

Sunsets and sunrises in Homer and Apollonius of Rhodes: book-divisions and beyond

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Introduction: the Homeric ‘para-text’

In a study entitled *Seuils*, the French literary critic Gérard Genette has called attention to what he calls the ‘para-text’ of books: the cover, title, name of the author, preface, dedication, subtitles, footnotes, and advertisements.¹ Inspired by this original and interesting book, I have been considering the ‘para-text’ of an oral text like Homer’s. Are there elements which could be said to function as title, preface, etc.? Hard-core oralists like Walter J. Ong would, of course, have a fit at the prospect of such a perverse exercise. Nor, I believe, would they be satisfied even if I said that I am using words like ‘title’ etc. in inverted commas, as metaphors. But, well ... *tant pis*.

The function of the title in the Homeric epics is obviously fulfilled by the theme word or phrase which we find at the beginning of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the ‘wrath of Achilles’ (μῆνιν ... Ἀχιλλῆος), ‘the man’ (ἄνδρα), and at the beginning of the songs of Phemius and Demodocus in the *Odyssey*, ‘the return of the Greeks’ (νόστον Ἀχαιῶν: I 326), ‘the quarrel between Odysseus and Achilles’ (νεῖκος Ὀδυσσῆος καὶ ... Ἀχιλλῆος: VIII 75), ‘the love affair of Ares and Aphrodite’ (ἀμφ’ Ἄρεος φιλότιτος ... τ’ Ἀφροδίτης: VIII 267), and ‘the Wooden Horse’ (ἵππου κόσμον ... δουρατέου: VIII 492-3).

The proems may be said to take over the function of the preface, or perhaps the blurb, arousing the interest of the listener by giving a short indication of what the song will be about.

The place of the table of contents is taken by certain speeches, mainly by gods, in which events to come are listed. Well-known examples from the *Iliad* are Zeus’ announcements in Books VIII and XV, in which he reveals the chain of events culminating in Achilles’ return to battle and the death of Hector; from the *Odyssey*, Athena’s speech in Book I, which lists the content of Books I-IV, the

Telemachus, and Zeus' speech in V, which informs the hearers about Books V-XIII, Odysseus' stay with the Phaeacians.

An example of advertising appears in Book I of the *Odyssey*. Phemius is singing about the return of the Greeks. Penelope asks the singer to stop, but is then rather harshly overruled by Telemachus, who says that people always applaud the latest song (351-2). In a very subtle way, the narrator of the *Odyssey* is recommending his own song, which, as it recounts the return of the last Greek, Odysseus, is of course the very latest song.

It is even possible to find footnotes in Homer. In *Iliad* II 641-3 we hear that:

Thoas ... was the leader of the Aetolians, for Oeneus and his sons, including Meleager, were dead. So all the lordship of the Aetolians was given to Thoas.²

It was Samuel Bassett who once suggested that the γάρ-clause, 'for Oeneus ...', contains information which 'a modern historian would place in a footnote'.³

Finally, we have something resembling chapters: the twenty-four books of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Nowadays when we think of books we have in mind a complete text, say the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. Chapters, however, are elements of a whole, which need that whole if they are to be understood. The books of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* form chapters in the sense that, taken together, they form the whole of these poems and need that whole, perhaps not to be understood, but certainly to be appreciated to the full. For instance, Book XVI, the death of Patroclus, can be understood in isolation, but its full importance can only be grasped in the context of the plot of the *Iliad* as a whole. Of course, there have been times when parts of the Homeric epics, *rhapsoidiai*, were performed in isolation, but such recitations should, in my opinion, be compared to the performance of one movement of a sonata or symphony. It is a secondary use which, in effect, relies on the fact that the audience knows the whole.

Homeric book-divisions

So far I have been talking about the books of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as if they were a given, which they are not. In the main, scholars have taken up one of two positions: (1) the book-division is old, going back to Homer (Goold)⁴ or to the sixth-century Athenian recension of the Homeric text (Broccia, Stephanie West),⁵ or (2) the book-division is Alexandrian, deriving from Zenodotus (Lachmann,

Wilamowitz)⁶ or Aristarchus (Richardson, Taplin).⁷ Positions have been taken on the basis of external evidence or internal criteria, or both. The external evidence, consisting of papyri, scholia, and ancient testimonia, is sparse and difficult to assess. Thus it leads West (in her summary of the question for the *Odyssey* commentaries) to adopt a 'pre-Alexandrian' position, and Richardson (in his summary for the *Iliad* commentaries) to prefer an 'Alexandrian' position. Internal criteria may be more helpful here.

Let us start at the beginning. How do we know that there were breaks at all? In *Odyssey* VIII 70 we are told that the singer Demodocus is given wine to drink whenever he desires it and in 87-92 that he repeatedly pauses in his singing. In the case of long songs like the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, each of which take some twenty-five hours to perform, it is even more inevitable that there should be breaks. Now the next question is: how many breaks are we thinking of here? About twenty-four units for the 'pre-Alexandrians' and even for an 'Alexandrian' like Richardson, who writes that 'to some extent ... the divisions presumably did correspond with rhapsodic breaks, in so far as they come at significant breaks in the narrative.' In his recent study of the *Iliad*, Oliver Taplin has proposed a radically different picture: in his view, the poem was performed in three successive sessions, in the course of which there were a handful of minor breaks ('variables at the discretion of the poet, using his sensitivity to audience response').⁸

Even more important perhaps than the exact number of units are the criteria used to define them. What exactly does Richardson mean when he speaks of 'significant breaks'? We can approach the question from two sides: we can look for units in terms of narrative content or look for caesuras, recurrent devices which separate one unit from another. Ideally, the two approaches should produce the same result. In the context of this paper I will leave aside the first approach, merely noting in passing that a considerable number of Homeric books do form satisfactory unities. (Take, for instance, *Iliad* IX, the Embassy; *Iliad* XVI, Patroclus' *aristeia* and death; or *Odyssey* III, Telemachus' stay with Nestor.) In fact, the exceptional length of certain books, such as *Iliad* XI with 848 lines or *Odyssey* IV with 847 lines, strongly suggests that content did play a major role in the division.⁹ Let us take a closer look at the dividing devices.

Book-divisions and sunrises and sunsets

It has often been observed that sunsets and sunrises appear with some prominence at book-divisions.¹⁰ The exact figures are as follows: the *Iliad* has thirteen

sunrises, of which three are found at the beginning of a book (Books VIII, XI, XIX); and fourteen sunsets,¹¹ of which four occur at the end of a book (I, VII, VIII, IX). The *Odyssey* has eighteen sunrises, of which six are found at the beginning of a book (II, III, V, VIII, XVI, XVII); and twenty-nine sunsets, of which nine occur at the end of a book (I, II, III, V, VII, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX).

On the basis of these figures, it seems reasonable to claim that sunrises and sunsets are a punctuating device. The fact that these passages have this structural function is not difficult to explain. Let us return to the metaphor of the chapter. The end of one chapter and the beginning of a new one presents readers with a white space, a pause, and hence an opportunity to lay the book aside for a while. Similarly, sunset/sunrise passages, moments when the narrative has reached a natural moment of rest, are a kind of white space, offering the singer a pause, a moment to rest and take a sip of wine. What better moment to take a rest than when your characters are taking a rest too, and what better moment to begin again than a fresh sunrise? It may be helpful here to note a remark by Philip Stevick, from his study on the chapter in fiction (mainly the modern novel):

A sense of formal completion results from a progression of events leading to a further event or a passage of time which convention has led the reader to expect will not be rendered fictionally. Perhaps the most obvious and conclusive of such progressions is the preparation for sleep. It is, of course, unnecessary that any character in a novel ever go to sleep, and characters in hundreds of novels never do. But as an artifice for rendering the tranquility and the dramatic lapse that chapter division demands and as a device for focusing the fiction, after a passage of complex relationships, upon an individual consciousness, the fictional sleep is infinitely varied.¹²

There is another feature of the sunrises and sunsets which makes them particularly suited to perform a structural function: their formulaic nature. There is hardly a better known Homeric line than the twenty-two times repeated ἤμος δ' ἠριγένεια φάνη ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἥως, 'when early-born Dawn appeared with her rosy fingers'. Looking at the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* from an Olympian point of view, one might say that the sunsets/sunrises are a kind of large-scale 'refrain composition'.¹³

Homeric sunsets and sunrises are internal punctuators. An epic narrative never begins with a sunrise, as do so many tragedies, at least two messenger-speeches

(Euripides *Supplices* 650-1, *Bacchae* 677-9), one ancient novel (the *Aethiopica*), and many modern novels.¹⁴ An epic narrative begins *in medias res*, more precisely at an indeterminate moment of the day. Likewise, epic narratives do not end with nightfall, but are constructed in such a way as to allow continuation. (I do not think, for many reasons, that the *Odyssey* ended at XXIII 296, with Odysseus and Penelope lying in bed.) It may also be helpful to note that sunsets and sunrises are typical features of long narratives: we do not find them in the average embedded narrative in *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but they do occur in Nestor's long story in *Iliad* XI (one sunrise), in Menelaus' in *Odyssey* IV (two sunsets and two sunrises) and in Odysseus' in *Odyssey* IX-XII (eleven sunsets and twelve sunrises).

These natural breaks created by sunsets and sunrises should be distinguished from the enforced ones, imposed by Alcinous on Demodocus in *Odyssey* VIII 97-9 and 537 and by Odysseus on himself in *Odyssey* XI 328-32 and XII 450-3. Here a narrative is cut off and is not to be resumed. Even if Odysseus does in fact resume the tale of his adventures in XI 385, it was, in my view, not his original intention to do so.

Sunrises and sunsets are not the only internal punctuators: another device is the recapitulatory summary beginning with 'so he/they' (ὥς ὁ/οἱ μὲν) followed by a change of scene. An example is:

[end of *Iliad* XI...]

and Patroclus laid him there and with a knife cut the sharp tearing arrow out of his thigh, and washed the black blood running from it with warm water, and, pounding a bitter root in his hands, laid it on to make pain disappear, one which stayed all kinds of pain. And the wound dried, and the flow of blood stopped.

[... beginning of *Iliad* XII]

So (ὥς ὁ μὲν) within the shelter the warlike son of Menoetius [=Patroclus] tended stricken Eurypylus, and meanwhile (οἱ δ') the Argives and Trojans fought on in massed battle.

Book XII opens with a recapitulation of the last scene of the previous book (Patroclus tending the wound of Eurypylus) and then turns from the Greek camp to the battlefield. This device is found at the opening of seven Iliadic and two

Odyssean books.¹⁵

To make the picture complete and nicely complex, I may add that there are also books which have no punctuation at all. To give only one example: *Odyssey* IX opens with the familiar tag, 'Then resourceful Odysseus spoke in turn and answered him'; in other words, we have a book opening with the answer to a speech from a previous book. Everybody agrees that this is a major dividing point in the *Odyssey*, starting off Odysseus' long travel story; yet it is helpful to realize that it is not in any way punctuated. On the contrary. This is in fact the only instance of a dialogue spilling over from one book into the next. I note in passing that Virgil has imitated this Homeric book-division, making his *Aeneid* I end with Dido asking Aeneas to tell his story, and II begin with Aeneas starting his answer. In Virgil, too, this is the only instance of a dialogue being split over two books.

An obvious counter-argument to the thesis that sunrises and sunsets are a punctuating device is the fact that they are found in the middle of units as well. If we confine ourselves to the traditional books, we see that only one in four of all Homeric sunrises or sunsets are found at a book-division. The same situation applies to the other punctuating device, the 'so he/they' (ὥς ὁ/οἱ μέν) formula followed by a change of scene: in the first twelve books of the *Iliad* it occurs twelve times, twice at the beginning of a book. There is no reason, however, why devices which are used to divide minor units should not be exploited for the division of major ones, as well.

The fact that not all Homeric books open with a sunrise need not worry us either. It may be instructive here to look for a moment at a real book and real chapters. In Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* we have twenty-seven chapters, eleven of which begin on the morning of a new day. This example tells us that sunrises are still a handy expedient to punctuate a story, even for a twentieth-century novelist, but that using this expedient in all cases would turn it into a mannerism, a literary sin which both the Homeric book-divider and Virginia Woolf have been careful to avoid. In the case of the Homeric epics, a structure whereby each book opens with a sunrise is, of course, precluded by the rhythm of the stories. The narratological term 'rhythm' refers to the amount of time spent on the narration of events; the speed of narration may slow down or accelerate. Confining ourselves to the *Iliad*, we see how the four central fighting days take up the most space, covering several books at a time (first day: Books II-VII, second day: VIII-X, third day: XI-XVIII, fourth day: XIX-XXII).

My argument so far is that when we look at the criterion of punctuators, the

traditional book-division (whoever may have been responsible for it – I am leaving that question open for the time being) yields a fairly satisfactory picture, in the sense that the majority of books are marked off in one way or another.

This seems to be the right moment to discuss in more detail Oliver Taplin's recent attack on the traditional Homeric book-divisions. According to Taplin, we should no longer observe the late book-divisions: 'while the job has on the whole been well done, several of the divisions come at one place when several alternatives would have done just as well; and a few of them are downright badly placed, obscuring crucial continuities.'¹⁶ To substantiate this claim he discusses in an appendix all the Iliadic book-divisions, proposing alternatives.¹⁷ He does a virtuoso job and yet one is left with the feeling that in the end his verdict on Aristarchus applies equally to his own alternative divisions: some of them also obscure crucial continuities. I will discuss two examples.

As an alternative to the existing book-division between Books I and II, Taplin suggests a division at I 492 and 493: in lines 488-92 we hear about Achilles sitting in anger beside his ships and then in 493 we leave the human world and turn to the world of the gods, in particular to Thetis' mission to Zeus, which sets in motion the battles of the next day:

But when the twelfth dawn after this day appeared, the gods who live forever came back to Olympus all in a body and Zeus led them; nor did Thetis forget the entreaties of her son ...

An argument in favour of Taplin's division is the sunrise of 493, but an argument against it is the observation that Achilles' continued wrath and Thetis' mission to Olympus have previously been presented as a whole. Thus in lines 421-7 Thetis said to Achilles: 'But *you* therefore carry on sitting by your ships and being angry at the Greeks. For Zeus has gone to the Aethiopians. *On the twelfth day* he will be coming back to Olympus and then *I* will go to him and take him by the knees and I think I can persuade him'. The 'you' and the 'on the twelfth day', 'σὺ μὲν ... δωδεκάτη δέ ... καὶ τότε' ... εἶμι' (421, 425), underline the connection between the activities of Achilles and Thetis, which are separated from each other when we follow Taplin's alternative division.

The second example concerns *Odyssey* XIII 92/3, where Taplin would like to place the major break in this poem:

She [the Phaeacian ship] carried a man with a mind like the gods for
 counsel, one
 whose spirit up to this time had endured much, suffering many pains:
 the wars of men, hard crossing of the big waters;
 92 but now he slept still, oblivious of all he had suffered.
 93 At the time when shines that brightest star, which beyond others
 comes with announcement of the light of the young Dawn,
 then was the time the sea-faring ship started approaching the island
 [Ithaca].

As many scholars have observed, lines 89-90 (ἄνδρα ... ὅς ... μάλα πολλὰ πάθ' ἄλγεα ὄν κατὰ θυμόν) echo the proem of the *Odyssey*, and in so doing form a perfect conclusion to the first half of the story. The sunrise of 93-5, heralding the day Odysseus finally returns home after twenty years of war and wanderings, would form a perfect opening for a new book. Yet Taplin's division has its own drawback: it cuts up the Phaeacian transporting of Odysseus, which will soon (125-87) be the subject of a dramatic dénouement, when the Phaeacians are punished for it by Poseidon.

I conclude that the existing book-division is not always ideal, but not easy to replace either. There remains the question of who is responsible for it. A plausible hypothesis would be that Homer and the rhapsodes regularly used a sunrise or sunset to create a natural break, and that this same device was then used by the person who later made the actual division into twenty-four.¹⁸ Who that person may have been will be revealed below.

So far I have looked at the Homeric sunsets and sunrises in connection with the question of book-divisions. There is, however, another aspect which merits attention. What is striking is the very number of sunrises and sunsets. Almost all individual days are duly punctuated by sunrise and sunset, and some even have more than one. Why this recording of phenomena which the hearer can trust to take place anyway? The explanation must be sought in the general tendency of the Homeric epics to repetition. Each instance of an event is described, even when it is identical to an earlier event: whenever a sacrifice is made, a meal is prepared, or a ship is launched, this is described. The degree of detail may vary, but there is always a description. The Homeric epics are therefore an extreme instance of what Genette has called singulative narration.¹⁹

A consequence of the repeated, almost automatic, and often formulaic, nature

of Homeric sunsets and sunrises is that they have no special significance for the story itself; they take place anyway, no matter what has just happened or what is about to happen. More generally, time does not seem to have any relevance for the characters. This at least is the opinion of Herman Fränkel, which he set out in a famous article on the conception of time in archaic Greek literature:

In general, the concept of time is hardly developed in Homer. The narrative drifts by in calm, continuous journeys. It is surrounded by the fields of time, which are monotonous, *indifferent*, and without substance, as when a column marches through a broad, open steppe without any roads. Together with the events and through them, time moves on *unnoticed*, like the path which one creates in high grass [my italics].²⁰

A scrutiny of all Homeric sunsets and sunrises shows that this picture needs to be modified. There are at least two instances which are fully integrated into the story and have a direct relevance to the characters. The first passage is *Iliad* VIII 485-8:

And now the shining light of the sun dipped into the Ocean, trailing black night over the grain-giving earth. For the Trojans the daylight sank against their will, but for the Achaeans welcome (ἀσπασίη) and thrice-supplanted dark night came.

The second instance is *Odyssey* XIII 28-35:

But Odysseus turned his head again and again towards the sun, eager for it to go down. And as when a man longs for his meal, for whom all day long his wine-coloured oxen drag the compact plough across the field, welcome (ἀσπασίως) the light of the sun sets for him, so as to allow him to go to dinner, and as he goes his knees fail him. In like wise the sunset was welcome (ἀσπαστόν) to Odysseus.

In both passages a sunset is focalized by characters in the story, who long for it because it will mean the end of fighting (the Greeks) or the beginning of a – night-time – voyage home (Odysseus). To these two focalized sunsets could be added the speeding up of the sunset by Hera in *Iliad* XVIII 239-42 and the postponing

of the sunrise by Athena in *Odyssey* XXIII 345-9.

To sum up: the beginnings and ends of Homeric days are almost without exception duly marked; because of their frequency and intrinsic nature, these sunrises and sunsets provide convenient moments for marking a break, in the manner of chapters in a book. Despite their frequency and intrinsic nature, they are occasionally firmly integrated into the story, by having them focalized by mortals or manipulated by gods.

Let us turn now to Apollonius of Rhodes and see how he handles the rhythm of day and night.

Sunsets and sunrises in Apollonius of Rhodes

The first thing to note when talking about sunrises and sunsets in Apollonius is that, though he is not as systematic as Homer, he does surprisingly often record nightfall and sunrise. According to Richard Hunter, ‘This marking of time is not the product of a desire to be different from the *Odyssey* nor merely a quasi-naive device of “realism”, but is central to the poet’s vision of his story: the Argonauts’ voyage is emblematic for all (past and future) sea-voyages, in which the careful and repetitive marking of time is crucially important...’²¹ I fully agree with Hunter’s final remark, that the marking of time during sea voyages is important. One need only think of Herodotus’ description in Book IV 85-6 of the dimensions of the Black Sea, Bosphorus, and Hellespont in terms of days of sailing. What I do not understand is Hunter’s statement that ‘this marking of time is not the product of a desire to be different from the *Odyssey*’. The marking of time is, I would say, very much the product of a desire to be the same as the *Odyssey*. Perhaps what Hunter means is that through this marking of time we realize that the *Argonautica* covers a much longer period than the forty-two days of the *Odyssey*, namely six months.

The observation that Apollonius imitates the Homeric system of sunsets and sunrises is hardly striking. It becomes more exciting, however, when we take a look at his – three – book-divisions. It turns out that Book III ends with nightfall, i.e. mirrors the common Homeric practice, but that I and II end with sunrise:

Book III Nightfall came (ἦμαρ ἔδν) and Jason’s task was at an end.

Book I All day and all night a strong wind carried the Argo on, but as first light appeared the wind had dropped completely. When they made out a coastline which apparently projected a long way into the gulf, they

rowed towards it and put in there *at sunrise* (ἄμ' ἠέλιω).

Book II There they spent the night, and not long afterwards they were pleased to see the coming of Dawn (ἠὼς ... φαάνθη).²²

It can hardly be questioned that at the end of Books I and II Apollonius is making an intertextual move:²³ knowing that Homeric books regularly end with nightfall, he varies this custom by making two of his books end with sunrise.²⁴ The reversal is a typical instance of Apollonius' tendency towards a self-conscious reworking of Homeric language, style and narrative technique.

But there is more at stake here than mere intertextuality. If Apollonius is indeed reworking Homeric book-divisions, this means that they cannot be ascribed to Aristarchus, who lived *after* Apollonius. This brings Zenodotus into the picture, who was Apollonius' predecessor as librarian of the *Mouseion* in Alexandria and who, moreover, investigated the number of days in the *Iliad* – and hence must have intensively studied the sunrises and sunsets!²⁵ One hardly needs to be Eco's William of Baskerville to conclude that Zenodotus must have been the mysterious book-divider.

So much for the book-divisions. But there is more to be said about the Apollonian sunsets and sunrises. Most of them are mentioned only very briefly: 'at night', 'at sunrise' etc. The more elaborate passages are never identical. As always, Apollonius avoids repetition, the repetition which is so typical of the Homeric epics. One way in which a sunrise or sunset may be given an individual form is by introducing geographical details which reflect the location of the heroes at that point in the story. An example is I 519-20:

When the shining eyes of *gleaming Dawn* (αἰγλήεσσα ... Ἡώς) beheld the steep ridges of Pelion and under a clear sky the headlands were washed by a sea stirred up in the breeze, then Tiphys awoke.

This is the sunrise heralding the day of departure of the Argo. The mention of Mount Pelion is highly apt, in that we find ourselves in Iolcus, which lies near that mountain, and in particular in that the Argo was built of wood felled on that mountain (some lines later Argo will be called Πηλιάς, 'Pelian'). Similarly, the sunrise of III 1223-4 fittingly contains a reference to the snowy Caucasus, since we now find ourselves in Colchis, to the north of which lies the Caucasus.

Another way in which sunrises and sunsets are integrated into the story is by

having them focalized by characters, a technique which we have already observed in Homer. A very compressed example is found at the end of Book II, quoted above: 'they were pleased to see the coming of dawn'. A much longer and more intricate example is found in Book III. At the beginning of this book, Medea has been pierced by Eros' arrows and has fallen passionately in love with Jason. When her sister Chalciope asks her to help Jason pass the trials set for him on the next day by her father, King Aetes, she enthusiastically promises her help: 'May my eyes not behold the *bright dawn* (φαείνοι ἠώς) and may you not endure the sight of my life for much longer, if I place anything before the safety of you or your sons' (728-31). Soon these words will acquire a very different significance. When Medea is alone again, she begins to have doubts, contemplating the fact that in helping Jason she will be harming her father. At this point night falls (743-51):

The night was now drawing darkness across the earth. Sailors on the open sea looked from their ships towards Helike and the stars of Orion, the traveller and the gatekeeper were already longing for sleep, and an exhausted sleep embraced a mother whose children had died; through the city no dogs barked, no noise resounded – the darkening gloom was gripped by silence. But Medea had not been overtaken by sweet sleep.

We are dealing here with a brilliant example of what the Dutch Latinist Anton Leeman has called the *topos* of 'the lonely vigil': the contrast between a world asleep and an individual who is awake and all alone.²⁶ The description gradually moves from alert watchfulness to sleep (ὑπνος), and then to a deep sleep verging on unconsciousness (κῶμα), a climactic series which serves to reinforce the contrast with Medea, who does not sleep at all. The figure of the woman whose children have died forms an ominous foreshadowing of Medea's murder of her own children, an event which is not told in the *Argonautica* itself.

In the course of an anguished monologue, Medea then decides to commit suicide rather than betray her father. Her earlier rhetorical utterance, 'May my eyes not behold the bright dawn', now threatens to become reality. But then she again shrinks from the idea of taking her own life: 'she remembered her happy friends, as a young girl would, and *the sun* was a sweeter sight than before, now that she really began to ponder everything in her mind' (813-16). Deciding to help Jason after all, she becomes impatient (819-24):

She longed for the *new dawn* (ἥῶ τελλομένην) to rise at once so that she could give him [Jason] the protecting drugs as she had arranged and could meet him face to face. Often she pulled the bolts back from her door, hoping to catch the gleam of dawn, and very welcome (ἀσπάσιον) was the light scattered by the *early-born* (ἠριγενής), which caused everyone to stir throughout the city.

Here, finally, we have our focalized sunrise, a focalization which becomes all the more pregnant in the light of the importance of ‘dawn’ and ‘sunlight’ as representations of life in the entire scene of Medea’s lonely vigil. Scholars²⁷ have connected ἀσπάσιον, ‘welcome’, with *Iliad* X 35, ‘and he [Menelaus] was welcome (ἀσπάσιος) to him [Agamemnon] as he came up to him’. In my opinion, the focalized sunsets of *Iliad* VIII 488 and *Odyssey* XIII 28-35, quoted above, which both contain the root ἀσπασ-, are more likely to have inspired Apollonius in this passage.

Medea’s joy at the arrival of the new day and the idea of helping Jason will be short-lived. Because of her assistance to the Greeks, she is forced to flee from her fatherland, Colchis, and when a group of armed Colchians arrives to reclaim her, she begins to regret her decision. The result is another sleepless night, another ‘lonely vigil’ (IV 1058-67):

... night which brings men rest from labours came on, spreading quiet over the whole world. But sleep brought Medea no rest at all. In her breast her aching spirit whirled like a spindle turned in the night by a toiling woman whose orphaned children cry all around her; her husband is dead, and as she weeps at the awful fate which has seized her, tears drip over her cheeks...

Like the woman in the simile, Medea weeps at her ‘awful fate’, which earlier, in her supplication of the Argonauts, she had defined as follows (1031-41):

‘It is because of you and the tasks you had to confront ... that I am prey to this terror; it was thanks to me that you yoked the bulls and reaped the deadly harvest of earth-born men, and through me that you will return safely to Haimonia with the golden fleece. I am the one who has lost country and parents, who has lost her home and everything which is

delightful in life; but you will see again the sweet sight of your parents.
From me, however, bitter fate has taken all splendours...'

In other words, Medea's help has brought joy to Jason and the Argonauts, but misery to herself. She doesn't know that fate has even more sorrow in store for her. The narrator gives the readers a hint of what is to come through the figure of the woman in the simile, who has lost her husband. Though Medea is about to be married to Jason, he will in the end desert her, an event which, like Medea's murder of her children, is not described in the *Argonautica* itself.

The contrast which is set out so abundantly in Medea's speech, between happy Argonauts and unhappy Medea, is in fact a recurrent theme in Books III and IV of the *Argonautica*.²⁸ Jason rejoices when Medea promises her help and at the moment when he wins the Golden Fleece, but Medea weeps over her help. With this theme in mind, it is instructive to take a look at the very end of the *Argonautica*: 'and gladly (ἀσπασίως) you [the Argonauts] stepped out on to the shores of Pagasae.' One last time we are confronted with the question of the Homeric book-divisions, since this line has been taken by some as a reflection of *Odyssey* XXIII 296, 'They [Odysseus and Penelope] then gladly (ἀσπασίως) went together to bed, and their old ritual', which, according to Aristarchus and Aristophanes of Byzantium, was the τέλος/πέρας, 'end' (?), of this poem.²⁹ In other words, Apollonius imitated the 'end' of the *Odyssey* in the end of his own poem. As I said earlier, I do not believe that the *Odyssey* ended at XXIII 296, and other Homeric lines containing ἀσπασίως may have been Apollonius' model here.³⁰ What I find more interesting is the significance of the line itself. Once more we hear that the Argonauts are rejoicing, this time because they have come home safely. The narrator does not mention Medea, but the readers know, both from other texts and from the hints in the *Argonautica* itself, that the story of Jason and Medea is not over yet, that terrible events lie in the future. Thus, the last line of the *Argonautica* is ironic or ominous, in any case a far cry from the happy end of the *Odyssey* (whether we think of XXIII 296, the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope, or, as I would be inclined to do, XXIV, the reunion of Odysseus with his old father and the reconciliation with the suitors' kinsmen).

By way of conclusion I would like to return once more to the idea of the Homeric book as chapter. Whoever was responsible for the actual division into twenty-four books succeeded in creating a 'paratextual' device which was destined to live a long and glorious life in the history of literature: 'It is impossible

to overestimate the significance of the fact that two of the oldest, greatest, most honored, and most loved of narrative works come to the post-classical reader with twenty-four sections more or less equal in size... One can think of no greater authority for the assumption that the way to write an extended narrative is to write it in chapters.³¹

NOTES

I wish to thank audiences in Oxford and London for their comments on an oral version of this paper, and Mrs. Barbara Fasting for her correcting of my English.

1 G. Genette, *Seuils* (Paris 1987). Cf. also M. Couturier, *Textual Communication. A Print-Based Theory of the Novel* (London 1991).

2 All Homeric translations are based on those of Richmond Lattimore.

3 *The Poetry of Homer* (Berkeley 1938) 103.

4 G.P. Goold, 'The nature of Homeric composition', *Illinois Classical Studies* 2 (1977) 1-34, esp. 26-30.

5 G. Broccia, *La forma poetica dell' Iliade e la genesi dell'epos omerico* (Messina 1967); A. Heubeck, S. West, and J.B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, I (Oxford 1988) 39-40.

6 See R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford 1968) 116.

7 N.J. Richardson, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, VI (Cambridge 1993) 20-1; O. Taplin, *Homeric Soundings. The Shaping of the Iliad* (Oxford 1992), esp. 2-31 and 285-93.

8 Taplin, *Homeric Soundings*, 27-8. His (sub)divisions are: *Iliad*: I 492/493, IV 445/6, VII 482/XIII 1, IX 713/XI 1, XVI 123/124, XVIII 353/354, XXIII 56/57, XXIII 897/XXIV 1. *Odyssey*: IV 847/V 1, VIII 586/IX 1, XIII 92/93, XVI 481/XVII 1, XX 90/91 or XX 394/XXI 1.

9 This same fact, the irregular length of some books – 11 of the 48 Homeric books are longer than 625 lines, which is the norm, i.e. one forty-eighth of the total – seems to refute the idea that the book-division reflects Panathenaean practice; some rhapsodes would have been given much longer portions than others.

10 See e.g. J. Van Sickle, 'Dawn and Dusk as Motifs of Opening and Closure in Heroic and Bucolic Epos (Homer, Apollonius, Theocritus, Virgil)', *Atti del convegno mondiale scientifico di studi su Virgilio* (Milan 1984) 125-47, esp. 127-31. Sunrises and sunsets also figure regularly at Taplin's breaks: nine times out of fourteen.

11 Sunset is used as a form of shorthand to refer not only to actual sunsets but also to people retiring to bed or sleeping. A Homeric day does not usually end at sunset, but includes action which takes place in the evening or during the night. Thus a day is terminated either by a sunset or by a description of people retiring to bed, and often by both.

12 P. Stevick, *The Chapter in Fiction* (Syracuse, N.Y. 1970) 45-6.

13 The term derives from W.A.A. van Otterlo, *Untersuchungen über Begriff, Anwendung und Entstehung der griechischen Ringkomposition* (Amsterdam 1944) and indicates passages which are divided up in more or less homogeneous sections through the repetition of an identical verse (refrain). Examples are found in *Iliad* IV, where each new encounter of Agamemnon with one of the commanders is introduced by 'so he spoke, and the son of Atreus went on, cheerful in his heart', or

in *Odyssey* XI, where each encounter of Odysseus with one of the ghosts is introduced by 'next there came to me'.

14 For this last category see V. Klotz, 'Muse und Helios. Über epische Anfangsnote und -weisen', in N. Müller (ed.), *Romananfänge. Versuch zu einer Poetik des Romans* (Berlin 1965) 11-36.

15 See Broccia, *Forma poetica*; Goold, 'Homeric composition'; and K. Stanley, *The Shield of Homer. Narrative Structure in the Iliad* (Princeton 1993) 249-68.

16 Taplin, *Homeric Soundings*, 13.

17 The same exercise has been undertaken for the *Odyssey* by S.D. Olson, *Blood and Iron. Stories and Storytelling in Homer's Odyssey* (Leiden 1995) 228-39.

18 It may be relevant that at the time of the Athenian recension of the Homeric text the Athenian alphabet had only 23 letters. This too might suggest a later date for the division.

19 'Narrating n times what happened n times': G. Genette, *Narrative Discourse, An Essay in Method* (Ithaca, N.Y. 1980) 114-15.

20 'Im Ganzen also finden wir bei Homer einen unentwickelten Zeitsinn. Die Darstellung zieht mit gelassenem aber immer fordernden Marschschritt in Tagereisen dahin. Die Gefilde der Zeit umgeben sie gleichförmig und gleichgültig und wesenlos, wie wenn eine Kolonne durch breite, offene, weglöse Steppe wandert. Mit den Ereignissen und durch sie rückt unbeachtet die Zeit weiter, wie der vergangliche Pfad den man sich im Grase selbst tritt': *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens* (1955) 1-22.

21 R. Hunter, *Apollonius of Rhodes. Jason and the Golden Fleece (The Argonautica)* (Oxford 1993) xxiii.

22 All translations are taken from Hunter, *Apollonius of Rhodes*.

23 This observation develops one of M. Campbell, in 'Apollonian and Homeric book division', *Mnemosyne* 36 (1983) 154-6, that Apollonius' book-divisions contain many verbal echoes of Homeric ones.

24 Van Sickle, *Dawn and Dusk*, 131 adduces *Od.* II 434 ('all night long and into the dawn she remained on her journey') as a parallel for the end of I and II. Here it should be observed, however, that *Od.* III opens with a three-line dawn passage, which eclipses the brief 'into the dawn' of the previous book. At first glance, the sunrise at *Od.* IX 560, six lines before the end of the Book, is another possible parallel. However, the ensuing – formulaic – description of rowing and sailing suggests a considerable passing of time (imperfects!), and hence by the end of the Book a whole day, or at least a considerable part of a day, has elapsed; cf. 104-5, where the same formulaic description of rowing and sailing is immediately followed by the arrival at the new destination, an arrival which, as becomes clear in 142-3, takes place at night.

25 We know about Zenodotus' calculation of the days of the *Iliad* from an inscription (*IG* XIV 1290), but the exact form of his study (an introduction to a text edition, a monograph, or a lecture) is unknown. See K. Nickau in *RE* X A, pp. 36-8.

26 A.D. Leeman, 'The lonely vigil', in *Form und Sinn. Studien zur römischen Literatur* (Frankfurt 1985) 213-30.

27 E.g. M. Campbell, *Echoes and Imitations of Early Epic in Apollonius Rhodius* (Leiden 1981) 54.

28 See R. Hunter, 'Medea's flight: the Fourth Book of the *Argonautica*', *Classical Quarterly* 37 (1987) 129-39.

29 The term τέλος may also refer to something other than the physical end, e.g. the fulfilment of the plot. For a discussion and bibliography, see A. Heubeck, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, III (Oxford 1992) ad XXIII 297.

30 The best candidate is ἀσπάσιοι δ' ἐπέβαν [mariners or warriors like Odysseus, who are transported by ship] γαίης, κακότητα φυγόντες (*Odyssey* XXIII 238).

31 Stevick, *Chapter in Fiction*, 164-5.