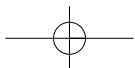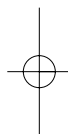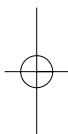PART I

# Reception within Antiquity and Beyond

CHAPTER ONE

# Reception and Tradition

## *Felix Budelmann and Johannes Haubold*

## Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the use of the term 'tradition' in studying the reception of classical antiquity. Tradition is a remarkably open and wide-ranging concept. Its core meaning of 'passing on' has relevance in numerous contexts, and as a result tradition has a role in a wide range of disciplines well beyond the arts.

Within Classics, tradition has had a particular history which centres on the concept of the 'classical tradition'. Long before 'reception' gained the prominence that it has now, the classical tradition was discussed and popularized by books like Gilbert Murray's *The Classical Tradition in Poetry* (Murray 1927) and Gilbert Highet's *The Classical Tradition* (Highet 1949). Such work needs to be seen on the one hand in relation to contemporary thinking about tradition outside Classics: outstanding here are T.S. Eliot's 1920 essay on 'Tradition and the individual talent' and Aby Warburg's 1932 *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity* (see Kennedy 1997: 40–2, and the preface to Warburg 1999). On the other hand, work on the 'classical tradition' represents a more or less explicit engagement with debates over how and why Classics fits into the modern world. These debates go back to the nineteenth century – witness the altercations between Friedrich Nietzsche and Ulrich von Wilamowitz in the 1870s, both classicists by training but with diametrically opposed viewpoints about the subject (Henrichs 1995) – and then gained fresh relevance after the crisis of World War One: Murray's work on the classical tradition is not an isolated phenomenon in the post-war year (on Murray as responding to the war see West 1984: 209–33). Already a few years earlier, two high-profile volumes appeared devoted to the 'legacies' of Greece and Rome, edited by Murray's friend R.W. Livingstone (1921) and Cyril Bailey (1923) respectively, and a multi-volume series *Our Debt to Greece and Rome* was published in the US between 1922 and 1948 (cf. Schein, this volume, ch. 6).

Today, work on the classical tradition from the first half of the twentieth century leaves a mixed impression. Murray's book in particular reads with hindsight as a blend of sensitive analysis that still continues to be suggestive and a now rather dated eulogy of what he regards as 'classical' poetry. A similar point could be made about the notion of a classical tradition as a whole. It remains a useful and indeed evocative term referring to the engagement with classical antiquity in later periods: note for instance the *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* and the Blackwell's *Companion to the Classical Tradition* (Kallendorf 2007). At the same time, some scholars, anxious because of the connotations of conservatism and elitism that the classical tradition cannot always shed, avoid it altogether at the expense of the term 'reception'. Especially in Britain, reception is sometimes thought to be the less problematic concept of the two.

In this chapter, we will not step into the debates over the classical tradition, nor will we focus on discussing 'tradition' in general. Rather, we want to pick up on areas of classical scholarship in which tradition has an established role – by which we mean areas where scholars have become accustomed to using the term 'tradition', partly for historically contingent reasons but partly also because it seemed appropriate and helpful to do so. Most famously, tradition is at the heart of Homeric studies, but books have been published in recent years also on, for example, the Epicurean tradition, ritual lament in the Greek tradition, the Augustinian tradition and the Anacreontic tradition. All these traditions are of course also cases of reception, usually of whole strings of reception. Tradition and reception tend to overlap, though the precise relationship between the two terms, and their implications in any given area of study, is not always easy to pin down. So what we will do in this chapter is take the two traditions of Homeric epic and Anacreontic lyric and discuss what they have to offer to the student of reception. The reason we devote the bulk of the chapter to case studies is that we want to reflect the way both the study of tradition and that of reception depends on its material. Like many critical terms, 'tradition' and 'reception' are most effective when they are tailored from case to case. This is not to say that there are no general points to be made, and we will indeed make some such points; but we believe that it is important to stress the variation in possible approaches to tradition and reception, both in practice and at a more abstract conceptual level.

## Reception and the Anacreontic tradition

Our first case study in reception and tradition is taken from the early modern reception of the Greek lyric poet Anacreon (sixth/fifth century BCE). Anacreon's output is only preserved in fragments, with few complete poems. What is preserved fully, however, is the *Anacreontea*, a collection of mostly anonymous poems inspired by Anacreon, written between the first century BCE and the ninth century CE (text and translation of both Anacreon and the *Anacreontea* in Campbell 1988, discussion in Rosenmeyer 1992). When the *Anacreontea* were first printed, in 1554 by Henricus Stephanus (= Henri Estienne) in Paris, they were widely taken to be by Anacreon

himself, and spawned a rich reception history in most European languages, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Our example will be a poem of unknown date by Abraham Cowley (1618–1667), published among his 1656 *Miscellanies* as one of eight 'Anacreontiques: or, Some Copies of Verses Translated Paraphrastically out of *Anacreon*'.

> *Drinking*
> The thirsty *Earth* soaks up the *Rain*,
> And drinks, and gapes for drink again.
> The *Plants* suck in the earth, and are
> With constant drinking fresh and faire.
> The *Sea* it self, which one would think
> Should have but little need of *Drink*,
> Drinks ten thousand *Rivers* up,
> So fill'd that they oreflow the *Cup*.
> The busie *Sun* (and one would guess
> By's drunken fiery face no less)
> Drinks up the *Sea*, and, when'has don,
> The *Moon* and *Stars* drink up the *Sun*.
> They drink and dance by their own light,
> They drink and revel all the night.
> Nothing in *Nature*'s *Sober* found,
> But an eternal *Health* goes round.
> Fill up the *Bowl*, then, fill it high,
> Fill all the *Glasses* there; for why
> Should every creature drink but *I*,
> Why, *Man of Morals*, tell me why?

In analysing this poem as an act of reception the first thing to point out is its close connection with one of the *Anacreontea* (21 in today's standard numeration).

| | |
|---|---|
| Ἡ γῆ μέλαινα πίνει, | The black earth drinks, |
| πίνει δένδρεα δ' αὐτήν. | the trees drink it. |
| πίνει θάλασσ' ἀναύρους, | The sea drinks the torrents, |
| ὁ δ' ἥλιος θάλασσαν, | the sun the sea, |
| τὸν δ' ἥλιον σηλήνη. | the moon the sun. |
| τί μοι μάχεσθ', ἑταῖροι, | Why fight with me, my friends, |
| καὐτῶι θέλοντι πίνειν; | if I too want to drink? (tr. Campbell) |

Clearly, Cowley's poem uses the structure and conceits of the *Anacreontea* piece, expanding on it in length and level of rhetoric. Cowley imitates the basic sequence of the drinking earth, plants, sea, sun and moon, leading up to the question about the speaker's own drink, but elaborates throughout and so produces a poem that is three times as long.

The next point to note is that Cowley's poem (unlike his Greek source) is clearly tied to a particular political situation. It is one of a rash of English Anacreontic pieces written in the early to mid-seventeenth century by poets including Robert Herrick,

Richard Lovelace, Alexander Brome and the Aeschylus editor Thomas Stanley. As Oliver Cromwell's Parliamentarians were gaining more and more political control their austere cultural and religious outlook was becoming increasingly dominant. Royalists found themselves beleaguered and many of them, including Cowley, spent some time in exile. It is in this context of Puritan supremacy that Cowley's punchline about the 'man of morals' is to be understood. While the nameless Greek author just addresses his friends, Cowley makes a thinly veiled allusion to Puritans, perhaps even Oliver Cromwell himself, and their clampdown on drinking.

It is obvious that these socio-political connotations of the poem could be pursued in more detail (Revard 1991), but here we want to discuss three aspects of Cowley's poem as part of the Anacreontic tradition more broadly.

## Tradition as a Chain of Influence

One thing the Anacreontic tradition does for the student of Cowley is to bring into view a vast number of earlier Anacreontic poems, more or less directly relevant to Cowley's own. Cowley's 'Drinking' is linked with Anacreon through a long chain of what we might call intermediate acts of reception. Without doubt the most influential is the late antique and Byzantine *Anacreontea* collection, which itself constitutes a reception of Anacreon. The Anacreon of Cowley and his contemporaries was not the Anacreon printed in today's editions but the *Anacreontea*. Most intermediate acts of reception are less momentous, of course, and do not reshape perceptions of an earlier text or author to the same degree. One such intermediate reception is a version of the same *Anacreontea* piece by the German poet Georg Rudolf Weckherlin, published in 1641 as 'Ode oder Drincklied. Anacreontisch' (Fischer 1884: 501–3). Like Cowley, and unlike most other poets writing versions of *Anacreontea* 21, Weckherlin expanded significantly on his model. The similarities in the detail of Cowley's and Weckherlin's expansion, together with the fact that Weckherlin spent time in England, have suggested to some scholars the dependency of one version on the other. Weckherlin may have drawn on Cowley, or Cowley on Weckherlin, alongside whatever other sources they used (Zeman 1972: 45–8; Revard 1991 traces other influences on Cowley).

Influence-spotting has sometimes acquired a bad name and can in fact be misleading. The complete set of literary influences (let alone cultural influences more broadly) that bear upon a poem is ultimately untraceable. In our example, even the role of Weckherlin is unclear. Moreover, we may ask which other Anacreontic poems Cowley was familiar with, and what drinking songs more broadly. What other poems may have shaped his habits? What anti-puritan jokes? We simply will never know what earlier material, consciously or unconsciously, went into Cowley's poem, let alone what in turn had shaped that earlier material. We are able to point, in certain cases, to obvious influences, but those influences will always only be a few among many. That said, it is undeniable that Cowley's creative act has behind it an enormous number of earlier creative acts. Even though we cannot delineate all or even most of them in an archaeology of influence, the influence of the past as such is

undeniable. Anacreon is not transported onto Cowley's desk or to Cowley's period by a time machine (and the same is of course true for our reading of Anacreon or Cowley today). Renaissance or modern engagements with antiquity are shaped by many centuries of cumulative earlier engagements, starting in antiquity itself. Bearing in mind the wider Anacreontic tradition does not give us a key to tracing this build-up in exhaustive detail, but it shows us the importance of giving historical depth to any analysis of individual moments of reception, such as Cowley's 'Drinking', and indeed to our own reading of Anacreon, Cowley or anything else.

## Tradition as an Imaginary Context

The amorphous and elusive nature that the Anacreontic tradition shares with many other traditions is not just a hindrance but can also be an advantage. It offers poets a place of belonging. Homeric rhapsodes called themselves 'sons of Homer', making themselves part of a wider family (Graziosi, this volume, ch. 2). The *Anacreontea* collection does something comparable with Anacreon, whose name opens the first poem. The poets of the *Anacreontea* often remained anonymous, and in various ways positioned themselves as continuing a project started by Anacreon rather than advertising their own originality. Cowley is less self-effacing. He publishes in his own name and leaves his mark. Not least because of his rhetorical expansions, Cowley has often been regarded as the most important English Anacreontic poet (Baumann 1974: 73–9; Mason 1990: 107–9). The jibe at the 'man of morals', too, distinguishes this poem not just from *Anacreontea* 21, but also from other, less polemical, versions of it. Even so, Cowley can still be looked at as part of a larger project. He calls his piece a paraphrastic translation, and uses the term 'Anacreontiques' almost as the marker of a genre. He thus places his poem among other poems carrying this label, like Weckherlin's 'Ode oder Drincklied. Anacreontisch' and like several of Herrick's *Hesperides* (published 1648, see Braden 1978: 216–17). The ways individual authors place themselves in or against a tradition vary enormously. In most cases, like here, there is some blend of innovation, indeed flaunted innovation, and seamless integration.

Just as the nature of this blend varies so do its effects. In Cowley's poem, one effect is a playful pretence of innocence. The piece poses as just an Anacreontic translation: there is nothing new. The fact that this mere translation is provocative in a context in which drink is a political issue would of course not have escaped Cowley's readers. So the traditionality of Cowley's stance sharpens rather than blunts the poem's political edge.

But that is not the only effect it has. It would probably be wrong to see the avowedly Anacreontic aspect of the poem merely as mock-camouflage used for political attack. Even though Cowley is rarely harmless, this is probably the punchiest of his *Anacreontiques*, which suggests that Anacreon held further attractions for him. Arguably, he and his royalist friends also drew some comfort from communing with Anacreon and Anacreontically minded people of the past. As they had to keep themselves to themselves, in a world that was hostile to their practices and beliefs, the

Anacreontic tradition will have given them a more sympathetic imaginary home. They were not alone in enjoying drink and song.

# Tradition as Continuity

Much recent literary and cultural criticism focuses on what is particular about a given text or author. Why does Anacreon appeal to a royalist under the Protectorate? How does Cowley's piece relate to Weckherlin's? How does Cowley adapt *Anacreontea* 21? Not that these questions can be settled with certainty, but they can be discussed in interesting ways.

Thinking about the Anacreontic tradition gives a different vantage point. Of course, as we just pointed out, tradition too has room for particularity. Cowley created his own lastingly recognizable place within it. But tradition also puts a premium on continuity, sometimes even timelessness. Anacreontic poetry continued to be widely popular across a number of centuries. The appeal of each individual poem will have had something to do with its particular features and circumstances – such as Cowley's anti-puritan snipe for the consumption of other anti-puritans – but for a balanced understanding of Anacreontic poetry one needs to come to terms also with the many features that one finds again and again, in different periods and languages: brevity (Cowley's poem is at the long end of the spectrum); simplicity of metre (here: the iambic tetrameters); simplicity of language (Cowley is unusually rhetorical, but even Cowley's language is quite straightforward); wit (here: the punch line); a small number of usually apolitical and unspecific themes (especially drink, which here has a political application, and love); and, above all, a light-hearted tone.

Perhaps one of the most helpful observations to make about these repeated features is to point out that many of them are shared with the ever-popular genre of drinking song, and to note that Anacreontic poetry weaves together refined poetry and banal forms of conviviality (Achilleos 2004). The connection with drinking song is important because it helps explain both the remarkable degree of stability in the tradition and its popularity in many contexts in which popular forms of song and high-cachet poetry could be brought together (Roth 2000 is particularly suggestive).

This is a rewarding but challenging line of enquiry to pursue further. What, one is led to ask, is it that gives drinking song and the way Anacreontic poetry uses it such wide appeal? Homeric criticism has learned to discuss formulae and types scenes, and the power that is locked up in them (see our second case study). In addition to providing convenient building blocks for composition in performance, such repeated material contains pieces of cultural memory in condensed form. Comparable models for thinking about other poetry are rare, even though the Anacreontic tradition like many other literary traditions is repetitive in its own way: repeated metrical patterns, repeated themes, repeated jokes, etc. The recent rise in the use of cognitive science in literary studies is promising here, and may eventually help analyse the traditional aspects of Anacreontic poems like Cowley's. There is almost certainly something hardwired in the appeal of particular simple forms and particular themes like drink and desire. The risk in looking for cognitive patterns is

of course that one goes too far and starts treating Anacreontic poems as exemplars of more or less universal patterns, ignoring their individuality, their links with certain contexts and the fluctuations of their popularity. The potential pitfalls are obvious, but so is the need to understand more fully why Cowley and others chose to write 'Anacreontics', rather than simply using the Anacreontic poems they read as a quarry, or a foil against which to present their own ideas.

## Reception and the Homeric Tradition

From the reception of Anacreon in early modern Britain we move on to another area where the concept of tradition is of particular interest to students of reception. In the first half of the twentieth century, Milman Parry influentially defined Homeric poetry as the product of a traditional art form (Parry 1971). Linguistic formulae and other traditional patterns provide the performing bard with an economic means of responding to the constraints of oral improvisation. This idea was taken up and refined by Parry's student Albert Lord (Lord (2000). According to him, the traditional nature of Homeric poetry extends beyond language to type scenes such as arming, bathing or supplication (compare already Parry 1971: 404–7); and even to large-scale story patterns such as the return of a hero after an extended period of absence. More recent scholarship has further developed Parry's ideas, pointing out the expressive potential of traditional language and combining an aesthetic of traditionality with an emphasis on audience response (e.g. Nagy 1999; J.M. Foley 1999; Scodel 2002). What remains a largely unresolved problem is Homer's relationship with other, earlier literatures in the ancient Mediterranean (Burkert 1992; Morris 1997; West 1997). This is another area of obvious interest to anybody wishing to study the reception of ancient material; though it raises different questions from the ones we encountered when looking at Cowley's subversive drinking song.

Broadly speaking, the epic tradition from which Homeric poetry grows is both more pronounced and less open to change than the tradition of Anacreontic poetry within which Cowley was operating. Whereas Cowley was free to reshape *Anacreontea* 21 quite radically, albeit within the wider traditional framework of Anacreontic song, the language, themes and narrative patterns of early Greek epic tend to be more stable. The reasons for this are complex and are certainly not exhausted by labelling Homeric poetry an 'oral' art form (Foley 2002). Recent scholarship suggests that the traditional features of Homeric poetry have much to do with its claims to truth and authority (Graziosi/Haubold 2005). Whatever the reasons behind the phenomenon, such is the level of repetition and formulaic stylization in Homeric poetry that it is often difficult to pinpoint the contribution of individual composer-performers. This has an obvious impact on the terms of our inquiry: with Cowley we asked what thinking about tradition can add to our understanding of reception. With Homer and his predecessors in the ancient Mediterranean the most pressing question becomes how best to understand the act of reception itself, in the face of an obvious and thoroughgoing commitment to tradition.

To get a sense of the issues involved, let us start with an apparent echo of Babylonian literature in Homer. Homer, like Hesiod, sees the gods as descendants of Uranus (= 'Sky'). The only exception to this view is a passage from the *Iliad* where Oceanus and Tethys are described as the ancestors of the gods (Homer, *Iliad* 14.197–205):

Τὴν δὲ δολοφρονέουσα προσυήδα πότνια Ἥρη.
'δὸς νῦν μοι φιλότητα καὶ ἵμερον, ᾧ τε σὺ πάντας
δαμνᾶι ἀθανάτους ἠδὲ θνητοὺς ἀνθρώπους.
εἶμι γὰρ ὀψομένη πολυφόρβου πείρατα γαίης,
Ὠκεανόν τε θεῶν γένεσιν, καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν,
οἵ με σφοῖσι δόμοισιν ἐὺ τρέφον ἠδ' ἀτίταλλον,
δεξάμενοι Ῥείας, ὅτε τε Κρόνον εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς
γαίης νέρθε καθεῖσε καὶ ἀτρυγέτοιο θαλάσσης.
τοὺς εἶμ' ὀψομένη, καί σφ' ἄκριτα νείκεα λύσω.'

[Then, with cunning intent the lady Hera answered her:
'Give me loveliness and desirability, graces
with which you overwhelm mortal men, and all the immortals.
Since I go now to the ends of the generous earth, on a visit
to Okeanos, whence the gods have risen, and mother Tethys
who brought me up kindly in their own house, and cared for me
and took me from Rheia, at the time when Zeus of the wide brows
drove Kronos underneath the earth and the barren water.
I shall go to visit these, and resolve their division of discord.']

(tr. Lattimore; modified)

The extract is taken from a longer speech: Hera asks Aphrodite for the *kestos*, a magic piece of clothing with which she hopes to distract Zeus from the battlefield and thus ensure an Achaean victory. She pretends that her plan is to reconcile Oceanus and Tethys (in reality she wants to seduce Zeus), and in this context depicts them as the ancestors of the gods (*Il.* 14.201). Walter Burkert and others (Burkert 1992: 91–6; cf. Morris 1997: 602; West 1997: 147–8) have pointed out that this apparently innocent detail is highly unusual in the context of early Greek epic; and that it recalls the Babylonian account of creation, the *Enūma eliš*, where two watery creatures, Apsu and Tiamat, give rise to the gods (*Enūma eliš* I.1–5, Talon):

*e-nu-ma e-liš la na-bu-ú šá-ma-mu*
*šap-liš am-ma-tum šu-ma la zak-rat*
ZU.AB-*ma reš-tu-ú za-ru-šu-un*
*mu-um-mu ti-amat mu-al-li-da-at gim-ri-šú-un*
A.MEŠ-*šú-nu iš-te-niš i-hi-iq-qu-ma ...*

When the sky above was not yet named
and below the earth did not yet have a name,
Apsu, the first one, their ancestor,
and creative Tiamat who bore them all,
were mixing their waters together . . .

There are some striking similarities between the two ancestral couples of Hera's speech and the Babylonian *Enūma eliš*. According to Burkert, even the name Tethys is derived from that of Tiamat, the corresponding mother figure in the Babylonian text. Homer, it would seem, has adopted and reworked a Babylonian classic 'down to a mythical name' (Burkert 1992: 93; for further discussion of the possibility that Tethys = Tiamat, see West 1997: 147–8 with n. 200).

Now, it is important to note that we do not actually know for certain whether *Enūma eliš* is the model behind Hera's speech. With Cowley, things were very much more straightforward: not all his sources can be traced, but he clearly had *Anacreontea* 21 in mind and assumed that at least some of his readers did too. By contrast, it cannot be proved that Homer ever came into contact with non-Greek poetry, including *Enūma eliš*. Sceptics have even suggested that parallels between Homeric epic and earlier Near Eastern texts are largely a reflection of standard human patterns of thought; though this position seems extreme and is becoming increasingly untenable. Assuming that Hera's speech in *Iliad* 14 does bear a meaningful resemblance with *Enūma eliš* beyond what is simply human, the question remains how to interpret it. Burkert emphasizes the fact that Oceanus and Tethys as a primordial couple are untraditional by the standards of Homeric (and Hesiodic) poetry. His claim is correct in so far as these deities do not normally occupy such a prominent role. But to conclude, as he does, that their depiction must be the result of external influence because it could not have been traditional raises a host of problems. At a very general level, Burkert's model of reception as 'influence' has severe limitations (Haubold 2002): as has become clear when we looked at Cowley and the Anacreontic tradition, acts of reception – however conceived – need not exclude continuity of tradition. We shall return to this point in a moment; but since the devil in reception studies is often in the detail, let us first revisit some of the details of Burkert's case.

To begin with, neither Oceanus nor Tethys can fairly be called untraditional characters in early Greek epic, no matter where their names originated. Oceanus makes appearances throughout Homer (*Il.* 1.423 etc.; *Od.* 4.568 etc.) and Tethys is well known to Hesiod (*Th.* 136 etc.). Turning to their role as described by Hera, we note that the goddess speaks δολοφρονΥουσα 'with cunning intent'. Under such circumstances we expect a fair amount of rhetorical distortion, especially from a deity who has a habit of manipulating cosmogonic 'facts'. In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, Hera gangs up with the Titans to engender Typhaon, the enemy *par excellence* of Zeus' rule (335–6). In this context, she describes the Titans as the progenitors of gods and men (337), a half-truth which is transparently intended as a challenge to Zeus as 'father of gods and men' (πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε). Hera's speech in *Iliad* 14, from which our passage is taken, is likewise born of insubordination and contains similar half-truths: her description of Oceanus and Tethys in particular seems only a slight exaggeration when compared to the *Theogony*, where they give rise to no fewer than 6,000 divine children (Hes. *Th.* 337–70). Declaring Oceanus the 'origin of the gods' is not so much wrong as it is tendentious. A similar point can be made about Hera's claim to be his foster daughter, and about the alleged time of her adoption during the battle of the Titans. That battle was the defining

moment of Zeus' rule. Hera claims that she was with Oceanus (himself a Titan) when it happened, thus distancing herself from the current world order. In the process, she becomes an adoptive daughter of Oceanus, one of the powerful *Okeaninai* who are prominent throughout the epic tradition, often as a challenge to Zeus' rule (e.g. Hes. *Th.* 358, 886–90 for Zeus' wife Metis and her children).

It would thus appear that a simple dichotomy between 'traditional' and 'untraditional' material does not do justice to the complexities of Hera's speech. Nor will it help us understand the dynamics of reception in the context of early Greek epic. Later epic poets often engaged in a conscious game of adopting and transmuting earlier literary habits (e.g. Fantuzzi and Hunter 2005; Hinds 1998). That this was so was well understood by their contemporaries and was an important part of the enjoyment the texts had to offer. We look in vain for a similar awareness among the audiences of Homer. The Homeric scholia notoriously fail to comment on possible connections with earlier non-Greek texts: even such glaring parallels as *Iliad* 14 and *Enūma eliš* 1 are passed over in silence. One might argue that the relevant Near Eastern texts had simply fallen into oblivion; though later Greeks certainly knew some of them, and they could have known even more had they cared to find out. The point is that they did not care: as Glenn Most observes, there is no evidence to speak of that Greek audiences were ever interested in identifying Homer's sources (Most 2003: 85). Most's observation poses a problem for the student of reception: even if we accept as likely that Hera's speech in *Iliad* 14 depends ultimately on *Enūma eliš*, it is far from clear what exactly follows from this. The problem can be formulated in even more general terms: what, if anything, does our knowledge of older non-Greek texts contribute to our understanding of Homeric poetry?

In pursuing this question further, we must beware of judging Homeric epic by literary standards other than its own. In their search for a viable model, scholars of Homer have sometimes looked to the reception of Greek poetry on the part of Latin authors. But even the most superficial of glances suggests that the analogy is a false one: Latin poets partake in a poetics of allusion and imitation (*imitatio, aemulatio* etc.) of which the reception of Greek literary models is an integral part. These are important aspects of the early modern reception of classical literature too (including Anacreon), but with Homer the situation is very different: as Scodel 2002 in particular has shown, Homeric epic does not highlight borrowings of any kind because this would run counter to its 'rhetoric of traditionality'. In other words, the Homeric narrator wants his story to look familiar even when there are strong reasons to suspect that it is not.

This takes us back to the more fundamental question of whether Homer had 'sources' in any relevant sense of the word; or whether the undoubted similarities between, say, *Iliad* 14 and *Enūma eliš* call for an altogether different model of how texts relate to other texts. The question is best tackled by stepping back and looking at Homer's treatment of the gods more generally. By common consent, this is an area where Greek epic comes particularly close to neighbouring narrative traditions (Morris 1997: 616). The notion of a divine family with a history, a shared abode and a hierarchical structure with Zeus at its head all point eastwards. So far, scholars have tended to assume that the Homeric gods represent little more than literary embellishments,

perhaps borrowed from eastern sources for orientalising effect. But the relatively serious deities of Hesiod's *Theogony* are as 'oriental' as the laughing and feasting deities familiar from the *Iliad*. More generally, the gods are of central importance to epic as a genre, and even the details of their description mattered enormously to ancient audiences. Zeus, for example, was the 'gatherer of clouds' (cf. Ugaritic Ba'al as 'rider of the clouds'; Burkert 1992: 116) for very good reasons. Everyone knew that it was he who ruled the heavens and wielded the thunderbolt. It could not be otherwise: no less than the stability of the universe depended upon it. Zeus and his fellow gods, then, cannot be brushed aside as 'oriental imports', but they were not contained within the confines of Greek culture either (however understood). Like everyone else in the ancient Mediterranean, the Greeks conceived of their gods as universal forces. Zeus ruled the entire world, not just Greece. Poseidon caused earthquakes all over, not just in Greece. More generally, what Herodotus (2.53) calls the Greeks' 'theogony' had to account for the making of the entire world, not just Greece. It is here that we find some of the common ground between epic tradition and near eastern reception that so often proves elusive: Homer's gods may well have reached the Greeks from the East and they are certainly *meant* to look international; but at the same time they are also perfectly traditional.

This last point can now be generalized: in the context of strongly traditional art forms like early Greek epic, the study of reception acquires a specific meaning. As we have seen, one should not think of Homer as reworking individual source texts in the sense in which Cowley reworks *Anacreontea* 21; nor should one divorce individual passages from the wider context of the Greek epic tradition. Our point here is not to emphasize the uniqueness of Homer so much as to insist that there is no one single kind of relationship between tradition and reception; different texts require us to define this relationship in different ways, depending on the value they place on continuity, cultural authority and political relevance. Homeric poetry is only one among many examples one might use to illustrate the wider point that reception and tradition can be linked in complex and often unpredictable ways. There are of course differences in texture even within the overall framework of early Greek epic. Hera's deceptive speech in *Iliad* 14 is clearly meant to stand out as *relatively* idiosyncratic. But even here, the fabric of the tradition is stretched rather than simply torn. More generally, almost anything that we might wish to study under the heading of reception in Homer can also, with almost equal justification, be called 'tradition'.

# Conclusions

Both case studies illustrate, we hope, that considerations about tradition have much to add to discussions of reception. In spite, or probably rather because, of their different vantage points, 'tradition' and 'reception' go together well and can mutually enhance one another. Cowley's Anacreontics and Homer's epics become richer texts when they are looked at in terms of both tradition and reception. One central

contention of this chapter, therefore, is that we need to keep tradition in view when studying reception, and vice versa.

Beyond that, it is difficult to speak in general terms, and that is our second conclusion. The way 'tradition' and 'reception' relate to one another varies greatly. Our two case studies differ in many respects, and further examples, drawing on other texts or indeed on non-textual traditions, would produce further differences. The notions of tradition and reception owe much of their currency to their vague and suggestive quality, which makes both of them flexible umbrella terms for a wide range of critical pursuits. This volume demonstrates just how wide a term 'reception' is, and here we have tried to adumbrate the similarly broad range of 'tradition'. Such flexibility can be challenging in practice. It requires changes in approach when transferring the terms from one example to the next. Not just the poems, sculptures, pamphlets and ideologies that fall under the rubrics of tradition and reception are context-dependent, but so are the concepts themselves.

This need for sensitivity to context prompted us to concentrate on case studies rather than general discussion, and we hope this focus has justified itself. Before we end, though, we need to address an issue that is raised by our particular choice of examples. We picked two traditions that between them cover a certain breadth, trying to demonstrate that our topic embraces both ancient (Homer, Anacreon) and more recent (Cowley), and both conventionally classical and non-canonical (*Enūma eliš*) material. Yet in a different way our choice has been rather limited. Both case studies are taken from traditions that are firmly established within classical scholarship. Both are in a sense obvious choices.

One reason for this focus on the well established is the fact that the concept of 'tradition' is both epistemologically and politically problematic. Traditions, as Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger influentially put it, are often invented, individually or collectively, consciously or unconsciously (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). There are few traditions whose existence cannot somehow be questioned, and there is no objective way of establishing whether something is a tradition, or what is and what is not part of a particular tradition. Marx neatly quipped 'I am not a Marxist'.

This awareness of the role of invention in forming traditions leads on to questions about the reasons for their invention. Here as elsewhere, the question *cui bono* can prompt interesting answers. Discussions of the classical tradition from the first half of the twentieth century, for instance, often have an element of self-justification: classicists give themselves a particular role by placing themselves in a continuous and value-laden tradition that reaches from antiquity to their own day. More sympathetically perhaps, some African thinkers have claimed certain kinds of continuity between their culture and the ancient Greeks as part of their struggle against dominant models that see everything that is valuable in African cultures as a colonial import (Howe 1998: index s.v. 'Greece/Greeks'). At the other end of the political scale, and with blatantly invidious intent, the Italian Fascists portrayed themselves as part of a tradition started by the Romans (Stone 1999). Clearly, talk of tradition is often self-interested, and the self-interest may be judged admirable or contemptible.

Our two case studies are less highly charged. Homer can be said to have been invented (Graziosi 2002); there is no reliable test for determining what is and what

is not an Anacreontic poem; and as we have discussed Cowley's use of Anacreon is not innocent. But it is obvious that questions of *ad hoc* manipulation and politics are less immediately prominent in Cowley's 'Drinking' and Homeric uses of non-Greek motifs than in fascist or postcolonial uses of tradition. Clearly, therefore, our two cases studies can claim to be representative only to a very limited extent. We chose two unusually well-established traditions because we wanted to give ourselves room for illustrating ways in which tradition as a critical term can help studying acts of reception. With different examples, the chapter would have looked rather different.

But that is of course part of our point. The important thing to understand here is that one of the most interesting questions about traditions is what they allow people to do. Traditions are enabling. They enable people – scholars as much as poets, politicians and whole societies – to make certain connections. Traditions derive their power from people believing in them and using them in the way they choose. They do not exist as such, and they are not intrinsically good or bad. So for a last time we are reminded of the need to follow the lead of one's subject matter. In the study of reception as indeed elsewhere, 'tradition' should not be invoked, defended or attacked as a Platonic idea, but should be seen as a pliable tool for suggesting new perspectives, in different ways on different occasions. The concept is there for the taking.

## FURTHER READING

Martindale 1993 contains important material on tradition in the study of reception (especially ch. 1.5), as does Lianeri 2006. Hardwick 2003a: ch. 1 charts a path 'from the classical tradition to reception studies'. The classical tradition is first expounded at length by Murray 1927; for recent work see Kallendorf 20007. Burke 2004: chs 1 and 2 has some concise comments on tradition from a cultural history perspective. The standard volume on invented traditions is Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds) 1983. The introduction to Machor and Goldstein (eds) 2001 traces the changes in the use of reception as a critical term. Stimulating perspectives on tradition outside the humanities may be gained from Boyer 1990 and Aunger (ed.) 2001.

Rosenmeyer 1992 discusses Anacreon and the *Anacreontea*; text and translation of both in Campbell 1988. Zeman 1999 is an overview of Anacreontics in post-Renaissance literature, with further literature on the various periods and countries. Brown 1999 and Roth 2000 treat Anacreontics as a genre, especially in English literature. For Homeric epic as a traditional genre see Parry 1971, J.M. Foley 1999, Lord 2000. Up-to-date discussions of tradition and reception in Homer can be found in Scodel 2002 and Graziosi this volume. Burkert 1992 and West 1997 collect and discuss much of the relevant material for the Homeric reception of Near Eastern poetry. Haubold 2002 suggests an alternative framework for comparative study.