

## XIX.—The Divine Nature of Poetry in Antiquity

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Fourteenth century Italy witnessed many debates on poetry in which the opposition based its objections chiefly on two notions: that poetry deals with falsehood, and that it serves no useful purpose. The apologists — mainly Mussato, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Salutati — founded their principal defense on the argument that since poetry is of divine origin, it is above reproach, and so equated it with Theology, Queen of the Seven Arts. After reading these debates one begins to wonder exactly what history this idea of the divine nature of poetry had in antiquity and whether it was ever used as an argument in defense of poetry. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to trace the history of this concept in early antiquity, and to determine what the poets as creatures "light, sacred, and winged," in the words of Plato (*Ion* 534B), conceived their task to be.

Very early in Greek literature we find that the idea of divinity in connection with poets is already established, and that this divinity stems from the poet's direct relationship with the gods and from his relationship with other men who are *θεῖοι* in themselves. As the sceptre of the king comes from Zeus<sup>1</sup> and the fillets are conferred upon holy men by Apollo,<sup>2</sup> so, too, the words of the poet come from the gods.<sup>3</sup> The *aretê* of each is bestowed and protected by special divine dispensation, and Homer so grants when he applies to king, seer, priest, and poet the terms *δῖοι*, *θεῖοι*, *διοτρεφέες*, *διογενέες*.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 2.101 ff., 197; 9.38, 99. *Il.* 2.197 is the key passage: "Their honor (*τιμή*) is from Zeus, and Zeus loves them." Of interest in this connection is the remark in Pausanias 9.41.1 that of all the works of art attributed to Hephaestus by the poets, none is authentic except the sceptre of Agamemnon. The translations used in this paper, unless otherwise stated, are from the Loeb editions.

<sup>2</sup> *Il.* 1.14, 28, 373.

<sup>3</sup> *Il.* 2.484 ff.; *Od.* 1.10; 8.44, 64, 488, 498; 17.518; 22.347.

<sup>4</sup> *Il.* 1.176; 2.196, 445; *Od.* 1.65, 196, 284; 2.27, 233, 394; 3.121; 4.17, 621, 691; 8.87, 539; 16.252; 17.359; 23.133, 143; *et al.* *δῖος*, of course, does not always suggest divinity, but it is always used to point out some excellence, especially in kings and princes. The following terms are also found: *ἀνρίθιοι*, *Od.* 1.21; 20.369; 21.254; *θεοειδέες*, *Od.* 1.113; 3.343; *θεοεικέλοι*, *Od.* 8.256. It seems fair to include passages which refer to Telemachus, since he is sole heir to the throne and in his father's absence

Orpheus is said to be a lyre player "by grace of Apollo," as kings are said to be ἐκ Διὸς not because they are his sons but because they hold their kingship from him.<sup>5</sup> To be sure, the ties of *φιλία* between sovereign rulers and champions, whether Greek or Trojan, and the gods are more apparent;<sup>6</sup> Hector, for example, is dear to Zeus because he shields the towers of Troy through a combination of valor, goodness, and piety.<sup>7</sup> Yet this *philia* exists too for the poet if only because he glorifies by his recitals the exploits of his king, and thereby adds brilliance to his *kydos*. This concept receives a more profound and searching analysis from later poets, but especially from Hesiod and Pindar, who established more solidly the relationship between poetry and good government. All reaffirm the close kinship between king, seer, priest, and poet, and the last three, besides their own proper meed of divinity, bask in the divinity of their king.

The first indication of the divine nature of poetry is evinced in mythological and legendary sources which preserve an early belief in the actual creation of poetry by one or other of the gods. Familiar to all — and yet I must repeat it here — is the story of Hermes<sup>8</sup> who "all on a summer's day" was born, left his cradle to construct the lyre out of a tortoise shell and linen threads, and to steal the herd of Apollo. At nightfall he returned to his cradle, wrapped the fragrant swaddling clothes about him and snuggled deep within their soft warmth. So Apollo found him and was bent on punishing his younger brother, but when Hermes took up the lyre and touched each string, "Phoebus Apollo laughed for joy; for the sweet throb of the marvellous music went to his heart, and a soft longing took hold on his soul as he listened" (*Hymn. Hom.* 4.420–423). The two brothers then struck a covenant whereby Apollo was to

performs many of the duties proper to the head of the house. Dolopion (*Il.* 5.78), priest of the river Scamander, and Onetor (*Il.* 16.605), priest of Zeus, are said to be honored among the people ὡς θεοί. See L. Bieler, *ΘΕΙΟΣ ANHP, Das Bild des Göttlichen Menschen in Spätantike und Frühchristentum* (Wien 1935) 1.9 ff. Bieler concludes that a *theios anēr* is a person of overwhelming ability, beloved of the gods and intermediary between gods and men, and at the same time their counselor and guide.

<sup>5</sup> Pindar, *Pyth.* 4.176. The scholia (2.139.15 Drachmann) explain ἐκ Διὸς as follows: ὅτι τὸ βασιλεύειν ἐκ Διὸς ἔχουσιν.

<sup>6</sup> See F. Dirlmeier, "ΘΕΟΦΙΛΙΑ, ΦΙΛΟΘΕΙΑ," *Philologus* 90 (1935) 57–77, 176–193, esp. 64 ff.

<sup>7</sup> *Il.* 8.493; 10.49; 13.674; 15.461.

<sup>8</sup> *Hymn. Hom.* 4. Also in Ps.-Eratosth. *Catasterismi* 24 in *Mythographi Graeci* (Leipzig 1897) 3.1.

keep the lyre, and Hermes was to become lord over all birds of omen, grim-eyed lions and boars, tender of the herds and flocks, and was appointed messenger to Hades. It is fitting that Hermes, with all the cunning and skill he displays for technical matters, should construct the lyre, but more fitting for it to become the property of Apollo, who is skilled in good, well-ordered utterance (*ibid.* 479) and can learn whatever he pleases (*ibid.* 474). The invention of the flute out of deer's horns is attributed to Athena, who was inspired to imitate the sounds of the wild cries made by the Gorgons and the hissing of their snaky locks when she killed Medusa.<sup>9</sup> But her grimaces when she played produced such merriment among the other gods that she hurled away her pipes, which the satyr Marsyas picked up. But this instrument, too, came into the hands of Apollo, after his famous contest with Marsyas.<sup>10</sup> Whoever were the original inventors of the several instruments, the concept of Apollo as god of poetry became fixed;<sup>11</sup> the lyre, along with the silver bow and quiver, was thereafter commonly regarded as a property of Apollo, and he was so portrayed in art and literature.

But the figures more closely identified as the guardians of poetry were the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne,<sup>12</sup> the Muses, deities belonging to the new dynasty of Mount Olympus along with the Hours, and the Graces, Eunomia, Dike, and Eirenè, all born after "the blessed gods had finished their toil and had settled by force their struggle for honor with the Titans" (Hesiod, *Theog.* 881-2). A new era was launched among the Olympian gods, who had emerged from anarchy glorious and triumphant, and were now

<sup>9</sup> Pind. *Pyth.* 12.6 ff. and Plut. *De cohib. ira* 6.

<sup>10</sup> For the story of Marsyas, see Apollod. 1.4.2; Paus. 1.24.1; Ovid, *Met.* 6.382 ff.; *Fasti* 6.695; Diod. Sic. 3.59.

<sup>11</sup> See *Il.* 1.603; *Od.* 8.488 and Hesiod, *Theog.* 94-95.

<sup>12</sup> It is easy to understand why Mnemosyne should be nominated mother of the Muses, for she was a very ancient figure belonging to the dim beginnings of Greek theology, at the time when Earth and Heaven first embraced (Hes. *Theog.* 45, 135). Wherever the corpus of knowledge must be presented in the memory, we discover that it is usually couched in poetic form, and thus knowledge, poetry, and memory are inseparable during the oral stages of societies. Caesar, for example, relates that among the Druids, religious and secular knowledge was preserved in poetry orally recited (*BGall.* 6.13 f.). Cf. also Cic. *Div.* 1.90. Memory was an indispensable faculty for the early Greek bard, and, along with thought, became a vital force in the creative process of poetry. In time the figure of Mnemosyne lost her importance, but the process remained as a cardinal principle in the course of composition, and was numbered by the rhetoricians, for example, as one of the five qualities essential for the orator. See J. A. Notopoulos, "Mnemosyne in Oral Literature," *TAPA* 69 (1938) 465-493.

ready to give their existence fuller meaning and brighter beauty. It was at this time that the civic virtues were born, and such excellences as promote the harmony and integrity of a group and enrich and gladden its spirit. Here belong the Muses who by their gifts enable the prince of a people to speak true judgments with gracious words (*ibid.* 80 ff.) and who bring solace to one whose soul is heavy with sorrow and grief (*ibid.* 98–103). Among other boons, their heavenly song offers mirth, love, and sweet sleep.<sup>13</sup>

To be sure, the figures of Apollo, Mnemosyne, and the Muses are the product of primitive imagination; but they are nonetheless personifications which offer vital evidence of certain feelings and attitudes entertained by the Greeks concerning poetry. Their most primitive theology taught them that poetry was sprung from the gods and originally created for the pleasure and enchantment of the gods.<sup>14</sup> It was then given to mortals, through a few chosen spirits, the first of whom were sons of gods sent among men to chant the glorious deeds of mortals of old and to sing the story of the blessed gods (*Theog.* 100 f.). The names usually advanced as the first poets on earth are Orpheus, Linus, Pamphos, Thamyras, Philamon, Musaeus, and Eumolpus. In speaking of these early poets, it became quite common to reduce them to a trio, Orpheus, Musaeus, and Linus, who acquired the greatest prestige among the Greeks as the earliest teachers and theologians.<sup>15</sup> Tradi-

<sup>13</sup> *Hymn. Hom.* 4.449. Throughout antiquity, the Muses symbolized the more spiritual aspects of cultural life. See E. R. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern 1948) 233. The part they played in the history of philosophic thought, especially in the Pythagorean school, has been traced by P. Boyancé, *Le Culte des Muses chez les Philosophes Grecs* (Paris 1937), esp. 93–131. See also A. Delatte, *Littérature Pythagoricienne* (Paris 1915), who discusses the Pythagorean doctrine that poetry and dance, as manifestations of the transcendent music of the spheres, play a calming role in the world of human passions and therefore have an important share in leading man toward divine wisdom. Since knowledge and wisdom resided in the Muses, they were invoked not only by the poets, but by philosophers and by men of the state. Empedocles, for example, asks the Muses for knowledge that divine law deems proper for mortal men to know and that is on the side of *eusebia* (Frag. B 3 D.-K.); he calls upon Calliope when he begins his story of the gods (Frag. B 131). Solon prays to the goddesses for several goods, among them intellectual understanding. See A. W. Allen, "Solon's Prayer to the Muses," *TAPA* 80 (1949) 50, and F. Solmsen, *Hesiod and Aeschylus* (Ithaca 1949) 107 ff. On the number of the Muses and the significance of each, see Solmsen, *ibid.* 38 ff. and O. Falter, *Der Dichter und sein Gott bei den Griechen und Römern* (Würzburg 1934) 37–50. Pausanias (9.29.1–5) also discusses the various traditions as to the number of the Muses.

<sup>14</sup> *Hymn. Hom.* 3.188 ff.; Hes. *Theog.* 40 ff., 51.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Aristoph. *Frogs* 1030–1036; Plato, *Prot.* 316D; *Rep.* 363C–E, 364DE; *Ion* 536B. Clement of Alexandria called Orpheus *ἱεροφάντης καὶ ποιητής* (*Protr.* 7.63) and Moses the same thing (2.21).

tion varies as to the exact genealogy of these poets, but a god or a muse is usually assigned as one of the parents;<sup>16</sup> Orpheus, for example, is considered the son of Apollo and Calliope, or the son of Calliope and Oeagrus,<sup>17</sup> and is in turn mentioned as the ancestor of both Homer and Hesiod.<sup>18</sup> There is also extant the legend of how Apollo presented his lyre to Orpheus, and after his death, it was placed by Zeus in heaven in honor of the Muses.<sup>19</sup> It was the Muses, too, who mourned and buried Orpheus, so that every important event of his life is connected with some divinity or other.<sup>20</sup> The merits of Orpheus were hardly those ordinarily associated with the hero, but were of a kind which made him a leader in spiritual matters — his love of peace and harmony, and his inclination for the more civilized aspects of life.<sup>21</sup> Diodorus (4.25) tells us that Orpheus was foremost among the Greeks in culture, music, poetry, and theology. In him were vested all the powers which were later commonly attributed to poetry, from its civilizing influence to its capacity for emotional catharsis.<sup>22</sup> It is not surprising, then, to find the Greeks, already so richly endowed by nature with a deep poetic instinct and aesthetic sensibility, from their earliest beginnings ascribing a noble and honorable origin to poetry through its connection with divine beings. Poetry was first born and bred in heaven and was then bestowed upon mortals to sweeten their brief and stern existence.

This belief in the divine origin of poetry emerges for the historical period under the more refined concept of divine inspiration, whose annals properly begin in the sphere of prophecy. That a god could

<sup>16</sup> Apollod. 1.3; Paus. 2.19.8; 9.29.6; Hyg. *Fab.* 161. Plato recalls this popular tradition when he speaks of the early poets as "children of the gods" (οἱ θεῶν παῖδες ποιηταί *Rep.* 366AB; *Tim.* 40DE).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Pind. *Frag.* 139.9; *Cert. Hom. et Hes.* 314; Diod. 4.25.2; Paus. 9.30.4; Apollod. 1.3.2 and 1.9.16; Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 1.23. See also K. Freeman, *Companion to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Oxford 1949) 2.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Cert. Hom. et Hes.* 314–315; Proclus, *Vit. Hom.* 26.14. For tables which trace the kinship between Orpheus, Homer, and Hesiod, see K. Ziegler, "Orpheus," *RE* 18.1 (1939) 1223.

<sup>19</sup> See I. M. Linforth, *Arts of Orpheus* (Berkeley 1941) 9.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Antipater of Sidon, *Anth. Pal.* 7.8.5 and Ovid, *Met.* 11.44 ff. Compare the tradition preserved by Alcaeus of Messene (*Anth. Pal.* 7.55) that Hesiod's funeral rites were performed by nymphs.

<sup>21</sup> See W. K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion* (London 1935) 39 ff.

<sup>22</sup> For more extensive studies on the biography, poetry, and influence of Orpheus, see Linforth (above, note 19); Guthrie (above, note 21); Ziegler (above, note 18) 1200–1316; R. Keydell and K. Ziegler, "Orphische Dichtung," *RE* 18.2 (1942) 1321–1417; L. Weber, "Orpheus," *RhM* 81 (1932) 1; M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion* (Munich 1941) 642–662.

possess the body of a human being and could employ his victim as an instrument for his thoughts is a belief which was early accepted in Greece and which persisted in certain forms even in her most enlightened period.<sup>23</sup> The doctrine received serious consideration among the earliest Greek philosophers. Heraclitus, for example, confirmed his faith in the Sibyl "who speaks words grave, unadorned, and unscented, from a maddened mouth" (μαυρομένῳ σόματι),<sup>24</sup> and in the Lord Apollo who "neither reveals nor hides but intimates" (Frag. B 93 D.-K.). The main seats of divine prophecy in Hellas were located at Dodona, at Delphi and at Delos, the last two under the sovereignty of Apollo<sup>25</sup> who had acquired Delphi after he slew the Python.<sup>26</sup> How the ecstatic type of manticism became associated with Apollo is not definitely

<sup>23</sup> See E. Rohde, *Psyche* (translated by W. B. Hillis, London 1925) 287.

<sup>24</sup> Frag. B 92 D.-K.; also Plut. *De Pyth. or.* 6. Are these adjectives meant to suggest a subtle criticism of the poets whom Heraclitus elsewhere reproves (Frag. B 42, B 57, B 104, B 106 D.-K.)? In Frag. B 14 he calls an unholy performance the activity of night-ramblers, magicians, Bacchantes, and Maenads. Is this statement an indication of the abuses which had crept into the mystic cult through the misinterpretations of the populace (see A. Delatte, *Les Conceptions de l'Enthousiasme chez les Philosophes Présocratiques* [Paris 1934] 12); or does it perhaps imply a preference on the part of Heraclitus for the more restrained enthusiasm of Apollo, rather than the more violent kind of Dionysus? Kathleen Freeman (above, note 17), p. 106, suggests that he is justifying his own oracular style. That charlatanism later entered the entechnic branch of the prophesying art we know from Hippocrates, *Sacred Disease* 2.2-3; Plato, *Rep.* 364ac; Dem. *De Cor.* 259-261. Compare also Ennius' scathing indictment: "superstitiosi vates inpudentesque harioli, / aut inertes aut insani aut quibus egestas imperat; / qui sibi semitam non sapiunt, alteri monstrant viam; / quibus divitias pollicentur, ab iis drachumam ipsi petunt" (Cic. *Div.* 1.132).

<sup>25</sup> The question of Apollo's provenience remains unanswered, but that he was not indigenous to Greece is now generally accepted. There remains, however, the possibility of an Asiatic origin (see Wilamowitz, "Apollon," *Hermes* 38 [1903] 575 and also his *Der Glaube der Hellenen* [Berlin 1932] 2.30; Nilsson [above, note 22] 527-530), or a European one first set forth by K. O. Müller, *Die Dorier* (translated by Tufnell and Lewis, London 1839) 219-330. See also L. R. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States* (Oxford 1896-1909) 4.98-112; Rendel Harris, *Ascent of Olympus* (London 1917) 40; A. B. Cook, *Zeus* (Cambridge 1914-1925), 2.499. Most of these references are from R. D. Miller, *The Origin and Original Nature of Apollo* (U. of Penn. Diss., 1939) 4-24, in which he discusses both hypotheses, but not with convincing thoroughness. Miller also supports the thesis that Apollo was not the first to prophesy at Delphi (p. 43). For the most recent discussion on Apollo, see W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (London 1950) 73-87.

<sup>26</sup> *Hymn. Hom.* 3.300-304 and 354 ff. In this account, the place-name Pytho and the adjective Pythian as an epithet of Apollo are derived from the rotting away of the slain serpent. Different versions of the Pytho story may be found in Aesch. *Eum.* 1 ff. and Eur. *IT* 1247 ff. See H. W. Parke, *A History of the Delphic Oracle* (Oxford 1939) 6-8.

known. Homer, of course, portrays him as the god of prophecy, but it is the quiet, rational kind which has nothing to do with *enthousiasmos*.<sup>27</sup> It has been suggested that the wild behavior of the priestess may be a survival of an earlier Thessalian ritual or that she may have existed at Delphi with Ge-Themis.<sup>28</sup> Another theory is the one which points to an influence on the Apolline worship stemming from Dionysus,<sup>29</sup> who very early gained prominence as a figure in the enthusiastic cult and whose temper by Homer's time was already termed "frenzied" (*Il.* 6.132). One phase of Dionysus' worship consisted in rites of purification which were accomplished by a violent heightening of the emotions to a singular degree of religious ecstasy followed by gradual tranquillization. How particularly suitable this form of turbulent rapture was to Dionysus in connection with his role as god of the vine immediately leaps to mind. After the union of Apollo and Dionysus at Delphi, Apollo acquired this faculty for arousing the ecstatic trance in a more subdued and refined form by abandoning some of its more extravagant aspects. Hence it became appropriate to designate Apollo by epithets once exclusively applied to Dionysus.<sup>30</sup> The relationship of these two gods continued throughout the historical period, as we see in the fact that the trieteric festival of Delphi was held in the Corybantian cave near Delphi every second year, that the festal year at Delphi was divided between the two gods, and that the front pediment of the temple showed the form

<sup>27</sup> See Farnell (above, note 25) 4.190; Rohde (above, note 23) 289; Nilsson (above, note 22) 528 f.

<sup>28</sup> On the Earth Goddess as a former deity of Delphi, see Aesch. *Eum.* 2; Pind. *Pyth.* 4.76; Paus. 10.5.5-7. Further evidence which connects Ge-Themis with Delphi is the omphalos, the sacred stone which symbolized the centre of the earth and which in later times was kept in the innermost part of the Delphic temple. One such stone was unearthed and found to have the name of the Earth Goddess inscribed on one side. See Parke (above, note 26) 10. On the origin of the ecstatic element in Apolline prophecy, see Farnell (above, note 25) 4.192. He sets forth a third possibility, namely, that the Pythia came to Delphi at the same time with Apollo, which seems to be the view of Kurt Latte, "The Coming of the Pythia," *HTHR* 33 (1940) 9-18.

<sup>29</sup> See Rohde 289 ff.; Nilsson, 528 ff., points to an Asiatic influence. Parke (above, note 26), 16-17, states that Dionysus merely established the oracle more firmly on lines which were already otherwise determined. Farnell, 192, discounts any Dionysiac influence, as does Latte (above, note 28). Plutarch mentions the ties between Apollo and Dionysus (*Is. and Osir.* 35; *E at Delphi* 9, where he comments that "the artists . . . attribute to Apollo in general a uniformity, orderliness, and unadulterated seriousness, but to Dionysus a certain variability combined with playfulness, wantonness, seriousness, and frenzy").

<sup>30</sup> Aesch. Frag. 187 (341), calls him Κισσοεύς 'Ἀπόλλων, ὁ βακχεύς, ὁ μάντις.

of Apollo, and the back pediment, that of Dionysus.<sup>31</sup> At any rate, the concept of Apollo as the supreme god of prophecy became fixed for all antiquity, while Dionysus retained his more ancient role as god of the orgiastic cult.

Exactly how the god aroused the surge of ecstasy in his priestess is not clearly defined. Some thought she drank of the spring nearby which had miraculous powers, others that she chewed the laurel leaf, and still others that a vapor arising from a rocky niche literally filled the breast of the priestess and caused her to enter the ecstatic trance.<sup>32</sup> At the height of her ecstasy the god Apollo then spoke through her lips. The role of the priestess was reduced by some to that of a mere instrument, and beyond this she contributed very little. In fact, Plato tells us that the women in charge of the oracle were ignorant, simple folk who rarely uttered brilliant comments when in command of all their senses.<sup>33</sup> Plutarch, too, calls the priestess a simple, unlettered peasant (*De Pyth. orac.* 22), and Cicero refers to Cassandra as a "temporary housing for the god" (*Div.* 1.67). We are also reminded of the pathetic passage in the *Iliad* in which the horse Xanthus, inspired by Hera, "broke his eternal silence and portentous spoke" (19.405). But whether the priestess maintained some level of awareness beyond her ecstasy which enabled her to control her thought and expression to any degree, or whether she completely ceased to exercise in her own personal will the madness which engulfed her, the trance, at any rate, always came from the god, and always to reveal his divine purpose.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> See Nilsson (above, note 22) 516; Parke (above, note 26) 336; Rohde (above, note 23) 288. Cf. also Plutarch (above, note 29). Farnell (above, note 25) 4.206 says that both divinities worked together for the cause of Greek art and music, of which the Pythian festival was the chief national expression.

<sup>32</sup> See Paus. 10.24.7; Plutarch, *De Pyth. or.* 6. See Farnell, 4.188 ff.; H. J. Rose, *Handbook of Greek Mythology* (London 1930) 173; Parke (above, note 26) 18-31. Lucan (5.86-98) declares inspiration to be a part of the *divinus spiritus aetherius*, the *anima mundi* of Stoicism which is buried in the earth and escapes at Delphi. Cf. also 9.578-580 and Virgil, *Aen.* 6.724-734.

<sup>33</sup> *Phaedr.* 244b. See also his story of Tynnichus, a man singularly lacking in poetic talent until the god, one day, inspired him to compose beautiful lines (*Ion* 534DE). On this point, Farnell (p. 189) says: "The female is more responsive than the male and the uncultured than the cultured intellect to certain influences of religious mesmerism."

<sup>34</sup> The performance of Cassandra (*Agam.* 1214 ff.) seems to indicate that she is powerless to resist the advance of Apollo and that great agony accompanies the presence of the god within her. She speaks of the "pains of prophecy" and begs Apollo for mercy. In Virgil (*Aen.* 6.77 ff.) the Sibyl attempts in vain to free herself of the god.



Because of the irrational behavior and wild utterances which came to be associated with a person possessed by a god for the purpose of revelation, the ancient Greeks were inclined to term as divine all forms of abnormal conditions whether divinely effected or induced by actual mental aberrations, disease, fever, and even dreams, for in sleep the soul was thought to be released from the injunctions and restrictions of the body and could freely commune with the supernatural world. These forms of madness came from the gods to impress their will upon the victim, to punish *hybris* or any equally grievous fault, and to revenge the moral transgressions perpetrated by man against man.<sup>35</sup> The activity of the poet, too, was accepted as a kind of divine madness,<sup>36</sup> closely identified with that of the mantic, since both poet and seer functioned by a divinely-wrought frenzy.<sup>37</sup> It is under this metaphor that Plato chose to describe divine inspiration, and the concept of *mania* for the poet persisted even in the Middle Ages through Isidore's derivation of *carmen* from *carere mente* (*Etym.* 1.39.4). Now, possibly because

<sup>35</sup> E.g., Hera and Io in Aesch. *PV* 589 ff.; Hera and Heracles in Eur. *HF* 830 ff.; Dionysus and Pentheus, *Bacch.* 616 ff., 849 ff.; Athena and Ajax in Soph. *Ajax* 50 ff. See O'Brien-Moore, *Madness in Ancient Literature* (Princeton U. Diss., 1924) 67. The Chorus in Euripides' *Hippolytus* suggests that the love-madness of Phaedra comes from Pan, Aphrodite, the Corybantes, or Cybele. See A. C. Vaughan, *Madness in Greek Thought and Custom* (U. of Mich. Diss., 1919) 21. The traditional function of the Furies of causing madness to exact vengeance is well known. On the general subject of spirit possessions, good and evil, see J. Tambornino, *De Antiquorum Daemonismo* (Giessen 1909).

<sup>36</sup> This association between poetry and madness may be noted also among other peoples. In Old Norse, for example, *othr*, "poetry" also meant "frenzied," "mad," and the vessel which held the mead to induce poetic inspiration was called *otherir*, and once probably applied to the drink itself as "that which stimulates to poetry or eloquence." See N. K. Chadwick, *Poetry and Prophecy* (Cambridge 1942) 13.

<sup>37</sup> The idea that the poet and seer belong in the closest of relationships by virtue of their divine inspiration is not limited to the Greeks and Romans. Saxons, Celts, Gauls, and Norse in their sagas or religious poems boast of the poet-seer. The Saxons had Caedmon who was inspired by an angel (Bede, *Hist. Eccl.* 4.24, which is the earliest reference to poetry in England); the Celts Tydain, Tabesin, Amargin, and Mongan; the Norse, Othin, poet himself and source of poetic inspiration and mantic wisdom. The ancient Gauls had quite a strong poet-seer tradition in their Druid cult; we find Cicero mentioning that he was acquainted with a chief Druid, Divitiacus, whose work he placed in the sphere of *physiologia* (*Div.* 1.90). Caesar was impressed by the educational task of the Druid priests who preserved in verse form the entire learning of their community in such matters as astronomy, geography, natural history, and philosophy (*BGall.* 6.13). Today the same alliance between poetry and manticism may be observed in the shaman of northern Siberia, in the priests of the Island of Mangaia, in the arioi of Tahiti who must demonstrate the ability to enter the ecstatic trance before they can join the dramatic guilds. See Chadwick (above, note 36) 22-27.

the priestess expressed herself in language to a certain degree rhythmic, and possibly because she chose words which as the result of a combination of obscurity and impressiveness contrived to elevate her speech above that of normal usage, the poet was identified with the seer. The rhythm and language of prophecy were gradually borrowed and used on occasions which were removed from the sphere of manticism, so that we reach the stage when the poet is no longer identified with the seer. Their ancient kinship, however, is never disavowed, but persists in the figure of Apollo as god of both poetry and prophecy<sup>38</sup> and in the physical propinquity of Delphi, the Castalian spring nearby, and Mt. Parnassus which threw its shadow over the temple of Apollo.<sup>39</sup> Nor must we forget that Dionysus himself inspired the dithyramb, was the patron-god of drama, and that among his epithets was included the name *Musagetes*.<sup>40</sup>

There is an analogous development among the Romans between the history of the seer and that of the poet. In earliest times the word *vates* was applied exclusively to the man of oracles, but he, too, expressed his prophecy in song. Gradually his activities were extended to include songs not strictly prophetic but which yet dealt with religious matters. The earliest examples at our disposal are fragments from the rather unpolished, primitive Saturnian and Arval verses which nevertheless indicate a definite, if crude, art of poetry and demonstrate inspiration as the operating principle for the *vates* in the strict sense of prophet and in the freer sense of poet. A certain amount of disagreement exists among scholars concerning the exact time in the history of Latin poetry when

<sup>38</sup> This dual role of Apollo was already established by the time of Homer. For further material, see Farnell 4.245.

<sup>39</sup> Much of our knowledge about springs in antiquity comes from Pausanias. Of the springs commonly associated with the Muses, he speaks of Helicon, 9.30.8 and 31.3; Castalia, 10.8.9-10; Aganippe, 9.29.5; Hippocrene, 9.31.3. That miraculous powers should be attributed to fountains and rivers in Greece and Italy is not difficult to understand for countries where water has always been at a premium. We recall that the Romans celebrated a festival of the Fontinalia and that Horace fondly sacrificed to his fons Bandusiae (*Carm.* 3.13). See M. Ninck, "Die Bedeutung des Wassers im Kult und Leben der Alten," *Philologus*, Supplbd. 14 (1921).

<sup>40</sup> For a more extensive study on the origin and function of Dionysus and on his connection with the mystery cults and the doctrine of purification, see Rohde 253-361; Farnell 5.85-239; Parke 14 ff., 335 ff.; Nilsson 532-582. The term *Musagetes* applied to Dionysus is found in a Naxian inscription. See Farnell 5.145 and 332. It is to Apollo, however, that the epithet rightly belongs.

*vates* was employed as a complete synonym for *poeta*.<sup>41</sup> Actually before the Augustan period, *vates* was sparingly used, and when used, the word on the whole retained its original meaning of seer. A clear case is in Plautus, *Miles* 911: Bonus vates poteras esse nam quae sunt futura dicis. In a survey of Rome's first poets the fragments reveal that the word used in reference to a poet or his work is *poeta* or its derived forms<sup>42</sup> and they yield only one passage in which *vates* might be interpreted to mean *poeta*. This we find in Ennius when he consigns the early attempts at poetry, including the *Bellum Punicum* of Naevius (Cicero, *Brut.* 76), to the *Fauni* and *vates*. The passage, quoted by Cicero (*Brut.* 71), reads: "quos olim Fauni vatesque canebant / cum neque Musarum scopulos / nec dicti studiosus quisquam erat ante hunc." That Ennius is here referring to Naevius as *vates* is quite clear from Cicero's testimony, but equally clear is the disparagement Ennius attaches to the term when used in the realm of poetry. Cicero quotes the passage elsewhere (*Or.* 171) when he pleads for the privilege of criticizing archaic writers once granted to Ennius, who revealed his scorn for old poetry by saying "in verses which once upon a time the Fauns and seers used to sing." The rest of the quotation from Ennius is equally significant and betrays his conviction that he had progressed far beyond the *Fauni vatesque* stage. In fact,

<sup>41</sup> M. Runes in "Geschichte des Wortes Vates," *Festschrift für Paul Kretschmer* (Wien 1926) 202–216, argues that before Virgil's time *vates* retained its primitive meaning of "man of oracles." E. Bickel, however, maintains that Ennius was the first to use *vates* in the sense of *poeta* on the basis of *Ann.* 232 where Ennius refers to Naevius as *vates*. See his "Die Vates der Kelten und Die Interpretatio Graeca des Südgallische Matronenkultes im Eumenidenkult," *RhM* 87–88 (1938–39) 193–241. The important point, however, is not that Ennius applied the term *vates* to Naevius, but how he meant the term to be taken, and for this, the rest of the quotation is significant.

<sup>42</sup> In a passage from the *Satires* (3.6–7) in which Ennius is being toasted for his "cup of flaming verses," he calls himself *poeta*, and again, he uses the term when he describes the dream in which Homer appears at his side to inspire him (Cic. *Acad. Pr.* 2.51). We find *poemata* when he boasts of the glory his work shall acquire (*Ann.* 1.2–3), and even the verb *poetor*, in a subtle reference to his need for wine to induce composition (numquam poetor nisi si podager, *Sat.* 21). The epigram on Naevius, justly criticized for its "Campanian haughtiness," reads that with him will die the Latin tongue and the goddesses of song will mourn for the *poeta* (Gell. *NA* 1.24.2). The epitaph of Pacuvius assures us that the bones at rest are those of Marcus Pacuvius, *poeta* (Gell. 1.24.4). Accius, too, uses *poetae* in speaking of the criticism unfairly incurred by poets for the rudeness and bad manners of the spectators (Nonius 150.11). Lucilius offers no instance of the term *poeta*, but does expound the distinction between *poesis* and *poema* (Nonius 428.5.).

Cicero himself quotes the passage to fortify his argument that nothing is ever invented and perfected at the same time (*nihil est enim simul inventum et perfectum*). Ennius places the *veteres versus* at a period in Latin literature when no one had yet ascended the *scopulos Musarum*, and says that before him no one had been conscious of polished style. Surely, by using the term *vates* and especially in the same breath with *Fauni*, when referring to Naevius and earlier poets, Ennius is not implying the dignity and respect which the term was later to acquire; on the contrary, he is using the term in disparagement, to indicate the lack in the older writers of the art and technique which he feels are inherent in the word *poeta*. And by applying the term *poeta* to himself, it is clear that he views his own work as far superior to that of his predecessors.<sup>43</sup>

Among the Greeks the word *ποιητής* had since the time of Herodotus superseded the more ancient term *αοιδός*.<sup>44</sup> One explanation presented is that with the advent of rhapsodes and interpreters a distinction had to be made between the actual author of a poem and its performer. Later one finds the distinction carried to a fine degree when such terms as *τραγῳδοί* and *κωμῳδοί* are set in juxtaposition with *τραγῳδοποιοί* and *κωμῳδοποιοί*.<sup>45</sup> Whatever the various uses to which *ποιητής* was put, by the Hellenistic period it was on the whole accepted in its sense of "maker of verses."<sup>46</sup> The idea of "creation" which we assume in our word "poetry" was alien to the classic Greek. The introduction of the creative element in *poiêsis* and the application of the word "creator" to *ποιητὴς* were an extension of metaphorical language derived from Jewish-

<sup>43</sup> For further evidence that Ennius considered himself the first real *poeta* of Rome, see J. H. Waszink, "The Proem of the *Annales* of Ennius," *Mnemosyne*, Ser. 4, vol. 3 (1950) 215-240. For the attempt on the part of some Romans to declare themselves true artists and not mere translators on the ground that they combined Latin material with Greek form, see P. van de Woestyne, "Haec Tibi Erunt Artes," *Mélanges Paul Thomas* (Bruges 1930) 705-712.

<sup>44</sup> The early poets use the term *aoidos* exclusively. Solon in *Elegy* 22.3 uses *μεταποίησον*, "change your song," and in one instance Pindar uses *ποιητὴς* in the sense of *factus* (*Nem.* 5.29). For the application of *ποιεῖν* and its related forms in reference to poets and poetry in Herodotus, see 1.23; 2.53, 116; 4.13, 14; 6.21, *et al.*

<sup>45</sup> See H. Weil, "L'Origine du Mot Poète," *Études sur l'Antiquité Grecque* (Paris 1900) 237.

<sup>46</sup> Weil, *ibid.* *ποιεῖν μῦθον* meant not to invent, but to put in verse, as in Plato, *Phaed.* 61B, according to Weil. But W. C. Greene, "Plato's View of Poetry," *HSCP* 29 (1918) 71, note 5, feels Weil is interpreting the phrase much too narrowly.

Christian theories of creation in theological speculations.<sup>47</sup> When the Romans for the first time were becoming aware of Greek literature, and writers such as Ennius, Naevius, and Plautus were turning to the Greeks for their literary types and their metre, it is fair to conjecture that they simply borrowed the term *poiētēs* because they felt that it carried greater prestige and dignity than their own word *vates*, in that it connoted a greater degree of skill and polish.<sup>48</sup> It was not until later that the term *vates* flowered anew and was endowed with deeper brilliance by the Augustan poets who revived the word deliberately, conscious of its more ancient religious connotation,<sup>49</sup> and by so doing renewed the ancient alliance between poetry and prophecy. This attempt to give religious tone to poetry is further evident in the extensive use these poets made of the term *carmen*,<sup>50</sup> derived from Carmenta, the Arcadian goddess of prophecy who settled in Italy.<sup>51</sup>

Wherever the cult of divine inspiration is found, one finds with it the idea that the ecstatic trance can be artificially induced. Some peoples in modern times recommend a variety of food and drink, including beer and such stimulants as narcotics and tobacco.<sup>52</sup> The Greeks, in addition to wine, endorsed golden honey as nutriment capable of producing true prophetic utterance (*Hymn. Hom.*

<sup>47</sup> See Curtius (above, note 13) 154, and M. W. Bundy, "Imagination in Classical and Mediaeval Thought," *U. of Ill. Studies* (1927) 114. Greene (above, note 46) 71 ff. states that *poiētēs* for the Greeks had a creative element in so far as the poets could refer to their poems as "offspring" (*Symp.* 209A). They could not, however, create ideas (*Rep.* 596B) but images, since they are only imitators (*Sophist* 265B).

<sup>48</sup> See Runes (above, note 41) 209.

<sup>49</sup> Antiquity offered a variety of derivations for *vates*: Varro (*LL* 7.36): a versibus viendis; Servius (*Aen.* 3.443): a vi mentis, who mentions Varro as his authority, repeated by Isidore (*Etym.* 7.12.15). Forcellini (s. v.) introduces an etymology from *vesania* (madness). Bickel (above, note 41) proposes a Celtic origin on the basis of Strabo 4.4.4: *βάρδοι οὐάρεῖς καὶ δρυῖδαι*, who explains *οὐάρεῖς* as the *ἱεροποιοὶ καὶ φυσιολόγοι* of the Celts. Runes suggests an Etruscan borrowing, relating it to the place-name *Vaticanus* (Pliny *HN* 3.5.54; 16.87.237). He also notes the frequency with which *vates* appears with *haruspex*, *hariolus*, derived from Etruscan *haru* (Enn. 332; Cic. *Nat. Deor.* 1.55; *Div.* 1.4; 2.9, 13), and fortifies his argument by recalling that the Romans learned the art of divination from the Etruscans (Cic. *Leg.* 2.21). See Runes (above, note 41) and "Die Herkunft des Wortes Vates," *IF* 55 (1937) 122-128.

<sup>50</sup> In both Virgil and Horace the use of *carmen* far outnumbered the use of *poema*, except for the *Ars Poetica* where *poema* is more suitable for Horace's discussion of the more technical aspects of poetry.

<sup>51</sup> Varro proposed *Casmenae* as the early form, turning later into *Carmenae* by rhotacism and finally into *Camenae* with the loss of *r* (*LL* 7.26-27).

<sup>52</sup> See Chadwick (above, note 36) 49.

4.560), which calls to mind the story of how bees poured honey on the lips of Pindar, whence arose his career of song.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, the accoutrements play an important part in the role of the poet-seer. We read in old Norse and Celtic legends that robes, staff, and musical instrument were necessary to achieve the right pitch of ecstasy,<sup>54</sup> and one is here reminded of the staff the Homeric seers own, and of the olive shaft Hesiod received on the day the Muses endowed him with the gift of song (*Theog.* 30 ff.).

It was inevitable that the uninhibited behavior of one under the influence of wine should be compared to the holier forms of madness, and gradually the conviction grew that wine was effective in accomplishing that highly cherished union between men and gods. The poets particularly added impetus to this notion by testifying that wine gave wings to their song. Cratinus (*Anth. Gr.* 13.29) received much notoriety in antiquity as a wine-inspired poet and there is some evidence which lends support to the view that Archilochus imbibed quite freely; among the Romans we have Ennius' confession that for him wine eased the task of poetic composition (*Numquam poetor nisi si podager*).<sup>55</sup> This belief, however, achieved its highest

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Paus. 9.23.2 and Antipater of Sidon (*Anth. Gr.* 16.305).

<sup>54</sup> See Chadwick 9 ff. and 49 ff. Preserved human heads also play a part as mantic accessories in Irish sagas and in Norse literature where the prophetic heads are attached to the end of drinking horns. See Chadwick 10. Among the Greeks, too, there existed the legend that the head of Orpheus, when severed from his body, was cast into a cave and there issued prophetic statements. See Linforth (above, note 19) 127 ff., who also includes the version that Orpheus' head and lyre, cast into the sea, floated to Lesbos where they were both buried in the soil by the inhabitants, and as a consequence, Lesbos became the most musical of all isles.

<sup>55</sup> *Sat.* 21. The wine-bibbing of Cratinus became an unfailing source of comment for the humorists. Aristophanes, in *Peace* 700-703, relates that Cratinus died of shock when he saw the raiding Laconians smash a jar of wine. Cf. also Ar. *Frogs* 357 and *Knights* 526-36, in the Scholia (400) to which is found a note to the effect that Cratinus wrote a play *πυρίνη* (*The Flagon*) in which his lawfully wedded wife *Κωμφοδία* sued him for desertion and for transferring his affections to *Μέθη*. Nicaenetus (*Anth. Gr.* 13.29) maintains that wine is a swift horse to the poet and that no one knew this so well as Cratinus who drank not from the bottle but from the whole cask. See also Horace, *Ep.* 1.19.1-8. For Archilochus, see his epigrams in *Ath.* 1.30F; 11.483D: "Come then, with a cup . . . and draw the red wine to the dregs; for we cannot remain sober on this watch." We offer Plut. *Mus.* 28 (in which he names Archilochus as the poet who made innovations in drinking-songs) only on the assumption that an abstainer would probably refrain from composing eulogies to wine. Callimachus, frag. 544 Pfeiffer, applies to Archilochus the adjective "wine-stricken" (*μεθυσμένης*). Antipater of Thessalonica (*Anth. Gr.* 11.20) bids the water-drinkers with their effeminate verses to stay away from the wine bowl from which he shall pour libations to honor the birthday of Archilochus and virile Homer, and implies thereby that both these poets were imbibers. The adjectives "effeminate" and "virile" may have been

point of popularity in the Graeco-Roman period as one aspect of the feud between the inspirationists and the technicians. Rebellion against the Alexandrian stress on meticulous finish, technical perfection, and acquired skill led a group of poets to claim inspiration and particularly wine-inspiration, as indispensable to poetry, and were thus termed *οἰνοπόται*, in contradistinction to the *ὕδροπόται*, who composed by labored art and learned rule under the chaste influence of cool water libations.<sup>56</sup> This literary quarrel, which is a reflection of the more embracing philosophical controversy between *physis* and *technē*<sup>57</sup> and which is continued as such by Horace, Longinus, and others, does not abate until poets and critics finally agree that the poet's fine frenzy is subject to law, and that *natura*, *ars*, and *exercitatio* compose the vital triad for the serious artist. Plutarch expressed this same view admirably when he said that nature without learning is a blind thing, learning without nature an imperfect thing, and practice without both an ineffective thing (*De lib. educ.* 4B).<sup>58</sup>

The singer, then, early received recognition among the Greeks as one privileged with special divine dispensation, whose winged words issued forth at the direct prompting of the gods, and who not only revealed the divine purpose but enshrined it in enduring, artistic form. In time, the activity of the bard was gradually liberated from the purely religious sphere sufficiently to allow him to consider the life and actions of his fellow men as the substance of his poetry. The rest of our inquiry will be devoted to a consideration of how the poet justified his claims to this holy gift of

chosen to contrast the bloodlessness of the water-drinkers with the sparkling vitality of the wine-drinkers. Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 7.432: *Carmina vino ingenium faciente canunt*. It is well also to point out that the description of intoxication as madness is as old as Homer (*Od.* 18.406; 21.298).

<sup>56</sup> The poets who claimed wine-inspiration were chiefly Antigonos, Antipater of Thessalonica, and Nicaenetus, who praised their method and disparaged that of their rival school in epigrams which reveal the finer points of their controversy. For more details on this question, see H. Lewy, "Sobria Ebrietas: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der antiken Mystik," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 9 (1929) 43-54. For the attitude of Horace on wine as a source of inspiration, see A. P. McKinlay, "The Wine Element in Horace," *CJ* 42 (1946-47) 161-168, 229-236.

<sup>57</sup> See P. Shorey, *Φύσις, Μέλῃη, Ἐπιστήμη*, *TAPA* 40 (1909) 185-201. Cf. Plato, *Phaedr.* 269D, where he names these three qualities as the requisites for the perfect orator.

<sup>58</sup> Extravagant devotion to madness or intoxication as the principle for poetic activity became rich material for satirical comment. See Ar. *Frogs* 357; *Knights* 526-536; Horace, *Ars. P.* 453 ff.; *Ep.* 1.19.1-20; *Sat.* 2.3.322, 7.117.

poetry by his choice of material and by his performance in the community, a performance which entitled him to view his task as a divine mission. For such a study the early poetry offers evidence of greater validity than does the more sophisticated, conscious art of later writers; and of the early poets, we shall consider Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar, who represent different societies and changing circumstance.

The Olympian gods, though ennobled in appearance and invested with superhuman power, were essentially created in the image of man, but very soon the bards tried to make man over in the image of their gods by borrowing the truly god-like qualities and bestowing these on the finest of their own kind. No one succeeded so well in this as did Homer when he romanticized the heroic age and viewed it, on the whole, as the best of all possible worlds for mortal man in so much as it offered in its glorious pageantry and brilliant action the closest parallel to the happy, eternal existence of the gods. It was inevitable that in such a portrayal certain individuals should emerge as the *aristoi* of the community for whom the great mass functioned and existed, a shadowy lot, whose mundane role could in no way enhance their existence or rescue them from obscurity. Among those who achieved honor and standing in the community above the common horde was the minstrel.

Homer everywhere mentions the minstrel in the highest tones of respect and reverence, and refers to him time and again as *θεῖος ἀοιδός*.<sup>59</sup> Even though it may be argued that the expression became the established epithet for the singer, yet the choice of word is in itself significant. Not all men can be *θεῖοι*, only those who can actually claim divine forebears and those who use their talents here on earth to fulfill god's plan.<sup>60</sup> At times this quality of divinity may be transferred to the possession of a *θεῖος ἀνὴρ*, or to objects that for their excellence rival those of Mt. Olympus, such as jars of sweet, pure wine, man's nearest substitute for the ambrosial drink of the gods (*Od.* 9.205). This constant reference to the minstrel as a holy being with a divinely instituted vocation is further strengthened by passages which specifically allude to poetry

<sup>59</sup> *Od.* 1.336; 4.17; 8.43; 87; 539; 16.252; 17.359; 23.133, 143; 24.439, *et al.* It is to be noted that the poet is more extensively portrayed in the *Odyssey* which represents a shift from the battlefield to the arts of peace and to palace life, the proper background for the minstrel.

<sup>60</sup> See Bieler (above, note 4) 9.



as a gift from the gods, and in these statements there is usually found some form of the verb *δίδωμι*.<sup>61</sup> When Polydamas charges Hector to remember that one cannot possibly excel in all things since god has bestowed his gifts on different men, gifts which stem directly from Zeus and which mark the individual with a singular excellence, he names, first, ability on the battle-field, understandably enough since he addresses Troy's finest warrior, and then, the dance, song, and blessed understanding (*Il.* 13.726 ff.). The gift of sweet song which belongs to the blind minstrel Demodocus is on different occasions said to come from god (*Od.* 8.44), from Apollo, and from the Muses, and we are told that this minstrel, whom the Muse loves above all other men, the goddess has endowed with sweet song as compensation for his blindness (8.64 ff.). At the feast of Alcinous, Odysseus bids the herald offer a portion of white-tusked boar to Demodocus, since he is of the tribe of minstrels whom the Muse has loved and taught and who thereby above all men on earth have a share in honor and reverence (*τιμῆς καὶ αἰδοῦς* 8.480). Since the Muses give, they can also withdraw, the high gift of poetry (*ᾠοδὴν θεσπεσίην*) and so did they dishonor Thamyris who proved in his boasting an unworthy disciple (*Il.* 2.594). The poet's vocation, therefore, stems from the gods and is sustained by the gods. For Homer, poetry is one of the refinements of life (*Od.* 8.248), the crown of the feast (*ἀναθήματα δαιτός* 1.152), and the means to immortalize the worthy personality (*Od.* 8.73).

The poet is not only regarded with special grace by the gods but is highly honored among the people. Telemachus feels called upon to warn the wooers, an ill-behaved, unruly lot, to mind their manners when the minstrel begins his song, since it is a great privilege to hear so godlike a voice (*Od.* 1.368). Of the men who consorted with the wooers, Odysseus spares Phemius alone, whose craft comes from the gods, and places him on a plane untouched by the *hybris* and guilt of the others (*Od.* 22.344 ff.). Nowhere are the reverence and honor accorded to a bard more clearly presented than in the tender and affectionate treatment of Demodocus (*Od.* 8.62 ff.). The herald leads the good minstrel to his place where a silver-studded chair set against a pillar awaits him, and on a beautiful table stand a basket of food and a cup of wine to drink when his heart should so bid him. When Demodocus has finished

<sup>61</sup> *Od.* 8.44, 64, 481. Cf. 22.347-348: Θεὸς δέ μοι ἐν φρεσὶν οἴμας παντοίας ἐρέφυσεν.

his enchanting song, the herald guides him by the same exit which the nobles have used. To be sure, much of the gentleness and warmth in this scene may be attributed to the special feelings aroused by the bard's affliction, and it is extremely tempting to consider this passage a glimpse into Homer's own personal experience. Yet wherever mentioned in Homer, the bard is accorded great courtesy and honor and his high position in the community is never questioned. On the shield of Achilles, after Hephaestus has fashioned the earth and all the stars, the first thing he portrays is a city with singers playing the lyre and brightening the marriage feast (*Il.* 18.490 ff.), and later he depicts a singer of the harvest song (*ibid.* 569 ff.), suggesting the important role poetry has played both as a religious and a civilizing influence in society. All men are susceptible to the charms of poetry, and although the Homeric bard sings to nobles of the life and ideals of nobles, yet even a lowly swineherd can be enchanted by the beauty of song (*Od.* 17.512 ff.).

In Homer, as in other Greek poets, one meets repeatedly the tragic sense of life aroused by the reflection that man's days are numbered and at best, full of sorrows.<sup>62</sup> One form of compensation for this infinite despair was the acquisition of a good name to be honored and cherished among posterity, and hence the Homeric heroes willingly lived dangerously and assumed a debonnaire attitude toward death so long as they could thereby acquire their share of renown. When Hector, for example, finally faces the gleaming sword of Achilles and knows that nothing can stay the flaming wrath of the Greek warrior, he shouts, "Let me not die without a struggle or ingloriously, but in some great deed of arms of which men yet unborn shall hear" (*Il.* 22.304 ff.). Glorious death was ranked above a life of quiet anonymity, and nowhere is this so clearly exemplified as in the irrevocable choice Achilles so freely made. Yet the heroes realized, too, that deeds, however noble and glorious, would be short-lived unless they could be enshrined in the memory of the community by the poet's art. The minstrel, therefore, achieved equality with the leaders of the community because it was his vocation which transformed the deeds of a man into the *aretê* of the hero and rendered imperishable the cherished values of the heroic code. His function, therefore, was to immor-

<sup>62</sup> *Il.* 6.146-9; 21.463-466; 24.525 ff. Cf. Pind. *Pyth.* 8.92-96; *Nem.* 11.15-16; Aesch. *Agam.* 1327-29; Soph. *Oed. Tyr.* 1528-30.

talize the deeds of men, and the recital of these deeds gave great pleasure and satisfaction to the hearers, who felt that for a brief moment man could, in his display of courage and magnanimity of spirit, rival the gods despite the nameless forces at work to enfeeble his every move. In fact, the Homeric heroes emerge more noble figures than the Homeric gods simply because of their very mortality combined with their capacity for suffering due to the limitations of human wisdom.

It is usually thought that Homer claims for his poetry the hedonistic function, and on the whole this is the correct view.<sup>63</sup> He frankly states that poetry was bestowed on mankind to give delight (*Od.* 8.45), and this delight for his audience flows from the recital of glorious deeds. Whenever the poet wishes to make this point he uses some form of *τέρπω*<sup>64</sup> which leaves little latitude for oblique interpretations, since the term clearly means to enjoy and may refer either to carnal or to the more intellectual pleasures. Yet one finds in Homer an awareness of the teaching function of poetry, not so strongly expressed, but a trace of it is there nonetheless, and in his mind it is closely identified with the immortalizing aspect of poetry. He is aware of the poet's far-reaching influence to perpetuate in artistic form the character of an individual so that his moral excellence or failing may become a model for future generations either to emulate or to shun. Nestor sees Telemachus as a worthy subject for the poet's pen, if he will add valor to the splendid appearance he already possesses (*Od.* 3.198). Orestes, too, will become an example far and wide for vengeance rightly taken (*ibid.* 203). When the wooers, despatched so ignominiously to Hades, meet Agamemnon and recount to him the latest events in the upper world, especially the return of Odysseus, the murdered king dwells on the virtues of Penelope — and who could be a better judge of the wifely virtues? — constancy, loyalty, all embracing excellence, and goodness of understanding (*Od.* 24.192 ff.). She will never want for praise or commendation. "The fame of her virtue shall never perish, but the immortals shall make among men on earth a lovely song in honor of constant Penelope" (*ibid.* 196–198). On the other hand, the evil deeds of Clytemnestra shall

<sup>63</sup> See J. W. H. Atkins, *Literary Criticism in Antiquity* (Cambridge 1934) 1.12, and E. E. Sikes, *The Greek View of Poetry* (London 1931) 4.

<sup>64</sup> *Il.* 9.186–189; *Od.* 1.347; 8.45; 17.385. Cf. also the use of *ιμερόεις* "delightful" in reference to song in *Il.* 18.570; *Od.* 1.421; 17.519; and *θελκτήρια* "charm" in *Od.* 1.337.

harvest for her a hateful song (στρυγερή αἰοδὴ, *ibid.* 200). Helen of Troy envisages a similar fate for herself and for Paris when, expressing remorse for her past behavior and bitterly rebuking Paris for his unclean heart, she calls herself a dog and Paris a sinner and predicts that "an evil doom does Zeus prepare for them both since in days to come they shall become a song in the ears of men to be" (*Il.* 6.358). The term she uses is αἰοδιμοί, a *hapax legomenon* in Homer, which she applies in its disparaging sense of "notorious."

Furthermore, Homer indicates from his own practice that a poet may indulge in outright moralizing. When he relates the story of how Hephaestus caught Ares and Aphrodite with his golden net and the other gods burst into unquenchable laughter at the ludicrous plight of the two deceivers, lest the audience be carried away by the humor of the situation, the poet feels obliged to add that ill deeds do not thrive and that the slow catches the swift, even as the lame Hephaestus has outstripped Ares, swiftest of the gods (*Od.* 8.329 ff.). These examples clearly suggest that Homer was sensible of the poet's power to crystallize the virtues and vices of individuals in enduring portraiture and thus of the poet's capacity to guide the *mores* of men yet unborn. Nor did Homer feel bound to limit himself to those dashing, spirited virtues which make the perfect warrior, but widened his scope to include virtues of a more sober, less spectacular nature.

The minstrel is beloved of the gods and his art stems from the gods; these are sufficient grounds for terming him *theios*. But he also earns this epithet as one who employs his unusual gifts to illumine the *erga* of the hero and of the king, who are *theioi* in themselves. The poet gains further divine favor in his capacity as servant of the king who, ideally speaking, fulfils the plans of Zeus.

Hesiod becomes a faithful disciple of the doctrine of divine inspiration, but he describes a much more personal relationship between himself and the Muses, when he relates how the goddesses came to him while shepherding his flock under holy Helicon and gave him a staff of sturdy olive and breathed into him a divine voice (ἐνέπνευσαν ἀυδὴν θέσπιν).<sup>65</sup> He never allows his reader to forget that his vocation is sanctioned by divine patronage and that all

<sup>65</sup> *Theog.* 30 ff. For a study of the poet's initiation, see E. Reitzenstein, "Zur Stiltheorie des Kallimachos," *Festschrift für Richard Reitzenstein* (Leipzig 1931) 52 ff. For the latest treatment of Ennius' dream and the sources of his imitation, see Waszink (above, note 43).

singers are on earth through the Muses and Apollo. In one passage he speaks of eloquence in general as a holy gift (*ιερή δόσις*) of the Muses to mankind (*Theog.* 93). Homer had already pronounced eloquence a highly prized virtue for the good leader (*Od.* 8.167 ff.),<sup>66</sup> and this gift in Odysseus and Nestor proved as valuable as martial valor. Hesiod, however, sets forth most vividly the role of eloquence in the cause of good government when he pictures the Muses pouring sweet dew upon the lips of the heavenly-nourished prince who can then rule his assemblies with gracious words and persuade his people with gentle speech, and as a result is treated as a god with reverence (*Theog.* 80 ff.). The Muses, therefore, have a vital share in the art of government since they bestow upon the prince the gift of eloquence which in this passage is presented as a powerful civic virtue.

What impresses one most strongly in Hesiod is his view of poetry as a divine medicine.<sup>67</sup> He says of the Muses, "Mnemosyne bore a forgetting of ills and a rest from sorrow" (*λησμοσύνην τε κακῶν ἄμπαυμά τε μερμηράων*, *Theog.* 55). His pessimistic outlook upon history combined with his belief in a corresponding decay in men's souls cautions him against the hope that man will ever see another Golden Age which will transform man's present lot with its heavy toil and short wages. On the contrary, Discord, Envy, Misery and all manner of Evil-doing will increase in human hearts until Aidos and Nemesis flee the earth and forsake mankind (*Works and Days*, 197 ff.). The present race of men, with their toil, sorrow, and death, find little in their drab existence to commend. Hesiod's prescription for contentment is to make a virtue of necessity by seeking salvation in the manifesto of toil and by lightening the daily ardors with the simple resources on hand. When oppression lies too heavy on the human spirit and sorrow finds deeper roots in the human heart, then can the servant of the Muses cause men to forget their griefs and ills by singing the glorious deeds of men and of the blessed gods (*Theog.* 98 ff.).

When Hesiod speaks of the glorious deeds of men as material for the poet, he must be referring to bards of a by-gone era who could

<sup>66</sup> There is a striking resemblance between this passage of Homer and Hes. *Theog.* 81 ff. Note Plato's use of two civic leaders as examples of great eloquence, Pericles and Adrastus, legendary king, known for his mellifluous tongue (*Phaedr.* 269A).

<sup>67</sup> See Sikes (above, note 63) 2. Homer indicated this power in poetry when he portrayed Achilles finding surcease in song (*Il.* 9.189). Cf. Plato, *Laws* 653D.

portray men's brilliant exploits which rivalled those of the gods themselves. Though Hesiod and men of his imagination and creative spirit were enchanted by these wonderful tales of the glorious past, yet Hesiod must have felt that the Boeotian peasant, earth-bound and toil-worn, would respond less warmly to stories of men whose entire existence was dedicated to the sword and the clarion call. Nor could they in their humility conceive of the gods descending Mt. Olympus to rejoice or grieve in any way over human destiny. So Hesiod wrote of the wonders of divine beings, of their births and progeny, their struggles to establish a kingdom in heaven out of chaos and confusion, but of men he portrayed their humble lives and scant circumstances and offered them a practical handbook on the ordering of their daily existence. And herein lies the basic difference between the Ionian and the Boeotian view of poetry; for while Homer aims essentially to delight his audience, Hesiod feels the burden of a greater responsibility prompted by the untutored tastes and straitened exigencies of his hearers. He therefore retains the heroic form but puts it to new use by utilizing material of more realistic, immediate significance and by allowing the needs of the community to shape his art. Although destined through his magnificent grasp of humanistic values to become the greatest teacher of Hellas, Homer did not stress this as his role in general, and taught chiefly by indirection; Hesiod, on the other hand, is at every point conscious of this function as the main task of poetry and teaches quite openly, only partially disguising his purpose by the use of gnomic expressions and of fables such as that of the hawk and the nightingale (*Works and Days*, 203 ff.).

This didactic view of poetry leads Hesiod to found his art on the corner-stone of truth, although he is at the same time aware that the poet may also deal with fiction. Is one here to think that perhaps this is a faint foreshadowing of the *mythos*, *logos* controversy? One is strongly tempted to see in this passage the implication that Homer's material was essentially *mythos*, while Hesiod's was *logos*. Surely his preamble to the *Theogony* is to be interpreted as a plea for the infallibility of his disquisition on the genesis and nature of the gods and their universe. On that solemn occasion when the Muses marked Hesiod as their fitting spokesman by presenting him with the olive staff and filling his heart with a divine voice, they bade him celebrate the things that are, that shall be, and that were before (*Theog.* 32, 38). How could a simple

shepherd, "denizen of the wilderness and a thing of shame" (*ibid.* 26), otherwise be so presumptuous as to undertake such holy themes unless divine sanction and assistance were vouchsafed to him? Where Hesiod seeks great accuracy of facts involving a feat of memory, he invariably invokes the Muses, as, for example, when he actually begins his genesis and asks the goddesses to declare to him the "events from the beginning and which came first to be" (*ibid.* 115). For the same reason Homer called upon the Muses when he began his catalogue of ships, since the account required extensive acquaintance with geography and other knowledge of a factual nature. The Muses, therefore, can impart knowledge, but for Hesiod this knowledge is of a more abstract nature involving concepts of greater philosophical implications. The Muses can sing of the revered gods from the dim days of the great chasm to the splendid era of the Olympic dynasty; they can sing the laws of all and the goodly ways of the immortals, and as he listens, Zeus rejoices in his heart (*Theog.* 36 ff.). Surely, one can here say that the Muses and through them the poets are helping to stabilize the empire of Zeus by presenting him as the centre of the divine world and as the figure in whom reside most of the moral values which could give significance and depth to human existence. Hesiod consciously conceives of the poet as the educator of the community in that he presents a religious doctrine and a code of ethics derived from it. The poet's primary concern is the creation of an enlightened political order founded on enduring moral principles, and he deems poetry along with *Dikê*, *Eirênê*, and *Eunomia*, the new generation of Zeus' children, to be indispensable agents in the fulfillment of his purpose. As an inspired poet Hesiod offers the fruits of his reflections to both prince and peasant and urges them to a pattern of behavior which will elevate them beyond the selfish brutalities of an unprincipled world. For Hesiod, therefore, poetry is much more than a graceful accomplishment; beneath its charming exterior lies the more significant reason for its practice, the obligation to become a positive force in the spiritual and political ordering of human society. In Hesiod's mind the poet is inseparable from the theologian and the philosopher, and he consciously undertakes this role of *poeta-theologus*. To use Grote's phrase, "He casts the divine foretime into a systematic sequence."<sup>68</sup> For this reason, poetry is

<sup>68</sup> *Hist. of Greece* (1899) 1.11.

for Hesiod *ιερὴ δόσις*.<sup>69</sup> It comes as a special dispensation from heaven upon chosen individuals that they may forward the laws of Zeus, and so Hesiod unites into an indissoluble triad the figure of Zeus, Poetry, and Good Government.

Hesiod won recognition early in antiquity as a teacher,<sup>70</sup> and on the basis of his subject-matter was called theologian by Aristotle (*Met.* 3.4.12).<sup>71</sup> This belief in the early Greek poets as the first philosophers, theologians, and scientists found a strong exponent in Strabo who, indeed, calls the poetry of Homer a "philosophic treatise" (*φιλοσόφημα* 1.2.17). This identification of poet with theologian emerges for the Middle Ages in the works of Lactantius (*Div. Inst.* 5.5), of Augustine (*Civ. Dei* 18.14), and of Thomas Aquinas (*Metaph.* 2.1.3). It is this concept of the poet as a figure who proclaims the close kinship between poetry and theology that made such a strong appeal to the fourteenth century defenders of the art. Boccaccio, for example, by a devious derivation which he borrowed from others, identified Musaeus with Moses.<sup>72</sup> It was

<sup>69</sup> *Theog.* 93. Cf. Plato's *theia moira*, *Phaedr.* 230A; *theia physis*, *Rep.* 366c; *Laws* 682A.

<sup>70</sup> What influence Hesiod exerted on his own age, it is impossible to judge, but that he gave the first contours to certain concepts which were to become the breath and life of Greek thought is beyond question. For his influence on Solon and Aeschylus, especially in the sphere of justice, see Solmsen (above, note 13). Heraclitus' remark that Hesiod was *διδάσκαλος πλείστων* (*Frag.* B 57 D.-K.), however disparagingly meant, at least indicates the poet's popularity. The *Works and Days* has been called a "didactic and admonitory epistle" and has been compared to Horace's *sermo* and *epistula*, since it is addressed to Perses and offers advice on topics from agriculture to ethics. T. A. Sinclair (*Hesiod, Works and Days* [London 1932] xiv ff.) finds similarity between the two poets in their method, their use of narrative device drawn from history to mythology, their gnomic manner, and in their autobiographical element. E. K. Rand found points of comparison in the temperament of Hesiod and Horace. See "Horatian Urbanity in the Works and Days," *AJP* 32 (1911) 131-165.

<sup>71</sup> Plato names Homer, Hesiod, and Simonides as poets who practised the art of teaching but disguised it by their poetry (*Prot.* 316D); Herodotus tells us (2.53) that Homer and Hesiod formed a theogony for the Greeks; Diogenes Laertius names Hesiod, along with Parmenides, Empedocles, and Xenophanes, as an early philosopher-poet (9.22). For more material on the early poets as philosophers, see W. Jaeger, *Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford 1947) 9 ff. The group in antiquity which most strongly saw poetry as philosophy were the Stoics, who tried to gloss over the criticism on poets expressed by other schools through a system of allegorical interpretation and hermeneutics. For a more detailed study of this point, see P. De Lacy, "Stoic Views of Poetry," *AJP* 69 (1948) 241-271. On the attitude to poetry and its use by philosophers, see W. Kroll, *Verständnis der Römische Literatur* (Stuttgart 1948) ch. 4, and Delatte (above, note 13), esp. 110 ff., who traces the first "apologies" of Homer in Pythagorean sources.

<sup>72</sup> *De Gen. Deor.* 14.8, translated by C. G. Osgood in *Boccaccio on Poetry* (Princeton 1930). Older authorities for this derivation are Eusebius (*Praep. Evang.* 9.27) and John of Salisbury (*Entheticus* 1187-96).



Mussato, however, who made the most thorough and systematic exposition of the sacred nature of poetry chiefly by viewing the poet as a *poeta-theologus*.<sup>73</sup>

Like Hesiod, Pindar was strongly conscious of his priestly role and his mission as teacher, but whereas Hesiod wrote primarily for the common man and strove to give shape and meaning to the lowly endeavors of peasant life, Pindar wrote for a class whose aims and virtues were already crystallized into an ideal of human behavior that was considered dignified, decent, and beautiful.<sup>74</sup> The poet's task, therefore, was to add lustre to the brilliant achievements of the nobility, to remind his aristocratic audience that their privileges carried with them a corresponding set of responsibilities, and to sound the warning that only by a strict vigilance against the wayward tendencies of man's nature could they preserve the values they cherished. By using the athletic contest as an external symbol of all the *aretai* which give worth to the nobility, Pindar transcends the moment and rescues his poetry from the taint of the occasional. As the *προφήτης Μουσῶν* (*Paeon* 6.6; *frag.* 150 [118]) Pindar is not concerned with shaping or altering the aristocratic way of life but in praising and glorifying it as the only mode of existence possible for the cultured, intelligent individual.

It is not surprising that Pindar should express complete faith in the doctrine of divine inspiration. As a mark of divine sanction it elevates the bard, his office, and his subject-matter, and serves to distinguish the true poet from the merely skilled, the eagle from the crow (*Ol.* 2.86–88). Divine inspiration, however, is no longer for him a state of temporary exultation but becomes a permanent quality of the creative process and fuses the poet's imagination, his expression, and his material. To establish a close relationship between men and the gods is characteristic of Pindar. Just as the strength and swiftness of the Olympic victor are derived from Zeus, and men are wise, brave, and eloquent through the gods, so, too, the poet's song comes as a noble gift from Heaven.<sup>75</sup> All noble accomplishments come through divine favor and for this reason

<sup>73</sup> See A. Zardo, *Albertino Mussato* (Padua 1884), who includes a history of this debate and the arguments exchanged between Mussato and his opponent, Giovannino of Mantua.

<sup>74</sup> On Pindar as a representative of the aristocracy of his day and for the philosophical aspects of his poetry, see W. Jaeger, *Paideia* (Oxford 1945) 1.205–222; and for the poet's mastery of his art, see G. Norwood, *Pindar* (Berkeley 1945) 165–186 and H. Gundert, *Pindar und sein Dichterberuf* (Frankfort 1935).

<sup>75</sup> *Ol.* 10.20; *Pyth.* 1.41, 2.49, 8.76; *Frag.* 141 (105).

the mere imitator or one who depends on the ἀρεταὶ διδακταὶ is doomed to failure, since the divine spark is lacking (*Ol.* 9.100 ff.). Anything in which God has no part had better be silenced is Pindar's final judgment on matters ungraced by divine approval (*ibid.* 104).

In addition to Zeus, Apollo, and the Muses as patrons of poetry, Pindar quite frequently invokes the Graces, whom he calls αἰοιδιμοὶ βασιλειαὶ (*Ol.* 14.3). They, too, are the daughters of Zeus and of the same generation as the Muses. The connection between the Muses and Graces Hesiod had already mentioned (*Theog.* 64), but Pindar gives them a prominence in his odes which they had hitherto never enjoyed. The fact that the Graces were especially worshipped in Boeotia may partially explain Pindar's deep affection for them.<sup>76</sup> He views them as figures who combine outer beauty with inner nobility and spiritual refinement and as such become a symbol of the true poetic spirit, of τὸ σοφόν, τὸ καλόν, τ'ἀγλαόν (*Ol.* 14.7). As once the Furies could inspire fear and dread not only by their natural office but also by their appearance, so now the beauty of the Graces delights the beholder and their spirit inspires the noble soul. The graceful expression goes hand in hand with the noble thought, and this becomes an infallible combination in arousing the noble heart to lofty action. This exalted notion of poetry reminds one very strongly of the same demands for the noble conception and the noble reader which Dante was to establish for the "dolce stil nuovo."<sup>77</sup>

Pindar, too, like his compatriot, constantly insists that poetry deal with truth.<sup>78</sup> To be sure, his immediate themes demand that he make this plea, since he writes of historical persons, victors in the Olympic contests whose actual feats, he suggests, are splendid enough to carry their own charm and their own persuasion without need on the poet's part to resort to fiction; indeed disregard for the actual facts would detract from the hero's achievements. Furthermore, Pindar, in seeking to glorify the hero's provenience, wherever feasible, treats the history of his city, his family, and the local gods; and here too Pindar must satisfy the demands of accuracy. He calls upon Truth, the daughter of Zeus, who sets all

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Paus. 9.38.1, and for their history 9.35.1-7. See also Falter (above, note 13) 27; Farnell 5.426-431.

<sup>77</sup> See his discussion on the merits of the sweet new style in *Purgatory* 24.49-63; 26.97-114.

<sup>78</sup> *Ol.* 13.93 ff.; *Pyth.* 4.279-286; *Nem.* 1.18.

things right (*Ol.* 10.4), and intimates that he will eschew tales decked with glittering lies (*Ol.* 1.29). He breaks this rule only when strict adherence to orthodox material violates his sense of beauty or his supremely noble conceptions of divine behavior.<sup>79</sup> Yet the demand for historical accuracy imposed on Pindar by the framework of his ode is only the more superficial aspect of his plea for truth; of greater significance is the implication that the true poet seeks the enduring and the meaningful behind the shifting scenes and offers his reflections as universal truths in the form of concrete symbols and pleasing metaphors. Thus τὸ καλόν and τ'ἀληθές are fused inseparably for Pindar and become the touchstone of the poet truly graced with divine favor. The gods from whom flows the unfailing stream of all truth can prompt sage poets to a knowledge beyond the reach of mortals (*Paeon* 6.51 ff.); to the Muses, to Zeus, and to Mnemosyne specifically is allotted the knowledge of all things (*ibid.* 55–56), and men who would tread the steep path of Helicon unenlightened by the wisdom of the Muses remain blind spirits (τυφλαὶ φρένες *Paeon* 7.13 ff.). That is why Pindar calls the poets *sophoi*,<sup>80</sup> they are so through the Muses, and so from Heaven come both the art and the wisdom of the poet; because they are *sophoi* they have valuable lessons to teach. It is in such a light that Pindar views the message he seeks to impart through his poetry. Since he addressed a select audience already conscious of its values,<sup>81</sup> Pindar's tone is epideictic rather than starkly didactic. He teaches through praise.<sup>82</sup> The beauty and

<sup>79</sup> *Ol.* 1.28–35, 52–53; 9.35–40; *Nem.* 5.14 ff.; 7.22–27; 8.32–37.

<sup>80</sup> The vocabulary of the fifth century applied this term to poets, prophets, and all thinkers in general. In Democritus (A 116 D.-K. from Aetius 4.10.4 and cf. also B 11 D.-K.) we read, "Souls deprived of reason, the *sophoi*, and the gods have more than five senses." Here *sophoi* is understood to mean poets, prophets, and philosophers, and it has been suggested that by the sixth sense is meant γνησία γνώμη "philosophical intuition." See Delatte (above, note 24) 51 ff., who reviews the position of several schools on this point.

<sup>81</sup> Compare the tone of Theognis whom loss of wealth and prestige had turned into a cynical critic of his own class, and whose work points to the unsettled state of the aristocracy in Megara. Despite his bitterness, however, he still felt that the hope of the country lay with the nobility, and despite his pessimistic view of life, he found certain things to be good: reverence for the gods, moderation, true friendship, poetry.

<sup>82</sup> T. C. Burgess applies βασιλικοὶ λόγοι, encomia addressed to rulers, to many of Pindar's odes. See his "Epideictic Literature," *Studies in Class. Philol.* 3 (Chicago 1902) 89–261, particularly 129–130. The theme of praise in Pindar, however, transcends the external framework of the encomium to become an integral, vital part of the poet's spirit which fuses his art with his philosophy.

strength of the Olympic runner reflect his patrician lineage, his beloved city, and the kindly gods who smile upon him. Hence Pindar is proud to call himself a poet of the exalted contest and to affirm that the noble heart leaps at his tidings (*Ol.* 4.1 ff.). From the virtues of the victor Pindar proceeds to the virtues of his city which he besprinkles with the honey of his poetry (*Ol.* 10.99) and lights up with dazzling songs (*Ol.* 9.21). Thus the victor himself becomes the visible symbol of those virtues cherished by the aristocracy. Nobility of lineage, with its implications of wealth and social position, together with nobility of spirit become the main key to an interpretation of the Pindaric concept of the aristocratic character and of lofty poetry. The qualities he deems especially laudable for the city are Law, Justice, and Peace, the golden daughters of Themis, who repel *hybris* and maintain the *καὶρὸς ἄριστος* (*Ol.* 13.4 ff.). He prays that the leader may honor his people, prompt them to concord and peace, guide them with justice, and forge his tongue on the anvil of truth (*Pyth.* 1.86); for Pindar views truth as a mark essential for the good administrator or citizen as it is for the poet. The deceitful citizen, he tells us, can utter no word of force among noble men, but under every government the man of straight speech comes to the front (*Pyth.* 2.81–88). Like his predecessors, Pindar names eloquence, in addition to sense and courage, as a desirable faculty for the civic leader, and praises Arcesilaus for all three virtues (*Pyth.* 5.109–115). From the sphere of ethics, Pindar borrows concepts which he applies to the art of poetry. Not only must the poet stand on the side of Justice and Truth, but he must exercise a sense of propriety in his work and must maintain measure due, which he frequently invokes as the goal for the ordering of one's personality, for the art of government, and for the art of poetry.<sup>83</sup> In his own case, Pindar sustains the beautiful mean, not only in such obvious technical matters as length and dignified language, but in achieving a delicate balance at times between praise and subtle reproof; for the noble mind needs only a gentle reminder.

The poet, the ruler, and the athlete all need the same qualities of justice, law, and strength, and must all receive their final blessing for their work from heaven. The poet finds his proper material in the noble deeds of the good citizen and the Olympic victor, and his

<sup>83</sup> *Ol.* 13.47–48; *Pyth.* 2.34, 4.247, 8.67–69, 11.52–53.

power of song provides a mirror in which will be reflected forever the image of these deeds (*Nem.* 7.11 ff.). Without the poet's pen they would be wrapt in darkness (*ibid.* 12) and lie silently buried in the ground (*Nem.* 9.6-7). Thus Pindar reveals the high-minded vision<sup>84</sup> of his calling by striking a solid alliance with κλέος, ἀρετή, and αἰδώς, (*Pyth.* 3.111 ff.), and the purpose of this triad is to inspire noble action on the part of the hearer. The two following quotations summarize beautifully Pindar's concept of the poet's mission: "Virtue gains long life through glorious strain" (*Pyth.* 3.114), and the "wise poet will be happy if in return for much toil he can say his good word and can set on high the fame of the state" (*Isth.* 1.45-46).<sup>85</sup>

The poet's task, therefore, is a divine task, and on the basis of this conviction, Pindar dares to name himself "prophet of the Muses" and to affirm that he is prompted to noble strain by some might divine (*Paeon* 9.34). Other poets recognized in Pindar this god-like quality, which led Horace to say that a mighty breeze uplifts the Swan of Dirce (*Carm.* 4.2.25). Man may be only the dream of a shadow, but there is something of the divine in him,<sup>86</sup> and the poet, above all others, calls forth and nourishes this divine element. As a gift of heaven, poetry, too, along with peace, law, and concord, is a radiant light which rests on men and offers the highest vindication of man's noble nature (*Pyth.* 8.96 ff.).

It is not surprising that poets should accept the doctrine of divine inspiration, for, after all, it exalts their office and ennobles their work. What, however, was the attitude of the philosophers toward this theory? Democritus, for example, declared that there can be no poetry without madness (*Frag.* B 17 D.-K.) and that

<sup>84</sup> It is this lofty view of poetry which justifies the professional status of minstrelsy in Pindar's eyes. The bard is a priest of the Muse, her interpreter (*Frag.* 150 [118]) and Pindar is quick to upbraid those who would prostitute this art (*Isth.* 2.1 ff.).

<sup>85</sup> Pindar sees in poetry a powerful influence toward peace and government. He is quick to condemn the tyrant (*Pyth.* 11.53) and eager to praise the ruler who places his virtues at the service of the State (*ibid.* 54). The Muse brings love of law into the heart (*Pyth.* 5.65-67). The strong bond Pindar strikes between Poetry and Peace reminds one of the story that Pythagoras advised his pupils to dedicate a temple to the Muses that they might preserve Concordia among the citizens. See F. Cumont, "Un Mythe Pythagoricien chez Posidon et Philon," *Rev. Phil.* 43 (1919) 81. Not only is poetry a vital force in maintaining harmony, but it, too, flourishes best in time of peace. See Bacchylides, *First Paeon*: "Peace brings forth for men wealth and the flowers of honey-tongued songs."

<sup>86</sup> *Pyth.* 8.95 ff.; *Nem.* 6.1 ff.

only the poet who writes with enthusiasm and divine frenzy can achieve the beautiful (Frag. B 18). Empedocles, too, called upon Calliope to assist him in expounding his theory of the blessed gods (Frag. B 131). For the most thoughtful analysis of divine inspiration among the philosophers, however, one must go to the *Ion* and to the *Phaedrus* of Plato. A complete study of Plato's views on this subject, however essential to a comprehensive history of divine inspiration, must be reserved for separate treatment; in the present paper one can only offer a brief conclusion. A close analysis of the *Ion* and the *Phaedrus* reveals serious objections on the part of Plato to the doctrine of divine inspiration as it is generally accepted, despite his treatment of the subject in orthodox terms. His most telling criticism springs from his conviction that divine madness, as it commonly operates in poets, exhibits a fatal shortcoming in that it seeks no permanent alliance with *logos*. Divine inspiration, therefore, far from rescuing poetry from Plato's ultimate verdict, serves only to strengthen his condemnation of the art.

In this paper an attempt has been made to show that early Greek mythology and legends assigned a divine origin to poetry on the basis that it was actually created by the gods and that it was first practiced on earth by children of the gods. For the historical period, this belief in the divine nature of poetry emerged under the concept of divine inspiration, which points to an ancient kinship between poetry and prophecy. We then proceeded to analyze divine inspiration as a form of madness and of intoxication, and to indicate the view of certain philosophers on inspiration as a working principle for poets. The poets, however, did not deem it sufficient to establish the divine claims of their vocation solely on the doctrine of *enthousiasmos* but endeavored to prove that their *alêtheia* and *sophia* stemmed from the gods, and that by putting their art to noble use in the community, they won the right to consider both their material and their mission as holy. We chose Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar as representative poets in early, divergent societies who reveal their belief in the divine nature of poetry by virtue of the bard's *afflatus*, his *doctrina*, and his *officium*.

That the poet was divinely inspired and that his calling received its mandate from heaven were ideas, on the whole, highly cherished throughout antiquity. To be sure, many of the themes on the divine nature of poetry the Romans inherited from the Greeks as rhetorical motifs or as traditional *topoi* the use of which they

justified by the principle of imitation. Yet the doctrine of divine inspiration had a remarkable history among the Romans and shows some rather interesting variations. From the very beginning it was made the basis of the poet's position in society. We have already noted that Ennius saw greater dignity in the term *poeta* than in the term *vates*, but in preferring the newer word, he did not at the same time relinquish the idea of divine inspiration which is implicit in the older term. Because he believed that poets were entrusted to man as a divine gift, he called them *sancti*, and as such there was a place reserved for them by the side of military conquerors (Cic. *Arch.* 18 ff.). That the religious value of poetry was early recognized we know from the commission Andronicus received to compose a hymn to Juno (Livy 27.37.7). Despite the opposition that arose from such men as Cato,<sup>87</sup> poetry earned for itself a place among the recognized disciplines by virtue of its influence in the spiritual and political life of the community, and especially so under Augustus who saw in this art a powerful medium for propagandizing his moral and political reforms, and so encouraged the view that poets are inspired voices. Both Virgil and Horace skilfully wove national themes into the substance of their poetry, and by investing the *vates* with new distinction and dignity, converted the poet once again into the *sacerdos Musarum*.<sup>88</sup> How the Augustan poets combined imperial doctrine with their own subject-matter and their own convictions may to a certain extent be seen in their singular devotion to Apollo as a source of inspiration and as the god closely identified with the fortunes of the Julian house.<sup>89</sup> Horace, who gives due place to the Muses and Bacchus in his poetry, yet reserves for Apollo his finest tribute when he ascribes to Phoebus his *spiritus*, *ars carminis*, and *nomen poetae* (*Carm.* 4.6.29). Tibullus and Propertius continued to invoke Apollo and the Muses, but found a more quickening source of inspiration in love. Propertius, for example, remarked that to seek for inspiration when one is in love is to seek for water in time of full flood (1.9.15). This shift from divine beings to mortals for the poet's *afflatus* was not entirely new among the Romans. Ennius

<sup>87</sup> Gellius 11.2 says Cato praised the good old days when a poet was termed "grassator." Cf. Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 1.2.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Hor. *Carm.* 3.1.3; Ovid, *Am.* 3.8.23; *Trist.* 3.2.3-4; Prop. 3.1.3.

<sup>89</sup> For the worship of Apollo in Rome and for the special veneration accorded him by the poets, see E. H. Haight, "An Inspired Message in Augustan Poets," *AJP* 39 (1918) 341-366.

in his vision received the gift of poetry from Homer,<sup>90</sup> and Lucretius warmed to his task by finding his inspiration in Epicurus, whom he called *divina mens* (3.15) and *deus* (5.8,51). This tendency to seek poetic enthusiasm in actual persons reached its high point in the cult of emperor worship. Statius frequently invoked the name of Domitian, and Lucan affirmed that he had no need for the Muses, Apollo, or Bacchus, since the *numen Neronis* was sufficient for his inspiration (1.63 ff.).<sup>91</sup>

Christianity posed new problems in the concept of divine inspiration in its creed of grace and divine intervention. Inspiration now flowed from the Spiritus Sanctus, but only for the holy prophet and saint, not for the poet. The suspicions expressed in regard to poetry in certain academic discussions caused an astonishing reversal in the supposed origin of poetry. While the Greeks and Romans had considered her a daughter of the gods, she was now entitled a child of Satan, as the principal source of lies.<sup>92</sup> While the dove, bird of the Holy Ghost, became the symbol for the divine inspiration of prophets, the raven, traitorous bird of Noah, became the symbol for poets.<sup>93</sup> This unflattering attitude to poetry persisted in some quarters throughout the Middle Ages, until she received vindication in Dante's metaphysics with his matchless statement that art is the daughter of nature and nature is the child of God (*Inferno* 11.100 ff.), and in the valiant apologies of the Trecentisti who derived *vates* from *vas Dei* and who, with Cicero, once more equated poetry with *doctrina* and *humanitas* (*Tusc. Disp.* 5.66).

<sup>90</sup> Schol. ad Pers. Prol. 2-3; Cic. *Acad. Pr.* 2.51.

<sup>91</sup> For an excellent investigation of the views the Roman poets held of their task, see J. Cousin, "Nature et Mission du Poète dans la Poésie Latine," *Revue des Cours et Conférences* 38, Ser. 1 (1936-37) and Ser. 2 (1937); 39, Ser. 1 (1937-38) and Ser. 2 (1938); 40, Ser. 1 (1938-39) and Ser. 2 (1939).

<sup>92</sup> See K. Borinski, *Die Antike in Poetik und Kunsttheorie* (Leipzig 1914-1924) 1.3.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 ff. The poets, especially the classical ones, were also referred to as "spiritu immundo instincti." Borinski points out that poetic inspiration was considered a form of demonic possession since it convulsed the soul and roused the passions, while the Holy Ghost worked with tranquillity and gentleness. He also shows that not only poetry but all artistic activity received criticism in the early Church. In this connection, see F. A. Norwood, "Ante-Nicene Fathers and Greek Artistic Achievement," *Journal of History of Ideas* 8 (1947) 431-448, who traces the attitude of early Christianity towards aesthetics and shows the change from a feeling of antipathy to one of appreciation.