

From Hexameter to Hekatompedon: Spatial Mnemonics and the Mutual Influence of
Oral Epic and the Architecture of the Archaic Age Greek Temple

Even as recent Homer scholarship (Calame 2009, Clay 2011) has underscored the importance of spatial memory in the creation, memorization, and performance of Homeric epic, a number of important books and articles have furthered our understanding of the architectural evolution of the Doric temple in Greece. In particular, Jones (2002) recently argued that triglyphs arise in the Doric frieze not as representations of covers for beam ends in wooden temples, but as stylized renditions of tripods, raising the possibility that there is a connection between the function of tripods as exemplars of *geras* par excellence in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and their appearance in the Doric frieze.

In my presentation, I propose that the incorporation of epic devices such as triglyphs and an architectural footprint resembling a Bronze Age *megaron* arises in the evolving Archaic Age temple hand-in-hand with the established poetic practice of using the so-called Simonidean memory technique of *loci* in spaces culturally designated as performance venues for Homeric poetry: outdoor sanctuaries (using evidence from Hesiod's *Dichterweihe* in the *Theogony*) and the *megaron*, which closely resembles the Archaic age temples in its disposition of constituent spaces.

I briefly sketch a reconstruction of how the toponym-rich proem of the *Theogony* might represent a use the physical topography of a cult site as a mnemonic for the performance of the *Theogony* in situ, and then go on to examine how the *Odyssey* intermingles potentially mnemonic descriptions of rural cult sites (the grove of Athena in Book 6; the Cave of the Nymphs in Book 13) with likewise potentially mnemonic urban cult sites (the palace of Odysseus).

My paper concludes that there may have existed a synergy between the rise of the Archaic Age monumental Greek temple and the description of *megara* in early Greek epic: *Aoidoi* may have employed the physical architecture of the spaces in which they performed both as mnemonics and as plot elements in their narratives. The use of temples as mnemonics may have, conversely, influenced their design, prompting communities to attempt to create performance spaces more closely approximating the palaces familiar from epics, enhancing the theatricality and sense of immediacy of the performance of epic.

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