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the oudeis news

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Homer, the Iliad and the Odyssey

A Short Historical Introduction

It is believed that Homer originally was called Melesigenes and was born in the eighth century BC in Smyrna, which was located in Ionic Little Asia (today´s West-Turkey) / by *Georg Leyrer*

December 96

For quite some time, Philology questioned Homer´s identity, presuming that he was only a fictious person. The most recent studies, though, provide evidence that he was the author of at least the Iliad; his authorship of the Odyssey is still doubted. The notion of his being blind and the pictures of him handed down are most likely not genuine. The two epic poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey, combine for over 28,000 hexameters. They are based on a long oral tradition which began in the second millennium BC. They were put down in written form around 750 BC, the Odyssey being slightly younger than the Iliad. The Iliad, rather than being a complete account of the Trojan Wars, deals with only one episode: the Wrath of Achilles. It spans, all in all, but 50 days, and only a few of them are dealt with in detail. Yet, the background of the complete war is made visible, and anticipations of both Achilles´ death and the fall of Troy indicate the author´s familiarity with the complete account. Extensive descriptions of heroic and manly fights and battles do not overshadow the theme of failing and the tragic fates of the protagonists Achilles and Priamos. Both Achilles and Priamos are described as crying when they dispute about Hector´s corpse, and Achilles, aware of his forthcoming death, feels that he is united with his enemy in suffering. It is not clear to what extent historic events influenced the composition of the Iliad. There were at least nine cities built on the site where Troy is presumed to have been (at the north-western coast of Turkey). The second of them (Troy II), which was the first influential settlement on these grounds, was destroyed as early as 2200 BC. The next important one was Troy VI (approx. 1300 BC), which had intense contacts and trade with the Greek mainland and Crete. It was destroyed by an earthquake. The last influential settlement of this period, Troy VIIa, was de stroyed violently. Both Troy VI and Troy VIIa have been „identified“ as Homer´s Troy by different scientists.

However one feels about that, it is safe to say that at least some facts in the Iliad are historic (e.g. the forms and construction of the ships). The same applies to the Odyssey. Although attempts to locate the places of action in geographical terms failed to a great extent, neither its historical nor its artistic value is diminished. A lot can be learned about Greek every day life at that times through Homer´s descriptions. They also offer rich material for philological studies concerning Greek dialects and their different influences (aeolic, ionic).

It is considered impressive at least how Homer singlehandedly created and perfected a poetic versatility and style unheard of at that times. The frequent and delicate interweaving of the different episodes by use of multiple cross references, his artistic use of literary devices (esp. Similes and Epithetons) and the elegance with which he manages to change between the narrators´ levels secured his position of „the poet“ of Greek history. He is considered the first to anticipate and preform the Hellenistic culture, which brought forth notions of the democratic state, philosophy, mathematics, logic and literary forms, influencing European history and culture up until nowadays.

A First Draft Of A Possible Playscript

This collage exempts several lines from the whole Epos. Correlating to the language of the discussion on oudeis-idea the use of English should provide a commonly understandable version / by *Monika Wunderer*

For the verses the English translation of Albert Cook was used. Because of time pressure, this draft was released long before one actually would publish a text. Amongst other problems, the last scene is still missing and the realization of especially the first scene is unclear. My intention was to show a „real“ current status of the production, including all obvious faults.

Still, this play is intended to be multilingual and to be developed worldwide. This first draft could (but has not got to) be used in the writing of the particular scenes.View the first draft at .../english/textmen.html!

A Monthly Internet Publication providing background information, news and links concerning the progress of

oudeis.
A World Wide Odyssey.

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Farewell

Dear Oudeis-Team, as you may have already heard, I´m leaving kis.productions at the end of December.../ by *Wolfgang Sturm*

It´s not an easy step and a lot of sentimentality is involved in this decision after all these years. Especially Oudeis is not easily left behind, because it is one of the most interesting projects ever done by us. It is now steadily growing because of a very good team joined together worldwide to realize this extraordinary performance. The reason why I´m changing working place is that MICA (Music Information Centre Austria) is offering me some interesting jobs and a full time employment (which is quite hard to find in the cultural sector). So I wish you all the best for oudeis. Of course, I have already marked the 16th of October 1997, when I will be one of the spectators of the premiere of our first worldwide internet theatre.

Welcome Our New Webmaster

On the net he is known as leyrer@st1hobel.phl.univie.ac.at.

Regarding his email address one can gather at least three pieces of information: First, his surname is Leyrer (his first name being Georg). Second, he studies at Vienna University, Austria. Third, he uses the same computer as Monika, but speaking of him - he is a Philosopher. Being near his middle twenties now he is a graduate student but besides this much of his time is spent on playing basketball or making wonderful inspirative music with his guitar or keyboard.Since the end of October he is also a part of the oudeis team Vienna.