

Steadfast in a Multiform Tradition: *émpe*dos and *asphalés* in Homer and Beyond

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Claudia Filos

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ABSTRACT

Steadfast in a Multiform Tradition: *émpedos* and *asphalḗs* in Homer and Beyond

A thesis presented to the Graduate Program in Ancient Greek and Roman Studies

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
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By Claudia P. Filos

This Homeric word study of *émpedos* and *asphalḗs* offers the first comprehensive investigation of steadfastness in the ancient Greek mytho-poetic system. Prompted by the idea expressed in the name Empedokles, this work attempts to describe the potential relationship between steadfastness and *kléos*, ‘poetic fame’. Using formulaic and contextual analysis to consider every occurrence of *émpedos* in Homer and drawing generously upon supplemental evidence from other authors and traditions, this work seeks to rebuild the social, mythical, and poetic concepts of steadfastness from an internal perspective. We find that the use of *émpedos* and *asphalḗs* reflects traditional Indo-European concepts of stability that are highly appropriate to a system based on multiformity and composition-in-performance. Evidence also shows that these words

are appropriate to metapoetic and metapragmatic discussions of stability. Thus, the name Empedokles offers a highly relevant perspective on the nature of poetic glory, and concepts of steadfastness become crucial to our understanding of this multiform tradition.

The foundation of this study is an understanding of the metaphors associated with these terms and close readings of the contexts in which they occur. This analysis leads to refined definitions. Specifically, this work argues that *émpedos* and *asphalés* denote a steady, continual, and even ritually appropriate state, and that these terms are equally appropriate to describe subjects that are steadfastly fixed in place or steadfastly kinetic. Further, *émpedos* and *asphalés* are explicitly associated with subjects that switch from one steadfast state to another. These findings develop through analysis focused on several topics: the idea of perishable fame, the stability of Zeus' divine authority vs. the instability of human prosperity, the steadfastness of scepter bearers, the value of steadfast strength and intelligence, descriptions of charioteering and homecoming, and the pairing of steadfastness in epic couples such as Odysseus and Penelope. Uniting the esthetics of rigidity and fluidity with the careful balance of incitement and restraint, the study of *émpedos* and *asphalés* reveals a single aesthetic principle stabilizing the

Homeric cosmos, from the progression of individual lines of poetry, to the fixed path
and endless motion of the stars and moon above.

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Ἑλένης μὲν ταύτην ἄπιξιν παρὰ Πρωτέα ἔλεγον οἱ ἱερεὺς γενέσθαι. Δοκέει δέ μοι καὶ Ὅμηρος τὸν λόγον τοῦτον πυθέσθαι: ἀλλ', οὐ γὰρ ὁμοίως ἐς τὴν ἐποποιίην εὐπρεπὴς ἦν, τῷ ἐτέρῳ τῷ περ ἐχρήσατο, [ἐς δ'] μετῆκε αὐτόν.

The priests say that this is the way Helen came to Proteus. And it seems to me that Homer was aware of this version of the story, but since it wasn't as appropriate to the epic poem as the other version that he used, he released it.

Herodotus, *Histories* 2.116.1–6¹

οὐχ ὀράας ὅτι δ' αὖτε κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοὶ
τεῖχος ἐτειχίσσαντο νεῶν ὕπερ, ἀμφὶ δὲ τάφρον
ἤλασαν, οὐδὲ θεοῖσι δόσαν κλειτὰς ἐκατόμβας;
τοῦ δ' ἦτοι κλέος ἔσται ὅσον τ' ἐπικίδναται ἠώς
τοῦ δ' ἐπιλήσονται τὸ ἐγὼ καὶ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων
ἦρω Λαομέδοντι πολίσσαμεν ἀθλήσαντε.

Don't you see that once again the flowing-haired Achaeans
built a wall inland of the ships, and drove around it
a ditch, and in no way gave glorious hecatombs to the gods?
Surely the fame of this will last as long as the dawn is scattered,
and they will forget that wall which I and Phoebus Apollo,
struggling, built for the hero Laomedon.

Iliad 7.448–453

¹ Translations by author, unless noted otherwise. This translation is based in part on the translation of Andrea L. Purvis in Strassler 2007:166–167.

Introduction

Homeric Epic as **émpedon kléos*

The overriding pressure upon the oral poet composing in performance is to express the themes of a song with multiformity appropriate to the occasion. A "variation esthetic" in the context of such composition simultaneously promotes both the preservation of traditional, fixed elements as well as innovative variations in diction and theme.² Assuming that a skilled singer is interacting with an audience steeped in tradition, both innovations and fixed elements are equally appropriate to the moment of performance.

This esthetic of variation is crucial because within a thriving oral tradition an individual performance is definitive and perfectly appropriate to its occasion, yet inevitably unable to express the totality of information associated with any specific song tradition. Meaning is derived from how the poet artistically selects and weaves together multiform constituent elements, and even how one multiform compares to other multiforms in the poetic tradition. The possibilities are immense and both singer

² Muellner 1976:25.

and audience experience multiformity in meaningful ways.

Given this variation esthetic driving preservation and innovation, it is fitting that the Homeric tradition internally promotes and even idealizes what Gregory Nagy has called an “esthetic of rigidity” and an “esthetic of fluidity.”³ Nagy’s analysis shows that Homeric poetry idealizes itself as perfectly rigid, yet simultaneously sees itself as the product of a fluid performance tradition.

The formula *kléos áphthiton* in some sense captures both views of poetry. Scholars have rightfully given attention to this expression of imperishable or unfailing fame, yet the quotations above acknowledge how stories and the glory they convey can be used, rejected, or forgotten. How does glory become and remain imperishable in such a dynamic system? In *Pindar’s Homer*, Nagy observes that *alétheia*, the archaic Greek word for truth, denotes a specialized form of memory, one that utilizes forgetting in order to actively remove stories and themes which are no longer appropriate from the larger mytho-poetic system.⁴ Working from the constituent lexical units *a-* and *lēth-*, Nagy shows that truth can be conceptualized as the sum of all that is not forgotten and that

³ See Nagy 2009a, chapters 1 and 2.

⁴ Nagy 1990a:58–60. See also the section of Lévi-Strauss cited by Nagy. Lévi-Strauss 1979:153–163, in particular pp. 162–163.

it is established and maintained not by actively remembering what is true, but by forgetting what is false.

This view of truth fits with our understanding of the process of composition in performance. For instance, Nagy notes Lévi-Strauss's observation that "the latest performance of myth is in principle an occasion for selecting from and thereby potentially erasing versions available from countless previous performances."⁵

According to this line of thought, the creation of one poetic multiform in performance facilitates the forgetting of multiple others. The process of composition-in-performance allows the oral poet to create "truth" by excluding from his song the themes and formulae which are found to be less appropriate at the moment of storytelling. While this flexibility helps to preserve the poetic system, over time single themes and formulae will be forgotten. Unlike the imperishable fame (*kléos áphthiton*) offered to Achilles in the form of the *Iliad*, some tales of glory will eventually be forgotten and can be conceived of as *perishable*. In such a light, the creation of imperishable fame is entirely dependent upon perishable fame.

The fact that we are still talking about the anger of Achilles and the wanderings of Odysseus certainly suggests that the Homeric poems, from our perspective, can rightfully be labeled imperishable. Yet Parry's revelation that these epics are the

⁵ Nagy 1990a:60.

products of an oral poetic system draws our attention back to a time when the poems were not yet fixed in the form we have inherited.⁶ Given the reality that our *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are the most privileged multiforms among countless others that have, for the most part, faded into oblivion, the idea of perishable *kléos* becomes more relevant. Since Parry and Lord, many scholars have managed to reveal and read what Christos Tsagalis beautifully calls the “oral palimpsest,” and they have found abundant confirmation of other multiforms and traditions still evident to the philologist and specialist.⁷ But it remains to be asked, what does the poetic tradition itself have to say about the issue of perishable fame, and what does this evidence suggest about the traditional function and form of poems such as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*? Further, does this internal view of perishable glory support the idea that the Homeric poems are products of an oral tradition? If answers are to be found in the diction of the poems, we need to find a term that might appropriately describe multiforms that were once appropriate and authoritative but eventually proved less than imperishable.

The name Empedokles⁸, though occurring outside the Homeric tradition, offers valuable and relevant evidence for this discussion by providing another view of poetic

⁶ On the evolutionary model of the Homeric poems, see Nagy 1996.

⁷ Tsagalis 2008.

⁸ As a parallel consider the name Sophokles, which also joins a second declension adjective with *-klēs*.

glory. Derived from the adjective *émpedos*⁹ (usually translated as ‘firm, steadfast, continual’) and the noun *kléos*, this name hints at a traditional association between the term used by Homeric epic to reference itself and the theme of being steadfast. In part, this work attempts to describe the potential relationship between these two themes and to gain some understanding of what might be appropriately labeled **kléos émpedon*.¹⁰

Working from the assumption that diction is the most accurate expression of theme,¹¹ I have approached these questions by pursuing a close reading of the diction of steadfastness in Homer and Hesiod. Specifically, the heart of this work is a Homeric word study of the adjective *émpedos* and its prose counterpart *asphalés*, which is typically glossed as ‘not liable to fall, immovable, steadfast.’¹² Applying the method

⁹ From the prefix ἐν-/ἐμ-, ‘in/on’, and either the root πεδ-, ποδ-, πους, ‘foot’ or πέδον, ‘ground’. Chantraine derives it from πέδον, s.v. πέδον.

¹⁰ The collocation of *émpedos* and *kléos* is not attested in extant versions of Homer. Other attested name forms beginning with ἐμπεδο- include Ἐμπεδονίκα, Ἐμπεδοζένω, Ἐμπεδοκράτη. Although names might pair nontraditional elements, these names suggest that the term ἔμπεδος is appropriate for expressions of praise.

¹¹ Nagy 1979:1.

¹² Liddell-Scott 1996, s.v. ἔμπεδος. To my knowledge, there has not yet been a full-length study of these terms, nor has anyone studied these terms via formulaic analysis. Still, several scholars have considered *émpedos* while exploring other topics. In his forthcoming *Homeric Durability: Telling Time in the Iliad*, Lorenzo F. Garcia discusses the transitory nature of being *émpedos*. I hope to incorporate his analysis in a future edition of my work. Alex Purves also offers a recent scholarly discussion of the word *émpedos* in Homer with a focus on the concepts of time and falling. In particular, see Purves

outlined by Leonard Muellner, I have used formulaic and contextual analysis to work inductively seeking “to rebuild the categories of thought and expression from within the epic world, not to impose them from without”.¹³ This reading is extended through analysis of key passages and themes in related authors and traditions.

My guiding questions in this study are as follows: What do *émpedos* and *asphalés* really mean and what themes do they evoke in context?¹⁴ Is there a relevant collocation of the diction and themes of steadfastness with the diction and themes associated with

2006:191. Froma Zeitlin sees *émpedos* as a desirable and typically masculine human trait. Yet she notes a certain kind of “symmetry” in the relationship of Odysseus and Penelope, where the hero must be *émpedos*, while the heroine must keep everything *émpedos*. See Zeitlin 1996:29-32. In chapter 5, I argue for a different view of the steadfast nature of this couple. Moreover, I see the pairing of steadfastness in such couples as a traditional compositional technique played out on the macro-narrative level. J.-P. Vernant sees the human condition as unstable in contrast to the *émpedos* nature of the immortal realm. For the mortal hero, only grave markers and songs of praise remain steadfast after death. For this reading, see Vernant 1991:39-41.

On *émpedos* as a poetic synonym for *asphalés* see my discussion to follow on the D Scholia (4.314.2, 5.254.1-2, 6.352.1) and the following Homeric passage which describes the immortal horses of Achilles: ἀλλ' ὡς τε στήλη μένει ἔμπεδον, ἢ τ' ἐπὶ τύμβῳ / ἀνέρος ἐστήκη τεθνηότος ἢ ἐ γυναικός, / ὡς μένον ἀσφαλέως περικαλλέα δίφρον ἔχοντες. (*Iliad* 17.434-436).

Further, a review of the use of *émpedos* as attested in the corpus of Greek literature shows that a vast majority of examples come from poetry.

¹³ Muellner 2007.

¹⁴ On the need to rebuild the meaning of Homeric words from scratch in light of the paradigm shift brought about by Parry and Lord and taking into account recent work on Indo-European poetics, see Muellner 2007. I draw special attention to his reading of Nietzsche's description of philology and the inspiration he draws from Emile Benveniste's statement that the study of the Homeric vocabulary is "in its infancy," *dans l'enfance*.

the creation of poetic glory, within epic or beyond the boundaries of that genre? If these themes can be traditionally linked as in the name Empedokles, what does this pairing tell us about the nature of *kléos*? What does all this imply about the powers of the oral poet and the process of composition in performance?

My analysis yields several results. First and foremost, this work posits a more nuanced semantic field for *émpedos*. Contextual evidence reveals that while this term denotes a steady state in relation to space and/or time and can in fact be glossed as ‘steadfast’ or ‘continual’, *émpedos* can also express the idea of an uninterrupted sequence. In certain situations this word can even denote ritually appropriate thoughts and behaviors. Formulaic analysis shows that *émpedos* tends to function in very specific thematic contexts. First, we will see that *émpedos* and *asphalés* are used to describe the instability of human fortune in contrast to the stability of the cosmic order ruled by Zeus. Second, we will explore the use of *émpedos* to describe force and intelligence, as well as the parts of the body associated with these heroic traits. When collocated with *bíē* ‘force, violence’, *émpedos* becomes associated with the stance of warriors remaining firm in battle. With *nóos* ‘intelligence, consciousness’ and related diction, *émpedos* and *asphalés* become associated with a constellation of themes used to describe horses and charioteering—including chariot racing and the crucial concept of *nóstos*. Through

rebukes and wishes, we will see that *émpedos* and *asphalés* offer speakers the opportunity to incite steadfastness in their listeners or recreate their own moments of former glory.

On the narrative level, I argue that steadfastness is a concern in Herodotus, Homer, Hesiod and Apollonius of Rhodes, as evidenced by the fact that *émpedos* and *asphalés* occur time and again at crucial moments. Moreover, these themes can serve as an organizing principle in such works. This becomes evident when looking at the four categories of steadfastness which emerge from this study: 1) subjects that are steady and constant in their motion or action, 2) those that are steadfastly immobile or stable in their state, 3) subjects and actions that are ritually appropriate or uninterrupted in their sequence, and 4) subjects that are involuntarily fixed in place. I argue that the deliberate coupling of these categories, seen in pairings such as Odysseus and Penelope or Jason and Medea, reflects a deeply imbedded tendency to create poetic stability by joining steadfastly static subjects with others that are steadfastly kinetic. In a sense, these different categories of being *émpedos* can be seen as the warp and weft from which the poetic narrative is woven on the level of micro-narrative as well as on an epic scale.

Applying a broader perspective, analysis shows that *émpedos* and the semantically related *asphalḗs* display thematic links to the Indo-European root meaning ‘firm, solid, sound’.¹⁵ As part of this system, they become associated with the traditional Indo-European concepts of kingship, poetic authority, and truth, and via the formula ἔδος ἀσφαλῆς αἰεὶ (‘ever steadfast seat’) these themes sit at the very foundation of cosmic and divine stability.¹⁶ Yet, as will be shown, even here connotations of potential instability are present and built into the cosmic order.

The null category of steadfastness is also relevant to this discussion. In fact, the Homeric presentation of subjects described as *not émpedos* proves crucial to our understanding of heroic success and poetic fame. Specifically, I hope to show that passages describing the destruction of the Achaean wall are thematically linked to the poet’s ability to create (and re-create) steadfast glory.

Finally, metrical analysis detailed in the appendix shows that the theme of being *émpedos* is a traditional one, involved in multiple formulas and formulaic constituents such as *ménon émpedon*.¹⁷ From our external perspective, evidence suggests that *émpedos* might describe the formulas and themes, fixed and flexible, which the oral poet weaves

¹⁵ Benveniste 1971:256–259. Benveniste proposes **der-w-* or **dr-eu* as this root. Cf. **deru-*, **dreu-* and **dher-* in Watkins 2000.

¹⁶ Martin 2001:65–84. In particular, see his discussion of *asphalḗōs* and related themes in the *Audacht Morainn*, pp. 72–73.

¹⁷ All tables are located in the appendix.

together to create his song of praise. Further, I would posit that from our external perspective, **kléos émpedon* is a fitting label for the properly sequenced, occasion-appropriate, and flexibly steadfast multiform created during an oral poet's performance. If so, the name Empedokles offers a view of fame that is steadfastly fixed, constantly advancing in an unswerving, uninterrupted way, and always appropriate in its sequence and timing.

Chapter 1

The Diction of Steadfastness: *émpedos* and *asphalés* in Homer, Hesiod, and Herodotus

1.1 Preliminary Definitions and Built-in Metaphors

ἀλλ' ὡς τε στήλη μένει ἔμπεδον, ἢ τ' ἐπὶ τύμβῳ
ἀνέρος ἐστήκη τεθνηότος ἢ ἔ γυναικός,
ὡς μένον ἀσφαλέως περικαλλέα δίφρον ἔχοντες...

but as a grave marker remains steadfast, which upon a tomb
of a dead man or woman stands,
so they remained steadfastly holding the very beautiful chariot...

Iliad 17.434–436

Let us begin by establishing working definitions for both *émpedos* and *asphalés*. The Homeric passage above reveals a traditional relationship between *émpedon* used adverbially and the adverb *asphaléōs* from the adjective *asphalés*. In particular, the use above suggests that the terms can sometimes function as synonyms. The D scholia provide evidence in support of this idea. Forms of *émpedos* are glossed six times in the scholia and these entries generally offer some form of the following three words as

explanation: *asphalḗs*, *bébaios*, and *hedraîos*.¹⁸ From this it can be inferred that all four words convey the same basic meaning which might be stated as ‘steadfast, secure’.

Valuable information can also be gleaned from the relative distribution of these terms throughout both Homeric epic and the ancient Greek corpus. Forms of *émpedos* occur 58 times in Homer, while forms of *asphalḗs* are much less frequent: only eight instances throughout both epics,¹⁹ three times collocating with *émpedos*.²⁰ Beyond Homer, however, analysis shows that *asphalḗs* is by far the more common term and most frequently occurs in prose. Furthermore, in the scholia, *asphalḗs* is used to gloss *émpedos*, while *asphalḗs* is generally not glossed, and, if so, is glossed with terms other than *émpedos*. To my knowledge, the adjectives *bébaios*, and *hedraîos* never occur in Homeric epic. Taken all together, this evidence suggests that *émpedos* might be understood as a poetic synonym for terms such as *asphalḗs*, *bébaios*, and *hedraîos*.

Yet, other scholia suggest these words are not absolute synonyms. The following passage, which will be discussed in greater detail further on, reveals the built-in metaphors underlying each word and provides insight into the connotations carried by each term.

¹⁸ D scholia at *Iliad* 4.314, 5.254, 6.352.

¹⁹ *Iliad* 13.141, 15.683, 17.436, 23.325; *Odyssey* 6.42, 8.171, 13.86, 17.235. Each passage is discussed during the course of this study.

²⁰ *Iliad* 13.141, 15.683; *Odyssey* 13.86.

ἀσφαλῶς, κυρίως ἐπὶ τῶν μὴ σφαλλομένων, ἐμπέδως δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ ἐρριζωμένων.

“ἀσφαλῶς” properly with reference to not being tripped up/thrown down/overthrown, and “ἐμπέδως” with reference to things having been rooted firmly in the ground.

BQ scholia at *Odyssey* 13.86

The word *émpedos* seems to offer connotations of being rooted in the ground (as indicated by the root ριζ-) and fixed along what we might understand as a horizontal plane, while *asphalés* can carry with it connotations of things not tripped up and secure along a vertical plane.

These connotations are also present in the bT scholia for *Iliad* 12.9–12 which discuss the use of *émpedon*. The context here is that the narrator of the poem has prophesied the future destruction of the Achaean wall by saying it would not remain *émpedon* for long:

τὸ δὲ ἔμπεδον οὐκ ἔστιν ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀσφαλές· ἐπεπόρθητο γὰρ ὑπὸ Σαρπηδόνοιο, Ἑκτοροιο, Ἀπόλλωνοιο· ἀλλ' ἔμπεδον ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ κείμενον· ὕστερον γὰρ ἀλίπλοον ἐγένετο σὺν τοῖς θεμελίοιοις.

émpedon not instead of *asphalés*, for it had been destroyed by Sarpedon, Hector, and Apollo, but instead of τῷ πεδίῳ κείμενον (having been placed on the ground), for later it becomes covered with water along with the foundations.

bT scholia at 12.9–12

To be clear, this passage says that *asphalés* would be an inappropriate term for describing the visible remains of a wall that had failed, while *émpedos* would be appropriate in this context. For the moment, I would delay an in-depth discussion of this passage and of what it means to be not *émpedos*²¹ and simply note the distinction being made between these two terms, and that *émpedon* is being used here to describe something that cannot appropriately be called *asphalés*.

Though the scholia provide a useful starting point, analysis of the contexts in which *émpedos* and *asphalés* appear offers the best evidence for a nuanced understanding of these terms. For convenience, tables have been included (in the appendix) that categorize these examples in a variety of ways. Table 1 outlines all of the objects, characteristics, and activities in Homeric epic that are described as *émpedos* and Table 2 those that are not *émpedos*. Within each table I have further organized the list by grouping similar subjects and actions together. Included are terms said to be *émpedos* through involvement in a simile. For instance, if the epic describes a hero as steadfast like a rock in the ocean, the rock is included in the table.

Although my focus is generally on the use of *émpedos* and *asphalés* in Greek epic, I will also cite examples from other sources, as well as draw attention to passages with

²¹ For a discussion of the Achaean wall and the theme of being not *émpedos*, see Chapter 6.

related diction and themes. Throughout my analysis, passages will be examined to see how the metaphors inherent in *émpeḍos* and *asphalés* emerge to shed light on their use and to see how these metaphors might apply to descriptions of poetic glory. I hope to show that *émpeḍos* and *asphalés* are traditionally appropriate terms for describing both the perishable nature of the human condition and the enduring nature of the poems that offer immortal glory as compensation for our mortality.

1.2 Herodotean Concerns

Taken as a whole, one might say that the poetics of *émpeḍos* holds within its domain all that is fixed and all that is fixed in its movement. Such concepts are not unusual within the Indo-European poetic tradition. For example, two common formulaic descriptions of Indra in the *Rig Veda* describe him as the lord of “all that stands and moves”²² and the god before whom “everything firm is afraid.”²³ For the Indo-European poet, there is a built-in system for describing a totality, whether the sum of human wealth or the entire cosmos, in terms of what moves and what does not. The poetry of *émpeḍos* is, in some sense, built upon this view. Moreover, *émpeḍos* is traditionally used to describe and express concerns about the instability and

²² *Rig Veda* 1.89.5. Quotations from the *Rig Veda* are taken from the translation of Griffith 1920–1926.

²³ *Rig Veda* 1.58.5, 1.166.5. On the contrast between standing firm and fear, see below.

perishability of all human affairs. Such concerns might threaten the very foundation of a mytho-poetic system which values imperishability so highly.

On some level, our whole human experience can be categorized into things that are fixed, things that are not, and things that are fixed in their continual and timely renewal. Such are the sentiments so poignantly expressed in Glaucos' "generation of men" speech (*Iliad* 6.144-149).

The idea that human experience is inherently unstable is also expressed in the prose of Herodotus. His use of *émpedos*, *asphalés*, and related themes suggests that his public demonstration is in part designed to express and help alleviate traditional concerns about the perishable and variable nature of human existence. Thus, through Herodotus we can gain a greater understanding of what is at stake and possible solutions. One key passage describes the last-minute intercession of Cyrus on behalf of Croesus. Although Croesus once considered himself the most fortunate of men, at this point in the micro-narrative, he is about to be burned alive.

. . . Καὶ τὸν Κῦρον ἀκούσαντα τῶν ἑρμηνέων τὰ Κροῖσος εἶπε,
μεταγνόντα τε καὶ ἐννώσαντα ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐὼν ἄλλον
ἄνθρωπον, γενόμενον ἐωυτοῦ εὐδαιμονίῃ οὐκ ἐλάσσω, ζῶντα πυρὶ
διδοίῃ, πρὸς τε τούτοισι δείσαντα τὴν τίσιν καὶ ἐπιλεξάμενον ὡς οὐδὲν
εἶη τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι ἀσφαλέως ἔχον, κελεύειν σβεννύναι τὴν
ταχίστην τὸ καιόμενον πῦρ καὶ καταβιβάζειν Κροῖσόν τε καὶ τοὺς μετὰ
Κροῖσου.

Cyrus, learning from the interpreters what Croesus said, changed his mind and thought about how he, although human, was burning alive another human being who was previously no less fortunate than himself. Further, since he feared retribution for these acts and thought about how not one thing having to do with human beings is secure, he ordered that the kindled fire be put out immediately and Croesus and those with him be brought down.

Histories 1.86.32–39

During this critical moment marked by a conjunction of fire and fear, Cyrus has realized that human fortune is, by its very nature, unstable and variable. In fact, Cyrus' story offers Herodotus a chance to relate the rise and fall of individual fortunes to his own thoughts about the waxing and waning of entire cities.

Ταῦτα μὲν νῦν Πέρσαι τε καὶ Φοίνικες λέγουσι. 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 ἐπεξιῶν. Τὰ γὰρ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλα ἦν, τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν σμικρὰ γέγονε· τὰ δὲ ἐπ' ἐμέο ἦν μεγάλα, πρότερον ἦν σμικρὰ. Τὴν ἀνθρωπήϊην ὧν ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμὰ ἐν τῷ τῷ μένουσαν, ἐπιμνήσομαι ἀμφοτέρων ὁμοίως.

These are the things that the Persians and Phoenicians say. I am not going to say that these things happened one way or another, but I know who was the first to begin unjust acts against the Greeks, and indicating this man I will advance further my *lógos* describing cities great and small alike. For those that previously were great, many of them have become small, while those that are great in my own time were previously small.²⁴

²⁴ Note that *émpedos* can also be used to describe the steadfast nature of a city. Cf. the description of Aea at *Argonautica* 4.277, “Αἰῖά γε μὴν ἔτι νῦν μένει ἔμπεδον.”

Knowing that no aspect of human prosperity remains in place, I will mention both alike.

Herodotus *Histories* 1.5.9–18²⁵

Human prosperity, whether associated with a single man or an entire city, is predictably unstable, and this truth is a significant influence on the composition of the *Histories*. Herodotus points towards this knowledge as a reason for his particular editorial stance and the inclusion of multiformity within his own narrative. As evidenced by the *prooimium*, Herodotus' inquiry is meant to counteract the perishable nature of greatness and associated fame:

Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέος ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλέα γένηται, τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.

This is the public demonstration of the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, so that human events do not become faded in time, nor the great and wondrous accomplishments, some displayed by the Greeks, some by the non-Greeks, be without *kléos*, along with other things, starting with the reason they made war upon one another.

Herodotus *Histories* Prologue

Just as Herodotus is willing to name the man who first started the conflict, he is also willing to personally and publicly declare that Athens saved Greece (7.139.20-21).

Herodotus is compelled to pause his narrative and make this statement just before the

²⁵ For discussion of this passage, see Nagy 1990a:240–241.

battles of Thermopylae and Salamis, a pivotal moment in the history of the West. The Athenians seem to be facing sure defeat, but instead of hiding behind the city walls, they rest their fate in the fleet. Taking to their ships they evacuate the city, leaving it to be burned. As we are about to see, the decisive moment for Athens is marked, like Cyrus' epiphany, by fear, fire and the diction of steadfastness.

Herodotus begins this section of the narrative by saying that he is compelled to give a judgment which is liable to cause envy or hatred (ἐπίφθονον [7.139.2]), but appears to him to be true (ἀληθές [7.139.2]). He explains that if Athens had stayed and not resisted, or resisted but abandoned their land permanently, no one would have been able to oppose the Persians at sea or on land (7.139.3–20). After stating this opinion, he once again stresses the truth of his judgment saying: Νῦν δὲ Ἀθηναίουσ ἄν τις λέγων σωτήρας γενέσθαι τῆσ Ἑλλάδοσ οὐκ ἄν ἀμαρτάνοι τᾶληθέοσ, “Someone saying now that the Athenians were the saviors of Greece would not miss the mark of truth.” (7.139.20–21). Herodotus then sums up the source of Athenian greatness: their decision and ability to remain steadfast.

Οὐδέ σφεασ χρηστήρια φοβερὰ ἐλθόντα ἐκ Δελφῶν καὶ ἐσ δεῖμα βαλόντα ἔπεισε ἐκλιπεῖν τὴν Ἑλλάδα, ἀλλὰ καταμείναντες ἀνέσχοιτο τὸν ἐπιόντα ἐπὶ τὴν χώραν δέξασθαι.

Not even the fearful oracular responses that came from Delphi persuaded them to leave Hellas, but remaining fixed they endured to await the attack of the invader upon their land.

Herodotus *Histories* 7.139.27–29

In fact, these authoritative statements lead almost directly into the frightening oracles and the debate about what they might mean. For the purposes of our discussion here, we will limit our attention to the first. Surprisingly, given what Herodotus has just told us about *how* Athens saved Greece, the oracle explicitly tells the Athenians *not* to remain steadfast.

5 ἽΩ μέλαιοι, τί κάθησθε; Λιπῶν φύγ' ἐς ἔσχατα γαίης
δῶματα καὶ πόλιος τροχοειδέος ἄκρα κάρηνα.
Οὔτε γὰρ ἡ κεφαλὴ μένει ἔμπεδον οὔτε τὸ σῶμα,
οὔτε πόδες νέατοι οὔτ' ὧν χέρεις, οὔτε τι μέσσης
λείπεται, ἀλλ' ἄζηλα πέλει· κατὰ γὰρ μιν ἐρείπει
10 πῦρ τε καὶ ὄξυς ἼΑρης, συριηγενὲς ἄρμα διώκων.
Πολλὰ δὲ κάλλ' ἀπολεῖ πυργώματα, κού τὸ σὸν οἶον·
πολλοὺς δ' ἀθανάτων νηοὺς μαλερῶ πυρὶ δώσει,
οἳ που νῦν ἰδρῶτι ρεούμενοι ἐστήκασι,
δείματι παλλόμενοι, κατὰ δ' ἀκροτάτοις ὀρόφοισιν
15 αἷμα μέλαν κέχυται, προῖδὸν κακότητος ἀνάγκας.
Ἄλλ' ἴτον ἐξ ἀδύτοιο, κακοῖς δ' ἐπικίδνατε θυμόν.

5 Wretched men, why sit idle? Flee to the farthest reaches of the Earth
leaving
your homes and the high peaks of your circular city.
For neither does the head remain steadfast, nor the body,
nor the lowest feet, nor the hands, nor does the middle
remain, but they are unenviable. For fire and sharp Ares,
10 driving his Syrian chariot are casting it down.

He will destroy many other fortified cities, not only yours.
And many temples of the immortal gods he will give to raging fire,
temples which now stand dripping with sweat
and quaking with fear, and from the rooftops
15 dark blood flows, foreseeing the necessity of misery.
Now go from the sanctuary and cover your thūmós [‘heart, spirit’] with
these evils.

Herodotus *Histories* 7.140.5-16

This oracular response includes the *only* occurrence of *émpedos* in all of Herodotus, along with many themes and words which will quickly become familiar and useful markers in our discussion. I would draw the reader’s attention to the following details in this passage. In essence, the oracle offers a poetic rebuke and warning. This rebuke delivered in dactylic hexameter features the phrase μένει ἔμπεδον ‘remains steadfast’ with *émpedon* in the fourth foot (7.140.7). This phrase is used in a metaphorical context, describing parts of the body. The metaphor focuses, in part, on hands and feet, both of which are associated with *bíē* ‘force’ (7.140.7–8). The oracle offers a terrifying vision featuring fire and the war god Ares as a charioteer (7.140.10–11). This vision of Ares is so horrible, it draws gore and trembling from the buildings (7.140.14–15). The oracle closes by telling the listeners to cover their *thūmós* (7.140.16), part of the mental and emotional faculties, which, along with *ménos*, resides in the *phrénes*, somewhere around

the diaphragm.²⁶

Overall this oracle calls for terror, flight and total despair. Yet after receiving this rebuke prophesying that they won't be *émpedos*, the Athenians manage to do the exact opposite. They find a way to remain steadfast — not by staying at Athens, or by leaving and going elsewhere permanently. Instead the Athenians become the “saviors” σωτήρας of Greece by leaving home, standing firm against the enemy on the sea, and then returning home in a steadfast way. As will become evident over the course of this work, Herodotus is using themes and language which are highly traditional and evocative of Homeric themes and diction. In fact, I would go so far as to say that these Herodotean concerns are *Homeric concerns*. Therefore, with this oracle in mind, let us turn back to Homer.

1.3 Homeric Metaphor: Laying an *émpedos* Foundation

The oracle's poetic metaphor about not being *émpedos* in the context of Herodotus' praise for Athenian resolve points towards the use of poetry to create steadfastness and confer glory. Yet how is it possible to create something as permanent and stable as *kléos áphthiton* from this perishable and transient human existence? In nature the answer is the combination of death and birth. Like the leaves, we human beings are fixed in our

²⁶ For the relationship between *ménos*, *thūmós*, and *phrénes*, see Nagy 1990b:87–93.

individual ethereality yet persist in our uninterrupted, sequential re-creation and renewal as a group. Thus, the brilliant yet ephemeral leaves simultaneously highlight the problem and point to its solution. Similarly, *émpedos* and *asphalés* serve double functions simultaneously expressing and mitigating the instability of human affairs.

Compare, for instance, the use of the line-terminal phrase *émpedon aiei* in Theognis:

Πολλοί τοι πλουτοῦσι κακοί, ἀγαθοὶ δὲ πένονται,
ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς τούτοις' οὐ διαμειψόμεθα
τῆς ἀρετῆς τὸν πλοῦτον, ἐπεὶ τὸ μὲν ἔμπεδον αἰεὶ,
χρήματα δ' ἀνθρώπων ἄλλοτε ἄλλος ἔχει.'

Many bad men are wealthy and many good poor,
but we will not exchange with these
wealth for excellence, since it [excellence] is always steadfast
while possessions, some men hold at one time, others at another.

315–318

These lines provide an explicit contrast between the steadfast nature of *areté* 'excellence' and the variability of possessions. The Homeric tradition offers its own solutions for the instability of human affairs through its poetic techniques, themes and diction. One particularly effective technique is the Homeric simile. In his study of Homeric metaphor, Leonard Muellner describes the power of Homeric similes to portray ephemeral events in an imperishable way.

To use metaphoric terms appropriate to the epic itself, one can say that the conventional relation between tenor and vehicle in epic is like that between the generation of men and the generation of leaves: individual men die, but trees never cease losing their leaves in season. Yet on another level, while the events in the epic are, for the heroes, one-time, unrepeatable events that lead to inevitable death, for us, they are κλέος ἄφθιτον, because, like an event in a simile, they are performed again and again.²⁷

Such a reading marks metaphors as crucial to a discussion of the poetry of steadfastness.

Along with the metaphors intrinsic to *émpedos* and *asphalés*, two other similes lay the foundation of this work and, fittingly, both employ rocks as the vehicle; one depicts a stone steadfastly fixed in place; another depicts a stone steadfastly in motion. The first example comes from book 15 of the *Iliad*. In this passage, Hector and the Trojans are compared to powerful waves and wind, while the Greeks are equated to a rock wall that withstands the ocean's wrath.

ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς δύνατο ῥῆξαι μάλα περ μενεαίνων·
ἴσχον γὰρ πυργηδὸν ἀρηρότες, ἠΰτε πέτρη
ἠλίβατος μεγάλη, πολιῆς ἀλὸς ἐγγύς ἐοῦσα,
ἢ τε μένει λιγέων ἀνέμων λαιψηρὰ κέλευθα
κύματά τε τροφόντα, τὰ τε προσερεύγεται αὐτήν·
ὥς Δαναοὶ Τρῶας μένον ἔμπεδον οὐδὲ φέβοντο.

But he [Hector] could not break through them, although greatly desiring it,

²⁷ Muellner 1990:96.

for joined together like a tower²⁸ they were restraining him, as a great steep cliff near the gray sea that withstands both the swift paths of the clear-voiced winds and swelling waves that break against it. So the Danaans remained steadfast against the Trojans, nor were they fleeing.

Iliad 15.617–622

There are several points to be made regarding the themes and diction of these lines.

First, the scholia for line 618 gloss the word *purgēdón* with the words *asphalôs* and *puknôs*, thereby equating *ménon émpedon* “firmly remaining” with these two terms.

Second, it should be noted that the Greeks remain steadfast by arranging themselves into a sort of human wall and that this action is described by the word ἀρηρότες, built from the root *ar-. This root means ‘fit, join’ and appears in words traditionally used to express the work of carpenters and poets.²⁹ The word *puknôs* is the adverbial form of *puknós*, an adjective used to describe subjects that are dense and overlapping either in physical terms or in frequency. Like *émpedos*, it can appropriately describe a range of subjects including the construction of a stone wall and *phrénes*. It can even describe a special kind of speech, as attested by the phrase *pukinòn épos*, which becomes

²⁸ Thanks to Leonard Muellner for emphasizing the metaphoric use of the word *purgēdón* here and for drawing my attention to the transition between vertical and horizontal space.

²⁹ On this association between the root *ar-, the work of the carpenter, and the activity of the poet, see Nagy 1979:297–300.

“unassailable” in the mind of the listener.³⁰ We might also note that the Vedic tradition reveals an association between carpenters and firmness. For instance the *White Yajur Veda* includes evidence that those seeking firmness would metaphorically sacrifice a carpenter.³¹ Taken together, this evidence shows that the phrase *ménon émpedon* can denote a condition in which a group of men are joined together in a manner similar to the way a carpenter or poet fits together his work. In each case the result is conceived as being physically dense and potentially enduring in both space and time. Furthermore, we can see that this act of standing firm is traditionally contrasted with fear and running away.

So lines 617–622 offer a powerful image, but *the very next line* marks a change in momentum and triggers a new simile. This passage reveals another aspect of *émpedos* that only becomes clear when viewed in context: being *émpedos* is often a temporary state maintained through proper mental focus.

αὐτὰρ ὁ λαμπόμενος πυρὶ πάντοθεν ἔνθορ' ὀμίλῳ,
 ἐν δ' ἔπεσ' ὡς ὅτε κύμα θοῆ ἐν νηϊ πέσῃσι
 λάβρον ὑπαὶ νεφέων ἀνεμοτρεφές· ἡ δέ τε πᾶσα
 ἄχνη ὑπεκρύφθη, ἀνέμοιο δὲ δεινὸς ἀήτη
 ἰστίῳ ἐμβρέμεται, τρομέουσι δέ τε φρένα ναῦται
δειδιότες τυτθὸν γὰρ ὑπέκ θανάτοιο φέρονται·
 ὡς ἐδαΐζετο θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσιν Ἀχαιῶν.

³⁰ For this description of *puknós* and *pukinòn épos*, see Martin 1989:35–37.

³¹ See the *White Yajur Veda* 30.6.

But he [Hector] shining with fire from all sides leapt into the throng,
and he fell down upon them as a wave falls down upon a swift ship,
furiously, a wind-fed wave from under the clouds, the ship is
entirely hidden beneath the foam, and a fearful gale
roars in the sail, and the sailors tremble,
their minds in a panic, for they are being carried only a little bit out from
under death,
Just so the spirit in the breast of the Achaeans was being torn apart.

Iliad 15.623–629

Despite their original success, the Achaeans can only stand firm against Hector until their minds and spirits are overcome with fear. Like the oracle given to the Athenians, these similes explicitly contrast shaken minds and flight (*phébonto* 15.622) with remaining steadfast (*ménon émpedon* 15.622). In fact, this passage features many words and themes that appeared in the oracle, including fire, fear, shaking, as well as a reference to the *thūmós* of those affected. The Greeks are compared to sailors whose minds (*φρένα*, 15.627) are overcome because they are afraid (*δειδιότες* 15.628) and shaking (*τρομέουσι* 15.627). This contrast makes perfect sense when we consider that *phobéomai* is from the root **bhegh-* meaning ‘run’.³² This contrast can also be seen in the Vedic tradition through the formulaic descriptions of Indra. In the *Rig Veda* he is twice called the god before whom “everything firm is afraid.”³³ Thus, overcome by fear, the

³² Nagy 2010b:29–34

³³ *Rig Veda* 1.58.5, 1.166.5.

steep cliff of the Greeks proves temporary. It is transformed and metaphorically falls, hidden and trembling, under the waves in the form of a ship just two lines later.

Perhaps the best example of the temporary aspect of *émpedos* is the simile comparing Hector to a rampaging boulder. At this point in the narrative the Greeks have been roused by Poseidon’s speech. In response to his words, they form into a human wall bracing “shield against shield, helmet on helmet” (*Iliad* 13.130–131). Hector leading the attack is compared to a boulder flying down a hill.

... ἦρχε δ' ἄρ' Ἐκτωρ
ἀντικρὺ μεμαώς, ὀλοοίτροχος ὡς ἀπὸ πέτρης,
ὄν τε κατὰ στεφάνης ποταμὸς χειμάρροος ὥση
ρήξας ἀσπέτω ὄμβρω ἀναιδέος ἔχματα πέτρης·
ὔψι δ' ἀναθρόσκων πέτεται, κτυπέει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ
ὔλη· ὁ δ' ἀσφαλέως θέει ἔμπεδον, ἦος ἴκηται
ἰσόπεδον, τότε δ' οὔ τι κυλίνδεται ἐσσύμενός περ·
ὡς Ἐκτωρ ἦος μὲν ἀπείλει μέχρι θαλάσσης
ῥέα διελεύσεσθαι κλισίας καὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν
κτείνων·

... and Hector led them
furiously straight on, as a large boulder from a rocky peak
that a river swollen with winter rain forces from the edge
breaking the supports of the shameless rock by its ceaseless flow;
leaping on high it flies on, and the forest resounds beneath it;
the stone securely runs steadfast till it reaches
the flat land, but then in no way rolls though eager;
so Hector threatened just short of the sea
to pass easily through the huts and ships of the Achaeans killing.

Iliad 13.136–145

Like all Homeric metaphors this passage, which equates Hector with the stalled boulder, is packed with meaning. On one level these lines reflect Hector's larger fate within the *Iliad*; like the boulder rolling down the hill only to run out of energy before it reaches the ocean, Hector will run steadfastly (θέει ἔμπεδον) but stop before reaching his goal of destroying the ships and saving Troy. In fact Achilles is described by Pindar in just such terms as ὃς Ἑκτορα σφᾶλε, "the one who tripped up Hector" (*Olympian Ode* 2.81).

On another level, this simile is a description of the transition between being steadfastly kinetic and steadfastly fixed. The boulder is originally in a position of high potential energy up on the cliff. The force of the river sends it loose, releasing that pent up kinetic energy so that the stone securely and without faltering rolls until it reaches the level ground (ἀσφαλέως θέει ἔμπεδον, ὄφρ' ἄν ἵκηται/ἰσόπεδον). At first the stone is kinetically *émpeidos*. Once it has stopped on the level ground, I would argue that it is once again *émpeidos*, though the poem does not label it as such. As we have seen, being steadfastly placed in or on the ground is one way the authors of the scholia understood the basic meaning of *émpeidos*. Thus, this simile highlights the important fact that *émpeidos* denotes not just motion or rigidity, but a steady, almost inertial state.

On yet another level these lines show the boulder gaining a new function as it

transitions from a steadfastly kinetic state (θέει ἔμπεδον) to a steadfastly fixed state. Just as boulders left behind by a receding glacier can become an awe-inspiring signpost for the power that once moved them, so, in its new fixed location on the level ground, the rock becomes a visible reminder and sign of the power of the once flooding river. I draw attention to these three levels of meaning because the themes and actions here will be echoed in other passages and metaphors during the course of this study.³⁴

Returning our attention to the phrase *théei émpedon*, we see that these words help to create an association with a complementary simile involving Hector. The passage in question describes Achilles overtaking Hector outside the walls of Troy and contains the only other Iliadic occurrence of the three-word phrase θέει ἔμπεδον ὄφρα (“runs steadfastly until”):

Ἕκτορα δ' ἀσπερχές κλονέων ἔφεπ' ὠκύς Ἀχιλλεύς.
ὡς δ' ὅτε νεβρὸν ὄρεσφι κύων ἐλάφοιο δίηται,
ὄρσας ἐξ εὐνῆς διά τ' ἄγκεα καὶ διὰ βήσας·
τὸν δ' εἴ πέρ τε λάθησι καταπτήξας ὑπὸ θάμνω,
ἀλλὰ τ' ἀνιχνεύων θέει ἔμπεδον, ὄφρα κεν εὔρη·
ὡς Ἕκτωρ οὐ λῆθε ποδώκεα Πηλεΐωνα.

But swift Achilles unceasingly harassed and drove Hector.
As a dog in the mountain puts to flight the fawn of a deer
stirring it from its bed through the hollows and glens,
and although the fawn is unseen cowering beneath a bush,
the dog tracks it and runs steadfastly until he finds it.

³⁴ In particular, see section 4.2.

Just so, Hector was not escaping the notice of swift-footed Achilles.

Iliad 22.188–193

The occurrence of λάθησι ‘is unseen’ and οὐ λῆθε ‘not escaping notice’ shows that mental focus can be crucial to remaining steadfastly in motion and on the proper track, just as it was crucial for remaining steadfastly and defensively fixed in battle.

Moreover, this passage echoes the previous example of *théei émpedon* at 13.141 and, in doing so, shows a transition of the diction of steadfastness from Hector to Achilles. Yet it is notable that in both similes Hector is equated with the object set in motion which eventually falters. Here it is the fawn; previously it was the boulder. I would argue that these similes, in a sense, create a relationship between Hector as the fixed stone on the ground and Hector as the doomed fawn cowering beneath a bush. On a metaphoric level the fixed stone becomes an unmistakable and immovable **émpedon sêma* (gravestone) for Hector and an eternal and sure **émpedon sêma* (sign) of Achilles’ superior glory. The phrase *théei émpedon* will reappear in the *Odyssey* at a crucial moment to be discussed later, and that moment will once again feature the importance of mental focus.

With this foundation of knowledge about the diction and metaphors of

steadfastness, it is necessary to turn to a more systematic analysis of the formulas and contexts in which *émpedos* and *asphalés* occur.

Chapter 2

Steadfast Thrones and Scepters

Ἥ μὲν ἄρ' ὡς εἰποῦσ' ἀπέβη γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη
Οὐλύμπόνδ', ὅθι φασὶ θεῶν ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ
ἔμμεναι·

Speaking thus beaming-eyed Athena went
toward Olympus, where they say the ever secure seat of the gods
is

Odyssey 6.41–43

2.1 *Émpedos*, *Asphalés*, and the Steadfastness of Scepter-bearers

This section explores the use of *émpedos* and *asphalés* to describe the foundation of authority on both cosmic and human levels. In the epic world, one of the primary symbols of authority, truth, stability, and kingship was the scepter. These associations are made explicit in passages such as the dying words of Cyrus as presented by Xenophon.

οἶσθα μὲν οὖν καὶ σύ, ὦ Καμβύση, ὅτι οὐ τόδε τὸ χρυσοῦν σκῆπτρον τὸ
τὴν βασιλείαν διασῶζόν ἐστιν, ἀλλ' οἱ πιστοὶ φίλοι σκῆπτρον βασιλεῦσι
ἀληθέστατον καὶ ἀσφαλέστατον.

And so, Cambyses, you must also know that this golden scepter does not
maintain your kingdom, but trustworthy philoi are the truest and most
secure scepter for kings.

Cyropaedia 8.7.13.1–4

Evidence shows that the ancient Greek poetic tradition also associates scepter- and staff-bearing characters (poets, gods, kings, seers and heralds) with the diction of steadfastness. In examining the use of *émpedos* and *asphalés* with these authoritative figures, we will see that poetry—and theogonies in particular—are a means of making the cosmic and social order stable. This stability is maintained by a system of reciprocal exchange among gods, poets, and kings. Furthermore, the explicit association of steadfastness with the three “masters of truth” (i.e., poets, heralds, and seers)³⁵ suggests that steadfastness was associated with these functions before they were differentiated into separate professions. Finally, over the course of this section, we will see that *émpedos* can be used to designate uninterrupted, properly timed, and ritually appropriate events and actions.

³⁵ On poets, seers, and kings as the “masters of truth,” see Detienne 1999.

2.2 The Formula *hédos asphalès aieí*

As we have seen, the word *émpedos* can be used to point out that nothing in regard to human beings is steadfast forever. This subsection seeks a greater understanding of the traditional use of the formula *hédos asphalès aieí* in light of the reading and syntactic analysis of the *Theogony* offered by Leonard Muellner.³⁶ I hope to show that *asphalés* is used to describe the foundation of Zeus' authority, and via the formula *hédos asphalès aieí* these themes sit at the very foundation of cosmic and divine stability.³⁷ The basis for this argument comes from contextual analysis of the formula *hédos asphalès aieí*³⁸ which is attested twice in the Hesiodic *Theogony* and once in the *Odyssey*. A close variant of the formula also appears once in Pindar. It is my contention that in all four cases the phrase helps to define the basis of divine stability and authority and that this stability is traditionally expressed by the word *asphalés*.

The only Homeric occurrence of the formula *hédos asphalès aieí* is from the passage cited above and involves a reference to an unstated authority. I believe this passage shows either the Homeric tradition referring to the Hesiodic tradition or to an earlier

³⁶ Muellner 1996, particularly Chapter 3, "The Narrative Sequence of the Hesiodic *Theogony*."

³⁷ Forms of *asphalés* occur three times in the Hesiodic corpus. All three occurrences are from the *Theogony*.

³⁸ The *Rig Veda* offers a parallel phrase in Sanskrit, "*váruṇasya dhruvám sádah,*" at 8.41.9d. Griffith (1826:428) notes the parallel.

formula shared by both traditions. To understand this reference, we must turn back to a mythical beginning of beginnings—the start of the Hesiodic cosmogony extant in our

Theogony:

Ἦτοι μὲν πρῶτιστα Χάος γένετ'· αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
Γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος, πάντων ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ
ἀθανάτων οἳ ἔχουσι κάρη νιφόεντος Ὀλύμπου,

First of all there was Chaos, but then
there was broad-bosomed Gaia, the ever-steadfast seat of all
the gods who inhabit the peak of snowy Olympus.³⁹

Hesiod *Theogony* 116–118

There are several relevant points to be made about this diction. First, the line terminal phrase *asphalès aiei* (with *asphalés* in the fifth foot) collocates with *émpedon* in the phrase *émpedon asphalès aiei* seen at *Iliad* 15.683. It also partially matches the description of Odysseus on the island of Calypso: *ménon émpedon heímata d' aiei* (with *émpedon* in the fourth foot).⁴⁰ The parallels between these lines suggest that the line terminal phrases *asphalès aiei* and *émpedon + ~ + aiei* are formulaic.

Moreover, it must be acknowledged that the placement of *asphalés* in the Hesiodic

³⁹ Lines 117–118 are omitted when this passage appears in Plato's *Symposium*. By truncating the enjambed genitive “of immortals” this variant labels Gaia not just the steadfast foundation of the gods, but of all gods and men:

αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα / Γαῖ' εὐρύστερνος, πάντων ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ, / ἦδ' Ἔρος . . . Plato *Symposium* Stephanus 178b5–7

⁴⁰ ἔνθα μὲν ἐπτάετες μένον ἔμπεδον, εἴματα δ' αἰεὶ (*Odyssey* 7.259).

line once again raises the possibility that *émpedos* is not an exact poetic synonym, as *émpedon* could metrically replace *asphalés* in the fifth foot.⁴¹ What are we to make of this? I see two likely choices: first, that this “sporadic instance” of nonobservance of thrift reflects the fact that *asphalés*, in this context, functions as a distinctive modifier,⁴² or second, that the phrase *émpedon aiei* is not absolutely equivalent with *asphalès aiei*. In this case, I believe that *asphalés* is used because of the connotations it offers and due to a relationship with inherited Indo-European themes and diction. By implying that the home of the immortals is “not liable to fall” and secure along a vertical axis, *asphalés* points out the distinctions between mortals and immortals in terms of status, stability, and continuity.

Several comments can be made about these passages on a thematic level. In his analysis of the *Theogony*, Muellner notes, “From a syntactic standpoint, mythical thought is above all teleological. The narrative is intended to justify the situation that obtains at its conclusion.”⁴³ The passage quoted above with the formula *hédos asphalès aiei* is a superlative example of this principle. Muellner also notes the following:

⁴¹ On the localization of *émpedos* in the fourth foot, see appendix, Table 5.

⁴² On the “trend toward thrift” as well as a brief discussion of distinctive vs. generic epithets, see Nagy 1990b:22–24.

⁴³ Muellner 1996:54.

[The *Theogony*] . . . has as its goal the creation of the world and the establishment of the kingship of Zeus over gods and men; in turn, it actually represents an emergent, not a permanent or rigid, solution to a set of problems that do not thereby disappear forever.⁴⁴

The first lines of the cosmogony express this teleological perspective by immediately pointing forward to a challenged but secure Olympian order, one which does not yet exist in the mythical time of the narrative.⁴⁵

In addition to pointing forward to the goal of Zeus' kingship, these first lines also reflect upon the creative accomplishments of the poet in successfully reaching this point in the poem. Muellner argues that the *Theogony*, which is a *prooímion*, struggles with its own *prooímion*, stumbling and having to restart multiple times before successfully proceeding with the cosmogonic myth above. He sees this stumbling as betraying "a concern about its starting point."⁴⁶ This idea can be formulated in the poem's own terms. By composing these lines and successfully beginning the cosmogony, the poet has accomplished something like the first acts of creation; he has brought forth an ever-steadfast seat of security and authority—a *hédos asphalès aiei*—for the poem, the authority of Zeus, and the cosmos.

So within both the mythical narrative world and the world of performance, this

⁴⁴ Muellner 1996:55.

⁴⁵ For a discussion of the importance of this early order, see Muellner 1996:57.

⁴⁶ Muellner 1996:56.

hédos asphalès aiei is dependent upon the authority and skill of the poet. Yet there is a loop in the logic supporting this foundation. The poet is *himself* sustained and authorized by gifts from the divine Muses: his scepter and his divine voice, both granted specifically so that he might chant the *Theogony* (30–34). In fact, the inner poet of the narrative must receive the divine inspiration and scepter of the Muses before a successful cosmogony can be attempted.

As we will see, both the scepter and the gift of divinely inspired speech are related to the theme of being steadfast as expressed by the words *asphalés* and *émpedos*. The following passage from a hymn to Selene shows that the scepter can be described in just such terms.

. . . καὶ χρύ-
σειον σκῆπτρον ἑαῖς κατέχεις πα-
λάμαισιν. γράμματα σῶ σκῆπτρῳ
α[ύ]τὸ[ς] Κρόνος ἀμφεχάραξεν, δῶ-
κε δέ σοι φορέειν, ὄφρ' ἔμπεδα πάν-
τα μένοιεν.

and you hold fast in the palm of your hand a golden scepter.
Kronos himself scratched the markings on your scepter⁴⁷
and gave it to you to bear, in order that everything might remain
steadfast.

⁴⁷ It is not clear what these γράμματα might be, but it is interesting, given the internal context of binding, that the use of potent markings and writing is consistent with the physical evidence associated with curse tablets and binding spells. For more information on binding spells see Gager 1992.

I would also highlight the fact that this passage describes the passing of a scepter from one divinity to another. Specifically, it shows the passing of steadfastness from an overthrown figure of authority to a steadfast source of authority. Richard Martin has noted the reciprocal relationship among gods, kings, and poets, and that the passing of the scepter or rod (between the Muses and Hesiod, as well as between an Irish king and his poet) is one symbol of this relationship.⁴⁹ Together these passages reveal that the ability to remain steadfast is a crucial part of the exchange. As the scepter moves from gods to poets to kings, the authority and power of being steadfast follows with it.

Another sign of the Muses' authorization is divinely inspired speech which, like the scepter, is described with terms related to *asphalēs* and *émpedos*. In the *Theogony*, when the Muses mark the authority of mortal kings, their support is made apparent by the way the king speaks without stumbling: ὁ δ' ἀσφαλέως ἀγορεύων (*Theogony*, 86). Martin notes the abundance brought about by a king who speaks *asphaléōs* and points to this passage as highlighting an Indo-European concern with “steadiness in the context of

⁴⁸ My thanks to Graeme Bird for a lively discussion of this passage and its translation. Any errors are my own.

⁴⁹ Martin 2001:65–84.

kingship.”⁵⁰

This steadiness seems to be a crucial aspect of the exchange between poet, priest, and king as evidenced by hymn 10.173 from the *Rig Veda*. The hymn in question is part of the ritual consecration of the king and offers evidence of the collocation of the themes of kingship and stability within a related Indo-European poetic tradition:

1a. ā tvāhārṣam antár edhi	dhruvās tiṣṭhāvicācaliḥ
1c. víśas tvā sáravā vāñchantu	mā tvád rāṣṭrám ádhi bhraśat
2a. ihaívaídhi mápa cyoṣṭhāḥ	párvata 'vāvicācaliḥ
2c. índra 'vehá dhruvās tiṣṭha	ihá rāṣṭrám u dhāraya
3a. imám índro adīdharad	dhruvám dhruvéṇa havíṣā
3c. tásmāi sómo ádhi bravat	tásmā u bráhmaṇas pátiḥ
4a. dhruvā dyaúr dhruvā pṛthiví	dhruvásaḥ párvatā imé
4c. dhruvám víśvam idám jágad	dhruvó rájā víśám ayám
5a. dhruvám te rájā váruṇo	dhruvám devó bṛhaspátiḥ
5c. dhruvám ta índraś cāgnís ca	rāṣṭrám dhārayatām dhruvám
6a. dhruvám dhruvéṇa havíṣā	abhí sómam mṛśāmasi
6c. átho ta índraḥ kévalír	víso balihṛtas karat

1. I have brought you here; remain among us. Stay steadfast and unwavering. Let all the people want you, and let the kingship never fall away from you.
2. Stay right here—do not slip away, but stay unwavering, like a mountain. Stand steadfast here, like Indra, and here uphold the kingdom.
3. Indra has supported him firmly with a firm oblation. Let Soma—and Brahmaṇaspati also—speak up for him.

⁵⁰ See Martin 2001. In particular, see the author’s discussion of *asphalēōs* and related themes in the *Audacht Morainn*, pp. 71–73. He notes parallels to this language at *Rig Veda* 10.173.4 and *Audacht Morainn* Sec. 55. I would in turn highlight the recurring themes of firmness and stability in the same passage of the *Audacht Morainn*.

4. Firm is the sky and firm the earth, and firm are these mountains. Firm is all this world, and firm is the king of all the people.
5. Steadfast let King Varuṇa, steadfast the god Bṛhaspati, steadfast let Indra and Agni maintain your steadfast kingship.
6. With a firm oblation we touch the firm Soma. Thus let Indra make all the people who bring tribute yours alone.

Rig Veda 10.173⁵¹

This hymn makes explicit a relationship of reciprocal firmness and stability among gods, poet, and king. Moreover, the repeated use of the word *dhruvám* makes clear the importance of the diction of steadfastness in bringing about the desired stability. My sense is that forms of *asphalḗs* and *émpedos* can serve as semantic reflexes of this traditional diction within the ancient Greek poetic tradition.

Returning to the Hesiodic tradition and its description of kings with divine authorization, I would note that the *Odyssey* uses the word *émpedos* to express the abundance attained through the rule of Muse-authorized kings. Included in a description of total prosperity and abundance involving plants, animals, and humans (*Odyssey* 19.109–114), the poem highlights the birth of animals:

τίκτη δ' ἔμπεδα μῆλα...

the sheep give birth steadfastly...

⁵¹ Translation by Doniger 1981:64. Doniger also notes that these verses appear in the *Atharva Veda* as protection against earthquakes. On the connection between Poseidon, earthquakes, and the word *asphalḗs*, see below.

I draw special attention to this line because it provides additional insight into the meaning of *émpedos*. By using *émpedos* to describe the birth of animals—a process which is sequential and seasonal—the poetic tradition may be signaling not just prosperity, but prosperity through appropriately timed and uninterrupted sequence. This is relevant to our discussion of the *Theogony* since, as Muellner has shown, the theme of interrupted vs. uninterrupted births and generations is one of the primary narrative concerns of Hesiod’s cosmogony.⁵² And as already discussed, issues of interrupted sequence are evident in the structure of the *prooimion*. However, after the Muses breathe inspiration into him, the poet within the *Theogony* ends the verbal stumbling apparent in the starting and stopping of the *prooimion* and finally begins the appropriately sequenced story. With this public demonstration, the poet in the here and now of the performance proves his competence and divine support.

The second Hesiodic instance of *hédos asphalès aiei* develops and builds upon these themes. Eleven lines after Gaia appears, she brings forth her own equal, Ouranos, presumably for procreation. As a true equal, Ouranos is also granted the formula *hédos asphalès aiei*.

⁵² For his reading of the *Theogony* with special attention to the concept of “sequence in performance,” see Muellner 1996:54–93.

Γαῖα δέ τοι πρῶτον μὲν ἐγείνατο ἴσον ἑωυτῇ
Οὐρανὸν ἀστερόενθ', ἵνα μιν περὶ πάντα καλύπτοι,
ὄφρ' εἴη μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ...

Earth first brought forth starry Ouranos,
equal to herself, so that he might cover her all around.
and so he might be an ever-steadfast seat for the blessed gods...

Hesiod *Theogony* 126–128

Like the Muses who pass on the power to keep things *émpeða*, Gaia is capable of passing on her ability as well. Yet it is the poet who actually confers this epithet upon Ouranos. By transferring the formula from Earth to Heaven perhaps the poet reveals that he is equal to Gaia in the capacity to make equals.

The irony here is that Ouranos is going to be castrated and deposed just a few lines later. Given this truth, the use of *asphalès aieí* seems curious. Yet the text makes clear that Ouranos *will* provide a steadfast seat of authority for Kronos and siblings, and only then *for the Olympians*. That is, Zeus' stability will be built upon the foundation of lost authority. Such a use of the phrase makes sense if we remember that myth tends to offer a teleological perspective. This use also reflects the metonymic, evolutionary nature of the myth that Muellner describes:

. . . the earlier manifestations are not eradicated or rendered obsolete by the later ones; on the contrary, later ones incorporate the former, which remain accessible constituents of reality and experience.⁵³

Certainly Gaia and Ouranos are not eradicated after Ouranos' castration. Their later actions prove vital to the establishment of Zeus' kingship. Though overthrown, Ouranos is still present and visible in the mythic world. This former king, like the Achaean wall, may no longer be *asphalēs*, though he might still be labeled *émpedos*.

Returning to the example of *hédos asphalès aiei* at *Odyssey* 6.42, we can see that the next few lines offer a detailed description of why Olympus has earned this formula.

Ἥ μὲν ἄρ' ὡς εἰποῦσ' ἀπέβη γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη
Οὐλύμπόνδ', ὅθι φασὶ θεῶν ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ
ἔμμεναι· οὔτ' ἀνέμοισι τινάσσεται οὔτε ποτ' ὄμβρῳ
δεύεται οὔτε χιῶν ἐπιπίλνεται, ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἴθρη
πέπταται ἀννέφελος, λευκὴ δ' ἐπιδέδρομεν αἴγλη·
τῷ ἔνι τέρπονται μάκαρες θεοὶ ἥματα πάντα.

Speaking thus beaming-eyed Athena went
toward Olympus, where they say the ever-secure seat of the gods
is; neither is it shaken by the winds nor ever by the rains
nor does it snow, but the sky spreads out
cloudless, and a white radiance has run over it;
in that place the blessed gods delight for all days.

Odyssey 6.41–46

Olympus is *asphalēs*, at least in part, by virtue of its supernatural environment. Despite the epithet “snowy Olympus” this special location reserved for the immortals provides

⁵³ Muellner 1996:59.

an atmosphere that is always pleasing.

Another key feature of this formula is the phrase *hóthi phasí* ‘where they say’, which may be seen as reaffirming the very foundation upon which the Iliadic tradition rests. In making this statement, I refer to Muellner’s argument of a “systematic and internal relationship” between the *Iliad* and the *Theogony* and his exploration of the Iliadic tradition as a “sequel in potential performance” to “an expanded prelude” such as the *Theogony*.⁵⁴ If the *Theogony* can function as the prelude for a poem such as the *Iliad*, and the Hesiodic tradition presents the formula *hédos asphalès aiei* as a stable foundation for the order established within its cosmology, then this formula also serves as a *hédos asphalès aiei* (ever-steadfast foundation) for the Homeric tradition as well! Given the close ties between the Hesiodic and Iliadic traditions, this shared foundation between the two is especially significant.

Moreover, the words *hóthi phasí* in this distinctly pan-Hellenic tradition signal that this formula presents a well known tradition. For instance, Douglas Frame has argued that the word *phasín* [“they say’] helps to “bring to mind” authoritative statements made in the *Iliad* but referenced in the *Odyssey*.⁵⁵ Thus, by using *hóthi phasí* in combination with *hédos asphalès aiei* to describe the stability of Zeus’ divine authority,

⁵⁴ Muellner 1996, see specifically pp. 52–55.

⁵⁵ On this use of *phasín*, see Frame 2009:10–11n2.

the Homeric tradition acknowledges a pan-Hellenic foundation of authority shared within the narrative world and the world of the performance.

The final example to discuss is the variant in Pindar at *Nemean* 6.4:

Ἐν ἀνδρῶν, ἔν θεῶν γένος· ἐκ μιᾶς δὲ πνέομεν
ματρὸς ἀμφοτέρου· διείργει δὲ πᾶσα κεκριμένα
δύναμις, ὡς τὸ μὲν οὐδέν, ὁ δὲ
 χάλκεος ἀσφαλὲς αἰὲν ἔδος
μένει οὐρανός.

One is the race of men, one, the race of gods; from one mother we both draw breath. Yet authority completely separates us, so that one is nothing, while [for] the other brazen heaven remains an ever-steadfast throne.

Pindar, *Nemean*. 6.1–4⁵⁶

Though not an exact repetition, this line offers the same basic idea—that the seat of divine authority is steadfast both in time and along a vertical axis of superiority. This use is highly appropriate to the argument being offered for the separation between gods and men. While both gods and men originated with the earth, the immortals were able to move higher and can claim heaven as a secure seat of power. This variant does not include an explicit reference to another tradition or authority through the use of *φασί*. That multiform seems to be traditionally associated with Olympus. Instead, the poetic tradition chooses to express the underlying idea behind the formula directly.

⁵⁶ Text as in Maehler 1971.

It is significant that the phrase *hóthi phasí* is used to express the common knowledge of Mount Olympus' status as the seat of divine authority. In fact, a search for *hédos asphalès aiei* shows that the entire formula ὅθι φασὶ θεῶν ἔδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ—that is, a reference to the tradition behind the statement—is the most common multiform for this idea. Thus, this phrase allows any poet to access and affirm this cosmic foundation. Like a star, or a mountain that provides a visual focal point which is steadfast in time and space, and to which whole populations can refer, this phrase provides a means of referencing Olympus as the steadfast pan-Hellenic symbol of divine authority. The symbol and the formula are perfectly synchronized.⁵⁷

2.3 The Steadfast Scepter of Poets, Seers, and Heralds

So the scepter of the Muses offered to the poet Hesiod signals the gift of *asphalés* speech. Other passages in which forms of *émpedos* occur show a connection with scepters. In each case the scepter signals the steadfast nature of the holder in a professional realm of influence. For instance, the seer Teiresias who has *émpedoi phrénes* even in death (*Odyssey* 10.493) is specifically depicted as still holding his scepter in the underworld (*Odyssey* 11.90–91).⁵⁸

⁵⁷ On the Hesiodic “transformation of the Muses from local goddesses on Mount Helikon into pan-Hellenic goddesses on Mount Olympus,” see Nagy 1990b:57–59.

⁵⁸ For a more detailed discussion of this passage, see the next section.

We might also consider a highly relevant example of the phrase *émpedon aién* from another epic tradition, the *Argonautica*. The passage in question describes Aithalides, a herald and son of Hermes, who retains special mental abilities in death.

Τείως δ' αὖτ' ἐκ νηὸς ἀριστῆες προέηκαν
Αἰθαλίδην κήρυκα θεόν, τῷ πέρ τε μέλεσθαι
ἀγγελίας καὶ σκῆπτρον ἐπέτρεπον Ἑρμείας
σφωιτέροιο τοκῆος, ὅς οἱ μνήστιν πόρε πάντων
ἄφθιτον· οὐδ' ἔτι νῦν περ ἀποιχομένου Ἀχέροντος
δίνας ἀπροφάτους ψυχὴν ἐπιδέδρομε λήθη·
ἀλλ' ἦ γ' ἔμπεδον αἰέν ἀμειβομένη μεμόρηται,
ἄλλοθ' ὑποχθονίοις ἐναρίθμιος, ἄλλοτ' ἐς αὐγάς
ἠελίου ζωοῖσι μετ' ἀνδράσιν.

Then the leaders sent forth from the ship
the swift herald Aithalides, to whom they turned over
both the messages and the scepter of his father Hermes,
who provided him with an imperishable memory
of all things. Nor still now having departed
to the unutterable eddies of Acheron has forgetfulness caught up to his
soul.
But it is destined to go continually back and forth forever,
at one time counted among those beneath the earth, at another
to be among living men in the light of the sun.

Argonautica 1.640–648

From this rich passage we see that *émpedos* can describe an uninterrupted sequence, and in this case, the context involves continual vertical motion. Through the gifts of his father (the scepter and an imperishable memory) Aithalides maintains a steadfast soul and can go back and forth between the worlds of the living and the dead, outpacing the

forgetfulness of death.⁵⁹ The scepter in this passage is an important symbol both of his power and of his relationship to Hermes. In fact, *epétrepon* from *epitrépō* can also carry the meaning “bequeath,” thereby marking the scepter as an inheritance from his immortal father. In this context the scepter is also being used both to signal the steadfast nature of the holder’s special sphere of influence as a messenger and the uninterrupted sequence of this divine lineage. His imperishable memory is matched and perhaps maintained by his ability to remain forever in motion.

Moreover, it should be noted that within the Indo-European poetic tradition the professions of poet, seer, and herald (the professions of Hesiod, Teiresias, and Aithalides respectively) were at one time undifferentiated.⁶⁰ Nagy, citing Benveniste, argues that the power to “authorize” denoted by the verb κρίνω is an inherited feature of this merged profession and that this “authority” is at the root of the poet’s ability to confirm the authority of both gods and kings.⁶¹ Nagy also notes the traditional function of theogonies in “confirming the authority that regulates a social group.”⁶² I would posit that another role of theogonies (and the poet creating/performing them) is to

⁵⁹ On the association between Hermes and memory as evidenced in the Hymn to Hermes, see Nagy 1990b:58–59.

⁶⁰ On this Indo-European poet/herald/seer function and on Hesiod’s role as a poet/herald/seer, see Nagy 1990b: 59–60.

⁶¹ See Nagy 1990b:59, where the author cites Benveniste 1969: vol 2, 35–42.

⁶² Nagy 1990b:59. Nagy cites M. West 1966:1–16.

make this authority stable and steadfast, and that *émpedos* and *asphalés* are traditionally appropriate terms for this “stabilization” within the ancient Greek poetic tradition. Further, the fact that the extant poetic tradition associates all three of these scepter-bearing figures with the diction of steadfastness (that is, *émpedon*, *asphaléōs*) suggests that the theme of being steadfast was associated with this profession and with the scepter back when these roles were undifferentiated.

As additional evidence for a traditional association between cosmogonies and theogonies in the ancient Greek tradition, I would point to the occurrence of *émpedos* at the beginning of Orpheus’ cosmogony in the *Argonautica*:

Ἦειδεν δ' ὡς γαῖα καὶ οὐρανὸς ἠδὲ θάλασσα,
τὸ πρὶν ἔτ' ἀλλήλοισι μιῇ συναρηρότα μορφῇ,
νείκεος ἐξ ὀλοοῖο διέκριθεν ἀμφὶς ἕκαστα·
ἠδ' ὡς ἔμπεδον αἰὲν ἐν αἰθέρι τέκμαρ ἔχουσιν
ἄστρα, σεληναίης τε καὶ ἠελίοιο κέλευθοι·

He sang how the earth, sky, and sea,
once joined together into one form,
and through destructive strife were each separated
and how the stars and the paths of the moon and sun
remain an ever steadfast fixed sign in the sky

Argonautica 1.496–500

With these examples in mind, I would return once again to the fascinating instance of the phrase *émpeda pánta* in the hymn to Selene. Below is a slightly expanded quotation:

... ἀρχὴ
καὶ τέλος εἶ, πάντων δὲ σὺ μούνη
ἀνάσσεις· ἐκ σέο γὰρ πάντ' ἐστὶ
καὶ εἶς <σ'>, αἰών<ι>ε, πάντα τελευτᾶ. ἀένα-
ον διάδημα ἐοῖς φορέεις κροτά-
φοισιν, δεσμοὺς ἀρρήκτους, ἀλύ-
τους μεγάλοιο Κρόνοιο καὶ χρύ-
σειον σκῆπτρον· ἐαῖς κατέχεις πα-
λάμαισιν. γράμματα σῶ σκῆπτρω
α[ὕ]τὸ[ς] Κρόνος ἀμφεχάραξεν, δῶ-
κε δέ σοι φορέειν, ὄφρ' ἔμπεδα πάν-
τα μένοιεν·

You are the beginning and the end, and you alone are mistress of all
for all things are from you and in your time all things together are
brought to fulfillment.

As an everlasting fillet you bear on your temples
the invulnerable, unbreakable fetters of great Kronos,
and you hold fast in the palm of your hand a golden scepter.
Kronos himself scratched the markings on your scepter
and gave it to you to bear, in order that everything might remain
steadfast.

PGM 4.2833–2844

So Selene is associated with the proper timing, continual sequence, and fulfillment of everything in the natural world, and it is in this context that she is praised. Selene is

also given many names including Hekate at line 2812, and she is worshiped for her multiform nature:

Κλωθὴ καὶ Λάχεσις ἠδ' Ἄτροπος εἶ, τρικάρανε,
Περσεφόνη τε Μέγαιρα καὶ Ἄλληκτώ,
πολύμορφε,

you are Klotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, three-headed one,
Persephone, Megaira, Allektro, multiform . . .

PGM 4.2794–2796

She is also worshiped as subduer and subdued: ‘Δαμνῶ, Δαμνομέ-/νεια· Δαμασάνδρα· Δαμνοδαμία (2844–2845). This multiform moon goddess in chains is steadfast in every way. She is securely steadfast in her bonds, kinetically steadfast in her movement and multiformity, and completely steadfast in her course and uninterrupted sequence.⁶³ Fittingly, her power and authority involve steadiness. Furthermore, the gift of a scepter—the traditional symbol of kingship and authority—grants her the power and authority to keep everything *émpeda* and its ornamentation seems key to this potency.⁶⁴

⁶³ One manifestation of this goddess, perhaps her Hekate persona, seems to have some level of authority over all things. Compare Hesiod’s description of Hekate in which, although strictly a Titan, Hekate’s powers remain steadfast into Zeus’ reign (*Theogony*, 421–425).

⁶⁴ Alternately, James T. McDonough has proposed to me that Selene has “one end of the chains holding Kronos as a crown for her, but as a source of authority over Kronos” and that she “moves the chains and controls Kronos with a nod of her head.”

Interestingly, Selene is also associated with another symbol of cosmic kingship and authority; she was one of the gods featured on the ornamentation of the throne of Zeus at Olympia (Pausanias 5.11.8). If she is a goddess with the authority to keep all things steadfast, then her presence helps to establish Zeus' throne as a *hédos asphaltès aiei*.⁶⁵

2.4 Steadfast and Appropriate Honor

The use of *émpedos* as 'uninterrupted sequence' or 'appropriately timed and sequenced' is particularly fitting in contexts where the term is used to discuss the honors given to gods and heroes. There are several passages in which the terms *émpedos* and *asphaltès* are associated with such honors. One overt example describes the care that Odysseus received while on Calypso's island.

τόφρα δέ οἱ κομιδή γε θεῶ ὡς ἔμπεδος ἦεν.

At that time his care was continual and ritually appropriate as for a god.

Odyssey 8.453

My translation of *émpedos* as "continual and ritually appropriate" may at first seem unjustified, but over the course of this subsection I hope to show that this is in fact the case. The diction is striking given that Calypso has offered to make Odysseus immortal

⁶⁵ I would once again draw attention to the Sanskrit phrase *váruṇasya dhruvám sádah*, at *Rig Veda* 8.41.9d. The words *dhruvám* and θρόνος 'seat, throne' share the same Indo-European root, **dher-*, meaning to hold firm, support.

(*Odyssey* 7.256–257). Pindar’s 10th *Pythian Ode* provides additional evidence of *émpedos* used in the context of worshipping a god. In that ode, the poet tells us that Apollo delights endlessly and appropriately (*émpedon*) in the feasts of the Hyperboreans (34–36). Apollo’s continual and appropriate pleasure suggests that the honors given to him were themselves *émpedos*.

Steadfast honors were also provided to the heroes of cult. In fact, one passage from the *Argonautica* uses *émpedon* adverbially to describe the permanent establishment of cult for Castor and Polydeuces on the Stoechades Islands.

ὃ δὴ βωμοί τε καὶ ἱερὰ τοῖσι τέτυκται
ἔμπεδον, οὐδ' οἶον κείνης ἐπίουροι ἔποντο
ναυτιλίας, Ζεὺς δέ σφι καὶ ὀψιγόνων πόρε νῆας.

Therefore altars and offerings have been performed continually and appropriately for them; not only did the watchers attend that ship, but Zeus gave to them also the ships of later sailors.

Argonautica 4.651–653

The term *émpedon* offers useful connotations here on several levels. First, the idea of being *émpedos* highlights the physical steadfastness of the altars. Second, *émpedon* can be seen as signaling both the frequency and the perpetual nature of the offerings. Finally, the word *émpedos* is particularly appropriate to this pair since they offer an

important example of the Indo-European twin myth.⁶⁶ Douglas Frame has shown that this myth generally pairs a strong and mortal warrior horseman with an intelligent, immortal cattleman. As shown in the next section, *asphalés* and *émpedos* are traditionally associated with these roles, these twins, and the nexus of twin-myth themes—especially the crucially important word *nóstos*, which denotes the idea of homecoming but also conveys the idea ‘return to light and life’.⁶⁷ In fact, the use of *émpedos* to describe the cult of Castor and Polydeuces is particularly appropriate given the details of their myth. The *Odyssey* tells us that the earth holds them alive and they endlessly alternate between the living and the dead (*Odyssey* 11.298–304). Thus, they are fixed in the ground, endlessly in motion, and constantly returning to light and life.

Another word which can appropriately describe the honor given to a god and to heroes through cult worship is *tímé*.⁶⁸ Forms of this word can combine with *émpedos* to produce names such as *Empedotimos*⁶⁹ expressing the idea of steadfast honor. The

⁶⁶ For a complete analysis of the Dióskouroi in this mytho-poetic context, see Frame 2009.

⁶⁷ On the meaning of *nóstos*, see Frame 1978 and Frame 2009.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of the word *tímé* as used to describe the honor associated with hero worship, see Nagy 1979:7§1n2.

⁶⁹ *Empedotimos* and similar names are attested in works from Heraclides Ponticus in the 4th century B.C.E. through writers such as Gregory of Nazianzus in the 4th century C.E.

names Empedokles and Empedotimos show that *émpedos* is an appropriate term for describing the enduring and steadfast glory obtained through poetry or cult.

The scene in Quintus Smyrnaeus' *Posthomerica* in which Priam responds to Penthesileia's arrival offers further evidence of an association between the concept of honor and the word *émpedos*. These lines also reveal a thematic link to the concept of *nóstos*.

Ἄγε δ' εἰς ἐὰ δῶματ' ἄνασσαν,
καί μιν προφρονέως τίεν ἔμπεδον, εὔτε θύγατρα
τηλόθε νοστήσασαν⁷⁰ ἔεικοστῶ λυκάβαντι,
καί οἱ δόρπον ἔτευξε πανείδατον, οἷον ἔδουσι
κυδάλιμοι βασιλῆες,

And he led her into his house
and readily honored her appropriately, as a daughter
returning home from afar after twenty years,
and he furnished a meal for her with all sorts of food
such as glorious kings eat

Posthomerica 1.85–89

At this point in my analysis I find it useful to draw upon the complementary research of Leonard Muellner and Gregory Nagy. Their work can help us to understand the network of associations between *émpedos* and the kingly, extended feast which is the

⁷⁰ The meaning of *nóstos* as 'return to light and life' is made explicit in the simile leading into this description. The poet tells us that at the sight of Penthesileia Priam was overjoyed as a blind man who regained his sight after longing to either see or die (*Posthomerica* 1.74–83).

ritually appropriate response to an epic homecoming by someone who is *philós* or ‘near and dear’. In his analysis of the relationship between *mênis* and *philótēs* Muellner argues that *tīmḗ* ‘honor, prestige’ and *philótēs* ‘friendship, affection’ are “interdependent if not synonymous in epic society and diction. It is heinous to dishonor one’s *phíloi*; it is inevitable that those whom one loves dearly be the objects of *tīmḗ*.”⁷¹ Muellner also notes a traditional collocation of the verb *philéō* ‘treat as a *philós*’ and the adverb *endukéōs*, which Gregory Nagy has shown means ‘in proper ritual sequence’.⁷² In his analysis of the uses of *endukéōs* Nagy cites the example at *Odyssey* 17.111 where “Telemachus says that Nestor as host *ephílei* ‘loved’ him *endukéōs*, treating him as if he had been a son who had just returned after an absence.” He also cites *Odyssey* 15.491, and 14.11 where *endukéōs* is used to describe meals, and *Odyssey* 14.390 and 17.113 where *endukéōs* is used in combination with the verb *komízō* ‘take care of, convey’.⁷³ Furthermore, and equally significant to this study, Nagy notes that the glosses for *endukés* in Hesychius include *asphalés* ‘steady’, while the glosses for *endúkion* include ‘*bébaion*’.⁷⁴ As noted at the start of this study, both *asphalés* and *bébaion* can be used to

⁷¹ Muellner 1996:149.

⁷² For Muellner’s discussion of *philéō* and *endukéōs*, see Muellner 1996:173, especially notes 81 and 83. For Nagy’s insightful discussion of *endukéōs* as ‘in proper ritual sequence’ see Nagy 1996: chapter 2.

⁷³ Nagy 1996:44.

⁷⁴ Nagy 1996:48n27.

gloss *émpedos*!

Turning back to the simile describing Priam's response to Penthesileia's arrival, we can see that a meal in which food and drink is offered in uninterrupted sequence is the traditional and ritually appropriate response to the return of a loved one. For this reason, *émpedos* meaning something like 'continual and ritually appropriate' is a superior reading to 'continual' in such a context.

With all this in mind, let us return to the events on Ogygia, but this time to *Odyssey* scroll 7 where Odysseus himself describes his treatment by Calypso.

ἦ με λαβοῦσα
ἐνδुकέως ἐφίλει τε καὶ ἔτρεφεν ἠδὲ ἔφασκε
θήσειν ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀγήραον ἦματα πάντα·
ἀλλ' ἐμὸν οὐ ποτε θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἔπειθεν.
ἔνθα μὲν ἐπτάετες μένον ἔμπεδον, εἵματα δ' αἰεὶ
δάκρυσι δεύεσκον, τὰ μοι ἄμβροτα δῶκε Καλυψώ·

She took me and she loved and nurtured me in a continuous and ritually appropriate way,
and said she would make me immortal and ageless for all my days;
but never could she persuade the spirit in my chest.
For nine years I remained fixed there (in uninterrupted sequence), and
with constant tears
I kept wetting my garments, the divine ones Calypso gave me.

Odyssey 7.255–260

With this diction Odysseus is contrasting the steadfast and appropriate immortalizing care conveyed by *endukéōs* with his equally steadfast (*émpedos*) embrace

of sorrow and his constant refusal of immortality. We might even say that this passage provides an expanded multiform for the narrator's description of Odysseus' care, with which we began this subsection.

τόφρα δέ οἱ κομιδὴ γε θεῶ ὡς ἔμπεδος ἦεν.

At that time his care was continual and appropriate as for a god.

Odyssey 8.453

When we view the narrator's comments through the lens of Odysseus' description, it is clear that *émpeδος* in this context conveys the idea of 'continual and ritually appropriate'.

In conclusion, I would cite one more passage which contains *émpeδος* and which touches upon the theme of immortalization. The passage I have in mind is the moment in *Iliad* scroll 19 when Thetis protects Patroclus' corpse from decay by means of nectar and ambrosia:

Πατρόκλω δ' αὖτ' ἀμβροσίην καὶ νέκταρ ἐρυθρὸν
στάξε κατὰ ῥινῶν, ἵνα οἱ χρώς ἔμπεδος εἴη.

But as for Patroclus, ambrosia and red nectar
she trickled down his nose, in order that his flesh might be unchanging.

Iliad 19.38–39

When given to living mortals, ambrosia can convey immortality. Administered here after death, ambrosia and nectar protect the body from the natural process of decay. This use of *émpepos* to describe the preserved body of a fallen hero is in some ways parallel to the concept of imperishability expressed by *áphthiton*.

Chapter 3

Steadfast Strength and Steadfast Intelligence

3.1 *ménon émpedon* with *émpedon* in the fourth foot

The previous sections analyzed how the words *émpedos* and *asphalés* are used to describe authority, power, and honor. *Émpedos* is also traditionally used to describe subjects that are steadfastly fixed or subjects that are steadfast in their continual motion. Contextual analysis shows that being steadfastly fixed is associated with strength and the mental ability to ward off overwhelming fear, while being steadfastly in motion is linked with intelligence. Through these associations *émpedos* and *asphalés* are used to describe the warrior who is able to stand firm in battle and the minds of those who think in ritually appropriate ways.

This subsection deals with passages in which the adverbial neuter *émpedon* localizes in the fourth foot. Just as *émpedos* is used to describe endless and secure motion seen in the description of Aithalides, it is equally as valid to use the word for staying fixed in place. One typical way to express this is the formulaic phrase *ménon émpedon* with

émpeidon in the fourth foot. In fact, *ménō* is the second-most common verb used with *émpeidos* after forms of the verb “to be.”⁷⁵ Several relevant examples are given below:

ὡς Δαναοὶ Τρῶας μένον ἔμπεδον οὐδὲ φέβοντο.

So the Danaans steadfastly remained and did not flee

Iliad 5.527, 15.622

Τρῶας ἐπερχομένους μένον ἔμπεδον. . . .

[The Achaeans] steadfastly awaited the approaching Trojans . . .

Iliad 15.406

ἔνθα μὲν ἐπτάετες μένον ἔμπεδον

There for seven years I remained steadfastly

Odyssey 7.259

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν αὐτοῦ μένον ἔμπεδον, εἴ τις ἔτ' ἔλθοι
ἀνδρῶν ἠρώων, οἳ δὴ τὸ πρόσθεν ὄλοντο.

However I remained there steadfastly, if perhaps some hero
might still come,

Odyssey 11.628

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν αὐτοῦ μένον ἔμπεδον,

⁷⁵ Note that *asphaléōs* also collocates with *ménō*. When Odysseus is kicked by Melanthius, Odysseus doesn't go off the path but remains steadfast (ἀλλ' ἔμεν' ἀσφαλέως) both physically and mentally. (*Odyssey* 17.233-238)

however I remained there steadfastly, . . .

Odyssey 11.152

This idea of remaining fixed in place in a special way is also captured by other lines in which *émpedos* localizes in the fourth foot. Consider, for example, the following clause at *Iliad* 18.158 describing how Hector trusted securely in his *alké* ‘defensive strength’ (ὃ δ' ἔμπεδον ἀλκὴ πεποιθῶς). This example shows a link between the theme of remaining steadfast and the concept of *alké*. Derek Collins has fully analyzed the word *alké* as used within Homer. In the course of his work, he comments upon several words and themes relevant to this discussion. First, he argues for a dynamic, interdependent relationship between the action of staying firm and remembering *alké*. In other words, remaining fixed in place helps one to remember his *alké* and remembering one’s *alké* often has the outcome of one’s standing firm.⁷⁶ I would argue that the steadfastness denoted by *émpedos* displays a similar dynamic relationship between sustained mental effort and being firm; one aids the other.

Collins’s insights on the verb *ménō* are also relevant to this study.

I stress here that the meaning behind not forgetting (*lanthanō*) one’s *alké* is that direct action of some kind is taken, and the most common action

⁷⁶ For this discussion of *alké* with *hístēmi* and *lanthánō*, see Collins 1998:95–97.

taken is represented by verbs of ‘standing/withstanding’ like *histēmi*, and, as we saw earlier, *menō*.⁷⁷

So maintaining steadfast strength has a strong connection with *ménō* and remaining steadfast (*ménon émpedon*). While Collins sees *alké* as bringing about an “irreversible mental and physical state,” I would note that *émpedos* can appropriately describe subjects that are temporarily steadfast.⁷⁸

3.2 Maintaining Steadfast Strength and Intelligence

Many of the Homeric passages describing steadfast strength or intelligence involve the line-terminal formula *émpedos* + BE, where *émpedos* localizes in the fifth foot and BE is a two-syllable form of the verb *eimí*. The phrase *émpedos* + BE occurs 16 times in Homer. Several examples are listed below:⁷⁹

· ἔτι μοι μένος ἔμπεδόν ἐστιν #

...my spirit/mind [*ménos*] is still steadfast.

Iliad 5.254, *Odyssey* 21.426

· νόος γε μὲν ἔμπεδος ἦεν. #

...but his consciousness [*nóos*] was remaining steadfast

Iliad 11.813

⁷⁷ Collins 1998:97.

⁷⁸ On *alké* as an irreversible state, see Collins 1998:69.

⁷⁹ For a full listing, see the appendix.

εἴθ' ὡς ἠβώοιμι βίη τέ μοι ἔμπεδος εἴη # (Odyssey 14.468)

εἴθ' ὡς ἠβώοιμι, βίη δέ μοι ἔμπεδος εἴη # (Iliad 7.157)

Would that I were young and my strength [bīē] were still steadfast

ὦ γέρον εἴθ' ὡς θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι φίλοισιν

ὡς τοι γούναθ' ἔποιτο, βίη δέ τοι ἔμπεδος εἴη # (Iliad 4.314)

Old man, if only, as the spirit [thūmós] in your chest,

your knees could keep up, and your strength [bīē] could remain steadfast

... τοῦ τε φρένες ἔμπεδοί εἰσι (Odyssey 10.493)

... whose mind is steadfast

As these passages show, *émpedos* + BE # is used in a formulaic way to express the idea of maintaining steadfast strength with 'bīē' (strength, physical force, violence). We can also see that *émpedos* + BE # collocates with a cluster of terms related to intelligence, such as *phrēnes* ('mind'), *nóos* ('consciousness, mind'), *nóēma* ('thoughts'), and *ménos* ('spirit, mind'). The ancient Greeks considered the hands and feet to be the agents of force, 'bīē', while they saw the midriff, *phrēnes*, as the central physical location associated with the life forces that maintain emotional and mental power. The *phrēnes* are also the seat of the breath and, as such, the life forces associated with the *phrēnes* (that is, *nóos*, *ménos* and *thūmós*) are seen as interdependent with breathing. Less commonly noted is the fact that *phrēnes* are also the location of visualization.

ἦστο γὰρ ἐν μνηστῆρσι φίλον τετιμημένος ἦτορ,

ὄσσομενος πατέρ' ἐσθλὸν ἐνὶ φρεσίν, εἴ ποθεν ἐλθῶν
μνηστήρων τῶν μὲν σκέδασιν κατὰ δώματα θείη,
τιμὴν δ' αὐτὸς ἔχοι καὶ κτήμασιν οἷσιν ἀνάσσοι.
τὰ φρονέων, μνηστῆρσι μεθήμενος, εἴσιδ' Ἀθήνην.

[Telemachus] sat among the suitors grieving in his own heart,
envisioning in his mind his noble father, if coming from somewhere
he should scatter the suitors throughout the house
and he himself have honor and rule over his property.
Thinking these things, as he sat idle among the suitors, he saw Athena.

Odyssey 1.114–118

What is more, Pindar tells us that song and music can charm (*thélgei*) *phrénes*—even those of the immortals (Pindar *Pythian* 1.12). Through this complex, interconnected web of associations, the concept of the *émpeδος* mind/body nexus becomes associated with the effect of epic song on both the singer and the listener. Perhaps the most significant example is Odysseus' encounter with the Sirens. In that episode Odysseus ties himself to the mast of his ship in order to steadfastly and safely listen to the song of the Sirens. At this famous moment, the poem uses *émpeδος* to describe how the hero stays in place (ὄφρ' ἔμπεδον αὐτόθι μίμνω [*Odyssey* 12.161]).

3.3 Wishing for Youthful Strength

The formulaic expression βίη δέ τοι ἔμπεδος εἴη, which Agamemnon uses at *Iliad* 4.314, also appears in a full-line formula that traditionally expresses the wish for youth, and which can be used to start or end a story about past heroic exploits.

εἴθ' ὥς ἠβώοιμι, βίη δέ μοι ἔμπεδος εἶη· (*Iliad* 7.157)
εἴθ' ὥς ἠβώοιμι βίη δέ μοι ἔμπεδος εἶη (*Iliad* 11.670)
εἴθ' ὥς ἠβώοιμι βίη τέ μοι ἔμπεδος εἶη (*Iliad* 23.629)
εἴθ' ὥς ἠβώοιμι βίη τέ μοι ἔμπεδος εἶη (*Odyssey* 14.468)
ὥς νῦν ἠβώοιμι βίη τέ μοι ἔμπεδος εἶη· (*Odyssey* 14.503)

If only/I wish now that I were in the prime of my youth, and my *bíē* was
steadfast

The last two examples above from *Odyssey* scroll 14 show the line being used to open and close the fabricated story Odysseus tells about his cloak, creating a clear ring composition. Similarly, Nestor uses the formula at *Iliad* 7.157 as the closing of an expanded twenty five-line micro-narrative about his slaying of Ereuthalion and again as the opening to the almost hundred-line description of his former victories at 11.670.

The first speech is part of a rebuke causing seven young heroes to come forward as volunteers for a one-on-one battle. The second speech is part of the critical scene in which Nestor convinces Patroclus to take Achilles' place in the war.

The use of the formula in re-creating past glory points to the fact that the speaker's *bíē* is being strengthened, albeit in a fictional sense. In other words, the statement of lost *bíē* invokes an occasion to re-create it through storytelling. And, as can be seen from context, these stories have real power to evoke and strengthen the *bíē* of those present at the time of performance. In summary, the passages above reveal that *émpedos* is a traditionally appropriate term for describing the state of one's *bíē*, that this

strength is steadfast in youth but not in old age, and that storytelling is an appropriate medium for making *bíē* steadfast.

These same ideas can apply to the use of *émpedos* in describing the life forces and physical locations associated with mental faculties. A quick review of Tables One and Two in the appendix shows a thematic link between the word *émpedos* and objects and activities that are related to mental energy. Consider *ménos*,⁸⁰ *phrénes*, *nóēma*, *ménō*,⁸¹ *alké*, *nóos*; each of these words has some relationship to one's mental capacity. Other subjects are more closely related to the physical locations and life forces associated with martial activities and physical violence: *bíē*, *guîa*, *poús*. Thus, *émpedos* can be used positively or negatively to describe one's mental/physical state. Consider the use of *émpedos* when Patroclus meets the wounded Eurypylus:

... κατὰ δὲ νότιος ῥέεν ἰδρῶς
ῶμων καὶ κεφαλῆς, ἀπὸ δ' ἔλκεος ἀργαλέοιο
αἶμα μέλαν κελάρυζε· νόος γε μὲν ἔμπεδος ἦεν.

... and the wet sweat was running
down from his shoulders and head, and from the painful wound
dark blood gushed—even so his consciousness at least was steadfast.

Iliad 11.811–813

⁸⁰ On the association between *ménos* and remembering, see Nagy 1974:266.

⁸¹ On the association between *alké*, *ménō*, and memory, see Collins 1998 and the discussion below, specifically pages 49–50.

An opposition is being made here between the injured warrior's ability to fight and his ability to think and speak appropriately. Like the rock at *Iliad* 15.617–622 withstanding the flowing wind and waves, his *nóos* is withstanding the pain, sweat, and blood that have overcome his martial strength. Although he looks as if he might lose consciousness, Eurypylus has maintained his wits and along with them the ability to convince Patroclus to remain by his side.

3.4 Rebuking Inappropriate Thoughts

At other times, epic describes a character as seeming to have a strong mental/physical core but not being *émpedos* with respect to his mental capacity. Rebukes can be used in such a case to prompt a mental readjustment. In this context *émpedos* might be translated 'appropriate'. For example in *Odyssey* scroll 18, Penelope rebukes Telemachus for allowing the mistreatment of Odysseus while disguised as a stranger (*ξεῖνος*, 18.223) in the house:

“Τηλέμαχ', οὐκέτι τοι φρένες ἔμπεδοι οὐδὲ νόημα.
παῖς ἔτ' ἐὼν καὶ μάλλον ἐνὶ φρεσὶ κέρδε' ἐνώμας
νῦν δ' ὅτε δὴ μέγας ἐσσι καὶ ἤβης μέτρον ἰκάνεις,
καὶ κέν τις φαίη γόνον ἔμμεναι ὀλβίου ἀνδρός,
ἔς μέγεθος καὶ κάλλος ὀρώμενος, ἀλλότριος φῶς.
οὐκέτι τοι φρένες εἰσὶν ἐναίσιμοι οὐδὲ νόημα,

Telemachus, no longer is your mind steadfast, nor your thoughts.
Even being still a child you had better thoughts in mind.

But now that you are big and you are arriving at the limit of youth,
and someone would say you are the child of a blessed man
looking at your size and beauty, some foreigner;
no longer is your mind proper [enaísimoi], nor your thoughts

Odyssey 18.215–220

From this passage we may deduce several points: First, one’s mental state does not always correspond with one’s visible physical state. Second, one’s *phrénes* can be unstable, fluctuating between being *émpedos* and not *émpedos*. As has already been seen, the ability to maintain steadfast *phrénes* can depend upon the subject’s age.

Telemachus’ newly adult *phrénes* are set in stark contrast to the mind of his father, a man who is remarkable in his ability to remain physically and mentally *émpedos* during his quest for *nóstos*. In his encounter with Circe, Odysseus manages to keep these faculties steadfast, while members of his crew are physically transformed. Note, however, that the thoughts of the transformed sailors are specifically labeled as being *émpedos* (“... however their minds remained steadfast as before. / So, weeping, they were confined,” αὐτὰρ νοῦς ἦν ἔμπεδος ὡς τὸ πάρος περ. / ὡς οἱ μὲν κλαίοντες ἔέρχατο) and that their crying signifies this (*Odyssey* 10.240–241). Similarly, while trapped on Calypso’s island, Odysseus describes himself in similar terms: “There, for seven years, I remained steadfastly, and my garments were always being drenched by tears,” ἔνθα μὲν ἑπτάετες μένον ἔμπεδον, εἴματα δ' αἰεὶ / δάκρυσι δεύεσκον (*Odyssey* 7.259–260).

Returning to the passage about Telemachus' inappropriate mind and thoughts, I would draw attention to the fact that Penelope is rebuking Telemachus for ritually inappropriate behavior. The treatment of guests is protected by Zeus, the highest authority in the cosmos, and mistreatment in these matters is of cosmic significance. In fact, the mistreatment of guests is an offence worthy of *mēnis*, the cosmic anger which is the subject of the *Iliad*.⁸² As Leonard Muellner has shown, *mēnis* is “the sacred name of the ultimate sanction against tabu behavior, and epic personages invoke it to forestall people from breaking fundamental cosmic rules.”⁸³ Noting this, we can compare the rebuke of Telemachus with Apollo's rebuke of the gods in *Iliad* 24. At this point in the narrative, Apollo is angered that the other gods are allowing Achilles to mistreat the corpse of Hector:

σχέτλιοί ἐστε, θεοί, δηλήμονες· οὐ νύ ποθ' ὑμῖν
 Ἔκτωρ μηρί' ἔκηε βοῶν αἰγῶν τε τελείων;
 τὸν νῦν οὐκ ἔτλητε νέκυν περ ἑόντα σαῶσαι
 ἦ τ' ἀλόχῳ ἰδέειν καὶ μητέρι καὶ τέκεϊ ᾧ
 καὶ πατέρι Πριάμῳ λαοῖσί τε, τοί κέ μιν ᾧκα
 ἐν πυρὶ κήαιεν καὶ ἐπὶ κτέρεα κτερίσαιεν.
 ἀλλ' ὀλοῶ Ἀχιλῆϊ, θεοὶ, βούλεσθ' ἐπαρήγειν,
 ᾧ οὔτ' ἄρ φρένες εἰσὶν ἐναίσιμοι οὔτε νόημα
 γναμπτὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι

⁸² *Odyssey* 14.283–284.

⁸³ Muellner 1996:194.

You are hard, gods, baneful! For did Hector
never burn for you the thigh-bones of perfect oxen and goats?
But now you do not endeavor to save him, even being a corpse,
for his wife to see, and his mother and son,
and his father Priam and his subjects, those who would swiftly
burn him in the fire and honor him with funeral gifts.
But you gods are willing to aid destructive Achilles
whose mind is not proper, nor is the thought
in his breast pliable

Iliad 24.33–40

Apollo's speech highlights the system of reciprocity and ritual exchange. Since Hector acted in a ritually appropriate way by giving honors to the gods, the gods should, in turn, make sure that he receives his own ritual honors in death. Instead the gods have allowed Achilles to drag Hector's corpse behind his chariot in an attempt to deny his fallen opponent any proper and timely funeral rituals. Furthermore, as Muellner has also shown, leaving the dead unburied is an act that can incur *mênis*.⁸⁴ As a result, his behavior causes Apollo to label Achilles' *phrênes enaísimoi*.

With these passages in mind, let us return to Penelope's rebuke of Telemachus.

“Τηλέμαχ', οὐκέτι τοι φρένες ἔμπεδοι οὐδὲ νόημα.
παῖς ἔτ' ἐὼν καὶ μάλλον ἐνὶ φρεσὶ κέρδε' ἐνώμας
νῦν δ' ὅτε δὴ μέγας ἐσσι καὶ ἤβης μέτρον ικάνεις,
καὶ κέν τις φαίη γόνον ἔμμεναι ὀλβίου ἀνδρός,
ἐς μέγεθος καὶ κάλλος ὀρώμενος, ἀλλότριος φῶς.
οὐκέτι τοι φρένες εἰσὶν ἐναίσιμοι οὐδὲ νόημα,

⁸⁴ Muellner 1996:32. For a list of offences that incur *mênis*, see p. 8.

Telemachus, no longer is your mind steadfast, nor your thoughts.
Even being still a child you had better thoughts in mind.
But now in fact that you are big and you are arriving at the limit of
youth,
and someone would say you are the child of a blessed man
looking at your size and beauty, some foreigner;
no longer is your mind proper [enaísimoi], nor your thoughts

Odyssey 18.215–220

It is now clear that *émpedoi* as used here is closely related to, if not nearly synonymous with, *enaísimoi*. Telemachus' neglect of proper ritual procedure could put the whole household at risk of Zeus' destructive and indiscriminate *mênis*. To remedy the situation, Penelope rebukes him by suggesting that his mind and thoughts are inappropriate to his age and to customary ritual procedures.

If during the prime of life *phrénes* and *bíē* can typically be described as *émpedos*, old age offers another stage to consider. The epic gives us two depictions here: Priam and Nestor. Passages involving Nestor have already been discussed. The lines involving Priam are also noteworthy since he is the only person to be labeled *émpedos* by the Homeric poem without a qualifying modifier—that is, we are not told that his actions, characteristics, or features are *émpedos*, but rather that he *himself* is *émpedos*. In this scene Achilles taunts Aeneas:

. . . ἀτὰρ εἴ κεν ἔμ' ἐξεναρίζῃς,

οὐ τοι τοῦνεκά γε Πρίαμος γέρας ἐν χειρὶ θήσει·
εἰσὶν γάρ οἱ παῖδες, ὁ δ' ἔμπεδος οὐδ' ἀεσίφρων.

. . . nevertheless if you kill me
not even for that reason will Priam place privilege in your hand;
for he has sons, and he is steadfast and not witless.

Iliad 20.181–183

Though it is not mentioned explicitly I believe the *géras* discussed here is the scepter of kingship, which, as already shown, is associated with the theme of being steadfast. Here again, we can see resonances of understanding ritually appropriate sequence. Achilles is saying that Aeneas will never receive the scepter because Priam's lineage is yet unbroken. He has sons to follow him, and he is right-minded. He understands the proper sequence and ritual, and so he will pass the privilege of the scepter to his children. In other words, Priam will maintain his social status so long as his mind and his lineage remain *émpedos*.

Chapter 4

Poetic Fame, Steadfast Fame

This chapter explores the ways in which the diction and themes of steadfastness are used to describe poetic fame, charioteers, and the pursuit of *nóstos*. Drawing upon evidence from the lyric and epic traditions, and giving special attention to the use of metaphor, I show that *émpedos* and *asphalés* offer valuable evidence about the nature of fame within this oral poetic tradition.

4.1 Kinetic Fame

Several passages from Pindar suggest that this poetic tradition sees its work as distinctly kinetic in nature. In fact, the opening lines of *Nemean 5* explicitly note a preference for preserving and spreading fame through kinetic art.

Οὐκ ἀνδριαντοποιός εἰμ', ὥστ' ἐλινύσοντα ἐργά-
ζεσθαι ἀγάλματ' ἐπ' αὐτᾶς βαθμίδος
ἐστᾶότ'. ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πάσας
ὀλκάδος ἔν τ' ἀκάτῳ, γλυκεῖ' ἀοιδά,
στεῖχ' ἀπ' Αἰγίνας διαγγέλλοισ', ὅτι
Λάμπωνος υἱὸς Πυθέας εὐρυσθενῆς
νίκη Νεμείοις παγκρατίου στέφανον,

I'm no sculptor, so as to make statuary
that stands idle upon the same base,
but upon each trading vessel
and light boat, sweet song,
go from Aegina announcing that Pytheas,
son of Lampon, won the crown
in the pancration.

Pindar *Nemean* 5.1–5

The poet defines his work by creating a distinction between himself and the creators of *agálmata elínúsonta*. Both of these words are significant. The noun *ágalma* works in this metaphor on several levels. In the passage above, the meaning expressed is “statue,” as made clear by the context, “I’m no sculptor.” On a more latent level, it must be noted that the semantic field of *ágalma* is quite broad, including meanings such as glory, honor, ornament, pleasing gift, gravestone, statue, cult statue, image, and portrait;⁸⁵ by the third century A.D., it is even used in reference to hieroglyphics.⁸⁶ Examination of this list suggests that these definitions carry two core meanings: static visual representation (statue, portrait, and so on) and the trappings of immortality (glory, honor). In some cases, the term derives meaning from both categories; that is, some ideas expressed by *ágalma* are visual representations which convey or help bring about some level of immortality (gravestone, cult statue, statue).

⁸⁵ Liddell-Scott 1996, s.v., *ágalma*.

⁸⁶ Plotinus, *Ennead* 5, chapter 8, section 6, line 8.

With this in mind, let us return to Pindar and the passage under discussion. The main idea is that song is superior to static visual art in preserving and spreading glory because of its mobility. In fact, the hymn created by Pindar is so “active,” the poet addresses it directly like a person, commanding it to go off on every ship. Like the athlete who labors over his athletic ordeal, the poem will labor to spread the fame of the victor. This passage exploits an underlying assumption equating movement with praise and fame. Pindar expresses a similar idea in *Isthmian 2*.

μήτ' ἀρετάν ποτε σιγάτω πατρώαν,
μηδὲ τούσδ' ὕμνους· ἐπεὶ τοι
οὐκ ἐλινύσοντας αὐτοὺς ἐργασάμαν.

Let him never silence the excellence of his father,
nor these hymns, since
not to stand idle did I labor over them.

Pindar *Isthmian* 2.44–46

Here again Pindar uses the phrase *ouk elinúsontas*, “not idle,” to describe his poem. In this case, however, the poet is also discussing silence, which is equated to standing still in idleness. Within this poetic ideology, to move is to speak aloud and praise; to stand idle is to be silent.

These Pindaric passages reveal not just a merging of the themes of movement and glory but also a cycle of labor and compensation involving the athlete and the poet. The

poem is given as compensation for the athlete's ordeal, which is described in terms of a *mókhthos* or *pónos*.⁸⁷ The poet labors over the creation of a hymn. Because the hymn is well-crafted, it is not standing idle (οὐκ ἐλινύων). By its own labor it spreads the fame of the victor both in time and in space. In a sense, it is the ordeal of the poet, as well as the poem, that compensates the athlete for his struggle.

In fact, there is a never-ending cycle of labor in the earning and compensation of the victory ode. The occasion of the pan-Hellenic contest is that of an ordeal created to compensate a hero from the past for his long-ago ordeal and death. The athlete achieves victory by struggling in his own contest. The poet then labors to produce a hymn that will not stand idle; the poem works to link the glory of the athlete to the glory of the heroic past. However, because the mythical hero must be compensated on a recurring basis for his catastrophic ordeal, athletic heroes must also participate in a successful and recurring ritual ordeal.⁸⁸ The cycle of labor becomes never-ending.

Bacchylides' 13th victory ode offers evidence of these themes which is particularly relevant to the discussion of *émpedos* and *asphalés*. The first passage uses *émpedon* to describe how Aretê brings forth a good reputation.

⁸⁷ Another significant term used to express the toil of the athletic contest is the term at the root of our word athlete, ἄθλον 'contest, struggle, prize'.

⁸⁸ Nagy 1990a:chapter 4.

... οὐ γὰρ ἀλαμπεί νυκ[τὸς]
πασιφανῆς Ἄρετ[ά] κρυφ-
θεῖσ' ἀμαυρο[ῦται καλύπτρα,]
ἀλλ' ἔμπεδον ἀκ[αμάτα] βρύ-
ουσα δόξα
στρωφᾶται κατὰ γᾶν [τε]
καὶ πολὺπλαγκτον θ[άλασσαν.]

... for not by the lightless veil of night
is shining Excellence, having been covered,
obscured,
but steadfastly teeming with
an inexhaustible reputation
it roams down along the land
and the much-wandering sea.

Bacchylides 13.138–144

These lines create an association between the *émpedon* production of the reputation and its tireless wandering. In this case, excellence remains *émpedos* and continues to wander even after death.⁸⁹ The word *akamáta* used here is particularly appropriate to descriptions of this type of work as it is used by the Hesiodic tradition to describe the voice of the Muses (Hesiod *Theogony* 39).

Earlier in this same hymn, the poet gives a similar description of how death affects the athlete.

[-- παρ]ᾶ βωμὸν ἀριστάρχου Διὸς

⁸⁹ I would suggest that it is the poet's mental effort of creating the hymn that keeps this excellence *émpedos*.

[Νίκας] φ[ε]ρ[ε]κυδέος ἀν[θρώ-]
[πο]ισιν ἄ[ν]θεα
[χρυσέ]αν δόξαν πολύφαντον ἐν αἰ[ῶ-]
[νι] τρέφει παύροις βροτῶν
[α]ἰεὶ, καὶ ὅταν θανάτοιο
κυάνεον νέφος καλύψῃ, λείπεται
ἀθάνατον κλέος εὔ ἐρ-
χθέντος ἀσφαλεῖ σὺν αἴσα.

... beside the altar of best-ruling Zeus,
the flowers of renowned Victory
nurture endlessly for a few men a golden reputation much spoken of
in their lifetimes, and whenever the dark-blue
cloud of death covers [them], there is left behind
the immortal glory of a well-accomplished deed
with a steadfast fate.

Bacchylides 13.25–33

According to Bacchylides, the glory of winning at Nemea will last beyond the grave.

While the athlete is alive, his victory will continually uphold an untarnished reputation (δόξα). His death, however, will bring about a transformation. Once the cloud of death covers him, immortal fame will be left behind which, once set upon its journey, can never be tripped up.

4.2 Steadfast Fame: Transferring the Metaphor

So fame can traditionally be thought of as mobile and active, and this is one of the ways that *émpedos* is traditionally used: to describe steadfast motion. But what of the traditional use of *émpedos* to describe subjects that are steadfastly fixed in place? As we

have also seen, the word *émpedos* has a built-in metaphor of being rooted to the ground. I believe the idea of steadfast fame as expressed in the name Empedokles resonates with both connotations of standing steadfastly fixed and of remaining steadfastly in motion. This subsection examines this idea with a focus on how the metaphor of standing still or being rooted to the ground might apply to something as traditionally kinetic as poetic glory.

Though invoking connotations of being rooted to the ground, *émpedos* is often used precisely of subjects in which this idea is not inherently appropriate. We can imagine a host of subjects—trees, roots, feet even—in which this built-in metaphor can help strengthen the already present sense of being rooted. But just as often the Homeric tradition offers some very unexpected subjects—mist, minds, and sailing ships. The idea here, I think, is that the word *émpedos* can be used to transfer the quality of steadfastness to subjects that inherently lack firmness. Through the use of *émpedos* the poet is able to transfer the firmness of things fixed in the ground to subjects which lack this stability, and to do so appropriately. Moreover, because *émpedos* most specifically denotes a steadfast state, whether fixed in place or in motion, it is particularly appropriate to descriptions of subjects that turn from being steadfastly kinetic to steadfastly fixed or vice versa.

Consider the scene in which Odysseus' ship finally gets to Ithaca. The passage uses both *émpedos* and *asphaléōs* in comparing the unhindered movement of the ship to the running of horses, thus comparing travel on land to travel on sea.

. . ή δ' , ώς τ' έν πεδίω τετράοροι ἄρσενες ἵπποι,
πάντες ἅμ' ὀρμηθέντες ὑπὸ πληγῆσιν ἰμάσθλης
ὑψόσ' ἀειρόμενοι ρίμφα πρήσσουσι κέλευθον,
ὡς ἄρα τῆς πρύμνη μὲν ἀείρετο, κῦμα δ' ὄπισθεν
πορφύρεον μέγα θῦε πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης.
ή δὲ μάλ' ἀσφαλέως θέεν ἔμπεδον.

. . . as in a plain, four stallions
are urged on all together driven by blows from the whip
and rising up high lightly undertake their voyage,
so the stern of the ship was being raised, and behind it seethed
a great heaving wave of the loud-roaring sea.
It ran on steadfastly and without faltering . . .

Odyssey 13.81–86

With twenty years of struggle and half an epic behind him, Odysseus is finally brought to his homeland with these six, compact, highly appropriate lines. First, I would point out that this is exactly the type of conveyance Odysseus requested of Alkinoos (πομπήν δ' ὀτρύνει καὶ λίσσεται ἔμπεδον εἶναι [*Odyssey* 8.30]).⁹⁰ More importantly, at this moment, Odysseus' *nóos* is finally at rest. He is described as being in a death-like, motionless sleep during which he forgets the things he suffered (δὴ τότε γ'

⁹⁰ Note that *émpedos* has connotations of 'uninterrupted sequence' here.

ἀτρέμας εὔδε, λελασμένος ὅσσ' ἐπεπόνθει [*Odyssey* 13.92]). As Douglas Frame has beautifully argued, Odysseus' *nóstos* involves both a return to his homeland and a return from death and unconsciousness to “light and life.”⁹¹ In other words *nóos* is the key to his *nóstos*. To describe Odysseus' ship as he undertakes this most important transition, the epic tradition uses the phrase *asphaléōs théen émpedon*. This is almost the same phrase, in the same location of the line, as appeared in the now familiar boulder simile (*Iliad* 13.136–145). This time, however, there is no hindrance, no interruption of the momentum forward until the hero reaches his goal.

Yet the scholia for these lines note a sense of disconnection between the diction and the context.

... ἀσφαλῶς, κυρίως ἐπὶ τῶν μὴ σφαλλομένων, ἐμπέδως δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ ἐρριζωμένων. ἢ δὲ ναῦς οὔτε ἄσφαλτός ἐστιν, οὔτε ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ ἐρριζῶται. εἴληπται οὖν εἰς ἔμφασιν τῆς ἀκλινοῦς καὶ μὴ σφαλλομένης ἐν τῷ πλῶ.

“ἀσφαλῶς” properly with reference to not being tripped up/thrown down/overthrown, and “ἐμπέδως” with reference to things having been rooted firmly in the ground. But the ship is neither unfallen, nor rooted in the ground, and so it [the diction] has been taken as a reflection / suggestion of not veering and of not being stopped in its course.

BQ scholia at 13.86

⁹¹ *Odyssey* 13.80, 92. On the connection between *nóos* and *nóstos* in this passage and the latent association between the root **nes-* and the theme of “returning to light and life” in general, see Frame 1978:74–76.

These lines acknowledge how the poet is capable of transferring the physical firmness and steadfastness associated with the word *émpedos* and *asphalés* to subjects that lack such qualities. This transfer of associations may even cross conceptual boundaries, from vertical space to horizontal space, from distance to time, or even from steadfastly fixed to steadfastly kinetic.

Returning to the simile itself, I would note that the phrase “ran steadfastly without faltering” (ἀσφαλέως θέεν ἔμπεδον) is appropriate to the language of charioteering. In fact, we must understand some traditional aspects of charioteering in order to grasp a deeper level of meaning in this simile.

In ancient Greece, the most dangerous point of a chariot race was the moment in the middle when the drivers had to skillfully guide their horses around the *térma* or turning post. One such moment can be seen in the Funeral Games of *Iliad* 23, which offer not just a chariot race, but a lesson in chariot racing. I am referring here to Nestor’s instructions to his son Antilochus.

ὃς δέ κε κέρδεα εἰδῆ ἐλαύνων ἥσσανας ἵππους,
αἰεὶ τέρμ' ὀρόων στρέφει ἐγγύθεν, οὐδέ ἐ λήθει
ὄππως τὸ πρῶτον τανύση βοέοισιν ἰμᾶσιν,
ἀλλ' ἔχει ἀσφαλέως καὶ τὸν προὔχοντα δοκεύει.

But the one who, driving worse horses, knows all the tricks,
he, keeping his eye on the turning post, turns close to it, and it does not
escape his notice

how he may first bring his horses to full speed with the oxhide reins,
but he drives steadily and keeps his eye on the leader.⁹²

Iliad 23.322–325

This use of *asphalēōs* in this context is also supported by a passage in Theocritus' Idyll

24. Here, the poem makes explicit that learning to navigate this turn safely is a crucial aspect of the education of Herakles:

ἵππους δ' ἐξελάσασθαι ὑφ' ἄρματι καὶ περὶ νύσσαν
ἀσφαλέως κάμπτοντα τροχοῦ σύριγγα φυλάξαι
Ἀμφιτρύων ὃν παῖδα φίλα φρονέων ἐδίδαξεν
αὐτός...

But to drive forth horses yoked to a chariot and
to guard the nave of the wheel while safely rounding the turning post
Amphitryon himself taught his son, thinking of him dearly...

Theocritus Idyll 24 119-122

Like *asphalēōs*, *émpedos* can be used adverbially to describe a successful turn in a race. To understand this, we must return to Nestor in *Iliad* 23 when the old hero remembers a disastrous chariot race from his youth. As we will see, steadfastness is a key to the outcome of this race, so the hero highlights this by invoking the theme immediately. First Nestor states that his limbs are no longer steadfast (*émpeda*, 23.627). Then he wishes that he were young and his strength were still steadfast (*émpedos*,

⁹² Translation by Douglas Frame. Frame 2009:152.

23.629) as when he competed in funeral games among the Epeians. On that day he won every contest except the chariot race, which he lost to twins.⁹³ Nestor claims he was outnumbered and that the twins each took their own role, one holding the reins, one driving the horses to go faster:

οἱ δ' ἄρ' ἔσαν δίδυμοι· ὁ μὲν ἔμπεδον ἠνιόχευεν,
ἔμπεδον ἠνιόχευ', ὁ δ' ἄρα μάστιγι κέλευεν.

They were twins, one held the reins steadfastly,
held the reins steadfastly, while the other urged on with the whip.

Iliad 23.641-642

Douglas Frame offers a masterful reading of this episode which goes beyond the scope of the present study.⁹⁴ For our purposes, it suffices to summarize one of Frame's key findings: Nestor crashed at the turning post in this race precisely because he didn't "hold the reins steadfastly." In fact, the repetition of *émpedon hēniókheuen* signals the moment in which the twins safely make the dangerous turn around the turning post. So this passage presents a metapoetic metaphor in which the end of the hexameter line is

⁹³ On Nestor's role in the events of *Iliad* scroll 23, see Frame 2009:131–172. Frame argues that Nestor's loss in the chariot race signals that "he had not yet learned to take his brother's place, and that he had yet to become a horseman." In contrast Frame sees *Iliad* 11 as the narrative in which Nestor *does* become a horseman.

⁹⁴ In the future, I hope to expand this study to include a full discussion of the concept of steadfastness as it relates to Nestor and the Indo-European twin myth.

equated with the turning post in a race.⁹⁵

Gregory Nagy, prompted by Douglas Frame, has also shown that the successful execution of this dangerous racing maneuver depends upon the careful balance of restraint and incitement as well as careful attention to “signs.”⁹⁶ From this metaphor we can infer that passing from the relatively fixed meter at the end of one hexameter verse to the relatively flexible beginning of another represents a potentially difficult turning point, and that this “turn” requires a balance of restraint and incitement on the part of the poet. But which is restraint, and which incitement? Given our strong tendency to think like readers and writers, we might be tempted to perceive fixed or rigid elements as restraint, while greater flexibility and fluidity might be perceived as allowing or promoting incitement. Within in an oral poetic system, however, it is just the opposite. Rather than restraining the poet, the formulaic system enables rapid and

⁹⁵ We might even say that this metaphor reflects the metapoetic devise of metabasis as experienced on a microlevel of composition: the individual verse line. Inspired by the use of the verb *metabainein* in the traditional closing lines of a *Homeric Hymn*, Gregory Nagy has used the term metabasis to describe the way a hymn “refers to its own hymnic consequent” while moving ahead and shifting forward the subject of the performance. In Nagy’s reading, the hymn offers both the perfect beginning and the “perfect transition” to the rest of a performance, proceeding sequentially to its successful conclusion. For this concept of metabasis, see Nagy 2009a: 232-246, 326-335. Nagy also shows that in certain contexts this metabasis can even lead to a recycling back to previous subjects. Such recycling metabasis is typical of Cyclic epic but atypical of Homeric epic. On this distinction, see Nagy 2010a: 94-95.

⁹⁶ Nagy 1990a:208. See especially footnote 40.

fluent composition. Thus, the particular concept of steadfastness expressed by *émpedos* and *asphalés* can be seen as emerging from and reflecting the traditional forces driving the composition of hexameter verses in performance. The poetics of steadfastness merge the complementary esthetics of rigidity and fluidity with the balance of incitement and restraint.⁹⁷

Knowing this, let us return our attention to the description of Odysseus' journey to Ithaca at *Odyssey* 13.81–86. As we saw, that passage features a simile about horses running securely and steadfastly (*ἀσφαλέως θέεν ἔμπεδον*). Given what we know about charioteering, we can see that this simile located about halfway through the epic might signal a metaphorical “turning point” in the *Odyssey*, thus equating the “turn” with the “return” as in *nóstos* ‘return to light and lift’.⁹⁸ If so, the epic diction is suggesting that steadfastness is a quality necessary for all three “turns”: the turn in a chariot race, the “turn” at the end of a verse, and the return of a hero.

Still, it should be noted that even this moment of steadfast motion is fleeting and that the transition is marked with a *sêma*, or sign. Like the stone left on the plain discussed in chapter one, the unhindered motion of the boat is doomed to end. Just as

⁹⁷ Here, as earlier, I am invoking Nagy's use of the terms “esthetics of rigidity” and “esthetics of fluidity.”

⁹⁸ On the connection between *nóstos* and the turn in a race, see Frame 2009:170–171.

the ship nears port on its return, Poseidon punishes the Phaeacians for helping his enemy:

ἡ δὲ μάλα σχεδὸν ἤλυθε ποντοπόρος νηῦς
ρίμφα διωκομένη. τῆς δὲ σχεδὸν ἦλθ' ἐνοσίχθων,
ὅς μιν λᾶαν θῆκε καὶ ἐρρίζωσεν ἔνερθε
χειρὶ καταπρηνεῖ ἐλάσας·

And the seafaring ship came very near
being driven swiftly. But the Earthshaker came nearby
and he made it stone and rooted it below,
striking it with the flat of his hand.

Odyssey 13.161–164

Poseidon transforms the formerly kinetically *émpedos* ship into a statically fixed stone (*Odyssey* 13.155–164). Though it is not labeled *émpedos*, it is thematically *émpedos* in that the ship is now rooted in the ground. As we have seen, this is the exact unlikely scenario which the scholia saw as the literal interpretation of *émpedon* at 13.86. Like the boulder of the simile discussed in chapter one, the ship is now a secure sign or σῆμα of the power that overwhelmed it.

That Poseidon would have the power to transform a kinetic object into something fixed and secure is actually appropriate to the traditional function of the god. The scholia at Hesiod *Works and Days* 790 discuss the eighth month, which is associated with Poseidon. The following lines are particularly revealing:

... τοῦ δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶ τὸ κινεῖν καὶ ἡρεμεῖν τὰς ἀστάτους τῶν κινουμένων ὀρμάς. διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς οὗτος οὐ μόνον Ἐνοσίχθων, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἀσφάλειος ὑμνεῖται· καὶ οἱ τοὺς σεισμοὺς παύειν ἐθέλοντες Ποσειδῶνι θύουσιν.

His is to move and to fix the unresting rush of things set in motion. On account of which, the god is hymned not only as the Earthshaker, but also as the Securer, and those wishing to stop the shaking make offerings to Poseidon.

scholia at Hesiod Works and Days 790

As final evidence of the relationship between steadfastness, Poseidon, and the idea of *nóstos*, I would draw the reader's attention to a beautiful epigram from the *Greek Anthology* which features *émpedon* in a remarkable way while commemorating *nóstos* and perhaps honoring Poseidon the Securer.

Νῆα Ποσειδάωνι πολύπλανος ἄνθετο Κράντας
ἔμπεδον ἐς νηοῦ πέζαν ἐρεισάμενος,
αὔρης οὐκ ἀλέγουσαν ἐπὶ χθονός, ἧς ἔπι Κράντας
εὐρύς ἀνακλινθεὶς ἄτρομον ὕπνον ἔχει.

Crantas, after his many voyages, dedicates his ship to Poseidon, fixing it firmly on the floor of the temple. It cares not for the winds now it is on the earth, the earth on which Crantas, stretching himself at ease, sleeps a fearless sleep.⁹⁹

Greek Anthology 6.69

Crantas' dedication is clearly reflecting Poseidon's transformation of the Phaeacian ship as well as Odysseus' sleep during his journey aboard the ship. Yet, given what we

⁹⁹ Translation by W. R. Patton. Patton 1916, reprint 1999:337.

have learned about the association between the adverb ἀσφαλῆως and charioteering, I would posit that the epithet Ἀσφάλειος also reflects Poseidon's association with horses and charioteering. If so, the epithet would mark Poseidon as the god who can make things secure in both kinetic and fixed ways and the god who challenges that security by making fixed things shake and break apart or by making steadfastly kinetic things crash, trip, and swerve. Like *émpedos* and *asphalḗs*, Poseidon with his various associations to water, horses, and earthquakes, can be seen as a divine expression of the balance between rigidity and fluidity, incitement and restraint.

Such a vision of Poseidon brings to mind the ritual at Onchestos described in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* at lines 229–238. In this ritual, the driver entering Poseidon's sacred grove leaps off his chariot (232–233),¹⁰⁰ allowing the horses to pull the empty and rattling vehicle through the grove without the restraint of a human driver (234).¹⁰¹ Some chariots make it through safely, but those which crash are left as fixed dedicatory offerings to the god, while the horses are given care (235–236). Richard Martin sees this ritual in part as a test of the craft of the carpenter or joiner who constructed the

¹⁰⁰ On the apobatic leap from a chariot, see Nagy 2009b. Here the driver simply leaps off. In the apobatic athletic contest the fully-armed rider leaps off while the chariot is at full speed, hits the ground running, races on foot, and then leaps back on.

¹⁰¹ Compare the Phaeacian ships which also lack a human pilot. Instead, the boats steer by their own wits (*Odyssey* 8.556–559).

chariot.¹⁰² In section 1.3, we saw that the phrase *ménon émpedon* could be associated with the word ἀρηρότες, built from the root *ar-. At that time, we noted that this root means ‘fit, join’ and appears in words traditionally used to express the work of carpenters and poets.¹⁰³

I find Martin’s reading compelling and would suggest that although the words *émpedos* and *asphalḗs* do not appear in the description of the ritual, these words express the quality which is being tested. Chariots and horses which make it through the grove without crashing or swerving off course have proven secure in their motion, while chariots and wheels which remain in one piece attest to the fixed and secure nature of their construction. Moreover, in the transformation of unsuccessful chariots into fixed dedicatory offerings, the ritual in some sense echoes the dedication of a fixed ship to Poseidon. The ritual at Onchestos, however, highlights the significance of being steadfast in all its forms not by foregrounding a successful and permanent

¹⁰² On this rite as a test of craft, see Martin 2010. Martin addresses this ritual in a larger discussion about the rhetoric of craft, the craft of talk, and the ways in which “the pressure of competition shapes authors and authority, contexts and content.” Martin notes, “It is the pressure of Greek agonism, of contests, of judgment (krisis) within a ritual situation—the Pythian Games on the one hand, and the Panathenaia on the other—that have encouraged the growth of an entire body of myth, lore, and explanation to undergird a set of rules and regulations. *Out of crisis come criteria*” (3.35; emphasis in the original).

¹⁰³ On this association between the root *ar-, the work of the carpenter, and the activity of the poet, see Nagy 1979:297–300.

homecoming, but by highlighting failure and then transforming it into ritual success, since a crash in the ritual can be compensated for by a successful prayer and offering (237–238).¹⁰⁴ Thus ritual, like metaphor, provides a context for transferring and transforming steadfastness.

Returning to our discussion about metaphor, we might also consider a passage from *Iliad* 15, which, like Odysseus' journey home, involves four horses and features the word *émpedon*. Like the ritual at Onchestos, this also involves a leaping rider. The context here is that Aias is defending the Greek ships pulled up on the shore and is described as moving deftly from one ship to another.

... ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀνήρ ἵπποισι κελητίζειν ἐϋ εἰδώς,
ὅς τ' ἐπεὶ ἐκ πολέων πίσυρας συναίρεται ἵππους,
σεύας ἐκ πεδίοιο μέγα προτὶ ἄστυ δίηται
λαοφόρον καθ' ὁδόν· πολέες τέ ἐθηήσαντο
ἄνῆρες ἠδὲ γυναῖκες· ὁ δ' ἔμπεδον ἀσφαλῆς αἰεὶ
θρώσκων ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἄλλον ἀμείβεται, οἱ δὲ πέτονται·

¹⁰⁴ We might also compare the episode in the *Odyssey* in which Teiresias (who has *émpedoi phrénes* even in death [*Odyssey* 10.493]) tells Odysseus to bring an oar inland until it is mistaken for a winnowing shovel (11.121–137; 23.265–284). Once it is mistaken, Odysseus must fix the oar in the ground (making it physically *émpedos* although it is not described as such) and make a sacrifice to Poseidon (11.129–130; 23.276–277). On the multiple meanings of this complex image see Nagy 1990a:231–232, especially n. 82 where Nagy remarks, “The complexity of the gesture of Odysseus in planting his implement is reinforced by the inherent symbolism of the winnowing shovel: just as this implement separates the grain from the chaff, so also it separates true things from false things; I compare the discussion of *krisis* in the sense of *separating, discriminating, judging...*”

ὥς Αἴας ἐπὶ πολλὰ θοάων ἵκρια νηῶν
φοῖτα μακρὰ βιβάς,

. . . as when a man well-skilled in the knowledge of riding horses
yokes together four horses out of many
and drives them from the plain to the great town
and passes down along the road, and many are amazed,
both men and women, and he always securely
leaps and passes ceaselessly from one to the other while they fly,
so Aias over the wide decks of the swift ships
kept going back and forth striding

Iliad 15.679–686

As we have seen, it is not unusual in the Homeric tradition to compare horses with ships, but this example is particularly interesting because it equates the *fixed* ships with *moving* horses. It is as if both the steadfastness of the boats in the world of the narrative and the steadfastness of the horses and horseman within the frame of the metaphor is being transferred to the hero. Thus, this metaphor equating steadfast motion with steadfast rigidity once again makes clear that *émpedos* most specifically signals a steady and continual state in relation to both space and time.

We might also note that the verb *empedóō* ‘confirm, ratify’ can be used specifically to describe the act of making *speech* steadfast.¹⁰⁵ Built from the same root as the

¹⁰⁵ This verb is unattested in Homer, Hesiod, the *Argonautica*, and *Posthomerica*, but is used by Euripides, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristophanes. It also appears in prose authors such as Xenophon and Plato. In the near future I will expand this study to include a discussion of the use of *émpedos* in tragedy.

adjective *émpedos*, *empedóō* comes to mean ‘ratify, confirm, uphold’ and is used of gifts, drink offerings, treaties, laws, and oaths. Given that *émpedos* is a word for signifying a steady continual state that can also be used to describe a ritually appropriate mind, the use of this root makes perfect sense. In other words, *empedóō* is about making words and rituals *émpedos*, continual, lasting, and appropriate. It is precisely through this power that the poet is able to create steadfast and imperishable glory from perishable human components.

In closing this discussion, I would draw attention to a phrase in another Indo-European tradition and to the name Empedokles, which we first considered in the opening pages of this work. The phrase comes from the *Mahābhārata* and explicitly uses the metaphor of standing fast to describe the imperishability of fame.

akṣayā tava kīrtiś ca loke sthāsyati

your fame will stand imperishable in the world

3.42.22¹⁰⁶

If the ancient Greeks inherited a traditional understanding of fame as steadfast, then the name Empedokles may reflect traditional ideas about the nature of poetic

¹⁰⁶ This passage came to my attention from its inclusion in West 2007:408 (West’s translation used above). Compare also the closing lines (135–143) of the Old English poem *Widsith* which ends with the phrase “*heahfæstne dom*” ‘high and steadfast fame’.

glory. As we have seen, *émpedos* and *asphalés* are remarkably appropriate adjectives for describing poetic multiforms within an oral poetic system. Yet despite this “just right” fit, *émpedos* never collocates with *kléos* within the extant ancient Greek poetic tradition. This fact could be viewed as refuting the appropriateness of the association, but I would argue for an alternative explanation. The universal avoidance of this collocation, despite the many links which mark it as appropriate, reflects an awareness of and aversion to acknowledging the potential relationship between these terms. Perhaps a formulaic collocation is avoided because the vision of steadfast fame evoked by the name Empedokles is most appropriate from an outside perspective. In fact, while forms of *émpedos* occur 58 times in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and 627 times in the entire Greek corpus, the name Empedokles occurs over 1,700 times.¹⁰⁷ Through sheer repetition, then, this name becomes the most dominant expression of *émpedos*, and *kléos* becomes the primary subject of such steadfastness.

By uniting the esthetics of rigidity and fluidity with the careful balance of incitement and restraint, *émpedos* offers a single esthetic principle guaranteeing the steadfastness of the Homeric tradition across space and time. From the steady progression of individual verses uttered by singers thousands of years ago, to the relatively fixed manuscripts of Aristarchus in the second century BC, the name

¹⁰⁷ Data based on a search of the TLG.

Empedokles reflects the enduring steadfastness of the Homeric poems. Moreover, if we consider the adoption of writing as a turning point in the transmission of the Homeric tradition, perhaps the name Empedokles even presents a compressed micronarrative that speaks to the poetic tradition's ability to steadfastly "turn" from one medium to other.

Chapter 5

Steadfast Is the Warp, Steadfast Is the Weft: *émpedos* and the couples of the *Odyssey* and *Argonautica*.

So far we have focused our attention on three major categories of steadfastness: subjects that are steady and constant in their motion or action (kinetically *émpedos* like the boulder) and those that are steadfastly immobile or fixed (*émpedos* in a static way like the cliff). We have also seen that an underlying concept of uninterrupted sequence can, in certain contexts, give *émpedos* the meanings ‘continual, properly sequenced, ritually appropriate’. This chapter introduces a fourth category of steadfastness: steadfastly remaining in place while bound. I will refer to this category as ‘securely *émpedos*’. The deliberate coupling of these categories seen in pairings such as Odysseus and Penelope or Jason and Medea reflects a deeply imbedded tendency to create poetic stability by joining steadfastly fixed subjects with objects steadfastly in motion. In a

sense, these different categories of being *émpedos* can be seen as the warp and weft from which the poetic narrative is woven on a micro-narrative or epic scale.

5.1 The *Odyssey*: Penelope as Warp, Odysseus as Weft

Just as a human life is composed of various periods of mental and physical steadfastness, the *kléos* of the *Odyssey* can be seen as a weaving made up of different states of being *émpedos*. Specifically, I argue that the Homeric couple of Penelope and Odysseus, on a metaphoric level, form the warp and weft of the *Odyssey*: Penelope by staying steadfastly fixed (statically *émpedos*) in her marriage at home and Odysseus by steadfastly wandering and swerving (kinetically *émpedos*), weaving in and out of adventures on his journey. Like a woven textile, a successful *Odyssey* requires warp and weft, steadfast Penelope and wandering Odysseus. The epic poet weaves together these two story lines and themes in the creation of his song. In fact, the glory of both Odysseus and Penelope is, in part, dependent upon each one remaining *émpedos*. In Penelope's case, she must not remarry and betray the steadfastness of her uniquely constructed marriage bed. For Odysseus, he must remain steadfast in his motion home, not allowing himself to become passively *émpedos* in some other location for too long.

By remaining firmly in place, Penelope provides the secure theme with which Odysseus' quest for *nóstos* is paired. The theme of being *émpedos* occurs twice with the

theme of *nóstos* in the Homeric corpus. Although each is from a different epic, they are linked thematically by the use of horses. Like the rock similes discussed earlier, these passages describe horses as being *émpeδος* both while motionless and while moving.

I turn first to the passage from the *Iliad* involving fettered horses. In this scene, Poseidon has stopped at a cave to tie up and feed his immortal steeds.

ἔνθ' ἵππους ἔστησε Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων
λύσας ἐξ ὀχέων, παρὰ δ' ἀμβρόσιον βάλεν εἶδαρ
ἔδμεναι· ἀμφὶ δὲ ποσσὶ πέδας ἔβαλε χρυσείας
ἀρρήκτους ἀλύτους, ὄφρ' ἔμπεδον αὔθι μένοιεν
νοστήσαντα ἄνακτα·

There Earthshaker Poseidon stood his horses,
releasing them from the yoke, and before them threw immortal food
to eat, but he threw golden fetters around their feet,
unbreakable and not to be loosed, so that there they would steadfastly
await
their master achieving his *nóstos*.

Iliad 13.34–38

Though used to describe fettered horses, these lines also call to mind Penelope who is waiting steadfastly for *her* lord to achieve his *nóstos*. If this connection seems unlikely, consider the use of the phrase *émpeδα πάντα* in relation to Penelope. Within the *Odyssey* this phrase is used in the formulaic lines that question whether Penelope (used twice of Penelope, once spoken by Penelope herself at *Odyssey* 19.525) and Mentor (once) are, or should remain, in place and guard everything at home.

πείθεσθαί τε γέροντι καὶ ἔμπεδα πάντα φυλάσσειν

Odyssey 2.227

ἢ ἐ μὲνει παρὰ παιδὶ καὶ ἔμπεδα πάντα φυλάσσει

Odyssey 11.178

ἢ ἐ μὲνω παρὰ παιδὶ καὶ ἔμπεδα πάντα φυλάσσω

Odyssey 19.525

So when Odysseus meets with his mother in the underworld he asks if his *gêras* remains with his father and son (*Odyssey* 9.174–176). He also inquires specifically about Penelope asking the question: Does she remain by my son and guard everything *êmpeða* or has the best of the Achaeans married her? There is some ambiguity about what exactly Odysseus is referring to when he says *êmpeða pánta*¹⁰⁸ in that *êmpeða* may be either an adjective, “guard everything *êmpeða*,” or an adverb, “continuously and appropriately guard everything.” If the former is the most appropriate reading of the line, as I suggest with my translation, then the question hints at the most crucial *êmpeðos* object and secure sign in the *Odyssey*: the hero’s bed. As we will see, to keep watch over everything *êmpeðos* is to maintain the security of his marriage and by extension his *nóstos*.

¹⁰⁸ On this passage and a discussion of *êmpeðos* in relation to gender roles generally see Zeitlin 1996:29–31.

Odysseus calls his bed a μέγα σῆμα ‘great sign’ (*Odyssey* 23.188) and it is the final key in the recognition scene with Penelope. When Penelope orders her servants to move the bed that Odysseus made out of the room (*Odyssey* 23.178–180), she is prompting Odysseus to offer information that only her true husband knows. The “secret,” which we as the external audience are in on, is that Odysseus built his bedroom around an enormous, living olive tree. The trunk of this plant, still rooted into the ground, forms one of the bedposts (*Odyssey* 23.190–204). So the bed, like the stone left on the plain by the raging river, is by its nature *émpedos*—rooted in the ground. After giving a description of how the bed was constructed, Odysseus admits he does not know whether his bed is still *émpedos* or whether some other man has placed it elsewhere (*Odyssey* 23.203). If it had been moved, the bed (like the displaced boulder) would become a sort of trophy for the force that displaced it. Since the bed is still firmly in place, it becomes, in part, a sign of the superior cunning required to create and maintain such a *sêma* (*Odyssey* 23.206).

The unmoved bed is also Penelope’s *sêma* of steadfastness, in that her cunning is one tool by which this achievement is accomplished. I am referring here specifically to the way she puts off marrying another man by means of her tricky weaving (*Odyssey* 2.94–106). For three years Penelope spends her days going back and forth in front of

her loom weaving a shroud for Laertes only to unravel the fabric at night. Though not literally bound by them, Penelope uses these threads to remain steadfast as she awaits her husband's homecoming.

Odysseus' *kléos* also depends upon maintaining an *émpedos* state. Unlike Penelope, however, Odysseus must remain *émpedos* in a kinetic way. In fact, like the boulder, Odysseus begins his epic in a fixed *émpedos* position. Consider the description of his time on Calypso's island, "There seven years I remained fast" (μένον ἔμπεδον, *Odyssey* 7.259) or the narrator's description of the care he received while there, "during that time his care was steadfast and appropriate as for a god" (τόφρα δέ οἱ κοιμῖδὴ γε θεῶν ὡς ἔμπεδος ἦεν, *Odyssey* 8.453). I will address this last line momentarily. For now, I would point out that this type of static *émpedos* position threatens the hero's *nóstos*. If Odysseus remains *émpedos* in a static way like Penelope, he will lose his homecoming. Instead he must find a way to remain kinetically *émpedos* like the boulder that runs securely while being pushed on by the swollen river. Unlike the boulder, however, he must find a way to maintain that state. He must display his *émpedos* nature by remaining constantly in motion. Ideally he would go straight home, but without wandering there would be no *Odyssey*. Therefore, Odysseus must find a special way to remain kinetically *émpedos*.

Two passages display this kinetically *émpedos* aspect of Odysseus' character: his voyage past the Sirens and his transport on the Phaeacian ship to Ithaca. I have discussed the journey to Ithaca at length. Regarding the episode with the Sirens, a key point seems to be that Odysseus uses his intelligence to remain steadfast in his journey home. First Odysseus has his crewmembers block their ears with wax in order that they not get enticed by the deadly song, but he leaves his own ears free (*Odyssey* 12.37–54). He also orders his men to tie him to the mast ὄφρ' ἔμπεδον αὐτόθι μίμνω, “in order that I may remain steadfastly in that spot” (*Odyssey* 12.160–161). But not surprisingly, Odysseus has managed something tricky here. The hero has bound himself to a decisively kinetic object, and his *kléos* is literally tied to his ability to remain securely in motion. Thus, he has managed to transfer the language of remaining fixed to a new and opposing context.

5.2 Jason and Medea

So the *Odyssey* displays the weaving of steadfastly fixed and steadfastly kinetic subjects on an epic scale. This subsection examines the use of the word *émpedos* in Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica* with a focus on actions taken by Jason and Medea to obtain the Golden Fleece.¹⁰⁹ There are three main portions of the final contest to get the

¹⁰⁹ In the future I hope to expand this section into a full chapter.

fleece: the plowing of the field with the fire-breathing oxen, the battle with the earthborn men, and the subduing of the snake. Each portion of this contest requires the hero or heroine to be *émpedos* or to overcome something *émpedos*. In addition, mastery over all three types of steadfastness is required for success.

The first of the tasks calls for Jason to yoke two fire-breathing oxen and then sow a field with magical teeth that sprout into an army of earthborn warriors. When the oxen first approach the field, the other heroes are frightened, but Jason takes a firm stance and awaits their charge.

Ἔδδειςαν δ' ἦρωες ὅπως ἴδον· αὐτὰρ ὁ τοὺς γε,
εὖ διαβάς, ἐπιόντας ἅ τε σπιλάς εἰν ἀλὶ πέτρῃ
μίμνεν ἀπειρεσίησι δονεύμενα κύματ' ἀέλλαις·

And the heroes watching were afraid on the spot, but he,
planting his feet firmly, awaits them, as a wave-dashed rock in the sea
withstands the waves driven on by the boundless winds

Argonautica 3.1293–1295

Though the word *émpedos* is not used, the metaphor above offers diction and themes parallel to other Homeric metaphors in which *émpedos* does occur.

... ἢ ὕτε πέτρῃ
ἠλίβατος μεγάλη πολιῆς ἀλὸς ἐγγὺς ἐοῦσα,
ἢ τε μένει λιγέων ἀνέμων λαιψηρὰ κέλευθα
κύματά τε τροφόεντα, τά τε προσερεύγεται αὐτήν·
ὥς Δαναοὶ Τρῶας μένον ἔμπεδον οὐδὲ φέβοντο.

... as a great
steep cliff near the gray sea
that withstands both the swift paths of the clear-voiced winds
and swelling waves that break against it,
so the Danaans remained steadfast against the Trojans, nor were they
fleeing.

Iliad 15.618–622¹¹⁰

So the hero begins his ordeal by being *émpedos* in a fixed way.

Next Jason must yoke the oxen and plow the teeth into the field. In this episode the hero is described as successfully completing his task by guiding the plow in a steadfast way.

... καὶ γέντο θεῶν ἔμπλειον ὀδόντων
πήληκα βριαρὴν δόρυ τ' ἄσχετον, ᾧ ῥ' ὑπὸ μέσσας
ἐργατίνης ὡς τίς τε Πελασγίδι νύσσειν ἀκαΐνη
οὐτάζων λαγόνας. Μάλα δ' ἔμπεδον εὖ ἀραρυῖαν
τυκτὴν ἐξ ἀδάμαντος ἐπιθύνεσκεν ἐχέτλην.

... and he grabbed the helmet full of pointy teeth
and his resistless spear, and with it
as a farmer with a Pelasgian goad
he was jabbing the flanks in the middle
and very steadily was guiding the well-constructed,
finished plow of adamant.

Argonautica 3.1321–1325

¹¹⁰ For a detailed discussion of this passage, see Section 1.

Thus, in this task he is kinetically *émpedos*. Next, Jason must fight the earthborn men that grow out of the teeth he sows into the ground. Again, although the word *émpedos* does not occur in this passage, the earthborn men are by their nature *émpedos* in that many of them are still sprouting and fixed in the ground during the battle.

Οὐ̃τα δὲ μίγδην
ἀμώων, πολέας μὲν ἔτ' ἐς νηδὺν λαγόνας τε
ἡμίσεας δ' ἀνέχοντας ἐς ἠέρα, τοὺς δὲ καὶ ἄχρις
γούνων τελλομένους, τοὺς δὲ νέον ἐστηῶτας,
τοὺς δ' ἤδη καὶ ποσσὶν ἐπειγομένους ἐς ἄρηα.

. . . he struck indiscriminately,
reaping, while many [were] still in up to their bellies and ribs,
half-emerged into the open air, some
having risen as far as the knees, some just newly standing,
others already hastening with their feet to the battle.

Argonautica 3.1381–1385

After Jason defeats the earthborn men with the help of advice from his lover, Medea, the couple accomplish the final feat together. In this task, Medea is actually the hero as she is the one who enchants the beast by means of singing and drugs (4.146–151).¹¹¹ She is also the one labeled by the epic as being *émpedos* just at the moment when the fleece is finally obtained.

¹¹¹ Note that the root of the verb *thélgō* is the same root traditionally used to describe the effect of the Muses and epic poetry. See also the effect of Orpheus' alternate

Ἔνθα δ' ὁ μὲν χρύσειον ἀπὸ δρυὸς αἴνυτο κῶας,
κούρης κεκλομένης, ἢ δ' ἔμπεδον ἔστηυῖα
φαρμάκῳ ἔψηχεν θηρὸς κάρη,

Then, with the girl urging, he took hold of the golden fleece
from the tree. But she, standing steadfast,
was stroking the head of the monster with the drug.

Argonautica 4.162–164

First, it is notable that this important mythic moment—the moment in which Jason actually takes the fleece—involves the concept of steadfastness. Second, it should be noted that Medea, like Penelope, is heroic for being *émpedos* in a fixed way, and that this state was obtained through the use of skill and trickery. In this case, the heroine uses magic instead of weaving, but both women display feats of intelligence.¹¹² Medea's steadfast moment must be viewed in relation to the rest of the trials, which, as we've seen, have been trials of Jason's steadfastness.

Thus, this sequence of episodes includes every category of steadfastness discussed so far: passive (Medea and Jason), kinetic (Jason) and secure (the earthborn warriors). Taken together with the evidence from the *Odyssey*, these passages reveal a tendency to

Theogony in the *Argonautica* 1.515, or the song of the Sirens as described in the same work at 4.894. Cf. also *Odyssey* 17.514–521 and Pindar *Pythian* 1.12.

¹¹² I would also point out *émpedos* is used in a passage describing Medea as an anti-Penelope. In the *Argonautica*, when Medea fears that Jason will leave her, the epic describes her thoughts: . . . ἴετο δ' ἢ γε / νῆα καταφλέξει διά τ' ἔμπεδα πάντα κεάσσαι, / ἐν δὲ πεσεῖν αὐτὴ μαλερῶ πυρί. *Argonautica* 4.391–393.

For a discussion of the phrase *ἔμπεδα πάντα* in relation to Penelope, see page 63.

pair male and female characters that are steadfast in different ways. This tendency might also be seen in the pairing of Prometheus and Io in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*. There, however, the male god is steadfastly fixed in place while the female is supernaturally kinetic.

Chapter 6

On Not Being *émpedos* and the Metapoetic Destruction of the Achaean Wall

6.1 Reornamenting the Epic Landscape

Contextual analysis has shown that the theme of being steadfast as expressed by *émpedos* and *asphalés* is linked to depictions of flooding waters, boulders rolling down from the mountains, and galloping steeds. We have seen that these themes are often invoked by the Homeric tradition when an epic hero either achieves one of the goals important to his (or her) epic *kléos*, or fails to achieve such a moment. Finally, we have seen how the diction of being *émpedos* is involved in transitions between life and death and the foundations of authority, on both micro- and macrocosmic levels.

This section examines one final category of steadfastness: subjects that are described as *not émpedos*. I have already addressed the unstable *bíē* and *phrénes* that

typically come with old age and death.¹¹³ There are two other examples I would like to examine quickly: Achilles' *gêras* and the Achaean wall.

During the embassy of book nine, Achilles points out that all the *gêra* 'gifts' distributed to the other leaders remain steadfastly in place (*êmpedon*) except his own (*Iliad* 9.335). He is referring here to the fact that the honorific portion given to him (Briseis) was taken away. Because of this, and because of the way the system of reciprocal exchange fails in the beginning of the epic (Agamemnon refuses to give the appropriate ransom to Chryses), Achilles is, for a time, unwilling to participate in the exchange of his life and *nôstos* for imperishable fame.

Although it can never be allowed within the epic tradition, what can we learn from Achilles' claim that his *klêos* will be destroyed if he chooses a long life and *nôstos* (*Iliad* 9.411–416)? In what ways can *klêos* be destroyed?¹¹⁴

¹¹³ I would also add that in death one's form becomes distinctly not *êmpedos*. Not only does the corpse decay, but also the shade in the underworld is so not *êmpedos* that it can't be restrained even momentarily by an embrace. For an interesting discussion of the mobility of shades vs. the fixed nature of the corpse/funeral stele, see Steiner 2001, especially pp. 135–146.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, 20e3–21a1, with the translation of Gregory Nagy: πρὸς δὲ Κριτίαν τὸν ἡμέτερον πάππον εἶπεν, . . . ὅτι μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστὰ τῆσδ' εἶη παλαιὰ ἔργα τῆς πόλεως ὑπὸ χρόνου καὶ φθορᾶς ἀνθρώπων **ἠφανισμένα**, πάντων δὲ ἔν μεγιστον, οὗ **νῦν ἐπιμνησθεῖσιν πρέπον** ἄν ἡμῖν εἶη ("He [Solon] said to my grandfather . . . that there were, inherited by his city, ancient deeds, great and wondrous, that have disappeared through the passage of time and through the destruction brought about by

In pursuing these questions, I turn once again to the discussion between Poseidon and Zeus quoted in the opening lines of this study. The exchange is triggered by the construction of the Achaean wall and by the fact that the Greeks have neglected to offer a sacrifice in connection with their work. Poseidon feels threatened by both acts.

Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἦ ῥά τίς ἐστι βροτῶν ἐπ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν
ὅς τις ἔτ' ἀθανάτοισι νόον καὶ μῆτιν ἐνίψει,¹¹⁵
οὐχ ὀράας ὅτι δ' αὖτε κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοὶ
τείχος ἐτειχίσσαντο νεῶν ὕπερ, ἀμφὶ δὲ τάφρον
ἤλασαν, οὐδὲ θεοῖσι δόσαν κλειτὰς ἑκατόμβας;
τοῦ δ' ἦτοι κλέος ἔσται ὅσον τ' ἐπικίδναται ἠώς·
τοῦ δ' ἐπιλήσονται τὸ ἐγὼ καὶ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων
ἦρω Λαομέδοντι πολίσσαμεν ἀθλήσαντε.

Father Zeus, what mortal is there upon the wide earth
who will still sing/tell to the immortals his mind and counsel?
Don't you see that once again the flowing-haired Achaeans
built a wall inland of the ships, and drove around it
a ditch, and in no way have given glorious hecatombs to the gods?
But surely the fame of this will last as long as the dawn is scattered,
and they will forget that wall which I and Phoebus Apollo, struggling,
built for the hero Laomedon.

Iliad 7.448–453

human agency. He went on to say that of all of these deeds, there was one in particular that was the greatest, which it would be fitting for us now to bring to mind . . .”). This passage was brought to my attention by inclusion in Nagy 1990a. For his discussion of the *Timaeus* passage and its relationship to the opening of Herodotus, see page p. 226.

¹¹⁵ Thanks to Leonard Muellner for drawing my attention to the fact that ἐνίψει here is from ἐνέπω ‘tell, speak, tell tales, sing’, the same word used to invoke the Muses at *Odyssey* 1.1.

The interconnected web of themes surrounding the creation and destruction of the Achaean wall is complex and includes issues such as antagonism between gods and men, the resolution of antagonism between gods, and the power of cultic honors vs. poetic glory.

The diction here not only makes explicit that Poseidon is concerned about the preservation of fame through song, but it also shows an association among the themes of *kléos*, memory, and perishable fame. Poseidon's main argument is that the *kléos* associated with the Achaean wall will cause the Trojan wall to be forgotten. It is as if the two walls, both present in the vicinity of Troy and both worthy of *kléos*, compete for glory. Zeus responds to Poseidon's fear by saying that a god with weaker hands and *ménos*¹¹⁶ might fear such things, but that the *kléos* of Poseidon will last "as long as dawn is scattered" (*Iliad* 7.456–458). In other words, Poseidon's *kléos* will remain firm because his *ménos* and *bíē* remain firm.

With all this in mind, let us turn to the display of this *bíē* and *ménos* and Zeus' solution to the problem of perishable fame: the destruction of the Achaean wall by flooding rivers at *Iliad* 12.8–33. It is my contention that this scene reveals a latent and traditional thematic association to the manner in which oral poetry is created.

¹¹⁶ Gregory Nagy has shown that *ménos* is related to the idea of remembering as evidenced through its use in Homeric contexts. See Nagy 1974:266–269.

- ... θεῶν δ' ἀέκητι τέτυκτο
 ἀθανάτων· τὸ καὶ οὐ τι πολὺν χρόνον ἔμπεδον ἦεν.
- 12.10 ὄφρα μὲν Ἑκτωρ ζωὸς ἔην καὶ μῆνι' Ἀχιλλεὺς
 καὶ Πριάμοιο ἄνακτος ἀπόρθητος πόλις ἔπλεν,
τόφρα δὲ καὶ μέγα τεῖχος Ἀχαιῶν ἔμπεδον ἦεν.
 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κατὰ μὲν Τρώων θάνατον ὄσσοι ἄριστοι,
 πολλοὶ δ' Ἀργείων οἳ μὲν δάμεν, οἳ δὲ λίποντο,
- 12.15 πέρθητο δὲ Πριάμοιο πόλις δεκάτῳ ἐνιαυτῷ,
 Ἀργεῖοι δ' ἐν νηυσὶ φίλην ἐς πατρίδ' ἔβησαν,
 δὴ τότε μητιόωντο Ποσειδάων καὶ Ἀπόλλων
 τεῖχος ἀμαλδῦναι ποταμῶν μένος εἰσαγαγόντες.
 ὄσσοι ἀπ' Ἰδαίων ὀρέων ἄλα δὲ προρέουσι,
- 12.20 Ῥῆσός θ' Ἐπτάπορος τε Κάρησός τε Ῥοδίος τε
 Γρήνικός τε καὶ Αἴσηπος δῖός τε Σκάμανδρος
 καὶ Σιμόεις, ὅθι πολλὰ βοάγρια καὶ τρυφάλεια
 κάππεσον ἐν κονίησι καὶ ἡμιθέων γένος ἀνδρῶν·
 τῶν πάντων ὁμόσε στόματ' ἔτραπε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων,
- 12.25 ἐννήμαρ δ' ἐς τεῖχος ἴει ῥόον· ὕε δ' ἄρα Ζεὺς
 συνεχές, ὄφρα κε θᾶσσον ἀλίπλοα τείχεα θείη.
 αὐτὸς δ' ἐννοσίγαιος ἔχων χεῖρεςσι τρίαιναν
 ἠγεῖτ', ἐκ δ' ἄρα πάντα θεμεῖλια κύμασι πέμπε
 φιτρῶν καὶ λάων, τὰ θέσαν μογέοντες Ἀχαιοί,
- 12.30 λεῖα δ' ἐποίησεν παρ' ἀγάρροον Ἑλλήσποντον,
 αὐτίς δ' ἠϊόνα μεγάλην ψαμάθοισι κάλυψε
 τεῖχος ἀμαλδύνας.

- ... It had been built against the will of the gods
 and so for no long time was it to remain firm.
- 12.10 So long as Hector was living and Achilles raged
 and the city of lord Priam remained unsacked
so long the great wall of the Achaeans remained firm.
 However, when many of the best of the Trojans were killed
 and many of the Greeks were killed, and others left,
- 12.15 and the city of Priam was sacked in the tenth year,
 and the Argives departed for their own fatherland in ships,
 then Poseidon and Apollo took counsel

to obscure all traces of the wall, leading in the might of the rivers,
as many as pouring forth from Ida flow to the sea—
12.20 Rhesos¹¹⁷ and Heptaporos, Karesos and Rhodios,
Grenikos and Aisepos, and immortal Skammandros,
and Simeoeis—where many bull hide shields and helmets
fell in the sand, and many of the race of demigods.
Phoebus Apollo turned the mouths of all of these together
12.25 and for nine days he released the flow against the wall
and Zeus rained continuously so he might more quickly place the
embankments under the water.
And the Earthshaker himself carrying in his hands the trident
led them, and sent into the waves all the foundations
of wood and stone, which the long-haired Achaeans suffered over,
12.30 and made it smooth along the strong-flowing Hellespont
and once again covered the great shore with sand obscuring
all traces of the wall.

Iliad 12.8–32

As shown by Gregory Nagy, this passage shifts the timeframe of the narrative outside the boundaries of the *Iliad* and provides a rare opportunity to view the epic tradition from an external point of view.¹¹⁸ In his discussion of the destruction of the wall, Nagy notes: “It is almost as if all the ‘props’ that mark an Achaean expedition against Troy are to be obliterated once the expedition is over and the attention of epic switches to other places, other stories.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ I follow Lattimore’s spelling for the names of the rivers.

¹¹⁸ For a discussion of the external viewpoint mentioned here, see Nagy 1979:159–160.

¹¹⁹ Nagy 1979:160.

Interestingly, Quintus Smyrnaeus also provides a description of the destruction of the Achaean wall and uses the scene to help close his epic. This placement at the end of his *Posthomerica* supports Nagy's idea that this scene traditionally signals the end of the themes associated with the Trojan War and provides the closure necessary to redirect the attention of the singer and audience. Further, by describing the destruction of the wall at the end of his epic, Quintus Smyrnaeus in a sense inserts his entire epic within the boundaries of the Iliadic mytho-poetic framework. In doing so, the author legitimizes the appropriateness of his work and its connection to the Iliadic tradition which he seeks to complete.

If it is true that the foundation of epic *kléos* can appropriately be described by terms such as *asphalés* and *émpedos*, perhaps this passage actually describes, on a metaphoric level, the sweeping away of those themes and ornaments that are no longer "most appropriate." As mentioned in the introduction, "truth," ἀλήθεια is in some sense created not by remembering what is true, but rather by forgetting what is false.¹²⁰ The creation of a new and appropriate poem works in a similar fashion. The poet must release the version that is no longer appropriate, just as Herodotus says in the opening quotation of this study. As the new multiform speeds towards the listener, it metaphorically sweeps away what is old.

¹²⁰ Nagy 1990b:58–60.

This very idea is expressed by Đemail Zogic, an oral poet of the former Yugoslavia, during a conversation with Milman Parry's assistant:

Nikola: But if a good singer hears a bad singer who has attempted a good song, but isn't capable of finishing it, of singing it as he should, . . . can this good singer make a good song out of it and sing it as it should be sung? . . .

Đemail: He can make it good, by ornamenting it and adding to it, and improving it, by God, so that it would be as if you had never heard that first singer who was bad.¹²¹

Such is the case with the destruction of the wall. For a time, while the frame of reference remains within that of the *Iliad* (Hector lives, Achilles rages), the wall will remain *émpedos*. But when the perspective shifts to an external viewpoint (the city is sacked and the Greeks return home), from that external perspective we see that the wall is not steadfast forever.

¹²¹ Parry and Lord 1954:241. Đemail has earlier in this conversation expressed a preference for singers who leave out something over those who add to a song: "The man who adds something thinks it up himself and adds it to the song, and it can't be true." When asked why some singers make additions he responds: "That's what people like, the ornamenting of a song, do you understand? There are some people who add and ornament a song and say: 'This is the way it was,' but it would be better, brother, if he were to sing it as he heard it and as things happen . . . You can find plenty of people in Novi Pazar who know these songs but don't know how to sing them clearly, just as things happened, just as Bosnian heroes did their deeds . . ." (239).

The concept here is that a good poet can ornament a song just as he learned it, thereby preserving and reproducing the truth of the heroic events of the past.

I would argue that the medium of epic is itself *émpedos*, both from an internal perspective—that is, the singer’s contention that he sings the song word for word (static)—and from an external, diachronic perspective—namely, the ability of epic diction to be flexible, ever changing and ever appropriate (kinetic). It is from this *émpedos* nature that the Homeric poet draws the power to sing a properly sequenced and appropriate song for every occasion. Like a god that can reornament a landscape and obscure all traces of what was once firm, the poet has the power to turn his attention and praise toward what is most appropriate at each occasion of performance. That one version of *kléos* might shine brightly enough to become *émpedon* and for a time bring its singer and subjects steadfast glory while obscuring the glory of others. Those versions that are never obscured become *áphthiton*. As the following lines show, the power of the Homeric poet could be described in just these terms.

Ἴστρον μὲν ἡμαύρωσε καὶ ἱερὰ κύκλα σελήνης
 ἄξονα δινήσας ἔμπυρος ἥλιος·
 ὕμνοπόλους δ' ἀγληδὸν ἀπημάλδυνεν Ὅμηρος
 λαμπρότατον Μουσῶν φέγγος ἀνασχόμενος.

As the fiery sun whirling in respect to its axis
 dims the stars and the radiant circle of the moon,
 so Homer plunges into obscurity the mass of singers
 holding up the brightest light of the Muses.

Greek Anthology 9.24

Only during the destruction of the Achaean wall, a rare moment in which epic comments upon itself from an external point of view, can epic acknowledge its own perishable nature. That this moment also provides an alternate description of the creation of Achilles' tomb and the only Homeric attestation of the term *hēmítheoi*, a word more appropriate to the diction of cult than epic, seems highly relevant.¹²² We might say, then, that this passage allows the audience to witness one tradition (epic) presenting and acknowledging a view of poetic glory from the perspective of another tradition (cult), both of which are capable of conferring some form of remembrance and immortality upon their recipients. From the perspective of cult, the glory conveyed by epic might prove to be temporarily steadfast yet perishable and appropriately described as **émpedon kléos*.

In summation I propose that the word *émpedos* denotes a special form of stability that inherently acknowledges the potential for instability, whether in the establishment of human authority, fame, and fortune or the divine cosmic order. Perhaps the name Empedokles presents a similar view of poetic glory, one that acknowledges and accounts for the role of perishable fame and truth in the poetic

¹²² On the destruction of the wall in connection with Achilles' tomb, see Nagy 1979:160, §16n1. For Nagy's discussion of *hēmítheoi* see pp. 159–161.

tradition. Such a view of stability fits perfectly with the concept of poems created by an oral poetic system of composition in performance.

Imperishable fame, like truth, is created not by remembering what is forever *áphthiton* but by forgetting all that was once steadfastly appropriate and true, yet ultimately proved perishable. Or, to state it in terms appropriate to this discussion, a song, theme, or formula becomes imperishable by remaining steadfastly appropriate and true for each singer, in each moment of performance. In short, imperishability is the outcome of the successful struggle to remain *émpedon aiei*. The epithet *áphthiton* is not a label granted once and then never contested: like Zeus' divine authority it is predicated upon the idea of endless challenge and proven superiority. The potential of lost fame is always present so long as the singer of tales maintains the authority to choose what is most appropriate and true at each and every moment of performance. In this light the study of steadfastness, as expressed through the traditional diction and themes of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, offers a glimpse of the Homeric tradition's latent exploration of its own nature as **émpedon aiei*.

In the end, we might say that concepts of steadfastness help to define the place and experience of humans in the ancient Greek cosmos. The authority of Zeus is steadfast forever, but human happiness is secure only in its insecurity. Scepter-endowed kings,

poets, messengers and seers can exchange steadfastness and truth with the gods. The best we regular mortals can hope for is to occasionally emulate the heroes who remained steadfast in the face of fear and who managed to maintain appropriate thoughts and rituals. With steadfast minds, we can balance restraint and incitement, carefully and securely making our way around the dangerous turning points in our own lives. If we do this successfully we can hope to attain a glorious reputation and the kind of “return to light and life” which is both physical and spiritual. Then, though we are mortal and perishable, our graves will remain steadfast signs for future generations and the songs of our glory will prove imperishable because they will be steadfast in their diffusion and endurance. And just as our deeds of excellence were achieved through a careful balance of opposing and complementary forces, so our fame will be perfectly woven from the balanced themes and diction of steadfastness.

Appendix

Table 1: Subjects and Actions Described as Being *émpedos*.

might (μένος) of Diomedes, *Iliad* 5.254

might (μένος) of Odysseus' nurse (self-stated), *Odyssey* 19.493

might (μένος) of Odysseus (self-stated), *Odyssey* 21.426

mind/mental energy (νόος) of Eurypylus, *Iliad* 11.813

mind/mental energy (νόος) of each of the sailors transformed into a swine,
Odyssey 10.240

φρένες of Teiresias, *Odyssey* 10.493

care given to Odysseus on Calypso's island (like as to a god), *Odyssey* 8.453

transport given to Odysseus by the Phaeacians, *Odyssey* 8.30

bed of Odysseus—the hero wonders whether it is *émpedos*, *Odyssey* 23.203

wall of the Achaeans, *Iliad* 12.12

honorific gifts given to Greek kings (other than Achilles), *Iliad* 9.335

Priam, *Iliad* 20.183

flesh of Patroclus after Thetis infuses it with ambrosia (2x), *Iliad* 19.33, 19.39

night watch of the Trojans, *Iliad* 8.521

everything guarded in Odysseus' household, *Odyssey* 2.227

everything guarded by Penelope (Odysseus's question), *Odyssey* 11.178

everything guarded by Penelope (Penelope's question), *Odyssey* 19.525

the signs (σήματα) identifying Odysseus to Penelope (story about the cloak),

Odyssey 19.250

the signs (σήματα) identifying Odysseus to Penelope (description of their bed),

Odyssey 23.206

the signs (σήματα) identifying Odysseus to his father (his scar and the story of

the orchard given by his father), *Odyssey* 24.346

the remaining of Greek forces against the Trojans like a crag against the sea,

Iliad 15.622

the remaining of horses like a pillar on a tomb, *Iliad* 17.434

the remaining of Poseidon's fettered horses, *Iliad* 13.37

the remaining in place of Hephaestus' shackles, *Odyssey* 8.275

the remaining of Greek heroes like mist on a mountain top on a still day, *Iliad*

5.527

the remaining of Greek forces when in a stalemate with Trojans, *Iliad* 15.406

the remaining of Odysseus on Calypso's island for seven years, *Odyssey* 7.259

the remaining of Odysseus while waiting for more approaching shades, *Odyssey*

11.628

the remaining of Odysseus for his mother's shade, *Odyssey* 11.152

the staying of Odysseus when tied to his mast, *Odyssey* 12.161

the running of a hound after a fawn (like Achilles chasing Hector), *Iliad* 22.192

the rushing of the Phaeacian ship transporting Odysseus to Ithaca (like the

running of yoked stallions), *Odyssey* 13.86

the standing of Odysseus like a rock when hit with a stool, *Odyssey* 17.464

the holding of a shield by Ajax, *Iliad* 16.107

the jumping of Ajax from ship to ship like horseman jumping from horse to

horse, *Iliad* 15.683

the falling of snow, *Iliad* 12.281

the flying of a rock rolling down a hill (like the pressing of Hector against the Greeks), *Iliad* 13.141

the trusting of Hector in his ἀλκή, *Iliad* 18.158

the driving of a chariot by twin sons of Actor (while defeating Nestor) (x2), *Iliad* 23.641, 23.642

the birthing of new flocks for a blameless king with κλέος, *Odyssey* 19.113

Table 2: Subjects and Actions Described as or Implied to Be Not *έμπεδος*

μένος and ἀλκή of Odysseus (rebuke by Athena), *Odyssey* 22.226

φρένες and νόημα of Telemachus (rebuke by Penelope), *Odyssey* 18.215

φρένες of Paris (rebuke by Helen), *Iliad* 6.352

βίη of Odysseus (self-stated while in disguise, part of a wish) (x2), *Odyssey* 14.468
and 503

βίη of Nestor (self-stated, part of a wish), *Iliad* 7.157

βίη of Nestor (self-stated, part of a wish), *Iliad* 11.670

βίη of Nestor (self-stated, part of a wish), *Iliad* 23.629

βίη of Nestor (wish made by Agamemnon), *Iliad* 4.314

heart of Agamemnon, *Iliad* 10.94

limbs of Nestor, *Iliad* 23.627

wall which the Greeks built, *Iliad* 12.9

foot joints of tired warrior, *Iliad* 13.512

ἴς of Agamemnon's shade, *Odyssey* 11.393

the planting of Odysseus' feet on a tree, *Odyssey* 12.434

the holding of a spear by Glaucos, *Iliad* 16.520

Table 3: Partial Formulaic Analysis of *émpedos* (˘˘)

émpedos in the fifth foot

All line-terminal-*émpedos* (˘˘) + form of “be”

Full-line formulas

Pattern A: εἴθ' ὦς/ὦς νῦν + ἠβώοιμι βίη + δέ/τέ + μοι || ἔμπεδος εἶη

(contains the half-line of Pattern B below noun + δέ + τοι/μοι || ἔμπεδος + εἶη)

εἴθ' ὦς ἠβώοιμι βίη δέ μοι || ἔμπεδος εἶη (*Iliad* 7.157, 11.670)

εἴθ' ὦς ἠβώοιμι βίη τέ μοι || ἔμπεδος εἶη (*Iliad* 23.629, *Odyssey* 14.468)

ὥς νῦν ἠβώοιμι βίη τέ μοι || ἔμπεδος εἶη (*Odyssey* 14.503)

Half-line formulas

Pattern B: βίη (˘˘) + δέ(˘) + τοι/μοι(˘) || ἔμπεδος + εἶη

ὥς τοι γούναθ' ἔποιτο βίη δέ τοι || ἔμπεδος εἶη (*Iliad* 4.314)

Formulaic lines

Pattern C: noun(˘˘) + γε(˘) + *(˘) || ἔμπεδος + form of “be”

αἶμα μέλαν κελάρυξε· νόος γε μὲν || ἔμπεδος ἦεν. (*Iliad* 11.813)

Pattern D: ἔτι μοι + μένος || ἔμπεδον + form of “be”

δὴν ἔκαμον τανύων· ἔτι μοι μένος || ἔμπεδόν ἐστιν, (*Odyssey* 21.426)

οὐδὲ καταπτώσσειν· ἔτι μοι μένος || ἔμπεδόν ἐστιν, (*Iliad* 5.254)

Pattern E: noun (˘˘) || ἔμπεδος/ἔμπεδον + form of “be”

Ἀχαιῶν || ἔμπεδον ἦεν. (*Iliad* 12.12)

émpedos in the fourth foot

Full-line formulas

Pattern F: (almost exact)

σήματ' ἀναγνοῦση, τά οἱ ἔμπεδα || πέφραδ' Ὀδυσσεύς (*Odyssey* 23.206)

σήματ' ἀναγνόntonς, τά οἱ ἔμπεδα || πέφραδ' Ὀδυσσεύς (*Odyssey* 24.346)

Pattern G: (exact)

ἀρρήκτους ἀλύτους, ὄφρ' ἔμπεδον || αὔθι μένοιεν (*Iliad* 13.37, *Odyssey* 8.275)

Pattern H: (almost exact, contains Pattern I)

ἦέ μένει παρὰ παιδὶ καὶ ἔμπεδα || πάντα φυλάσσει, (*Odyssey* 11.178)

ἦέ μένω παρὰ παιδὶ καὶ ἔμπεδα || πάντα φυλάσσει, (*Odyssey* 19.525)

Half-line, line-terminal formulas

Pattern I: καὶ ἔμπεδα || πάντα φυλάσσειν

πείθεσθαί τε γέροντι καὶ ἔμπεδα || πάντα φυλάσσειν (*Odyssey* 2.227)

Half-line, line-originating formulas

Pattern J: αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν αὐτοῦ μένον ἔμπεδον || (contains Pattern M)

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν αὐτοῦ μένον ἔμπεδον, || ὄφρ' ἐπὶ μήτηρ (*Odyssey* 11.152)

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν αὐτοῦ μένον ἔμπεδον, || εἴ τις ἔτ' ἔλθοι (*Odyssey* 11.628)

Partial-line formulas

Pattern K: ἔμπεδον, || οὐδὲ

ἔγχος δ' οὐ δύναμαι σχεῖν ἔμπεδον, || οὐδὲ μάχεσθαι (*Iliad* 16.520)

Pattern L: μένον/μένει/μένος(̃) + ἔμπεδον || + οὐδέ (combines Patterns K and M)

ὥς Δαναοὶ Τρῶας μένον ἔμπεδον || οὐδέ φέβοντο (*Iliad* 5.527)

Τρῶας ἐπερχομένους μένον ἔμπεδον, || οὐδ' ἐδύναντο (*Iliad* 15.406)

οἴσθα μὲν, οἶον ἐμὸν μένος ἔμπεδον || οὐδ' ἐπεικτόν· (*Odyssey* 19.493)

οὐκέτι σοί γ', Ὀδυσσεῦ, μένος ἔμπεδον || οὐδέ τις ἀλκή, (*Odyssey* 22.226)

Pattern M: μένον/μένει/μένος(̃) + ἔμπεδον ||

ἀλλ' ὥς τε στήλη μένει ἔμπεδον, || ἢ τ' ἐπὶ τύμβῳ (*Iliad* 17.434)

ἔνθα μὲν ἐπτάετες μένον ἔμπεδον, || εἴματα δ' αἰεὶ (*Odyssey* 7.259)

Pattern N: verb ending in -εει (̃) + ἔμπεδον || ᾄφρα

κοιμήσας δ' ἀνέμους χέει ἔμπεδον, || ᾄφρα καλύψῃ (*Iliad* 12.281)

ἀλλά τὲ ἀνιχνεύων θέει ἔμπεδον || ᾄφρά κεν εὕρη· (*Iliad* 22.192) (contains

Pattern O)

Pattern O: θέει/θέεν + ἔμπεδον

ὔλη· ὃ δ' ἀσφαλέως θέει ἔμπεδον, || εἶος ἵκηται (*Iliad* 13.141)

ἢ δὲ μάλ' ἀσφαλέως θέεν ἔμπεδον· || οὐδέ κεν ἴρηξ (*Odyssey* 13.86)

Table 4: Comparison: Localization of Generic Dactylic Word vs. *émpedos*

	O'Neill's Il.	O'Neill's Od.	O'Neill's Avg. ¹²³	McDonough's Il. Avg. ¹²⁴	<i>émpedos</i> Il. & Od.
1 st foot	25.7%	33.8%	29.8%	28.8%	7%
2 nd foot	9.6%	7.1%	8.4%	6.2%	10%
4 th foot	29.4%	27.6%	28.5%	27.7%	56%
5 th foot	35.3%	31.5%	33.4%	37.2%	28%

Summary

This table demonstrates two important facts about the localization of the term *émpedos* in the Homeric tradition. First, in comparison to the averages obtained by O'Neill and McDonough for words that scan as dactyls (column 4, O'Neill's Avg.), *émpedos* shows a statistically significant trend toward localization in the fourth foot and away from localization in the first foot. (Column 5, *émpedos* Il. & Od., contains the results I obtained in my analysis of the localization of *émpedos* in all 58 Homeric occurrences.) Also, because *émpedos* localizes in the fourth or fifth foot 84% of the time,

¹²³ I have calculated the average from data compiled by Eugene O'Neill Jr. as set forth in his "The Localization of Metrical Word-Types in the Greek Hexameter," Yale Classical Studies, vol. 8 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), 105–178.

¹²⁴ James T. McDonough, Jr., "The Structural Metrics of the *Iliad*" (PhD diss., Columbia University, New York, 1966). In particular, see charts on pages 52–100. O'Neill used 1,000-line samples for his calculations, while McDonough based his numbers on the entire *Iliad*. McDonough uses a slightly different system for describing position.

these lines show a statistically significant trend toward maintaining the bucolic dieresis.

Table 5: Localization of *émpeδος* in Homeric Epic, by Case and Location

ἔμπεδος (14 times)

In the fifth foot

εἴθ' ὡς ἠβώοιμι, βίη δέ μοι ἔμπεδος εἴη· (*Iliad* 7.157)

εἴθ' ὡς ἠβώοιμι βίη δέ μοι ἔμπεδος εἴη (*Iliad* 11.670)

εἴθ' ὡς ἠβώοιμι βίη τέ μοι ἔμπεδος εἴη (*Iliad* 23.629)

εἴθ' ὡς ἠβώοιμι βίη τέ μοι ἔμπεδος εἴη (*Odyssey* 14.468)

ὡς νῦν ἠβώοιμι βίη τέ μοι ἔμπεδος εἴη· (*Odyssey* 14.503)

ὡς τοι γούναθ' ἔποιτο, βίη δέ τοι ἔμπεδος εἴη· (*Iliad* 4.314)

στάξε κατὰ ῥινῶν, ἵνα οἱ χρώς ἔμπεδος εἴη. (*Iliad* 19.39)

πῦρ μέγα καιόντων· φυλακὴ δέ τις ἔμπεδος ἔστω (*Iliad* 8.521)

αἶμα μέλαν κελάρυζε· νόος γε μὲν ἔμπεδος ἦεν. (*Iliad* 11.813)

τόφρα δέ οἱ κομιδὴ γε θεῶ ὡς ἔμπεδος ἦεν. (*Odyssey* 8.453)

In the fourth foot

εἰσὶν γάρ οἱ παῖδες, ὁ δ' ἔμπεδος οὐδ' ἀεσίφρων. (*Iliad* 20.183)

ἀλλ' οὐ γάρ οἱ ἔτ' ἦν ἴς ἔμπεδος οὐδ' ἔτι κῆρυξ (*Odyssey* 11.393)

αἰεὶ τῷ γ' ἔσται χρώς ἔμπεδος, ἦ καὶ ἀρείων. (*Iliad* 19.33)

καὶ δέμας, αὐτὰρ νοῦς ἦν ἔμπεδος ὡς τὸ πάρος περ. (*Odyssey* 10.240)

ἔμπεδον (31 times)

In the fifth foot

οὐδὲ καταπτώσσειν· ἔτι μοι μένος ἔμπεδόν ἐστιν. (*Iliad* 10.254)

δὴν ἔκαμον τανύων· ἔτι μοι μένος ἔμπεδόν ἐστιν (*Odyssey* 21.426)

ἀθανάτων· τὸ καὶ οὗ τι πολὺν χρόνον ἔμπεδον ἦεν. (*Iliad* 12.9)

τόφρα δὲ καὶ μέγα τεῖχος Ἀχαιῶν ἔμπεδον ἦεν. (*Iliad* 12.12)

πομπὴν δ' ὀτρύνει καὶ λίσσεται ἔμπεδον εἶναι. (*Odyssey* 8.30)

In the fourth foot

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν αὐτοῦ μένον ἔμπεδον, ὄφρ' ἐπὶ μήτηρ (*Odyssey* 11.152)

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν αὐτοῦ μένον ἔμπεδον, εἴ τις ἔτ' ἔλθοι (*Odyssey* 11.628)

ὡς Δαναοὶ Τρῶας μένον ἔμπεδον οὐδὲ φέβοντο. (*Iliad* 5.527)

ὡς Δαναοὶ Τρῶας μένον ἔμπεδον οὐδὲ φέβοντο. (*Iliad* 15.622)

Τρῶας ἐπερχομένους μένον ἔμπεδον, οὐδ' ἐδύναντο (*Iliad* 15.406)

ἔνθα μὲν ἐπτάετες μένον ἔμπεδον, εἴματα δ' αἰεὶ (*Odyssey* 7.259)

κοιμήσας δ' ἀνέμους χέει ἔμπεδον, ὄφρα καλύψῃ (*Iliad* 12.281)

ἀρρήκτους ἀλύτους, ὄφρ' ἔμπεδον αὖθι μένοιεν (*Iliad* 13.37)

ἀρρήκτους ἀλύτους, ὄφρ' ἔμπεδον αὖθι μένοιεν. (*Odyssey* 8.275)

δήσατ' ἐν ἀργαλέω, ὄφρ' ἔμπεδον αὐτόθι μίμνω (*Odyssey* 12.161)

ἀλλά τ' ἀνιχνεύων θέει ἔμπεδον ὄφρα κεν εὕρῃ. (*Iliad* 22.192)

ὔλη· ὃ δ' ἀσφαλέως θέει ἔμπεδον, εἶος ἵκηται (*Iliad* 13.141)

ἢ δὲ μάλ' ἀσφαλέως θέεν ἔμπεδον· οὐδέ κεν ἴρηξ (*Odyssey* 13.86)

ἀνέρες ἠδὲ γυναῖκες· ὃ δ' ἔμπεδον ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ. . . . (*Iliad* 15.683)

νεκροῦ ἀπεστυφέλιξαν· ὃ δ' ἔμπεδον ἀλκὴ πεποιθῶς (*Iliad* 18.158)

οἱ δ' ἄρ' ἔσαν δίδυμοι· ὃ μὲν ἔμπεδον ἠνιόχευεν (*Iliad* 23.641)

οὔτε στηρίζαι ποσὶν ἔμπεδον οὔτ' ἐπιβῆναι. (*Odyssey* 12.434)

οἴσθα μὲν, οἶον ἐμὸν μένος ἔμπεδον οὐδ' ἐπιεικτόν. (*Odyssey* 19.493)

“οὐκέτι σοί γ', Ὀδυσσεῦ, μένος ἔμπεδον οὐδέ τις ἀλκή (*Odyssey* 22.226)

ἔγχος δ' οὐ δύναμαι σχεῖν ἔμπεδον, οὐδέ μάχεσθαι (*Iliad* 16.520)

ἄλλ' ὡς τε στήλη μένει ἔμπεδον, ἢ τ' ἐπὶ τύμβῳ (*Iliad* 17.434)

In the second foot

ἢ μοι ἔτ' ἔμπεδόν ἐστι, γύνοι, λέχος, ἧέ τις ἤδη (*Odyssey* 23.203)

In the first foot

ἔμπεδον, ἄλλ' ἀλαλύκτημαι, κραδίη δέ μοι ἔξω (*Iliad* 10.94)

ἔμπεδον αἰὲν ἔχων σάκος αἰόλον· οὐδὲ δύναντο (*Iliad* 16.107)

ἔμπεδον ἠνιόχευ', ὃ δ' ἄρα μάστιγι κέλευεν. (*Iliad* 23.642)

ἔμπεδον, οὐδ' ἄρα μιν σφῆλεν βέλος Ἄντινόοιο (*Odyssey* 17.464)

ἔμπεδοι (3 times)

In the fifth foot

μάντιος ἀλαοῦ, τοῦ τε φρένες ἔμπεδοί εἰσι. (*Odyssey* 10.493)

In the fourth foot

τούτῳ δ' οὔτ' ἄρ νῦν φρένες ἔμπεδοι οὔτ' ἄρ' ὀπίσσω (*Iliad* 6.352)

“Τηλέμαχ', οὐκέτι τοι φρένες ἔμπεδοι οὐδέ νόημα. (*Odyssey* 18.215)

ἔμπεδα (10 times)

In the fourth foot

σήματ' ἀναγνούση, τά οἱ ἔμπεδα πέφραδ' Ὀδυσσεύς. (*Odyssey* 19.250)

σήματ' ἀναγνούση, τά οἱ ἔμπεδα πέφραδ' Ὀδυσσεύς (Odyssey 23.206)

σήματ' ἀναγνόντος, τά οἱ ἔμπεδα πέφραδ' Ὀδυσσεύς (Odyssey 24.346)

ἤε μένει παρὰ παιδὶ καὶ ἔμπεδα πάντα φυλάσσει (Odyssey 11.178)

ἤε μένω παρὰ παιδὶ καὶ ἔμπεδα πάντα φυλάσσω (Odyssey 19.525)

πείθεσθαί τε γέροντι καὶ ἔμπεδα πάντα φυλάσσειν (Odyssey 2.227)

In the second foot

οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' ἔμπεδα γυῖα ποδῶν ἦν ὀρμηθέντι (Iliad 13.512)

οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' ἔμπεδα γυῖα φίλος πόδες, οὐδέ τι χεῖρες (Iliad 23.627)

τοῖσι μὲν ἔμπεδα κεῖται, ἐμεῦ δ' ἀπὸ μόνου Ἀχαιῶν (Iliad 9.335)

τίκτη δ' ἔμπεδα μῆλα, θάλασσα δὲ παρέχη ἰχθυῶν (Odyssey 19.133)

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