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**Between Tradition and Innovation:
Genealogy, Names and the number
of the Muses**



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of the Muses

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Debts are what authors of academic literature have to pay unconditionally. Someone has nicely said, in a similar context, that it is very fortunate that nowadays we are not thrown into jail for the debts we owe. However, I would like to avoid making this list of my debts a lengthy one, and I shall limit my acknowledgements to the essential minimum.

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Introduction

This work forms part of a larger project attempting to describe the image, place, and function, as well as the methods of perception of the Muses in the antiquity. It should be stressed that those aspects of the Muses' image in the Greek culture have been considered particularly worthy of analysis, which have been hitherto ignored or insufficiently highlighted in the research. Thus, among a number of issues under investigation there is for instance the question of the Muses' place in the ancient Greek religion, the question of the Muses' gender, or the problem of the relations between *poetologische Bildersprache* and the culture of a given period, including, among others, analyses of the scenes of poetic initiation.

This study, however, is focused exclusively on the question of the **genealogy, names, and number of the Muses**. To date, this particular subject-matter has not been approached more comprehensively, while the existing analytical studies are either superficial or flawed with methodological shortcomings. In the resulting situation, many scholars¹ make references to certain conclusions regarding the origin, names, and the number of the Muses on the basis of two or three works (of a rather encyclopaedic nature) recognised as classic and authoritative².

¹ On the frequency of references to the image of the Muses and the scenes of poetic initiation in the research on Homer (the opinion is also valid for other authors, beginning from Hesiod and Pindar), see Clay J.S. 1983, 9: *any serious study of Homer thus does well to begin with a consideration of the nature of the Muse and the problem of invocation*.

² Most of Chapter 1 will be devoted to the discussion of this historiographical problem.

However, putting textbook opinions aside and looking into ancient Greek sources more meticulously, it is immediately noticeable that the image of the Muses in the antiquity was fluid, whereas the frequently upheld canonicity of Hesiod's representation – fairly limited³. At times, it may even seem that the clear-cut determination of the scope of the Muses' image appears only in modern mythology textbooks.

Apart from a general delineation of the research scope, it is also of significance to point out the specific character of the methodological approach. Due in part to the specific nature of the problems under examination, one of the particular features of this study is the neutral approach to both texts of outstanding value and those of lesser literary merit. Thus far, the research on the Muses has been primarily focused on partial analyses dedicated to the works of several most notable authors, especially Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar,⁴ whose accounts were valued more than those deriving from the later or somewhat inferior texts. Reaching out beyond the range of individual authors and concepts of inspiration is, however, of great importance for the proper delineation of the cultural background of the Muses' image. It also leads, inevitably, to the search for some elements that would be common to various authors. Therefore, in this work the focus of particular attention is not on intellectually conspicuous texts, but rather on finding a summation representative for the epoch; with full awareness, naturally, of the significance of individual and local differences. In this measure, the purpose of this work is, beyond doubt, to ascertain the image of the Muses as a certain reproduction of specific traits in the Greek

³ See e.g. commentary of Nisbet/Hubbard 1970, 282-283 to Hor. 1. 24.3: *like other poets Horace speaks vaguely of 'the Muse' (cf. 3.3.70) and sometimes of a particular Muse, such as Clio (1.12.2), Polyhymnia and Euterpe (1.1.33), Calliope (3.4.2), Thalia (4.6.25); Melpomene*. In the passage commented on, Horace speaks of Melpomene, assigning to her, however, functions different from the "canonical" ones, because, as the authors of the commentary (283) claim: "*assignment of provinces was still vague*".

⁴ See e.g. Marg 1957; Latte 1968; Gundert 1978.

mentality of the period in question, rather than to carefully re-create the perceptions of individual poets⁵.

Due to restrictions imposed by its form, this study is focused primarily on sources from the Archaic and Classical periods. However, due to, among others, the state of preservation of the sources, some later accounts will be also referred to on a number of occasions. They are treated selectively, however, and analysed inasmuch as they yield information about the state of the perceptions relating to the genealogy, number, and names of the Muses in the above eras.

I hope that an analysis in this particular form can speak for itself, and I think the propounded conclusions shall hold true also for accounts and testimonies from other periods. This results from the specific method of analysis that has been assumed and the particular view applied to research work, shifting the interest from determining the truth about the Muses themselves towards a “truth” about the people drawing on the Muses’ image. This change can also be described as a shift from the philological and historical perspectives towards an anthropological one⁶.

Finally, I would like to describe briefly the contents of the individual chapters.

Chapter 1 contains an introduction to the issues of the genealogy, number, and the names of the Muses. For obvious reasons (Karen Bassi (1993) calls this a palinodic feature of academic texts, but we could just as well speak of priamel), it deals, in large part, with an analysis of evaluations of the above issues in modern academic literature. Thus, an

⁵ Cf. e.g. Maehler 1963; Lanata 1963. Of course, a “mentality” or a “culture” is investigated, above all, through analysing individual texts; hence, the role of individual poets cannot be underestimated. The difference is in where the emphasis is placed, and how the conclusions are drawn.

⁶ Cf. Bowie F. 2000, 4-6.

attempt is made to demonstrate the nature, and the possible causes, of the neglect in this area of study. The entire chapter will serve to justify a renewed attempt to undertake a description of these issues in the academic field.

Chapters 2 to 4 have been devoted to the analysis of accounts concerning the genealogy, names, and the number of the Muses. Each one contains a recapitulation of partial conclusions resulting from a detailed analysis, and a certain measure of general conclusions.

All the lines of analysis come together in Conclusions (Chapter 5), comprising a multi-faceted analysis of the earlier, partial conclusions, as well as an attempt to outline the contexts in which discrepancies in the stories of the origin, number, and the names of the Muses cease to be the copyist's error or *poetische Spielerei*.

The whole has been supplemented by Chapter 6, entitled *Between Tradition and Innovation II*, which is an attempt to indicate the contexts in which various divergent versions of mythic stories function in the Greek culture. Thus, the analysis shall include some clues as to the types of discrepancies, on the levels of both the storyline and communication, and also a recapitulation of the causes of those discrepancies, supplied with some new examples of such accounts and their role in the Greek culture.

1. Between Tradition and Innovation I

ἄπαν δ' εὐρόντος ἔργον
Pi. O. 13.17

About a century ago, in his *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*¹ Otto Bie wrote on the genealogy, names, and the number of the Muses in the following way:

Die Genealogie gab ihnen sicher Zeus zum Vater, wie es Homer und alle älteren Epiker thun. (...) Die übrigen willkürlichen Genealogieen (...) haben für die älteren Hauptkulte kaum eine Bedeutung, nicht einmal die eines Kompromisses verschiedener im Kulte vorkommender Versionen; sie sind nur Spielereien dichterischen Phantasie, wie Eumelos Apollon den Vater der Musen nennt (...) Die Namen für die drei helikonischen älteren Musen Melete, Mneme, Aoide (Paus. 9, 29) klingen etwas zu gelehrt (...) Die erste ausführliche literarische Erwähnung der Neunzahl liegt bekanntlich in der hesiodischen Theogonie vor; hier werden die später populär bleibenden einzelnen neun Musen genannt; hier sind Zeus und Mnemosyne die Eltern. Wir haben hier das dichterisch fixierte Resultat der mythologischen Bestrebungen vor uns, die in der boiotischen Sängerschule lebendig waren. An der Scheide des 8. und 7. Jahrhunderts, dürfen wir annehmen, hat sich am Helikon die Vorstellung der neun Musen entwickelt. Ihre Namen sind einfache Übertragungen allgemeiner Adjectiva und darin viel echter, als jener drei überlieferten Namen der alten helikonischen Musen.

The German scholar's opinion is certainly not the first of this type to appear in the academic world, but it is one of the most representative and fairly influential, also due to where it was first published. Consequently, a number of clearly subjective statements (*klingen etwas zu gelehrt, Spielereien dichterischen Phantasie, willkürlichen Genealogieen* etc.), careless attitude towards some evidence (apart from the selective manner in which it was treated), and disputability of some

¹ Bie 1894-1897, col. 3240-3241.

interpretative presuppositions significant for general conclusions, are worthy of attention here, since they present some cause for concern. Some elements of the argumentation even create the impression of being in contradiction to one another, as e.g. judging one version of the Muses' names as *etwas zu gelehrt* while recognizing the other one to be much truer (*viel echter*), not just a probable one, despite the fact that the latter set of names is derived from adjectives (arbitrarily selected, in all certainty) depicting the assumed fields of the deities' activity². Upon a closer reading, it becomes evident that the author assumes a wrong research perspective and evaluates the problem "from within", as if he were a "believer" or a "native". Currently, however, an "ethnographer's outlook" must be adopted, and therefore the knowledge of the image and the role of the Muses in the European culture must be put aside, and any initial presuppositions concerning the shape, function, and the place of the genealogy, names, and the number of the Muses in the Greek culture, must be suspended.

With the image of Zeus and Mnemosyne so deeply entrenched in the modern mind, there are very few scholars – Penelope Murray and Alex Hardie being among those exceptions – who realize that the image of the Muses, as present among the ordinary public and in the academic world alike, is the result of this representation having evolved within the European culture; that it is a construct, a derivative of the gradual and heterogeneous process of eliminating the rare and untypical elements in favour of the common and similar ones. It is also, at the same time, an integral part of the tradition and imagination characteristic of the average educated European, even an element of the European identity and self-identification³. In this view the origin and the number of the

² The case of *genealogies* is similar; some among them are defined as legitimate and homogeneous, while others are considered improper and *arbitrary* (*willkürlichen*).

³ Cf. the chapter on the Muses in the textbook on medieval literature by E. Curtius (1953, 228-246), and also e.g. Murray 1989 and 2006.

Muses, similarly to many other elements of our tradition, cannot be disputable or subject to controversy.

However, already in the antiquity there appeared, on many occasions, various tendencies that strove to make traditions uniform and sought a common denominator for e.g. many individual versions. Those tendencies could have been both a response to socio-political changes (for instance, in the Hellenistic or Second Sophistic period) and an individual reaction resulting from competition-related contexts. Consequently, in the research on the Greek and Greco-Roman cultures the continual clash and intermingling between inventiveness and tradition can be postulated. At the same time, innovation is fairly often portrayed as an element of tradition, only a forgotten one, while the traditional may be deemed the ancestors' unnecessary innovation. The dance of tradition and innovation is carried on to the tune of cultural transformations. Any single element cannot be properly interpreted on its own; only a thorough and holistic analysis can offer the possibility to impart a definite sense.

Some of the modern interpretative proposals recommend solutions resulting from anachronistic presuppositions and the deficiency of impartiality in viewing the extant ancient accounts. However, in an analysis of the image of the Muses in the Archaic and Classical periods, the elements of that image cannot be evaluated according to the norms typical of the later historical eras; instead, they must be investigated with a proper regard for cultural features characteristic for the period under research. And at that particular time in history, the mythical tradition was exceptionally unstable and fluid.

The factor responsible for this situation is, most of all, the oral tradition,⁴ which had dominated until the fifth century BC and continued to play a significant role later on. Moreover, the function of myth, especially in oral cultures, is to respond to a changing reality and

⁴ Cf. e.g. Lord 1960; Finnegan 1977; Foley 2002; Ford 2003.

to adapt to new social experiences, not to represent any unchangeable and indisputable norms (in a narrative mode)⁵. Hence, for instance, the question of recognising Zeus as the father of the Muses – Bie's *Genealogie gab ihnen sicher Zeus zum Vater* – is even problematic inasmuch as for the Greeks of the Archaic and Classical periods, this element of their perception of the world of gods (especially the minor and female deities) was far from being fixed or permanent. Diverse accounts showing alternative versions (from today's point of view, assuming a centrality of one of the versions) of theogonic tales clearly attest to plurality in this sphere of religious notions. The general expression (*Genealogie*), as used in Otto Bie's article, had completely pushed aside the question of sources and created a false illusion of a cohesive tradition.

An equally significant reason for the appearance of still newer and newer versions of mythic stories was the necessity dictated by competition among poets at all kinds of *agōnes*, from the context of private events and symposiums to poetic competitions at pan-Hellenic festivals (e.g. at Delphi). Finally, discrepancies in the extant literary versions are also an effect of the political, and thus also religious, fragmentation of the Greek world and the resulting existence of local versions of the mythic stories. The fact that they did not become extinct throughout the Hellenistic era, and even fared pretty well in the Roman Empire, may be attested to, for example, by information yielded by Pausanias. Tales expressing local experiences, serving to build or reinforce the sense of unity, inevitably had to be adjusted to changing historical conditions.

Communication context was of no less significance for the mythical representation, as the myth was certainly variously communicated: to children; by children; other elements must have been of particular importance to women; still others were narrated on special occasions, e.g. at weddings and funerals. Besides, certainly there were also different sets of stories intended for diverse age and social groups.

⁵ Cf. Gould 1985.

When these, here only briefly sketched, circumstances are taken into consideration, Otto Bie's analysis must be regarded as inadequate and incomplete. Were other mythic genealogies *willkürlich* indeed? Is pointing out to *Spielereien dichterischen Phantasie* a reasonable explanation for their existence? What is known about the image of the Muses in the most ancient cults,⁶ and why is the version by Hesiod – (only) a poet himself, after all – or those by *alle älteren Epiker* (also those whose works are lost?), more “certain” than the versions by other poets, whose genealogies are only a product of imagination and poetic play?

It is all the more regrettable to realise that such opinions, disregarding the information from various accounts and expressing the lack of understanding for divergent versions, tend to prevail in the twentieth-century works as well. For instance, Walter Otto's well-known study contains the following statements⁷:

Man glaubte zwar auch von “älteren Musen” zu wissen, (...) die ebenfalls von einem einzigen Elternpaar stammen sollten, nämlich von Uranos und Gaia. (...) Aber das alles kann nichts daran ändern, dass die Musen, die wir kennen, dem Olympischen Zeusreich eingeboren sind.

It appears that the method of approaching this issue in Otto's text presupposes some kind of belief in the actual existence of the goddesses (and we are not concerned here with an over-interpretation of the statement *die Musen, die wir kennen*), and therefore also the possibility of deriving an authentic genealogy.

An even more interesting, and at the same time greatly symptomatic, example of a generalisation relating to the archaic and classical image

⁶ Of course, this argument is based by Otto Bie on the assumption that there had existed (the most ancient) cult of the Muses at the Olympus and Pieria, and their image in the cult must have been identical (but why?) with that found in Hesiod. Even a neutral assessment of that opinion reveals that one supposition is here based upon another (obviously, for the lack of any concrete evidence).

⁷ Otto 1961, 26 (underlined by TM).

of the Muses is Simon Pulleyn's commentary on the *Iliad*, Book I⁸. In the note to verse 604, the following statement is found: *The Muses are daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, but Apollo is their leader in song*. Significantly, the statement is not incorrect in general, but unfortunately wrong in reference to the text on which it comments. Mnemosyne is never mentioned as the mother of the Muses in the *Iliad*, and the statement in question results from the author's wish to offer some general information. The move may be comprehensible from the diachronic perspective or from the average reader's viewpoint, yet still it is inexcusable in a detailed commentary on the work.

A different variety of this approach: generalisation and details contrary to conclusions, can be also found in Anne Queyrel's article in *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae*. In her introduction, she clearly indicates that *les M. sont filles de Zeus et de Mnémósyne*. Further on in the text, she cites another option: their descent from Ouranos and Ge. Apart from the contradiction in the introductory information, Queyrel's opinion is puzzling also due to the fact that in the iconography, as she clearly states in her article, Zeus is not featured as father of the Muses at all⁹.

In turn, in Eike Barmeyer's work on the Muses and the inspiration theory, the question of other stories dealing with the Muses is relegated to a footnote as little relevant to the image of the deities. The note reads as follows:

Es bleibt ungewiss, welchen Platz die Musen in der vorolympischen Religion eingenommen haben, in der sie allem Anschein nach auch schon verehrt wurden. So wird etwa im Scholion zu Ap. Rhodios (III, 1) eine ältere Musengeneration, die von

⁸ Pulleyn 2000, 275.

⁹ Queyrel 1992, col. 657: (...) *les M. sont filles de Zeus et de Mnémósyne. La paternité du premier des dieux n'est pas illustrée sur le documents; en revanche, la maternité de Mnémósyne, (...) apparaît dans les représentations. Dans une tradition indépendante d'Hésiode, la ou les M. sont les filles d'Ouranos et de Ge (...).*

Kronos abstammt, unterschieden von einer jüngeren, die aus der Verbindung zwischen Zeus und Mnemosyne hervorgegangen ist. Eine ähnliche Generationsunterscheidung sollen Alkman und Mimnermos von Kolophon vertreten haben (...), indem sie behaupteten, die Erzeuger der älteren Musen seien Uranos und Gaea, die der jüngeren Zeus und Mnemosyne gewesen. Auf jeden Fall wird die Musenzeugung als Tat der höchsten Gottheiten bewertet.¹⁰

Even if a reference to other versions of the genealogies is found in this passage, the conclusions are not the result of any analysis of the sources, but rather that of the author's superficial impression based on, let it be said, a perfunctory analysis of a single account from the Hellenistic period. In a similar fashion, Maria Teresa Camilloni handles the issue of the genealogies: *È questa una teologia delle Muse diversa da quella esiodea; comunque è sempre «celeste»*¹¹. However, those are not the only genealogies, nor in all of them are the Muses the offspring of *der höchsten Gottheiten*. Even Otto Bie's article had already indicated the existence of some, sufficiently old, genealogies linking the goddesses with e.g. Pieros and Antiope, not to mention Euripides' Harmony. In the academic statements cited above, there is a discernible tone of helplessness, arising possibly from the lack of a broader analysis of the ancient accounts. Simultaneously, however, there is an evident compulsion to pass a judgement and, as in the case of the archaic singers, propose one's own version of the story.

With regard to the descriptions of the genealogy, number, and names of the Muses in the modern historical literature, another noteworthy problem is such an allocation of emphasis in the text that the reader must get the impression of a little value of the *non-canonical* versions. Such a priamelic figure was already fairly overtly used by Otto Bie. It

¹⁰ Barmeyer 1968, 58, n. 12 (underlined by TM). A justified opinion on that book is found in a note in David Harvey's article (2000, n. 52) on Phrynichos: *Barmeyer 1968 says a lot about Henry Miller but nothing about Aristophanes.*

¹¹ Camilloni 1998, 50.

can also be found, in a more disguised form, in Christina Walde's article devoted to the Muses in *Neue Pauly*¹²:

Seit Hesiodos, der in der Konzeption der Musen die massgebliche Rolle spielt, sind die Neunzahl (Hes. Theog. 60; andere Konstellationen: Arnob. 3,37) und die Namen (Hes. Theog. 75 ff.) Kalliope, Kleio, Euterpe, Erato, Urania, Terpsichore, Melpomene, Thaleia, Polyhymnia mehr oder minder kanonisch. Alternative Genealogien nennen Uranos und Ge (Mimn. Fr. 13 IEG; Diod. 4,7,2) oder Apollon (Eumelos fr. 17 Kink) als Eltern. Cicero (nat. deor. 3.54) kennt neben den kanonischen Musen zwei weitere Gruppierungen: vier Töchter des arkadischen Zeus (Thelxinoe, Aoide, Arche, Melete), sowie neun Töchter des Pieros und der Antiope, die Pierides, mit denselben Namen wie die kanonischen Musen.

Hopefully, I shall be able to demonstrate that the phrases such as *kanonisch*, *alternative Genealogien*, *andere Konstellationen* significantly distort the image of the Muses in the Archaic and Classical periods. Enumerations void of any justification, and dressed in phrases fraught with specific meaning, prevent the reader from properly appreciating the state of research or the actual state of the issue. As in the other works dealing with the same subject, we are here faced with the sense of an overwhelming importance of Hesiod's version, and, to use the expression employed by the author of the entry, its (timeless? universal?) *canonicity*.

As the above passages clearly demonstrate, the crux of the problem is not just the genealogy, but also the number and names of the Muses; in the ancient Greek tradition, these two areas were also not free from discrepancies. Thus the generalised statements referring to the canonicity of some individual version – particularly in commentaries to the works from the Archaic and Classical periods – must arouse astonishment and objection. A case in point may be the opinion of Heide Froning,¹³ who in her work on the dithyramb and the art of vase painting in Athens

¹² Walde 2000, 511-512.

¹³ Froning 1971, 76; cf. also n. 480.

argues that the nine wooden statues placed over the altar depicted on Polio's crater must be the Muses, because *die Neunzahl der Musen ist seit Homer (Od. 24.60) und Hesiod (Theog. 76) kanonisch*.

A more nuanced view of this image among scholars is necessary, and the only way to proceed is through a careful and detailed analysis of all the accounts that are available and, inevitably, of culture-bound practices connected with the phenomenon in question.

Apart from their historiographic significance, quoting so many citations *in extenso* is here important for another reason as well. All these scholarly works are also significant in that they constitute a basis for the knowledge on the Muses for those historians who are not directly involved in the research on the image of those deities; they are works commonly mentioned in notes and bibliographies. It is surely common knowledge how often scholars, especially philologists, encounter references to the Muses in various works of classical literature. However, none of the hitherto mentioned works is quoted as frequently as Maximilian Mayer's article in *Realencyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*¹⁴. The 1933 work had every right to become a classic due to its (relative) versatility and completeness; there is no doubt the article therein contains the fullest list of the relevant source evidence. However, upon a more careful reading, we may notice flaws in the methodological approach and problems related to the article's selection of the evidence. The most surprising, however, are multiple

¹⁴ Mayer, 1933, 687-691, cf. e.g. Pease 1968, 1100, and 1102 (where, incidentally, referring to an article on the Muses, the author of the commentary confuses Mayer with Kees, the latter writer being the author of a small entry on a military outpost in Egypt called Mousai); Queyrel 1992, 657; van Groningen 1948, 289: *Pour plus de détail le lecteur voudra bien consulter l'article substantiel de M. Mayer etc.*; Harvey D. 2000, n. 53: *for the literary evidence see Mayer 1933, 687-91*; Erbse 1972, 195, n. 75: *Vgl. im einzelnen M. Mayer etc.*; Broggiato 2002, 277, n. 435: *Sulle differenti tradizioni riguardanti il numero delle Muse vd. M. Meyer*; Murray 1981, 89, n. 16.

errors made in the quoted source material¹⁵. The commonly employed references to the relevant pages of Mayer's article prove, in this case, the force of the rhetorical *effect of reality* (Mayer's text is, due to the article's character, filled with so many references to sources that it appears to be hyper-reliable), as well as the deceptiveness of the belief in various authorities on the subject. The absence of any critique clearly suggests that the references to the evidence material had not been thoroughly verified at the stage of text consultations; the fact that some other author's research is cited usually relieves the writer of the obligation (in reality, frequently difficult to fulfil) to carry out one's own in-depth research on the subject.

All of this serves to indicate, hopefully, how important it is to re-examine the question and go through an analysis of the surviving evidence material. It should be pointed out that the direction of the changes in the approach towards analysing the image of the Muses has already been shown by the scholars such as Penelope Murray and Alex

¹⁵ When discussing, for example, a passage from Arnobius (col. 688), Mayer falsely interprets a fragment of the first sentence and believes that Mnaseas had also cited a "canonical" genealogy – *Die Herleitung von Uranos und Ge (Antipater Anth. Pal. IX, 21, 9) kannte auch Mnaseas nebst den drei M., indem er beide Versionen kombinierte, d. h. die hesiodischen neun Töchter von Zeus und Mnemosyne als eine jüngere Generation dazusetzte (Tzetz. Hes. opp. p. 23 G., Schol. Hom. Il. II 671, Arnob. III, 37)*. From Arnobius' fragment, it clearly follows that it was not Mnaseas, but the *ceteri praedicant*; besides, there are 4, not 3, Muses there; the excerpt from Antipater of Thessalonika in the *Palatine Anthology* is under no. 26, not 21, and is not a direct proof of the poet's knowledge of the alternative genealogy of the Muses; a commentary on the passage from the *Iliad* cannot be found in any of the standard editions of the best-known scholia (Dindorf, Erbse), with a sole exception of the *Anecdota Graeca* by Cramer (vol. I, pp. 277-278); there is nothing there on any other genealogies, but there is a mention of three Muses in Mnaseas. Finally, after having looked through Tzetzes' commentary for several times, following Mayer's cross-references, I have not been able to locate there any information on Mnaseas or any other genealogies.

Hardie¹⁶. In one of his articles, the latter author also considers a part of the tradition connected with the names of the deities and attempts to present it against a broad cultural background¹⁷. Moreover, some additional support for the analyses in this work is also provided by the research, ever more common since the time of Bruno Gentili, on the so-called pragmatic side of the literary production in ancient Greece,¹⁸ the results of which have considerably facilitated postulating some interpretation solutions. A breakthrough work in how to approach the myth material and demonstrate the fluidity of the “tradition” is undoubtedly the article by Mark Griffith (1990) entitled, quite significantly, *Contest and Contradiction in Early Greek Poetry*. The diversity of borrowing and inspiration in this matter is obvious, because, in Bacchylides’ words, ἕτερος ἔξ ἑτέρου σοφὸς¹⁹.

The aim of this study is therefore to attempt to examine the source material concerning the genealogy, number, and the names of the Muses, in particular with reference to the Archaic and Classical periods.

¹⁶ Murray 2002; Murray/Wilson eds. 2004; Murray 2005; Hardie 2000; 2004; 2007.

¹⁷ Hardie 2006.

¹⁸ Cf. e.g. Rösler 1983; Gentili 1990; Latacz 1994; Bartol 1995.

¹⁹ Bacch. *paе.* fr. 5 = Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 5.68.5. In the subsequent chapters of this work, unless otherwise indicated, lyric poets will be cited according to the Campbell edition, elegiac and iambic poets – to the Gerber edition, poems and fragments of Pindar and Bacchylides – to the Snell and Maehler editions. Should it be important for the purpose of analysis, and in the case of other authors, editors’ initials or names shall be used.

2. Genealogy of the Muses

The genealogy-related information is mentioned for the first time, quite unsurprisingly, in Homer and Hesiod; yet the works of these two poets, even though both are considered to have expressed pan-Hellenic tendencies, significantly differ in this respect¹. All that can be found in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is only a brief piece of information on the origin of the Muses, whereas Hesiod devotes a considerable amount of space to build an image of the goddesses that is reliable and fairly complete, at least in comparison with other known descriptions.

In Book II of the *Iliad*, in the so-called “second invocation”, the narrator calls upon the Muses to aid him in enumerating the troops and their commanders as (491-492): Ὀλυμπιάδες Μοῦσαι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο / θυγατέρες – *Muses of Olympus, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus*². Also, in verse 598 of the same Book, they are called “daughters of Zeus”: Μοῦσαι ... κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο. There is no more information relating to the origin of the Muses anywhere else throughout the *Iliad*³. In turn, in the *Odyssey*, only once, in Book VIII (488), some Muse (in the singular) is called *Zeus’ daughter* (Διὸς πάϊς)⁴. The Muses’ mother is not mentioned

¹ The problem with a proper assessment of the information on, for example, the origin of the Muses results in part from a conviction, evident in some research, that only one pan-Hellenic version may exist, and also is due to ignoring the possibility of the existence of many mutually competitive supra-local versions.

² Unless noted otherwise, translations of the classical texts are provided by the author.

³ In the remaining invocations to the Muses, they are only referred to as inhabitants of the Olympus: Ἔσπετε νῦν μοι Μοῦσαι Ὀλύμπια δώματ’ ἔχουσαι – *Now, you Muses living on Olympus, tell me* – which could, but did not have to, suggest the descent from Zeus.

⁴ *Od.* 8.488: ἢ σέ γε Μοῦσ’ ἐδίδαξε, Διὸς πάϊς, ἢ σέ γ’ Ἀπόλλων – *whether the Muse taught you, the daughter of Zeus, or Apollo.*

in Homer at all, which had prompted interpretations assuming an early stage in the development, and the original nature, of the representation. However, a situation where only a father is mentioned is encountered in many poetic works⁵. This is certainly in agreement with the social pattern according to which it was the father, much more than the mother, who had been the individual defining the descendants' group identity. This is also indicated by a greater fluidity in the question of female names, especially mothers' names, in the mythology⁶. In this case, it can be therefore assumed that Homer not so much omits Mnemosyne, as does not mention the mother at all. However, the impact of Hesiod's version is so great that on many occasions to Homer's Muse/Muses, contrary to the actual state of affairs, the same origin as in Hesiod is attributed⁷. Yet the fluid and indefinite character of the Muses' number (first singular, then plural),⁸ and the lack of any names may suggest some distinctness of Homer's version.

Pondering on which version is the earlier one is pointless, since it is impossible to support either interpretation unequivocally due to the state of the sources. Nevertheless, it seems plausible that the less elaborate picture from Homer's epics: the Muse or Muses, the indefinite number, the lack of names or any information about a mother, corresponds more to what is usually considered as an earlier phase of development. Let us remember, however, that such a particular representation may be also the result of a conscious selection of the elements of the image, of a pan-Hellenic stylisation (Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι), individual

⁵ Cf. e.g. Alc. fr. 27 and 28; Thgn. 15; Bacch. 1.3.

⁶ Cf. Bremmer 1987, 45: *changing women's name was one of the poetic means of giving a story a new look* – the remark refers to the divergence in the tradition concerning the names of Polybos' wife, Oedipus' adoptive mother.

⁷ Cf. the comments above referring to Simon Pulleyn in Chapter 1.

⁸ A similar situation can be also found, for instance, in the case of Charis – Charites.

preferences of the author or an audience group, or even some sort of regression in the manner the Muses were portrayed.

In Hesiod's version, the Muses are, no doubt due to the connection with the narrator, Heliconian deities (*Th.* 1). However, it does not prevent Hesiod from calling them, elsewhere in the text, Ὀλυμπίαδες – *living on Olympus* (*Th.* 25). The expressions referring to the Muses' descent from the father prevail here as well – *Th.* 25, 52: Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπίαδες, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο (*Muses of Olympus, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus*), or verse 104: τέκνα Διὸς (*daughters of Zeus*), although, at the same time, right in the middle of the so-called *Hymn to the Muses*, a depiction of the Muses being born of Mnemosyne (*Th.* 52-62, 75-79⁹) is found:

(...) Μοῦσαι Ὀλυμπίαδες, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο.
τὰς ἐν Πιερίῃ Κρονίδῃ τέκε πατρὶ μιγεῖσα
Μνημοσύνη, γουνοῖσιν Ἐλευθῆρος μεδέουσα,
ληημοσύνην τε κακῶν ἄμπαυμά τε μερμηράων.
ἐννέα γάρ οἱ νύκτας ἐμίσητο μητίετα Ζεὺς
νόσφιν ἀπ' ἀθανάτων ἱερὸν λέχος εἴσαναβαίνων·
ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ῥ' ἐνιαυτὸς ἔην, περὶ δ' ἔτραπον ὦραι
μηνῶν φθινόντων, περὶ δ' ἤματα πόλλ' ἔτελέσθη,
ἢ δ' ἔτεκ' ἐννέα κούρας, ὁμόφρονας, ἧσιν αἰοιδὴ
μέμβλεται ἐν στήθεσσι, ἀκηδέα θυμὸν ἐχούσαις,
τυτθὸν ἀπ' ἀκροτάτης κορυφῆς νιφόεντος Ὀλύμπου·
(...)

ταῦτ' ἄρα Μοῦσαι ἄειδον Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι,
ἐννέα θυγατέρες μεγάλου Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖαι,
Κλειώ τ' Εὐτέρπη τε Θάλειά τε Μελπομένη τε
Τερψιχόρη τ' Ἐρατώ τε Πολύμνιά τ' Οὐράνιη τε
Καλλιόπη θ'· ἢ δὲ προφερεστάτη ἐστὶν ἀπασέων.

The Olympian Muses, the daughters of aegis-holding Zeus. Mnemosyne (Memory) bore them on Pieria, mingling in love with the father, Cronus' son – Mnemosyne, the protectress of the hills of Eleuther – as forgetfulness of evils and relief from anxieties.

⁹ Cf. also Hes. *Th.* 915-916.

For the counsellor Zeus slept with her for nine nights, apart from the immortals, going up into the sacred bed; and when a year had passed, and the seasons had revolved as the months waned, and many days had been completed, she bore none maidens – like-minded ones, who in their breasts care for song and have a spirit that knows no sorrow – not far from snowy Olympus’ highest peak. (...) These things, then, the Muses sang, who have their mansions on Olympus, the nine daughters born of great Zeus, Clio (Gloryfying) and Euterpe (Well Delighting) and Thalia (Blooming) and Melpomene (Singing) and Terpsichore (Delighting in Dance) and Erato (Lovely) and Polymnia (Many Hymning) and Ourania (Heavenly), and Calliope (Beautiful Voiced) – she is the greatest of them all. [transl. G. Most]

In the *Theogony*, there are of course many catalogues and accounts of the births of deities, yet a remarkably great deal of attention is focused on the Muses (the so-called *Hymn to the Muses* numbers ca. 100 verses), despite their seemingly tertiary role in the cosmogonic tale. Such a special treatment of these goddesses is certainly a conscious composition manoeuvre and is extremely significant for the interpretation of the entire work. There is no doubt that the goddesses encountered by the shepherd “Hesiod” on the slopes of the Helicon, thanks to whom he was able to relate the tale of the beginnings of the world, gods, and human beings, could not have been nameless figures, some indefinite supernatural powers. In order to fulfil the function attributed to them in the work, particularly in the story of bringing order into the world of primordial chaos, which had inevitably involved the name-giving and determining the source of the origin, they had to become definitely realistic entities. It is all the more probable, therefore, in spite of the absence of any conclusive evidence, to assume here a decisive role of the poet’s ingenuity.

The figure of Zeus appears to be here a traditional element, as may be indicated such by expressions as Ὀλυμπιάδες or Ὀλύμπια δώματ’ ἔχουσαι, which can be seen already in Homer. Mnemosyne, in turn, may be a figure derived from some earlier tradition, perhaps even a local one (Martin West pointed to Eleuther at Kithairon,

Boeotia¹⁰), or just a poetic invention. The image of the Muses born of *Mnemosyne-Memory* is particularly imbued with meaning¹¹ and could be also intelligible without any connection with the versions already known by audiences.

One way or another, the version of the Muses' genealogy that is today known, in its earliest example, from Hesiod's *Theogony* appears to have been quite common in the Archaic and Classical Periods. References to it can be found in Solon,¹² Alcman,¹³ or Pindar¹⁴. Notably in Pindar, but also in some works by other authors, the more frequent information is that of the descent of the Muses from Zeus only¹⁵ and, separately, from Mnemosyne¹⁶. This does not prove anything conclusively, however, as it may be just a result of, say, the poetic *variatio*.

¹⁰ Cf. Hes. *Th.* 54 - West 1966, comm. *ad locum*. However, cf. also cautious comments in Schachter 1986, 144.

¹¹ According to one interpretation thread, the Muses, begotten by Mnemosyne-Memory and Zeus, remember everything that has been accomplished before and can describe/sing out achievements of the gods, especially those of (their father) Zeus, cf. Stehle 1997, 205: *the addition of Zeus' fatherhood to the picture of the Muses singing means that Zeus begets the language used to describe the system*. Such an interpretation can be seen, in particular, in a partially preserved hymn to Zeus by Pindar (frg. 29-35); cf. Pucci 1998, 31-48 and Hardie 2000.

¹² Sol. fr. 13.1-6: Μνημοσύνης καὶ Ζητὸς Ὀλυμπίου ἀγλαὰ τέκνα, / Μοῦσαι Πιερίδες, κλυτὲ μοι εὐχομένωι.

¹³ Cf. Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2.31.1.

¹⁴ Cf. Pi. *pae.* 6.54-55.

¹⁵ Cf. Pi. *O.* 10.96; *N.* 3.10 (for an alternative interpretation, see below); cf. also fr. 29-35 from the *Hymn to Zeus*; Thgn. 15; Alcman. fr. 27 and 28.

¹⁶ Cf. Pi. *I.* 6.75-76; *N.* 7.12-15; *pae.* 7b.11-20; cf. also *h. hom.* 4.429-430; Terp. fr. 4 = adesp. 941 PMG (*Mnema*); perhaps also Alcman. fr. 8 PMGF. In iconographic representations, Mnemosyne is fairly well attested as the mother of the Muses, as opposed to Zeus, who is entirely absent on ancient vases, cf. Queyrel 1992. However, this may have resulted, for instance, from the obvious knowledge of the father's identity among the contemporary public.

The familiarity with, not to say the universality of, Hesiod's version seems to be corroborated by post-Classical authors as well¹⁷; for instance, Clement of Alexandria writes in his *Encouragement to Greeks*:

Τὰς δὲ Μούσας, ἃς Ἀλκμὰν Διὸς καὶ Μνημοσύνης γενεαλογεῖ καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ ποιηταὶ καὶ συγγραφεῖς ἐκθειάζουσιν καὶ σέβουσιν;

As for the Muses, Alcman derives their origin from Zeus and Mnemosyne, and the rest of the poets and prose-writers deify and worship them [transl. G.W. Butterworth]¹⁸.

Diodorus of Sicily, in turn, states:

οἱ πλείστοι τῶν μυθογράφων καὶ μάλιστα δεδοκιμασμένοι φασι θυγατέρας εἶναι Διὸς καὶ Μνημοσύνης· ὀλίγοι δὲ τῶν ποιητῶν, ἐν οἷς ἔστι καὶ Ἀλκμάν, θυγατέρας ἀποφαίνονται Οὐρανοῦ καὶ Γῆς;

For the majority of the writers of myths and those who enjoy the greatest reputation say that they were daughters of Zeus and Mnemosynê; but a few poets, among whose number is Alcman, state that they were daughters of Uranus and Gê [transl. C.H. Oldfather]¹⁹.

Evaluations of such late evidence must be, however, particularly careful; firstly, because the picture of the Muses in the Hellenistic period and the Roman Imperial era is more stable and enduring (as there already exist collections of myths) and, secondly, the pan-Hellenic versions had been, no doubt, superseding local stories, albeit in various time-spans. The political changes of the late fourth century BC,²⁰ more or less conducive to the process of unification among the Greeks (also in the sphere of the *imaginaire*) and the spreading model of education

¹⁷ From a later period, a genealogy serving as an example of transforming and adapting Hesiod's version to the altered historical and cultural conditions: *Iuppiter et Moneta* (Hyg. *Fab. Praef.*) is worth mentioning.

¹⁸ Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2.31.1.

¹⁹ Diod. 4.7.1.

²⁰ In contacts with the non-Greeks, so frequent after Alexander the Great, it was natural to seek common features, obliterating regional differences.

based on a certain body of texts deemed as classical and also common to various *poleis*, had all played a crucial role in this. Furthermore, the conditions in which poetry had functioned in the Archaic Period, being primarily an oral phenomenon associated with a definite place and time, had in large part disappeared or changed. All this suggests caution in evaluating this sort of evidence and drawing any far-reaching conclusions. In most cases, however, poets invoked the Muses without any precise reference to their genealogy. In such circumstances, also taking into consideration the fallibility of our tradition and the loss of a major part of the works from the Archaic and Classical Periods,²¹ we are unable to make a precise assessment of statistical shares of particular genealogies. This, however, is perhaps not the most important. Likewise, the role of the genealogy known from Hesiod's *Theogony*, or the significance of the text itself, should not be belittled. It was, with all certainty, quite commonly known in the Archaic era, as attested by a number of adaptations and references²².

High appreciation of, and fairly universal acquaintance with Hesiod's works is not tantamount, however, to rejecting other possible story-telling solutions, especially when an audience (e.g. a local one) demanded it. Also, to the Greeks, the canonicity attributed to Hesiod – the phenomenon itself later than the issues in question by at least an epoch²³ – could not have been, in the Archaic and Classical Periods, tantamount to eschewing the competition. At times, on the contrary, it must have inspired a desire to compete with the

²¹ It may be assumed with much probability that the lost works are primarily those with more local links, whereas the surviving ones are those whose versions of mythical stories, apart from their aesthetic value, were more generally accepted and could appeal to larger audiences.

²² Cf. e.g. Alc. fr. 347a; Sol. fr. 4 – cf. Irwin 2005, esp. pp. 155-198; Sem. fr. 6; Bacch. 5.191-193; Heracl. 22 F 57 DK; Xenoph. 21 F 11 DK; Pi. *I.* 6.66-71.

²³ On the canon in the Greek culture, cf. e.g. Finkelberg/Stroumsa eds., 2003.

model (or, perhaps, already traditional?) representation and to seek different paths²⁴.

It is not surprising, therefore, that information on other versions of the Muses' genealogy emerges in the sources. Contrary to appearances, there are quite a few of those; and considering the fact that most certainly the works that have survived are primarily those with more universal and pan-Hellenic contents, it may be assumed that there had existed even many more of them.

Ouranos and/or Ge

One of the most interesting genealogies distinct from that associated with the name of Hesiod derives the Muses from Ouranos and/or Ge.

²⁴ The question of fossilization of the tradition, as well as of the attempts to break up entrenched intellectual forms, especially language clichés, metaphors, or conventional phrases, emerges, contrary to appearances, fairly often in familiar works. Suffice it to mention, for example, Choirilos' famous expressions (fr. 2 Bernabé) – ἄ μάκαρ, ὅστις ἔην κεῖνον χρόνον ἴδρις ἀοιδῆς, / Μουσάων θεράπων, ὅτ' ἀκήρατος ἦν ἔτι λειμών· / νῦν δ' ὅτε πάντα δέδασται, ἔχουσι δὲ πείρατα τέχνη, / ὕστατοι ὥστε δρόμου καταλειπόμεθ', οὐδέ πη ἔστι / πάντη παπταίνοντα νεοζυγὲς ἄρμα πελάσσαι – on the once pristine meadow and the end of ingenuity, and juxtapose it, for example, with one of Timotheos' fragments (796): οὐκ ἀεῖδω τὰ παλαιά· / καινὰ γὰρ κρείσσω. / νέος ὁ Ζεὺς βασιλεύει, / τὸ παλαιὸν δ' ἦν Κρόνος ἄρχων. / ἀπίτω Μοῦσα παλαιά. Innovativeness and the awareness thereof were not limited, however, as the examples above might suggest, to the classical era only. Much information is extant on tendencies to seek new forms and versions of stories by e.g. Stesichorus and Simonides, cf. [Plut.] *de mus.* 12. 1135c-d; Stes. fr. 193 = *P. Oxy.* 2506 fr. 26 col. I. Besides, taking into consideration all the information on genre-, metric-, music-, or plot-related novelties, the entire Archaic Period is a constant march of innovation in the field of literature, cf. e.g. Phrynys test. 2 (= schol. ad Ar. *Nub.* 969 sqq.); Pi. *O.* 13.17; Critias el. 4 W. At any rate, it appears that the phenomenon of *kainotomia* in the Greek culture deserves a separate treatment.

In the second section of the already-cited passage from the work of Diodorus of Sicily,²⁵ the information can be found on *a few poets* (ὀλίγοι δὲ τῶν ποιητῶν) in whose works the Muses *appear as daughters of Ouranos and Ge* (θυγατέρας ἀποφαίνονται Οὐρανοῦ καὶ Γῆς). Diodorus refers here to the poet Alcman (ἐν οἷς ἔστι καὶ Ἀλκμάν), while similar information can also be found in several other texts. First of all, in the *scholia* to Pindar's third Nemean ode,²⁶ which will be discussed separately further on in this chapter, there is a remark indicating that Aristarchus had interpreted the passage from Pindar's work as suggesting that the Muses are daughters of Ouranos, while he, or possibly the *scholion's* author, was simultaneously citing the accounts of Alcman and Mimnermos:

ὁ μὲν Ἀρίσταρχος Οὐρανοῦ θυγατέρα τὴν Μοῦσαν δέδεκται, καθάπερ Μίμνερος καὶ Ἀλκμάν ἱστοροῦσιν.

Aristarchus assumes that the Muse is Ouranos' daughter, as transmitted by Mimnermos and Alcman;

The presence of such a genealogy in Mimnermos²⁷ is also confirmed by Pausanias²⁸:

Μίμνερος δέ, ἐλεγεία ἐς τὴν μάχην ποιήσας τὴν Συμυρναίων πρὸς Γύγην τε καὶ Λυδούς, φησὶν ἐν τῷ προσιμίῳ θυγατέρας Οὐρανοῦ τὰς ἀρχαιοτέρας Μούσας, τούτων δὲ ἄλλας νεωτέρας εἶναι Διὸς παῖδας.

Mimnermos, who composed elegiac verses about the battle between the Smyrnaeans and the Lydians under Gyges, says in the preface that the elder Muses are daughters of Uranus, and that there are other and younger Muses, children of Zeus. [transl. W.H.S. Jones]

²⁵ Diod. 4.7.1. Cf. also Euseb. *praep. evang.* II.2.16: Τὰς δὲ Μούσας θυγατέρας εἶναι Διὸς καὶ Μνημοσύνης, τινὲς δὲ Οὐρανοῦ καὶ Γῆς - *The Muses are daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, while according to others, of Ouranos and Ge.*

²⁶ Cf. schol. Pi. N. 3.16b Drachmann.

²⁷ Mimn. fr. 13 W = 14 Allen (1993, commentary: pp. 113-115).

²⁸ Paus. 9.29.4.

A similar piece of information can be also found in a papyrus of Oxyrynchos with a commentary to Mimnermos' works, where, however, the Muses' descent from Ge is mentioned²⁹:

Γῆς {μὲν} Μούσα{ς} θυγατέρας ὡς Μίμνεμος .}τας? ἐγε?|[νεαλόγησε]

Mimnermos considered the Muses as daughters of Ge.

Some discrepancies in the data are, of course, evident, as the sources mention either the goddess Ge only (the papyrus of Oxyrynchos) or Ouranos (Pausanias); or, they mention only Alcman (Diodoros), while others only Mimnermos (Pausanias), but one piece of evidence points out both these authors: the *scholia* to Pindar. The fact that both Alcman and Mimnermos had used that genealogy independently seems very plausible. At the same time, the extant information indicated that it was one of the several genealogies of the Muses which had appeared in the poetic works of both Alcman and Mimnermos. Firstly, it clearly follows from the cited passage by Clement of Alexandria,³⁰ which is also attested by fairly numerous fragments,³¹ that Alcman had derived the Muses from Zeus and/or Mnemosyne as well. Secondly, Pausanias explains that Mimnermos had referred to two genealogies of the Muses in the *prooimion* to one of his elegiac works (*Smyrneis*). This latter information is, as a matter of fact, quite peculiar and it should be considered highly probable that Pausanias, or his source, had misread the beginning of Mimnermos' work³². Having found therein two versions of the story of the Muses' origin, he may have thought that the

²⁹ Cf. Pap. Oxy. 2390 fr. 2 cols. II 28-29.

³⁰ Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2.31.1.

³¹ Alcm fr. 8; 27; 28.

³² A literal interpretation is assumed by e.g. Stehle 1997, 204, n. 114: *Mimnermos reconciles accounts, according to Pausanias (9.29.4), by distinguishing between older and younger Muses, the former offspring of Ouranos, the latter of Zeus, while a separate commentator says that he made them daughters of Ge.*

author had in mind two generations of these deities (as it is typical for explaining the myth discrepancies since about the fifth century BC, but, apparently, no earlier than that). In turn, the said doubling of the Muses in Mimnermos may be clarified in several ways: for example, by perceiving it as analogous to the two possible *proimions* of Stesichorus in *Palinodia*,³³ or just by referring to our knowledge of the priamelic structure, which is apparently more convincing³⁴. Incidentally, once again, the best example of such a structure could be, if preserved in a larger portion than the extant one, the above-mentioned work by Stesichorus³⁵. One way or another, such a rhetorical move offers the possibility of skirting around the tradition and introducing a new version with a simultaneous inclusion in the text of one or more versions, traditional and/or rival to the one selected by the poet. The assumption that Mimnermos had cited two groups of different Muses and recognized them as two generations seems to be, in this case, rather anachronistic and stands in opposition to our knowledge of the mythical conceptions typical of the Archaic Period, in which the narrative pluralism is something definitely comprehensible and acceptable. Apparently, therefore, discrepancies do not need to be explained by, for instance, such rationalizations. The earliest known authors who search for rational explanations of discrepancies in the mythical image of one of the heroes through referring to the existence of several different figures bearing that name, as well as to the category of generations, are Herodotus³⁶ and Herodorus³⁷. Besides, this way of thinking is closer to

³³ Cf. Bowie 1993.

³⁴ Cf. Race 1982.

³⁵ For examples of using priamel, see *h. hom.* 1; Pi. fr. 29; fr. 128c; *h. hom.* 3.208 sqq.; cf. also Plut. *glor. Athen.* 4.347f-348a.

³⁶ Cf. Hdt. 2.43.

³⁷ Cf. FGtH 31 F 14 – in his commentary, Jacoby explains: *die Scheidung mehrerer Ἡρακλεῖς beginnt für uns bei Herod. II 43 ff., der zwei oder eigentlich drei Homonyme hat; 6 (Cic. de nat. deor. III 42) oder 7 (Lyd. de mens. IV 67) haben die*

prose, which competes with poetry to have a share in the *sophia*, and rather contradictory to the context in which poetry functions in the public sphere³⁸. In fact, it appears that initially this method of approach resulted more from the need to put the chronology in order than from any search for a rational explanation of discrepancies in the traditional stories.

Mousaios: One account which may point at the familiarity with the Uranic genealogy, and which contains a rationalizing clarification of the discrepancies between the myths, is the following note in the *scholia* to the *Argonautics* by Apollonios of Rhodes³⁹:

ἐν δὲ τοῖς εἰς Μουσαῖον ἀναφερομένοις δύο ἰστοροῦνται γενέσεις Μουσῶν, πρεσβυτέρων μὲν κατὰ Κρόνον, νεωτέρων δὲ τῶν ἐκ Διὸς καὶ Μνημοσύνης

in the works attributed to Mousaios there are two genealogies of the Muses mentioned: the older [sc. Muses] are from a generation [which appeared] under Cronos, whereas the younger are the offspring of Zeus and Mnemosyne.

In spite of the interpretations assuming that *κατὰ Κρόνον* would signify the Muses' origin from Cronos,⁴⁰ it is to be recognized, however, as e.g. Martin West in his commentary to Hesiod's *Theogony* suggests,⁴¹ that the generation in question was *under Cronos*. Taking into consideration the presence of the Uranic genealogy in two different archaic poets at more or less the same time, which must suggest its considerable role,

"Indices deorum" (Bobeth, De I. D., Leipzig 1904, 76). s. ferner die orphische Theogonie κατὰ τὸν Ἱερώνυμον φερομένη καὶ Ἑλλάνικον (4 F 87), wo Χρόνος ἀγήραος auch Ἡρακλῆς heisst. Cf. also F 42 = schol. Apoll. Rhod. I 23, where the scholiast notes that Herodotos was to claim that there were two Orpheuses, the other one supposedly sailing with the Argonauts – Ἡρόδωρος δύο εἶναι Ὀρφεῖς φησιν, ὧν τὸν ἕτερον συμπλεῦσαι τοῖς Ἀργοναύταις.

³⁸ On the rivalry of discourses and people for prestige and respect, cf. e.g. Goldhill 2002; Morgan 2000.

³⁹ Mousaios 2 B15 DK = schol. Apoll. Rhod. 3.1.

⁴⁰ Cf. e.g. Mayer 1933, 687 (*Töchter des Kronos*).

⁴¹ West 1966, 181.

and also taking into account other known Muses' genealogies (none of them reaching beyond the "age of Zeus"), it can be assumed with a great degree of probability that we are dealing here with a genealogy similar to the one described above (Ouranos and Ge). Possibly, it can be assumed that the author of the *scholion* (as it is unclear how accurate he is in quoting the work/works [which ones?] attributed to Mousaios) thinks of an indefinite vague genealogy from the time before Zeus; the opposition of *before* and *after Zeus* is expressed in the phrases: *from a generation [which appeared] under Chronos* (κατὰ Κρόνον) and *the offspring of Zeus and Mnemosyne* (ἔκ Διὸς καὶ Μνημοσύνης).

Dating the information is a huge problem, especially as even the scholiast himself points to the uncertainty of the attribution: *in the works attributed to Mousaios* (ἐν δὲ τοῖς εἰς Μουσαῖον ἀναφερομένοις). It can be assumed, at the most, that the work was no older than the late sixth – early fifth century BC, but almost certainly it is later⁴². However, if it is dated to the fifth or fourth century, the information about the two generations would, in turn, match the tendency evident in Herodotus and Herodorus. Noticeable in the description of the genealogy is the fact that the author of the *scholion*, or the work attributed to Mousaios, does not know, or ignores, the principles connected with the making and functions of disparate versions of myths, even in works of the same poets⁴³.

⁴² On the tradition connected with Mousaios and the works attributed to him cf. West 1983, 39-44, esp. 41-42, where West claims that the fragment in question may come from the *Eumolpies*, dating from the second half of the fourth century BC.

⁴³ For other interpretations of the two generations of the Muses, cf. Chmielewska-Brzostowska 2004, 17, where the author notes that the distinction between the older and younger generations of the Muses may have been due to the wish to distinguish the new elegiac form from the older hexametric one. Such an explanation of the function of the two versions of the Muses' genealogy could be largely complementary with the above interpretation. It is worth pointing out, however, that on the basis of our knowledge of the epics we can assume it was exactly the descent from Zeus (and Mnemosyne) that was linked with the works of this genre. Cf. also a different interpretation in Finkelberg 1998, 72.

To make an initial résumé of the above, it can be assumed as certain that both Alcman and Mimnermos, the poets of the seventh – sixth centuries BC, had made use of both genealogies in their works: the one usually associated with Hesiod, and the different one, indicating the origin of the Muses from Ouranos and Ge. It cannot be ruled out that there could also have appeared other versions in which only one of the parents was mentioned, as it is the case with Zeus. In turn, Pausanias' information on the two generations of the Muses seems to be rather an interpretation based on readings later than the time when Mimnermos' works were written, and they could have appeared, as indicated by the remark on some passages attributed to Musaios in the *scholia* to the *Argonautics*, only in the fifth – fourth centuries BC at the earliest.

There exists also some other evidence pointing to the knowledge of the Uranic genealogy. For instance, **Arnobius of Sicca**, a Christian rhetor living at the turn of the third century AD, in his work *Adversus nationes* (comprising a polemic discussion with the Greco-Roman polytheism), included the following remark⁴⁴:

Musas Mnaseas est auctor filias esse Telluris et Caeli, Iovis ceteri praedicant ex Memoria uxore vel Mente,⁴⁵ has quidam virgines, alii matres fuisse conscribunt.

According to Mnaseas, the Muses are daughters of Tellus (Earth) and Coelum (Sky), while others claim that they are daughters of Jupiter, with Memoria (Memory) or Mens (Mind) as his consort, some represent them as virgins, others as mothers.

⁴⁴ Arnob. *Adv. nat.* 3.37 Marchesi.

⁴⁵ It is difficult to say if this is another version (found in a lost literary text) of the name of the Muses' mother – perhaps the Latin version of the Greek Metis? – or only a fantasy or an error on the part of the author, his source, or a copyist. At this point, it is necessary to mention the possibility of new versions of mythical plots appearing not only in strictly literary, not to say poetical, texts, but also in interpretations and discussions of those texts, or in compendia of myths.

The above-mentioned Mnaseas may be identified with a Patara-born student of Eratosthenes and the author of the work known as *Periplus* or *Periegesis*, containing a description of the world known then (i.e. in the second half of the third century). On the basis of extant fragments,⁴⁶ it may be assumed that he had also depicted and explained, in a rationalistic-euhemeristic way, local myths and *thaumasia* (miraculous or wondrous events/objects). The context is, of course, unknown, and thus it cannot be ascertained whether Mnaseas had cited here some local genealogy or just referred to some work of poetry or prose; it is certain, however, that the passage confirms the knowledge of the Uranic genealogy in the Hellenistic epoch. Moreover, the question of the Muses' image was apparently not alien to Mnaseas, as is evident from some other surviving fragment of this work that he thought there were only three Muses (*Mousa*, *Thea* and *Hymno*)⁴⁷; this shall be discussed in more detail further on.

It is much more problematic to assume that the descent of the Muses from Ouranos was alluded to by Antipater of Thessalonica (in the late first century) in one of his epigrams in which he distinguished the earthly Muses, i.e. the canon of nine poets and poetesses, from the heavenly (divine) ones⁴⁸. The ambiguity and the association with the Uranic genealogy cannot, however, be ruled out completely, as it exists in the literature and is known to readers.

⁴⁶ Cappelletto 2003 – the relevant fragment is under no. 13 in this collection (the editor's commentary: 181-184).

⁴⁷ Frg. 15 Cappelletto = *Epim. Hom.* m 65.

⁴⁸ Cf. Antipater Thess. *AP IX.26*: ἐννέα μὲν Μούσας μέγας Οὐρανός, ἐννέα δ' αὐτὰς / Γαῖα τέκεν θνατοῖς ἄφθιτον εὐφροσύναν – a literal translation, e.g.: *9 Muses by the great Ouranos, 9 by Ge were born for the mortals' eternal joy* does not convey the meaning of these verses (Maximilian Mayer's interpretation is the result of such a reading), hence it is better to render the passage in question as follows: *9 Muses were born by Heavens, 9 by the Earth for the humans' eternal joy*.

Pindar N. 3.10: Finally, it is necessary to mention one more piece of evidence concerning the Uranic genealogy, which is, however, extremely difficult to interpret clearly.

In Pindar's third Nemean ode, there appears an invocation to a Muse (v. 10), who is, according to the standard edition, οὐρανοῦ πολυνεφέλα κρέοντι θύγατερ⁴⁹. The verses 10-11 are usually translated: *begin for the ruler of the cloud-covered sky, daughter, / a proper hymn* (transl. W.H. Race). Such an interpretation assumed that the mentioned Muse is a daughter of Zeus as the ruler of heavens. Besides, William Race, in his commentary to the edition of Pindar published in the Loeb Classical Library, explains in a note: *The Muses were daughters of Zeus by Mnemosyne (cf. Hes. Th. 53-55)*⁵⁰.

However, it is clear from the *scholia*⁵¹ that Aristarchus had read it as οὐρανῶ (and, most certainly, further on πολυνεφέλα κρέοντι θύγατερ) and assumed that the Muse was represented there as a daughter of Ouranos, similarly – the scholiast explains – as in Mimnermos and

⁴⁹ Pi. N. 3.1-12 Pfeijffer: Ὡ πότνια Μοῖσα, μάτερ ἀμετέρα, λίσσομαι, / τὰν πολυξέναν ἐν ἱερομηνίᾳ Νεμεάδι / ἴκεο Δωρίδα νᾶσον Αἴγιναν· ὕδατι γάρ / μένοντ' ἐπ' Ἀσωπίῳ μελιγαρύων τέκτονες / κώμων νεανίαι, σέθεν ὅπα μαϊόμενοι. / διψῆ δὲ πρᾶγος ἄλλο μὲν ἄλλου, / <ἀε>θλονικία δὲ μάλιστ' αἰοιδὰν φιλεῖ, / στεφάνων ἀρετᾶν τε δεξιωτάταν ὀπαδόν· / τᾶς ἀφθονίαν ὅπαζε μήτιος ἀμᾶς ἄπο· / ἄρχε δ' οὐρανοῦ πολυνεφέλα κρέοντι, θύγατερ, / δόκιμον ὕμνον· ἐγὼ δὲ κείνων τέ νιν ὀάροις / λύρα τε κοινάσομαι.

⁵⁰ Race 1997, 23, note 2; cf. Pfeijffer 1999, 260-262: the relations between the Muses and Zeus also result from other premises, as, according to the author, *it is true that the Muses always start their song with Zeus*.

⁵¹ Schol. Pi. N. 3.16b: ὁ μὲν Ἀρίσταρχος Οὐρανοῦ θυγατέρα τὴν Μοῦσαν δέδεκται, καθάπερ Μίμνερμος καὶ Ἀλκμάν ἱστοροῦσιν· ὁ δὲ Ἀμμώνιος προστίθεισιν, ὅτι διὰ τοῦτο κρέοντα κέκληκε τὸν Οὐρανὸν, ὅτι πρὶν Κρόνον βασιλεῦσαι οὗτος ἐβασίλευσεν. ἤλλακται δὲ ἡ πτώσις, ἀντὶ τοῦ τοῦ πολυνεφέλου οὐρανοῦ θύγατερ. βέλτιον δὲ φησιν ὁ Δίδυμος ἀκοῦειν τὸ ὄλον οὕτως· τοῦ πολυνεφέλου κρέοντος οὐρανοῦ θύγατερ, τοῦ Διός. κρέων γὰρ οὐρανοῦ ὁ Ζεὺς, Διὸς δὲ Μοῦσαι.

Alcman⁵². The same opinion was also held by another Hellenistic scholar, Ammonios, who had complemented Aristarchus' argumentation by indicating that Ouranos was portrayed as a ruler (κρέων), as he had reigned before Cronos. An opposite view was put forward, however, by Didymos, who assumed that the ruler of heavens here was Zeus. From a grammatical point of view, both interpretations are valid. Which version of the genealogy myth was meant by Pindar, and which was preferred by the contemporary audiences, seems impossible to determine.

Without resolving the question (as there is no sufficient basis to do so), it is worth pointing out the possibility, even if it is a distant one, of reading Pindar's text in such a way that would presume the poet's and/or his audiences' knowledge of the Muses' genealogy referring to their descent from Ouranos. More importantly for the present study, the *scholia* prove that such a genealogy was clear and intelligible in the Hellenistic times, perhaps not only in the academic circles of Alexandria, which were concerned with rare and curious versions. Besides, it follows from the same *scholion* that both Aristarchus and Ammonios viewed discrepancies in Pindar's genealogy of the Muses, who had elsewhere derived their origin from Zeus (and/or Mnemosyne),⁵³ as something quite natural and acceptable.

⁵² Principally, in all the manuscripts οὐρανῶ was read (a description of the manuscripts and readings in Pfeijffer 1999, 260-262), and Pindar himself must have recorded the word as OPANO – cf. Pfeijffer 1999, 261: *The unanimous manuscriptal tradition in favour of οὐρανῶ only points to an autograph OPANO and has no further value as an argument*. Consequently, the reading οὐρανῶι could be proposed, which offered the possibility of the following reading: οὐρανῶι πολυνεφέλα κρέοντι θύγατερ – *o daughter of the cloudy ruler Ouranos*. I am grateful to Benedetto Bravo and Miłkołaj Szymański for helping me to interpret this problem.

⁵³ In one of paeans, it is Mnemosyne who is represented as Ouranos' daughter – Pi. *paean*. 7b.14 = fr. 52h, 11-20.

A correct appraisal of accounts may stand a chance of success when the context is, first of all, complete. However, even at this point, due to the uniqueness of the Uranic genealogy, it appears that it is necessary to justify the possibility of the existence of exactly such a version of the mythic story, both in works of poetry and in the listeners' awareness.

It is beyond doubt that Ouranos and Ge are primordial deities in the majority of theogonic myths. In a passage in Euripides,⁵⁴ it is mentioned that those gods are the union out of which, through division, the world that we know was formed. In Hesiod, this story is quite similar. As the offspring of Ouranos and Ge, the Muses would be, therefore, among the original elements of the new order, and at the same time a part of the natural world, its inherent constituent. This perfectly underscores their direct descent from the goddess of the Earth. They would thus also pre-date the births of Zeus and many other gods, which is evident, among others, in the interpretation presupposing the existence of at least two generations of the Muses. It could simultaneously also point to some stronger ties with the nymphs, who are also often linked to Ge, or even Ouranos. The connection with Ge may also result, in the case of the Muses, from the relations between chthonicity and knowledge, as indicated by multiple pieces of evidence from the antiquity,⁵⁵ beginning from the connections between Ge and the oracle of Delphi, through nympholepsy and the functions of caves, to links with the knowledge of snakes and bees⁵⁶. In one of his *epinikia*, Pindar describes how Iamos, later to become a soothsayer, received his knowledge: just after he was born, his mother lay him down on the ground and he was fed with honey, that is bees' venom, by two snakes.⁵⁷ The connection with

⁵⁴ Eur. fr. 484 TGrF.

⁵⁵ Cf. e.g. *h. hom. ad Herm.* 552-565 (*semmnai theai*); Eur. *IT* 1259 sqq; cf. Rutherford 2001, 228-229.

⁵⁶ Cf. Ustinova 2009.

⁵⁷ Pi. Pi. *O.* 6.45-47.

knowledge is obviously very significant in the depiction of the Muses,⁵⁸ which may be also indicated by the choice of Mnemosyne as their mother. A certain parallelism, with regard to functions, can actually be seen between Mnemosyne and the goddess Ge, who is otherwise, according to Hesiod, the mother of Mnemosyne. In fact, Zeus is not much different, either, in his basic functions of the Uranic deity, from Ouranos himself. According to this view, the two genealogies are to a certain extent interchangeable.

Besides, the Uranic genealogy may also be a kind of a local proposition that had permeated into poetry, just as, for instance, other genealogies by Triptolemos, described by Pausanias, one of which suggested the descent of the hero from Ge and Okeanos, or, as some manuscripts had proposed, Ouranos⁵⁹. Many other versions, seemingly disparate, in reality are in conformity with one another inasmuch as they explain the same phenomena in a way which is structurally similar and appropriate for the local Greek audience. The differences in the versions of the story may be also the result of the poetic ingenuity typical for the culture of competition,⁶⁰ which complements the justification appealing to the existence of local versions. Finally, it is worth noticing that one of the Muses in Hesiod's version is named Ourania. Already in his *ad locum* commentary, West had suggested that this fact may be interpreted as Hesiod's allusion to the Uranic genealogy⁶¹.

All the above arguments emphatically demonstrate that the dismissal of the versions of genealogy other than Hesiod's as *Spielereien*

⁵⁸ Cf. Murray 1981, 90-92.

⁵⁹ Cf. Paus. 1.14.3 – the version referring to the relations of Triptolemos with Ge and Okeanos (or Ouranos) is attributed to Mousaios; information according to: Henrichs 1987, 250 and n. 30 – with a more detailed analysis of this particular point in Pausanias' work.

⁶⁰ Cf. e.g. Griffith 1990.

⁶¹ Cf. Hes. *Th.* 78 – West 1966, 181.

dichterischen Phantasie cannot be viewed as a serious treatment of the subject. The Uranic genealogy had the right to be in the Greek imagination of those times, perhaps even in the sphere of cult worship, on an equal footing with other genealogies. The fact of its disappearance over the course of time should certainly be explained in terms of the growing popularity of Hesiod's pan-Hellenic theogony⁶²; the similarity of Zeus and Mnemosyne to Ouranos and Ge must have acted, in this case, in favour of the former pair of gods.

Other genealogies

Among other genealogies, an apparently exceptionally early version pointing to the origin of the Muses from Apollo should be mentioned in the first place. Tzetzes attributes the authorship to **Eumelos** of Corinth (eighth century BC)⁶³. Irrespective of the authenticity and dating, such a version of the genealogy bears a solid justification and appears understandable, as Apollo is regularly linked in the Greek imagination with poetry and music; suffice it to recall the ending of the *Iliad's* Book I, where Apollo plays the phorminx and accompanies the chorus of the Muses at the feast of the gods⁶⁴. Despite some speculation efforts, it remains uncertain whether this is, for example, a local Corinthian

⁶² The question remains whether the Uranic version is a pan-Hellenic one and whether, finally, we are not faced here with a rivalry between two supra-regional versions of the genealogy.

⁶³ Eum. fr. 17 Bernabé (fr. 35 West) = Tzetz. *Ad Hes. Op.* P. 23 Gaisford: ἄλλ' Εὐμηλος μὲν ὁ Κορίνθιος τρεῖς φησὶν εἶναι Μούσας, θυγατέρας Ἀπόλλωνος, Κηφισοῦν, Ἀπολλωνίδα, Βορυσθενίδα – *but Eumelos of Corinth says that there are three Muses, daughters of Apollo: Kephiso, Apollonis, Borysthenis.* On Eumelos and the works attributed to him, cf. West 2002, and esp. 127-128.

⁶⁴ Hom. *Il.* 1.602-604; for the earliest evidence of the cult of Apollo Mousagetes, cf. A. Tziafalis AD 52 B 2 (1997[2003]), 523, no. 19; cf. SEG 51 (2001), 713.

version (or one from the Greek colonies on the Black Sea), or the author's own invention⁶⁵.

Yet even if it is an example of the poetic ingenuity of Eumelos, who had probably commenced, in a different work, from an invocation to the Muses as daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, it is worth pointing out that an innovation of this kind existed within a set of propositions intelligible and acceptable to audiences. This means that the poet could not propose, in a wilful and arbitrary way, for instance Hades and Aphrodite as parents of the Muses⁶⁶. On the other hand, a version of a given myth proposed by the poet, especially in the religious context, may have become, provided that it had been accepted, an obligatory version; until, of course, it was further modified⁶⁷. In view of such

⁶⁵ All the three names (already in 1827, Gottfried Hermann suggested that Apollonis was a corrupted version of the name *Achelois* or *Asopis*) are clearly associated with rivers (Borysthenes – the Dnieper; Kephisos – the name of many rivers, e.g. in Boeotia/Phokida). West 2002, 128 suggests that such an odd choice of the Muses' names (in the *prooimion*?) could be connected with the theme of the work (West assumes that the information comes from the epic poem *Europia*) and was due to an effort to combine the mythic material of Boeotia with that from the Black Sea coast: *A poet who planned to deal with Boiotian myths and also to pursue Pontic connections might perhaps have invented these particular Muses to deliver the material. But it remains very peculiar.*

⁶⁶ Unless it was thoroughly justified; yet even then the listeners could reject the proposed version of the story on the basis of their knowledge and common sense. On the other hand, it is obvious that a rarer version, more difficult to accept by the audience, would demand some special authorization efforts on the poet's part, e.g. a long hymn to the Muses with a description of a meeting with them and imparting the knowledge of what was, what is, and what will be, to the poet; or an account of becoming blind due to a false depiction of some figure in the work and recovering the sight after changing the story according to what the figure himself or herself had supposedly told the poet. On the limitations in introducing innovations, cf. a highly instructive passage in the work of Aelian (*VH* 2.11).

⁶⁷ It did not have to, of course, completely invalidate other known versions (especially poetic ones). Certainly, a position towards a mythic story depended on many variables, e.g. social standing and education of community members, or the

a two-way communication – the audience demands new versions, while the poet responds to various types of social needs – and of a relative freedom in forming myth storylines, as well as the importance of poetic competition, the state of **permanent inventiveness** may be spoken of throughout this age. This would correspond, as a matter of fact, with the number of known rival versions of diverse myth tales, which, due to the state of preservation of the classical literature, are actually only the tip of an iceberg⁶⁸. An additional, perhaps even pivotal, argument is the fact that discrepancies sometimes occur in various works by the same poet. This is certainly not the result of lapses in memory or changing views, but almost surely of adapting the work to local conditions, listeners, and his rivals' versions⁶⁹. Returning, finally, to the information on the origin of the Muses from Apollo, it is worth noticing that this genealogy, or possibly Tzetzes, mention only the name of the father⁷⁰.

time and circumstances of a recitation. In some, e.g. ritual, contexts, first of all, a common version accepted by community members may have existed, while in others, e.g. at symposia, diverse versions, both old and new, may have been accepted simultaneously.

⁶⁸ Some examples of other variations in mythic stories shall be presented in Chapter 6.

⁶⁹ At least one archaic poet was already in the antiquity said to have introduced many mythological innovations in his works – Stes. fr. 193 C. = P. Oxy. 2506 fr. 26 col. I. Very often such versions are cloaked in the form of the return to the true version, the one that had been forgotten; priamel had been the most frequently employed structure in such situations. On Stesichorus, cf. Woodbury 1967; Bowie 1993; Bassi 1993; Beecroft 2006. On Euripides, cf. *schol. ad Eur. Hec.* 3.

⁷⁰ Considering the Muses' names linked with water and, for example, the information on Epicharmus's genealogy, cited further on in this chapter, the contemporary listener could conjecture that some (local) nymph may have been the mother. On the other hand, having taken into account the connection between the names and the rivers in the regions very distant from one another, one may assume that the author of this etymology had only provided the name of the father.

Eur. Med. 830-832 (Harmony): Another interesting genealogical information is found in the *Medea* by Euripides. In the middle of the play, a chorus of Corinthian women delivers the famous praise of Athens (824-832):

Ἐρεχθεΐδαι τὸ παλαιὸν ὄλβιοι
καὶ θεῶν παῖδες μακάρων, ἱεράς
χώρας ἀπορθήτου τ' ἄπο, φερβόμενοι
κλεινοτάταν σοφίαν, αἰεὶ διὰ λαμπροτάτου
βαίνοντες ἀβρῶς αἰθέρος, ἔνθα ποθ' ἀγνάς
ἐννέα Πιερίδας Μούσας λέγουσι
ξανθὰν Ἄρμονίαν φυτεῦσαι.

From ancient times the sons of Erechtheus have been favored; they are children of the blessed gods sprung from a holy land never pillaged by the enemy. They feed on wisdom most glorious, always stepping gracefully through the bright air, where once, it is said, the nine Pierian Muses gave birth to fair-haired Harmonia. [transl. D. Kovacs]

The information is interesting and worthy of note here because it is the only known evidence confirming such connection between Harmony and the Muses. The fundamental problem here is the proper understanding of the sentence structure, as the grammar permits to follow two possibilities, which cannot be rendered in translation both at the same time. The structure *accusativus cum infinitivo* used in the verses 831-832 (with the Muses and Harmony in the accusative) lends itself to be translated as in the version above: *the nine Pierian Muses gave birth to fair-haired Harmonia*.⁷¹ However, another translation is also possible: *Harmony gave birth to the nine*

⁷¹ As translated by David Kovacs in the last Loeb Classical Library edition (2001, 361). Cf. scholia *ad locum* – <ξανθὰν Ἄρμονίαν>: ἔνιοι λέγουσι τὸν Εὐριπίδην τὰς Μούσας λέγειν Ἄρμονίας θυγατέρας, ἀγνοήσαντες. οὐ γὰρ τοῦτο λέγει, ἀλλ' ὅτι αἱ Μοῦσαι πρῶτον ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἐλθοῦσαι τὴν ἄρμονίαν ἦδον καὶ τὴν μελωδίαν; cf. notes in Bond 1981, 242, in the commentary to *Heracles Furens*; Page 1938, 132-133, Mastronarde 2002, 309, and many other editors and translators.

*Muses*⁷². Obviously, the former possibility is more seldom chosen by translators on account of the trouble explaining how the nine Muses could have been able to collectively give birth to (one) Harmony, and if such a version could be acceptable to Athenian audiences; especially in the situation where Harmony was defined as *fair-haired* (ξανθὰν Ἀρμονίαν), which clearly imparts human features to her figure.

On the other hand, however, the crucial question is why, in a work lauding Athens, there is a reference to a figure from the sphere of Theban myths, as audiences of Athens would certainly interpret her⁷³. Harmony, usually identified as Aphrodite's daughter and the wife of Cadmus, seems completely out of place here, which means that at least we do not know any reasons of mythographical nature why she would appear in this context at all⁷⁴. Another puzzling element is the place of birth,⁷⁵ particularly when it is not entirely clear if the birth had taken place within the limits of Athens (*chora*) or in *the bright air* (*aither*⁷⁶), upon which the descendants of Erechtheus trod. In both cases, the role

⁷² Harmony as the mother of the Muses: cf. Foley 1985, 162: *wisdom dwells where Harmony gave birth to the nine Muses*; Collard 1975, vol. 2, 239; Knox 1985, 2-3; Pucci 1980, 122-123; Mayer 1933, cols. 695-696; Most 1999, n. 1.

⁷³ Cf. Hes. *Th.* 937 and 975-978; Hellan. fr. 51 Fowler; for other figures named Harmony, cf. Empedocles, fr. 122.2; *Pap. Derveni* XVII.5-7; Pherec. 3 F15 (fr. 15c Fowler); Hellan. fr. 23 Fowler.

⁷⁴ In Theognis, the Muses turn up at Harmony's wedding at Thebes (Thgn. 15-18) – cf. also Paus. 9.12.3, where the author mentions the remains of Cadmus' house at the agora, with the place indicated as the site where the Muses were standing when singing at the wedding. For the connections between Harmony and the Muses in iconography, cf. Shapiro 1993, 107-109.

⁷⁵ It is worth recalling that the Muses are called *Pierides* in verse 829. Although the term is not, to the Greek ear, explicitly connected with being born in Pieria, the fact that it has been used seems to dilute the "Athenian" interpretation.

⁷⁶ As for the latter interpretation, we might be dealing here with a picture of Athens' intellectual development (*Athenians treading through aither*), whose effect (offspring) is both literary development (the Muses) and harmony (understood as, for example, social accord). Possibly, thanks to this intellectual development and

of Cadmus' wife seems to be a poetic extravaganza, unless it is assumed that Euripides had chosen her for the sake of the meaning of her name (*Harmonia* = *harmony*). It may be presupposed that the Athenian listener could hear that *the muses (=mousikē) had begotten harmony*, or possibly *harmony had begotten the muses (=mousikē)*; whereas the link between the Muses (=mousikē) with harmony is something definitely understandable (especially towards the end of the fifth century BC⁷⁷), and the both possibilities of interpretation are defensible in this context: music is a manifestation of harmony, as the (proper) combination and arrangement of sounds, whilst the effect of the impact exerted by music on the outside world (and listeners) can be described as introducing the order into a world of chaos, as well as introducing the balance and combining dispersed elements⁷⁸. Such a way of perceiving the function of music and the Muses can be also seen in other evidence from the antiquity⁷⁹. Besides, the goddesses appear to be associated with the

wisdom, the social accord facilitates growth for the Muses (begets the Muses), i.e. for literature and music.

⁷⁷ On *mousikē* in the fifth – fourth centuries BC, cf. e.g. Wilson 1999; Wilson 2003b; Murray/Wilson eds. 2004.

⁷⁸ It is curious whether Euripides did not have such connotations in mind, considering the further part of the 3rd stasimon, in which a chorus of Corinthian women tries to dissuade Medea from her intent of murdering her children, as such a behaviour is the most flagrant manifestation of acts against social harmony. Besides, the song clearly juxtaposes the intended deed and its destructive effects against the harmony and *sophia* existing at Athens, where Medea intends to take refuge after committing the infanticide.

⁷⁹ Cf. e.g. Rhianos, fr. 19 Powell; Serv. comm. in Verg. *Aen.* 1.8; schol. Hom. *Od.* 3.267, 143, 15b Dind. (= Dem. Phal. fr. 144 SOD [fr. 191 Wehrli] – on Sparta, cf. also Luc. *de saltat.* 10; Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 1.16.78); Pi. fr. 29-35; Pl. *Resp.* 4.424c.; Porph. *VP* 45. Cf. Hardie 2004; Wilson 2003a; Wilson 2004. An extremely interesting case is Kamarina, where at the re-establishment of the city (about 461 BC) the new system of phratries was based on the interrelations among the strings of the lyre and thus even in public documents the citizens are defined as belonging to a phratry called, for example, *shortest string* – cf. Wilson 2004, 280-281.

sphere of order (particularly in the social dimension) also in the cult-related context, even though most of the relevant accounts come from the later period⁸⁰.

Finally, it is worth adding that in verse 831 there appears the verb *λέγουσι* – *they speak* (the *accusativus cum infinitivo* structure depends on it), through which the chorus (and, consequently, the author) suggests that the depicted version of the genealogy is not a poetic contrivance and something completely new. This means that either some version of such a genealogy had actually existed or (which I would be inclined to opt for also in view of the conclusions from the above analysis) that this is an interesting example of the poet's own authorisation effort.

Of course, the use of the adjective *ksantha* (*fair-haired*) seems to tip the scales in favour of the interpretation assuming that Harmony is portrayed here as a human being, and therefore the mother of the Muses. At the same time, however, the structure of the sentence, the multiple ambiguities, the absence of any justification for the wife of Cadmus appearing in this context, the problem of the birthplace (and the connection between that place and Harmony), and a simultaneous appearance of the evocative connotations of *harmony* and *mousike* all suggest that the opposite version had been acceptable to contemporary

⁸⁰ Such a cult-related function of the Muses may have existed at Sparta (the king offered sacrifices to the Muses before fighting a battle – Plut. *de cohib. ira* 458e; *Vit. Lyk.* 21; *Apophth. Lac.* 221a; Luc. *de saltat.* 10), Messene (in connection with Heracles Aleksikakos – cf. Paus. 4.31.10 and Zunino's comments 1997, 178, n. 128; 185-186; 275-279), at Croton/Metapontum (Iambl. *VP* 9.45; 9.50; cf. also: Porph. *VP* 45; Iambl. *VP* 35), perhaps also at Cheronea (Plut. *Sulla* 17 [463c]; *Quest. conv.* 8 [716f-717a], cf. Burkert 1983: 168-179), and also at Rome (Dugas 1944; Cancik 1969; Sciarrino 2004; Hardie 2002). Cf. also Mojsik 2011a and Mojsik 2011b (forthcoming); Patrick Lynch 1972, 116 attempted to link the "Athenian" Muses of Euripides' tragedy with the information from *Oedipus at Colonus* (691) by Sophocles and the worship of the Muses, attested in Plato's time, at Academia, which is located near Colonus. However, his opinion is based on an ambiguous statement of the tragedy chorus and some loose, rather imprecise, comments of modern scholars.

recipients as well. Besides, it cannot be ruled out that the ambiguity here was intended⁸¹.

The passage certainly demands some further analysis⁸²; from the point of view of this study, however, the essential thing is, first of all, that the statement of the chorus contains an example of some kind of play with the genealogical tradition⁸³. The version of the story on the Muses' genealogy, perhaps created as required by this particular tragedy, displays the role of innovation and the space in which the poet's ingenuity can function. More importantly – and this is also confirmed by the so frequently referenced presence of the seemingly divergent

⁸¹ A similar ambiguity can be also found, for example, in Pindar: cf. *P.* 4.177 – where either Orpheus or his skills descend from Apollo; perhaps also *N.* 3.10. In Euripides, cf. *Med.* 819; *HF* 679 and Bond's commentary *ad locum*. Moreover, cf. also Boedeker's interpretation on another passage in the play (verse 819), 1991, 107, n. 49: *The phrase οὐν μέσῳ λόγοι there could be interpreted as "words spoken between now and the time I kill the children" or "words of compromise, in the middle between extremes". The ambivalence may well be intentional; in either interpretation, Medea declares that she is beyond the reach of logoi.*

⁸² This particular point poses a problem because, among others, it is not certain in what kind of context it should be interpreted. It may be construed in the context of the mythical tradition; the sense of the whole tetralogy; this individual play; in the context of the chorus' statement in the drama and its interaction with Medea; in the context of this one song (the chorus of Corinthian women comments upon a conversation between Aegeus and Medea; except for Harmony, the Eroses, Sophia and Aphrodite can also be seen), or even within a stanza (assuming that individual parts of the song can be relatively independent). Within the play itself we can observe, for example, a recurring question of the role of the song and how it is employed by women – cf. e.g. Hopman 2008. The chorus song, considered as key and crucial in the play (cf. Buttrey 1958), is interpreted as a clash between the vision of a peaceful Athens (the Eroses and Sophia) and Medea's family disharmony, while in the background there is the problem of Aegeus' solicitude for his offspring juxtaposed against Medea and Jason's destroying their own family and offspring.

⁸³ On the genealogical innovations in Euripides, cf. schol. in Eur. *Hec.* 3.

myth versions – from the point of view of the contemporary audiences, such a genealogy is as authentic as any other⁸⁴.

Epicharmus (Pieros and Pimpleis): A different piece of genealogic information is found in an extant fragment of the work Ἡβης Γάμος⁸⁵ (*Hebe's Wedding*) composed by Epicharmus,⁸⁶ and preserved in Tzetzes' work:

Ἐπίχαρμος δὲ ἐν τῷ τῆς Ἡβης Γάμῳ ἑπτὰ λέγει, θυγατέρας Πιέρου καὶ Πιμπληΐδος νύμφης· Νειλοῦν, Τριτώνην Ἀσωποῦν, Ἑπταπόλην, Ἀχελωΐδα, Τιπόπλου, καὶ Ῥοδίαν.

Epicharmus says in "Hēbēs Wedding" that there are seven [Muses], they are daughters of Pieros and the nymph Pimpleis: Neilō, Tritōnē, Asōpō, Heptaporē, Achelōis, Titoplō and Rhodia.

A relatively large portion (as for this particular author and the conditions determining the survival of many classical texts) of this work has survived, out of which most fragments are quoted by Athenaios in his *Deipnosophistai*⁸⁷. The latter author also reports that there had existed another version of the work, which was entitled *Mousai*⁸⁸.

⁸⁴ Cf. e.g. Pratt 1993; Veyne 1988; Detienne 1996.

⁸⁵ In Athenaios (3.110b) there is a remark that after modifications this work was entitled *Mousai* – cf. Harvey D. 2000, 104 and n. 54, attempting to reconstruct the form and contents of the work, also with some references to further literature. Unfortunately, there may be some doubt as to whether the title is of the author's own invention or it is a later idea, which is very likely. Athenaios' information seems to attest, at least, to the distinct presence of the Muses in the work.

⁸⁶ Epicharmus fr. 39 PCG = Tzetz. ad Hes. *op.* 6, 23.1 Gaisford = *An. Ox.* IV 424-425 Cramer.

⁸⁷ 23 fragments of the *Hēbēs gamos* are known, which makes up about 47 verses in total; in turn, there are 8 or 9 extant fragments ascribed to *Mousai*, cf. Olson 2007, 42-47.

⁸⁸ Athen. 3.110b: Ἐπίχαρμος δ' ἐν Ἡβης γάμῳ κἀν Μούσαις - τοῦτο δὲ τὸ δρᾶμα διασκευὴ ἐστὶ τοῦ προκειμένου - ἄρτων ἐκτίθεται γένη etc.

Assuming as probable that the work had been composed as a drama, some scholars suggested that the Muses could have formed some sort of chorus therein, at least in that other version⁸⁹. The extant fragments apparently come from a speech of some deity describing, possibly, a procession of wedding guests and, first of all, the food which is to be served to them at the wedding of Heracles and Hebe. Most details clearly refer to fish, provided (as a gift?) by, for instance, Poseidon, but perhaps also by the Muses, who in Epicharmus' work, according to Tzetzes, were to bear the names linked with some rivers: Neilō, Tritōnē, Asōpō, Heptaporē, Achelōis, Tipoplō, Rhodia. The entire composition was of a clearly farcical character and, allegedly, Heracles himself also appeared in the further part of the work, especially as he additionally fitted in well enough with the context on account of the fact that he was frequently represented as a typical glutton.

The genealogic information indicating the Muses' descent from Pieros and Pimpleis⁹⁰ can be interpreted in two ways. First, considering the farcical overtone of the play, the etymological rendering of the names proposed by David Harvey and Douglas Olson: *Fat and Fullness*⁹¹ is reasonable. Epicharmus' use of such a genealogy seems to be understandable within the gastronomic context of the work.

However, at the same time, these names possess geographical connotations, as Pieros is an eponymous hero of Pieria,⁹² while Pimpleis is most probably a nymph connected with Pimplea, which is, generally speaking, a toponymical term from Pieria⁹³. In some later sources, both of these names are associated with the Muses⁹⁴. For

⁸⁹ Cf. Harvey 2000, 104.

⁹⁰ *An. Ox.* IV p. 424-425; Cramer provides here the name Pimpleias or Pimplias.

⁹¹ Olson 2007, 42; Harvey 2000, 104: *Fatso and Fulla*.

⁹² For a list of sources, see Herzog-Hauser 1956, 498-499.

⁹³ Cf. Schmidt 1950, col. 1387: *Ort, Quelle bzw. Berg in der makedonischen Landschaft Pieria*.

⁹⁴ In literary texts, the Muses are also called *Pimpleides* – cf. *AP* 5.206.

instance, in Pausanias (9.29.4), it is mentioned that Pieros was to be either responsible for determining the number and names of the Muses in the cult worship of these deities in the Helicon area, or that he was the father of nine daughters whose names had been identical with the Muses' (and, possibly, also competed with the Muses), while the so-called *sons of the Muses* were in fact their offspring⁹⁵. In other versions of this story, he was either the father of the Muses in general, as in Epicharmus' work mentioned here, or the father of the third generation of the Muses, perhaps also of the terrestrial Muses, as opposed to the divine ones (as in Pausanias). In a logical, rational system referenced by Cicero in his work *On the nature of gods* (3.54), Pieros' Muses are third-generation Muses, after the daughters of *Iove altero* and *Iove tertio et Mnemosyne*. This time, however, their mother is **Antiope**:

tertiaie Piero natae et Antiopa, quas Pieridas et Pierias solent poetae appellare, isdem nominibus et eodem numero, quo proxumae superiores;

the third ones, born of Pieros and Antiope, whom the poets are accustomed to call Pierides and Pieriai, are known in the same number and under the same names as the previous ones.

There were attempts, of course, to amend and modify the version cited by Cicero – for example, by changing the name Antiope to Argiope – yet the unification (in relation to what?) and “smoothing out” of the story are completely unnecessary⁹⁶.

⁹⁵ Cf. also Anton. Lib. 9 (*Emathides*).

⁹⁶ See commentary *ad locum* in: Pease 1968. A tempting interpretation by Alex Hardie (2006, 58) is that Antiope was Thespios' daughter, mother of Amphion and Zethus, and hence this story could have corresponded to the local genealogy associated with the Valley of the Muses remaining (most probably since the fourth century BC) under control of Thespieae. However, such a version of the origin of Antiope is not known even in Pausanias (i.e. following his sources at Thespieae); unfortunately, Hardie does not mention any reference to sources of the origin of this mythological information. Besides, it is likely that the particular figure named Antiope would have been just one of the 50 daughters of Thespios (and she had rather not been identi-

It appears that one of the explanations for the connections between the Muses and the Macedonian-Thracian Pieros,⁹⁷ confirmed relatively late, may indicate a peculiar interpretation of the epithet *Pierides*, which is attested in reference to the Muses already in the works of Sappho and Pindar⁹⁸. In those early sources, however, the term *Pierides* carries some different connotations; it may point out some relation, in the ancient Greek imagination, between the Muses and the mountains (also the nearby Olympus), Zeus, and perhaps the nymphs as well. Therefore, just as the Greek gods, despite being called *Olympian*, are not descendants of *Olympus*, do not come from the Mount Olympus, nor did their cult arrive from that particular area, so the *Pierides* do not have to be originally the daughters of Pieros.

However, while the Muses' connection, in the sphere of the *imaginaire*, with Pieria as a land may be regarded as quite early, Pimplea poses a considerable interpretational dilemma, as its appearance in Epicharmus is the first one in literature. After him, Pimplea (as a location or a nymph linked to a given place) turns up only in metapoetical expressions of Hellenistic,⁹⁹ and later on also Roman¹⁰⁰ poets. However,

fied with the mother of Amphion and Zethus, who was to have been, in the most widely popular version, the daughter of Nycteus), while the entire story was just a small portion of the myth of Heracles' labours. It cannot be denied, however, that Antiope mentioned in the genealogy had been a heroine associated with Boeotia.

⁹⁷ The stories of the Muses' descent from Pieros or the rivalry with his daughters are missing in Apollodorus' *Library*, but they appear, in a version showing the rivalry between the Muses and Pieros' daughters, in Ovid (*Met.* 5.250-678) and Antoninus Liberalis (9). The commentary by Celoria 1992, 130-131, to Antoninus Liberalis' version, suggests that both this author and Ovid may have used the work by Nikander of Kolophon.

⁹⁸ Cf. e.g. Sa. fr. 103; Pi. *I.* 1.65, *O.* 10.96.

⁹⁹ Cf. Call. *Del.* 7; Lycophr. 275; Sositheos 3 F1a (Krumeich ed. 1999) = Serv. *ad Verg. ecl.* 8.68 – Pimplea as the beloved of Daphnis.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Hor. *Carm.* 1.26.9; Catull. 105; Varro *de ling. lat.* 7.20; Stat. *Silv.* 1.4.25 (Pimplea – the name of a Muse); Mart. 12.11.3.

from the later texts, and even more clearly from the *scholia*, it follows that all of them had only a vague idea of the place in question. This particular name was used, as a matter of fact, to refer to some town/village, a mountain, a hill, or a spring; it was linked with Macedonia, or, alternatively, with Thracia, and even with Orchomenos¹⁰¹ in one of the commentaries. In his Delian hymn, Callimachus had enigmatically pointed out that the Muses hated those who did not praise Pimplea (*Del.* 7-8). At the same time, as one of the commentators sensibly notes, it is the only (known) passage in which Callimachus himself (in extant works) makes a reference to that place¹⁰². In consequence, it may be presumed that the “fashion” for Pimplea, as well as for a couple of other locations linked with the Muses (e.g. Parnas, Leibethra, Kallirhoe etc.), so evident in the Hellenistic (and, as a result, also Roman) literature, is – to a great extent – an element of the literary play resulting from the sophisticated interests of the authors and their audiences.

Although the references to geographical names in the names Pieros and Pimpleis/Pimplea had to be intelligible, especially in the case of the former one, such a reception of the names is certain perhaps only for the Hellenistic era. Moreover, with an interpretation stressing geographical connotations, linking the Muses’ names, i.e. rivers situated in various regions of the world then known to Greeks, with the locally bound Pieros and Pimplea might have appeared as strange. Thus, apparently, it is better to interpret Epicharmus’ genealogy as connected primarily

¹⁰¹ Cf. schol. in Lycophr. 275: Πίμπλεια δὲ καὶ πόλις καὶ ὄρος καὶ κρήνη Μακεδονίας etc.; schol. Apoll. Rhod. 1.23-25: Πίμπλεια χωρίον κατὰ Πιερίαν· οἱ δὲ ὄρος Θράκης, οἱ δὲ κρήνην καὶ κώμην τῆς Πιερίας; Acron. ad Horat. *carm.* 1.26.9 – *Pipleae Musae dictae aut a Pipleo fonte Macedoniae, vel vico, aut a monte Pipleo Orchomenorum*; Hesych. s.v. <Πίπλ(ε)ιαί>· αἱ Μοῦσαι ἐν τῷ Μακεδονικῷ Ὀλύμπῳ, ἀπὸ κρήνης Πιπλείας.

¹⁰² Cf. Bing 1981, 63-64; Mineur 1984, 57; the author holds that Callimachus had used the name Pimplea for Pieria due to the fact that the word ‘Pieria’ may have been restricted in use for political reasons; cf. also Gigante Lanzara 1990, 71.

with the contents and the character of the work, in which, let it be remembered, *Fat and Fullness*, the parents of the Muses associated with rivers (and hence “abundant with fish”) appear in the context of a wedding feast and gifts for the bride and groom.

Partly similar associations appear possibly also in a later genealogy ascribed to Aratus of Soli (third century BC). In Book V of his work *Astrika*, there was supposedly a reference to four Muses as daughters of **Zeus** and **Plousia**¹⁰³. The mother’s name, similarly to the pair from Epicharmus’ composition, inspires distinct associations with abundance and affluence.

A noteworthy fact here is the presence of nymphs as mothers of the Muses, which may result from the existence of local versions, but also from perceiving the Muses as beings from the borderland between nature and culture, and similar to nymphs in many respects. The relation with water, which can be seen in some versions of the Muses’ names, also corroborates this observation.

Recapitulation: Apart from the genealogy known from Hesiod’s work, some other archaic and classical versions of the origin of the Muses can also be encountered. The best attested one is the genealogy pointing to the Muses’ descent from Ouranos and Ge, but no less interesting are accounts involving Apollo, Pieros and Pimplea, or Zeus and Plousia. Some information, difficult in terms of any clear interpretation, involves some relations between the Muses and Harmony.

The above analyses of the source material have aimed to demonstrate that in the Archaic and Classical Periods there could have existed, in

¹⁰³ Arat. fr. 87 SH = Tzetz. ad Hes. *Op.* 23 Gaisford = *Anecd. Oxon.* 4.424 Cramer. An additional problem connected with interpretation is identification of the work *Astrika* – cf. Maas 1892, 214-215, Ludwig 1965, 27-28.

parallel, diverse genealogies of the Muses,¹⁰⁴ not necessarily perceived as “alternative”, as it is now often presented, because this would presuppose the superiority of the version attributed to Hesiod. Taking into consideration that some of those versions may have been locally bound and/or, as a result, they might have appeared in (one) composition performed (for example, just once) in a specific cultural and social context, it must be assumed that such “other” genealogies could have existed in a much greater number than what survives in the extant source material. The evidence from the later period seems to offer an additional confirmation in this regard.

The version known from Hesiod’s *Theogony* is clearly popular¹⁰⁵; it does not prevent, however, other disparate genealogies from being formed, even by the same poets and within the same compositions. In most cases, the reasons for the appearance of various versions of genealogies remain completely unknown. It is therefore difficult to state unequivocally if the factors involved were local traditions or, for instance, the more or less unrestrained inventiveness of the poets, generated by competition¹⁰⁶. In a great number of cases, both of

¹⁰⁴ Among later genealogies, the following can be mentioned: Iuppiter and Moneta (Hyg. *Fab. Praef.* 27) – cf. Hardie 2007; Iuppiter [Zeus] and Mens [Metis?] – Arnob. *Adv. nat.* 3.37 Marchesi; perhaps also Isis (*Vita Aesopi* in version of the codex G).

¹⁰⁵ I am not inclined to use the phrase “most popular” on account of my apprehension towards creating a version in which the cultural diversity of the Greek *poiesis*, scattered all over the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions, becomes levelled to some sort of impersonal median average. Next to nothing is known about depictions of this type in, for example, Greek cities on the Black Sea coast or in Italy, and it does not seem reasonable to create a narrative similar to the Athenocentric political history.

¹⁰⁶ Clear examples of the existence of local versions of the Muses mythology are the accounts dealing with introducing (the worship of) the Muses at Troezen by Ardalos, son of Hephaestus (Paus. 2.31.3), by the sons of Aloeus at Thespieae (Paus. 9.29.1-2), or the story of the seven Muses on Lesbos, known from an account by

these factors probably run in parallel, as the compositions of poetry embrace in themselves the dependence on traditional stories (among others, from the poet's *polis*) and the innovativeness resulting from the circumstances of recitations. The public performance, usually connected with competition, compelled the poet to adapt to local and genre-related limitations, or other limitations related to specific audiences and performance situations¹⁰⁷. In turn, such a model of the composing and functioning (both local and bound by performance situations) of mythic stories supports the assumption that these other versions were accepted (and rejected) by the contemporary audience certainly much more easily than it seems. This is also due to the fact that the mythic tradition in the Greek world was not a constant and never-changing element, but it was subject to continuous reinterpretation¹⁰⁸.

Therefore, in view of the absence of any clear premises, it is only fitting to avoid using such adjectives and phrases as “alternative”, “canonical”, “older version”, “poetic fantasy”, or “game-playing” (*Spielerei*).

Myrsilos of Methymna. Other examples: Philostr. *VA* 4.13 (ναὶ Παλάμηδες, δι' ὃν λόγοι, δι' ὃν Μοῦσαι, δι' ὃν ἐγώ); *schol. Hom. Il.* 22.391 (Krinoeis and Idean Dactyls); Strab. 9.2.25 (Thracians); cf. Hardie 2006.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Griffith 1983; 1990; Graziosi 2002, 79-86.

¹⁰⁸ Buxton 1994, 69: *Differences between works, between different narrators within a genre, between the 'same' story told in different genres, are a standard feature of the pluralism of Greek mythology.*

3. Names of the Muses

In **Homer**, as has already been pointed out in the previous chapter, the Muses are not mentioned by name. The narrator refers to them by using general expressions *Mousa/Mousai*, or some other terms defining them, e.g. *thea/theos*. At times, especially in the protagonists' own statements, there is an evident doubt as to the identity of the deity¹.

This does not have to mean, however, that in the time when the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were composed, or even before that, the names of the Muses were not known. It must be remembered that what is now considered a proof of the originality of Homer's version, may have been the poet's conscious choice, a genre-bound limitation, or may have resulted from the circumstances of the story's composition, the context of a recitation, or our lack of extra-textual knowledge obvious to the poet and his audience². Besides, in the later period as well, the Muse/Muses are repeatedly invoked by using their general term (and frequently as a group), and not by invoking their individual names. It could even be said that in the extant evidence from the archaic and classical poetry, the general invocation to the Muse/Muses is the norm, while invoking them by name is more rare and rather exceptional. It is best seen in the relatively well-preserved works by Pindar, with their frequent references to the Muse/Muses (about 59 instances), the epithets referring to their places of abode or appearance (*Pierides*, *Helikoniades*), or the elements indicating their position within the divine community (*korai*, *parthenoi*,

¹ Cf. Mojsik 2001.

² Cf. Henrichs 1987, 253: the sons of Thestios are just as often treated as a group as they are mentioned by name, depending on the author's preference and the context in which the names appear.

thygates)³. The names of Terpsichore, Calliope and Clio⁴ appear in the odes only six times. The ratios are therefore overwhelming and apparently not accidental. It can be assumed that this had been some sort of individual feature, if not for the fact that a similar phenomenon can be found in the majority of poets. Besides, the importance of the specific character of the genre, and the recitation circumstances, is also worth considering. For instance, it is known for a fact that noblemen from various parts of the Greek world commissioned Pindar, as well as other poets, to compose victory odes. In such circumstances, the mythological, and also other elements had to be adapted to suit regional needs, or at least the possible divergences had to be taken into account. On the other hand, the composition undoubtedly was meant to be intelligible on the pan-Hellenic level. As a consequence, the Muses must have been located between those two tendencies: the pan-Hellenic and the local one. Using supra-regional terms made the work intelligible and interesting to a much larger audience than the victor himself, his environment, and his fellow citizens.

Of course, the above explanations constitute only one of the many possible contexts which make it possible to justify the state of the affairs depicted in the sources. Also of significance were, no doubt, the author's ingenuity and the plot context, as may be attested, for example, by *Hebe's Wedding* by Epicharmus, which has already been mentioned earlier in this study.

Hesiod: Among the extant texts, the Muses' names are mentioned for the first time in Hesiod's *Theogony*. Notably, for a single time: in the verses 77-79, Hesiod mentions the names of the nine Muses that Mnemosyne bore to Zeus (76-79):

³ See the relevant entries in Slater 1969.

⁴ Terpsichore (*I.* 2.7), Calliope (*O.* 10.14; fr. 128c.5) and Clio (*N.* 3.83; *pae.* 7a.7).

έννεά θυγατέρες μεγάλου Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖαι,
Κλειώ τ' Εὐτέρη τε Θάλειά τε Μελπομένη τε
Τερψιχόρη τ' Ἐρατώ τε Πολύμνιά τ' Οὐρανίη τε
Καλλιόπη θ' ἡ δὲ προφερεστάτη ἐστὶν ἀπασέων.

the nine daughters born of great Zeus, Clio (Gloryfying) and Euterpe (Well Delighting) and Thalia (Blooming) and Melpomene (Singing) and Terpsichore (Delighting in Dance) and Erato (Lovely) and Polymnia (Many Hymning) and Ourania (Heavenly), and Calliope (Beautiful Voiced) – she is the greatest of them all. [transl. G. Most]

The first question that can be asked is, obviously, why it is these particular names that are in Hesiod's work. Martin West, in his *ad locum* commentary, had suggested – and this is now *opinio communis* – that they result from the preceding verses containing phrases such as κλειούσιν (67), τέρπουσι (37=51), ἐν θαλίης (65), μέλπονται (66), ἀμβροσίη μολπῆ (69), ἐρατὸς (70), ἐρατὴν (65), ὑμνεύσαις (70), οὐρανῶ ἐμβασιλεύει (71), ὅπῃ καλῆ (68)⁵. There is no expression referring to Terpsichore, but already in the first verses the Muses reveal themselves in dance. A reader may get the impression that in *Theogony* the names of the Muses appear all of a sudden, like a glimpse of the poet's insight – as West, who had assumed Hesiod's ingenuity, clearly believed⁶ – and immediately stem from the words describing their song and dance. I would, however, be tempted to think that this is an intended and premeditated move, perhaps only hinting at randomness⁷. The whole description forms, in keeping with the representation of the

⁵ West 1966, 180-181 – the observation predates, of course, West's comment – the historiographical details can be found in his commentary.

⁶ West 1966, 180: *These names seem not to have been traditional, but to be suggested to Hesiod by things he has said about the Muses in the preceding lines.* A different opinion is maintained by e.g. Erbse 1972, 194 and n. 73, with further literature.

⁷ Here, it is even more difficult to decide whether this could be the poet's innovation or whether the names and the number of the Muses were traditional elements. An analysis of the description suggests a considerable contribution of the invention serving to create an image imposing upon the listener an impression of the novelty, freshness, and immediacy of the Muses' appearance; this is also an interpretation

Muses in the initial verses of the *Theogony*, a picture of a female chorus (with Calliope as the chorus leader) characterised by specific features. The names ascribed to them reflect the activities (κλείουσιν, τέρπουσι, μέλπονται, ὑμνεύσαις) performed by the chorus while praising their father Zeus (οὐρανῶ ἔμβασιλεύει) and other gods, the effect of the *choreia* activity and its characteristics from the listeners' perspective (τέρπουσι, ἔρατὸς, ὅπῃ καλῆ), as well as the circumstances in which these activities are manifested (ἐν θαλίῃς). This critical assessment is shared by Penelope Murray⁸: *For Hesiod these names signify collectively all the pleasure of poetry and song which the Muses embody, and they are not used to differentiate between individual Muses*. In this respect, the Muses are similar to other groups of female deities, such as the Horae, Charites, Nereides, or nymphs. Like all these groups, they are usually represented together and even when they are given names, those do not serve to single out any individual from among the group. Their features and attributes, and thereby their names as well, are interchangeable⁹; exactly as in the case of the other female group deities, whose (desired) characteristics, e.g. beauty, song, dance, the power to arouse pleasure, recur frequently in names and descriptions. This is certainly the reason for the re-appearance of the Muses' names, as known from Hesiod's text, in the lists of the Nereides, Charites, nymphs, or Maenads.

The name **Thalia**,¹⁰ for instance, is attributed not only to the Muse, but also to a Sicilian nymph, daughter of Hephaestus (Aisch. *TrGF* III

I would support. It cannot be completely ruled out, however, that the picture of the Muses was, in a certain degree, dependent on a tradition older than Hesiod.

⁸ Murray 2005, 152.

⁹ Cf. also MacLachlan 1993, 54, n. 28, where the author attempts to prove that the relations between the groups of the goddesses (e.g. interchangeability of functions and descriptions, recurrence of names) point to their common roots. This seems rather difficult to concur with fully. It seems that some of these phenomena may be explained in an alternative way, without any recourse to the alleged common origin.

¹⁰ *LIMC* s.v. *Thaleia*, with primary sources and literature, and also the relevant entries in *RE*, *New Pauly* and in Roscher's *Lexicon*; similarly to the other names, with

F 6-11); a nymph who was in love with Daphnis (schol. Theocr. 8.93a); a Nereid (Hom. *Il.* 18.39, among others); a Maenad (iconography)¹¹; a female companion of Aphrodite (iconography); a companion of a woman in the company of Eros (iconography)¹². **Clio** is also variously depicted as an Oceanid or Nereid. **Ouranía** is not only an Oceanid and Maenad (a vase from the fifth century), but also an epicleris of diverse goddesses. **Erato** appears as an Arcadian Dryad, as one of the fifty Nereides, as the nurse of Dionysus, as one of Meleager's sisters turned into birds, as the daughter of Danaos or Thespios and the mother of Dinastes (whose father was Heracles), or as a Maenad pictured on a late-sixth-century vase. **Calliope**, in turn, appears on a late-sixth-century Attic vase as the name of Adrastos' wife. On the other hand, no evidence from the pre-Imperial period is known to indicate the usage, in other contexts, of the names: **Euterpe** (although, according to Plutarch, this was supposedly the name of a hetaera from Caria, Themistocles' mother),¹³ **Melpomene**, **Polyhymnia** and **Terpsichore**.

no direct source references. It is also worth paying attention to the interpretative licence when analysing vase representations with the images such as a female figure named Erato as a member of Dionysus' retinue (automatically interpreted as a Maenad); in this context, cf. Diodorus on the relations between the Muses and Dionysus (Diod. 4.4).

¹¹ Cf. the comments of Rudolf Wachter (2001, 284-285), who indicates that the names of the Maenads in iconography outside the area of Attica are usually illustrative and refer to the activities performed by them, e.g. Molpe, Choro, Klyto, or the desirable, characteristically female features (e.g. hair) – cf. Xantho, Myro. A considerable number of the names also appear on Attic vases, e.g. Choro, or in a closely similar form: Myris, Molpaios, Choranthé, Choreia; cf. also Paus. 2.20.4. Other illustrative names on Attic vases: Komoidia, Tragoidia, Thaleia, Dione, Eudia, Opora, Paidia, Thyone (Wachter 2001, n. 984).

¹² Cf. also the lists of Nymphs' names overlapping with the names of the Hesiodic Muses in: Camilloni 1998, 25-27.

¹³ Cf. Plut. *Them.* 1.2.

An interesting prospect for an alternative view of the “classical” texts and “classical” interpretations is offered, in particular, by **iconography**, as it often points out some versions of the names, unknown in the surviving texts, which however must have been intelligible to the audience, e.g. at a symposium, and might have played some role during recitations of compositions carrying mythical information. Such a context suggests that to the Greek listener of the Archaic and Classical periods, the name of a figure, especially a secondary and female one, and additionally a member of a group, was not ascribed to that figure permanently; it was not an element of his/her personality, but may have reflected characteristic features of a group, in accordance with how it may, or in fact should, have been perceived by a given audience¹⁴. Such a name may thus be subject to change depending on the needs of the poet and his listeners, and the choice may be justifiable both within a narration and in the context of a recitation/song.

The interpretation pointing to the collectiveness of the Muses in Hesiod’s *Theogony* and their connection with the description of their activities, which precedes the said list, partially explains the purpose of giving names to the Muses in this composition. Apart from the links with *choreia*, the individualised representation of the goddesses in the text may be also construed within the context of the authorization strategies employed by Hesiod and, in general, in the Greek literature of that period. Thus, if we assume that the whole long *prooimion*, in the form of a hymn to the Muses, was to make it easier for Hesiod to validate the correctness of his version – probably new and first of all supra-regional – of the theogonic myth, the reference to specific and named divine figures who had compelled/inspired him to sing must perform a significant narrative role.

¹⁴ Cf. Murray 2005, 152, on the Muses: *They are personified, but not personalized as individuals, even though Hesiod gives them individual names (...)*.

The knowledge of Hesiod's list in the second half of the sixth century BC is confirmed by the famous François vase, on which, among many other figures, there are representations of nine Muses together with their names¹⁵. However, in one instance the list is different from that of the *Theogony*: instead of the Hesiodic Terpsichore, there is a Muse named **Stesichore**. The difference is seemingly a minor one, yet it may cause some speculation. For example, Rudolf Wachter¹⁶ notes that it may point to the unoriginality of Hesiod's list. In his opinion, if the whole of the depiction on the vase (representing a certain stage in the wedding of Peleus with Thetis) comes from, or is at least inspired by, a literary text, the case may be similar with the list of the Muses, and therefore also with the variant form Stesichore. The event was described by, for instance, the *Kypria*, and even if the list had not been derived from that epic, it could have come from a tradition shared by Hesiod and the author of the *Kypria*. On the other hand, the Muses' number, names, and the order of the names are too similar to the relevant fragment of Hesiod's *Theogony* for the convergence to be accidental. The problem is impossible to resolve due to the lack of any additional evidence. At the same time, it is worth stressing once again that here, too, it is certain

¹⁵ Otherwise, the problem with identifying female figures depicted on vases comes down to the fact that they are not given names at all. It seems this is due partially to the fact that the context was comprehensible to the viewer, partially to the fact that in this way the representations, similar to texts, could remain ambiguous and still be subject to reinterpretation depending on the context in which a given vessel was used. Wachter 2001, 57-61 lists only three vessels whereon the Muses are signed: a Corinthian aryballos from c. 595-570 BC, with inscriptions *Mousai*, *Mosai*, *Kalliopa*, two groups, with three women each, signed, and one female figure (*Kalliopa*) separately, led by Apollo with a lyre; a shard of skyphos from Ithaca (1st quarter of the sixth century BC), an unidentified scene with Apollo (the name partially lost) and the Muses (*Moisai*); a piece of a vase from Naukratis, with an inscription *Mosa*[...] , usually interpreted as *Mosai*.

¹⁶ Wachter 1991, 107-108; cf. Stewart 1983.

that this element of the goddesses' image might easily have undergone changes and reinterpretations.

Familiarity with the names known from Hesiod's work in the Archaic and Classical periods is also confirmed by literary texts¹⁷. In the extant compositions, the Muses mentioned by name are Calliope,¹⁸ Ourania,¹⁹ and Clio²⁰. Notably, however, only Calliope, and perhaps Clio just once in Simonides, appear in works other than those by Pindar and Bacchylides. Terpsichore is attested to only twice prior to the close of the fifth century BC, in Pindar and Aristophanes²¹. The extant contemporary texts do not offer even one mention of Melpomene, Pol(yh)ymania,²² Euterpe, Erato, or Thalia²³. Among the iconographic evidence, the François vase features a full list, while the name Calliope can be found on another vase²⁴. There is, of course, too little evidence to draw any far-reaching conclusions. At most, the prevalence of Calliope, whose name is attested by a considerable number of various authors, as well as the frequency of the names in Pindar and, or perhaps especially, Bacchylides,²⁵ can be pointed out as surprising and noteworthy facts.

¹⁷ Cf. comments in the previous chapter (n. 37-39); in general, cf. Hardie 2009, although he draws somewhat different conclusions (based on the existing sources) than those proposed in the analysis below.

¹⁸ Calliope – Alc. fr. 27; Sa. fr. 124; Stes. fr. 63; fr. 240 PMGF; Pi. *O.* 10.4; Bacch. 5.176; 19.13; Emped. fr. 131; cf. *b. hom.* 31.1-2; Cor. 692 fr. 20; Pi. fr. 128c.5.

¹⁹ Ourania – Bacch. 4.8; 5.13; 6.11; 16.3; cf. Pl. *Phaedr.* 259b-d.

²⁰ Clio – Pi. *N.* 3.83; *pae.* 7a.7; cf. schol. ad *N.* 2.17; Bacch. 3.3; 12.2; 13.9; 13.228; Eur. *Hy.* fr. 1, IV. 7-8 = fr. 752h.7-8 TGrF.

²¹ Pi. *I.* 2.7 – cf. also Cor. 655.1, who is not included herein due to dating difficulties; Ar. *Ran.* 674.

²² Hardie (2009, n. 2) includes here the anonymously survived fr. 942 PMG.

²³ Thalia, Euterpe, and Melpomene are only known from some texts dating to the time of the Roman Empire – cf. Hardie 2009, 9.

²⁴ Cf. *LIMC* s.v. *Mousa*, *Mousai*.

²⁵ Ourania, in particular, is an interesting example here, as prior to the end of the fifth century BC she is attested by this author only.

The presence of Calliope is usually explained by her superior position among the group of the otherwise uniform Muses in the text of the *Theogony* itself (*Th.* 79-80)²⁶:

(...) ἡ δὲ προφερεστάτη ἐστὶν ἀπασέων.
ἡ γὰρ καὶ βασιλεῦσιν ἄμ' αἰδοίοισιν ὀπηδεῖ

she is the greatest of them all, for she attends upon venerated kings too. [transl. G. Most]

It is difficult to assess, however, if such a clarification may be sufficient. The absence, save for two exceptions, of the names of the Muses in drama should likewise not be overlooked. Although in Euripides' works, among others, references to the Muses as a group abound, in a total of several dozen passages the name of Calliope can be found only in the now fragmentary tragedy *Hypsipyle*. Even in the *Rhesos*, where a Muse, the chief protagonist's mother,²⁷ is one of the crucial figures in the play, she remains a nameless individual, one out of the impersonal chorus of female deities²⁸.

Returning to Calliope, the most that can be done is to determine that the only known justification of the presence of the name "Calliope"

²⁶ Calliope is, in Hesiod's text, a patron of kings and gives them the gift of eloquence – cf. e.g. Stoddard 2003.

²⁷ Cf. Eur. *Rhes.* 926-927: the Muse, Rhesos' mother, says in the play that when she had given birth to him, a child fathered by the god of the river Strimon, she felt shame before her sisters and mourned her lost virginity (as David Kovacs translates in the Loeb Classical Library edition: *I felt shame before my sisters because I was unwed*), so she threw the baby into the river and Strimon entrusted him to the Nymphs for rearing – κάπεί σε τίκτω, συγγόνους αἰδουμένη / καὶ παρθενεῖαν, ἦκ' ἐς εὐύδρου πατρός / δίνας· τρέφειν δέ σ' οὐ βρότειον ἐς χέρα / Στρυμῶν δίδωσιν ἀλλὰ πηγαίαις κόραις.

²⁸ Cf. Eur. *Rhes.* 890-892 – ἡ γὰρ ἐν σοφοῖς / τιμὰς ἔχουσα Μοῦσα συγγόνων μία / πάρεμι. On the cult of Rhesos and Clio at Amphipolis, cf. Marsyas of Pella, FGrH 135 F7; archaeological data: *Ergon* (1959), 37-44; *BCH* (1960), 793-798; cf. also Mojsik 2011 b (forthcoming).

in the relevant texts may result from her identification with the figure of the chorus leader; especially as a great number of elements in the image of the Muses point to their being perceived and represented exactly as a prototypical, model female chorus²⁹.

Non-Hesiodic names: Apart from the names known from Hesiod, there are of course also other names of the Muses. Some of them have already appeared in the accounts dealing with the genealogies, since the post-classical sources, which are fundamental to the current analysis, e.g. Cicero, Diodorus, Tzetzes, Arnobius, scholia etc., usually tend to collect the three elements of the Muses' image (which are here dealt with separately) into one comprehensive whole. In **Eumelos** (fr. 17 Bernabé), names of three Muses, daughters of Apollo, are attested to: **Kephisō**, **Apollonis**, **Borysthenis**³⁰. Epicharmus (fr. 39 PCG) mentions seven daughters of Pieros and Pimpleis: **Neilō**, **Tritōnē**, **Asōpō**, **Heptapolē**, **Achelōis**, **Tipoplō**, and **Rhodia**³¹. In both cases, the names are clearly connected with water and nature in general³². Moreover, Epicharmus notes that the mother of the Muses is a nymph. We may expect a similar situation in Eumelos.

In turn, in Book V of the work *Astrika* by Aratus, assuming that Tzetzes' information is authentic, four daughters of Zeus and the

²⁹ On the chorus and *choreia*, cf. Zwolski 1978; Mullen 1982; Lonsdale 1993; Calame 1997; David 2006. Cf. also West 1966 – commentary ad Hes. *Th.* 3-4: *The dancing of the Muses is modelled on that of mortals.*

³⁰ Cf. the comments in West 2002, 127-128.

³¹ The names cited in Tzetzes' version, according to the Thomas Gaisford edition (1823). David Harvey (2000, 104) proposes the following: *Neilō*, *Tritōnē* (*Tritōnis?*), *Asōpō*, *Heptaporē* (*Heptaporis?*), *Achelōis*, *Titoplō* (*Tritōnō?*), *Rhodia*.

³² Welcker has already indicated that the names in Epicharmus are derived from the names of rivers and lakes abundant in fish (ref.: Harvey 2000, 104). Beyond doubt, the fact had been in some connection with the contents of Epicharmus' composition and the enumeration of the dishes served at the wedding of Heracles and Hebe.

nymph Plousia: *Archē*, *Meletē*, *Thelxinoē*, *Aoidē* were mentioned³³. Once again, the mother is a nymph, yet this time the names bear references not to the realm of nature, but to the process of the forming and functioning of song (as the end product of that process)³⁴. Nothing is known of the context in which Aratus had proposed such names, or if that was his own original idea. The fact is that in the midst of the Hellenistic era there appeared a representation of the Muses completely different from the “canonical” one. Perhaps it should be assumed that the “canon” itself was not that “canonical”.

A fairly similar list, but without the first Muse, *Archē*, and with *Mnēmē*³⁵ instead of *Thelxinoē*, is cited by Pausanias (9.29.2). Its origin, according to the author, is in the vicinity of Helicon attributed to the sons of Aloeus, who were to have been the first to determine the number of the Muses (i.e. three) and specify their names. Pausanias adds that only Pieros, who had arrived from the North, was to establish nine Muses with the names known later.

οἱ δὲ τοῦ Ἀλωέως παῖδες ἀριθμόν τε Μούσας ἐνόμισαν εἶναι τρεῖς καὶ ὀνόματα αὐταῖς ἔθεντο Μελέτην καὶ Μνήμην καὶ Ἀοιδίην. Χρόνῳ δὲ ὑστερόν φασι Πίερον Μακεδόνα, ἄφ’ οὗ καὶ Μακεδόσιν ὀνόμασται τὸ ὄρος, τοῦτον

³³ Aratos fr. 87 SH = Tzetz. Ad Hes. *Op.* P. 23 Gaisford: Ἄρατος δὲ ἐν τῇ πέμπτῃ τῶν Ἀστροφικῶν, τέσσαρας λέγει, Διὸς τοῦ αἰθέρος, καὶ Πλουσίας νύμφης, Ἀρχήν, Μελέτην, Θελξινόην, καὶ Ἀοιδίην.

³⁴ The Muses are usually perceived as patronesses of the process of creating song, or as the process itself, but also as the final result; hence, in the fifth century BC, the identification of the Muse with song, or with poetry in general (also in a personalized manner, e.g. the Muse of Euripides = poetry of Euripides) – cf. e.g. Murray 2005, 148-150.

³⁵ Most often, Plutarch’s information is cited (743d) at this particular point in the text, indicating that the Muses were to be called *Mneiai* in Chios. A certain problem, however, in interpreting this passage is that the location mentioned in the text, the island Chios, is purely hypothetical, as all the manuscripts yield here an unclear ἐν λειῳ, whereas “Chios” is an emendation by Willamowitz.

ἐλθόντα ἐς Θεσπιάς ἑννέα τε Μούσας καταστήσασθαι καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα τὰ νῦν μεταθέσθαι σφίσι.

*The sons of Aloeus held that the Muses were three in number, and gave them the names of Melete (Practice), Mneme (Memory) and Aoede (Song). But they say that afterwards Pierus, a Macedonian, after whom the mountain in Macedonia was named, came to Thespieae and established nine Muses, changing their names to the present ones*³⁶.

Despite the changes, the set of the names established by Aloeus' sons makes references, similarly as in Aratus, to the creative process finalized in the composition (performance?) of song: *Practice – Memory – Song*³⁷. In the Muses' names, the referenced elements of the song composition process are those which are regarded (it would be interesting to know in whose view, in the poet's or the listeners') as decisive. All things considered, such a particular set reveals a slightly different, more technical as it were, view of the creative process and the performance context, where the significant elements in the creation of *oidē* (*song*) are to be *meletē* (*practice*) and *mnēmē* (*memory*). As rightly observed by Alex Hardie, names of this kind may have appeared in the late fifth century BC at the earliest, and more certainly – due to some other elements of the story in Pausanias – at the beginning of the fourth century³⁸.

Another version, undoubtedly earlier and borrowed from some other source, is cited by **Mnaseas**. In the *Epimerismi Homerici*, the note at the entry *Mousa* indicates that in Mnaseas' work three Muses named ***Mousa, Thea, Hymno*** had been mentioned³⁹. At this point, there is a reference – whether by Mnaseas or by the author of the note it is not known – to the opening verses of the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Palamedeia* (or *Kypria*). It is difficult to decide whether this was a serious statement or

³⁶ Paus. 9.29.2-3, transl. by W.H.S. Jones.

³⁷ For an attempt to interpret the set of the names and their cultural context, see Hardie 2006.

³⁸ Hardie 2006.

³⁹ *Epim. Hom.* m 65 = Cappelletto fr. 15 = fr. 25a FHG.

perhaps more of a joke⁴⁰. Even if it were to be recognised as a somewhat less intelligent postulation, it is at the same time clearly different from what some of the scholars consider as “canonical”.

In a discussion on the less known numbers of the Muses within the *Table Talks*,⁴¹ Plutarch mentions yet different Muses names, *i.e. Hypatē, Mesē, Neatē*⁴². One of the participants in the conversation explains that there are various interpretations of these names, referring

⁴⁰ Cf. a thorough commentary in the Pietro Cappelletto edition (2003, 187-189). In a similar context, Rutherford (2001, 59) has mentioned an Attic vase (c. 420 BC) with a depiction of four young men returning from the Choes feast, whose names were written in an accompanying inscription: *Kallos, Neanias, Komos, Paian* – cf. *LIMC* s.v. *paian* and *ARV*² 1318.1.

⁴¹ Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 744c: αἰτία δ' οὐχ ὡς ἔνιοι λέγουσι τὰ μελωδούμενα γένη, τὸ διάτονον καὶ τὸ χρωματικὸν καὶ τὸ ἑναρμόνιον· οὐδ' οἱ τὰ διαστήματα παρέχοντες ὄροι, νήτη καὶ μέση καὶ ὑπάτη· καίτοι Δελφοί γε τὰς Μούσας οὕτως ὠνόμαζον, οὐκ ὀρθῶς ἐνὶ μαθήματι, μᾶλλον δὲ μορίῳ μαθήματος ἑνὸς τοῦ μουσικοῦ, τῷ γ' ἁρμονικῷ, προστιθέντες. ἀπάσας δ' ὡς ἐγὼ νομίζω τὰς διὰ λόγου περαιομένας ἐπιστήμας καὶ τέχνας οἱ παλαιοὶ καταμαθόντες ἐν τρισὶ γένεσιν οὕσας, τῷ φιλοσόφῳ καὶ τῷ ῥητορικῷ καὶ τῷ μαθηματικῷ, τριῶν ἐποιοῦντο δῶρα καὶ χάριτας θεῶν ἅς Μούσας νόμαζον; 745a-b: ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο θαυμάζω, πῶς ἔλαθε Λαμπρίαν τὸ λεγόμενον ὑπὸ Δελφῶν. λέγουσι γὰρ οὐ φθόγγων οὐδὲ χορδῶν ἐπωνύμους γεγονέναι τὰς Μούσας παρ' αὐτοῖς, ἀλλὰ τοῦ κόσμου τριχῆ πάντα νενεμημένου πρώτην μὲν εἶναι τὴν τῶν ἀπλανῶν μερίδα, δευτέρα δὲ τὴν τῶν πλανωμένων, ἐσχάτην δὲ τὴν τῶν ὑπὸ σελήνην, συνηρηθῆσθαι δὲ πάσας καὶ συντετάχθαι κατὰ λόγους ἑναρμονίους, ὧν ἐκάστης φύλακα Μοῦσαν εἶναι, τῆς μὲν πρώτης Ἑπάτην, τῆς δ' ἐσχάτης Νεάτην, Μέσην δὲ τῆς μεταξὺ, συνέχουσαν ἅμα καὶ συνεπιστρέφουσας, ὡς ἀνυστόν ἐστι, τὰ θνητὰ τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ τὰ περιγεία τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

⁴² Charalambos Kritzas (1980) had pointed to the possibility of a connection between the names mentioned in the dialogue and an inscription from near Argos, dated to the close of the fourth century BC, containing the words *netas, mesas, hypatas*, and *pratas*. However, this interpretation is highly speculative. Cf. also West 1992, 241, n. 14, where the author indicates that the word *Prātā*, found in that inscription, is a Doric form of the ordinal number *the First*, “*who presumably corresponds to a local name for some other important note, e.g. Hyperhypatē*”.

to the voice pitch, or the height of string sounds, but in actual fact their names reflect the three levels into which the world is divided⁴³. He also adds that the Delphians use these exact names⁴⁴. The cosmological interpretation is probably derived from Xenocrates, who was to further develop the Platonic concept of the soul's tripartite division and wrote on the three levels of existence⁴⁵. Regardless, however, of the assumed explanations,⁴⁶ pointing to the possibilities and a range of the listeners' freedom of interpretation, and their sources, it is only certain that the names refer to some tripartite division and the interpretations linked both cosmological and musical conceptions together.

In the same text within the *Table Talks*, there is also yet another name outside Hesiod's list. In discussing the name *Polymnia*, one of the participants in the dispute recalls that one of the three Muses at Sikyon was called *Polymatheia* (*Thoroughly Educated*)⁴⁷. Perhaps, as in the case of the names such as *Meletē* or *Mnēmē*, some change in the image of both the Muses and the poetry in general is visible here. In addition, to consider the transformations in the iconographical representations

⁴³ In this context, it is interesting to note the information on the names of the phratries introduced at Kamarina in the fifth century BC and linked with the location of the strings in a lyre; see Wilson 2004, 280-281.

⁴⁴ On the possible cult-related presence of the Muses at Delphi, cf. Plut. *de Pyth. orac.* 17, 402 c, and also Mojsik 2011 b (forthcoming).

⁴⁵ Cf. the commentary *ad locum* in Teodorsson 1996.

⁴⁶ With regard to the assumption that the names and the number of the Muses were somehow related to the number and placement of the strings in the instrument, Wilhelm H. Roscher (1904, 35-36; 69) proposed an interpretation that the attested presence of the seven (and also, probably, nine) Muses was connected with, among others, the number of the strings. Although the hypothesis seems to be reasonable and thus quite tempting, there is no clear ancient evidence confirming this proposition. Even in Plutarch's compilatory text, no argument supports such an interpretation and there are no references to the seven or nine strings.

⁴⁷ Cf. Plut. *Mor.* 746e: ἡ δὲ Πολύμνια τοῦ φιλομαθοῦς ἐστὶ καὶ μνημονικοῦ τῆς ψυχῆς, διὸ καὶ Σικυώνιοι τῶν τριῶν Μουσῶν μίαν Πολυμάθειαν καλοῦσιν.

of the Muses in the course of the fifth century BC, the appearance of writing utensils and book rolls in the hands of the goddesses,⁴⁸ as well as the information from the early fourth century BC referring to the presence of the cult of the Muses in schools,⁴⁹ names like these should not come as a surprise: they simply reflect the Muses' increasingly stronger ties with the spheres of education and upbringing in the Classical period.

The name *Sophia*, which appears on a red-figure Attic pyxis from c. 430 BC,⁵⁰ should be considered in a similar context. The vessel shows representations of Thamyris, Mousaios, Apollo, and the Muses: Orania, Polymne, Terpsichore, and Sophia⁵¹. According to Philippaki, the latter figure is a Muse; yet it may be assumed that it is a personification of knowledge and wisdom⁵². On the other hand, the context of the representation makes it possible to venture an assumption that not only could the viewers interpret the figure as one of the Muses, but this was also the artist's intention.

There remains a fairly enigmatic piece of evidence. In the *Anecdota Graeca*, and in Tzetzes⁵³ as well, there is a remark to the effect that there had existed a certain list of the Muses whose names were to have been derived from the five senses:

⁴⁸ Cf. Immerwahr 1964; Queyrel 1992; Glazebrook 2005. Apparently, changes in how the Muses are depicted in the fifth century BC (instruments, writing utensils, book rolls) permit us to identify them better from among other group deities such as nymphs and Charites, or goddesses such as Aphrodite. However, they may still be mistakenly perceived as representations of mortal women.

⁴⁹ Aesch. 1.10; Athen. 8.348d; DL 6.69; cf. Theophr. *char.* 22.6; Herodas 3.

⁵⁰ ARV² 1328; Philippaki 1988 (quote from: *SEG* 37.59).

⁵¹ Philippaki identifies one more Muse (Calliope), but he does not confirm the existence of any name inscription on a vase.

⁵² According to Philippaki, this is the first known personification of the *sophia* in iconography, and the first confirmation of the use of the name *Sophia* with reference to a Muse.

⁵³ *An. Ox.* IV p. 424-425 Cramer = Tzetz. *Ad Hes. Op.* P. 23 Gaisford.

Τινὲς δὲ πέντε αὐτὰς εἶναί φασι, καὶ ὀνόματα ἔχειν τῶν πέντε αἰσθήσεων.

Some claim that there are five and their names come from the five senses.

However, as there is no further relevant information, it cannot be dated or properly evaluated.

Recapitulation: Apart from the names known from Hesiod's version, the classical and later literature contains records of: 3 daughters of Apollo (Eumelos): *Kephisō, Apollonis, Borysthenis*; 7 daughters of Pieros and Pimpleis (Epicharmus): *Neilō, Tritōnē, Asōpō, Heptapolē, Achelōis, Tipoplō, Rhodia*; 4 daughters of Zeus and the nymph Plousia (Aratus): *Archē, Meletē, Thelxinoē, Aoidē*; 3 Muses of the Aloads (cf. Pausanias): *Meletē, Mnēmē, Aoidē*; 3 Muses cited in Mnaseas: *Mousa, Thea, Hymno*; 3 Muses in Plutarch: *Hypatē, Mesē, Neatē*. This is by no means a complete list, and the ingenuity in the selection of the Muses' names does not vanish after the Classical period with the establishment of Hesiod's status of an authority. In turn, the names of the Muses mentioned in the *Theogony* are also attested as names of the nymphs, Charites, Oceanids, Maenads, and some other beings. Besides, there occur also other expressions pertaining to the Muses, indicating their geographical or cult-related associations, as well as their age, social status, and position among the gods and deities.

All of the above examples of evidence should be considered as a clear testimony to the pluralism as a characteristic feature of the Greek mythological imagination. The picture becomes fuller, and clearer, when the noticeably frequent references to the Muses as the *Pierides*, *Olympiades*, or *Helikoniades* are included. At the same time, we should definitely resist the temptation to interpret such expressions as the evidence attesting the existence of the cult worship at the locations to which these phrases refer. It may be assumed that in defining the Muses in this particular way the poets did not aim to make references to the places connected with the sphere of the religious worship of the

Muses, and well known to the audiences, but rather to appeal to some conceptions of a different kind.

In his work on the girl choruses of Sparta, Claude Calame hypothesized that groups of women in choruses were frequently, and girls' choruses almost always, given collective names⁵⁴. They had resembled the names of the divine choruses: of the Muses, nymphs, Nereides, Danaids, Emathids, Amazonids, or pertaining to the field of worship, e.g. Deliades, Lesbiades. Also, the suffixes *-id*, *-ad* are a characteristic of the feminine gender sphere and are connected with subordination and membership (geographical, familial), as they include the semantic features “female” and “collective” and always the feature “geographical/family association”. Expressions describing the Muses have geographical connotations as well, e.g. *Pierides*,⁵⁵ which Calame attempts to render as *the daughters of Pieria*. Simultaneously, the members of such a chorus are portrayed as *thygatres*, *korai*, *paides*, *parthenoi*, or *tekna* – which points to their family connections – or as *hetairai*, *philai* – the terms strengthening the impression of a greater cohesion among the group members⁵⁶. Such an interpretation makes it possible to assume that the usage of those terms appealed to a set of meanings entirely different than in the interpretation presupposing a simple relation with cult practices, as it could, for instance, evoke a picture of a divine chorus of girls/women. The question that still needs to be explained, of course, is why these and not any other locations had been chosen: why, specifically, *Pierides* or *Helikoniades*? There is no doubt, however, that a particular individual decision may have resulted from miscellaneous causes, not necessarily related to the worship of a deity in a given location. Not every single place in the realm of the

⁵⁴ Cf. Calame 1997, 19-88.

⁵⁵ *Olympiades*, *Helikoniades*, and *Pierides* – cf. Ps.-Hes. *Sc.* 206; Pi. *I.* 1.65; *I.* 2.34; Bacch. 1.1; cf. Hes. *Th.* 1; Ibyc. fr. S151.24; Alc. fr. 3.1; Hes. *Th.* 25, 52.

⁵⁶ Calame 1997, 31-34.

mythological imagination is a place of worship, as Richard Buxton has recently attempted to demonstrate⁵⁷.

In spite of having referred to only a fairly limited amount of the evidence material, the entire analysis above has served to demonstrate the role, significance, and fluidity of the onomastic designations in the Greek culture.

⁵⁷ Buxton 1994.

4. Numbers: Muses and the Arithmetic of Imagination

The last element of the image of the Muses on which I would like to focus is the question of the number of these deities in the Greek culture. As has already been noted on several occasions in the previous chapters, the *Iliad* uses references or invocations either to one Muse or to the Muses in general, without any number specified. In the *Odyssey*, in turn, there is basically only the singular number employed; with one notable exception, however – in Book 24, in the so-called II *Nekya*, in the description of Achilles' funeral, the following verses can be found (58-62):

ἀμφὶ δέ σ' ἔστησαν κοῦραι ἀλίσιο γέροντος
οἴκτρ' ὀλοφυρόμεναι, περὶ δ' ἄμβροτα εἴματα ἔσσαν.
Μοῦσαι δ' ἑννέα πᾶσαι ἀμειβόμεναι ὅτι καλῆ
θρήνηον· ἔνθα κεν οὔ τιν' ἀδάκρυτόν γ' ἔνόησας
Ἄργείων· τοῖον γὰρ ὑπώρορε Μοῦσα λίγεια.

*Standing around you then, the old man of the sea's dear daughters
raised up piteous moans; in ambrosial garments they dressed you.
Then all nine of the Muses in lovely antiphonal voices
sang you a dirge; there you would have seen not one of the Argives
who was not weeping, for so the clear song of the Muses aroused them.*
[transl. R. Merrill]

This passage, especially due to the number of the Muses stated therein, had aroused much doubt already in the antiquity. It is evident from the scholia that Aristarchus considered the exact number of the Muses to be a non-Homeric element¹. The Alexandrian scholar athetised a much greater portion than the modest verse 60. As a matter of fact, he believed

¹ Cf. schol. in *Od.* 24.1 Dindorf.

(just as Aristophanes of Byzantion did) that the *Odyssey's* ending had been actually at verse 296, Book 23². The verse in question has thus become just a fraction of the great controversy over the authenticity of the ending, of the *Nekya* as a separate whole, and the time when that particular part of the text was composed. Without attempting here to resolve this issue, a very complicated one and beyond the scope of our direct interest,³ it should be noted that for the purpose of the analysis below it is important that in the concluding sections of the epic there appears – at the levels of syntax, versification, as well as culture – a remarkably large number of elements whose authenticity is bound to arouse some controversy.

The first fundamental issue in this analysis, the one already raised by Aristarchus, is the divergence between the custom of invoking the Muses or Muse, without mentioning a specific number, as evident in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and the picture of the nine Muses singing at Achilles' funeral.

According to Alfred Heubeck, it is Hesiod who *refers always to nine Muses* and this is what clearly sets him apart from Homer, in whose works the number of the Muses is *not fixed*⁴. However, to take a scrutinizing look at the texts of the *Theogony* and *Works & Days*, the number of the Muses in Hesiod appears exclusively in the *Theogony* alongside the information on the birth of the Muses⁵ and the passage

² Cf. schol. ad loc.: Ἀριστοφάνης δὲ καὶ Ἀρίσταρχος πέρας τῆς Ὀδυσσεΐας τοῦτο ποιοῦνται.

³ Literature concerning the authenticity of the end part is quite extensive – cf. e.g. Blass 1904, 215-216; Page 1955; Erbse 1972; Stössel 1975; Postlethwaite 1981; Edwards 1985, 9-11; West S. 1989; Kullmann 1992; Kullmann 2002.

⁴ Heubeck 1992, 366; cf. also Pulleyn 2000, 275: *The "Odyssey" refers to only one Muse (...), except at Od. 24.60 (a late passage), where we are told that there are nine in all. The "Iliad" never gives a total figure. There was probably no fixed number at the earliest period (see West on Th. 60; Heubeck on Od. 24.60).*

⁵ In the text of the *Theogony*, the number of the Muses results from the number of nights that Zeus had spent in Mnemosyne's bed. In this context, Roscher's

complementary to that scene, depicting the goddesses' first performance on the Olympus, in the verse 60, as well as in the verses 916-917, where the information about the birth is reiterated, and also in verse 76⁶. The justification for stating the number is obvious here: it is the number of the daughters of Mnemosyne and Zeus. In addition, verse 76 is an introduction to the enumeration of the goddesses' names (v. 77-79), mentioned only once throughout the composition, whereas at the other relevant points in the two works, only the plural form (the Muses) is stated⁷. Therefore, if the sole work surviving to the present day had been, for instance, *Works & Days*, we would be led to think that Hesiod did not specify the exact number of the Muses, either, and thus he must surely have been unfamiliar with that number. At any rate, stating the number again and again would certainly have not made much sense,

comments on the relation between the number of the Muses and the amount of days of the celebration are worth citing – cf. Roscher 1904, 72: *Dasselbe was wir oben von der Siebenzahl im Kultus und Mythos behauptet haben, dass in der überwiegenden Anzahl der Fälle der Ausgangspunkt für die Entwicklung der Sieben zu einer typischen und heiligen Zahl die hebdomadische Frist (Woche) gewesen sei, gilt auch von dem Verhältnisse der enneadischen Kultbestimmungen zur enneadischen Frist. Doch lässt sich kaum in Abrede stellen, dass hier und da (z. B. bei Neunzahl der Muses) auch noch andere Gründe massgebend gewesen sind oder mitgewirkt haben, z. B. musikalische, oder auch der Gesichtspunkt, dass die 9 als die Verdreifachung der uralten heiligen Dreiheit angesehen worden ist.*

⁶ Hes. *Th.* 68: αἱ τὸτ' ἴσαν πρὸς Ὀλυμπον, ἀγαλλόμεναι ὅτι καλῆ, and 75-76: ταῦτ' ἄρα Μοῦσαι ἀειδὸν Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι, / ἐννέα θυγατέρες μεγάλου Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖαι – cf. the commentary of West 1966, 179: *The first thing a newborn god does – even if he is born practically on the summit of Olympus! – is to go and join the other gods.* It is also worth drawing attention to the fact that from the perspective of the narration, the number of the Muses in the *Theogony* appears only in verse 60, and earlier in the text their number is consistently indefinite for the audience. In the plot structure accompanying the account of the birth, and therefore also in the scene where they make their appearance to Hesiod, the Muses are still κεκαλυμμένοι ἤεροι πολλῶ / ἐννύχιαι.

⁷ Cf. Hes. *Th.* 1; 25; 36; 52; 75; 93; 94; 96; 100; 114; *Op.* 658; 662.

as the audience must have already known it from elsewhere, or had remembered that number if it had already been mentioned.

Such a view of the question may also put the references to the Muses in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in a different light. Perhaps this is not some indefinite number at all, but only an illusion to which the reader of today succumbs. The problem would be due to assuming the specific perspective, not of the direct listener (i.e. the composition being recited, circumstances of the recitation, and the context-related knowledge), but that of the reader (accessing the text only), who has neither the insight into the circumstances in which the work had been composed and functioned, nor the knowledge (or, rather, the communicative competence) of the contemporary audiences.

A balanced judgement should therefore, as it seems, indicate that in the extant two epics the number of the Muses is not specified, yet it could have been evident to the contemporary audiences. Hence, any picture assuming some sort of a linear evolution, e.g. from one Muse, through some indefinite group, to the image of nine Muses, is an over-simplification contrary to our knowledge of the archaic culture. According to this view, for example, Pindar should be juxtaposed with Homer, as in the extant works, with all his frequent references to the Muses, not even once does he specify their number (except for one rudimentary and reconstructed passage in the paean 12⁸). It is not due to the absence of knowledge or some archaisation; the lack of a definite number in victory odes may have been the result of many possible reasons. In the case of Pindar, it is certain that both himself and his audiences knew various numbers of those deities. Apparently, therefore, it would be most reasonable to state that with regard to verse 60 of the

⁸ Pi. *pae.* 12.2 (= G1 Rutherford): [...]οισιν ἐννέ{α Μοῖζ}ταις – cf. Rutherford 2001, 365, n. 2: *The Muses are nine according to Hes. Th. 60, 74 (the number is not otherwise specified in Pindar)*. Of course, the second relevant passage in the *Theogony* is verse 76, not 74.

Odyssey, there are no sufficient arguments to consider the information as inauthentic on that basis alone.

The only distinct doubt may arise in connection with the fact that albeit seems impossible to identify any sensible reasons for the unexpected mention of the number of the goddesses in this insignificant (from the metatextual point of view) context – considering the Muses' important role in the epic as narrators of the tale⁹. In Hesiod, as has already been mentioned, the number appears only in the context of the birth; whereas here their number is mentioned in a context where the plural may just as well have appeared. Why, therefore, are nine Muses mentioned in this particular passage? One of the scholars pointed to Homer's predilection for the number 9, yet this is not a particularly strong argument¹⁰.

Besides, the verses 60-62 are controversial for other reasons as well. After the image of the Muses singing a threnody in verse 60, there appears, in verse 62, a Muse in the singular form. To put it differently, the difficulty is not just in demonstrating that Homer could make a reference to nine Muses, even if he had only used the singular or plural forms beforehand, but also in connecting this new image of the nine Muses with another reference, a couple of verses further on, to one Muse. The closest example of such a shift from the plural to singular, or vice versa, within just a few verses of one composition, with reference to a similar deity, would be probably a passage in the song of the chorus in Euripides' *Elektra*¹¹.

This single Muse/muse from verse 62 poses a problem also due to the fact that it is more sensible to understand this noun not as a reference to a goddess (a representative of the Muses, the chorus leader?) but the effect of her/their action, i.e. the song¹². It is the song, a threnody sung

⁹ Cf. e.g. de Jong 1987, 45-53.

¹⁰ Erbse 1972, 196-197.

¹¹ Eur. *El.* 703 and 717.

¹² Heubeck 1992, 366-367. This is exactly the case with Euripides' *Elektra* in verse 703.

in turns by the Muses, that causes the Achaeans to lament. However, in this usage the word is attested only in the fifth century BC and it is not very likely that it had been older than the close of the sixth century¹³. Alfred Heubeck's explanation that Μοῦσα designates here one of those nine Muses, perhaps the leader of the chorus, *evoking, raising* the cry of the Achaeans, is not very convincing. It is an interpretation resulting from an attempt to defend the passage against charges of corruption or interpolation; whereas the use of the adjective *ligys* is not decisive, as it may be used both in relation to the human voice and the song itself¹⁴.

How should, therefore, the verses 60-62 from Book 24 of the *Odyssey* be construed? On account of their unique and problematic character (the plural and singular forms, nine Muses, or one Muse?) and the vagueness of the word Μοῦσα in verse 62, and particularly its probably late meaning, I would be inclined to think that the verses were added or (rather) subjected to transformation during transmissions of the text. This interpretation, albeit risky, seems to be simpler and more reasonable, and the number appears easier to explain assuming that it is given by someone who knows the Hesiodic tradition very well. However, the context of verse 62 corresponds to the fifth century better than to the turn of the eighth and seventh centuries¹⁵.

¹³ The earliest confirmations are perhaps in Pindar (*N.* 3.28), Aeschylus (*Suppl.* 695; *Eu.* 308), and Sophocles (*Trach.* 643). In this context, the sonorous song, not the sonorous (having a resonant-sounding voice) Muse, is a simpler interpretation.

¹⁴ Cf. Heubeck 1992, 366-367 and e.g. Hom. *Il.* 1. 248; cf. Maehler 1963, n. 1.

¹⁵ The scholars do not seem to split the question of the authenticity of the both verses; they consider all of them to be of a later date, e.g. Blass 1904, Page 1955, Pulleyn 2000, or regard them as authentic, e.g. Erbse 1972, Stössel 1975, Heubeck 1992, or rather authentic: Edwards 1985. It is also quite rare to separate the issue of the number of the Muses from the research on the authenticity of the whole ending, especially the II *Nekya*. If anybody ever takes a closer look at this passage, serious discussions usually do not focus on the presence and the number of the Muses, but on a possible source/sources for the description of the funeral. Through a reference to Proclus' *Epitome*, another composition from the epic cycle is indicated

Beyond Hesiod, and the aforementioned passage from the conclusion of the *Odyssey*, the number nine with reference to the Muses appears only in two works (among the extant texts) by the end of the fifth century BC. One possible passage is the reconstructed fragment from Pindar's paean 12, which has already been mentioned above. The other one is a fragment from Eumelos preserved in Clement of Alexandria¹⁶.

In the iconography, the number nine is exceptionally rare as well¹⁷; it appears in only several vessels, especially in the so-called François vase, where the identification is certain, although in this particular case the crucial factors are the painting convention and the place on the vessel's surface. But, under these circumstances, is it possible to definitively determine that there were nine Muses in that particular period? Of course, the authors are familiar with Hesiod's compositions, and therefore also with his description of the Muses' birth. This is evident in both paraphrases of his epics, as in Alkaios (fr. 347a), and in mentioning the poet's name, in Bacchylides (5.191-193). However, it appears that stating the number is either linked to some specific story context, e.g. the story of the birth of the Muses, or it results from some extratextual factors, such as the requirements imposed by competition, the local versions, or the expectations of listening audiences. This often overlooked fact is important in that invoking the Muses without mentioning any accurate number (or, similarly, their names and origin),

(*Aithiopsis* or *Memnonis*), in which depictions of further events connected with Achilles and also of his death could have been found: cf. Stössel 1975, 51-52, Kullman 2002; West 2003.

¹⁶ Eumelos fr. 16 Bernabé = dub. 2 Davis = 34 West: *For when Eumelos had written: "O daughters nine of Mnemosyne and Olympian Zeus", Solon begins his elegy thus: "O glorious children of Mnemosyne and Olympian Zeus"* [transl. M.L. West]. However, one of the three publishers, Davis, had doubted the authenticity of the fragment.

¹⁷ Cf. Queyrel 1992.

for example, at the beginning of the composition, may be variously interpreted in different performance contexts, especially if the audience did not know or remember the right passage from the *Theogony*. Moreover, we ought to be aware of the fact that even if the audience members were well acquainted with Hesiod's works, they may have interpreted the plural in a way appropriate for a local, or individual, unique character (also that related to cult practices)¹⁸.

Other numbers: It is worth stressing that a fairly large amount of diverse number configurations related to the Muses is known: beginning from just one or two up to suggesting the existence of ten. Some of the available data, as in many other cases, are late but significant due to the possibilities of reflecting the condition from before the Hellenistic period.

1 Muse: The possibility of there appearing invocations (or references) addressed to one Muse is quite obvious, which is clearly indicated by some of the examples cited above. This situation is not, however, tantamount to assuming the existence of one Muse. As a matter of fact, it is important and perhaps quite telling that no evidence suggests that some author had assumed the existence of only one goddess. The custom of invoking one Muse instead of the whole group, which can

¹⁸ One of the few known cult-related contexts from before the close of the fourth century, in which the nine Muses appear with certainty, is the nine-day-long festival devoted to Zeus at Dion in Macedonia (Diod. 17.16.4; cf. Arr. 1.11.1; schol. Dem. 19.192). Even though the cult innovation attributed to Archelaus is likely, a question remains if, for instance, the Muses had not been added to the celebration due to e.g. the identical numbers of days in Zeus' festival and the goddesses in Hesiod's version (cf. Roscher 1904, 72). However, even in this case, it would at least attest to a dissemination of the poet's version. Another cultural space where, in the fourth century BC, the nine Muses are clearly found is the Athens school, cf. Athen. 8.348d; DL 6.69.

be seen in the relevant literature, is interestingly commented on by the poet Rhianos¹⁹: πᾶσαι δ' εἰσαΐουσι, μῆς ὅτε τ' οὔνομα λέξεις – *if you mention the name of one of the Muses, all of them listen to you.*

2 Muses: Readers are informed of the existence of two Muses by the Stoic philosopher Lucius Annaeus **Cornutus** (first century AD) in his work on Greek myths:

λέγονται δὲ παρά τισι καὶ δύο μόναι εἶναι, παρ' οἷς δὲ τρεῖς, παρ' οἷς δὲ τέτταρες, παρ' οἷς δὲ ἑπτὰ;

*it is said that some claim there are only two [sc. Muses], others that there are three, others four, while still some others claim there are eight.*²⁰

It is not known in which texts such a configuration had actually appeared, as no further details are given; the author only noted that some texts that had referred to that number did exist. The situation regarding the number of, for instance, the Hyades or Charites is similar, as their number is not fixed²¹. From this, a conclusion may arise that perhaps not always had the Muses been represented as a prototypical all-female chorus, while their local and individual connotations might have reached beyond the most disseminated characteristic features.

3 Muses: The number three is perhaps the best attested alternative to the nine Muses. The fact that in Sikyon one of the three local Muses

¹⁹ Rhianos, fr. 19 Powell = schol. Ap. Rhod. 3.1c: 'οὐδέ τι λήθονται Μουσέων βροτοί· αἱ γὰρ ἕασι / κοίρανοι, αἴσι μέμηλε χορὸς θαλίαι τ' ἑρατειναί.' 'Ριανὸς δὲ ἐν α# 'Ηλιακῶν φησι μῆδὲν διαφέρειν, εἰ μίαν ἐπικαλεῖται τῶν Μουσῶν τις· πάσας γὰρ σημαίνει διὰ μιᾶς. λέγει δὲ οὕτως: 'πᾶσαι δ' εἰσαΐουσι, μῆς ὅτε τ' οὔνομα λέξεις.'

²⁰ Corn. *de nat. deor.* 14.

²¹ Hyads: schol. Arat. 172, 369 M. Charites: Alc. fr. 62 Calame; Paus. 3.18.6, cf. Paus. 9.35.1, Athen. 4.139, schol. Eur. *Or.* 626; MacLachlan 1993, 51, n. 23: *names and number of Charites vary in different cult-centers.*

was to have been named *Polymatheia*²² has already been mentioned above. There may also be some connection between that *polis* and the information from an epigram by Antipater of Sidon on some allegedly archaic statues of three Muses made by three different sculptors (each having sculpted one statue of a Muse), in addition to which two of them had come from Sikyon²³.

In turn, in the already-cited *Table Talks* by Plutarch, the ancient origin of three Muses is mentioned, and a suggestion of the presence of three Muses: *Neate*, *Hypate*, and *Mese*, at Delphi²⁴:

Εἶπεν οὖν ὁ <ἀδελφός>, ὅτι τρεῖς ἦδεςαν οἱ παλαιοὶ Μούσας· καὶ τούτου λέγειν ἀπόδειξιν ὀψιμαθές ἐστι καὶ ἄγροικον ἐν τοσοῦτοις καὶ τοιοῦτοις ἀνδράσιν. αἰτία δ' οὐχ ὡς ἔνιοι λέγουσι τὰ μελωδούμενα γένη, τὸ διάτονον καὶ τὸ χρωματικὸν καὶ τὸ ἑναρμόνιον· οὐδ' οἱ τὰ διαστήματα παρέχοντες ὄροι, νήτη καὶ μέση καὶ ὑπάτη· καίτοι Δελφοὶ γε τὰς Μούσας οὕτως ὠνόμαζον, οὐκ ὀρθῶς ἐνὶ μαθήματι, μᾶλλον δὲ μορίῳ μαθήματος ἐνὸς τοῦ μουσικοῦ, τῷ γ' ἁρμονικῷ, προστιθέντες. ἀπάσας δ' ὡς ἐγὼ νομίζω τὰς διὰ λόγου περαινομένας ἐπιστήμας καὶ τέχνας οἱ παλαιοὶ καταμαθόντες ἐν τρισὶ γένεσιν οὕσας, τῷ φιλοσόφῳ καὶ τῷ ῥητορικῷ καὶ τῷ μαθηματικῷ, τριῶν ἐποιοῦντο δῶρα καὶ χάριτας θεῶν ἅς Μούσας ὠνόμαζον.

So my brother said that the ancients knew of three Muses only. "To give proof of this fact," he continued, "in a company so numerous and so learned would be boorish pedantry. But the reason for it does not lie, as some say, in the three types of melody, diatonic, chromatic, and enharmonic, nor in the three notes that establish the intervals, top, middle, and bottom. It is true that the Delphians gave the names of these to the Muses, incorrectly associating them with a single science, or rather with a part of the single science of music, namely that concerned with scales. In my opinion the ancients, observing that all branches of knowledge and craft that attain their end by the use of words belong to one of three kinds, namely the philosophical, the rhetorical, or the mathematical, considered them to be the gracious gifts of three goddesses, whom they named Muses.

²² Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 746e.

²³ AP 16.220 – commentary: Aubreton/Buffière, 286-287; Gow/Page, 91-92.

²⁴ Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 744c-d (transl. F.H. Sandbach); cf. 745b. Cf. also Wolfgang H. Roscher's notes (1904, 35-36) on the relation between the number of the Muses and the number of the strings in an instrument.

The passage from Pausanias' *Periegesis* cited in the previous chapter, in turn, yields information about three Muses in the vicinity of the Helicon. According to the author, the original cult of the three goddesses had been established there by the sons of Aloeus, and only later Pieros changed that number into nine²⁵.

The role and the original character of the number three are also indicated by the accounts on three having been replaced by nine in some Greek city. The most complete version of such a story can be found in **Augustine of Hippo**, who in his work *De doctrina christiana* recounts that (in a city whose name Augustine has forgotten) a commission for statues of three Muses was placed with three different sculptors (each man to make a set of three) and that finally all the nine sculptures had been chosen:

Non enim audiendi sunt errores gentilium superstitionum, qui novem Musas Iovis et Memoriae filias esse finxerunt. Refellit eos Varro, quo nescio utrum apud eos quisquam talium rerum doctior vel curiosior esse possit. Dicit enim civitatem nescioquam, non enim nomen recolo, locasse apud tres artifices terna simulacra Musarum, quod in templo Apollinis donum poneret, ut quisquis artificium pulchriora formasset ab illo potissimum electa emerent; ita contigisse ut opera sua queque illi artifices aequae pulchra explicarent et placuisse civitati omnes novem atque omnes esse emptas ut in Apollinis templo dedicarentur. Quibus postea dicit Hesiodum poetam imposuisse vocabula. Non ergo Iuppiter novem Musas genuit, sed tres fabri ternas creaverunt. Tres autem non propterea illa civitas locaverat quia in somnis eas viderat aut tot se cuiusquam illorum oculis demonstraverant, sed quia facile erat animadvertere omnium sonum, quae materies cantilenarum est, triformem esse natura.

But we must not listen to the fictions of pagan superstition, which have represented the nine Muses as the daughters of Jupiter and Memory. They were refuted by Varro, a man whose erudition and thirst for knowledge could not, I think, be surpassed among pagans. He says that a certain town (I forget its name) placed contracts with three workmen for three sets of images of the Muses to be set up as an offering in Apollo's temple, intending to select and buy those of the sculptor who produced the most attractive ones. (69) It so happened that the workmen's products were equally attractive, and the town selected

²⁵ Paus. 9.29.2-3.

all nine and they were all bought for dedication in Apollo's temple. He adds that poet Hesiod later gave them names. So Jupiter did not beget the nine Muses, but they were made by three sculptors, three apiece. (70) And the town had placed contracts for three not because they had seen them in a dream or because that number had appeared before the eyes of one of its citizens, but because it was a simple matter to observe that all sound, which is the essence of music, is naturally threefold²⁶.

There is a familiar ring to Augustine's interpretation pointing that the number three has a "natural" relationship with the tripartite division in music.

In turn, the only poet from the Archaic period in whose composition the three Muses were to have appeared (provided that the relevant fragment is considered to be authentic) is the aforementioned **Eumelos** (fr. 17 B.). The three Muses are also mentioned, without any particular details, by some of the later authors, e.g. **Mnaseas**,²⁷ **Ephorus**,²⁸ **Diodorus**,²⁹ **Varro**,³⁰ **Cornutus**,³¹ and **Ausonius**.³²

²⁶ Aug. *de doctr. christ.* 2.68-70; translation from Green 1995.

²⁷ *Epim. Hom.* μ 65 = fr. 15 Cappelletto. With regard to this composition, Cappelletto (2003, 182) notes: *Per il numero e per i nomi delle Muse la traduzione offre un'ampia serie di varianti.*

²⁸ Arnob. *adv. nat.* 3.37 (= FGrH vol. II, 70 F 222): *Ephorus has igitur numero tris effert.*

²⁹ Diod. 4.7: ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ κατὰ τὸν ἀριθμὸν διαφωνοῦσιν· οἱ μὲν γὰρ τρεῖς λέγουσιν, οἱ δ' ἑννέα, καὶ κεκράτηκεν ὁ τῶν ἑννέα ἀριθμὸς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων ἀνδρῶν βεβαιούμενος, λέγω δὲ Ὅμηρου τε καὶ Ἡσιόδου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν τοιούτων – *Writers similarly disagree also concerning the number of the Muses; for some say that they are three, and others that they are nine, but the number nine has prevailed since it rests upon the authority of the most distinguished men, such as Homer and Hesiod and others like them* [transl. C.H. Oldfather].

³⁰ Serv. comm. in Verg. *Buc.* 7.21 – *sane sciendum, quod idem Varro tres tantum musas esse commemorat: unam, quae ex aquae nascitur motu; alteram, quam aëris icti efficit sonus; tertiam, quae mera tantum voce consistit.*

³¹ Corn. *de nat. deor.* 14.

³² Aus. *Epist.* 14.63-64: *An te carminibus iuvat incestare canoras / Mnemosyne natas, aut tris aut octo sorores?* – *Or dost thou delight to outrage with thy verses the*

At the same time, it does not seem that all of them make references to one and the same source; Diodorus and Cornutus speak of some authors (using the plural form), whereas the phrasing in Diodorus (οἱ μὲν γὰρ τρεῖς λέγουσιν, οἱ δ' ἑννέα) does not suggest the prevalence of either number. On the other hand, Ausonius, a relatively late author (fourth century AD), in one of his letters writes about *aut tris aut octo sorores*. Quite apparently, even though the number nine gains its dominant position in the course of, roughly speaking, the Hellenistic period, the ingenuity does not disappear, and discrepancies are not resolved altogether, of which even the authors of late antiquity are aware³³.

There still remains a question of what the situation may have been in the era before any canon was established. In Plutarch's dialogue cited above (Plutarch being clearly an example of a Greek scholar of the Imperial period who was interested in the problem of different versions of the Muses' number), there appears a suggestion that the three Muses belong to the ancient times³⁴. Similar conclusions may be drawn also from the story of Aloeus' sons cited by Pausanias, or the story of (nine) Heliconian statues known from Augustine's text³⁵. Hence, many

songfull / daughters of Mnemosyne, be they sisters three or eight? [trans. R.P.H. Green (1991)].

³³ Cf. e.g. Arnob. *adv. nat.* 3.37: *Musas Mnaseas est auctor filias esse Telluris et Caeli, Iovis ceteri praedicant ex memoria uxore vel Mente, has quidam virgines, alii matres fuisse conscribunt. Libet enim iam paucis etiam illas partes attingere, quibus alius aliud eadem de re dicere opinionum diversitate monstramini. Ephorus has igitur numero esse tris effert, Mnaseas, quem diximus, quattuor, Myrtilus inducit septem, octo adseverat Crates, ad extremum Hesiodus novem cum nominibus prodit, dis caelum et sidera locupletans.*

³⁴ Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 744c: τρεῖς ἦδεσαν οἱ παλαιοὶ Μούσας and commentary *ad locum* of Sven-Tage Teodorsson (1996), who is, nonetheless, wrong as to many interpretation-related questions.

³⁵ The information in Pausanias seems to refer clearly to some local tradition, in a similar way, perhaps, as the account on the three Muses at Sikyon. It is also worth

scholars assume that three is the original number of the Muses, while nine and other variants are only secondary³⁶. Simultaneously, they also refer to the significant role of the number three in the religious life of the ancient Greeks³⁷.

However, this tempting hypothesis has many flaws, which should be taken into consideration. For instance, as much as the number three is indeed one of the more important numbers in the realm of the religious imagination, not only of the Greeks, there is no doubt that other numerical configurations are held as tremendously important as well: sevens, nines, twelves, twos, etc³⁸. It seems that serious interpretations, especially with the condition of available source evidence being as it is, cannot be formulated on the basis of a hypothesis of such a particular predilection. This is also due to the fact that the crucial factor in this case is not the general, diachronic picture of the Greek culture and religion, but rather a synchronic, regionally and historically varied image emerging from individual sources. In this case, then, it is difficult to juxtapose the

stressing that the possibility of the three Muses' appearance in the following cult locations cannot be ruled out: at Sikyon, then near Mount Helicon (sic! – as it is the exact place where Hesiod had “met” the nine Muses), perhaps also at Delphi. There is, however, no clear basis for dating the presence of cult worship at those places prior to the fourth century. On the cult of the three Muses there, cf. also van Groningen 1948; Linfert-Reich 1971, 7. In Sven-Tage Teodorsson's opinion (1996, commentary on 744c), at all the more ancient places of worship the three Muses appear to be older than the nine.

³⁶ Cf. e.g.: Harvey 2000, n. 53 – *originally three, it seems, then variants*. Teodorsson 1996, 353: *The opinion that the Muses are three was common; it was probably the original one.*

³⁷ On the role of the number three in mythology and cult worship, cf. Usener 1903; Rubincam 2003; cf. also Calame 1997 n. 17: *Usener... notes that the young women who form a chorus in the tradition of written mythology (Nymphs, Maenads, etc.) usually appear in groups of three...; Theocr. 13.43 sqq., who mentions a chorus of three Nymphs, is an exception; in Eur. Ion 495 sq. the three daughters of Aglauros form a chorus.*

³⁸ Cf. e.g. Roscher 1904.

nine Muses of Hesiod or other improvised or local myth constellations (the names of Epicharmus, genealogies of Mimnermos and Alcman etc.) and suggestions of (fictitious) protagonists of Plutarch's dialogue or some local (also fictitious) Boeotian aitiologies noted by Pausanias in the second century AD. As Alex Hardie has recently shown in his meticulous analysis of the Aload myth, *The Aload names cannot predate Hesiod; (...). It follows that the <cult>, as claimed for Helicon, is most likely a fiction. We are dealing not with real cult, but with Heliconian ideology that retrojected three Muses' names back to the mythical origins of worship on the mountain, and tied them together with the presence there of terrible twins*³⁹.

In this situation, it is worth asking some extra questions regarding the cultural context of each one of the accounts separately (Hardie), or the sources of the knowledge displayed by the authors of extant accounts (in this case, those of Plutarch and Pausanias). Another interesting problem is whether the initiative to impose order on the group of the Muses (also evident in Cicero's picture of the three generations of the Muses) had resulted from a general need to make the knowledge of the past of the ancient Greek world more systematic – the tendency already present in the Hellenistic period, but typical especially of the Imperial era. In the light of the extant evidence concerning the Archaic and Classical periods, such a picture is rather unlikely. In the case of the Muses, it would be somewhat akin to assuming that there had existed some original tradition common to all Greeks (perhaps even from the time of their joint transmigration?), relating to the image of the goddesses (of little importance in terms of social aspects), which determined the number and other elements of their mythical picture. From that particular perspective, such early evidence as Hesiod's list or the seven Muses of Epicharmus would be a departure from the general order.

³⁹ Cf. Hardie 2006, 47.

The problem lies, of course, mostly in the necessity to separate the question of the considerable presence of the image of three Muses in literary texts, and perhaps also in the cult-related context, from that of the role played by the conviction about the originality of three Muses and the dating of that view⁴⁰. The source basis in the latter case is too slim and problematic to draw any far-reaching conclusions of a general nature. Besides, the modern scholars' initiative to impose order is closer to the Imperial period than it is to the (oral) culture of the Archaic and Classical periods.

Ultimately, for the research problem examined here, to demonstrate the incidence, and therefore also the role and the weight (certainly confirmed by those numerous accounts) of the numbers other than Hesiod's nine, is more important than to determine their priority. It is, at most, to be regretted that it is not known whether the three Muses had appeared in any other archaic works, except for, perhaps, the *Theogony* (or the *Korinthiaka*) by Eumelos⁴¹.

4 Muses: The number four can be found in **Cornutus:** *while according to others, there are four* (παρ' οἷς δὲ τέτταρες), but also in **Servius'**

⁴⁰ Among the possible explanations of the role and originality of the number three in the image of the Muses, the musical connotations which are seen in Plutarch's dialogue may be indicated, alongside the possibility that the number three, being less than nine, may have been "naturally" considered to be the earlier one; cf. also Roscher 1904.

⁴¹ Also interesting are the explanations (preserved particularly in some later texts) of the individual numbers, especially three; there is no doubt that the problem calls for a separate discussion, cf. esp. Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 743c-746d; Cornut. *de nat. deor.* 14; Serv. *comm. in Verg. Buc.* 7.21: *sane sciendum, quod idem Varro tres tantum musas esse commemorat: unam, quae ex aquae nascitur motu; alteram, quam aëris icti efficit sonus; tertiam, quae mera tantum voce consistit*; Aug. *de doctr. christ.* 2.68-69; Suda s.v. *Nikolaos*: ἔλεγε δὲ καὶ τὰς Μούσας ἄρα διὰ τοῦτο πολλὰς ὑπὸ τῶν θεολόγων παραδεδοσθαι, ὅτι πολὺ τὸ ποικίλον ἔχει τὰ παιδεύματα καὶ πρὸς πᾶσαν βίου χρῆσιν οἰκεῖον.

commentary on Virgil's *Aeneid*: *others claim that* (sc. *Muses*) *are four* (*alii quattuor dicunt*). Once again, we are dealing here with the plural, and even though it is unclear to what extent this reflects the state of the perception of the goddesses in the Archaic and Classical periods, it seems to communicate something about the perceptions relating to the number of the Muses (in the earlier literature) in the Imperial period.

Arnobius, in turn, states the source of his information and notes that the four Muses, daughters of Tellus and Coelus, had been mentioned by **Mnaseas**⁴². I have previously referred twice to the evidence drawn from the *Epimerismi Homerici*, where only three Muses were ascribed to that author, with their names mentioned (*Mousa, Thea, Hymno*). The contradiction between the texts, however, is only ostensible, as due to the periegetic nature of Mnaseas' works it is very likely that both those numbers may have appeared there⁴³. However, due to the rudimentary condition in which that author's work has survived, it is difficult to determine if the information had come from some local stories he quoted (which is quite possible considering the character of the composition), or from literary works. The latter, of course, does not preclude the former.

The only known author who might have used the number four in a literary work was **Aratus** of Soli⁴⁴. However, there is a problem with identifying the work entitled *Astrika*, of which nothing, save for Tzetzes' account, is known.

5 Muses: Five is the least attested number and a reference to it appears only in **Tzetzes** – *Some say that they are five, and their names come from the five senses* (Τινὲς δὲ πέντε αὐτὰς εἶναί φασι, καὶ ὀνόματα ἔχειν τῶν

⁴² Arnob. *adv. nat.* 3.37 = fr. 13 Cappelletto – *Musas Mnaseas est auctor filias esse Telluris et Caeli (...) Mnaseas, quem diximus, quattuor, (...)*.

⁴³ Cappelletto ascribes fr. 13 to the work *Europiaca*.

⁴⁴ Aratus fr. 87 SH.

πάντε αἰσθήσεων). The explanation for the names seems to indicate a late origin. However, the possibility that the names are later than the number itself cannot be ruled out.

6 Muses: Apparently, no evidence suggests the appearance of six Muses in the literature of the antiquity. However, a certain passage from the *Adversus nationes* by Arnobius (3.38) expresses a slight possibility that such a figure had indeed appeared. On the other hand, Arnobius' remarks may be only theoretical (six comes from subtracting three from nine) and do not refer to any specific text.

7 Muses: Seven goddesses, in turn, are attested to relatively well and sufficiently early. The earliest record comes from the already-cited composition on the wedding of Hebe and Heracles by **Epicharmus**. The figures of the seven Muses, daughters of Pieros and Pimpleia, had actually played a significant role in the work, as either Epicharmus himself (according to Athenaios, in the composition's second version) or one of the Alexandrian philologists had changed the title of the work from *Hebe's Wedding* into *Muses*⁴⁵.

Apart from Epicharmus, the seven Muses appear in a narrative cited by Arnobius and Clement of Alexandria; it is derived from the work of **Myrsilos** of Methymna and tells the story of seven Mysian serving-maids (Mysai = Moissai⁴⁶), who had placated king Makar's anger with their singing and music⁴⁷:

⁴⁵ Athen. 3.110b – cf. Olson 2007, 42.

⁴⁶ From the linguistic point of view, the identification of *Mysai* with *Moissai* became possible only when the diphthong *oi* had come to be pronounced as *y* (probably in the first/second centuries AD). I am grateful to M. Szymański for drawing my attention to this aspect of interpretation of Myrsilos' narrative.

⁴⁷ Myrsilos F 7a Jackson 1995 = Arnob. *adv. nat.* 3.37; Clem. Alex. *Protr.* 2.31.1 sqq. On the story, cf. Jackson 1995, 36-43 (commentary on the excerpt) and the author's earlier article: Jackson 1991, with the translation cited above.

Ὁ δὲ Μάκαρ Λεσβίων μὲν ἐβασίλευεν, διεφέρετο δὲ αἰεὶ πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα, ἠγανάκτει δὲ ἡ Μεγακλῶ ὑπὲρ τῆς μητρὸς· τί δ' οὐκ ἔμελλε; καὶ Μούσας θεραπαινίδας ταύτας τοσαύτας τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὠνεῖται καὶ καλεῖ Μύσας (Μοίσας?) κατὰ τὴν διάλεκτον τὴν Αἰολέων. Ταύτας ἐδιδάξατο ἄδειν καὶ κιθαρίζειν τὰς πράξεις τὰς παλαιὰς ἐμμελῶς. Αἱ δὲ συνεχῶς κιθαρίζουσαι καὶ καλῶς κατεπάδουσαι τὸν Μάκαρα ἔθελγον καὶ κατέπαυον τῆς ὀργῆς. Οὗ δὴ χάριν ἡ Μεγακλῶ χαριστήριον αὐταῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς μητρὸς ἀνέθηκε στήλας χαλκᾶς καὶ ἀνὰ πάντα ἐκέλευσε τιμᾶσθαι τὰ ἱερά. Καὶ αἱ μὲν Μοῦσαι τοιαίδε·

Makar was king of Lesbos, and he was always at odds with his wife. Megaklo was annoyed for her mother's sake. Why wouldn't she be? So she goes and buys these Mysian serving-maids, just so many in number, and she calls them 'Moisai' in her Aeolic dialect. These she taught to sing and perform tunefully on the lyre the deeds of old. By constant performance on the lyre and fine singing they progressively bewitched Makar, and soothed his rage. For this reason Megaklo dedicated them as a thank-offering on behalf of her mother in bronze, and ordered that they be honoured in all temples. And that is what the Muses are.

Evidently, at the end of the account it is stated that to honour the seven Mysian women (Mysai = Moissai) statues were erected and offerings ordered. Due to the character of the tale, probably explaining the locally bound number of the deities and the colloquial etymology of the term *Moissai* in Lesbos, but also due to the source of the information (Myrsilos' work entitled *Lesbiaka* was of a paradoxographical character⁴⁸), it may be surmised that it is a local narrative. How old it is remains unclear, but presumably it dates from at least the Classical period, judging from the author' lifetime. As a matter of fact, the number seven is relatively well attested to have been linked to Lesbos⁴⁹.

In some later sources, there are references to the seven Muses in **Cornutus** – *while according to others, seven* (παρ' οἷς δὲ ἑπτὰ) – and in

⁴⁸ On the author and the work in question, cf. Steven Jackson's preface (1995, 5-13) to the edition of Myrsilos' fragments.

⁴⁹ Cf. e.g. Roscher 1904.

Servius' commentary on the *Aeneid* – many claim that there are seven [Muses] (*multi septem dixerunt*)⁵⁰.

The number seven, as well as three, is a fairly frequent figure both in mythology and religious cult⁵¹. However, interpretations referring only to some isolated mythological or religious evidence are not very convincing⁵². In the case in question, much more important is the information that the number seven is quite often connected with *choreia*, e.g. as a number of the *choreutai*, whether humans or deities⁵³. Hence also the opinion of Claude Calame, pointing to the equivalence of the numbers nine and seven in this particular sphere, and the doubt if the prevailing fluidity in that field had ever finally solidified⁵⁴. Also, Wilhelm H. Roscher indicated the possibility of there being a connection between the number seven and the Muses through a reference to the most widely used number of strings in a string instrument; yet such an analogy would be apparently a rather late (and in the cult-related context, secondary) interpretation⁵⁵. Another problem is the fact that the classical sources do not seem to confirm such an explanation.

⁵⁰ Cornut. *de nat. deor.* 14; Serv. *comm. in Verg. Aen.* 1.8.

⁵¹ Cf. e.g. Roscher 1904.

⁵² Steven Jackson (1991), for example, has tied the number of the Muses in Myrsilos' work with seven beautiful slave girls of Lesbos, who were to be, according to the *Iliad*, Agamemnon's gift to Achilles. It is not known, however, whether the number seven in this epic reflected some specific knowledge related to Lesbos, had been derived from elsewhere, or was accidental.

⁵³ Wilhelm H. Roscher (1904, 19) notes that it is particularly evident in the entourage or cult of Apollo.

⁵⁴ Calame 1997, 23. The most frequent numbers of choristers seen in the archaic iconography are 3, 4, 6, 7 (Calame 1997, 21 and n. 8); even though the number obviously depends on the space available on a vessel, the painter's ingenuity, sheer coincidence, or convention, it is striking to notice the close similarity to the number of members in groups of female deities, such as the Horae, Charites, Muses, Sirens, Pleiades, Maenads. Cf. also Crowhurst 1963.

⁵⁵ Roscher 1904, 35-36.

8 Muses: The number eight does not appear to be particularly popular, but it can be found with reference to the Muses and, possibly, in a relatively early period. According to an account by Arnobius of Sicca, the author who was to have mentioned the eight Muses was Crates⁵⁶. It remains a mystery (even though most scholars usually seem to overlook it⁵⁷) which Crates Arnobius really meant. Many authors named Crates are known to have existed, and Arnobius does not offer any additional information⁵⁸. Among several most likely ones, there is a fifth-century comedy poet from Athens,⁵⁹ Crates of Thebes, a philosopher⁶⁰ of the Cynic school, or Crates of Mallos, a second-century scholar, author of many writings on Greek literature, and also an envoy of Attalos II to Rome. Each one of them may be a potential candidate, especially as even the theoretically least likely one, Crates of Thebes, was also an author of some poetical works⁶¹. However, for example, in the *Poetae Comici Graeci*, at the entry on the comedy writer Crates, there is no reference to Arnobius' passage, which demonstrates that it was not

⁵⁶ Arnob. *adv. nat.* 3.37: *octo adseverat Crates*.

⁵⁷ Cf. e.g. Mayer 1933, 687-691.

⁵⁸ Even a thorough analysis of Arnobius' text yields no results, as this is the only passage where that name is mentioned. Besides, Arnobius cites from an unknown source, which makes any identification even more difficult.

⁵⁹ There may have also existed another comedy poet of the same name (living in the fourth or third century BC), but none of his works have survived and it is not very likely that Arnobius, or his source, had made a reference here (without any additional information) to such an obscure figure – cf. *Neue Pauly* s.v. Crates {2}.

⁶⁰ Two Platonist philosophers named Crates, scholars of the Academy in the third and second centuries BC, are also known – cf. *Neue Pauly* s.v. Crates [3] and [6].

⁶¹ Cf. DL 6.86; interestingly, in Crates' poetical passage, quoted by Diogenes Laertios, there appears a reference to the Muses: ἔστιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τόδε „ταῦτ' ἔχω ὅσσ' ἔμαθον καὶ ἐφρόντισα καὶ μετὰ Μουσῶν // σέμν' ἐδάην· τὰ δὲ πολλὰ καὶ ὄλβια τύφος ἔμαρψεν” – *These lines, too, are his: “All this I learnt and pondered in my mind, / Drawing deep wisdom from the Muses kind / But all the rest is vanity”*. [trans. C.D. Yonge].

known to the authors of the volume, or they did not consider it either important enough, or pertaining to the poet in question. It is quite similar in the case of the philosopher Crates of Thebes. On the other hand, Crates cited by Arnobius was on several occasions identified with an author of critical works, Crates of Mallos⁶². However, neither Pietro Cappelletto in his commentary on Mnaseas (cited by Arnobius)⁶³ nor the author of the latest edition of Crates of Mallos, Maria Broggiato,⁶⁴ justify their interpretations. Furthermore, they do not attempt to verify possible connections between Arnobius' information and other figures named Crates. Cappelletto and Broggiato probably follow here in the footsteps of Curt Wachsmuth's findings in the 1860 edition of Crates, to which they both refer in their own commentaries⁶⁵.

Although the authorship of Crates of Mallos is likely, it is worth remembering, especially in view of the state of the current knowledge of ancient literature, that there also exist other interpretational possibilities, as the eight Muses may have appeared in one of the comedies by the Athenian poet Crates, as well as in poetical compositions by Crates of Thebes. The best solution would be to insert Arnobius' information in the editions of all the three authors, with some suitable notes on the uncertain identification.

Besides, even if it is assumed that Crates of Mallos was indeed the author of the information, the evidence itself undoubtedly referred to some earlier text he had quoted, or possibly to some local narrative. It is very likely, therefore, that the mention is early and may come from before the Hellenistic period.

Apart from the problematic remark in Arnobius, there are references to the number eight in Ausonius (*Epist.* 14.63-64): *aut tris aut octo*

⁶² On this aspect of Crates' literary and academic activity, cf. Asmis 1992.

⁶³ Cappelletto 2003, 182, n. 326.

⁶⁴ Broggiato 2002, 276-277.

⁶⁵ Wachsmuth 1860, 71.

sorores, and Servius, in his commentary on the *Aeneid*: *alii has octo, ut Athenis visuntur*. Servius' remark is interesting for two reasons, as it refers to the plural form (*alii*) with respect to the sources of the information and also indicates the Athenian origins of that tradition. No other account is, however, in existence that would link Athens with the eight Muses; unless, of course, it is assumed that the author in question is the comedy writer Crates, or Crates of Thebes, the philosopher active at Athens.

10 Muses: The number ten is only featured here to emphasise further that the freedom in designating the number of the Muses does not vanish as a result of the dissemination of the image of nine goddesses. In the fragmentary *scholia Londinensia* to *Aitia* by Callimachus, there is a suggestion that the number ten mentioned in the passage might have been the number of the Muses stated in the composition, or the result of the author's adding of Apollo Mousagetes or queen Arsinoe to the nine Muses⁶⁶. Of course, offering any correct solutions to this question is beyond our concern here. It is sufficient to assert that the scholiast had indicated that in his time such an example of artistic invention in a literary work was not anything odd or bizarre.

As the above observations demonstrate, the number of the Muses (as well as their genealogy and names) does not seem to have been, and perhaps even could not have been, constant in the Archaic and Classical periods, as it is clearly "fluid" also in texts of the later periods. Yet the Muses are not the only deities whose number was undergoing modifications. As in the cases of names and genealogies, it was

⁶⁶ *Scholia Londinensia ad Callim.* F 2a Pf.; cf. Dillery 1999, 276. For the phenomenon of the 10th Muse, cf. e.g. SEG 52 (2002): 947 – a tomb epigram of an actress (second century AD), cf. Webb 2002; SEG 18: 503 – a man (Tattianos) as a 10th Muse; Herodes Atticus as a 10th Muse – cf. Clay D. 2004, 87.

a phenomenon typical particularly of female group deities. Examples of differences in the numbers of the Charites, Hyades, etc. have already been mentioned in this chapter. There are many more of discrepancies of this type: in genealogies, numbers, or names of gods and heroes, and also in other elements of myths. Their presence and amount prove, in addition, that the fluidity in the representation of the Muses is not an idiosyncrasy or a coincidence, but something definitely typical for the culture of the Archaic and Classical periods, and, to a great extent, to the Greek culture as a whole.

Of course, the phenomenon described above has its own causes; finding out what they are may tell us a lot about the specific characteristics of the epoch and the mentality of ancient Greeks. I shall now endeavour to point out the most significant of these causes.

5. Conclusions

It seems that most of the problems with interpretation of the literature of the Archaic and Classical periods, including representation of the Muses therein, are connected with a proper appraisal of communication contexts¹. I have in mind here both the context presupposed by the author/performer, i.e. the one in which the text originally functioned, and also, for example, possible contexts of re-composition and re-performance. Such criticism is not an easy task, as there was no uniform concept of poetry and literature in the Archaic period, and individual compositions were rather linked with the circumstances in which they were performed. As a result, they became *the objects of criticism* rather as public performances, not “texts”, *since Greek poetry did not become an affair of private reading until late in the fifth century*².

Although voices calling for revisions in the method of approaching interpretation of archaic and classical texts had been heard for at least three decades, even such adherents of the pragmatic approach as Bruno Gentili and John Herrington were not able to free themselves from evaluating text as a text³. Throughout the period in question, a text was prepared, recited, and evaluated in the strict relation with communication contexts, not in agreement with any formal patterns. The

¹ Recently, cf. e.g. Budelmann ed. 2009.

² Ford 2002, 4. On the change taking place at the turn of the fifth and fourth centuries BC, cf. also (p. 8): *a fundamental and broad shift from early responses to singing as a form of behavior regulated by social, political, and religious values to a conception of poetry as a verbal artifact, an arrangement of language subject to grammatical analysis, formal classification, and technical evaluation. This shift was completed in the fourth century, and “Poetics” is its most conspicuous monument.*

³ Gentili 1988; Herrington 1985.

proposed shift in the approach would offer us the possibility not only of making criticism of many elements present in poetical expressions more specific, but also of highlighting the role of context, which is responsible for given contents being composed. The first element that ought to be indicated is the fact of the social conditioning of poetry. As Claude Calame has put it in one of his works, archaic poetry must be perceived as a *social act*⁴. This results from the fact that actually every literary text participated, one way or another, in the life of the community in which and/or for which it was created. Yet Greek texts of the Archaic and Classical periods do not so much take part in the life of the community as their participation is, in most cases, intended; compositions are created at the behest of the entire community or a section thereof, and are presented, to a greater or lesser extent, in public. The Greek world in the period in question does not know the notion of “closet” writing or literary creation for the author’s own purpose. Hence, Eva Stehle, when referring to a portion of the literary production with the strongest ties to communal life, uses the term *community poetry*⁵. Of course, the intensity of participation or immersion in social life tends to be different and depends on a multitude of factors, yet the intended public circumstances of expression are beyond dispute in a majority of cases.

⁴ Calame 1997, 9: *Defined as a poetry of occasion, in contrast to modern poetry, it assumes a definite social function and can only be understood by reference to the circumstances of its creation. Archaic “literature” is never gratuitous, nor does it have the critical dimension of Alexandrian or modern poetry; it is always subject to the demands of the civic community for which it exists; it has to be understood as a social act.* Cf. Stehle 1997, 6: *performance in pre-Hellenistic Greece was in the first instance the self-presentation of performers as social actors to their audiences. Their performances are not simply vocalizations of poetry, but acts of staging themselves. (...) Those who wished to participate in public business acted out a dramatized identity in a variety of ways in agora, public meeting, court and council, on military service, and in the symposium.* Cf. Ford 2003, 37.

⁵ Stehle 1997.

Such context, in turn, has an influence on the contents of a text and defines functions of poetic expression. At the same time, in speaking of context, it must be stressed that, basically, this means a countless number of performance-related situations arising from social, political, cultural, but also economic conditions. The fundamental factor exerting an influence on such a diversity is the socio-political fragmentation of the ancient Greek world and the need to maintain the distinctness of individual *poleis* by stressing the features distinguishing one community from another. Hence, one of the factors stimulating creation of new versions of mythic narratives was e.g. the foundation of Greek colonies. In turn, introducing new cults and disseminating related texts (clearly evident in, for instance, the *poleis* of the West Mediterranean) in the Archaic period served the purpose of forging a group identity⁶. And it was precisely in the colonies where that identity could be created almost anew, though of course with some preserved links to traditions of the *metropolis* as well as to the pan-Hellenic ones⁷. Other factors bearing an impact on mutations of mythic stories must have been also all the socio-political transformations that had urged the search, through narratives, for explanations of changes taking place in the life of a given community⁸.

There is no doubt that the *poleis* had their own distinct local traditions; but those were subject to constant reinterpretation. Change and creation in this sphere usually aimed to distinguish from, and

⁶ Stehle 1997, 57 and n. 97; Burnett 1988.

⁷ Relations between the names of the Nereids and the colonization experience is discussed, for example, in McNerney 2004.

⁸ The description of the Spartan genealogy, preserved in Pausanias, and an analysis of its ideological functions (especially as regards territorial claims) has led Claude Calame (1987, esp. 176-7) to assume that a genealogy legend may be, as an ideological representation, a narratisation of an actual state of the political territorial division corresponding to the historical situation. On the functions of genealogies, cf. also Möller 1996; on the role of myth in explaining reality, cf. Gould 1985.

create the opposition to, what there is (or, actually, “is becoming”) on the outside and is seen as “different”, and, as a result, to work out some common characteristics meant to consolidate the community. Conversely, in other situations – for instance, when there was a need for identification with a greater entity – such actions might have also tended in the opposite direction and emphasised some similar, supraregional or pan-Hellenic features.

Such a need for public communication of the community,⁹ also with a view to reaffirm the hierarchy or the norms of social co-existence, was responsible for the citizens’ participation in the public *choreia*¹⁰. At the same time, the chorus comprised of representatives of the community acted as a confirmation of the “veracity” of the performed version of a given narrative, and also facilitated its acceptance by the group. There was, of course, one more intermediary needed to achieve it: the poet, the author of a composition – of the song, and also (depending on the situation) of the music (or choreography). At times, more than one poet and one performer were involved, as festive occasions were also opportunities for poetic contests, i.e. occasions involving rivalry¹¹. Sometimes, even more than one audience were involved as well, owing

⁹ As Eva Stehle (1997, 58) has put it: performers of community poetry are “community’s means of communication with itself” – from the perspective of the relations between performers and their audience, performers speak both on behalf of, and to the community.

¹⁰ On the role of *choreia* in social life, cf. the famous passage of Polybius (4.20-21), and also Zwolski 1978; Mullen 1982; Lonsdale 1993; on *choreia* in iconography, cf. e.g. Brand 1999.

¹¹ Cf. Griffith 1990, 188: (...) *it is hardly an exaggeration to say that most Greek poetry, from the time of Homer and Hesiod to that of Euripides, was composed for performance in an explicitly or implicitly agonistic context*; Henderson 1989, 24: *A considerable proportion of early Greek lyric poetry was produced in an atmosphere of rivalry, both informal (e.g. at symposia) and formal (e.g. at regional or pan-Hellenic games and festivals)*; cf. Reisch 1885; Weiler 1974; von Scheliha 1987; Herz 1990; Osborne 1993; Collins 2005.

to the fact that spectators watching contests at festivals could be very diverse, which the poet must always have taken into consideration; besides, it did not have to be the only audience assumed by the poet. Moreover, *community poetry*, which is given the most attention here, is not the only type of public expression, and only the most manifest example of *public performances*¹².

Among other elements important for communication contexts, such categories as gender, age, social status, and attitude towards the profession of poet/musician¹³ need also be mentioned, although we must be aware that these categories are all linked with one another; for example, age and gender both determine a person's social rank. As a matter of fact, generated meanings result from intentions of poets, performers, individuals/institutions ordering a given composition, as well as from the requirements, aspirations, and communication competence of its audience/-s¹⁴. These, again, depend on, *inter alia*, gender, age, social status, place of origin, intellectual level, education, and many other factors. In addition, the importance of venues and occasions related to performances must not be forgotten. Religious, martial, social (weddings, funerals), and agrarian contexts were in

¹² In the case of symposium poetry, it often resembles *community poetry* with its function of building an identity in opposition to what is foreign/different (e.g. deriving from a different social group or *hetaireia*) – cf. Ford 2002, 25-45.

¹³ On the differences between the professional and the amateur performer, see e.g. Wilson 2004, 295: *The professional plays before 'all Greece', for remuneration in fame and coin; the 'eleutheros' plays before, or rather 'among', his peers in the closed space of the symposium, in an exclusive demonstration of his 'Culture' (Protagoras 312b, cf. Gorgias 501e)*. Cf. also Stehle 1997, passim, where the author states that compositions of professional poets may imitate *community poetry* in order to create a bond with local audiences. Importantly, compositions of professional poets are those containing the most elements of metapoetical discourse, which appears to be linked with their social and economic situation.

¹⁴ Cf. e.g. Seaford 1994, 5: *The tendency of oral poetry to express and legitimate the interests and aspirations of its audience is well documented*.

connection with proper selection of mythic narratives (and their versions), and adapting them to current needs. In turn, the contexts of symposia and agonistic performances had an effect on a greater amount of metapoetical expressions serving to authorise performances of competing poets. Finally, all of this had been subject to modifications depending on whether the poets recited their compositions locally or delivered them during pan-Hellenic festivals in front of inhabitants of different *poleis*.

Still other reasons for introducing modifications are, for instance, limitations stemming from genre-bound requirements. Simultaneously, however, it is true that at least until the fourth century BC those were ordinarily fairly strictly connected with performance occasions. In this context, apart from the already cited examples from Pindar, it is worth paying particular attention to the relatively frequent cases of relations between the number of mythic figures and the number of the members in a chorus performing a given composition¹⁵. This may be one of the more frequent and prosaic reasons for introducing changes in numbers of protagonists in mythic stories.

It may be possible to imagine the poet's invention regardless of recitation circumstances; yet this appears to be (which the above deliberations hopefully prove) a relatively marginal phenomenon. Even a composition improvised at a symposium was also reliant on the venue, the participants of the occasion, and circumstances of the performance¹⁶.

¹⁵ Cf. Harvey 2000 (on Epicharmus); Stehle 1997, 32, n. 27, dealing with a possible link between the number of the Hippokoontides and the number of the chorus members; and, generally, in Sourvinou-Inwood 2004, 6 and n. 15, where the author demonstrates that the different representation of gods in tragedies (in contrast to a more positive one in comedies and speeches) is dependant on the socio-religious context.

¹⁶ Ford 2002, 32: *Singing games thus also served as a set of structures that allowed participants to "perform themselves" as they interacted with and competed against each other.*

Also in a symposium context, the participants competed against one another, played their assigned or improvised roles, and presented themselves to other members of their group – all of them involved in a constant rivalry to attain a superior position. Simultaneously, however, the symposium, seemingly poised between those two trends, was a space where specific features both common and distinguishing the participants from other groups (different, in particular, with respect to their social status) were emphasised¹⁷. Interestingly, representations of the Muses seem to appear much more seldom in symposium-type compositions. The poetry of Alkaios, even with all the difficulties related to its actual state of preservation, may serve here as the best example¹⁸. There are, among others, extant fragments with initial sections of his works in which no invocations or references to the Muses can be found. Apparently, this could have been the case as there was possibly no need to authorise enunciations within a circle of participants equal in terms of status. Therefore, it seems justified to argue that the frequency of the Muses' appearance in poetical compositions had also depended on certain characteristics of the communication context. Furthermore, it is also worth pointing to the possibility of the parallel existence of disparate versions of mythic narratives (or their particular elements) within one author's body of works, or even within a single work¹⁹.

¹⁷ Ford 2002, 33: *the symposium was a setting for elite males to reinforce their solidarity and to demonstrate their distinction.*

¹⁸ Verses 9-10 of Horace's *carmin.* 1.32 (words of thanks are due to J. Danielewicz for the information on this passage) – *Liberum et Musas Veneremque et illi / semper haerentem puerum canebat* – suggest however that the goddesses must have appeared in Alkaios' poetry. Horace's expressions are too general to say anything about specific compositions. The assumption that there may have been references to the Muses in, for instance, hymnal compositions, or those invoking the mythic tradition (cf. e.g. fr. 304; 308b; 327), is, in my opinion, not in opposition to the reflection on their absence in the known symposium works.

¹⁹ The best known example is perhaps *Palinodia* by Stesichorus (fr. 192-193), especially if we concur with Bowie that the both versions are found in one work –

The dissimilarity does not have to be due to a change in “views” or an error (also in the tradition of transmitted accounts), but possibly to the audiences’ expectations or some conscious authorization attempts.

All the factors mentioned above may have had an impact on the shape of a given composition, the mythic stories it had contained, as well as on the way it was received²⁰. Even a superficial account of diverse types of *Sitz im Leben* points explicitly to the complexity of the communication context in the period which has been examined in this study, as well as to the functions of this type of communication for the audiences. With all these considerations in mind, it should be assumed that the discrepancies in some versions of mythic narratives – which are now clearly evident – do not belong to the category of *poetische Spielerei*, but they were an essential and inherent trait of the Greek culture throughout the entire period in question.

In the already cited passage from Servius’ commentary on the *Aeneid* (*comm. in Verg. Aen.* 1.8), there is a remark that the Muses are called Boeotian, Attic, or Sicilian (*alias Boeotias, alias Atthidas, alias Siculas* [sc. *multi dixerunt*]) goddesses, clearly depending on the context and the listeners’ requirements. There is also a similar relation in the case of the numbers of these deities, as in many locations: Lesbos, Sikyon, Delphi, Helicon, perhaps also Corinth, their number must have been connected with, for example, some local preferences. Likewise, there can be no doubt that the names and genealogies encompass various elements related to performance situations, the knowledge of which is now usually impossible to recover. In any event, the prevalence of the

cf. Bowie 1993; Bassi 1993; Beecroft 2006. Cf. also Mimn. fr. 13.

²⁰ And also on what is now called metapoetics, as these two spheres are not separated and may be subject to mutual influence. Hence, for instance, priamel is concurrently a kind of the poet’s show of eloquence, an intertextual discourse with the spirits of the predecessors and thus with the “tradition“, and a negotiation of a new, local etc., version of the myth with actual audiences.

texts containing pan-Hellenic versions of myths explicitly demonstrates that the rejection of certain versions might have taken place already at a relatively early stage of the text transmission. The local, the rare, and therefore (to an average Greek) also the less comprehensible used to have, normally, fewer listeners, and subsequently readers²¹.

It is difficult to say whether the factors in question may be responsible for the Muses' fairly modest portrayal in mythology, in particular when compared with other mythic figures, and the absence of any elaborate narratives devoted to them. In fact, except for the story on an encounter with Thamyris and some (initiation-related) scenes of epiphanies of the goddesses, there is actually little else the sources offer concerning their image in myths. For the lack of any additional evidence, we usually tend to limit ourselves to the opinion expressed succinctly by Penelope Murray (2002, 46): *There were indeed very few myths about Muses, and they were envisaged in different ways in different authors and different periods*. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that the genealogies and name lists discussed in this study may be seen as a testimony to a much more vivid interest, in at least some of the features of the Muses' representation, than hitherto imagined.

We can only hope that the presentation of even these modest elements of myths related to the Muses may be instrumental in altering the view of the goddesses in the academic literature, as well as in transforming the language by which the Muses are described in both academic and general papers. It would be particularly recommended to avoid any simplifications and anachronisms resulting from diachronic description.

²¹ The language form used by the poet may have been a decisive factor as well; for example, we know that Corinna had used a local dialect (Boeotian) in her compositions, cf. Cor. test. 4 (= Paus. 9.22.3).

6. Between Tradition and Innovation II

Investigating the ancient **mythological tradition** and its successive transformations is not an easy task for a variety of reasons. One of those, making research in the field all the more difficult, is the continuing presence of the Greek mythology in the European culture, both at the level of school education and in the sphere of popular culture. With all the diversity among the countries of the European Union, the ancient classical culture, and thus also the ancient Greek mythology, remain a constituent element of the common heritage and a significant point of reference. In addition, the majority of people are emotionally linked to the picture of the world created by school textbooks, including those dealing with mythic tales¹.

The difficulties in the matters related to analysis and criticism of the mythographical tradition are noticed by modern scholars, as Nicholas Horsfall has pointedly stated: *the surviving literary texts (...) are characterised by a fluidity often both fascinating and infuriating, that is rarely to be followed up with ease through Roscher, Gruppe and Robert*².

It seems difficult to carry out thorough source-based research and postulate interpretations of observed phenomena also due to the fact that the analysing of mythological and mythographical traditions requires constant changes in the perspective, from the diachronic (as most sources are relatively late in origin, and they tend to summarise rather than cite, without much delving into details) to the synchronic one (for instance, searching for the archaic and classical versions, as well as the original context of performance) and back again: (synchronic)

¹ Cf. e.g. Doherty 2001; Roberts 2000.

² Horsfall 1993, 134.

analysis of particular, reconstructed local and individual versions leads to attempts to create a (diachronic) general picture showing features characteristic for a given place and period.

Studies of the mythology and the mythographical tradition are made more difficult also by the political and cultural diversity of the ancient Greek world, and the Greeks' own approach to tradition and innovation. As a result, something that was a primary factor in the occurrence of some phenomenon in one place somewhere else may have been absent altogether, or be of only a marginal importance, for a number of social, political, or cultural reasons.

Besides, the source material in the form we normally have at our disposal, i.e., in most cases, texts of the Hellenistic and Roman origin, provides the scholar with an additional task of seeking original contexts of performance, in which the meanings crucial for the understanding of the myth and its mutation were generated. This particular task appears to be the key to understanding the relationship between tradition and innovation in the Archaic and Classical periods. The fluidity and contradiction present in the tradition noted in the works of the Alexandrian scholars and their successors from the Imperial period is now a clear indication of the changes within the Greek culture, responsible for the shift in the interpretation perspective³.

Of course, the need to make the view of the past simpler and more uniform, as well as the anachronistic approach, are normal, common, and quite understandable human responses. However, due to eventual distortions, they always turn the tradition into a thing invented⁴. In the case of the mythological tradition, the change consists, among others,

³ In this context, an excerpt from Callimachus is sometimes cited (612): *I sing nothing which is not attested*. Alan Cameron's comments on the Greek mythography (2004), especially (218) *mythology became a part of literary culture, in effect a status marker*, refer to the time of the Roman Empire, but they are in part also valid already for the Hellenistic period.

⁴ Cf. Hobsbawm, Ranger eds 1983.

in that new “interpretations” are proposed, instead of new versions of the myth or equivalents of individual narrative elements – which solutions were typical for the literary culture of the Archaic and Classical periods. Both ancient and modern scholars justify such interpretations by references to arbitrarily selected elements of the mythical tradition. Certainly, the result thereof is at least the conclusion that narratives in themselves are (always) ambiguous, and human interpretative capabilities extremely efficient.

There are, however, cases of research analyses resulting in a change of our view of the classical culture – through fresh re-examination of the evidence material, closer approach to the original interpretation contexts, and creation of a correct research perspective. A case in point here may be the representation of the ancient theatre, which has been hitherto under an excessively strong influence of the image of the theatre at Athens. It is understandable in that nearly everything that is today known about the ancient Greek theatre refers to Athens. Yet, for instance, there are numerous source accounts attesting that, for instance, in many local cult-related contexts the theatre had nothing to do with Dionysus, with whose festivals it was strictly connected at Athens. In regional contexts, theatre was linked with other gods, such as Apollo, Zeus, Asclepius, or Athena. Theatres were located in the sacred circles of these deities and drama plays were connected with their festivals⁵.

The case is also similar with regard to the modern perception of the Muses as the sole deities connected with the realm of inspiration. As a matter of fact, for the Archaic and Classical periods, this view is strongly exaggerated. The contemporary sources clearly show that there was a possibility to invoke any other deity, probably also without the name being specified. Quite often, the figures imparting knowledge and inspiration are, for example, Charites and nymphs, or even some heroic figures appearing as protagonists in compositions. With due regard to

⁵ Cf. e.g. Wilson ed. 2007.

the unique Greek qualities in this respect, it should also be noted that this corresponds to our knowledge of the Indo-European tradition⁶.

The last example refers to numbers. In one of his articles, Ian Storey (2009) has recently shown how very problematic it is to properly interpret the number of *choreia* participants in Euripides' *Suppliant Women*. The traditional model assumes that a tragedy chorus should consist of twelve or fifteen members. However, these are numbers impossible to reconcile with the number of the seven mothers – also confirmed in the text of the tragedy – of the so-called Seven against Thebes. Storey points to various possibilities of how to resolve this situation, until he finally concedes that (if our traditional assumptions concerning theatrical conventions are put aside) the simplest and most sensible solution is to assume that in this particular tragedy the chorus was composed of seven *choreutai*. Similar problems connected with representations can be encountered also in some other tragedies, where the chorus comprised groups smaller or larger than twelve or fifteen⁷.

Also with reference to the mythic tradition, a meticulous and multi-faceted analysis of the evidence material may permit us to throw some light on a range of problematic issues and amend uncertain interpretations. Aware that there had always been much confusion caused by plot contradictions perceived in myths,⁸ and as a consequence in the absence of rational explanations, we were compelled to omit certain elements in narratives, or otherwise deny their presence or importance. There have been also frequent cases of direct interference in the text or tradition in order to introduce some rationally justified

⁶ Cf. Jörgensen 1904; Mojsik 2001; Watkins 1995; West 2009.

⁷ Cf. e.g. Frontisi-Ducroux 2007 – in the case of the representation in Aeschylus' *Eumenids*, there has probably appeared a contradiction between the number of *choreia* participants (fifty – cf. Pollux 4.110) and the traditional number of the Erinyes in the myth (three).

⁸ Judging from Nicholas Horsfall's opinion cited at the beginning of this chapter, some stronger emotions may be also involved here (see: *fascinating and infuriating*).

alterations. The discussion in the previous chapters has aimed to change the *opinio communis* in at least one minor point: certain aspects of the mythic image of the Muses. However, on account of the fact that the source material has basically referred thus far to these deities only, in this brief chapter I would like to demonstrate more clearly that the phenomenon in question is a common one and involves a major part of the familiar myths. I shall begin with identifying some examples of changes and innovations introduced into myths and then propose a brief description of some types of divergences in narratives.

Such analysis is justified in view of the fact that dissertations devoted to mythic tradition usually adopt a different method of approach. On the one hand, correlations between myth versions in works of various poets are studied, the oldest known version (the “Ur-Mythen”) is sought and attempts are made to date it⁹. It is a typically philological method of approach; hence some resulting analyses are only derivatives of studies focused on determining the original version of a given text and dating it¹⁰.

On the other hand, some scholars search for contexts that would make it possible to formulate a proper (i.e. appropriate for the place and time in which myths are formed or referred to) interpretation of particular versions of myths. Hence, with regard to changes in mythic narratives, scholars tend to concentrate, for instance, on linking them with socio-political transformations and indicate the dynamics of

⁹ Cf. e.g. March 1987. The work contains an analysis of five myths: of Peleus and Achilles, Meleagros and the Calydonian Boar, Deianeira and the death of Hercules, Clitaimnestra and the Oresteia myth, and Oedipus; yet – to the reader’s surprise – it does not offer any conclusion. However, in her preface, the author notes (p. XI) that such studies *show quite clearly that poets made adaptations to a ‘given’ myth to a larger extent than has perhaps been generally realised, and that the literary form or needs of the occasion for which a piece of poetry was produced often influenced to a high degree the poet’s particular use of inherited mythological material.*

¹⁰ Cf. March 1987, 157-159.

the cultural context responsible for generating new meanings¹¹. Still other works attempt to delineate various paths of the development of mythographical tradition, as well as to identify the layers within that tradition and indicate the historical context accountable for changes that transpire therein¹².

Noticeable, however, is the absence of analyses focused on the construction of mythic plots, on circumstances in which its individual structural elements were formed, and their place within the whole of a given version of the myth. Such a method of approach must assume some partial shift in the perspective, as it involves an attempt to view the myth from the prospect of the ancient poet/mythographer's technique, and thus also to collect information on his actual creative possibilities and limitations related to building plot structures. Instead of searching for the original, or at least the oldest known myth version, and then studying its meanings in social contexts, we are aiming, through analysis of many narratives and the changes they underwent, to imagine the narrative tools used by the poet/mythographer. Such analysis may have, of course, synchronic as well as diachronic dimensions¹³.

Finally, I would like to make a reservation that the analysis below is still only an outline and does not claim to be complete. To cite Peter Wilson (2003, 165), *the scope of this chapter will permit only limited*

¹¹ Cf. e.g. Vidal-Naquet 1986; Vernant 1980; Buxton 1994.

¹² Cf. Cameron 2004; Henrichs 1987, cf. especially p. 258: *all analysts and interpreters of Greek myths must be prepared to scrutinise their assumptions in the light of the mythographical tradition before general conclusions about the structure and meaning of any myth are in order. This is the kind of source-critical scrutiny which I propose to call "applied mythography"*.

¹³ At this point, it is necessary to quote Nicholas Horsfall's (1993, 140) remark pertaining to invention in the Roman poetry, in particular to the catalogue of heroes in Virgil's *Aeneid*: *a concentration of invention in a given area points in all probability to a deficiency in inherited material*.

exploration of some less-traveled paths that may point to new directions in the larger picture.

To begin with, several cases deserve particular attention. In one of Pindar's works there is a remark on Mnemosyne's descent from Ouranos (*pae.* 7b.14 = fr. 52h, 11-20). The possibility of the Muses' own descent from Ouranos is obviously very much in doubt, as it stands in obvious contradiction to that remark¹⁴. There is a similarly problematic reference preserved in the scholia to Olympic Ode 13: *Pindar says in the Hyporchemata that the dithyramb was first invented in Naxos, in the first book of the Dithyrambs in Thebes, and here in Corinth*¹⁵. However, when these two pieces of information are juxtaposed and treated impartially, it has to be admitted that the appearance of a certain myth version in one of the compositions of the poet does not preclude a different configuration of the narrative's constituent elements elsewhere. It may also be concluded from this example that the analysis aiming to put in order and rationalise myth representations in works of poetry, especially if based on fragmentary information and without at least outlining the original interpretation contexts, may lead us astray. Consequently, it should be assumed that at least in the case of myth versions from the Archaic and Classical periods, we may be dealing with single individual versions of narratives, which did not intend, and in fact were never meant to, make up a cohesive picture of the Greek mythology¹⁶. This does not mean that there are no narratives whose one of the existing versions has (more or less evidently) prevailed over others and become better known;

¹⁴ Ignore, of course, the occurrence of a situation when a god begets his offspring in an incestuous union with his own daughter.

¹⁵ Pi. fr. 71 (schol. Pi. O. 13.25c) – translation (and commentary *ad locum*) by van der Weiden 1991.

¹⁶ Cf. Detienne 1986. On the most important extant classical compendium of mythology, the *Library* (attributed to Apollodorus), as *tendentious account of Greek myth with its own goals*, cf. Fletcher 2008.

rather, it signifies that in local or agonistic contexts – at least from the pan-Hellenic point of view – epichoric and novelty versions tend to prevail¹⁷.

Similar conclusions may be drawn from the information in Pausanias stating that *the Lesbian Sappho made many inconsistent references to Eros in her poems*¹⁸. It is, incidentally, one of those pieces of evidence which demonstrate that the reasons for the existence of various divergent myth versions were not understood already in the antiquity¹⁹. In consequence, also in the works of classical authors a certain astonishment is obvious, resulting in attempts to explain or reconcile those contradictory versions of myths²⁰.

Another interesting case of the source evidence is one of the accounts concerning Ion of Chios; namely, Sallustius' argumentum²¹ to Sophocles' *Antigone* mentions the existence of divergent versions of the story of Antigone and her sister Ismene. In this passage, Sallustius refers to a remark made by Ion, who was to claim in his dithyrambs that the sisters had been burned at the sanctuary of Hera by **Laodamas**, son of Eteocles. However, from the critical references to the relevant passage it evinces that in the manuscripts the name of that son of Eteocles was **Laomedon**, whereas the form Laodamas is Richard François Philippe

¹⁷ Cf. Hom. *Od.* 1.351-352.

¹⁸ Sapph. fr. 198 (Paus. 9.27.3).

¹⁹ The transition from the oral to written culture undoubtedly played a significant part here. Along with an evaluation of the text as text, and, what is particularly important, in juxtaposition with other compositions of a given poet, not some local and provisional circumstances of recitation, the methods of interpretation and criticism as applied to a composition have changed. Cf. Bremer 1987.

²⁰ Among the proposed resolutions of the contradictions there are, for instance, the existence of many generations (e.g. Cic. *de nat. deor.* 3.54) or the homonymy of the protagonists (e.g. the case of Heracles described above).

²¹ Sallustius is identified with the fifth-century AD rhetor from Syria, who was active at Athens and Alexandria, author of commentaries on Demosthenes and Herodotus – cf. Jebb *ad locum* and Suda s.v. It should be said, however, that the attribution does not result obviously from the note found in Suda.

Brunck's emendation from the late-eighteenth-century edition of the *Antigone*²². The emendation could be, of course, supported (and the editors do not hesitate to do so) by references to other pieces of evidence where the name Laodamas can be found; yet all of them are of late origin, compared with Ion²³. If we were to decide on a quantitative basis alone, this single mention in the manuscripts would undoubtedly be deemed an error, e.g. a copyist's mistake²⁴. However, if we consider the time when Ion of Chios had lived, the lack of other evidence from the Archaic and Classical periods, as well as the above comments on Pindar and the context of poetical innovativeness, or, in general, discrepancies in myths in the Archaic and Classical periods, it is reasonable to assume at least a measure of caution²⁵. Of course, the question of the name cannot be decided in the absence of any additional evidence. Yet the problem of determining the name (of a fictitious figure, let it be remembered) in

²² Ion fr. 83 Leurini = fr. 740 PMG.

²³ Cf. *RE* s.v. Laomedon I.

²⁴ Cf. e.g. Gantz 1993, 513, where the author claims that Laodamas is the version of the name already attested in Ion.

²⁵ There is a very similar situation in the case of the tradition concerning the name of one of the Epigoni. In one of the papyri (P. Oxy. 4099, ed. R. Fowler in *Ox. Pap.* 61 (1995), 55–8; cf. Huys 1996), the last entry in the list mentions [**Th**]eximeles son of [Partheno]paeus. Hyginus (*Fab.* 71), who lists the Epigoni in the same order, mentions **Thesimenes** son of Parthenopaeus, as the last one, otherwise unknown. As a result, the text of Hyginus was amended by most editors (Bursian, Rose, Marshall) on the basis of the information from Pausanias 3.12.9, where the name of the son (or brother) of Parthenopaeus appears as **Tlesimenes**. E. Bethe had thus concluded that the version Thesimenes must have been an interpolation derived from a marginal comment. In turn, the editor of the papyrus, Robert Fowler, argued that the texts of Hyginus and the papyrus can be reconciled and he suggested a common version **Theximenes** – cf. Cameron 2004, 247; Huys 1996. Finally, it should be noted that in the case of fictitious figures we are faced with a situation when we can never speak of any true version, and rarely of the original one (and even then, in what sense would that be original, as we never know the whole of the tradition); see Griffith 1990, 195.

the oldest version of the narrative is here secondary to an emphasis on the need to accentuate the right points in analyses of such texts. In their editing work, scholars tend too easily, even at the lowest interpretation level, to give in to their wish to reconcile contradictions and remove rare and singular items of information, in order to correct “errors” made by ancient authors or medieval copyists²⁶.

To pass on to selected examples of discrepancies in mythic narratives, as in the case of the Muses, we shall begin from **genealogies**.

It has already been demonstrated that some divergent records regarding Eros appeared as early as in Sappho, although it is unclear what kind of information they provided. A substantial body of evidence, however, points to the fact that some of the innovations referred to that deity’s origin. Among others, the following configurations related to his genealogy are found in the sources:

– son of Aphrodite and Ares (schol. Ap. Rhod. 3.26) – Simonides fr. 575;

– son of Ge and Ouranos (schol. Ap. Rhod. 3.26) – Sappho fr. 198;

– son of Aphrodite and Ouranos (schol. Theocr. 13.1-2c) – Sappho fr. 198;

– son of Iris and Zephyr (schol. Theocr. 13.1-2c + Plut. *Amat.* 765 d-e) – Alkaios fr. 327;

– son of Erebos and Nyx – Akusilaos (FGrH 2 F6)

– son of Eileithyia – “Olen” in Paus. 9.27.2.

In the case of the origins of the Horae,²⁷ Charites,²⁸ and Sirens the situation is similar. In Euripides’ *Helen* (167), the latter are daughters of Ge, while in some other versions they are daughters of Acheloos and

²⁶ Assuming this point of view and interpretation context, I think that the version from the manuscript ought to be retained in the edition, while Brunck’s proposition can be assigned to the critical apparatus.

²⁷ Helios – Quint. Smyrn. 2.490; Cronos – Nonn. *Dion.* 12.15.

²⁸ Cf. Paus. 9.35.5.

e.g. Terpsichore (Ap. Rhod. 4.893-6)²⁹. There are also variances in the stories recounting the genealogies of some heroes, e.g. of Hyacinthus,³⁰ Orpheus,³¹ or Triptolemos³² – or even Dionysus³³ himself. Basically, each mythical figure may receive a different set of parents in one or another of the narrative versions, and usually confirmation of this phenomenon can be found. Notably, however, the figure of the mother changes somewhat more often than that of the father, which is quite interesting in view of the social context.

As for **names**, a long passage from Pausanias, referring to local versions of the Charites' names and pointing to contexts of epichoric cults,³⁴ is a particularly interesting example. Of course, names of the more prominent heroes or gods are not very likely to change; local variations connected with deities are facilitated by the usage of cultic epiclesis, among others. As has already been noted, the most frequently changed or modified names are those of figures who are less significant in the narrative and, for instance, of female protagonists – such as the name of Eteocles' son, or the mother/wife of Oedipus, or Oedipus'

²⁹ Cf. also Apollod. 1.3.4 and 1.63.

³⁰ Apollod. 1.16; Hes. fr. 120 West; Hyg. *Fab.* 271.

³¹ See test. 22-26 Kern.

³² See e.g. Apollod. 1.32 = Pherecyd. FGrH 3 F5; Henrichs 1987, 250 and notes; Paus. 1.14.2; Hyg. *Fab.* 147; Ov. *Fasti* 4.510.

³³ See e.g. Praxilla fr. 752 = Hesych. B 128 (I 309 Latte) and schol. in Pi. P. 3.177 or Cic. *de nat. deor.* 3.21-23.

³⁴ Paus. 9.35.1-2: *The Boeotians say that Eteocles was the first man to sacrifice to the Graces. Moreover, they are aware that he established three as the number of the Graces, but they have no tradition of the names he gave them. The Lacedaemonians, however, say that the Graces are two, and that they were instituted by Lacedaemon, son of Taygete, who gave them the names of Cleta and Phaenna. These are appropriate names for Graces, as are those given by the Athenians, who from of old have worshipped two Graces, Auxo and Hegemone. Carpo is the name, not of a Grace, but of a Season. The other Season is worshipped together with Pandrosus by the Athenians, who call the goddess Thallo.* [trans. W.H.S. Jones]

adoptive mother, the wife of king Polybos, who is mentioned in sources variably as Merope, Periboia, Medusa, or Antiochis³⁵. A similar principle applies to female group deities: Horae,³⁶ Hyades,³⁷ Sirens,³⁸ Okeanids³⁹ etc. Popularity and circulation of a given myth may play a pivotal role here, precisely as in the case of the tale about the family of the Labdacids.⁴⁰

A similar rule applies to changes in **the names of the offspring** of mythic figures, which is particularly evident when there is a larger number of children, e.g. of Niobe, Danaos, or Aigyptios. In this situation, there also appear, of course, some discrepancies in **the number** itself⁴¹.

Among other examples, there are divergent versions as to who was resurrected by Asklepios,⁴² who gave a lyre to Amphion,⁴³ who invented

³⁵ Cf. Bremmer 1987, 45; the evidence concerning Oedipus and the family of Labdacids, cf. Gantz 1993, 488-506 and 510-525; much of the information on the variants of the myth comes from the famous scholia to Euripides' *Phoinissai*.

³⁶ Hyg. *Fab.* 183 – Auge, Anatole, Mousika, Gymnastika, Nympe, Mesembria, Sponde, Elete, Akte, Hesperis, Dysis; Nonn. *Dion.* 41.263 – Anatolia, Mesembria, Dysis, Arktos.

³⁷ Hes. fr. 227 West; Hyg. *Fab.* 192; Eustath. in Hom. *Il.* 1156.

³⁸ Apollod. *Epit.* 7.18; Suda s.v. *Seirenas*; Strab. 5.4.7 and 6.1.1; Lycophr. 712.

³⁹ Hes. *Th.* 346 sqq.; h. hom. 2. 418-423; Apollod. 1.8; Hyg. *Fab.* 142.

⁴⁰ Cf. Robert 1915; March 1987; Bremmer 1987; Edmunds 2006.

⁴¹ Niobe – Apollod. 3.5.6; Ael. *VH* 12.36: Homer claims that girls and boys were six each (*Il.* 24, 603), according to Lasos, there were seven in each group (fr. 706), Hesiod – nine and ten respectively (fr. 183), Alcman – ten, Mimnermos and Pindar – twenty. Aigyptos' sons: Hecataeus (FGrH 1 F 19, cf. Dowden 1992, 43) claims that there were less than twenty, while according to Hesiod – fifty. Danaids – Apollod. 2.1.5, Hyg. *Fab.* 170.

⁴² Cf. schol. Pi. *P.* 3.54 (= 3.96, II, 75 Drachmann): according to Orphics – Hymenaios; Stesichorus (in *Eriphyle*) – Kapaneus and Lycurgus; Phylarchos – Phineus; Pherekydes – the dead at Delphi; according to others: Hippolytus, Tyndareus, Glaucou, daughters of Proitos, Orion; cf. Cinesias fr. 774 = Philodem. *De Piet.* (p. 52 Gomperz).

⁴³ Cf. schol. in Ap. Rhod. 1.740-1a = Pherekydes fr. 41 Fowler: Armenidas claims that the Muses, the same as Pherekydes, while Dioscorides (FGrH 594 F12)

the letters,⁴⁴ who abducted Chrysippos,⁴⁵ or where exactly Apollo's birthplace was⁴⁶.

Even with such erratic material at our disposal, it seems possible to outline certain regularities. Discrepancies in mythic narratives on the level of the plot are connected with modifications, among others, in the following elements:

- changing the name: particularly vulnerable to change are the names of secondary characters, especially women and figures less familiar or significant for the plot, e.g. heroes' parents, siblings, spouses, offspring, companions, or confronted (and defeated) opponents⁴⁷;
- changing the genealogy and family relations;
- changing the number of protagonists;
- changes in the protagonists' motives⁴⁸;
- changes in the place and time of action, e.g. the birthplace of a given figure, the place of their sojourn or residence,⁴⁹ or localization in time and space of certain civilisational inventions (e.g. the place where

says that it was Apollo; Eur. fr. 48 (*Antiope*) – Hermes, cf. Nightingale 1995, 96-97; Zeus taught him to play and sing? – cf. Ps.-Plut. *de mus.* 3.

⁴⁴ Hecataeus fr. *20 Fowler = schol. Dion. Thrax 6 (183.1 Hilgard); among others, according to Aeschylus – Prometheus; Stesichorus and Euripides – Palamedes; Mnaseas – Hermes etc.

⁴⁵ Chrysippos abducted by Zeus, not Laios: Praxilla fr. 751 = Athen. 13.603a (III 329 Kaibel).

⁴⁶ Delos or Delphi? Cf. Stehle 1997, 196; elsewhere – Tac. *Ann.* 3.60–64; Bousquet 1988 and SEG 38, 1476; Polycharmus FGrH 770 F 5 – see Cameron 2004, 224-226.

⁴⁷ Cf. Henrichs 1987, 248: *it was the minor figures and less familiar names that were most vulnerable*; Bremer 1987, 45: *changing women's name was one of the poetic means of giving story a new look.*

⁴⁸ Cf. Buxton 1994; March 1987, *passim*.

⁴⁹ Cf. Storey 2009, 123, on Aithra at Athens (normally, a resident of Troezen) in Euripides' *Suppliant Women*.

the dithyramb was invented); moreover, modifications related to the arrangement of the beginning, the end, or the circumstances of the occurrence of a phenomenon;

– lists of participants in important events, e.g. list of protagonists hunting the Calydonian Boar or taking part in funeral games in honour of Pelias⁵⁰;

– other changes related to the plot of the narrative:

a) adding a new plot;

b) extending a plot (e.g. a minor one in other versions of the narrative);

c) transposing plots;

d) changing the place of the narrative's beginning or ending; modifications in the sequence of events⁵¹.

Individual elements are, of course, more or less interrelated. Hence, adding new protagonists – for example, to the list of the participants involved in the hunt for the Calydonian Boar – provides an opportunity for including some extra plots (e.g. local or expected by primary audiences). In turn, a seemingly modest change of the protagonist's name may enable an entirely different representation of the plot (as it happens in the case of Oedipus' marriage to his mother) and introduce a new arrangement of events, as well as enforce a new motivation or some other explanations⁵². Needless to say, situations might have occurred when even a slight manipulation in the order of events facilitated stressing certain meanings and toning down the significance of others. Similar consequences may be also involved in the case of changes in the genealogy. Such an operation did not serve, as it

⁵⁰ Cf. Henrichs 1987, 252-253.

⁵¹ Cf. Bremmer 1987, 43 (in a reference to the myth of Oedipus): *The very beginning of the myth was an area where the poets could freely exercise their ingenuity without altering the traditional plot of the myth.*

⁵² Cf. Bremmer 1987.

is usually pointed out, only the interests of local aristocratic elites, but may have also performed an important narrative role. For instance, if it is assumed that Oedipus begot children not with his mother but with another wife, some of the plot-related difficulties are resolved and new narration possibilities arise. In addition, the setting of the narrative, ordinarily bound to some local context, enables, or imposes, adding other local elements, or the inclusion of the story (or its protagonist/-s) into the body of various narrative plots connected with a given region (e.g. in the case of Heracles).

If the question of mythology is viewed from the perspective of the narrative structure, some of the variances identified in myths can be represented, following Richard Buxton, as *recurrences*⁵³. Buxton has noted that what the scholars of today – and some section of the public of the late antiquity as well – consider as opposing variants of the narrative, are actually better described as equivalents. For instance, in subsequent versions of a tale, changes in the motivation and chronology of events may appear, even though other elements remain the same. Among the examples he has cited, Buxton indicates the different depictions of making Achilles invulnerable – by exposing him to fire or water, or to a combination of the two (boiling water) – and explains that the common feature of all these versions is *the notion of fatal incompleteness, since to call into question the boundary between divinity and mortality is perilous and usually catastrophic*⁵⁴. To put it differently, the contradiction that the primary audiences probably could not see, was created in the imagination of the reader who perceived the plot of the myth in a different way. The sense of the Oedipus myth, as Jan Bremmer has shown, may remain the same, despite some considerable

⁵³ Buxton 1994, 69-79. In his analysis, he refers in particular to the works of Vladimir Propp.

⁵⁴ Buxton 1994, 74.

changes in individual elements of the structure⁵⁵. It does not mean, however, that the sense or the message cannot be manipulated.

Contradictions are therefore quite evident, particularly at the level of mythology textbooks, whose authors have since the antiquity made continuous efforts to cope with this (unwanted) abundance of detail⁵⁶. As a result, some of them simplified myths in order to obtain a single version, whereas others presented all known variants of a given narrative.

At the close of this analysis, I would like to mention the titles of two works of great relevance to the issues addressed here. Both in *Creative Poet. Studies on the Treatment of Myths in Greek Poetry* of Jeniffer March and *Mythological Invention and poetica licentia* of Nicholas Horsfall, the authors' anachronistic focus on the poet's **ingenuity** is evident. However, as the source-based analysis has clearly demonstrated, modifications in mythic narratives can be only partially justified by referring to the poet's creativeness and invention. We are now aware of the fact that the poet and/or mythographer was constrained in his ingenuity both on the communicative level (including contexts connected with performance, audience members, and possible relations of dependence, e.g. payment/reward/"gift") and social level (e.g. gender, status). Nevertheless, even this particular aspect of the Greek literary culture can be described more accurately if the structure of a myth is taken into consideration. A meticulous analysis of individual constituent elements of myth narrations sheds much light on the poet and/or mythographer's technique, as well as their possibilities and limitations in the spheres of narration and plot. An additional goal of

⁵⁵ Bremmer 1987, 53: *Oedipus is a model of how not to succeed to the throne.*

⁵⁶ Cf. e.g. Schmidt M. 2004, 23: *What can we say for certain about Orpheus? First, that his mother was Calliope (...). Who is his father is less certain (...).* This passage sounds as if a real-life figure was being described, not a mythical hero.

such an analysis may be a juxtaposition of resulting conclusions with the knowledge of communicative and social contexts.

In view of all the comments presented above, I would like to conclude that it is my hope the examples noted in this chapter, along with my initial attempt to classify them, contribute to the strengthening of the main thesis of this work: that the number, genealogy, and names of the Muses in the Archaic and Classical periods were subject to fluidity.

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