–7 bards are one of the craftsmen typically invited abroad. The persona of the *Works and Days* feigns ignorance of sailing, but travelled to Chalcis to perform at Amphidamas’ funeral; his father moved to Ascræ from Aeolian Cyme. The narrator of the *Hymn to Apollo* (174–5) lives in Chios, performs in Delos, and travels widely. We find no notion of local poets passing down traditions in a particular polity. The existence of the oral tradition implies continuous transmission, but not necessarily in one particular place.

Thirdly, on Nagy’s model, the Mycenaean collapse created isolated units in which local traditions formed, before increasing connectivity in the eighth century brought them back together.¹⁵ More recent archaeological evidence challenges this idea of a Greek

⁹ Cf. Levaniouk (n. 4 [2000]), 68.

¹⁰ Strabo 13.1.52–3 provides some evidence, although of doubted reliability. See A. Faulkner, *The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (Oxford, 2008), 3–10; N. Richardson, *Three Homeric Hymns. To Apollo, Hermes, and Aphrodite* (Cambridge, 2010), 244–5; sceptically, S.D. Olson, *The ‘Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite’ and Related Texts* (Berlin, 2012), 1–9 accepts that contemporary individuals claimed descent from Aeneas, but rejects reference to a particular local group.

¹¹ Even Eumelus and Asius are not restricted to local settings.

¹² Epichoric hexameter inscriptions often show local dialect features, but are typically short and restricted to a narrow range of (dedicatory or funerary) functions—limited evidence for local narrative traditions. See e.g. CEG 326, with J. Day, *Archaic Greek Epigram and Dedication: Representation and Reperformance* (Cambridge, 2010), 40–1. For thin evidence for Doric hexameter: Alcman fr. 26, 27, 80, 107 PMGF; M.L. West, *Theogony* (Oxford, 1966), 80 n. 2; M.L. West, *The Epic Cycle: A Commentary on the Lost Troy Epics* (Oxford, 2013), 209 on *Iliad* Parva fr. 9 PEG.

¹³ E. Bowie, ‘Historical narrative in archaic and early classical Greek elegy’, in D. Konstan and K.A. Raaflaub (edd.), *Epic and History* (Malden, MA, 2010), 145–66.

¹⁴ For traditions whereby Alcman, Tyrtaeus and other archaic poets travelled to Sparta see the testimonia in D. Gerber, *Greek Elegiac Poetry* (Cambridge MA, 1999); D.A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric. Volume II: Anacreon, Anacreontea, Choral Lyric from Olympus to Alcman* (Cambridge MA, 1988); cf. R. Hunter and I. Rutherford, ‘Introduction’, in R. Hunter and I. Rutherford (edd.), *Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture: Travel, Locality and Pan-Hellenism* (Cambridge, 2009), 1–22, at 11; G.B. D’Alessio, ‘Defining local identities in Greek lyric poetry’, in R. Hunter and I. Rutherford (edd.), *Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture: Travel, Locality and Pan-Hellenism* (Cambridge, 2009), 137–67, at 154–5. Compare Ps.-Plut. *De musica* 9 (poets moving to Sparta), Bowie (n. 13).

¹⁵ Nagy’s model is based on A.M. Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece: An Archaeological Survey of the Eleventh to the Eighth Centuries B.C.* (Edinburgh, 1971). Mitchell (n. 3), 40–2 gives a similar view, whilst acknowledging more recent scholarship and evidence for regional *koinai*.

‘dark age’;¹⁶ although the crisis at the end of the Late Bronze Age disrupted connections within the Greek world, the different areas were not so isolated.¹⁷ Pottery distributions demonstrate continued exchange in the Early Iron Age within the Greek world and beyond.¹⁸ Trade may not precisely reflect population movement, but does suggest that any local traditions would have been in contact with each other.

Moreover, all epos—even poems purportedly from a non-Ionic-speaking area, like the Hesiodic poems—largely display Ionic dialect, with Aeolic elements (sometimes attributed to an Aeolic phase of the tradition, or the replacement of archaisms with dialect forms).¹⁹ Can we really postulate a line of, say, Knossian poets immersed in Cretan Doric, but passing on an Ionic *Kunstsprache*? Archaic poetry is never in pure spoken local dialect; literary Lesbian, Ionic and Doric always includes archaisms, borrowings and complications.²⁰ On one explanation, the distinctive formal genres (epic, elegiac, choral lyric, etc.)—and literary dialects—developed in separate regions, then spread whilst maintaining dialect associations.²¹ Alternatively, each area originally used its own dialect for all genres, literary dialects becoming fixed through particular models.²² The issue is further complicated by the uncertain prehistory of the dialects and their relationship with Mycenaean,²³ making it a difficult starting point to evaluate the status of local traditions.²⁴

Wholesale re-examination of these controversies requires book-length treatment.²⁵ The more modest aim here is to examine three significant epic characters—Nestor, Iris and Sarpedon—and the evidence for their prehistory, drawing on evidence from etymology, formulaic diction, narrative and non-epic depictions. Did they develop in local traditions, before being absorbed into epos? In each case, the situation is more complex than anticipated.

¹⁶ O. Dickinson, *The Aegean from Bronze Age to Iron Age* (New York, 2006), 5–8.

¹⁷ For an overview of the Postpalatial period: Dickinson (n. 16), 58–76. Twelfth-century instability and migration would obstruct the development of isolated traditions. For eleventh/tenth-century interconnectedness in the Aegean: I.S. Lemos, *The Protogeometric Aegean: The Archaeology of the Late Eleventh and Tenth Centuries B.C.* (Oxford, 2002), especially 1–2, 224–5.

¹⁸ E.g. the Euboean PSC skyphos in the ninth–eighth centuries: R. Kearsley, *The Pendent Semi-circle Skyphos: a Study of its Development and Chronology and an Examination of it as Evidence for Euboean Activity at Al Mina* (London, 1989), with review by M. Popham and I.S. Lemos in *Gnomon* 64 (1992), 152–5. But earlier shapes also show wide distribution: Lemos (n. 17), 27–99.

¹⁹ ‘Aeolic phase’: e.g. N. Berg and D. Haug, ‘Innovation vs. tradition in Homer – an overlooked piece of evidence’, *SO* 75 (2000), 5–23, at 16–18; sceptically, G. Horrocks, ‘Homer’s dialect’, in I. Morris and B. Powell (edd.), *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden, 1997), 193–217, at 214–17. See further C. Bozzone, *Homer’s Living Language* (Cambridge, 2024), 155–61.

²⁰ A. Bowie, *The Poetic Dialect of Sappho and Alcaeus* (New York, 1981) discusses the difference between Sappho and Alcaeus’ language and spoken Lesbian.

²¹ M.L. West, *Greek Metre* (Oxford, 1982), especially 29.

²² E.g. M.L. West, ‘The rise of the Greek epic’, *JHS* 108 (1988), 151–72, at 151–2 attributes the form of epic to the prominence of Ionic bards.

²³ Overview of Greek dialect prehistory: S. Colvin, ‘Greek dialects in the Archaic and Classical ages’, in E.J. Bakker (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language* (Chichester, 2010), 200–12, at 204–5; on difficulties with reconciling this with Mycenaean: W. Cowgill, ‘Ancient Greek dialectology in the light of Mycenaean’, in H. Birnbaum and J. Puhvel (edd.), *Ancient Indo-European Dialects* (Berkeley, 1966), 77–95.

²⁴ Cf. Levaniouk (n. 4 [2000]), 96 on the Aeolic phase.

²⁵ I provide an in-depth discussion in my doctoral thesis, which I hope to publish in revised form.

I. NESTOR

Nestor was popular in early epos, appearing extensively in the *Iliad* and hosting Telemachus in Pylos in the *Odyssey*. He is also mentioned in the *Catalogue of Women* and the Epic Cycle. Although numerous studies explore his links with local traditions, many are extremely speculative; the issues therefore deserve reconsideration.²⁶

1. *Pylian tradition?*

Nestor is a Pylian, so we might suppose that he originates in a Pylian local tradition,²⁷ encouraged by the *Iliad*'s narratives of his youth: 7.132–57 (his fight with Ereuthalion at Pheia), 11.670–761 (battle with the Eleians) and 23.629–45 (Amarynceus' funeral games). It might seem easy to suppose that such exploits derive from local Pylian stories. Some, however, judge them *ad hoc* creations, fitting Nestor's rhetorical needs:²⁸ in Book 7, encouraging the Greeks to volunteer against Hector by recounting his own duel; in 11, urging Patroclus to similar exploits; in 23, displaying his past athleticism. But rhetorical function does not prove untraditionality. In the case of the Ereuthalion narrative, a mention at 4.219 anticipates the story at 7.136–56, suggesting that it is not an innovation.²⁹ Moreover, the narratives mention many specific place names, unlikely to be the poet's inventions.

The specificity of the Elean battle is itself problematic, however. The Pylians go from Pylos to the city of Thyroessa in half a day (11.711, 723–6); next morning, the Epeians are routed as far as Buprasium (754–8). But Messenian Pylos is more than seventy miles from Thyroessa;³⁰ Buprasium is similarly unrealistically far north from the Alpheios.³¹ Some scholars delete certain of the offending details,³² or accept Strabo's argument (8.3.26–9) that the Homeric Pylos was in Triphylia.³³ But outside Strabo (and Didymus,

²⁶ E.g. D. Frame, *The Myth of Return in Early Greek Epic* (New Haven, 1978) and D. Frame, *Hippota Nestor* (Cambridge, MA, 2009) relating Nestor to the Vedic divine twins; but Nestor is never described as a twin, the name Νέστωρ does not precisely match Vedic *Nāsatyā*, and the Vedic twins have a far more obvious Greek parallel, the Dioscuri. Thus these similarities are likely due to motif-transfer from the twin figures to different characters, rather than Nestor being an inherited Proto-Indo-European figure.

²⁷ So West (n. 22), 160; G. Nagy, *Greek Mythology and Poetics* (Ithaca, 1990), 225; B. Hainsworth, *The Iliad: A Commentary, Volume III* (Cambridge, 1993), 298.

²⁸ M.M. Willcock, 'Mythological paradeigma in the *Iliad*', *CQ* 14 (1964), 141–54, at 143 (with n. 2); cf. M. Alden, *Homer Beside Himself: Para-Narratives in the Iliad* (Oxford, 2000), 74–111.

²⁹ Hainsworth (n. 27), 297.

³⁰ Thyroessa is reasonably identified with Thyron (*Il.* 2.592). For a plausible location, see J.F. Lazenby and R.H. Simpson, *The Catalogue of Ships in Homer's Iliad* (Oxford, 1970), 83; in any case, it lies on the part of the Alpheios flowing westward to the coast.

³¹ Buprasium was, in Strabo's time, a region between Elis and Dyme (8.3.8). Also mentioned, as if nearby, are the 'Olenian rock' and the hill of Alesium. Strabo says that the Olenian rock was conjectured (εἰκάζουσι, 8.3.10) to be Mt Scollis, although the name seems connected to later Olenus (on the coast east of Dyme). Strabo identifies Alesium with Alesiaum on the Elis–Olympia road (rather further south than the other locations). Others link it with Alissos, very close to Dyme: M.B. Sakellariou, 'τὰ ὄρια τῆς χώρας τῶν Ἑπειῶν', *Πελοποννησιακά* 3 (1960), 17–46, at 34–5, rejected by Lazenby and Simpson (n. 30), 99.

³² F. Böhle, 'Ein pylisches Epos', *RhM* 83 (1934), 319–47, believing the account a historical narrative of Bronze Age battle, deleted unrealistic details; conversely, R. Cantieni, *Die Nestorerzählung im XI. Gesang der Ilias (V. 670–762)* (Zürich, 1940), judging the account purely mythical, removed references he thought too precise.

³³ E. Visser, *Homers Katalog der Schiffe* (Stuttgart, 1997), 522–30, 556–60 discusses the location of Pylos and Buprasium, accepting the Triphylian Pylos. While also considering Strabo's arguments,

perhaps Strabo's source³⁴) this Triphylian Pylos is scarcely if at all mentioned,³⁵ unlike neighbouring Lepreum; Strabo himself says little about it apart from arguing that it is Homeric Pylos, and saying it was synoecized into Lepreum some time after the Second Messenian War (8.3.30). Even if we were to accept the Triphylian Pylos, there remains the implausible distance to Buprasium. It seems preferable to accept that the narrative is unrealistic. Perhaps this emphasizes the superhuman valour of the Pylians and Eleans (though nothing else in the story particularly supports this); or the original details might have become confused; or the original composer might have employed local place-names, but not a genuinely local story.

A further factor bearing on the existence of local Pylian tradition is the region's history. Around 1200 B.C. the Mycenaean palace of Pylos at Ano Englianos was burnt, one of a series of destructions comprising the 'Late Bronze Age Collapse'. It was not rebuilt; subsequent habitation at the site was scanty at best.³⁶ However, a reduced population apparently continued to live in the region, building a small tholos tomb near Korifasi in the Protogeometric period and a settlement and archaic temple near Romanos, closer to the coast.³⁷ That the name Pylos survives itself demonstrates some continuity, in Thucydides (4.3.2) referring to the coastal promontory near the former palace; by then the area was sparsely populated, presumably due to the Spartan occupation. In the second century A.D., Pausanias records Pylian local traditions (4.36), including a 'house of Nestor', tomb and cave where Nestor kept his cattle. But given the long Spartan rule, these may be innovations created after Messenian independence.³⁸ In short, the archaeology is at least compatible with stories about Nestor being passed down in the region until the Spartan conquest.

Visser's conclusion is mainly based on a belief that Pylos must be the midpoint of the other cities in the same entry of the Catalogue of Ships (*Il.* 2.591–602).

³⁴ Σ Pind. *Pyth.* 6.35 Drachmann.

³⁵ *Hom. Hymn Herm.* 398, even as transmitted, does not require a town Pylos on the Alpheios: Pylos here may be the region.

³⁶ J.L. Davis, K.M. Lynch and S. Hofstra, 'Remembering and forgetting Nestor: Pylian pasts pluperfect?', in S. Sherratt and J. Bennett (edd.), *Archaeology and Homeric Epic* (Oxford, 2006), 53–73, especially 60–3 show that there is no evidence for later cult there. Compare J.L. Davis and S.R. Stocker, 'Messenia', in A. Kotsonas and I.S. Lemos (edd.), *A Companion to the Archaeology of Early Greece and the Mediterranean* (Hoboken, NJ, 2020), 671–91, at 677–8.

³⁷ Davis and Stocker (n. 36), 679. Elsewhere in Messenia, Nichoria (about 20 km east on the Messenian gulf) remained extensive—if smaller than in the Late Bronze Age—and was inhabited until the eighth century, though possibly with a break at the end of the twelfth (cf. W.A. MacDonald, W.D.E. Coulson and J. Rosser [edd.], *Excavations at Nichoria in Southwest Greece, Vol. III* [Minneapolis, 1983], 4–7).

³⁸ For different views on cultural continuity under Sparta see M.M. Austin and P. Videl-Naquet, *Economic and Social History of Ancient Greece* (London, 1972), 86–7; N. Luraghi, 'The imaginary conquest of the Helots', in N. Luraghi and S. Alcock (edd.), *Helots and their Masters in Laconia and Messenia: Histories, Ideologies, Structures* (Washington, 2003), 109–41; on continued local cult, S. Hodkinson, 'Spartiates, helots and the direction of the agrarian economy', in N. Luraghi and S. Alcock (edd.), *Helots and their Masters in Laconia and Messenia: Histories, Ideologies, Structures* (Washington, 2003), 248–85, at 274. One might argue that Messenian culture (and traditions about Pylos) survived under Spartan rule, underlying revolts in the Second (if real) and Third Messenian Wars. After the Third Messenian War many Messenians were settled at Naupactus by the Athenians, some accompanying the Athenians in their seizure of Pylos during the Peloponnesian War (including forty hoplites, Thucydides 4.9.1). A plausible assumption is that they informed the Athenians about Pylos' defensibility, encouraging them to choose this spot; geographical knowledge might have included stories about the significance of local landmarks.

2. *Ionian tradition?*

Nestor's name has the root **nes-* (cf. *véομαι*, 'return'), paralleled in Mycenaean *ne-e-ra-wo* /*Ne(h)elāwos*/ (PY Fn 79.5).³⁹ His father Neleus/Νηλεύς may show the same root—perhaps even an *-εὺς* suffix remodelling of /*Ne(h)elāwos*/.⁴⁰ This cannot prove that Nestor was a real king at Pylos; we have little comparative evidence for Mycenaean onomastics elsewhere, and the Mycenaean *ne-e-ra-wo* does not seem to have been of high status. But Mühlestein used it as evidence, not just for Nestor's Pylian origin, but also to validate the historical tradition by which Nestor's descendants, particularly Neileus, founded Miletus and the Ionian cities of Asia Minor.⁴¹

The reality of EIA population movements is too controversial to be evaluated here,⁴² but there is good evidence for a tradition, by the Archaic period, that Pylians founded certain Ionian cities: for Colophon, Mimnermus fr. 9–10 West, and for Miletus, an inscribed bronze bucket from the first half of the sixth century, dedicated in the Samian Heraion by a priest of Ne(i)leus;⁴³ the obvious reason for the cult would be Neileus' role as founder. Hence one may argue that the real focus for local traditions about Nestor was in Ionian cities where he was considered the ancestor of the city founder and of certain aristocratic families—especially the Neleids in Miletus.⁴⁴

Given the Ionian epic language, an Ionian origin for Nestor and his stories may seem appealing. It might seem strange that Ionian traditions would preserve obscure place-names and details of battles from Bronze Age Pylos, but this fits the idea that these have been corrupted in transmission. However, the Milesian founder was called Νεῖλεως, not the Homeric form Νηλεύς.⁴⁵ The suffix *-εὺς* is explicable as a shorter form of the name,⁴⁶ but the difference between *-ει-* and *-η-* (contracted *-εε-*) shows that Νηλεύς derives from a dialect in which long *ē* from contraction merges with inherited long *ē*, unlike Attic-Ionic. This suggests strongly that Νηλεύς—and Nestor—entered epos from a non-Ionic source.⁴⁷

³⁹ M. Ventris and J. Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek* (Cambridge, 1973–2), 562; H. Mühlestein, *Homerische Namenstudien* (Frankfurt am Main, 1987), 158–9; Frame (n. 26 [1978]), especially 81–95; Frame (n. 26 [2009]), 25–33.

⁴⁰ M. Durante, 'Νεῖλεως ε Νηλεύς', *SMEA* 3 (1967), 33–46; Frame (n. 26 [1978]), 97; (n. 26 [2009]), ch. 2 n. 54.

⁴¹ Hellanicus fr. 125 *EGM*; Frame (n. 26 [2009]), 515–40 (with notes) collects ancient sources and modern bibliography. Other names shared with the foundation narratives are also found at Pylos.

⁴² For the disputed Ionian migration contrast R.L. Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography II* (Oxford, 2013), 572–6; N. Mac Sweeney, *Foundation Myths and Politics in Ancient Ionia* (Cambridge, 2013), 44–69.

⁴³ L.H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece: A Study of the Origin of the Greek Alphabet and its Development from the Eighth to the Fifth Centuries B.C.* (Oxford, 1990²), 471, item C; cf. Frame (n. 26 [2009]), 539 and ch. 10 n. 61; Mac Sweeney (n. 42), 48 n. 7.

⁴⁴ See Frame (n. 26 [2009]), 515–17 and *passim*, for such groups.

⁴⁵ Frame (n. 26 [2009]), ch. 2 n. 43 collects attestations; in some later sources Neleus' name replaces Neileus'.

⁴⁶ See R. Janko, 'The etymologies of βασιλεύς and ἐρμηνεύς', *CQ* 64 (2014), 462–70.

⁴⁷ Frame's explanation (n. 26 [2009]), 33–4 is that, when 'the myth of the foundation of Miletus [by Neileos] came into being' due to the Neleids, they changed Nestor's father's name—formerly Νεῖλεως—to Νήλεως, to emphasize his Aeolic connections and disguise the connection between Nestor's father and the founder of Miletus, because the Neleids allegedly wanted to 'fashion Panionism in their own image' but at the same time not to be too overt, to avoid offending other Ionic cities. This *ad hoc* theory—assuming that the Neleids (a) consciously created foundation myth as propaganda, (b) had an extremely precise awareness of slight linguistic distinctions, (c) were able to change such forms in the inherited epic traditions—seems unlikely.

3. *Wider connections*

Nestor's connections go beyond Pylos and Ionian Asia Minor. Nestor's father Neleus is Pelias' twin, born at Iolkos to Poseidon and Tyro (*Od.* 11.235–53, [Hes.] fr. 30, 30a M–W). Neleus' daughter Pero features in the story of Melampus (*Od.* 11.281–97, 15.225–42); he became ruler of Argos (*Od.* 15.240, [Hes.] fr. 131 M–W), possibly dying at Corinth.⁴⁸ If we keep positing local origin on the basis of associations of content (as with Pylos) or appropriate audience (as with Miletus/Ionia), we must now add Thessalian, Argive and perhaps Corinthian traditions.

One might explain this multiplicity by diachronic layering. Thus West supposes that Nestor's traditions originated in Pylos, spread to Thessaly in the twelfth–eleventh centuries, then passed on to Aeolic Asia Minor, eventually to Ionia. Mühlestein prefers a migration Thessaly–Pylos–Ionia.⁴⁹ The contradiction reflects different starting points—for West, the supposed Achaeans, Aeolic and Ionic phases of epic language; for Mühlestein, a euhemeristic approach to Neleus' exile to Messenia and Ionian migration legends. Besides their incompatibility, both neglect some details (such as Pero, and Heracles' sack of Pylos).

Moreover, heroic exploits themselves are rarely confined to a particular location. The very 'Pylian' narratives we started with—the Eleian war and the funeral games at Buprasium—involve Eleian heroes like the Molione. Are they then influenced by Eleian local tradition?⁵⁰ If we suppose that these characters originated in distinct local traditions—with an all-Pylian or all-Eleian cast—then no trace of these original, 'pure' local stories actually survives. This is not to completely deny any connection between content and origin; but a situation in which isolated, distinct local strands have been superficially combined seems improbable.

4. *Nestor's traditional language*

If Nestor's youthful Peloponnesian exploits represent his original, local tradition, his elderly appearance at Troy is a secondary, 'Panhellenic' development. Nestor's traditional diction, however, shows him as an older, adviser figure.⁵¹ Νηληϊάδοιο γέροντος,⁵² and frequently γέρων, γεραιός, fits the 'old man' at Troy, not the young Pylian. The formula Νέστωρ ~~~~~ Γερήνιος οὔρος Ἀχαιῶν,⁵³ though likely referring to a Messenian town,⁵⁴ combines this with his status within the larger body of Achaeans; similarly the formula ὦ Νέστωρ Νηληϊάδη μέγα κῦδος Ἀχαιῶν.⁵⁵ Even λιγὺς Πυλίων

⁴⁸ Paus. 2.2.2; *contra* Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.7.3, Hyg. *Fab.* 10.

⁴⁹ West (n. 22), 160; Mühlestein (n. 39), 162–5. Cf. Levaniouk (n. 4 [2000]), 248–74, with wider evidence for links between Thessaly and the Peloponnese.

⁵⁰ Cf. Levaniouk (n. 4 [2000]), 44.

⁵¹ K. Dickson, 'Nestor among the Sirens', *Oral Tradition* 8 (1993), 21–58, especially 22. Nestor's literary role confirms the evidence of the diction: H.M. Roisman, 'Nestor the good counsellor', *CQ* 55 (2005), 17–38.

⁵² *Il.* 8.100, 15.378.

⁵³ 'Gerenian guardian of the Achaeans', *Il.* 8.80, 11.840, 15.370, 15.659, *Od.* 3.411.

⁵⁴ Γερήνιος cannot be from γέρων: P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris, 1999²), 216–17. According to the *Catalogue of Women* (fr. 35, 36.7 West, Σ *Od.* 3.68 Pontani, Σ *D Il.* 11.692 van Thiel), Nestor escaped Heracles' sack of Pylos because he happened to be staying in Gerenum, a town attested historically (Strabo 8.3.29, *IG* V.1 1336). Strabo's suggestion that someone changed the town's name to Gerenum 'deceitfully', or of coincidental similarity, is simply based on his attempt to separate Nestor from Messenia.

⁵⁵ 'Son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans', *Il.* 10.87, 10.555, 11.511, 14.42, *Od.* 3.79, 3.202; although Odysseus is also μέγα κῦδος Ἀχαιῶν: *Il.* 9.673, 10.544, 12.184.

ἀγορητής,⁵⁶ indisputably referencing his Pylian origin, fits Nestor's Iliadic portrayal as wise adviser better than his warlike Pylian reminiscences. The description of Nestor's great age, shared between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, is thus probably traditional.⁵⁷ Furthermore, each of his paranarratives begins εἴθ' ὥς ἡβώοιμι βίη τέ μοι ἔμπεδος εἴη | ὥς ὁπότε ...,⁵⁸ presumably a traditional formula. Now, formulae may be transferred between characters and reworked over time; but such rich formulaic diction for Nestor the aged adviser is good evidence that Nestor has long held this role; he was not recently borrowed as a young warrior from Pylian local tradition.⁵⁹

5. Iconography and epigraphy

A possible eighth-century depiction of Nestor is identified through his Elean antagonists, the Molione (who, being conjoined twins, are easier to distinguish in the abstract Geometric style). An LG oinochoe produced and deposited at Athens may depict their flight from Nestor (*Il.* 11.750–2),⁶⁰ perhaps indicating the importance of stories about Nestor in Athens; Coldstream suggested a connection with Athenian aristocrats who claimed Neleid ancestry.⁶¹ On another interpretation, however, the oinochoe might reflect an artistic stylization, not conjoined twins.⁶² Unambiguous depictions of Nestor appear in the early sixth century,⁶³ with wide geographical range, focussing on his involvement at Troy.

The inscribed 'Nestor's Cup' from Pithecusae has a claim to ownership by 'Nestor' and two hexameters threatening anyone who drinks from it with being seized by Aphrodite.⁶⁴ This may refer to Nestor's Iliadic cup (11.632–7), closely parallel to Mycenaean items;⁶⁵ but it is hard to imagine two vessels as different as the Pithecusan skyphos and the Mycenaean/Iliadic cup. The scholarship divides over whether the

⁵⁶ *Il.* 1.248; 4.293.

⁵⁷ *Il.* 1.250–2, *Od.* 3.245. For M.L. West, *The Making of the Odyssey* (Oxford, 2014), 71 the *Odyssey* clumsily reproduces the *Iliad* lines; even if his charge of incompetence were valid, this does not mean that the poet refers specifically to the *Iliad* rather than the tradition.

⁵⁸ 'If only I were young and my strength was firm, as when ...', *Il.* 7.157, 11.670–1, 23.629–30; cf. 2.313–14, 7.132–3. For the traditionality of this phrase, see Dickson (n. 51), 32 n. 19; A. Kelly, *A Referential Commentary and Lexicon to Homer Iliad VIII* (Oxford, 2007), 366–7.

⁵⁹ A reviewer suggests that Nestor might already have been represented in a local tradition as an aged adviser figure reminiscing about the past. To posit a local Pylian (and specifically hexameter!) tradition that regularly employed a frame narrative featuring an older Nestor, just to explain these epithets, seems to me a step too far; especially as attested Greek epos lacks frame narratives that serve purely to introduce the main narrative, a function normally fulfilled by invocations to the Muses.

⁶⁰ Agora P4885 (Agora grave 13): *LIMC* Nestor 2* (7.1:1061) = Aktorione 3* (1.1:473) has further bibliography. Mid eighth century *LIMC* Aktorione 11 might also show them with Nestor (or possibly Heracles).

⁶¹ J.N. Coldstream, 'The Geometric style: birth of the picture', in T. Rasmussen and N. Spivey (edd.), *Looking at Greek Vases* (Cambridge, 1991), 37–56, at 51–2.

⁶² M.K. Dahm, 'Not twins at all: the Agora oinochoe reconsidered', *Hesperia* 76 (2007), 717–30.

⁶³ *LIMC* 5 (Corinthian pyxis found at Caere), 28 (middle Corinthian cup), 29 (shield-band relief from Delphi), 34 (Attic black-figure Tyrrhenian amphora).

⁶⁴ *SEG* 14.604 = Meiggs and Lewis no. 8; see G. Buchner and D. Ridgway, *Pithekoussai I: La necropoli: Tombe 1-723, scavate dal 1952 al 1961* (Rome, 1993), 219 with appendix. For bibliography: P.A. Hansen, 'Pithecusan humour. The interpretation of "Nestor's Cup" reconsidered', *Glotta* 54 (1976), 25–44, at 25; Buchner and Ridgway (this note), 751–8; S. West, 'Nestor's bewitching cup', *ZPE* 101 (1994), 9–15.

⁶⁵ The LHI 'Dove cup' from Mycenae: H.L. Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments* (London, 1950), 335.

inscription constitutes a genuine curse or a joke,⁶⁶ and on the relationship with the Homeric scene. More convincingly, Nestor's cup was a traditional motif referred to by both the *Iliad* and the inscription,⁶⁷ given the Mycenaean parallel, the skyphos' date (c. 725, rather early for a fixed written version of the *Iliad* at Pithecusae) and the anomaly of the *Iliad* passage itself—only Nestor, comparatively old and weak, can lift it.⁶⁸

6. Conclusions

The hypothesis that Nestor's character originated in an isolated local tradition—whether Pylian or Ionian—in the 400 years after the fall of the Pylian palace, being then integrated into a new, 'Panhellenic' Greek epos in the eighth century, is untenable. Though it is certainly conceivable that stories about a local king, surviving in the Pylos area despite the Early Iron Age population decrease, entered epos before the Spartan conquest, Nestor's rich traditional diction in epos indicates a long development in the role of a wise, aged advisor, not the young, bold warrior of the *Iliad*'s Pylian exploits. The idea that Nestor developed in an Ionian tradition, bound up with an ancestral connection to founders of Ionian cities, faces linguistic objections over Neleus' name (and doubts regarding Pylos-(Athens)-Ionia migration).⁶⁹

In any case, theories about strictly local development neglect the fundamental diversity of areas with which Nestor (and his family) is connected; the 'Pylian' stories themselves narrate wars and competitions with other Peloponnesian regions. The principle that local content implies locally-developing tradition would result in a vast number of different hypothetical local traditions about Nestor; though it would be possible to explain this by means of multi-stage migration, this approach appears rather arbitrary. Given the introductory comments about Early-Iron-Age interconnectedness, we might instead propose that traditions about Nestor did not develop in an isolated region, but in an environment of wider communication and connection. That is, the epic tradition in which Nestor's character developed, even if performed mainly around some part of Ionia, Aeolia or elsewhere, was constantly in contact with other regions of the Greek world, absorbing characters and local details, and known to audiences there.

⁶⁶ Language of magic: West (n. 64), C. Faraone, 'Taking the "Nestor's Cup Inscription" seriously: erotic magic and conditional curses in the earliest inscribed hexameters', *ClAnt* 15 (1996), 77–112. But overwhelming sexual passion is not comparable to the harsher punishments of more seriously cursed cups (cf. *IG* xiv 865 = *LSAG* 238 pl. 47[3]). Thus the inscription may be humorous: so L.H. Jeffery, 'The alphabet and Greece', in *CAH Plates to Volume III* (1984), 274; B. Powell, *Homer and the Origin of the Greek Alphabet* (Cambridge, 1991), 163–7; Hansen (n. 64), 41–2. Ownership inscriptions on cups are strikingly prevalent at early dates: cf. Hansen (n. 64), 30–2; M. Bessios, Y. Tzifopoulos and A. Kotsonas, *Μεθώνη Πιπρίας Ι* (Thessaloniki, 2012), 339–43.

⁶⁷ So West (n. 64), 13–15; Graziosi (n. 4), 135 n. 33.

⁶⁸ Already noted in antiquity: N.J. Richardson, 'Homeric professors in the age of the sophists', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 201 (1975), 65–81, at 72.

⁶⁹ *CQ*'s reader suggests that even if stories like those of Nestor do not actually originate in local traditions, the *Iliad* poet might have imagined so, and presented these secondary narratives accordingly. But there is little indication in the text that the poet had a personal attitude to the historical development of the epic tradition. A more plausible view might be that the secondary narrators of the poem are placed in contrast (or even rivalry) with the narrator, in which the local/supra-local scope of the narrative might play a role. For the idea of rivalry between poet and secondary narrators see especially A. Kelly, 'Performance and rivalry: Homer, Odysseus, and Hesiod', in M. Revermann and P. Wilson (edd.), *Performance, Iconography, Reception: Studies in Honour of Oliver Taplin* (Oxford, 2008), 177–203; E.T.E. Barker and J.P. Christensen, *Homer's Thebes: Epic Rivalries and the Appropriation of Mythical Pasts* (Washington, DC, 2020); T.J. Nelson, 'Intertextual *agōnes* in Archaic Greek epic: Penelope vs. the *Catalogue of Women*', *Yearbook of Ancient Greek Epic* 5 (2021), 25–57.

II. IRIS

My second case-study is Iris, the divine messenger of the *Iliad*. Whilst not (explicitly) mentioned in the *Odyssey*, she appears occasionally in the *Homeric Hymns* and *Theogony*. While the issue with assigning Nestor to a particular local tradition turned out to be the complexity of many different local connections, Iris shows precisely the opposite: a lack of any apparent local associations in the Archaic period. Erbse considered Iris an invention of the *Iliad* poet; but more recent work on her etymology and formulaic diction demonstrates her diachronic depth in the tradition.⁷⁰

1. *Absence from cult*

According to Nagy, ‘the Homeric concept of the Olympian gods . . . incorporates, yet goes beyond, the localised religious traditions of each city-state’.⁷¹ We might therefore expect ‘Panhellenic’ epos to emphasize common ground between local cults, focussing on deities that are widely worshipped and excluding those who exist only in particular localities. With Iris, however, far from being worshipped everywhere, one is hard-pressed to find traces of her in any local cult whatsoever.

Iris is difficult to identify, sharing as she does most of her attributes with Nike.⁷² Her earliest certain depictions are an early sixth-century altar from Amyclae, a limestone metope from Paestum and a seventh/sixth-century terracotta metope from Thermos, Aetolia.⁷³ Early sixth-century Attic vases show Iris leading a divine procession at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis;⁷⁴ towards the end of the century a wider variety of themes are attested: Iris running, at the judgement of Paris, bringing Antilochus to Troy, stopping a chariot, and with Heracles and Geryoneus.⁷⁵ Iris is usually represented in situations that relate to mythological narrative, suggesting that she was primarily associated with poetry. The only evidence for cult is a fragment of the third-century antiquarian Semos of Delos, recording the sacrifice of a certain kind of cake to Iris on the island of Hecate.⁷⁶ It seems unlikely that this tradition—one of many such Delian customs—is a survival of some substantial archaic cult, from which Iris might have been adopted into the epic pantheon.

2. *Etymology and diction*

Iris’ antiquity is clear from her name. Synchronically functioning as the Greek word for ‘rainbow’,⁷⁷ the initial *w- is revealed by Homeric hiatus, and digamma in early

⁷⁰ H. Erbse, *Untersuchungen zur Funktion der Götter im homerischen Epos* (Berlin, 1986), 54–65. Iris’ etymology: see Chantraine (n. 54), 468–9; C. Watkins, *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (Oxford, 1995), 36 n. 13; R. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* (Leiden, 2010), 598; L. Massetti, ‘Two lovely names: on Κύπρις and Ἴρις’, *MSS* 70 (2016), 41–59.

⁷¹ Nagy refers here to the English translation (New York, 1925) of E. Rohde, *Psyche: Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen* (Freiburg, 1898), 125–7, but this section is rather concerned with hero cult. Compare Kearns (n. 4), 62.

⁷² A. Kossatz-Deissman, ‘Iris I’, *LIMC* 5.1 (1990), 741–60, at 743.

⁷³ Kossatz-Deissman (n. 72), nos. 1 (= Pausanias 3.19.3), 3, 4.

⁷⁴ Kossatz-Deissman (n. 72), nos. 124, 125, 126 (with Chiron), compare 84 (Iris and Hermes lead wedding procession, early sixth-century Attic BF *lebês gamikos*).

⁷⁵ Kossatz-Deissman (n. 72), nos. 11a, 12–13, 83, 96, 105–8, 110, 127, 128, 137, 141–5, 147–9, 168–9, 170, 170a. In the fifth century scenes with Iris proliferate further.

⁷⁶ *FGrHist* 396 F 5 = Ath. *Deipn.* 14.53.

⁷⁷ E.g. *Il.* 11.27, 7.547.

inscriptions.⁷⁸ Traces of *w- in Homeric formulae demonstrate that Iris is no creation of the *Iliad* poet. *wīr-is is an *i*-stem derivative of a *-rō-* noun (like ἄκρις ‘peak’ from ἄκρος⁷⁹), the root being either *uieh₁- ‘wrap, envelope, turn’ or *ueih₁- ‘be eager, strive, have fresh energy’ (both form *-rō-* derivatives).⁸⁰ At first sight, *uieh₁- seems a better match, given semantic parallels like Latin *arcus*, Proto-Germanic *regnabugô deriving the name of the rainbow from its curved shape.⁸¹ But in Greek we otherwise only find *ueih₁- (e.g. ἕμαι, ἱρηξ, ἴς, Ἰάνασσα, Ἰάνειρα), which therefore seems more likely.⁸² Moreover, as Massetti has shown, Iris has a parallel figure in Vedic mythology, Venás, whose name may be a *-nō-* derivative of *ueih₁-, and who shares a number of characteristic features: a messenger of the gods, who flies and is assimilated to a bird of prey, with golden wings.⁸³ Given these parallels, these figures are surely cognate, from a common prototype in Proto-Indo-European mythology.

Iris’ antiquity is confirmed by her role and diction in epos. Her appearances in the *Iliad* often take the form of messenger/divine visit scenes,⁸⁴ with considerable repeated diction. Some is not specific to Iris, but part of broader formulaic language⁸⁵—although this still shows her integration into the traditional storytelling of the *Iliad*. Specific, however, is the repeated phrase by which Zeus orders her to bring a message, Ἴριν δ’ ὄτρυνε χρυσόπτερον ἀγγελέουσιν | “βάσκ’ ἴθι Ἴρι ταχεῖα ...”⁸⁶ ‘He urged on Iris, the golden-winged, to bear a message: “Swift Iris, go forth ...”’. Here χρυσόπτερος parallels Venás’ *pakṣē hiraṇyāve* ‘golden wing’,⁸⁷ alongside the imperative βάσκε, itself only found in the combination βάσκ’ ἴθι, in these four instances and at *Il.* 2.8 (Zeus sends a dream to Agamemnon) and 24.336 (to Hermes, not long after being spoken to Iris). As Hainsworth suggests, βάσκε is an archaic formation (< *g^w_hskō, cognate with Sanskrit *gácchati*), surviving in the fossilized context of Iris’ traditional language.⁸⁸ Iris also has unique formulae: the epithet ποδῖνημος ὠκέα Ἴρις ‘wind-footed swift Iris’ (9x *Il.*, *Hom. Hymn Ap.* 107)⁸⁹; ἀελλόπος ἀγγελέουσα (see n. 85), ἀελλόπος ‘storm-footed’

⁷⁸ Massetti (n. 70), 50 n. 35.

⁷⁹ Massetti (n. 70), 42; for Hittite evidence for this derivational pattern see M. Weiss, ‘Greek μυρίος “countless”, Hittite *mūri-* “bunch (of fruit)”’, *HSF* 109 (1996), 199–278, at 202–5.

⁸⁰ For more details, see Massetti (n. 70), 50–1. Massetti cites *-rō-* derivatives including, for *uieh₁-, OE *wīr* ‘wire’, ON *vīrr* ‘wire’, Welsh *gŵyr* ‘bent’; for *ueih₁-, Toch. A *wir* ‘young’, Ved. *vīra-* ‘young man’, Av. *vīra-* ‘young man’, Lith. *vīras* ‘young man’, Lat. *vir* ‘man’, etc., perhaps also the Mycenaean name *wi-ro* (KN As 1516.18).

⁸¹ Here I differ from Massetti (n. 70), 50, who claims that an etymology from *uieh₁- ‘fails to be cogent semantically’. The cognates show that a *-rō-* stem derivative of *uieh₁- can come to mean ‘a bent thing’, appropriate for the rainbow; by contrast, *-rō-* stem derivatives of *ueih₁- connote youth, strength and vitality—certainly not inappropriate to a rainbow or Iris, but rather less specific (being applicable to most gods).

⁸² Perhaps also the name of Iros in the *Odyssey*, if not itself based on Iris (cf. 18.6–7).

⁸³ Massetti (n. 70), 52 lays out the parallelism in full, identified earlier in passing by M.L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 2007), 153. For the bird of prey cf. ἱρηξ, which probably derives from a *-rō-* substantive, Massetti (n. 70), 50; for Iris’ epithet χρυσόπτερος ‘golden-winged’, *Il.* 8.398, 11.185, *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 314.

⁸⁴ A typical pattern: M.W. Edwards, ‘Homer and oral tradition: the type-scene’, *Oral Tradition* 7 (1992), 284–330, at 308–10.

⁸⁵ ἄγγελος ἦλθε (2.786, etc., cf. 23.199); ἀγγοῦ δ’ ἰσταμένη προσέφη πόδας ὠκέα Ἴρις (2.790, etc.); ὡς ἔφατ’, ὦρτο δὲ Ἴρις ἀελλόπος ἀγγελέουσα (8.409, etc.); ἡ μὲν ἄρ’ ὡς εἰποῦς ἀπέβη πόδας ὠκέα Ἴρις (8.425, etc.). Elsewhere in the *Iliad*: ἄγγελος ἦλθε (4x); ἀγγοῦ δ’ ἰσταμένη/ἰστάμενος (12x); ὡς ἔφατ’, ὦρτο δ’ (4x); ἡ μὲν ἄρ’ ὡς εἰποῦς ἀπέβη at 5.133, cf. 15.100, 149.

⁸⁶ *Il.* 8.398–9 = 11.185–6, and (first line modified, but the same address) 15.157–8, 24.143–4.

⁸⁷ *RV* X 123.5d, see n. 80 above.

⁸⁸ Hainsworth (n. 27), 245–6.

⁸⁹ ποδῖνημος is only used of Iris in epos, in this formula and *Il.* 5.353.

occurring only in this formula in the *Iliad*,⁹⁰ and πόδας ὠκέα ‘swift-footed’ (9x *Il.*, *Th.* 780), although the masculine is shared with Achilles.⁹¹

3. Beyond the *Iliad*

Other than the potential indirect reference of *Od.* 18.6–7, Iris is not used as the gods’ messenger in the *Odyssey*. This is not typical of early epos in general, which is more consistent with the *Iliad*. Iris appears at *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 314–24, *Hom. Hymn Ap.* 102–4 (bringing Ilithyia to Delos) and in the *Cypria*, informing Menelaus of Helen’s departure.⁹² She is described in the *Theogony* as the daughter of Thaumas and Electra (both linked to the sea), the sister of the Harpies Aello and Ocypete; *Theogony* 268–9, describing their speed on a par with winds and birds, may apply to Iris as much as to her sisters. In *Theogony* 780–9, Iris is the messenger from Zeus to Styx (ἄγγελήην πωλεῖται, *Theog.* 781), fetching a jugful of Stygian water for oaths.

Comparison with the winds matches Iris’ traditional epithets (ποδῆνεμος, ἀελλόπος) and the simile at *Iliad* 15.170–2, where Iris is compared to snow or hail driven by the North Wind, and 23.198–212, where Iris visits the winds so that they will kindle Patroclus’ funeral pyre. Perhaps these connections reflect Iris’ nature as personified weather phenomenon. Moreover, Alcaeus fr. 327 V. identifies Eros as the son of Iris and Zephyrus.⁹³ Though this may allude to Iris’ visit to the winds in *Iliad* 23, it is also possible that it reflects a traditional association.⁹⁴

If Iris is well-integrated in the tradition, why is she absent from the *Odyssey*? On the one hand, Iris is not the exclusive messenger of the gods in the *Iliad*. Other gods are sent when appropriate: Thetis to Achilles (24.120–42), because she is his mother; Hermes to Priam (24.333–469, 679–94), who can put the guards to sleep at 445. The disguised Hermes’ extensive conversation with Priam resembles Athene visiting Telemachus as Mentes in *Odyssey* Book 1. Revealing also is the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, where Iris is first sent to Demeter to convince her to return; when she fails, Zeus sends the other gods in turn (325–30). Zeus then sends Hermes to Hades (334–57), presumably because of his role as psychopomp. One could make the case that Hermes is sent to Calypso in *Odyssey* Book 5 rather than Iris because Ogygia is so remote that it requires him rather than Iris;⁹⁵ but Iris is happily sent to Styx (*Theog.* 780–9), though far away and in the underworld (775); and *Odyssey* 5.29 (Ἑρμεία, σὺ γὰρ αὖτε τὰ τ’ ἄλλα περ ἄγγελός ἐσσι) is incongruous if Iris is the default messenger.⁹⁶ Perhaps we have to do more with an idiosyncratic difference between different poems. If so, this is a good example of a

⁹⁰ Once of horses: *Hom. Hymn Aphr.* 217.

⁹¹ 30x *Il.*; of Orsilochus, in a different position in the line, at *Od.* 13.260.

⁹² *Cypria* arg. 24–5 Bernabé; cf. M.L. West, *The Epic Cycle* (Oxford, 2013), 97–8.

⁹³ δεινότατον θεῶν, | <τὸν> γέννατ’ εὐπέδιλλος Ἴρις | χρυσοκόμα Ζεφύρῳ μίγεισα.

⁹⁴ Σ T II. 23.230 Erbse, in fact, suggests that the poet knew the story about love between Iris and Zephyrus. For wider references to this genealogy of Eros see G. Liberman, *Alcée: Fragments II* (Paris, 1999), 142.

⁹⁵ Compare the theory that Priam’s journey to Achilles is portrayed as a *katabasis*: M.H. de Jàuregui, ‘Priam’s catabasis: traces of the epic journey to Hades in *Iliad* 24’, *TAPhA* 141 (2011), 37–68.

⁹⁶ But for this line, there are other explanations for why Iris is not the messenger; Σ *Od.* 5.29b–c Pontani suggest that Iris, being ‘more striking’ (καταπληκτική), is appropriate to a war poem, Hermes to the *Odyssey* because they are both μυθώδης ‘legendary’, ‘fabular’ (why exactly is unclear); and that Hermes here is appropriate as Calypso’s nephew. J.B. Hainsworth, in J.B. Hainsworth, A. Heubeck and S. West, *A Commentary on Homer’s Odyssey*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1988), 257, on 5.28 suggests that Hermes is more persuasive; note also that Zeus, especially associated with Iris, directly intervenes less often in the *Odyssey*.

difference within the poetic tradition for which there is no evidence that it represents a difference between local traditions.

4. Conclusions

The striking feature about Nestor was his connection to a variety of different locations and regions, challenging the idea of an isolated Pylian local tradition. Iris poses the opposite problem: despite being an ancient, established part of the poetic tradition with Indo-European roots, she has no connections with local cult. Naturally, it is hard to disprove the possibility that she was transmitted in a local tradition; but if so, this has left no detectable trace, neither on her character in epos nor on local cult. Moreover, her earliest certain depictions in art occur with a relatively wide distribution, apparently deriving from poetry, not cult.

So Iris seems, in her characteristics, to have been ‘Panhellenic’—at least, not associated with a particular local context—from the outset. If her non-local quality is an ancient inheritance, is it not plausible to suppose that other ‘Panhellenic’ or non-localized aspects of the epic gods (and the epic world in general) might also be ancient, not eighth-century innovations resulting from merging features of local traditions? At least in this respect, the non-localized world of epos is apparently no recent development.

III. SARPEDON

In the *Iliad*, Sarpedon leads the Lycians, one of the most prominent Trojan allies. In the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (fr. 140–1 M–W), he is Minos’ brother, who becomes king of Lycia and fights at Troy;⁹⁷ otherwise he is absent from epos. But does he come from a local tradition—Lycian, or Greek? And if so, what evidence is there for the date of his entrance into epos?

1. Etymology

Sarpedon’s name is linked with relative certainty to south-west Anatolia. In addition to the form */zrppedun.../* found on the Xanthos Inscribed Pillar (TL 44, see below), probably his name in Lycian B, we find a corresponding pattern of Lycian A names in */hrppid-/*, with a wider pattern of correspondence between Lycian A */hr-/*, Lycian B */zr-/*, Carian */š(a)r-/*, likely from **/sr-/*.⁹⁸ A very close parallel is Carian *Pēdōn*. Since neither Lycian A */hr-/* (corresponding to Ap-/Ep-) nor B */zr-/* (corresponding to Σερ-) are attested in Greek transcriptions as Σαρ-, whereas we have examples of Carian */šar-/* transcribed Σαρ- (Σαρυσσώλλος, Σαρυσσισ),⁹⁹ it seems likely either that the Greek form is based on an older pre-form with different phonetic realization,¹⁰⁰ or (more

⁹⁷ Fr. 141 M–W (= P. Oxy. 1358 fr. 1 col. I): Sarpedon’s name is not visible, but the references to the Trojan allies (line 23) after Europa’s children makes this much clear, cf. M. Hirschberger, *Gynaikōn Katalogos und Megalai Ēhoiai. Ein Kommentar zu den Fragmenten zweier hesiodischer Epen* (Leiden, 2004), ad loc.; Διόθεν τέρας ἦεν ‘there was a sign from Zeus’, line 28, probably refers to the tears of blood (Il. 16.459–60).

⁹⁸ D. Schürr, ‘“Sarpedon” und verwandte Namen’, in *BN* 48 (2013), 257–81, at 260, 266–9.

⁹⁹ See Schürr (n. 98), 260, 267–8 for examples.

¹⁰⁰ So S. Durnford, ‘Is “Sarpedon” a Bronze Age Anatolian personal name or a job description?’, *AS* 58 (2008), 103–13; Schürr (n. 98), 271 inclines to this view (but cf. page 271 n. 131).

plausibly) directly on Carian.¹⁰¹ Either way, the etymology supports an origin in south-west Anatolia.¹⁰²

Admittedly, Sarpedon's name is not unique, being shared with the Gorgons' island in the *Cypria*,¹⁰³ an Atlantic island in Stesichorus,¹⁰⁴ a Cilician promontory,¹⁰⁵ a Thracian cape¹⁰⁶ and a Thracian hero killed by Heracles.¹⁰⁷ The Thracian Sarpedon might be a later creation or variant based on the Iliadic Sarpedon. The place-names are less clear; they do not obviously come from Caria or Lycia,¹⁰⁸ perhaps similar-sounding names were assimilated to the more familiar character's name. But they are relatively marginal, and an unlikely source for Sarpedon's name. The question then arises: what evidence supports a Lycian (or Carian) tradition about Sarpedon, from which he might have been absorbed into Greek epics?

2. Local Lycian tradition?

It has been proposed that Sarpedon originated in local 'Lycian' tradition,¹⁰⁹ and that the return of his body to Lycia (*Iliad* 16.666–83) reflects local cult.¹¹⁰ Cult is later attested at the 'Sarpedoneion', a building in Xanthos described by Appian.¹¹¹ But it is not clear that this existed early. Appian's Sarpedoneion, if it is building G on the acropolis, dates from 460 without evidence for an earlier shrine.¹¹² Sarpedon's name is found in a long inscription in Lycian B (alongside Greek and Lycian A), the late fifth-/early fourth-century¹¹³ Xanthos Inscribed Pillar (*TL* 44), which is metrical¹¹⁴ and might refer to the

¹⁰¹ So I. Yakubovich, *Sociolinguistics of the Luvian Language* (Leiden, 2010), 138; M. Bachvarova, 'Migrations in Anatolian narrative traditions', in K. Kopinias, Ç. Maner and N.C. Stampolidis (edd.), *Nostoi: Indigenous Culture, Migration and Integration in the Aegean Islands and Western Anatolia during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages* (Istanbul, 2015), 145–83, at 172.

¹⁰² Durnford (n. 100) hypothesized original Anatolian **sar-pēdan*, 'of the top place', to explain both the place names and give an original meaning 'commander'. But as Schürr (n. 98), 277 shows, this is implausible (Carian *Pēdōn* would then mean just 'place'!). The meaning of the element *-pēd-* thus remains unclear. C. Aceti collects older scholarship on Sarpedon's name: 'Sarpedone fra mito e poesia', in L. Pagani (ed.), *Eroi nell'Iliade: personaggi e strutture narrative* (Rome, 2008), 1–269, at 155–6 n. 381.

¹⁰³ Fr. 32.2 Bernabé, cf. Hes. *Theog.* 274–5.

¹⁰⁴ Fr. 6 Finglass, perhaps the same as (or based on) the Gorgons' island.

¹⁰⁵ Strabo 13.4.6.

¹⁰⁶ Hdt. 7.58.2, Ap. Rhod. 1.216, cf. Σ Ap. Rhod. 1.211 Wendel = Callisthenes, *FGrHist* 124 F 39.

¹⁰⁷ Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.5.9; cf. Durnford (n. 100), 103–4, 112.

¹⁰⁸ The Gorgons might be related to the same mythological complex, Bellerophon's horse Pegasus being born from Medusa.

¹⁰⁹ T. Bryce, *The Lycians in Literary and Epigraphic Sources* (Copenhagen, 1986), 27–8; M.L. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 1997), 386; A.G. Keen, *Dynastic Lycia: A Political History of the Lycians and their Relations with Foreign Powers, c. 545–362 B.C.* (Leiden, 1998), 209–10; B. Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes* (Oxford, 2005), 50–1.

¹¹⁰ For this theory: Aceti (n. 102), 111–12, 152, 223–4. See M. Clark and W. Coulson, 'Memnon and Sarpedon', *MH* 35.2 (1978), 65–73; Currie (n. 4), 57, 64–6, 90 for the neoanalytic theory that the Iliadic Sarpedon takes on Memnon's former role, but this is neither certain, nor incompatible with Sarpedon's traditionality: Aceti (n. 102), 231–62.

¹¹¹ *BCiv.* 4.78–9.

¹¹² Keen (n. 109), 187–9.

¹¹³ M.D. Gygas and W. Tietz, "'He who of all mankind set up the most numerous trophies to Zeus": the Inscribed Pillar of Xanthos reconsidered', *AS* 55 (2005), 89–98.

¹¹⁴ H. Eichner, 'Probleme von Vers und Metrum in epichorischer Dichtung Altkleinasiens', in G. Dobesch and G. Rehrenböck (edd.), *Die epigraphische und alttumskundliche Erforschung Kleinasiens* (Wien, 1993), 97–169, at 128–53.

Trojan War.¹¹⁵ But given our limited understanding of Lycian B, it is unclear whether this reflects an ancient epichoric poetic tradition about Sarpedon, or Greek cultural influence; the accompanying Greek inscription draws on fifth-century Athenian ideology.¹¹⁶ A reference to the Trojan War would imply at least partial influence from the Trojan saga, rather than an original, separate tradition about Sarpedon from which he might hypothetically have been transferred to Troy in the eighth century.

If the form of the name is Carian, not Lycian, why is Sarpedon a Lycian in the *Iliad*? The poet refers specifically to the Lycian river Xanthos¹¹⁷ (2.877, etc.), clearly distinguishing the Carians (2.867–75). That said, the people the Greeks called Λύκιοι really called themselves the *Trēmili*. The Greek name derives from the Late Bronze Age Lukka peoples, a ‘conglomerate of independent communities’ in western Anatolia with a fractious relationship with the Hittites; it is usually assumed that the Lycians are culturally their descendants.¹¹⁸ The Lukka lands, however, may be a wider region, including part of (later) Caria.¹¹⁹ So Lukka/Λύκιοι seemingly became restricted to a narrower region over time (cf. the term Αἰθιῳα/Αἰθίοι). Perhaps, then, Sarpedon became known to the Greeks from a Carian source before the term Λύκιοι became narrowed to the *Trēmili*.

3. Intermediary Milesian/Rhodian traditions?

According to Strabo and Apollodorus, Sarpedon founded Miletus.¹²⁰ Some scholars therefore posit a local foundation narrative there featuring Sarpedon,¹²¹ perhaps related to Herodotus’ statement (1.147) that certain Ionian cities adopted Glaucus’ descendants as kings. Further, the killing of Amisodarus’ sons Atymnius and Maris (apparently genuinely Anatolian names, and listed among Sarpedon’s *hetairoi*) by Antilochus and Thrasymedes, Nestor’s sons (*Il.* 16.317–29, 419), has been taken to allude to a conflict between Sarpedonic and Neleid phases of Miletus.¹²² Local tradition held that the male Cretan/Carian population had been massacred when Ionians arrived.¹²³ On this theory, the *Iliad* poet borrowed some characters from a local foundation narrative in which Neleids fought Carians over Miletus.¹²⁴

¹¹⁵ See Schürr (n. 98), 255–6.

¹¹⁶ P. Thonemann, ‘Lycian, Athens and Amorges’, in J. Ma, N. Papazarkadas and R. Parker (edd.), *Interpreting the Athenian Empire* (Oxford, 2009), 176–94, at 181–2.

¹¹⁷ Though probably not the Lycian name, cf. Strabo 14.3.6.

¹¹⁸ Bryce (n. 109), 4; Keen (n. 109), 27; Aceti (n. 102), 162.

¹¹⁹ R. Oreshko, ‘Ethnic groups and language contact in Lycia (I): the “Maritime Interface”’, *Journal of Language Relationship* 18 (2020), 13–40, at 18–20.

¹²⁰ Strabo 12.8.5, 14.1.6 (relying on Herodotus and Ephorus), Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 3.1.2; for the presentation of Sarpedon as Cretan, see the next section.

¹²¹ M. Bachvarova, *From Hittite to Homer: The Anatolian Background of Ancient Greek Epic* (Cambridge, 2016), 438–9.

¹²² R. Janko, *The Iliad: A Commentary. Volume IV* (Cambridge, 1992), on 16.317–29; Aceti (n. 102), 206–9; Bachvarova (n. 101), 170; Bachvarova (n. 121), 440. ‘Atymnius’ is also an alternative name for the Miletus over whom Sarpedon and Minos quarrel (Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.1.2). But we cannot assume that these characters entered the tradition solely in association with Sarpedon: Amisodarus reared the Chimaera, associated with Bellerophon.

¹²³ Herodotus 1.146, Pausanias 7.2.6.

¹²⁴ *CQ*’s reader suggests that different groups in Miletus may have articulated their identity through descent from different heroic figures: ‘Cretans’ from Miletus or Sarpedon, ‘Lycians’ from Sarpedon or Glaucus, ‘Ionians’ from Neileus; cf. Mac Sweeney (n. 42), 44–79, especially 48–53 on Neileus. We are probably dealing with interaction between local Milesian concerns and the epic characters, although Sarpedon’s Lycian features in the *Iliad* suggest a more complex situation than a purely Milesian borrowing.

A parallel argument is that Sarpedon's fight with Tlepolemus in *Iliad* 5 reflects Rhodian epic tradition. A duel originally in Lycia and narrated by Rhodian poets would be translated to Troy by the *Iliad* poet.¹²⁵ The evidence for archaic-period conflict between Rhodes and Lycia comes from a vague statement, φασι δὲ ἀεὶ Λυκίους Ῥοδίοις ἐχθρεύειν;¹²⁶ the testimony that Cleobulus (sixth-century ruler of Lindos) led a military expedition against Lycia;¹²⁷ and the foundation of Phaselis.¹²⁸ There is some plausibility to the idea that the poet associated Tlepolemus and Sarpedon on the basis of the geographical proximity of Rhodes and Lycia, or contemporary conflict; but hypothesizing a poem about an equally hypothetical war over Phaselis featuring Sarpedon seems overly speculative.¹²⁹

4. Cretan Sarpedon?

In various traditions from [Hes.] fr. 141 M–W onwards,¹³⁰ Sarpedon is Minos' brother, son of Zeus and Europa, and leads migration from Crete to Lycia. In Strabo and Apollodorus, these events are also linked to Miletus' foundation. There is a contradiction in parentage with *Iliad* 6.196–9 (Sarpedon the son of Zeus and Bellerophon's daughter Laodameia). The *Catalogue* version is problematic for Sarpedon's involvement at Troy: he would be a contemporary of Minos, Idomeneus' grandfather (*Il.* 13.450–3). Later sources (Diod. Sic. 5.79.3) made the Trojan Sarpedon the grandson of the Cretan Sarpedon, but the solution in Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 3.1.2)—that Sarpedon lived for three generations—probably goes back to the *Catalogue*: fr. 141.20 M–W, ἢν μερόπων ἀνθρώπων, resembles the description of Nestor's three-generation life at *Il.* 1.250–1, τῷ δ' ἦδη δύο μὲν γενεαὶ μερόπων ἀνθρώπων | ἐφθιάθ', and Teiresias at *Melampodia* fr. 276 M–W, ἐπτά τ' ἐπὶ ζῶειν γενεὰς μερόπων ἀνθρώπων.¹³¹ Sarpedon's long life is generally seen as an innovation, reconciling conflicting versions in the tradition,¹³² although the repeated phraseology (and thus the reattribution of characters to different

¹²⁵ See Aceti (n. 102), 178–87; G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary. Volume II* (Cambridge, 1990), 122 on 627–9; D.L. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Berkeley, 1959), 148–9; M. Nilsson, *Homer and Mycenae* (London, 1933), 263 (the latter two positing Mycenaean conflict). Levaniouk (n. 4 [2012]), 377–8 notes the presence of epic poets on Rhodes, Peisander and the shadowy Peisinous (Clem. Al. *Strom.* 6.2.25).

¹²⁶ 'They say that the Lycians have always been hostile to the Rhodians', Σ bT *Il.* 5.639 Erbse, perhaps rather reflecting the later conflict of 189 B.C. onwards due to Roman intervention, for which see S.L. Ager, *Interstate Arbitrations in the Greek World, 337–90 B.C.* (Berkeley, 1996), 275–8. Certainly it does not support confident assertions like those of O. Treuber, *Geschichte der Lykier* (Stuttgart, 1887), 89.

¹²⁷ Lindos Chronicle, C.1–5.

¹²⁸ Phaselis is commonly called a Rhodian foundation; the closest ancient testimony to this is apparently Philostephanus (Ath. *Deipn.* 7.51), first calling the founder Argive, then adding 'some say that he was from Lindos'. In any case, Oreshko (n. 119), 14–15 has argued that this region was not culturally part of Lycia.

¹²⁹ As discussed above, etymologically Sarpedon is unlikely to originate from the name of an archaic-period Lycian.

¹³⁰ Compare Bacchylides fr. 20 E10 Snell = Σ AB *Il.* 12.292 Erbse, Hdt. 1.173, Strabo 12.8.5, 14.1.6 (relying on Herodotus and Ephorus), Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.1.2.

¹³¹ μερόπων ἀνθρώπων can be line-final without reference to generations of people (*Il.* 3.402, etc.). But with only eight lines separating the probable occurrences of Sarpedon and the Trojan allies in fr. 141, all partly surviving and none suitable for introducing a grandson, a three-generation life seems almost certain: Hirschberger (n. 97), 311.

¹³² Bryce (n. 109), 21; Currie (n. 109), 50 (the Trojan connection an innovation and the Cretan colonization primary); N.C. Unwin, *Caria and Crete in Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2017), 71.

eras) is likely traditional. But this does not tell us whether the *Iliad* poet knew the Cretan association of Sarpedon.¹³³ Aceti argues that the *Iliad* poet is innovating with Sarpedon's lineage, since the majority of sources contradict this,¹³⁴ but the other sources are all later, some very considerably.

Stories of Cretans settling in south-west Anatolia are sometimes attributed to Bronze Age links between Minoan Crete and Miletus;¹³⁵ this would mean the survival of a Middle Bronze Age tradition, and Sarpedon's links with Minos and Rhadamanthys could be the result of MBA borrowing from Anatolian into Minoan poetry.¹³⁶ However, little evidence suggests great antiquity for Sarpedon in Greek tradition. Two Corinthian vases from the early mid sixth century do have ΣΑΡΠΑΔΩΝ, apparently /ā/ for Ionic η.¹³⁷ Lycian /e/ is sometimes transcribed as Greek /a/,¹³⁸ but at face value the Corinthian form (vs. epic η) implies that the Ionic form has been through the *ā > ē sound change. However, if Sarpedon's name originally had ā, it would be difficult to explain the correspondence with Carian *Pēdōn* (see above); and Pindar has the ē-vocalism (*Pyth.* 3.112).

Further, Sarpedon's traditional diction lacks distinctive formulaic epithets or fossilized linguistic forms.¹³⁹ One proposed exception is τὰρχύω 'bury', used of his burial at *Il.* 16.456 (= 674), elsewhere once of a grave marker (7.85). This has been linked with Hittite *tarḫ-mi* 'conquer', 'be superior', Luwian *Tarhund-*, Lycian *Trqḡnt* (both names of gods), on the hypothesis that it referred to an Anatolian ritual granting the deceased 'heroic or divine' status, coming into epos with Sarpedon from Lycian tradition.¹⁴⁰ Without attestations in Anatolian in connection with funerary rites, however, the semantic gap seems too wide; even if accepted, it does not necessarily imply that Sarpedon entered the tradition early. Moreover, the onomastic evidence is all from the first millennium.¹⁴¹ As such, Sarpedon is probably not a Bronze Age survival in epos, nor as well integrated into epos as, say, Nestor.

¹³³ P. Wathelet, *Les Troyens de l'Iliade: mythe et histoire* (Paris, 1989), 204 thought that Tlepolemos' questioning of Sarpedon's genealogy shows the *Iliad* poet announcing his innovation.

¹³⁴ Aceti (n. 102), e.g. 158, 226.

¹³⁵ Bryce (n. 109), 31.

¹³⁶ So Aceti (n. 102), 156–61.

¹³⁷ LIMC 7.1.296–7, 1, 2 (Iliadic scenes); discussed by R. Wachter, *Non-Attic Greek Vase Inscriptions* (Oxford, 2000), 309–10, 334.

¹³⁸ Schürr (n. 98), 271.

¹³⁹ For Σαρπηδόνα διόν (*Il.* 16.638, 678) cf. e.g. 4.223 (Ἀγαμέμνονα), 13.129 (Ἑκτορα); διός is used of other heroes (e.g. Odysseus). ἀντίθεος (ἀντίθειον Σαρπηδόνα: 6.663, etc.; ἐπ' ἀντιθέῳ Σαρπηδόνη: 5.629, 16.649) is similarly widely applied (e.g. Pandarus, Odysseus). For Λυκίων βουληφόρε (6.633), βουληφόρον ἀμφὶ ἄνακτα (12.414), compare Αἰνεΐα Τρώων βουληφόρε (5.180, etc.), Ἰδομενεύ, Κρητῶν βουληφόρε (13.219, 255); for the acc. βουληφόρον, cf. 2.24 = 2.61, 10.518. For Λυκίων ἀγός (6.647, etc.), also of Glaucus, (7.13, etc.), and followed by ἀνδρῶν, ἀσπιστάων, etc. compare Θρηκῶν ἀγός (4.519), Κρητῶν ἀγός (7x *Il.*), Τρώων ἀγός (5.217). χαλκοκορυστήν (6.199) is used of Hector 3x *Il.* (cf. Currie [n. 4], 72 and n. 204). See further P. Wathelet, *Dictionnaire des Troyens de l'Iliade* (Liège, 1988), 976–8.

¹⁴⁰ See further Chantraine (n. 54), 1095; Nagy (n. 27), especially 131–2; West (n. 109), 386; C. Watkins, "'Hermit crabs', or new wine in old bottles", in B.J. Collins, M.R. Bachvarova and I.C. Rutherford (edd.), *Anatolian Interfaces: Hittites, Greeks and their Neighbours* (Oxford, 2008), 137; Bachvarova (n. 121), 446. Janko (n. 122), 377 dismisses the possibility.

¹⁴¹ Bachvarova (n. 101), 171 connects a Mycenaean toponym (PY Un 718.1, Er 880.2), but alternative interpretations are legion: F. Aura Jorro, *Diccionario micénico* (Madrid, 1985–93), 282–3, Wathelet (n. 139), 975.

5. Conclusions

From etymological evidence, Sarpedon genuinely originates in south-west Anatolia, although pin-pointing specific details proves challenging. The form of the name suggests a Carian source, but there was certainly a local cult to Sarpedon at Xanthos in Lycia from the fifth century, with a distinctive Lycian form of the name; presumably the figure had cross-regional importance. What little we know about local Xanthian beliefs might suggest that Sarpedon was associated with Troy there as well, perhaps due to later interaction with Greek epos.

On internal evidence, Sarpedon seems a relatively recent entrant to epos and the Trojan War. It has been proposed that this happened via a Milesian or Rhodian tradition. I have argued against a Rhodian Sarpedon, although an awareness of the geographical proximity of Rhodes and Lycia might have led the poet to match Sarpedon and Tlepolemus. The evidence that Sarpedon was regarded as pre-Ionian founder of Miletus is stronger, and might explain the Carian form of the name. But the Sarpedon of the *Iliad* is clearly Lycian, not Milesian; even if the character has originally entered the mythological tradition from Ionia, we must assume direct Lycian influence at some point.

Of the three characters, Sarpedon is the best candidate for a model whereby ‘Panhellenic’ epos subsumes epichoric traditions around the eighth century. Whether from Lycian, Milesian, or other Ionian or Carian tradition, he seems to have entered epos from south-west Anatolia shortly before the composition of the surviving poems—plausibly, the eighth/ninth century. That said, Sarpedon is somewhat problematic for the term ‘Panhellenism’, because (at least in the *Iliad*) he is not exactly ‘Hellenic’. The fact that the poets were equally happy to adopt a character who hardly fits the Persian-War-era ideology of Panhellenism suggests that they were more interested in a supra-local, broad cast of characters than articulating a particular identity. Moreover, Sarpedon cannot be pinned down to a single ‘major city-state’. Lycia was probably not a political unity before 430,¹⁴² nor equivalent to a single Greek city state; and Sarpedon seemingly had regional—not purely local—importance.

IV. CONCLUSION

These three case studies challenge the idea that archaic hexameter draws on local poetic traditions of different city states, subsuming them into a Panhellenic whole. In the case of Nestor, postulating an origin in an isolated local tradition—whether Pylia or Ionian—is problematic: a single character may have a wide range of connections to different parts of the Greek world, and it is methodologically dubious to try to isolate individual local strands and assign them to various different local origins. Iris has a long history in the epic tradition, but no local associations: non-local elements in epos are not all recent developments. Sarpedon provides the strongest case for a relatively recent entry into epos, but appears to have had a regional, not just local, importance, and controverts the ‘Hellenic’ element of ‘Panhellenic’. Plausibly, the epic tradition involved ‘Panhellenic’ characters with a wide range of local links even before the eighth century, alongside completely non-local characters like Iris. The formation of the epic tradition was evidently longer and more complicated than the theory of a predominantly eighth-century Panhellenicizing synthesis suggests.

¹⁴² Thonemann (n. 116), 170.

A more comprehensive survey might identify characters which better fit a model of isolated local traditions. But this evidence suffices to encourage a degree of caution, should anyone be tempted to posit the existence of a local poetic tradition from local-seeming content. This is certainly not to deny that different traditions, poetic and non-poetic, did exist in the various different settlements of the Aegean, and some may well have been strongly bound to a particular locale; but it is important to emphasize that these were not isolated entities, but interacting in complex ways. Such complexity fits well, both with the interconnectivity revealed by past decades of archaeological research and the mobility of epic poets implied in the poems themselves.

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