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HOMERIC HYMNS
HOMERIC APOCRYPHA
LIVES OF HOMER



Edited and Translated by
MARTIN L. WEST

HOMERIC FLUTING

HOMERIC APOCRYPHA

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EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY
MARTIN L. WEST



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PREFACE

In the old Loeb Classical Library edition by H. G. Evelyn-White, which originally appeared in 1914, the poems and fragments of Hesiod were coupled with the Homeric Hymns and Epigrams, the remains of the Epic Cycle and of other poems associated with Homer's name (including the *Battle of Frogs and Mice*), and the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod*. This material is now being distributed across three new volumes, each of which will contain a considerable amount of extra matter. The present one contains the Hymns and the other Homerica. Besides the *Battle of Frogs and Mice* I have included a fragment of a perhaps earlier poem of the same type, a *Battle of the Weasel and the Mice*. To accompany the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* I have gathered in the whole collection of ancient Lives of Homer. The so-called Homeric Epigrams, which Evelyn-White printed on their own, are here given in the contexts in which they are preserved, dispersed through the pseudo-Herodotean Life.

I have edited and arranged the texts according to my own judgment, but relied on existing editions for information about manuscript readings. The nature of the Loeb series precludes the provision of the fullest philological detail about variant readings or scholars' conjectures. I have nevertheless tried to ensure that the reader is alerted

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to the significant textual uncertainties. In places I have made minor orthographical changes without signalling the fact.

It is a pleasant duty to thank Dr. Nikolaos Gonis for bringing to my attention an unpublished Oxyrhynchus papyrus containing parts of two of the Homeric Hymns.

Martin L. West
Oxford, May 2002

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

CAG	M. Hayduck and others, <i>Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca</i> (Berlin, 1882–1909)
CEG	P. A. Hansen, <i>Carmina Epigraphica Graeca</i> (Berlin and New York, 1983–1989)
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
FGrHist	Felix Jacoby, <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> (Berlin and Leiden, 1923–1958)
FHG	Carolus et Theodorus Müller, <i>Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum</i> (Paris, 1841–1873)
GRBS	<i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>
HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
LIMC	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> (Zurich and Munich, 1981–1999)
Mus. Helv.	<i>Museum Helveticum</i>
NGG	<i>Nachrichten der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen</i>
OCD ³	<i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> , third edition (Oxford, 1996)

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

<i>PMG</i>	<i>Poetae Melici Graeci</i> , ed. D. L. Page (Oxford, 1962)
<i>PMGF</i>	<i>Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> , ed. M. Davies (Oxford, 1991)
<i>RE</i>	<i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> (Stuttgart, 1894–1980)
<i>Rh. Mus.</i>	<i>Rheinisches Museum</i>
<i>SVF</i>	H. von Arnim, <i>Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta</i> (Leipzig, 1903–1905)
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
[]	words restored where the manuscript is damaged
⌈ ⌋	letters deleted by scribe
< >	editorial insertion
{ }	editorial deletion
† †	corruption in text
*	(attached to a fragment number) uncertain attribution

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HOMERIC HYMNS

INTRODUCTION

Nature and Purpose of the Hymns

When a rhapsode gave a performance of epic poetry in a formal setting—a complete short epic, or an episode from a longer one—it was the custom to begin with a hymnic address to a god or goddess. There is an allusion to the practice in the *Odyssey* (8.499), where Demodocus, in fulfilling Odysseus' request for the story of the Wooden Horse, "began from the god." Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days* each begin with a hymn (to the Muses and to Zeus respectively), followed by a transition to the main matter of the poem. Crates knew a copy of the *Iliad* that had a prefatory hymn to the Muses and Apollo attached.¹ Pindar compares an athlete's victorious debut at the Nemean Games, which were sacred to Zeus, with the fact that "the Homeridai, the singers of stitched words, generally begin from a *prohoimion* to Zeus."² *Prohoimion* means what precedes the *hoimē*, a term used in the *Odyssey* (8.74, 481; 22.347) for the theme of an epic singer's narrative.

The so-called Homeric Hymns are a collection of thirty-three such *prohoimia*. In fact when Thucydides

¹ See the Appendix Romana B, edited in this volume after the Lives.

² *Nemean* 2.1.

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(3.104.4) quotes from the *Hymn to Apollo*, he calls it not a hymn but a *prohoimion*. Socrates is said to have composed a *prohoimion* to Apollo in prison, besides versifying some Aesopic fables (Plato, *Phaedo* 60d). Later authors, however, cite poems from the collection as "hymns," and their title in the manuscripts is 'Ομήρου ὕμνοι, "the Hymns of Homer." Their original prefatory function is confirmed by internal evidence. Nine of them (2, 11, 13, 16, 22, 25, 26, 28, 31) refer at the outset to "beginning" from the deity, that is, to celebrating him or her first. Most of them end with a salute to the deity, often followed by the announcement that the singer will now pass on to another subject: "I will take heed both for you and for other singing," or some such formula. In the late Hymns 31 and 32 it is made explicit that the transition will be to narrative about the deeds of heroes. Sometimes (2, 6, 10, 11, 13, 15, 20, 22, 24–26, 30–31) the ending includes a brief prayer for assistance, favor, or prosperity.

The first thing that strikes the reader of the Hymns is the enormous disparity in their length. A few of them run to hundreds of lines; there are two of intermediate length, Hymn 7 of fifty-nine verses and Hymn 19 of forty-nine; of the rest, none exceeds twenty-two lines, and fifteen are of under ten. There is, then, a basic distinction between long and short Hymns. What distinguishes the long ones is the inclusion of an extended narrative about the deity's birth or some other mythical episode in which he or she was involved. The short ones limit themselves to summary mythical references, indications of the god's spheres of influence, or description of his or her typical activity. A few of them are essentially mere excerpts from longer poems: Hymns 13, 17, and 18 from the longer Hymns to Demeter,

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the Dioscuri, and Hermes respectively, and Hymn 25 from Hesiod's *Theogony*.³

Thucydides quotes the *Hymn to Apollo* as the work of Homer, and with one exception (to be considered presently) no other author is ever named for any of the Hymns. However, the third Anonymous Life of Homer preserves an ancient scholarly opinion that the only genuine works of Homer were the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and that "the *Hymns* and the rest of the poems attributed to him are to be reckoned alien." To the modern critic it is clear from differences of language, political reference, and geographical outlook that the Hymns were composed by various authors in various places, at dates ranging probably from the second half of the seventh century BC to at least the fifth century, possibly even later. Their authors' names were not recorded because rhapsodes did not claim individual credit for what they added to the inherited stock of hexameter poetry. They dealt in traditional matter, and those of them at least who called themselves Homeridai, the Sons of Homer, regarded it as all coming down to them from their supposed ancestor "Homer."⁴ The authors of the Hymns often show their acquaintance with the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and Hesiod, and sometimes with other poems in the Hymn collection itself. This is not surprising in view of the Hymns' creation and transmission among a professional rhapsode class.

Most of them, we may suppose, were originally com-

³ Hymn 13.1-2 ~ 2.1-2, 493; Hymn 17.2-5 ~ 33.2-5, 18; Hymn 18.2-9 ~ 4.2-9; Hymn 25.2-5 ~ Hes. *Th.* 94-97.

⁴ See M. L. West, "The Invention of Homer," *CQ* 49 (1999), 364-382.

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posed for recitation in a particular setting, at some particular festival or gathering. Sometimes a specific local reference is apparent from the poem itself. Of the long Hymns, that to Demeter obviously stands in intimate relationship to the Eleusinian Mysteries, while that to Apollo contains a vivid depiction of the Delian festival at which the poet is participating. Other local references will be mentioned below. In some cases the rhapsode was in competition for a prize; the poet of Hymn 6 prays to Aphrodite to "grant me victory in this contest, and order my singing."

Individual Hymns

In first place stand four fragments of what was evidently a long *Hymn to Dionysus*. Two come from ancient quotations, one of them overlapped by a papyrus; a third is given by another papyrus; the fourth, from the conclusion of the poem, survives in a manuscript of the Hymns, preceding the *Hymn to Demeter*.⁵ It apparently contained the story, well known to poets and vase painters from around 600 BC, of how Dionysus came to be received in Olympus and accepted by Hera. When she gave birth to Hephaestus she was disgusted at the crippled child she had borne and threw him down from heaven into the sea. There he stayed for years with the Nereids, perfecting his engineering skills. Then he sent his mother a fine throne, in which he had incorporated a secret mechanism. When she sat down in it, she found herself trapped. None of the other gods was

⁵ For the connection of the fragments and a reconstruction of the content see M. L. West, "The Fragmentary Homeric Hymn to Dionysus," *ZPE* 134 (2001), 1–11.

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able to free her. It was clear that Hephaestus had to be induced to come back and undo what he had done. Ares undertook to go and fetch him by force. He went off, but failed to achieve his object, because Hephaestus defended himself with fire, which Ares could not face. Then Dionysus went equipped with wine, made Hephaestus drunk, and brought him back to Olympus in jolly mood, riding on a donkey or mule. He set Hera free, and she rewarded Dionysus by persuading the other Olympians to admit him to their number.

There is nothing in the fragments inconsistent with a dating to the later seventh century, so that the popularity of the story may be due to the currency of the hymn. The denial of Naxos' claim to be the god's birthplace (fr. A 3 ff.) is against a Naxian origin for the poem. On the other hand, the emphasis on Drakanos and Ikaros as claimants, the one a promontory in Cos, the other an island near Samos, does indicate the southeast Aegean as the poet's vantage point.

The *Hymn to Demeter* (2) remained unknown to the world until C. F. Matthaei's discovery of the manuscript M in Moscow in 1777 and Ruhnkenius' editions of 1780 and 1782. It is actually a hymn to both Demeter and Persephone, the presiding goddesses of the Eleusinian Mysteries, and it contains the Mysteries' foundation myth. It relates how Persephone was carried off to the lower world by Hades; how her grieving mother Demeter searched for her, came in the guise of an old woman to the house of Keleos the king of Eleusis, and was engaged to nurse the infant Demophon; how she was caught putting him in the fire at night, which would have made him immortal, and then revealed her divinity; how her continuing grief held