

The Bard's Quest for Knowledge  
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In the Greek world, knowledge of the ends of the world was brought into the realm of the known primarily by travelers and bards sharing stories and tales. Itinerant bards would travel from village to village entertaining the people with adventures of their journeys of far off places and times. The dissemination of knowledge of the greater outreaches of the world was important to the Greeks in understanding their past, present, and future. Therefore bards, who possessed this esoteric knowledge of the world, were prized accoutrements to the houses of their patrons and may have been temporary residents. The status of the bard in society is ambiguous but a special status seems to have been granted to them through special privileges and protection. After all, the bard was an entertainer, either for large civic festivals or for private feasts, and was revered for his esoteric knowledge. Some of the literary evidence concerning the role of the bard in society derives from a bard himself, Homer. Through the examination of oral tradition and the role of the bard in Homer and other literary sources from the Near East, I will demonstrate that the itinerant bard had an important role in society by sharing stories and adventures acquired through his own journeys which were adapted and integrated into the Greek knowledge and imagination of the world.