Early Greek Poets and Professionalism

Did professional poets, who regularly practiced a specialist skill (τέχνη) due to a need or desire for material gain, exist in the archaic period? The most common view is that early poets were amateurs, who addressed, identified with and, it is often inferred, belonged to the aristocracy.[1] Though not averse to receiving occasional prizes and gifts of hospitality, it is believed that poetry was at this stage neither their primary occupation, nor their main or major source of income or identity. Ewen Bowie has restated this conception of the early poet in two recent articles, characterising the seventh and sixth century performer as 'a species within the genus "member of a local elite"'.[2] In what follows, I seek to question this longstanding assumption.

According to the traditional view, poetry only became a profession gradually over time. The archaic period is often seen as a period of change and transition in which the aristocracy gradually declined in power and influence. The introduction of coinage from the sixth century is believed to have created a new middling class, who began to encroach on the power and privileges of the traditional aristocracy.[3] Kurke has argued that coinage, unlike the traditional system of reciprocal gift-exchange favoured by the elite, ‘threatens the distinction of nobility because anyone can have money and anyone can give money to anyone else’.[4] The production of poetry, it is believed, changed with society, with the professional steadily replacing the noble amateur. In time, poetry was no longer exchanged between equals but ‘became a commercial good available to the one who could pay for it’.[5] This commodification of poetry and the transformation of the art of the poet into a specialist occupation, by which he might earn a living, are often regarded as professionalization.

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[1] Amateurs: early poets did not sing 'for anything but their own satisfaction' according to C.M. Bowra, 'Xenophanes and the Olympic Games', *AJP* 59 (1938) 257-79, at 262; cf. L. Kurke, 'Kaphleia and deceit: Theognis 59-60', *AJP* 110 (1989) 535-44, at 538, on aristocratic scorn for 'professional trades'. Aristocratic values and audience: Xenophanes, Bowra, *AJP* 59 (1938) 271; on Pindar, Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford 1964) 2, 100-3, 400; on Alcaeus, L. Kurke, 'Crisis and decorum in sixth-century Lesbos: reading Alkaios otherwise', *QUCC* 47 (1994) 67-92, at 68; on Theognis, R. Lane Fox, 'Theognis: an alternative to democracy', in R. Brock and S. Hodkinson (eds.), *Alternatives to Athens* (Oxford 2000) 35-51, at 40; on poetry before Anacreon, I. Kantzios, 'Tyranny and the symposium of Anacreon', *CJ* 100 (2005) 227-45, at 227; Kantzios, 'Marginal Voice and Erotic Discourse in Anacreon', *Mnemosyne* 63 (2010) 577-89, at 578 n. 3. Aristocratic origins: see M. Wecowski, *The Rise of the Greek Aristocratic Banquet* (Oxford 2014) 49 ('aristocratic, i.e. "insider" and dilettante, virtuosi'); on Alcaeus, C.M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry*^{2} (Oxford 1961) 140; J.A. Kemp, 'Professional Musicians in Ancient Greece', *G&R* 13 (1966) 213-22, at 217; on Solon, B. Gentili, *Poetry and Its Public in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore and London 1988) 159; on Pindar, P. Murray, 'Poetic inspiration in early Greece', *JHS* 101 (1981) 87-100, at 99; S. von Reden, 'Deceptive readings: poetry and its value reconsidered', *CQ* 45 (1995) 30-50, at 30; I. Morris, 'The strong principle of equality and the archaic origins of Greek democracy', in J. Ober and C. Hedrick (eds.) *Dēmokratia* (Princeton 1996), at 27.

[2] E. Bowie, 'Wandering Poets, archaic style', in R.L. Hunter and I. Rutherford (eds.), *Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture* (Cambridge 2009) 105-36, quotation at 106; 'Epinicians and patrons', in P. Agócs, C. Carey and R. Rawles (eds.), *Reading the Victory Ode* (Cambridge 2012) 83-92.

Yet there is no consensus on when professionalism became common among poets. Many scholars, including Bowie, accept that the *Odyssey* contains depictions of poets who, like the historical rhapsodes, may be labelled ‘specialist craftsmen’ or even ‘professionals’.[6] And yet the development of professionalism is most frequently connected with the final decades of the sixth and the first of the fifth century, roughly corresponding to the career of Simonides.[7] Ibycus, who belonged to the previous generation, and Anacreon, whose career overlapped with that of Simonides, are also cited as examples of early professional court poets.[8] According to this view, it was the poets of the early sixth century, notably Solon and probably Theognis, who were the last true aristocratic amateurs, while Pindar may be understood as the first true professional.[9] Bowie, however, has questioned whether any significant change took place in the relationship between poet and patron between 550 and 450, suggesting that even as late as the 470s, near the end of Simonides' lifetime, the poet's relationship with his audience was characterised primarily by guest-friendship (ξενία), rather than patronage.[10] Similarly other scholars have seen the development of professionalism as an event connected to the New Music of the late fifth century.[11] This view also links the emergence of the professional performer with the declining influence of the aristocracy, but focuses instead on the supposed culmination of this process, in Athens at least, a century later.[12]

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[3] A.R. Burn, *The Lyric Age of Greece* (London 1960) 157-8; J. Svenbro, *La parole et le marbre* (Lund 1976) 90-1; L. Kurke, *Coins, Bodies, Games and Gold* (Princeton 1999) 17-19; D.M. Schaps, *The Invention of Coinage and the Monetization of Ancient Greece* (Ann Arbor 2004) 117-21.

[4] L. Kurke, *The traffic in Praise* (Ithaca 1991) 253.

[5] Von Reden, *CQ* 45 (1995) 30.

[6] Bowie, in *Reading the Victory Ode* 84; West acknowledges that performers in the Odyssey are professionals, yet questions whether this reflected historical reality: see A. Heubeck, S. West, J.B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer’s* Odyssey. *Volume I* (Oxford 1988) 96.

[7] S. Gzella, 'The problem of the fee in Greek choral lyric', *Eos* 59 (1971) 189-202; F. Cairns, 'Money and the poet. The first stasimon of Pindar *Isthmian* 2', *Mnemosyne* 64 (2011) 21-36. Simonides: Σ *Pac.* 697b (Holwerda II.2 p.107); Σ *Isthm.* 2.9a (Drachmann III.214); Suda σ 440; M. Detienne, *Les Maîtres de Vérité dans la Grèce Archaïque* (Paris 1967) 106; L. Woodbury, ‘Pindar and the Mercenary Muse’, *TAPA* 99 (1968) 527-42, at 535; Svenbro, *Parole* 175-6; J.M. Bell, ‘κίμβιξ καὶ σοφός: Simonides in the anecdotal tradition’, *QUCC* 28 (1978)

Yet what do we mean by professionalism? For both sociologists and modern professionals themselves the word has a complex meaning and indeed it has proved nearly impossible to develop an all-encompassing definition. Part of the difficulty is that

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29-86, at 29; Gentili, *Poetry* 162; S. Hornblower, 'Greek lyric and the *polis*', in F. Budelmann (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Lyric* (Cambridge 2009) 39-57, at 42.

[8] Kantzios *CJ* 100 (2005) 228: the poetry of Anacreon represents a 'deviation from the old aristocratic model of sympotic expression', due to his status as an itinerant professional; cf. N. Nicholson, 'Pederastic poets and adult patrons', *CW* 93 (2000) 235-59, at 237. Chronology: see G.O. Hutchinson, *Greek Lyric Poetry* (Oxford 2001) 257-8.

[9] Theognis' poetry has been dated on internal evidence to either around 640 or 600: see discussion by Lane Fox, in *Alternatives* 38-40.

[10] Bowie, in *Wandering Poets* 134-5, and in *Reading the Victory Ode* 83.

[11] New Music: see T. Power, *The Culture of Kitharôidia* (Washington DC 2010) 475-535.

[12] E.g. P. Wilson, 'The sound of cultural conflict. Kritias and the culture of *mousikê* in Athens', in C. Dougherty and L. Kurke (eds.), *The Cultures within Ancient Culture* (Cambridge 2003) 181-206, at 181: 'an overthrow of an elite cultural hegemony [comparable with] the overturn of elite political power'.

professionals must earn their status as such from society.[13] What constitutes professionalism is thus a matter of debate and different groups may propose particular definitions to suit their own purposes. Nevertheless, some common features may be delineated.[14] Regular practice in a paid occupation is necessary to separate the professional from the amateur, while specialist knowledge and training distinguishes the unskilled or semi-skilled labourer from the professional. These, however, are only the basic requirements for a practice to be classed as a profession. In addition, professionals hold a collective identity, based on shared skills, as a separate and autonomous group in society. Professions may (though not always) develop organisations to better promote the interests of the group, enhance its shared identity, maintain standards and restrict membership of the group to those of proven ability. Finally, although all professionals earn money from their skills, they justify these fees by demonstrating that profit is not their principal aim and that their skills benefit the community.[15]

It used to be commonly assumed that professionalism, as outlined above, was a modern phenomenon that appeared only after the Industrial Revolution.[16] 'The rise of professionalism' is thus as much a cliché of histories of the modern world as of the ancient. In both cases, scholars have supposed that professions developed out of a particular economic development: on the one hand, the invention of coinage, on the other industrialisation. Both have tended to distinguish the new professionals from earlier practitioners, who appear either as aristocrats or a parasitic sub-set of the aristocracy dependent on the gentry for their living. The assumption that the Industrial Revolution marked the birth of professions has, however, been steadily demolished over the past three decades, particularly by historians of early-modern England.[17] By contrast, there is as yet no detailed study of professionalism in the ancient world. Part of the reason may be that scholars are understandably wary of employing a modern term which has no exact parallel in Greek or Latin. We should not underestimate the differences between periods: professions undoubtedly increase in number and complexity over time in line with economic growth and technological advancement. However, the basic phenomenon is not unique to modern industrial societies. I aim to show that many of the recognised features of modern professions can also be ascribed to poets in the archaic period and that our available evidence suggests more continuity than change over the sixth and fifth centuries.

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[13] See S. R. Cruess *et al*., '"Profession": a working definition for medical educators', *Teaching and Learning in Medicine* 16 (2004) 74-6, at 75.

[14] See W.E. Moore, *The Professions: Roles and Rules* (New York 1970) 3-20.

[15] See L. Arnold and D.T. Stern, 'What is medical professionalism?', in D.T. Stern (ed.) *Measuring Medical Professionalism* (Oxford 2005) 15-37.

[16] E.g. M.S. Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism*^{2} (New Brunswick 2013) xxiv, 2-7.

First, is there any early evidence for professionalism among poets? Part one considers (a) whether archaic poets were believed to possess a rare specialist skill, upon which they based their identity as a distinct group within society; (b) whether this skill was comparable to that of other specialist craftsmen and required training and regular practice to obtain it; (c) whether it could be exchanged for payment and the extent to which poets belonged to a wealthy elite and (d) how poets justified their fees. The material is problematic since early poetry, our only evidence, may tell us more about the persona the poet wished to project than the actual historical reality. It is also incomplete, rendering absolute certainty impossible. Nevertheless, for the same reason, an argument against early professionalism from silence can never be entirely convincing either. Part two considers the evidence for a distinction between amateur and professional poets. Part three examines the positive evidence for a change both in the conditions of the production of poetry and the values of the poets themselves.

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[17] See e.g. W. Prest (ed.) *The Professions in Early Modern England* (London 1987), especially 1-19.

1. Early Professionalism

a) Professional Identity

‘Singers’ (ἀοιδοί) appear as a recognisable and distinct group in the *Odyssey*. Penelope identifies Phemius as a member of this group, who knows the stories celebrated by singers (τά τε κλείουσιν ἀοιδοί *Od.* 1.338).[18] A basic knowledge of a subject or skill need not on its own suggest professionalism. Achilles in the *Iliad* is capable of singing of the glorious deeds of men (ἄειδε δ’ ἄρα κλέα ἀνδρῶν 9.189). He accompanies himself upon the *phorminx,* the same instrument employed by Phemius (*Od.* 1.155), just as Paris is supposed to be skilled with the *citharis* (*Il.* 3.54). Yet though Achilles may sing (ἄειδε), he is nowhere described as a singer (ἀοιδός). Similarly, the women of Troy play a part in the lament for Hector; yet they are contrasted with the ἀοιδοί who are brought to the funeral as the leaders of the dirge (ἀοιδοὺς / θρήνων ἐξάρχους *Il.* 24.720-1). Odysseus is twice compared to a singer because of his ability to create stories that charm his listeners; yet this comparison is only effective because Odysseus is not a singer.[19] In fact, no one termed a singer in epic fulfils any other role or appears for any other purpose than to sing, and singers are never mentioned without reference to their craft. Phemius is compelled to sing for the suitors (*Od.* 1.153-4); Demodocus is called to sing for the Phaeacians (8.43-5); Menelaus has a singer perform at his daughter’s wedding (4.17); a singer who gives pleasure with his song can even be called from abroad (17.385).[20]

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[18] Cf. Telemachus’ assertion that singers (ἀοιδοί) are not responsible for Penelope’s troubles (1.347-8); singers as a group: cf. *Il.* 24.720-1; *Od.* 8.879-81; *Hom. Hy. Ap.* 169; *Hy.* 25.3; 32.19.

[19] *Od.* 11.368; 17.518-20.

[20] The one exception is the singer of Agamemnon (*Od.* 3.267-71). However, providing moral counsel is a traditional role of the poet: see S.P. Scully, ‘The bard as the custodian of Homeric society’, *QUCC* 8 (1981) 67-83, at 74-8; R. Thomas, ‘The place of the poet in archaic society’, in A. Powell (ed.), *The Greek World* (London 1995) 104-29, at 117-9.

A crucial difference is that, while amateurs may perform, only a recognised ἀοιδός has the knowledge and understanding from the Muses that allows him to compose.[21] Detailed information about past events, such as the names and number of the heroes at Troy, is beyond the ken of ordinary mortals, but is known to the divine Muses (*Il.* 484-93).This knowledge, coming as it does from the god, allows poets to claim a special status in the community. Odysseus states that poets as a group are worthy of honour (τιμῆς ἔμμοροί *Od.* 8.80) because they are taught by the muse (οἴμας Μοῦσ' ἐδίδαξε, φίλησε δὲ φῦλον ἀοιδῶν 8.81).

Maslov has argued that the term ἀοιδός is rarely used to mean 'poets-composer' outside of hexameter poetry; elsewhere it may denote merely singers, either solo or in a chorus.[22] The exceptions are when it is applied to mythical or semi-mythical poets.[23] Crucially melic poets do not refer to themselves as ἀοιδοί. However, we need not assume, as Maslov does, that these poets lacked a 'collective self-consciousness'.[24] This appears to have been grounded not in a collective term but rather, like the mythical ἀοιδοί, in their status as recipients of the divine wisdom of the Muses. Ibycus echoes Homer when he states that, while no man may catalogue the ships at Troy, it is within the competence of the Muses in their wisdom (Μοίσαι σεσοφι[σ]μέναι S151.23 *PMGF*). Theognis similarly lays claim to special wisdom (σοφιζομένῳ μὲν ἐμοί 19 West) in the placing of his seal. In another passage from the corpus (769-72), the servant of the Muses is credited with unique understanding (μοῦνος ἐπιστάμενος 772), which should be shared with others less fortunate. The speaker of another passage (1055-8) claims that he and his companion, who accompanies him on the aulos, have been granted gifts by the Muses. Although not certainly by Theognis, these lines illustrate a view of both the source and purpose of the genre of didactic poetry: an outpouring of divine wisdom through chosen individuals.

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[21] Knowledge from Muses: Murray *JHS* 101 (1981) 89-95; J.S. Clay, *The Wrath of Athena* (Princeton 1983) 10-25; similarity to seers: M.A. Flower, *The Seer in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 2008) 78.

[22] B. Maslov, 'The semantics of ἀοιδός and related compounds', *CA* 28 (2009) 1-38.

[23] Sappho fr. 106 Voigt; Stesichorus S148 col. 1.4 *PMGF*.

[24] Maslov *CA* 28 (2009) 32-3.

For Solon, it is the patronage of the Muses and the special understanding they grant that defines the poet and distinguishes him from those who practice other occupations.

> ἄλλος Ὀλυμπιάδων Μουσέων πάρα δῶρα διδαχθείς,
>
> ἱμερτῆς σοφίης μέτρον ἐπιστάμενος
>
> Another man, taught gifts by the Muses of Olympia, understanding the measure of longed-for wisdom
>
> (fr. 13.51-2 West)

Poets are not alone in receiving divine favour: Hesiod states that poets are from the Muses, as kings come from Zeus.[25] Each is differentiated by their patron gods, suggesting that each has a separate yet (from the poet's perspective) equally important role in society. The Muses are especially worthy of honour, since, while they are the patrons of poets, they may also grant kings the gift of speech in their particular field: judging cases in the law courts. Archilochus is exceptional in claiming to both understand the gift of the Muses (Μουσέων ἐρατὸν δῶρον ἐπιστάμενος fr. 1.2 West) and to act as a servant of the god of war. Like Solon and Hesiod, he distinguishes two normally separate practices by their patron deities. His particular achievement is to be proficient in both. As in Homer, special knowledge forms the basis of a claim to special status in society. Xenophanes (fr. 2.11-12, 14 West) in the sixth century claims to deserve the same honours and rewards athletes on the basis of his wisdom (σοφίη).

In addition to a distinct identity, the creation of professional organisations was not without precident in the archaic period. The singers who labelled themselves the Homeridai were an established group by the sixth century on Chios. They appear to have been a collective body of poetic performers, united both by a common practice and a claim to descent from the legendary master Homer.[26] Another form of association may have existed on Lesbos and, if so, it possibly promoted the memory of Terpander in order to gain special privileges for Lesbian citharodes who claimed to be his descendents at the Spartan Carneia.[27] Similar groups include bodies of doctors and seers, who also shared a specialist skill and purported to be organised, at least orginally, on family lines.[28] Unlike the later guilds of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, such groups were few in number and membership of associations may not have been widespread. Their influence, however, probably extended beyond Chios or Lesbos and recognition by these organisations is likely to have been highly valued. By the fifth century, the rhapsode Ion could aspire to receive from the Homeridai the public gift of a crown in recognition of achievements (Pl. *Ion* 530d7-8).

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[25] Hes. *Theog*. 93-6; cf. fr. 305 and 357 M–W; *Hom. Hy.* 25.2-4.

b. The poet's art

Was this divine gift, which formed the basis of the poet's identity, seen as a skill? Was training or regular practice required to obtain it? In early epic, the art of a poet, unlike handicrafts, is not specifically termed a skill (τέχνη).[29] The one early exception is the *Hymn*

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[26] Homeridai: Pind. *Nem*. 2.1-3; descent from Homer: Σ *Nem*. 2.1c (Drachmann III.29-30)**;** date of Homerid Cynaethaeus of Chios c. 504-501: Σ *Nem*. 2.1c = Hippostratus 568 F 5 *FGrHist*; see M.L. West 'Cnaithaeus's Hymn to Apollo', *CQ* 25 (1975) 116-70, at 165-6 and 'The invention of Homer', *CQ* 49 (1999) 364-382, at 368. The *Hymn to Apollo*, possibly the work of Cynaethus or another Homerid, has been dated to 523/2 (see W. Burkert, 'Kynaithos, Polycrates and the Homeric Hymn to Apollo', in G.W. Bowerstock et al. (eds.), *Arktouros* (Berlin and New York 1979) 53-62, at 59-61) or 580 (N. Richardson, *Three Homeric Hymns* (Cambridge 2010) 13-15).

[27] See E. Stewart, *Wandering Poets and the Dissemination of Greek Tragedy in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BC* (Oxford Forthcoming 2015); Lesbian poets in Sparta: Arist. fr. 545 Rose; Hesych. m 1004; Suda m 701; Eustathius s.v. *Il*. 9.129.

[28] Asclepiadai: Thgn. 432-4; families of seers: see Flower, *Seers* 42-3.

[29] τέχνη: metallurgy (*Od*. 3.433, 6.234, 11.613-14, 23.161, Hes. *Theog*. 863), carpentry in shipbuilding (*Il*. 3.61), sailing (*Od*. 5.270) and weaving (*Od*. 5.259, 7.110). See D. Roochnik, *Of Art and Wisdom: Plato's Understanding of Techne* (Philadelphia 1996)17-33.

to Hermes, in which the art of the cithara and the pipes is explicitly termed τέχνη.[30] By comparison, craft metaphors for poetry are relatively common in Pindar.[31] This prompted Svenbro and others to argue that the concept of the poet as a craftsman was a later innovation, linked to a ‘secularisation’ of poetry in which skill superseded divine inspiration.[32]

However, as Murray demonstrated, a strict dichotomy between skill and inspiration was not universally recognised or accepted in the archaic period.[33] Moreover, artisanal skills are, like the inspiration of the Muses, divine gifts. The metal-worker in early epic learns his skill from Hephaestus and Athena (ὃν Ἥφαιστος δέδαεν καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη / τέχνην παντοίην *Od.* 6.233-4).[34] Moreover, early poets are equated with craftsmen. Solon juxtaposes the poet who has learned the gifts of the Muse with the pupil of Athena and ‘much skilled’ Hephaestus (Ἀθηναίης τε καὶ Ἡφαίστου πολυτέχνεω / ἔργα δαεὶς fr. 13.49-50 West). Eumaeus similarly includes the singer in the category of foreign ‘public workers’ (δημιοεργοί):

> μάντιν ἢ ἰητῆρα κακῶν ἢ τέκτονα δούρων,
> καὶ θέσπιν ἀοιδόν, ὅ κεν τέρπῃσιν ἀείδων.
> οὗτοι γὰρ κλητοί γε βροτῶν ἐπ’ ἀπείρονα γαῖαν·

> a prophet or healer of evils or joiner of beams, or even an inspired minstrel,
> who gives delight with his singing. For these men are summoned by mortals on the wide earth.

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[30] 445, 465, 483, 511; Richardson, *Three Homeric Hymns* 24-5, argues for a sixth century date.

[31] τέχνη: *Pyth*. 12.6; *Nem*. 1.25; *Pae*. 9.39 SM; craft metaphors: D. Steiner, *The Crown of Song* (London 1986) 52-65**.**

[32] Svenbro, *Parole* 187-8, 193-5; cf. Woodbury, *Phoenix* 39 (1985) 200; A. Ford, *The Origins of Criticism* (Princeton 2002) 113-14. Secularisation: Detienne, *Maîtres* 109-10; Gentili, *Poetry* 162.

[33] Murray, *JHS* 101 (1981) 87-100.

[34] Cf. *Od*. 7.110-11; 23.161; *Il*. 15.42. Hephaestus as craftsman: *Od*. 8.297, 327, 332, Hes. *Th*. 929.

(*Od.* 17.384-6)

The specialist nature of these skills is demonstrated by the fact that these craftsmen are called (κλητοί) from abroad. Not every community can be expected to have either a skilled carpenter or a skilled poet; yet they supply a general need, hence their role as 'public workers'.

The word τέχνη appears to be largely interchangeable in meaning with the more common term for the poet's art, σοφίη. The craft of shipbuilding, for example, can be termed both σοφίη (*Il.* 15.412) and τέχνη (*Il.* 3.61). The poet's σοφίη is not only comparable, but even superior to other skills. While Solon claimed that poets understood the measure of skill or wisdom in general (σοφίης μέτρον fr. 13.52), Hesiod had initially suggested a limit to this wisdom, when he stated that he was not an expert (σεσοφισμένος *Op.* 649) in seafaring. However, he continues nonetheless to offer advice on this very topic: for the Muses have taught him to sing (Μοῦσαι γάρ μ' ἐδίδαξαν ἀθέσφατον ὕμνον ἀείδειν *Op.* 661). The inspiration of the Muses grants not only a particular form of expertise (the ability to sing) but also the authority to discuss any other skill. This claim to superiority, while common, need not have gone unchallenged by practitioners of other crafts. We may compare Hesiod's attitude with the later remark by Socrates that craftsmen, like poets, erroneously believe they have knowledge in other fields once they have mastered their own (Pl. *Ap.* 22d4-e1).

The poet must work to develop his poem. As in the *Odyssey*, Hesiod places poets among a list of practitioners of parallel occupations:

> καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεῖ κοτέει καὶ τέκτονι τέκτων,
> καὶ πτωχὸς πτωχῷ φθονέει καὶ ἀοιδὸς ἀοιδῷ.
>
> And potter strives with potter, carpenter with carpenter; and beggar envies beggar and minstrel envies minstrel.

(Hesiod *Op.* 24-5)

Here, in juxtaposing four specific crafts, Hesiod introduces the dominant theme of his poem: the need for work. Good strife encourages work in each area of human endeavour, as specialists compete with their rivals. Solon echoes this need for work by characterising poetry as one of the possible occupations by which a man may strive to avoid poverty (σπεύδει δ' ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος fr. 13.43). The common term 'servant of the Muses' eloquently testifies to the poet's devotion both to the god and the practice of his art.[35]

An important part of a poet's work was its promotion of his poetry through frequent performances at different festivals. The author of the *Hymn to Apollo* presents himself as a wanderer who has come to Delos to perform and who will promote the fame of the Delian maidens in other cities (στρεφόμεσθα πόλεις εὖ ναιεταώσας 175). As Bowie argues, there may be many reasons for travel other than the performance of poetry and aristocrats could also be on the move, especially when in political exile (as in the case of Alcaeus and Solon). Nevertheless, it is significant that virtually every poet for whom we have any biographical information is said to have spent an extended period of time away from their homeland.[36] The exceptions are illuminating: the *Theognidea* seems to concern a particular city, possibly Megara in the verses by Theognis, yet lines 783-8 attest to journeys as far afield as Sicily, Euboea and Sparta. Alcman and Tyrtaeus are not known to have produced poetry in any context other than Sparta, yet the former was believed to have been a Lydian and the latter an Athenian.[37] Because travel was an inherent part of a poet's work, if he did not travel ancient authors seem to have assumed that he was a foreigner to begin with.[38] This suggests either that poets travelled specifically to perform, or that the work of a poet was particularly suitable for dispossessed exiles in need of a new occupation.

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[35] Hes. *Theog.* 100; *Hom. Hy.* 32.20; *Margites* fr. 1.2 Allen; Thgn. 769; Bacchyl. 5.13-14, 192-3 Maehler; Ar. *Av.* 909; Choerilus fr. 317 *SH*.

[36] See Bowie, in *Wandering Poets*.

[37] Alcman: see TA1-9 *PMGF*; Tyrtaeus: Lycurgus *Leocr.* 106; Pl. *Leg.* 629a, cf. scholion *ad loc.*; Paus. 4.15.6; Philochorus *FGrHist* 328 F 215.

Training may also have been necessary to increase the chances of victory in festival competitions. The assertion that each member of the Homeridai received his art ‘in succession’ from his predecessor, may suggest that the skill of a poetic performer was taught through successive generations.[39] The source, a scholion from Pindar, is admittedly late; nevertheless, there is evidence from the fifth century of poets training their sons, while the *Hippocratic Oath* required a doctor to treat his teacher like a father and train his teacher’s sons free of charge.[40] Aristophanes (*Eq.* 541-4) likened his early career as a comic poet to the gradual apprenticeship of a helmsman and there is little to suggest that a comparable period of training could not have existed at an early period.

c) The poet’s fees

Early poets were not dilettantes and their work was not a casual or common past-time. Our early sources confirm that early poets, like their fifth century counterparts, cultivated close relationships with and composed works for the rich and powerful and it is likely that they also received material rewards in the form of patronage in return.[41] The gift of meat made by Odysseus to Demodocus – granted both because poets in general are worthy of honour, and in response to his song (*Od.* 8.475-81) – appears to presage the meal prepared for Pindar at the house of his patron (Pind. *Nem.* 1.19-22), and parallel the requests for clothing and coin made by Hipponax, albeit obliquely to his divine patron Hermes.[42] Symbolic prizes are also known for victories at festivals and additional gifts may have been included, as was the case for athletes from the sixth century.[43]

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[38] Cf. R.P. Martin, ‘Hesiod’s Metanastic Poetics’, *Ramus* 21 (1992) 424-40, at 428-35, who argues that Hesiod deliberately presents himself as an exile in adopting the persona of the didactic poet.

[39] οἱ καὶ τὴν ποίησιν αὐτοῦ ἐκ διαδοχῆς ᾖδον Σ *Nem*. 2.1c (Drachmann III.29).

[40] E.g. Iophon and Sophocles Ar. *Ran.* 71-9; Σ *Ran.* 78a-b (Holwerda 3.1a, 15); [Hipp.] *jusjur.* 4-10.

[41] Poets and rulers: Arion and Periander; Solon and Philocyprus (Φιλοκύπρου δὲ τούτου τὸν Σόλων ὁ Ἀθηναῖος ἀπικόμενος ἐς Κύπρον ἐν ἔπεσι αἴνεσε τυράννων μάλιστα, Hdt. 5.113.2; Solon fr. 19 West = Plut. *Sol*. 26.2-4); Anacreon and Polycrates (Strabo 14.1.16 = fr. 483 *PMG*; Hdt. 3.121.1); Ibycus and Polycrates (Ibycus S151.47-8 *PMGF*). Pindar and Bacchylides, like Solon, composed works for Hieron in praise of the foundation of a city: Aetna (Pind. *Pyth* 1.31, 60; *Nem*. 9.2 and fr. 105a S–M ; Bacchyl. 20c. 7 Maehler).

The evidence for payment is well known and there is not space to document it in greater detail here.[44] We may note, however, that the acquisition of wealth was an explicit aim of the early poet and not merely an occasional or unexpected benefit. Hesiod, in his discussion of the effects of good strife, says that a man who is shy of work is stimulated into action by seeing a rich man (πλούσιον *Op.* 22) setting his house in order. This rivalry between neighbour and neighbour for wealth (ζηλοῖ δέ τε γείτονα γείτων / εἰς ἄφενος σπεύδοντ’, 23-4), is directly compared with professional rivalries, including that between poets. Aristocrats, as Hesiod knew well, could certainly be acquisitive: the difference is that poets seek to gain wealth through a skill specific to them. Solon, like Hesiod, indicates that professionals, including poets, practice their crafts in order to obtain wealth and avoid poverty (κτήσασθαι πάντως χρήματα πολλὰ δοκεῖ fr. 13.42). The smith, with whom the poet is compared, earns a living from his craft (ξυλλέγεται βίοτον 50) and it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the poet must do the same. Solon, at any rate, specifically asks for fortune (ὄλβον μοι πρὸς θεῶν μακάρων δότε 3). He does not have an explicit plan for gaining wealth, yet it is clear that work as a poet is one possible way to attempt to earn a living.

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[42] Hipponax: δὸς χλαῖναν Ἱππώνακτι fr. 32.4 West, cf. fr. 34; Ar. *Av*. 936-46. Plutarch (*de comm. not.* 1068b) claims this line is regularly used by the wise (σοφοί), since they lack food and shelter.

[43] Cf. the earnings of the rhapsode Ion at the fifth century Panathenaea (αὐτὸς γελάσομαι ἀργύριον λαμβάνων Pl. *Ion* 535e4); prizes: Hes. *Op*. 656-7; Paus. 10.7.4, 7.6; athletes: Xenoph. fr. 2 West; Plat. *Ap*. 36e; Andoc. 4.31, *IG* I^3 131.11-17; Solon’ legislation on athletes’ rewards: Plut. *Sol.* 23, Diog. Laert. 1.55.

[44] See e.g. Gzella *Eos* 59 (1971) 189-202.

Finally, Herodotus noted that Arion earned great wealth (ἐργασάμενον δὲ χρήματα μεγάλα 1.24) after a visit to Italy and Sicily in the time of Periander (c. 627-587). Herodotus describes him as the finest citharode (κιθαρῳδός) and singer (ἀοιδός) of his day. He also mentions that he took a costume (σκευή 1.24.4-6) on his fateful return voyage, which suggests that his usual performances were not spontaneous but rather designed for a public audience, probably the source of his income.[45] Wilson claims that this passage is informed by the later professionalism of the fifth century; yet we should be wary of dismissing such an early source too easily.[46] If Herodotus is wrong, we will have to assume that he ignored, or was ignorant of, a change in the production of poetry that had taken place either in his lifetime, or in that of his father and grandfather, and certainly during the period covered by his inquiry.

While Gentili and Bowie accept that poets might desire and receive rewards, they argue that their performances were not motivated by the prospect of payment.[47] The first objection is that archaic poets were wealthy aristocrats of the same social and economic status as their audiences, and therefore did not need to work for a living. Gentili focusses on Solon as the prime example of a poet who operated 'in conditions of complete economic independence.'[48] This argument is suspect for several reasons. Firstly, it fails to question how this wealth was acquired. If, as Hesiod and Solon indicate, one of the objects of a professional career was to accumulate wealth, we need not be surprised if the most successful poets, like many modern professionals, were also very rich. Furthermore, unlike Solon, these scholars have too rarely noted the fact that ‘there is no set end to wealth for men’ (πλούτου δ’ οὐδὲν τέρμα πεφασμένον ἀνδράσι κεῖται fr. 13.71). The very poor need not have been the only ones attracted to a professional career, nor is it likely that a poet would cease to apply himself to his work once he became successful. Both the desire and need for wealth, as long as it is acquired justly, are strongly articulated by Solon and in the *Theognidea*.[49] In the fourth century, Aristotle similarly noted that the τεχνῖται could often become wealthy (πλουτοῦσι γὰρ καὶ οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν τεχνιτῶν, *Pol.* 3.1278a.24-5). The difference between a professional and a ‘gentleman’ is not measured in money; rather it is determined by the way in which that wealth is acquired.

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[45] Costumes at festival performances: Pl. *Ion* 535d2-3; cf. Power, *Kitharôidia* 17: '*skeuê* and monetary earnings are cognate, mutually reinforcing'.

[46] Wilson, in *Music and the Muses* 285.

[47] Gentili, *Poetry* 159: elegiac and iambic poets composed 'with a . . . variety of purposes and occasions in mind and without the prospect of direct, immediate reward'. Bowie, in *Wandering Poets* 106: 'poets [do not travel] *in order to* perform or [because] they are seeking or accepting specific commissions' (his emphasis).

[48] Gentili, *Poetry* 160; cf. Thomas, in *Greek World* 120: 'Theognis . . . is an independent aristocrat'; Hornblower, in *Greek Lyric* 40: 'Solon was presumably not under anyone else's patronage'.

Another problem is that – aside from the ‘aristocratic’ values articulated in their poetry – the notion of the wealthy archaic poet is founded on surprisingly little evidence. In Solon’s case, the author of the *Athenian Constitution* notes that, according to most sources, he belonged in terms of his wealth, though not his family or reputation, to the ‘middle classes’.[50] Plutarch quotes fr. 15 as evidence that Solon belonged to the class of the poor rather than the rich (πενήτων μερίδι μᾶλλον ἢ τῇ τῶν πλουσίων, *Sol.* 3.2). He further explains Solon’s poverty as deriving from his father’s mismanagement of his estate (2.1 = Hermippus 1026 F 14 *FGrHist*). Hornblower dismisses this ‘explicit and modern-sounding story’ as little more than ‘an inference from Solon’s own poetry’.[51] The story itself is probably a late invention; nevertheless Hornblower’s assumption that Solon was a wealthy aristocrat runs contrary to our earliest evidence, Solon himself, and is no better justified than Plutarch’s belief that he was poor. While it is unlikely that Solon as *archon* was seriously poor, yet the persona he projects is not that of a leisured aristocrat and we have no grounds for insisting on his 'economic independence'.

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[49] Sol. fr. 13.3; Thgn. 561-2, 753, 1119-22, 1153-4 West.

[50] ἦν δ’ ὁ Σόλων τῇ μὲν φύσει καὶ τῇ δόξῃ τῶν πρώτων, τῇ δ’ οὐσίᾳ καὶ τοῖς πράγμασι τῶν μέσων, ὡς ἔκ τε τῶν ἄλλων ὁμολογεῖται, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τοῖσδε τοῖς ποιήμασιν μαρτυρεῖ, [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 5.3.

[51] Hornblower, in *Greek Lyric* 40.

Archaic poets in general never boast of wealth, but frequently complain of poverty. Hesiod's father was not a wealthy aristocrat, but a fugitive from poverty who had the misfortune to find himself in Ascra (*Op.* 635-40). Hipponax seems to have cultivated the image of the poor poet, complaining that 'wealth is blind'.[52] The *Theognidea* bemoans the evils of poverty.[53] Theognis, or another contributor to the corpus, indicates that he has lost his former wealth or, specifically, that it has been taken by force (341-50, 667-82, 1197-1202). West saw Theognis as an aristocrat suffering unexpected misfortune.[54] And yet this image closely corresponds to Solon's description (fr. 13.41-3) of the man who, upon finding himself without means, turns to the gifts of the Muses, among other occupations, in order to improve his situation. Curiously enough this was the experience of Horace, who also claimed that poverty and the loss of his family estate drove him to write verse.[55] If this is an exaggeration, Horace may partly be adopting the mantel of the dispossessed Greek poet.

A possible explanation for the poverty of the poet is that the aristocratic class as a whole is in decline.[56] Yet, while Theognis is poor, his addressee is rich. The poet tells his pupil not to look down on him because of his reduced means.

> μήποτέ μοι πενίην θυμοφθόρον ἀνδρὶ χαλεφθεὶς
>   μηδ' ἀχρημοσύνην οὐλομένην πρόφερε·

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[52] Πλοῦτος – ἔστι γὰρ λίην τυφλός, fr. 36.1 West; cf. frr. 38 and 39.

[53] ἆ δειλὴ πενίη, 649; cf. 267, 351, 620, 1129-30.

[54] M.L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus* (Berlin and New York 1974) 69.

[55] paupertas impulit audax / ut versus fecerem *Ep*. 2.2.51-2.

[56] Kurke *AJP* 110 (1989) 540-3, *Traffic* 253-4; Lane Fox, in *Alternatives* 40: 'a true aristocrat . . . at a time when [aristocratic values] are under challenge'.

> Do not ever be angry with me, a man, for my heart-wrenching poverty, nor cast in my teeth dire want.
>
> (Thgn. 155-6)[57]

Who is the person addressed? The passage comes from the *Florilegium Purum* (27-236), which contains relatively few known excerpts from the works of other poets and a high proportion of addresses to Cyrnus. There is thus a strong possibility that these lines are by Theognis and, if so, directed at Cyrnus. Elsewhere, the advice Cyrnus receives is appropriate for a wealthy young nobleman. Theognis no longer possesses an estate, but he does offer Cyrnus advice on how to manage his labourers and servants (301-2).

The final argument for the aristocratic poet is his frequent association with the wealthy. The symposium, a common venue for the performance of poetry, is often viewed as an entirely aristocratic institution and the presence of the poet is thought to demonstrate his credentials as a member of the elite.[58] Moreover, poets, when abroad at the houses of foreign aristocrats, are entitled to sustenance as strangers (ξένοι) and present themselves more often as recipients of hospitality than patronage. Scholars have tended to draw a sharp distinction between hospitality, implying the reciprocal exchange of gifts, and the commercial exchange of rewards for services.[59] Thus Bowie, in ruling out professionalism among early poets, characterises the travels of Ibycus as ‘visits to aristocratic houses . . . in which his primary status was that of a ξένος’.[60]

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[57] Cf. χρήματ’ ἔχων πενίην μ’ ὠνείδισας 1115. For the text see West, *Studies* 151.

[58] Kantzios *CJ* 100 (2005) 227: ‘It is indeed tempting to assume that any archaic sympotic poetry is purely aristocratic, since . . . the symposium is the preserve of the nobility’; cf. O. Murray, ‘The affair of the Mysteries: democracy and the drinking group’, in O. Murray (ed.), *Sympotica* (Oxford 1990) 149-61, at 149-50; Kurke, *Coins* 18-19.

[59] von Reden *CQ* 45 (1995) 30; Kurke, *Coins* 10; J. Vélissaropoulos-Karakostas, ‘Merchants, prostitutes and the “new poor”’, in P. Cartledge et al. (eds.), *Money, Land and Labour in Ancient Greece* (London 2002) 130-9; Hornblower, in *Greek Lyric* 39.

However, it is possible for the distinction between ξενία and commercial exchange to become blurred, since professional poets may claim the status of strangers in order to disguise or justify their fees as hospitality. This was certainly the case with Pindar, who describes his association with Thorax, the man who commissioned his tenth Pythian, in precisely the terms of reciprocal exchange (πέποιθα ξενίᾳ *Pyth*. 10.64).[61] Wealthy athletic victors are praised for welcoming strangers, including poets, to their houses.[62] Yet Pindar also terms what he receives as payment (μισθός).[63] The poet may thus claim that the payment he receives is a form of hospitality. In doing so, the poet again stresses that the relationship is reciprocal and that he is not primarily motivated by greed. We do not know whether the same was true for Ibycus, yet the example of Pindar means that we should be wary of using Ibycus’ position as a stranger to rule out professionalism.

Moreover, since aristocratic houses routinely attracted the poor and recipients of patronage in general, the mere presence of the poet tells us little about his status. Hired entertainers, particularly the aulos-player, were an essential part of the symposium. Moreover, feasts were an obvious source of food for those in need. Hesiod’s brother Perses runs the risk of having to talk his neighbours into a meal, an ultimately fruitless endeavour (ἀχρεῖος δ᾽ ἔσται ἐπέων νομός, *Op*. 403). Perses exemplifies the parasitic flatterer (κόλαξ / παράσιτος), who tries to gain a living through his skill at words. The word κόλαξ is first used in the sixth century by Asius of Samos (fr. 14 West), who describes a flatterer drawn by the smell of roasted meat (κνισοκόλαξ) as a wandering beggar who is not invited (ἄκλητος) but comes anyway in order to be given food. He provides nothing in return except for his unwanted chatter. The poet, in gaining a meal in return for praise, can come uncomfortably close to resembling the κόλαξ if he fails to benefit his audience. The tragic poet Acestor, who is satirised in Eupolis' *Kolakes* (fr. 172.14 K–A) as an unsuccessful parasite, is thrown out of a dinner party for making an ill-chosen joke. Lazy poets are fed by the Clouds in Aristophanes because they flatter their ethereal patrons (*Nub*. 331-4). It should not surprise us that Hesiod ranks poets alongside beggars as examples of men driven by good strife (*Op.* 26).

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[60] Bowie, in *Wandering Poets* 124, cf. 128, 134-5.

[61] H. Fraenkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums* (Munich 1962) 492 n.13.

[62] ἐς ἀφˈνεὰν ἱκομένους / μάκαιραν Ἱέρωνος ἑστίαν *Ol*. 1.10-11; cf. ὄπι δίκαιον ξένων Pind. *Ol.* 2.6; Ἱέρωνι φιλοξείνῳ Bacchyl. 5.11, 49 Maehler. On ξενία in epinician see Kurke, *Traffic* 135-59.

[63] *Pyth*. 11. 42; *Nem*. 1.19-24, 10.43; *Isthm.* 2,6-11; Σ *Nem*. 5. 1a (III.89 Drachmann).

d) Justifying patronage: a service orientation?

How did poets justify the payments and hospitality they received and, in the process, differentiate themselves from mere flatterers? Poets stressed that they, unlike flatterers, benefited their patrons with their skill, what sociologists have termed a 'service orientation'. Their status thus depends less on membership of an aristocratic class and more on their skill and what they can offer in return for patronage.

Poets, therefore, do not merely ask for pay or complain of their lot, but stress that their poverty is *undeserved*. In the realm of didactic poetry, the claim to better fortune is based on knowledge and understanding, specifically of morality and excellence (ἀρετή). The poet of the *Theognidea* complains that he is poor despite this understanding:

> αἰσχρὰ δέ μ' οὐκ ἐθέλοντα βίηι καὶ πολλὰ διδάσκεις
> ἐσθλὰ μετ' ἀνθρώπων καὶ κάλ' ἐπιστάμενον
>
> You [sc. poverty] teach me by force, unwilling as I am, many shameful things, though I understand the good and fine things among men.
>
> (Thgn. 650-1)

Those who have wealth do not have the same knowledge (πολλοὶ πλοῦτον ἔχουσιν ἀίδριες, Thgn. 683). Solon similarly contrasts those who are rich and worthless, with those, such as himself, who are poor yet have excellence (ἀρετή fr. 15 = Thgn. 315-18). Knowledge and understanding, though possessed by good men in general, is the particular attribute of their teachers, the poets. These are not merely the complaints of dispossessed aristocrats, but of poets whose wisdom, demonstrated in their poetry, entitles them to better fortune.

In an address to a patron such a complaint might have two effects: first, it both explains and justifies the poet's presence as companion and tutor to those who are financially his superiors and, second, hints that he deserves financial reward. Such an approach – part of what Martin has termed the 'poetic strategies of wandering poets' – is paralleled in later poetry.[64] Pindar's *hyporcheme* to Hieron (fr. 105b S–M), which contains the image of a poor Scythian bereft of a wagon, is adapted by the mercenary poet of Aristophanes *Birds* (941-4) as the basis of a request for payment. Ancient scholars believed that Pindar's original had a similar purpose.[65]

The benefit a poet or entertainer bestows may be felt most immediately by his host. In Xenophon's *Symposium*, the comic Philip knows that he is invited to dinner only because he is funny and that if he ceases to amuse, he will cease to be invited.[66] No one expects to receive an invitation from him in return. Equally in Homer singers partake of the meal along with other guests because of their song. Unlike flatterers, poets are not only invited, but are invited for the specific reason that they are 'workers for the people' (δημιοεργοί), who have a particular skill that is in demand. Penelope implies that heralds are fed like strangers and suppliants, but unlike them heralds belong to a special category as δημιοεργοί (19.130-5), which may form the basis of their request for sustenance. If poets, whom Eumaeus also describes as δημιοεργοί, can demonstrate a similarly beneficial skill, the relationship between patron and poet becomes reciprocal, even though it is a song and not the promise of future hospitality which the poet offers in return.

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[64] R.P. Martin, 'Read on Arrival', in R.L. Hunter and I. Rutherford (eds.), *Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture* (Cambridge 2009) 80-104, at 81, 93-4.

[65] Σ *Av*. 941b (Holwerda II.3 p.148).

[66] ἐκαλούμην ἐπὶ τὰ δεῖπνα, ἵνα εὐφραίνοιντο οἱ συνόντες δι' ἐμὲ γελῶντες 1.15.5-6.

Poets also advertised their usefulness to the state as political advisors. It has been claimed that poets in the archaic period were primarily engaged in politics and used their poetry as a tool to serve political ends.[67] This may well have been the true in some cases, such as Alcaeus and Solon. However, poets are generally enabled to contribute to politics not as members of the elite, but as poets who possess special wisdom. The ability of the poet to promote good behaviour is alluded to in the *Odyssey*, where Agamemnon entrusts his wife to a singer (3.267-8). His removal to a deserted island allows Aegisthus to take power and opens the way for Agamemnon's murder. Xenophanes' σοφίη is particularly valuable, since it helps further good government (εὐνομίη fr. 2.19). It is because of this skill that he believes he is more worthy of reward than athletes (οὐκ ἐὼν ἄξιος ὥσπερ ἐγώ 11). Tyrtaeus composed a work on the subject of εὐνομία (fr. 1 West), which later authors interpreted as part of a successful attempt to end civil strife in Sparta.[68] The Athenian Lycurgus (1.106-7) mentioned a tradition that the Spartans selected Tyrtaeus as general, but noted that his achievement was in teaching the Spartans to be brave through his poetry, rather than any skill as a soldier or statesman. This echoes the belief of the ghost of Euripides in Aristophanes' *Frogs* that poets are admired for their ability to make men better in cities.[69] The political value of the poet's τέχνη is echoed by Protagoras in Plato's dialogue. He defines Homer, Hesiod and Simonides as early practitioners of what he terms sophistic skill (τὴν σοφιστικὴν τέχνην *Prot.* 316d2) and which Socrates more narrowly defines as a political skill. Once again, this has the same purpose of making men better citizens.[70]

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[67] V. Cobb-Stevans *et al.*, 'Introduction', in T.J. Figueira and G. Nagy (eds.) *Theognis of Megara* (Baltimore 1985) 1-8, at 4; Gentili, *Poetry* 160; von Reden *CQ* 45 (1995) 30.

[68] Arist. *Pol.* 1306b36; Paus. 4.18.2-3.

[69] ὅτι βελτίους γε ποιοῦμεν / τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν, 1009-10.

The poet can thus be presented less as a politician in his own city and more a political advisor brought in from abroad, who is maintained by cities and rulers because of his wholesome counsel. The resolution of civil strife in Sparta was credited to the legendary poets Thaletas and Terpander.[71] Stesichorus is said to have offered political advice not only to his fellow citizens of Himera, but also to those of Locri.[72] Solon not only composed an elegy for Philocyprus on the re-foundation of his city but also is believed to have been instrumental in persuading the king to transfer his seat to the better location.[73]

Professional poets play a double game: they earn money and even make veiled requests for payment in their works, yet they also developed strategies to justify or disguise these payments. Successful poets, like modern professionals, are likely to have belonged to the elite in the sense that they possessed wealth and were associated with the rich and powerful. Yet there is little to suggest that they were aristocrats in the conventional sense, since both their wealth and social status was contingent on their skill as poets. As Finley put it in his discussion of the δημιοεργοί of the *Odyssey*, professionals ‘floated in mid-air in the social hierarchy.’[74]

2. Professional and Amateur Poets?

There is thus little evidence to support a major change in the production of poetry in the sixth century. It is probable that many poets before 500 were professionals, though this need not have been the case in every instance. We now need to ask whether the texts differentiate in any way between professional and amateur poets. Were performers in particular genres (especially rhapsodes) more likely to be professionals than others (such as lyric monody)?

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[70] δοκεῖς γάρ μοι λέγειν τὴν πολιτικὴν τέχνην καὶ ὑπισχνεῖσθαι ποιεῖν ἄνδρας ἀγαθοὺς πολίτας, 319a3-4.

[71] [Plut.] de Mus. 1146b; Aelian *V.H.* 12.50; Thaletas: Plut. *Lyc.* 4.1; Terpander: Athen. 635e-f; Diod. Sic. 8.28; *Suda* m 701; Philodemus *de Mus*. fr. 133.

[72] Himera: Arist. *Rhet.* 2.1393b; Locri: *Rhet*. 1394b-95a.

[73] Fr. 19 West; cf. Plut. *Sol*. 26.2-4.

[74] M.I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus*^{3} (London 1977) 55.

Performances by amateurs, either in choruses or the symposium, are well documented, but there is little explicit evidence for the amateur poet. In order to maintain the notion of the late rise of professionalism, Gentili and Bowie have had to characterise the Homeric ἀοιδοί and the rhapsodes, who are often believed to be their historical successors, as early exceptions. Yet this distinction is unjustified. There is no indication of the existence of more than one type of poet in epic and we cannot assume that the Homeridai, or even rhapsodes in general, were the only performers to identify with their mythical predecessors. The description of the Homeric poet does not exactly correspond to any one type of performer, especially not the rhapsode, who recited verses unaccompanied by the lyre, but rather presents a general ideal of the poet to which later performers could aspire.[75] The closest parallel is in fact citharodes, who were believed to have set Homer's poetry to music at an early stage.[76] The Greeks distinguished different forms of poetry, particularly monodic and choral, according to the contest for which they were produced, but not different forms of poet.[77] Outside of the categories of contests, there is little to distinguish poets: Herodotus (1.23) calls Arion both a citharode and the inventor of the dithyramb, Xenophanes, the critic of Homer, apparently recited his poetry in the manner of a rhapsode (Diog. Laert. 9.18), while the work of Stesichorus is notoriously hard to classify.[78]

Though Solon testifies to the existence of professional poets, Gentili has attempted to argue that we should not include him among them. He claims that Solon here only refers to professional rhapsodes and that the prosperity Solon asks for from the Muses (ὄλβον μοι πρὸς θεῶν μακάρων δότε 13.3) is ‘fairly clearly landed wealth’ appropriate to aristocrats, rather than money earned as a poet.[79] Yet Plutarch believed that Solon’s fortune was made in trade (ἐμπορία, *Sol*. 2.1). Moreover, Solon does not explicitly make any such distinction. The address to the Muses suggests that Solon is making his appeal in the capacity of a poet. We may compare Hesiod’s claim that those shown favour by the Muses prosper (ὁ δ’ ὄλβιος, ὅντινα Μοῦσαι /φίλωνται *Theog*. 96-7), which directly follows the statement that singers and citharists come from the Muses and Apollo (ἐκ γάρ τοι Μουσέων καὶ ἑκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος / ἄνδρες ἀοιδοὶ ἔασιν 94-5). It is unlikely that Solon would wish to dissociate himself from those who have received gifts from the very goddesses to whom his prayer is addressed. If Solon makes a distinction between himself and other professionals it is in the superiority of his personal wisdom, since he, unlike his rivals, recognises the limitations of τέχνη and that wealth, when obtainable, can only be earned justly.

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[75] G. Nagy, *Homeric Responses* (Austin 2003) 42.

[76] Power *Kitharôidia* 243-71.

[77] M. Davies, 'Monody, choral lyric and the tyranny of the handbook', *CQ* 28 (1988) 52-64.

[78] Hutchison *Greek Lyric* 116-9.

3. Simonides: the first professional poet?

The only positive evidence for the early amateur poet is the belief of ancient writers that Simonides was the first poet to charge fees. The claim is reported in the scholia on the second *Ishmian* and Aristophanes’ *Peace* and is repeated by the *Suda*.[80] However, the earlier works quoted as evidence by the scholia only suggest that Simonides was grasping and do not specifically name him as the first mercenary poet.[81] Xenophanes, we are told, called Simonides a miser (κίμβιξ).[82] Although Xenophanes’ poem shows that the tradition of Simonides’ greed dates from an early period, it does not suggest that this was a new development. No other early source supports the contention of later scholars. The joke in *Peace* (697) that Sophocles is turning into Simonides is ambiguous and need only refer to the reputation for avarice found in Xenophanes. Aristotle provides an anecdote, in which Simonides claimed that the wise in general frequented the doors of the rich.[83] This suggests that as late as the fourth century Simonides may still have been seen merely as the prime example of the sage maintained by patronage.

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[79] Gentili, *Poetry* 159-60.

[80] ὁ Σιμωνίδης δοκεῖ πρῶτος σμικρολογίαν εἰσενεγκεῖν εἰς τὰ ᾄσματα καὶ γράψαι ᾆσμα μισθοῦ, Σ *Pac*. 697b (Holwerda II.2 p.107)**;** πρώτου Σιμωνίδου προκαταρξαμένου, S *Isthm*. 2.9a (Drachmann III.214); Suda σ 440.

[81] Bell, *QUCC* 28 (1978) 37.

[82] Σ *Pac*. 697e = Xenophanes fr. 21 D–K.

Pindar’s second *Ishmian* is the only source quoted by the scholion on *Peace* to specifically mention a change in the behaviour of poets. Pindar recalls the men of old (οἱ μὲν πάλαι 1) who addressed their poems to boys, at a time when the Muse was not then a hireling. This golden age acts as a foil for the present era. Both the scholia assume that the passage refers to a recent change brought about by Simonides. Yet Pindar is, perhaps deliberately, vague and may not have a specific or recent development in mind. There is nothing in the text to suggest an allusion to Simonides, beyond the tradition of that poet’s greed, and modern commentators have rightly been sceptical of this interpretation.[84] It is Pindar’s Muse who is greedy and no other contemporary poet is mentioned.

The Pindaric scholia suggest that the early poets alluded to in the opening line are Alcaeus, Ibycus, Anacreon and their contemporaries.[85] Again there is nothing in the text, beyond the fact that all of these men composed love poetry, to directly tie Pindar’s image of the early poets to specific individuals. As Nicholson has shown, Pindar frequently appeals to the image of the pederastic lover and instructor of youth in order to ‘obscure the poet’s status as a . . . wage-earner’, much as he employs the status of the poet as the patron’s guest for the same purpose.[86] Ibycus may have adopted the same tactic in praising the beauty of Polycrates (S151.46-8 *PMGF*). Pindar characterises these poets as pederasts in order to demonstrate that they are disinterested and may have the overall genre in mind rather than any particular early poets or poetic school.

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[83] Arist. *Rhet.* 1391a 10-12; cf. Pl. *Resp*. 489 b-c; Diog. Laert. 2.69.

[84] See Woodbury *TAPA* 99 (1968) 529 and Cairns *Mnemosyne* 64 (2011) 23-4. On the poem as an attack on Simonides, see U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 312-13.

[85] τοὺς περὶ Ἀλκαῖον καὶ Ἴβυκον καὶ Ἀνακρέοντα, καὶ εἴ τινες τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ δοκοῦσι περὶ τὰ παιδικὰ ἠσχολῆσθαι, S *Isthm.* 2.1b (III.213 Drachmann).

When we come to compare the careers of Ibycus and Anacreon with Simonides and Pindar there appear to be more similarities than differences. All four are known to have composed works for multiple rulers and aristocrats. The careers of Anacreon and Simonides even overlap, as both were guests of the Pisistratids in Athens. The pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Hipparchus* explicitly claims that the tyrant promised Simonides a substantial fee (μεγάλοις μισθοῖς καὶ δώροις πείθων *Hipparch*. 228b-c). Bowie notes that ‘no such claim is made for Anacreon’, and yet the activities of the two poets are so similar that it is difficult to believe that they did not receive the same rewards.[87]

Finally, the second *Isthmian* does not demonstrate a new attitude to money. Pindar alludes to earlier poetry in order to justify his views. He ascribes the doctrine of the mercenary Muse that ‘money is man’ to the Spartan Aristodamus.[88] The same maxim was quoted by Alcaeus.[89] The scholia also quote Anacreon: ‘Persuasion did not yet shine with silver then’.[90] Anacreon, in the generation before Pindar, similarly appeals to an ideal past, uncorrupted by the desire for precious metal. Both poets admit to living in a world where money transactions are common and even necessary, yet are eager to show that they do not approve of this situation. According to Pausanias it was Homer who cared little for the money of tyrants (χρήματα παρὰ τῶν δυναστῶν 1.2.3), unlike later poets including Anacreon. The myth of the original disinterested poet and the idea of change are revived in successive generations because, ironically, both the need for money and the prejudices against commerce remain constant.[91]

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[86] Nicholson *CW* 93 (2000) 253.

[87] Bowie, in *Wandering Poets* 130.

[88] χρήματα χρήματ’ ἀνήρ, *Isthm*. 2.9-11.

[89] Alcaeus fr. 360 Voigt = Σ Pind. *Isthm.* 2.17 (Drachmann III.215); Diog. Laert. 1.30-1; cf. Thgn. 621, Eur. *Med*. 559-61.

[90] οὐδ’ ἀργυρῆ κω τότ’ ἔλαμπε Πειθώ, fr. 384 *PMG* = Σ Pind. *Isthm.* 2.13 (Drachmann III.215).

There is little to differentiate fifth century poets from their predecessors, either in their activities or values. Professionalism and patronage appear to have been common throughout the whole of the sixth century and there is no compelling reason to believe that this was a new phenomenon. Rather these poets were the direct descendants of the Homeric singer, whose main occupation and source of income was to perform.

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[91] Cf. H. von Wees, 'Megara's Mafiosi: timocracy and violence in Theognis', in R. Brock and S. Hodkinson (eds.), *Alternatives to Athens* (Oxford 2000) 52-67, at 63-4, for the modern myth, restated continually over the twentieth century, that earlier generations of the Italian mafia were not primarily interested in money.