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Foreword

Inclusive, collaborative and progressive, AMPAL serves as a forum for postgraduates in Classics to refine their research under a shared theme. In 2019 Leeds welcomed papers on Power in Ancient Literature and we were lucky enough to receive talks on both Greek and Roman drama, on epigraphy, on Latin poetry from Augustus to Nero; on philosophical, historical and fragmentary texts from Archaic Greece to Late Antiquity. Not only were the presentations tailored to the theme of Power, but the delegates also embraced this in their discussion sessions. As a result, this edition reflects both the diversity of the papers and the integration of the feedback from the conference itself.

New Classicists is the ideal forum to present this work, because it represents the future of Classics by incorporating interdisciplinary research, combining studies on different periods and regions of antiquity. New Classicists is led by postgraduates and the chief editor, Greg Gilles, has steered these papers through the peer-review process with support, encouragement and academic rigour. This edition presents papers on Greek literature, philosophy and Roman history, to explore the Power structures at work in Classical literature and New Classicists provides the platform for such a diverse range of subjects.

It is great to see a publication that so aptly reflects the spirit of the conference itself by welcoming new approaches and audiences. AMPAL 2019 was the first to include a keynote open to the public, delivered by Natalie Haynes on Women and Narratives of Power in the Trojan War, which championed the retelling of Troy in trade publications such as A Thousand Ships and Pat Barker's Silence of the Girls. Encouraging inclusion and debate was a key ethos for AMPAL 2019 and is well reflected in this work.

Special thanks go to Elinor Cosgrave for taking the lead in organising AMPAL 2019, to Greg Gilles for his patience and tenacity in producing the volume and to the anonymous peer-reviewers for their valuable feedback. Above all, thanks go to the researchers in this volume and beyond, who gave their time to share their research and created such a warm, friendly conference environment.

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One to rule them all: The γόης of (Plato's) Ancient Athens

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Introduction

Best translated as "sorcerer" or "enchanter", the γόης (*goēs*) played a prominent role in Ancient Greece by means of the influence he was capable of exerting on others through his words.[1] This paper will analyse a pivotal stage in the development of this intriguing figure. By adopting a historical perspective, in what follows I will first illustrate the main features of this figure, with a focus on Euripides' *Bacchae* and *Hippolytus* and on Plato's *Laws*. The *goēs* will emerge as a liminal figure, an outsider and lawbreaker relegated to the edges of society because of his very psychagogic powers (i.e. powers that move the soul). The bulk of this work will be devoted to Plato's Athens as depicted in three dialogues (*Euthydemus*, *Gorgias*, and *Republic*).[2] A careful reading suggests a crucial shift: the *goēs* is now refashioned as a Sophist, and as such, far from being an outcast, he can exert his power on the City overtly and gain a central role in its dynamics of power. Ultimately, and paradoxically, Athens itself will turn out to be a *goēs*, exerting the strongest influence on Athenians, non-Athenians, and Sophists alike.[3]

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[1] Cf. LSJ s.v. For the literary evidence cf. e.g. A. *Ch*. 823; Hdt. 2.32.6-33.4; E. *Ba*. 234; *Hipp*. 1038. For an analysis of the non-fragmentary, literary occurrences of the term up to Plato cf. Antola 2016.
The figure of the *goēs* remains object of interest in later periods, however it becomes harder to distinguish from other figures such as the μάγοι (*magoi*). The terms *goēs* and μάγος (*magos*) are in fact used as synonyms already in the fifth-century BC (cf. Bernard 1991, p. 46). On the different figures cf. e.g. Graf 2009, pp. 21-34.

[2] For an exhaustive study of *goēs*, γοητεύω (*goēteuō*), and γοητεία (*goēteia*) in Platonic dialogues cf. Antola 2016, pp. 54-128. For editions and translations see bibliography. All translations are modified by me. The translation of Plato's *Euthydemus* is my own. I refer mainly to A.T. Murray 1919 for the *Odyssey*; Kovacs 1995 and 2002 for Euripides' plays; Bury 1967 & 1968 for the *Laws*; Rowe 2012 for the *Republic*; Lamb 1967 for the *Gorgias*.

[3] Cf. Antola 2016, esp. pp. 113-128, for a different reading. In this paper, I refrain from treating the figure of the *goēs* as an analogy or a metaphor in reason of the historical approach I endorse. Looking at literary evidence up to Plato, it would seem that the original "magical connotation" of the activity of the *goēs* never fades as the figure evolves and is associated with different fields of expertise (i.e. rhetoric; for one, we note that in Pl. *Lg.* 1.649a1-6 the "magical aspect" remains noteworthy) – cf. Rinella 2010, esp. pp. 177, 186-187, 205. Therefore, in this study I will not differentiate the passages analysed according to different fields, and I will take the term *goēs* at face value. With regards to Plato, I will be focusing on the figures of the γόητες (*goētes*)-Sophists and on the City of Athens. Cf. n. 16 for other *goētes* in Plato, and n. 2 for Platonic passages grouped under different fields of expertise.

The *Goēs*

Notwithstanding a renewed interest in recent scholarship,[4] the figure of the *goēs* remains in many respects still surrounded by mystery, because of the sparse literary evidence and the ambiguity that characterises its depiction. Still, it is possible to point out quite safely a few elements.

Scholars generally agree that, since the Greek term *goēs* derives from the verb γοάω (*goaō*), "lament",[5] at least at the beginning the *goēs* was connected to the world of the dead, and engaged in a number of activities related to the chthonian sphere, using γόοι (*gooi*), "laments", to appease restless shadows, or to instigate them against the living.[6] Through what can be described as psychagogic skills, he would communicate with the souls of the dead, and he would lead them to do his bidding.[7] Far from being limited to the Underworld, however, the psychagogic power of the *goētes* proves to be just as capable of moving the souls of the living. As is clear from literary evidence,[8] in the day-to-day world they could bend the will of those who listened to them through their most effective words. This paper will focus on this latter aspect of the activity of the *goēs*, a figure that can at last be defined as a "sorcerer", and "enchanter" gifted with the power of influencing other people's souls.

Before delving into the main argument, it is important to highlight the most striking features that characterise these individuals; this will allow a more in-depth understanding of the figure of the *goēs*. In this section, we will look into Euripides' depiction of two *goētes* before moving to Plato's *Laws*. These examples, to be kept in mind during the analysis of the *goētes* portrayed in Plato's *Euthydemus*, *Gorgias*, and *Republic*, will also offer the opportunity to see the development of the figure of the *goēs* in different authors.[9]

At first, the *goētes* are described by literary sources as foreigners and outsiders.[10] Two instances fitting this description can be found in Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *Bacchae*: the main characters of the plays, Hippolytus and Dionysus, are in fact both called *goētes* by their counterparts in the plays (Theseus and Pentheus respectively). The former, son of Theseus and of the Amazon

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[4] Cf. infra, n. 6.
[5] Cf. Chantraine 1968; Frisk 1972; Beekes 2010, lemma γοάω (*goaō*). On the formation of the word cf. Chantraine 1933, p. 267. *Contra* Buck and Petersen 1949, p. 451.
[6] Cf. Burkert 1962, p. 44; Vermeule 1979, p. 17; Dickie 2001, p. 30, n. 45; Collins 2008, p. 59; Graf 2009, pp. 24-26. On Greek lament see Reiner 1938 *cit. ap.* De Martino 2000, pp. 189-191; Alexiou 2002, esp. pp. 102-103.
[7] On the relation between *goēs* and ψυχαγωγία (*psychagōgia*) cf. Carastro 2006, pp. 55-56. For a detailed account of the "goals" of the *goēs* cf. Johnson 2009, pp. 14-15.
[8] Cf. infra. For the relationship between *goēteia* and λόγος (*logos*), and for the power of the latter to influence people's emotions and/or opinions cf. Gorg. *Hel*. 8-14. Cf. Antola 2016, pp. 23-30; Antola 2018, pp. 45-49.
[9] For a different reading cf. Antola 2018, pp. 49-58.
[10] Cf. Hdt. 2.32.6-33.4; 4.105.1-12 for the first (non-fragmentary) evidence on this regard. For an analysis of this feature in connection to the figure of the *goēs* cf. Antola 2016, pp. 15-22. On magic as a prerogative of foreigners cf. e.g. Luck 1997, pp. 8-9.

Hippolyta (thus only half-Greek), leads an ascetic and uncivilized life, refusing to take part in the activities of the City of Troezen to spend time hunting and honouring Artemis;[11] the latter, son of Zeus and Semele, is a foreigner just arrived in Thebes from Lydia, determined to revolutionise the City by introducing his own initiatory rites.[12] Refusing to abide by the rules and customs of the Cities in which the events take place, these *goētes* can also be called lawbreakers (Hippolytus is accused of raping his stepmother at 943-945, and Dionysus of spreading chaos in the City of Thebes at 216-232),[13] who, through their psychagogic power and charming ways, appear most capable of moving people's souls.

On the one hand, Hippolytus is described by his father Theseus as follows (*Hipp*. 1038-1040):

> ἆρ' οὐκ ἐπωιδὸς καὶ **γόης** πέφυχ' ὅδε,/ ὃς τὴν ἐμὴν πέποιθεν εὐοργησίαι/ψυχὴν κρατήσειν […]
>
> "Is this man not a chanter of spells and a **sorcerer**?/ He is confident that by his gentleness of temper/ he will overmaster my soul [...]"

On the other hand, at *Ba*. 217-218, Dionysus' persuasive power is exemplified *in primis* by Pentheus, the ruler of Thebes. After having entered the city as an envoy of Bacchus, the god led the women away from Thebes:

> […] γυναῖκας ἡμῖν δώματ' ἐκλελοιπέναι/ πλασταῖσι βακχείαισιν [...]
>
> "Our women have left the houses, /under the influence of Bacchic rites […]"

And, at *Ba*. 233-238, the king of Thebes himself describes the newcomer as follows:

> λέγουσι δ' ὡς τις εἰσελήλυθε ξένος,/ **γόης** ἐπωιδὸς Λυδίας ἀπὸ χθονός,/ ξανθοῖσι βοστρύχοισιν εὖοσμος κόμην,/ οἰνωπός, ὄσσοις χάριτας Ἀφροδίτης ἔχων,/ ὃς ἡμέρας τε κεὐφρόνας συγγίγνεται/ τελετὰς προτείνων εὐίους νεάνισιν.
>
> *"*They say that a foreigner has arrived/ a **sorcerer**, an enchanter from Lydia,/ his blond locks reeking of scent,/ with a face wine-colored and the charm of Aphrodite in his eyes./ He consorts day and night with/ young women, offering them ecstatic rites*."*

Amongst the incredible feats he is capable of performing,[14] unlike Hippolytus, the *goēs* Dionysus is also characterized by another ability, a trait that we will find in the *goētes* portrayed in Plato's

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[11] Cf. E. *Hipp*. 10-19; 952-954; 986-987. Cf. Segal 1978, p. 134; Kovacs 1987, pp. 30-31; Mitchell 1991, pp. 105-106. For a different interpretation cf. Antola 2016, pp. 37-38, n. 203.
[12] Cf. Foley 1985, pp. 205-258. On "Dionysian xenia" cf. Massenzio 1969.
[13] For a different interpretation cf. Mirto 2010, p. 4; Susanetti 2016, esp. p. 288.
[14] For a detailed account of Dionysus' powers and "miracles" cf. Antola 2016, pp. 45-50. For a different interpretation and a more detailed analysis of the two Euripidean instances cf. Antola 2016, pp. 31-50.

Euthydemus and *Republic*; he is capable of changing in shape, or shapeshifting,[15] as reported by the god himself at *Ba.* 4:

> […] μορφὴν δ' ἀμείψας ἐκ θεοῦ βροτησία […]
>
> "Changed in shape from god to mortal."

And by the chorus of Lydian Bacchae at *Ba*. 1017-1019:

> φάνηθι ταῦρος ἢ πολύκρανος ἰδεῖν/ δράκων ἢ πυριφλέγων/ ὁρᾶσθαι λέων.
>
> "Appear as a bull, or a many-headed/ snake [for us] to see or a fire-blazing/ lion to behold."

Owing to all these skills, and in particular to their psychagogic ability, Euripides' *goētes*, already outsiders and lawbreakers, appear set to stand at the edges of society, as liminal figures in opposition to the extant rulers.

This notwithstanding, depictions highlighting the *goētes*' power and liminality are not a prerogative of Euripides. One last general representation worth mentioning in this regard is found in Plato's *Laws*,[16] where the Athenian Stranger, main character of the dialogue, is talking about φάρμακα (*pharmaka*), "drugs",[17] at *Lg*. 1.649a1-4:

> εἶεν, ὦ νομοθέτα, τοῦ μὲν δὴ φόβου σχεδὸν οὔτε θεὸς ἔδωκεν ἀνθρώποις τοιοῦτον φάρμακον οὔτε αὐτοὶ μεμηχανήμεθα - τοὺς γὰρ **γόητας** οὐκ ἐν θοίνῃ λέγω […]
>
> "Be it so, O lawgiver, that for producing fear no such drug apparently has been given to men by god, nor have we devised such ourselves (for **sorcerers** I count not of our company) […]"

From the passage one gathers that no man can devise a *pharmakon* to produce and instil fear,[18] only the *goētes* are capable of such an achievement. Owing to this powerful, dangerous ability and its harmful effect, they are not to be counted as a part of the company of civilized men who,

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[15] The ability of shapeshifting in connection to the *goētes* is first attested in Hdt. 4.105.1-12, where the Neurians are said to be capable of turning into wolves. Cf. Buxton 1987, esp. p. 68; Colonna 1996, p. 737 *ad loc.* For "stories of wolves on the outskirts of the city" cf. Svenbro 1989, pp. 148-163. On Dionysus' transformative abilities cf. Bollack 2005, pp. 107-108; Buxton 2010, pp. 85-86. See also Marietti 2002, pp. 47-48.

[16] For other occurrences of the term *goēs* in Plato's dialogues cf. *Plt*. 303b8-c5; *R*. 2.383a3-5; *Sph*. 235a1; 241b6-7 for the plural form; *Hp.Mi*. 371a2-b1; *Men*. 79e7-80b7; *Plt*. 291c3-6; *R*. 2.380d1-6; 10.598c7-d5; *Smp*. 203d4-8; *Sph*. 235a8 for the singular form.

[17] In this instance φάρμακον (*pharmakon*) has been translated as "drug" taking into account the mind-altering qualities that it shares with wine, as wine (and the intoxication it provokes) was discussed up to this point (cf. *Lg*. 1.635b-648e). For wine as a "mind-altering drug" cf. Rinella 2010, pp. 3-16, esp. pp. 3, 8-9, 12. See also Rinella 2010 for a study on *pharmakon* within the full Platonic corpus, esp. pp. 59-63, 186 on the *Laws*. On *Lg*. 1.649a1-4, cf. Schöpsdau 1994, p. 249.

[18] In this passage, *pace* Burkert 1962, p. 42 and Belfiore 1986, p. 421, the *pharmakon* is employed to harm. Cf. *Lg*. 11.933a2-5. On the *pharmakon* and its "neutral power" cf. Gorg. *Hel*. 14. See Segal 1962, p. 116.

with the Athenian Stranger, are reunited in Crete to discuss the Laws of Cities. Once more, the *goētes* appear as liminal (though incredibly powerful) figures, estranged from civilization.[19]

Goētes in (Plato's) fifth and fourth century BC Athens

In this section we turn to Athens, the setting for the remainder of this paper. My argument will proceed as follows. First, I will introduce the *goētes*-Sophists, and illustrate their role and influence in Athens, using by way of exemplification the *Euthydemus*. Then, taking my cue from the *Gorgias*, I will focus on another *goēs*, namely the City of Athens. I will argue that Athens is the main competitor of the Sophists in the battle for influence and power that shapes the City par excellence. Finally, I will illustrate who appears to be the most powerful *goēs* in Plato's Athens.

So far, the *goētes* have emerged as individuals extraneous to/estranged from civilised Cities. In the fifth and fourth century BC, however, a new development occurs: Plato's Athens is inhabited by several Sophists labelled as *goētes*.

Foreigners and outsiders like Dionysus and Hippolytus, the Sophists come from different places: Abdera (Thrace), Leontinoi (Sicily), Chios, to quote a few.[20] What role are they to play in Athens? And why are they called *goētes* by Plato?[21]

The Sophists were professional teachers:[22] they would come to Athens when the power of the City was at its zenith to provide a specialised education as well as persuasion techniques, which were in high demand in Athenian democracy.[23] For this very reason it was not long before they gained a central position in the City, taking on the power to interact and "play" with the people who considered themselves to be the rulers of the City: the Athenians.[24]

On the basis of the literary evidence, it can be argued that the power of persuasion the Sophists teach and have mastered is in truth hardly different from the psychagogic ability of the *goētes* encountered in the tragedies (both move people to *do* things *via words*). It is this which in the end

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[19] Cf. *Lg*. 10.909a8-c4, where the θηριώδεις (*thēriōdeis*), "the wild", capable of bewitching (the verb *goēteuō* is used in this instance) people and gods, are given a similar depiction. Cf. Antola 2016, pp. 67-70, esp. p. 69, n. 365. See Carastro 2006, p. 189 for magic as a "public danger". Cf. Viano 1965, pp. 426-427; Luck 1997, p. XV. On the passage see also Leszl 1985, p. 67; Eidinow 2007, p. 344, n. 3; Eidinow 2016, p. 318, n. 30.

[20] Protagoras, Gorgias, and Euthydemus and Dionysodorus respectively.

[21] The very definition of "Sophist" in the homonymous Platonic dialogue is more than once characterized by the term *goēs*. Cf. *Sph*. 235a1; 235a8; 241b6-7.

[22] Cf. Marrou 1948, pp. 84-85. On the Sophists cf. also Guthrie 1971; Kerferd 1981; Untersteiner 2008; Corey 2016.

[23] Cf. Monoson 2004; Wallace 2004. In general, see Sluiter and Rosen 2004. For a useful sourcebook on education cf. Joyal 2009.

[24] This is true especially for Periclean Athens, cf. De Romilly 1992. On the "ideology of power" cf. Th. 2.61.2, 4; 64.3. Cf. Raaflaub 1994, esp. pp. 115-118; Henderson 2003.

marks them as *goētes*, "enchanters", who despite not having the ability to raise the dead, certainly have the power of influencing the living through the "art of the word".[25] The mastery of this art is what would seem to give the Sophists an advantage over the Athenians, who, as it would appear from the *Euthydemus*, cannot resist the *goētes*-Sophists' influence.

At the beginning of the *Euthydemus*, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus,[26] two elderly brothers from Chios who have recently turned into Sophists are represented whilst exerting their action on young Athenians and a vast audience. Under the guise of teaching virtue to a young aristocrat, they launch into a verbal skirmish, displaying an impressive mastery in endorsing a definition only to rapidly shift to its opposite. At 288b7-8, Socrates describes their ability as follows:

> […] οὐκ ἐθέλετον ἡμῖν ἐπιδείξασθαι σπουδάζοντε, ἀλλὰ τὸν Πρωτέα μιμεῖσθον τὸν Αἰγύπτιον σοφιστὴν **γοητεύοντε** ἡμᾶς.
>
> "The two have not wanted to show us [their knowledge], continuing to joke; rather, they imitate Proteus, the Egyptian Sophist, **bewitching** us."

In this passage, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus are said to imitate the Greek divinity Proteus, who, like the already encountered Dionysus, has the ability of shapeshifting.[27] The parallel unfolds as follows: just as Proteus changed form in order to avoid capture by Menelaus in the *Odyssey*,[28] so the two *goētes* avoid direct confrontation; rather than giving one, straight definition, they keep on shifting from one to the other.[29] Their teachings are devoid of knowledge, and truly aim only at winning the verbal battle in progress.[30] However, their "logic and linguistic artifices"[31] bewitch (the verb *goēteuō* is used) their audience, and are described as a part of the "art of enchantments" which succeeds in moving the souls of its listeners. At 290a1-4:

> ἡ μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἐπῳδῶν ἔχεών τε καὶ φαλαγγίων καὶ σκορπίων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων θηρίων τε καὶ νόσων κήλησίς ἐστιν, ἡ δὲ δικαστῶν τε καὶ ἐκκλησιαστῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὄχλων κήλησίς τε καὶ παραμυθία τυγχάνει οὖσα·

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[25] Cf. Antola 2018, pp. 49-52 for a different reading and an in-depth study on the *goēs* Hippolytus. On persuasion see Worthington 1994. Cf. also Buxton 1982; Rothwell 1990.

[26] On these individuals, cf. Nails 2002, pp. 136-137, 152.

[27] Cf. Hom. *Od.* 4.456-8: ἀλλ' ἦ τοι πρώτιστα λέων γένετ' ἠϋγένειος,/ αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα δράκων καὶ πάρδαλις ἠδὲ μέγας σῦς·/ [γίνετο δ' ὑγρὸν ὕδωρ καὶ δένδρεον ὑψιπέτηλον. "At first he turned into a well-maned lion,/ and then into a serpent, and a leopard, and a huge boar;/ then he turned into flowing water, and into a tree, high and leafy." This very ability of Proteus is contested by Plato in the *Republic*, cf. *R*. 2.381d1-5. See e.g. Bordoy 2013, p. 18-20.

[28] For the whole episode cf. *Od*. 4.351-570.

[29] Quimby 1979, p. 23. It is noteworthy that at *Euthd*. 297c2 the λόγοι (*logoi*) of the Sophists are compared to a hydra, to whose aid a crab comes. Following Decleva Caizzi's suggestion (Decleva Caizzi 1999, p. 90, n. 80-82), it could be inferred that the crab is Dionysodorus himself, considering he is sitting on the left of Socrates (273b), side from which the crab is said to attack. If this reading is accepted, this is another case in which a *goēs* morphs, albeit only in Socrates' words, into an animal.

[30] On "eristic", the Sophists' method, cf. e.g. Giannantoni 2005, pp. 85-86. See also Skousgaard 1979, p. 379; Nehamas 1990, pp. 6-7; Denyer 1991, pp. 8-19.

[31] Erler 2008, p. 58.

> "That of the enchantments is the art of bewitching vipers, venomous spiders, scorpions and other beasts and diseases, that [of the Sophists] turns out to be the art of bewitching and gently persuading judges, assemblymen, and other crowds."

The effect of the Sophists' teaching is such that everyone is conquered by their words and persuaded of/by their ability, even those who at first refrained from approving of the Sophists' method. At 303b1-7:

> ἐνταῦθα μέντοι [...] οὐδεὶς ὅστις οὐ τῶν παρόντων ὑπερεπῄνεσε τὸν λόγον καὶ τὼ ἄνδρε, καὶ γελῶντες καὶ κροτοῦντες καὶ χαίροντες ὀλίγου παρετάθησαν. ἐπὶ μὲν γὰρ τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν ἐφ' ἑκάστοις πᾶσι παγκάλως ἐθορύβουν μόνοι οἱ τοῦ Εὐθυδήμου ἐρασταί, ἐνταῦθα δὲ ὀλίγου καὶ οἱ κίονες οἱ ἐν τῷ Λυκείῳ ἐθορύβησάν τ' ἐπὶ τοῖν ἀνδροῖν καὶ ἥσθησαν.
>
> "In this circumstance, there was no one amongst those present who refrained from praising the speech and the two men above all measure, and who did little but wore himself out by laughing, clapping his hands and rejoicing. For whilst before only Euthydemus' followers caused an uproar at each speech beautifully proclaimed, then the very columns of the Lyceum all but joined the men in the general confusion and delight."

Athens itself, as embodied by the crowd as well as by the very columns of the Lyceum, appears to be bewitched and to yield to the psychagogic enchanters.[32]

There is no need to pursue this matter any further; it seems quite clear that the ground-breaking power of the *goētes*-Sophists is fully capable of enchanting and dominating their audience. It would seem that it hardly matters that their teachings are nothing more than an illusion, in that they do not convey any knowledge;[33] the techniques that succeed in winning the verbal battle in the end also allow them to influence, persuade and conquer anyone who listens. The *goētes*(-Sophists) have truly entered the City of Athens, where they seem to have found the perfect place to stay.

With all their charming power, the *goētes*-Sophists would seem to be the most powerful individuals in (Plato's) Athens, and could be considered (in a way) the "rulers" of the City. Another dialogue, the *Gorgias*, however, shows that the picture is much more nuanced.

A pupil of the Sophist Gorgias, Callicles,[34] Socrates' third interlocutor in the dialogue, speaks of himself and of his fellow Athenians in these terms (483e4-484b1):

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[32] Spatharas 2001, p. 165 speaks of "incantatory speech." Cf. *Prt*. 334c7; 339d10 for a similar reaction to another Sophist's (Protagoras) words.
[33] For a depiction of other similar "Sophists" cf. Antola 2016, pp. 88-95.
[34] On this individual, cf. Nails 2002, pp. 75-77.

[…] πλάττοντες τοὺς βελτίστους καὶ ἐρρωμενεστάτους ἡμῶν αὐτῶν, ἐκ νέων λαμβάνοντες, ὥσπερ λέοντας, κατεπᾴδοντές τε καὶ **γοητεύοντες** καταδουλούμεθα λέγοντες ὡς τὸ ἴσον χρὴ ἔχειν καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ δίκαιον. ἐὰν δέ γε οἶμαι φύσιν ἱκανὴν γένηται ἔχων ἀνήρ, πάντα ταῦτα ἀποσεισάμενος καὶ διαρρήξας καὶ διαφυγών, καταπατήσας τὰ ἡμέτερα γράμματα καὶ μαγγανεύματα καὶ ἐπῳδὰς καὶ νόμους τοὺς παρὰ φύσιν ἅπαντας, ἐπαναστὰς ἀνεφάνη δεσπότης ἡμέτερος ὁ δοῦλος, καὶ ἐνταῦθα ἐξέλαμψεν τὸ τῆς φύσεως δίκαιον.

"We mould the most excellent and powerful of us, catching them young, like lions, and subduing them by enchantments and **bewitching** them, we enslave them, telling them that they must have but their equal share, and that this is what is fair and just. However, I believe that if a man gifted with a nature of sufficient force were to be born, then he, having shaken off all that we have taught him, would burst his bonds and would break free; having trampled down our writings, our enchantments, our spells, and our laws, which are all against nature, our slave would rise in revolt and would show himself our master, and then the just according to nature would shine."

The City itself, and not the Sophists, is depicted as using every means it has to mould and subdue its most excellent youths. Laws/writings and enchantments/spells are adopted as "instruments of persuasion"[35] to allow the state to rule undisturbed, and Athens itself, by implementing these methods, turns at last into a *goēs*. No more liminal, no more extraneous to/estranged from civilisation, or embodied by strangers who make their way into the City; the *goētes*, the "enchanters", are the Athenians themselves. Through their magical-persuasive-normative speeches, *they* move young men's souls (and in truth the souls of anyone who lives in Athens).[36]

According to this reading, Plato's Athens features *two* contestants, *two goētes* who fight for power, namely the Sophists and the City itself. With that in mind, we now move on to the *Republic*.

A passage in book 6 allows to shed light on the relationship between the Sophists and the City; at 493a9-c3:

οἷόνπερ ἂν εἰ θρέμματος μεγάλου καὶ ἰσχυροῦ τρεφομένου τὰς ὀργάς τις καὶ ἐπιθυμίας κατεμάνθανεν, ὅπῃ τε προσελθεῖν χρὴ καὶ ὅπῃ ἅψασθαι αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὁπότε χαλεπώτατον ἢ πρᾳότατον καὶ ἐκ τίνων γίγνεται, καὶ φωνὰς δὴ ἐφ' οἷς ἑκάστας εἴωθεν φθέγγεσθαι, καὶ οἵας αὖ ἄλλου φθεγγομένου ἡμεροῦταί τε καὶ ἀγριαίνει, καταμαθὼν δὲ ταῦτα πάντα συνουσίᾳ τε

[35] Cf. Carastro 2006, p. 204. On the polysyndeton/chiasmus, *pace* Dodds 1959, p. 269 *ad loc.*, see Antola 2016, p. 66, n. 349.
[36] For the polemics in Callicles' argument in respect to the corrupting action of the City cf. Antola 2016, pp. 65-67. On Callicles' speech cf. e.g. Motte 1981, pp. 563-565. Also, for the deceptive, disrupting activities associated with *goēs* and its cognates which fall beyond the scope of this paper, cf. *Lg*. 10.908d1-909c4; 11.933a2-5; *Mx*. 234c6-235c5; *R*. 10.597e1-602d4; *Plt*. 291a8-c6; 303b8-c5; *Sph*. 234c2-241b7. See Antola 2016, pp. 58-61, 67-72, 85-96.

καὶ χρόνου τριβῇ σοφίαν τε καλέσειεν καὶ ὡς τέχνην συστησάμενος ἐπὶ διδασκαλίαν τρέποιτο, μηδὲν εἰδὼς τῇ ἀληθείᾳ τούτων τῶν δογμάτων τε καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν ὅτι καλὸν ἢ αἰσχρὸν ἢ ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακὸν ἢ δίκαιον ἢ ἄδικον, ὀνομάζοι δὲ πάντα ταῦτα ἐπὶ ταῖς τοῦ μεγάλου ζῴου δόξαις, οἷς μὲν χαίροι ἐκεῖνο ἀγαθὰ καλῶν, οἷς δὲ ἄχθοιτο κακά […]

"It's just as if someone observed well the mood and appetites of a mighty and powerful beast he was rearing up, how one must approach and handle it, when it was at its most difficult or most docile and for what reasons, in which circumstances it was used to utter each sound, and moreover what sort of sounds uttered by another would placate it or send it wild, and when he had learnt all this by spending time in its company, he decided to call it wisdom, and turned to teaching, claiming to have established a body of expertise, when in truth he would be no expert of any of the opinions and appetites [he was dealing with], and of what in them was beautiful or ugly, good or bad, just or unjust, but would simply name all these things after the beliefs of the mighty beast, calling what gave it pleasure good and what upset it bad."

The subject in this scenario is a Sophist,[37] depicted as the tamer of a mighty and powerful beast. After having observed closely its behaviour, and having learnt which sounds one has to utter to placate or send it wild, he appoints himself as the beast's worthy teacher. The Sophist's (educative) action is effective: as we have seen their words can and *do* influence those who listen to them; however, they clearly lack an independent agency.[38] The Sophist is doing nothing more than idolising the powerful beast, whose opinions, whims, and emotional state define his notion of the good and the bad, his "wisdom" consisting in nothing more than an ability to slavishly reproduce the beast's beliefs/opinions.[39] The Sophist, in sum, depends from the beast. But who is this beast? Animal metaphors aside, it is the City itself that subdues everybody, including the Sophists who are ultimately its slaves rather than its masters.[40]

In conclusion, the Sophists are not the most powerful *goētes*, the tamers of the City; while capable of enchanting the Athenians, their powerful skills still depend on the City itself. The City turns out to be the real tamer and most powerful *goēs* who, consciously or unconsciously, leads their actions. Therefore, the Sophists assume a central position in Athens' dynamics of power because

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[37] Cf. *R*. 6.493a6-9.

[38] Cf. Corey 2015, p. 208. Cf. also Grote *ap.* Adam 1902 *ad loc.*; Levi 1966, pp. 12-19; Capizzi 1982, p. 431.

[39] Cf. Poulakos 1995, pp. 92-93; Gastaldi 2003, p. 215.

[40] As shown in the pages that lead to this passage (cf. *R*. 6.492b-c; 5.475d), the (only) focus of the City is on pleasures, beautiful words, and sounds, and thus, behaving non-rationally, no differently from an animal, the City is at last equated to one. Gastaldi 2003, p. 212 points out that the beast is the Athenian "demos". Considering that Athens is a democracy, and that what is depicted in this passage and in the Stephanus pages quoted above is in fact a representation of the people who assembled together form the City, seeing in the animal the corrupted City itself seems a logical follow up. For other Platonic passages in which the Athenians are depicted as animals cf. *R*. 6.496d; *Grg*. 516a-b.
We recall that at *R*. 1.336b1-d7 the rhetor-Sophist of the dialogue, Thrasymachus, is portrayed as a magical creature, most likely a werewolf (cf. e.g. Pisano 2011, pp. 94-96). Following my reading, one could say that in this case, far from appearing as the City's tamer, the rhetor-Sophist himself has turned into a beast. We note that neither *goēs* nor its cognates are employed referring to him.

the City appoints and keeps them in check by forcing them to teach what it wants and needs, namely a number of persuasion techniques that leave the City's corruptive action unscathed. Far from being lawbreakers, that is the likes of Hippolytus and Dionysus, the *goētes*-Sophists have to abide by the laws of the Athenians in order to live and prosper in the City par excellence. (Plato's) Athens then morphs at last itself into an animal, into a mighty and powerful beast, and proves to be in the end the most powerful, the most influential *goēs*, and the Athenians the most influential people who rule over outsiders, individual teachers/Sophists, and fellow citizens alike. At *Republic* 6.492b, Plato's Socrates goes as far as to call the Athenians the "most influential" Sophists,[41] and one of the reasons for this astonishing statement lies in the power they exert over the Sophists.

Conclusion

To sum up, at the beginning the *goētes* were liminal figures, outsiders and lawbreakers. This paper has shown that, from Euripides to Plato, the *goētes* turn from liminal figures into functional cogs in the social machine. In Plato's depiction of Athens, the *goētes* morph into Sophists who are integral to the City; they are foreigners who are granted a central position in the dynamics of power in Athens. The psychagogic power of these newfound *goētes* is noteworthy. But, as it has been revealed, it is limited by an even greater power: that of those who make the rules in Athens, the "Sophist-in-chief",[42] the Athenians themselves. In the end, it would seem that the one to rule them all, the true *goēs* of (Plato's) ancient Athens, is Athens itself.

[41] Cf. *R.* 6.492a8-b1: […] μεγίστους […] σοφιστάς […]. I translate with Waterfield 1998 μέγιστος (*megistos*) as "most influential" considering that these figures' main power is the influence they exert on others.
[42] Rowe 2012, p. 213 *ad loc.*

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Cheiron's qualities complicated in John Updike's *The Centaur*

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Cheiron the centaur is an important and frequently-referenced figure in mythology and ancient texts; however, few of those ancient texts provide many details about him, and often the details provided are contradictory. This multiplicity of representations, along with the array of qualities that are attributed to him, provide much for writers of reception texts to select from to suit their purposes. Therefore, the study of Cheiron in reception gives an opportunity to examine what qualities are privileged by the authors for that chronological period. John Updike's *The Centaur* places Cheiron in small-town America, post-World War II, setting the action in 1947.

The mythological elements of John Updike's *The Centaur* are relatively well-documented and discussed in scholarly articles, primarily from the 1960 - 80s. Cheiron's role within the text is, naturally, given close scrutiny, amongst the wider theological and stylistic concerns of the surrealist techniques utilised, and melding of the mythological as befits Updike's concern with 'the American small town and middle-class materialism', and his portrayals of 'ordinary America …[and] the daily rounds of life' (Ulvydiene, 2018, p.101). There is continued uncertainty amongst critics on the mythic content of the novel (Vickery, 1974, p.29) but Updike's fascination with old sagas, and the purpose they held for their original audiences, fulfils the roles of both history and catharsis (Vickery, 1974, p.31). What has not, however, been widely considered is how the portrayal of Cheiron here maps onto those features exemplified in the ancient sources, and the implications within the text of their inclusion. This article seeks to address that gap.

Cheiron in the ancient sources

The ancient sources allow us to paint a composite portrait of Cheiron. His ancestry is a different parentage from that of the other centaurs. Cheiron was born of Philyra and Cronos; discovered by Rhea, Cronos turned into a horse and thus Philyra became pregnant with Cheiron. Appalled at giving birth to such a hybrid creature, she turned into a linden tree (Hyginus, *Fabulae 138*). A summary of Cheiron's qualities would include philanthropy, fairness, wisdom, as well as hunting, medicine and prophecy, bestowed by Apollo, his foster father, who raised him after Philyra's rejection (Xenophon, *Cynegeticus, 1*). Pindar grants Cheiron a place in the myth of the upbringing of Achilles (Pindar, *Nemean Odes 3*, 46-53) and Apollodorus specifically details the role he plays in advising Peleus on the capture of Thetis (Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca,* 3.13.5). It is Cheiron's longstanding connection to Peleus which results in Achilles' education being entrusted

to him (Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.13.5); however, he also tutored numerous other heroes and mythological figures, such as Asclepius and Jason (Pindar, *Nemean Odes 3*, 52-55). One other aspect frequently attributed to him – and foregrounded within Updike's novel – is his sacrificing his immortality to free Prometheus. This myth tells of Cheiron's accidental wounding by an arrow of Hercules that had been contaminated with the blood of Hydra. Being immortal, Cheiron is permanently wounded and in agony but unable to die. Variations of the myth conclude either with Cheiron offering up his immortality to free Prometheus from his eternal torment on the rock, or – as in Updike's concluding passage – following being freed from the rock by Hercules, Prometheus offering to become immortal for him to release him from his pain. This version rather complicates the myth as Prometheus is already immortal, and Hercules is the connection which allows this exchange to take place. This trade, sanctioned by Zeus who rewards Cheiron by placing him in the sky as a constellation, frees both Cheiron and Prometheus from their suffering.

Notably, Cheiron is not given voice frequently in the ancient texts – the *Precepts of Cheiron*, attributed to Hesiod and only surviving in fragments, is the only ancient evidence we have for the centaur being adopted as an authorial voice (Pausanias, *Descriptions of Greece*, 9.31.5). This poem, however, was instrumental in initiating discussions around aspects of education, and the desired qualities of the mythological character of Cheiron. He is of especial interest due to his dual nature – he is divine, immortal, but not a god. He is a man and a beast, and this liminality can be employed to explore a range of boundaries and concerns. The figure of Cheiron brings seemingly opposite traits into a helpful unity, which in turn can reflect the complicated issues that reception texts wish to explore. *The Centaur* exploits this liminality in such a way, whilst referencing Cheiron's notable qualities. It is interesting, however, that Updike chooses to keep narrative distance from Cheiron, especially as he employs first person narration for another character.

The plot and structure of The Centaur

The plot of *The Centaur* essentially covers a three-day period in 1947 in which high school science teacher, George Caldwell, and his adolescent son, Peter, are exiled from their rural homestead by weather and circumstance. The title of the novel refers to Cheiron, the most famous centaur in mythology and reception, and aligns this figure with the character of George Caldwell; his son, Peter, is linked to Prometheus, and the novel also liberally utilises other mythological figures, often inconsistently, with other contemporary characters. The novel follows their trials and tribulations as they make repeated attempts to return home, only to be thwarted by difficulties outside of their control. The apparent simplicity of this plot channels elements of the *Odyssey* but is complicated by the melding of contemporary characters and settings with those from Greek mythology. A full exploration requires careful plotting of who is representing which mythological character, as the references are not always stable.

As the novel frequently switches between modern and mythological character names and settings, it might be helpful to outline more fully its structure and the broad content of each chapter. In brief, the novel unfolds with a first chapter which employs omniscient third person narration, introducing Caldwell and establishing the motif of combining characters with mythological referents. Caldwell presides over a rowdy class, who meld into their mythological representations, and he gets shot by a poisoned arrow. He leaves school briefly to get the arrow removed, and returns to find the headteacher, Zeus/Zimmerman, observing his class and licentiously fondling a student. The second chapter is narrated from the perspective of his teenage son, Peter, who is also conflated with Prometheus. Chapter three returns to third person narration, focusing upon Cheiron as a tutor and providing a calm contrast to Caldwell's chaotic lesson in chapter one. Chapter four returns to Peter's perspective and establishes concerns about his father's health, as well as narrating their first night stranded away from home. The fifth chapter is the centrepoint of the novel: Caldwell's obituary, written about him at the age he has reached in the novel, and thus foreshadowing the 'death' of Cheiron/Caldwell. Chapter six returns again to Peter but serves to combine his perspective with that of Prometheus, linking the death of Caldwell in the previous chapter firmly with the fate of Peter. The next chapter returns to an omniscient third person narration following Caldwell at first, and then Peter, until they meet up. This chapter further turns between the two when they separate again and tells of the second night exiled from their home. Chapter eight is narrated by the adult artist Peter, addressing his sleeping lover, and recollecting the homecoming of him and his father. The final short chapter nine concludes the novel with a return to Cheiron and a mythological setting, melding this perspective with that of Caldwell. The novel ends with the words, 'Chiron accepted death' (Updike, 1963, p.269).

It is the enduring nature of mythology and the themes with which it is concerned, exploring experience of humankind, that allows Updike to use the closer relationships of mortals to the divine to pose the theological question of what it means to have faith in contemporary post-war America. In focusing primarily upon Cheiron's role as a tutor, and his sacrifice for Prometheus, Updike transfers to Caldwell aspects of both the divine and the heroic in a contemporary, limited and unrewarding setting. However, just as the ancient sources portraying Cheiron are limited and fragmentary, permitting little insight from the centaur himself, so Updike's novel maintains a similar distance from its heroic figure. In melding mythological and modern characters, the novel could also be considered to offer a fragmentary perspective of the centaur, and one in which his true voice is suppressed, filtered through the voices of other narrators.

The novel explores a variety of different facets of Cheiron's role that appear in the ancient text, concentrating on his role of teacher, his hybridity, and his sacrifice of his immortality for Prometheus. The form in which the novel unfolds is also hybrid, characteristically liminal and centaur-like, with its alternating narrative perspectives. The winner of the 1964 National Book Award, it is also Updike's 'most puzzling work' (Keener, 2010, p.463), and one about which critics fail to reach agreement. Peter's narration, which is years later and takes place as he lies in bed with his sleeping lover, possibly in a dream-like state himself, questions whether the future he has come to embody was worth his father's sacrifice (Updike, 1963, p.244). He has escaped the rural backdrop that he and his father hated, and moved to the city; he has become an artist,

although he wonders at the relative expense of the blank canvas, and the lessening of value once he has marked it; and he is mindful of his leisurely days in bed with his lover, and is frightened to consider that it was for this that Cheiron gave up his life. To express in more realist terms, Peter considers the sacrifice of his father as 'the incongruity of a great spirit caught in an ignoble job', (Walcutt, 1966, p.326) and it is possible that it is Peter who sees Caldwell's life as so full of anguish, as it is so different to the life to which he himself aspires. An interesting question to ask is what purpose the identification of Cheiron with Caldwell serves, and why the reader should be encouraged to explore his portrayal of and similarities to the mythical centaur. In considering those aspects of Cheiron's character identified in the ancient texts separately within Updike's novel, it will be possible to draw conclusions as to why a relatively unremarkable, bumbling, somewhat clumsy and occasionally embarrassing man is so strongly linked with the tutor of heroes and the centaur's self-sacrifice.

Cheiron as teacher

So ubiquitous is the role of tutor within the ancient sources that most receptions, such as Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Tanglewood Tales*, and Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson series, portray this as Cheiron's foremost quality. Within Updike's novel, we are introduced to both Cheiron, the tutor of mythological heroes, and Caldwell, the high school science teacher to a class of undisciplined teenagers. The contrasts between settings and students underscores the sense of degeneration, and of imperfection of contemporary time and place, that pervades the novel. The nobility of Cheiron underscores this contrast. Both lessons described are on the same topic, the genesis of the earth, although their content differs wildly. Within Cheiron's mythological lesson, Love is asserted to have 'set the Universe in motion' (Updike, 1963, p.92), whereas Caldwell's lesson abbreviates the five-billion-year history of the universe into a three-day case study of chemical and biological life leading to the emergence of a 'flint-chipping, fire-kindling, death-foreseeing, … tragic animal … called man' (Updike, 1963, p.45). In terms of the students, Cheiron asserts that 'Achilles gave his teacher the most trouble yet seemed the most needful of his approval and loved him least bashfully', Jason is 'less favoured', and Asclepios is 'the best student' (Updike, 1963, p.89). Caldwell has a grudging affection for his students but is aware of their flaws; poor Judy Lengel 'didn't have it upstairs', Kegerise is 'one of the bright ones', and Iris Osgood is 'dumb as pure white lead' (Updike, 1963, p.35). Caldwell's teaching career, however, has been 'long enough to keep a step or two ahead of the bastards occasionally' (Updike, 1963, p.37); an ironic comment given Cheiron's longevity and tutoring of generations of heroes. In contrast to Cheiron's experience of teaching – 'his students completed the centaur. They fleshed his wisdom with expectation' (Updike, 1963, p.37) – Peter sees that for Caldwell, 'teaching was sapping him' (Updike, 1963, p.96). For all that Caldwell sees himself as being no good at teaching through a lack of discipline (Updike, 1963, p.120), Peter understands that his father has a much greater effect upon his students than he realises. 'Once a student had had my father, he did not forget it, and the memory seemed to seek shape in mockery' (Updike, 1963, p.112). Peter himself becomes 'the petty receptacle of a myth', but he admits that being his father's son gives him an identity and importance, makes him 'exist in the

eyes of these Titans' (Updike, 1963, p.112)**,** which further melds the real and the mythological. Caldwell's obituary in Chapter Five is the pen portrait of a lively and dedicated tutor, although not a mentor to heroes, perhaps, due to his 'inexhaustible sympathy for the scholastic underdog' (Updike, 1963, p.158)**.**

This is highlighted in Caldwell's lesson. Caldwell's lesson is all about trying to express the inconceivable (Vickery, 1974, p.36) that his students are unable to comprehend. This is the main problem for Caldwell as a teacher – his lessons have no practical, realistic dimensions for his unimaginative students and Updike turns on its head what the reader might consider to be 'inconceivable'. It is not the heavens as religion paints them that cannot be understood but rather the scientific explanation for the genesis of the earth, and its immense, unimaginable numbers. What is crucial to the novel is Caldwell's difficulty in communicating such big ideas within such a limited group; yet it is vital to his role as beleaguered teacher that he try to do so. As Vickery (1974, p.36) suggests, 'when the inconceivable is narrated, it is myth'. In such a way, Updike melds the two figures of Cheiron and Caldwell. In highlighting the nobility of teaching the young, even when those children are not destined to be heroes or even grateful for the effort, Updike reminds the reader that performing duties that benefit others is a heroic act, and one which the 'everyman' performs every day.

Cheiron's duality

Updike's portrayal of Cheiron and Caldwell speaks to the dual nature of Cheiron that is shown both in the ancient sources and reception. However, in Updike's novel this duality of man and beast is not perceived to be a strength. The novel draws upon a quotation from Karl Barth: 'Heaven is the creation inconceivable to man, earth the creation conceivable to him. He himself is the creature on the boundary between heaven and earth' (Barth, 1949, p.63). Updike has stated that he was drawn to this quotation because 'we're all on a boundary and all are centaurs' (Farmer, 2015, p.340), and his novel highlights the differing status of Cheiron's halves as representative of the struggle of all men. The superiority of Cheiron's human half is highlighted from the beginning of the novel: 'His top half felt all afloat in the starry firmament of ideals and young voices singing; the rest of self was heavily sunk in a swamp where it must, eventually, drown' (Updike, 1963, p.8). Indeed, it is not even that his lower half – his horse, beast half – is inferior but rather that in being neither wholly one thing nor the other, he is unable to have the best of both natures. As he responds to Venus/Vera Hummel, '[a] combination …often conceals the best of its elements' (Updike, 1963, 26). The main problem with the Cheiron/Caldwell beast is, as Doc Appleton – aligned to Apollo - tells George, that he has never come to terms with his own body (Updike, 1963, p.118). Hoag (1980, p.89) asserts that Caldwell and Cheiron 'both hate the body, revere the spirit' but there is no ancient evidence to support this assertion of Cheiron's distaste of the flesh, either his own or that of others; indeed, he utilises his physically unique nature in hunting, and is portrayed as having a family life with his wife and children (Pindar, *Pythian Odes 4*). Updike and his modern critics demonstrate a tendency to worry at the animal part of Cheiron's physical being, and how this would denigrate his nature. In representing

humankind as a whole, as asserted in the quotation above, Updike suggests that animal traits drag humans down, and cause them to be unable to achieve closeness to divinity; a state which Updike seems to assume is the desire of all.

Not only does Caldwell himself struggle to reconcile his two natures and to see their inherent value and strengths but he also seems to be unable to communicate the worries of his human side to those around him. Caldwell's family clearly do not understand him and Peter frequently loses patience with his father. Whilst this 'beast' nature is a metaphor that Updike employs to signal humankind's baser nature, and Caldwell's 'man' nature signals a concern with the more existential aspects of religious thought, it manifests as a psychological schism which affects men in the modern world, who need to reconcile both the ephemeral and the material; as Farmer (2015, p.340) elaborates, the centaur is the Christian view of man, highlighting the division between body and soul. Caldwell portrays this difficulty, and the discomfort of trying to combine both parts, or to switch between the two: 'Monsters are most vulnerable in their transitions' (Updike, 1963, p.268). As Caldwell is in a liminal state of anticipating his own death, *The Centaur* 'consists of instructions about how to behave on such a boundary' (Farmer, 2015, p.341). Vickery (1974, p.34) suggests that the two states of man and beast are never reconciled but are 'destined to find them antinomies'. This appears to ignore the ancient sources that portray Cheiron as perfectly comfortable with his combined nature, and in viewing the man and beast as divided, Vickery speaks to modern preoccupations with wholeness and unity. Despite this division between man and beast, there is humour in the reversal that it is the centaur, the hybrid being, which makes Cheiron – and by extension, Caldwell – an effective tutor. Despite everything, Caldwell is a well-remembered and fondly thought of teacher.

Despite Peter's frustration with his father, there are glimpses of the affection he has for Caldwell, and an almost unconscious wish to be somewhat like him. Peter expresses the desire 'to have a dancer's quick and subtle hooves' (Updike, 1963, p.55); their shadow joins them as 'a prancing one-headed creature with four legs' (Updike, 1963, p.105), and on their return home after the three-day odyssey, George 'was the shape of the neck and head of the horse I was riding' (Updike, 1963, p.257). Hoag (1980, p.95) reads this part differently, and suggests that '[t]he centaur motif is used symbolically to represent a third major problem in the novel, the psychological thraldom of Caldwell and Peter to each other', which somewhat recognises the interdependence of Cheiron and Prometheus in the ancient texts. It also suggests that 'the centaur' of the novel could, at times, be a combination of George and Peter. As the novel does not have completely stable mythological referents, 'the centaur' could mean different things at different times. Arguably, if this line of interpretation is to be followed, Peter offers a different dimension to the idea of the centaur. His comfort with the modern world as he sees it and his ability to show his physical imperfection, his chronic psoriasis, to his girlfriend and have acceptance of it offers an interesting counterpoint to George's physical discomfort, distaste of touching, and sense of being out of time. Together, they represent the distinct schism between the Golden Age and the modern era. However, the most powerful mythological identification within the novel is between Caldwell and Cheiron; the relationship between Cheiron as portrayed in the ancient sources and Updike's rendering are more illustrative if stability in this reference is assumed. This lack of comfort with

the modern world for Caldwell is shown by his seeing no strength or benefit in his combined natures – rather, combining both man and beast natures makes them inferior in both aspects.

Within the novel, this inferiority is also manifested in Cheiron's perception of his immortality. Despite Venus' acknowledgement of his fraternity with the gods, he does not feel as worthy of his life as the gods do. Venus plays on this and berates him for his dual nature that so horrified Philyra, who 'so loathed the monster she bore' (Updike, 1963, p.23). Nevertheless, despite Cheiron's feelings of inferiority, in his exchange with Venus, we see a nobility and pride not evidenced by Caldwell. Cheiron acknowledges that to reverse his horse and man halves would make him 'a freak', which the gods would 'forbid' (Updike, 1963, p.26); and still he is aware that his immortality does not make him a god, and his 'Olympian position' is 'precarious and ambiguous' (Updike, 1963, p.28). Yet he has a quality that Zeus cannot possess, in his knowledge of and friendship with men, and this makes him vulnerable: 'It was rumoured that Zeus thought centaurs a dangerous middle ground through which the gods might be transmuted into pure irrelevance' (Updike, 1963, p.28). It is here that we see the true value of Cheiron, as Updike perceives him – as a link between the divine and the mortal. This is demonstrated too in a mythological chapter, where plants are described as responding to Cheiron by 'hailing the passage of a hero' (Updike, 1963, p.87). The mythological Cheiron is, perhaps, the successful reconciliation of human and divine, the religious and the secular. Caldwell, however, shows the contemporary difficulty in navigating the boundary but the persisting desire to do so. The purpose of Cheiron's duality within Updike's novel is to show the necessity of continuing to strive for divinity, as the author's theological beliefs would support.

Cheiron's sacrifice

In beginning this novel with Cheiron's wounding by one of his students, Updike establishes his theme and the central aspect of the centaur's character that will dominate the narrative. The arrow itself is not thought to be poisoned – Hummel/Hephaistos cannot smell anything, and Cheiron/Caldwell cannot imagine his students – his heroic students in chapter three's mythological setting, such as Jason and Achilles – 'doing anything like that' (Updike, 1963, p.15); however, the wounding occurs within the modern setting, with students displaying the behaviour of lustful centaurs (Updike, 1963, p.44). Nevertheless, throughout the narrative, Caldwell feels himself to be poisoned, or to feel his imminent death like a poison on his life. Peter overhears his father ask Appleton if his ailment could be 'hydra venom' (Updike, 1963, p.116), a clear reference to the myth of Heracles and Cheiron's fatal wounding. The narrative is suffused with images of death, albeit mostly from Peter's retrospective – he sees his father's face whiten and skin sink (Updike, 1963, p.154), although he also hears Appleton's comforting rejoinder to George that 'without death… there could not be life' (Updike, 1963, p.124), which foreshadows Cheiron's sacrifice. Caldwell illustrates this maxim in his science lesson on the genesis of the earth, as well as foreshadowing his own fate, by his example of the co-operative green algae volvox which 'invented death' (Updike, 1963, p.41). Caldwell outlines to his class that those potentially immortal cells volunteer for death by performing 'a specialised function within an

organised society of cells'; an environment which is 'compromised', and which means that the volvox – and each cell thereafter which follows its example – 'dies sacrificially, for the good of the whole' (Updike, 1963, p.41). Reflected in Caldwell's obituary, which details that he 'took up teaching duties … he was never to put down' (Updike, 1963, p.158), the comparison of sacrifice, and of entering a compromised environment of a high school, cannot be ignored: '[h]is agonizing, unhealing wound is his life' (Walcutt, 1966, p.326).

Yet it is not that Caldwell necessarily feels that he should be employed elsewhere; he considers himself fortunate to have been given the teaching role when he needed work, asserts that he cannot give it up because it is all that he is good at, and he fears losing it, albeit because he feels the weight of responsibility for his family upon him. The strain of entering the environment every day is his ultimate sacrifice. The moment of sacrifice at the novel's end – his acceptance of his role, and his responsibilities, despite the 'infinitude of possibilities' (Updike, 1963, p.268) that could have occurred and that he could have been – is that he must carry on and teach, thus exchanging the physical death of Cheiron 'for a series of smaller, spiritual, daily deaths' (Farmer, 2015, p.335). In doing so, Caldwell is Updike's vehicle for exploring 'the significance of the saint in the modern world' (Vickery, 1974, p.35). In accepting life as Caldwell, which requires a continuation of his everyday psychological suffering in order to provide opportunities for Peter/Prometheus by his having a stable income, he portrays a reversal of Cheiron's noble death. Here, the divine within Caldwell wins out. Farmer (2015, p.335) suggests that Updike is attempting a twentieth-century *Ars Moriendi*, in which Caldwell is playing out a Christian attitude towards death and sacrifice, and moreover that Caldwell does not literally die at the end of the novel but performs a living sacrifice of signing up to countless more small deaths in continuing his teaching. This somewhat complicates the obituary placed at the centre of the novel, and it is little wonder that some critics have considered Caldwell's death an actual one; the details suggest that Caldwell's death cannot happen very far outside of the novel's scope. However, viewed metaphorically, it is an acceptance that this is all life has to offer, and that it is the death of any hope or impetus to make a radical change in his life. Updike here potentially suggests that this sacrifice, this death for the benefit of his family, is not just within reach of all men but is something routine. As Walcutt (1966 p.330) suggests:

> The myth of the centaur expresses with the beautiful Greek lucidity what twentieth-century man is reduced to bandaging in sanitary psychological abstractions: unconsciously, both heroes "want out".

Both Cheiron and Caldwell desire death as an end to their respective pain, and twentieth-century man is psychologically tortured by his everyday necessities. Caldwell, after much soul searching, finds faith and value in his everyday duties and the sacrifice of carrying on, and this provides a role model for others similarly dissatisfied with their lives.

Some of the final lines of the novel complicate the relationship between George and Peter, and run counter to the epigraph at the beginning of the novel from Josephine Preston Peabody's 1897

version of Greek myths. The translation from Apollodorus' *Bibliotheca (*2.5.4) suggests that Cheiron was unable to die because he was immortal, and Prometheus offered himself to become immortal for him. This moves the agency away from Cheiron offering to atone for Prometheus' theft of fire, and towards Prometheus offering to alleviate Cheiron's suffering. It is later, however (2.5.11), recorded that it was Cheiron's offer, made through Heracles' offices (because it was his arrow that had caused Cheiron's wound); and that because Prometheus was already immortal, and freed from the rock, this was no simple exchange. Cheiron had to be willing to descend into Hades and into suffering for Prometheus. This alternative view underpins the complications that Updike has woven throughout the novel and seemingly contradicts his assertion that it is Cheiron/Caldwell who is sacrificing himself. This alternative version also highlights the difficulties in firmly identifying characters with the mythological backstory or their mythological 'other half'; indeed, the mythological index warns that '[n]ot all characters have a stable referent' (Updike, 1963, p.270). This fluidity allows the reader to draw multiple, often conflicting meanings from the novel, reflecting the difficulties of maintaining a faith or position.

'Time and tide for no man wait'

Throughout Updike's novel, the reader cannot escape the fixation upon time, felt by both George and Peter. The repetition of 'time and tide for no man wait' (Updike, 1963, p.59, p.140, p.252) punctuate the relentlessness of time. Caldwell is floored by Judy Lengel's naïve suggestion of 'time' (Updike, 1963, p.99), when asked to name an erosional agent because of its ultimate truth. The novel deliberately refuses to portray time as finite and linear, not only through the surreal melding of Cheiron with Caldwell but also through the persistence of its effects. Time is so ubiquitous, and yet so unknowable, that Caldwell cannot seem to wrestle any sense from it, and he particularly berates Pop Kramer – Cronos – for its slipperiness. Of course, within Cronos lives 'a savage darkness none of the rest of us had ever known' (Updike, 1963, p.63), as Peter intuits; however, as Peter is also Prometheus, he would know about the pattern of overthrowing one's father that has been established within the Titan race, and the horror of Cronos devouring his children in myth. However, Cronos also presided over a Golden Age, in which there were no laws, rules or difficulties, and which did not require a focus upon linear time. It is perhaps this control over time that Caldwell particularly resents, his knowledge of the primordial origins of the races of gods and men. In mythology, Cronos is the father of Cheiron but in Updike, he is Cheiron/Caldwell's father-in-law, perhaps enabling the reader to more easily identify with their fractious relationship.

Peter's relationship with time is more fluid, and therefore it seems to give him less concern. He reflects on visiting museums with his mother, when 'Arcadian time would envelop us' (Updike, 1963, p.240); he sees himself as if 'viewed from the future' (Updike, 1963, p.124); and Vera Hummel is able to evoke 'a curious sense of past time' (Updike, 1963, p.247) within him. He is able to transcend the fixed and rigid nature of time that George experiences. Peter's sense of

cyclical, simultaneous time frees him from his father's dread of its relentless passage. Only at one point, when going to meet his father, does he fear that he is late (Updike, 1963, p.128), and he experiences George's pressure; it is, perhaps, at this point that he realises his father is not immortal.

This obsession with time reflects Caldwell's frustration at the lack of action in his life; the passage of linear time brings a psychological pressure to feel as though one is moving forward and making progress. In highlighting the lack of action within the novel, and the lack of possible action available to Caldwell, Walcutt (1966, p.330) suggests that the action 'has slowed down until it is not a movement but a tense balance of forces in which the actions make no linear progress but only vibrate at constant, tormented wave lengths'. The mythical Cheiron, in existing within mythological and cyclical time, does not have such pressure; indeed, his cross-generational role seems to require him to remain static within his life in order to adequately prepare his heroic students for action. As Walcutt (1966, p.332) notes, however, contemporary time does not afford that perspective. The pressure to move forward creates a 'dislocated modern environment'. Yet, as shown by the explanation of Caldwell's entry into teaching, it offers limited opportunities for progress and fulfilment.

In joining Caldwell with Cheiron, Updike seems to reflect the ideas of Jung in establishing the link between myths and archetypes – a recurring pattern of images, symbols and situations. For Jung, the archetypes influence how a person relates to the world around them and helps them to make sense of what they encounter. Updike suggests that the novel is his exploration of the sense that 'the people we meet are *guises*, do conceal something mythic, perhaps prototypes or longings of our minds' (Updike, 1966, p.499-500), which suggests that there is some similarity in how people behave, in how they see the world, and a repetition of life across time to develop this sensation. Undoubtedly, Updike portrays Caldwell as experiencing 'repeating human experiences' (Ulvydiene, 2018, p.103), and it is this cyclical nature of his experience versus the linear experience of time and society's expectation of progress which causes his anguish. Cheiron serves as an exemplar because he understands this circularity, and the repetition of experience. In being combined with Caldwell, who is subject to the pressures of modern life and linear time, he can see both the repeating nature of life as well as its differences upon mortals. Here his longevity is a strength, as it permits him to live beyond the normal span and experience those repetitious patterns for himself. This experience gives him a 'perennial civilising role among mankind' (Vickery, 1974, p.38). It is modern writers, such as Elizabeth Cook in her 2001 prose poem novella *Achilles*, who see this as a curse and create anguish for Cheiron. For Updike, the passage of linear and accountable time is crushing. The degeneration of modern life is particularly illustrated by this mechanisation of time to the clock, and Caldwell epitomises the constant struggle to work within this inflexible, authoritarian system.

Conclusion

This article has concentrated upon highlighting the qualities of Cheiron from the ancient sources employed by Updike, focusing upon the aspects of his role as a tutor and his sacrifice of his life to free Prometheus. The attention given to time within the novel draws the reader's attention to the differences in perceiving linear and mythic time, and the difficulties that linear time creates for modern society. However, the primary message of the novel is that humans are innately mixed, living on boundaries between animal and human, mortal and divine, and that they must learn to accept their liminality in order to live peacefully. Updike uses the mythological to contrast an ideal with the actual, and reinforces the view that living and working within the constraints of the modern world was the greatest sacrifice a man could make. The use of Cheiron within Updike's novel and the relationships between the characters and their counterparts, as indicated in the 'Mythological Index' at the end of the book, invites the reader to see living in the modern world, fulfilling responsibilities and caring for family, as heroic deeds. Updike redraws the expectations of the hero, and places centrally those who teach and those who sacrifice themselves for the benefit of others as the truly heroic.

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Orestes as a representative of power play, (re-)establishment of political authority and expansionism[43]

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Power play and the Orestes myth

Power play was a defining aspect of ancient Greek social and political life. The (re-)formation of political order, the construction of social identity or status, and the (re-)establishment of authority of either individuals or social groups were all subject to power play. It became a diachronic element of ancient Greek political practice and represented a constant while not always consensual exchange of power among agents of authority. As expressed through literary texts, power play could and did hold ramifications for Greek politics and identity across time, thus gradually contributing to a system of circulation and promotion of various political ideas.

In archaic and classical Greek society, mythical stories were powerful enough to dominate the understanding and formation of social and political notions. Literature as well as historiography frequently produced mythical versions, while the nature of their performance or reading respectively, enabled their circulation among diverse audiences. Such versions were both literary presentations of commonly known stories and interpretations of social and political circumstances. Thus, they often reflected various forms of power play enabling a retrospective understanding of socio-political situation. While a form of power play traced within literature or historiography may recall or resemble a contemporary case of political tension, it can also be argued that current political circumstances influenced the ways in which mythical power plays were shaped.

A telling example of such an interaction lies in the various versions of the Orestes myth. The multiple power plays among the figures of the Orestes myth as found in both literature and historiography have often been presented either as a parallel to the power play among different social groups or communities or as a mythical justification of the political authority of various figures or city-states. As a result, depending on the literary genre and the period in which the myth is inscribed, power plays within the myth have been projected in either contemporary or diachronic political dynamics.

In general, I would suggest that power plays in the Orestes myth may be interpreted in two directions: one that refers to poetic versions of the myth with political and social connotations,

[43] I would like to thank both reviewers for their constructive comments and suggestions on previous drafts of this paper during the blind-review process.

and one that is connected to historiographical sources, such as Herodotus' *Histories*, that shed light to Orestes' role in the construction of power dynamics among various Greek city-states. Thus, in the presentation of the myth in the *Odyssey*, from a social perspective, the tension between Orestes and Aegisthus forms a case of power play. Although they both belong in a patriarchal system of governing, they represent different types of it: Orestes is a symbol of hereditary kingship as defined by a father-king and a son-heir sequence, while Aegisthus promotes a distorted version of this monarchic regime where the political authority has been usurped by a member outside the royal hereditary sequence that managed to gain power in a period of political upheaval.

From an intra-familial aspect, in lyric and tragic versions of the myth, the power play between Orestes and Clytemestra[44] underlines the conflict between male and female power and the prevalence of patriarchy. In Stesichorus' presentation of Clytemestra's dream, the matricide is an action that Orestes undertakes as the only rightful king of Sparta in order to prevent the rule of his mother (Stesichorus, *Oresteia* fr. 180; Davies – Finglass, 2014, pp.506-507; Neschke, 1986, p.296). At the same time, in Pindar's *Pythian* 11, the family bonds within the Atreid house are generally distorted and Orestes' act of vengeance fails to break the vicious cycle of bloodshed within his family, even though it restores the political stability provided by the patriarchal system (Pindar, *Pythian* 11.17-37; Finglass, 2007, p.3; Kurke, 2013, p.132).

From a political perspective, similar elements of the myth have been discussed as examples of social conflict related to the expansion of either Athens' or Sparta's political leadership over other Greek regions, in both literary and historiographical texts which involve themselves in contemporary political issues of the period. In Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Orestes' presence in the Athenian court serves as the mythical justification of the foundation of Areopagus and the political alliance between Athens and Argos (Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 681-710, 755-777; Flaig, 2013, pp.71-72; Leão, 2010, p.50). At the same time, in Herodotus' *Histories*, the transfer of Orestes' bones is employed to explain the political rivalry between Sparta and Tegea (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.65-69; Barker, 2006, pp.14-15).

This paper proposes the co-examination of two non-tragic examples of power play revolving around the figure of Orestes that have hitherto been kept separate: the Orestes myth in the *Odyssey* and the recovery of Orestes' bones described in Herodotus. Although previous scholarship has offered general discussions on the myth, the two versions have been examined separately as they occur in different literary genres and historical periods. Instead of such an approach, I shall provide a specific reading of the political and literary function of the aforementioned mythical versions based on the role of Orestes and the concept of power play. As will be shown, diachronically and along the genres, Orestes is related to the successful resolution of political

[44] For the etymology of the Greek name *Κλυταιμήστρα/Κλυταιμήστρη* (*Clytaemestra/Clytaemestre*), see Sommerstein (2008) x; also, cf. Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women* 19.9-27.

disruption and the re-establishment of already existing forms of authority, while the political ideas he represents serve as a mythical justification of political expansionism. More specifically, in the *Odyssey*, I shall discuss the role of the social power play between Aegisthus and Orestes in the progress of the plot. As I shall show, the rivalry between them serves as a mythical parallel to the conflict between Odysseus and the suitors and offers a gradual justification of their killing through the transformation of Orestes into a symbol of political stability. I shall then examine a historical and socio-political approach to the figure of Orestes in Herodotus' *Histories*, namely the relocation of his bones from Sparta to Tegea. As I shall argue, in Herodotus' narration, Orestes remains a symbol of mythical justification for the historical political tension between Sparta and Tegea and the subsequent re-establishment and expansion of Sparta's political authority.

Mythical power plays: Orestes vs Aegisthus and Odysseus vs the suitors

The Oresteia-story is frequently narrated in the *Odyssey* by gods and men either extensively or briefly.[45] Scholars have described it as a mythical exemplum and a pedagogical guide for Telemachus' coming of age procedure.[46] Although such an interpretation of the story is fundamental, it is still the case that Telemachus never acts according to Orestes' paradigm. On the other hand, Odysseus' homecoming has two levels of accomplishment, consisting of his return to Ithaca and the extinction of his political enemies, who represent the rising power of the aristocracy, and who threaten his marriage and the welfare of his *oikos* (Thornton, 1970, p.2). Such an act resembles the murder of Aegisthus and validates the connection between Orestes and Odysseus. Although the killing of the suitors was a massive murder that constituted a dubious side of Odysseus' return (Gottesman, 2014, p.55), scholarship has shown that various elements of the plot throughout the poem gradually foreshadow and justify it as a necessary act that Odysseus undertakes in order to restore his political power and social status.[47]

However, there is still room for further analysis on the narrative elements employed for such a connection between the wider plot of the poem and Odysseus' act of revenge. Therefore, this discussion seeks to show how the power play between Orestes and Aegisthus followed by the subsequent act of vengeance enables the accomplishment of Odysseus' return. The *Odyssey* is an epic poem about Odysseus' successful homecoming (Katz, 1991, p.29) to the accomplishment of which major aspects of the plot contribute: among others, for example, Athena's twofold plan about Odysseus' return (*Odyssey* 1.80-95);[48] Telemachus' journey as a quest for Odysseus' whereabouts and a preparatory action for his homecoming (*Odyssey* 1.88-95; 1.267-285);

[45] The story is narrated six times in the poem by multiple internal narrators with various points of focalisation.
[46] D' Arms – Hulley, 1946; Millar – Carmichael, 1954; Clarke, 1963; Finley, 1965; Rose, 1967; Austin, 1969; Belmont, 1969; Geddes, 1984; Olson, 1990; Olson, 1995; Petropoulos, 2011.
[47] Allen, 1939, p.112; Heubeck – West et al., 1988, p.53; Olson, 1990, p.59; Petropoulos, 2011, p.84; Gottesman, 2014, p.55.
[48] For a theory that the plan belongs to Zeus, see Marks, 2008, p.18.

Teiresias' insight into the reason why Odysseus' return is delayed and how it can be accomplished (*Odyssey* 11.90-137); Penelope's weaving (*Odyssey* 2.85-128; 19.137–158; 24.138-161); Zeus' settlement of the end of the poem and Athena's subsequent intervention to prevent the suitors' kinsmen from reacting (*Odyssey* 24.472-544). Supported by a system of formulas some of the aforementioned elements unfold throughout the narration (e.g. Athena's plot), while some others are repeated (e.g. Penelope's weaving), so that all different aspects of the plot come together (Marks, 2008, pp. 65, 76-77).

Thus, although a concrete authorial plan cannot be traced in the *Odyssey*, the poem's formulaic nature contributes to a coherent textual connection among the various though relating points of the plot (Webber, 1989, pp.1-2). Given that repeating utterances move beyond a mere reappearance of the same phrases *metri* or *memoriae gratia* and become part of the oral performance of the epic (Nagy, 2004, p.139-141), narrative elements helpfully marked by similar formulas can be easily recalled by the audience. Hence, the more a narrative element is mentioned, the more powerful it becomes. From this perspective, the repetition of Orestes' act, partially consisting of recurrent formulaic structures, is not simply an artefact of mythical tradition in oral poetry but also becomes one of the narrative elements contributing to the successful homecoming.

As I shall argue, the repetition of the Oresteia-story facilitates Odysseus' homecoming in multiple ways. First, Orestes becomes a symbol of justice in which the heroic *κλέος* (*kleos*) is related to and restored by an act of vengeance. His exemplum contributes to Telemachus' transformation into a son suitable for Odysseus and capable of accompanying him in the killing of the suitors. Subsequently, the repeating references to the power play between Orestes and Aegisthus gradually build a solid ground for the killing of the suitors to take place and enable the audience to reach the end of the poem already prepared for what *should* happen. Hence, even before it happens, the killing has been gradually justified as an inevitable and necessary act of restoration of Odysseus' political authority. In addition, as I shall show, Orestes' model of retributive justice enables Odysseus to overcome the killing of the suitors and preserve the hereditary kingship.

Zeus is the first who refers to Orestes in the *Odyssey*, in the first assembly of the gods.

> ὡς καὶ νῦν Αἴγισθος ὑπὲρ μόρον Ἀτρεΐδαο
> γῆμ᾽ ἄλοχον μνηστήν, τὸν δ᾽ ἔκτανε νοστήσαντα,
> εἰδὼς αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον, ἐπεὶ πρό οἱ εἴπομεν ἡμεῖς,
> Ἑρμείαν πέμψαντες, ἐύσκοπον ἀργεϊφόντην,
> μήτ᾽ αὐτὸν κτείνειν μήτε μνάασθαι ἄκοιτιν.
> ἐκ γὰρ Ὀρέσταο <u>τίσις</u> ἔσσεται Ἀτρεΐδαο,
> ὁππότ᾽ ἂν ἡβήσῃ τε καὶ ἧς ἱμείρεται αἴης.
>
> (*Odyssey* 1.35-41)

as now lately, beyond what was given, Aigisthos married
the wife of Atreus' son, and murdered him on his homecoming,
though he knew it was sheer destruction, for we ourselves had told him,
sending Hermes, the mighty watcher, Argeïphontes,
not to kill the man, nor court his lady for marriage;
for vengeance would come on him from Orestes, son of Atreides,
whenever he came of age and longed for his own country.

(Translation by Lattimore, 1967, p.28)

In his first presentation in the poem, Orestes is described as Agamemnon's son who killed Aegisthus when he returned to his homeland in order to avenge his father's murder. For Orestes, τίσις (*tisis*) is the revenge on his father's murderer (Jones, 1941, pp.197-201), which enables him to restore Agamemnon's honour and the normal hereditary sequence to the throne. This act of vengeance guarantees his *kleos*, namely the glory and fame that come as a result of the successful murder of his political rival.[49] By the time Orestes killed Aegisthus, he became the winner of this power play and maintained his social status as the only capable heir to Agamemnon's throne. Furthermore, I would suggest that his *tisis* introduces a set of political ideas that gradually define the type of restoration of social order needed in Ithaca as well as the political system promoted in the *Odyssey*. Orestes represents the already existing type of regime and contributes to the reestablishment of its political authority in periods of political ambiguity. He symbolises the superiority of the hereditary kingship over any other regime. Even more, his act promotes the retributive punishment of the political enemies as the only way to the restoration of social power.

In addition, Orestes' revenge was not unexpected. The gods had warned Aegisthus (*Odyssey* 1.34-39) and approved his death as a just punishment (Marks, 2008, pp.17-19). Furthermore, Athena, whose concern is to ensure Odysseus' safe homecoming, approves Orestes' act of vengeance and claims that every usurper should share the same fate as Aegisthus (*Odyssey* 1.44-50). Thus, an implicit comparison between the suitors and Aegisthus, and subsequently between Odysseus and Orestes, is gradually introduced.[50] The analogy becomes even clearer in *Odyssey* 1.252-270, where Mentor imagines Odysseus' safe homecoming and the performance of the killing of the suitors as a necessary action that would restore the hereditary kingship and bring Odysseus' family together (Austin, 1969, pp.62-63).

As a result, I would argue that this kind of *tisis* is included in a larger model of justice that defines the *Odyssey*, and especially its main act of punishment, namely the killing of the suitors. The

[49] For initiation and adulthood rites, see van Gennep, 1960, p.11; Turner, 1969, p.94; Dowden, 1999, p.224; Graf, 2003, p.3ff; Martin, 2014, p.6.
[50] See, Olson, 1990, p.61; Olson, 1995, p.27; de Jong, 2001, pp.12-14; Marks, 2008, pp.20-22.

model is introduced in the beginning of the poem through the divine justification of Orestes' revenge and refers to a *lex talionis*, a retaliatory form of retribution law based on bloodshed and revenge upon an enemy, since violence is countered with violence.[51] Subsequently, from a literary point of view, the presentation of Orestes as a symbol of justice, the connection between his *kleos* and his act of vengeance and the subsequent gradual justification of the killing of the suitors even before its commitment, reveal that the hero's act is one of the narrative elements that enable Odysseus' successful homecoming.

Moreover, the suitors represent the political danger in Ithaca caused by the rising power of the aristocrats during the king's absence (Mireaux, 1948-1949, pp.152-153). Therefore, *tisis*, namely their punishment, would acquire a political dimension which in turn would contribute to the resolution of the political disorder in Ithaca. When Telemachus visits Pylos in the third book, Nestor cannot offer any reliable information about Odysseus' whereabouts, but he provides him with a useful instruction: for the social order and the hereditary kingship to be restored in Ithaca the suitors must die, regardless of whether Odysseus returns or not. In such a narrative, the Oresteia-story is exploited as the closest example of a similar case, in which a royal house managed to preserve its power through an act of vengeance, so that Telemachus is convinced of the necessity to imitate Orestes and perform the killing of the suitors (*Odyssey* 3.195-200, 3.313-316; Alden, 1987, p.133).

> ἀλλ᾽ ἦ τοι κεῖνος μὲν ἐπισμυγερῶς ἀπέτισεν·
> ὡς ἀγαθὸν καὶ παῖδα καταφθιμένοιο λιπέσθαι
> ἀνδρός, ἐπεὶ καὶ κεῖνος ἐτίσατο πατροφονῆα,
> Αἴγισθον δολόμητιν, ὅ οἱ πατέρα κλυτὸν ἔκτα.
> καὶ σὺ φίλος, μάλα γάρ σ᾽ ὁρόω καλόν τε μέγαν τε,
> ἄλκιμος ἔσσ᾽, ἵνα τίς σε καὶ ὀψιγόνων ἐὺ εἴπῃ.
>
> (*Odyssey* 3.195-200)

> but Aigisthos too paid for it, in a dismal fashion;
> so it is good, when a man has perished, to have a son left
> after him, since this one took vengeance on his father's killer,
> the treacherous Aigisthos, who cut down his glorious father.
> so you too, dear friend, for I see you are tall and splendid,
> be brave too, so that men unborn may speak well of you.
>
> (Translation by Lattimore, 1967, p.56)

[51] Happily, the suggested definition of justice here is corroborated by a very recent work published on the theme of revenge in the *Odyssey* (Loney, 2019), although the rest of my argumentation remains distinct.

In fact, Aegisthus' rise to power recalls the suitors' usurping behaviour in Odysseus' palace as presented in the first book (*Odyssey* 1.91-178). Nestor observes an escalation in the way in which he gained his political power (*Odyssey* 3.263-273, 3.304-310). Aegisthus, in dealing with various obstacles – from the resisting Clytemestra, whom he eventually convinced to move to his palace; to the exile of the singer whom Agamemnon set as Clytemestra's guard; and to the murder of the king himself – gradually deconstructed Agamemnon's political authority and established his own based on adultery and bloodshed (Thornton, 1970, p.11; Olson, 1995, p.34). Furthermore, his political rule was a usurped and imposed seven-year reign which made people suffer and came to an end when Orestes returned to Mycenae and punished him.

> ἑπτάετες δ᾽ ἤνασσε πολυχρύσοιο Μυκήνης,
> κτείνας Ἀτρεΐδην, δέδμητο δὲ λαὸς ὑπ᾽ αὐτῷ.
> τῷ δέ οἱ ὀγδοάτῳ κακὸν ἤλυθε δῖος Ὀρέστης
> ἂψ ἀπ᾽ Ἀθηνάων, κατὰ δ᾽ ἔκτανε πατροφονῆα,
> Αἴγισθον δολόμητιν, ὅ οἱ πατέρα κλυτὸν ἔκτα.
>
> (*Odyssey*, 3.304-310)

> seven years he lived as lord over golden Mykene,
> after he killed Atreides, with the people subject beneath him,
> but in the eighth the evil came on him, great Orestes
> come home from Athens, and he killed his father's murderer,
> the treacherous Aigisthos, who had killed his glorious father.
>
> (Translation by Lattimore, 1967, p.59)

Regardless of whether Telemachus did or did not perform a similar act of vengeance after all, I would suggest that the political significance of the outcome of the power play between Orestes and Aegisthus contributed to the achievement of two greater purposes. Firstly, Telemachus realised the connection between the restoration of political power and the murder of his rivals and completed his coming of age procedure based on social ideas provided by Orestes' example, so that he can facilitate his father's return. Secondly, following the political practice introduced by Orestes' act of vengeance, Odysseus accomplished both levels of his homecoming, he reestablished his status both as the leader of his *oikos* and the king of Ithaca, and he became the only winner in the power play between hereditary kingship and rising aristocracy. Furthermore, a diachronic dimension is acquired: Odysseus managed to re-establish his reign not temporarily but forever (*Odyssey*, 24.482-483; Marks, 2008, 75), while Telemachus contributed to the killing as Odysseus' only capable heir indicating that the model of justice provided by Orestes will be maintained in future forms of the regime. This perpetual perspective of hereditary kingship shows that Orestes does not only enable the justification of the killing of the suitors; even more, he becomes a mythical symbol of the political superiority of the hereditary kingship diachronically.

In fact, the presence of the suitors in Odysseus' palace caused a social disorder which reflected Aegisthus' illegitimate rule imposed on Mycenae during Agamemnon's absence, as they are both outsiders attempting to enter the royal house and usurp its political authority. Odysseus' effective reaction to that political attack was analogous to Orestes' act of vengeance. Gradually though implicitly the killing of the suitors has already been justified when it takes place: the divine approval of Orestes' act of vengeance, already expressed, and the acceptance of Odysseus as Ithaca's only rightful king, seals the idea that the murder of the suitors is inevitable and necessary for the restoration of Ithaca's political order (Murrin, 2007, p.508).

The mythical figure of Orestes and the historical power play between Sparta and Tegea

In the 6th and 5th century BCE, the relationship between Sparta and other Peloponnesian city-states was complicated (Dougherty, 1993, p.31). The social and political rise of Athens followed by a network of alliances with other Greek city-states caused Sparta's concern about its political role in Greece after the Persian Wars. In such a power play among various Greek city-states that changed the political dynamics, a series of mythical connections between Sparta's historical past and heroic figures was introduced to justify the city's role as the most powerful Greek political and military force even after the Persian Wars (Cawkwell, 1993, pp.370-376; Forsdyke, 2007, p.226). To that purpose, a bond between the Atreid house and Sparta's heroic past was introduced. Among other versions of the Orestes myth that promoted such a connection (Stesichorus' *Oresteia*; Pindar's *Pythian* 11), around 430s BCE, in the *Histories*, Herodotus presents a story according to which the relocation of Orestes' bones from Tegea to Sparta was a mythical prerequisite for the conquest of Tegea (Parker, 2011, pp.117-118). In fact, it was a common political practice for various city-states to link their mythical pasts with multiple heroes after their death through the recovery of their bones in order to claim their political authority over other regions or broaden the impact of their foreign policy (e.g. Theseus' bones, see Podlecki, 1971; Tisamenus' bones, see Leahy, 1955).

Nevertheless, Herodotus' historiographical presentation shares some common elements with the epic approach. Mythical narratives have a substantial role in the presentation of the main theme of the *Histories*, namely the attestation of the causes of the Persian Wars (*Histories* 1.1). Immediately after the proem, Herodotus introduces an account of various mythical abductions of Greek, Persian or Trojan women that led to the Trojan War and the hatred between Persians and Greeks. Although as an authorial figure he differs significantly from a poetic one, he still regards myth as a source of understanding of human motivation. Such a technique offers a logical explanation and aetiology to myths that were considered the causes of the Trojan War. In fact, Herodotus attempts to reasonably justify how the various mythological incidents can be applied to actual historical facts. Based on reason, he applies what is supposed to be a historical explanation to the mythic and legendary past in order to rationalise it (Dewald, 2012, pp.61-65, 75-77; Saïd, 2012, pp.90-93). As I shall show, the recovery of Orestes' bones falls into a similar category of mythical justification. Furthermore, as I shall argue, despite the fundamental differences between epic poetry and historiography, in the *Histories*, just like in the *Odyssey*,

Orestes remains a symbol of restoration of an already existing political system, and contributes to the expansion of its authority and the justification of the relevant means to such a purpose.

The *Histories* have mostly been discussed within a historical context. Likewise, the transfer of Orestes' bones has been examined as another case that offers an insight in its contemporary historical circumstances. Recent scholarship on this matter has followed two main directions. According to the first one, a change in Sparta's foreign policy is marked by the recovery of Orestes' bones: Sparta created an alliance with Tegea and set the foundations for the Peloponnesian League.[52] According to the second one, the relocation of Orestes' bones does not indicate any change in Spartan policy. On the contrary, it offers a continuation of the already existing interstate relations and Spartan practices: Tegea was seized by Spartans, no alliance was agreed, and Sparta continued its effort to gain control over the Peloponnese.[53]

Moreover, I would suggest that a fundamental duality lies in the understanding of the *Histories*. Although the story refers to political practices of the past, it also offers an insight into the actual historical time of composition that lies in the mid-5th century BCE, around 430-420 BCE.[54] Therefore, as I shall show, the role of Orestes in the construction of Spartan foreign policy bears a double political orientation depending on the historical period in which this narrative can be inscribed. Furthermore, in 430s BCE, multiple literary versions of the Orestes myth had already been circulated. Although the relocation of Orestes' bones is not included in them, it remains another aspect of an already existing variety of stories revolving around the same figure. Thus, I shall provide a literary reading in order to show that the role of the hero in the *Histories* resembles his function in the *Odyssey*, as he remains a mythical symbol of political restoration and stability. In addition, given that Spartans claimed their inherited right to rule over the entire Peloponnese and conquered Tegea (Phillips, 2003, p.310), I shall argue that Orestes' presentation as a Spartan hero serves as an aetiology for Sparta's political history and expansionism that is retrospectively justified in both previous periods of its history and the 5th century BCE.

In an analysis of Sparta's political history, Herodotus underlines Spartans' failure to conquer Tegea during Leon's and Hegesicles' kingship (c. 575-560 BCE) despite their previous victories and the already established legal innovations of Lycurgus (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.65; Nafissi, 2018, pp.93-99).[55] Furthermore, when they consulted the Delphic Oracle on how to expand their power in Arcadia, they were given an oracle which they, nevertheless, misinterpreted. Thus, they were defeated and enslaved by Tegeans (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.66.1-2; Kurke, 2009, pp.417-

[52] Dickins, 1912, pp.20-26; Leahy, 1955, pp.30-31; Parke – Wormell, 1956, pp.95-100; Leahy, 1958; Huxley, 1962, pp.60-70; Jones, 1967, pp.43-46; Forrest, 1968, pp.74-83; Jeffery, 1976, pp.120-125; Sealey, 1976, pp.80-85; Cartledge, 1979, pp.135-140; Huxley, 1979; Hammond, 1982, pp.355-359; Hall, 2007, pp.335-336.
[53] Cawkwell, 1993; Boedeker, 1998; Phillips, 2003; Welwei, 2004.
[54] For the composition date, see Sansone, 1985, pp.1-9.
[55] For Lycurgus' laws see Forrest, 1968, pp.40-60; Welwei, 2004, p.223; Cartledge, 2009, pp.42-44; Nafissi, 2018.

423).[56] According to the same story, several years later, at some point between 560-546 BCE, during the reign of Anaxandridas and Ariston, Spartans conquered Tegea based on an oracle given by the Delphi, according to which,

> *ἔστι τις Ἀρκαδίης Τεγέη λευρῷ ἐνὶ χώρῳ,*
> *ἔνθ᾽ἄνεμοι πνείουσι δύω κρατερῆς ὑπ᾽ ἀνάγκης,*
> *καὶ τύπος ἀντίτυπος, καὶ πῆμ᾽ ἐπὶ πήματι κεῖται*
> *ἔνθ᾽ Ἀγαμεμνονίδην κατέχειν φυσίζοος αἶα·*
> *τὸν σὺ κομισσάμενος Τεγέης ἐπιτάρροθος ἔσσῃ.*
>
> (*Histories* 1.67.4)

> There is a certain Tegea, in the level land of Arcadia,
> where two winds blow by mighty necessity,
> and there is stroke and counterstroke, and grief is laid upon grief.
> There the grain-giving earth holds Agamemnon's son:
> When you have conveyed him safely home, you will be lord of Tegea.
>
> (Translation by Kurke, 2009, p.436)

Spartans had to trace Orestes' bones in Tegea and relocate them to Sparta where they belonged. After a thorough search, Lychas, one of the noble men,[57] while in Tegea, found the bones in the backyard of a blacksmith, and removed them to Sparta, so that in the following battles, Tegea was finally defeated (*Histories* 1.68.6). However, this story, which Herodotus presents as a sequence of facts that led to the restoration of Orestes' bones, is most probably fictional (Asheri et al., 2007, p.130). Even more, the historical momentum in which Tegea's conquest took place, if it really did ever happen, does not imply that the cult of Orestes was established in the same period. On the contrary, given that there is no safe date or even evidence for the historicity of this battle, the story was either a pre-existing one applied as a mythical justification to Sparta's expansionism, or an ex post facto explanation of the competition with Tegea. As it is quite uncertain when, how or if this story was formed, the following focusses on the literary aspects of it based on the fact that it is presented as having taken place at some point in Sparta's past, and it is related to the city's current political situation in the time of composition of Herodotus' *Histories*.

In any case, as I have shown, in the *Histories*, the interpretation of the Orestes myth has maintained some fundamental political aspects already acquired in the *Odyssey*. In a period of

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[56] For Spartan expansionism see Barker, 2006, pp.14-15; Doak, 2013, pp.206-207.
[57] For Lychas' social status, see Braun, 1994, pp.42-45; Boedeker, 1998, pp.172-173.

ambiguity and conflict, the hero contributed to the re-establishment of Sparta's superiority over its political rivals, while it served as a model of political stability since Herodotus presents a story including the recovery of the hero's bones as a means that affirmed the Spartan leadership.

Subsequently, Orestes preserves the political superiority of kingship over other regimes as the relocation of his bones restores the prevalence of Sparta's political system over other cities. The hero is related through blood to the Spartan king Menelaus. Moreover, in the *Odyssey*, Agamemnon was the king of Mycenae and the general who led all Achaeans to the victorious Trojan War. Thus, Orestes, as both a Spartan and an Achaean descendant, is connected to the wider region of the Peloponnese. As a result, I would suggest that this duality in his political profile explains why Orestes is connected to the expansion of Spartan foreign policy. He is not a Spartan in the strictest definition of the word and at the same time, he is related to Menelaus' throne. His father is the general of the whole Greek army in Troy and his uncle is the one that ruled over Sparta. Although Orestes was never considered the king of Sparta, his contribution to such a narrative of Spartan politics extends the authority of this political system around the Peloponnese by the time he is related to Menelaus' throne, and mythically justifies Sparta's political expansion.

Therefore, what really matters is not the establishment of Sparta's right to claim that all different city-states of the Peloponnese share the same origins (Huxley, 1983, pp.5-8). On the contrary, I would suggest that what is established through Orestes' relation to Sparta is that all different origins of the Peloponnese should be subjected to Spartan power and political system. Though not a strictly Spartan hero, Orestes is still related to the Spartan throne, thus justifying Sparta's political system and offering a solid ground for the expansion of its authority over other city-states.

On the other hand, I would argue that a retrospective analysis of such a narrative would shed light on the double role of the relocation of Orestes' bones in Spartan foreign policy and political history depending on the historical period in which it is examined. In the original context of this story and when examined under the light of the interstate relations between Sparta and Tegea, the hero represented the restoration of Spartan political authority after a period of political ambiguity and the promotion of the already existing double kingship. However, such a justification of Spartan interstate relations and techniques of expansionism acquires another dimension if applied to the historical and political context of the mid-5th century BCE. In the aftermath of the Persian Wars, Athens' greatest achievement in the battlefield and the foreign policy, Sparta lost much of its previous glory (Powell, 2018, p.291). From a 5th-century perspective, the recovery of Orestes' bones offers a retrospective justification of Sparta's foreign policy not so much in relation with other Greek city-states, but mainly with Lydia. The alliance offered to Spartans by Croesus came in the aftermath of their victory against Tegeans and recognised Sparta as the most powerful Greek city (*Histories* 1.69). Such an approach to Spartan political history offers a retrospective explanation and justification of the city's decision to withdraw from the anti-Persian campaigning

in 470s BCE.[58] Although I would not suggest that Herodotus necessarily promotes his contemporary Spartan political ideals through the presentation of Orestes as a Spartan hero, I would recognise in such a narration another reminder of Sparta's previous leadership over the Peloponnese and a retrospective justification of its political history and foreign policy that would enhance its authority after the Persian Wars.

Conclusion: A literary comparison between the *Histories* and the *Odyssey*

Having been composed almost three centuries apart, the *Histories* and the *Odyssey* represent two different literary genres. The first seeks to trace a causal relationship among facts in order to offer historical evidence on the Persian Wars, while the other one forms a complex fictional narrative revolving around Odysseus' homecoming. However, in both cases, various mythical episodes with social connotations having taken place in different periods of either mythical or historical time, were brought together in a complicated nexus that created causality between an act of enforcement and the re-establishment of political authority.

On a structural level, both presentations of Orestes' role are retrospectively arranged. In the *Histories*, the narration of the power play between Sparta and Tegea started with the initial Spartan defeat; it recalled Lycurgus' legal reformations of the 9th century BCE; it returned to the later oracle about the relocation of Orestes' bones, and the subsequent Spartan victory; and finally, through Croesus' alliance offer to Sparta, it reached the period after Tegea's defeat. Similarly, in the *Odyssey*, Orestes' act of vengeance is recalled as a mythical exemplum of the past although it foreshadows the killing of the suitors.

Thus, as I have shown, in both cases Orestes remains a symbol of political restoration and stability. In the *Histories*, the relocation of Orestes' bones serves as a mythical justification for Sparta's claims in the mid-fifth century relating to its successful foreign policy and the restoration of its political leadership and the expansion of its authority. Seemingly, the *Odyssey* introduces the Orestes myth in order to initiate the gradual in-advance justification of the killing of the suitors as an act that guarantees the restoration of Odysseus' political authority.

[58] For a historical account of the relevant facts, see Powell, 2018, pp.291-299.

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Curtius Rufus' Roman reading of the proskynesis debate

Theatricality of power and free eloquence in the *Histories of Alexander the Great*

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At an unspecified date most probably in the first century AD[59], the historian Quintus Curtius Rufus wrote the *Histories of Alexander the Great*. Alexander the Great had always been a very famous figure in Roman cultural memory, and can even be called, as Spencer (2002) puts it, a "Roman cultural myth". He was the role model of several Republican generals and emperors[60], the subject of many moral *exempla* and declamation exercises: he found his way into all forms of literature and became a paradigm reflecting Roman concerns about monarchy and empire. Alexander was indeed a perfectly relevant case for a "study on power"[61]: in the *Histories*, from being a good and moderate ruler tolerating *libertas* according to the customs established by his fathers, he becomes a tyrant, corrupted by the East and Fortune[62]. Through the portrayal of Alexander's reign, Curtius thus wrote a discourse on monarchy. To articulate his reflection, he uses speech as an indicator of the nature of Alexander's regime. Oratory was indeed a central part of Roman culture and underwent profound changes when the Republic was replaced by the Principate, as is famously discussed in Tacitus' *Dialogue of the orators*. This topic is investigated in the passage I focus on, the debate on the king's deification in book 8 of the *Histories*.

Alexander's *adfectatio inmortalitatis* is introduced in book 4, when the king is told by the oracle of Hammon that he is the son of Jupiter. According to Curtius, the priest lies to flatter him, and Alexander is blind to it because Fortune has already started to corrupt his character[63]. In book 8, Alexander now wants to be worshipped as a god by all his subjects. To this end, he wishes to impose the proskynesis, a Persian ritual. Persians indeed prostrate themselves before the Great

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[59] See Baynham (1998, pp. 201-219) who summarizes the state of art on this matter. I follow her and Yakoubovitch (2015) who demonstrate that Curtius most probably wrote under Vespasian. Some scholars suggest other dates, most often Claudius, as Atkinson (1980, pp. 25-34).
[60] Surveys on *imitatio Alexandri* are found in André (1990), Martin (1994, pp. 296-315) and Spencer (2009).
[61] Baynham (1998, p. 9).
[62] Yakoubovitch (2014) and Müller (2016) examine the construction of this evolving portrait.
[63] Curt. 4.7.25-32.

King, as they believe his power reaches that of the gods[64]. This is a crucial political matter, for according to Curtius Rufus and a long tradition before him, the Persian monarchy is a *dominatio*, and the proskynesis a sign of the subservience of the Persian subjects to the Great King. During a banquet, Cleo the flatterer champions the proskynesis, and Callisthenes, Alexander's historian, speaks out against it, arguing that no living man can become a god and that Greeks and Macedonians should not forsake their customs. He rouses the opposition of the Macedonians and Alexander's attempt is given up. As for Callisthenes, he is executed on a false charge. The versions of the proskynesis affair that are found in Curtius' *Histories*, Plutarch's *Alexander* and Arrian's *Anabasis of Alexander* are very different from each other[65]. Only Arrian and Curtius report that a proper debate took place; but in the *Anabasis*, the sophist Anaxarchus, and not a man named Cleo, promotes the proskynesis, and Arrian's judgement on Callisthenes is strikingly negative. Curtius' historiographical choices are all the more notable in this passage as the tradition and the very character of Callisthenes seem to have been malleable.

It has been rightfully acknowledged that the content of the speeches reflects the Roman standards of the imperial cult[66]. However, the account is also a Roman reading of a political conflict. Pownall (2018) convincingly draws a parallel between Callisthenes' fate and Nero's killing of Seneca. However, *libertas*, which is the main focus of the episode and the distinctive trait of the Olynthian, is not particularly a Senecan feature. The passage is indeed a study on speech under tyranny relying on a contrast between the court and Callisthenes. Baynham (1998, pp. 192-195) notices Curtius' contemporary prejudices concerning flattery and compares Callisthenes to the Neronian Stoic Thrasea Paetus, also figure of *libertas*. Her conclusions must be furthered and some of them nuanced: to that end, I examine the construction of the antagonism between tyranny and speech and draw parallels between Curtius' account and Tacitean narrative structures and political analysis. First, flattery should be re-examined as part of a larger problem: the corruption of speech. More precisely, the passage makes a specific use of theatricality, thus showing that the distortions of language which are highlighted make court life appear as constant role playing. I thus hope to underline the proximity between Curtius and Tacitus as they both bring to light a feature of tyranny which Boesche (1987) calls "the politics of pretence". I then analyse the portrait of Callisthenes, following a path opened by Spencer (2009, p. 270), who examines the Roman reception of the Olynthian historian as becoming "a means of interrogating the kinds of freedom

[64] Some modern historians demonstrated that the ritual had no religious meaning and was misunderstood by ancient authors. Alexander's intentions regarding proskynesis and deification are still debated: see Robinson (1943), Balsdon (1950), Badian (1981), Bosworth (1988, pp. 113-114), Badian (1996), Friedricksmeyer (2003), Bowden (2013), Pownall (2014).

[65] Curt. 8.5.5-25; Plu. *Alex*. 54; Arr. *An*. 4.10-12. Arrian himself underlines that there were various versions of the conflict (*An*. 4.14. 3-4); his comment allows to conclude that Curtius does not follow the versions of Aristobulus and Ptolemaeus, but that of the vulgate tradition. See Atkinson (1980, pp. 58-67) on Curtius' sources. However, Bowden (2013) rightfully emphasizes that the imperial accounts of the proskynesis affair have been contaminated by the moral tradition.

[66] See in particular Bosworth (1988, p. 118) and Baynham (1998, p. 193).

and discourse that are available to subjects"[67]. Curtius depicts him as a figure of resistance by making him the embodiment of free eloquence threatened by the dramaturgy of tyranny, and thus the focus of a reflection on discourse and truth under autocracy.

I- Expressing oneself under domination as wearing a mask

Firstly, the focus will be on two protagonists, the Greeks and Macedonians invited to the banquet as a collective character, then Cleo the flatterer. Their depiction shows that the loss of *libertas* has as a corollary the spread of *(dis)simulatio* at court. At the beginning of the debate, the Greek and Macedonian elite keeps silent, as emphasized by the narrator after Cleo's speech:

> *Is tum silentio facto, unum illum intuentibus ceteris …*[68]
>
> He [Callisthenes] then, as silence had been made and the rest was staring at him alone …

This must be regarded in a wider context, for when the debate takes place, it has been some time since the Macedonian elite was silenced. The first half of book 8 is punctuated by three sympotic episodes which reflect the corruption of speech and of which the proskynesis debate is the third. At the beginning of book 8, Alexander kills the general Cleitus[69]. The man, while drunk, vehemently castigates Alexander, showing *licentia uerborum*[70]. The king, enraged and drunk as well, slays him with a spear, a horrifying act which causes his friends to distrust and fear him. Consequently, little before the proskynesis debate, when Alexander marries the Persian captive Roxane, Curtius reports that the Macedonian aristocrats dissimulate their disapproval:

> *Sed, post Cliti caedem* ***libertate sublata,*** *uultu, qui maxime* ***seruit****, adsentiebantur.*[71]
>
> But since after the murder of Cleitus freedom of speech had been suppressed, they assented by expression of their faces, which is the most subject to servitude.

As freedom of speech has been suppressed, the Macedonians are forced to conceal their feelings and perform approval, which is described as acting like slaves: Curtius uses an antithesis between *libertas* and *seruire* to emphasize the change in Alexander's governing which has been revealed by the murder of Cleitus. *Vultus*, which is supposed to be the mirror of the soul in rhetorical

[67] See also Spencer (2002, pp. 135-138).
[68] Curt. 8.5.14. I translate Curtius' text. As for the other authors, I use the translations which are found in Loeb Editions, except where indicated.
[69] Curt. 8.1.19-52.
[70] Curt. 8.2.2.
[71] Curt. 8.4.30.

theory[72], is here precisely what pretends: a mask. Hypocrisy is a first step towards open flattery, which is one of the major themes of the proskynesis episode.

After Curtius has broached the subject of Alexander's desire for deification, he portrays the characters who encourage his ambition:

> ***Non deerat talia concupiscenti perniciosa*** *adulatio****, perpetuum malum regum, quorum opes saepius adsentatio quam hostis euertit.*** *Nec Macedonum haec erat culpa […] sed Graecorum, qui professionem honestarum artium malis conruperant moribus, Agis quidam Argiuus, pessimorum carminum post Choerilum conditor, et ex Sicilia Cleo (hic quidem non ingenii solum, sed etiam nationis uitio adulator) et cetera urbium suarum purgamenta, quae propinquis etiam maximorumque exercituum ducibus a rege praeferebantur, hi tum caelum illi aperiebant […].*[73]
>
> In his desire for such things he did not lack pernicious flattery, the perpetual evil of kings, whose power is more frequently overthrown by constant assent than by foes. And this was not the fault of the Macedonians […] but of the Greeks, who had corrupted their profession of the liberal arts by evil habits. Agis, an Argive, the composer of the worst poems next after Choerilus, and Cleo, from Sicily (the latter indeed a flatterer, from a defect not only in his own character, but also in his nation) and other sweepings of their own cities, whom the king preferred even to his nearest friends and the leaders of his greatest armies, these people then were opening the sky to him […].

Curtius blames Greeks and exonerates Macedonians, insisting on a conflict between the two which is also mentioned by other sources but not so prominently[74]. It serves to draw a clearer contrast between the flatterers and Callisthenes as Greek men of letters[75] and to underline the Macedonians' respect for their ancestral customs. Furthermore, *Graeca adulatio* is a Roman motif mentioned by Tacitus in a similar context, as he refers to the divine honours bestowed by the Greeks to Theophanes of Mytilene[76].

Flatterers have been the traditional escort of kings at least since Herodotus, which Curtius knows about since he broadens the scope by making a general statement: *perpetuum malum regum*. The spreading of flattery at Alexander's court is attested by other historians[77], but Curtius is also close to Roman treatments of this moral and political problem. In Cicero's *De amicitia*, the flatterer is

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[72] Cic. *de Orat*. 3.59.221: *imago est animi uultus*, "the face is the mirror of the soul" (my translation). See also Cic. *Pis*. 1.1 : *oculi, supercilia, frons, uoltus denique totus, qui sermo quidam tacitus mentis est, hic in fraudem homines impulit, hic eos quibus eras ignotus decepit, fefellit, induxit* : "it was your eyes, eyebrows, forehead, in a word your whole face, which is a kind of silent language of the mind, which pushed your fellow-men into delusion; this it was which tricked, betrayed, inveigled those who were unacquainted with you" (I altered N. Watt's translation). There, Cicero admits that deception is possible.

[73] Curt. 8.5.6-8.

[74] See in particular Plut. *Alex*. 54.2.

[75] Curtius is not very explicit on Cleo's identity, except on his "profession of the liberal arts", which is vague. Arrian's Anaxarchus, on the contrary, is clearly a sophist. Cleo is elsewhere unmentioned. Edmunds (1971, p. 387) argues that Curtius invented the character whereas Bosworth (1995, p. 78) accepts his existence.

[76] Tac. *Ann*. 6.18.2.

[77] Particularly in the accounts of the proskynesis affair: see Arrian's and Plutarch's (footnote 7).

the fake friend, as opposed to the true friend, and is characteristic of the tyrant's entourage[78]. Due to the return of autocracy, the notion is popular in first century literature: Seneca, like Curtius, mentions how pervasive and dangerous flattery is for monarchies, while the most precious good for kings is precisely a friend who speaks truth to power[79]. In Tacitus' works, as a lot of senators, seeking their self-interest or out of fear, support the emperor's desires, *libertas* is replaced by adulation, which is a symptom of the elite's abasement. Speech is no longer a means of directing public life as it was theoretically under the Republic, but a means of pleasing the prince: therefore, *adulatio* is a corrupted speech, the language of enslavement[80]. The contrast Curtius draws between *libertas* and *adulatio* is similar to this Tacitean motif, as will be further developed.

The flatterer does not speak the truth but tells everything his target wants to hear. Therefore, he is defined by his very falseness:

> *Secerni autem blandus amico a uero et internosci tam potest adhibita diligentia quam* ***omnia fucata et simulata a sinceris atque ueris***.[81]
>
> But by the exercise of care a fawning friend may be separated and distinguished from a true friend, just as everything made up and false may be distinguished from what is genuine and true.

The characteristic vice of flattery is *simulatio*, pretending what is not, as is also shown by the make-up metaphor (*fucata*). He is only a mask beneath which the true face cannot be discerned.

Tyrannical power is thus defined by its ability to corrupt language and communication, to the extent that it breaks the relationship between character and speech, between thinking and speaking. The disappearance of freedom of speech results in the spread of *dissimulatio* and *simulatio*, which manifest themselves in servile flattery and faked approval. Communication becomes pretending and role playing, as will be deeper explored. As the only choice left is between staying silent or speaking the language of the master, Alexander keeps a firm hold on public discourse.

II- The proskynesis debate as a performance

Furthermore, Curtius' narrative borrows features from the field of theatre, as soon as the debate is introduced:

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[78] See Cic. *Amic*. 24-26. Curtius uses the word *amici* to translate ἑταῖροι, which refers to the escort of the Macedonian king, composed by riders protecting him and spending most of the time with him; nevertheless, he exploits the latin meaning of *amicus*, referring to the codified relationship of *amicitia*, which is obvious in the account of Philotas' trial for example (see Curt. 6.10.26).
[79] Sen. *Ben*. 6.30-33.
[80] Kapust (2011, pp. 112-113) and Strunk (2017, pp. 133-165). See for example Tacitus' lament on *adulatio*: Tac. *Ann*. 3.65.
[81] Cic. *Amic*. 25.95 (I altered W. Falconer's translation).

Igitur festo die omni opulentia ***conuiuium exornari iubet****, cui non Macedones modo et Graeci principes amicorum, sed etiam Persarum nobiles adhiberentur. Cum quibus cum discubuisset rex, paulisper epulatus, conuiuio egreditur. Cleo,* ***sicut praeparatum erat****, sermonem cum admiratione laudum eius instituit* […].[82]

Therefore on a festal day he ordered a banquet to be prepared with all magnificence, to which not only the first Macedonians and Greeks of his friends, but also the nobility of the Persians were invited. As the king had taken his place at table with them, after feasting for a little while, he left the banquet. Cleo, as had been prearranged, began the conversation by expressing admiration for the king's distinctions.

The debate is staged in advance: the king, as a playwright, chooses the place, circumstance and scenery. Events unfold in a predefined order as in a script where every carefully chosen guest has a role to play, whether they know it or not: Alexander must be absent, the flatterer must start speaking, the Greeks and Macedonians must be the audience listening and the Persian nobles are expected to prostrate themselves before the king when he comes back, to set an example for others[83]. The flatterer speaks for the king on his command, which makes him the main actor of a play orchestrated by power: this is a clever use of this stock-character, who is by definition master of *simulatio*.

The fact that the only deliberative debate between the friends of the king starts with the speech not of an orator, but of a court actor, should be emphasized. The assembly speech, whose flourishing is characteristic of a free state, cannot be but a performance staged by power. Speech is no longer a means of getting political support and achieving consensus, but of dissimulation and manipulation designed to conceal the king's burning desire to enslave his own people. Orchestrating public performances is a way to control public discourse and one of the distortions of speech that are highlighted in the passage.

Furthermore, after Callisthenes' speech and the Macedonians' reactions to it, the narrator reveals a piece of information:

Nec quicquam eorum, quae inuicem iactata errant, rex ignorabat, ***cum post aulaea, quae lectis obduxerat, staret.***[84]

And the king was not unaware of anything that had been said on one side and the other, since he was standing behind the curtains which he had spread round the couches.

[82] Curt. 8.5.9-10.
[83] Curt. 8.5.21.
[84] Curt. 8.5.21.

The term *aulaea* belongs to the realm of theatre, referring to the curtains which separate the stage from the audience before and after the show[85]. If one considers who is watching and who is watched, the king is actually a second audience, since he himself watches the Greeks and Macedonians' reactions to Cleo's speech. The court is monitored by the assessing gaze of power as if trapped on a stage. Because Callisthenes will break the performance of assent and speak his mind, he will suffer the king's wrath. Based on these elements, the narrative could be analysed through the theatrical paradigm as a descriptive model for power relations which was developed by sociological and political science studies. The anthropologist Scott (1990) demonstrates how subordinates are forced to play a role which corresponds to the appearances the dominant wants to see, a facade he calls the "public transcript". Bartsch (1994, pp. 1-35) uses this model to explore Tacitus' account of Nero's reign[86]. Departing from Nero's own performances as an actor, she notices a reversal of roles between actor and audience, since the audience is forced to praise the emperor's acting as they are monitored by the gaze of power. She also demonstrates that Tacitus uses this very theatrical paradigm to shape the emperor's interactions with his relatives, who are forced to play roles in front of him: she concludes by calling Tacitus one of the first theoreticians of theatricality. The two criteria she retains, the emphasis on role playing and the function of gaze, can apply to Curtius' account of the debate. As a historian and political observer, Curtius not only shows Alexander producing manipulative dramaturgy and staging propaganda, but also that autocracy causes the court to be turned into a theatre where everyone is forced to play a role in keeping with expectations defined by power. Curtius' court can be paralleled with Tacitus' Julio-Claudian society, whose characters, princes as well as subjects, constantly conceal, manipulate and pretend, to such an extent that Galtier (2011, p. 158) calls the Tacitean man "*homo personatus*", the masked man. Tacitus' historiographical enterprise was to unveil the true faces of men, truth behind appearances. Both historians used very similar interpretive models and narrative strategies and the theatrical paradigm as hermeneutics of autocracy.

Curtius portrays Alexander's court at this point as the reign of false pretences and masks. The polysemy of the word *persona* could indeed encapsulate the problem of speech under autocracy as reflected by the opposition between controlled and free speech. It originally refers to the theatrical mask but is also the Latin word for rhetorical *ethos*. Even though the rhetorical *persona* is forged by the orator, far from being a mask, Cicero conceived it as revealing the true character of the orator. Roman culture considered the actor and the orator as opposite, for the face and speech of the orator were supposed to reveal his true self, whereas the actor wore masks and practiced *imitatio*, counterfeiting[87]. What tyranny provokes through the repression of *libertas* is

[85] See for example Cic. *Cael.* 65 or Hor. *Ep*. 2.1.189.
[86] On theatricality in Tacitus' *opera maiora*, see also Galtier (2011, pp. 143-224).
[87] See Guérin (2009, 2011) and his comprehensive study of rhetorical *persona*. Dupont (2000) discusses this differentiation between actor and orator and calls the actor "l'orateur sans visage", "the faceless orator".

a paradigm shift in political life: speech becomes a mask and the court actor rises to power, whereas free and transparent eloquence cannot survive.

III- The shaping of Callisthenes as figure of resistance

The performance of power is shattered by Callisthenes, Aristotle's nephew, a rhetor, philosopher and Alexander's court historian. He is introduced after Cleo's speech:

> *Grauitas uiri et **prompta libertas** inuisa erat regi, quasi solus Macedonas paratos ad tale obsequium moraretur.*[88]
>
> The austere dignity of the man and his ready freedom of speech were odious to the king, as if he alone were delaying the Macedonians who were prepared for such obsequiousness.

Callisthenes is a charismatic man combining *libertas* as freedom of speech and *grauitas*, which indicates influence over other people. Not only does he display independence of mind, but he seems also able to rescue others from further enslavement.

Baynham (1998, pp. 192-195) writes that Callisthenes' speech is rash; however, whereas Arrian and Plutarch blame Callisthenes for speaking inappropriately or being foolish, Curtius strikingly does not. Callisthenes' frank speech reminds Herodotus' Greek wise advisors to Persian arrogant despots, such as Solon speaking truth to Croesus[89], and yet this is a fundamentally Roman version. As opposed to Cleitus, whose insulting words were judged excessive by the narrator, Callisthenes' speech is moderate, praises Alexander, gives priority to defending religion and customs and avoids political matters that are raised by the narrator himself, who sees the proskynesis as a despotic symbol[90]. His frankness, which is therefore free from foolhardiness as well as from flattery, is the expression of his independent spirit. Furthermore, what is unique to this character is that his *libertas* works at the individual but also at the collective level, as shown by what happens after his speech:

> *Aequis auribus Callisthenes, ueluti **uindex publicae libertatis,** audiebatur. Expresserat non adsensionem modo, sed etiam uocem, seniorum praecipue, quibus grauis erat inueterati moris externa mutatio.*[91]
>
> Callisthenes was heard with favourable ears, as the defender of the public liberty. He had stirred up not only assent, but also voices, especially of the older men, for whom it was painful to change their long-standing customs to those of strangers.

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[88] Curt. 8.5.13.
[89] Hdt. 1.32.
[90] Curt. 6.6.1-5.
[91] Curt. 8.5.20.

The catchword *uindex publicae libertatis* has a strong political meaning and had a long Republican history before being famously claimed by Augustus[92]. Labelling Callisthenes this way definitely makes Alexander the enemy of freedom. First, because he speaks against proskynesis and prevents the ritual to be imposed, he defends political freedom – freedom from *dominatio* that the king wants to establish[93]. Furthermore, Macedonians start to express their support overtly, as shown by the emphasis on the word *uox*. The previous public performance has been breached and free speech has been – temporarily – restored, as if Callisthenes was serving as *exemplum* of freedom and had pulled their voices out of them. In this way, he combines political freedom and freedom of speech[94].

Callisthenes dies for his opposition under a false pretence: he is accused of plotting the Pages conspiracy and is executed without having had the right to speak in his defence. His conviction and death reveal how much Alexander fears free speech, as emphasized by Callisthenes' young friend Hermolaus, one of the plotters:

> *At Callisthenis* ***uox carcere inclusa est****, quia solus potest dicere. Cur enim non producitur, cum etiam confessi audiuntur? Nempe quia* ***liberam uocem*** *innocentis audire metuis ac ne* ***uultum*** *quidem pateris.*[95]
>
> But the voice of Callisthenes is shut up in a dungeon, because he is the only one able to speak. For why is not he brought before you, when even those who have confessed are heard? No doubt because you fear to hear the free voice of an innocent man and cannot even endure his face.

Free speech (*libera uox*) is here metaphorically contrasted with imprisonment (*uox carcere inclusa*) – the context of the trial lends itself to it. Callisthenes is not only metonymically defined by *uox*, but more specifically by his eloquence: *quia solus potest dicere*. The words *uox* and *uultus* reappear to designate the voice and face of the true orator, kept free against all odds. Callisthenes thus serves as a medium to convey the antagonism between tyrannical power and free eloquence.

To achieve that purpose, Curtius shaped his character on a Roman model, which is made obvious by the different uses of *libertas* I commented on, but also if one compares Callisthenes to Roman

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[92] Aug. *RG* 1.1. Wirsubszki (1950, p. 103) lists Republican examples. Cogitore (2011, pp. 136-137, 155, 158-159) surveys Claudius', Flavian and Antonine uses of *libertas* as catchword. After Augustus who used it against Antony, the slogan *de facto* appears after the death of "bad" emperors (Caligula, Nero and the civil war of 69, Domitian). The emperor is expected to ensure the preservation of *libertas* – which Alexander fails to do in the passage, thus similar to bad *principes*.

[93] *Libertas* in a political sense is essentially freedom from tyranny in the *Histories*. Monarchy can authorize *libertas*, as demonstrated by the traditional Macedonian regime (see Curt. 4.7.32). In the second pentad, Curtius exploits the antithesis between *libertas* and *seruitus* to portray Alexander not as a *rex* anymore but as a *dominus* looking like a Persian Great King and bearing the features of the "rhetorical tyrant" which Dunkle (1971) traces: see Curt. 6.6.1-11 and 8.7.

[94] For all these reasons, I do not think, as Baynham (1998, p. 194) does, that *ueluti* must be analysed as showing that the narrator does not endorse the Macedonians' reaction.

[95] Curt. 8.7.8-9.

imperial figures of resistance. The reference to Seneca which Pownall (2018, p. 67-68) underlines reflects Callisthenes' depiction as a tutor but not as a figure of political *libertas*. It is rather the characteristic of another Neronian philosopher, Thrasea Paetus, as portrayed by Tacitus. More precisely, a parallel can be drawn between the structure and meaning of the proskynesis episode and the trial of Antistius Sosianus in book 14 of the *Annals*[96]. The praetor Antistius, because he has read a satirical poem about Nero during a banquet, is charged with *maiestas*. Whereas every senator approves the death sentence to please Nero, thus bringing dishonour on the assembly, Thrasea alone takes the floor to oppose it, arguing that under the reign of a good prince, a free Senate should not put people to death as if law did not provide for proper punishment. After the speech, Tacitus writes:

> ***Libertas Thraseae seruitium aliorum rupit****, et postquam discessionem consul permiserat, pedibus in sententiam eius iere, paucis exceptis, in quibus* ***adulatione*** *promptissimus fuit A. Vitellius, optimum quemque iurgio lacessens et respondenti reticens, ut pauida ingenia solent.*[97]
>
> The freedom of Thrasea broke through the servitude of others, and, on the consul authorizing a division, he was followed in the voting by all but a few dissentients – the most active flatterer in their number being Aulus Vitellius, who levelled his abuse at all men of decency, and, as is the wont of cowardly natures, lapsed into silence when the reply came.

Thrasea is contrasted with flatterers and sycophants such as the future emperor Vitellius, in the same way as Callisthenes with Cleo. He is the only one that dares to oppose the death sentence approved by the Senate out of obsequiousness. Thanks to his moderate speech which demonstrates his *libertas*, as freedom of speech and independent spirit, he liberates the Senate from assent and flattery, that is from servility, as is emphatically shown by the juxtaposition of *libertas Thraseae* and *seruitium aliorum*. Therefore, his freedom too works at the individual and at the collective level: not only does he show *libertas* as moral independence of spirit and speech, but he is also a freedom-maker[98]. Baynham (1998, pp. 194-195) points the resemblance out, but states that Curtius demonstrates a "reserved attitude" towards Callisthenes, as Tacitus towards Thrasea. However, as some scholars like Strunk (2017, p. 108) argue, Thrasea certainly dies because of his opposition, but Tacitus' account highlights the horror of Nero's tyranny rather than it denounces the rashness of the philosopher. This same conclusion applies to Callisthenes. Curtius, who most probably wrote under Vespasian, may have been inspired by the historical Thrasea. In any case, the characteristics shared by Curtius and Tacitus as historians should be especially highlighted. Experiencing the Principate provided them with a set of political attitudes, types of conflicts, oppression and resistance, which results on similar interpretations of History

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[96] Tac. *Ann.* 14.48-49.
[97] Tac. *Ann*. 14.49.
[98] On Tacitus' Thrasea Paetus see Wirszubski (1950, pp. 138-143, 165), Heldmann (1991), Morford (1991, pp. 3442-3447), Devillers (2002), Strunk (2017, pp. 104-121).

and power. Thus, the historical characters they wrote about, once transformed into figures by the narrative, show similarities.

Curtius made Callisthenes the most formidable opponent and victim of Alexander, whereas no other historian gave this key role to this character[99]. As the man was at the same time an orator, a philosopher, a historian, he symbolizes various forms of discourse: oral and written, rhetorical, moral, memorial. The king's deification, as Curtius tells the reader when relating the oracle of Hammon, was intended to forge the legend of the king, and was based on deception and promoted by flattering discourse[100]. Alexander's control on public discourse is also a control over his own image. The proskynesis affair therefore deals with what choices are left to men of letters under a tyrannical regime: Cleo and Agis are depicted as *qui professionem honestarum artium malis conruperant moribus*, and Callisthenes in contrast as *praeditu[s] optimis moribus artibusque*, "with the best habits and arts"[101]. Spencer 2009 (p. 268) argues that "the figure of Callisthenes opens up, for Roman authors, strategically interesting ways of focusing on and exploring relationships between historiography, autocracy, and individual responsibility". Even though Callisthenes' status as historian is not mentioned in the passage, the fact that the man in charge of the conqueror's memory is made the embodiment and martyr of free discourse against flattery and falsification must be emphasized. It is all the more remarkable as it happens in a historiographical work whose narrator undertakes to reveal the facts behind the performance of power. As a historian, Curtius shows concerns about the corruption of memory and truth by autocracy, as will Tacitus, especially in his account of the trial of the historian Cremutius Cordus who is convicted of having praised Cassius and Brutus under Tiberius and speaks in defence of freedom of expression[102]. Both stories, though different, deal with the fate of discourse under despotism and shape historians as defenders of *libertas*.

In this study on discourse and power, Curtius reveals that the loss of *libertas* gives way to the reign of false pretences, flattery as well as the control on public speech by power. These different kinds of perverted discourse can be encapsulated in the theatrical paradigm. The distortion of speech under autocracy reflects a wider issue: Boesche (1987, p. 208) writes about Tacitus' works that "despotism substitutes appearance to reality, the playing of role for sincere opinion, acting for genuine accomplishments". A similar fracture between deep truth and surface can be observed in Curtius' account of Alexander's reign at this point. The man who ultimately shatters the

[99] On Callisthenes, see Brown (1949), Pédech (1984, pp.15-69), Golan (1988), Pownall (2014). The reception of Callisthenes in late Republican and early imperial Roman texts shows that he became an *exemplum* of the intellectual victim of tyranny (see Cic. *Rab. Post*. 9.23; Sen. *Suas*. 1.5; Sen. *Nat.* 6.23.2-3), which, as Bowden (2013) shows, influenced the imperial accounts of the proskynesis affair.
[100] See Curt. 4.7.8 and 4.7.29-30. See Spencer (2002, p. 138): "But the underlying assumption, made explicit in Curtius' story, is that behind the mystique of a ruler, there may be more manipulation than action".
[101] Curt. 8.8.22.
[102] Tac. *Ann*. 4.34-35. On Cremutius Cordus and freedom of speech, see Strunk (2017, pp. 151-165).

dramaturgy of power and the "politics of pretence" is the orator and historian, who is made the embodiment of freedom and truth. As parallels have been drawn between Curtius and Tacitus, the common focuses, interpretive tools and narrative frameworks that were highlighted suggest that these texts are underpinned by a common "anatomy of tyranny"[103] and thus reflect a Roman early imperial paradigmatic tyranny.

[103] The expression is borrowed from Walker (1960, p. 233), cited by Boesche (1987, p. 189).

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Reconciling Aphrodite

The Power of the 'Weakling' Goddess in Homer's *Iliad*

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The early Greek poetic tradition surrounding Aphrodite has been labelled 'contradictory': she is by turns vulnerable and venerable, silly and serious.[104] The mortal Diomedes recognises Aphrodite as a 'weakling goddess' and wounds her (*Il.* 5. 331, 335-40).[105] She flees to the comfort of Dione at Olympus, where Zeus tells her that deeds of war are not for her (*Il.* 5. 428). By extension, Zeus can be interpreted as implying that she does not belong in the martial *Iliad.*[106] Instead, Zeus says, she should to keep to 'the lovely works of marriage' (*Il.* 5. 429-30), namely love and sex, her domain of power. Yet, puzzlingly, we encounter several moments in the *Iliad* where erotic love is at issue, but Aphrodite's influence is omitted: for example, in the widespread blame of Paris and Helen for the Trojan War, and not Aphrodite, for causing their elopement.[107]

Mirroring the *Iliad*'s frequent omission of Aphrodite from her own domain of power, scholars have often emphasised Aphrodite's indignity and relative invisibility in Homeric epic, ahead of her fearsome divinity. Griffin has quipped that Aphrodite is 'anything but a favourite,' because she 'suffers personal indignity in both epics,' while Rosenzweig considers that Zeus in *Iliad* 5 is relegating Aphrodite's powers over love and sex to 'second class status' as compared with war.[108] Friedrich observes a corresponding dearth of Aphrodite in discussions of Greek myth and religion: scholars traditionally either avoided her as a topic, or dismissed her as a 'serious' religious and mythological figure.[109] This perhaps encourages Suter's view that Homer 'secularises' traditional religious narratives about Aphrodite for 'literary' purposes, framing the

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[104] Rosenzweig 2004: 1.

[105] Cf. *Il*. 21. 423-6, Aphrodite is wounded in battle again in the *Iliad*, though this time by fellow immortal, Athene.

[106] Brillet-Dubois 2011: 130-2. Cf. Boedeker 1974: 53-5, on Aphrodite's association with the chorus, and peacetime, rather than war.

[107] For the anthropocentric blame of Paris, see e.g. Hector (*Il*. 3. 87), Menelaus (*Il.* 3. 100); for the anthropocentric blame of Helen, see e.g. Helen (*Il.* 3. 128, 173, 6. 180; at *Il.* 6. 356, she blames herself and Paris) and the Trojan elders (*Il.* 3. 156-8).

[108] Griffin 1980: 156; Rosenzweig 2004: 8.

[109] Friedrich 1978: 1-2.

'literary' as divorced from religious belief.[110] How could the *Iliad*'s portrayal of a weakling goddess possibly be compatible with serious religious reverence for the goddess?[111]

Yet the *Iliad*'s portrayal of divine frivolity serves an important purpose in epic. Griffin has argued that the light-heartedness of the gods' affairs, deceptions and disagreements highlights the contrasting gravity of the equivalent behaviours among mortals, particularly in war.[112] Correspondingly, some scholarship has emphasised Aphrodite's 'unmistakable potency' ahead of her 'foolishness.'[113] Nonetheless, a path towards resolving the tension between Aphrodite's 'contradictory' portrayals in the *Iliad* has not been fully explored, especially in light of two developments in scholarship: firstly, the potential of metapoetic readings of Greek poetry to provide insights into how the poet self-consciously reflects in the text on their own poetics;[114] and secondly, Brillet-Dubois' consideration of the possibility of metapoetic mutual influence between the *Iliad* and the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite.*[115] The term 'metapoetic' designates poetry that self-referentially draws attention to the poetry-making process, or its own status as poetry. Correspondingly, the first section of this article will discuss, with particular reference to *Iliad* 3, how and why metapoetic episodes in the *Iliad* omit Aphrodite from her domain of power. Building on these insights, the second section will show how Homer self-consciously evokes the *Hymn*, along with its cultic value to the goddess. I shall thereby argue that Homer's simultaneous disregard, omission and acknowledgment of Aphrodite and her power are not so contradictory as some have surmised. It is precisely by omitting the goddess that Homer evokes a religious narrative that conspicuously praises her.

How could Homer evoke the *Hymn*'s narrative, given that the *Hymn* is usually dated later than the *Iliad*?[116] Their relative chronology is ultimately uncertain, and in any case, does not have to limit the possibility that each narrative influenced the other. I turn here to the work of Brillet-

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[110] Suter 1987: 57.

[111] This assumption that Homer's Aphrodite is not worth serious consideration reflects how the other Homeric gods have also been downplayed as a frivolous literary 'diversion' from the more serious anthropocentric plots of epic. Griffin 1980: 145-8; cf. Dietrich 1979: 129-30.

[112] Griffin 1980: 162; cf. Rinon 2006: 224; Golden 1990: 55-6. For scholarship that examines Homer's gods with a view to 'serious' theology, see e.g. Otto 1954; Dietrich 1979: 130, 151; Allan 2006.

[113] E.g. Friedrich 1978: 1 n. 1, 3; Cyrino 1993: 219; Breitenberger 2007: 78; Cyrino 2010: 32, 73, 79, 104.

[114] For metapoetic studies of Homer, see: Kennedy 1986; Goldhill 1991; Ledbetter 2003: 9-39; Rinon 2006; Halliwell 2011: 36-92. For similar metapoetic approaches to tragedy, see e.g. Ringer 1998; Wright 2010; Torrance 2013.

[115] Brillet-Dubois 2011, esp. 131.

[116] The consensus is that the *Hymn* is 'post-Homeric, but prior to the sixth century and the earliest of the *Hymns*' (Faulkner 2008: 47). However, ultimately, 'no certainty can be reached about absolute dating' (Brillet-Dubois 2011: 106). Some scholars have viewed the chronology of the *Iliad* and the *Hymn* as very close: on grounds of the linguistic, formulaic and content-related similarities between the *Iliad* and the *Hymn,* West (2003: 14-16) suggests that that they were composed within the space of one generation, while Reinhardt (1961: 507-21) argues that the two texts are by the same poet.

Dubois, who outlines several ways of accounting for the well-established formulaic, thematic, linguistic and structural similarities, as well as verbatim repetitions, between the *Iliad* and the *Hymn*.[117] One traditional approach holds that the poet of the *Hymn* directly imitates Homer,[118] and therefore that the intertextual influence between the texts flows unidirectionally from the older *Iliad* to the newer *Hymn*. However, following studies of orality in the *Iliad* and the *Hymn*,[119] the similarities between the two texts have gained a broader range of explanations, attributable to 'independent [oral] composition within the same tradition, or conscious interaction with either the other poem or a common source.'[120] Brillet-Dubois, meanwhile, blends these approaches. She considers that the independent Iliadic and Aphroditean traditions behind each work, which each poet drew on, influenced the other. This enabled each poet to engage directly with the narrative tradition that informed the other's work.[121] Furthermore, it is possible that each oral narrative could have directly influenced the other, before each was written down and 'fixed' into a text.[122]

Taking this possibility of mutual influence seriously could be extremely helpful in considering the *Iliad*'s 'contradictory' portrayals of Aphrodite. As Brillet-Dubois suggests, Homer may metapoetically allude to the *Hymn*'s narrative tradition in order to define his own work against it.[123] She argues that the ejection of Aphrodite from epic by Zeus in *Iliad* 5 amounts to Homer self-consciously rejecting the Aphroditean themes of the *Hymn*: 'On a metapoetic level, it is as if we were witnessing the conflict between Aphroditean and Iliadic traditions about who belongs in what poem.'[124] Brillet-Dubois convincingly shows that 'the hymnic and the heroic traditions developed simultaneously in a fruitful dialogue, defining their themes and poetics in relation to each other.'[125] However, her reading of the *Iliad*'s evocation of the *Hymn*'s narrative tradition exacerbates a contradiction between epic presenting Aphrodite as a goddess who is too 'weak' to belong there, and epic presenting itself as a religiously authoritative genre, born of the divine inspiration of the Muses.[126] This tension is hard to resolve: could Homer really self-consciously reject Aphrodite from the *Iliad*, while also suggesting that his epic has legitimate religious authority?

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[117] Brillet-Dubois 2011: 106.

[118] Brillet-Dubois 2011: 106; Faulkner 2008: 31-4.

[119] E.g. Parry 1930 and 1932; Lord 1960; Preziosi 1966; Finkelberg 2000; Faulkner 2011: 3-7.

[120] Brillet-Dubois 2011: 106.

[121] Brillet-Dubois 2011: 109-11, 129-132.

[122] Cf. Faulkner 2011: 4-6.

[123] Brillet-Dubois 2011: 129-31.

[124] Brillet-Dubois 2011: 130; see also Richardson 2015 (e.g. 30), who emphasises the generic innovation of the *Homeric Hymns*.

[125] Brillet-Dubois 2011: 132.

[126] For discussions of how Homer metapoetically grounds the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in the religious authority of the Muses, see Halliwell 2011: 58-68, and Goldhill 1991: 59, 69-70.

A broader recourse to metapoetic analysis can help to resolve this tension. Brillet-Dubois considers several moments in the *Iliad* which overtly recall the *Hymn* by means of formulaic, thematic and structural similarities, thereby calling attention to the self-aware process of composing poetry.[127] Yet there are other pertinent, illuminative metapoetic moments in the *Iliad*, when mortal characters, in parallel with Homer as poet-like figures, exclude Aphrodite even from the realm of desire. These episodes, especially in light of Aphrodite's intervention in *Iliad* 3, echo how the *Hymn* portrays Aphrodite's manipulation of mortal desire as initially beyond Anchises' perception. Building on Brillet-Dubois' insights, we can additionally consider the possibility that Homer evokes the *Hymn* not only to define his own genre agonistically against it, but also, collaboratively, in harmony with its religious respect for the goddess.

A broader metapoetic approach allows us to see how Homer imbues the *Iliad* with playful self-awareness surrounding its own theology regarding Aphrodite, thus contributing further to the insight of metapoetic approaches which uncover the relationship in Homer between epic poetics and theology.[128] This reading therefore aims to alleviate the tension between Homer's 'contradictory' portrayals of Aphrodite, by more cohesively accounting for how Homer has Zeus eject Aphrodite from epic in *Iliad* 5 in a way that does not snub, or secularise, but conspicuously honours the goddess.

'Overwriting' Aphrodite in the *Iliad*

Homer sets up metapoetic parallels between himself and two major mortal characters, Helen and Achilles. While Homer cumulatively displays an intimate grasp of the literary-theological tradition surrounding Aphrodite, Helen and Achilles display their relative short-sightedness in relation to the goddess. In parallel with Homer performing his poetry, Helen weaves images of battle, while Achilles sings of the 'glorious deeds of men' (*Il*. 3. 125-7; 9. 185-9):

> "[Iris] found Helen in the hall, where she was weaving a great purple web of double fold on which she was embroidering many battles of the horse-taming Trojans and the bronze-clad Achaeans…"

[127] Brillet-Dubois (2011: 129-32) considers various examples from books 3, 5, 13, 20 and 24. See also her discussion of book 14 (pp. 109-12).

[128] Ledbetter 2003: 9-14. Halliwell (2011: 57) uses metapoetics to note a theologically relevant distinction between divine and mortal agency in the Muse-inspired production of poetry: 'The overall impression of the two epics is that, however vital the Muses may be (and however dangerous to claim independence of them, as Thamrys rashly did), their value to a singer never erases a human phenomenology of performative impulses, expertise, and memory.'

> "And [the embassy to Achilles] came to the huts and the ships of the Myrmidons, and [Achilles] they found delighting his mind with a clear-toned lyre, fair and elaborate, and on it was a bridge of silver; this he had taken from the spoil when he destroyed the city of Eëtion. With it he was delighting his heart, and he sang of the glorious deeds of warriors; and Patroclus alone sat opposite him in silence, waiting until Aeacus' grandson should cease from singing."

The metanarratives created by Helen and Achilles overlap with Homer's own subject matter, inviting parallelisation between Helen and Achilles as internal poet-like figures, and Homer as external poet: Helen weaves images of the warriors whom she goes on to observe and discuss in the *teichoscopia*,[129] while Achilles sings of 'glorious deeds of warriors,' recalling the glorious deeds of battle that he himself has withdrawn from;[130] meanwhile, Homer sings of all of these things. Following Kennedy and Halliwell, we might take these metapoetic parallels as carrying over into these characters' interactions that immediately follow in the *teichoscopia* and speech to the embassy respectively, where Helen and Achilles can still be understood as in parallel with Homer.[131] Yet while their metanarratives converge with Homer's narrative, there is an important difference between theirs and Homer's artistic visions (*Il.* 3. 126-8; 9. 337-43):

> "…[Helen] was embroidering many battles of the horse-taming Trojans and the bronze-clad Achaeans which for her sake they had endured at the hands of Ares."

> "[Achilles:] But why must the Argives wage war against the Trojans? Why has he gathered and led here an army, this son of Atreus? Was it not for fair-haired Helen's sake? Do they then alone of mortal men love (φιλέουσ', *phileous'*) their wives, these sons of Atreus? Whoever is a true man, and sound of mind, loves (φιλέει, *phileei*) his own and cherishes her, just as I too loved (φίλεον, *phileon*) her with all my heart, though she was but the captive of my spear."

Helen attributes the cause of the men's fighting to herself and Ares, through the Greek prepositions εἵνεκ', *heinek'* ('for the sake of') and ὑπ', *hup'* ('at the hands of'). Achilles also uses ἕνεκ', *henek'* ('for the sake of') to ascribe the war's cause to Helen. In using active verbs

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[129] Kennedy 1986: 8-10. N.B. The *teichoscopia* is the episode in which Helen, Priam and the Trojan elders watch the battle from the walls of Troy.
[130] Halliwell 2011: 37, 76.
[131] Kennedy 1986: 9-10; Halliwell 2011: 76.

(*phileous'*, 'men love,' *phileei*, 'loves,' *phileon*, 'I... loved') to express the desires of the Atreidae, the hypothetical 'true man,' and himself, Achilles shows that he thinks of mortals having agency over their own love for their women.

These perspectives omit Aphrodite's power over erotic desire, by attributing erotic agency to mortals, rather than to Aphrodite. The limitations of these perspectives become especially evident towards the end of *Iliad* 3, when we see the goddess exert her control over Paris and Helen by engineering an erotic scene between them. Is Aphrodite not just as important an explanation for why the men are fighting as those posited by Helen and Achilles during and after their metapoetic interludes? Why does the goddess allow her intervention to go unacknowledged? After all, it is clear in other mythology that mortals risk their wellbeing and even their lives if they do not honour her in the right way.[132] This being the case, why are these incomplete mortal perspectives privileged by Homer, by virtue of the metapoetic parallel between these characters, as 'internal poets,' with Homer, as 'external poet'? Aphrodite's appearances throughout *Iliad* 3 shed some crucial light on this question, over the course of which we observe the goddess both escaping and entering the perception and acknowledgement of mortals. It emerges that Aphrodite not only permits mortals to refrain from acknowledging her power, but she is actively complicit in their frequent inability to perceive her.

We see this firstly when Aphrodite intervenes in Paris and Menelaus' duel (*Il.* 3. 373-5, 380-3):

> "And now would Menelaus have dragged him away, and won boundless glory, had not Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, been quick to notice, and broken the strap, cut from the hide of a slaughtered ox… But him Aphrodite snatched up, very easily as a goddess can, and shrouded him in thick mist, and set him down in his fragrant, vaulted chamber, and then herself went to summon Helen."

Aphrodite's intervention in removing Paris from battle is made clear to Homer's audience, but whether Paris is aware of it is initially left unaddressed: we see the goddess' agency over Paris, but not whether she hides it from Paris and the onlooking warriors. Paris' later words to Helen imply that he misunderstands what has happened to him (*Il.* 3. 439-40): 'For now has Menelaus vanquished me with Athene's aid, but another time will I vanquish him.' Paris' only explicit

[132] E.g. Eur. *Hipp*. 12-14, 21-2: Aphrodite kills Hippolytus not only for his active disrespect in calling her 'the worst of deities,' but for his more passive, evasive transgression: avoiding sex and marriage, Aphrodite's domain(s) of divine power. Cf. *Hom. Hymn Ven.* 185-90: after unwittingly sleeping with Aphrodite, Anchises expresses his fear that the goddess will leave him as a 'living invalid' and pleads with her not to.

acknowledgement of the goddess precedes her intervention, in response to Hectors' mistaken warning (*Il.* 3. 54) that the 'gifts of Aphrodite' will not help him in battle (*Il.* 3. 63-6):

> "…cast not in my teeth the lovely gifts of golden Aphrodite. Not to be flung aside are the glorious gifts of the gods, whatever they themselves give, but of his own will would no man choose them."

Paris' anticipatory acknowledgement of Aphrodite's gifts is vague and lacking in specific theological insight, however: what these divine gifts actually are is left unsaid; he falls short of predicting that the goddess will intervene in the duel and save him; and he immediately moves on from Aphrodite to generalising about the gods more broadly. Paris' implied inability to perceive the workings of the goddess in more meaningful detail mirrors his lack of verbal acknowledgement of Aphrodite's intervention after it happens. Yet Aphrodite is happy to remain unseen and unacknowledged by Paris, who nonetheless remains a favourite of hers.

Aphrodite more actively contributes to her own omission from mortal perspectives when she deceives Helen. In the disguise of an old woman, Aphrodite says to Helen (*Il.* 3. 390-2):

> "Come here; Alexander [i.e. Paris] calls you to go home. There he is in his chamber and on his inlaid bed, gleaming with beauty and garments."

Having masked her appearance with a mortal disguise, she fittingly masks her own agency here: she pretends that Paris calls Helen. This deception is unsuccessful, however, since unlike Paris, Helen discerns the goddess' identity from her neck, bosom, and eyes (*Il.* 3. 396-7). She shatters the goddess' attempt at keeping herself and her agency in erotic matters hidden (*Il.* 3. 399-405):

> "Strange goddess, why is your heart set on deceiving me in this way? Will you lead me (ἄξεις, *axeis*) still further on to one of the well-peopled cities of Phrygia or lovely Maeonia, if there too there is someone of mortal men who is dear to you, because now Menelaus has defeated noble Alexander and is minded to lead hateful me to his home? It is for this reason that you have now come here with guileful thought."

Helen points out Aphrodite's misrepresentation of her own involvement through her accusation of guilefulness, and makes clear, via the active second-person verb *axeis* ('will you lead...'), that she knows that the goddess is driving the imminent erotic scene between Paris and Helen. Where before, it was initially unclear whether Paris knew of Aphrodite's intervention, it is now clear that Helen has seen through Aphrodite's attempts at self-concealment, at least partially: Helen also believes that Menelaus has defeated Paris, which he technically has not, due to Aphrodite's

removal of Paris from battle. It seems that Aphrodite's influence is hard to detect, and even when a mortal does detect it, they are likely to miss the complete picture.[133]

However, does the fact that mortals can sometimes see through Aphrodite's disguise not diminish the goddess' power over mortals? This is a mistake that Helen makes, and is made to regret. She dares to challenge the goddess' status and power, telling her (*Il.* 3. 406-12):

> "Go, sit by his [Paris'] side, and abandon the way of the gods, and turn not your feet back to Olympus; but ever be anxious for him, and guard him, until he makes you his wife, or maybe even his slave. There I will not go—it would be shameful—to share that man's bed; all the women of Troy will blame me afterwards; and I have measureless griefs at heart."

Helen asserts her own agency and rationale, explaining that she does not want to join Paris because she would be ashamed and judged for doing so.[134] She thereby catastrophically attempts to reduce the goddess' agency over events by telling her what to do, and accordingly, reduce the goddess' status as a divinity, such that she would abandon the ways of the gods and become a wife or a slave to the mortal Paris. Far worse than simply failing to mention the goddess, as she does earlier when weaving images of battle, Helen's words now misrepresent Aphrodite's status as lower than Helen's, constituting 'remarkable… irreverence.'[135]

Aphrodite is angry and, in no uncertain terms, re-establishes her power over Helen (*Il.* 3. 414-17):

> "Provoke me not, hard woman, lest I desert you (σε μεθείω, *se metheio*) in anger, and hate you (σ'ἀπεχθήρω, *s'apechthero*), just as now I love you exceedingly, and lest I devise grievous hatred of you from both sides, Trojans and Danaans alike; then would you perish of an evil fate."

She reasserts the rightful balance of power with a prohibition against Helen's insubordination. This is marked especially through her self-positioning as grammatical subject with Helen as the

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[133] *Iliad* 5 hints that mortals cannot usually perceive the gods due to a mist that blocks their vision: Diomedes can only clearly perceive gods in battle after Athene removes the mist from his vision at *Il.* 5. 127-8. Even when mortals can perceive the gods, they frequently misunderstand what they see: see, e.g. García (2002: 20) who observes the frequent disconnect in Greek epic and hymns between mortals seeing a god and understanding their godhead.

[134] Cf. Roisman 2006: 18-20; Blondell 2010: 14.

[135] Friedrich 1978: 60.

accusative second-person object, unambiguously reasserting her agency over Helen (*se metheio*, 'I desert you,' *s'apechthero*, 'I hate you'). Thus Helen, in fear (3. 418), obeys the goddess.[136] Yet the immediately following phrase obscures how unmediated Aphrodite's influence over Helen is: ἦρχε δὲ δαίμων, *erche de daimon* (3. 420: 'the goddess [or, the goddess' divine power] led the way') is ambiguous, even as Aphrodite's power over Helen prevails. Is it the goddess herself, or some divine power external to herself, that is leading Helen?[137]

Helen's acquiescence aptly summarises how the *Iliad* portrays Aphrodite in relation to her own power: as long as the goddess' will is brought about, she is happy for her direct influence to be obscured, whether by being omitted from mortal perspectives, or having her power over Helen summarised by Homer in an ambiguous phrase. The culmination of Aphrodite's intervention further underscores this (*Il.* 3. 438-47). Paris beseeches Helen:

> "Reproach not my heart, lady, with hard reviling words. For now has Menelaus vanquished me with Athene's aid, but another time will I vanquish him; on our side too there are gods. But come now, let us take our joy, bedded together in love; for never yet has desire so encompassed my mind—not even when I first snatched you (ἁρπάξας, *harpaxas*) from lovely Lacedaemon and sailed (ἔπλεον, *epleon*) with you on my seafaring ships, and on the isle of Cranae slept with you on the bed of love—as now I love you (σεο νῦν ἔραμαι, *seo nun eramai*), and sweet desire seizes me.' He spoke, and led the way to the bed (ἄρχε λέχοσδε, *arche lechosde*), and with him followed his wife."

Paris inaccurately mentions Athene's supposed aid of Menelaus, despite Aphrodite having withdrawn Paris from battle, and despite Athene not having intervened in the duel between Paris and Menelaus (*Il.* 3. 340-82). He mentions also the protective presence of the gods in Helen and Paris' lives: he is vague, albeit correct, in this generalisation. Compounding his weak grasp on the reality of divine influence on events, he expresses his present and past experiences of desire without reference to Aphrodite's (to us, clear) agency over erotic events. On the one hand, his mind and self are passive objects of desire ('...desire... encompassed my mind,' 'sweet desire seizes me,'),[138] but on the other, he himself has agency in expressing and enacting his own desire, as conveyed by the first-person verbs and nominative participle (*epleon harpaxas*, 'I sailed having seized...', *seo nun eramai*, 'now I love you'). Where before, Aphrodite, or her divine power, 'led

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[136] Roisman (2006: 19 n. 37) notes that Helen's fear motivates her, and therefore is distinct from emotions of the goddess' domain, love and desire. This allows her own motivation to remain independent from the goddess.

[137] Either interpretative possibility remains open (Breitenberger 2007: 70).

[138] This translation accurately reflects the grammar of the Greek text, as follows: ἔρως φρένας ἀμφεκάλυψεν, *eros phrenas amphekalupsen* (*Il*. 3. 442); με γλυκὺς ἵμερος αἱρεῖ, *me glukus himeros hairei* (*Il.* 3. 446).

Helen' (*Il.* 3. 420: *erche de daimon*), Paris now leads 'her to bed' (*arche lechosde*, as above): the theocentric narrative has been replaced with an anthropocentric rendering of events, as hallmarked by the use of the same verb, *erche*/ *arche* ('to lead'). Seemingly, this omission of Aphrodite's involvement comes with the goddess' full approval, since she has presided over this erotic scene.

Returning to the question of why Helen and Achilles, in their anthropocentric poet-like visions of erotic culpability for the Trojan War, are not guilty of offending the goddess, this scene is illuminative. We have seen that Aphrodite misrepresents her own agency in events.[139] It is not being noticed and mentioned by mortals, *per se*, that matters to the goddess, but the enactment of her will pertaining to erotic desire. The realisation of Aphrodite's desired outcome for Helen and Paris' lovemaking is compatible with Paris' omission of Aphrodite's role in events: as such, she is happy to be 'written out' of the scene from Paris' perspective. Mortals can be ignorant of and silent about Aphrodite's involvement in a way that does not displease her.[140]

Iliad 3 therefore contextualises Achilles' later omission of the goddess in his speech to the embassy. Presumably, the goddess tacitly approves of his anthropocentric views of desire and would be happy with his plans being brought about (*Il.* 9. 393-400):

> "For if the gods preserve me and I reach home, Peleus indeed will then himself seek (μάσσεται, *massetai*) a wife for me. Many Achaean maidens there are throughout Hellas and Phthia, daughters of chief men who guard the cities; of these whichever I choose (τάων ἥν κ' ἐθέλωμι, *taon hen k' ethelomi*) I shall make my dear wife (φίλην ποιήσομ' ἄκοιτιν, *philen poiesom' akoitin*). Very often was my gallant heart eager to take there a wedded wife, a fitting bride, and to have joy of the possessions that the old man Peleus had won."[141]

Achilles attributes agency in his future marriage to Peleus (*massetai*, 'will seek') and himself (*philen poiesom' akoitin*, 'I shall make my dear wife'), the phrase *taon hen k' ethelomi* ('of these

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[139] N.B. This corresponds with Aphrodite's association with deception in Greek poetry (e.g. Friedrich 1978: 14, 111; Cyrino 2010: 49), as well as with a broader tendency of gods to disguise themselves when encountering mortals, e.g. Athene disguises herself as Mentes (*Od*. 1. 104-5); Demeter disguises herself as an old woman (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 101-4).

[140] Cf. *Il*. 3. 390-2, 424-46.

[141] Although Achilles mentions Aphrodite shortly before the quotation begins, he does so to compare Agamemnon's daughter to the goddess in terms of beauty (*Il.* 9. 389): he would reject her as a wife even if she rivalled the goddess in beauty, thus rhetorically strengthening his rejection of Agamemnon's attempt at reconciliation. Achilles' brief mention of the goddess earlier in this speech therefore does not indicate a direct perception of Aphrodite's agency over erotic affairs in his life.

whichever I choose') emphasising his perceived personal freedom over these deeds of marriage, despite Zeus specifically having relegated these to Aphrodite's domain in *Iliad* 5 (428-30).

Since Aphrodite is conditionally happy with anthropocentric views of love and desire, why does Homer include Aphrodite in his epic at all, especially given the implication in *Iliad* 5 that she does not really belong there (see above)? *Iliad* 3 helps us here also. We have also seen that mortals can perceive and respond to the goddess' intervention in a way that very much displeases her. Aphrodite is angered when Helen attempts to control the goddess' agency and lower her status from divinity to Paris' wife or slave. If mortals perceive the goddess, they must respond to her in a way that duly acknowledges her power. The metapoetic parallel between Helen and Homer is troubling, then. Like Helen, Homer can apparently see through the goddess' disguise, since he includes her in his narrative: but, as García notes, mortal perception of the gods is frequently couched in misunderstanding of their godhead, and how to respond to that god appropriately.[142] In parallel with Helen, does Homer not also risk misunderstanding how to respond to her divinity, as Helen initially does? Homer takes a theological risk in this metapoetic parallel, unless he makes sure to clarify that, unlike Helen, he appropriately honours her divine status and power. Homer mitigates this risk by evoking the piety of the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite.*

'Rewriting' the Aphrodite of the Homeric Hymn

Brillet-Dubois has argued that Homer moulds his epic through contrast with the Aphroditean tradition that underpins the *Hymn*. By 'borrowing… dictional elements firmly related to specific contexts,' in this case hymnic contexts, and reintegrating them into a new epic context, Homer defines his epic against the genre and religious context of the *Hymn*. [143] Conversely, here I consider how Homer self-consciously incorporates the contextual significance and authority of the *Hymn*'s piety,[144] via the *Iliad*'s similarities with the *Hymn*, to complement the limited metapoetic visions of desire advanced by Helen and Achilles, and to mitigate the risk that his own poetic vision of Aphrodite might also be limited. This interaction between the *Hymn* and the *Iliad*

[142] García 2002: 20.

[143] Brillet-Dubois 2011: 131.

[144] Although the *Hymn* has frequently been interpreted as humiliating the goddess, Decker (2019: 41) suggests reading the text as praising the goddess, by serving as 'an exhibition of the goddess' awesome works and methods,' in keeping with the function of the other *Homeric Hymns*. Here, I build on this reading of the *Hymn* as conventionally pious.

further exemplifies the self-aware construction of Homer's poetic voice and authority within a contemporary religious framework.[145]

Several linguistic and thematic features of the *Iliad*'s portrayal of Aphrodite resonate with, and thereby can be read as evoking, those of the *Hymn.*[146] Here I focus on four theologically significant features in the *Hymn*, which Homer incorporates into the *Iliad* to evoke the associated piety of the *Hymn*. The first is that, like Homer, the *Hymn* designates Aphrodite's power over erotic desire, only to obscure her agency in erotic situations. This is achieved both through Zeus' involvement in the plot, and through use of language. The *Hymn*'s opening specifies Aphrodite's domain (*Hom. Hymn. Ven.* 1-6):

> "Muse, tell me of the doings of Aphrodite rich in gold, the Cyprian goddess, who sends sweet longing upon the gods, and overcomes the peoples of mortal kind, and the birds that fly in heaven, and all the numerous creatures that the land and sea foster: all of them are concerned with the doings of fair-garlanded Cytherea."

As in the *Iliad*, here Aphrodite's domain of divine power encompasses 'sweet longing' (γλυκὺν ἵμερον, *glukun himeron*).[147] This formulaic phrase appears also in the *Iliad*, when Paris experiences desire as a result of the goddess' coercion of Helen to join him (*Il.* 3. 446).[148] Like in *Iliad* 5 (see above), so in the *Hymn*, Zeus oversees the demarcation of Aphrodite's domain (*Hom. Hymn Ven.* 45-52), as the most powerful member of the pantheon. However, his designation retains some flexibility, since Zeus, enabled by his position as chief god of the pantheon, appropriates this power over desire without her knowledge.[149] He makes Aphrodite fall in love with the mortal Anchises, so that she will no longer humiliate the other gods with such undignified passions for mortals.[150]

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[145] Cf. Goldhill 1991: ix.

[146] The linguistic similarities pertain to vocabulary and formulae shared between the two works: see, e.g. Heitsch 1965: 23; Preziosi 1966; Janko 1982; Faulkner 2008: 26-7; Faulkner 2015. The thematic similarities include the birth of Aeneas; divine seductions (e.g. *Iliad* 14); the humorous treatment of Aphrodite (e.g. *Iliad* 5 and 21, when Aphrodite is wounded) (Richardson 2010: 29).

[147] E.g. *Il.* 5. 428-30, 14. 198-9, 214-31.

[148] For a thorough survey of identical formulae in the *Iliad* and *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, see Preziosi 1966: 172-82; cf. Faulkner 2008: 23-34.

[149] This ambiguity surrounding how exclusive Aphrodite's powers are to herself also colours *Il.* 14.197-223, when Hera asks Aphrodite for 'love and desire.' Aphrodite gives Hera her belt, which allows Hera to control love and desire independently from Aphrodite while she wears it. Furthermore, in the *Hymn*, Athene, Artemis and Hestia are immune to Aphrodite's capacity to 'persuade or outwit,' indicating some limitations on her powers (*Hom. Hymn Ven.* 7-33).

[150] *Hom. Hymn Ven.* 45-52. In other words, the *Hymn* portrays a 'critical moment... in the evolution of the Olympian order and thus fill[s] the gap between the other two [i.e. theogonic and heroic] genres of *epos*' (Clay 1989: 169-70).

Echoing how Aphrodite's control over desire is intermittently taken over by Zeus, the narrative intermittently obscures how directly Aphrodite influences desire. For example, the narrative's expression is clear that she directly induces desire in Anchises (*Hom. Hymn. Ven.* 143):

> "With these words the goddess cast sweet longing into his heart."[151]

Yet desire is also portrayed as having its own agency independent from the gods (*Hom. Hymn. Ven.* 91, 56-7):

> "Desire seized Anchises…"[152]

> "Thereupon smile-loving Aphrodite fell in love with him at sight, and immoderate longing seized her mind."

The inconsistency of the language's attribution of agency, whether to Aphrodite, Zeus or desire itself, further obscures the goddess' agency over desire. The ascription of agency to desire itself also echoes Paris' words at *Il.* 3. 446, after Aphrodite has forced Helen to sleep with him (see above): 'sweet desire seizes me.' Notably, the same idiom is used in both works, which places desire, rather than the divine force that has ignited this desire, as the nominative subject of the sentence. In the same way that divine influence over desire is overwritten in the *Iliad*, so it is in the *Hymn*.

Yet despite Aphrodite's lapse in control over desire, and despite the linguistic obscuring of her agency, her power is nonetheless to be honoured by mortals in the *Hymn*: Aphrodite spares Anchises from punishment for sleeping with her because he is 'dear to the gods' (*Hom. Hymn Ven.* 195). He is favoured by the gods, despite his failure to resist her seduction, because he models pious responses to the goddess: he offers to build her an altar on a hilltop when initially he suspects her divinity; and he averts his gaze when he realises that she is a goddess (*Hom. Hymn Ven.* 92-106*,* 182-3). It is Anchises' persistent piety, and his successful placation of Aphrodite despite the narrative's obscurity surrounding the exclusivity and agency behind the goddess' power, that I suggest Homer is tacitly evoking. Underscoring this piety, Homer also evokes the associated religious context of the *Hymn* as an invocation of and offering to Aphrodite.[153]

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[151] This phrase echoes Zeus' direct inducement of desire in Aphrodite: *Hom. Hymn. Ven.* 45-6, 53.

[152] I have adapted this line of West's translation ('Anchises was seized by desire') to reflect the Greek text (Ἀγχίσην δ' ἔρος εἷλεν, *Anchisen d'eros heilen*), which renders Anchises as the accusative object and desire as the nominative subject.

[153] Cf. Calame 2011: 336-7.

The second theologically illuminative similarity between the *Hymn* and the *Iliad* is the goddess' portrayal as deceptive,[154] and as such, fully complicit in her agency over desire being obscured in both works. Recalling how Aphrodite disguises herself as a mortal and misrepresents her own agency when appearing to Helen at *Il.* 3. 390-2 (see above), she also disguises herself as a mortal virgin when appearing to Anchises (*Hom. Hymn. Ven.* 130-6):

> "…while I have come to you [Anchises], forced by necessity. Now I beseech you by Zeus and your noble parents (no humble people would have produced such a child as you): take me, a virgin with no experience of love, and show me to your father and your dutiful mother, and your brothers born of the same stock; I shall not be an unfitting daughter-in-law for them, but a fit one."

Not only is Aphrodite's agency obscured by Zeus' appropriation of her control, and by the narrative's obscuring idioms: she herself obscures her own (and Zeus') divine agency over desire, through her disguise, and her claim that she is driven by necessity.

A consequence of the goddess' penchant for deceiving mortals is the unreliable ability of mortals to perceive her as she intervenes in mortal affairs. This corresponds with mortals' inability to understand who they are perceiving, and therefore how they should behave in response. This constitutes the third feature of theological significance shared by the *Iliad* and the *Hymn*. Anchises partially detects the goddess through her disguise, recognising her divinity through her neck and eyes (*Hom. Hymn. Ven.* 181), again echoing how Helen recognises Aphrodite in the *Iliad* (see above). His consequent fear of the goddess (*Hom. Hymn. Ven.* 182) recalls Helen's fear on fully apprehending Aphrodite's power over her (*Il.* 3. 396-7, 418). Yet Anchises is unreliable in his ability to perceive the goddess. Initially Anchises suspects, on seeing the goddess in disguise, that she is divine, and offers an appropriately pious response, but he cannot tell which goddess she is (*Hom. Hymn. Ven.* 92-5, 100-2):

> "Hail, Lady, whichever of the blessed ones you are that arrive at this dwelling, Artemis or Leto or golden Aphrodite, high-born Themis or steely-eyed Athena… I will build you an altar on a hilltop, in a conspicuous place, and make goodly sacrifices to you at every due season."

[154] Friedrich 1978: 14, 111; Cyrino 2010: 49.

Anchises' vagueness in identifying his interlocutor as divine recalls Paris' vagueness in discussing the goddess' gifts and in interpreting her intervention in the duel (see above). Accompanying his vagueness is his inconsistency in sticking to this identification. Following the goddess' deceptive speech, in which she misrepresents herself as a mortal virgin, he conditionally accepts her story (145: 'if you are mortal...') and sleeps with her (*Hom. Hymn. Ven.* 166-7), entirely in keeping with divine will:

> "And then Anchises by divine will and destiny lay with the immortal goddess, the mortal, not knowing the truth of it."

Like Helen, Anchises fails to treat the goddess as she should be treated, despite having some limited ability to see through her disguise. He sleeps with her, which like Helen's attempt to diminish the goddess' status above, comes at great risk to himself: as he later notes, mortals who sleep with gods risk losing their vitality (*Hom. Hymn Ven.* 189-90), and Aphrodite mentions other mortals who have slept with gods to their great detriment, such as Tithonus (*Hom. Hymn Ven.* 218-38). Yet, in both works, the faulty ability of mortals to perceive and respond to the goddess in adequately pious ways is ultimately acceptable to the gods, so long as it happens 'by divine will.'

If mortals so often fail to detect the workings of the goddess, what gives the poet, who is also mortal, superior insight? Is invoking the Muses enough?[155] I suggest that it is not, since both works provide further assurance that their poets have superior insight. In the same way that Homer creates a metapoetic parallel between himself and Helen, the poet of the *Hymn* creates one between himself and Anchises. In so doing, each poet casts himself as superior to the mortal characters. Not only can each poet recognise the gods and their power more fully than the mortals in their poems, but they can also adequately evoke literary and generic conventions that praise the gods. This is the fourth theologically significant similarity between the two works.

We encounter Anchises' partial vision of the divine in close proximity to the depiction of him playing a cithara. This musical moment metapoetically reflects the musical performance of the *Hymn* itself (*Hom. Hymn. Ven.* 78-83):[156]

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[155] *Il*. 2. 484-93; *Hom. Hymn Ven.* 1.

[156] Cf. Calame 2011: 336-7.

> "…the others were all following the cattle over the grassy pastures, while [Anchises], left all alone in the steading, was going about this way and that, playing loudly on a lyre. Zeus' daughter Aphrodite stood before him, like an unmarried girl in stature and appearance, so that he should not be afraid when his eyes fell on her."

Aphrodite's successful deception and seduction of Anchises follows directly after we encounter him playing a cithara, implying that anything he might be singing is coloured by his unreliable vision of the divine. Further creating a metapoetic parallel between Anchises and the poet of the *Hymn*, Anchises' first address to the goddess directly mirrors the poet's own final address to the goddess (*Hom. Hymn Ven.* 92, 292: 'hail,' χαῖρε, *chaire*).[157] Yet they display contrasting ability to perceive the goddess: Anchises' perception is vague, calling the goddess 'queen' or 'lady' (*Hom. Hymn Ven.* 92: ἄνασσ', *anass'*), which could refer to a goddess or a mortal. The poet of the *Hymn* is more precise, addressing her as 'goddess' (*Hom. Hymn Ven.* 292: θεά, *thea*). This metapoetic parallelisation recalls Helen and Achilles' limited anthropocentric perceptions of Aphrodite in the *Iliad*, as well as the contrast between their limited visions and Homer's broader blending of anthropocentric with theocentric perspectives.

As Achilles and Helen can be compared with Homer at their metapoetic moments (see above), Anchises contrasts with the poet who is performing the narrative of the *Hymn*. The poet demonstrates a comparatively fuller understanding of the workings of the gods by invoking the goddess, her domain, and its limitations thoroughly and precisely; by demonstrating the complex relationship between human and divine agency in desire; and by showing the contrasting ways that divine agency in erotic events is obscured, misrepresented, experienced and misunderstood. These theological insights are legitimated in real-life religious terms, through the invocation of the Muse's authority (*Hom. Hymn Ven.* 1), and by the offering of this poetic insight to the goddess as part of a hymn directly addressed to her, thus summoning her presence and bidding her farewell (*Hom. Hymn. Ven.* 292-3):[158]

> "I salute you (*chaire*), goddess (*thea*), queen of well-cultivated Cyprus. After beginning from you, I will pass over to another song."

[157] Clay 2011: 236.
[158] García 2002: 6; Clay 2011: 236.

This reflexive ending is formulaic: it conspicuously situates the *Hymn* within the genre of *Homeric Hymns* and praise poetry,[159] although other *Homeric Hymns* offer more overt prayers and praise to the gods through this (or a similar) formulaic ending.[160] Accordingly, Breitenberger perceives the *Hymn* as 'not encomiastically compliment[ing]' Aphrodite as much as it might be expected to, through its paradoxical presentation of the goddess as overcome by her own domain of power.[161] However, this reinforces that the goddess' domain is so powerful that even she bows to its power.[162] Moreover, this more covert mode of praise is highly fitting for honouring a goddess whose own methods are covert and deceptive.

Thus, the theologically significant portrayals of Aphrodite in relation to mortals, her own misrepresentation of her agency in erotic events, and her subjugation by Zeus, are all legitimised in real-life religious terms by the conventional generic marking of the narrative as a religious text addressed directly to the goddess. For the poet performing the *Hymn*, the 'contradictory' aspects of Aphrodite's theology, namely her humiliation by Zeus and the by turns overt and covert representation of her agency in erotic events, are shown to be completely compatible with, and in fact, constitutive of reverent interaction with the goddess. They illuminate and elevate her domain of power, and thus venerate her.[163]

These four theological insights about the goddess in the *Hymn* all find parallels in the *Iliad*, which also demonstrates: Aphrodite's dominion over desire, including the obscurity of her power and its limitations;[164] the goddess' deceptive complicity in this misrepresentation of her agency; mortals' unreliable perceptions of the goddess, and concomitant misunderstandings of how they should respond to her; and finally, the poet's use of metapoetic parallelisation to demonstrate superior theological insight to his mortal characters. However, the *Iliad* differs from the *Hymn* by omitting to praise the goddess and function as an offering to the goddess, at least explicitly. We can reasonably speculate that Homer 'rewrites' these theological insights of the *Hymn* to evoke its associated reverence. Thereby Homer pre-emptively placates the goddess whom his epic playfully ejects in *Iliad* 5.

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[159] Clay 2011: 236; Calame 2011: 334; Faulkner and Hodkinson 2015: 9.

[160] E.g. The *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* offers prayer and praise to the goddess in its final lines preceding its similar formulaic final line (*Hom. Hymn Dem.* 480-95); Calame 2011: 334.

[161] Breitenberger 2007: 64. Cf. Bergren 1989: 1; Faulkner 2008: 3-4.

[162] Breitenberger 2007: 64. Cf. Decker 2019: 41.

[163] Decker 2019: 41.

[164] Regarding the limitations of Aphrodite's power, Homer calls into question how exclusive these powers are to the goddess herself when Hera temporarily appropriates them at *Il.* 14. 197-223. This echoes Zeus' temporary appropriation of the goddess' powers at *Hom. Hymn Ven.* 45-52.

On this reading, therefore, Homer's portrayal of Aphrodite evokes a religious narrative genre that praises the goddess' power. Each poet sets up a competitive relationship between himself and his characters, in keeping with the reflexive and competitive culture that drove oral performance in archaic Greece.[165] Each poet emerges victorious in this self-wrought metapoetic 'competition,' as well as sufficiently pious, by providing theologically superior perspectives that interweave both anthropocentric and theocentric perspectives on erotic activity.

Aphrodite Reconciled: Empowering the 'Weakling' Goddess

This reading of the intertextual relationship between the *Iliad* and the *Hymn* has significant consequences for how we understand Homer's reflexive construction of his own genre as theologically engaged, and yet simultaneously anthropocentric. In contrast with arguments which simplistically characterise Homer's gods as 'literary,' as falsely opposed to being seriously theological,[166] we can infer that Homer takes the business of placating and revering Aphrodite seriously. Homer circumnavigates any risk of offending the goddess, born of his sometimes anthropocentric, and therefore, partial, depictions of desire, as well as by the potential for his own mortal perception (like Anchises', Helen's and Achilles') to be lacking when it comes to perceiving the workings of the gods. The goddess is pre-emptively placated by Homer's evocation of her hymnal narrative, and its associated reverence and cultic value to the goddess.

This reading also contextualises the anthropocentricity of the epic genre as Homer moulds it. Having placated Aphrodite, Homer is free to craft Helen and Achilles' anthropocentric perspectives (metapoetically in parallel with his own) in a way that centralises their own mortal agency in desire as distinct from divine agency, without erasing Aphrodite's crucial role. The narrative's emphasis on the independent agency of these characters proves essential to the epic characterisation and motivation of each. Helen's view of herself as blameworthy, rather than under the control of Aphrodite, contributes to Homer's sympathetic characterisation of her as appropriately sensitive to what constitutes shameful behaviour for women and the consequent judgement of the Trojan women.[167] Helen thereby reinforces heroic values, which compounds the view that Helen is worth fighting for.[168] Meanwhile, Achilles, in his speech to the embassy, capitalises on the idea that he is free to respond to desire as he wishes, both in responding angrily

[165] References to poetic competitions are found in both *Homeric Hymns* and epic: the shorter *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* ends with a prayer for 'victory in this contest' (*Hom. Hymn* 6.19-20, cf. Clay 2011: 236-7); Hesiod boasts of victory in a poetic contest (Hes. *Op*. 650-62).

[166] E.g. Suter 1987.

[167] Roisman 2006: 18-20; Blondell 2010: 10, 14.

[168] Roisman 2006: 19; Blondell 2010: 9.

to the loss of his purportedly beloved Briseis by withdrawing from battle (*Il.* 9. 335-43), and by deciding to return home so that Peleus and he can choose him a wife (*Il.* 9. 393-400). His anthropocentric vision of desire means that he can make these arguments forcefully: he is free from Aphrodite's control, and free to pursue either of the two fateful paths that have been revealed to him by Thetis (*Il.* 9. 410-29).

Homer intertwines the pious theocentricity of the *Hymn* with the anthropocentric perspectives of Helen and Achilles, thereby creating a distinctively epic worldview in which mortal agency is central,[169] but the gods' power is still to be taken seriously.[170] Contrary to dismissive comments about 'foolish' Aphrodite and the view that her portrayal is 'contradictory,'[171] it emerges that the *Iliad* aligns with perceptions of the goddess as 'great,' 'universal' and powerful.[172] Homer's evocation of the *Hymn* ensures that Aphrodite is honoured as she should be.

[169] Cf. Williams 1993: 75-102.
[170] Cf. Griffin 1980: 162.
[171] Friedrich 1978: 1-2; Rosenzweig 2004: 1.
[172] Friedrich 1978: 4; Cyrino 1993: 219; Cyrino 2010: 32, 104.

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CONTINUITY AND INNOVATION IN IMPERIAL INSCRIPTIONS[173]

Augustus' *Res Gestae* and the Stelae of the Qin First Emperor Compared

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Having defeated his political rivals in the civil wars which plagued the Late Republic (44-31 BC) and expanded the rule of Rome enormously, Augustus introduced the era known as the Roman *Principate* (i.e. what we call the Roman 'Empire'). The *Res Gestae* is the final account by Augustus of his own achievements, and was one of the documents that was entrusted to the Vestal Virgins before his death.[174] The content of *RG* might have been revised and updated in Augustus' final years, presumably presenting us with a conclusive view of how Augustus perceived the 'empire' of Rome.[175] According to Suetonius, Augustus requested in his own will that his text should be inscribed on two bronze pillars and set up in either side of the entrance of his

[173] I would like to thank the organizers (Elinor Cosgrave, Maria Haley, Sophie Milner, Laura Clements, Lorena Zanin and Timothy McConnell) of the Annual Meeting of Postgraduates in Ancient Literature (AMPAL) on June 13-14, 2019 for the opportunity to participate and to thank all those who were present for their helpful comments. I would also like to thank the reviewers of this paper, Jordon Houston and Greg Gilles for the publication of this conference proceedings. Finally, I would like to extend gratitude to Dominic Rathbone for his constant encouragement and guidance as well as Victoria Győri and Wang Zhongxiao for their warm help.

There have been some comparative studies between Augustan Rome and China in Qin/Han Dynasty in the past few decades. *Conceiving the Empire China and Rome Compared* (2008, F.Mutschler and A. Mittag (eds.)), the proceedings of the conference "'Empire' and 'World'" in 2005 at Essen, explores and compares the idea of 'empire' with regard to the Roman and Chinese empires. Martin Kern's 'Announcements from the mountains', mainly introducing the Qin stelae, is especially relevant to this article and is referred to when needed. Christian Witschel's 'The *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* and the Roman Empire' discusses the text of Res Gestae, which is also very inspiring. However, since these are two distinct articles, they do not deal with both inscriptions simultaneously. Alexander Yakobson's 'The first emperors: image and memory' in Pines 2014 tries to compare the images of these two emperors, but mainly discusses Augustus rather than the Qin emperor. Zhao Dan Qing's MA thesis 'Foreigners and Propaganda: war and peace in the imperial images of Augustus and Qin Shi Huangdi' compares certain points in both *RG* and the Qin Stelae, mainly to explore how the two emperors in their propaganda were justified as superior rulers over foreigners by portraying themselves as peace-bringers with moral superiority and divine support. Wang Zhongxiao's PhD thesis 'World views and military policies in the early Roman and Western Han empires' also contains a section about the Qin stelae inscriptions, which mainly discusses about the specific world view of Tianxia in the stelae, and how it is possible to be compared in general with the Roman idea of *orbis terrarum* in the RG. The focus of this article, however, is different from all the studies mentioned above. By covering some of the details in these texts, it will, on the basis of previous studies, discuss how the idea of 'empire' is conceived and represented by the time of Augustus and Qin emperor.

In this article, I use the edition of Res Gestae of Cooley, A. E. (2009), *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*: Text, Translation, and Commentary. Cambridge. For the translation of the Qin stelae, I refer to Kern, M. (2000), *The Stele Inscriptions of Ch'in Shih-Huang: Text and Ritual in Early Chinese Imperial Representation*. New Haven.

[174] There are four documents listed by Suetonius, *Aug*. 101.4: his will, directions for his funeral, an account of what he had accomplished and a summary of the condition of the whole empire.

[175] Ramage, 1987, p.13; Cooley, 2009, p.42; Gagé, 1935, p.22-3; Brunt and Moore, 1967, p.6; Witschel, 2008, p.242.

Mausoleum, which was completed in 28 BC in the Campus Martius.[176] Unfortunately, these bronze pillars might have been melted down afterwards and thus do not survive. For the text of *RG* we can only rely on the three published sources from the province of Galatia in Asia minor, respectively from Ancyra, Pisidian Antioch and Apollonia.[177]

In the east, before 221 BC, China had been ruled by the Zhou Dynasty, under which the relationship of the emperor to the regional lords had been more like one of *primus inter pares* (literally 'the first among equals') than of supreme ruler.178 As the centralized power of the Zhou decreased throughout the Spring and Autumn period (770-403 BC) and the Warring States period (402-221 BC), the Qin State, previously only marginal on the western fringes of the Zhou realm, through a series of innovations and reforms, began to consolidate its power and expand its rule eastwards.179 Finally, after generations of strife, in 221 BC, having conquered all the other Warring States, King Zheng of Qin unified all of China once again under his own rule. Solidifying the new unity with strict legal reforms, he invented and adopted the imperial title of 'Huangdi', literally meaning 'August Thearch', which continued to be borne by the later rulers for the next two millennia.180 Two years after the establishment of his rule, he began to tour the newly conquered regions with his court scholars. For ten years, from 219 to 210 BC, he visited numerous mountain ranges in the east and south, on the top of which he erected a series of stele inscriptions, all of which are panegyrics of the Qin unification.[181]

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[176] Suetonius, *Aug*. 101.4. It is curious that although Strabo (5.3.8) gives a detailed description of the monument, he does not mention the text itself. For the text inscribed on bronze at Rome, see Güven, 1998, pp.31-2; Cooley, 2009, pp.3-4; Brunt and Moore, 1967, p.2.

[177] All three sources are inscriptions. At Ancyra it was upon the temple of Rome and Augustus. The exact place of the inscription at Antioch is not clear, probably on a monumental gateway leading to a temple to Augustus. And the *RG* at Apollonia was inscribed upon a large base supporting five statues of imperial family members. See Cooley, 2009, 6-18. For the Sardis fragment identified in 1929, see Thonemann, 2012, pp.287-8. As it has not been properly published, this version will not be referred to this study.

[178] From around 770 BC, the rule of the Zhou, also known as the East Zhou, began to wane. The feudal states only paid nominal loyalty to the crown but were virtually individual nation-states that kept their own courts. For further discussion on how to define this period see Bodde, 1986, pp.22-30.

[179] Qin, long lying on the fringes of the civilized central China and inevitably influenced by the barbarian tribes such as Jung and Ti nearby, was also regarded by the contemporaries more as barbarians than as civilized communities, see Bodde, 1986, p.31. One of the most important sources on the rise of the Qin empire is the *Shi Ji*, or *Records of the Grand Historian/Historical Records*, covering the legendary period of Chinese history to around 100 BC, compiled on the basis of texts by Sima Qian (145-89 BC), an official historian of the Han imperial court. In this study, I refer to the English translation of Burton Watson's 'The basic annals of the First Emperor of the Qin' in the Records. Translation of this chapter can be seen in Watson, 1993, pp.35-85.

[180] There is a discussion in the Records on the adoption of a proper name to the First Emperor (Watson, 1993, p.43). Although the chancellors suggested the title of the Great August, the most exalted one, that had been used by previous rulers, to the emperor, it was the emperor's own decision to adopt his own title, namely Huangdi, to distinguish himself from his predecessors. The English translation of this title is debated. Watson and Bodde translate it as 'August Emperor', Kern as 'August Thearch', while some studies about the title keep its Chinese pronunciation as Huang-ti/Huangdi, such as Wechsler, 1985, p.86. In my study, I follow the translation of Kern as 'August Thearch'.

[181] The inscriptions of the stelae, except that of Mt. Yishan, are preserved in the Records. Now only part of the Stele of Mt. Tai and Langyai still survives. For a short introduction of the preservation of the texts in later copies, see Li, 1985, pp.247-8. For the translation of the texts, see Kern, 2000, pp.10-49, Bodde, 1989, pp.45-63.

219 BC Stele of Mt. Yishan 峄山, Tai 泰山and Langya 琅琊山

218 BC Stele of Mt. Zhifu 之罘, Dongguan ('Eastern Vista') 东观

215 BC Stele of 'Gate' of Jieshi 碣石

210 BC Stele of Mt. Kuaiji 会稽

To begin with, the authorship and location of the inscriptions are of great significance. The *Res Gestae,* as mentioned already, was composed by Augustus in his final years, as an expansion of the form of the funerary inscriptions commonly inscribed on tombstones at Rome which served to enumerate and honour the achievements of the deceased.[182] The seven stelae inscriptions, on the other hand, were not composed by the Qin emperor himself, but by the imperial scholars whom the Qin had inherited from the old eastern regions of traditional scholarship serving the Zhou dynasty.[183] Although they also eulogized the exploits of the emperor as Augustus did in the *Res Gestae*, these inscriptions were not narrative reports of the specific achievements of the emperor, but rather adhered to formulaic expressions, most likely drawn from the archival records of the previous dynasty.[184] Thus, given the fact that all these inscriptions were probably based on one standardized proto-text with repetitions and variations, my discussion will not focus on one specific inscription but consider them as a whole. Their differences in terms of authorship reveals the fact that the legitimacy of the Qin dynasty still relied heavily on the influence of prior dynasties.

Although *Res Gestae* was originally erected in Rome, the only copies we have today are all from Galatia in Asia Minor on the eastern frontier of Rome at that time. After the death of King Amyntas in 25 BC, Galatia was subjected to Roman rule, and became a border province next to the allied kingdoms of Pontus and Cappadocia.[185] This is exactly the place where the most complete copy of the *RG,* known as the *Monumentum Ancyranum* (Temple of Roma and Augustus in Ancyra) survives.[186] The temple has both the Latin text inscribed in two parts (six

[182] Brunt and Moore, 1967, pp.2-3; Cooley 2009, p.30, Witschel, 2008, p.243.
[183] Kern, 2008, pp.220-1.
[184] Kern, 2000, pp.119-139.
[185] Strabo, 12.5.1, 12.6.3. See also Magie, 1950, pp.453-4, Mitchell, 1993, p.61.
[186] This is perhaps the most complete copy of the Res Gestae, inscribed on the marble walls of the Temple of Roma and Augustus at Ancyra. Parts of another Greek copy were discovered at Apollonia (the Monumentum Apolloniense), and about 270 small fragments of

columns) inside the temple on either side, and a Greek version carved on the external wall, extending over nineteen columns. Despite the lack of firm ancient corroborations, we can on the analogy of practice with other important imperial texts, be fairly confident that the text was disseminated by the Senate to the governors of each province, probably on the proposal of Tiberius, but that it was left to the individual cities to decide how and where to publicize it.[187] Although the main target audience of Augustus must have been the citizens at Rome, the possibility cannot be entirely excluded that he may also have given some thought to the audience beyond Italy and have intended the text to be sent to the provinces, one of which, obviously, was Galatia.[188]

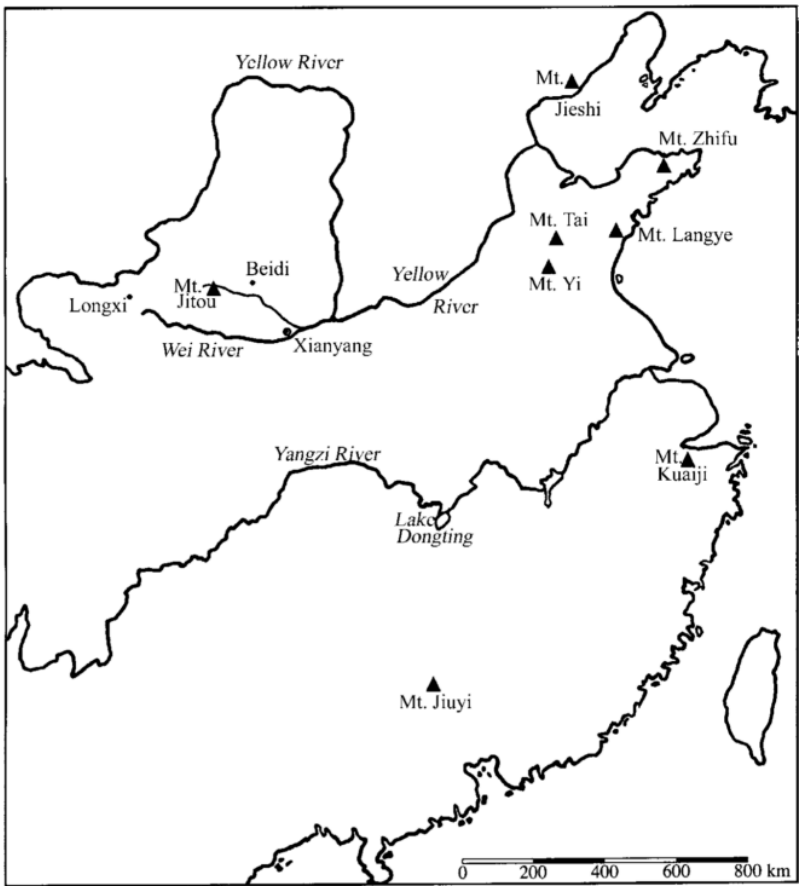
On the other hand, all the seven Qin stelae were erected on mountains which were located also in the newly conquered eastern territories of the empire, at the outermost points away from the then capital Hsien-yang which lies in the west.

Map showing the location of Ancyra in the Augustan Rome.
(AWMC: Map 8.2 Expansion of the Empire in the Age of Augustus)

the Latin version have been found at Antioch (the Monumentum Antiochenum), which are important for completing some of the lacunae in the Latin version from Ancyra.

[187] Cooley, 2009, pp.18-21, Witschel, 2008, pp.255-6.

[188] Cooley, 2009, p.39, Witschel, 2008, pp.244-6.



Map showing the location of the seven inscribed stelae. (Source: Kern, 2008, p.220)

Although the emperor also toured the west, no stone inscriptions have been found there. The seven stelae might thus be taken as a threatening imperial proclamation to the conquered people in the east of its dominion.[189] Not surprisingly, this also reveals the essential logic behind the new imperial geography: the previously discrete spots scattered under the Zhou dynasty are now recognized as *topoi* of specific significance within the order of the now unified empire.[190] It therefore seems that both the Chinese and Roman imperial texts eulogizing the achievements of the newly established emperors were displayed in the distant zones presumably to serve a similar purpose of measuring out the extent of the new empire and of demonstrating its sovereignty over these outermost regions.

[189] Kern, 2000, pp.106-7, Lewis, 1999, p.339.
[190] Kern, 2000, p.125.

All of these texts emphasize the concept of world-wide rule. In the case of *Res Gestae*, Augustus claims that his conquests had made the 'whole world' (*orbis terrarum*) subject to 'the rule of Roman people' (*RG* 3.1). Similar expressions can be found in the Qin inscriptions where it says that the August Thearch owns the land 'all under heaven', or 'all within the universe' and 'within the six combined directions', which include the four cardinal directions, heaven above and earth below.[191] Apart from these formulaic expressions, both the *RG* and the Qin inscriptions also try to present their respective rules as extending to the four extremities of the world. In Augustus' main record of his conquests in *RG* 26, for example, Roman rule covers the vast land extending to the west end at the Pillars of Herculus, north up to the estuary of Elbe, south down to the Nubian and Arabian towns, bordering with the Ocean for most of the part, almost equivalent to the *orbis terrarum*. Similarly in the inscription of Mt. Langyai, there is a description of the Qin realm referring to the four extremities, as 'to the west it ranges to the flowing sands, to the south it completely takes in where the doors face north, to the east it enfolds the eastern sea, to the north, it goes beyond Ta-hsia, wherever human traces reach, there is none who does not declare himself subject'.[192]

In contrast to the places enumerated by Augustus in the *RG* which he claims to have conquered, the four extremities listed here in the Qin inscriptions were taken from the stock formula of political language of the traditional classic *Shang-shu*, or the *Book of Documents*, a collection of rhetorical prose attributed to ancient figures.[193] The chapter 'Tribute of Yu' of the 'Book of Xia' in *Shang-shu*, probably composed in the fifth to fourth century BC, is a geographical description of the nine regions that were united into a single state by the sage King Yu.[194] The stele inscription about the realm of Qin resembles the description of the realm of King Yu in the Tribute, that can be seen as a precedent for the Qin inscription: while the *Tribute of Yu* says,

> 'On the east, reaching to the sea;
> on the west, extending to the flowing sands;
> to the utmost limits of the north and south;
> his fame and influence filled up (all within) the four seas.'

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[191] Cosmology is one of the key factors in understanding the formation of China's early empire; as Wang says that 'cosmology and the unified empire have been seen as the two most enduring structures of Chinese civilization'. According to Wang, while the Four Directions define the political centre, the parallel idea of 'high-low' connections is used to 'indicate the meeting point of Heaven and Earth in this layered universe'. See Wang, 2000, pp.1-22, 46-7.

[192] According to Wang's theory, the idea of Sifang, or the Four Directions, means more than the extensiveness of the new reign, but rather has a ritual significance. As the Four Directions have the capacity to connect the humans to the divines, they point to the centre, where the ruling power was rooted and monopolized the access to the divine world and knowledge. See Wang, 2000, pp.26-37.

[193] As one of the earliest historical documents in China, Shang-shu covers a wide range of topics and it is generally agreed by the scholars that they were composed in the Western Zhou period.

[194] The chapter 'Tribute of Yu', or Yu Gong, is among the New Text documents of *Shang-shu*, which refer to predynastic rulers, or mythical sage-kings. 'Tribute of Yu' thus relates the stories of the sage-King Yu (c. 20th BC), the legendary founder of the Xia dynasty.

It is said on the Mt. Langya inscription that:

> 'Within the six combined [directions],
> This is the land of the August Thearch.
> To the west it ranges to the flowing sands,
> To the south it completely takes in where the doors face north.
> To the east it enfolds the eastern sea,
> To the north, it goes beyond Ta-hsia'. [195]

Another mythical king Shun, the predecessor of King Yu, is also behind this universal claim. According to *Shang Shu*, Shun had long been venerated as a cosmic ruler who had also measured out the extent of his rule by mounting the mountains in four directions and performing rites on each peaks.[196] Interestingly, this story actually comes from the redacted version of *Shang-shu* in the Qin imperial times, meaning that the alleged 'traditional' ritual action of the mythical king was more likely to be an 'invented tradition'.[197] It might be argued that the Qin inscription is more exaggerated in terms of claiming universal rule by purposely exploiting the traditional language of denoting world-wide power of previous rulers. However, the landmarks used by Augustus to present the extent of his realm, is also inherited from traditional language. Many of the places were traditionally conceived as being at the edges of the inhabited world, such as the Ocean/*Oceanus*, and actually had not been entirely conquered by Rome by the time of Augustus, thus also indicating a touch of exaggeration.[198] Of course, 'invented tradition' might not be unfamiliar to Augustus as well, if we consider his religious reform, which was dubiously claimed to be a 'return to the tradition'.

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[195] I do not agree with Wang, 2015 here who argues that the unbounded and open world view in the Tribute of Yu changed in the time of Qin to a different world view of Tianxia representing a 'relatively closed geopolitical entity'. From the quotation above it is obvious that Qin still inherited (, if not invented, see below) the pre-Qin ideology of universal dominion. See Wang, 2015, pp.44-52.

[196] It is recorded in the 'Canon of Shun', that after the King Shun succeeded King Yao, he 'in the second month of the year he made a tour of inspection eastwards, as far as Dai-zong, where he presented a burnt-offering to Heaven… in the fifth month he made a similar tour southwards, as far as the mountain of the south, where he observed the same ceremonies as at Dai. In the eighth month he made a tour westwards, as far as the mountain of the west, where he did as before. In the eleventh month he made a tour northwards, as far as the mountain of the north, where he observed the same ceremonies as in the west.'

[197] Kern, 2000, p.111.

[198] For example, Augustus claims Nabata, 'which adjoins Meroe', to be the southernmost point of the Roman rule (26.5). These two places are traditionally regarded as the edge of the world. According to Strabo 2.5.7, further south was thought to be unhabitable on account of heat. However, this region was never fully conquered by Rome by the reign of Augustus. Under the Prefect of Egypt, Petronius, the Roman army did advance to the area around Meroe, but it was soon reconquered by the Meroites probably up to Aswan (Shinnie, 1978, p.258). In 20 BC envoys were sent from Meroe to Samos and made a treaty with Augustus, which included some sort of agreement about the Dodecaschoenos, which lay north of Meroe (Strabo, 17.1.53-8).

So, even here we can make a comparison. Neither of these exaggerations are to be taken as mere hyperbolic self-glorification. Traditional language presenting the rule of ancestral or even mythical kings was used both by Augustus and Qin emperor, presumably showing their concerns of legitimacy derived from political lineage, at times even at the expense of creating some 'traditions' that were actually without any precedents;[199] on the other hand, the exaggerations also show that they began to see the lands under their rule not merely as separate towns or individual states, but rather as a whole block that corresponds to the whole known world. Relative to this is how they both, as 'true' unifiers, claim to have ended the chaos by bringing universal and eternal *pax* to the world which, in turn, justify and legitimize the military conquest by presenting it not as aggressive but defensive and punitive expeditions for the purpose of restoring social order.[200] It is fairly certain that neither Augustus nor the Qin First Emperor was the first to claim world-wide rule in their respective historical contexts: for example, before Augustus Pompey was also recognized as world-conquerors, and before the Qin there was the Zhou dynasty which expressed its rule as extending to 'all under heaven'.[201] More importantly, however, it was from Augustus and the Qin emperor that new views of their universal rule began to take shape which characterized their regimes more as what is now called 'empire', each with their own agendas, but not without similarities.

In the case of *Res Gestae*, the sections which best exemplify Augustus' attitude towards Roman rule are 26-33. The opening sentence of 26.1 says: 'I extended the territory of all those provinces of the Roman people which had neighbouring peoples who were not subject to our rule'.[202] We can notice here a new focus slightly different from the previous general claim of universal rule: the provinces. Having combined the last sentence of 27, where Augustus claims to have 'regained all provinces', we would find a closed circular narrative structure from 26.1 to 27.3. It gives us the impression that all the areas listed in between are within the provincial system. This, however, is only an exaggeration.[203] Augustus here incorporated under 'provinces' areas which had not yet come under full Roman control, such as areas between the rivers Rhine and Elbe, Aethiopia and

[199] On the traditional narratives and images of previous kings, such as Romulus, used by Augustus and Augustan authors, see, for example, Scott, 1925, pp.89-91, Starr, 2009, pp.367-9, on a more general discussion, see Galinsky, 1996, pp.93-106; on those by Qin emperor, see discussion above, n.22-4.

[200] Aug., *RG* 3.2, 12.2, 13, 25.1, 26.2-3; Mt. Yi: 'He unified all under heaven under one lineage, warfare will not rise again…the black-haired people live in peace and stability, benefits and blessings are lasting and enduring', Mt. Tai: 'after having pacified all under heaven, he has not been remiss in rulership', Mt. Langyai: 'the black-haired people are peaceful and tranquil, and do not use weapons and armor', Dongguan: 'forever halted were clashes of arms', Mt. Kuaiji: 'calm and peaceful, honest and hard-working, there is none who does not obey orders'. Pines also mentions how the theme of universal peace permeates the inscriptions, see Pines, 2014, pp.265-7. About how the idea of 'peace' works in the imperial context, see Cornwell, 2017, pp.1-9.

[201] About the world conquest of Pompey, see Cic. *Pro Lege Manilia*, 11.31, 17.53, 19.57, *Pro Balbo* 6.16, Vell.Pat, 2.31.1, 2.31.3, 2.32.4, 2.53.3, 2.55.3. About the discussion of the development of the idea of 'All under Heaven'/Tianxia and relative terms used before Qin, see Pines, 2002, 101-116, Wang, 2015, pp. 28-46.

[202] Aug., *RG* 26.1: omnium provinciarum populi Romani, quibus finitimae fuerunt gentes quae non parerent imperio nostro, fines auxi.

[203] Cooley, 2009, 219-220.

Arabia.[204] Moreover, Augustus' claims to universal rule even go beyond the list in 26-27 of territories supposedly under direct Roman rule and continue at 29-33 by including some 'periphery' areas that were definitely not ruled, or even fully conquered by Rome, such as Armenia, Parthia and India.[205] It is noticeable that these places are presented as being under Roman rule either by military threat, or by Roman friendship appealed for by their own initiative. Therefore, Augustus' exaggeration thus seems to indicate that, if there was a 'strong' view of what Roman rule meant, that would be the Roman provinces.[206] There is also a relatively 'weak' view of Roman rule, which includes the periphery maintained by threats and intervention, or even more weakly by 'friendship', indicating various levels of Roman rule and influence over the remote lands.[207] It can thus be viewed as a concentric circle; that is, that from the core of the 'provinces' to the periphery of 'friendly states', Roman rule gradually gets weaker.

[204] For example, Augustus claims in 26.5 that his army marched so far in Arabia as reaching 'the territory of the Sabaei to the town of Mariba' (supposedly the southern end of Roman rule and that of the earth), but according to Strabo, this was merely a failed expedition. The siege of Mariba lasted for only six days that Aelius Gallus, the prefect of Egypt, was forced to retreated probably because of a lack of water. See Strabo, 16.4.23-4.

[205] Augustus' claims about Roman power over Parthia is especially striking. There are various kinds of interaction mentioned in the *RG* between Augustus and Parthia, the latter of which is mostly presented as taking the initiative in seeking peace and 'friendship' with Rome through envoys, with almost no mention of military force or political intervention. See Aug., RG 29.1, 32.1, 32.2, 33.

[206] About how the idea of 'provinciae' worked as the central element in the understanding of Roman empire for the Augustan authors, see Richardson, 2008, pp.117-145.

[207] There have been sufficient discussions among scholars about (the claim of) Roman rule or influence over the peripheral and remote areas in the form of indirect control such as taking hostages and establishing 'friendship'. See, for example, Sherwin-White, 1984, pp.322-8, Campbell, 1993, pp.213-40, Rose 2005, pp.21-67 dealing with Roman contact with Parthia and Armenia; Thorley, 1969, pp.219-23, Sidebotham, 1986, p.601 that with India and Arabia. About general discussions of Roman policy towards client kingdoms, see Badian, 1958, Millar, 1982, 1988, Braund, 1984, Mattern, 1999, Sidebottom, 2007. About Roman diplomatic success maintained specifically by 'friendship', see Burton, 2011, by taking hostages, see Allen, 2006.

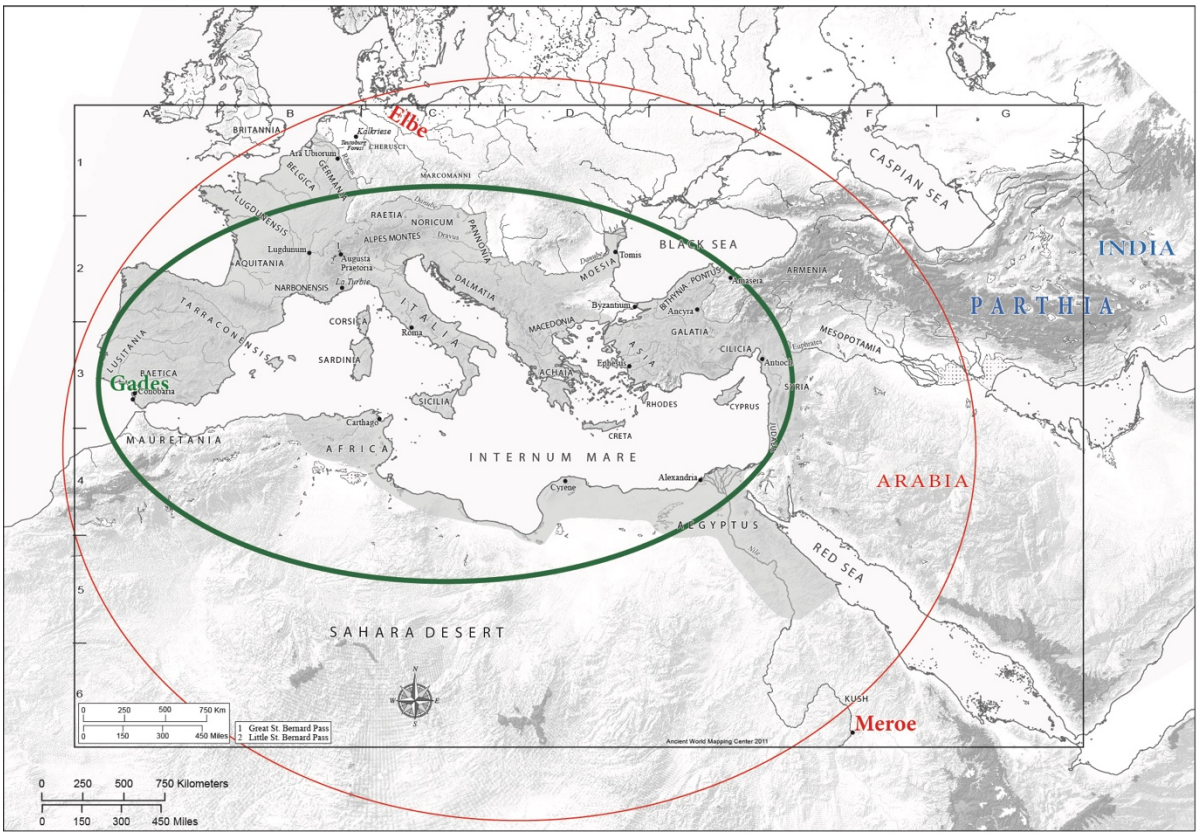

Diagram showing the concentric-circle rule of Augustan Rome
(AWMC: Map 8.2 Expansion of the Empire in the Age of Augustus, circles are drawn by the author)

In the case of the Qin empire, the idea of organizing the rule of 'all-under-heaven' in the manner of a concentric circle is more traditional than innovative.[208] In the 'Tribute of Yu', the realm of King Yu had already been described as being divided into 'five concentric domains' as belonging to one coherent rule. From the royal capital to the wild there are five concentric domains of five hundred li (miles) each, including the Royal Domain in the centre, then Domain of the nobles, Peace-securing domain, Domain of Restraint, and Barren Domain which are mostly occupied by barbarian tribes. Curiously, however, although neither the ideas of 'all under heaven' nor concentric rule were new to the Qin, the inscription puts more emphasis on the supreme power of the emperor, whose influence is more or less equally cast on people 'both near and remote', instead of presenting concentric rule. It might reveal that the rule of the Qin was not only 'restoring' the previous world order, but rather 'starting' a new era that can be more fairly claimed to be a unified universal rule, for which the key factors are the new role of the emperor, or August

[208] About the general introduction on the idea of concentric-circle identity in Chinese culture, see Guo and Chen, 2009, pp.1-16.

Thearch, as well as the new uniform system of administration established with the emperor as its centre.[209] It claims that:

> 'His precepts and principles reach all around, the distant and near are completely well-ordered, and all receive his sage will' [Mt. Tai]
>
> 'Distant and near, down to regions remote and obscure, they are single-minded in their efforts, reverential and respectful' [Mt. Langyai]
>
> 'The black-haired people are transformed and civilized, distant and near share unified measures' [Dongguan].

Therefore, we can see that what is more underlined in justifying the unification of the universal rule is not the ruling system as in *RG*, but rather the personal power of the Qin emperor, to whose will people from the core to the remote regions are all claimed to be 'single-mindedly' submissive.

To conclude, we can see that the *Res Gestae* of Augustus and the Qin inscriptions do have many elements in common, especially in terms of their claims of universal rule. Although both 'empires' are recognised as unprecedented and influential in the west and east respectively, the texts reveal that they might have very different ideas on the essence of what is called by us an 'empire'.[210] On one hand, the *RG* reveals that in Augustan Rome, a new vision of perceiving Roman influence in a concentric-circle scheme was beginning to take shape, making it a more coherent political entity than earlier periods of the Roman Republic which is the main feature of the new 'empire'; while on the other hand, the Qin inscriptions imply that it is the role of emperor, or August Thearch, that defines the innovative nature of the new rule and justifies it as what is now called an 'empire'. What we can see from these texts, however, is how they present and prioritize their concerns about the essentially new features of their rules, which is helpful to understand the ancient equivalent ideas of 'empire', however different they might be in the west and east.

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[209] The significance of the First Emperor's view of rulership and his self-presentation is sufficiently discussed by Pines, who argues that 'the notion of emperorship established by the First Emperor, and particularly the concept of the ruler as a reigning sage, became his major legacy for the Han and subsequent dynasties'. See Pines, 2014, pp.236-8, as well as pp.258-279.

[210] Mutschler and Mittag, 2008, p.xiv. To be more specific, Augustus was 'princeps' in ancient Rome rather than 'emperor', but in the context of comparing him with Qin emperor, Augustus is often called the 'the first Roman emperor'. See, for example, Witschel, 2008, p.241. On the other hand, Qin emperor, although called 'August Thearch' in this paper, is more frequently referred to as 'Qin First Emperor'. See Kern, 2008, p.217.

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