INTRODUCTION

In the late sixth century, Heraclitus could call Hesiod 'the teacher of most men' (διδάσκαλος δὲ πλείστων, 57 DK). Xenophanes could speak similarly of Homer (ἐξ ἀρχῆς καθ᾽ Ὅμηρον ἐπεὶ μεμαθήκασι πάντες, 'From the beginning all have learned according to Homer', 10 DK) and, moreover, criticise Homer and Hesiod for attributing to the gods ὅσσα παρ᾽ ἀνθρώποισιν ὀνείδεα καὶ ψόγος ἐστιν ('however many things that among men are a source of censure and reproach', 11 DK); no doubt the detrimental effects such stories had on human behaviour played no small part in this critique.[1] A century later, Herodotus tells us that Cleisthenes, the archaic tyrant of Sicyon, brought an end to rhapsodic performances of Homeric epic because of its excessive praise of the Sicyonians' enemies, the Argives: ῥαψῳδοὺς ἔπαυσε ἐν Σικυῶνι ἀγωνίζεσθαι τῶν Ὁμηρείων ἐπέων εἵνεκα, ὅτι τ᾽ Αργεῖοί τε καὶ Ἄργος τὰ πολλὰ πάντα ὑμνέαται ('he suspended the rhapsodic contests in Sicyon, because they involved the Homeric epics, which constantly celebrate Argos and the Argives', Hdt. 5.67.1).[2] Finally, Aristotle demonstrates the selection process involved in how a great majority of the fragments of archaic poetry – especially those of Solon – have come to survive, εἵλοντο κοινῇ διαλλακτὴν καὶ ἄρχοντα Σόλωνα, καὶ τὴν πολιτείαν ἐπέτρεψαν αὐτῷ, ποιήσαντι τὴν ἐλεγείαν ἧς ἐστιν ἀρχή ... ('They agreed to choose Solon as an arbitrator and archon and they entrusted the political system to Solon, who wrote the elegy of which this is the beginning ...', *Ath. Pol.* 5.2). This survey of apparently unrelated passages conveys a similar point. Whatever their relationship to the poetry and/or events they describe, each attests to the early belief that poetry in the archaic period was felt to interact significantly with its social context, whether influencing

[1] Lesher (1992) 84. [2] Waterfield's translation (1998).

behaviour, instrumental in political spheres, or simply reflective of the historical context that produced it. Together the passages positively encourage investigation of the relationship between archaic poetry and the cultural and political situations in which it thrived, at the same time as they illustrate the varying types of evidence such an investigation will need to confront and assess.

Accepting the encouragement and challenges of our sources, this book examines the articulation of archaic political culture and language in early Greek poetry, and in particular that of Solon. It focuses on the relationships this poetry struck between the poetic traditions to which it was indebted and the political and social present in which it was performed. The primary concern is how a particular body of early Greek poetry, elegy, manipulated and appropriated traditional hexameter poetry and its themes for the needs of its contemporary audience, and more specifically how to contextualise Solon within that genre. Elegy provides the starting-point for two reasons. First, of the forms of early Greek poetry, elegy is the most closely akin to the dominant genre of extant early Greek poetry, ἔπεα, hexameter poetry, and it is this relationship that has allowed the material expressed in both genres to be most extensively compared.[3] Second, a stance adopted by elegy is particularly significant to an investigation of the intersection of archaic poetics and politics, namely the stance of exhortation or *paraenesis*. Elegiac poets frequently purport to address their immediate audience in their capacities as citizens of a polis, and thus the fragments are replete with political material, a feature that has led scholars to reconstruct a strong civic function behind elegy, particularly in comparison to epic. In response to both the importance of this stance, and the scholarly responses it has induced, the bulk of this study will evaluate the place of elegiac exhortation within archaic poetic and political culture, and consider what a re-evaluation of the former may contribute to a better understanding of the latter. It will also concentrate on the earliest proponents of this type of

[3] On the shared metrical forms see West (1974) 9–10; for the elegists' application of ἔπεα to their own work see West (1974) 7 and Bowie (1986) 31–2. See below pp. 22–9.

elegy, beginning with Callinus and Tyrtaeus, and culminating in Solon, precisely because both ancient and modern treatments of their fragments bring to the fore crucial issues of interpretive method involved in historical contextualisations – a topic to which I shall return.

It is not only the collective opinion of the ancients and the suitability of the content of the fragments of early Greek poetry that invite their use in reconstructing archaic culture and politics; there is also the compulsion of necessity. Without the remains of archaic poetry any access to this period would have been greatly hindered, not just for us, but also for the earliest proponents of such reconstruction – Aristotle for one – in the centuries immediately following the archaic era. Apart from scant inscriptional evidence, this poetry remains among our best evidence for the culture and history of an age to which major political transformations are attributed, and as such warrants its pre-eminent status as a source.

The opinion of the ancients, the content of the fragments, and their value as sources make such a study seem natural and obvious, as numerous studies in the twentieth century bear out.[4] Yet the difficulties of gaining access to the archaic period through the meagre remains of its poetry and the biases of the sources who quote them generate a final reason for participating in the continual re-evaluation of this poetry's relationship to its historical context. How are poetic texts to be understood in relation to their contemporary political and cultural environment, what can they reveal about the culture that produced and enjoyed them? Perhaps nowhere in the study of Classics are these questions so urgent as in the study of early Greece, a period in which poets and poetry occupied an important position,[5] but where the amount of evidence at our disposal seems inversely proportional to the methodological concerns it elicits.

As issues of methodology raised by these questions will be discussed in greater detail in the chapters to follow, this introduction focuses on a fundamental tension in the study of

[4] See Gerber's critical bibliography (1991). [5] Thomas (1995).

early Greek poetry that has shaped this study: the tension between the fragment and the narrative. Studying poets who are known almost entirely through a handful of short, usually fragmentary, poems and whose cultural context is plotted only through the points that they themselves and the largely silent record of archaeology constitute makes for an extraordinary situation. As Robin Osborne asks regarding archaic Greek law, 'how do we join up the dots'?[6] How do we create a narrative? And what kind of narrative should it be?

Just as nature abhors a vacuum, a survey of the scholarship suggests that fragments of poetry require a narrative. A seemingly irresistible need to contextualise this poetry is shared by ancients and moderns alike.[7] We encounter the majority of the extant fragments in ancient narratives, narratives which are likely to have been largely constructed from the poems themselves.[8] Forced to lean, however mistrustfully, on these narratives, never *un*-influenced by them, we extract the fragments, judiciously, in order to enclose them in narratives of our own making. Creating narratives is inevitable: it is how we make meaning. In most cases if we did not find a narrative in our research, we could not proceed to write – though we hope that what results comes without too much violence to our sources. But with fragments, particularly of archaic poetry, this inevitable feature is often a danger. Circularity threatens at every point: we construct narratives that then enable (or force) the fragments to help us understand them better. The more persuasive and continuous the narrative the greater the threat that it may for ever encase the fragments that it tries to explain. And to develop a narrative of such coherence and staying

[6] Osborne (1997).

[7] The ancients did, however, in most cases have the luxury of creating the fragments we so gratefully cherish, selecting their quotations from complete poems and from larger collections of poetry: see Plutarch's references to the 100 exceedingly well composed (χαριέντως πάνυ πεποιημένον) verses of the *Salamis* of which he quotes only six, *Sol.* 8.1–3. On fragments see Bowie (1997).

[8] There are also the anthologies which tell their own implicit story about reception, a tale of the endeavours of later generations to preserve, narrating implicitly the purposes this poetry came to serve for readers separated by centuries.

power is on some level one of the aims to which we aspire when we write.

The initial starting-point of this book – it must be admitted – was less the search for a narrative, than a presumed narrative awaiting its details. I intended to produce an account of the political language in the early Greek poets, in particular their representations of the polis which one might well expect to reflect in some way the extensive transformations this entity underwent during the archaic period. The more I worked the more I became aware of the predictive powers of my intended narrative, the problems of presuming, if not the story, then the *kind* of story, these fragments should tell. Archaic poetry forms a corpus of material spanning some 200 years and stretching across several *poleis*, both colonies and mother cities, islands and mainland, in Asia Minor, Greece, and Magna Graecia. However good the evidence for the panhellenic aspects of early Greek poetry may be, attempts to impose overarching narratives, typically those of development, on such limited amounts of temporally and spatially diverse material are as likely to distort as to facilitate access to the poetry; not to mention (potentially) also to overlook the particular dialogue between the panhellenic and the local that each poet, or genre, might foster.

Early Greek poetry is an over-exploited body of poetry, providing as it does the props to support several types of developmental narratives, *topoi* of progress, or at least change – whether literary or historical. Diachronic approaches to the material can generate one such narrative type. While capable of the greatest good, and absolutely fundamental to philological method, diachronic studies of given concepts or subjects are also capable of the greatest harm when it comes to archaic poetry. The overwhelming, if also understandable, focus on the fifth and fourth centuries for which we have comparatively abundant evidence can generate predictive, teleologically driven, narratives of which the classical period serves as the culmination. Viewing the poems obliquely from the perspective of later centuries, such studies often fail to address the poems in their own right, in ways which carefully take into account

their genre, performance and audiences, and their own cultural context.[9]

A similar pattern can occur in historical contextualisations of archaic poetry. Increasingly in recent decades scholars have focused on the important political developments of the seventh and sixth centuries, a period characterised by the 'rise of the polis'. Adopting this view, one is encouraged to interpret the poetry produced in this time as (usually) a (positive)[10] reflection of this phenomenon.[11] Such contextualisations provide interesting narratives, heirs to the tradition of Aristotle,[12] but the picture they offer is often so general as to be a distorting one. One thing must be certain, the polis did not *simply* 'rise'. While of course no literary product is ever divorced from its historical and social context, historical developments so visible from a diachronic perspective often provide too crude a basis to contribute to finer interpretations of the poems themselves or of their interaction with their contemporary context.[13] Blunt historical contextualisations may blinker our readings of the poems, most regrettably since, with so little extant poetry, we need approaches that will make us more sensitive, rather than less so.[14] Moreover, the comparisons with Homeric epic underlying many such discussions often compromise their interpretations. Literary concerns, such as epic distancing and the uncertainty of dating the Homeric poems, both

[9] Obliquely viewed from the fifth century, even Homer often suffers in such discussions, as in Seaford (1994) 1–13, esp. n. 49. To do the most service to one's sources in such studies, one must either address each body of poetry in its own right, understanding the influence of genre and performance context, or be explicit that one is analysing, on the basis of what can be observed from their own literature, how later generations received or would have received such earlier poetry. Although beginning with Aristotle, Fisher's study (1992) of hybris, for instance, is commendable for its treatment of each body of literary evidence on its own terms.

[10] Sometimes negative: see Kurke (1992).

[11] See, for instance, Raaflaub (1993), Nagy (1990). See also pp. 28–9.

[12] See Davies (1997) 26–7.

[13] This is not inevitable, but rather the product of an overwhelming tendency in diachronic analysis implicitly to conceive of the individual moments of which it (and the evidence upon which it is based) is composed as static.

[14] A more complex model may be no less blunting, as Morris (1996). See also pp. 58–62.

as unities and in their parts, defy the use of epic in simple historical reconstructions.[15]

A larger problem is that these two approaches to the poetry often rely heavily on influential studies from the early twentieth century which have enshrined our fragments in certain irresistible narratives. They are well known: the evolution of genres – epic, lyric, tragedy – and their relationship to the *Entwicklung des Geistes*; Tyrtaeus revealing the nascent characteristics of classical Sparta; or the great lawgiver Solon forging a new idea of Δίκη.[16] These influential ideas continue to underlie many discussions. Historical and literary teleologies have dominated the reading of these poems, often buttressing one another: poetry helping to write the history, and history helping to interpret the poetry. That we still engage with such discussions as Snell's and Jaeger's is of course appropriate: their narratives are impressive and were particularly so in their time; they are often more stimulating than those of their critics. One might, however, regret that these narratives are frequently encountered before the poems themselves, or immediately relied upon to fill the gaps and silences left by their fragmentary state. The persistence and propagation of such persuasive narratives serve to occlude wider analysis of the poems, causing one to forget that there are silences, and that they may be filled otherwise. The relative lack of communication between disciplines exacerbates the problem: many historical accounts are still influenced by the approaches that philosophers and philologists have long since undermined.[17]

This could be a very exciting time for early Greek poetry – and Solon. In recent decades scholarly focus on the enormous historical and cultural developments of this period has been

[15] See the excellent discussion of this issue by Rose (1997).
[16] The formulations of Jaeger (1966, originally published 1926 and 1932) and Snell (1982, originally published 1946).
[17] For instance, Snell looms large in such historians as Murray (2nd edn 1993) and Raaflaub (1993), despite the work of Lloyd-Jones (1965, 1971), and more recently Williams (1993); cf. Renehan (1979) and Wirshbo (1993). But the reductivism of some philologists also poses problems: see pp. 22–3 and Ch. 2, n. 31.

met by a greater appreciation of all aspects of the poetry[18]. The work done in several areas – on genre, on the symposium as the performance context of this poetry, on understanding allusion in orally derived poetry – as well as the challenges to traditional dating of the Homeric poems against which we inevitably compare melic poetry, not only invite a comprehensive reinvestigation of the inherited orthodoxies, but demand that new approaches be forged that can embrace these many features.[19]

In this book I attempt to recontextualise the poems of Tyrtaeus, Callinus and Solon differently. I assume that as our best source for the archaic period these poems and fragments do have something to say about contemporary politics and social dynamics, but I challenge the ways in which they have hitherto been enabled to speak. The purpose of this study is to open up discussion, to allow for and to advocate continual re-examination of our fragments from differing perspectives, to recognise and even to embrace the limitations of the evidence while remaining continually receptive to what these shards of poetry could be trying to say. I look closely at the political language of the poetry itself and privilege that language as an indication of the poetry's meaning. For although this poetry is, at best, a frustrating source for reconstructing the details of specific events in archaic history (a subject outside the scope of this book) there are some things which the fragments are excellently placed to reveal, primary among which is contemporary archaic political discourse, or, at the very least, poetic representations of this discourse. While it was my aim to focus closely on the language of this poetry from a literary and cultural perspective – to put to one side, at least temporarily, more embracing narratives of development – the

[18] Dougherty and Kurke (1993), Mitchell and Rhodes (1997), Fisher and van Wees (1998). Two new commentaries on Solon, Noussia (2001) and Mülke (2002), will no doubt stimulate new studies.

[19] For genre see Bowie (1986); for the symposium see Murray's volume (1990b); for allusion in orally derived poetry see Foley (1991, 1997) on the concept of traditional referentiality; for the dating and shape of the Homeric poems see Burkert (1976, 1987), West (1995), and Nagy (1996).

results, or at least the method of this study, should be relevant for wider historical, political, legal and intellectual studies in which these poets are enjoined as 'evidence'.

So through confronting methodological concerns, a guiding principle of this research emerged. My design was to take each poet on the terms set by the language of his poetry, not only with carefully maintained uncertainty about what narrative I should expect, but also with an ambivalence towards, even suspicion of, the narrative itself. I hoped to liberate the poems from the enabling narratives upon which they (and we) had come to depend, without too much violence, regardless of the concern that a book of loosely-joined chapters would result. And yet, of course a narrative must emerge – the reader will be relieved to learn – but one less obvious, less predictable, and therefore hopefully less *predictive* – less distorting – than those that have prevailed. A close examination of one type of elegy, that of exhortation, provides an important connecting thread between three poets of the seventh and early sixth centuries, Tyrtaeus, Callinus, and Solon. Their use of hexameter poetry in the genre of elegiac exhortation and Solon's apparently close responses to Tyrtaean poetry suggest important aspects of the political uses of poetry and poetic tradition. Furthermore, Solon, both poet and political agent, provides the ideal figure through which to explore the dimensions of the dialogue between poetic and political discourse and the function of poetry in archaic politics.[20]

The study progresses in three Parts. Part I analyses the genre of martial exhortation elegy and the scholarly approaches to its content and social function. Its three chapters seek to *defamiliarise* the poems, to look at them afresh, extracted from the

[20] Between the submission of this study as a doctoral thesis and its publication, Solon studies have experienced a boom: two new – and sorely needed – commentaries, Noussia (2001) and Mülke (2002); a new Loeb, Gerber (1999); extended studies, Balot (2001) and Almeida (2003); and an international conference, 'Solon: new historical and philological perspectives', convened by Josine Blok and André Lardinois (Soeterbeeck, the Netherlands, 11–15 Dec. 2003), whose papers are to be published by Brill. I have attempted where relevant to provide a reference to these works in my notes, indicating those places where they have contributed to refining my arguments.

age-old narratives of historical and literary development they have been made to tell. A re-evaluation of the content of this type of elegy, its similarity with Homeric exhortation, and its performance context at the symposium lead to an interpretation of this poetry diametrically different from that which currently prevails.

Part II centres on one poem of Solon, immersing itself in a close reading of Solon 4 ('Solon's *Eunomia*'). In this poem Solon enacts a relationship to the dominant hexameter traditions, as well as to the genre of martial exhortation elegy. A close reading demonstrates how this poem carefully situates itself in an adversarial relationship to the martial poetic traditions of epic and elegiac exhortation, while positively embracing the themes of Hesiod and Odyssean epic. These chapters develop a way of addressing the issues of allusion and intertextuality which attempts to recognise and respond to similarity without reverting to an anachronistic model of textual interaction.[21] Indications of a political stance inherent in Solon's poetics provide the basis for the more wide-ranging discussion offered in Part III.

Part III builds on this close reading of Solonian exhortation and addresses the task of *recontextualising* both the poetry and the figure into a political context. These two chapters take us outside the confines of earlier chapters to other genres of poetry – particularly iambus – and to the biographical traditions involving Solon, exploring more fully the political implications of Solon's poetic usage. Chapter 7 examines those aspects of Solon's language in elegy and iambus that suggest the influence of contemporary political language, particularly language associated with tyranny, on Solon's poetry, as well as his active manipulation of this influence. Chapter 8 returns to the ancient narratives regarding Solon in order to demonstrate, contrary to expectations, that this reading of Solon finds support in traditions surrounding him. Both chapters provide a basis for future directions in which research on

[21] As, for instance, Pucci (1994). See also pp. 114–19 and 155–64.