

UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED, FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICAL AND NEO-LATIN STUDIES
&
ELTE EÖTVÖS JÓZSEF COLLEGIUM

SAPIENS UBIQUE CIVIS

III.



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AARON PLATTNER

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♪ Hush, Mum and Twin Brother, don't you fear, for Baby Heracles is here ♪. A Note on the Infant Heracles Episode in Pindar's *Nemean* 1*

In Nemean 1 Pindar celebrates the chariot race victory of Sicilian nobleman Chromius. As usual, the poet praises his commissioner through the attribution of stereotypical outstanding properties and by means of a transcending mythical foil (pars epica). But in this case, his choice to relate the winner's success to Heracles's postnatal throttling of the Hera-sent twin snakes disconcerted ancient as well as modern critics and caused them to provide possible explanations. Albeit the great number and ingenuity of their suggestions, the issue still needs further investigation. This paper aims to add clarity by stressing the ode's poetological statement as a contributing factor to Pindar's choice. The argument runs that while the hymnic reminiscences of the entire pars epica – among other things – stress Chromius's mortality, the commemoration of the allegedly ancient snake-throttling episode demonstrates the possibility to overcome same mortality thanks to the Muse who never forgets great contests.

Keywords: Pindar, Chromius, Nemean Games, Infant Heracles, Immortality, Homeric Hymns, Hermes

Nemean 1 celebrates the chariot race victory of Sicilian nobleman Chromius.¹ The ode's first half consists of a hymnic call upon Syracusan off-

* I express my sincere thanks to the great Pindar expert that is my supervisor E. Krummen, to my fellow Athens-scholarship holder N. Voss and my friend C. Steinberger from Ancient Near Eastern Studies for helping me to considerably improve this paper's quality.

¹ On the ode's date of composition, see BRASWELL (1992: 25–27): An absolute dating is impossible due to the lack of respective information. However, a terminus post quem is signalled by the scholia's reference to Chromius as 'Aitnaios', namely 476 / 475 BC when Hieron I renamed Katane at the foot of Mount Aitna after the volcano and re-

shore island Ortygia (vv. 1–6), the announcement of the festive occasion (vv. 7–9), the invocation of the Muse (vv. 10–13) and the eulogies of the winner's homeland Sicily (vv. 13–18) and himself (vv. 19–33). The ode's second half embodies an elaborate and vivid narration (*pars epica*) of the infant Heracles's fight against the Hera-sent snakes in Alcmene's bed-chamber (vv. 33–59) and Tiresias's subsequent prophecy about the prodigy's road of justice to Mount Olympus (vv. 60–72).

As elsewhere, Pindar expresses his commissioner's praise directly, by assigning him outstanding properties, as well as indirectly, by placing him in front of a transcending mythical backdrop.² From Antiquity onwards, critics were puzzled as to why a chariot race winner is compared to the infant Heracles and sought to explain the *pars epica*'s rele-

housed its former inhabitants, as to settle mercenaries from Syracuse and the Peloponnesian area instead; on *Nemean* 1's colonial aspects, see FOSTER (2017: 132–134). Considering the Nemean Games' biennial recurrency (Bacchyl. *Epin.* 9,21–24) after their so-called 'world premiere' in 573 BC (according to Hier. *chron. a. Abr.*), the earliest possible date thereafter is 475 BC. By contrast, a terminus ante quem depends on whether one accepts the assumption that Hieron I, who died in 466 BC, was still alive at the time. The latest possible date would then be 467 BC.

On Chromius's biography, see BRASWELL (1992: 27–28): The sources are Pind. *N.* 1 and Pind. *N.* 9 plus the corresponding scholia. Their information must be taken with a pinch of salt, for Pindar, despite his factual obligation, does clearly prioritize the winner's praise, and the scholia are themselves based on what they claim to explain. Keeping this in mind, the picture presents itself as follows: Chromius is the son of a not further known Hagesidemus, maybe from Gela on the south coast of Sicily because in his youth he did military service for the local tyrant Hippocrates. The section Pind. *N.* 9, 34–37 praises his outstanding achievements as commander of the cavalry, foot soldier, and captain. When Hippocrates died around 490 BC, Chromius probably entered the service for the subsequent tyrant Gelon, Hieron I's brother. Gelon took him to Syracuse in 485 BC, where Chromius remained even after his master's death in 478 BC, working for the Deinomenid dynasty; on Syracuse under the Deinomenids, see LEWIS (2019: 33–36).

² E.g., Pind. *O.* 1, 24–96 (Pelops as mythical backdrop) and 100–117 (explicit praise); on the comparison of Hieron's rulership to that of Zeus, cf. n. 53.

In this case the image of hero-god Heracles. Pindar's metaphorical use of Heracles's columns at the Western end of the Mediterranean as uncrossable boundary marks shows that mere mortals can at best hope for an asymptotic approximation but not for a comparison on equal terms: Pind. *O.* 3, 43–45; *N.* 3, 19–26; *I.* 4, 7–13.

vance to Chromius.³ Their suggestions can be subsumed under five interpretative approaches:

1. The ethico-religious approach: The most significant explanation stems from the Italian Graecist Giuseppe Aurelio Privitera.⁴ Based on vv. 33–34, Privitera deems a direct relation between Chromius and Heracles as secondary.⁵ For him, the hero-god embodies a set of contemporary aristocratic values within a world that is governed by the same Zeus to whose joy the epinicion is being sung (Ζηνὸς Αἰτναίου χάριν, v. 6) and with whose cosmic order it ends (παρ Δὲ Κρονίδᾳ, σεμνὸν [...] νόμον, v. 72). By attributing to Chromius give or take the same virtues as to the infant Heracles (εἶδε γὰρ ἐκνόμιον / λῆμ' αὖ τε καὶ δύναμιν / υἱοῦ, vv. 56–58), Pindar places Chromius's chariot race on a categorical level with Heracles's victory over the snakes.

The *pars epica*'s role within this complex, according to Privitera, is to vividly represent these values. Yet, one might wonder together with the ancient commentator whether for the sake of representation alone the poet could not as well have chosen a different Heracleian adventure.⁶

2. The mythical approach: Such an explanation was given by the Greek Grammarian Chrysippus. Chrysippus thinks that the reason for Heracles's appearance in *Nemean* 1 is his well-known connection with the

³ Let alone the fact that the correlation of Heracles's deeds with those of the winner is generally conventional and, given Heracles's popularity in Magna Graecia, especially appropriate for a winner from that region, Pindar might have intended to integrate Chromius in the family of the Heraclidae. By tradition, Syracuse is a Doric foundation; it was founded in 733 BC by Archias from Corinthus, a descendant of Heracles (cf. Paus. 5, 7, 3). Chromius not only followed Gelon to Syracuse and helped him to take over the control of the city but, by marrying one of his master's sisters (Σ Pind. N. 9, 95 a = Timaeus FGrHist 566 F 21), also became part of the ruling family and thus a Heraclidae successor.

⁴ PRIVITERA (1975); cf. ROSE (1974: 150).

⁵ No relation whatsoever is assumed by WILAMOWITZ (1922: 256), FARNELL (1930: 159–160) and FRAENKEL (1972: 85–86).

⁶ Albeit in a slightly different context, the ancient commentator justly says that Heracles always had bodily strength and a quick mind (Σ Pind. N. 1, 49 c).

Nemean lion.⁷ Since there are Pindaric odes in which a myth is told because of its connections to the sporting event, Chrysippus's approach is understandable.⁸ However, said connection could at best be considered a minor reason for the poet's choice, because Chrysippus's explanation has three weak spots: It ignores the fact there is no explicit reference to the Nemean lion in *Nemean* 1;⁹ it omits the fact that the strangling of the Nemean lion is not the aition of the Nemean games;¹⁰ and it does not explain the *pars epica*'s role at all.

3. The biographical approach: The earliest explanation of this kind dates from the Grammarian Chaeris.¹¹ Reading Pindar's *Nemean* 9 (on Chromius's second chariot race victory) as a source of historical information, Chaeris recognizes a parallel between the lives of Heracles and Chromius within the numerous toils and hardships (cf. *πολυπόνων*, v. 33) that ultimately lead to their well-deserved rewards: in the former's case immortality, the marriage with Zeus's daughter Hebe and eternal banquets;¹² in the latter's case immortal glory, the marriage with a noble woman from the Deinomenid dynasty and opulent banquets in his house.¹³

⁷ Σ Pind. *N.* 1, 49 c. Confronting the Nemean lion famously is Heracles's first of the twelve canonical labours (cf. Pind. *I.* 6, 48; Bacchyl. *Epin.* 9, 8–9; and the fact that the beast's skin is one of Heracles's characteristic attributes during the later adventures [Stesich. F 229]).

⁸ Pind. *O.* 1; *O.* 3; *O.* 10; *N.* 9.

⁹ As already the ancient commentator rightly objected (Σ Pind. *N.* 1, 49 c); cf. however MORRISON (2007: 27).

¹⁰ Despite Bacchyl. *Epin.* 13, 44–57; on this, see MAEHLER (1982: 251–253). The actual aition of the Nemean games is the myth of the local hero Opheltes. Being the prince of Nemea, as a baby he was killed by a snake, when his nurse laid him down onto the grass, as to show the Seven against Thebes the way to a nearby water source. The Nemean games were initially held as his funeral games and repeatedly performed (Marmor Parium FGrHist 239 F 22; Pind. *N.* 8, 50–51; Pind. *N.* 10, 28; Bacchyl. *Epin.* 9, 10–24). As in the case of the Nemean lion, there is no explicit reference to the myth of Opheltes in Pind. *N.* 1.

¹¹ Σ Pind. *N.* 1, 49 c.

¹² Cf. Pind. *I.* 4, 76–78 and Hom. *H.* 15, 4–8; in Hom. *Od.* 11, 601–603 Odysseus tells the Phaeacians about meeting Heracles's image in the realm of the dead, whereas the son of Zeus himself lives amongst the gods.

¹³ Pind. *N.* 9, 34–48.

Despite the plausibility of this interpretation, which is championed by the US-American classical philologist Bruce Karl Braswell in his commentary on Pindar's *Nemean* 1,¹⁴ there are two reasons why it is not unproblematic: first, the methodological danger of matching Chromius's *vita* with events from Heracles's life, given the lack of more thorough information about the historical background (*petitio principii*); and second, the neglect of the *pars epica*'s independent role, due to the general focus on Heracles's deeds. Admitting his incapability to determine said role, Braswell turns to following ad-hoc explanation: 'It is enough that the poet may have wished to describe a vivid scene which was presumably already familiar to his audience from other versions [...] and, no less perhaps, from contemporary vases.'¹⁵

¹⁴ BRASWELL (1992: 56) and, building thereupon, MORGAN (2015: 387–390) and LEWIS (2019: 132–135).

¹⁵ BRASWELL (1992: 31). This claim is not only a simplistic ad-hoc explanation, but also an undervaluation of Pindar's operating principles. It appears highly implausible in the light of the plurality of the past proposed interpretations, which contribute to the well-established picture of Pindar as a thoughtful and crafty poet. It seems to be the case that the Theban songwriter, although being a transitory figure between the archaic and classical period, did in some respects even anticipate Hellenistic poetry. In *Nemean* 1 this becomes clear from the fact that the depiction of gods in their youth is a common feature of Hellenistic literature (e.g., Heracles in Theocr. *Id.* 24 or Eros in Apoll. Rhod. 3, 111–155), even though the new humanizing realism (HERTER [1927: 251]) harks back to other texts, e.g., the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* (cf. VERGADOS [2013: 28–29]); on the latter's influence on Hellenistic and later writers, see THOMAS (2020: 63–73). Moreover, there lies an epistemological problem within the falsification of the question of the infant Heracles-episode's familiarity in Pindar's time: When BRASWELL states that the episode was presumably already familiar to Pindar's audience from other versions or from contemporary vases, his claim basically relies on three ancient sources – Pherecydes FGrHist 3 F 69, Pind. *Paian.* 20 and, most importantly, red-figure pottery (Musée du Louvre G 192; Museo archeologico nazionale dell'Umbria 73; and Metropolitan Museum of Art 25.28). However, the time of origin of this pottery, as proposed by archaeologists, does not precede the assumed date of composition of *Nemean* 1, and older visual evidence is not available. Thus, one cannot exclude the possibility that it was the other way around Pindar who originally influenced vase painting, thereby making the myth more popular; cf. MORRISON (2007: 28 and n. 180). This is even more plausible if one considers the fact that, as a general rule, it is usually the visual arts which absorb motives from literature, and not vice versa (e.g., from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, to mention the most famous and influential sources of inspiration – especially the blinding of the Cyclops in Hom. *Od.* 9, 371–394). Also, the scene on the hydria in the

4. The metaphorical approach: Such an explanation was given by Didymus from Alexandria.¹⁶ According to the scholion, he considered the *Nemean 1*'s *pars epica* to bear the same meaning as the metaphor of the sailor men's fair wind from Pind. *P.* 1, 33 (πομπειῖος οὔρος): like Heracles, Chromius, after his delightful early triumph, can legitimately hope for many more future victories and an ultimate divine reward.

This interpretation, which is promoted by the German-US-American philologist Thomas Gustav Rosenmeyer,¹⁷ can hardly be denied such undertones, especially because, from the perspective of the Theban servants around Alcmene and Amphitruo, Heracles's first fight (πειρᾶτο δὲ πρῶτον μάχας, v. 43) already belongs to the past, whereas his future heroic deeds, being rendered in a prophetic form, are still to happen.¹⁸

5. The poetological approach: Such an explanation was given by the US-American classical philologist John Petruccione.¹⁹ Taking the second stanza with its reflection upon the fragility of a mortal's success and life as a starting point, Petruccione interprets the role of the poet, who is labelled the host's friend (vv. 31–32),²⁰ as not less heroic than the deeds of Chromius and Heracles: to make use of his own innate qualities (vv. 25–28), i.e., writing songs to fight 'the criticisms of the envious and the obscurity of death which Chromius cannot combat without his aid.'²¹

Metropolitan Museum of Art is astonishingly faithful to Pindar's infant Heracles episode: Let aside the presence of the goddess Athena as supporter of brave warriors, one can see the infant Heracles on a κλίνη, fighting the snakes, on the left Amphitruo with pulled sword trying to protect his family, and on the right Alcmene in a reaction of fear, as indicated by the posture of her body and hands – the female attendants and the Theban warlords are missing for spatial reasons, and Alcmene cannot be painted naked because of the rules of the genre. Again, in favour of BRASWELL, one could object the possibility that it is precisely *because* of the written sources, i.e., Pherecydes and especially Pindar, that archaeologists dated the pottery so close after the assumed composition of *Nemean 1*. The argument would then become a circular reasoning.

¹⁶ Σ Pind. *N.* 1, 49 c.

¹⁷ ROSENMEYER (1969).

¹⁸ Cf. PETRUCCIONE (1986: 34, n. 3).

¹⁹ PETRUCCIONE (1986).

²⁰ Cf. Pind. *O.* 1, 16–17.

²¹ PETRUCCIONE (1986: 44); cf. MORRISON (2007: 38–39).

The *pars epica*'s role attributed by Petruccione shares with that according to Privitera the aspect of representation of heroic aristocratic values. But while for the latter the throttling of the snakes serves as a mythical backdrop only for Pindar's commissioner, Petruccione also relates it to the poet himself and thus emphasizes its poetological significance.

Despite the great number of interpretations, comprising even more²² than the above listed, Pindar's main emphasis on Heracles's postnatal throttling of the snakes still needs further investigation. To help broaden our understanding of *Nemean 1*, this paper very briefly presents Pindar's promise of immortal renown to his *laudandus*. The argument runs that while the hymnic reminiscences of the entire *pars epica* – among other things – stress Chromius's mortality, the commemoration of the allegedly old snake-throttling episode demonstrates that same mortality can be overcome thanks to the Muse who never forgets great contests.

The *Nemean 1*'s *pars epica* prominently features three aspects which can also be found in the more extensive Greek hymns, most paradigmatically in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*.²³ The first aspect is the earliness of the divine nature's manifestation, which Pindar delineates very briefly albeit vividly:

ὥς, ἐπεὶ σπλάγχνων ὑποματέρος ἀν- 35
 τίκα θνητὰν ἐς αἴγλαν παῖς Διός
 ὠδῖνα φεύγων διδύμῳ
 σὺν κασιγνήτῳ μόλεν,
 ὥς {τ'} οὐ λαθὼν χρυσόθρονον
 ἦραν κροκωτὸν σπάργανον ἐγκατέβα·
 ἀλλὰ θεῶν βασιλέα

²² WILAMOWITZ (1922); FINLEY (1955: 124–127); MÉAUTIS (1962: 170–184); RADT (1966); FRAENKEL (1972: 85–89); ROSE (1974); SEGAL (1974).

²³ Even though little Hermes, unlike the Pindaric infant Heracles, is a guileful trickster god with humorous aspects; on this aspect, see VERGADOS (2011: 87–98) and VERGADOS (2013: 37–38). The indicated passages from the *Homeric Hymn* refer to the critical edition of ALLEN (1912). For a commentary, see THOMAS (2020: 137–470); cf. also VERGADOS (2013: 214–586).

σπερχθεῖσα θυμῷ πέμπε δράκοντας ἄφαρ. 40
 τοὶ μὲν οἰχθεῖσάν πυλᾶν
 ἐς θαλάμου μυχὸν εὐ-
 ρὺν ἔβαν, τέκνοισιν ὠκείας γνάθους
 ἀμφελίξασθαι μεμαῶτες· ὁ δ' ὁρ-
θὼν μὲν ἄντεινεν κάρα, πειρᾶτο δὲ πρῶτον μάχας.
 δισσαῖσι δοιοὺς αὐχένων
 μάρψαις ἀφύκτοις χερσὶν ἑαῖς ὄφιας. 45
 ἀγχομένοις δὲ χρόνος
 ψυχὰς ἀπέπνευσεν μελέων ἀφάτων.²⁴

How, immediately after from his mother's womb 35
the son of Zeus had come to bright daylight,
fleeing birth pang together with
his twin-brother,
 not unnoticed by Hera with the golden throne
 he climbed into his saffron swaddling clothes;²⁵
but the queen of gods
became angry and sent snakes straightaway. 40
 These went through the gates, which opened by themselves,
 to the roomy bedchamber's
 corner, seeking to wind their swift jaws
 round the babies. However, Heracles
craned his neck and made his first combat experience
 by grabbing a snake's neck
 with each of his inescapable hands. 45
 He strangled them until
 life left their ineffable limbs.²⁶

The underlined verses representing the basic sequence of events are equivalent to how the early manifestation of Hermes's divine nature is introductorily summarized in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*:²⁷

²⁴ Pind. *N.* 1, 35–47; cf. Paus. 9, 11, 3.

²⁵ BRASWELL (1992: 57) recognizes a potential inspiration from Hom. *H.* 4, 237.

²⁶ The responsibility for this paper's translations from ancient Greek into English rests on myself.

²⁷ Cf. Hom. *H.* 3, 119–134; Call. *Iov.* 55–57; Call. *Ap.* 58–64.

ὃς καὶ ἐπεὶ δὴ μητρὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτων θόρε γυίων
οὐκέτι δηρὸν ἔκειτο μένων ἱερῷ ἐνὶ λίκνῳ,
ἀλλ' ὃ γ' ἀναΐξας ζήτει βόας Ἀπόλλωνος
οὐδὸν ὑπερβαίνων ὑψηρεφείος ἄντροιο.²⁸

After he had leaped from his mother's immortal womb,
Hermes did not stay for long in the holy cradle,
instead darted off to look for Apollo's cattle
outside the threshold of the high-roofed cavern.

The non-underlined verses with the purpose to facilitate the audience's visualisation of the scene correspond to what in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* is explained in far greater length: that Hermes, on the very first day of his existence,²⁹ makes a string instrument out of a tortoise shell (vv. 24–64) and steals Apollo's cattle herd before returning to his cradle on Mount Cyllene (vv. 64–153).

The second aspect shared by both *Nemean 1* and the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* is the extraordinariness of the divine nature's manifestation. It is marked by a character's reaction of two-sided astonishment (word stem θαμ- or θαυμ-; in the following underlined). Not only Pindar's Amphitruo has mixed feelings when he sees what his son is capable of:

ἔστα δὲ θάμβει δυσφόρῳ
τερπνῶ τε μιχθείς. εἶδε γὰρ ἐκνόμιον
λῆμὰ τε καὶ δύναμιν
υἱοῦ·[...] ³⁰

Amphitruo stood there filled with both uneasy
and pleasant astonishment; for he saw the extraordinary
courage and strength
of his son.

²⁸ Hom. *H.* 4, 20–23.

²⁹ As confirmed twice by little Hermes himself in Hom. *H.* 4, 273 (χθὲς γενόμεν) and 376 (αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ χθιζὸς γενόμεν).

³⁰ Pind. *N.* 1, 55–58.

The Apollo from the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* ascribes the same feelings to himself, albeit on two different occasions. The uneasy astonishment (θάμβος δύσφορον, v. 55) occurs as he spots two oxen hides on top of a lofty rock (vv. 403–404):³¹

Πῶς ἐδύνω δολομῆτα δύω βόε δειροτομῆσαι,
ὥδε νεογνὸς ἐὼν καὶ νήπιος; αὐτὸς ἐγὼ γε
θαυμαίνω κατόπισθε τὸ σὸν κράτος· οὐδὲ τί σε χορὴ
μακρὸν ἀέξεσθαι Κυλλήνιε Μαιάδος υἱέ.³²

How did you manage to kill two oxen,
you who are new-born and childish? I myself
henceforth marvel at your strength. Not a bit taller
you need to grow, Cyllenean, son of Maia!

The pleasant astonishment (θάμβος τερπνόν, v. 56) is engendered by little Hermes's theogony chant accompanied with a new string music (vv. 418–433):³³

νῦν δ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ πολύτροπε Μαιάδος υἱέ
ἧ σοί γ' ἐκ γενετῆς τάδ' ἄμ' ἔσπετο θαυματὰ ἔργα 440
ἧέ τις ἀθανάτων ἠὲ θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων
δῶρον ἀγαθὸν ἔδωκε καὶ ἔφρασε θέσπιν ἀοιδήν·
θαυμασίην γὰρ τήνδε νεήφατον ὅσσαν ἀκούω,
ἦν οὐ πώ ποτέ φημι δαήμεναι οὔτε τιν' ἀνδρῶν,
οὔτε τιν' ἀθανάτων οἱ Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσι, 445
νόσφι σέθεν φηλῆτα Διὸς καὶ Μαιάδος υἱέ.³⁴
[...]
θαυμάζω Διὸς υἱέ τάδ' ὥς ἐρατὸν κιθαρίζεις.³⁵

Come on now and tell me, versatile son of Maia,
whether these wondrous activities have been yours 440
since the hour of your birth or some god or mortal man

³¹ Cf. Hom. *H.* 3, 440–447; see also THOMAS (2020: 368–369) and VERGADOS (2013: 494).

³² Hom. *H.* 4, 405–408.

³³ Cf. Hom. *H.* 3, 134–135.

³⁴ Hom. *H.* 4, 439–446.

³⁵ Hom. *H.* 4, 455.

gave you this brilliant gift and showed you god-inspired chant.
For wonderful is to my ears this new sound,
 which never, methinks, has been learned by any human
 or immortal who lives on Mount Olympus 445
 except you, deceiver, son of Zeus and Maia.
 [...]

 I admire, son of Zeus, how lovely you play the lyre!

The third aspect shared by both *Nemean* 1 and the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* is the definition of the divine nature's significance for mankind. In the case of the Pindaric Heracles, this significance is defined as the paradigmatic implementation of justice in a Hesiodian sense.³⁶ Heracles's deeds are perspectivized by Tiresias according to Zeus's law (νόμον, v. 72; contrasting terms in the following underlined), which Heracles continues recommending (αἰνέσειν, v. 72; cf. *Cleanth.* F 1, 39):³⁷

ὅσους μὲν ἐν χέρσῳ κτανών,
 ὅσους δὲ πόντῳ θηρας αἰδοροδίκας.
 καὶ τινα σὺν πλαγίῳ
ἀνδρῶν κόρῳ στείχοντα τὸν ἐχθρότατον 65
 φᾶσέ νιν δῶσειν μόρον.³⁸
 καὶ γὰρ ὅταν θεοὶ ἐν
 πεδίῳ Φλέγρας Γιγάντεσσιν μάχων
 ἀντιάζωσιν, βελέων ὑπὸ ῥι-
 παῖσι κείνου φαίδιμαν γαίᾳ πεφύρσεσθαι κόμαν
 ἔνεπεν. [...] ³⁹

How many lawless⁴⁰ monsters both by land
 and by sea Heracles would kill.
 Also, a certain man⁴¹ who with crooked

³⁶ Hes. *Erga* 5–8.

³⁷ Cf. Pind. *I.* 4, 70–78.

³⁸ This is the reading of the Mss. By contrast, SNELL–MAEHLER read φᾶ ἔ δαῶσειν μόρον. On this issue, see BRASWELL (1992: 76–77).

³⁹ Pind. *N.* 1, 62–69.

⁴⁰ Cf. the Cyclopes from the *Odyssey*: Hom. *Od.* 9, 106; 215; 275–276.

⁴¹ Probably rather Antaeus son of Poseidon than Cynus son of Ares (cf. Pind. *I.* 4, 70–73 and Paus. 9, 11, 6).

insolence struts along – the most hated
 fate, Tiresias said, Heracles would bring him. 65
 And he said that when the gods
 meet the Giants in battle on the plain of Phlegra,
 the force of his projectiles
 would cause their bright hair to be
 mixed with dirt.

As for the Hermes from the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, his significance for mankind is mainly⁴² apparent from the bounties which Apollo and Zeus grant him in the context of the two brothers' final reconciliation on Mount Olympus (vv. 504–578): the telling of oracles (vv. 564–566), the protection of flocks (vv. 567–571), the convoy of the dead into Hades (vv. 572–573)⁴³ and the permission to consort with mortals and gods alike (vv. 576–578).⁴⁴

The three mentioned similarities are limited to the hymn's narrative sections only, while further essential hymnic elements are missing in *Nemean* 1 – such as the stereotyped sacral attributions, the solemn tone and the praying person's request within the context of mutual affection. Also, the *pars epica* does not arise from a cultic setting, but it emanates from the victory celebration which is established at the beginning of the second stanza:

ἔσταν δ' ἐπ' αὐλείαις θύραις
 ἀνδρὸς φιλοξείνου καλὰ μελπόμενος,
 ἔνθα μοι ἀρμόδιον
 δεῖπνον κεκόσμηται [...] ⁴⁵

I have positioned myself at the manor gate
 of a hospitable man, as I celebrate his deeds,
 where a befitting
 banquet has been arranged for me.

⁴² In addition, from the epicleseis in Hom. *H.* 4, 13–15.

⁴³ Cf. Hom. *Od.* 24, 1–10.

⁴⁴ Cf. Hom. *H.* 3, 132. On the nature of this reconciliation, see THOMAS (2020: 426–427).

⁴⁵ Pind. *N.* 1, 19–22.

At this point, the ode's antecedent emblematic⁴⁶ perspective on the islands Ortygia and Sicily changes to Chromius's house⁴⁷ and the banquet there. The scene is marked as a victory celebration by the references to the venue (αὐλείαις θύραις, v. 19) as well as to the aspects of epinician⁴⁸ music (καλὰ μελπόμενος, v. 20) and dining (ἀρμόδιον δεῖπνον, vv. 21–22).⁴⁹

Based on the hymnic colouring on hand, it may nonetheless be argued that the *pars epica* evokes the semblance of a hymn to Heracles. This evocation is further enhanced by the fact that the scene is set at Boeotian Thebes, where Heracles, in his sanctuary south of the Cadmea beyond the Electran Gates, was worshipped as a youthful and belligerent deity (πρόμαχος).⁵⁰ This suggestion can be assigned three purposes Pindar may have intended to accomplish: first, to implicitly ask Heracles to bless Chromius and his dining party with ἀρετή and ὄλβος (prayer);⁵¹ second, to portray Chromius as a quasi-religiously worshipped protector of his πόλις (analogy); and third, to increase the audience's

⁴⁶ Cf. NEER-KURKE (2019: 223).

⁴⁷ Maybe to be localised on Ortygia, Syracuse's most ancient quarter (MORGAN [2015: 384]).

⁴⁸ The meaning is not 'beautifully singing' but rather 'singing the fair deeds (of Chromius)'; cf. BRASWELL (1992: 48).

⁴⁹ Although the aspects of the verbs ἔσταν (aorist = event; v. 19) and κεκόσμηται (perfect = result; v. 22) coupled with the fact of first-person narration (ἔσταν, v. 19 and μοι, v. 21) express a certain immediacy at the surface, the present celebration is not only an actual but also a literary one. The stereotypical side of its nature is highlighted by the generalizing statement about the frequency of Chromius's banquets (θαμά, v. 22). Accordingly, the outstanding properties which Chromius demonstrated at the sport event in Nemea appear as general traits of his character (vv. 24–33), and the aspect of the *pars epica*'s exemplariness is emphasized. On the inclusive aspect of Pindar's self-fashioning as a guest, see KUHN-TREICHEL (2020: 69–70).

⁵⁰ Paus. 9, 11, 4; Isocr. *Or.* 5, 32; Phot. *Bibl.* 148a (190). On the cult of Heracles Promachus, see SCHACHTER (1986: 14–30); on the portrayal of his worship and that of his sons at Thebes in Pind. *I.* 4, 76–86, see KRUMMEN (1990: 35–94); cf. the archaeological findings in ARAVANTINOS (2005: 398–399). That Heracles also protects new-born children might be an influence from the dwarfish Egyptian divinity Bes on the Theban Heracles-tradition (KRUMMEN [1990: 94–97]); on Bes's functions and iconography, see DASEN (1993:55–83, especially 68–75).

⁵¹ Cf. Hom. *H.* 15,9.

awareness of the categorical contrast between his mortal existence and Heracles's immortality (antithesis).

Whereas both prayer and analogy serve the indirect praise of Chromius, the antithesis contributes to the discourse of immortality that is engendered by the juxtaposition of the notion of mankind's fugacity (vv. 32–33) and the image of Heracles's eternal life (vv. 69–72), which frame the *pars epica* in form of an antithetical ring composition.⁵² With all due parallels between the lives of Chromius and Heracles,⁵³ it thus stresses the preliminary gnome's thought that the former has reached the maximum that is humanly possible in terms of great fame in life:

ἀρχαὶ δὲ βέβληνται θεῶν
 κείνου σὺν ἀνδρὸς δαιμονίαις ἀρεταῖς.
 ἔστι δ' ἐν εὐτυχίᾳ 10
 πανδοξίας ἄκρον· μεγάλων δ' ἀέθλων
 Μοῖσα μεμνᾶσθαι φιλεῖ.⁵⁴

The foundations have been laid by the gods
 and that man's super-human achievements.
 Within success lies 10
 the top of fame. Great contests
 the Muse loves to remember.

⁵² Cf. PETRUCCIONE (1986: 39–40). The fugacity of humans is a commonplace often to be found in Pindar, most famously in *P.* 8, 88–97. On Heracles afterlife, see n. 12.

⁵³ Regarding the *pars epica*'s content, it is immediately evident that Heracles's ἀρετή relating to the promotion of Zeus' law from the very first day of his existence, serves as an honouring mythical mirror for Chromius: Tiresias's prophecy first widens the perspective from the victory celebration to the whole world, highlighting Heracles's exemplary aspect of *Zivilisationsbringer* who fights injustice and establishes order (cf. MORRISON (2007: 30). Subsequently, it closes the ode with the image of Mount Olympus and the eternal banquet as reward for the toils. This image correlates with Chromius's banquet from the second stanza as well as with the characterization of Ortygia as the mound and resting spot of Alpheios river (Ἄμπνευμα σεμνὸν Ἀλφειοῦ, v. 1), thus suggesting an honourable convergence of Nemean athlete and hero-god. Against a possible comparison of Chromius's rulership to that of Zeus argue MORGAN (2015: 386 and 388) and LEWIS (2019: 132–133).

⁵⁴ Pind. *N.* 1, 8–12.

But same gnome simultaneously signals a way for Chromius to transcend his mortality. It can be observed on the linguistic level that the contests and protagonists of both *Nemean* 1 and its *pars epica* are deliberately merged, as to stress the aspect that they equally qualify for commemoration: The genitive ἀέθλων (v. 11) does not only denote athletic competitions, but at the same time it holds the special meaning of ἄθλος in the sense of 'labour of Heracles', including the throttling of the snakes.⁵⁵ Similarly, the demonstrative pronoun κείνου (v. 9) refers to both Chromius and Heracles. Given its position after the announcement of Chromius's victory (v. 7), before having heard or read the *pars epica*, one naturally assumes that it anaphorically refers to the man of the moment. But in retrospect one realizes that same pronoun cataphorically refers to Heracles, too. The semantics of the genitive ἀνδρός (v. 9) constitute no objection, for Heracles was (partly) likewise a mortal ἀνὴρ supported by the gods;⁵⁶ and even if the meaning of ἀνὴρ in this specific passage was exclusively 'man' as opposed to the earlier stages of development of a male human being,⁵⁷ Tiresias's prophecy makes it applicable to little Heracles by integrating his grown-up future self into the present of the scene.

From this poetological perspective, the existential dichotomy between Chromius and Heracles is overcome, for the former is offered the prospect of a kind of immortality that he can effectively reach, i.e., immortal fame.⁵⁸ At the time of the ode's initial performance when Chro-

⁵⁵ Cf. MORRISON (2007: 26). Although the throttling of the snakes does not appertain to the canonical twelve labour catalogue, but it is only a so-called προγύμνασμα (preliminary or exercise), it can still be considered a labour of Heracles in the broader sense.

⁵⁶ E.g., by Athena when fighting Cynus and his father Ares in Apollo's grove at the Pagasetic gulf (Hes. *Asp.* 325–471).

⁵⁷ The contrasting expression δαίμονιαις ἀρεταῖς (v. 9) rather suggests the meaning 'mortal' as opposed to the immortal gods.

⁵⁸ Cf. KUHN–TREICHEL (2020: 170) and Σ Pind. *N.* 1, 49 b: [...] ἐπαπορήσειεν ἂν τις, διατί τοῦ Ἡρακλέους μνημονεύει· οὐ γὰρ εὐκαιρος δοκεῖ ἡ μνήμη νῦν Ἡρακλέους. καὶ φαμεν, ὅτι βουλόμενος δεῖξαι, ὡς οἱ διαφανεῖς ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις καὶ τοῖς λόγοις ἀθάνατοι γίνονται τῇ μνήμῃ, διὰ τοῦτο μέμνηται Ἡρακλέους ἀρετῆς [...]. "One might be puzzled as to why Pindar makes mention of Heracles, for this does not seem the right time to do so. I think he calls to mind Heracles's prowess because he wants to

mius's Nemean victory was still recent,⁵⁹ Heracles's throttling of the snakes already lied in a distant past (ἀρχαῖος λόγος, v. 34).⁶⁰ Therefore, the fact that it is sung after all this time illustrates the long chronological range of the Muse's love for great contests, suggesting that Chromius's success will still be remembered in a time when it may itself be regarded as an ancient tale.⁶¹

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show that those who excel in deed and reasoning become immortal through commemoration."

⁵⁹ Cf. MORRISON (2007: 28–29).

⁶⁰ Cf. SLATER (1969: 74–75). BRASWELL (1992: 57), by contrast, estimates the expanse of the chronological dimension with not more than one to two generations.

⁶¹ The promise of a winner's – and, by association, the poet's – lasting fame is in a victory ode's nature, for glory itself traditionally strives after eternity (κλέος ἄφθιτον, Hom. *Il.* 9, 413). The sung winners are exclusively men, although we have notice of female chariot race winners, Spartan princess Cynisca from the 5th to the 4th century BC being the first and most famous (Paus. 3, 8, 1).

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Seven Against Mage: Darius and His Co-Conspirators

In this article, we will focus on the turbulent year 522 BC, when Darius the Great became the King of the Achaemenid Empire. His ascension to the throne was not a simple hereditary matter, as he had to depose the impostor King, false Bardiya, and face many rebellions across the Empire. Darius eventually prevailed, but he was not alone in the rebellion, as he received help from six other Persian noblemen. We will study three sources that describe these events: the Behistun inscription by Darius, Herodotus' Histories, and Ctesias' Persica. The core of the story does not change much, but each one of the sources brings new details to the narrative. Our main goal will be to compare the lists of the nobles who helped Darius and how their roles (or even the conspirators themselves) changed throughout the sources.

Keywords: Achaemenid Empire, Behistun inscription, Herodotus, Ctesias, Darius, Gaumāta

1. Introduction

After the death of the founder of the Achaemenid Empire, Cyrus the Great, in 530 BC, his son Cambyses succeeded him on the throne. His younger brother, Bardiya, ruled in the north-eastern part of the Empire. Cambyses led the expedition to Egypt and was outside of the core of the Empire for several years. During this time, a revolt, starting in March 522 BC, took place there and Cambyses hurried back to suppress the rebellion, but he was injured on his thigh while travelling and died in Syria. His younger brother became the King in 522 BC. Bardiya, at that time impersonated by one of the Magi, ruled only for several months. His rule is described variously in the sources – either as good, or as a

rule of chaos and the Lie.¹ After only seven months, seven noble Persians went to the palace of the Mage and killed him. Out of the seven conspirators, Darius was the one who became the King afterwards. This is the core of the story, which appears in all sources, but there are many unknowns in the overall picture of that year. The sources disagree on certain details and a shroud of mystery and folktales later made their way into the narrative. Before we proceed to the lists of conspirators, we need to dive deeper into the chaotic year 522 BC.

Early in the year Cambyses was still campaigning in Egypt, but his rule lasting for eight years was going to end soon, as he died while travelling back to Persia. His death was an accident, although Herodotus puts it as a kind of divine retribution.² His younger brother, Bardiya, is more problematic person in the sources. Firstly, his name appears in several different forms. Bardiya is the original Old Persian variant of the name.³ In the Greek environment his name has many forms. Herodotus calls him Smerdis,⁴ Ctesias Tanyoxarces,⁵ other authors use derivatives of these two names such as Tanaoxares, Mardos, and Mergis.⁶ In modern literature scholars use both Bardiya and Smerdis following the Old Persian or Herodotus' model.

Bardiya's life before his ascension to the throne is almost not attested. He was appointed by Cyrus to be a governor in the eastern part of the Empire. His fate is also a matter of question. All sources agree that

¹ Herodotus describes a benevolent rule of Bardiya (Hdt. 3, 67) towards the subjects of the Empire (excluding Persians), while Darius, obviously, portrays him in an extremely unfavourable light (DB § 13–14). Aeschylus follows Darius' example (A. *Pers.* 774–775).

² As one can expect from Herodotus, divine and dreams play a part in the life of Cambyses. His brother went with him to Egypt, where Bardiya was able to draw a bow, while Cambyses failed to do so, then he promptly sent his brother back to Susa. Later, Cambyses had a dream, in which his brother was the ruler of the Empire and ordered his execution out of fear. Cambyses was also injured on the same spot, where he stabbed the sacred bull of Apis.

³ For example, DB § 10.

⁴ Hdt. 3, 30sqq.

⁵ Phot. *Bibl.* 72 § 8.

⁶ Tanaoxares is mentioned by Xenophon (X. *Cyr.* 8, 7, 11), Mardos by Aeschylus (A. *Pers.* 774), and Mergis by Justin (Just. *Epit.* 1, 9).

he was killed on the orders of his brother,⁷ but the real perpetrator is unknown. In Darius' version of the events, which the Greek sources follow to a high degree, a Mage impersonates Bardiya. However, this happens only after Bardiya is murdered by his brother Cambyses.⁸ The death of Bardiya is somehow kept secret and not even the governors and many courtiers are aware of it, let alone public. At this point, shortly before the death of Cambyses, the impostor enters the scene. The fake Bardiya deceives everyone into believing that he is the real son of Cyrus, which prompts Cambyses to return, only to die along the way. Just like in the case of Bardiya, this impostor has several different names in the sources. In the original Old Persian, he is known as Gaumāta, a Magian.⁹ He rebelled in March 522 BC in the city Paīšiyauvādā and was killed by Darius in late September in fort Sikayauvatiš,¹⁰ located in Nisaea, a region famous for its horses. Darius does not give us much information about the Mage, he is simply an impostor, who claims that he is indeed Bardiya and a rightful king of the Empire.

The Greek sources give more detailed (and more fantastic) descriptions of the events. Herodotus mentions two Mages, who took advantage of the killing of real Smerdis. The first one, named Patizeithes, who was left in Persia to run the household of Cambyses, perceived, that King's brother was killed and convinced his own brother, also named Smerdis, who was Bardiya's look-alike, to rebel against Cambyses and to rule in the name of Smerdis. The revolt started, Cambyses

⁷ See BRIANT (2002: 98–99) for the variants of the narrative.

⁸ There are several accounts of how the murder was achieved. Darius does not give any details; Herodotus mentions a hunting accident near Susa or drowning in the Erythraean Sea (Hdt. 3, 30). In *Persica*, Tanyoxarces is poisoned with bull's blood (Phot. Bibl. 72 § 10).

⁹ The term Magus (μάγος) refers to the priests in Zoroastrianism, trained in 'anything connected to religious matters' (X. Cyr. 8, 3, 11). In the Greek sources, the word later gained negative connotations as a practitioner of magic, a magician/mage in the modern English language. Magians themselves were also a Median tribe according to Herodotus (Hdt. 1, 101), which could explain why the Mage set up his palace in Media. Also, in the Akkadian part of the inscription, Gaumāta is specifically identified as a Mede (DB § 10).

¹⁰ DB § 11–14. The only Greek source with the name derived from Gaumāta is Justin (Just. Epit. 1, 9) – Gaumāta appears as Cometes in his work.

died on the way back to Persia, as he knew the truth, and Smerdis ruled for several months exempting many tribes across the Empire from military service and taxes.¹¹ Ctesias pushes the plot even further. In his narrative, a Mage named Sphendadates was flogged by the younger son of Cyrus after some offence and started to plot against him. He eventually convinced Cambyses to kill his own brother and then the Mage started to pose as him, Tanyoxarces in Ctesias' work, since he looked very similar in appearance. Unlike in other sources, the Mage used disguise after the consultation with Cambyses. After Cambyses died, the Mage ruled in Tanyoxarces' name with the help of several eunuchs.¹² In the Greek sources, Gaumāta uses a disguise to act as Bardiya with some elaborate plan, which is not explicitly mentioned in the Behistun inscription. There are also differences in the chronology, when the killing of real Bardiya took place¹³ and when Bardiya was proclaimed the King.¹⁴

The disguise of the Mage worked perfectly for some time¹⁵ until his secret was inevitably revealed. The sources differ again in the case of revelation, also in the depiction of the killing of the Mage, and the events surrounding it. Darius does not give us many details, as his description is, to say, insufficient. We do not know, how Gaumāta was revealed to be the impostor, his rule is described as tyrannical, and only after several months Darius is chosen by Ahura-Mazda to depose the Mage, which he does with help of six other nobles. We will return to the problems surrounding Darius' version later.

¹¹ Hdt. 3, 61–67.

¹² Phot. *Bibl.* 72 § 11–13. The powerful role of eunuchs over the kings is a recurring theme in *Persica*. See LENFANT (2012).

¹³ Darius states that Bardiya had been killed before Cambyses went to Egypt (DB § 10), in *Histories* Bardiya was in Egypt for some time and was killed only after his brother had sent him back (Hdt. 3, 30), in Ctesias' account the murder took place before the Egyptian campaign (Phot. *Bibl.* 72 § 10). Justin even puts the murder and impersonation after the death of Cambyses (Just. *Epit.* 1, 9).

¹⁴ See BRIANT (2002: 101–103) for the problems surrounding the chronology of the events.

¹⁵ The murder was kept secret because the kings lived isolated in their palace (Just. *Epit.* 1, 9, 11). The sheer improbability of this long-lasting deception (the Mage was even able to fool the wives of real Smerdis) puts another unknown into the narrative of Darius and Greek sources.

A much more colourful story of Herodotus has very surprisingly a different protagonist. In his narrative, a Persian noble Otanes is the main conspirator against Smerdis and not Darius, who is, in fact, the last one to join the plot. It was the daughter of Otanes, Phaedyne, one of the wives of Smerdis, who noticed, that Smerdis is the impostor since he had no ears.¹⁶ Otanes invited Aspathines and Gobryas for a discussion, each one of them later brought one conspirator to their ranks. Darius joined them as the last one, but soon became the most vocal one. They entered the palace of Smerdis without any difficulties and carried out the killing. The following events are also at odds with Darius' version. According to Herodotus, The Seven had a meeting shortly after Smerdis was killed and discussed the future form of government. Otanes proposed a form of democracy, Megabyzus an oligarchy (or an aristocracy), and Darius a monarchy. After four members sided with Darius, they needed to settle who will become the King. They agreed on a competition: the one whose horse will neigh first on the following dawn will become the King. Otanes declined, while six remaining conspirators met the next day. Darius used a trick and became the King of the Achaemenid Empire. While in the Behistun inscription, Darius is an unquestionable leader and future King, Herodotus downplays his importance and adds many details to the events, although the eventual outcome and the main points of the revolt, including the names, stay the same. Main elements of Herodotus' story are rooted in the narrative of the Behistun inscription.

Ctesias' version is unfortunately not complete because his work is lost. The summary by Photius offers us a story similar to the one by Herodotus. Next to the problems with chronology and the role of eunuchs, the only difference is how the Mage was exposed. Here, one of the eunuchs told the whole army stationed in Persis the truth. The following events are the same as in *Histories*. The Seven attack the Mage in his palace, kill him, and Darius becomes the King after the morning meeting when his horse neighs first.¹⁷

¹⁶ A punishment issued by Cyrus (Hdt. 3, 69).

¹⁷ Phot. *Bibl.* 72 § 11–15.

Now that we know the outline of the events, we can proceed to the main topic of this article – the lists of the Seven.¹⁸ We have seen that the sources contain notable differences in the narrative, and the lists are no exception. In the next three chapters, we will examine each one of the sources and their lists. We will advance chronologically with the Behistun inscription as the first, continue with *Histories*, and end with *Persica*. It should be noted that each of the sources has its fair share of problems, and we may never know the truth surrounding the events of year 522 BC. From Darius' one-sided account and self-promotion to the Greek sources infused with folk stories and sometimes contradictions to the Behistun inscription we are left in a tough spot, because trusting Darius may not be wise, but Greek authors have their agenda as well.

2. Behistun inscription

This monument is located near the city of Kermanshah in western Iran. It was created by Darius shortly after his ascension around the year 520 BC. The trilingual text¹⁹ commemorates Darius' victory over Bardiya and various other rebels across the Empire, but it justifies Darius' right to the throne as well. It is the first and the longest of the Achaemenid inscriptions.²⁰ The first part deals with the ancestors of Darius before we get to know how he became the King. Most of the text then focuses on the revolts and usurpers across the Empire and how Darius successfully defeated them. The text itself is in some parts very problematic – Darius was personally involved in these affairs, but we cannot expect unbiased account and we get to know only the victor's point of view. The list of the seven conspirators as presented by him should be the most trustworthy one, although Darius could freely change the overall course of the events in his narration. When it comes to his helpers, he could possibly omit someone who was later a threat to him and we know one such an example from the Greek sources, but the conspirator, In-

¹⁸ For general studies of the lists and the conspirators see for example GSCHNITZER (1977); WIESEHÖFER (1978: 168–174); BRIANT (2002: 128–137); LENFANT (1996: 373–379); LENFANT (2004: LXXVII–LXXX).

¹⁹ Texts are in Elamite, Akkadian, and Old Persian.

²⁰ See ROSSI (2021) or KUHRT (2007: 10–11) for a general introduction to the Achaemenid inscriptions.

taphernes in this case, nevertheless appears in the inscription. While a deliberate omission of a certain individual is a possibility, the list of names mentioned by Darius should be accepted as the most trustworthy one. However, the involvement of other conspirators is heavily toned down and we will see the alternative stories in the Greek sources. Darius possibly did not even need to omit someone and change the conspirators, as he already reduced the power of other nobles and made them his followers in his narration. Darius mentions that some others helped him against Bardiya without giving any further details at first,²¹ only towards the end of the text he names those six nobles.²² He also states that the families of these men should be protected by the following rulers.²³ Save for the names we cannot gather much information from the text. Darius simply mentions the names of his followers (for he is the leader, the King, the chosen one), the names of their fathers, and that they are of Persian origin. In accordance with the Old Persian text, we will write the Persian forms of the names in this chapter with the Greek variants for Darius' relatives in brackets.²⁴

Dārayavauš – Darius does not go to great lengths when describing his ancestry and his person in general. His father was Vištāspa (Hystaspes), governor of Parthia, his grandfather was Aršāma (Arsames), the Achaemenid.²⁵ He then goes all the way back to Haxamaniš (Achaemenes), the mythical ancestor of the Persian kings. He is related to Cyrus the Great and his sons, because Cišpiš (Teispes), son of Achaemenes had two sons. Cyrus II belonged to one line, Darius to the other one. It is not very surprising that Darius' sparse details raise suspicion in the eyes of modern scholars. The lineage as presented by Darius is very likely fabricated,²⁶ nevertheless, it gives Darius the right to the throne, all the more, when he was supported by Ahura-Mazda. It is hard to imagine,

²¹ DB § 13.

²² DB § 68.

²³ DB § 69.

²⁴ For the Greek rendition of Persian names see SCHMITT (2011).

²⁵ DB § 1.

²⁶ BRIANT (2002: 110–111); FRYE (2005); WATERS (2004); SANCISI-WEERDENBURG (1995: 1038sq); WIESEHÖFER (1978: 186). Also see STRONACH (1997) for other inscriptions issued by Darius.

that there was no one else in the whole family, who would not have closer ties to the family of Cyrus, because Darius would have been a distant relative of him, even if his lineage was real. Also, his father and even his grandfather were alive in 522 BC, but they were ignored in hereditary matters. As it appears, Darius simply created his lineage after he deposed Bardiya, real or not, to cement his right to rule, but as we will see, the Greek sources completely undermine his claims (it is not that they should be regarded as correct and trustworthy either).²⁷

We have already discussed what led to the rule of Darius above. Darius was the only one who was willing to oppose the false king Gaumāta, although the Greek sources contain alternative stories. With the help of Ahura-Mazda and six noble followers he challenged the Mage for the throne since Darius should be, as presented by the text, the rightful king of the Empire, which was taken away from his family by the usurper with no claim.²⁸ In the case of the Seven, Darius is the supreme lord, others are merely his followers, not a single one of them has any chance to become the King (contrary to what we know from the Greek sources). Problematic is also the insufficient description of Darius' rise to power, as he leaves many questions unanswered, and it looks like he omits some facts from his narrative.²⁹ Since he was victorious in the chaotic era after the death of Cambyses, he needed to link his person and his rule to the founders of the Empire. His sketchy lineage and a claim to the throne are combined with the mysterious figure of the Mage Gaumāta and instead of getting answers we would start to ask: Why did Cambyses kill his brother? Who was this Mage? How did he access the throne and fool everyone? What exactly happened to real Bardiya? The scholars started to question this account, and, in a twist, Darius could be

²⁷ Only Justin (*Just. Epit.* 1, 10) states that he was related to the royal family.

²⁸ In the end, there are two possibilities: Darius is telling the truth (and the Greek sources follow his narrative with some tweaks), or he is lying – Gaumāta was his creation and Darius was not the rightful king. SCHWINGHAMMER (2021: 418).

²⁹ See KIPP (2001: 186–229) or BRIANT (2002: 97–106) for the diverse views on the credibility of Darius.

the usurper himself, when he revolted against real Bardiya and retrospectively created a figure of the Mage.³⁰

The text itself is full of usurpers, Gaumāta is not an exception, he is not even the only one who claimed to be real Bardiya.³¹ There are more persons who claimed that they are sons or descendants of previous kings, for example, the Mede Phraortes (Fravartiš), who lied³² that he is the son of Cyaxares, the Persian Martiya, who rebelled in Elam, and two subsequent kings posing as Nebuchadnezzars, sons of Nabonidus, who rebelled in Babylon.³³ The rebellions started right after Darius killed Gaumāta. If Darius killed the despised tyrant, why would many parts of the Empire have revolted against him instead of showing him gratitude? The answer may lie in *Histories*, as Herodotus asserts that the revolt against the Mage was specifically a Persian affair³⁴ and even Persians themselves were not united as the revolts against Darius in Elam and Persis show. We can also imagine that many other nobles were not impressed by Darius' claim to the throne and were actively trying to rule themselves or to break away from the still recently founded Empire. On the other hand, even if Darius was the usurper, he already had many governors on his side since several of them helped him to crush the opposition.³⁵ There could be a wider circle of conspirators against the sons of Cyrus, not only seven brave men killing an impostor, but other factions existed as well.

Several elements of the inscription are heavily inspired by older ones, most notably the stele of Naram-Sin. Darius follows his example and similar motifs (nine rebels defeated in one year, iconography, etc.) are found in both inscriptions, while the fight against liar appears in the

³⁰ See DANDAMAEV (1989: 83–94); BALCER (1987: 150–166); SHAYEGAN (2006); DEMANDT (2004).

³¹ A Persian named Vahyazdāta rebelled against Darius directly in Persia itself after he proclaimed himself to be Bardiya, son of Cyrus (DB § 40).

³² All the rebels are liars as is stated in the inscription. See SCHWINGHAMMER (2021) for more details.

³³ The complete list of nine usurpers is mentioned in DB §52. For two Babylonians see ZAWADZKI (1994).

³⁴ See note 1; Herodotus' discussion of the nobles (Hdt 3, 67sqq).

³⁵ WATERS (2014: 69).

inscription by Nabopolassar.³⁶ Possibly the number of the conspirators is not a coincidence, as it could be symbolic only. There was a long-lasting tradition of the importance of seven throughout the sources.³⁷ While seven conspirators could indeed carry the killing of the Mage in person,³⁸ from the description it looks like Darius had many generals and governors loyal to him even before they attacked the Mage as we have discussed above. To briefly end Darius' role, it looks like he was one of the ambitious nobles, who tried to become the King of the Empire in an extremely chaotic period. The Empire was at the deciding point, will it belong to the sons of Cyrus (and the Achaemenid family if we trust Darius' lineage), or another noble Persian family (if we disregard Darius' lineage), or will it be even the Empire of Persians (rebels and various usurpers across the Empire)?

Vindafarnā – son of Vāyaspāra. He was sent by Darius to reconquer Babylon. In November, Vindafarnā defeated the rebel named Arakha, who posed as Nebuchadnezzar IV and was crucified after his defeat.³⁹ Vindafarnā is also depicted on the monument as Darius' bow-carrier, thus he had one of the most prestigious positions within the Empire.

Utāna – son of Thukhra. No further information.

Gaubaruva – son of Marduniya. After Elam revolted, Gaubaruva was sent by Darius to recapture the province, which he easily did. The leader of the revolt was executed.⁴⁰ Gaubaruva is depicted on the monument as Darius' lance-carrier (*arštibara*), one of the highest ranks within the Empire. He is depicted in the same position on Darius' tomb.⁴¹ He is also mentioned in the Persepolis fortification tablets several times.⁴² From the sources we can deduce that Gaubaruva was the second most important person in the Empire, Darius' most trusted helper.⁴³

³⁶ WATERS (2014: 73–75). For more information on the influences on Darius' monument see ROOT (1979: 202–226).

³⁷ KONSTANTOPOULOS (2015: 15–18).

³⁸ See BRIANT (2002: 113) for the possible battle outcome.

³⁹ DB § 50.

⁴⁰ DB § 71.

⁴¹ DNC. There we have a mention of his origin (a tribe) – Patišuvāriš (Patischorian).

⁴² PF 353; 688; 1153; 1219.

⁴³ See Gobryas in the chapter focusing on Herodotus.

Vidarna – son of Bagābigna. He was sent by Darius to crush the rebel Phraortes (Fravartiš), who revolted in Media. Vidarna fought in the battle against him in January 521 BC, although the decisive point was the battle of Kundurush in May and Phraortes was not captured until June of that year.⁴⁴

Bagabuxša – son of Dātuva. No further information.

Ardumaniš – son of Vakauka. No further information.

3. Herodotus

As we have already seen, the narrative of Herodotus is much more detailed than the one of Darius. It is also different in some parts: Cambyzes supposedly killed his brother out of jealousy, the Mage is a look-alike of Smerdis (he even has the same name), there are two Mages involved in the plot, the rule of the Mage is not tyrannical or bad, Darius is not the leading conspirator, the unlikely discussion about the future government took place, and other details. Herodotus wrote his work several decades after the described events, so some folk tales or alternative exaggerated stories were circulating around by that point and appeared in his account. We do not know where exactly Herodotus gathered the information, although the nature of his narrative suggests that it was someone close to the family of Otanes.⁴⁵ Herodotus himself was also born in the Achaemenid Empire, therefore he had the opportunity to meet someone from the court in the western parts of the Empire. Even with all the differences, the list of the Seven is not particularly problematic in the case of Herodotus. There are few inconsistencies compared to the Behistun inscription, but Herodotus mirrors the list itself quite well with one change among the ranks of conspirators, which can be easily explained. Seven conspirators appear in the third book of *Histories*. Naturally, Herodotus uses the Greek variants of the names, by which are the persons known in modern literature, and the names can be traced back to their Persian origin.

Darius – His ascension to the throne is much more complicated in the account of Herodotus. Here, Darius is no longer the undisputed

⁴⁴ DB § 25; 31. See DANDAMAEV (1989: 119–120).

⁴⁵ WATERS (2014: 77).

leader, the one destined to become the King, the one chosen by the god. In *Histories*, Darius became the King more by using a clever trick rather than leading the conspiracy from the beginning. In the Behistun inscription, Darius does not mention his role before his rebellion, while according to Herodotus he was one of the courtiers of Cambyses.⁴⁶ His father, Hystaspes, was a governor of Persia, which is a mistake on Herodotus' part, as Darius states that his father was a governor of Parthia.⁴⁷ We do not know Darius' lineage from *Histories*, so his claims have no power here, he became the King in a rather different way from the Behistun inscription. Darius joined the Seven as the last one after arriving at the meeting in Susa. At that time already, he thought that the Mage was an impostor. Then he urged the others to kill the Mage without any delays, contrary to the cautious approach of Otanes. With the help of Prexaspes, the murderer of real Bardiya, they hurried to the court and managed to kill the Mage. And it was Darius himself who slew him in a dramatic fashion.⁴⁸ Five days after the killing, the Seven met again and in the discussion over the future form of government, Darius proposed keeping the monarchy as the ideal form of rule, as it maintains stability in the Empire. He swayed four other members and the next morning they decided to wait for a divine sign, whose horse will neigh first at sunrise. However, Darius was not going to lose the rule to a random lot. He asked his groom Oebaras for help and with a trick his horse neighed first. Thus, he became the King, which was confirmed by thunder and lightning appearing from the clear sky.⁴⁹

This is the version of the events by Herodotus. While the main outline remains the same, there are notable differences in details. Darius became the King after scheming and for some time he is not the leading conspirator at all. Nevertheless, with his cunningness and determination, he succeeded in taking the throne. Fake Smerdis is also a different

⁴⁶ Hdt. 3, 139. Darius was δορυφόρος, one of the most important roles at the royal court, *arštibara*, a lance-carrier, although Herodotus asserts that he had no important role at that time – he was a 'private person'.

⁴⁷ Hdt. 3, 70. cf. DB § 35.

⁴⁸ Hdt. 3, 70–79.

⁴⁹ Hdt. 3, 80–87.

person from the Behistun inscription. In *Histories*, we have two Mages, one of them was even appointed by Cambyses to run his household in his absence. Smerdis was killed during the Egyptian campaign, but the time is not specified. Nevertheless, everyone is deceived by the Mage for quite a long time.⁵⁰ Fake Smerdis has the same name and the same look as the son of Cyrus, on the other hand, in the Behistun inscription he simply proclaimed himself the rightful King and no disguise is mentioned.

Herodotus also throws a different light on the Mage, something which is only hinted at in the Behistun inscription. Magi were one of the tribes of Medes and were associated with Zoroastrian religion.⁵¹ From the inscription we know the Mage resided in Media rather than Persia. In the Akkadian version of the text, Gaumāta is described as a Mede.⁵² Were the Persians afraid of the return of the rule of Medes as Herodotus points out in the speech of Cambyses?⁵³ The Median character of revolt is, however, rejected among modern scholars.⁵⁴ Moreover, Herodotus claims that the Seven killed Smerdis in Susa, not in Media as Darius says. In the case of other revolts, Darius focuses on widespread revolts in his Empire, while Herodotus' account is the direct opposite, as he mentions only the revolt in Babylon after the ascension of Darius.⁵⁵

The last event connected to Darius in *Histories* but absent in the inscription is the foundation of a festival called Magophonia.⁵⁶ Supposed-

⁵⁰ If we follow the inscription, Bardiya was killed before the Egyptian campaign of Cambyses starting in 525 BC. His death would be unnoticed for three years, less than that in the account of Herodotus, since Smerdis went to Egypt with his brother. How exactly was the murder kept a secret and no one missed real Smerdis or recognized fake Smerdis for several years is not properly explained in the sources. For all the variants of the chronology see note 13.

⁵¹ DE JONG (1997: 387–403).

⁵² DB § 10.

⁵³ Hdt. 3, 65 in a speech of Cambyses. In 3, 73, Gobryas describes Smerdis as a Median, Magian.

⁵⁴ DANDAMAEV (1989: 87–88; 96–98); BRIANT (2002: 895–896). Also see ROLLINGER (2005).

⁵⁵ Hdt. 3, 150–160. Plus, he adds the revolt of Oroetes (3, 120–129).

⁵⁶ Hdt. 3, 79. The festival also appears in the works of Ctesias (Phot. *Bibl.* 72 § 15) and Josephus Flavius (J. *AJ.* 11, 3, 1).

ly, every year on the day of the killing of the Mage, Magi should not leave their homes, otherwise they would be killed. This commemorated the killing of Smerdis by Darius. During the attack on the false king, Darius cut off his head and showed it to other Persians, who in turn killed any Magian they could find. Darius himself mentions only the killing of Gaumāta, not any other Mage. The very existence of this festival and the form of celebration or commemoration are a matter of discussion,⁵⁷ since Magi continued to be the priests in the Achaemenid Empire without any further similar hostilities.

Otanes – Greek variant of the name Utāna. While Darius does not attribute him with anything, Herodotus makes Otanes the protagonist of the revolt against the Mage. According to him, Otanes was the son of Pharnaspes, which is clearly a mistake by Herodotus,⁵⁸ and the brother of the wife of Cyrus, Cassandane. This family relationship is one of few differences connected to the list of conspirators compared to the inscription. Herodotus possibly mixed up the conspirator with another person of the same name⁵⁹ (the name Otanes appears several times in *Histories* and was apparently a common name in Persia). Nevertheless, in Herodotus' account, he is closer to the royal family than Darius could ever dream to be, even with his supposed lineage. If we accept the account of Herodotus as the more trustworthy one, then Darius could have changed Otanes' lineage to exempt him from the royal family and give himself the right to the throne, which would explain one of the changes from the inscription.

Otanes, one of the noblest and wealthiest Persians,⁶⁰ started to suspect the King and with the help of his daughter Phaedyne, wife of Smerdis, he found out that he is an impostor. He contacted two other Persian noblemen, Gobryas and Aspathines, who each brought another person to their ranks. Only after that, Darius joined the rest of the conspirators, somehow knowing the truth about Smerdis beforehand.

⁵⁷ See DANDAMAEV (1976: 137–140); WIESEHÖFER (1978: 175–178); BICKERMAN–TADMOR (1978); BOYCE (1982: 86–88).

⁵⁸ Hdt. 3, 68. He is the son of Thukhra in the Behistun inscription.

⁵⁹ WATERS (2004: 96b).

⁶⁰ Hdt. 3, 68.

Otanes was the most respected conspirator, but his suggestions were overturned by Darius. After the killing of fake Smerdis, much problematic discussion over the future form of government, the so-called 'Constitutional Debate' took place. Otanes is again honoured to speak first, suggesting a form of democracy (rule of *plethos*) and condemning monarchy and tyrannical rulers.⁶¹ While Herodotus asserts the veracity of the discussion, modern scholars are doubtful.⁶² Otanes' proposal of almost Athenian form of democracy as a government in Persia is out of question. The reason behind the inclusion of this debate by Herodotus is unknown, whether he inherited it from his source, or it reflects his time, searching for an ideal form of government.⁶³ Even though other conspirators chose a monarchy, they still decided upon several oligarchic institutions, as they could visit the King, whenever they wanted to (with one exception) and the King was able to marry a wife only from the families of the Seven, clearly distinguishing these families from the other nobles.⁶⁴ Otanes, however, declined to become the King and went on to receive privileges for himself and his descendants.⁶⁵ The importance of the Seven and the protection of the members by Darius is also mentioned in the Behistun inscription.⁶⁶

The fate of Otanes is unknown, but he reappears in *Histories* after he separated himself from the court.⁶⁷ He married Darius' daughter and Darius married Phaedyne in turn. Later, Darius entrusted him with the campaign against Samos,⁶⁸ which was not exactly in accordance with Otanes' wishes (when Otanes declined kingship, he desired not to rule nor to be ruled). Potentially, this general was not the member of the Seven, since the name itself appears in *Histories* five more times and in some cases, it is not specified which Otanes was the mentioned one. It is also unclear if there are five more people bearing the name Otanes, or if

⁶¹ Hdt. 3, 80.

⁶² See for example ROY (2012); LATEINER (2013).

⁶³ FORSDYKE (2006: 224).

⁶⁴ ROY (2012: 316–317).

⁶⁵ Hdt. 3, 83.

⁶⁶ DB § 69.

⁶⁷ For more details see BRIANT (2002: 132–135).

⁶⁸ Hdt. 3, 149.

some mentions represent the same person. From Otanes' progeny, Phaedyne was the wife of Cambyses, Smerdis, and Darius, Amestris was the wife of Xerxes, Anaphes and Smerdomenes were commanders in the army of Xerxes, and Patiramphes was the charioteer of Xerxes. Otanes is also one of the commanders during the invasion of Greece (with an addition that he is the father of Amestris).⁶⁹ If we return to the discussion over the future of Persia, the King had to marry daughters of other Seven, therefore Amestris should be the daughter of the conspirator.⁷⁰ Otanes' involvement in the invasion is rather strange since he would be way too old by that point and possibly not even alive. Herodotus could mix this general with the member of the Seven and we will return to the problem of Otanes and his brethren later again. There is also another Otanes, clearly not related to the Seven, whose father was Sisamnes. This Otanes was a commander during Darius' campaign to Scythia. With more persons bearing this name, the relation between Otanes, the member of the Seven, the children of Otanes, or the other commander is sometimes unclear.

Intaphernes – Greek variant of the name Vindafarnā. Intaphernes is not given much space by Herodotus. His role of a bow-carrier of Darius does not appear in *Histories*. During the attack on the Mage, Intaphernes lost his eye.⁷¹ The only other event related to him is his downfall. The story narrated by Herodotus does not contain many details, why Darius should get rid of Intaphernes, but it appears there was some power struggle between these two men since the main reason for his execution is rather strange. Intaphernes wanted to see the King, but at that time, he was with his wife, the only time the Seven could not meet the King. The guards stopped Intaphernes, who then mutilated them in anger. Darius feared of potential conspiracy against him and when the other five members denounced the actions of Intaphernes, the bow-carrier

⁶⁹ Phaedyne (Hdt. 3, 68, 3), Amestris (7, 61, 2), Anaphes (7, 62, 2), Smerdomenes (7, 82). In the case of the last one, Herodotus asserts that his father Otanes was the brother of Darius, which means that he was not related to Otanes, the member of the Seven. Patiramphes (7, 40, 4) and the other Otanes (7, 61, 2).

⁷⁰ SCHMITT (2006: 175).

⁷¹ Hdt. 3, 78.

was then put to death together with his family (apart from his wife, her brother, and the eldest son).⁷² Intaphernes also does not reappear in his high position on the tomb of Darius, unlike Gobryas. Thus, one of the members and his family were gone.⁷³

Gobryas – Greek variant of the name Gaubaruva. Gobryas appears in *Histories* as a supporter or a close companion of Darius. First, he agrees with Darius' plan to attack the Mage without hesitation, then he risks his life during the fight with Smerdis himself.⁷⁴ These little snippets may reflect the depiction of Gobryas on the monuments by Darius and in the Persian tablets as his second-in-command and one of the most important figures in the Empire. Gobryas married the daughter of Darius, Artazostre, while Darius married the daughter of Gobryas even before his ascension to the throne and had three sons with her.⁷⁵ As a close supporter of Darius from the beginning, he held one of the most prestigious positions in the Empire and his family (namely his son as we will see later) enjoyed a successful career.

Hydarnes – Greek variant of the name Vidarna. Hydarnes is largely ignored by Herodotus during the revolt. His family remained influential for generations within the Empire. His eponymous son Hydarnes was the commander of the Immortals during the invasion of Greece and his other son Sisamnes was the leader of Arians.⁷⁶ As we will see, later, several satraps or kings (from Asia Minor) claimed to be descendants of Hydarnes.

Megabyzus – Greek variant of the name Bagabuxša. Also spelled as Megabyxus.⁷⁷ During the Constitutional Debate, Megabyzus proposed an oligarchy/aristocracy as the best form of government and the middle road between monarchy and democracy.⁷⁸ His son Zopyrus was involved in the capture of Babylon. Herodotus narrates a quite fabulous

⁷² Hdt. 3, 118–119. The lamentation of his wife is compared to the plea of Antigone – see ZELLNER (1997).

⁷³ See BRIANT (2002: 131–132).

⁷⁴ Hdt. 3, 73; 3, 78.

⁷⁵ Hdt. 7, 5, 1 (Artazostre); 7, 2, 2 (marriage with the daughter of Gobryas).

⁷⁶ Hdt. 7, 83; 7, 66.

⁷⁷ See BREMMER (2008: 354–355).

⁷⁸ Hdt. 3, 81. See ROY (2012: 309–311).

story about how Zopyrus mutilated himself in order to gain the trust of the inhabitants of the city and later opened the gates for the Persian army. Darius then gave him the city of Babylon.⁷⁹ This account is at odds with the inscription since Darius sent Intaphernes to capture the city during the second revolt, not Megabyzus or his son, and Darius was not personally there, unlike in *Histories*.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the family of Megabyzus remained influential for several generations, until the reign of Artaxerxes I. We will discuss the fate of Megabyzus' family in the chapter dedicated to Ctesias.

Aspathines – Greek variant of the name Aspačanā. The only name not connected to the inscription, where the last name is Ardunamiš. However, Aspačanā appears on the tomb of Darius as his *vačabara*,⁸¹ carrying an axe and a *gorytus*. His role at the court was thus a very significant one and Herodotus captured a later tradition. Aspathines, obviously a person of high importance, replaced Ardunamiš, whose fate is completely unknown and does not appear in any other source. The name Aspačanā also appears in the tablets from the Persepolis area.⁸² One of the seals is read as 'Aspathines, son of Prexaspes'. Prexaspes is a person known from *Histories*. He was the killer of real Smerdis and later he committed suicide by jumping from a tower, after he told the truth to all the summoned Persians.⁸³ He had a son, who was a cupbearer of Cambyses, but the name is missing.⁸⁴ The connection between Aspathines and Prexaspes might exist save for the mention in the tablets. The son of Aspathines was another Prexaspes⁸⁵ and grandfathers and grandsons

⁷⁹ Hdt. 3, 150–160. Ctesias further expands this narrative. In *Persica*, the city revolted during the reign of Xerxes after Babylonians killed Zopyrus, and his son Megabyzus, grandson of the conspirator, helped to capture the city (Phot. *Bibl.* § 22).

⁸⁰ DB § 50.

⁸¹ DNd. The word *vačabara* is translated in two different ways – either as a bow-bearer: KENT (1953: 140), or as a garment-bearer (or chamberlain): HINZ (1973: 53–55).

⁸² PT4 14; PF 806; 1444; 1853. See GARRISON (1998).

⁸³ Hdt. 3, 30; 3, 74–75.

⁸⁴ Hdt. 3, 34.

⁸⁵ Hdt. 7, 97.

often shared the name.⁸⁶ The one different name in the account of Herodotus can thus be explained, as Aspathines was an influential person at the royal court.

4. Ctesias

The account of Ctesias is by far the trickiest one. The physician from Cnidus lived and visited the Achaemenid Empire⁸⁷ over one hundred years after the revolt against the Mage took place. We have to deal with two main problems concerning his work *Persica*. Most of all, his work is only fragmentary and the whole story about Darius and the Mage is summarized in a few paragraphs by Photius.⁸⁸ The list itself is extant, but that is virtually the only thing known about the Seven in the work of Ctesias. His list is at first glance very different from the one in the Behistun inscription, but also from *Histories*, and since the work is lost, the importance of the members, their background, what was the course of the events, and who even were the members of the Seven cannot be satisfyingly explained.

The other problem are the sources of Ctesias. Just like Herodotus, he relied on oral tradition, even though he boasted himself with access to royal parchments and documents.⁸⁹ His list is a result of different, later tradition, which he heard at the court around the year 400 BC. He definitely did not see the Behistun inscription in its original or transcribed form since the differences are way too obvious. Furthermore, Ctesias even assigns the creation of the monument to queen Semiramis,⁹⁰ which raises many questions about his sources, trustworthiness, and where exactly he got his information. The events themselves as described by Ctesias are not much different from Herodotus. Cambyses killed his brother, then appointed the Mage to act as the son of Cyrus. Later he went on the expedition to Egypt and died on the way back. The Mage is

⁸⁶ For example, Megabyzus, son of Zopyrus, whose father was Megabyzus, Cambyses, son of Cyrus, whose father was Cambyeses, Mardonius, son of Gobryas, whose father was Mardonius, etc.

⁸⁷ See DORATI (2011).

⁸⁸ Phot. *Bibl.* 72 § 10–15.

⁸⁹ D.S. 2, 34. See STRONK (2007: 37–40) or BRIANT (2002: 889) for example.

⁹⁰ D.S. 2, 31, 1.

proclaimed the King and after several months he is killed by the Seven, then Darius becomes the King after his horse neighs first. The differences from *Histories* are minor. Ctesias uses different names for some of the characters, Cambyzes' brother is killed before the expedition, and there is an involvement of eunuchs during the revolt. Otherwise, Ctesias followed Herodotus' example, maybe sprinkled with some later Persian (or Babylonian) oral tradition as in the case of the Seven.

Before we proceed to the list itself, we will discuss the most notable change from the previous two lists. The most surprising omission is the absence of Megabyzus. Megabyzus' grandson, Megabyzus, is the protagonist of the books 16 and 17 of *Persica*, as he overshadows King Artaxerxes I as an extremely virtuous man and a great commander with a complicated relationship with the King and the royal family.⁹¹ Ctesias recorded the power struggle between Artaxerxes and the family of Megabyzus and the downfall of one of the prestigious families.⁹² Megabyzus' eponymous grandson actively fought against Artaxerxes, later he was sent to exile, but in the end the King pardoned him. The family of Megabyzus eventually lost power due to hostilities between the sons of Megabyzus and the King. Zopyrus went to exile to Athens and died during the siege of Caunus, and Artyphius was involved in a plot against Darius II.⁹³

Darius – naturally he remains in the list, but there is not much to say about him and his involvement in the revolt, as the description is very sparse. He is the only conspirator whose father (Hystaspes) is mentioned by Ctesias. As in *Histories*, Darius became the King after using a trick to win the contest with neighing horses and founded the festival Magophonia. The widespread revolts are missing from Ctesias' account.

Onophas – this name does not match the list of the Seven from Behistun or *Histories*. Nevertheless, the connection to one of its members is still there. In this case, Ctesias mixed Otanes with his son Anaphes, who is mentioned by Herodotus.⁹⁴ Although, it is not clear whether Ctesias

⁹¹ Phot. *Bibl.* 72 § 28–41.

⁹² See BRIANT (2002: 136); WATERS (2017: 94–100).

⁹³ Phot. *Bibl.* 72 § 43 (Zopyrus); 51 (Artyphius).

⁹⁴ See note 69.

meant Otanes or his son, since he also mentions that Onophas was the father of Amestris,⁹⁵ while in *Histories*, her father is Otanes, and from the fragments, we cannot be exactly sure if Otanes/Onophas is one person or father and son. Onophas is also a commander of the Persian navy in the battle of Salamis.⁹⁶ Diodorus later asserts, that Anaphas was one of the members of the Seven.⁹⁷ Here, he recorded later tradition or mixed up Otanes and his son (again, it is not clear, which one is alluded to), just to further complicate the issue. All in all, while the new name appears in the list, the relation to the original member of the Seven remains. Ctesias recorded a later tradition, in which the son substituted or even merged with his father.⁹⁸

Idernes – The name is widely accepted as a form of the name Hydarnes.⁹⁹ Plutarch mentions a similar variant of the name Indarnes and from the context it is Hydarnes (technically a son of the member of the Seven).¹⁰⁰ We cannot say whether Ctesias wrote about the father or the son because they share the name. The family of Hydarnes suffers the same fate as those of Intaphernes or Megabyzus. Idernes (probably a grandson of the member of the Seven) had a daughter Stateira and a son Terituchmes. Stateira was married to King Artaxerxes II, while Terituchmes married the daughter of Darius II, Amestris. But later he planned to kill her and wanted to start a revolt against the King. However, Terituchmes himself was killed by certain Udiastes, and the whole family of Terituchmes, descendants of Hydarnes, was executed on the orders of Queen Parysatis, save for Stateira (for now).¹⁰¹ As we can see, the royal family continued the tradition of marriages with the families of the Seven, but as with the family of Megabyzus, this could lead to power struggles within the wider family of the kings and downfalls of whole clans.

⁹⁵ Phot. *Bibl.* 72 § 20.

⁹⁶ Phot. *Bibl.* 72 § 26.

⁹⁷ D.S. 31, 19, 1.

⁹⁸ BRIANT (2002: 135); LENFANT (2004: 262, n. 484).

⁹⁹ LENFANT (1996: 374).

¹⁰⁰ Plut. *Apoph.* 69. The episode appears in *Histories* (Hdt. 7, 135, 1).

¹⁰¹ Phot. *Bibl.* 72 § 54–55.

Norondabates – *hapax legomenon*. This person remains a mystery, although there was an attempt to relate him to a known personality, Orontopates.¹⁰² Even if Ctesias referred to any person bearing this name, due to fragmentary account, we cannot say why he would replace established families in the list, as he was probably not related to the Seven.

Mardonius – In his case, the identification is clear. Ctesias continued in recording later tradition, in which the original conspirator blurred with his son. Mardonius is the son of Gobryas (or technically it could also be Gobryas' father). Mardonius was the general of Xerxes' army during the invasion of Greece.¹⁰³ Ctesias' account is not without an issue, for he asserts that Mardonius died after pillaging Delphi¹⁰⁴ and not in the battle of Plataea as in *Histories*.¹⁰⁵

Barisses – One of the problematic names, since Barisses was long thought to be *hapax legomenon*, but very recently he was identified with one of the names in the Persian tablets. Barisses was thought to be connected to Badres,¹⁰⁶ one of the Persian generals in *Histories*.¹⁰⁷ According to the recent research,¹⁰⁸ Barisses is identified as Barišša, one of the officials in Persepolis, treasure keeper during the reign of Xerxes.¹⁰⁹ The relation to the families of the Seven, however, cannot be traced.

Ataphernes – This name is usually associated with Intaphernes.¹¹⁰ His name (Vindafarnā) appears in several variants in Greek sources. Intaphernes is the name stated by Herodotus, Artaphrenes appears in *Persians* by Aeschylus,¹¹¹ and Daphernes is a variant used by Hellanicus

¹⁰² GUTSCHMID (1892: 505, n. 143). See also LENFANT (1996: 377); SCHMITT (2006: 257–260).

¹⁰³ Hdt. 7, 5–10 for example.

¹⁰⁴ Phot. *Bibl.* 72 § 25.

¹⁰⁵ Hdt. 9, 63.

¹⁰⁶ LENFANT (1996: 377). See also SCHMITT (2006: 233–235).

¹⁰⁷ Hdt. 7, 77.

¹⁰⁸ SÖDERLUND (2020: 11).

¹⁰⁹ PT 25; 78.

¹¹⁰ LENFANT (1996: 376); BRIANT (2002: 898).

¹¹¹ A. *Pers.* 21; 776; 778. There we have Artaphrenes as the one who slew the Mage, so we have another version of the events. In third different account, Intaphernes is the leader of the conspiracy. Aeschylus also names certain Maraphis as one of the Kings before Darius and after Mardos. Aeschylus wrote earlier than Herodotus and although his description is extremely short, he recorded another version of the events, in which

as it is mentioned in a *scholion* to Aeschylus' play.¹¹² The name does not reappear in *Persica*, so we do not have any additional information, but with many different variants of the Persian name floating around the Greek world, Ctesias probably meant one of the original Seven. However, the appearance of Intaphernes might be surprising, for Ctesias typically records the sons of conspirators or the persons, who became important later. Intaphernes was dead for a long time and his family did not have any power, but probably his involvement in the rebellion was significant enough (Aeschylus has him as the King of Achaemenid Empire), so Ctesias' source still had him as the conspirator. To exhaust all the possibilities, not probable though, since Darius does not credit him with anything in the inscription and perhaps, he was too young at the time of rebellion, there was also a Persian with very similar name in Greek sources – Artaphernes,¹¹³ brother of Darius (later, his nephew, Artaphernes' son, bore the same name). But save for the similar name, there is nothing that would indicate his presence in the list.

5. Legacy of the Seven

As we could see, the conspirators and their families (or at least most of them) continued to hold offices and the most important ranks in the Achaemenid Empire (unless they met their fate at the hands of the Kings, like Intaphernes, Megabyzus, and Hydarnes). Their importance in the transition of the rule from the family of Cyrus to the family of Darius was so significant, that the satraps and the kings in the following centuries claimed to be descendants of one of the Seven. We can regard the seven conspirators as 'founding fathers' for the rulers of later times.

One of the rulers from Asia Minor, Rhosaces, satrap of Ionia and Lydia in the 4th century BC, claimed to be a descendant of one of the Seven, although it is not specified which one.¹¹⁴ Exactly the same can be said about Orsines (or Orxines), general from Pasargadae during the time of

both Maraphis and Artaphernes became the Kings. See SHAYEGAN (2012: 20–23) for more information on the appearance of these two persons.

¹¹² HFG F167.

¹¹³ For example, Hdt. 5, 73.

¹¹⁴ D.S. 16, 47, 2.

the conquest of Alexander.¹¹⁵ The kings of Cappadocia claimed to be descendants of Cyrus the Great and one of the Seven, Otanes (Diodorus has Anaphas) in this case.¹¹⁶ Curiously, Diodorus mentions that this Anaphas was appointed as a governor of Cappadocia and was freed from tribute, which mirrors Herodotus' account (Otanés was given special privileges).¹¹⁷ Rulers of the smaller kingdom of Armenia, also traced their roots to one of the Seven, Hydarnes this time, whose descendant Orontes ruled there during the reign of Seleucid king Antiochus III.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, the origins of the dynasty are not necessarily connected to the Seven, since Orontes, satrap of Armenia during the reign of Artaxerxes II, was of Bactrian descent¹¹⁹ with an unclear relation to Hydarnes.¹²⁰

One famous satrap from Asia Minor apparently belonged to the family of Hydarnes as well and it was no other than Tissaphernes. His father was Hydarnes as it is stated in the text of Xanthus Stele.¹²¹ Which Hydarnes it was, however, is again a question.¹²² It could be the son of the conspirator or perhaps his eponymous grandson. The mightiest rulers who claimed to be the descendants of the Seven were the kings of the Pontic Empire. The founder of the kingdom, Mithridates, used this claim. However, the conspirator in question is not mentioned by name and we only have a vague description of him.¹²³ The number seven appears in the Sassanian Empire, where seven noble families played a major part in the politics of the kingdom.¹²⁴ They are not related to the co-conspirators

¹¹⁵ Curt. 4, 12, 8.

¹¹⁶ D.S. 31, 19, 1–2.

¹¹⁷ See note 23. Also see BRIANT (2002: 135–136).

¹¹⁸ Str. 11, 14, 15.

¹¹⁹ X. An. 3, 5, 17.

¹²⁰ See BRIANT (2002: 136–137).

¹²¹ *Tituli Lyciae*, 44c, 11–12. Widrŕna in the Lycian part of the inscription.

¹²² DANDAMAIEV (1989: 260); BRIANT (2002: 136).

¹²³ Plb. 5, 43, 2. The story appears also in Diodorus (D.S. 19, 40, 2), while elsewhere, Mithridates VI claimed to be a descendant of Darius himself (App. *Mith.* 112; Just. *Epit.* 38, 7, 1). There is even a story related to Mithridates I, the founder of the Pontic Empire, about how Mithridates escaped from Antigonus with the help of *six* companions (App. *Mith.* 2, 9).

¹²⁴ POURSHARIATI (2008: 48).

of Darius, but the number itself and the prestigious role at the court might echo the famed rebellion against Smerdis and seven Persian clans.

The rulers of later times were eager to portray themselves as the descendants of the Seven. Connecting the rule of the famous general or king of earlier periods with the contemporary Hellenistic kingdoms was a fairly common practice at that time. The seven Persian noblemen belonged to the prestigious group of possible ancestors. But it should come as no surprise that these claims of descendancy of the Seven were very far-fetched and simply self-serving. It is not dissimilar to what Darius very likely did in 522 BC – created a lineage to legitimize his rule, later kings, in turn, traced their ancestry to his helpers.

6. Conclusion

The revolt against the Mage with the lists of conspirators is described to a greater detail mainly in three sources – the Behistun inscription, Herodotus, and Ctesias. While many details differ throughout them, the core of the story essentially remains the same. The only source with notable changes compared to other sources is Aeschylus. Our goal was to compare the lists of seven conspirators, who rose against the impostor on the Achaemenid throne. As we could see, the lists themselves and the narrative changed throughout the time. The original description of the rebellion was recorded by Darius the Great, whose list of the Seven is the most trustworthy one since he was an eyewitness. On the other hand, his narrative raises a suspicion, for he possibly created a person of the Mage and revolted against the rightful king of the Empire. His presented lineage is also highly problematic and simply served its purpose. In his narrative, Darius is the supreme lord, the chosen one by the god Ahura-Mazda. Others are merely his followers. This changed in the Greek world. The whole story of the false king became more embellished with a look-alike of the brother of Cambyzes, a dramatic scene of the killing, and uncertainty about the future government of the Empire. Darius' role also changed. Although he naturally became the King, according to Greeks, it was under different circumstances. Other conspirators such as Otanes are no less important in *Histories* than Darius himself.

The list of the Seven also changed in Greek sources. Herodotus transcribed the Persian names into Greek and did a fine job since he record-

ed the names from the Behistun inscription with only one change, Ardunamiš was replaced by Aspathines, who rose to prominence later, thus this mistake can be explained easily. Other names match their Persian counterparts, however, their roles in the narrative could be different. Ctesias recorded a very dubious list of the Seven, but when we examine the list closer, there are traces to the original members. Ctesias heard later stories about the events, and it is noticeable in his list. Darius remained in his account, next to him we have potentially up to three sons of conspirators (Onophas, Idernes, and Mardonius), Onophas might be a different name of Otanes, Idernes could be the original conspirator as well, Ataphernes is a different variant of the name from *Histories*, we know Barisses, a person who became important later, from Persian tablets. Only Norondabates is not identified so far.

The members of the Seven and their families remained influential for several generations. The conspirators themselves held the most important offices. Their descendants were generals and officers, too. There were also marriages between the families of the Seven. However, this could have had some consequences, as three clans faced the wrath of the Kings – Intaphernes, Megabyzus, and Hydarnes. The prestige of the Seven lasted for centuries. The satraps and kings across Asia Minor claimed to be descendants of one of the seven conspirators even long after the Achaemenid Empire was conquered by Alexander the Great.

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Notes on a Minor Character in Attic Tragedy: The Nurse of Phaedra. A Study on Subordinate Characters in Tragic Plots

5th century Attic theatre was a mass phenomenon and the audience was the focal point of this collective dimension. The tragic subject was based on the epic tradition, which was part of spectators' cultural heritage: the tragedian could not overlook these expectations. This study aims to investigate the dramatic key role of minor characters, which represents a privileged tool to introduce novelty in the repertoire. The re-configuration of them, even drastical, did not necessarily imply a disruption of the epic core, and so the marginal position of servants, pedagogues, nurses, messengers, was crucial. The λόγος is the only mean at their disposal, that's the reason why they so frequently pronounce warnings and training. But are these humble characters capable of being righteous advisors, for a good παιδεία? The case of Phaedra's nurse, in Euripides' Hippolytus Stephanephoros, offers an intriguing opportunity of study.

Keywords: Attic tragedy, Euripides, Hippolytus, Phaedra, Secondary characters, Servants, Nurse, Pedagogues, Greek *paideia*, Athenian audience

How important are minor characters in Attic tragedy? Why are these marginal figures so assiduously documented amongst the most important tragic works? Is their role so marginal that the myth could do without them? The aim of this work stems from being pure research on the importance of servants in tragedy and Attic society, investigating each case where secondary characters appear in drama works thoroughly. Conversely, the intention is to give a general framework of the research questions, attempting to offer few coordinates. At first, the work will draw the narrative functions of marginal roles, while in a second moment will be analyzed a specific case study: the dialogue between Phaedra's nurse and

her protégé, which takes place in the first episode of *Hippolytus Stephanephoros*, with particular attention to the servant's speech.

Bond to a religious and popular dimension, tied to ancient mythological traditions and dependent on fixed expressive means, Greek theatre was addressed to a prepared audience, already prone to the vision of a poetic performance featuring sacred elements.

Theatre in 5th century Athens embodies mainstream forms of representation and expression that account for an essential perspective and a common field for the authors. However, the Greek Myth is not to be seen as a closed system, official and defined: rather, it is an open text, that is created anew in different versions. The magic of drama consisted of introducing heroes into contemporaneity.¹

Therefore, it is evident that the chosen stories and the characters brought on stage are not accidental. Spectators were put before a conflict, where human possibilities seemed irrelevant, and where the πόλις political and social cornerstones were reiterate. Tragic theatre was a complex institution, both mythical and ritual, 'the efficacy of which it was essential to achieve the active participation of the citizens'.² The audience knew they were spectating a fictional scene; nevertheless, there was a profound sense of truth, bound to the perception that theatre could give access to a sacred dimension. If it's true that, as stated by Giorgio Ieranò, 'tragic theatre doesn't appeal to the intellectual sphere of the viewer, doesn't produce educational results through a didactic training, doesn't show notions but provokes an answer that is not purely rational',³ it can be asserted that each choice made by the tragedian reveals, in addition to the artistic taste, their educational intentions. A question could be hypothetically raised: was the tragedian free in his action of writing in conformity with his artistic taste? Otherwise, was he inhibited by the reception and taste of the audience? Notwithstanding, as widely renowned, τοὺς [...] παρειλημμένους μύθους λύειν οὐκ ἔστιν (Ar. *Po.* 1453b), 'it is not possible to dismiss the traditional myth'.

¹ IERANÒ (2010: 12).

² CAPOMACCHIA (1999: 9).

³ IERANÒ (2010: 13).

Aristotle had already posed in the *Poetics* what he deemed to be the ‘preferential themes’ derived from the myths that the tragedians resorted to: from these episodes the δεινὰ ἢ οἰκτρὰ, ‘the sort of things that seem terrible and pitiable’ would emerge, elements that made a τὸν καλῶς ἔχοντα μῦθον (Ar. *Po.* 1453a), ‘well-built story’ out of a tragedy.

The poet who resorted to such assets of tales had the responsibility to try and “use the traditions well”, to highlight each time the perspective through which observe the development of the events, attempting to preserve in the creation process the “fact that defines the identity and the very core of a single story”.⁴

The tragic plots were traditional, and the poet’s prerogative lied in the introduction of the novelty, manipulating the matter to revive and modernize them. Thus, how was it possible to balance the will to innovate and the audience’s expectation? The performance used to show a section of one heroic saga, a frame of a mythical story, which embodied notions that were familiar for a 5th century spectator. In the dramatic composition, along with the heroic figure, a variety of accompaniment characters appear, so marginal that they seldom have a name. These characters interact, talk, and concur with the development of the story. This type of character is ‘a character without life or story other than the one that tides them to the protagonist. A character, as it can be seen in general with every helper, servant, slave, that comes handy to the tragedian, being part of the constellation of characters to service the protagonists of the story’.⁵ These figures constitute an important element of innovation, as they give the tragedian the chance to manipulate and redeploy the scene, from technical necessities on the stage to the very keystones of the myths. Secondary characters could easily be the element of modification to the traditional version, without undermining the mythical core of the story. Considering for example the ‘substitution’ of Pylades with the pedagogue in Sophocles’ *Electra*, the comparison with Aeschylus’s *Libation Bearers* can show a strong innovation, which should have been received with surprise by the audience. The innovation is significant, as it

⁴ SUSANETTI (2017: 21).

⁵ DE MARTINO–MORENILLA (2011: 39).

shows a didactic enhancement of the storyline: not a peer friend by the young hero's side, but a teacher is now supporting his actions. The narrative core remains unchanged. Deeming secondary characters as mere functional elements, whose role is to solve the most practical stage issues during a performance, almost as if they didn't have their own personality, would be fairly reductive; no element is incidental to the theatrical aspect. There is no intention in overestimating the importance of secondary characters; however, their dramatic role appears to be so skillfully built that one could be attracted – if not by the specific servant, pedagogue, or nurse – by their behavior and mode of intervention. Their relationship with the protagonist is essential, and they add a lot to the overview of the story and to the understanding of the sequence of events as a whole, showing different points of view on the happenings and on characters' behavior, also suggesting solutions that could challenge heroes' decisions 'in such a way that makes a secondary character essential for the development of the dramatic action, acquiring importance and relevance in the plot through their freedom of speech: out of instinct and sometimes challenging the orders given, for the sake of their owners. As a matter of fact, behind the secondary characters' action and speech exists a subtle overlap of functions and, in some specific cases, there are references to other tragedies or to the very contemporaneity, as the example of Phaedra's nurse will highlight. An element of interest is the wide spectrum of possibilities the tragedian disposed to modify these characters' functions, and the modes by which the poet obtained alternative dramatic settings – without dismissing the myth – following the pedagogic, political, moral, or religious message they intend to convey to the audience.

Secondary character's type is attested as a major or minor appearance in nearly every play, much more consistently in Euripides' work. One of his biggest innovations consists in his modality of bringing secondary characters on stage, and in how he discusses their condition as servants: their speech discloses a certain intellectual complexity and they are also entrusted with actions by which is determined the development of events. Modern characters, in a way, constitute a joining link

between myth and contemporary reality.⁶ Tragic secondary characters, on one hand, embody all those typical features that the audience would well recognize in contemporary servants, so much that 'in a theatre, kids could sit by their pedagogue's side'⁷; but, on the other hand, the saga was seemingly detached from the real historical Athenian environment, where these plays were taking place concretely. What appears on stage is a world of kings that moves around in an everyday setting, a dimension that is willingly kept afar from the citizens which were attending the show:

...beyond the effective and constant disguise of modern debates into the mythical past, the very basis of power was impersonated not by members of the democratic *πόλις*, but contrariwise by kings and princes, local sovereigns, heirs whose consanguinity translated into the promise of a realm.⁸

The Athenian spectator was permeated by a sense of distance towards these characters projected in an anachronistic dimension, perfectly inserted in the epic frame. A juxtaposition of levels appeared on the scene, the familiar and the alienating ones:

...this distance, an emotional cushion for the spectators, is usually accomplished in tragedy through the use of stories from the distant mythical past and the distance is often created by the foreign setting and characters, producing a spatial and conceptual rather than temporal distance.⁹

Therefore, what is known and what is mythical would combine in a complex mechanism that brought the hero temporarily in touch with the audience through the scene, an audience that would have returned to the life of the *πόλις*, once the tragedy was over. A singular and uncommon element was the secondary characters' mode of intervention: it was characterized by unseen audacity, in response to their personal will,

⁶ See FUNAIOLI (2011: 76).

⁷ RODIGHIERO (2013: 223).

⁸ CAPOMACCHIA (1999: 70).

⁹ VERNANT-VIDAL-NAQUET (1988: 245).

which could be in conflict with their 'legitimate' owners' decisions. An example is the episode of the *Libation Bearers* where Cilissa becomes the herald of a false message directed at Aegisthus, hoping for the end of his and Clytemnestra's tyranny: doing so, she interrupts the stream of events, thus redirecting them from what her owner had in mind. Which real actual servant could have ever acted in such a way, in the 5th century Athens? Is it hard to conceive a servant such as the one that in the first parts of the *Hippolytus* reproaches his owner for his behavior against Aphrodite, but in Euripides times?¹⁰ Historically framing the extent of freedom given to servants in Athens can be quite problematic.¹¹ However, thanks to the examples of marginal characters retrieved from tragedies, it is possible to highlight some recurrent dramatic peculiarities. Consider once again the initial episode of Euripides's *Hippolytus*, where the dialogue between the Amazon and the old servant takes place: the youngster, devoted exclusively to Artemis, arrogantly dismiss Aphrodite, while the servant reproaches him, suggests to abstain from haughtiness, and invokes the Goddess for her forgiveness towards his protégé. The theme debated by this marginal character is a burning issue, and it can only be imagined how unusual it would sound for the Athenian spectator to hear such a big matter discussed by a humble servant. Moreover, the sense of superiority displayed arrogantly by the youngster could be seen as inappropriate, especially in light of his uncommon behavior.¹² At the end of the play, the servant keeps sending his prayers to Aphrodite, justifying Hippolytus' attitude as a result of his young impulsiveness and unawareness; with these last words, he

¹⁰ For this type of characters and their relationship with masters, see SYNODINOU (1977: 61 ff).

¹¹ CITTI-CASALI-FORTI (2009: 1).

¹² It is important to consider the historicist fact, that the perception of a 5th century BC spectator could not, by force of things, be identical to that of a contemporary reader and coincide there, as PADUANO (2000: 23) points out in his translation of the *Hippolytus*: 'L'impressione sgradevole suscitata nel lettore moderno è il prodotto della nostra lontananza dalla valutazione dell'auto-elogio nella civiltà classica, dove esso non suonava offensivo quando era investito del valore dell'oggettività e del consenso sociale e, dunque, era propriamente omogeneo se non identico al comportamento virtuoso: è appunto il presupposto della civiltà di vergogna'.

fixes the main features of the hero and, from a meta-theatrical point of view, it is possible to grasp a reference to the tragic end of the story (Eur. *Hipp.* 117–120). In the Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers*, other than Orestes nurse, a second marginal character acts against his owners' will, namely Aegisthus servant: the man exits the palace announcing the death of the tyrant, calling Clytemnestra on the scene. After forecasting the death of the queen, instead of grieving over or feeling compassion for her, he affirms that her death will be an 'act of justice' (Aesch. *Lib.* 884). When he then reveals the ambush that Orestes had planned against her, he does not attempt to save her, calling her attention to the presence of her son instead. This type of behavior does not quite reflect the one typical of a marginal character, manifesting instead how the servants can sometimes be moved by pure devotion, instead of obedience. Another useful example is given by the two shepherd-servants of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*: Laius's servant, responsible for saving Oedipus as a newborn instead of exposing him to death, and Polybus's servant that had took the infant to his owner in Corinth. The disobedience towards Laius's orders leads to the misunderstanding of the hero's paternity, the crucial element of the whole story. The two shepherds will again contribute to discover the truth when forced to confess, interrogated by Oedipus himself in his palace, despite their refusal to answer. They are responsible for Oedipus' faith twice: at first, with their actions, and then through their own confession. In *Alcestis*, Euripides returns to a domestic dimension, amongst Admetus' palace walls. The servants enter the scene talking about food, referring to the banquet prepared to host Heracles, who suddenly appears without remorse, despite Alcestis' recent death. Heracles eats voraciously to the utmost indignation of the servants, and the distance from an everyday dimension can be here immediately detected: the servant reproaches the host, calls him back to the state of things the host seems to be ignoring and encourages him to intervene. Thanks to this behavior (which certainly does not befit a secondary character), Heracles goes back to his heroic nature and snatches Alcestis from Thanatos. Another Euripidean example is the prologue of *Iphigenia in Aulis*, during the forced stop of Agamemnon and his army in Aulis before marching towards Troy. Agamemnon in the first lines of

the play is writing a letter to his wife Clytemnestra, while conversing with an old servant. The hero through his letter wants to warn Clytemnestra not to reach him together with their daughter Iphigenia; in fact, the two women were previously been called to the Warfield with the promise of an arranged marriage between Iphigenia and Achilles, whereas it was a plot against the girl all along: according to the seer Calchas, the young woman needs to be sacrificed in order to obtain the favor of the gods, and put an end to the unstoppable wind that was blocking the sailing. Agamemnon regrets the plot and decides to save his daughter, thus sending his servant as a messenger. The instructions given are continuously interrupted by the servant's objections and reproaches; nevertheless, he finally accepts to go, but Menelaus stops him along his path. The sovereign threatens the servant to death, and then Agamemnon starts to fight with his brother. The role of the old and faithful servant is not yet fully accomplished, as he once again crucially intervenes on the scene by confessing to Clytemnestra and Achilles the existence of the plot against Iphigenia. Thus, the servant pushes the two heroes against the Atreides: although by the end of the story Iphigenia herself will be sacrificed for her own will, the dramatic importance of this marginal figure cannot be overlooked, first as a confidant, then as advisor, ultimately as a messenger. Another old man appears within Euripides' *Electra*, an old servant from Agamemnon's house, pedagogue of his sons, depicted on the scene as a shepherd that complains about his extremely old age. He brings to Electra – fallen into disgrace, since when Clytemnestra forced her to marry a farmer – the news of a strand of blond hair found on the tomb of her father, the first clue of the return of her brother. Although she does not listen to old man's words, he insists on trying introducing her to the brother: first, through the track of a foot left nearby the tomb and then, talking about a mantle wore by a stranger seen around the palace, similar to Orestes' one. Ultimately, when Orestes finally appears on the scene, the servant will act again, and actively plot against Clytemnestra: the two dethroned will get their revenge by Electra's house, killing the betraying mother and taking the throne.

The examples provided above aim at drawing some of the fundamental secondary characters' peculiarities, highlighting the importance

of their actions on scene. They are always bound to their original condition of marginality, and no matter how uncommon and new their interventions may appear, they will always be subordinate to heroes. Generally, servants' actions acquire significance as they oppose the obstacles that could put the hero at risk, ignited by their utmost devotion. Thanks to this tie, there is a constant 'link to everyday life'¹³ on stage; the heroic stature of the protagonist is emphasized and put into contrast with the marginality of the servant. Amongst different tragic characters, nurses and pedagogues seem to take a special role, as they constantly accompanied the protagonist. This protecting activity is perpetrated thorough years, so much that they move to the protégé's house even once their task of raising the children is over, and the nurse, as well as the pedagogue, maintains a role of tutoring, even when her protégé is absent. The τροφός, more specifically, follows her owner even in the husband's house, and follows her in every movement. It is not just a servant-owner relationship, it is rather the acquiring of a mythic significance, so she becomes the stereotype of the loyal supporter throughout the tragic path of the heroine. An example of this dramatic importance is evident in the case of the nurse Cilissa in Aeschylus' tragedy. She is the maid of Orestes in the *Libation Bearers*, savior of her protégé from the tyranny of Aegisthus. When she enters the scene, she is immediately interrogated by the choir on her direction: the τροφός explains that she has been invited by her owner to talk about Orestes' death. She has an affectionate bond with the hero and does not know that the news of his death is just a facade to carry on the plot. After describing the false grieving of Clytemnestra, in fact hiding the joy for the disappearance of the only one in power to take the throne, Cilissa falls in a deep and felt sorrow for the end of his protégé, remembering him since his birth, thus displaying her truly bond of affection for him. The realism of Cilissa's description represents a dramatic break from the typical heroic tone, which 'lower' the level of the tragic text, with the depiction of concrete and common details from everyday life. Her words increase the pathos and at the same time the accessibility to the episodes on scene: in a context of extreme heroism, the audience needs to see those epic values as part of their

¹³ SUSANETTI (2007: 281).

lives; only this way tragedy can fulfill its educational purpose, through the use of references that belong to everyone's life and common people. More specifically, the role of the nurse is contra posed to the one of Clytemnestra, almost taking the role of substitute mother in a situation of unfulfilled motherhood.¹⁴ Once the choir reveals the facade of Orestes' death, the nurse sends a fake message to Aegisthus and leads him into his killers' trap: it is thanks to the saving intervention of the *τροφός* that the revenge of Agamemnon's son can be fulfilled; this secondary character, fixed in his function of tutor – typical for the maids – takes the events planned by Orestes to a direction that results decisive for the completion of his heroic path. A variation can be found in Euripides' *Electra*, where the old preceptor of Agamemnon is responsible for saving Orestes, and the same happens in Sophocles' *Electra*. This variation is significant, because draws the characteristics of a figure that is not simply collateral, but rather has a role in the tradition of Agamemnon's myth and his family. Therefore, their function can be modified along with the choices of the poet. In *Medea*, the nurse is given a monologue that introduces the setting of the tragedy: her words explain to the audience the conquest of the Golden Fleece, the return of the Argonauts in Greece with Medea, the death of Pelias caused by her daughter, the escape from Corinth and Jason's decision to marry Glauce, daughter of Creon. The nurse is visibly worried about Medea's violent reaction, and she looks anguished for her children. At this point, the pedagogue of the poor children enters the scene, and the two exchange a dialogue entirely based on the destiny of their protégés. The servants are both aware of the terrible things to come, referring to the epilogue of the story, but they choose not to give up on their role of constant guide and protectors: the old lady who raised the protagonist, together with the old man who educated her children, represent now a fundamental part of the tragic-

¹⁴ FRANCO (1997: 139); cf. also ROSE (1982: 50): 'Cilissa [...] functions as a natural and familiar figure of the sorrowing mother in contrast with Clytemnestra's cold formality, while her recollections of the infant Orestes contrast with Clytemnestra's sinister dream in which she gives birth to a snake and wraps it in swaddling clothes. Additionally, she suckles the monster as the nurse fed the real-life baby (753–754) [...]. She recalls that Orestes was not a blood sucking snake but a harmless and defenseless baby'.

mythical path, to such level that they cannot dismiss their destiny until the tragic end. Again, it is a pedagogue – Oedipus’ – that in Euripides’ *Phoenician Women* escorts Antigone on the roof of Thebes palace to observe the army deployed in front of the city, called to help Polynices. In the dialogue between the old man and the protégé, the παιδαγωγός through his presence and words helps to revive and symbolize the tie between Antigone and her fledged brother, a crucial aspect that will transform her in the protagonist of the tragic events, up to her exile with the father. One last example: Deianira’s nurse in Sophocles’ *Women of Trachis*. Although seemingly not essential from a first glance, as she appears on scene only twice, with a deeper analysis it can be seen how her contributions takes place in two critical points of the saga: at the beginning of the story, with the appearance of the protégé, and in the moment of her death. The τροφός is part of Deianira’s life, who is longing for Heracles’ news (her spouse); the nurse suggests to send their son Hyllus to the father and this proposal will direct the story to its tragic development. Heracles is already on his way home from Euboea, together with Iole, the daughter of Eurytus. A messenger refers this fact to Deianira, and she resorts to what she believes to be a love potion, given to her by the centaur Nessus, to re-bind Heracles forever to her. Hyllus himself will attend to the devastating effects of the poison, which will corrode Heracles’ body, while Deianira, after having involuntarily caused the terrible deed, takes her own life. At this point the nurse, after having suggested the heroine to use the potion, enters the scene and announces the faith of the two protagonists: doing so, she closes the story of her protégé, narrating the end she brought her to. As it emerges from these examples, instead of intervening with their actions, the secondary characters act through words. Their words, suggestions, reprimands, and calls for a righteous behavior constitute the bond that runs between them and the protagonists, and they keep playing a role of protection and support. There is another mythical function that can be analyzed, which belongs to these marginal categories: surely, they can function as an anti-heroic pendant or, conversely, challenge the heroic stature of the protagonists by establishing a peer relationship with them. However, the ‘function of the τροφός and παιδαγωγός is heroic in itself, as it is

essential to the fulfillment of the protégé's destiny'¹⁵ as they are entrusted with raising and educating the heroes from their birth. These secondary characters take an important part from a pedagogic point of view, as they are heroes' διδάσκαλοι, with the task of teaching the principles of the traditional παιδεία. But are they always fit for their roles?

The importance of παιδεία was already resonating in 'Homer poems, where it was considered as a fundamental value that characterized in a didactic sense the relationship among different characters'¹⁶: παιδεία was based on ancient values transmitted from generation to generation, through a profound and constant relation between teachers and students, founded on trust. Consider, for example, *Iliad* episode 9, where amongst the participants of Achilles' delegation, next to Odysseus and Ajax, two marginal characters make their appearance: Nestor and Phoenix. To convince Peleus' son to go back to battle, two heroes and two old wise men are sent as messengers, and one of them in the past has played for Achilles the important role of tutor. The old man reveals the bond that ties him with the hero during the speech he pronounces to persuade him: he is the one who held him on his lap. Phoenix will not reach his goal, and the hero will not return to battle; but it's not a casualty that by the end of book 9, when Agamemnon's army withdraws, Achilles wants Phoenix by his side, making a bed for him in his tent. The tutor will be the one following him in his return to the battlefield: Phoenix as a supporter of Achilles, from his birth to his death. He is the archetype of the wise marginal character. In the 15th book of *Odyssey*, another old servant appears, interrogated by Odysseus in disguise, narrating his own story: Odysseus' servant, the best and most loyal of all, entrusted with taking care of the pigs, to the point of receiving the epithet of δῖος ὑφορβός. He is a virtuous and humble character, content with his life, suffering from his owner's distance and for the ruin of the palace; he does not have a wife nor sons, living with the pigs he takes care of. Eumaeus welcomes Odysseus, destitute and begging, offering him his only mantle; he feels empathy towards the beggar and hosts him in the name of Zeus. Eumaeus is the ethical opposite of the

¹⁵ CAPOMACCHIA (1999: 50).

¹⁶ CASTRUCCI (2013: 25).

suitors, impersonating the mythical example of virtue and devotion. Tragedy and epic poetry are two completely different worlds, although many references and didactic characters can be found both in Homer and in tragedy. It is almost as if they are relocated into an idealistic pedagogic horizon, namely the ancient παιδεία of the *patres*. According to this idea, διδάσκαλοι on scene embody the traditional ethic that began to waver in 5th century Athens, and their teachings are in contrast with the new and emerging pedagogic strategies. But is it always true that each didactic figure appearing on the scene embodies the authority of the tradition? Nurses and pedagogues are, conventionally 'old': they have raised the hero, and on some occasions, have followed them in their heroic path, or have found them later in a key moment of their exceptional story. Their old age is related to wisdom, to long life experience, to the credibility of their teachings and the promulgation of moral principles:

...the assumption of this important role by a slave is tempered by his or her advanced age and by his or her espousal of the master's values. The slave is evoked as a means of defining for the free protagonist, rather than for himself, but the master's reliance on others implies a loss of independence that compromises his authority and may create situations in which the slave gains a measure of honor that clashes with his status.¹⁷

However, if it's true that 'the tragic παιδεία was a νόστος, led by a good διδάσκαλος that investigated the validity of the fundamental values of the tradition',¹⁸ and that an antithesis exists between the ancient Homeric παιδεία and the νέα παιδεία of the Sophists, it could be useful to focus on the role of διδάσκαλος as a secondary character. The servant-protégé relationship presents some internal limits traced back to the pressuring responsibility of conferring a virtuous παιδεία to the protégé, which risks to trespass into plagiarizing and corrupting the disciples. What was the role of παιδεία, of the preceptor in the dramatic context, and of the relationship between a teacher and a student? It is difficult to

¹⁷ JOSHEL-MURNAGHAN (1998: 8).

¹⁸ CASTRUCCI (2013: 70).

overlook such a matter with regards to the tragic contest, being 5th century BC a period historically overturned by revolutionary forms of pedagogy, alienating teaching theories, extravagant figures of tutors that present themselves (if not imposed themselves) as new preceptors of the dominant classes, responsible for disorienting the ethical directions of the ἀρχαῖα παιδεία.¹⁹

Generally, we talk about “Sophists” as if there were something widely known and assumed. However, even in its literal meaning, the word itself can be deceptive, as in 5th century Greece there has never been a homogeneous tradition of thought, and consequently an institutionalized school that could be called “sophistic”.²⁰

In this complex cultural context, tragedy brings the myth on stage and attaches new vibrant emotions and meanings to it, in order to wake the audience’s conscience up.

διδάσκαλοι, as characters, contribute to fulfill this purpose with their actions and speech. Projecting them into the scenery of the myth, the tragedian transposes contemporary issues into a dim and distant light, where an unambiguous resolution is not possible, and the human thought and actions are unfit.²¹

These words can be applied also to the ‘servile teaching’ theme, to the point of turning disciples into teachers and teachers into disciples, inducing the audience into reflecting on whom can be considered as a ‘teacher’ during the annual Great Dionysia representations, as well as in the everyday life scenery. If tragedy stages a recurring theme that after Aeschylus has been called ‘the drama of the πάθει μάθος’, and the

¹⁹ Cf. NERI (1992: 111): ‘Sulla scena si colgono gli echi della vita culturale ateniese, i dibattiti della sofistica che aveva insegnato a contrapporre le ragioni del *nomos*, della “legge”, a quelle della *physis*, della “natura”’; cf. also CASTRUCCI (2017: 143): ‘con l’avvento delle distorsioni della nuova pedagogia sofistica il principio stesso dell’educare era stato messo a dura prova, venduto da maestri itineranti che provenivano dal di fuori e che operavano al meglio per “snaturare” i fondamenti e i valori antichi in cui da sempre Atene si riconosceva’.

²⁰ BONAZZI (2010: 13).

²¹ IERANÒ (2010: 138).

spectator 'learns as a self-taught person' where the wisdom derives from the process of feeling anguish, can be noted how this tragic principle is also inserted in the pedagogic discourse, involving the figure of the διδάσκαλοι. The preceptor has the task of supporting disciples in their personal (and otherwise lonely) anguishing learning path so that the πάθει μάθος becomes συμπάθεια in sorrow, compassion, and identification with the other's πάθη.

It's better to be sick than nurse the sick:
the first is plain and simple suffering,
the second mixes sorrow in the heart
with hard work for the hands.

This quote (Eur. *Hipp.* 186–188) is useful to understand the identification between teacher and disciple as companionship through anguish: the result is an attempt to 'teach reality' to the protégé, to protect them from feeling sorrow and to permit the early learning other than, following the tragic scheme, when it is too late to remedy. The goal of the διδάσκαλος is to avert the worst, to analyze reality and saving solutions from one's life baggage: sorrow as *magister vitae* can now be translated into precautional solutions, to prevent other negative teachings. Occasionally, it is almost as if the characters that are entrusted with the role of righteous advisers forgot the necessity of a virtuous παιδεία, anchored to the belief that justice lies in the middle ground. The traditional moral law seems to be left behind, in favor of opportunistic strategies that aim at saving the protagonist. In some cases, a deeper sense of affection emerges and surpasses the moral constraints that, to some extent, takes the lead and turns orthodox teaching into a direction of compromising or even murder. Nevertheless, the triggering element of this training is the sense of protection that the teacher feels for his pupil: how is it possible then for διδάσκαλοι to steer their loved pupils to evil? Is it intentional manipulation or is it corruption, merely caused by ignorant arrogance? What is shown on the scene is an ancient theme such as the one of pedagogy, enriched with its new problems and, more especially, with its new shadows. The sense of protection the διδάσκαλος is gripped by conducts to a 'second education', often far from the commonly accepted moral norms and directed at obtaining ad-

vantageous results for pupils. Based on these elements, it is clear that φιλία constitutes an obstacle and a limit to παιδεία. In addition to φιλία, it is possible to find another limiting element in the relationship between secondary characters and their pupils. There are multiple reasons why traditional norms did not always find fertile soil in the teaching repertoire of these humble tutors, and the violation of νόμος is not simply caused by the sense of protection towards the hero. At the roots of it could lie a lack of awareness towards a moral code the teachers apprehended, perhaps passively, which has been never internalized. Thus, it could be explained how, when faced with the urgency of reality and practical necessity, servants resort to ‘common sense’ and their personal experience, rather than relying on ethical notions. The old nurse and the old pedagogue usually don’t possess right cultural instruments to understand the moral precepts they have inherited, lacking intellectual education. They ‘find happiness in their protégés through the only means they can use. They worry for their owners as if they were their children, to the point of slandering or plotting against those who try to damage their protected ones’.²² The low class the nurse and the pedagogue come from, as well as the domestic dimension in which they exist, are equivalent to a dimension of life that is ‘other’ than the royal dimension the tragic protagonists belong to. Therefore, it is paradoxical how these very characters are entrusted with such pedagogical function, resulting from a bond of trust built through years of formation together. Both these figures play the role of διδασκάλοι exclusively in function to the φιλία that links them to the protected ones; φιλία that, as stated before, represents one of the strongest limits to a virtuous παιδεία. The fundamental contribution of secondary characters consists in their constant closedness and never-ending support toward the protagonists, whilst from a pedagogic perspective they resort to mere old-school teachings in order to fight the indecipherability of the tragic: through these traditional notions emerges the weakness of their confusing and superficial subscription to old values, which they don’t fully comprehend. With naive ‘didactic buoyancy’ they try to take on their educational responsibilities and ‘give lessons’ by imposing their various γνῶμαι of unclear origins, moved by a sense of affection: ‘the most vivid aspect of their personality

²² DE MARTINO–MORENILLA (2011: 278).

and action is their intense tie to their owners',²³ but the lack of knowledge about the true nature of good is what they miss to do good. The damage is also aggravated by the fact that they are assigned an educational mission that involves the custody of a disciple whom will trust them all through his growth. In this sense, the characters of the nurse and the pedagogue are profoundly dramatic and bring the human limits to παιδεία on the stage: good intentions are not sufficient.

It is a widely acknowledged opinion that Euripides, prompted by a strong experimental drive, has developed a kind of theatre that conferred the role of protagonist to the man, their feelings, their psychic sphere, their impulses. To some extent, it was coherent with the spirit of his time, which was spreading equally in different fields such as historiography, medical science, philosophy, and politics. Expression of this new anthropocentric theatre type is the constant presence of verbal agony: protagonists and interlocutors debate on issues from different and almost unreconcilable perspectives, in a way as to prevail on one another through augmentation, giving the impression that relativity of opinions is not and undefeatable. It is a subtle intellectual exercise, well-concealed with this phase of Greek culture and civilization. An exercise that stimulates the audience to analyze the pros and cons of every situation to act accordingly, being the verbal agony the perfect place for a conceptual examination of the drama on scene. The true element of novelty in the Euripidean theatre consists in the spirit that enlivens it: the plots are those of the myths, characters of the tragedies are still heroes from the Troy war or other sagas; however, what is left of these heroes on the scene is their theatre costumes, as in their intimate self and in their way of thinking and of acting they resemble the men and women of the 5th century BC seated at the theatre. The main characters in their human dimension don't just measure themselves through oracles, demons, constrictions, written or unwritten laws: they face ordinary situations and problems determined by feelings that are common to every human being such as love, hate, need for vengeance, the reputation they want others to perceive; they have a personality, a specific nature that determines their choices. Thanks to this 'humanistic' approach, Euripi-

²³ SUSANETTI (2007: 51).

des' theatre proposes to display a fragment of existence that is based on protagonist's personality, rather than on pre-constituted ideological parameters. As a consequence, premises and implications – both religious and moral – from which the myths derived, when immersed into the realism of ordinary life can become surreal or be subverted by the characters. For such a strong tradition, statute of the tragic genre, theatrical communication form was entrusted with the representation of a myth with a powerful pedagogic meaning. For these reasons, the relationship between Euripides and his audience was not the greatest, as the meager number of victories testimony. However, as the following extract from Aristophanes' *Clouds* demonstrates, the younger audience made the exception in receiving his works:

STREPSIADES: «'For my part' he at once replied 'I look upon Aeschylus as the first of poets, for his verses roll superbly; they're nothing but incoherence, bombast, and turgidity'. Yet still, I smothered my wrath and said 'Then recite one of the famous pieces from the modern poets'. Then he commenced a piece in which Euripides shows [...]»

His unprecedented study on men seldom received wide consensus, if not completely rejected from the critics, being this type of theatre a disruption with the tradition.

The change of the axis from the hero to the man also resulted in the alteration of the mythical fact into a more "human" conclusion, coherently with the personality of the character as the times and settings of the tragedy were too distant from the one of the myth.²⁴

Among Sophists and during the assemblies led by demagogues, while Athens was internally wounded by intestine wars and destined to a military defeat, the ethical principles on which the city was founded started to falter. The thirty-year war against Sparta would have eased the process. It is in such context that Euripides decided to move to Pella, even though 'it remains surprising to think of such a prominent Athenian abandoning his city to dwell at the palace of a sovereign'.²⁵ Euripides

²⁴ AMMENDOLA (1946: 5).

²⁵ CANFORA (2001: 205).

made an extreme gesture towards a city that demonstrated not to be ready for his theatrical innovations and preferred to take shelter in a traditional and safe institution.

‘He left Athens because he gave up on the difficult task of dialoguing with the audience of Athens, in one of those moments of blatant obscurantism. The democratic city had rejected him. More precisely, it had demonstrated intolerance: a kind of intolerance that is merged with incapability, or lack of interest in understanding, to which Aristophanes has the resolution to become, even after his death, an implacable interpreter’.²⁶

Aristophanes has been one of the most tenacious opposers of Euripides, being the comedy writer that depicted him parodically, using detrimental and polemical tones, both in *Thesmophoriazousae* and in *Ranae*, with the aim of hit and ridicule the unsettling critics Euripides moved against the average Athenian. Aristophanes attacked the most intellectual and bothering aspects of his drama, a drama that gives voice to ‘restless women and antisocial men’ as well as the aspects that put into discussion those long-established familiar and social values.

It is easy for Aristophanes to choose the most provoking taboos by choosing in the vast tragic production of Euripides, who analyzed the very core of interhuman relations from different angles. The work of Euripides, instead of reviving and re-establishing the traditional values of the πόλις, put them into question. Through Aristophanes, who with great clarity had grasped Euripides’ lack of involvement in the political and institutional tasks, it is possible to understand the perception that Athenians had towards the tragedy of Euripides. Together with his escape to Pella, this situation concurred in causing his failure, and consequently the frustration of his artistic ambitions’.²⁷

What would have happened if Euripides had decided to rewrite one of his unsuccessful pieces following the taste of the audience? How could

²⁶ CANFORA (2001: 205).

²⁷ CANFORA (2001: 205).

have he reconfigured the story without breaking the mythical core in a way to obtain a positive reception of his tragedies?

The *Hippolytus Stephanephoros* is reported to be a recantation, that is the rewriting of a tragic story by retreating and resetting the facts previously narrated. For the sake of this study on secondary characters, the figure taken into consideration is Phaedra's nurse, to highlight through her case marginal characters' peculiarities and functions. This character embodies all the peculiarities of the anti-heroic tutor devoted to protecting her owner, a trope in the traditional tragic *τροφός*; however, she hides something unsettling in her resoluteness. If audacity can be listed as one of the common features of secondary characters, it is also true that they have never exited their marginality, and their marginal dimension helped to glorify the hero by contrast. In the episode between Phaedra and the nurse can be detected a subversion of roles: the heroine is exhausted by her sufferance, whilst the servant, using sophist-like rhetoric, plagiarizes her fragile mind. Even in this case, as common amongst the nurse type, the intensity of her words is fueled by her maternal sense of protection towards Phaedra and thus her solutions seem righteous, even if they break with the traditional ethics. The disorienting element for a viewer, together with the impactful final suggestion, is the persuasive mode in which the *τροφός* reasons to push the heroine to talk. She appears on stage before Phaedra: like a simple soul, she cannot comprehend the 'unpleasant disease' that corrupts her owner's body and soul, she can only assess that her sufferance is haunting her.

O the troubles we mortals undergo,
 the wretched illnesses! What shall I do
 to make you comfortable? What do I not do?
 Here you are in the fresh air and sunlight.
 Your sickbed has been moved outside the house,
 for coming here was all you talked about. 220
 But soon enough you'll be hurrying back
 to your own rooms again. You'll be convinced
 you were mistaken. Nothing pleases you.
 You get no joy from what is here at hand
 and find what is not here more pleasurable.

If it's true that on some occasions she speaks words of wisdom, she is also able to express deep and felt words. As a matter of fact, after having affirmed, in an impulse of rage and 'selfishness', how her closeness to her protected is already a matter of sorrow for her and how life is made of obstacles, she then reflects with profundity on how a man is attracted to everything that shines in the world, preferring it to the uncertainties of their faith. The audience would assess an intellectual depth that is unusual for a minor character, so meaningful to steal the attention throughout her speech. Later on, after presenting the suffering of the heroine through the servant's words, the dialogue seems to take a direction of inconciliability between the two. The *τροφός* takes the role of the rational and realistic side that does not understand the passion of Phaedra, who seems almost into a hallucinatory state. The servant attempts to contain the absurdity of her desires, being this typical for a character that only lives in a domestic setting and cannot adventure herself beyond the practical dimension. Unable to find a pragmatic solution, the nurse roots her protégé's problems back to a god's will, as Phaedra herself had thought, believing she has fallen victim to a delusion that brings her to scandalous desires.

I am so miserable! What have I done?	280
Why has my mind lost all its common sense?	
I was insane; struck down with delusions	
from some god. Alas, I am so wretched!	
O nurse, please cover up my head again.	
I am ashamed of what I have just said.	
Cover me. My eyes are streaming tears,	
and my face betrays my shame.	

Referring to her nurse as if she were her mother, Phaedra implores her to cover her face out of shame. The reaction of the old nurse creates a break in the common ethical ground in which she based her reasoning of the first section of the dialogue. It is the perspective of someone who frames experiences in the category of tradition and ancient wisdom. She then proceeds to wish for her own death, after trying to make her owner come back to her senses, starting with a series of dissertations on the

existence of men, moving from a personal to a universal sphere and seeing *φιλία* as the root of her sorrow.

I'll cover you up. But when will death come
to cover up my body? A long life
has taught me a great deal: human beings
should pledge affection for one another
not to very marrow of their souls,
but with moderation. Bonds of friendship
linking hearts should be easy to untie,
easy to cast off or tighten. 250

That is why the example of the Phaedra's nurse can help understanding one of the peculiarities of the secondary characters in Attic tragedy. After the exhortation of the choir, the nurse wishes even more for Phaedra to speak up and asks Troezenian women to be by her side more than ever, to testimony the affectionate bond they have. Behind this request perhaps lies an awareness of the bold words she is about to say, unfit for a servant to say? Or is she just aware of the subtle and manipulative ways she is using? These are just conjectures; however, it seems that the servant before speaking up would like to highlight how her actions are aimed for the good of her protégé, almost as if she wants to justify her own ways. From this point on, her tone changes radically: from a tired and discouraged servant to a maternal and reassuring nurse, calling her protected *ὦ φίλη παῖ*, 'my dear child', reprising the familiar roles, based on mutual trust and comprehension. She invites her to relax and forget everything she had said by that moment, reassuring of her health condition and the gravity of the situation. She declares that she will change her attitude and choose better means of communication, but one could spot a certain degree of forcedness in these words, perhaps only meant to reassure the protégé:

But come now, my dear child,
let's both forget what we just talked about.
[...] Well, I'll stop that 310

and find a different and a better way.
 [...] Why are you still silent?
 You should not remain so quiet, my child,
 but if I've said something wrong, correct me,
 or else accept the good advice I offer.

Before the tenacious silence of Phaedra, the nurse displays all her discomfort and, abandoning the detachment shown previously, proceeds with threatening her, showing her the catastrophic outcomes her death would cause. After mentioning the sad destiny of her sons, destined to be dethroned by Hippolytus, the illegitimate son of Theseus, Phaedra finally cries. The nurse thinks she has touched a sore spot, and it will not stop the servant from doing her investigations. Again, she promptly changes her ways.

PHAEDRA: «Nurse, you are destroying me! 360
 By the gods I beg you to say nothing
 about that man; don't mention him again!»

NURSE: «You see? Your mind is fine, but even so,
 though your thoughts are clear, you are not willing
 to help out your own sons and save your life»

The speed of the dialogue becomes striking, dialogue that will end in the much-expected confession, a *stichomythia* led by the *τροφός* that penetrates the reticence of the heroine and will reach the proposed outcome of knowing the truth. It is the classic process of agony, a recurring trope of the Euripidean tragedy. The peculiar element of this episode is that the one who prevails in the conclusion is the marginal character, after using the weapons of the persuasive rhetoric and more: in front of her lack of arguments 'the blindness of the nurse becomes desperate and produces the decisive advance, as well as the determining event of the tragic action: her plea has the features of a sacred and ritual prayer, and therefore it applies an unavoidable pressure'.²⁸ The servant's behavior is almost characterized by violence; however, the subsequent part will not

²⁸ PADUANO (1998: 12).

become clearer in its development, but 'it will be crossed by a tendency in have things said rather than saying'. When Phaedra mentions her family's guilty love chain, playing the role of the third victim of a common destiny, the *τροφός* does not grasp the truth. Only when the queen affirms more clearly that she only knows the bitterness of love, the old lady understands she had fallen in love, and she herself mentions Hippolytus after Phaedra 'had named him through periphrasis', that is 'the son of the Amazons'. The servant horrifies and, if in a first moment she had prayed for her own death, now even the light of the day irritated her. There is now a crucial part, as researchers have theorized an estimated anti-Socratic remark in it: the servant affirms that βίου θανοῦσα· χαίρετ', οὐκέτ' εἴμ' ἐγώ. οἱ σώφρονες γάρ, οὐχ ἐκόντες ἀλλ' ὅμως, 'virtuous people now love what is bad, they do not wish to do that but they do'. This statement is the exact opposite of Socratic ethics, also called 'ethical intellectualism', according to which only those who don't know the good can do bad. Analyzing the theme of a hypothetical debate between Euripides and Socrates goes beyond the scope of the present study, however, it is important to once again demonstrate how the tragedian relies on secondary characters to inert references to contemporary reality. Back to the text, following the *τροφός* reaction, the scene hosts a dialogue between Phaedra and the choir, in which she lost herself in a long monologue about virtue. This intermission gives the old servant an occasion to calm down and restore her role as a tutor; nevertheless, this will be the moment when her word will reach the utmost level of audacity. Her motherly affection perhaps forces her to look at her protégé's sorrow with a lighter soul: it is not a sinful passion but a love desired by Aphrodite. Ever since she starts talking again, her speech is set on a tone of retreat, to resize the gravity of the matter and convince Phaedra that a solution to her problem is natural and right.

So Aphrodite then is no mere goddess, but something greater, if such beings exist, for she has utterly ruined Phaedra, as well as me and this whole royal house. (362)

A situational subversion can be spotted in this passage through a subtle and refine rhetoric, almost as if the servant was not the unwary nurse

displayed few lines before anymore, one who could not detect the subliminal messages of her owner. Nurse's speech is so convincing that Phaedra appears to be unjust and proud to the gods, due to her reticence. What is deemed to be virtuous in the traditional ethics becomes evil and arrogant in the words of the nurse, against the will of the gods. This could have also been the perception of the audience in seeing the τροφός intervention and her sophistic speculations, so common in the Athens of the 5th century. It is no casualty that the opposition between νόμος and φύσις, law and nature, codified ethics and soul power, was one of the most discussed themes by the Sophists. Is it a genuine wisdom 'that glorifies the undefeatability of love as the creative force of the universe',²⁹ or is it a brutal lack of morals that pragmatically affirms the meaning of life, as stated by Paduano?³⁰ Are these simple words, derived from a long experience that wisely acknowledges imperfection as an integral part of heroism, or is it just that 'the nurse seems anything but a clever, manipulative character'³¹ trying to manipulate the weak mind of Phaedra? The only certainty is that the more Phaedra loses decisional power the more the nurse acquires some. To her opposition, the nurse responds less appropriately to win her. With an unstoppable climax, propelled by the nurse's affection, Phaedra goes from affirmation of her position to a weak resistance. She gives in to her nurse's insistence and indulges, although still fearing the worst (vv. 519–524).

NURSE: « But you're afraid of everything. What do you dread now? »

PHAEDRA: « That you will mention something about me to Theseus's son »

NURSE: « Leave it to me, my child. I'll organize things properly. I only pray that you, Aphrodite, lady of the sea, work with me in this »

The nurse's plan will fail and she will try to stop Hippolytus' rage without results, calling him out on the silence oath he had pledged before the confession: she will only receive impulsive and impious words in charge. After hearing the renowned tirade against the female gender

²⁹ GRILLONE (1979: 82).

³⁰ PADUANO (1998: 13).

³¹ ROISMAN (1999: 47).

and the betrayals they plot together with the maids, the nurse submits to the inexorable Phaedra's judgment and curse. Again, the servant reappears in her humble superiority: she is aware that her owner is enraged but she does not stop reasserting her affection towards her. She knows she has failed but, without hypocrisy, she admits that if she eventually had succeeded in her plan, she would have now been deemed wise, as men 'measure wisdom according to the results'. She is not humiliated nor enraged, and she concludes her path with a last intellectual stance, loyal to her own dramatic role. What did Euripides want to represent through the character of the nurse? According to the critics, there is no single answer. Considering similarities between the rhetorical attitudes of the servant and the sophistic philosophy that was growing in Athens, is it possible to see a glimpse of this new movement in the character of the servant? Was Euripides' intention to take the old and new παιδεία together on the scene? Following these assumptions, does Phaedra represent, with her virtuous demeanor, the positive values of tradition, whereas the nurse, with her subtle and opportunistic relativism, represents the Sophistic philosophy, self-proclaimed as the best of the teachings?

If so, the theme of the didactic relation between a secondary character and the hero is once again represented on the scene, with its shadows and limits. Some have even hypothesized that 'the nurse reveals the mind of her creator', being this figure 'a capsule of the modern mind'.³² What Blitgen wants to say is that the nurse's advices are not coming from a place of cynicism, conversely, they synthesize a tradition modeled on the comprehension and tolerance of everything that is human: the nurse seems to consider Phaedra as an individual human, beyond codified ethical assumptions. The essence of the τρυφός actions lies in compassion and the empathy she feels, and according to Blitgen it leads the audience to feel more engaged and closer to the marginal character.

Regardless of the impressions and questions he raised in the audience, Euripides has never given an unambiguous answer through his representations. What appears to be evident instead is how 'the whole

³² BLITGEN (1969: 85).

mythical and scenic action has started from the nurse'.³³ This secondary character interferes with the normal stream of events and it can be affirmed that she is responsible for starting the tragic mechanism. Prompted by her compassion towards the protégé, she covers a fundamental dramatic role: with the confession of Phaedra's love towards Hippolytus, the tragic path of the heroine stops and, consequently, the one of Hippolytus starts with a breach in his destiny. Until that moment, the young man had conducted an esoteric and pure existence, supposedly detached from the political and social setting of everyday life, whereas Phaedra has kept the secret of her love, deciding to abandon herself to sorrow. These two protagonists could have proceeded in different directions through their tragic paths, with distant schemes: Phaedra in her feeling of guilt before the heresy of her own desire, and Hippolytus living in his Artemidean dimension, convinced of his superiority over the other men. Phaedra gives in to the love impulse that was devastating her, while Hippolytus represents the opposed tendency, rejecting his corporeality. It is only thanks to a third element, that functions as a joint link, that the dramatic action meets a turning point in the story. The nurse is a marginal character but, paradoxically, she can be considered to have a central role in the story. It is with her that the tragedy is fueled inexorably, with a dichotic development, through the common tragic outcome of the two protagonists. Once again, it can be observed how the poet deploys marginal characters as a way to introduce plot modifications, and how through this manipulation he is able not to subvert the mythical core. The character of the nurse embodies different functions: companion, guardian, teacher and confident for the heroine. Moreover, her words hide references to contemporaneity, such as the alleged remark on the Socratic ethics, the Sophistic speculation on νόμος and φύσις, the verbal agony's relativism, the instruments of rhetoric, all transformed into subtle weapons of persuasion. A secondary character, versatile and multifaceted, results in the end essential and irreplaceable to the tragic mechanism.

This research, through the specific case study of the nurse in *Hippolytus* *Stephanephoros* has attempted to explain how secondary characters

³³ GRILLONE (1972: 67).

of Attic tragedy are not marginal to the development of the story: they represent a privileged instrument for the tragedian to introduce elements of novelty in the epic repertoire. It is a privileged choice as, due to their subaltern nature, the secondary characters in tragedy leave a wider scope of possibilities to insert a change. The audience was already equipped with expectations that needed to be fulfilled, and these expectations were based on the traditional myths. Thus, changing the function of a marginal character even drastically, did not necessarily imply the disruption of the epic core and consequently the fruition by the audience was not compromised. In the end, it can be said that minor characters' dramatic flexibility gave the tragedian great potentialities to reconfigure the mythical story: without their intervention, the plot would not have found so unforeseen development. Without them, there would have not been the tragedy.

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‘Green vines on the slag of ruin’? The Choir in Euripides’ *Bacchae*

In this paper, I am examining the social role of the choir in Euripides’ Bacchae. I am arguing that Wole Soyinka’s adaptation The Bacchae of Euripides. A Communion Rite presents a viable model to understand the social relevance of the characterization of the bacchantes in Bacchae better. Also Euripides’ choir, like Soyinka’s slave choir, is affected by the expectation of the role of rural, foreign slaves. The exceptionality and the dramatic conflict of the bacchantes lies in the fact that they are free followers of Dionysus while the other protagonists in the play expect them to be slaves. An understanding of the choir along these lines affects the interpretation of the entire Bacchae: the play becomes, thus, also a social drama about potential class conflict and class hatred, a problem that Attic tragedy is able to negotiate in the mirror-reality of mythical Thebes.

Keywords: Euripides, Bacchae, bacchantes, slaves, class, Wole Soyinka, Athens, Thebes

1. Introduction

The Bacchae of Euripides. A Communion Rite, Wole Soyinka’s 1973 adaptation of Euripides’ *Bacchae*, begins with this series of impressions:

To one side, a road dips steeply into lower background, lined by the bodies of crucified slaves mostly in the skeletal stage. The procession that comes later along this road appears to rise almost from the bowels of earth. The tomb of Semele, smoking slightly is to one side, behind the shoulder of this rise. Green vines cling to its charred ruins.¹

¹ SOYINKA (1973: 1).

In literary studies, we are used to understand literary texts particularly from their first words – *arma virumque cano*. In the case of Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides. A Communion Rite*, this rule can be extended to the first mute scene: the series of impressions, crucified slaves near a road, a procession of slaves that 'appears to rise almost from the bowels of the earth', and finally a patch of green vines attached to the charred ruins of Semele's tomb, represents the series of events that is also otherwise dramatized in the play. The foreign slaves of the city of Thebes are suppressed by their urban masters; with the arrival of the rural god Dionysus, the slaves of the city rise up and take part in the rites of Dionysus; through the enfolding of the events that are told in the Euripidean *Bacchae* – Pentheus' madness, the *sparagmos*, Agave's madness and awakening, the flight of the remaining Cadmeans – the slaves eventually triumph over the shattered city and its former rulers. The 'green vines' on Semele's charred tomb thus, in Soyinka's play, represent the rural, foreign slaves, who eventually outlive the city and its rulers – they are like the re-growing plants that outlive a ruined city.²

Focusing on the slaves of the city, one could say, Wole Soyinka in his post-colonial adaptation has turned Euripides' *Bacchae* into a completely different play. The choir of slaves and their highly individualized slave leader are the true subjects of Soyinka's play and the focalizer through whom the audience is invited to perceive the classical drama. In this paper, I would like to argue that Wole Soyinka's highlighting of the choir does not run contrary to the original play but is rather the result of a careful reading of it.³ Soyinka uncovers aspects that are present in the original but left widely unexplored in modern scholarship: the social role of the choir and the meaning of this role for the significance of Euripides' play as a whole. To make my point, I will first reflect on Soyinka's adaptation as an interpretation of the original (2.). In the following,

² The 'Green vines' reappear in SOYINKA's play in Dionysus' opening monologue as 'Green vines on the slag of ruin', SOYINKA (1973: 2), from where I took the title for this paper.

³ The 'Green vines' clinging to Semele's tomb, for instance, are cleverly taken from Dionysus' prologue in the original, Eur. *Bacch.* 11–12: ἀμπέλου δέ νιν / πέριξ ἐγὼ κάλυψα βοτρυνώδει χλόη. 'And I have shrouded [the sacred place of my mother] all around with the grape bearing greenery of the vine.'

I will look at Euripides' *Bacchae* with a view to the strands of meaning that accompany the social role of the choir, e.g., the opposition of the city and the rural sphere, the description of Dionysus and his following as foreigners and Dionysus' friendly relations with slaves and servants (3). Then, I will finally focus on the social role of the choir in the *Bacchae* as it is expressed in the characterisations by other protagonists (4) and draw my conclusions for the meaning of the entire play from there (5).

2. Soyinka's adaptation as an interpretation of the original

One may ask why it is at all necessary or helpful to take recourse to Soyinka's adaptation if what I am going to show is anyway already in the original play – and it is the original play that this paper is eventually going to be about. It is, if not necessary, at least extremely helpful to do this for the following reasons. As is now a commonplace in literary studies, once developed under the name of reader–response–criticism, the meaning of a text cannot be gleaned from the text alone but comes into being only between a text and its recipients in the act of interpretation.⁴ The interpretations that an audience of Euripides' *Bacchae* would make, are not easily available from the remaining text, as they came into being only between the performed version of the text and the (ancient Athenian) audience. If one is, like I am, interested in the interpretations of these implied recipients, one has to be particularly aware that the substance of a text exists only in these.⁵ Literary criticism has to overcome itself to an extent to distinguish between interpretations that arise for the inscribed recipients and interpretations that arise out of the social, cultural and structural conditions of scholarship.⁶ This is by itself a difficult task and the more so in the case of the *Bacchae* because of the inherently precarious situation of interpreting a text that was never intended to be text but performance.⁷ This difficulty would usually tend to rather streamline and fossilize scholarly interpretations, as the raised

⁴ See ISER (1994: 50–67).

⁵ I would agree with ISER (1994: 34–35), that this is true for all literary texts.

⁶ Wolfgang ISER but also others, like Susan SONTAG, took the starting point of their criticism of 'classical interpretation' from this point, ISER (1994: 23).

⁷ For the transformation of Euripides' plays into texts that could be read in books, see HOSE (2020); for the transmission of these texts, see PICCIONE (2020).

unavailability of the text's inscribed interpretations tends to raise the appeal of once established interpretations in scholarship.⁸

If this is inevitable, it should appear that breaking up established patterns of interpretation is particularly beneficial in complicated cases like the *Bacchae*. Interpretations are always also influenced by the intersectionality of those who interpret.⁹ One way of countering the fossilization of interpretation can be to bring interpretations by as diverse a group of interpreters as possible into the discourse.¹⁰ It is for this reason that I believe adaptations of Euripides' *Bacchae* do not only have an artistic value of their own but also an epistemic value for the interpretation of the original play.¹¹ This again is particularly the case for Soyinka's work because of the extraordinary mix of abilities and backgrounds that have come together in his career:

Wole Soyinka (*1934) apart from being a playwright is also a politician and an influential intellectual of postcolonial Nigeria since the end of British rule in 1960.¹² Soyinka's position is also special for the fact that he studied literature in Nigeria and Britain at the time before the decolonization but always identified as Nigerian from the time of independence.¹³ Soyinka thus had access and was aware of Western scholarship and the Western reception of the *Bacchae*, a fact that is well documented not only by the adaptation itself but also by Soyinka's accompanying essay.¹⁴ On the other hand, Soyinka is a creative practitioner of theatre, as playwright and as director, and his artistic work would position him in the postcolonial tradition of the former British Empire; as Isidore Okpewho puts it, 'he aided the celebration of Nigeria's independence in

⁸ ISER (1994: 35).

⁹ For a definition of intersectionality, see COLLINS-BILGE (2016: 1-30).

¹⁰ I would agree with Patricia MOYER, who already 25 years ago, in an article about Euripides and SOYINKA, called for a reappraisal of 'the range of personal voices' in scholarship; MOYER (1997: 107).

¹¹ A thoughtful overview over the vast reception of the *Bacchae* in the 20th century is FUSILLO (2006), see also GOFF (2017).

¹² OKPEWHO (1999: 34-35).

¹³ OKPEWHO (1999: 51).

¹⁴ SOYINKA (1973: v-xi).

1960 with the production of his first major play, *A Dance of the Forests*.¹⁵ Most notably in *The Bacchae of Euripides* but also in his other texts, Soyinka aims to transform the Western canon into a new canon for his post-colonial home country, and demonstrates what Okpewho calls 'the Africanization of Euripides' play' by, e.g., the inclusion of elements from Yoruba culture and the colonial experiences of the suppressed into *The Bacchae of Euripides*.¹⁶ Both Soyinka's practical affiliation with theatre and his pre- and post-colonial British-Nigerian background and interests make him stand out from most Western scholars and might render his interpretation particularly interesting in the sense of presenting a more diverse perspective to complement more or less homogenous Western views. The proof also of this pudding has to lie in the eating, though; I will therefore in the following highlight the interpretative choices in *The Bacchae of Euripides* that are the starting point for my interpretation of the original.

The major change in Soyinka's adaptation is usually seen in the fact that, as his title suggests, he turns the *Bacchae* into a 'communion rite': the killing of Pentheus at the end of his play clearly serves the liberation of the slaves/bacchantes and the renewal of social peace.¹⁷ This change is usually explained in the light of the new traditions of postcolonial literature.¹⁸ It has one major precondition, though: Soyinka looks foremost at the social context of Euripides' original staging and consequently at social constellations in the play.¹⁹ On the level of the play, this results in the focus lying more on the choir and its differentiation into foreign slaves of Thebes and bacchantes, who have come from abroad with Dionysus.²⁰ While the choir of bacchantes is limited to their ritual function,

¹⁵ OKPEWHO (1999: 34).

¹⁶ OKPEWHO (1999: 32–33; 38–39); the 'Africanization' of Euripides has not been uncontested; Andrea NOURIYEH sees *The Bacchae of Euripides* more as an adaptation for a London audience than for Nigeria, NOURIYEH (2001: 162).

¹⁷ FISCHER-LICHTE (2014: 58).

¹⁸ For instance BADA (2000: 7–8).

¹⁹ SOYINKA (1973: vi–ix), see also OKPEWHO (1999: 35–37).

²⁰ This differentiation becomes clear when slaves and bacchantes first meet in the play: 'SLAVE LEADER Bacchantes, fellow strangers [...] fellow aliens [...]' SOYINKA (1973: 15).

the choir of slaves act out a social drama of their own that is given voice mainly by the individual choir leader, the slave leader. The oppression that is thematized in the play is, thus, given from an individual perspective and at the junctions of the play the slave leader works as a focalizer for the audience, who are invited to relate to the plight of the Theban slaves.

The constellation of figures in the original *Bacchae* is clearly different, but the bacchantes of Euripides' play are not limited to the role that the bacchantes play in Soyinka's adaptation; they include also those aspects that Soyinka extracted and reconfigured in his slave choir. Before I will look at the implications of this in detail, I would like to give a brief overview over the interpretations of Euripides' *Bacchae* in recent scholarship:

Interpretations of the *Bacchae* are legion.²¹ Since George Grube's article from the 1930s,²² the play has mostly been read as a conflict between the rational – Pentheus – and the irrational – Dionysus.²³ Earlier historical-biographical interpretations ascribed this rational – irrational dichotomy in the *Bacchae* – and the fact that Dionysus wins in the end – to Euripides' supposed conversion to a renewed religious feeling in old age. More recent scholarship has emphasized the role of meta-theatre and gender – Pentheus' cross-dressing as a maenad and the ambivalence of Dionysus' and Pentheus' gender.²⁴ Psychoanalytical approaches stress Pentheus' twisted relationship to seeing the maenads including his mother naked;²⁵ another focus has been the relationship between the *Bacchae* and religious and cult practice in Athens at the time of the play.²⁶

All of these directions in scholarship of the *Bacchae* have in common that they start from the figures of Dionysus and Pentheus and tend to, sometimes implicitly, read either of the two as the key character of the

²¹ For an overview see REITZAMMER (2017: 298–314), MILLS (2006: 80–102), VERSNEL (1990: 96–99), ORANJE (1984: 7–19).

²² GRUBE (1935).

²³ Recently SUSANETTI (2016).

²⁴ FOLEY (1980), ZEITLIN (1990a), BUXTON (2013).

²⁵ SEGAL (1986: 282–293).

²⁶ VERSNEL (1990: 99–205).

Bacchae. This leads me to the problem I encountered when reading the *Bacchae* and my personal fascination with Soyinka's adaptation: It is very difficult to imagine the interpretation an Athenian audience would have given to the *Bacchae*, because none of the major protagonists in the play is an inviting focalizer through which to look at the unfolding action.²⁷ Under these special circumstances, it seems that scholars in the modern West have felt drawn to either the figure of Dionysus or the figure of Pentheus.²⁸ Laurialan Reitzammer is therefore, in my opinion, well-advised to remind her readers that modern interpreters might be much more sympathetic towards Pentheus, more willing to identify with Pentheus, and more willing to criticize the divinity of Dionysus in the way Pentheus does, than an ancient Athenian audience would have been.²⁹ This has been shown in extenso by Hans Oranje in his review of the older scholarship.³⁰

Wole Soyinka's adaptation of Euripides' *Bacchae* does not focus on the figure of Pentheus but on the choir. This creative choice, though, is, as I will show now, based more firmly in the characterization of the choir in Euripides' *Bacchae* than it might appear at a first glance. The original bacchantes are addressed as slaves in a number of occasions during the play. I will therefore have a close look at the characterization of the choir and especially those scenes that can be understood as significant for a social placing of the bacchantes. If the bacchantes were slaves of the city, also in Euripides' original, also interpretations of the whole play would have to include the social conflicts so central to Soyinka's post-colonial adaptation.

The following reappraisal of the choir in Euripides' *Bacchae* has to answer two questions: what is the role of the choir of bacchantes in Theban society in the play, and does one have to understand the choir of *Bacchae* as slaves in any way similar to the way Soyinka's adaptation

²⁷ The problem of the interpretation of the *Bacchae* has been fittingly called 'the riddle of the *Bacchae*' by NORWOOD (1908), see also ORANJE (1984: 3).

²⁸ A particularly poignant example is Arthur VERRALL's interpretation of Dionysus as a fraud, VERRALL (1910: 1–163), see also ORANJE (1984: 7–19).

²⁹ REITZAMMER (2017: 298–314).

³⁰ ORANJE (1984: 7–19).

does? These two questions are fundamentally connected with three more general points that therefore also need to be targeted: (1) the opposition between city and rural sphere in the *Bacchae*; (2) Dionysus and the bacchantes as foreigners; (3) Dionysus as a friend of slaves in the play. A brief observation of each of these points shall begin my study of the *Bacchae*.

3. Preconditions of the argument

a) *The Opposition of the City and the Rural Sphere in the Bacchae*

The social placing of the choir of bacchantes includes the notion that the bacchantes are foreigners and not from the city, as will be shown further below. These attributes of the choir are linked to a general opposition of city and country in the play.³¹ This opposition is expressed particularly in the opposed parties of Pentheus and his grandfather Cadmus, on the one hand, and Dionysus, on the other. City and country figure in this opposition in the characterizations of these characters and particularly in some scenes of direct encounter. I will give one example each out of the large number of scenes that characterize each of the parties and that juxtapose city and country when the two parties meet.³² A natural starting point for the characterizations is the respective introductions of the parties at the beginning of the play.

Bacchae begins with a prologue by Dionysus (1–63) followed by the parodos of the bacchantes (64–166).³³ The two parts serve largely to inform the audience about the story of Dionysus in Thebes and to give a characterization of the god; similar information is given by Dionysus himself in the prologue and by the choir in the parodos: Dionysus was

³¹ Hans ORANJE differentiates between palace, city and Cithaeron, ORANJE (1984: 147–148); the contrast between city (including the palace) and country is far more pronounced than that between city and palace in my opinion.

³² Further scenes where the contrast is prominent, only some of which can be analysed in detail, are the destruction of Pentheus' palace by the earthquake (Eur. *Bacch.* 586–603), the rage of Cadmus' daughters on the mountain (Eur. *Bacch.* 976–977), the march of the Thebans from city to mountain (Eur. *Bacch.* 1043–1045), Agave's return from mountain to city (Eur. *Bacch.* 1142–1145), spindle and hunt in Agave's discourse (Eur. *Bacch.* 1236–1237).

³³ In my verse count and text, I follow the edition of DIGGLE ed. (1994).

conceived and born in Thebes, where he has now returned in human form (1–12, 88–103); he has travelled the East and established his festivities there (13–22, 120–134); he has now driven his aunts and the other women of Thebes to perform his rites in the vicinity of the city to punish them for slandering his mother Semele and not recognizing his divinity (23–42, 105–119); he is planning to challenge the new king Pentheus, a stubborn non-believer, with his human presence and with his troop of maenads (43–54); the final verses of the prologue introduce the chorus as the god's Lydian following, who shall now announce him in Thebes (55–63); the parodos consequently adds jubilant and exhortative passages to the story of Dionysus (64–87) and culminates in the epode in a picture of the god among his followers on Mount Cithaeron (135–166). This last, conspicuous passage includes a description of Dionysus in a rural setting that strikingly shows the connection between the god and nature:

ἡδὺς ἐν ὄρεσσιν, ὅταν	135
ἐκ θιάσων δρομαίων	
πέσῃ πεδόσε, νεβρίδος ἔχων	
ἱερὸν ἐνδυτόν, ἀγρεύων	
αἶμα τραγοκτόνον, ὠμοφάγον χάριν,	
ἰέμενος εἰς ὄρεα Φρύγια, Λύδι,	140
ὁ δ' ἔξαρχος Βρόμιος,	
εὐοῖ.	
ῥεῖ δὲ γάλακτι πέδον, ῥεῖ δ' οἴνῳ,	
ῥεῖ δὲ μελισσᾶν νέκταρι. (Eur. <i>Bacch.</i> 135–144)	

Sweet in the mountains, whenever (135) out of the running thiasoi he would fall to the ground, being endowed with the sacrifice of a fawn skin, hunting for the blood of slaughtered goats, he ate the prey raw, when he was hurrying to the Phrygian, the Lydian mountains (140), he the leader Bromius, whoopee! The earth flows with milk, it flows with wine, it flows with the nectar of the bees.³⁴

³⁴ Translations are mine.

Dionysus is shown at his own revels running extatically in the mountains. This picture is complemented by a hunt and a scene from the Land of Cockaigne – the god and his following can feast in the mountains with meat, milk, whine and honey being provided by nature.³⁵ The god, it seems, is at home in the mountains.

Similarly, Cadmus, grandfather to Pentheus, founder of Thebes and head of his family, is introduced with a defining reference to the city. Briefly after Dionysus' depiction in the mountains, the seer Tiresias introduces the former king as:

Κάδμουν [...], 170
 Ἀγήνορος παῖδ', ὃς πόλιν Σιδωνίαν
 λιπὼν ἐπύργωσ' ἄστν Θηβαίων τόδε. (Eur. *Bacch.* 170–172)

[...] Cadmus (170), the son of Agenor, who having left the city of Sidon gave towers to this fortress of the Thebians.

The theme of city building is alluded to three times in this brief passage: Cadmus' Agenorid family hails from Sidon, one of the ancient cities of Phoenicia, a paradigm of the city as such. ἐπύργωσ and ἄστν refer to city building in its most material form: the fortress at the top of the city and the act of giving towers (and walls) to the city to demarcate its borders. The fact that Cadmus is introduced as Thebes' founder brings his connection to the city and to cities into the foreground.

Cadmus, in this scene, serves to contextualize the more central figure of Pentheus – he is his grandfather and Pentheus is clearly one of Cadmus' stock of city builders. When Pentheus and Dionysus clash for the first time in person in the second epeisodion, Pentheus orders his guards to seize Dionysus with the following explanation: καταφρονεῖ με καὶ Θήβας ὁδε. – 'This one despises me and Thebes' (503). The king and his city are one and the same in their opposition to Dionysus – in the eyes of the Cadmean. As prominent in the characterization of the city dweller Pentheus is his rhetorical rationality. When Cadmus and

³⁵ For goat slaughter as a Dionysiac practice, see BURKERT (1966: 98–102), SEAFORD (1996: 164–165).

Tiresias, the team of elderly men on their way to honour Dionysus, first meet Pentheus in the first episodion, the seer of Thebes has this to say:

ὅταν λάβῃ τις τῶν λόγων ἀνὴρ σοφὸς
καλὰς ἀφορμάς, οὐ μέγ' ἔργον εὖ λέγειν:
σὺ δ' εὗτροχον μὲν γλῶσσαν ὥς φρονῶν ἔχεις,
ἐν τοῖς λόγοισι δ' οὐκ ἔννεσί σοι φρένες.
θράσει δὲ δυνατὸς καὶ λέγειν οἷός τ' ἀνὴρ
κακὸς πολίτης γίγνεται νοῦν οὐκ ἔχων. (Eur. *Bacch.* 266–271)

Whenever some wise man took a beautiful subject as starting point for his speech, it is no big deal for him to speak well. And you also have a glib tongue like a clever man, but in what you say there is no clever thoughts. One who possesses rashness and masters speaking – such a man (270) becomes a harmful citizen when he has no understanding.

After a praise of sober, straightforward speech that reminds the modern of Cato's *rem tene verba sequuntur*, Tiresias criticizes his king as a man who knows how to speak well, but does not have the intellect to fill his speech with valid content. A man like this, he continues, is a danger to society. Tiresias thus criticizes Pentheus in the same way Plato has Socrates criticize the sophists of his, and Euripides', day.³⁶ The audience, we can assume, is supposed to recognize in Pentheus, or Tiresias' criticism of Pentheus, the criticism brought against city politicians (πολίτης) in 5th century Athens. This becomes apparent again when Cadmus, the city builder, addresses his grandson πολίτης to πολίτης:

καὶ μὴ γὰρ ἔστιν ὁ θεὸς οὗτος, ὥς σὺ φήεις,
παρὰ σοὶ λεγέσθω: καὶ καταψεύδου καλῶς
ὥς ἔστι, Σεμέλη θ' ἵνα δοκῇ θεὸν τεκεῖν,
ἡμῖν τε τιμὴ παντὶ τῷ γένει προσηῖ. (Eur. *Bacch.* 333–336)

And even if this guy is not the god, like you say, he shall be said to be at your court; and you shall beautifully lie that he is such, so that

³⁶ This must have been particularly funny to a 5th century audience, because Euripides has Tiresias continue in a typical long sophist's speech with warped arguments about all sorts of things (Eur. *Bacch.* 266–327). See SEAFORD (1996: 174).

Semele may seem to have given birth to a god (335) and glory be added to us, to the entire tribe.

Cadmus puts Tiresias' criticism of Pentheus' type into live action, when, assuming that Pentheus does not care for the truth but only for his personal benefit and the benefit of his group, he suggests to his grandson to ignore what he thinks is right and support the story of Dionysus' divinity for the sake of the additional glory this would shower on the Cadmeans. Cadmus, like Tiresias before, characterizes Pentheus as a rhetorical thinker after the model of the Greek sophists of the fifth century and the new class of only self-interested politicians that was particularly prominent at the turn from the 5th to the 4th century.³⁷ Rhetorical thinking is, thus, an attribute that is closely related to the spirit of the city-dweller that is also otherwise shown in the characterization of Cadmus and Pentheus.

The characterizations of Dionysus as a rural god and Pentheus or the Cadmeans as city-dwellers becomes particularly distinct whenever the two are contrasted with each other. In the action of the play the two figures and the spheres they represent clash, when Dionysus destroys Pentheus' palace (576–603) or predicts his death by the hands of Agave (973–976). This opposition is also present in the poignancy of the contrast in describing words whenever the two spheres touch. In the fourth stasimon when the choir prepares the killing of Pentheus they ask:

Τίς ὄδ' ὀρειδρόμων μαστήρ Καδμειῶν 385
 ἐς ὄρος ἐς ὄρος ἔμολ' ἔμολεν, ὦ βάκχαι; (Eur. *Bacch.* 385–386)

Who is this seeker for the Cadmean ladies, who runs in the hills (385)
 to the mountain to the mountain, o bacchants?

Here the word Καδμειῶν marks the daughters of Cadmus, Agave and her sisters, the maenads, as originally belonging to the sphere of the city, the one pole of the twisted story; Pentheus, the king of the city, to the contrary, is marked twice as now belonging to the sphere of the holy

³⁷ For a recent survey of the relationship of rhetoric, democracy, individuality and the polis in this time, see ALEXIOU (2020: 1–25).

mountain of Dionysus (ὄρειδρόμων; ἐς ὄρος ἐς ὄρος). The liturgical-sounding repetition (ἐς ὄρος ἐς ὄρος) affirms this swap of roles with Pentheus walking the path of a maenad himself now. The two poles – Cadmean city and Dionysiac mountain – are positioned against each other in poignant brevity.

This same phenomenon can be observed in a number of passages. At the beginning of the herald’s report that tells the death of Pentheus, the journey of the troop is told:

ἐπεὶ θεράπνας τῆσδε Θηβαίας χθονὸς
 λιπόντες ἐξέβημεν Ἀσωποῦ ῥοάς,
 λέπας Κιθαιρώνειον εἰσεβάλλομεν
 [...]. (Eur. *Bacch.* 1043–1045) 1045

After we had stepped out of the living quarters of the Theban land, having left behind the floods of Asopus, we entered the mountainous area of Cithaeron (1045) [...].

Also here the human, everyday quality of the ‘Theban land’ with its ‘living quarters’ (θεράπνας) is contrasted with the uninhabitable ‘mountainous area of Cithaeron’, reflecting the major opposition of the play. In the same report, Agave and her sisters, who are Theban city girls by heritage and position but act as maenads of Dionysus in the play, are described in quick succession first as ‘daughters of Cadmus’ (Κάδμου κόραι, 1089) and then as ‘not inferior in swiftness to a wild rock-pigeon’ (πελείας ὠκύτητ’ οὐχ ἥσσονες, 1090) showing the contrast of their urban family belongings and their wild actions. Similarly, after Agave’s return, she, still half mad, describes herself braggingly:

[...]
 ἦ τὰς παρ’ ἰστοῖς ἐκλιποῦσα κερκίδας
 ἐς μείζον’ ἤκω, θῆρας ἀγρεύειν χερσίν. (Eur. *Bacch.* 1236–1237) 1236

[...me] who, having left behind the weaver’s shuttles with the looms, comes to something better: catching animals in the hunt with my hands.

The textile labor of city-dwelling women is opposed to the feats of the maenads in the mountains, in this case with a premonition that the wild side will win.

The three kinds of examples I have given show clearly that Dionysus and the Cadmeans are opposed to each other along the lines of the wild countryside and the civilized city. But as especially the third kind of examples can show, this opposition runs through the entire play as prominently that it guides various single descriptions into the same dichotomy. The opposition of city and country is therefore one major line of meaning in Euripides' *Bacchae*.

b) Dionysus and the Bacchants as foreigners

Another such line of meaning is the idea that Dionysus, who is originally from Thebes, and the choir of bacchants are a foreign element in the city if not in Greece in general.³⁸ This idea is uttered both by the god and his following in a neutral or positive self-description and by the Cadmeans and their Theban compatriots in disdain. I will now briefly list some passages that can represent the important aspects of these descriptions.

The introduction of Dionysus in the prologue includes a catalogue of the places he has been to: Lydia, Phrygia, Persia, Bactria, Media, Arabia – in short, all of Asia already knows the god (13–17). While he has already established his rites in all these places 'with Greeks and Barbarians mixed together' (μιγάσιν Ἑλλησι βαρβάροις, 18), Thebes shall be the first city in Greece proper to receive his cult (23–25). What is true of the god is also true of his following. At the end of the prologue Dionysus addresses his bacchants like this:

ἀλλ', ὦ λιποῦσαι Τμῶλον ἔρυμα Λυδίας,
 θίασος ἐμός, γυναῖκες, ἃς ἐκ βαρβάρων
 ἐκόμισα παρέδρους καὶ ξυνεμπόρους ἐμοί,
 αἵρεσθε τὰ πικρὰ ἐν πόλει Φρυγῶν
 τύμπανα, ῥέας τε μητρὸς ἐμὰ θ' εὐρήματα,
 βασίλειά τ' ἀμφὶ δώματ' ἐλθοῦσαι τάδε
 κτυπεῖτε Πενθέως, ὡς ὀρᾷ Κάδμου πόλις. (Eur. *Bacch.* 55–61)

³⁸ See also ORANJE (1984: 146).

Onwards, you who have left Tmolus, the fence of Lydia, my festive procession, women, whom I have led from the Barbarians as my companions in the festival and my fellows in travel, take up the kettle-drums that are at home in the cities of the Phrygians, the invention of Mother Rea and of me, and after having marched around this kingly palace (60) here of Pentheus, make noise, so that the city of Cadmus may hear.

Also the bacchantes, we learn, come from Asia (Λυδίας) and bring Asian customs with them (Φρυγῶν). It is worth mentioning that the contrast between Greek and foreign in this passage is combined with the contrast of city and country. Not only do the bacchantes hail from Lydia but from the mountains of Tmolus, which are described as ‘fence of Lydia’ to underscore their mountainous harshness. The foreign bacchantes shall bring their message to the city of Cadmus (Κάδμου πόλις) which is given Pentheus’ kingly palace as an urban attribute (βασίλειά [...] δώματ[α] [...] Πενθέως). The dichotomy of city and country and the dichotomy of Greek and foreign are thus merged together. The choir affirms this double dichotomy only a few verses later in their own song when they say to have brought Dionysus ‘from the Phrygian mountains to the spacious roads of Greece’ (Φρυγίων ἐξ ὁρέων Ἑλλάδος εἰς εὐρυχόρους ἀγυιάς, 86–87). Again, Phrygian mountains’ mark the rural–foreign, ‘spacious roads’ the Greek–urban.

The foreign–native dichotomy is taken up by the choir in the second stasimon. Here, the question of receiving the foreigners is posed to Dirce, a nymph representing Thebes, who had received Dionysus in the mythical past but now, as city of Thebes, is unwilling to receive the choir of bacchantes (519–536).³⁹ This passage is important because it transforms the merely mythological foreignness of Dionysus and his flock – the fact that the cult of Dionysus is somehow culturally understood to be ‘Asian’ rather than Greek – into a current social issue: Will Thebes accept the foreign bacchantes into their community? We will see later that this transformation from mythological into social is recurring in the play.⁴⁰

³⁹ See SEAFORD (1996: 191–192) for the ritual context of this scene.

⁴⁰ SEAFORD (1996: 192) notes for this scene that ‘in the *Ba[cchae]* [the tragic chorus participates in the action] more than elsewhere in Eur[ipides].’

After these different aspects of foreignness have been shown, it remains to point to the great number of passages where Dionysus is called a foreigner by Pentheus, which I will represent with three examples, Eur. *Bacch.* 460; 642; 800:

πρῶτον μὲν οὖν μοι λέξον ὅστις εἶ γένος. 460
First of all, tell me what's your origin.

πέπονθα δεινά: διαπέφευγέ μ' ὁ ξένος, 642
Terrible misery! The stranger has escaped me!

ἄπόρῳ γε τῷδε συμπεπλέγμεθα ξένῳ, 800
I am stuck with this annoying stranger

Pentheus, the representant of the city, constantly reminds the god, his following and the audience of Dionysus' status as a foreigner. His part is the official refusal to allow Dionysus, his cult and his following entrance into the society of Thebes.

Both Dionysus and the Bacchantes are styled as foreigners by the Thebans. While the bacchantes also ascribe foreignness to themselves, the ascription of foreignness especially by Pentheus is always negative. The repulsion of the foreigners by the people of the city lays the foundation for part of the conflict that is thematized in the play.

c) Dionysus, friend of slaves

The third preliminary point marks the fact that Dionysus is recurrently depicted as a friend of the servants of Pentheus. This fact is important as it locates Dionysus, his cult and his following socially in Thebes – with the servant class.

When the servants of Pentheus bring the arrested god in the second epeisodion, they retell their encounter and do not forget to also give the friendly exchange between the prey and its hunters. They did not capture the god out of their own free will:

ὦ ξέν', οὐχ ἐκὼν 441
ἄγω σε, ... (Eur. *Bacch.* 441–442)

Stranger, I do not persecute you out of my own free will, ...

In the third epeisodion, the messenger advises Pentheus to honour Dionysus because of the miracles he has seen on mount Cithaeron:

ὥστ', εἰ παρῆσθα, τὸν θεὸν τὸν νῦν ψέγεις 712
εὐχαῖσιν ἂν μετῆλθες εἰσιδὼν τάδε. (Eur. *Bacch.* 712–713)

So that, if you had been there, you would approach the god, whom now you censure, with prayers seeing these wonders.

Both of these extracts show that Pentheus' slaves take a positive picture from Dionysus and counsel Pentheus in his favour. This behaviour is particularly remarkable as it diametrically opposes the stance of the irate king, and is, if one looks at the scenes with a realistic expectation, a high risk for the servants. That they still stick to the foreigner, characterizes the friendly relationship between the two as authentic while it undermines the credibility of the king's accusations against the god.

To conclude the preliminary points, it can be said that the opposition of city and countryside is one recurring line of meaning in the *Bacchae*. In this opposition, the Cadmeans take the side of the city and Dionysus and his following the side of nature and the countryside. In alignment with this opposition is a second opposition, the one of foreign and Greek.⁴¹ Also in this opposition, Dionysus and his following take the space of the foreigners. Lastly, it can be said that Dionysus stands in a special relationship to the servants, slaves and the imprisoned of the community. He is a friend of the slaves. I can now resume my original endeavour, return to the choir of bacchantes and try to answer the two questions formulated before: what is the role of the choir of bacchantes in Theban society in the play, and does one have to understand the choir of *Bacchae* as slaves in any way similar to the way Soyinka's adaptation does?

4. The Bacchantes as foreign rural servants in Euripides *Bacchae*

A social placing of the bacchantes in the society of Thebes is not self-evident as the bacchantes of the myth of Dionysus ordinarily would not

⁴¹ Compare ORANJE (1984: 146–148).

have any social role in any society; they are a prop of the myth, the following of Dionysus, and much like satyrs or amazons do not actually belong into any social reality. Social reality, at least at some level of interpretation, I argue, plays into Euripides' tragedy also where the mythological context would forbid it. The bacchantes in Euripides are also foreign rural servants in a social setting in the same sense that Euripides' Medea, apart from being a mythological figure, is also a married woman in a realistic social setting.⁴² That this level of meaning is present also in the *Bacchae* can be shown by the following passages.

The best place to show this is the encounter of the bacchantes and the messenger in the fifth epeisodion (1024–1042), which I am giving in three extracts:

ὦ δῶμ' ὃ πρὶν ποτ' εὐτύχεις ἀν' Ἑλλάδα,
 Σιδωνίου γέροντος, ὃς τὸ γηγενὲς
 δράκοντος ἔσπειρ' Ὀφειος ἐν γαίᾳ θέρος,
 ὥς σε στενάζω, δούλος ὦν μὲν, ἀλλ' ὅμως
 χρηστοῖσι δούλοις συμφορὰ τὰ δεσποτῶν. (Eur. *Bacch.* 1024–1028)

1025

O House of Greece, before then happy, of the old man from Sidon, who sowed the earthborn harvest (1025) in the lands of the Snake, how deeply do I sigh about you, even if only a slave, but for good slaves the misery of their masters is nonetheless a shared experience.

The passage is particularly well endowed with the lines of social meaning I sketched above. The messenger gives an address of three verses to the city of Thebes, reiterating the circumstances of its foundation. This he juxtaposes to himself, a slave. With this social self-placement and the resulting opposition of the masters and the slave, the scene is set for the following dialog between the messenger and the bacchantes.

⁴² That the specificity of Euripides' treatment of Medea is the tension between the social realism of a story about an abandoned woman in a Greek polis and the mythic tale of a male-heroic outsider figure, has been stated more or less expressly by many authors, for a few recent ones see FOLEY (2000), MUELLER (2017), SWIFT (2017), SILVA (2019).

τί δ' ἔστιν; ἐκ βακχῶν τι μηνύεις νέον;
Πενθεὺς ὄλωλεν, παῖς Ἐχίονος πατρός. 1030
ὦναξ Βρόμιε, θεὸς φαίνῃ μέγας. (Eur. *Bacch.* 1029–1031)

Bacchants: What's up? From the bacchants, what news can you report?

Messenger: Pentheus is dead, the son of his father Echion. (1030)

Bacchants: Lord Bromius, your greatness as a god is disclosed!

The choir asks for news from Mount Cithaeron; the messenger proclaims that Pentheus has been destroyed; the choir rejoices with an address to their god Dionysus under the guise of Bromius. A social encounter follows.

πῶς φήεις; τί τοῦτ' ἔλεξας; ἦ 'πὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς 1032
χαίρεις κακῶς πράσσουσι δεσπόταις, γύναϊ; (Eur. *Bacch.* 1032–1033)

Messenger: How can you say this? What have you just said? Do you seriously rejoice over my masters, who are in bad shape, woman?

The messenger reacts with astonishment. He would have expected that the bacchants like him are slaves of Pentheus and like him, would share in the misfortune of his master – like he had just said above: ‘for good slaves the misery of their masters is a shared experience’ (1028).

The choir answers to this with a statement that again is a social placing of themselves, Eur. *Bacch.* 1034–1035:

εὐάζω ξένα μέλεσι βαρβάροις:
οὐκέτι γὰρ δεσμῶν ὑπὸ φόβῳ πτήσσω. 1035

I jubilate strange things with my foreign song:

Because not anymore I am struck with fear from chains. (1035)

They do not share in the *symphora* of the slave because they are foreigners, who with Pentheus' demise are now free of the threat of imprisonment – a threat that had been real for these bacchants earlier in the play.

The statement that they are foreigners and therefore not loyally bound to Pentheus is affirmed by the bacchants when they refer to their

master Dionysus. The messenger–slave accepts this statement although he still takes the behaviour of the bacchantes to be at least insensitive to the circumstances.

The interest of this passage lies in the expectation that the messenger seems to bring to the bacchantes that they, like him, are slaves of Pentheus. The bacchantes decline this, saying that they are foreigners and followers of a foreign god. The roles of foreigner and slave, though, are far from exclusive in most societies, in ancient Athens and in what an Athenian expectation of mythical Thebes would have been. The remarkable thing for the messenger is that these foreign women assert to be foreigners but deny to be slaves. The most interesting point about this scene for my purpose is that the realistic expectation of the messenger is that people like the bacchantes would usually be slaves and should behave accordingly. The bacchantes are exceptional because they do not.

The next passage reaffirms that the realistic role of the bacchantes in the Theban society the audience might have imagined would be that of slaves. When Pentheus incarcerates Dionysus at the end of the second episode, he also announces that he will have the bacchantes sold as slaves or brought back from the kettle drums to the weavers' looms of the house – the realistic occupation of city women:

ἐκεῖ χορεύει: τάσδε δ' ἅς ἄγων πάρει
κακῶν συνεργούς ἢ διεμπολήσομεν
ἢ χεῖρα δούπου τοῦδε καὶ βύρσης κτύπου
παύσας, ἐφ' ἱστοῖς δμῳίδας κεκτήσομαι. (Eur. *Bacch.* 511–514)

511

There you may dance! And those to whom you are a leader as helpers in bad deeds, either we will sell them, or, after I have stopped their hand from this thud and from the banging of the drum, I will make them fit as slave girls at the looms!

The passage again shows that the bacchantes are exceptional because they do not do, what they would do in a realistic setting.

A third passage renews this expectation. When, in the exodus, Agave, still not quite herself, brags of the gruesome slaughter of, unknowingly, her son on Mount Cithaeron, the bacchantes direct her to address her speech to the citizens of Thebes. In this constellation the bacchantes

take the role of supporting women in the household of Agave – most likely slaves – a role they do not actually have, but at least Agave in her delusion takes them to be:

δειξόν νυν, ὦ τάλαινα, σὴν νικηφόρον 1200
 ἀστοῖσιν ἄγραν ἦν φέρουσ’ ἐλήλυθας. (Eur. *Bacch.* 1200–1201)

Now show, miserable woman, to the citizens your glorious bounty
 (1200) that you have gone out to bring back!

This scene is important for the social constellation of the play also in a wider sense that can help the understanding of the play along the lines of my questions. As I remarked earlier, a fitting focalizer for an Athenian audience in the *Bacchae* is conspicuously absent: in all of the play one meets the Cadmeans and their slaves and servants, but one does not meet the class of people that form the backbone of polis society: citizens.⁴³ Only in the scene between Agave and the choir we find a clear ascription of citizens. After being ordered to show her bounty to the citizens of Thebes, Agave gives a triumphal speech to the audience, who is, thus, indirectly declared to be, what they also are in real life: the citizens of the polis. In as much as Agave’s fury is the ultimate sign and reason for the Cadmeans to be expelled from their position of power, the audience, the citizens of the polis, are invited to judge this themselves from Agave’s deluded monolog. The facilitators of this determining situation within the play are the bacchantes.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, one can summarize the question of the choir as follows: Do the bacchantes also have a social role in a realistic imagination of mythical Thebes? This has to be answered in the affirmative. The bacchantes are mythical figures but they are also characterized as people who would

⁴³ This is not entirely true. As I have shown above, Cadmus and Tiresias are given the typical attributes of city-dwellers including rhetorical speech, which make them appear like *polites* – in breach of their mythological roles; Tiresias is indeed a figure that is offered as a focalizer for the audience in the beginning, but he does not appear anymore after verse 369. For a recent interpretation of Tiresias in the whole play, see SEIDENSTICKER (2016).

realistically be slaves if it wasn't for Dionysus. This social role of the bacchants in mythical Thebes puts them in a social struggle and has an impact on the entire play. Hans Oranje discusses the special quality of the choir in *Bacchae* and notes their 'involvement in the scene which is being played, and in the actions of, and actions against, the character with whom they are linked.' This function, like Oranje continues, 'exceeds that of a „Programmiert“ or even of a „Szenenreflex“ in the sense of Rode.⁴⁴ But while Oranje, based on his observations, shies back from 'class[ing] the bacchants as a character in the play' and sees their function still as 'interpret[ing] moods,'⁴⁵ I would go beyond this because of the social function of the bacchants inscribed in the text. It is of course true that the bacchants give supporting volume to the words of Dionysus, but what is called the 'drama of liberation' by Oranje⁴⁶ is the drama of the bacchants more than that of the god. As much as Dionysus is a god in the play, there is never any doubt that he will receive what is his right. The situation of the bacchants is much more precarious – they would be slaves – and therefore interesting for the tragedy. More than setting the 'mood', it is the fear, the rage and the triumph of the bacchants – the urgency of their struggle – that carries the audience through the tragedy and gives coherency to the otherwise fragmented play.

Looking back at Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides. A Communion Rite* the significance of the social role of the bacchants/slaves is thus similar but also different in the two plays. While in Soyinka's version the audience is invited to identify with the slave leader and his group, *Bacchae* leaves the audience in the position of the otherwise missing *polis*-citizens. Even with the social function of the bacchants in mythical Thebes which I have tried to show, the social struggle of the rural foreign servants remains safely stored away in the twisted mirror-reality of Thebes as an Anti-Athens that Froma Zeitlin has described.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, the steady tension around the roles of slaves and bacchants adds to the dramatic power of the play. The Theban picture of an unbounded

⁴⁴ ORANJE (1984: 157).

⁴⁵ ORANJE (1984: 158–159).

⁴⁶ ORANJE (1984: 158).

⁴⁷ ZEITLIN (1990b).

social struggle carries the numerous appearances of the choir through the play, and gives an urgency to Euripides’ *Bacchae* that would be impossible if the bacchantes were simply mythological props in a play about Dionysus and Pentheus.

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The Paleographic Error: The Hellenistic Scholars' Studies about *Iliad* 14, 241 and 21, 363

The skills and care by which the Hellenistic scholarship studies the Homeric text are well-known by scholars. Despite several researches concerning the methodology of Alexandrian scholars (διόρθωσις) have been published in the last decades, the Hellenistic studies about the paleographic error produced by copyists in delivering the Homeric text has not been studied and relevant essays on the subject are lacking.

*In order to clarify the method adopted by Hellenistic scholars to acknowledge and emend the paleographic errors in the Homeric texts, I have taken into account their exegesis on Il. 14, 241 and Il. 21, 363. As regards Il. 14, 241 I have studied two scholia handed down by the manuscript tradition and reaching back to the exegesis of Porphyry and Herodianus; on the other hand, as concerning Il. 21, 363 I have analysed two scholia handed down by the manuscript tradition and the P. Oxy. 221 (2nd century AD) which gives us information about the book 21 of the *Iliad*.*

The aim of my research is: (1) supporting the thesis about the Hellenistic scholars' skills in working on the Homeric text; (2) studying how the acknowledgement of the paleographic error is used in order to restore the Homeric text; (3) showing how in the Hellenistic age this exegetical method has been adopted by several scholars.¹

Keywords: Homer, *Iliad*, Aristarchus, Herodianus, Hellenistic Scholarship

1. Premise

It is well known that Alexandrian philologists worked on the Homeric text with great care and attention.²

In this contribution I will examine two *scholia* that shed light on the Alexandrian diorthotic practice: *Sch. Porph. vel ex. Il. 14, 241c* and *Sch.*

¹ The present paper is the result of a re-work of my master thesis discussed at the Università degli Studi di Genova the day 20 October 2020.

² See, e.g., MONTANARI (1998; 2015a; 2015b; 2018); MONTANA (2011; 2012; 2015); PAGANI (2015).

ex. *Il.* 21, 263e.³ Through the analysis of these *scholia* I will try to demonstrate how the Alexandrian philologists were aware that some textual corruptions may have been produced because of the inability to understand the previous alphabet⁴ and leading to a reading error, thus committing what today is commonly called a ‘paleographic error’.

In the year 403/402 BC, under the archonship of Euclides – as it is known – the Eastern Ionic alphabet (dark blue) was adopted by Athens to write official documents,⁵ previously written in the Attic alphabet (light blue).⁶ The graphemes E/O, applied in Attica before the reform, were used to indicate generally the short light and dark vowel, the long open vowel, and the long closed vowel,⁷ while in the Ionian of Asia, which later became the standard scripture, there were more specific graphemes or digraphs to indicate the short closed (E/O), long open (H/Ω), and long closed (EI/OΥ) sounds. This transition could lead to misunderstandings of texts written in the previous alphabet, thus generating errors that spread throughout the tradition due to the copying of μεταχαρακτηρίσαντες;⁸ already in the Hellenistic age exegetes, at least since Aristarchus, show themselves aware of the risks inherent in this transition, understanding the philological consequences of the phenomenon that occurred in the fifth century.

Thanks to the analysis of the passages taken into account (preceded by a contextualization of the Homeric text to which they refer and an examination of their presence in the manuscripts that carry them, i.e. Venetus A and Townleianus) it will be possible to see how the Hellenistic philologists offer solutions to the corruptions produced in the text by proposing hypotheses about errors’ development.

³ The text of the *scholia* presented is that of ERBSE: see ERBSE (1971: 269) for the *sch.* Did. *Il.* 7, 238c² and ERBSE (1974) for the *sch.* Ariston. *Il.* 11, 104a¹. I myself have sifted through the manuscript witnesses.

⁴ See WEST (2001: 21–23) and PALMER (1980: 94–97).

⁵ See CASSIO (2016²: 117).

⁶ For a taxonomy of Greek alphabets and their coloring see KIRCHHOFF (1877) and CASSIO (2016²: 115–116).

⁷ The signs for the latter sounds will become more regularly fixed around 350 BC: see CASSIO (2016²: 117).

⁸ See COBET (1876: 289) and WEST (2001: 22–23).

2. *Iliad* 14: a case study for μεταχαρακτηρίσαντες

In the course of the book 14 of the *Iliad*, the goddess Hera intends to make her husband Zeus fall into a deep sleep, after having lured him using her sensuality, so as to be able to support the Greeks, contrary to what the Chronius' son had arranged. She then asks Aphrodite for love and lust so that she can go – says Hera misleadingly – to Ocean and Thetis, who have been clashing for a long time: she hopes to make peace between them by using persuasive words and beauty. Aphrodite, believing the deception, decides to help her: she pulls out of her chest an embroidered brassiere, which had hidden inside love, desire, secret conversation and persuasion, and suggests Hera to wear it. The wife of Zeus descends from Olympus and reaches the island of Lemnos, the city of the divine Thoas, where she meets Ὑπνος, brother of Θάνατος,⁹ to whom she turns to force her husband to sleep.

Il. 14, 231–241.

ἐνθ' Ὑπνω ξύμβλητο κασιγνήτῳ Θανάτοιο,
 ἐν τ' ἄρα οἱ φῦ χειρὶ ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζεν·
 “Ὑπνε ἄναξ πάντων τε θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων,
 ἡμὲν δὴ ποτ' ἐμὸν ἔπος ἔκλυες, ἡδ' ἔτι καὶ νῦν
 πείθει· ἐγὼ δέ κέ τοι ἰδέω χάριν ἡματα πάντα.
 κοιμήσόν μοι Ζηνὸς ὑπ' ὀφρύσιν ὅσσε φαεινῶ
 αὐτίκ' ἐπεὶ κεν ἐγὼ παραλέξομαι ἐν φιλότῃ.
 δῶρα δέ τοι δώσω καλὸν θρόνον ἄφθιτον αἰεὶ
 χρύσειον· Ἡφαιστος δέ κ' ἐμὸς πάϊς ἀμφιγυήεις
 τεύξει' ἀσκήσας, ὑπὸ δὲ θοῇν ποσὶν ἦσει,
 τῷ κεν ἐπισχοίης λιπαροῦς πόδας εἰλαπινάζων.”

There with Hypnos he met, brother of Thanatos,
 shook hands with him and spoke words to him and apostrophized him by name:
 “Hypnos, lord of all gods and all mortals,
 in the past you have listened to my words, so also now
 Listen to me: and I will be grateful to you forever.
 Under the eyelashes of Zeus, assume for me the two shining eyes
 immediately after I have lain beside him in love.

⁹About the god Hypnos see GOSTOLI–CERRI (1998: 755), Hes. *Th.* 211–232 and RICCIARDELLI (2018: 129–132).

As a gift then I will give you a beautiful throne always immortal
golden; and Hephaestus, my crooked-legged son
will build it adorning it, under this a stool for your feet will be there,
on which you may spread your scented feet while you eat.”

The *scholium* at verse 241 is located at folium 185r of Venetus A: it is the last in the right/outer margin and ends in the lower margin. The lemma ἐπίσχοιες is present. In the available Iiadic witnesses, both ancient and medieval emerges an alternation between the forms ἐπισχοίας (put in text in West’s edition) ἐπίσχοιες, ἐπισχοίης. Venetus A features ἐπισχοῖες in the Homeric text. The text of the *scholium* is written with several tachygraphic signs. The text contained in the ms. ἐπισχοίης τὸ ἐπισχοίην is corrected by Cobet, and consequently by Erbse, to ἐπισχοίην τὸ ἐπισχοίης¹⁰. The end-of-colon symbol is found only with the dicolon.

Sch. Porph. vel ex. Il. 14, 241c. ἐπίσχοιες: τῷ ἐπίσχοιμι ἀκόλουθόν ἐστι τὸ ἐπίσχοις, τῷ δὲ ἐπισχοίην τὸ ἐπισχοίης· καὶ ἴσως ἔδει οὕτως ἔχειν, παρεφθάρη δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν μεταχαρακτηρισάντων· τῷ δὲ χαρκτηῖρι γενόμενον ὅμοιον τῷ “ιοίην” καὶ “ἀγαγοίην” παρὰ Σαπφοῖ (fr. 182 et 169 L. – P.) καὶ τῷ “πεπαγοίην” παρ’ Εὐπόλιδι (Eur. fr. 472 K. – A.) εἰκότως ἐβαρυτονήθη τὸ ἐπισχοίης, γενόμενον ἐπίσχοιες ὡς Αἰολικόν. οὕτω καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος ὁ Κοττιαεὺς ἐν τῷ ἰ’ τῶν Παντοδαπῶν. Α

Sch. Porph. vel ex. Il. 14, 241c. you could lay: ἐπίσχοις is the form corresponding to ἐπίσχοιμι, ἐπισχοίης to ἐπισχοίην; and perhaps it was necessary for it to be so, but it was corrupted by transliterators: being similar to the (verbal) form ιοίην (*I would go*) and ἀγαγοίην (*I would lead*) in Sappho and to πεπαγοίην (*I would fix*) in Eupolis,¹¹ it is rightly without the accent on the last syllable ἐπισχοίης (*you could lay*), which becomes ἐπίσχοιες as Aeolic. In this way also Alexander of Cotiaeum in book 9 of the *Miscellaneous Things*.

¹⁰ See ERBSE (1974: 619) and COBET (1876: 291).

¹¹ See KASSEL–AUSTIN (1986: 533–534) and OLSON (2017: 235–236).

Erbse is uncertain in attributing this *scholium* to a class, proposing the alternative between Porphyrian material¹² and the repertoire of exegetical *scholia*. A different hypothesis by Schrader also envisaged the possibility that it was a VMK *scholium*, notably Herodian.¹³

The debated issue responds to the question concerning the transition from the Attic to the Ionic alphabet.¹⁴ In this case the exegete analyzes the writing error due to the misunderstanding of the ancient graph E (with its triple value of ε, η, ει). The scholium should be examined in conjunction with *Sch. Hrd. Il. 14, 241b1*:

*Sch. Hrd. καθ.*¹⁵ *Il. 14, 241b1*. {τῷ κεν} ἐπίσχοιες: οὕτως τὴν γραφὴν παρατίθεται ὁ Ἡρωδιανὸς ἐν τῷ ιζ' τῆς Καθόλου (1, 469, 14) καὶ λέγει ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐπίσχοις πλεονασμὸν εἶναι τοῦ ε ἢ συστολὴν τοῦ ἐπισχοίης. A

Sch. Hrd. καθ. Il. 14, 241b1. {on which} you might lay: Herodian thus proposes this spelling in the seventeenth book of the *General Prosody* and says that there is a pleonasm of ε from the form ἐπίσχοις or an abbreviation from ἐπισχοίης. A

Herodian was thus witnessing a lesson ἐπίσχοιες, which he claimed corresponded either to the aorist optative form of thematic verbs (ἐπίσχοις) or to that of athematic verbs (ἐπισχοίης), through various mutations (addition of ε and abbreviation of η, respectively).

¹² His hypothesis had been based on ERBSE's belief, see ERBSE (1960: 96) that the *Homeric Questions* were the exclusive conduit of material from Alexander of Cotiaeum in the *Iliadic scholia*; however, this idea was later discussed (see, e.g., VAN DER VALK [1963–1964: 1, 113–114] and DYCK [1991: 312; 324]). For the connections of Porphyry's work with the Homeric scholastic tradition see ERBSE (1969) IL. For the Porphyry's *Homeric Questions* see SCHRÂDER (1880–1890) and MACPHAIL (2011).

¹³ See SCHRÂDER (1880–1890) and ERBSE (1974: 619).

¹⁴ See WEST (2001: 21–22), CASSIO (2016²: 115–118) and COBET (1876: 289–292, in particular 291 about this *scholium*).

¹⁵ Herodian *scholium* derived not from the *Iliake prosodia* (epitomized and merged with the other three works of Aristonicus, Didymus, and Nicanores), but from the *Katholike prosodia*.

In our *scholium* we further read that one (ἐπίσχοις) is derived from the form ἐπίσχοιμι, the other (ἐπισχοίης)¹⁶ from ἐπισχοίην. The hypothesis is then proposed (ἴσως) that the original form in the text should in fact have been ἐπισχοίης. We then move on to the genesis of error's analysis, which is explained with terminology that finds significant consonance with the one applied by modern philological analysis: the correct form of the verb, in fact, became corrupted (παρεφθάρη) due to the errors by the copyists. It is extremely interesting to note that the scholiast reports the term (in the masculine plural genitive of the aorist participle) τῶν μεταχαρακτηρισάντων to indicate the copyists who produced the text by putting it from an ancient method of writing into a different one, from the Athenian alphabet (light blue) to the Ionic one (dark blue).¹⁷

The exegete also notes that ἐπισχοίης, rightly, is not accented on the last syllable,¹⁸ so both ἐπισχοίης and the alleged Aeolian form ἐπίσχοιες from this point of view are analogous (being both devoid of accent on the last syllable).

We find in closing the mention of an authority, namely the ninth book of the *Miscellaneous Things* of Alexander of Cotiaenum,¹⁹ to whom is not clear, however, how much of the preceding treatment must be referred.

Alexander of Cotiaenum was born around 70/80 AD and died around the middle of the second century. He lived in Rome where he used to be a teacher (sophistês), which allowed him to gather a large fortune. He was the teacher of the rhetorician Aelius Aristides, and was chosen by the emperor Antoninus Pius as the tutor of his adopted sons Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. Less than twenty fragments have come

¹⁶ The verb is also analyzed only from a semantic point of view by Eustathius in 983, 4–5 (see VAN DER VALK [1979: 631]) κοινότερον δὲ ἐπισχεῖν λέγεται τὸ κρατῆσαι 'Prevailing is most commonly called holding'.

¹⁷ For comparisons between Ancient and Medieval μεταχαρακτηρισμός see REYNOLDS–WILSON (2016: 53–58; 85–86).

¹⁸ A prosodic issue, by the way, that reinforces the hypothesis that Herodian is behind this note.

¹⁹ See MONTANA (2018: 1–29) (to which we refer for further bibliography); DYCK (1991: 307–355); MURPHY (1969).

down to us, which testify to interests in 1) lexicon and etymology, 2) grammatical morphology, 3) exegesis. His interest in Homer is testified to us by quotations in Porphyry's *Homeric Matters* and homeric *scholia*.

3. *Iliad* 21, 363: κνίσην μελδόμενος ο μελδομένου?

The second evidence of Alexandrian *diorthosis* related to paleographical error begins with the exegetical scholastic in *Il.* 21, 363e.

Achilles, after having slaughtered innumerable Trojans, is heading towards Ilium, but the river Scamander decides to stop his advance with the impetus of its whirling waters and asks for help to his brother Simoeis so that, joining the fury of their waters, they can protect Troy. They succeed in their intent for a short time, since Hera, worried about Achilles' fate, promptly urges her son Hephaestus to generate a great fire on the plain of Troy while she goes in the middle of the Ocean to blow the hot wind Notus. Hephaestus carries out his mother's orders by going to the plain and blinding up a great fire that sets everything on fire: first the corpses of the men killed by the Pelides, then, approaching the trees around the river (elms, willows and tamarisks), the river plants (lotus, rush, Cyperus)²⁰ finally it devastates the fishes and eels in the river by boiling its waters.

Il. 21, 354–371.

καίετο δ' ἰς ποταμοῖο ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζεν·
 Ἥφαιστ', οὐ τις σοί γε θεῶν δύνατ' ἀντιφερίζειν,
 οὐδ' ἂν ἐγὼ σοί γ' ὦδε πυρὶ φλεγέθοντι μαχοίμην.
 λῆγ' ἔριδος, Τρῳᾶς δὲ καὶ ἀντίκα δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς
 ἄστεος ἐξελάσειε· τί μοι ἔριδος καὶ ἀρωγῆς;
 φῆ πυρὶ καιόμενος, ἀνὰ δ' ἔφλυε καλὰ ῥέεθρα.
 ὥς δὲ λέβης ζεῖ ἔνδον ἐπειγόμενος πυρὶ πολλῷ
 κνίσην μελδόμενος ἀπαλοτρεφέος σιάλοιο
 πάντοθεν ἀμβολάδην, ὑπὸ δὲ ξύλα κάγκανα κεῖται,
 ὥς τοῦ καλὰ ῥέεθρα πυρὶ φλέγετο, ζέε δ' ὕδωρ·
 οὐδ' ἔθελε προρέειν, ἀλλ' ἴσχετο· τεῖρε δ' αὐτμή
 Ἥφαιστοιο βίηφι πολύφρονος. αὐτὰρ ὁ γ' Ἥρην
 πολλὰ λισσόμενος ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·
 “Ἥρῃ τίπτε σὸς υἱὸς ἐμὸν ῥόον ἔχραε κήδειν

²⁰ Typical marsh plant very similar to papyrus.

ἐξ ἄλλων; οὐ μὲν τοι ἐγὼ τόσον αἰτιός εἰμι
ὅσπον οἱ ἄλλοι πάντες, ὅσοι Τρώεσσιν ἄρωγοί.

Burning with the strength of the river, he addressed him and called out to him:
'Hephaestus, none among the gods can compete with thee,
not even I would fight with you who are so fiery.
Suspend the dispute. In fact the Trojans even immediately the divine Achilles
from the stronghold you drive; what [matters] to me of contention and defense?'
He spoke burning with fire, and over it seethed the beautiful currents.
As also a pot seethes within being pressed by much fire
liquefying the fat of the fattened swine
on every side shuddering, and underneath lies the crackling wood,
so its beautiful currents with fire burned, and boiled the water;
and did not want to flow, but held back: weakened it the blaze
of Hephaestus versatile with violence; but that to Hera
much pleading, addressed words that fly:
'Hera, why did thy son plummet to torment me
among the others? Yet I am not so responsible as all the others,
as many as come to the Trojans' aid.

The Genavensis manuscript bears at folium 719 a long *scholium* at verse 363 attributable to the class of *scholia exegetica*. It is written in the right-outside margin (with the exception of the last line, for which the exegete uses the lower mg. since there is no more space in the outer one), and is linked to the text, more precisely to the word κνίσῃ (this is the variant present in the Homeric text of the ms.), by means of a symbol identical to the tachygraphic sign for ὅτι and is without a lemma (Nicole, followed by Erbse, proposes its integration in the form <κνίσῃν μελδόμενος:>).²¹ There are numerous tachygraphic signs for the desinences and conjunctions γάρ, καί, δέ. Throughout the text there is a recurring error of gemination of the sibilant in the word – declined in several cases – κνίσῃ: there are examples in the third, fourth and seventh lines. The end is marked by its scholastic sign.

Sch. ex. Il. 21, 363e. <κνίσῃν μελδόμενος:> τὴν κνίσαν τήκων. καὶ Καλλίστρατος ἐξηγεῖται: “τὴν πιμελὴν τήκων ἀπαλοῦ συός”. Κομανὸς ὁ Ναυκρατίτης γράφει σὺν τῷ ν, “κνίσῃν μελδόμενος”, ὅπως κείσεται <τὸ> παθητικὸν ἀντὶ τοῦ ἐνεργητικοῦ τοῦ μέλδων

²¹ See NICOLE (1891) *ad. loc.* and ERBSE (1977: 212).

τὴν κνῖσαν, καίων. Πεισίστρατος δὲ ὁ Ἐφέσιος καὶ Ἑρμογένης ἐν τῷ Περι τῶν <πέντε> προβλημάτων· “ἐγγράπτο, φησί, ΜΕΛΔΟΜΕΝΟ, καὶ δεόν ἦν <τό> υ προσθεῖναι, κακῶς δέ τις τὸ ς προσέγραψεν.” ὁ γὰρ νοῦς “τῇ κνίσῃ τηκόμενου τοῦ σῦος”. ὁ μὲν <οὔν> ποιητὴς μέλδεσθαι φησι τὰ ἐψόμενα, οἱ δὲ πεποιήκασι τὸν λέβητα τηκόμενον. ἡ δὲ αἰτία γέγονεν ἐν τῷ μὴ τοὺς ἀρχαίους προστιθέναι τῷ ο τὸ υ, ἀλλ’ ὅταν τὴν συλλαβὴν ταύτην βούλωνται γράφειν ου, τὸ ἐν γράμμα σημειοῦσθαι μόνον. γεγραμμένου δὴ οὕτως, “ΚΝΙΣΗΙ ΜΕΛΔΟΜΕΝΟ” καὶ οὐ προσκειμένου τοῦ υ, ὁ μεταγράφων εἰς τὴν νῦν γραμματικὴν οὐκ ἐνόησεν ὅτι, “μελδομένου” ἦν, ἀλλ’ ἄνευ τοῦ υ ἀναγινώσκων ἀδιανόητον ἡγεῖτο καὶ ἡμαρτημένον εἶναι· διόπερ προσέθηκε ἀντὶ τοῦ υ τὸ ς, μελδόμενος ποιήσας. γράφεται οὖν ὁ λέβης τηκόμενος ἀντὶ τοῦ <τηκόμενου> ἀπαλοτρεφέος σιάλοιο. εἰ δέ τις τὸ τηκόμενος φήσῃ ἴσον εἶναι τῷ τήκων, παραθεῖς ὅτι καὶ ὁ λοιδορῶν λοιδορούμενος λέγεται ἢ, “πεπληγυῖα” (*Il.* 5, 763; *Od.* 10, 238) <ἀντὶ τοῦ πλήσσουσα> καὶ, “πέπληγον δὲ χορόν” (*Od.* 7, 264) ἀντὶ τοῦ ἔτυπτον, κατανοεῖτω τὴν ἀνομοιότητα· βιάσεται γὰρ λέγειν “ὥς δὲ λέβης πυρὶ πολλῷ τήκων”, κωλυούσης τῆς ἐπιφερομένης λέξεως· ἔσται γὰρ ἀσύνετον τὸ σιάλοιο. φανερόν οὖν ὅτι λέγεται τηκόμενου σιάλοιο ζεῖν τὸν λέβητα. οὐ προσγεγραφομένου δὲ πρότερον τοῦ υ, ὁ μεταγράφων, ὅπερ ἔφην, ἐλλείπειν νομίσας τὴν λέξιν, προσέθηκε τὸ ς. Ge

Sch. ex. *Il.* 21, 363e. <κνίσῃν μελδόμενος> dissolving the fat. Calistratus also interprets “melting the fat of a tender swine.” Comanus of Naucratis writes it with the υ (i. e. in the accusative) “κνίσῃν μελδόμενος” so that there is the passive (i. e. μελδόμενος) instead of the active μέλδων τὴν κνῖσαν, meaning burning. Instead Pisistratus of Ephesus and Hermogenes in the writing *On the Five Problems* say: “It was written ΜΕΛΔΟΜΕΝΟ and it was necessary to add the υ, but mistakenly one added the sigma: in fact the concept is “while the pig melts in the fat”. <So> the poet says that what is cooked melts, but some have understood that it was the cauldron that was melted. The cause was determined by the fact that the ancients did not add the υ to ο, but when they wanted to write this syllable ου, they marked only one letter. So since it was written like this “ΚΝΙΣΗΙ ΜΕΛΔΟΜΕΝΟ” and since the υ was not placed near it, the one who transcribed it into the present alphabet did not understand that it was “μελδομένου”,

but reading it without the υ he thought it was unintelligible and believed it was wrong; therefore he placed the sigma in place of the υ , creating μελδόμενος. The melting cauldron is therefore written in place of “<melting> the tender swine”. If one will assert that [the middle form] τηκόμενος is equivalent to [the active one] τήκων, citing as an argument that even λοιδορῶν can be said λοιδορούμενος or, “πεπληγυῖα” (*Il.* 5, 763; *Od.* 10, 238) <in place of πλήσσουσα> and “they beat the ground dancing” (*Od.* 7, 264) instead of ἔτυπτον (they struck), he should try to pay attention to the difference; for it will make it difficult to say “ὥς δὲ λέβης πυρὶ πολλῷ τήκων” (when the cauldron melted with great fire) since the word that follows prevents it: in fact the expression “of the swine” will be unintelligible. It is therefore clear that it is said that while the swine melts, the cauldron boils. Since at first the υ was not written in addition, the copyist, as indeed I have said, judging the word to be lacking, added a sigma.

After providing a simpler formulation to indicate the concept of the melting of fat (μελδόμενος equals τήκων), the *scholium* transmits a doxography that gives an account of an ancient discussion about the correct constitution of the text and, consequently, the interpretation of this passage. The only oscillation documented in the manuscripts in our possession concerns κνίσην/κνίση (as can be seen from West’s edition),²² while the witnesses we possess agree in handing down the participle μελδόμενος in the nominative singular, to be agreed therefore with the the phrase’s subject λέβης (v. 362). The *scholia* records traces of an ancient discussion that concerned not only the alternative between the accusative and dative for κνίσην/κνίση but also the case of the participle. The first reported position is that of Callistratus²³ who interpreted this pericope to mean τὴν πιμελὴν τήκων ἀπαλοῦ σὺς evidently reading κνίσην in the accusative (it is glossed by τὴν πιμελήν), as the object complement of the participle μέλδομενος in the nominative (glossed by τήκων) and taking ἀπαλοτρεφῆος σιάλοιο (‘translated’ by ἀπαλοῦ σὺς) as the specification complement of the object complement.

²² See the Homeric text above mentioned WEST (1998–2000: 2, 257) and MONRO–ALLEN (1963b: 199).

²³ See MONTANA (2007–2008: particular 1–4); MONTANA (2008: *passim*); MONTANA (2012: 47–48); PFEIFFER (1973: 301–302) and BOUDREAUX (2019: 48–51).

Callistratus is a scholar who was, most likely, mentored by Aristophanes of Byzantium. His ἀκμή is placed in the middle of the second century BC. He studied the Homeric poems, Hesiod, Pindar, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, and Cratinus (with less certainty Aeschylus and Eupolis). It is not known whether he made new *ekdoseis* of the texts or worked on those of his master Aristophanes, nevertheless the *sch.* at *Il.* 3, 18a suggests that he edited the Homeric poem (καὶ ἡ Ἀριστοφάνους καὶ ἡ Καλλιστράτου κτλ. 'the edition of Aristophanes and that of Callistratus'). There are 35 certain fragments of Homeric exegesis (15 in the *scholia* to the *Iliad* and 20 to the *Odyssey*, in addition to a couple handed down by etymological tradition): these fragments come from the works *Πρὸς τὰς ἀθετήσεις*, *Περὶ Ἰλιάδος* and *Διορθωτικά*. The *corpus* of *scholia* in which the Alexandrian philologist is most quoted, however, is the one to Aristophanes in which we read his name about 30 times (19 citations in the *Frogs*, 7 in the *Birds* and 6 in the *Wasps*). The sources also mention a miscellaneous collection of his Σύμμικτα and the erudite writing *Περὶ ἑταιρῶν*.

The same textual arrangement and exegesis are attributed by the *scholia* to Comanus of Naucratis.²⁴

Not much is known about this scholar, who lived in the 2nd century BC: he was a contemporary of Aristarchus. We know neither the titles of his works nor the quantity, however, from the twenty-one fragments preserved we can assume that he dealt with exegesis to Homer, although some clues might suggest an interest in Hesiod, in the language of the Attic writers and in prosodic issues. He used the traditional tools of Homeric exegesis: the analysis of the text's literal sense, the use of μεταφορά, and the need to adhere to the historical verisimilitude of Homer's time. Although Aristarchus' fame was greater than that of the Naucratis, here the latter's variant has been reported at the expense of the coincident by Aristarchus':²⁵ as far as we know from another *scholi-*

²⁴ See mainly NOVEMBRI (2018: particularly 2–3) to which we refer for further bibliography, SOLMSEN (1945: 115–116); SCHMIDHAUSER (2008: 331–334) and MONTANA (2015: 141, n. 375).

²⁵ Regarding the relationship between Aristarchus and his contemporary, we would certainly know more from the work *Πρὸς Κομανόν* of Aristarchus himself, of which

um ad loc. (21, 363c), Aristarchus' position thus included:²⁶ κνίσῃν in the accusative, direct complement of μέλδομενος in the nominative.²⁷

Then the analysis, with a δέ that would seem a typical index of the scholiastic compilation, moves on the interpretation of Pisistratus of Ephesus²⁸ and Hermogenes:²⁹ the introductory formulation seems to associate Pisistratus to the opinion of Hermogenes (see *infra*), but the *scholium*'s mentions only the latter's work (known also from *scholium* 363c) entitled Περί τῶν <πέντε>³⁰ προβλημάτων of which apparently it reports a *verbatim* quotation. The text that these scholars thought was correct, is κνίσῃ μέλδομένου ἀπαλοτρεφέως σιάλοιο ('while the tender swine melts in fat') thus believing that the verse contained an absolute genitive with σιάλοιο as subject (with ἀπαλοτρεφέως as attribute) and κνίσῃ as dative of limitation. What is most interesting to our discussion is the explanation that is given to support their interpretation over the traditional one: the two hypothesized that the erroneous confusion in the case of the participle had arisen because of the ancient spelling ΜΕΛΔΟΜΕΝΟ – which in the Attic alphabet represented μέλδομένου: they propose that someone, not understanding the value of the final O, as such unexplained, thought about a fallen sigma and believed he had to restore it, introducing it unduly. The opinion of Hermogenes is also recorded, more briefly, in the *scholium ad Iliad* 21, 363c,³¹ where, however, no mention is made of Pisistratus.³² We cannot say more about the relationship between the two scholars, however it has been speculated that one was a source for the other.³³

we have testimony from *Sch. Did. Il.* 1, 97–99; 2, 798a; 24, 110b¹. Scholars who have interpreted Πρὸς to mean 'against' have assumed that there was adversity between the two scholars (see DYCK [1988: 221–262]); on the contrary, it is possible to interpret the preposition as a dedication.

²⁶ About this position see *scholium* to 21, 363c: ERBSE (1977: 210–212).

²⁷ See WEST (1998–2000: 2, 257).

²⁸ About this author see BACIGALUPO (2020) to which we refer for further bibliography, and SCHMIDT (1987: 65–69).

²⁹ About this author see IPPOLITO (2005) and CADOUX (1938: 233).

³⁰ Integration, clearly, is done on the basis of the *scholium* 21, 363c.

³¹ See ERBSE (1977: 210–212).

³² See BACIGALUPO (2020: 3).

³³ See BACIGALUPO (2020: 3–4).

Not much is known about Pisistratus of Ephesus: the time in which he carried out his activity of exegesis is unknown and he is mentioned only at this point of the *Iliadic scholia* and by Diogenes Laërtius (2, 60).

Information about Hermogenes is more copious. They are conveyed by an inscription of Smyrne (CIG 3311) which also hands down a list of the titles of his works. Son of Caridemus and husband of Melitina (see CIG 3350) he was a great scholar of medicine as evidenced by his *Ἱατρικά*, in 77 books. He also wrote historiographical texts with a *History of Smyrna* and the *Histories of Foundations of Cities*, a *πίναξ Ῥωμαίων καὶ Σμυρναίων*, a *διαδοχὴ κατὰ χρόνους* and other scholarly works including the writing *On the Five Problems*, mentioned in the *scholium* but not recorded in the epigraph.

Going back to the content of the *scholium* at 21, 363e, the discussion continues by pointing out the fact that the participle is of middle diathesis, therefore, in a context where κνίσῃ dative of limitation and not κνίσῃν accusative was read, it is not transitive: μέλδων is different from μελδόμενος as well as τήκων from τηκόμενος. Therefore, the exegete argues that the cauldron boils over while the fat of the swine melts.

We close the *scholium* with the resumption, in *Ringkomposition*, of the crucial theme: the error is due to the misunderstanding of the vowel O because of the ancient μεταχαρακτηρισμός.

Important to consider in our discussion is the papyrus fragment of *P. Oxy.* 221 (TM 60508/LDAB 1631)³⁴ which preserves the so-called *Commentary of Ammonius*³⁵ to *Il.* 21, 1–363. The papyrus, a fragment of a roll, contains on its *verso* the *Commentary*, whose writing, distributed in 17 columns, is assigned to the middle of the 2nd century AD, while the *recto* (*P. Oxy.* 220, first half of the 2nd century AD) contains a metrical treatise.

The attribution to Ammonius, son of Ammonius, is due to an inscription found between column X and XI: Ἀμμώνιος Ἀμμωνίου γραμματικὸς ἐσημειώσαμην. He probably lived between the middle of

³⁴ See GRENFELL–HUNT (1899: 53–85) and for more information about the papyrus the following note and the site: <https://www.trismegistos.org/text/60508>.

³⁵ See PONTANI (2005: 65; 136; 269) and PAGANI (2006: particularly 1–2 about the date of the papyrus).

the 1st century AD and the middle of the 2nd century AD: the dating elements are derived from the same commentary, which provides a *terminus post quem*, containing references to grammarians of Augustan age and a probable *terminus ante quem*, never mentioning the later Herodian, Antonine age. It follows that the identification with other homonyms is impossible since it is known an Ammonius, Ammonii filius, as head of the library of Alexandria, student and successor³⁶ of Aristarchus, composer of a commentary on the *Iliad*, whose activity is placed, however, in the middle of the 2nd century BC, another Ammonius who comments to the *Odyssey* at the end of the 1st century AD is known from P. Lit. Lond. 30 + P. Sijpesteijn 3 (LDAB 1382)³⁷ in which Ammonius is quoted with the monogram AM which is however identified by some with the same Ammonius Alexandrinus disciple of Aristarchus;³⁸ a third Ammonius is the author of a lexicon *De adfinium vocabulorum differentia* whose dating is uncertain, however the material seems not to date back beyond the 1st century AD, not to mention the different horizon of research interests.

The close relationship between Ammonius' *Commentary* and this *scholium* transmitted by the ms. Genavense has been recognized as an indication that the scholar responsible for this layer of the exegetical apparatus of the ms. Ge³⁹ also had at his disposal material in some form derived from this *hypomnema*.⁴⁰

The papyrus testifies that the explanation of μελδόμενος through the hypothesis of an error related to μεταχαρακτηρισμός already dated back to Crates of Mallus (fr. 32 Broggiato).

On this basis two reflections can be made: 1) Pisistratus and Hermogenes did not elaborate the explanation independently, but simply rec-

³⁶ About this Ammonius see MONTANA (2006: 1–3) and D'ALESSANDRO (2018: particularly 109–111).

³⁷ See GRENFELL–HUNT (1899: 54).

³⁸ See D'ALESSANDRO (2018: 160–161).

³⁹ ERBSE identifies this as the first of five hands intervening at different times in the manuscript.

⁴⁰ See ERBSE (1969: XLII; LIX); ERBSE (1977: 78–121); LUNDON (2011: 175–176); PAGANI (2019: 351–352).

orded a doctrine elaborated by Crates⁴¹ alone (see *infra*), reporting, according to Müller,⁴² a *verbatim* quotation (ἐγγέγραπτο – συός);⁴³ 2) it has been argued by Helck⁴⁴ that Pisistratus, along with Hermogenes, was a Cratæan school grammarian, whatever this may mean for a figure like Hermogenes, several centuries away from Crates.

Crates of Mallus was the leading exponent of Hellenistic philology in Pergamum and was a contemporary of Aristarchus. *Suida*⁴⁵ defines him as a 'Stoic philosopher' nicknamed 'the Homeric and the critic'. According to the story of Suetonius (*De grammaticis et rectoribus* 2, 1), we owe to him the birth of philological interest in Rome: he was in fact sent by Attalids in diplomatic mission to the Senate, around 168 BC, but was forced to stay in Rome because of a broken leg, so he devoted himself to teaching. The influences of his Stoicism were also felt on the philological work: in fact he made the theory of costume his own, with the consequent maintenance of a particular and eccentric linguistic form in opposition to the Alexandrian method that preferred the regularity:⁴⁶ this dichotomy, which we inherit from the account of Varro on the alleged dispute between anomalists and analogists, has been greatly reduced by modern criticism; however, we must not forget that this diatribe may entails the circulation of different texts, depending on where the text was written. As far as literary criticism is concerned, it seems that Crates favored the allegorical interpretation of the texts.⁴⁷ The only two titles of his works that have been transmitted regard some of his works of Homeric exegesis: the Διορθωτικά (perhaps in eight or nine books) and the Ὀμηρικά. The Διορθωτικά probably carried the bulk of the philological work on the Homeric poems, with the treatment of critical-textual problems,⁴⁸ unlike the second work of more general argument. The two

⁴¹ About Crates see, for the edition of the text, BROGGIATO (2001: particularly 43–44; 195–197 about our *casus studii*); HELCK (1905). Also see MONTANA (2012: 61–64).

⁴² See MÜLLER (1912: 30).

⁴³ See BACIGALUPO (2020: 3).

⁴⁴ See HELCK (1905: 68; 73); BARTH (1984: 184–185).

⁴⁵ *Suid.* κ 2342 see ADLER (1933: 182).

⁴⁶ See MONTANA (2012: 62).

⁴⁷ See MONTANA (2012: 63).

⁴⁸ As such it is interpreted by ERBSE (1959: 288) and following.

works must have belonged, in all probability, to the genre of the *hypomnemata*,⁴⁹ even if some scholars – like Pfeiffer⁵⁰ – consider them to belong to that of the monograph. It would seem, judging from the surviving fragments, that Crates did not work on an ἔκδοσις⁵¹ of the Homeric poems as Aristarchus did. Little else has come down to us besides fragments on the Homeric writings: a few remnants of exegesis concerning Alcman, Stesychorus, Pindar, Hesiod, and Euripides.

We report below the text of column 17 of *P. Oxy.* 221, rr. 19–34:

κν{ε}ί-
 [σην μελδ]όμενος<:> Ἀρίσταρχος καὶ
 [ῆ Καλλιστ]ράτου σὺν τῶ<ι> ν κνίσην,
 [ἴν' ἡ<ι> σὺς] τὴν κνῖσαν τήκων, ὁμοί-
 [ως τῶι "κ]νίσην δ' ἐκ πεδίου ἄνε
 [μοι φέρο]ν". κνίση δὲ οὐ μόνον ὁ ἐ-
 [πίπλου]ς, ἀλλ<λ>ᾶ πᾶν λίπος. τὰ κν{ε}[ί-]
 [ση δὲ ο]ὐδέποτε εἴρηκεν Ὅμηρο[ς].
 [κυρίως] δ' ἐστὶ μέλδειν, ὡς Δίδυ-
 [μος, τ]ὰ μέλη ἔδειν. ὁμοίωσε δὲ
 [τὴν μέ]ν ὑπὸ τῶ<ι> ὕδατι γῆν τῶ<ι> λέ-
 [βητι, τ]ὸ δ' ὕδωρ τῶ<ι> λίπει. Κράτη[ς]
 [δ' ἐν Δ]ιορθωτικῶν γραφομέ-
 [νου "ME]ΛΔΟ<ME>N<O>" φησὶν ἀντὶ τοῦ με[λ-]
 [δομέ]νου διὰ τὸ τοὺς ἀρχαίους
 [τῶ<ι> ο τ]ὸ ν μὴ προστιθέναι ἀγνο-

Dissolving the fat<:> Aristarchus and
 [the edition] of Callistratus (sc. wrote) with the ν κνίσην,
 so that it is 'melting the fat of the pig'
 in the same way as 'the fat from the plain
 the winds carried'⁵² (*Il.* 8, 549). κνίση is not only
 omentum, but every fat. κνίση (sc. neuter plural).

⁴⁹ See BROGGIATO (2001: XXI).

⁵⁰ See PFEIFFER (1973: 239).

⁵¹ See BROGGIATO (2001: XXI).

⁵² Here κνίση indicates the smoke that is released from cooking the fat: the matter is also indicated in the *scholium* 21, 363c (see *infra*) and in Porphyry himself, from whom part of the material of the *scholium* is derived: see *Quaest. Hom.* 1, 253, 14.

Homer never said this.

μέλδειν (dissolve) is in the proper sense, as Didymus says, the wearing out of limbs (τὰ μέλη ἔδειν). He compared the earth under the water to the cauldron and the water to the fat. Crates in the Διορθωτικά says that being written ΜΕΛΔΟΜΕΝΟ for μελδομένου due to the fact that the ancients did not added the υ to the omicron, not knowing[?]

In the fragment of the *Commentary* we can note the presence of a head-word: κν{ε}ί- [σὴν μελδ]όμενος that identifies the words that will be the focus of the analysis and it is the same as the one at *scholium* 363c (see below). The first variants reported in this ancient doxography are those of Aristarchus and Callistratus: κνίσση must be an accusative held by the middle participle μελδόμενος, so the information reported by the *Commentary* and the *scholium* coincide, however the tradition of the *scholia* conveys the information about the two exegetes in two different *scholia*, witnessed by two different manuscript traditions (363c from b and T and 363e from Ge). It is pointed out, immediately following, that κνίσση (*scil.* accusative plural neuter) finds no evidence in the Homeric poems, so the exegete accepts this as evidence in favor of the accusative singular with νι, which, on the contrary, has other parallels including *Il.* 8, 549, which is reported. A par-etymological reflection on the word μέλδειν (*to dissolve*) is then reported: it is traced back to Didymus who would consider the verb derived from the crasis of (τὰ) μέλη ἔδειν (*to consume the limbs*). This reference to Didymus is the terminus post quem for the dating of the *Commentary*. They are then further clarified the metaphoric terms established by Homer: the boiling cauldron corresponds to the earth under the river, while the melting fats are equated to the boiling water. It is reported later, in the doxography, the interpretation of Crates that originally there was μελδομένου written with the final vowel graph O (see above), then misunderstood. This is the same opinion, conveyed by *scholium* 363e, of Pisistratus and Hermogenes, who are not mentioned in the *Commentary*; it should be noted, however,

that, on the contrary, in *scholium* 363e only the reflection of the epigones is reported, but no name of Crates is mentioned.

In fact, Broggiato indicates in the apparatus of the parallels⁵³ the composite exegetical and Porphyrian *scholium* handed down from the mss. bT to 21, 363c: this is a further piece that helps delineate the picture of the ancient ecdotic and exegetic discussion of this passage:

Sch. ex. | Porph. Il. 21, 363c. κνίση μελδόμενος· σὺν τῷ ν Αρίσταρχος “κνίσην” τὸ δὲ “μελδόμενος” ἀντὶ τοῦ τήκων. “κνίσην” δὲ πᾶν τὸ πιμελές. Τινὲς δὲ οὐδετέρως ἤκουον “τὰ κνίση”, b(BCE³) T καὶ τὸ “μελδόμενος” ἀντὶ ἐνεργητικοῦ τοῦ μέλδων, ὃ ἐστὶ τήκων· ἀλλ’ οὐδὲν τῶν εἰς –ος οὐδετέρων ἀδιαίρετόν ἐστι παρ’ Ὀμήρῳ κατὰ τὸ πληθυντικόν· τείχεα γὰρ καὶ βέλεα λέγει· τί οὖν ἐστὶ T τὸ “Τηλέμαχος τεμένη νέμεται”; (*Od.* 11, 185) T οὕτως οὖν καὶ τὰ “κνίση μελδόμενος”. b(BCE³) T ἀλλ’ αἰ παρ’ Ὀμήρῳ ἡ κνῖσα θηλυκῶς εἴρηται. Ἑρμογένης δὲ ἐν τῷ Περί τῶν πέντε προβλημάτων γράφει “κνίση μελδόμενου”, ἵν’ ἡ “τῇ κνίση μελδόμενου”. b(BCE³) T τινὲς δὲ “κνίσην μελδομένου”, ἵν’ ἡ συὸς τηκομένου τὴν κνίσαν· μέλδειν δὲ κυρίως τὸ τὰ μέλη ἔδειν· b(BCE³) T ἄμεινον δὲ τῇ συνήθει γραφῇ χρῆσθαι “κνίση μελδόμενος” ἀντὶ τοῦ λιπαινόμενος. Καὶ ἔστι “μελδόμενος” ἀντὶ τοῦ τὰ μέλη ἀλδόμενος, ὡς ἀλλαχοῦ “μέλε’ ἤλδανε ποιμένι λαῶν” (*Od.* 18, 70). T | σημαίνει δὲ ἡ κνῖσα καὶ τὴν ἐκ τῶν κρεῶν ἀναθυμίασιν, ὅταν λέγῃ “καὶ τότε με κνίσης ἀμφήλυθεν ἡδὺς αὐτμή” (*Od.* 12, 369) καὶ “κνίση δ’ οὐρανὸν ἵκεν” (*Il.* 1, 317). Σημαίνει δὲ καὶ τὸ λίπος, ὡς ἐπὶ τῶν γαστέρων ἔφη “ἐμπλείην κνίσης τε καὶ αἵματος” (*Od.* 18, 119). Σημαίνει δὲ καὶ τὸν ἐπίπλου, ὡς ὅταν λέγῃ “κατὰ τε κνίση ἐκάλυψαν δίπτυχα ποιήσαντες” (*Il.* 1, 460–461)· διπλᾶ γὰρ ποιήσαντες τὰ κνίση τοὺς μηρούς ἐκάλυψαν. “δίπτυχα” δὲ αὐτὰ τὰ κνίση “ποιήσαντες”· ἐπεὶ γὰρ δύο οἱ μηροί, τὸν ἐπίπλου εἰς δύο διελόντες ἐκάτερον τῶν μηρῶν θατέρῳ μέρει τοῦ ἐπίπλου ἐκάλυπτον. B(BE³) T Καὶ ἔστιν ἐν τῇ κωμωδία (IV p. 687 M. = fr. Ad. 608 [III p. 517] K.) τὸ ἐνικὸν οὐδέτερον, “τὸ κνῖσος ὀπτῶν ὀλλύεις τοὺς γείτονας”. T

⁵³ See BROGGIATO (2001: 43).

Sch. ex. | Porph. *Il.* 21, 363c. κνίση μελδόμενος: Aristarchus writes with the ν κνίσην and means μελδόμενος in the sense of τήκων. With κνίσην meaning anything that is greasy. Some interpreted as neuter τὰ κνίση and [the middle] μελδόμενος in place of the active μέλδων, meaning τήκων; but in Homer in the plural there is no contracted form among the neutrals in -ος: in fact he uses the forms τείχεα (walls) and βέλεα (darts)⁵⁴; why then is there that verse Τηλέμαχος τεμένη νέμεται⁵⁵ (Telemachus owns the lands) (*Od.* 11, 185)? Thus there could also be κνίση μελδόμενος. But in Homer κνῖσα (the fat) is always used in the feminine. Hermogenes in *On the Five Matters* chooses the *varia lectio* κνίση μελδομένου so that it is τῇ κνίση (sc. dative⁵⁶) μελδομένου; some instead κνίσην μελδομένου so that it is 'dissolving the swine in the fat part (acc. of relation)'; dissolving in the concrete sense [indicates] eating the limbs (τὰ μέλη ἔδειν); it is better to use the usual *lectio* κνίση μελδόμενος in the sense of "anointing" (λιπαινόμενος). And μελδόμενος is in the sense of τὰ μέλη ἀλδόμενος (increase the limbs), as elsewhere μέλε' ἦλδανε ποιμένι λαῶν (*Od.* 18, 70) (invigorated to the shepherd of nations the limbs); ἡ κνῖσα in fact also means the exhalation [of fumes] from the flesh, when he says "and then the sweet scent of fat enveloped me" (*Od.* 12, 369) and "the fragrance reached heaven" (*Il.* 1, 317). | It also means fat, as [when] it says about the stomach "filled with fat and blood" (*Od.* 18, 119). And it also means the caul, as when it says "they wrapped (sc. the thighs) in fat making a double layer" (*Il.* 1, 460–461); for by making the fat double they hid the thighs. "Making" the fat itself "double"; since they are two thighs, cutting the caul in two, they hid each of the two thighs with one of the two parts of the caul. And one finds in the play the neuter singular, τὸ κνῖσος ὀπτῶν ὀλλύεις τοὺς γείτονας (Adesp. fr. 866 K. – A.)⁵⁷ (you kill your neighbors with the fat of grilled things).

⁵⁴ Instead of forms τείχη and βέλη.

⁵⁵ HEUBECK in his text of the *Odyssey* (see HEUBECK [1983: 108]) chooses the non-contracted form εα and reports in apparatus the following: 'τεμένεα Ar.: τεμένη codd., testes τέμενος Fick'.

⁵⁶ The clarification serves to emphasize that the dative is meant: the article is unequivocal, unlike the noun alone, depending on whether the *iota subscriptum* is written or not.

⁵⁷ See KASSEL–AUSTIN (1995: 250).

The *scholium* is of interest to the discussion, first of all, because it proves the Aristarchean intervention on the Homeric text, which coincides with the information reported by the *Commentary* of Ammonius. Also related to the text on the papyrus is the question of the neuter plural κνίση: the *scholium* reports in fact that in Homer there are no contracted forms of the neuter plural of nouns of the athematic declension in -ος; it is introduced then, with a rhetorical question, the fact that in *Od.* 11, 185 a noun with the contracted plural seems to be attested, but to counter this argument one says that the point is also that this noun in Homer is always feminine, so it would not be possible to call in the accusative plural form κνίση, since the feminine form would have been κνίσας. We then move on to a discussion of the text chosen by Hermogenes in his work *On the Five Matters* (thanks to this *locus* it has been possible to heal the exegetical *scholium* at *Iliad* 21, 363e). Here the name of Hermogenes is given, as we have already explained above, without that of Pisistratus of Ephesus.

Then the *scholium* dwells upon the meanings of the terms μελδόμενος (including the Didymean paretymology) and κνίσα which is explained as the exhalation of fumes (see also the text of the papyrus analyzed above) for which a parallel is reported from the twelfth book of the *Odyssey*.

4. Conclusions

The two cases I have analyzed hand us down considerations of philologists belonging to the Hellenistic and imperial age (conveyed by the scholiastic material) regarding the possible causes of corruption of the Homeric text.

The *scholia* I have considered in this contribution focus on paleographical and writing errors: Aristarchus had already realized the large number of errors caused by the change of alphabet in the 5th century.

The *scholia* which I have taken into account allow us to confirm the accuracy of the Alexandrian diorthotic work,⁵⁸ since they testify the interest in the research of the text corruption reason and, consequently, of the genesis of the error. This way of proceeding, formulating hypotheses on why the text was corrupted and giving possible reasons, indeed finds

⁵⁸ See e.g. MONTANARI (2015a) and the bibliography cited there.

many similarities with what is done by modern philologists; a fact that is also linguistically reflected in the *Iliad* 14, 241 *scholium* analyzed above, which speaks about the text corruption perpetrated by copyists who made changes to the alphabet.

The fact of having found an answer to a *locus vexatus* and having cured it indicates an accurate philological sensitivity towards the Homeric text, which undoubtedly corroborates the interpretative line according to which Alexandrian ecdotic practice took place following specific *criteria*. To affirm this does not imply, clearly, that Hellenistic philology made use of scientific methods as modern philology does today, nor that the texts reflections were always accurate and correct, nevertheless, it is appropriate to emphasize their diorthotic effort.

Moreover, these *scholia* report various doxographies which allow us to understand – or to guess at least – the large number of philologists who worked on the Homeric text, of which there probably remained traces in the library in the form of *ekdoseis*, *hypomnemata*, συγγράμματα, or some other.

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Avarice and Humor in Plautus' Comedy *The Pot of Gold*: Translation Procedures and Equivalent Effects

The paper searches for some textual occurrences regarding the distinctive Plautine humor with its prevalent linguistic aspect and particularly wordplays and phrases concerning the concept of avarice in his comedy The Pot of Gold. By exploring some specific examples, the text brings forward techniques of translation for rendering a comic effect in the first full translation (1915) of the play in Bulgarian by A. D. Pironkov. The purpose of the analysis is to determine whether the translation methods used ensure the preservation of Plautus' comic effect. Some linguistic characteristics of humor are presented based on Cicero's categorization of types of humor. A brief explanation is given of a possible pragmatic instrumentarium for producing humorous impact for a new audience.

Keywords: translation studies, ancient literature, ancient comedy, Plautus, humor, Bulgarian translation

Interest towards classical texts and authors starts to develop in Bulgaria around the 19th century – a time known as pre-liberation period.¹ Latin texts and authors remained fairly unknown with the exception of some *sententiae* and aphorisms.² This changed, to some extent, in the early 20th century during the so-called post-liberation period. In the year 1915 the first full Bulgarian translation of the Plautine drama *The Pot of Gold* is

¹ This is important to point out so that everyone can have a better understanding of the country's state in the fields of education, language, literature, and overall cultural development. Bulgaria was under Ottoman rule for about 500 years and was liberated in 1878 so the country had to achieve substantial progression in those fields to acquire commensurate state of knowledge.

² GERDZHIKOVA (2002: 28).

published, created by Aleksander D. Pironkov – author of books about linguistics, literature, and history.³ The translation is made from the Latin original according to the translator's own words – something unusual for this period. Most translations were made from mediatory languages due to the lack of trained experts in the Latin language and culture. Another notable characteristic of the translation is that it is in prose and not in verse – again in vogue with the times when the purpose of most translations was to acquaint the reader with the subject and content of texts rather than to preserve their unique style and characteristics.⁴ In this sense it may be said that the translation reaches its goal of familiarization. Our concern, however, will be with more than just its content, but rather with the comical aspect of the drama – to what extent and by what means the comic effect is (or is not) achieved.

Distinctive of Plautine drama is the diverse usage of language – alliterations, sound effects, hapaxes, metaphors, chiasms, etymologic figures, idiomatic phrases, etc. This type of humor is defined in Cicero's typology as *facetiae in verbo* or humor in words as opposite of the humor in things or *facetiae in re* (Cic. *De or.* 2, 59, 240). The translation of language specific humor can be very problematic to say the least.

Moreover, speaking about drama translation we should bear in mind the transfer between different media. A comedy is a drama piece which aims at eliciting laughter from the audience by achieving a comic effect. And it should be stressed that the performance of comedy is very different from the reception of its text. The comic effect is lost to a great extent when reading the text of the play written down on the white sheet – the mimics and gestures of actors, their expressions, the tone of their voices, masks, and clothing are no longer in play, as well as the musical aspect of the comedy – the so-called *canticum*, which is about two-thirds of each Plautine play.⁵ So inevitably the comic effect of the text – even of the original – would be tuned down and would be only reduced to a verbal manifestation of comicality.

³ GERDZHIKOVA (2002: 29, n. 15).

⁴ GERDZHIKOVA (2002: 18).

⁵ SIRAKOVA (2019: 2).

Thus, there are two or even three layers that target readers need to overcome in order to get an experience as close as possible to that of the original audience (time, space, media). This can be crucial for realizing the humor.

There are different approaches towards the problems mentioned and with the following examples we will see what methods were used in this first full Bulgarian translation of the comedy *The Pot of Gold* to overcome them.

The plot of *The Pot of Gold* is centered on two young Athenian people and their future marriage. Lyconides wants to marry Phaedria – a poor girl whom he has violated during the Cererian festivities. She got pregnant but her father Euclio doesn't know about this disgrace upon her and his family. The family neighbor – the old and rich bachelor Megadorus, uncle of the young man Lyconides, has also no idea about the problematic situation and wants to marry the girl. Amidst all this Euclio – an infamous miser, has found a pot of gold. The pot was revealed to him by the Lar – the household god, because of Phaedria's good will and pious behavior toward him, so she can have a sufficient dowry. Comic situations revolve around this old miserly man and his horrible character as the plot develops towards a happy end.

A great part of linguistic characteristics aiming at comic effects is related to avarice because the protagonist is a miser. Quite expectedly in most instances Plautus puts these verbal quibbles in the mouth of Euclio himself. Another character speaks also about poverty and Euclio's avarice – the old maid Staphyla. In the following passage she speaks to Euclio:

ego intus servem? An ne quis aedes auferat?
nam hic apud nos nihil est aliud quaesti furibus,
ita inaniis sunt oppletae atque araneis.⁶
(Pl. *Aul.* 82–84)

⁶ Quotations from the original are according to The Loeb Classical Library's edition of Plautus.

Да, да пазя къщата, да не би да отнесе който стените ли?
 Защото у нас нема друго, какво да задигнат крадците:
 къщата е пълна с нищо и с паяжини.
 (Plavt 1915: 9)

Yes, to guard the house so the walls may not be stolen maybe?
 Because inside there is nothing else for the thieves to steal:
 the house is full of nothing and cobwebs.⁷

This episode portrays the infamous avarice of Euclio, his deranged desire to keep everything he owns and puts all that in contrast to reality, in which he doesn't possess much. Staphyla mocks him exactly about that by asking why he is so upset and worried, what will the thieves take – the house? (*aedes auferat* – an expression, actualised by the usage of alliteration, and reinforcing the comic effect on lexical level). Comism is achieved on two levels: first because of the broken expectation – thieves steal jewelry, money, something of high value, not houses (unless the house is a collective image of things and objects in it, but this is not the case here). Houses themselves would not be of interest to thieves. On second level, comic effect is based on the use of nonsense, namely the idea that a large and massive structure like the house can be stolen as if it was something small like jewelry or a purse with coins. The translator has chosen the 'walls' – the supports that hold the structure – to represent the house. It is possible that in the recipient's cultural-historical environment of his time this might have sounded more natural to the audience than 'to take away the house', or he wanted to avoid the misunderstanding that 'the house' might mean 'everything in the building' and not the house itself.

Staphyla's own words confirm that the house is meant as the object of the supposed stealing because they indicate that there is nothing else inside that might attract thieves: *nihil est aliud quaesti furibus* (literally 'there is no other benefit for thieves'). The word *quaestus* means 'profit', 'benefit', and – important for this case – 'money'. The Bulgarian translator omitted the word *quaestus* and as a result the emphasis in the trans-

⁷ The literal English translation of passages throughout the text belongs to the author of this paper.

lated text is placed on 'other' (*aliud*) – i. e. there is nothing else – valuable or not, to be stolen, except the walls. This supports to some extent our interpretation of the translator's preference of 'walls' over 'house', as walls are something very particular and not at all tempting, and 'house', as a collective image and a kind of metonymy, can evoke associations with the objects and property inside it. Thus, the intertextual connection of the lexemes is more natural and conveys more precisely the meaning of the source text. It is also possible that the translator wanted to avoid the repetition of the word 'house', given that it already occurs twice within two sentences. Staphyla also specifies what exactly the house is full of (*sunt oppletae*) – emptiness (*inaniae*) and spiders or cobwebs (*aranea/araneum*). The oxymoron 'full of emptiness' is worth noting here, and in Bulgarian an alliteration of [p] sound is present ('пълна с празнота'), which, although missing in the source text, can compensate for the lack of such stylistic figure elsewhere in the translation. A. D. Pironkov has chosen the lexeme 'нищо' ('nothing') – 'full of nothing', which weakens the power of the oxymoron, but is more meaningful – we say, 'full of something', full of specific objects (and 'nothing' is the antonym). In this sense, the word 'празнота' ('emptiness') in Bulgarian is not so appropriate.

Spiders, which Euclio's house is also full of, are symbols of poverty in the source culture, and of destitution or simply of a lack of something, emptiness. Evidence of this peculiar symbolics could be found elsewhere in Roman literature, e. g. in Catullus (Cat. 13, 7–8):

... Nam tui Catulli
plenus sacculus est araneorum

which translates as:

because your Catullus'
purse is full of spiders

In Bulgarian, spiders do not have such connotations of poverty, but the word 'cobweb' is perceived as a symbol of bleakness, emptiness, of abandonment, because its presence implies a lack of care, of human presence. In this sense, the Bulgarian equivalent only partially covers

the meaning of the original lexeme and is rather associated with the meaning of the other element of the Latin expression (*inaniae*), and that is why some of its connotations are lost to the reader of the translation.

In all these instances the translator has used a pragmatic equivalence⁸ but nevertheless the full comism of the original is not reached.

Evcl. Quid sit me rogitas? qui mihi omnis angulos
furum implevisti in aedibus misero mihi,
qui mi intro misti in aedis quingentos coquos,
cum senis manibus, genere Geryonaceo;
quos si Argus servet, qui oculus totus fuit,
quem quondam Ioni Iuno custodem addidit,
is numquam servet. praeterea tibicinam,
quae mi interbibere sola, si vino scatat,
Corinthiensem fontem Pirenam potest.
(Pl. *Aul.* 551–559)

Евкл. И питаш защо, ти, който напълни всички кюшета на къщата ми с крадци; който доведе готвачи от Герион, всеки снабдени с три чифта ръце! Самата Аргус, която беше само очи и която Юнона бе поставила страж на Йо, не може да ги надзирава. Над това още една свирачка на флейта, способна сама да изсмучи коринтската чешма в Пирела, ако течеше от нея вино.
(Plaut 1915: 41)

Eucl. And you ask why, you, who flooded every corner of my house with thieves, who brought cooks from Geryon, everyone in possession of three pairs of arms! Argus herself, who was only eyes and whom Iuno was stationed as a guard to Io, cannot supervise them. And on top of that – a female flutist, capable of sucking dry the Corinthian fountain in Pirela, if a wine was to flow from it.

The above excerpt contains three mythologems, which Plautus brings forth to achieve a comic effect. Firstly, comism is built on the fact that

⁸ The terminology used in the analysis is from Koller's classification of equivalence and equivalent effect. The 5-structured typology includes Denotative, Connotative, Text-normative, Pragmatic, and Formal equivalence.

mythological characters or motifs are present in a description of an everyday situation. Mythologems serve as an exaggeration of the danger of cooks and flutist to the old man's possessions: Euclio sees the cooks as Geryon's heirs, with six hands each, which even Argus with all his eyes can't trace. As about the flutist, Euclio is very concerned with her drinking capabilities, as she could drink even the Corinthian spring of Pirene on her own.

Geryon is a king-giant who ruled in Spain and who was killed by Hercules. He had three heads and three bodies, therefore six arms.⁹ Thus, Euclio puts an emphasis on the thievishness of the cooks, which is hinted at in other lines in the comedy as well. The exaggeration in this case serves to the accumulation of comism.

In the Bulgarian translation a change in the phrase *genus Geryonaceus* is observed. The phrase is rendered with the name of Geryon alone, that could cause some misunderstanding in readers of the translated text, unfamiliar with the mythological figure, and might redirect them to the toponym or the geographical area with a similar name. In addition, the translator has omitted the beginning (*quingentos coquos* – 'five hundred cooks') of the successive structure of hyperboles, which is also additionally emphasised by alliteration. This leads to weakening the intensity of the episode's comic impact.

The second mythologem is related to the image of Argus, who had a hundred eyes, two of which rested and slept while the rest looked in all directions. Hera placed him as the guardian of the snow-white cow Io, favoured by Zeus.¹⁰ In Plautus' comedy the names of Zeus and Hera are replaced by those of Jupiter and Juno.

This further reinforces the hyperbolised thievishness of the cooks, whom even this mythological creature with hundred eyes cannot guard and keep from stealing. At the phonetic level, the verse is also marked

⁹ RILEY (1912).

¹⁰ By order of Zeus, Hermes put all the giant's eyes to sleep with his shepherd's whistle (*syrinx*) and his magic wand, cut him down and threw him from a high rock into the abyss, after which freed Io. Hera, on the other hand, placed the hundred eyes of her faithful servant on the tail of her bird, the peacock, on whose feathers they shone like celestial stars. BATAKLIEV (2011: 52–53).

by the alliteration *Ioni Iuno*. In the translation, although different, the sounds [ju] and [jo] are close enough to provoke a reaction, but nevertheless this effect is lost due to the textual distance between the two names. Inaccuracy is observed in the representation of Argus as a female in the footnote, but at least there **is** a footnote explaining the myth. In this way a clarification is given to the reader and some comic effect is reached. Still, a lot of its force is lost due to other omissions because the episode counts on the accumulation of humor with every element added to the hyperbolising structure.

The third mythologem refers to the Corinthian spring of the Pirene. Pirene is the daughter of Achelous – the god of the largest river bearing the same name in Greece.¹¹ She faded away after the death of her son Conchreas, killed by Diana, and became a spring in Corinth, named after her.¹² The spring being sucked dry by the flutist is a hyperbole of the reputation of musicians as participants in all banquets, and their addiction to drinking. Ovid in his *Fasti* (Ov. *Fast.* 6, 672–684) also speaks of such a reputation for men of the same profession.¹³

Aleksander Pironkov renders the Latin lexeme *interbibere* (hapax) by a pragmatic equivalent ‘уэсмучу’ (sucked) which belongs to Bulgarian colloquial style and the common lexical register. Thus, he manages to convey the insatiability of the flutist. The verb ‘уэсмуквам’ (suck) has a figurative meaning, characterised by a negative emotional coloring ‘to drink to the end’. The Pirene spring is given the name ‘Пирела’ (Pirela) – it is not clear whether this is due to euphony or some other phonetic feature of Bulgarian language at the time, or to some mistake.

In terms of translation, the complexity of the passage lies in the presence of many mythologems that emphasise Euclio’s fear of being robbed. In this case, the translator is faced with two choices. The first one is to keep the mythologems, which will require explanatory notes. The second is adapting them to the recipient’s language and culture by replacing them with connotative or pragmatic equivalents to achieve the passage’s comic effect. Such equivalents, for example, as far as the flutist is con-

¹¹ BATAKLIEV (2011: 74).

¹² RILEY (1912).

¹³ NAUDET (1833, n. 37).

cerned, might be 'пия като смок' (I drink like a snake) or 'изпивам цяла бъчва / бидон с вино' 'I drink a whole barrel / can of wine').

But there is a danger here – the new expression, although more understandable and natural to the target audience, may not be compatible with the rest of the text and sound out of place. For the most part Aleksander D. Pironkov has chosen to keep the mythologems, but due to the mistakes and the lack of explanatory notes for two of them the humor is mostly lost, and the comic effect is not achieved. Explanatory notes although not ensuring the full comic effect of the original, still will familiarise the reader with the mentioned myths and characters. And people tend to laugh more when the joke is at the expense of someone familiar to them. Rather the reader is left mainly confused and agitated.

Perii interii occidi. quo curram? quo non curram? tene, tene. quem?
quis?

[...]

obsecro vos ego, mi auxilio,

oro obtestor, sitis et hominem demonstratis, quis eam abstulerit.

quid est? quid ridetis? novi omnes, scio fures esse hic complures,

qui vestitu et creta occultant sese atque sedent quasi sint frugi.

quid ais tu? tibi credere certum est, nam esse bonum ex voltu cognosco.

hem, nemo habet horum? occidisti. dic igitur, quis habet? nescis?

Heu me miserum, misere perii,

Male perditus, pessime ornatus eo:

(Pl. *Aul.* 713; 715–720)

Загинах! Отидох си! Умрех! Къде да бегам? Де да не бегам! Чакай, чакай! Кого? Кой?

[...]

Заклевам ви, помогнете ми. Моля, умолявам, посочете ми човека, който я отне... Вий, които сте облечени в бело, и седите като честни хора... Какво говориш ти там? Вервам те, познавам те по външност, че си добър човек. Що е? Що се смеете? Познавам ви всички; зная, че тук има крадци... Ах, никой ли не ще е взел. Умрех си! Кажи, у кого са? Не знаеш ли? Уви, клетият аз. Погубен съм! Загинах! Ограбен съм.

(Plaut 1915: 53)

I perished! I'm done for! I died! Where to run? Where not to run! Wait, wait! Whom? Who?

[...]

I adjure you all, help me. Please, I beg you, point me to the person, who took her away from me... You, who are dressed in white and who sit like honest people... You there, what are you saying? I believe I know you by face that you are a good person. What is it? Why are you laughing? I know you all; I know there are thieves here... Oh, is no one taken it. I died! Say, who has them? You don't know? Alas, poor me. I am ruined! I perished! I am robbed.

Some features of this Euclian line – a long monologue, only part of which is given here – must be mentioned. This is a specific case of rhythmization of the text, resulting from fragmentation of the monologue, from the short lines containing only a word, from the use of synonyms to reinforce the transmitted idea to the extreme, which causes comism (*Perii interii occidi / obsecro vos ego, mi auxilio, / oro obtestor*) and accumulation of questions. Additionally, this monologue includes the only instance of interaction with the audience in the play. Poverty is ridiculous in antiquity, and wealth is a virtue. This passage can be considered as a culmination in the comic description of the main character, reflected in language peculiarities and style. A more extensive study on the subject could cover these features more fully.

For the purposes of this study, we will highlight an expression from the monologue, which refers to the audience of the performance. Euclio's address to the audience functions as specific stylistic device for provoking comism. Along with his requests for help towards the spectators, his suspicions are added:

quid est? quid ridetis? novi omnes, scio fures esse hic complures,
qui vestitu et creta occultant sese atque sedent quasi sint frugi.

which translates literally as:

What's happening? What are you laughing at? I know you all, I know there are many thieves here,
who hide with clothes and chalk and sit as if they were honorable.

The expression *qui vestitu et creta occultant* hides a distinct cultural reference. The Romans used to whiten their togas with chalk, clay or by fuller's treatment. Plautus alludes to white clothes that cover bad manners.¹⁴

Aleksander Pironkov renders it simply as 'dressed in white' in his translation. It is unclear to what the expression is referring without explanatory note. Also, the translator shuffled some sentences, restructured the sequence of lines trying to both preserve the comic situation, and make the speech fluent to the receiving audience. Thus, the above-mentioned phrase precedes Euclio's suspicion that there are thieves among the spectators, and the cause-effect connection is lost ('the thieves' are dressed in white clothes to hide their identity). However, the translator tried to preserve it as much as possible by comparing people dressed in white to honest people ('You, who are dressed in white and who sit like honest people'). On the one hand, this transformation establishes the symbolic link between the whiteness of the garment and the kindness and honesty of the people who wear it, and on the other hand, it hints on the fact that they are not in truth honest at all. Based on such an interpretation, the expression refers to the sentence 'I know there are thieves here...' and to some extent succeeds in preserving the connection of the source text.

No doubt, achieving humor through linguistic means and preserving this humor in translation is a difficult task. The Bulgarian translation failed in transferring the comic undertones of the original and furthermore, failed in explaining culturally specific linguistic phenomena to the reader, and familiarising him with them in order to fully grasp the intensity of the accumulated humor. Even using pragmatic equivalence, which in most instances is the best method when searching for equivalent effect, proves to be insufficient or inadequate in translating comedy. The target culture might lack for any equivalent of the phrase in question. With adding the specific topic of avarice, the task may become nearly impossible. The translator is left with the choice between preserving content and losing comism – maybe explaining it with a footnote – or, using totally different expression, even creating a new one him-

¹⁴ RILEY (1912).

self/herself. Struggling to understand the jokes, and the essence of comic moments prevents the audience from perceiving the inherent humor, and therefore from laughing, which is the very aim and function of comedy.

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The Case of Apollo and the Sibylline Books

In this paper I examine Augustus's reconceptualisation of the Sibylline books' role in Roman culture, religion and politics, focusing on the affiliation between the prophecies and Apollo. These oracles were described as the fata et remedia Romana; this concept, arguably, allows us to uncover that in republican religion Apollo's position was similar to the one occupied by the libri Sibyllini: both served to avert prodigies and help pursue the pax deorum. I believe, that Augustus utilised this connection to the benefit of his chosen god-patron, and appropriated the books in order to emphasise his reign as a new age, where no more prodigium could occur. Tibullus and Vergil contribute to this narrative. The Sibylline books did not lose all significance, rather they were reconfigured as instruments legitimising Augustus, supporting his desire to celebrate the ludi saecularis in 17 BC. Finally, I will present an alternative view on the Sibylline books' incorporation into the Augustan system using Ovid's distinctive treatment of the Sybil's story in Metamorphoses.

Keywords: Sibylline books, Augustus, Roman religion, Sibyl, Apollo, prodigies, Vergil, Ovid, Tibullus

According to Suetonius, when Lepidus — the *pontifex maximus* at the time — died, Augustus seized his position and immediately implemented several religious reforms, revived old cults and reorganized others.¹ One of the most striking reforms of his was the relocation of the Sibylline books to the Palatine Hill into the newly built sanctuary of Apollo (Suet. Aug. 31, 1):

[...] solos retinuit Sibyllinos, hos quoque dilectu habito; condiditque duobus forulis auratis sub Palatini Apollinis basi.

¹ Suet. Aug. 31; see WARDLE (2014: 249–259).

It was a striking move indeed, for since the first recorded consultation, these important and unique instruments of Roman religion were kept in the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, in the political-social-religious epicentre of the *res publica*. According to the most widely accepted traditions, these three rolls of books containing Greek hexameters were purchased by Tarquinius Superbus, the last king of Rome.² Their main function was to help interpreting, eliminating and expiating the various *prodigia*, thereby keeping control over the *pax deorum*: religious harmony between the divine and human spheres.³ Whenever an error (*prodigium*) or defect has occurred in the sacred integrity of the state, the books had been continuously consulted during the years of the republic.⁴ They had always been *fata et remedia*⁵ for the *res publica* in the time of severe crises (whether they be religious, political, military); accordingly, the books were only consulted when the most terrible prodigies were reported.⁶ They were under the supervision of a special priestly collegium, initially

² Aul. Gell. 1, 19; Dion. Hal. 4, 62; Zon. 7. 11; Serv. *ad Aen.* 6, 72. Lact. *Div. Inst.* 1, 6, 11; Sol. 2, 14–18. On the origins of the books and their relation to the various Sibyls of the Mediterranean, see: RADKE (1987: 58–59); PARKE (1988: 76–78) GILLMEISTER (2010: 9–11). KESKIAHO (2013: 146–155).

³ On the concept of *pax deorum* see MADEJSKI (2010); SATTERFIELD (2015). Both of them argue that *pax* is not a state which is achieved through the Sibylline books (or other expiatory rites), but an always changing condition that is needed to be pursued and constantly desired. It should also be noted that the Sibylline books were not a traditional collection of prophecies, but rather a list of instructions in hexameter, explaining how to handle those *prodigia* which may pose a threat to the *pax deorum*. KESKIAHO (2013: 156) states that there was no significant difference between the books and other Greek oracular texts (e.g. *Oracula Sibyllina*). In fact, they worked similarly for the Romans as Delphoi or Dodona for the Greek city states, see: Aul. Gel. 1, 19, 11: *Ad eos quasi ad oraculum quindecimviri adeunt cum di immortales publice consultendi sunt*.

⁴ For the complete list of consultations in the Republican period (till 83 BC), see ORLIN (2002: 202–207). From 83 BC, see PARKE (1988: 202–212).

⁵ Varro fg. 56c Cardunus (=Serv. *ad Aen.* 6, 72): *in quibus erant fata et remedia Romana*. Cf. Liv. 10, 5, 7: *quod remedium euis mali*. Plin. N.H. 11, 105: *saepe populo Romano ad Sibyllina coacto remedia confugere*.

⁶ Liv. 22, 9, 8: [...] *pervicit ut, quod non ferme decernitur, nisi cum taetra prodigia nuntiata sunt, decemviri libros Sibyllinos adire iuberentur*. Cf. Dion. Hal. 4, 62 5: τεράτων τινῶν καὶ φαντασμάτων μεγάλων καὶ δυσευρέτων αὐτοῖς φανέντων. See SATTERFIELD (2008: 15–19.)

formed by two members, hence called *duumvir sacris facundi* (*Ilviri*), then expanded to twenty-one members by the time of Augustus.⁷ Since they were the only members of Roman society who had access to these books, it was their responsibility, via the authorisation Senate (*senatum consultum*), to visit (*libros adire iussi*; Liv. 21, 62, 6) the temple of Jupiter to inspect (*inspicere*) the scripts, find a relevant passage (*consulere*), and afterwards communicate it towards the Senate.⁸ Thereafter, the Senate decided how to act based on these instructions in order to eliminate the *prodigium* (e.g. introduce a new cult, hold an *obsecratio*, *supplicatio*, a *lectisternium*, or in the most severe cases even sacrifice humans).⁹ Thus, the Senate held full authority over the books, keeping their content in utmost secrecy.¹⁰ This predetermined and strictly supervised practice of the consultations, and the fact that the scripts were kept in the most sacred temple of Roman statehood, shows that these books were closely tied to the *res publica*'s most essential religious and political traditions.¹¹

At the beginning of the 1st century BC, there was a rupture in this old tradition, and a radical transformation under the reign of Augustus. First, the 'original' scrolls were destroyed by a fire on the Capitoline Hill in 83 BC, and they were replaced by new ones seven years later. Alt-

⁷ In 365 BC – according to the *leges Liciniae-Sextiae* – the collegium was completely reorganised, and from then on it was made up of five patrician and five plebeian members (*Xviri*). There was another enlargement up to fifteen around Sulla's dictatorship (*XVviri*), and a third one during Augustus. See RE (1963: 1126); POTTER (1994: 149–150); GILLMEISTER (2007); SATTERFIELD (2008: 27–36).

⁸ Lact. *Div. Inst.* 1, 6, 13: *nec eos ab ullo nisi XVviris inspicere fas habent*. Following the example of one of the first *Ilviri* (M. Atilius), if a member broke his confidentiality, he was sewed up in a sack and casted into the sea. Cf. Val. Max. 1, 1, 13.

⁹ E.g. a sacrifice of a Greek and Gaul couple (cf. Liv. 22, 55–57). On the cults, rites, temples etc. introduced by the books, see: ORLIN (2002: 85–105). On a discussion about the consultations as a part of a 'social drama' see: GILLMEISTER (2015a: 183–188); KESKIAHO (2013: 161–162).

¹⁰ We do not have much information about the exact procedure. ORLIN (2002: 82–97) provides a detailed discussion about the topic. See also: RADKE (1987: 61–63); PARKE (1988: 191–192); KESKIAHO (2013: 158).

¹¹ SCHEID (1995: 25–26). Cf. SATTERFIELD (2008: 27): 'During the Republic, the two symbols of Roman power and its communion with the gods always stood together, occupying the same space, and asserting the same claims on divine favor and human respect.'

though the traditional system of interacting with the books seemingly had not been altered much, their cultural, religious context and relevance did change significantly. Furthermore, — as Suetonius' passage shows above — Augustus relocated the prophetic scripts to the newly built sanctuary of Apollo Palatinus. From then on, an enormous drop in the number of consultations can be noticed. Clearly, there was a distinct change in the form and function of the Sibylline books; not only the nature and political importance of the prophecies were transformed,¹² but the collection which once belonged to Jupiter and Juno was given a final Apollonic profile. Seemingly, the once important instruments of achieving the *pax deorum* were pushed into the background of Roman divination practises, becoming more of a cultural and literary phenomenon closely related to the Augustan Apollo. In this paper, I would like to present this process of transformation and provide a new perspective on the function and status of the Sibylline books in Augustan Rome. In my view, the double concept of *fata* and *remedia* attributed to the books help to better understand their role and significance in Roman religion, as well as why they were appropriated through Apollo by Augustus.

Fatum/a, in the context of the Sibylline books, meant to follow the *remedia*, a form of recommended instructions implied by the Senate using the interpretation of the collegium of the *XVviri*. They had to be followed in order to avoid any *nefas* of consequences to happen and to live and act according to the *fas*, thus ensuring the safety and future of the community.¹³ Through a partial republican connection to Apollo, the books were subjected and incorporated into the ideology of the principate, where the patron god of Augustus stepped forward as a symbol of the new system, a renovated, 'healed' *res publica*, following the divine *fatum*. In the years of the republic the books were one of the most important means to gain the power of knowledge: knowledge of the future

¹² GILLMEISTER has thoroughly examined the relocation of the books under the tutelage of Apollo. According to him, by the time of Augustus the character of the Sibyl emerged as a cultural phenomenon, and became a symbol of the new 'global', imperial identity to the Mediterranean (using the term of 'acculturation'); GILLMEISTER (2015).

¹³ RADKE (1987: 65). Originally the *fatum* was under the realm of Jupiter. See Cic. *N. D.* 1, 39. Verg. *Aen.* 3, 375–76; 5, 784.

and the appropriate rituals, practices, communication channels to expiate the gods. Augustus monopolised this power, and affiliated the books with Apollo, thus merging an already similar political-religious unit, in order to emphasize that by his reign, Rome has gained an everlasting *remedia* for any kind of prodigies, but most importantly that the course of history, the *fatum* is approved and supported by the gods.

Apollo and the Sibylline Books during the Republic

When the Sibylline books first appeared in Rome (around the 7th-6th century BC) they were in no way attached to Apollo. They could not have been, since his first shrine was inaugurated only in 431, much later than the first consultation was recorded.¹⁴ The shrine was called *Medicus*, as — according to Livy — Apollo was introduced into Rome to cease the ongoing epidemic and to preserve the health of the people (*pro valetudine populi*).¹⁵ This could be the first connection between the god and the prophecy collection. Following the ambiguity of Livy's account, Apollo's cult was either established following the instruction of the books,¹⁶ or as one of the separate actions carried out by the *Ilviri* to avert the severe plague (see Livy's wording in n. 15) devastating Rome since 436 BC.¹⁷ When the god was first officially introduced in Rome,¹⁸ it served a

¹⁴ Even those Greek city-states which were famous for their Sibyls had no sanctuaries of Apollo, see PARKE: (1988: 71 and 78). KESKIAHO (2013: 159–161) argues that these early consultations are hard to historically verify. See also GAGÉ (1955: 66–8). Cf. SIMON (1978: 204–5).

¹⁵ Liv 4, 25, 3 *Pestilentia eo anno aliarum rerum otium praebuit. Aedis Apollini pro valetudine populi vota est. Multa duumviri ex libris placandae deum irae avertendaeque a populo pestis causa fecere; magna tamen clades in urbe agrisque promiscua hominum pecorumque pernicie accepta. Famem quoque ex pestilentia morbo implicitis cultoribus agrorum timentes in Etruriam Pomptinumque agrum et Cumas, postremo in Siciliam quoque frumenti causa misere.* On the introduction of the cult, see: LATTE (1960: 222); RADKE (1987: 31–38 and 54–57); OGILVIE (1965: 574).

¹⁶ Eg. RE (1963: 1137); cf. GAGÉ 1955: (129 and 181); OGILVIE (1965: 574).

¹⁷ Liv. 4, 21, 5.

¹⁸ Livy 3, 67, 4. mention a hill called *Apollinare* before the official cult's introduction happened. See SIMON (1978: 208–209).

similar role as the *libri Sibyllini*: to pursue the *pax deorum*.¹⁹ Instead of applying some kind of expiatory rituals (*lustrum, auspicia*)²⁰ the god himself was the *remedium*. Protecting the physical health of the people and guarding Rome from various epidemics (which were also considered *prodigia*)²¹ was another key element to the concept of *pax deorum*, as these epidemics — which were thought to be crises of a religious origin — constantly afflicted the city and caused religious and literal physical pollution.²² This was not the only occasion when Apollo's healing capabilities and the Sibylline books' expiatory ability were deployed at the same time. In 399 BC, during a pestilence — as a result of a consultation of the Sibylline books — the rite of the *lectisternium* was introduced.²³ Imitating the Greek *theoxenia*, six deities were honoured during this expiating festivity, among them one of the central gods must have been Apollo (at least in the early ceremonies),²⁴ presumably because of his established cult title as *medicus*.²⁵ The *lectisternium* became a permanent, basic ritual for this purpose, as many other cults and rites which were introduced using the books. Of course, these early similarities do not mean that the books were related to Apollo in any way, but as the expression of *fata et remedia* shows, in this characteristic and function they resembled each other.

¹⁹ In Ennius (Alexander fr. 38–48) when Priam searched for *pax*, he offered a sacrifice at the altar of Apollo. Cf. Cic. *Div.* 1, 21.

²⁰ MADEJSKI (2010: 111).

²¹ For the definition to *prodigium*, see ENGELS (2007: 264–268); GILLMEISTER (2015: 219); SATTERFIELD (2015: 432–433).

²² There are 53 consultations until 83 BC, 14 are caused by pestilence (Liv. 4,21, 5; 4, 25, 3; 7, 2; 7, 27, 1; 10, 31; 10, 47; Oros. 4, 5; Liv. *ep.* 49; 38, 44; 40, 19; 40, 37; 41, 21, 10 ; Obs. 13; 22). The introduction of Aesculapius, one of the most important healing cults in Rome, happened also on behalf of the books (Liv. 10, 47, 6–7). On the epidemics in Rome see SCHIELD (2013: 51–52), GARDNER (2020: 20–28). Epidemics as prodigies, see ANDRÉ (1980).

²³ Liv. 5, 13. See LATTE (1960: 242–244); OGILVIE (1965, 664–666); SATTERFIELD (2008: 117–120).

²⁴ Liv. 5, 13, 6; 7, 25, 1. See LATTE 1960, 243; DUMÉZIL (1996: 567–568). Later the focus shifts to Jupiter (*epulum Iovis*) as the main god of the rite.

²⁵ PARKE (1988: 193–194).

As a result of the rich and intense cultural exchange between Rome and Greece, the Roman Apollo started to take a more Hellenistic shape, namely as a seer-god. Furthermore, Apollo was not only associated with prophecies and healing, but with victory and, with the safety and welfare (*salus*) of the entire Roman state.²⁶ The establishment of the *ludi Apollinares* during the Second Punic War shows the change in Apollo's position as he became a popular character in Roman religion. Following the battles of Lake Trasimene and Cannae, Rome found herself not only in a military and political crisis, but a religious-spiritual one as well.²⁷ Hannibal was still plundering the lands of Italy when the Senate, in order to ease the increasing superstitious turmoil, ordered all unauthorized, popular prophecy books to be collected, which started causing neglect among the populace towards rites and customs, undermining the authority of the political elite.²⁸ Among the gathered collection of prophecies there were two attributed to a fortune-teller called Marcius. One's authenticity was proved post-factum by foretelling the defeat at Cannae, the other — as Livy expressed himself — gave prediction about the *incertiora futura*: if the Romans seek to prevail over Hannibal a *ludi* should be held for Apollo (Liv. 25, 12, 9–10):

hostes, Romani, si ex agro expellere uoltis, uomicam quae gentium venit longe, Apollini uovendos censeo ludos qui quotannis comiter Apollini fiant; cum populus dederit ex publico partem, privati uti conferant pro se atque suis; iis ludis faciendis praesit praetor is quis ius populo plebeique dabit summum; decemviri Graeco ritu hostiis sacra faciant. hoc si recte facietis, gaudebitis semper fietque res uestra melior; nam is deum exstinguet perduelles uestros qui uestros campos pascit placide.

To confirm these oracles, the Senate ordered the *Xviri* to consult the Sibylline books for approbation, thus establishing the *ludi Apollinares*.²⁹

²⁶ GAGÉ (1955: 349–393); LATTE (1960: 223–224).

²⁷ See Polyb. 3, 112, 8. See also Liv. 22, 36 and 24, 10. For more sources and discussion, see ENGELS (2007: 767–768); KESKIAHO (2013: 162, especially n. 142).

²⁸ Liv. 25, 1, 6–12.

²⁹ About the *ludi* in detail, see: SCULLARD (1981: 159–160); BERNSTEIN (1998: 171–181); LATTE (1960: 223).

Although the games were ordered and supervised by the *praetor urbanus*, it was the *Xviri* who performed the sacrifices and rites, so this priestly body, that was originally created to oversee the Sibylline books, started to become affiliated with Apollo (or maybe it already was).³⁰ Livy states that Apollo was invoked not as healer, but as a symbol for victory (25, 12, 15): *haec est origo ludorum Apollinarium, victoriae, non valetudinis ergo ut plerique rentur, votorum factorumque*. However, the Marcian oracle uses a strong pestilential-medical metaphor to describe the instructions: *vomica ... hostem ... gentium ... expellere* (on the latter see OLD s. v. 1b.). This presupposes a symbolic connection between pestilence and the enemy, thus, in terms of the narratology, Apollo was seen as an obvious choice to eliminate it. The oracle's wording clearly testifies how the god was viewed at the time. In this regard, Livy perhaps was mistaken in his sources, and was influenced by Apollo's recent image as the victor of Actium (Prop. 4, 6, 69–70: *Apollo victor*), or simply wanted to reflect on the discourse of his time (*ut plerique rentur*).³¹ Nevertheless, Apollo did not bring victory immediately (for that purpose another Sibylline oracle inspired cult, Magna Mater, was installed in 202 BC),³² but his *ludi* became permanent in 208 BC as a response to a severe plague.³³ This multifaceted profile of the god does not counteract itself. In fact, Apollo, by the end of the Second Punic war, became an important, versatile god in Roman religion, summoned whenever the external or internal integrity of the Roman state was under threat.³⁴ In this manner, Apollo further resembled some of the Sibylline books' functions: they

³⁰ RADKE (1987: 66); GAGÉ (1955: 24–26); LATTE (1960: 221–221).

³¹ Cf. Macr. *Sat.* 1, 17, 25; 27. See MILLER (2009: 29).

³² Liv. 29, 10, 4–29, 11, 8.

³³ Already in the years of 211 (Liv. 26, 23, 3) and 209 (27, 11, 6) were attempts to make it permanent. For 208 (Liv. 27.23.5–7): *eo anno pestilentia grauis incidit in urbem agrosque, quae tamen magis in longos morbos quam in peritiales euasit. eius pestilentiae causa et supplicatum per compita tota urbe est et P. Licinius Uarus praetor urbanus legem ferre ad populum iussus ut ii ludi in perpetuum in statam diem uouerentur*. For context see BERNSTEIN (1998: 181–182).

³⁴ ALFÖLDI (1997: 76), examining Apollo's appearance on coinage of that time, remarks: 'Apollo was a versatile divinity, and his attraction for people could be due to the diverse aspect of his cult.'

shared the same priestly collegium, and both of them can be thought of as important instruments through which the *pax deorum*, the very equilibrium of the Roman imperium, could prevail. However, the Sibylline books were consulted more frequently at the time, and ' [...] were used in accordance with current needs and religious trends' as Keskiaho states. Meanwhile, he adds: '[...] by the end of the 3rd century they were connected with Greek rituals, Apollo, and, by association, prophecy.'³⁵ As Rome set foot on Greek soil, and with it Roman ambassadors and generals became regular visitors of Delphi,³⁶ the books slowly began losing their unique monopoly as state oracle,³⁷ and started to be affiliated with a Sibyl or Sibyls.³⁸

By the 1st century BC, all sources treat the Sibylline books as a collection of prophecies under the supervision of Apollo.³⁹ Despite this, in 83 BC, when the books were destroyed in the devastating fire of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, they were replaced in their original loca-

³⁵ KESKIAHO (2013: 165).

³⁶ According to Livy (1, 56) already in 511–10 BC Delphi had been visited by a Roman delegation, but its historicity is uncertain. At the time of Camillus, there was one visit due to the flooding of the Alban lake (Liv. 5, 15 3 and 5, 28, 1–5). Fabius Pictor was sent to Apollo's famous oracle after the defeat at Cannae (Liv. 22.57.4–5). When he returned (23.11.1–2), he proclaimed that the command of Pythia is to make atoning sacrifices and lead ceremonies to gain the blessing of the gods. For discussion on the former visits, see PARKE–WORMELL (1956: 265–282); OGILVIE (1965: 216–218 and 660, 689–693); GAGÉ (1955: 377–384); KESKIAHO (2013: 164); GILLMEISTER (2015: 215 n. 24).

³⁷ ALFÖLDI (1997: 73–75).

³⁸ The first mention of the Sibyl in Roman literature is by Navius, in his *Bellum Poenicum*. FGrH 70 fr. 134. See PARKE (1988: 71–74); POTTER (1994: 73–74); GILLMEISTER (2015: 217).

³⁹ Liv. 10, 8, 2: *decemviros sacris faciundis, carminum Sibyllae ac fatorum populi huius interpretes, antistites eosdem Apollinaris sacri caerimoniarumque aliarum plebeios videmus*. Cic. Har. Resp. 18: *fatorum veteres praedictiones Apollinis vatum libris, portentorum expiationes Etruscorum disciplina contineri putaverunt*. Most scholars accept an early connection with the books, see: WISSOWA (1902: 239); SIMON (1978: 203–204); ALFÖLDI (1997: 69–71). Against the connection with Apollo, see: LATTE (1960: 222); ORLIN (2002: 76–85). The coinage of the members of the *viri sacris facundi* frequently displays Apollonian symbols, which again may provide evidence for an interrelation.

tion seven years later.⁴⁰ This 'new' collection remained in the old, traditional centre of the state. However, from this date on, their content and the nature of each prediction significantly changed, gaining a Hellenistic profile.⁴¹ We only find one traditional *prodigium* and a following expiation ritual in 38 BC,⁴² instead of these past uses, it became frequent to turn to the predictions (that were attributed to Sibylline books)⁴³ in political or party struggles. Moreover, the content of such predictions has taken on an eschatological character, according to which the success or misfortune of the state as such depends on the individual. For example, Publius Cornelius Lentulus, one of the chief participants of the Catilinarian conspiracy, claimed in front of the Allobrogian delegates that he

⁴⁰ According to Appian (*B. Civ.* 1, 83) the fire on the Capitol was marked as one of the prodigies of the forthcoming civil wars. See also: Cic. *Verr.* 2, 4, 69; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4, 62; Plut. *Sull.* 27, 12–13; Plin. *H.N.* 33, 16; Tact. *Ann.* 6, 12, 5; Obs. 57; Cassiod. *Chron.* 132, 486. Sulla began to rebuild the temple, but did not live to see its dedication in 69 BC (Tac. *Hist.* 3, 72, 8–10). The new set of collections was gathered and copied down by various private texts from all around the Mediterranean and Asia (Erythrae, Italy, Samos, Ilium, Africa). Lact. *Div inst.* 1, 6, 13. See GAGÉ (1955: 446–461); POTTER (1994: 78). According to ORLIN (2010: 203) this wide range for the recollection meant that the Roman state recognized these *poleis* as members of the Roman community. See also: KESKIAHO (2013: 166); SANTANGELO (2013: 135–136).

⁴¹ There are already uncommon consultations before the fire (Liv. 38, 45, 3; Liv. *epit. Oxyrh.* 54). On these, see ENGELS (2007: 501–502); KESKIAHO (2013: 163–164); SATTERFIELD (2008: 129–136). A Sibylline oracle was consulted during the war against Mithridates as a religious instrument implemented in the struggle over the East, see SANTANGELO (2013: 129–133). One of the reasons for this changing character may be the failing traditional political system, see FLOWER (2009: 62–114). KESKIAHO (2013: 168–169) argues that the book's content did not change that drastically, rather the political culture of the time itself shifted to a different state. The growing role of the individual political leaders, generals and their authority over the state and the official religion had affected the Sibylline prophecies: 'At the very least, we can say that the oracles of the Sibyl seemed to have had, since the time of Sulla, a role in the propaganda around political leaders that they had not had before.'

⁴² Dio 48, 4. See SATTERFIELD (2008: 200–201).

⁴³ There is a debate among scholars that after the reinstitution these ambiguous prophecies came from the original collections, handled by the *XVviri* and the Senate, or from private ones. See RADKE (1987: 65–66); Cf. KESKIAHO (2013: 168) argues for their genuineness. GILLMEISTER (2015: 217–218) emphasizes the influence of the *oracula Sibyllina* on the *libri*.

has to be a future leader of Rome, for, according to the Sibylline books, three Cornelii should rule over Rome: after Sulla and Cinna, he must be the third.⁴⁴ Another illustrative example would be when, in 45 BC, prophecies (also supposedly from the Sibylline books) circulated in Rome stating that only a king would be able to defeat the Parthians. This meant that Caesar should become king before he leaves the already planned Parthian campaign in 44 BC.⁴⁵ It is hard to determine whether these prophecies were of an authentic origin, but it is certain that they were used as a legitimizing tool and distributed during late republican political strifes, and thereby affected public discourse.

These examples somewhat explain Augustus' definite policies against any prophetic texts. He not only banned and burned all other Latin and Greek, private, anonymous prophecy collections that were still popular and circulating in Rome at the time, but also issued to edit copies of the state controlled Sibylline books (*hos quoque dilectu habito*).⁴⁶ Strict action against the aforementioned popular, eschatological predictions of obscure origins is clear: the Roman state always had tight control over these private religious texts.⁴⁷ When Augustus ordered these ambiguous, unofficial collections to be handed over to the *praetor urbanus*, and simultaneously instructed the *XVviri* (whose *magister collegium*

⁴⁴ Sall. *Cat.* 47, 2: *eadem Galli fatentur ac Lentulum dissimulantem coarguunt praeter litteras sermonibus, quos ille habere solitus erat: ex libris Sibyllinis regnum Romae tribus Corneliis portendi; Cinnae atque Sullam antea, se tertium esse.* Cf. Plut. *Cic.* 17, 4; *Cic. Cat.* 3, 9. Cf. in 87 BC some verses from the books were read aloud, requiring the expulsion of Cinna and six others in order to attain peace. See PARKE (1988: 206). SATTERFIELD (2008: 180–186).

⁴⁵ Suet. *Iul.* 79: *proximo autem senatu Lucium Cottam quindecimvirum sententiam dicturum, ut, quoniam fatalibus libris contineretur Parthos nisi a rege non posse vinci, Caesar rex appelleretur.* Cf. Plut. *Caes.* 60, Dio 44, 15; App. *BC* 2, 11; Cicero in the *De Divinatione* (2, 111–113.) tell us about this particular prophecies. He complain that these kind of prophecies should be treated more carefully, since it is not certain for which age or occasion it applies. PARKE (1988: 209) on the account of this sources state that in the time of Cicero, there was already an irregularity in the usage of books. Cf. SATTERFIELD (2008: 196–200).

⁴⁶ Suet. *Aug.* 31, 1. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 6, 12, 2. For discussion on the Suetonius *loc.* see: WARDLE (2014: 246–247).

⁴⁷ Cf. Liv. 25, 1, 12; 40, 29, 12–14. Tac. *Ann.* 6, 12, 2.

was Augustus himself)⁴⁸ to review the unordered Sibylline books, his aim must have been to eliminate any other prophecies, which would undermine his authority or position. Cassius Dio reports that the Sibylline books had to be renovated, because apparently they became unreadable over time. He also adds that it was done personally by the *XVviri*, so that their contents would remain in secret.⁴⁹ These simultaneous orders clearly show Augustus' attitude towards prophecies as such: unofficial ones had to cease to exist,⁵⁰ and official ones had to be cleared from any uncomfortable content, while being accessible only to him and a few select members of his clientura.⁵¹ As Keskiaho notes: 'the consultation of the books happened in secret, we have to allow for an indefinite amount of agency to the *Xviri* in the composition of the oracular responses or even in the alteration of the books themselves.'⁵²

These policies, the austere regulation and control over (un)official prophetic texts indicate their importance in the eyes of the Augustan authorities. Nevertheless, a remark of Dionysius of Halicarnasseus contradicts this statement. The Greek historian, living in Rome, expresses his concern about the neglect of the Sibylline books — which he considered the most valuable possession of the Roman state⁵³ — by his contemporaries.⁵⁴ Dionysius noticed a shift in the acceptance, importance and cultural context of the books after the Augustan reorganization, which I believe was the deliberate intention of Augustus. Via the strong

⁴⁸ Octavian was a member of the magistrate from the early 30's (if a coin [BMCR Gaul 115] from 37 BC interpretation is correct), later become a magister (RG 4, 36–7.); see SATTERFIELD (2008: 210); MILLER (2009: 19).

⁴⁹ Dio 54, 17, 2: καὶ τὰ ἔπη τὰ Σιβύλλεια ἐξίτηλα ὑπὸ τοῦ χρόνου γεγονότα τοὺς ἱερέας ἀντοχειρία ἐκγράψασθαι ἐκέλευσεν, ἵνα μηδεὶς ἕτερος αὐτὰ ἀναλέξηται.

⁵⁰ The purging of private oracular texts was not enterally successful: an account of Tacitus (6, 12.) states that still in his day plenty of them were circulating in Rome.

⁵¹ See SATTERFIELD (2008: 211).

⁵² KESKIAHO (2013: 159).

⁵³ Dion. Hal. 4, 62, 5: συνελόντι δ' εἰπεῖν οὐδὲν οὕτω Ῥωμαῖοι φυλάττουσιν οὐθ' ὅσιον κτῆμα οὐθ' ἱερὸν ὡς τὰ Σιβύλλεια θέσφατα.

⁵⁴ Dion. Hal. 7, 37, 3: ὧν οὐκ ἡξίουσι οἱ τότε ἄνθρωποι καθάπερ οἱ νῦν ὑπερορᾶν. ENGELS (2012: 160–161) emphasizes the Anti-Augustan tone in this remark, moreover reinforces his argument with Cicero's and Livy's (43, 13, 1) critics about the neglection of *prodigia publica* of their times, which presumably a result of Augustan policies.

supervision and (re)politicisation of the collection, Augustus intended to marginalise and degrade the once important books of the Republican religion. As matter of fact, we find only one consultations during Augustus' reign,⁵⁵ and in Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* the term *Sibylla* itself is barely mentioned (seven times in total).⁵⁶ Numerous consultations known from other sources are not mentioned, and after all, the specific origin myth of the books, Tarquinius Superbus and the old Sibyl from Cumae, are completely omitted. According to Gillmeister, the adjective *sibyllini* was later added to the collection, so Livy perhaps adjusted his terminology to the policies of his era, a time when the books became vague, distant and rarely used (and, in a way, more special) items of the many Roman divination types. Meanwhile, the Sibyl's significance peaked as a cultural and a literal phenomenon. It is also possible that Livy did not want to include a 'popular story' in his work, nor wanted to choose between the Jovian and Apollonian traditions. As a historian with strong republican sympathy, Livy might have expressed his disagreement on the reorganisation of the books by not including any origin story.⁵⁷ Either way, it is certain, that the name *Sibyllini libri* is a later adaptation and a cultural invention.⁵⁸ Still, I would argue that the books did not completely lose their original importance and republican appearance as *libri fatalis* providing *remedia*.

At the feet of Apollo Palatine

Another important aspect of the relocation of the Sibylline books was the destination itself, the sanctuary of the Apollo Palatinus. It was an obvious choice for two reasons. First and foremost, it was practical to place the books (more precisely to seal them *sub Apollonis basi in duobus foruli aurati*) inside the pedestal of the sanctuary in the immediate vicinity of the princeps, since Augustus' humble residence (cf. Suet. *Aug.* 72.1)

⁵⁵ In 17 BC on the occasion of the *ludi saeculares*; see later in the study.

⁵⁶ Only the phrase *libri* emerges 19 times, three times the books named as *fatalis*. Cf. in Dionysius' version of the origin story there are no Sibyl mentioned. GILLMEISTER (2015a: 178); (2015: 213, n. 11). See the discussion in KESKIAHO (2013: 156–157, especially n. 91).

⁵⁷ GILLMEISTER (2015a: 179); (2015: 213); POTTER (1994: 81–83).

⁵⁸ GILLMEISTER (2010: 11 and 15).

stood right next to Apollo's new temple and was even connected to it by a *porticus*.⁵⁹ As the *magister collegium* of the *XVviri*, the *princeps* could easily control access to the books, having institutional and literal physical authority over them.

Secondly, this location is closely related to Augustus' religious-cultural aspirations. He was trying to break with the Jovian origins and emphasise the more recent Apollonian tone of the books. This, on the other hand, indicates a confrontation between the principal cult of the Roman state and his personal patron god. Jupiter Optimus Maximus's old temple on the Capitulum slowly lost its importance and the new sanctuary of Apollo on the Palatine Hill took over some of its functions.⁶⁰ But this change of emphasis in Roman religious customs and divine hierarchy did not arise out of blasphemy against the ancient state-cult of Jupiter, at least our sources never mention such intentions. Apollo Palatinus' brand-new, dazzling, monumental sanctuary complex represented Augustus' new statehood, and easily became the very symbol of it. The temple's iconography incorporated the god's victorious vengefulness (Apollo Actio), as well as his peaceful, cosmical image (Citharoedus, Sol), showing the full prism of the politico-religious ideology and propagandistic narrative of the new regime.⁶¹ The Palatine's image incorporated the old cult of Apollo Medicus as well,⁶² thus the god continued to represent — as discussed above — the health and safety of the Roman state, and it is highly likely that Augustus utilised this specific aspect of the god's image in order to be seen as the 'healer of the

⁵⁹ Suet. *Aug.* 29, 3. See WARDLE (2014: 228–230).

⁶⁰ BREAD–NORTH–PRICE (1998: 200–201).

⁶¹ On the Augustan Apollo see ZANKER, (1989: 65–70 and 82–89); GALINSKY (1999: 213–224); MILLER (2009: 186–196).

⁶² The temple of Apollo Medicus was restored between 34 and 32 BC by C. Sosius, a former confidant and *legatus* of Antonius. Despite this, the temple was inaugurated on Augustus' birthday (23 September), and Sosius became a pardoned ally of Augustus, and as a member of the *XVviri*, he was even participated in the *ludi saecularis*. For Apollo as healer during the Augustan Age: Hor. *Carm.* 1, 21, 13–15; CS. 61–64. MILLER (2009: 176–177).

state'.⁶³ This politically and culturally saturated place became the new home of the Sibylline books.

The purpose of the relocation was not only to keep up with the changing late republican religious habits and practices, nor only to have authority over these old, prestigious divination instruments of the *res publica*, but to incorporate them into the framework of Augustan ideology. In fact, Augustus was trying to make it appear as though the relocation of the books was a necessary, compulsory move. As if keeping the Sibylline books on the Capitol Hill was an error in the tradition which had to be ameliorated. Augustus partially discarded the original status and function of the books and replaced it with a new one, which was still loosely based on their original purpose.⁶⁴ The *pax deorum* had been replaced with *pax Augusta*,⁶⁵ under which no more prodigies could occur, at least since the policies of the *prodigia publica* had been reshaped.⁶⁶ Thus, the safety, the health and the future of the Roman state was secured by Augustus, through the values represented and symbolised by Apollo: *fatum*, *remedium*, *victoria* and *aura saecula*. With the relocation, Augustus finalised the association between the god and the books,⁶⁷ simultaneously creating a new religious-cultural unity. This was not a sudden invention, but part of a longer initiative, to which both Vergil's *Aeneid* and Tibullus (2, 5) attested and contributed to, forming this new, modified image of the collection.

In the beginning of the 6th book of the *Aeneid*, after Aeneas finally reaches the shores of Italy, he instantly ascends to the temple of Apollo, and to the dreadful secret cave of the Sibyl (6. 10–11: *horrendaeque procul secreta Sibyllae, / antrum immane*) to ask her for directions to the underworld, in order to seek the shadow of his father, Anchises. The portrait of the Cumean Sibyl as a prophetess of Apollo, and the whole topography of Apollo's Cumean sanctuary was a Vergilian innovation. There is

⁶³ WICKKISER (2005).

⁶⁴ Cf. GILLMEISTER (2015: 221): 'The political role of the Roman state oracle had become minimal while at the very same moment the renaissance of the Sibyl in Roman culture had reached its zenith.'

⁶⁵ CORNWELL (2017: 155–186).

⁶⁶ SATTERFIELD (2008: 208–210).

⁶⁷ GAGÉ (1955: 542–555); KESKIAHO (2013: 169).

no other evidence which makes such a connection between Apollo and Sibyl, or between Aeneas and the Cumaean Sibyl.⁶⁸ Although Apollo had an old sanctuary in Cumea, the Cumaean Apollo had minor influence on Roman culture, and was not affiliated with the Cumaean Sibyl before Augustus.⁶⁹ Miller points out that it seems as if Vergil reorganised the topography of the area ‘in order to highlight Apollo’,⁷⁰ thus emphasising the Apollonian character of the scene at the expense of the Sibyl’s. Furthermore, this literary, constructed place of the god’s sacred *arx* with the Trivia’s (Diana) *lucus* (cf. 9–10) resembles mostly Rome’s imperial Palatine temple, inaugurated in 28 BC.⁷¹ This meta-historical and cross-spatial connection between past and present, Cumae and Rome, becomes evident when Aeneas enters into the cave of the *Delius uates* (highlighting the Sibyl’s Apollonian profile) who *aperit futura* (12.). After some encouragement, the Trojan hero makes a vow to her (69–76):

tum Phoebo et Triuiaie solido de marmore templum
 institutam festosque dies de nomine Phoebi.
 te quoque magna manent regnis penetralia nostris:
 hic ego namque tuas sortis arcanaque fata
 dicta meae genti ponam, lectosque sacrabo,
 alma, uiros. foliis tantum ne carmina manda,
 ne turbata uolent rapidis ludibria uentis;
 ipsa canas oro. [...]

The promise of the new temple and festivity eventually will be fulfilled not by Aeneas, but Augustus. The *marmore templum* is clearly a reference to Apollo Palatinus, but the identification of *festus dies* is not so evident. It could refer to the *ludi Apollinares*,⁷² or, sticking to the Augustan timeline, it can also allude to either one of the victory games founded after Actium, or the *ludi saeculares* itself.⁷³ Aeneas, in addition, lists two more

⁶⁸ ZETZEL (1989: 279–280).

⁶⁹ MILLER (2009:134–135 and 146); HORSFALL (2013: 84–89). GILLMEISTER (2015: 214 and 218).

⁷⁰ MILLER (2009:135); Cf. CLARK (1977).

⁷¹ MCKAY (1973: 53–54 and 61–63); MILLER (2009: 136).

⁷² Serv. *ad Aen.* 6, 70; See also MCKAY (1973: 54); HORSFALL (2013: 113).

⁷³ MILLER (2009: 139).

segments: the Sybil's *sortes* containing *fata arcana* and the priestly body (XV*viri*) to oversee them.⁷⁴ In just a few lines the Vergilian narrator draws a parallel between Aeneas and Augustus: both of them founding temples, religious practices and priesthoods.⁷⁵ A key segment and a main cause of the Augustan reorganisation appears in these lines. The medium (cf. OLD sors 3.) of the Sibyl's oracular responses, the physical object itself and the mediated message, the secrets of the divine *fatum*, the future of the Roman race belong to Apollo,⁷⁶ and has to be stored in the sanctuary of Apollo, at least, this is what Aeneas promised (*funditque preces rex pectore ab imo*; 55) to the Sybil in exchange for her oracle (cf. 6. 83–97). We do not know the precise date when Vergil wrote these lines and whether he was influenced by the cultural-religious changes of his time or whether he was a herald of the Augustan relocation,⁷⁷ but from the perspective of the Augustan (contemporary) reader it does not necessarily matter. Vergil's epic presented, and at the same time legitimised the notion that the secrets and fate of Rome always belonged to Apollo, and Augustus was the one who corrected these 'mistakes' of the republican religious tradition. Servius, the 4th century commentator of the *Aeneid*, does not even mention any more connection with Jupiter and situates the books without any doubt under the guardianship of Apollo.⁷⁸

Hence, the *Aeneid* constructed the aetiology story of the Sibylline books within Apollo Palatinus' temple. In Vergil's epic, the concept of *fatum* (originally attributed to Jupiter) is clearly connected to Apollo, albeit, the episode of the Sibyl and Aeneas does not say much about the books' exact role within the ideology of the principate. Tibullus however, who happened to be the least political poet of the Augustan Age,⁷⁹ in his poem 2.5, depicts a very 'Roman' theme by commemorating the inauguration of his patron's son, M. Valerius Messalla Messallinus, into

⁷⁴ Serv. *ad Aen.* 6, 73; For detailed discussion, see HORSFALL (2013: 113).

⁷⁵ Cf. Suet. *Aug.* 29; 31, 4. MILLER (2009: 139). On the comparison of Augustus and Aeneas see WEEDA (2015: 137–140).

⁷⁶ RADKE (1987: 65).

⁷⁷ On a possible dating see HORSFALL (2013: xiv–xv).

⁷⁸ Serv. *ad Aen.* 6, 72: *qui libri in templo Apollinis servabantur*.

⁷⁹ See GOSLING (1987: 333 n. 2).

the *XVviri*.⁸⁰ The poem shows the influence of Vergil, but most importantly attests to the functional, cultural and ideological exchange between Apollo and the books. Tibullus further develops the Vergilian notion of placing the books into the sanctuary of Apollo, and portrays them as one of the inseparable items of the seer-god (15–20):

Te duce Romanos numquam frustrata Sibylla,
Abdita quae senis fata canit pedibus.
Phoebe, sacras Messalinum sine tangere chartas
Vatis, et ipse precor quid canat illa doce.
Haec dedit Aeneae sortes, postquam ille parentem
Dicitur et raptos sustinuisse Lares;

The Sibyl tells the *fata* to the Romans in hexameter (*seni pedes*). These verses are found in the books (*sacras chartas*); again the materiality of the prophecies are highlighted, as the *tangere* infinitive also shows. Messalinus' duty, as priest and an expert, was to visit the temple, and to communicate the book's messages as the Sibyl did in the *Aeneid*.⁸¹ Thus, the poem gives the appearance of continuity: the Sibyl, as a prophetess (*vates*) of Apollo, provided the verses containing *fata* to Aeneas, and now Messallinus does the same, albeit without direct reference, to Augustus. The Sibyl and Apollo are together responsible for the *fatum*, and it seems like Apollo and the books almost completely merged by this time; they surely formed an inseparable religious unit, to say the least. Following Gillmeister's argumentation (2015), the Sibyl and the books are also completely identical, both of them being merely an item for Apollo to reveal his prophecies.

In between lines 19–64, the poem shows the same vision as the *Aeneid*: blissful and idyllic proto-Rome, the arrival of Aeneas, his struggle, and after all, the founding of Rome and her future as an empire.⁸² This is

⁸⁰ PUTNAM (1973: 182).

⁸¹ MURGATROYD (1994: 176–180).

⁸² The wording of this sentence is similar to the lines of Anchises in the *Aeneid*, when he proclaims the famous mission of Rome (6, 851–853: *tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento / (hae tibi erunt artes), pacique imponere morem, / parcere subiectis et debellare superbos*. Cf. PUTNAM (1973: 189–190).

the *fatum*, which Apollo proclaimed through the Sibyls (Amalthea, Marpesia, Herophile, Phoeto, Graia, Aniena) and their books (*sacras ... sortes*) (cf. 65–70),⁸³ launched into motion by Aeneas, and finally fulfilled by Augustus. Surprisingly, when the poem jumps back to its present time, it begins to list typical prodigies (71–78).⁸⁴ As Burkowski noted, Tibullus here makes a sharp distinction between the recent ominous, unstable age of the civil wars and the prosperity of the proto-Roman past.⁸⁵ These *mala signa*, which are similar to the ones appearing in 44 BC following Caesars murder,⁸⁶ are the *fatum* (cf. 78: *fataque vocales prae-monuisse boves*) that needs to be interpreted and expiated. In this context Apollo appears to be taking over the basic characteristics of the Sibylline books, namely, to annul prodigies and ensure that the correct solutions were given to them (79–82):

Haec fuerunt olim, sed tu iam mitis, Apollo,
 Prodigia indomitis merge sub aequoribus,
 Et succensa sacris crepitet bene laurea flammis,
 Omine quo felix et satur [sacer]⁸⁷ annus erit.

Those prodigies belong to the realm of the past now; meanwhile, the poet asks Apollo to throw future ones into the fierce seas (*sub indomitis aequoribus*).⁸⁸ Apollo, with the help of the Sibylline books, even prevents any malicious *omen* or *prodigia* occurring in the future, and in this way (ironically) making it meaningless to consult the books anymore. Livy informs us that prodigies are no more reported in his time.⁸⁹ Thus, the

⁸³ See MURGATROYD (1994: 207–211).

⁸⁴ PARKE (1988: 209–210) raises the possibility that these lines are inspired by the original content of *libri Sibyllini*.

⁸⁵ BURKOWSKI (2016: 164–165). The distinction, however, is also emphasised with the future, bucolic prosperity as well (cf. 83–104).

⁸⁶ PUTNAM (1973: 191); MURGATROYD (1994: 211–212); Cf. Verg. *Georg.* 3, 464–88.

⁸⁷ See the critical appendix in MURGATROYD (1994: 280–281).

⁸⁸ Tibullus here may refer to the old custom of throwing protents into the sea, but in Livy (27, 37, 6) it is done following the order of the *haruspex*. Dio (24 frg. 84 Bossevain) informs about a case, where a statue of Apollo was thrown into the sea.

⁸⁹ Liv. 43, 13, 1–2: *Non sum nescius ab eadem neglegentia qua nihil deos portendere volgo nunc credant neque nuntiari admodum ulla prodigia in publicum neque in annales referri.*

original function of the Sibylline books, the main reason they were used during the republic, is absorbed completely by Apollo. To be precise, by the sanctuary of Apollo Palatinus, where the addressee of Tibullus' poem is going to be a priest, and where the Sibylline books are closed off forever under the full authority of Augustus.

This forthcoming age without prodigies is going to be *felix et satur*, an abundant, blissful era with Apollo's insurance. Although the poem was written possibly a few years before the *ludi saeculares*,⁹⁰ these expressions and the following themes and imagery (83–104) recall the atmosphere and symbols of the festivity.⁹¹ Here Tibullus once more invokes Vergil. After Aeneas landed in the underworld with Anchises' guidance, the future of Rome appears in front of him. The Trojan hero foresees Augustus, with a short but meaningful description (6, 791–793):

hic vir, hic est, tibi quem promitti saepius audis,
Augustus Caesar, divi genus, aurea condet
saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arua
Saturno quondam, [...]

The narrator (in the guise of Anchises) portrays Augustus in the line of Roman heroes, as an enabler of that *aurea saecula*, which once ruled all over Latium.⁹² This secular and cyclical imagery of Vergil and Tibullus not only shows the importance of the *ludi saeculares* in Augustus self-representation, but also further proves that both poets contributed to the construction of this image. The arrival of the new *saeculum* had been anticipated at least since the early 40s BC, as various prophecies and prophetic texts were circulating proclaiming the change of ages, and the arriving era of Saturn. However, due to the ongoing civil wars, there was little effort to celebrate it.⁹³ Virgil's famous, optimistic 4th eclogue

⁹⁰ For dating see MURGATROYD (1994: 163); CAIRNS (1979: 85–86).

⁹¹ CAIRNS (1979: 85–86); MILLER (2009: 260). Messallinus' name can be found on the *Acta* of the *ludi saecularis* 17 BC as *XVviri* (CIL VI 32323. 152).

⁹² HORSFALL (2013: 54–542).

⁹³ In 49 BC the coinage of L. Valerius Acisculus features Sol, Luna, Mercurius and Apollo, gods that are usually linked to the cyclical changes of time (RRC 474, 1 and 5). Cic. *N. D.* 2, 51; Cens. *DN.* 17, 2. According to ALFÖLDI (1997: 68–92), the appearance of

(who put his thoughts and hopes in the mouth of the Cumaean Sibyl)⁹⁴ or Horace's pessimistic and apocalyptic 16th epode reflects on the double nature of their times, and shows their 'space of experience' and 'horizon of expectation'.⁹⁵ Both Vergil and Tibullus were affected by the religious-cultural milieu of their time, which was full of cosmological-secular themes and conceptions, and they indeed further developed this notion in their poems. Augustus eventually capitalised on the concept of the recurring *saeculum* for his own advantage, incorporating his ideological narrative of himself. For this purpose, he used the Sibyl (and her books), who, under the authority of Apollo, gave the long awaited prediction of the new *saeculum* to begin. The single consultation of the Sibylline books during Augustus' reign proclaimed that a *ludi saecularis* should be held.⁹⁶

The Sibylline books and the *ludi saeculares*

The transfer date of the books is debated. Some argue that they were relocated right after the inauguration of the temple of Apollo in 28 BC.⁹⁷ According to Dio's narrative, the transition potentially occurred somewhere between 19 and 17 BC, when the recopying and editing could have happened.⁹⁸ Suetonius puts it to 12 BC, after Lepidus' death, when Augustus seized the position of the pontifex maximus.⁹⁹ The account of Vergil, Tibullus, and a *denarii* minted by Anistus Vetus,¹⁰⁰ suggest an

Apollo and the Sibyl on the coinage of that time represented the cyclical-secular conception.

⁹⁴ Verg. *Ecl.* 4, 4–7: *Vltima Cumaei uenit iam carminis aetas;/ magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo / iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna, / iam noua progenies caelo demittitur alto.*

⁹⁵ KOSSELLECK (1985: 267–288).

⁹⁶ CIL VI 32323. 141.

⁹⁷ PARKE (1988: 141); ORLIN (2002: 98).

⁹⁸ GAGÉ (1955: 542–554); SATTERFELD (2008: 213–218).

⁹⁹ GALINSKY (1996: 102); SANTANGELO (2013: 138); MILLER (2009: 240 n. 118); WARDLE (2014: 248–249).

¹⁰⁰ RIC I² 365 is a possible representation of the Sibylline books. The coin dates to 16 BC, on the reverse side a statue of Apollo stands on a chest within three coil-like forms. See GAGÉ (1955: 545–555). However, this identification is contested; cf. WARDLE (2014: 248).

earlier dating.¹⁰¹ Without any conclusion on this topic, what is certain is that during the aforementioned review (maybe in 18 BC) of the books the *XVviri*, with Augustus' guidance, found that a *ludi saecularis* should be held.¹⁰² Both the first (249 BC) and second (146 BC) *ludi Tarentum* were arranged according to the instructions of the Sibylline books, due to a severe plague and other prodigies.¹⁰³ However, unlike those other earlier games, the occasion in 17 BC was completely reshaped by Augustus. Its date, magnitude, rites, ceremonies and other sacrifices were changed, Apollo and Diana (next to the original pair of Dis and Proserpina) had given a crucial role and the new Palatine building complex was serving as one of the most prominent locations during the three day long festivity. Apollo, together with his sister Diana, appear not only as symbols and allegories of the cyclical change of time — as shown by Horace's *Carmen Saecularis* — but as a representation of the new Augustan Rome. The new games laid more emphasis on hopes for the future, rather than concentrating on the *chthonical* expiation rites of the past.¹⁰⁴ In Horace's hymn, the poet depicts Apollo in full splendour: prophecy, archery, healing (CS. 61–64) are the main *aretai* of the god and were constantly displayed in Augustan Rome. Apollo's prominence in the festivity, however, is further assured by the Sibylline books, as Horace mentions it right after the invocation of Apollo and Diana (1–5): '*Phoebe silvarumque potens Diana, [...] quo Sibyllini monuere versus.*' The Sibylline books reminded the *XViri*. Namely Ateius Capito, who according to the tradition found during a review the exact oracle that prescribed the *ludi*.¹⁰⁵ Satterfield states that prodigies in 17 BC, preserved by Julius Obsequens, were the reason for the consultation. She argues that these prodigies were fabricated by Augustus in order to have a steady reason

¹⁰¹ SATTERFIELD (2008: 213–216).

¹⁰² Cens. DN. 17, 9; FGrH 257 F 37.5 = Zos. 2, 6, 1.

¹⁰³ For 249 and 146 see: Liv. 7, 27; Zos. 2, 4, 1. Liv. *Peri.* 49, 6; Cens. DN. 17, 7–11. See BEARD–NORTH–PRICE (1998: 71–72); THOMAS (2011: 271–273) SANTANGELO (2013: 118–119).

¹⁰⁴ About the games of Augustus in general, see SCHNEGG-KÖHLER (2002: 245–262). See also: ZETZEL (1989: 280); THOMAS (2011: 271–273).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. BEARD–NORTH–PRICE (1998: 205); GALINSKY (1996: 102); SANTANGELO (2013: 138).

to consult the books, and link them with the previous ones.¹⁰⁶ Augustus' *ludi saecularis* was supported by the Sibylline books, he manipulated them in order to support his desire to organise a *ludi saecularis*, and thus celebrate the renewed Rome. The books, therefore, were still an important part of the legitimisation and ritual processes. Fortunately, we have the exact text of oracle (the response) and the inscription (*Acta*) commemorating the games. The two texts are the main sources on the event and to a certain degree, give us a clear look on how Augustus used the Sibylline books to promote his *ludi saeculares*, and how he changed the traditional ceremonies, putting Apollo, Diana and the Palatine hill in the focus. The text of the oracle, which Phlegon of Tralles handed down to us, and what seems like a genuine, Augustan origin,¹⁰⁷ highlights Apollo, and the god's connection with Sol:¹⁰⁸

[...] „καὶ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων,
ὅστε καὶ Ἥλιος κυκλήσκειται, ἴσα δεδέχθω
θύματα Λητοίδης.” [...]

The inscription of the *Acta*¹⁰⁹ almost exactly follows the words of the Sibylline's response, and constantly refers back to it (92, 105, 117, 121, 136, 141, 146). The books describe the order and specific rites, ceremonies of the *ludi*. Among these descriptions we find the prayer and due sacrifices to Apollo (141):

APOLLO, VTI TIBI IN ILLIS LIBRI[s sc]RIPTVM EST, QVARVMQVE
RERVM ERGO QVODQVE MELIVS SIET P(opulo) R(omano),
QVIR[itibus],

It is apparent, then, that the Sibylline books served as the main authority on where and when to organise the *ludi saecularis*. Augustus in this way easily reshaped the original *Secular Games*, his patron god, and the political-religious centre on the Palatine Hill emerged as the new focal point.

¹⁰⁶ SATTERFIELD (2016). Obs. 71. Dio (54, 19, 7) reports that there were prodigies in 16 BC as well.

¹⁰⁷ THOMAS (2011: 56); HORSFALL (2013: 584).

¹⁰⁸ FGrH 257 f 37 = Phlegon; cf. Macr. 99, 4 = Zos. 2, 6, SCHNEGG-KÖHLER (2002: 221–228).

¹⁰⁹ On the *Acta* se SCHNEGG-KÖHLER 2002: 24–45; THOMAS (2011: 274–276).

Through this celebration, the ideology of this new Rome manifested itself. The first line of the Sibylline response is ‘μεμνήσθαι, Ῥωμαῖε’ (remember, Roman)¹¹⁰ echoes the famous lines from the freshly published *Aeneid*, proclaimed by Anchises to Aeneas (6.851): *tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento*. This strong allusion, as Horsfall notes, ‘binds Anchises to the Sibyl and lends oracular authority to Anchises’ words.’¹¹¹ Not only the mission and future of Rome, a segment of the Jupiter-provided *fatum*, communicated by Apollo through the Sibyl, is revealed for Aeneas, but the substance of Augustan imperialism. It is impossible to establish who is alluding to whom,¹¹² but in terms of the cultural/ideological meaning, both texts show the Sibylline books’ precise function in Augustan Rome. Indeed, to some degree, they lost their old republican status, as they were only consulted when a specific political situation required so. But at the same time, the books were incorporated into the ideology of Augustus, as a conveyor of the Augustan *fatum*.

Conclusion

Before concluding, I would like to further develop my argument and illustrate through an example a potentially different view of this transition. In the 14th book of the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid retells the encounter of Aeneas and the Sibyl,¹¹³ but in an indistinguishably Ovidian manner, leaving behind the ‘metaphysical explanation and historical prophecies’¹¹⁴ of Vergil. Aeneas, as he arrives at the Sibyl’s cave, asks her to help him descend under the Avernus. Ovid sums up the whole *katabasis* in just a few lines (14, 116–121) and instead turns his attention to the Sibyl’s character and background story. On the way back to the surface, Aeneas thanks and praises her, and eventually makes a similar kind of vow, as in the *Aeneid* (127–128): *pro quibus aerias meritis evectus ad auras templa tibi statuam, tribuam tibi turis honores*. The Sibyl here rejects Aeneas’ worship: she does not want nor need a temple since she is not a god-

¹¹⁰ Cf. Hor. CS. 5: *mouere*; See THOMAS (2011: 53–53, 70).

¹¹¹ HORSFALL (2013: 584).

¹¹² See ZETZEL (1989: 277–279).

¹¹³ ELLSWORTH (1988: 49–51).

¹¹⁴ MYERS (2009: 77).

dess, but a human being.¹¹⁵ Once Apollo eagerly desired her, and promised to grant her eternal life (*lux aeterna dabatur*), but since the Sibyl was not attracted to him, and refused the god's advances, as a punishment Apollo cursed her with as many years as many grains there are in a heap of sand. But without perpetual youth, the Sibyl became a constantly ageing, deformed elderly woman, wasting away over time. This story was not attested elsewhere before Ovid, and it was probably an innovation of his own on the pattern of Cassandra, Aurora and Tithonus.¹¹⁶ For Ovid, the Sibyl is not a *sanctissima vates*, a possessed mouth piece of Apollo, but a de-mystified human being and most importantly a victim. One of the many victims of the god's sexual desire, positioning her in the company of Daphne or Io. However — as Galinsky puts it — Ovid treats this episode more seriously.¹¹⁷ In the case of Daphne, Apollo's unsuccessful seduction is commemorated by the laurel trees being derived from her, and, as many have previously noted, is a clear reference to Augustus, more precisely to his house's door jamb, on which, in order to honour him, two branches of laurel were hanged. The laurel became a symbol for Augustan renovations and victory, however, for Ovid, it was an emblem of authority, oppression and bloodshed.¹¹⁸ Thus, the Sibyl's miserable fate in the *Metamorphoses* could be interpreted through the Augustan policies concerning the Sibylline books. She is just another item appropriated and subjected to the Augustan state embodied by Apollo. Although, unlike Daphne, after her death the Sibyl will be denied and forgotten by the god (150–151). This means she has to live a thousand years (*Met.* 14, 1), exactly the same time needed for dead souls to return to Earth in Vergil (*Aen.* 6, 748):¹¹⁹

[...] nam iam mihi saecula septem
acta, tamen superest, numeros ut pulveris aequem,
ter centum messes, ter centum musta videre.

¹¹⁵ MILLER (2009: 358–359).

¹¹⁶ ELLSWORTH (1988: 50–52 especially n.14); MYERS (2009: 83).

¹¹⁷ GALINSKY (1975: 226–229).

¹¹⁸ See PADNEY (2018); MILLER (2009: 338–355).

¹¹⁹ In Greek tradition, the Sibyl was thought to live for a thousand years, see PARKE (1988: 20 n.15), POTTER (1990: 116).

tempus erit, cum de tanto me corpore parvam
 longa dies faciet, consumptaque membra senecta
 ad minimum redigentur onus: [...]

Ellsworth by using this information calculated that this long period of a thousand years ended exactly when Tarquinius Priscus bought the Sibylline books. According to his interpretation the voice that the Sibyl left behind is the Sibylline books themselves. However, Ellsworth's calculations does not seem to be entirely correct.¹²⁰ Yet, Ovid's usage of the phrase *saecula* — in light of the *ludi saeculares* — has an Augustan, contemporary political echo. There was a belief that Rome, and any other nation, could only exist merely for ten *saecula*.¹²¹ When the *sidus Iulium* appeared in 44 BC the Etruscan diviner Volcatius interpreted it as a sign that Rome's tenth saeculum had arrived, and according to Servius's commentary, this was supposed to be the saeculum under the dominance of Apollo (Sol).¹²²

After all, this Ovidian episode is not only a tragic story about beauty and love and their relationship with the passing of time, but a *metamorphosis*, the transformation of the Sibyl from a young and beautiful girl to a bodiless voice (152–153): *usque adeo mutata ferar nullique videnda / voce tamen noscar; vocem mihi fata relinquunt*. She is going to become what she already is in Vergil's *Aeneid*: only a voice, an intermediary of Apollo, a featureless communication channel, through which the *fatum* is revealed. Just like in the case of Augustus: the once prestigious collection of books, containing the *fata et remedia Romana*, reduced to a cultural, literary and political motif. A simple device under the realm of Apollo, through which the Augustan system justified itself as a new golden age, where there are no more prodigies; the *pax deorum* could not be disturbed under the *pax Augusta*. The transferring of the Sibylline books into the temple of Apollo Palatinus meant that an everlasting *remedium*

¹²⁰ Cf. FEENEY (1999: 21).

¹²¹ Cens. DN. 17, 5; cf. the cycle of ten cosmic ages in *Orac. Sib.* 4, 47, 8.199R.

¹²² Cf. Serv. Ecl. 4, 4: *VLTIMA CYMAEI V. I. C. A. Sibyllini, quae Cumana fuit et saecula per metalla divisit, dixit etiam quis quo saeculo imperaret, et Solem ultimum, id est decimum voluit: novimus autem eundem esse Apollinem, unde dicit 'tuus iam regnat Apollo*. See WAGENVOORT (1956: 1–5); COLEMAN (1977: 131–134); MILLER 2009: (254–260).

was implied — there were no consultations after the relocation.¹²³ The appropriation by Augustus and Apollo is perhaps best illustrated by the Sibyl's own words, preserved by Phlegon (FGrH 257 fr. 37 V.7–13):

At that time glorious Leto's son, resenting
My power of divination, his destructive heart filled with passion,
Will release the soul imprisoned in my mournful
Body, shooting my frame with a flesh-smiting arrow.
(trans. William Hansen)¹²⁴

The Sibyl's own, sorrowful words are supported by a relief found on a statue ('Sorrento') base in Sorrento. The figure of Diana, Apollo and Latona standing next to each other in their full glory, in front of them in the right corner sits a small and old woman, identified as the Sibyl, wearied and subdued, holding the urn containing the Sibylline books — almost like an offering.¹²⁵

Abbreviations

CIL VI	<i>Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum</i> . Berlin, 1996.
FGrH	Jacoby (ed.): <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> . Berlin–Leiden, 1923–30 and 1940–58.
OCD	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> . Oxford, 1968.
RE	<i>Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . Stuttgart, 1893–1980.
RRC	M. H. Crawford (ed.): <i>Roman Republican Coinage</i> . Cambridge, 1974.

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BERNSTEIN 1998	F. BERNSTEIN: <i>Ludi Publici: Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Entwicklung der öffentlichen Spiele im Republikanischen Rom</i> . Stuttgart 1998.

¹²³ See GILLMEISTER (2007: 71 n. 17); GILLMEISTER (2015: 219). Tacitus tells us how Tiberius declined a consultation when Tiber flooded.

¹²⁴ HANSEN (1996: 55).

¹²⁵ Sorrento, Museo Correale, inv. 3657.

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(Re-)Invention or Revival? The Emperor Augustus and the Re-Introduction of Rituals

The Emperor Augustus promised the revival of the Republic and its values, the revival of Rome's reputation as a great city and most importantly, he promised and ensured the revival of ancestral rituals. Augustus brought more attention to specific rituals, particularly when he performed them and thus set himself apart from earlier politicians. He also brought attention to rituals that, evidently, had not held a significant position within Roman religious traditions. By placing greater focus on the rituals, Augustus was able to paint himself as the savior of these rituals, thereby setting himself apart from his rivals and gaining the support of the people. This paper intends to look at a handful of examples that describe or depict Augustus actively participating in rituals. It will also explore whether Augustus performed the rituals as they were, or if he 're-invented' them for his own personal gain.

Keywords: Augustus, Late Republic, Rituals, Augustan politics, Roman religion

Introduction

There are many words that could be associated with Augustus. However, one that is repeatedly present throughout his career, is 'revival'. His revival of Republican, Roman values is a well-studied and analyzed topic.¹ He revived the City of Rome by renovating several derelict temples and transformed it by constructing several more memorable temples and monuments of his own. Likewise, through this building program, he simultaneously revived the economy and therefore the quality of life for those living in Rome as a result of the numerous jobs created through the transformation of the city. Similarly, the many improve-

¹ Key works on this topic include: SYME (1939), GALINSKY (2005), HÖLKESKAMP (2010), WALLACE-HADRILL (2008), RÜPKE (2012), GOLDSWORTHY (2014).

ments to the city's cleanliness also enhanced the quality of life for several people. However, what he was possibly the most known for, was the revival of rituals.

It has widely been acknowledged, that Augustus presented his own interpretation of *Mos maiorum* (or the ancestral traditions), one which was designed for the purpose of providing him with a positive political image, as well as for contrasting him against his rivals, whom he frequently presented as having neglected the ancestral morals and traditions.² This paper aims to explore how Augustus accomplished this interpretation by analyzing examples of rituals that he re-introduced over the course of his career. Rather than viewing the term simply as one that encompassed values that had held an important place in Roman society, this article will view it as an empty concept, on to which various socially accepted values and traditions and rituals could be attributed.

Because Augustus was able to alter the meaning of a supposedly fading ancestral concept to benefit his political career, it is likewise possible that he was able to achieve the same thing with the rituals he revived. This paper aims to explore the possibility of Augustus reviving these rituals for the basic purpose of drawing attention to his persona. Essentially, it will attempt to determine if he revived rituals as they had been, or if he re-invented them while inserting his own interpretation of their significance and/or meaning for the goal of placing himself at the center of these rituals and further highlighting his self-made image of being a champion of Roman morals and traditions.

The main argument of the paper will be formulated by way of comparison of various contemporary sources that detail the ritual proceedings of four major rituals – before and during Augustus' political reign. The rituals themselves will be analyzed in the context of four crucial events in Augustus' career: the proclamation of the Temple of Apollo Palatinus; the declaration of war by Augustus on Cleopatra; the closing of the doors of the Temple of Janus (which he did on three separate oc-

² For the purpose of keeping the argument concise, I have not approached the topic through an archaeological lens. For a general overview on archaeology of rituals see: LUGINBÜHL (2015), BEARD (2007), RYBERG (1955: 20–64), FOWLER (1922–1925), etc.

casions) and finally, the performance of the *augurium salutis*.³ The paper will attempt to demonstrate, that the rituals conducted during these events were not as important in the past as Augustus made them out to be. In fact, as will be demonstrated, nearly all of the traditions explored in this paper were only practiced on a handful of occasions prior to their reestablishment by Augustus. The paper aims to examine in detail, which changes to the rituals were instituted by Augustus – such as the frequency of their performance which I already alluded to – and in how far these alterations helped him shape his political career and image.

Building a character – why did Augustus need *Mos maiorum*?

Before going into the analysis of the main example, I would first like to provide some background on Augustus' program of cultural renewal, and how this shaped the legacy he left behind. Far before the program's conception in 29 BC, at the time of Julius Caesar's death in 44 BC, Augustus – who was then known as Gaius Octavius – was relatively unknown and largely inexperienced in terms of political and military affairs.⁴ The only thing that worked in his favour was the fact that he was Julius Caesar's adopted heir, meaning he had access to a powerful army and vast amounts of wealth. Caesar's will also provided the young Octavian with all of his titles, but these were not his to give away.⁵ Octavian was therefore effectively vying for a position of power in Rome among numerous other seasoned and powerful politicians. Without going into too much detail of the various alliances he made to move up the political ladder, I will move on to one of the most crucial alliances of his early career: the formation of the Second *Triumvirate* in 43 BC.⁶

This alliance alongside Mark Antony and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus provided Octavian (and the other two) with unlimited levels of authority which they were free to wield at their will. However, upon the exile

³ I aim to focus on the period leading up to the Battle of Actium and its immediate aftermath. These rituals were chosen because they were performed within this time frame, one that I consider a crucial period in the formation of Augustus' 'character' and definition of *Mos maiorum*, both of which this paper will discuss at length.

⁴ GOLDSWORTHY (2014: 87), SYME (1939: 113).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ SYME (1939: 188–189).

of Lepidus in 36 BC and a war with Mark Anthony being imminent, Augustus' time as *triumvir* was effectively coming to an end. This left him at risk of being targeted by his peers if the actions of the *triumvirate* were to be called into question. It is possible that Augustus' 'saviour image' was conceptualized in 36 BC. Such an image would have reduced the impact of any accusations of misconduct directed at him.⁷ Likewise, he also required valid grounds upon which he could declare Mark Anthony an enemy of the state. It is therefore logical that he then assumed a character which stylized him as the 'saviour' of Roman values.⁸ As this character was developed, temples, rituals and priesthoods that had been neglected as a result of the numerous civil wars and general unrest of the Late Republic, began to be reconstructed and revived. While this was happening, Augustus also connected the depleting quality of life among the Roman population to the neglect of these ancestral values in the Late Republic by key politicians at the time, including Mark Antony.⁹ In other words, Augustus began 'saving' aspects of Roman culture and religion that had allegedly fallen into decline, which in turn had caused unhappiness and misfortune among the people of Rome.

While doing this, Augustus simultaneously began redefining and highlighting various aspects of *Mos maiorum*, and then placing himself as a prime example of an individual that represented and upheld these newly defined rituals and morals.¹⁰ The key observations of this paper will be based on the argument that enough time had passed between the start of the ritual's supposed decline and Augustus' program of renewal, that the Roman populace simply did not recollect how vital the rituals and morals of *Mos maiorum* were to the lives and identities of previous generations. Furthermore, the concept of the 'ancestral traditions' or

⁷ MILLAR (2009: 61).

⁸ For reading on image-oriented leadership see WEBER (1947: 358): the central work on image-oriented leadership remains Weber's model of 'charismatic authority', which he describes as charismatic authority – A firm belief among the governed in the extraordinary qualities of a particular person, which in turn allowed said individual to rule over the governed. See also: SHILS (1965) and BELL (2004).

⁹ ZANKER (1990: 57).

¹⁰ Ibid (159–162).

Mos maiorum itself were both very generalized, meaning when Augustan propaganda referred to the importance of the ‘ancestral traditions’, there were no definite clues in terms of which specific point in the past (e.g. certain generations) or which specific traditions and rituals were meant. The general nature of his message, and the lack of knowledge about the traditions themselves, was what allowed Augustus to manipulate their meaning in a manner that benefitted his political growth. After a general analysis of the rituals Augustus supposedly revived, the paper will inquire further into the questions of whether these were indeed ‘revivals’, or if they were instead ‘re-inventions’ – or in some cases even inventions – of traditions.

The proclamation of the Temple of Apollo

This proclamation was made in 36 BC directly after the Temple of Nauplochos and was evidently built in response to a lightning strike on Augustus’ land which was interpreted as Apollo requiring the land for himself. This interpretation was determined through the consultation of the *Haruspices*.¹¹

They decided that a house should be given him from public funds; for the place which he had bought on the Palatine for house-building he had made public property and had dedicated to Apollo, since lightning had struck it. – Dio 49, 15, 5 (Transl. Hekster & Rich, 2006)

He erected the temple of Apollo in that part of his Palatine house which, when it had been struck by lightning, haruspices had declared to be desired by the god. He added porticoes with Latin and Greek libraries . . . – Suet. *Aug.* 29, 3 (Transl. Hekster & Rich, 2006)

The reputation of the *Haruspices* had diminished over the course of the Late Republic, and the program of renewal only intensified both the arguments being made for and against the group. Individuals such as Cicero openly criticized the interpretations of certain divinatory groups, stating that the practice was mostly based on superstition and implying

¹¹ HEKSTER–RICH (2006: 152).

that the individual conducting the interpretation was not at liberty to say what he wanted, but rather expected to say the desired outcome.¹²

Nor indeed is any other argument brought forward why there should be no such kinds of divination as I say, except that it seems difficult to say with respect to each sort of divination what is its reason or cause. What can the haruspex say to explain why a punctured lung, even though the innards are sound, should make this the wrong moment and cause a postponement to another day. – Cic. *Div.* 1, 85 (Transl. Schofield, 1986)

‘To begin with haruspicina, which I think should be practiced for the sake of the state and of public religion (*communis religio*) - but we are alone: it is therefore the moment to inquire into the truth without attracting ill-will, especially for me, since I am in doubt on most questions-let us first, please, make "an inspection" of entrails’. – Cic. *Div.* 2, 28 (Transl. Schofield, 1986)¹³

Because *Haruspices* and the *Haruspicina* were no longer seen as a reliable group or practice when Augustus did consult them 36 BC, it may have appeared as if he was attempting to reinstate the reputation that they had supposedly lost. Furthermore, the fact that the construction of the temple did not appear to benefit Augustus could have helped to reinforce the idea that the *Haruspices* were still a trustworthy institution, and that Augustus himself would not manipulate a sacred ritual for his own personal gain.

However, upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that Augustus was being selective and only highlighted aspects of the *Haruspices* and

¹² SCHOFIELD (1986: 58–59).

¹³ It should be noted that these criticisms appear alongside praises of the *Haruspices*. For instance, in *De haruspicum responsis*, Cicero shows respect for the prodigies and their interpretations by the *Haruspices*. However, the accusations made against him, and the accusations he in turn aims at Clodius in this text, could be taken as evidence of how open to interpretation the interpretations themselves were. Similarly, the criticisms put forward in *De Divinatione* could reflect legitimate views on the *Haruspices* during this period of time. For a more in-depth analysis of *De haruspicum responsis* see: CORBEILL (2018) and MORELL (2018). For further analysis of Cicero’s views on religion see: RÜPKE (2012: 186–204) and KENTY (2016).

the *Haruspicina* that benefitted him. To determine just how selective he was, we must first investigate how temples were typically proclaimed.

Firstly, temples were constructed in response to prodigies when the prodigy in question detrimentally impacted an entire community. Secondly, temples were typically decreed by the Senate, who in turn only did so after consulting the Sybilline books. We do not know of any Senatorial involvement in this instance, nor do we know of the Sybilline books being employed in the interpretation of this prodigy. Finally, lightning strikes were, and still are a fairly frequent phenomenon and were therefore the most common form of prodigy. Thus, a temple could not, for practical reasons, have been proclaimed and later constructed every time lightning struck. The area struck by lightning was instead covered with inscribed stones according to the Etruscan and Roman tradition. Such stone coverings were also established as a result of interpretations made by the *Haruspices*.¹⁴

These observations make it clear that by constructing a temple, Augustus was doing far more than necessary, and was not adhering completely to the rituals that he was supposedly upholding. For instance, the lightning strike itself affected Augustus alone, and therefore did not have a detrimental impact on the collective community. The prodigy should therefore have only resulted in the area being covered in stones – a temple was simply not necessary. Furthermore, the lack of evidence showing any involvement of the Senate would suggest that Augustus was acting on his own accord. By employing the *Haruspices*, he was able to choose the priests who would conduct the *Haruspica*. The chosen priests were then able to provide a reading that was vague enough to allow Augustus to do as he wished. In other words, stating that the land was ‘desired by the god’ did not necessarily mean a temple had to be constructed – Augustus simply wanted to build one and therefore took the necessary steps to ensure a corresponding interpretation.¹⁵

Next, I would like to investigate why Augustus felt compelled to disguise his desire to build a temple as the need to satisfy a god, while simultaneously amplifying the ritual process required to proclaim such

¹⁴ HEKSTER–RICH (2006: 158).

¹⁵ Ibid (159).

a temple. If Augustus' intention was indeed to construct a temple all along, there was no need for him to wait for lightning to strike his property. As he already possessed significant amounts of wealth at this time, he could have simply dedicated a temple to a god of his choice. The dedication of private temples was a common occurrence during the Late Republic, meaning his actions would not have been called into question had he followed this route.¹⁶ However, he wanted to build a large temple, and he wanted to build it on the Palatine, a key political and religious location within Rome. To build there would therefore create the implication that he was seeking even greater amounts of power than he already had. Because he was still at a precarious point in his career – where his actions as *triumvir* and his inexperience could have been held against him – any insinuation that he wanted absolute power would have been detrimental to his position on the political stage.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I would like to explore why Augustus chose to dedicate this temple to Apollo. Apollo, at this point in time, was not a key god in Rome, and the god more famously associated with lightning strikes was of course Jupiter. Furthermore, there was no association with Apollo at the Battle of Naulochus. Rather, Naulochus was known for a temple dedicated to his sister Artemis, and the success of the battle was credited to her also. While Artemis does appear alongside her brother and Leto at the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, this is the only instance of her being present in a temple that was supposedly dedicated to a battle in a region where she was a primary goddess. There are two key reasons why this may be, the first being Augustus' famed and long-term association with Apollo. His relationship with Apollo had been established very early on in his career – Augustus having infamously dressed as Apollo the Tormentor in 'the dinner of the twelve gods'.¹⁷ This relationship then progressed into Augustus establishing a physical representation of this relationship by annexing the Temple of Apollo Palatinus to his own home and took its final form with Augustus declaring himself the son of Apollo. It is also important to note, that Mark Antony was still alive and very influential at this

¹⁶ Ibid (155).

¹⁷ Suet. *Aug.* 70, 1–2.

point. As mentioned previously, one of Augustus' main strategies in gaining popularity was to contrast himself against his rivals, particularly Mark Antony. Despite Mark Antony's standing within Roman politics, he was leading a lifestyle – alongside Cleopatra in Egypt – that was perceived as self-indulgent, luxurious and overall not according to the morals of the ancestral traditions.¹⁸ Augustus, on the other hand, wanted to present himself as the leader dedicated to Rome, one who upheld its traditions and morals.¹⁹ Much like Augustus' own ties with Apollo, Mark Antony adopted an association with Dionysus.²⁰ While the association with this god was supposed to present Mark Antony as the conqueror of the East, Augustus focused on the more negative connotations of Dionysus, namely his associations with all things debauched, immoral and 'un-Roman'. Mark Antony's claim of being a descendant of Hercules was likewise exploited by Augustus, as evidenced by a terracotta figure depicting Apollo in a contest against Hercules, which was placed within the temple.²¹ The decorations in the temple alluding to the struggle between Mark Antony and Augustus would suggest that the Battle of Naulochus was no longer the central theme being celebrated by the Temple of Apollo Palatinus. The temple was first proclaimed in 36 BC. However, by the time it was actually dedicated in 28 BC, the Battle of Actium had already been fought, and coincidentally a temple of Apollo stood in Actium as well.²² It is my belief that, when the lightning strike occurred and the temple was first proclaimed, it was planned for the battle of Naulochus to play a central role. A temple dedicated to Apollo with allusions to his sister Artemis may also have helped Augustus win the approval of his newly obtained colony. However, Augustus' struggle with Mark Antony became the greater priority in his life after the temple had been proclaimed. When the temple was dedicated, the Battle

¹⁸ DAVIES (2000: 51).

¹⁹ ZANKER (1988: 57–65).

²⁰ Plut. *Ant.* 24, 1–5.

²¹ HEKSTER (2004: 171–174).

²² According to Suetonius – *Aug.* 18, 2 – Augustus was also involved in the enlarging of this temple.

of Actium was his greatest achievement thus far, and it stands to reason that the central theme of the temple was changed to reflect this victory.

In any case, the Temple was not built purely because Apollo required the land for himself. Rather, it was primarily one of many ways in which Augustus associated himself with the god and drew attention to himself. His victory over Mark Antony just before the temple was finally dedicated, allowed Augustus to further utilize the temple for propagandistic purposes. Without the declarations made by the *Haruspices*, the construction of the temple would appear to be a blatant celebration of his own achievements. Augustus' use of the *Haruspices* simply provided a distraction from his true motives and gave the temple the appearance of being a product of a pious leader striving to please the gods and uphold the ancestral customs.

The declaration of War on Cleopatra

This declaration in 32 BC was a decisive event in Augustus' career, because the outcome of this war would determine the manner in which his career continued. As we know from the previous section, Augustus' relationship with Mark Antony had steadily deteriorated in the years prior to this event. Mark Antony's alliance and relationship with Cleopatra meant, that the declaration was aimed just as much against Mark Antony as it was against Cleopatra.²³

The war was declared according to the *Fetial* tradition. The *Fetiales* were a priesthood, whose primary concerns were rituals surrounding international treaties. At this stage, Augustus himself was the *pater patratus* (the head of the priesthood). Their duties involved the negotiation of terms of surrender, the writing down of – and giving their agreement to – treaties and of course the declaration of war itself.²⁴ There are three key sources that detail the ritual proceedings surrounding the declaration – Livy, Ovid, Cassius Dio – and a later source by Servius Danielis.

Livy's passage of the *Fetiales* involves the war against the Prisci Latini by Ancus Martius. Some key quotes from this passage include the claim that this war was labelled a 'pure and righteous war' before the

²³ RICH (2011: 205).

²⁴ Ibid (187).

ritual of declaring the war was begun. He then goes on to describe details of the ceremony, stating that 'the customary practice was for a *fetial* to carry a bloody spear, tipped with iron or hardened in fire, to their (the enemies') borders'. He further states that the declaration would then be made, and that the *fetial* 'would hurl the spear across their borders'²⁵.

Ovid's description defers slightly from that of Livy's:

Her (the Temple of Bellona's) founder was Appius, who, when peace was refused to Pyrrhus, saw clearly in his mind, though from the light of day was cut off. A small open space commands from the temple a view from the top of the Circus. There stands a little pillar of no little note. From it the custom is to hurl by hand a spear, war's harbinger, when it has been resolved to take arms against a king and peoples. – Ovid. *Fasti*. 6, 205 (transl. J. Frazer, 1931)

While the casting of the spear remains the same, the key difference here is that the spear was cast at the Temple of Bellona rather than at the enemy's borders. Cassius Dio writes a similar account of how the ritual was carried out:

For they (the Romans) voted to the men arrayed on his (Mark Antony's) side pardon and praise if they would abandon him, and declared war outright upon Cleopatra, put on their military cloaks as if he were close at hand, and went to the temple of Bellona, where they performed through Caesar as *fetialis* all the rites preliminary to war in the customary fashion. – Cassius Dio 50, 4, 4–5 (transl. E. Cary, 1917)

It is possible that Livy's account was an accurate representation of how the rituals were carried out before, and the alterations mentioned by the latter two authors became the norm in the years after Ancus Martius first performed it.²⁶ These alterations may well have been made for purely pragmatic reasons, i.e., due to the vastness of the empire at this time, travelling to the enemies' borders would have been a difficult, dangerous and time-consuming task. However, it is worth noting that,

²⁵ Livy 1, 32, 13.

²⁶ WIEDEMANN (1986: 478).

no matter how pragmatic the reasons for staying in Rome were, by performing the ritual in Rome, Augustus (and anyone else that performed it) gained the inhabitants of the city as an audience.²⁷ In other words, I would suggest that the ritual can be seen as yet another Augustan strategy to shine a spotlight on himself and to demonstrate to the people of Rome that he was doing his best to uphold ancient traditions, unlike Mark Antony, the man he was about to go to war against.

Another fact worth noting is the evidence we have of the ritual being performed. We have the passage from Livy, detailing Ancus Marcius' war against the *Prisci Latini*; Vergil's observations on Pyrrhus; Augustus' performance of the ritual in 32 BC, described by Cassius Dio and finally Marcus Aurelius performing the ritual in 178 AD. It is clear that there are very few known, confirmed instances of the ritual being carried out prior to Augustus' performance of the ritual. Even if the ritual was performed on more occasions than this, it was evidently not important enough to be recorded. It could be argued that Augustus was simply hyperbolizing an event that was otherwise obscure or relatively unimportant, for the sake of celebrating himself and the show of morality and respect for the ancestral values that he was demonstrating to the public. Finally, it is important to note that Livy highlights the fact that the war declared must be 'pure and righteous'. As Wiedemann²⁸ points out, scholars from the earlier part of the 20th century – such as Frank and Scullard²⁹ – believed that the laws of the *Fetiales* were observed 'in good faith' because the values of *Mos maiorum* – the very concept Augustus was claiming to revive and uphold – would not have condoned a war of aggression. While the values of *Mos maiorum* may indeed have frowned

²⁷ It is important to note that this audience would have experienced this ritual long before the ritual itself was carried out. In the months, weeks or days leading up to the rituals, the public announcements for the rituals, coins minted for the rituals and preparations and decorations for the ritual, would have created an atmosphere of excitement and Augustus' name would have been at the center of it all. For more on the importance of rumour see: RAJA-RÜPKE (2021). For further reading on the use of Augustan coins as propaganda see: WALLACE-HADRILL (1986); GRUEBER (1910); CRAWFORD (1983); GRANT (1946); GRANT (1953), etc.

²⁸ WIEDEMANN (1986: 478).

²⁹ FRANK (1914: 9); SCULLARD (1959: 2).

upon actively starting a war, this did not necessarily mean that all the prior wars in Roman history had been defensive wars. Wiedemann and Harris argue, that the ceremony of throwing the spear may have simply been a ‘psychological mechanism’ that reduced any guilt that came with the declaration of a war that was in any way unjustified.³⁰ The war against Cleopatra could have been perceived as an unjust war, because Augustus’ conflict was clearly against Mark Antony. To declare war on a fellow Roman like Mark Antony, as well as the troops supporting him, would have meant that an overt Civil war rather than one which was – at least officially – fought against a foreign power like Egypt.³¹ It therefore seems very likely that Augustus performed the ritual in a theatrical manner to convince people that the war was indeed being carried out against non-Romans, this would simultaneously have helped reinforce the negative connotations of Mark Antony’s adopted foreign lifestyle and the idea that he had abandoned Rome as a result of his relationship and alliance with Cleopatra.³² Finally, it is worth noting once more that Augustus himself was the *Fetialis* that performed the ritual. In addition to disguising his conflict with Mark Antony, the ritual could also have allowed him to demonstrate just how much power and influence he had obtained.³³

We only have evidence of this ritual being practiced once during Augustus’ career. This could potentially indicate that Augustus only revived and performed rituals which had previously fallen into disuse when they could convenience his own political strategies.³⁴

Closing the doors at the Temple of Janus and the Augurium Salutis

A similar argument can be made for when Augustus ceremoniously closed the doors at the Temple of Janus in the Roman Forum, following the conclusion of the conflict against Cleopatra and Mark Antony in 29

³⁰ HARRIS (1979: 171); WIEDEMANN (1986: 478).

³¹ RICH (2011: 205). SCULLARD (2018: 156).

³² Sen. *Ep.* 83, 25.

³³ *Res Gestae* 4, 7. See also: WIEDEMANN (1986: 482).

³⁴ SALERNO (2018) provides an in-depth analysis of the *fetial* proceedings with specific focus on their re-invention during the Augustan age.

BC. This is an event that Augustus himself speaks about in his *Res Gestae*:

Our ancestors wanted Janus Quirinus to be closed when peace had been achieved by victories on land and sea throughout the whole empire of the Roman people; whereas, before I was born, it is recorded as having been closed twice in all from the foundation of the city, the senate decreed it should be closed three times when I was leader. – Chapter 13 (transl. A. E Cooley, 2009)

As Augustus states, the temple doors were to be closed whenever there was peace, and opened whenever there was conflict. Before Augustus, the ritual was only performed twice before in Roman history. Once, allegedly, by the legendary king Numa and a second time after the First Punic war in 241 BC by Aulus Manlius Torquatus.³⁵ This means that no one living had seen the ritual being performed in Augustus' time. Once again, the fact there were only two known instances of the ritual being performed would have meant, that the ritual did not hold a place of great importance among the numerous other rituals within Roman religion. The period from 241 BC to 29 BC was one of various wars and intermittent periods of peace, meaning that had the ritual indeed been of great importance, there would have been more known instances of it being performed.

Another source that details Augustus' performance of the two rituals explored in this section is that of Cassius Dio:

Nevertheless, the action which pleased him more than all the decrees was the closing by the senate of the gates of Janus, implying that all their wars had entirely ceased, and the taking of the augurium salutis, which had at this time fallen into disuse for the reasons I have mentioned. To be sure, there were still under arms the Treveri, who had brought in the Germans to help them, and the Cantabri, the Vaccaeii, and the Astures... – Cassius Dio, 51, 20, 5 (transl. E. Cary, 1917)

One detail that Augustus has quite clearly and conveniently left out of his own account, is the fact that Rome was still at war when the temple

³⁵ ZANKER (1988: 104).

doors were closed. This could be interpreted as a wish to deflect attention from the wars that were still happening. Rome had been through several decades of turmoil and Augustus, through his program of cultural and religious renewal, was trying to create a sense of stability by way of evoking a sense of a continuation of forgotten or disappearing past values. Because the war against Cleopatra (and Mark Antony) had been at the forefront of Roman events, it is quite possible that any smaller conflicts happening elsewhere in the Empire flew largely under the radar of the public. By celebrating the end of one major conflict, Augustus implied that peace as a whole had been restored. The awareness of ongoing wars would suggest that Augustus had failed to achieve the peace he had promised. Again, we see the by now familiar pattern of Augustus assuming the central position and painting himself as the bringer of peace, thereby helping boost his image. Maintaining a sense of peace was clearly important to Augustus, seeing as this was a ritual that he repeated at various points in his career.³⁶

While creating and upholding the semblance of peace and stability was no doubt a key strategy of Augustus, it would have been equally important for him to stress his victory against Mark Antony. Much like the declaration of war was to paint Mark Antony as a public enemy, closing the doors at the Temple of Janus was symbolic of said enemy being defeated. Furthermore, by being the individual leading on the ritual, Augustus was once more assuming a leadership position while simultaneously demonstrating his ever-growing power.

If we are to believe Cassius Dio, there was another ritual, alongside the closing of the doors of the Temple of Janus, which Augustus was evidently keen on performing, namely the so-called *Augurium Salutis*.³⁷ Essentially, it can be described as an inquiry conducted by the *augurs* to check if a prayer for the safety of the people could be conducted at the

³⁶ GREEN (2000: 305–307). For general reading on the Temple of Janus, see: MÜLLER (1943: 437–440).

³⁷ Cassius Dio 51, 20, 5. This ritual, like that at the Temple of Janus, was repeated by Augustus, as evidenced by a pointed pedestal (or *cippus*) found underneath the citadel of Rome (ILS9337): KEARSLEY (2009: 150).

time in question.³⁸ The prayer could only be uttered on a day ‘free of all wars’.³⁹ The first time Augustus performed the ritual was in January of 29 BC, the same time the doors at the Temple of Janus were closed.⁴⁰ Unlike the latter ritual, the *Augurium Salutis* had been performed not too long ago in 63 BC to celebrate Pompeius’ victory against Mithridates.⁴¹ However, enough time had elapsed for the ritual to be labelled as one which had been unduly neglected until Augustus’ ascent to power. A notable difference to the aforementioned cases is the fact that Augustus did not participate in or perform the ritual himself. Nevertheless, Suetonius suggests that the order for the inquiry came from him and was performed in his name – so Augustus seems to have made his presence felt in other ways.

He also revived some of the ancient rites which had gradually fallen into disuse, such as the augury of Safety, the office of Flamen Dialis, the ceremonies of the Lupercalia, the Secular Games, and the festival of the Compitalia. – Suet. *Aug.* 31, 4 (Transl. Rolfe, 1913)

It is thought that Sextus Appuleius, Augustus’ fellow consul, augur and also his nephew, consulted the augural college and performed the ritual on his behalf.⁴² While Augustus may not have been present, the conflict – or rather, the end of the conflict – being celebrated was, by this point, famously associated with him. Furthermore, since Cassius Dio and Suetonius both refer to Augustus’ involvement in the ritual, it can be surmised that it was well known that he was the one carrying out the prayer for the people of Rome despite his absence.

Much like closing the doors at the Temple of Janus, this ritual was performed specifically to highlight Augustus’ victory over Cleopatra and Mark Antony and the supposed peace that resulted from it. While a genuine desire to maintain the safety of the Roman people may have

³⁸ OCD (2012: 205). For further reading on the *Augurium Salutis* and the priesthood in general see: LINDERSKI (1986: 225–228).

³⁹ OCD (2012: 205).

⁴⁰ KEARSLEY (2009: 150).

⁴¹ KEARLSEY (2009: 151).

⁴² BROUGHTON (1952: 532); SYME (1986: 30); KEARSLEY (2009: 150).

existed, there can be little doubt that, in light of ongoing conflicts elsewhere in the Roman empire, the demonstrative focus on rituals and symbolism of peace was a form of distraction and political maneuver designed to bolster Augustus' popularity among the Roman people.⁴³ It is important to keep in mind that during the time period in which the four abovementioned rituals were conducted, Octavian had not yet assumed the name of Augustus. The association with an augural tradition not only highlighted Augustus' position as an *augur* – another impressive religious title among the many he had already obtained – but it also foreshadowed the change of his name from Octavian to Augustus which was to follow two years later in 27 BC.

Similarly, it should be realized that the other conflicts taking place elsewhere in the empire were not his own, but the campaigns of other powerful men whose military accomplishments were just as impressive – if not more impressive – as Augustus'. In addition to diverting from the fact that peace had not been completely restored, the splendor of the rituals also outshone the achievements of these men.⁴⁴ As Kearsley points out, this overshadowing, combined with the Senate's approval for both the event at the Temple of Janus and the *Augurium Salutis* to take place, effectively implied that the campaigns carried out by Augustus somehow trumped any others being carried out, and that the result of his conflicts had a greater impact on the future of Rome than any others. This would therefore have made it difficult for any other political contenders to gain the same level of popularity among the Roman people that Augustus was actively obtaining.⁴⁵

Finally, both rituals naturally involved some form of communication with the gods. By taking the central stage during the performance of such highly symbolic religious acts, Augustus demonstrated a certain proximity and intimacy to the Roman gods, giving the impression of their benevolence and support for him and his undertakings. This dis-

⁴³ For a list of conflicts still occurring during this period, see Cassius Dio 51, 20, 5.

⁴⁴ A key figure whose achievements may have threatened Augustus was Licinius Crassus who had been hailed as an exceptional military leader who according to Cassius Dio (51, 24, 4) had won the armour of an enemy king through single combat.

⁴⁵ Ibid (151). See also BEARD-NORTH & PRICE (1998: 188).

play of being favoured by the gods, in addition to having the approval of the Senate, would have only further enhanced and consolidated Augustus' reputation among the people of Rome.⁴⁶

Revival vs. Re-invention

It is striking that Augustus seems to have placed focus on rituals and religious groups that had ambiguous and somewhat obscure proceedings and history attached to them. In fact, the fact that history was already rather obscure for the Romans of the latter half of the 1st century BC, then begs the question of whether Augustus revived or rather re-invented them according to his own goals and ambitions? This question will be addressed in this part of the paper.

While there are several factors which point to this being the main motive behind the changes, there may also have well been some pragmatic reasons, and some level of desire to ensure the well-being of the Roman people. For instance, when considering the proclamation of the Temple of Apollo, it is important to note that, although Augustus was the prime beneficiary, since it allowed him to build a large temple – which commemorated the military victories of Naulochus and later Actium –, the temple was for public use. Several of the temples constructed in the Late Republic were private, meaning that numerous large and intricate temples had been constructed that few had access to. It seems plausible to suggest that the inability to access and take part in the rapid cultural change and the growing wealth of the Roman empire left many groups feeling isolated and alienated. By constructing a temple that was open to the public on his land, Augustus provided such groups with the ability to actively participate in the changes being brought about through Rome's growing wealth and success.⁴⁷ The dedication of this temple occurred around the same time that Augustus was starting his temple renovations, and at the same time his followers were investing in the beautification of the city. In addition to an overall progress in the quality of life, the renovation of the city would have created several jobs,

⁴⁶ LINDERSKI (1986: 2226; 2291). See also LINDERSKI (1995: 490).

⁴⁷ ZANKER (1988: 18–25).

and therefore new sources of income.⁴⁸ In short, these renovations not only boosted the image that Augustus was in the process of building as well as his political career, but also benefitted the populace of Rome. Similarly, despite the liberties taken with the proceedings of the *Fetiales* analyzed above, the change of the location happened prior to Augustus' performance of the ritual, which was in all likelihood a pragmatic decision. In terms of the closing of the doors of the Temple of Janus, the extraordinary thing was not so much what Augustus did – namely that he celebrated a major military accomplishment, which was very much a fixture of Roman culture – but how he did it. Augustus was simply doing what numerous military leaders before him had done, but he was doing this in a manner that involved and signaled the safety of the entire public.

The open and rather obscure nature of the rituals he renewed could allow us to view them as being a form of 'invented tradition'. According to Hobsbawm, an invented tradition is 'a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition.'⁴⁹ He then goes on to argue that such traditions are 'responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations.'⁵⁰ Because Augustus based his own ideology and the newly shaped ritual processes on *Mos maiorum*, a concept that had existed for generations before, the basic aspects of the rituals were, as Hobsbawm puts it, 'accepted' by the general public. Augustus therefore provided his own definitions, while simultaneously making use of the authority of – and general reverence for – 'old situations' (or institutions, traditions etc.). Furthermore, by re-introducing numerous rituals and highlighting the importance of their consistent practice, he also introduced the element of repetition. Therefore, it could be argued that the repetitive practice of numerous rituals that had all been redefined according to Augustus' own ideas and thus reflected the 'saviour of Rome' character he had created for himself – allowing his views to be 'inculcated' into the minds of

⁴⁸ RÜPKE-RAJA (2021: 60–61).

⁴⁹ HOBBSAWM (1983: 1).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

the Roman people, thereby influencing them to believe that these rituals had always been performed in this manner and that the virtues surrounding them had likewise remained the same for many generations. As Assmann⁵¹ also points out, repetition is a vital aspect for the establishment and perpetuation of tradition and ritual as relevant symbolic forms of cultural memory. Augustus, being the purveyor of these traditions and rituals, and the values that they stood for, clearly stood as a prime example of an individual who upheld and adhered to these principles. By publicly placing himself at the center of these ritual performances, he became directly associated with their symbolic content. The repeated performance of rituals such as the closing of the doors and the *Augurium Salutis* ensured the remembrance and long-term relevance of the ritual itself, but also cemented Augustus' place in the cultural memory of Rome.

The rituals discussed in this paper could, on the surface, be classified as revived, given that they had once been practiced, fell into varying levels of oblivion, and were then reinstated in a more notable manner by Augustus. Moreover, the fact that the performance of the rituals largely involved the same priesthoods and at times similar ritual procedures, would also imply a revival. Nevertheless, there were also significant changes made in most instances, and, when there was insufficient evidence of how certain procedures had been conducted, new procedures appear to have been introduced. Furthermore, these changes in the ritual proceedings drew attention to – and centered on – the persona and political career of one person. Therefore, while the rituals cannot be viewed as being completely invented, there are key differences that demonstrate that the rituals were also not revived in the sense of having been restored in its original form. The key thing here is that an element of continuity was maintained in spite of the changes that were made, we can therefore argue that instead of the rituals being revived or invented, they were in fact re-invented, with Augustus adding new elements onto those that already existed and altering them in certain ways.

⁵¹ ASSMANN (2006: 17).

Conclusion

Augustus' career was one of extreme and rapid change. By the end of his career, Rome had seen massive shifts in both its political and its religious practices. This was in addition to dramatic transformation made to the infrastructure of the city and an overall shift in how the Roman people viewed themselves in relation to the empire and their known world. The changes made to the ritual traditions attributed to *Mos maiorum* were one among many that occurred. It is clear that Augustus tapped into aspects of specific rituals that helped highlight his own achievements. He employed these aspects to develop the character that he presented to the Roman people. The growth of this character, alongside the development of the rituals, in turn allowed him to contrast himself against his rivals. Simultaneously, the performance of the rituals permitted him to detract from their deeds and successes. All these factors – enabled by the abovementioned alterations made to the rituals – ultimately led to Augustus' power and standing in Rome being gradually strengthened and consolidated. As the paper argued, the specific rituals explored had been either forgotten, or had always been in a state of obscurity or general unimportance. It therefore stands to reason that many – if not all – all the changes Augustus instituted went unnoticed or were imperceptible, because there was no evidence at the time suggesting that the rituals were performed any differently in the past. In essence, what this paper aimed to demonstrate is how Augustus looked to the past when trying to create and present an image of stability and continuity that would in turn gain him popularity and power. However, a simple revival of the rituals alone would not have allowed him to stand out to such a degree. on the other hand, altering them in a manner that placed him in the center of their proceedings meant that he could establish a lasting association between the ritual and himself. The re-invention of rituals was, in conclusion, a necessary measure in ensuring the establishment of the dominant and long-lasting legacy that Augustus left behind.

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Some Thoughts on the Blood of Christ and Its Symbolism in Byzantine Epigrams Regarding the Cross And the Crucifixion

This study deals with the holy byzantine epigram regarding the Cross and the Crucifixion of Christ focusing on the presence, the position, and the importance of the blood of Christ on the instrument of torture that is the Cross. I will try to interpret and explain this repeated pattern through the lines of Byzantine epigrams, and, in the end, figure out any possible influences from other domains of Byzantine philology, such as hymnography and homilies, drawing further conclusions.

Keywords: Byzantine holy epigram, Cross, Crucifixion, the blood of Christ, holy relics, soteriological connotations, Byzantine art

Introduction

Epigrams in the Byzantine period: development and function

According to the Byzantine dictionary of *Souda* (10th century) πάντα τὰ ἐπιγραφόμενά τισι, καὶ μὴ ἐν μέτροις εἰρημένα, ἐπιγράμματα λέγεται.¹ This definition, in essence, defines the epigram as anything written on an object, even if it is written as verse and links the ‘epigram’ to the term ‘inscription’. It is in fact true that Byzantines rarely used the term ‘epigram’ (ἐπίγραμμα = ἐπὶ and γράφω)² and instead used the terms στίχοι or ᾠαῖς, as can be seen in the titles of those poems.³

Undoubtedly, the term ‘epigram’ is not new to the Byzantines, since it has been in use since the Classical Years, when distinguished scholars

¹ ΣΟΥΔΑ (2002: 2270).

² RHOBY (2009a: 37).

³ KOMINIS (1996: 20); RHOBY (2008: 16); RHOBY (2009a: 40–41).

composed epigrams in order to express themselves, their thoughts and emotions. The epigram, subsequently, became the norm during the Hellenistic Years with the work of poets such as Kallimachos, Apollonios of Rhodes and Meleager. Throughout that period, there was a noticeable influence of the epigram on Latin literature.⁴ It continued to flourish during the Byzantine years,⁵ and took on a new metric form dealing with new themes and topics heavily influenced by the new religion of Christianity.⁶

At this point, it is imperative to distinguish the Byzantine epigram from the epigram in the Antiquity. Their differences lie in two basic features; the first has to do with the length of the epigram given that the Byzantine epigram can be just one line, few lines, or a lot of lines, a feature that was not evident in the ancient Greek epigram which was composed of just a few brief lines.⁷

Secondly, the meter in the Byzantine epigram is significantly different from that of the Antiquity, which featured a hexameter or elegiac distich (the exclusive meters featured in the ancient epigram). The Byzantine epigram featured a new meter – one that was exclusively Byzantine, the Byzantine dodecasyllabic meter.⁸ Essentially, it is a meter based on the ancient iambic trimeter thus consisting of twelve syllables.⁹ The new Byzantine

⁴ For the ancient epigram see e.g., GEFFCKEN (1969); KEYDELL (1962); CITRONI (2018: 21–42), for a complete definition of the Ancient epigram.

⁵ For the influence of Ancient Greek and Latin poetry on the Christian epigram see e.g., CATAUDELLA (1982), and for the reception of later Antiquity to Byzantine see e.g., AGOSTI (2019), also AGOSTI (2010), for the format of lines (e.g., caesurae) of later Antiquity epigrams.

⁶ KOMINHE (1966: 19); RHOBY (2009a: 37–45), for a brief presentation of the progress of the Byzantine epigram with its main representatives; LAUXTERMANN (2003a: 26–34), for the definition of the epigram and its Byzantine content.

⁷ LIVINGSTONE–NIBSET (2010: 7).

⁸ MAAS (1903). For the Byzantine dodecasyllabic verse, its format and particular features (caesurae, suffixes etc.) see also LAUXTERMANN (1998); RHOBY (2011); HÖRANDNER (2017: 52–55).

⁹ At this point it should be mentioned that other meters were rarely used. See RHOBY (2018: 66–70); HÖRANDNER (1995); JEFFREYS (1982); JEFFREYS (2019b). For the political verse in Byzantine poetry see e.g., JEFFREYS (1974); LAUXTERMANN (1999); KODER (1983); LAVAGNINI (1983); HÖRANDNER (2017: 42–52); ALEXIOU–HOLTON (1976); ΠΟΛΙΤΗΣ (1981). For the so-called ‘anacreontic’ verse of the first Byzantine years see NISSEN (1940); CICCOLELLA (2000); CICCOLELLA (2009). For the ‘heroic’ meter during late Antiquity or early Christian years see HÖRANDNER (2017: 57–61).

dodecasyllabic verse was largely introduced through the work of George of Pisidia during the 7th century¹⁰ influencing subsequent poets.¹¹

In this context, we see a plethora of ancient byzantine epigrams featuring a religious character drawing inspiration from holy persons and events. These epigrams expressed thoughts, fears, and wishes in a divine nature as well as prayers and requests towards God.¹² In detail, these holy epigrams, depending on their composer, can be categorized (and then subcategorized)¹³ as follows: a) epigrams to Saints, called συναξαριακά – synaxarian epigrams (referring to the life and works of Saints); b) epigrams for holy events (festive epigrams); c) epigrams to persons and events of the Holy Scripture; d) epigrams to important persons of the Church, state officials, and the aristocracy; e) epigrams engraved on holy relics, vestments, and other ecclesiastical relics; f) epigrams on icons and church murals (frescos); g) epigrams on religious manuscripts (either in the beginning or ending of the manuscript as a plea for its successful completion); h) epigrams on μολυβδόβουλα and seals; i) epigrams on metric acrostics; and j) various epigrams which cannot be categorized in any of the above mentioned categories, still featuring a religious character.

This study deals with epigrams on the cross and the Crucifixion amongst all other categories. Their lines reveal a pattern, that of the blood of Christ spilling and soaking the wooden cross.

The Holy Blood: a general historical introduction

Blood, as noticed in primitive peoples, is the component of the body which encloses the soul and life of people and animals, according to the teachings of the Old Testament.¹⁴ In different parts of the Mosaic Law, it

¹⁰ TARTAGLIA (1998: 53–54); KANTARAS (2019b). For the role of George of Pisidia in the Byzantine poetry see LAUXTERMANN (2003b); VASSIS (2019).

¹¹ RHOBY (2009a: 60–65); RHOBY (2010: 40–41).

¹² KOMINHS (1966: 25); ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗΣ (1993: 30).

¹³ KOMINHS (1966: 26–47).

¹⁴ Lev. 17, 11, 14 (ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ πάσης σαρκὸς αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐστὶ). It is worth mentioning that the concept of the living and embodied essence of blood can be seen in folk tales and traditions. A premium example is the act of ἀδελφοποιῖας (fraternization), which involves direct contact of the blood of its participants so as not only to achieve an artificial brotherhood but also to exchange each other's existence through blood. This is entirely a symbolic

is forbidden to consume it.¹⁵ Spilling human blood, i.e., murder, is clearly stated in the Old Testament as the greatest sin,¹⁶ reminding us of the corresponding Ten Commandment. One of the most distinct examples is the spilt blood of Abel shouting from the ground demanding the punishment of the murderer.¹⁷ Animal blood, according to the Old Testament, was offered to God as redemption¹⁸ and only specific animal blood was allowed in places of worship. The greatest sacrifice was spilling goat blood on the Arc by the high priest which served as redemption for himself and for his people. In essence, it is a sacrifice for shadowing the subsequent sacrifice of Christ. His sacrifice by spilling His blood saved the world and transcended eternally to the Kingdom of Heavens, both as a high priest and as the victim, as the perfect God and perfect human.¹⁹

This brings us to the New Testament, where we meet the greatest significance that can be attributed to αἷμα (blood). The difference and distance between the bloody sacrifices in the Old Testament and the spilt

act taking place in difficult times such as wars, captivity, exile, and usually during Easter, the day of 'love'. There are later descriptions for these acts in churches in front of icons, e.g., of a saint whose grace was being evoked at the time, or around a table using a cross and a gospel, where in the end the participants would take a vow (much like the case with Φιλική Εταιρεία – Filiki Etairia – for the war of Greek independence in 1821). Of course, in Greece, such acts took place mostly during the Turkish occupation, they were denounced by the Church and were forbidden from taking place on church property. Still, this tradition is documented even in Antiquity. Herodotus was the first to report such an act between peoples in Asia Minor, particularly from Lydda, who – in their effort to establish a strong bond – would nick their forearms and would consume each other's blood by licking the wound (Hist. A' 74). See ΜΙΧΑΗΛΙΔΟΥ-ΝΟΥΑΡΟΥ (1952).

¹⁵ Lev. 17, 10–15.

¹⁶ Gen. 9, 6. ὁ ἐκχέων αἷμα ἀνθρώπου, ἀντὶ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ ἐκχυθήσεται, ὅτι ἐν εἰκόνι Θεοῦ ἐποίησα τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

¹⁷ Gen. 4, 10. καὶ εἶπε Κύριος· τί πεποίηκας; φωνὴ αἵματος τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ σου ἐκτῆς χειρός σου. It is noted that after this biblical quote, the thought of the 'voice of blood' asking for revenge and leading to vendetta and vengeance or the direct punishment from God was common among peoples and we see something similar in the Greek reality, namely in proverbs (for instance παίρνω το αἷμα μου πίσω; το αδικοχυμένο αἷμα δικαιοσκοτώνει; το αἷμα παίρνεται πίσω; το αἷμα φωνάζει etc.).

¹⁸ Ex. 12, 7, 13, 22 (quotes for the delineation of provisions regarding Easter). Lev. 17 (for the purgation of slaughtered animals).

¹⁹ Paul underlines this sacrifice in his letter to Jews (Heb. 9, 11–22).

blood of the Savior is significant since the blood of sacrificed animals in the past involved only the purity of the body. The blood of Christ purifies the body as well as the soul relieving the human from guilt and saving him.²⁰ Revenge of the blood in the Old Testament, which remains at the disposal of God, as is any response of evil with evil,²¹ is reversed in the New Testament with the teachings of Christ through loving everybody, even an enemy.²² Christ Himself offered His blood to His students during the Last Supper in the form of wine, thus establishing the ritual of Communion, necessary for the salvation of man.²³

In light of this, the blood of Christ, clearly stated in the New Testament,²⁴ is offered in releasing human from sin,²⁵ guaranteeing resurrection.²⁶ Through it, human is offered eternal, true life,²⁷ peace is established between God and the world,²⁸ and he comes closer to God²⁹ finding absolution.³⁰ Through His blood, Christ Himself was redeemed as human,³¹ not for bearing sins but through the divination of human flesh. The blood of Christ also purges conscience,³² and through it, humans can transcend to the Kingdom of Heavens.³³

This symbolic value and meaning of the blood of Christ influenced all subsequent literature in Byzantium. Poetry – being delicate and fine in its expression – was heavily influenced as expected. So, studying Byzantine epigrams related to the cross and the crucifixion, the diachronic presence of a pattern regarding the blood of Christ spilling and soaking the cross can be distinguished. The timelessness of this pattern, which is evident

²⁰ Heb. 9, 13–14.

²¹ Heb. 12, 17, 21.

²² Rom. 12, 19–20.

²³ John 6, 53–56; Matt. 26, 28; Mark 14, 24; Luke 22, 20; 1 Cor. 10, 16 and 11, 25.

²⁴ Heb. 13, 20.

²⁵ Matt. 26, 28; Rom. 3, 25; Eph. 1, 7.

²⁶ John 6, 54.

²⁷ John 6, 53–54.

²⁸ Col. 1, 20.

²⁹ Eph. 2, 13.

³⁰ Eph. 1, 7; 1 Pet. 1, 18–19; Rev. 5, 6.

³¹ Heb. 9, 12.

³² Heb. 9, 14; 1 John 1, 7; Rev. 1, 5.

³³ Heb. 10, 19.

already from the early Byzantine era of Gregory of Nazianzus and continues up to the 15th century, helps to make several observations.

Specifically, among the sixteen epigrams in total, we observe that on the one hand, we get epigrams with lines referring clearly to the blood of Christ, a fact that is easily distinguished from the title (e.g., Εἰς τὸ ἅγιον αἷμα – Epigram no. 6) or the content of the lines. On the other hand, we see epigrams with lines that refer to the blood of Christ as being part of the Holy Relics, while other lines indirectly make that reference by reporting on the spilt blood of Christ after the spearing by the Roman soldier. Let us now explore each epigram individually and record the information they give us.

Epigrams

Epigram n. 1

4th century, Gregory of Nazianzus

Εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν
Ὡ Πάθος, ὦ σταυρὸς, παθέων ἐλατήριον αἷμα,
πλῦνον ἐμῆς ψυχῆς πᾶσαν ἀτασθαλίην.³⁴

*Translation*³⁵

For the Crucifixion
Oh passion, oh cross, blood that washes away all misfortunes,
clear my soul of all sins.

Remarks

As it can be understood by the title of the epigram, its two lines are devoted to the crucifixion of Christ (tit.: Εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν). The poet, i.e., Gregory of Nazianzus,³⁶ in his first line appeals to the Passion of Christ and the cross (Ὡ Πάθος, ὦ σταυρὸς) and to the blood spilt by the Son of God to wash away the misfortunes (παθέων ἐλατήριον αἷμα), while

³⁴ BECKBY (1964: 1, 150, n. 54); WALTZ (1957: 29, n. 54); VASSIS (2005: 889).

³⁵ All translations have been written by the author of this study. Their aim is to help the reader and by no means serve as a literary recreation of the epigrams.

³⁶ For the role of Gregory of Nazianzus in Christianizing the epigram and evaluating the quality of his work by scholars see ΒΕΡΤΟΥΔΑΚΗΣ (2010); CRISCUOLO (2007); GOLDHILL–GREENSMITH (2020); SIMELIDIS (2019).

the second line refers to the cleansing of the soul from all sins (πλῦνον ἐμῆς ψυχῆς πασαν ἀτασθαλίην).

At this point, we should notice the relation of blood to soul,³⁷ the latter being heavily emphasized in the Holy Scripture.³⁸ Specifically, the Old Testament attributed to the soul biological features such as breathing and life preservation,³⁹ as well as the essence of blood being the basis for life.⁴⁰ It also attributed higher, more spiritual features such as physical feelings, i.e. hunger,⁴¹ thirst⁴² and fulfillment,⁴³ etc., senses such as touch,⁴⁴ sight,⁴⁵ and emotions such as love,⁴⁶ hate,⁴⁷ bitterness,⁴⁸ sorrow,⁴⁹

³⁷ We see the same correlation of blood and soul in epigram no. 6 of the 11th century by John Mauropous.

³⁸ Throughout the centuries, the soul was the topic of a lot of discussions, studies, opinion-making, and argumentation. In ancient years (see RHODE [2010]: for the perception of soul in the ancient world; MANTZANAS [2008: 27–32]: for the problem of soul in Ancient philosophy) ideas mostly by Plato (Φαίδων, Τίμαιος, Πολιτεία) for the afterlife travel of the human soul (see ELKAISY-FRIEMUTH – DILLON [2009]) influenced a great deal the majority of later philosophical and religious perceptions, as well as Christian ones (see ΖΗΣΗΣ [1972]), even today (see e.g. BOWKER [1996]; SNEATH [1922]). Let us note that the correlation of body and soul troubled even the Church fathers (see ΚΑΡΑΜΑΝΩΛΗΣ [2017: 241–279]; ΝΙΚΟΛΑΪΔΗΣ [2019: 135–150]), who believed that man is not just body or soul but a combination of both (see Gregory of Nyssa, Περὶ κατασκευῆς ἀνθρώπου, PG 44, 236 BC). What the soul knows, existing or not, is due to embodiment (John of Damascus, Πρὸς τοὺς διαβάλλοντας τὰς ἀγίας εἰκόνας, Λόγος Γ', §12. KOTTER [1975: 3, 123, 26–27: ἀδύνατον ἡμᾶς ἐκτὸς τῶν σωματικῶν ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὰ νοητά]), that is, the 'residence' of the soul, the eye, and its speech (John of Damascus, Πρὸς τοὺς διαβάλλοντας τὰς ἀγίας εἰκόνας, Λόγος Α', §36 and Λόγος Β', §32. KOTTER [1975: 3, 148, 29–30: Ἐπεὶ ἀνθρώπος εἰμι καὶ σῶμα περικείμει, ποθῶ καὶ σωματικῶς ὁμιλεῖν καὶ ὁρᾶν τὰ ἅγια]). Also, for the church writers, the soul is not contained in the body but vice versa (see Nemesios of Emesa, Περὶ Φύσεως Ἀνθρώπου; MORANI [1987: 41, 8–10: Οὐ γὰρ κρατεῖται ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος, ἀλλ' αὐτὴ κρατεῖ τὸ σῶμα, οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ σώματι ἔστιν ὡς ἀγγεῖω ἢ ἀσκῶ, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον τὸ σῶμα ἐν αὐτῇ]).

³⁹ Gen. 2, 7. καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν ζωῆς, καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν.

⁴⁰ Gen. 9, 5. καὶ γὰρ τὸ ὑμέτερον αἷμα τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν ἐκ χειρὸς πάντων τῶν θηρίων ἐκζητήσω αὐτὸ καὶ ἐκ χειρὸς ἀνθρώπου ἀδελφοῦ ἐκζητήσω τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Certainly, the soul of animals in the Old Testament (Gen. 2, 19) clearly contrasts with human life (Lev. 24, 17–18; Prov. 12, 10).

⁴¹ Prov. 19, 15; Isa. 22, 6; Ps. 106, 9.

⁴² Ps. 106, 5; 147, 6.

⁴³ Ex. 15, 9; Ps. 106, 9.

⁴⁴ Lev. 5, 2; Num. 19, 22.

and more. These feelings and emotions also include religious sentiments towards God⁵⁰ and doxology to Him.⁵¹ Therefore, 'soul' receives a rich definition which carries on to the New Testament,⁵² where it is further attributed with being the basis for eternal life,⁵³ and for all emotions.⁵⁴

Surely, the concept of blood purging and redeeming the human soul is not new in the writings of the Holy Scripture. This valuable human blood is the essence of life itself, the true component of soul, carrying on its life through various doxological manifestations. This concept is the basis for all primitive acts of human and then animal sacrifice on tombs and graves where the blood needs to infiltrate the ground and empower the dead.⁵⁵ In Homer⁵⁶ the blood is the basis for life,⁵⁷ and it is evident how the soul can and will survive after death. The fighter's soul, after he has fallen in battle, exits through the mouth and the wound and descends to the underworld. There, it maintains the form of the dead man so that he is recognizable (like Achilles recognizes Patroclus in Hades) but is so frail and translucent that he cannot even receive a hug. Only blood can make this frail entity conscient again⁵⁸ (much like Odysseus

⁴⁵ Isa. 53, 10. [...] ἡ ψυχὴ ὑμῶν ὀψεται σπέρμα μακρόβιον.

⁴⁶ Song 1, 71; 1 Kings 18, 1.

⁴⁷ Isa. 1, 14. καὶ τὰς νουνημίας ὑμῶν καὶ τὰς ἐορτὰς ὑμῶν μισεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου; 2 Kings 5, 8. [...] καὶ τοὺς μισοῦντας τὴν ψυχὴν Δαυίδ.

⁴⁸ 2 Kings 17, 8. [...] καὶ κατάπικροι τῇ ψυχῇ αὐτῶν; Job 7, 11. ἀνοιξω πικρίαν ψυχῆς μου συνεχόμενος.

⁴⁹ Job 19, 2. ἕως τίνος ἐγκοπον ποιήσετε ψυχὴν μου καὶ καθαιρεῖτέ με λόγοις.

⁵⁰ Lev. 6, 5; 13, 4.

⁵¹ The doxological hymns are a fine example of glory towards God as it is revealed through the world and history. See e.g., Psalms 8; 18; 23; 28; 32; 102, 1; 103, 1, etc.

⁵² See e.g., ΤΡΕΜΠΕΛΑΣ (1959: 1, 483–486; 493–494); MEINERTZ (1950). As a side note, soul in Christian art is mostly anthropomorphized, as seen in icons representing the Assumption of Mary (WRATISLAV-MITROVIC–OKUNEV [1931]) and the event of Second Advent, where the souls of the pure in heart people are shown to enjoy the bliss in Heaven while the sinful souls are shown in torture.

⁵³ Matt. 10, 28; Luke 17, 33.

⁵⁴ Luke 12, 19; 2; Cor. 1, 23; 1; Thess. 5, 23.

⁵⁵ See e.g., ΛΕΚΑΤΣΑΣ (1957: 58).

⁵⁶ For the influence of Homer in Byzantine epigrams see e.g., OPSTALL (2014).

⁵⁷ Hom. *Od.* γ 455. τῆς δ' ἐπεὶ ἐκ μέλαν αἶμα ῥύη, λίπε δ' ὅστέα θυμός.

⁵⁸ Hom. *Od.* λ 50. [...] αἵματος ἄσσον ἵμεν [...]; 96. αἵματος ὄφρα πῖω καὶ τοι νημερτέα εἶπω. See ΠΑΝΤΑΖΙΔΗΣ (1982 [= 2009]: 25).

who – before his descent to Hades – slaughters his victim whose blood can retain the memory and feeling of life).

Returning to the epigram, the attribute of cleansing the soul from all sins and washing away all misfortunes given to the blood of Christ, is rendered through a request by the poet to the cross.⁵⁹ The use of the imperative *πλῦνον* attests to this assumption, while, finally, we ought to observe that generally the statement of a request by a believer (usually in the final lines of the epigram) towards the Divine is a common practice which we shall see in epigrams no. 14 (lines 15–18) and 15 (line 3).

Epigram n. 2

10th century, beginning of 960 (?),⁶⁰ anonymous

Χριστὸς δίδωσιν αἷμα τὸ ζωὴν φέρον.⁶¹

Translation

Christ offers the life-giving blood.

Remarks

This is a one-line epigram, the work of an anonymous poet, who makes reference to the blood offered by Christ in order to give life to sinful humans once again. As such, the epigram maker characterizes the blood of Christ as αἷμα τὸ ζωὴν φέρον.

Let's notice here that this epigram can be found engraved on the circumference of the rim of a chalice⁶² from which the believers received the Holy Communion, blood and body of Christ,⁶³ during Mass in

⁵⁹ The blood of Christ is essentially presented as the link between universal salvation and personal devotion (see CHEPEL [2017: 67]), a distinctive link for the magical invocations in the early Christian years.

⁶⁰ For more information on the exact date of the composition of the epigram see ROSS (1959: 7–8); RHOBY (2010: 259).

⁶¹ RHOBY (2010: 258–259, n. Me84; 511 [im. 56–59]); DURAND (1861: 339, n. 47); PASINI (1885–1886: 59, n. 3); PASINI (1888: 288); HAHNLOSER (1996: 67 [A. Grabar], n. 57; tab. LII); HÖRANDNER (1989: 152); GUILLOU (1996: 76, n. 72A; 65–67 [im. 72a-e]); VASSIS (2005: 277).

⁶² See RHOBY (2010: 258–259, no. Me84; 511 [im. 56–59]).

⁶³ The blood of Jesus Christ is the basis for the New Testament. During the Last Supper the pouring of wine into the cup offered by Christ to His disciples symbolized His blood that would be shed during His crucifixion for the salvation of those who believed in Him. (Matt. 26, 27–29. καὶ λαβὼν τὸ ποτήριον καὶ εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς

church.⁶⁴ In this way, it is justified that the epigram is fairly short, a one-liner, given the limited area that it would be engraved onto. Consequently, the poet composed the epigram knowing the object so that he could adjust the length of the epigram. Further, the poet keeping in mind how this object is used, adjusted the content of the line.

Epigram n. 3

10th century, anonymous

Ἔχεις με Χριστὸν αἷμα σαρκὸς μου φέρων.⁶⁵

Translation

You have me, Christ, since you bear the blood of my body.

λέγων· πίετε ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες· τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ αἷμά μου τὸ τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυνόμενον εἰς ἄφεςιν ἁμαρτιῶν. Mark 14, 23-24: καὶ λαβὼν τὸ ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς. καὶ ἔπιον ἐξ αὐτοῦ πάντες καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τοῦτο ἐστι τὸ αἷμά μου τὸ τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυνόμενον. Luke 22, 20. ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι λέγων· τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου, τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυνόμενον).

⁶⁴ At this point it is worth mentioning that after the 4th century AD, the divine worship acquires a new dynamic, which includes the transition from realism to symbolism (MANTZAPIΔΗΣ [1990: 195–196]: on the symbolic character of the Divine Liturgy). From the 6th century AD, in fact, the interpretive liturgical tradition is formed through a series of texts-treatises with analysis and theological-symbolic memorization of the liturgical types and sacred ceremonies (ΦΟΥΝΤΟΥΛΗΣ [1981: 17]). Thus, one of the most important texts of the Divine Liturgy and the symbolic interpretation of what is performed throughout is that of Nicholas Kabasilas (in the 14th century: ODB III: 1088) Εἰς τὴν θείαν Λειτουργίαν or Ἐσμηνεία τῆς θείας Λειτουργίας, where during the change of bread and wine via invoking the body and blood of Christ he emphasizes the soteriological work of Christ (PG 150, 425CD). The last of the memorizers of the Divine Liturgy during the Byzantine period is Saint Symeon of Thessaloniki (15th century: ODB III: 1981–1982), who, utilizing the previous interpretive tradition, emphasizes the Christological content and meaning of the rites. (ΦΟΥΝΤΟΥΛΗΣ [1965: 121–141]; ΓΙΕΒΤΙΤΣ [1983: 265–308]). Essentially the Divine Liturgy or Communion is nothing more than the union of Christ with men through His flesh (bread) and blood (wine). (Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο σεσάρκωται ἐκ Παρθένου, ἵνα ἡμῖν ἐνωθῇ. Τούτου τε χάριν ἐσταύρωται, καὶ τὸ αἷμα ἐξέχεε δι’ ἡμᾶς, ἵν’ αὐτοῦ κοινωνῶμεν. [...] Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο παραπλησίως κεκοινωνήκε σαρκὸς τε καὶ αἵματος, ἵνα κοινωνίαν ἔχωμεν μετ’ αὐτοῦ: PG 155, 233C [ΞΗ’]).

⁶⁵ RHOBY (2010: 272–274, n. Me91; 517 [im. 75–77]); COUGNY (1890: 1, 60, n. 369); PASINI (1885–1886: 2, 24); PASINI (1888: 249); FROLOW (1964–1965: 221); HAHNLOSER (1996: 180, n. 172; tab. CLXXII); GUILLOU (1996: 85–86, n. 81; tab. 74, n. 78 a-c); KRAUSE (2008: 46–47; im. 1g); HÖRANDNER–RHOBY (2008: 46); VASSIS (2011: 220).

Remarks

This is an epigram very relevant to the previous one, since we find it engraved on the circumference of a chalice made with enamel. Much like the previous epigram, this too refers to the blood of Christ and its soteriological attribute, since it bears the blood of Christ, which is received by each believer during Mass. We cannot be sure whether this is the same poet, who may have received an order to compose epigrams for two different chalices, because we have not further information on him. Still, it is worth noting that this same line with slight modifications (Ἐχεις με Θεὸν αἶμα σαρκός μου φέρων) is seen many years later in 1650 engraved on a valuable chalice made with gold-plated silver in the monastery of Tatarna in Karpenisi⁶⁶ that affords us to speak of a historical continuation and an imitation of the same line in subsequent years.

However, if one compares the two (similar in content) epigrams, they will see how there is a noticeable difference between them in format. In this epigram, we have Christ as a *persona loquens* (use of first-person singular pronouns makes it rather clear that it is a first-person narration), who addresses primarily the anonymous donor of the chalice emphasizing his sentiment towards Christ through His blood, and secondly, each person who wishes to receive the Communion, body and blood of Christ thus saving his sinful soul. This would justify the use of the second person singular form (Ἐχεις) making the epigram livelier and drawing the reader's attention.

Epigram n. 4

10th century, John Geometres

Εἰς τὴν λόγχην
Πλευρᾷς ἔπλασα πλάσμα σῆς Εὐαν πάλαι,
πλευρὰν δὲ ῥήσσεις τὴν ἐμὴν λόγχη σύ μοι·
ὁμῶς τὸ τραῦμα φάρμακον κεραννύει
τῶν τραυμάτων σου καὶ τὰ ῥεῖθρα βλυστάνει.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ ΚΟΥΜΟΥΛΙΔΗΣ (1991: 142; 104 [im.]).

⁶⁷ ΤΩΜΑΔΑΚΗ (2014: 137, n. 126); CRAMER (1839 [= 1964]: 4, 302, 21–25); PG 106, Joannis Geometrae, carmina varia argument sacri vel historici, col. 939 (πβ'); COUGNY (1890: 5, 455–456, n. 71); VASSIS (2005: 623).

Translation

For the Spear
 From your rib I once created Eve,
 My rib you are (now) piercing with the spear;
 still, (my) wound transforms into healing
 and heals your wounds and springs up.

Remarks

This epigram, written by John Geometres, is devoted to the spear as we are informed by its title (tit.: Εἰς τὴν λόγχην) and specifically, to the event of piercing the rib of the crucified Christ with the spear of the Roman soldier.⁶⁸ It is interesting how this evangelical event inspired the poet to compose this epigram since he had followed a career in army being a protospatharios (πρωτοσπαθᾶριος).⁶⁹

The use of acting on the part of the poet is noteworthy since it is presented as if Christ Himself is addressing each human. In that way, John Geometres, in the first two lines, attempts to juxtapose the creation of Eve from the rib of Adam⁷⁰ to the piercing of the rib of Christ on the cross (Πλευρᾶς ἔπλασα πλάσμα σῆς Εὐαν πάλαι, / πλευρὰν δὲ ῥήσεις τὴν ἐμὴν λόγχη σύ μοι). However, this juxtaposition is not accidental since the epigram maker concludes with a soteriological message according to which, the wound from the spear on the body of Christ is transformed into a healing element that can heal all humans (ὅμως τὸ τραῦμα φάρμακον κεραννύει / τῶν τραυμάτων σου καὶ τὰ ρεῖθρα βλυστάνει – lines 3–4).⁷¹ Let us make a note at this point that this heal-

⁶⁸ John's gospel refers to this exact incident (John 19, 34: ἀλλ' εἷς τῶν στρατιωτῶν λόγχη αὐτοῦ τὴν πλευρὰν ἔνυξε, καὶ εὐθέως ἐξηλθεν αἷμα καὶ ὕδωρ).

⁶⁹ LAUXTERMANN (1994: 163).

⁷⁰ Gen 2, 21–22. καὶ ἐπέβαλεν ὁ Θεὸς ἔκστασιν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀδὰμ, καὶ ὑπνώσε· καὶ ἔλαβε μίαν τῶν πλευρῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεπλήρωσε σάρκα ἀντ' αὐτῆς. καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὴν πλευρὰν, ἣν ἔλαβεν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ, εἰς γυναῖκα καὶ ἡγάγεν αὐτὴν πρὸς τὸν Ἀδὰμ.

⁷¹ It is highlighted here that the same soteriological message is found in hymnography (τὴν πλευρὰν ἐνύγη ὁ πλευρὰν εἰληφώς, τοῦ Ἀδὰμ ἐξ ἧς τὴν Εὐαν διέπλασας καὶ ἐξέβλυσας κρουνοὺς καθαρκτικούς: *Megalarion* from the First Stasis of the account of Epitaphios), and in homilies (ἐνύγη δὲ καὶ τῇ λόγχῃ τὴν πλευρὰν, διὰ τὴν ἐκ τῆς πλευρᾶς τοῦ Ἀδὰμ ληφθεῖσαν γυναῖκα: John Chrysostom, Εἰς τὴν τριήμερον Ἀνάστασιν, PG50, 822).

ing element consists of the blood and water that spilt out of the wound of the body of Christ on the cross.⁷²

Finally, this poem – aside from expressing the symbolic nature of the spear, that is the relic of Christ which was kept with other relics in Nea Ekklesia (Virgin of the Pharos)⁷³ in the 10th century –, may be referring to the ‘spear’, that is the small knife symbolizing the spear of the Passion used to cut bread during the Liturgy of Preparation.⁷⁴ In this last case, there is a metaphorical analogy between the spear that pierced the body of Christ and the ‘spear’ (knife) that cuts the bread, body of Christ. In any case, we cannot be sure whether these lines were composed by John Geometres as an order so that they could be engraved on the surface of that knife.

Epigram n. 5

10th–11th century (?),⁷⁵ anonymous

Τερπνὸν δοχεῖον αἵματος ζωηφόρου
πλευρᾶς ῥυέντος ἐξ ἀκηράτου Λόγου.⁷⁶

Translation

A beautiful vessel of blood that gives life
spilling from the rib of the indestructible Logos.

Remarks

This two-line epigram is engraved into a small cylindrical bronze vessel (Τερπνὸν δοχεῖον – line 1) with a cover top, in which the spilt blood of Christ was kept, after His torture on the cross (πλευρᾶς ῥυέντος ἐξ

⁷² It is known from the Gospel of Matthew (Matt. 4, 23; 9, 35) that Jesus heals πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ μαλακίαν ἐν τῷ λαῷ (‘all sickness and sickness among men’), also for the protection offered by the heavenly God to the believer in Him there is a clear reference in the Psalms (Ps. 17, 3; Ps 90; Ps. 117, 6–7).

⁷³ KLEIN (2006: 88; 91).

⁷⁴ MENTIAKHS (1997: 172–173).

⁷⁵ A. GUILLOU (GUILLOU [1996: 81–82, n. 78B; im. 74, n. 78 a-c]) and Ed. COUGNY (COUGNY [1890: 1, 60, n. 370]) published this epigram with a different order: Αἵματος ζωηφόρου τερπὸν δοχεῖον / ἐξ ἀκηράτου Λόγου πλευρᾶς ῥυέντος. Generally on the difficulties of reading this epigram see also HÖRANDNER (1989: 151).

⁷⁶ RHOBY (2010: 257–258, n. Me83; 510 [im. 53–55]); VASSIS (2005: 724); VASSIS (2011: 264).

ἀκηράτου Λόγου – line 2). Specifically, this object was a gold-plated cylindrical vessel with a hinged cover top, which – when closed – gives the illusion of a building with a dome, clearly alluding to a church. On the surface of the cover top, the first line is engraved in a circular manner, while the second line is engraved at the base of the vessel. What we see, then, is a correlation between the context of the lines with the use of the object, which may indicate that the poet may have either seen this object beforehand and examined it thoroughly, or someone may have described it to him in detail so that he could compose the lines.

The blood is described as ζωηφόρον, giving life to sinful humans, an attribute that we saw in epigram n. 2 (αἷμα τὸ ζωὴν φέρον), which allows us to speak of an instance of conscious imitation, i.e., similar use of the lines.

Epigram n. 6

11th century, John Mauropous, metropolitan of Euchaita⁷⁷

Εἰς τὸ ἅγιον αἷμα

Θεοῦ μὲν αἷμα, τῆς δ' ἐμῆς ψυχῆς λύτρον.⁷⁸

Translation

For the holy blood

The blood is God's, but also the salvation to my soul.

Remarks

This epigram is the only one whose title refers distinctly to its content (tit.: Εἰς τὸ ἅγιον αἷμα). In the one and only line of the poem, we observe the following two elements regarding the blood of Christ. The first one regards the explicit reference to the divine nature of Christ, since in the first part of the line we read that Θεοῦ μὲν αἷμα, while the second part concerns the soteriological message and symbolism of the blood of Christ, which was spilt for the salvation of the writer's soul (τῆς δ' ἐμῆς ψυχῆς λύτρον), and by extension for all mankind, given that the poet speaks metonymically on behalf of all humans. The epigram reveals the

⁷⁷ For the epigrams of John Mauropous on the cross and the crucifixion of Christ see KANTARAS (2021).

⁷⁸ STERNBACH (1897: 160, n. V); VASSIS (2005: 339).

same relation of blood and soul, like the one we saw above in the first epigram. Specifically, the use of the word λύτρον⁷⁹ referring to the blood of Christ underlines this exact method of redemption for the salvation of humans, i.e., through the spilt blood of the Son of God on the cross.

Epigram n. 7

11th–12th century, anonymous

Ὅν οἱ σταλαγμοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῶν αἱμάτων
δόξαν θεϊκὴν ἐστόλισαν καὶ κράτος,
πῶς δοξάσουσι μαργαρίται καὶ λίθοι;
σὸς κόσμος ἐστὶ, στ(αυ)ρέ, πίστις καὶ πόθος·
5 οὕτως σε κοσμεῖ καὶ βασιλὶς Μαρία.⁸⁰

Translation

Him (meaning the Cross), who drops from the blood of God
with power and glory donned,
how are pearls and gems going to honor?
An adornment for you, cross, is faith and love.
In this way, queen Mary can adorn you.

Remarks

This epigram is noteworthy since it is engraved on a staurotheke that contained a –now lost – vessel with drops of the blood of Christ. For reasons of context and syntax, this epigram is quite unorthodox in its sequence of reading.⁸¹ Therefore, the first line is engraved on the top part of the staurotheke, lines 2 and 3 are on its left, and the remaining two are on the right part. The bottom part of the staurotheke remains unwritten, and it may have been the place for a final line, but for unknown reasons, this did not happen.

Regarding the context of the lines, the first line explicitly states that it regards droplets of the blood of Christ (Ὅν οἱ σταλαγμοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῶν αἱμάτων) emphasizing the divine nature of the crucified Christ.

⁷⁹ See MONTANARI (2013: 1290 [λύτρον= means of redemption and buy out]); LIDDELL–SCOTT (3, 68); ΣΤΑΜΑΤΑΚΟΣ (1972: 587).

⁸⁰ HOBY (2010: 266–268, n. Me89; 515 [im. 69–70]); KRAUSE (2008: 39; im. 1a-e); FROLOW (1961: 296–297, n. 273); DURAND (1860: 310); VASSIS (2005: 531); VASSIS (2011: 244).

⁸¹ See e.g., RHOBY (2010: 266).

Following, the (anonymous) poet states his doubtful question about the capacity of precious gems and pearls to accredit the real value of Him who spilt His blood for all humans (πῶς δοξάσουσι μαργαρίται καὶ λίθοι).⁸² The answer is provided in the following line in which the only adornment suitable for the cross is faith and love towards it and not the stones and pearls that decorate it (σὸς κόσμος ἐστὶ, στ(αυ)ρέ, πίστις καὶ πόθος – line 4).⁸³

The epigram is concluded with the name of the person who is responsible for all that decoration of this sacred holy object, βασιλὶς Μαρία (queen Mary),⁸⁴ who was of noble descent – also, very powerful

⁸² By the way in Byzantine times the love and admiration of Christians for valuable and semi-precious stones prompts them to the manufacturing of crosses and reliquaries using these stones masterfully. After all, we should not forget that the allure of precious stones due to their glamour and colors is justified up to a point on account of their rarity and difficulty in finding (for precious stones in early Christianity see e.g., SPIER [1997]). In cases where these valuable objects (crosses and staurotheke) were accompanied by engraved lines, we notice that their tangible beauty is a metaphor for the glory of the cross and the Crucified and that the persons ordering their engraving expressed their faith through them. Some examples: λίθων διαυγῶν συνθέσει κ(αὶ) μαργάρων: this is an epigram at the back side of the staurotheke of Limburg, 10th century, anonymous, line 4: RHOBY (2010: 163–166, n. Me8; 499 [im. 25]); σέβων ἐκαλλώπ<ι>σε τὴν θήκην ξύλου: this is an epigram at the circumference of the staurotheke of Limburg, which mentions the beautification of the staurotheke with precious stones, 10th century, anonymous, line 7: RHOBY (2010: 166–169, n. Me9; 499 [im. 26]); θήκη περιστέλλουσιν ἀργυροχρύσω: regards the cross, 11th century, anonymous, line 4: RHOBY (2010: 295–296, n. Me106; 520 [im. 83]); κοσμεῖ χρυσῶ τε καὶ λίθοις καὶ μαργάροις / [...] / Κυριακὸς δὲ <τὴν> χρυσοῦν αὐτῶ θίβην: regards a staurotheke, 2nd half of 13th century, anonymous, lines 2 and 4: RHOBY (2010: 236–237, n. Me68; Εἰς ἐγκόλπιον σταυρὸν χρυσοῦν μετὰ λίθων / [...] / ὃς οὐ ταπεινοῖς ἐγκατεστρώθη λίθοις: regards an enkolpion (amulet). 13th–14th century, Manuel Philes, tit., line 3: RHOBY (2010: 180–183, n. Me18; 500 [im. 28]).

⁸³ In this case we observe an exception to the above-mentioned rule since the beauty and shine of the gold, as well as the pearls and the remaining precious gems, are in no way reflective of the actual shine of the cross embossed with the blood of Christ. On the contrary, these gems lose their shine when compared to the honest love and deep Christian faith.

⁸⁴ According to scholars, (see RHOBY [2010: 267]) it could possibly be either Maria of ‘Alania’ (1050–1103: see ODB II: 1298; GARLAND [1999: 180–186]), of Georgian descent, married initially to Michael VII Doukas (see ODB II: 1366–1367; POLEMIS [1968: 42–46]) and then Nikephoros III Botaneiates (see. ODB III: 1479; LEIB [1950]), or Maria of Antioch, of French descent (1140–1182/3: see ODB II: 1298; GARLAND [1999: 19–209]), sec-

and influential – and decided on the decoration of this specific stau-rotheke, on top of which, as mentioned before, there was a glass vessel keeping drops of the blood of Christ (οὕτως σε κοσμεῖ καὶ βασιλὶς Μαρία – line 5). Her noble descent and high social and financial status prompted her to address the personified cross (στ[αυ]ρό – line 4), without causing any discomfort to the reader of these lines.⁸⁵

This woman, then, inspired by her profound faith and honest love for Christ and his spilt blood on the cross, commissioned the composition of these lines to the poet – in which lines her name is mentioned – and the manufacturing of the stau-rotheke to a (possibly imperial) workshop,⁸⁶ in an effort to request redemption for her soul from earthly sins. Still, this request, which is common in epigrams of this kind and is mostly written in the last lines, is not present in this epigram. We could claim that this could be written in a final line engraved on the bottom part of the stau-rotheke (which is, however, absent).⁸⁷

Epigram n. 8

12th century (1192), anonymous

Εὐλον στομωθ(έν) αἵμασιν θεορρύ(τοις).⁸⁸

and wife to Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (see ODB II: 1289–1290) – On December 25th 1161, when their wedding nuptials took place – after his death, she is strangled by the new emperor, Andronikos I Komnenos (see ODB I: 94) in 1182/3.

⁸⁵ There are examples of other women of noble decent ordering engraved crosses and stau-rotheques. A prime example is Irene Doukaina whose figure is embossed on the wood of a cross (11th–12th century, Nicholas Kallikles: RHOBY (2010: 268–272, n. Me 90; 516 [im. 71–74]), while another mentionable is (‘purple-born’ / porphyrogenete) Eudokia Komnene, third daughter of Alexios I Komnenos and wife to Constantine Iasites (ODB II: 969), decorating a cross with engraved verses by Nicholas Kallikles, a favorite scholar in the imperial court of Komnenos family (FROLOW [1961: 317–318, n. 312]); ROMANO (1980: 105, n. 27). Lastly, we will mention Irene θυγάτηρ Παλαιολογῖνα who decorates this time an image of the cross (RHOBY [2010: 248–251, n. Me 79; 475 [im. XLIX]).

⁸⁶ The deep faith and love are declared in the epigrams usually with the word ‘passion’ in the dative (πόθῳ) accompanied with the name of the believer. Some examples: κοσμεῖ δὲ Νικόλαος τὴν θήκην πόθῳ: RHOBY (2010: 201–203, n. Me34; 468 [im. XXXIV]); θήκην Ἰω(άννης) δὲ τεύχει νῦν πόθῳ: RHOBY (2010: 281–283, n. Me97; 475 [im. LI]).

⁸⁷ For this view see RHOBY (2010: 268).

⁸⁸ RHOBY (2009a: 328–329, n. 229; 458 [im. LIII]); WINFIELD–WINFIELD (2003: im. 263); VASSIS (2011: 242).

Translation

Wood steelified by the blood of God.

Remarks

This epigram is one single line found in fresco in the southern gate of the Church of Virgin Mary of Araka⁸⁹ in Lagoudera in Cyprus, placed under the horizontal part of the cross, separated in the left and right part of it. This epigram is devoted to the wood of the instrument of torture of Christ, i.e., the cross, which has received a soteriological attribute after the blood of Christ was spilt on it. It is the holy blood that after being spilt on the wood of the cross, made it holy, steelified it, and transformed it from an instrument of torture to an instrument of salvation.

Epigram n. 9

12th century (1192), anonymous

Ξύλον στομωθὲν αἵμασιν θεωρίας.⁹⁰

Translation

Wood steelified by the blood of gazing (of God).

Remarks

This line, much like the previous one, is found on fresco of the same church in Cyprus. On the fresco, we see the cross and under its horizontal part and on the left and right of its vertical part we find the epigram.

In comparison of these two epigrams, it can be easily found that they share some commonalities both regarding their content and their form. Specifically, the blood of the Son of God which, during His crucifixion, soaks the wood of the cross is a central element in this line. As for

⁸⁹ It should be noted that the decoration of the church in December 1192 at the expense of Leo Authentis (according to an inscription above the northern entrance of the temple) was completed shortly after the legal acquisition of the mainland by the English king Richard I the Lionheart in May 1191 (see about WINFIELD–WINFIELD [2003: 50f]), as for the creator of the frescos, he is identified by some scholars as Theodore Apsevdīs – himself or at least a member of his laboratory (XOTZAKOΓΛΟΥ [2005: 649]). The connection of this temple with the art of Constantinople during this period is evident both in the style and in the iconographic program.

⁹⁰ RHOBY (2010: 413, n. Add33; 487 [im. LXXXII]); VASSIS (2011: 242).

the form, we can see the similarity in the choice of wording quite easily. It is true that in the four words that comprise the line, only the final one is different. That is, in the previous epigram (epigram n. 8) we see the word θεορροῦ(τοῖς) (= what pours out of God)⁹¹ while in this case (epigram n. 9), we see the word θεωρίας which ascribes a visual element to the epigram, since it refers to the gazing of God (θεωρία= viewing, observing, sight, the sense of vision).⁹² There are still some metric similarities since the vertical part of the cross smoothly divides the line in the fifth syllable, making a visible penthemimeres caesura. We also see similarities in the spelling mistakes of the same words in both epigrams, since in one case (epigram n. 8) we read CTOMOOΘ(EN) EMACHN ΘEOPI(TOIC), and in the other case (epigram n. 9) we read CTOMOOΘEN EMACIN. These mistakes allow us to assume that the poet may not have been academically inclined – the poet may have been the painter of the frescos – and that the composition of both epigrams can be attributed to the same individual. Further, it can be assumed that the poet-painter may be responsible for the slight modification in the lines since he may not have remembered entirely how these lines were composed.

However, we should mention that this line (epigram n. 9) is also found in the (internally) completely covered by frescos church of Holy Cross⁹³ in Agiasmati in Cyprus and dates back to 1494. It is possible that it is a copy of epigram n. 8 while the difference in the final word can possibly be interpreted as wrong reading on behalf of the copier.⁹⁴ Briefly, what we see is a constant effort of conscious imitation of this one-line epigram with slight modifications among them, which accompanies the symbol of the cross in the murals of the Cypriot churches.

⁹¹ See MONTANARI (2013: 966).

⁹² See MONTANARI (2013: 973).

⁹³ It is worth noting the existence of an unusually large number of temples to the East dedicated to the Holy Cross since the mid-Byzantine years in Cyprus. In any case, it is certain that the special tradition that wants St Helen to pass through Cyprus on her journey between Constantinople and Jerusalem to find the Holy Cross, has always been strongly present on the island and is able to justify the construction of temples in honor of Cross.

⁹⁴ See RHOBY (2010: 413, n. Add33).

Epigram n. 10

12th century, Gregory Padros, metropolitan of Corinth

Σταυρῷ βλέπων σε τὸν Θεὸν καὶ δεσπότην
 δέδοικα φρίττων καὶ πτοοῦμαι καὶ τρέμω.
 ὃς οὐρανούς ἔτεινας, ἥπλωσας χθόνα,
 πῶς χειῖρας ἐξήπλωσας ἐν σταυρῷ ξύλῳ,
 5 ἥλων δὲ πῶς ἤνεγκας ἀλγεινούς πόνους,
 πλευρὰν ἐνύγης, ἡμάτωσας τοὺς πόδας;
 ἃ μὴ φέρουσα σείεται χθὼν αὐτίκα,
 σκοτίζεται δὲ λαμπρὸν ἡλίου σέλας,
 καταπέτασμα σχίζεται θείου δόμου,
 10 θρᾶνουςι πέτραι καὶ τρέμει πᾶσα κτίσις.
 θρηνεῖ τεκοῦσα καὶ μαθητῆς δακρύοις.⁹⁵

Translation

On the cross I see you, God and Lord
 and I feel fear, I quiver and pother and shake.
 You who unfolded the skies and laid out the earth,
 how can your arms extend on the wood of the cross,
 how did you suffer through the agonizing pain of the nails,
 how your ribs were pierced and your feet bled?
 The earth is shaking because it can't take it anymore
 the light from your shining sun is darkening,
 the temple curtain is ripped,
 the stones are crashed and all creation is shaken
 mother and student mourn in tears.

Remarks

The lines in this epigram are a successful depiction of the crucifixion in accordance with the evangelical descriptions of the event. This may have been an epigram referring to the crucifixion of the Christ while His mother and student mourn (θρηνεῖ τεκοῦσα καὶ μαθητῆς δακρύοις – line 10), as evidenced by the use of the verb ‘see’ in the first line (Σταυρῷ βλέπων). These descriptions are particularly known to the writer of the epigram since he has served as Metropolitan, which – in

⁹⁵ HUNGER (1982: 642, n. VI); VASSIS (2005: 687). For Gregory Padros, metropolitan of Corinth, and his work see KOMINΗΣ (1960); BECK (1959 [= 1977]: 606); ODB III: 1587.

combination with the profound Christian and classical education – help him in the production of these lines showcase his expressivity and robustness. The former is achieved through the use of rhetorical questions⁹⁶ (lines 4–6) which express the emotional agony of the writer upon facing the crucifixion (Σταυρῶ βλέπων σε τὸν Θεὸν καὶ δεσπότην / δέδουκα φρίττων καὶ πτοοῦμαι καὶ τρέμω – lines 1–2), while the use of verbs (ἔτεινας [...] ἥπλωσας – line 3, ἐξήπλωσας – line 4, ἤνεγκας – line 5, ἐνύγης, ἡμάτωσας – line 6) and of the personal pronoun (σε – line 1) in the second singular ascribe a liveliness to the epigram, drawing the interest of the reader when addressing Christ Himself.

As for the content of the epigram, there are references to the spear- ing of the rib of Christ,⁹⁷ to the nails on His feet (πλευρὰν ἐνύγης, ἡμάτωσας τοὺς πόδας – line 6), to the event of the sky darkening upon Christ's last breath on the cross (σκοτιζεται δὲ λαμπρὸν ἡλίου σέλας – line 8), as we are informed by the Gospels of Matthew,⁹⁸ Mark,⁹⁹ and Luke,¹⁰⁰ as well as the earthquake that came after the darkening and destroyed buildings¹⁰¹ and the temple of Solomon¹⁰² (καταπέτασμα

⁹⁶ See GLÖCKNER (1901); SCHILLING (1903). On rhetorics in Byzantine poetry see JEFFREYS (2019a), and generally for rhetorics in Byzantium see e.g., JEFFREYS (2003); KENNEDY (1980); KENNEDY (1983); ΚΟΥΚΟΥΡΑ (2011³); MAGUIRE (2003); MULLET (2003); ΝΙΚΟΛΑΚΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ (1993); TRIANTAPH (2016). For the use of rhetorical questions on Byzantine epigrams on the cross and crucifixion of Jesus Christ see KANTARAS (2019a: 87–89).

⁹⁷ See epigram n. 4 (tit. Εἰς τὴν λόγχην), 5 (line 2) and 13 (line 2).

⁹⁸ Matt. 27, 45. Ἀπὸ δὲ ἑκτῆς ὥρας σκότος ἐγένετο ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης. For more information see ΤΡΕΜΠΕΛΑΣ (1951: 510).

⁹⁹ Mark 15, 33. Γενομένης δὲ ὥρας ἑκτῆς σκότος ἐγένετο ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης.

¹⁰⁰ Luke 13, 44. Ἦν δὲ ὥσεί ὥρα ἑκτη καὶ σκότος ἐγένετο ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης, τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλείποντος. For the exact time of death of Christ see ΤΡΕΜΠΕΛΑΣ (1951: 510).

¹⁰¹ Matt. 27, 51. Καὶ ἰδοὺ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη εἰς δύο ἀπὸ ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω, καὶ ἡ γῆ ἐσεισθη καὶ αἱ πέτραι ἐσχίσθησαν; Mark. 15, 38: Καὶ τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη εἰς δύο ἀπὸ ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω. For the reaction of nature, which out of fear for the criminal nature of humans expresses its empathy towards the death of Christ, see comments in ΤΡΕΜΠΕΛΑΣ (1951: 512–513).

¹⁰² The relevant first two verses from a four-line epigram of Theodore Prodromos in the same century (the 12th) bearing the title Εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν (Ποῦ σέλας ἡ εἰλίω

σχίζεται θείου δόμου, / θραύουσι πέτραι καὶ τρέμει πᾶσα κτίσις – lines 9–10). Generally, the earth's shattering is interpreted as the reaction of nature towards the terrifying view of the crucifixion (ἃ μὴ φέρουσα σείεται χθὼν αὐτίκα – line 7). The event of the Passion of Christ is completed with the mourning Virgin Mary and the tearful student of Christ, John (θρηνεῖ τεκοῦσα καὶ μαθητῆς δακρύοις – line 10).

In this mood of fear and death, we see an indirect reference to the blood of the crucified Christ, which is spilt all over His feet (ἡμάτωσας τοὺς πόδας – line 6). It is that blood that led to the salvation of humankind.

Epigram n. 11

12th century, Klemes the monk

Εἰς εἰκόνα¹⁰³ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐσταυρωμένου, ἀπὸ τοῦ πατριάρχου
Τεροσολύμων κυροῦ Ἰωάννου.

Κλίνας κεφαλὴν καὶ θανὼν ἐπὶ ξύλου,
ὦ φρικτὲ νεκρὲ, ζῶν Θεοῦ ζῶντος λόγε,
ἔοικας ὡς ἄνθρωπος αἵτησιν φέρειν
τῷ πατρὶ τῷ σῶ τὴν βροτῶν σῶσαι φύσιν·

5 ἀρχιερεὺς γὰρ καὶ παράκλητος μέγας
σύ, Σῶτερ, ὦφθης, ὡς ὁ σὸς Παῦλος γράφει.
σὺ γοῦν ὁ θύσας καὶ τυθεὶς, Πλαστοουργέ μου,
τὴν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν σὴν σφαγὴν δεδεγμένος
καὶ τὴν δέησιν ἣν δέδωκας λαμβάνων

10 ἐμοὶ τὸ λύτρον ὡς Θεὸς δῶρον νέμοις·
τί γὰρ πλεον τίς εἰς ἱλασμά σοι φέρει
ἢ τὸ προχυθὲν αἷμα [σου] σταυρουμένου;
τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ δε σοῦ τῆς ἀγίας
θρόνῳ με σεπτῷ πατριαρχῶν ἰδρύσας,

15 κὰν οὐρανοῖς δὸς σοὶ θύειν ἐπαξίως

διώχετο ἡδὲ σελήνης; / τίς δέ τε λατομήη πολιοὺς ἐτμήξατο πέτρους;) are indicative. See PAPAGIANNIS (1997: 239–240, n. 229b); VASSIS (2005: 641).

¹⁰³ In Byzantium, the term εἰκών is generally understood as depiction, representation, or portrait. Still, this term is also used to talk about the mobility of the icon, meaning icons on wood or other materials depicting Christ, the Virgin Mary, or saints (PENTCHEVA [2006: 631]). On an icon like this, the epigram could be engraved on the frame, the surface, or the back side (PENTCHEVA [2007: 120]).

καὶ τῆς τραπέζης συμμετασχεῖν τῆς ἄνω
καὶ δοῦλον ὄντα προσλαβοῦ δαιτυμόνα
τὸν πατριάρχην τῆς Σιών Ἰωάννην.¹⁰⁴

Translation

On the icon of the crucified Christ by the Patriarch of Jerusalem John
Supporting Your head on the cross and dying on it,
oh frightful dead man, creation of living God (You), Logos,
you look like a human that has a request
toward Your father, to save the mortals' nature;
because archbishop and great supporter
You, our Savior, you see, just like Your Paul writes.
You the sacrificed, my Creator,
after you accepted Your sacrifice for us
and received the request which you gave (to your father)
gave to me as God the gift of my reward;
what is more and who is bringing forgiveness to You
aside from Your spilt blood?
Of Your holy Jerusalem
on a respectable throne you placed me as a Patriarch
and in the skies I, now, sacrifice to You
and in the Mass I participate
and as Your servant accept me in the same table
me the Patriarch of Sion, John.

Remarks

This is an epigram devoted to the event of the crucifixion, ordered by the Patriarch of Jerusalem John, as we are informed by the title (tit. Εἰς εἰκόνα τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐσταυρωμένου, ἀπὸ τοῦ πατριάρχου Ἱεροσολύμων κυροῦ Ἰωάννου) and by some lines (τῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ δε σοῦ τῆς ἀγίας / θρόνῳ με σεπτῶ πατριαρχῶν ἰδρύσας – lines 13–14; τὸν πατριάρχην τῆς Σιών Ἰωάννην – line 18). This regards the 'spiritual father' of the poet, monk Klemes, for whom we do not have enough information. It seems

¹⁰⁴ SPINGOU (2013: 97, no. 402); ΛΑΜΠΡΟΣ (1910: 184, no. 363); MIONI (1981–1985: II 407 [524.XX.1]); VASSIS (2005: 409).

that Patriarch John¹⁰⁵ ordered the educated monk to compose the poem for an icon of the crucified Christ gifted to a monastery.¹⁰⁶

The Patriarch, after mentioning how Christ has bowed his head on the cross, showing him like he is posing a request to His Father for the forgiveness of humans (lines 1–4; 9), asks from the crucified's divine nature forgiveness as a reward, which only the spilt blood of Christ can guarantee (ἐμοὶ τὸ λύτρον ὡς Θεὸς δῶρον νέμοις· / τί γὰρ πλέον τίς εἰς ἱλασμό σοι φέρει / ἢ τὸ προχυθὲν αἷμα [σοῦ] σταυρουμένου; lines 10–12). The lines are completed with the statement of the final request of the Patriarch of Sion, John, towards the crucified Christ to accept him in the same table in his Holy Kingdom (lines 15–18). We should note the continuous use of the verbs in the second person singular when addressing the crucified Christ (ἔουκας – line 3, ὥφθης – line 6, δέδωκας – line 9, νέμοις – line 10), of the pronouns (personal and possessive) also in the second person singular (σὼ – line 4, σὺ – line 6–7, σὴν – line 8, σοι – line 11, σοῦ – line 13, σοὶ – line 15) and finally, the use of clitics (ὦ φρικτὲ νεκρὲ, ζῶν Θεοῦ ζῶντος λόγε – line 2, Σῶτερ – line 6, Πλαστουργέ μου – line 7) creating in that way a sense of directness and liveliness in the lines.

Epigram n. 12

12th–13th century, anonymous

Χιτῶν, χλαμύς, λέντιον, ἔνδυμα Λόγου,
 σινδῶν, λύθρον, στέφανος ἠκανθωμένοι(ς),
 ὁστοῦν, ξύλον, θρίξ – διδύμου, σταυροῦ, λύχνου -,
 ζώνης πανάγνου τμήμα, μανδύου μέρος,
 5 [Εὐστρα]τίου λείψανον, ὁστοῦν Προδρόμου,
 Εὐφημίας θρίξ, λείψανον Νικολάου,
 ὅστ᾽ Στεφάνου τοῦ νέου, Θεοδώρου
 [κα]ὶ Παντελεήμονος ἐκ τρι(ῶν) τριά.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ The patriarch appears as a donor in five more epigrams. This John is probably John IX Merkouropoulos, patriarch of Jerusalem between 1156 and 1166 and author of the lives of John of Damascus and Kosmas of Maiouma (BHG 395). See PAPADOPOULOS-KERAMEUS (1897: 303–350); ENGLEZAKIS (1973: 508); PLANK (1994: 176–183).

¹⁰⁶ For more information see SPINGOU (2013: 205–206).

¹⁰⁷ RHOBY (2010: 283–285, n. Me98; 517 [im. 78]); ΚΑΠΠΙΑΣ (2004: 416; 430 [im. 2]); ŠEVČENKO (1998: 246, n. 115); VASSIS (2011: 276).

Translation

Alb, toga, lention, clothing of Logos,
 shroud, blood, thorny wreath,
 bone, wood, hair – of the twin, the cross, the light-,
 part of the belt of the Virgin (Mary), part of the cloak,
 relic of Eustratios, bone of John the Baptist,
 hair of Euphemia, relic of Nicholas,
 bones of Stephen the Younger, of Theodore
 and of Panteleemon, three out of them three.

Remarks

These eight lines are a list of relics in a lipsanothek-enkolpion and they are engraved on the front part (cover) of the object.¹⁰⁸ Among these relics, we notice the blood of Christ (λύθρον¹⁰⁹ – line 2) and aside of any Christ-related relics (e.g., the alb, toga, lention, shroud, thorny wreath, lines 1–2), we also see a record of relics of John the Baptist (line 3: λύχνου¹¹⁰– line 5: ὁστοῦν Προδρόμου), of the Virgin Mary (line 4), of Saint Eustratios (line 5), of Euphemia and Nicholas (line 6), of Stephen the Younger (line 7) and finally of Saint Panteleemon (line 8).

It is noteworthy to point out how such a great number of holy relics was accumulated in such a small object, as is the reliquary, measuring 9,5x8,5 cm.¹¹¹ Undoubtedly, its religious value would have been immeasurable exactly due to the plethora of relics in it.

Finally, we should point out the importance of the word used by the anonymous poet to signify the blood of Christ, ‘λύθρον’, a word we find in Homer,¹¹² which declares the blood coming out of the wounds, the lethal blood, mixed with sweat and dirt. This transcends to the Byzantines

¹⁰⁸ This lipsanothek-enkolpion is kept safe in Moscow National Museum. See RHOBY (2010: 283–285, no. Me98; 517 [im. 78]).

¹⁰⁹ MONTANARI (2013: 1285 [λύθρον = blood mixed with dust or sweat]); LIDDELL–SCOTT (3, 63); ΣΤΑΜΑΤΑΚΟΣ (1972: 585).

¹¹⁰ RHOBY (2010: 285, n. 807).

¹¹¹ RHOBY (2010: 284).

¹¹² Hom. *Il.* Z 268. αἵματι καὶ λύθρῳ πεπαλαγμένον εὐχετάασθαι; Λ 169: λύθρῳ ἐπαλάσσετο χεῖρας; Υ 503: λύθρῳ δὲ παλάσσετο χεῖρας ἀάπτους; Hom. *Od.* χ 402: αἵματι καὶ λύθρῳ πεπαλαγμένον; ψ 48: αἵματι καὶ λύθρῳ πεπαλαγμένον. See also ΠΑΝΤΑΖΙΑΗΣ (1982 [= 2009]: 399).

in this same sense.¹¹³ The choice of this Homeric word by the poet shows knowledge of its existence and also, signifies a rather nuanced use of the word because it immediately recalls that the death of Christ is murder.

Epigram n. 13

13th century (1207), anonymous

Ἐσχηκα Χριστοῦ σπαργάνων μικρὸν μέρος,
ἤλων ἐγὼ δὲ τῶν σεβαστῶν τι τρύφος,
ζωὴν καὶ τὸ βλῦσαν αἶμα τῷ κόσμῳ,
στέφους ἀκανθίνου δὲ καὶ τμημὰ τι.¹¹⁴

Translation

I have a small piece of the napkins of Christ,
I have a shard of the hallowed nails,
I have the blood that poured life for humans,
and I have a piece of the thorny wreath.

Remarks

In this epigram, much like the previous one (epigram n. 11), there is a listing of the holy relics of a lipsanothek that is unfortunately lost nowadays. The specific lines are engraved on its front part while all the holy relics listed are related to Christ (e.g., the napkins – line 1, the nails – line 2, and the thorny wreath – line 4). Among those relics, we see the blood, τὸ βλῦσαν ζωὴν (line 3) for all humankind. What draws our attention is this specified, almost in a catalogue-making manner, format of the poem, since we are presented with a wealth of holy relics related to the life of Christ from birth till His crucifixion.

Epigram n. 14

13th–14th century, anonymous

Εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν
Διπλοῦς ὁ παθὼν· ζῶν γάρ ἐστι καὶ νέκυς,
ὡς αἶμα δηλοῖ καὶ τὸ συμβλύσαν ὕδωρ·
οὐκ οὖν θεὸς κράζουσι πέτραι γῆ σκότος.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ ΣΟΥΙΔΑ (2002: 721).

¹¹⁴ RHOBY (2010: 178–179, n. Me16); FROLOW (1961: 397–399, n. 473); VASSIS (2005: 260); VASSIS (2010: 219).

Translation

For the crucifixion

The sufferer has a dual nature, for he is living and dead,
as shown by the blood and water poured (from His rib);
so, the rocks, the darkness and the earth all scream 'God'.

Remarks

The writer of these lines, devoted to the crucifixion as we are informed by the title (tit. Εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν), highlight the dual nature of Christ (Διπλοῦς ὁ παθὼν – line 1). Specifically, referring to the event of spear- ing of Christ's rib on the cross, the poet uses the water and the blood that poured out of His rib as proof of his dual nature ([...] ζῶν γάρ ἐστι καὶ νέκυς / ὥς αἷμα δηλοῖ καὶ τὸ συμβλύσαν ὕδωρ, lines 1–2). The third and last line comes to underline the divine substance of Christ, since the reaction of nature (such as the earthquake and the darkness) upon His excruciating death is valid proof that indeed the crucified is God (οὐκ οὖν θεὸς κρᾶζουσι πέτραι γῆ σκότος – line 3).

Epigram n. 15

15th century, Michael Apostoles

Εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ

Παθὼν ὁ σωτὴρ ἀνθρώπων ὑπὲρ γένους,
ἔφηνεν αὐτοὺς τῶν παθῶν ἐλευθέρους·
ἐγγιάλιζόν μοι θεὲ σεῖο πάθεσιν ἀπάθειαν·
χειρὰς ἀειράμενος σταυροῦ ἔπι ὄρχαμος ἦς.
5 αἷμα δέδωκε πατρὶ λύτρον ἀποικομένων·
Χριστοῦ αἱματοέσσας δεξαμένη ραθάμιγγας
Πουλυβότειρα χθὼν ἤμεσεν αἷμα νέκυς.¹¹⁶

Translation

For the Crucifixion of Christ

After the savior has suffered for humans,
relieved them of their passions;
make me (then) an ally, my God, in the calmness of Your passions;
since spreading your arms on the cross made you a leader.
His blood was given to the Father as reward of those who have died;

¹¹⁵ HÖRANDNER (1994: 119, n. XIV); VASSIS (2005: 149).

¹¹⁶ ΛΑΟΥΡΔΑΣ (1950: 190, n. 78); VASSIS (2005: 588).

The euphoric land received the drops from the blood of Christ and rolled over the dead.

Remarks

This is an epigram devoted to the crucifixion of Christ (tit. Εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν τοῦ Χριστοῦ), whose lines refer to the relief from the passions of sinful humans through the sacrifice of the savior Christ (Παθῶν ὁ σωτὴρ ἀνθρώπων ὑπὲρ γένους, / ἔφηνεν αὐτοὺς τῶν παθῶν ἐλευθέρους) and his extension on the cross (χειρας ἀειράμενος σταυροῦ ἐπὶ ὄρχαμος ἦς – line 4). In this calmness of His Passions, the poet asks to participate (ἐγγιάλιζόν μοι θεὲ σεῖο πάθεσιν ἀπάθειαν – line 3).

The writer of these lines¹¹⁷ sees the spilt blood of Christ as definitive since that was what was gifted to His Father as reward for the salvation of the dead (αἷμα δέδωκε πατρὶ λύτρον ἀποικομένων – line 5). In short, it is the blood, the drops of which soaked the earth, rolling over the dead with their future resurrection (Χριστοῦ αἱματοέσσας δεξαμένη ραθάμιγγας / Πουλυβότειρα χθὼν ἤμεσεν αἷμα νέκυς – lines 6–7). These last two lines draw our attention because of the use of particular vocabulary so as to create the intensity of the image of the crimson blood of Christ (αἱματοέσσας – line 6)¹¹⁸ spilling on the fertile ground (Πουλυβότειρα χθὼν – line 7),¹¹⁹ soiling it (ἤμεσεν αἷμα – line 7).¹²⁰ The persistence on the hue of the blood is profound and it is a guarantee for the salvation of humans as reward (λύτρον – line 5) by God.

¹¹⁷ For some basic information about the writer of these verses, Michael Apostoles, see ODB (I: 140–141).

¹¹⁸ MONTANARI (2013: 97); ΣΤΑΜΑΤΑΚΟΣ (1972: 38).

¹¹⁹ The word *πουλυβότειρα* / *πολυβότειρα* (stemming from the words *πολύς* and the poetic *βοτέω* = herd: MONTANARI [2013: 441]) usually accompanies the word *χθὼν* (= land. LIDDELL–SCOTT [3: 632]) carrying the meaning of fertile land and for many, land that can provide sustenance (ΠΑΝΤΑΖΙΔΗΣ [1982: 539]; ΣΤΑΜΑΤΑΚΟΣ [1972: 809]; ΣΟΥΛΙΑ [2002: 938]). We also see it in Homer (ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ). See Hom. *Il.* Γ 195 (τεύχεα μὲν οἱ κεῖται ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ); Ζ 213 (ἔγχος μὲν κατέπηξεν ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ); Φ 426 (τῶ μὲν ἄρ' ἄμφω κεῖντο ἐπὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ). Hom. *Od.* θ 378 (ὀρχεῖσθην δὴ ἔπειτα ποτὶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ); τ 408 (ἀνδράσιν ἠδὲ γυναιξὶν ἀνὰ χθόνα πουλυβοτείραν). Also, the word *βότειρα* is seen as adjective for Demetra in the corresponding Homeric Hymn (ALLEN–HALLIDAY–SIKES [1936²: Εἰς Δήμητραν 122]).

¹²⁰ LIDDELL–SCOTT (1: 68).

Epigram n. 16

15th century (1494), anonymous

Κὰ γὰρ συνάδω, Δέσποτα, τῇ μ(η)ρί σου
 φωνῇ φιλικῇ προδρομικῇ σου, Λόγε·
 οὓς ἡγόρασας αἵματι σῷ τιμίῳ
 στ(αυ)ρῷ κρεμασθεῖς, πλαστουργέ, ἀνευθύνως,
 5 τούτοις καταλλάγηθι δωρεὰν πάλιν,
 εὖσπλαχνε Σ(ῶτ)ερ, ἐκ φιλαν(θρώπ)ου τρόπου.¹²¹

Translation

Me too, Lord, I agree with your mother
 speaking with the voice of your friend and precursor, Logos.
 Those whom you bought out with your holy blood
 when you were hanged on the cross, oh Creator, innocent as you were,
 with them you make peace again rewardless
 oh compassionate savior, in a benevolent manner.

Remarks

This final epigram poses a particularity in its content and its form since it is an answer to another epigram. The two epigrams are drawn on a cylinder¹²² at the church of the Holy Cross in Agiasmati, Cyprus and date back to 1494.¹²³ In one of those, the conversing personas are the Virgin Mary and Christ,¹²⁴ while the other (which interests us more) refers to John the Baptist and Christ.¹²⁵ Both address Christ to persuade

¹²¹ RHOBY (2009a: 370–373, n. 253; 498 [n. 100]); ΑΡΓΥΡΟΥ–ΜΥΡΙΑΝΘΕΥΣ (2004: 32 [im.]); ΔΟΜΗΤΙΟΣ (2007: 228 [im.]); VASSIS (2005: 372); VASSIS (2011: 231).

¹²² For the presence and the cylinder in the icon decoration of the Byzantine church, see GERSTEL (1994).

¹²³ For the decorative program of Byzantine churches with saints that hold written papyri, see RHOBY (2017: 277–278); RHOBY (2012: 738).

¹²⁴ The epigram is the following: Ὡ Δέσποτα, παῖ καὶ Θε(ο)ῦ ζῶντος Λόγε· σὺ μὲν προελθ(ὼν) ἐξ ἐμοῦ σπορᾶ(ς) ἄν(ευ) / ἐκ δὲ Π(ατ)ρ(ὸ)ς φῶς ῥεύσ(εω)ς, Σ(ῶτ)ερ, δίχα / αὐτῷ τε συνὼν οὐρανῶν ὕψει κλίνας / σῆς κλίσεως {HEN} τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἄφες / καὶ μ(η)ρι(κὰς) πλήρωσον ἱκ(ε)τηρίας. See RHOBY (2009a: 369–370, n. 252; 460 [im. LVIII]).

¹²⁵ It is worth mentioning that the verb choice is συνάδω to declare the unanimous view of John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary (συνάδω = agree with somebody), a verb that has a rhythmical tune to it and could mean ἀδω = sing with somebody

Him to show mercy and save humans from sin with his crucifixion and His spilt blood on the cross (στ[αυ]ρῷ κρεμασθείς, πλαστοουργέ, ἀνευθύνως, / τούτοις καταλλάγηθι δωρεὰν πάλιν, / εὖσπλαχνε Σ[ῶτ]ερ, ἐκ φιλαν[θρώπ]ου τρόπου – lines 4–6). John the Baptist is presented as speaking with φωνῇ φιλικῇ προδρομικῇ (line 2) as the mediator of the request of the Virgin Mary towards her Son, which is common in Christian Literature. There is a distinct reference to the blood of Christ that was spilt to buy off the salvation of those who crucified Him (οὐς ἡγόρασας αἵματι σῶ τιμίω – line 3). In any case, the mediation begins with the Virgin Mary¹²⁶ and continues with John the Baptist to reach Christ.¹²⁷

Epigrams and Art

Without a doubt, this interaction between text and image is a significant manifestation of Byzantine culture.¹²⁸ The value of these epigraphs on icons and objects is priceless. Byzantine epigrams, – which as we saw

(MONTANARI [2013: 2031]; ΣΤΑΜΑΤΑΚΟΣ [1972: 941]; LIDDELL–SCOTT [4, 195]), thus reinforcing the performativity of the epigram.

¹²⁶ Typical examples of mediation are found in the *Akathistos Hymn* and the *Theotokia*, where the Virgin Mary is often presented as γέφυρα μετάγουσα τοὺς ἐκ γῆς πρὸς οὐρανόν (ΠΑΠΑΓΙΑΝΝΗΣ [2006: 58; γ' 11]) and πάλιν μετὰ θάνατον, ἐν τῇ μελλούσῃ κρίσει μεσίτρια καὶ βοηθός (ΣΤΑΘΗΣ [1977: 185, n. 26]).

¹²⁷ Let's note that in Byzantium there was a commonly accepted kind of 'written communication' between sky and earth, e.g. the dual image of donors in codex Iveron Monastery of Mount Athos 5 in the 13th century (φ. 456^v/457^r) where we have the depiction of four persons; the Virgin Mary with an eiltarion on her hand representing the Byzantine empire employee τὸν ἐπὶ τῶν δεήσεων and in her capacity as mediator between God and humans she begs for the atonement of sins for her protégé, John (the second form of the bureaucratic scene). Christ on His part responds positively to the request and dictates to His secretary, John Chrysostom (the fourth person), the absolution of sins (see HUNGER [1995: 18; 19; im. 4]).

¹²⁸ In Byzantium, the power of the icons and by extension their influence has been tremendous in conveying ideas, perceptions, and opinions to people (either laymen or others). It suffices to consider the charm and allure still carried by the icons in our world today up to the point where people understand the reality they live only through icons, thus avoiding the actuality of the reality today making it just a spectacle (see ΣΠΗΛΙΩΤΗΣ [2017: 24–25; 42–43, n. 14]; BAUDRILLARD [1995: 18]; for the characterization of this situation as 'the perfect crime').

are a subcategory of these epigraphs – are preserved in manuscripts,¹²⁹ icons, church murals/frescos, crosses, staurothekes, and other objects. It is also possible that the epigrams we get from manuscripts bearing features like acceptance verbs, deictic adverbs and pronouns, references to the construction materials and/or the donor's name, were engraved on some other object which is lost now.¹³⁰ Further, an epigram engraved on a piece of art may not be referring to it either because it was not meant to be engraved on it initially, or it was composed for something else entirely.¹³¹ At the same time, there may have been cases in which the poet composed an epigram knowing exactly the object it would be engraved on,¹³² thus influencing the composition of the epigram, on account of its extent. This allows us to think that the poet may have either examined the object carefully or it was described to him thoroughly or even, he might have made it himself. Finally, there are those Byzantine epigrams which were composed for a particular object, epigrams that do not give us specific information for the object meaning that we cannot know for sure the date of that object, and lastly, those epigrams which were used from former literary collections or poets and were subsequently engraved on more modern artefacts.¹³³

Depiction of blood of Christ in Byzantine art

As a side note, it would be interesting to mention the most usual depiction of the spilt blood of Christ on the cross of Byzantine art (mostly in

¹²⁹ The majority of the preserved epigrams in manuscripts start with the preposition εἰς and a noun in their title, which could indicate the object on which they were engraved or were supposed to be engraved or simply the topic of the epigram. For example, the epigrams titled εἰς τὴν σταύρωσιν could indicate that the epigram was either engraved or was supposed to be on an icon of the crucifixion or that the topic was the crucifixion. See LAUXTERMANN (2003a: 152); DRPIĆ (2016: 26).

¹³⁰ DRPIĆ (2016: 25); LAUXTERMANN (2003a: 151).

¹³¹ MAGUIRE (1996: 6); MAGUIRE (2008: 724–725).

¹³² Indeed, there are epigrams engraved on mosaics, icons, and frescos which describe each piece on which they are engraved (LAUXTERMANN [2003a: 151]), illustrating the level of knowledge on the part of the poet.

¹³³ HÖRANDNER (2003: 157–158).

icons and frescos),¹³⁴ since it is certain that the makers of the epigrams we mentioned already must have known about it quite well, and maybe this was a type of inspiration to them for the production of their lines. It is worth noting that there was an intense effort by some Byzantine artists to depict as vividly as possible the blood of Christ pouring down the cross. A fine example is a double face icon of the 14th century (in the collection of the ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople) in whose back side the painter focuses on the naturalness of the blood dripping down to the feet of the crucified forming a stream.¹³⁵ Similar depictions can be found in post-Byzantine period, such as in the icon of the Crucifixion in temple (iconostasis)¹³⁶ in the first half of the 18th century in Iveron Monastery of Mount Athos, to which the painter places particular emphasis on the blood pouring down from the wounds in the body of Christ.¹³⁷

Finally, we should not forget about the rare but interesting depiction in Byzantine art of two female figures under the hands of the crucified Christ, one young and beautiful and the other old. The younger of the

¹³⁴ It is worth mentioning that Byzantine art is religious or theological art (see LEMERLE [1943]), through which the artist tries to address his spirit avoiding any personal experience in his creation and simultaneously, carrying the ambition to humbly reproduce a type that has already been noted as bearing the holy spirit. This is a sacred task that he is doing, much like a priest in church (see ΟΥΣΙΠΕΝΕΚΥ [1999: 38]). Therefore, these masterpieces are characterized by their grace, economy, and sensitivity mostly evident in painting, which is no longer a purely religious art, but also a didactic one since it aspires to teach even the feeblest of believers (see ΜΙΧΕΛΗΣ [2004]; ΑΡΑΜΠΙΑΤΖΗΣ [2014: 109–115]; CUTLER [2014: 548]; KOKOSALAKIS [1995]). That is why Byzantine icons are thought of as βιβλίον γλωττοφόρον by Gregory of Nyssa (Εἰς τὸν Μέγαν Μάρτυρα Θεόδωρον, PG 46, 737), since they can feature through imitation all those that ὁ λόγος τῆς ἱστορίας διὰ ἀκοῆς παρίστησι (Basil of Caesarea, Εἰς 40 Μάρτυρας, PG 31, 508–509; Germanos, patriarch of Constantinople, Ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Θωμᾶν, ἐπίσκοπον Κλαυδίουπόλεως, PG 172D–173A), allowing us to talk for theology written in icons (see SENDLER [2014: 70]; BROWN [1999]; CORMACK [1991]; BRUBAKER [1995: 209–211]: on theology of icons according to John of Damascus; ΤΣΕΛΕΓΓΙΔΗΣ [1984]). Generally, for art (in all forms) in the service of impressions, teaching, and emotion of its audience from the Antiquity, then the Byzantine and the modern times in the West and Orient see ΓΙΑΝΝΑΠΑΣ (2010⁴: 138–156).

¹³⁵ See e.g., ΒΑΦΕΙΑΔΗΣ (2015: 313–315; im. 267).

¹³⁶ For the iconostasis, its importance and place in the orthodox Christian church, see e.g., ODB III: 2023–2024; EPSTEIN (1981); THON (1986).

¹³⁷ See Θησαυροὶ Ἁγ. Ὁρῶς (1997: 181–182; im. 2, 116).

two is the one who collects the pouring blood into a vessel symbolizing the New Testament and reflecting the establishment of Church as described by John Chrysostom (ἐξ ἐκείνου τοῦ αἵματος καὶ τοῦ ὕδατος ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἅπασα συνέστηκε).¹³⁸ In contrast, the older woman can be identified as the Old Testament. A fine example of this rare representation full of symbolisms is seen in fresco at the old katholikon of the Holy Monastery of Great Meteoron of the year 1483, while a few more frescos also bear that depiction from the 16th century.¹³⁹ We therefore observe that the art of the Church has a symbolic and reducing character, as it introduces and mystifies the Christian in the divine truths. The depiction of the blood of the Godman on the cross for the sake of the people is one such truth.

Depiction of the blood of Christ in Western art

The shed blood from the body of the crucified Christ could not be an iconographic theme that would leave Western artists unmoved, especially from the beginning of the 15th century onwards. Clearly, we mention two characteristic examples of images, in which Christ is depicted crucified on the wood of the cross, while the blood that flows either from His hands or from His feet is depicted in a brilliant way, making clear references to the Holy Communion.

The first such example is the work of Raphael, one of the leading artists of the Renaissance period¹⁴⁰ (along with Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo). This wood oil painting, preserved in the main collection of the National Gallery in London¹⁴¹ and known as the 'Mond Crucifixion'¹⁴² depicts the crucified Christ having two angels, one on the right and one on the left, holding a chalice and collecting the blood that flows from His hands.

The second example belongs to Domenikos Theotokopoulos, the so-called El Greco, and to one of the many Crucifixions he painted, in which the viewer sees a crucified Christ bleeding from everywhere. Two

¹³⁸ PG 51, 229.

¹³⁹ See AXEIMASTOY-ΠΟΤΑΜΙΑΝΟΥ (2006: 182; 254; im. 161).

¹⁴⁰ MUNTZ (1989).

¹⁴¹ Exhibition number NG3943 (Room 61).

¹⁴² The painting was created between 1502 and 1503 by the then young Raphael for the Gavari chapel of the church of San Domenico in Città di Castello, Umbria.

angels, one on each side of the painting, collect the blood with their bare hands from the palms and sides of the Godman, while another – together with Mary Magdalene – does exactly the same at His feet, but using white cloths.¹⁴³ And in this case the correlation of the blood shed on the cross of Christ with the divine Communion is strong and obvious.

Conclusions

After the study of the epigrams mentioned above, we observe that the presence of the blood of Christ in the epigrams related to the cross and the crucifixion is diachronic,¹⁴⁴ since it is seen from the 4th to the 15th century. Still, the frequency of this pattern is not particularly great, given the only sixteen epigrams found about it, most of which have been composed during 10th–13th centuries. In this time period, we see those epigrams, whose writers make reference to the spilt blood in relation to another object that was used for safekeeping this holy blood, or which is somehow related to it.¹⁴⁵ These are engraved on holy objects and their composition was ordered by a prominent person in the Byzantine society, one that had the financial means to pay for such a costly endeavor.

¹⁴³ This work, the creation of which dates between 1597 and 1600, is housed in the Prado Museum in Madrid with the exhibition number P000823 room 009B. See RUIZ GÓMEZ (2017); Museo Nacional del Prado (1985: 314); ÁLVAREZ LOPERA (1993: 186–188, n. 154).

¹⁴⁴ The apotropaic character of the blood of Christ, which drives away every demon and protects the faithful Christian, can be considered the continuation of the corresponding apotropaic character of the blood of Isis, found in Ancient Egyptian magic and especially in amulets of the Pharaonic period (FRANKFURTER [1990]). In other words, there is a historical continuity of the apotropaic character, first of Isis and later of Christ in the perception and consciousness of the faithful. For the importance of the blood of Christ in Greek Magical Amulets see CHEPEL (2017).

¹⁴⁵ In general, the blood of the crucified Christ is associated with a series of relevant objects (engraved or not with an inscription) for the preservation of this sacred relic. These are objects that today are found and kept in various churches in Europe and that the authenticity many of which is disputed by some scholars. Indicatively, we mention the lipsanotek-enkolpion of the Holy and Great Monastery of Vatopedi of Mount Athos in Greece, the relevant reliquaries of Saint Mark of Venice, the vials in the abbey of Fécamp (Abbaye de la Trinité de Fécamp) of Normandy in northern France, the two drops of blood in the shape of two clotted tears in Neuvy-Saint-Sépulchre, France, the relics of Christ's blood in the church of St Waltrude in Mons, Belgium and the Byzantine enkolpion at the Museum of Siena Santa Maria della Scala in Italy.

We see two epigrams of the 10th century engraved on a chalice¹⁴⁶ which must have been used for Holy Communion.¹⁴⁷ Another case is about a two-line epigram¹⁴⁸ (of 10th–11th century) engraved on a small cylindrical vessel with a cover used for keeping the blood of Christ,¹⁴⁹ while we should also mention the also engraved epigram (11th–12th century) on a staurotheke with a (now lost) vessel containing droplets of the blood of Christ,¹⁵⁰ according to that same epigram.¹⁵¹ In this particular epigram, the writer expresses his question whether precious stones and pearls can glorify Him who has spilt His blood for humans.¹⁵² The last example regards a lipsanothek-enkolpion that bears an engraved eight-line epigram referring, among others, to the λύθρον of Christ.¹⁵³

As for the possible readers and viewers of these lines, they have a direct relation to either the object or the surface on which these lines appear. Specifically, the epigrams we see on church murals/frescos¹⁵⁴ were visible by virtually all individuals depending on the position of the epigram in the church and the educational level of individuals.¹⁵⁵ Epigrams

¹⁴⁶ See RHOBY (2010: 258–259, n. Me 84; 511 [im. 56–59]) and RHOBY (2010: 272–274, n. Me 91; 517 [im. 75–77]).

¹⁴⁷ Epigram n. 2 (Χριστὸς δίδωσιν αἷμα τὸ ζωὴν φέρον) and epigram n. 3 (Ἐχεις με Χριστὸν αἷμα σαρκὸς μου φέρων).

¹⁴⁸ Epigram n. 5 (Τερπνὸν δοχεῖον αἵματος ζωηφόρου / πλευρᾶς ῥυέντος ἐξ ἀκηράτου Λόγου).

¹⁴⁹ See RHOBY (2010: 257–258, n. Me 83; 510 [im. 53–55]).

¹⁵⁰ See RHOBY (2010: 266–268, n. Me89; 515 [im. 69–70]).

¹⁵¹ Epigram n. 7, line 1 (Ὅν οἱ σταλαγμοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῶν αἱμάτων).

¹⁵² Epigram n. 7, lines 1–3 (Ὅν οἱ σταλαγμοὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῶν αἱμάτων / δόξαν θεϊκὴν ἐστόλισαν καὶ κράτος, / πῶς δοξάσουσι μαργαρίται καὶ λίθοι;).

¹⁵³ Epigram n. 12, line 2.

¹⁵⁴ Epigrams n. 8; 9; 15; 16.

¹⁵⁵ Even if believers were not in a position to read and understand the engraved lines, either due to distance (RHOBY [2012: 746]; BREDEHOFT [2006]: for the same iconographic impact in medieval West), because of the position of the epigram high enough, or due to their low academic level (MULLET [1990]: for the literacy level in early Byzantium; BROWNING [1979]; JAMES [2007: 191]; LAUXTERMANN [2003a: 272–273]; CAMILLE [1985]; ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΙΔΗΣ [2011]), in any case they were able to understand that something important was featured in these lines. This weakness added an extra charm to them (see RHOBY [2017: 275]; NELSON [2000: 148–149]). These words that had a knowledgeable meaning were thought of as having magical powers, something that inspired awe

that are engraved on objects such as ecclesiastical chalices¹⁵⁶ or vessels with a top cover,¹⁵⁷ were primarily accessed by priests and the clergy since they were the ones using them for liturgical reasons and secondarily, by individuals who came into contact with them during Mass. In the case of epigrams referring to the crucifixion,¹⁵⁸ naming the donor and/or the person who ordered them,¹⁵⁹ the audience is clearer since it could be anyone who came into visual contact at the place of exhibition (e.g., church, Monastery). The case of epigrams on staurothekes and reliquaries is a bit different,¹⁶⁰ because they were not on display for everyone to see largely due to the value of the construction materials. These would be kept in the ecclesiastical vault, and they would be exhibited in special occasions.

The remaining epigrams refer to the blood of Christ as the necessary λύτρο (= means of redemption and buy out)¹⁶¹ for the salvation of humans and their original sin.¹⁶² This is the blood of His passion that washes away all misfortunes and cleanses the human soul from all sins,¹⁶³ the life-giving blood,¹⁶⁴ the ζωηφόρον blood,¹⁶⁵ that which

and respect to the people regardless of them understanding it or not. For this magical power of words (and consequently of the text) and the corresponding relationship and interaction that they have with the viewer see JAMES [2007: 197–198]; HÖRANDNER [1990]; BARBER [2002: 125–137]; RHOBY [2009b: 319; 325–326]; RHOBY [2017: 273–275]; HUNGER [1984]; KESSLER [2007: 142]; BERNARD [2014: 62–64].

¹⁵⁶ Epigrams n. 2; 3.

¹⁵⁷ Epigram n. 5.

¹⁵⁸ Epigrams n. 10; 11; 14.

¹⁵⁹ Epigram n. 11

¹⁶⁰ Epigrams n. 7; 12; 13.

¹⁶¹ See MONTANARI (2013: 1290).

¹⁶² See ΓΙΑΝΝΑΠΑΣ (1983¹: 168–172).

¹⁶³ Epigram n. 1, lines 1–2 ([...], παθέων ἐλατήριον αἷμα / πλῦνον ἐμῆς ψυχῆς πᾶσαν ἀτασθαλίην). It is about Christ τῷ ἀγαπῶντι ἡμᾶς καὶ λούσαντι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ (Apoc. 1, 5).

¹⁶⁴ Epigram n. 2 (Χριστὸς δίδωσιν αἷμα τὸ ζῶν φέρον). In the Gospel of John, we read the following words of Christ: ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν μὴ φάγητε τὴν σὰρκα τοῦ Υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πίνητε αὐτοῦ τὸ αἷμα, οὐκ ἔχετε ζῶν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς. ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σὰρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα ἔχει ζῶν αἰώνιον, καὶ ἐγὼ ἀναστήσω αὐτὸν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ (John 6, 53–54).

¹⁶⁵ Epigram n. 5, line 1 (Τερπνὸν δοχεῖον αἵματος ζωηφόρου).

springs up life for humans,¹⁶⁶ the blood that was spilt to buy off the salvation of mortals.¹⁶⁷ It is the blood that poured from the rib¹⁶⁸ of ἀκηράτου Λόγου (indestructible Logos), i.e. Christ, and His bloody nailed feet,¹⁶⁹ transforming His wound into healing element for all wounds of humankind,¹⁷⁰ since it was offered not only to His Father as reward for those who died¹⁷¹ but also saves the souls of each believer¹⁷² leading to forgiveness.¹⁷³ It is the blood (and body) that the believer receives during the Divine Liturgy in the form of wine (and bread), the abominable and saving properties of which were emphasized by the Fathers of the Church, such as Cyril of Jerusalem¹⁷⁴ and John Chrysostom.¹⁷⁵ Finally, it is the blood that soaked the wood of the cross¹⁷⁶ which highlights, aside from its divine nature,¹⁷⁷ its human, mortal aspect.¹⁷⁸

¹⁶⁶ Epigram n. 13, line 3 (ζωὴν κἀγὼ τὸ βλῦσαν αἷμα τῷ κόσμῳ).

¹⁶⁷ Epigram n. 16, line 3 (οὓς ἠγόρασας αἵματι σῶ τιμίῳ). Let's note that in the First Letter of Apostle Peter (1 Peter 1, 19) the blood of Christ is characterized as fair.

¹⁶⁸ Epigram n. 5, line 2 (πλευρᾶς ῥυέντος ἐξ ἀκηράτου Λόγου).

¹⁶⁹ Epigram n. 10, lines 5–6 (ἦλων δὲ πῶς ἤνεγκας ἀλγεινοὺς πόνους, / πλευρᾶν ἐνύγης, ἡμάτωσας τοὺς πόδας;).

¹⁷⁰ Epigram n. 4, lines 3–4 (ὅμως τὸ τραῦμα φάρμακον κεραννύει / τῶν τραυμάτων σου καὶ τὰ ῥεῖθρα βλυστάνει).

¹⁷¹ Epigram n. 15, line 5 (αἷμα δέδωκε πατρὶ λύτρον ἀποικομένων). See about ΤΡΕΠΕΛΛΑΣ (1956: A' 356).

¹⁷² Epigram n. 6 (Θεοῦ μὲν αἷμα, τῆς δ' ἐμῆς ψυχῆς λύτρον).

¹⁷³ Epigram n. 11, lines 11–12 (τί γὰρ πλέον τίς εἰς ἱλασμᾶ σοι φέρει / ἢ τὸ προχυθὲν αἷμα [σου] σταυρουμένου;). Let's not forget that the capacity of forgiveness (ἱλασμοῦ) for Christ is seen in the first letter of Evangelist John twice (καὶ αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστι περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου: 1 John 2, 2; ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐτὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἱλασμὸν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν: 1 John 4, 10).

¹⁷⁴ ἐκεῖ αἷμα ἁμνοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ ἦν ἀποτρόπαιον, ἐνταῦθα τοῦ Ἀμνοῦ τοῦ ἀμώμου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τὸ αἷμα δαιμόνων καθέστηκε φυγαδευτήριον (Cyril of Jerusalem, Myst. 1, 3; SC, 126 bis. 86).

¹⁷⁵ Τοῦτο τὸ αἷμα ἀξίως λαμβανόμενον ἐλαύνειμὲν δαίμονας καὶ πόρρωθεν ἡμῶν ποιεῖ, καλεῖ δὲ ἀγγέλους πρὸς ἡμᾶς, καὶ τὸν Δεσπότην τῶν ἀγγέλων. Ὅπου γὰρ ἂν ἴδωσι τὸ αἷμα τὸ Δεσποτικόν, φεύγουσι μὲν δαίμονες, συντρέχουσι δὲ ἄγγελοι. Τοῦτο τὸ αἷμα ἐκχυθὲν πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐξέπλυνε. Πολλὰ περὶ τοῦ αἵματος τούτου καὶ ὁ μακάριος Παῦλος ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἑβραίους ἐφιλοσόφησε (John Chrysostom, In Ioh. Hom., PG 59, 261).

In conclusion, Christ with his blood which ἐν τῷ ξύλῳ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἐπήγαγε τῷ κόσμῳ τῆς ζωῆς τὸν γλυκασμόν, according to Oktoechos,¹⁷⁹ appears in the lines of Byzantine epigrams for the cross and the crucifixion to highlight its soteriological symbolism.

Abbreviations

ACD	Acta Classica Universitatis Scientiarum Debreceniensis
AnArch	Annales Archéologiques
AnBoll	Analecta Bollandiana
AB	Art Bulletin
BHG	Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca
BMGS	Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies
BSI	Byzantinoslavica
BZ	Byzantinische Zeitschrift
DOP	Dumbarton Oaks Papers
ΔΧΑΕ	Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας
ΕΕΒΣ	Ἑπετηρίς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν
GLB	Graeco-Latina Brunensia
GRBS	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies
JÖB	Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik
JTS	The Journal of Theological Studies
NE	Νέος Ἑλληνομνήμων
ODB	Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium
OrChr	Oriens Christianus
PG	Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca, acc. J. P. Migne, vol. 1–161 (Parisiis, 1857–1866)
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum. I. Stuttgart 1950.
SC	Sources Crétiennes
SUC	Sapiens Ubique Civis
WSt	Wiener Studien

¹⁷⁶ The image of Christ bloody on the cross is seen in hymnography, as in e.g., Romanos the Melode, who while addressing the cross, he writes σὺ βωμὸς ἐγένου θειότατος, καλὸν θυσιαστήριον / τὸ αἷμα δεξάμενον τῆς θυσίας τὸ ἄχραντον (Rom. Mel., 23 η').

¹⁷⁷ Epigram n. 8 (Ξύλον στομωθ[έν] αἵμασιν θεορρύ[τοις]); n. 9 (Ξύλον στομωθὲν αἵμασι θεωρίας).

¹⁷⁸ Epigram n. 14, lines 1–2 (Διπλοῦς ὁ παθὼν· ζῶν γάρ ἐστι καὶ νέκυς, / ὡς αἷμα δηλοῖ καὶ τὸ συμβλύσαν ὕδωρ).

¹⁷⁹ Παρακλητική (Oktoechos): Περίοδος βαρέος ἤχου, Κυριακή πρωΐ, Ἐν τῇ Λειτουργίᾳ, Τὰ τυπικά καὶ οἱ μακαρισμοί, τροπάριον δ'. On Oktoechos see about GUILLAUME (1977–1979); TAFT (1982: 365–367).

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Classical Zeus or Barbarian Taranis? God and His Wheel on the Celtic Coinage

While the Mediterranean civilization reshaped protohistoric communities with the introduction of the coinage, it is fairly interesting in which way the Celts embraced the Classical iconography of Zeus and the compound messages behind it. Initially, they were made for interaction with a Greek or a Roman and not a Celt. The author of this article questions whether the La Tène's wheel motif had penetrated the coin's imagery from the warrior's thought – to whom, the lighting wheel, in combination with other signifiers, could stand as an 'Amalgamation Switcher' for the thunder-deity Taranis and his forgotten lore. For that reason, after examination of available historical and archaeological data, an alternative term for the obverse's bearded figure will be proposed.

Keywords: La Tène, Classical, Zeus, Taranis, Wheel, Celtic coinage

"[...] and **Taranis**, whose altar, is no more benign than that of Scythian Diana"

(*et Taranis Scythicae non mitior ara Dianae*)

Lucan (*Phars.* I, 445)

The numismatic artwork¹ which belongs to the late stages of Europe's Iron Age is, unfortunately, less examined than the other types of archaeological subfields. With the exception of catalogues from the late 19th–20th century,² we actually do not have a broader study of the puzzling symbolism which we are encountering on a vast majority of the protohistoric mints. Primarily, the one observed from the Celtic point of

¹ Artwork from the modern standpoint. Yet, images should be seen as collectivization of symbols with messages, and not observed as artistic expressions, with solely role to fill up the 'white space', see VAN ARSDELL (2008b: 194).

² LA TOUR (1892), FORRER (1908), DESS (1910), GÖBL (1973).

view. It is only in recent decades that new research has emerged and opened intriguing queries regarding the above-mentioned issue.³ The author of this article noticed certain patterns on Celtic coins (wheel – horse – bearded figure) which can as well be spotted on the other archaeological finds, coming from the La Tène culture and early Celto-Roman sculptures. For that reason, this paperwork endeavors to shed light on one of the most misread depictions concerning the Graeco-Roman influence on the Celtic coin iconography.

Often casually identified as Classical Zeus, the bearded diademed head on the obverse of Celtic coins is commonly followed by a horse image and the wheel symbol on the reverse. Even though it traces its origins back to the Mediterranean artistry, the aforementioned pattern was nonetheless accepted by the Late Iron Age elite⁴ as the main theme for their early phases of coin imitations, becoming a role model for independent emissions. Does the question arise as to why this particular portrayal derived from Philip II's coins? What was the specific purpose it has put down roots among those who requested such mintages? As Tomislav Bilić stated: "There are no discussions on whether this identification had any meaning for the Celtic people that issued those imitations."⁵ The authorities behind the monetarization must have been involved in choosing the appropriate prototype's image, hence scenery familiar to their kin could be seen as an advantage.

Despite the fact the 'Philips' were at the time popular throughout the European continent, the protohistoric ruling classes perhaps saw, in the Classical arrangement, relatedness to the once mutual Indo-European (IE) celestial allegory, that is the Celtic version of a theogonical episode. In what follows, first, I will show that the omnipresent pattern is in the connection with this lost lore. Secondly, I will propose an alternative nomination of the Zeus-like figure in the literature.

³ VAN ARSDELL (2008a), NASH BRIGGS (2009; 2010) and BILIĆ (2016). Previously, the Celtic coinage have been approached from a functionalist perspective, even interpreted as a primitive form of money, see COLLIS (1974).

⁴ According to the burial data, decorated weapons and regalia were obviously in vogue during the La Tène, pointing to the highly weaponized ruling class with a specific martial ideology. See RUSTOIU-BERECKI (2019: 134).

⁵ BILIĆ (2016: 382).

Setting the stage

A good amount of introductory literature for an archaeologist who is getting into numismatics will (mis)inform the reader that the Celts rather worshiped Greek Zeus, than the deity of their own. For example, in examinations concerning the bearded figure on obverses of Celtic coins, Robert Forrer repeatedly described the former as *Zeus kopf* – the head of Zeus.⁶ In terms of the history of art, Forrer was not mistaken, but even someone unfamiliar with Celtic coins would see the irregularity of this paradigm. To be exact, we do not maybe possess enough data to determine how the Celts perceived coin images, but we also cannot claim that the Late Iron Age coin's deity resembling Zeus' likeness was the ruler of Mount Olympus itself. Catalogues like Forrer's, which made a scientific breakthrough toward the Iron Age numismatics, were later on seen as exemplars for the future disciples. For instance, like his precursors, notable Serbian numismatist Petar Popović also described the bearded Celticized deity as *Зевсов профил* – Zeus in profile.⁷

Evidently, contemporary researchers have avoided analyzing coin's connotations (the secondary, cultural meaning of a sign), since they are challenging to judge, particularly the ones without inscription. To be exact, pioneer attempts to identify messages behind images were made by Edward Davies, who recognized that coin imagery was tied up with the culture of the people who created them; citing Davies regarding this matter, further misconceptions were questioned in a series of articles published by Robert D. Van Arsdell since the year 2007.⁸ According to him, Celtic currencies were issued by the 'Circumstance selectors' (Warrior/Religious elites), and the suitable imagery, struck by the die-cutters on the obverse and the reverse, was working together as an 'Amalgamation Switcher' (in a way that sememe of the entire coin was the storytelling sum of the two sides).⁹ Van Arsdell argued that coin images should be

⁶ FORRER (1908: 42, 121, 145–153).

⁷ ПОПОВИЋ (1987: 47). However, Popović did put the question mark next to Zeus' name.

⁸ VAN ARSDELL (2007a, n. 2).

⁹ VAN ARSDELL (2007b; 2008a).

seen as propaganda with coded messages from rulers to their people.¹⁰ Finally, this kind of opposite approach from the established narrative opened new research possibilities. From here, Bilić's study, based on the finds and place names, demonstrated that the iconography of the deity Apolo on the obverse of Noricum coins stood as the sun-god Belenos for the Celts.¹¹ Besides, La Tène's ciphers were studied by Nathalie Ginoux, and in her opinion, miscellaneous iconographic themes were purposefully transformed into standardized images, applied on the power-related objects as visual codes or *formulae*.¹² Hence, while identifying surreal images on diverse coins, we need to evaluate the entire picture and do not persist on denotations (the basic meaning of a sign).

Nonetheless, considering a »wheel – horse – bearded figure« pattern as a possible Celtic 'Amalgamation Switcher' is a bit of a challenge. Chiefly because each one of these signifiers was treated quite differently in the scientific circles. Even if some authors accepted the fact that images on Celtic coins are not the 'lifeless' artwork,¹³ but visual codes, there is still continual confusion for what these complex images stand for. The wheel, for example, is often observed as the symbol of a solar disk. In particular, while deciphering La Tène's iconography, Miranda Green acknowledged the wheel symbol rather as a form of the Celtic sun-lord; furthermore, a horse is also brought in the association with Belenos, or frequently with the goddess Epona.¹⁴

Indeed, IE folk stories do mention a solar deity and his Sun chariot, like in the case of Phaethon, the son of Helios. However, here we should echo Jaan Puhvel's question: "Why every myth has to be a solar myth?"¹⁵ To paraphrase Georges Dumézil's words, the divine beings of

¹⁰ VAN ARSDELL (2008b: 195).

¹¹ BILIĆ (2016: 385).

¹² GINOUX (2012: 184).

¹³ ALLEN–NASH (1980) and WILLIAMS–CREIGHTON (2006)

¹⁴ GREEN (1986: 116–117) and NASH BRIGGS (2009).

¹⁵ ΠΥΧΒΕΛ (2010: 26). It would be unachievable here to trace all of the thrusts and counterthrusts that marked the famous debate regarding the Marx Müller's theory about the worship of the Sun among the 'Aryan' peoples, which flourished during the previous centuries. Nevertheless, even though this kind of naturistic approach in linguistics was abandoned (yet obviously not entirely in archaeology), some scholars suggested that

the sky were more regarded as lords of stormy weather, and less as lords of light.¹⁶ Moreover, IE thunderers were distinguished as primeval sky-warriors of justice and abundance.¹⁷ The fact that the Celtic society was inspired by the foreign design on coins indicates that they recognized their thunder deity in the eloquent portrayal of Zeus and not a solar god, adding features, such as the wheel, to the whole arrangement. The only exception, and simultaneously a dilemma discussed later on, are the Western mints, where the profile of Zeus is abandoned in favor of the Apolo's.

The Classical sources for attestation of the Celtic thunder deity are scarce, but luckily, we do possess some parallels between the unanimous Gaulish lord of heavens and Roman Jupiter (Caes. *BGall.* VI, 17, 1). One of the earliest accounts on who this deity might be is coming from Jacob Grimm. In the chapter VIII of his '*Teutonic Mythology*', the folklorist draws a comparison between Germanic Donar and a Celtic god under the name of Taranis,¹⁸ historically confirmed by Lucan's 1st century AD poem (*Phar.* I, 445). Further, as mentioned by Mircea Eliade, in later sources the same deity is referred to as the master of fire,¹⁹ an aspect closely tied with coin minting. In addition, the Romanian scholar and one of the most renowned authors in the field of comparative mythology recognized the spoked wheel as one of Taranis' foremost attributes, which is equally suggested by Paul-Marie Duval.²⁰ As well, the IE Thunderer was often imagined by the northern 'barbarians' as a defensive charioteer dragged by various animals (horses, ibexes, or by birds), and the lighting wheel as an indivisible part of his divine chariot.²¹ In view of that, why should the myth of Taranis be exception regarding the

thunderstorms, rather than the Sun, were conceived to be the prime source of IE mythological metaphors, for example see KUHN (1859).

¹⁶ DIMEZIL (1999: 148). According to DUEV (2019: 15), IE sky-god and storm-god should not be equated.

¹⁷ ПИХБЕЛ (2010: 161).

¹⁸ GRIMM (1882: 168).

¹⁹ ELIJADE (1991: II, 120–121).

²⁰ DUVAL (1957: 284–287).

²¹ STRAIŽYS-KLIMKA (1997: 73). The role of the thunder deity was to look after ordinary people from evil forces.

common IE heritage? Ranko Matasović has pointed out that even deity's name is an onomatopoeic word for thunder, **Torano-*, derived by metathesis from an earlier **Tonaro-* (related to Skt. *stánati*, Lat. *tono*, OHG *donar*, saved in a French dialect as *taram*, in modern English as *thunder*, all stemming from a common Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root for thunder, **(s)tenH-*).²² Nevertheless, it is not my intention here to give a full account and repeat what has already been said about Taranis. However, the obvious absence of academic discourse about possible deity's depiction on Celtic coins certainly needs a further look into the available archaeological records.

Wheel-master from the La Tène art

In order to stay on course, we shall not overload our subject with unending mints and strict numismatic metrology such as denominations, weights, or dimensions, hence giving our full attention to the iconography. Concerning La Tène's wheel-folklore, we can trace its source quite early. Diodorus was aware that the Celts used two-horse chariots for their journeys and in battles (*Bibl. His.* V, 29). More so, other testimonies speak briefly of everyday chariot use among the many Celtic tribes (*App. Hist. Rom.* IV, 12; *Liv. Urb. Cond.* X, 28, 9; *Strab. Geog.* IV, 2–3; *Caes. BGall.* IV, 33, 1–3). The wheel's divine position might have been amplified when the chariot entombment emerged in the late 5th century BC, along with horse-burials. Gradually, likely in the connection with the growing custom of cremation, simplification prevailed – from the once complete vehicle, only a few dismantled *pars pro toto* elements were chosen for the ritual.²³

Thereby, this synecdoche (a single artifact representing the whole object) could perhaps explain the presence of the La Tène's miniature wheels and their relation with the Celtic coinage. The votive metalwork was one of the most common crafts of the late Iron Age, "either deposit-

²² MATASOVIĆ (2009: 384). As argued by JACKSON (2002): "Celto-Germanic isogloss **Dun(a)raz* ~ **Tonaros* have developed as the fossilization outcome of an initial epithet or epiclesis of the PIE thunder-god **Perkʷunos*." Also, GIMBUTIENE (1985: 167) noted that Baltic thunder god *Perkūnos* was known under the name of »*Tarškulis*«.

²³ SCHONFELDER (2002: 311–316), DIMA–BORANGIC (2018: 17) and GUŠTIN (2018: 7).

ed underground or [...] in wet places such as rivers, lakes, and bogs”.²⁴ It seems also that coins were part of votive offerings, “rather than just an everyday currency”.²⁵ The wheel models of this period, with a few centimeters diameter, were as well offered near sacred objects or worn as an integral part of sophisticated jewelry; for example, such were found at archaeological sites Százard-Regöly (Hungary) and Stradonice (Czech Republic) (see **Figure 1**).²⁶ Intriguingly, in some regions of ancient Gaul (large parts of today’s France), miniature wheels substituted the deposits of weaponry. Shortly after, offerings of coins increased, subsequently outnumbering wheel hoarding, or elsewhere, wheels were found simultaneously with chop-marked coins.²⁷ The mutual replacement and thesaurization suggest the token’s *sacra* inclusion, as these “might had the symbolic apotropaic function alongside the more obvious social and economic ones”.²⁸

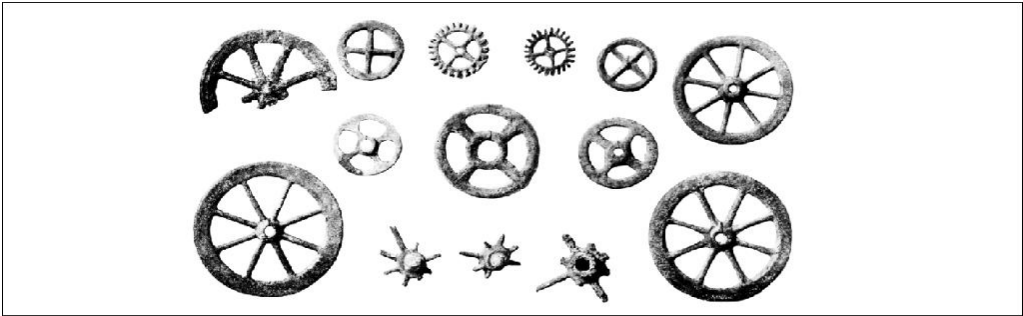


Figure 1. Votive wheels from Stradonice (after Pič 1903).

By sheer abstraction, the Celts managed to transform the ‘borrowed’ Classical design (substrate) into artwork in accordance with their taste and fashion, traditionally using La Tène’s wheel symbol from the other artistic spheres (adstrate). Yet, even though most of our knowledge of the Celtic religion is adopted from iconography, only a small-scale recognition is given to the one derived from coins. For instance, Green argued that: “The Celts did not possess the tradition of consistent physical rep-

²⁴ WILLIAMS-CREIGHTON (2006: 5).

²⁵ HARDING (2007: 245).

²⁶ RUSTOIU, BERECKI (2014: 257) and DIMA-BORANGIC (2018: 16, 18).

²⁷ Chop-marked coins are often found next to sanctuaries. See WIGG-WOLF (2005) and KIERNAN (2009: 20).

²⁸ HLADIKOVA (2019: 71).

resentation of their divinities".²⁹ Truly, in Delphi, they were stunned to see the anthropomorphic depiction of the Greek gods.³⁰ Nonetheless, the presence of the divine imagery gradually increased under the influence of Mediterranean mintages, initially made for interaction with a Greek or a Roman, and not a Celt. "[...] The La Tène societies got acquainted with the functioning of developed Greek states [...] during their southern and south-eastern expansion",³¹ and after Philip II acceded to power, Macedonian currency, as a by-product of this expansion (alongside with the other cultural and material values), spread throughout the Celtic realm. Which is the reason why "the appearance of the coins is a reflection of a clearly defined, yet progressively transforming monetary system".³² As follows, the abstraction of the naturalistic style should not be seen as Mi-róesque deconstruction of the images (with no thought to any underlying symbolism or as incompetence for imitation), and the wheel as a psychological result of *horror vacui*. Quite the opposite, re-assembling the fragments into the La Tène composition may point toward the same technique coming from the Early Styles of the 5th century BC.³³

There are two principal zones of the Celtic coinage based on the metal ore, and here also we can track the difference in design; whilst the populations on the upper Danube and in Western Europe modeled their coinage after the gold stater with Apollo's image, followed by the biga (two-wheel chariot) on the reverse, tribes settling along the lower and middle Danube were inspired by the silver tetradrachm, well-known by the portrayal of laureated Zeus, and the horse-rider on the coin's reverse.³⁴ Some tribes, like the Norici and the Taurisci, deliberately broke off with Zeus' profile, in favor of the Apollo's one instead, which Bilić described in his study.³⁵ Thusly, as the aforementioned endured among the Scordisci in

²⁹ GREEN (1992: 1).

³⁰ BUCHSENSCHUTZ et al (2012: 203).

³¹ Around 3rd century BC, see SMELY (2017: 43).

³² Ibid. 40, n. 1.

³³ HARDING (2007: 244).

³⁴ There were no strict borders. as tribes in modern Romania minted coins with Apollo's profile, see PREDA (1973).

³⁵ BILIĆ (2016: 382).

the East, the examination of their mints is required, as they were one of the first tribes on the frontline of the ancient trade routes.

The above suggested can be validated by the two Scordisci issues. First, by the obol of the *Dachereiter* type, and second, by the drachm of the *Kugelwange* type, both minted between the 2nd and 1st century BC (see **Figure 2**). Signifiers we see here (the wheel and the neck-torc³⁶), did not derive from the 'Philips', even if we suppose the wheel stands just as a reminiscence for the chariot. In fact, they almost certainly worked as Ginoux's *formulae* to the recipient of the coin. Curiously, the resemblance may be only seen in Hellenic issues carrying the Macedonian shield on the reverse, above the rider.³⁷ The equation »wheel = shield« is plausible and shall be argued.



Figure 2. (left, enlarged) The 'Dachereiter' type obol (copr. Nomos AG, cat. no. GöBL 188/2–3) and (right enlarged) the 'Kugelwange' type drachm (copr. Auktion München Collection, cat. no. GöBL 188).

On that account, Zeus, the counterpart of Taranis, has no well-known link with wheels. And on the territory of the Scordisci there are very scarce or no mentions of Epona whatsoever.³⁸ Besides, attestations of Belenos are non-existent, suggesting we should search the parallels of the before-said imagery on the La Tène artifacts from the same region.³⁹ Thence, additional evidence supporting the proposed premise may lie in the connection with the Gundestrup cauldron. Celtic cauldrons were an integral part of ancient feasts, associated with abundance, rejuvenation,

³⁶ A neck-torc, jewelry of the Celtic chieftains, is often regarded in connection with divine beings and heroes.

³⁷ Minted under Alexander III, in Pella between 323–315 BC. See FORRER (1908: T. XII, cat. no. 182).

³⁸ Her cult on the Balkans is not attested until the Roman era, brought by the miners. See ПОПОВИЧ (1995: 153).

³⁹ Roughly between the Papuk mountains and the Timok river (and even further into Thrace).

and fertility. An exquisitely decorated silver vessel made between the 2nd and 1st century BC was found in a dismantled state near Gundestrup (Denmark).⁴⁰ Attempts have been made to find its place of origin, but the general view is that it should be sought somewhere near the domain of the Scordisci tribe; it either found its way in Denmark via trade, was given as a gift, or taken there as war booty.⁴¹ From all the plates, the most interesting scenery for our subject is the one from the interior of plate C 6572: presumably, Taranis with a neck-torc, holding to the wheel with another figure, surrounded by mythic beasts and the ram-horned serpent. Noticeably, aren't the parallels between the visual code of the cauldron and Scordiscian coins quite self-evident? (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. (left) Plate C 6572 of the Gundestrup cauldron with the possible depiction of Taranis (copr. Copenhagen Nationalmuseum) in comparison with signifiers from the Scordisci issues (right, enlarged).

Unquestionably, a dense concentration of panoply of weapons, recorded over the last 100 years in the same area, and the discovery of the dies, points toward a war-oriented society,⁴² with "[...] a confirmation of long-lasting tradition with only formal changes in material culture".⁴³ During the last centuries of the Old Millenium, defined by the rise of the

⁴⁰ ELUÈRE (1993: 117).

⁴¹ BERQUIST-TAYLOR (1987: 10–24).

⁴² For recently discovered Scordiscian coin-dies in Northwestern Bulgaria see MAHOV (2018: 258–259). On the La Tène weaponry in the eastern Scordiscian zones see TOPBOB (2000) with cited literature.

⁴³ LJUŠTINA-SPASIĆ (2016: 330).

oppida (fortified cities), “the wide mobility and ceaseless movements of warrior bands led to an unparalleled widespread distribution of weapons”, and as a result, “of associated ornaments in connection with warfare.”⁴⁴ Of special importance are the curved *Sica* daggers, found amid the extent of south Romania, east Serbia, and northwest Bulgaria, produced for sacrificial purposes; or in addition, buckle belts of the *Laminci* type, unearthed in the Scordiscian sites from Southern Pannonia. Among basic decorative elements, like triangles and punched circles, one of the astral features from both of these finds is the spoked wheel (see Figures 4.1 and 4.2).⁴⁵ Aurel Rustoiu has noted that “These symbols, probably having magic meanings, also played an important role as agents of social communication [...] structured in such a way that their content could be grasped quickly”.⁴⁶ Also, coins testify that Pan-Celtic codes were expanding over tribal boundaries (see Figure 4.3).

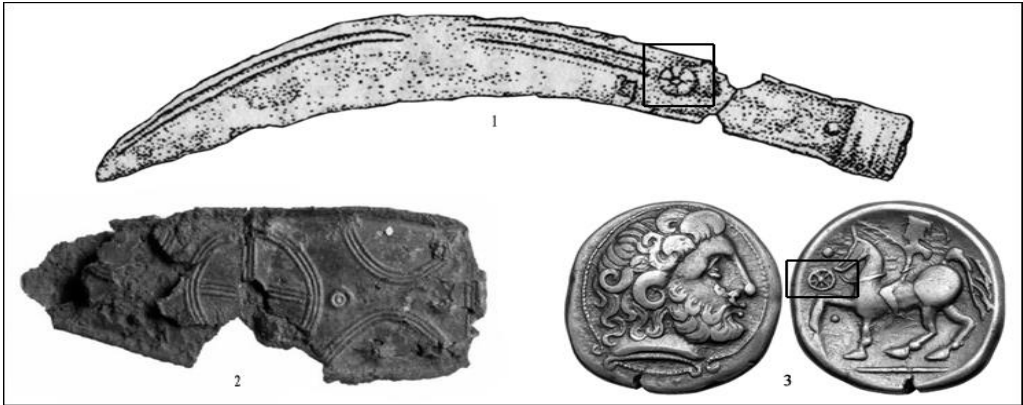


Figure 4. 1. Curved ‘Sica’ dagger (after GEORGIEVA 1992); 2. The belt buckle of the ‘Laminci’ type (after DRNIĆ 2009); 3. (enlarged) ‘Zweigarm’ type tetradrachm struck by the unidentified Eastern Celtic tribe, 300–201 BC (copr. Roma Numismatics Limited, cat. no. GÖBL 291/1).

Accordingly, not only it derive from the identical zone, but this kind of ‘Amalgamation Switchers’ are way too alike to be just a sheer coincidence, as the ‘Circumstance Selectors’ behind the previously suggested

⁴⁴ GINOUX (2012: 179) and RUSTOIU (2013: 215–216). Corresponding to the dating of the finds and the coinage presented in this paper (4th–1st century BC/ La Tène B–D). On La Tène coin routine see HARDING (2007: 245–246).

⁴⁵ RUSTOIU (2007) and DRNIĆ (2009: 306).

⁴⁶ RUSTOIU–BERECKI (2019: 135, n. 26). Obviously, the Celtic fraternities identified themselves through this images.

findings were the same strong, central authority. The vitality of this kind of organization was typical for an extensive network of the Iron Age elites, “expressed by the standardization of craftsmanship, and mainly where anything to do with adornment, instruments of war, and symbols of power.”⁴⁷ Well, should coins as power-related objects differ?

By no means, as the Celtic elite, with a common ideology of warfare and belief system, took upon themselves the privileges of minting. Henceforth, deliberately selecting and re-coding naturalistic images could convey a different meaning, which was a traditional “[...] transformation of an iconographic theme into a symbol, as a process within the development of Celtic art and society”.⁴⁸ Metalworking alone has been argued to have been imbued with supernatural abilities for the period of protohistory,⁴⁹ and, consequently, we can estimate without exaggeration that the talismanic value of divine images was treated with great reverence by the recipients of coins.⁵⁰

Sky-warrior from the Celto-Roman iconography

In favor of the formerly discussed assumptions are the findings of wheel amulets even up to the Roman imperial period. Some particular specimens carry engravings in the Latin language (*Iovi Optimo Maximo*),⁵¹ invoking Roman thunder deity, thusly taking the wheel outside of the »sun disk« narrative. As already pointed out, certain features of the Late Iron Age iconography were sufficiently distinctive from the Classical artwork (but not the coin’s depiction of the human head, as La Tène’s sculpture models are rather in full-face). And, as already said, Taranis was the deity of warfare. Well, in that case, if my assumptions are cor-

⁴⁷ BUCHSENSCHUTZ et al (2012: 192).

⁴⁸ GINOUX (2012: 179).

⁴⁹ See a detailed discussion in GREEN (2002).

⁵⁰ The Celts perhaps first have used votive aspect of coins, in rituals of passage, see BUCHSENSCHUTZ et al (2012). Sporadic finds of coins from the graves were found in Moravia and Slavonia, where the Celts were using their own minted coins for this purpose, see MICHAL (2009: 112) and DIZDAR (2004).

⁵¹ DIMA (2009: 19). Plus, this is not an exclusive inscription where storm-gods Jupiter and his counterpart Taranis are intertwined, see more in DUVAL (1957: 284) and FALILEYEV–KURULIĆ (2016).

rect, is it valid to state that the ‘barbarized’ images on coins should too be more ‘warlike’? Certainly, not all the Olympian gods were imagined as equestrians, hence the rider on the role model’s reverse, in all likelihood, is not a personification of Zeus.⁵² Contrary to this, the Celtic replications of the Mediterranean coinage almost always portray traditionally masculine prerogatives of war (see **Figures 5.1 and 5.2**). In particular, the Western and the Central coinage produced by Helvetii, Parisii, Gaulish Veneti, Allobrogians, Arverni, Pictones, Bituriges, Edui, Carnutes, Curiosolites, Redones, Boii, and other Iron Age tribes, depicting wheel-imagery with *formulae* leaning toward battle-like affairs.⁵³



Figure 5. 1. (enlarged) Catuvellauni stater, 25 BC–10 AD (after Swan 2018, cat. no. ABC 2562); 2. (enlarged) Caleti electrum hemistater, 2nd century BC (copr. Leu Numismatik AG, cat. no. LA TOUR 7169).

What is more, perhaps the most convincing evidence that the iconography of Taranis was warmongering, comes too from the Roman era. Despite the Celto-Roman syncretism, local gods managed to retain many of their original attributes, saving them from the mists of oblivion. As a result, the Gallo-Roman art displays traditions of the pre-Roman beliefs; plenty of hybridized sculptures are showing bearded deity on horseback, nude with a neck-torc or full in armor, holding lightning in the left arm, with the wheel »as his shield« in his right one (as on the Gundestrup Plate C scenery, again characteristics not common for Classical images), commonly followed by designation to Jupiter on its base.⁵⁴ The connection between the

⁵² Phillip II introduced his victorius biga and the equestrian rider in the memory of the Olympic games, see REGLING (1969: 28). According to PRICE (1974: 6) the »war-god« Ares is closely affiliated with a warrior horseman.

⁵³ LA TOUR (1892: cat. no. 3931, 3966–69, 4112–13, 5086, 8947, 6598, 6767, 6774, 6813, 9915–16). On the Gaulish *La Croix* type with battle axe images see FORRER (1908: T. V. cat. no. 118; T. XI. cat. no. 82). On the Helvetii issues with the wheel-iconography see DESS (1910: T. XXXIX., cat. no. 932).

⁵⁴ DONDIN PAYRE et al (2010: 75–76).

wheel and the shield is already pointed out, and this example leads us to the possibility that the wheel iconography on the Celtic coinage perhaps purposefully evolved from the archetype's naturistic depiction of the hoplon, apparently as the Celts equated the wheel with their lord's weaponry. In favor of this assumption is the testimony of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who left us a shred of evidence that the Celts were clashing weapons »against their shields« before engaging in a battle (*An. Rom.* II). Terrifying *tumultus gallicus*, a war-cry accompanied by the loudness of the *carnyx*, a trumpet (see **Figure 5.1**), attested by Diodorus (*Bibl. Hist.* V, 30) and Polybius (*Hist.* II, 27–31), could stand for invoking a growl of a heavenly warrior, worshiped by men-at-arms. The sudden burst of thunder's noise might be seen as a Lord's *clamor*, in a sense that the Celts imagined Taranis as the noisemaker, a crumbler, and ravisher.⁵⁵ Moreover, Romans did it equally, praying to the raging gods before engaging in combat (*Luc. Phars.* II. 45–51). This would be another plausible explanation for why the infiltration of the wheel as coin's inevitable signifier has happened.

Additionally, hybrid sculptures as well portray a deity riding down the giant serpent. The ram-horned serpent is generally in association with IE thunderers (once more a resemblance with the Gundestrup plate C scenery). Yet, Green said: "The snake reflects the peaceful nature of the god, associated with environment and fruitfulness".⁵⁶ However, it appears the serpent symbolizes the chthonic world in this situation, as an opposition of the nourishing heavens. Remarkably, the manifestation of this bellicose penetration can be viewed on numerous coins in the West. For example, stater minted by the Vindelici carries the image of the ram-horned serpent, followed by the neck-torc on the reverse (see **Figure 6.1**) or by the Trinovantes tribe (see **Figure 6.2**), both with parallels in Early La Tène jewelry, precisely with dragonesque brooches (see **Figure 6.3**).⁵⁷ The appearance of ram-horned beasts, which cross

⁵⁵ This metaphor perhaps reflects the noise produced by the wheels of the (wind/water) mill, further observed in linguistics: e.g. Russian *молния*, Old Norse *Mjöltnir*, Old English *mieltan*, Serbian *млинар*, all representing a word for a thunder-like noise (spark) produced by grinding or by the blacksmith's slashing hammer (noted by author).

⁵⁶ GREEN (1992: 227–8).

⁵⁷ On the LT B1 phase 'dragon' type brooches see POPOVIĆ (1996: 108) and SLADIĆ (2003: 37).

geographical and clannish borders, logically raises the question of whether this type of insignia was just artistic merit or a distinct elite's emblem? Certainly, the accentuation of centuries-old coin symbols "played an important role in the construction and expression of the public image, identity and mythology [...] of warriors."⁵⁸

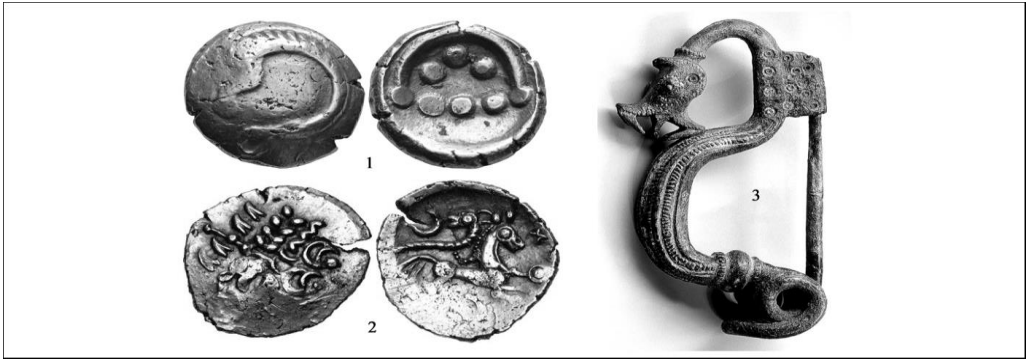


Figure 6. 1. (enlarged) Vindelici 'Rolltier' type stater, 2nd–1st century BC (copr. Leu Numismatik AG, cat. no. LA TOUR 9421–9422); 2. (enlarged) Triovantes issue, 100–40 BC (copr. CNG, cat. no. ABC 2225); 3. 'Carzghetto' variant brooch from Arbedo (Switzerland), 4th century BC (copr. Swiss National museum).

Furthermore, the Pan-Celtic serpent can be supplementary observed on the auction specimen minted by the Belgic Atrebates tribe (see **Figure 7.1**), in comparison with the La Tène's sword scabbards, the so-called 'Dragon-pair' variant with a serpentine-like decoration, possibly the finest archaeological analogy out there to this theme (see **Figure 7.2**).⁵⁹ As Rustoiu argued: "[...] The warrior identity [...] is indicated by the wide distribution of [...] associated symbols".⁶⁰ The Suessiones tribe, another Belgic tribe, equally minted coins depicting a 'triple-tailed' horse with, what seems to be, a world-devouring serpent above,⁶¹ with the spoked wheel bellow (see **Figure 7.3**), irresistibly resembling the composition from the Iron Age stone altars. Particularly the one from Gloucestershire (Great Britain), encircled by a ram-horned snake and the

⁵⁸ RUSTOIU–BERECKI (2019: 144).

⁵⁹ Sword scabbards with this theme can be found from the Atlantic ocean to the Black sea, see GINOUX (2012: 184).

⁶⁰ RUSTOIU–BERECKI (2019: 145).

⁶¹ World-devouring monsters have parallels in northern IE myths, see ELLIS DAVIDSON (1984: 88–91).

wheel on its top (see **Figure 7.4**).⁶² Not a few of the discussed hybrid sculptures were placed on similar leaf-carved columns. Maximus of Tyre, a rhetorician from the late 2nd century AD, noted that the Celts indeed worshiped 'Zeus', but they honored him in the form of a lofty oak (*Log.* VIII, 8), which is a tree frequently associated with IE thunder deities. A striking analogy is the myth of Thracian god Perkos, »depicted on horseback as facing a tree surrounded by a snake«.⁶³

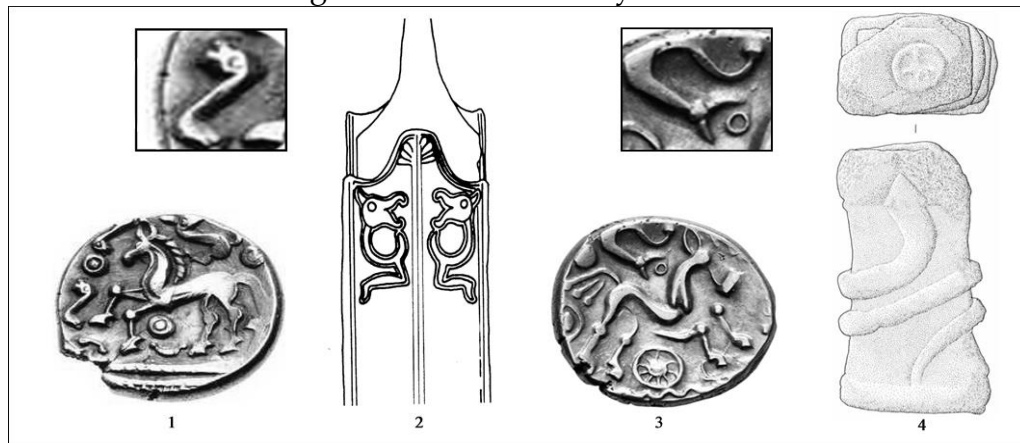


Figure 7. 1. (enlarged) Atrebat 'Climping' type stater (rev.), 75–30 BC (copr. CNG, cat. no. ABC 524); 2. 'Dragon-pair' motif (after Szabó–Petres 1992); 3. (enlarged) Suessiones 'à l'ancre' type stater (rev.) (copr. Leu Numismatik AG, cat. no. LA TOUR 8020); 4. Taranis' altar? (an unknown author).

Not to mention, the astral signifiers are almost always in the company of a horse (see **Figure 8.1**). "The horse is a metaphor for hunting and warfare, protection and order",⁶⁴ and its connection with Epona is quite odd if we observe the entire sememe of the Celtic coins (she was never accompanied with war attributes, but always with cornucupae and other symbols of earth and fruitfulness). The charioteer, horse-rider, and the horse alone rather stood as the connotation for the battle-god. Indeed, is this suggesting that the martial themes on coins might have been understood according to the cosmological mythos? It was already proposed that imagery on the Celtic coinage could be related to metaphors taken

⁶² GREEN (1992: 227–8). Could these be the vilified altars of Taranis, which Lucan mentions in his epic poem?

⁶³ Ibid.125. See also JACKSON (2002: 75–76). Possible 'Tree of life' motif can also be spotted on Celtic coins, see in LA TOUR (1892: cat. no. 9545) and VAN ARSDELL (1989: 1066).

⁶⁴ CARSTENS (2005: 72).

from the trance-world of shamanic visions.⁶⁵ Again, shapeshifting is a well-known shaman ability of the IE thunderers, and certain coins with centaur-like images riding over the fallen enemy suggest the same conclusion (see Figure 8.2).⁶⁶

Lastly, the biggest obstacle during this examination was a paradigm long present in the numismatic circles – that the wheel stands for the solar disk, therefore a sun-god.⁶⁷ However, the comparison of signifiers suggests that the difference between the Sun and the wheel on Celtic coins is quite apparent. Some specimens offer a rare scenery where they are portrayed together, adding another layer of new questions to our subject (see Figures 8.3 and 8.4). The wheel is clearly depicted with a round flat ring, and the Sun, oppositely, by the flower-like leaves and dots. Apparently, according to the aesthetically appealing *formulae* from rulers to their subjects, Celtic coins were predestinated to have ritual significance. As a prestige sign of abundance, the coin seized the role that wheel amulets once had, which is to associate toward elite's patron.



Fig. 8. 1. (enlarged) Dobunni 'Bodvot' type stater (rev.), 25–5 BC (copr. NumisBids, cat. no. LA TOUR E.v. I, 1); 2. (enlarged) Aulerci Diablintes stater (rev.), 100–50 BC (copr. Leu Numismatik AG, cat. no. LA TOUR 6493); 3. (enlarged) Trinovantes stater, 1st century BC (rev.) (copr. British Museum, cat. no. ABC 527); 4. (enlarged) Belgae quarterstater, 1st century BC (rev.) (copr. Silbury coins, cat. no. ABC 791).

Is Taranis' myth depicted on the Celtic coinage?

To sum up, all these motifs, like the nudity of a rider, the horse, the wheel, the torc, the serpent, and the obverse's deity turned out to be the highly standardized emblems of the warrior function among the Late

⁶⁵ CREIGHTON (1995; 2000). According to WILLIAMS–CREIGHTON (2006: 3): "More and more researchers are using elements of the shamanic cosmology to explain aspects of the archaeological record".

⁶⁶ As in the case of Zeus and Nordic Thor, see ELLIS DAVIDSON (1984: 147–148).

⁶⁷ And yet, Belenos was never depicted or associated with a torc and the spoked wheel, see OLMSTED (1994: 328).

Iron Age military elite, *post hoc* altering into a coin's visual code, practically identically in the Eastern, Central, and the Western coinages. As Daphne Briggs pointed out: "In all these coin images we are almost certainly looking at versions of actual cult images."⁶⁸ When mixed, the majority of them work as Van Arsdell's 'Amalgamation Switchers'. Or to say in other words, the wheel itself could signify a synecdoche for a biga or another Celtic divinity, but in the composition together with all the above-mentioned symbols – the wheel works as an entirely different connotation, a Ginoux's visual code penetrated from the warrior fraternity, attested in the same manner on the La Tène's jewelry, cauldrons, the warrior's equipment, and the Gallo-Roman art. The encounter with the Hellenistic princes may have stimulated the emblemization of these 'knights', mentioned by Caesar (Caes. *B Gall.* VI, 15). Afterward, a blend of suitable insignia could proclaim current conditions, declared and dictated by 'Circumstance Selectors'.

The fact that the Celtic mercenaries were probably the earliest social strata introduced with the Mediterranean monetary economy,⁶⁹ and that Taranis-linked ornaments, inscriptions, and sculptures were mostly found in the military areas – goes in the favor of the premise that the proposed arrangement was a compound message intentionally struck on coins, previously trained in the oral traditions. Yet, Briggs saw in this blend of images: "Hubristic identification with the cult of the Sun, celebrated by ancient aristocratic elites."⁷⁰ Still, after a previous survey of La Tène's semiotics and the Gallo-Roman folklore, it seems that the entire admixture stands as a fragmented metaphor for the nocturnal sky in which myth about theogonic war-tumult occurs.

Namely, the observed iconography likely represents a dualistic cult, the conflict between the Sun and Earth, the heavens and the underworld, a triumph of the IE sky-rider over a world-devouring serpentine monster from the abyss. Although "the religion, sacrality, and ritual were long considered peripheral to the proper concerns of archaeolo-

⁶⁸ NASH BRIGGS (2009: 3).

⁶⁹ SMELLY (2017: 44) and BUCHSENSCHUTZ et al (2012: 211).

⁷⁰ NASH BRIGGS (2009: 3).

gy",⁷¹ one surely cannot unsee the similarity between once the Pan-Celtic saga (whorled in the Graeco-Roman cloak) and the lore concerning the battle between the Norse Thor and Jörmungandr, Slavic Perun and Veles, Greek Zeus and Typhon, Indo-Iranian Indra and Vṛtrāḥ, Christian Saint George and the dragon, and other IE bygone stories where a son-god with thunder attributes is dethroning the immoral father-god, who sends a serpentine giant against the former as his last resort before final defeat.⁷²

As Van Arsdell postulated: "To the Warrior Elite this would probably mean one thing – war".⁷³ Thereupon, could Celtic coins be discerned in a way the Hellenic and Roman imagery pointed their recipients toward their myths and historical events? Were the Celts producing coins merely during turbulent times, as a war-money? The military redesign suits perfectly into this semiotic inspection, as an enduring Iron Age insignia invoking power and sacrality.

According to the Celtic die-cutter's thoughts, Taranis may have had combined attributes of Thor⁷⁴ (fertilizer and protector against evil), Perun⁷⁵ (linked with the burning oak), Zeus (armed with lightning, yet in the form of the wheel-shield), Indra⁷⁶ (brings victory in battle), and perhaps Mars⁷⁷, or even Týr (a battle-god from the heroic ethos). In favor of the latter postulate is an auction specimen with a rather bizarre scene of a monster wolf savaging humanoid figure, with the spoked wheel bellow (see **Figure 9**).⁷⁸ The scenery does not appear in any of the Celtic sources, yet it looks like a fable we can recognize from the 13th century Icelandic version as '*The Binding of Fenrir*' (Norse myth of wolf Fenrir biting of Týr's hand). It shows that the story was at least 1300 years old when Snorri Sturluson made it part of the '*Prose Edda*'. Hence, Celtic coins shouldn't be underrated as a valid source for comparative mythology, as their imagery

⁷¹ SPRETNAK (2011: 13).

⁷² ПИХБЕЛ (2010).

⁷³ VAN ARSDELL (2008a).

⁷⁴ DUEV (2019: 13).

⁷⁵ Ibid. 15.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 12.

⁷⁷ Interestingly, Lucan mentions Mars as the lord of winds and thunder (*Phars.* X, 205).

⁷⁸ See a synthesis of this problem in NASH BRIGGS (2010).

is immeasurable in terms of scientific data. Thanks to them, we can also determine that the Warrior and Religious elites were cooperating closely as they both were behind the prototype's design.



Figure 9. Belgic potin (rev.), 1st century BC (copr. Numismatics Paris, cat. no. LA TOUR 9194).

Nevertheless, if we consider Bilić's statement that Apollo represents the sun-deity Belenos, especially on the coinage where the shift Zeus > Apollo occurred, then why do numerous Western mints carry the wheel along with the beardless deity (see Figure 5.2)? There could be a chance that gold and silver ores were equated with the complexion of the Sun and the Moon, hence deities in connection with them were struck on coins.⁷⁹ So, a few possibilities arise:

- Gold coinage's 'Apolo' stands for Belenos (e.g. followed by the Sun symbol)
- Silver coinage's 'Zeus' stands for Taranis (e.g. followed by the spoked wheel or torc)
- Both stand for Taranis (as the spoked wheel or neck-torc has no link with Belenos)

The alternative option is Lugus – a triple deity made of Esus, Teutates, and Taranis. But for now, until new research emerges, these are only speculations. In all probability, the Celts did not possess a unique, dogmatic view of religion. Slow and difficult tribal communications inevitably favored local conservatism, giving way to various coin forms bit by bit. Although the La Tène abstraction, by using the visual language of warfare, did not make the portrayal of Zeus to be incapable of being identified, we should still acknowledge the creators behind it. So, I

⁷⁹ Perhaps the silver ore was not just of practical nature in the Southeastern Europe. Maybe Scordisci minted silver coins extensively because of their devotion to Taranis, and not because they 'cursed' the gold, see KIDD (1999: 312).

propose that at least the term '**Zeus-Taranis**' should be used while labeling the coin's bearded figure.

Concluding thoughts

Everything argued so far suggests that the 'thunder-wheel' communicated to viewers a far more obvious symbolism to ordinary Iron Age people than a 'sun-wheel', and so seems a better explanation. Sadly, this kind of combined scientific approach has only recently become a topic for archaeological enquiry. Yet, thanks to the coins, we at least have the outlines of one of the deity's myths. These circumstances give us a glimpse into the Celtic religious affinities and all available fragments seem to advocate that we can also connect numerous other emblems with Taranis. The extended minting span reflects the persistence of the same ornamental methods of a warrior thought for centuries. Alongside all the 'bread crumbs', the question of why Taranis is not mentioned as the plausible explanation behind the images on Celtic coins remains unclear. The author of this paper is aware he might be off-beam, but even if some of the premises turn out to be based on solid grounds, it will be a great addition to future numismatic studies (able to either confirm or reject many of the more tenuous connections hypothesized in this article).

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Rome and Human Sacrifices

This study examines how the Romans judged the custom of human sacrifices at the end of the Republic and during the Principate. The beginning of the study focuses on the period when Romans still practiced human sacrifices. Following this is an examination of Strabo's, Diodorus' and Caesar's descriptions concerning Celtic human sacrifices. At the end of the study, the question is posed whether these authors were independent or not. The theory of J. J. Tierney is also scrutinized. Regarding Caesar's account, it is also proposed that he may have been more independent of Posidonius' description than scholars believe, and thus his description seems less suitable for reconstructing Posidonius' work.

Keywords: Posidonius, Caesar, Diodorus, Strabo, Gauls, Druids, human sacrifice

Human sacrifice was not unheard of in Rome, as there are a number of examples from the period of the Republic when it is certain that the Romans performed human sacrifices, despite the fact that this was incompatible with the idea of Romanness and Roman religiosity.¹ However, it is well documented that there were several rituals in ancient Rome which required a human death: the drowning of hermaphroditic children, the duel between the *rex Nemorensis* and his successor, the live burial of Vestal Virgins and the live burial of Gauls and Greeks.² The Ro-

¹ HÄUSSLER (2014: 36).

² SCHULTZ (2010: 517). The live burials of the Gauls and Greeks were always extraordinary, and the sources used connected this custom with the fear of the enemies and with the upheavals of Vestal scandals, cf. VÁRHELYI (2007: 278). However, the sources indicate that not only the Romans performed sacrifices in dubious times; according to Plutarch (*Them.* 13), the Greeks also sacrificed humans before the battle of Salamis.

mans probably distinguished between these rituals and did not consider all of them to be human sacrifice, which is a special case of ritual murder.³ However, the differences between human sacrifice and ritual murder are suppressed by Roman authors when depicting other peoples,⁴ and thus they labeled every ritual murder performed by foreign peoples as human sacrifice. This phenomenon is quite significant, since the Romans clearly condemned human sacrifices and even banned the custom with a *senatus consultum* during the consulship of Cnaeus Cornelius Lentulus and Publius Licinius Crassus.⁵ At the same time, the ritual murder of individuals whose existence violated the natural order was customary and unexceptional for them, and was not even considered a sacrifice.⁶ Thus, several foreign customs were banned, while the Romans could continue to perform rituals which required a human death, as the aforementioned drowning of hermaphroditic children, the duel between the *rex Nemorensis* and his successor, and the live burial of Vestal Virgins were not to be considered human sacrifices in ancient Rome.⁷ These customs could be maintained. For example, in the case of the duel between the *rex Nemorensis* and his successor, there is evidence that such duels were still practiced during Caligula's reign,⁸ years after the Roman ban on human sacrifices. However, the *senatus consultum* which banned human sacrifices clearly shows that Roman attitudes changed in the 1st century BC, and even if the Romans performed human sacrifices before this

Similarly, based on Caesar (*Gal.* 6, 16), the Gauls might also have performed human sacrifices when someone's life was in danger.

³ SCHULTZ (2010: 516–518). The critical difference between ritual murder and human sacrifice is that 'ritual murder is not necessarily directed toward the divine' while a sacrifice "must be offered to, or directed to, someone'.

⁴ HÄUSSLER (2014: 36).

⁵ Plin. *Nat.* 30, 12. This event took place in 97 BC and banned the *immolatio* of human beings, which might not have included live burials, cf. VÁRHELYI (2007: 284); TÓTH (2013: 847). On the bans on the Druids, cf. KAPI (2019); TAKÁCS (2020: 17); ZECCHINI (1984: 73–108).

⁶ SCHULTZ (2010: 535).

⁷ SCHULTZ (2010: 535).

⁸ Suet. *Cal.* 35, 3. Suetonius also reports that Emperor Domitian ordered the live burial of the chief Vestal, Cornelia, cf. Suet. *Dom.* 8, 4. About the trials of Cornelia cf. JONES (1996: 77–78).

ban, Roman authors clearly disassociated themselves from the ritual. As Livy's account testifies, it became an un-Roman custom:

In addition to such great disasters, the people were terrified both by other prodigies and because in this year⁹ two Vestals, Opimia and Floronia, were discovered to have had illicit affairs. One had been killed at the Colline Gate, under the earth as is the custom and the other took her own life [...]. Since this horrible event which occurred in the midst of so many terrible things, as is wont to happen, was turned into a prodigy, the decemviri were ordered to consult the Books. Q. Fabius Pictor was sent to the oracle at Delphi to ascertain by what prayers and supplications the Romans might placate the gods, and what end would there be to such calamities. Meanwhile from the Sibylline Books some unusual sacrifices were ordered, among which was one where a Gallic man and woman and a Greek man and woman were sent down alive into an underground room walled with rock, a place that had already been tainted before by human victims – hardly a Roman rite.¹⁰

After the gradual change in Roman attitudes, the subject of human sacrifices was associated with the barbarian enemies,¹¹ and human sacrifices were frequently used to depict the barbarism, inhumanity and the cruelty of certain peoples or groups.¹² This phenomenon became extremely typical in the 1st century BC when Roman and Greek authors wrote about the religion of the Gauls.¹³ Thus, it is not surprising that there are

⁹ 216 BC.

¹⁰ Liv. 22, 57, 2–6. *Territi etiam super tantas clades cum ceteris prodigiis, tum quod duae Vestales eo anno, Opimia atque Floronia, stupri compertae et altera sub terra, uti mos est, ad portam Collinam necata fuerat, altera sibimet ipsa mortem consciverat...Hoc nefas cum inter tot, ut fit, clades in prodigium versum esset, decemviri libros adire iussi sunt et Q. Fabius Pictor Delphos ad oraculum missus est sciscitatum quibus precibus supplicisque deos possent placare et quaenam futura finis tantis cladibus foret. Interim ex fatalibus libris sacrificia aliquot extraordinaria facta, inter quae Gallus et Galla, Graecus et Graeca in foro boario sub terram vivi demissi sunt in locum saxo consaeptum, iam ante hostiis humanis, minime Romano sacro, imbutum.* Translated by SCHULTZ (2010: 533).

¹¹ VÁRHELYI (2007: 284).

¹² HÄUSSLER (2014: 36).

¹³ RIVES (1995: 68) suggests that stories about human sacrifice in Gaul probably began to spread during the 120s BC, so they can be connected to the Roman expansion in Transalpine Gaul. However, there were several conflicts between the Gauls and the

several problems in the literature regarding the interpretation of texts stating that human sacrifices took place in Gaul. The authors of such texts may have simply invented the claim that the Gauls performed such horrid rites even then, in order to depict them as cruel, uncivilized barbarians, even if this did not correspond to the reality of the author's own time. Therefore, the present study focuses on the three most detailed descriptions about the Gallic human sacrifices and investigates the problems concerning the texts. At the end of the study, an attempt is made to present a comprehensive picture of human sacrifice in Gaul and its representation in ancient accounts.

Before analyzing the texts, however, attention should be given to a few problems which make it difficult to answer any questions regarding this subject. The first major problem is that, in most cases, it is almost impossible to distinguish human sacrifice from other forms of violent death in the archeological data,¹⁴ for the sources indicate that the Gauls either stabbed their victims, impaled them, shot them with an arrow, burned them alive, or perhaps crucified them.¹⁵ Additionally, according to the authors, the victims were usually criminals, or perhaps captives, and since the method they used for sacrificing the victims seems quite common, it is almost impossible to distinguish human sacrifices from capital punishment or war injuries. The second major problem is that the originality of the data provided by the authors cannot be determined. Thus, it cannot be ruled out that their information originates from earlier times and that they present the reality of the past as a reality of their own time. Therefore, the mention of human sacrifices could be a manipulative

civilized world that led to the creation of a very negative *topos* about the Gauls and to the existence of a phenomenon called *tumultus Gallicus* or *metus Gallicus*, which could be used by politicians to mobilize citizens against their enemies, cf. BELLEN (1985); TWYMAN (1997); SZABÓ (2000: 1); ROSENBERGER (2003: 365). Roman propaganda against the Gauls was so strong that it still has an impact on the literature today, cf. SZABÓ (2000: 3).

¹⁴ HÄUSSLER (2014: 43).

¹⁵ Strabo 4, 4, 5; Diod. 5, 31, 3–4; 5, 32, 6. The word for crucifixion in Strabo's work is ἀνασταυρόω, which means either 'to impale' or 'to crucify'. Diodorus mentions that the Gauls impaled the victims, but he used another word in his description, cf. Diod. 5, 32, 6. So the Gauls may never have crucified their victims during the sacrifices.

element in the narratives that only serves to paint a negative picture of the Gauls. Because of this problem, scholars put forward different hypotheses concerning the originality of the descriptions, which influenced the interpretation of the accounts. This is especially true for the obscure and ambiguous parts of the texts.

Now that the main problems have been outlined, attention can be given to the analysis of the descriptions which provide important data about the Gallic customs. There are five authors who supposedly derived their information on this subject from Posidonius:¹⁶ Caesar, Diodorus, Strabo, Pomponius Mela and Athenaeus.¹⁷ The most relevant descriptions for the present study are those by Strabo, Diodorus, and Caesar. Strabo wrote the following about human sacrifices:

Again, in addition to their witlessness, there is also that custom, barbarous and exotic, which attends most of the northern tribes — mean the fact that when they depart from the battle they hang the heads of their enemies from the necks of their horses, and, when they have brought them home, nail the spectacle to the entrances of their homes. At any rate, Poseidonius says that he himself saw this spectacle in many places, and that, although at first he loathed it, afterwards, through his familiarity with it, he could bear it calmly. The heads of enemies of high repute, however, they used to embalm in cedar-oil and exhibit to strangers, and they would not deign to give them back even for a ransom of an equal weight of gold. But the Romans put a stop to these customs, as well as to all those connected with the sacrifices and divinations that are opposed to our usages. They used to strike a human being, whom they had devoted to death, in the back with a sabre, and then divine from his death-struggle. But they would not sacrifice without the Druids. We are told of still other kinds of human sacrifices; for example, they would shoot victims to death with arrows, or impale them in the temples, or, having devised a colossus of straw and wood,

¹⁶ This question will be addressed below.

¹⁷ TIERNEY (1960: 198); SILBERMAN (1988: xxxii).

throw into the colossus cattle and wild animals of all sorts and human beings, and then make a burnt-offering of the whole thing.¹⁸

As mentioned above, Strabo's information on the subject probably comes from Posidonius,¹⁹ and since Posidonius' name also appears in Strabo's text, this statement seems quite acceptable. However, if we compare this report with Diodorus' and Caesar's, a few unique elements stand out. Strabo mentions more methods of murdering than the other authors, and regarding the colossus – or wicker man – he shared more details than Caesar did, claiming that they also burned cattle and wild animals along with the human beings. However, he never explained who the victims were and what the Druids' role was during the sacrifices.

Diodorus is also said to have followed Posidonius,²⁰ but in this case it seems less obvious.²¹ Before exploring this question further, the differences between his and Strabo's description should be laid out. There are two relevant passages by him concerning human sacrifices:

3. They also observe a custom which is especially astonishing and incredible, in case they are taking thought with respect to matters of great concern; for in such cases they devote to death a human being

¹⁸ Strabo 4, 4, 5. Translated by H. L. JONES. The Greek text is as follows: πρόσσεστι δὲ τῇ ἀνοίᾳ καὶ τὸ βάρβαρον καὶ τὸ ἔκφυλον, ὃ τοῖς προσβόροισι ἔθνεσι παρακολουθεῖ πλεῖστον, τὸ ἀπὸ τῆς μάχης ἀπιόντας τὰς κεφαλὰς τῶν πολεμίων ἐξάπτειν ἐκ τῶν αὐχένων τῶν ἵππων, κομίσαντας δὲ προσπατταλεύειν τοῖς προφυλαίοις. φησὶ γοῦν Ποσειδώνιος αὐτὸς ἰδεῖν ταύτην τὴν θεάν πολλαχού, καὶ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἀηθίζεσθαι, μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα φέρειν πρῶτως διὰ τὴν συνήθειαν. τὰς δὲ τῶν ἐνδόξων κεφαλὰς κεδροῦντες ἐπεδείκνυνον τοῖς ξένοις, καὶ οὐδὲ πρὸς ἰσοστάσιον χρυσὸν ἀπολυτροῦν ἠξίου. καὶ τούτων δ' ἔπαυσαν αὐτοὺς Ῥωμαῖοι καὶ τῶν κατὰ τὰς θυσίας καὶ μαντείας ὑπεναντίων τοῖς παρ' ἡμῖν νομίμοις. ἄνθρωπον γὰρ κατεσπείσμενον παίσαντες εἰς νῶτον μαχαίρᾳ ἐμαντεύοντο ἐκ τοῦ σφαδασμοῦ. ἔθνον δὲ οὐκ ἄνευ δρυϊδῶν. καὶ ἄλλα δὲ ἀνθρωποθυσιῶν εἶδη λέγεται: καὶ γὰρ κατετόξευόν τινας καὶ ἀνεσταύρουν ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς καὶ κατασκευάσαντες κολοσσὸν χόρτου καὶ ξύλων, ἐμβάλλοντες εἰς τοῦτον βοσκήματα καὶ θηρία παντοῖα καὶ ἀνθρώπους, ὠλοκαύτουν.

¹⁹ TIERNEY (1960: 198; 207–211).

²⁰ TIERNEY (1960: 198; 203–207).

²¹ On the problems regarding Diodorus' sources cf. ILLÉS (2020: 99–100) and ILLÉS (2021: 8–10).

and plunge a dagger into him in the region above the diaphragm, and when the stricken victim has fallen they read the future from the manner of his fall and from the twitching of his limbs, as well as from the gushing of the blood, having learned to place confidence in an ancient and long-continued practice of observing such matters. 4 And it is a custom of theirs that no one should perform a sacrifice without a "philosopher"; for thank-offerings should be rendered to the gods, they say, by the hands of men who are experienced in the nature of the divine, and who speak, as it were, the language of the gods, and it is also through the mediation of such men, they think, that blessings likewise should be sought.²²

6. And in pursuance of their savage ways they manifest an outlandish impiety also with respect to their sacrifices; for their criminals they keep prisoner for five years and then impale in honour of the gods, dedicating them together with many other offerings of first-fruits and constructing pyres of great size. Captives also are used by them as victims for their sacrifices in honour of the gods. Certain of them likewise slay, together with the human beings, such animals as are taken in war, or burn them or do away with them in some other vengeful fashion.²³

²² Diod. 5, 31, 3–4. Translated by C. H. OLDFATHER. The Greek text is as follows: 3. μάλιστα δ' ὅταν περί τινων μεγάλων ἐπισκέπτωνται, παράδοξον καὶ ἄπιστον ἔχουσι νόμιμον: ἄνθρωπον γὰρ κατασπείσαντες τύπτουσι μαχαίρᾳ κατὰ τὸν ὑπὲρ τὸ διάφραγμα τόπον, καὶ πεσόντος τοῦ πληγέντος ἐκ τῆς πτώσεως καὶ τοῦ σπαραγμοῦ τῶν μελῶν, ἔτι δὲ τῆς τοῦ αἵματος ῥύσεως τὸ μέλλον νοοῦσι, παλαιᾶ τινι καὶ πολυχρονίῳ παρατηρήσει περὶ τούτων πεπιστευκότες. 4. ἔθος δ' αὐτοῖς ἐστὶ μηδένα θυσίαν ποιεῖν ἄνευ φιλοσόφου: διὰ γὰρ τῶν ἐμπείρων τῆς θείας φύσεως ὥσπερ εἰς τινων ὁμοφώνων τὰ χαριστήρια τοῖς θεοῖς φασὶ δεῖν προσφέρειν, καὶ διὰ τούτων οἴονται δεῖν τὰ γαθὰ αἰτεῖσθαι.

²³ Diod. 5, 32, 6. Translated by C. H. OLDFATHER. The Greek text is as follows: ἀκολούθως δὲ τῇ κατ' αὐτοὺς ἀγριότητι καὶ περὶ τὰς θυσίας ἐκτόπως ἀσεβοῦσι: τοὺς γὰρ κακούργους κατὰ πενταετηρίδα φυλάξαντες ἀνασκολοπίζουσι τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ μετ' ἄλλων πολλῶν ἀπαρχῶν καθαγίζουσι, πυρὰς παμμεγέθεις κατασκευάζοντες. χρῶνται δὲ καὶ τοῖς αἰχμαλώτοις ὡς ἱερεῖοις πρὸς τὰς τῶν θεῶν τιμὰς. τινὲς δ' αὐτῶν καὶ τὰ κατὰ πόλεμον ληφθέντα ζῶα μετὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀποκτείνουσιν ἢ κατακάουσιν ἢ τισὶν ἄλλαις τιμωρίαις ἀφανίζουσι.

As evident in the description above, Diodorus stated that the presence of the 'philosophers' was essential for the sacrifices, and these 'philosophers' were almost certainly the Druids. Thus, for some unknown reason, he used a different term,²⁴ which seems strange if one assumes that Diodorus and Strabo used a common source. Furthermore, Diodorus did not mention the wicker man when he wrote about burnt-offerings, and more importantly, contrary to Strabo, he explained what the Druids' role was during the sacrifices and identified the victims as prisoners and captives.

Caesar's description contains a few pieces of information that are not mentioned by Strabo or by Diodorus. Concerning human sacrifices, Caesar writes in his ethnographic *excursus* in the 6th book of the *Commentaries on the Gallic War*:

The whole nation of the Gauls is greatly devoted to ritual observances, and for that reason those who are smitten with the more grievous maladies and are engaged in the perils of battle either sacrifice human victims or vow so to do, employing the Druids as ministers for such sacrifices. They believe, in effect, that, unless for a man's life a man's life be paid, the majesty of the immortal gods may not be appeased; and in public, as in private, life they observe an ordinance of sacrifices of the same kind. Others use figures of immense size, whose limbs, woven out of twigs, they fill with living men and set on fire, and the men perish in a sheet of flame. They believe that the execution of those who have been caught in the act of theft or robbery or some crime is more pleasing to the immortal gods; but when the supply of such fails they resort to the execution even of the innocent.²⁵

²⁴ TIERNEY (1960: 210–211) suggests concerning the diviners that Posidonius glossed the name οὐάταις (the word used by Strabo) with μάνταις (the word used by Diodorus) and perhaps even with εὐαγγεῖς (this word used by Ammian), but he states that the latter one is less probable. This might be so, but this hypothesis cannot be proved, since Posidonius' text is lost, and there are clear problems with the terminology concerning the diviners.

²⁵ Caes. *BGall.* 6, 16. Translated by H. J. EDWARDS. The Latin text is as follows: *Natio est omnis Gallorum admodum dedita religionibus, atque ob eam causam, qui sunt adfecti gravioribus morbis quique in proeliis periculisque versantur, aut pro victimis homines immolant aut se immolaturos vovent administrisque ad ea sacrificia druidibus utuntur, quod pro vita hominis*

In Caesar's work, the aim of the sacrifices is completely different, as the statements in the first few sentences cannot be found either in Strabo's or in Diodorus' account. Caesar also did not mention that the Gauls performed human sacrifices to make divinations. He differs slightly from Diodorus regarding the victims too, since there is no mention of the captives of battle. According to him, the Gauls sacrificed thieves or other criminals and sometimes even innocent people, which is also a peculiarity.

These three descriptions supposedly based on the work of Posidonius thus show profound differences when the texts are compared. But does this mean that the authors wrote independent accounts? Unfortunately, this important question cannot be answered with absolute certainty, because even if there are profound differences between the accounts, the idea that Caesar, Strabo, and Diodorus used a common source cannot be completely dismissed. On this matter, J. J. Tierney has pointed out several similarities and parallels between the descriptions of Posidonius, Caesar, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, and Athenaeus, which seems rather convincing,²⁶ and some of the authors do in fact mention Posidonius in their descriptions.²⁷ The weak points of Tierney's view are obviously the differences, which according to him are additions. However, this idea cannot be proved because Posidonius' work is lost, so there is no way to know exactly what the author wrote about the Gauls. The most problematic text in terms of Tierney's view is clearly Caesar's,²⁸ since he never referred to Posidonius and he was in Gaul for almost a

nisi hominis vita reddatur, non posse deorum immortalium numen placari arbitrantur, publiceque eiusdem generis habent instituta sacrificia. Alii immani magnitudine simulacra habent, quorum contexta viminibus membra vivis hominibus complent; quibus succensis circumventi flamma exanimantur homines. Supplicia eorum qui in furto aut in latrocinio aut aliqua noxia sint comprehensi gratiora dis immortalibus esse arbitrantur; sed, eum eius generis copia defecit, etiam ad innocentium supplicia descendunt.

²⁶ TIERNEY (1960: 198–224).

²⁷ TIERNEY's view is followed *inter alia* by CHADWICK (1966: 7); LINCOLN (1988: 382) and FREEMAN (2006). However, the idea that Caesar derived his information from Posidonius appeared in the literature even before TIERNEY's work, cf. for example DEWITT (1938: 324).

²⁸ Cf. CUNLIFFE (2010: 67–75).

decade and certainly had some first-hand experience. Thus, one might rightly ask why he would use Posidonius' work to create his own ethnographic *excursus*. However, Tierney proved that Caesar at least in part and without acknowledgement drew on Posidonius' work at several points in the Gallic Wars. Yet the most problematic part – where Caesar differs the most from Posidonius – is clearly his ethnographic *excursus* in the 6th book, which, according to Tierney, contains highly debatable additions and omissions compared to Posidonius' work.²⁹ Is this really the case, or did Caesar present his own observations? Sadly, this is another question that cannot be answered. After all, Caesar's testimony cannot be verified with the help of archaeology, since there is no trace of human sacrifices in the Gallic archeological data from the 1st century BC. Therefore, Tierney's view can be accepted as a possible alternative that should be taken with a grain of salt because of the problems mentioned above. But what is there to gain from accepting this approach? The most positive result of Tierney's view is that it provides a more or less consistent picture of Gallic religious customs. If one assumes that the authors obtained their data from a common source, then the various descriptions³⁰ can be used quite boldly to interpret and explain the more obscure parts of the texts. Thus, the various data can be used as puzzle pieces to create a more complete picture of the subject. Based on this approach, we can say that, apart from some obvious additions, the authors – including Caesar – mostly recorded an older custom or *topos* with some modifications.³¹ In the previously cited text, Caesar gave less information about the role of Druids during the sacrifices than Diodorus. More precisely, he did not mention that the Druids had to oversee the rites and that they also acted as mediators between the humans and the gods during these rituals.³² He also did not tell us everything about the purpose of the human sacrifices, as he does not mention that the Gauls sometimes per-

²⁹ TIERNEY (1960: 198).

³⁰ Caes. *BGall.* 6, 16; Strabo 4, 4, 5; Diod. 5, 31, 3; 5, 32, 6 and perhaps Athenaeus 4. 154 A–C.

³¹ In Caesar's case, it can be hypothesized that he wanted to manipulate his audience and depicted the Gauls as more cruel in order to gain more supporters for his campaign.

³² TIERNEY (1960: 215–216).

formed these rites to make divinations.³³ The victims were mostly criminals or prisoners of war, but sometimes even innocent people were sacrificed as well.³⁴ The method of the sacrifices could vary greatly, as the victims could be stabbed, impaled, shot with an arrow, or burned alive in an enormous wicker man with cattle and wild animals.³⁵

In addition to Tierney's approach, there is another important view that focuses primarily on Caesar's sources and challenges the accuracy of Tierney's approach. Miranda Aldhouse-Green, for example, emphasizes that Caesar spent several years in Gaul during his campaign, enabling him to observe everything he wrote about; moreover, his Aeduius friend, Divitiacus – who, according to Cicero, was a Druid³⁶ – could also serve as a source of information about the Druids and their rituals.³⁷ This critique was also mentioned above with respect to Tierney's view, though not in its entirety, as Aldhouse-Green also argues that Caesar's comments on the Druids 'could not have been fraudulent in essence' because other educated officers who served with him, such as Quintus Tullius Cicero, would likely have refuted his false statements in Rome.³⁸ Therefore this approach implicitly suggests that Caesar had to present the reality of his time and had no need at all to use Posidonius' account to create his own ethnographic *excursus* on the Gauls. This line of thought also leads to the conclusion that Caesar's reports should be considered relatively reliable, since his political enemies likely checked the accuracy of his account.

³³ Caes. *B Gall.* 16; Diod. 5, 32, 6.

³⁴ Based on Diodorus' account, TIERNEY (1960: 216) suggests that Caesar's 'innocents' were prisoners of war, but there doesn't seem to be enough evidence to prove this.

³⁵ Caes. *B Gall.* 6, 16; Diod. 5, 31, 3–4; 5, 32, 6; Strabo 4, 4, 5.

³⁶ Cic. *Div.* 1, 41, 90. If we compare Cicero's statement with the accounts of Strabo (4, 4, 4) and Diodorus (5, 31, 2), who divided the Gallic intellectual and religious elite into three different groups, it appears that Divitiacus may have been a diviner and not a Druid.

³⁷ ALDHOUSE-GREEN (2021: 27) is the most recent proponent of this approach. KENDRICK (1994: 76–77) suggested a similar approach, but KENDRICK's work was first published in 1927, so his approach is much older than TIERNEY's. Caesar's own experiences are also emphasized by CUNLIFFE (2010: 5), who thought that even if Caesar augmented his knowledge with some data from Posidonius, he did not simply copy from him, cf. CUNLIFFE (2010: 6; 75).

³⁸ ALDHOUSE-GREEN (2021: 27).

This later element of the approach might not be true, however, since the power of the Druids seems extremely exaggerated, and it cannot be determined with certainty if his political enemies had as much interest in the accuracy of his ethnographic *excursus* as they had about Caesar's personal actions during the campaign. In Caesar's case, this approach is less problematic than Tierney's view, but it too could only be tested against the archaeological data, which unfortunately are not at all helpful in this matter. Therefore, it seems reasonable to accept this approach as a possible alternative as well, although it also provides a slightly different interpretation from Tierney's view. If Caesar did not use Posidonius' description at all for his own account, the other accounts should be viewed with greater caution to explain and interpret the obscure points of Caesar's ethnographic description, since he may have observed differently and therefore the differences may not be simple omissions or additions.³⁹ Nevertheless, it also seems certain that Caesar intentionally held back information he deemed unimportant at times. This seems evident in the case of divination by human sacrifice. On this matter, it can be noted that certain classes, such as the diviners and the bards, are absent from his sociopolitical *excursus*, since he clearly states that he wants to focus exclusively on the most influential classes of Gaul.⁴⁰ The absence of the diviners also indicates that he had no need to mention anything of their activities.

³⁹ Concerning this matter, the most critical point in Caesar's *excursus* is the 14th paragraph, in which Caesar states the following: *In primis hoc volunt persuadere, non interire animas, sed ab aliis post mortem transire ad alios [...]*. Following the view of TIERNEY (1960: 215), at this point Caesar should refer to Pythagorean beliefs, and so he speaks about reincarnation. However, if one does not accept this hypothesis *a priori*, and does not connect Caesar's words to the idea of reincarnation, a completely different picture can be obtained, since the passage *ab aliis post mortem transire ad alios* could mean that the spirits from these people (*ab aliis*) went to those (*ad alios*), so from the living ones to the ones in the underworld or in the otherworld. This view can be supported by a parallel from Lucan (1, 450–458) in which, regarding Druidic teaching, he wrote that they think *regit idem spiritus artus orbe alio*. At this point the *orbe alio* can also refer to the otherworld. Regarding this question, cf. MACCULLOCH (1911: 333–347).

⁴⁰ Caes. *BGall.* 6, 13. FREEMAN (2006: 150) suggests that, when Caesar speaks about the Druids, he might also be speaking about the bards and diviners. This also seems plausible.

In conclusion, there are two plausible alternatives on the basis of which one can create different narratives about the human sacrifices in Gaul. If one accepts Tierney's approach, the sources – including Caesar's account – probably represent, at least in part, an earlier state of affairs,⁴¹ and any differences between the texts could be seen as omissions or additions. In this case, Caesar could have used an old *topos* to manipulate his readers, and he depicted the Gauls as more barbarous than they actually were in his time. The other approach suggests that Caesar wrote about his own time and that his description provides a nearly realistic picture. This would mean that the Gauls were indeed so cruel that they still performed human sacrifices in his time, even building enormous wicker frameworks in which to burn people alive. However, if Caesar were more independent, then his account is less suitable for reconstructing Posidonius' work. In this case, the parallels in his description should be treated with more caution, since it is not known precisely which information was derived from Posidonius.⁴²

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⁴¹ This can be true in both cases.

⁴² This problem is also present in the rest of the descriptions. For example, LINCOLN (1988: 382) connects Mela's account to Posidonius, but his description is very similar to Caesar's, so he might have derived his information from Caesar.

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Bellum ad Danuvinus limes: The Self-Representation of Emperor Gallienus' Power (253–268) through Coinage from the Mints at Segestica and Viminacium

*In the following article we propose to reconstruct, through the numismatic record, the image of power shaped in the mints of Segestica and Viminacium by the emperor Gallienus (253-268). After a brief historical introduction, we will first examine the two mints in question, and then go on to statistically analyse their numismatic production: the denominations used, the most frequently repeated reverse legends, the divinities most involved in numismatic propaganda, the most frequently used configuration of the emperor's image on the reverse and finally, the most common reverse types related to the army and the triumph. We will see how much of the emperor's propaganda effort is focused on promoting Gallienus as a battle-hardened and victorious general, his legions as loyal to his figure and the lasting peace that his campaigns bring to the Danubian limes and adjacent regions.**

Keywords: Numismatics, Self-representation, Segestica, Siscia, Viminacium, Gallienus, Valerian, Roman Army

In the middle of the 3rd century, between 253 and 268, during the rule of Publius Licinius Egnatius Gallienus, the situation throughout the Empire and along the Danubian border was more than delicate. From north of the Danube, at different times between 253 and 268, a whole series of peoples ravaged the Empire, attracted by the wealth of the Roman regions, such as the *Alamanni*, permanently occupying a large part of *Raetia* in 254¹; the *Marcomanni*, penetrating through *Pannonia* and *Noricum*

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and plundering northern Italy in 254 and 258-260; the *Quadi*, laying waste to the land around *Brigetio* between 258 and 260; the *Iazyges*, plundering *Aquincum* and the Pannonian *limes* in 258-260; the *Tervingi*, raiding various towns in *Moesia Inferior* in 256; or the *Gothones*, among others, carrying out skirmishes and pirate attacks in the Black Sea, the Aegean and the Sea of Marmara in 253-256 and 267-268. Faced with these threats, the emperor himself directed much of the defence of these regions, fortifying some provincial seats such as *Vindobona*, *Aquincum*, *Sirmium* and *Singidunum*, among others. However, after the capture of Valerian by Shapur I in 260, a whole series of usurpers rose up against the power of the *domus Licinia Augusta* in these central provinces of the Empire: Ingenuus (260), Regalianus (260), Macrianus Senior (260-1), Macrianus Junior (260-1), Valens (261), Piso (261), among others, challenged the central Roman power in a series of unfortunate proclamations in *Pannonia*, *Illyria*, *Thessaly* and *Macedonia*.²

The imperial institution, therefore, suffered from these internal and external attacks, and had to react both militarily and through public propaganda, by various means, especially through epigraphy and, as far as we are concerned here, through numismatics.

I. The *Segestica/Siscia* and *Viminacium* mints

Our study will focus on the analysis of the self-representation of Emperor Gallienus through the two central mints, according to *RIC* (V 1), with the lowest production of all of them: *Segestica/Siscia* and *Viminacium*³ (Fig. 1). The *Segestica/Siscia* mint, located in present-day Sisak (Croatia), began op-

¹ During Gallienus' reign, most of the Central European *limes* collapsed, some regions were lost to the Empire for ever, such as *Raetia* in Spring 254, during the so-called *Limesfall*. Cf. FARKAS (2013: 45–54; 2015) for more details.

² CAH² (XII, 41–48); CHRISTOL (1997); CHRISTOL, NONY (1991: 205–208); DE BLOIS (1976: 1–8); GEIGER (2013: 86–87, 96–124, 138–151); GOLTZ, HARTMANN (2008); KIENAST (1990: 218); LE BOHEC (2017: 532–540); PARETI (1952: VI, 42–45, 49–53); ROLDÁN HERVÁS *et al.* (1989: 278–282); SYVÄNNE (2019: 93–266).

³ According to *RIC* (V 1), *Segestica/Siscia* would have produced up to 54 types related to the emperor Gallienus and *Viminacium* 15, while according to GÖBL (2000: 96–100, 118–122), *Segestica/Siscia* would have minted 43 different types and *Viminacium* ca. 140 different types related to the monarch.

erating between 259 and 265⁴ to supply the Danubian armies of *Pannonia* and *Dalmatia* locally.⁵ It minted its last series for Gallienus between 267 and 268, when the emperor interrupted the war in Gaul to go to the provinces of the Danubian *limes* to confront the *Herulii*, who had invaded the Black Sea and the Aegean in large numbers, only to be killed during the siege of *Mediolanum*.⁶ The mint, founded with staff from Rome, based the design of its different series on those of the Capitoline mint, sometimes with a certain delay in the production of the different types. The mint was inaugurated with only two *officinae*, but its production was almost always very high.⁷ Aurei and antoniniani were minted, but no other denomination is thought to have been produced. The main characteristic of the busts minted at *Segestica/Siscia* is the severity of the expression of their portraits, which, at the height of their degradation, became absolutely grotesque: perhaps the coins of this mint have the lowest quality amongst the mints, that operated during the reign of Gallienus.⁸ By contrast, the mint of *Vimi-*

⁴ RIC (V 1, 22) indicates 259 as the opening date of the *Segestica/Siscia* mint; BASTIEN (1992: 126); DE BLOIS (1976: 93); DOYEN (1989: 261–262); KUHOFF (1979: 29, 54), on the other hand, propose 262 as the most likely date of the opening of the mint; GEIGER (2013: 222); GÖBL (2000: 118); PFISTERER (2004: 106) further delay the creation of the mint to 263; while BLAND, BURNETT (eds.) (1988: 123) relegate the opening even further to 265, because, according to them, the pieces attributed to *Segestica/Siscia* before that year would be minted only in Rome.

⁵ The fact that the founding of the mint took place despite the unreliability of the troops in the region in previous years indicates the emperor's new approach during the early years of his reign GEIGER (2013: 222).

⁶ For the latter series cf. GÖBL (2000: n. 1456–1522).

⁷ Their earliest mintmarks were P, S (the shape of the P sometimes bordered on B), and the numerals I and II, which are easily distinguished from similar Gaulish numerals by their thinness and smaller size. On some coins the P and S do indeed stand for '*prima*' and '*secunda*', but they are often accompanied by the numerals, so they must have another interpretation. In such cases, S is undoubtedly the mark of the city, and P may refer to the province of *Pannonia*, just as HTR in later days would stand for *Heraclea Thraciae*. The earliest coins of *Segestica/Siscia* are unmarked. During the reign of Claudius II the *officinae* increased to 4, in the reign of Aurelian to 6 and in the reign of Probus to 7. The series of Latin marks continued for some years, but Greek marks appeared during and after the reign of Probus. In the later reigns, the letters SM (*Sacra Moneta*) usually precede the mintmark, such as SMXXIA. RIC (V 1, 22–23).

⁸ Naked collars or Roman-style busts of the *Segestica/Siscia* mint are common under Gallienus. The relief is generally flatter than those from the *Mediolanum* mint, but

nacium, located near the present-day town of Kostolac (Serbia), continued to mint coins at the beginning of the reign of Gallienus and Valerian in 253⁹ and ended its production when its staff and materials were transferred to the mint of *Lugdunum/Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium*, between 254 and 258, when Gallienus relocated his headquarters from the Danube to the Rhine. Its meagre production includes *aurei* and antoninian coins with widespread and generally poor-quality portraits.¹⁰

The production of both mints has been found in hoards throughout the Empire. As can be seen in the map of *Segestica/Siscia*, the area with the most finds is the area comprising the provinces of *Pannonia superior*, *Pannonia inferior* and *Dalmatia* (Fig. 2). Two are the most important hoards, that of IG 1957, Slovenia, with 272 coins of Gallienus¹¹, and that of Tulari, Serbia, with 97 different examples of the emperor.¹² In contrast, the *Viminacium* map shows much more concentrated finds in the province of Upper *Pannonia* (Fig. 3). The hoards with the most coins of Gallienus are those of Krog, Slovenia, with 67 coins of the emperor¹³, and Otrovanec, Croatia, with 14 coins.¹⁴

II. The numismatic self-representation of the Emperor Gallienus

According to *RIC* (V 1), all the types preserved in these two mints were antoninians, the most common type of coin in Gallienus' numismatic production.¹⁵ From their creation in 215 AD, the antoninian was already

deeper than that of Rome, and the coins improved in style under Probus and his successors. The lettering used for the coinage is generally quite regular: the letter V is usually square at the base and is often disarticulated. *RIC* (V 1, 22).

⁹ According to *RIC* (V 1, 22), the mint of *Viminacium* was already in operation before the accession to the throne of Gallienus and Valerian in 253. Colonial coins are known of the emperors from Gordian III (dated AN I, *Anno Primo*, 239–240) to Valerian and Gallienus (dated AN XVI, *Anno Sexto Decimo*, 254–255). Cf. GÖBL (2000: 96–99) for discussion.

¹⁰ *RIC* (V 1, 16–17, 19–20, 22–23); DE BLOIS (1976: 93–94); GEIGER (2013: 68, 206, 222, 236); GÖBL (2000: 96–100, 118–122); WEDER (1994: 77–88).

¹¹ *CHRE* (ID3726); GUEST (1994); HOBBS (2006: 191, n. 822).

¹² *CHRE* (ID3935); GUEST (1994); HOBBS (2006: 201, n. 1023).

¹³ *CHRE* (ID8090); BESLY, BLAND (1983: 196); GUEST (1994); HOBBS (2006: 170, n. 390).

¹⁴ *CHRE* (ID2877); HOBBS (2006: 173, n. 468).

¹⁵ Of the total of 1222 types related to the emperor in all the central mints, according to *RIC* (V 1, 741) (63%) would be antoninians.

the most widely used legal tender throughout the Empire and therefore an ideal medium of imperial propaganda.¹⁶ From its origins, the antoninian was required by law to contain 40-50% of silver;¹⁷ however, the enormous financial needs of the Roman state, in particular those of the various emperors and usurpers who succeeded one another throughout the 3rd century,¹⁸ had greatly devalued these numerals. In 258 the average weight of the antoninians was 3.19 g. and their silver alloy content was 14.14%. In the years after 260 these figures dropped to 2.52 g. and 5.8%, while in 267-268 the silver alloy content sank on average to 2.4%.¹⁹

The analysis of the self-perceived image of Gallienus and his government in the numismatics of *Segestica/Siscia* and *Viminacium* bears fruit, above all, in the study of the reverses of the different types. These reverses are usually more variable and sensitive to change than the obverses and, moreover, they are more explicit about the message of the emperor in question at that particular moment, thus offering us clearer snapshots of certain emperors and their reigns.²⁰ In *Segestica/Siscia*, for example, the four most frequently represented legends are VIRTUS AVG/FAL (8 types, 15%), FIDES LEG/PRAET/MIL (5 types, 9%), VICTORIA AVG/AET (3 types, 6%),

¹⁶ For the conception and development of the antoninians cf. HOWGEGO (1995: 115–140); METCALF (ed.) (2016: 507); SAVIO (2001: 182–195).

¹⁷ Weighing 1.5 *denarii*, equal to 1/64 of a pound or 5.11 g. of silver. SAVIO (2001: 185–186).

¹⁸ There are several possible causes for this continuous and prolonged devaluation of the currency during the 3rd century by the emperors: the imperative need to meet rising state expenditures at a time of declining revenues; the intense pressure, that the state of war exerted on the budget; the large sums that were often necessary to retain or win the loyalty of armies by way of donations; the diminishing fiscal value of areas that remained for long periods of time outside the jurisdiction of the central government; the hoarding and concealment of fortunes and the consequent sterilisation of much of the capital and withdrawal of money from circulation; the high tribute that sometimes had to be paid to foreign powers; and we might also add the loss of the Iberian and British mines from 260 onwards, which contributed to the declining precious metal (especially silver) content of the coinage DE BLOIS (1976: 90); GEIGER (2013: 307).

¹⁹ RIC (V 1, 6); CHRISTOL, NONY (1991: 206); COPE (1977: 216–219); CRISAFULLI (2008: 17–18); DE BLOIS (1976: 88); HOWGEGO (1995: 115–117, 135–136); SAVIO (2001: 185–186, 197); SEAR (2005: 22). There are some official antoninian coins minted in Rome from the period 267–268 (*BnF* 8862 and *BnF* 11259) with a silver content of 2% or less. CRISAFULLI (2008: 18); DERAISME, BARRANDON (2008: 835–854).

²⁰ MANDERS (2012: 39).

or PAX AVG (3 types, 6%) (Fig. 4). VIRTVS, a word derived from *vir* and, therefore, consubstantial to the male,²¹ was, in the Roman world, the incarnation or direct reference to the man's bravery, which was expressed in any public activity, in particular during the performance of the various feats and martial duties in the name of the State. Cicero²² or Augustus²³ tell us how *virtus* corresponded to one of the essential virtues of every imperator romanus, and that, moreover, it originally possessed a dual character, military and civil. Despite this, its numismatic representation has often been linked to its military rather than civilian character, usually showing images of armed women, personifying *Virtus* herself, or representations of other divinities, such as *Mars* or *Hercules*, with military panoply.²⁴ Among the *Segestica/Siscia* coinages, VIRTVS is generally accompanied by the suffixes AVGVSTA (7 different types),²⁵ and FALERI (1 type only),²⁶ a direct allusion to Santa Maria di Falleri, the ancient *Falerii Novi*, north of Rome on the Via Amerina, the third *civitas* with most epigraphy on Gallienus in the whole of the Italian peninsula and islands (5 cases, 6% of the total).²⁷ Granted colonial status by Gallienus, with the appellative of *colonia Faliscorum*, it

²¹ Generally speaking, it referred to virility and manliness, i.e. the sum of all the bodily or mental excellences of man, such as strength, vigour, bravery, courage, aptitude, ability, courage, excellence or virtue, most commonly. *Lewis-Short* (1997); *OLD* (2073).

²² *Cic. Manil.* 10.28. Cicero points out the virtues that the traditional Roman emperor had to possess: *virtus*, *auctoritas*, *felicitas* and, more generally, a knowledge of military affairs (*scientia rei militaris*) (*Cic. Manil.* 10.28) *HEBBLEWHITE* (2017: 34).

²³ *Virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia* and *pietas*, the four virtues of the *clipeus virtutis* granted to Augustus and the only virtues cited in the *Res Gestae* (*Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 34.2), do not correspond exactly to the four cardinal virtues of Greek philosophical thought on kingship, *andreia* (courage), *sophrosune* (temperance), *dikaosune* (justice) and *sophia* (wisdom). *NOREÑA* (2001: 152). However, *virtus*, in a way, could be better assimilated to *andreia*, both in its semantic field and in its use in Greco-Roman propagandistic reality.

²⁴ 'Virtus', *LIMC* (VIII, 273–281); *DA* (V, 926–927); *EISENHUT* (1973); *HEBBLEWHITE* (2017: 34 Y 36); *KLAWANS* (1959: 50); *MANDERS* (2012: 169); *MCDONNELL* (2006); *NOREÑA* (2001: 152, 155–156, 159); *SMITH* (1867: III, 1271).

²⁵ In 5 antoninians the figure of the emperor appears on horseback or standing (*RIC* [V Gallienus 589–590, 592–594]), while in 2 other types *Hercules* (*RIC* [V Gallienus 595]) and *Mars* (*RIC* [V Gallienus 591]) are the protagonists.

²⁶ Present on a type of an antoninian on which instruments and weapons are depicted, such as a quiver, a lion skin, a club, a vase and a bow. *RIC* (V Gallienus 596).

²⁷ 3 of them (60%) statue pedestals and 2 more (40%) plaques of different sizes.

was the community of origin of the Egnatii,²⁸ the *gens* of origin of the emperor's mother, Egnatia Mariniana, and, most probably, also the birthplace of Gallienus himself,²⁹ nicknamed at birth, in fact, Falerius, a nickname he recovered to honour his hometown (Fig. 5). It appears in the emperor's numismatics not only with the legend VIRTUS FALERI, but also with the legend PIETAS FALERI,³⁰ thus commemorating the *virtus* and *pietas* of Gallienus himself in relation to his hometown.³¹

The goddess FIDES, on the other hand, normally represented as a clothed woman with a *patera* and *cornucopia* in both hands, or carrying grains of wheat and a basket of fruit, was originally the personification of the good faith that should exist both in public agreements between different populations and in private transactions between individuals.³²

²⁸ The Egnatii of *Falerii Novi* probably came from an ancient local family, perhaps of *Faliscus* origin, which attained a high social position in the early Republican period. At the beginning of the Empire, they were already regularly registered in the tribe of the municipality, the Horatia, and had succeeded in bringing a very high number of individuals to the *quattuorvirateship*, with a significant number of economically and socially well-off freedmen as well. It is more than likely that Gallienus belonged, on his mother's side, to a particularly long-lived and fortunate branch of this ancient and noble municipal lineage. MUNZI (1994: 57–59). For more details cf. DI STEFANO MANZELLA (1990: 357–358); GEIGER (2013: 74–75); MUNZI (1994: 57–59).

²⁹ *Eius filium Gallienum senatus Caesarem creat, statimque Tiberis adulta aestate diluvii facie inundavit. Prudentes perniciosum reipublicae cecinere adolescentis fluxu ingenio, quia Etruria accitus venerat, unde amnis praedictus.* (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 32.3–4). The senate appointed his son Gallienus as Caesar, and immediately the Tiber in midsummer overflowed as if a flood had come. The wise men predicted disaster for the state because of the young man's dissolute disposition, for when he was called, he had come from Etruria, from where the river flowed. Cf. DI STEFANO MANZELLA (1990: 357–358); GEIGER (2013: 73–74); KIENAST (1990: 218) for details.

³⁰ Gold medallion with the busts of Gallienus and Salonina on the right, with the legend CONCORDIA AVGG, on the obverse, and two infants, one with the intention of sucking milk from a goat standing next to a tree, the other sitting between the animal's front legs, on the right an eagle and below a thunderbolt, all with the legend PIETAS FALERI, on the reverse. DI STEFANO MANZELLA (1990: 358); GÖBL (2000: n. 942A).

³¹ DE BLOIS (1976: 134, 147); DI STEFANO MANZELLA (1979: 111–112); DI STEFANO MANZELLA (1990: 357–359); GEIGER (2013: 73–75); GLAS (2014: 64–65); GÖBL (2000: N. 349, 942A); KIENAST (1990: 218); MUNZI (1994: 57–59).

³² The Romans dated the cult as early as the time of King Numa Pompilius (Liv. 1.21.3–4; Dion. Hal. 2.75.3; Plut. *Numa* 16.1). His original place of worship in Rome, the *aedes Fidei*

Fides appears for the first time in imperial numismatics in AD 69, during the Gallic civil rebellion and the rise of the emperor *Vitellius*, on whose coinage it appears with the legend FIDES EXERCITVS³³ and FIDES PRAETORIANORVM,³⁴ already converted into a military-related deity, holding a standard in each hand or a standard and a sceptre. The deity, therefore, had already abandoned its original meaning of tutelary goddess of the given word to become the symbol of fidelity between the Roman citizen and his emperor, with special emphasis on the members of the army in each of its ranks.³⁵ The constant allusions to *Fides* in the third century, with the aim of nominally maintaining the loyalty of the armed forces to their emperor, showed the extent to which the problems of loyalty of the army and the continuous external threats to the Empire constituted a real threat to the legitimacy of the emperors in this century. The figure of *Fides*, i.e. the personification of the loyalty of the legions, their soldiers and, above all, of the high officials to the figure of their legitimate emperor, allowed the monarch to reward the soldiers for their support on the battlefield, to regain the loyalty of the troops of a recently defeated usurper or even to warn potential rivals, who might aspire to the imperial throne, of the strong bond of loyalty existing between the legitimate emperor and his own army.³⁶ This strong bond, this

Populi Romani, was located on the Capitol itself. This building, probably the only temple dedicated to *Fides* in the entire Roman world, was dedicated by *Aulus Atilius Calatinus* (consul in 258 and dictator in 249 BC) and restored at the end of the Republic by *Marcus Aemilius Scaurus* (aedile curul in 58 BC) (Cic. *Nat.* 2.61). It was occasionally used for senate meetings (Val. Max. 3.2.17; App. Civ. 1.16), and around it were displayed bronze tablets containing laws and treaties, several of which were displaced by a storm in 44 or 43 BC. (Cass. Dio 45.17.3). The diplomas of honorably discharged soldiers were also routinely affixed here in the 1st century AD (CIL [XVI/1.2, 26, 32]). 'Fides Populi Romani / Publica', *LTUR* (II, 249–252); COARELLI (2007: 35); DOYEN (1989: II, 106); RICHARDSON (1992: 151).

³³ RIC (I², 126) and RIC (I², Vitellius 42).

³⁴ RIC (I², 121) and RIC (I², Vitellius 55).

³⁵ In the middle of the 2nd century AD, certain attributes of *Fides* generally reserved for *Abundantia*, such as ears of corn, poppies or baskets of fruit, were complemented by the inclusion of *vexilla* or banners, and then, in the year 139, became a purely military divinity. DOYEN (1989: II, 109).

³⁶ It is also notable that, although types proclaiming the *Fides* of the army were most frequently minted at the beginning of an emperor's reign, they were not usually aban-

contract of loyalty between the emperor and his army, was completed by a payment for services rendered, which could either be in kind or in gold, silver and bronze numerals with the legend FIDES.³⁷

In *Segestica/Siscia*, FIDES is accompanied by the appellatives MILITVM (2 different types)³⁸, aimed especially at securing the loyalty of the soldiers, whatever their rank; PRAET (2 types)³⁹, synonymous with PRAETORIANVM, aimed mainly at buying and maintaining the will of the members of the praetorian imperial guard; and, finally, LEG (1 example)⁴⁰, referring to LEGIONVM, to indicate the loyalty between the various legions of the Roman army and the emperor, who ultimately financed them and granted them privileges.

The goddess VICTORIA, the Greek *Νίκη*, is another protagonist on the *Segestica/Siscia* reverses. The *Νίκη/Victoria*, considered as a gift granted by the divinities to certain persons chosen by them, such as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar or Augustus, was used by the various emperors to legitimise their position at the head of the Imperial institution and thus ratify their right to reign. Thus, during the crisis of the 3rd century, almost all emperors, whether successful or unsuccessful, used numismatics to proclaim their military victories: even those rulers who did not manage to prevail on the battlefield or who did not lead any campaign, proclaimed their "victory" in their various denominations.⁴¹ Their repre-

doned once he was secure in his position. The monarch, therefore, not only needed the loyalty of the troops upon assuming the purple, but he also needed to retain this loyalty, as legitimacy became a continuous practice HEBBLEWHITE (2017: 198–199).

³⁷ 'Fides', LIMC (IV, 133–137); DA (II, 1115–1117); DE BLOIS (1976: 96, 101–102, 104, 111–112); DOYEN (1989: II, 106–109); GEIGER (2013: 220–221); GÖBL (2000: 105, 111–112); HEBBLEWHITE (2017: 198–202); MANDERS (2012: 90–92, 280); SEAR (2005: 38); SMITH (1867: II, 149–150).

³⁸ On those showing *Fides*, clothed, standing between the ensign and the standard, or two ensigns (RIC [V Gallienus 571]), and the legend inscribed within a laurel wreath (RIC [V Gallienus 570]).

³⁹ With depictions of the *Genius*, standing on the left, holding a globe in his right hand and a cornucopia in his left (RIC [V Gallienus 569]), and of an eagle between two ensigns (RIC [V Gallienus 568]).

⁴⁰ It features the image of three trophies. RIC (V Gallienus 567).

⁴¹ In the numismatics of Pupienus, Balbinus, Gordian I and II, Quintilian and Florianus, none of whom won any military victories against external enemies, some types of Victory appear, including the more frequent legend of VICTORIA AVG next to the image

sentation occurred not only when recent victories were achieved, but also in times of peace, even if there had been no military confrontations that year. Emperor Gallienus, of course, was no exception to this dynamic. Modern historiography has always tried to distinguish on his own coins his actual victories from mere Imperial propaganda, but the problem remains.⁴² Generally speaking, the different numbering of the victories on his coinage corroborates that the concept of "victory" had, in these years, more or less lost its original meaning, so that the types on which the VICTORIA AVGVSTA appears, followed by a numeral, were minted almost exclusively to promote imperial ideology without reflecting actual victories. Even so, Gallienus also won several real military victories, both by himself and through his generals in the East, such as *Septimius Odaenathus*, founder of the Roman client state, Palmyrene Kingdom, so it is possible that a good number of Victories on the coins did indeed allude to real victories fought and won on the battlefield.⁴³ Among the coins of *Segestica/Siscia*, VICTORIA is accompanied by the suffixes AVGVSTA (2 types)⁴⁴ and AET (1 example)⁴⁵, referring to AETERNA,

of Victory herself. Sometimes emperors went even further with their claims. Florianus, for example, struck coins with the legend VICTORIA PERPETVA (*RIC* [V 1, Florianus 23, 42]), while Quintillus 'fabricated' *ex novo* a victory over the Goths with the legend VICTORIAE GOTHICAE (*RIC* [V 1, Quintillus 87]). The use of the numismatic types related to the Victory reflects the immediate need for Quintilian and Florianus to persuade the army that they could win victory in the coming civil struggles against militarily proven rivals. HEBBLEWHITE (2017: 37).

⁴² For the various discussions of Gallienus' various victories and whether or not they are reflected in his numismatics, cf. *RIC* (V 1, 33–34); DE BLOIS (1976: 101–102, 135); GEIGER (2013: 212); GÖBL (2000: 105–106, 111); HEBBLEWHITE (2017: 38–39); KNEISSL (1969: 176–177); KUHOFF (1979: 71–74); MANDERS (2012: 277–278, 280–282).

⁴³ Solo campaigns: 254–256 on the Danube; 257–260 on the Rhine; 260 in *Raetia*; 260 in Northern Italy; 268 in Northern Italy. KIENAST (1990: 218). For details on the military operations specifically in Northern Italy between 253 and 268 cf. DE BLOIS (1976: 4–7, 28–33); GEIGER (2013: 107–119, 152–190); GLAS (2014: 150–163); LE BOHEC (2017: 627–635); PARETI (1952: VI, 42–45, 57–61). *Odaenathus'* campaigns: 262 and 266 against the Sassanids. KIENAST (1990: 239).

⁴⁴ In both types the Victory appears, winged, clothed, standing or walking on the left, holding a wreath in her right hand and a palm in her left. *RIC* (V Gallienus 587–588).

⁴⁵ With the image of Victory, winged, clothed, standing on the left, holding a wreath in her right hand and a palm in her left hand. *RIC* (V Gallienus 586).

which alludes to the eternity of victory, thus spreading the idea of invincibility as a permanent and immanent imperial quality, and which also appears in the 3rd century on the coins of the emperors Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Maximinus Thrax, Gordian III and Valerian⁴⁶.

Finally, the goddess PAX, in Greek represented by *Ειρήνη*, was the personification of peace, that is, the state of calm and normality produced after a victorious war, usually effigied by a lady carrying an olive branch and a sceptre, or a *cornucopia* or a *caduceus*.⁴⁷ Linked from very early on to the martial sphere,⁴⁸ *Pax* became a relevant divinity from the Late Republic onwards.⁴⁹ In the 3rd century it intensified its presence and appears on the reverse of the coinage of all emperors except Pertinax, Didius Julianus, Geta, Macrinus, Diadumenianus, Gordian I and Gordian II, Herennius Etruscus and Saloninus, reaching its zenith during the reign of Philip II and, to a lesser extent, during the reigns of Tacitus and Carus.⁵⁰ In *Segestica/Siscia*, the 3 types representing her⁵¹ are accompa-

⁴⁶ 'Victoria', LIMC (VIII, 237–269); DA (V, 830–854); DE BLOIS (1976: 90–91, 99–100, 101–102, 104, 135, 137); FEARS (1981a: 743–745); GEIGER (2013: 212); GÖBL (2000: 105–106, 111); HEBBLEWHITE (2017: 37–39); KIENAST (1990: 239); KŁAWANS (1959: 50); MANDERS (2012: 77–87, 91, 277–282); MCCORMICK (1987: 4, 26–28); SMITH (1867: III, 1257); TAEGER (1957: II, 438).

⁴⁷ The concept of *Pax* could also be represented by images of divinities such as *Virtus*, *Victoria* or *Sol*, or through figures of soldiers or trophies with captives at their feet MANDERS (2012: 204–205).

⁴⁸ There are many reasons that implicate the *Pax* as a consequence of the *bellum* and, therefore, associated with the martial world. Firstly, its use by Sulla, Caesar, Augustus or Hadrian, all of them in command of huge military contingents; secondly, associated with monuments related to the post-war world, such as the *Ara Pacis* or the *Hadrianeum*, both located in the Campus Martius, or even Vespasian's *Templum Pacis*. Thirdly, its clear link with *Victoria*, *Virtus*, *Nemesis* or *Mars*, the latter sometimes nicknamed *Pacifer* or *Pacator*, i.e. the bearer and guardian of peace DOYEN (1989: II, 274); HUSKINSON (ed.) (2000: 335–368); MANDERS (2012: 199–200); RAAFLAUB (ed.) (2007: 256–278).

⁴⁹ The earliest known coinage of *Pax* dates from 44 BC and shows the head of the goddess on the obverse and two joined hands on the reverse, the type being issued by *L. Aemilius Buca*. RRC (480/24).

⁵⁰ The percentages indicated for emperors who reigned for a longer period (e.g. Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Alexander Severus, Gordian III, Valerian, Gallienus, Aurelian and *Probus*) are relatively low (all below 5%). It is very likely, therefore, that these low percentages reflected the fact that they had not been able to fulfil the peace promise given or that the peace promises were mainly made at the beginning of each reign MANDERS (2012: 201).

nied by the appellative AVGVSTA or AVGVSTI: both have the same connotation and allude to the state of peace guaranteed by the emperor.⁵² Here *Pax* is more akin to *Providentia*, since only the emperor's action can guarantee the effective fulfilment of the designs of both divinities.⁵³

The common denominator that groups together the four most represented reverse legends in *Segestica/Siscia*, VIRTVS, FIDES, VICTORIA and PAX, 36% of the total number of reverses, is none other than the martial world and military victories. These messages reinforce the image of Gallienus as a strong and battle-hardened leader, a victorious warrior in accordance with the Hellenistic ideal of the exemplar ruler, as he is portrayed on various occasions by ancient authors, particularly Greek-language authors. Zosimus, for example, depicts him as a general continually engaged on the battlefield and concerned for the welfare of his subjects during the turmoils suffered by the Empire.⁵⁴ Similarly, Malalas⁵⁵ stresses how Gallienus κατήλθεν εἰς ἐκδίκησιν Ῥωμαίων, granting military initiative to the emperor himself, provided at all times with the *virtus* and πρόνοια or *providentia* of the Hellenistic monarchs; πόλεμον τῷ Ἐνάθῳ, ἐφόνευσεν αὐτόν, i.e., Gallienus himself personally engaged in combat with his enemy *Enathos*, killing him himself⁵⁶, like

⁵¹ In all 3 types the *Pax* appears, dressed, seated, standing or walking on the left, holding an olive branch in her right hand and a sceptre in her left. RIC (V Gallienus 575–577).

⁵² The legend PAX AVG accompanying the images of *Pax* could be understood in two ways, i.e. as PAX AVGVSTI or as PAX AVGVSTA. Since the unabbreviated legend PAX AVGVSTI appears more frequently throughout the 3rd century than PAX AVGVSTA, which only appears on one coinage of *Probus* (RIC [V 2 Probus 710]), the legend PAX AVG should more likely be considered as an abbreviation of PAX AVGVSTI rather than PAX AVGVSTA. AMIT (1965: 57); MANDERS (2012: 201–203).

⁵³ 'Pax', LIMC (VII, 204–212); DA (IV, 362–363); AMIT (1965: 57–58); DOYEN (1989: II, 273–275); MANDERS (2012: 199–205); SEAR (2005: 40); SMITH (1867: III, 163). The 3rd century coinage types bearing the legends PAX AVG(G), PAX AVGVSTI and PAX AVGVSTA are therefore largely reminiscent of the philo-imperial conception of divinity present in authors such as Seneca. MANDERS (2012: 203).

⁵⁴ Zos. 1.30–40. The author probably reflects with great fidelity Dexippus' original account so full of detail of the eastern front and the defence of Athens as the basic enclave of the Greek world. For a more detailed discussion cf. ARMSTRONG (1987: 240–246; 255).

⁵⁵ Mal. 298, 3–16.

⁵⁶ Malalas, a 6th century Byzantine author, tells of Gallienus' victory over a certain *Enathos*, a name probably distorted from that of Septimius Odaenathus. However,

every good Hellenistic ruler, always on the battlefield, sharing with his troops the hardships of the military campaign; καὶ παρέλαβε τὴν Ἀραβίαν, i.e., that literally the emperor conquered the eastern territory "with the spear" (δορικήτος χώρα) through his victories on the battlefield; and, finally, that Gallienus ἐποίησεν εἰρήνης πάκτα, i.e., that he secured peace and stability to the conquered territories and "liberated" them from the evil usurper, like the good kings of the past.

In the mint of *Viminacium*, the absence of a considerable number of types, according to *RIC* (V 1), makes the interpretation of their reverses more difficult, but we can appreciate how VICTORIA AVGG and VIRTUS AVGG, with 3 types in total (20%)⁵⁷, follow the same military trend as the reverses of *Segestica/Siscia*, in this case underlining the leadership capacities in the battlefield of both Gallienus and his father Valerian (Fig. 6).

Closely linked to the legends on the reverse are the different types of reverse. Among them, the most important in the numismatics of Gallienus of *Segestica/Siscia* and *Viminacium* are the reverses with images of divinities, which represent 61% of the total, with 33 different types, in the case of *Segestica/Siscia*, and 75% of the total, with 12 different types, in the case of *Viminacium*. Again, 2 of the 3 most represented divinities in *Segestica/Siscia*, *Victoria* (3 types, 9%)⁵⁸ and *Pax* (3 types, 9%)⁵⁹, are related to the martial sphere and to the necessary consequences of the

Odaenathus declared himself an independent king against the Sassanids and placed himself and his kingdom at the service of Gallienus' Roman Empire, not against it.

⁵⁷ One of the types of VICTORIA AVGG shows the image of Victory, winged, dressed, standing or walking to the left, holding a wreath in her right hand and a palm in her left (*RIC* [V Gallienus (joint reign) 299]), while the other type of VICTORIA AVGG and that of VIRTUS AVGG depict a soldier, wearing a helmet, in military costume, standing to the right, holding a spear in his right hand and resting his left hand on the shield (*RIC* [V Gallienus (joint reign) 300]), helmeted, in military costume, standing to the right, holding the spear in his right hand and resting his left hand on the shield (*RIC* [V Gallienus (joint reign) 300]), in one case, and standing to the left, resting his right hand on the shield and holding the spear in his left hand (*RIC* [V Gallienus (joint reign) 301]), in the other (*RIC* [V Gallienus (joint reign) 301]).

⁵⁸ Already mentioned above.

⁵⁹ Cf. above.

good leadership of the emperor as a victorious general (Fig. 7).⁶⁰ The images of three other divinities less represented in the mint, *Hercules*, *Iuppiter* and *Mars*, also belong to this same field, with 1 case each (3%).⁶¹ In *Viminacium*, the situation is similar: *Victoria* is one of the 2 most represented divinities⁶², with 2 examples (17%)⁶³, while *Iuppiter* also appears on one occasion (8%) (Fig. 8). The supreme god of the traditional Greco-Roman pantheon, the Greek *Ζεύς* and the Latin *Iuppiter*, had 3 functions relating to imperial power: as the principal deity during imperial investiture; as the essential god in the religious-magical aspects of war, battle and victory; and as the protector divinity par excellence.⁶⁴ It is not for nothing that in the mint of *Viminacium* he is called PACATOR ORBIS, as the bearer and guardian of peace throughout the Roman orb, and he is depicted seated on the left, holding a patera in his right hand and a sceptre in his left⁶⁵.

⁶⁰ The other most represented divinity would be *Felicitas*, with 3 other types in which she appears dressed, standing on the left, leaning on a column, holding a *caduceus* (RIC [V Gallienus 564]), with a *caduceus* in her right hand and a *cornucopia* in her left (RIC [V Gallienus 565]) and standing on the right, holding a sceptre in her right hand and a globe in her left. RIC (V Gallienus 566).

⁶¹ *Hercules*: an antoninian with the reverse legend VIRTUS AVG and the image of *Hercules*, standing right, holding a club in his right hand and a bow and a lion's skin in his left hand (RIC [V Gallienus 595]). *Iuppiter*: an antoninian with the reverse legend IO CANTAB and the representation of Jupiter, standing left, holding a thunderbolt in his right hand and a sceptre in his left (RIC [V Gallienus 573]). For discussion of this type cf. ALFÖLDI (1967: 25–26); DE BLOIS (1976: 108); GEIGER (2013: 223); GÖBL (2000: 120); MANDERS (2012: 107); OKAMURA (1992: 314–323); TEJA (1999: 407–410). *Mars*: an antoninian with the reverse legend VIRTUS AVG and the image of *Mars*, walking to the right, holding a spear in his right hand and a trophy in his left hand. RIC (V Gallienus 591).

⁶² The other most common deity in *Viminacium* is *Diana*, depicted in 2 types dressed, standing or walking on the right, holding a torch in her right hand (RIC [V Gallienus (joint reign) 290–291]).

⁶³ She appears, in one case, winged, clothed, standing or walking to the left, holding a wreath in her right hand and a palm in her left (RIC [V Gallienus (joint reign) 299]), while in another case, she is accompanied by Rome, helmeted, clothed, seated on the left on a shield, holding Victory in her right hand and the spear in her left (RIC [V Gallienus (joint reign) 297]).

⁶⁴ For these functions cf. FEARS (1977: 262, 270); FEARS (1981b: 34–35); FEARS (1981a: 736–826); HOBOLD (1995: 16); KLEINER (1992: 227–228); PRICE (1984: 11–15); WEINSTOCK (1957: 215–220).

⁶⁵ RIC (V Gallienus [joint reign] 294).

Representations of Gallienus also have a dedicated space in a good part of the numismatic reverses of the *Segestica/Siscia* and *Viminacium* productions, with 11 examples (20%) and 2 different types (12%), respectively (Fig. 9). The emperor is depicted in various forms, carrying out different tasks, in different poses and with different companions, in order to create an image suitable for each social group and for each particular occasion. In *Segestica/Siscia*, for example, the emperor is mostly depicted on horseback (5 types, 45%)⁶⁶ or standing (4 types, 36%),⁶⁷ while in the 2 *Viminacium* types the Roman emperor is depicted walking, raising his right hand and holding the globe with his left hand,⁶⁸ or in the act of performing a public sacrifice before an altar.⁶⁹ Thus, in *Segestica/Siscia* the image of Gallienus fighting on the back of his horse, riding through the barbarian enemies beyond the Danubian *limes*, an unmistakable symbol of the victorious general on the battlefield, of his promptness and speed in the face of disaster and of his unconditional support for the *alae* of his own army, is further enhanced, whereas in *Viminacium* a more ritualised image of the Roman emperor is preferred, as a solitary *sacerdos*, that is, as a "religious authority" and the only institution authorised to make sacrifices to the gods on public monuments, such as inscriptions, reliefs or coins,⁷⁰ seeking, at all times, their favour in the defence of the Empire.

⁶⁶ In 2 cases he is shown riding a horse or piercing an enemy (*RIC* [V Gallienus 589 and 593]), in another type raising his right hand and holding the sceptre or spear in his left hand (*RIC* [V Gallienus 552]), while, in another specimen with the reverse legend *VIRTVS AVG*, he is also depicted in military costume, riding on the right, spearing a lion instead of an enemy (*RIC* [V Gallienus 594]).

⁶⁷ The emperor is depicted in 4 different ways: in military costume, standing on the left, crowning a trophy (*RIC* [V Gallienus 592]); standing on the left, with a globe in his right hand and a sceptre in his left (*RIC* [V Gallienus 550]); standing on the left between two captives (*RIC* [V Gallienus 590]); and, finally, standing between two river gods (Rhine and Maine), with a spear in his right hand and a *parazonium* in his left (*RIC* [V Gallienus 549]). The *parazonium* or *παράζωνιον* was a short, broad dagger or sword, carried by high-ranking Greek and Roman officials and tied on the left side by a *cinctorium* or strap, and generally used as a symbol of social status. *Lewis-Short* (1302); *OLD* (1294); *TLL* (X.1.1, 324).

⁶⁸ *RIC* (V Gallienus [joint reign] 296).

⁶⁹ *RIC* (V Gallienus [joint reign] 287).

⁷⁰ STEPPER (2003: 105–6) considers that the emperor did not necessarily have to be depicted as a priest in the sacrificial scenes on the coins, as he could also be shown as a magistrate, since magistrates could also perform sacrifices. MANDERS (2012: 134–135),

Finally, 11-13% of the reverse depictions of both mints are devoted exclusively to army and triumph reverses (Fig. 10). In *Segestica/Siscia*, reverses with the legend inscribed on a laurel wreath constitute 67% of all types in the army and triumph category, with 4 different examples, 3 of which bear the reverse legends VOTIS DECENNALIBVS⁷¹ or VOTIS X ET XX⁷², in allusion to the vows for the *decennalia* of the year 262 and for those foreseen for the year 272⁷³, while the latter accompanies the legend FIDES MILITVM⁷⁴, in direct allusion to the loyalty owed to the emperor by the different infantry divisions of the imperial army. In *Viminacium*, on the other hand, 100% of the examples in the army and triumph category show a soldier standing, dressed in military uniform, wearing a helmet, resting his right hand on a shield and holding a spear in his left hand (or *vice versa*), the symbol, par excellence, of the model legionary and, by extension, of Gallienus' legions, and popular throughout the 3rd century, especially from the reign of Valerian⁷⁵, accompanied by the legends VIRTVS AVGG⁷⁶ or VICTORIAE AVGG⁷⁷.

III. Conclusions

The self-representation of Gallienus on the two marginal mints of *Segestica/Siscia* and *Viminacium* in the Danubian provinces, in the heart of the 3rd century Empire, according to *RIC* (V 1), yields very interesting data, substantial similarities between the two numismatic realities, but also not a few differences between them.

however, considers that the emperor was depicted as both priest and magistrate, since religion and politics shared the same space in Roman politics. Furthermore, the author points out that the emphasis of these types was on his office as a priest, rather than his office as a magistrate, due to the nature of the scene. The emperor as magistrate had other scenes in which his other facet could be clearly seen.

⁷¹ *RIC* (V Gallienus 597–598).

⁷² *RIC* (V Gallienus 599).

⁷³ Cf. CHRISTOL (2006: 126).

⁷⁴ *RIC* (V Gallienus 570).

⁷⁵ This group of reverses reflects the growing importance of the army as the century progressed. Emperors relied entirely on their legions in times of growing military problems, and the armed forces themselves used this power to choose or reject candidates for the imperial throne. MANDERS (2012: 176).

⁷⁶ *RIC* (V Gallienus [joint reign] 301).

⁷⁷ *RIC* (V Gallienus [joint reign] 300).

Firstly, we can see how, to a much greater extent than in other more productive mints such as those of Rome or *Mediolanum*, the antoninians are the sole and essential units of Imperial representation of the central power in the Danubian provinces. Neither aurei nor other bronze currencies detract from the prominence of the antoninians, which were probably produced to pay the military units in the Danube area at the different moments of the emperor's presence during his 15-year reign.

Secondly, and in consequence of this first point, *Segestica/Siscia* and *Viminacium* were established as essentially military mints, destined, to a large extent, to mint the numerals that would be used to pay the *stipendium* of the different army divisions. This can be seen from four different factors. Firstly, because *Segestica/Siscia* and *Viminacium* are located either directly on the Danubian limes, as in the case of *Viminacium*, or in the immediate hinterland of the Danubian limes, as in the case of *Segestica/Siscia*, strategic positions close enough to the legionary and ala camps in the Danubian region, such as *Poetovio*, *Vindobona*, *Carnuntum* or *Aquincum*, to supervise the production and flow of coinage as well as the transport of products to their recipients. Secondly, because both mints give great importance to martial legends: VIRTUS, FIDES, VICTORIA or PAX are among the most promoted legends, coinciding with an image closer to the military capacity of Gallienus, the loyalty of his armies, the victory against the barbarians of the North and the peace they bring after the (hypothetical) happy campaign. Thirdly, both mints promote, to a large extent, divinities related to the army: Victory, Pax, Hercules, Iuppiter or Mars appear on the reverse of the coinage on repeated occasions, which confers a habitual protection to the legions under their tutelage. And, fourthly, because between 11 and 13% of the representations on the reverses of both mints are devoted exclusively to army and triumphal reverses, such as images of laurel wreaths or soldiers.

However, as mentioned above, the Imperial representation of Gallienus on both mints also exhibits notable differences between the two workshops. Firstly, the number of types produced is very uneven, follow RIC (V 1) or Robert Göbl⁷⁸. Secondly, each mint is framed in a different historical moment: while *Segestica/Siscia* is primarily intended for

⁷⁸ GÖBL (2000).

the local numismatic production of the emperor during his sole reign between 260 and 268, *Viminacium* started to produce its numismatics during the joint reign of Valerian and Gallienus in 253, reaching up to 254-258, according to the researchers. Thirdly, although some of the legends and divinities most represented on their numismatic reverses coincide, many of the rest of the legends and divinities are different from each other, representing different messages in the two mints under study. And finally, fourthly, the image of the emperor Gallienus himself on the coins produced by the two mints is unequal: while on the *Segestica/Siscia* reverses the emperor appears more often on horseback or standing, on those of *Viminacium* he is depicted performing sacrifice or walking, which radically changes the way he approaches his own self-representation in front of the soldiers at each historical moment.

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Figures

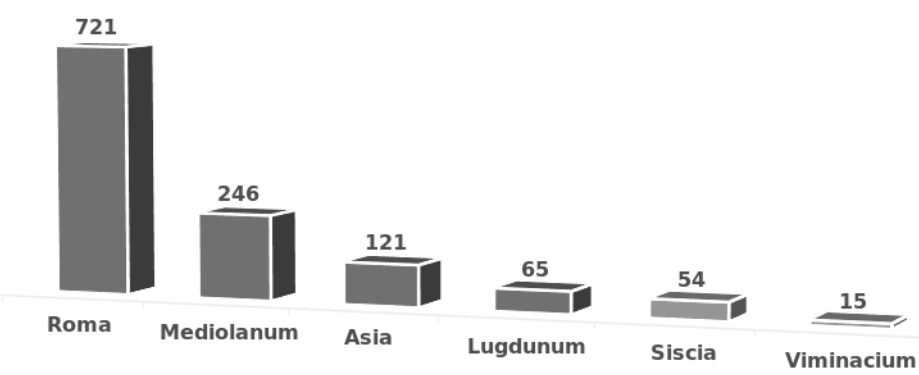


Fig. 1. Number of types per mint related to *Gallienus* according to *RIC* (V 1).



Fig. 2. Heat map of individual coins of the *Segestica/Siscia* mint (from *CHRE*).



Fig. 3. Heat map of individual coins of the mint of *Viminacium* (from CHRE).

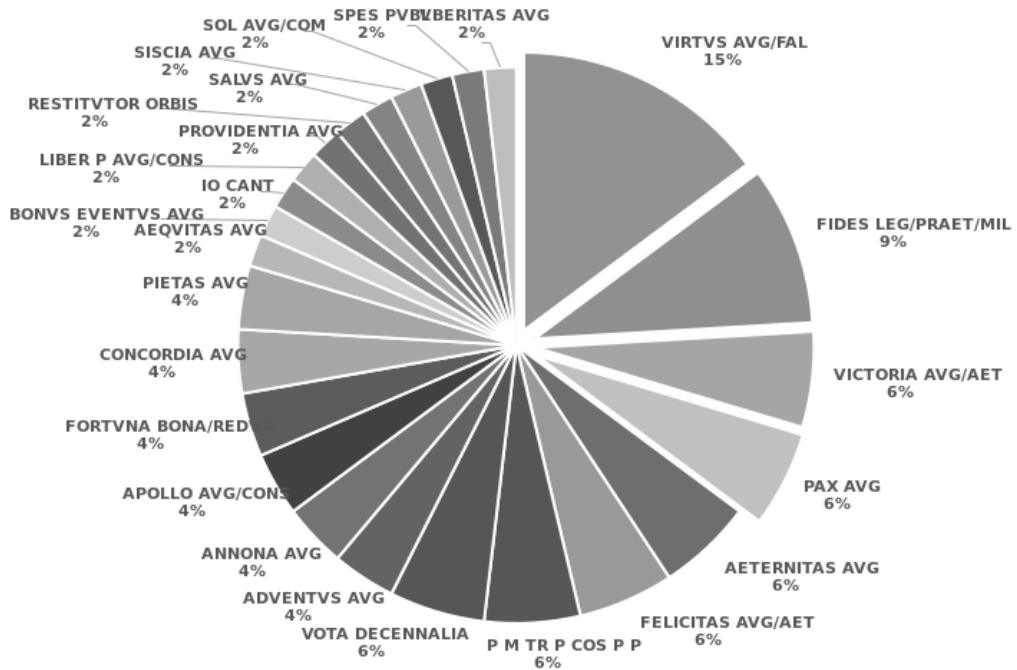


Fig. 4. Reverse legends of the *Segestica/Siscia* mint.



Fig. 5. Antoninianus of Gallienus (260-268) (from Münzkabinett Wien Rö 71855).

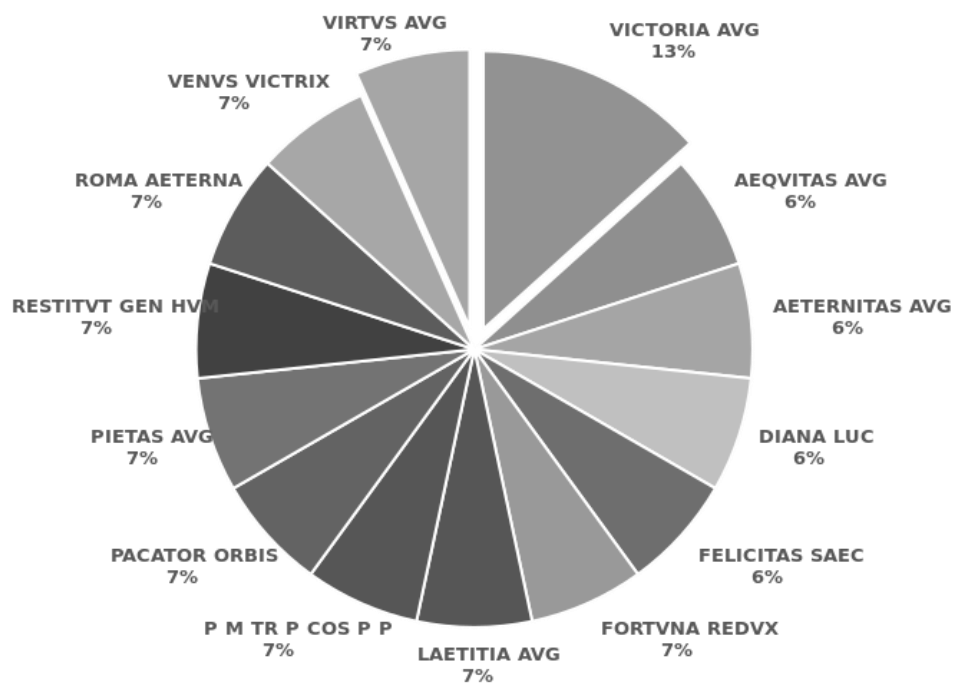
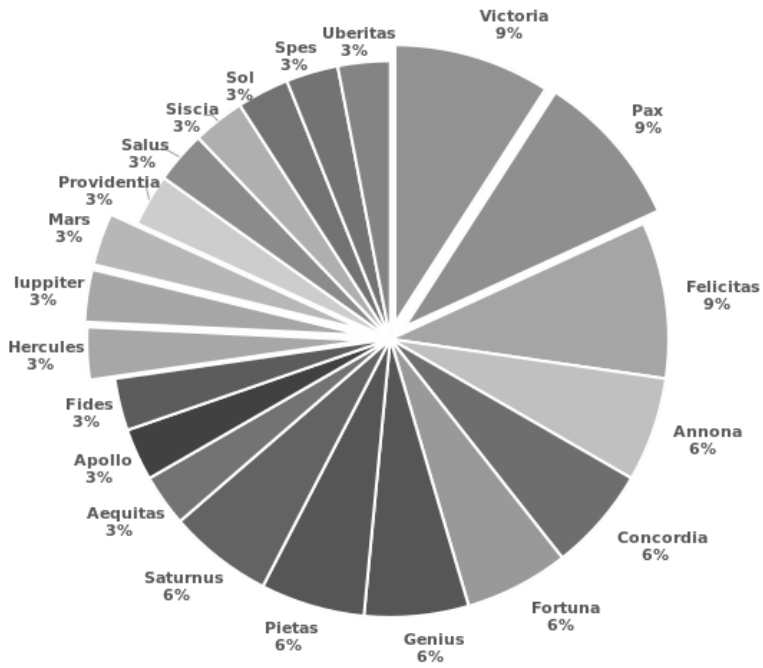
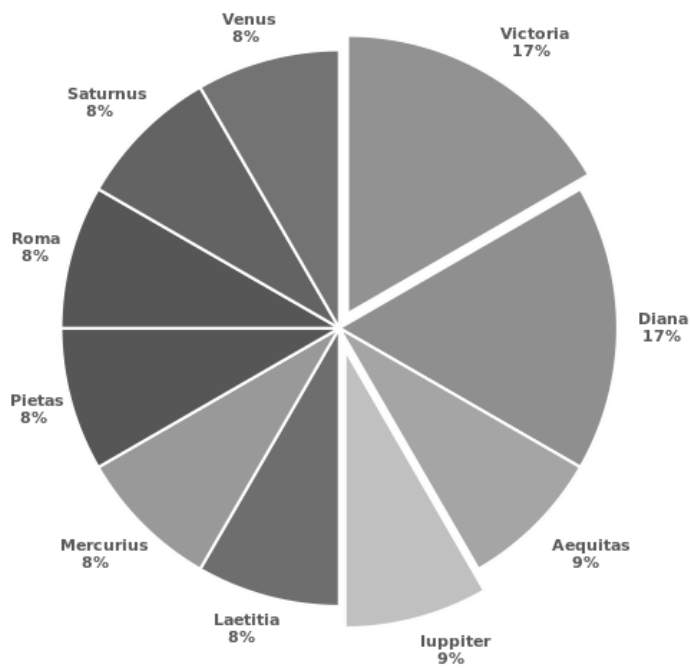


Fig. 6. Reverse legends of the mint of *Viminacium*.

Fig. 7. Reverse legends of the *Segestica/Siscia* mint.Fig. 8. Reverse legends of the mint of *Viminacium*.

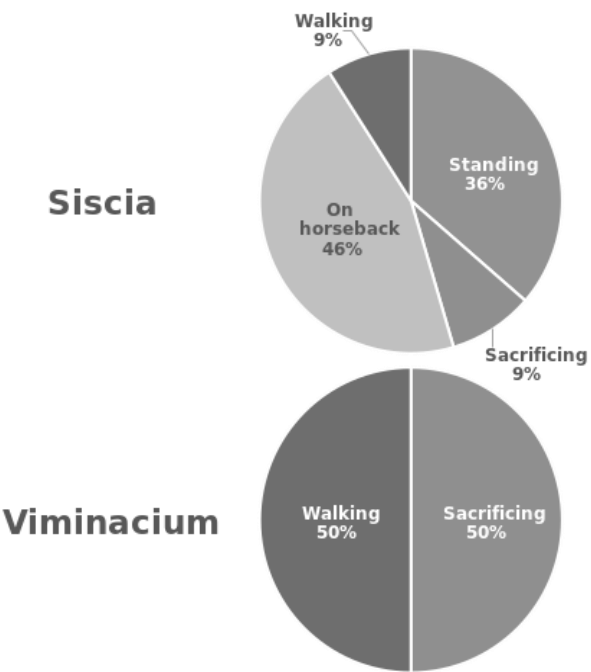


Fig. 9. Reverses with the image of Gallienus from the *Segestica/Siscia* and *Viminacium* mints.

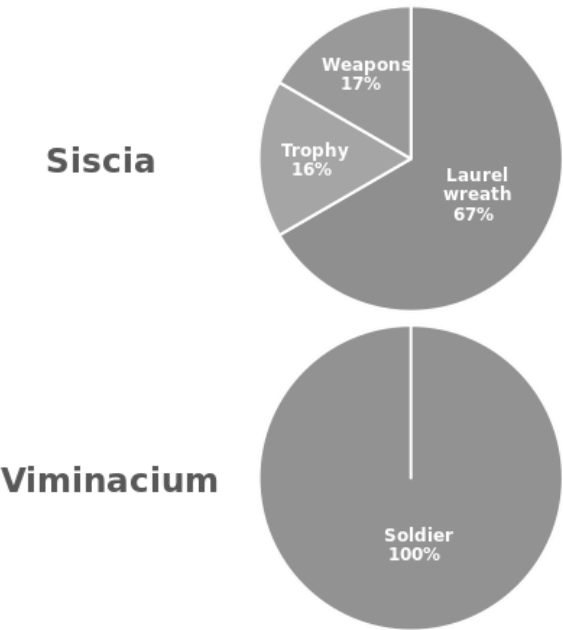


Fig. 10. Reverses with images of army and triumph from the *Segestica/Siscia* and *Viminacium* mints.

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Economic and Legal Minorization in the Late Roman Empire on the Example of Late Roman Colonate

The paper deals with the issue of the economic and legal minorization in Late Antiquity, or in another words, it deals with the processes of losing both the legal rights and economic wellbeing. The main focus of this paper is on the people under the Late Roman colonate. The coloni were among those, that were most definitely under the influence of minorization. The evidence presented in the paper suggest that in the Late Roman Empire the coloni were gradually losing their economic and legal status, often with the help of the powerful landlords, that sought to increase their own influence, sometimes even on the expense of other social groups, that lived in the Roman countryside.

Keywords: Late Roman Empire, Late Antiquity, Late Roman economy, colonate, great estates, Late Roman agriculture, minorization

Economic and legal minorization, or in another words, the process that leads certain groups of people into the poverty and to lose various legal rights can be found in many periods of history. Some might even argue that the mechanism behind economic and legal minorization is still recognizable in multiple areas of today's world. The Late Roman Empire, or in a broader sense Late Antiquity, was not different in this respect.

Late Antiquity was a turbulent time, full of changes that eventually led Antiquity into the Middle Ages. Thus, it is not wrong to consider the Late Antiquity to be, as many historians put it, one of the most important transitive periods in human history. But of course, such general statements are often a part of a historical narrative, allowing us to understand and describe the past reality more precisely. In fact, it is now generally accepted that the transformation into the Middle Ages de-

pended heavily upon geography. However, it is indisputable that Late Antiquity is very rich period to study, with many topics to focus on, as is demonstrated by many scholars who base their research in Late Antiquity.¹ The issue of minorization is one of them.

Unfortunately, it would be far beyond the scope of this paper to study minorization in respect to the whole of Late Roman society. Therefore, it is necessary to detail the scope of research to a single social group among Roman society, in which the processes of minorization can be found. For the purpose of this paper, such a group is going to be identified in the Late Roman colonate.

Historiography of the great estates and the colonate

The Roman colonate has been discussed quite often by the historians of Late Antiquity since the beginning of the 20th century. The studies were usually conducted in conjunction with topics about socio-economic conditions on the great estates or in the Roman countryside as a whole. Another aspect the authors took interest in was the evident deterioration in the legal status of coloni. Despite the many studies about the topic, there is still some ambiguity in questions regarding even some of the basic elements of the colonate.

In the early 20th century, the emergence of the great estates and the changes in the institution of the colonate were often seen as a stepping stone towards the feudalization of society. For example, in his study about Byzantine Egypt, Gelzer saw the estates as basically proto-feudal domains.² Another early 20th century scholar, Harold Idris Bell, believed that the increasing authority of the landowning magnates together with gradual binding of the workforce to the land led not only to feudalization, but also evidently worsened the living conditions of the peasantry.³ Similar opinions were shared in the now classic monograph of E. R. Hardy about large estates.⁴

¹ A. K. BOWMAN, P. BROWN, A. CAMERON, G. HALSALL or S. MITCHELL to name just a few scholars dealing with Late Antiquity. For the historiography of Late Antiquity see for example the introductions of CAMERON (2014), MAYER (2009) and MITCHELL (2015).

² GELZER (1909).

³ BELL (1917: 103).

⁴ HARDY (1931).

This view somewhat changed in the forties. One of the first scholars to disagree with the notion of massive pauperization of the Late Roman countryside was Germaine Rouillard. While she also pointed out the appearance of the large estates and semi-servile peasants, the evidence from the Roman Egypt suggested the existence of a financially secured populace not only among the landowners but also among the tenants.⁵ Similar ideas were adopted by Johnson and West in their noteworthy study *Byzantine Egypt: Economic Studies*.⁶

In the second half of the 20th century, the image of conditions in the Late Roman Empire was rehabilitated considerably. And this was not just on the subject of living conditions of the common people, but also in the matter of overall cultural importance, as can be seen in Peter Brown's *The World of Late Antiquity*.⁷ But for the purpose of this paper, it is much more important to mention the research done on the nature of the Late Roman colonate by the J. M. Carrié. He argued that the Late Roman colonate emerged due to the fiscal reasons after Diocletian's reforms. Sadly, it is not possible to go into detail in regard to Carrié conclusions, but in short, he believed that the relationship between the landowner and his workforce was to a large extent a fiscal one. In that case, the conclusions about coloni being a semi-servile class would be questionable.⁸

Carrié also explored the utility landowners with their large estates could provide to the Roman state; however, these concepts about the great estates serving as a helpful institution for the purposes of Roman government has been further developed by a French scholar, Jean Gascou. He has basically claimed that the great estates served as a semi-public establishments helping the Roman government with local administration and even with maintaining public order, as the private armed retinues of landowners were also seen as semi-official in character. Then

⁵ More about her results e.g. ROUILLARD (1953).

⁶ JOHNSON–WEST (1949); their study influenced many of the later authors, especially those who dealt with the prosperity of common rural populace, e.g. KEENAN (1975), KEENAN (1980) and MACCOUL (1993).

⁷ BROWN (1971).

⁸ For his results see CARRIÉ (1983) and CARRIÉ (1997).

the coloni could see in their landlords not as some kind of feudal lord but more likely an official responsible for collecting their taxes.⁹ Gascoû's model has served as an inspiration for many scholars and has received usually positive feedback¹⁰ and even those who largely criticize his conclusions, for example Banaji,¹¹ do not deny the importance of Gascoû's work.

When discussing the historiography of great estates including the coloni, it is important to mention the debate about the economic prosperity of the estates. As I have already mentioned, in the early 20th century there was a prevailing belief that the great estates were economically regressive. On the other hand, in the second half of the 20th century this belief was replaced by a theory seeing the ancient economy in general as a primitive one. In another words, the supporters of this argumentation believed that the farmers or even the estate owners were not able to plan ahead of time rationally in order to maximize their profits.¹² Some revisions of this concept appeared at the end of the 20th century, especially thanks to the work of Dominik Rathbone in his book *Economic Rationalism and Rural Society in Third-Century AD Egypt*.¹³ Because of his thorough study of what is known as the Heroninos archive, he was able to determine that the economy of the great estates was highly monetized and the internal accounts showed evidence of economic planning. Nonetheless, Rathbone was still uncertain whether economic rationality survived after the 3rd century AD in Roman Egypt. This uncertainty was rejected by the works of more recent authors like Robert Mazza, Jairus Banaji or Peter Sarris. They have concluded that the economy of the great estates was highly monetized even after the third century and that there a lively market both for land and labour existed.¹⁴ Thus the notion

⁹ GASCOU (1985).

¹⁰ For one of the more important works of authors agreeing with GASCOU see for example KAPLAN (1992).

¹¹ For more about BANAJI's opinions regarding GASCOU's work see BANAJI (2001).

¹² Among the supporters of these opinions one can find for example FINLEY (1985), or for the more recent work regarding the great estates of Late Antiquity see HICKEY (2001) or KEHOE (2003: 711–721).

¹³ RATHBONE (1991).

¹⁴ BANAJI (1997), BANAJI (2001), MAZZA (2001) and SARRIS (2006).

about a rapid decline in the rationality of economic thinking in the Late Roman Empire was already debunked by the aforementioned authors.

The ideas behind the economic prosperity of great estates of course even influenced the research done on the well-being of the agricultural populace of Roman countryside. This also included the workforce of such estates that often consisted of the people under the Roman colonate. At the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the new millennium, the tendency appeared to somewhat reconcile with the Gascoü's model, which has already been explained in the paper, at least as far as the legal and economic status of *coloni* is concerned. The dependence of workforce upon the landowners was often ascribed to fiscal reasons, but overall, there seemed to be no clear signs of the great estate's landlords achieving some kind of economic or social dominance, especially not at the expense of said workforce.¹⁵

However, the situation remains much more complicated and some of the more recent studies have already found issues with those conclusions. The willingness of the Roman State to make great estates and their respective landowners into some kind of a semi-official institutions is questionable. On the other hand, it might be much more plausible to say that the Roman State just reacted to what was already common practice in order to make the most out of it. Even the issues regarding Roman colonate appear to be much more complex and it is not possible to simply ascribe their apparent worsening living conditions to fiscal needs. While fiscal matters stood as one of the factors in the development of the Late Roman colonate, there were other reasons for it as well, for example the increasing influence of the great estate owners on the local level of different Roman provinces. These are going to be explained further in the paper.

On the shortcomings of methodology

The complexity of the issue of Roman colonate is also partially caused by some methodological difficulties. The people who are described as *coloni* typically came from the lower classes of Roman society. The historical research done on the subjects concerning lower social classes is

¹⁵ BAGNALL (1993), WARD-PERKINS (2000).

always accompanied by some particular problems that are mostly connected with primary sources available to us. It is important to realize that the authors of the vast majority of the preserved written sources came from the elites rather than the commoners. On top of that, they were written for high society, so the information provided by such texts must be interpreted carefully with the authors' persona always in mind.¹⁶

In the last couple of decades archaeologists have made considerable progress in their research of the Late Roman countryside. However, until relatively recently archaeologists naturally focused on monumental remains like churches or residences of influential figures. As such, the archaeology of the agrarian economy, or more specifically the archaeology of great estates, was often neglected. But to be fair, archaeologists keen on conducting research on such topics need to overcome several difficulties. Probably the most serious is the fact that the places where the agricultural aristocracy of the Late Roman Empire wanted to establish their estates were in locations with favourable climatic conditions for agriculture. Unfortunately for archaeology, such places were often densely populated, and they have often remained so to this day. That has inevitably led to the destruction of much of the archaeological material from the time of the Late Roman Empire in these areas. This is the main reason why we have more agricultural archaeological and even epigraphical material of the Late Roman Empire available to us from the locations that are not among the most important for the historians of the Roman great estates and the colonate.¹⁷ In addition, conclusions of archaeological research must always be consulted with other sources, es-

¹⁶ The somewhat unflattering image of the peasantry was evident in the literary works of the educated minority from antiquity to the modern times. For example, in the 5th century, the bishop Synesius of Cyrene portrayed the peasants of the Cyrenaica with the help of an anecdote as being somewhat foolish – KINGSLEY (2003, 116). In the Byzantine period, we can find similar lines in the *History* of George Akropolites, where he belittles a certain Constatine Margarite as a peasant born of peasants, capable only of grunting – Akropol. *Hist.* 297 (§60). However, picturing the peasants in a negative way appeared even in later periods and especially in the early modern age. See DÜLMEN (2005).

¹⁷ SARRIS (2006, 118).

pecially when dealing with social or economic history. As such, archaeology is invaluable in finding out, for example, the borders of the great estates or what level of material culture was available for the inhabitants of the estate. But it does not provide us answers if we ask who the inhabitants of these estates were. Whether it was free farmers, tenants or possibly slaves managed directly by estate owners.¹⁸ For the abovementioned reasons this paper will deal mostly with textual sources. The archaeological research will be taken into consideration through the works of historians that have already put the archaeological research of the Roman agricultural countryside into the context.

The development of the Roman colonate

The complexity of the issue concerning Roman colonate is also partially caused by its terminological ambiguity¹⁹ and by the fact that the whole colonate as an institution developed over time. It was as late as in the reign of the emperor Justinian that the legislation on the topic of coloni was united. Before that there were considerable differences in the legal status of coloni, which could also vary based on the laws that were promulgated in certain provinces.

While the terms used to describe coloni or tenants in general appeared in legal and other textual sources even before the 4th century and as early as in the period of Late Republic when the term was used with the meaning of tenants,²⁰ the first law that can be linked to the Late Roman colonate that was characterized mainly by binding the coloni to the land was very likely the law of Constantine's published in 332 AD:

Imp. Constantinus A. ad provinciales. Apud quemcumque colonus iuris alieni fuerit inventus, is non solum eundem origini suae restituat, verum super eodem capitationem temporis agnoscat. Ipsos etiam co-

¹⁸ For more information about the limits of archaeology, see for example SODINI (2003, 28).

¹⁹ Apart from the more specific terms used in this paper, the coloni were often called simply with words that originally meant common peasants like the greek *georgoi*. This was true especially for the papyri, but it appeared even in the Justinian Novels – BANAJI (2001, 187).

²⁰ SIRKS (2008, 122).

lonos, qui fugam meditantur, in servilem conditionem ferro ligari conveniet, ut officia quae liberis congruunt, merito servilis condemnationis compellantur implere.²¹

This particular law was enacted *ad provinciales*, therefore it is possible it was not applied universally over the whole Roman Empire at that time.²² Later in the 4th century more laws regarding the coloni appeared, most of them hinting at the deteriorating legal status of coloni. Thus, the other laws for example prohibited them from pretending to be free men²³ or simply forbade them to leave the land they worked upon.²⁴

Another law states that the coloni could not freely dispose of their property without the knowledge of their landowner.²⁵ However, it is essential to notice that this law was aimed at the group of coloni hiding under the term *coloni adscripticii*. These, together with the *coloni iuris alieni* who were the main concern of the above-mentioned law by Constantine, can be described by the general label of bonded coloni who paid their taxes through their landlords. On the other hand, there were those among the coloni that enjoyed considerably more freedom according to the code of laws. While they still appeared to be bonded to the land they had to till,²⁶ they paid the taxes themselves and they could freely dispose of their own property.²⁷ It was also forbidden to reduce their status to that of *adscripticii*.²⁸ Nonetheless, even the *coloni liberi* could not be called completely free men. The law by Anastasius eventually bonded them to the land if they remained on it for more than thirty

²¹ Cod. Theod. 5, 17, 1.

²² I was appropriately reminded of the possibility that the law in question could be actually applied universally. For example as an answer to provinciales, but with general validity. On the other hand, binding the coloni to the land in various provinces appeared in laws at a later date, for example in Illyricum by the year 371 (Cod. Iust. 11, 53, 1) and in Palestine by the year 386 (Cod. Iust. 11, 51, 1).

²³ Cod. Iust. 11, 48, 8.

²⁴ Cod. Iust. 11, 51, 1.

²⁵ Cod. Theod. 5, 3, 1.

²⁶ Cod. Iust. 11, 48, 23; 11, 48, 51–53.

²⁷ Cod. Iust. 11, 48, 19; 11, 48, 52.

²⁸ Cod. Iust. 11, 48, 23.

years.²⁹ In a later law³⁰, it was then established that the same rule applied even to their children, thus making their status of bonded coloni *de facto* hereditary.³¹

By the content of the laws themselves it is hard to decide what precisely caused the gradual decline of the coloni's legal status and it is also difficult to discover whether such laws were published in order to establish a new state of affairs or whether they just acknowledged circumstances already common in practice. Available evidence actually suggests that the latter might be closer to the truth. The laws binding the coloni were published continuously from the 4th century up to the time of Justinian for different parts of the Roman Empire and it seems that those laws did not indeed introduce a new order of things, but that they were implemented to allow the state to gain the most from the conditions in practice. In Egypt, for example, we know of papyri describing coloni by the terms³² that appeared as officialy in legal sources at a much later date,³³ which would suggest that the legal framework about the coloni developed according to established common practice. Of course, it is not possible to be completely sure, as there is always a chance that we simply lack the evidence of the intermediary legal sources.

On the other hand, these are not the only examples of such laws. A comparable pattern can be identified even when discussing the issue of *autopragia*, or in another words, when discussing the practice in which the residents working on an estate did not pay the taxes directly to the state's officials, but paid it through their respective landowners. Before

²⁹ Cod. Iust. 11, 48, 19.

³⁰ Cod. Iust. 11, 48, 23.

³¹ The interpretation of the laws Cod. Iust. 11, 48, 19 and Cod. Iust. 11, 48, 23 is not completely clear and there exists a discussion about precise meaning of these two laws. Sirks for example believes in completely opposite interpretation. In this scenario the *coloni adscripticii* working for 30 years on the same land would gain the status of free coloni that would even transfer to their children; SIRKS (2008, 130).

³² P. Oxy L 3584; The papyri in question is a petition dated to the middle of 5th century from a certain estate worker Apphous. He describes himself with a term *paroikos* that is considered to be synonymus with the term *enapographos*, which is greek equivalent to the latin term *coloni adscripticii*, or in another words – bonded colon.

³³ The term *paroikos* appeared in 6th century laws, for example Cod. Iust. 1, 2, 24.

the appearance of evidence of the autopract status in any legal source, it is possible to find mentions of it in the papyri of the Heroninos archive.³⁴

Lastly, the development of the legal status according to the legislation was finalized and somewhat united in the reign of the emperor Justinian, so it is clear that the whole process of developing and uniting the legal status of the Late Roman colonate took more than two hundred years. Even though it is not possible to call people under the colonate truly free from the legal perspective, they were still not slaves as the state never really removed their status of Roman citizens. Possibly the best way to describe coloni legally would be to say that they were free in their relation to the Roman state and a Roman society as a whole, but in a servile condition with regard to their masters and landowners. In other words, they were *in domini potestate*.³⁵

Republishing of laws and *patrocinium*

There are some issues when dealing with legal sources such as the *Codex Theodosianus* and *Codex Iustinianus*.³⁶ I have already mentioned some of them in the previous paragraphs, but probably the most relevant in regard to this paper is the discussion to what degree the laws pictured the reality of the Late Roman Empire. The laws could very well just describe the state of affairs desired by the Roman government and evidence in support of this exists. For the purpose of this paper the most important of such evidence is the fact that the laws often used to be republished, which suggests that the Roman state had problems enforcing the laws.

A very relevant example of the aforementioned republished laws is the section that deals with the illicit form of patronage most often called *patrocinium*. In this kind of patronage, the rural populace, with bonded coloni among them, entered into service and put themselves under the protection of someone other than their rightful landowner. Most cases of *patrocinium* are reported from the Roman east, where the coloni and oth-

³⁴ RATHBONE (1991, 404–407).

³⁵ SARRIS (2006, 154); Nonetheless, the caution here is necessary, because the landlord did not possess the power over the coloni due to sphere of the private law, but more likely as a right of the landlord pertained in public law based in his ownership of the land – GREY (2007, 168).

³⁶ For more about the codes see: MATTHEWS (2000) and SIRKS (2007).

er agricultural laborers came under the protection of some local authority, often but not exclusively of military origin. Such protection would serve them against both brigands and the landowner's officials collecting rents, as well as imperial tax collectors. The first law concerning prohibiting *patrocinium* and stating that the *colonorum multitudo* under its protection should meet their obligations was issued in the year of 360 for the area of Egypt.³⁷ In the year 368 or 370 the proscription was published again by the emperors Valentinian and Valens, this time for the whole empire.³⁸ In the early fifth century the Roman state even tried to reach an arrangement with those landowners who had gained new lands through the illicit patronage by making such gains legal as long as they met all their fiscal obligations; however, it once again prohibited any further gain of lands by such means.³⁹ But *patrocinium* still remained reality, as we can see from further laws in the *Codex Iustinianus* prohibiting it.⁴⁰

The mentions of *patrocinium* do not come only from the legal sources. A very nice description of *patrocinium* is available to us through one of Libanius' speeches,⁴¹ where he informs us that it happened on one of his estates. Of course, he laments over the whole situation because not only did he lose his workforce, but he was also unable to collect the rents from them while still being responsible for the collection of taxes. For the western part of the Roman empire, the evidence of *patrocinium* is much scarcer, but one can find references to it in the works of the Church fathers - *De gubernatione Dei* by Salvian is the most informative about the subject of *patrocinium*.⁴² He informs us of the poor condition of people from countryside that forced them into service and under the protection of the rich landowners.

While *patrocinium* was definitely undesirable for the purposes of the Roman state, the coloni could actually benefit from it and not just by the

³⁷ Cod. Theod. 11, 24, 1.

³⁸ Cod. Theod. 11, 24, 2.

³⁹ Cod. Theod. 11, 24, 6.

⁴⁰ Cod. Iust. 11, 53, 1.

⁴¹ Lib. Or. 47.

⁴² Sal. *De gub. Dei* 5, 8, 39–44.

fact that their new masters could provide them with protection from real threats like brigand attacks. From the economic point of view, the rigid system of a workforce bonded to the land on the one hand and landowners responsible for collecting of taxes on the other led to a certain economic stagnation, in which both of the parties gave up on fully investing into the land in order for agriculture production to be more efficient.⁴³ By being bonded to the land with circumstances that changed only very little through the time, the *coloni* essentially lost the opportunity to officially bargain for better conditions with their landlords.⁴⁴ *Patrocinium* could serve them as a way to better their own living situation. Considering that the laws introduced severe penalties for both the *coloni* under *patrocinium* and for the individuals providing it,⁴⁵ it would be only logical to assume that it must have been beneficial for both parties if they were willing to undertake such risks. They could, for example, bargain over the contract much more freely.

Economic, social and legal power of the *coloni*

Precisely determining the actual economic and financial conditions of both the *coloni adscripticii* and the *coloni liberi* is a difficult, if not completely impossible task due to the lack of relevant sources. Some of the literary sources talk about the impoverished agrarian population⁴⁶, but

⁴³ For more information about the economic efficiency of such systems of production see KEHOE (2007, 36–40; 69–72).

⁴⁴ On the other hand, it is important to mention here that many economic studies found out the less developed countries of today's world were actually more agriculturally productive in a system where tenants had to pay both the taxes and rents, simply because it drove them to work harder. The question is, however, if it is possible to project such findings to the reality of the Late Roman period – FOXHALL (1990, 102).

⁴⁵ As seen in Cod. Iust. 11, 53, 1 the law theoretically allowed putting the *coloni* that turned themselves over to the protection of another into the chains, but considering the need of the workforce in Late Antiquity, it is hard to imagine that the punishments were overly harsh. On the other hand, there were penalties even for the ones providing *patrocinium* that often consisted of fines or property confiscations.

⁴⁶ Apart from the already mentioned *De Gubernatione Dei*, there are more pieces of Christian literature talking about the bad living conditions of the peasants. An open letter of the 5th century written by the abbot Shenoud can serve as a nice example. In

we cannot take this as a given, as I have already explained. On the other hand, in some papyri one can find mentions of coloni having substantial wealth.⁴⁷ However, it is not fitting to be overly optimistic about the economic wellbeing of the Late Roman agricultural populace. After all, the evidence suggests that there was a great deal of indebtedness in the Late Roman Empire, especially among the coloni. The debt is also considered as one of the main factors why it was possible for the formerly free inhabitants of the Roman Empire to lose such a large portion of their personal rights, as happened in the case of coloni.⁴⁸

While the gradual loss of the coloni's legal rights was evident from the Roman code of laws, they were never truly completely without them and the evidence available to us suggests that they were not oblivious of their rights. There are some petitions that have survived, sent to the local authorities by both the free farmers and the coloni, in which they tried to defend their rights. Most of these petitions sent by the coloni were about their landowners raising rents too high and indeed it was forbidden by law to raise the rents above the value that was agreed upon when the contracts between landowners and coloni were created.⁴⁹ Other type of petitions that can be often found consists of pleas regarding remissions of rent payments because of various occurrences like droughts, crop failures or dying cattle.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, in most cases we do not know what the response of the official authorities was, so we cannot decide how successful such petitions were. Nonetheless, the very

the letter, the abbot berates one of the landowners of the city of Panopolis for exploitation of his workforce – BARNES (1964, 157–159).

⁴⁷ For example, P. Oxy XXVII 2479 consists of a plea made by a certain colonus that fled from the Appion estate of Kinea because his cattle died and he no longer could pay his rents. Now he is asking for the chance to return to the estates to work again without the punishment. The fact that he once had cattle at his disposal suggests that before he was struck by bad fortune he was doing quite well.

⁴⁸ See FINLEY (1976).

⁴⁹ Cod. Iust. 11, 50, 1.

⁵⁰ They were eligible for remissions of the rents only in a case of what was known as *vis maior*, or in another words if some unforeseeable disaster struck their land and they were thus unable to make a profit from their land. But unfortunately, a lot of calamities like seasonal heat waves that could cause for instance crop failures were considered to be foreseeable – KEHOE (2007, 110–119).

existence of such petitions provides us with several very interesting findings. Firstly, the fact that the coloni sent the petitions indicate that they were quite knowledgeable about their own rights and they were ready to defend them if the need for it occurred. From this evidence alone, it seems they were not as defenceless as some authors, both modern ones and ancient ones, imply.⁵¹ Secondly, the petitions sent to the imperial authorities might suggest that the rural populace even in the fifth and six centuries had some faith in finding justice when addressing imperial authorities. Especially, when put in context with the increasing care of imperial administration for the imperial rescripts that in some cases could serve as a way to alter the conditions of the agrarian workforce.⁵²

On the other hand, different evidence puts the life of the countryside's common folk into a much worse light. We know of various petitions from originally free farmers that describe the illicit activity of local powerful landowning magnates. Such documents show that the landowning elite used their influence and sometimes even brute force to coerce the local population into conceding their lands and eventually becoming coloni in the coercer's service. One of the best documented examples of such petitions are the ones sent by one Dioscuros in the mid-6th century, describing the affairs in the village by the name of Aphrodite.⁵³ He informs us that the private armed retinues of the neighbour-

⁵¹ The need for protection of the common people is often emphasized in the work of church fathers. For example, John Chrysostom compared them to a flock and highlights the necessity of their masters caring for them and leading them not only in secular but also in spiritual matters; DE WET (2015, 83–113).

⁵² KEHOE (2007, 19). The petitions sent by the agrarian populace from the lower social classes are not just the Late Roman phenomenon. Similar petitions can be found through different historical periods. They were especially popular in the Early Modern Europe. The success of such petitions could not be taken for granted and the chances of favourable outcome were most likely quite low and yet the people sending them still expressed some hope in finding help with authorities. Even for the studies of Early Modern period the petitions served as one of the few primary sources available for various research questions regarding the common people. See for example: WÜGLER (2001).

⁵³ P.*Cairo Masp.* I 67002.

hood landowners⁵⁴ collected taxes from the farmers they had no rights to and that they even seized their cattle and blocked the irrigation canals to force them into cooperation. Even in one of the Libanius' speeches, it is possible to find mentions of such behaviour by the influential magnates. He vividly describes the common practice of a large landowner buying a small parcel of land in the village and then using his influence and power to coerce other farmers in the vicinity to enter into his service in order to gain control of their lands.⁵⁵ The great landowners even used such methods as deliberately causing hunger among the population in order to further advance their economic and social power and in effect decrease the influence of the people standing lower on the social ladder.⁵⁶

While it is true that the farmers initially entered into colonate status willingly by signing a contract with the landowner,⁵⁷ the likes of the above mentioned evidence suggest that they could often be driven into entering the colonate by the landowners themselves. This is not to mention the economic pressure the large estates generated on the small scale free farmers, who could hardly remain economically competitive in an areas in which powerful magnates operated.

In the paper papyri were often mentioned as a source material. However, when dealing with papyri one needs to keep in mind some

⁵⁴ The topic of private armies of influential figures is also very interesting to study. In the sources, such units are often described with the term *buccelarii*. As can be seen, they were often used by rich landowners, even though there were laws that prohibited creating personal armed bands of soldiers. However, some authors believe that the *buccelarii* eventually developed into having a semi-official character and thus they could have served as a military reserve of the state, while being partially provided for by the landowners that employed them. See for example: SCHMITT (1994).

⁵⁵ LIB Or. 39, 11.

⁵⁶ STAHAKOPOLOUS (2004, 187–210).

⁵⁷ The laws found in Cod. Iust. 11, 48, 8 and Cod. Iust. 11, 48, 22 explicitly state that workers need to agree to becoming *coloni adscripticii* and they cannot be made into adscripts simply by working on a landowner's land. There was also need of an additional document proving their agreement to enter such service. Such sureties can be found in the papyri. For example, P. Oxy I 135 shows us the condition of the contract. The labourers in question were retained on a permanent basis and the contract extended even to the families of the labourers.

methodological flaws. Firstly, the vast majority of papyri remain unedited and are currently available only to a handful of papyrologists. As such, it is possible that some currently undocumented papyri contain valuable information about the topic at hand that will alter our conclusions sometime in the future. Secondly, and probably even more importantly, almost all of the papyri come from Egypt, which is often considered to have had atypical economic and social conditions among the regions of the Late Roman Empire. Nonetheless, there are some papyri from the other parts of the Roman Empire as well containing similar information on the topics of great estates and the colonate.⁵⁸

Conclusions

In the paper I tried to provide evidence in order to shed some light on the living conditions of the people under the Late Roman colonate. The legal sources clearly reveal that the legal status of the Late Roman coloni deteriorated through the time and the coloni themselves thus can be considered under the influence of legal minorization.

However, it is necessary to realize that they were never completely without rights and that they were never truly reduced to a servile status. As such, the various petitions suggest that the coloni knew about their own rights and were ready to defend them when it was needed. On the other hand, in reality people under the Late Roman colonate probably had only limited options to use their own free will. The owners of large estates held considerable influence over affairs in the Roman countryside and the evidence indicates that they were prepared to use their power to achieve benefits even at the expense of the local people. Thus, the landowners had the means to force both the free farmers and coloni to do their bidding. Nonetheless, even coloni could try to better their own living conditions by entering under the *patrocinium* and eventually achieving better bargaining terms for themselves. But it is true that even the *patrocinium* could be enforced on the coloni by someone in power.

⁵⁸ Among the other written sources describing comparable phenomena the most notable ones are probably the already mentioned literary works of Church Fathers describing social problems of the rural populace among them especially the mentions of the illicit form of patronage often called *patrocinium*.

Patrocinium was of course prohibited by the laws, which is understandable, because in such cases the state lost any potential control, especially in fiscal matters.

Last but not least, the notion that the legislation dealing with *coloni* reacted to the situation already in practice, rather than trying to create a new state of affairs, suggests that the deteriorating legal status of *coloni* reflected to their economic wellbeing and social standing. Unfortunately, we lack the sources needed to provide a complete image of the economic prosperity of the *coloni*, but the available evidence implies that the Roman countryside was economically quite diverse and even that some of the *coloni* could enjoy relatively good material security. On the other hand, the impoverishment of the Late Roman agrarian populace was very likely on the rise and this was true even for the *coloni*. After all, their large indebtedness was one of the main reasons why they started to become more and more dependent on the estate owners. In this respect, the legal minorization of the *coloni* revolved around their economic and social standings, rather than the other way around.

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The Art of Praise in the ‘Argonautica-Syncrisis’ at the Beginning of Claudian’s *Bellum Geticum*

Techniques of praise in Claudian’s panegyric epics have been broadly debated. Similes and comparisons are an essential part of the concept of his poems. Comparative elements may influence the characterization as well as the praise of the addressees and have so far only been briefly discussed.

*This paper addresses on the proem of *Bellum Geticum*, the so-called ‘Argonautica-Syncrisis’. It aims to look at the techniques of depiction and praise through this passage, where Claudian takes up the myth of the Argonauts to illustrate and exaggerate the character traits and deeds of his protagonist. Furthermore, whether the myth is used to influence the recipient’s perspective is examined. The primary focus lies on the depiction of Tiphys as the helmsman and conqueror of the Symplegades as well as its impact on the characterization and praise of the protagonist Stilicho.*

Keywords: Claudian’s *Carmina Maiora*, *Bellum Geticum*, ‘Argonautica-Syncrisis’, praise, panegyric epics, similes, syncriseis, intertextuality

What does the helmsman of the Argo, Tiphys, have in common with Stilicho, a Roman military commander at the end of the 4th century AD? What connects these two figures, one mythological, one real? We shall discover the result in the following pages.

Claudian’s *Bellum Geticum* has generated interest in research since the 1970s.¹ Its proem, which this paper is about, has so far been interpreted first and foremost regarding its relationship to the work as a

¹ SCHROFF (1927); CAMERON (1970); BALZERT (1974); GARUTI (1979); CAMERON (2011); MÜLLER (2011); WARE (2012); COOMBE (2018).

whole as well as its overall panegyric effect.² The role of Tiphys within has only been discussed briefly.³ The following paper aims to close this gap.

First, an introduction to the poem and its *praefatio* is given. Here, the expectations with which the recipients enter the poem following the *praefatio*, are of interest. Then the selected passage, in which Stilicho is compared to Tiphys and his deeds, is subjected to a close reading. Including intertextual references, an interpretation is sought. Furthermore, it is examined to what extent the figure of Tiphys shapes the praise of Stilicho at the beginning of *Bellum Geticum*.

Bellum Geticum is one of the latest poems in Claudian's oeuvre and deals with the war against the Goths which took place in the winter of 401/402 AD.⁴ As the title reveals, it is one poem of the *Carmina Maiora* which is not explicitly called panegyric. Nevertheless, *Bellum Geticum* is high encomiastic and primarily pursues praising Stilicho and his deeds in the war against the Goths.⁵ The poem focuses on Stilicho's outstanding achievements, which are presented against the background of the preparations for the final battle at Pollentia, which itself is only mentioned in passing.⁶

The beginning of *Bellum Geticum* leaves the reader rather surprised, since one does not find anything they would expect at the very start of such a poem. Within the *praefatio*,⁷ which precedes the poem, Claudian

² The works of Claudia SCHINDLER must be mentioned in particular at this point, as she has published on Claudian in various volumes since the early 2000s. SCHINDLER was also the first to attribute importance to the opening verses of *Bellum Geticum*, which made an in-depth treatment of it possible in the first place. SCHINDLER (2004a); SCHINDLER (2004b); SCHINDLER (2005); SCHINDLER (2009).

³ SCHINDLER (2005); COOMBE (2014).

⁴ SCHINDLER (2009: 138); MÜLLER (2011: 351–352).

SCHINDLER (2004b: 19–20); SCHINDLER (2005: 109); MÜLLER (2011: 353–354).

⁶ CAMERON (1970: 181).

⁷ Claud. *Get. Praef.* 1–18: *Post resides annos longo velut excita somno / Romanis fruitur nostra Thalia choris. / optatos renovant eadem mihi culmina coetus / personat et noto Pythia vate domus. / consulis hic fascēs cecini Libyamque receptam, [5] / hic mihi prostratis bella canenda Getis. / sed prior effigiem tribuit successus aenam, / oraue patricius nostra dicavit honos. / adnuit hunc princeps titulum poscente senatu / respice iudicium quam grave, Musa, subis! [10] / ingenio minuit merces properata favorem: / carminibus veniam praemia tanta negant, / et*

foreshadows an epic about Stilicho's great success in the war against the Goths and raises expectations for an imposing entry in a panegyric epic:⁸ At the beginning of the *praefatio*, Claudian announces the end of what must have been a long break in literary activity (Claud. *Get. Praef.* 1–2). He then refers to his earlier consular panegyrics and other literary works (Claud. *Get. Praef.* 3–5) and announces that he will now praise Stilicho's victory over the Goths (Claud. *Get. Praef.* 6–7). Claudian furthermore elaborates on how he had achieved fame and honour at the Roman court through his earlier poetry (Claud. *Get. Praef.* 8–14). The *praefatio* ends with the announcement of Stilicho's eulogy and his deeds in the following poem (Claud. *Get. Praef.* 15–18).⁹ After hearing or reading this *praefatio*, one is awaiting an imposing introduction. However, something completely different occurs: the proem turns out to be a syncrisis that focuses on single and predominantly threatening stations from the myth of the Argonauts.¹⁰

The syncrisis is divided into three parts. At the end of each part a reference to Stilicho can be found: Firstly (1) Tiphys, the helmsman of the Argo, and his achievement in the passage of the Symplegades are highlighted (Claud. *Get.* 1–11a). This part of the myth is then set in relation to Stilicho's achievements in the war against the Goths (Claud. *Get.* 11b–14a). In this paper, I will examine these fourteen verses. To give a better insight into the whole proem, I will also offer a glimpse of the remaining two parts of the syncrisis. The second section (2) presents itself as a kind of *recusatio* of mythological contents and aims to distinguish the poetic program of this poem from the classical mythological epics. For this purpose, some stations of the Argonauts' journey are brought up and described as fictitious and, moreover, exaggerated (Claud. *Get.*

magis intento studium censore laborat / quod legimur medio conspicimurque foro. /materies tamen ipsa iuvat solitumque timorem [15] / dicturo magna sedula parte levat, / nam mihi conciliat gratas inpensius aures / vel meritum belli vel Stilichonis amor.

⁸ PERRELLI (1992: 119).

⁹ FELGENTREU (1999: 132–133; 215).

¹⁰ SCHINDLER (2005: 109; 112). CAMERON (1970: 287) has indicated that Claudian often draws on material from mythology to anticipate or suggest the theme of a poem. What is new here is that the epic begins with a mythological narrative. See also SCHINDLER (2004b: 20).

14b–27a). The third part (3) embraces two of these points and puts each of them in relation to Stilicho's success (Claud. *Get.* 27b–35). All juxtapositions primarily aim to exaggerate Stilicho as a military commander in comparison with mythical heroes and happenings.¹¹

Structure of the syncrisis

Argonautica-Syncrisis (1–35)	
1–14a	Tiphys
1–11a	Tiphys, the helmsman of the Argo
11b–14a	Comparison Stilicho and Tiphys
14b–27a	<i>Recusatio</i>
14b–15a	Introduction
15b–19	Building the Argo with Minerva's support
20–21	Accusations against poets of mythical epics
22a–26	Further examples
22a	Harpyies
22b–23	Dragon, guardian of the Golden fleece
24	Fire-breathing bulls
25–26	Earth-borns
27a	End (revisiting the myth- <i>topos</i>)
27b–35	Fusion of myth and reality (Stilicho)
27b–30	Comparison of the Harpyies and Goths
27b–28	Expulsion of the Harpyies (thanks to the Argonauts)
29–30	Expulsion of the Goths (thanks to Stilicho)
31–35	Comparison of the Earth-borns and Goths
31–33a	Fall of the Earth-borns
33b–35	Fall of the Goths

To make the following close reading comprehensible, the first fourteen verses of the syncrisis will now be given in Latin as well as in English translation:

¹¹ SCHINDLER (2005: 112); SCHINDLER (2009: 139).

Text and Translation:

*Intacti cum claustra freti, coentibus aequor
 armatum scopulis, audax inrumperet Argo
 Aeeten Colchosque petens, propiore periclo
 omnibus attonitis, solus post numina Tiphys
 incolumen tenui damno servasse carinam
 fertur et ancipitem montis vitasse ruinam
 deceptoque vagae concursu rupis in altum
 victricem duxisse ratem; stupuere superbae
 arte viri domitae Symplegades et nova passae
 iura soli cunctis faciles iam puppibus haerent
 ut vinci didicere semel. quodsi ardua Tiphyn
 navis ob innocuae meritum sic gloria vexit
 quae tibi pro tanti pulso discrimine regni
 sufficient laudes, Stilicho?*

When the bold Argo broke the locking bolts of the sea and the surface, armed with converging rocks, seeking Aeetes and the Colchians, and while all were stupefied because of the too close danger, <then> Tiphys all alone, apart from divine power, is said to have saved the ship uninjured and with but small harm, and to have avoided the collapse of the rock <threatening> from both sides, and, after the convergence of the swaying rock face had been deceived, to have guided the ship victoriously on to the high seas; there they stood, the haughty, the Symplegades subdued by man's skill; and they endured the new laws of the sea-bottom, and, now easily accessible to all ships, remained standing, as soon as they had once learned to be vanquished. If such great an honor is conferred on Tiphys because of the merit of an undamaged ship, what praise will be conferred on thee, Stilicho, for the expulsion of danger from so great an empire?

In the first two verses, the recipients find themselves in the middle of the myth about the Argo. There is no introductory word or any other kind of introduction; the story simply starts at a point somewhere on the sea; straightaway an uneasy atmosphere is drawn: the sea is described as untouched; the conditions seem threatening. A poem about war beginning with the adjective *intactus* gives the entrance a special effect: through this, the image of something untouched is drawn, and, thus, peaceful associations are retrieved; one then immediately thinks of the Goths invading Italy and disturbing the peace that existed there. It is also striking that the word *mare* is not used here, instead *aequor* and *fretum* are used synonymously. Particularly the noun *aequor* can evoke associations with a battlefield and, thus, create a connecting line to the final battle at Pollentia. The phrase *claustra freti* is also worth mentioning and seems to be an allusion to Seneca's *Medea*. In the second stasimon of the Roman tragedy, the Symplegades are referred to as *claustra profundis* (Sen. *Med.* 42b). The word *claustrum* is usually also used in connection with big doors or gates. Therefore, it evokes the image of the Argo breaking through a barrier.

Furthermore, linguistic parallels to Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* can be found,¹² where the sea is also described as untouched. Claudian may have consciously placed these linguistic markers to link the two passages of the poems.

The second verse finally opens up to the recipient that the following story is about the Argo (Claud. *Get.* 2b: *audax inrumperet Argo*). The sea itself is described as armed (Claud. *Get.* 1b–2a: *coentibus aequor / armatum scopulis*). This makes the sea seem to have prepared itself like a person for battle and as it was by force preventing the Argonauts from continuing their journey.¹³ The adjective *audax* should also be emphasised,

¹² Claud. *Get.* 1: *intacti [...] claustra freti*; Val. Fl. 3, 554: *intactas [...] undas*; Claud. *Get.* 1–2a: *coentibus aequor / armatum scopulis*; Val. Fl. 4, 688: *clausum scopulus super effluit aequor*. Cf. further Stat. *Theb.* 5, 336: *intacti [...] ponti*. GUALANDRI (1968: 67–68).

¹³ The sea was earlier described as inhospitable in Pindar and Apollonios of Rhodes: Pind. *P.* 4, 203: σὺν Νότου δ' αὔραις ἐπ' Ἀξείνου στόμα πεμπόμενοι ἤλυθον. BRASWELL (1988: 273; 286). Apoll. Rhod. 2, 547–548: ὥς ἄρα καρπαλίμως κούρη Διὸς αἰξάσσα | θῆκεν ἐπ' ἀξείνοιο πόδας Θυνηίδος ἀκτῆς. In this case, it should be mentioned, that in the passage of Statius' *Thebais*, which was cited above, the sea is, unlike

through which the voyage of the Argo is interpreted as a venture. A similar representation is found in Seneca's *Medea*, where in the second stasimon the chorus describes Jason's first sea voyage as bold.¹⁴ Afterwards the destination of the journey is mentioned twice (Claud. *Get.* 3a: *Aeeten Colchosque petens*), thus, briefly interrupting the drawing of the threatening situation, before in v. 3b the focus is again directed to the danger (Claud. *Get.* 3b: *propiore periclo*). Claudian draws a classic maritime-nautical picture here, in which the sea represents danger to a ship.¹⁵ It should be mentioned that the ablative can be read literally, considering that the Symplegades are in constant motion, opening and closing again.

In the following verse, human actors are integrated for the first time. First, the mood on the Argo is described within an ablative absolute (Claud. *Get.* 4a: *omnibus attonitis*): the crew of the ship seems to be completely dazed by the impending hurdles and therefore incapable of acting.¹⁶ Such a drawing of the Argonauts can already be found at the epic of Apollonios of Rhodes, where the Argonauts appear equally terrified facing the Symplegades.¹⁷

In v. 4b, Tiphys, the helmsman of the Argo and protagonist of this part of the syncrisis, is mentioned for the first time. The adjective *solus* (Claud. *Get.* 4b) indicates Tiphys' special position. This aspect will later be

to earlier depictions, illustrated as hospitable to the Argonauts. Stat. *Theb.* 5, 336-337a: *Pelias intacti late subit hospita ponti / pinus*.

¹⁴ Sen. *Med.* 301-302: *Audax nimium qui freta primus / rate tam fragili perfida rupit*. BOYLE (2013: 209) points out, that *audax* is used as an epithet to the Argonauts as well as to their sea voyage in Roman Literature. Cf. Ov. *epist.* 12, 14: [...] *audacis attuleratque viros*; Catull. 64, 5-6: *auratam optantes Colchis avertere pellem / ausi sunt vada salsa cita decurrere puppi*.

¹⁵ 'The ship in danger' is known since Alcaeus of Mytilene (Alk. 326 LP [=46a D]) and Theognis of Megara (Theogn. 667-680). The image of the ship in danger is popular both within Greek tragedy and philosophy as well as historiography: Aischyl. *Sept.* 208-210; Soph. *Ant.* 180; Plat. *Rep.* 488b; Pol. 6, 44, 3. The *topos* is further used in epic poetry: Hom. *Il.* 15, 615-629; Apoll. Rhod. 2, 70-73; Verg. *Aen.* 1, 148-156; Lucan. 1, 498-504a. On this account, the famous poem of Horace about the ship in danger should be mentioned (Hor. *Carm.* 1, 14).

¹⁶ BALZERT (1973: 11).

¹⁷ Apoll. Rhod. 2, 561a: σὺν δέ σφιν χύτο θυμός.

relevant for the characterization and exaltation of Stilicho. In the *Argonautika* of Apollonios of Rhodes, Tiphys also plays an important role in the successful passage of the Symplegades.¹⁸ At this point, it should also be mentioned that Tiphys, as an independently acting figure, does not occur at this point in the Roman epic version of Valerius Flaccus. There the Argonauts reach for the oars all together,¹⁹ although they are just as dismayed in the face of the cliff and are only motivated to do so by a speech of Jason.²⁰

The following verses (Claud. *Get.* 5–8a) describe the thoroughfare and Tiphys' involvement in it. This part is divided into four sub-paragraphs: Firstly, the integrity of the ship (Claud. *Get.* 5: *incolumen tenui damno [...]* *carinam*) and Tiphys' function as a rescuer are emphasised (Claud. *Get.* 5: *servasse*). The minor damage to the Argo, caused by the Symplegades, is only mentioned in passing (Claud. *Get.* 5a: *tenui damno*). Secondly, reference is made to the beginning verses (Claud. *Get.* 1b–2a: *coentibus aequor / armatum scopulis*) when the converging cliffs are again depicted as a threat (Claud. *Get.* 6: *et ancipitem montis vitasse ruinam*). By use of the word *ruina*, the threat with which the Argonauts are confronted is described on two levels. On the one hand, *ruina* can be read literally as the imminent collapse of the rocks, on the other hand in a figurative sense as an approaching disaster for the Argonauts and their planned venture. Thus, the nature of the situation is made clear and Tiphys is portrayed as the helmsman, who is able to overcome this danger. Thirdly, the focus is once again directed to the clashing rocks (Claud. *Get.* 7: *deceptoque vagae concursu rupis in altum*). In the fourth part, the successful thoroughfare is described as a victorious undertaking (Claud. *Get.* 8a: *victricem duxisse ratem*). Claudian uses warlike terms and motifs to create associations. This supports the later comparison with Stilicho and gives the passage through the Symplegades the appearance of a warlike enterprise.

In the following verses (Claud. *Get.* 8b–11a) it is reported that after the thoroughfare of the Symplegades the rocks remain rigid (Claud. *Get.*

¹⁸ Apoll. Rhod. 2, 550–610; especially 573b–575a; 584–585; 610b. COOMBE (2014: 177); COOMBE (2018: 144).

¹⁹ Val. Fl. 4, 689–690.

²⁰ Val. Fl. 4, 637–646.

8b–9a: stupuere *superbae* / [...] *Symplegades*) and that they no longer pose a threat neither to sailors nor to ships.²¹ It is even mentioned, that the Symplegades now ensure easy access (Claud. *Get.* 9b–10: *passae* / [...] *cunctis faciles iam puppibus*). Furthermore, the drawing of the Symplegades as haughty is interesting (Claud. *Get.* 8: *superbae*) and suggests a negative valuation. In addition, the artistry of Tiphys is emphasised and brought into close connection with the overcoming of the danger. The new circumstances are clearly contrasted with the previous ones. Where at first the sinking of the Argo and the failure of the entire mission threatened (Claud. *Get.* 1b–2a; 3b; 6; 7), now, thanks to Tiphys, trouble-free passage is possible for all ships (Claud. *Get.* 9b–10a). Moreover, the artistry of Tiphys is highlighted at this point and brought into close connection with the overcoming of the danger (Claud. *Get.* 9a: *arte viri domitae Symplegades*).²² Afterwards, the Argonauts and most importantly Tiphys are described as masters of the Symplegades (Claud. *Get.* 11a: *ut vinci didicere semel*). This already offers a comparison; for this, we must anticipate the following: when Stilicho is later compared to Tiphys and his deeds, the praise is specifically measured by the merits attributed to Tiphys. The Argo's helmsman is here presented as both the saviour of the Argo and the conqueror of the Symplegades. Accordingly, v. 11a could also refer to the Goths, who are defeated at the end of Stilicho's campaign and forced to withdraw from Italic territory.

²¹ This passage might be inspired by the corresponding passage of Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*; Val. Fl. 4, 711–712a: *Tum freta, quae longis fuerant impervia saeculis, / ad subitam stupuerat ratem*. SCHINDLER (2005: 121).

²² COOMBE (2014: 177). The art of helmsmanship is already a component of maritime-nautical imagery in Plato's philosophical treatises (Plat. *Rep.* 241d; 488; there referred to as τέχνη), where it serves predominantly as an *exemplum*. Cicero, in one of his *Epistulae ad Familiares* (Cic. *Fam.* 1, 9, 21), compares the art of sailing to the art of governance. Furthermore, as a negative example, reference can be made to a simile from Lucan's *bellum civile* (Lucan. 7, 123b–127), in which the *ars* of the helmsman fails and the ship is finally abandoned to its fate. In Claudian's *Carmina Maiora*, the *ars* and corresponding other terms for art of navigation – or precisely its non-existence – are an essential aspect in numerous maritime-nautical comparisons and similes (Claud. *Rufin.* 2, 12b–13a; 4 *cons. Hon.* 219–224; 419–427; *Gild.* 215–222; *Mall. Theod.* 42–50; *Eutrop.* 2, 419b–431; *Stil.* 1, 281–290).

Then, finally, the story refers to Stilicho (Claud. *Get.* 11b–14a). First, Tiphys' merits are presented in abbreviated form once more. His deeds are mentioned as the origin of his fame (Claud. *Get.* 11b–12: *quodsi ardua Tiphyn / navis ob innocuae meritum sic gloria vexit*). Claudian subsequently argues, that if Tiphys has achieved such great glory for saving one single ship (Claud. *Get.* 12a: *navis ob innocuae*; 11b–12: *ardua [...] / sic gloria vexit*), then Stilicho is owed even greater honour for preserving the Roman Empire from the Goths (Claud. *Get.* 13–14a: *quae tibi pro tanti pulso discrimine regni / sufficient laudes, Stilicho?*).²³ Even before Stilicho's name appears in the poem, it is emphasized that he was able to avert very great danger (Claud. *Get.* 13b: *tanti pulso discrimine regni*). What the recipients have probably been expecting since the very beginning is finally provided here. Stilicho's name is conspicuously placed in the middle of the verse. At this point, the first part of the syncrisis closes.

The comparison has two characterizing functions which lead to Stilicho's praise: on the one hand, Stilicho's prudence is emphasised, on the other hand, his role as a commander and victor is underlined. Furthermore, the rescue of the Roman territory is highlighted.²⁴ Tiphys' enterprise, however dangerous and courageous, nevertheless serves predominantly as a point of comparison and is subordinated to Stilicho's actions and success.

With special regard to the fact that the entire first part of the syncrisis aims at a comparison between Tiphys and Stilicho, it is worth taking a look at v. 4, where Tiphys is called lonely (Claud. *Get.* 4). Tiphys and Stilicho appear on the same level insofar as they both act alone and are successful in a situation, in which everyone else is completely dazed (Claud. *Get.* 4a: *omnibus attonitis*).

Finally, the choice of Tiphys as the main protagonist should be discussed. Tiphys is not the classical hero from the myth of the Argonauts, for that is Jason.²⁵ Nor is Stilicho the Roman emperor. Furthermore, Tiphys' prominent role as a leader in the passage of the Symplegades is first encountered in Claudian's poem. This is where the peculiarity of

²³ SCHINDLER (2005: 113); SCHINDLER (2009: 139); COOMBE (2018: 145).

²⁴ COOMBE (2014: 177).

²⁵ GUALANDRI (1968: 66); KIRSCH (1989: 184); COOMBE (2018: 144).

this syncrisis seems to lie: both figures, mythical and real, are merely minor players in the respective story and are heroized by their achievements. Therefore, they both appear to be underdogs.

The image of Tiphys, the helmsman who saves the Argo and ensures a safe passage and journey, serves – apart from its characterizing function – first and foremost as an illustration. The description of Tiphys' deeds presents Stilicho's victory as a great success. Since the comparison places Stilicho above Tiphys and his achievements and depreciates the mythological narrative, the image also has the effect of exaggerating and, thus, provides Stilicho with a supermythical greatness: what a hero achieves in myth, is incredible; (but) what Stilicho has accomplished, however, is of higher value.²⁶ Considering that the Argonautica-Syncrisis as a whole extends over 35 vv. and that Tiphys' image in particular is richly painted (Claud. *Get.* 1–14a), the passage also has a retarding effect, since it delays the entry into the epic's main plot. Simultaneously, the syncrisis assumes a structuring function, for it clearly marks the beginning of the epic. Furthermore, the description of the Argo, traditionally the first ship of antiquity, breaking through the locking bolt of the sea for the very first time (Claud. *Get.* 1a: *intacti cum claustra freti*) lends Stilicho's deeds a certain symbolic character. Ultimately, the syncrisis is also prospective, especially since it anticipates the expulsion of the Goths by Stilicho at the end of the epic. Thus, the victory over the Goths could be symbolically evaluated as a sign of the restoration of Roman supremacy as the Argo symbolizes the start of a new age.²⁷ Therefore, the syncrisis mainly has an impact on how the recipients start off this poem and what kind of position they will take through.²⁸

Another outstanding point, which has an impact on the praise of Stilicho throughout the syncrisis, is the fact, that Tiphys himself is – within the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus – characterized through two

²⁶ SCHINDLER (2005: 112–113; 121); SCHINDLER (2009: 139–140); MÜLLER (2011: 254, n. 10).

²⁷ COOMBE (2014: 178); WARE (2012: 225–226); COOMBE (2018: 145). See also Verg. *Ecl.* 4, 34–36: *alter erit tum Tiphys et altera quae vehat Argo / delectos heroas; erunt etiam altera bella [35] / atque iterum ad Troiam magnus mittetur Achilles.*

²⁸ SCHINDLER (2005: 115; 117); COOMBE (2014: 177); COOMBE (2018: 26).

similes.²⁹ When Tiphys is mentioned at the beginning of *Bellum Geticum*, the descriptions and sections, in which Tiphys plays a role in the Roman epic, are called to mind. At this point, it must be pointed out, that there is no characterization of Tiphys within similes in the *Argonautica* of Apollonios of Rhodes.

The first simile on Tiphys in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* can be found in the first book following the sea storm scene.³⁰ The simile compares the obedience of the Argonauts to Tiphys to the obedience of the forces of nature to Jupiter. Primarily, the simile serves as an illustration of the scene. Moreover, Tiphys as the Argo's helmsman is characterized in two ways: firstly, he appears as a leading figure at this point, and secondly, his relationship with the crew is described in more detail. Furthermore, the passivity of the Argonauts within the scene should be emphasised. This creates a strong contrast to Tiphys' vigour and reminds of his independent action.³¹

In the second simile, the illness and death of the helmsman and the significance of this loss for the crew are discussed.³² It must be mentioned that Apollonios of Rhodes, even if only briefly, also reports Tiphys' death and the lamentations of the Argonauts in the second book of his epic, but the episode is not as richly displayed as in Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*. The focus is on the Argonauts' wish for Tiphys' recovery, which is compared to the pleading of children who fear for their mortally ill father. Tiphys' death is staged here like that of a father: like children, the crew does not want to acknowledge the certainty of the approaching death. This simile strongly focuses on the emotional aspect and has a performative effect, since it evokes pity in the recipient. In

²⁹ GÄRTNER (1994: 239).

³⁰ Val. Fl. 1, 689–692: *Tiphys agit tacitique sedent ad iussa ministri, / qualiter ad summi solium Iovis omnia circum [690] / prona parata deo, ventique imbresque nivesque / fulguraque et tonitrus et adhuc in fontibus amnes.*

³¹ ANZINGER (2007: 177).

³² Val. Fl. 5, 22–27a: *qualem praecipiti gravidum iam sorte parentem / natorum flet parva manus trepidique precantur / duret ut invalidis et adhuc genitoris egenis, / haud aliter socii supremo in tempore Tiphyn [25] / ante alios superesse volunt. mors frigida contra / urget.* On the design of the scene in Apollonios of Rhodes, see MORRISON (2007: 297–298); MORRISON (2020: 132).

addition, Tiphys' relationship with the Argonauts plays a significant role once again.

In both similes, Tiphys' relationship to the crew is highlighted. The image of Tiphys as a helmsman and attachment figure of the Argonauts is here recalled as a reminiscence at the beginning of *Bellum Geticum*. The role attributed to Tiphys thus influences the characterization and praise of Stilicho. Stilicho not only appears superior to Tiphys, but also figuratively comes close to Jupiter. Moreover, as a Roman army commander, he becomes the father of the nation and in this role surpasses a simple family father.

I will now summarize the main impacts on Stilicho's praise within the first part of the syncrisis.

There are several points of characterization through reminiscences and within the syncrisis itself. The comparison of Tiphys and Stilicho has the effect that the emphasis on Tiphys (re-) acting alone (*solus* [...] *Tiphys*, v. 4b) facing the Symplegades can be transferred to Stilicho's deeds during the war against the Goths.³³ Both figures appear as heroes who save themselves and their followers in a precarious situation through acting alone. Furthermore, Stilicho's position as commander-in-chief and victor becomes evident in the same way as the salvation of the Roman Empire.³⁴ Moreover, Stilicho's role as a leader is expanded by the intertextual reminiscences of Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*.

Finally, there are two more points, that influence the praise within the syncrisis and the poem as a whole. On the one hand, since Stilicho is not only compared to but also put over a hero out of a myth, Stilicho is given supermythical greatness. On the other hand, the syncrisis also assumes a prospective function, since Stilicho's victory over the Goths at the end of the poem is anticipated here. In the juxtaposition of the Symplegades' passage and Stilicho's success against the Goths, a hint of interpreting Stilicho's victory as the foundation of a new age is suggested; similarly, the voyage of the Argo was often interpreted as the beginning of a new age as well. This symbolic character is already noticeable

³³ BALZERT (1973: 11); MÜLLER (2011: 355, n. 13); WARE (2012: 226).

³⁴ WARE (2012: 88). See also Claud. *Get.* 36–38: *per te namque unum mediis exuta tenebris / imperio sua forma redit claustrisque solutae / tristibus exangues audent procedere leges.*

in the opening verses when the Argo is described as a ship breaking through the locking bold of the untouched sea. The first fourteen verses of the proem have a significant impact on the attitude with which the recipients enter the main plot of the epic.

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Pompa and Praise in Claudian's Panegyrics on the Third, Fourth and Sixth Consulship of Honorius

The paper deals with three representations of pompae (processions) within Claudian's Panegyrics on the Third, Fourth and Sixth Consulate of Honorius. The depictions of two adventus (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 125sq.; Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 543sq.) and one processus consularis (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 565sq.) are examined with regard to content, form, and function and subsequently compared. The comparison shows that all three pompa-passages share common features. These similarities form a design concept through which the passages are connected. At the same time, in terms of length, formal features as well as aspects of content a development can be observed in the adventus-passage in 6 cons. Hon. Honorius, here, outgrows the former versions of himself, represented in Claud. 3 cons. Hon. and Claud. 4 cons. Hon. Similarly, the poet Claudian surpasses himself on a poetic level.

Keywords: Claudian, panegyric, Honorius, glorification, *pompa*, procession; *adventus*, *processus consularis*

I.

[...] *quantae miracula pompae / vidimus [...]*! (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 565sq.)¹ – This exclamation is the beginning of the account of the *processus consularis* in Claud. 4 cons. Hon., the panegyric, which Claudian wrote on the occasion of Honorius' Fourth Consulate in 398. Literally, *pompa* can be translated as 'procession' in the given context. The exclamation as a whole then reads: 'What miracles of procession did we see!'²

¹ The Latin text is quoted after HALL (1985).

² *Quantae* does grammatically belong to *pompae*. I interpret *quantae* as an enallage, which is set for metrical reasons.

In Claudian's political poems *pompae* (processions) of different types are treated to varying degrees (*processus consularis*,³ *pompa nuptialis*,⁴ *pompa amphitheatralis*,⁵ *pompa triumphalis/triumpus*,⁶ *adventus*⁷ etc.). Repeatedly, these passages occupy a prominent position in the works with regard to their length, location and/or formal design, and represent an important tool for the praise of the addressees. This paper focuses on the *miracula* of the three *pompae* treated within the Panegyrics on the Third (396), Fourth (398), and Sixth (404) Consulate of Honorius. While research has already shown parallels between the depictions of the two *adventus* (Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 125sq; Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 543sq.) and the *processus consularis* (Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 565sq.), a systematic comparison of the three passages has yet to be made.⁸ The present paper aims to

³ E.g. Claud. *Prob.* 231–233.

⁴ Claud. *Epith.* 286–287b.

⁵ Claud. *Man.* 293; Claud. *Stil.* 3, 317–369.

⁶ Claud. *Eutrop.* 1, 251–270a.; Claud. *Stil.* 3, 17–25.

⁷ E.g. Claud. *Stil.* 2, 397–405; Claud. *Get.* 450–468. Of course, the *adventus* is a ceremony. However, with the *occursus* and the *introitus*, this ceremony also contains two types of *pompae* (cf. LEHNEN [1997: 105sq.] in detail for the structure of the *adventus*; MACCORMACK [1972: 723] offers a concise summary). The representations of *adventus* here dealt with are representations of *introitus* (in the broader sense). While LEHNEN rightly mentions the ‘Handlungen in der Stadt’ and the ‘Abschluss des *adventus*’ as individual steps of the *adventus* after the *occursus* and *introitus*, there is a procession until the ‘Einzug des Herrschers in den Palast’. That is why the passage in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* is examined to the extent given above. LEHNEN (1997: 159) also implies this when he says ‘Wie bereits festgestellt, bestand das Adventuszeremoniell im Grunde aus zwei Festzügen.’ For simplicity's sake, the term *adventus* is used in the paper referring to the *introitus* (in the broad sense).

⁸ MÜLLER (2011: 382sq.) briefly refers to the content-related connections between the *adventus*-passages in Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* and Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* The comparison, however, is neither systematic/all-encompassing nor does it include the passage in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* Furthermore, MÜLLER (2011: 177sq.) considers the *pompa*-representation in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* a resumption of the *adventus* in Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.*, but he does not show concrete points of connection on the level of content, form, or vocabulary, nor does he compare the two passages. ERNEST (1987: 62; 65; 107) looks at the *pompa*-passages within all three Consular Panegyrics, but he does not compare the text passages. DÖPP (1980: 236sq.) notes that there are scenes similar to the *adventus*-passage in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* in Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* and Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* without going into depth.

(1) examine systematically what (content) is represented in the three passages, how (form) and why (function) it is done.⁹ The findings are, then, (2) compared to reveal potential conceptual similarities.¹⁰ In this context, it will also be analyzed whether, with regard to content, form, and/or function, a development can be seen over the course of the three passages.¹¹ Through the exemplary analysis of the three representations of *pompae*, the paper also hopes to provide (3) an approach to the representations of processions within Claudian's political poems in general.¹²

II.

1. Content, Form and Function of the three *pompa*-Representations

Length, Position, Structure and Content of the Passages

In the *Panegyric on the Third Consulate of Honorius*, the *adventus* of Theodosius and Honorius in Milan in 394¹³ is depicted in 16 verses (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 126–141). The poem comprises a total of 211 verses, and the passage fits 13 times into the work. The text passage is positioned almost exactly at the end of the second third of the poem, following the account of Honorius' journey to Milan (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 111–125). It is divided into two parts: first, in seven verses (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 126–132), one reads how the crowd fights for the best spot as the godlike Theodosius rides through the city with Honorius on his lap. Then, the army accompanying the procession is described in nine verses (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 133–142).

In the *poem on the fourth consulate of Honorius*, the *processus consularis* is presented in 54 verses (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 565–618).¹⁴ The passage fits

⁹ See 2, 1.

¹⁰ See 2, 2a.

¹¹ See 2, 2c.

¹² See 2, 2b.

¹³ Cf. DÖPP (1980: 61sq.) for the historical background of the poem.

¹⁴ Not all scholars view the passage as a description of a *processus consularis*. BARR (1981: 23; 83; 89) postulates that the passage depicts an *adventus*, specifically the arrival of Honorius in Milan in 394, which is also treated in Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 126sq. While Claudian marks the arrival in Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 122 explicitly with the vocabulary *adventus* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 125 also contains such a marking), in Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 565 one finds only the term *pompa*, which refers to a procession in general. Further-

about 12 times into the panegyric, which consists of 656 verses, and is located in the last fifth of the work. It follows the passage about Honorius' appearance and military skills (Claud. 4 cons. Hon 518–564). It is divided into four parts: the first twelve verses (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 565–576) describe the masses observing Honorius who is being carried, like a statue of an Egyptian god, by cohorts dressed in white. Then, seven verses address the aristocracy that gathers around Honorius (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 577–583). The third section comprises 27 verses and provides,

more, there are no indications in the text that hint at an *adventus*. Not only does Claudian remain vague about the time and place of the *pompa*, but the description of a journey in advance, which would lead one to expect an arrival in the following, is missing. Both *adventus*-passages in Claud. 3 cons. Hon. and Claud. 6 cons. Hon., however, are preceded by such a description. Parallels to the account in Claud. 3 cons. Hon., through which the *pompa* could be seen as a continuation or version of the preceding account, are also missing: neither the battle against Eugenius nor Theodosius is mentioned. While Honorius rides in Claud. 3 cons. Hon. in a chariot, he is carried in Claud. 4 cons. Hon., instead of a metallic sparkling army, in Claud. 4 cons. Hon. cohorts dressed in white are mentioned. MÜLLER (2011: 177sq.) also interprets the *pompa* as *adventus*, though the arguments brought fourth are not entirely convincing, either. While the text passage is not marked as *adventus*, it appears through intratextual references to the proem of the poem very well as a (continuation of the) *processus consularis*: immediately at the beginning of Claud. 4 cons. Hon. (5–17), the *processus consularis* is described in strong mythical exaggeration. This account is linked by the use of the same or related vocabulary to the later description of the *pompa*. Thus, the vocabulary *proceres* (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 5) is found as *procerum* (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 579), *habitus* (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 6) and *senatu* (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 11) appear identically in Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 583. In terms of content, *niveas [...] cohortes* (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 568) corresponds to *togatus / miles* (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 9), *trabeam* (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 12) is taken up by *Ausonio [...] amictu* (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 566) as well as by the detailed description of the garment (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 585sq.). The phrase *umeris vectura curules* (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 13) is recalled by *portatur iuvenum cervicibus aurea sedes* (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 584). The *pompa*-description at the end of Claud. 4 cons. Hon. appears through these intratextual references as a description of a *processus consularis* and continues the account from the proem. CHARLET (2002: 43, n. c) also sees the account from the proem continued; MORONI (1993: 12); ERNEST (1987: 65sq.); CAMERON (1970: 201) and FARGUES (1933: 321) also consider the passage a *processus consularis*. Other scholars are not set: MACCORMACK (1972: 725, n. 24; 730sq.; n. 60; 737; 738) calls the account *adventus* and *processus consularis* and *consular adventus*. COOMBE (2018: 151) names the passage *processus* and *adventus*. DÖPP (1980: 117sq.) considers the verses 565–576 an *adventus*, the verses 577–618 as *processus consularis*.

in three subsections of nine verses each, a description of the consular robe and a comparison of Honorius with Bacchus (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 584–610).¹⁵ Lastly, acclamation and *manumissio* are treated in eight verses (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 611–618).

Finally, the *Panegyric on the Sixth Consulate of Honorius* depicts the *adventus* of Honorius in Rome in 403¹⁶ in 68 verses (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 543–610).¹⁷ The poem consists of 660 verses, the *pompa*-depiction fits about 10 times in the work in its entirety and is also located at the end in the last fifth. It is preceded by the descriptions of Honorius' journey to Rome (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 494–522) and of the preparations for his arrival (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 523–542). The passage is divided into five parts. The first 17 verses (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 543–559) describe the crowd between the Milvian Bridge and the Palatine, who admire the incoming ruler for not letting the senators walk in front of his chariot. The second part depicts in 18 verses how the female spectators admire Honorius and his army (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 560–577), this section can be divided into two sections of nine verses each, the verses 569–577 are then devoted to the cataphracts. After this, Stilicho, who enters the city at Honorius' side, is addressed in nine verses (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 578–586). Subsequently, Honorius is described in 16 verses addressing the crowd and the Senate (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 587–602). Finally, the passage shows in eight verses how Honorius continues his way to the Palatine (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 603–610).

The following table summarizes the observations made in regard to length, position, outline, and content of the three passages:

¹⁵ The verses 584–601 represent the description of the consular robe in 18 verses. It is divided into two parts of equal length by different textual designs, since the second section consists only of rhetorical questions. The last nine verses contain the comparison with Bacchus.

¹⁶ Cf. among others DÖPP (1980: 230) for the dating of the *adventus*.

¹⁷ Since the Games do not belong to the *pompa* anymore (see above n. 7), they are not taken into account.

Table 1: length, position, outline, content of the three pompa-passages

	Claud. 3 cons. Hon.	Claud. 4 cons. Hon.	Claud. 6 cons. Hon.
Length	16 verses fits about 13 times into the poem	54 verses fits about 12 times into the poem	68 verses fits about 10 times into the poem
Position	end of the second third	last fifth	last fifth
Outline	7 (vv.126–132) 9 (vv.133–141)	12 (vv.565–576) 7 (vv.577–583) 27 (vv.584–610) 9 (vv.584–592) 9 (vv.593–601) 9 (vv.602–610) 8 (vv.611–618)	17 (vv.543–559) 18 (vv.560–577) 9 (vv.560–568) 9 (vv.569–577) 9 (vv.578–586) 16 (vv.587–602) 9 (vv.603–610)
Content	crowd – Theodosius / Honorius army	crowd – Honorius Aristocracy consular robe + com- parison with Bacchus acclamation/ <i>manumissio</i>	crowd –Honorius female spectators– Honorius and army Stilicho Honorius in front of the people and the Senate way to the Palatine

Formal Design of the Passages

Let us now consider the formal design of the individual *pompa*-passages in more detail.¹⁸ At the beginning of the account in Claud. 3 cons. Hon. is depicted how the crowd fights for the best spot when Theodosius and Honorius enter Milan. Through the phrase *quantae tum iuvenes, quantae sprevere pudorem / spectandi studio matres* (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 126sq.), it becomes clear that the visual perception of the emperor and his son is the goal of this group of persons. Although the crowd's perspective is not explicitly taken – there is no verb of seeing as a predicate – implicitly the *introitus* is very much being conveyed from their point of view. The

¹⁸ The following formal analysis is not exhaustive, but focuses on some main aspects.

recipient is invited to take the perspective of this group of secondary characters. If he accepts the offer, he can perceive what is being described more closely and vividly. Through the implicit internal focalization, the entire representation of the *adventus* thus gains vividness. Thereafter, the second outline section of the passage, which describes the army, appears to be especially vivid due to further recourses:

floret cristatis exercitus undique turmis,
 quisque sua te voce canens. praestringit aena
lux oculos, nudique seges Mavortia ferri 135
 ingeminat splendore diem. pars nobilis arcu,
 pars longe iaculis, pars comminus horrida contis;
 hi volucres tollunt aquilas, hi picta draconum
 colla levant, multusque tumet per nubila serpens
 iratus stimulante Noto vivitque receptis 140
 flatibus et vario mentitur sibila tractu.

Firstly, the verses 133–141 are separated from the text passage preceding: the positioning of the predicate *floret* at the beginning of the verse/sentence causes an incision,¹⁹ as does the rhetorical question in Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 131, which interrupts the narrative in the narrow sense. Moreover, compared to the rest of the *adventus*, the army description shows a particularly high density of sensual details. The phrase *sua te voce canens* (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 134), denoting the praise of Honorius articulated by the troops, refers to the auditory level of the moment. Subsequently, the phrase *praestringit aena / lux oculos* (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 134) introduces a visual stimulus, the bronze glow of the army's armor. The glow is then alluded to through *splendore* (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 136), which refers to the shine of the sword blades. In the description of the standards, *picta* (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 138) evokes the colored painting of the dragon's banners. The fictional hissing of the serpent standards in Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 141 (*vario mentitur sibila tractu*) recurs again to the auditory level at the end of the army description.

¹⁹ When the predicate is positioned at the beginning of the verse and the sentence – as is the case only five times in the entire poem, including the present passage (Claud. 3 cons. Hon 5; 22; 121; 133; 205) – this results in the clear marking of a new beginning.

At the beginning of the account of the *processus consularis* in Claud. 4 cons. Hon. the crowd is addressed, which observes Honorius as he passes by: *nunc quoque quos habitus, quantae miracula pompae / vidimus* (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 565). The exclamation, already cited at the beginning of this paper, contains an explicit internal focalization with *vidimus*. A group of secondary characters, who appear in the first person plural as We, again perceives on a sensory-visual level. The recipient can become part of that group and follow the description more closely and vividly from its perspective. Furthermore, the *pompa*-passage again contains a particularly vivid subsection, the description of Honorius and his robe in Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 584–601. Through the positioning of the predicate *portatur* (Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 586) at the beginning of the verse/sentence the section, again, is separated from the preceding passage. Numerous references to the visual (including *aurea*, Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 586; *zmaragdis*, Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 588; *virent*, Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 589; *caerula*, Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 590) and tactile (*asperat*, Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 587; *mollire rigorem*, Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 593) sensory level also enhance its vividness:

portatur iuvenum cervicibus <u>aurea sedes</u>	
ornatuque novo gravior deus. <u>asperat Indus</u>	585
velamenta <u>lapis</u> pretiosaque fila <u>zmaragdis</u>	
ducta <u>virent</u> ; <u>amethystus</u> inest et <u>fulgor Hiberus</u>	
temperat <u>arcanis hyacinthi caerula flammis</u> .	
nec rudis in tali suffecit gratia textu;	
auget acus meritum <u>picturatumque metallis</u> .	590
vivit opus: multaque animantur <u>iaspide cultus</u>	
et variis spirat <u>Nereia baca</u> figuris.	
quae tantum potuit digitis <u>mollire rigorem</u>	
ambitiosa colus? vel cuius pectinis arte	
traxerunt solidae <u>gemmarum</u> stamina telae?	595
invia quis calidi scrutatus stagna profundi	
Tethyos invasit gremium? quis divitis algae	
germina <u>flagrantes</u> inter quaesivit harenas?	
quis iunxit <u>lapides ostro</u> ? quis miscuit <u>ignes</u>	
Sidonii <u>rubrique maris</u> ? tribuere <u>colorem</u>	600
Phoenices, Seres subtegmina, pondus Hydaspes.	

Within the *adventus*-passage in Claud. 6 cons. Hon. there is also a particularly vivid subsection to be found: the part dedicated to the appearance of Honorius and the army (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 560–577).

conspicuas tum flore genas, diademate crinem	560
membraque <u>gemma</u> to trabeae <u>viridantia</u> cinctu	
et fortes umeros et certatura Lyaeo inter	
Erythraeas surgentia colla <u>zmaragd</u> os	
mirari sine fine nurus; ignaraque virgo,	
cui simplex <u>calet</u> ore pudor, per singula cernens	565
nutricem consultat anum, quid fixa draconum	
ora velint, ventis fluitent an vera minentur	
<u>sibila</u> suspensum rapturi faucibus hostem.	
ut <u>chalybem</u> indutos equites et in <u>aere</u> latentes	
vidit cornipedes, ' <u>quanam de gente</u> ' rogabat	570
' <u>ferrati venere viri? quae terra metallo</u>	
<u>nascentes informat equos? num Lemnius auctor</u>	
<u>indidit hinnitum ferro simulacraque belli</u>	
<u>viva dedit?</u> ' gaudet metuens et pollice monstrat,	
quod <u>picturatas</u> galeae Iunonia cristas	575
ornet avis vel quod rigidos vibrata per armos	
<u>rubra sub aurato</u> crispentur serica dorso.	

The visual and auditory sensory levels are constantly emphasized in the passage. Colors and sparkle are, among others, evoked by the words *gemma*to (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 561), *viridantia* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 561), and *zmaragd*os (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 564), which are used to illustrate Honorius' appearance. Words such as *chalybem* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 569), *aere* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 569), *metallo* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 571), *ferro* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 573), *rubra* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 577), and *aurato* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 577), which describe the armor of the cataphracts, also refer to visual stimuli. *Sibila*, then, directly refers to the sound produced by the serpent standards, *hinnitum* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 573) to the neighing of the horses. The speech in Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 570–574 additionally evokes the auditory level in a particularly emphatic manner. Not only this density of sensory detail makes the passage vivid and separates it from its surroundings, but also the internal focalization that is

now included in the subsection. Successively, the perspective of two different female groups of persons is taken. The appearance of Honorius is conveyed from the point of view of the *nurus*, mentioned in Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 564. Through *mirari*, the sensual-emotional perception of this group of people is explicitly marked. The description of the army follows from the perspective of a *virgo*, who also is mentioned in Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 564. The sensual perception on the visual level is explicitly marked by the words *cernens* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 365) and *vidit* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 570), and the words *gaudet* and *metuens* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 574) also highlight the emotions. Once again, an offer of perspective is created, through which the recipient can perceive what is described more closely.

Functions of the Passages

The *adventus*-passage in Claud. 3 cons. Hon. represents the climax of Honorius' glorification on the level of content. There are two aspects that repeatedly play a role in his glorification in the panegyric, both reach their climax at the moment of the *adventus*: his quasi-divine status and his characterization as being close to the army/being a successful soldier/being victorious. The quasi-divinity is already addressed in the proem of the work with the words *spes votumque poli* (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 10).²⁰ Then, in the treatment of the victory at the Frigidus in Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 87sq., Honorius is characterized as a miracle worker whom the elements obey.²¹ Upon his arrival in Italy, the cities are described as *adventu sacrata tuo* in Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 122, and the river god Eridanus bows respectfully (*summissusque adorat / Eridanus*, Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 122sq.), Honorius' arrival resembles an epiphany.²² Finally, in the description of the *adventus*, he is equated with his father Theodosius twice with a pair of gods, and the characterization as a quasi-god reaches its climax: *quis non Luciferum roseo cum Sole videri / credidit aut iunctum Bro-*

²⁰ Cf. also WARE (2012: 89); BARR (1952: 151).

²¹ Cf. SCHINDLER (2009: 80). HOFMANN (2012: 143sq.) discusses Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 87b–101, showing an example of a 'profanes Andachtsbild' for Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 96–98.

²² Cf. CHARLET (2000: 179); BARR (1952: 176).

mio radiare Tonantem? (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 131). Furthermore, the panegyric repeatedly refers to Honorius' closeness to the army, characterizing him as militarily adept and with an affinity for war. In the proem, the connection to the army is first shown in the treatment of his origin: *strictis quem fulgida telis / inter laurigeros aluerunt castra triumphos* (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 11). Then the troops pay tribute to the infant Honorius after his birth (*lustravitque tuos aquilis victricibus ortus / miles et in mediis cunabula praeibit hastis*, Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 16), in his childhood he plays in the midst of his father's spoils of war and is fearless when the emperor clothed in his armor picks him up (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 22sq.). Later Honorius undergoes military training (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 39sq.) before he wants to take part in the battle against Eugenius (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 73sq.). For the outcome of the battle at the Frigidus, Honorius plays a passive but decisive role at the side of Theodosius through his *auspiciis* (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 88) and *fatis* (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 89): *pugnastis uterque* (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 88). It is this victory that is thematized in the first part of the *adventus* by the phrase *velaretque pios communis laurea currus* (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 130) and is attributed to Theodosius and Honorius. The term *laurea* refers to the phrase *laurigeros [...] triumphos* (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 12): while Honorius was raised between triumphs, he now celebrates his own first military success. The second part of the *adventus* is the detailed description of the army that cheers during Honorius' triumphal entry. The characterization of Honorius as militarily adept/successful and close to the army reaches its climax at the moment of his triumphal *adventus*.

At the same time, the *adventus* is the end of Honorius' glorification in a narrow sense: it is followed by the speech of Theodosius, in which he transfers the care of his sons to Stilicho, the *katasterismos* and the praise of Theodosius, before the epilogue deals with the future military successes of the two sons Honorius and Arcadius. Müller²³ shows two strands of content for the composition of the panegyric: one that serves to glorify Honorius, a second that focuses on the Emperor Theodosius. The first strand (the glorification of Honorius) dominates at first, then meets the second strand from Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 63sq. on, before this

²³ Cf. MÜLLER (2011: 104sq.).

strand of content finally replaces the first and is devoted exclusively to the glorification of Theodosius. Thus, a division of the panegyrics into three blocks can be observed. The *adventus* is located before the point at which the second strand finally replaces the first, at the end of the second block of content. On a structural level, it marks the end of Honorius' glorification, the end of an argumentative strand.

The passage in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* forms, from a structural point of view, the end for the poem as a whole; only the epilogue follows. In addition, it is connected with Honorius' glorification, which reaches its climax. Honorius is clearly represented as a consul by the words *numero consul / cingeris* in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 580, as announced in the proem (Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 1–17). At the same time, the characterization as quasi-divine, which occupies an important place in the panegyric, reaches its climax: already in the treatment of Honorius' birth, he is referred to as *deus* (Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 137). In the context of the interpretation of the *omina* that occur at Honorius' proclamation, he is then equated with the young Jupiter (Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 197sq.). The first part of the description of the *processus consularis* contains a simile in which a statuette of a god being carried by priests in an Egyptian procession is equated with Honorius carried by soldiers in the *pompa* (Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 170bsqq.). *Effigies* (Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 572) refers to the statue, *numina* (Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 570) and *deus* (Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 574) indicate that it is a figure of a god. Honorius is here implicitly compared to the image of a god before he is again referred to as *deus* (Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 585) shortly thereafter. It is striking that Honorius is neither called by name nor addressed in the course of the entire description of the robe; in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 582, however, the *poeta* addresses his addressee twice with *te*.²⁴ Having equated Honorius with an image of the gods, he thus actually appears to be a statuette of a god carried by young men. Finally, at the end of the account, Honorius is being compared with Bacchus in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 606sq.²⁵ The elaboration of

²⁴ LEHNER (1984: 101) also notes the lack of apostrophe and interprets it, along with the passive *portatur*, as a recourse that highlights the remoteness of the *deus* Honorius.

²⁵ Cf. for an overview of the passages in which Honorius is deified in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* LEHNER (1984: 113sq.).

his quasi-divinity thus reaches its climax in the *pompa*-passage. Honorius appears in it as a consul with (quasi-)divine status.

The *adventus*-representation in Claud. 6 cons. Hon. is also located immediately at the end of the poem. The depiction structurally marks the end of the work in the broader sense. The passage, moreover, serves to glorify Honorius, his glorification reaches its climax again.²⁶ In the description of his appearance, the reference to the diadem (*diademate crinem*, Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 560) for one thing underlines Honorius' rank as emperor. Compared to Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 53sq., where Honorius appears at the side of Theodosius during another *adventus*,²⁷ a development can be observed: while earlier one reads *quamvis diademate necdum / cingebare comas* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 65) and Honorius merely is represented as a companion, he later is the protagonist of the *adventus* and also the emperor. In the *adventus*-passage right at the beginning of the proem, the words *cum pariter trabeis reparatur* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 4) emphasize that the entry into Rome is connected with the accession to the consulship. The word *trabeae* also appears in Claud. 4 cons. Hon. 561 within the description of Honorius. The intratextual reference to the beginning of the poem points to Honorius' function as consul, although the *processus consularis* is addressed only after the *adventus* in Claud. 6 cons. Hon. (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 640sq.).²⁸ This is even more the case because the breve description of the robe in Claud. 6 cons. Hon. macrotextually²⁹ refers to the description of the consular robe in Claud. 4 cons.

²⁶ Of course, the passage also serves to glorify Stilicho, albeit to a lesser extent. Already in Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 440bsqq. his merits in the Gothic war are highlighted. In the *adventus*, he is characterized as Honorius' educator in Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 578sq. and implicitly shares the success of the war.

²⁷ Probably in 389, following the victory over Maximus, cf. DEWAR (1996: 100sq.).

²⁸ I use the term 'macrotextual' to refer to connections between individual political poems of Claudian; 'intratextual', by contrast, means references within the same political poem.

²⁹ DEWAR (1996: 372) points out that *adventus* and consular ceremony are blurred here. Although KELLY (2016: 340sq.) has recently attempted to show, that the two ceremonies are separated both on the level of representation and historically, he concedes that some elements in the *adventus*-passage point ahead to the *processus consularis*. Among these elements he lists the word *trabea* (2016: 345), which cannot mean the consular garb in terms of content, but evokes the consulate through its parallel to the proem.

Hon. Once again, a development can be seen in comparison to the *adventus* at the beginning of the poem: not Theodosius (*trabeatus*, Claud. 6 cons. *Hon.* 74), but Honorius himself now carries the *trabea* (Claud. 6 cons. *Hon.* 561). Honorius is also characterized as powerful and triumphant/victorious by the detailed description of the army.³⁰ The intratextual reference to the young emperor's fictional triumph depicted in Roma's speech (Claud. 6 cons. *Hon.* 374–383a), underlines this quality since it makes the victory over Gildo resonate. In the *adventus*-passage, Honorius is characterized as a victorious ruler with an affinity for the military as well as a consul.

2. Comparison of Content, Form and Function of the three *pompa*-Representations

Similarities between the three Passages

Firstly, a comparison of the passages' structure shows that they all display a certain symmetry, i.e. regularity within the distribution of verses: the *adventus*-representation in Claud. 3 cons. *Hon.* consists of two parts, which are of almost equal length. They comprise seven (Claud. 3 cons. *Hon.* 126–132) and nine (Claud. 3 cons. *Hon.* 133–141) verses, respectively. The third outline section of the passage in Claud. 4 cons. *Hon.* (*peplopoiia* and comparison with Bacchus), then, consists of three subsections with a length of nine verses each (Claud. 4 cons. *Hon.* 584–592; 593–601; 602–610). Moreover, the second and fourth section of the same passage are also of similar length, seven (Claud. 4 cons. *Hon.* 577–582) and eight (Claud. 4 cons. *Hon.* 611–618) verses, respectively. Within the description of the *adventus* in Claud. 6 cons. *Hon.*, the first and second section again show a similar length, they consist of 17 (Claud. 6 cons. *Hon.* 543–559) and 18 verses (Claud. 6 cons. *Hon.* 560–577), respectively. Furthermore, the second section can be divided into two subunits of nine verses each (Claud. 6 cons. *Hon.* 560–568; 569–577). What proves to be striking is that the outline sections that form or contain the especially vivid passages

³⁰ The choice of the *ignara virgo* as focalizer makes the army seem especially masculine and strong; also, the girl's ignorance of the army – that she is not inexperienced/uneducated on a general level is shown in Claud. 6 cons. *Hon.* 572sq. – makes the cataphracts seem all the more impressive.

repeatedly break down into (groups of) nine verse(s): the army description in 3 *cons. Hon.* consists of nine verses (Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 133–141). In Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* there is a sequence of three units with nine verses each; the vivid description of the garment comprises 18 verses of this sequence and can be subdivided into two subsections of nine verses each (Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 584–592; 593–601). Also, in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* the vivid passage measures 18 verses and can be divided into two parts of equal length (Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 560–568; 569–577).³¹ Moreover, the three passages show similarities in content: at their beginning, the crowd that witnesses Honorius' entry is mentioned. All passages also deal in some way with the appearance of the young ruler³² and the army. Although, Honorius is thereby staged as quasi-divine to varying degrees, the comparison with Bacchus can be found in all three text passages (Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 132; Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 602sq.; Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 562). Finally, the formal analysis of the passages has shown that all representations share a form of internal focalization and a particularly vivid section, which is separated from the preceding text passage and is characterized by a high level of sensual detail – two sensory levels are present in each subsection. Looking at the functions of the three passages, it becomes clear that all of them structurally mark an end and, and in terms of content, they represent the climax of Honorius' glorification. These similarities connect the three *pompa*-passages and represent a kind of common design concept.

In addition, there are further similarities between the individual representations. Firstly, in Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* and Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* the internal focalization is located immediately at the beginning of both *pompa*-descriptions, and in both works the two particularly vivid passages are separated from the preceding passages by the position of the predicate at the beginning of the verse/sentence. Also, the characteriza-

³¹ While both vivid passages in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* and Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* are thus of equal length and are divided into two sections of nine verses each, the third section in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* also comprises nine verses (Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 578–586). As in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.*, a sequence of three units with nine verses each is built. For easier comprehension see table 1.

³² Cf. also ERNEST (1987: 111).

tion of Honorius as quasi-divine is central in both poems and reaches its climax in the *pompa*. Secondly, the *pompa*-descriptions in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* and Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* are located at the same position within the respective poems, structurally both mark the end of the respective poem. Moreover, both passages contain, albeit to very different degrees, descriptions of Honorius' robe; there are parallels with regard to vocabulary: *gemmato* and *viridantia* (Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 561) refer to *gemmarum* (Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 595) and *virent* (Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 587), *zmaragdis* (Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* 586) is taken up by *zmaragdus* (Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 563). Likewise, both passages emphasize Honorius' role as consul, even though to different degrees. Thirdly, Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* and Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* are formally linked by the sensory levels (visual/auditive) the descriptive sections allude to. Moreover, they share similarities in content: both depict an *adventus*. Furthermore, the composition of the crowd is very similar in both passages.³³ In Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* the *iuvenes* (Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 126), *matres* (Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 127), *pueri* (Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 127), and *senes* (Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 128) make up the crowd. The audience of the *adventus* is divided into female, young³⁴ and old, and male, young and old. In Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* the crowd is composed of *vir*i (Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 546), *matres* (Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 546), *iuvenes* (Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 547), *senes* (Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 548), *nurus* (Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 564), and *virgo* (Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 564). First, male and female parts of the population are distinguished, then each group is subdivided into young and old. Three of the words used (*iuvenes*, *matres*, *senes*) are identical in both passages and establish a connection between them. Both *adventus*-passages also contain a detailed army description. In each case soldiers with their armor (Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 133–137; Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 569–577) and standards (Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 139–141; Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 565–568) are described, only the order is inverted. In the description of the standards, there are particularly striking parallels in content and wording:³⁵ both times it is described how the serpent or

³³ Cf. also MÜLLER (2011: 382) and ERNEST (1987: 109).

³⁴ Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 126: *quantae* [...] *iuvenes*.

³⁵ The inter- and macrotextual references of the army description to Amm. Marc. 16, 10, 7; 8 and Claud. *Ruf.* 2, 351–365 cannot be discussed here.

dragon standards are filled with wind and thus, as if brought to life, produce a hissing sound; *draconum* (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 138) and *sibila* (Claud. 3 cons. Hon. 141) reappear literally as *draconum* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 566) and *sibila* (Claud. 6 cons. Hon. 568).³⁶ In particular through these army descriptions, Honorius is characterized as close to the army and victorious in both passages.

Similarities with other pompa-Representations

The three *pompa*-passages discussed, of course, are particularly connected due to the topic of the three panegyrics. Nevertheless, an exemplary look at the other, longer *pompa*-passages in Claudian's political poems shows that the different elements of form and content reappear. The description of the fictional *adventus* in Claud. *Stil.* 2, 397–405 has also a symmetrical outline (3 verses–3 verses–3 verses); there, too, Stilicho is described in more detail upon his entry (Claud. *Stil.* 2, 402) and the crowd is mentioned (*milia vulgi*, Claud. *Stil.* 2, 397; *matres*, Claud. *Stil.* 2, 400). The perspective of the *matres* is explicitly taken, marked with *spectabant* (Claud. *Stil.* 2, 440). Also, the account of the fictional triumph in Claud. *Stil.* 3, 17–25 is structured regularly (3 verses–2 verses–2 verses–2 verses), the visual level is strongly present, and the appearance of Stilicho is described (Claud. *Stil.* 3, 20). The *pompa nemorum* (Claud. *Stil.* 3, 317) in Claud. *Stil.* 3, 317–369 is with 53 verses similarly extensive as the representations in Claud. 4 cons. Hon. and 6 cons. Hon. Moreover, it is located also at the end of the poem. It, too, is rather regularly structured (15 verses–29 verses–14 verses), a subsection proving moreover increasingly vivid through visual and auditory stimuli (Claud. *Stil.* 3, 345–355). Finally, a passage from Claud. *Get.* shows the clearest similarities to the three *pompa*-passages within Honorius' Consular Panegyrics. In Claud. *Get.* 450–468, Stilicho's return to Milan is depicted, the word *tuus adventus* in Claud. *Get.* 447 marking it as *adventus*:

³⁶ While all the observed similarities link the three *pompa*-passages and, on a macrotextual level, result to some extent in the evocation of preceding passage(s) in the reception of the later one(s), the similarities between Claud. 3 cons. Hon. and Claud. 6 cons. Hon. are particularly striking. There is a strong macrotextual connection; the *adventus* in Claud. 3 cons. Hon. is triggered by the *adventus* in Claud. 6 cons. Hon.

ipso Roma die (nec adhuc ostenditur auctor) 450
personuit venisse ducem, laetisque Quirites
vocibus auspiciū certi plausere triumphī,
 muniti Stilichone suo. quis gaudia vero
 principis, amplexus alacris quis disserat aulae?
pulveris ambigūam nubem speculamur ab altis 455
 turribus, incerti socios adportet an hostes
 ille globus. mentem suspensa silentia librant:
 donec pulvereō sub turbine sideris instar
emicuit Stilichonis apex et cognita fulsit
canities. gavisā repens per moenia clamor 460
 tollitur 'ipse venit'. portas securā per omnes
 turba salutatis effunditur obvīa signis.
 non iam dilectus miseri nec falce per agros
 deposita iaculum vibrans ignobile messor
 nec temptans clipeum proiectis sumere rastris 465
 Bellona ridente Ceres humilisque novorum
 seditio clamosa ducum: sed vera iuventus,
 verus ductor adest et vivida Martis imago.

To begin with, the verses are also distributed rather regularly, the three outline sections consist of five (Claud. *Get.* 450–454), eight (Claud. *Get.* 455–462), and six (Claud. *Get.* 463–468) verses. The second outline section, moreover, is again particularly vivid. It contains references to the auditive level – there is even a small direct speech in Claud. *Get.* 46 – and to the visual sensory level. Again, there is an internal focalization – *speculamur* in Claud. *Get.* 455 explicitly marks the visual perception of a group of characters. Through the internal focalization – similar to Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* – and the rhetorical question in Claud. *Get.* 453bsq. – similar to Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* – the vivid subsection is separated from the preceding lines. The passage again addresses the crowd (Claud. *Get.* 455–457a; 462) witnessing the arrival, the appearance of the Stilicho (Claud. *Get.* 458–460a), and the army (Claud. *Get.* 463–468). With regard to function, the *adventus*-passage represents the climax of glorification, Stilicho is shown to be the ideal commander and quasi-divine savior of Rome. The quasi-divinity is constantly mentioned in the poem and reaches its

climax in the *adventus*-passage,³⁷ similar to Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* and Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.*

Certain elements of content, such as the treatment of the people, the person arriving, and the army, have of course topical character.³⁸ However, similarities can be recognized, which go beyond the commonplaces and do not appear accidental. For example, it would not be necessary to mention the crowd in the *pompa*-depictions of the Consular Panegyric on Honorius or in the account of the fictional *adventus* of Stilicho in Claud. *Stil.* 2 at the mere beginning of the passages. Formally, moreover, the internal focalization within these four accounts as well as within the *adventus*-passage in Claud. *Get.* represents a choice in design. The particularly vivid subunits of some and the outline symmetry of all the longer *pompa*-representations also prove to be striking. These are features of design that connect the other representations of *pompa* to those within the Panegyrics for Honorius.

Differences between the three Passages

Despite the similarities that link the *pompa*-representations within all three Consular Panegyrics for Honorius, there are also differences through which the passage in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* stands out. For example, the absolute and relative length is different in all three passages. While the account in Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* with 16 verses is clearly shorter than the following two, the length also increases from Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* to Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.*: the account of the *processus consularis* comprises 54 verses, that of the *adventus* 68 verses. The length of the individual passages thus augments constantly. Formally, the internal focalization in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* stands out from the two preceding passages in that it is the only explicit twofold internal focalization. Also, the way the sensory levels are alluded to in the vivid passage in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* is different, because the amount of stimuli referring to the visual

³⁷ In Claud. *Get.* 356b–358, for example, there is a brief ekphrasis describing the reverent reaction of a shepherd family to the appearance of Stilicho, whose face glimmers. Stilicho's appearance resembles the epiphany of a god. Cf. HOFMANN (2012: 145sqq.) who points out parallels in the design of the scene to the religious 'Andachtsbild'.

³⁸ Cf. REES (2013: especially 109sqq.) on the topos of the people admiring the ruler arriving in epideictic speech.

and auditory level is almost the same, the sensory levels are balanced. Both formal elements are increased in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* in relation to Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* and Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* Also, in terms of content, the third passage shows a development on various levels. On the one hand, there is a linear development over the three poems: Honorius appears in Claud 3. *cons. Hon.* at the side of Theodosius. In Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* he is represented alone.³⁹ In Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* Honorius is shown alone, then it becomes clear that Stilicho travels at his side. Stilicho now accompanies Honorius, the relationship from Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* is inverted.⁴⁰ As seen, the *adventus*-passages in Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* and Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* are particularly strongly connected on a macrotextual level, the vocabulary *currus* (Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 130) / *curru* (Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 579), *vehere* (Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 129) / *vectus* (Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 579), *genitoris* (Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 128) / *genitor* (Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 583), *urbem* (Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 129) / *urbe* (Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 580) represent additional literal parallels. The passage in Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* is thus evoked in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.*, the inversion of the relationship (Theodosius ruler, Honorius companion – Honorius ruler, Stilicho companion) becomes particularly clear. Also, with regard to the qualities and roles attributed to Honorius in the course of his glorification an increase can be observed in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* While Honorius is explicitly depicted neither as consul nor ruler in the passage in Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* – Honorius was, of course, designated heir at the moment of the *adventus*, as is also clear from Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* 89sq. but his *insignia* are not

³⁹ MÜLLER (2011: 177) considers the passage in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* a resumption of the passage in Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* and comments: ‘Als grandioses Finale des Porträts inszeniert, stellt er [Claudian] auf über fünfzig Versen nochmals exaltiert dar, welches festliches Ereignis es gewesen sei, als Honorius dort von seinem Vater als Augustus der westlichen Reichshälfte präsentiert wurde.’ He does not note, however, that Theodosius does not appear in the *pompa*-representation in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.*, Honorius is now alone!

⁴⁰ MÜLLER (2011: 383) also recognizes the reversal of the relationship: ‘Betrat Honorius in 3 *cons. Hon.* Mailand als kindlicher Begleiter seines Vaters, erscheint er in 6 *cons. Hon.* als Hauptprotagonist der Prozession durch Rom, dem sein Vormund und Betreuer nur mehr stolz zur Seite steht.’ Not only is there a development of the *adventus*-passage in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* intratextually compared to Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* 53sq., but also macrotextually to Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.*

emphasized in the depiction of the *adventus*, Theodosius is still emperor –, in the *processus consularis* in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* he is represented as consul. In the *adventus*-passage in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* he, finally, is characterized as ruler and subtly as consul, as well. Honorius thus explicitly appears as emperor only in the last work, where there is also a hint to his role as consul like in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* Both facets are combined. Also, Honorius appears as more military-adept and triumphant in the last poem than in Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* due to both the length and content of the army description and the fact that the victory over Alaric was achieved under his reign and the victory over Gildo is intratextually evoked in the *adventus*-passage.⁴¹ Moreover, the treatment of Honorius' appearance increases in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* in comparison to both the depictions in Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* and Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.*: while his appearance in Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* is described in general terms, in Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* the clothing, the consular robe, is depicted. In Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* the appearance of Honorius is described in a more concrete manner⁴² including the garment. The passage in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* thus offers the most complete description of Honorius. Through the development in content in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.*, the glorification of Honorius reaches a climax not only on an intratextual level, but also on a macro-textual one. The *adventus*-passage represents the climax of the glorification of Honorius in general: he outgrows the former versions of himself, represented in Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* and Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* Similarly, the poet Claudian surpasses himself on a poetic level with the *adventus*-passage in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.*

III.

This paper has dealt with three representations of *pompae* within the Panegyrics on the Third, Fourth and Sixth Consulate of Honorius. The

⁴¹ The fact that Honorius is less clearly staged as quasi-divine can be explained with CAMERON (1970: 382) by the fact that rulers in Rome had to appear close to citizens. This facet nevertheless resonates through the macrotextual reference to Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* The less prominent position of this quality, therefore, does not contradict a development in Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.*

⁴² ERNEST (1987: 112) also notes the level of detail in this description compared to the previous *pompa*-passages.

passages were first examined with regard to content, form, and function (1). A subsequent comparison revealed (2) that they share common features on all levels. Formally, for example, they have in common a certain regularity in verse distribution, the presence of internal focalization and particularly vivid sections. In terms of content, population, Honorius, and army are addressed repeatedly. Moreover, the passages fulfill similar functions with regard to structure and content, they all mark an end and represent the climax of Honorius' glorification. These similarities form a kind of design concept through which the three *pompa*-passages are connected. Other similarities between individual passages reinforce these connections. At the same time, in terms of length, formal features such as implementation of internal focalization and sensual detail, as well as individual aspects of content – whether Honorius appears accompanied or alone, for example – a development for the *adventus*-passage in 6 *cons. Hon.* can be observed. In part, the development occurs successively from Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* to Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* to Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* (e.g. length), in part Claud. 6 *cons. Hon.* appears increased compared to Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* or both Claud. 3 *cons. Hon.* and Claud. 4 *cons. Hon.* (e.g. description of Honorius' appearance). It is precisely through the connection of the three *pompa*-passages created by the parallels in design that this development becomes apparent. An exemplary glance at other depictions of procession in Claudian's political poems also revealed (3) that the longer *pompa*-descriptions show some similarities to the three depictions treated. Here, a systematic study in order to confirm and deepen the findings is still necessary.

The results of the analysis show how elaborate the three *pompa*-passages in the Panegyrics for Honorius are on every level. It could be argued that the degree of refinement lends the representations a kind of splendor, in Latin *pompa*, on a poetic level.⁴³ I began the paper with a

⁴³ Especially the typical vivid subsections used by Claudian throughout his poems have this effect. Following MEHMEL (1940), ROBERTS (2014: 126sq.) uses the metaphor of the *pompa* to describe the late antique narrative style in general, which is characterized – not only for Claudian – by descriptions and speeches that follow each other almost unconnected. The various units, which MEHMEL (1940: 106) calls 'isolierte Bilder', form a *pompa*/procession, which is why ROBERTS calls the style 'pompatic poetics'.

quote from the *Panegyric on the Fourth Consulate of Honorius*, which I translated as 'What miracles of procession did we see!' Platnauer, the translator of the English Loeb edition, at the beginning of the 20th century decided to translate the word *pompa* more generally as 'splendor', here we read: 'What miracles of splendour [have we not seen]!'⁴⁴ I hope to have shown in this paper the *miracles of processions* within Claudian's political poems, as well as the *miracles of splendor* they encompass.

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⁴⁴ PLATNAUER (1922: 329).

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Venantius Fortunatus as an Aulic Poet (*Carm.* 6.1 and 6.5)

This paper examines Venantius Fortunatus's aulic stand in two of his carmens: an epithalamium written for king Sigibert's wedding with the Visigoth princess Brunchild (Carm. 6.1), and a consolation written for the death of Galswinth, Brunchild's sister, who married to Sigibert's brother, and died tragically under suspicious circumstances (Carm. 6.5). Both poems were written for the Austrasian court with a political motivation behind; therefore the question arises, whether Fortunatus could preserve his integrity, and what kind of messages he conveyed through literary allusions and rhetorical tools.

Keywords: Venantius Fortunatus, Merovingian Gaul, late antique literature, epithalamium, consolation, Brunchild

Venantius Fortunatus (~535–609) was born in Italy, obtained a classical education in Ravenna and moved to Gaul around 566. He arrived at the Austrasian court in Metz for the wedding of King Sigibert (561–575), presumably by the king's invitation. All of Fortunatus' first patrons had transalpine connections, which makes it likely that he left Italy for Gaul well prepared, maybe in the hope of finding more prosperous patronage among Merovingian elites. In his epic poem on St Martin, Fortunatus explains his journey with less worldly reasons. There he claims to have been seeking a cure for an eye illness by praying to St Martin in Ravenna, and the oil standing on the saint's altar healed him. In gratitude, he decided to set off for a pilgrimage to the saint's tomb in Tours.¹

Living in Gaul, Fortunatus wrote mostly occasional poetry for his patrons: rulers, bishops and dukes of the Merovingian Gaul. Albeit he

¹ WILLIARD (2016: 4–7).

travelled widely, he lived for most of the time in Poitiers, where later in his life he became a bishop. Initially, he provided services here to Radegund, a Merovingian ex-queen who founded a monastery in the city. Fortunatus helped her to obtain a piece of the Holy Cross from Byzant for her abbey. He also dedicated many of his poems to her and her adopted spiritual daughter, Agnes. Gregory of Tours was another important patron in Fortunatus' life being the one commissioning his epic on St Martin.² Fortunatus never held an official post in any of the Merovingian courts, yet, due to his existential dependence on his patrons, his poetry was considered at least problematic, if not mere flattery.³ The aesthetics of his poems were questioned on this basis by, inter alia, R. Koebner, who published a monography on Fortunatus in 1915 and considered his works schematic, self-serving with no literary value at all.⁴ Lately, J. George and M. Roberts argued for his poems to be complex literary works.⁵ Though George shed a new light on the position of the poet in the Merovingian courts in a social-political context,⁶ H. Hess still states that there was no place for any criticism in his poems.⁷

Both the 6.1 epithalamium and the 6.5 consolation were written for the Austrasian court and had specific goals. Therefore, the question arises, to what extent did Fortunatus meet his patrons' expectations, whether he did convey any different messages. The paper begins with an outline of the most important characteristics of Merovingian politics in the second half of the 6th century, concentrating especially on marriage strategies. Then, an overview of the two poems is given examining their political goals to finally get to a comparison of some common elements in the poems.

² WILLIARD (2016: 7–10).

³ S. DILL (1926: 376–384).

⁴ KOEBNER (1915: 28–29).

⁵ GEORGE (1992); ROBERTS (2009).

⁶ GEORGE (1989).

⁷ HESS (2019: 135).

Merovingian politics in the second half of 6th century Gaul

Following the death of King Clothar (511–561), his four sons divided the kingdom among themselves.⁸ Out of them, Sigibert (561–575) got the territories in Austrasia and Aquitania while Chilperich (561–584) received lands in Neustria. In this shared rule over Gaul, all brothers tried to gain more power against the others, which resulted in a bitter rivalry mostly between Sigibert and Chilperich. This competition was the context of their marriages as well.⁹

First, Sigibert married Brunchild, the daughter of the Visigoth king, Athanagild (551–567/8), in 566. Next, Chilperich asked the hand of Brunchild's sister, Galswinth. Athanagild gave huge dowries with both of his daughters, who then got a remarkably rich *Morgengabe* from their husbands. Since both princesses grew up as Arians, they later had to convert to Catholicism.¹⁰ Brunchild was married to Sigibert for about ten years until Sigibert got murdered in 575 (supposedly on Chilperich's behest).¹¹ Galswinth's marriage must have been shorter and ended tragically.¹² Based on Gregory of Tours' account on the marriage, included in

⁸ In 567 the eldest brother, Charibert died, and his territory got divided again between his surviving brothers: Gonrthran, Sigibert and Chilperich. See the maps about the exact territories of each ruler by WOODS (1994: 368–369).

⁹ CRISP (2003: 146–152).

¹⁰ DLH 4, 27–28.

¹¹ DLH 4, 51. Here, Fredegund, Chilperich's wife, is named as the one who sent assassins to Sigibert. One should, however, keep in mind that the context is a warning to Sigibert, that he should spare his brother's life for 'Whoso diggeth a pit (for his brother) shall fall therein.' (*Proverbs* 26: 27.) Death falls onto Sigibert as heavenly judgement. The story had a different taste if Chilperich would have his brother killed then in turn.

¹² It is impossible to point out the exact dates. Fortunatus writes in his consolation that he saw Galswinth travelling through Poitiers as she was heading to her wedding. Fortunatus arrived at Poitiers sometime between 567–569. [WILLIARD (2016: 7).] The wedding should have taken place afterwards. Gregory tells her father gave Galswinth a large dowry, but Athanagild died around 567–568, which suggests that Galswinth married Chilperich while her father was still alive. DLH 4, 28; Izidor 47; 48; CRISP (2003: 163–164).] Galswinth's death is also impossible to date. Fortunatus provides some help as he mentions some of the relatives of Galswinth in his consolation (*Carm.* 6. 5, 368), which suggests that she was already remarried and Sigibert still alive, which puts the composition of the poem and Galswinth's death before 575. [REYDELLET

his work about Frankish history, Chilperich had Galswinth killed as she was demanding more respect. Namely, Chilperich's previous wife also stayed in court, which Galsuinth did not want to take.¹³ Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that Gregory's information should be handled with caution, especially regarding the stories about Chilperich who is mostly depicted in his works as a villain.¹⁴

Keeping concubines while being married remained a usual phenomenon among Merovingian rulers even after Christianization since their most important goal was to have a male heir. In addition, the kings handled their relations arbitrarily: they got married and divorced according to their actual needs. It was sufficient to marry a woman only after she proved to be fertile, while a wife could be put aside if another union promised more benefits. To this end, Merovingian kings often married women of lower social status without a strong family background to support them. Consequently, it was easier to divorce in case the king's preference shifted towards someone else for certain reasons. In contrast, a wife of another royal dynasty could demand exclusivity or stability and could more likely count on her social network. Giving up the flexibility of their relationships, it seems kings decided to marry someone from another dynasty for the sake of prestige and if their own status had to be strengthened. Therefore, both marriages were motivated more by internal affairs rather than by a desire for foreign allies.¹⁵ In the case of Sigibert, a military defeat to the Avars led to the marriage to a Visigoth princess. Chilperich probably decided to marry Galswinth seeing Sigibert's success to demonstrate power through the wedding festivities. Gregory tells that Chilperich was mostly motivated by Galswinth's large dowry while not being able to send away Fredegund, his previous wife, whom he remarried after the death of Galswinth. Another problem lies in the passing of Galswinth's father just around the

(1994b: 179, n. 75).] Williard estimates Galswinth's death to happen in 569 [WILLIARD (2016: 199).] For the different possible chronologies see FELS (2006: 9–10).

¹³ DLH 4, 28.

¹⁴ Chilperich is the Nero of his era. Cf. DLH 6, 46.; HALSALL (2002: 337–350).

¹⁵ DAILEY (2015: 101–115); CRISP (2003: 146–166).

time of the wedding,¹⁶ which could have devalued Galswinth's status in Chilperich's court right upon arrival.¹⁷

Venantius Fortunatus' epithalamium for Sigibert's and Brunchild's wedding might have been performed on the spot, and on one hand, it served as his poetic introduction in Gaul, on the other, to boost Sigibert's image as a ruler. Fortunatus' presence surely contributed to Sigibert's royal portrayal, as it connected him to Roman traditions, which were highly valued in the Merovingian Gaul.¹⁸ Several members of the elite represented themselves as 'Romans'; this is conspicuous in Fortunatus' poetry too, as he often associates someone with the ancient empire through origins, education or connections to the institutions of the imperium.¹⁹ The motives behind and the circumstances of writing the consolation for the death of Galswinth are much more obscure since neither the addressee(s) nor the commissioner is known with certainty. Moreover, the time of writing remains also questionable, as it is not clear whether the poem was sent right after the bereavement or it is just a later commemoration.

The epithalamium: De domno Sigiberchto et Brunichilde regina
(*Carm.* 6.1)

The 143 lines poem consists of two parts divided by the chosen metre. A 24-line long *praefatio* comes before the actual epithalamium in elegiac distiches following the traditions of Claudian and Sidonius Apollinaris. The epithalamium is versed then in hexameters, thus adding a heroic, epic tone.²⁰

¹⁶ See citation 12.

¹⁷ CRISP (2003: 162–165). Princess Rigunth's fate can serve as an analogy. She was the daughter of Chilperich, betrothed to Reccared, the son of the Visigoth king, but on the way to the wedding she was stopped in Toulouse when news of her father's death arrived, and she found herself shortly deserted by her escort, deprived of her treasure and forced into sanctuary at St Mary's church (DLH 7, 9–10).

¹⁸ WILLIARD (2016: 6).

¹⁹ BUCHBERGER (2017: 133–146); HESS (2019: 131–175).

²⁰ ROBERTS (2009: 8).

In the *praefatio*, Fortunatus opens with a description of spring, utilizing the Vergilian model (1–14):²¹ first, the pictures of the changing nature are visualized; trees regaining their green crowns, fresh vine sprouts and bees reproducing without any touch forecast the hope for offspring out of chaste marriage. The word *posteritas* in line 11 is then echoed by the word *prosperitas* in line 15 where Fortunatus directs his audience from nature to the tumultuous royal court (15–24). The epithalamium begins in the line 25. From here onwards, Fortunatus concentrates on the bride and groom. In the first part, Sigibert is pictured as someone now ready to be united by a lovely tie in order to have offspring from a legal marriage. In the next section (37–59), Cupid shoots his arrow on Sigibert who, as a result, burns in love immediately, which Cupid reports joyfully to Venus (48–59). In the third section (60–98) Venus and Brunchild can be seen preparing for the wedding, then comes Cupid's panegyric of Sigibert followed by Venus' speech that takes the rest of the poem. Venus opens with the laudation of Brunchild (100–112) and goes on with a short itinerary describing the princess' journey from Toledo to Gaul (113–117). Venus connects the summary of Brunchild's noble ancestry (117–127) to the itinerary. In the last lines of the poem, Venus talks about the happy union of the bride and groom and by discussing the hope for progeny, she returns to the opening motive of fecundity.²²

Throughout the poem, Fortunatus mostly follows the antique traditions of epithalamia. The genre itself stems from archaic layers of literature as songs were organic parts of wedding rituals in ancient Greece where they sang while the bride was led from her parents' house to her future husband's home. Sappho is considered to be the first one to turn these folkloristic songs into literature.²³ Mythology played an integral part in epithalamia since the beginning.²⁴ Venus, Cupid and the Graces often appeared preparing the couple for the wedding, escorting them to

²¹ Cf. Verg. *Georg.* 1, 43.

²² ADAMIK (2014: 303–308).

²³ CONTIADES-TSITSONI (1990: 21–46).

²⁴ CONTIADES-TSITSONI (1990: 105).

the marital chamber.²⁵ The genre had its rhetorical rules as well. Menander writes in his rhetorical handbook in the 3rd century that the epithalamium needs to give a description of the wedding chamber, praise the bride and the groom, their families and, first and foremost, the God of marriage.²⁶ It was also important to prove the social equality between the two parties.²⁷ Although Fortunatus writes in line with such requirements, the mythological apparatus is rather humble compared to other late antique authors like Claudian or Dracontius, who involve more deities than only Venus and Cupid. Nonetheless, this modification has a function. The Christian Fortunatus usually did not attribute such important and active roles to pagan deities, unlike in the poem in focus. It is also possible that in this case Venus and Cupid substitute a more Christian setting only to avoid any reference to the different religious convictions of the Arian Visigoths and Catholic Franks.²⁸ The poet further added an itinerary, which could be hardly described as a traditional part of the ancient epithalamia.

Sigibert's laudation in the poem takes the regular form of a *panegyric* following the rules of the *basilikos logos*, starting with his origins, and then continuing with his virtues. Sigibert's ancestry is always discussed from the aspect of the future: as he has a royal ancestry, he will beget great kings alike, thus the glory of his antecedents will be increased by him. In addition, the lines concerning his lineage contain an allusion to the famous prophecy from Book 6 of the *Aeneid*:²⁹ '*...tibi quem promisimus hic est, / Sigibercthus, amor populi, lux nata parentum, / qui genus a proavis longo tenet ordine reges / et reges geniturus erit, spes gentis opimae.*'³⁰ Hereby, Sigibert is depicted as a founder of a dynasty. Talking about his offspring, however, the most important for Fortunatus is to emphasize the Catholic doctrines about procreation. It was prepared by the picture of the bees in the *preafatio*, where he used the words *casto* and *cubili*. These

²⁵ ROBERTS (1989: 322).

²⁶ Menandros *Peri epideiktikon*. 2, 6.

²⁷ WILSON (1948: 37–38).

²⁸ KOEBNER (1915: 26).

²⁹ PAGLIARO (2017: 125–126).

³⁰ *Carm.* 6.1, 67 – 70, cf. Verg. *A.* 6, 791–794.

words return at the beginning of the epithalamium: '*...sed quod natura requirit / lege maritali amplexu est contentus in uno. / quo non peccat amor, sed casta cubilia servans / instruat de prole lares, ubi luserit heres.*'³¹ The ethical aspects of a marriage are also important to have trueborn children. (Though non-marital origin did not exclude a son from the inheritance per se by the Merovingians.)³²

Sigibert appears to his folk as a righteous ruler, a true caring father: '*pater et rex sit, nullum gravet, erigat omnes.*'³³ He is wise and forgiving, an inspiring example for the people: '*corrigit ipse prius.*'³⁴ His youth is depicted by the *puer senex* topos³⁵: '*iam gravitate senes tenerosque supervenit annos: / legem naturae meruit praecedere factis.*'³⁶ Sigibert has the *gravitas* and *pietas* necessary for a good ruler, he brings just laws (*bene lege co-ercet*), he is affectionate towards his subjects and so he wins the favour of his people: '*solus amat cunctos et amatur ab omnibus unus.*'³⁷ His prowess in battle is shown in connection with his victorious father, Clothar, and his much older cousin, Theudebert (533–548), who ruled Austrasia, the same territory as Sigibert, and was an extremely popular ruler.³⁸ Compared to them, Sigibert looks like a warrior king. This has special meaning as Sigibert presumably wished to hide the consequences of a military loss by his representative marriage. Altogether, the qualities and words appearing in Sigibert's praise will be used by Fortunatus in the other panegyrics written for Merovingian rulers.³⁹

At the end of the poem, Fortunatus completes the praises: Sigibert and his bride stand out of their environment: '*quantum virgo micans turbas superare videris / femineas, tantum tu, Sigiberchte, maritos.*'⁴⁰ This motive

³¹ *Carm.* 6.1, 33–36.

³² NELSON (1986: 4). It was just less likely to happen as a queen had more instruments in her hand to secure the throne for her own children. DAILEY (2015: 110–113).

³³ *Carm.* 6.1, 86.

³⁴ *Carm.* 6.1, 95.

³⁵ EHLEN (2011: 243).

³⁶ *Carm.* 6.1, 80–81.

³⁷ *Carm.* 6.1, 98.

³⁸ FRIEDRICH (2020: 18–19).

³⁹ WILLIARD (2016: 181).

⁴⁰ *Carm.* 6.1, 130–131.

of the bride and groom emerging out of the crowd is based on an ancient topos already present in Sappho's poetry.⁴¹ In addition, the couple is described as having shining faces, the sun-rays surround Sigibert's head like a halo while Brunchild is compared to various jewels. On one hand, all the splendor expresses heavenly lustre,⁴² on the other, it refers to the earthly wealth of the king. Brunchild just travelled through Gaul bringing a huge dowry, this royal glamour showed the people Sigibert's might. By presenting a catalogue of jewels, Fortunatus stressed further this quite spectacle message of power.

To sum up, Fortunatus gave the expected ideal image of a king. Sigibert appears as a worthy descendant of his ancestors, who can stand in line with his forefathers: the triumphant Clothar and Theudebert. Despite his youth, he is a wise and just ruler, anybody living under his command can be sure of good leadership and lawful treatment. Moreover, through a Vergilian allusion Sigibert is depicted as the founder of a dynasty. Still, Fortunatus puts a meaningful emphasis on Christian ethics, and by celebrating Sigibert's decision for a legal marriage, he warns the king to live according to those values. This was hardly the king's desire, which proves Fortunatus to be more than a simple flatterer.

The consolation: *De Gelesuintha* (Carm. 6.5)

The possible messages and the circumstances of composing the 6.5 consolation for the death of Galswinth are less clear than in the case of the 6.1 epithalamium. Here, many theories have been created about the questions who commissioned the poem, to whom it was addressed with what kind of aim, and why Fortunatus did not mention any of the inconvenient details.⁴³ There is no word about the murder which Gregory of Tours was not shy to describe.⁴⁴ Chilperich's name – though being the husband and the accused murderer – is not coming up in Fortunatus' work. Though Goiswinth, the mother is addressed in the poem, research

⁴¹ Cf. Sappho, fr. 105.; 106.; 110.

⁴² ROBERTS (2011: 113–120).

⁴³ See the summarizing table at STEINMANN (1975: 189).

⁴⁴ DLH 4, 28. Fortunatus might have left these unmentioned out of esthetical reasons: the *decorum* forbade to visualize and describe the violence.

mostly sees Brunchild, her other daughter in the Austrasian court as a recipient besides (or excluding) her mother.⁴⁵

The 370-line long poem is written in elegiac distiches. It is one of Fortunatus' longest works. The genre had its rhetorical requirements. According to Menander, consolatory speeches have three compulsory parts: the lamentation which needs to give a philosophical frame to the bereavement, a laudation recalling the character of the deceased and the consolation offering comfort to the mourners.⁴⁶ Fortunatus' poem starts with the lamentation (1–12), which points out the uncertain nature of human life. It is like ice: slippery, fragile. The winter imagery here stands in contrast with the spring pictures in the opening of the epithalamium. This is followed by a brief summary of the events (13–22): Galswinth left her homeland to marry, but now she is buried in a foreign land. From the 23rd line onwards, the narration starts. Fortunatus shows in a linear order everything that happened to Galswinth from the marriage proposal until her heavenly entrance. This relation is broken by the querelae of the different characters: herself, her mother – Goiswinth –, her sister – Brunchild – and her nurse. There is also a short laudation (237–246) of the princess inserted and an itinerary (209–236), again an uncustomary element for the genre. The poem is closed by the consolation. The grieving mother should find comfort in the circle of her still-living family members. The final words express the Christian hope for salvation, there is no need to weep for those already in Paradise. As the traditional elements of a consolation take a relatively small portion of the poem, it might be considered rather as an elegy. The narration and the querelae associate the poem with the late antique epics as well.⁴⁷

The querelae widen the grief throughout the poem. The first three of them thematize the parting of mother and daughter. Goiswinth addresses first the envoys from Gaul who hasten the departure. The exclamation is full of the worries of the mother unwilling to let her child

⁴⁵ KOEBNER (1915: 52); REYDELLET (1994a: xxiii); ROBERTS (2017: 301, n. 11); H. D. Williard suggests that the poem was commissioned by Brunchild and intended for the Austrasian and Visigoth courts; WILLIARD (2016: 196, 202).

⁴⁶ LATTIMORE (1962: 215–216).

⁴⁷ ROBERTS (2017: 301).

go, she claims the *lex naturae* to be extinguished, she can no longer be the mother of her daughter (49–82). Then Galswinth turns back on the bridge towards the city and cries out to the gates for being cruel to let her go, though until then the walls enclosed her to safety. Her fears echo those of her mother: who will take care of her among strangers (97–122)? Next, Goiswinth speaks again, this time to the whole of Spain. She, just separated from her daughter, cannot find her place anymore in the kingdom (139–168). Then the querela grieving Galswinth moves on with growing intensity on an emotional spectre replacing the geographical one. First the nurse – like previously the mother – calls to account the natural order of the world: she, the nurse should have died before Galswinth, who was yet too young (259–270). Brunchild goes further by wishing to die together with her sister (283–298). Last, the mother cast her curses on nature for allot her only pain (321–346).⁴⁸

Altogether, the querelae reflect deep grief and pain even though consolations were mostly written to comfort and explain why the weeping is unnecessary. Women might be condemned for excessive crying over the bereavement, Plutarch in his *Consolatio ad uxorem* for instance set his wife as an example for not abandoning her duties after the death of their little daughter and not being lost in grief loading her environment like other, weaker women might do. Seneca also warns his female addressees in his consolations to restrain their emotions.⁴⁹ Fortunatus himself adopted these thoughts when he wrote for Chilperich after losing his two little sons. He advised the king not to remain sorrowful, bear the burden with dignity, and help his wife to find comfort. He reminds the ruler that he should be a good example for his people too.⁵⁰ Although in the consolation for the death of Galswinth he addresses two

⁴⁸ DAVIS (1967: 122–125).

⁴⁹ Sen. *Ad Helviam, Ad Marciam*; Plut. *Consolatio ad uxorem* 608C–610C.

⁵⁰ *Carm.* 9.2, 83–86.: *Rex precor ergo potens, age quod tibi maxime prosit, / quod prodest animae cum deitatis ope: / Esto virile decus, patienter vince dolores; / quod non vitatur, vel toleretur onus.* *Carm.* 9.2, 89–94.: *Consuleas dominae reginae et amantis amatae, / quae bona cuncta capit te sociante sibi; / materno affectu placare iubeto dolentem / nec simul ipse fleas nec lacrimare sinas. / Te regnante viro tristem illam non decet esse, / sed magis ex vestro gaudeat alta toro.* *Carm.* 9.2, 97–98.: *Tallis erit populus qualem te viderit omnis, / deque tua facie plebs sua vota metet.*

queens, no such arguments are used. The one line at the end of the poem warning not to weep for someone in Paradise cannot outweigh the tragic tone of the querelae.

Nevertheless, certain circumstances could make a bereavement especially painful in antiquity, like if someone died far away from home and family, was buried in a foreign land, by others than his or her relatives, or if the death occurred untimely and violently.⁵¹ These were all true in Galswinth's case, so the exclamations can be justified. It is also possible that Fortunatus tried to give a safe passage to the emotions: absolving them in the form of exaggerated grief rather than in thoughts of revenge. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the Wheel of Fortune is pictured in the first line of the poem: '*Casibus incertis rerum fortuna rotatur.*'⁵² In the classical era, Fortuna was not to blame, it counted as a neutral authority contrary to Fatum who is sometimes depicted as a hostile force.⁵³

The real tragedy seems to be more the parting of mother and daughter rather than the actual death of Galswinth. The bereavement is foreshadowed. All the worries in the querelae suggest that she went on a dangerous journey. As she sets off, the nature is echoing with pain bringing in Vergilian tunes: '*deducit dulcem per amara viatica natam, / inplentur valles fletibus, alta termunt, / frangitur et densus vacuis ululatibus aer.*'⁵⁴ The verb *ululo* is used by Vergil in Aeneas' and Dido's cave scene, where the nymphs squawk, and the word *malum* in the next line predicts the tragic end of the love story.⁵⁵ Even Goiswinth's words in her last querela suggest that the tragedy was not entirely unexpected: '*hoc ergo illud erat, quod mens praesaga timebat.*'⁵⁶ Here lies another episode from Vergil in the background as in the 10th song of the Aeneid Lausus,

⁵¹ LATTIMORE (1962: 178–199).

⁵² *Carm.* 6.5, 1.

⁵³ LATTIMORE (1962: 317).

⁵⁴ *Carm.* 6.5, 127–129.

⁵⁵ Verg. *A.* 4, 168–170: *conubiis summoque ulularunt vertice Nymphae. / ille dies primus leti primusque malorum / causa fuit.*

⁵⁶ *Carm.* 6.5, 333.

a warrior fighting against Aeneas, reacts with the same words when his son's death is reported to him.⁵⁷

Galswinth's departure evokes a violent aspect of wedding songs too: young virgins often looked ahead of their new lives fearing the separation from their mothers and then the marriage. Therefore, archaic epithalamia sometimes contained a lament of the bride.⁵⁸ Galswinth's own querelae fit well into this tradition. The consolation is connected to the epithalamia on the level of language as well, Fortunatus names Cupid in one line talking about Galswinth's unwillingness to marry: '*fixa Cupidinicis cuperet huc frigora flammis*.'⁵⁹ The themes of marriage and death can be intertwined. A topos existed in epitaphs of classical antiquity, which claimed that young girls and boys were taken by gods for their beauty and kindness. This promise of immortality, life on the Olymp or in the Elysium offered a very similar consolation as the Christian salvation.⁶⁰ These children were often named *raptus/rapta*, words Fortunatus himself uses for Galswinth.⁶¹ Another classical topos concerning the rite du passage motif common in getting married and dying is the story of the girl who died on the day of her wedding. The contrast of life and death was exploited in epigrams in the Hellenistic era, but later it found its way into other genres too.⁶² As Fortunatus mentions Galswinth's wedding only in one line and makes no further references to the marriage, the poem can be connected to this Hellenistic topos as well. Furthermore, this way the transitions from Toledo to Gaul and from earth to heaven are not distinguished, and Galswinth appears as a virgin heading to her unification with her heavenly bridegroom.⁶³ The

⁵⁷ DAVIS (1967: 124); Verg. A. 10, 843.

⁵⁸ FEENEY (2013: 76–78).

⁵⁹ *Carm.* 6.5, 25.

⁶⁰ WYPUSTEK (2013: 125–126).

⁶¹ WYPUSTEK (2013: 162–165).

⁶² SZEPESSY (1972: 341–357).

⁶³ In the Middle Ages, there were serious concerns about the question of whether women can become saints. To be honoured as such, women first had to overcome the failures of their sex. Most often it was achieved by preserving virginity. Therefore, it can have significance by Fortunatus, that Galswinth appears as a virgin and her mas-

final consolation should be found in Galswinth's beatification. Though the poem is full of tragic tones, by the end, Galswinth is admitted to heaven by Virgin Mary, the martyr St Stephan and the Apostles. The ending is anticipated also by a miracle that happened at her grave: a lamp falls to the ground but does not break, nor does the light diminish, which symbolizes Galswinth's sound faith.⁶⁴

The poem contains many references to Claudian's late antique epic, *De raptu Proserpinae*, the parallel is apparent: the grieving mother or the girl forced into a marriage are recurring actors in both works. While the mother is devastated, the girl in the epic receives a warm welcome in her new home, just like in the consolation. The laudation of Galswinth makes it clear that she became an exemplary queen of her new homeland. Moreover, the transition through marriage leads in both cases to some form of death. Galswinth crosses five rivers on her journey mirroring the five rivers of the Underworld. There is a direct reference to Claudian's work in the 367th line of the poem too, as Fortunatus uses the word *tonans*, which is to be read by Claudian in the very same line. In the epic it means Iuppiter, in the consolation it might refer to God's anger from the Old Testament and his heavenly judgement awaiting people.⁶⁵

According to Gregory, following Galswinth's death Sigibert and Gonthran joined for a campaign against Chilperich avenging the murder,⁶⁶ hence vengeance (at least a war on Chilperich) was possibly a very actual matter after Galswinth's death. M. Reydellet, K. Steinmann and Roberts suggest that the poem was written shortly after the bereavement,⁶⁷ and both Reydellet and George see it as an attempt on Radegund's behalf to restore peace.⁶⁸ Radegund and Fortunatus seem to

culine role accepting the oath of the soldiers can further strengthen the idea of her worthy nature. DAILEY (2015: 48–53).

⁶⁴ GEORGE (1992: 99); DAVIS (1967: 132–133); REYDELLET (1994b: 178, n. 69).

⁶⁵ GIOANNI (2012: 938–943).

⁶⁶ DLH 4, 28.

⁶⁷ STEINMANN (1975: 189–199); REYDELLET (1994a: xliii); ROBERTS (2017: 298).

⁶⁸ REYDELLET (1975: xxiii–xxiv); GEORGE (1992: 96; 101).

share a desire for peace along with Gregory of Tours.⁶⁹ A king, however, could hardly afford peace as he was expected to provide booty for his warriors.⁷⁰ Nonetheless, Fortunatus created an illusion according to which the death of Galswinth was not a tragedy at all, and it must be perceived as a rebirth of life in heaven. At the same time, he discouraged his readers to take earthly revenge by reminding his audience of God's judgement.

Common elements and motives

The 6.1 and 6.5 carmens have some common elements, partly due to the rhetorical requirements and Fortunatus' own preferences. While laudations were a compulsory part of both the epithalamia and the consolations, itineraries are often added by Fortunatus over the genre-specific formulae. In the following, these will be examined side by side. First, the two itineraries, which describe the same journey from Toledo to Gaul, but the same phrases get very different connotations. Both princesses travel through snowy, high mountains, cold winter pictures appear. '*Per hiemes validasque nives Alpenque Pyrenen / perque truces populos vecta est duce rege sereno / externis regina toris. super ardua montis / planum carpis iter.*'⁷¹ – stands in the itinerary of the epithalamia. Invoking the *militia amoris* topos well known from Ovid,⁷² the seemingly least pleasant road means an obstacle between the couple, which they successfully overcome: '*nil obstat amantibus umquam.*'⁷³

Much longer is the itinerary in the consolation, and surprisingly, the winter imagery here gets a positive connotation. The snow is white and glittering, the high mountains reach the skies, the words reveal Paradise. This description becomes the turning point in the poem, these lines bring light among the dark tunes for the first time. Galswinth's journey

⁶⁹ Gregory of Tours condemned the many liaisons of the Merovingian Kings not only because it was against the Christian idols, but because he saw it as the source of instability in Gaul. In his opinion, the disputes of the too many children stemming from the too many relations of the kings lead to the wars. DAILEY (2015: 101).

⁷⁰ CRISP (2003: 5–7).

⁷¹ *Carm.* 6.1, 113–116.

⁷² EHLEN (2011: 250).

⁷³ *Carm.* 6.1, 116.

is more detailed than Brunchild's. Here, Fortunatus includes passages about Tours and Poitiers as the princess progresses through partly to mention the venerated saints of the two cities, St Martin and St Hilary, who was famous for his eloquence. The saints direct attention towards the transcendent as well. St Hilary's words enlighten the minds just as the rays of the sun illumine the mountains: '*sol radio, hic verbi generalia lumina fundunt, montibus ille diem, mentibus iste fidem.*'⁷⁴ St Martin is connected to the skies: '*Toronicas terras Martini ad sidera noti.*'⁷⁵ The last words stem from the 5th eclogue of Vergil, from a lamentation told for Daphnis, the deceased shepherd, who will then become a guardian of all the shepherds. St Martin, as a Christian bishop, fulfils the same pastoral task of being a caretaker of his fold.⁷⁶ The two saints were deeply honored by Fortunatus; therefore it is no accident that he mentioned them in the consolation. The scene in Poitiers is further extended, Fortunatus grabs the occasion to portray Radegund as a sympathizing mother-figure for Galswinth, offering the newcomer warm welcome and support.⁷⁷ Fortunatus mentions himself too when seeing the procession going through the city. He positions himself as another foreign soul in Gaul and creates a sense of fellowship between him, Radegund and Galswinth.⁷⁸ Consequently, the itineraries are functional, as they serve their individual aims both in the consolation and the epithalamium.

The laudations of the two princesses have specific purposes as well. Fortunatus could have very little personal knowledge of either Brunchild or Galswinth at the time of composing the poems, hence, both princesses get an idealized, nevertheless, very different depiction. Brunchild is described by her physical features while Galswinth is characterized by her acts.

The first words about Brunchild evoke Vergil: '*...maturalis nubilis annis / virginitas in flore tumens, complexa marito / primitiis placitura suis,*

⁷⁴ *Carm.* 6.5, 221–222.

⁷⁵ *Carm.* 6.5, 229.

⁷⁶ DAVIS (1967: 130–131).

⁷⁷ SMITH (2009: 310–311).

⁷⁸ ROBERTS (2017: 308–310).

*nec damna pudoris / sustinet, unde magis pollens regina vocatur.*⁷⁹ These lines echo Lavinia's introduction: '*iam matura viro, iam plenis nubilis annis.*'⁸⁰ Brunchild's beauty is shown by flowers and jewels: '*lactea cui facies incocta rubore coruscat, / lilia mixta rosis: aurum si intermicet ostro, / decertat tuis numquam se vultibus aequant. / sapphirus, alba, adamans, crystallae, zmaragdus, isapis / cedant cuncta: novam genuit Hispania gemmam.*'⁸¹ The phrase *lilia mixta rosis* is a recurring element of Fortunatus' poetry, here, the white and red colors are already present in the preceding line. The flowers are partly borrowed from Vergil, who portrays Lavinia with lilies and roses,⁸² which becomes commonplace in late antique epithalamia likewise.⁸³ Light and flowers have always been part of wedding songs,⁸⁴ but they gain special importance by Fortunatus. Light has a particular significance in his poetry. First of all, by the descriptions of churches, as shine makes them a place of God. A glittering effect is often achieved by using precious stones or sometimes even floral images. This method is especially transparent in one section of his epic *Vita Sancti Martini*. While gems and flowers garnish vestments of lay nobles on several occasions, representing earthly riches against the simplicity of the Saint, at one place the splendor of heaven's armies. This latter scene turns into the depiction of a wedding chamber where virgins and martyrs are followed by Christ himself appearing as the bridegroom.⁸⁵ In the case of Brunchild, the jewels do not only mean to indicate the princess's wealth and the roses do not only symbolize love, as lilies also not only her innocence: these are all metaphors for virginity and heaven.⁸⁶ Brunchild as a bride is shown as the perfect image of a Christian virgin.

Brunchild's laudation takes up thirteen lines, extra ten lines about her ancestry are added later, where Fortunatus names her father and the excellent rule he brought to Spain. Compared to this, Galswinth's lauda-

⁷⁹ *Carm.* 6.1, 52–55.

⁸⁰ Verg. *A.* 7, 53.

⁸¹ *Carm.* 6.1, 107–111.

⁸² Cf., Verg. *A.* 12, 68–69: *aut mixta rubent ubi lilia multa / alba rosa.*

⁸³ Cf. Dracontius. *Romul.* 6, 8; 7, 45.

⁸⁴ CONTIADES-TSITSONI (1990: 56–66).

⁸⁵ PATAKI (2017: 92–93); cf. *Vita Sancti Martini*, 3, 455–528.

⁸⁶ ROBERTS (2011: 114–119).

tion seems shorter, only ten lines in a more than twice as long poem as the epithalamium. The difference in length becomes especially apparent when compared to the consolation written for the death of Vilithuta (4.26), a noblewoman who died in childbirth, where the laudation of the deceased takes up about a fourth of the poem. Another peculiarity of Galswinth's laudation is the omission of her origins, though she was a daughter of a king. Royal lineage was highlighted in another consolation of Fortunatus written for a dead princess, Theudechild (4.25), where he enumerates the distinguished relatives.⁸⁷ Prominent ancestry was brought up writing about Vilithuta as well.⁸⁸ However, these all seem to be functional. In Vilithuta's case, the noble pedigree is a barbarian one which, apart from her Roman education and kind character, serves to prove that the word 'barbarian' do not necessarily have a pejorative meaning. It is an exemplary place for the mixed identities of Merovingian society.⁸⁹ In the poem for Theudechild, Fortunatus presumably wanted to stress Merovingian greatness, as the princess was the daughter of a late Merovingian king, sister to the already-mentioned popular ruler Theudebert. Lastly, while at Brunchild's wedding, Fortunatus had to make the courtesy to praise the Visigoth king for the envoys of Spain, the king had already been dead when Galswinth herself died. Mentioning her father in the consolation would have served no aim. There is no referring to Galswinth's beauty either, unlike in the works for Brunchild or Vilithuta. Despite these lapses, the laudation still contains conventional elements. Like all good Christian noblewomen, Galswinth was also a true mother to the needy: '*pauperibus tribuens advena mater erat.*'⁹⁰ Choosing the word *advena* can have a special meaning: patristic authors used it for rebirth, it can refer here to Galswinth's new life in heaven.⁹¹ The princess is magnanimous and eloquent too: '*et magno meruit plebis amore coli, / hos quoque muneribus permulcens, vocibus illos.*'⁹² Her foreign-

⁸⁷ *Carm.* 4.25, 7–10.

⁸⁸ *Carm.* 4.26, 13.

⁸⁹ See note 19.

⁹⁰ *Carm.* 6.5, 244.

⁹¹ QUESNEL (1996: 126).

⁹² *Carm.* 6.5, 238–239.

ness is highlighted again in these lines, she needs to win the graces of her new compatriots, and she does a wonderful job. She wins even the favor of the warriors: *'utque fidelis ei sit gens armata, per arma / iurat iure suo, se quoque lege ligat.'*⁹³ This is a very unusual motif, as the army was traditionally not supposed to swear an oath to Merovingian queens.⁹⁴ Bringing in the soldiers partly suggests dangers, partly shows Galswinth's skills to establish herself in her new homeland. Voices of war are contrasted in the next line, Galswinth creates peace: *'regnabat placido componens tramite vitam.'*⁹⁵ Most importantly though, she converts to the Catholic faith to win the heavenly reward: *'quaque magis possit regno superesse perenni, / catholicae fidei conciliata placet.'*⁹⁶ These closing lines of the laudation serve as an affirmation: Galswinth was on the right religious conviction when she died, she must have been accepted to the eternal kingdom. In addition, it sets a reassuring example to the converted Brunchild as well. The laudation assures everyone that Galswinth met the requirements set for a good queen, she made everything in her power to make herself beloved in her new home.⁹⁷

A pictured alliance between the Visigoth and Austrasian courts is a further common aspect of the epithalamium and the consolation. It is spoken directly in the epithalamium. Brunchild is presented as a princess, who came to unite the two nations: *'Hispanam tibimet dominam, Germania, nasci, / quae duo regna iugo pretiosa conexuit uno.'*⁹⁸ It is strengthened by the many Vergilian allusions described above, which connect Brunchild to Lavinia and Sigibert to Aeneas, who were the mythical founders of a new nation. Later, this picture returns in a panegyric written for Brunchild by Fortunatus in the 580s. Brunchild's daughter married to a Visigoth ruler, while his son ruled in Gaul: *'Gallia cuius habet genus et Hispania fetum / masculus hinc moderans, inde puella regens.'*⁹⁹

⁹³ *Carm.* 6.5 241–242.

⁹⁴ GEORGE (2011: 47).

⁹⁵ *Carm.* 6.5, 241–243.

⁹⁶ *Carm.* 6.5, 245–246.

⁹⁷ WILLIARD (2016: 202).

⁹⁸ *Carm.* 6.1, 118–119.

⁹⁹ *Carm.* App. 6, 3–4.

In the consolation the idea is less direct but still present. First of all, the grief unites the lamenting daughter and mother in the two courts. Brunchild refers to the shared tragedy in her querela crying for Galswinth: '*non te hic cara soror, non ibi mater habet.*'¹⁰⁰ After Goiswinth's last exclamation the grieving mother and daughter are connected: '*partitis lacrimis soror hinc, inde anxia mater, / vocibus haec Rhenum pulsat et illa Tagum. / condolet hinc Batavus, gemit illinc Baeticus axis, / perstrepat hoc Vachalus, illud Hiberus aquis.*'¹⁰¹ The geographical names here cover Gaul and Spain, the two kingdoms seem joint in the grief. Though the distance separates mother and daughter, the common sadness overcomes the physical obstacles.

According to Roberts, the consolation brings sympathy towards the Austrasian and Visigoth courts through this common grief, it creates an extra bond between the two natural allies while forging hostile feelings towards Neustria.¹⁰² Though Chilperich is not mentioned in the poem, the connection with the *De raptu Proserpinae* allows the audience to see him in the role of the lord of the Underworld.¹⁰³ Williard agrees that the poem should be understood in the context of Visigoth and Austrasian diplomacy and suggests that the work aimed the audience of these two courts.¹⁰⁴

This blueprint of alliance seems however problematic. Historical research shows that Sigibert wanted to solve internal issues by his marriage to the Visigoth princess and not to gain external support. The message of the consolation is enigmatic. On one hand, the Claudian allusions may suggest a theory towards a hidden negative portrayal of Chilperich and Fortunus' careful judgement on him between the lines.¹⁰⁵ On the other hand though, the many Vergilian loci echoed in the poem can put Chilperich into Aeneas' role, who was innocent of Dido's death, and so forming a neutral depiction of Chilperich.¹⁰⁶ Neither of the

¹⁰⁰ *Carm.* 6.5, 288.

¹⁰¹ *Carm.* 6.5, 347–350.

¹⁰² ROBERTS (2017: 310–311).

¹⁰³ GIOANNI (2012: 941–943).

¹⁰⁴ WILLIARD (2016: 200–204).

¹⁰⁵ GIOANNI (2012: 941–943).

¹⁰⁶ GEORGE (1992: 99–101).

allusions should be understood as the exclusive narrative for the whole poem. Looking at the poetic oeuvre of Fortunatus, it seems unlikely that he would have served the political interests of the Austrasian court by writing propagandistic works against Neustria. In his panegyrics written for royalty, the ideal king is the one who can bring and maintain peace, which has a higher value than victorious wars.¹⁰⁷

In the 6.1 epithalamium *Pax* seems to win over Mars: '*Mars habet ecce duces, pax habet ecce decus.*'¹⁰⁸ In a panegyric composed for the royal couple not much after the wedding, Sigibert is though praised for his successful wars, these secure peace and prosperity: '*prosperitate nova pacem tua bella dederunt / et peperit gladius gaudia certa tuus. / plus tamen ut placeas, cum sit victoria iactans, / tu magis unde subis, mitior inde manes.*'¹⁰⁹ These lines can be read as an admonishment for the king: true virtue cannot be found on the battlefield. In another poem, addressed to Charibert (561–567), Sigibert's and Chilperich's older brother, the king and his uncle, the late king Childebert (511–558) are described to be peaceful rulers (*rex placidus*). The deceased Childebert is presented as a gentle, wise and just king who set an example for his successor.¹¹⁰ The past wars are mentioned here again from the aspect of the present peace: '*Quos prius infestis lassarunt bella periclis, / hos modo securos pacis amore foves.*'¹¹¹ An echo of this can be found in Galswinth's laudation, which shows that she overcame the dangers by bringing peace. The pictured unity between the Visigoth and Austrasian people by Fortunatus can be understood as a plead for peace in an era when memories of enmities were still close. At the dawn of the 5th century, the Visigoths were forced to leave and move to Spain by the rising Merovingians. Wars went on until the beginning of the 6th century.¹¹² Possibly, the Franks still meant a threat in the middle of the century.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ BRENNAN (1984: 5).

¹⁰⁸ *Carm.* 6.1, 20.

¹⁰⁹ *Carm.* 6.1a, 15–19.

¹¹⁰ *Carm.* 6.2, 13–15.

¹¹¹ *Carm.* 6.2, 39–40.

¹¹² MEZEI (2006: 8).

¹¹³ COLLINS (1995: 40).

Analyzing the laudations and the itineraries proves that Fortunatus used the required elements with creativity, the compulsory parts were always shaped to the exact situations. The same things could appear very differently depending on the context. The content is, however, not fully formed by the desires of the addressed. Keeping the peace was hardly the most important thought of the Merovingian rulers, whose power, treasure and fame derived mostly from military campaigns, Fortunatus still tried to promote a pious way of life in line with his own values.

Conclusion

To conclude, Fortunatus seems to carefully balance between the expectations of his patrons and his conscience. He met the requirements of his commissioners both in the epithalamium and the consolation. He boosted Sigibert's image as a ruler, as a successful warrior as well as a wise judge of his people. If the consolation was written on behalf of Rade Gund to send a message of peace to Brunchild, which seems likely, he accomplished his task again speaking against earthly vengeance. Both poems have some didactic points. Sigibert is warned about the expected behavior of a good Christian husband, while for Brunchild, the conversion and beatitude of her sister can serve as an argument for her newly adopted Catholic religion. The content of the poems reveals a deeply religious person in those lines where he speaks beyond the notions of the rulers. Examining these literary artefacts in their historical context shows Fortunatus' skills to write beyond flattery and preserve his integrity even in delicate situations.

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The Citations of Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* in Angelo Poliziano's Unpublished Hand Notes to Virgil's *Aeneid*

As far as scholars know from the available evidence, Angelo Poliziano's academic activity in the Studium of Florence did not include a course specifically devoted to Apollonius Rhodius. This paper offers a survey of the citations from Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica in Poliziano's hand notes to the Aeneid, transmitted by the incunabulum Paris, BNF, Rés. G. Yc. 236, to provide new information for further research both on the humanist's interest in the Hellenistic poem and, more generally, on the Apollonian reception in the Renaissance.

Keywords: Poliziano, Virgil, *Aeneid*, Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, *Fortleben*

1. Introduction

The importance of the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius for Virgil's *Aeneid* has been the subject of scholarly interest in recent decades.¹ However, the focus on the relationship between these poems has an ancient origin and in the 15th century Angelo Poliziano (1454–1494) acknowledged that some *loci* from Apollonius' *Argonautica* had been used by Virgil as a model.²

Poliziano's philological and exegetical activity is linked to his role as a teacher at the *Studium* of Florence (1480–1494) and his interest in Virgil

¹ For the importance of Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* as a model for the *Aeneid* see, e.g., BEYE (1993); HUNTER (1993: 170–189), and NELIS (2001), with further bibliography. For what concerns the Homeric poems as models for the *Aeneid*, see, e.g., KNAUER (1979²) and FARRELL (2021).

² On Virgil's reception in the Renaissance see WILSON-OKAMURA (2010).

is shown by the courses he taught on the *Eclogues* (1482–1483) and the *Georgics* (1483–1484).³ It is known that Poliziano lectured on the *Aeneid* in the academic year 1486–1487,⁴ and both his unpublished hand notes, transmitted by the incunabulum Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Rés. G. Yc. 236,⁵ as well as the *recollectae* of his lessons, handed down by the manuscript Ravenna, Biblioteca Comunale Classense, 237,⁶ bear witness to his exegetical work on the Virgilian poem.

Although Poliziano never wrote – as far as scholars know – a commentary on Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, his interest is shown by the several citations from this poem (and from the *scholia*) that he scattered in his oeuvre.⁷

³ Regarding Poliziano's teaching at the *Studium* of Florence see CESARINI MARTINELLI (1996); MANDOSIO (2008), and VITI (2012). See also DEL LUNGO (1868); DEL LUNGO (1897: 93–132); MAÏER (1966: 423–438); BRANCA (1968); BRANCA (1983).

⁴ BRANCA (1983: 75–76).

⁵ In addition to Poliziano's hand notes to the *Aeneid*, the incunabulum Paris, BNF, Rés. G. Yc. 236 hands down those on the *Georgics*, published by CASTANO MUSICÒ (1990), and those on the *Eclogues* of which I am working on the critical edition. This incunabulum is a copy of the second Virgil's edition printed in Rome in 1471 by Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz, with the collaboration of the editor Giovanni Andrea Busi (IGI 10180; ISTC iv00151400). On this incunabulum see e.g., PEROSA (1955: 29–30, nr. 15); MAÏER (1965: 353); CASTANO MUSICÒ (1990: VII–X), and DANELONI (2013: 311, nr. 85).

⁶ The ms. Ravenna, Biblioteca Comunale Classense, 237, hands down the *recollectae* of Poliziano's lessons on the *Georgics* (ff. 3r–22r) and on the *Aeneid* (ff. 23r–88r); on this manuscript and its owners, see PEROSA (1955: 35–36, nr. 22); MAÏER (1965: 258); VERDE (1977: 151), and PAOLINO (2016: 177–179).

⁷ With regard to Poliziano's interest in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* (and in the *scholia*) see, e.g., VIAN (2005: 611–613); VIAN (1997: 982–984); DANELONI (2011: 422–423); CATTANEO (2015: 101–104); CATTANEO (2017). In this respect, not only the commentaries written by Poliziano in support of his lectures at the *Studium* of Florence should be considered, but also e.g., the hand notes written in the incunabula's margins, his epistolary, both *Miscellanies* (see the recent edition by DYCK–COTTRELL [2020]), his works in prose and poetry, his notebooks, as the so-called *De poesi et poetis* (i.e., the first part of the manuscript Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Naz. II I 99, in which Poliziano collected informations about poetry and poets of classical antiquity; see CESARINI MARTINELLI [1982] and CESARINI MARTINELLI [1985]), and the manuscript Par. Gr. 3069 (for a description of this notebook, see SILVANO [2010: XLIII–LIX]), in which in

The method I adopted to classify the citations from the *Argonautica* has been defined by Claudio Bevegni in a series of landmark studies on the reception of Greek theatre in Angelo Poliziano's commentaries:⁸ (1) I have taken into account the hand notes where the lines of the *Argonautica* are cited *verbatim* by Poliziano and the notes where the humanist refers to the Hellenistic poem without citing the text;⁹ (2) I quoted the lines of the *Aeneid*'s lines that the humanist intended to comment on; (3) I considered the context and the reasons that led Poliziano to cite the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius.

Concerning the transcription of Poliziano's hand notes, I have adopted the following criteria: (1) punctuation and capital letters follow modern usage; (2) I retained Poliziano's spelling of the Latin terms; (3) for what concerns Latin, I have always restored diphthongs; (4) with regard to Greek, I have normalised spirits, accents, and *alia minima*. The following paragraphs provide an analysis of Poliziano's hand notes, fol-

the 1485 the humanist cited several *scholia* to Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*, as pointed out by PEROSA (1994: 86) and DANELONI (2011: 422–423).

⁸ BEVEGNI (2016c: 194–196); see also BEVEGNI (2016a) and BEVEGNI (2016b). Claudio Bevegni's research method hinges upon tracing the citations of ancient works scattered throughout Poliziano's oeuvre. All the quotations are catalogued as 'primary citations' (i.e., when Poliziano transcribes a passage from a manuscript of the author he is citing) and 'secondary citations' (when the humanist cites a passage from indirect tradition). I adopted this method in VESPOLI (forthcoming), where I offer a first survey of Poliziano's citations from Sophocles' extant plays.

⁹ Poliziano cited at f. 91r of the incunabulum Paris, BNF, Rés. G. Yc. 236 a *locus* from the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius (5,17,4–6) in which the latter noted that Virgil wrote the fourth book of the *Aeneid* taking as a model the third book of Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*. The hand note is the following one: *Macrobius: 'De Argonauticorum tertio, quorum scriptor est Apollonius, librum Aeneidos suae quartum totum paene formaverit, ad Didonem vel Aenean amatoriam continentiam Medae circa Iasonem transferendo. Quod ita elegantius auctore digessit, ut fabula lascivientis Didonis, quam falsam novit universitas, per tot tamen saecula speciem veritatis obtineat et ita pro vero per ora omnium volitet, ut pictores fictioresque qui figmentis liciorum contextas imitantur effigies, hac materia vel maxime in effigiandis simulacris tamquam unico argumento decoris utantur, nec minus histrionum perpetuis et gestibus et cantibus celebratur. Tantum valuit pulchritudo narrandi ut omnes Phoenissae castitatis conscii, nec ignari manum sibi iniecissem reginam, ne pateretur damnum pudoris, coniveant tamen fabulae, et intra conscientiam veri fidem frementes malint pro vero celebrari quod pectoribus humanis dulcedo fingentis infudit'.*

lowing the progressive order of the lines of the *Argonautica* cited by the humanist.¹⁰ The acronym *Ang.* (= *Angelus*), which is written before several hand notes, introduces Poliziano's thoughts on the text or *loci paralleli* that he has found without using ancient commentaries.¹¹

2. AR 1, 306–309; 536–539 ad Verg. *Aen.* 4, 143–150 (f. 93r, m.d.)

In the fourth book of the *Aeneid*, Virgil compares Aeneas, who is about to go on a hunting trip with Dido, to Apollo (Verg. *Aen.* 143–150):

Qualis ubi hibernam Lyciam Xanthique fluenta
deserit ac Delum maternam invisit Apollo
instauratque choros, mixtique altaria circum 145
Cretesque Dryopesque fremunt pictique Agathyrsi;
ipse iugis Cynthi graditur mollique fluentem
fronde premit crinem fingens atque implicat auro,
tela sonant umeris: haut illo segnior ibat
Aeneas, tantum egregio decus enitet ore. 150

As when Apollo *in winter* quits Lycia, and the streams of Xanthus, to visit his mother's Delos, and renews the dance, while mingling about his altars Cretans and Dryopes and painted Agathyrsians raise their voices—he himself treads the Cynthian ridges, and with soft foliage shapes and binds his flowing locks, braiding it with golden diadem; the shafts rattle on his shoulders: so no less lightly than he went Aeneas, such beauty shines forth from his noble face! (Trans. FAIRCLOUGH-GOOLD, slightly modified)

Poliziano writes in the right margin of f. 93r, next to Verg. *Aen.* 4, 143–150, the following note, where ll. 306–309 and ll. 536–539 of the first book of Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* are cited:

Angelus. Videtur Maro duas Apollonii comparationes decerpisse, quae in primo Argonauticon libro sunt:

¹⁰ The translations are mine only where a translator is not indicated.

¹¹ CESARINI MARTINELLI (1982: 195): 'Con la sigla *Ang.* l'umanista era solito contraddistinguere le osservazioni personali, non riprese da altre fonti'; see also CASTANO MUSICÒ (1990: IX).

Ἦ, καὶ ὁ μὲν προτέρωσε δόμων ἐξῶρτο νέεσθαι.
 Οἶος δ' ἐκ νηοῖο θυώδεος εἴσιν Ἀπόλλων
 Δῆλον ἄν' ἡγαθέην ἢ Κλάρον, ἢ ὅ γε Πυθῶ
 ἢ Λυκίην εὐρείαν ἐπὶ Ξάνθοιο ῥοῇσι.

Et non multo post:

Οἱ δ', ὥς τ' ἡίθιοι Φοῖβω χορὸν ἢ ἐνὶ Πυθοῖ
 ἢ πον ἐν Ὀρτυγίῃ ἢ ἐφ' ὕδασιν Ἰσμηνοῖο
 στησάμενοι, φόρμιγγος ὑπαὶ περὶ βωμὸν ὁμαρτῇ
 ἐμμελέως κραιπνοῖσι πέδον ῥήσσωσι πόδεσσιν.

Κτλ.

Angelo. Maro seems to have drawn from two similes of Apollonius, which are found in the first book of the *Argonautica*:

He spoke and went forth from his home to make his departure. And as Apollo goes from his fragrant temple through holy Delos or Claros, or through Pytho or broad Lycia by the streams of Xanthus. (Trans. RACE)

And not much further:

And they, as when young men form a chorus to honor Phoebus either in Pytho, or perhaps in Ortygia, or by the waters of Ismenus, and around the altar to the lyre's accompaniment with swift feet they beat the ground all together in rhythm. (Trans. RACE)

Etc.

Poliziano compares Verg. *Aen.* 4, 143–150 with two similes from the first book of Apollonius' *Argonautica* related to Apollo.¹²

In the first simile cited by Poliziano (*AR* 1, 306–309) Jason's walk through the crowd on his way to the harbour of Pagasae is compared to

¹² For what concerns the use of the similes by Apollonius Rhodius see EFFE (2008), with further bibliography.

that of Apollo when he walks around his temples.¹³ Virgil virtually cites the Apollonian text: *hibernam Lyciam Xanthique fluenta* of Verg. *Aen.* 4, 143 reworks Λυκίην εὐρεῖαν ἐπὶ Ξάνθοιο ῥοῇσι of AR 1, 309, where only the term *hibernam* varies from εὐρεῖαν of the Hellenistic model.¹⁴ The second simile cited by Poliziano (AR 1, 536–539) is described by Apollonius Rhodius in the scene of Argo's departure from Pagasae: the Argonauts beating the waves with their oars are compared to youths stamping their feet on the ground while dancing in honour of Apollo at Pytho.

As pointed out by Damien P. Nelis, the simile described in AR 1, 536–539 recalls that in AR 1, 306–309;¹⁵ it is likely that Virgil decided to use both the similes described in the first book of the *Argonautica* as a model for *Aen.* 4, 143–150 because he was aware of the relationship between them. From this perspective the expression *instauratque chorus* of Verg. *Aen.* 4, 145 is the citation of χορὸν ... στησάμενοι of AR 1, 536–538, as well as *altaria circum* of Verg. *Aen.* 4, 145 is parallel to περὶ βωμὸν of AR 1, 538.

3. AR 1, 1182–1184 *ad* Verg. *Aen.* 6, 5b–8 (f. 112v, m.s.)

In the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas lands at Cumae for visiting Apollo's temple in order to seek a prophecy from the Sibyl. In *Aen.* 6, 5b–8 the Trojans, who have just landed, are described as in the search for water supplies and fuel:

¹³ The comparison between Verg. *Aen.* 4, 143–150 and AR 1, 306–309 was already suggested by modern scholars: see e.g. JAHN (1912: 157 *ad loc.*); NELIS (2001: 135), and WEBER (2002: 322–333).

¹⁴ WEBER (2002: 323), commenting on the use of *hibernam* in Verg. *Aen.* 4, 143, points out that Lycia is not described as Apollo's 'winter home' but, on the contrary, 'is the place in Asia that in winter the god *leaves behind* for Greece'; according to this reading, Aeneas' leaving from Carthage in winter mirrors Apollo's abandoning Lycia in the same season of the year (see p. 324, n. 9).

¹⁵ See NELIS (2001: 135), who also surmises a memory of AR 2, 674–675 (τοῖσι δὲ Λητοῦς υἱός, ἀνερχόμενος Λυκίην / τῇλ' ἐπ' ἀπείρονα δῆμον Ὑπερβορέων ἀνθρώπων) in this Virgilian simile: 'Virgil subtly alludes to the god's Apollonian destination (i.e., the land of the Hyperboreans), however, when he describes the *Agathyrsi* (4, 146) dancing in his honour' (cit. *ibid.*).

5

Iuvenum manus emicat ardens
litus in Hesperium; quaerit pars semina flammae
abstrusa in venis silicis, pars densa ferarum
tecta rapit silvas, inventaque flumina monstrat.

In hot haste the youthful band leaps forth on the Hesperian shore;
some seek the seeds of flame hidden in veins of flint, some despoil the
woods, the thick coverts of game, and point to new-found streams.
(Trans. FAIRCLOUGH–GOOLD)

Alongside this Virgilian description, in the left margin of f. 112v, Poliziano cites AR 1, 1182–1184 as follows:

Angelus. Apollonius, libro primo:

Ἐνθα δ' ἔπειθ' οἱ μὲν ξύλα κάγχανα, τοὶ δὲ λεχαίην
φυλλάδα λειμώνων φέρον ἄσπετον ἀμήσαντες
στόρνυσθαι τοὶ δ' ἀμφὶ πυρῆια δινεύεσκον.

Angelo. Apollonius in the first book:

Thereupon some of the crew were bringing dry wood, while others
were bringing leaves that they had gathered in abundance from the
meadows to spread for beds; some were twirling sticks to make fire.
(Trans. RACE)

1182 κάγχανα Polit. : κάγκανα *recte*

The Argonauts land in Cianides, a region of Misia where they are peacefully welcomed by locals. After the landing, Apollonius describes the Argonauts collecting wood and leaves for use as bedding and fuel (AR 1, 1182–1184): this description is similar to that in Verg. *Aen.* 6, 5–8.¹⁶

A comparison between these two *loci* shows that *querit pars semina flammae* of Verg. *Aen.* 6, 6 corresponds to τοὶ δ' ἀμφὶ πυρῆια δινεύεσκον of AR 1, 1184 and *pars densa ferarum* / *tecta rapit silvas* of Verg. *Aen.* 6, 7–8

¹⁶ Concerning the similarity between AR 1, 1182–1184 and Verg. *Aen.* 6, 5–8 see AUSTIN (1977: 33) and NELIS (2001: 469).

reworks οἱ μὲν ξύλα κάγκανα, τοὶ δὲ λεχαῖην / φυλλάδα λειμώνων φέρον of AR 1, 1182–1183.

4. AR 3, 291–295 *ad Verg. Aen.* 8, 407–415 (141r, m.d.)

In the eighth book of the *Aeneid*, Venus asks Vulcan to forge weapons for Aeneas, and the god, overcome by love, agrees. In Verg. *Aen.* 8, 407–415 Vulcan preparing nighttime to forge the weapons is compared to a spinner who wakes up in the middle of the night to spin wool:¹⁷

Inde ubi prima quies medio iam noctis abactae
 curriculo expulerat somnum, cum femina primum,
 cui tolerare colo vitam tenuique Minerva
 impositum, cinerem et sopitos suscitāt ignis 410
 noctem addens operi, famulasque ad lumina longo
 exercet penso, castum ut servare cubile
 coniugis et possit parvos educere natos:
 haud secus ignipotens nec tempore segnior illo
 mollibus e stratis opera ad fabrilia surgit. 415

Then, just as when first rest had expelled sleep in the mid-circuit of driven-off night, a woman, who has been given the task of bearing the burden of her life by the distaff and by delicate Minerva, first stirs up ashes and wakes the slumbering fires, adding night to her daily task, and in the light of the lamp keeps her maidservants busy with the endless weighing out of wool, that she may be able to keep her husband's bed chaste and bring up her little sons. By no means otherwise or more sluggishly late than at that time does the ruler of fire rise from his soft beddings to his forger's tasks. (Trans. FRATANTUONO, ALDEN SMITH)

In commenting on this simile, Poliziano writes in the right margin of f. 141r the following note, where AR 3, 291–295 is cited:

Apollonius in III Argonauticon:

Ὡς δὲ γυνὴ μαλερῶ πυρὶ κάρφεα χεύετο δαλῶ
 χερσὶν ἡ τις, τῇ πέρ τε ταλασῆια ἔργα μέμηλεν,

¹⁷ On this Virgil's simile see FRATANTUONO–ALDEN SMITH (2018: 501–507) with further bibliography.

ὥς κεν ὑπωρόφιον νύκτωρ σέλας ἐντύναιτο,
 ἄγχι μάλ' ἐγρομένη· τὸ δ' ἀθέσφατον ἐξ ὀλίγοιο
 δαλοῦ ἀνεγρόμενον σὺν κάρφεα πάντ' ἀμαθύνει. 295

291 πὺρὶ Polit. : περὶ edd. | 292 τῇ πέρ τε Polit. : τῇπερ edd.

And as when a woman *throws twigs on the glowing embers of a fire-brand*, a working woman whose task is *also* wool-spinning, so as to furnish light under her roof at night *when she awakes very early*, and the flame rises prodigiously from the small brand and consumes all the twigs together. (Trans. RACE, slightly modified)

In these lines, Eros hidden in Medea's heart is compared by Apollonius to the glowing embers of a fire-brand that a spinner feeds nighttime throwing twigs on it.¹⁸ The correspondences between the two similes are the following ones: (1) *inde ubi prima quies medio iam noctis abactae / curriculo expulerat somnum* of Verg. *Aen.* 8, 407–408 is an expansion of ἄγχι μάλ' ἐγρομένη of AR 3, 294; (2) *cum femina primum* of Verg. *Aen.* 8, 408 is a citation of ὥς δὲ γυνὴ of AR 3, 291; (3) *cui tolerare colo vitam tenuique Minerva / impositum* of Verg. *Aen.* 8, 409–410 expresses the same content of τῇπερ [τῇ πέρ τε Polit.].¹⁹ *ταλασῆια ἔργα μέμηλεν* of AR 3, 292; (4) *cinerem et sopitos suscitāt ignis* of Verg. *Aen.* 8, 410 recalls μαλερῶ περὶ [πὺρὶ Polit.] κάρφεα χεύετο δαλῶ of AR 3, 291; (5) *noctem addens operi* of Verg. *Aen.* 8, 411 could be a reminiscence of AR 3, 293: ὥς κεν ὑπωρόφιον νύκτωρ σέλας ἐντύναιτο.²⁰

Poliziano acknowledged the striking similarities between AR 3, 291–295 and Verg. *Aen.* 8, 407–415 and therefore transcribed in the incunabulum Paris, BNF, Rés. G. Yc. 236 the simile described by Apollonius Rhodius to comment on the scene of the *Aeneid*. The first published work in which – as far as I know – the similarities between these two similes

¹⁸ On this simile see CLACK (1973: 310–311); CAMPBELL (1994: 266–271); EFFE (2008²: 206), and MOREAU (2003: 252–253).

¹⁹ It should be noted that Poliziano's reading τῇ πέρ τε in AR 3, 292 produces a hypermeter line.

²⁰ Concerning all these similarities see NELIS (2001: 341–343; 476).

have been acknowledged is Fulvio Orsini's *Virgilius collatione scriptorum Graecorum illustratus*, published in 1567.²¹

5. Final observations

As I pointed out above, the aim of this research is to collect the citations from Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* in Poliziano's unpublished hand notes on the *Aeneid* in order to understand why the humanist cited the Hellenistic poem to comment on Virgil's masterpiece and to identify the manuscripts he used to read it.

In order to clarify the reasons that led Poliziano to cite lines from the *Argonautica*, it is worth saying something about the nature of the hand notes in which Apollonius Rhodius' poem is cited. Firstly, the lines of the *Argonautica* are not cited for the purpose of exegesis of the text of the *Aeneid* (e.g., to clarify terms or expressions),²² but to point out the inter-textual relationship between the text of Apollonius Rhodius and that of Virgil: the Hellenistic poem is always cited as a model for the text of the *Aeneid* on which Poliziano is commenting. A clear example is the hand note wherewith Poliziano acknowledges that the similes described in AR 1, 306–309 and AR 1, 536–539 of the first book of Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* have been used as a model by Virgil in writing *Aen.* 4, 143–150: *Videtur Maro duas Apollonii comparationes decerpisse, quae in primo Argonauticon libro sunt.*

With regard to the manuscripts of the *Argonautica* used by Poliziano, scholars have identified two witnesses: the manuscript of 13th century Laur. 32, 16 (= S) and the manuscript of 10th century Laur. 32, 9 (= L).²³ My examination of these manuscripts yielded the following results:

²¹ ORSINI (1567: 371–372). It is worth noting that the incunabulum Paris, BNF, Rés. G. Yc. 236 was purchased by Fulvio Orsini, see CASTANO MUSICÒ (1990: VII).

²² In this respect, it is worth noting that Poliziano never cited the *scholia* to the *Argonautica* in the hand notes under consideration; the combination text + *scholium* is frequently found in Poliziano's commentaries.

²³ Regarding Poliziano's use of these manuscripts, see RESTA (1978: 1081); PEROSA (1994: 86); VIAN (2005: 611–613); VIAN (1997: 982–984); DANIELONI (2011: 422–423); SPERANZI (2016: 58), and CATTANEO (2017: 238–240). A detailed description of the well-known manuscript Laur. 32, 9 is in ORSINI (2005: 305–310).

1, 306–309 Ἡ, καὶ ὁ μὲν προτέρωσε δόμων ἐξῶρτο νέεσθαι. /
Οἶος δ' ἐκ νηϊο θυώδεος εἴσιν Ἀπόλλων / Δῆλον ἄν' ἡγαθέην ἡὲ
Κλάρον, ἢ ὅ γε Πυθῶ / ἢ Λυκίην εὐρεῖαν ἐπὶ Ξάνθοιο ῥοῆσι.

306 ἐξῶρτο Polit. L (f. 194r) : ἄρα ὦρτο S (f. 192v)

1, 536–539 Οἱ δ', ὥς τ' ἠίθεοι Φοῖβω χορὸν ἡ ἐνὶ Πυθοῖ / ἢ που
ἐν Ὀρτυγίῃ ἢ ἐφ' ὔδασιν Ἰσμηνοῖο / στησάμενοι, φόρμιγγος ὑπαὶ
περὶ βωμὸν ὁμαρτῇ / ἐμμελέως κραιπνοῖσι πέδον ῥήσσωσι
πόδεσσιν.

537 ὔδασιν Polit. L (f. 197r) : ὕδασ' S (f. 194r)

1, 1182–1184 Ἐνθα δ' ἔπειθ' οἱ μὲν ξύλα κάγχανα, τοὶ δὲ
λεχαῖην / φυλλάδα λειμώνων φέρον ἄσπετον ἀμήσαντες /
στόρνυσθαι· τοὶ δ' ἀμφὶ πυρήϊα δινεύεσκον.

1182 ἔπειθ' Polit. S (f. 199r) : ἔπειτ' L (f. 205r) κάγχανα Polit. :
κάγκανα L (f. 205r) P (f. 199r)

3, 291–295 Ὡς δὲ γυνὴ μαλερῶ πυρὶ κάρφεα χεύετο δαλῶ /
χερνῆτις, τῇ πέρ τε ταλασῆϊα ἔργα μέμηλεν, / ὥς κεν ὑπωρόφιον
νύκτωρ σέλας ἐντύναιτο, / ἄγχι μάλ' ἐγρομένη· τὸ δ' ἀθέσφατον ἐξ
ὀλίγοιο / δαλοῦ ἀνεγρόμενον σὺν κάρφεα πάντ' ἀμαθύνει.

291 χεύετο Polit. L (f. 227v) : δεύετο S (f. 212r) 292 τῇ πέρ τε Polit. L
(f. 228r) : τῇπερ S (f. 212r)

The comparison between the text of the *Argonautica* cited by Poliziano in his hand notes and that transmitted by the manuscripts L and S shows that the humanist read L instead of S.²⁴ The only exception is AR 1, 1182–1184, which seems to have been cited from the manuscript S: Poliziano, in fact, cite 1, 1182 with the reading ἔπειθ' of S instead of ἔπειτ' of L.²⁵ On the other hand, it is likely to me that Poliziano's error

²⁴ However, it should be noted that when in L there is an iota *adscriptum* in Poliziano's notes it is usually *subscriptum*.

²⁵ In this respect, it cannot be excluded that Poliziano exchanged *suo Marte* ἔπειτ' of L with ἔπειθ'.

κάγχανα in AR 1, 1182 against the correct reading κάγκανα of both L and S, has been caused by a humanist's *lapsus calami*.

**6. Appendix. Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*: AR 3, 744–754 (?)
ad Verg. *Aen.* 4, 522–532 (98r, m.d.)**

In *Aen.* 4, 522–532, Virgil describes firstly a quiet night (Verg. *Aen.* 4, 522–527) and then Dido's suffering due to Aeneas' decision to depart from Carthage (Verg. *Aen.* 4, 529–532):

Nox erat, et placidum carpebant fessa soporem
 corpora per terras, silvaeque et saeva quierant
 aequora, cum medio volvuntur sidera lapsu,
 cum tacet omnis ager, pecudes pictaeque volucres, 525
 quaeque lacus late liquidos, quaeque aspera dumis
 rura tenent, somno positae sub nocte silenti.
 Lenibant curas et corda oblita laborum.²⁶
 At non infelix animi Phoenissa, neque umquam
 solvitur in somnos, oculisve aut pectore noctem 530
 accipit; ingeminant curae rursusque resurgens
 saevit amor, magnoque irarum fluctuat aestu.

It was night, and over, and over the earth weary creatures were tasting the peace of slumber, the woods and wild seas had sunk to rest — the hour when stars roll midway in their gliding course, when all the land is still, and beasts and coloured birds, both those that far and near haunt the limpid lakes, and those that dwell in the thorny thickets of the countryside, are couched in sleep beneath the silent night. They were soothing their cares, their hearts oblivious of sorrows. But not so the soul-racked Phoenician queen; she never sinks into sleep, nor draws darkness into eyes or heart. Her pangs redouble, and her love, swelling up, surges afresh, as she heaves with a mighty tide of passion. (Trans. FAIRCLOUGH–GOOLD)

Poliziano, in order to comment on this scene, penned near Verg. *Aen.* 4, 522 the following short note (f. 98r, m.d.):

²⁶ This line is generally omitted by editors, see CONTE (2019²: 103 *ad loc.*); see also pp. IX–XXXVIII with regard to the manuscript tradition of the *Aeneid* and pp. XLVIII–LI for the *conspectus codicum*.

Angelus. Haec descriptio ex Apollonii 3^o.

Angelo. This description has been taken from the third book of Apollonius.

It seems likely to me that Poliziano's hand note refers to AR 3, 744–754.²⁷

Νύξ μὲν ἔπειτ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἄγεν κνέφας· οἱ δ' ἐνὶ πόντῳ
ναυτίλοι εἰς Ἑλίκην τε καὶ ἀστέρας Ὠρίωνος 745
ἔδρακον ἐκ νηῶν, ὕπνοιο δὲ καὶ τις ὁδίτης
ἦδη καὶ πυλαῶρὸς ἐέλδετο, καὶ τινα παίδων
μητέρα τεθνεώτων ἀδινὸν περὶ κῶμ' ἐκάλυπτεν·
οὐδὲ κυνῶν ὕλακὴ ἔτ' ἀνὰ πτόλιν, οὐ θρόος ἦεν
ἡχήεις· σιγὴ δὲ μελαινομένην ἔχεν ὄρφνην. 750
Ἀλλὰ μάλ' οὐ Μήδειαν ἐπὶ γλυκερὸς λάβεν ὕπνος·
πολλὰ γὰρ Αἰσονίδαο πόθῳ μελεδήματ' ἔγειρεν
δειδυῖαν ταύρων κρατερὸν μένος, οἷσιν ἔμελλεν
φθειῖσθαι ἀεικελίῃ μοίρῃ κατὰ νειὸν Ἄρης.

Then night was drawing darkness over the earth, and the sailors on the sea looked towards Helice and the stars of Orion from their ships, and by now the traveler and gate-keeper were longing for sleep, and deep slumber was enfolding the mother whose children had died; and no longer was there barking of dogs through the city nor echoing sounds, but silence gripped the darkening night. But by no means had sweet sleep overtaken Medea, because in her longing for Jason many anxieties kept her awake, as she dreaded the great strength of the oxen that were going to make him die a horrid death in the field of Ares.
(Trans. RACE)

As well as in Verg. *Aen.* 4, 522–532, where the description of the quiet night is followed by that of the restless Dido, in AR 3, 744–754 the description of the night (AR 3, 748–751) is followed by that of Medea, sleepless because she is worried about the dangerous undertaking imposed on Jason by Aeetes (AR 3, 752–754).

²⁷ The similarity between these scenes has been already acknowledged by SCALIGER (1561: 251); see also NELIS (2001: 166; 179–180; 333; 465).

The verbal similarities between Verg. *Aen.* 4, 522–527 and AR 3, 748–751 have been already pointed out:²⁸ (1) Verg. *Aen.* 4, 522a (*nox erat*) corresponds to AR 3, 744a (νύξ μὲν ἔπειτ' ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἄγεν κνέφας); (2) Verg. *Aen.* 4, 522–523 (*et placidum carpebant fessa soporem / corpora per terras*) is similar to AR 3, 746–748 (ὑπνοιο δὲ καὶ τις ὁδίτης / ἤδη καὶ πυλαωρὸς ἐέλδετο, καὶ τινα παίδων / μητέρα τεθνεώτων ἀδινὸν περὶ κῶμ' ἐκάλυπτεν); (3) Verg. *Aen.* 4, 524a (*aequora*) is a citation of AR 3, 744 (ἐνὶ πόντῳ); (4) Verg. *Aen.* 4, 524 (*cum medio voluntur sidera lapsu*) mirrors AR 3, 745–746 (καὶ ἀστέρας Ὠρίωνος / ἔδρακον ἐκ νηῶν); (5) the description of nature's silence in Verg. *Aen.* 4, 525–527 (*pecudes pictaeque volucres, / quaeque lacus late liquidos, quaeque aspera dumis / rura tenent, somno positae sub nocte silenti*) is similar to that in AR 3, 749–750 (οὐδὲ κυνῶν ὕλακῇ ἔτ' ἀνὰ πτόλιν, οὐ θρόος ἦεν / ἡχήεις· σιγὴ δὲ μελαινομένην ἔχεν ὄρφνην).

In both scenes the description of the quiet night clashes with that of the tormented feelings of a woman: Dido in Verg. *Aen.* 4, 529–532 and Medea in AR 3, 751–754. The similarities are the following ones: (1) Verg. *Aen.* 4, 529–531 (*at non infelix animi Phoenissa, neque umquam / solvitur in somnos, oculisve aut pectore noctem / accipit*) reworks AR 3, 751 (ἀλλὰ μάλ' οὐ Μήδειαν ἐπὶ γλυκερὸς λάβεν ὕπνος); (2) in Verg. *Aen.* 4, 531–532 (*ingeminant curae rursusque resurgens / saevit amor, magnoque irarum fluctuat aestu*) the description of Dido's distraught state of mind is similar to that of Medea's feelings in AR 3, 752 (πολλὰ γὰρ Αἰσονίδαο πόθῳ μελεδήματ' ἔγειρεν).

In conclusion, the striking similarities between AR 3, 744–754 and Verg. *Aen.* 4, 522–532 suggest that Poliziano had in mind Apollonius Rhodius' lines in commenting on the Virgilian scene.²⁹

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²⁸ See e.g., NELIS (2001: 179–180; 333).

²⁹ Regarding Poliziano's interest in Greek texts with the aim of shedding light on Latin ones, see e.g., VESPOLI (2021a); see also VESPOLI (2021b).

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The Description of the Siege of Székesfehérvár by Wolfgang Lazius. A Hidden *Oratio Funebris* in a Historical Work

The siege of Székesfehérvár in 1543 that lead to the city's one-century-long Turkish occupation was narrated by Johannes Martinus Stella (an Italian soldier), Miklós Istvánffy (the most famous Hungarian historian of the 16th century), and György Szerémi (a Hungarian priest working under János Szapolyai). The former two mainly focused on the events of the siege, while the latter used the 15th century's religious conflict as a focus point. A common point in all of their works is that they all briefly mention György Varkocs, the captain of Székesfehérvár. On the contrary, the historian of Ferdinand I, Wolfgang Lazius devotes the part dealing with the siege of Székesfehérvár in his monumental historical work to writing an obituary to György Varkocs. In my presentation I show how did Wolfgang Lazius use the siege's events that were appropriately narrated by the aforementioned authors, to hide a well-written oratio funebris of György Varkocs in the historical description of the siege of Székesfehérvár.

Keywords: Johannes Martinus Stella, Miklós Istvánffy, György Szerémi, Wolfgang Lazius, letter, *commentarius*, historical work, *oratio funebris*

The description of a siege can be used with many different intentions in mind. In light of these possibilities, in this study I will concentrate on two questions. Specifically, how and for what purpose can such a description be used? How much does the narrative of an event change depending on each possibility?

The first question can be answered in several ways and is the easiest to answer since we have limited options to choose from. Firstly, a work like this can be employed as part of a larger historical work or as a standalone description. It might be the subject of a letter, or a *commentarius* on which other writers can base their historical works, or even the

basis for an *oratio funebris*. These are just a few examples of how to employ a siege description; in the history of Hungarian literature, such a description has been used as a basis for a poem or even a song; but, for the time being, I will concentrate on the first four options.

The siege in question in this study is that of Székesfehérvár, also known as Alba Regia, which is recounted in the afore-mentioned four types of writings, namely a letter, a *commentarius*, a historical work, and a kind of *oratio funebris*. The siege of Székesfehérvár was not the only one that year: in 1543 the Ottoman Empire launched a military campaign in Hungary in order to clear the way for a future campaign against the Habsburg Monarchy.¹ The Turks took control of the capital city of Buda in 1541, which gave them control over the road leading to the centre of the country.² From Buda, the army moved to Esztergom, which was and still is the religious capital of Hungary. After days of warfare, the city was taken by the middle of August 1543. According to our sources, the defenders of the city most likely gave up the struggle when the Turkish army arrived at Székesfehérvár, the crowning and burial city of the kings of Hungary, on the 20th of the same month, after burning down Tata, one of Mathias Rex's Renaissance palaces.³

In the 16th century, the city's position made it difficult for any army to take Székesfehérvár, which was located in the middle of a swamp. This was in fact its strongest defence, as the walls of the city were mostly made of wood and mud, as they were in many other parts of Hungary. The only exceptions were the stone walls and towers enclosing the inner city, mostly built at the command of Ferdinand I, as the city was under Habsburg rule at the time. It was exactly this swamp that in previous years had prevented the Turks from attempting a siege at Székesfehérvár. György Varkocs was the captain of Székesfehérvár from the middle of the Summer of 1543.⁴ The last military assistance from the Habsburg king in the form of some cannons was followed by a modest Habsburg detachment that arrived at the city just before the start of the siege. At that time the city was inhabited by a mix of civilians from the

¹ BÁNLAKY (2001: IV. b).

² BÁNLAKY (2001: IV. b).

³ BÁNLAKY (2001: IV. b).

⁴ MAGONY (2014: 35; 100).

city and its neighbouring villages, as well as several Hungarian, Italian, and Habsburg mercenaries. The city's whole defence force numbered between five to eight thousand people, which was reduced to about three to four thousand people by the start of the Siege.⁵ This was the state in which the Turkish army found Székesfehérvár in 1543.

Since in this paper I focus on other aspects of the descriptions of the Siege, I will forego the details, and will focus, instead, more on the way the events were described according to the following sources: Johannes Martinus Stella, who wrote a letter about the Siege, György Szerémi, who wrote a *commentarius*, and Miklós Istvánffy, who wrote about the Siege as part of his historical work, as well as Wolfgang Lazius who, similarly to Istvánffy, incorporated the description of the Siege in his monumental work.

Despite the fact that two of these three authors were alive at the time of the Siege, none of them were present. As for Martinus Stella, he was a soldier who fought alongside the Italian mercenaries in Hungary, primarily in Esztergom. Although he was not in the country at the time of the Siege of Székesfehérvár (he left for Vienna in August), as a soldier he was able to learn about the battle from his fellow men who had fled to the Habsburg capital after the Siege ended. He wrote four letters about the Turkish military campaign of 1543 to his relatives living in Amsterdam.⁶ We don't know if these were real or imagined relatives, but this is a minor matter as far as the letters are concerned. The letters were published a year after the Siege, making them one of the earliest sources of information from that time period; the third letter, written in Vienna in early September 1543, covers the events under Székesfehérvár.⁷

Although the text has the basic structure of a typical letter, it reads more like a war diary, with facts listed one after the other, without any trace of partiality. Given his background as an Italian soldier, it is no wonder that his letter focuses more on the Italians' role in the events. He does not blame them for losing the city, nor does he blame anyone else. In his opinion, the tragedy was the result of ill-fortune that no one could

⁵ VERESS (1990: 50–57).

⁶ KULCSÁR (2004).

⁷ STELLA (1746: 619).

have prevented. He even goes on to describe the state of the Italian soldiers that had fled from Esztergom to Komárom at the end of the letter.⁸

György Szerémi was the second writer who could have been present during the Siege. He was a priest under János Szapolyai, and following the king's death, he moved to Transylvania with the widowed queen and his son, where he lived for the rest of his life.⁹ At the request of the famed Hungarian humanist Antal Verancsics, he wrote a long *commentarius* titled *Epistola de perditione Regni Hungarorum*. The *commentarius* covers events from the middle of the 15th century to 1543. It is not a continuous narrative but a compilation of small stories, and the Siege of Székesfehérvár represents one of these episodes.¹⁰ The way he uses the Latin language to describe what he wants to say proves that he is not a well-versed humanist. Although his work is not easy to read, it showcases a huge range of folklore and everyday gossip, as well as his own thoughts on current events.

Although his work deals with the events in question, the focus is not on the Siege itself. The Siege is just a pretext for entering into a religious debate about the punishment of the Lutheran citizens of Székesfehérvár for their wrongdoings. In this debate, the Turkish army and the Siege are seen as the punishment of the citizens for abandoning true Christianity and becoming Lutherans. Surprisingly, the sultan in his account is a positive character who is not anti-Christian. On the contrary, he shows interest in learning about the faith which Szerémi calls 'our' religion, referring to Christianity rather than Lutheranism, the religion practiced by the citizens of Székesfehérvár, with whom the sultan nonetheless engages in conversation with. In his work, Szerémi portrays the sultan as a man who wants to liberate Christianity from the influences of the Reformation. In light of this, the Siege becomes merely an excuse for having the debate, rather than being its main subject.

Miklós Istvánffy, the third writer, wrote about the Siege almost half a century after it happened, in the early years of the 17th century. He was a politician, a poet, and a humanist who, unlike Szerémi who worked for Szapolyai, worked for the Habsburgs and was well-versed in Latin. He

⁸ STELLA (1746: 618–619).

⁹ BARTONIEK (1975: 60).

¹⁰ SZERÉMI (1857: 388–397).

incorporated the description of the Siege into his great work, *Historiarum de rebus ungaricis libri*.¹¹ He was heavily influenced by Paolo Giovio's work, and in this particular case he closely follows him, which may explain why the only thing we learn in this episode is that the Habsburg soldiers did everything they could to save the city, with no explanation as to who is to blame for the defeat. The text claims that the Habsburg mercenaries held meetings, fought to their deaths, guarded the walls, and did many other things to protect the city, despite the fact that they ultimately failed.

This account is part of a larger historical work and it meets all the expectations of the genre. It describes the city, its history and significance, the military state it was in, and even the strategic decisions made prior to the Siege. It is a well-written and consistent description of the events, free of bias, in which the author aimed to include everything he knew about events happening in and around Székesfehérvár at the time. At the end of the episode, he also briefly mentions the overall state of Europe in 1543, and as an outside observer, he concludes that the unfortunate events in Hungary were by-products of Europe's larger political problems, making the fall of the city inevitable.¹²

Following this summary of the authors and their works, I will continue with the second question I proposed at the beginning of this paper. How much does the narrative of an event change depending on the purpose? Some events of the Siege are mentioned by all three writers, and this provides the possibility to answer the question. In chronological order, the first event is the filling of the swamp around Székesfehérvár.¹³ It was the first thing the Turks did when they arrived at the city, in order to get close to the outer city walls and launch an onslaught. It was described as a long and difficult task, carried out by almost all the Turkish soldiers as well as the villagers residing around Székesfehérvár who were forced by the Turks to participate in the undertaking.¹⁴ After days of continuous wood chopping and swamp filling, the Turks succeeded in their task.

The second thing mentioned by all authors was the fog on the morning of the day the city fell. As fog is quite common in places filled with

¹¹ ISTVÁNNFY (1622: 165–167).

¹² ISTVÁNNFY (1622: 167).

¹³ STELLA (1746: 616); SZERÉMI (1857: 391); ISTVÁNNFY (1622: 165).

¹⁴ SZERÉMI (1857: 391); ISTVÁNNFY (1622: 165).

swamps, its appearance on the 2nd of September was perceived more as a misfortune than a surprise.¹⁵ In his work, Stella mentions that some believed the fog was the product of witchery, although he traces it to natural causes.¹⁶ Protected by the fog, the Turks got inside the outer walls of the city unnoticed, and after days of bombarding, the final battle began. As the end of the military season for the Turks drew nearer by the day, this proved to be a turning point of the Siege. Székesfehérvár was the last city attacked by the Turks that year, and despite their efforts to seize it as soon as possible, the city held out for nearly two weeks.

The third event, mentioned in each text, relates to the closed gate leading to the inner city of Székesfehérvár which the soldiers encountered when repelling the enemy in the outer city and deciding to retreat to relative safety.¹⁷ Nobody knows why the gate was closed, but it was not opened even when the captain of the city requested it.¹⁸ The fourth event is linked to this incident: because of the closed gate, soldiers were forced to battle the Turks head-on, and this resulted in the death of György Varkocs. He died on the front line protecting his men. Both Stella and Istvánffy mention that the enemy cut off not just his head, but his right arm, too.¹⁹ Stella specifies that the Turks paraded his severed arm in mocking.²⁰ However, according to Istvánffy, the Turks cut off Varkocs's arm out for the golden rings he was wearing.²¹

¹⁵ STELLA (1746: 617); ISTVÁNNFFY (1622: 166). Szerémi, unlike Stella and Istvánffy, does not openly state that there was fog, but he alludes to it. As for the date, Szerémi does not mention it, Istvánffy uses the modern version, and Stella uses the Roman version.

¹⁶ STELLA (1746: 617).

¹⁷ STELLA (1746: 617); SZERÉMI (1857: 392–393); ISTVÁNNFFY (1622: 166).

¹⁸ Stella claims that it is debatable whether the gate was closed by accident or because someone ordered it to be closed. Istvánffy writes something similar, stating that while he believes it was an accident, he also considers the possibility that the gate was locked due to panic generated by the circumstances or because of plotting. Szerémi, on the other hand, claims that the Lutheran citizens of Székesfehérvár closed the gate on purpose to keep the Christian soldiers out.

¹⁹ STELLA (1746: 617); ISTVÁNNFFY (1622: 166). Interestingly, Szerémi does not mention the captain's death in the chapter dealing with the Siege; he only mentions it in later chapters of his work.

²⁰ STELLA (1746: 617).

²¹ ISTVÁNNFFY (1622: 166).

The city captain, György Varkocs, was a Silesian soldier in the service of Ferdinand I and a close friend of the king. We do not have much information about his earlier life and how he became a Habsburg soldier, but we do know that he began serving for Ferdinand I in 1536, when Charles V recommended Varkocs to his brother.²² He was present at the battle of Buda in 1541 and remained in Hungary afterward.²³ He was named captain of Székesfehérvár in 1543, but only at the last minute, which is why in the middle of the Summer he was not even in the country and arrived in Székesfehérvár just before the Siege began.²⁴

As I mentioned earlier, the description of a siege can be utilised as an *oratio funebris*. Wolfgang Lazius, a historian of Ferdinand I, utilised *The Description of the Siege of Székesfehérvár* as an *oratio funebris* of the city captain. Wolfgang Lazius was a humanist, a historian, a cartographer, and a physician who, like György Varkocs, was present at the battle of Buda in 1541.²⁵ In the second half of the 16th century, he wrote a monumental historical work entitled *Rerum Austriacarum Decades*. The 5th *decas* of this work is about Hungary,²⁶ with the events concerning Székesfehérvár making up for the entirety of the fifth book of this *decas*.

Although *The Description of the Siege of Székesfehérvár* is expected to be humanist, it serves more as a means to highlight the good character traits of György Varkocs, making him the hero of the Siege. What is more, Lazius accomplishes all this with scattered half-sentences hidden within the description. According to him, Varkocs encouraged the soldiers to hold out whenever they lost faith, such as when the enemy filled in the swamp, causing panic among the citizens, or when the bombardment lasted much longer than expected.²⁷ Lazius highlights the

²² MAGONY (2014: 93).

²³ MAGONY (2014: 95–99). According to GEÖCZE (1896: 119–121) this information can be concluded from his letters written in the time period between the two events.

²⁴ According to MAGONY (2014: 35; 100) in the summer of 1543 Varkocs was in Gorizia, Italy and arrived at Székesfehérvár not long before the Turkish army.

²⁵ KRATOCHWILL (1985).

²⁶ KASZA (2018).

²⁷ LAZIUS (fol. 161v): *Etsi enim nec consilia Warkhesio nec animus deessent, nox quoque nulla quieta foret, in tali tamen, praesertim gentium colluvie non satis nec loco nec homini credere oppidanos in urbe atque hostes extra urbem in castris iuxta metuere, circumspectare omnia, et omni strepitu adesse, alio atque alio loco milites adhortari, prorsus naturam ipsam*

captain's good communication skills, which he considers to be one of the most well-known traits of Varkocs.²⁸ It also shows that he cared about the people he was responsible for. Not long before the last day of the Siege, he warned the Hungarian soldiers, the *hajdús*, to be more alert and to remain loyal to the Habsburgs.²⁹

It should be mentioned that Lazius is the only writer of the four who claims that the reason for losing Székesfehérvár was the betrayal of the Hungarian troops, since they abandoned their posts and the Turks were able to get into the outer city unnoticed.³⁰ As a result, he included the siege of Székesfehérvár as one of the sieges in 1543 that ended due to treachery. Despite this, the fact that the city captain forewarned the soldiers shows that he honoured his pledge to Ferdinand I, and his loyalty was unwavering, even in the desperate conditions of a siege.

György Varkocs was also present in the final combat in the outer city, where he fought alongside his soldiers and tried to safeguard their lives, before leading them back to the inner walls when it became clear that the Turks would triumph. When the gate remained shut even despite his orders for the inhabitants within to open it,³¹ he was the first to

imperitantem mortalibus improbo labore evincere conabatur. Sed (quod in proverbio est, ne Hercules contra duos) consilio suo saluberrimo, ut nec omnium pectora erigere potuerat, ita nec suum omnibus robur in arma largiri, tametsi omnia sua necessaria, vitam, opes, honores post uniuscuiusque commodum duceret.

²⁸ LAZIUS (fol. 162r; 163v): *Neque tamen ea in rerum difficultate procul Warkhesius a suis aberat, homo indefessi ingenii manuque plus quam prompta, et qui pluribus annis plurium linguarum commercio contra tot gentes efferas ordines duxerat. and Quin et Hungaros ea vis doloris tantique viri amissi cura attigit, partim quod in eius regni ditione satus, et linguae commercio, et longa militia acceptissimus fuerat.*

²⁹ LAZIUS (fol. 161v): *Quos etsi saepenumero Warkhesius moneret, ne studio pugnandi aut spe praedae longius progredierentur [...].*

³⁰ LAZIUS (fol. 161v): *Erant in oppido Hungarorum aliquot centum ex ea hominum colluvie, qui boves agitando simul rapinis adsuescunt, incultum genus hominum et ferox, sub dio, praeter panem et aquam nullos cibos norunt, gentilitia Hungaris lingua Heydokhii appellati, et a latrocinii ob audaciam in ista penuria militum, tot caesis exercitibus, ad belli aperti speciem traducti. Quos etsi saepenumero Warkhesius moneret, ne studio pugnandi aut spe praedae longius progredierentur, deinde etiam quid iniquitas loci incommodi haberet, proposuisset, erumpentes tamen clam duce aliquoties, locis occultis in hostem ruebant, et re feliciter gesta, spoliis capitibusque praecisis onerati in castra nostra redierant.*

³¹ LAZIUS (fol. 163r–163v): *Inter haec Warkhesius cum iniquo loco pugnari, hostiumque continuo augeri copias cerneret, permetuens suis, ad stationes oppidi clamat, petens portam aperiri, ut quae*

turn around and confront the enemy; and although his right hand was severed, he fought to his dying breath.³² An interesting detail to notice is that the Habsburg historian is the only one of the authors who claims that Varkocs's arm was cut off before his death. If we consider the statements of the other two writers to be true, this little change can be seen as an attempt to make the death of Varkocs much more heroic.

According to Lazius he died a hero's death, befitting of a dedicated and ever-faithful soldier. To demonstrate his greatness, Lazius claims that the death of Varkocs was such a horrible event that the enemy stopped fighting to pay their respects to the fallen captain.³³ György Varkocs was a friend of Ferdinand I, and as the historian of the king, it was the job of Wolfgang Lazius to write the obituary Varkocs deserved even if it was concealed within the account of the siege he died in. Varkocs and Lazius both fought in the siege of Buda in 1541, and considering the way Lazius portrays the captain, there could have been some sort of friendship between the two. As a result, the *oratio funebris* hiding beneath the description of the Siege can be seen as a tribute or a parting gift from a writer to a dear friend.

In conclusion, it can be confirmed that a siege description can be presented in a variety of ways, such as a letter, as we saw in Stella's case, with the purpose of sharing information, a religious debate, as in Szerémi's work, with the intention of defending one's own beliefs, or a simple historical account, as presented by Istvánffy, recounting the events with the goal of remaining objective. Nonetheless, one of the

supererant cohortes, intra oppidum ex pugna reciperentur. Sed res erat in celeritate posita, nec praesidium, quod intra moenia fuerat, re nova stupefactum, titubantibus omnium ut mentibus, ita etiam manibus, tam cito recludere portam poterat. Neque permittebant Hungaricae gentis oppidani, qui nostros numero superabant, et omnem apertionem odio gentis nostrae prohibebant, vel quod hostium una simul ingressum timerent, vel quod desperatis rebus nostros caedibus exponere cupieban novamque sibi apud tyrannum gratiam ista in Germanos impietate mercari.

³² LAZIUS (fol. 163v): *Cum acerrime cominus pugnaretur, hostes loco et numero, nostri virtute confiderent, dumque laborantibus ipse Warkhesius succurrit atque integros pro sauciis accersit, circumventus ab hostibus alterum brachium saucius amisit, nihilo tamen timidior, etsi trunco corpore pugnam inter confertos instaurabat, ac strenui militis bonique ducis simul officia exsequebatur.*

³³ LAZIUS (fol. 163v): *Ex cuius morte luctus non apud regem inclytum magis, quam ipsos etiam hostes fuit.*

most interesting uses of *The Description of the Siege of Székesfehérvár* is undoubtedly the one by Wolfgang Lazius as a hidden *oratio funebris*.

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³⁴ The Latin text can be read in Péter Kasza's transcript, who is currently working on it to be published.

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Desiring the Transcendent – Plato’s Eros and Eighteenth-Century Notions Concerning the Affections of the Sublime

Most scholars agree that eighteenth-century notions of the sublime stem from antiquity, seeking its origins in Pseudo-Longinus’ famous tractate On the Sublime. The objective of the present study is to highlight a less discussed viewpoint as described more recently by James I. Porter, which argues that the aforementioned theories have more to do with ancient Platonic conceptions regarding intelligible beauty than Longinus’ rhetorical analysis of ὕψος. Plato’s Phaedrus and the Symposium are the most frequently mentioned dialogues to support this theory, focusing mainly on divine beauty and its parallels with eighteenth-century descriptions of the sublime. In this article I would like to approach the question from a somewhat different perspective: eros. Is it possible to find parallels between early modern accounts of emotions accompanying the sublime experience and Plato’s notions on erotic mania?

Keywords: sublime, Eros, Longinus, Plato, Kant, Burke

*[...] this wondering:
this is where philosophy begins and nowhere else [...]*
(Plato, *Theaetetus* 155D)¹

1. Introduction

Why do people experience a sense of awe while observing depictions of natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions or tornadoes? What is the psychological mechanism which makes us appreciate bloody tragedies, or more recently, watching horror movies? What exactly fascinates us in the fateful fall following the romance of Romeo and Juliet? This human ten-

¹ COOPER (1997: 173).

dency, a sense of fearful awe when we face some uncontrollable power, has perplexed philosophers, aesthetes and psychologists for centuries.

Since the 18th century, especially with the publication of two key studies, namely Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) and Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790), it has been fashionable to answer the above query by differentiating between two fundamentally separate aesthetic categories: the beautiful, inducing peaceful relaxation of the senses, and the sublime, which in turn generates a paradoxical emotion, that of a fearful joy and desire or awe in the observer. The latter, famously, went on to become a hallmark feature of high romanticism. But from where does this observation, this differentiation really originate?

Current scholarship generally agrees that the genesis of the notion of the sublime can be traced back to the obscure, fragmentary tractate entitled *On the Sublime* (Περὶ Ὑψους) written most probably in the 1st century by an anonymous author referred to as Longinus or Pseudo-Longinus, noting that this is the first known study utilizing the term ὕψος (height, sublimity) similarly to early modern theories. In addition, scholars almost universally concur that although Pseudo-Longinus took an important first step, his analysis remained mostly literary, and therefore Burke and Kant made a revolutionary leap forward by treating the sublime as a more universal phenomenon, which constitutes an entirely separate and mostly antithetical category from the beautiful.

But is this approach valid? There have always been voices which problematized this traditionally accepted reception history, to a lesser or greater degree, which more recently culminated in James I. Porter's monumental study entitled *The Sublime in Antiquity* published in 2016.

Although his theory remains somewhat controversial and has been criticized by some for its rather simplistic deconstruction and dichotomy of the sublime and the way he attributes its roots to almost any philosophical school in antiquity, in this study I would like to argue that part of Porter's argument – the reason why he downplays Pseudo-Longinus' significance in favor of Plato – remains valid; and I would go still further by suggesting that even if we reject Porter's somewhat obscure categories of *material sublime* and *immaterial sublime*, and with them many

other presumed ancient sources of the concept, some of Plato's views will still represent the best ancient precursor of eighteenth-century notions of the sublime, centuries earlier than Pseudo-Longinus' tractate.

It is important to highlight one essential difference between Porter's theory and my argument: although I am going to build on his views concerning Plato in this study, I am not following his dichotomy of *material sublime* and *immaterial sublime*. In my view, all sublime experience is paradoxical *par excellence*: material and immaterial at the same time; whatever object it is induced by, it ultimately arises from a feeling of fearful awe at the transcendent and a desire to experience its power based on some form of physical experience.

In addition to the above departure, in this study I would like to argue that the many parallels between the Platonic notion of eros and the sublime experience have been somewhat overlooked in previous investigations in favor of those parallels with experiencing *Beauty Itself*. I will attempt to show this through the analysis of the concept of Plato's eros and *erotic mania* (or *enthusiasm*) in this context, mostly building on passages from the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*, respectively.

2. Definitions and Reception History

Somewhat ironically, even though he himself emphasized the argument that the cornerstone of every theoretical investigation should be the clear definition of its objective, the author of *On the Sublime* falls short in that respect.² This is a disconcerting reminder of the difficulties every scholar needs to face in such an investigation, and should not be entirely surprising since the notion of sublimity, as we will see below, is inextricably linked to the qualities of inconceivability and ineffability.

As a solid starting point, in *The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy* we find the following entry:

Sublime: n., adj. Awesome grandeur (of a personal character, of a work of art, of nature), contrasted in eighteenth-century aesthetics (Burke, Kant) with the beautiful. The classical treatment is *On the Sub-*

² Longinus 1.

lime, a work from the first century. Longinus is commonly given as the name of the author.³

Dictionary entries often add that the Greek noun ὑψος used by Pseudo-Longinus, depending on the context, can be translated in various ways, from 'height' to even 'loftiness' or, of course, 'sublimity'. The Latin counterpart '*sublimis*', a compound adjective made up of 'sub' (under) and 'limes' (boundary or border), can be translated as 'heightened' or 'grand', and went on to become the ancestor of the modern terminology *sublime* and *sublimity*.

At the beginning of his book, James I. Porter gives an account of the traditional reception history referred to in the above entry, also referenced by most scholars whenever any investigation concerning the sublime takes place.

Umberto Eco is no exception when, in his *On Beauty*, he considers Pseudo-Longinus' tractate as the root of all other theories. In his interpretation, the term discussed in the original study refers to

[...] an expression of grand and noble passions (like those expressed in Homeric poetry or in the great Classical tragedies) that bring into play the emotional involvement of both the creator and the perceiver of the work of art. With regard to the process of artistic creation, Longinus accords the maximum importance to the moment of enthusiasm [...].⁴

In the beginning of his work, the ancient author himself provides the following introduction to the concept:

[...] the Sublime consists in a consummate excellence and distinction of language, and [...] this alone gave the greatest poets and prose writers their preeminence and clothed them with immortal fame. For the effect of the genius is not to persuade the audience but rather to transport them out of themselves. Invariably what inspires wonder, with its power to amaze us, always prevails over what is merely convincing and pleasing. (Longinus 1, 3)

³ MAUTNER (2005).

⁴ ECO (2004: 278).

Based on the above, it can be observed that Pseudo-Longinus' analysis is mostly literary, and in later passages he considers five major sources of sublimity: great thoughts, strong emotion, certain figures of thought and speech, noble diction, and dignified word arrangement.

Eco also echoes most scholars in recounting that this tractate was almost completely forgotten during the Middle Ages, rediscovered sometime in the 16th century and eventually brought back to the focus of intellectual discourse by Nicolas Boileau in the 17th century, gradually becoming a more general aesthetic concept as opposed to the more rhetorical one represented by Pseudo-Longinus.

In 1757, Edmund Burke wrote the first essential study on this subject, which was published under the title *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. Eco points out that although most scholars agree that this was the revolutionary moment when sublimity became an entity completely separated from the notion of beauty, we should not forget the fact that by this time the definition of this term, just like the Greek word itself, had been somewhat modified: while for Pseudo-Longinus it is artistic creativity that induces the experience of the sublime, Burke goes on to merge these approaches and analyzes the concept in both contexts, natural as well as artistic objects and their attributes alike:

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime.⁵

In a later passage he goes on to define the sublime as follows:

The passion caused by the great and sublime in nature, when those causes operate most powerfully is astonishment; and astonishment is that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror.[11] In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power

⁵ BURKE (1990: 36).

of the sublime, that far from being produced by them, it anticipates our reasonings and hurries us on by an irresistible force. Astonishment, as I have said, is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree; the inferior effects are admiration, reverence, and respect.⁶

One of the many undeniable merits of Burke’s study lies in its objective of creating a standard dichotomy of the beautiful and the sublime, which can be summarized in the following table:

Table 1:

Beautiful	Sublime
diminutiveness	grandiosity
smoothness	roughness
graduality	suddenness
sophistication	enthusiasm, astonishment, overwhelming power
regular light	darkness, or translucent light
finiteness	infinity

This analysis served as the basis of the philosophical discourse of which Immanuel Kant also partook, and whose most significant testament is the chapter devoted to the mentioned dichotomy scrutinized in the *Critique of Judgement*.

As Eco concludes, the German philosopher defined the experience of the beautiful as ‘disinterested pleasure, universality without concept, regularity without law’, whereas the sublime is ‘absolutely great’ generating negative pleasure and awe.⁷ The experience can also be induced by a formless object, ‘insofar as we present unboundedness, either [as] in the object or because the object prompts us to present it, while yet we add to this unboundedness the thought of its totality.’⁸

As is well-known, beyond a new dichotomy of the beautiful and the sublime, Kant also created further distinctions by differentiating between mathematical and dynamic sublimities. The former is the ‘nega-

⁶ BURKE (1990: 53).
⁷ ECO (2004: 294).
⁸ KANT (1987: 98).

tive pleasure' that we feel, for example, when staring at the nighttime sky with its innumerable stars, while the latter is an emotion incited by the sheer forces of nature, such as thunderstorms.⁹

It is worth noting at this point that Kant, although emphasizing the importance of applying the term only to objects of nature, he himself uses works of art as examples of mathematical sublimity, namely the pyramids of Giza as well as Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome.¹⁰

In addition, he also argued that the sight of the beautiful kindles an emotion of peaceful contemplation, as opposed to sublimity which instigates a dynamic locomotion in the mind. The latter point is in interesting opposition to Burke's views, which placed more emphasis on the concept of astonishment in connection with the sublime, an almost frozen state of mind, whereas for Kant the hallmark feature of sublimity is dynamism of the mind.¹¹

Kant's complex dichotomy concerning the beautiful and the sublime might be summarized in the following table:

Table 2:

Beautiful	Sublime
finality, symmetry, disinterestedness, minuteness	grandiose, colossal, infinite with a sense of totality
static	dynamic
tranquility and positive pleasure	enthusiasm: anxiety, negative pleasure
independence	moral freedom
acquired virtue	actual virtue
x	mathematical, dynamic (and moral) aspects

Interestingly, this is the point at which Umberto Eco ends his history of sublimity in his study *On Beauty*, although as Porter and Shaw also point out, its story is far from over after Kant. The two early modern studies had a huge influence on German idealism, romanticism, modernism, and

⁹ ECO (2004: 294).

¹⁰ KANT (1987: 108).

¹¹ KANT (1987: 108).

postmodernism alike, and the discourse regarding the nature of the sublime, sometimes referring to the same or a very similar basic concept under a different term such as *the uncanny* or *awe*, and its role in our aesthetic experiences continues still today. To a name just a few: Freud, Auerbach, Lacan, and more recently, the philosopher Slavoj Žižek or the neuroscientist Beau Lotto, have all contributed to the ongoing dialogue.

3. An Alternative Approach to the History of the Sublime

As already mentioned above, some scholars do not entirely agree with this standard reception history. A slight departure especially can be observed in the twentieth century and is shared by many scholars today; the focus has shifted more towards the experience and the emotions of the sublime as opposed to the quality of the objects that can induce them.

Philip Shaw is a good example of this, with his definition in his famous *The Sublime – The New Critical Idiom*, in which instead of enumerating the many observable qualities of physical objects generating the sublime (stepping beyond traditional categorizations such as *rhetorical sublime* and *aesthetic sublime* or *natural sublime*), he focuses rather on the emotional experience shared by all descriptions:

In broad terms, whenever experience slips out of conventional understanding, whenever the power of an object or event is such that words fail and points of comparison disappear, then we resort to the feeling of the sublime. As such, the sublime marks the limits of reason and expression together with a sense of what might lie beyond these limits; this may well explain its association with the transcendent [...] To adapt Robert Doran's analysis, this encounter with the limit reveals the paradoxical nature of the sublime: on the one hand, being overwhelmed/dominated by an encounter with the transcendent in art or nature induces a feeling of inferiority or submission ; on the other, it is precisely by being overpowered that a high-minded feeling of superiority or nobility of soul (mental expansiveness, heroic sensibility) is attained.¹²

¹² SHAW (2017: 2).

James I. Porter expresses a similar view, rejecting the traditional reception history and the categories of *rhetorical sublime* or *aesthetic sublime*. I elaborate the reasons for this departure.

Firstly, he does not believe Pseudo-Longinus should be considered as the primary source of later notions of the sublime, underlining the fact that even *On the Sublime* references to earlier theories and the word ὕψος is not treated as a strict philosophical/literary term by the ancient author himself. Sometimes it is used in the singular, at other times in the plural (τὰ ὕψη), and in other passages it is replaced with other words with a similar meaning, such as (τὰ ὑπερφυᾶ). His definition of the notion remains similarly obscure.¹³

Based on this argument, he explains that the best way to grasp at what counts as sublime for the ancient author, is to not look merely at the literary quotes provided by him, but also the emotions and passions rendered in connection with it. In other words, just as Shaw did in his later study, Porter also investigated examples or ‘thematic markers’ denoting *emotions* in the text which frequently describe a paradoxical set of passions, fearful joy or enthusiastic awe.¹⁴

Table 3:

Ecstasy (ἔκστασις, 1, 4)
Wonderful (θαυμάσιον, 1)
Ravery (βάκχευσις, 3, 2)
Enthusiasm (ἐνθουσιασμός, 3, 2)
Authentic passion (γενναῖον πάθος, 8, 3)
Grandeur (μεγαλοφροσύνη, 8, 3)
Ambivalent emotions (ὑπεναντιώσεις, 10, 3)
Erotic mania (ἐρωτικάις μανίαις, 10, 2)
Fear (φοβερός, 10, 6)
Greatness (μέγεθος, 8, 3)
Frenzy (μανία, 8, 3)
Harmony (ἁρμονία, 39, 3)
Loftiness (ὑπεραίρον ἀνθρώπινα, 36, 3)

¹³ PORTER (2016: 5).

¹⁴ PORTER (2016: 51).

Looking at these phrases and passages describing awe, ecstasy, astonishment, enthusiasm or frenzy when referring to the sublime, there appears to be an obvious connection with Plato and his notions concerning *enthusiasmos* or divine frenzy, which possesses these hallmark emotions of awe combining fear and joy as described in the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*.

In conclusion, Porter references the scholarship according to which the above concept of sublimity lends itself well to the idea of the transcendent,¹⁵ which in Plato's terminology would be called *Beauty Itself*; therefore Plato contrasting earthly beauty with *Beauty Itself* can be viewed as the actual precursor to the modern categories of the beautiful and the sublime.¹⁶

Based on the above reasoning, Porter constructed a different reception history not solely based upon the term of ὑψος. As he himself put it:

On this alternative history of the sublime's entry into early modernity, Boileau appears as a mere latecomer, Longinus is a dispensable accessory, rhetoric can serve as a principal agent of aesthetics (including Christian aesthetics), and sublimity need not be limited to literature. [...] The Platonizing tradition that swept across Europe in the wake of Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, touching everything from theology to theories of art and aesthetics, has to be reckoned as one of the main contributing factors in the spread of the sublime independently of Longinus.¹⁷

He also goes on to construct his own dichotomy of *material sublime* and *immaterial sublime*:

[Material] Sublimity originates in an encounter with matter. It bears, so to speak, memory of this encounter even when it strains to pull

¹⁵ Encountering the divine is often described as a terrifying experience in many Biblical passages as well as in Greco-Roman myths. The following lines from *The Second Book of Enoch* reflect this exceptionally well: 'And those two men lifted me up thence on to the seventh Heaven, and I saw there a very great light [...] and I became afraid, and began to tremble with great terror [...]' (5, 20).

¹⁶ PORTER (2016: 51).

¹⁷ PORTER (2016: 38).

away from the physical realm into some higher, often more spiritual realm [...]

Whereas the immaterial sublime represents an escape from matter into the immaterial, the material sublime is an experience of the radical otherness of matter and a reveling in this quality.¹⁸

Later, similarly to the argument to our study, Porter claims that many elements in Plato's aesthetics show a strong parallel with what he calls immaterial sublime:

Plato's sublime is an *immaterial* sublime. It is posited on the disgrace of matter and a repudiation of the senses, and it seeks to transcend the phenomena of this world in order to achieve contact with another, higher world.¹⁹

Following this argument, he goes on to examine the relationship between the experience of *Beauty Itself* and that of the sublime, and gives a more detailed analysis of this based on passages from the *Phaedrus*, the *Symposium* and the *Io*.

As has been mentioned, Porter's book has received some criticism,²⁰ and even Porter may agree that Plato's ethereal Good or *Beauty Itself* implying symmetry and harmony in the *Timaeus*, does not immediately remind us of the sublime: the latter usually associated with an immense and more disorderly or even shapeless powerful force.

One might also argue that the dichotomy of *material* versus *immaterial sublime* seems rather arbitrary, which is a point Porter also seems to imply in his study.

However, one important fact often overlooked by his critics is that it was not he who associated Plato with the sublime in the first place, as the connection, directly or indirectly, had been made by many scholars even before Porter. Even without resorting to a postmodern deconstruction of the sublime and going through a complicated line of argumenta-

¹⁸ PORTER (2016: 391).

¹⁹ PORTER (2016: 562).

²⁰ See HALLIWELL (2016).

tion including religious experience, looking at the key texts themselves more carefully, Plato's name will ultimately appear.

Upon closer inspection, it seems that Pseudo-Longinus himself was a great admirer, and most probably a follower of Plato, treating him as an author of sublime texts and mentioning and quoting him in his short tractate as many as twenty times.

'The followers of Plato' are mentioned by Edmund Burke himself in his famous study, saying that when it comes to treating power as a source of the sublime and the notion's parallels to religious experience, they already knew something of this relationship.²¹

In some passages, Kant also seems to draw more direct parallels between intelligible or intellectual beauty and the sublime.²²

Beside those already mentioned above writing on the sublime, we should not forget about other contemporary scholars who make similar connections. Robert Clewis, for example, in his 2009 study *The Kantian Sublime and the Revelation of Freedom* writes the following concerning enthusiasm which, as we have seen, is considered to be the passion of the sublime: 'Indeed, there are very intriguing connections to be made between inspiration, genius, and enthusiasm which can be traced back to enthusiasm's Platonic origin.'²³

Robert Doran, in his famous *The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant* (published one year before *The Sublime in Antiquity*) also addresses the relationship, not accepting the traditional rhetorical-aesthetic categorization of the sublime, pointing out that all theories, rhetorical or aesthetic, describe essentially the same experience, which is overpowering astonishment and awe representing fear and joy. He adds: 'The fact that this feeling of ecstasy is produced more pragmatically, but not exclusively, by nature in Burke's and Kant's theories does not thereby negate the real continuity between Longinus and modern aesthetics.'²⁴

As we have seen above, Philip Shaw also emphasized that sublimity is essentially a form of altered state of consciousness of an ambivalent

²¹ BURKE (1990: 64).

²² KANT (1987: 131).

²³ CLEWIS (2009: 11).

²⁴ DORAN (2015: 272).

nature inducing awe (being a combination of fear and joy), seeing further parallels between Pseudo-Longinus's notions concerning sublimity and ecstasy and Plato's eros.²⁵

Moving on to another common counter-argument referenced above, we should address the notion of harmony, which is famously associated with heavenly beauty in many Platonic passages. This fact in itself, however, does not render our investigations impossible if we take into consideration the ancient views on the paradoxical nature of *harmonia*, in which it is often defined as the ultimate form of beauty, being a union of contrary forces.²⁶

The key argument is, therefore, that a form of enthusiasm and ecstasy accompanied by ambivalent or paradoxical emotions of awe (fear and joy), even without mentioning the term ὕψος, is exactly what Plato describes concerning enthusiasm in some of his dialogues, most famously in the *Phaedrus* and in the *Symposium*; and this serves as the basis for our research in considering Platonic dualism as the actual precursor of eighteenth-century dichotomies of the beautiful and the sublime.

4. Erotic Mania and the Affections of the Sublime in the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*

Now that Plato's role in the genesis of the notion of the sublime is established, I consider a less studied element: the question of how his description of a specific form of enthusiasm, *erotic mania*, relates to 18th century notions of the sublime experience.

For this, it is important to highlight a fact only briefly alluded to above, namely that in the feeling of enthusiasm shared by basically all theories of sublimity, there is an element of longing. The sublime, the power of which as fearful or incomprehensible as it may be, triggers an interest and a desire to comprehend or participate in that power, very much reminiscent of the notion of the drive toward the Good symbolized by Plato's Heavenly Eros.

²⁵ SHAW (2017: 31).

²⁶ See Iamblichus *Vita Pythagorae*, DK 58 C4 and Philolaus VS 44 B 6.

If we can believe the description of Pausanias, there used to stand a statue of Eros at the entrance of Plato's Academy,²⁷ and his frenzy or *mania* is in the very center of two of Plato's most famous dialogues, the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium*; therefore one might rightfully assume that this deity bore a special significance for Plato and his followers.

The Platonic term *μανία* essentially covers a form of *ἐνθουσιασμός*, which is derived from the adjective *ἐνθεος*, a compound translating roughly as 'possessed by god'. Its erotic form is connected, of course, to Eros himself, the Greek deity of love and sexual desire whose cult gradually gained prominence and evolved in many ways over the centuries.

The erotic *mania* is famously referenced in the *Symposium*: 'A lover is more godlike [...], since he is inspired by a god.'²⁸ Of course, the notion of possession can already remind the reader of the longing, the astonishment and the enthusiasm described by the early modern theories previously alluded to.

What is known of the ancient views on this god, and his cult in general? As for religious ceremonies, physical evidence is scarce, but fortunately we still have much in the way of literary and mythological references to get a more detailed picture.

Surprisingly, Homer never mentions Eros as a divinity *per se*, although love and desire, in its many forms, famously plays an essential role in his epics. In Hesiod's *Theogony* however, he is named as one of the primordial gods (as it is also related in the *Symposium*), and Parmenides, one of Plato's heroes, also considered him to be among the first deities (fragment 13).²⁹

In the 5th century, Prodicus defined him as 'desire doubled', and *mania* as 'eros doubled'.³⁰

In the earliest depictions, he is a pubescent boy, often associated with any deity who was involved in some form of love affair. In later centuries, he famously accompanied Aphrodite, often directly referred to as her son, and especially by Hellenic times was frequently depicted

²⁷ See Pausanias 1, 30.

²⁸ COOPER (1997: 465), *Symposium* 180b.

²⁹ HORNBLOWER–SPAWFORTH (2012).

³⁰ Fr. B7 DK as referenced by USTINOVA (2018: 294).

as an inseparable companion to her as one of several prepubescent boy figures, the *erotes*, symbolizing different forms of love. However, we should remember that like all ancient deities, his figure was very intricate, and also had appeared in the company of Dionysus for instance, whose role in divine frenzy or *mania* is well-known.³¹

The complexity of ancient beliefs is well reflected by the fact that the Amor of Apuleius' *Metamorphosis*, apparently, is not a prepubescent boy, whereas in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, he is described as one. In some archaic legends referenced in the *Symposium*, Eros is one of the youngest of the gods and indeed he is depicted as such, whereas in others he is considered as most ancient. In one of the many origin myths he is named as the son of Aphrodite and Ares who obviously represent two opposing forces, and Harmonia, Deimos (terror) and Phobos (fear) are his siblings,³² which facts already lend themselves to notions of sublimity exceptionally well.

There is one element however, which all myths share; even centuries before Plato's analyses, he had already been considered an ambivalent figure, implying the paradoxical emotions of longing, not unlike the sublime – joy as well as pain, yearning as well as fear.

As we have seen above, a form of erotic passion is also an important element of Pseudo-Longinus' notions on ὕψος; he even cites Sappho's famous love poem, finding sublimity in her description of bitter-sweet love inducing paradoxical feelings. His activity of inducing love is both joyful and terrible, so much so that in a way, his name was synonymous with madness.³³

Plato's famous passages on Eros depict an equally complex picture. As one can see in the *Phaedrus*, erotic *mania* is one of the four divine frenzies, all of which are related to different higher powers: prophetic *mania* associated with Apollon, telestic *mania* attributed to Dionysus and poetic *mania* connected to the Muses.

This categorization is further complicated by the *Symposium*, in which Plato seems to imply that the root cause of all four frenzies is also

³¹ CYRINO (2010: 44).

³² HARRINGTON-TOLMAN (1897).

³³ USTINOVA (2018: 298).

a kind of desire, that is, a form of Eros himself: from Diotima's argumentation we can conclude that ultimately all people are driven by a form of desire for *Beauty Itself*, and which is basically identical to the divine Good,³⁴ and moreover, they desire the everlasting possession of the Good. Everlasting is the same as eternal, a well-known quality of deities, therefore Plato seems to imply that yearning for an immortal existence, in other words, desiring the transcendent is a basic human tendency.

This very longing in ephemeral human beings manifests itself in the desire or the drive to produce something permanent: the creation of works of art (this includes poetic mania stemming from eros) and the production of offspring are the most physical manifestations of this aspiration. Thus, all the above-mentioned frenzies can be traced back to the same drive, a kind of desire or eros. As Diotima says: '[...] love, Socrates, is not, as you imagine, the love of the beautiful only. [It is...] the love of generation and of birth in beauty.'³⁵

The most noble form of this erotic mania is of course spiritual; and its elevating aspect – which, in Platonic terms, is pushing us towards *Beauty Itself* or the Good, the immaterial, supersensible form of divinity – very much resembles the experience of the sublime, especially Kant's notion of the mathematically sublime: one cannot quite comprehend the immensity of space by looking at the stars, but still feels a kind of elevated desire to look at the starry sky and try and make sense of the meaning of the divine qualities of endlessness and eternity. There is an element of privation and an element of desire to this notion.

Now that we have investigated how eros as a divine form of enthusiasm is related to all other forms of enthusiasm, and ultimately to the sublime, let us now examine another interesting parallel, the duality of eros. As mentioned earlier, it is common to think that Burke and Kant were revolutionary in creating the dichotomy of the beautiful and the sublime. Although it is truly difficult to find any specific examples of this in Pseudo-Longinus's work, a very similar dichotomy is obviously present in Plato's philosophy.

³⁴ 206a3.

³⁵ 206e.

As we see in the *Phaedrus*, there are two forms of beauty, earthly beauty and *Beauty Itself*, the divine source or form of beauty and goodness, which is obviously superior to the former aspect. *Beauty Itself*, as Porter also pointed out, has much to do with the notion of the sublime. When people first get an idea of it, they go through astonishment and desire accompanied by the paradoxical set of emotions of fearful joy so well-known from descriptions of eighteenth-century analyses of the sublime. This is beautifully described in the somewhat agonizing process of growing wings in the *Phaedrus*, an image that clearly shows that the ascension of the soul is not something that one could call a traditionally pleasant experience.³⁶

In the *Symposium*, it is further emphasized however that not only beauty, but Eros – similarly to his companion Aphrodite – has two different aspects: *pandemos* (common love as the physical representation) and *ouranios* (heavenly). The object of the former is something physical; thus it represents a certain desire that can be physically fulfilled, whereas the latter represents a drive towards spiritual fulfillment that is beyond, and in some ways in opposition to, the human form. This interesting duality permeates the entire dialogue right from the beginning, with the different encomia attributing opposing qualities to Eros.

Another intriguing question is whether the Eros in the speech of Diotima – who articulates that Eros is not really a god, but a *daimon* – constitutes a third kind, or not. Both Plutarch and Alcinous say that Plato proposed the existence of three different kinds of Eros, the noble, the base, and the median position, whereas Plotinus seems to have accepted only the first two.³⁷

A metaphysical explanation might resolve this issue, namely the notion that humans in their earthly bodies are only capable of thinking in opposites, whereas in the realm of forms, true existence defeats human understanding and can only be described in terms of paradoxical nature. This is also supported by the many Platonic passages preferring *noesis* to *dianoia*.

³⁶ See also the famous ‘Allegory of the Cave’, where walking up into the light is initially a rather unpleasant experience.

³⁷ See Alc. 187; Plot. 3, 5.

Diotima's suggestion in considering Eros to be an essentially paradoxical concept representing ambivalent emotions may imply this notion as well: by mediating between the physical and the heavenly spheres, he is essentially a unity of opposing forces, which is beautifully symbolized by not only the legend of him being the son of Ares and Aphrodite, but also by Diotima's myth attributing Eros' birth to contrary powers of Poros and Penia.

In addition, Diotima's comment that Eros is 'not just love in the beautiful', but 'love in the generation and birth in beauty', also suggests that the experience of *Beauty Itself* (in our interpretation: the sublime), is more akin to birth and as such, not something we would traditionally describe as pleasant; it is painful and joyful at the same time. This also, in a way, can be interpreted as a metaphor of the paradoxical nature of the sublime.

5. Eros and Psyche

Diotima emphasizes that Eros dwells in the soul, and indeed there are many literary, mythological, and philosophical references in which this deity is inextricably linked to the psyche. But how can such passions belong to the ethereal soul if at other times they are strongly associated with the body?

Such contradictory views on the soul and the passions famously permeate the Platonic corpus, and some scholars might even argue that any comparison between 18th century notions on the sublime in this context can be considered nearly impossible, because of the many passages in which Plato seems to imply that emotions or passions are from the mortal coil, being in direct opposition with the pure soul belonging in the realm of forms. And truly, if the *Definitions* is of any authority on these matters, it is rather odd to find no entry for eros, and the following one for *mania*: 'Madness: the state which is destructive of true conception.'³⁸

As always, one should remember the Socratic problem and the fact that – as it was also outlined by T. M. Robinson in his summary of Plato's soul theory – the philosopher seems to have changed positions

³⁸ COOPER (1997: 1686).

about this point over his lifetime, his views ranging from the arithmetical dualism of the *Gorgias* to the mitigated dualism of *Alcibiades I* (if we can accept the latter's authenticity), or even a form of monism reflected in the *Charmides* and the panpsychism implied by the *Timaeus*.³⁹

Some of these views, nonetheless, can justify the affections of the sublime to be present in the soul: the first – and most obvious one – is the famous soul chariot metaphor of the *Phaedrus*, where, beside the rational part of the soul, there are two other faculties: the spirited and the appetitive, representing emotional drives.

Although these are generally considered to be inferior to the rational capacity, there are passages that imply a more balanced relationship, such as the entry on the notion of ῥαθυμία in the *Definitions* meaning “‘laziness”, an inertia of the soul, having no passion’.⁴⁰

Furthermore, just as Eros can be earthly and heavenly, emotions are of two kinds, and those propelling the soul towards the transcendent are not to be restrained. Even traditionally there is an element of Eros which seems to be connected to self-sacrifice which can be interpreted as a form of rejection of the body in favor of our true, spiritual self,⁴¹ not to mention the many literary and artistic references to the close relationship of the figures of Eros and the Psyche, and Diotima also placing Eros in the soul in her speech.

Based on the above we can conclude that Plato – or at least the Plato of the middle-period – seems to be more accepting of passions, arguing that the key to a happy life cannot mean a mere rejection of all affections, but rather finding the right balance between emotions and rationality. This is reflected by the afore-mentioned differentiation between earthly and heavenly eros in the *Symposium*. A form of enthusiasm therefore, where noble passions are combined with *noesis*, is encouraged, and this is what the heavenly form eros in the *Phaedrus* and *The Symposium* seems to symbolize. The passage mentioned of Alcinous' study also seems to support this interpretation.

³⁹ WRIGHT (2000: 38).

⁴⁰ COOPER (1997: 1681).

⁴¹ Sappho names Eros to be her 'therapon', which can also refer to a substitute in ritualistic sacrifice. See NAGY (2009: 32).

This tendency itself is also reminiscent of the Kantian concept of the sublime. In his *Critique of Judgement*, we can read the following: 'If the idea of the good is accompanied by affect, this is called enthusiasm (...)', and a few lines below the passage he goes on by also stating: 'enthusiasm is sublime'.⁴²

5. Conclusion

In light of the above argument, eighteenth-century notions of the dichotomy between the beautiful and the sublime seem to be inextricably linked to the Platonic dualism of earthly beauty and intelligible beauty; therefore instead of Pseudo-Longinus' tractate, Plato should be considered as their ancient precursor.

Furthermore, a similarly close relationship with the duality of earthly eros and heavenly eros, the paradoxical emotions of eros or erotic enthusiasm and the affections of the sublime can be observed in the spiritual longing and the conjoined presence of ambivalent passions and simultaneous cognitive processes induced by sublimity and the same experienced through eros, as is described in the *Phaedrus* and in the *Symposium*.

The above connections justify further research for more parallels in later Platonic texts, some already referred to, but not thoroughly elaborated upon by Porter himself, such as Plotinus' *Enneads*, Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*, Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* or Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite's *Mystical Theology*.

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Impact of the Greek Diaspora on Translations of Modern Greek Literature in Slovakia

This paper presents some of the results of a PhD research concerning translations of Modern Greek literature into Slovak language. It will focus on the comparison of the translation activities in Slovak and Czech Republic. It is a well-known fact that there is an abysmal difference between the Czech and Slovak translation situation for what Modern Greek literature concerns. After the defeat of the communists in Greece in 1949, Czechoslovakia received thousands of Greek citizens who were stationed only in cities of the Czech part of the country. The first lectorate of Modern Greek was established at the Charles University in Prague in order to educate Greek children in their mother tongue. Textbooks and dictionaries in Czech language were published to help Greeks integrate themselves in the new environment. The situation in the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia was diametrically different. The absence of a Greek diaspora had a significant impact on Modern Greek studies and hence the production of translations from Modern Greek literature into Slovak.

Keywords: Modern Greek language, Modern Greek literature, translated literature, translations into Slovak language, Greek diaspora

Until now, only few works of Modern Greek literature have been translated into Slovak, much of it through another language. There is an abysmal difference between the situation in the Slovak and the Czech Republic. One of the main reasons is that there is a large Greek diaspora in the Czech Republic, which doesn't exist in Slovakia. In this paper, I will focus on the influence of the Greek diaspora on the receiving culture and literature and the conditions in which translation literature develops, if a diaspora does not exist.

At the beginning, it is appropriate to clarify the relations between the Czech and the Slovak Republic, which almost the whole century,

until 1993, formed one state, Czechoslovakia. In this state, two distinct national identities shaped in two different cultural environments which were largely interconnected but also separate. Both territories had different histories, development of literature and did not evolve as a homogeneous unit. They were also separated as far as the language concerns. Although most words are in fact different, they are largely similar, being cognates, which makes both languages mutually intelligible to a significant extent.

First of all, it is necessary to briefly describe how the Greek diaspora has been shaped in the Czech Republic. After the end of World War II, the political situation was completely different in Czechoslovakia and Greece. In Greece, the left was being suppressed by the extreme right, and in Czechoslovakia, the position of the communists was getting stronger. In 1948, Czechoslovakia secretly began supplying weapons and various materials to the rebel government and the rebel army in Greece, and subsequently received more than 3 800 evacuated children from northern Greece. After the defeat of the communist uprising in Greece, adults were also accepted and the number increased by another 8 200 Greek citizens. They were received amicably and were able to integrate into the Czechoslovak environment while fully preserving their national identity. All of them were located in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia, mostly in the cities of Brno, Karviná, Krnov, Šumperk etc.,¹ which had a decisive influence on the formation of a strong Greek diaspora in the Czech Republic, but not in Slovakia. This created an immense difference between the Czech and Slovak cultural environment. Such a significant discrepancy as between the Czech and the Slovak Republic regarding the initial conditions for the creation of translations does not appear in other languages.

The emergence of the Greek diaspora significantly helped in the development of Modern Greek studies and translations of Modern Greek literature in the Czech Republic. In the post-war years, the cultural exchange between Czechoslovakia and Greece slowed down, but the interest in Modern Greek in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia grew thanks to the large Greek community. In 1948, a lectorate of Modern

¹ HRADEČNÝ (2007: 662–663).

Greek was established at Charles University in Prague, at the Department of Antique Sciences, in order to prepare teachers to provide education for Greek children in their mother tongue. Dimitrios Papas, the author of the first Czech textbook for Greeks, *Η τσέχικη για Έλληνες*² (1954), became the first associate professor of Modern Greek language. His successor, Theodor Nedělka, worked on a Modern Greek-Czech dictionary,³ which was published in 1982.⁴ In 1990s, a prominent translator from Modern Greek into Czech Růžena Dostálová (1924–2014) managed to establish full university study programme of Modern Greek Philology at Masaryk University in Brno, thus creating favourable conditions not only for further development of students in the Czech Republic, but also an invaluable opportunity for Slovak students enthused for Modern Greek language and culture.

In Slovakia, Modern Greek started to be taught only in 1991 at the Department of Classical and Semitic Philology of the Faculty of Arts, Comenius University in Bratislava, under the guidance of Peter Kuklica. After Jana Grusková obtained the position of assistant professor at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University for classical philology in 1997 with a focus on Greek philology, she began working systematically with the support of professor Peter Kuklica on the development of Modern Greek studies in Slovakia. She established intensive contacts with neogrecists abroad, especially in the Czech Republic, with Růžena Dostálová and Catherine Franc-Sgourdeou. Significant professional assistance was also provided by neogrecists from the Institut für Byzantinistik und Neogräzistik of the University of Vienna, especially Maria Stassinopoulou. Classical philologists at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University have been systematically striving for the development of Modern Greek studies for the last thirty years. In 2008, after many years of efforts, Grusková, in cooperation with the Embassy of the Hellenic Republic in the Slovak Republic, managed to establish a lectorate of Modern Greek at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University, which is financially provided by the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. A lan-

² PAPAS (1954).

³ NEDĚLKA (1982).

⁴ Cf. DOSTÁLOVÁ (2002), TSIVOS (2014, 2017).

guage course has been provided in four levels (two hours a week in four terms) by a native Greek lecturer.⁵ Nevertheless, because there was a lack of qualified academic staff, the conditions have never been favourable enough to establish Modern Greek philology as a programme of university studies. In the last two decades, Slovak students interested in studying Modern Greek philology used the opportunity to study in the Czech Republic and finally the first generation of qualified Modern Greek philologists started to take shape. Some of the graduates are also interested in translation – especially those who previously studied classical philology, usually at the Comenius University in Bratislava, where they first became acquainted with Modern Greek language and culture. Two graduates continue their doctoral studies and further expand their academic education, which is a promise for the future.

In eastern Slovakia, the theologist Ján Zozuľák, a graduate of orthodox theology in Greece, remarkably contributed to the spread of Modern Greek culture. Under his leadership, Modern Greek was successfully taught for several years at the Orthodox Theological Faculty of the University of Prešov. In collaboration with Erika Brodňanská, a graduate of the classical and semitic philology at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University and a student of professor Kuklica, Ján Zozuľák prepared the study program Greek Language and Culture for the bachelor's degree⁶, although it was never put into practice. Ján Zozuľák is the author of the first Modern Greek-Slovak dictionary and the only Slovak textbook of the Modern Greek language. The interest in Modern Greek in eastern Slovakia is higher mostly because of the Orthodox believers, who use religious texts translated from Greek (Ancient, Medieval or Modern).

In both countries, in the same year (1998), an institution for supporting mutual cultural activities was founded: the Czech Society of Modern Greek Studies in the Czech Republic, based in Brno, and the Slovak Society of Modern Greek Studies in Slovakia, Bratislava. Both are members of the European Society of Modern Greek Studies and have been significantly contributing to promoting and spreading Modern Greek culture and literature. The Czech Society of Modern Greek Studies publishes

⁵ Cf. GRUSKOVÁ (2002).

⁶ ZOZULÁK et al. (2011: 125–129).

every year the magazine *Neograeca Bohemica*, spreading Modern Greek literature. Except for that, there are several organizations associating Greeks living in the Czech Republic: the Club of Friends of Greece, which offers various activities, Greek women's association Lyceum of Greek Women, which promotes Greek folklore, Greek dance group Prometheus, the Association of Friends of Nikos Kazantzakis etc. Members of the Greek community are connected by the Association of Greek Municipalities in the Czech Republic.⁷ Only few hundreds of Greeks live in Slovakia including children. It is therefore natural that there are no such organizations in Slovakia. Cultural events are organized only sporadically by the Department of Classical and Semitic Philology at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University or by the Embassy of Greece in Bratislava. Until 2015, the Society of Slovak-Hellenic Friendship 'Filia' was also active in this way.⁸

In the Czech Republic, there are many opportunities to learn Modern Greek language for the children of Greek origin as well as for the general public. The courses are offered by the individual Greek municipalities, by the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno or by various language schools throughout the whole Czech Republic. In Slovakia, the options for those interested in Modern Greek are very limited. Since 2018, children of Greek origin can learn Modern Greek at the courses provided by the Embassy of Greece in Bratislava. Courses of Modern Greek for the general public are nowadays offered only at the local cultural centre in Bratislava. For many years until 2016 they were offered at the Department of Classical and Semitic Philology at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University in Bratislava as well.

The existence of the Greek diaspora also greatly influences the translation activities of Modern Greek literature. Until 1989, during the communist era, there was a centralised effort in the cultural policy of Czechoslovakia to publish works of world-famous authors, but after 1989 there was a boom in commercial, bestseller literature, and the quality of translated literature declined.⁹ The changes of this period were also re-

⁷ HRADEČNÝ (2007: 670–671).

⁸ Its founder Titos Papadopoulos was its chairman for decades.

⁹ BEDNÁROVÁ (2015: 57).

flected in the publication of translations of Modern Greek literature. Although the economic situation after the division of the common state in 1993 was comparable in both countries, in the Czech Republic, Modern Greek literature continued to be published mainly thanks to the institutions supporting the Greek minority such as the Greek Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, the Embassy of Greece, as well as the *Kosta ke Elenis Urani Foundation* (Ιδρυμα Κώστα & Ελένης Ουράνη).¹⁰ Due to the non-existence of a Greek minority in Slovakia¹¹ the publishing possibilities are much more limited. There are no institutions in Slovakia aiming at supporting publishing translations of Modern Greek literature. Besides, as there has been no Greek minority in Slovakia, Greek culture and Modern Greek literature has seemed distant and obscure to Slovak readers, and therefore their interest in it has been very low. Since 1989 Slovak translations of the Modern Greek literature are published only exceptionally, on an ad hoc basis, based on personal preferences or acquaintances of the translator and author or for the particular needs of a specific institution.¹²

But a more important factor than change of the economic situation that influenced the translation production of Modern Greek literature in Slovakia was the absence of qualified translators. Whereas in the Czech Republic the Modern Greek studies already had been formed, translations of Modern Greek literature could have been created by the professional translators. Let's mention at least the first of them: František Štuřík (1895–1968), Milena Vieweghová-Opluštilová and Růžena

¹⁰ HRADEČNÝ (2007: 667).

¹¹ Only few Greeks lived in Slovakia in the second half of the 20th century. These were mostly graduates of Slovak universities who had little interest in promoting or translating Modern Greek literature.

¹² E. g. Mimis Androulakis' work *Shadows in Athens. Dream Dialogues at the Turn of the Millennium* (*The Dream. Σκιές στην Αθήνα/Tiene v Aténach. Snové dialógy na prelome tisícročí*, 1999) was translated on the basis of the personal knowledge of the author and translator, Odysseas Elytis' work *Worthy It Is* (*Dôstojné je...*, 2001) was translated on an as-needed basis for the civic association Studňa, works of three Modern Greek playwrights *Greek Drama. Nina Rapi, Giannis Mavritsakis, Dimitris Dimitriadis* (*Grécka dráma. Nina Rapi, Jannis Mavritsakis, Dimitris Dimitriadis*, 2019) were translated for the needs of the Theatre Institute in Bratislava.

Dostálová. In addition to the first translators, some Greek emigrants working in the cultural field were also active, e. g. Lysimachos Papadopoulos (1916–2000).¹³ In Slovakia, there was no way to get an education in the field of Modern Greek philology. Thus most of the works were translated through other languages (mainly French). The authors of Slovak translations directly from Modern Greek were the so-called ‘amateur’ translators, without philological and translation education, but with a warm relationship to Modern Greek culture, who learned to master the Modern Greek language and tried to cover the needs of Slovak culture in this regard. Due to a close proximity of Slovak and Czech languages, some of the Slovak translations were created in cooperation with Czech philologists as well.

By the time the first Slovak translation of Modern Greek literature was published, i. e. in 1960, a considerable number of works had been translated in the Czech Republic, directly from Modern Greek, not through other languages like in Slovakia until 1973, when the first Slovak translation directly from Modern Greek was published. In total, there are several times more Czech translations of Modern Greek literary works than Slovak ones.

However, it should be noted that one of the reasons why Modern Greek literature is translated in Slovakia to a lesser extent than in the Czech Republic is the proximity of both languages. At this point, it is necessary to explain the relationship between them.

The situation when the two languages of the two nations are so similar that the speakers understand them in detail and at the same time the differences between them make the speeches special, is unique. The proximity of Slovak and Czech is beneficial on the one hand, because thanks to Czech translations, Slovak readers can get to know works of world literature that have not been translated into Slovak. On the other hand, this proximity harms the Slovak market. Slovak translations are often understood as complementary to Czech ones, despite the fact that individual cultures need their own translation experience, because this is a basic need in their modern existence.¹⁴

¹³ HRADEČNÝ (2007: 666).

¹⁴ KUSÁ (2005: 79–80).

It has been assumed that Slovak translations of the works already translated to Czech have not been needed.¹⁵ However, otherwise there is no such tendency. Some works published in Slovak were consequently published in Czech, although in these cases the additional contribution was evident.¹⁶ It is very unlikely that Czech publishers would take into account the fact that a work was already translated into Slovak. On the other hand, it should be noted that some works by authors who have not been translated into Czech have been published in Slovak, in particular already mentioned ad hoc translations.¹⁷

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From the presented overview, it is evident that the arrival of Greek emigrants after the Second World War and the subsequent formation of the diasporic community was a decisive factor in the further development of Modern Greek studies, as well as in the dissemination and translation of Modern Greek literature.

Even though the conditions in Slovakia are much less favourable than in the Czech Republic, we must continue our efforts in translating the Modern Greek literature into Slovak, for there is still much work to be done. We have already started to create a translation concept which will include not only the greatest works of the most famous Modern Greek authors, but also other works of various genres so that Slovak readers get to know the character of the Modern Greek literature more comprehensively. It is necessary to proceed systematically, as well as to

¹⁵ This applies to translations from all foreign languages, not only Modern Greek.

¹⁶ For instance, in 1973 a selection of Giorgos Seferis' poetry was published in Slovak under the name *The Argonauts (Argonauti)*, in 2011 the author's entire work was published in Czech (SEFERIS [2011]). The same phenomenon can be observed in poetry of Konstantinos Kavafis and Odysseas Elytis, whose collections of poems were first published in Slovak (Kavafis' *Things Ended [Dokonané je]* in 1989, Elytis' *Worthy It Is [Dôstojné je...]* in 2001) and only later in Czech, but the Czech translations comprised more or different poems than the Slovak ones (KAVAFIS (1997, 2013], ELYTIS [2003]).

¹⁷ E. g. *The Third Wedding Wreath (Το Τρίτο στεφάνι/Tretí venček)* by Kostas Tachtsis (1984), *Vangelis' Lost World (Ιστορία μιας χαμένης γης/Vangelisov stratený svet)* by Aris Fakinos (1991) or *Once at a Station (Κάποτε σε ένα σταθμό/Kedysi na stanici)*, by Kostas Asimakopoulos (1983), who are also among the authors known beyond the borders of Greece.

deepen the relations with Greek cultural institutions in order to support the dissemination of Greek literature and culture in Slovakia. Thanks to the fact that the first generation of Slovak neogrecists who have studied in the Czech Republic has already begun to form, there is a hope for a forthcoming improvement in the near future. Furthermore, the Greek community in Slovakia is growing, which could also contribute to a wider interest in Modern Greek literature in Slovakia.

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‘Named After the Great Odysseus’: Putting the *Odyssey* in *Assassin’s Creed Odyssey*

The recent video game Assassin’s Creed Odyssey is one of the most elaborate popular re-interpretations of classical antiquity. Known for its lavishly detailed simulations of historical settings and events, the game is set during the first nine years of the Peloponnesian War (431–422 BC). But why is it called Odyssey? This paper aims to show the connections and similarities between the game and Homer’s Odyssey, by drawing attention to the game’s underlying story structure (which places the game within a large video game tradition of odyssey-like quest-adventures), its specific narrative and world design (which contains various references to the Homeric texts), and its main character (who may be considered as a reflection of Odysseus, due to their similar actions and shared characteristics).

Keywords: *Odyssey*, Homer, *Assassin’s Creed Odyssey*, video games, reception, mythology

The study of antiquity and video games has over the past decade become a rapidly growing subdiscipline of classical reception studies.¹ From early scholarship around the end of the 2000s, the field of study has nowadays evolved into an area of research with its own edited volumes, monographs, conference panels, and more.² Classical scholars

¹ This paper was first presented at the *Sapiens Ubique Civis VIII* Conference held in Szeged, Hungary on September 1–3, 2021. I am deeply grateful to the organizers for the engaging conference and kind welcome, and to the participants for the insightful conversations. I also wish to thank Steven Malliet and Kristoffel Demoen for their comments on an earlier version of this text.

² For early scholarship, cf. GARDNER (2007) and LOWE (2009). For edited volumes, cf. THORSEN ed. (2012), ROLLINGER ed. (2020a) and DRAYCOTT–COOK ed. (forthc.). For monographs, cf. ANDRÉ (2016) and CLARE (2021). For dedicated conference panels, cf.

have pled for the importance of studying video games in classical studies, and have drawn attention to a variety of reasons to do so. First, video games are one of the primary media in which audiences engage with the ancient world in the 21st century.³ Second, due to their intrinsically participatory nature, video games present wholly different and innovative experiences of antiquity that offer new possibilities for the reception of the ancient world.⁴ Additionally, since the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga considered ‘play’ to be an essential part of culture and of various practices contained within it, to ignore practices of play in our research would mean to exclude essential cultural elements from classical reception studies.⁵

This paper examines one ‘classical antiquity game’, or video game set in classical antiquity: *Assassin’s Creed Odyssey*.⁶ This game was released in 2018 by game developer Ubisoft Quebec on PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One and Nintendo Switch (in 2019, it was also released on Google Stadia). It is the eleventh main game in Ubisoft’s highly popular *Assassin’s Creed* video game series (Ubisoft 2007–), a game franchise that has visited and reconstructed various moments in history and is known for

for instance the ‘Current research in gaming’ and ‘Integrating games and pedagogy’ panels at the Antiquity in Media Studies (AIMS) Conference in December 2021.

³ E.g. CHRISTESEN–MACHADO (2010: 107); LOWE (2009: 64); POLITOPOULOS et al. (2019: 322).

⁴ For instance, the fact that video games not only present representations of their subject matter (as a literary text, a painting, or a film would) but also consist of intricate simulations that grant players agency (FRASCA [2003]), is a fascinating possibility for reception studies to explore. ‘To simulate’, says FRASCA (2003: 223), ‘is to model a (source) system through a different system which maintains to somebody some of the behaviors of the original system’. So-called flight simulators, for instance, simulate the actual ‘system’ of flying a plane. These systems are processes, and these processes can convey meaning when enacted by a player (i.e. what BOGOST [2007] calls ‘procedural rhetoric’), and these meanings may be explored by classical reception studies. For example, historical strategy games such as *Sid Meier’s Civilization* (MicroProse 1991), where gameplay revolves around the maintenance of a historical empire and the conquering of other empires, may be explored in terms of the systems they simulate, e.g. systems of culture, economics, diplomacy, happiness, and so on.

⁵ HUIZINGA ([1938] 2019). Cf. RASSALLE (2021: 4).

⁶ For the term ‘classical antiquity game’, cf. VANDEWALLE (2021a: 2–5). For a work-in-progress bibliography on *Assassin’s Creed Odyssey*, see <https://paizomen.com/2020/07/10/assassins-creed-odyssey-2018/>.

its lavishly detailed reconstructions of historical periods and locations.⁷ The game is set during the first nine years of the Peloponnesian War (i.e. 431–422 BC), and the player takes up the role of an either male or female Spartan mercenary called Alexios or Cassandra (depending on the player's choice). Cassandra is, however, the canonical protagonist of the game, which means that this paper will use her name when referring to the game's protagonist.⁸ The game includes a large (albeit condensed and compressed) version of the Greek world, from Kephallonia in the West to Lesbos in the East, and from Makedonia in the North to Krete in the South (I will use the in-game spelling for names of characters and locations whenever the specific in-game locations are meant).⁹ The player lives through several historical events, such as the Plague of Athens (430 BC), the Battle of Pylos (425 BC) and the Battle of Amphipolis (422 BC). The game's main story is divided into three parts, each with their own name. The first is called 'Odyssey' and revolves around the reunion and reconciliation of a broken family, as the player is tasked with finding Cassandra's parents and brother throughout Greece, meeting them for the first time after being apart for decades. The second is imperatively titled 'Hunt the Cult of Kosmos' and sees Cassandra take on the sinister Cult of Kosmos, a shadowy organization that plagues the Greek world and aims to take control of it. A final overarching storyline, called 'Between Two Worlds', involves the slaying of various mythical beasts (the Minotaur, the Sphinx, the Cyclops Brontes, and Medusa) within the context of a larger, mythological storyline centered around Atlantis.

Apart from its sheer scale and both historical and artistic detail, the game's many overt references to ancient sources turn the game into a milestone within the history of ludic classical reception. Whereas in 2009 scholars of antiquity were warned to 'expect the expected' while inves-

⁷ Previous entries in the series have, for example, explored the Italian Renaissance (*Assassin's Creed II*; Ubisoft Montreal 2009), the American Revolution (*Assassin's Creed III*; Ubisoft Montreal 2012), Ptolemaic Egypt (*Assassin's Creed Origins*; Ubisoft Montreal 2017) or, most recently, Viking Age England (*Assassin's Creed Valhalla*; Ubisoft Montreal 2020).

⁸ HARRADENCE (2018). As such, 'Cassandra' is the name of the character in the official novelization of the game (DOHERTY [2018]).

⁹ Cf. POLITOPOULOS et al. (2019: 319; 321) on *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* and compression, or WESTIN–HEDLUND (2016: 10) on *Assassin's Creed* and shrinking.

tigating video game versions of antiquity – referring to the stereotyped ways in which games often seemed to recreate the ancient world – *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* is an example of a growing trend in video game receptions where game worlds and narratives are increasingly shaped through references to ancient sources and texts.¹⁰ This trend is facilitated by the increased consultation of scholars (e.g. historians) in the process of game development, which is the case for *Assassin's Creed Odyssey*.¹¹ Regarding the game's references to ancient sources, scholars have found various Greek authors and texts that served as inspirations for the game's representation of history, or that were in some way included into the narrative or world of the game, including Herodotus, Aristophanes, Thucydides, Pausanias, Plato (and Socrates), Pindar, Archilochus, Alcaeus, Anacreon and the Homeric Hymns.¹² Additionally, the game includes several real-world inscriptions, thereby complementing the design of its world with ancient epigraphical evidence.¹³

However, the game's subtitle reveals an affinity with another ancient text, which has largely gone undiscussed in scholarship on the game. At first glance, the subtitle '*Odyssey*' seems incongruous with the game's setting during the Peloponnesian War and the large efforts taken to produce an 'authentic' version of classical, 'Golden Age' Greece. The question this

¹⁰ LOWE (2009: 74). I thank Hamish Cameron, Julie Levy, Dunstan Lowe and Kate Minniti for their answers to my questions on this topic during a roundtable on Classics and video games on May 1st, 2021 hosted by Britta Ager and the Society for Classical Studies. The roundtable discussion is available on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IfxmMe8VNa4>.

¹¹ The consultant for *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* was Dr. Stéphanie-Anne Ruatta (cf. HALL-DANSEREAU [2019]; REINHARD [2019]). For other discussions of scholarly involvement in contemporary video game production, cf. PAPROCKI (2020); POIRON (2021); SERRANO LOZANO (2021). For literature on scholars creating their own games, reconstructions, or modified versions of games, cf. GHITA-ANDRIKOPOULOS (2009); HOLTER et al. (2020); MCMANUS-JUNG (2012).

¹² Cf. GUILBERT et al. (2019: 108) for Herodotus, Thucydides and Pausanias; cf. GAINSFORD (2019) and ROLLINGER (2020b) for Homer, Archilochus, Alcaeus and Anacreon; cf. REINHARD (2019) for Aristophanes, Herodotus, Thucydides and Pausanias; cf. VANDEWALLE (2019) for Thucydides, Pausanias, Pindar and Aristophanes; cf. VANDEWALLE (2021b) for Plato (and Socrates).

¹³ Cf. VANDEWALLE (2021c; 2022).

paper seeks to answer, then, is the following: which connections may be observed between the game and Homer's *Odyssey*? It aims to do so by unearthing the game's Odyssean subtext and to propose an understanding of *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* as a reception of the Homeric *Odyssey*. We will discuss this process of reception on three connected and mutually reinforcing levels of meaning. The first section of this paper is focused on the level of the game's underlying story structure and will establish *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* as 'an' odyssey, in accordance with the modern meaning of the word and its frequent usage in video games. The second section, situated on the level of both the game's specific narrative and its world design, considers the game's ties to Homer's *Odyssey* through the exploration of several intertextual references. Finally, the third section will examine the level of the game's main character and provide initial foundations towards a study of how the character of Cassandra may (in part) be thought of as a reception of Odysseus, since both serve as the protagonists of their respective odyssey narratives and share similar characteristics. Throughout the text, references will be made to a freely accessible 'game corpus' (or 'GC') which is available on YouTube and contains the passages of the game that were used and analyzed for this paper.¹⁴

1. *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* as odyssey

A first, 'easy', answer as to why the game is named *Odyssey* lies with the meanings and connotations of the modern word 'odyssey', which is defined by Merriam-Webster's Dictionary as 'a long wandering or voyage usually marked by many changes of fortune', or 'an intellectual or spiritual wandering or quest'. The story of *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* certainly

¹⁴ The GC can be found at <https://youtu.be/LTIqVfg4Xgs>, and is a compilation drawing from various playthroughs of the game. Recording one's gameplay is a suggested and recommended method within game studies and analysis (e.g. AARSETH [2003: 3]; CONSALVO-DUTTON [2006]; FERNÁNDEZ-VARA [2019: 51]) intended to provide transparency into the researcher's own version or actualization of the game 'text'. Contrary to literature or film (which generally are non-participatory experiences), the specific on-screen form of a video game will look different to each and every individual player due to these players' own in-game choices and behavior. In this context, gameplay recordings provide the readers of a game analysis with a transparent look into the actual form of the game that was experienced and analyzed by the researcher.

offers such a long wandering or voyage, as its story takes the player across the entire Greek world in search of Cassandra's family.

In doing so, the game inscribes itself into a long tradition of video games inspired by adventure stories and quest narratives.¹⁵ Early video games were, for instance, heavily influenced by mythical voyages and Tolkienesque hero's journeys.¹⁶ Examples include *Colossal Cave Adventure* (Crowther & Woods 1977), *Ultima I: The First Age of Darkness* (Gariott 1981), *The Legend of Zelda* (Nintendo R&D4 1984), as well as the still incredibly popular table-top game *Dungeons & Dragons* (Gygax & Arneson 1974). Some games explicitly indicate their odyssean narrative structures in their title, such as *Oddworld: Abe's Oddyssee* (Oddworld Inhabitants 1997) or *Super Mario Odyssey* (Nintendo EPD 2017).¹⁷ Interestingly, even the classical antiquity game *God of War* (SCE Santa Monica Studio 2005), which revolves around the character Kratos who violently takes on the Greek pantheon, was originally titled 'Dark Odyssey'.¹⁸ This narrative structure (a hero embarks on a quest in an attempt to find specific objects, slay dangerous foes and restore balance to a disrupted equilibrium, whilst undergoing character change throughout this process) has remained popular in games ever since, as is for example evidenced by the success of online worlds such as *World of Warcraft* (Bliz-

¹⁵ For video games and quest structure, cf. AARSETH (2005).

¹⁶ FIZEK (2012: 26–27); JENKINS (2004: 122); JUUL (1999: 10); JUUL (2005: 72); ROBINSON (2015: 126–127). For the Hero's Journey, cf. CAMPBELL (1949) and VOGLER (2007).

¹⁷ It is also worth mentioning that there have been various video games that revolve more explicitly around (the myth of) Odysseus, such as *Ulysses and the Golden Fleece* (Sierra On-Line 1981), *The Odyssey* (Fasoulas 1984), *The Odyssey* (Duckworth Home Computing 1986), *Odyssey: The Search for Ulysses* (In Utero & Cryo Interactive 2000), *The Odyssey: Winds of Athena* (Liquid Dragon Studios 2006), *The Odyssey* (Crazysoft Limited 2012), *The Next Penelope* (Regard 2015) or *An Odyssey: Echoes of War* (Choice of Games 2019).

¹⁸ SIRIO (2019). During Sirio's interview with Stig Asmussen (game director for *God of War III* [Santa Monica Studio 2010]), it was revealed that the name was changed since the game's marketing team considered it 'too high-brow, and people might not get it' (SIRIO *ibid.*). This brings up an interesting conversation on the connotations of the word 'odyssey' as a seemingly perceived 'high-brow' concept, despite its frequent and recurring use in popular culture. Similarly, the character 'Kratos' (whose name does not refer to the ancient mythological character from, for instance, Aesch. *PB*; cf. LOWE [2009: 82, n. 47]) was originally named 'Dominus' (SIRIO [2019]).

zard Entertainment 2004-) or *The Elder Scrolls Online* (Zenimax Online Studios 2014-) which are full of different quests and adventures.

The same narrative structures are found in *Assassin's Creed Odyssey*, as Cassandra explicitly embarks on a dangerous adventure to bring balance to her original family situation. The three overarching narratives mentioned above (i.e. Cassandra's family reunion, the fight against the Cult of Kosmos, and the task of slaying the mythical beasts) are presented as 'your odyssey' in the game's menu, and the journey of the player consists of various side-tracking adventures (called 'quests') and dangerous encounters with enemies.¹⁹ Additionally, the odyssey-like qualities of the game are also deeply connected to a certain gameplay aspect that *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* introduced to the *Assassin's Creed* series, which is freedom of choice. For the first time in an *Assassin's Creed* game, the player chooses what their character says (out of a variety of pre-determined options) and is even able to choose specific narrative actions that Cassandra performs in the world of the game. These choices may have large consequences, including the life or death of in-game characters. This aspect of player choice was heavily present in the game's marketing campaign: in one of its trailers, a character is heard saying 'As you write your odyssey across the mountains and the seas, remember: the fate of Greece journeys with you', indicating the game's intention on having the player make decisions in order for them to 'write' their 'own' odyssey throughout the game.²⁰ Note especially the use of the second person singular, a typical technique in video games where the word 'you' refers to both the player and their character, who is virtually bound to the players' actions and decisions.²¹ Since the player controls Cassandra, the game simulates not only Cassandra's odyssey but also the player's, and the player is free to choose their own path on their journey.

The general participatory nature of games (i.e. the audience is required to perform meaningful, non-trivial actions in order for the 'text' to progress)²² and the added mechanic of freedom of choice also mean

¹⁹ Cf. GUILBERT et al. (2019: 111).

²⁰ The trailer can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_SJZSAAtLBA.

²¹ Cf. SCHRÖTER (2013: 28); WALKER (2001); VELLA (2015: 5–6).

²² Cf. AARSETH (1997: 1).

that each playthrough of the game will be different from another, and that every player chooses a specific balance between progressing the main story, going off the beaten path to explore the game world, listening to the world's inhabitants, and so on.²³ The many possible odysseys that *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* thus facilitates or allows may be considered as exhibiting a similar polytropy as Odysseus is attributed in the first line of the Homeric poem: frequently interrupted by unforeseen and unexpected activities, replete with spontaneous sidetracks to threatening foes or romantic partners, and ever shifting between moments of peace and quiet on the one hand and instances of thrilling action on the other, the story of *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* is an individual odyssey that takes on a specific shape according to the individual that embarks on it.

2. *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* and Homer's *Odyssey*

Moving on, then, to a discussion of *Assassin's Creed Odyssey*'s affinity with, specifically, Homer's *Odyssey*, this section will explore the relationship between the two by examining various references made to the ancient text by the game. As we will see, most of the relevant references and environments are found near the beginning of the game (indeed, even before the *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* logo is shown to the player), so our attention will primarily be centered around the game's first missions.

The game's main narrative begins on the island of Kephallonia, where the player is first introduced to Kassandra.²⁴ The audience becomes acquainted with Kassandra's backstory through flashbacks: originally from Sparta and the grandchild of king Leonidas, she was cast from Mount Taygetos as a child by her father after trying to prevent her baby brother Alexios from suffering the same fate.²⁵ She survives the

²³ The game's story thus quite nicely resembles NAGY's (2013: 276) description of the *Odyssey*: 'The plot of this story and its main character, once the *Odyssey* is fully told, will be a fusion of many different subplots and even of many different subcharacters.' The participatory nature of the game story means that each individual 'fusion' will be different.

²⁴ The beginning of the main story is preceded by a prologue which recounts the Battle of Thermopylae (480 BC), which the player experiences as Leonidas (Kassandra's grandfather).

²⁵ If the player chooses to play as Alexios, Kassandra is his baby sister and it is subsequently her who is initially cast from Mount Taygetos.

fall, however, and manages to acquire a small rowboat and sail away. She reaches Kephallonia, where she is rescued by a man called Markos who decides to take care of her. Markos is a kind but irresponsible man who owes money to many people on the island, including a dangerous figure called the Cyclops. In the present day, Cassandra is contacted by a sinister man called Elpenor (not connected, but perhaps a small reference to, the minor Homeric character who dies at *Od.* 10, 552–560), who asks Cassandra to retrieve Penelope's Shroud for him (i.e. the burial shroud she weaves by day and unravels by night in order to delay the suitors' advances, *Od.* 2, 96–110) from the ruins of Odysseus' palace on the neighboring island of Ithaka (GC1).²⁶ During this exchange, Elpenor brings up Homer's *Odyssey* and, revealingly, calls it an 'inspiring tale'. Cassandra agrees to his proposal and, as she sails to Ithaka, says: 'Headed to the house of Odysseus on a tiny boat... Let's try not to piss Poseidon off, shall we?' — a clear reference to the Greek myth (GC2).

Kassandra then ventures to Odysseus's Palace, the largest structure on the island, and recovers the Shroud (GC2).²⁷ The Palace lies in ruins, thereby invoking an oft-recurring iconography of antiquity in video games as a place that is already marked by and full of ruins (GC3).²⁸ The

²⁶ The game identifies its Ithaka with the modern Ithaca (i.e. the island Ithaki), although it is debated whether the modern island is the same island as the one meant by Homer (cf. for example, BITTLESTONE et al. [2005]; BROWN [2020]; GOEKOOP [2010]). The details of this discussion are outside the scope of the present study.

²⁷ In the game, the Shroud is later fashioned into a hood that Kassandra may wear (the 'Shroud of Penelope', GC12), in keeping with the franchise's long-standing tradition of stealthy protagonists that wear hooded robes.

²⁸ In an analysis of the remarkably frequent inclusion of ruins in video games with ancient themes, LOWE (2012) distinguishes four modes in which video games reimagine classical antiquity: 'Reconstruction', where efforts are made to represent ancient history as it must have been for the people who lived it; 'Heritage', which focuses on presenting the afterlife of the ancient world (possibly even in the ancient world itself), including its ruins; 'Destruction', centered on the act and process of ruination (not just of buildings, but also of smaller objects such as vases; cf. CLARE [2021: 49–52] on this popular trope in the *God of War* series [2005–]); and 'Fantasy', where 'ruins are retrojected into the ancient past, to replace their own originals' (2012: 72) in an attempt to create a familiar, recognizable image of antiquity as a place that is ruined, instead of the actual antiquity itself. Odysseus's Palace in *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* primarily conforms to the 'Heritage' mode, not simply presenting the ruins of a bygone age but also,

palace design, however, is generic and resembles many other in-game forts and palaces scattered throughout the map (e.g. in Mycenae, on Thera, near Argos, etc.). Interestingly, the Palace includes Minoan and Mycenaean artwork, which decorates not only this palace but various older locations throughout the game world as well. Specifically, the artwork is inspired by distinct Minoan and Mycenaean art pieces that are easily recognizable as such: the Bull-Leaping Fresco, the Ladies in Blue Fresco, the Griffin Fresco, the Shield Frieze Fresco, relieving triangles above entrances, and spiral patterns.²⁹ Minoan and Mycenaean art is seemingly used as a symbolical indicator that a location, while ‘Greek’, is still older than the ‘Greek’ found in the rest of the world.

The player may then choose to explore the island, and discover various locations inspired by the Greek epic (see Fig. 1 for a map). For instance, the player may find a location called ‘Phorkys Anchorage’ (GC5), which refers to the harbor where Odysseus first arrives back on Ithaca in *Od.* 13, 96–113. The game does not include the ‘two projecting headlands’ from Homer (δύο δὲ προβλήτες ἐν αὐτῷ/ ἄκται, *Od.* 13, 97–98)³⁰, but two outward-stretching coast lines on the sides of the harbor may be discerned, which may refer to these headlands.

Nearby lies the ‘Cave of the Nymphs’ (GC6), where in *Od.* 13, 355–369 Odysseus prays to the Naiads and stores his gifts from the Phaeacians. However, while the cave itself refers to Homer, its interior design is original and displays the generic cave design found in caves all across the game. The game may even include the olive tree that Homer mentions as standing between the harbor and the cave (τανύφυλλος ἐλαίη, *Od.* 13, 102), although the island has many of these trees and its presence here could be mere coincidence.

especially with the character of Odessa encountered in this palace (cf. below), explicitly drawing attention to Odysseus’ lineage and descendants. Therefore, while others have remarked that *Assassin’s Creed Odyssey* generally moves away from the stereotypical ‘white marble ruins’ iconography of antiquity through, for instance, its attention to the polychromy of the ancient world (POLITOPOULOS et al. [2019: 319]), it still presents the motif of ruins at various instances.

²⁹ Elsewhere, the game also includes other pieces of Minoan art such as the Cup-Bearer Fresco in, for example, the ‘Submerged Minoan Palace’ location south of Keos.

³⁰ All translations from the *Odyssey* in this text stem from MURRAY (1995ab).

In the *Odyssey*, Athena then asks that Odysseus visit the pig farmer Eumaeus (*Od.* 13, 404), whose farm lies close to the 'rock of Corax and the spring of Arethousa' (*Od.* 13, 408). The game includes both a location called 'Eumaios's Pig Farm' (GC7) and one called 'Raven's Rock' (GC8), which may be identified with Homer's rock of Corax (the Greek word for 'raven'). Its location, however, seems off: following Athena's description, the rock should be near Eumaios's Pig Farm, but the game places it next to Phorkys Anchorage. Seeing as the game takes place during the Peloponnesian War, Eumaios's Pig Farm may also be perceived as an anachronism (one of many found in the game), but the location should rather be considered as the farm which was once, centuries ago, owned by Eumaios, instead of the farm that would currently be maintained by him.

A little bit to the north, the player will also find a place called 'Melanthios's Goat Farm' (GC9), referring to the disloyal goat herd who first appears in *Od.* 17, 212. He sees Eumaeus and the disguised Odysseus, and kicks the latter on his hip (an act he will later pay the price for).

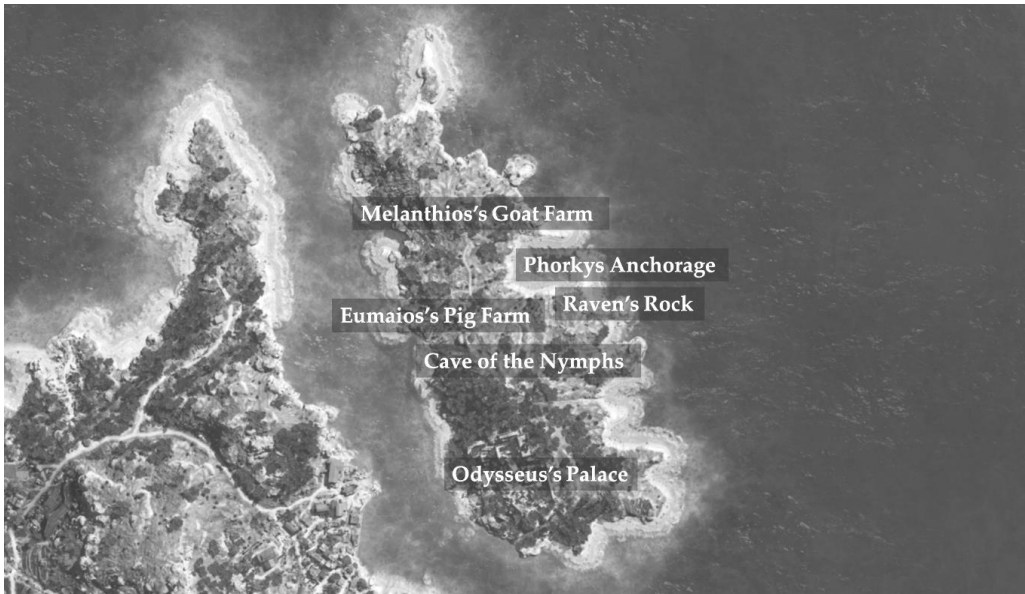


Fig. 1. *Assassin's Creed Odyssey's* Ithaka, including the names of all in-game locations.

The design of Ithaka, as well as that of most other locations on the map, thereby moves away from the exuberantly spectacularized or overly

stereotyped aesthetics that are often found in classical antiquity games.³¹ Instead, the (main) game primarily participates in a Rankean aesthetic of realism aiming to show the past ‘how it was’ (albeit with several mythological features).³²

However, while these various locations may be identified with the ancient descriptions through their names, their actual exterior or appearance does not match the descriptions in the *Odyssey*.³³ For example, in the *Odyssey* Eumaeus’ farm is situated on a high location with a wide view (περισκέπτω ἐνὶ χώρῳ, *Od.* 14, 6) and a beautiful and large courtyard (αὐλή [...] καλή τε μεγάλη τε, *Od.* 14, 5–7).³⁴ In the game, however, the farm consists of a rather small house with an adjacent pigsty and tiny cabbage field, and without a particularly panoramic view. Similarly, while the *Odyssey* counts almost a thousand swine at the farm (600 females, 360 males, *Od.* 14, 13–20), in the game only a handful can be seen. We have already pointed to the game’s compression of ancient Greece: because of technological constraints (and creative feasibility) the game necessarily ‘shrinks’ Greece, which also allows the player to traverse the game world easier and faster. The developers then created the digital assets for several ‘possible’ locations (e.g. farms, forts, houses, ports, etc.) and reused and reconfigured these assets in different constellations throughout the world to build a visually and architecturally coherent, but still diverse world. The intertextuality with the ancient *Odyssey* therefore lies not so much with the individual intricacies of the locations that Homer describes; rather, the mere presence and referentiality

³¹ On spectacularization (and other similar modes of reception), cf. for example ANDRÉ-LÉCOLE-SOLNYCHKINE (2013: 90–92) or CLARE (2021: 35–57).

³² CHAPMAN (2016: 61–69). Similarly, for instance, when the Athenian Acropolis appears in the game, it is not due to the game adhering to the so-called ‘Acropolis syndrome’ (ANDRÉ 2016: 71–77) that makes any game setting instantly recognizable as ‘ancient Greece/Athens’ simply by including the Acropolis, but rather because it intends to portray Athens as it was experienced in antiquity.

³³ Cf. FRENCH-GARDNER (2020: 65) on the importance of (recognizable) names in establishing a link between modern receptions and ancient elements, even though the resemblance may stop there.

³⁴ The argument may of course be made that, since the events of the *Odyssey* have already long transpired in the world of the game, the appearance of these locations has already changed over time.

of the locations in the game is more important than what these locations would actually have looked like according to Homer.

On the game’s map, these locations also receive brief descriptions (GC10).³⁵ For example, the Phorkys Anchorage is described as follows:

Named for the ancient sea god Phorkys, this bay was the first sight Odysseus saw upon his return. It provides a natural shelter for sailors from rough waters.

Similarly, the description for the Cave of the Nymphs reads:

This cave served as a shelter for the Naiads, young nymphs who spun the sea into a glistening purple cloth. Odysseus prayed here in joy upon his return.

These descriptions serve the purpose of further fleshing out the game world through the addition of backstories to and the recounting of the histories of the locations visited by the player. Interestingly, these descriptions seem to refer to or paraphrase actual lines from the *Odyssey*. The second sentence of the Phorkys description seems to be a paraphrase of *Od.* 13, 99–100, where it is mentioned that the harbor provides cover against dangerous waves created by stormy weather (αἶ τ’ ἀνέμων σκεπόωσι δυσαήων μέγα κῦμα/ ἔκτοθεν).³⁶ The cave description draws on *Od.* 13, 107b–108a (ἐνθα τε νύμφαι/ φάρε’ ὑφαίνουσιν ἀλιπόρφυρα), although the meaning of the phrase has changed: rather than weaving a cloth with the color of the purple sea, the game mentions that it is the sea that is spun into a purple cloth. The exact meaning of this is unclear: does the game claim that the Naiads are responsible

³⁵ In order to access these descriptions, the player must turn on the ‘Historical Locations’ filter. HALL–DANSEREAU (2019) explain that many players did not find this feature. It is also worth pointing out that in a freely downloadable extra storyline released on December 14th, 2021 (which saw the addition of the island of Korfu), an extra Historical Location inspired by the *Odyssey* was added called ‘Pontikonisis Islet’, or the location where Poseidon turns the ship of the Phaeacians to stone after it had brought Odysseus to Ithaca (*Od.* 13, 163).

³⁶ Interestingly, both Homer and the game developers feel the need to explain the namesake of the location: the game explains Phorkys was a sea god; Homer attributes him the description ‘the old man of the sea’ (ἀλίοιο γέροντος, *Od.* 13, 96).

for the purple color of the sea (where the purple cloth would be a metaphor for the purple-colored surface of the sea, but which would be strange given that the Naiads were primarily freshwater nymphs occupied with rivers, fountains, brooks, etc.), or does it say that the Naiads are spinning a purple cloth into which a textile sea pattern is woven? Nevertheless, these texts are additionally functional in establishing *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* as an entertainment product with educational potential: by offering the player valuable and mostly well-informed knowledge about the ancient world, the game may educate its non-classically trained audience during their act of play, or even prove interesting for use in pedagogical contexts.³⁷

In Odysseus's Palace, the player may also find a so-called *ainigmata ostraka* or 'riddle potsherd' (the artificial Greek compound is used as a singular) that details an enigmatic description of a specific location where the player may find treasure (GC3). The Ithakan *ostraka*, called 'Fatal Attraction', reads as follows:

If you retrace the steps of Odysseus and take the path north, you will find a goat farm in Ithaka where he once met Athena. She helped him with a disguise to reclaim his wife and kill her suitors. Find your reward on a slaughtered goat.

In contrast to the previously discussed location descriptions, this *ostraka* leads to its own 'quest' (although the game does not use this word in this instance). The riddle refers to Melanthios's Goat Farm, where the

³⁷ Much has been written and presented on the educational potential and applications of the *Assassin's Creed* series, e.g. GILBERT (2017); KARSENTI-PARENT (2020); MATUSZKIEWICZ-RUFFING (2021); RASSALLE (2020); VINCENT (2021); WAINWRIGHT (2014). Discussion has also revolved around the game's so-called *Discovery Tour*, a version of the game that acts as a 'virtual museum' and strips the game of its story and combat. Instead, guided tours are added, which were written in collaboration with scholars and consist of brief videos, texts and photographs with information on various aspects of the ancient world (e.g. politics, philosophy, art, etc.). On the production of the *Discovery Tour* for the game's predecessor, *Assassin's Creed Origins* (set in Ptolemaic Egypt), cf. POIRON (2021).

player may find their reward (GC9).³⁸ However, while the enigma mentions that Odysseus met Athena in that farm, Homer recounts that it is near the olive tree by the bay of Phorcys that Athena met Odysseus and gave him the disguise of a beggar (*Od.* 13, 429–438). Note especially the phrase 'If you retrace the steps of Odysseus', displaying the game's intention of having Cassandra (and her player) experience their own odyssey while treading in Odysseus' footsteps.

On Ithaka, the player also encounters a minor side-character called Odessa, who serves as the starting point for the side-quest 'A Small Odyssey' (GC4). Odessa says she is 'named after the great Odysseus' and even claims to be a descendant of the legendary hero (similarly to Cassandra, a descendant of Leonidas). She has embarked on her own odyssey to see the ruins of Odysseus' Palace and to 'seek his greatness'. Much later in the game, Cassandra also finds her in Megara, where she is taking care of her sick father in her large estate (GC15). Cassandra decides to help her but it soon turns out that Odessa is targeted by the leader of Megaris, who wants to seize her large estate and has even tried to arrange a marriage with her in order to acquire it, although Odessa had everyone of the men he sent killed. Odessa thus parallels Penelope, as the person defending a large estate by refusing the advances of outside suitors.³⁹

Environmentally and climatologically speaking (GC11), the game places Ithaka in its so-called 'summer' biome: in order to create environmental variety, the game attributes different biomes (each with 'its own flora, fauna, weather systems, and unique topography')⁴⁰ to different regions, such as the warm summer climate we find on Ithaka which contrasts with, for example, the decidedly scorched, 'volcanic' biome of the islands Thera, Anaphi, Nisyros, Melos and Hydrea, or the 'deciduous forest' biome comprising not just the islands of Chios, Lesbos, Lemnos, Thasos, Euboea and Skyros, but also the mainland regions of

³⁸ The reward is an engraving that players may add to their weapons to enhance their power. The engraving causes a +2% increase in damage dealt with swords and daggers.

³⁹ It is noteworthy that Cassandra, who we will later consider as similar to Odysseus, may 'romance' Odessa (cf. below; GC15), thereby symbolically referring to a union between Odysseus and Penelope.

⁴⁰ LEWIS (2018: 14).

Phokis, Malis and Makedonia.⁴¹ The Homeric epithets associated with the island are also applicable to the island in the game, as the island is fittingly rocky (e.g. κραναήν Ἰθάκην)⁴² and surrounded by sea (cf. ἀμφιάλω Ἰθάκη).⁴³ Since, as we have already mentioned, the game through technological necessity compresses ancient Greece, not much room is left for the absent Neriton mountain described by Homer (ἐν δ' ὄρος αὐτῇ/ Νήριτον, *Od.* 9, 21–22), although a small forest is present (εἰνοσίφυλλον, *Od.* 9, 22) near the Palace.

Kassandra then returns to Elpenor with the Shroud, who surprisingly hands it over to her and explains that this was all just a test to see her abilities (GC12). He has another assignment for her, which requires her to sail to Megaris where she must kill the man known as the Wolf of Sparta. Before she leaves, however, Kassandra hears that the Cyclops – the dangerous figure who holds sway over Kephallonia – is coming after Markos. This version of the Cyclops is a human who has lost one of his eyes, and instead uses a replacement eye made of obsidian. Kassandra tracks him down and, before eventually killing him, taunts him by inserting his obsidian eye into the posterior of a spontaneously passing goat (GC13). It is remarkable that a Cyclops needs to be defeated and removed of the possession of his eye in order for the journey to start, since it is primarily after Odysseus defeats and taunts Polyphemus that his troubles and wandering begin. As already mentioned, Kassandra also encounters some ‘actual’ Cyclopes on her journey, but the inclusion of an (albeit human) Cyclops figure at the very beginning of the game next to various other Homeric references is noteworthy, and productive in establishing the game’s relationship with the ancient *Odyssey*.

Once Kassandra leaves Kephallonia for good, we see the *Assassin’s Creed Odyssey* title card and her journey (indeed, her odyssey) begins (GC14). Both Odysseus’ and Kassandra’s odysseys are tales of *nostos*, or homecoming: indeed, the very last mission of the game’s main story

⁴¹ Cf. LEWIS (*ibid.*); HALL–DANSEREAU (2019).

⁴² Cf. Hom. *Od.* 1, 247; 15, 510; 16, 124; 21, 346; Hom. *Il.* 3, 201. Cf. also *Od.* 10, 417 and 10, 463 for τρηχέης Ἰθάκης (or *Od.* 13, 242), or *Od.* 11, 480 for Ἰθάκην ἐς παῖπαλόεσσον (GOEKOOP 2010: 130).

⁴³ Cf. Hom. *Od.* 1, 386; 1, 395; 1, 401; 2, 293; 21, 252.

('Dinner in Sparta')⁴⁴ sees Cassandra literally come home and have dinner with her family in her childhood home in Sparta.⁴⁵ Yet, whereas Odysseus traveled ten years to get to Ithaca, we have seen that Cassandra starts her journey right after she leaves it. Cassandra therefore experiences what may be called an inverse odyssey: the goal is still to reunite with her family (similarly to Odysseus' journey), but instead of traveling throughout the Greek world to reach Ithaca, she leaves Ithaca on a quest that takes her throughout the Greek world. The placement of Ithaca at the opening of the game is interesting, seeing as the Odyssean subtext thus colors and frames the game from its very beginning: while the overt Odyssean references largely disappear after this point, the initial references invite players to remember the ancient story and to believe that they themselves are also embarking on their own odysseys.

The Homeric identifications on Ithaca are also tied to the game's 'high concept' approach to its location design. Many of the game's locations are specifically centered around one theme, story, or concept: Nisyros, for instance, consists of only one location (the lair of the Cyclops Argos); the storyline on Melos revolves around the in-game 'Battle of One Hundred Hands', a tournament where Cassandra must fight a large number of enemies (as a metaphor for slaying one of the Hecatoncheires); Keos is the home of pirate leader Xenia, and multiple quests set on the island revolve around pirate-based activities; most of the quests in the Kretan region of Pephka are Minotaur-themed, and so on. Within this context, Ithaca is the island of Odysseus and, by extension, the island of Homer: its purpose is to make the player aware of the

⁴⁴ While 'Dinner in Sparta' is the final mission of the 'Odyssey' storyline, it is still succeeded by an epilogue called 'We Remember'. Depending on how the player has treated Cassandra's family members (her mother Myrinne, her brother Alexios, her father Nikolaos and his adoptive son, Stentor), the player may actualize one out of nine endings with different character constellations. For instance, if the player had chosen to kill Nikolaos upon meeting him, he will not be present at the dinner party and the actualized ending will be different from the one experienced by players who spared him.

⁴⁵ On *nostos*, cf. NAGY (2013: 275). NAGY explains that the word *nostos* at once comprises both the hero's homecoming as well as the song of that homecoming (i.e. the *Odyssey*). In this sense, Cassandra's *nostos* is not just her quest to reunite her family, but also the video game *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* itself.

Greek myth that eponymously inspired the game, and to introduce a mythological dimension to the game's main historical narrative. By incorporating the remnants of the Homeric past into the design of the game world, and by actively drawing attention to them, the game also historicizes these mythological stories, and proposes a version of ancient Greece where these stories actually took place.

We see, therefore, that the game is connected to Homer's *Odyssey* in a variety of ways. The main theme of the game's central narrative (a quest to see a family reunited) corresponds to the theme of the ancient text and, while the game odyssey's direction is reversed, similar scenes and quests invite the player to interpret their actions as similar to the ones told by Homer. The design of the game world also includes direct references to locations and descriptions from the Greek poem, and draws attention to the legacy of the Greek myth within the historical context of the game.

3. Cassandra and Odysseus

One can, however, also think of the game's protagonist, Cassandra, as a parallel of Odysseus. Cassandra is similar to Odysseus, of course, in the primary sense that both are the protagonists that embark on their respective odysseys to return to their family, and that both slay many (mythical and similar) foes encountered on their voyages. The resemblance runs deeper, however, as will be argued in this section.

The first lines of the *Odyssey* offer a brief, though poignant description of its main character. In translation, they read (*Od.* 1, 1–10):

Tell me, Muse, of the man of many devices, driven far astray after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy. Many were the men whose cities he saw and whose minds he learned, and many the woes he suffered in his heart upon the sea, seeking to win his own life and the return of his comrades. Yet even so he did not save his comrades, for all his desire, for through their own blind folly they perished—fools, who devoured the cattle of Helios Hyperion; whereupon he took from them the day of their returning. Of these things, goddess, daughter of Zeus, beginning where you will, tell us in our turn.

We are specifically interested here in several aspects that find parallels in *Assassin's Creed Odyssey's* design of Cassandra. Homer, for instance, de-

scribes the many cities and people that Odysseus encountered on his journey (πολλῶν δ’ ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω, *Od.* 1, 3).⁴⁶ We have already pointed out how Cassandra visits the entirety of ‘Greece’ on her journey, and is confronted with various people ‘whose minds (*noos*) she learns’, since every in-game region contains various quests that bring her into contact with everyday people who need and ask for her help.⁴⁷ Homer then focuses on Odysseus’ suffering and woes (πολλὰ δ’ ὃ γ’ ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν, *Od.* 1, 4). He also draws attention to the comrades Odysseus lost (ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ὥς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰέμενός περ, *Od.* 1, 6). Cassandra’s voyage is similarly full of pain and death. In the game’s epilogue (called ‘We Remember’), Cassandra meets Sokrates at the Cemetery Road in Athens, where they reminisce about those they lost. Sokrates’ first reaction when Cassandra approaches is ‘Behold, I’ve kept myself alive’, thereby bringing up the theme of loss and affirming that he is not among those who perished. Cassandra and Sokrates then remember Phoibe, a girl from Kephallonia and friend to Cassandra who was killed by the Cult of Kosmos during the Plague of Athens. Next is Perikles, who also died during the Plague (murdered by the game’s main antagonist, Deimos). Finally, they reminisce about Brasidas of Sparta, who became Cassandra’s ally after defeating a common enemy together in Korinth and was killed by Deimos in the Battle of Amphipolis. Both Cassandra and Odysseus are therefore heroes partially characterized by their failure to keep the ones around them safe.

⁴⁶ On *Assassin’s Creed’s* conception of history as a vivid and living place where attention is granted to everyday people and activities, cf. CASEY (2021); GILBERT (2019); GUESDON (2018); HALL–DANSEREAU (2019).

⁴⁷ NAGY (2013: 312) has described the concept of *noos* as a mental process of adaptation: ‘Odysseus keeps on adapting his identity by making his *noos* fit the *noos* of the many different characters he encounters.’ The same applies to Cassandra: isolated from most of the Greek world on Kephallonia (indeed, unaware that the Peloponnesian War had even started; GC12), her quest sees her reintegrate into Greek society and acquaint her with varying perspectives on that Greek world. As a mercenary, she never explicitly chooses sides in the conflict, thereby showing her capability to adapt to different situations. Since the player controls Cassandra’s choices, the extent to which she adapts her *noos* to that of others (or, conversely, radically rejects this adaptation) will differ from playthrough to playthrough.

Furthermore, we have already drawn attention to the aspect of choice that *Odyssey* introduced to the *Assassin's Creed* franchise (and that remained in its successor, *Assassin's Creed Valhalla*). Player choice takes many forms in the game, including free roam through the game's open world and character customization.⁴⁸ The main way, however, that player choice is integrated into the game consists of dialogue options, which sometimes lead to specific actions within the story. Presented with a given problem, for instance, the player can choose the way Kassandra responds, and sometimes this choice brings with it one of three actions (aside from the general accepting or refusing of quests). These three actions are: Attack (indicated with a crossing swords icon; cf. Fig. 2), Lie (indicated with a scale), and Flirt (indicated with a heart). These three choices are all distinct actions that Homer's Odysseus is shown performing and which he is, arguably, famous for doing.

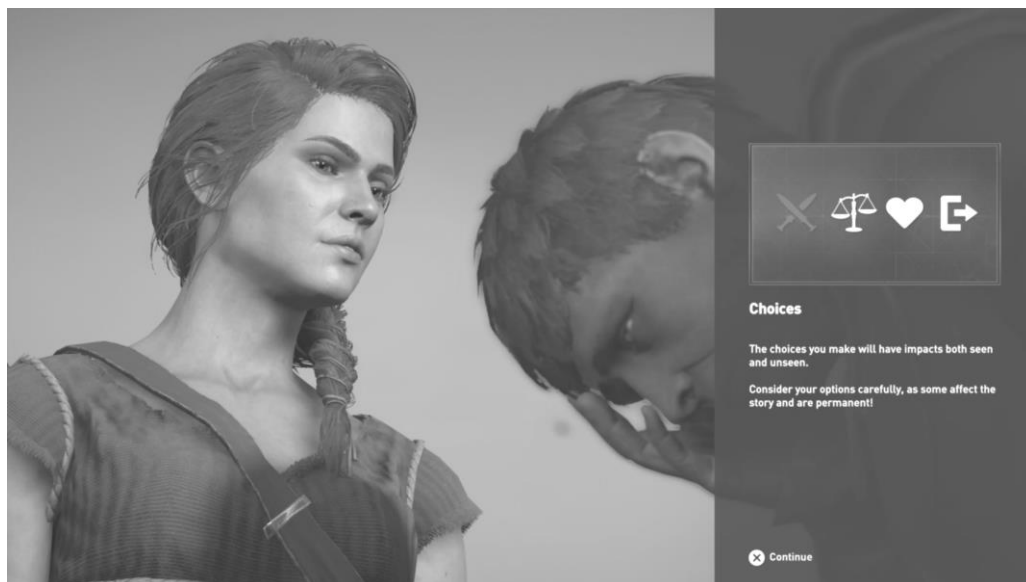


Fig. 2. The game explains the different choices that the player may make as Kassandra.

The Attack option is the least surprising (and by extension, perhaps, convincing) parallel between the two heroes. Violence is still one of the most common forms of action within video games, in part since 'guns and weaponlike interfaces offer such easy immersion and such a direct

⁴⁸ The player is, for instance, able to customize their character's weapons and armor, as well as select the special abilities that Kassandra may use throughout the game.

sense of agency'.⁴⁹ Similarly, Greek heroes were defined by their glorious deeds, often tied to their feats in battle. Both Cassandra and Odysseus are powerful warriors and well-versed in various types of weaponry: Odysseus is said to be an expert with the spear (e.g. *Il.* 11, 401) and the bow (*Od.* 8, 215, cf. below), whereas Cassandra may use swords, daggers, staffs, heavy blunt weapons (e.g. maces or battle hammers), heavy bladed weapons (e.g. battle axes or scythes), spears and bows. Both heroes therefore exhibit a certain martial versatility and skill that surpass the abilities of the people around them.

The Lie option offers a deeper parallel. Odysseus has been studied in connection to the various lies he tells in the *Odyssey*, such as the several 'Cretan lies' where he assumes different identities connected to Crete and its king, Idomeneus.⁵⁰ His lies have, for example, been connected to his need for survival and his gradually accumulated cautious nature.⁵¹ One scholar even considered Odysseus as 'the only Homeric hero who is renowned for lying'.⁵² Similarly, Cassandra is able to lie on various occasions and for various purposes (e.g. to help or save a friend, to cover up a crime or failure, etc.). While Cassandra's lies less serve the purpose of her immediate survival, they do establish her (especially in combination with her general verbal abilities, strong enough to challenge even Sokrates at times) as a Greek hero who is not only martially proficient, but also as someone who is skillful with words and capable of manipulating and possibly avoiding dangerous situations through speech.⁵³

Finally, the Flirt option allows Cassandra to engage in sexual relations with various characters throughout her journey. Odysseus is similarly depicted in several extra-marital romances in the *Odyssey*. For instance, at *Od.* 5, 225–227, Homer describes a sexual encounter between Odysseus and Calypso:

⁴⁹ MURRAY ([1997] 2017: 181). Cf. also SERRANO LOZANO (2020: 56–58) for a discussion on violence in classical antiquity games. Cf. LEVY (2021) on what classical antiquity games could do 'more' than the mere presentation of violence.

⁵⁰ For example, cf. HAFT (1984); SCHMOLL (1990); TRAHMAN (1952); WALCOT (1977).

⁵¹ Cf. HAFT (1984: 299); SCHMOLL (1990: 67); TRAHMAN (1952: 35).

⁵² SCHMOLL (1990: 67).

⁵³ Cf. WALCOT (1977: 9).

So he spoke, and the sun set and darkness came on. And the two went into the innermost recess of the hollow cave, and took their joy of love, remaining by each other.

This scene has been described as exhibiting a ‘casual attitude towards sexual relations’.⁵⁴ Cassandra’s attitude towards these matters seems to be of a similarly casual nature, as on multiple occasions she is given the option to engage in sexual activities without the purpose of initiating a romantic relationship. For example, at one point (in the side-quest ‘Age is Just a Number’, set in Delphi), Cassandra may choose to ‘help out’ an older woman named Auxesia whose husband Koragos had lost his sexual drive due to old age. The Flirt action may even lead to a Calypso or Circe-like ‘island romance’: when Cassandra reaches Hydrea, she encounters a woman called Roxana whom she may ‘romance’; similarly, when Cassandra arrives on Mykonos, she has the option to romance a woman named Kyra or a man called Thaletas, which leads to its own associated sub-plot.

When taken together, these three possible actions (Attack, Lie, Flirt) allow to consider Cassandra as a character modeled on Odyssean foundations. Players may also choose to further the relationship between Odysseus and Cassandra by purchasing one of several extra downloadable ‘packs’ for the game, i.e. several pieces of armor or weaponry that the player can buy and which enhance the character’s in-game abilities. One of these is the ‘Odysseus Pack’ (GC16–17), which allows Cassandra to use Odysseus’ armor and weapons and, in doing so, to metonymically ‘become’ Odysseus himself. The Odysseus Pack also allows the player to customize their horse (Phobos) as a fully navigable Trojan horse, referring to Odysseus’ successful plan that ended the Trojan War. It is worth examining the gameplay enhancements of the items included in the Odysseus Pack (cf. Table 1), as these statistically characterize Odysseus in the universe of the game.

⁵⁴ HEUBECK et al. (1988: 273).

Table 1. The Odysseus Pack gameplay enhancements.

Item	Enhancement
<i>Odysseus' Bow</i>	+19% Hunter Damage +14% Damage with Bow Charged Shot +30% Elemental Damage but -30% Elemental Buildup
<i>Odysseus Greaves</i>	+19% Hunter Damage +14% Damage with Bow Charged Shot
<i>Odysseus Breastplate</i>	+19% Hunter Damage +14% Damage with Bow Charged Shot
<i>Odysseus Belt</i>	+19% Hunter Damage +7% CRIT Chance
<i>Odysseus Hood</i>	+19% Hunter Damage +21% Damage with Bows on Distant Targets
<i>Odysseus Bracers</i>	+19% Hunter Damage +35% CRIT Damage
<i>Odysseus Set</i>	Gain 50% of an Adrenaline Segment with Hunter Abilities
<i>Trojan Horse</i>	/

As can be seen in Table 1, each item (except for the Trojan Horse, which is purely cosmetic and has no statistical or strategic impact on the game) enhances Cassandra's so-called Hunter abilities. These are the abilities provided by the 'Hunter' class of gameplay, i.e. one of three classes of abilities (Hunter, Warrior and Assassin) that each emphasize a different aspect of combat: while the Hunter class revolves around ranged attacks (any damage done from afar, e.g. with a bow), the Warrior class involves hand-to-hand action and the Assassin class increases stealth. The Odysseus Pack items also give extra damage while using bows and increases the player's chance of performing a critical hit ('CRIT') to an enemy. This shows us that the game perceives Odysseus primarily as a bowman, which fits Hom. *Od.* 8, 215–223 where Odysseus proclaims himself as a master bowman, second only to Philoctetes, as well as the famous episode in *Od.* 21, 416–423 where he fires an arrow through the twelve axes.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ In the *Iliad*, however, Odysseus instead appears primarily as a spearman (cf. HAF 1984: 297; HEUBECK et al. 1988: 359), as he is for example often attributed the epithet δουρικλυτός (cf. *Il.* 11, 396; 11, 401; 16, 26). Given that Odysseus also appears as a bowman in the video game *Immortals Fenyx Rising* (Ubisoft Quebec 2020), which was developed by the same studio as *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* and released two years later,

The relationship between Cassandra and Odysseus deserves further examination, but I hope to have already shown interesting similarities between them in the previous discussion. Odysseus is, however, not the only parallel with ancient characters that may be drawn. For example, it has been pointed out that Cassandra may be perceived as a Spartan Amazon who challenges the traditional gender roles of ancient Greece.⁵⁶ A look into the early concept art created by the developers also reveals the influence of the superhero character Wonder Woman, a character from DC Comics who is equally an Amazonian warrior.⁵⁷ At several instances, non-playable characters encountered in the game world will also explicitly compare Cassandra to other heroes or demi-gods such as Achilles or Heracles, elevating Cassandra to a comparable position and facilitating her characterization as a similar Greek hero.⁵⁸ These various inspirations co-exist, and Cassandra thus becomes a ground zero for a complex mixture of adaptation processes that imbue her with the identity and characterizations of various well-known names from Greek antiquity.⁵⁹

we may say that the understanding of Odysseus as a bowman transcends the game *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* proper and may be considered as a more general conceptualization of the character by Ubisoft Quebec. In *Immortals Fenyx Rising*, the protagonist Fenyx also carries a bow that is named the 'Bow of Odysseus', and often engages in 'Odysseus Bow Challenges' where an arrow needs to be fired through several axes.

⁵⁶ DAGIOS (2020: 134–140).

⁵⁷ LEWIS (2018: 34). This source of inspiration has also been explicitly alluded to by the some of the game's leading developers (HALL–DANSEREAU 2019).

⁵⁸ For example, in the quest 'A New Horizon', Herodotos (who becomes Cassandra's companion relatively early in the game and subsequently accompanies her on her odyssey) predicts that 'Heroes like Cassandra will live on in the stories and legends of their triumphs. They live forever.' Similarly, in the side-quest 'Not My Mother's Daughter', the character Zopheras asks Cassandra: 'Did Zeus give you any special powers? You know, Achilles got invulnerability, Herakles got the strength of a god...' Cassandra replies: 'If you know the old stories, you know what Zeus is especially good at', hinting at sexual skills in line with the Flirt action. Note the almost superhero-like descriptions of ancient heroes, as characters such as Achilles or Heracles become defined by a specific supernatural power not unlike those of contemporary superhero characters.

⁵⁹ Or, adapting an insight of ANDRÉ-LÉCOLE-SOLNYCHKINE (2013: 93) on the landscape design of classical antiquity games, we may suggest that Cassandra becomes 'a dialogue of forms, which appears as a palimpsest of receptions' (my translation).

4. Conclusion

In summary, why is the game called *Odyssey*? The goal of this paper has been to explore the relationship between the Homeric poem and the modern video game, which despite the subtitle '*Odyssey*' has largely gone unexplored in current research on the game. We have discussed the game on three levels: its underlying story structure, its specific narrative and world design, and its main character. It was pointed out that the game places itself in a long tradition of quest-adventure games, offering players the experience of their own odysseys and the possibility to make meaningful choices on their journey. We have also drawn attention to some striking thematic, narrative, environmental and textual references that lay bare the game's inspiration by the ancient text. Finally, although this topic could be researched further, we have discussed several similarities between the two odysseys' protagonists and seen that these are described by their respective texts in parallel ways. Players may even enhance their character with Odysseus' gear and armor. The game therefore presents itself as a multifaceted re-imagination of Homer's *Odyssey*, where the ancient *Odyssey* is re-interpreted into a historical context and re-enacted by a player: while the game does not explicitly retell the events of the Homeric poem and sets its story during the Peloponnesian War, this historical background is supplemented by a layer of mythology that colors it from its very beginning, asking that we re-enact and 'retrace the steps of Odysseus' with a character that exhibits similar characteristics to Odysseus himself. Whatever form this odyssey takes, however, is up to you.

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