

## **Calliope, a Muse Apart: Some Remarks on the Tradition of Memory as a Vehicle of Oral Justice**

**Penelope Skarsouli**

The relation of the Muses in ancient Greece, especially during the archaic and the beginning of the classical period with which this paper is concerned, to the notion of memory is apparent first by their very name: the word *mousa* can be related to the verb *mimnêskô* (“remind,” “bring, put in mind”).<sup>1</sup> Around the seventh century B.C.E., in his poem entitled *Theogony*, Hesiod commemorates the birth of the Muses and identifies them as the daughters of the goddess *Mnemosyne* and Zeus (lines 53-65). Indeed, Memory is well known as the mother of the Muses. According to a passage in Plutarch, the Muses were also called *Mneiai* (Memories) in some places.<sup>2</sup> And Pausanias tells us that the Muses were three in number and had the names of *Meletê* (Practice), *Mnêmê* (Memory) and *Aoidê* (Song).<sup>3</sup> Each one, in other words, bore the name of an essential aspect of poetical function. As rhythmical song, the Muse is inseparable from poetic Memory and is necessary for the poet’s inspiration as well as for his oral composition. From the perspective of our present argument, it is significant that Memory and the Muses are also closely connected with the notion of persuasion.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> On this etymology and its meaning, see Assaël 2000:40 ff. For the Muses in general, see Queyrel 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia*, 743D: “Actually all the Muses are said to be called *Mneiai* (Memories) in some places, as is the case of Chios” (italics mine; trans. by Sandbach 1961).

<sup>3</sup> Pausanias 9.29. 2-3. See also Detienne 1967:10-15.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Plutarch, *Moralia*, 745D: “Necessity is a thing devoid of art; it is Persuasion (*Peithô*) that is ‘musical’ and dear to the Muses” (trans. by Sandbach 1961).

### The Proem of Hesiod's *Theogony*

Hesiod begins his *Theogony* with a “Hymn to the Nine Muses”; in lines 77-79, he gives the list of their names. We may note again a passage from Plutarch who around 100 C.E. mentions the Hesiodic Muses in a way that will help introduce the section of the *Theogony's* proem under discussion here.<sup>5</sup> Herodes, a teacher of rhetoric, mentions there the muse Calliope in particular and her special relation, in Hesiod, to the kings. He is referring to lines 80-103 of the Hesiodic proem, which concern the power of the Muses to intervene in human affairs; more precisely, Hesiod mentions the gifts of the Muses to men, rulers and poets. He enumerates the Muses and finally sets Calliope apart:

Καλλιόπη θ' ἢ δὲ προφερεστάτη ἐστὶν ἀπασέων.  
 ἢ γὰρ καὶ βασιλεῦσιν ἅμ' αἰδοίοισιν ὀπηδεῖ 80  
 ὅν τινα τιμήσωσι Διὸς κούραι μέγαλοιο  
 γεινόμενόν τε ἴδωσι διοτρεφένων βασιλῆων,  
 τῷ μὲν ἐπὶ γλώσση γλυκερὴν χεῖουσιν ἐέρσην,  
 τοῦ δ' ἔπε' ἐκ στόματος ῥεῖ μείλιχα· οἱ δὲ τε λαοὶ  
 πάντες ἐς αὐτὸν ὀρώσι διακρίνοντα θέμιστας 85  
 ἰθείησι δίκησιν· ὃ δ' ἀσφαλῶς ἀγορεύων  
 αἰψὰ κε καὶ μέγα νείκος ἐπισταμένως κατέπαυσεν·  
 τοῦνεκα γὰρ βασιλῆες ἐχέφρονες, οὔνεκα λαοῖς  
 βλαπτομένοις ἀγορήφι μετὰτροπα ἔργα τελεῦσι  
 ῥηιδίως, μαλακοῖσι παραιφάμενοι ἐπέεσσιν. 90  
 ἐρχόμενον δ' ἄν' ἀγῶνα θεὸν ὡς ἰλάσκονται  
 αἰδοὶ μελιχίῃ, μετὰ δὲ πρέπει ἀγρομένοισιν·  
 τοιῆ Μουσάων ἱερὴ δόσις ἀνθρώποισιν.

...and *Calliope*, who is the chiefest of them all, for she attends on *worshipful princes*: whomsoever of heaven-nourished princes the daughters of great Zeus honour, and behold him at his birth, they pour sweet dew upon his tongue, and from his lips flow gracious words. All the people look towards him while *he settles causes with true judgements*: and he, speaking surely, would soon make wise and even of a great quarrel; for therefore are there princes wise in heart, because when the people are

<sup>5</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia*, 743C: “After this we made libations to the Muses and, having sung a paean to their Leader, joined Erato in singing to the lyre Hesiod’s verses about the birth of the Muses. When the song was over, Herodes the teacher of rhetoric spoke up. “You hear,” said he, “you who try to drag *Calliope* away from us rhetoricians, how Hesiod says that she is to be found in the company of *kings*...” (italics mine; trans. by Sandbach 1961).

being misguided in their assembly, they set right the matter again with ease, *persuading them with gentle words*. And when he passes through a gathering, they greet him as a god with gentle reverence, and he is conspicuous amongst the assembled: such is the holy gift of the Muses to men.<sup>6</sup>

Calliope is the most outstanding of the group because through her the transition is made from the Muses to the revered princes. This introduction of kings in the proem and their dependence on Calliope has seemed irrelevant and quite strange to some commentators.<sup>7</sup> Normally, the Muses are the goddesses of poetry, whereas princes or kings depend on Zeus; but, at the same time, Hesiod demonstrates the relationship between poet and king, whom he clearly thinks of as parallel beneficiaries of Calliope's favor.<sup>8</sup> Only Calliope can bestow the Muses' gift on the kings and link poetry to the royal art of persuasion. Her name literally means "beauty of voice,"<sup>9</sup> which confers the power of persuasion on both the poetic performance and the royal functions: she bestows on both the gift of an efficient utterance. Moreover, it has been suggested that this parallel is Hesiod's innovation, and in fact the *Theogony* is the only extant poem in which the Muses are said to aid rulers as well as poets (Thalman 1984:140, espec. n. 18).

It is important to my argument that the king is visualized in the proem of the *Theogony* as he pronounces his judgment. To settle their quarrel the two parties would come before the king and state their case; the king must then settle the dispute by pronouncing a legally binding decision (*themis*). Because the Muses inspire him, he can decide the case with straight judgments. He is a *worshipful* king<sup>10</sup> because thanks to the gift of eloquence he is able to make good judgments (*diakrinonta themistas*, 85) and reach

---

<sup>6</sup> Italics mine; trans. by Evelyn-White 1982.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, West's reaction (1966:182), "Why are the kings introduced at all? They are not usually regarded by the Greeks as being dependent upon the Muses, except for the celebration of their renown." Cf. Blößner 2005:27ff.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the analysis of this parallelism by Laks (1996).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Liddell 1996: s.v. *Kalliopê, hê*, (*kalê+ops*), "the beautiful-voiced" (also *Kalliopeia*). Her name takes us back to line 68 of the proem: *agallomenai opi kalêi* ("delighting in their sweet voice"). Cf. also Alcman, 27.1-2 (in Page 1962): "Come, *Muse Calliope*, daughter of Zeus, begin the lovely verses (*arch' eratôn epeôn*)." In general for Calliope, see Harriott 1969:16 ff.

<sup>10</sup> *aidoios basileus*, l. 80. The king who has a claim to regard and reverence. Cf. Neitzel 1977:38 ff.

good, just, that is to say straight decisions (*itheîêisi dikêisin*, 86) in front of all the people in the agora, the speaking-place. The *themistes* are the “precepts of *themis*” and serve as points of reference to the magistrates. We may assume the existence of a repertory or a traditional stock of *themistes*, oral and memorized (Rudhardt 1999:30). The king as ruler has access to these *themistes* as well as to the scepter; he pronounces laws on behalf of Zeus. The description of Agamemnon in *Iliad* 9.97-99 provides an example:

Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon *king of men*,  
in you I shall end, from you I shall begin, because  
you are lord of many peoples, and *Zeus* has given you  
*the scepter and the precedents*, so that you might take counsel for them.<sup>11</sup>

As mentioned above, Hesiod underlines the fact that the king must *persuade* the antagonists to accept his decisions. In other words, the king settles disputes, yet he does not deliver an authoritative judgment; he must try to justify his decision and for this justification he needs the help of the Muses. Hence the link between efficient speech and straight judgment. In particular, Calliope pours “sweet dew” on his tongue so that his words may flow sweetly and permit him to be a good arbitrator and bring a great quarrel (*mega neikos*, 87) to an end. Her very name provides Hesiod with a transition to the notion of persuasive speech, since it is in his voice that the king’s capacity of gentle persuasion resides. We must note that the justice Hesiod is trying to expound is closely related to the voice—spoken aloud, pronounced, declared or else listened to, heard and remembered; it is something performed. According to Havelock (1978:216), “the procedure of which *dikê* is a symbol is conducted by oral exchange” as practiced in a preliterate society. The king’s judgment is pronounced orally and thus his position before the people is one of a speaker before an audience.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Italics mine; trans. by Thalmann 1984:141.

<sup>12</sup> The etymology of Calliope’s name lies not only in voice, but in face or appearance as well; indeed, *ops* signifies not only “voice” but also “the eye, face” (see Liddell 1996, *s.v.*). So, we could say that Calliope is also the Muse “with the beautiful face” and in extension “with the beautiful appearance,” “with the appearance that delights.” Lines 84-85 of the *Theogony* underscore the importance of the visual here: οἱ δέ τε λαοὶ / πάντες ἐς αὐτὸν ὀρώσι διακρίνοντα θέμιστας (“all the people *look towards him* while he settles causes”). The “optical” elements have a real importance in the frame of the relation between speaker and audience; cf. *Odyssey* 8.170-71, a passage that is often studied as a parallel to *Theogony* 79-93, despite Calliope’s absence there: ἀλλὰ θεὸς μορφήν ἔπεισι στέφει, οἱ δέ τ’ ἐς αὐτὸν / τερπόμενοι λεύσσουσιν· (“but the god sets *a crown of beauty* upon his words, and men *look upon with delight*”).

Some critics go so far as to interpret Calliope's patronage as the king's dependence on the poet for the versification of his laws and decrees, but what is of interest for this discussion is rather the essence of persuasive speech, the essence of Calliope's beautiful voice implying the powers of poetic speech, that is to say the particular qualities of rhythmical song, of metrical speech. Havelock has even argued that legal speech "must be metrical and formulaic; otherwise the utterance would not be the voice of the Muse."<sup>13</sup> From this point of view, when the king's utterance is compared to a running river (line 84), we recognize the automatism of the performance. Oral composition is based on instantaneous creation by means of formulas and fixed patterns. This could be the meaning of the adverbs "soon" (*aipsa*), "quickly" (*tacheôs*), "easily" (*rhêidiôs*) in the text (lines 86, 90, 102, 103 cited below) with both the king's and the poet's performance. Furthermore, these performances share the same positive results: as the king finds a solution for the external manifestations of social conflict, so the poet calms the internal symptoms of personal pain. They have the same ability to divert man's mind from care (cf. *metatropa* in line 89 and *paretrape* in line 103 below). As the former restores justice, so the latter restores serenity.<sup>14</sup> When the poet sings, the listener forgets his cares.

. . . ὁ δ' ἄλβιος, ὃν τινα Μοῦσαι  
 φίλωνται· γλυκερὴ οἱ ἀπὸ στόματος ῥέει αὐδὴ.  
 εἰ γάρ τις καὶ πένθος ἔχων νεοκηδέϊ θυμῷ  
 ἄζηται κραδίην ἀκαχήμενος, αὐτὰρ ἀοιδὸς  
 Μουσάων θεράπων κλέεα προτέρων ἀνθρώπων                      100  
 ὑμνήσῃ μάκαράς τε θεούς, οἳ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν,  
 αἰψ' ὃ γε δυσφροσυνέων ἐπιλήθεται οὐδέ τι κηδέων  
 μέμνηται· ταχέως δὲ παρέτραπε δῶρα θεάων.

Happy is he whom the Muses love: *sweet flows speech from his mouth.*  
 For though a man has sorrow and grief in his newly-troubled soul and  
 lives in dread because his heart is distressed, yet, when a singer, the  
 servant of the Muses, chants the glorious deeds of men of old and the

---

For a discussion of the similarities between these two passages, see Martin 1984 and Neitzel 1977.

<sup>13</sup> Havelock 1963:109. See also p. 111: "Only Calliope carries the name that identifies the verbal shapes which poetry commands. She is pre-eminently the symbol of its operational command of the formulas. She therefore is reserved for the princely function."

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Pucci 1977:29 ff.

blessed gods who inhabit Olympus, at once he *forgets* his heaviness and *remembers* not his sorrows at all; but the gifts of the goddesses soon turn him away from these.<sup>15</sup>

The combination of Memory (*Mnêmê*) and Forgetting (*Lêthê*) is remarkable here: whoever hears the Muses, the daughters of Mnemosyne, no longer remembers his own ills. This particular dimension of remembering, from the standpoint of forgetting, stands in a particular relation to the speech of the king and oral justice. For example, Nereus, the old man of the sea, is praised later on in the poem as follows (*Theogony*, 233-36; trans. by Evelyn-White 1982):

And Sea begat Nereus, the eldest of his children, *who is true* (*alêthea*) and lies not: and men call him the Old Man because he is trusty and gentle and *does not forget the laws of righteousness* (*oude themistôn lêthetai*), but thinks just and kindly thoughts.

The adjective “gentle” or “kind” (*êpios*) traditionally modifies a king and recalls the gracious words of the ideal ruler. It characterizes Nereus, who does not forget the *themistes*. His truthfulness, like that of the poem’s king, is directly related to the administration of justice (Walcot 1963:15). Indeed, the force of persuasion that distinguishes the oratorical function of the prince consists, as well, of a faultless speaking ability. In Hesiod’s poem we read that the king speaks “surely” (*asphaleôs*), that is to say unerringly; the idea of truth (*alêtheia* < *a+lêthê*) is often associated with that of “certainty.” This *alêtheia* contrasts with erroneous thoughts that lead to injustice, because the ability to speak the truth unerringly implies, according to Hesiod, knowledge of what is just and proper.

Herein lies another dimension of the ruler’s dependence on the Muses: the persuasive force of his speech is based on their knowledge of truth. In fact, thanks to the Muses the ruler *does not forget* what is just and proper. Memory is an essential faculty for him.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, in some Greek cities the judicial officials were called *mnêmones*, “rememberers,” or *hieromnêmones*, “sacred rememberers.”

---

<sup>15</sup> *Theogony*’s poem, lines 96-103 (trans. by Evelyn-White 1982).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Roth 1976:334: “Judges are those whose duty it is to remember these rules, to choose the right rule to apply in each case, and to hand down the collection of rules to the next generation.” See also the commentary by West (1966:183-84) on *Theogony* 85-86.

According to Aristotle,<sup>17</sup> these officials recorded the decisions of the courts, and they may belong to a period when certain magistrates were charged with remembering previous decisions as a service for judges; in so far as writing did not yet exist, they were adjuncts or living “records” for the magistrates.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the institution of *mnêmôn* (from *Mnêmê*, *Mnêmosunê*) expresses the social function of memory. As Gernet notes (1981:235), “the *mnêmôn* is the person who protects the memory of the past with a view to affecting a decision in a court of law.” Under the heading *mnêmôn*, legend still remembers the “hero’s servant,” apparently a kind of clerk, of counselor, or a depository for divine advice whose memory is called on at the appropriate time (*ibid.*:235 and n. 54). In a text of Plutarch, we find an example of such a *mnêmôn*:

But as for Achilles, it is said that his mother Thetis staidly forbade him to kill Tenes, since Tenes was honored by Apollo; and she commissioned one of the servants to be on guard, and to *remind* (*hopôs prosechêi kai anamimnêiskêi*) Achilles lest he should unwittingly slay Tenes. But when Achilles was overrunning Tenedos and was pursuing Tenes’ sister, who was a beautiful maiden, Tenes met him and defended his sister; and she escaped, though Tenes was slain. When he had fallen, Achilles recognized him, and slew the servant because he had, although present, not reminded him (*hoti parôn ouk anemnêse*).<sup>19</sup>

The transposition of the *mnêmôn*’s function or role from counselor to a larger juridical sphere may in part be explained by his obligation to remember what must not be forgotten, as, for example, the divine commands of Thetis, cited above. Rulers—kings and judges—are those whose duty is to remember the precepts of justice and to choose the right rule to apply in each case. And we may suppose that remembering is facilitated if these precepts are in verse.<sup>20</sup> This could also be a way to explain the connection between

---

<sup>17</sup> *Politics*, 1321b, 34-40.

<sup>18</sup> See also Gagarin 1986:131.

<sup>19</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia*, 297E-F (trans. by Babbitt 1972). Other *mnêmones* are Spensitheos in Crete and Panamyas, Kasbollis’ son, in Hallicarnassus. Cf. Svenbro 1988:67 and n. 45.

<sup>20</sup> According to Plutarch again, poetry reinforces memory, which is the biggest service that it offers to language. See *Moralia*, 407F: “Then, besides, there is nothing in poetry more serviceable to language than the ideas communicated, by being bound up and interwoven *with verse*, are *better remembered* and kept firmly in mind (*mallon*

justice and poetry, between justice and the Muses, and especially the beautiful voice of Calliope.

### Solon's Elegy to the Muses

Another poet invokes the Muses when discussing justice: Solon, the Athenian lawgiver of the sixth century B.C.E. Tradition holds that he attempted to put his laws into epic verse, beginning them as follows: "First let us pray to King Zeus, son of Cronus, that he bestow good fortune and honour upon these ordinances (*thesmois toisde*)."<sup>21</sup> Here again is a word that belongs to the family of *themis* (*themistes*): *thesmos*, "the ordinance," that Solon uses to introduce his own laws.

At the same time, Solon begins his most personal elegy with an invocation of the Muses, defining them by their Hesiodic parentage. He does not ask for poetic inspiration but calls upon them in their traditional capacity as the daughters of Memory. Moreover, he emphasizes their lineage in a particularly direct way, beginning his poem with the word and figure of *Mnêmosunê*:<sup>22</sup>

Μνημοσύνης καὶ Ζηνὸς Ὀλυμπίου ἀγλαὰ τέκνα,  
 Μοῦσαι Πιερίδες, κλυτὲ μοι εὐχωμένω·  
 ὄλβον μοι πρὸς θεῶν μακάρων δότε καὶ πρὸς ἀπάντων  
 ἀνθρώπων αἰεὶ δόξαν ἔχειν ἀγαθήν,  
 εἶναι δὲ γλυκὺν ὦδε φίλοις, ἐχθροῖσι δὲ πικρόν,                   5  
 τοῖσι μὲν αἰδοῖον, τοῖσι δὲ δεινὸν ἰδεῖν.

Shining *children of Memory* and of Olympian Zeus,  
*Pierian Muses*, hear me as I pray.  
 Grant me prosperity at the hands of the blessed gods,  
 and always a good reputation at the hands of men;

---

*mnêmoneuesthai kai krateisthai*). *Men in those days had to have a memory for many things (pollên edei mnêmên pareinai)*" (italics mine; trans. by Babbit 1969).

<sup>21</sup> Solon, fr. 40 Gentili and Prato 1988. See Plutarch, *Life of Solon*, 3. 5.

<sup>22</sup> See the exceptionally complete commentary on lines 1-2 by Mülke (2002:244-45).



and so to be sweet to friends and bitter to enemies,  
*an object of reverence* to the former, but to the latter terrible to  
 look upon.<sup>23</sup>

Solon is asking for things not ordinarily considered to be gifts of the Muses.<sup>24</sup> He appeals to the Pierian goddesses not for the customary gift of poetic skill but for wealth and prosperity from the gods and for good reputation from men. For this reason, many scholars have found his opening address to the Muses puzzling, unexpected, and unrelated to the rest of the poem. Some have pointed out the formal character of the prayer;<sup>25</sup> others, such as Almeida, have been left dumbfounded (2003:107): “The prayer is difficult because there is no precedent heretofore in Greek literature for such a request to these particular divinities whose province is oversight of musical production.”

We could find an essential reason for Solon’s request to the Muses, however, by bearing in mind the particular conception of memory elaborated by Hesiod, within the framework of which memory is connected not only with poetry but also with justice. The Muses’ protection of oral justice is especially relevant in a poem composed by the reformer of Athens. Thus the elegy is not addressed to the Muses as goddesses of wisdom, as some have assumed (see Allen 1949:50), but rather as goddesses who favor the justice.

Other elements in this elegy recall Hesiod’s proem to the *Theogony*: the notion of sweetness (*glukun hôde philois*, 5; cf. *Theogony*: *glukerên cheiousin eersên*, 83),<sup>26</sup> the importance of *olbos* “prosperity” (line 3; cf. *Theogony*, 96: *ho d’ olbios, hon tina Mousai philôntai*), and the notion of respect (*toisi men aidioion*, 6; cf. *Theogony*, 80: *basileusin aidioisin*). Solon desires a good name among men; as in Hesiod, the king, thanks to Calliope, who has the gift of eloquence and consequently the power of persuasion. In this way he earns the citizens’ respect as well as a good reputation. For Solon, who was both statesman and poet, this model would have had a special significance.

---

<sup>23</sup> Solon, poem 1, 1-6 Gentili and Prato 1988 (trans. by Anhalt 1993:12).

<sup>24</sup> For the presentation of this problem, see Anhalt 1993:11-12.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, van Groningen 1958:96, with n. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Note here Solon’s poetic revision of the fundamental Greek principle of “helping friends and harming enemies” expressed especially with the adjectives *kalos* (to the friends) and *kakos* (to the enemies); see Blundell 1989:26 ff. Solon uses adjectives (*glukus* and *pikros*) specific to the language of poetry (cf., for example, Sappho, fr. 130 Voigt 1971: *glukupikron orpeton*) and poetry’s effect on its listeners and their emotions.

**Pindar's *Olympian* 10**

Pindar has composed this ode for the victory of the Locrian boy Agesidamos in an Olympic boxing contest in 476 B.C.E. As the poet moves to the first epode, he makes a reference to the muse Calliope, the only one in his work, in the framework of praising Epizephyrian Lokris, the home of Agesidamos. More precisely, Pindar extols the Lokrians' sense of justice in human affairs (line 13) and their appreciation of the Muse Calliope (line 14) and Ares, the god of war (line 15):

Νέμει γὰρ Ἀτρέκεια πόλιν  
 Λοκρῶν Ζεφυρίων,  
 μέλει τέ σφισι Καλλιόπα  
 καὶ χάλκεος Ἄρης.

For the city of the Locrians of the West is the home of the  
 Goddess of Strictness,  
 And dear to them are the Muse Calliope and the brazen  
 God of War.<sup>27</sup>

The meanings of *atrekeia* (line 13) vary between “truth” and “justice.” More precisely, it means “truth” in the sense of “straightforwardness,” and in the goddess *Atrekeia*, “Strict Justice,” there may be an allusion to the strictness of Zaleukos, the Lokrian lawgiver, the first to make written laws around the seventh century B.C.E.<sup>28</sup> By using this word, Pindar emphasizes the respect of the Lokrians for precision and strictness, “in the present case, strictness in the administration of justice and honesty in commercial intercourse.”<sup>29</sup> Moreover, Demosthenes declares that in more than 200 years only one law has been changed in Epizephyrian Lokris, saying that the Lokrians are not bold to propose new laws, but obey the old ones punctually (*akribôs chrôntai*).<sup>30</sup> Their reputation for respect of law is fitting in the

---

<sup>27</sup> Trans. by Farnell 1930:57, altered concerning the translation of the word *Atrekeia*.

<sup>28</sup> See the commentary of Gildersleeve 1885:215. For Zaleukos and his law code, see von Fritz 1983 and Adcock 1927:100-01.

<sup>29</sup> Verdenius 1988:62. See also the city's description by Nassen (1975:225-26).

<sup>30</sup> Demosthenes, *Against Timocrates*, 140.

schema of justice as a *topos* in Pindar's praise of cities and rulers.<sup>31</sup> And we know that their city, thanks to the goddess of strictness, is well ordered (*eunomos*).<sup>32</sup>

Within this framework, the mention especially of the muse Calliope just after *Atrekeia* must have a special signification. Commentators, in general, interpret Calliope's mention as Pindar's praise for the Lokrians' artistic sensibility, as does Nassen (1975:226) who speaks of "the artistic sensitivity and refinement of a people who rival the Ionians in their tuneful harmony with the flute" and who will therefore be able to appreciate the song that Pindar has composed in their honor. With this meaning, Calliope represents the Muses in general,<sup>33</sup> and the people's care for her balances their care for Ares (Hubbard 1985:64 and n. 150). We may add that, in this case, Calliope does not represent simply appreciation of music belonging—like justice and warlike spirit—to a *topos* for the praise of cities. She is not the equivalent of all the Muses or the heroic Muse. She is chosen because of her voice, which is also beautiful given that she bestows the gift of eloquence and persuasion as in the Hesiodic passage, and for this reason she is necessary for the application of *eunomia* inside the community of Lokris and for the maintenance of *atrekeia*. Besides, exactitude is also a quality of speech. The Lokrians are not "inexperienced in good things (*mêd' apeiraton kalôn*; Pindar, *Olympian* 11.17)" because they have achieved a special harmony in artistic and political life.

### Empedocles's fragment 131

From our point of view, it is significant that Empedocles, the Presocratic philosopher from the middle of the fifth century B.C.E., unlike Hesiod and Solon, chooses to invoke only one of the muses, Calliope,<sup>34</sup> as we can see in fragment 131 Diels and Kranz (1951) where he mentions her name:

---

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, *Olympian* 2.6; 13.6-7.

<sup>32</sup> Moreover, Plato uses the superlative form of *eunomos* when describing Lokris: *Timaeus*, 20a: *eunomôtatês poleôs*, "a most well-governed city."

<sup>33</sup> For example, see the commentary of Verdenius 1988:62.

<sup>34</sup> Few commentators have found this choice remarkable, but cf. Fakas 2001:60-61, espec. n. 178.

εἰ γὰρ ἐφημερίων ἔνεκέν τινος, ἄμβροτε Μοῦσα,  
 ἡμετέρας μελέτας <ἄδε τοι> διὰ φροντίδος ἐλθεῖν,  
 εὐχομένῳ νῦν αὖτε παρίστασο, Καλλιόπεια,  
 ἀμφὶ θεῶν μακάρων ἀγαθὸν λόγον ἐμφαίνοντι.

If for the sake of any one of mortal men, immortal Muse, (it pleased you) that our cares came to your attention, now once more, *Kalliopeia*, answer a prayer, and stand by as a worthy account of the blessed gods is being unfolded.<sup>35</sup>

It is significant that Hippolytus, who transmits the fragment in the late second and early third centuries C.E., understands Empedocle's Muse to be an allegory for the *dikaios logos*, "the just reason," a principle that he describes as being between the antagonists Love and Strife. According to Hippolytus, "Empedocles, addressing this same just reason, which collaborates with love, as a Muse, also calls on her to collaborate with him" with the verses of the fragment above.<sup>36</sup> Empedocles' address to the muse of the beautiful voice takes the form of a prayer (*euchomenôî nun aute paristaso*, 3), as in Solon's elegy (*klute moi euchômenôî*, 2); and as in this elegy, Empedocles evokes her traditional capacity as the daughter of Memory in another fragment. Indeed, in fragment 3 Diels and Kranz (1951), she is called *polumnêstê*, that is to say "much-remembering," "mindful."<sup>37</sup> In this way, the main qualities of her persuasion-oriented speech are again apparent: the poet prays that his words may *flow* from his mouth (*ocheteusate pégên*, 2). Here the stream of words is described not as "sweet" (in Hesiod: *epi glôssêi glukerên cheiousin eersên*, 83) but as "pure" (in Empedocles: *katharên pégên*, 2) usually reserved for language of ritual.<sup>38</sup> We note also the word *mania*, "madness," in the beginning of fragment 3,

<sup>35</sup> Trans. by Wright 1995:159.

<sup>36</sup> Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 7.31.3-4. See also the commentary on Hippolytus' passage in Bollack (2003:91), who speaks about the "Muse conciliatrice" whose "dons de parole" are invoked in the text.

<sup>37</sup> I find this meaning preferable to the meaning of the epithet in Homer (for example, *Odyssey* 4.770; 14.64): "much-wooed." The text of Empedocles is as follows (fr. 3.1-5 Diels and Kranz 1951 [= 2 Wright 1995]), "But turn from my tongue, o gods, the madness of these men, and *from hallowed lips let a pure stream flow*. And I entreat you, virgin Muse, white-armed, of long memory, send of that *which is right and fitting of mortals to hear*, driving the well-reined chariot from the place of reverence" (trans. by Wright 1995:157).

<sup>38</sup> See the commentary by Wright (1995:158).

which Empedocles uses to describe the transgression of boundaries of *themis*, of what is fitting and right. Empedocles prays against *mania*'s power and for that which is right for mortals to *hear* (line 4), reminiscent of the just speech invoked by Hesiod, a speech before an audience.

This speech expresses the best decision between opposing claims, that is, a decision is taken impartially, based on the truth. Within this framework, Empedocles also, in another fragment, declares his belief that truth is in his words. At the same time, it is significant that he relates truth to the notion of persuasion, which means more precisely the effort on the part of the listeners to understand and to be convinced (*pistis*, “confidence”):<sup>39</sup>

My friends, I know that there is *truth* in the words which I shall speak (*alêtheiê para muthois hous egô eksereô*), but indeed it comes hard for men, and *the onrush of conviction* (*pistios hormê*) to the mind is unwelcome.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, in fragment 146 Diels and Kranz (1951), Empedocles explores the relationship between the political leaders and the prophets and, more significantly from our standpoint, the poets (trans. by Wright 1995:291): “And at the end they come among men on earth as prophets, *minstrels* (*humnopoloi*), physicians, and *leaders* (*promoi anthrôpoisin*), and from these arise as gods, highest in honor.” Empedocles himself played an important political role;<sup>41</sup> he was neither statesman nor judge, but we know that, when signs of tyranny became clear in Acragas, he *persuaded* the citizens of Acragas to put an end to their seditions and to practice political equality:

Νεάνθης δ' ὁ Κυζικηνὸς ὁ καὶ περὶ τῶν Πυθαγορικῶν εἰπῶν  
φησι Μέτωνος τελευτήσαντος τυραννίδος ἀρχὴν ὑποφύεσθαι·  
εἶτα τὸν Ἐμπεδοκλέα πείσαι τοὺς Ἀκραγαντίνους παύσθαι μὲν  
τῶν στάσεων,<sup>42</sup> ἰσότητα δὲ πολιτικὴν ἀσκεῖν.

---

<sup>39</sup> The speech of Empedocles' muse, that is to say Calliope, is significantly described as *pistômata* (from the same root as *pistis*), “assurances,” which justify such confidence once (fr. 4. 2 Diels and Kranz 1951: *hêmeterês pistômata Mousês*). See Verdenius 1948:11.

<sup>40</sup> Fr. 114 Diels and Kranz 1951 (=103 Wright 1995); trans. by Wright 1995:267.

<sup>41</sup> On Empedocles' political life, see Bidez 1894:125 ff.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *Theogony*: καὶ μέγα νείκος ἐπισταμένως κατέπαυσεν, 87.

Neathes of Cyzicus, who tells about the Pythagoreans, relates that, after the death of Meton, the germs of a tyranny began to show themselves, that then it was Empedocles who *persuaded* the Agrigentines to *put an end to their factions* and cultivate equality in politics.<sup>43</sup>

This is exactly the same role that Solon had been called on to play in Athens when there were signs of general uprising. Diogenes Laertius reports an incident, which shows that Empedocles was actively democratic and provides an example of his rhetorical performance in relation to justice. The philosopher had prosecuted two state officials for having introduced “tyrannical” manners in relation to their guests. The latter had been kept waiting, and when the wine was finally brought in they were ordered either to drink it or to have it poured over their heads: “For the time being Empedocles was reduced to silence; the next day he impeached both of them, the host and the master of the revels, and secured their condemnation and execution (εἰσαγαγὼν εἰς δικαστήριον ἀπέκτεινε καταδικάσας ἀμφοτέρους). This, then, was the beginning of his political career.”<sup>44</sup>

Calliope recalls, once again, this specific relationship between persuasion and justice. Moreover, the role of this muse in Hesiod’s proem (lines 80-103) finds a particular extension in Empedocles’ philosophy: as the great quarrel is brought to an end by the speech of the king-judge (καὶ μέγα νεῖκος ἐπισταμένως κατέπαυσεν, 87), so in the philosopher’s fragments, the action of Strife, whose name is *Neikos*,<sup>45</sup> is soothed by the force of Love (*Philia*).<sup>46</sup> Another echo of Calliope’s function in a cosmological framework is the passage of Plato’s *Phaedrus* (259d), where she is especially connected to the Muse Urania (*Ourania*<*ouranos*, “the sky”) by Socrates:

τῇ δὲ πρεσβυτάτῃ Καλλιόπῃ καὶ τῇ μετ’ αὐτὴν Οὐρανίᾳ, τοὺς ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ διάγοντάς τε καὶ τιμῶντας τὴν ἐκείνων μουσικὴν ἀγγέλουσιν, αἱ δὴ μάλιστα τῶν Μουσῶν περὶ τε οὐρανὸν καὶ λόγους οὔσαι θεῖους τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνους **ἰᾶσι καλλίστην φωνήν.**

<sup>43</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 8.77 (trans. by Hicks 1958).

<sup>44</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 8.64 (trans. by Hicks 1958).

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, fr. 17. 19; 35. 3; 36 Diels and Kranz 1951.

<sup>46</sup> See the introduction by Wright (1995, espec. 30 ff.).

[...] And to *Calliope*, the eldest of the Muses, and to *Urania* who is next to her, they make report of those who pass their lives in philosophy and who worship these Muses who are most concerned with heaven and with thought divine and human and *whose voice is the most beautiful*.<sup>47</sup>

In conclusion, we return to another passage in Hesiod's *Theogony* (lines 901-03), which conveniently sums up our argument:

Δεύτερον ἠγάγετο λιπαρὴν θέμιν, ἣ τέκεν "Ὠρᾶς  
Εὐνομίην τε Δίκην τε καὶ Εἰρήνην τεθαλυῖαν,  
αἷ ἔργ' ὠρεύουσι καταθνητοῖσι βροτοῖσι.

Next he (Zeus) married bright *Themis* who bore the *Horae* (Hours), and *Eunomia*, *Dikē* (Justice), and blooming *Eirênê* (Peace), who mind the works of mortal men.

Here, it is stated that Zeus's second wife, after Mnemosyne, is *Themis* and that from their union were born the Hours, *Eunomia*, Justice, and Peace; *Eunomia*, the "Lawfulness," represents communal life regulated by good laws and customs.<sup>48</sup> Justice and Peace are inherent qualities of this goddess.

The examples of oral justice that we have examined exemplify a special kind of speech capable of expounding right choices and of persuading conflicting parties to make a peaceful settlement of their claims. As long as this type of justice is preserved intact, discord and strife, quarrels and seditions are unknown, thus giving a precise meaning to the "beauty" offered by *Calliope*, the Muse of "the beautiful voice."<sup>49</sup>

*École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris*

---

<sup>47</sup> Trans. by Fowler 1960, modified slightly.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Pindar, *Olympian* 9.15-16, who speaks about *Themis* and her glorious daughter, the Savior *Eunomia*: ἄν Θέμις θυγάτηρ τέ οἱ σώτειρα λέλογχεν/μεγαλόδοξος Εὐνομία.

<sup>49</sup> This article is developed from a paper I delivered at the international conference on "Orality and Literacy: Memory" at Rice University in October 2003. I am very grateful to Jesper Svenbro and Jean-Claude Picot for their attentive reading of my text and their comments.

## References

- Adcock 1927 F. E. Adcock. "Literary Tradition and Early Greek Code-Makers." *The Cambridge Historical Journal*, 2:95-109.
- Allen 1949 Archibald W. Allen. "Solon's Prayer to the Muses." *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 80:50-65.
- Almeida 2003 Joseph A. Almeida. *Justice as an Aspect of the Polis Idea in Solon's Political Poems*. Leiden: Brill.
- Anhalt 1993 Emily Katz Anhalt. *Solon the Singer: Politics and Poetics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Assaël 2000 J. Assaël. "Poétique des étymologies de Μοῦσα." In *L'Antique notion d'inspiration*. Ed. by J. Assaël. *Noesis*, 4. pp. 11-53.
- Babbitt 1969 F. C. Babbitt, trans. *Plutarch's Moralia*. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Babbitt 1972 \_\_\_\_\_, trans. *Plutarch's Moralia*. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bidez 1894 Joseph Bidez. *La Biographie d'Empédocle*. Gand: E. Van Goethem.
- Blößner 2005 Norbert Blößner. "Hesiod und die 'Könige.' Zu 'Theognie' 79-103." *Mnemosyne*, 58:23-45.
- Blundell 1989 Mary Whitlock Blundell. *Helping Friends and Harming Enemies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bollack 2003 Jean Bollack. *Empédocle. Les Purifications: Un projet de paix universelle*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.
- Detienne 1967 Marcel Detienne. *Les maîtres de vérité dans la Grèce archaïque*. Paris: François Maspero.
- Diels and Kranz 1951 Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. 6th ed. Zurich: Weidmann.
- Duban 1980 Jeffrey M. Duban. "Poets and Kings in the Theogony Invocation." *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica*, 33:7-20.



- Evelyn-White 1982      Hugh G. Evelyn-White, trans. *Hesiod. The Homeric Hymns and Homeric*. Loeb Classical Library. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Fakas 2001              Christos Fakas. *Der hellenistische Hesiod: Arats Phainomena und die Tradition der antiken Lehrepik*. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag.
- Farnell 1930             L. R. Farnell. *The Works of Pindar*. Vol. 1. London: Macmillan.
- Fowler 1960             H. N. Fowler, trans. *Phaedrus*. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gagarin 1986            Michael Gagarin. *Early Greek Law*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gentili and Prato 1988      Bruno Gentili and Carolus Prato. *Poetae Elegiaci: Testimonia et fragmenta*. Vol. 1. Leipzig: Teubner.
- Gernet 1981             Louis Gernet. *The Anthropology of Ancient Greece*. Trans. by John Hamilton and Blaise Nagy. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Gildersleeve 1885        Basil L. Gildersleeve. *Pindar. The Olympian and Pythian Odes*. London: Macmillan.
- Harriott 1969            Rosemary M. Harriott. *Poetry and Criticism before Plato*. London: Methuen.
- Havelock 1963            Eric A. Havelock. *Preface to Plato*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Havelock 1978            \_\_\_\_\_. *The Greek Concept of Justice: From Its Shadow in Homer to Its Substance in Plato*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hicks 1958               R. D. Hicks, trans. *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers*. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hubbard 1985            Thomas K. Hubbard. *The Pindaric Mind: A Study of Logical Structure in Early Greek Poetry*. Leiden: Brill.
- Laks 1996                André Laks. "Le double du roi. Remarques sur les antécédents hésiodiques du philosophe-roi." In *Le métier*

- du mythe: Lectures d'Hésiode*. Ed. by F. Blaise et al. Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion. pp. 83-91.
- Liddell 1996 H. G. Liddel et al. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Martin 1984 Richard P. Martin. "Hesiod, Odysseus, and the Instruction of Princes." *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 114:29-48.
- Mülke 2002 Christoph Mülke. *Solons politische Elegien und Iamben (Fr. 1-13; 32-37 West)*. München: K. G. Saur.
- Nassen 1975 Paula J. Nassen. "A Literary Study of Pindar's Olympian 10." *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 105:219-40.
- Neitzel 1977 Heinz Neitzel. "Zum zeitlichen Verhältnis von *Theogonie* (80-93) und *Odyssee* (8, 166-177)." *Philologus*, 121:24-44.
- Notopoulos 1938 James A. Notopoulos. "Mnemosyne in Oral Literature." *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 69: 465-93.
- Page 1962 Denys L. Page. *Poetae Melici Graeci*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Pucci 1977 Pietro Pucci. *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Queyrel 1992 Anne Queyrel. "Mousa, Mousai." *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*. Vol. 6. Zürich: Artemis. pp. 657-68.
- Roth 1976 Catharine P. Roth. "The Kings and the Muses in Hesiod's Theogony." *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 106:331-38.
- Rudhardt 1999 Jean Rudhardt. *Thémis et les Hôrai: Recherches sur les divinités grecques de la justice et de la paix*. Geneva: Librairie Droz.
- Sandbach 1961 F. H. Sandbach, trans. *Plutarch's Moralia*. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Solmsen 1954 Friedrich Solmsen. "The "Gift" of Speech in Homer and Hesiod." *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 85:1-15.
- Svenbro 1988 Jesper Svenbro. *Phrasikleia: Anthropologie de la lecture en Grèce ancienne*. Paris: Editions la Découverte.
- Thalmann 1984 William G. Thalmann. *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic Poetry*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- van Groningen 1958 Bernhard A. van Groningen. *La composition littéraire archaïque grecque. Procédés et réalisations*. Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Mij.
- Verdenius 1948 W. J. Verdenius. "Notes on the Presocratics." *Mnemosyne*, 4:8-14.
- Verdenius 1988 \_\_\_\_\_ . *Commentaries on Pindar*. Vol. 2. Leiden: Brill.
- Voigt 1971 Eva-Maria Voigt. *Sappho et Alcaeus. Fragmenta*. Amsterdam: Polak and Van Genneep.
- von Fritz 1983 Kurt von Fritz. "Zaleukos." *Paulys Realencyclopädie*. Vol. 9. A. 2. Munich: Druckenmüller. pp. 2298-301.
- Walcot 1963 Peter Walcot. "Hesiod and the Law." *Symbolae Osloenses*, 38:5-21.
- West 1966 Martin Litchfield West. *Hesiod: Theogony*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Wright 1995 M. Rosemary Wright. *Empedocles: The Extant Fragments*. 2nd ed. London: Bristol Classical Press.