

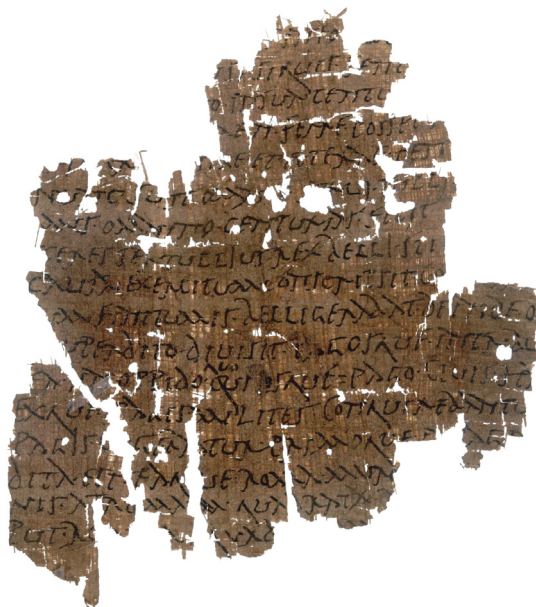
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## PAPERS ON ANCIENT LITERATURES: GREECE, ROME AND THE NEAR EAST

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edited by

ETTORE CINGANO & LUCIO MILANO



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*MOMOS ADVISES ZEUS*  
CHANGING REPRESENTATIONS OF ‘CYPRIA’ FRAGMENT 1

Elton T.E. Barker

This paper investigates the importance of context for assessing fragment one of the ‘Cypria’, one of the poems belonging to an ‘Epic Cycle’ that – along with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* – told the story of the war at Troy.<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the Homeric poems, these poems come down to us in pieces, in the form of mutilated quotations, assorted testimonia and a later summary by Proclus. Offering brief glimpses of a wider epic world this raw data tends to be mined for glossing the Homeric poems or else for reconstructing the ‘original’ lost narratives.

An analysis of fragment one of the ‘Cypria’ has its roots in the Venice International University’s *Advanced Seminar in the Humanities: Literature and Culture in the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece, Rome, and the Near East*. First, its fragmentary remains, which tell of Zeus’s plan to relieve the earth of the burden of mankind, recall a number of Near Eastern narratives. Thus the fragment offers one way into thinking about the possible relationship between Near Eastern and Greek epic, an approach which, though central to the seminar’s aims and objectives, still proves so contentious and problematic in practice. Second, the different contexts in and against which this fragment may be read present the opportunity to explore the interpenetration of literature and culture. In particular, by moving away from the pursuit of an archetype – whether that of a ‘Cypria’ or Homeric text – to pick away at the contexts in which the fragment is embedded, it becomes possible to trace the changing representations of the ‘Cypria’ fragment one and explore the impact of reception on its interpretation.

In section one I put the fragment itself at the forefront of our enquiry. After first setting out the limitations of conventional literary criticism or neoanalysis, I draw on oral theory to show the traditionality of the text’s language and its ‘resonance’ with other narratives, which suggests that the ‘Cypria’ potentially belonged to a wider epic world that shared common terminology, themes and strategies. Having tried to make something of the fragment of the ‘Cypria’ that survives, in the following two sections I

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<sup>1</sup> For editions of the ‘Epic Cycle’, see SEVERYNS 1963; DAVIES 1988; BERNABÉ 1996; WEST 2003a. For works of criticism, see, for example: SEVERYNS 1953; HUXLEY 1969, 123-43; GRIFFIN 1977; DAVIES 2003; HOLMBERG 1998; BURGESS 2001, 2005. On the ‘Cypria’, see: SCAIFE 1995; BURGESS 1996; 2002; MAYER 1996; FINKELBERG 2000; MARKS 2002. I use inverted commas throughout to indicate the probable artificiality of the ‘Epic Cycle’ and even of the ‘Cypria’, in the form transmitted to us at least.

focus on the issue of reception and its impact on the poem's subsequent evaluation. In section two I consider the second-century AD summary of Proclus, by means of which the 'Cypria' as a whole has been transmitted to us. I show that Proclus' summary represents the 'Cypria' in such a way that reflects his own culture's preoccupation and familiarity with the Homeric epics: his summary attempts to provide his readers with all the information required to appreciate the wider mythical tradition, of which the Homeric poems were once a part. In section three I attempt to capture a snap-shot of the practice of reception in process by returning to consider the context in which fragment one is embedded, the story of a 'D-scholion' probably dating to the Alexandrian period. Focussing on the surprise appearance of Momos I argue that this gloss *already* interprets the 'Cypria' fragment by virtue of reading it within the margins of another narrative,<sup>2</sup> one, moreover, which posits a marked, and *ideological*, disjunction between Greek epic and Near Eastern accounts of the formation of the cosmos and man's place within it.

### The fragment

The first fragment ascribed to the 'Cyclic Epic' known as the 'Cypria' is believed to preserve the very beginning of the poem. It runs as follows:<sup>3</sup>

ἦν ὅτε μυρία φύλα κατὰ χθόνα πλαζόμενα <αἰεὶ  
ἀνθρώπων ἐ> βάρυ <νε βαθυ>στέρνου πλάτος αἴης.  
Ζεὺς δὲ ἰδὼν ἐλέησε, καὶ ἐν πυκιναῖς πραπίδεσσιν  
κουφίσαι ἀνθρώπων παμβώτορα σύνθετο γαῖαν,  
ρίπισσας πολέμου μεγάλην ἔριν Ἰλιακοῖο,  
ὄφρα κενώσειεν θανάτῳ βάρους· οἳ δ' ἐνὶ Τροίῃ  
ἦρωες κτείνοντο, Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή.

There was a time when the countless races <of men> wandering <constantly>  
over the land were weighing down the expanse of <deep-> breasted earth.  
And when Zeus saw it he took pity, and in his closely-packed thoughts  
he proposed to relieve the all-nurturing earth of men  
by stirring the great strife of the Iliadic war,  
so that he could empty the burden through death. And at Troy  
the heroes kept being killed, and Zeus's plan was being accomplished.

Clearly the text is not certain, and various alternative readings or emendations have been proposed.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, enough of it remains to ascertain several key ideas: the

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<sup>2</sup> Though scholars usually pay little regard to context (since fragments hold the interest), Christopher Pelling does precisely that in his study of Athenaeus's citation of Herodotus. His transitional habits, Pelling suggests, 'can sometimes be a guide to how he or his speakers or his audience read the nuances of an original text': PELLING 2000, 181.

<sup>3</sup> The quotation from the 'Cypria' follows the latest Loeb edition by WEST 2003a. All translations are mine, with the exception of examples from Near Eastern texts.

<sup>4</sup> BERNABÉ 1996 proposes <ἀνθρώπων ἐπίεζε> in line 2. DAVIES 1988 prints a much less certain text:

## Momos Advises Zeus: *Changing Representations of 'Cypria' Fragment 1*

earth is groaning under the sheer weight of man's numbers; pitying her Zeus devises a plan to lighten her load by reducing the human population; his solution is the Trojan War. But, before exploring these motifs and the language in greater detail, it is first necessary to set out two dominant scholarly approaches to interpreting the 'Epic Cycle', which, I suggest, offer an insufficiently nuanced approach to thinking about the 'Epic Cycle' more generally and this fragment in particular.

### *A flatter, looser, less dramatic style*

Arguably the most influential critic of the past generation has been Jasper Griffin, whose 1977 article condemned the 'Epic Cycle' as having been 'composed in a flatter, looser, less dramatic style'.<sup>5</sup> Griffin's point of comparison here is Homer: concerned to counter the excesses of oral formulaic theory, which, he feared, would lead to the banal conclusion that all epic narrative was basically the same, Griffin aims to show Homer's superior literary skill. With this objective in mind, Griffin severely censures our fragment:

But the Cyclic poet felt the need to spell out fully the effective Homeric hint, and so the story was told of Zeus planning to reduce the over-population of the world by means of the Trojan war. The idea is of a distressing thinness and flatness, dissolving the *Iliad's* imposing opaqueness to an all too perspicuous 'rationality'; the whole story is thus made pre-determined, and a sort of unity is imposed upon it, of a rather superficial sort.<sup>6</sup>

Based on the assumption that the idea of the 'Διὸς βουλή' is simply lifted from the *Iliad*, Griffin argues that the 'Cypria' poet felt the need to spell the plan out – Zeus's aim to reduce mankind's numbers – an idea Griffin labels of 'distressing thinness and flatness'.

Two points may be made, however, that temper this kind of literary criticism. First, Griffin's preconceptions condition his interpretation of the 'Cypria': after all, it is a moot point whether much can be made of the style of *fragments*.<sup>7</sup> Second, those preconceptions derive from an altogether conventional source: for all of Griffin's customary verve, his analysis conforms to a post-Aristotelian tradition which regarded

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ἦν ὅτε μυρία φύλα κατὰ χθόνα † πλαζόμενα  
< > βαθυστέρνου πλάτος αἴης.  
Zeὺς δὲ ἰδὼν ἐλέησε καὶ ἐν πυκιναῖς πραπίδεσσι  
† σύνθετο κουφίσαι παμβώτορα γαίης ἀνθρώπων †  
ρίπισσας πολέμου μεγάλην ἔριν Ἰλιακοῖο,  
ὄφρα κενώσειεν † θανάτου βάρους. οἳ δ' ἐνὶ Τροίῃ  
ἦρωες κτείνοντο, Διὸς δ' ἔτελείετο βουλή.

<sup>5</sup> GRIFFIN 1977, 53.

<sup>6</sup> GRIFFIN 1977, 48. See also KIRK 1985, 53.

<sup>7</sup> 'Nevertheless, for all Griffin's ingenuity and good taste, it is hard to judge a poem's style from such fragmentary remains.' DOWDEN 2004, 203. As an example of a certain arbitrariness that may enter stylistic judgement, we might point to VAN DER VALK 1963, 252 n. 751, who *praises* the 'Cyprian' poet for diversifying from Homer.

the 'Epic Cycle' poems as being later than Homer and, thus, inferior.<sup>8</sup> Such has been the influence of this view that Malcolm Davies, one of the recent champions of the 'Epic cycle', recommends it only so far as it preserves 'a good deal of interesting mythological information'.<sup>9</sup> From antiquity the 'Epic Cycle' poems have been read in relation to Homer in a manner that consigns them to a class both later than and inferior to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

*The Iliad poet knew the Aithiopsis story*

One twentieth-century movement, however, has bucked the trend by suggesting that the Homeric poems were derived from pre-existing material.<sup>10</sup> This is neoanalysis. As Malcolm Willcock explains:

Its essential approach is to see behind some of the incidents of the *Iliad* into the content of pre-Homeric poetry in the belief that it can be shown that 'Homer' consciously or subconsciously reflects scenes from that broader background.<sup>11</sup>

So, for example, according to Willcock, 'one thing is certain: the *Iliad* poet knew the Aithiopsis story'.<sup>12</sup>

The neoanalyst movement has been important for challenging the assumption that gives priority to Homer and for shedding light on the broader background of the Homeric poems. Yet, there is a tendency in neoanalytic criticism to conceive of that broader background as a model for Homer, as if the *Iliad* were 'indebted to a particular recognizable pre-existing poem'.<sup>13</sup> Similar to the tradition of literary criticism, therefore, neoanalytic interpretation understands the relationship between epic poems as one between literary texts.<sup>14</sup> If we are to take oral poetics seriously, as Willcock himself implies that we should, what difference does it make to a study of 'Cypria' fragment one that an oral tradition lay behind the formulation of epic verse?

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<sup>8</sup> See BURGESS 2001, 7-46; WHITMARSH 2001, 26. For ancient sources expressing this prejudice see, for example: Arist. *An. Post.* 1.12; Callim. *Epigr.* 28; Hor. *Ars P.* 132.

<sup>9</sup> DAVIES 2003, 10.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, the pioneers KAKRIDIS 1949 and PESTALOZZI 1945; the German proponents, KULLMANN 1960 and SCHADEWALDT 1965; and more recent Anglo-Saxon applications by DOWDEN 1996 and WEST 2003b.

<sup>11</sup> WILLCOCK 1997, 174.

<sup>12</sup> WILLCOCK 1997, 181.

<sup>13</sup> WILLCOCK 1997, 186. Willcock here criticises such critics as KULLMANN 1960 and SCHADEWALDT 1965, who see the relationship of passages between different epic stories as one between texts. His own analysis, however, retains the literary tendency to talk in terms of authors and their models. So, he finds neoanalysis exciting for it offers the prospect of seeing into 'the thought processes of the poet Homer himself': WILLCOCK 1997, 175.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, DOWDEN 1996 and WEST 2003b. For an analysis of the shortcomings of neoanalysis, with a view to oral theory, see KELLY 2006. For further criticism, see BURGESS 1996; ALLAN 2005.

## Momos Advises Zeus: *Changing Representations of 'Cypria' Fragment 1*

*Oral tradition works like a language, only more so*

One major drawback to the two approaches to the 'Epic Cycle' that we have briefly outlined is the set of assumptions on which they are based: both presuppose a literary understanding of epic poetry that relates to texts and individual authors, and that privileges originality.<sup>15</sup> In a series of studies over the past decade, however, John Foley has expounded a theory for understanding ancient Greek epic that attempts to do justice to its orality. For the purposes of our study, I wish to highlight three key findings, starting with his idea that oral poetry represents a special kind of discourse.

Foley locates his work in the oral-based tradition founded by Milman Parry, which proposed that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were based on a generations-old technique of verse-making. As Foley explains, from an oralist perspective it is better to think of a 'word', not as something visually defined by white space on a page, but as a unit of utterance.<sup>16</sup> In fact that unit could be extended to notions of 'theme' or even 'narrative', by virtue of which it is possible to conceive of poems moulded out of entirely traditional material.<sup>17</sup> According to Foley, then, 'oral tradition works like a language, only more so'.<sup>18</sup>

From this perspective, particular words, phrases or even story-patterns act as the basic building blocks of hexameter verse. But, far from being 'functional', as if metre were the sole determinant of what words were used when, these units of utterance are extremely versatile and could be put to use in any number of different ways, according to the demands or aims of each individual composition or bard. The second point, therefore, relates to each bard's use of this traditional language and recurrent 'typical scenes' to create new compositions:<sup>19</sup> this individual fluidity in the general narrative tradition of an epic is termed 'multiformity'.<sup>20</sup> On this basis the *Iliad* that we possess, according to oral traditional theory, represents just one version of any number of narratives that once told the story of the war at Troy or, even, Achilles' primary role within it – what we might term an 'Iliadic' tradition.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> As FOLEY 2005, 200 puts it: 'Conventional literary history abhors a vacuum of authorship..., preferring to impute a supremely gifted individual as the ultimate source of each of the works that constitute a tradition, but that desperate search for an author-like figure may well obscure the process behind the product.' For remarks on the influence of post-romantic ideas of originality, see SCODEL 2002, 28. See pp. 42-3 with n. 44 below. One of the key challenges still facing Homeric critics is how to talk about originality while recognising the claims of oral theory. See BARKER – CHRISTENSEN 2008 for a preliminary investigation into how the formula "many pains" (ἀλγεα πολλά) gets spun differently by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

<sup>16</sup> FOLEY 1997, 151-3.

<sup>17</sup> FOLEY 1997, 154.

<sup>18</sup> FOLEY 2002, 127-8.

<sup>19</sup> As SCODEL 2002, 32 puts it: 'Traditionality does not depend entirely on objective tradition. It is a cultural construct, the social memory of the past'.

<sup>20</sup> For differing views about the 'multiformity' of the 'Cypria', see FINKELBERG 2000 and BURGESS 2002. For a multiform *Iliad*, see, for example: NAGY 1996, 29-112; 1999; 2001.

<sup>21</sup> FOLEY 2005, 202: 'At the level of narrative structure, many oral epic traditions employ recurrent "typical scenes", multiform units that recur in the same and different songs, varying within limits. At the top level, "story-patterns" present structural pathways for the action of entire epics; the dramatis

Yet, it is important to note that, at the same time, these units of utterance, which may be applied on an individual basis to individual compositions, belong to and evoke a wider epic tradition. This – my third point – Foley terms as ‘traditional referentiality’: that is to say, the broader context of the epic tradition *resonates* through each and every particular example of a unit of utterance – whether that is conceived of as a word, phrase, motif or story-pattern – to create an interwoven web of significance.<sup>22</sup> As a result, as Foley puts it, ‘the bard performs *pars pro toto*, the part implying the whole, without rehearsing the entire linear compass of the implied traditional context.’<sup>23</sup> So, for example, the first occurrence of the Homeric formula ‘swift-footed Achilles’, when Achilles calls an assembly while *standing*, need not be dismissed as irrelevant, solely determinant on metre, as convention oral analysis reads it. Rather, the formula may be regarded as evoking ‘the entire heroic portrayal, complete with its mythic history and contradictions’<sup>24</sup> at the key moment when Achilles enters the narrative; moreover, it suggests the *Iliad*’s unusual stance vis-à-vis the tradition, locating Achilles’ ‘swiftness’ in debate not so much in battle.<sup>25</sup>

I suggest that using this idea of traditional referentiality or ‘resonance’ may help us make better sense of fragment one of the ‘Cypria’ and allow us to see its place in an epic tradition that potentially ranked alongside the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

#### *Fanning the great strife of the Iliadic War*

Even judging from the mutilated state of fragment one of the ‘Cypria’, we are able to discern that it is full of language and motifs that resonate within a broader epic tradition, such as that represented for us by the two Homeric epics and the Hesiodic *Works and Days* and *Theogony*. I shall briefly set out these resonances in three general categories, verbal units, motif and orientation, while bringing into consideration two passages that display a number of similar ideas, the proem of the *Iliad* and a section of the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*.

Our fragment opens with the words, ‘there was a time when’ (ἦν ὄτε), which has a ring of the ‘folk-tale’ about it.<sup>26</sup> Though no extant epic narrative offers an exact match, a similar phrase, however, does occur near the beginning of the *Odyssey*: having given a brief sketch of the background, the narrator moves to Odysseus’ current predicament via the phrase ‘but when’ (ἀλλ’ ὄτε, Hom. *Od.* 1.16). There is little reason, then, to suspect ἦν ὄτε as not being suitable for the beginning of an epic. Besides, most units of utterance in this passage appear to be entirely conventional. The phrase that follows, ‘countless races’ (μυρία φῶλα), has an exact parallel in the *Iliad* at a critical moment when Hector exhorts his men to fight for Patroclus’ body and just after Zeus has again

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personae and all other details are subject to change, but the flexible framework of the story as a whole governs the bard’s composition and the audience’s reception’.

<sup>22</sup> See FOLEY 1999, especially 13-34; SCODEL 2002, especially 1-2.

<sup>23</sup> FOLEY 2005, 204.

<sup>24</sup> FOLEY 1997, 167-8.

<sup>25</sup> GRAZIOSI and HAUBOLD 2005, 51 use the example of the formula at *Iliad* 2.688 to make a similar point.

<sup>26</sup> It occurs repeatedly in the fables of Aesop: *Prov.* 253.1.10; 253.2.10; 302.1.1; 4.11; etc.

## Momos Advises Zeus: *Changing Representations of 'Cypria' Fragment 1*

foreshadowed his own impending doom.<sup>27</sup> Other words or verbal units are equally traditional, such as the phrases applying to Zeus looking on and pitying, his 'closely-packed' thoughts, his wish to 'lighten' earth's burden, and the action taking place 'in Troy', which, as one might expect, occurs frequently in Homeric epic especially in the *Iliad*.<sup>28</sup>

More interestingly, a number of themes raised in this fragment have suggestive parallels elsewhere in Homeric narrative. The adjective πλαζόμενα, which here defines the 'countless races [of men]' (μυρία φύλα), resonates with the idea of wandering that is such a critical word and motif for the narrative of Odysseus' return right from its onset.<sup>29</sup> 'Great strife' (μεγάλης ἔρις), on the other hand, is one of the key motivating principles of epic narrative, central to the Hesiodic *Works and Days* and headlined as the main theme of Demodocus' first song (Hom. *Od.* 8.73-82). But the most impressive parallel occurs in the proem to the *Iliad* (1.1-8), which tells how Achilles and Agamemnon 'stood apart in strife' (διασπότην ἔρισαντε, *Il.* 1.6) and asks which of the gods set them in strife (Τίς τ' ἄρ' σφωε θεῶν ἔριδι ξυνέηκε μάχεσθαι, *Il.* 1.8).

There are, moreover, other suggestive resonances between the openings of the 'Cypria' and the *Iliad*. The first of these is the idea of the death of heroes, whose souls are sent into Hades in lines 4-5 of the *Iliad*. The term ἥρωες is far less common than we might initially think given our tendency to talk of the characters of Homeric epic as 'heroes'.<sup>30</sup> In fact it seems more likely that it is a highly charged word that characterises this particular kind of narrative as 'epic' and sets it in the generation before our time.<sup>31</sup> Its presence at the beginning of both the 'Cypria' and *Iliad*, therefore, immediately brands both narratives as 'heroic epic', a story-world prior to our own. In addition, its position and orientation is strikingly similar in both texts. In each case it belongs to the δέ-phrase, which indicates a connection of some kind between the main theme (the wrath of Achilles or the overburdening of the earth) and the race of 'heroes'. In both cases too the result is the same: the heroes die. That theme might remind us of the famous passage in the Hesiodic *Works and Days*, which tells of the destruction of the 'race of heroes' prior to our own generation.<sup>32</sup> Both the 'Cypria' and the *Iliad* then resonate within a much wider epic cosmos in a way that suggests that their narratives will investigate the relationship between gods and man in the history of the world, and offer an explanation as to why there are no more heroes any more.

<sup>27</sup> Hom. *Il.* 17.220. For variations on this phrase, see: φύλα ἀνθρώπων, Hom. *Il.* 14.361, 15.54; φύλα θεῶν, Hes. *Th.* 202, 965; *Op.* 199; φύλα ἀοιδῶν; Hom. *Od.* 8.481; φύλα γυναικῶν, Hom. *Il.* 9.130; Hes. *Th.* 10.21. 'Countless pains' (μυρία ἄλγεα) occurs in the proem to the *Iliad* 1.2.

<sup>28</sup> Ζεὺς δὲ ἰδὼν: Hes. frg. 10(a) 89 (M.-W.); ἐλέησε: h *Ven.* 210; κουφίσαι: Hes. *Op.* 463; ἐνὶ Τροίῃ: Hom. *Il.* 2.237; 6.315; 9.246; 13.433; 16.515; 18.330; 19.330; 24.542, 744; *Od.* 11.499; 12.189; 13.315; 15.513; 18.266. The adjective πυκνός ('closely-packed') occurs with significant frequency near the end of the *Iliad*, on which see LYNN-GEORGE 1988, 230-76.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example: Hom. *Od.* 1.2, 59, 75; 2.396; 9.81; 13.5, 204, 278; etc.

<sup>30</sup> See HAUBOLD 2000, 1-10; NAGY 2005.

<sup>31</sup> HAUBOLD 2000, 7 comments: 'The Greek "hero" (ἥρωες) above all points to "us", the non-heroes, outside his world'.

<sup>32</sup> Hes. *Op.* 156-73.

One further striking structural similarity remains: a second δέ-clause (or, in the case of the *Iliad*, a third) introduces an additional fundamental idea that draws each poem to a close and that is exactly paralleled in both texts: ‘and the will of Zeus was being accomplished’ (Διὸς δ’ ἐτελείετο βουλή). Arguably, no other line in the *Iliad* has attracted so much interest: it will come under scrutiny again in section III below, since it is this line that prompts our scholion to tell the story about the ‘Cypria’. But we can make three points in passing. First, the phrase ‘Διὸς βουλή’ resonates throughout archaic Greek hexameter epic – both Homeric and Hesiodic narrative – at times when Zeus claims or consolidates power.<sup>33</sup> Second, as well as being highly resonant within an epic cosmos (as we might expect from an expression relating the ‘plan of Zeus’), this particular unit of utterance is notoriously problematic. Given its imperfect tense, it is not at all clear what is part of Zeus’s plan, or when.<sup>34</sup> This ambiguity has great creative potential in implicating its audience in the process of negotiating the divine plan. Third, and a related point, the prominence of Zeus at the beginning of both passages is by no means accidental: Zeus’s plan in some way coincides with, or represents, the beginning of the narrative. Dennis Feeney has put this well: ‘When you are five lines into the *Iliad* you read Διὸς δ’ ἐτελείετο βουλή (‘the plan of Zeus was being fulfilled’), and you know that this poem’s action will comprise the will or plan of Zeus. After the first one hundred lines of the *Odyssey*, when the council of the gods is over, the same god’s guiding dispensation is also in the open’.<sup>35</sup> Zeus is prominent in a way that suggests the narrative deriving from his planning. Fragment one of the ‘Cypria’ operates a similar strategy.

There is, however, a striking difference, which Griffin is quick to point out. The ‘Cypria’’s plan of Zeus seems to be related to the overburdening of the earth and is much more explicit about destroying mankind. Yet, both of those motifs are present too in the wider epic tradition, as illustrated by the fragmentary Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (frg. 204.95-101 M.-W.):<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Hom. *Il.* 1.5; 12.241; 13.524; 20.15; 21.229; Hom. *Od.* 8.82; 11.297; 13.127; 14.328; 19.297; *h. Ven.* 23; *h. Ap.* 132; *h. Cer.* 9; Hes. *Th.* 465; 730; Hes. *Op.* 79; 99; Hes. *Sc.* 318.

<sup>34</sup> At first it seems that Achilles precipitates Zeus’s plan: we first see Zeus, keen to avoid a quarrel with Hera, hesitating to accept Thetis’s supplication; when the next episode begins we see him pondering how to put his plan into action (Hom. *Il.* 2.1-6). Yet, by book nineteen, Achilles himself interprets his strife with Agamemnon as having happened ‘according to Zeus’ (Hom. *Il.* 19.273-4). In fact all the action of the *Iliad* can be seen to flow through Zeus’s plan. See especially: SLATKIN 1991 on the role of Thetis; ALVIS 1995, 10-79 on the interconnectedness of Achilles’ μήνις and Zeus’s βουλή; CLAY 1999 on the essential polysemic nature of the plan that resists any one particular reading; MARKS 2002, 12-19 on the grammatical uncertainties of the poem.

<sup>35</sup> FEENEY 2001, 58. He goes on to show the difference in Apollonius’ *Argonautica*, which pointedly leaves Zeus out of its narrative. This is an important point for thinking about the oral traditional context for the ‘Cypria’: in its construction, the ‘Cypria’ appears more akin to Homeric than Hellenistic epic.

<sup>36</sup> For a recent collection of essays on this neglected text, see HUNTER 2005 (ed.). According to NAGY 1979, 160-1, the word ἡμίθεοι signals the last generation of heroes. See also NAGY 2005, 82-4, where he suggests that ‘this word *hêmitheos* shows a “genetic” understanding of the hero’ (84).

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>πάντες δὲ θεοὶ δίχα θυμὸν ἔθειντο  
ἔξ ἔριδος· δὴ γὰρ τότε μῆδετο θέσκελα ἔργα  
Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης, † μείξαι κατ' ἀπείρονα γαίαν  
τυρβάξας †, ἦδη δὲ γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων  
πολλὸν ἀϊστῶσαι σπεύδου, πρ[ό]φασιν μὲν ὀλέσθαι  
ψυχὰς ἡμιθέων ]οισι βροτοῖσι  
τέκνα θεῶν μι[ ] [ ] ο [όφ]θαλμοῖσιν ὀρώντα.

All the gods were divided in two parties by strife. For at that time high-thundering Zeus was planning godlike things, to stir up troubles (?) on the boundless earth. And now he was eager to annihilate the multitudinous<sup>37</sup> race of mortal men, his reason being the destruction of the lives of the demigods... children of the gods.

Though the text is badly mutilated, its language, motifs and story-pattern all strikingly evoke our fragment: the earth has become overburdened by mankind; Zeus plans to reduce mankind's numbers by fanning the flames of strife. In addition, the paraphrase ψυχὰς ἡμιθέων closely mirrors the *Iliad's* ψυχὰς ἡρώων. What can we make of the similarity between all three of these passages?

The combination of motifs we have identified can give rise to what Barbara Graziosi and Johannes Haubold call 'resonant patterns', by means of which individual narratives log on to a world wide web:<sup>38</sup>

[I]ndividual hexameter texts tend to sketch the overall history of the cosmos as well as placing themselves at a particular point within it. This is perhaps most obvious in the Hesiodic *Works and Days*, which incorporates a full account of past history from the golden age to the present. In a similar vein, the *Theogony* can be read as a complete account of the world, which ends with the present, that is, with a stable Olympian hierarchy under the rule of Zeus. Of course, each poem depicts the history of the world from its own very specific perspective: thus, in the *Works and Days*, which focuses on the present, the history of the cosmos is essentially a history of humankind... Conversely, the *Theogony* looks at world history from the perspective of the Olympian order whose gradual emergence it describes.<sup>39</sup>

Hesiodic epic depicts an evolving universe from the (almost) exclusively divine *Theogony* to the (almost) exclusively human *Works and Days*. Complementing this evolution, the Homeric poems map a world in transition from a time when gods play a

<sup>37</sup> If that is how to take πολλὸν: WEST 1997, 481. The text is given by West on p. 480. Its fragmentary state makes it difficult to ascertain Zeus's motives: do we accept West's reconstructed translation 'giving as his ground the lives of the *hemitheoi*', and if so, what is meant by it? Moreover, had we a full text the problem might not be solved, for this is given as Zeus's 'ostensible reason' (πρόφασιν μὲν) – as if Zeus had an ulterior motive. Here too Zeus's plan appears highly intricate and elusive.

<sup>38</sup> See 'Resonant Patterns': GRAZIOSI – HAUBOLD 2005, 63-149. On the Hesiodic world-view, see CLAY 2003.

<sup>39</sup> GRAZIOSI – HAUBOLD 2005, 139.

full and active role (say at the beginning of the *Iliad*) to a time when, with the gods less evident, humans take responsibility for their actions (say in the *Odyssey*). Taken together these two poetic traditions, the Hesiodic and Homeric, create our world.

I contend that we may read our fragment along similar lines. It is not Iliadic, in the sense that it is not about, or solely about, Achilles; rather, it is more broadly oriented towards the Trojan War and more explicitly under the direction of Zeus. From this perspective the resonant patterning of our fragment positions the ‘Cypria’ as a non-Iliadic Trojan War narrative, comparable to the Hesiodic *Catalogue* and, potentially, part of a truly wider epic world that stretches all the way to the Near East.<sup>40</sup>

*A Near Eastern-Aegean cultural community (koinê)*

With a global market now in view, it is time to consider a third critical strategy, which has been attracting growing support, for approaching fragment one of the ‘Cypria’: that is the Near Eastern influence on Greek epic. The fact that classicists should be looking to place Homer in the broader cultural context of ‘what constitutes a Near Eastern-Aegean cultural community (*koinê*)’,<sup>41</sup> we have Walter Burkert and Martin West largely to thank.<sup>42</sup> Yet, while both authors impressively chart the parallels between ancient Greek epic motifs and their Near Eastern counterparts, discussion of particular examples proves less illuminating of a specific relationship.<sup>43</sup> Ironically, scholars more familiar with the Near East have shown less enthusiasm for a cross-cultural study of ancient epic on the grounds that comparative studies tend to overlook the heterogeneity of ‘Near Eastern’ cultures themselves.<sup>44</sup> The case of *Gilgamesh* is particularly acute: in its *Standard Babylonian Version* most often cited by classical scholars, the highly archaic Sumerian language in which it was crafted made it, in the words of Jack Sasson, ‘unlikely to be based on living transmission, dispensed by illiterate bards, or appreciated by multilingual audiences’.<sup>45</sup> With the Near East such a nebulous world, comparison to Greek cultural phenomena must be carefully framed and worked out.

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<sup>40</sup> CINGANO 2005, 143 suggests that the *Catalogue* ‘was composed to serve both as an introduction to, and an integration of, the *Cypria* and the *Iliad*’. While I would put the stress more on the oral tradition than on any single text, Cingano’s article is suggestive for the place of the *Catalogue* in the epic cosmos that I am outlining here.

<sup>41</sup> BURKERT 2005, 291.

<sup>42</sup> BURKERT 1992, 2005; WEST 1997. See also MORRIS 1997.

<sup>43</sup> In his review of WEST 1997, DOWDEN 2001 presents five possible reactions to the identification of a potential parallel, ranging from regarding it as derivative on an earlier model to dismissing it outright as coincidence or an example of universality. See also NAGY 2005 for the theory and application of comparing the ‘epic hero’.

<sup>44</sup> ‘The challenge that lies before us is to confront the illusion of cultural unity implied by the “stream of tradition” with the historically documented discontinuities in Mesopotamian social and political history.’ MICHALOWSKI 1996, 192.

<sup>45</sup> SASSON 2005, 219. SASSON 2005, 231 concludes: ‘The epic that has inspired us was far from the Mesopotamian scribe’s most copied composition (omens were) and hardly was the national epic that our great scholars want it to be.’

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Nevertheless, as Burkert suggests, the sheer number and variety of correspondences between Near Eastern and Greek epic cannot be denied, nor should we want to deny it given the frequent past association of 'Classics' with narratives of Western superiority.<sup>46</sup> What is important, however, is to be more precise with what one is comparing. Burkert notes in passing the recurrence of formulaic verses, the repetition of verse groups, standard epithets and typical scenes: though he goes on to pursue the holy grail of Near Eastern antecedents to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, these elements suggest a loose affiliation to the oral tradition theory outlined above. In other words, the approaches of classicists broad-minded enough to consider Near Eastern epic are hindered by precisely the same problems that we encountered above with the literary aesthetic and neoanalytical approaches to epic: that is, the pursuit of 'original' sources and the identification of specific literary borrowing between texts. As Piotr Michalowski remarks, 'contemporary readers take for granted certain concepts of authorship and the authority of the writer' and 'find it extremely difficult to shed basic post-Romantic ideas about the spiritual inspirations of writers and the unique talents of poets'.<sup>47</sup> Rather, taking an oral tradition approach may allow us to view linguistic phrases, motifs and story-patterns as part of a broad, Mediterranean cultural *koinē*.<sup>48</sup> In fact, such an approach has recently proved popular among ancient historians, who have used the idea of 'networks' to explore the interconnectedness of various Mediterranean cultures. One could view literary correspondences as similarly interconnected and multidirectional in a way that avoids prioritising one narrative tradition over another or studying texts according to a hierarchy of influence.<sup>49</sup>

For example, one passage from the Babylonian epic, the *Atrahasis* reads (I 352-7 = II 1-6):

There had not gone by 600 and 600 years  
when the land became wide, the people numerous:  
the land was bellowing like a bull.  
The gods became disturbed by their uproar,

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<sup>46</sup> See, for example, BERNAL 1987. For a study of the battles in and over cultural identity played out in classical scholarship, see GOLDHILL 2002, especially 93-106. The classic study of the West's construction of the 'Orient' remains SAID 1978.

<sup>47</sup> MICHALOWSKI 1996, 183. SASSON 2005, 231 agrees: 'We are trained to focus on authors as vessels for genius and are unnerved by a literature that is anonymous even when assigned composers'.

<sup>48</sup> From this perspective, even evidence from *Gilgamesh* would be applicable, since earlier traditions of this truly multiform text could well have been disseminated orally over a wide area, provided that we bear in mind that we are talking about oral traditions and not fixed texts. On the various form of *Gilgamesh*, see TIGAY 1982.

<sup>49</sup> On 'networks' see, for example, MALKIN 2003. Christensen elsewhere in this *Acta* discusses these problems more fully and sketches out a way of thinking about *Gilgamesh* and the *Iliad* that shows greater sensitivity to the distinctiveness of each cultural context. HAUBOLD 2002, 11 has recently suggested that the evolution from a past full of gods to our human present has its parallel in Near Eastern epic. Though they differ in form and emphasis, 'they all share a basic narrative syntax, which corresponds to their shared function of explaining the universe, how it was made and what it was like.'

Enlil had an earful of their shouting  
and he addressed the great gods:  
'The noise of mankind has become too intense for me,  
with their uproar I am deprived of sleep'.

Both West and Burkert point out that the motif of the highest god devising a catastrophe because mankind has become too numerous finds a parallel in our fragment of the 'Cypria'.<sup>50</sup> The *Atrahasis* continues, however, with Enlil sending a flood – a motif, insofar as we are able to judge from the opening fragment, absent from the 'Cypria'. Working with a model of direct literary allusion in mind, in which the 'Cypria' derives its motifs from the *Atrahasis*, West presents the following analysis. Unable to find a Greek flood myth before the fifth century BC,<sup>51</sup> West concludes that Greek versions 'cannot be independent of the Flood story that we know from Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hebrew sources, especially from *Atrahasis*, the eleventh tablet of the *Gilgamesh* epic, and the *Old Testament*,<sup>52</sup> and that, 'the myth of the overpopulated earth in the *Cypria* provided a motivation of the Trojan War that was still unknown to Hesiod and Homer'.<sup>53</sup>

West's line of thinking seems to run as follows. The 'Cypria' has the overpopulation motif. In Near Eastern epics, that motif is combined with the idea of a flood. No Greek narrative bears a trace of that motif before the fifth-century. Therefore, the 'Cypria' is late and presents a reason for the Trojan War that is foreign to the Homeric poems.

The first thing to note is the tendency to ascribe to the 'Cypria' a 'post-Homeric' role in the sense that it is a text that comes after the Homeric poems. That is not the only way to take the correspondence between the 'Cypria' fragment and the *Atrahasis*, however. Using the notion of oral formulaic theory, we could just as easily conceive of the 'Cypria' fragment one as operating within a broader epic context that extends far beyond the narrow Homeric perspective or, at the very least, as projecting a rival approach to the Trojan War. Indeed, if Near Eastern epics are anything to go by, the 'Cypria' narrative suggests that the connection it draws between overpopulation, Zeus's plan and the Trojan War has good precedent.<sup>54</sup>

Moreover, West himself concedes that the one Greek source for a flood myth before the fifth century occurs in the *Iliad*.<sup>55</sup> Granting that example, it seems perverse to insist

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<sup>50</sup> BURKERT 1992, 100-2; WEST 1997, 481. The text I give represents a combination of both of their translations.

<sup>51</sup> Such as the story of Deucalion's Flood: Ov. *Met.* 1.163-6; Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.8.2; schol. Pind. *Ol.* 9.78b; d schol. Eur. *Or.* 1646.

<sup>52</sup> WEST 1997, 490.

<sup>53</sup> WEST 1997, 493-4.

<sup>54</sup> BURGESS 2001, 149 comments: 'It has been assumed that the *Cypria* has simply lifted the idea of a plan from the *Iliad*. But recognition that the plan of Zeus at the beginning of the *Cypria* is similar to long-standing myths (Near Eastern and Indo-European) undercuts the view that it is simply an expansion of an Iliadic passage.'

<sup>55</sup> Hom. *Il.* 12.1-34; cf. 7.442-64. NAGY 2005, 82 regards the myth of the cosmic flood as 'deeply embedded in the overall structure of the oldest surviving epic of Greek literature, the Homeric *Iliad*'. He also draws a connection to Zeus's plan in our 'Cypria' fragment and to the label of '*hêmitheoi*' in

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on the lateness of the 'Cypria's overpopulation motif. Indeed, if the 'Cypria's overpopulation motif looks out of place or somehow 'Near Eastern', that is because our world has been inevitably shaped by Homeric epic, a process that begins as soon as the Homeric poems are written down, if not before.<sup>56</sup>

In the next two sections, I turn the spotlight on to two examples that explore the Homeric influence on shaping the textual reception of the 'Cypria'; but it may be interesting to note in passing the possible influence of Homeric epic even on the text of the fragment itself as we have it. While I have suggested that its language, motif and possibly even orientation resonate within a wider epic universe, a number of linguistic oddities stand out. The word *παμβώτωρ* appears to be a hapax.<sup>57</sup> *Κενόω* is unattested before the fifth century BC, when it becomes popular in tragedy. Most striking of all, however, is the description of the events at Troy as the *πολέμος Ἰλιακός*, the 'Iliadic War'. The adjective *Ἰλιακός*, and its collocation with *πολέμος*, has no precedent before the fifth century;<sup>58</sup> yet, if we conceive of the 'Cypria' as an epic poem alongside the Homeric poems, we must date its oral tradition back to at least the seventh century BC. Therefore, we are left with the problem of how to explain what appears to look like a late linguistic feature in an otherwise oral traditional text? One possibility may be that what we have here is an indication of the 'multi-formity' of the 'Cypria' tradition: even its purported opening fragment exhibits signs of the pressure the Iliadic tradition exerted on the Greek epic world. Indeed, we might even want to think of it as a self-conscious marker of the tradition of the Trojan War, now – that is to say, in the fifth century – best represented by the *Iliad*. Interestingly, the description of a *πολέμος Ἰλιακός* occurs most frequently in the Homeric scholia and commentaries on the *Iliad*.<sup>59</sup>

In this section I have suggested that, from what we can tell, the 'Cypria' belonged to an epic world sharing common terminology, themes and strategies. But, while granting the 'Cypria' a potential place within an epic tradition, it is also important to set a limit to any analysis of the 'Cypria' and, in particular, its literary pretensions, since we are

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the Hesiodic Catalogue (83): 'The scenario of obliteration followed by preservation for the *hêmitheoi* in Hesiodic poetry must be contrasted with the scenario of obliteration followed by no preservation for the *hêmitheoi* in *Iliad* 12.17-33, where Homeric poetry refers to its heroes exceptionally as the last generation of heroes.' See also SCODEL 1982.

<sup>56</sup> There is another lesson here too: classicists should be wary of treating Near Eastern examples as monolithic precursors to Homeric epic, when we would rightly shy away from conducting similarly one-dimensional examinations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. MICHALOWSKI 1996, 188, for example, argues that the flood myth in *Gilgamesh* appears to have been imported into the narrative at some late stage, where it undergoes a fundamental transformation: 'The flood story, as it is imbedded in the late recension, is the playground of many ideas.' Near Eastern narratives are themselves fluid and must be interpreted carefully with a view to their individual representations.

<sup>57</sup> The feminine form *παμβώτις* is found at Soph. *Phil.* 391, in collocation with 'Earth' (Γᾶ).

<sup>58</sup> It is first attested in the fifth century BC, for example, in Hellenic. frg. 84 Fowler. See HUXLEY 1969, 129; DAVIES 2003, 2-5; BURGESS 2001, 10-1; GRIFFIN 1977, 39 n. 9 uses *Ἰλιακός* as one reason for dating the 'Cypria' later than the Homeric poems.

<sup>59</sup> For example, in [Plut.]. *Vit. Hom.* 1.72. It occurs throughout Eustathius' *Ad Iliadem*. Cf. Callim. *Aet.* frg. 114.25.

left dealing with only fragmentary remains. It is important then to assess the bigger picture of the ‘Cypria’: in the next section, I contemplate the extent to which we may its representation in summary form by Proclus for thinking about the ‘Cypria’ tradition as a whole.

### The summary

In the previous section we examined a possible remnant of a rival tradition to Homeric epic. That remains for us, however, no more than a glimpse; the narrative tradition labelled the ‘Cypria’ has not survived the exigencies of time, but comes down to us in the form of a summary by Proclus. In this section my concern will not only be to pursue the elusive trace of the ‘Cypria’ tradition; I also focus on Proclus’ representation of the ‘Cypria’ as a summary, highlighting in particular the profound influence of the Homeric poems on Proclus’ reconstruction. My aim throughout will be to try to keep in view this double vision, one which both delves into the pre-Homeric background that the ‘Cypria’ potentially records, while at the same time recognising that the style, form, and possibly even the content, of the ‘Cypria’ as we know it is post-Homeric, in the sense that its story-pattern has been undergone a revolution under the influence of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

### *The process of manufacturing the Epic Cycle*

Very few fragments of the ‘Cypria’ survive. When scholars criticise this poem, what they tend to be criticising is a prose summary written by a late antique author by the name of Proclus, who was probably not writing before the second century AD.<sup>60</sup> In the first place, then, one ought to exercise due caution when treating his narrative as evidence for the oral tradition known as the ‘Cypria’. Moreover, as Jonathon Burgess has recently suggested, Proclus’ work comes at the end of a long process of change experienced by the ‘Cyclic Epics’,<sup>61</sup> to the extent that the ‘Epic Cycle’ may even be an artificial construction that came into being to supply background to the Homeric poems.<sup>62</sup> As Burgess explains, along with ‘the process of manufacturing the Epic cycle’, the poems included within it underwent ‘editorial manipulation’.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> The summary of the ‘Epic Cycle’ is part of a work called the *Chrestomathia*, itself preserved in another work called the *Bibliotheca* by the ninth-century Byzantine writer-patriarch, Photios. On the question of which ‘Proclus’ is the author of the *Chrestomathia*, the fifth-century neo-platonist or a lesser-known figure from the second century AD, see WILSON 1983, 38-40; BURGESS 2001, 11-12. On Proclus the neo-platonist, see HEATH 1989, 124-36. Modern editions of Proclus’ summary, such as the Loeb by WEST 2003a, are often supplemented by the *Epitome* of Apollodorus. It is exactly this scholarly habit of filling in the mythical background to Homeric epic that critically shapes the ‘Cypria’ as we now have it.

<sup>61</sup> BURGESS 2001, 7-46.

<sup>62</sup> WEST 1996, 531 describes the ‘Epic cycle’ for the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* as ‘a collection of early Greek epics, *artificially arranged* in a series so as to make a narrative extending from the beginning of the world to the end of the heroic age’ (my italics). A similar point is made in passing by FANTUZZI – HUNTER 2004, 96, who suggest that the cyclic poems ‘(at least when viewed from a third-century [BC] perspective) “*completed*” Homer’ (my italics).

<sup>63</sup> BURGESS 2001, 8. Contrast HUXLEY 1969, 123-4.

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Eventually, summaries of the poems in the Epic cycle about the Trojan war were added to early manuscripts of the *Iliad*... [Proclus'] summaries of poems in the Epic cycle that were not about the Trojan War were not included in the manuscripts and did not survive.<sup>64</sup>

This is a fundamental point. The 'Epic Cycle' survives *only because* of its physical location in manuscripts of the Homeric poems.<sup>65</sup> In a very real sense, then, 'Epic Cycle' exists as a *construct* designed to introduce the Homeric poems.

As will become clear, I owe much to Burgess' study; but my analysis attempts to open new lines of enquiry into Proclus' account. First, I consider the beginning of Proclus' summary of the 'Cypria' in relation to the opening fragment we examined above and assess the summary's general outlook; then, I explore one particular episode that presents a potentially intriguing encounter with the wider epic tradition. Thus, I hope to raise some interesting possibilities of what an independent 'Cypria' might have looked like, and reveal the difficulty of trying to read the 'Cypria' without recourse to Homer.

### *Zeus confers with Themis*

A good place to start our enquiry into Proclus' version of the 'Cypria' is with his beginning for its comparative value with our opening fragment (*Cyp. arg. 1*):

Ζεὺς βουλευέται μετὰ τῆς Θέμιδος περὶ τοῦ Τρωϊκοῦ πολέμου. παραγενομένη δὲ Ἔρις εὐωχομένων τῶν θεῶν ἐν τοῖς Πηλέως γάμοις νεῖκος περὶ κάλλους ἐνίστησιν Ἀθηνᾶ, Ἥρα καὶ Ἀφροδίτη.

Zeus confers with Themis about the Trojan War. As the gods are feasting at the wedding of Peleus, strife appears and causes a dispute about beauty among Athena, Hera and Aphrodite.

There are a number of important differences to note between the two sources of the 'Cypria'. First, Proclus glosses the phrase Διὸς βουλή with the more prosaic Ζεὺς βουλευέται. While that may appear to be a natural result of translating epic into prose, it has several significant repercussions. On the one hand, the loss of the formula Διὸς βουλή separates the 'Cypria' from its embedded context within the wider epic tradition and, given the peculiarly highly charged resonance of that particular verbal unit, from the history of the cosmos. As a result, the opening of the 'Cypria' no longer seems so closely related to the context in which the *Iliad* also plays a role. It is, rather, the *end* of the 'Cypria' – at least as represented by Proclus – that makes that connection,

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<sup>64</sup> BURGESS 2001, 17. Both SEVERYNS 1953, 279-84 and DAVIES 1986, 101-4 argue that the summary was changed when added to the *Iliad* manuscripts. BURGESS 2001, 28-33 puts the 'misrepresentation' of the 'Epic cycle' much earlier, in the Hellenistic period.

<sup>65</sup> BURGESS 2001, 24 argues that Proclus has 'cropped' the 'Cypria' to lead into the *Iliad*.

which underlines its function as an introduction to the *Iliad*.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand, the prosaic gloss puts Zeus in the position of agent and represents him as actively involved in a hands-on management of the cosmos.<sup>67</sup> Though occurrences of the phrase ‘Διὸς βουλή’ equally suggest Zeus’s ascendancy, the degree and nature of that involvement in the events is never explicit, especially when we bear in mind the utterance’s resonant interplay with other instances over a wider tradition. The prosaic translation removes any ambiguity and reduces the complexity of that plan in a way that Griffin has in mind when he levels his criticism against the ‘Cypria’.<sup>68</sup>

A second important feature to note is the figure with whom Zeus consults when making his plans: Proclus assigns Zeus a special advisor, where there is none in the ‘Cypria’ fragment. One immediate effect has been to suggest to scholars that the Zeus of the ‘Cypria’ had help in managing the cosmos, a point by no means clear from the opening fragment. I shall return to this question in section III below; for the time being, let us consider Zeus’s special advisor as recorded in Proclus. Modern editions give that figure as Themis, basing that reading on a papyrus fragment pre-dating Proclus, which in theme and language appears to anticipate his summary of the ‘Cypria’.<sup>69</sup> The depiction of Themis in deliberation with Zeus is apt, pointing to the end of the Hesiodic *Theogony*, when Zeus, advised by Earth and Ouranos, swallows his first wife Metis (‘Intelligence’), takes as his second Themis (‘Right’, ‘Custom’), and begins the process of ordering the cosmos, which includes populating the earth with heroes (Hes. *Th.* 886-962). Such a narrative appears to fit the proposal by Graziosi and Haubold cited above, that the Hesiodic *Theogony* presents a cosmos at an early stage of construction, prior to the world of heroes and its destruction as narrated by the Homeric poems. In the light of the Hesiodic *Theogony*, then, Proclus’ ascription of Themis to the role of Zeus’s special advisor makes sense, even if an exact parallel is lacking.

Furthermore, if we take an overview of Proclus’ summary, it is possible to discern a coherent narrative being set out which accords with our reading of the opening description of Zeus planning with Themis. The summary opens with a scene of almost

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<sup>66</sup> In contrast to the majority view, MARKS 2002 contests the assumption that the ‘Cypria’ was designed to introduce the *Iliad*. Relying heavily upon Proclus’ reconstruction, he finds it ‘difficult to see why a narrative intended to introduce the *Iliad* would conclude with a plan of Zeus’ (2). Instead, he regards the plan of Zeus in the opening fragment and its mention at the end of Proclus’ summary as forming ‘a structural ring around the entire Kypria’ (9), which reads the *Iliad*’s separation of Achilles from the Achaeans ‘as an event planned by Zeus before Agamemnon and Achilleus even quarrel’ (12). His analysis offers the best attempt I know of trying to reconstruct a ‘Cypria’ tradition that refrains from prioritising the *Iliad*. Nevertheless, I believe he puts too much faith in Proclus’ summary being independent from Homeric epic for his conclusions regarding the alleged ‘proto-Panhellenic’ (20) outlook of the ‘Cypria’ to prove convincing.

<sup>67</sup> MARKS 2002, 8 suggests that ‘the active deliberation implied by the verb βουλεύεται is inconsistent with other surviving poems’.

<sup>68</sup> See pp. 35-6 above.

<sup>69</sup> P.Oxy. 3829 ii 9: ὁ Ζεὺς ἀσέβειαν καταγνοὺς τοῦ ἡρωϊκοῦ γένους βουλεύεται μετὰ Θέμιδος ἄρδην αὐτοῦς ἀπολέσαι. It should be noted, however, that the papyrus account introduces the idea of mortal impiety ἀσέβεια, which is absent from Proclus’ summary and, as far as we can tell, from the ‘Cypria’. This suggests that the two passages should not be treated as exactly equivalent.

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exclusive divine action, centred on the marriage of Thetis. When humans make an appearance, it is their interaction with the divine that comes to the fore: so Peleus marries Thetis, Zeus and Nemesis give birth to Helen, Paris judges the goddesses, Helenus and Cassandra prophesy events to come, and Aphrodite organises Paris's tour around Greece. Later on, while we still see some divine activity – such as when Aphrodite and Thetis arrange Achilles' *liaisons dangereuses* with Helen – by and large men motivate, and are responsible for, the action. By the end of the summary, the focus has shifted to an almost exclusively human world, as allies gather at Troy to repel Achilles; only Zeus remains, overseeing the action in a manner strikingly reminiscent of his role at the beginning of the *Iliad*. Thus the 'Cypria' summary presents a movement from a world full of gods to a world inhabited solely by men. Seen from this perspective, the fantastical element that has so troubled Homeric scholars could be regarded as 'earlier history' (akin to the liminal place the Phaeacians inhabit in the *Odyssey*). Furthermore, its 'ending' potentially rereads the opening conflict of the Iliadic tradition as one motivated by eros – an eros that threatens to engulf all mankind in deadly strife.

Two points emerge from this summary description. First, Proclus' summary maps out a 'Cypria' that appears to situate itself in between a Theogonic world of divine affairs and an Iliadic world of human conflict. Second, it presents a vantage point on to the *Iliad*, by means of which that poem's depiction of human conflict may be seen as guaranteeing the stability of the cosmos. To explain: the 'Cypria' opens with the cosmic problem of Thetis, who is fated to bear a son greater than the father. Zeus deals with this by marrying her off to the mortal Peleus, thereby circumventing any further 'Theogony', since the son who will be born, Achilles, is – crucially – mortal.<sup>70</sup> In fact, one can see that a direct result of this narrative will be the *Iliad*, in which Thetis' son causes 'the souls of many heroes to go to Hades'.<sup>71</sup> From now on the gods are not (seriously) going to fight; instead, strife has been displaced on to mortals, whose suffering is only beginning. On this reading, the 'Cypria' stands at the critical juncture of a post-*Theogonic*, pre-*Iliadic* world.<sup>72</sup>

Thus it could be argued that Proclus here preserves the 'Cypria' tradition's opening strategy that sets itself in and against a wider epic tradition that contrasts with, and

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<sup>70</sup> '[W]hat informs the human stature of Achilles is Thetis's cosmic, theogonic power – her role in the succession myth; and although the *Iliad* never reverts to it explicitly, it returns us to it repeatedly. If Themis had not intervened, Thetis would have borne to Zeus or Poseidon the son greater than his father, and the entire chain of succession in heaven would have continued: Achilles would have been not the greatest of heroes, but the ruler of the universe. The price of Zeus's hegemony is Achilles' death': SLATKIN 1991, 101. Similarly, NAGY 1979, 220 argues that the displacement of strife from the divine sphere 'causes not only the Trojan War in particular but the human condition in general'.

<sup>71</sup> If we remember, our fragment of the 'Cypria' associates the 'continual dying of heroes' with the 'Διὸς βουλή' – like in the *Iliad* proem. This locates the 'Cypria' at an early stage of cosmos construction.

<sup>72</sup> The key narrative strategy employed by the Hesiodic *Theogony* explores the problem of procreation in the tale of succession, and the success of Zeus's eventual triumph over desire. The ending of our *Theogony* – however suspect it may be – fits this strategy: it represents Zeus populating the world and arranging its order.

possibly even complements, the *Iliad*'s Troy story. It may be equally true, however, that Proclus has the *Iliad* – and, for that matter, the *Theogony* – in mind when constructing this account. First, Proclus explicitly labels the war at Troy as ‘the Trojan War’ (Τρωϊκός πόλεμος). This description looks rather like a later gloss indebted to the Iliadic tradition and, like the πόλεμος Ἰλιακός gloss we noted above, occurs frequently in the Homeric scholia and commentators.<sup>73</sup> Second, the manuscripts of Proclus’ summary read *Thetis*, not *Themis*. Reading ‘Thetis’ makes sense *in the context of the Iliad*, where she compels Zeus to honour her son. In fact, the ‘Διὸς βουλή’ of *Iliad* 1.5 is later glossed by Athena, in the context of Zeus honouring Achilles by supporting the Trojans, as a ‘plan of Thetis’.<sup>74</sup> Third, and most importantly, we should reconsider our previous account of the ‘Cypria’ based on Proclus. Most obviously, the vast array of episodes recorded looks rather like the result of a concern to supply the background to the Homeric poems. But it is also significant that, while the beginning of Proclus’ account does not flatly contradict the opening fragment of the ‘Cypria’ we analysed above, the critical motif of a special advisor is new. This presents the possibility that the argument we have just set out, which proposed that the ‘Cypria’ situates itself in between the *Theogony* and *Iliad*, could derive precisely from a concern to draw a connection between these two extant examples of poetic traditions. Or, perhaps, by making this move we ourselves reconstruct a ‘Cypria’ that appears able to function as a ‘missing link’ between the *Theogony* and the *Iliad*. Are we right to imagine a ‘Cypria’ tradition logging on to a world wide web? Or are we simply replaying the dynamics of Proclus’ summary, as we read and fit the ‘Cypria’ into these other traditions? Having raised the difficulty of reading without Homer, I consider a test case of the influence of Homer on an episode within Proclus’ summary: the story-telling of Nestor.

#### *Nestor in a digression*

In one of the opening episodes of the ‘Cypria’ summary, Proclus records the origins of the Trojan War. Having been deserted by his wife, Menelaus sails around Greece mustering a coalition force against Troy. After first conferring with his brother, Menelaus’ next port of call is Nestor (*Cyp. arg.* 4):<sup>75</sup>

καὶ πρὸς Νέστορα παραγίνεται Μενέλαος, Νέστωρ δὲ ἐν παρεκβάσει διηγείται αὐτῷ ὡς Ἐπωπεὺς φθείρας τὴν Λυκούργου θυγατέρα ἐξεπορθήθη, καὶ τὰ περὶ Οἰδίπουν, καὶ τὴν Ἡρακλέους μανίαν, καὶ τὰ περὶ Θησέα καὶ Ἀριάδην.

<sup>73</sup> For example, Arist. *fr.* 640, 44; Procl. *in Alc.* 273.2. It occurs throughout the scholia (both tragic and epic) and, again, in Eustathius’ *Ad Iliadem*.

<sup>74</sup> Hom. *Il.* 8.370 – no doubt intended as a dig at daddy. See the ‘commentary’ section below. Comparing the variants Themis and Thetis, MARKS 2002, 7 n. 21 comments, ‘Neither reading is overtly non-traditional, though substitution of Thetis for Themis could have emerged in response to the diffusion of Iliadic tradition’.

<sup>75</sup> The following fragments are thought to intersect with this episode: B17, 19, 21; D15, 16.

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Menelaus goes to Nestor, and Nestor in a digression narrates to him how Epopeus, having seduced the daughter of Lycurgus, had his city sacked, and the things about Oedipus, and the madness of Heracles, and the things about Theseus and Ariadne.

At first sight, this episode might appear to conform to the kind of criticism usually levelled at the 'Epic Cycle'. The style is rambling, introduced simply by a *καί*, as if there were no logical connection between this episode and the one preceding it, and is then simply strung together by a series of further connectives (*καὶ...καὶ...καὶ*). The key protagonist is Nestor, a figure familiar to us from Homeric epic for recalling past exempla: here, he appears a caricature of himself relating no less than four stories. From this perspective, the label ascribed to the 'Cypria' as post-Homeric would seem warranted. I want to try, however, to read this episode through the double vision I set out above, first by outlining a possible 'Cypria' strategy being presented here, and then by considering Proclus' representation of it.

Let us first consider the stories Nestor tells to his patient. At one level the stories would appear relatively straightforward: all treat the theme of love-madness.<sup>76</sup> It is not too much of a leap of the imagination to see the relevance of that issue to Menelaus: he has just been dumped by his beautiful bride, Helen, who under the influence of Aphrodite herself has eloped with her lover, Paris. The power of love could apply to any of the characters in this sorry tale. Yet, it is not so clear cut why Nestor should be telling Menelaus *these particular stories*. Only the first example has a clear-cut, unequivocal message: 'Epopeus, having seduced the daughter of Lycurgus, had his city sacked'. The seducer is punished by the sacking of his city: that, we can imagine, would be *exactly* the kind of tale Menelaus would want to hear. But the other examples that follow are more difficult to make sense of, even granting the fact we are dealing with a summary. 'The things about Oedipus' suggest the dangers of incest and the antagonism between the father and his sons; it is hard to see the direct relevance to Menelaus' predicament. The 'madness of Heracles' evokes the moment, dramatised in Euripides' play *Heracles*, when the returning hero is turned mad by Hera and kills his wife and children in a bloody assault; again this is a tale that hardly suggests a simple application to the situation in which Menelaus finds himself. The last example even appears to reverse the emotional focus of the episode: Theseus himself is the lover who elopes with Ariadne and then abandons her. Furthermore, that story's usual conclusion focuses on the tragedy of his return when, after he forgets to change his sails, his father commits suicide: if that were the story told here, then it may be the case that the audience are being invited to identify sympathetically with the seducer.

We are, of course, only dealing with a summary. Yet, the stories could still have been presented in such a way as to draw attention to their didactic message. Or, possibly, the problem lies with the stories themselves, which do not appear to yield any simple paradigm or paradigmatic form of behaviour for the listening Menelaus. Either way, whether we think the 'Cypria' to blame for the lack of clarity, or else ascribe the

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<sup>76</sup> 'In a paradigm-rich digression, the effusive Nestor relates tale of love-madness to Menelaus': SCAIFE 1995, 167.

problem to Proclus' representation, an interpretative challenge is set before the reader. In fact, since this episode replays a typical scene from epic, I would go further. This episode questions the very purpose of the type scene, in which an older figure relates a story to a younger hero in order to set before him a paradigmatic way of responding to his present predicament – such as we see in Homeric epic with the story-telling of Nestor.

I shall return to this point presently; for the moment I want to raise a further problem in this scene of story-telling. A story that Nestor *could* have told about Theseus, and one arguably more appropriate, was his elopement with *Helen*. One might object that the 'Cypria' did not know of this story; but if Michael Anderson is right that Helen's first appearance in the *Iliad* does recall her previous abduction, then it would not be necessary to insist on the 'Cypria's' ignorance of it, no matter how its relationship to Homeric epic is to be conceived.<sup>77</sup> And, with that being so, we might well have expected to find this story narrated to Menelaus, which is precisely the line Anderson takes:

The situation resembles Telemachos' visit to Sparta in *Odyssey* 4, where tales of past accomplishment serve to encourage a disheartened traveller. The story of Helen's previous abduction would have offered another apt example in this context, where the memories of her past recovery might have roused Menelaos' spirits for success in the coming campaign against Troy.<sup>78</sup>

Anderson explains his assumptions regarding the 'Cypria' – assumptions themselves based on Homeric epic – by bringing in evidence from Homer. We see here just how difficult it is for scholars to think outside of a world that is not dominated by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

That point is shown too by Anderson's observation that the *Odyssey* acts as a precedent for Nestor's story-telling in the 'Cypria': the hero (Menelaus / Telemachus) on a quest (for his wife / father) first stops off at Nestor's palace at Pylos, where he is royally entertained by the old man's stories. The connections between the two episodes could reflect a type scene that was part of an oral poet's repertoire, suggesting a resonant rivalry between two epic traditions. But evidence from the *Odyssey* may suggest an alternative reason for its presence in Proclus' summary. As Telemachus nears the end of his quest, he asks Nestor's son whether he could make a detour by-passing Pylos so as to avoid being detained further by his old man: if he must enjoy Nestor's hospitality again, Telemachus fears not being able to get back home in time before the epic ends (Hom. *Od.* 15.195-201)!<sup>79</sup> In this way, the *Odyssey* slips in a sly

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<sup>77</sup> At her first appearance Helen is attended by two servants, one of whom is 'Aithra, daughter of Pittheus' (Hom. *Il.* 3.143-4). As ANDERSON 1997, 99 comments, 'Since this Aithra, daughter of the king of Troezen, can be none other than the mother of Theseus, the passage presupposes the story of Helen's previous abduction'. Cf. schol. Hom. *Il.* 3.242; Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.10.7.

<sup>78</sup> ANDERSON 1997, 99.

<sup>79</sup> DICKSON 1995, 196 suggests that Nestor's potential to detain and enchant Telemachus mirrors the Sirens and echoes his position as a bard-shadow in the *Iliad*.

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dig at Nestor's expense based on his reputation for telling stories, a reputation that recalls Nestor's characterisation in the *Iliad* and that is confirmed by his earlier appearance in the *Odyssey*; Nestor's (over)fondness for story-telling we might call his *Homeric* reputation. What is interesting about Proclus' summary is how it seems to both represent Nestor's reputation *and* replay the *Odyssey's* joke at his expense. With admirable economy, Proclus piles up the case studies (which in itself is an unHomeric twist in the sense that the Homeric Nestor never relates a *series* of examples at one sitting) to ape the *Odyssey's* representation of Nestor as a talker who goes on and on and on...

If we are thinking of a Nestor cast in the role of his Homeric alter ego, then it is really no surprise that Nestor does not mention Helen. Far from arousing Menelaus' spirits for success in the coming campaign, as Anderson suggests, a tale of her past abduction might just have been too close to the bone for Menelaus to take at this time. Therefore, regardless whether an original 'Cypria' had mentioned Helen, Proclus' omission is equally significant for illustrating Nestor's tact: he wouldn't want to remind Menelaus that his young bride had already another lover, *and* had been whisked off before. And Nestor, if we think of his Iliadic representation at least, is a master tactician.<sup>80</sup> While it remains possible that Odyssean and 'Cypria' traditions are both participating in a dialogue over Nestor's story-telling abilities, it seems likely that Proclus representation owes some debt at least to Homeric epic, and relies on his reader's familiarity with it.<sup>81</sup>

In addition, there is one feature where it is difficult to deny Proclus' influence on the translation of the 'Cypria' tradition for future generations: that is in his description of this episode as a 'digression' (παρέκβασις). Malcolm Heath has shown that this term, which comes straight from the rhetorical schools, is applied by *later* scholia to denote such story-telling in the *Iliad*.<sup>82</sup> This appears to be the Nestor who appears in Proclus' summary of the 'Cypria'. But, before we condemn the 'Cypria' for its love of digressory material and basic narrative incoherence, we should note the influence of later cultural contexts on forming a response to epic narrative. According to these later readers, versed on an Aristotelian concept of 'unity', the Homeric poems *themselves* fail to conform to the vigorous standards of what makes a coherent narrative, even though Aristotle had applied similar standards to distinguish the Homeric poems from the inferior, more rambling, 'Epic Cycle'.<sup>83</sup> Thus it appears that, from the perspective of

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<sup>80</sup> For example, his negotiation of the Achilles problem: Hom. *Il.* 1.247-84; 9.93-81; 11.655-805. On the latter: MARTIN 2000.

<sup>81</sup> As HEATH 1989, 114 remarks: 'Nestor's readiness to deliver rambling secondary narratives is familiar, of course, from both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*'.

<sup>82</sup> So, for example, 'Phoenix's use of the Meleager story in *Iliad* 9 is cited by the rhetoricians to illustrate the term παρέκβασις (Trypho, iii 203.20-3, Gregory of Corinth, iii 224.5-12);' and Eustathius (100.29-43) cites *Nestor* as an opportunity to slip in other stories not connected to the main narrative: HEATH 1989, 113-14. For a discussion of 'unity' and its impact on interpreting Homer, see HEATH 1989, 64 n. 20, 82-3, 93-5, 113-14, 118-19, 132.

<sup>83</sup> Arist. *Poet.* 1459<sup>a</sup>19-<sup>b</sup>18. See SCAIFE 1995, 169-74.

later readers, Phoenix's tale is a 'digression' no less than Nestor's stories in the 'Cypria' – and may be denoted as such.<sup>84</sup>

Proclus' use of the term *παρέκβασις*, then, locates him within a grammatical tradition that stretches back to Aristotle.<sup>85</sup> As a result, we should be mindful of using that label to describe Nestor's case studies if we want to draw a distinction from Homeric epic: this is a term more suited to later, literary genres than to epic narrative. Or, to put that point slightly differently, this term is used to denote a feature of epic generally – not just Cyclic Epic – that appears unfamiliar or even obtrusive to an audience from a later cultural context with different notions of what a narrative should look like. The very language that Proclus uses both shows his participation in that later context and goes on to influence an interpretation of the 'Cypria'. Therefore, *even if* his summary were to represent an accurate record of what the 'Cypria' tradition told, it is already a *translation* of epic for another culture and crucially alters the way that epic is received by an audience. From this perspective, criticism of the 'Cypria' for being digressionary and not conforming to 'Homeric' standards is, in fact, to misunderstand 'Homeric' epic, since it rehearses the arguments of later critics who mark out passages from the Homeric epics on an equal basis.

Having just suggested that Proclus' summary fundamentally alters the reception of the 'Cypria', let me return finally to the examples that Nestor relates to Menelaus. The three key problematic stories that we noted above were those relating the incest of Oedipus, the madness of Heracles, and the paramours of Theseus: only the tale of the sacked city seemed pertinent to Menelaus' situation. It is interesting to note, therefore, that all three of these heroes, Oedipus, Heracles and Theseus, as far as we can tell, once enjoyed epic narrative traditions to rank alongside the Homeric epics. That is to say, the examples that Nestor cites relate to stories not only about individuals but also about *representatives of rival traditions*. As a series they construct a tradition and the 'Cypria's' place within it.

Our response may again take one of two forms. We might see this episode as preserving a key moment in the 'Cypria' when that epic tradition engaged with and reworked rival traditions. In Nestor's stories its rivals are 'read' according to the narrative strategy of this epic, namely the power of Aphrodite. In fact, her presence dominates Proclus' 'Cypria' summary: she directly motivates not only Paris, but also Zeus, Peleus, Menelaus, Helen, even Achilles; the longest fragment represents her dressing;<sup>86</sup> her power also touches the final episode, in which Achilles and Agamemnon

<sup>84</sup> In passing HUNTER 2001, 109 speaks of Homer as being praised in the grammatical tradition for the use of *παρέκβάσεις* (digressions), 'which allow the reader some respite'.

<sup>85</sup> That is all the more true if Proclus is the famous neo-Platonist philosopher. In his treatment of the dramatic aspects of Plato's dialogues, this Proclus writes: 'time, place, participants – all must have a bearing on the one *skopos*' (Procl. *in Prm.* 630.27-36). For this Proclus, Nestor's tales would certainly seem to be a 'digression'.

<sup>86</sup> Frg. B/D4. GRIFFIN 1977, 50 complains that the 'list of flowers is too long'. Yet, this flowery fragment could be seen as disarmingly sensuous – evocative, indeed, of other such descriptions of Aphrodite's power, such as Demodocus' song about Aphrodite's erotic entangling with Ares (Hom. *Od.* 8.266-366). As GRAZIOSI – HAUBOLD 2005, 83 comment: 'The underlying motif of this tour-de-force of epic performance is still theogonic, and thus "serious", in the sense that the union of two gods

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capture Briseis and Chryseis respectively. That last scene is particularly pointed since it may afford a glimpse of the 'Cypria's head-on engagement with the Iliadic tradition, so that these two women are no longer the object of argument over honour,<sup>87</sup> but are valued for their own sake under the power of love.<sup>88</sup>

Yet, we cannot be sure that Proclus himself does not have a hand in the construction of the 'Cypria's relationship to rival epics or epic traditions. We might, for example, think of these examples as deriving ultimately from a 'Cypria' tradition, but represented by Proclus with the Homeric poems in mind. Or, more radically still, we could understand Proclus self-consciously framing this 'Homeric' moment of Nestor telling stories with a gesture towards other epic traditions that failed to survive the test of time. The problem confronting us lies in part with Proclus' immersion in Homer and in part too with our inheritance of that view on to the epic world.

Throughout this section, I have tried to maintain a double vision through which we may read Proclus' summary, taking the claims of the 'Cypria' tradition seriously, while at the same time identifying areas where Proclus' influence may be felt on its transmission. If nothing else I hope to have shown the difficulty of talking about the 'Cypria' from its representation as a summary, a task that is all the more difficult given the dominance of the Homeric poems over Proclus' outlook and our own. It is perfectly reasonable to posit a 'Cypria' tradition that competed alongside and in competition with the two Homeric poems that have survived; but with only Proclus as our guide, it is impossible to reconstruct a pre-Homeric 'Cypria' with any assurance. Moreover, in terms of its form, style and even content Proclus' summary of the 'Cypria' displays signs of influence under the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; the 'Cypria' *only survives* because of its context in situ in the Homeric manuscript tradition. In my next and final section, I will attempt to capture a snapshot of the literary reception of the 'Cypria' in process by focussing on the embedded context of fragment one.

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always has potentially threatening implications.' In the Homeric hymn Aphrodite receives a duly, though playful, 'epic' treatment.

<sup>87</sup> Briseis is merely a 'prize' (γέρας, Hom. *Il.* 1.133, 138, 161). Later examples may suggest, however, that Achilles has formed some kind of emotional attachment to her (e.g. Hom. *Il.* 9.342). Even when the love-goddess stars in the *Iliad*, she does not come out of it smelling of roses. After having whisked Paris away from the battlefield to his boudoir and the bed of Helen, her return to battle is marked by a sharp encounter with Diomedes on the field of war from which she runs crying (Hom. *Il.* 5.343-417). See GRIFFIN 1977, 43-4.

<sup>88</sup> The 'Cypria's Aphroditean rereading of rival epics may also be seen from a later episode that Proclus recounts, the meeting of Achilles and Helen. This scene is immediately followed by Achilles holding back the ships, which directly contests the *Iliad's* placement of Odysseus in that role (Hom. *Il.* 2.155-210). GRIFFIN 1977, 44 unsurprisingly complains that the Iliadic mutiny 'has been given a romantic and un-Homeric motivation' and cites the *Catalogue's* gossip that Helen would have married Achilles had he not been a boy (Hes. frg. 204.87-92 M.-W.) as proof that their association was typical of 'later', less 'epic' reporting. Yet, as we have seen, the *Catalogue* lies at the interface of the Hesiodic and Homeric traditions. Moreover, the twelfth-century Homeric commentator and bishop of Thessaloniki, Eustathius, defines the instruments of the Διὸς βουλή specifically as *Helen and Achilles* (*Ad Iliadem* 1.33.15). MAYER 1996, 9 marries Helen to that other epic femme fatale, the Hesiodic Pandora, 'as an *aetion* for wars in general', which further suggests a close relationship to Achilles.

### The commentary

In the first two sections of this paper I have tried to do justice to the ‘Cypria’ tradition by paying close attention to the manner of its representation: in section one I interpreted its opening fragment in relation to the latest oral theory on epic narrative; in section two I assessed the ‘Cypria’ narrative as it survives for us in the form of Proclus’ summary. In both cases I was careful to acknowledge the difficulty of talking about a ‘Cypria’ tradition without recourse to Homeric epic, which for Proclus and for us stands as the sole surviving example of ancient Greek heroic epic. In fact, it is likely that the ‘Cypria’ as we have it has been formed by a long process of transmission through a culture dominated by Homeric epic; even its opening fragment potentially exhibits the influence of that tradition.

In the final section I turn to consider a third context for considering the ‘Cypria’: that is, the scholarly gloss or commentary. Crucially fragment one of the ‘Cypria’ comes down to us not in isolation but as a marginal gloss alongside the text of the *Iliad*. I argue that paying due attention to its embedded context is essential for assessing the way in which the ‘Cypria’ is being positioned for the reader of Homer and, therefore, for how it is being read by a particular interpretative community. Thus I identify several key features that relate the central ‘Cypria’ fragment to a world wide web in a similar manner to that we observed in section one above. But, using the remarkable appearance of Momos, I suggest that what had been potentially a cultural *koinê* spanning the Mediterranean world is now divided into East and West, and what had been essentially an oral tradition is now translated for a literary readership.

### Rambling ἱστορίαι

With some notable exceptions, the Homeric scholia – marginal notes and glosses on the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* – and, in particular, the D-scholia, have generally not attracted much interest from their modern-day counterparts,<sup>89</sup> to the extent that, in his editorial introduction to the Cambridge commentaries on the *Iliad*, Geoffrey Kirk could claim that the D-scholia ‘only rarely offer anything that is both new and valuable to the modern commentator’. Instead, the modern commentator again privileges originality, as Kirk ranks Aristarchus’ quest for ‘authenticity’<sup>90</sup> over the D-scholia’s ‘rambling ἱστορίαι’.<sup>91</sup> As Barbara Graziosi has recently shown, however, the stories that ancient commentators tell can shed light on the set of assumptions enjoyed in a particular cultural context.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, Antonios Rengakos characterises the D-scholia as ‘shot

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<sup>89</sup> ERBSE 1969-1988 omits the D-scholia from his monumental edition of Iliadic scholia. See also NAGY 1997.

<sup>90</sup> KIRK 1985, 42.

<sup>91</sup> ‘Their special contribution takes two main forms: either brief notes on single words... or long and often rambling ἱστορίαι from much later sources, not without signs of Aristarchan influence here and there, on matters of history, mythology and geography.’ KIRK 1985, 40.

<sup>92</sup> GRAZIOSI 2002. As BURGESS 2004, 344 notes in his review, however, Graziosi’s study tends to gloss over different eras even as she explores the significance of varying representations of Homer. In this paper I have tried to pay close attention to discrete cultural periods in order to frame more precisely the work of competing interpretative communities.

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through with learned (*i.e.* mainly Alexandrian and exegetical) material',<sup>93</sup> and suggests that Apollonius uses them for his *Argonautica*.<sup>94</sup> Not only does such a tactic smack of typical Hellenistic conceit – the poet looks up the critics to rewrite epic; it also indicates the specific influence of the D-scholia on interpreting epic. I suggest that, by paying close attention to the story our D-scholion relates, it will be possible to gain an important insight into the process of reception that significantly impacts on the interpretation of the 'Cypria'.

### *And the will of Zeus was being accomplished*

Fragment one of the 'Cypria' comes to us embedded in an related by the D-scholialist on *Iliad* 1.5, which I cite in full:<sup>95</sup>

ἄλλοι δὲ ἀπὸ ἱστορίας τινὸς εἶπον εἰρηκέναι τὸν Ὅμηρον. φασὶ γὰρ τὴν γῆν βαρουμένην ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπων πολυπληθείας, μηδεμιᾶς ἀνθρώπων οὔσης εὐσεβείας, αἰτῆσαι τὸν Δία κουφισθῆναι τοῦ ἄχθους· τὸν δὲ Δία πρῶτον μὲν εὐθύς ποιῆσαι τὸν Θηβαϊκὸν πόλεμον δι' οὗ πολλοὺς πάνυ ἀπώλεσεν· ὕστερον δὲ πάλιν, συμβούλῳ τῷ Μώμῳ χρησάμενος, ἦν Διὸς βουλὴν Ὅμηρος φησιν, ἐπειδὴ οἶός τε ἦν κεραυνοῖς ἢ κατακλυσμοῖς ἅπαντας διαφθεῖρειν· ὅπερ τοῦ Μώμου κωλύσαντος, ὑποθεμένου δὲ αὐτῷ γνώμας δύο, τὴν Θέτιδος θνητογαμίαν καὶ θυγατρὸς καλῆς γένναν, ἐξ ὧν ἀμφοτέρων πόλεμος Ἑλλησὶ τε καὶ βαρβάροις ἐγένετο, ἀφ' οὗ συνέβη κουφισθῆναι τὴν γῆν πολλῶν ἀναιρεθέντων. ἡ δὲ ἱστορία παρὰ Στασίῳ τῷ τὰ Κύπρια πεποιηκότι, εἰπόντι οὕτως·

ἦν ὅτε μυρία φύλα κατὰ χθόνα πλαζόμενα  
< > βαρυστέρνου πλάτος αἴης.

Ζεὺς δὲ ἰδὼν ἐλέησεν, καὶ ἐν πυκιναῖς πραπίδεσσιν  
σύνθετο † κουφίσαι παμβώτορα γαίης ἀνθρώπων,  
ρίπισαι πολέμου † μεγάλην ἔριν Ἰλιακοῖο,  
ὄφρα κενώσειεν θανάτου βάρους· οἱ δ' ἐνὶ Τροίῃ  
ἦρωες κτείνοντο, Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή.

καὶ τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῖς νεωτέροις ἱστορούμενα περὶ τῆς τοῦ Διὸς βουλῆς ἐστὶν τὰδε (*Cypria* frg. 1). ἡμεῖς δὲ φαμέν κατὰ τὴν Ἀριστάρχειον καὶ Ἀριστοφάνους δόξαν τὴν Θέτιδος εἶναι βουλήν, ἦν ἐν τοῖς ἐξῆς φησιν λιτανεύουσιν τὸν Δία ἐκδικῆσαι τὴν τοῦ παιδὸς ἀτιμίαν (A 508), καθάπερ καὶ τὰ κεφάλαια ἐν τῷ προοιμίῳ κεῖται τῆς ποιήσεως.

And others have said that Homer was speaking about some story. For they say that Earth, being weighed down by the multitude of mankind, there being no piety

<sup>93</sup> RENGAKOS 2001, 199. NAGY 1997 praises 'their tendency to preserve the relatively more learned versions of the ancient sources' (117) including 'the scholarly genre of the mythological *historia*' (118).

<sup>94</sup> RENGAKOS 2001, 199.

<sup>95</sup> The quotation uses the text of van Thiel. His edition of the D-scholia, from which this text derives, is available in preliminary form at <http://www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/ifa/vanthiel/index.html>.

among mankind, asked Zeus to be relieved of the burden. First Zeus immediately made the Theban war, by means of which he destroyed very large numbers; later again the Trojan one, after consulting with Momos in counsel, this being what Homer calls the plan of Zeus, when it was possible for him to destroy everyone with thunderbolts or floods. This very thing Momos prevented, and proposed to him the marriage of Thetis to a mortal and the birth of a beautiful daughter. From these two events war came about between Greeks and barbarians, resulting in the lightning of the earth as many were killed. The story is found in Stasinus who composed the *Cypria*:

There was a time when the countless races wandering  
The breadth of the deep-breasted earth.  
Zeus when he saw it took pity, and in his complex mind  
he resolved to relieve the all-nurturing earth of mankind's weight  
by fanning the great strife of the Iliadic war,  
so that he could empty the burden through death.

The heroes at Troy kept being killed, and the plan of Zeus was being accomplished. And these are the stories by the newer poets concerning the plan of Zeus. But we think, in line with the opinion of Aristarchus and Aristophanes, that it is the plan of Thetis, who in the following lines (*Iliad* 1.508), he says, by supplicating Zeus avenged the dishonour of her son, just as the summary has it in the proem of the poem.

The obvious, but fundamental, point to make straightaway is the status of the gloss: fragment one of the 'Cypria' only exists because the scholion draws a connection between the two texts via the phrase 'and the plan of Zeus was being accomplished' (*Il.* 1.5; 'Cypria' frg. 1.7). Already this flags a feature that will be critical for thinking about the scholion's influence on the 'Cypria': the highly resonant utterance, Διὸς δ' ἔτελείετο βουλή, is now unpacked by a written note. The textualisation of epic verse has important implications for its interpretation, as we shall see.

Further proof of the 'Cypria' being read alongside the Homeric epics may be gleaned by two further issues regarding the framing of the fragment. First, the scholion dismisses the evidence of the 'Cypria' for explaining the *Iliad*'s version of the 'plan of Zeus', in preference for the reading of Aristarchus and Aristophanes, the two Alexandrian authorities on Homer. This strategy involves pointing to evidence internal to the *Iliad*, interpreting Zeus's plan as a response to Thetis' supplication – the so-called 'plan of Thetis' that we discussed earlier. The point is crucial. It represents the scholion's refusal to read the *Iliad* or, for that matter, the 'Cypria' as part of a shared wider epic cosmos, signified by the resonant formula Διὸς δ' ἔτελείετο βουλή. Instead, he presents the 'Διὸς βουλή' of the *Iliad* as being explicable according to the *textual dynamics* of the *Iliad* alone, and ascribes the 'Cypria' to 'newer poets'. Here we see the process of separating the Greek heroic epic world into Homeric and post-Homeric blocs well under way.

Second, the scholion initially cites another parallel for 'the plan of Zeus'. After first suggesting that some suppose this to mean fate (οἱ μὲν τὴν εἰμαρμένην ἀπέδοσαν) the scholion continues, 'but others take it to mean the sacred prophetic oak of Zeus on

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the Dodonian mountain of Thesprotia, as Homer himself says in the *Odyssey*: “but [the king of the Thesprotians] said Odysseus had gone to Dodona to hear the plan of Zeus from the divine lofty-leaved oak” (ἄλλοι δὲ ἐξεδέξαντο δρῦν ἱερὰν μαντικὴν τοῦ Διὸς ἐν Δωδωναίῳ ὄρει τῆς Θεσπρωτίας, ὡς αὐτὸς Ὅμηρος λέγει ἐν Ὀδυσσεΐα. ‘τὸν δ’ ἐς Δωδώνην φάτο βήμεναι, ὄφρα θεοῖο ἐκ δρυὸς ὑψικόμοιο Διὸς βουλήν ἐπακούσαι’, *Od.* 14.327, 19.296). Yet, it is curious that *this* example from Odysseus’ Cretan tales should be the passage cited from the *Odyssey*, when at 11.297 the exact same unit of utterance as used in the *Iliad* and ‘Cypria’, ‘Διὸς δ’ ἐτελείετο βουλή’, occurs. The reason, I suggest, relates to a similar concern to explain points of interest in relation to the Homeric text. The full resonant phrase concerns two lesser-known mythological figures, Melampous and Iphicles, whereas the shorter ‘Διὸς βουλή’ directly applies to Odysseus himself. This story, then, draws a parallel not just between the two Homeric epics, but also between the two Homeric heroes, Achilles and Odysseus. Both of the scholion’s ‘stories’ are cited because of their relation to the *Iliad*, the *Iliad* not just as a poem but now as a text, down to a specific line that the scholion can cite.

In this way, the scholion appeals to the authority of the two Homeric poems and, furthermore, to their present manifestation as texts, by means of which specific passages may be indicated to the reader. We are now in a very different world from that of an oral tradition with competing multiform traditions and units of utterance resonating within a wider epic cosmos. Two other key indicators of this different cultural context may be observed, which underscore the ‘Cypria’ tradition’s transformation into a fragment dependent on the Homeric poems for its survival. They are the motif of natural disasters and the figure of Momos.

### *Thunderbolts or flood*

Our scholion does not simply quote what is thought to be the opening of the ‘Cypria’; he also narrates a story about the earth complaining that she is overburdened by mankind. As we saw above, that motif occurs in the ‘Cypria’ fragment and resonates within a wider epic world that potentially extends to epic narratives from the Near East. Similarly, Zeus’s subsequent plan to relieve that burden by reducing the numbers of mankind is related in the scholion’s story, the opening fragment of the ‘Cypria’ and various Near Eastern epics. Thus far, the scholion’s story maps onto the ‘Cypria’ tradition, as far as we can tell from the opening fragment, with little significant difference.

The scholion’s story, however, is far more detailed about Zeus’s plan than the fragmentary remains of the ‘Cypria’ suggest, and introduces several additional features. First, there is a moral dimension to *Operation Gaia Freedom*: Earth complains not only about the numbers of mankind but also about their impiety: men have behaved badly.<sup>96</sup> Second, Zeus has several options that he can draw upon in response, only one of which is the Trojan War. Initially he causes the Theban War; then, after musing about

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<sup>96</sup> This motif, if we recall, occurs in P.Oxy. 3829 ii 9, which is used by scholars to emend Proclus’ text to read ‘Themis’ rather than ‘Thetis’. See n. 69 above.

deploying natural forces at his disposal – the lightning bolt or deluge – he causes a second war, the Troy story.

As scholars have noticed, both motifs – mankind’s impiety and Zeus’s recourse to natural weapons for diminishing mankind’s numbers – occur in the Near Eastern epic of *Gilgamesh*.<sup>97</sup> The *Standard Babylonian Version* reads (XI 182-5):

Instead of arranging a flood, let a lion arise and diminish the peoples.  
Instead of arranging a flood, let a wolf arise and diminish the peoples  
Instead of arranging a flood, let a famine be arranged and st[rike] the land.  
Instead of arranging a flood, let Erra arise and strike the peoples.

This episode describes Ea’s reproach to Enlil for reducing mankind’s number by sending a flood, since a flood fails to distinguish guilty from innocent. As we noted above, we must use evidence from Near Eastern epic with due caution, given its own unique circumstances of transmission: it cannot simply be assumed that these texts, and in particular the *Gilgamesh* epic, were widely disseminated in their own cultures, let alone translated for others. Nevertheless, using oral theory, it is possible to conceive of such linguistic phrases, motifs and story-patterns as being part of an epic ‘language’, shared by different groups within a broad Mediterranean network or *koinê*, as Burkert has coined it. As such, the episode from *Gilgamesh* quoted above may be considered admissible evidence for supplementing the scholion’s gloss: mankind’s impiety and Zeus’s recourse to natural weapons enjoy an audience beyond the imagination of one scholion. Even so, it is far from evident that these features were part of the ‘Cypria’ tradition. The question regarding their citation by the scholion remains.

Before considering that problem, proof that the scholion or, rather, his source may have introduced these motifs from a source external to the ‘Cypria’ tradition comes from a strikingly similar gloss on the same line of the *Iliad* (1.5) in an anonymous marginal commentary, the *Codex Baroccianus*. The details of an over-burdened earth, an impious mankind, and a Zeus being prevented by Momos from killing all with his thunderbolts, confirm the close relationship of the two passages; yet, the narrative of this anonymous gloss has been greatly expanded to take in yet another story (162):<sup>98</sup>

τότε ὁ Ζεὺς πολὺς ὑετὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ χέας, τὰ πλείστα μέρη τῆς Ἑλλάδος κατέκλυσεν... Δευκαλίων δὲ διὰ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν τῇ λάρνακι φερόμενος ἐφ’ ἡμέρας ἐννέα καὶ νύκτας τοσαύτας τῷ Παρνασῷ περίσχει.

At that time Zeus sent a deluge from the heavens and flooded the greater part of Greece... Deucalion, carried on the water in his ark for nine days and nights, held fast to Parnassus.

This commentator does not simply mention the flood in passing as one of Zeus’s (untried) options; in this case, Zeus does end up sending a flood. As such this story fills

<sup>97</sup> For example, WEST 1997, 491. I cite his translation of the *Gilgamesh* passage.

<sup>98</sup> The full text (of which this is only a brief extract) is given in CRAMER 1837, 405.

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out our scholion's account by encompassing Deucalion's flood as well in an attempt, it seems, at filling in still more of the background to the Homeric poems. Here we have the entire mythicscape recorded in a manner that recalls the opening of the epic to end all epics, Ovid's *Metamorphosis*.<sup>99</sup>

Quite clearly, this example at least shows a writer's attempt at comprehensiveness that stretches far beyond the poetic dynamics of any particular epic tradition, such as that of the *Iliad* or of a 'Cypria', which sought to project its own unique version of the Trojan War, even if we grant the common assumption that the 'Cypria' tried to tell it all.<sup>100</sup> This is an important point. Given this anonymous commentator's expansion of the story, it is equally possible that the motifs of an impious mankind and Zeus's options are imported via our scholion's story into the 'Cypria' tradition. At one level this tactic recalls the oral formulaic approach that I used above for thinking about fragment one of the 'Cypria', in the sense that it logs the 'Cypria' onto a *World Wide Web*. But there is a critical difference too. As Foley suggests, in a passage quoted above, the oral tradition works so that it does *not* have to tell the whole story at any one sitting or in any one representation. Now, it seems, the scholar must.

Besides, our scholion insists that this was *not* the story the *Iliad* told: the possibility of resonance within a wider epic cosmos is raised only to be rejected in favour of a reading self-contained within the *Iliad* itself. The epic cosmos is now, significantly, divided. It is time to consult Momos and consider why.

### *Momos advises Zeus*

While some scholars pass over Momos's sudden appearance,<sup>101</sup> others, such as Walter Burkert labels the scene 'remarkable'. He searches for an answer to this enigma in Near Eastern epic:

What is even more curious is that, at the beginning of *Enuma Elish*, Apsu, 'the first one, the begetter', distressed by the noise of the younger gods, who are depriving him of his sleep, makes plans to kill them all, and doing so he has an advisor, Mummu, 'giving counsel to Apsu'. Is Momos the same as Mummu? If so, the Greek text would present a contamination of motifs from *Atrahasis* and *Enuma Elish*.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> See Ov. *Met.* 1.253-9, where Jupiter rules out using lightning in favour of a flood. The *Old Testament* represents Yahweh responding to mankind's impiety which, WEST 1997, 491 argues, 'resembles the reason given in the Graeco-Roman version by those sources that give a reason' – and, we might add, the story our scholion records.

<sup>100</sup> The suspicion that the 'Cyclic Epics' tried to tell the whole story is the common criticism levelled against the 'Cypria' by scholars, ranging from Aristotle (Arist. *Poet.* 1459<sup>a</sup>37-<sup>b</sup>7) to GRIFFIN 1977.

<sup>101</sup> So WEST 1997, 481 n. 125 comments: 'In the *Cypria*, according to Proclus' summary, Zeus's advisor was Themis, not Momos'.

<sup>102</sup> BURKERT 1992, 103. The references are to *Enuma Elish* I 47 and to *Atrahasis* I 352-7 (quoted above on pp. 43-4).

Burkert's speculation presents a good example of the strategies classical scholars employ when dealing with Near Eastern sources and, as such, bears out our earlier cautionary remarks. Burkert proceeds from a common motif – a god's plan to kill mankind – via some linguistic juggling, to the conclusion that the Greek text derives directly from no less than two Near Eastern epics; there is little respect for each narrative's individual integrity. It should be noted that Burkert is careful to frame his analysis as overtly speculative,<sup>103</sup> nevertheless, I find this explanation unconvincing for two reasons. First, it suggests that the scholion's story simply takes an 'original' Near Eastern myth and applies it to a Greek context. Not only is any external evidence lacking for such any literary appropriation across these two cultures,<sup>104</sup> it overlooks the role of Momos as Zeus's special advisor in the host text; that is to say, the function of the appropriation. This brings me onto my second point: Momos has a literary career in our Greek sources that could shed light on his role in our story.

Conceptually 'momos' ('blame') is fundamental to the ancient Greek poetics and, in particular, to the lyric tradition, in which poets employ various strategies to ward it off.<sup>105</sup> As a personification, however, Momos, born as the fatherless son of Night in the Hesiodic *Theogony*,<sup>106</sup> does not reappear until the Hellenistic period,<sup>107</sup> with a bang, at the very end of Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* (113):

χαῖρε ἀναξ· ὁ δὲ Μῶμος, ἴν' ὁ Φθόνος ἔνθα νέοιτο.

Hail, Lord [Apollo]; but Momos – let him go where Envy dwells.

Given that the poet, through his patron Apollo, had previously concentrated his attack on Envy, a question mark hangs over Momos's sudden appearance. Adolf Köhnken suggests that: 'What Phthonos is secretly complaining about to Apollo now, Momos is likely to advance publicly against the hymn later on',<sup>108</sup> which presents an intriguing scenario of the kind we might think typical of the scholarly Callimachus. At the end of his version of a Homeric hymn, Callimachus anticipates not only his text's reception but also its reception in the light of that Homeric tradition: inspired by the

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<sup>103</sup> It should also be recorded that, at the presentation of this paper at the VIU seminar in May 2005, Walter Burkert cast further doubt on this earlier proposal. I am much indebted to the discussion that took place at the seminar and, in particular, to insightful comments from Walter Burkert, Ettore Cingano, Irad Malkin, Piotr Michalowski and Dirk Obbink.

<sup>104</sup> There has been considerable debate too among Near Eastern scholars about the identity of Mummu: see HEIDEL 1948 for a discussion. He associates Mummu closely with Apsû and Tiâmat as, respectively, son, father and mother.

<sup>105</sup> See, for example, Pind. *Pyth.* 1.81-2, *Ol.* 6.74; Bacchyl. 13.199-209; Timoth. *Pers.* 202-20.

<sup>106</sup> Hes. *Theog.* 214.

<sup>107</sup> With the exception of a brief cameo in Plato (*Resp.* 6.487<sup>a</sup>). When Momos reappears in Hellenistic literature he reflects this dual heritage. As the representative of blame or carping criticism, he acts out the various poetic strategies employed by the lyric poets for warding off blame. As the representation of a god, he signifies a return to Hesiodic origins. See, for example, Callim. frg. 70; *Anth. Pal.* 9.356, 11.321, 16.265, 16.266; epig. frg. 393; Babr. 59, 455.

<sup>108</sup> KÖHNKEN 1981, 421.

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literary pretensions of Envy, who uses the 'vogueish metaphor' of Homer as the sea,<sup>109</sup> readers may end up *blaming* the poet if they do not consider his hymn to have been long (that is to say 'Homeric') enough for praising Apollo.<sup>110</sup> Here, in Hellenistic times, Momos is reborn as Callimachus' worst reader – a critic, if you will.<sup>111</sup> Can we make use of this representation of Momos for thinking about our scholion's story?

Given his absence from both Proclus' summary and 'Cypria' *fragment one*, Momos's presence in our scholion's story baffles Marks:

The *Kypria* eschews linkage between the Trojan and Theban wars, omits human impiety as a motivating factor, and denies or does not know a Zeus who would absent-mindedly jeopardize the universe and a Momos who would dissuade Zeus from this path and be the 'real' author of the Trojan war...<sup>112</sup>

Like Burkert, Marks credits Momos's role to another 'tradition' in which Zeus *really* does shoot his bolt and drown mankind.<sup>113</sup> Yet, there is more at stake than a Zeus 'absent-mindedly' jeopardising the universe, as suggested by Marks' own passing remark glossing Momos as 'the "real" author'. This description points to our discussion of Momos's rebirth as a critic in Hellenistic literature. The reference is highly pertinent. In response to moaning earth and mankind's impiety Zeus arms his Weapons of Mass Destruction. This tactic, as we have seen, represents the typical divine response in Near Eastern epic. In Homeric epic, however, and in the Hesiodic *Catalogue*, the Διὸς βουλή always starts a *war* among men – namely, the Trojan War. That is what happens here too – *but only after Momos's intervention*. Acting as Zeus's special advisor (a role, interestingly, he fulfils time and again in Lucian),<sup>114</sup> Momos differentiates the archaic Greek epic tradition from corresponding, rival Near Eastern mythical narratives.

Therefore, the scholion's story not only attempts to supply all the background someone would need for reading the *Iliad*, given that the 'resonance' of epic language would now have been lost to an audience of *readers*. It also sets Zeus up in the role of

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<sup>109</sup> 'To show off his qualifications as a literary critic', suggests TRAIL 1998, 221, Phthonos 'refers to Homer allusively, using the vogueish metaphor that compares him to the sea'.

<sup>110</sup> BING 1993, 193 argues that 'poetics of exclusion', when the speaker bars the impious and Apollo expels Envy, turns out 'to be self-selecting: whether we see the god or not *depends on us*' (emphasis in original). For the expression 'poetics of exclusion', see BASSI 1989.

<sup>111</sup> As WILLIAMS 1978, 96 suggests: 'In a specifically literary context μῶμος is criticism of published work, and poets sometimes try to strike a pre-emptive blow against it.'

<sup>112</sup> MARKS 2002, 11. He notes that Momos' role here may refer to a tradition in which Zeus, in anger at humanity, destroys the universe in an *ekpyrosis* of lightning (p. 11 n. 31).

<sup>113</sup> BURKERT 1992, 102 concludes: 'We are clearly dealing with two competing versions'. A similar position may be found outlined in PEARSON 1917, 77: 'The only trace of his active participation in the events of the heroic saga is to be found in schol. A Hom. A 5... The abstract of the *Cypria* given by Proclus... is too brief to prove that Momos is substituted by the scholiast for Themis: but whether he appeared in the epic or not – and the scholiast certainly implies that he did – the story of his being taken into council is unquestionably old...'

<sup>114</sup> See, especially, Luc. *Iupp. Trag.* 19-31, 43; *Dial. D.* WHITMARSH 2001, 253 suggests that Momos is just one of the poet's alter egos, 'tantalizingly close to the figure of Lucian, but distant enough to frustrate attempts to identify the two'.

the Homeric poet as an ‘author’ – *the author* – of the epic cosmos and casts Momos as a critic – *the critic* – who finds fault with him.

Let us re-examine the scholion’s story in the light of this proposal. Zeus’s initial response to Earth’s complaints is to start a war. But this war is the one at Thebes, an epic tradition to rival that of the Trojan saga, which again points to the story’s attempt at comprehensiveness. Having presumably not succeeded in delivering enough collateral damage, Zeus turns to other means: he primes his lightning bolt and makes ready for sending a deluge. But Momos stops him. Marks suggests that Momos does this in order to prevent Zeus from jeopardising the universe; but there is little evidence for that concern in our sources where the flood motif does occur. Rather, we must seek an alternative explanation.

One striking feature of the subsequent narrative is the story’s description of the Trojan War as a conflict between ‘*Greeks and barbarians*’. Such nomenclature marks a significant departure from the language of epic, in which the Greeks are known collectively as ‘Achaean’, ‘Danaans’ or ‘Argives’, while their opponents are named after their place of origin, such as the ‘Trojans’, and *not* as an ideological ‘other’. Rather, the description of ‘Greeks and barbarians’ recalls Herodotus’ *History*, and projects a post-Persian War situation retrospectively onto the events of epic.<sup>115</sup> I earlier described a world of epic that extended beyond Homer to encompass Near Eastern narratives too. That oral tradition, which does not respect boundaries of, for example, language, conceptions of divinity or even social structure, is now reread in the light of the experience when these worlds collided. The world that was a *koinê* now fractures along the fault-lines of ‘us’ versus ‘them’.

In this context, Momos’s advice takes on added significance. Momos stops Zeus from deploying lightning or a flood, and instead advises him to start a war. As we have seen, both motifs occur with frequency in various Near Eastern narratives, but are generally absent from Greek epic, at least in terms of primary story-patterns.<sup>116</sup> Yet, war certainly does characterise Greek heroic epic. From this perspective, when Momos stops Zeus from using natural forces to lessen mankind’s numbers in favour of human conflict, in effect he is authorising Greek heroic epic: Momos, working within a tradition of blame stretching back to Homeric epic itself,<sup>117</sup> prevents Zeus, the author of the cosmos, from messing up and doing non-Greek epic. The choice of Momos, the god of censure, as special advisor to Zeus is, therefore, highly pointed. Through this

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<sup>115</sup> ‘Description of the Trojan war as a conflict between Greeks and “*barbaroi*”, echoed in ps.-Apollod. *Epit.* 3.1.1 as “Europe” vs. “Asia”, clearly reflects a “re-contextualization” of the mythical conflict in terms of the historical antagonism between Greece and Persia; cf. Herodotus 1.1-4’: MARKS 2002, 10 n. 28.

<sup>116</sup> I have in mind the *Iliad*’s allusive account of a flood, projected into its future, at the centre of its narrative (Hom. *Il.* 12.1-34). See n. 55 above.

<sup>117</sup> For blame and praise as fundamental to ancient Greek poetics, see, for example: NAGY 1979; MACKIE 1996.

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persona, the story points to a sophisticated critique of epic *and* a self-conscious awareness of working within a tradition of literary criticism.<sup>118</sup>

In this last section, I have examined at some length the embedded context of 'Cypria' fragment one: I want to draw out three points that suggest far-reaching consequences for interpreting epic. First, the scholion's framing story indicates a new way of conceiving epic that is fundamentally *literary*. According to oral formulaic theory, not all the story has to be told: units of utterance resonate within a wider epic cosmos to give added significance to any particular passage or even phrase. Now, however, the story is everything; or, rather, it all gets written down for a reader unfamiliar with that world. Next, there appears to be an ideological split. From the potential of a cultural *koinê* for epic narrative, we have now entered into a brave new world order, in which the epic cosmos fractures: Greek epic of war and human endeavour is set against Near Eastern epic of direct interference from the gods in the form of natural disasters.<sup>119</sup>

Lastly, we might consider the repercussions for the two Greek epic traditions, the *Iliad* and the 'Cypria'. In the story cited, Momos directs Zeus to authorise Greek epic, which means a war; then the opening lines of the 'Cypria' are quoted. This suggests that the 'Cypria' may be thought of as a good example of a (Greek) epic narrative on war. But, crucially, the scholion pointedly rejects the story for thinking about Zeus's plan in the *Iliad*. Ultimately, the motifs of the overburdened earth, a Zeus who would use natural weapons, a special advisor – none of this is considered relevant for reading Homer. The *Iliad*'s plan of Zeus is *not* part of this world; Homeric epic is subject to its own set of rules. It leaves the 'Cypria', however, associated with a story that would attempt to tell everything, an association from which it is still struggling to escape.

### Conclusion

In this paper, I have explored the epic tradition of the 'Cypria' through its opening fragment and summary representation. Previous scholarship has tended to undervalue both the 'Epic Cycle' and the 'D-scholion' in the pursuit of the originality of Homer or

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<sup>118</sup> This allusive and highly knowing rereading of the tradition, and in particular the 'Διὸς βουλή', is a familiar tactic from Hellenistic times and suggests an Alexandrian context for the D-scholion's story. FANTUZZI – HUNTER 2004, 97, for example, describe how Apollonius draws on cyclic epic, and in particular the 'Cypria', in his reworking of epic: 'It was the same poem [the *Cypria*] which was the principal epic source for the character of the blasphemous Idas, who appears from time to time in the *Argonautica* to express his displeasure, rather like a frustrated reader who finds himself in a poem different from the one he expected'. Momos, like the figure of Idas in Apollonius, reacts like a frustrated reader to the author, Zeus. Similarly, FEENEY 1991, 58 comments that in contrast to Homeric epic, which parades (however allusively) its Διὸς βουλή 'Apollonius' proem has nothing explicit on show'.

<sup>119</sup> That is not to say that Near Eastern epics are not interested in issues of mortality: one need only cast a cursory glance over the narrative of *Gilgamesh* to see that it is far from the case. Rather, we are talking about cultural perceptions. In a later Greek context, such as when Asia Minor becomes Hellenised, it is possible that a growing awareness of cultural difference led to such a distinction being drawn (by Greek scholars) between Greek (meaning Homeric) epic and Near Eastern stories. We have been living that difference ever since.

an original 'Cypria'. Taking instead the broad literary and cultural perspective encouraged by the VIU seminar, I have tried to investigate two claims: first, that it is impossible to get back to an 'original' text; second, that the changing form of the 'Cypria' reveals the influence of interpretative practices of later communities, working within a world that is now dominated by Homeric epic.

In section one, we looked, as best we could, at the fragment in its own terms. I argued that its language, motifs and story-pattern resonate with a wider epic cosmos. Even at this point of our study, however, we were forced to concede that its text might show signs of Homeric influence. It does not seem that we are able to return to a 'Cypria' untouched by and independent of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

In section two, we considered Proclus' summary, which for us represents the 'Cypria' narrative as a whole. I suggested that the 'Cypria' makes sense within a wider world represented by the Hesiodic *Theogony* and Homeric *Iliad*. But we also recognised that such a strategy already and inevitably (re)uses the Homeric poems for interpreting the 'Cypria': in terms of its style, form and, arguably, its content, Proclus' summary betrays the influence of Homer. While, no doubt, much of the material Proclus cites belonged to now lost epic traditions, and perhaps even to a specific tradition of which the 'Cypria' was once part, its epitome by Proclus critically recasts it in relation to, and at the service of, reading Homer.

In my final section, we turned the spotlight from the fragmentary text to its embedded context: our 'D-scholion' illustrates one way in which the 'Cypria's' interpretation has been framed by its reception. On the one hand, the scholion only quotes the story, in which the 'Cypria' fragment is preserved, because of its potential use for thinking about Homer; the 'Cypria' fundamentally is not a poem in its own right. On the other hand, the 'Cypria' fragment is transmitted as one element of a much broader tradition that now has to be spelt out for readers. We may be able to imagine that the 'Cypria' had a role to play in the epic cosmos; but now it is used for filling in the background to Homer; now the whole tradition gets written down. As a result, the 'Cypria' gets assimilated into that wider tradition, and its particular, unique focus gets lost from view forever. Instead, warped by the gravity exerted on the cosmos by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the 'Cypria' tradition ends up orbiting around these two 'stars' of epic hexameter.

Returning to an 'archetype' holds a strong attraction and represents a valid scholarly enterprise; but equally significant are its later manifestations and reception(s). Even had such readings not been part of an 'original' narrative called the 'Cypria' – if there had been such a formalised representation of that story – they suggest how later readers working within a Homeric tradition read the 'Cypria'. Where recent scholarship has explored how Hellenistic poets adopted criticism and responses to criticism as a poetic strategy, our present example seems to reverse that motif: here we have the prose critic, the humble commentator on epic, turning poetic strategies against themselves to offer a highly sophisticated and pointed critique of the Homeric epic tradition. In doing so,

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however, he may have helped to condemn one of the rival narratives, the 'Cypria', to a fragment.<sup>120</sup>

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