

CLCS4009. READING ANTIQUITY: A SURVEY OF ANCIENT LITERATURE

LECTURE 6 WORKSHOP: EPIC AND THE ORAL TRADITION: HOMER'S *ODYSSEY*

Read carefully through Homer's *Odyssey* Book 8 where Odysseus is entertained by Alcinous and the Phaeacian nobles, considering the questions below, and be prepared to present your thoughts and discuss in class.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1/ What do we learn about Demodocus himself and his audience?
- 2/ Is there evidence to suggest that Demodocus composes his songs orally?
- 3/ To what extent does the repetition characteristic of orally composed poetry occur in *Odyssey* 8?
- 4/ What are the subjects of Demodocus' songs?
- 5/ How does Demodocus' first song recall the *Iliad*?
- 6/ What light does Demodocus' second song throw on the Greek attitude towards their gods?
- 7/ What simile describes Odysseus's reaction to the third song, and how is its subject-matter significant?
- 8/ What do the words and actions of (a) Alcinous, (b) the Phaeacian nobles and (c) Odysseus tell us about the social and moral values of Homeric society?

FURTHER READING: SECONDARY LITERATURE

- de Jong, I. *A Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Feeney, D. C. *The Gods in Epic: Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.
- Foley, J. M. (ed.) *A Companion to Ancient Epic*. Malden Mass and Oxford: Blackwell, 2005
- Graziosi, B. and Haubold, J. *Homer: the Resonance of Epic*. London: Duckworth, 2005
- Haubold, J. *Homer's People: Epic Poetry and Social Formation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000
- Morris, I. and Powell, B. (eds.). *A New Companion to Homer*. Leiden: Brill, 1996.
- Murnaghan, S. *Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.
- Nagy, G. *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979.
- Scodel, R. *Listening to Homer: Tradition, Narrative and Audience*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.