THE CENTER FOR HELLENIC STUDIES

Stony Brook University
College *of* Arts and Sciences

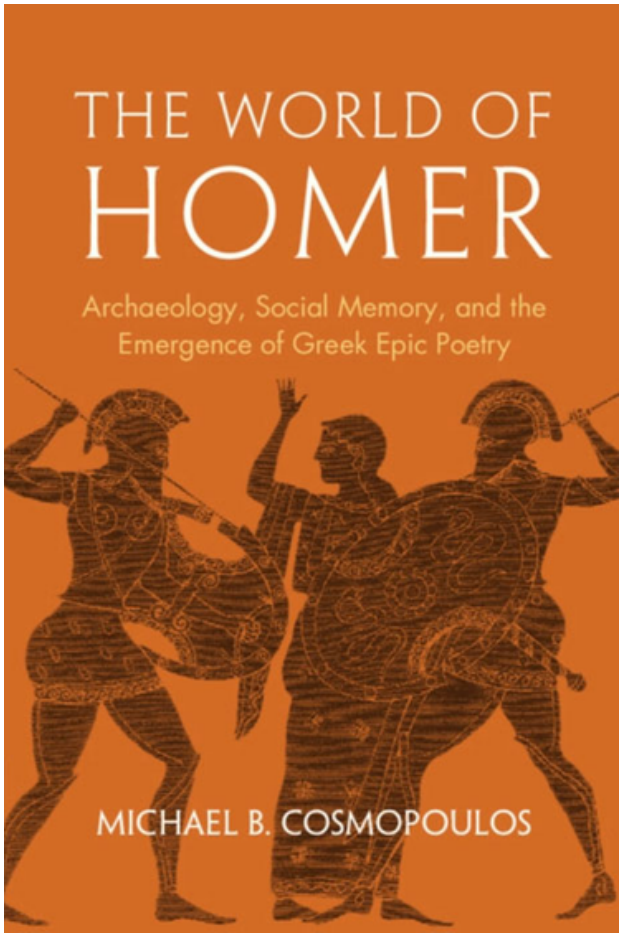
The World of the Odyssey:

Myths, Archaeology, and the Origins of Homer's Epics



Michael Cosmopoulos

Curator's Distinguished Professor
Archaeology, University of Missouri



For thousands of years, Homer's Iliad and Odyssey have captivated audiences with their timeless tales of love, honor, war, and adventure. But how did these extraordinary poems come into being? Were they purely products of poetic imagination, or did they preserve memories of a real historical past? Over the past 150 years, exciting archaeological discoveries have transformed our understanding of the world of Homer, bringing to light the great palaces of the Homeric heroes and revealing the fascinating society of the Greek Bronze Age. The palaces of Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos, Iklaina, and Troy stand at the crossroads of myth and historical reality and raise an intriguing question: how did memories of a civilization that disappeared centuries before Homer survive and find their way into the epics? Bringing together archaeology, history, and the study of ancient poetry, this lecture explores what archaeological discoveries can tell us about the origins of the Iliad and the Odyssey, and how the distant world of the Bronze Age helped give birth to two of the greatest works of world literature.

ZOOM REGISTRATION

Thursday, December 3rd, 2026

6:00PM I Zoom Lecture

Questions? Contact: styliani-anna.tsirka@stonybrook.edu