

In the Bird Cage of the Muses: Archiving, Erudition, and Empire
in Ptolemaic Egypt

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Department of
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the prominent role of the Mouseion-Library of Alexandria in the construction of a new community of archivist-poets during the third century BCE in the wake of Alexander the Great's conquests. I contend that the Mouseion was a new kind of institution—an imperial archive—that facilitated a kind of political domination that worked through the production, perpetuation, and control of particular knowledges about the world rather than through fear and brute force.

Specifically, I argue that those working in the Mouseion, or Library, were shaping a new vision of the past through their meticulous editorial and compilatory work on the diverse remnants of the pre-conquest Greeks. Mastery of this tradition, in turn, came to form the backbone of what it meant to be educated (*pepaideumenoí*), yet even more importantly what it meant to be a Greek in this new political landscape. In contrast to many studies of politics and culture in the Hellenistic period which focus on the exercise of power from the top down, I explore how seemingly harmless or even esoteric actions, actions that seem far distant from the political realm, such as the writing of poetry and editing of texts, came to be essential in maintaining the political authority and structures of the Hellenistic monarchs.

In developing this vision of the cultural politics of the Hellenistic Age, my first chapter examines the central role of the Mouseion of Alexandria in making erudition one of the key sources of socio-cultural capital in this ethnically diverse and regionally dispersed polity. Through the work of its scholars, the Mouseion and its archive of the Greek past became the center around which a broader panhellenic community and identity coalesced. In chapter two, I explore the implications of this new institution and

social type through a close reading of Lykophron's enigmatic work, the *Alexandra*, presenting it as a poetic archive that used philological practices to make the past relevant to a new group of elite consumers scattered throughout the Hellenistic world by re-imagining the conflict between Europe and Asia. In the final chapter, I argue that this new institution gave rise to a new type of man, the archivist-poet. I examine how this new figure of subjectivity became one of the primary means of participating in Hellenistic empires of knowledge through the genre of literary epigram.

For my father who left us too soon.

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Abbreviations

Standard abbreviations are used for collections and editions of texts, but the reader may find the following list helpful.

<i>AB</i>	Austin, C. and G. Bastianini, eds. 2002. <i>Posidippi Pellaei quae supersunt omnia</i> . Milan.
<i>AP</i>	<i>Anthologia Palatina</i> .
<i>CA</i>	Powell, J.U., ed. 1925. <i>Collectanea Alexandrina</i> . Oxford.
<i>LSJ</i>	Liddell, Henry George and Robert Scott. 1996. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9 th ed. With revised supplement, rev. by Henry Stuart Jones with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie, Oxford.
<i>SH</i>	Lloyd-Jones, H. and P. Parsons, eds. 1983. <i>Supplementum Hellenisticum</i> . Berlin.

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1. Introduction: Alexandrian Archive, Imperial Archive

“All cultural production has a deep investment in the political character of its society, because this is what drives and energises it.”

-Bill Ashcroft and Pal Ahluwalia¹

“For the enterprise of empire depends upon the idea of having an empire, as Conrad so powerfully seems to have realized, and all kinds of preparations are made for it within a culture, then in turn imperialism acquires a kind of coherence, a set of experiences, and a presence of ruler and ruled alike within the culture.”

-Edward Said²

“What constitutes the archive, what form it takes, and what systems of classification signal at specific times are the very substance of colonial politics.”

-Ann Stoler³

“There is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory.”

-Jacques Derrida⁴

1.1 Introduction

While Alexander’s “world” conquests of the late fourth century BC permanently altered the geopolitical map of the ancient Levant and Mesopotamia, the spread of Greek culture coupled with the knowledge explosion that followed his conquests swept away the traditional ideological structures that had propped up prior status quos. The Ptolemies and other Successor Kingdoms not only found themselves ruling over a large number of “barbarian” ethnic groups, but they also became the leaders of a far from homogenous Greco-Macedonian ethnic group. To speak of a unified Greek culture at the beginning of

¹ Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (2001) 88.

² Said (1993) 11.

³ Stoler (2002) 92.

⁴ Derrida (1995) 4.

the Hellenistic period is problematic at best. The diversity among Greek speakers was considerable. These Greeks inhabited a wide range of locations, spoke a wide variety of dialects, worshipped their gods in many different ways, and participated in numerous political systems. Moreover, many of the colonists living in the recently conquered lands or New World⁵ were often lumped together with other Greeks despite the great differences they shared amongst themselves. One can, therefore, only loosely speak of those demarcated as Greek in the early Hellenistic period as a unified or coherent ethnicity; rather they were a people who identified themselves under a broad ethnic umbrella. Throughout the Hellenistic period, more and more people came to identify themselves as “Greek.” One has to ask how any coherent notion of a panhellenic community or shared identity could end up connecting the rhetorician in Athens with the priest in Memphis and the soldier in Ai Khanum.

A new panhellenic world order was possible, and along with it new institutions and centers of control for the newly conquered lands. One of the new centers of control established by Alexander’s generals was the city of Alexandria, situated on a remote, brackish stretch of land on the Egyptian Delta that straddled the line between the Hellenic world and the rich and ‘exotic’ Egyptian one Greeks now controlled. Alexandria’s rulers, the Ptolemies, created a veritable curio box of the broader *oikoumenê*, collecting in a

⁵ The “Old” world refers to those lands considered part of the Greek-speaking world before the Hellenistic period. This would include the traditional Greek mainland, but it would also refer to places like Syracuse and Massilia. The “New” world ostensibly refers to the lands conquered by Alexander the Great and ruled by the *Diadochoi*. In using the terms “Old” and “New,” I am taking into consideration that a large amount of the world known to Hellenistic Greeks was technically a “Greek” world in the fourth and third century BCE. The use of these terms presents the world from a Greek perspective, which sees their traditional homelands as the Old world and the newly conquered and colonized world as the New. I see this world as defined by Greco-Macedonians. I recognize that from an Egyptian standpoint, Egyptians would have viewed themselves as a more established society with traditions that stretched back for thousands of years, and that, in fact, the Greeks themselves viewed them in a similar light. This, however, does not take away from the fact that a Greek inspired form of culture became the primary means through which ruling elites defined themselves.

grand imperial gesture everything from large monuments and throngs of peoples down to the smallest unit of literature, the epigram. It would ultimately claim a population that was drawn from over fifty Greek poleis and twenty ethnic groups from Africa, Asia, the Balkans and Italy. Alexandria came to be known as “the nurse of all peoples (παντοτρόφος).”⁶ Alexandria was seen as the city which literally had it all: “Everything, which is and comes into being, is in Egypt: wealth, wrestling, power, prosperity, the sibling gods, the best king, the Mouseion, wine, all the things which [one] wants,…”⁷ Much as this city would collect people in all their diversity, so too would its cultural heart, the Mouseion-Library of Alexandria,⁸ assemble a hitherto unimaginable body of textualized information within its doors. The Mouseion quickly gained a reputation as the preserver of all that was worth knowing and had become the beacon of culture for the Hellenistic world.⁹ This new institution and its attendant disciplines would rule the world not through fear and intimidation, but through the control and production of knowledge.

The irony of this entire endeavor was that this forward-looking cultural project was so rooted in the past. Peter Green has succinctly described the historical situation at the time of the foundation of the Mouseion:

As in the Alexandrian Library, so among the new dynasties of the Successors, the vision of the future could not shake off an enduring obsession with the past. If one thing united the multifarious members of this huge new diaspora, it was a search for roots, for justification and identity in the form of ancestral myth. That the

⁶ Selden (1998) 290 and the *Oracle of the Potter*, *P. Oxy.* 2332 II 61f.

⁷ Herod. 1.26-31.

⁸ I shall refer to what is generally known as the Library of Alexandria or the Mouseion-Library or Library-Mouseion of Alexandria simply as the Mouseion. I believe that it is impossible to sort out how the two were distinct, if indeed they were. For a recent discussion on this topic, see Too (1998) 115-126.

⁹ See Herod. 1.31; Timon of Phlius (*SH* 786 or Ath. I.22 d); pseudo-Callisthenes’ *Letter of Aristeas*.

process was (as we can see) in essence one of self-invention deterred no one and in all likelihood never occurred to them.¹⁰

Thus, the Mouseion, itself born in the cauldron of empire, helped provide this newly formed political entity, a conglomerate of conquerors and the conquered with a means for establishing a new social hierarchy based upon a reimagined past. The focus on constructing narratives of “ancestral myth,” which Green mentions above, created new Hellenic identities around which elite imperial subjects defined themselves.¹¹ These identities and narratives, however, represented a shift in power driven from the bottom-up through new discursive and epistemological forces.

As the Ptolemies tried to create a city that was a microcosm of a global empire, so too did the Mouseion come to symbolize the desire and actualization of gathering all knowledge in one place.¹² It became an archive of Hellenism. Institutions, such as the Mouseion, not only provided a means of trying to claim hegemony over a group of people living outside one’s physical borders, they also provided a means for managing those living within one’s borders. This should not be mistaken as a conscious policy of the ruling elite but rather speaks to the fact that the Ptolemies established institutions to extend the profile of their power.¹³ Despite being funded through the largesse of the Ptolemies, the

¹⁰ Green (2007) xx.

¹¹ Stoler (2002) 97. For a relevant definition of “imperialism,” see Doyle (1986) 45, who states that it “is simply the process or policy of establishing or maintaining an empire.” This definition allows me to avoid the debate over whether imperialism existed in the pre-industrial age, although, clearly, I think some incarnation of it did exist in premodern situation. Naturally, imperialism did not function in the same manner as in modernity, but, in some ways, specifically epistemologically and discursively, it did, as I shall demonstrate throughout this dissertation. In terms of differentiating imperialism from colonialism, Said (1993) 9 distinguishes imperialism as “the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory” from colonialism, “which is almost always a consequence of imperialism [and] is the implanting of settlements on distant territory.”

¹² Jacob (1997); (1999); (2002).

¹³ For the opposing opinion, see Maehler (2004) 7, who viewed the Ptolemaic rule as practicing a “cultural policy of ‘apartheid.’”

Mouseion influenced the world by developing and popularizing everyday cultural activities for a select elite. The Mouseion emerges from closer examination as a new kind of institution that directly shaped memory without a clear master plan. It was an imperial improvisation that was able to change into whatever it needed to be to continue its existence.

Knowledge producing entities like archives constructed a coherent set of shared experiences that legitimized the authority of those ruling over the ruled.¹⁴ The Alexandrian Archive and its archivists, working both within its walls and outside of them manufactured “the new global order of cultural knowledge.”¹⁵ This new order would, in turn, play a crucial role in mapping out a social hierarchy for Hellenistic elites in which erudite displays of this new brand of “Greek” cultural knowledge became *the* social and political capital of the period. Greek culture, as reordered through new archival discourses, justified the superiority of the new Greek speaking ruling elite and the learned class. Thus, Hellenistic elites constructed a dominant imperial ruling identity through literary and scholarly activities in addition to more overt forms of control and domination, such as the military.

Regardless of its actual reach and influence, the Mouseion was the ultimate symbol of the new Hellenistic erudition and served as the imaginary heart of this new world culture. It was able to project its power through its repute as the font of all learning. It often received credit for much that it was never actually associated with and probably also contributed in many ways now forgotten. Long after the Ptolemies had fallen from

¹⁴ This notion is borrowed from Said (1993) 9-12.

¹⁵ Flemming (2003) 461.

political power, the cultural practices established by their greatest institution lived on throughout the world in every erudite act.

1.2 “Library of Dreams”¹⁶

I have borrowed the title of this section from Roger Bagnall, who originally used it to highlight the fact that what has been said about the Library of Alexandria is not commensurate with what we actually know about it. In short, we know very little about this institution beyond its existence, although a huge amount, including this dissertation, continues to be written about it.¹⁷ For example, the date of its founding can only be safely placed to sometime between 310-275 BCE, and we will probably never even know whether it was founded under the reign of Ptolemy I Soter or Ptolemy II Philadelphos. We also are ignorant of the person or persons who might have conceived it, though the ancient world supplies with no shortage of potential candidates from the likely (Demetrios of Phaleron) to the plausible (Philitas of Kos) to the impossible (Aristotle). Yet another source of controversy is the size of its collection, which is also unknowable. Some have estimated at its holdings of scrolls at the tens of thousands; others several hundred thousand.¹⁸ Another question is whether it contained works in all the languages of the world or only Greek works. The classic example of its myth-generating power entails its supposed conflagrative destruction during Julius Caesar’s time in Egypt, which, although

¹⁶ See Bagnall (2002) 348-62.

¹⁷ There have been many articles as well as several books written on the topic over the past twenty-five years. The following is merely a sampling: Canfora (1990); El Abbadi (1990); Blum (1991); Erskine (1995); MacLeod (2000); Casson (2001); Bagnall (2002); McNeely (2008); Too (2010).

¹⁸ For a full treatment on the number of works contained within the Mouseion, see Bagnall (2002) 351-56. He suggests that the number is somewhere near the lower end of the spectrum.

often repeated by modern scholars, when examined closely, seems highly unlikely.¹⁹

Needless to say, the Mouseion was clearly an institution about which very few, even in the ancient world, knew many details. It is abundantly clear that this was part of the reason why it could come to be attributed with doing so much, and how it became the library that symbolized more than it could ever contain within its walls. Nevertheless, this section is an attempt to summarize what can be known about it.

The most extensive ancient account of the institution was given over two hundred years after its foundation by Strabo, the first century BCE geographer, who describes it in the following way (Strabo, 17.1.8):

τῶν δὲ βασιλείων μέρος ἐστὶ καὶ τὸ Μουσεῖον, ἔχον περίπατον καὶ ἐξέδραν καὶ οἶκον μέγαν ἐν ᾧ τὸ συσσίτιον τῶν μετεχόντων τοῦ Μουσείου φιλολόγων ἀνδρῶν. ἔστι δὲ τῇ συνόδῳ ταύτῃ καὶ χρήματα κοινὰ καὶ ἱερεὺς ὁ ἐπὶ τῷ Μουσείῳ τεταγμένος τότε μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν βασιλέων νῦν δ' ὑπὸ Καίσαρος.

The Mouseion also forms part of the royal section (of the city); it has a covered walk, an *exedra*, and a large house, in which is the communal mess hall of cultured men (φιλολόγων ἀνδρῶν) who share the Mouseion. This association of men shares common property, and it has a priest in charge of the Mouseion, who used to be appointed by the kings but is now appointed by Caesar.²⁰

Beyond this information, modern scholars have been able to cobble together a list of the famous scholars and poets who have been named as its head, including Apollonios of Rhodes and Eratosthenes but even lists like these are questionable.²¹

¹⁹ It should be noted that Strabo, who was in Egypt less than a generation after the Library's supposed destruction and describes the city of Alexandria in detail, makes no mention of the catastrophe. Moreover, Cicero, who survived Julius Caesar, makes no mention of it in his surviving works though surely it would have survived in some form in his letters. Even *The Alexandrine War* fails to make mention of the burning of Mouseion. In point of fact, it is not until the first century CE that we see actual mention of its destruction when Seneca the Younger (*Tranq.*, IX.5) mentions the destruction of 40,000 books in Alexandria.

²⁰ The translation is my own.

²¹ As stated above, the list of "Head Librarians"—a loaded term if there ever was one—is highly problematic and highly contested, since it is unclear whether the Ptolemies and Hellenistic Greeks recognized a "Head Librarian." The earliest evidence dates to a papyrus, *P.Oxy 1241*, which contains a partial list naming

Stories still abound about how the Library assembled its collection and what its collection consisted of. Much of the initial topographical information was gathered by a group of land surveyors, known as the “bematists,” who accompanied Alexander throughout his conquests.²² These men used the latest developments in mapping and surveying technology to make geographical observations on a scale previously unknown.²³ They also gathered a huge amount of raw field data on everything from place names to reports on flora and fauna.²⁴ Eventually, this textualized data as well as the ethnographic reports of lands on the fringes of the new Hellenistic kingdoms, the diaries of those who accompanied Alexander, *periploi* of figures such as Nearchos, and histories of the conquest eventually were collected in the archives and collections of old and new metropolitan centers of the Hellenistic world.

There are many apocryphal stories of the policies the Ptolemies instituted to develop the Mouseion’s collection. The most famous stories appear hundreds years after the Mouseion’s inception in the writing of the second century medical writer Galen. He depicts the Mouseion as an institution that aggressively pursued a policy of acquiring texts

Apollonios and Aristarchos, διδάσκαλοι, but fails to mention the Mouseion or Alexandria. For more details on this papyrus, see, Parsons (1952) 153-157; Pfeiffer (1968) 154-155. In general, scholars agree that Zenodotos was the first Head Librarian, but beyond that there is not much we can say definitively. Kallimachos, Apollonios of Rhodes, and Eratosthenes also served in some capacity, but only the “Latin Tzetzes” mentions that Kallimachos was a “Head Librarian.” The order of the Librarians is also contested. Fraser (1972) I.333 proposes these dates and this order for the “office of the Librarian” as he calls it: Zenodotos (ca. 285- ca. 270 BCE), Apollonios of Rhodes (c. 270-245 BCE), Eratosthenes (245-204/201 BCE), Aristophanes (204/201-189/186 BCE), Apollonios the Eidograph (ca. 189/186-175 BCE), and Aristarchos (ca. 175-145 BCE). A figure named Cydas follows Aristarchos, but his role is brought in to question because of his title as “One of the Spearman.” For full treatment, see Parsons (1952) 122-162; Pfeiffer (1968) 154-155, 172; Fraser (1972) I.305-335.

²² Baiton, Diognetos, Philonides, Amyntas, and Archelaos are some of the names we have of the surveyors who survive in name only, quoted in later authors, such as Pliny. For more information, see Jacob (1999) 34-35.

²³ On the bematists, see Jacob (1999) 34-35; Fraser (1996) ch. 4. Engels (1978) 157-158 argues convincingly for the accuracy of the bematists.

²⁴ See Bodson (1991).

at all costs. Stories of the Alexandrians labeling scrolls “from the ships” supposedly date back to the time when Ptolemy III demanded all ships docking in Alexandria be searched and all texts found within be copied with the copies be given to the owners while the originals were kept by the Mouseion. Moreover, Ptolemy III also legendarily left a hefty deposit of fifteen talents to borrow and copy the original texts of the tragedians and kept the originals while returning the copies and forfeiting the deposit. Galen also reports how the kings of Pergamon and Alexandria competed for old books which led to the forgeries and the price of old books to be pushed up in price. Galen also provides us with an account in which the Alexandrians did not place new acquisitions immediately into the Mouseion but first placed them in warehouses “in heaps” or all heaped together. All of these stories support the idea that the Mouseion aspired to achieve a collection of unsurpassed size.²⁵ These stories, whether true or not, speak to the ways in which the Mouseion captivated the minds of the ancient world.

Even in the ancient world, the epithet “Library of Dreams” was most fitting, because right from its foundation it had already acquired a reputation as a wondrous institution. By the 270 BCE, the Mouseion was already well known, appearing briefly in the work of Herodas (1.31). In Herodas’ narrative, the Mouseion is one among many words used to describe the city of Alexandria. A mere ten to twenty years after its founding, it must have already become so well-known that Herodas could merely refer to it by name. By the end of the third century BCE, the satirist, Timon of Phlios, expected his audience to understand his lampoon of the institution when he called it the “Birdcage

²⁵ Much of the information from this paragraph is from Barnes (2000) 64-66.

of the Muses.”²⁶ And although these brief references speak to the Mouseion’s quickly established fame, they provide us with no substantial details about the institution beyond the fact that it loomed large in the popular imagination. For the Jewish population of the Levant, the Mouseion had the sterling reputation to legitimize their scriptures. The so-called *Letter of Aristeas*²⁷ claims to be written by someone from within the Ptolemy Philadelphos’ court recounting among other things how Demetrios of Phaleron was the one who persuaded Ptolemy II to translate the Jewish Scriptures in effect completing the collection.²⁸ By linking themselves to the cultural heart of the Hellenistic world, the Hellenized Jewish community not only attempted to legitimize their group’s status amongst the broader Greek community, they also tried to reimagine themselves as part of the Greco-Macedonian ruling class. It is primarily with the Mouseion’s legendary legacy as the “Library of Dreams” that this dissertation is concerned.

1.3 The Mouseion and Alexandrian Archiving

Over the past twenty years, we have seen an aggressive reevaluation of the notion of the “archive” in a diverse number of fields, including but not limited to history, literary studies, library science, anthropology, and political science. The archive used to represent

²⁶ Mineur (1985) and Cameron (1995) take issue with the standard translation, preferring “bird’s nest” for “birdcage” as a translation for *τάλαρος*. Cameron, basing his argument on Mineur’s philological work, claims that the tone of birdcage is all wrong, since it emphasizes the unworldly qualities of the scholars. Cameron feels that the nest emphasizes the competitive and even polemical qualities of those working in the Library-Mouseion. Cameron and Mineur present a compelling case for their translation, but I still think that even the translation “nest” could still provide the idea of privilege and rarity, since ultimately these squawking chicks are all living in a nest in the royal quarters of Alexandria, fighting for the scraps handed out by the King. Therefore, I shall continue to use “birdcage.”

²⁷ The date for this document is contended. Most believe that it was composed sometime in the second century BCE. For more information, see Parsons (1952) 93-94, Fraser (1972) I.696-704, Canfora (1990) 30-36, 119-122, and Barnes (2000).

²⁸ Among the incredible stories in this letter is that Ptolemy II freed 100,000 slaves from their owners. For a fuller treatment of how this work of literature fits within its milieu, see Fraser (1972) I.687-716, esp. 696-704; Gruen (1998) 207-222.

a place cordoned off from the larger world where historians went to recover facts from the past, whereas now it is seen as a politicized place that acts upon the world through the production of knowledge. As a result, the term “archive” has become a more inclusive one that can refer to anything from a text to a building.

Taking a cue from these studies, I believe that we might better understand the historical impact of the Mouseion by viewing it as an actor in the society—an archive-as-subject that can be seen as an independent force for manufacturing traditions and cultural knowledge. The Mouseion provided coherence to a burgeoning notion of imperial Hellenistic elite subjectivity. This archive-as-subject accomplished its goals by sifting through the scattered cultural remains of both the Greek and barbarian pasts in order to reconfigure them into a new “Greek” tradition. This tradition would be the epistemological scaffolding upon which a new unifying imperial tradition could be hung.²⁹ This imperial tradition eventually overshadowed earlier incarnations of ethnic identity and became the central basis of an elite identity for those living both the New and Old worlds of the Hellenistic period. To limit the scope of this dissertation, I shall focus mostly on the “Greek” aspects of the formation of this new imperial culture of this period.³⁰ The Alexandrian Archive not only ruled from the center qua institution but also through its many learned products. As we shall see, Alexandrian poetic works replicated the discourse

²⁹ For the most nuanced discussion on cultural identity in colonial and imperial settings, see Woolf (1997), who introduced the notion of a “new imperial culture” which has been modified here slightly. For Greek ethnic identity, the essential works are Hall (1997) and (2002); Whitmarsh (2001); Dougherty and Kurke (2003); König and Whitmarsh (2007).

³⁰ This is not to suggest that non-Greek cultures did not play a role in the formation of this culture. Others have addressed Egyptian and Near Eastern influence on Hellenistic cultural products. Selden (1998) and Stephens (2003 and 2005) address Egyptian elements in Hellenistic literary works. West (2000) does so for Jewish aspects of Lykophron. On Egyptian influence on Greek history via Manetho, see Dillery (1998). On Babylonian aspects, see Kurht (1987); Kurht and Sherwin-White (1991). See also Verbrugge and Wichersham (2001).

of their Alexandrian “mother,” becoming portable archives that could now be carried in one’s pouch.

In my first chapter, I begin by laying out the basic theoretical concepts that will inform the remainder of this dissertation. I will argue that the Mouseion was the center of a new mode of discourse in the early Hellenistic period—archival discourse. This discourse helped produce, promote, and perpetuate a certain way of interpreting the cultural inheritance of cultural knowledge inherited from the Old world.

Epistemologically, in the Hellenistic period, past knowledges were broken down into units that could be reconfigured into a range of literary and scholarly works and practices. These cultural activities would in turn form the basis for a new way of defining “Greek” or “imperial” identity for elites. Through a thorough theoretical exploration of the Mouseion as archive and through brief treatments of works ranging from Homer to Manetho, this chapter will establish the model that forms a frame for the rest of the dissertation. In this manner, I shall introduce the ways in which everyday cultural activities replicated the actions of the broader archive, and in doing so perpetuated and expanded its political reach.

The second chapter presents Lykophron’s *Alexandra* as a miniature archive that made knowledge portable, allowing for and facilitating the dispersal of a cultural knowledge from the imperial center. Those who consumed this new cultural product could feel connected to the larger world, because of their connection to texts and scholarly knowledge, in addition to the traditional modes of civic performance. For its part, the poem replicates the impulse to collect and control knowledge embedded in institutions such as the Mouseion, whose discourses were part of the empire’s system of power and control. Just as the trappings of Greek culture in the form of the gymnasium and theater

followed Greek expansion, Greek culture, in general eventually became so ubiquitous that it came to be seen as the natural marker of being an “educated” person. It would be in the form of the scroll that this new vision of the tradition could reach the remotest areas of the *oikoumenê*, becoming a portable agent of political, social, cultural change, redefining the notion of being Greek from a biological one to a performed one, specifically to someone having knowledge of things and activities demarcated as Greek. The Hellenistic imperial subject now had a means by which they could define themselves, all neatly bundled up in the form of a scroll. Therefore, Lykophron’s work should not be merely seen as something that reinforces some unchanging and universally accepted tradition but instead as something that constructs a new one, as one shaped through its own archival discourse.

The final chapter examines the rise of a new type of man, the archivist-poet. By the early third century BCE the Alexandrians had become the de facto gatekeepers of the *paideia* of the Hellenistic empires. This imperial *paideia* provided new means for contemporary elites to interact with the mass of textualized information gathered from the past and present. Throughout the early Hellenistic period, we see how these poets were elevated and celebrated in temple sites all over the *oikoumenê*,³¹ as well as being anointed heroic in hero cults across the Greek-speaking world.³² We also see the poet celebrated and elevated to leading civic elder and with statues of them in public spaces, such as the agora, spreading all over the world.³³ These new poets won glory for themselves after they had

³¹ I will treat this topic in chapter three. For a fuller discussion on visual representations during this period, see Zanker (1995) ch. 4; Hardie (2003); Clay (2004); Dillon (2006); Bergmann (2007), Schmidt (2007), Stewart (2007).

³² This too I shall treat in my final chapter. For the fullest treatment on the matter, see Clay (2004).

³³ The classic example of this is the case of Posidippos who was supposedly honored in the agora in Pella, see *AB 118* or *SH 705*. For an interpretation of this epigram, see Stephens (2004b).

elevated their poetic predecessors through their own archival efforts into objects of veneration and study.

The rise of this new type of man, however, was mainly accomplished textually through the body of literary epigram which also served as a “space” where this identity and his or her practices were further defined. The archivist-poet’s literary activities became the model for how one should and could interact with the mass of works and data collected by the Mouseion. Since the Alexandrians wanted to present themselves as active participants in the “real” world, it should come as no surprise that archivists in the guise of scholar-poets became the heroes of this new generation of elite. By means of their scholarly and literary works, they were arbiters of culture and provided the means of demarcating and defining imperial elite identity. In the end, the Alexandrian archivist was able to construct a shared sense of culture in a new literate notion of *paideia* through their scholarly and literary works, which ultimately served and stabilized the dominant new political entities of the period.

2. Theorizing the Alexandrian Archive: Three Perspectives

“... archives—that is, traces of the past collected either intentionally or haphazardly as ‘evidence’—are by no means limited to official spaces or state repositories. They have been housed in a variety of unofficial sites since time immemorial. From the Rosetta stone to medieval tapestry to Victorian house museums to African body tattoos, scholars have been ‘reading’ historical evidence off of any number of different archival incarnations for centuries...”

-Antoinette Burton¹

“A ruling of Ptolemy II Philadelphus exempted schoolteachers, athletic coaches, (most probably) artists of Dionysus, and victors in the games of the various Alexandrian festivals. The accounts of tax collectors show how the exemptions were put into effect... overall for the Arsinoite nome teachers formed some 0.5 percent of the adult population, the same percentage as athletic coaches. This encouragement of literacy, sport, and culture throughout the Ptolemaic countryside tallies well with the record of Ptolemy II, who in Alexandria built up the Library and the Museum. The growing use of Greek in official records, in place of Egyptian demotic, is perhaps a product of this initiative.”

-Dorothy Thompson²

2.1 Introduction

In classical studies, Simon Goldhill is the first person who used the term “archive” to describe the Mouseion. According to Goldhill, “The archive as context for poetic production is also seen in the constant, even obsessional, awareness of past texts.”³ He then clarifies how he views the Mouseion functioning archivally: “the institutions of the Library and the Mouseion construct literary and scientific knowledge *as institutions*: the categorizing, collecting, cataloguing of material; the prescriptive rules of literary method;

¹ Burton (2005) 3.

² Thompson (1997) 247.

³ Goldhill (1991) 224.

the critical annotation of past texts.”⁴ Here, Goldhill uses the Mouseion merely to establish the historical context for a discussion of Hellenistic poetry, and he does not develop this idea beyond a simple, yet astute observation. In many ways, Goldhill’s use of the term foreshadows much of the scholarly activity pertaining to archives that has occurred over the past fifteen years. Since that time, others, such as Tim Whitmarsh, have treated, albeit briefly, the notion of the Mouseion as archive.⁵ There has yet to be a study that has fully explored the Mouseion through the lens of Goldhill’s statement. This chapter will address this shortcoming.

In this chapter, I will introduce recent scholarship on archives and demonstrate their relevance to the study of the Mouseion. These theories will deepen our understanding of the many and subtle ways the Mouseion not only impacted the literary but also the political world. I shall begin with a brief survey introducing and situating recent developments in archival studies and potential applicability to the ancient world. This will be followed by an in-depth discussion of Foucault’s notion of the archive and the development of a key Hellenistic discursive structure, archival discourse. This section focuses on the key methods by which the Mouseion constructed knowledge. In the next section, “Foucault’s Kallimachos,” I shall demonstrate how this archival discourse directly shaped Alexandrian cultural and knowledge production through an analysis of Kallimachos’ *Pinakes* and *Aitia*. Following this section, I focus on the way performance and textualization resulted in the creation of “The Alexandrian Archiving of Homer.” This section charts the technological and political forces that underlie the acts of remembering and forgetting this iconic Hellenic culture hero. The final and longest

⁴ Goldhill (1991) 224.

⁵ For example, see Whitmarsh (2004), especially ch. 8.

section, entitled “ The Imperial Archive of Alexandria,” adopts a postcolonial position and directly examines the role empire played in archiving processes and the broader political consequences of those same processes. In short, this section will demonstrate how seemingly esoteric activities, such as the writing of poetry, helped foster and spread hierarchical systems of domination.

2.2 Reimagining the Archive

The Mouseion was an archive in the traditional sense of the word—it was a physical location that stored documents. The traditional definition of this term, however, implies that an archive preserves the past for the present and assumes that the past is some sort of independent object that is present someplace “out there” to be studied. From this perspective, archives are seen as “inert sites of storage and conservation”⁶ of the past that should be mined for the facts and evidence, a source for the historian or researcher to exploit and therefore a minor player, or rather a simple spectator, in the broader course of history. Viewing the Mouseion from this perspective reduces it to a “cultural link” that provides some sort of “continuity” with the Greek past.⁷ To define the Mouseion as an archive-as-source implies that Greek culture was a clearly defined and agreed upon set of common values shared by all Greek colonists. This leaves little room for what we know was a dynamic negotiation both within a diverse set of localized Greek identities and between self-identified Greeks and non-Greek peoples.

If we start moving away from viewing the Mouseion as an archive-as-source toward one that views it as an archive-as-subject, we acquire a more nuanced

⁶ Stoler (2002) 90.

⁷ Erskine (1995) 42.

understanding of how culture became connected to imperialism in the early Hellenistic period. The Mouseion was the ultimate filter through which Imperial Hellenistic culture itself crystallized and where the dream of total political domination coincided with the desire for domination of all knowledge.⁸ The Mouseion provided the discourses and disciplines through which the world could be ordered and reproduced for its new audience. In this way, it served both as a memory bank and retrieval system, archive-as-source, but also as an active archive-as-subject in its generative powers.

Jacques Derrida, in his 1995 work *Archive Fever*, made one of the most influential interventions in archival studies, asserting boldly “there is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory.”⁹ He provides us with a clear way to try to understand the “psychology” of the archivization process and calls for a “science of the archive must include a theory of [its] institutionalization, that is to say, the theory both of the law which begins by inscribing itself there and of the right which authorizes it.” He argues that the archive functioned as a “place from which order is given,” and that it provides order, both in the taxonomic and the imperative sense of the term, to the signs gathered in it through the hermeneutic actions of those overseeing the archive—its archons.¹⁰ Derrida’s archive is governed, then, by an *archontic* principle of consignation, “gathering together.” It is this *archontic* principle that will play a crucial role in establishing the lines of institutional authority over whatever was supposedly housed in the archive. He states that “*consignation* aims to coordinate a single corpus, in a system or a

⁸ Flemming (2003) 450.

⁹ Derrida (1995) 4.

¹⁰ Derrida (1995) 1-3.

synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration.”¹¹ This act of consignment is not merely a logical ordering of the things housed within the archive but rather a performative, interpretive act—part of a process of manipulation and control. Although Derrida’s work does not fit within the scope of this dissertation, his work reveals the way an archive-as-subject can hermeneutically connect power to knowledge.

Throughout the eighties and nineties, when the discipline of history and other humanities began thinking about “history as narrative” and “history-writing as a charged political act,” it was only natural that the “source” for all of this would also come under scrutiny.¹² Ann Stoler has best summarized what these various approaches to the archive have in common:

All are concerned with the legitimating social coordinates of epistemologies: how people imagine they know what they know and what institutions validate that knowledge, and how they do so. None treat the conventions and categories of analysis (statistics, facts, truths, probability, footnotes, and so on) as innocuous or benign. All converge on questions about rules of reliability and trust, criteria of credence, and what moral projects and political predictabilities are served by these conventions and categories. All ask a similar set of historical questions about accredited knowledge and power—what political forces, social cues, and moral virtues produce qualified knowledges that, in turn, disqualified other ways of knowing, other knowledges. To my mind, no one set of concerns is more relevant to the colonial politics of archives and their (parent) archiving states.¹³

Stoler continues by calling on her fellow anthropologists to view archiving as a “process” rather than as “things” and that archives are “epistemological experiments rather than sources.”¹⁴ We should, however, also recall that she has stressed that archives are firmly ensconced in material reality and that they share both a material and figurative existence.

¹¹ Derrida (1995) 3.

¹² The terms are borrowed from Stoler (2002) 92. The scholarship on this issue is substantial. In terms of this dissertation, I have consulted: White (1986; 1990; 2000), de Certeau (1992), and Clark (2004).

¹³ Stoler (2002) 95.

¹⁴ Stoler (2002) 87.

2.3 Foucault in Alexandria: Archival Discourse

Michel Foucault probably made the first substantial contribution toward what has become a recent small cottage industry of theorizing the archive. Michel Foucault, in his *Archaeology of Knowledge*, theorized the archive as an epistemological project that “is the first law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements (*énoncés*) as unique events.”¹⁵ For Foucault, the archive is a “system of statements” that permits what can and cannot be said. In conceptualizing the archive thus, Foucault seemingly differentiates it from its material roots, claiming that the archive is not “the sum of all texts that a culture has kept upon its person as documents attesting to its own past, or as evidence of a continuity of identity; nor do I mean the institutions, which, in a given society, make it possible to record and preserve those discourses that one wishes to remember and keep in circulation.”¹⁶ Most commentators have jumped on this statement to highlight the fact that Foucault’s definition of archives states that they are not a mass of texts and then emphasize its non-material aspects.¹⁷ This interpretation, however, fails both to properly contextualize his statement and to fully comprehend the complexities that lay behind the key terms used in its definition.

Through his presentation of the archive as a set of discursive rules or a corpus of statements, Foucault radically transforms how we view the archive, shifting our emphasis away from recovering some lost past towards explicating how the complexities and nuances of statements, whether “events or things,”¹⁸ come to be agents of change in the

¹⁵ Foucault (1972) 129.

¹⁶ Foucault (1972) 129.

¹⁷ For example, see Richards (1993) 11.

¹⁸ Foucault (1972) 128.

present. He defines archives as the set of rules that “enables statements both to survive and to undergo regular modification. It is *the general system of the formation and transformation of statements.*”¹⁹ Statements in this case are not merely disembodied textual entities but are grounded in material reality. Robert Young best summarizes Foucault’s complex and lengthy definition of “statement” as:

a specific material event, a performative act or function, an historical eruption that impinges on and makes an incision into circumstance. Its effect, therefore, in the first instance, is primarily one of discontinuity, of deictic intervention, of effecting change, but it also exists in a productive tension with regularity. It involves language, but it is not reducible to it because that language will also be part of the situated materiality of circumstance.²⁰

This definition reflects Foucault’s concern over providing a model that is not reductive. In fact, Foucault’s model can help us better understand how seemingly esoteric statements of scholarship might be intertwined within the broader world of politics.

It is therefore imperative that we understand what factors and conditions influenced how the Alexandrians inherited a diverse set of objects that represented the past—literary works, local customs and histories from all over the Greek and non-Greek speaking world—and then reordered and resignified them into a coherent entity packaged as a tradition, an episteme of the past. Foucault has connected the production of knowledge to power and made it a central to his conceptual framework. He defines his power/knowledge relationship in the following manner:

We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation

¹⁹ Foucault (1972) 130.

²⁰ Young (2001) 201-202.

without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time as power relations.²¹

Foucault's analyses of power and knowledge, specifically his focus on modes of power and authority, systems of selection and exclusion, can and have been used productively to discuss and explain historical instances of knowledge production in imperialist and colonialist contexts.²² From such a perspective, the Mouseion functions as a "super Foucauldian" archive, affecting material reality as a master of discourse and knowledge production.

Foucault's vision of the archive provides us with the means for teasing out the complexity that was the Mouseion. When we examine how he imagines what the archive is not, it becomes clear that Foucault is more concerned with purging his readers of their entrenched notions of the archives-as-sources. This is evident when he states emphatically that the archive is not "that which collects the dust of statements that have become inert once more, and which may make possible the miracle of their resurrection."²³ In so doing he is challenging the traditionally held belief that archives provide continuity between past and present as an unmediated doorway to the past. Foucault argues that archives shape the past through a process of *both* remembering *and* forgetting. The difference may seem overly subtle, but when this viewpoint is applied to the Mouseion it drastically alters how we view Greek cultural traditions and their histories. Rather than seeing traditions as "age-old continuities" or "self-enclosed truth(s)"²⁴ we come to view them as sites of

²¹ Foucault (1977) 27.

²² For representative examples, see Pratt (1992), Said (1993), and Selden (1998). See further section 6 of this chapter.

²³ Foucault (1972) 129.

²⁴ Foucault (1972) 31, 32.

knowledge production, thus they become ever-changing products discursively constructed. Instead of considering knowledge about the past to be something organic and prior, it becomes linked to specific moments in time. This perspective emphasizes the key role that archives play in the production of knowledge and makes the interpretive activities of the archive central rather than “secondary and derivative.”²⁵

First, we must try to understand the role that the discourse plays in the production of knowledge. Discourse is one of the most difficult terms to define, and it is even more difficult to pin down how Foucault defines it, for even he admits that he uses the term in many different ways, declaring that:

I believe that I have in fact added to its meanings: treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements; and have I not allowed this same word ‘discourse’, which should have served as a boundary around the term ‘statement’, to vary as I shifted my analysis or its point of application, as the statement faded from view?²⁶

Discourses, moreover, are in a constant state of flux as they interact “with languages, events, other discourses, as an intrinsic part of its own operation.”²⁷ Foucault does not see discourse as establishing groupings of texts along thematic or ideological grounds but rather as a concept that allows for a great diversity of seemingly unconnected texts to be associated with one another. In stating this, Foucault wants to stress that discourses do not have some *a priori* system of order that can at some point reach perfection. Instead, discourse and statements function symbiotically producing one another and only come to form regularities rather than rules. This constant state of negotiation within discourses

²⁵ Zajko (1998) 103.

²⁶ Foucault (1972) 80.

²⁷ Young (2001) 403.

provides us with a model to deal with the ever-changing nature of knowledge and material reality. Hence, Foucault views discourse not as containing knowledge; rather, discourse is the means through which knowledge is constructed “as part of a specific practice whose knowledge is formed at the interface of language and the material world.”²⁸ As Young concludes, discourse for Foucault amounts to a “regulated practice” and knowledge “operates in the interstices of the contact zone between concepts and materiality.”²⁹

When examining the Hellenistic construction of cultural knowledge, the Mouseion played the part of a figurative archive regulating a mass of statements and revealing “the rules of a practice that enables statements both to survive and to undergo regular modification. It is *the general system of the formation and transformation of statements*.”³⁰ Discourse facilitates a configuration of seemingly unrelated fields of statements to become the means by which subjectivity is determined.³¹ The production of discourse, however, is regulated and “is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality.”³² Foucault goes on to explain that there are two systems of exclusions—external and internal. These exclusionary mechanisms attempt to account for the material conditions that make certain truth claims possible, specifically the “multiple institutional

²⁸ Young (2001) 398. Much of this summary is based on Young’s (2001) ch. 27 analysis of Foucault in postcolonial studies.

²⁹ Young (2001) 400 and 399 respectively.

³⁰ The emphasis is Foucault’s. Foucault (1972) 130.

³¹ Foucault (1972) 122.

³² Foucault (1981) 52.

supports and various social structures and practices underlying the production of truth.”³³ Here, Foucault takes the historical and material into consideration, a point which scholars of empire and colonialism have embraced and fleshed out, although he is more concerned with exploring the internal factors delimiting discourse.

Foucault lays out three external exclusions: the taboo, the mad and the sane, and the true and false.³⁴ Of these three categories, Foucault’s distinction between true and false seems most pertinent to the study of the Mouseion. Truth is based upon statements made by those sanctioned to speak by some institution, anything, for example, from a think tank to a temple complex. These institutions sanction certain individuals as authorized experts who speak the truth, while those not authorized to do so speak falsehoods. The institutions and their actors circulate statements, which they deem true, while they attempt to keep unauthorized statements out of circulation. In the context of the Mouseion, it should be seen as the institution that empowers a group of people as arbiters of truth. Therefore, the scholarly texts and literary works produced by its denizens became the sanctioned truth about the past. Naturally, this can lead to competing claimants over the “true” way to understand the past. An example of this kind of rivalry is over the “true” interpretation of Homer between those working in Alexandria and Pergamon. Those working from the Mouseion saw themselves and their grammatical approach as more “truthful” than the Pergamene focus on their subject matter.³⁵ Each feels sanctioned by their (rather similar) approaches as the proper authority who should police the key figure of the Greek heritage.

³³ Hook (2001) 525-526.

³⁴ Mills (2003) 57-58.

³⁵ Page (1981) 63 succinctly lays out the differences between the two schools: “the Alexandrians concentrated on textual criticism and grammar, the Pergamenes, though by no means neglecting these aspects, were primarily interested in Homer’s subject-matter, and especially in relating the contents of the poems to the principles of Stoic philosophy.” See also Pfeiffer (1968) 234-251. For a slightly different viewpoint, see section 4.5 of this dissertation.

Truth in this case was very much intertwined with the broader power structures that play a role in supporting these institutions.

Foucault argues that there are internal procedures that delimit and control “discourses themselves exercis[ing] their own control; procedures which function rather as principles of classification, of ordering, of distribution.”³⁶ He distinguishes three types. The first is the “commentary” which is a means for making narratives that maintain symbolic authority to speak anew. Commentaries can reposition literary works such as the Homeric epics into a new discursive system, resulting in new-found influence. Sometimes, as in the Hellenistic period, these “secondary” works can achieve higher status than the primary works they comment upon. The second type is the “author,” which supplies a sense of consistency and unity among a body or statements or narratives. In the Hellenistic period, the attribution of authorship was manipulated to elevate or diminish certain narratives by ascribing or denying authorship to them. This provided a means of signaling to broader society who was permitted to speak and under what circumstances. Lastly, there are “disciplines” which Foucault defines as “a domain of objects, a set of methods, a corpus of propositions considered to be true, a play of rules and definitions, of techniques and instruments: all of this constitutes a sort of anonymous system at the disposal of anyone who wants to or is able to use it.”³⁷ The rise of new fields of study like philology empowered many through a set of practices that determined how the past was constructed.

Thus Foucault’s three internal delimiting entities of discourse were embodied in the activities and archivists of the Mouseion. The Mouseion allowed at least some of those living in the Hellenistic world to speak through it, as de facto gatekeepers of discourse.

³⁶ Foucault (1981) 56.

³⁷ Foucault (1981) 59-60.

The archival activities of selecting texts and textualization of knowledges from all points of the world provided the impetus for disciplines, such as philology and science, to arise and provide a means of controlling who was authorized to speak and therefore to construct knowledge about a great range of subjects. The figure of the author also became a platform through which Alexandrians could wield their influence over discourse, both as commentators of canonical authors and as authors in their own right. The new awareness of the author that stemmed from biobibliographical scholarship, which will be addressed in the next section, allowed those working within the archive to further reorder knowledges chosen from the past. Lastly, the commentary was a staple activity of the Mouseion, providing a way of making the authorities of the past “relevant” to its modern audience. In such ways, the Mouseion played an active role in shaping how the discourses were formed and negotiated during this period. If we are to take into account the materiality of statements, then we need to consider both the external and internal procedures of regulating discourse.

Discourse can be loosely defined as a “system that structures how we perceive reality,”³⁸ The dominant discourse of the early Hellenistic was an archival discourse—the discourse of the Mouseion. Archival discourse was simultaneously delimited by and fostered the disciplines of Greek science, philology, mathematics, biology, medical thought, philosophy, among others, and it would be through these interpretive frames that antiquity came to define the broader world of phenomena. In short, these disciplines worked in conjunction with specific discourses forming a discursive totality that shaped how the world came to be seen and understood by the Greeks themselves and all the

³⁸ Mills (2003) 55.

peoples under Greek domination. And that totality was the hegemonic discourse³⁹ of the period surpassing others as the principal lens through which the world was conceived. It was through the employment of such discourse(s) that Hellenistic subjects learned what were acceptable narratives and privileged means for participating in elite society.

2.4 Foucault's Kallimachos

Kallimachos' prose and poetic works revolutionized how the world was conceived, creating new ways to tell stories about it. By resituating local traditions, regional studies and "antiquities" of different cities into new panhellenic products, he contributed to new ways of envisioning Hellenism. These cultural products are examples of how archival discourse determined knowledge production. His works were critical in the construction of cultural memory for those living all over the Hellenistic world. Mastery of the Greek cultural past as recreated through scholarship and Alexandrian poetry, offered a new means through which displaced and dispersed elites could establish a shared sense of community and identity.

The prose works of Kallimachos helped usher in a Hellenistic epistemological revolution as they transformed local traditions and knowledge into new forms of knowledge accessible to a panhellenic Hellenistic audience. Although most of Kallimachos' prose works exist in name only, a sampling of only their titles speaks to the massive enterprise the Alexandrians undertook to archive the known past: *On the Rivers of the world (Peri tôn en tê oikoumenê potamôn)*; *On the Rivers of Europe (Peri tôn en Europê potamôn)*; *On Birds (Peri orneôn)*; *Customs of the Barbarians (Nomina*

³⁹ I am borrowing this term as it has been defined by Echevarria (1998) 11, 40-41.

barbarika); *On Contests (Peri agônôn)*; *On Nymphs (Peri Nymphôn)*; *Foundation of Islands and Cities and Changes of their Names (Ktiseis nêsôn kai poleôn kai metonomasiai)*; *On the Names of Fishes (Peri onomasias ichthyôn)*; *The Names of the Months According to Peoples and Cities (Mênôn prosegoriai kata ethnê kai poleis)*; *Designations According to Peoples (Ethnikai onomasiai)*.⁴⁰ These works also suggest the broad range of sources that allowed the production of these works. Through the creation of a new body of knowledge, writers of these works, such as Kallimachos, created one of the world's first knowledge explosions.

Of all of Kallimachos' prose works, his *Pinakes* was the one for which he was most famous. The *Pinakes or Tables of Persons Eminent in Every Branch of Learning Together With a List of Their Writings*, which is its full title, was most likely the first attempt to catalogue the texts housed in the Mouseion. It was not merely a list of titles, but it seems to have been part library catalogue, part systematic bibliography, and part biographical encyclopedia. It has come to be known as a biobibliographical work.⁴¹ A project to catalogue tens of thousands of texts housed within the Mouseion ended up running 120 scrolls long.⁴² Despite the *Pinakes'* once massive size, only a handful of fragments survive from it (as nearly all of the works from this period, especially the non-literary ones). We know from some of the extant fragments that book scrolls were organized along disciplinary lines: rhetoric, philosophy, historians, medical writings, and miscellany like

⁴⁰ List of titles is from Blum (1991) 135. The list of these titles will surely also remind many classicists of the probable Aristotelian ancestry for this impulse to collect. This topic, however, is not within the scope of this dissertation. For more information, see Owen (1961).

⁴¹ Blum (1991) 1-2.

⁴² “Πίνακες τῶν ἐν πάσῃ παιδείᾳ διαλαμπάντων καὶ ὧν συνέγραψαν, ἐν βιβλίοις κ' καὶ ρ'.” The passage is cited in Pfeiffer (1968) 128.

cooking.⁴³ Kallimachos attempted to order all poetic works, by classifying them according to form and style. Within each category, authors were then arranged in alphabetical order, possibly utilizing methods pioneered by Philitas in his own Homeric glosses, complete with a short bibliography of their works. These works were then listed in alphabetical order perhaps containing the number of lines of the poem as well as its first line.⁴⁴ The *Pinakes* was a text that applied an ordering principle to the immense collection of texts in the Mouseion. By archiving these texts into new categories of study, it laid out ways to produce cultural knowledge from an unwieldy and diverse mass of information.⁴⁵ The *Pinakes* was not merely a card catalogue but was a textual archive that provided a new map of Hellenism.

Overall Kallimachos' critical works appear to have shared the same essential characteristics, assembling materials gathered from his reading of the variety of texts of the Mouseion eventually leading to works that seemed to relish the knowledge of data, raw fact and detail—information—instead of aspiring to provide some deeper philosophical understanding of the universe.⁴⁶ His own literary projects were erudite set pieces that mixed and mingled his knowledge drawn from linguistics, ethnography, local history, natural history, and mythography. He was not alone in his method of writing poetry but was instead one of the pathfinders of Alexandrian poetry.

⁴³ For further details, such as textual references, see Pfeiffer (1968) 128-129; Blum (1991) 154; Jacob (2000) 91.

⁴⁴ Pfeiffer (1968) 127-129; Blum (1991) 150-160; Jacob (2000) 90-92.

⁴⁵ Jacob fully develops this idea with respect to Kallimachos. For a full treatment of the relationship between the prose and poetic works of Kallimachos, see Jacob (2000).

⁴⁶ Jacob (1999).

Kallimachos' *Aitia* is one of those set pieces that demonstrates how Alexandrian poetic works used material once only seen in prose. The *Aitia* presents us with the unique case of having an Alexandrian poetic work along with knowledge of a prose work, the *Pinakes*, written by the same author. These two works demonstrate how intertwined Alexandrian prose and poetry was and points to a shared ordering principle that lay behind both works. In the *Aitia*, Kallimachos culls an encyclopedia's worth of local customs and cults from all over the Greek-speaking world and reorders them into a six thousand line elegiac poem divided into four books.⁴⁷ Kallimachos' fragmentary work was broad in scale, attempting to address the origins of cities, cults, names of places and gods, and the history of local places. Kallimachos lures his readers in by playing on their curiosity and enticing them with clever answers presented in a polished form of language. This hybrid poetic product for Hellenistic elites provided them with a way to engage with the Mouseion's collection of data that was repeatable. In essence, he presents a new way of transforming the mass of factual knowledge acquired by the Mouseion into the building blocks of works of Alexandrian archival poetry. Kallimachos announces his widespread citation of archive sources when he states that "I sing nothing unattested."⁴⁸

The narrative structure of the *Aitia*'s first two books appear to transition its readers into a brand new kind of narrative, by situating a group of seemingly unrelated set of local customs and rituals into the form of a familiar poetic trope. These books revolve around a young poet, who dreams that he has gone from North Africa to Mount Helikon. His readers would probably have known that Kallimachos was from Kyrene, a Greek colony

⁴⁷ These are only estimates, since the work is only fragmentary. Much of this discussion is drawn from Jacob (2000) and Fantuzzi and Hunter (2002) 42-88.

⁴⁸ Its original location is unknown. The Greek is as follows: "ἀμάρτυρον οὐδὲν ἀείδω" (fr. 612).

founded in the seventh century BCE in North Africa, far from the homeland, so they would have assumed that this was his own journey from the “frontier” to an iconic poetic location of the Old world. This establishing scene most likely eased its readers into the poem with a scene that harkens back to Hesiod’s *Dichterweihe* in the *Theogony*. This journey could further be interpreted as the journey of the “modern” poet returning to the heart of the literary tradition.

Kallimachos, however, immediately signals to his readers that this is something new by framing in elegiac meter rather than hexameters. He then spends the remainder of the first two books introducing a new narrative device that has his protagonist poet pose a series of questions to the Helikonian Muses. He asks question after question ranging from “Why, on the island of Paros does one sacrifice to the Graces with neither flutes or crowns?” to “Why do armed men visit the young Elean virgins before their marriage?” to “Why did the Argonauts leave their ship’s anchor at Cyzicus?”⁴⁹ Although Kallimachos’ question and answer narrative device itself was fairly revolutionary, his readers could have easily identified with the character of the inquisitive poet and through this internal narrator comfortably eased themselves into the poem’s narrative. The poem also reinforces the authority of the Muses, who bestow their wisdom to the inquiring poet, and on this account it seems most probable that the poem’s readers would have shared the main narrator’s ignorance of the *aitia* covered in the poem. Perhaps, the depiction of the inquiring poet and the Muses was a metaphor symbolizing the readers’ own perceived reliance on the Mouseion to ascertain cultural knowledge.

The third and fourth books were dedicated to Queen Berenike, the wife of Ptolemy III Euergetes, and appear to have been structured differently than the first two. They

⁴⁹Jacob (2000) 97.

encourage its readers to experience the past in a more direct manner. The narrative no longer involves the Muses, but instead is a series of *aitia* told through various narrators, such as the poet himself or a lock of the Queen's hair. This type of narrative is an even more radical departure from traditional narrative conventions than that of the first two books. It not only asks the readers to embrace new ways of telling a story but it also asks its readers to become a series of unfamiliar objects. In essence, this poem metaphorically tells its readers that those who have successfully absorbed its knowledge will become the very embodiment of Hellenism. The change in structure suggests that this section of the poem might have been written much later than the first two books.⁵⁰ Or perhaps Kallimachos used the narrative structure from the earlier books to transition his readers into a more experimental one in the later books, where its readers can now directly experience the world of the objects depicted.

Over the course of the *Aitia*, its reader has gone from one who learns from his or her masters to one who can construct their own narratives based from the knowledge at hand. Perhaps the poem traces the development of the *doctus poeta* from a disciple, who studies texts, to a master, who writes about them. Much like the Alexandrian Archive, the *Aitia* provides a model for how one could create new traditions from earlier forms of knowledge. The resulting poem was a coherent unit that gave new ways of framing knowledge from the past and shaping the diversity of the past into a coherent narrative work. It achieved this by aggressively taking the archival mindset of the period, and discursively reordering the textualized information of the Mouseion. This resulted in a cultural product that could create a sense of order from the massive diversity of knowledge housed in the Mouseion and beyond.

⁵⁰ See Selden (1998) 358-369; Fantuzzi and Hunter (2002) 46.

The Mouseion fostered a discursive mode that became a key way for Hellenistic elites for defining their reality. Archival discourse transformed the production of cultural knowledge in the Hellenistic period, helping produce a “superintending unity of knowledge”⁵¹ from the textual remnants of the past and present. Archival discourses acted through works, such as the *Pinakes*, to organize the past knowledge into units of knowledge, information, words, and quotations.⁵² Within the process, notation becomes the first step towards producing new knowledge as “*notabilia*”⁵³ that could be used as the building blocks in the production of new texts. Highlighted parts of texts in turn could then be excerpted and reconfigured as the foundation of new texts infinitely. This discursive trend was not only restricted to the works of Kallimachos, but was evident in many Alexandrian poetic works. Poems, such as Hermesianax of Kolophon’s elegiac *Leontion*, which catalogued love affairs in the work of poets and philosophers, and Lykophron’s *Alexandra*, a poem filled with lexical oddities and local lore, reproduced and help circulate the discourse of the archive in their own cataloguing narrative structures. Archival texts, whether some prose gloss or Alexandrian poem, speak to a wider archive of texts that would form the basis for a new *paideia*.

2.5 The Alexandrian Archiving of Homer

The Alexandrians, as Gregory Nagy has clearly shown, transformed Homer into what he calls “scripture.”⁵⁴ From the sixth century BCE, Homer had been written down

⁵¹ Richards(1993) 4.

⁵² I have borrowed this notion from Jacob (1999) 63-65 and (2000) 92, 94-95.

⁵³ Jacob (2002).

⁵⁴ Nagy (1996) 107-225.

probably in *transcript*⁵⁵ form, but the existence of scripts entailed the continual performance of Homer's works. In fact, it is clear that performers of epic, such as the rhapsode we encounter in Plato's *Ion*, used some forms of written support in their performance.⁵⁶ These performances were also highly regulated by major cultural centers such as Athens, leading to variant texts.⁵⁷ Oral performance, however, was the primary means that most Greeks, including the elite, encountered Homer⁵⁸ until the Peripatetics began to study Homer as a text.⁵⁹ Nagy has argued that early Hellenistic scholars relied on Aristotelian Homeric studies rather than actual rhapsodic performances to interpret Homer.⁶⁰ The earliest Alexandrian Homeric critic, Zenodotos, attempted to elevate their culture hero through intense textual study.⁶¹ They, in essence, spurred on a massive shift in the ways educated Greeks would imagine Homer. They would promote a vision of Homer that was unlike the Homer whose works earlier generations of Greeks had experienced.

The Mouseion's existence as a physical place that housed scrolls points to another issue, the use of technologies in the process of archiving Homer. Literacy went hand-in-

⁵⁵ I have borrowed this term and all the terminology with relation to Homer and his texts from Nagy (1996) 112, who defines transcript, script and scripture as follows:

By *transcript* I mean the broadest possible category of written text: a transcript can be a record of performance, even an aid for performance, but not the equivalent of performance... As for *script*, I mean a narrower category, where the written text is a prerequisite for performance. By *scripture* I mean the narrowest category of them all, where the written text need not even presuppose performance.

⁵⁶ This is the argument from Nagy (1996) 135-145.

⁵⁷ I am referring to the *politikai* or "city books" of Homer.

⁵⁸ Gentili (1988) 176.

⁵⁹ Nagy (1996) 128-132.

⁶⁰ Nagy (1996) 130.

⁶¹ For a full treatment of Zenodotos' project, see Rengakos (1993); Nagy (1996); Lallot (2000).

hand with the development of ways to interpret the textualized information held within the archive. The technology of writing had begun to transform Homer from its earliest appearance, but the rise of literacy and the Alexandrian archive provided a new textual means of remembering the past that helped reshape and rebrand this culture figure.

The Alexandrians probably did not see themselves as doing anything different from those in the past, and they most likely saw their work as central towards “preserving” the past. In fact, they were appropriating the past to construct distinctly new traditions built around a textualized Homer.⁶² What separated the early Hellenistic period from earlier eras was the rate of textualization within these modes of discourse. In *The Archive and Repertoire*, Diana Taylor grapples with similar issues and introduces the concepts of the archive and repertoire to better understand how knowledge is generated, recorded, and transmitted.⁶³ Taylor’s position allows us to discuss how systems of the written and spoken word can coexist and function vis-à-vis the other in producing knowledge.⁶⁴ According to this model, the difference between knowledges is precisely the difference in their respective means of diffusion. What Taylor calls “repertoire,” on the one hand, “enacts embodied memory: performance, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing—in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge” and it demands that people be physically present to transmit this specific brand of knowledge.⁶⁵ This kind of cultural and social knowledge depended on face-to-face contact for its spread

⁶² The classic example is the anachronistic belief among the Hellenistic scholia that Homer “wrote” his works and Hesiod “read” them as texts. Both are cited in Nagy (1996) 151.

⁶³ Taylor (2003) 21.

⁶⁴ Taylor’s model also allows us to move beyond the written/spoken binary to consider other means of disseminating knowledge, such as the “digital.” See Taylor (2003) 22.

⁶⁵ Taylor (2003) 20.

throughout its constituency. The archive, on the other hand, represents “enduring materials (i.e. texts, documents, buildings, bones)” forming a type of “archival memory” that is able to “work across distance, over time and space” and can separate “the source of ‘knowledge’ from the knower—in time and/or space.”⁶⁶

In the case of “Homer,” a Hellenistic rhapsode and an Alexandrian grammarian might both refer to the figure of Homer, but what they saw when they thought about him was a very different thing. For the rhapsode, Homer was the heart of a living song tradition; for the archivist, he was primarily a text to be studied. Taylor emphasizes that both archive and repertoire are both mediations. They replicate themselves “through their own structures and codes” with neither being more authentic than the other but rather working in their own ways to “generate, record, and transmit knowledge.”⁶⁷ Texts often served a mnemonic function for the transmission of “repertoire” knowledge; in archival memory by contrast, writing replaced the “performed utterance” of the repertoire.⁶⁸ This is what Taylor means when she stresses that both often coexist, work in tandem as well as “alongside other systems of transmission.”⁶⁹

The categories of the archive and repertoire map well onto the historical shift in the transmission and construction of Homeric knowledge that occurred from the Classical

⁶⁶ Taylor (2003) 19.

⁶⁷ Taylor (2003) 20-21. Therefore a performance captured on video is not classified as part of a repertoire but rather part of the archive, since it will be functioning with the economy of more “enduring” materials. In this system, it replicates itself in a mode consistent with the archive rather than as a live performance which though seemingly ephemeral are actually replicable and can transmit communal “memories, histories, and values” much like archives.

⁶⁸ Taylor (2003) 17.

⁶⁹ Taylor (2003) 21.

period into the Hellenistic period.⁷⁰ Taylor's model is able to take in account the complexities and nuances in this shift from oral to literate, and not focus on the shift in itself. Instead, Taylor offers a model that can account for the broader historical factors that led to the writing being the dominant mode of transmitting and constructing the cultural past. For example, in discussing the conquest of the Americas, she explores how the interactions between written and oral played out on the political stage. She vividly chronicles the horrific repercussions "on the ground" when a group privileges a set of texts as authoritative over others: "Not only did the colonizers burn the ancient codices, they limited access to writing to a very small group of conquered males who they felt they would promote their evangelical efforts."⁷¹ By directly connecting the political to the cultural in such a manner, Taylor's theorization of the archive helps us understand the political consequences when competing modes of knowledge production collide.

In the fourth century BCE, writing did not displace embodied performances but rather altered "the degree of legitimization of writer [had] over other epistemic and mnemonic systems."⁷² Bruno Gentili describes the situation in the Hellenistic period in just such a manner:

The Hellenistic period presents the spectacle of a culture with two totally different aspects, moving along distinct but parallel lines—learned poetry, libraries, and erudition on the one hand; and, on the other, festive performances, popular education, and entertainment, which still operate within the oral institutional framework provided by theaters and public competitions. One should not underestimate the importance of the latter type of activity, for there was no other way in which large sectors of society could become familiar, orally, with the poetry

⁷⁰ Much of this paragraph mirrors what Taylor (2003) 16-33 has done in terms of interpreting the major changes the European conquest of the Americas wrought on the production of knowledge.

⁷¹ Taylor (2003) 18.

⁷² Taylor (2003) 18.

of the past—the poetry that elite culture knew mainly through books and libraries.⁷³

Thus, writing allowed the restriction of power to those who could practice it and in that way restricted access to the elite classes. As Taylor stresses, the two are neither mutually exclusive nor possible without the other. The pre-Hellenistic Greek-speaking world mainly used writing as a “prompt to performance, a mnemonic aid”⁷⁴ to enhance and improve public speeches, religious rituals, poetic performances, and even to vote. These activities defined the citizen of that world, and the Hellenistic imperial subject continued to use them, too, to define themselves, but they also relied more and more on writing as a means of assembling, reimagining, and transmitting cultural knowledge.⁷⁵ With the conquests of Alexander, political events both provided the means but also the demand for textuality and archiving to be the primary means through which the past was seen, becoming the foundation for a new broader vision of a *paideia* that was foundation for a new panhellenic identity.

Scrolls and writing were a primary means by which Hellenistic elites asserted their power, and limited who could participate in empire on an administrative as well as cultural level.⁷⁶ The large number of documentary papyri recovered from the Hellenistic period speak to the ways that the writing of Greek became the gateway to participate in elite society. One would, for example, have very limited access to the channels of power in

⁷³ Gentili (1988) 176.

⁷⁴ Taylor (2003) 17.

⁷⁵ See Gentili (1988); Bakker (2002); Jacob (2002).

⁷⁶ For an overview, see Thompson (1992) and (1994) and (1997); Ma (2003).

Hellenistic Egypt without the ability to petition someone in Greek.⁷⁷ The ability to write and communicate in Greek or to have access to someone who could do so also connected that person to the broader network of power.⁷⁸ Communication over distances also fostered a sense of regularity within the new imperial system. Koine Greek developed during this period as well as new conventions in writing that tried to assure communication among such a diverse population.⁷⁹ Language and textuality not only affected modes of communication, it also facilitated the way the past was imagined anew by the archival institution of the Mouseion.

Texts during this period came to be one of the main means by which elite interactions were mediated, and Alexandrian poetry should not be seen as separate phenomenon. Alexandrian texts should instead be seen as part of a broader shift toward textuality evident in the mass of papyri recovered from Egypt. Texts made it possible for new cultural knowledge to reach over distances to a broader number of people by making knowledge portable. Texts not only facilitated the rule of the Egyptian hinterland from the metropolis of Alexandria, but they also facilitated the control of cultural knowledge. Through a system of petitions, writing determined who was able to participate in the Ptolemaic legal system⁸⁰ and also who could participate in any new literate cultural activities. Literacy after all placed different demands on those who sought to possess it

⁷⁷ Thompson (1997) 247-248 argues strongly for the notion of “going Greek” by creating a ruling caste through tax status. Moreover, Thompson (1997) 257 highlights how the Ptolemies exerted their political powers by making the scribal classes “retool in Greek,” and then further displaying their authority over the subject people through “census, survey, and fiscal measures.” For a fuller discussion on this topic, see Thompson (1994) and (1997). For the opposing view that there was no official policy, see Préaux (1936) and (1978), esp. pt. II; Goudriaan (1988).

⁷⁸ For a fuller discussion on this topic, see Thompson (1997), esp. 247-57.

⁷⁹ For a discussion on the effect of the political use of *koine* on literature, see Silk (2009).

⁸⁰ See Lewis (1986); Thompson (1997); Evans (2004).

than earlier cultural activities that defined earlier cultural traditions. Whereas knowledge of proper choral dance movements might have empowered Classical Greek subjects, a knowledge of antiquated vocabulary and obscure references to local customs and rituals would privilege the new Hellenistic subject. Naturally, this technological shift was gradual, and a major consequence of this technological shift was a radical redefinition of “Greekness.”

The archivists’ new home supplanted earlier historical incarnations of the bard. In the fourth century BCE, privileging the study of Homer as a text initiated a process that would culminate with the search for the text of the “real” Homer by the second century BCE Alexandrian, Aristarchos. It was not only variants of Homer, such as the *politikai* editions, that would eventually fall by the wayside with the eventual quest for the “real” Homer, but even the works attributed to Homer were reduced during the Hellenistic period to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* based on criteria of content rather than form.⁸¹ The figurehead of all Greek culture, and now imperial Hellenistic culture, could no longer be associated with works or beliefs that were not equal to his status as the sovereign cultural authority.⁸² In the Hellenistic period, Homer also became a figure much alluded to. Once again, his words were not only studied by Philitas in gloss form, but also are littered throughout the works of Alexandrians from Kallimachos to Lykophron.⁸³ Additionally, the new way of enjoying Homer as a text for study entailed a certain erasure of those parts of the corpus that now seemed unworthy of his genius.

⁸¹ Nagy (1996) 150-51.

⁸² Brink (1972).

⁸³ For Kallimachean uses of Homeric vocabulary, see Rengakos (1992). For Lykophron, see Rengakos (1994). For Epigram’s use of Homer, see Sistikou (2007) and the final chapter of this dissertation.

The Alexandrians revolutionized the use of writing to reorder the past into a “unity,” but this same technology provided a way of projecting the logic of the Mouseion beyond its walls. The archons of Alexandria provided the world with a way of making Homer “new.” Although elites could still experience Homer in live performance (and they did), they now had novel ways of experiencing Homer and of using him as material within their own works through citation and allusion. The Mouseion provided a place paradoxically outside of the archive, where the textualizing function of archivization could repeat itself *ad infinitum*. Authors such as Apollonios of Rhodes used Zenodotos’ edition of the text to construct their own works through references to obscure Homeric lexical oddities and forms. Now elites spread over the world could share in a different kind of Homer through the study of his text.

The Alexandrians had transformed Homer from symbol of the old song culture into an idol of the new literary culture they produced and embraced. He had become an Alexandrian poet. This fact did have the effect of producing a vision of Homer that was best suited for those who had the power and resources for textual study. Homer was now anachronistically relegated to being a writer of verse, albeit *the* writer within the Greek tradition, yet through a selective remembrance of Homer, one that elides his original performative self.⁸⁴

2.6 The Imperial Archive of Alexandria

Hellenistic kings ruled over highly developed imperial states that retained power through both material and figurative avenues. As John Ma has stated, these states were comprised of “a set of centralized and autonomous institutions, exercising control and

⁸⁴ The idea that Homer wrote his poems can be found in the scholia (scholia A to *Il.* 17.719).

coercion over a territory.”⁸⁵ On the one hand, we know that these Hellenistic kingdoms maintained well-organized bureaucracies and concrete means of extracting surplus from a variety of localities over a vast expanse of territory and on a scale hitherto undreamed of in the Greek world.⁸⁶ On the other, imperial discourses, such as archival discourse, informed and framed how the kings and the ruling elite expressed themselves and constructed the episteme that helped extend and legitimize their status as rulers over large number of peoples spread over vast expanses of territory. I have artificially separated these two aspects of power, but in reality the two were and are interdependent and are two different aspects of the same impulse to assemble and wield power and control. Through the shaping of knowledge, the Mouseion was an imperial archive that exerted itself on the Hellenistic world as both an actual physical entity as well as a symbol of universal knowledge in the service of empire. The result of wedding the material to the figurative was “to create ‘imagined empire’, a space of unity and efficacy filled with the royal presence; whereas, in reality, actual kingdoms could be quite ragged on the ground, with enclaves of resistance and difference, difficult lines of communication, and the constant “interference” of rival kingdoms.”⁸⁷

The relationship between power and knowledge is a concept that has not escaped scholars of the Hellenistic period, as Peter Green intuitively observes about the Mouseion’s collection, that “knowledge is power.”⁸⁸ Michel Foucault, however, provides us with the

⁸⁵ Ma (2003) 183.

⁸⁶ The imperial infrastructure of Hellenistic kingdoms has a long scholarly history and the following is only a brief sampling of scholarship documenting all the major kingdoms: Bickerman (1938); Rostovtzeff (1941); Musti (1966); Orrieux (1993); Briant (1990): 40-65 and (1994); Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993): 40-71; Billows (1995); Callieri (1995); Hatzopoulos (1996); Thompson (1997); Ma (1999) and (2003).

⁸⁷ Ma (2003) 185.

⁸⁸ Green (2007) 59.

tools for systematically analyzing how power and knowledge were intertwined.⁸⁹ This premise became the foundation for the idea that empire is a knowledge project, which theorists of empire and postcolonialism have popularized over the past thirty years.⁹⁰ Thomas Richards, scholar of British imperialism, has outlined the wedding of knowledge and power in modern British literature. Empire is, Richards claims, “an improvisation” constantly adjusting to the reality on the ground.⁹¹ For Richards, the imperial archive helped maintain an improvised rule over a far-flung empire through the establishment of order, by actively defining its subjects.⁹² This ordering of knowledge within the archive was part of the broader imperial project and its end goal of the consolidation of its own empire. Theorists have generally insisted that this vision of empire is a purely modern, post-Enlightenment phenomenon and have generally ignored or disregarded any possible pre-modern examples of the same phenomena. Over the past ten years or so, however, Classicists, such as Christian Jacob, Phiroze Vasunia, Susan Stephens and Tim Whitmarsh, among others, have challenged Modernity’s monopolistic claim over this notion by exploring possible ancient Mediterranean examples of the phenomenon.⁹³ Many of these Classicists have pointed to the similarities between the rise of literacy and the knowledge explosion in the wake of Alexander the Great’s conquests and similar

⁸⁹ Foucault (1970), (1971), (1977) and (1981).

⁹⁰ For example, see Pratt (1992); Richards (1993); Said (1993); Cohn (1996); Stoler (2002).

⁹¹ Richards (1993) 3.

⁹² Richards (1993) 4.

⁹³ See Vasunia (2001); Stephens (2003); Whitmarsh (2004). For the issue of postcolonialism’s applicability to the ancient world, see Hose (1999). For other examples, see Goldhill (1991); Selden (1998); Too (1998); Jacob (1999); Rebecca Flemming (2003); Bing (2005).

happenings during European colonialism in the modern period.⁹⁴ Scholars of the ancient world, however, have mainly focused on making connections between the new “sciences” or disciplines that came into prominence during the Hellenistic period: Jacob focusing on the geographic knowledge of the period, Flemming on the medical, and Stephens on ethnographic.⁹⁵ This section will try to supplement their studies with a treatment of the cultural world.

It is, therefore, no longer possible to discuss the production of culture without discussing its connections to the broader political world. Even the study of Hellenistic literature has come to embrace this idea with many recent studies situating Hellenistic poetry within its political and historical context.⁹⁶ In short, culture, defined loosely as “social aggregation through shared institutions, values, and preoccupations,”⁹⁷ is an essential component of political domination and imperialism.⁹⁸ Naturally, the term culture is very broad and imprecise and can refer to anything from eating habits to religious practices or clothing.⁹⁹ Within the ancient Greek context, Greek culture could have been defined through a number of institutions: the Games, gymnasium, symposium, or theater. For Hellenistic elites, however, the intense study of literature was a critical new mode of

⁹⁴ On the ancient side, see Jacob (1999), (2000), and (2002); Flemming (2003); Stephens (2003); Whitmarsh (2004). This group has made the clearest connection between the rise of the Successor Kingdoms of the Hellenistic World and the production of new knowledges. Vasunia (2001) has done so for the world of Classical Greece leading up the conquest of Alexander. On the modern side, among the large number of works that deal with the knowledge explosion, I have found Richards (1993) the best. The issue of literacy as an actor in pre-industrial empire building has been laid out by Mignolo (1995).

⁹⁵ See Jacob (1999); Flemming (2003); Stephens (2003) respectively.

⁹⁶ See Goldhill (1991); Erskine (1995); Too (1998); Selden (1998); Jacob and Polignac (2000); Jacob (2000); Stephens (2003) and (2005).

⁹⁷ Whitmarsh (2001) 35.

⁹⁸ Said (1993) 8.

⁹⁹ See Dougherty and Kurke (2003b), Hall (2003), and Antonaccio (2003).

performing Greekness. The ancient world utilized language and customs as a means of demarcating groups, but we should not mistake these similarities for the nationalistic movements of the nineteenth and twentieth century.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, we should avoid race as a category in the ancient world since it was viewed in a completely different manner.¹⁰¹ Instead, we should concentrate on recovering how culture and identity were constructed within specific ancient contexts.

Modes of differentiation during the Hellenistic were just as if not more fluid than in the modern period, and we should engage with that difference in all its complexity. Many today, for example, can identify themselves as belonging to several different “cultures” simultaneously—urban, youth, tribal, national, trade or corporate. Likewise, a Hellenistic subject could also identify themselves through numerous categories and could assume many roles in society. One example is Zenon, whose correspondence with his employer Apollonios, an important adviser to Ptolemy II Philadelphos, makes up the largest documentary archive from Ptolemaic Egypt. Around 260 BCE, Zenon emigrated from Caria to Egypt in order to oversee a wide range of Apollonios’ properties. His correspondence reveals his position on the imperial frontline trying to forge a new life in a

¹⁰⁰ On national identity in the ancient world, see Østergård (1992).

¹⁰¹ For a fuller discussion of racism and the ancient world, see Snowden (1991); Isaacs (2004); Eliav-Feldon, Isaac, and Ziegler (2009). I primarily view the term racism as a modern phenomenon and part of broader discourses of empire and nation state. The term is too loaded to be decoupled from its modern associations. Therefore, any discussion of a form of “racism,” ancient or not, that lacks its modern pseudo-scientific connections seems to no longer be “racism.” Isaacs’ 2009 attempt to trace modern racism as a direct descendent of ancient precursors as problematic at best. Snowden, on the other hand, paints too simple a picture of views on “race” in the ancient world, and I feel he whitewashes how some people from antiquity associated skin color with certain negative values. As Isaacs has outlined in his 2004 work, there are many examples of value judgments based on skin color is present in ancient narratives, and clearly they must have played a role in shaping modern notions of race. This, however, does not justify Isaac’s attempt to trace a direct line of descent from Ancient Athens down to the present and that it “developed” into modern racism.

new environment and working among unfamiliar peoples and climes.¹⁰² Another is Dryton, a cavalry officer from the second century BCE, a Greek who straddled the line between Greek and Egyptian worlds. He was an ethnic Greek who lived with his Hellenized Egyptian wife and family. He and his family navigated a life between the two cultures. His wife, Apollonia, and their five daughters maintained dual identities in terms of name and language.¹⁰³ A final example is Peteharsemtheus, who maintained an Egyptian name while emphatically affirming his privileged status as “a Greek born in Egypt.”¹⁰⁴ He is a fine example of a Hellenized Egyptian, who corresponded with his family in demotic while his “official” correspondence was in Greek. As we can see from these examples, culture is never as neat and tidy and that the ancient inhabitants of Ptolemaic Egypt must have defined and dealt with cultural identity differently from us.

In premodern societies, culture and ethnicity was constantly being negotiated on the ground through everyday interactions and relied less on established and “officially” sanctioned narratives of national or ethnic identity. The idea that an ancient monarch could dictate culture or rule with an apartheid-like system seems to be an anachronistic interpretation of the avenues of power and influence.¹⁰⁵ Unlike a modern state, which can literally reach into a family’s living room, ancient political entities had neither the technology nor the ideology to carry out such a micro-managing of their subjects.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² For more on Zenon, see Pestman (1981); Orrioux (1983), (1985) and (1987); Clarysse and Vandorpe (1995).

¹⁰³ See Pomeroy (1984); Lewis (1986).

¹⁰⁴ See Lewis (1986) 139-141. For more information on the privileged status of being “Greek,” see Thompson (1997).

¹⁰⁵ For an example of this type of argument, see Maehler (2004).

¹⁰⁶ For a representative sampling of those who argue for a harder, apartheid-like system from the top-down, see Habicht (1958); Lewis (1986); Savalli-Lestrade (1998); Maehler (2004). For those who see more

Although the very top of the ruling class might have believed in hard categories of culture and ethnicity, the examples above demonstrate how most of the subjects, even local elites, of Ptolemaic Egypt constantly redefined and reevaluated what comprised “Greek culture” and whose “property” it was. The papyrological evidence concretely demonstrates how fluid the notion of cultural identity is.¹⁰⁷

In his treatment of the depictions of Hellenistic monarchs, John Ma has outlined a way through which culture and cultural markers were employed situationally.¹⁰⁸ Ma uses Pierre Briant’s interpretation of the Borsippa cylinder as a way to begin a discussion on the hybrid nature of the symbols of power and culture.¹⁰⁹ The Borsippa cylinder is a Babylonian chronicle that presents the glories of Antiochos I through a traditional Babylonian cultural form. It was a clay cylinder inscribed with archaizing Babylonian cuneiform script that chronicles the Antiochos’ restoration of a temple where it was buried.¹¹⁰ Ma (and Briant) recognizes that there are “untraditional” elements, such as the title “the Macedonian,” among what are predominantly traditional Babylonian features. Ma goes on to demonstrate how even the dominant culture has to negotiate with other

interpenetration of the cultures, see Tarn (1959); Wilcken (1963); Welles (1970). Briant’s notion of a dominant ethno-class, which I will discuss later, appears to be a way of moving beyond a Manichean approach to the topic of culture. One can have a “dominant” ethno-class and still have contestation and negotiation taking place on the smallest scale. The ways of defining who comprises this “ethno-class” and how one works within categories laid out by the ruling bodies is the place where we can see the variety and slippage that comprise these issues. Regardless, I think any fast and hard categories applied to the ancient world is problematic at best.

¹⁰⁷ Dillery (1998) sees this in historical writing. Selden (1998) and Stephens (2003) and (2005) see it in the literary evidence. For the papyrological evidence, see Goudriaan (1988); Thompson (1997), (2001), and (2003); Rowlandson (2003). For variety in depictions of kings, see Ma (2003).

¹⁰⁸ See Ma (2003).

¹⁰⁹ Ma (2003) 186-191.

¹¹⁰ See Kurht and Sherwin-White (1991).

cultures with hybridity being the natural result.¹¹¹ He believes that rulers had to function on many different levels, performing as the “oriental” king in some situations and the great benefactor of *poleis* in others.¹¹² In this instance, power and culture work together according to the situation. Ma provides us with the type of flexible model that can simultaneously account for the hierarchies among cultural categories, especially in imperial and colonial contexts, and that these categories are constant state of flux.

Culture is enacted and negotiated through the daily habits and activities of certain groups of people, and therefore we should consider how it is constituted. It can never be merely manipulated from above and is not monolithic. How else could one explain the case of Ptolemy introduced above. Here was a man who apparently felt he was “Greek” and yet had no problem maintaining a “barbarian” name and the use of its language.¹¹³ Before the Hellenistic period, it would have been highly unlikely for a person to do so, but the realities of his historical situation allowed for this to happen. The complexity of all historical situations dictates that the interaction of cultures always results in some interpenetration, which calls for more flexible models of culture that can take into account the range of cultural differences in all their geographic and temporal complexity. Instead of viewing cultures as static and as chiefly subject to influence by rulers, they should be seen as forces that respond to and directly impact society on many levels, most of them not consciously controlled or planned.

¹¹¹ Ma (2003) 189.

¹¹² Ma (2003) 179-183.

¹¹³ For more on ethnicity in Ptolemaic Egypt, see Lewis (1986); Goudriaan (1988); Thompson (1992) and (1997); La’da (2002) and (2003). For Egyptian elites, see Lloyd (2002); Baines (2004).

Andrew Erskine is a representative of those scholars who depict the Mouseion as part of a broader Ptolemaic cultural agenda to legitimize the new dynast's authority. Erskine employs culture as a static entity that can be used, inherited, recovered, and reborn seemingly in some unchanged pure form. He states that: "Being cultural leaders was a reflection of their aspiration to political leadership... So just as the Ptolemies sought to establish control over other Greek states, so they also sought to establish control over Greek culture."¹¹⁴ This view of the Mouseion and its political context has been repeated in some form or another by many scholars of the Hellenistic period and mainly seems to depend on an undertheorized notion of culture.¹¹⁵ Although this approach to the Mouseion attempts to politicize the institution, it still depicts the Mouseion as a mere repository of an object, the past. As I have shown above in the case of Homer, this iconic figure meant different things in different historical situations. Although Homer was *the* central figure that defined Greek culture throughout antiquity, he did so in many different forms—as the singer, as the master of all arts, as the text, and as the theologian. He was and remains a central signifier for defining culture, but his meaning is determined by his social context. Erskine's approach misunderstands the highly active and interpretive role that the Mouseion played in shaping and imagining the past anew for the inhabitants of a world newly dominated by a small Greco-Macedonian elite.

¹¹⁴ Erskine (1995): 45.

¹¹⁵ The general view that the Mouseion is repository or source is still commonplace. These scholars tend to characterize the Mouseion as the passive preserver or guardian over the Greek tradition or inheritance, making claims that the new disciplines of "philology" and "science" were established "to recapture the missing literary legacy of our predecessors" (Berti and Costa (2009) 3). Krevans and Sens (2006) 188 follow a similar line of thought stating that "the concern of Hellenistic scholars" was "with uncovering and preserving the linguistic and cultural past." For examples of those who continue to use the rhetoric that describe the Mouseion as a passive vessel which "preserved" "Greek" culture for posterity, see Flemming (2003: 453); Maehler (2004); Krevans and Sens (2006: 188); Gutzwiller (2007: 21).

For all the merit of the work of Erskine and those who have followed in his footsteps, their approach is limited by an underdeveloped notion of culture, one that fails to take into account factors that arise in imperial and colonial contexts. In these contexts, culture should not solely be seen as propaganda legitimizing the ruling elite or the cynical plaything of sycophantic poets.¹¹⁶ Culture does not work as imagined, for example, in this statement:

So just as the Ptolemies sought to establish control over other Greek states, so they also sought to establish control over Greek culture. They went about in just the same way—seizing books from ships, tricking foreign states into relinquishing them, practices such as these might seem more like the high-handed attitude of an imperial power than a book collector. The aim was all Greek books, thus a monopoly of Greek culture.¹¹⁷

Erskine here makes an apt comparison between controlling culture and land, but in both cases he equates seizure of something with control. To put it bluntly, this is never the way it happens. Control over something, whether it is an object or an idea, such as Greekness, is always a process not a mere one-time action. Erskine argues as if culture is a parcel of land, something that is clearly defined and obvious to all, and can simply be handed over to someone else unchanged. Culture, however, is not a parcel of land and culture is not a “permanent,” fixed entity that can be handed over from one person or ruler to another unchanged. This is especially true with the case of the Successor Kingdoms where we see such radical change in the geographic dispersion of Greek speakers between 350 and 250 BCE. Scholars who follow this model have failed to see that culture is as much a process as ruling, and that it is not something that is static, but fluid. Although most of Erskine’s overall conclusions are still pertinent, it is how he conceives of categories such as culture

¹¹⁶ For the former, see Maehler (2004). For the latter, see Green (1990) 171-172.

¹¹⁷ Erskine (1995): 45.

and the processes and institutions that shape the construction of culture that need to be explored in a more nuanced manner in order to see the complexity and diversity of ancient societies.

“Greekness” or Hellenicity, to borrow a term from Jonathan Hall, is not a static concept, but is a category that is continually being contested and redefined. Greeks throughout antiquity consistently relied on the binary of Greek versus barbarian as the means of defining themselves. From the first time they encountered *barbaroi* in the seventh century BCE down through the Second Sophistic, the concept of who fit within which category was continually negotiated and renegotiated and became a palimpsest of cultural difference. The provisional nature of these categories is natural, but the manner in which cultural identity historically played out cannot be examined separately from the broader political and historical events that informed this dialogue.

From its earliest incarnations, we can see how Greek-speaking peoples imagined their relationship with the other or barbarian as one that catalyzed into a sense of panhellenic identity. Initially, this is evident in their interactions with non-Greek speakers in the age of colonization in the Archaic period, where there had been an ambivalence toward peoples some of whom would have become members of “Greek” colonies.¹¹⁸ With Persian invasions of the early fifth century, however, we begin to see a more negative, orientalist depiction of barbarians in the works of Aischylos and Herodotos, whose narratives could be easily seen as narratives of resistance to the larger and imperialistic “barbarian” invader, the Persians. Cultural identity came to the fore in the late fourth century exacerbated by the colonial and imperial ambitions of the Greco-Macedonians.

¹¹⁸ See Hall (2003) and Antonaccio (2003).

The fourth century saw the growth of a broader and more developed sense of panhellenic identity constructed vis-à-vis the othering of barbarian peoples within the Greek discourses of tragedy, history, and oratory.¹¹⁹ The fourth century orator, Isokrates, for example, expanded the definition of “Greekness” so as to include aspects of culture as well as nature in his *Panegyricus*.¹²⁰ Still Isokrates was not calling for a world culture, but rather for all Greeks to unite behind the shield of Athens in a campaign against the Persians. His statement nevertheless reflects a willingness of the Greeks to debate the terms of what constitutes their identity. Phiroze Vasunia has made a compelling case that these discourses mapped out the conquest of Alexander the Great, but ultimately one could also contend that these discourses shaped an identity of resistance to the exclusion of the non-ethnic Greek.¹²¹

After the conquests in the Hellenistic period, the notion of Hellenicity shifted from being primarily determined biologically to one determined through performing Greekness. Naturally, the language of defining identity in the Hellenistic was still very much couched in the traditional genealogical forms inherited from earlier generations, but from the start

¹¹⁹ For examples, see Hartog (1988); Martin (1990); Vasunia (2001).

¹²⁰ Section 52 of Isocrates’ speech is as follows:

τοσοῦτον δ' ἀπολέλοιπεν ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν περὶ τὸ φρονεῖν καὶ λέγειν τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους, ὥσθ' οἱ ταύτης μαθηταὶ τῶν ἄλλων διδάσκαλοι γεγόνασιν, καὶ τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὄνομα πεποιήκε μηκέτι τοῦ γένους ἀλλὰ τῆς διανοίας δοκεῖν εἶναι, καὶ μᾶλλον Ἕλληνας καλεῖσθαι τοὺς τῆς παιδείας τῆς ἡμετέρας ἢ τοὺς τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως μετέχοντας.

So far has our city left other men behind with regard to wisdom and expression that its students have become the teachers of others. The result is that the name of the Hellenes no longer seems to indicate an ethnic affiliation (*genos*) but a disposition (*dianoia*). Indeed, those who are called 'Hellenes' are those who share our culture (*paideusis*) rather than have a common biological inheritance (*physis*).

The translation is Jonathan Hall’s (2002) 209. For a detailed discussion of this passage, see Hall (2002) 209-210.

¹²¹ See Vasunia (2001).

we see those traditional discourses molded for a new audience in newer political situations. Even in terms of performance, the idea of being Greek was no longer *merely* wrapped up in participating in local or regional rituals and traditions or even in partaking in earlier panhellenic institutions, such as the Games or the Homeric tradition or the more recent Athenian inspired cultural institution of tragedy.¹²² For many thousand Greek colonists living outside of the traditional Greek homeland and for the numerous native elites of the outside of it, new ways for defining and participating in “Greekness” were required.

Hellenistic Greek writers gradually redefined what it meant to be Greek turning it into a more inclusive category that could incorporate those formerly considered fringe Greeks, such as Greco-Macedonians, as well as ethnically non-Greek elites under the umbrella of Hellenism. Throughout the history of this trope, we witness the politics of cultural identity formation, where power relations among an ever-changing slate of political players (the Athenians, Spartans, Ionians, Greeks, Persians, Egyptians, Greco-Macedonians, Celts, Indians, Jews, Scythians, Italic peoples, etc...) are played out in the discourse surrounding the manner in which people define themselves versus others. In his history of Egypt, Hekataios of Miletos tried to define Egypt for Greeks, while native elites such as Manetho and Berossos wrote the histories of Egypt and Babylon respectively in order to write their own ethnic groups into the dominant cultural discourse.¹²³

Alexandrian literature, as I have already mentioned, privileged viewing “Greek” cultural tradition through the filter of learning. Practitioners of this new form of erudition

¹²² This is not to suggest that these “older” institutions were no longer highly influential entities through which culture was defined, since they were. It is just not within the scope of this dissertation to discuss the ways archival discourse and the imperial expansion affected these institutions.

¹²³ I shall address Hekataios and Manetho within this section. For more of Berossos, see Kuhrt (1987); Verbrughe and Wickersham (2001).

transformed knowledge of the past into a key status and ethnic marker. Through displays of this knowledge in literary endeavors, anyone with means could aspire to be counted as a member of this new elite.¹²⁴ These acts of self-definition have broader political implications, since at any given moment in history they often shaped who held power and how much power they could wield. Conceptions of cultural identity have historically been cited as the reasons behind conquest and empire making, but they also play a key role in consolidating power within an empire and extending an empire's power beyond its physical limits. Therefore, it makes sense to peel back the historical layers that overlay this narrative trope, so we can see how it changed and developed during this critical period within the early Hellenistic period.

Greco-Macedonian imperialism had led to the creation of a wholly new entity, Hellenistic imperial subjectivity. This new imperial culture superseded the traditional Greek-barbarian binary which had played such a crucial role in defining Greek identity. To define this form of subjectivity, I turn to Greg Woolf's work on Roman imperialism. In his analysis of Roman imperialism and Romanization, Greg Woolf proposes to move beyond the idea of "conflict, competition or interaction between two cultures" and shift to the idea that we are dealing with a "new imperial culture" that has "supplanted" earlier incarnations of Roman culture.¹²⁵ Woolf's model can take into account the complex and ever-changing nature of culture, especially in antiquity. Moreover, it can also account for the diversity of experiences of cultural politics, especially useful when dealing with colonial

¹²⁴ Clearly, this brand of erudition privileged those who were wealthy enough to have leisure time. Besides *otium*, the new learning was based on access to texts and demanded that its practitioners have access to texts like those housed in the Mouseion.

¹²⁵ Woolf (1997) 341.

or imperial cultural formation.¹²⁶ He feels that a key advantage to this view of imperial culture is that it “invites us to look for the structuring principles, the cultural logic of empire.” It is not culture itself that is the source of conflict between two distinct cultural systems but rather that culture is an “effect of discriminatory practices” and that “the production of cultural *differentiation*” was a sign of authority of those in power.¹²⁷ At the same time, it still allows us to account for the fact that imperial cultures, such as the Romans and Greco-Macedonians, were and are products of the political reality of one people or nation extending domination over others.¹²⁸ Furthermore, Woolf’s theories on cultural and ethnic formation are useful in allowing us to move beyond static and essentialized notions of culture discussed above. Both instead are seen as provisional categories that speak to the political situations of that historical moment.¹²⁹ Thereby when the Alexandrians colonized knowledge of the past, it resulted in a culture that was no longer merely Greek or barbarian but instead a new hybrid imperial culture. Therefore, Hellenistic Hellenicity should be seen as a manifestation of an imperial culture.

Cultural knowledge was the foundation of imperial Hellenistic culture, and cultural activities were the primary means through which elites of the dominant Greco-Macedonian ruling class reinforced and refined their own identities, but also the means through which “native” elites could aspire to enter the ranks of the elite. It should be no surprise that to be considered a member of the Hellenistic Greek elite was defined more on

¹²⁶ Dougherty and Kurke (2003b) also stress the need to recognize the multiple levels of ethnic and cultural identity, especially in the ancient world.

¹²⁷ Bhabha (1985) 156.

¹²⁸ Woolf (1997) 341.

¹²⁹ Stephens (2003) addresses the use of Egyptian models within Alexandrian literature; while Stephens (2004b) and (2005) continues to flesh out Egypt in Alexandrian contexts.

the practice of “Greek” activities, especially in conquered lands, that required persons to be educated or learned in Greek culture to be “*pepaideumenoi*” (educated) in “*paideia*.” This conception of power should not merely be considered the property of one group who lords it over another,¹³⁰ but rather as a part of a larger process where power relations are constantly negotiated and renegotiated. Following Tim Whitmarsh’s work on *paideia* in the Imperial period, I have come to define the term as connoting “civilization and culture” in addition to its more conventional meaning of “education” that should not be viewed as “a single, doctrinally coherent system, but a locus for a series of competitions and debates concerning the proper way in which life should be lived.”¹³¹

The rise of the discipline of philology and scholarship in the early Hellenistic period was a means for Hellenistic ruling elites to deal with the past by colonizing it. They dealt with it, as Said stated about the Orient, “by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it” and in the end these new disciplines allowed for a new way of “dominating, restructuring, and having authority over” the past and its traditions.¹³² Texts formed the cultural core around which a Greek identity would coalesce thus coming also to play a key role in disseminating and defining that identity in many ways that either complemented or displaced traditional means of self-identification. This version of Hellenicity attempted to make local traditions, such as

¹³⁰ There remains a need to avoid falling into the pitfalls of either taking up the tired model Arnoldian notion of “Culture” that still occasionally rears its head in scholarly discourse and in the popular imagination or notions of reified national cultures and identities that still permeate discourses in intellectual circles, especially in the rhetoric of political policy and identity politics. We also see notions of national identity or regional identity appear in some the postcolonial scholarship with appeals to “authenticity” and “experience” (see Clifford (1988) 255-279, esp. 259 where he notes Said’s “appeals to an old-fashioned existential realism” that belies his claims that the categories he relies on are merely rhetorical conventions).

¹³¹ Whitmarsh (2001) 5.

¹³² Said (1979) 3.

local cults and lore that had hitherto defined regional Greek identity relevant to broader population through cultural products like Kallimachos' discussed above. Local traditions and lore, which must have filled the lost prose histories of Xenomedes of Kos and Timaios of Tauromenion, by definition never served a large constituency. They might have, however, represented a way for Greeks to reconnect with their fading traditions.

Theokritos, in his *Idyll* 15, presents us with two female characters who cling fiercely to the identity of their natural birthplace now that they live in the new multicultural city of Alexandria. Throughout this work, Theokritos focuses on the tensions among its characters over regional identity, traditions, and cultural stereotypes. We see each of these respectively in the mention of the "broad vowels" of Dorians (l. 88), the old woman who speaks like Homer (ll. 62-63), and in describing a thief as setting upon someone "like an Egyptian" (l. 48). These all point to a shared anxiety over identity of those separated from the lands of their birth and their past, which appears throughout early Alexandrian works from Theokritos to Herodas.¹³³

This anxiety was alleviated by the integration of all these local differences into new panhellenic cultural products. Thereby, in each *hapax legomenon*, strange cult name of some god, or new hybrid poetic form, we can see how erudition provided its vastly diverse audiences with a means of engaging an otherwise distant, slightly irrelevant set of traditions. What was once considered local now appeared universal, because it could now

¹³³ The following are a representative sampling: Herodas 1 presents us with the anxiety of a woman left behind by her man whom she fears has left for good to settle in the new land of opportunity, Egypt. Apollonios' *Argonautika* in its own right is an homage to learning and the epic past, reflecting the need to reconnect with the past in new ways. Kallimachos' *Iambi* represent a nostalgic look back to the past of iambic poetry along with his *Aetia* and their search for causes. Peter Green (2007) 61 has also noted this tendency among Alexandrian poetry in which he sees an "recurrent obsession with *aitia*—causes, roots, origins, the why and how of lovingly retrieved ancient customs." Later on the same page, he recognizes the same contradictory pattern of new and old I have continually mentioned when he notes, "this new world still in so many ways inextricably wedded to the old."

be shared, even when masked as local lore, in every corner of the empire. The prerequisite for entrance into Greek culture had changed from an ethnically charged one exemplified by the citizenship laws of Athens to one passed around as shared *paideia*. For whether a person was reading a work of Kallimachos in Alexandria or out in the distant frontier, the intellectual minutiae contained in the work ultimately led back to its symbolic cultural heart in Alexandria's royal quarters.

The Mouseion came to represent the new Hellenistic *paideia* and onto it were projected the hopes of all. Foucault defines an "other" place that represents everything to everyone and in so doing becomes a place that can never actually exist. Thomas Richards, utilizing the work of Michel Foucault and Edward Said, describes modern projects of empire as having created a "fantasy of the imperial archive."¹³⁴ His model posits that this fantasy relies on the myth of an archive that allows empires to rule through the control of knowledge gathered and ordered in this fantasy archive. Foucault envisions this place as:

the idea of accumulating everything, of establishing a sort of general archive, the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages, the project of organizing in this a sort of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in an immobile place, this whole idea belongs to our modernity.¹³⁵

Although Foucault claims his space for modernity, it perfectly describes the things that Hellenistic elites projected onto their own "imaginary" archive.

The Mouseion represented an imaginary place where ethnically Greek scholars¹³⁶ were able to introduce "foreign" cultures to a Greek speaking audience. Prose works

¹³⁴ Richards (1993): 6.

¹³⁵ Foucault (1986), 26.

¹³⁶ I am referring to those who would now be considered so based on their birth having been born in what was the pre-Hellenistic Greek-speaking world.

composed at the Mouseion, like Kallimachos' *Collections of the Marvels of the World Appearing in Certain Places* and *Customs of Barbarians*,¹³⁷ used the space of the archive to integrate new foreign entities into the preexisting hierarchy.¹³⁸ This "virtual space" can be seen as compensation for the disorder of the "real space" of Hellenistic world that witnessed great upheavals in established social hierarchies and power structures.¹³⁹ The Mouseion and its archival project could provide a sense of order through a new set of habits and ways of knowing the world. The Mouseion played a central part of that unconscious act of "self-invention" in a quest "for justification and identity in the form of ancestral myth."¹⁴⁰ Works of the Mouseion began a process of integrating new cultural habits and knowledge into the archive of Hellenism by couching the unfamiliar in the form of the familiar. Kallimachos' *Hymn to Delos*, for example, integrates elements from the ethnographic writer Hekataios of Abdera's early Hellenistic account of Hyperborea into his description of the sacred island. Kallimachos' work is a mini-archive of trends of the period, as it draws from the familiar (the hymnal form, Delos' ancient connection to Hyperborea, and utopic thought) and unfamiliar (Hekataios' account of Hyperborea, Delos' connection to Egypt) all spun together with erudite and highly allusional language.¹⁴¹ Besides his work on Hyperborea, Hekataios of Abdera was known for his

¹³⁷ For a fragment of the former work, see fragment 407 from Pfeiffer (1949); for the latter, see fragment 405.

¹³⁸ One could trace this fascination back to the Logographers and Herodotos, and I am not claiming that this phenomenon is new rather that each work arose in a different historical context.

¹³⁹ The notion of "virtual space" and "real space" are borrowed from Foucault's essay, "Of Other Spaces" (1986).

¹⁴⁰ Green (2007) xx.

¹⁴¹ For a full description of the connections among the texts of Hekataios, Euhemeros, and Kallimachos, see Dillery (1998) 269-274.

ethnographic and geographical treatise of Egypt the *Aigyptika*.¹⁴² Despite the fact that he wrote his *History of Egypt* before the establishment of the Mouseion,¹⁴³ his history can be seen as a precursor of those actually written from the dream space of the Mouseion. It was one of the first works that attempted “to take the ‘facts’ of another, non-Greek culture, and deploy them in a completely fictional, other-worldly setting.”¹⁴⁴ Hekataios, like Kallimachos, wove the unfamiliar “facts” of Egypt into a fantastic narrative that appealed to his predominantly ethnic Greek audience. His texts could be seen as bringing Egypt to Greece. Although he never worked in the Mouseion, Hekataios represents a certain type of archival thinking that would transform the way Greek culture would be conceived. Moreover, his work in the form of a text was most likely housed in the Mouseion and in the form of a scroll had a long afterlife shaping the imagination of intellectual successors, like Kallimachos.

The Mouseion was also a virtual “dream” space where native elites, such as the Egyptian Manetho, could develop their own “Greek” voice.¹⁴⁵ He is one of first known “barbarians” to write a history of Egypt in Greek. His *History of Egypt* covered Egyptian dynastic history from its beginnings through the age of Alexander the Great. Manetho

¹⁴² Dillery (1998) 272. The early Hellenistic period saw a number of Greeks writing histories of the newly conquered lands, such as Megasthenes on India. Oswyn Murray (1970) 159 saw the work of Hekataios as a break from earlier accounts of Egypt and states that his work “marked a turning point in Greek understanding of both Jewish and Egyptian civilization.” There were, of course earlier writers who described of distant lands. In addition to Herodotos and Hekataios of Miletos, these included Ktesias of Knidos, a fifth century BCE writer on India and Persia. The fourth century Peripatetic philosopher Theophrastos wrote on Jewish religious practices in his *On Piety* probably to be understood as an early Hellenistic example of explaining newly encountered foreign customs. For more on the dating and Theophrastos’ connection to Hekataios, see Stern and Murray (1973).

¹⁴³ For the extant fragments, see *FHG*, 2. 384-96. He is believed to have written the work under Ptolemy I Soter at Thebes. For more biographical information on Hekataios, see Murray (1970), Stern and Murray (1973); Sarton (1987) 206; Dillery (1998).

¹⁴⁴ Dillery (1998): 274.

¹⁴⁵ For a more biographical information on Manetho, see Dillery (1998) and (1999); Verbrugge (1996).

could introduce a history of his people from a wholly new perspective, since he could read Egyptian and was himself a member of the Egyptian priesthood. His account must have been an attempt to redefine what constituted “Egypt” in the minds of the Greeks, and the title of one of his lost works, *Against Herodotos*,¹⁴⁶ also suggests as much. His history along with his other works, such as the *Digest of Physics*, also push us to believe that he was trying to present his Greek speaking audience with an Egyptian’s view of Egypt. In an analysis of the narrative structures Manetho’s history, John Dillery has described it as a work that:

contained narratives that offered another way to present the history of Egypt, one that concerned both the past and the future, and which privileged the role of the native priest (prophetic texts, biographies, etc.); this element also made Egypt in some sense powerful again in a world where its standing had in fact been greatly diminished.¹⁴⁷

Manetho was not, therefore, writing against his Greek “overlords” but was trying to carve out a space for himself and other Egyptian elites into the new Hellenistic power structures. The Mouseion provided a space where native elites could imagine “foreign” ways of telling stories with the traditional Greek ones.¹⁴⁸

The Mouseion was a place where cultures encountered one another and a space where relations between narrative and culture could be renegotiated. It was after all a contact zone, neither Greek nor Egyptian, where both conquerors and conquered could project their aspirations in a new “global world.” All this underscores the ironic fact that we have tried to reconstruct a world of texts, scholarship, and institutional history from

¹⁴⁶ Verbrugge and Wickersham (2001) 97 lists Manetho’s eight known titles: *History of Egypt*, *Against Herodotos*, *The Sacred Book*, *On Antiquity and Religion*, *On Festivals*, *On the Preparation of Kyphi*, *The Digest of Physics*, and *The Book of Soothis*.

¹⁴⁷ Dillery (1999) 112.

¹⁴⁸ For more on Egyptian elite, see Lloyd (2002); Baines (2004).

legends. It appears any attempts to recover the details of the inner workings of the Mouseion are not only hopeless but also highly problematic. Instead, I propose to assume the most basic of assumptions: that the Mouseion was a place where texts were gathered, scholarship was done on those texts, and most importantly that it was viewed as the seat of culture for the broader “world.”

2.7 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have tried to demonstrate how it was through the seemingly trivial activities of the archive—scholarship, library science, and erudite poetry—rather than through the actions of monarchs that the means of control over the empire were perpetuated. These practices were the means through which the elite came to identify themselves as imperial subjects and the rightful rulers of the known world. The period redefined what and how one defined oneself as “Greek.” The learned works produced within the Mouseion enabled its readers to imagine themselves as part of a broader learned elite, empowering them to believe that they too had entered the sacred brotherhood of those living at the cultural center of their world. So, no matter where the consumers of this new culture were situated, they could now envision themselves as a part of the broader project, and they could achieve this simply by writing a poem or reading a commentary on a canonical work, products of an imperial archive.

Archival discourse was the hegemonic discursive structure that fostered a systematicity of thinking and behaving that provided coherence for Hellenic identity. Through the act of archiving, the Mouseion reconfigured earlier phenomena, everything from rituals to medical knowledge, into textualized cultural knowledge. This knowledge permitted a disparate body of information to be reimagined through the systematic

structuring of archival discourse. This structuring, in turn, helped meet the new demands that the conquests of Alexander and their subsequent colonization created, and the subjects of these new ventures as they endured massive social and cultural upheavals by providing the illusion of seamless continuity with the past. Thus, the Mouseion imposed, at least to a degree, a Greek epistemological framework enabled primarily through gathering, selecting, claiming, and revering certain cultural artifacts, whether tangible or intangible, as “authentic” and authoritative collective property.

At the Mouseion, burgeoning disciplines, such as philology, had been transforming the formless heap of textualized information collected there into coherent systems of knowledge. Works like Kallimachos’ *Pinakes*, which systematically detailed the lives and works of all known Greek writers housed within the Mouseion, provided their audience not only with a way of making sense of the past but also a way of interacting with it. Through works like the *Pinakes*, iconic poets, who had become shadowy figures fading into oblivion, could once again play a central role in Greek culture. Hellenistic elites could access a broader, “international” community and take part in common ways of “worshipping” a shared group of culture heroes. This was accomplished through the purchase of a scroll of a learned Alexandrian poet, the sending of an epigram to a friend, or the composition a learned poem. Examples of all these phenomena exist: the fragments of Kallimachos found in the house of an low level official living in the remote Egyptian *chôra*,¹⁴⁹ epigrams on letters from the Zenon archive, and Lykophron’s composition of his

¹⁴⁹ There is an example of a text of Kallimachos found in the second century CE Egyptian site of Karanis. The neighbor of the owner of the Kallimachos fragment, one Socrates, a local tax collector, also owned literary and grammatical papyri. Although these are late examples, they provide a possible glimpse how scholarship and Alexandrian maintained their reputation. It is possible that third century BCE bureaucrats also consumed these texts, but these texts did not survive. For a full treatment of Karanis, see van Minnen (1994).

monument to learning—the *Alexandra*.¹⁵⁰ These acts of self-definition, all derived from the study of texts, provided a way by which elites could feel connected to the distant past while still connecting with one another. Through the spread of texts that carried the “seal” of erudition, new ways of conceiving of tradition and experiencing the past radiated forth from metropolitan cultural centers, like Alexandria, to the remotest hinterland of the known world.

¹⁵⁰ I shall discuss these latter two topics in detail in my second and third chapters.

3. Poem as Archive: Lykophron's *Alexandra*

“The authority of the archive of Homer and Hesiod was such that it led not to their stories being rejected but rather reinterpreted in a more acceptable light.”

-Vanda Zajko¹

“For the enterprise of empire depends upon the idea of having an empire, as Conrad so powerfully seems to have realized, and all kinds of preparations are made for it within a culture, then in turn imperialism acquires a kind of coherence, a set of experiences, and a presence of ruler and ruled alike within the culture.”

- Edward Said²

3.1 Introduction

Lykophron's *Alexandra* is a tour-de-force of learned obscurantism that pushes the edge of Alexandrian poetry.³ Moreover, it is a literary work that defies any attempts at classification within the traditional bounds of Ancient Greek generic conventions.⁴ It

¹ Zajko (1998) 107.

² Zajko (1998) 107.

³ Lykophron's poem is still a much neglected and understudied text, unpopular within the mainstream of Classical Studies. Its harshest critics have labeled it as possibly a “monstrous enterprise as an elaborate joke,” see Hopkinson (1988) 230. Given the fact that it is one of the few extant, long poems (1500 lines) from the Hellenistic period, it is shocking that it does not have a larger body of scholarship attached to it.

⁴ The debate over its date and its author has produced more scholarship than work on the poem itself. Essentially, I shall side with most of the ancient commentators who did not question the existence of a single poet. The eighteenth century saw the argument be raised again by two English men of leisure, C.J. Fox and G. Wakefield. The debate was given formal grounding by the nineteenth century scholar Niebuhr (1828), who hypothesized that there must have been a second Lykophron, who was writing in the early second-century BCE. The ancient theory was not only resuscitated but began to flourish. Niebuhr bases his argument on the belief that a figure identified in the poem was in fact Flaminius and that the poem recounts the Roman conquest of “Greece.” Dates for the composition of the poem vary greatly: 302 BCE (Ciaceri); 295 BCE (Wilamowitz and Susemihl); 274 BCE (Holzinger); 260 BCE (Clinton who sets that as the earliest possible date based on what he believes to be a reference to the First Punic War). Momigliano (1945) uses Lykophron's presentation of the tribute of the Lokrian maidens as supporting an early third-century BCE date most likely predating the First Punic War, though he concedes that his argument is not strong enough to persuade those set on the second-century BCE date. Pfeiffer (1968) 120 also accepts the third-century BCE date for Lykophron based on its form and learnedness which he sees as linked to his scholarly work on comedies. In short, I believe that this poem was produced in the early to mid third century BCE by the same

begins with what seems to be a typical messenger speech or *rhêsis* in tragic meter with a Trojan guard telling King Priam about the rantings of *Kassandra*. As we read on, however, we slowly begin to realize that this messenger speech is not going to end and that what we are actually reading is a 1500-line messenger speech recounting her prophecies. The narrative retells and “foretells” events from the first generation of mortals down to the third century BCE, taking the reader across the entirety of the history of man as it was imagined in the Ancient Greek mind. Its learnedness makes itself known in nearly every line. Within this 1500 line poem, exactly 518 of its 3000 words are *hapax legomena* while another 117 appear here for the first time.⁵ These words, often either compound words or obscure proper names, impede the regular flow of the meter, resulting in a poem that must have been at the least difficult to understand or at worst a highly learned riddle.⁶ The work is a collection of literary and factual minutiae gathered from the pre-Hellenistic world, containing countless mythical,⁷ historical, colonial or foundational (*ktiseis*),⁸ geographic, and other erudite factoids. All of these factors make the work challenging enough to read, but when one adds in a meandering narrative structure the poem tests

person who edited the comic texts and was labeled part of the Alexandrian Pleiad of tragic writers. As specific issues of dating arise, I shall provide details at those points in the text and notes.

⁵ Hopkinson (1988) 230.

⁶ As it has been noted by Stephanie West (2000) 160, Lykophron’s use of neologisms and over-the-top imagery resemble Aischylos’s style and is perhaps an homage to the tragedian. Both poets borrowed heavily from existing genres to “perfect” these new genres, albeit Lykophron draws from more genres than Aischylos. I am using the term “genre” here in the loosest sense when discussing Lykophron’s work. His work seems to have never produced any imitators, although we are not sure of Lykophron’s intentions or hopes. At the least, we can see it as a pioneer of early Alexandrian poetry. I believe the key difference is that in Aischylos those passages are generally not sustained and here we see them used extensively and generally not for the same end. Lykophron appears aware that he is affecting Aischylos whereas Aischylos seems to be merely playing with language.

⁷ On Lykophron as mythographer, see Gasse (1910).

⁸ On whether *ktisis* was an actual genre in the pre-Hellenistic era, see Dougherty (1994). For *ktisis* in the Hellenistic period, especially Apollonios of Rhodes, see Krevans (2000).

even the most experienced and learned of readers. Rather than recounting a story or *muthos* à la Homer or Herodotos, it deploys a baroque display of erudition reminiscent of Ezra Pound's *Cantos* or James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. Lykophron's text should be viewed as part of an economy of texts that tries to order and classify the cultural past through its composition, and is by default an archive in its own right.⁹ It is for this reason that I have labeled this work a poetic archive, but the broader question that arises from this label is what role did this text play in the world in which it was conceived?¹⁰

The *Alexandra* shares many of the traits of the broader archive, the Mouseion of Alexandria and its genesis in the crucible of empire. Much as the Mouseion can be seen as the offspring of Aristotle's desire to know combined with Alexander the Great's will to power so too can literary products, such as Lykophron's *Alexandra*, conceived in the "dusty" archival halls of the Mouseion, trace their genealogy back to the imperialist context that bore them. Lykophron's work is a synecdoche for the broader activities of the Mouseion that reproduced and disseminated archival discourse from the imperial metropole of Alexandria throughout the Greek-speaking world. As I have discussed in my first chapter, discourse is not merely a language or textuality that mediates between word and world but is also an event or action that acts directly upon the world.¹¹ According to this model, we must root out all the "particular interests" that all discourses serve and construct by stripping the text "of its esoteric or hermetic elements, and to do this by

⁹ Echevarria (1998) 9.

¹⁰ According to a Foucauldian model of literature, this period witnesses a move away from a phase of literary production, in which a work's "signifying content" was closely matched with its "signifying element," to one where they are more mediated. Foucault locates this shift in different modes of poetic production to the post-Enlightenment period where writers began to bring "language back to light once more in its own being" in other words we are now concerned with the signifying element for its own sake rather than its relation to the signifying content. See Foucault (1972) 118-125.

¹¹ Foucault (1981) 67.

making the text assume its affiliations with institutions, offices, agencies, classes, academies, corporations, groups, guilds, ideologically defined parties and professions.”¹² In the case of the Mouseion, we can see how archival discourse could be directly linked to historical institutions and offices of power in Alexandria. Furthermore, archival discursive activities, such as the writing of learned poetry, acted as means of facilitating a cultural system of inclusion and exclusion through the production, consumption, and overall circulation of a particular brand of knowledge. This new knowledge subsequently helped facilitate and impose a system of socio-political hierarchy upon its new subjects—a true wedding of knowledge with power. Alexandrian archival discourse provided both Greeks and native elites of the newly conquered areas with a means of forging a shared imperial identity despite inherited historical and cultural differences. A new set of shared discursive activities provided a means to be participating subjects in the new Hellenistic empires of knowledge. The Mouseion provided the *oikoumenê* with a unified and comprehensive ordering of the world’s knowledge which matched Alexander’s awe-inspiring imperial attempt to conquer the entire world.

In its method of reordering the world through discursive activities fostered by the Mouseion, Lykophron’s *Alexandra* is *the* quintessential example of the archival turn of the early Hellenistic period. The composition of this poem became yet another *de facto* attempt to manage and “properly” archive a huge swath of the Greco-Macedonian past, weaving intertextual references to major works of literature with regional and local historical minutiae to form a single poem. Stephanie West has likened Lykophron’s work to the modern novel stating that they share the same kind of “unstoppable imperialism...

¹² Said (1983) 212.

with its tendency to absorb imaginative literature of every sort.”¹³ Hellenistic elites connected with one another and navigated their past through the shared production and consumption of new archival products. The Hellenistic imperial subject now had a means by which they could define themselves and the other all neatly bundled up in the form of a scroll. It was a portable agent of political, social, cultural change that could reach even the remotest areas of the *oikoumenê*. Lykophron’s work was not something that merely manipulated and imposed some unchanging and universally accepted Greco-Macedonian tradition upon the world but was something that constructed a new one.¹⁴

In this chapter, I shall use the example of the *Alexandra* to peel away the layers of the archive and demonstrate how literary products of the Mouseion discursively replicated the actions of that broader archive, but on a micro-level. To this end, I shall examine how the process of “shrinking the empire down to the size of a filing cabinet” informed the production of poetry and how the very act of poetic composition reinforced the broader values of the Mouseion and also of empire.¹⁵ Lykophron’s work made knowledge portable, making it possible to feel a part of the larger world—Hellenistic elites formed communities predominantly through texts and scholarly knowledge more so than through civic performance. As a consequence even the smallest products of the archive, literary works, can be understood as miniature versions of the larger, replicating the imperial

¹³ West (2000) 166. West, however, only makes this statement in her conclusion in a sort of musing gesture, never fully fleshing out her astute observation.

¹⁴ Christian Jacob (2002) 5 was the first scholar who laid out the method by which he sees Alexandrian scholarship reshaping the past.

¹⁵ The notion of shrinking all knowledge into a filing cabinet was first introduced by Thomas Richards (1993) 4 for imperialistic activities of the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries. Christian Jacob (2002) 5 applied this idea to the Mouseion.

archive's goal of compression to the point where a single line of poetry can epitomize the Greek cultural tradition.

3.2 Lykophron as Poet and Archivist

Lykophron, a native of Chalcis on Euboea, was recruited to live and work in Alexandria sometime between 275-250 BCE and became a key member of the new group of highly erudite and challenging poets working from the Mouseion. Because these poets were known both for their scholarly or archival work as well as their highly learned poetic works, I shall call them archivist-poets.¹⁶ Besides the *Alexandra*, Lykophron wrote tragedies on various subjects ranging from traditional to contemporary topics, and for those works was anointed a member of the Tragic Pleiad, a group of seven third-century BCE poets.¹⁷ He is also one of the first-known writers of satiric drama, an encomium to a philosopher, and anagrams.¹⁸ His pioneering work with anagrams reveals his fascination with words and their visual nature and must have partly been influenced by his own archival work in the Mouseion. According to Tzetzes, he archived comic texts in the Mouseion and most likely ordered and possibly edited the texts themselves. He is also known for the now lost work entitled *Περὶ κωμωιδίας* which might have dealt with lexical

¹⁶ Mair (2006) 303 cites Suidas s.v. *Λύκος* as the primary source for this information. Pfeiffer (1968) 119-121 mentions him in the same way. For a fuller discussion on the controversy of his dates, see Mair (2006) 303-314; Mooney (1921) 156-58. I shall discuss this matter in the final section of this chapter.

¹⁷ See Suidas c.v. *Λυκόφρων* for his attribution as a member of the Tragic Pleiad and also for a short list of his titles. Also Mair (2006) 306. The Pleiad was a term believed coined originally by either by Aristophanes of Byzantium or Aristarchus of Samothrace, successive heads of the Mouseion in the second-century BCE. The "Alexandrian Pleiad" was group of poets working in Alexandria during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, which named after a cluster of stars, the Pleiades, which were seven in number. The group though is sometimes listed as eight or more often including Alexander Aetolos, Homeros of Byzantium, Sosiphanes of Syracuse, Sositheos of Alexandria, Lykophron, Philikos, Dionysiades of Tarsos, and Aiantides. For a full treatment, see Fraser (1972) 1.619.

¹⁸ Hopkinson (1988) 229-230. On page 230, he claims Lykophron is the "first recorded maker of anagrams (*Πτολεμαῖος > ἀπὸ μέλιτος, Ἀρσινόη > ἴον Ἡρας* – SH 531)." See also West (2000) 156.

oddities in the texts of Old Comedy.¹⁹ We, however, know that the Hellenistic scholar-archivists, such as Lykophron, Kallimachos and Kallistratos, were probably the sole persons who had access to the full texts of Old Comedy beyond Kratinos, Aristophanes, Eupolis and Menander.²⁰ They were also the ones who created collections of excerpts, commentaries on individual plays, edited texts, glosses on lexical oddities, hypotheses for the plays, and wrote biobibliographies for all extant comic writers, and indeed for all writers in general.

Lykophron's dual role as a poet and editor is apparent in his only extant work, *Alexandra*. Despite its tragic meter, it is hard to imagine that it was ever performed as it stands, considering the demands it would have made on its reciter and audience. That is not to say that the work was *never* performed in its entirety or in sections, but the material and many of the literary effects indicate a work that was meant as a text to be read over and over again rather than as something primarily encountered in one-time performance.²¹ The evidence seems to suggest that work itself was in wide circulation throughout Antiquity and into the Byzantine era.²² This suggests that we should try to

¹⁹ For the reference to his authorship of *Περὶ κωμωιδίας*, see Ath. iv, 140A. For a full discussion of the scholarly work of Lykophron and others working in the Hellenistic period, see Olson (2007) 23-29. For a briefer summary, see Hopkinson (1988) 229; Pfeiffer (1968) 119-121.

²⁰ Blum (1991) 104 though points out that the Ptolemies failed to acquire "certain" titles of Euripides and Kratinos.

²¹ West (2000) 155 feels that unlike Aischylos and Pindar, which are often raised as equally challenging in Greek, Lykophron's work could not fall back on performance as a means of pleasing its audience. She feels his work was clearly meant to be read and studied as a complete text. Cameron (1995) 224-225 feels that explanatory glosses must have arisen as quickly as Lykophron's text was "published" which strongly suggests that he too feels it was a read text.

²² The papyrological evidence also reflects its lasting popularity as evidenced by the five copies of it found in a provincial town in Roman Egypt. *POxy* 2094 and 3445 (2c AD), *POxy* 3446 (2c AD), *POxy* 4428 (early 3c AD), *POxy* 4429 (1 or 2c AD), and *PMon* 156 (1 or 2c AD) speak to its consistent use over the span of three centuries in the ancient world (West (2000) 285-86). West (2000) 286-286 has also noted another papyrus that might have been a commentary to a section of the work, *POxy* 2463. The work was also much read through Byzantine times from which we have nearly 150 manuscripts (West (2000) 156).

understand its broader (socio-political) role in the pre-modern past rather than to judge it by modern aesthetic standards.²³ Ancient authors, like Virgil, Quintilian, and Clement of Alexandria, support this claim in their admiration for the work and in their allusion or citation of it as an important work for schoolmasters.²⁴

Besides the obscurity of the language and information contained in the poem, what makes the *Alexandra* so difficult to read is its meandering narrative structure. As suggested above, the poem appears to be more focused on displaying a vast amount of knowledge and with conveying that learning to its reader than with utilizing traditional dramatic conventions, such as plot and turning points, to tell a compelling tale.²⁵ Lykophron implements a narrative structure that archives its subject matter, winding through various topics and moving associatively from subject to subject. His narrative style is reminiscent of oral storytelling or the digression, but his digressions are so learned and replete with factual oddities that they refocus their readers towards the archive that created it. No longer is the reader supposed to pick up mere allusions to other works, such as we find in many Hellenistic and earlier works, but s/he is challenged to pick up informational minutiae only available to those most steeped in researches in the archive.²⁶ Throughout

²³ West (2000) 154-155 makes the same argument contra Cameron.

²⁴ West (2000) 156.

²⁵ This narrative has some oral qualities, but when analyzed in detail those shared characteristics are only superficial. For example, in the Homeric epic, especially in the *aristeias*, the protagonist of that book faces another in battle. At that moment Homer digresses, and a brief genealogy of that hero is sung. The detour, however, is quickly terminated when that hero also falls, returning us to the narrative with an anatomically vivid description of his death. In the *Alexandra*, some of the digressions are not only longer, but they are also usually so challenging to read because of the obscurity of the references, that the reader's concentration tends to linger over the digression not being able to quickly return to the original narrative.

²⁶ We can find a similar link between Modernity and this shift in narrative structures in Walter Benjamin's writings. Benjamin's notion is that the age of storytelling is slipping into an age of merely passing on information, where the rise of texts are meant to convey some sort of knowledge or information rather than to tell a story. See Benjamin (1968) 83-110.

the work, we see a focus if not an obsession with lists and an exploration of those lists, following threads to their very end, transforming what were once displays of character and story-telling into a model of how to display one's cultural knowledge. Such characteristics as these lead me to label this text an archival one that reflects the archival turn of the period. In defining "archival turn," I defer to Ann Stoler who defines it as that which "registers a rethinking of the materiality and imaginary of collections and what kinds of truth-claims lie in documentation."²⁷ Tim Whitmarsh sees an archival turn in the Hellenistic period with the canonization of authors and works in learned centers like the Mouseion, where these cultural products were no longer merely viewed as something to be read or performed but as objects of intense study.²⁸ It seems both to have been written from the archive and to have pushed its readers back towards its archival roots in the Mouseion, ultimately affirming and rewarding those who have acquired cultural knowledge as defined by the Mouseion.

Although the *Alexandra* could never possibly fulfill its promise of recounting all things, the *Alexandra* seems to be trying to fold the world into its 1500 lines. It swallows up vast tracts of space and time in its telling, condensing both the heroic and historical world of the Greeks and their respective conflicts with the Trojans and Persians into a grand single narrative of epic scale. The *Alexandra* claims to recount the entire past and strives to become a "tale of the tribe" in its ordering of places, people, artifacts, and rituals as they ought to be properly understood.²⁹ In this way it symbolizes the highest

²⁷ Stoler (2002) 94. See also Patrick Geary (1994) and his chapter entitled "Archival Memory and the Destruction of the Past."

²⁸ Whitmarsh (2004) 122-138, esp. 127-128.

²⁹ A claim famously made by another archivist-poet, Ezra Pound, of his own encyclopedic exercise in the rare and obscure from the literary and documentary past.

achievement of an Alexandrian archivist-poet. In his *Alexandra*, Lykophron created a poem that was a microcosm of his world as ordered through the texts collected within the Mouseion—a literary act that imposed an archival and scholarly orderliness to its world and past.

3.3 Historicizing the *Alexandra*

The early Hellenistic period supplied an ideal situation for such a poetic project as Lykophron's *Alexandra*. Without the vast resources available to the poet-archivist and a culture amenable to its form and style, it is hard to imagine how this work could have come into existence. The Mouseion provided both access to an unprecedented number of texts as well as the virtually unlimited means to study them from the newly acquired largesse of conquest. There had been earlier collections of texts like Aristotle's legendary library, but by all accounts these collections were dwarfed by the Mouseion's collection, which was ultimately bankrolled by vast financial resources of the Ptolemaic monarchy.³⁰ Moreover, the early Hellenistic was also an intellectually fertile period, producing figures who would pioneer the worlds of scholarship and philology. By the mid-fourth century BCE, Peripatetic philosophy had already attempted to categorize literature as part of its larger project of empirically studying the world of phenomena.³¹ Later in the same

³⁰ As to the ancient accounts of the size of these respective collections, we have what appear to be overinflated estimates, such as Josephus' account of the Mouseion, claiming it contained 200,000 volumes (Jewish Antiquities 12.13). Roger Bagnall (2002) 353 methodically investigates the ancient accounts and dispels them as exaggeration producing a more likely estimate for the number of volumes in the Library at around 10,000-15,000 titles in its early stages.

³¹ Although it is not within the scope of this dissertation to treat Aristotle, I will summarize some of the pertinent points in this footnote. Aristotle's importance for the development of the art (*technē*) of philology cannot be overstated. He pioneered the idea of gathering information not only about literature but all things of the world. There is not adequate space to discuss his role, but the titles of some of his works speak for themselves: *περὶ τραγωδιῶν*, *Νίκαι Διονυσιακαί*, *ἀποήματα Ὀμήρικα*. See Pfeiffer (1968). Moreover, the Mouseion's urge for a comprehensive collection might, beyond its genesis in the crucible of empire, may also be a byproduct of its Peripatetic ancestry. If we are to believe that Demetrios of Phaleron was one of the

century, Philitas of Kos began a systematic studying and ordering of the Greek language. He was most likely responsible for perfecting the gloss as a genre with his seminal work, *Disorderly Words* (Ἀτακτοὶ γλῶσσαι, *Ataktoi glóssai*). The now lost work probably explored the meanings of rare literary words, words from local dialects, and technical terms.³²

I now turn to how works such as Lykophron's reshaped information from the distant past into knowledge that was crucial toward political and cultural self-definition in the present. As cited earlier, Stephanie West, at the end of her insightful chapter on Lykophron's work, states rather randomly that "we may reflect on the unstoppable imperialism of the modern novel, with its tendency to absorb imaginative literature of every sort."³³ Clearly, West is alluding to Edward Said's work on the modern novel as a link between culture and imperialism,³⁴ and perhaps recognizes that the *Alexandra* too can be viewed from a perspective such as I am proposing.

Building off West's astute observation, it is possible to see how the *Alexandra* simultaneously attempted to expand its domain over all genres of Greek literature, in

"founders" of the Mouseion then the Peripatetic empiricist motto of "*tithenai ta phainomena*" or "save the phenomena" might also be at the heart of this project. The earlier Aristotelian project of assembling data of the world in order to order it according to Aristotelian lines might have been expanded here on a larger scale. See Owen (1961). On Aristotle's reliance on written reports, see MacLeod (2002) 107-08.

³² Glosses (γλῶσσαι) (especially for Homer) date back to the fifth century BCE, possibly as early as Demokritos. Antimachos of Colophon (late fifth century BCE) was a precursor of Alexandrian learned poetry who famously edited texts of Homer and used glosses to compose his own poetry (Pfeiffer 1968: 94). On glossography, see Dyck (1987).

³³ West (2000) 166. I describe this as "random," because the quote is only loosely connected with that of the text surrounding it and probably has more to do with her discussion of Christa Wolf's *Cassandra* than Lykophron's *Alexandra*. Regardless, her point is an astute one. West (2000) 166 highlights the fact that the narrator or author does serve the highly malleable role of exerting their own agenda through a retelling of the past and as "engineers(s) of human souls." The latter term could be interpreted in a number of manners, from a more traditional, if one focuses on "souls," or as one that sees authors as artists giving voice to the universal inner workings of man. One could, however, also focus on the word "engineer" and view the narrator as shaping identities and subjectivity. This is a position I would prefer.

³⁴ See Said (1993).

many ways replicating the imperialistic desire for total knowledge characteristic of the Hellenistic period and its institutions—the collection of the Mouseion-Library, scholarly glosses, and encyclopedic works. In contrast to pre-Hellenistic poetic works, which generally only claimed dominance over a single genre, Lykophron’s work lays claim over Homer and the epic cycle poems, lyric, tragedy, comedy, and even history, attempting to unify all literature under one unifying figure, Lykophron.³⁵ This gesture mirrors the imperialistic actions of the broader imperial archive that claimed all culture under the brand name of Greece or Hellenism. From this point on and at least through the end of antiquity, much of the Eastern Mediterranean defined itself through cultural idioms, such as literature and philosophy, that were primarily informed by Hellenistic notions of what it meant to be Greek.³⁶ The *Alexandra* and archival discourse played vital roles in helping imperial subjects navigate the thorny field of the past by providing a model of how one ought to sift, sort, and reorder the past in order to order the past.

³⁵ West (2000) depicts the *Alexandra* as a tribute to Pindar and Aischylos, and also speaks of it being influenced by Mesopotamian traditions as well as Herodotus. Others, like Sistikou (2008), link his work to the epics.

³⁶ I realize that many, especially those who are highly influenced by the second wave of postcolonial studies, will have profound difficulties with this statement. I, however, am not claiming that Hellenistic period works were not affected or influenced by Egyptian or the Babylonians or even local and regional Greek culture. I still believe that most of the past and the information inherited during the Hellenistic period was processed and reordered through modes of discourse that were primarily Greek in origin. I believe that recent scholarship, such as Selden (1998) and Stephens (2003) and (2005), although forwarding an important and necessary counterpoint to the notion of “pure” Greek culture, goes too far in its advocacy of the importance of the role of those native traditions. These works, however, do not go far enough in interrogating how much of the “original” culture, if we can agree to start from a position that there are recognizably different cultural traditions, can be called “Greek” and “Egyptian.” For example, can cultural products maintain certain values or viewpoints once they have been resituated within a wholly different idiom through an act of translation or a change in performance context. For a contrary viewpoint, see Selden (1998) and Susan Stephens (2003).

3.4 Poetic Archival Beginnings

A work of such density demands and repays a similar density of interpretation. Throughout this chapter, I will use its first line as a point of departure to discuss broader themes of the poem I feel are embodied in this first line. In this section, I will explore how the beginning of the poem reveals the world that shaped it. The first line begins with a Trojan guard, who is responsible for looking after *Kassandra*, reporting her most recent “rantings” to *King Priam*. He states:

Λέξω τὰ πάντα νητρεκῶς, ἄ μ’ ἱστορεῖς

It is peculiar that work known for its rare and strange words begins with a fairly innocuous and common one, *λέξω* (*λέγω*).³⁷ This word, however, can be seen as important for setting the tone for the entirety of the work, albeit in a different manner from the more numerous ones by which this work has become defined. Because *λέγειν* is a commonly used word, its definitions are many and that allows for it to be interpreted in many ways. In a society where major works of literature lacked titles and were often known through first lines of a work, the choice of the inaugural word of a work was crucial and often set the tone or theme for the whole work. It is for all these reasons that I see this word as the key for the first line and perhaps the entire poem.

To establish a baseline interpretation of this first line, let us look at the most straightforward interpretation of it. On the most basic level, one could see this line as merely beginning the narrative, triggering the action. A guard or slave is commanded to watch over the prophetess, *Kassandra*, and he announces to *King Priam* that he will report (*λέξω*) exactly (*νητρεκῶς*) everything (*τὰ πάντα*), of which the king has asked

³⁷ I shall delve into the many possible meanings of this word over the course of the next few paragraphs, but briefly the word can mean anything from “speak”, “define”, or “tell” to “gather” and “collect.”

(ἱστορεῖς) from him. It is already odd in that it appears to be a messenger speech, which always occur within the course of a play, beginning what seems to be some kind of tragedy. Its meter, iambic trimeter, is what primarily signals to its reader that this is a tragedy. Naturally, the “joke” or “punch line” of this supposed tragedy would be realized after its reader got through the next fifty lines, when it becomes clear that the messenger will be the only one doing the talking. It would be interesting to know the performative context of this work, but most agree that it would be challenging to recite even for the most adept reader.³⁸ Beyond its adherence to the trappings of being a tragedy in good Alexandrian fashion, this work was clearly intended to play with the conventions of genre and explore the limits of learning.

The text itself leaves lots of clues as to what the effect that this text might have on its audience. The first fifteen lines of the poem allude to the way that many were expected to experience the text as something to be read closely, studied, and commented upon.

When *Kassandra's* guard begins a speech recounting *Kassandra's* “ravings” (ἄσπετον βοήν), he makes it clear to his lord that it will not be an easy thing to comprehend.

Lykophron densely packs these lines (like all of his lines) with very difficult and obscure language and images. Besides actually telling his audience, the messenger’s choice of diction immediately informs his audience that this will be a challenging poetic experience

(1-15):

Λέξω τὰ πάντα νητρεκῶς, ἃ μ’ ἱστορεῖς,
 ἀρχῆς ἀπ’ ἄκρας· ἦν δὲ μηκυνθῆ λόγος,
 σύγγνωθι, δέσποτ’· οὐ γὰρ ἦσυχος κόρη
 ἔλυσε χρησμῶν, ὡς πρὶν, αἰόλον στόμα·
 ἀλλ’ ἄσπετον χέασα παμμιγῆ βοήν
 δαφνηφάγων φοίβαζεν ἐκ λαιμῶν ὄπα,

³⁸ West (2000) 155. For a fuller discussion of performance in the period, see Bing (1988) and (2009) 106-115.

Σφιγγὸς κελαινῆς γῆρυν ἐκμιμουμένη.
τῶν ἄσσα θυμῷ καὶ διὰ μνήμης ἔχω,
κλύοις ἄν, ὦναξ, κἀναπεμπάζων φρενὶ
πυκνῆ διοίχνει δυσφάτους αἰνιγμάτων
οἶμας τυλίσσων, ἥπερ εὐμαθῆς τρίβος
ὀρθῆ κελεύθῳ τάν σκοτῶ ποδηγετεῖ.
ἐγὼ δ' ἄκραν βαλβίδα μηρίνθου σχάσας
ἄνειμι λοξῶν ἐς διεξόδους ἐπῶν,
πρώτην ἀράξας νύσσαν, ὡς πτηνὸς δρομεύς.

All will I tell truly that thou askest from the utter beginning, and if the tale be prolonged, forgive me, lord. For not quietly as of old did the maiden loose the varied speech of her oracular prophecies, but poured forth a weird confused cry, and uttered wild words from her bay-chewing mouth, imitating the speech of the dark Sphinx. Thereof what in heart and memory I hold, hear thou, O King, and, pondering with deep contemplation in a wise heart-mind, wind and wander upon her hard to decipher paths of enigmas, where a much-learned path leads them on the straight road through the shady darkness. And I, cutting the utter bounding thread, will trace her paths of devious speech, striking the starting-point like a winged runner.³⁹

The guard makes it clear from the first two lines that he will be speaking for a long time (μηκυνθῆ) for which he asks forgiveness (σύγγνωθι). He then emphasizes that Cassandra's speech is not only long, but that it will not be easy to decipher as it is made up of "prophecies" (χρησμών) "loosed" (ἔλυσε) from her "rapid mouth" or "shifting speech" (αἰόλον στόμα). On the very next line, the guard speaks of Cassandra's indistinct shout(s) (ἄσπετον βοῆν) and emphasizes its scope adverbially with παμμιγῆ ("of all sorts" or "all-confounded"). These points are continually repeated, likening her speech to that of the oracle of Delphi (δαφνηφάγων),⁴⁰ the Sphinx (Σφιγγός), "hard to decipher paths of enigmas" (δυσφάτους αἰνιγμάτων οἶμας), and as something that takes place "in the shade" (τάν σκοτῶ). The guard-messenger also makes it clear the means

³⁹ All translations of Lykophron are based upon Muir's Loeb translation which I have modified.

⁴⁰ This word is even further emphasized by the next word "φοίβαζεν," a *primum dictum* that is clearly built upon the fact that the Delphic Oracle was Phoibos Apollo's. Moreover, the word clarifies and emphasizes the force of the previous word, "δαφνηφάγων" just in case the audience has not picked up the reference.

through which one can begin to understand this work. First of all, with his references to the mythic figures of Apollo, Oidipous, and Theseus, clearly it will not be an easy poem. He then goes on to outline what it will take to “solve” this puzzle—memory (διὰ μνήμης), “pondering with deep contemplation in a wise heart-mind” (κάναπεμπάζων φρενὶ πυκνῇ), “the willingness to wander” (διοίχνει), and “a much-learned path to lead them on the straight road” (εὐμαθῆς τρίβος ὀρθῇ κελεύθῳ... ποδηγετεῖ).

If these are the characteristics of Lykophron’s ideal reader, one then begs to ask how could a Hellenistic subject develop these skills and abilities. Lines 8-12 provide us with a possible answer, suggesting that the study of texts is the virtue elevated in the guard’s prelude and celebrated throughout this work. These lines might reveal the way its audience experienced the text, and if we can better understand the text’s original performative context, we can better understand the way it functioned in its historical moment. I would, therefore, like to look once again at lines 8 through 12 to attempt to recover some clues to as how the poem might have been performed (8-12):

τῶν ἄσσα θυμῷ καὶ διὰ μνήμης ἔχω,
κλύοις ἄν, ὦναξ, κάναπεμπάζων φρενὶ
πυκνῇ διοίχνει δυσφάτους αἰνιγμάτων
οἶμας τυλίσσω, ἥπερ εὐμαθῆς τρίβος
ὀρθῇ κελεύθῳ τὰν σκότῳ ποδηγετεῖ.

Thereof what in heart and memory I hold, hear thou, O King, and, pondering with deep contemplation in a wise heart-mind, wind and wander upon her hard to decipher paths of enigmas, where a much-learned path leads them on the straight road through the shady darkness.

In terms of word choice, line eight and the first half of line nine are unremarkable and could have easily been found in the fifth century tragedians. For example, the guard uses an optative to respectfully ask King Priam to listen to his words, supposedly as one would expect in a normal performance.

If, however, we return to the first word of the poem, λέγειν, and consider using another one of its meanings, “to recite what is written” or possibly “to read,”⁴¹ then the seemingly banal request to listen from line nine changes drastically. Instead of the audience imagining a stage performance, they might now imagine themselves taking part in a recitation of a learned work of a slave to his audience of elite members. Read from this light, the next line makes it clear as to how the king should “deeply contemplate” these words and “to wander on the hard to explain paths of enigmas while winding up (the Ariadne’s string)” —through texts. The use of τυλίσσειν in line eleven is a clear reference to Theseus winding up the string as a way of “solving” the labyrinth implying that the audience should see themselves like Theseus lost in a maze, only that this maze is made up of obscure words and facts.⁴² Although the text makes it clear that “winding up” is the key to freedom, the text never explicitly mentioned the elusive string. The next line and a half speak of the “ready to learn” or perhaps “quick at learning” path that will lead our lost hero to the “straight path,” but we still have no mention of the actual means to achieve this end.⁴³

Although οἶμας of line ten is usually seen as the direct object of διοίχνηι (“he wanders willingly” or “he pursues”) on line ten, τυλίσσω syntactically could also govern οἶμας as its direct object. Lykophron places this word in an ambiguous position as the first word on its line, next to τυλίσσω and therefore closely connected to it, and separated

⁴¹ LSJ cites Plat. *Theaet.* I 43 C (λαβέ τὸ βιβλίον καὶ λέγε) as an example for the former. It also states that it can mean “to read” but only in compounds like ἀναλέγομαι and ἐπιλέγομαι.

⁴² This is reminiscent of another famous poetic line from Posidippos (*AB* 118.17), in which he imagines himself unrolling a scroll (βίβλον ἐλισσων). I shall discuss this specific passage in section 4.4 of this dissertation.

⁴³ Line 13, the next line, provides us with a string, a starting string (μηρίνθος), but the context seems different.

from its “natural” modifiers and verb on the previous line. Besides meaning “to roll up,” LSJ suggests that *τυλίσειν* might also mean “to unravel,” citing this very line.⁴⁴ This entry is clearly based on the belief that this passage refers not only to the winding up of string but also to the act of unrolling scrolls when reading. If this is the case, what then is being read? If *τυλίσιων* governs *οἶμας* as its direct object then its literal definition of “paths” is unacceptable. *οἶμος*⁴⁵ does not only mean “path” but can also mean, according to the LSJ, “the course or strain of a song.” This is the way it is used in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* (452) and Pindar (O. 9.72). It would also work well with the *Alexandra*, at least in terms of language, since it draws so heavily from and affects an Archaic period aesthetic. In this case then, Lykophron’s guard-messenger (or shall I call him his “guide”) would be imploring his king to go back after his recitation and unroll the scroll himself and spend time the time necessary to achieve understanding of the *δυσφάτους αἰνιγμάτων οἶμας* of these old songs. Therefore, the idea here is that Priam should turn to unrolling and studying this difficult text in much the same fashion that the Alexandrians were puzzling over much Archaic poetry like Pindar.⁴⁶

Tim Whitmarsh sees this type of intervention by the poet as an example of the “annotatory voice.” It is a way for the poet to emphasize his status as a “commanding” figure, one who has accrued his authority through his knowledge of the “tradition.”⁴⁷ Play

⁴⁴ There are examples of *τυλίσειν* with different prefixes used in this fashion. A good example of this can be found in the second century writer Sextos Empirikos (*Adversus Mathematicos* I.281) when he writes: “παρ ἕκαστα τὴν Ὀμηρικὴν διετύλισσε ποίησιν” (“unrolls the bookrolls of Homer one-by-one”).

⁴⁵ LSJ views *οἶμη* as equal to *οἶμος*, describing it as a metaphorical use meaning “the way of song.”

⁴⁶ The last lines viewed from this perspective might perhaps suggest that “the well-known path guides” one to the “path of editing.” It is a bit of a stretch to suggest that the “ὄρθος” modifying *κέλευθος* could be interpreted as a reference to the process of editing texts (*διόρθειν*), but it is intriguing nonetheless.

⁴⁷ Whitmarsh (2004) 135.

of this kind proliferates this work, but it does not reduce the work into something merely composed to entertain the frivolous elite of the Hellenistic period, although this admittedly might have been one of its many functions. Instead it points to and represents deeper cultural trends occurring in Hellenistic society as compensation for the radical changes in the political landscape of the period.

3.5 The Poetic Archive Collecting

I would like to return to the first word of the poem once again, but this time with the meaning “I shall collect.” Collecting was one of the key acts of the archive-as-subject for without it there would be no archive. Collecting is not merely a natural act but rather an interpretive—the initial way of ordering the collection through selection. The archive’s selection process sanctions certain information as valid knowledge. In the case of the Mouseion, collecting determined what was studied and cited in Alexandrian works, and was a key characteristic of the Alexandrian archive. In as much as the *Alexandra* can be called an archive, it is fitting to address the manner in which Lykophron’s poetic archive collected its material. From this point of view, Lykophron’s first line can be seen as the guard’s promise to “collect all things precisely.” The poem clearly seeks comprehensiveness and precision in terms of what it collected. This section will explore the ways collecting the past created new archival modes of narration that became the building blocks upon which a new Hellenistic imperial notion of subjectivity was based.

The *Alexandra* itself can be seen as collector and collection of information of the past. The poem presents us with a Trojan messenger-guard, who struggles to collect

Kassandra’s “prophecies.” After a very impressive prelude (ll. 16-30),⁴⁸ which showcases the guard’s own ability to weave highly learned poetry, he begins to recite Kassandra’s prophetic lament for Troy (31-34):

Αἰαῖ, τάλαινα θηλαμῶν κεκαυμένη,
καὶ πρόσθε μὲν πεύκησιν οὐλαμηφόροις
τριεσπέρου λέοντος, ὃν ποτε γνάθοις
Τρίτωνος ἠμάλαψε κάρχαρος κύων.

Alas! hapless nurse of mine burnt even aforetime by the warlike pineships of the lion that was begotten in three evenings (Herakles), whom of old Triton’s hound of jagged teeth devoured with his jaws.

Although Kassandra’s lament will eventually be “prophetic” and will address “future” events, her narrative first marches backwards in time to the earliest possible Greek sacking of Troy by Herakles. In this passage, Lykophron’s narrator uses the sacking of Troy as a platform to present a collection of biographical lives linked to this great hero. Lykophron

⁴⁸ The guard’s speech is very difficult to distinguish from Kassandra’s own verses, and the only thing that cues the audience into the fact that Kassandra is now speaking is by having the guard say so on line 30. The passage is (16-30):

Ἦώς μὲν αἰπὺν ἄρτι Φηγίου πάγον
κραιπνοῖς ὑπερποτάτο Πηγᾶσου πτεροῖς,
Τιθωνὸν ἐν κοίτῃσι τῆς Κέρνης πέλας
λιποῦσα, τὸν σὸν ἀμφιμήτριον κάσιν.
οἱ δ’ οὔσα γρώνης εὐγάληνα χερμάδος
ναῦται λιάζον κάπὸ γῆς ἐσχάζοσαν
ὑσπληγγας. αἱ δὲ παρθενοκτόνον Θέτιν
ιουλόπεζοι θεῖνον εὐῶπες σπάθαις
πελαργοχρῶτες, αἱ Φαλακραῖαι κόραι,
ὑπὲρ Καλυδνῶν λευκὰ φαίνουσαι πτίλα,
ἄφλαστα καὶ φώσσωνας ὠργυιωμένους
ἀπαρκτίαις πρηστῆρος αἰθωνος πνοαῖς.
ἦ δ’ ἔνθεον σχάσασα βακχεῖον στόμα
Ἄτης ἀπ’ ἄκρων βουπλανοκτίστων λόφων
τοιῶνδ’ ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς ἦρχ’ Ἀλεξάνδρα λόγων.

Dawn was just soaring over the steep crag of Phegion on swift wings of Pegasos, leaving in his bed by Kerne Tithonos’ brother of thine by another mother, and the sailors loosed in calm weather the cables from the grooved rock and cut the landward ropes. And the centiped fair-faced stork-hued daughters of Phalakra smote maiden-slaying Thetis with their blades, over Kalydnai showing their white wings, their stern ornaments, their sails outspread by the northern blasts of flaming stormwind: then Alexandra opened her inspired Bakchic lips on the high Hill of Doom that was founded by the wandering cow and thus began to speak:

turns to Herakles, one of Greece's earliest heroes, to begin his vast sweeping survey which takes us from the earliest heroes of prehistory to the Lykophron's own time in third century BCE. For the story of Troy, the Greeks first encountered the Trojans when Herakles saved the Trojan king's daughter from a sea monster, "old Triton's hound" (34). The same king, however, ends up cheating Herakles of his reward, the Horses of Tros, resulting in the first Greek sacking of Troy. Lykophron quickly uses the event of Herakles' sacking of Troy as a point of departure for a catalogue of Herakles' collected mythical accomplishments. This catalogue of biographic accounts is interlaced with a flurry of oblique and compressed references that can likewise be seen as a collection of lexical oddities filled with words like line 33's "three day long" (τριεσπέρου).⁴⁹

Lykophron establishes the poem's overall narrative structure here. The topic at hand rather than the narrator quickly become the focus of the narrative. This type of shifting storyline continues throughout the narrative where the poem seems to pass from one topic to the next, quickly leading its audience into its own labyrinth of obscure learning. What began as a lament to Troy quickly turns into a digression on the life or lives of Herakles. On its broadest level, the poem's narrative is structured around collections of digressions filled with information about the topic at hand. On a micro level, a collection of obscure words and references pushes the narrative along from word-to-word and line-to-line.

The following example makes it clear how Lykophron structures his narrative, hanging obscure biographical lore and vocabulary upon a narrative framework, relegating Troy to a mere point of departure for a broader goal of an erudite display (38-51):

ὁ τεκνοραίστης, λυμεῶν ἐμῆς πάτρας,

⁴⁹ This is also the first known occurrence of this word.

ὁ δευτέραν τεκοῦσαν ἄτρωτον βαρεῖ
τύψας ἀτράκτω στέρνον ἔν τ' αὐλῶ μέσῳ
πατρός παλαιστοῦ χερσὶν ὀχμάσας δέμας
Κρόνου παρ' αἰπὺν ὄχθον, ἔνθα γηγενοῦς
ἵππων ταρακτῆς ἐστὶν Ἴσχένου τάφος,
ὁ τὴν θαλάσσης Αὔσονίτιδος μυχοῦς
στενοῦς ὀπιπεύουσαν ἀγρίαν κύνα
κτανῶν ὑπὲρ σπήλυγγος ἰχθυωμένην,
ταυροσφάγον λέαιναν, ἣν αὖθις πατήρ
σάρκας καταίθων λοφνίσιν δωμήσατο,
Λέπτυνιν οὐ τρέμουσαν οὐδαίαν θεόν·
ἐξηνάριξεν ὃν ποτ' ἀξίφω δόλῳ
νέκυς, τὸν Ἄιδην δεξιούμενον πάλαι.

He the slayer of his children, the destroyer of my fatherland; who smote his second mother (Here) invulnerable with grievous shaft upon the breast; who, too, in the midst of the racecourse seized in his arms the body of his wrestler sire (Zeus) beside the steep hill of Cronus, where is the horse-affrighting tomb of earth-born Ischenus; who also slew the fierce hound that watched the narrow straits of the Ausonian sea, fighting over her cave, the bull-slaying lioness (Skylla) whom her father restored again to life, burning her flesh with brands: she who feared not Leptynis (Persephone), goddess of the underworld. But one day with swordless guile a dead corpse slew him; yea, even him who of old overcame Hades.

In this representative selection, the storyline moves from one collection of facts about some figure, place or event to another, creating a narrative that seems to privilege knowledge of obscure facts rather than producing compelling characters or well-constructed plotline. This is one of the reasons why, for example, he never mentions the names of Zeus and Hera. He prefers to refer to them indirectly. In Hera's case, he deploys the rare word ἄτρακτος, which usually means "a spindle," for an "arrow."⁵⁰ In order to understand his use of this word here, the audience is expected to pick up on his allusion to a story from the *Iliad* in which Hera had to endure the pain of an arrow stuck in her breast by Herakles.⁵¹

⁵⁰ LSJ suggests that the word might with this meaning have been more commonly used by the Spartans, citing Thucydides 4.40. Beyond that, the meaning only appears in tragedy (Aesch. Fr. 123, Soph. *Phil.* 290, *Tr.* 714).

⁵¹ *Iliad* 5.392-94, where Homer uses the usual word for arrow, ὀιστός. Mooney (1921) 6, in his notes, points out the reference.

In a similar fashion, on the next line he alludes to Zeus, using a fairly common word, αὐλός, but in a new way. αὐλός, which usually refers to the instrument, here means “stadium.” In effect, he creates a *hapax semanticum*, once again assuming that a “learned” audience will deduce what the word means from the context, that is if they have the proper knowledge to pick up on his reference to the aetiological story of Zeus and Herakles as the first wrestlers at Olympia. In this way, his narrative is set up to delight the reader steeped in knowledge from the Alexandrian archive, and if they do not have that knowledge, to spur them on to track it down.

The passage continues with an example of how the *Alexandra* constructs associative strings of learned digressions that appear to replicate an archivist glossing a word or commenting upon a line of text. On line 42, he orients his audience with a straightforward reference to Olympia by mentioning “Kronos’ steep hill” (Κρόνου παρ’ αἰπὺν ὄχθον), which rose to the north of the Olympian plains. Lykophron uses Mt. Kronos to trigger another explicatory digression, introduced by ἐνθα. He uses this moment to give some details of the location, providing a gloss for the location, a one-line digression about a figure, Ischenos, whose grave was located there. The power of the digression is not to enhance the story’s dramatic effect, the character of Herakles, or even the location, but, once again, to either delight and reward those who share this knowledge or coax on the others to acquire this knowledge.⁵² With a relative pronoun, ὅ, on the next line (44), the narrative then abruptly returns to its focus on the lives of Herakles. At first glance, however, it is unclear who the antecedent is to this pronoun, Herakles or Ischenos. After a moment of consideration, it is obvious who the antecedent is, but within the flow

⁵² In this case, it was probably well-known local lore, since this son of Hermes received offerings at the games held there. See Mooney (1921) 6.

of listening to or reading the poem it must have been unclear. This is yet another way that the Lykophron's narrative style pushes his audience to return to the text to seek clarification.

The rest of this passage is full of similar digressions that appear to be platforms for collecting and displaying of learned minutiae. There is the difficult language consisting of rare words (σπήλθγξ),⁵³ epic vocabulary (ὀπιτεύω, ἰχθυάω), neologisms (λοφνίς, δωμάω, οὐδαῖος),⁵⁴ and rare names used for well-known mythical figures (Λέπτυνις).⁵⁵ The passage also gathers together a collection of stories loosely structured through a stripped down narrative. Lykophron uses the following disparate narrative elements to construct his narrative in these lines: the story of Herakles' "second" mother, a digression on the origins of wrestling during the Olympian Games, a tale of the giant Ischenos, Herakles' slaying of Skylla, an account of Skylla's rebirth, and an account of Herakles' death and his trip to the Underworld. These are all structured through digressions and even digressions within digressions, such as that of Skylla, the "fierce hound" (ἀγρίαν κύνα) mentioned on line 45. Where traditional poetic narratives try to elicit immediate joy from their audience, the *Alexandra* appears to reward those readers who spend the time to decipher its "coded language."

The *Alexandra's* catalogue style is structured around collecting topics (*ktiseis* or local lore) and figures (Herakles).⁵⁶ It easily forgotten that the *Alexandra's* overall

⁵³ σπήλθγξ only appearance that clearly predates Lykophron's use is in Aristotle (*Hist. An.* 9.17, 2). It also appears in Apollonios of Rhodes (2.568).

⁵⁴ These are all instances of *primum dictum*.

⁵⁵ Mooney (1921) 7 cites the scholia to explain how this name refers to Persephone (τὴν λεπτύνουσαν τὰ σώματα τῶν ἀποθανόντων). Clearly, this also speaks to how obscure this reference was to ancient Greeks.

⁵⁶ Bing (2009) 25 mentions that Hermesianax's *Leontion* is sometimes described as "καταλόγος."

structure is linear in nature, especially when one gets lost in its tangential dead ends and switchbacks quickly shifting within digressions from the heroic age to the Age of Alexander. As demonstrated by my analysis of lines 38 through 51, when the story introduces new topics, places, or figures, it enters into a digression centered on the new subject and often digresses within a digression as on lines 42-43. There is still, however, a back story that structures the entire narrative, and at some point the digressions end and return to the subject matter of that story. In the case of Herakles, the end of the Herakles' archival "digression" is signaled with the return to the topic that originally triggered it—the lament of the city of Troy (52):

λέυσσω σε, τλήμον, δεύτερον πυρουμένην

I see you, hapless city, fired a second time

Ultimately, the audience is reminded of the poem's broader narrative of the sacking of Troy. For its Hellenistic audience, the fall of Troy must have evoked the conquest of "Asia" by Alexander and raised the question of who was counted as part of the imperial *pepaideumenoí*. The *Alexandra* provided a new way for elite subjects to negotiate "Greekness" and elite identity in a world where everyone who mattered seemed to be "Greek." Its new mode of narrative like the broader message of the poem itself, begged its audience to reflect on how they would incorporate all these obscure factoids and way of storytelling into a new coherent form of cultural knowledge and subjectivity.

Collecting permitted the *Alexandra* to order events differently, which accounts for its associative narrative structure. Although the poem continually presents simple collections of information before its audience only to get lost in its own learned digression, it does so in an orderly fashion. What appears to be the haphazard heaping up of information is an attempt to create order from something that ultimately resists it—a

collection. How, for example, can one resolve the contradictory accounts of Helen's five husbands? The poem tries to do so by presenting its audience with what appears to be an unmediated story and appears that way, because Lykophron chooses to avoid privileging one version over another. It seems like some biobibliographical or mythographic entry that provides all known variations on the topic at hand. The catalogue style of narrative, which defines the *Alexandra*, reflects the urge to gather all knowledge on a certain topic and to present it to its audience. This too, like the collection, mediates the way the text is constructed and experienced, and ends up privileging the presentation of information over the pleasure of character and plot.

Lykophron's Helen narrative provides us with another example of the way the poem imposes a maze-like structure on its readers. One of these structural digressions makes up a good part of the first few hundred lines, beginning with one of Lykophron's many famous lists, specifically in this case the exploration of Helen's five husbands (144-179). The list is initially triggered by events leading up to Paris' abduction of Helen that in turn triggers a discussion of her five known husbands (Theseus, Paris, Menelaos, Deïphobos, and Achilles). That leads in turn to a narrative loosely structured around Achilles and his deeds for the next hundred or so lines. The poem then flows ahead chronologically tracing Achilles' many activities before he steps foot on Trojan land, and it culminates with the death of Hektor. At this point, the narrative turns backwards in time to tell of Hektor's glories over the Greeks, leading us back to the main narrative of the poem. The circuitous narrative of the poem is more concerned with telling every possible myth associated with Achilles than with telling a compelling story about him. Once again it is a collection-like structure that orders the telling of events. Achilles, like Herakles

before him and Alexander the Great after him, appears to be a figure around whom myths gathered. The linear narrative should only be seen therefore as the premise upon which these stories are hung. Ultimately, however, Lykophron's work seems to be obsessed with imposing its erudition upon the reader, presenting a piecemeal narrative driven by associative digressions rather than merely organizing everything neatly under the aegis of a single, straightforward linear narrative.

Unlike most pre-Hellenistic narratives, which were driven by strong plots and character development, the *Alexandra's* narrative seems merely the pretext through which a reader could encounter a vast collection of mythological and obscure facts. This innovative narrative style allowed Lykophron to collect and reorder stories inherited from the past and to reformulate them into a new type of aesthetic and cultural product. This new model for poetic production also altered the way texts were composed, organized, and consumed and privileged the poem's form over content. Whereas traditional narratives generally attempted to connect its audience to its main characters through the use of powerful verbal images, nuanced character development, and elaborate plot twists, the *Alexandra* rewards one's ability to decipher it. Naturally, pre-Hellenistic Greek works constantly referenced one another through intertextual references and displayed a deep awareness of earlier treatments of traditional stories, but the Alexandrians, of whom Lykophron is the most extreme, marked a shift by which what was once secondary became primary. Instead of using devices to highlight some central character, point or dilemma, works of archivist-poets usually worked in the opposite manner, drawing its audience in through the familiarity of well-known plots and then redirecting them to the poem's subtle erudite effects. The ideal consumer of an Alexandrian work would have left the work with an understanding of the learned play going on in the work. For the *Alexandra*, this meant

the decipherment of the poem's lexical oddities and obscure cultural references. This method of reading ultimately rewarded those who had acquired or had access to the accumulated mass of textualized knowledge of an institution like the Mouseion.

The comprehensive nature of collections of works such as the *Alexandra* or the *Pinakes* raises the question how all this information was attained. The Mouseion's collection of texts is the logical answer. The biggest clue is provided by Kallimachos who in his *Aetia* famously cites his source—Xenomedes of Kos (3.53-54).⁵⁷ Local histories like Xenomedes' must have also figured in the construction of the *Alexandra*, with its wealth of information, especially of certain geographic areas like the region of Southern Italy and Sicily. The scholia attribute Lykophron's inordinate number of foundation stories from that region to his use of Timaios of Tauromenium's *Histories*. This work covered much of the ancient history of Sicily and region of Southern Italy as well as an overall history of Greece.⁵⁸ Lykophron's work can be seen as archiving Timaios along with many others, and in that sense clearly performing the archival function of collecting and ordering the past for the present and future. In this specific case these data from the periphery are incorporated and given their place within the broader construction of the "Hellenic."

Lykophron's treatment of Helen is characteristic of the way in which Lykophron dealt with other major Greek culture heroes. By collecting the many lives of these heroes on the "pages" of this poem, we can glimpse how the archival process encouraged new ways of imagining and encountering these cultural icons. The *Alexandra* uses its immense

⁵⁷ For more on this figure, see Huxley (1965).

⁵⁸ Timaios could also be seen as the source of many of the myths in this work, since he was known to have preserved so many tales to the point where he received the nickname, the "collector of old wives' tales" or the "old ragwoman." The use of his account may explain the prophecy of the "rise of Rome" since Timaios was known to have included an account of Pyrrhus in his works. For a full treatment, see Brown (1958).

accumulation of learned facts to legitimize its position as a cultural arbiter of its age, and with this power it provides its readers with authoritative accounts of important Greek culture heroes. Whereas a traditional account based on the figure of Helen would have tried to present its audience with a consistent and compelling “dramatic” figure pieced together from a plethora of earlier accounts, Lykophron’s narrative is mainly concerned with providing an encyclopedic account that is more concerned with knowledge about each figure than a compelling narrative.

The *Alexandra* offers a model to its readers a new way to interact with the massive database of knowledge accumulated in Alexandria, by presenting itself as a collection of mythographic information gathered from all over the world. The form of a collection permitted the reconciliation of seemingly contradictory and incompatible pasts into a single coherent whole. This poem helped Hellenistic elites navigate the same kind of phenomena only on a much larger stage, by providing a model as to how to deal with similar circumstances. The act of collecting and archiving transformed local knowledge and performance into something new, textualized knowledge. This allowed elites to imagine their own local performance traditions and customs as part of a broader panhellenic Hellenistic identity. This was often achieved by transforming these traditions from performances into portable archival information that could, in turn, reuse the local in new ways. Therefore, what was once a song performed at some initiation rite in Argos or some local story of a heroine’s connection with a local cult site could now still maintain their cultural importance only now among a broader textual collection of similar events. Works, like Lykophron’s, were the way by which those, who cherished their own local cultural knowledge, could now see how their local identities and broader Panhellenic ones were not only compatible but were one and the same. Many of these elites, much like the

one who composed this poem, attempted to form a cohesive ruling class with a common cause from a vast pool of difference.

3.6 Poem Archiving Words

Returning to the first line, we can view the guard reciting a written text of the prophetess' words to his king, since "reciting what was written" is another possible meaning for λέγειν. The scene could now be viewed as playfully reenacting an imagined ideal performative or enunciative context that suggests how the poem might have been influencing its audience.⁵⁹ The poem begins by telling the story of a king, leader of a foreign land of great wealth, listening to the misunderstood words of a person with powers bestowed by the gods conveyed to him by a servant or slave. This scene aligns perfectly with the historical context of the poem. Could we not substitute Ptolemy for Priam having a slave (the guard) recite a new and difficult piece of poetry, which was ultimately written by one "blessed" by the gods or in this case by a servant of the Muses—Lykophron? Lykophron was a virtuoso at coming up with neologisms, displaying a befuddling variety of them, a true testament to the mountain of scholarly works and glosses necessary to create a work of such detail. Within this section of the chapter, I will explore how the archiving of words transformed them from being markers of local identity or even of genre into markers of panhellenic learning. This transformation made archaic, local, and obscure words into key elements for a new economy of cultural and poetic production. Moreover, his extensive use of rare and unique words points to specific new ways language and texts were utilized in social and cultural activities of the period.

⁵⁹ In section 3.4, I have already discussed the idea that the *Alexandra* was making its reader aware of its own textuality in this manner. Here, however, I slightly change the context.

As I argue throughout this dissertation, the Alexandrians often created new poetic forms by taking a preexisting form and modifying it in order to provide a new means to engage with the past. A perfect example of this is the *Mimiambi* of Herodas which took a preexisting generic form, the prose mime of Southern Italy and Sicily, and made it a verse form.⁶⁰ Lykophron’s extensive uses of neologisms or his massive word creative abilities should be seen in the same light as a means of creating “new” ways of presenting the past, by splicing up old words and making them into new ones. The existence and circulation of the *Alexandra* as a text insured that its effect on its readers would be at least in part visual, and thus confirm its status as a text to be read and studied.

From the very first line, Lykophron unashamedly makes it clear that neologisms and archaisms will be a central part of his work. Specifically, the fourth word of the first line, νητρεκῶς, meaning something like “truly” or “exactly,” presents the reader with the first of many *hapax legomena* appearing in this work. In this case, Lykophron created a new word by removing the alpha privative from the word ἀτρεκῶς and substituted it with the archaic sounding privative *nê-* (νη) to create νητρεκῶς.⁶¹ The use of this privative had a minor revival among Alexandrian poets.⁶² Some Alexandrians, such as Apollonios of Rhodes, appear to have used them to evoke the past. His use of νηλειής (pitiless), for

⁶⁰ This is only one example. Bucolic and literary epigram also would be relevant to this discussion.

⁶¹ The use of the *nê* privative was more common in Epic and Archaic poetry. A common and much used example of this type of formation used throughout antiquity is νήπιος, but we see other examples such as νηκερδής (without gain, unprofitable) (*Il.* 17.469, *Od.* 14.509) and νήκεστος (incurable) (*Hes. Op.* 238). There are several other examples and mostly from before the Classical period, although it was sporadically used throughout this period as well. νηλής, for example, appears in Homer (*Il.* 9.632), Pindar 11.34, Aischylos (*Pr.* 42), and Euripides (*Cycl.* 369).

⁶² Other examples from the “Alexandrians” follow: νήπαστος, (unceasing) (*Lyc.* 972), νήκουστος (unheard, unknown) (*Arat.* 173), and νήλιπος (unshod, barefooted) (*Ap. Rhod.* 3. 646).

example, had only appeared in Hesiod and the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* before his.⁶³ Of all the Alexandrians, Apollonios used the *ne* privative the most, which makes sense considering the fact that he worked in epic. Other Alexandrians probably saw this as an easy method for creating neologisms or words that sounded profound and learned. Both Theokritos and Lykophron, for example, were the only writers known to have used *νήριθμος*,⁶⁴ which suggests that either one borrowed the term from the other or perhaps both coincidentally “created” the same word through a common process. The appearance of *ne* privatives probably sounded slightly archaic to its Hellenistic audience but still was easily comprehensible. Although the construction of neologisms in this manner appears to be an easy process, these poets most likely relied on established glosses or word lists, such as Philitas’ Homeric glosses, to discover *ne* privatives that had not occurred before.

Lines 38-51, which I have already discussed, demonstrates the ways in which Lykophron’s use of language, in essence, becomes the point of his narrative. The medium, in this case, literally becomes the message for this audience. The *Alexandra* is a wonderful learned crossword puzzle that rewards its audience through its inventive use of language to not only to gloss and revive words but also to imagine new ones. To achieve this, Lykophron has his messenger of lowly status employ a host of rare, learned, or new words. One example of this is *παμμυγῆ* (“of all sorts” or “all-confounded”) from line five. The word had only appeared in the early tragic works of Aischylos (*Pers.* 269) and Phrynichos (*Lob. Phryn.* 515) and is clearly archaic, rare and learned. Another example is *ἀναπεμπάζω* from line nine. This word only appears in Plato (*Lys.* 222e) and might be seen as a learned allusion to this rare word to flesh out that a “Platonic” sort of

⁶³ *νηλείης*, *ές*, pitiless, ruthless, Hes. *Th.* 770, *h. Ven.* 245, A.R. 4.476

⁶⁴ See Theoc. 25.57; Lykoph. 415.

contemplation is necessary for this poem. The final example is ποδηγετέω from line twelve, which is a *primum dictum* with its only other occurrence appearing in Oppian. This word caps a series of statements emphasizing the themes discussed above with the force of a *hapax*. From these examples of only the first thirteen or so lines of the *Alexandra*, it seems clear that its audience would have quickly come to the realization that the more one picks meticulously over the text, the more one is rewarded. In this manner, a knowledge of Greek at a very high, learned and literate level became a means of compiling cultural capital necessary to declare oneself part an elite.

Lykophron's extensive use of neologisms reveals another manner in which textuality can result in new ways of dealing with collections of older materials. His neologisms create a new visual experience for its audience pointing to the probable means by which they interacted with the *Alexandra*—as a text. Lykophron appears to create words that can be roughly divided into three categories.⁶⁵ As one would expect, many of the words are compounds, such as μουσόφθαρτος (“death by the Muses,” line 832) or αίμοπώτης (blood sucking, line 1403). These words would have probably been the “easiest” to generate since they are not necessarily “new” words per se but rather new combinations of words. In the case of these words, their meaning is not difficult to grasp, but the challenge of these words for the poet is their coining and for his audience is the recognition that they are *hapax*. Through reordering this collection and fitting them into the meter, archival discursive activities, such as this one, altered and reordered their archive of words. In this case, we see how Lykophron's neologisms make something “new” by reassembling the seemingly familiar from the past.

⁶⁵ Ciani (1975) has been invaluable in assembling and ordering Lykophron's use of words.

These *hapax* are generally longer words, and therefore stand out prominently in the line, whether in the first position as in the following two examples (the *hapax* are underlined):

θαλασσόπαις δίμορφος ἀυδάξει θεός, (892)

The two-formed god, son of the sea, declares

καὶ τὸν δυνάστην τοῦ πετρωθέντος λύκου
ἀποινοδόρπου καὶ πάγων Τυμφρηστίων. (901-02)

and the lord of the wolf that devoured the atonement and was turned to stone and of the crags of Tymphrestus.

or in middle positions as the following:

Σχοινηῖδι μουσόφθαρτον Ἄρεντα Ζένη, (832)

Slain by the Muses and (wept) by the goddess of the Rushes (Aphrodite in Samos), Arenta, the Stranger (Aphrodite in Memphis),

δαπταῖς τιτύσκων αἰμοπώτησιν φόβον. (1403)

Fashioning a terror for the ravenous blood-suckers.

or a line with two *hapax* as follows:

τὸν ἥπατουργόν ἄρσεν' ἀρβυλόπτερον.
liver-destroying male with winged sandals. (839)

All of these compound *hapax* are notable in the way in which they make their physical presence known in the text. We have seen this before in the works of Pindar and Aeschylus, but here given the likely performative context of this work, we must consider the visual force of these compounds. The words have a physical presence that dominates their respective lines. Aurally these words being compounds of two regular words would not be as distinct as odd words, and so they draw attention to themselves as unique words through the manner they dominate their respective lines. The words themselves would have taken up a large part of each line imposing their physical presence on the reader and

constantly reminding him or her of their own importance to the work itself. The physicality, both aurally and visually, also puts a spotlight on the presence of a master technician of words who lies behind this work and to whose authority he or she ought to defer and strive to imitate.

Another class of *hapax* is merely new formations of words based on commonly used roots. In this category, I would include words like *ρίφή* (a nominalization of the verb *ρίπτειν*, lines 235 and 1326), *μύρμος* (a variant of *μύρμηξ*, lines 176 and 890),⁶⁶ and *λεβητίζειν* (a verbalization of *λέβης*). The third and final class of *hapax* is composed of alternative versions of common words like *ἀγάστωρ* (brother, line 264) and *σμήριγξ* (hair, line 37). The words might have either been local dialectical variants or popular colloquialisms, but their presence would have been noticeable aurally and visually on account of their rarity. The inclusion of strange variants of words also provide a Panhellenic forum for rare dialectic anomalies drawn from local settings, and can thus be seen as a means of appropriating the local for the center.

The deployment of these words, however, was not all fun and games since behind the construction and assemblage of these neologisms lay a system of material support informed by the impulse to control, order, and regulate a diverse language for a new readership.⁶⁷ This impulse provided a way of creating a new set of coherent and consistent traditions from a very diverse set of earlier traditions. Historically, the documentary culture of Egypt worked hand-in-hand with this new mindset, promoting regularity in spelling, though hardly at the level of the age of the printing press, and an attention to

⁶⁶ Lykophron actually creates two semantic *hapax legomena* with this single word. On line 176, he uses it to refer to one meaning of *μύρμηξ*, “ants,” and in the other, another, “a reef.”

⁶⁷ Much of this notion is borrowed from O’Driscoll (1999) 182, 184.

detail hitherto unimaginable. These conventions seeped into the production of literary texts.⁶⁸ Conventions of spelling constitute part of a broader regulatory impulse to exert control over language. This impulse can be also seen in the great projects of editing the canonical works of Homer, the tragedians, and comedians. The idea of viewing the poetic and cultural past through texts restricted access and thus controlled who could access positions of privilege and power, and it also provided a means through which one could gain entrance to and participate in this new empire of knowledge.

In the ancient world, the ability to coin even a few neologisms would have required sustained access to a large body of texts over the course of several years or glosses drawn from them, or both. As I have mentioned earlier in this section, even to know that a word using a privative as a *hapax* would have most likely required glosses as a means of determining if indeed a word was “new.” In order to assemble the collection of alternative and rare place names and personal titles we find in the *Alexandra*, we are aware that Lykophron probably used prose sources revealed through his use of vocabulary. The *Alexandra* is full of data that must have been drawn from local histories. His account of the five chiefs who go to Cyprus (447-591), his account of ktiseis by returning Greek heroes (592-647), and his vivid and lengthy account of Southern Italy (911-1089) suggest a reliance on now lost local and regional histories.⁶⁹

Lykophron’s treatment of the founding on the Balaeric Islands is a perfect example of where regional and local histories, language, and panhellenic lore converge. From lines 633-647, he recounts the Boiotian founding of the islands (633-647):

⁶⁸ See Johnson (2004).

⁶⁹ We are aware that Timaios of Tauromenion was probably the source for his Southern Italy narrative, but it is clear that he relied on other sources to discuss such a wide range of locations and topics. See Brown (1958).

Οἱ δ' ἀμφικλύστους χοιράδας Γυμνησίας
 σισυρνοδῦται καρκίνοι πεπλωκότες
 ἄχλαινον ἀμπρεύσουσι νήλιποι βίον,
 τριπλαῖς δικώλοις σφενδόναις ὠπλισμένοι.
 ὦν αἰ τεκοῦσαι τὴν ἐκηβόλον τέχνην
 ἄδορπα παιδεύσουσι νηπίους γονάς.
 οὐ γάρ τις αὐτῶν ψίσεται πύρνον γνάθῳ,
 πρὶν ἂν κρατήσῃ ναστὸν εὐστόχῳ λίθῳ
 ὑπὲρ τράφηκος σῆμα κείμενον σκοποῦ.
 καὶ τοῖ μὲν ἀκτὰς ἐμβατήσονται λεπρὰς
 Ἰβηροβοσκούς ἄγχι Ταρτησοῦ πύλης,
 Ἄρνης παλαιᾶς γέννα, Τεμμίκων πρόμοι
 Γραΐαν ποθοῦντες καὶ Λεοντάρνης πάγους
 Σκῶλόν τε καὶ Τέγυραν Ὀγχηστοῦ θ' ἔδος
 καὶ χεῦμα Θερμῶδοντος Ὑψάρνου θ' ὕδωρ.

And others shall sail to the sea-washed Gymnesian rocks (the Balaeric Islands)—
 crab-like, clad in skins—where cloakless and unshod they shall drag out their lives,
 armed with three two-membered slings. Their mothers shall teach the far-shooting
 art to their young offspring by supperless discipline. For none of them shall chew
 bread with his jaws, until with well-aimed stone he shall have won the cake set as a
 mark above the board. These shall set foot on the rough shores that feed the
 Iberians near the gate of Tartessos—a race sprung from ancient Arne, Temmikian
 (Boiotian) chiefs, yearning for Graia and the cliffs of Leontarne and Scolos and
 Tegyra and Onchestos' seat and the flood of Thermodon and the waters of
 Hypsarnos.

On line 633, Lykophron signals a change in location to his audience, by using the old name for the Balaeric Islands, Γυμνήσια. He then quickly supplies his audience with an etymology of this word when he describes the inhabitants as going about “cloakless” (ἄχλαινον) and “unshod” (νήλιποι) on the very next line. Lykophron masterfully constructs this line, which describes the natives' lifestyle by employing two privative adjectives, the first a common alpha privative adjective and the second a *nê* privative. Lykophron's use of the contemporary alpha privative early in the same line highlights his use of the near-*hapax* νήλιπος.⁷⁰ He further proves his poetic subtlety, since he uses each privative adjective to describe separate objects, the people and their livelihood. As the

⁷⁰ It only appears Apollonios' *Argonautika* and another writer from Late Antiquity.

passage moves along, Lykophron cleverly plays with his audience and the shared (mis)understanding that the Balaeric Islands (Βαλιαρεῖς) derived their name from their expertise in slinging (βάλλειν). Over the course of the description of its people, Lykophron appears to consciously avoid exploiting the obvious and easy use of wordplay. Instead, he opts to be his usual obscure self and only once employs a βαλλ- root word (ἐκηβόλον) on line 637 during his description of the island. This is a perfect example where his use of words supplied his audience with a template for making rare language and local stories the cultural property of his audience through etymological games.

The end of the passage above also points to extensive use of prose works, such as local histories, to produce obscure and odd sounding proper names for well-known figures. On lines 644-647, Lykophron ends this passage with a slew of proper names all associated with Boiotia. Τεμμίκων πρόμοι (“Boiotian Chiefs” or “Chiefs of Temmikia”), for example, from line 644 were, according to Mooney, the “pre-Cadmean” inhabitants of Boiotia. This term, which also is used on line 786, along with the others in these lines are representative of the local place names and cult names that proliferate the poem. Just about twenty lines after this passage, for example, a rare Iberian or Abderan cult name of Herakles prominently fills nearly an entire line: τοῦ Κηραμύντου Πευκέως Παλαίμονος.⁷¹

Mythographic handbooks or local histories most likely provided the other details, both nominal and factual, that filled his accounts of mythic figures like Helen and Achilles. In his account of Helen and her five husbands (141-179), Lykophron refers to Helen’s mother Leda as “Πλευρωνίας” on line 143 (141-143):

κλαίων δὲ πάτραν τὴν πρὶν ἠθαλωμένην

⁷¹ Mair (2006) 375 cites the sources for each location as either the scholia or *E.M.* respectively.

ἴξη χεροῖν εἶδωλον ἠγκαλισμένος
τῆς πενταλέκτρου θυιάδος Πλευρωνίας.

And wailing you will come to your fatherland that was burnt of old, embracing in your arms the wraith of the five-times married frenzied descendent of Pleuron.

Helen is introduced above by an obscure mythical reference to Pleuron, the grand or great-grandmother of Leda. Instances like this fill the lines of poem and strongly suggest that Lykophron had access to proto-mythographic sources for this information. The next two lines (144-145) supports this assumption in its alternate genealogy for the Fates:

γυιαὶ γὰρ εὐναστῆρας ἄμναμοι τριπλαῖς
πήναις κατεκλώσαντο δηναιᾶς Ἄλός,

For the lame daughters (the Fates) of the ancient Sea (Tethys) with the triple thread have decreed her bedfellows shall share their marriage feast among five bridegrooms.

How else, for example, could he have known the alternative genealogy of the Fates as Tethys instead of the more canonical Hesiodic attribution to Zeus and Themis or Nyx? Beyond sources, it is clear from the scholia on Lykophron that his poem caused the writing of commentaries to explain its intricacies. All these facts speak to the textual economy that this poem functioned in. The precise differentiation between words and textual variants is the product of a highly literate society, one obsessed with the minutiae of language, as such as emerge from stories about the Hellenistic Alexandria.

Glosses of Greek dialects must have also played a role in the construction of the *Alexandra*. Throughout the narrative, Lykophron incorporates local regional or dialectical variants. These were clearly not *hapax legomena* per se, since they must have been used locally or regionally. In terms of the literary record, however, Lykophron has created neologisms from the local. For example, the Boiotian variant for “eagle,” αἰέτας,

on line 461 provides an example of local dialect used to create a *hapax*.⁷² Line 461 is part of a larger narrative that explores the banishment of *Kassandra*'s cousin, *Teuker* (Τεῦκρος), who had murdered his brother, *Aias*. The mention of *Aias* triggers a digression on this figure that leads us to the dialectal *hapax* in question. What is odd in the use of this word here is that the narrative does not have any direct connection to *Boiotia*. It appears as though *Lykophron* is merely coloring this tale with a neologism, because he could.

Another example of the center appropriating the periphery appears in the extensive use of local cult names of well-known deities. In the following example, we see *Kassandra* telling of how she fought off the advances of *Apollo* (352-353):

ἢ τὸν Θοραῖον Πτῶρον Ὠρίτην θεὸν
λίπτοντ' ἀλέκτρων ἐκβαλοῦσα δεμνίων,

I who spurned from my maiden bed the god *Thoraios*, Lord of *Ptoön*, Ruler of the Seasons

In this case, *Lykophron* cleverly refers to *Apollo* using a *Lakonian* cult-title, *Thoraios*, that marks him as a fertility deity in its etymology which contains the word for “seed” or “semen”—*θορός*—and in such manner plays conveys to his audience both his role as fertility god and the seed of his desire in a single word. *Lykophron* adds one more reference to another local or regional association with *Πτῶρος*, an allusion to a hill in *Boiotia*. A little further in this same passage, we encounter a series of lesser-known titles to the goddess *Athena*: *Λαφρία* (“Giver of Spoil,” line 356), *Πυλᾶτις* (a reference to her association with thresholds, line 356), *Βούδεια* (a *Thessalian* title of hers, line 359), and *Αἴθυια* (“Seagull”—a *Megarian* title of hers associating her with the sea, line 359). The *Alexandra* contains an unprecedented collection of rare and local cult names and titles for

⁷² The line runs: σκύμνον παρ' ἀγκάλησιν αἰεῖτα βράσας.

the gods that otherwise would have been lost to posterity and makes them into knowledge that is once again sought after and relevant to its audience. All the examples discussed above clearly demonstrate how the imperial cultural center has provided a means for its Panhellenic audience to appropriate, use, and revere local traditions, transforming it from local knowledge to Panhellenic property. Additionally, it shows how new archival works created demand for the products of the Mouseion.

Besides using glosses, Lykophron constantly glosses words within his text. This creates a new way of experiencing the poem as a text. Glossing was probably intended to be part of the poem's broader effect of creating a learned type of opaqueness of language, in order to match and affect the confusion that Kassandra's words were supposed to have induced. An example of this, previously discussed, is from line 49:

Λέπτυνιν οὐ τρέμουσαν οὐδαίαν θεόν·

She who feared not Leptynis (Persephone), goddess of the Underworld.

“Leptynis” is an obscure reference to Persephone, and Lykophron glosses the goddess with the last two words of this line. He does so, however, in a Lykophronian fashion using a word that is itself the first known occurrence of that word, a *primum dictum*. Lykophron, here, appears to play with and satirize the idea of the gloss by making it necessary for the reader to find a gloss for the poem's gloss. This way of constructing a text forces its readers either to hunt down the answer in other texts or to create their own texts to provide their answers. The act of writing and reading this poem reinforces and perpetuates the economy of texts that has arisen during this period. Even the answer to this mini mystery over the identity of this goddess is ultimately supplied by the scholia to this text, who

explain “τὴν λεπτύνουσαν τὰ σώματα τῶν ἀποθανόντων.”⁷³ Clearly, this line was not only obscure to its modern readers.

In this way, Lykophron’s *Alexandra* became a monument to scholars and archivists, honoring them with its obscure erudition. Through its use of obscure and rare words, the *Alexandra* constantly reminded its readers that they were reliant on a larger web of connections both epistemological and social that spread out beyond their immediate horizons. These words, which appear in nearly every line, constantly prod the reader to reach out to others to come to an understanding of this poem and others like them. They must have done so through communication with others as well as through acquisition of texts about the texts like glosses. But even for those dwelling in the remotest areas of the Hellenistic world, the consumption and production of archival texts in the form of glosses and learned poetry could provide a connection to imperial centers of learning, such as Alexandria. This relationship was often solely constructed and enacted through the need to defer to other texts and learned persons in order to comprehend the work to its fullest. In effect, we witness demand for knowledge facilitated through an economy of texts and the creation of a community of consumers and producers of a shared product, archival learning. Lykophron’s readers turned into consumers of a specific brand of highly literate learning, and these consumers in turn create a demand and perpetuation of the practices, institutions, and ideologies that supported and were promoted in this type of endeavor, accepting a new hierarchy based on the control and possession of cultural knowledge.

⁷³ The citation is from Mooney (1921): 7. For the full passage, see Scheer (1881-1908).

3.7 The Poetic Archive “Restaging” the East-West Conflict

When we begin to examine closely just exactly who is doing the “talking” or “telling” of this poem, we once again turn to the first word of the *Alexandra*. It is curious that the person who actually retells the course of the history of the Greek-speaking world is a barbarian. There are many examples of pre-Hellenistic literary works that have barbarians playing a central role,⁷⁴ but we should also consider that Hellenistic literati, especially the Alexandrians, were writing from a radically different political position than their predecessors. It should be no surprise that a work that so resembles a work of Aischylos would also take up themes, narrative perspectives, and a style of that author, and in this manner Lykophron is, in essence, restaging works of the master tragedian. In the imagination of Greeks of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, barbarians represented not only the other but a political threat, a belief that was primarily colored by their interactions, past and present, with the Persians. For Hellenistic Greeks, however, barbarians no longer posed the same kind of threat, and were, in fact, mostly their subject peoples. Throughout the Hellenistic period, indigenous elite gradually would assimilate themselves into the dominant ethno-class, the Greco-Macedonians. They eventually acquired status as “Greeks” by participating in institutions and practices deemed Greek.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ One immediately thinks of the *Iliad* and the important role the Trojans play within it, Aischylos’ *Persians* and *Suppliant Women*, Euripides’ *Medeia* and *Trojan Women*, and even Herodotus’ *Histories*, in which Xerxes among others plays a central role to the larger work. The key in these works is that the “barbarian” speaks for himself or is at least presented in that manner.

⁷⁵ Below, I provide a brief survey of some important works discussing “ethnic” relations in Egypt. It is a fact though that certain communities, such as the Jewish diaspora, quickly adopted it as their own. Baines (2004) has convincingly argued that much of the extreme polarity one sees in the material evidence from Ptolemaic Egypt is partially due to the nature of the evidence. He calls for us to examine the evidence from an interdisciplinary perspective in order to recover the multiple identities contained in those texts. Baines himself paints a very nuanced picture of the mixture of cultures among indigenous Egyptian elites primarily through an examination of visual forms. Clarysse (1992) also focuses on native elites. Bagnall (1981) has argued for a more polarized society and Maehler (2004) has argued strongly for a systematic apartheid-like cultural policy conducted by the Ptolemies, which, in my opinion, is untenable. Others, such as La’da (2003), in contrast, argue for the near lack of discrimination against indigenous Egyptians.

This section explores how the political situation of the Alexandrians affected how they reimagined their past on a material and figurative level. This approach raises a whole host of issues, ranging from questions of performance or enunciative context of the *Alexandra* to the very complex notion of who is actually doing the speaking in this poem, to whom, and for what end.

We must first begin by understanding the historical context in which the *Alexandra* was written. Lykophron composed the *Alexandra* in a political and cultural climate that was very different from those that flourished prior to the conquests of Alexander. Pre-Hellenistic culture was replaced by a new imperial culture. This process, however, would take time and took place slowly, being constantly negotiated and renegotiated in Alexandrian cultural products like Lykophron's. Ironically, these highly literate, esoteric works came to speak to and for an audience that was far vaster and more diverse than anything that part of the world had seen before. The work probably was seen simultaneously as a sign of change and displacement from the past and as a something that might bring this new conglomerate of peoples together.

The work must have embodied the social and political upheavals sweeping over the world, having affected different entities within this new world differently. The *Alexandra* with its challenging Greek and obscure language probably constantly reminded the ethnically Greek colonists dispersed throughout the new empires of the *Diadochoi* of their own sense of displacement from the cultural traditions they had left behind in the Old World. For them, no longer would identity be so dependent on birth and physical participation in local institutions of song and performance. For the Greeks who remained in the Old World, new Alexandrian works, such as Lykophron's, might have highlighted their discomfort with their new identity as rulers of the known world. Lastly, the work

might also have underscored the sense of foreignness and hardship that many of the Hellenizing elites faced. They, who were demarcated as barbarians according to the previous epistemological regime, must have seen the work as yet another sign of their outsider status in their own lands.

Yet, at the same time, this poem provided its audience with a common means of participating in this new world. This text can be seen as a miniaturized blueprint of the world that, if disseminated through imitation, could provide the key to elites of the Hellenistic world to form a new cohesive elite imperial identity.⁷⁶ Through the introduction of new ways of imagining literary and cultural traditions, anyone could attain admittance to the elite through display of the prerequisite knowledge. An empire of knowledge had been established open to those who could master knowledge of the past. Knowledge of the past or tradition was an ever-changing entity, constantly being redefined to suit current political and historical realities. Everyday subjects of this empire continually negotiated what comprised tradition through everyday activities such as the written line, their choice of clothing, or their meals. The *Alexandra* and other texts like it not only reinforced a sense of alienation from the world but also provided a way for integrating oneself within it. Written texts, as at no time before, provided a way of bridging the distances between people, compensating everyone for their collective sense of displacement. Moreover, the contents of those works also supplied its consumers with new modes of forming communities. Learnedness or being a *pepaideumenos* would gradually become the mark of a civilized, imperial Hellenistic subject. Birth was no longer *the*

⁷⁶ Here my interpretation differs radically from the notion that this “blueprint” was a conscious policy mapped out by the leadership as Stephanie West (2000) 164 suggests or an Apartheid-like system as Herwig Maehler (2004) has argued. Maehler (2004) 11 sees the Ptolemies exercising “a deliberate cultural policy, whose aim was to preserve their Greekness, and safeguard their cultural heritage from amalgamation with, or absorption by, the surrounding Egyptian civilization.”

prerequisite to having a voice in the larger political community—now both a member from the priestly caste in Memphis and a Greek colonist in the *chôra* could perform and partake in larger and broader political states of the period.

The time-old trope of East versus West is invoked in the first line of the *Alexandra* with the use of ἱστορεῖς, the last word of the line, which would have triggered images of Herodotos in the mind of its ancient readers. It is and was well known that its root word, ἱστορίη, is featured prominently in the first line of Herodotos' *Histories*.⁷⁷ Herodotos clearly was not the first to use or coin the term, but it is clear that by the third century BCE, the word had become associated with his work.⁷⁸ According to Gould, words related to ἱστορίη appear twenty three times in his text.⁷⁹ Of those twenty-three incidences, nine appear in Herodotus' famous Second Book, which provides of an account of ancient Egyptian society as seen through Greek eyes.⁸⁰ By invoking this word in the first line of the *Alexandra*, Lykophron's work not only lays claim to the genre of history, but it also puts the spotlight on the content of his Second Book, Egypt. Lykophron's account of the conflict between Asian and Europe rewrites Herodotos' account (1.1-1.5). It should not be surprising that the poem could so strongly allude to and try to rewrite Herodotos' account given Lykophron's own personal history in Egypt with its monarch.⁸¹ Just as

⁷⁷ Herodotos' text begins: Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέος ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις ἦδε (1.1).

⁷⁸ Gould (1989) 9-11.

⁷⁹ Gould (1989) 9.

⁸⁰ 2.19.14 and 2.19.17 near the beginning of his inquiry on the nature of the Nile; 2.29.4 used describing his journey up the Nile to Meroe; 2.34.6 where he compares the Nile to the Ister; 2.44.17 where he visits Phoenicia; 2.99.1 ending his account of Egypt; 2.113.1 begins a discussion he had with Egyptian priests over Helen while 2.118.3 and 2.119.13 where he concludes his inquiries with the priests where he reconciles Egyptian and Homeric accounts of stories about Helen. The last usages are telling in linking the method of Herodotos with Lykophron both in approach as well as subject matter.

⁸¹ The latest to point this out is West (2000): 154-56.

Herodotos constantly calls upon words related to ἱστορίη to attain a sense of epistemological authority over both his logographic predecessors and audience, so here too Lykophron attempts to achieve that same type of authority over his readers through an intertextual reference to that earlier work in order to rewrite that work for his new audience.

Lykophron's *Alexandra* is littered throughout with tales about the conflict between the "East" and the "West" or the "two continents," to quote the author himself,⁸² but it is not until line 1281 that the narrative directly engages with the Herodotean account of the origins of the conflict between the Greeks and barbarians (1.1-1.5).⁸³ In Herodotos' *Histories*, the historian gives us his version of what the Persians and Phoenicians claim to be the causes of the conflict. Herodotos states that the Persians claim that the Phoenicians started it by abducting Io from the Greeks, and the conflict lingered due to "common violence" (Μέχρι μὲν ὧν τούτου ἀρπαγὰς μούνας εἶναι παρ' ἀλλήλων), but that ultimately the Greeks would be "greatly to blame" (Ἕλληνας δὴ μεγάλως αἰτίους γενέσθαι).⁸⁴ The Phoenician account naturally clears their own sailors of blame, offering an alternative story in which Io goes willingly with the sailors to Egypt. This account attributed to foreigners was ultimately a Herodotean construction that created the illusion of a perceived, long-standing tension between Asia and Europe. After the account, Herodotos himself intervenes and claims that he will no longer dither on all these stories and will instead move onto something about which he actually knows.⁸⁵ Herodotos, in this

⁸² See line 1295 for "ἠπείροις διπλαῖς."

⁸³ See West (2000): 154-156 for the most recent treatment of this issue.

⁸⁴ Both passages are from Herodotos 1.4.

⁸⁵ The Greek runs as follows (1.5):

manner, claims authority and legitimacy over the competing accounts of the conflict privileging his own rational perspective and relegating the mythic stories of prehistory to the other side.

The *Alexandra* expands upon the Herodotos' 1.1-1.5, both in terms of its length and temporal scope. His "Herodotean" narrative runs from line 1291 to 1460, tracing the conflict's origins back to the age of the gods and pushing it forward down to the "prophetic future" in the age of Alexander the Great.⁸⁶ The tale of the conflict is once again posed as one narrated by the Asians. Its narrators the guard and Kassandra reclaim the authoritative high ground from the Herodotean narrative by claiming comprehensive knowledge of the strife. This is exactly the same criterion by which archival discourse and the archetypal archive, the Mouseion, base their own claims of superiority.

The poem also tries to reconcile all narratives, conflicting or not, within one grand comprehensive narrative, simultaneously reinforcing the constructed geographic divide between the "Asia" and "Europe."⁸⁷ Lykophron, however, complicates the relationship between these two "foes" by spreading equal blame to both parties. The result is presented as a cycle of violence that demands resolution. This need for resolution of the conflict accounts for the largest difference between the two narratives. Kassandra sees the possibility for reconciliation between the two sides and provides a part in the story for a great reconciler. She ultimately prophesizes that a lion, Alexander the Great, will bring an end to the conflict. In this manner, Lykophron produces a narrative that both reimagines

Ἐγὼ δὲ περὶ μὲν τούτων οὐκ ἔρχομαι ἐρέων ὡς οὕτως ἢ ἄλλως κως ταῦτα ἐγένετο, τὸν δὲ οἶδα αὐτὸς πρῶτον ὑπάρξαντα ἀδίκων ἔργων ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, τοῦτον σημήνας προβήσομαι ἐς τὸ πρόσω τοῦ λόγου, ὁμοίως μικρὰ καὶ μεγάλα ἄστεα ἀνθρώπων ἐπέξιόν.

⁸⁶ In terms of length, I merely mean that Lykophron's treatment spans a little over ten percent of his work whereas Herodotus 1.1-1.5 is a very small fraction of its entirety.

⁸⁷ See West (2000) 158-159.

and partially neutralizes the hard Manichean divide between the two continents which Herodotos constructed in his *Histories*. Lykophron's hybrid literary work, a mixture of prose and poetry, attempts to reconcile the conflicting sides by showing how they have been resolved in a single poetic creation.

Lykophron begins his retelling of the history of the conflict between the Greeks and barbarians within the personal tragic narrative, having *Kassandra* foretelling her enemies' destruction (1280-81):

Τοσαῦτα μὲν δύσκλητα πείσονται κακὰ
οἱ τὴν ἐμὴν μέλλοντες αἰστώσειν πάτραν.

So many are the woes, hard to bear, which they shall suffer who are to lay waste to my fatherland.

This stance, which is consistent with that of Herodotos, is quickly balanced with a curse upon the Phoenicians, whom *Kassandra* curses for their actions (1291-1295):

Ὅλοιτο ναῦται πρῶτα Καρνῖται κύνες,
οἱ τὴν βοῶπιν ταυροπάρθενον κόρην
Λέρνης ἀνηρείψαντο, φορτηγοὶ λύκοι,
πλάτιν πορεῦσαι κῆρα Μεμφίτη πρόμῳ,
ἔχθρας δὲ πυρσὸν ἦραν ἠπεῖροις διπλαῖς.

My curse, first, upon the Carnite (Phoenician) sailor hounds! The merchant wolves who carried off from Lerne (Argos) the ox-eyed girl (Io or Isis), the bull-maiden, to bring to the lord of Memphis (Telegonus, King of Egypt, or possibly Osiris) a fatal bride, and raised the beacon of hatred for the two continents.

This act of curse and blame is the first noticeable departure from the Herodotean version. No longer will the barbarians place more blame on the Greeks, but blame will be spread evenly between the two parties. Lykophron has his *Kassandra* continue telling her story in a manner consistent with the Herodotean tit-for-tat vision of the conflict (1296-1301):

αὔθις γὰρ ὕβριν τὴν βαρεῖαν ἀρπαγῆς
Κουρήτες ἀντίποινον Ἰδαῖοι κάπροι
ζητοῦντες αἰχμάλωτον ἤμπρευσαν πόριν
ἐν ταυρομόρφῳ τράμπιδος τυπώματι

Σαραπτίαν Δικταῖον εἰς ἀνάκτορον
δάμαρτα Κρήτης Ἀστέρω στρατηλάτη.

For afterwards the Curetes (Cretans), Idaean boars, seeking to avenge the rape by their heavy deed of violence, carried off captive in a bull-formed vessel the Saraptian (a Phoenician town) heifer (Europa) to the Dictaeon palace to be the bride of Asteros, the lord of Crete (Zeus).

The passage above is a perfect example of how Lykophron modifies the Herodotean manner of narrative. By casting the various players as animals, Lykophron adds a level of judgment on them that was lacking in the original Herodotean narrative.⁸⁸ The Phoenicians are portrayed as merchant wolves (φορτηγοὶ λύκοι) and the Cretans as Idaean boars (Ἰδαῖοι κάπροι). Then from lines 1302-1308, Lykophron continues to rewrite the narrative of Herodotos, deepening his narrative by adding motivation to his actors, having Kassandra state that the Greeks are not satisfied with a tit-for-tat (1302-1308):

οὐδ' οἳ γ' ἀπηρκέσθησαν ἀντ' ἴσων ἴσα
λαβόντες, ἀλλὰ κλῶπα σὺν Τεύκρω στρατὸν
καὶ σὺν Σκαμάνδρῳ Δραυκίῳ φυτοσπόρῳ
εἰς Βεβρύκων ἔστειλαν οἰκητήριον,
σμίμβοισι δηρίσοντας, ὧν ἀπὸ σπορᾶς
ἔμοις γενάρχας ἐξέφυσε Δάρδανος,
γῆμας Ἀρίσβαν Κρηῖσσαν εὐγενῆ κόρη.

Nor were they contented when they had taken like for like; but sent with Teucer and his Draukian father Skamandros a host of plunderers to the dwelling-place of the Bebryces (Trojans) to war with mice; of the seed of those men Dardanos begat the authors of my people, when he married the noble Cretan maid Arisba.

Although Kassandra comes right out to call the Greek army a “raping army” or “host of plunderers” (1303) (κλῶπα στρατὸν), she begins to attempt to reconcile the two parties in the last two lines, when she points out that this conquest also began a system of mixing between the two sides and concludes with the detail that the Trojans have Greek ancestry

⁸⁸ Substituting animals for character names is quite common in Lykophron, but I believe in this case, it is more than a mere convention.

through Dardanos.⁸⁹ Here, a Trojan princess lays bare the common ancestry between the two sides through which there might be reconciliation.

In the examples cited above, Lykophron uses the language of song or literature to convey *Kassandra's* judgments, rather than doing so in a declarative manner of Herodotos. Herodotos, who was still groping around for a means of differentiating his type of storytelling from traditional poetic ones, used the stripped-down, almost clinical language of the logographers in his retelling of the conflict in 1.1-1.5. By doing so, he attempted to seize authority from those who had competed with him over the telling of the past. In contrast, Lykophron tries to reclaim that authoritative high ground by absorbing both poetic and prose traditions within his narrative, producing a hybrid product to impose an authority upon his readers, an authority based on new means of viewing the world rooted in the scholarly discourse of the period.

Over the next 150 or so lines, *Kassandra* recounts the wars waged back-and-forth between the two sides, including all of its major figures: the Argonauts, Theseus, Herakles, the Amazons, Paris and the Trojans, Helen, Agamemnon, Orestes, the Dorians, Midas, and Xerxes. Even within this stretch of narrative, there are still moments where Lykophron complicates the narrative by dropping in examples that foreshadow the way a hero-figure could resolve this conflict. For example from lines 1374-1377, *Kassandra* points out that Orestes will found a colony in Aeolis in Asia Minor of many races and diverse tongues.

Ὁ δεύτερος δέ, τοῦ πεφασμένου κέλωρ
ἐν ἀμφιβλήστροις ἔλλοπος μυνδοῦ δίκην,

⁸⁹ Dionysios of Halicarnassos (1.61-62) states that Dardanos was originally from Arcadia. Furthermore, although the mixing between the two sides was present from the beginning in the *Iliad*, that narrative had been sublimated under the broader Herodotean narrative that emphasized the geographic and cultural divide between the two sides.

καταιθαλώσει γαῖαν ὀθνείαν, μολῶν
χρησιμοῖς ἰατροῦ σὺν πολυγλώσσῳ στρατῶ. (1374-1377)

And, second (Orestes), the son of him that was slain in a net, like a dumb fish, shall lay waste with fire the alien land, coming, at the bidding of the oracles of the Physician (Apollo), with a host of many tongues.

Ultimately, *Kassandra* ends her narrative in the historical present of the early third century BCE. She ends her tale foretelling the arrival of a lion and a wrestler, who will resolve the conflict. The idea of a man resolving the conflict with a polyglot army or host is a precursor to the end of this narrative and this conflict, Alexander the Great (1439-1450):

ἕως ἄν αἴθων εὐνάσῃ βαρὺν κλόνον
ἀπ' Αἰακοῦ τε κάπῳ Δαρδάνου γεγῶς
Θεσπρωτὸς ἄμφω καὶ Χαλαστραῖος λέων
πρηνῆ θ' ὀμαίμων πάντα κυπῶσας δόμον
ἀναγκάσῃ πτήξαντας Ἀργείων πρόμους
σᾶναι Γαλάδρας τὸν στρατηλάτην λύκον
καὶ σκῆπτρ' ὀρέξει τῆς πάλαι μοναρχίας.
ὣ δὴ μεθ' ἕκτην γένναν αὐθαίμων ἐμὸς
εἷς τις παλαιστής, συμβαλὼν ἀλκὴν δορὸς
πόντου τε καὶ γῆς κείς διαλλαγὰς μολῶν,
πρέσβιστος ἐν φίλοισιν ὑμνηθήσεται,
σκύλων ἀπαρχὰς τὰς δορικτήτους λαβῶν.

until a tawny lion—sprung from Aiakos and from Dardanus, Thesprotian at once and Chalastraian—shall lull to rest the grievous tumult, and, overturning on its face all the house of his kindred, shall compel the chiefs of the Argives to cower and fawn upon the wolf-leader of Galadra, and to hand over the scepter of the ancient monarchy. With him, after six generations, my kinsman, unique wrestler, shall join battle by sea and land and come to terms, and shall be celebrated among his friends as most excellent, when he has received the first fruits of the spear-won spoils.

This passage has rightly generated much scholarly controversy, which probably would have pleased Lykophron. The issue, however, is clearly: who is the “lion” and who is the “wrestler?”⁹⁰ Many candidates for each have arisen ranging from Alexander the Great to

⁹⁰ There is also the issue of the “Galadran Wolf,” whom I also side with Ciaceri (1901) as a stand in for Antipater, who was left as vice-regent in Greece while Alexander was warring in the East.

Pyrrhos of Epiros to Flaminius.⁹¹ Given the background story, I believe that it is more than likely that the “lion” is Alexander and the “wolf” is Antipater, the vice-regent of Greece in Alexander’s absence, as Ciaceri has argued.⁹² This “solution” is consistent with an equally sensible conjecture by Mair about the identity of the “wrestler” and his successive “six generations.” Mair argues that the “wrestler” represents Pyrrhus, and then deduces that the six generations refer to six kings of Macedon with Pyrrhus being the sixth after Alexander. Mair speculates that sixth generations refer to Alexander, Philip Arrhidaios, Kassander, his three sons, Demetrios Poliorcetes, and lastly Pyrrhus. If we combine this genealogy with Ciaceri’s theory that the wolf is Antipater, we would merely have to substitute Antipater for Alexander to arrive at plausible explanation of this passage for it to date to the third century.⁹³ This solution is plausible enough and consistent with Lykophron’s cryptic style and more importantly removes the need to provide a second Lykophron.⁹⁴ Regardless of the theories, it is clear that there is neither conclusive proof for

⁹¹ To provide a brief sample of some of the various theories from the modern era: Wilamowitz (1883) argues that the “wolf” is Alexander and does so using convoluted reasoning that identifies the Argive chiefs of line 1443 as Persians. Holzinger (1895) says that the “lion” is Pyrrhus. Niebuhr (1827) believes the wrestler is Flaminius and therefore hypothesizes that the work was by a younger poet named Lykophron working in the early second-century BCE. Mair (2006) argues that the “lion” is Alexander but that the “wolf” and “wrestler” symbolize entire peoples. West (2000) even calls it a panegyric to Alexander. For more information, see Bates (1895); Mooney (1921); West (1983), (1984), and (2000); Mair (2006).

⁹² Ciaceri (1901).

⁹³ For a full discussion of these theories, see Mair (2007) 308-314, esp. 312.

⁹⁴ The theory of the “Second Lykophron” first made its appearance in antiquity, possibly as early as the first century CE. Although the Lykophron’s ancient biographies fail to mention this “second Lykophron”, the scholia on the *Alexandra* do. The scholia produced a substantial amount of notes pertaining to the poem, of which a substantial portion survives. It is comprised of comments from older scholia and the Byzantine Tzetzes (for more on this topic, see Dickey 2007). Immediately below, I present the scholia from Scheer’s edition (1908 *TLG*) which he has divided into older scholia on the left and Tzetzes’ version on the right (1226):

γένους δὲ πάππων·
ἐντεῦθεν περὶ Ῥωμαίων λέγει
καὶ Λυκόφρονος ἑτέρου νομι-
στέον

περὶ Ῥωμαίων ἐντεῦθεν δια- (1,bis)
λαμβάνει. τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ τοῦ (2,bis)
σχολίου γελοῖα· φασὶ γὰρ Λυ- (3,bis)
κόφρονος ἑτέρου (4,bis)

nor even a need for a “Second Lykophron.”

In the end, Lykophron holds up Alexander as the figure who ends the conflict between Asia and Europe, suggesting that such reconciliation is fundamental to navigating the new political reality of the Hellenistic world. In this way, the *Alexandra* attempts to appropriate Herodotos in order to reconcile the tensions between Greeks and barbarians. The poem provided a means for dealing with the historic situation of the early Hellenistic period when Greek identity had expanded beyond its biological parameters, which had raised anxieties about what constituted Greekness and how would they form a cohesive ruling class from such a diverse group. The *Alexandra* attempted to do so, by providing new ways of “performing Greekness” from its characters drawn from the highest ranks, like Alexander, down to its lowest character, the Trojan guard. This character’s status is not only low, but he is technically a “barbarian” who recites to his “barbarian” king a reimagined history of the Greeks. This is a narrative presented in the mouths of foreigners. Through these figures, the poem and poet clearly show that scholarly knowledge was the way for all to thrive in the new structures of power. Although the figure of Alexander could provide the moment for reconciliation and unity, it was ultimately up to the everyday elite members of this community to bring this imagined community to fruition.

Lykophron relied on the cultural capital he has accrued through the composition

εἶναι τὸ ποίημα, οὐ τοῦ γράψαντος τὴν τραγωδίαν· συνήθης (5)
γὰρ ὦν τῷ Φιλαδέλφῳ οὐκ ἂν περὶ Ῥωμαίων διελέγετο.

The earlier source speaks of another Lykophron (Λυκόφρονος ἐτέρου), which the Tzetzes states is laughable (γελοῖα). As I have mentioned throughout this chapter, most ancient statements on Lykophron fail to mention a second poet. In the modern era, Niebuhr in the nineteenth-century popularized the position that there must have been a second Lykophron. This Lykophron worked within the second century BCE. Niebuhr argued that that was the only way Rome could play such a prominent role in the text. This argument works upon the assumption that the Rome described here is clearly the “rising Rome” of the second century BCE. I find this a retroactive reading that interprets the passage in too straightforward a manner, ignoring the fact that the rest of the poem is never this clear. It seems odd that this would be the only simple reading amongst such a highly dense and complex work.

of his poetic archive to redefine the traditional Herodotean binary between the Greeks and barbarians for the Hellenistic Age. He pushed aside the Herodotean model of Greekness and demonstrated how it had broken down. The world of the third-century BCE was a place where the Greeks found themselves masters of the known world. They were no longer threatened by a foreign other as formulated in earlier discourses, and the *Alexandra* provided a way to deal with the politics of this new age. It ultimately provided a means of recuperating, reformulating, and reconciling cultural-historical narratives, such as the Greek ancestry of the Trojans, by overwriting the traditional Herodotean narrative which emphasized the natural enmity and difference between the two sides.

3.8 Conclusion

ὄς δὴ ποδηγῶν πτόρθον Ἀγχίσου νόθον
 ἄξει τρίδειρον νῆσον εἰς ληκτηρίαν,
 τῶν Δαρδανείων ἐκ τόπων ναυσθλούμενον.
 Αἰγέστα τλήμων, σοὶ δὲ δαιμόνων φραδαῖς
 πένθος μέγιστον καὶ δι' αἰῶνος πάτρας
 ἔσται πυρὸς ρίπαῖσιν ἠθαλωμένης.
 μόνη δὲ πύργων δυστυχεῖς κατασκαφὰς
 νήπαυστον αἰάζουσα καὶ γοωμένη
 δαρὸν στενάξεις. πᾶς δὲ λυγαίαν λεῶς
 ἐσθῆτα προστρόπαιον ἐγχλαινούμενος
 αὐχμῶ πινώδης λυπρὸν ἀμπρεύσει βίον.
 κρατὸς δ' ἄκουρος νῶτα καλλυνεῖ φόβη,
 μνήμην παλαιῶν τημελοῦσ' ὀδυρμάτων. (965-977)

That whelp shall guide the bastard scion of Anchises and bring him to the farthest bounds of the three-necked island (Sicily), voyaging from Dardanian places. Hapless Aegesta! to thee by devising of the gods there shall be most great and age-long sorrow for my country when it is consumed by the breath of fire. And thou alone shalt groan for long, bewailing and lamenting unceasingly the unhappy overthrow of her towers. And all thy people, clad in the sable garb of the suppliant, squalid and unkempt, shall drag out a sorrowful life, and the unshorn hair of their heads shall deck their backs, keeping the memory of ancient woes.

It is fitting that we end with a selection of the *Alexandra* which is both *ktisis* and *aition*, something I have not discussed in this chapter. *Aetia* and *ktiseis* were ways that the

Alexandrians were able to exert control over the past, since they provided a way for the scholar-poets to reinterpret their pasts seamlessly and to situate those pasts within a seemingly familiar discourse. In this case, we can see how Lykophron gathered information from local histories about Southern Italy and wove them into his broader panhellenic work. Lykophron attributes the foundation of Aigesta/Segesta to a Trojan and then even claims the garb of the indigenous inhabitants was worn to mourn the destruction of Troy. The poet ties together both the Greek and Trojan pasts and then resituates local traditions as dependent and founded upon that tradition. In the ultimate imperial gesture, the poem reconciles all the players by subsuming them to the grand narrative of reconciliation between East and West. Greek and Trojan heroes no longer are separate but share a common goal of unifying the Mediterranean under one broad cultural paradigm, which was worked out in narratives like this one. The indigenous people of Segesta history is here appropriated to resituate it as part of a broader story of Panhellenism.

Lykophron's reframing of historical miscellany into a learned piece of literature provided a means for those living in areas remote from one another to unite behind the belief that they shared one another's cultural values and traditions. In this case, the *aition* was not only used to connect customs from the edge of the Greek-speaking world to the rest of the world but also to connect it to its remote past embodied in the earlier canonical works. Moreover, the content of the story told above attempts to reconcile the discursive struggle between Greek and barbarian which had been fought out in texts over the course of centuries. Throughout the *Alexandra*, literary maneuvers like this one instill a sense of the interconnectedness among its readers of the world and in effect shrink the girth of the world and centuries of time into a few lines of iambic pentameter, compelling all parties to

back to the edge of recorded time in order to witness a world with a common ancestry.

This chapter focused on the specific ways that Lykophron's *Alexandra* functioned as a text that disseminated, defined, and negotiated identities in the early Hellenistic era. I have argued that this work acted much like a miniature Mouseion mapping out a new way of defining Greekness or more specifically a brand new imperial identity for the Greek-speaking Hellenistic empires. Greco-Macedonians not only living in Ptolemaic Egypt but throughout the empires of the *Diadochoi* inherited the imperial mantle formerly held by the Persians, and as Pierre Briant has argued, they made up the new "dominant ethno-class" supplanting the Persians.⁹⁵ The *Alexandra* was one attempt to create new ways for this new ethno-class to renegotiate what constituted its criteria of self-identity. It created a coherent unified vision of an "imagined empire" from a very contradictory set of pasts inherited from the expanse of the Hellenistic *oikoumenê*.

Just as I contend that this work is a poetic archive and a microcosm of the larger archive, the Mouseion, so I have attempted to demonstrate that even individual parts of this poem mirror its broader agenda as well as being part and parcel of the discourse of the burgeoning Hellenistic empires. On the material level, the production of these works (and all the others) were products of the leisure time and the broader superstructure of textualized knowledge that the broader imperial project provided. Figuratively, the work promoted and promulgated a certain type of erudition that for those who comprehend it permit symbolic entrance into the hallowed halls of the center of the empire. To feel as though one fully comprehended this work would enable its readers to imagine themselves as part of the learned elite, empowering them to believe that they have entered the sacred

⁹⁵ See Briant (1988).

brotherhood of the *cognoscenti*. No matter where these readers were situated, they could now envision themselves as citizens of the broader imperial project. Merely by participating in the archival discourse embedded in works such as Lykophron's, they could feel the presence of the imperial metropole of Alexandria in the scholarly works they interacted with on a regular basis. Therefore, empire and imperialism should not only be seen and limited to those agents who actively partake in the administration of empire but also in the mundane and dusty corners of the everyday, especially in those areas heretofore considered a world apart from the political, the cultural.

Alexandrian texts marked the end of the old notion of Greek identity, which was no longer solely determined by birthplace or birthright, and ushered in a new type of elite identity based on the performance of tangible activities such as wrestling, the drinking of wine, and the composition of poetry that would eventually allow for the radical reconstitution of Hellenicity into a position based on *paideia* rather than *ethnos*. Lykophron's *Alexandra* legitimated the prestige and political superiority of its practitioners through its dazzling and over-the-top displays of erudition. Those who could not achieve a level of erudition comparable to this work were condemned to silence. Poets of the period, like Kallimachos and Timon of Phlios, made it clear that within the ranks of the elite, competition, envy, and rivalry were fueled by a drive to accumulate and produce this type of erudite knowledge. Social rank and prestige were carried through displays of learning, and this becomes the sign of culture throughout the rest of Antiquity. Erudition was at the core of subjectivity in this world. Literature was part of broader institutions, symbolically embodied in the Mouseion, that sanction certain forms of expression as valuable and relevant. Alexandrian poetry was part of a larger discourse that was actively involved and central in the establishment and perpetuation of social structures that

sustained the dominance of the elite class. Those who mastered the minutiae of the archive and proved that they were masters of its knowledge, like Lykophon, were considered the elite of this new empire of knowledge.

4. The Rise of the Alexandrian Archivist-Poet, “The Cult of Paideia” and Literary Epigram

“The publication of the epigrams in roll form explains how such pieces written by poets in one part of the Greek world were imitated in others...”
-P.M. Fraser¹

4.1 Introduction

Χοιρίλος Ἀντιμάχου πολὺ λείπεται· ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ πᾶσιν
Χοιρίλον Εὐφορίων εἶχε διὰ στόματος
καὶ κατάγλωσσ’ ἐπόει τὰ ποήματα καὶ τὰ Φιλητᾶ
ἀτρεκέως ἤδει· καὶ γὰρ Ὀμηρικὸς ἦν. (AP 11. 218)

Choirilos is far inferior to Antimachos, but on all occasions Euphorion would ever talk of Choirilos and made his poems full of glosses, and knew those of Philitas well, for he was indeed a follower of Homer.²

The second century BCE scholar and poet, Krates of Mallos, was most likely the “Krates” responsible for this superficially erudite epigram. Krates, who worked at one of the main Hellenistic centers of learning, Pergamon, was known to be an editor and commentator of Homer, and he eventually acquired the epithets, “the Homeric” and “the Critic.”³ It should therefore be no surprise that this Homerist and literary critic populated one of his epigrams with epic poets (Choirilos of Samos, Antimachos of Kolophon, and Euphorion of Chalkis), Homeric scholars (Antimachos of Kolophon and Philitas of Kos), innovators of elegiac (Antimachos and Philitas), and figures associated with Hellenistic centers of learning (Philitas’ connection to the foundation of the Mouseion in Alexandria, Euphorion’s position as librarian in Antigonos’ Antioch, and Krates’ own position in

¹ Fraser (1972) I.608.

² Krates of Mallos is the author of this epigram. The translator is Paton (1960).

³ Ὀμηρικὸς Κριτικὸς

Pergamon). More importantly, this epigram celebrates a new type of persona, the archivist-poet, and the scholarly activities associated with this new archetype. It is also no minor point that Krates chose to construct and promote this archetype in epigrammatic form, since epigram was one of the defining literary activities of Hellenistic elite.⁴ This chapter will focus on the prominent role the figure of the archivist-poet and literary epigram played in reconstituting *paideia* in light of the new political landscape of the third century BCE.

In the first and second chapters, I discussed how physical institutions, such as the Mouseion, as well as literary works such as Lykophron's *Alexandra*, dictated the ways in which people could participate in this empire of knowledge. I will continue this thread in this chapter by demonstrating how literary epigram came to embody, duplicate, and circulate the means of enacting the identity of a new figure. The heroization of this figure played a crucial role in the successful spread and adoption of this persona throughout both the Old and New worlds of the Hellenistic *oikoumenê*. This model of subjectivity thus became a new hero for a "modern" age, a person whose traits and activities others would try to imitate: the archivist-poet would come to dominate and define subjectivity within the Hellenistic period.

⁴ Literary epigram was practiced by all major poets of the Hellenistic period. Anonymous epigrams and ones by little known poets also appear in the *Palatine Anthology* which also supports the notion that its practice was wide spread amongst the elite. New avenues of elite expression and patronage also contributed to its rise as a genre in the Hellenistic period. Peter Bing and Jon Bruss (2007) 14 summarize it best in their introduction to *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigram* observing that much like the "epigraphic habit" of Classical Athens "the Hellenistic age just as clearly developed a 'habit' of writing epigram—an epigrammatic habit. In putting the spotlight on this type of verse, poets were exploring one of those 'untrodden paths' which were so much favored by the elite." For more background on literary epigram, see Reitzenstein (1893); Cameron (1968) and (1993); Gutzwiller (1997) and (1998) and (2005); Harder, Regtuit and Wakker (2002); Fantuzzi and Hunter (2002); Acosta-Hughes, Kosmetou and Baumbach (2004); Meyer (2005); Bing and Bruss (2007); Prioux (2007); Tueller (2008).

Thus, these “Alexandrians” established erudition as a “heroic” attribute. A skill that defined this erudition was the subtle art of literary allusion. Although literary allusion was essential for all forms of poetry, especially Alexandrian, it was the defining characteristic of literary epigram. Not by chance was the composition and study of literary epigram one of the main activities of this new class. Extensive use of allusion allowed the epigram to be a fairly brief form and often, like Kratos’ one above, nearly incomprehensible unless one were aware of the persons, places or works the citations directed them towards. Deciphering a set of allusions within a literary epigram demanded extensive knowledge of the archive upon which it was constructed. This prerequisite for composing and comprehending this genre most likely pushed its audience to search for clues to best understand these works through scholarly works. This archival approach to the past was forged by pioneering archivist-poets, like Philitas of Kos, and established archivist-poets as the key players who defined *paideia* through the production of scholarly and literary works. Because these epigrams were so short, they could easily be shared with other elites as a form of communication. Since they were often written on common themes and tropes, epigrammatic production led to practices of epigrammatic imitation and response. This new manifestation of a traditional verse form was a staple of the new *paideia*. The rise of literary epigram in the third century BCE provided a way for elites to shrink earlier forms of literature and song into small interchangeable forms of poetry. Literary epigram also valorized the new types of manhood to serve a Hellenistic “cult of *paideia*”—the archivist-poet—defining them as those who rake over texts and use new innovative literary forms, such as epigram, to construct a larger sense of shared cultural identity through performing the ascribed activities of the archivist. By partaking in the

acts of composing, sharing, and studying epigrams, a Hellenistic Greek-speaker directly performed the new identity of an elite Hellenistic subject.

To perform the part of the archivist-poet through activities such as the composition of epigrams would be the way through which one came to know and construct the Greek past, providing a means of constructing common memories and traditions and transmitting them as social and cultural knowledge. Performance of this archetypal figure functioned as an episteme or a way of knowing the past, and knowledge about the past was constructed and passed on through embodied action or in this case the literary activities of the archivist-poet.⁵ Subjects of this new empire of knowledge could now feel plugged into a wider network of elites stretched out over massive expanses of geography through the sharing of texts. The sharing of texts provided those isolated in the remotest corners throughout the New and Old worlds with an overarching sense of connectedness to Greek institutions. This new mode of networking allowed elite to interact remotely with one another imagining themselves as attending a virtual symposium through the sharing of literary epigrams. Much as we turn to the role Archaic poetry played in defining elite male identity in sympotic settings, so too should we consider the role that Alexandrian literary epigram played in defining subjectivity by establishing a virtual symposium for elite living in both the Old and New worlds of the Hellenistic Age.

Returning to our epigram above, Krates' work replicates, highlights, and orders the archival practices of the Alexandrians. Much like Lykophron's *Alexandra*, the work invites the reader to enter into this highly erudite riddle through its list of these names. The epigram throws out this list of names (or in other cases, again the *Alexandra*, it might be rare words or toponyms) that challenge its reader to solve the mystery of how these figures

⁵ Much of these notions of performativity were borrowed from Taylor (2003) xiii-xx.

all work together. In this manner, the epigram compels its readers to seek help to get answers and rewards the reader astute reader who knows where to go (or already has accrued the necessary knowledge). The truly masterful Alexandrian would “solve” this riddle possibly in the following manner. First of all, he would recognize that it provides its readers with a genealogy for the figure of the archivist-poet that traces its origins to Chorilos of Samos (late fifth century BCE) and Antimachos of Kolophon (early fourth century BCE). Legend speaks of a rivalry between the two.⁶ Both were poetic innovators. Choirilos introduced contemporary historical and anthropological themes as well as lexical innovations in his work.⁷ Not surprisingly, Antimachos is also seen by scholars as one of the key precursors of Alexandrian learning.⁸ He would then see how the epigram then chronologically follows the archivist-poet’s lineage through Philitas (late fourth through early third centuries BCE) and Euphorion of Chalkis (ca. 275-200 BCE). The genealogy culminates in the present not surprisingly with its author, Krates (early half of the second century BCE). He positions himself as the rightful inheritor of this rich tradition of archivist-poets. Furthermore, this epigram maps spatially onto the Hellenistic world’s centers of learning with each archivist respectively standing in for Alexandria, Antioch, and Pergamon. Like Homeric heroes, who trace their lineage back and sing past glories, Krates traces his own “heroic” lineage back while simultaneously displaying his poetic

⁶ For an account of the rivalry between Choirilos and Antimachos, see Huxley (1969): 25-27.

⁷ Huxley (1969) 27 outlines Choirilos’ innovations and presents the case as to how he can be seen as a forefather for the Homeric textual criticism. For the notion that Choirilos represents “old” epic, see Huxley (1969): 28-29. Huxley believes that Choirilos wrote “heroic and heroic-historical epics” in a “grand manner” which he sees as contra to Kallimachuo’ slender style ((1969) 28), yet Huxley admits that Choirilos is ultimately hard to pin down and that he evoked extreme reactions of praise and condemnation by ancient critics ((1969) 12). For more on Choirilos, see also Hollis (2000).

⁸ Specifically, he was known to have produced Homeric glosses with forays into biobibliography by championing his hometown of Kolophon as the “real” birthplace of Homer. He was also famous for his use of neologisms and obscure turns of phrase.

virtuosity. Krates also attempts to create a hierarchy among the figures mentioned within his epigram, by stating how the earliest figure mentioned, the epic poet Choirilos of Samos, is inferior to the next, Antimachos. He then seems to imply that Euphorion is superior to all prior figures due to the fact that he possessed the knowledge of all and that he was a follower of *the* authority on poetry, Homer. From this line of thought, we can extrapolate that the poet himself should be considered the best since he is at the tail end of this tradition, therefore a beneficiary of the accrued knowledge of these earlier figures.⁹

The entirety of this epigram reveals the archival mindset that created it with its fixation “upon itemization, analysis, ordering, hierarchisation, synthesis, synopsis,”¹⁰ something that we see throughout Alexandrian forms of poetry but is particularly evident in literary epigram. For Hellenistic elites, literary epigram had become the form that not only conveyed the authority of archivist-poet but also was the means through which that authority is deepened and disseminated throughout the political and temporal landscape.

4.2 Toward an Understanding of the Alexandrian Archivist

In a recent edition of *Archival Outlook*, the official newsletter for the Society of American Archivists, the society’s president attempted to address the question: “What is an Archivist?”¹¹ After much rumination over the problems with providing an adequate definition, the president came up with the following:

⁹ I will discuss the rise of biobibliography in the Hellenistic period within this chapter, but for quick points of reference, see Blum (1991); Bing (1993).

¹⁰ König and Whitmarsh (2007): 38.

¹¹ Pearce-Moses (2006) 3, 26.

Archivists select and keep documents, photographs, sound recordings, and other records that have enduring value as reliable memories of the past, and they help people find and understand the information they need in those records.¹²

This definition provides us with a valuable starting point for a discussion on archivists, since it directs us to the fact that archivists not only work with material evidence from the past but that they shape the past through processes of selection and explication of it. In short, we should not view the archivist as merely a product of the archive, as it were, and one who serves it, but as someone who has an active role in shaping how materials of the past get remembered.

As we have seen, Alexander's conquests provided the material basis not only for founding Alexandria and its massive archive of documents, but also created the broader need for a culture, an imperial culture, to unite its highly multi-ethnic citizenry. The Mouseion of Alexandria was one of the few institutions that could bridge the gap between the Old and New worlds, accruing the cultural authority to not only dictate how the cultural past would be reimagined but also the course that the new narrative would follow. The Alexandrian archive provided both the physical means for reordering the collective past through textualized units of knowledge and also the figurative and symbolic means of "mapping and colonizing the enormous expanse of pre-existing knowledge."¹³ The same processes that Tim Whitmarsh and Jason König astutely observed for the (Roman) Imperial period occurred during the Hellenistic period, with a major reordering and archiving of texts, authors, and miscellany all in the service of empire. It should be no

¹² Pearce-Moses (2006): 26. Pearce-Moses (2006) 26 realized the problem with this and any definition and immediately followed it up conceding that "That's a sweeping statement, and reasonable archivists could contest every phrase within it. (In fact, I could lead the parade.)"

¹³ König and Whitmarsh (2007): 29.

surprise that we can also see the broader “imperialist impulse” in the Hellenistic age and its “capacity to control the representation of space and time, to figure its complex diversity in a single appropriative space, that hallmarks imperial power.”¹⁴ Literary epigram either in its material form as a scroll or in its figurative form as a literary genre, likewise provided a “single appropriative space” for “complex diversity” of knowledge. Literary epigram provided a means for its writers to appropriate other genres and incorporate them into a new form. It is no coincidence that we see Posidippos, one of the foremost archivist-poets of his time, claim, in epigram form no less, that the poet’s soul “has been labored out in book scrolls” (ἐν βύβλοις πεπονημένη).¹⁵ Yet, beyond its form, we also have to turn to its content in an attempt to recover the types of value systems and behaviors that epigrams cultivated, for it was within this archive of epigrams that our archivist-poet worked.

If archives, generally speaking, are the means through which the past gets remembered, then the archivists are actors who play a role in what gets archived and the manner in which it becomes archived. Naturally, archivists are often mere products of broader institutional practices, disciplinary conventions, and societal demands, but they also play a part in shaping those very same things. Returning to our definition, the Hellenistic *poeta doctus* can be seen as an archivist, since he isolated certain features of past work, specifically linguistic aspects, and attempted to transform this information into “enduring” knowledge. Alexandrians constituted this philological knowledge by situating it within new discursive activities. For example, Evina Sistikou has recently demonstrated how literary epigram became a forum for displaying the knowledge and practices of

¹⁴ König and Whitmarsh (2007): 36.

¹⁵ *AB* 137. Goldhill (1991) 224 has pointed to this quote as a point of departure for his lucid discussion on the idea that he views the archive from a similar perspective as “context for poetic production” in the Hellenistic period with the era’s “constant, even obsessional, awareness of past texts.”

contemporary Homeric scholarship.¹⁶ Sistakou points to the different ways the Alexandrian poets—Simias, Kallimachos, Askpiades of Samos and Posidippos of Pella—employed homerisms in their epigrams to demonstrate how these poets engaged “with both poetry and philology.”¹⁷ She views the extensive use of “abstruse poetic words” in epigrams as *glossai* (γλῶσσαι).¹⁸ All of the *hapax legomena*, toponyms, and Homeric lexical variants deployed by the first generation of Alexandrian poets were a critical new way that Alexandrians were able to transform a concept inherited from their past.¹⁹ For Sistakou, “philological interpretation” resulted in a new kind of bookish poetry that was consequently “evidence for the editing work of influential scholars of the early third century.”²⁰ Sistakou’s treatment of glosses in Homer highlight the manner in which archival activities, like glosses, transformed the way Homer was conceived and experienced. Homer went from being the person who told stories to the text that supplied words.

A set of discursive practices, mainly philological activities, coalesced through shared membership in the Mouseion and then was perpetuated through activities, such as

¹⁶ As I discussed in section 2.5, the Alexandrians inherited from their predecessors the figure of Homer, and they began to make sense of him and his works through archival discourse. Through archival discourse, they added a textual dimension to Homer and made it possible to understand him and his work as a text that required intense study. The Alexandrians had, in effect, transformed the concept of Homer through the discursive activities of the archivist-poet.

¹⁷ Sistakou (2007) 407-408.

¹⁸ For full quote, see Sistakou (2007) 392. Sistakou, however, does not take a Foucauldian approach to the topic at hand. She discusses how glossography and “philology” played an important role in moulding the genre of literary epigram.

¹⁹ To make her case Sistakou (2007) 391 directly quotes Goldhill’s notion about the Mouseion that “the archive as context for poetic production is seen in the constant, even obsessional awareness of past texts.”

²⁰ Sistakou (2007) 392.

the writing of epigrams, that spread forth from the urban elite.²¹ By doing so, the identity of the archivist-poet limited access to those who aspired to be included in it, by the requirements of its defining activities. In this manner, it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate the production of culture from the material world that produced them. The Alexandrian archivist was able to construct a new imperial *paideia* through their scholarly and literary works, the production and consumption of which ultimately redefined what kind of people made up the dominant ruling class and stabilized it.

The Alexandrian construction of an imperial *paideia* also gave birth to the “Cult of Paideia.” Paul Zanker originally coined the term “Cult of Paideia” as a means of describing what he saw as the rise of the figure of the “intellectual” during the third century BCE. Zanker traces this phenomenon in the depiction of intellectuals during this period, emphasizing how their depiction as statues provided their viewers with a model for behavior, one that showed a “thinker at work” promoting the “concept of thinking as a strenuous and laborious undertaking.”²² He ultimately attributes the rise of the figure of the intellectual to the political upheaval of the period and sees the “veneration of the poets and philosophers of the past” in statuary form as part of a “quest for stability and proper orientation in life.”²³ In short, he sees portraits as “icons in a unique cult of paideia” for a new audience of viewers who sought “guidance for their own lives in the writers of the past” as compensation for the sense of displacement they felt from their cultural past.²⁴ Ultimately, Zanker’s main point when discussing the Hellenistic period is that the role of

²¹ For an argument for the pivotal role Hellenistic urbanization played in Alexandrian culture, see Green (2007): 60-61.

²² Zanker (1996): 92 and 102 respectively.

²³ Zanker (1996): 179.

²⁴ Zanker (1996): 179 and 180 respectively.

intellectual was compensation for the loss of political power in the shift from polis based political autonomy to a political landscape of empires.

Although Zanker is correct to recognize the phenomenon of a “cult of paideia” during the Hellenistic era, he overplays how psychic and spiritual factors led to the construction of the new figure of the intellectual.²⁵ Instead, his secondary point that intellectuals provided a new means of interacting with an inherited set of cultural heroes should be emphasized. Because Zanker’s ambitious work grappled with the massive topic of visual representations of the intellectual throughout antiquity, the construction of the intellectual within texts was understandably given little attention. Zanker has provided this work with an entry point into the textual construction, in both scholarly and literary works, of the icons of the Hellenistic cult of paideia. I shall continue to use the term, *archivist*, to describe Zanker’s “intellectual.” Our focus on texts will allow us to examine the factors that led to the construction of the new hero type as a means of remembering the past.

This new hero introduced a new set of archival practices which others would imitate, and these practices are evident in the following epigram (*AP* 9.26):

Τάσδε θεογλώσσους Ἐλικῶν ἔθρεψε γυναῖκας
ὔμνοις καὶ Μακεδῶν Πιερίας σκόπελος,
Πρήξιλλαν, Μοιρῶ, Ἀνύτης στόμα, θῆλυν Ὅμηρον,
Λεσβιάδων Σαπφῶ κόσμον εὐπλοκάμων,
Ἥρινναν, Τελέσιλλαν ἀγακλέα καὶ σέ, Κόριννα,
θοῦριν Ἀθηναίης ἀσπίδα μελψαμένην,
Νοσσίδα θηλύγλωσσον ἰδὲ γλυκυαχέα Μύρτιν,
πάσας ἀενάων ἐργάτιδας σελίδων.
ἐννέα μὲν Μούσας μέγας Οὐρανός, ἐννέα δ’ αὐτὰς
Γαῖα τέκεν θνατοῖς ἄφθιτον εὐφροσύναν.

²⁵ Zanker also overplays the notion of loss of political volition. The idea that formerly independent Hellenistic poleis ceded power to its imperial sovereigns now seems overly simple. That being the case, there clearly was a major realignment of the political forces and structures throughout the fourth and third century BCE, primarily facilitated by the Macedonians. For a fuller discussion on these matters, see Billows (2003).

These are the divine-voiced women that Helicon fed with song, Helicon and Macedonian Pieria's rock: Praxilla; Moiro; Anyte, the female Homer; Sappho, the glory of the Lesbian women with lovely tresses; Erinna; renowned Telesilla; and thou, Korinna, who didst sing the martial shield of Athena; Nossis, the tender-voiced, and dulcet-toned Myrtis—all craftswomen of eternal pages. Great Heaven gave birth to nine Muses, and Earth to these nine, the deathless delight of men.²⁶

In this epigram, the first century CE poet, Antipater of Thessalonika, appears to celebrate preeminent female poetic luminaries by collecting them together as the human manifestations of the nine Muses. The Greek tradition of assembling lists of famous personages stretches back to the earliest period of literary production in Greece, though those often focused on the gods or other supernatural bodies. It was, however, only during the Hellenistic period with the rise of Mouseion that we see the impulse to list and collect famous literary personages become widespread and nearly universal. Clearly this impulse to order was partially influenced by Alexandrian archivist-poets, such as Kallimachos and Hermippos, who assembled large treatises of biobibliographic information on past writers in an attempt to map out the diverse figures of the intellectual past.²⁷ The Alexandrian archivist-poets' biobibliographic activities allowed them to determine and elevate whomever they deemed as their cultural predecessors by producing variant list of poets as the nine great poets of lyric of old or the "Alexandrian Pleiad," seven tragic poets working in the Age of Ptolemy II whose number matches the number of stars in the Pleiades star

²⁶ I have modified Paton's (1960) translation.

²⁷ Kallimachos' *Pinakes* is generally considered the first work of this tradition, and Hermippos is generally considered to be his heir. We must understand that these works are not merely reflections of the collections but rather shapers of them. For a fuller treatment of this topic, see Pfeiffer (1968); Blum (1991). This tendency to archive and order traditional figures and monuments appears also in epigrams treating everything from the Seven Sages (*AP* 7.81 and 9.366) to the nine lyric poets (*AP* 9.184, 571) to the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World (9.58).

cluster.²⁸

These epigrams embody the archival impulse to reduce these complex figures to bits of textualized data, reflecting the effect of literacy on memory.²⁹ For example, the epigrams on the Seven Sages reduce their combined bodies of thought to a few short punchy sayings, which can be easily recycled and reused in other short poetic works. This underlines the importance the Alexandrian archival mode of discourse placed on the acquisition and display of some piece of knowledge or information about historical figures regardless of the content of their works. This new way of knowing and remembering the past also lent itself to easy distribution, since most of this information could be spread via a short papyrus epistle or the anthologization of short poems for distribution as book-scrolls. Moreover, the textualization of knowledge played a role in shaping what new cultural forms, such as literary epigram, arose and how they constructed knowledge.³⁰

Alexander Aitolos was a member of the initial wave of those who worked in the Mouseion of Alexandria and was responsible for the editing of tragic texts. The following epigram demonstrates how an archivist explored and remapped the past. It also suggests the way that epigrams could function as models for how the archivist-poet ought to interact and reimagine the past (*AP* 7.709):

²⁸ Naturally, this is only one means that the Alexandrian archivist-poets interacted with the past. Sistikou (2007) provides, as we have seen, another example with her lucid and nuanced reading of Homeric scholarship within literary epigram.

²⁹ I have already discussed this matter in the first chapter. Egbert Bakker (2002) 67 further clarifies this shift in memory when he states that “‘memory’ is a function of a culture’s dominant mode of communication.” Therefore, for Archaic Greece, Bakker (2002) 67 and 69 sees performance as reenacting the past bringing its protagonists into the present; whereas in the literate culture of the fourth century, memory functioned in a manner more consistent with the modern notion as a retrieval system of stored information over which the archivist-poet would lord. The past became informational fodder that new discursive systems processed into cultural knowledge. The archivist-poets played an essential role in this process by exploring and promoting new modes of interacting with the past through such disciplines as philology and learned poetry.’

³⁰ The *locus classicus* for this argument is Bing (1988). See also Dupont (1999); Jacob (1999).

Σάρδιες ἀρχαῖαι, πατέρων νομός, εἰ μὲν ἐν ὑμῖν
ἐτρεφόμαν, κερναῖς ἦν τις ἂν ἢ βακελᾶς
χρυσοφόρος ῥήσων λαλὰ τύμπανα· νῦν δέ μοι Ἄλκμαν
οὔνομα καὶ Σπάρτας εἰμὶ πολυτρίποδος
καὶ Μούσας ἐδάην Ἑλικωνίδας, αἶ με τυράννων
θῆκαν Κανδαύλεω μείζονα καὶ Γύγεω.

Ancient Sardis, my fathers' home, had I been reared
In you, I would have been a kernos-bearer or a eunuch
Wearing gold, beating the vocal drums; but now, my name
Is Alkman, and I come from Sparta of the many tripods,
And know the Helikonian Muses, who have made me
Greater than the tyrants Kandaules and Gyges.³¹

The mention of ancient Sardis (Σάρδιες ἀρχαῖαι) temporally situates the epigram for the Hellenistic reader within the distant past. Ancient Sardis, unlike contemporary Hellenistic Sardis, was seen as a contact zone between the Greek and barbarian worlds, and its very mention would have evoked the seminal text which recorded the events of Sardis, Herodotos' *Histories*, specifically his account of the Lydian kings, Gyges and Kroisos. The mention of these kings combined with Herodotos' account of them would have also evoked the genesis of the negative "barbarian" type in Greek thought, specifically here the barbarian's obsession with wealth and power. Next we read an appositive statement surprisingly proclaiming that its author is not the actual author of this epigram, and that he has put on the pose of someone from ancient Ionia. From the middle of the second down through the end of the third lines, the epigram expands on this possible past, presenting us with a contrafactual biography its author. Through the use of the stock "oriental" images of servitude, luxury, and sexuality, its author conveys what its "author" could have become a true "oriental." We see this conveyed respectively through the images of him as a eunuch priest of Rhea, his position of servitude conveyed by the bearing of an offering tray decked out in luxury (in the gold ornaments), and the strange

³¹ The translation is by Lightfoot (2009).

musical instruments resounding with the incomprehensible or loquacious womanly sounds of *lala*. Right after this depiction, the identity of this epigram's "author" is revealed as Alkman, the quintessential Greek and Spartan poet. His Greek identity is then immediately reinforced with a tripod and its implied importance for Greek society.³² Line five's reference to the Helikonian Muses immediately would have evoked another poetic association with another founding father of the Greek poetic tradition, Hesiod, which would have in turn made the reader return to and reconsider the significance of the tripod from the previous line within a Hesiodic context. According to his own self-mythologizing, the tripod was the prize Hesiod won in a competition and cemented his status as a singer with "clear-sounding song."³³ More importantly the tripod would have symbolically evoked another Greek social institution that separated Greeks from barbarians—song and song contests. With this in mind, the epigram ends with the bold statement that can be read on two levels, the political and the literary. Politically, the final line suggests that the Muses have made the poet mightier than the Lydian tyrants, Kandaules and Gyges, promoting a message that cultural institutions can overcome the political power of the barbarian—essentially a civilizing power. On a literary level, if we take Kandaules and Gyges of the final line as a direct invocation of the Lydian Logos in Herodotos I, the final line seems to say that refined epigram is greater than the big book of history.

The epigram works on many levels in retelling the conflict between the Europe and Asia of Herodotos. Alexander Aitolos achieves this by ingeniously taking on the persona of one of the great poets of the Greek past, Alkman, by exploring a lesser-known biographical

³² For a full treatment on tripods, see Papalexandrou (2005).

³³ Hes. *Op.* 655-659.

fact that his father was from Sardis.³⁴ In taking up this pose, he is able to compress the narrative of Herodotus into poetic images of Asia starkly juxtaposed against those of Europe. Moreover, the conceit of writing in the voice of another is common in Greek epigram, though Alexander Aitolos presses this by adding allusions to the Hesiod on top of Alkman. Through a biographical gesture, he has claimed the poetic mantle of these two canonical poets for his own while at the same time glorifying the power of Greek literary culture and its ability to civilize and overcome foreign political power. How profoundly this message might have resonated with its constituent audience comprised of “Greeks” and former “barbarians” should not be underestimated, given how radically the political situation had changed since Herodotos’ day.³⁵

The poem, then, reads as an attempt, in a Hellenistic context, to redefine what it now meant to be Greek, emphasizing culture as a practice rather than as determined by blood. This epigram under the pretext of celebrating a traditional poet, in fact, takes part in a larger debate of how members of different Hellenistic elites would define themselves in relation to Greece and the Greek heritage. Alkman, here, becomes a thoroughly modern figure, one who is viewed as Greek because of his excellence in song. The celebration of Greek song as a marker of culture within this epigram would have underscored the broader cultural significance of reading and writing literary epigrams such as this one. From this perspective, the final statement of Alexander’s epigram does not merely celebrate how culture can overcome the political, but also emphasizes that the civilizing influence of cultural products, defined as Greek, have the power to overcome one of the

³⁴ *POxy* 3542; cf. *Suda* s.v. Alkman.

³⁵ Plutarch’s *Moralia* (599e) also has a version of this same epigram attributed though to a “writer of epigram” (ὁ γράψας τὸ ἐπιγράμματιον) actually emphasizes the Greek-barbarian distinction more strongly by calling the Muses “Hellenic” (Ἑλληνίδας) rather than Helikonian (Ἑλικωνίδας).

most deep seated character traits of the barbarian, his love of servitude. In broader terms, it suggests that “human nature” is actually determined by *nomos* and not *physis*.

The imperial *paideia* of the early Hellenistic period, the ultimate product of Alexandrian archivist-poets, was the thing that provided a means of enfranchisement for those formerly considered barbarian, as well as providing those who had always considered “Greek” with a sense of connection to that past.³⁶ In essence, Alexander Aitolos has returned to the literary well, and compressed many different types of discourse into a few lines of papyrus. Through the action of composing this epigram, he provides a model of how to reuse multiple narratives from the past by shrinking them into a single poem. This reduction and reordering of earlier texts into a new form of knowledge in order to provide a means of comprehending the past is the activity of an archivist.³⁷

4.3 Philitas of Kos: The Ur Archivist in Writing

The epigram by Krates with which this chapter began celebrates the erudition of *the* quintessential *poeta doctus*, Philitas, situating him within a broader genealogy of the archivist-poet.³⁸ In the Hellenistic world, Philitas was seen as one of the figures at the origin of the new literary and learned movement of Alexandrianism. He was a poetic innovator and was held to be the “inventor” of elegy by his Roman followers.³⁹ He also

³⁶ Naturally this notion of *paideia* and culture is not purely Greek, but in this instance has been constructed as such. Culture clearly is a constantly changing and contested category, and the multicultural elements that informed the construction of Greek culture during this period are legion. For a fuller discussion of the hybrid nature of Ptolemaic culture, see Selden (1998) and Stephens (2003).

³⁷ See Pearce-Moses (2006); König and Whitmarsh (2007).

³⁸ For the fullest treatment of his extant fragments with extensive notes and commentary, see Spanoudakis (2002).

³⁹ In his *Institutio Oratio*, Quintilian ranked Philitas second to only Kallimachos as an elegiac poet (10.1.58). Propertius famously invokes Kallimachos and Philitas in his *Elegies* III.1:

was a pioneer in the field of glosses, earning the title of “ποιητὴς ἄμα καὶ κριτικός.”⁴⁰ He was the legendary figure whom Ptolemy Soter I supposedly chose to educate his son, Ptolemy II Philadelphos, who in turn would become known as one of the greatest benefactors of culture the Greek-speaking world produced. Legend has it that Philitas not only educated the founder of the Mouseion but also its first Head Librarian, Zenodotos. In the Greek imagination, Philitas was a larger than life figure who came to be associated with all the major literary occurrences of his age much in the same way the Mouseion of Alexandria was. Philitas filled the Greek cultural impulse to assign a “founder” to everything from buildings to ideas. It was in this role that he came to be seen as the founder of the new scholarly and archival modes of thought embodied in the image of the absent-minded scholar. This figure was a kind of microcosm of the larger trends of the Hellenistic period. Philitas produced both scholarly works and highly learned poetry that spurred the new wave of learning.

Philitas was the quintessential archivist-poet of his age, and it was not only his work that was imitated but also his life that became the stuff of legends. His ascent to hero status mirrored the ways in which culture heroes from Greece’s past were elevated by Alexandrians, like Philitas himself. Just as Alexandrian archivists reconstructed the lives of their culture heroes based on biographical readings of their works, so too did they shape

*Callimachi Manes et Coi sacra Philetæ,
in vestrum, quaeso, me sinite ire nemus.*

“*Coi sacra Philetæ*” (“shrines of Koan Philitas”) points to Philitas being the “hero-founder” of this genre. See also: Prop. 3.1-6, 3.51-52, 9.43-44; Ov. *Ars am.* 3.329-48, *Rem am.* 759-60; Stat. *Silv.* 1.2.252. The Latin trope was even picked up by Ezra Pound, Modernism’s archivist-poet par excellence, in his own *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, a work that is a precursor to his own highly erudite and archival works.

⁴⁰ Strabo 14.2.19 (657c)

the figure of Philitas. Philitas and his legend would resonate well into the Imperial period where we encounter them in the work of Athenaios (9.401d-e or 9.64.26-36 Kaibel):

ἀεί ποτε σύ, ὦ Οὐλπιανέ, οὐδενὸς μεταλαμβάνειν εἴωθας τῶν
παρασκευαζομένων πρὶν μαθεῖν εἰ ἢ χρῆσις μὴ εἴη τῶν ὀνομάτων παλαιά.
κινδυνεύεις οὖν ποτε διὰ ταύτας τὰς φροντίδας ὡσπερ ὁ Κῶος Φιλητᾶς
ζητῶν τὸν καλούμενον ψευδολόγον τῶν λόγων ὁμοίως ἐκείνῳ διαλυθῆναι.
ἰσχνὸς γὰρ πάνυ τὸ σῶμα διὰ τὰς ζητήσεις γενόμενος ἀπέθανεν, ὡς τὸ πρὸ
τοῦ μνημείου αὐτοῦ
ἐπίγραμμα δηλοῖ·
ξείνε, Φιλητᾶς εἰμί. λόγων ὁ ψευδόμενός με
ᾤλεσε καὶ νυκτῶν φροντίδες ἐσπέριοι.

Ulpian, you always refuse to take your share of food until you've learned whether the word for that dish is ancient. Like Philitas of Cos, therefore, who was constantly searching for the deceiving word, through these worries of yours you risk withering away some day. For he became utterly emaciated through these studies and died, as the epigram in front of his memorial makes clear:

“Stranger, I am Philitas. The deceiving word caused my death,
and the evening's thoughts extended deep into the night.”⁴¹

It is not of little consequence that Athenaios' character quotes an epigram inscribed on a memorial of the archivist-poet, since both epigram and cultic gravesites played a large role in the perpetuation and circulation of the archivist-poets' image during the Hellenistic period. Ironically, the epigram cited is most likely a fictionalized sepulchral epigram and not an actual inscriptional one, since it is highly unlikely an actual funerary inscription would deal with such obscure literary references. What is interesting in this epigram is the fascination with how Philitas' death has been presented. One would expect a hero's death to be in battle, but not surprisingly this culture hero is done in by the “deceiving word.” It is fitting, since it was words and not weapons that made this new archetype of manhood heroic in the eyes of his worshippers.

Peter Bing has explored how Philitas might have served as a model for the scholar-poet throughout the Hellenistic period (and beyond) and how he was a great influence to

⁴¹ This is a modified version of Bing (1993).

other great Alexandrian poets, like Kallimachos and Apollonios. Bing skillfully traces how this type of man might have been born from the actual painstaking labors necessary to produce glosses and his learned brand of poetry, specifically showing how the glossing of rare words and archiving of regional customs were essential toward the production of his poetic works.⁴² Moreover, he convincingly maps out how certain erudite literary effects within these poetic works came to be interpreted by successive generations of archivist-poets biographically.⁴³ A perfect example of this is Bing’s analysis of the famous fragment of Hermesianax’s elegiac work, *Leontion*, which catalogues the loves of his poetic predecessors from Orpheus down to his near contemporary, Philitas.⁴⁴ Hermesianax’s description on Philitas is as follows (7.75-79):

Οἴσθα δὲ καὶ τὸν ἀοιδόν, ὃν Εὐρυπύλου πολιῆται
 Κῶοι χάλκειον στῆσαν ὑπὸ πλατάνῳ
 Βιττίδα μολπάζοντα θοήν, περὶ πάντα Φιλίταν
 ῥήματα καὶ πᾶσαν τρυόμενον λαλίην.

And you know that singer whom the Koan citizens
 of Eurypylos raised in bronze beneath the plane tree,
 Philitas, singing of nimble Bittis, when he was weak
 with all the glosses, all the forms of speech.⁴⁵

What at first glance appears to be a standard biographical reading of the elegiac works of Philitas might be sophisticated play on the “loves” of the famous. Bing, in essence, espouses Kuchenmüller’s ingenious thesis that Bittis is not a person but rather “the

⁴² Bing (2003): 333-339.

⁴³ Bing also discusses how biographical stories about Philitas led to his depiction as an “absent-minded professor.” He consequently believes that this type becomes a new comic type and the butt of jokes. For a full explanation, see Bing (2003): 340-343.

⁴⁴ The *Leontion*’s meter was commonly used in literary epigram and the section regarding Philitas (or any other subject) could easily be detached from the broader narrative and presented as an independent epigram. Since it is written in catalogue form, each vignette is meant to stand on its own and would not lose much force separated from the rest of the poem.

⁴⁵ This is an adapted translation from Bing (2009): 24.

humorous personification of Philitas’ scholarly passion, the gloss.”⁴⁶ Kuchenmüller’s thesis is based on Ovid’s reference to Bittis as “Battis” and extrapolates that her name is based on βατταλογία, which means “idle talk,” and therefore her name, Battis, ends up meaning “chatterbox.” This is then seen as a reference to glosses and to the title and substance of Philitas’ signature scholarly work, *Ataktoi Glossai*.⁴⁷

Both examples provided above demonstrate the close relationship between the archival activities of Philitas and the biographical. The celebration of these learned activities in the lives of the iconic figure of the erudition conveys how the Alexandrians positioned themselves as the rightful inheritors of their tradition, having transformed the poet into the archivist. This trope also appears in their epigrams, such as this one attributed to Philitas (fr. 8 Lightfoot):

Φιλιτᾶ Παιγνίων
 Οὐ μέ τις ἐξ ὀρέων ἀποφώλιος ἀγροιώτης
 αἰρήσει κλήθρην, αἰρόμενος μακέλην·
 ἀλλ’ ἐπέων εἰδῶς κόσμον καὶ πολλὰ μογήσας,
 μύθων παντοίων οἶμον ἐπιστάμενος.

Philitas’ *Light Verse*
 No lumbering rustic snatching up a hoe
 Shall bear me from the mountains—me, an alder tree;
 But one who knows the marshalling of words, who toils,
 Who knows the pathways/strains of all forms of speech.⁴⁸

In his short article on this epigram, Peter Bing explores the many possible readings of this epigram, identifying two possible methods of reading this poem either with the alder tree standing in for an actual person or as an actual object.⁴⁹ Bing brushes off the first

⁴⁶ Bing (2009): 24; Kuchenmüller (1928): 27.

⁴⁷ For the full argument, see Bing (2009) 24.

⁴⁸ The translation is Lightfoot (2009) 43.

⁴⁹ Bing (1986) 223.

possibility, mentioning in a footnote that some scholars (Kayser) have felt that the alder represented a poet, others a woman (Reitzenstein and Wilamowitz).⁵⁰ Bing then explores the possibility of seeing the alder as object. He finally comes to the conclusion that the object is not, in fact, a tree but rather a writing tablet made from an alder tree.⁵¹ Bing thus considers the poem a puzzle. It was identified as a *paignia* by Stobaios, and that the poet expected a sophisticated reader to understand the joke, whence the image of the uneducated rustic (ἀποφώλιος ἀγροιώτης).⁵² Bing concludes that “Philetas, the first great Hellenistic poet, thus provides us with an early sign of the nascent awareness of writing and books that would characterize the Age.”⁵³

One could usefully expand on Bing’s argument and conclusion by showing how the poem not only displays an awareness of its textuality it but also reconfigures the earlier Hesiodic trope of the blessed singer. In many ways, the epigram resembles Hesiod’s famous meeting with the Helikonian Muses in the *Theogony* where they address Hesiod, who is still merely a shepherd pasturing his flocks on Mount Helikon (28-34):

“ποιμένες ἀγραυλοι, κάκ’ ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον,
ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,
ἴδμεν δ’ εὖτ’ ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.”
ὥς ἔφασαν κοῦραι μεγάλου Διὸς ἀρτιέπειαι,
καί μοι σκῆπτρον ἔδον δάφνης ἐριθηλέος ὄζον
δρέψασαι, θηητόν· ἐνέπνευσαν δέ μοι αὐδῆν
θέσπιν, ἵνα κλείοιμι τὰ τ’ ἐσόμενα πρό τ’ ἐόντα,
καί μ’ ἐκέλονθ’ ὕμνεϊν μακάρων γένος αἰὲν ἐόντων,
σφᾶς δ’ αὐτὰς πρῶτόν τε καὶ ὕστατον αἰὲν ἀείδειν.

⁵⁰ Bing (1986) 223 n.3.

⁵¹ Bing has cited the discovery of a writing tablet from Vindolanda made from an alder tree as proof of their existence in the ancient world, though even this assumption has been challenged since its publication by Cameron (1995). Bing’s contention that the alder represents a writing tablet and therefore a poem seems like a very plausible reading.

⁵² Bing (1986) 222 explains how he comes to this meaning of the word.

⁵³ Bing (1986) 226.

“Rustic shepherds, wretched things of shame, mere bellies, we know how to speak many false things as though they were true; but we know, when we will, to utter true things.” So said the ready-voiced daughters of great Zeus, and they plucked and gave me a rod, a shoot of sturdy laurel, a marvelous thing, and breathed into me a divine voice to celebrate things that shall be and things there were aforetime; and they ordered me to sing of the race of the blessed gods that are eternal, but ever to sing of themselves both first and last.⁵⁴

The similarities are many: both passages are spoken, both talk down to the addressee as a rube, both speak of knowledge of the spoken word, both are about the anointing of a poet figure, and both mention specific kind of trees. Naturally, there are differences, such as the length of the passages, but Philitas’ epigram is clearly alluding to Hesiod especially in each poem’s first line, where Philitas’ use of ἀγροιώτης is reminiscent of Hesiod’s ἄγραυλοι.

Philitas’ epigram reenacts the Hesiodic encounter, removing it from its original context of Mount Helikon and resituating within a contemporary Hellenistic setting. The poem makes it clear that this work is not for the uninitiated but for “one who knows the marshalling of words, and who has toiled (or labored)” (ἀλλ’ ἐπέων εἰδῶς κόσμον καὶ πολλὰ μογήσας). If the archetypal archivist-poet, as embodied by Philitas, is a Homeric critic and learned poet, then this line describes such a figure perfectly. The term “one who knows how to marshal or order words” certainly could be interpreted as “one who knows how to arrange epics,” alluding to the new Hellenistic trade of editing Homeric texts. “One who toils” also brings to mind or possibly in this case programmatically constructs the attributes of the modern learned Alexandrian poet who no longer merely passively is bestowed with the gift of song but who instead now labors over texts to produce his works, both poetic and scholarly. The last line once again plays upon the well-established Hesiodic trope of Muse-bestowed poetic knowledge (*Th.* 26-28), instead focusing on the

⁵⁴ This translation has been adapted from Hugh Evelyn-White (1982).

knowledge of the strain or course of all tales or stories (μύθων παντοίων οἶμον). Given the content of the previous line, we might logically view these words as supporting the idea that the new poet has acquired his or her knowledge by dredging this knowledge from all sources, both prose and poetic, for his own new archival products. Clearly, this poem satisfies its learned readers with its archival pyrotechnics.

Philitas became the embodiment of the very idea of *paideia* for the post-Classical Greco-Roman world, appearing and reappearing as the absent-minded bookworm, and celebrated as a civic hero with the learned accoutrements of the scroll.⁵⁵ Throughout antiquity, Philitas was revered for his poetic excellence and as the founder of love elegy.⁵⁶ Everyone from his immediate Hellenistic successors, such as Theokritos and Hermesianax, down through Roman Augustan poets, to Imperial authors, paid homage to him in their own poetry. It is, therefore, no surprise that an age, which fully developed the scholarly practices of biobibliography, textual editing, and glossography, would also turn those practices upon their own cultural heroes. It was probably during Philitas' lifetime that biographical readings of his texts began to inform how he would be received and archived in this age of poet-scholars. This included the possibility of controversy as well as commemoration. A generation after the death of the poet, Philitas' production of glosses spurred Aristarchos to produce his own work, *Against Philitas*, which both plays into the common feeling, best expressed by Timon of Phlios, that the Mouseion was a place of

⁵⁵ See Hermesianax, *Leontion*, 75-78

⁵⁶ In the Greek literary tradition, poets, such as Theokritos, who was working only a generation after him, cite him as an Orpheus-like *ur* singer. His name appear as late as the Imperial period as an aged wise man-singer figure in Longos' *Daphnis and Chloe*, where the biographical themes of his elegiac works (his supposed love for Bittis) have now become mixed with his. The Latin tradition often cites him as the "founder" of "modern" elegy (Prop. 3.1-6, 3.51-52, 9.43-44; Ov. *Ars am.* 3.329-48, *Rem am.* 759-60; Stat. *Silv.* 1.2.252). The Latin trope even gets picked up by Ezra Pound, Modernism's archivist-poet par excellence, in his own *Homage to Sextus Propertius*, a work that is a precursor to his own highly erudite and archival works.

personal squabbling and squawking.⁵⁷ Indeed, biographical interpretation might be the reason why later archivist-poets (those in his lineage) came to view him as a rival of Antimachos, possibly viewing his own *Ataktoi Glossai* as a response to Antimachos' earlier lexical work. Nonetheless, as Paul Zanker has astutely noted, these figures were the icons of the new wave of learning, and we can witness how they performed the important function of providing a new model of subjectivity under the condition new political realities through their veneration of erudition.

4.4 The Rise of Literary Epigram and the Cult of Paideia

The rise of literary epigram,⁵⁸ mainly in elegiac couplet or distichs, coincided with the rise of the world of Diadochoi as well as with the figure of the archivist-poet. None was the direct “cause” of the others, but all were integral and essential to the formation of Hellenistic culture, as we understand it. Literary epigram was a poetic form that was meant to convey a lot of knowledge in very little space, and it both was a result of and promoted the culture of literacy that we witness in the late Classical through early Hellenistic periods. The literary epigram was also seen as something that worked within a larger network and formed an archive in its own right. Here, too, texts provided the means through which elites in different locations could cultivate a sense of common purpose and identity through the shared act of producing literature. Early Alexandrian archivist-poets transformed epigram into a new genre that could provide a means for engaging with the archives of textualized knowledge assembled in cultural centers like

⁵⁷ For the contrasting view, see Cameron (1995).

⁵⁸ The shift from pre-Hellenistic or fourth-century epigram, inscribed epigram, to its more literate descendent, has been told many times, most recently in: Svenbro (1993); Gutzwiller (1998) 1-114; Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004) 283-349; Bowie (2007) 95-112; Bettenworth (2008) 69-94; Tueller (2008) 1-64, esp. 57-64.

Alexandria, and could facilitate networks among elite population spread out over a massive expanse of territory. This sharing of knowledge and discursive practices over vast distances in effect created what I have called a “virtual symposion” where the sharing of texts, specifically epigrams, whether in letters or in collections, constructed a space, albeit a literary and textual one, where values were constructed and shared through participation in it or through it.⁵⁹ The content of these epigrams also reinforced the function of its form by imagining and defining the places inhabited by the archivist-poet as well as his or her activities and character traits.

Literary epigram arose during the third century BCE, and the genre came to serve various functions within Hellenistic society. First of all, it was one of the main ways through which elites of the Successor kingdoms came to express and define themselves in light of their immensity of the cultural knowledge they had inherited. Literary epigram became a primary means of disseminating and producing cultural knowledge and tradition, and its short and highly allusive nature was perfectly suited for the archivist-scholar. This nature also made nearly every word in each epigram vital towards deciphering them. Moreover, its form also demanded that its audience have control over a large body of poetical and cultural minutiae to comprehend the references contained in each. Epigram rewarded those who had acquired that base of knowledge or who had access to it.

⁵⁹ The actual contexts in which these epigrams were produced are not definitively known. We can surmise that some were still recited at symposia, possibly as caps to previous ones, yet we can see how the poetic book anthology might have arisen as a means of providing a substitute for this practice as well as a handbook of sorts for such activities (for more on this, see Cameron 1995; Gutzwiller 1997; Krevans 2007). Most scholars, however, feel that most inhabitants of the Hellenistic world encountered them primarily as texts (see Bowie 2007; Tueller 2009, et al).

A perfect example of this is one of Nossis' *sphragis* epigrams that rewards well-read readers who are able to pick up on the series of allusions captured in its four brief lines (*AP* 5.170):

Ἄδιον οὐδὲν ἔρωτος· ἅ δ' ὄλβια, δεύτερα πάντα
 ἐστίν· ἀπὸ στόματος δ' ἔπτυσσά καὶ τὸ μέλι.
 τοῦτο λέγει Νοσσίς· τίνα δ' ἅ Κύπρις οὐκ ἐφίλησεν,
 οὐκ οἶδεν τήνα γ', ἄνθεα ποῖα ρόδα.

Nothing is sweeter than desire. All other things are second.
 From my mouth I even spit honey.
 Nossis says this. Whom Aphrodite does not love,
 knows not her flowers, what roses they are.⁶⁰

In this epigram, Nossis, who was active in the 280s or 270s BCE, with her first word ἄδιον conjures images of the beginning of Theokritos' *Idyll* 1, in which Thyrsis the shepherd and a shepherd make competing claims over what is sweet or pleasant (ἄδύ) (1-11):

{ΘΥΡΣΙΣ}
 Ἄδύ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα καὶ ἅ πίτυς, αἰπόλε, τήνα,
 ἅ ποτὶ ταῖς παγαῖσι, μελίσδεται, ἄδύ δὲ καὶ τὴ
 συρίσδες· μετὰ Πᾶνα τὸ δεύτερον ἄθλον ἀποισῆ.
 αἶ κα τήνος ἔλη κεραὸν τράγον, αἶγα τὴ λαψῆ·
 αἶ κα δ' αἶγα λάβη τήνος γέρας, ἐς τὴ καταρρεῖ
 ἅ χίμαρος· χιμάρω δὲ καλὸν κρέας, ἔστε κ' ἀμέλεξῆς.
 {ΑΙΠΤΟΛΟΣ}
 ἄδιον, ὦ ποιμὴν, τὸ τεὸν μέλος ἢ τὸ καταχῆς
 τῆν' ἀπὸ τᾶς πέτρας καταλείβεται ὑπόθεν ὕδωρ.
 αἶ κα ταὶ Μοῖσαι τὰν οἶδα δῶρον ἄγωνται,
 ἄρνα τὴ σακίταν λαψῆ γέρας· αἶ δὲ κ' ἀρέσκη
 τήναις ἄρνα λαβεῖν, τὴ δὲ τὰν οἶν ὕστερον ἄξῆ.

Thyrsis

Something sweet is the whisper of the pine that makes her music by yonder springs,
 and sweet no less, master Goatherd, the melody of your pipe. Pan only shall take
 place and prize afore you; and if they give him a horny he-goat, then a she shall be
 yours; and if a she be for him, why, you shall have her kid; and kid's meat's good
 eating till your kids milch-goats.

Goatherd

As sweetly, good Shepherd, falls your music as the resounding water that gushes
 down from the top o' yonder rock. If the Muses get the ewe-lamb to their meed,

⁶⁰ The translation is Skinner's (2005): 125.

you shall carry off the cosset; and if so be they choose the cosset; the ewe-lamb shall come to you.⁶¹

Although we are not sure of the dates of the two poets, the two works share an uncanny resemblance with one another. Theokritos emphasizes the importance he see in the first word of the poem, **ἄδύ**, by repeating it in line two and then by having his second character begin his song with its variant, **ἄδιον**. Whereas repetition and position tell Theokritos' reader the importance of this key term for the poem, Nossis' brief epigram relies solely on position. Besides **ἄδύ**, both poems use **δύτερα** (**δέυτερον**) in order to flesh out a hierarchy. Furthermore, the mention of the mouth (**ἀπὸ στόματος**) so close to honey (**τὸ μέλι**) resembles Theokritos' line 146 (**πλήρες τοι μέλιτος τὸ καλὸν στόμα, θύρσι, γένοιτο**). Aphrodite (**Ἄ Κύπρις**) from Nossis' epigram speaks to the theme of the second half of Theokritos' poem, which chronicles the death of Daphnis on account of his falling out with Aphrodite.

In terms of content, there also appears to be a connection between the two works. Whereas Theokritos is claiming that bucolic poetry is what is sweet(est), Nossis appears to cap Theokritos' shepherd by employing **ἄδιον** of her own and state that desire is what is sweetest. Theokritos' *Idyll* 1 had many programmatic qualities to it and might have been one of the works that established bucolic as a genre. The poem promotes the idea of song over all and within its lines tells the story of pastoral's legendary founder, Daphnis, who caused his own death by offending Aphrodite. It is unclear what Daphnis did, but it is clear from the *Idyll* that Aphrodite is portrayed as a cruel god who plays a part in Daphnis' death. With this in mind, it makes sense that Nossis alludes to key bucolic elements present in Theokritos' poem: honey, desire, Aphrodite, and amoeban song in her

⁶¹ The translation is Edmonds (1996).

own response. Her work embodies amoeban song, since it can be seen, in effect, as a response to Theokritos and possibly a response to another epigram. Nossis ends her poem with the word ῥόδα, which traditionally has been associated with Sappho.⁶² With this word, Nossis appears to making a programmatic statement of her own that calls for a return to a female poetics of desire exemplified by Sappho instead of bucolic poetry that favors song over desire. Nossis, of course, has nicely positioned herself as the inheritor of this tradition.⁶³ All of this information contained within the brief short lines of Nossis' epigram was only available to one who had the resources to develop the skill and knowledge to sit atop this cultural hierarchy.

Through this medium, archivist-poets could use intertextual allusions to appropriate and resituate past works of literature, and thereby reduce longer works into smaller forms in a manner that required a certain amount of literary knowledge to appreciate. Moreover, the brevity of these works allowed for them to easily acquire a new range of meanings and purposes based on their placement among other epigrams when anthologized. For example, an epigram seen as a response to another epigram on a similar theme or a capping epigram. When grouped with others that addressed a similar topic, strings of epigrams on a common theme are collected together and viewed as capping one another within larger poetic anthologies, such as the *Garland of Meleager*.⁶⁴

In an article discussing just such ordering in the *Garland of Meleager*, Kathryn Gutzwiller identifies several of these strings of poems that function this way. Below, I

⁶² "... και Σαπφοῦς βαιὰ μὲν ἀλλὰ ῥόδα.." AP4.1.

⁶³ The idea of talking about what is sweeter in the context of Sappho also reminds one of the famous opening line of Sappho 16, which ask what is κάλλιστον. The idea of comparing items resonates also with the themes of this poem.

⁶⁴ See Cameron (1968) and (1990); Gutzwiller (1997).

summarize one of the more simple examples of these strings that turned upon some key terms and themes. Within an anthological context, Gutzwiller examines how two separate strings of epigrams are constructed and then demonstrates how one transitions to the other. I shall begin my summary from the point of transition and will then proceed to recapitulate how one string of epigrams is linked together. Let us start with *AP* 5.141, the transition epigram by Meleager:

Ναὶ τὸν Ἔρωτα, θέλω τὸ παρ' οὔρασιν Ἥλιοδώρας
φθέγμα κλύειν ἢ τᾶς Λατοίδεω κιθάρας.

By Eros, I would prefer to hear the voice of Heliodora
By my ears rather than of the lyre of Latoides.⁶⁵

Gutzwiller points out how “the lyre of Latoides” links this epigram to its predecessor but it also anticipates the next sequence through the introduction of a new element, “Heliodora.” The reader though will not encounter this new figure until a clear break in the sequence is created. The editor does so by introducing a new theme based around garlands (ὁ στέφανος) in this anonymous poem (*AP* 5.142):

Τίς, ῥόδον ὁ στέφανος Διονυσίου ἢ ῥόδον αὐτὸς
τοῦ στεφάνου; δοκέω, λείπεται ὁ στέφανος.

Which is it? Is the garland Dionysius' rose, or is he
a rose of the garland? The garland, I think, loses.

Once again, the epigram is a clear break in the sequence, and as the reader moves on through this sequence, s/he would be searching for links backward to the prior sequence and also the more immediate response to this epigram. The next epigram by Meleager continues on the same theme relying on key words to connect the two poems while introducing new twists to the poems, such as a girl. The girl, Heliodora, is also a means of pushing the reader back to the transition epigram (5.141):

⁶⁵ The translations of this sequence of epigrams are by Gutzwiller (1997).

Ὁ στέφανος περὶ κρατὶ μαραίνεται Ἡλιοδώρας·
αὐτὴ δ' ἐκλάμπει τοῦ στεφάνου στέφανος.

The garland withers on the head of Heliodora, but she gleams forth, the garland's garland.

The present sequence continues over the next two epigrams where new twists and links are added. Although this summary has glossed over many of the subtler points Gutzwiller injected into reading this sequence, it provide us with a clear example of the ways epigrams might have functioned as groups.⁶⁶

What was once probably carried out on a personal level at symposia was now hammered out within larger, mostly textual networks.⁶⁷ This new ordering can help us reimagine the use and reuse of these texts in various settings, and thus help to recover the ways through which these epigrams could have constructed and conveyed cultural knowledge through successive phases of production, reproduction, and anthologization. Textuality and the rise of texts permitted these epigrams to speak to a broader audience allowing them to enter a place through words. Thus what appears to be poetic capping in paired epigrams can be seen as related to both the intimate setting of an actual symposion and also as part of virtual symposion. Virtual “symposiasts” could contact one another remotely through epigrams sent in epistolary form or through anthologies in the form of book scrolls.

Literary epigram spread far and wide, because they were able to hitch rides on papyri which could circulate throughout the various Hellenistic empires. For example, there were letters written on small sheets of papyrus letters that only contained a single

⁶⁶ This summary is based on Gutzwiller (1997) 179-181.

⁶⁷ See Cameron (1993); Gutzwiller (1997) and (1998).

epigram or two.⁶⁸ The famous archive of Zenon, a third century BCE secretary to the Apollonios, the finance minister of Ptolemy Philadelphos II, provides a baseline for understanding how texts and letters traveled among elites during the early Hellenistic period. They reveal that letters could easily travel over political boundaries and over great distances (from Karia to Egypt for example) as well as revealing the kinds of content they contained.⁶⁹ Although most of his letters concerned themselves with mundane business affairs, some reveal the cultural activities of the elite male of the period. A very small and short letter from Apollonios⁷⁰ to Zenon, for example, which was a little less than a foot long and a little under two and a half inches wide with less than fifty words, discusses the matter of a boy, whom the schoolmaster Philon introduced to Zenon. Interestingly, this letter concerning a schoolmaster contains what appear to be two literary allusions—the first an embedded iambic line and the second a poetic sounding reference to some unknown source. Erudite touches, such as this, reveal the ubiquity of erudition among the elite of this society and its possible larger role in Hellenistic society. From this short letter, we can begin to comprehend how the cultural or literary could have even seeped into a very short, fairly unspectacular correspondence between two fairly educated members of the local elite.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Specifically, I am thinking about the small (28 x 6 cm) letter, which is laced with literary allusions, which I will discuss shortly. See Edgar (1931) 155-56.

⁶⁹ The bibliography for this topic is massive. Some exemplary works are Turner (1968); Orrieux (1983), (1985), and (1987); Lewis (1986).

⁷⁰ Edgar (1931) 155 doubts that this is the same Apollonios, for whom Zenon is working, based on its “tone of banter of which we find no trace in any of his other letters.” I personally do not see why it could not be him.

⁷¹ For the complete text and full discussion of the papyrus, see Edgar (1931) 155-56.

C.C. Edgar, an early commentator on this piece, proposed that the same Apollonios might have been the author of two epigrams from the same archive.⁷² These two epigrams appear to have been written as funerary epigrams supposedly for the purpose of being inscribed on the grave of Zenon's beloved Indian hunting dog, Tauron, commemorating his premature death by wild boar. The two poems, the first in elegiac and the second in iambics, run as follows (*SH* 977):

Ἴνδον ὄδ' ἀπύει τύμβος Ταύρωνα θανόντα
 κεῖσθαι, ὁ δὲ κτείνας πρόσθεν ἐπεῖδ' Αἴδαν·
 θῆρ ἄπερ ἄντα δρακεῖν, συὸς ἢ ῥ' ἀπὸ τᾶς Καλυδῶνος
 λείψανον, εὐκάρποις ἐνπεδίοις τρέφετο
 Ἀρσινόας ἀτίνακτον, ἀπ' αὐχένος ἀθρόα φρίσσων
 λ[ό]χμαις καὶ γε[ν]ύων ἀφρὸν ἀμεργόμενος·
 σὺν δὲ πεσῶν σκύλακος τόλμαι στήθη μὲν ἐτοίμως
 ἠλόκις, οὐ μέλλων δ' αὐχέν' ἔθηκ' ἐπὶ γᾶν,
 δραξάμενος γὰρ ὁμοῦ λοφιᾶι μέγαλοιο τένοντος
 οἴῳ πρ[ι]ν ἔλυσεν ὀδόντ' ἔσθ' ὑπέθηκ' Αἴδαι. (10)
 σώζει δὲ Ζή[νω]να πον[ων] ἀδίδακτα κυναγόν,
 καὶ κατὰ γᾶς τύμβωι τὰν χάριν ἠργάσατο.

σκύλαξ ὁ τύμβωι τῶιδ' ὑπ' ἐκτερισμένος
 Ταύρων, ἐπ' αὐθένταισιν οὐκ ἀμήχανος·
 κάπρωι γὰρ ὡς συνῆλθεν ἀντίαν ἔριν,
 ὁ μὲν τις ὡς ἄπλατος οἰδήσας γένυν
 στῆθος κατηλόκιζε λευκαίνων ἀφρῶι·
 ὁ δ' ἀμφὶ νώτῳ δισσοῦν ἐμβαλῶν ἴχνος
 ἐδράξατο φρίσσοντος ἐκ στέρνων μέσων
 καὶ γᾶι συνεσπείρασεν· Αἴδαι δὲ δούς
 τὸν αὐτόχειρ' ἔθναισκεν, Ἴνδον ὡς νόμος.
 σώζων δὲ τὸν κυναγὸν ὧι παρείπετο
 Ζήνων' ἐλαφρᾶι τᾶιδ' ὑπεστάλη κόνει.

This tomb proclaims that Indian Tauron lies dead. But his slayer saw Hades first. Like a wild beast to behold, like a relic of the Calydonian boar, it grew in the fertile plains of Arsinoe immovable, shaking from its neck the mane in masses in its lair, and dashing the froth from its jaws. Engaging the fearless dog, readily it ploughed a furrow in its breast: then immediately laid its own neck upon the ground. For Tauron, fastening upon the massive nape, with mane and all, loosed not his teeth again until he sent it down to Hades. So he saved hunter Zenon from distress, unschooled; and earned his gratitude in his tomb below the earth.

⁷² Edgar (1931): 156.

A dog is buried beneath this tomb, Tauron, who did not despair in conflict with a killer. When he met a boar in battle face to face, the latter, unapproachable, puffed out its jaws and, white with froth, ploughed a furrow in his breast. The other planted two feet about its back, and fastened upon the bristling monster from the middle of its breast, and wrapped him in the earth. He gave the murderer to Hades and died, as a good Indian should. He rescued Zenon, the hunter whom he followed; and here in this light dust he is laid to rest.⁷³

Most scholars have viewed this epigram as based on the actual experiences of Zenon and his dog out for a hunt and that this epigram had been ordered for the purpose of being put on a grave for his dog.⁷⁴ For these scholars, its main import lies in its use as evidence to reconstruct the nitty gritty lives of Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt. The literary aspects of these texts have been nearly wholly neglected or at least subordinated to the broader “historical” importance for recovering the “realities” of the period. An interpretation that either analyzes how the literary tropes were deployed to frame the experiences of those during of the Hellenistic period or even more radically the idea that this text might have been a literary fiction has been nearly completely neglected.⁷⁵ Viewing these epigrams from either of these perspectives, I believe that we can partially recover how a literate elite man of the early Hellenistic period framed his own experiences and activities through the lens of literature thereby reinforcing and perpetuating the importance of those narratives.⁷⁶ The neglect of the literary and potentially fictional aspects of the epigram is surprising

⁷³ Translation is from Page (1970) 460-463.

⁷⁴ Most recently by Bing (2009) 207-208, but also Fraser (1972) I.611-12.

⁷⁵ The interpretation of Orrieux (1983) who does bring to light the narrative structures borrowed from epic that inform this work.

⁷⁶ This notion is fairly similar to Orrieux’s structuralist analysis of this pair of poems, structuralist in his attempt to recover the broader, deeper cultural patterns which he sees divulged in these poems. Orrieux (1983) 136 sees this as a new take on the Homeric hunt and sees the new subjects of the Hellenistic modifying and situating that myth within their own historical situation where he astutely points out that the historical factors, including urbanization and literate culture played in this “mythe adapté aux temps nouveau.”

considering the fact that scholars of literary epigram generally view most funerary (and dedicatory) epigrams from this period as mere literary exercises or games of the elite.⁷⁷ We also have several examples, including one by Anyte (*AP* 7.202) that employs the conceit of commemorating a rooster killed by a predator, whose “highfalutin vocabulary” mixed with its “domestic subject-matter” point to “an exercise in ironic deflation.”⁷⁸ It seems more than likely that these epigrams were literary epigrams written in this vein and sent from one elite male to another, whose purpose might have been to entertain one another rather than to retell or commemorate an actual event, though admittedly the two are not mutually exclusive.

When we look more closely at these epigrams and the manner in which they were preserved, it seems likely that we are, in fact, dealing with epigrams that functioned and circulated in the manner more consistent with ones deemed “literary” and that were anthologized. First of all, the poems play on the trope of the hero taken away prematurely, but only in this case the hero is a dog of Indian descent. This kind of playfulness is a hallmark of Alexandrian poetics. To further support this conjecture, the literary trope of verse epitaphs for dogs became common during the third century BCE.⁷⁹ This epigram, in fact, could have been one of the epigrams that first established this theme as a literary trope. These poems are fairly sophisticated literary specimens that clearly model themselves on earlier literary works which depict scenes of hunting. This is best exemplified by the mention of the mythical Calydonian boar in the first one, which

⁷⁷ Perhaps, their format as “letters” compels their interpreters to see them as genuine as opposed to works already canonized in established literary forms, such as the poetic anthology.

⁷⁸ Hopkinson (1988) 253.

⁷⁹ Fraser (1972) I.611 states that “Metrical epitaphs for dogs, both domestic and hunting, are very common from the third century onwards.” Fraser cites Peek, *Gr. Grabged.* as an example of this phenomenon. For more citations, see Fraser (1972) II.864.

immediately elevates this event to mythical status. This is immediately followed by mention of the grand setting of the supposed events that connects them to Queen Arsinoe. Therefore, the first epigram establishes our main players, Zenon and Tauron, as part of a mythical landscape also linked to the prominent political players of their day. Both epigrams play up Tauron's pedigree as an Indian dog, which speaks to the trope of exoticism and maps out new political realities, where India and its products (in the form of trade goods and Tauron) have come to the center of the empire. The second plays on this trope and then proceeds to heroize the actions of the dog in a literary tone that evokes combat sequences fit for a hero as depicted in the *Iliad*.

As I have already mentioned, there could have been a Tauron that belonged to Zenon, and the dog might have even died during a hunt, but it seems equally compelling to say that this was an amusement piece sent from one elite member to another as a means of not merely sharing in common cultural activity but literally placing oneself into that setting. What could be more Alexandrian than the mixing mundane figures into a heroic setting, a play with traditional tropes? In this pair of epigrams, instead of seeing merely a transaction between a freelance poet and his client Zenon, why not imagine that we are glimpsing two elite members creating a bond with one another through the sharing of the literary epigrams. These epigrams might further suggest how Zenon was able to maintain friendships and contacts over great distances.⁸⁰ Finally, this solution might best answer the often-asked question of why Zenon kept these epigrams if he had actually inscribed them

⁸⁰ Orrieux (1983) ch. 5 also proposes an interesting theory that Zenon was a precursor to the rural patronage so prominent in the socio-political hierarchy of Late Roman Egypt, and in this way his role was one of local, rural leader in lieu of the normal civic apparatus provided by a fully developed traditional Greek polis. This explanation might shed light on another reason why Zenon might have felt the need to share this literary correspondence as a man of the frontier. It should be said that although the town he was located in, Philadelphia, had not acquired civic status, it did have a gymnasium.

on the dog's grave. If it was never inscribed or even meant to be, the papyrus might have been what Zenon had wanted all along and therefore the reason why he preserved it.⁸¹

Epigrams circulated even on a scale as small as the papyrus just discussed, might have been a way for everyday elites to imagine themselves within grander narratives of the period. They could do so by engaging in literary activities as scholars familiar with the literary greats of the past and capable of updating them through their own poetic works. Literary epigram provided a means through which elite could imagine themselves as part of the broader community of Greeks, not circumscribed by time and space, but available to construct a set of shared values connecting peoples over vast expanses of time and space. Besides Zenon's letter, we also have two poems of Posidippus (115-16 AB), dating from the mid-second century BCE from Memphis that were copied in "casual" hand on a roll that also contained a "bread account" and a private letter.⁸² This type of evidence supports the notion that these poems were shared over long distances not only through large book rolls but also through less formal documents.⁸³ We also know that epigrams circulated as the introductions to prose works, such as Persaios' mathematical treatises⁸⁴ and Eratosthenes' eighteen line epigram to Ptolemy III.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Another equally interesting possibility is that the epigrams were meant to commemorate Zenon's hunting dog and that this text was meant to substitute for an actual commemoration in stone.

⁸² Stephens (2004a): 66.

⁸³ Fraser (1972) I.607-608 feels that book rolls and collections were the prime means of disseminating this new brand of poetry rather than "isolated poems." Although this might have been the primary means by which poets knew of one another across the vast expanses of the Hellenistic world, nevertheless we do know of letters containing one or two epigrams that traveled over these same expanses. It makes sense not to disregard this possible means of sharing such works.

⁸⁴ Perseus heralds his mathematical work with the following short epigram (Procl., *In Eucl. Elem.*, p. 111):

Τρεῖς γραμμὰς ἐπὶ πέντε τομαῖς εὐρῶν [ἑλικῶδεις]
Περσεὺς τῶνδ' ἔνεκεν δαίμονας ἰλάσατο.

The early Hellenistic Berlin Papyrus (P.Berol. 13270) contains four songs, of which the first three, written as one continuous poem, have generally been identified as *skolia* in astrophic dactylo-epitrites.⁸⁶ It was found in the tomb of a Greek soldier in Elephantine. Three words have been written in the margin to the left of the text⁸⁷ and are generally thought to either be the titles of the works or the answers to the “riddles” the poems present.⁸⁸ The fourth poem is separated from the others by an indentation and appears to be an elegiac epigram celebrating the beginning of a symposion. This epigram appears to be, as Cameron states, “a ten line elegy/epigram that lays down the rules of the symposium (laughter, jokes, mutual mockery, some serious talk and obedience to the symposiarch).⁸⁹ Cameron sees all four poems as evidence of the sympotic culture of the period stating that “It seems clear that this is a soldier’s script for a symposium, the text of a selection of favourite songs that he took with him to perform at symposia with fellow Macedonians stationed in Elephantine.”⁹⁰

Having discovered three spiral lines in addition to five conical sections, Perseus propitiates the gods on account of these things.

The translation is my own. For more information, see Fraser (1972) I.408, 423 and II.605-606, 611-612.

⁸⁵ See Fraser (1972) I.611.

⁸⁶ Cameron (1995) 74 identifies the meter as such; while Powell (1981) 192 identifies the meter of the third as dactylic with trochaic elements mixed in. As for the identification of these poems as *skolia*, Bravo (1997) first took this idea to task and proposed that the songs actually are all part of a single dithyrambic poem. Most recently Kwapisz (1998) 45 has also stated that the traditional identification is untenable but admits that “we must definitely do away with the conception of three *skolia* (whatever might replace it).” I find Bravo’s thesis compelling, but ultimately not something that can be proved definitively. It is not, however, within the scope of this chapter to address Bravo’s argument, and I will therefore restrict myself to his less controversial claims.

⁸⁷ The generally accepted readings of these three words runs as follows: ΜΟΥΣΑΙ/ ΕΥΦΩΠΑΤ[ΙΣ] / ΜΝΗΜΟΣΥΝΗ.

⁸⁸ The following argue for them being titles: Page (1970); Powell (1981); Porten (1996); Cameron (1995).

⁸⁹ Cameron (1995) 74.

⁹⁰ Cameron (1995) 74-75.

Cameron’s interpretation makes much sense and might further illuminate how poems were performed during symposia in the Hellenistic period, but recently Benedetto Bravo has provided another way of viewing the texts and their titles that might also change how we view their intended purpose. Bravo has made a convincing case that the three words written in the margin, which have been generally accepted as titles, are, in fact, not titles.⁹¹ Instead, Bravo argues that the three words are an explicatory comment on one of the passages. He sees the first word, ΜΟΥΣΑΙ, as a lemma and the remaining two words (ΕΥΦΩΡΑΤ[ΟΝ] ΜΝΗΜΟΣΥΝΗ) its gloss. Bravo argues that the three words clarify the beginning of the third passage: ὦ Μουσ<ᾶν> ἀγανόμματα μάτερ. Thereupon, the three words would go from being titles to an explicatory note meaning “Muse: obviously Mnemosyne.”⁹² Bravo’s conjecture opens the door for another possible way for interpreting this set of texts—as texts of study rather than as sympotic performance cribs.

If we accept that they might be or are corrections, then this allows for more ways of interpreting this text, especially the fourth one. The fourth poem, as mentioned above, is an elegiac epigram that is rather pedestrian lacking any Alexandrian flourishes (CA p. 192):

Χαίρετε συμπόται ἄνδρες ὀμ[ήλικες, ἐ]ξ ἀγαθοῦ γὰρ
 ἀρξάμενος τελέω τὸν λόγον [ε]ἰς ἀγ[αθό]ν.
 Χρὴ δ’, ὅταν εἰς τοιοῦτο συνέλθωμεν φίλοι ἄνδρες
 πρᾶγμα, γελᾶν παίζειν χρησαμένους ἀρετῆ,
 ἦδεσθαί τε συνόντας, ἐς ἀλλήλους τε φ[λ]υαρεῖν,
 καὶ σκώπτειν τοιαῦθ’ οἷα γέλωτα φέρει.
 Ἦ δὲ σπουδὴ ἐπέσθω, ἀκούωμέν [τε λ]εγόντων
 ἐμ μέρει· ἦ δ’ ἀρετὴ συμποσίου πέλεται.

⁹¹ For his treatment of this topic, see Bravo (1997) ch. 3. He concludes by stating that the poems are not separate *skolia* but that the poem was a dithyramb meant for performance.

⁹² The problem with this interpretation, as pointed out by Kwapisz (1998) 46, is that ΜΟΥΣΑΙ is a plural and is referencing the “Mother of the Muses.” Kwapisz resolves this issue, by arguing that the final iota in ΜΟΥΣΑΙ is, in fact, not a letter but rather a line signaling the end of the lemma.

Τοῦ δὲ ποταρχοῦντος πειθώμεθα· ταῦτα γάρ ἐστιν
ἔργ’ ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν εὐλογίαν τε φέρει.

Hail, fellow-drinkers, men, companions! From Good
Setting out, I purpose my poem for Good.
‘Tis right, whenever we join, dear fellows, for such
A doing, to laugh, to play, putting excellence to use,
And to enjoy being together, and with each other to joke
And to tell such jests as bring on laughs.
Let solemnity follow, and let us listen, speaking
In turn; this is the excellence of the symposium.
Let us obey the drinkmaster, for this is the
Task of good fellows, and it brings on praise.⁹³

One possible way to interpret this text would be to argue that its owner used this text to study these *skolia* as written documents. Given that context, we then could view the final epigram not merely as something meant for performance but something employing the conceit of being an initiation of a symposion. This might explain Cameron’s observations that this poem contains all the hallmarks of a sympotic work, since the work might have been meant to be a paradigmatic example of this type of song. Moreover, it might also explain why the song is so ordinary, since those who wrote this down were merely transcribing a preexisting song that exemplified this type of song. In short, from this perspective these poems could be part of a larger archival discourse in which virtual symposia provided a means for Hellenistic elites to partake and perform the new literary *paideia* without actually being present in an actual symposion. These texts became yet another means of mediating, imagining, and expanding the kinds of activities deemed important to Greek identity, such as the symposion.

Another plausible explanation is that we have evidence here for texts that circulated as a crib for those who might have needed help in conducting a symposion with friends. The text might have filled a knowledge gap for Greeks living in newly conquered

⁹³ The translation is from Porten (1996).

lands who never had the opportunity to learn the etiquette of symposia. The latter could be especially pertinent considering that it was found in the tomb of a soldier. Perhaps, these males were too young to have attended one before leaving their home in the Old world, or perhaps those who were using this text were from the lower classes and never had the chance to attend one. In the case of the latter, these newly displaced Greeks might have found themselves with newly found status and felt impelled to conduct themselves as “proper Greeks.” The lemma and the standard epigram might also point to a group of native elites or perhaps a mixed group of Greeks (and natives) who needed to be walked through the proper ways to start a symposion. This epigram could therefore be seen as means of extending and promoting another defining “Greek” activity through the medium of texts.

Hellenistic epigrams were one means for elevating and privileging the learned values of their age as distinct from previous eras. The following anonymous epigram, which was found on a late third century BCE papyrus,⁹⁴ elevates erudition in the form of literary knowledge and celebrates it as a value equal to those martial values of old. The poem takes the form of a praise poem of Ptolemy (*SH 979*):

..].τωνουρ[]..ναν.α[
 εὐαίων Πτολεμ[*c.* 10—12].τοδ' Ὀμήρωι
 εἶσαθ' ὑπὲρ δι..[*c.* 7—9 κ]ατ' ὄναρ τέμενος
 τῶι πρὶν Ὀδυσσεΐας τε κ[αὶ Ἰλι]άδος τὸν ἀγήρω
 ὕμνον ἀπ' ἀθανάτων γραψ[α]μένωι πραπίδων.
 ὄλβιοι ὦ θνατῶν εὐεργέται, [οἶ] τὸν ἄριστον
 ἐν δορὶ καὶ Μούσαις κοίρανον ἠρόσατε.

Blessed Ptolemy... set this up to Homer... who wrote of old the ageless song of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* from his immortal mind. O happy benefactors of mankind! You who sowed the seed of a leader best with the spear and the Muses!⁹⁵

⁹⁴ The same papyrus also contained an epigram describing a fountain, see Page (1970) 448-453.

⁹⁵ This is a modified version of Page (1970) 452-453.

This fragmentary epigram celebrates the new Ptolemaic king and presents him as a patron of epic with his dedication to Homer. It is a celebration of Ptolemy's sponsorship of war and song, two activities traditionally honored by Greeks. This literary epigram, however, modifies the partnership of song and war with its preponderant use of words associated with the literary rather than the martial. It is Homer and not the likes of Achilles, who was celebrated and bestowed with an immortal gift in this epigram. In this manner, this epigram privileges the art of song over all other arts, including that of war. Ptolemy also appears to be receiving praise for setting up a shrine or statue to Homer which would further reinforce the heroic status of the singer over the warrior-hero.

In the final lines, where we see a reference to the martial with the phrase “with the spear” or “on my spear” (ἐν δορὶ), most ancient readers would see it as an allusive nod to Archilochos' famous poem that celebrated both his poetic and martial abilities.⁹⁶ The literary epigram has taken the trope of the poet and warrior, privileging the activities of the poet over the warrior. Much like Archilochos' work rewrote the Homeric ethos, this work also rewrites the values signified in older texts by resignifying them through literary allusion. Literary allusion forces its readers to reevaluate values embodied in the phrases alluded to and associated with those works by reconfiguring them in a different poetic settings. Moreover, in this case, the activity of composing an epigram reinforces the values promoted in the work itself—particularly the values of learnedness as embodied in poetic authorities. In short, the poem, which at first glance appears to merely continue the trope of elevating a leading contemporary political figure through his benefaction and martial

⁹⁶ Archilochos might even have an antecedent in Achilles himself, found in Book 9 singing κλεῖα ἀνδρῶν, he is a poet only incidentally, and also only through Homer's, not his own, verse. Archilochos appears as the first who defines himself in terms of both occupations. I think it is safe to say that most would view Archilochos as the originary poet-warrior.

accomplishments, is really a revaluing what defines a great man. This is a drastic departure from the civic mentality exemplified by the Athenian tragedian, Aischylos, whose epitaph famously failed to mention his literary accomplishments and instead commemorated his participation at Marathon.

In the previous epigram, we saw how a political figure could win fame by being honored for his support of the Muses, and in the following epigram, we see how literary epigram glorifies the deeds of the poet, vaulting the poet into the status of hero (*SH 980*):

ἔρχεο δὴ μακάριστος ὁδοιπóρος, ἔρχεο καλοῦς
 χώρους εὐσεβέων ὀψόμενος, Φίλικε,
 ἐκ κισσηρεφείος κεφαλῆς εὐμνα κυλίων
 ῥήματα, καὶ νήσους κώμασον εἰς μακάρων,
 εὖ μὲν γῆρας ἰδὼν εὐέστιον Ἀλκινόοιο
 Φαίηκος, ζῶειν ἀνδρὸς ἐπισταμένου·
 Ἀλκινόου τις ἔων ἔξ αἵματος < >
 [>] οὐ Δημοδόκου

Make your way, blessed wayfarer, make your way, Philikos, to look upon the fair lands of the reverential dead, and with your head wreathed with ivy, rolling forth your hymnal words, and begone with revel to the Islands of the Blessed. Happy that you saw the festive old-age of Alkinoös, the Phaiekian, a man who knew how to live. Born of Alkinoös' line... from Demodokos...⁹⁷

This is an anonymous epigram that celebrates one of the most famous poets from the early Hellenistic period, Philikos of Korkyra, one of the Hellenistic tragic pleiad. It is composed in elegiac verse, and it is unknown whether or not it was actually inscribed. It probably was not inscribed, however, since it seems to be an example of a trope common in literary epigram, the writing of epitaphs for famous literary figures.⁹⁸ In this poem Philikos is heading to the Isles of the Blessed. The epigram presents the archivist-poet as a hero figure

⁹⁷ This is a modified translation from Page (1970) 453-454.

⁹⁸ See Fraser (1972) I.609. Fraser, however, makes a distinction between works, such as Kallimachos' elegy at the death of Herakleitos rather than a "more specifically funerary piece such as Dioscorides' epitaph on Machon (*AP 7.708*)."

with the honors of a rich afterlife traditionally reserved for only the best of the Achaians.⁹⁹ Even when he arrives there rather than seeing a contemporary joining the ranks of heroic figures from the Homeric epics, he joins the ranks of the heroic singers from those very same epics, Demodokos and Alkinoös. In this instance, epigram once again was a means to valorize the archivist-poets by linking them to their cultural forefathers, a trend that we see throughout the early Hellenistic period.

Like Poseidon's trident and Zeus' thunderbolt, the newly heroized archivist-poet also needed their heroic accoutrements. Theirs would be the scroll. Both Hermesianax' elegiac work, *Leontion* and Krates' epigram, which were discussed earlier, present Philitas with glosses. For the fullest account of this association, we must turn to Posidippos and his *sphragis* epigram (*SH* 705.17 = *AB* 118.17), where he calls for a statue for of himself to be set up in the agora in Pella with "unrolling a scroll" (βιβλον ἐλίσσω).¹⁰⁰ The statue of Posidippos, I believe, demonstrates how much the scroll had become a symbol and accoutrement of the learned icons of the Alexandrian cult of *paideia* during the late third century BCE. It also speaks to another observation noted by most scholars of the period that we see the elevation of the poet to heroic or near heroic status.¹⁰¹ In another of Posidippos' epigrams, the poet's soul "has been labored out in book scrolls."¹⁰² Many epigrams (along with Hermesianax' *Leontion*) present themselves under the pose of being

⁹⁹ The *locus classicus* for this is Hesiod *Theogony*

¹⁰⁰ For more information on this epigram, see Lloyd-Jones (1963). For its possible statue, see Clay (2004) 84-86.

¹⁰¹ See Clay (2004) and Hollis (1996).

¹⁰² *AB* 137.

dedicatory for statues.¹⁰³ It has been well documented that there was a Hellenistic phenomenon where *poleis*, individual benefactors, and monarchs erected statues in honor of poets, mostly pre-Hellenistic, such as Anakreon and Archilochos, but also Hellenistic ones, such as Posidippos, if the epigrams are to be believed. These statues were set up in either public (agora) or possibly sacred or cult settings.¹⁰⁴

Finally, epigrams also celebrated the activities of this new hero and the places s/he frequented. The following epigram by the famous Hellenistic epigrammatist, Asklepiades, commemorates the victory of a certain Konnaros (*AP* 6.308):

Νικήσας τοὺς παῖδας, ἐπεὶ καλὰ γράμματ' ἔγραψεν,
Κόνναρος ὀγδώκοντ' ἀστραγάλους ἔλαβεν·
κάμῃ χάριν Μούσαις τὸν κωμικὸν ὧδε Χάρητα,
πρεσβύτην θορύβῳ θῆκέ με παιδαρίων.

Konnaros, having beaten the boys, since he wrote such beautiful letters, took home eighty knucklebones, and in gratitude to the Muses he hung me up here, the comic mask of old Chares, amid the applause of the boys.¹⁰⁵

It starts boldly proclaiming that some youth has been victorious on account of writing “beautiful letters,” which almost always conveys a sense of a text or something written rather than a sung performance.¹⁰⁶ Next, the victor’s name is given and his prize, a mere eighty knucklebones. The epigram then shifts to the object of this epigram, a comic mask, presented in the first person, which is being dedicated in honor of Konnaros’ victory. This epigram captures the spirit of the Alexandrians in its satirical play on traditional themes.

In this case under the pretense of being a dedicatory epigram for a comic mask, we are

¹⁰³ For the possible heroization of Philitas, see Hollis (1996).

¹⁰⁴ The most thorough treatment of this trend is Clay (2004). See also Dillon (2006).

¹⁰⁵ The translation is from Paton (1958).

¹⁰⁶ The use of *grammata* in the Greek strongly suggests that we are dealing with some written form of competition rather than a mere singing contest. Considering the mention of “beautiful” letters, perhaps this epigram is about some sort of written poetry contest, which took place in gymnasium.

presented with a mock epinician for a mere schoolboy. The epigram presents Konnaros as its satirical hero by recounting his great deeds. Instead of a victory over Herakles in wrestling, Konnaros' triumph is over other "boys" in "letters." His booty will not be golden tripods or fine bronze armor but the small sum of eighty knucklebones. Konnaros will not be dedicating his shield before his polis at the local temple, but will instead hang up a mask of a comic poet in the new "sacred" space of the gymnasium. His deeds will not be sung on a grand scale, but written over four brief lines. In typical Alexandrian fashion, the epigrammatist is the new Homer singing the songs of new schoolboy heroes.

This epigram should first be understood within its anthological context. It appears in book 6 of the *Palatine Anthology*, situated a mere two positions ahead of Kallimachos' epigram on the same topic.¹⁰⁷ The fact that Asklepiades' poem has been anthologized with other works on a similar theme makes it clear that the poem was meant to evoke a certain setting. The dedication within the poem appears to allow the poem fit a certain type of epigram. Perhaps there was an actual historical Konnaros, who lived and wrote good verses as a youth, but when we see where this epigram was situated within its anthological context, its received interpretation becomes clear. We are dealing with a poem that was seen as a play on a theme, one that played with the perceived conventions of dedicatory epigram with hints of epinician coloring. Therefore, it was the epigram's existence as a text that once again comes to fore, for the epigram playfully honors and both celebrates writing of literate poetry on a literal and figurative level and promoting the space, accoutrements, and figures of these same activities.

This epigram does not celebrate some famous hero or even a minor general or poet but instead cleverly celebrates an everyday student from an unspecified location. The

¹⁰⁷ AP 6.310.

ingenuity of this epigram is that it so brilliantly presents itself as an earnest parody of a praise and dedicatory poem finished off with the personalized touch of a name for the victor, the amount of the prize, and in what event he excelled. Traditionally, these details would have been employed to celebrate a specific person in a polis, but here we see a very different thing, an individual presented as a panhellenic type for the broader Hellenistic world. Although this epigram might have originally been written to commemorate a Konnaros who was important and revered by his polis, this epigram's broader function, nevertheless, seems to be a greater one. By taking on the pose of celebrating an everyman figure, it elevates this otherwise unknown figure into a heroic model for all who had been educated in a gymnasia, and in this way it connects elites dispersed throughout the Hellenistic landscape by making their isolated experiences within gymnasia all over the New and Old world a shared experience.

A poem like this provides its readers with a broader narrative connecting them together with the figure of Konnaros, who represents a model for imperial subjectivity for its geographically dispersed citizenry. Its readers would feel a familiarity to the events depicted in this epigram, unlike many of the events they would have been reading in pre-Hellenistic works. The reading and writing of works such as these was not merely a quaint distraction but played a vital role in shaping a community. Epigrams like this gave meaning to these new everyday activities that elites all over the Hellenistic world must have been partaking in and gave them voice. The epigram supplied them with that voice and even its form favored refined subtlety over martial force, and in this way can be seen as privileging those who excelled in these new "arenas." As I have stressed, the elite class was redefined in the early Hellenistic period with erudition becoming a key skill necessary for admittance into the elite.

In her work on literary epigram, Doris Meyer has argued that in the Hellenistic period the written word had surpassed the monument in its power to assure the survival of what had been inscribed.¹⁰⁸ Meyer astutely makes the point that texts can survive in many of the ways that a stone monument could, even outlasting some. What we see here is the elevation of the power of texts to create a sense of order for a community through the shared practices of writing, reading, and circulating them. In the Hellenistic context, the epigrammatic form and content buttressed the rise of the archivist's identity as well as his activities. The Archaic symposion has been seen as a space of elite identity formation, and I think we should also consider the virtual symposion of the Hellenistic in the same manner. It allowed for a broad group of people to partake virtually in the activities that were once only possible in the intimate settings of the *andron*. Literary epigram had the ability to connect like-minded elites throughout the imperial landscape and allowed them to negotiate and refine the ways in which they came to view themselves. The very act of writing and composing literary epigrams not only reinforced and perpetuated the scholarly practices of the archive but also created demand for these products. It also led to the construction and elevation of the figures and places associated with this new era of erudition. In this way, the very form and content of literary epigrams shaped how elites came to view who was a participating member of their broader group.

4.5 Conclusion

Literary epigram provided learned elites spread throughout the new expanses of the Greco-Macedonian empires with a portable means of sharing in broader cultural activities that came to define and bind new groupings of people. Thus the production,

¹⁰⁸ Meyer (2005): 110-114.

circulation, and consumption of epigrams provided a means for elites create a sense of community and shared identity through displays of virtuosity in their production and erudite response to them. Epigrams were the perfect means for replicating the archival activities of those elite at the centers of power, since they were based on a knowledge of a broader body of texts and cultural knowledge embodied in the great archive of the Mouseion of Alexandria. Much as participation in the archival discourses of Alexandria connected those on the fringe with the center, so the imperial subject also could see how his existence wherever he or she was could be part of a broader imperial network of subjects. As the first epigram discussed in this chapter suggests, a common base of knowledge accrued through the consumption of materials produced by the vanguard of archivist-poets working from places such as the Mouseion of Alexandria, was the prerequisite for participating in this broader virtual symposium. It provided a shared activity that all could participate in but also it constructed and promoted certain types of behavior and persons as heroic. I shall end, as I began, with an epigram that embodies everything just mentioned (*SH* 494 and Ath. 5.222a):

φεύγετ', Ἀριστάρχειοι, ἐπ' εὐρέα νῶτα θαλάττης
 Ἑλλάδα, τῆς ξουθῆς δειλότεροι κεμάδος,
 γωνιοβόμβυκες, μονοσύλλαβοι, οἷσι μέμηλε
 τὸ σφῖν καὶ σφῶιν καὶ τὸ μῖν ἢ δὲ τὸ νῖν.
 τοῦθ' ὑμῖν εἶη δυσπέμφελον· Ἡροδίκῳ δὲ
 Ἑλλάς ἀεὶ μίμνοι καὶ θεόπαις Βαβυλῶν.

Flee, students of Aristarchos, over the wide back of the sea
 from Greece, you who are more cowardly than the nimble deer,
 buzzers-in-corners, masters of the monosyllable, concerned with
sphin versus *sphoin* and *min* versus *nin*.
 This is what I wish for you, storm-tossed ones. But may Greece
 and Babylon, child of the gods, always be there for Herodikos.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ This is a modified translation from Olson (2006) 560-561.

This epigram is an invective against the Alexandrian school of Aristarchos written by Herodikos of Babylon. After one reading, it is obvious that this epigram epitomizes many of the themes discussed in this chapter. In his *Learned Banqueteers*, Athenaios describes Herodikos as ὁ Κρατήειος (“the disciple of Krates”) and attributes at least one prose work to him, *To the Man Who Likes Sokrates*.¹¹⁰ As a student of Krates, Herodikos was clearly near the top of the scholarly elite and his work in both verse and scholarly prose situate him as a prototypical archivist-poet. The second word of his epigram, Ἀριστάρχειοι, also reveals how his poem plays upon the tropes of his period. No longer are conflicts merely driven by cultural between Greeks versus barbarians, but the Hellenistic elite see the battle over how Greeks “remember” Homer. In the next line, Herodikos makes his allegiances to Krates’ Pergamene school clear when he describes the followers of Aristarchos as “more cowardly than the brown deer.” Displaying his erudition to describe the Alexandrians, he uses the “recherché” ξουθῆς κεμάδος (“nimble deer”).¹¹¹ The next two lines continue his frontal assault on the rival school. The third makes a strong impression on its readers with two vivid and erudite words—γωνιοβόμβυκες and μονοσύλλαβοι—that dominate the line. The fourth line clarifies Herodikos’ μονοσύλλαβοι with a series of monosyllabic words. Herodikos concludes the first half of the fifth line with yet another rare word, δυσπέμφελον. This word is a rare epithet only used by Homer and Hesiod before Herodikos employs it here. Through his brilliant display of erudition, Herodikos proves

¹¹⁰ Ath. V.215f.

¹¹¹ Page (1981) called the use of ξουθῆς as “more recherché than e.g. Alcaeus 7.247.6 = HE 33 θοῶν ἐλάφων ὦιχετ’ ἐλαφρότερον” (p. 64). He comes to equate ξουθῆς with Alkaios’ θοῶν and therefore translates it as “nimble” or “agile.” This definition relies on one of its less common meaning “thin, delicate, fine” in effect synonymous with λεπτός or ἀπαλός. The standard translation, which Olson originally employed, means “tawny” or “yellowish-brown.” This is a fine translation, but I think Page is correct in employing his translation considering its possible antecedents. Page also neglects to mention κεμάς, which I have added, since it too was a carefully chosen word, appearing in Homer (*Il.* 10.361) and Kallimachos (*Hymn Del.* 112). One would normally expect the more common ἔλαφος as cited in the Alkaios passage.

his knowledge of epic language and attempts to show how he sees the two schools differing.¹¹² In doing so, Herodikos also gets at the heart of the conflict over defining Homer. While the Aristarchans get lost in frivolous aspects of intense study, his school, the Pergamene, is focused on the true heritage of Homer, getting at (Stoic) truth through a study of its key words. It is not that both are not deeply entrenched in highly erudite and archival matters, but it is perceived that their focuses differ. In these four and a half lines, Herodikos has not only successfully presented himself as a refined learned epigrammatist, but he has demonstrated with passionate ire the centrality of this dispute to his world.

Over the last line and a half, Herodikos conjures up an idealized world and places himself within it. His final line begins with Greece and ends with his fatherland, Babylon. In the center of the final line lies an optative of wish calling for these two places to remain forever for him. Herodikos seems to be declaring that Babylon is now Hellas and vice versa. It is through the actions of Herodikos that what were once two oppositional sides—Greek and barbarian—are through a figure of learning have resolved into a single entity. This ultimately is a utopic projection onto the world that hopes the world to unite under the banner of erudition. In this epigram, he imagines a world where the everywhere is now Greek, so naturally the key toward achieving his ideal world is through the proper interpretation of Homer, the founder of this world culture. If they merely purge the Aristarchans from the world, things will resolve themselves. For Herodikos, he hopes for a world where there is no more distinction between Greek culture and “culture” in a world

¹¹² The generally accepted difference between the two schools is that “the Alexandrians concentrated on textual criticism and grammar, the Pergamenes, though by no means neglecting these aspects, were primarily interested in Homer’s subject-matter, and especially in relating the contents of the poems to the principles of Stoic philosophy” (Page (1981) 63). In my interpretation of the epigram, I am not disagreeing with this statement in general but contend that Herodikos, in this specific epigram, is expressing a different way to differentiate the two schools than generally accepted.

where the distinction between Greek and barbarian has been transformed into something new. This is the world that he sees created him, one that requires a certain brand of “Alexandrian” knowledge to enter the ranks of the elite. It is no surprise that Herodikos chose to construct this ideal world through the medium of literary epigram, not only the ultimate tool of compressing and bringing things together but also something that epitomized the archive upon which it was built.

Herodikos’ epigram demonstrates how this literary form tried to cultivate a certain set of values and practices. Ironically in his attempt to provide an idealized vision of the future, Herodikos perpetuates the conflicts and rivalries that defined his world. Beyond its hope, Herodikos’ epigram speaks to the world in which it was born. Indeed, the elevation of the archivist-poet as hero in the third century BCE seems to have been followed by the elevation of academic rivalries among “schools” that followed those original archivist heroes. These rivalries can be seen as yet another way through which Hellenistic empires could compete with one another by fighting proxy culture wars through the cultural institutions they supported. More importantly, the “success” of this rivalry speaks to how literary epigram and more broadly archival discursive activities became one of the central ways people communicated (or argued) with one another over great distances. Figures in these various centers not only competed with one another over great distances but they followed one another’s idea through written texts. Indeed, Herodikos’ epigram can be seen as response to Krates, which was surely a response to others, and reveals the way this poetic medium was able to overcome distance and time to develop notions of identity.

On textual battlefields, such as the epigrammatic, Hellenistic empires marshaled troops of scholars and recruited the best and brightest from all over the known world to

fight in wars over how one viewed Homer.¹¹³ The imperial *paideia*, over which this war was fought, was not only spread by means of the epigram but epigram became one of the central fronts upon which it was fought. The spread of this learned culture was so successful that places once considered barbarian like Pergamon and Egypt, had by the end of the second century BCE become centers of “Hellenic” *paideia*. In his epigram, Herodikos himself even presents the conceit that Greece along with his hometown of Babylon ought to be seen as the learned pillars of this world, beautifully rendered in the last line of this epigram with both words bookending that line. The transformation and spread of this imperial *paideia* and its soldiers, the archivist-poets, clearly did not develop overnight, and as I have tried to demonstrate throughout this chapter it culminated in the very “success” of having scholars wielding learning dominating the literary landscape rather than heroes with swords.

¹¹³ Much of this paragraph was based on information obtained from Page (1981: 62-64) or *FGE* 62-64.

5. Conclusion

The Mouseion, I have argued, was an archive whose denizens were concerned with the construction of knowledge about the world past and present. To a remarkable extent, it determined what could be said and known about the world and how one viewed that world. The focus of this dissertation has been the way its archival mode ordered this world, and how it was through these channels as well as through the linguistic modes that people came to have access to a broader archive of Hellenism. It was a knowledge project but one linked materially and figuratively to the political world that surrounded it through its archival activities. Highly learned works, such as Kallimachos' *Aitia*, established a new sense of Greekness not determined by birthplace or birthright but rather through shared experience in certain activities defined as being Greek. I have tried to demonstrate throughout this dissertation how these Hellenistic cultural activities disseminated, redefined, and negotiated identities, specifically focusing on the role of archives, textuality and empire on these processes. Through archival discursive activities, elites living in Hellenistic imperial centers wielded influence over a vast collection of peoples, lands, custom, and knowledges, often vying to speak for the entirety of the known world.

In terms of knowledge, textuality also served the needs of the new rulers of the early Hellenistic world, permitting a select few located in major political centers to dictate to the large dispersed mass of subjects what ought to be considered worth knowing. It was only through the ability to write and read Greek, especially in Ptolemaic Egypt, that one had access to the channels of political power. Naturally, the new Greco-Macedonian Hellenistic rulers did not consciously use texts and writing to spread this new knowledge, but rather it appears to be the peculiar result of history, the coalescing of several unrelated

historical factors, like the rise of the Aristotelian notion of textualized knowledge during the fourth century along with the socio-political upheavals caused by the invasions of Alexander. Massive collections of book scrolls housed in major political centers legitimized the knowledge claims of Hellenistic rulers, providing them with the physical “proof” which they could point to if questioned. This unrealizable endeavor of archiving the world and paring it down into one rather large “filing cabinet” contributed greatly to the legitimization of texts and writing as the means of mediating knowledge about the present and past.¹ In short, control over the archive and writing resulted in the wielding of massive political power, and it was in this manner that those who ran the Mouseion of Alexandria ought to be viewed as possessing immense political power. Cultural knowledge provided status to its practitioners, and many of those who had accrued this knowledge also were established political figures. The scholars of the Mouseion, who undertook the great Aristotelian project of assembling the entirety of all knowledge in one location, redefined the knowledge contained within.² This new class of archivists thereby played a crucial role in the reimagining of Panhellenic paideia that would persist through the Byzantine period.

Textuality provided the means for the new Hellenistic conquerors to bridge the Old and New worlds of the Hellenistic world, with the “Old” representing lands formerly considered “Greek” and “New” former “barbarian” lands like Egypt. The texts of the archive were able to incorporate both embodied performances of the pre-Hellenistic world as well as foreign knowledges into a new form of cultural knowledge or paideia for an audience composed of a wide range of ethnic groups dispersed over an unprecedented expanse of territory. The new class of Hellenistic elites, who ruled this world, thus had at

¹ For the notion of empire as filing cabinet, see Richard (1993) 4.

² See Owen (1961); MacLeod (2002): 107-08.

their disposition not only the traditional cultural capital that relied on embodied performance, but also a culture of literacy, by which they incorporated both local and foreign knowledge that writers were exploiting in completely new types of literary texts.³ These texts, which were a product of the new archival discourse, transformed older knowledges into data or information that Alexandrian archivists would then shape into new cultural products, whether prose treatises, commentaries, or new literary works. New cultural practices, some performative and others textual, arose to utilize these new works in the full.

These texts also provided new ways for elites to reassemble the past into a new coherent form of culture, one that served the radically diverse and different needs of the Hellenistic imperial subject. Whereas pre-Hellenistic Greeks constructed their Panhellenic identity from their own local civic activities, whether political, judicial, cultural, or religious, and the occasional regional or Panhellenic event, Hellenistic elites supplemented these modes of self-definition by participating in activities emanating from imperial culture centers. In many ways, Alexandrian archival texts mark the end of the old Greek identity, one based primarily on birth and the sense of one's birthplace, and ushered in a new type of identity based in practice and knowledge of things Greek that would eventually allow for the radical reconstitution of Hellenicity into one that was based on *paideia* rather than *ethnos*. Here we see how dazzling displays of erudition reveal a superior knowledge of

³ As I have mentioned above, traditional, highly local means of transmitting knowledge remained intact throughout this period. We still games, gymnasia, religious practices, and dietary practices so commonly identified as Greek persist and even spread throughout the Hellenistic, but we also see how many of these embodied practices or performances were transformed into textual or permanent record. As Taylor (2003) 20 astutely recognizes: "The live performance can never be captured or transmitted through the archive. A video of a performance is not a performance, though it often comes to replace the performance as a *thing* in itself (the video is part of the archive; what it represents is part of the repertoire)." A classic example of this same phenomenon in the Hellenistic world, which Tim Whitmarsh first pointed out (2004) 131, can be seen in Kallimachos' *Hymn to the Bath of Athena*, in which the author mimetically affects the a ritual of or for Argive maidens.

literature and culture that legitimates also the prestige and political superiority of its practitioners. Those who could not achieve this level of erudition were condemned to silence. Within the elite, levels of competition, envy, and rivalry arose around the notion of being “educated.” Social rank and prestige were carried through displays of learnedness and this becomes the moniker and use of culture throughout the rest of Antiquity. Erudition is at the core of subjectivity in this world. Literature is a central part of the broader institutions, symbolically embodied in the Mouseion, that sanction certain utterances as valuable and relevant.

The highly learned poetry of the Alexandrians, for example, which came to dominate the literary production of this period, created and spread a form of poetry that often transformed local lore and knowledge into a form of panhellenic knowledge, in essence transferring local knowledge to the political center. By creating new ways of structuring the information inherited from the past, Alexandrian works, like the *Alexandra*, simultaneously displaced and supplemented traditional modes of performing poetry. These new modes of narration stressed mastery of the type of knowledge configured within new the imperial centers of learning. Alexandrian poetry written from the Mouseion set the bar for what it meant to be educated. It was around this archive and the literature produced there that a new identity formed or coalesced. Here was born the notion of *paideia* as determining identity, and the knowledge of texts and culture as the key to being Greek.

Discursive activities like poetry writing put into circulation certain types of values, traditions, and knowledges bound up with those discourses. Lykophron’s *Alexandra* was one of the poetic works that in mimicking the actions and aspirations of the Mouseion, attempted to compress the entirety of the collection of the Mouseion into the form of one

poem. Much as the Mouseion figuratively pared down the empire into one institution, so Lykophron's work was a shrinking of the Greek past into one narrative. In the *Alexandra*, we have a poem that retells the history of the Greek and barbarian peoples by creating a poetic archive seemingly of all that was told about them. The *Alexandra* not only ends in reconciliation, but it also provides a blue print to what the proper collection of knowledge should be for its new elite members. Like other Alexandrians, Lykophron's poem attempts to define what traditions are for this world and how one should engage with them. By pushing its audiences to explore the obscure minutiae of the archive, the *Alexandra*'s narrative structure plants the idea within its audience that this type of knowledge is what they should covet. Naturally it would have been impossible for the large majority of Hellenistic Greeks to acquire all the knowledge to decipher a work like the *Alexandra*. What, however, is more important is that it establishes an ideal model that each elite member could strive to attain. In this manner, narrative itself compels its audience to turn to those working in those imperial centers for guidance and knowledge, and performing the duties of the new cultural heroes of their age.

The archivist was the person who reordered the past and circulated his own persona and practices in a new set of heroes, the canonical poets of the past, who was the subject of his studies and the persons whom he saw himself as succeeding. Throughout the early Hellenistic period, we see how these poets were elevated and celebrated in temple sites all over the oikoumenê,⁴ as well as being anointed in hero cults across the Greek-speaking world.⁵ We also see archivist-poets celebrated and elevated to leading civic

⁴ For a fuller discussion on visual representations during this period, see Zanker (1996) ch. 4; Clay (2004); Dillon (2006); Schmidt (2007); Stewart (2007).

⁵ See Clay (2004) for the fullest treatment on the matter.

elders, with statues of them in public spaces such as the agora.⁶ Archivist-poets promoted themselves and defined themselves through the genre of literary epigram. They provided a means for even the remotest of elites to feel connected with the imperial centers of the world through the medium of epigram, envisioning themselves as partaking in a virtual symposium.

The new ways of assembling and transmitting knowledge and the political context in which it functioned should not be underestimated. Alexandrian archival culture became a key legacy of this period and provided a set of cultural practices, which persisted throughout the Hellenistic age into the Roman imperial period, that facilitated the growth and development of an elite ruling class. In many ways, they created the historical conditions in which such states could arise. Writing provided the means for an imperial center to wield control over great distances of both time and space, exerting its influence over how one could connect with someone living several hundred miles or centuries apart. This transformation of knowledge arose in conjunction with the major political events of the times through the mediation of the archive. Archiving was the central way in this period for creating, remembering, circulating, and replicating a certain type of knowledge whether to continue a set of beliefs or attempt to legitimize a different group of “memories, histories, and values.”⁷

⁶ The classic example of this is the case of Posidippos who was supposedly honored in the agora in Pella, see *AB 118* or *SH 705*. For a similar case with Philitas, see Hollis (1996).

⁷ Taylor (2003): 21.

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Biography

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