Cultic Contexts for Elegiac Performance

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A scattering of testimonia in Greek texts, mainly of the Hellenistic and imperial period, had always made it clear that elegy was used in the archaic and early classical eras for substantial narrative poems.¹ That evidence was not given much attention until I argued in the 1980s for the existence of a body of such elegiac poetry which constituted an important genre or form distinct from that of the shorter elegiac songs composed for and transmitted by performance in symposia.² The publication in 1992 of papyrus fragments of elegiac poems by Simonides on the battles of Plataea and Artemisium seemed to some extent to support this claim, though a poem on a single battle, even if a poem of several hundred lines, is rather different from what I had proposed as the nature of Mimnermus’ Smyrneis, Tyrtaeus’ Eunomia, or Xenophanes’ two thousand lines on the foundation of Colophon and emigration to Elia in Italy.³ One of

¹ I am very grateful to the editors for their suggestions for improvement of this paper, and also to Claude Calame, who made helpful proposals for improvement of a shortened version of the paper which will appear in French in Calame and Ellinger (forthcoming).
² Bowie (1986). I do not wish here to enter the debate whether the terminology ‘genre’, used by Rossi (1971), or ‘form’, proposed by Calame (1974), is more apposite.
³ For the Simonides poem see Boedeker and Sider (2001); for my own reflections in the light of the Simonides and Archilochus papyrus fragments see Bowie (2001a), (2010a), (2010b); for a critique of the categorization of such poetry as ‘historical elegy’ see Sider (2006). For the fragility of my hypotheses concerning Tyrtaeus and Mimnermus see Grethlein (2010), whose arguments against the existence of a long narrative elegy by Tyrtaeus entitled Eunomia seem to me stronger than those against such a Smyrneis by Mimnermus.
many questions raised by the fragments of Simonides’ Plataea poem was the context and location of its first performance. That question must also be asked of Archilochus’ recently published elegiac narrative of Telephus’ rout of the Achaeans.\(^4\) If, as I shall argue, one persuasive interpretation of the fragmentary lines is that they are part of a self-standing narrative poem involving Telephus and his father Heracles, might it then be worth exploring the possibility that both this and Archilochus’ other known narrative involving Heracles, his *Deianeira*,\(^5\) were composed for first performance in connection with one of Thasos’ most important cults, that of Heracles? After examining this possibility I shall return to the Plataea poem of Simonides and suggest that for it too a premiere in a cultic context should be considered.

That long elegies were composed for performance in cultic contexts is not in itself a new idea. The public festivals of archaic Greece, which in 1986 I had proposed as the performance location of long elegies, were all conducted in honour of a divinity, both those at the great international sanctuaries at Delphi, Olympia, Nemea, the Isthmus, and Delos, or those mounted by a city in honour of its own gods like the Panathenaeae and Dionysia at Athens, or the Carneia and Hyacinthia at Sparta. Some sung (or danced and sung) performances at such festivals were competitive, like *citharoidia* and (for its brief appearance) *auloidia* at Delphi, or like dithyrambs, tragedies, and comedies at the Athenian Dionysia. Others, such as *prosodia*, paeans, and other types of hymn, were not performed in the framework of an *agon* but by choral groups sent by participating cities. On the basis of our limited evidence poetry entered in a formally structured *agon* was neither required nor perhaps even expected to give a high profile to the god in whose honour the festival was being held, though Dionysus *does* appear occasionally as a character in tragedy and comedy, and it may be noted that in *aulite*\(^6\), pipe-playing, the Pythian nome (*νόμος Πυθικός*) credited to Sacadas presented a sort of ‘tone poem’ that was thought to give a musical representation of the different stages in Apollo’s battle with the Python. On the other hand choral hymns, including paeans, regularly gave prominence to

\(^4\) Obbink (2005) etc. For a full bibliography of discussions from 2006 to 2012 see Swift (2012).

the deeds of the god addressed, as of course did hexameter hymns by solo performers.

What remains quite uncertain is to which of these two broad categories the performance of long elegiac poems regularly or more often belonged. If the competition in *auloidia* at Delphi in 586 BCE—a competition that the Amphictyons abolished after it had happened only once—was for elegy, as I argue elsewhere, then we have at least one case from the sixth century of an agonistic framework for elegiac performance;⁶ and if, as I there suggest, a poem entered for that competition was Sacadas’ Ἰλίου πέρσις (*Sack of Troy*), then we seem to have an example comparable to those from fifth-century Athens where the subject of the competitive poem has nothing to do with the cultic context of the festival, in this case the Pythia.⁷ If the suggestions below are correct, however, we would have some cases of elegiac poems which did give an important place to the god honoured by the festival in which they were first performed—either a place in a narrative, in the case of Archilochus, or a place in an opening invocation, in the case of Simonides. This would add complexity to our picture if we believed the context of their performance to have been agonistic, or would corroborate the prevalence of a pattern if we do not. In either case, however, it must be conceded that the hypotheses I offer are built upon very slender evidence and are accordingly extremely fragile. But in a subject where evidence of any sort is very hard to come by, every detail that is available should be brought to bear and the inferences that might be made on its basis should be exposed for scrutiny.

1.1. ARCHILOCHUS’ ‘TELEPHUS’

Archilochus’ Telephus poem was published in 2005 by Dirk Obbink. A photograph of the papyrus can be found on the Oxyrhynchus papyri website.⁸ I print below the text as printed by Obbink (2006) and my translation of lines 1–25.

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⁶ Paus. 10.7.4–5. ⁷ See Bowie (2014). ⁸ http://www.papyrology.ox.ac.uk/POxy/.
and spearmen though they were: and the broad stream of the C[aimus

Well did we hasten to

to

indeed so much fear did the gods’ destiny bring—and spearmen though they were: and the broad stream of the C[aimus

was choked with corpses as they fell, as was the plain of Mysia: and they to the strand of the sea with its many breakers

being slaughtered by the hands of a man without mercy
turned their course pell-mell, these Achaeans with fine greaves,
and gladly climbed into their swift-travelling ships,
the sons and brothers of immortals, [whom Agamemnon
was leading to holy Ilion to fight. (15)
But at that time they had lost their way and reached the strand
and put ashore at the lovely city of Teuthras,
and there, snorting might, they and their horses alike,
because of their witlessness their spirit was mightily cast down:
for they thought that they were climbing up into the high-gated city
of the Trojans
forthwith—but to no purpose did they tread wheat-growing Mysia.
But Heracles came to face them, shouting to his stout-hearted son,
An implacable bulwark in the war with the foe,
Telephus, who then struck cowardly flight into the Danaans
as he pressed forward before the lines, giving pleasure to
his father . . .

Whereas there is no doubt that we have a narrative section in which
the Achaeans flee before Telephus (5–25), exemplifying the gnome
that flight is not always wrong (1–4), two important details remain
unclear.

First, was the Telephus narrative an exemplum that the poet
wanted to relate to a battle situation in which he and his fellow
warriors had themselves fled? That was what Obbink suggested in
the editio princeps, and this reconstruction has been accepted by
most scholars. But the proposal was based on a restoration of line 3
that Obbink later abandoned, viz. [νῶτ'] ἐτρέψαμεθ' ἀφυγεν
(‘forthwith we turned our backs to flee’).9 In his 2006 article
Obbink accepted the supplement εἵμεθα proposed by West and
favoured the restoration printed in the text above, [π]ήμ[α]θ' ἐδ[εὶμεθα] ἀφ υγεῖν (‘[Well did we hasten] to flee our [hostile woes]’).10

But neither restoration is the only way that the gaps in the
papyrus can be supplemented. Taking a different view, I have
suggested that the first person plural verb which is the basis of
Obbink’s idea that the singer and his comrades were described by a
verb of action should rather be one describing knowledge or recep-
tion of a story or maxim. Thus I initially proposed ἐπιστάμεθα, to

9 Obbink (2005) 19–42.
10 Obbink (2006); West (2006), also accepted by Lulli (2011).
be part of the phrase \[\pi\eta[\mu\alpha\tau'\varepsilon\pi\sigma\sigma\tau\alpha]\mu\varepsilon\theta'\;\alpha[\lambda\lambda]a\varphi\nu\gamma\varepsilon\nu\] (‘we know how to flee other woes’).\(^{11}\) Later I favoured the supplement \(\varepsilon\delta\varepsilon\varepsilon\varepsilon[\alpha]\mu\varepsilon\theta',\) to be part of a hexameter beginning \(\eta[\rho\omega'\;\varepsilon\delta\varepsilon\varepsilon[\alpha]\mu\varepsilon\theta'\;\alpha[\nu\delta]\alpha\varphi\nu\gamma\varepsilon\nu\cdot\varphi\varepsilon\gamma[\alpha]\gamma\rho\;\Lambda\chi\alpha\ioi\) (‘we have been told that a man who was a hero fled: for the Achaeans began to flee’).\(^{12}\) On this reconstruction the singer would play a role in the first three lines, and in those lost lines that preceded them, not as a participant in a battle but simply as a transmitter of wisdom, a maître de vérité. We would be left ignorant about how his thought reached this point, but exempli gratia scenarios could of course be reconstructed.\(^{13}\)

If another proposal I recently made is correct (Bowie 2010c), that an apparently dactylic pentameter preserved in Stobaeus and attributed by him to Euripides’ tragedy Telephus should on metrical grounds be taken to be from Archilochus’ poem, then we learn that this poem had a title, ‘Telephus’, suggesting some length and a predominantly mythological narrative focus.\(^{14}\)

Second, did Heracles have a part in this narrative at all? Obbink supplemented the beginning of line 22 \(\text{Ἡ}ρακλῆς\), bringing Telephus’ father Heracles into the narrative, but some have been sceptical. On this detail I am not sceptical, but I register its precarious status.

As soon as the Telephus poem was published I began to wonder if it might be part of a Heracles cycle, and if its performance might have something to do with very important cult or cults of Heracles on

\(^{11}\) Noted in the apparatus of Obbink (2006).

\(^{12}\) Cf. Bowie (2010b) n. 22. For \(\varepsilon\delta\varepsilon\varepsilon[\alpha]\mu\varepsilon\theta'\) cf. \(\delta\varepsilon\varepsilon\sigma\tau\alpha\) of Homer’s receiving heroic tradition from the Muses in Sim. fr. 11.16 W\(^{2}\). For the shortening of the \(\omega\) in \(\eta[\rho\omega'\varepsilon\delta\varepsilon\varepsilon[\alpha]\mu\varepsilon\theta'\alpha[\nu\delta]\alpha\varphi\nu\gamma\varepsilon\nu\cdot\varphi\varepsilon\gamma[\alpha]\gamma\rho\;\Lambda\chi\alpha\ioi\) (‘we have been told that a man who was a hero fled: for the Achaeans began to flee’) but I am now less attracted to the supplement \(\varphi\varepsilon\gamma[\alpha]\gamma\rho\;\Lambda\chi\alpha\ioi\) (‘for the Achaeans began to flee’): perhaps \(\varphi\varepsilon\gamma[\alpha]\gamma\rho\;\Lambda\chi\alpha\ioi\)... (and Agamemnon took to flight).

\(^{13}\) E.g., ‘Muses, tell me of the flight of the Achaeans when they mistakenly attacked Mysia. The Achaeans were mighty heroes, and led by the great Atreidae, and yet they fled. One should not call it cowardice if one flees under a god’s compulsion—we are told even a man who was a hero fled. For Agamemnon fled...’

\(^{14}\) \(\Ε\υ\mu\pi\sigma\iota\delta\iota\epsilon\ou\;\varepsilon\;\mathrm{T\gamma\lambda\epsilon\varphi\o\nu}\) (fr. 702 N\(^{2}\) = Kannicht, \(\mathrm{T}\gamma\varphi\mathrm{G}\;\mathrm{V}\;\mathrm{2}\;\mathrm{fr}\;\mathrm{702})\;\tau\omicron\nu\mu'i\;\alpha\epsilon\iota,\;\kappa\acute{\alpha}n\;\tau\iota\tau\rho\gamma\nu\nu\varphi\epsilon\mu\omicron\omega\iota\sigma\theta\iota\) (‘Always be bold, even if the gods’ dispensation is harsh’), Stobaeus 4.10.10 (= \(\mathrm{adespota}\;\mathrm{elegiaca}\) 24 W). Nauck emended to a trimeter: \(\tau\omicron\lambda\mu\alpha\;\sigma\upsilon,\;\kappa\acute{\alpha}n\;\taui\nu\tau\rho\alpha\chi\upsilon\nu\nu\epsilon\mu\omicron\omega\iota\sigma\theta\iota\) (‘Be bold, even if the gods’ dispensation is harsh’).
Thasos. Aloni has explored the importance of Heracles for Paros,\(^\text{15}\) and makes the surprising statement that in this context Paros and Thasos are much the same thing.\(^\text{16}\) Certainly Paros had a cult of Heracles, and gave him a place in its mythology,\(^\text{17}\) but his place in Thasian mythology was much more important. On his way back from Troy Heracles subjugated the Thracian inhabitants of Thasos and gave the island to the sons of Androgeos (who had been handed over to him as hostages when two of his men were killed by the four sons of Minos on Paros).\(^\text{18}\)

Cecilia Nobili has recently argued persuasively for some relation between the Telephus poem and the cult of Heracles on Thasos.\(^\text{19}\) But Nobili’s interpretation followed from her acceptance of the West–Oubbink restoration of line 3 as a reference to a contemporary battle in which the poet had been involved. Nor am I am persuaded by her suggestion that the invading Achaeans and the Mysians of the myth are to be interpreted as in some way mirroring the relation of contemporary Parians on Thasos to the Thracian and/or Phoenician inhabitants who were already on the island when they arrived.\(^\text{20}\) That idea might have gained some support from the notion that the supposed flight of the singer in this poem refers to the same incident as gave rise to Archilochus’ famous shield poem, fr. 5 W, where the enemy is indeed Thracian, of the Saii group. But few would accept that fr. 5 W comes from the same poem as the Telephus narrative,\(^\text{21}\) and in the tetrameter battle poems of Archilochus the Naxians, also land-grabbing in the northern Aegean, play just as large a role as the Thracians. If the choice of mythological theme is to be understood as mirroring some contemporary war situation, then the two Hellenic groups, Naxians and Parian colonists on Thasos, are better reflected in two similarly Hellenic groups, Achaeans under Agamemnon and Menelaus and the Mysians led by Telephus, who himself has Hellenic lineage. There may also be a David and Goliath dimension: Naxos is the largest of the Cyclades, its archaic dedications on Delos are opulent and assertive; Paros is much smaller, and in the north Aegean

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\(^{16}\) ‘che è quasi la stessa cosa’, Aloni and Iannucci (2007) 213.
\(^{17}\) En route to Troy Heracles established an altar to Zeus and Apollo on Paros, Pind. fr. 140(a) col. 2, 15–17 Maehler.
\(^{18}\) καὶ παραγενόμενος εἰς Θᾶσον καὶ χειρωσάμενος τοῖς ἐνοικοῦντας Θρᾴκας ἔδωκε τοῖς παῖσι Ανδρόγυνον κατοικεῖν, [Apollod.] Bibli. 2.5.9.
\(^{19}\) Nobili (2009).
\(^{21}\) See e.g. Swift (2012) 150 n. 46.
a Parian colonist, much engaged in conflicts with Naxians, could well sympathize with Telephus and his Mysians as warriors from a small country being attacked by a much larger coalition force of Achaean.

One possible story is this: a Parian audience on Thasos could see the initial success of Telephus against the Achaean as an encouragement to expect similar success against Naxians trying to push into the Thasian peraea; it was important that Telephus’ success came about because Heracles responded to his son’s call for help. When Achilles joined the battle Telephus was indeed wounded, but the wound was inflicted because Telephus tripped on a vine made to block his path by Dionysus—and the wound was eventually healed, and Telephus and the Achaean became allies. We cannot guess how much of this later story was told in the poem of Archilochus, but even if not told, many of his audience might well have known it, and they would surely know too that Dionysus, who had caused Telephus to trip and be wounded, had as prominent a role in Naxian cult as did Heracles in the Parian settlement on Thasos.

So far, then, we may have a poem which makes a contribution to the Parian colonist’s creation of their new Thasian identity, a poem which may credit Heracles for help in battle to his son Telephus in the mythical past, perhaps an augury of help in the embattled present. Here it is worth returning briefly to the Deianeira poem (frr. 286–9 W). It is not hard to see that Heracles defending his bride against the sexual assaults of the monstrous other is a story that could be mapped onto the struggles of Parian colonists. Even in ‘normal’ Greek societies in the archaic period rapes or abductions of adjacent communities’ women are attested.22 When colonizing groups in which men greatly outnumbered women were contesting control of the northern Aegean such incidents must have been even more frequent.

So both the Telephus and the Deianeira poem could have strong contemporary resonances for the Parians on Thasos.

If there is indeed a connection between Heracles’ role in Archilochus’ elegies and the cult of Heracles on Thasos, then first performance of these elegies in or near the location of that cult should at least be considered. It seems probable that there was more than one cult of

22 Aristomenes abducts girls from the shrine of Artemis at Caryae, Paus. 4.16.2–9; girls are snatched from the shrine of Artemis Limnatis in reign of Spartan king Teleclus, Strabo 8.4.9, 362C, cf. 6.3.3, Paus. 4.4.2–3. See the discussion of Calame (1977), vol. I, 253–64 = (1997) 149.
Heracles, but his chief cult seems to have been that of the complex identified on epigraphic evidence as a Heracleion west of the agora, between the agora and the so-called Gate of Heracles. Both Launey (1944) and Pouilloux (1954) interpreted the archaeological evidence and the testimony of Herodotus as indicating a double cult, of Heracles as god and of Heracles as hero, a contention that was very effectively demolished by Bergquist. I do not think it matters for my proposal which the right interpretation is. What is important is that from the first half of the seventh century the precinct had a rock altar with two rows of five associated bothroi between this altar and the street to the north-west there was a distance of some twenty metres, which was almost certainly already part of the precinct and was later paved. To the south, by the middle of the sixth century BCE, there was a building with a hearth which Bergquist argues to have been intended to be, and used as, a hestiatorion for sixteen banqueters. In a later period—at some time between the fifth and the third centuries BCE—this building had been expanded to create five parallel hestiatoria, each with seventeen couches. Along the west side of the precinct a wide set of steps had been built, and at the bottom of these steps there is evidence of a balustrade, suggesting that they were used as a stand for viewing something taking place to the west of the precinct. A stoa or gallery had been added along the east side of the precinct, and a new temple with an altar to the north.

One of the uses of these spaces is hinted at by a phrase in IG xii suppl 353:

... ... ... ... ... ...
βοῦν
[...75+ letters... ]νατευθῆν. ὅ τι δ᾿ ἂν ἀπόσταθμον γίνηται, τῶν μὲν
[... ]εἰ τοῖς πολεμάρχοις, ὡστε τῇ τάξει τῆς νικώσης
an ox
[... ] may be sacrificed (?). And whatever is weighed out, of the
[... as seems good?] to the polemarchs, so that to the victorious

IG xii suppl 353.9–11 = SEG 55.972.9–11

23 Cf. Herodotus 2.44.4–5 and Bergquist (1973), arguing partly on the basis of IG xii suppl. 414.
24 See the map in Bergquist (1973) fig. 1.
25 Bergquist (1973) 40 fig. 4 = this volume, Appendix fig. 1.
26 Bergquist (1973) 42 fig. 5 = this volume, Appendix fig. 2, and Bergquist (1973) 45 fig. 6.
27 Bergquist (1973) 46 fig. 7 = this volume, Appendix fig. 3, and Bergquist (1973) 49 fig. 8.
28 Bergquist (1973) 46 fig. 7 = this volume, Appendix fig. 3; cf. Bergquist (1973) 51 fig. 9.
These clauses concern what will be provided or done by a person leasing a ‘garden of Heracles’ (τὸν κήπον τοῦ Ἡρακλέους, line 4): an ox is to be sacrificed; something will happen to meat weighed out; something, perhaps some of this meat, will be allocated to the polemarchs so that it <may be awarded?> to ‘the winning formation’ (ὡςτε τῇ τάξει τῇ νικώσῃ). It seems that by the time of the inscription, the late fourth or early third century BCE, some sort of contest involving τάξεις, ‘groups’ or ‘formations’, was taking place in connection with the cult, and Bergquist attractively suggested that the steps and balustrade were for watching these contests in the area or street to the west of the precinct.

Making what is of course a speculative leap, I suggest that it is possible that those contests go back to seventh-century cult practice; that Archilochus’ Telephus elegy, narrating the conflict between the τάξεις of the Achaeans and that of the Mysians, was performed in or adjacent to the temenos in the presence of the assembled worshippers as part of a festival; and that this privileged place of performance made a vital contribution to the survival of this elegy, which might otherwise have been too long to survive complete in sympotic transmission. It would be nice to imagine too that, when these assembled worshippers broke up and some formed into a smaller group for ritual dining in the associated hestiatorion, their sympotic songs included shorter elegies of Archilochus, among them such martial elegies as are represented by fr. 3 W. At a later date (the middle of the fourth century BCE) a cult of Heracles on Thasos included an agon, and its link with commemoration of the battle achievements of Thasian warriors was maintained by a ceremony in which on reaching adulthood the sons of those who died in battle were presented with arms and equipment.

Let me return to the elegiac poems themselves. Whether at any point in the Telephus or Deianeira poem any direct or indirect appeal to Heracles or references to this cult on Thasos were made by the persona cantans is currently beyond our knowledge. We know nothing of how

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29 For the meaning of ἐνατεύειν see Bergquist (1973) 70–80.
30 ‘We may perhaps imagine that the street (or road) below and along the western peribolos occasionally served as an agonal area, where contests took place or at least ended, while onlookers were seated or stood behind a balustrade of ropes on the two wide flights of steps flanking the propylon platform, which on these occasions perhaps accommodated honorary seats for judges and officials’, Bergquist (1973) 50, cf. 58.
31 Pouilloux (1954) no. 141.20 = Sokolowski (1962) no. 64.10 (mid-fourth century BC).
either poem opened or concluded. One day we may—Oxyrhynchus has been generous. But that such an appeal or such references might be found in early elegy is indicated by some fragments of other poets.

1.2. SIMONIDES’ ‘PLATAEA’

The most important of these is the Plataea elegy of Simonides. Famously it opens with a hymn to Achilles, and slips from Homer’s conferral of *kleos* upon the Greek warriors at Troy, above all upon the fallen Achilles, to the elegiac poet’s wish to confer *kleos* on the Greeks who defeated Mardonius and his Persian armies at Plataea. The main part of the poem seems almost certainly to have been an account of the battle, and it is partly this account that Simonides seems to be using to create a group identity in his audience. But that sense of identity is reinforced by the more than twenty prooemiacal lines that dwell upon that earlier war in which Greeks together fought non-Greeks, the Trojan war. And this might be a ground for insisting that the audience or audiences envisaged by Simonides were not the citizens of just one city, but those of any city that had participated in the Plataea campaign in 479.32

But even if the citizens of many cities may have been envisaged as his hoped for audiences by this now quite old, very professional poet, there must have been one place where his poem was first performed. Where was that, and how does the location relate to the *prooimion*? There is no space to review other scholars’ numerous suggestions here. What seems to me crucial is the importance given to the hymn to Achilles by its length and position in the poem. Martin West suggested that this was because the first performance coincided with a festival in honour of Achilles.33 I wish to make the stronger claim that this hymn points to first performance of the whole poem at a place where there was a cult of Achilles. If that were so, the poet would be choosing a subject for his main narrative that could be seen as linking that narrative to the nexus of myth attached to the hero who was the object of the cult. It does not matter too much for this argument that I should be able to offer strong arguments in favour of

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32 Compare the point made by Plu. *de Herod. malign.* 42 = mor. 4872d = Sim. fr. 16 W².
33 West (1993a) 5.
one particular cult of Achilles rather than another, though of course it
does matter that there should be one quite plausible candidate.

Several cults of Achilles are attested in mainland Greece, and no
doubt there were others of which we have no evidence. Those at
Byzantium34 and at Tanagra35 might in theory be the location of the
premiere of Simonides’ poem, whereas that in Thessaly,36 which had
Medized, seems highly unlikely. But the most probable location is
Sparta. There Pausanias reports a temple of Achilles on the road
leading northwards out of the city towards Arcadia where in his
own time ephebes came to sacrifice before competing in a mock battle
at Platanistae, and where there was another monument recalling the
Trojan war:

τὴν δὲ ἐπ’ Ἀρκαδίας ἱοῦσιν ἐκ Σπάρτης Ἀθηνᾶς ἐστικεν ἐπίκλησιν
Παρείας ἀγαλμα ἐν ὑπαίθριῳ, μετὰ δὲ αὐτὸ ἱερὸν ἐστιν Ἀχιλλέως· ἀνοί-
γευς δὲ αὐτὸ ὑπῆρξον· ὀπόσιος δ’ ἀν τῶν ἐφήβων ἄγονευσθαι μέλλω-
σιν ἐν τῷ Πλατανιστάῳ, καθέστηκεν αὐτός τῷ Ἀχιλλεῖ πρὸ τῆς μάχης
θύειν. ποιήσας δὲ σφίζει τὸ ἱερὸν Σπαρτιάται λέγουσι Πράκα ἀπόγονον
τρίτον Περγάμου τοῦ Νεοπτολέμου. προϊόσι δὲ Ἰπποῦ καλοῦμενον
μνήμα ἐστι. Τυνδάρεως γὰρ θύσας ἐνταῦθα ἔπον τοὺς Ἐλένης ἐξώρκου
μνησίματα ἵππας ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τῶν τομίων· ὁ δὲ ὅρκος ἦν Ἐλένη καὶ τῶι
γῆμα προκριθέντι Ἐλένην ἀμυνεῖν ἀδικουμένου· ἐξορκώσας δὲ τὸν ἱερὸν
κατώρυξεν ἐνταῦθα.

Paus. 3.20.8–9

On the road from Sparta to Arcadia there stands in the open an image
of Athena surnamed Pareia, and after it is a sanctuary of Achilles. This it
is not customary to open, but all the youths who are going to take part
in the contest in Plane-tree Grove are wont to sacrifice to Achilles before
the fight. The Spartans say that the sanctuary was made for them by
Prax, a grandson of Pergamus the son of Neoptolemus. (9) Further on is
what is called the Tomb of Horse. For Tyndareus, having sacrificed a
horse here, administered an oath to the suitors of Helen, making them

34 ἐγγός δὲ τοῦ καλοῦμένου Στρατηγίου Αἰαντός τε καὶ Ἀχιλλέως βασικοῦ ἀν-
εθήκατο· ἐνθα καὶ τὸ Ἀχιλλέως χρηματίζει λουτρόν (near the so-called Strategion
[office of the strategoi] he [sc. the city’s founder, Byzas] dedicated altars to Ajax and
to Achilles: and here there is also what goes under the name of “The bath of Achilles”),
Hesychius Illustrius, patr. Const. 16 Preger.
35 Διὰ τι Ταναγραιοῦ πρὸ τῆς πόλεως ἐστιν Ἀχιλλείων, τόπος οὕτως προσαγορευό-
μενος; (‘Why do the Tanagrans have in front of the city an Achilleion, a place so-
called?’), Plu. QGr 37 = mor. 299C.
36 Philostr. Heroicus 53.8–16 = pp. 67–9 de Lannoy. This cult was suspended
stand upon the pieces of the horse. The oath was to defend Helen and him who might be chosen to marry her if ever they should be wronged. When he had sworn the suitors he buried the horse here.
(translation by Ormerod, via Perseus)

It would not be coincidental, then, that the first part of Simonides’ narrative allocates a generous five lines (Simonides fr. 11.29–34 W2) to the departure of the Spartan force from the Eurotas valley, led by their kings and accompanied by cult images of the Dioscuri and Menelaus—a departure that will have taken them past the sanctuary of Achilles. Did they perhaps even sacrifice to Achilles? On this admittedly speculative hypothesis the poem of Simonides had among its principal objectives the hymning of Achilles, an Achilles whose own metonymic relation to the Trojan war would be reinforced by the nearby ‘Horse’ (Ἕπος) of Tyndareus that Pausanias goes on to mention next. But, like some sorts of melic poem, this elegy moves from praise to narrative, choosing a theme that suits both time and place—Sparta in the year 479 or 478—and choosing an organization of its narrative—an initial spotlight on the Spartans’ departure northwards—that ties in closely with its Laconian place of first performance. Whether Simonides was asked to compose a hymn to Achilles and given carte blanche concerning the narrative element of the hymn, or whether he was also told to make Plataea his subject, we cannot of course tell—just indeed as we cannot know whether such a ‘commissioning’ model is applicable, or whether instead there was an ἀγών μουσικός in which each poet chose his subject more or less free from external prompting, though doubtless influenced in that choice by the time and place of the competition.

If Simonides’ poem and Archilochus’ Heracles poems belonged in some sense to the same genre, then hypotheses about their performances may be argued to be mutually corroboratory. Like Simonides composing for performance in or beside a hieron of Achilles, Archilochus, six generations or so earlier, composing for performance in or beside a temenos of Heracles on Thasos, might have begun with a hymn to Heracles and then segued into a narrative, in his case mythical, that attested the power of the hero. Both Archilochus’ and Simonides’ narratives, in different ways, gave their audiences grounds for confidence in the military future of their polis.

It would strengthen my argument if I could point to a third closely similar case, but in the present state of our evidence I cannot.
It should be remembered, however, that before 1992 neither of my two examples discussed above were available.

I can however offer two cases which offer some elements of similarity.

1.3. MIMNERMUS’ SMYRNEIS

One of these cases is the opening of the Smyrneis of Mimnermus. Despite the recently voiced scepticism of Jonas Grethlein, it still seems to me very probable that Mimnermus composed a narrative poem which later, at least, circulated with the title Smyrneis and which included narrative of the battles between citizens of Smyrna and the Lydian forces under Gyges. This narrative was long enough to include a speech (μῦθος) by the king, and to permit or invite a relatively elaborate prooemion:

Μίμνερμος δέ, ἐλεγεία ἐς τὴν μάχην ποιήσας τὴν Σμυρναίων πρὸς Γύγην τε καὶ Λυδούς, φησίν ἐν τῷ προοιμίῳ θυγατέρας Ὀὐρανοῦ τὰς ἀρχαἰοτέρας Μούσας, τούτων δὲ ἄλλας νεωτέρας εἶναι Διὸς παιὰς.

When Mimnermus composed elegiac lines on the battle of the Smyrnaeans against Gyges and the Lydians he said in his prooemion that the older Muses were the daughters of Uranus, and that there were others who were younger than these and were the children of Zeus.

Paus. 9.2.94

It is on this prooemion that I focus briefly. Was Mimnermus’ distinction between two different groups of Muses, daughters of Uranus and daughters of Zeus, no more than poetic play, of the sort we find in the Iliad before the catalogue of our Book 2 (Iliad 2.484–92)? Perhaps. But we are entitled to draw a distinction between those archaic poems which begin with a perfunctory appeal to the Muse (e.g. the Iliad, the Odyssey, Solon fr. 13 W) and others which dwell at some length on

39 Cf. the commentary on Alcman in P.Oxy. 2390 fr. 2 ii 28: Γῆς [μὲν] Μοῦσα[ς] θυγατέρας ὡς Μίμνερμος [ος] τὰς ἐγενεαλόγησει (‘the Muses the daughters of Earth, the genealogy Mimnermus gave them’) = Minn. fr. 13 W.
the Muses’ nature.\textsuperscript{40} One of the latter is Hesiod’s \textit{Theogony}, which
sings at such length of the Muses that it is worth considering whether
its first performance was at the shrine of the Heliconian Muses where
Hesiod tells us he dedicated the tripod that he won at the funeral
games of Amphidamas of Chalcis.\textsuperscript{41} Might Mimnermus’ \textit{Smyrneis}
also be intended for performance in or in association with a shrine of
the Muses at Smyrna? We have only one testimony to the existence of
such a Mouseion, and it is from the Roman period,\textsuperscript{42} by contrast with
over a dozen testimonies to the existence of a Mouseion at Ephesus,
but our epigraphic material from Smyrna is much less voluminous
than that from Ephesus, Aphrodisias, or Pergamum. It is a long shot,
but archaic Smyrna could, like its Roman successor, have had a
Mouseion, and it could be in or beside that Mouseion that Mimner-
mus first gave an audience a taste of his \textit{Smyrneis}.

In his elegiac \textit{Smyrneis}, then, Mimnermus might have opened with
a sequence that related closely to its place of first performance. It is
hard to see how his treatment of Smyrna’s wars with the Lydians
could have been more closely related to that opening than a stress on
the Muses’ role as conferring \textit{kleos} on warriors’ distinction in battle;
but that such distinction was indeed a feature of the poem is sug-
gested by another fragment of Mimnermus, quoted by Stobaeus
without ascription to a poem with a title, but certainly about embat-
tled Smyrnaeans fighting Lydians and possibly from the \textit{Smyrneis}.\textsuperscript{43}

1.4. \textbf{CALLINUS’ ADDRESS TO ZEUS}

My second case is more remote, because it is a poem for which we
have no explicit evidence of narrative at all. Like the \textit{Smyrneis},

\textsuperscript{40} There are indeed intermediate positions, as the editors have pointed out, e.g in
Pindar’s play with Muses or Graces, but the apparent elaboration of Mimnermus’
invocation puts it at or near one end of the spectrum.

\textsuperscript{41} τὸν μὲν ἔγω Μοῦσαι’ Ἐλικονάδεσσ’ ἀνέθηκα | ἔνθα με τὸ πρῶτον λυγχῆς
ἐπέβησαν ἀοιδῆς (‘This [sc. tripod] I dedicated to the Muses of Helicon, at the place

\textsuperscript{42} ταύτης τῆς <ἐπ>γραφῆς ἀντ[ι]γραφ[α]ν κεῖται | ἐν τῷ ἐν Ζμόρηι ἄρχειω τῶν |
[καλου]μένου Μοὺσείων (‘a copy of this inscription has been lodged in the archive in
Smyrna called the Mouseion’), \textit{ISM}myrna 191, cf. Petzl (1972) 64–7 on the \textit{fortuna}
of the two halves of this text.

\textsuperscript{43} Stob. 3.7.11 = Mimn. fr. 14 W.
however, it is also a poem with a title: ‘The address to Zeus’ (ὁ πρὸς τὸν Δία λόγος) is cited by Strabo as a poem of Callinus in order to use its phrase ‘and pity the Smyrnaeans’ (Συμυρναίων δ’ ἔλεγον) as evidence that Ephesus, or a part of Ephesus, was once called Smyrna. It is an argument that receives very little support from any other evidence, and I retain the view I recently put forward that this is a poem commissioned by Smyrna from the Ephesian poet Callinus—a view that draws part of its attraction from our knowledge that Zeus was always a more important part of the pantheon in Smyrna than Ephesus. Given that very much less Callinus seems to have survived into the Hellenistic and Roman periods than either Mimnermus or Tyrtaeus, there is a least a strong chance that when elsewhere Strabo cites a line referring to the advance of the Cimmerian war machine—νῦν δ’ ἐπὶ Κιμμερίων στράτος ἠρχεται ὡβριοδέργων (‘and now the host of the violence-dealing Cimmerians advances’, Callinus fr. 5(a) W)—he is drawing this from the same poem; and an earlier remark of Strabo, citing Callisthenes, shows that in this or another poem Callinus told of the Cimmerian sack of Sardis. If that were so, this poem would have both an appeal to Zeus and a narrative of battle (though of course it also could have predictions of conflict facing its mortal audience). Such a narrative or prediction would, like the poems of Mimnermus and later of Simonides, but unlike the Telephus narrative of Archilochus, have focused on very recent, almost contemporary events. It must be admitted, of course, that the only substantial fragment of Callinus to survive, fr. 1 W (twenty-one lines quoted by Stobaeus 4.10.12), is martial hortatory elegy of the sort that also predominates in the surviving poetry of Tyrtaeus. But that from Tyrtaeus and Archilochus both martial hortatory and other sorts of elegy have survived demonstrates that the paraenetic nature

44 καὶ Καλλινός ποι ὁμόμακεν αὐτήν, Συμυρναίος τοὺς Ἐφεσίους καλῶν ἐν τῷ πρὸς τὸν Δία λόγῳ / ‘Συμυρναίους δ’ ἔλεγον’ (Call. fr. 2 W) καὶ πάλιν μνήσαι δ’ εἰ κοτέ τοι | μηρία καλὰ βοῶν Συμυρναῖοι κατέκηαν>’ (Call. fr. 2a W) (‘and it seems that this is what Callinus named it, calling the Ephesians “Smyrnaeans” in “The address to Zeus” (sc. when he says) “and pity the Smyrnaeans”’ (Call. fr. 2 W) ‘and again “remember if on some occasion the Smyrnaeans have burned for you” the fine thighs of oxen’), Strabo 14.1.4, 633C.
46 Cf. also the hemiepes Τρήκες ἀνδρας ἄγων (‘leading the Trerian warriors’), Call. fr. 4 W.
47 Strabo 13.4.8, 627C = Callisthenes FGrH 124 F29 = Call. fr. 5 (b) W.
of Callinus fr. 1 W does not entitle us to suppose that frs. 2, 2a, 4, and 5 W are also from a martial exhortatory poem.48

If there was a poem of Callinus that opened with an appeal to Zeus (fr. 2 W), that included some narrative of battle, and that was first performed in or beside a sanctuary of Zeus, it would stand alongside my examples from Archilochus and Mimnermus in the seventh century and Simonides in the fifth of a narrative elegy which may have opened with invocations to divinities in or beside whose sanctuaries its first performance took place.

1.5. CONCLUSIONS

Let me briefly draw together these fragile speculations. Three of the four known Ionian poets of the mid-seventh century may have composed elegies for performance in cultic space—Archilochus in a Thasian temenos of Heracles; Mimnermus in a Mouseion at Smyrna; Callinus in a temple of Zeus. The fourth seventh-century Ionian poet to whom elegiacs were attributed in antiquity is Simonides of Amorgos: not a line survives of the two books of elegies ascribed to him by the Suda,49 so nothing at all can be inferred from fragments or testimonies about their place of performance.

We do not know how Archilochus began either of his Heracles poems, but we can see how his choice of theme and treatment may have responded to a cultic context, a context which may have contributed to the poems’ survival. We can suppose that Mimnermus and

48 I am grateful to the editors for making the point, here answered, that the genre of Call. fr. 1 might lead us to expect his other fragments also to be from a poem of the same genre. Of course it should be noted that the proportion of surviving Archilochean elegy that is martial hortatory elegy is small—only fr. 3 W is reasonably certain, though its future tenses, looking forward to a battle, are not reinforced by any second- or third-person imperatives; the third-person ἵτω of fr. 7.1 W2, on which its classification as hortatory elegy depends, is one of Peek’s very speculative supplements.

49 Σιμωνίδης, Κρίνεω, Αμοργίνος, ιαμβογράφος. ἐγραψεν ελεγείαν ἐν βιβλίοις β’, ιάμβους (‘Simonides, son of Crines, from Amorgos, writer of iamboi’. He wrote an elegy in two books and iamboi’), Suda Σ 446. These two books may have included, or been, the ‘Early history of Samos’ given to Simmias of Rhodes in the Suda entry that has been contaminated with data concerning Simonides, καὶ ἐγραφὲ κατὰ τινας πρῶτος ιάμβους, καὶ ἄλλα διάφορα, Ἀρχαιολογίαν τε τῶν Σαμίων (‘according to some he was the first to write iamboi, and he wrote various other works, and an Early history of Samos’), Suda Σ 431.
Callinus opened with praise and prayer to the Muses and to Zeus respectively, but the extant fragments do not allow us to see, and we may be wrong to try to see, a close link between their context and their narrative.

Almost two centuries later Simonides of Ceos chose, if I am right, to honour Achilles with a long *prooemion* in a poem much of which was devoted to narrative of the battle of Plataea, a poem whose first performance was associated with the hero’s sanctuary. His invocation to Achilles helped him to draw an analogy important for his contemporary warriors and for his own function as a poet between what they had done, and he was doing for them, and what Homer had done for Achilles.

If some of the above hypothetical reconstructions are correct, the shape and function of archaic elegy becomes more complicated. Alongside shorter sympotic elegy, with its wide range of subjects, moods, and stances, stands the composition of longer elegiac poems with narration of earlier mythical events or near-contemporary military situations several of which both (a) have some bearing on the past or present fortunes of the city in which they were first performed and (b) emphasize their own contribution to these fortunes by invoking a god whose cult gives the city some ground to expect divine support. The subject, stance, and first performance context of such elegiac poems makes them look much more like choral paeans or *prosodia*, where the *persona cantans* gives a high priority to the interests of his community, than like the hexameter poetry of rhapsodes or the melic poetry of Stesichorus whose mythical themes are of Panhellenic interest.50

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50 There are certainly exceptions to this generalization, e.g. the *Corinthiaca* of Eumelus, or poems of Stesichorus where the interests of a particular city may have played a part in choice of theme: for this possibility see Bowie (2015).