STRANGER THINGS

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Fantasy in Antiquity

Historiography and Reception

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Introduction

Imagination is one of the most valuable gifts of the human brain. Humankind has understood and explained the world it lives in rather by stories than history. In our days, some have announced the 'end of history', but no one will ever dare to proclaim the 'end of stories'. As also expressed by Pratchett (*The Science of Discworld II*), our species should have rather been named *Pan narrans*, the storytelling ape. Every given story is a departure from the real world. Even in those that explain actual events, there is an inherent subjective element from the storyteller, whose standpoint and experience modify the manner a story is told. In the same way that the very same river cannot be crossed twice, a story cannot be equally narrated twice. The context, the words, the details and the listeners/readers affect the story as well. Stories rather tell how we perceive our reality than the real facts and events. Complete objectivity is an unreachable goal when human discernment is the only source.

Stories have not only been used to describe the world we know, but they also have tried to explain what was beyond our reach, perception, experience and knowledge. Imagination knows no limits and can tear down the barriers of space and time. In the virtually endless world where our ancestors lived, there was always an unknown place on the next valley or in a faraway shore, where the strange happened. This left room for imagining new realities beyond the familiar limits and, in Greek literature, paradoxography was a fertile genre. The progressive enlargement of the known world was not a deterrent and the stories remained unaltered (see, e.g., some of the earliest accounts on India in Alexander historians) or were pushed further away, beyond the new frontiers. Even more, the remote past remained a completely unreachable place and it became an ideal scenario for stories about long-gone heroes and gods. It comes as no surprise that many stories begin with a loose and suggesting location of the events: "once upon a time, in a faraway land" (or "A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away…"). Sometimes, this imaginative creativity was not applied to fabulate about farther lands and strange people, but it helped to explain the daily mysteries. Natural phenomena were many times perceived as expressions of divine or supernatural powers. Random played no role in the world, but divine will –and

whim– ruled human and natural fate. There was no chaos, but inscrutable gods-given order. The relation of the ancient people with the 'fantastical' element was not uniform and it evolved during the ages and/or depended on the individual's own attitude. Some believed without hesitation all these stories, while others, like the euhemerists, tried to rationalise all the myths. In the middle, there was a full range of shades of grey.

Human progress has essentially left no place on Earth untouched and there are no pristine lands still waiting to be discovered. Science can satisfactorily explain most of what happens around us every day, and history and archaeology have filled many gaps of our past. It could seem that there are no more mysteries, neither close nor distant. However, human's thirst for stories has not ceased to exist, quite the opposite. On some occasions, this longing for a less prosaic world resorts to more attractive pseudohistorical or pseudoscientific theories, like ancient aliens/astronauts, astrology or numerology, among (too) many others. In our opinion, scholars from the different concerned disciplines should take a more active role in publicly denounce and disprove these dangerous and misleading deceits, especially these days, when they can be easily widespread through social media. However, fortunately, human imagination can find more enriching and useful ways to express its potential through literature, cinema, painting, music and other artistic disciplines.

Despite some early precedents can be arguably raised, fantasy and science-fiction as narrative genres were both born in the mid-, late- 19th century. The distinction between them can be tricky on some occasions and this is not the place to fix the criteria for it. Their development was parallel and mutual influences can be found everywhere. Both genres became progressively popular during the first decades of the 20th century, but for many time they were considered 'lesser' literature, labelled as 'childish', 'frivolous', 'escapist' or 'nerdy', among others. Fortunately, this snobbish contempt has almost disappeared and nowadays science-fiction and, especially, fantasy are among the most popular genres. However, *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* remains the only fantasy or sci-fi film that has ever won the Academy Award for Best Picture. In the same way, no author that can be unquestionably and primarily considered a 'sci-fi/fantasy writer' has been rewarded with the Nobel Prize yet.

Fantasy has a long and close relationship with Classics. Ancient mythology and history have been a recurrent inspiration for fantasy authors and Classical motifs echo elsewhere in their stories. In the same way that it is hard to create for a sci-fi author an alien race that bears no resembling with any terrestrial species, most fantasy stories can trace back their roots to previous literary patterns, history or ancient mythology, among others. Ancient history and ancient stories are still a fundamental part of Western culture and social imaginary, therefore, it is not surprising to find its influence elsewhere, proving that it is still a main force in our civilization.

This volume is the proceedings of an online conference that took place on April 20th-21st 2020, while the whole world was facing a surreal situation with everybody locked down in their homes. In the middle of that nightmare, this conference was for us a bright light, which helped us to carry on, keeping our research alive and kicking. Despite the distance, we felt the warm keenness of all the participants, listening to many engaging presentations and participating in enriching discussions. This book gathers together most of the papers from that meeting (and adds a couple of new contributions). We really want to thank all the participants for their willingness to take part both in the conference and the proceedings. Your response and involvement have greatly eased the publication process. In the same way, we want to thank those who participated in the conference, but for different reasons have not been able to publish here. Your commentaries during the meeting have surely found their way to the papers gathered here and have improved them.

The contributions in this volume are divided into two main parts. The first one deals with the perception of the extraordinary in Antiquity and the role of 'fantastical' elements in the works of different Classical authors. Jurgen R. Gatt shows the critical method of Herodotus when dealing with fanciful stories and its relation to forensic speeches. Ronald Blankenborg reappraises the topic of the geography described in the *Odyssey* and how it has been wrongly considered almost an accurate travel guide. Thomas A. Husøy's paper is focused on the omens for the battle of Leuctra described in the sources and their role as reflections of a Boeotian ethno-symbolism. For her part, Mariachiara Angelucci analyses Polemon of Ilium's fragments and this author's closeness to the Aristotelian school. Borja Antela-Bernárdez presents a study on the depiction of Sertorius in Plutarch and the parallelisms established with some other mythical and historical characters.

The writer from Chaeronea is also the focus of Marine Glénisson's contribution, which reflects on the role and significance of the fantastic details he included in his *Lives.* Finally, Mónica Durán Mañas' paper bounds the two parts of this volume with an engaging dialogue between the ancient and modern perceptions of otherness.

The second section is focused on how Classical culture and history have been used and integrated into the fantasy genre, both in books and films. The first chapter, written by Guendalina D. M. Taietti, presents the pseudo-historical creation of 'the oath of Alexander' by Christos Zalokostas and how behind this modern 'fantasy' lurked a political agenda. Antonio Ignacio Molina Molina Marín presents an examination of the influential J. R. R. Tolkien's works from a Classical studies' perspective. Marc Mendoza's paper, in turn, is focused on Ephebe, Greece's lookalike in Discworld, the literary universe created by the funniest fantasy writer, Sir Terry Pratchett. Julia Guantes García's contribution reflects on the recurrent film archetype of the 'amazon' through a deep analysis of its appearance in three 21st-century blockbuster movies. Sabrina Colabella shows the Classical influences found in the successful literary and filmic series *Hunger Games*, especially through its protagonist Katniss Everdeen. Finally, Daniela M. Dantas Gomes presents a thorough comparison between the ancient harpies and the homonymous characters appearing in George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* and its TV series adaptation *Game of Thrones.*

This book, therefore, addresses in many different ways the broadness of human creativity and imagination. The unceasing need and production of stories are a telling manifestation of these fundamental aspects of human existence. Stories are an honest expression of our constant struggle to understand a world that raises many questions but offers just a few easy answers. The basic questions, however, have remained the same for centuries: where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going? Certainly, science has helped us in this endless crusade, but humans still need stories to make sense of all the apparently random and confusing facts it brings up. Even if we discover that the Answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, The Universe, and Everything is 42, we still need a story to make sense of it.

<div align="right">The Editors</div>

ANCIENT
FANTASY

Confronting Miracles: Trial and Irresolution in Corinth and Dodona

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Introduction

Wonders have a special place in Herodotus' Histories[1]. We need only think of the lengthy digression on the cause of the Nile's flooding –it was the only river known to Herodotus to flood in summer– and on its unknown source somewhere beyond the land of the wizards, far to the West (Hdt. II. 5-34). Indeed, wonders great and small, natural and artificial, are among the most prominent subjects of Herodotean historie[2]. In this, the traveler from Halicarnassus follows in the footsteps of the Ionian natural scientists and, especially, of the arch-rationalizer Hecataeus[3]. Herodotus' handling of these phenomena, however, does not only look back to the 6th-century[4]. Like the author of On the Sacred Disease[5], who tackles another wonder[6], Herodotus borrows cutting-edge rhetorical tools that were being used in the assemblies and law-courts of his age[7]. As I hope to show in the following discussion –which engages with two infamous examples of wonders in the Histories– Herodotus and the quasi-Herodotean Periander deploy and refer to arguments and tropes found in contemporary forensic literature. More-over, they also purposefully re-enact the triangular logic of the law-courts to settle a disagreement between their sources, the one insisting on a rationalized account, the other on a miraculous version of the same events.

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[1] See, for example, Munson 2001 on the role of wonder in ethnography.

[2] At Hdt. II. 35, the entirety of the Egyptian *logos* is justified because Egypt provides more wonders than any other country.

[3] On the role of wonder in Greek science, see, among others, Lloyd 1995.

[4] In this way, this paper conforms to that scholarship which attempts to place Herodotus in the context of the 5th-century; e.g. Lateiner 1986; Thomas 2000; Raaflaub 2002; Provencal 2015.

[5] On the importance of rhetoric in this work, see esp. Laskaris 2002.

[6] Epilepsy is described as a wonder (θαυμάσιον) in the very opening of the book. Cf. Hdt. III. 33.

[7] See, especially, Thomas 2000 and Provencal 2015 on Herodotus' connection to rhetoric and the sophistic world.

Test and Trial in Periander's Court

The account of Arion's miraculous escape on the back of a dolphin is one of the most infamous passages in Herodotus. In it, Herodotus interrupts his account of the succession of Lydian monarchs, which he had introduced at the end of his proem, to paint a little vignette of two remarkable Greek figures: the poet Arion and the tyrant Periander. Herodotus' interest in Periander is, of course, not confined to this isolated passage[8]. In Hdt. III. 50-53, we are reintroduced to the tyrant engaged in a further inquiry involving questioning (ἱστορέων), this time of his own sons. Periander is also another one of the Greek sages whom Herodotus introduces in the first part of his first book[9], presumably in another bid to secure his own innovative brand of authority (Asheri 2007: 90). The inclusion of the poet Arion is also easily accounted for by Herodotus' interest in poets and poetic knowledge[10]. Moreover, his inclusion is fortuitous, since what we know of Arion is largely derived from this passage[11]. For this reason, perhaps, Sayce's (1883: 14-15), How and Wells' (1912: *ad loc.*), and Legrand's (1932: 43-44) commentaries largely concern themselves with the poet and with Herodotus' confused report of his accomplishments. Asheri's (2007: 91) more recent commentary, on the other hand, focuses on the most exceptional feature of this passage: its very inclusion here[12]. Together with the description of Lake Moeris, included for no other reason than geographical proximity to the previous subject of discussion (Hdt. II. 149-150), the story about Arion's rescue is *the* archetypal Herodotean digression. Accordingly, Munson (1986: 94) treats this episode as the limit case of the celebratory and non-explanatory episodes in the *Histories*, though she argues that such hard and fast distinctions between celebration and explanation are alien to Herodotus' text. Whatever the explanatory function the episode may have, Munson's first point is easily understood. The episode not only breaks the narrative sequence of the Lydian account, but it also, simultaneously, jumps across the Mediterranean in a series of leaps, first to Corinth, then to Italy,

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[8] Myres (1953: 83) sees Periander as the central figure of this vignette.

[9] Like Bias and Pittacus (Hdt. I. 27); Solon (I. 29); Chilon (I. 59); and Thales (I. 74).

[10] Against Myres (*supra*), Munson (1986: 96) and Flory (1978: 412) propose Arion as the central figure.

[11] Aelian records a hymn which he attributes to Arion (Page 1962: 506-507), though spuriously (Bowra 1963: 124-125, with previous scholarship).

[12] This fact, of course, did not go unnoticed in previous scholarship; see Legrand 1932: 43. See also Gray 2001: 11 n. 2.

and then back to Corinth[13]. The digressiveness of Hdt. I. 23-24 has also given rise to much speculation as to why Herodotus includes the digression in the first place. How and Wells (1912: *ad loc.*), for example, suggest that Herodotus was attracted to the story for religious purposes, Asheri (2007: 91) that the digression was included because it illustrated the mutability of fortune, Erbse (1992: 156) focuses on balance, while Benardete (1969: 15-16) draws a broad but suggestive analogy between Arion's singing and Herodotus' text.

Questions of motivation apart[14], Herodotus' interest in intellectual issues –most notably the corroboration of his sources and the material proof tagged on at the end– is one of the most prominent themes of the episode. Thus, to use Hooker's (1989: 142) cogent classification, the subject matter of this episode can be divided into the religious, Arion's prayer and his miraculous rescue, the moral, the focus on balance and poetic justice, and the intellectual. Of course, this latter category must be sufficiently broadened to include things beyond Herodotus' meta-historie[15]. In the same paper, Hooker (1989: 144) suggests that the digression –which moves in space but *not* in time– serves to introduce the audience to the method of comparative chronology. Demont, on the other hand, suggests that Herodotus concentrates on Periander's *historie*, in effect, to characterize his own[16]. And though Herodotus includes a number of other notable tropes[17], wealthy men (Asheri 2007: 92), magnificent tyrants (Wood 1972: 23-24), first discoverers (Asheri 2007: 91), brave gestures (Flory 1978: 411-414), last-minute rescues (Wood 1972: 23-24) and the like, it is these intellectual –and broadly epistemic– issues that the following discussion pursues.

Starting with Herodotus' own meta-historie, we may note that the references to his sources arrange the text into an elaborate structure[18]. Thus,

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[13] Despite this rupture, some have suggested subtle ways in which this digression may have been intricately bound to the surrounding context (Cobet 1971: 146-150; Gray 2001: 16-19) and the work as a whole (Munson 1986: 98-101; Erbse 1992: 156). It is hard, however, to resist Asheri's (2007: 91) impression that the ordinary reader would have failed to see some of the subtler threads of thought detected by scholars.

[14] There is no reason why Herodotus should have been motivated by any one reason, as Hooker (1989: 141) notes.

[15] I adopt this term from Luraghi 2006.

[16] For the intellectual dimension as reason for inclusion, see Demont 2009: 196.

[17] Bowra (1963: 131-132) and Asheri (2007: 91) have also drawn attention to mythic parallels found in Greece.

[18] For alternative structures, see Hooker 1989: 141 (narrative scenes); Erbse 1992:

two external source-citations, referring to Herodotus' named sources, form a ring around the digression, separating it from the surrounding text. Two more internal source citations, both simple "λέγουσι" with no explicit subjects, can also be found in between, dividing the digression into three unequal parts. The first of these marks the end of Herodotus' general account of Arion and of his musical accomplishments, which Herodotus knows to be true[19]. It subsequently introduces the central account of the wonder in a relentless *oratio obliqua*, neatly separating the domain of hearsay from that of knowledge. It is, in other words, a distancing device. This distancing effect of these internal source-citations is even starker when we turn to the second "λέγουσι", found roughly in the middle of the account and tagged, tellingly, to the miraculous climax of the story: "*they say* that Arion was rescued by a dolphin and carried to Taenarum"[20]. This internal source citation, we note, also has an important structural function; it divides the hearsay-account into two panels, the first dealing with Arion's abortive *nostos* on the Corinthian ships, the second with Periander's investigation, both arranged around this central hinge-joint. And, looking at the transitional sentence itself, we note that we can assign the first half of the sentence, the μέν clause, which says, "and they [the sailors] sailed off to Corinth", to the first panel as its conclusion. Arion has jumped into the sea and the sailors, presumably shrugging their shoulders, sailed off. The second half of the sentence, the δέ clause, treats of the dolphin and of Arion's miraculous *nostos*. Indeed, it is the only direct reference to it. The whole affair of the miracle, purportedly the reason of Herodotus' digression, placed prominently in the middle of the ring structure and in between the two panels, is put aside with a few words. And, further, it is clear *why* Herodotus would want to distance himself from the story, the very wondrousness which drove him to relate it in the first place (Gray 2001: 14). So stark is the distancing effect of these source-citations that it is hard to resist the impression that Herodotus disbelieved the story in spite of his evidence to the contrary (e.g. Fehling 1989: 24; Gray 2001: 19; Erbse 1992: 150)[21].

154; Gray 2001: 14 (crises).

[19] πρῶτον ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν (Hdt. I. 23).

[20] All translations are my own.

[21] Gould (1989: 30) believes that the corroboration of the sources convinced the sceptical Herodotus (cf. Fowler 1996: 82), while Lateiner (1989: 199) suggests that the statuette did the job.

As to *what* Herodotus tells us of this evidence, none of the details excites much surprise. Thus, many of the most notable features can be broadly generalized. We note, first, that the account is introduced with an explicit reference to the wondrous nature of the event in question (Munson 1986: 100). This may serve to explain not only Herodotus' interest in the event but also the archaeological proof tagged at the end of the ring-structure described since, as Nenci (1955) has demonstrated long ago, autopsy and wonder are intimately connected to one another. Further, the external source citations themselves are also perfectly explained by Fehling's (1989: esp. 21-23) rules for Herodotean source citation. Thus, the two sources are those people who are most intimately involved with the events in question, namely the Lesbians and the Corinthians[22]. These sources also dove-tail beautifully and Herodotus is keen to emphasize this point with the forensic sounding verb ὁμολογέουσι. Like Fehling, Gould (1989: 29) also refers to this episode as an archetype of corroboration, but suggests that is a sign of Herodotus' trustworthiness. Indeed, his good faith also seems guaranteed by the monument which he adduces –in suitably paradigmatic fashion– as material evidence (Gould 1989: 29), a monument which, as Fehling (1989: 23) begrudgingly acknowledges, is also attested elsewhere.

More remarkable is the quasi-Herodotean "embedded inquiry" (Demont 2009: 179-180 with previous bibliography) described in the second panel of the story. On this point, the parallels between Periander and Herodotus' own methods are well-known and do not need to be discussed at length. One needs only point out that we find, in this passage, the first use of the verb ἱστορεῖν, echoing Herodotus' programmatic proem (Hdt. I. 1; Christ 1994: 168; Demont 2009: 184). Moreover, we note that Periander's sources –a Lesbian poet and Corinthians sailors– are exactly parallel to Herodotus' own sources. More generally, Gray (2001: 14-16) has lucidly spelt out the role of wonder, Periander's preference for eyewitnesses, and, most especially, the importance of methical doubt, and cogently traced these preoccupations back to Herodotus' own practices. She concludes, in line with Christ's (1994) and Demont's (2009) more general findings, that "Periander's inquiry mirrors Herodotus' own" (Gray 2001: 15-16). Also characteristic of these experimenter-kings –and of Herodotus– is explicit care with vaguely methodological matters. Herodotus, thus, emphasizes

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[22] A point also noted by Legrand (1946: 43). How and Wells (1912 *ad loc.*) also suggest that the inclusion of Corinth, Lesbos and Tarentum is motivated by the prominence of the image of the dolphin.

that Periander summoned the sailors to his court "as soon as they landed". More importantly, Periander is also heavily involved in the management, even manipulation, of his sources of information. In sum, Arion is arrested and hidden from the sailors as they are baited to condemn themselves out of their own mouth. These tyrannical methods, we must also note, appear to distance Periander from Herodotus. In fact, the theatrical use of his sources, noted by Legrand (1946: 44), seems more typical of the practices of coercive experimenter-kings Christ describes and which methods, he argues, Herodotus is keen *not* to attribute to himself (Christ 1994: 199-200).

These features –particularly the stage-management of witnesses– are ones that can also be seen in similar episodes involving other monarchs, most notably Astyages and Proteus. Indeed, the effects of Periander's careful handling of witnesses can best be shown by contrasting this account to Astyages' questioning of Harpagus about the infant Cyrus' fate (Hdt. I. 114-118; Gray 2002: 307). Astyages, the last king of Media, having dreamt in a typical regal fashion that his grandson would overthrow him, ordered Harpagus to dispose of the boy as soon as he was born. Harpagus, unable to obey his king, passed on the task to a slave of his, a cowherd. This servant, whose wife had just aborted in the third trimester, also baulked at the task and, on the counsel of his wife, raised the boy as his own, in lieu of his dead son. Some years later, the boy Cyrus was predictably summoned to Astyages' palace. The king, believing his grandson to be long dead and buried, was dumbstruck (ἐκπλαγεὶς) by the kingly demeanour of the boy and his appearance (Hdt. I. 116.2), much as the sailors were dumbstruck (ἐκπλαγέντας) at the sight of Arion (23.7). Realizing he had been duped, Astyages ensured that the cowherd was alone –Herodotus is emphatic about this fact– and asked him where he had gotten the child and who had given it to him. When this did not work, Astyages resorted to methods not entirely different from those of an Athenian Court, namely threatening the slave with a *basanos,* a threat which successfully necessitated (ἐς τὰς ἀνάγκας) a *truthful* confession (τὸν ἐόντα λόγον). The King, realizing what had transpired, summoned Harpagus to question him. Unlike Periander[23],

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[23] Alyattes, unlike Periander, already knew the truth about the boy when interrogating Harpagus. These dissimilarities may explain why the handling of the second witness diverges at this point.

however, Astyages, in spite of his previous methodological scrupulousness[24], summoned the presumed guilty party *without* concealing the cowherd. It is this crucial detail that explains what happened next. On seeing the cowherd (ὡς εἶδε τὸν βουκόλον ἔνδον ἐόντα), Harpagus immediately resolved to tell the truth (οὐ τρέπεται ἐπὶ ψευδέα ὁδόν), ensuring that his account is not refuted (ἵνα μὴ ἐλεγχόμενος) (Hdt. I. 117.2). The situation in Media, then, is the exact reverse of that in Corinth. Astyages, realizing what had transpired, summoned Harpagus to test him in his accuser's presence. Periander, on the other hand, perplexed by doubt at hearing a fantastic tale, tests the sailors in their accuser's absence. The sailors, subjected to questioning but oblivious to Arion's presence, unlike Harpagus, turned to lies (ψευδέα) and, as a result, were refuted (ἐλεγχόμενος). Periander's brilliance as a judge, Herodotus implies, is his having taken care of just this eventuality.

The obvious similarity of the two episodes prompts one to suggest the existence of a stereotyped pattern. Demont (2009: 190-192), therefore, has described Periander's experiment as a type, a "trap interview" method, which he succinctly describes as a method of "cross-checking the answers to the questions one asks and presenting irrefutable external testimonies". It is this trap interview which allows Periander to settle his original question. The Corinthian tyrant is also an archetypical Herodotean character who can be placed alongside the ones Christ (1994) describes, namely that of the "royal arbitrator", a figure with a reputable Homeric stamp (e.g., Hom. *Il.* XVIII. 497-508)[25]. A further example can be found in Proteus (Gray 2002: 307), who also must adjudicate between two contrary accounts of an alleged crime, namely Helen's abduction, and effectively decides between them. Gagarin (1989: 21-30) too, in his discussion of early Greek trials, points to yet another figure in Herodotus' first book (96-99), Deioces, who had seized royal power because of his ability to settle disputes justly[26]. Yet, various features particular to these passages also point forward, evoking forensic notions which were contemporary to Herodotus. Most dramatical-

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[24] When questioning the cowherd earlier on in the narrative, the boy Cyrus is also led 'off-stage' (Hdt. I. 116.3).

[25] On this important passage, see Bonner / Smith 1930: 31-41; Wolff 1946: 34-49; MacDowell 1978: 18-21; Gagarin 1989: 26-30.

[26] Though Gagarin (1989: 21-22) does not mention the other examples of experimenter-kings and tyrants, these episodes appear to support his thesis.

ly, and as already noted, Astyages threatens the cowherd with a straight-forward *basanos* and, more importantly, its operation is described in ways remarkably consistent with those of 5th- and 4th-century forensic literature and rhetoric[27]. The sequence of appearances in Periander's court –Arion's accusation; the Corinthian's denial; Arion's appearance; and finally the Corinthian's confession– is also a reasonable way of describing the sequence of speeches in an Athenian trial. Periander's methodological concerns, such as his concern with the *immediate examination* of witnesses is also attested in forensic speeches contemporary to Herodotus[28]. Furthermore, Periander's trap interview seems to be just a particularly stage-managed instance of Anaximander's more general advice about "stealing testimony" ([Arist.] *Rh. Al*. 1432a4-5). All these features, it seems, belong to the world of the courts. Gray (2001: 15) too draws attention to the important "legal" dimension of Periander's investigation and the appeal to the Homeric *histor*, but argues that Herodotus prefers to focus on intellectual matters instead. Yet, as Darbo-Peschanski (2013: 78-80) assures us, there is no necessary hard and fast distinction between the two domains. Moreover, a sensitivity to the forensic dimension of Periander's intellectual pursuits allows us to highlight some important features of his embedded *historie*, and Herodotus' own.

We note, then, that in the process of Herodotus' telling, the object of Periander's investigation undergoes an important change. As we have noted, Periander is first confronted by Arion's miraculous tale, the wonder that Herodotus introduces at the beginning of the digression. His immediate first reaction is, understandably, doubt. Yet, as Gray (2001: 21) has also observed, once Periander has interrogated the sailors and engaged in literal *historie*, the tyrant finds himself confronted by a new situation: he now has two divergent accounts of Arion's recent past. In other words, Periander is confronted by two alternative versions between which he must choose. Once again, obvious analogues with Herodotean *historie* abound. This situation, however, is also an exact replica of that faced by an Athenian juror. Arion's and the Corinthians' accounts are not only opposing speeches in a case of attempted homicide, Periander must also adjudicate guilt by

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[27] Necessity is the most typical characteristic of the *basanos*, from Antiphon (Antiph. 6.25) down to Aristotle (*Rhet*. 1376b26-27).

[28] Hdt. I. 23.7: ὡς δὲ ἄρα παρεῖναι, "*as soon* as he arrived". An emphasis on the importance of an *immediate* examination of testimonial evidence is also found in Antiphon (V. 30).

choosing between them. And though his intricate experiment obviated the need for a trial, it is only in terms of these contradictory accounts, anticipated by the wily Periander, that the tyrant's experiment makes any sense. The tyrant's success as a judge, then, involves manipulating the circumstances in such a way as to enable himself to make a definitive choice between two opposing speeches. An Athenian juror would surely have been impressed.

Periander's experiment, in other words, is designed to test speech by confronting it to more speech. This is clearly the case with respect to the Corinthian sailors' account. As I have argued, it is with respect to this confrontation and consequent refutation that most of the tyrant's methodological scruples are linked[29]. In fact, so complete is Herodotus' account of the test for the sailor's lying tale, that we seem to forget that the speech which Periander, and Herodotus, are primarily interested in is not the sailors' tale, but Arion's. The question, then, is how does this test figure into Periander's investigation of the poet's wondrous account? Gray (2001: 25) has, once again, pre-empted one possible answer to this question: Herodotus shows a marked tendency to assume that falsifying one detail of a story vindicates the alternative account. Though Herodotus is surely not innocent of such logical errors, there seems to be no clear evidence that he succumbs to this habit here. An examination of the other episodes allows for another, less problematic, answer: testing one account acts as a reverse test for its opposite. We note, then, that virtually all the episodes described above involve just this confrontation of opposing speeches to one another. In Proteus' court, for example, Paris' lying account is refuted by that of his servants, while in Alyattes' court, Harpagus chooses not to lie because he fears being refuted by his dependant, who had already spoken. It comes as no surprise, then, that Periander's reacts to hearing Arion's speech by summoning the sailors to tell their story. In the case of Paris, this confrontation of speech leads to Paris' refutation, while Harpagus resolves to own up to his disobedience *because* of the fear of being contradicted. Arion's account, on the other hand, survives Periander's experiment while the sailors' lies are refuted by Arion's presence and they subsequently confess. Surely, this is a reassuring sign.

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[29] Hdt. I. 23.7: "they could no longer deny [the truth]". On this elenchus, see Gray 2001: 25.

As I hope to have shown, much of Periander's investigation –a stereo-typical episode of Herodotean *historie*– can be plausibly linked to the world of the lawcourts. Not only is Periander a Homeric judge, but his methods appear to parallel contemporary forensic argumentation in a number of ways. Beyond these important points of continuity, however, we must also acknowledge points of significant departure. Thus, the test which Periander applies to the accounts is essentially an *ad hoc* one, guided not by formal rules of admissibility, but by personal whim and arbitrary violence. As already noted, Herodotus is keen to disavow such methods. So do actual litigants who usually go to great lengths to ensure that their actions adhere, and condemn their opponents of not adhering, to the *traditional* standards of proof (Antiph. I. 8). This difference, however, can be plausibly related to Herodotus' characterization of Greek tyranny. Indeed, what better contrast could explain the legal position of the Greek tyrant as the custodian of law who is himself above the law? Secondly, and more importantly, we must also note the profound silence which surrounds the question which motivated the 'court proceedings' in the first place, namely the veracity of Arion's narrative. This is not only true of Periander –as Gray (2001: 19-22) notes, we never get wind of a judgment– but, more significantly, of Herodotus himself. Seemingly not content with Periander's trial, with his sources corroborating one another, and with the material proof at his disposal, Herodotus disdains even from mentioning the miracle in more than a few words. Such caution, of course, is alien to much forensic rhetoric. Here, the presentation of any evidence, defended to the hilt as credible and pertinent, is followed quickly by strong demonstrative claims of the defendant's guilt or innocence. Litigants often imply that if the jurors only were to listen fairly to the arguments being presented (by themselves), their decision is all but obvious, almost not worth dwelling upon[30]. In Periander's court, on the other hand, it is doubt which moves the process to trial and doubt which impels Periander to confront the accounts to one another and to adjudicate between them. And yet, in spite of Periander's ingeniousness, and in spite of the sailors' confession, this doubt remains fundamentally unresolved by the trial. Even a full confession of their culpability is no sufficient proof of Arion's miraculous account. For this, Periander must rely, like Herodotus, on a report.

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[30] This is especially the case in Antiph. VI and in several of the *Tetralogies*.

In the next section, I will attempt to show that these two central features, seeming resolution of a quasi-legal dispute by ingenious and forensic-sounding *historie* and, secondly, lingering doubt –the one drawing him to the methods of the law-courts, the other drawing him away from its results– characterise Herodotus' own investigation of a similar wonder.

Manufacturing corroboration at Dodona

Located in the far north of the Hellenic world and generally sought for resolution of domestic affairs (Stoneman 2011: 61), the oracle of Dodona hardly features in other accounts of Greek religion. Herodotus' lengthy discussion does find, however, one illustrious literary precedent in Homer, whose account he appears to correct[31]. Apart from this inconsequential polemical point, Herodotus' interest in the oracle seems to be related primarily to the great similarity of Egyptian divination and the oracular practices at Dodona (Hdt. II. 57.3). In characteristic fashion, he explains this overlap in terms of cultural influence and, as Lloyd (1975: 147-149) observes, in a candidly *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fashion. Greek divination, being more recent, must have originated from similar and more ancient Egyptian practices. Herodotus' account on Dodona, then, is related to the larger discussion on comparative religion found in the Egyptian *logos*. The supposedly Greek practice of divination is just another instance of the general historical trend for religious practices to migrate across the Mediterranean Sea from Egypt into Greece. Besides the similarity of the practices that suggested to Herodotus a common source, and which, like Arion's statue, constituted a material proof for this thesis (Fehling 1989: 70), the evidence for Herodotus' account of Dodona's foundation was entirely testimonial in nature. Unlike the Corinthian and the Lesbian sources for Arion's account[32], however, the sources available to Herodotus are separated not only by water. Like Arion and the sailors, they blatantly contradict one another.

The first member of this contradictory pair is the Egyptian priests' account. Herodotus' numerous source-citations referring to this exchange – all marked in a historic case, which stresses the historicity of the exchange– reassure us that Herodotus is reporting what the Egyptian priests had told

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[31] Herodotus emphasizes that the diviners are women, *not* men (cf. *Il.* XVI. 235).
[32] Groten (1963: 79) regards this episode, in view of the way these contradictory sources are handled, as an "ideal example" of Herodotus' method of inquiry.

him (Marincola 1987: 122). As in Arion's account, the source-citations also play an important structural role. Accordingly, the substance of the account may be divided into two main sentences, each one introduced by the verb ἔφασαν[33]. The first describes the basic state of affairs: they said that the priestesses were abducted from Egypt. This is followed by an oblique infinitive clause which refers to the substance of the priests' own learning (πυθέσθαι), namely that the women were sold off separately in Libya and Greece. It is from this statement, therefore, from the priests' most relevant claim, that Herodotus seems most concerned to distance himself. And, moreover, the reason for this distancing, though implicit, is sufficiently clear. As Fehling (1989: 70) notes, Herodotus expresses scepticism when the priests' account moves beyond the shores of Egypt. His scepticism starts, in other words, at that very moment the Egyptians transgress their own local knowledge. The second sentence mirrors this basic structure. Thus, the priests say (ἔφασαν) that their own people conducted a great but unsuccessful "search" and that they later learnt (πυθέσθαι), what had happened to the women. Once again, the sequence of dependent clauses marks out Herodotus' increasing caution. The two parallel statements dependent on ἔφασαν are separated by a prominent genitive absolute which refers to Herodotus' own intervention in the interrogation, εἰρομένου δέ μευ. It is this question that leads the priests to expand on their initial πυθέσθαι. The priests must account, therefore, not only for the women's fate, but for their own precise knowledge and, especially, for every scrap of information that transgresses the Egyptian seaboard. And further, in giving this account, the priests adhere to admirably Herodotean principles. Aside from the priests' express concern with the limitations of their own knowledge, they also appear quite as keen as Herodotus to distinguish between direct and indirect sources of knowledge and to conceive of their knowledge as somehow bound to a geographical place. Thus, they explicitly differentiate searching and finding (ἀνευρεῖν) from inquiry (πυθέσθαι), telling Herodotus that they have learnt (πυθέσθαι) and now know (ἐπιστάμενοι) not by their own search but by means of learning (πυθέσθαι). Fehling (1989: 69) has, not unreasonably, complained that the priests' answer, which they have learnt by learning, is hardly very informative. This, however, may be the whole point of the exchange. The Theban clergy turn out to have no precise knowledge about what took place in the distant lands

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[33] This is similar to the structure observed in Arion's λόγος.

because they must depend, ultimately, on an indirect source of information. Their account, then, trails off into an insecure and repetitious πυθέσθαι.

The explicit concern for the exact limits of a source's knowledge is, of course, by no means unparalleled in the *Histories*. Earlier in the second book, we meet Herodotus interrogating another of his sources as to his supposedly ἀτρεκέως knowledge only to find him wanting (Hdt. II. 28). Yet, such an examination of a witness' claim to know is also specially marked in contemporary forensic speeches. In Antiphon's *First Tetralogy*, to take one example, the mock-defendant examines the knowledge credentials of his opponent's witness and finds that they are not as substantial as they initially appeared (Antiph. II. 2.7)[34]. Conversely, the characterization of one's own witnesses as knowledgeable, συνειδότες, can form the basis for one's own defence (Antiph. VI. 22, 25). Moreover, as in Herodotus, litigants lay special stress on the immediate nature of their witness' knowledge since indirect knowledge –by hearsay or πυθέσθαι– is not only frowned upon, but formally inadmissible (Bonner 1905: 20-23). Herodotus' increasing caution when confronted with his sources' mere πυθέσθαι, therefore, has clear forensic parallels. His reaction also ties Herodotus to Periander's court. Like the Corinthian tyrant, Herodotus' first reaction to the Egyptian account is doubt. And much like Periander, Herodotus' doubt moves him to an active examination of his sources.

Herodotus too, then, is soon confronted by an alternative account for the phenomenon: that of the Greeks. Placed side by side with the Egyptian account just described and sharing a basic structure –it is also framed by two source-citations– the Greek story is remarkably different. Indeed, it offers a literal negation of the previous account. Not only was there no abduction of any women, but there were no women at all! This account, steeped in the religious imagination of its sources, hardly inspires great confidence in its credibility. To be sure, the Egyptian account of women abducted by piratical Phoenicians is not entirely free from legend[35]. Nonetheless, it is free of the manifestly marvellous elements found in the Greek version. Even more remarkable is the apparent lack of any detailed account of the source's knowledge, whether solicited by Herodotus or proffered by the source. Herodotus gives only one clue as to the priestesses' source of knowledge,

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[34] Similar charges are levelled against the slave witness in Antiphon V.
[35] Abduction is the dominant motif of the first legendary tale Herodotus ever tells us (Hdt. I. 1.2).

an internal source-citation, distancing in its effect, positioned at that very point when their local knowledge is surpassed. More conspicuous is the appendix that, in the manner of Hdt. I. 23-24, treats of a proof: the corroboration of other locals who agree with these named priestesses[36]. Fehling (1989: 69) has also drawn attention to the corroboration of other locals, suggesting that Herodotus resorted to this desperate measure because "there was no other place involved other than Dodona". Quite apart from the fact that a fiction-writer may have freely invented any source without so much as blinking, one cannot help but detect a little over-zealousness in the verb συνωμολόγεον, unique in Herodotus' massive text. Could we not, following Luraghi's (2001) footsteps, detect a reference to the social surface of the belief[37], namely the fervency with which the belief is held in Dodona? Moreover, the corroboration of these locals does not seem to have impressed Herodotus much. He soon will flatly deny that anything resembling the literal truth of the Greek could ever have happened.

What, then, one may ask, is the point of this alternative version? The question becomes more urgent if we follow Gould's (1989: 21; cf. Waters 1985: 25) plausible suggestion that Herodotus actually *sought out* this account, as he is occasionally wont to do (e.g. Hdt. II .3)[38]. The forensic methods of the *histor*-kings give us a possible answer. As in Arion's case of attempted murder, we find that Herodotus too resorts to testing one account of kidnap with that of the other interested party. Whether Herodotus actively searched for this second version is not strictly relevant since the text itself enacts this very confrontation. And, like Periander, this test must be understood as an attempt to resolve the divergence of the two accounts. Indeed, the rest of Herodotus' *historie* is an attempt to resolve this contradiction and to reconstruct a coherent account of what actually happened (Pearson 1941: 351; Lloyd 2007: 276). Unsurprisingly, this

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[36] On these named sources, see Gould 1989: 20-22 As with the case of the Saite scribe, however, what is most remarkable is that this identification has absolutely no bearing on Herodotus' inquiry; see Hornblower 2002: 274. See also Luraghi 2001: 159 n. 35.

[37] Herodotus' sources, Luraghi argues, are not historical sources but a descriptor of the social provenance of the information he is reporting.

[38] On such cross-checking, see Schepens 2007: 45, with previous bibliography.

reconstruction[39] leans heavily on the less fantastical Egyptian account[40]. The talking birds are expunged from the narrative by appeal to *a priori* principles and replaced by the abducted women. Even so, additional elements are quietly introduced into the narrative. Thus, an important detail from the Greek version is added: the oracle was set up under an oak tree.[41] The name of the Pelasgian city where the Egyptian slave was sold is also given, Thesprotia, presumably on the grounds that the oracle was important to the Thesprotians (Lloyd 2007: 276). More importantly, the confrontation of the two seemingly contradictory accounts also allows Herodotus to rationalize the more implausible elements of the Greek version. Thus, he conjectures that the women were called doves because the abducted Egyptian woman spoke a barbarian language and explains that the dove's loquaciousness simply means that the woman eventually learnt Greek. Even the bird's black feathers are accounted for; the 'dove' was Egyptian and, therefore, dark-skinned[42]. Herodotus' reconstruction, in other words, does not merely reject the impossible elements of the Greek account, it *corrects* them in light of the inherently more plausible Egyptian version. Appeal to *a priori* assumptions –the possible– allows Herodotus to reject certain fantastical elements, but it is the confrontation of the two versions which allows him to see the Greek account for what it is, a garbled version of the same story. Moreover, this confrontation also helps Herodotus explain one crucial detail, namely how the priestesses of Dodona know of the Libyan 'dove'. The priestess, Herodotus concludes, in accordance with *eikos*, must have told their forebears of her abducted sister. Herodotus, in other words, finally turns to focus on the knowledge-credentials of his second sources. This examination allows him to conclude that the Greeks, though horribly confused, have a

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[39] Herodotus' reconstruction is aided by two important intellectual tools of the late 5th century: appeals to τὸ εἰκὸς and τὸ ἀδύνατον; see Lloyd 1976: 252. In short, Herodotus argues that the Egyptian account conforms to εἰκός and is therefore plausible, while specific details of the Greek account are rejected by an appeal to τὸ ἀδύνατον.

[40] Herodotus generally suppresses or explicitly rejects stories that are overtly fantastical; see Lateiner 1989: 79.

[41] This detail may have been included because of the continued prominence of oak trees in the local cult; see Fehling 1989: 68. Thus, though carefully evaluated testimony is fundamental to Herodotean reconstruction, the historian does help himself to other sorts of evidence.

[42] Hdt. II. 57: "when they say that it was a black dove, they actually mean that the woman was Egyptian."

plausible link to a source of knowledge. What Herodotus' *historie* impels him to judge, then, is that the two accounts, rather than being opposites, are inexorably intertwined.

The confrontation of the two sources, then, does not lead, as it did in Periander's court, to the refutation of one in favour of the other. It leads, rather, to the *rehabilitation* of one account, albeit at the expense of its literal truth. The Greek story, Herodotus concludes, operates on two different levels, that of mythical speaking (λέγειν), and disguised, but entirely rational, indicating (σημαίνειν)[43]. And, crucially, Herodotus concludes that it is only the superficial speech that contradicts the more authoritative Egyptian version of the foundation of Dodona. Indeed, when it is stripped of its mythical elements, the Greek story corroborates the Egyptian account in every detail. The final product of Herodotus' inquiry, then, is a common rationalized account of Dodona's foundations dependent on the testimony of two independent sources which corroborate one another, albeit unknowingly. As in Periander's trial, the confrontation of two contradictory speeches allows for the contradiction to be resolved. The means by which this is achieved, however, is not summary arrest. Unlike the experimenter-kings and tyrants, it is always Herodotus who moves to his sources. Rather, what Herodotus' test relies on, at least in this instance, is upon his ability to penetrate beneath the superficial meaning of an oracular account and see its deeper significance. In Greek, it is his σύνεσις. It is this quality above all others that makes Herodotus the ideal 'judge' in this dispute. It is in light of this test's success at resolving the contradiction, then, and of his own emphatic intervention in its resolution, that we must register the sceptical tone with which Herodotus' solution is presented (Lloyd 1976: 252). Indeed, Herodotus is now emphatic that this reconstruction only represents his opinion (γνώμη), not his unimpeachable knowledge. Not only does he point, repeatedly, to his own beliefs (δοκέειν), he also preserves the original contradictory testimony of the sources *in spite of his solution*. In this, one cannot help but be moved by the observations of Dewald, Lateiner and, in particular, of Darbo-Peschanski about the role of Herodotus' habit of

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[43] Most often, the verb 'indicating', σημαίνειν, seems to be roughly synonymous with 'speaking' or 'declaring', λέγειν. Accordingly, messengers are regularly portrayed engaging in straightforward recounting what happened, or σημαίνειν τὸ γεγενημένον (e.g. Hdt. II. 109). Occasionally, however, a tension develops between λέγειν and σημαίνειν, one exploited to good effect by Heraclitus (DK22 B93).

preserving these contrary accounts[44]. Here, as elsewhere, Herodotus ultimately surrenders his own 'judicial authority' to a final arbiter who is external to the text, namely the reader, one who is being warned of Herodotus' lingering doubts. It is in this, once again, that Herodotus and forensic oratory must completely part ways.

Conclusion

As I hope to have demonstrated, it repays to consider the broadly forensic elements of these archetypical episodes of Herodotean *historie* concerning wonders. Many of the argumentative devices and tropes deployed here can be found also in the contemporary forensic literature. Moreover, as Darbo-Peschanski and others have indicated, the willful confrontation of *logoi* to one another in order to determine their relative credibility cannot but be seen through the lens of a juror. Even more generally, Fehling's two cardinal rules for source citation –the reference only to *interested* sources and the maintenance of party bias– can also be re-interpreted in this light. We need only note that, as Humphreys (1985) has argued, the most common type of witness called to court was also deeply vested in the outcome of the case and was, most commonly, directly involved with one of the litigants (cf. Rubenstein 2005). In this essential fact, the Athenian witness and the Herodotean source are one and the same. On the other hand, Herodotus parts ways with the forensic orators in a number of ways and, especially, in his frank admission of doubt. Indeed, Herodotus' scepticism becomes all the more poignant when we compare it to the typical confidence of litigants found on either side of the debate. These broad parallels and poignant differences, I propose, do not merely reveal Herodotus' sensitivity to forensic issues. They also point to the central place of forensic rhetoric in the 5th-century intellectual climate generally and, more especially, to its profound influence on discussions on the nature, purpose, and forcefulness of evidence[45].

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[44] Connor (1993) finds, in the image of the juror a powerful metaphor for Herodotus' *historie*, and Floyd (1990) has conjectured a possibly etymological link. Lateiner (1989) and Darbo-Peschanski (2013) have also emphasized the importance of these judgments, emphasizing Herodotus' multivocality and the different levels of judgement operative in Herodotus' text.

[45] In the *First Tetralogy* generally attributed to Antiphon, for example, we find a sustained discussion on the relative power of testimonial and circumstantial evidence;

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see Gagarin 2002: 112-118.

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On stranger tides: fictional geography in ancient historiography[*]

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Introduction

This paper questions the convictions behind ancient historiographers' inclusion of real locations in their discussion of Odysseus' wanderings. As early as Herodotus, historiographers traced the various locations of Odysseus' misadventures around the Mediterranean, as a rule of thumb well outside the coastal regions of Asia Minor and Greece itself. A playwright like Euripides joins in when he retrieves the Cyclops' footsteps on the island of Sicily. Various other authors, working in different genres, added to the idea that it may well be, or have been possible to sail after Odysseus, and to visit all the places he visited. And not only in Antiquity, of course. Following the lead of ancient historiographers, geographers, and playwrights, modern scholarship and tourism equally sail the Mediterranean Sea tracing the hero's route. I do not object to the consequences of such a conviction –sailing the Mediterranean is on my Bucket list too– but, in this contribution, I will spoil this attractive prospect, and argue that the Homeric epic itself provides sufficient clues to prevent interpreters from following in the ancient historiographers' misguided footsteps.

Convinced historians and playwrights

In ancient literature and scholarship, the notion that Odysseus' wanderings, as described by the *Odyssey*'s titular hero in books IX-XII, may be traced in the real world is old and persistent[1]. In historiographic sources from antiquity, among the main contributors to the notion of the Mediterranean as

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[1] Commonly, the locations of the *Apologue* are found in the western part of the Mediterranean; see Haller 2011; Romm 2011. Modern scholarship, following Crates of Mallus, has been open to the possibility that Odysseus ventured out on the Atlantic (Schoder 1987); Mullen (2013) defends the farfetched thesis that Odysseus sailed around the Northkapp all the way to the Russian White Sea (cf. Vinci 2006: 284). Odysseus' wanderings have been studied as representing the voyages of the early

Odysseus' wandering universe are Herodotus, Thucydides, and Strabo. Not only historiographers contributed to the notion of a real world for Odysseus' travels, though. Euripides' satyrplay *Cyclops* first mentions Sicily as the land of the Cyclops[2]: staying remarkably close to the Odyssey's account in the details (O'Sullivan 2016; Shaw 2020), he has Silenus and his company land there to be taken prisoner by the one-eyed giant[3]:

ἤδη δὲ Μαλέας πλησίον πεπλευκότας
ἀπηλιώτης ἄνεμος ἐμπνεύσας δορὶ
ἐξέβαλεν ἡμᾶς τήνδ᾽ ἐς Αἰτναίαν πέτραν,
ἵν᾽ οἱ μονῶπες ποντίου παῖδες θεοῦ
Κύκλωπες οἰκοῦσ᾽ ἄντρ᾽ ἔρημ᾽ ἀνδροκτόνοι.
τούτων ἑνὸς ληφθέντες ἐσμὲν ἐν δόμοις
δοῦλοι: καλοῦσι δ᾽ αὐτὸν ᾧ λατρεύομεν
Πολύφημον: ἀντὶ δ᾽ εὐίων βακχευμάτων
ποίμνας Κύκλωπος ἀνοσίου ποιμαίνομεν.

"And as we were busy rounding Cape Malea, a wind from the east blew down on the ship, and cast us to land near this mountain here, Aetna, where the sea god's one-eyed sons, the man-slaying Cyclopes, dwell in their remote caves. One of these caught us and now we are slaves in his house: they call the master we serve Polyphemus. And instead of our bacchic revels we now herd the flocks of this godless Cyclops." (E. *Cyc*. 18-26)

Greek colonists in Dougherty 1999: 314-315; West 2005; Rinon 2007; Lane Fox 2009: 165-184, who also presents a recent overview of scholarly views that deny historical or geographical accurateness in Odyssean geography. A recent account of a voyage in Odysseus' footsteps is found in Huler 2008 and Geisthövel 2010.

[2] Dougherty 1999: 327-331; Wright 2006: 25-26, who argues against the 'early twentieth-century tendency to interpret Euripides by unearthing parallels to contemporary events, as if the plays were veiled political commentaries, […] now generally thought to be unreliable', thus renouncing a direct link with the Athenians' Sicilian expedition; cf. Syropoulos 2018: 15 n. 40.

[3] Primary texts from which quotations have been taken are listed in the bibliography (Monro / Allen 1963; Stuart-Jones / Powell 1963; Kovacs 2001; Radt 2002-2005; Wilson 2015). Translations are by the author, unless otherwise indicated.

Thucydides accepts the reality of cyclopes as the islands original inhabitants, and ties them in with the history of the island's occupancy[4]:

Σικελίας γὰρ περίπλους μέν ἐστιν ὁλκάδι οὐ πολλῷ τινὶ ἔλασσον ἢ ὀκτὼ ἡμερῶν, καὶ τοσαύτη οὖσα ἐν εἰκοσισταδίῳ μάλιστα μέτρῳ τῆς θαλάσσης διείργεται τὸ μὴ ἤπειρος εἶναι: ᾠκίσθη δὲ ὧδε τὸ ἀρχαῖον, καὶ τοσάδε ἔθνη ἔσχε τὰ ξύμπαντα. παλαίτατοι μὲν λέγονται ἐν μέρει τινὶ τῆς χώρας Κύκλωπες καὶ Λαιστρυγόνες οἰκῆσαι, ὧν ἐγὼ οὔτε γένος ἔχω εἰπεῖν οὔτε ὁπόθεν ἐσῆλθον ἢ ὅποι ἀπεχώρησαν: ἀρκείτω δὲ ὡς ποιηταῖς τε εἴρηται καὶ ὡς ἕκαστός πη γιγνώσκει περὶ αὐτῶν.

"For the voyage round Sicily in a merchantman is not far short of eight days; though the island is that large, only two miles of sea prevent it from being mainland. It was settled originally as follows, and all these peoples occupied it: They say that the earliest inhabitants in any part of the country were Cyclopes and Laestrygonians. I cannot tell of what race they were, or where they came from or went to: it must suffice what is narrated by the poets and what everyone generally knows about them." (Th. VI. 1.2-2.1)

In this same passage, Thucydides identifies Sicily as the land of the Laestrygonians. Elsewhere, he is the first to localize Aeolia (modern-day Lipara), the island of the wind god, and Scheria (Corcyra, modern-day Corfu) in the real world[5]:

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[4] Mackie 1996; Bonnet 2009, who argues that Thucydides' testimony stages a 'colonial memory' which depicts the early times of Phoenician presence in Sicily and propounds a hierarchized model of cohabitation within which the Greeks appear as the natural outcome of the colonizing process.

[5] For an overview of all the locations of Odysseus' *Apologue*, and their localisations in antiquity and later scholarship, see 'The Wake of Odysseus' project (http://wakeofodysseus.com/; accessed on March 19th 2021) under the direction of J. S. Burgess, who clearly states that his website 'does not assume that there was a "real" journey of Odysseus, or even a historical Odysseus. Localization of the wanderings deserves attention because 1) the Homeric journey probably, at some level, responds to Greek exploration and colonization in the western Mediterranean; 2) ancient Greek and Roman authors localized the journey variously; 3) peoples of ancient Sicily and Italy often initiated or accepted localization the journey in their lands, motivated by issues of genealogy and cultural authenticity; 4) the recreation of a preceding journey (cf. Aeneid/Odyssey) is a trope of modern travel writing.' The final destination of Odysseus' wanderings, Ithaca, is presented by the poet as traceable in the real world, though ancient and modern scholars are not in unison on its exact identification, cf. Heubeck / Hoekstra 1989: 13-14.

καὶ οἱ μὲν ἐν Σικελίᾳ Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ Ῥηγῖνοι τοῦ αὐτοῦ χειμῶνος τριάκοντα ναυσὶ στρατεύουσιν ἐπὶ τὰς Αἰόλου νήσους καλουμένας· θέρους γὰρ δι᾽ ἀνυδρίαν ἀδύνατα ἦν ἐπιστρατεύειν. νέμονται δὲ Λιπαραῖοι αὐτάς, Κνιδίων ἄποικοι ὄντες. οἰκοῦσι δ᾽ ἐν μιᾷ τῶν νήσων οὐ μεγάλῃ, καλεῖται δὲ Λιπάρα· τὰς δὲ ἄλλας ἐκ ταύτης ὁρμώμενοι γεωργοῦσι, Διδύμην καὶ Στρογγύλην καὶ Ἱεράν.

"That same winter, the Athenians in Sicily and the Rhegians made an expedition against the so-called islands of Aeolus with thirty ships; it was impossible to invade them in summer, owing to the want of water. The Liparians, being Cnidian colonists, occupy these islands: they dwell in one of them, called Lipara, a rather small island. From this as their headquarters they cultivate the other islands: Didyme, Strongyle, and Hiera." (Th. III. 88.1-2)

οὔτε γὰρ ἐν πανηγύρεσι ταῖς κοιναῖς διδόντες γέρα τὰ νομιζόμενα οὔτε Κορινθίῳ ἀνδρὶ προκαταρχόμενοι τῶν ἱερῶν ὥσπερ αἱ ἄλλαι ἀποικίαι, περιφρονοῦντες δὲ αὐτοὺς καὶ χρημάτων δυνάμει ὄντες κατ᾽ ἐκεῖνον τὸν χρόνον ὁμοῖα τοῖς Ἑλλήνων πλουσιωτάτοις καὶ τῇ ἐς πόλεμον παρασκευῇ δυνατώτεροι, ναυτικῷ δὲ καὶ πολὺ προύχειν ἔστιν ὅτε ἐπαιρόμενοι καὶ κατὰ τὴν Φαιάκων προενοίκησιν τῆς Κερκύρας κλέος ἐχόντων τὰ περὶ τὰς ναῦς - ᾗ καὶ μᾶλλον ἐξηρτύοντο τὸ ναυτικὸν καὶ ἦσαν οὐκ ἀδύνατοι· τριήρεις γὰρ εἴκοσι καὶ ἑκατὸν ὑπῆρχον αὐτοῖς ὅτε ἤρχοντο πολεμεῖν.

"[The inhabitants of Corcyra] did not meet with the usual honors accorded to the parent city at public assemblies, nor did they allow a Corinthian man precedence at sacrifices, as did the other colonies. They rather treated them with contempt as they were equal at that time to even the richest communities in Greece in point of wealth, and the most powerful with regard to military strength. Especially Corcyra's naval position gave the inhabitants reason to feel proud, as they brought forward that even during the island's earliest occupancy the Phaeacians were renown for everything to do with ships – that was why they lavished more care on their fleet, and why they were so efficient; indeed there were a hundred and twenty galleys at their disposal when they began the war." (Th. I. 25.4).

The Lotus-eaters were first localized in Libya by Thucydides' predecessor, Herodotus:

ἀκτὴν δὲ προέχουσαν ἐς τὸν πόντον τούτων τῶν Γινδάνων νέμονται Λωτοφάγοι, οἳ τὸν καρπὸν μοῦνον τοῦ λωτοῦ τρώγοντες ζώουσι. ὁ δὲ τοῦ λωτοῦ καρπός ἐστι μέγαθος ὅσον τε τῆς σχίνου, γλυκύτητα δὲ τοῦ φοίνικος τῷ καρπῷ προσείκελος. ποιεῦνται δὲ ἐκ τοῦ καρποῦ τούτου οἱ Λωτοφάγοι καὶ οἶνον.

"On a headland jutting out into the sea from the land of these Gindanes live the Lotus Eaters, who stay alive by eating only the fruit of the lotus. The lotus fruit is the size of a mastic-berry, and its sweet taste makes it resemble the fruit of a date-palm. The Lotus-Eaters also make wine of this fruit." (Hdt. IV. 177.1)

1st-century Strabo draws up a concise Odyssean geography from elder sources. He peppers his compilation with critical comments on the Homeric description of the real world[6]:

τοιαῦτα μὲν οὖν οὐ κακῶς ἄν τις διαποροίη περὶ τῶν κειμένων παρὰ τῷ ποιητῇ περί τε Μυσῶν καὶ ἀγαυῶν ἱππημολγῶν· ἃ δ᾽ Ἀπολλόδωρος ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ περὶ νεῶν προοιμιαζόμενος εἴρηκεν ἥκιστα λέγοιτ᾽ ἄν. ἐπαινεῖ γὰρ Ἐρατοσθένους ἀπόφασιν, ὅτι φησὶν ἐκεῖνος καὶ Ὅμηρον καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους τοὺς παλαιοὺς τὰ μὲν Ἑλληνικὰ εἰδέναι τῶν δὲ πόρρω πολλὴν ἔχειν ἀπειρίαν, ἀπείρους μὲν μακρῶν ὁδῶν ὄντας ἀπείρους δὲ τοῦ ναυτίλλεσθαι. συνηγορῶν δὲ τούτοις Ὅμηρόν φησι τὴν μὲν Αὐλίδα καλεῖν πετρήεσσαν, ὥσπερ καὶ ἔστι, πολύκνημον δὲ τὸν Ἐτεωνόν, πολυτρήρωνα δὲ τὴν Θίσβην, ποιήεντα δὲ τὸν Ἁλίαρτον· τὰ δ᾽ ἄπωθεν οὔτ᾽ αὐτὸν εἰδέναι οὔτε τοὺς ἄλλους. ποταμῶν γοῦν περὶ τετταράκοντα ῥεόντων εἰς τὸν Πόντον μηδὲ τῶν ἐνδοξοτάτων μηδενὸς μεμνῆσθαι, οἷον Ἴστρου Τανάιδος Βορυσθένους Ὑπάνιος Φάσιδος Θερμώδοντος Ἅλυος· ἔτι δὲ Σκυθῶν μὲν μὴ μεμνῆσθαι, πλάττειν δὲ ἀγαυούς τινας ἱππημολγοὺς καὶ γαλακτοφάγους ἀβίους τε, Παφλαγόνας τε τοὺς ἐν τῇ μεσογαίᾳ ἱστορηκέναι παρὰ τῶν πεζῇ τοῖς τόποις πλησιασάντων, τὴν παραλίαν δὲ ἀγνοεῖν· καὶ εἰκότως γε. ἄπλουν γὰρ εἶναι τότε τὴν θάλατταν ταύτην καὶ καλεῖσθαι Ἄξενον διὰ τὸ δυσχείμερον καὶ τὴν ἀγριότητα τῶν περιοικούντων ἐθνῶν καὶ μάλιστα τῶν Σκυθικῶν, ξενοθυτούντων καὶ σαρκοφαγούντων καὶ τοῖς κρανίοις ἐκπώμασι χρωμένων· ὕστερον δ᾽ Εὔξεινον κεκλῆσθαι τῶν Ἰώνων ἐν τῇ παραλίᾳ πόλεις κτισάντων· ὁμοίως δ᾽ ἀγνοεῖν καὶ τὰ περὶ Αἴγυπτον καὶ

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[6] Cf. Strabo's claim (I. 1.2) that Homer was 'the inventor of the science of geography'; see Duffy 2013: 38-39.

Λιβύην, οἷον τὰς ἀναβάσεις τοῦ Νείλου καὶ προσχώσεις τοῦ πελάγους, ὧν οὐδαμοῦ μεμνῆσθαι, οὐδὲ τοῦ ἰσθμοῦ τοῦ μεταξὺ τῆς Ἐρυθρᾶς καὶ τῆς Αἰγυπτίας θαλάττης, οὐδὲ τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἀραβίαν καὶ Αἰθιοπίαν καὶ τὸν ὠκεανόν, εἰ μὴ Ζήνωνι τῷ φιλοσόφῳ προσεκτέον γράφοντι "Αἰθίοπάς θ᾽ ἱκόμην καὶ Σιδονίους Ἄραβάς τε." οὐ θαυμαστὸν δ᾽ εἶναι περὶ Ὁμήρου· καὶ γὰρ τοὺς ἔτι νεωτέρους ἐκείνου πολλὰ ἀγνοεῖν καὶ τερατολογεῖν, Ἡσίοδον μὲν Ἡμίκυνας λέγοντα καὶ Μεγαλοκεφάλους καὶ Πυγμαίους, Ἀλκμᾶνα δὲ Στεγανόποδας, Αἰσχύλον δὲ κυνοκεφάλους καὶ στερνοφθάλμους καὶ μονομμάτους καὶ ἄλλα μυρία. ἀπὸ δὲ τούτων ἐπὶ τοὺς συγγραφέας βαδίζει Ῥιπαῖα ὄρη λέγοντας καὶ τὸ Ὠγύιον ὄρος καὶ τὴν τῶν Γοργόνων καὶ Ἑσπερίδων κατοικίαν, καὶ τὴν παρὰ Θεοπόμπῳ Μεροπίδα γῆν, παρ᾽ Ἑκαταίῳ δὲ Κιμμερίδα πόλιν, παρ᾽ Εὐημέρῳ δὲ τὴν Παγχαῖαν γῆν, παρ᾽ Ἀριστοτέλει δὲ ποταμίους λίθους ἐξ ἄμμου ... ἐκ δὲ τῶν ὄμβρων τήκεσθαι, ἐν δὲ τῇ Λιβύῃ Διονύσου πόλιν εἶναι, ταύτην δ᾽ οὐκ ἐνδέχεσθαι δὶς τὸν αὐτὸν ἐξευρεῖν. ἐπιτιμᾷ δὲ καὶ τοῖς περὶ Σικελίαν τὴν πλάνην λέγουσι καθ᾽ Ὅμηρον τὴν Ὀδυσσέως· εἰ γὰρ αὖ χρῆναι τὴν μὲν πλάνην ἐκεῖ γεγονέναι φάσκειν, τὸν δὲ ποιητὴν ἐξωκεανικέναι μυθολογίας χάριν. καὶ τοῖς μὲν ἄλλοις συγγνώμην εἶναι, Καλλιμάχῳ δὲ μὴ πάνυ μεταποιουμένῳ γε γραμματικῆς, ὃς τὴν μὲν Γαῦδον Καλυψοῦς νῆσόν φησι, τὴν δὲ Κόρκυραν Σχερίαν. ἄλλους δ᾽ αἰτιᾶται ψεύσασθαι περὶ Γερήνων καὶ τοῦ Ἀκακησίου καὶ Δήμου ἐν Ἰθάκῃ, Πελεθρονίου δ᾽ ἐν Πηλίῳ, Γλαυκωπίου δ᾽ ἐν Ἀθήναις. τούτοις δὲ μικρά τινα προσθεὶς τοιαῦτα παύεται, τὰ πλεῖστα μετενέγκας παρὰ τοῦ Ἐρατοσθένους, ὡς καὶ πρότερον ἐμνήσθημεν, οὐκ εὖ εἰρημένα. τὸ μὲν γὰρ τοὺς ὕστερον ἐμπειροτέρους γεγονέναι τῶν πάλαι περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα καὶ Ἐρατοσθένει καὶ τούτῳ δοτέον· τὸ δ᾽ οὕτω πέρα τοῦ μετρίου προάγειν καὶ μάλιστα ἐφ᾽ Ὁμήρου, δοκεῖ μοι κἂν ἐπιπλῆξαί τις δικαίως καὶ τοὐναντίον εἰπεῖν, ὡς περὶ ὧν ἀγνοοῦσιν αὐτοί, περὶ τούτων τῷ ποιητῇ προφέρουσι.

"Any one may well entertain such questions as these touching the localities mentioned by the poet [Homer], and with regard to the Mysians and the illustrious Hippemolgi: but what Apollodorus has advanced in his preface to the Catalogue of Ships in the Second Book [of the Iliad] is by no means to be adopted. For he praises the opinions of Eratosthenes, who says that Homer and the rest of the ancients were well versed in everything that related to Greece, but

were in a state of considerable ignorance as to places at a distance, in consequence of the impossibility of their making long journeys by land or voyages by sea. In support of this he asserts, that Homer designated Aulis as 'rocky,' as indeed it is; Eteonus as 'mountainous and woody,' Thisbe as 'abounding in doves,' Haliartus as 'grassy;' but that neither Homer nor the others were familiar with localities far off; for although there are forty rivers which discharge themselves into the Black Sea, he makes no mention whatever even of the most considerable, as the Danube, the Don, the Dnieper, the Bog, the Phasz, the Termeh, the Kisil-Irmak, nor does he even allude to the Scythians, but makes up fables about certain illustrious Hippemolgi, Galactophagi, and Abii. He had become acquainted with the Paphlagonians of the interior from the relations of such as had penetrated into those regions on foot, but he was perfectly unacquainted with the sea-coasts of the country; which indeed was likely enough, for that sea was in his time closed to navigation, and known by the name of Pontus Axenus [or the Inhospitable] on account of the severity of the storms to which it was subject, as well as of the savage disposition of the nations who inhabited its shores, but more especially of the Scythian hordes, who made a practice of sacrificing strangers, devouring their flesh, and using their skulls for drinking-cups; although at a subsequent period, when the Ionians had established cities along its shores, it was called by the name of Pontus Euxinus [or the Hospitable]. He was likewise in ignorance as to the natural peculiarities of Egypt and Libya, as the risings of the Nile, and the alluvial deposits, which he nowhere notices, nor yet the isthmus [of Suez] which separates the Red Sea from the Egyptian Sea; nor yet does he relate any particulars of Arabia, Ethiopia, or the Ocean, unless we should agree with the philosopher Zeno in altering the Homeric line as follows, "'I came to the Ethiopians, the Sidonians, and the Arabians.'" Indeed we ought not to be surprised at meeting with this in Homer, for those who have lived at a more recent period than he did, have been ignorant of many things, and have told strange tales. Hesiod has talked about *Hemicynes, Megalocephali,* and *Pygmies;* Alcman of *Steganopodes;* Æschylus of *Cynocephali, Sternophthalmi,* and *Monommati,* (they say it is in his *Prometheus,*) and ten thousand other absurdities. From these he proceeds to censure the writers who talk of the Riphæan Mountains and Mount Ogyium, and the dwelling of the

Gorgons and the Hesperides, the land of Meropis mentioned by Theopompus, Cimmeris, a city mentioned in Hecatæus, the land of Panchæa mentioned by Euhemerus, and the river-stones formed of sand mentioned by Aristotle, which were dissolved by rain-showers. Further, that there exists in Africa a city of Bacchus which no one can find twice. Zeno likewise reproves those who assert that the wanderings of Ulysses mentioned in Homer were in the neighbourhood of Sicily, for again, if we should say that the wanderings did take place in those parts, we should have to confess that the poet transferred them to the ocean for the sake of making his account the more romantic. Some allowance might be made for others, but no manner of excuse can be put forward for Callimachus, who pretends to the character of a critic, and yet supposes that Gaudus (Gozo, near Malta) was the island of Calypso, and identifies Scheria with Corcyra. Other writers he blames for misstatements as to Gerena, Acacesium, and the Demus in Ithaca, Pelethronium in Pelium, and the Glaucopium at Athens. With these and a few similar trifling observations, most of which he has drawn from Eratosthenes, whose inaccuracy we have before shown, he breaks off. However, we frankly acknowledge, both with respect to him [Apollodorus] and Eratosthenes, that the moderns are better informed on geography than the ancients: but to strain the subject beyond measure, as they do, especially when they inculpate Homer, seems to me as if it gave a fair occasion to anyone to find fault, and to say by way of recrimination, that they reproach the poet for the very things of which they themselves are ignorant." (Str. VII. 3.6; translation by Hamilton / Falconer 1903)

After some general remarks on Homer's geographical accuracy when speaking about Greek territory (following Apollodorus' introduction to Iliad 2), and his inaccuracy with regard to more distant lands and waters, Strabo moves on to the equally 'fantastic' in poetic accounts of 'geography' by Hesiod, Alcman, and Aeschylus: Zeno rightly criticizes more recent other authors for being as ignorant as Homer appears to be (Kim 2011: 51; Duffy 2013: 39). For that reason he again falls in with Zeno when the latter criticizes those who look for Homeric locations around Sicily: they may well be right, but have to confess that Homer's inaccurate description of 'Sicily' indicates that epic dislocates the Odyssean events 'to the ocean' (τὸν δὲ

ποιητὴν ἐξωκεανικέναι) for poetic purposes[7]. Strabo also disapprovingly cites Callimachus, who is the first attested to identify Ogygia as Gozo (and Scheria as Corcyra/Corfu).

In as far as ancient sources agree on the traceability of Odysseus' route after failing to successfully round Cape Malea, many episodes of the *Apologue* have been localized on the island of Sicily[8]. Drawings of Odysseus' route from Troy to Ithaca, based on the observations from antiquity, therefore usually center on the island[9]. Eratosthenes' well-known warning that

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[7] Kim 2007: 374-385 extends the debate with Eratosthenes beyond 'an isolated argument about the purpose of poetry' to encompass a 'new portrait of Homer' including his 'didactic concerns' (364): 'in the section immediately following the outline of the ideal geographer, Strabo begins an extensive critique of his predecessors, from Eratosthenes to Posidonius, that stretches from 1.2 to 2.4. The first item of business, however, is a long and detailed defense of Homer from Eratosthenes' contention that "poets aim at entertainment not instruction"' (376). Kim concludes that 'Strabo not only insists that Homer was correct, but that he *wanted* to be correct, not only that he was content to hear about things, but that he had made an effort to verify such information and to pass it on his audience. Such a conception of Homer lies at the heart of Strabo's deployment of Homeric poetry as evidence throughout the rest of the *Geography* and suggests an attitude very different from that of other ancient Homeric exegetes, who posit Homer's words as a priori authoritative or "scriptural," whether in moral, scientific, or other terms' (385).

[8] As in Thucidydes' 'Sicilian narrative' (cf. Frangoulidis 1993) and Petronius' *Cena Trimalchionis* (Mordine 2013), cf. Schroder 1987: 321-322. Until the first reports by travellers in Hellenistic times, of all currents and tides, including their origins, those around Sicily (especially the strait of Messina) were best known in antiquity; cf. Cartwright 2001: 108-109.

[9] Despite Ogygia being the 'navel' (H. *Od.* I. 50) of the sea and the plot of the *Odyssey* (cf. McGrath 2019). The first map of Odysseus' travels may have been drawn on the indications by Claudius Ptolemy, who included longitude and latitude for some of the places in the *Odyssey* in his own *Geographia* (though his calculation of longitude begins at a different zero degree than ours, and he used an incorrect circumference of the earth that distorted his projections and produced longitudinal distances generally one and a half times greater than they should be). In 1597 the cartographer Abraham Ortelius became the first person to draw a map of Odysseus' travels. A map like Gladstone's (1858) reconstructs the route on a map representing Hecataeus' presumed symmetric earth rather than 'upon the basis of the actual distribution of the earth's surface' (E. Della Zazzerra on https://www.laphamsquarterly.org/roundtable/geography-odyssey; accessed on March 19th 2021). Examples of modern maps having Odysseus circle Sicily on http://www.classics.upenn.edu/myth/php/homer/index.php?page=odymap, https:// odys seus tracks. Word press. com/

'you will find the scene of the wanderings of Odysseus when you find the cobbler who sewed up the bag of the winds' is not the only reason to be hesitant when tracing Odysseus' footsteps in the world of his wanderings: there are more grounds to not fall in with ancient historiographers' willingness to identify the locations of the *Apologue*'s episodes with familiar islands, sea straits, and harbours.[10] I draw my main argument to consider Odysseus' storyworld as fictional from the reasons Odysseus, as a secondary narrator, has to shape his autobiography, and the locations evoked in it, the way that he did: to erase his own past ten years and make his whereabouts irretraceable (Ryan 2019; Blankenborg 2020b).

In Odysseus' unlikely footsteps

In the *Odyssey*, we see Odysseus operating in four different locations: Ogygia, where he is kept prisoner by Calypso until she releases him on the order of Zeus (*Od.* I. 11-25, V. 55-268), Scheria, the island of the Phaeacians, where he delivers his *Apologue* (*Od.* V. 441-XIII. 77), Ithaca (*Od*. XIII. 113-XIV. 533, XV. 301-494, XVI. 1-XXIV. 549), and the sea, where Poseidon vexes him and his Phaeacian companions (*Od.* V. 269-440, XIII. 78-112; see McGrath 2019). In between, Homer describes various (other) places: Mount Olympus, where the gods gather in assembly (*Od.* I. 26-105, V. 1-54), Ithaca, as home to Telemachus and Penelope (*Od*. I. 106-II. 419, IV. 625-847, XV. 553-557), and Pylus (*Od*. III. 1-497, XV. 193-291), Sparta (*Od.* IV. 1-624, XV. 1-192), and the sea (*Od*. II. 420-434, XV. 292-300, 495-552), as the territory covered by the *Telemachy*. Many other locations are evoked or memorized, both by the poet and his secondary narrators: Troy, the ports of call between Ismarus, Lesbus and Cape Malea, Egypt, Phoenicia, Crete, Thesprotia, Dodona, Zacynthus. Due to these clues, the route home followed by Agamemnon, Nestor, and even Menelaus and Helen may be traced (Cerveney 1993; Sammons 2014). In his 'Cretan lying tales', Odysseus can be equally be traced on the map (Haft 1984; Reece 1994).

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map/; accessed on March 19th 2021; and https://www.businessinsider.com/an-interactive-map-of-homers-odyssey-2013-12?international=true&r=US&IR=T; accessed on March 19th 2021.

[10] Identification is regularly on the basis of vague analogies, cf. Polybius' comparison of Sicilian dolphins', dogfish's, and swordfish's tunnies-hunting techniques with the predatory moves by Scylla (Plb. XXXIV. 2 on *Od.* XII. 95).

In telling his autobiographical story to the Phaeacians on Scheria, however, Odysseus is notoriously vague on the precise whereabouts of his misadventures[11], despite the 'mapping of monsters and nymphs', already popular in antiquity (cf. Th. I. 25.4, III. 88, VI. 2.1; Hdt. IV. 177; Str. I. 3.6, cited above). Both with regard to the way he frames his tales using the sea as a narratological device (Beaulieu 2016: 59-89; Blankenborg 2020b), as to the description he offers of creatures and landscapes, Odysseus deliberately caters his credulous Scherian audience (Hopman 2012; Blankenborg 2019). He starts his account from a well-known city that he recently helped to destroy (cf. *Od.* I. 2):

εἰ δ' ἄγε τοι καὶ νόστον ἐμὸν πολυκηδέ' ἐνίσπω,

ὅν μοι Ζεὺς ἐφέηκεν ἀπὸ Τροίηθεν ἰόντι

"Well then, I will narrate you my troublesome return journey, as Zeus bestowed upon me when I left Troy behind" (H. *Od.* IX. 37-38).

His first stop, presumably after having sailed or rowed for the remainder of the day, keeps him in the vicinity of Troy: Odysseus decides to raid the local inhabitants' city, the Cicones (*Od.* IX. 39-59), but the attack on the city by Odysseus and his men backfires: despite Odysseus' warning to flee, his comrades stay on the beach and drink, only to be surprised by the returning Cicones and their allies[12]. Having sustained severe losses (six men per ship) in Ismarus, Odysseus and his crew continue their journey to the south, in an attempt to reach Ithaca by rounding the Peloponnese[13]. A storm grounds them for two days (*Od.* IX. 67-75). Then, upon rounding Cape Malea (*Od.* IX. 80-81), another storm wind from the north blows Odysseus and his men into

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[11] A 'landscape completely emerging from myth' (Reinhardt 1996: 81; cf. Tally 2019: 78-82). On the irrelevance of the *Apologue*-story to the Odyssey's plot as initiated by Athena, see McGrath 2019: 87-104. Robbins (2018: 49-50) compares Odysseus' role as narrator with a recurring narratological pattern in which first-person (especially plural) narration 'transfers the excitement and anxiety of a sea voyage in the most vivid narrative technique available to the pen.'

[12] Identified as an instance of *hybris* that characterizes Odysseus 'the sacker of cities' elsewhere (e.g. *Od.* IX.504) by Friedrich 1991: 27-28. (Gaca 2014: 308 n. 21) identifies the 'inland male' Cicones' allies as members of a 'defense coalition' that was 'regionally on call to come to the rescue in the event of a martial ravaging inroad'. Cf. the two poems on the confrontation with the Cicones in the cycle by Cooperman 2012.

[13] Having sailed west first, as did Agamemnon, who arrived at Cape Malea well before Odysseus (Cerveney 1993). Menelaus and Nestor sailed south first to Lesbus in an attempt to cross the Aegean Sea through 'island-hopping' westward.

unknown territory. As the wind continues to drive them forward, past Cythera, it is tempting to assume that they end up in North-Africa[14]. The distance to be covered, however, would not take 'nine days and nights' (ἔνθεν δ' ἐννῆμαρ φερόμην ὀλοοῖς ἀνέμοισιν, *Od.* IX. 82) at the mercy of a raging storm: Odysseus is driven beyond what is comprehensible by winds from varying directions. The description of the journey itself, many days and nights in a row, makes the unknown waters terrifying: Mycenaean and archaic Greek seafarers are used to sailing routes with sufficient, practically day-by-day reachable, harbours (Mauro 2019: 22-24). Odysseus is rather –I presume, given the duration of the storm-driven journey– blown towards the west for nine nights and days, without spotting an island before he and his crew reach the Lotus-Eaters (*Od.* IX. 82-84)[15]. After having their diner, Odysseus sends three of his men to explore the vicinity[16], and to look for human habitation. The locals turn out to be feeding on some exotic drug-like substance that makes them tolerant but forgetful: having eaten from it, Odysseus' men only want to stay with the Lotus-Eaters. He has to bring them back to the ship forcefully and tie them to the rowing benches; the others are to avoid the lotus and row the ship away from the harbour[17].

From the Lotus-Eaters it appears to be only a short voyage to the land of the cyclopes: it took less than a day. Odysseus' description of the land (*Od.* IX. 106-115), and of Goat Island (*Od.* IX. 116-141), is favourable and with the keen eye of a colonist (Reinhardt 1996: 78; Rinon 2007: 108-110; Lane Fox 2009: 73-88). Arriving there, however, is a frightening experience, even for the experienced sailor:

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[14] The Lotus-Eaters are located near modern Djerba (Hdt. I. 177; Ps.-Scyl. 110.1.4).

[15] A papyrus fragment (P.Mich.inv.1591 = *P.Mich.* XVIII 760) from the papyrus collection of the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, possibly the work of the 2nd-century BC historian Polybius, giving distance figures between places and references to episodes of the *Odyssey*, appears to contribute to the calculation of distances in order to determine which episodes of the *Odyssey* were 'true'; the *periplus* of Sicily is set at eight days, with a stop every night; cf. Williams 2002.

[16] *Od.* IX. 90 (ἄνδρε δύω κρίνας, τρίτατον κήρυχ' ἅμ' ὀπάσσας) suggests that Odysseus expected his men to encounter civilised beings, as he sends a herald, or rather an 'interpreter', with the two scouts.

[17] Despite the land of the Lotus-Eaters being a 'fantasy of apathy' (McMahon 2016: 5, who considers the Lotus-Eaters 'islanders'); later in his *Apologue*, Odysseus will admit to have surrendered to the lure of apathy (with Circe), and eventuality to have been forced to succumb to it (with Calypso).

ἔνθα κατεπλέομεν, καί τις θεὸς ἡγεμόνευεν

νύκτα δι' ὀρφναίην, οὐδὲ προυφαίνετ' ἰδέσθαι:

ἀὴρ γὰρ περὶ νηυσὶ βαθεῖ' ἦν, οὐδὲ σελήνη

οὐρανόθεν προύφαινε, κατείχετο δὲ νεφέεσσιν.

ἔνθ' οὔ τις τὴν νῆσον ἐσέδρακεν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν,

οὔτ' οὖν κύματα μακρὰ κυλινδόμενα προτὶ χέρσον

εἰσίδομεν, πρὶν νῆας ἐυσσέλμους ἐπικέλσαι.

"There we floated, and some demon guided us through the pitch-black night, and nothing showed itself to the eye. For the fog around ships was thick, and no moon was visible in the sky, as it was covered in clouds. No one could see the island with their own eyes, nor did we distinguish the great waves breaking on the beach before our well-built ships ran ashore." (H. *Od.* IX. 142-148)

The sea is covered with a thick fog that makes land and harbour virtually invisible. There is no light from the moon. The next day, however, Goat Island proves to be an excellent stop-over for sailors, and the crew entertains itself with food and drink until the evening. Building upon the experience with the Lotus-Eaters, Odysseus is confident he will find human beings on the nearby mainland, but he does not send scouts out again:

ἄλλοι μὲν νῦν μίμνετ', ἐμοὶ ἐρίηρες ἑταῖροι:

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ σὺν νηί τ' ἐμῇ καὶ ἐμοῖς ἑτάροισιν

ἐλθὼν τῶνδ' ἀνδρῶν πειρήσομαι, οἵ τινές εἰσιν,

ἤ ῥ' οἵ γ' ὑβρισταί τε καὶ ἄγριοι οὐδὲ δίκαιοι,

ἦε φιλόξεινοι, καί σφιν νόος ἐστὶ θεουδής

"The rest of you stay here, my loyal companions: I will go there with my ship and my staff, and I will probe these men: who they are, whether they are prone to violence, uncivilised and unjust, or that they welcome strangers, and their mind is god-fearing" (H. *Od.* IX. 172-176)

What follows is death and ruin[18], and a narrow escape from what seemed a colonist's utopia[19]. The subsequent arrival on the island of the wind god –no specific traveling time is mentioned, but the sailors do not halfway go ashore, nor sail through the night, so I would say: no more than a day– seems to be more felicitous (*Od.* X. 1-14). After the exciting and horrifying adventure in the cave of the cyclops Polyphemus, Odysseus and his men have reached a peaceful island whose inhabitant, the wind god Aeolus, sends a favourable wind, only to their detriment though:

αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ πνοιὴν Ζεφύρου προέηκεν ἀῆναι,

ὄφρα φέροι νῆάς τε καὶ αὐτούς: οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔμελλεν

ἐκτελέειν: αὐτῶν γὰρ ἀπωλόμεθ' ἀφραδίῃσιν.

"For me he sent the breeze of the Zephyr to blow and carry the ships and the men –but such was not destined to be fulfilled: we perished because of their irresponsible actions." (H. *Od.* X. 25-27)

As it is this western wind that almost brings Odysseus back from the great unknown to his homeland Ithaca, apparently the storm wind that carried him from Cape Malea had been from the east. Again, this trip takes roughly nine nights and days (*Od.* X. 28-29); as the wind god favours their journey, obviously there was no need to only sail during the day. There is a difference, however between the nine days of sailing from Cape Malea, and the nine days of sailing from Aeolia: the latter was with a steady, but favourable wind, the former due to storms. It is therefore likely that the distance covered from Cape Malea to the west constituted many more sea miles than the journey from Aeolia to Ithaca (Blankenborg 2020b).

Odysseus can practically see his countrymen warming themselves at the small fires on the beach (*Od.* X. 29-30): having escaped from the great unknown, he is about to set foot in the real world of Ithaca again. Unfortunately, and due to his crew's distrust[20], he is driven back into the world of

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[18] Hopman (2012) argues that in his *Apologue* to the Phaeacians, Odysseus deliberately contrasts his own personal triumph in the Cyclops-episode with his failure in the confrontation with Scylla (*Od.* XII. 234-259). Sluiter (2014) argues that Odysseus' helplessness against the 'fishing' Scylla (*Od.* XII. 251-255) results in a 'metamorphosis' of the hero in *Od.* XXII. 383-388, where Odysseus is the 'fisher' overlooking his dead prey, the suitors.

[19] A 'negative' Utopia in contrast with Phaeacian Scheria, cf. Segal 1994: 202; Hernández 2000: 345-346.

[20] See Murnaghan 2005: 422-423 on the notion that the 'question of whether the

magic and beasts immediately (*Od.* X. 47-49). He again reaches the island of Aeolus having been driven by storm winds for an unspecified number of days –probably less than the nine days and nights of the trip from Aeolia, as he is driven by storm winds (coming from the east) this time. From Aeolia, they sail for six days and night (*Od.* X. 80): presumably not to the east (cf. Bilić 2012: 318-321), as Aeolus denies them a second chance (*Od.* X. 73-74), and, given the impossibility of spending the night on dry land after a day's sailing, still in the great unknown. Even the landscape has changed drastically by now[21]:

ἑβδομάτῃ δ' ἱκόμεσθα Λάμου αἰπὺ πτολίεθρον,
Τηλέπυλον Λαιστρυγονίην, ὅθι ποιμένα ποιμὴν
ἠπύει εἰσελάων, ὁ δέ τ' ἐξελάων ὑπακούει.
ἔνθα κ' ἄυπνος ἀνὴρ δοιοὺς ἐξήρατο μισθούς,
τὸν μὲν βουκολέων, τὸν δ' ἄργυφα μῆλα νομεύων:
ἐγγὺς γὰρ νυκτός τε καὶ ἤματός εἰσι κέλευθοι.
ἔνθ' ἐπεὶ ἐς λιμένα κλυτὸν ἤλθομεν, ὃν πέρι πέτρη
ἠλίβατος τετύχηκε διαμπερὲς ἀμφοτέρωθεν,
ἀκταὶ δὲ προβλῆτες ἐναντίαι ἀλλήλησιν
ἐν στόματι προύχουσιν, ἀραιὴ δ' εἴσοδός ἐστιν,
ἔνθ' οἵ γ' εἴσω πάντες ἔχον νέας ἀμφιελίσσας.
αἱ μὲν ἄρ' ἔντοσθεν λιμένος κοίλοιο δέδεντο
πλησίαι: οὐ μὲν γάρ ποτ' ἀέξετο κῦμά γ' ἐν αὐτῷ,
οὔτε μέγ' οὔτ' ὀλίγον, λευκὴ δ' ἦν ἀμφὶ γαλήνη:
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν οἶος σχέθον ἔξω νῆα μέλαιναν,
αὐτοῦ ἐπ' ἐσχατιῇ, πέτρης ἐκ πείσματα δήσας:
ἔστην δὲ σκοπιὴν ἐς παιπαλόεσσαν ἀνελθών.
ἔνθα μὲν οὔτε βοῶν οὔτ' ἀνδρῶν φαίνετο ἔργα,
καπνὸν δ' οἶον ὁρῶμεν ἀπὸ χθονὸς ἀίσσοντα.

"On the seventh day we arrived at the steep citadel of Lamus, Laestrygonian Telepylus, where the herdsman who brings his flocks home exchanges greetings with his colleague on the way out. A

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companions are treated fairly is an excellent point of entry into broader questions about Odysseus' first-person narrative in books 9-12 and whether that narrative can be considered objective'.

[21] Into the 'abyme of literary cartography', cf. Tally 2019: 78-79; Jørgensen 2019: 1.

sleepless man could have earned double wages here, one herding cows, and another grazing the shiny sheep: the paths of day and night are close there. When we arrived in the renown harbour –a high range of rocks stood on both sides around it, and high promontories, opposite one another, stretched out forward in the harbour's mouth–, the entrance was narrow: all kept their curved ships within the enclosure. Closely packed they were fastened securely in the basin. No wave ever surged in there, great or small, and all around the surface was perfectly calm. I alone kept my dark ship outside, right at the furthest point, and tied my ship's hawser to the rock. I climbed it and finally stood on an uneven vantage point, but no signs of cattle or human beings appeared –all I saw was smoke rising from the land."
(H. *Od.* X. 81-99)

The Laestrygonians turn out to be man-eaters (*Od.* X. 80-82), a characteristic they share with the cyclops and the Sirens but not attested outside the world of mythological geography[22]. Both the landscape, and the customs and appearance of the Laestrygonians are otherworldly. Subsequently, Odysseus and his men sail for a day (*Od.* X. 134) and visit the island Aeaea, inhabited by the nymph Circe (*Od.* X. 135-136). It looks like Odysseus' route from (almost touching) Ithaca first took him to the west (back to Aeolus), then to the north (the Laestrygonians appear to live beyond the fixed arctic circle, as 'the paths of night and day are close there' [ἐγγὺς γὰρ νυκτός τε καὶ ἤματός εἰσι κέλευθοι, *Od.* X. 86])[23], and from there south to south-west, as he seems to leave the northern waters[24]. With Circe, they spend their

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[22] Cicero (*Att.* II. 13.2) and Pliny (*NH.* III. 9) located the harbour of the Laestrygonians near Formiae ('formerly called Hormiae'). The Phaeacians are familiar with man-eating giants:

οἵ πρὶν μέν ποτ' ἔναιον ἐν εὐρυχόρῳ Ὑπερείῃ,
ἀγχοῦ Κυκλώπων ἀνδρῶν ὑπερηνορεόντων,
οἵ σφεας σινέσκοντο, βίηφι δὲ φέρτεροι ἦσαν.

"They once dwelled in wide Hyperia, close to the Cyclopes, man characterized by arrogance, who plundered them continuously, and were superior in strength." (H. *Od.* VI. 4-6)

[23] Bilić (2012: 301-313) argues, with reference to geographical and mathematical sources from Antiquity, that the fragments of Crates of Mallus suggest localisation of the Laestrygonians on, or slightly below, the fixed arctic circle (66° northern latitude).

[24] Unless the 'rising of the sun' from Circe's island Aeaea (ἀντολαὶ Ἠελίοιο, *Od.* XII. 4) is to be interpreted as the polar six-month day, in which case Aeaea is even further

time without care or worry for a full year (τελεσφόρον εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν, *Od.* X. 466), before embarking on their most dreadful voyage: to the entrance of the netherworld. This entrance is further to the south as the north wind will carry them hither (*Od.* X. 506). The journey to the gate of the netherworld in the sunless land of the Cimmerians (*Od.* XI. 14-19) takes one day (*Od.* XI. 11-12) [25], and returning (back north?) to Circe (probably) takes the remainder of the night (*Od.* XII. 1-7). From Circe's island, and with her blessing, Odysseus probably set course in eastern direction[26]: upon rounding Cape Malea they were driven to the west for many days, so they must head east to reach Ithaca again[27]. It appears to be only a short trip from Circe to their next stop, the island of the Sirens: Odysseus barely has the time to instruct his crew on how to safely pass these monsters[28]. As with the Laestrygonian episode, Odysseus encounters beings and landscapes that are not attested outside the storyworld of the *Apologue*[29]:

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to the north than Laestrygonian Telepylus.

[25] Locating the Cimmerians close to the north pole rather than to the south pole, as Strabo states (Bilić 2012: 300, who agrees that 'the meteorological characteristics of their land as described in the *Odyssey* correspond to those at the pole'). Crates *fr*. 53 equates the Cimmerians to the 'Cerberians' who live either at both poles or solely at the South Pole. Schol. HV *Od.* X. 86 compares, and opposes, the meteorological characteristics of the Cimmerian land to those obtained among the Laestrygonians (Bilić 2012: 300 n. 22). Their 'six-month night' appears to be contrasted with Aeaea's 'rising of the sun' (*Od.* XII. 4), but Odysseus' one-day voyage cannot cover the distance.

[26] *Od.* XII. 149 states that Circe gave them a 'favourable wind' (ἴκμενον οὖρον), but does not clarify the direction it came from.

[27] Departing from Circe's island for the second time, Odysseus sets sail for Ithaca again, having received instructions for a successful return journey from both the soul of the deceased seer Teiresias in the Netherworld (*Od.* XI. 104-115), and from Circe (*Od.* XII. 39-110, 127-138). The latter links Odysseus' perilous sea voyage to a remarkably successful ship (Ἀργὼ πᾶσι μέλουσα 'the Argo, dear to all', *Od.* XII. 70) from the mythological (and her personal) past, thereby leaving only one option open for Odysseus: he cannot imitate what the world's first ship accomplished (negotiating moving rocks in a distant, mythical sea), so his route to Trinacia is via Scylla and Charybdis (Heubeck / Hoekstra 1989: 121; West 2005; Blankenborg 2020b).

[28] Odysseus benefits from the goddess' favourable wind, preceding a sudden change in meteorological circumstances (*Od.* XII. 167b-169) as the 'eerie calm of the waters that subside upon the approach of Odysseus' ship, contrasts stark with the turmoil in his soul and prompts him to share the prophecies of Circe with his companions' (Nugent 2008: 47).

[29] And suggest a return to the world of the *Iliad*: 'A sort of self-destructive nostalgia compels these old heroes to dwell in the memory of their splendid and grievous past.

Σειρῆνας μὲν πρῶτον ἀφίξεαι, αἵ ῥά τε πάντας
ἀνθρώπους θέλγουσιν, ὅτις σφεας εἰσαφίκηται.
ὅς τις ἀιδρείῃ πελάσῃ καὶ φθόγγον ἀκούσῃ
Σειρήνων, τῷ δ' οὔ τι γυνὴ καὶ νήπια τέκνα
οἴκαδε νοστήσαντι παρίσταται οὐδὲ γάνυνται,
ἀλλά τε Σειρῆνες λιγυρῇ θέλγουσιν ἀοιδῇ
ἥμεναι ἐν λειμῶνι, πολὺς δ' ἀμφ' ὀστεόφιν θὶς
ἀνδρῶν πυθομένων, περὶ δὲ ῥινοὶ μινύθουσι.

'First, you will reach the Sirens, who enchant all humans, whoever
reaches them. If one approaches them ignorantly and hears the Si-
rens' voice, then his wife and his young children will never stand at
his side nor welcome him when he returns home: the Sirens enchant
him with their shrill voice. The sit in a meadow, and all around there
is a great heap of bones and shriveling skins as corpses are decaying.'
(H. *Od.* XII. 39-46)

'Immediately thereafter' (αὐτίκ' ἔπειτα, *Od.* XII. 201), Odysseus and his men
approach the rock of Scylla, though Odysseus keeps the danger secret ('I did
not speak of Scylla yet' Σκύλλην δ' οὐκέτ' ἐμυθεόμην, *Od.* XII. 223). Opposite
Scylla's rock the dreadful whirlpool Charybdis roars. Next, they arrive quickly
(another αὐτίκ' ἔπειτα, *Od.* XII. 261) at the island of the Sun God's cattle,
where the wind holds them until the ship's supplies run out[30]. Even after
eating the cattle they still remain for six more days (*Od.* XII. 397-399) until
the unfavorable wind resides. Zeus' punishment for eating the cattle follows
swiftly: a western wind, but with the power of a gale (*Od.* XII. 407-411) that
drowns the men and destroys the ship. Floating on the sea, holding on to

The Sirens with their specific Iliadic diction appeal both to Odysseus's literary com-
placency and to his nostalgia for his glorious deeds: that is why the Sirens' song
would bring Odysseus out of the *Odyssey* to rot on their island' (Pucci 1998: 5-6).
Schur (2014: 14-15) analyses the Sirens' song as a metapoetical comment on 'a bra-
vado demonstration of acoustic presence': 'The quantitative volume of voices con-
tributing to the Sirens' performance creates an illusion of loudness. But the sound of
Homeric-style singing is here pointedly distinguished (as well as superimposed onto)
the Homeric text. The cost of a safe passage amounts to Odysseus's missing of the
recital, and the successful epic transmission must forgo our hearing the very essence
of the Sirens' singing'.
[30] Douglas Olson (1997) links the name of the island, Thrinacia, to the word θρῖναξ
'winnowing-shovel' (first attested in Ar. *Pax* 567, *IG* I³ 422.134), a synonym for the
πτύον (*Il.* XIII. 558) with which Eustathius and Σ^QBHV gloss ἀθηρηλοιγός (*Od.* XI. 128).

remains of the shipwreck, Odysseus has been considerably blown off course: driven by wind from the south, he floats a whole night before returning to Charybdis (*Od.* XII. 427-430). Odysseus escapes death again and arrives on Ogygia, Calypso's island, after ten days of floating helplessly (*Od.* XII. 447-449). If the wind was still blowing from the south, Calypso's island is located to the north, but not necessarily at a great distance from Charybdis as Odysseus is merely driven there by the currents and the winds. He stays with Calypso for seven years. From her island, having built a ship himself, he sails with favorable (*Od.* V. 268) wind for eighteen days and nights. We may safely presume a western wind, since Calypso told him to keep the Arctos constellation to his left (*Od.* V. 273-277), and so he does. Odysseus' eighteen-day return journey makes up for the two times nine days and nights he was blown to the west. With Phaeacian Scheria in sight, Odysseus' boat is shipwrecked by Poseidon. The goddesses Ino and Athena come to the rescue, and driven by calm wind from the north (*Od.* V. 385), Odysseus floats for two more days before setting foot on Scheria (*Od.* V. 388-389). His last journey, from Scheria to Ithaca, is difficult to fathom, as the primary narrator Homer deliberately frustrates any comparison to the properties of real ships: the Phaeacian ship carrying the sleeping Odysseus sails without human guidance, faster than a hawk can fly (*Od.* XIII. 81-87). Since the ship's propulsion does not depend on the wind, Scheria's location remains unclear.

Thus both Odysseus' entry into the *Apologue*'s storyworld, and his return from it, are presented in such a way as to incapacitate any enthusiast trying to follow the hero's footsteps: the repeated (multiple) nine-day-and-night voyages evidence Odysseus' leaving any geographically mappable environment, as does the unfathomable trip from Scheria to Ithaca. Locations and distances within the storyworld are either vague or schematic like the recurring 'six-days' stretches. Many of the distances covered are barely alluded to, or impossible to grasp as the mode of transportation (e.g. floating helplessly) and the speed of travel cannot be measured against the time elapsed. Descriptions of locations and their inhabitants are often not compatible with the experiences of the internal audience[31]. Odysseus' *Apologue* resembles a schematic and episodic fictional tale kept together by the sea (Blankenborg 2020b), rather than a believable or geographically correct (and traceable) *melee* of exotic ports of call.

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[31] Though the first and the last usually are, e.g. the land of the cyclopes and the Ogygia in the *Apologue* for the Phaeacians, cf. Blankenborg 2019.

The usefulness of fictional geography

Modern consensus tends to consider Odyssean geography 'imaginative renderings of actual places' (Dougherty 2001; cf. Reinhardt 1996; Haller 2011; Romm 2011). Odysseus runs into beings no-one has ever met, and situations that others can barely imagine. He even talks to the souls of the deceased on the shores of the netherworld. Given that Odyssean geography is not even supposed to be considered as 'real' by the epic's internal audience(s), at least three questions remain: what 'actual places' does the *Apologue* refer to, what is the purpose of the *Apologue*'s geography, and what made – and makes– people take the *Apologue*'s geography seriously?

The first question has been addressed elsewhere: Odysseus' account features a mixture of folklore, fantasy, and reality. Some of the episodes of the *Apologue* may have their origin in independent tales about ogres and nymphs (Reinhardt 1996). Others are characterised by the gaze of the colonist (Reinhardt 1996: 78; Dougherty 2001; Rinon 2007: 108-110; Lane Fox 2008: 73-88), and hence tied in with the archaic Greeks' expanding knowledge of the inhabited world. As an archaic *Argonautica*, predating the *Odyssey*, located adventurous episodes in the then-unknown east (especially in and around the Black Sea), the *Odyssey*, being composed after the exploration and colonisation of the eastern Mediterranean, relocated the *Apologue* to the west (West 2005). Any alleged reference in the tales of the *Apologue* to locations and circumstances in the real world, like fjord-like landscapes in the far north, is coincidental and probably too farfetched (Tally 2019: 78-82). As to the monsters Odysseus encounters, many of them serve narratological purposes, mirroring, contrasting, and accumulating the experiences that characterise Odysseus as a storyteller and a hero (Hopman 2012; Sluiter 2014; Blankenborg 2018).

The second, the purpose of the *Apologue*'s geography, is treated together with the question concerning the purpose of the *Apologue* as a whole. If Odysseus' 'autobiography' is considered fiction (Trahman 1952; Walcot 1977; Emlyn-Jones 1986; Reece 1994), his tale is meant to entertain the Phaeacians like a professional singer's, and to stimulate the hosts on Scheria to provide him with gifts and a transfer to Ithaca (Pucci 1998; Blankenborg 2020a). The tales serve another purpose as well, though: Odysseus has long understood that his audience is demanding and that the Phaeacians may not too readily accept his claim that he is who he says he is, especially after their singer Demodocus' songs (*Od.* VIII. 75-78, 500-520) on 'the famous deeds of Odysseus':

νῦν δ' ὄνομα πρῶτον μυθήσομαι, ὄφρα καὶ ὑμεῖς
εἴδετ', ἐγὼ δ' ἂν ἔπειτα φυγὼν ὕπο νηλεὲς ἦμαρ
ὑμῖν ξεῖνος ἔω καὶ ἀπόπροθι δώματα ναίων.
εἴμ' Ὀδυσεὺς Λαερτιάδης, ὃς πᾶσι δόλοισιν
ἀνθρώποισι μέλω, καί μευ κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει.

"Now I will tell my name first, that you may know it, and that I may
be a guest for you from now on, having escaped the day of my undo-
ing though still far away from home. I am Odysseus, son of Laertes,
who am known among men for all sorts of stratagems, and my fame
reaches to the sky." (H. *Od.* IX. 16-20)

In an attempt to prove the validity of his claim ('I am the Odysseus that you all have heard of: the semi-mythological character who you believe brought down Troy'), Odysseus has to account for his current, deplorable situation[32]. How to prove this claim without any accompanying men, without some spoils of war to show for? Fortunately, Alcinous helps Odysseus, even before he introduces himself and begins his apologue, with a few suggestions concerning the type of story that would be appropriate to tell in order to make a believable claim (*Od.* VIII. 572-584): 'Tell me whither you have wandered and to what countries of men you have come; tell me of the people and of their populous cities, both of those who are cruel and wild and unjust, and of those who are kind to strangers and fear the gods in their thoughts. And tell me why you weep and wail in spirit as you hear the doom of the Argives and Danaans, and of Ilium […] Did some kinsman of yours fall before Ilium […] or was it perhaps some comrade dear to your heart?' Subsequently, Odysseus tells a story of wanderings, and of loss.[33] Similar to Odysseus' Cretan lying tales, the *Apologue* features 'focalized space' (De Jong 2012: 27),

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[32] As he already did in his exchange with the Phaeacian princess Nausicaa, claiming that, despite his appearance, he visited important places as the leader of larger groups (*Od.* VI. 164).

[33] He provides ample detail, in line with the Phaeacians' claim (*Od.* VIII. 201-206, authenticated by the poet) that theirs is a world filled with gods and supernatural monsters: so is the landscape of Odysseus' wanderings. This landscape is consistently hard (or virtually impossible) to travel in, as its main points of interest are isolated and remote, and can only be reached by ship (as can Scheria). With the sea keeping the locations visited together, the individual stops are as isolated and remote as are the events tied to them. With the eyes of the narrator searching the virtual space, the sea, of his imagination, the adventures and their location stand out like islands in isolation; see Blankenborg 2018.

the notion that Odysseus description of places and events merely serves to highlight his own objectives when telling a story.

Finally, what made –and makes– people take the *Apologue*'s geography seriously? In antiquity, localisation of Odysseus' wanderings divided authors into two opposing groups: those who strongly advised against any attempt to so in the real world, and those who assumed that it could only be in the real world. The latter were driven by various motifs including those that caused that 'peoples of ancient Sicily and Italy often initiated or accepted localization the journey in their lands, motivated by issues of genealogy and cultural authenticity' (J. Burgess, http://wakeofodysseus.com/about/; accessed on March 19th 2021). To some extent, the identification of gradually more familiar territory with the locations of the Homeric journey echoed archaic Greek exploration and colonisation in the western Mediterranean and beyond. In more recent times, the continuing tendency resulted in Odysseys beyond the limitations of the planet, and into the more abstract realms of symbolism and motif-pattern structured reception[34]. Did I mention the modern travel-minded enthusiasts already (Roth 1999; Huler 2008; Geisthövel 2010)?

Concluding remarks

Homer's *Odyssey* is not historiography, nor is his Odysseus a historical figure. Nonetheless many, already in antiquity, have tried to find Odysseus' trace as some of the points of reference of his myth appear to be traceable: the city of Troy in Asia Minor, Cape Malea on the Peloponnese, Crete, the island of Ithaca in the west. It has proven tempting to identify all the other places Odysseus (claims to have) visited: In the western Mediterranean, out on the Atlantic Ocean, or even beyond the Tropic of Cancer. The historiographers' belief reflects the expansion of their cultural horizon, and the eagerness to identify the fantastic accordingly, rather than a proper reading of a non-scientific text.

The way Odysseus organises his serial, adventurous tales, reminds a modern audience of the island-like points of recollection in clinical settings,

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[34] E.g. *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) by Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke, and *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000) by the Coen Brothers.

where patients 'search their mind' for the individual elements of a structured story. Of course, there is no proof for Odysseus' presence anywhere, not even at the historical sites, but the search for his footprints continues.

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Xenophon, Callisthenes, and Diodorus: The Importance of the traditions of Omens and Oracular Prophecies for ethno-symbolism and ethnic renewal in the historiographical accounts of the Battle of Leuctra[*]

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Introduction

We often find omens and oracular prophecies referenced in connection to important events in history. The tales of these omens and oracular prophecies were added to the stories of significant battles and events after they had occurred to explain the outcome through divine intervention, curses, or other supernatural phenomena. Other times they were suggested to have been invented before the event occurred as a method of boosting morale amongst the troops or local populations. In both cases, omens and oracular prophecies often play on a combination of both local traditions and pan-regional myths, and we can therefore see them as a tool for mythical innovations and ethno-symbolism used to strengthen or renew localised identities.

   In this paper, I shall investigate three historiographical accounts of the omens and oracular prophecies reported in connection with the Battle of Leuctra, and I will examine these accounts and their impact on the regional ethnic identity in Boeotia. First, I shall look at Xenophon's account as a contemporary Athenian writer who was notoriously anti-Theban and pro-Spartan[1]. Second, I shall look at some fragments from Callisthenes of Olynthus,

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[1] For Xenophon's account, see X. *HG.* VI. 4.7-8. Whilst Xenophon was a contemporary of the events, it is likely that he wrote this part of the *Hellenica* between 358-355;

which have survived through Cicero's *De Divinatione*[2]. Callisthenes was not a contemporary of these events but belonged to the generation after the Battle of Leuctra, and his account of the omens represents the immediate evolution of these traditions. I shall then examine the account of Diodorus Siculus, which was written three centuries after the battle. Yet, we should keep in mind that Diodorus Siculus's primary source for these events was the 4th-century historian Ephorus (Lanzillotta 1984: 164). The importance of the traditions of these omens and oracular prophecies will be considered throughout, both in terms of localised Boeotian traditions and their political importance. Stories of omens, divine interactions, and local myths like these have an important role in the growth of identity for regional and sub-regional ethnic groups[3]. The importance of these events and stories in the context of the strengthening of Boeotian regional ethnic identity in the 360s will be examined by applying the concept of ethnic renewal to the historiographical accounts. Before analysing the historiography, I shall outline the concepts of ethno-symbolism, ethnic renewal, and provide a brief historical background for the battle.

Ethno-symbolism and ethnic renewal

I am in this paper following Anthony Smith's three-factor definition of ethno-symbolism; first, the centrality of symbolic factors (including myths, traditions, stories, and rituals), and second, that these are based upon pre-existing ethnic and ethno-religious symbols, myths, or memories among the

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see Lanzillotta 1984: 164-165 (also mentioning the anti-Theban leanings of Xenophon).

[2] Callisthenes (*BNJ* 124) F 22a, 22b *apud* Cic. *Div.* I. 74-76, II. 54. Unless I mention Cicero in the text from here on, I will only reference this passage as Callisthenes.

[3] Here I am applying a method of ethnicity which suggests a multi-layered process of ethnicity. This is the method for understanding ethnicity suggested by Handelman (1977), explaining that ethnicity could be organised into 'ethnic category', 'ethnic association', 'ethnic network' and 'ethnic community'. Recently, Vlassopoulos (2015: 12) has suggested a similar approach to ancient Greek ethnic groups with four stages of the process: Kinship (Aeolian, Dorian, Ionian), Historic (Hellenic), Territorial (Boeotian, Arcadian, etc.), and Community or city identity (e.g., Theban, Orchomenian, Coronean). I am working with the additional layer of sub-regional ethnicity, pertaining to a group that fulfils some of the criteria of ethnicity but is smaller than a region and larger than a *polis.*

same or a related population. The third factor is that these myths can resonate with a population for a long period; hence the examination of late sources remains crucial for this purpose (Smith 2005: 98). We can read related populations of the Boeotians as sub-regional groups in Boeotia, other Aeolian groups, or the rest of the Hellenes.[4] Regional ethnic groups like the Boeotians developed around the idea of a common background, tied to an eponymous hero, a supposed common history, some shared cultural features, and localised myths[5]. We can see this in ancient historiographical accounts, as Herodotus provides us with a suggestion of what made the Greeks 'Greek': kinship (constructed through mythical genealogies), language, cult, and customs (Hdt. VIII. 144.2). A similar model works equally well for regional groups like the Boeotians.

In the stories of the Battle of Leuctra, at least two of these factors were used, with local customs and cults being a part of the stories as we see regional cult centres such as the sanctuaries in Thebes and the sanctuary of Trophonius at Lebadea in the stories. Furthermore, Panhellenic cult centres such as Delphi and Dodona are also represented in these accounts. For this paper's context, we find the importance in the story of the Leuctrides, omens and prophecies from the sanctuary of Trophonius, Zeus at Dodona, and Apollo at Delphi[6]. The ancient Greeks considered religion and political affairs as strongly linked and important for local political situations and identities[7]. In relation to this, Smith's model of ethnic renewal should be kept in mind throughout this paper. This model consists of four factors:

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[4] The concepts of the same or related populations in this case refers to ethno-cultural attributes, Smith 2005: 98-99.

[5] Whilst ethnicity is modern terminology, I am applying the word to regional identities in ancient Greece as it is the best term we have for these regional groups; from here on they will be referred to as regional ethnicities. These groups were an ever-changing concept, changing with cultural need; much like the identities in the modern world, this could include changing myth history, festivals, and sanctuaries, to mention some possible factors. Studies of ethnicity in Greek Antiquity has been done since the 1980's, with an explosion of scholarship following Hall 1997; for an overview of such scholarship until 2015 see Vlassopoulos 2015: 2 n 9.

[6] For omens and oracles as a part of the local identity in ancient Greece, see Dillion 2017: 39.

[7] For the importance of religion in political decision making for Greeks, see Nilsson 1951: 16; Bonnecheré 2013. Parker (2000: 87) described warfare as the *par excellence* sphere for divination.

1) Religious renewal –we observe cultic or religious renewal of regional ethnic groups in the foundation of new regional cults or changes to older cults.
2) Selective borrowing –fits with stories about omens and oracular prophecies that borrow elements from sub-regional or other neighbouring ethnic groups and include genealogical changes or divine intervention from a local deity associated with such nearby populations.
3) Incorporation and participation –we should think of popular participation in these stories as if they boosted the troops' morale and in terms of possible participation in religious rites based on the stories.
4) Myths of election –the sense of being favoured by one's gods, in terms of ancient Greece mythical heroic characters can be added to this as well[8].

These factors then function as elements of ethnic renewal or strengthening of regional ethnic identities; the relationship between the four varies, and not all factors need to be in place for ethnic renewal[9]. Yet, they provide a guide for analysing this concept and are helpful for my analysis of the ethnosymbolism and ethnic renewal of the Boeotians in the first half of the 4th-century.

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[8] This list is a part of Anthony Smith's definitions of ethnic renewal, for which see Smith 1988: 21-24.

[9] Definitions such as this are widely useful for the study of ethnic identities, yet as identities like these often are subjective in nature, they do not always fit neatly into the definitions. De Vos (1975: 16) suggests that the ethnic identity of a group of people consists of their subjective symbolic or emblematic use of any aspect of culture, to differentiate themselves from other groups; he acknowledges that there is no common characteristic to all ethnic groups at De Vos 1975: 9. Eriksen (1993: 12) suggests we should always apply the same criteria for ethnic identities as if not the concept loses its usefulness for comparison; Hall (2002: 12, 2015b: 26) agrees with this. Yet, as these identities are ever-changing, we should acknowledge that these criteria cannot always be the same. It is the same for the criteria of ethnic renewal; I would suggest that for ethnic renewal two of these criteria need to be in place.

Historical background for the Battle of Leuctra

The Battle of Leuctra was fought between the Boeotians and the Spartans after a failed peace conference[10]. This peace conference had failed because the Thebans and Spartans disagreed upon whether the Boeotian *poleis* should be granted autonomy, as the Spartans demanded that these were to be free of Theban control. As a response to this, the Thebans told the Spartans to stay out of the affairs of Boeotia, as they had never interfered in Sparta's control over Laconia (D.S. XV. 51.4)[11]. The background for these events was the King's Peace of 386, which led the Spartans to dissolve the Boeotian *koinon,* and the Spartan garrison in Thebes, installed in 382[12]. In 379, the Thebans rebelled under the leadership of Epaminondas, Gorgidas, and Pelopidas and began the process of rebuilding the *koinon*. The Spartans responded with repeated attacks in Boeotia. It is important to acknowledge here that whilst the Thebans forcefully incorporated some *poleis,* like Plataea and Thespiae, into the resurgent Boeotian *koinon,* this was presumably not the case for smaller *poleis* and districts across Boeotia[13]. We can assume

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[10] The Thebans had originally sworn as Thebans; but had returned and demanded to join the peace on behalf of the Boeotians as a unified grouping instead: X. *HG.* VI. 3.19; Plu. *Ages.* 28.2, who is mistaken in placing Epaminondas in these negotiations. See also D.S. XV. 50.4.

[11] This is particularly interesting as the Spartans had joined the peace of 371 as Λακεδαιμόνιοι without opposition from the other Hellenes. Yet, in the common peace of 375 the Thebans had not had the same demand and signed as Thebans; see Tufano 2019a: 50; Buckler 1980: 51-52. We can explain this by suggesting that in 375 Thebes could not sign on behalf of the Boeotians, as at least Thespiae, Plataea, and Orchomenus as major Boeotian settlements were not aligned with the new Boeotian *koinon*. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that the Boeotian *koinon* of 375 seems to have survived this peace, despite the peace not recognizing the *koinon*; see Buckler 1980: 52-53.

[12] The King's Peace had dissolved the Boeotian *koinon*, which had been based upon the Boeotian regional ethnic group, for the outline of the peace see X. *HG.* V. 1.31. Four years later, the Spartans occupied the Theban citadel, partly to stop the Thebans from reunifying the Boeotians into a *koinon* based upon the regional ethnic group again; see D.S. XV. 20.2, who suggests this to have been parts of the reason. X. *H.G* 5.2.25-26, points towards Theban factionalism as the reason.

[13] Both Plataea and Thespiae had in the years before Leuctra been forcefully incorporated into a resurgent Boeotian *koinon* under the leadership of Thebes. See Isoc. XIV. 4-5, 10, 12, 17, 39, for Plataea accusing Thebes of breaking the King's Peace when forcing them back in. See X. *HG.* VI. 3.1, for Thespiae being left without a *polis*

this as no evidence suggests that they forced many of the smaller communities in Boeotia back into the *koinon,* and since these smaller communities had a stronger position as a member of the *koinon* than as autonomous states. For this reason, the Spartans, under the leadership of Cleombrotus I invaded Boeotia along the coast, and in the process, sacked several Boeotian coastal communities including Thisbe and Creusis (X. *HG.* VI. 4.3-4; D.S. XV. 53.1; Paus. IX. 13.3). The two armies met at Leuctra, in the territory of the Boeotian *polis* Thespiae.

Xenophon's account of omens and oracular prophecies at Leuctra

The first account I shall investigate is that in Xenophon's *Hellenica*, where Xenophon briefly sums up some omens and a prophecy given by an unnamed oracle in connection with the Battle of Leuctra. Xenophon's account looks at this from the perspective of the Theban leaders, who, according to Xenophon, feared to lose the battle as they feared a defeat would mean that the rest of the Boeotians would rise against the Theban hegemony over the region (X. *HG.* VI. 4.6). Whilst most of the Boeotian' *poleis* presumably had re-joined the Boeotian *Koinon* of their own volition, a defeat here would show that Thebes failed in their responsibility to protect the other settlements, as Thebes was the largest and most powerful *polis* within Boeotia. We should read the first supernatural event reported by Xenophon in connection to the myth of the rape of the Leuctrides, the daughters of Schedaus, named after their connection to Leuctra (Paus. IX. 13.5; Plu. *Mor.* 773c-774d, 856f, *Pel.* 20.3)[14]. This myth survives in the later accounts of Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, and Pausanias, and this brief mention by Xenophon. According to the story, two Spartan ambassadors violated the Boeotian maidens Theano and Euxippe; other accounts of this myth provide alternate

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in 373 (also mentions Plataea); obviously, this cannot be correct, and we should regard Thespiae to have had a *polis* after 373; see Stylianou 1998: 388. We should however accept that other Boeotian *poleis* may have re-joined voluntarily. As Buckler (1980: 20-23) observes, the evidence suggests that Orchomenus, Plataea, and Thespiae were the only Boeotian *poleis* that Thebes acted harshly towards in this period. The rest of the Boeotians had presumably re-joined voluntarily.

[14] D.S. XV. 54.2-3 mentions the daughters of both Schedaus and Leuctrus. Stylianou (1998: 394-395) suggests that this may be because Diodorus misread his source (Ephorus) who presumably referred to Schedaus in this account, and D.S interprets Λευκτρίδας as a patronym. Tufano (2019b: 56), in turn, suggests that the name Leuctrus was mentioned in later sources as a connection to the battlefield.

names for the Boeotian maids, Hippo and Moplia or Miletia[15]. It is not the maidens' names that are the important aspect here, but that because they could not live with the shame, the maidens hung themselves. Their father demanded retribution; however, he did not receive this, and so in response, he cursed the Spartans[16]. In his account, Xenophon does not mention the Leuctrides by this name, but the word he applies in the *Hellenica* is παρθένων (maidens, girls); yet, when put in context with later accounts, it is clear that the maidens mentioned in his account were the Leuctrides. Xenophon suggests that an oracle had reminded the Boeotians of these mythical events before the battle and that a curse doomed the Spartans to be defeated near the monument for the maidens[17]. Therefore, the Thebans put garlands on the monument to show their respect for the maidens and symbolise that they were about to fulfil their father's curse and avenge them. Local customs and traditions were important in ancient Greece. In his *Memorabilia* (I. 3.1), Xenophon highlights the importance of the polis' local customs*,* and we can apply similar logic to the significance of the custom of regional and sub-regional ethnic groups. In this instance, we observe a local myth of two Leuctrian maidens being raped by Spartan ambassadors, and the addition of their father's curse to the stories added a tale that symbolised the upcoming defeat of the Spartans.

The next supernatural event to occur, according to Xenophon (*HG.* VI. 4.7), was that all the temples in the *polis* of Thebes opened their doors, and the priestesses proclaimed that divine signs from the gods decreed an upcoming defeat of the Spartans. This omen showed that the gods favoured the Thebans and their claim to the hegemony of Boeotia; thus, suggest the existence of divine support towards the *koinon* or regional federal states. As Emily Mackil (2013: 207) suggests, religious actions and innovation in the name of the Boeotians were a necessity to promote the belief in a resurgent Boeotian *koinon*, as a decade before, the region had had a strong Spartan

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[15] For the name of the Leuctrides, see Paus. IX. 13.5 for Hippo and Moplia; Plu. *Mor.* 773c, for Hippo and Miletia, but also Theano and Euxippe.

[16] Plu. *Mor.* 774b mentions that Schedaus summoned the Erynies, presumably to ensure that his daughters were avenged.

[17] X. *H.G.* VI. 4.7, Xenophon does not mention which oracle this may be, but the other historiographical accounts I am talking about include prophecies from the Sanctuary of Trophonius: Callisthenes (*BNJ* 124) F 22a, 22b; D.S. XV. 53.4; Polyaen. 2.3.8; whilst Paus. IV. 32.5 suggests that the Thebans also sought advice from the sanctuaries of Apollo at Ptoion, Apollo Ismenos in Thebes, Apollo Abae in Abae, and Delphi.

influence, including the Spartan occupation of the Cadmea in Thebes. The direct consequences of this Spartan occupation had been that anti-Theban factions took power in several Boeotian *poleis*. Therefore, the construction of an omen comprising the priestesses of the sanctuaries in Thebes singing about the upcoming victory could be a powerful symbol of the will of the gods to support the resurgent *koinon* based upon the regional ethnic identity of the Boeotians. Stories like these added to the strengthening of the regional ethnic group and their federal state, as mythical innovations were used to strengthen the bonds between communities within the region in the face of both external and internal threats. As a concept, ethnicity develops from changing political and cultural needs through negotiations and developing stories deployed for specific purposes[18]. Hence, we can read the tradition of the song of the priestesses here as a constructed tradition to show the support of the gods.

This was further strengthened by the report that Heracles's weapons had disappeared from his sanctuary in Thebes (X. *HG.* VI. 4.7; Ogden 2004: 140; Dillion 2017: 189). They considered the disappearance of these weapons an omen showing the support and participation of Heracles on the side of the Boeotians. The Boeotian version of Heracles was important here as he features in the stories of the mythical wars between the Boeotians, led by the Thebans, and the Minyans, led by the Orchomenians (Ps.-Apollod. II. 4.11; Paus. IX. 37.1-3). In this myth, the defeat of Orchomenus represented the Theban right to rule Boeotia and presumably reflected genuine conflicts between the Orchomenians and Thebans in the 6th-century, which later inspired a mythical story featuring important characters from the heroic age. We can read the supposed intervention of Heracles at Leuctra similarly; in the story of Heracles and the Minyans, the Minyan king Erginus had subjugated the Thebans. This situation lasted until Heracles intervened on behalf of his native city and successfully defeated Erginus and the Minyans[19]. In the

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[18] Sharp 1988: 79-80; 'ethnicity is a political process by which people seek to form groups, and to differentiate one groups from another, by appealing to the idea of ineluctable cultural difference'. Also see Barth 1969; Smith 1986. For scholars of the ancient world; Garman 2006: 113- 114, 116; Hall 1997: 19: "Ethnicity is socially constructed and subjectively perceived".

[19] As shown by Schachter 2014, this story may reflect an actual conflict between the Minyans of Orchomenus and the Boeotians led by Thebes in the 6th century, as before the Archaic period evidence suggests peaceful relations between the cities; see also Giroux 2020: 7; Grigsby 2017: 15; Schachter 2016a: 6. If so, the mythical tradition of the battle may have been in place by the 5th century. Hellani. (*BNJ* 4) F 101a

context of Leuctra, just under a decade before the battle, the Spartans had unjustly occupied the Cadmea in Thebes, which in 379 had been followed by a rebellion that led to a resurgent Boeotian *koinon*, once more with the regional ethnic identity as a potent feature. Thus, we can read the mythical intervention of Heracles at Leuctra as the hero once more coming to restore Thebes as the hegemon of Boeotia, with increased influence on the Hellenic mainland. Another layer worth considering here is that Heracles had joined the battle on the side of his native Thebes instead of the Spartans, who believed themselves descended from the Heraclidae. Hence, the invented tradition suggests that Heracles came to aid his native city rather than the city of his descendants. The stories of Heracles's alleged involvement in the battle may then be seen as the hero's support for the Thebans as hegemon of both Boeotia and the Hellenic mainland.

Xenophon finishes his account of supernatural events before the battle by saying 'some say that the Theban leaders created these omens' as Theban propaganda before the battle, before adding that 'as far as the battle was concerned everything went wrong for the Spartans' (X. *HG.* VI. 4.7-8). By this, he indicates that there were reports that the Theban leaders made these stories up and that this contributed to the defeat of the Spartans[20]. He does not, however, explain which Theban leaders were responsible for these stories. The omens and prophecies suggested divine support for the resurgent Boeotian *koinon* and regional federal states. Therefore, it is likely that the omens and prophecies were stories used to boost morale among the

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(Heracles kills those who comes to collect tribute following the death of Clymenus); Pi. *Pae*. VIII. 139-141; E. *HF* 48-50, 220-221, all hint at this story without providing much detail. Another 5th- century source, Pherecydes (*BNJ* 3) F 95, provides an alternate version, but still with a conflict between Thebes and the Minyans. In this version, Erginus is neither killed nor compelled by Heracles to make peace but continues the conflict to the time of Oedipus, suggesting a different chronology, Cingano 1992: 10, possibly an Orchomenian version? (Buck 1979: 60-61). For more details about this conflict in early Greek mythography, see Fowler 2013: 193-194; Gantz 1993: 379-380. Yet, as Schachter (2014: 83-84) suggests, parts of this myth may have changed to fit the narrative of the 4th-century.

[20] However, it is worth noting here that in *Eq.Mag.* 9. 9*.* Xenophon mentions that the gods warn whoever they wish through omens, dreams, and voices. Several of the examples reported by Xenophon and Callisthenes hint at supposed divine support for the Boeotians in this battle. Thus, the gods by warning whoever they wish would symbolise the fourth element needed for the ethnic survival or renewal: myth of election.

Boeotian troops, and the Theban leaders mentioned by Xenophon were those who favoured the battle. These stories allowed for the belief in putative divine support for the Boeotian *koinon* and the upcoming Theban hegemony of the Hellenic mainland. They achieved this morale boost for the troops through playing on local traditions from Boeotia by adding stories that became a new aspect of ethnosymbolism for the Boeotian regional ethnic identity in the late Classical period. Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood suggests that the local religion of the *polis* gave meaning to all the elements making up the polis identity. She does this by suggesting that 'ritual reinforces group solidarity' (Sourvinou-Inwood 2000: 22). We can apply similar logic to ritual and myths on a regional level like in the stories Xenophon conserves about Leuctra, as mythical stories such as these would be crucial for the solidarity of regional ethnic groups.

If we then compare Xenophon's account to the factors for ethno-symbolism, Xenophon's account plays on local ethno-symbols by suggesting that the Thebans sacrificed at the monument of the maidens. Xenophon's account may be the first account to reference the maidens of Leuctra; yet, if there were a monument for them near the battlefield, it would show the use of this monument as an ethno-symbolic act playing on an established mythical tradition (X. *HG.* VI. 4.7)[21]. Therefore, local myths played a central role in his account, emphasising that a monument was already there. Xenophon's account then fulfils two of the criteria for ethno-symbolism.

Next, I shall compare it with Smith's theory of ethnic renewal. First, we see no firm evidence of cultic renewal in Xenophon's brief account. Yet, cultic elements are clearly a part of his narrative with the temples in Thebes and the sacrifice at the monument of the maidens. Second, we can read no sound evidence for cultural borrowing in Xenophon's account, except perhaps from local stories of Leuctra and Thespiae with the story of the maidens. Third, as his account is centred on the military campaign, any reference to popular participation should be about the armies in the battle. Xenophon infers that the stories of omens and supernatural intervention may have

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[21] This type of cult was not uncommon in Boeotia and Schachter (1986: 122, with n. 4 on that page) has identified several cults for similar maidens in Boeotia including the Antipoinedes in Thebes and the Coronides at Orchomenus. Also, see Lanzillotta 1984: 168, who suggests that the story of maidens was partly in place before the battle. If we accept this, then the legend presumably developed further following the battle.

aided the Boeotians in their victory. If the Boeotian forces believed the stories, and if this contributed to the victory, then we have popular participation among the Boeotian troops. Finally, we can see the usage of a myth of election, as the priestesses in Thebes sang of the upcoming victory, an unnamed oracle spoke of an upcoming defeat of the Spartans, and Heracles was preparing to fight with the Boeotians. Therefore, we can apply Smith's theories of ethno-symbolism and ethnic renewal to Xenophon's account of omens and oracular prophecies[22].

Callisthenes of Olynthus's account of omens and oracular prophecies at Leuctra

The next account I shall analyse here is that of Callisthenes (*BNJ* 124 F 22a, 22b), which has survived in Cicero's *De Divinatione* (I. 74-76, II. 54). The traditions we find in Xenophon's narrative presumably hint at some traditions constructed to boost the morale of the Boeotians before the battle, which is why a focus on omens and prophecies supporting the Boeotians makes sense. Callisthenes's account, however, focuses on some omens and prophecies from a Spartan perspective as well. Yet, it is probable that Callisthenes, together with Ephorus, was among the first historians to write about things from a Boeotian or Theban perspective, rather than a Spartan or Athenian viewpoint (Georgiadou 1996: 73). The first omen Callisthenes refers to in his account relates to Heracles but with slight differences to Xenophon's account, as Callisthenes suggests that the armour of Heracles in his sanctuary in Thebes clanked and his statue started sweating. After this, the doors of the sanctuary had swung open despite being sealed with bars, and they found his armour on the ground (F22a). Callisthenes's account does not mention Heracles's weapons, nor the hero taking part in the battle like the mythical traditions suggested by the reports in Xenophon's *Hellenica*. Yet, we should read it as Heracles, seen as a Theban hero, favouring the Boeotians in the battle. In contrast to Xenophon's almost contemporary version, Callisthenes was born after these events. It is important to remember that these fragments survive in the later work of Cicero rather than directly. Nonetheless, Callisthenes's report suggests how these stories developed in terms of 4th-century ethno-symbolic tales and the process of ethnic renewal

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[22] Lanzillotta (1984: 173) suggests that the reason Xenophon only reported favourable omens was to discredit the Thebans, as they had won because of divine interaction and not their own valour.

for the Boeotians. As previously mentioned, the Boeotians were in the process of re-establishing the Boeotian *koinon*; at this time, ancient Greek federal states were still centred on regional ethnic identities (Hall 2015a: 48)[23]. These identities functioned as an ever-changing organism by adapting mythical stories like these to fit the changing political narratives by constructing new ethnic, genealogical, or mythical links. Therefore, it was a natural progression for the tales of mythical events related to the Battle of Leuctra to develop in response to the changing power balance on the Hellenic mainland.

Callisthenes then introduces an omen from the sanctuary of Trophonius at Lebadea, a *polis* near the Phocian border. Introducing an omen that included Lebadea made sense from a political and ethnic aspect, as during the Corinthian War, just over two decades earlier, the Spartan commander Lysander had sacked the *polis* and presumably this sanctuary (Schachter 1994: 77). The omen reported by Callisthenes (F 22a) was that the roosters at Lebadea crowed during the divine rights of Trophonius. The omen of the crowing roosters symbolised the forthcoming Theban victory, as they believed that, if they were to lose the Battle of Leuctra, the roosters would have remained quiet (F 22a, b; Dillion 2017: 189). The roosters at the sanctuary were associated with the nymph Hercyna, the daughter of Trophonius, who was also associated with the worship of Demeter at the sanctuary (Paus. IX. 39.2-4; Schachter 1986: 38-39, 1994: 85). As a deity, Demeter played a prominent role in Thebes's local divine system, and as a patron deity of Thebes, her presence at this sanctuary may demonstrate Theban influence. We can observe several reasons why including omens and oracular prophecies from the sanctuary of Trophonius, would be helpful in the mythification of the stories of the battle. Lebadea was within the traditional Orchomenian sphere of influence in western Boeotia. Orchomenus had historically been Thebes's biggest rival for the hegemony over Boeotia and, as we have seen, in the Archaic period, had used a claim to a Minyan regional ethnic identity

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[23] The article focuses on the importance of ancient Hellenic regional ethnicities and their growth before becoming a part of regional federal systems. The Boeotians had already been in such an organisation in the 5th century, which had been dissolved following the King's Peace in 386. With the new Boeotian *Koinon* developing in the 370s and 360s, new mythical traditions like these stories would function as new aspects of the renewed Boeotian regional ethnicity. Larsen 1968: XVI-XVII also share the view that federal states came out of ethnic groups, albeit he calls them tribal groupings and takes a primordial standpoint rather than ethno-symbolic.

instead of a Boeotian. They were also the only Boeotian community to remain outside the resurgent Boeotian *koinon* in 371. As a deity, Trophonius symbolised this heritage for the Lebadeans; Trophonius was a son of the Minyan king Erginus of Orchomenus and, therefore, had a direct Minyan lineage (*Hom*. *Hymn.* III*.* 296; Paus. IX. 37.4). We can then see two strategic reasons for incorporating stories related to Trophonius into the narrative of the Battle of Leuctra; first, the Spartans had sacked the *polis* and sanctuary a few decades before when the Lebadeans presumably had refused to abandon the *koinon*. Perhaps the reason why the Lebadeans declined to join the Orchomenians was because of their elevated status as holding a Boeotarch district with Coronea and Haliartus. Such a position offered them a more influential place in the affairs of Boeotia than as a dependent *polis* of Orchomenus. Second, we can read omens coming from a Minyan sanctuary supporting a Boeotian victory as a strengthening of the Boeotian regional ethnic group in western Boeotia and as a confirmation that the Minyan identity had been reduced to a sub-regional ethnicity[24].

Another worthwhile observation related to this sanctuary was the increased activity in the 4th century, which from a Boeotian geopolitical perspective, makes the most sense after the Battle of Leuctra. Albert Schachter (1994: 77; 2016c: 117) suggests that we should, at least partly, read the increased activity and the foundation of the cult of Zeus Basileus at Lebadea as an attempt to show Theban superiority over the Orchomenians[25]. I shall discuss the role of Zeus Basileus in more detail in my section on Diodorus's account, as it is the first to mention Zeus in the context of the Battle of Leuctra. Yet, as Mackil (2013: 210 n. 232) suggests, it is more likely that the traditions of omens at the sanctuary of Trophonius in the context of the battle and the establishment of a Panboeotian festival at Lebadea after was to show Boeotian ethnic unity in the former Minyan region in western Boeotia.

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[24] Two fragments, one from Hellani. (*BNJ* 4 F 42b) and the other from Nic. Dam. (*BNJ* 90 F 51), mention stories about the Minyans having been defeat at Orchomenus: in Hellanicus by the Thracians, in Nicolaus by the Phocians. Yet, Pi. *O.* 14.1 shows that the memory of the Minyans in Orchomenus was alive in the 5th century; see Segal 1985: 205. The survival of a Minyan identity in Orchomenus can aid in explaining why their opposition to the Theban led Boeotian *koinon.* Nicolaus in his account applies the Greek word καταδραμόντες, which may not mean that the Minyans were expelled, but rather that they were overrun or ravaged by the Phocians.

[25] Cf. Bonnecheré 2003: 17, who says that it is more reasonable that the cult of Zeus Basileus was present at Lebadea before the Battle of Leuctra. Yet, if this was the case it seems to have taken a more Panboeotian federal character after the battle.

Mackil's suggestion fits as an aspect of ethno-symbolism and ethnic renewal in this portion of Boeotia; however, the failed Orchomenian coup attempt in 364 may have influenced Callisthenes's account as he was writing after this event[26].

Callisthenes (F 22a) also reported omens occurring in Delphi, which they used to explain the defeat of the Spartans. First, wild herbs grew on a statue of Lysander, which had been set up to celebrate his role in defeating the Athenians at Aegospotami in 404. As a further celebration of this victory, the Spartans had placed golden stars in the sanctuary of Castor and Polydeuces at Delphi; the Spartans had placed these dedications up as they thought the Dioscuri favoured the Spartans over the Athenians towards the end of the Peloponnesian War[27]. According to Callisthenes's account of the omens before Leuctra, these golden stars had fallen off and were never found again. They intended both dedications to show that the gods favoured Lysander and the Spartans. However, when looking at these two omens in connection to the previously mentioned omen from Lebadea, which Lysander had sacked in 395 (Plu. *Lys* 28.2), it could be read as the gods abandoning the Spartans partly because of this unjust action committed by Lysander. These were omens used to explain why the Spartans lost the battle. Lysander was instrumental in Sparta's victory in the Peloponnesian War and the establishment of its hegemony in the early 4th-century, and Castor and Pollux were revered by the Spartans; as sons of Tyndareus/Zeus and Leda, they were local heroes, associated with the Spartan model of dual kingship[28]. Another

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[26] For this coup attempt and Orchomenus's fate, see D.S. XV. 79.3-6; D. XX. 109; Paus. IX. 15.3, Plu. *Comp. Marc. Pel.* I. 1, Beck and Ganter; 2015: 149; Buckler 1980: 184, as Schacter 2014: 84 suggests, the Thebans may have contributed to change the narrative of the myths to fit with their recent destruction of Orchomenus following 364.

[27] For the gods favouring the Spartans at the Battle of Aegospotami, see Pau. III. 11.5, who suggested that the Spartans won the battle partly because of divination in their support. For the role of Castor and Polydeuces in the battle, see Plu. *Lys.* 12.1, who claims Castor and Polydeuces appeared as stars on either side of Lysander's ships. This story can be dated back to the fourth century as Plutarch's source for this story was Daimachos (*BNJ* 65 F 8). Anaxandridas (*BNJ* 404) F 2, also cited by Plutarch (*Lys.* XVIII. 1-3), connects Lysander's offerings to Apollo at Delphi with Leuctra.

[28] The parentage of the twins was debated in ancient sources, with some making them the sons of Zeus and the mythical Spartan queen Leda (Hes. *CW.* F 21; Alc. F 34; Hom. *Hymn.* XVII. 1-2; Ps.-Apollod. I. 8.2), whilst Pi. *N.* X makes only Castor the son of Zeus and Leda, with Polydeuces the son of Tyndareus and Leda. Hom. *Od.* XI. 298-304, suggests Tyndareus and Leda, without a connection to Zeus. All of these

way of reading the omens occurring around the monument for Lysander at Delphi could be that Lysander could not bear the shame of seeing Sparta defeated and its hegemony ending (Dillion 2017: 190). Nonetheless, these omens reported by Callisthenes could be read as Castor and Polydeuces, gods closely associated with Sparta, abandoning them before the battle against the Thebans.

Callisthenes (F 22a) further mentions that the Spartans sent an embassy to Dodona to consult the oracle of Zeus there before the battle. Dodona was in Epirus, and therefore far away from the battlefield, yet as Herodotus (II. 52. 2) reports, this was one of the oldest and most prestigious sanctuaries on the Hellenic mainland. Thus, favourable prophesies here could have strongly boosted the morale amongst the Spartans. The oracle advised them not to fight the Thebans at Leuctra; instead, they should consider the safety of their army and withdraw from Boeotia. Nevertheless, the Spartans pursued the battle, and it culminated in the end of the Spartan hegemony of the Greek mainland. Callisthenes's account, therefore, presents us with two versions of negative myths of election or having lost the favour of one's gods. We can see this as Callisthenes presenting us with two examples that his readers would have understood as a sign that Zeus and the twin gods, Castor and Polydeuces, closely connected to Sparta, were not on their side.

As Callisthenes was writing in the middle of the third quarter of the 4th-century, and whilst the account differs from that of Xenophon, it shows the evolution of these stories in the 4th-century, as it would have been necessary to both explain the Theban victory and the Spartan defeat. When comparing this to Smith's theory of ethno-symbolism, we learn how these traditions developed in relation to the regional ethnic group in Boeotia in the 4th-century. We find elements comparable to the criteria of ethno-symbolism in Callisthenes's account, playing both on local mythical traditions in Boeotia, such as the omens from the sanctuary of Trophonius and Heracles's involvement in the battle. Yet, his account also shows wider Panhellenic symbolism by including a prophecy from the sanctuary of Zeus at Dodona and omens at Delphi. His account is the only account I am discussing here, which does not hint at the story of Leuctrides; perhaps it was included in his account, but in a section, which is now lost. Furthermore, his account hints at the third factor, as it shows the short-term durability of the stories. We can then

provides a strong connection for twin gods and the Spartans, with the twin gods often associated as the protectors of the Spartans.

divide the omens and prophecies reported by Callisthenes into two categories: first, those local to Boeotia, thus, important to the regional ethnic identity. Second, those who explained the defeat of Sparta in supernatural terms on a Panhellenic level, which we can read as important both on a local level but also used to explain the rising power of Thebes on the Hellenic mainland. Just as in Xenophon's account, the fragments of Callisthenes also have elements that align with Smith's theory of ethnic renewal: first, Xenophon mentions an omen from a nearby oracle without specifying which; Callisthenes makes this the oracle of Trophonius, a god genealogically associated with the sub-regional ethnic group of the Minyans in western Boeotia. A connection with Trophonius makes sense to have developed shortly after the Battle of Leuctra, as the chief *polis* of the Minyans, Orchomenus, was reluctant to re-join the new Boeotian *koinon.* Hence, having a Minyan deity on their side could aid in promoting Boeotian identity near Orchomenus. This also hints at cultural borrowing from the sub-regional group by using a story about omens from one of their gods. The stories of the omens would serve a similar purpose as those in Xenophon's account, and we can see popular participation both before (for the Boeotian army) and after the battle (additional elements added to the stories for regional unity). Second, we can also observe myths of election in Callisthenes's account, with Trophonius, Hercyna, and Zeus all on the side of the Boeotians. Trophonius and Hercyna being local deities, with omens occurring during divine rites for Trophonius that included the roosters associated with Hercyna (Paus. IX. 39.2). At the sanctuary at Dodona, Zeus refused to support the Spartans, and as we have seen, even Castor and Polydeuces were thought to have abandoned them through omens said to have occurred at Delphi. We then see all the factors needed for ethnic renewal or survival outlined by Smith in Callisthenes's account (Smith 1988: 21-24).

Diodorus Siculus's account of omens and oracular prophecies at Leuctra

The next account of omens and oracular prophecies I shall include in this paper is that of Diodorus Siculus, writing three centuries after the events, yet his principal source for them, Ephorus, was a contemporary. For this reason, Diodorus's account has some merit as a memory of a 4th-century

source, although his account was presumably affected by the changing circumstances from the 4th-century until his own time[29]. Diodorus (XV. 53.4) suggests that Epaminondas fabricated the omens before the battle in order to boost the morale of the Boeotian forces (cf. Polyaen. II. 3. 12). The first omen reported by Diodorus (XV. 50.2) was a comet seen over many nights, which later was thought to symbolise the end of Spartan dominance on the Hellenic mainland. Next, he talks of an omen regarding a blind man searching for runaway slaves who spoke to Epaminondas outside the gates of Thebes. Matthew Dillion (2017: 200) suggests that this hints at Theban enslavement during the period of Spartan domination less than a decade before; they were the runaway slaves. Diodorus suggests that some people in Thebes interpreted this as a warning for the future as if the Thebans would be slaves to the Spartans again if they were to lose the battle. However, in Diodorus's account, the Theban leader Epaminondas related this omen to the past and the Spartan occupation of the Cadmea. Furthermore, Diodorus (XV. 52.4) suggests that on this occasion, Epaminondas quoted one of Hector's speeches in the *Iliad* (XII. 243): εἷς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης ("only one omen is best, to fight for the land that is ours") [30].

In the *Iliad*, this is a part of Hector's answer to a speech by Polydamas. Hector and Polydamas had different approaches to the defences of Troy, with Polydamas preferring a more cautious approach than Hector. If we compare this to the Boeotian situation, we can see Epaminondas and Hector as parallels here: Hector promoted a more direct attack style to defend their lands, whilst Epaminondas favoured a direct attack in an open battle to defend Boeotia against the Spartans[31]. However, the context of the Trojan War and the Spartan invasion of Boeotia in 371 were different. In this instance, the Thebans and their Boeotian allies fought to avoid another period of Spartan dominance in Boeotia. An interesting aspect of this account is that Diodorus provides the first mention of Epaminondas in the literary accounts

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[29] After all, we should not regard the account of Diodorus a fully accurate reflection of Ephorus's account; see Georgiadou 1996: 75; Hammond 1937: 79-80.

[30] Diodorus' translations are taken from Loeb Classical Library, translated by Charles L Sherman (1952).

[31] Hector played a role in the Theban cults as there was a tomb of Hector in the city. Schachter (1981: 233-234) suggests that this hero cult was established in Thebes after Cassander rebuilt the city in 316. For Hector's tomb in Thebes, see Paus. IX. 18.5; Aristodemus (*BNJ* 383) F 7.

of these events, as neither Xenophon nor the surviving fragments of Callisthenes mention him nor any other Boeotarchs by name.

Diodorus (XV. 52. 5) then mentions another supposed unfavourable omen, as the wind tore a ribbon from a Boeotian spear which then wrapped itself around a slab that was positioned over the graves of Spartan and Peloponnesian soldiers that had fallen during Agesilaus of Sparta's invasion of Boeotia[32]. They considered these omens unfavourable for the Boeotians; however, Epaminondas and the Boeotarchs still led the troops to battle. Epaminondas, together with Pelopidas, were two of the most famous leaders of the rising Boeotian *koinon* and often stood in opposition to other Hellenic leaders such as Agesilaus. As we have seen, Diodorus suggests Epaminondas quoted the Trojan hero Hector when met by bad omens; we can view this in contrast with Agesilaus, who wished to be seen as a leader of the Greeks similar to Agamemnon in the Trojan War (Shipley 1997: 152). Therefore, we can see a tradition developing that portrays the Thebans and the Spartans as parallel with the opposite sides of the Trojan War. Perhaps this tradition became a part of the stories of the battle after the bones of Hector were transferred from Ophryneion to Thebes in 316 (see note 31).

Diodorus, like Xenophon and Callisthenes, reports omens that include Heracles; and just as in Xenophon's account, the weapons of the hero disappeared from his sanctuary in Thebes. Diodorus (XV. 53.4) suggests that the Thebans believed that the heroes of old were coming to the aid of the Boeotians, rather than just Heracles. Whilst Diodorus mentions only Heracles by name, we should regard these heroes of old as heroes local to Boeotia, both of Minyan and Boeotian heritage. Pausanias (IV. 32.4-5) suggests that the Messenian hero, Aristomenes of Messene, also took part in the battle. The addition of Aristomenes into these stories may have functioned as a mythical reminder of the Theban liberation of Messene and its effects on Sparta shortly after Leuctra[33]. Therefore, this story represents an important change in the myth history of 4th-century Boeotia and a developing aspect

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[32] Lanzillotta (1984: 173) suggests that the reason why Diodorus –or Ephorus, indeed– was the first account to report unfavourable omens was to discredit the Thebans, as they had won because of divine interaction and not their own valour.

[33] Having a Messenian hero helping the Boeotian forces at Leuctra fits with the Theban role of liberating Messene not long after the battle. We see another example of this with an omen reported by Paus. IV. 26.8, with the mythical seer Caucon associated with Messene appearing in Epaminondas's dream before the battle.

of an ethno-symbolic story representing the victory over the Spartans. Pausanias's (IX. 13.6) account agrees with that of Diodorus in crediting Epaminondas with the invention of the omens, but also provides additional names for the other Boeotarchs voting to fight: Malgis and Xenocrates[34]. It was this Xenocrates whom Pausanias suggests went to Lebadea to fetch the shield of Aristomenes. It is also in his account that we find an association between Aristomenes and the local deity Trophonius: after Aristomenes lost his shield at the Battle of the Boar's Cave, it was Trophonius's answer that allowed the Messenian hero to find it again (Paus. IV. 16.7). This story explained the reason why the shield of Aristomenes was at the sanctuary of Trophonius in Boeotia. These stories functioned as a 4th-century mythical innovation by the Messenians in an attempt to associate themselves with the Thebans and Boeotians, a tradition which seems to have been accepted in Boeotia too (Tuplin 1987: 102-103).

Diodorus (XV. 53. 4), like Callisthenes, reports a messenger arriving at the Boeotian camp with a message from Trophonius himself, bringing word about the victory and that, after winning, they needed to set up a festival for Zeus. Diodorus is the first to mention Zeus and the festival in connection with these omens. This festival became the Basileia at Lebadea, and this festival was an important Boeotian festival celebrating both the victory at Leuctra and the divine support for the unity of the Boeotians. We should consider pan-regional festivals such as the Basileia as a crucial identity component for regional ethnic groups. Setting up a Panboeotian festival in Lebadea would strongly benefit the Thebans as this would allow them to promote the *koinon* and Boeotian unity in the neighbourhood of their traditional rival in Orchomenus[35]. The *polis* of Orchomenus joined the Boeotian *koinon* in 370, less than a year after Leuctra and all of Boeotia was once more united in the same regional federal state. As stated above, Diodorus provides the first of the accounts I have discussed here, which includes a direct reference to the Basileia festival. We have already seen that in the account of Callisthenes, the oracle of Zeus at Dodona told the Spartans not to fight, and in Pausanias's account, the Messenian hero Aristomenes fought at Leuctra.

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[34] Xenocrates is also mentioned in the Leuctra epigram, alongside Theopompus and Mnasilaos: Mackil 2013: T4 (415-416); *RO* nº. 30; *IG* VII. 2462.

[35] Orchomenus was the only settlement in Boeotia that was not a part of the resurgent Boeotian *koinon* after the Battle of Leuctra in 371. See Schachter (1994: 112) versus Mackil (2013: 210 n. 232) above.

The chief deity of Messene was Zeus, who was also associated with Trophonius[36]. We can therefore see several reasons, in various accounts, why a festival to Zeus would be appropriate after the battle of Leuctra. We also observe a likely reason for this in the local cults of Boeotia. The chief deity of the Minyans and Orchomenians was Zeus Karaios, which the Boeotians had incorporated into their pantheon in the last half of the 6th-century (Schachter 2016d: 240). Further, by instituting a Panboeotian festival in honour of Zeus in the neighbourhood of Lebadea and the former Orchomenian territories elevated the Theban or Boeotian version of Zeus near Orchomenus (Schachter 2016c: 117).

Finally, Diodorus (XV. 54.1) brings forward the myth of the Leuctrides as a component in the battle, as he suggests that the Spartan exile Leandrias went to Epaminondas to inform him about the legend of the Spartan ambassadors's unjust action against the Boeotian maidens in the local folklore. Diodorus claims local oracle-mongers also used this story to boost the morale of the Boeotians; thus, Diodorus suggests this was a tradition both within Boeotia and among the Spartans as seen from the involvement of a Spartan exile. Playing on this mythological event allowed the Theban leaders to proclaim that it predestined them to defeat the Spartans, as the curse said that they were doomed to lose fighting near the monument of the maidens their ambassadors had wronged in the distant past. If we accept that this was a tradition local to both Sparta and Boeotia, it makes sense that the Spartans associated it with other locations called Leuctra (Tufano 2019b: 55). Diodorus's account of the Leuctrides suggests they were the daughters of Schedaus and Leuctrus, presumably confusing his account by applying Leuctrus as a patronym (Stylianou 1998: 395).

I shall now compare Diodorus's account of these traditions to Smith's definition of ethno-symbolism. Diodorus's account, just as the accounts of Xenophon and Callisthenes, shows an awareness of localised traditions and their role in the stories of the Battle of Leuctra. The Leuctrides were already included in Xenophon's account and seem to have been present in the traditions of the battle from the 4th-century. Furthermore, the traditions reported by Diodorus mentioning Heracles, Trophonius, and Zeus hints at 4th-century traditions that Diodorus took from Ephorus. Diodorus, in his ac-

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[36] Schachter (1994: 78) highlights that in two periods Trophonius was identified with Zeus; briefly in the second century B.C and again in the first century A.D

count, suggests that the soldiers put their superstition aside, and with courage prepared for the battle. Yet, the very survival of these stories hints at their importance, which then fulfils the third criteria for ethno-symbolism: durability. For a comparison with the theory of ethnic renewal, we should keep in mind that Ephorus and probable 4th-century events are represented in Diodorus's account. First, Diodorus's account shows the element of cultic renewal and is the first to hint at the new festival of Zeus Basileus at Lebadea. This festival had a Panboeotian reach and was strategically organised at Lebadea near the territory of Thebes's primary rival in Boeotia, Orchomenus. Second, just as in the account of Callisthenes, we can see the role of an omen from the Minyan deity Trophonius. Since this corresponds with the account of Callisthenes and we can see increased activity at the sanctuary in the 4th-century, we can assume regional ethnic renewal in this period[37]. The new festival of Zeus Basileus fits this pattern as well, since, as I have previously mentioned, Zeus was a primary god of Orchomenus and the Minyans[38]. We can therefore consider the organisation of a new festival for Zeus at Lebadea after the battle as cultural borrowing from the Orchomenian and Minyan traditions. Third, we can see popular participation as the new festival, the Basileia, had a Panboeotian reach, as seen in epigraphic remains of the 4th-century[39]. Fourth, a myth of election is once more represented as stated in the belief of Heracles's involvement in the battle, the prophecy from Trophonius, and his message to the Boeotians telling them to organise a new festival for Zeus. Diodorus also says that the heroes of old came to the aid of the Boeotians, with Pausanias mentioning Aristomenes as one of these; all these mythical events fit well with the records of Xenophon, Callisthenes, and other historical records from the 4th-century.

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[37] Such similarities between the accounts of Callisthenes and Ephorus should not be considered surprising, since Ephorus used Callisthenes's work as a source for his own histories; see Georgiadou 1996: 75.

[38] Giroux 2020: 5; Schacter 2016c: 182, also see Schachter 1994: 108, where he mentions an inscription (*SEG* XXIII. 295) which can be restored to mention Zeus Karaios instead of Laphystion, this inscription deals with the border between Coronea and Lebadea; Karaios is the most common epithet of Zeus in Boeotia. Then perhaps we can suggest that Karaios and Laphystion refers to the same version of Zeus, on the border between former Minyan and Boeotian territory.

[39] See especially *IG* VII. 2532 from Thebes and *IG* VII. 552 from Tanagra.

Other Accounts: Pausanias and Plutarch

Throughout the text above, I have outlined the importance of mythical innovation and the ethno-symbolism of the omens and oracular prophecies at the Battle of Leuctra in the historiographical accounts of Xenophon, Callisthenes, and Diodorus, with some reference to other accounts. I shall now briefly investigate some additional features of Plutarch and Pausanias, both much later authors, yet both provide interesting insights into the usage of the stories of the omens and prophecies for the Battle of Leuctra. However, I shall not finish this section by comparing their accounts to Smith's ethno-symbolism and ethnic renewal theories. I cover the records of Pausanias and Plutarch in this article because Pausanias includes a prophecy that is not recorded elsewhere that shows the internal division lines within Boeotia. Whilst Plutarch was a Boeotian writer himself, and as Salvatore Tufano has recently and convincingly argued, Plutarch's account in the *Amatoriae Narrationes* (*Mor.* 773-774d) seems to come from a local Boeotian source (Tufano 2019b).

Plutarch talks of the omens and prophecies in the stories of the Battle of Leuctra in the *Life of Pelopidas* (20.3-22.4) and the *Moralia –*see; *Amatoriae Narrationes* (773c-774d)*, De Malignitate Herodoti* (856f)*,* and *De Pythiae Oraculis* (377e-f). Yet, his primary account of the omens was in the now lost work *Life of Epaminondas* (Plu. *Ages.* 28.4; Georgiadou 1996: 79). The accounts he provides in *De malignitate Herodoti* and *De Pythiae Oraculis* do not provide many details about these supernatural traditions. In *De Malignitate Herodoti,* he merely mentions that the Spartans lost at Leuctra because of the curse of the Leuctrides, whilst in the *De Pythiae Oraculis,* he lists three omens. These three omens are not represented in Xenophon or Diodorus's accounts; the eyes of a sculpture of Hiero of Sparta fell out; the golden stars dedicated by Lysander at Delphi disappeared; wild weeds and herbs grew on the sculpture of Lysander. We see two comparable omens in the 4th-century account of Callisthenes, with the exception being the mention of Hiero of Sparta. In the *Life of Pelopidas,* Plutarch emphasises the involvement of Pelopidas in these events, as he mentions a story of the Leuctrides appearing in Pelopidas's dreams. According to Plutarch, Pelopidas saw the maidens weep, and Schedaus instructed him that in order to defeat the Spartans at Leuctra, they needed to sacrifice an auburn-haired virgin and, after some discussion, decided to sacrifice a horse of this description. Plutarch also suggests that there was some confusion as to which Leuctra this was referring to, as there were places called Leuctra in both Laconia and

Arcadia. Yet, as we have seen, Xenophon says there was a monument for the maidens already at Leuctra before the battle, and so, if this was a local tradition in Boeotia in the 4th-century, it is unlikely that Pelopidas and the Boeotians were uncertain about the location. The Spartans, however, were more likely to have made incorrect assumptions about the location of the place named Leuctra, where they would be defeated.

We find Plutarch's fullest account of the stories associated with Leuctra in his *Amatoriae Narrationes*, where he mentions the story of the Leuctrides (Dillion 2017: 189). This account differs from those of Diodorus and Pausanias in that the Spartans killed the Leuctrides rather than the maidens killing themselves. Tufano has recently discussed the nature of this story (2019b), and I shall therefore not focus on the story Plutarch tells of the Leuctrides here but briefly mention the omens he mentions at the end of this account. Here Plutarch once more says the Leuctrides and Schedaus came to Pelopidas in his dream, with a prediction that the Spartans would lose a battle at the site of the tomb of the maidens. That this omen in the account of Plutarch was attributed to Pelopidas should be no surprise; after all, next to Epaminondas, he was the most famous Boeotian leader of this time. This then corresponds with Xenophon and Diodorus's accounts, which also mentions the monument of the Leuctrides.

The last account I shall investigate here we find in the stories reported by Pausanias. We can see two other omens represented in Pausanias's account. First, Pausanias (IX. 13.4) suggests that the Spartans brought a flock of sheep to sacrifice to the gods for good fortune in the upcoming battle. These were guarded by she-goats, which were eaten by wolves on the way to the battle, whilst the sheep were left untouched. Again, this was a story applied to the outcome of the battle in order to explain the defeat of the Spartans. Finally, Pausanias mentions a prophecy from Delphi that connects Leuctra with the semi-mythical battle site of Ceressus. This was within the territory of Thespiae, one of Thebes's principal rivals in Boeotia who in the past tended to side with the Athenians or Spartans against them[40]. In 373, the Thebans had forced Thespians back into the Boeotian *koinon,* and late accounts of the battle suggest the Thespians were reluctant to fight at Leuctra. This makes

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[40] For some examples of the Thespians in opposition to the Thebans, see Hdt. VII. 132.1, VIII. 66.2, IX. 30 (Persian Wars); Th. IV.133.1 (Thebes razing the walls of Thespiae following the Battle of Delium in 424); X. *HG.* VI. 3.1; Isoc. XIV. 9 (Thebes recent subjugation of Thespiae), 13 (Spartan garrison at Thespiae).

sense in the context of the Thespians being reluctant members of the *koinon*; therefore, later accounts suggested they left the battlefield and hid in the fortress at Ceressus (Paus. IX. 13.8; Polyaen. II. 3.3). Pausanias then connects the Thespian choice of hiding at Ceressus with the semi-mythical Battle of Ceressus. This battle had curbed a Thessalian invasion of Central Greece in the 6th-century and, according to Plutarch, liberated the Greeks, much like the Battle of Leuctra[41].

According to Pausanias (IX. 14. 3), the Thessalians consulted the oracle at Delphi after failing to defeat the Thespians at Ceressus. Here they were told that Ceressus would only fall when the Dorians had lost their youth at the location where Schedaus's daughters had died. Plutarch (*Cam* 19.2) also connects the two battles by suggesting that they took place on the same day but two hundred years apart[42]. Famous battles and wars often become important in the memory of ethnic groups, and it would make sense that such a connection was already being constructed in the 4th-century as a part of the ethnic renewal of the Boeotians[43]. Yet, if they knew this story before the battle, it would not make sense for the Thespians to hide here. According to Pausanias's (IX. 14.4) version of the story, the Thebans following the battle of Leuctra, under the leadership of Epaminondas, attacked and defeated the Thespians at Ceressus; this then fits as a story that developed following the Battle of Leuctra. Two factors suggest this: first, the story connects the semi-mythical event of Ceressus with the Battle of Leuctra, and both battles were crucial for the ethnic unity of the Boeotian regional ethnic identity. Second, it functions as a story of the Thebans defeating the Thespians and justifies

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[41] This battle was an important part of the ethnic saga of the Boeotians in the 6th century when their ethnicity as we know it was formed. Various sources provide different dates for this; for a good collection of dates in modern sources, see Mackil 2013: 24 n. 14; Grigsby 2017: 65 n. 83. But as Schachter (2016b: 45) suggests, fixing a date is futile. Instead, the importance of the battle should be regarded as a crucial moment in the regional ethnogenesis. Our only direct tips from ancient sources are found in Plu. *Cam* 19.2, which puts it two hundred years before Leuctra on the same day, and in *Mor.* 866f, in which he puts it shortly before the Persian Wars.

[42] Again, it is impossible to know if this date is accurate; instead, we find the importance here of the dates of two battles being connected in Boeotia as important myth-making events. For such events, see Smith 1986: 76, where he uses the example of Russian identity.

[43] Smith 2009: 28: "The myths and memories of ethnic resistance and expansion help to define and crystallize ethnic communities"; see also Smith 2000: 67.

the weakened position of Thespiae in the Boeotian *koinon* following the 370s (Tufano 2019b: 57).

Conclusion – omens, prophecies, and localised ethnic identity

We should consider the stories of omens and oracular prophecy before the Battle of Leuctra pivotal in the 4th-century strengthening of the Boeotian regional ethnic identity. They allow us to analyse the importance of localised traditions and the impact of major events such as battles had on them. In the story of the rape of the Leuctrides, Spartans committed an unjust action against Boeotian maidens; thus, we can read the defeat of the Spartans at Leuctra as an element of righting this wrong. This story, alongside omens involving Heracles's weapons, the priestesses in Thebes singing for the upcoming victory, and the messenger from Lebadea, all fit as stories representing ethno-symbolism and ethnic renewal within Boeotia in the 4th-century. These stories came about for two reasons; first, a method of boosting the morale of the Boeotian troops before the battle, and second, to explain the rising power of Thebes and the diminishing position of Sparta. Diodorus suggests Epaminondas was responsible for this, but perhaps it would be better to assume that it was Epaminondas together with the two other Boeotarchs who wished to fight at Leuctra. The unnamed heroes mentioned by Diodorus were added to the story after the battle in order to make it seem that all the heroes of Boeotia supported them in the battle. The heroic assistance of Aristomenes of Messene functioned as a later addition relating to the Boeotian liberation of Messene from Spartan control after the Battle of Leuctra. Furthermore, we should also consider that the Delphic omens mentioned by Callisthenes were developed after the battle as justification and divine explanation for the defeat and the following decline of Spartan power. Thus, these omens reported by the historiographical sources, as well as Pausanias and Plutarch, provide pivotal clues about the role of legendary events in the consolidation and renewal of regional ethnic groups. By analysing these accounts alongside the concepts of ethno-symbolism and ethnic renewal, we can observe how these stories contributed to the strengthening of the Boeotian regional ethnic group from 371 onwards.

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Il meraviglioso nei frammenti di Polemone di Ilio e l'influenza della scuola aristotelica

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Introduzione

La natura frammentaria di ciò che disponiamo di Polemone di Ilio rende difficile avere un'idea esaustiva dei suoi scritti e conoscerne il reale carattere. L'interesse per il mondo del meraviglioso appare, tuttavia, chiaro dal contenuto di alcuni frammenti e dai titoli che alcuni passi di autori posteriori ci hanno tramandato. Al di là della loro autenticità non si può ignorare che la tradizione gli abbia attribuito interessi di tipo paradossografico.

Questo contributo intende affrontare il tema del meraviglioso in Polemone, a partire dall'analisi di tre frammenti che documentano un'attenzione specifica ai *thaumasia* in ambiti dell'erudizione tra loro molto diversi. Si passa dal prodigioso fenomeno idrografico legato agli dei Palici in Sicilia, all'*himation* del sibarita Alcistene, considerato dalla letteratura antica tra i *mirabilia* degni di nota, per prendere infine in considerazione una breve curiosità di carattere aneddotico relativa all'eccezionale magrezza di due individui poco noti. Due di questi frammenti, inoltre, documentano gli unici titoli specifici sul tema del meraviglioso. I titoli di Polemone, per quanto utili, analogamente a quelli di molte opere antiche, risentono di rielaborazioni posteriori e dell'opera epitomatrice delle fonti intermedie. Le informazioni che trasmettono, spesso non concordanti, lasciano aperta più di una possibilità e rendono difficile il tentativo di ascrivere i frammenti a un'opera precisa. Nonostante la difficoltà si intende cercare di comprendere la natura e l'organizzazione delle opere paradossografiche di Polemone, mettendo in luce l'origine del suo interesse per il meraviglioso e l'influenza che la scuola aristotelica ebbe sulla sua produzione letteraria relativa ai *mirabilia*, in particolare attraverso il confronto tra i passi del periegeta e quelli corrispondenti del περὶ θαυμασίων ἀκουσμάτων dello Ps.-Aristotele.

Il meraviglioso in campo idrografico

Nell'ambito del commento ad alcuni versi dell'*Eneide*[1], Macrobio riporta *verbatim* un passo molto significativo sull'ordalia dei Palici in Sicilia[2]:

> Polemon vero in libro qui inscribitur περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ θαυμαζομένων ποταμῶν sic ait: οἱ δὲ Παλικοὶ προσαγορευόμενοι παρὰ τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις αὐτόχθονες θεοὶ νομίζονται. ὑπάρχουσιν δὲ τούτοις ἀδελφοὶ κρατῆρες χαμαίζηλοι. προσιέναι δὲ ἁγιστεύοντας χρὴ πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἀπό τε παντὸς ἄγους καὶ συνουσίας ἔτι τε καί τινων ἐδεσμάτων. (27) φέρεται δὲ ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὀσμὴ βαρεῖα θείου, καὶ τοῖς πλησίον ἱσταμένοις καρηβάρησιν ἐμποιοῦσα δεινήν· τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ ἐστὶ θολερὸν αὐτῶν, καὶ τὴν χρόαν ὁμοιότατον χαμαιρύπῳ λευκῷ. φέρεται δὲ κολπούμενόν τε καὶ παφλάζον, οἷαί εἰσιν αἱ δῖναι τῶν ζεόντων ἀναβολάδην ὑδάτων. φασὶν δὲ εἶναι καὶ τὸ βάθος ἀπέραντον τῶν κρατήρων τούτων, ὥστε καὶ βοῦς εἰσπεσόντας ἠφανίσθαι καὶ ζεῦγος ὁρικὸν ἐλαυνόμενον, ἔτι δὲ φορβάδας ἐναλλομένας. (28) ὅρκος δέ ἐστιν τοῖς Σικελιώταις μέγιστος καθηραμένων τῶν προκληθέντων. οἱ δὲ ὀρκωταὶ γραμμάτιον ἔχοντες ἀγορεύουσιν τοῖς ὀρκουμένοις περὶ ὧν ἂν χρῄζωσιν τοὺς ὅρκους· ὁ δὲ ὀρκούμενος, θαλλὸν κραδαίνων, ἐστεμμένος ἄζωστος καὶ μονοχίτων, ἐφαπτόμενος τοῦ κρατῆρος ἐξ ὑποβολῆς δίεισιν τὸν ὅρκον. (29) καὶ ἂν μὲν ἐμπεδώσῃ τοὺς ῥηθέντας ὅρκους, ἀσινὴς ἄπεισιν οἴκαδε, παραβάτης δὲ γενόμενος τῶν θεῶν ἐμποδὼν τελευτᾷ. Τούτων δὲ γινομένων ἐγγυητὰς ὑπισχνοῦνται καταστήσειν τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν, ἐπὴν νεαρόν τι γένηται, κάθαρσιν ὀφλισκάνουσιν τοῦ τεμένους. περὶ δὲ τὸν τόπον τοῦτον ᾤκησαν Παλικηνοὶ πόλιν ἐπώνυμον τούτων τῶν δαιμόνων Παλικήν. (30) Haec Polemon (Macr. Sat. V. 19.26-30 Willis = F 83 Preller = FGrH III, p. 140, F 83).

Non sono molte le testimonianze di scrittori latini sul tema del giuramento ordalico legato a queste divinità, che appartengono alla mitologia greca pur essendo originariamente autoctone della Sicilia (Manni 1980; Ciaceri 2004: 25-28). Silio Italico e Vibo Sequestre vi fanno riferimento senza però

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[1] Verg. *A*. IX. 581-585: Stabat in egregiis Arcentis filius armis, / Pictus acu chlamydem et ferrugine clarus Ibera, / Insignis facie: genitor quem miserat Arcens, / Eductum matris luco Symaethia circum flumina, pinguis ubi et placabilis ara Palici.
[2] Sui Palici, vedi Glotz 1907; Ziegler 1949a; Croon 1952; Bello 1970; Rizzo 1987; Cusumano 1990, 2006; Meurant 1998; Maniscalco 2001-2002, 2008; Witczak **2004-2005**; Cordano 2008; Angelucci 2014.

soffermarsi sul mito ad esse collegato e tralasciando di spiegare il particolare rito che consentiva di smascherare gli spergiuri. Macrobio, che ignora la citazione peraltro molto breve dei due autori, lamenta la carenza di riferimenti e afferma la necessità di far ricorso a fonti greche per trovare informazioni e fornire una esegesi più accurata del passo virgiliano in esame, dichiarando che Virgilio stesso attinse alla letteratura greca (Macr. *Sat*. V. 19.16): *Quis hic Palicus deus, vel potius qui di Palici, nam duo sunt, apud nullum penitus auctorem Latinum, quod sciam, repperi: sed de Graecorum penitissimis litteris hanc historiam eruit Maro*. Tra gli autori che fanno parte delle *penitissimae Graecorum litterae* figura il nome di Polemone accanto a Eschilo (Macr. *Sat*. V. 19.18, 24; Aesch. *TGrF* 3 F 6), Callia (*FGrH* 564) e Senagora (*FGrH* 240). È Polemone, tuttavia, l'unico autore che viene citato per ricordare il procedimento ordalico legato ai Palici. Il titolo è riportato esplicitamente: περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ θαυμαζομένων ποταμῶν. Sebbene la spiegazione etimologica del nome delle divinità e le notizie ascrivibili alla vicenda legata alla loro nascita non siano espressamente collegate al periegeta, possiamo ritenere che egli le citasse prima dell'ordalia, tenendo presente il tenore complessivo di tutti i suoi frammenti, indipendentemente dall'opera di provenienza. La spiegazione dei miti legati alle divinità e degli epiteti con cui erano onorate era, infatti, un tema a lui particolarmente caro. Il termine Palici, secondo l'etimologia che Macrobio attribuisce ad Eschilo[3], deriva da ἀπὸ τοῦ πάλιν ἱκέσθαι in quanto le due divinità, fratelli gemelli nati dalla ninfa Talia, erano venuti alla luce dalla terra dove la madre, incinta di Zeus, si era rifugiata per sfuggire alla collera di Era. Nel territorio del comune di Mineo (Vanotti 1984: 100; Cusumano 2006: 122)[4], vicino al punto in cui sarebbero usciti i due fratelli, si trovavano due sorgenti di acqua sulfurea, che secondo la testimonianza di Polemone formavano crateri molto profondi, messi in relazione dagli antichi con queste divinità. Secondo la testimonianza di Callia (*FGrH* 564 F 1) il luogo era situato non lontano dal fiume Simeto a sud di Catania.

Il *thaumasion* legato a questi κρατῆρες, che nelle fonti antiche vengono indicati anche con i nomi di πηγαί, κρῆναι, *lacus, stagna* (Cusumano 2006: 122-123)*,* è duplice come emerge dal passo di Polemone: da una parte il fenomeno idrografico consistente nella presenza di profonde acque sulfuree ribollenti e gorgoglianti tali da far scomparire muli, buoi e cavalli che erano caduti al loro interno; dall'altra la capacità di smascherare gli spergiuri per il

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[3] Macr. *Sat*. V.19.18.
[4] Sul sito di Palice, vedi Di Stefano 1977; Messina 1977.

particolare potere loro attribuito dagli antichi. Coloro ai quali era rivolta un'accusa, che Macrobio (*Sat.* V. 19.20) riconduce al furto o a colpe analoghe, potevano dunque recarsi qui perché venisse dichiarata la loro innocenza mediante un singolare rito la cui sacralità era confermata da una procedura, che prevedeva determinate condizioni e un solenne giuramento (Cusumano 1990, 2006; Angelucci 2014: 19-20). In caso di colpevolezza l'individuo era colpito da morte istantanea[5] che secondo lo Ps.-Aristotele (*Mir. Ausc.* 57) avveniva per combustione. Pertanto, prima di giurare, doveva fornire dei garanti che avrebbero dovuto provvedere alle spese di purificazione nel caso fosse risultato spergiuro. Data la solennità del rito era prevista una particolare sequenza di atti: l'accusato doveva presentarsi purificato da ogni contaminazione, incoronato, vestito solo con la tunica e senza cintura e pronunciava la formula del giuramento dall'orlo del cratere, al quale doveva avvicinarsi agitando un ramoscello.

Il frammento di Polemone può essere raffrontato con un passo del περὶ θαυμασίων ἀκουσμάτων conservato nel *corpus aristotelicum* ma già dagli antichi considerato non opera di Aristotele bensì della sua scuola e risalente forse al III sec. a.C.[6] Oggetto della descrizione sono lo stesso prodigio legato alle acque e il procedimento ordalico volto a smascherare gli spergiuri, temi che consentono di inserire il periegeta nell'ambito degli interessi coltivati dal Peripato.

È innegabile l'attenzione che la scuola aristotelica rivolse ai fenomeni naturali. Fu Aristotele a indirizzare per primo la sua indagine critica al regno animale e ai fenomeni metereologici, promuovendo una straordinaria raccolta di materiale e dettando una linea di investigazione che fu poi seguita nel periodo successivo, pur con delle differenze. Non si trattava di mera catalogazione di *mirabilia*, ma di un tentativo di ricerca scientifica che aveva lo scopo di comprendere la natura e le sue leggi. Il suo progetto era molto ambizioso e perseguiva l'intento di coprire ogni campo del sapere, prendendo in considerazione la scienza in tutte le sue sfaccettature. Ciò che contraddistingue il filosofo è la ricerca delle cause come emerge dai suoi scritti, tra i quali si annovera il trattato *Meteorologia*, senza dubbio il più significativo ai fini di comprendere il suo legame con la paradossografia. Occupandosi, infatti, delle leggi che governano il mondo e di fenomeni non

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[5] Secondo Diodoro (XI. 89) chi era colpevole non moriva ma diventava cieco.
[6] Per quanto riguarda le ipotesi che sono state avanzate sulla data di composizione dell'opera, vedi Sassi 1993: 457-459; Vanotti 1997: XI-XIV. Alcuni indizi fanno pensare all'epoca adrianea ma la collocazione nel III sec. a.C. sembra preferibile.

solo atmosferici (Aujac 2003: 14; Casservitz 2003: 27-29)[7], come si potrebbe supporre dal titolo, ma anche sismici, idrologici e chimici, egli osserva che alcuni sono in qualche modo spiegabili scientificamente mentre altri non possono essere chiariti da un punto di vista razionale (Arist. *Mete*. 338a-339a): ἐν οἷς τὰ μὲν ἀποροῦμεν, τῶν δὲ ἐφαπτόμεθά τινα τρόπον. Con questa affermazione l'autore si ferma a riflettere sull'esistenza di quanto è presente e osservabile in natura ma non intelligibile nelle sue cause, aprendo la strada a ciò che sarà in seguito indicato come *thaumasion*[8]. Da sottolineare è la rilevanza del luogo geografico in cui si colloca il fatto analizzato, che non è considerato in termini generali ma dipendente da fattori legati a una specifica località. Così le frequenti alluvioni del Nilo, facendo di volta in volta cambiare aspetto al delta, sono la causa dei continui mutamenti della linea di costa dell'Egitto (Arist. *Mete*. 351b), le piogge estive in Arabia e Etiopia sono dovute al clima caldo (348b-349a), mentre solo nel Ponto la rugiada è dovuta al vento del nord e non a quello del sud (347a-b). Gli esponenti del Peripato, che raccolsero la sua eredità, ebbero a disposizione tutti i dati da lui raccolti e perseguirono nella medesima direzione, orientandosi però progressivamente sempre di più verso la raccolta fine a sé stessa (Sassi 1993: 454-457; Angelucci 2014: 11-12). Permase l'interesse verso i fenomeni della natura, la botanica e la zoologia ma la volontà di comprendere le leggi naturali lasciò ben presto spazio alla mera catalogazione.

Il περὶ θαυμασίων ἀκουσμάτων, contenente il passo sul fenomeno prodigioso legato ai Palici, appartiene a questa fase del Peripato e fornisce informazioni che integrano quelle presenti nel frammento di Polemone[9].

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[7] Il termine μετεωρολογία può comprendere anche fenomeni marini e celesti, quali costellazioni e astri.

[8] PAJÓN LEYRA 2011: 244: "ARISTÓTELES EMPRENDE, PUES, EN LA *METEOROLOGÍA* EL ESTUDIO DE UN CONJUNTO DE FENÓMENOS EN EL QUE RECONOCE QUE LA LÓGICA A VECES ESTARÁ DESTINADA A FRACASAR, DADO QUE LAS LEYES NATURALES SE CUMPLEN ALLÍ DE FORMA MENOS REGULAR QUE EN OTROS ÁMBITOS (ὅΣΑ ΣΥΜΒΑίΝΕΙ ΚΑΤὰ ΦύΣΙΝ ΜέΝ, ἀΤΑΚΤΟΤέΡΑΝ ΜέΝΤΟΙ). CON ELLO EL FILÓSOFO NO HACE OTRA COSA SINO PERMITIR LA ENTRADA DE LO INEXPLICADO, DE LO QUE ALTERA EL ORDEN NATURAL PREVISIBLE Y, POR TANTO, DE LO SORPRENDENTE, EN EL ÁMBITO DE LA CIENCIA".

[9] Il passo dello Ps.-Aristotele è ripreso quasi *verbatim* da Stefano di Bisanzio (s.v. παλική), che tuttavia non specifica l'autore da cui dipende. Strabone (VI. 2.9) ricorda il prodigio naturale ma non fa cenno al culto dei Palici e al giuramento. La fonte è infine citata dal *Paradoxographus Florentinus* (*mir*. 8). Un breve cenno alla morte in

Viene specificata l'altezza del getto del geyser, l'ampiezza dell'area coperta dalle acque e la causa di morte dello spergiuro. I due testi sono pertanto complementari e consentono di meglio conoscere il fenomeno di queste particolari acque sulfuree.

> ἔστι δὲ καὶ κρήνη τις ἐν Παλικοῖς τῆς Σικελίας, ὡς δεκάκλινος· αὕτη δ' ἀναρρίπτει ὕδωρ εἰς ὕψος ἓξ πήχεις, ὥστε ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδόντων νομίζεσθαι κατακλυσθήσεσθαι τὸ πεδίον· καὶ πάλιν εἰς ταὐτὸ καθίσταται. ἔστι δὲ καὶ ὅρκος, ὃς ἅγιος αὐτόθι δοκεῖ εἶναι· ὅσα γὰρ ὄμνυσί τις, γράψας εἰς πινακίδιον ἐμβάλλει εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ. ἐὰν μὲν οὖν εὐορκῇ, ἐπιπολάζει τὸ πινακίδιον· ἐὰν δὲ μὴ εὐορκῇ, τὸ μὲν πινακίδιον βαρὺ γενόμενον ἀφανίζεσθαί φασι, τὸν δ' ἄνθρωπον πίμπρασθαι. διὸ δὴ λαμβάνειν τὸν ἱερέα παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐγγύας ὑπὲρ τοῦ καθαίρειν τινὰ τὸ ἱερόν. (Ps.-Arist. *Mir. Ausc.* 57, 834b Bekker)

Il problema delle fonti dello Ps.-Aristotele rimane aperto ed è altresì legato all'incertezza relativa alla data della sua composizione (Vanotti 1997: 101). Anche il rapporto di emulazione, a lungo sostenuto, nei confronti dei *mirabilia* callimachei, contenuti nell'opera Θαυμάτων τῶν εἰς ἅπασαν τὴν γῆν κατὰ τόπους ὄντων συναγωγή, è stato talvolta messo in dubbio e i due scritti potrebbero avere un'origine indipendente[10].

L'opera dello Ps.-Aristotele si può suddividere in tre nuclei tematici, secondo una linea di analisi seguita già dagli studiosi moderni dell'Ottocento (Müllenhof 1870: 472; Geffcken 1892: 83; Ziegler 1949: col. 1152; Westermann 1839: col. XXVI; così anche Vanotti 1984: 33): di argomento naturalistico sono i capitoli 1-77 e 137-151 con l'aggiunta di quelli dal 114 al 129; presentano temi storico-mitografici i capitoli centrali 78-136 con l'eccezione del gruppo 114-129; i capitoli 152-178 sono, infine, incentrati su fonti e fiumi

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cui incorreva chi cadeva nel geyser è presente anche in Antig. *Mir.* 121. Gli studi di Dorandi hanno escluso l'attribuzione dell'opera ἱστοριῶν παραδόξων συναγωγή all'Antigono di Caristo autore di biografie di filosofi e di trattati sulla storia dell'arte e dello stile. Sullo *status quaestionis* si rimanda a T. Dorandi 1999: XIV-XVII; vedi anche Pajón Leyra 2011: 110-113. Di recente Ronconi (2007: 63-64) ha riproposto la paternità dell'opera a questo Antigono. Dorandi (2005: 121-124), pur riconoscendo l'assoluta validità degli studi del Ronconi sul *Palat. Heid.* gr. 389, ha ribadito la sua posizione in merito all'attribuzione dell'opera paradossografica.

[10] Così Sassi 1993: 458-459: "nulla impedisce che la gestazione dello scritto pseudo-aristotelico sia indipendente da Callimaco (riferimenti al quale, di fatto, non vi sono): anche perché non è detto che il genere paradossografico vada per forza ridotto a una linea di filiazione unica".

e risalgono al *De Fluviis* dello Ps.-Plutarco di età tardo-imperiale. Questi ultimi secondo il Flashar furono redatti e uniti alla raccolta con ogni probabilità in un secondo momento, come ha evidenziato l'analisi della tradizione manoscritta[11]. Risultano infatti assenti in un certo numero di codici, che al termine del capitolo 151 riportano la parola τέλος. Lo studioso ritiene inoltre che nell'opera siano da identificare cinque sezioni, e non tre, sulla base della fonte prevalentemente utilizzata nei diversi capitoli: 1-77 provengono da Teofrasto; 78-114 da Timeo; 115-138 da Teopompo; 139-151 da Teofrasto; 151-178 dal *De Fluviis*.

In entrambi i tipi di suddivisione il frammento sui Palici appartiene al primo gruppo di capitoli di argomento naturalistico, attribuibili per la maggior parte dei casi a Teofrasto. Sono caratterizzati tuttavia, come emerge da un'analisi complessiva, da "disordine espositivo", che secondo la critica potrebbe essere indice di una rielaborazione personale soprattutto se confrontati, laddove è possibile, con i passi corrispondenti di Eliano e di Plinio (Vanotti 1984: 41-42), che hanno evidenziato una maggiore omogeneità:

> "Se dunque per Plinio ed Eliano pare lecito ipotizzare il ricorso a una fonte comune, costituita forse da escerti dei trattati di Aristotele o di Teofrasto, non altrettanto pare potersi concludere per il *De Mirabilibus*: il disordine espositivo, che caratterizza la raccolta, potrebbe anzi essere indice di una redazione personale, indipendente dalle raccolte a cui attinsero Plinio ed Eliano; oppure frutto della dipendenza dalle stesse sillogi, ma rielaborate in forma autonoma" (Vanotti 1984: 42).

Nonostante tutte le incertezze su una derivazione diretta da Teofrasto, i *mirabilia* legati alle acque dovevano ad ogni modo essere ampiamente trattati in ambiente peripatetico. Lo stesso Teofrasto, che si occupò prevalentemente di questioni di botanica, coltivò interessi paradossografici nel campo delle acque come testimonia lo scritto περὶ ὑδάτων. A fenomeni acquatici particolari sono relativi i capitoli 53-57 dello Ps.-Aristotele, che costituiscono un blocco omogeneo da un punto di vista tematico per il quale è stato proposto il riferimento oltre a Teofrasto anche a Fania, allievo di Aristotele.

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[11] Flashar (1981: 56-62) individua tre famiglie di codici e ritiene che i capitoli 152-178 appartengano alla terza. Westermann (1839: II-VI) individua quattro famiglie.

Se da una parte è chiaro l'interesse che le sorgenti straordinarie dei Palici dovevano suscitare nel Peripato, dall'altra la presenza nello Ps.-Aristotele di informazioni assenti nel frammento di Polemone, già in sé ampio e ricco di dettagli, richiede alcune considerazioni sul problema delle fonti del periegeta e sul suo eventuale uso del περὶ θαυμασίων ἀκουσμάτων, posto che esso sia da attribuire come sembra al III sec. a.C. Come di consueto Polemone non fornisce indicazioni sugli autori utilizzati, problema in parte certamente dovuto alla natura frammentaria di ciò che ci è pervenuto. L'impossibilità di avere dati espliciti sulle fonti si aggiunge e si lega dunque all'analoga difficoltà esistente per lo Ps.-Aristotele: in entrambi i casi ci sono molte incertezze e riserve che impediscono di tracciare una "filiazione" precisa di un testo da un altro (Sassi 1993: 459).

Il testo di Polemone manca di alcune informazioni e ne presenta altre assenti nel περὶ θαυμασίων ἀκουσμάτων, mentre le notizie comuni a entrambi non presentano significative divergenze. Si tratta di passi che complessivamente presentano una forte somiglianza. Si potrebbe presupporre l'uso di fonti diverse ma è anche possibile seguire un'altra linea di ragionamento e formulare l'ipotesi di una fonte comune a Polemone e allo Ps.-Aristotele oppure l'utilizzo di quest'ultimo da parte del periegeta unitamente ad altri autori.

La fonte originaria da identificare in Teofrasto o ad ogni modo nell'ambiente del Peripato sarebbe stata oggetto di rielaborazione con la conseguente perdita di alcune informazioni sia nello Ps. Aristotele sia in Polemone, a sua volta pervenuto a noi per tradizione indiretta con tutto ciò che ne consegue. Macrobio, autore del V sec. d.C., non ebbe con ogni probabilità accesso diretto alle opere del periegeta e sono dunque da imputare alla fonte intermedia i rimaneggiamenti dell'originale e la sua trasmissione deficitaria.

Tenendo conto della natura erudita di Polemone e dell'ampiezza dei suoi scritti è però molto probabile che Polemone avesse fatto ricorso a più fonti e che dunque ci possa essere una commistione di elementi provenienti da autori diversi. L'affermazione del periegeta οἱ δὲ Παλικοὶ προσαγορευόμενοι παρὰ τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις αὐτόχθονες θεοὶ νομίζονται può far presupporre il ricorso a fonti locali, orali e scritte, così come non è da escludere l'autopsia, per quanto essa non sia documentata. Indipendente-mente dalla questione di una diretta dipendenza chi si occupava di questi temi aveva in Callimaco un punto di riferimento che tutti gli autori di paradoxa dovevano conoscere. La sua celebre opera era organizzata per

sezioni geografiche ognuna delle quali a sua volta doveva prevedere una suddivisione per argomenti. Particolare rilevanza era conferita alla parte relativa alle acque, come risulta dai frammenti superstiti, trentanove dei quali su quarantotto erano relativi a materiale idrografico (Giannini 1963: 107-108). Filostefano, forse suo allievo e anch'egli originario di Cirene, fu molto vicino ai suoi interessi in particolare per quanto riguarda il tema specifico dei fiumi meravigliosi, come è riscontrabile nell'opera περὶ παραδόξων ποταμῶν, nella quale si evidenzia però un'impostazione non geografica ma tematica (Giannini 1963: 21-23)[12].

Tra le fonti letterarie di Polemone si può ipotizzare anche il περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίαι θαυμαζομένων di Ninfodoro di Siracusa anch'egli tradito per frammenti[13]. Non si può provare ma è certo che il periegeta doveva conoscere eventuali scritti sulla Sicilia, che riportavano notizie singolari. Un punto di contatto tra i due si ritrova in una notizia non di carattere paradossografico ma relativa al luogo originario di Laide, individuato da entrambi nella città di Iccara in Sicilia. La testimonianza potrebbe essere ascrivibile a una fonte comune, quale Timeo (Jacoby *ad FGrHist* 570: 603; Spada 2002: 254-255), ben noto a Polemone, e dunque non prova necessariamente –ma neanche esclude– la conoscenza di Ninfodoro da parte del periegeta.

Polemone dovette dunque avere a disposizione numerosi testi che si occupavano dei Palici e certamente Timeo ebbe un ruolo non secondario. La sua opera περὶ Τίμαιον in almeno dodici libri testimonia che egli ben conosceva i suoi scritti (Angelucci 2018). Non ci sono pervenuti frammenti dello storico di Tauromenio sui Palici ma egli è considerato la fonte del racconto diodoreo su questi dei (D.S. XI. 89)[14]. Dopo aver trattato della fondazione di *Palike* (XI. 88.6) presso il recinto sacro delle due divinità, Diodoro dedica un ampio *excursus* al culto collegato ai κρατῆρες per il quale si può pensare all'utilizzo di Timeo[15]. Il passo di Polemone è

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[12] Su Filostefano, vedi lo studio di Capel Badino 2010.

[13] Il titolo è tramandato da uno scolio all'Odissea: *FGrH* 570 T 2 = Schol. Hom. *Od*. μ 301.

[14] Su Timeo fonte di questo passo di Diodoro, vedi Meister 1967: 50-51; Pearson 1987: 141; Chisoli 1993: 23.

[15] D.S. XI. 89: "Poiché abbiamo menzionato queste divinità, non è giusto passare sotto silenzio l'antichità e l'incredibile natura di questo luogo sacro e, in generale, le caratteristiche peculiari dei cosiddetti "crateri". Si narra, infatti, che questo sacro recinto superasse tutti gli altri per antichità e per venerazione, dal momento che di

più vicino allo Ps.-Aristotele che non a Diodoro per contenuto e dunque si può immaginare che Timeo non sia stata la sua fonte principale. Sia in Diodoro sia in Polemone si parla, tuttavia, di κρατῆρες in riferimento ai Palici e non di κρήνη come nello Ps.-Aristotele e il giuramento viene da entrambi definito μέγιστος con un'espressione molto simile. Tenendo conto dell'estesa opera περὶ Τίμαιον e della conoscenza che il periegeta aveva dello storico si può ben ipotizzare che egli avesse familiarità anche con la versione timaica del mito dei Palici. Timeo, originario della Sicilia necessariamente conosceva questi geyser così particolari e giunse ad Atene intorno al 316 a.C. pochi anni dopo che Teofrasto era divenuto scolarca del Peripato, entrando in contatto con gli interessi naturalistici della scuola aristotelica. Non stupisce dunque che Polemone possa aver avuto presente i testi di diversi autori sul medesimo argomento e che egli stesso abbia effettuato un'operazione di scelta e di rielaborazione delle informazioni.

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questo luogo sono ricordati dalla tradizione numerosi e straordinari fenomeni. In primo luogo vi sono alcuni crateri in genere di dimensioni non grandi, i quali emettono straordinari getti d'acqua da una profondità inverosimile e il cui aspetto esteriore è simile a quello dei lebeti che, riscaldati da fiamme impetuose, sprigionano acqua bollente. In realtà l'acqua che sgorga ha l'apparenza di essere bollente, tuttavia questo fatto non è pienamente accertato, poiché nessuno ha mai osato toccarla: infatti lo stupore che genera il getto d'acqua è tale da far credere che il fenomeno sia dovuto a una qualche forza divina. In realtà non soltanto l'acqua emana un forte odore sulfureo, ma per di più la voragine emette un rumore assordante e terrificante; ad ogni modo, rispetto a questi due fenomeni, è più sorprendente il fatto che l'acqua né trasborda né cessa il movimento e si proietta in alto con un flusso di straordinario impeto. La religiosità che circonda questo sacro recinto è dunque così grande che ivi si prestano i giuramenti più santi e gli spergiuri sono sorpresi immediatamente dalle punizioni divine: alcuni infatti hanno lasciato quel luogo sacro privi della vista. E inoltre è così grande il timore delle divinità che gli uomini coinvolti in controversie, qualora siano sopraffatti da qualcuno che sia più potente, sono giudicati sulla base delle affermazioni rafforzate dal giuramento prestato in questi luoghi" (trad. di Micciché 2018). Diodoro continua il suo racconto ricordando la protezione offerta da questo luogo agli schiavi oppressi da padroni violenti, che possono condurli via solo dopo aver guadagnato la loro fiducia con concessioni garantite da un solenne giuramento.

Lo straordinario *himation* di Alcistene

Oggetto dell'interesse di Polemone non sono solo fenomeni prodigiosi o fatti inusuali ma anche oggetti degni di nota per le loro caratteristiche insolite a tal punto da essere considerati veri e proprio *thaumasia*. Il titolo περὶ τῶν ἐν Καρχηδόνι πέπλων lascia intendere un argomento non direttamente collegato con il tema del meraviglioso e completamente diverso dal quello dell'opera περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ θαυμαζομένων ποταμῶν, precedentemente presa in esame. Il contenuto del frammento che ci è rimasto, tuttavia, rivela l'attenzione dell'autore per un prodotto tessile che per la sua straordinaria manifattura è ascrivibile ai *mirabilia*: l'*himation* del sibarita Alcistene in seguito venduto ai Cartaginesi da Dioniso I. A parte l'unico frammento che ci è pervenuto e ciò che si può intuire dal titolo, nulla sappiamo sugli altri argomenti trattati in questa opera.

L'*himation* è una testimonianza degli intensi scambi commerciali tra la città punica e i Greci, i cui rapporti, come è ben noto, non si riducono agli scontri bellici per il controllo dei traffici del Mediterraneo occidentale e alle guerre per il predominio della Sicilia. Qui i Cartaginesi combatterono prima con Gelone di Siracusa, poi con Dioniso I e con Agatocle e non è escluso che la vendita del prezioso mantello possa essere inserito nel contesto di questi scontri (*infra*). I continui conflitti tra i due popoli, la concorrenza nei commerci e le scorrerie piratesche dei Fenici spiegano il giudizio negativo che i Greci diedero di Cartagine. Nonostante i continui contrasti i legami commerciali furono stretti e intensi fin da epoca antica: nelle tombe della città punica, come in quelle di Utica, sono venute alla luce ceramiche corinzie del VII sec. a.C. A Mozia gli scavi hanno rinvenuto vasellame fittile corinzio del VII sec. a.C. e ceramiche di provenienza ionica di epoca successiva. Gli scambi si fecero ancora più intensi nel periodo di maggior fioritura di Cartagine, che doveva la sua ricchezza soprattutto al commercio finalizzato all'apertura di nuovi mercati di importazione e d'esportazione e alla creazione di zone di monopolio attraverso l'eliminazione dei concorrenti oppure, nel caso questo non fosse possibile o ritenuto non necessario, mediante trattati. Dai paesi del Mediterraneo e dalle aree dell'Oceano Atlantico provenivano olio, vino, metalli e articoli di lusso. Dall'Africa interna erano importati schiavi, avorio, oro, pietre preziose e pellicce, beni che venivano poi in parte nuovamente immessi sul mercato. Particolarmente richiesti erano i pellami e le stoffe cartaginesi, soprattutto quelle di porpora, la cui qualità era ampiamente nota in tutto il Mediterraneo, come testimoniano le fonti antiche. Ermippo (F 1 Meineke = F 63 Kock), esponente

della Commedia Antica, vissuto nel IV sec. a.C., menziona nei *Phormophoroi* i tappeti e i cuscini variopinti venduti dai Cartaginesi, ricordati da Plinio (*NH*. V. 8) come gli inventori del commercio e da Strabone (XVI. 23) come i primi esportatori nel Mediterraneo di vesti riccamente lavorate[16].

Una città come Cartagine, che da sempre aveva interagito con i Greci, sia attraverso contatti commerciali, sia a causa di conflitti, non poteva non attrarre l'attenzione di Polemone. I Cartaginesi, inoltre, da una parte furono influenzati dalla cultura greca in ambito religioso, artistico e letterario, dall'altra, a causa dei loro traffici che coinvolgevano aree lontane al di là delle Colonne d'Ercole, erano sentiti dai Greci come depositari di un sapere geografico ed etnografico superiore al loro. I racconti dei viaggi degli esploratori cartaginesi dovevano essere di indubbio fascino e interesse per Polemone che ebbe il nome di periegeta grazie agli scritti dedicati alla descrizione del patrimonio monumentale, culturale e mitico di città e luoghi celebri[17].

Polemone dedica uno scritto a un aspetto particolarmente caratteristico di Cartagine[18], ossia il commercio e la produzione della porpora e dei tessuti pregiati, per i quali la città punica era molta nota nel mondo antico. Una veste così preziosa come l'*himation* di Alcistene incontrava certamente il gusto dei Cartaginesi e poteva rivaleggiare con i tessuti di loro fabbricazione. I beni acquistati venivano poi nuovamente immessi nel mercato e questo

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[16] Sui commerci di Cartagine, vedi Picard 1987: 39-41; Prandi 1979: 90-97; Huss 1999: 79-80; Lancel 1995: 120-121.

[17] Nel VI sec. a.C. Annone redasse in lingua punica il *Periplo*, a noi conosciuto in una traduzione greca, in cui descrisse il viaggio da lui compiuto con una flotta per scopi commerciali e di colonizzazione lungo la costa occidentale dell'Africa, forse fino all'attuale Golfo di Guinea. Circa nello stesso periodo il cartaginese Imilcone passava l'attuale stretto di Gibilterra, dirigendosi verso l'Europa nord-occidentale (Plin. *NH*. II. 169). Giuba II, re di Mauretania, si basò su "libri punici" nella descrizione delle sorgenti del Nilo, che venivano collocate in Mauretania; vedi Huss 1999: 88. A questa letteratura bisogna aggiungere la produzione storiografica di Cartagine: Avieno, a proposito della spedizione di Imilcone, parla di "antichissimi annali dei Punici" (Avien. 414). L'attività letteraria cartaginese è testimoniata anche dalle biblioteche presenti nella città punica, probabilmente legate ai templi. Plinio il Vecchio (*NH*. XVIII. 22) ricorda che, dopo la distruzione della città, il senato romano decretò che esse venissero lasciate ai dinasti d'Africa, probabilmente Micipsa, Gulussa e Mastanabale; vedi Huss 1999: 87.

[18] Engels (2014: 76) lo considera forse parte dello scritto Κτίσεις Ἰταλικῶν καὶ Σικελικῶν πόλεων.

può essere stato il caso del pregiato mantello sibarita. Non stupisce, pertanto, che il periegeta lo citasse inserendolo con ogni verosimiglianza accanto ai pregiati tessili di manifattura punica.

> Ἀλκισθένην δὲ τὸν Συβαρίτην φησὶν Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν τοῖς [περὶ τρυφῆς] Θαυμασίοις ὑπὸ τρυφῆς ἱμάτιον τοιοῦτον κατασκευάσασθαι τῇ πολυτελείᾳ ὡς προτίθεσθαι αὐτὸ ἐπὶ Λακινίου ἐν τῇ πανηγύρει τῆς Ἥρας, εἰς ἣν συμπορεύονται πάντες Ἰταλιῶται, καὶ τῶν δεικνυμένων <μάλιστα> πάντων ἐκεῖνο θαυμάζεσθαι. οὗ φασι κυριεύσαντα Διονύσιον τὸν πρεσβύτερον ἀποδόσθαι Καρχηδονίοις ρʹ καὶ κʹ ταλάντων. ἱστορεῖ δὲ καὶ Πολέμων περὶ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐπιγραφομένῳ περὶ τῶν ἐν Καρχηδόνι Πέπλων. (Athen. XII. 541a-b = F 85 Preller = *FHG* III, p. 141, F 85)

L'*himation* ricordato da Polemone era un tessuto di straordinaria magnificenza a tal punto da essere inserito tra i *mirabilia* nel περὶ θαυμασίων ἀκουσμάτων dello Ps.-Aristotele, che Ateneo riprende quasi alla lettera, omettendo tuttavia i particolari sulle sue dimensioni, sulla ricchezza delle decorazioni e sul colore purpureo e precisando che anche il periegeta ne aveva fatto menzione. Il testo della scuola aristotelica costituisce, dunque, un riferimento fondamentale per conoscere la straordinarietà di questa veste, che non ci è pervenuta come molti materiali deperibili del mondo antico. La mancanza di conservazione dei tessili rappresenta una perdita molto grave data la loro diffusione e il largo uso che ne veniva fatto a livello sia pubblico sia privato. Sono le fonti letterarie e i vasi figurati a fornirci informazioni di cui altrimenti non potremmo essere in possesso (Richter 1966; Vickers 1999; Andrianou 2009: 42-61; Acton 2014: 148). Conosciamo interni domestici arredati con cuscini, tende e drappi mentre a livello pubblico si possono ricordare le cosiddette "architetture urbane", realizzate con tessuti all'interno del recinto sacro dei santuari o in deter-minati luoghi della *polis* per ospitare attività ed eventi[19]. Anche nel caso del mantello di Alcistene è la fonte letteraria a consentirci di conoscerne l'esistenza.

> Ἀλκισθένει[20] τῷ Συβαρίτῃ φασὶ κατασκευασθῆναι ἱμάτιον τοιοῦτον τῇ πολυτελείᾳ, ὥστε προτίθεσθαι αὐτὸ ἐπὶ Λακινίῳ τῇ πανηγύρει

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[19] Marchiandi (2019: 40) ricorda la *skene* eretta al Ceramico ogni anno per celebrare i funerali pubblici dei caduti in guerra e quella innalzata dagli Efesini a Olimpia in occasione del banchetto offerto da Alcibiade nel 416 a.C.

[20] Ἀλκισθένει Giannini, Ἀλκιμένει Bekker, Westermann.

τῆς Ἥρας, εἰς ἣν συμπορεύονται πάντες Ἰταλιῶται, τῶν τε δεικνυμένων μάλιστα πάντων ἐκεῖνο θαυμάζεσθαι· οὗ φασὶ κυριεύσαντα Διονύσιον τὸν πρεσβύτερον ἀποδόσθαι Καρχηδονίοις ἑκατὸν καὶ εἴκοσι (ταλάντων. ἦν δ᾽ αὐτὸ μὲν ἁλουργές, τῷ δὲ μεγέθει πεντεκαιδεκάπηχυ, ἑκατέρωθεν δὲ διείληπτο ζῳδίοις ἐνυφασμένοις, ἄνωθεν μὲν Σούσοις, κάτωθεν δὲ Πέρσαις· ἀνὰ μέσον δὲ ἦν Ζεύς, Ἥρα, Θέμις, Ἀθηνᾶ, Ἀπόλλων, Ἀφροδίτη. παρὰ δ᾽ ἑκάτερον πέρας Ἀλκιμένης ἦν, ἑκατέρωθεν δὲ Σύβαρις. (Ps.-Arist. *Mir. Ausc.* 96, 838a Bekker)

Commissionato dal sibarita Alcistene l'*himation* era color porpora, lungo 6,50 metri circa, ornato in basso e in alto dalle rappresentazioni delle città di Susa e di Persepoli, distinguibili probabilmente sulla base di scritte indicanti i loro nomi (Rossbach 1894; Dugas 1910; Jacobsthal 1938; Heurgon 1966; Vanotti 1984: 178-179; Bugno 1999: 16-17; Marchiandi 2019). Nella parte centrale campeggiavano Zeus, Hera, Themis, Atena, Apollo e Afrodite. Ai lati del gruppo erano raffigurati Alcistene e la città di Sibari.

   La straordinarietà di questo mantello era legata a molteplici fattori, che spiegano il prezzo di vendita pari a 120 talenti, cifra spropositata se si pensa che secondo la testimonianza di Tucidide la lega delio-attica, nella sua fase iniziale, versava ad Atene circa 460 talenti all'anno (Th. I. 96.2). Si distingueva in primo luogo per le dimensioni fuori dal comune, che già in sé erano considerate un valore. La grandezza ordinaria di un *himation* era di 4 m mentre quella di un peplo non raggiungeva usualmente i 2 m (Barber 1992; Wagner-Hasel 2013: 163). Già in Omero troviamo che Ettore chiede alla madre di offrire il "peplo più splendido e grande" (*Il.* VI. 271) ad Atena per ottenere il favore della dea e la salvezza di Troia. La regina sceglie "quello che di ricami era il più vago e il più grande / splendeva come una stella, e sotto a tutti era l'ultimo" (VI. 293-295; trad. di R. Calzecchi Onesti 1990). È il più grande e il meglio decorato, splendente come una stella e l'ultimo del mucchio anche quello offerto da Elena a Telemaco al momento di lasciare Sparta con l'auspicio che un giorno il giovane possa donarlo alla sua sposa (Hom. *Od*. XV. 101-104, 115-122). Così il celebre peplo intessuto da Penelope è definito "grande" (μέγας) e "oltre misura" (περίμετρος) (II. 94-95, XIX. 139-140, XXIV. 129-130). Purtroppo la perdita dei tessili antichi non consente di trovare un riscontro alle fonti letterarie. L'unico esemplare a noi pervenuto integro proviene da un'urna cineraria di bronzo di Eleusi e misura 2,20 m in lunghezza e 0,50 m in larghezza (Marchiandi 2019: 73).

Come già si evince dai passi menzionati di Omero anche la decorazione concorreva a rendere una veste particolarmente pregiata. La bellezza delle composizioni figurative, che si riscontra nelle vesti dipinte su ceramica, doveva rispecchiare quella dei tessili andati perduti. La realizzazione di un ornato ricco e complesso contribuiva ad aumentare sensibilmente i tempi della tessitura, che già in sé era lunga e impegnativa e richiedeva un notevole numero di ore. Il valore aumentava ulteriormente se la decorazione prevedeva l'impiego di perle e pietre pregiate, come sembra fosse il caso dell'*himation* sibarita sulla base di quanto riporta il grammatico bizantino Giovanni Tzetzes che cita un passo di Plutarco andato perduto e non altrove attestato[21].

Grandezza, preziosità e ricchezza dei motivi decorativi lo rendevano un pezzo unico di altissimo pregio. A ciò si aggiungeva il fatto di essere ἁλουργές, ossia completamente tinto di color porpora, segno di lusso e regalità. Sono di porpora e ricamate le tele intessute da Elena Hom. (*Il*. III. 125-126) e da Andromaca (XXII. 441) così come il peplo che avvolge le ossa di Ettore (XXIV. 796) e il mantello di Odisseo (Hom. *Od*. VIII. 84) e di Telemaco (IV. 115). Il pigmento usato nella tintura delle stoffe veniva ricavato dalla secrezione del murice comune attraverso un processo lungo e laborioso. Per ottenere la quantità necessaria di porpora per colorare un tessile della dimensione e dunque del peso di quello di Alcistene erano necessari decine di migliaia di questa particolare specie di molluschi gasteropodi se si considera che per tingere un grammo di lana ne servivano sette esemplari (Marchiandi 2019: 63-64).

Non sappiamo molto sul committente noto anche come Alcimene dai codici dello Ps.-Aristotele o come Antistene da Giovanni Tzetzes (*Chil*. I. 29 816). In una tabella bronzea ritrovata a Olimpia un certo Ἀλκισθένης è ricordato come prosseno degli Elei nella seconda metà del VI a.C. La rarità del nome e il tipo di alfabeto utilizzato fanno presumere che si possa trattare dell'individuo menzionato da Ateneo come il primo proprietario

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[21] Tzetz. *Chil*. I. 29 816: Τοιοῦτον τὸ ἱμάτιον ὑπῆρχεν Ἀντισθένους· ἦν σοῦσον, ἁλουργές, πεντεκαιδεκαπηχυαῖον, ἔχον μὲν ζῷδα καὶ θεοὺς καὶ Περσικὰ καὶ Σοῦσα, μαργάροις ἠσκημένα τε καὶ λίθοις τιμαλφέσι. Χειρίδι δὲ θάτερα μὲν εἶχε τὸν Ἀντισθένην, ἐν δὲ θάτερᾳ Σύβαριν, τὴν πόλιν Ἀντισθένους. Τοῦτο δὲ Διονύσιος ὁ πρότερος κρατήσας, εἰς ἑκατὸν καὶ εἴκοσι τάλαντα νομισμάτων Καρχηδονίοις ἐμπολεῖ. Πλούταρχος, οἶμαι, γράφει.

dell'*himation* e come colui che ne ordinò la fabbricazione (cf. Siewert 2013: 152 = *SEG* LXIII 324)[22].

Se si considerano la dimensione e quindi anche il peso del mantello non è pensabile che fosse stato fabbricato per essere indossato[23]. Si potrebbe pensare ad arredamento o ad altro simile uso privato ma l'ipotesi più probabile è che sia stato commissionato con l'intento di offrirlo come dono nel santuario dorico di Era a Capo Lacinio, oggi Capo Colonna, promontorio della Calabria che costituisce il limite sud del Golfo di Taranto[24]. Qui gli scavi archeologici hanno portato alla luce ricchi doni votivi ascrivibili al VI a.C.[25] ed è possibile che questa particolare offerta costituisse l'ornamento della statua della divinità e venisse esposta durante la solenne festa annuale.

L'*himation* entrò a far parte del tesoro di Era Lacinia e cadde successivamente nelle mani di Dioniso I, descritto dalla tradizione come amante dei tessuti preziosi (Brugnone 2008: *passim* e part. 55, 61-62, 69-70), durante il saccheggio del tempio, episodio sul quale non siamo molto informati e accaduto verosimilmente quando fu conquistata Crotone nel cui territorio sorgeva il santuario. Per quanto riguarda la cronologia dell'evento, gli studiosi hanno ipotizzato due date: il 389 a.C. durante la prima guerra contro gli Italioti culminata con la battaglia dell'Elleporo (Sordi 1978: 12-13; Vanotti 1984: 179) oppure il periodo 380-378 a.C. nel corso della seconda guerra di Dioniso I in Italia meridionale (Beloch 1923: 377; Ciaceri 1940: 440-441; Ghinatti 1961-1962: 124, 129; Stroheker 1958: 220, 1968-1969; De Sensi Sestito 1984; Marchiandi 2019: 51 n. 51) Incerta è anche la circostanza della successiva vendita del pregiato mantello da parte del tiranno siracusano. Da Diodoro (XV. 17) sappiamo che egli dovette risarcire i Cartaginesi con una cifra di mille talenti in seguito a una pesante sconfitta,

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[22] Nel *SEG* online, *Indices*, s.v. Ἀλκισθένης sono attestate solo otto occorrenze di questo nome. A favore di Alcistene sono anche Giannini 1967: 264; Flashar 1981: 116; Marchiandi 2019: 50.

[23] Circa il luogo di fabbricazione non siamo informati. Nota è la *tryphé* dei Sibariti e degli Italioti ed è possibile che la veste sia stata tessuta in ambito italico. Heurgon (1966) ha tuttavia ipotizzato che possa provenire da Mileto sulla base dei rapporti tra questa città e Sibari.

[24] Propendono per l'ipotesi dell'uso in un culto pubblico Rossbach 1894; Giannelli 1963: 154; Marchiandi 2019: 50. Sono favorevoli alla fabbricazione per arredamento o uso privato Jacobsthal 1938; Losfeld 1991: 162-163.

[25] Il tempio, del quale oggi rimangono solo pochi resti, un tempo era ricchissimo e ornato dai dipinti di Zeusi (Liv. XXIV.3.3-7). Sul santuario e sulle offerte votive, vedi Giangiulio 1982; Spadea 1996.

da identificare con ogni verosimiglianza con quella del 383 a.C. a Cronio. È possibile che il prezioso *himation* fosse stato ceduto per centoventi talenti in questa occasione (Vanotti 1984: 179). Non abbiamo però dati a riguardo. I Cartaginesi erano d'altra parte noti per l'interesse riservato ai tessuti di lusso, di cui erano essi stessi produttori e commercianti e dunque non stupisce che fossero stati interessati all'acquisto anche a prescindere da questa specifica circostanza.

Il fatto che si dica che il mantello fosse stato venduto ai Cartaginesi dal tiranno di Siracusa, dunque nel IV sec. a.C., indurrebbe a credere che non possa essere stato tessuto e istoriato nel momento di massima fioritura di Sibari, nota per la sua ricchezza e in seguito distrutta dai Crotoniati (510 a.C.)[26], e che dunque risalga alle successive riedificazioni della città (Jacobsthal 1938: 206, 215-216). Sono, tuttavia, attestati casi di sopravvivenza attraverso i secoli di pregiate manifatture tessili e non è da escludere una sua datazione più alta, anche tenendo conto dell'epoca in cui si colloca la tabella bronzea recante il nome Ἀλκισθένης[27]. La corazza di lino, che il faraone Amasis offrì come dono votivo nel tempio di Atena Lindia (Hdt. II. 182, III. 47.3; Plin. *NH*. XIX. 12), è registrata della *Cronaca di Lidos* nel 99 a.C. e risulta ancora esistente, seppure molto deteriorata, nel I sec. d.C. (Marchiandi 2019: 76)[28]. Nota per la finezza del tessuto e impreziosita con molte decorazioni, la tradizione ricorda anche un secondo esemplare donato da Amasis agli Spartani e realizzata con una particolare tecnica in base alla quale ogni singolo filo era composto da un numero elevatissimo di capi[29], indicato con la cifra simbolica di trecentosessanta o trecentosessantacinque, ed era oggetto di tanta meraviglia da essere ridotta in brandelli da quanti la volevano toccare in continuazione[30].

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[26] Sul lusso dei Sibariti, vedi Ampolo 1993; Musti 2005: 289-290.

[27] Così Marchiandi 2019: 50 n. 46. Heurgon (1966: 445-446) ritiene che Alcistene avesse commissionato il mantello intorno al 513-512 a.C. prima della caduta di Sibari e fissa come termine *post quem* la fondazione di Persepoli (518 a.C), raffigurata accanto a Susa sul peplo.

[28] Un altro analogo esemplare, poi successivamente rubato dai Sami, era stato donato da Amasis agli Spartani: Hdt. III. 47.

[29] Hdt. III. 47 (360); Cronaca di Lindo (360, con riferimento alla corazza inviata dai Samii agli Spartani; vedi Higbie 2003: 34-35 n. 29, 113-115); Plin. *NH*. XIX. 12 (365).

[30] Vedi la testimonianza di Plinio (*NH*. XIX 12) attinta dall'autore di *Mirabilia* Muciano; cf. Marchiandi 2019: 76, 90-91.

Per quanto riguarda le fonti da cui Polemone attinse le notizie in merito ai tessili descritti, non si può del tutto escludere la diretta autopsia, ma non abbiamo alcun dato a riguardo. Certamente utilizzò fonti scritte come richiesto da un tipo di letteratura, quella antiquaria e paradossografica, che imponeva il ricorso a ricche biblioteche. Il soggiorno a Pergamo è molto probabile mentre sicura è la presenza del periegeta ad Atene (Angelucci 2011: 329-330)[31], dove ebbe modo di attingere al vasto materiale bibliografico presente. Ateneo non riferisce le informazioni che Polemone riportò sull'*himation* ma si limita a dire ἱστορεῖ δὲ καὶ Πολέμων περὶ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ ἐπιγραφομένῳ περὶ τῶν ἐν Καρχηδόνι Πέπλων. Considerando però il parallelismo tra il testo del periegeta sui Palici e il passo del περὶ θαυμασίων ἀκουσμάτων sul medesimo argomento si può presumere che la citazione di Polemone nei *Deipnosofisti* subito dopo lo Ps.-Aristotele non sia casuale. Come nel caso del frammento 85 si può pensare a una fonte comune o all'uso diretto dello Ps.-Aristotele, tenendo comunque presente tutte le incertezze sulla datazione e sulla natura dello scritto. Per quanto riguarda l'ipotesi, più probabile, di una fonte comune, è stata prospettata per il capitolo 96 dello Ps.-Aristotele la dipendenza da Timeo (Vanotti 1984: 33, 179). La parte centrale dell'opera, di argomento storico-mitografico, è quasi tutta di ambientazione occidentale e viene ritenuta fin dalla critica ottocentesca frutto della rielaborazione degli scritti timaici o di Lico di Reggio (Geffcken 1892: 83-84)[32]. Flashar (1981: 46) ha proposto che la fonte di questa parte sia lo storico di Tauromenio ma attraverso l'intermediazione di Posidonio. Dal momento che Posidonio si colloca nel I sec. a.C. bisogna a questo punto pensare a una datazione più bassa della raccolta, il che escluderebbe la possibilità che essa –o almeno questa parte– sia stata letta dal periegeta. La tesi del Flashar non è tuttavia accettata in modo unanime dagli studiosi[33].

Come si è visto a proposito dei Palici, nonostante la forte somiglianza tra Polemone e lo Ps.-Aristotele, la ricerca sul rapporto tra i due autori pone più problemi che soluzioni e non permette di giungere a delle conclusioni definitive. Ciò che invece emerge è una matrice comune, identificabile negli interessi naturalistici degli esponenti del Peripato e nelle opere che trattavano di *Sikelika*, tra cui in particolare Timeo. Lo storico di Tauromenio,

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[31] Non si può, invece, dire molto sulla presenza di Polemone ad Alessandria (Angelucci 2011: 331).

[32] Müllenhof (1870: 426) propone come fonti sia Timeo sia Lico di Reggio.

[33] Vedi la discussione in Vanotti 1984: 43-46.

d'altra parte, soggiornò a lungo ad Atene dove entrò certamente in contatto con la scuola aristotelica pur non lasciandosi coinvolgere direttamente. Lo sforzo di catalogazione degli esponenti del Peripato, inoltre, fu tale da lasciar presumere che non avessero tralasciato anche questioni storico-mito-grafiche ed etnografiche. Si può, dunque, rintracciare un fondamento culturale comune al di là di ogni ipotesi sulle relazioni tra Timeo, Polemone e lo Ps.-Aristotele (Momigliano 1982: 242; Vanotti 1984: 52-53).

L'eccezionale magrezza di Archestrato e Panareto

Polemone non si limita ai *mirabilia* legati ai corsi d'acqua e allo straordinario *himation* di Alcistene ma riferisce anche dell'eccezionale magrezza dell'indovino Archestrato, che pesava solo quanto un obolo, e di Panareto, discepolo di Arcesilao di Pitane e attivo alla corte di Tolomeo Evergete, dove visse senza mai ammalarsi nonostante l'esile corporatura.

> Πολέμων δ' ὁ περιηγητὴς ἐν τῷ περὶ Θαυμασίων Ἀρχέστρατόν φησι τὸν μάντιν ἁλόντα ὑπὸ πολεμίων καὶ ἐπὶ ζυγὸν ἀναβληθέντα ὀβολοῦ ὁλκὴν εὑρεθῆναι ἔχοντα· οὕτως ἦν ἰσχνός. ὁ δ' αὐτὸς ἱστορεῖ, ὡς καὶ Πανάρετος ἰατρῷ μὲν οὐδενὶ ὡμίλησεν, Ἀρκεσιλάου δὲ ἠκροᾶτο τοῦ φιλοσόφου, καὶ ὅτι συνεγένετο Πτολεμαίῳ τῷ Εὐεργέτῃ τάλαντα δώδεκα τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν λαμβάνων· ἦν δὲ ἰσχνότατος, ἄνοσος διατελέσας. (Athen. XII 552; F 84 Preller = *FHG* III, p. 141, F 84)

> Λέγεται δὲ καὶ Ἀρχέστρατος, ὁ μάντις, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τοῖς ὕστερον τῶν κηρῶν λεπτότερος εἶναι. Πολέμων οὖν φησιν ἐκεῖνον ἁλόντα ὑπὸ Πτολεμαίου καὶ ἐπὶ ζυγὸν ἐπιβληθέντα ὀβολοῦ ὁλκὴν εὑρεθῆναι ἔχοντα. (Eusth. *ad Il.* 1287 44 (*Il.* XXIII.72))

L'aneddoto su Archestrato, del quale non abbiamo altre notizie, si trovava forse in una commedia andata perduta (Kirchner 1895) ed è tràdito anche da Eliano all'interno di un elenco di individui segnalati per la loro magrezza, senza tuttavia l'indicazione della fonte o di altre notizie sull'argomento[34]. Polemone racconta che Archestrato, fu trovato avere il peso di un obolo al momento della sua cattura ὑπὸ πολεμίων secondo la lezione di Ateneo ed Eliano, da preferire a ὑπὸ Πτολεμαίου presente in Eustazio. L'obolo era usato sia come moneta, pari a 1/6 di dracma (Plu. *Lys*. 17), sia come unità di

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[34] Ael. *VH*. X. 6: Ἀρχέστρατος δὲ ὁ μάντις ὑπὸ πολεμίων ἁλοὺς καὶ ἐπὶ ζυγὸν ἀναβληθεὶς ὀβολοῦ ὁλκὴν εὑρέθη ἔχων, ὥς φασι. καὶ Πανάρετος δὲ λεπτότατος ἦν· διετέλεσε μέντοι ἄνοσος.

peso, corrispondente a 1/6 di chenice, ossia a 72 centigrammi circa. Per quanto riguarda Panareto (Schmidt 1949) si tratta di un individuo noto solo dal periegeta, dal quale sappiamo che visse nel III sec. a.C. sotto Tolomeo Evergete e che fu allievo di Arcesilao di Pitane, fondatore della media Accademia di indirizzo scettico (Athen. X 420c-d).

Tenendo presente F 83, che trasmette il titolo περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ θαυμαζομένων ποταμῶν, si pone immediatamente la questione dell'impostazione del materiale paradossografico in Polemone. Si tratta dunque di capire a che cosa si riferisse il titolo περὶ Θαυμασίων, se egli avesse composto un'unica opera relativa ai *thaumasia*, suddivisa eventualmente in sezioni secondo un criterio geografico o tematico, oppure due scritti autonomi, di cui uno specifico sui corsi d'acqua della Sicilia, o ancora se si tratti di un titolo abbreviato utilizzato dalla tradizione per indicare i suoi scritti sui *mirabilia*. Per affrontare questo problema e tentare di dare una risposta, è necessario in primo luogo riflettere sull'attitudine al meraviglioso di Polemone e sul suo interesse per le notizie particolari e insolite, per poi prendere in considerazione più nello specifico il problema dell'organizzazione del materiale paradossografico.

L'interesse di Polemone per i *thaumasia*

Polemone rivela da una parte l'effettiva volontà di dedicare una parte della sua produzione letteraria ai *thaumasia*, inserendosi in un filone che trovava molto seguito in età ellenistica, dall'altra dimostra una speciale predilezione per il meraviglioso anche in opere quali il περὶ τῶν ἐν Καρχηδόνι πέπλων che la tradizione ci ha tramandato con un titolo non riconducibile immediatamente a questo argomento. Dal momento che ci è pervenuto un unico frammento non abbiamo elementi per dire quali altre informazioni il periegeta fornisse in relazione ai tessili cartaginesi e se si occupasse di argomenti di carattere paradossografico oppure se il meraviglioso fosse solo uno degli aspetti trattati.

Per comprendere la sua attenzione per i *mirabilia* si possono prendere in considerazione gli interessi presenti nelle sue opere più note, che gli hanno meritato il titolo di περιηγητής, e la tradizione culturale in cui si inserisce. Interessi paradossografici e periegetici si possono ben ritrovare nel medesimo autore. Gli scrittori di periegesi, soprattutto di quella antiquaria, sono attratti da ciò che rende degno di nota un monumento, un culto o una festa. Possono essere informazioni, non necessariamente di carattere

paradossografico, che caratterizzano una città e suscitano interesse, oppure si può trattare di notizie che appartengono più specificamente al campo del meraviglioso e dell'insolito. Negli scritti periegetici di Polemone emerge un marcato interesse per le particolarità che contraddistinguono un luogo rendendolo unico, come risulta dal racconto di aspetti e costumi curiosi, dalla descrizione di monumenti salienti e dalla volontà di spiegare gli usi linguistici tipici di determinate località, gli epiteti con cui una divinità viene onorata in un santuario e i miti ad esso collegati. Così in uno scolio a Omero vengono riferite le vicende mitiche a cui il periegeta faceva riferimento per motivare l'esistenza vicino ad Amassito[35] di un tempio in cui Apollo era onorato come Sminteo, epiteto diffuso anche in altre aree della Troade ma legato in quel luogo a una vicenda mitologica specifica. In alcuni casi le notizie riferite concorrono a dare lustro a una località[36] mettendo in evidenza il sostrato mitico della sua storia, in altri sono informazioni che hanno soprattutto i tratti della curiosità erudita e della notizia insolita. In un passo tràdito da Ateneo (IX 372a-b = F 35 Angelucci = F 36 Preller = *FHG* III, p. 125, F 36) Polemone ricorda l'usanza che distingueva la festa delle Teossenie celebrate a Delfi in onore di Latona e di Apollo da quelle omonime di altre città greche: colui che portava a Latona la γηθυλλίς più grande prendeva parte al pasto rituale offerto alla divinità e al quale alcuni fedeli potevano partecipare come segno di speciale riconoscimento. Il periegeta stesso dichiara di aver visto un esemplare di questo ortaggio di dimensioni particolarmente grandi e di aver sentito raccontare che tale usanza veniva ricondotta al desiderio di γηθυλλίς di Latona quando era incinta di Apollo. Tale attenzione per i dati peculiari o curiosi di un luogo si riscontra anche in scritti non periegetici, di analoga materia erudita come peraltro accade per tutte le sue opere: nello scritto πρὸς Ἀδαῖον καὶ Ἀντίγονον Polemone riporta il fatto singolare del porfirione che, quando è addomesticato, segnala al padrone il tradimento della moglie soffocandosi (Athen. IX 388c = F 59 Preller = *FHG* III, p. 133, F 59; cf. Ael. *NH.* III. 42); in un frammento di incerta sede egli ricorda il fenomeno delle statue che si spostavano da un luogo

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[35] Il santuario si trovava nei pressi del sito di Crisa (Göz Tepe), 20 km a sud di Antigonia-Alessandria Troade.

[36] La descrizione di monumenti, doni votivi, culti, costumi e aspetti etnografici, concorreva a mettere in luce le città di area greca in un contesto politico in cui la Grecia aveva ormai perso il predominio politico. Non è un caso che Polemone fosse stato insignito della prossenia di Delfi, a cui aveva dedicato lo scritto περὶ τῶν ἐν Δελφοῖς ἀναθήματων; vedi Angelucci 2011: 335-336.

all'altro a tal punto che quella di Dioniso era stata legata dagli abitanti di Chio e quella di Artermide dagli Eritrei (Schol. vet. Pi. *Ol*. VII. 95 = F 90 Preller = *FHG* III, p. 146, F 90).

Non stupisce, dunque, che l'interesse per particolari insoliti ed eruditi, ampiamente coltivato negli scritti periegetici e non solo, abbia indotto Polemone a occuparsi all'interno del περὶ τῶν ἐν Καρχηδόνι πέπλων del pregiato *himation* di Alcistene, ascrivibile alla categoria dei *mirabilia*, e a dedicare una o più opere in modo specifico alla materia paradossografica. Il *thaumasion* è un dato che oltrepassa il confine dell'umana esperienza ma che è ritenuto credibile perché appartenente al mondo del reale e verificabile e perché attestato da scrittori di riconosciuta autorità[37]. A questa sfera appartengono le particolarità relative a fenomeni naturali, quali i geyser collegati al culto dei Palici.

Se la nascita del genere paradossografico si può fissare con Callimaco[38], l'attenzione agli aspetti meravigliosi della realtà era un tema caro alla tradizione culturale greca fin da epoca ben più antica. La meraviglia è l'origine della speculazione filosofica greca, come afferma Aristotele e produce desiderio di conoscenza (*Mete*. I. 2 982b, *Rhet*. I. 11 1371a; Gastaldi 1989): "non deve pertanto stupire che l'interesse per quanto è meraviglioso (*thaumasion*), paradossale (*paradoxon*), o presenta proprietà peculiari (*idion*) sia insito nell'approccio speculativo ellenico, soprattutto quello ionico, e attraversi diacronicamente, seppur con diversa rilevanza, l'intera produzione letteraria greca" (Vanotti 1984: 20). In Omero si trova il termine θαῦμα per indicare un fatto meraviglioso ed è soprattutto nell'*Odissea* che emerge la curiosità per le meraviglie della natura e per i popoli favolosi. Odisseo, che diventerà il simbolo della *curiositas* umana, si imbatte nel suo lungo viaggio di ritorno da Troia in creature e popolazioni straordinarie e paradossali come il Ciclope Polifemo "mostro immenso" (IX. 190), i Lotofagi

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[37] Schepens / Delcroix 1996: 382: "An astonishing item can only be termed θαυμαστόν if, indeed, it belongs to the real world, if it is witnessed or reported to have happened or to have been observed". Vedi Pajón Leyra 2011: 46; Geus / King 2018.

[38] Come giustamente rileva Giannini 1963: 264-265: "[...] si possono facilmente rintracciare gli elementi fondamentali della paradossografia attraverso quelli che possiamo dire i precedenti del genere, ripresi e fissati in piena autonomia da Callimaco che va senz'altro visto come il catalizzatore di tutta una lunga serie e varia della tradizione sul meraviglioso". Vedi anche Giannini 1967: 15-20; Pfeiffer 1973: 223-224.

e i Lestrigoni. L'attrazione per realtà umane e geografiche nuove si ritrova nello spirito dei Greci e degli Ioni dell'Asia Minore che intrapresero spedizioni commerciali e si mossero per fondare colonie in terre sconosciute, che ad un tempo spaventavano e attraevano. Il fascino del meraviglioso si sviluppò in concomitanza con il sorgere degli interessi geografici ed etnografici, che favorirono la nascita della letteratura dei peripli e delle successive esperienze letterarie di Erodoto e dei logografi. Lo storico di Alicarnasso dichiara esplicitamente di volersi soffermare sull'Egitto proprio per la presenza di πλεῖστα θωμάσια (II. 35) e arricchisce la sua narrazione con particolarità naturalistiche ed etnografiche destinate a stupire il lettore, come si può constatare anche dalla descrizione della penisola arabica, della Scizia e della Libia (Hartog 1980; Pajón Leyra 2011: 175-188; Angelucci 2014: 10). Nei successori di Erodoto non mancano riferimenti all'ambito del meraviglioso ma è soprattutto con l'affermarsi della storiografia di scuola isocratea con Eforo e in particolare con Teopompo che si diffonde il gusto per i *mirabilia* come diversivo gradito capace di catturare l'attenzione e di procurare ἡδονή, interrompendo l'esposizione storica. Nel IV secolo a.C. le conquiste di Alessandro Magno aprono nuovi orizzonti e mettono i Greci in contatto con regioni e popoli fino ad allora sconosciuti. La flora, la fauna e i favolosi costumi dell'Oriente trovano ampio spazio nelle opere degli storici di Alessandro, fornendo un ricco materiale alla letteratura sui *mirabilia*. Parallelamente il costituirsi della scuola aristotelica contribuisce in modo decisivo al suo sviluppo e alla sua diffusione: in epoca ellenistica il genere paradossografico è ormai largamente praticato e apprezzato e trova in Callimaco il suo maggior rappresentante[39]. Polemone si inserisce, dunque, in una tradizione culturale già ampia e varia, che aveva trovato nel Peripato il terreno fertile per il suo sviluppo ma che affondava le sue radici nella sensibilità greca del passato e nelle spinte culturali della letteratura ionica originatisi in Asia Minore, da cui egli stesso proveniva.

L'organizzazione del materiale paradossografico

Se dunque è chiara la matrice culturale dell'interesse per il meraviglioso presente nel periegeta, non altrettanto lo è l'organizzazione del materiale paradossografico all'interno della sua produzione letteraria. Disponiamo di

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[39] Per una rassegna degli scrittori di paradossografia in epoca ellenistica, vedi Giannini 1964: 105-127, 139.

due titli di argomento chiaramente paradossografico, περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ θαυμαζομένων ποταμῶν e περὶ Θαυμασίων, ma non sappiamo quale relazione esistesse tra i due scritti e se effettivamente le opere fossero due. Varie sono le ipotesi formulate dagli studiosi anche alla luce di due frammenti che riportano titoli affini a quello di natura paradossografica sui fiumi della Sicilia (*infra*). Si tratta di F 81 e di F 82 che citano rispettivamente il περὶ ποταμῶν e il περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ ποταμῶν, confermando l'attenzione del periegeta per questioni idrografiche ma senza riferimenti al tema del meraviglioso.

> τοῦ καλλινάου: νῦν τοῦ ἐν Ἀττικῇ μνημονεύει. ἔστι γὰρ καὶ ἔτερος ὁμώνυμος ἐν Βοιωτίᾳ. εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ ἔτεροι, καθά φησι Πολέμων ἐν τῷ Περὶ ποταμῶν, γράφων οὕτως [frg. 81]· '[ἐν] Ἀθήνησί τε Κηφισὸς καὶ ἐν Σικυῶνι καὶ ἐν Ἄργει <...> (Schol. E. *Med*. 835 Schwartz = F 81 Preller = *FHG* III, p. 13, F 81)

In questo frammento, che presenta peraltro una lacuna, Polemone fissa la sua attenzione su un fiume, che risulta particolare per la frequente omonimia di cui è oggetto. L'elenco del periegeta, che ricorda i corsi d'acqua chiamati Cefiso presenti in Grecia, è incompleto. Due fiumi con questo nome scorrono in Attica, uno attraversa la Focide e la Beozia, altri omonimi si trovano rispettivamente nell'isola di Salamina, presso Sicione, Skyros e Argo (Bölte 1921; Str. IX. 2.18-19; Paus. I. 38.5).

> καλοῦνται δὲ οἱ κεστρεῖς ὑπό τινων πλῶτες, ὥς φησι Πολέμων ἐν τῷ περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ ποταμῶν. (Athen. VII 307b-c Kaibel = F 82 Preller = *FHG* III, p. 140, F 82)

Emerge, da questo breve frammento, oltre all'interesse di Polemone per le specie di pesci presenti nei fiumi della Sicilia, anche la curiosità verso i termini che variano da un'area geografica all'altra: in Sicilia il termine πλῶτες era la denominazione locale per i muggini (κεστρεῖς)[40]. L'aggettivo πλωτός veniva utilizzato per indicare i pesci che nuotano a livello dell'acqua come le murene (Athen. I. 4c, VII. 313), dette in latino *flutae* (Varrone in Macr. *Sat*. III. 15.7-8; Col. VIII. 17; Plin. *NH*. IX. 169; Mart. XIII. 80). Anche in questo caso è evidente la matrice della ricerca portata avanti dal Peripato sulle orme di Aristotele, che si era occupato dei κεστρεῖς come risulta dal passo immediatamente successivo a quello contenente la citazione di

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[40]Hesych., s.v. πλῶτες; Thompson 1966: 108-100 s.v. κεστρεύς, 203 s.v. πλῶτα. Per gli altri tipi di pesci citati da Epicarmo, vedi Thompson 1966: 4 s.v. αἰολίαι, 241-243 s.v. σκίανα.

Polemone: Ἀριστοτέλης δ' ἐν τῷ περὶ ζῴων ἠθῶν καὶ βίων φησίν, ὅτι ζῶσιν οἱ κεστρεῖς κἂν ἀφαιρεθῶσι τὰς κέρκους.

In entrambi i frammenti i dati presenti non sono attinenti al tema specifico del meraviglioso ma a quello della curiosità erudita, legata nel primo caso a un'omonimia, nel secondo a una particolarità linguistica della Sicilia. Siamo dunque nell'ambito della notizia insolita e singolare, che contraddistingue Polemone e di cui si trova testimonianza in tutti i suoi scritti. A partire da questa osservazione e da alcune riflessioni sulle sue opere periegetiche si può cercare di comprendere come potesse essere organizzato il materiale paradossografico.

L'analisi dei frammenti degli scritti periegetici e i titoli che ci sono rimasti, pur con tutti i dubbi che essi pongono perché spesso non originali e rielaborati dalla tradizione da cui sono trasmessi, lasciano intendere che Polemone fu autore con ogni probabilità di trattati indipendenti e non di una περιήγησις κοσμική suddivisa in macrosezioni sulla base delle regioni considerate. Questa tesi ben si sposa con la natura enciclopedica della sua ricerca che si traduceva in opere nelle quali dedicava uno spazio vastissimo a porzioni limitate di territorio. Come esempio si possono ricordare i titoli περὶ τῆς Ἀθήνησιν Ἀκροπόλεως, περὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς προπυλαίοις πινάκων, περὶ τῆς Ἱερᾶς ὁδοῦ, περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικυῶνι πινάκων, περὶ τῶν ἐν Λακεδαίμονι πόλεων, περὶ τῶν ἐν Δελφοῖς θησαυρῶν, περὶ τῶν Θήβησιν Ἡρακλείων. Da Strabone sappiamo che l'opera περὶ τῆς Ἀθήνησιν Ἀκροπόλεως si componeva di quattro libri. D'altra parte l'autore a Polemone più vicino per tipologia di produzione letteraria e indubbiamente a lui noto è Eliodoro di Atene (*FGrH* 373) che dedicò alla sua città di origine ben quindici libri. Questa era la natura della ricerca antiquaria ellenistica di chiara matrice peripatetica. È stato soprattutto il peso dell'autorità della *Periegesi della Grecia* di Pausania a indurre poi i moderni a credere che anche Polemone avesse composto un'opera analoga[41].

Alla luce di queste considerazioni e data l'importanza del criterio territoriale nei suoi scritti si può avanzare l'ipotesi che Polemone non avesse redatto un'unica opera paradossografica suddivisa in sezioni secondo un criterio geografico o tematico ma piuttosto singoli componenti focalizzati sui *mirabilia* di un determinato territorio. Il περὶ Θαυμασίων sarebbe

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[41] Per una discussione sulla natura degli scritti periegetici di Polemone si rimanda al mio studio Angelucci in corso di stampa. In particolare, per la posizione degli autori moderni sull'argomento, vedi p. 35 n. 117.

un'abbreviazione di uso corrente riferita a uno o più scritti sul tema del meraviglioso, così come Pausania (VIII. 46.5) definisce gli autori di paradossografia con la formula generica οἱ ἐπὶ τοῖς θαύμασι. La notizia sull'eccezionale magrezza di Archestrato e di Panareto apparterrebbe a un'opera paradossografica di cui non possediamo il titolo.

Il periegeta aveva senza dubbio presente sia l'impostazione callimachea dei *parodoxa*, organizzati in sezioni geografiche ognuna delle quali a sua volta suddivisa per argomenti, sia il criterio puramente tematico che alla fine prevalse e di cui Filostefano con il suo περὶ τῶν θαυμαζομένων ποταμῶν è un esempio. Il criterio geografico è quello, tuttavia, che consente di collegare la produzione letteraria paradossografica con la letteratura dei viaggi. L'indicazione territoriale è un marcatore delle opere di Polemone e induce a ritenere che anche i suoi scritti sui *thaumasia* fossero trattati indipendenti relativi a singole aree geografiche.

Il περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ θαυμαζομένων ποταμῶν doveva dunque essere autonomo, frutto di un interesse per la Sicilia che emerge anche nello scritto Κτίσεις Ἰταλικῶν καὶ Σικελικῶν πόλεων. È possibile che il periegeta occupandosi di questo territorio abbia registrato e catalogato i *mirabilia* presenti, dedicando loro un'opera specifica. Il titolo περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ ποταμῶν può essere considerato un'abbreviazione del più completo περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ θαυμαζομένων ποταμῶν. Il frammento che lo tramanda riporta l'uso del termine πλῶτες in Sicilia invece del più comune κεστρεῖς. Tale curiosità linguistica, pienamente conforme al gusto erudito di Polemone, ben poteva trovare spazio in uno scritto di notizie insolite e particolari relativi al mondo idrografico dell'isola.

Forma abbreviata era con ogni probabilità anche il περὶ ποταμῶν. L'informazione tramandata dallo scoliasta alla *Medea* di Euripide sui diversi fiumi di nome Cefiso poteva essere contenuta all'interno di un'opera sui *paradoxa* idrografici dell'Attica o di un'altra regione della Grecia dove scorreva un corso d'acqua con tale nome. La notizia sul fiume Cefiso non è di carattere paradossografico ma rientra nelle particolarità che potevano essere incluse accanto ad altre più specifiche sul tema del meraviglioso. Tenendo conto che Polemone si occupava sempre di questioni di antiquaria e mai, per quanto ne sappiamo, di natura puramente geografica, si può credere che tale opera sui fiumi fosse anch'essa di carattere parados-sografico o comprendesse ad ogni modo notizie singolari. Sulla linea di quanto detto a proposito degli scritti periegetici, relativi ad aree specifiche e per lo più limitati a una singola città o a parte di essa, e considerando che

l'elemento territoriale è un marcatore sempre presente in Polemone, è preferibile pensare che l'opera fosse relativa ai fiumi meravigliosi di una regione determinata piuttosto che ipotizzare un'impostazione più ampia e un'eventuale suddivisione in sezioni geografiche.

Bisogna, tuttavia, sottolineare che si rimane nel campo delle supposizioni e i dati in nostro possesso non consentono di giungere a delle conclusioni definitive e sicure. Altre sono state anche le ipotesi formulate dagli studiosi. Preller mantiene distinto il περὶ Θαυμασίων dal περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ θαυμαζομένων ποταμῶν e pensa all'esistenza di un'opera con un titolo analogo al περὶ τῶν θαυμαζομένων ποταμῶν di Filostefano e avente ad oggetto aspetti singolari e insoliti dei fiumi piuttosto che il loro corso, la loro origine o natura, argomenti questi ultimi propri più dei geografi che non dei periegeti (Preller 1838: 125, 131; cf. Angelucci 2014: 15). Sulla stessa linea si pone il Müller (*FHG* III: 139) che sostiene l'esistenza di un περὶ ποταμῶν, di cui il περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ θαυμαζομένων ποταμῶν, abbreviato in περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ ποταμῶν, costituiva una parte. Deichgräber (1952: 1315-1316) riconosce la problematicità della questione e se da una parte si attiene alla suddivisione proposta dal Preller[42], dall'altra sostiene che fiumi e fonti inusuali della Sicilia dovevano essere solo uno dei temi trattati da Polemone attraverso la tecnica dell'*excursus* (Pasquali 1913: 176-186; Angelucci 2011: 334-335).

Secondo Giannini (1964: 120-121), invece, il periegeta compose un'unica opera intitolata περὶ Θαυμασίων, nella quale una particolare attenzione era rivolta al meraviglioso nel mondo delle acque, tematica dalla quale il periegeta si spostava per affrontare argomenti che poco avevano di paradossografico[43]. Ritiene, tuttavia, che difficilmente si possa dubitare dell'identità tra il περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ ποταμῶν e il περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ θαυμαζομένων ποταμῶν (Giannini 1963: 121 n. 134). Egli non scarta, dunque, l'ipotesi che il περὶ ποταμῶν fosse un'opera non di carattere paradossografico, suddivisa sulla base di criteri geografici in sezioni, ciascuna delle quali a sua volta in una sottosezione relativa ai *paradoxa*[44].

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[42] Mantiene i due scritti separati anche Engels 2014: 78.

[43] Così sostanzialmente pensa anche Susemihl 1965: 673 n. 134, per quanto nell'indicare gli scritti di Polemone mantenga distinti i due titoli περὶ Θαυμασίων e περὶ τῶν ποταμῶν, opera quest'ultima di cui il περὶ τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ θαυμαζομένων ποταμῶν e il περὶ τῶν θαυμαζομένων ποταμῶν costituivano una parte.

[44] L'opera è ritenuta incentrata sull'omonimia dei fiumi e non di carattere parodossografico da Schmid / Stählin 1920: 243.

Conclusione

I frammenti che la tradizione ha attribuito a opere paradossografiche sono troppo pochi per giungere a conclusioni sicure e i titoli pongono questioni non risolvibili in via definitiva. La natura degli scritti paradossografici di Polemone come la loro organizzazione rimane, pertanto, un problema aperto. Sembra però preferibile pensare a singoli trattati relativi ai *paradoxa* di luoghi specifici, analogamente alla tipologia degli scritti periegetici, piuttosto che a un'opera complessiva di più ampio respiro.

Risulta, invece, chiara la sensibilità del periegeta per il tema del meraviglioso, che si inserisce nel gusto della ricerca erudita e ne rappresenta una forma di espressione. Come si è visto l'interesse per i *thaumasia* nasce dalla stessa attenzione al particolare che si riscontra in tutte le sue opere a partire da quelle periegetiche, dove viene registrato tutto ciò che contribuisce a rendere una località unica e dove le informazioni fornite risultano non di rado al di là della comune esperienza per chi non è originario della città descritta.

La tipologia quasi enciclopedica della sua raccolta di materiale e il suo interesse per il meraviglioso, soprattutto in campo naturalistico ma non solo, fanno pensare ai successori di Aristotele. È significativo che i due frammenti più rilevanti di Polemone in tema di *mirabilia* si trovino registrati anche nel περὶ θαυμασίων ἀκουσμάτων, all'interno del quale è innegabile la presenza di un "nucleo aristotelico" a prescindere da tutti i problemi legati alla sua datazione e alle fasi di elaborazione (Vanotti 1984: 52). L'attitudine del periegeta alla ricerca erudita così minuziosa, attenta al dettaglio e rispondente a esigenze di completezza presenta una forte matrice peripatetica e indiscussa appare l'influenza che gli studi della scuola aristotelica ebbero su di lui, nonostante in nessun frammento egli dichiari un'esplicita dipendenza da essa o faccia riferimenti diretti.

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Odysseus Sertorius

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In 1992, Professor Luis García Moreno published a brilliant paper, in which he pointed out the relationship between paradoxography and Plutarch's *Life of Sertorius*. Directly or indirectly, we can trace the influence of these ideas in later studies, such as that of Jean-Mallier Pailler (2000), to point out the one that, in my opinion, deserves more attention. In previous studies, I have already offered some reflections on the character of Sertorius, but I would like to take up here, from the framework indicated, certain elements that strike me in Plutarch's biography. In any case, it is worth warning whoever reads these lines that I will start here from a recurrent perception and idea –to which I have devoted some research (Antela-Bernárdez 2011, 2014a)–, concerning the fictions that are transmitted in the historical narratives of our sources, and that, although they have sometimes been considered as truthful, they deserve another kind of approach.

Certainly, much of what the ancients recorded in their works of history and biographies or collections of facts, *exempla*, etc., seems to be more related to fiction than to reality. It is possible, for example, that this might have been intentional, like when Lycurgus of Butades recalled the night of the battle of Chaeronea by evoking the cold that gripped the bodies of those who took the responsibility for manning the defences of Athens, something that is hard to believe considering that the battle took place in August and that the temperature in Attica in that period of the year is usually high (Antela-Bernárdez 2019). But it is more likely that many of these references are, at the bottom, the product of a way of conceiving reality, history and the world, typical of Antiquity or perhaps, more specifically, of Greek culture. Certain data considered to be historical are merely symbolic or narrative-cultural resources, which, in the hermeneutic effort to understand our sources, we must critically observe with care, perspective and detail.

As far as the case of Sertorius is concerned, as his experiences are recounted in the biography dedicated to him by Plutarch, there are certainly many elements that seem to transcend the historical and become more fictional. The aforementioned works by García Moreno and Pailler are excellent proofs of how to analyse many of these facts. I would now like to draw

attention to some aspects which, as far as I know, have not been dealt with yet, but which complement the view of the aforementioned works.

Theodor Mommsen (1976 VII: 54) considered Sertorius to be the greatest character to emerge in the *History of Rome*. Mommsen's coincidence with Theopompus' statement about Philip of Macedon, who claimed that Europe had never produced a man like the Macedonian king (*FGrH* 115 T 19, F 27 *apud* Plb. VIII. 11; cf. D.S. XVI. 95.1), is quite surprising. In this respect, it is necessary to recall that both Philip and Sertorius were one-eyed. From here, it is worth dwelling on the prologue to the *Life of Sertorius*, in which Plutarch expounds his famous maxim that Rome's worst enemies were, in fact, one-eyed men. This danger of one-eyed men for Rome brings us to several places that must have been commonplace in the minds of the text's recipients in Antiquity. Perhaps the most obvious case in relation to Sertorius is that of Horatius Cocles.

Cocles shows several similarities with Sertorius that are surely not coincidental. As well as being one-eyed, Cocles was the protagonist of a memorable episode in the history of Rome. In 508 BC, while defending Sulpicius Bridge alone against Etruscan troops, he heroically resisted them, but when besieged by his enemies he had to save his life by throwing himself into the Tiber:

> "Then Cocles cried, "O Father Tiberinus, I solemnly invoke thee; receive these arms and this soldier with propitious stream!" So praying, all armed as he was, he leaped down into the river, and under a shower of missiles swam across unhurt to his fellows, having given a proof of valour which was destined to obtain more fame than credence with posterity. The state was grateful for so brave a deed: a statue of Cocles was set up in the comitium, and he was given as much land as he could plough around in one day." (Liv. II. 11-12; translated by Foster 1919)

As we can see, the story of Cocles was well known to the Romans, and the physical presence of his memory, by means of a statue, configured his exemplum within the urban space of the city. Beyond certain interesting symbolisms such as the religious value of bridges in Antiquity – and in Roman culture in particular–, it is worth pointing out the parallels with an episode in the life of Sertorius:

> "To begin with, when the Cimbri and Teutones invaded Gaul, he served under Caepio, and after the Romans had been defeated and

put to flight, though he had lost his horse and had been wounded in the body, he made his way across the Rhone, swimming, shield and breastplate and all, against a strongly adverse current; so sturdy was his body and so inured to hardships by training." (Plu. *Sert.* 3.1; all translations by Perrin 1919)

Undoubtedly, there is an *emulatio* here, but we do not know if it was conscious. We cannot even say whether the event is authentic or it is the result of the assimilation of one one-eyed man (Sertorius) with another (Cocles). However, this assimilation, which seems to have its origin in the lack of an eye, may lead us to other reflections. In fact, one-eyed men were often assimilated in antiquity to Cyclopes. And thus to the *Odyssey*[1].

Certainly, Sertorius had many elements in common with the hero Odysseus. The most obvious are precisely those that connect Sertorius with his travels, his wandering search for a place to rest and settle. But the comparison between the two characters certainly goes beyond that. First of all, we must remember Odysseus' role as a spy of the Achaeans, able to sneak in among the enemies[2]:

"Marring his own body with cruel blows, and flinging a wretched garment about his shoulders, in the fashion of a slave he entered the broad-wayed city of the foe, and he hid himself under the likeness of another, a beggar, he who was in no wise such an one at the ships of the Achaeans. In this likeness he entered the city of the Trojans, and all of them were but as babes…" (Hom. *Od*. IV. 244-250; translation by Murray 1919).

The passage has much in common with another starred by Sertorius:

"In the next place, when the same enemies were coming up with many myriads of men and dreadful threats, so that for a Roman even to hold his post at such a time and obey his general was a great matter, while Marius was in command, Sertorius undertook to spy out the enemy. So, putting on a Celtic dress and acquiring the commonest expressions of that language for such conversation as might be necessary, he mingled with the Barbarians; and after seeing or hearing what was of importance, he came back to Marius. At the

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[1] We can even point out that Sertorius' peer in Plutarch's *Lives*, Eumenes, also faced a Cyclops, a one-eyed man: Antigonus Monophthalmus. I owe this idea to the kind advice of Antonio Ignacio Molina Marín.

[2] The topic has been reviewed by Pórtulas 2014.

time, then, he received a prize for valour; and since, during the rest of the campaign, he performed many deeds which showed both judgement and daring, he was advanced by his general to positions of honour and trust" (Plu. *Sert.* 3.2-3).

This is not the only example of Sertorius' ability to infiltrate himself behind enemy lines:

"Then, when the slaughter was ended, he ordered all his soldiers to lay aside their own armour and clothing, to array themselves in those of the Barbarians, and then to follow him to the city from which the men came who had fallen upon them in the night. Having thus deceived the Barbarians by means of the armour which they saw, he found the gate of the city open, and caught a multitude of men who supposed they were coming forth to meet a successful party of friends and fellow citizens. Therefore most of the inhabitants were slaughtered by the Romans at the gate; the rest surrendered and were sold into slavery." (Plu. *Sert.* 3.8-10)

It is hard not to see, in this last episode, concomitances between the action of Sertorius and the capture of Troy by the Achaeans through the cunning wit of Odysseus. In fact, even the order of the narrative seems to invite us to do so, since in Plutarch's work this story comes just after the episode of the already mentioned emulation of Cocles. In this sense, the celebrated cunning of Odysseus has, in fact, a character of its own in Sertorius. It does not stand for no reason that Sertorius is remembered, especially by historiography, as a model of a general skilled in trickery and deception, a specialist in guerrilla warfare (Cadiou 2004)[3]. Episodes demonstrating his skill in this field are frequent and once again underline the links with Odysseus' *métis*. The relationship between the two may be underlined not only by Sertorius' character as a traveller, but also by that physical feature of the sole eye, and hence of the Cyclopes, which would connect the Roman general with the tradition of the Homeric poem.

There are, then, certain elements in the *Life of Sertorius* that might make us doubt the authenticity of the account. Therefore, we can ask ourselves to what extent Sertorius, as a character in the historical account, really lived these events as such, or whether, on the contrary, the facts conform to a series of clichés that concerned popular knowledge and helped the latter to

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[3] For some historiographical considerations on the perception of modern historians in relation to guerrilla warfare, see Antela-Bernárdez 2014b.

frame the character and connect him with others, to understand him better from here. I suppose the question is unanswerable.

However, one last aspect of Plutarch's biography seems to be worth mentioning in this study. The story of Sertorius and his white deer is well known (Plu. *Sert.* 11.3-8, 20.1-5; App. *BC.* I. 110; cf. Konrad 1994: 123-124). The issue of this animal, which has attracted no attention from the researchers, as far as I know, deserves caution. First of all, we know that the little white hind was quickly associated with Artemis by Sertorius (Plu. *Sert.* 11.7). Sertorius would derive interesting propaganda benefits from this, by making his Hispanic-Lusitanian followers believe that the goddess was protecting and favouring his enterprise (cf. Konrad 1994: 125).

We can try to understand the figure of this animal in many ways[4]. Firstly, we know that the stag is a fundamental animal in the hunting activity of the Homeric heroes[5], although it should also be noted that, in Homer, only Odysseus is dressed with a deer skin, thanks to Athena (Hom. *Od.* XIII. 434-437; Levaniouk 2011). In this aspect, in fact, he coincides with Actaeon himself (Paus. IX. 2.3). On the other hand, the hind could refer to multiple aspects: Professor Ñaco del Hoyo suggested to me in an informal conversation some years ago, that this animal might be related to the hinds on the coins of Mithridates VI Eupator (De Callatÿ 1997). Bearing in mind the links between Mithridates and Sertorius, also mentioned by Plutarch, this could be one reasonable option. Another, also related to these coinages, would be that the hind in question was related to Iphigenia, converted by Artemis into a sacred hind, which would again bring us back to the Homeric sphere. If we consider that Iphigenia's journey took place in regions that earlier geography had associated with Iberia, perhaps we could connect the two ideas. All this, however, seems somewhat excessive and would deserve more attention than the one I can devote here.

Likewise, the use of this deception is in itself a possible crime of *hýbris*, an aggression against the goddess and the respect she deserved. This is even pointed out by Plutarch (*Sert.* 12.1) himself: "They believed that they were led, not by the mortal wisdom of a foreigner, but by a god". The very idea

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[4] There is evidence on the importance of the deer in Celtic cults and rituals; see Ladenbauer-Orel 1965; Pauli 1983. I owe these references to the kind advice of Nikolaus Boroffka.

[5] They are also present in the Macedonian Classical world, as evidenced by some famous paintings from Pella.

that Sertorius had encouraged or nourished beliefs of a divine nature about himself in a complex situation, as far as we know from Antiquity, must have aroused suspicion among the Romans, fearful of the divine punishment they might suffer for this. Indeed, this seems to be the meaning of the idea with which Perpena begins the speech he addresses to Sertorius' men to lead them to sedition and conspiracy: "What evil genius, pray, has seized us and is hurrying us from bad to worse?" (Plu. *Sert.* 25.3). The same idea, albeit in a veiled form, is implicit in the story of the loss and recovery of the hind, which Sertorius skillfully orchestrates to make it seem that this is a new design of the divinity, and thereby also to reaffirm his image as a pious man beloved by the gods, when in fact it was a ruse of his own (Plu. *Sert.* 20).

We know that Sertorius was killed by his own men at a banquet (Plu. *Sert.* 26.6-11; cf. Konrad 1994: 211-214)[6]. It is perhaps a little audacious to think here that his death could be related to that of Actaeon, turned into a stag by Artemis and torn to pieces by his own dogs[7]. However, Plutarch himself invites us in a certain way to do so from the very prologue of his *Life of Sertorius* (1.4), where Actaeon is mentioned in a way that perhaps seems accidental. In any case, it is possible that the element of hunting has a certain weight here, taking into account the value that this activity has both in the myth of Actaeon and in the scene of the *Odyssey* where the hero appears dressed with the skin of a deer. The same is true of the episode of Pentheus' death, butchered by a trusted person, in the *Bacchae* (337-342).

Perhaps, there could be some link between Sertorius' sacred hind and the Dionysian cycle[8]. Plutarch mentions sacred deer elsewhere (*Ages.* 6.8), again in a Boeotian context. The relationship of Actaeon to Semele also is related to this, as does the customary dress of the bacchants, the *nebris*

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[6] The episode has many elements in common with the banquet in which Alexander murdered Cleitus. On the links between this episode in Alexander's life and the Homeric world, see Cohen 1995; *contra* Carlier 2000.

[7] It is important to note that, in the earliest extant versions of the myth of Actaeon, the reason for this punishment does not seem to have to do with Artemis directly, but with Actaeon's desire to marry Semele; see Levaniouk 2011. In fact, the hunting competition between Actaeon and Artemis appears in Euripides' *Bacchae*, where another character, Pentheus, is cut up by his close associates.

[8] We must take into account the Thracian origin, in some traditions, of Dionysus. There are traditions of the depiction of deer in a Thracian context (Kull 2000) and also the connections between certain Thracian and Iberian traditions; see Kull 2002; Spânu *et al.* 2018: esp. 17 (map 3), 27 (map 5). I owe these references to the kind advice of Nikolaus Boroffka.

(Levaniouk 2011). This suggests to me that the strong presence of the Dionysian and the Boeotian mythical cycle is actually related to Plutarch's Boeotian origin. On the other hand, although Pailler (2000) pointed out the elements of the heroic model of Heracles in the *Life of Sertorius*, as well as more slightly than with those that could refer to the *Odyssey*, the fact is that we can clearly add to these two aspects those of Dionysus and the Theban cycle.

Returning to the strong presence of the hunting metaphor in Actaeon and in the episode of the *Odyssey* in which Odysseus dresses in deerskin, it is worth asking to what extent the conflict in Hispania in which Sertorius was the protagonist would also have been posed in these terms by Plutarch. Indeed, during his fight with Metellus, Plutarch (*Sert.* 13.1-3) points to Sertorius as the hunter, albeit in a certain reversed role:

"Metellus was now getting on in years, and was somewhat inclined also, by this time, to an easy and luxurious mode of life after his many and great contests; whereas his opponent, Sertorius, was full of mature vigour, and had a body which was wonderfully constituted for strength, speed, and plain living. For in excessive drinking he would not indulge even in his hours of ease, and he was wont to endure great toils, long marches, and continuous wakefulness, content within meagre and indifferent food; moreover, since he was always wandering about or hunting when he had leisure for it, he obtained an acquaintance with every way of escape for a fugitive, or of surrounding an enemy under pursuit, in places both accessible and inaccessible. The result was, therefore, that Metellus, by being kept from fighting, suffered all the harm which visits men who are defeated; while Sertorius, by flying, had the advantages of men who pursue. For in excessive drinking he would not indulge even in his hours of ease, and he was wont to endure great toils, long marches, and continuous wakefulness, content within meagre and indifferent food; moreover, since he was always wandering about or hunting when he had leisure for it, he obtained an acquaintance with every way of escape for a fugitive, or of surrounding an enemy under pursuit, in places both accessible and inaccessible. The result was, therefore, that Metellus, by being kept from fighting, suffered all the harm which visits men who are defeated; while Sertorius, by flying, had the advantages of men who pursue".

Note the value in this supremacy of Sertorius over Metellus based on the former's experience as a hunter. New Actaeon, Sertorius, a great hunter, would have been finally killed by his own men, in the same way as Anctaeon is killed by his dogs. Plutarch's narrative elaboration and the religious crime committed against Artemis would make the public presuppose the end that the story had in store for him.

To conclude, after this kind of play with the ideas, the models and the sources, I wonder if what we know about Sertorius, which came mainly from Plutarch, can really be regarded as historical or just a kind of game in fictions concerning myth, parallels and interpretative boxes the ancient authors used to manage in order to set into motion the kind of comprehensive narrative they associated with the literary genre they called History. Our knowledge, thus, about what happened and what Sertorius' adventures meant for the people of the age he lived, however, just makes sense if we take into account very seriously this type of narratives and the usual, unclear and pretty links between facts and fiction.

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Great men are strange men: inclusion of fantastic details and their role in Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*

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Plutarch, a Greek philosopher and writer of the 1st century AD, is famous for his *Parallel Lives*, where he constructs pairs of great men, one Greek and one Roman, based on similarities in their destinies. In the *Lives*, he often insists on the fact that he is not writing histories but βίοι (Plu. *Alex.* 1.2; *Tim.* 1.1). It means that, instead of documenting a period, he intends to shed light on the character of his heroes, most of them being characterized by their great virtue[1]. To do so, the biographer selects some episodes of the life of the protagonists to underline his qualities or a recurrent pattern in his behaviour. The purpose of such a project is of moral nature: contemplating great characters must provide some kind of mirror not only for the reader to understand and improve his own character but also for Plutarch to reflect on himself (Plu. *Per*. 2.1-4; *Tim*. 1.1) and pursue his philosophical inquiry, in a less theoretical way than in his moral treatises[2].

In this project, strange and fantastic details play a key role for several reasons: first, their inclusion in the texts is the result of a concerted choice of the author, and they must therefore contribute to illuminate the personality of the heroes and to build the reflection of both Plutarch and the reader; second, they echo Plutarch's own beliefs that the gods have an influence on the life of individuals[3]; finally, divine signs are relevant when it comes to understand and characterize virtue, because virtue is by definition connected to the divine, as Plutarch recognizes in a few passages, for example in his *Life of Aristides*. As people call the protagonist "fair", Plutarch comments on justice as a key virtue and declares:

> Σεμνότατον ἡ ἀρετὴ καὶ θειότατόν ἐστιν... τὴν δ᾽ἀρετήν, ὃ μόνον ἐστὶ τῶν θείων ἀγαθῶν ἐφ᾽ἡμῖν, ἐν ὑστέρῳ τίθενται, κακῶς φρονοῦντες.

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[1] Only in the case of Demetrius and Antonius does Plutarch explicitly say that he introduces flawy characters.

[2] On Plutarch's biographical method and aims, see Frazier 2010.

[3] Plutarch was a priest in Delphi when he wrote the *Parallel Lives*.

"Virtue is the most holy and divine quality; as for virtue, which is the only divine good thing among us, men put it last, because they despise it." (Plu. *Arist*. 6)[4]

All this leads us to ask: how does Plutarch's inclusion of strange and fantastic episodes in the *Lives* contribute to their moral purpose? We will first determine what kind of details qualify as "fantastic" and "marvellous" in Plutarch's βίοι before we examine how they contribute to their moral purpose.

Presence of the fantastic in Plutarch's *Lives*

Plutarch often mentions strange and marvellous events in the *Lives*. They roughly fall into two main categories depending on the sources at his disposal to account for a person's life[5]: some of them resort to the myth and come from poets and oral tradition, others are supernatural phenomena occurring in an otherwise non-mythical life. Mythical elements form the most part of the lives of the first Greeks (Theseus, Lycurgus, Solon) and of the first Romans (Romulus, Publicola). Plutarch himself, at the beginning of the *Life of Theseus*, admits that it is difficult to separate myth from history when events took place too long ago and appeals to the benevolence of his readers:

> Εἴη μὲν οὖν ἡμῖν ἐκκαθαιρόμενον λόγῳ τὸ μυθῶδες ὑπακοῦσαι καὶ λαβεῖν ἱστορίας ὄψιν· ὅπου δ᾿ ἂν αὐθαδῶς τοῦ πιθανοῦ περιφρονῇ καὶ μὴ δέχηται τὴν πρὸς τὸ εἰκὸς μεῖξιν, εὐγνωμόνων ἀκροατῶν δεησόμεθα καὶ πράως τὴν ἀρχαιολογίαν προσδεχομένων.

> "I wish I could force what's mythical to submit to the reason that purifies it, and gain the appearance of history; but when it will despise stubbornly what's credible and will not suffer to be mixed with verisimilitude, we will ask that our hearers be kind and welcome gently this old story." (Plu. *Thes*. 1.5)

Plutarch's defence here is honest, since he does not wish to force verisimilitude on details that are by nature incredible, an attitude that we find more radically expressed one century later in Lucian's *A true story*, where he pro-

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[4] All Greek translations in this paper are my own; Greek text is from Ziegler 1957-1973.
[5] On Plutarch's sources and method of work in the *Lives*, see Smith 1940; Pelling 1979, 1980.

claims that his sole truthful statement will be that he will tell lies all throughout his narrative. This does not mean that Plutarch does not express any critical judgement on some of the most incredible episodes he reports, or even contradicts them, as we will see. Nevertheless, the first *Lives*, resorting to ἀρχαιολογία, are not the only ones concerned with mythical elements: some posterior heroes' lives are also intertwined with the realm of fiction and myth. Such is for example the case of Alexander and Pyrrhus, who claim a divine and heroic ascendance and are constantly compared to their great predecessors[6]. In those two cases, mythical episodes play an important role in defining the personality of the hero.

The other category of marvellous episodes corresponds to what we call the "fantastic", i.e. the brutal manifestation of strange and supernatural events inside a world otherwise governed by rationality and history. Those episodes, far more numerous, concern almost every *Life*. Plutarch signals them through a wide range of terms. He employs in several passages the adjective θαυμάσιος, significant of the amazement caused by an unusual vision[7]. Plutarch also recurs to words like φάσμα[8] or ὄψις[9] when he wants to talk about supernatural apparitions, whereas τέρας[10] characterizes a divine sign that is often frightening and monstrous. Furthermore, words with the παρα- prefix are more relevant in the case of events and visions that are extraordinary in the eyes of the multitude. Hence, the marvellous encompasses things that are out of the ordinary, almost always strange to the multitude and potentially frightening.

Certain moments of a *Life* are more suited to fantastic manifestations than others. The birth and the death of the hero are often dramatized through dreams, prophesies, apparitions, or other divine signs. About the birth of Cicero, for example, Plutarch remarks:

Τῇ δὲ τίτθῃ φάσμα δοκεῖ γενέσθαι καὶ προειπεῖν ὡς ὄφελος μέγα πᾶσι Ῥωμαίοις ἐκτρεφούσῃ.

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[6] For the mythical in Plutarch's *Life of Pyrrhus*, see Mossé 2007.

[7] See Plu. *Cor*. 38.6; *Sull*. 7.4; *Dio* 2.3; *Arat*. 22.2.

[8] See Plu. *Thes*. 35.8; *Rom*. 2.4; *Num*. 8.3, 15.4; *Sol*. 12.6; *Them*. 15.2; *Tim*. 8.7; *Aem*. 17.9; *Pel*. 31.4; *Sull*. 27.4; *Cim*. 6.6; *Luc*. 8.5; *Alex*. 3.1; *Caes*. 42.1, 69.6-11; *Cic*. 2.1, 14.4; *Dio* 2.4-5, 55.1; *Brut*. 12.8, 36.7, 48.1; *Arat*. 32.2.

[9] See Plu. *Them*. 28.5; *Alc*. 39.2.

[10] See Plu. *Fab*. 18.3; *Sull*. 7.4; *Alex*. 75.1; *Caes*. 63.4; *TG* 1.4; *Dio* 55.3.

"They say that an apparition occurred to her nanny and predicted that she would raise someone very useful to all Romans." (Plu. *Cic*. 2.1)

Likewise, Pericles's mother dreamt of a lion only days before she gave birth to his son (Plu. *Per*. 3.3), and Olympias and Philippe both had a predictive dream before the birth of Alexander the Great (Plu. *Alex*. 2.3-5)[11]. These manifestations all point to the exceptional character whose life will be narrated. When it comes to death, supernatural signs take either dramatic importance when they anticipate the tragic faith of the protagonist, such as is the case in *Caesar* (63.1-12, 69.6-13) and *Brutus* (36.1-37.1, 48.1-5), or function as the last appreciation of the gods – and the writer – on the life that just ended. Caesar's murder, Plutarch reports, was not dear to the gods, as they allowed his personal demon to chase and punish every one of the men who complotted against him (Plu. *Caes.* 69). The fantastic can also signal the divine nature of the hero. Romulus is said by historians to have all the sudden disappeared (Plu. *Rom*. 27.1-9), whereas men discovered long after his death that Numa's coffin was empty, bringing into question the true nature of a divine man (Plu. *Num*. 22.1-4).

Other privileged moments for the fantastic to emerge are battles and important political decisions. The Roman *Lives* in particular are punctuated by omens occurring before generals go to battle, pointing to a future victory or defeat. Plutarch finds those details in his sources, but since they are in rupture with the everyday life experience and are potential lies or mere superstitions, he must develop strategies to prove that their inclusion inside the *Lives* is the result of careful scrutiny and that his aim is not to deceive or amuse his audience gratuitously.

Plutarch's inclusion of fantastic details in the *Lives*

If Plutarch agrees that divine interventions and prodigies can be genuine, the choice of such details needs to be carefully justified, because of the risk of ψεῦδος attached to them. Justifications of the supernatural in the writing of history are commonplace since Herodotus, but it seems to gain importance in a time where the realm of fiction and fantasy is more and more explored for itself. Fictional narratives become numerous and the development of what we call 'novels' is only one example of such fictional attempts.

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[11] On dreams in Plutarch's *Lives* and especially in Alexander, see King 2013.

Intertwined with the increasing theorization of fiction is the question of its purpose: is it a pure amusement designed to entertain erudite readers, or does the truth lie behind fiction? It all depends on the writer's intentions: does he seek to deceive his readership by hiding that he is lying, or does he, on the contrary, clearly show that what he says is false, giving fiction a moral ground by being honest? In the 2nd century AD, Lucian of Samosata will develop this alternative in the prologue of *A True Story*, where he criticises historians like Ctesias, who tell more myths than poets while pretending to write histories, i.e. factual and true stories. He himself, he assesses, is more honest in stating that he tells only lies in his book (Gassino 2010)[12]. Lucian also states, in *How to write history*, that many historians do not give honest and impartial accounts of the events they retell, a critic that Plutarch also formulates, pointing to Herodotus's dishonesty in the treatise *On the Malice of Herodotus*. Plutarch is also aware that fiction can deceive people and thus be harmful: he advises young men to be careful while reading the poets, who say many lies in a very convincing way (*How the young men should study poetry*). In this context, and considering that Plutarch himself expresses concerns regarding honesty and morality both in the writing of history and of fiction, it is to be expected that he be careful in the inclusion of fantastic and strange episodes in his *Lives*, whose purpose is of moral nature and which are mostly based on historical material.

Accordingly, Plutarch's inclusion of historical material in the *Lives*, fantastic or not, is generally thorough and he often mentions his sources, even though he sometimes recurs to a vague λέγεται. He hereby applies the method he assigns to the historian, who must be honest and clear in his account[13]. He expresses very few personal judgements on the events he reports, often leaving it to his sources themselves or to other characters of the narrative. Actions and words, for Plutarch, can and must account for the character and morality of the man he is writing about more than the opinion of the moralist. He nevertheless, on occasions, expresses criticism towards some of his sources or inserts a personal judgement at the end of anecdotes. It does not mean, however, that the moralist leaves it entirely to his sources to dictate the content of the *Life*: his account is thematically organised and the specific details developed in each one of the chapters are given a specific form that fits the theme they seek to illustrate. This is especially clear when

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[12] On the role of fiction in history in Antiquity, see Bowersock 1996.

[13] Plutarch's opinions on the writing of history are expressed in *On the malignity of Herodotus*; see for further inquiry on this theme Cook 2001.

the same episode is included in two different *Lives*, as we will see in the case of Brutus's "bad demon" in the *Lives* of Caesar and Brutus.

This careful method proves useful when it comes to mythical accounts, and Plutarch develops various strategies to include myths, especially in the first *Lives*, whose material is essentially mythical, without seeming naïve or deceitful. The choice of the strategy depends on the *Life* and on the purpose he fulfils in developing the chosen episode. These devices are easy to trace in the first *Lives*, for which the only sources available are mythical stories. First, Plutarch often recurs to the sorting of his sources, in order to establish the most plausible version of the story. In *Theseus*, for example, the relationship of the hero with the Amazons is carefully analysed by Plutarch, who writes at the beginning of the episode:

> Εἰς δὲ τὸν πόντον ἔπλευσε τὸν Εὔξεινον, ὡς μὲν Φιλόχορος καί τινες ἄλλοι λέγουσι, μεθ᾽Ἡρακλέους ἐπὶ τὰς Ἀμαζόνας συστρατεύσας, καὶ γέρας Ἀντιόπην ἔλαβεν· οἱ δὲ πλείους, ὧν ἐστι καὶ Φερεκύδης καὶ Ἑλλάνικος καὶ Ἡρόδωρος ὕστερόν φασι Ἡρακλέους ἰδιόστολον πλεῦσαι τὸν Θησέα καὶ τὴν Ἀμαζόνα λαβεῖν αἰχμάλωτον, πιθανώτερα λέγοντες. Οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἄλλος ἱστόρηται τῶν μετ᾽αὐτοῦ στρατευσάντων Ἀμαζόνα λαβεῖν αἰχμάλωτον.

> "He navigated to the Hellespont, as Philochorus and some others say, during a military expedition against the Amazons with Heracles, and he took Antiope as a gift of honour; but others, more numerous, among who Pherecydes, Hellanikos and Herodoros, say that Theseus made the trip after Heracles with his own expedition and took the Amazon prisoner, and they give a more credible version. In fact, no one else, among the men that were members of the expedition, is said to have made an Amazon prisoner." (Plu. *Thes*. 26.1)

In this passage, Plutarch mentions several sources, some named and some anonymous, and confronts them to establish what is most likely to have happened. He establishes that there were two separate expeditions against the Amazons by recurring to two sorts of arguments, the number of the sources, and also a logical argument, proving the coherence of the version he ultimately chooses. This discussion about the credibility of his sources allows him to gain the trust of the reader in bringing rationality to the myth. He also applies this method to the Amazon episode, stating as an addition to the narrative:

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Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν ἄξια μνήμης περὶ τῶν Ἀμαζόνων. Ἦν γὰρ ὁ τῆς Θησηίδος ποιητὴς Ἀμαζόνων ἐπανάστασιν γέγραφε, Θησεῖ γαμοῦντι Φαίδραν τῆς Ἀντιόνης ἐπιτιθεμένης καὶ τῶν μετ᾽αὐτῆς Ἀμαζόνων ἀμυνομένων καὶ κτείνοντος αὐτὰς Ἡρακλέους, περιφανῶς ἔοικε μύθῳ καὶ πλάσματι. Τῆς δ᾽Ἀντιόπης ἀποθανούσης ἔγημε Φαίδραν, ἔχων υἱὸν Ἱππόλυτον ἐξ Ἀντιόπης, ὡς δὲ Πίνδαρός φησι, Δημοφῶντα. Τὰς δὲ περὶ ταύτην καὶ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ δυστυχίας, ἐπεὶ μηδὲν ἀντιπίπτει παρὰ τῶν ἱστορικῶν τοῖς τραγικοῖς, οὕτως ἔχειν θετέον ὡς ἐκεῖνοι πεποιήκασιν ἅπαντες.

"These are the things worth remembering about the Amazons. As for the attack of the Amazons the poet of the *Theseid* wrote about, that Antiope and the Amazons accompanying and defending her attacked Theseus when he was married to Phaidra and that Heracles killed them, it resemble very clearly a myth or a fiction. Just after Antiope's death did Theseus marry Phaidra, having a son named Hippolytus or, as Pindarus says, Demophontes. As for the misfortunes that she and her son endured, since nothing is opposed in historical writings to the account of the tragic poets, we must hence suppose that it happened the way they all without exception reported it." (Plu *Thes*. 28.1-3)

Plutarch strongly contradicts his source, a poet whose name and oeuvre he thoroughly mentions, by recurring to a chronological argument proving the poet's mistake. He then moves on to Phaidra and accepts her tragic fate based on the consensus of the sources. This excursus at the end of a longer development on the Amazons, then, seems to have a historical and methodological goal, proving that Plutarch does not take every mythical story for granted without examining it.

Another way to include a myth in good faith is to criticise not the source but the content of the narrative. This is what is done in the case of Romulus: whereas the hero is thought to have seen more birds than his brother and thus to have gained the right to found a new city, Plutarch expresses doubts in the manner of Titus Livius:

Ὁρμήσασι δὲ πρὸς τὸν συνοικισμὸν αὐτοῖς εὐθὺς ἦν διαφορὰ περὶ τοῦ τόπου. Ῥωμύλος μὲν οὖν τὴν καλουμένην Ῥώμην κουαδράταν (ὅπερ ἐστὶ τετράγωνον) ἔκτισε, καὶ ἐκεῖνον ἐβούλετο πολίζειν τὸν τόπον, Ῥέμος δὲ χωρίον τι τοῦ Ἀβεντίνου καρτερόν, ὃ δι᾽ἐκεῖνον μὲν ὠνομάσθη Ῥεμωρία, νῦν δὲ Ῥιγνάριον καλεῖται. Συνθεμένων δὲ τὴν ἔριν ὄρνισιν αἰσίοις βραβεῦσαι, καὶ καθεζομένων χωρίς, ἕξ φασι τῷ Ῥέμῳ, διπλασίους δὲ τῷ Ῥωμύλῳ προφανῆναι γῦπας· οἱ δὲ τὸν μὲν

Ῥέμον ἀληθῶς ἰδεῖν, ψεύσασθαι δὲ τὸν Ῥωμύλον, ἐλθόντος δὲ τοῦ Ῥέμου, τότε τοὺς δώδεκα τῷ Ῥωμύλῳ φανῆναι· διὸ καὶ νῦν μάλιστα χρῆσθαι γυψὶ Ῥωμαίους οἰωνιζομένους.

"As they rushed into founding the city together, there was immediately a disagreement as to the location. Romulus had founded the so-called Roma quadrata (so named because it has four corners), and he wanted to turn this place into a city, whereas Remus had founded a strong place on the Aventinus, which was called, after himself, Remoria, and which is now called Rignarium. Deciding to settle this fight using the auspice of birds, and sitting in separate places, Remus, they say, saw six vultures, whereas Romulus pretended to have seen twice as much. They say that Remus really saw them, but that Romulus lied, and that the twelve birds only appeared to Romulus when Remus had returned. And that's the reason why Romans mostly use vulture to take the auspices." (Plu. *Rom*. 9.4-5)

Plutarch recurs to φασι and οἱ δέ to cite his source, which does not mean that he distrusts it, as Cook (2001) showed, but either that he recurs to an alternate and well-known tradition or else, that he wishes that the narration of the episode prevails over the montage of sources. Not only does Plutarch prove here his cautiousness towards his sources by reporting the opinion of people doubting the most commonly accepted version, but he also gives a pedagogical value to the episode by linking the myth to Roman habits, a subject he was interested in enough to write about in his *Roman Questions*. These precautions make a well-known myth suitable to the moral purpose of the *Life* as a whole.

   Another way of justifying the necessity of myths is to underline their links to moral or philosophical concerns. Accordingly, Plutarch sometimes adds a philosophical comment to the myth, as if it were a fable or another allegorical type of writing. It is, for example, what we find in *Romulus*, where Plutarch comments on the extraordinary apotheosis of his hero, who is said to have all the sudden disappeared from the surface of the earth.

Ἔοικε μὲν οὖν ταῦτα τοῖς ὑφ᾽ Ἑλλήνων περὶ τ᾽ Ἀριστέου τοῦ Προκοννησίου καὶ Κλεομήδους τοῦ Ἀστυπαλαιέως μυθολογουμένοις. [...] Λέγεται δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἀλκμήνης ἐκκομιζομένης νεκρὸν ἄδηλον γενέσθαι, λίθον δὲ φανῆναι κείμενον ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης, καὶ ὅλως πολλὰ τοιαῦτα μυθολογοῦσι, παρὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἐκθειάζοντες τὰ θνητὰ τῆς φύσεως ἅμα τοῖς θείοις. Ἀπογνῶναι μὲν οὖν παντάπασι τὴν

θειότητα τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀνόσιον καὶ ἀγγενές, οὐρανῷ δὲ μειγνύειν γῆν ἀβέλτερον.

"These stories resemble those that the Greeks report regarding Aristeas of Proconnesius and Cleomedes of Astypalaius. […] And as to the corpse of Alcmenes, it is told also that it disappeared as it was transported, and that it was a stone that laid on the deathbed; all the same, many such myths are told, which deem divine, against all credibility, what in nature is mortal and place it among what's divine. If it is impious and bad to completely ignore that virtue is divine, it is even worse to confound the sky with the earth." (Plu. *Rom*. 28.4-6).

The juxtaposition of several examples of mortals being deemed divine after their death gives Plutarch the occasion to draw the line between superstition and piety, a theme that he holds dear enough to have written an entire treaty on the question (*On superstition*). This consideration is only the prelude to a more philosophical digression on the divinity of virtue:

Οὐδὲν οὖν δεῖ τὰ σώματα τῶν ἀγαθῶν συναναπέμπειν παρὰ φύσιν εἰς οὐρανόν, ἀλλὰ τὰς ἀρετὰς καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς παντάπασιν οἴεσθαι κατὰ φύσιν καὶ δίκην θείαν ἐν μὲν ἀνθρώπων εἰς ἥρωας, ἐκ δ᾽ ἡρώων εἰς δαίμονας, ἐκ δὲ δαιμόνων, ἂν τέλεον ὥσπερ ἐν τελετῇ καθαρθῶσι καὶ ὁσιωθῶσιν, ἅπαν ἀποφυγοῦσαι τὸ θνητὸν καὶ παθητικόν, οὐ νόμῳ πόλεως, ἀλλ᾽ ἀληθείᾳ καὶ κατὰ τὸν εἰκότα λόγον εἰς θεοὺς ἀναφέρεσθαι, τὸ κάλλιστον καὶ μακαριώτατον τέλος ἀπολαβούσας.

"As for the bodies of good people, we must not send them to the sky in spite of their nature, but as concerns their virtues and their souls, we must absolutely think that, according to their nature and to divine justice, they will become heroic from human, from heroic they will become demonic, from demonic, if finally, like in an initiation, they succeed and are purified, they will escape every bit of mortality and suffering, not through the laws of the city, but through truth and according to the rightful reason, and become gods, achieving the most beautiful and happiest goal." (Plu. *Rom*. 28.8).

The view that good souls can ascend to the realm of the deity is a recurrent theme in the *Moralia*, in particular in the three *Delphic dialogues*, where questions about the nature and veracity of omens bring into questioning the

existence of demons, i.e. intermediate beings between gods and men[14]. This theme is also at the core of the allegorical reading of the Osiris myth in the dialogue *Isis and Osiris* and is central to the eschatological myth at the end of the dialogue *Concerning the face which appears in the orb of the moon*. In *Romulus*, then, Plutarch recurs to well-known myths about his hero to pursue the philosophical inquiries of the *Moralia* regarding the relationship between men and gods. In this case, the moral lesson itself is sufficient to allow Plutarch to tell fantastic stories about his characters. His treatment of the myth, as we see, is generally thorough and accompanied by explanations or methodological considerations that render such stories acceptable in his compositions.

Even when Plutarch leaves the realm of the myth, fantastic and strange facts still pervade the *Lives*, whether in the form of omens and other divine signs or of ghosts and apparitions. Plutarch's sources, as in the case of myths, are generally mentioned, and the moralist's attitude towards those signs oscillates between the careful scrutiny on the nature and effects of those signs and the justification of their insertion in the *Life*. We will now examine these two treatments of the fantastic.

Plutarch's critical treatment of fantastic details usually revolves around the question of the veracity of the omens, an interrogation that can also lead to moral considerations about faith, whether it be the good faith of the pious man or the unreasonable one of the superstitious crowd. For example, at the end of the *Life of Coriolanus*, whose death was announced by many divine signs, Plutarch writes:

> Ταύτην καὶ δὶς γενέσθαι τὴν φωνὴν μυθολογοῦσιν, ἀγενήτοις ὅμοια καὶ χαλεπὰ πεισθῆναι πείθοντες ἡμᾶς. Ἰδίοντα μὲν γὰρ ἀγάλματα φανῆναι καὶ δακρυρροοῦντα καί τινας μεθιέντα νοτίδας αἱματώδεις οὐκ ἀδύνατόν ἐστι· καὶ γὰρ ξύλα καὶ λίθοι πολλάκις μὲν εὑρῶτα συνάγουσι γόνιμον ὑγρότητος πολλὰς δὲ καὶ χρόας ἀνιᾶσιν ἐξ αὑτῶν, καὶ δέχονται βαφὰς ἐκ τοῦ περιέρχοντος, οἷς ἔνια σημαίνειν τὸ δαιμόνιον οὐδὲν ἂν δόξειε κωλύειν. [...] ἔναρθρον δὲ φωνὴν καὶ διάλεκτον οὕτω σαφῆ καὶ περιττὴν καὶ ἀρτίστομον ἐν ἀψύχῳ γενέσθαι παντάπασιν ἀμήχανον [...]. Ὅπου δ᾽ ἡμᾶς ἡ ἱστορία πολλοῖς ἀποβιάζεται καὶ πιθανοῖς μάρτυσιν, ἀνόμοιον αἰσθήσει πάθος ἐγγινόμενον τῷ φανταστικῷ τῆς ψυχῆς συναναπείθει τὸ δόξαν, ὥσπερ ἐν ὕπνοις ἀκούειν οὐκ ἀκούοντες καὶ βλέπειν οὐ βλέποντες

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[14] On Plutarch's demonology, see Soury 1939; Brouillette 2014.

δοκοῦμεν. Οὐ μὲν ἀλλὰ τοῖς ὑπ᾽εὐνοίας καὶ φιλίας πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἄγαν ἐμπαθῶς ἔχουσι καὶ μηδὲν ἀθετεῖν μηδ᾽ἀναίνεσθαι τῶν τοιούτων δυναμένοις μέγα πρὸς πίστιν ἐστὶ τὸ θαυμάσιον καὶ μὴ καθ᾽ἡμᾶς τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεως. [...] Ἀλλὰ τῶν μὲν θείων τὰ πολλά, καθ᾽Ἡράκλειτον, ἀπιστίῃ διαφυγγάνει μὴ γινώσκεσθαι.

"This voice was heard twice, as narrate people believing things that appear dishonest and are difficult for us to believe. In fact, that it appeared statues sweating, crying or presenting some bleeding moisture, it is not impossible; indeed the wood and the stone often collect mould that produces humidity and they reject many colours on the outside, and they receive dye from what surrounds them, by which means nothing would provide the divinity to address some signs. […] But it is completely impossible that an articulate voice and a language that clear, precise and ordinate reside in an inanimate element. […] But when history forces us through many trustworthy witnesses, we must persuade ourselves that this opinion is a feeling different from sensation, residing in the imaginative part of the soul, like in dreams we believe that we hear when we do not hear, that we see when we do not see. But those who have gained too much sensitivity because of their benevolence and their friendship to the god and are not capable of erasing and remove any of those facts, have a strong argument to support their faith in the marvellous and transcending power of the god. […] But, according to Heraclitus, our distrust forbids us to know most divine facts." (Plu. *Cor*. 38. 1-4).

In this passage, Plutarch expresses some thoughts about a subject that he holds dear and that, as a priest himself, he knows well: the question of the veracity of omens. Some of them can be genuine and, even though they might be signs of a divine presence, they can be explained by some scientific reasoning, whereas others, such as clear voices, are most likely mere inventions and resort to superstition, δεισιδαιμονία. Plutarch then, with many nuances, tries to explain the psychology of those superstitious persons who see and hear fantastic things that reinforce their faith. He does not clearly condemn this attitude and prefers to suspend his judgement, recurring to a sentence by Heraclitus. Such passages are good examples of Plutarch adopting a scientific view on oracles and omens to formulate some moral considerations. This moderate attitude is again expressed in the *Life of Camillus*, where he advises to adopt a nuanced view on oracles:

Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ συνάγουσιν ὁμοειδῆ τινα, τοῦτο μὲν ἱδρῶτας ἀγαλμάτων πολλάκις ἐκχυθέντας, τοῦτο δὲ στεναγμοὺς ἀκουσθέντας ἀποστροφάς τε δεικνύντες καὶ καταμύσεις ξοάνων, ἃς ἱστορήκασιν οὐκ ὀλίγοι τῶν πρότερον. Πολλὰ δὲ καὶ τῶν καθ᾽ἡμᾶς ἀκηκοότες ἀνθρώπων λέγειν ἔχομεν ἄξια θαύματος, ὧν οὐκ ἄν τις εἰκῇ καταφρονήσειεν. Ἀλλὰ τοῖς τοιούτοις καὶ τὸ πιστεύειν σφόδρα καὶ τὸ λίαν ἀπιστεῖν ἐπισφαλές ἐστι διὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἀσθένειαν, ὅρον οὐκ ἔχουσαν οὐδὲ κρατοῦσαν αὐτῆς, ἀλλ᾽ἐκφερομένην ὅπου μὲν εἰς δεισιδαιμονίαν καὶ τῦφον, ὅπου δ᾽εἰς ὀλιγωρίαν τῶν θείων καὶ περιφρόνησιν· ἡ δ᾽εὐλάβεια καὶ τὸ μηδὲν ἄγαν ἄριστον. (*Life of Camillus*, 6, 3).

"Furthermore, they bring up stories of the same sort, sometimes the sweat often pouring out of statues, sometimes the moaning that they heard, showing statues turning away and closing their eyes, facts that numerous ancient historians report. We can also hear many stories from our contemporaries worthy of amazement that it would not be reasonable to despise. But on such matters, too strong a belief as well as too strong a distrust are unwise because of the human weakness, possessing no boundary nor self-control, but pulled sometimes towards superstition and blindness, sometimes towards the neglect and the contempt of divine signs. It is better to be cautious and to resort to 'nothing too much'." (Plu. *Cam*. 6.3)

The two opposite but equally wrong attitudes Plutarch reports are consistent with what he notes in the treaty *On superstition* (*Mor.* 164e). Fantastic details are once again the starting point for a moral discussion that justifies the mention of extraordinary and unprovable facts. When it comes to the fantastic and the supernatural, then, it is not uncommon for Plutarch to link it to philosophical considerations on human relationships to the divine. Doing so, he prolongs the more austere and theoretical discussions of the *Moralia*[15].

Fantastic details can also serve as a way of displaying the influence of the gods on the life of an individual. Signs and omens announcing the birth of great men thus function as the first clue that some divine power will influence their destiny, just as signs occurring before or after death confirm that a life was indeed governed by more than human decisions. Furthermore,

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[15] On Plutarch and his treatment of Roman divination in the *Lives*, see Stoffel 2005.

depending on his sources, Plutarch sometimes develops surprising and dramatic episodes, where fantastic details grow into elaborate peripetias. We will examine this point more thoroughly through the example of Brutus's ghost, which we find at the end of the *Life of Caesar* and again twice in the *Life of Brutus*. On two occasions indeed, a phantom (φάσμα) visited him and predicted him that he would fall at Philippi. At the end of the *Life of Caesar*, Plutarch mentions that divine vengeance is about to strike Caesar's assassins:

Ὁ μέντοι μέγας αὐτοῦ δαίμων, ᾧ παρὰ τὸν βίον ἐχρήσατο, καὶ τελευτήσαντος ἐπηκολούθησε τιμωρὸς τοῦ φόνου, διά τε γῆς πάσης καὶ θαλάττης ἐλαύνων καὶ ἀνιχνεύων ἄχρι τοῦ μηδένα λιπεῖν τῶν ἀπεκτονότων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς καθ᾽ὁτιοῦν ἢ χειρὶ τοῦ ἔργου θιγόντας ἢ γνώμῃ μετασχόντας ἐπεξελθεῖν. [...] μάλιστα δὲ τὸ Βρούτῳ γενόμενον φάσμα τὴν Καίσαρος ἐδήλωσε σφαγὴν οὐ γενομένην θεοῖς ἀρεστήν· ἦν δὲ τοιόνδε. Μέλλων τὸν στρατὸν ἐξ Ἀβύδου διαβιβάζειν εἰς τὴν ἑτέραν ἤπειρον, ἀνεπαύετο νυκτὸς ὥσπερ εἰώθει κατὰ σκηνήν, οὐ καθεύδων, ἀλλὰ φροντίζων περὶ τοῦ μέλλοντος· λέγεται γὰρ οὗτος ἀνὴρ ἥκιστα δὴ τῶν στρατηγῶν ὑπνώδης γενέσθαι καὶ πλεῖστον ἑαυτῷ χρόνον ἐγρηγορότι χρῆσθαι πεφυκώς· ψόφου δέ τινος αἰσθέσθαι περὶ τὴν θύραν ἔδοξε, καὶ πρὸς τὸ τοῦ λύχνου φῶς ἤδη καταφερομένου σκεψάμενος, ὄψιν εἶδε φοβερὰν ἀνδρὸς ἐκφύλου τὸ μέγεθος καὶ χαλεποῦ τὸ εἶδος. Ἐκπλαγεὶς δὲ τὸ πρῶτον, ὡς ἑώρα μήτε πράττοντά τι μήτε φθεγγόμενον, ἀλλ᾽ἑστῶτα σιγῇ παρὰ τὴν κλίνην, ἠρώτα τίς ἐστιν. Ἀποκρίνεται δ᾽αὐτῷ τὸ φάσμα· ὁ σὸς ὦ Βροῦτε δαίμων κακός· ὄψει δέ με περὶ Φιλίππους. Τότε μὲν οὖν ὁ Βροῦτος εὐθαρσῶς ὄψομαι, εἶπε, καὶ τὸ δαιμόνιον εὐθὺς ἐκποδὼν ἀπήει. Τῷ δ᾽ἱκνουμένῳ χρόνῳ περὶ τοὺς Φιλίππους ἀντιταχθεὶς Ἀντωνίῳ καὶ Καίσαρι, τῇ μὲν πρώτῃ μάχῃ κρατήσας τὸ καθ᾽ἑαυτὸν ἐτρέψατο, καὶ διεξήλασε πορθῶν τὸ Καίσαρος στρατόπεδον· τὴν δὲ δευτέραν αὐτῷ μάχεσθαι μέλλοντι φοιτᾷ τὸ αὐτὸ φάσμα τῆς νυκτὸς αὖθις, οὐχ ὥστε τι προσειπεῖν, ἀλλὰ συνεὶς ὁ Βροῦτος τὸ πεπρωμένον, ἔρριψε φέρων ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὸν κίνδυνον.

"The great demon protecting him, however, whom he beneficiated throughout his life, and who, after his death, followed him to avenge his murder, rushed through land and sea and purchased his killers until no one of them was left: he prosecuted those who took part in the murder with their own hands and those who participated to the

conception of it. […] In particular, the phantom that appeared to Brutus clearly showed that this slaughter was not dear to the gods: here is what happened. As the expedition was about to quit Abydos to pass on the other continent, he took a break and went to his tent for the night, as usual, not sleeping, but thinking about the future; in fact, the man is said to have been, of the generals, the least keen to sleeping, and to have by nature been used to spend much of his time awake. He thought he heard some noise at the door and, looking in the direction of the lamp with the light already fading, he saw the frightening vision of a man of a great height, with a harsh appearance. At first, he was struck, as he saw that he was not doing nor saying anything, but stood silently near the bed, then he asked him who he was. And the apparition answers: "I'm your bad demon, Brutus, you will see me at Philippi." Brutus then answered with confidence "Il will see you", and the demon immediately stepped away. Time passed and Brutus was facing Antonius and Caesar at Philippi. Having been successful in the first battle, he had conquered the enemy and had destroyed Caesar's camp; as he was about to fight the second battle, the same apparition visited him again at night without saying anything, but Brutus understood his fate, and he plunged himself into the danger." (Plu. *Caes*. 69.2-13).

The paragraph is dedicated to the consequences of Caesar's murder, which "was not dear to the gods", as the fantastic apparition makes clear. Plutarch focuses on the frightening appearance of the ghost, carefully set in an obscure ambience and filled with dreadful physical features, all the more striking as Plutarch does not disturb the coherence of his ghost story with the mention of a source. Brutus's reaction, whereas noble and firm, is interpreted in the sense of a man accepting a divine punishment for his actions, as we see in the expression "Brutus understood his fate". In this text, thus, the phantom, implicitly equalled with Caesar's μέγας δαίμων, is inserted inside a fantastic narrative that purports to prove, before closing the *Life*, that Caesar was loved by the gods to the point that they sought revenge for his unjust death.

Plutarch's focus is, as is to be expected, slightly different in the *Life of Brutus*, where he wants to illuminate the personality of a great man who was also a philosopher (*Dio* 1; *Brut*. 2). The phantom appears in two different moments of the biography. The first episode takes place as Brutus is about to sail to Asia with his army:

Ἐπεὶ δὲ διαβαίνειν ἐξ Ἀσίας ἔμελλον, λέγεται τῷ Βρούτῳ μέγα σημεῖον γενέσθαι. Φύσει μὲν γὰρ ἦν ἐπεργήγορος ὁ ἀνήρ, καὶ τὸν ὕπνον εἰς ὀλίγου χρόνου μόριον ἀσκήσει καὶ σωφροσύνη συνῆγεν, ἡμέρας μὲν οὐδέποτε κοιμώμενος, νύκτωρ δὲ τοσοῦτον ὅσον οὔτε τι πράττειν οὔτε τω διαλέγεσθαι, πάντων ἀναπαυομένων, παρεῖχε, τότε δὲ τοῦ πολέμου συνεστῶτος, ἐν χερσὶν ἔχων τὰς ὑπὲρ τῶν ὅλων πράξεις καὶ τεταμένος τῇ φροντίδι πρὸς τὸ μέλλον, ὁπηνίκα πρῶτον ἐφ᾽ἑσπέρας ἐπινυστάξειε τοῖς σιτίοις, ἤδη τὸ λοιπὸν ἐχρῆτο τῇ νυκτί πρὸς τὰ κατεπείγοντα τῶν πραγμάτων. Εἰ δὲ συνέλοι καὶ κατοικονομήσειε τὴν περὶ ταῦτα χρείαν, ἀνεγίνωσκε βιβλίον μέχρι τρίτης φυλακῆς, καθ᾽ἣν εἰώθεσαν ἑκατόνταρχοι καὶ χιλίαρχοι φοιτᾶν πρὸς αὐτόν, ὡς οὖν ἔμελλεν ἐξ Ἀσίας διαβιβάζειν στράτευμα, νὺξ μὲν ἦν βαθυτάτη, φῶς δ᾽εἶχεν οὐ πάνυ λαμπρὸν ἡ σκηνή, πᾶν δὲ τὸ στρατόπεδον σιωπὴ κατεῖχεν. Ὁ δὲ συλλογιζόμενός τι καὶ σκοπῶν πρὸς ἑαυτόν, ἔδοξεν αἰσθέσθαι τινὸς εἰσιόντος· ἀποβλέψας δὲ πρὸς τὴν εἴσοδον, ὁρᾷ δεινὴν καὶ ἀλλόκοτον ὄψιν ἐκφύλου σώματος καὶ φοβεροῦ, σιωπῇ παρεστῶτος αὐτῷ. Τολμήσας δ᾽ἐρέσθαι, τίς ποτ᾽ὢν εἶπεν ἀνθρώπων ἢ θεῶν, ἢ τί βουλόμενος ἥκεις ὡς ἡμᾶς; ὑποφθέγγεται δ᾽αὐτῷ τὸ φάσμα ὁ σὸς ὦ Βροῦτε δαίμων κακός· ὄψει δέ με περὶ Φιλίππους. Καὶ ὁ Βροῦτος οὐ διαταραχθεὶς ὄψομαι εἶπεν.

"As he was about to march to Asia, they say that a great sign appeared to Brutus. By nature, indeed, the man had a light sleep, and he used to encompass it, by exercise and wisdom, in a brief moment of time. He did not sleep during the day; as for the night, when everybody was resting, he slept only when he had nothing to do or nothing to think about. Since there was a battle, having in his hands the plan of actions and looking with anxiety to future events, he dropped asleep over the meal, and then dedicated the rest of the night to the most pressing affairs. And if he chose and managed well the time dedicated to these, he read a book until the third guard, at which time the centurions and the tribunes used to come to him. Then, as the expedition was about to cross away from Asia, it was a very dark night, and he had not much light in his tent, as the camp was entirely plonged into silence. Brutus was thinking about something and examining a point, and he believed he had felt someone was entering the tent. Looking at the entrance, he sees a terrible and strange vision of an unnatural and terrifying body, who stood in silence next to him. He dared to ask who he was, if he belonged to the men or the

gods, and why he came to him. The apparition responded: "I am your bad demon, Brutus: you will see me at Philippi". And Brutus, untroubled, said: "I will see you"." (Plu. *Brut*. 36.1-7)

The episode is developed with much detail. The only mention of a source is a discrete λέγεται that does not alter the novelistic tone of the narrative, which closely echoes the end of *Caesar*. Even though the event is the same and the dialogue with the ghost similar, the encounter only occupies the end of the episode, Plutarch's main focus being on Brutus's habits: his lack of sleep and his studious application, only disturbed by his attention to his men, is consistent with the personality of a man who is as much a good general as he is a philosopher. His reaction to the ghost's entrance confirms his courage and his virtue: in contrary to the *Life of Caesar*, the protagonist expresses no fear; Plutarch recurs to a Stoic vocabulary to underline the boldness of his protagonist (τολμήσας) and his firm attitude towards the frightening sight of the ghost (οὐ διαταραχθείς). The response ὄψομαι is then to be interpreted as that of a man who believes in destiny and in the impossibility to escape it, his only choice residing in his attitude towards it. The ghost announces then Brutus's faith in Philippi but also the dignified death he will choose.

As in *Caesar*, Brutus last encounters the ghost before the battle of Philippi, here again at night:

Ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ νυκτὶ πάλιν φασὶν εἰς ὄψιν ἐλθεῖν τὸ φάσμα τῷ Βρούτῳ, καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἐπιδειξάμενον ὄψιν, οὐδὲν εἰπεῖν ἀλλ᾽οἴχεσθαι. Πόπλιος δὲ Βολούμνιος, ἀνὴρ φιλόσοφος καὶ συνεστρατευμένος ἀπ᾽ἀρχῆς Βρούτῳ, τοῦτο μὲν οὐ λέγει τὸ σημεῖον, μελισσῶν δέ φησι τὸν πρῶτον ἀετὸν ἀνάπλεως γενέσθαι, καὶ τῶν ταξιάρχων τινὸς ἀπ᾽αὐτομάτου τὸν βραχίονα μύρον ῥόδινον ἐξανθεῖν, καὶ πολλάκις ἐξαλείφοντας καὶ ἀπομάττοντας μηδὲν περαίνειν, καὶ πρὸ τῆς μάχης αὐτῆς ἀετοὺς δύο συμπεσόντας ἀλλήλοις ἐν μεταιχμίῳ τῶν στρατοπέδων μάχεσθαι, καὶ σιγὴν ἄπιστον ἔχειν τὸ πεδίον, θεωμένων ἁπάντων, εἶξαι δὲ καὶ φυγεῖν τὸν κατὰ Βροῦτον. Ὁ δ᾽Αἰθίοψ περιβόητος γέγονεν, ὁ τῆς πύλης ἀνοιχθείσης ἀπαντήσας τῷ φέροντι τὸν ἀετὸν καὶ κατακοπεὶς ταῖς μαχαίραις ὑπὸ τῶν στρατιωτῶν οἰωνισαμένων.

"This night, as they say, Brutus saw the same apparition, and it looked the same, without saying anything but leaving. Poplius Boulomnius, a man found of philosophy and who had served from the beginning on with Brutus, does not speak about this sign, but he says that the

first bird was infested with bees, and that the arm of one of the soldiers spontaneously secreted an unguent smelling of rose, and that they wiped it out and tried to remove it several times without effect, and that before the battle itself two eagles, rushing on one another in the space between the two armies, fought against one another, and that an incredulous silence had gained the land, as they all stared, and that the eagle near Brutus's side gave way and fled. And the Ethiopian became famous, who, when the door opened, approached the man carrying the eagle and was cut open with knives on the impulsion of the soldiers regarding him as an omen." (Plu. *Brut*. 48.1-5).

The ghost's apparition is only one of a series of omens mentioned by different sources, which all point to the hero's defeat. By contrast to the φασί introducing the phantom episode, Plutarch develops the version of a close companion of Brutus that seems to induce doubt as to the veracity of the ghost's narrative. But instead of diminishing Brutus's acceptance of his faith, the series of omens attributed to Poplius Boulomnius and possibly some other sources reinforce it: in spite of so many and so explicit signs from the gods, the general confronts his destiny with determination. The reminder of the ghost in the overture of the sequence underlines the Stoic attitude of Brutus in remembering the reader of the previous episode and on showing the parallel between Brutus's words then and actions now. Different narrative choice in the *Life of Caesar* and in the *Life of Brutus* construct a fantastic episode as a clear demonstration of the fatality falling upon men, who can only choose how to react to their announced faith.

To sum up, so far, we have seen that fantastic details in Plutarch are generally carefully chosen and integrated inside the *Lives* to serve a moral purpose. He then uses all kind of marvellous stories and signs to expose philosophical ideas and judge the conduct of his hero. Furthermore, as Brutus's ghost already demonstrated, fantastic details contribute to the characterization of the heroes, underlining a relationship to the gods that is central to Plutarch's understanding of virtue and goodness.

Plutarch and the characterization of great men through fantastic details

The construction of each *Life* depends on the unique mixture of nature, character and piety, which constitutes the virtue particular to each great man. The texture of the narrative, the choice and the treatment of biographical material are then adapted to each destiny. In this context, it is to be expected that the role of fantastic details too depends on the specificity of each *Life*.

Many differences can indeed be observed in the treatment of marvellous and fantastic details. Some *Lives* are almost void of supernatural episodes whereas others seem entirely devoted to characterizing the protagonist as a divine man. Among the less fantastic *Lives* is the *Life of Phocion*, an Athenian general from the 5th century BC. Fantastic episodes and divine manifestations are almost absent from the narrative, which is consistent with the general tone of the biography: Plutarch intends to show the austerity and the moral righteousness of a man devoted to his fellow-citizens. *Phocion* is then a 'civic' biography reflecting on the interaction of politics and practical philosophy in Athens[16]. The fate of Phocion, who died as unjustly as Socrates (Plu. *Phoc.* 38.5), and his cynical *bons mots*, characterize a man who does not amaze people with his divine aura but with the rectitude of reason. He does not appear to be keen on religious ceremonies, as he replies to someone asking him to participate financially to a sacrifice that he is not rich enough to contribute (9.1). If he once takes omens before a battle, Plutarch does not give the result of the consultation, wondering instead if the unusual length of the procedure should be interpreted as the sign that the auspices were bad or as a strategical move on the part of Phocion (13.1). Through this alternative, Plutarch insists on Phocion's practical view on religion rather than on a divine influence on the course of the battle. Ultimately, the most prominent divine sign mentioned in the *Phocion* is an oracle received years ago announcing that the Athenians would lose some part of the city (28.4-6), a prophecy that takes a particular sense in the context of a Macedonian occupation of Athens decided by Phocion for the sake of his fellow-citizens, who complain that the gods are indifferent to their misfortune while they are celebrating mysteries, a celebration that used to be filled with divine signs (28.1-3). The prophecy then underlines how little Phocion cares about religious displays and superstition, a disdain that will eventually cost him his life. In this *Life*, then, fantastic details are almost absent

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[16] Phocion was a student of Plato and Xenocrates; see Plu. *Phoc*. 4.2.

because of the cynical and down-to-earth personality of a protagonist who acts as some kind of cynical Socrates only concerned with governing the city with moral virtue alone instead of the fear of the gods. Other heroes, such as Marius, are not primarily concerned with fantastic details because Plutarch makes clear from the beginning of the story that what is really at the core of the biography is the importance of παιδεία (education) in the conduct of a virtuous life.

If some *Lives* are not filled with fantastic episodes, they are essential to understand the personality and virtue of other great men. First, some heroes construct their identity through a privileged relationship to divinity, as is the case of Theseus, Numa Pompilius, Sertorius and Alexander the Great, who claim a divine ascendance[17]; second, divine favour, good fortune and piety play an essential part in most of the *Lives*, as the nature and the education of great men, that constitute their character, do not suffice to account for the diversity of their faiths. His heroes' reactions to divine manifestations and supernatural events thus complexify and nuance Plutarch's comprehension of their virtue. The *Life of Sulla* is in this matter interesting: it shows a character who never ceases to trust his good fortune to make decisions and who was so dear to Fortune that he was nicknamed 'Felix'. Supernatural and divine signs in his *Life* are interpreted in the sense of Fortune manifesting itself to him to guide him, thus giving some divine aura to his actions. It is clear from the beginning of the *Life* on, as Plutarch comments:

Σύλλας δὲ οὐ μόνον ἡδέως προσιέμενος τὸν τοιοῦτον εὐδαιμονισμὸν καὶ ζῆλον, ἀλλὰ καὶ συναύξων καὶ συνεπιθειάζων τὰ πραττόμενα, τῆς τύχης ἐξῆπτεν, εἴτε κόμπῳ χρώμενος εἴθ᾽οὕτως ἔχων τῇ δόξῃ πρὸς τὸ θεῖον. Καὶ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ὑπομνήμασι γέγραφεν ὅτι τῶν καλῶς αὐτῷ βεβουλεῦσθαι δοκούντων αἱ μὴ κατὰ γνώμην, ἀλλὰ πρὸς καιρὸν ἀποτολμώμεναι πράξεις ἔπιπτον εἰς ἄμεινον. Ἔτι δὲ καὶ δι᾽ὧν φησι πρὸς τύχην εὖ πεφυκέναι μᾶλλον ἢ πρὸς πόλεμον, τῇ τύχῃ τῆς ἀρετῆς πλέον ἔοικε νέμειν καὶ ὅλως ἑαυτὸν τοῦ δαίμονος ποιεῖν, ὅς γε καὶ τῆς πρὸς Μέτελλον ὁμονοίας, ἰσότιμον ἄνδρα καὶ κηδεστήν, εὐτυχίαν τινὰ θείαν αἰτιᾶται· πολλὰ γὰρ αὐτῷ πράγματα παρέξειν ἐπίδοξον ὄντα πρᾳότατον ἐν τῇ κοινωνίᾳ γενέσθαι τῆς ἀρχῆς. Ἔτι δὲ Λευκόλλῳ μὲν ἐν τοῖς ὑπομνήμασιν, ὡς ἐκείνῳ τὴν γραφὴν ἀνατέθεικε, παραινεῖ μηδὲν οὕτως ἡγεῖσθαι βέβαιον ὡς ὅ τι

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[17] On Alexander's relationship to the gods, see Aubriot 2003.

ἂν αὐτῷ προστάξῃ νύκτωρ τὸ δαιμόνιον. Ἐκπεμπομένου δὲ αὐτοῦ μετὰ δυνάμεως εἰς τὸν συμμαχικὸν πόλεμον ἱστορεῖ χάσμα τῆς γῆς μέγα γενέσθαι περὶ Λαβέρνην· ἐκ δὲ τούτου πῦρ ἀναβλῦσαι πολὺ καὶ φλόγα λαμπρὰν στηρίσαι πρὸς τὸν οὐρανόν. Εἰπεῖν δὴ καὶ τοὺς μάντεις ὡς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς ὄψει διάφορος καὶ περιττὸς ἄρξας ἀπαλλάξει τῇ πόλει ταραχὰς τὰς παρούσας. Τοῦτον δὲ αὐτὸν εἶναί φησιν ὁ Σύλλας· τῆς μὲν γὰρ ὄψεως ἴδιον εἶναι τὸ περὶ τὴν κόμην χρυσωπόν, ἀρετὴν δὲ οὐκ αἰσχύνεσθαι μαρτυρῶν ἑαυτῷ μετὰ πράξεις καλὰς οὕτω καὶ μεγάλας. Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν περὶ τῆς θειότητος.

Sulla was not only pleasantly accepting such a good fortune and eagerness, but also exaggerated and divinised his actions, assigning them to his good fortune, either boasting or really attributing his glory to a sacred action. And in his *Memoirs* indeed he has written that, of the actions that he appeared to have decided rightly, those that he did not owe to reflexion, but that he risked on a determined circumstance turned out to be for the best. Furthermore, judging from the fact that he says that they were by nature due to good fortune rather than to war, he seemed to attribute more advantages to the fortune than to virtue, and to completely see himself as a creature of the god, he who at least attributed his togetherness with Metellus, a man who was his equal in rank and his relative by marriage, to some divine good favour; whereas he thought that the celebrity of the man would indeed cause him many worries, he found out that sharing the power with him was very cheerful. And again, he advices Lucullus, whom he dedicated his book, to not consider anything as stable as the commandments made at night by the divinity. As he was sent to the allies' war with his forces, he reports that there was a big gap in the earth around Laverna; that from it, lots of fire burst and that a bright flame stood in direction of the sky. And the soothsayers said that a good man visibly remarkable and talented would, after having taken the power, free the city from its contemporary troubles. This man, Sulla said, would be himself; as for the appearance, he had a golden look that was distinctive of him, and as for the virtue, he did not feel ashamed to bear witness to himself after such beautiful and great actions. So much on the subject of divinity."
(Plu. *Sull*. 6.4-7)

In this paragraph, Plutarch characterizes for the first time the relationship of his hero with divinity. The source for the passage seems to be Sulla's own

book, which Plutarch cites for the major part of his account. The only mention of a personal interpretation from the biographer is the alternative he gives to explain why Sulla would have accentuated the role of Fortune in his life: he could have done it in good faith or out of a strategy aiming at glorifying himself. He nevertheless integrates spectacular events and prodigies in his attempt to show his link to the gods, as the end of the text makes clear with the prediction of the soothsayers and Sulla's own commentary on their interpretation. Sulla never ceases during his life to let strange and fantastic omens guide his choices and determine his actions. It gives him a powerful aura on the people around him. In this case, fantastic details are an essential part of the hero's character and virtue.

Whereas Sulla, according to Plutarch, genuinely believes that fortune governs his every move, other heroes are more sceptical and instrumentalise supernatural manifestations of the divine at political ends. This last attitude is particularly evident in the case of some of the heroes who are accustomed to fabricating or twisting omens, as is the case of Romulus, Numa Pompilius, Themistocles or Sertorius. We will develop the example of Themistocles. When Athens is under the threat of the Persians, Themistocles recurs to false omens to persuade people to leave their city and embark on boats:

> Ἔνθα δὴ Θεμιστοκλῆς, ἀπορῶν τοῖς ἀνθρωπίνοις λογισμοῖς προσάγεσθαι τὸ πλῆθος, ὥσπερ ἐν τραγῳδίᾳ μηχανὴν ἄρας, σημεῖα δαιμόνια καὶ χρησμοὺς ἐπῆγεν αὐτοῖς, σημεῖον μὲν λαμβάνων τὸ τοῦ δράκοντος, ὃς ἀφανὴς ταῖς ἡ ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐκ τοῦ σηκοῦ δοκεῖ γενέσθαι, καὶ τὰς καθ᾽ἡμέραν αὐτῷ προτιθεμένας ἀπαρχὰς εὑρίσκοντες ἀψαύστους, οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐξήγγελλον εἰς τοὺς πολλούς, τοῦ Θεμιστοκλέους λόγον <δια>διδόντος ὡς ἀπολέλοιπε τὴν πόλιν ἡ θεὸς ὑφεγουμένη πρὸς τὴν θάλασσαν αὐτοῖς· τῷ δὲ χρησμῷ πάλιν ἐδημαγώγει, λέγων μηδὲν ἄλλο δηλοῦσθαι ξύλινον τεῖχος ἢ τὰς ναῦς· διὸ καὶ τὴν Σαλαμῖνα θείαν, οὐχὶ δεινὴν οὐδὲ σχετλίαν καλεῖν τὸν θεόν, ὡς εὐτυχήματος μεγάλου τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ἐπώνυμον ἐσομένην. Κρατήσας δὲ τῇ γνώμῃ ψήφισμα γράφει, τὴν μὲν πόλιν παρακαταθέσθαι τῇ Ἀθηνᾷ τῇ Ἀθηνῶν μεδεούσῃ, τοὺς δ᾽ἐν ἡλικίᾳ πάντας ἐμβαίνειν εἰς τὰς τριήρεις, παῖδας δὲ καὶ γυναῖκας καὶ ἀνδράποδα σῴζειν ἕκαστον ὡς ἂν δύνηται. Κυρωθέντος δὲ τοῦ ψηφίσματος οἱ πλεῖστοι τῶν Ἀθηναίων ὑπεξέθεντο γενεὰς καὶ γυναῖκας εἰς Τροιζῆνα, φιλοτίμως πάνυ τῶν Τροιζηνίων ὑποδεχομένων.

"And so Themistocles, not succeeding in approaching the crowd with human reasonings, setting up a trick like in tragedy, brought up in front of them divine signs and omens. He took the sign of the serpent, which seemed to be invisible during these days from the sanctuary, and finding untouched the primal offerings put before it daily, the priests announced to the people, as Themistocles had spread the word, that the goddess had left the city and showed them the way to the sea; and Themistocles again proclaimed the oracle, telling that the wooden wall designated nothing else than the ships. That was why the goddess called Salamina "divine", not "terrible" or "sad", because it would be the name of a great success for the Greeks. His opinion prevailing, he writes a proposal that the city be entrusted to Athena, the protectress of Athens, and that all those in their prime would embark on the triremes, whereas they would keep their children, wives and slaves safe, each of them in the best way possible. The motion having prevailed, the majority of the Athenians took their families and women to Troezen, because they were welcomed most eagerly by the Troezenians." (Plu. *Them*. 10.1-5).

This passage is a typical example of oracle manipulation by one of Plutarch's heroes; the general does not hesitate to bribe priests to achieve his goal. As in *Sertorius*, he recurs to the theatrical metaphor to characterize the behaviour of a man who counts on the duplicity of his audience to get their attention through a sensational mean. Characters who use omens as political tools usually express some charismatic yet rational behaviour that leads them to glory by appealing to the most irrational and superstitious part of the soul of their contemporaries. This behaviour is indeed an important characteristic of Themistocles's way of governing people and constitutes an important feature of his virtue.

Other generals do not create oracles but show their connection to divinity by correctly interpreting them. Piety is the principal quality of some of Plutarch's great men, as is the case of Timoleon and Paulus Aemilius. At the beginning of *Timoleon*, Plutarch introduces the hero as someone dear to the gods, whose name providentially comes up in discussions about who is to be sent to Corinth to help the population vanquish their enemies (Plu. *Tim*. 3.2-3). The gods never cease to manifest themselves during Timoleon's life through spectacular signs. Before he leaves for Corinth with his army, indeed, prodigies occur that predict his victory:

Γενομένων δὲ τῶν νεῶν ἑτοίμων καὶ τοῖς στρατιώταις ὧν ἔδει προσισθέντων, αἱ μὲν ἱέρειαι τῆς Κόρης ὄναρ ἔδοξαν ἰδεῖν τὰς θεὰς πρὸς ἀποδημίαν τινὰ στελλομένας καὶ λεγούσας ὡς Τιμολέοντι μέλλουσι συμπλεῖν εἰς Σικελίαν. Διὸ καὶ τριήρη κατασκευάσαντες ἱερὰν οἱ Κορίνθιοι ταῖν θαῖν ἐπωνόμασαν. Αὐτὸς δ᾿ἐκεῖνος εἰς Δελφοὺς πορευθεὶς ἔθυσε τῷ θεῷ, καὶ καταβαίνοντος εἰς τὸ μαντεῖον αὐτοῦ γίνεται σημεῖον. Ἐκ γὰρ τῶν κρεμαμένων ἀναθημάτων ταινία τις ἀπορρυεῖσα καὶ φερομένη, στεφάνους ἔχουσα καὶ Νίκας ἐμπεποικιλμένας, περιέπεσε τῇ κεφαλῇ τοῦ Τιμολέοντος, ὡς δοκεῖν αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ στεφανούμενον ἐπὶ τὰς πράξεις προπέμπεσθαι. Ναῦς δὲ Κορινθίας μὲν ἔχων ἑπτά, Κεκρυραίας δὲ δύο, καὶ τὴν δεκάτην Λαυκαδίων προσπαρασχόντων, ἀξήχθη. Καὶ νυκτὸς ἐμβαλὼν εἰς τὸ πέλαγος καὶ πνεύματι καλῷ χρώμενος, ἔδοξεν αἰφνιδίως ῥαγέντα τὸν οὐρανὸν ὑπὲρ τῆς νεὼς ἐκχέαι πολὺ καὶ περιφανὲς πῦρ. Ἐκ δὲ τούτου λαμπὰς ἀρθεῖσα ταῖς μυστικαῖς ἐμφερὴς καὶ συμπαραθέουσα τὸν αὐτὸν δρόμον, ᾗ μάλιστα τῆς Ἰταλίας ἐπεῖχον οἱ κυβερνῆται, κατέσκηψεν. Οἱ δὲ μάντεις τὸ φάσμα τοῖς ὀνείρασι τῶν ἱερειῶν μαρτυρεῖν ἀπεφαίνοντο καὶ τὰς θεὰς συνεφαπτομένας τῆς στρατείας προφαίνειν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ τὸ σέλας· εἶναι γὰρ ἱερὰν τῆς Κόρης τὴν Σικελίαν, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν ἁρπαγὴν αὐτόθι μυθολογοῦσι γενέσθαι, καὶ τὴν νῆσον ἐν τοῖς γάμοις ἀνακαλυπτήριον αὐτῇ δοθῆναι.

"As the ships were ready and equipped with the men needed, the priestesses of Kore believed to have seen in dream that the goddesses were getting ready for an expedition, saying that they were about to navigate with Timoleon. This is why the Corinthians equipped a sacred trireme and named it after the two goddesses. As for Timoleon, he himself made the trip to Delphi and made a sacrifice to the god, and as he was going down to the place of the oracle a sign occurred to him. From the votive offerings hanging in the temple one band detached and was carried away, upon which were some crowns and some Victories embroidered. It fell on Timoleon's head, and so it looked like he was escorted and crowned by the god to accomplish his deeds. With seven Corinthian ships and two from Corcyra, whereas the ten ships from Leucadia were already equipped, he left. Thrown at night on the sea and favoured by a good wind, he believed all the sudden that the sky burst and versed on the ship a lot of very clear fire. From this a lamp lifted itself up, like those in the mysteries

and running along the same course they did, fixed itself on the place that precisely the pilots were heading. And the oracles showed that the apparition bore witness to the dreams of the priestesses, and that the goddesses, taking part to the expedition, had produced in advance this light from the sky. Sicily was indeed sacred to Kore, since precisely, it is here, as some legends have it, that her abduction took place, and that the island was given to her as a wedding present." (Plu. *Tim.* 8.1-8).

Plutarch compresses in only one chapter several divine signs that occurred in different places and different times. No clear source is given as to the provenance of the stories, except for the myth in the end, which is attributed to tradition. The effect Plutarch wants to achieve is that of the divine favour, which is a leitmotiv in the existence of his hero. Indeed, even if some people are sceptical as to the success of the expedition, the general is victorious, which is due in part to his piety (he consults the oracle in Delphi), in part to his faith in divine signs. Fantastic details are the manifestation of the god's love for Timoleon and of the favour of the divinity that falls upon him, as Plutarch several times says.

Similar is the case of Paulus Aemilius. His piety and faith in the gods are expressed from the beginning of the *Life* on by the seriousness of his application to his religious and civic duties. Whereas others consider indeed the augur position as only an honour among others, he takes it seriously and acquires a true competence in understanding omens and divine signs (Plu. *Aem.* 2), which proves useful on the conduct of his affairs and on his relationship to his soldiers. He is then characterized by a constant intermingling of courage, rational deliberation and piety that leads him to victory, as is visible in several comments Plutarch makes on his hero's actions, for example when he is about to fight Perseus:

Αἰμίλιον δὲ Παῦλον, ὡς ἐξώρμησεν ἐπὶ στρατείαν, πλοῦ μὲν εὐτυχίᾳ καὶ ῥᾳστώνῃ χρήσασθαι πορείας κατὰ δαίμονα τίθημι, σὺν τάχει καὶ μετ᾽ ἀσφαλείας ἐπὶ τὸ στρατόπεδον κομισθέντα· τοῦ δὲ πολέμου καὶ τῆς στρατηγίας αὐτοῦ τὸ μὲν τόλμης ὀξύτητι, τὸ δὲ βουλεύμασι χρηστοῖς, τὸ δὲ φίλων ἐκθύμοις ὑπηρεσίαις, τὸ δὲ τῷ παρὰ τὰ δεινὰ θαρρεῖν καὶ χρῆσθαι λογισμοῖς ἀραρόσιν ὁρῶν διαπεπραγμένον, οὐκ ἔχω τῇ λεγομένῃ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς εὐτυχίᾳ λαμπρὸν ἀποδοῦναι καὶ διάσημον ἔργον, οἷον ἑτέρων στρατηγῶν, εἰ μή τις ἄρα τὴν Περσέως φιλαργυρίαν Αἰμιλίῳ τύχην ἀγαθὴν περὶ τὰ πράγματα γενέσθαι

φησίν, ᾗ λαμπρὰ καὶ μεγάλα πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον ἀρθέντα ταῖς ἐλπίσι τὰ Μακεδόνων ἀνέστρεψε καὶ κατέβαλε, πρὸς ἀργύριον ἀποδειλιάσας.

"As Paulus Aemilius went on a military campaign, I attribute to the divinity that he beneficiated from an lucky navigation and an easy passage, since he was transported to the camp quickly and without difficulty; as for the fight and the strategy, I see that he accomplished them through his extreme audacity, his wise decisions, the help of dedicated friends, a courage out of the ordinary and the use of appropriate reasonings: I cannot leave this glowing and eminent deed to the man's legendary good fortune, as in the case of other generals, if one does not say that the greed of Perseus regarding the matter was for Aemilius a good fortune, through which he ruined and devastated the great expectations of the Macedonians regarding the war, that were brilliant and big, because he was fearful regarding the money." (Plu. *Aem*. 12.1-3).

Plutarch characterizes the complex mix of reflection and divine favour that distinguishes Paulus Aemilius from the rest of his soldiers; he underlines the rarity of the combination by saying that "other generals" are only lucky and dear to the gods. This mix becomes even clearer when the hero is confronted with supernatural events that force him to demonstrate at once the multiple sides of his talents. It is the case when Plutarch narrates at length the battle between Paulus Aemilius's army and the Macedonian king Perseus's troops. The battle itself is won by the Romans due to Aemilius's intelligence and use of subterfuges (τεχνάζω, Plu. *Aem*. 18.1). But Plutarch never forgets that Paulus's piety is what separates him from the rest of the generals, and the battle is thus preceded by an extraordinary sign, the eclipse of the moon.

Ἐπεὶ δὲ νὺξ γεγόνει καὶ μετὰ δεῖπνον ἐτράποντο πρὸς ὕπνον ἀνάπαυσιν, αἰφνίδιον ἡ σελήνη πλήρης οὖσα καὶ μετέωρος ἐμελαίνετο, καὶ τοῦ φωτὸς ἀπολείποντος αὐτὴν χρόας ἀμείψασα παντοδαπὰς ἠφανίσθη. Τῶν δὲ Ῥωμαίων, ὥσπερ ἐστὶ νενομισμένον, χαλκοῦ τε πατάγοις ἀνακαλουμένων τὸ φῶς αὐτῆς καὶ πυρὰ δαλοῖς καὶ δασὶν ἀνεχόντων πρὸς τὸν οὐρανόν, οὐδὲν ὅμοιον ἔπραττον οἱ Μακεδόνες, ἀλλὰ φρίκη καὶ θάμβος τὸ στρατόπεδον κατεῖχε, καὶ λόγος ἡσυχῇ διὰ <τῶν> πολλῶν ἐχώρει, βασιλέως τὸ φάσμα σημαίνειν ἔκλειψιν. Ὁ δ᾽ Αἰμίλιος οὐκ ἦν μὲν ἀνήκοος οὐδ᾽ ἄπειρος παντάπασι τῶν ἐκλειπτικῶν ἀνωμαλιῶν, αἳ τὴν σελήνην περιφερομένην εἰς τὸ σκίασμα τῆς γῆς ἐμβάλλουσι τεταγμέναις

περιόδοις καὶ ἀποκρύπτουσιν, ἄχρι οὗ παρελθοῦσα τὴν ἐπισκοτουμένην χώραν πάλιν ἀναλάμψη πρὸς τὸν ἥλιον· οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τῷ θείῳ πολὺ νέμων, καὶ φιλοθύτης ὢν καὶ μαντικὸς ὡς εἶδε πρῶτον τὴν σελήνην ἀποκαθαιρομένην, ἕνδεκα μόσχους αὐτῇ κατέθυσεν. Ἅμα δ᾽ἡμέρα τῷ Ἡρακλεῖ βουθυτῶν οὐκ ἐκαλλιέρει μέχρις εἴκοσι· τῷ δὲ πρώτῳ καὶ εἰκοστῷ παρῆν τὰ σημεῖα, καὶ νίκην ἀμυνομένοις ἔφραζεν. Εὐξάμενος οὖν κατὰ βοῶν ἑκατὸν καὶ ἀγῶνος ἱεροῦ τῷ θεῷ, προσέταξε διακοσμεῖν τοῖς ἡγεμόσι τὸν στρατὸν εἰς μάχην· αὐτὸς δὲ τὴν ἀπόκλισιν καὶ περιφορὰν ἀναμένων τοῦ φωτός, ὅπως μὴ κατὰ προσώπου μαχομένοις αὐτοῖς ἔωθεν ὁ ἥλιος ἀντιλάμποι, παρῆγε τὸν χρόνον ἐν τῇ σκηνῇ καθεζόμενος, ἀναπεπταμένη πρὸς τὸ πεδίον καὶ τὴν στρατοπεδείαν τῶν πολεμιῶν.

"When it was night and the men after eating rested and began to sleep, all the sudden the full moon, which was high in the sky, blackened, and as the light decreased the moon took in turn various colours and then disappeared. Whereas the Romans, as is their custom, invoked its light with the noise of the bronze and lifted up the fire of torches and fire-branches in direction of the sky, the Macedonians did not do anything of the sort, but fear and divine apprehension pervaded the camp, and the word spread silently to many men that the apparition meant the eclipse of the king. As for Aemilius, he was not unaware nor completely without experience of the unordinary eclipses, which push the moon in its course in the shadow of the earth at some determined periods of time and hide her, until she leaves the darkened region and reflects the sunrays again; nevertheless, attributing many phenomena to the divinity, and being keen to sacrifices and divination, when he first saw that the moon became visible again, he sacrificed eleven calves to her. When it was daylight, he sacrificed to Heracles and did not get a positive omen after twenty victims; but the propitious signs occurred with the twenty-first victim, and he predicted victory if they stood in the defensive position. Having vowed to the god a hundred bulls and sacred games, he gave the order to his lieutenants to prepare the army to battle; he himself waited for the decline and the decay of the sun, in order that he would not blind the soldiers at dawn as they fought, and he passed the time sitting in his tent which was deployed in direction of the plain and the camp of the enemies." (Plu. *Aem*. 17.7-13)

Plutarch treats the eclipse as a scientific and meteorological phenomenon through the knowledge he attributes to Aemilius, who understands that this is nothing more than a temporary disappearance of the moon. The rational reflection of the hero is also visible in his attitude towards sacrifices, as he keeps bringing victims to the altar until he finally receives a positive sign from the divinity. This attitude does not exclude genuine piety to the gods, as Plutarch suggests, opposing the Roman custom to the fearful reaction of the Macedonians, who immediately interpret the omen as a sign hostile to their king. The context of the battle, then, permits this eclipse to announce Aemilius's victory, because his piety is far more reasonable than the mere superstition of the Macedonians. At the end of the battle, Plutarch lists yet another series of miracles that underline the Roman victory and give it a sacred meaning.

Ἀεὶ μὲν οὖν λέγονται <γεγονέναι> φιλοβασιλεῖς οἱ Μακεδόνες, τότε δ᾽ὡς ἐρείσματι κεκλασμένῳ πάντων ἅμα συμπεσόντων, ἐγχειρίζοντες αὐτοὺς τῷ Αἰμιλίῳ δύο ἡμέρας ὅλης κύριον αὐτὸν κατέστησαν Μακεδονίας. Καὶ δοκεῖ τοῦτο μαρτυρεῖν τοῖς εὐτυχίᾳ τινὶ τὰς πράξεις ἐκείνας γεγονέναι φάσκουσιν. Ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὸ περὶ τὴν θυσίαν σύμπτωμα δαιμόνιον ἦν ἐν Ἀμφιπόλει <γὰρ> θύοντος τοῦ Αἰμιλίου καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν ἐνηργμένων, κεραυνὸς ἐνσκήψας εἰς τὸν βωμὸν ἐπέφλεξε καὶ συγκαθήγισε τὴν ἱερουργίαν. Ὑπερβάλλει δὲ θειότητι πάντα καὶ τύχῃ τὰ τῆς φήμης. Ἦν μὲν γὰρ ἡμέρα τετάρτη νενικημένῳ Περσεῖ περὶ Πύδναν, ἐν δὲ τῇ Ῥώμῃ τοῦ δήμου θεωροῦντος ἱππικοὺς ἀγῶνας, ἐξαίφνης ἐνέπεσε λόγος εἰς τὸ πρῶτον τοῦ θεάτρου μέρος, ὡς Αἰμίλιος μεγάλῃ μάχῃ νενικηκὼς Περσέα καταστρέφοιτο σύμπασαν Μακεδονίαν. Ἐκ δὲ τούτου ταχὺ τῆς φήμης ἀναχεομένης εἰς τὸ πλῆθος, ἐξέλαμψε χαρὰ μετὰ κρότου καὶ βοῆς, τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην κατασχοῦσα τὴν πόλιν. Εἶθ᾽ὡς ὁ λόγος οὐκ εἶχεν εἰς ἀρχὴν ἀνελθεῖν βέβαιον, ἀλλ᾽ἐν πᾶσιν ὁμοίως ἐφαίνετο πλανώμενος, τότε μὲν ἐσκεδάσθη καὶ διερρύη τὰ τῆς φήμης· ὀλίγαις δ᾽ὕστερον ἡμέραις πυθόμενοι σαφῶς, ἐθαύμαζον τὴν προδραμοῦσαν ἀγγελίαν, ὡς ἐν τῷ ψεύδει τὸ ἀληθὲς εἶχε.

"As they say, the Macedonians always loved their king, but then, as they were all falling together as if their support had clashed, they surrendered to Aemilius and established him within two days master of all Macedonia. And this fact seems to testify for the people saying that these great actions were accomplished with the help of good

fortune. Furthermore, a divine sign also occurred regarding the sacrifices. As Aemilius was sacrificing in Amphipolis and as the victims were on the move, lightning fell on the altar, inflamed and burnt the offering. But the way the rumour spread surpasses this sign of divinity and good fortune. It was indeed the fourth day after the defeat of Perseus in Pydna, and in Rome, as the citizens were watching horse races, all the sudden the word spread in the first part of the theatre that Aemilius had just defeated Perseus in a big battle and that he had submitted Macedonia entirely. From this point, as the rumour quickly reached the common people, joy burst with applauses and screams, and filled the city this day. After that, since the word did not come from a secure source, but seemed to have been wandering simultaneously in every group, the rumour then decreased and faded away; but a few days later they received clear notice of it, and they were amazed that this was announced in advance, as if the truth was contained in a lie." (Plu. *Aem*. 24.1-6)

Plutarch once again distorts the timeline to join diverse signs of Aemilius Paulus's good fortune. Some signs testify for his excellence as a military as well as a political leader, as the submission of the Macedonian and the rumour that spreads in Rome. These two prodigies frame another one, more spectacular by its apparent irrationality, and testifying to Aemilius's privileged relationship to the gods. In this paragraph, then, Plutarch once again affirms that the greatness of his exceptional stateman resides in an uncommon mix of divine favour and human intelligence. The way Plutarch treats fantastic details in the *Lives* serves thus to precise and define the personality of the character he focuses on; it also gives some explanations why they succeed or fail.

The supernatural and the marvellous are so important in certain *Lives* that the protagonist himself becomes a supernatural and fantastic creature, for different reasons. In the case of Alexander the Great, as we already saw, the young man developed the image of him being the son of a god, something that pervades all his life and contributes to his aura. The beginning of the *Life* enumerates a series of spectacular and divine signs that occurred before the young man was born. Then Plutarch, based on statues and on previous records of historians, describes the young man, who is beautiful and smells good, two features that are frequently noted in the case of divine epiphanies (Plu. *Alex.* 4). He develops very young an ambition and some intellectual skills that place him way ahead of children of his age, as is the case of the

gods in their childhood[18]. He is compared to Achilles, whose grave he visits after having heard a prophecy saying that his great deeds would eventually be celebrated by future generations, as the exploits of heroes of the past (14.8-9, 15.7-9). As Achilles moreover, Alexander is also prone to anger and loses a friend because of his own impetuosity. His path to Asia is punctuated with oracles predicting his victories and his future glory, which Plutarch attributes to various sources sometimes leaving the realm of objectivity to that of fiction. The *Life of Alexander* shows how a great hero may become a legend for generations to come when the fantastic and the marvellous details pervading his life become the truth of his own history. A more subtle case of marvellous character is Titus Flamininus. An encomiastic tone pervades the whole life as Plutarch progressively elevates his hero to the stature of a living miracle. From childhood on, he accomplishes great military deeds and trains his body and his spirit into becoming a great general. His exploits only make his aura grow, as in the case of the best heroes of the past. Plutarch reports of his great deeds in battle and of the amazement of the soldiers, which as a result make him the equal of Homeric heroes and a wonder for the people. His aura appears in all its glory when he visits Greece and receives praises from the population. He then dedicates ex-votos to the gods and calls himself 'divine' (θεῖος, Plu. *Flam*. 12.12), an epithet that is at ease with the feelings of people around him. Plutarch's epic narrative is a way of showing the great virtue of his hero and transforming him into a leaving miracle.

To conclude, we have seen that the moral goal of the *Lives* demands that fantastic details be closely selected and examined because they must be consistent with a certain truth. Each life being different, though, fantastic details are not always given the same meaning. They are often key elements to understand the destiny and the character of the hero, whether it shows that he tends to equal some mythological model of the past, or else uses fantastic and divine manifestations to govern people. Fantastic details, in the end, further Plutarch's philosophical reflection on the role of divine powers in the life of human beings, which is as ambiguous as it is important for the Delphic priest that he was.

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[18] Hermes, for example, is often presented as a gifted little child.

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Nuevas perspectivas de alteridad a través del mito griego

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Introducción

A menudo se ha entendido el fenómeno de la alteridad en el mundo heleno como una diferencia entre lo griego y lo bárbaro o lo ateniense y lo no ateniense (Cartledge 1993: 8-17; Martínez 1999: 221-232; Buxton 2000: 16 n. 8, 86, 111, 183; Benéitez Prudencio 2012: 15-44) que marca una oposición y, aun, un antagonismo[1]. Incluso se ha apuntado a la contraposición entre ciudadanos griegos y los que no lo son, es decir, mujeres, niños, esclavos, bárbaros y animales o incluso monstruos (Flores Farfán 2011: 91-92; Álvarez Rodríguez 2019: 2). Y esta interpretación etnocentrista se deja traslucir en muchos otros estudios de carácter histórico (García Sánchez 2007: 33-49; Ginés Ordoñez 2017: 20), antropológico (Korstanje 2011: 262-264; Acuña Delgado / Acuña Gómez 2017: 519-523; Fernández Guerrero 2019: 65-68), mitológico (Molas Font 2013: 551-553), etc., hasta el punto de que, partiendo del DLE se ha redefinido la alteridad como la concepción de los que ostentan la condición de ser otro (Santamarina Novillo 2015: 32). En esta línea, la Antropología nace "para explicar científicamente a los otros" y esos otros, a su vez, se convierten en referentes de alteridad a través de un discurso antropológico que limita, en ocasiones, con la "ficción" (Lorite Mena 1995: 81). El diccionario de la RAE, en efecto, deja un amplio margen de interpretación a un concepto que augura ser mucho más complejo, pues define la alteridad tan solo como la "condición de ser otro". Su etimología es muy clara: llega al español a través del latín tardío *alteritas, -atis*, término que deriva, a su vez, de *alter*, "otro". Esta escueta y enigmática definición deja paso a otra interpretación del término que es la de ponerse en el lugar del otro, ya sea por empatía, suplantación, fusión o redefinición. El mismo significado presenta en el *DLE* la entrada "otredad", término más empleado en filosofía. La oposición no se da entonces solo entre alteridad e identidad, sino entre alteridad e integridad; no se trata solo de las diferencias entre

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[1] Paradójicamente, personajes míticos de origen foráneo como Pélope, Dánao o Cadmo son protagonistas de mitos fundacionales que narran el origen de los griegos. Véase Gruen 2011: 227-243.

nosotros y ellos, sino de las posibilidades del yo[2]. Partiendo de este sentido, es fácil comprender que la noción de alteridad se halla íntimamente ligada, por definición, al mundo de la fantasía y que, por tanto, su naturaleza se vincula a la capacidad imaginativa de todo ser racional. Pues, ¿cómo puede uno ser otro sin dejar de ser ni uno ni otro? Alguien podría pensar rápidamente en algún caso patológico del tipo representado magnífica- mente por Robert Louis Stevenson en su novela *El extraño caso del doctor Jekyll y el señor Hyde* (1886). Pero incluso en un trastorno disociativo de la personalidad como el que ha querido verse bajo el comportamiento del protagonista (Bottan 2019: 25-26, 39-48), la fantasía subyace omnipresente. Se hace entonces necesario definir también el término fantasía, vocablo de origen griego transmitido al castellano a través del latín *phantasia*. De nuevo cito las definiciones del *DLE* (s.v. fantasía), dejando al margen las locuciones, los tecnicismos o las formas en desuso:

> 1. f. Facultad que tiene el ánimo de reproducir por medio de imágenes las cosas pasadas o lejanas, de representar las ideales en forma sensible o de idealizar las reales. 2. f. Imagen formada por la fantasía. U. m. en pl. 3. f. fantasmagoría (‖ ilusión de los sentidos). 4. f. Grado superior de la imaginación; la imaginación en cuanto inventa o produce. 5. f. Ficción, cuento, novela o pensamiento elevado e ingenioso. *Las fantasías de los poetas, de los músicos y de los pintores*.

Según estos significados, la fantasía creadora de imágenes (2)[3] como ilusión de los sentidos (3), como imaginación con capacidad de inventar o producir hechos que no existen (4), puede considerarse el motor de la alteridad, esa condición de ser otro que no soy, pero que puedo sentir y creer que soy. Alteridad y fantasía van, pues, de la mano y abren al mismo tiempo el camino de la ficción (5). Sin embargo, la ficción –del latín *fictio, -ōnis*–, a diferencia de aquellas, implica una intencionalidad, tal y como sugieren nuevamente las entradas del *DLE*[4].

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[2] En este mismo sentido se refiere Lorite Mena (1995: 82) a la alteridad exterior e interior, respectivamente.

[3] Los números entre paréntesis remiten a las distintas definiciones del *DLE*.

[4] El *DLE* define ficción como "1. f. Acción y efecto de fingir" y "2. f. Invención, cosa fingida", que dan paso a la tercera y última acepción "3. f. Clase de obras literarias o cinematográficas, generalmente narrativas, que tratan de sucesos y personajes im- aginarios. Obra, libro de ficción".

Por este motivo, no es extraño hallar los primeros testimonios de alteridad precisamente en los relatos míticos de pueblos de muy variada procedencia, en los que la fantasía da paso a la encarnación en la mirada del otro o, tal vez, al intento de ser otro distinto del que uno es. En este sentido, el imaginario mítico de la Grecia Antigua –esplendorosamente revivido por el Romanticismo alemán– es un árbol cargado de frutos que da respuesta a la diversidad social a través de arquetipos bien definidos y de largo recorrido histórico[5]. El caso más claro de alteridad es probablemente el representado por los gemelos –o mellizos–, que simbolizan, por lo general, aspectos de naturaleza contrapuesta, pero también son numerosos los hermanos que encarnan polos opuestos de una dualidad inteligible. Y paralelamente, existen en los mitos otras variadas maneras de convertirse en otro, ya sea a través de metamorfosis, de objetos mágicos o de acontecimientos que desembocan en una pérdida de identidad que puede ser involuntaria o deliberada[6].

En las líneas siguientes, se visitan algunas formas de alteridad representadas en diferentes personajes que configuran la mitología griega y se analizan sus significados desde una perspectiva actual. Para ello, se agrupan atendiendo principalmente a la morfología de los personajes, de suerte que se habla de alteridad genética, travestismo, polimorfismo, metamorfosis, alteridad de género, seres híbridos, muerte e invisibilidad, todas ellas maneras de ser o de sentirse otro, ya sea de una forma temporal o permanente.

Alteridad genética

Melanie Klein (1982: 158-159), en el marco del psicoanálisis, explicaba bien la fantasía, bastante común, de tener un hermano gemelo, como un deseo que corresponde al anhelo de comprenderse a sí mismo y aceptar las emociones y ansiedades. Sin embargo, ese gemelo, idealizado y confiable, dista mucho de los descritos por las narraciones mitológicas de los antiguos

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[5] Es importante recordar que un arquetipo no es solo un motivo o imagen que se repite en el elenco mitológico o en la obra literaria, sino que responde a razones concretas que deben indagarse para establecer las bases mitocríticas con que analizar su presencia en la literatura. Véase Mora 2015: 199.

[6] Este tipo de doble en el que hay dos caracteres semejantes es el que Jourde y Tortonese (1996: 92-100 *apud* Herrero Cecilia 2011: 25-31) denominan "doble objetivo", frente al "doble subjetivo", que implica una escisión del mismo individuo.

griegos y estos, a su vez, son marcadamente diferentes de la diversidad representada por el *Doppelgänger* romántico.

Junto a los gemelos o mellizos, ya que no se hacía distinción en la Grecia antigua, existen en el mito griego otras figuras con una doble identidad complementaria, aunque su vínculo no sea gemelar, como es el caso de las dos Afroditas, Urania y Pandemo (Pl. *Smp*. 180d-180e; *LIMC*, s.v. Aphrodite), diosas del amor espiritual y físico, respectivamente. Asimismo, el de los dos Eros, uno nacido del Caos según la *Teogonía* hesiódica (120-124; Sch. A.R. 3. 26b: τρίτον δὲ ἔρωτα γεγονέναι καθ᾽ Ἡσίοδον (ib. 120)), otro hijo de Afrodita y Ares –o incluso de otras deidades–[7]. Pero también hay hermanos que, aun siendo mellizos como Apolo y Ártemis, no habitan una misma realidad dicotómica.

Así pues, los gemelos de los mitos griegos, de marcada raigambre folclórica, no siempre responden a una concepción del ser humano como ente binario. Una mirada hacia la literatura clásica muestra que la mitología presenta a este tipo de personajes con unas características bien definidas y constantes: por una parte, un nacimiento anómalo que implica una perturbación del orden natural, causada por la intrusión de una presencia extraña entre los humanos; por otra, el hecho de que ambos o uno de ellos tiene poderes sobrenaturales. Además, la exposición de los niños por temor de la madre a la vergüenza pública y la anagnórisis o reconocimiento posterior cuando los niños ya son mayores son dos elementos también frecuentes.

Estos hitos no son exclusivos de ningún género en particular y, así, los gemelos pasan a ser protagonistas tanto de tragedias como de comedias. En el primer caso, los personajes se ven enfrentados a graves dificultades que deben superar; en el segundo, son frecuentes los equívocos de personalidad. Con el tiempo, los gemelos trágicos, presentes también en las narraciones de las culturas más diversas[8], evolucionan hasta configurarse el tema del *Doppelgänger*, perdiéndose con ello la esencia de lo que fueran en la tragedia. Por su parte, los gemelos cómicos se desarrollan a partir del

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[7] Eros es hijo de Afrodita y Ares en Simon. F 575 Page; de Urano y Afrodita en Sapph. F 198 Lobel-Page; de Iris y Céfiro en Alc. F 327 Lobel-Page; de Poros y Penía en Pl. *Smp*. 203b; de Venus y Mercurio, de Diana y Mercurio o de Venus y Marte en Cic. *N.D*. III. 23-60, etc. Véase *LIMC*, s.v. Eros.

[8] El tema de los gemelos tiene una amplia presencia no solo en el marco indoeuropeo e indoiranio, sino también en civilizaciones tan distantes como la sumeria, la maya o la polinesia. Véase Ward 1968: 9-29; Megged 1979: 37-44; Meletinski 2001: 193-194; López Saco 2011: 14-25.

modelo plautino (*Menaechmi*) de la mano de escritores como Juan de Timoneda (s. XVI), autor de *Los Menecmos*, o William Shakespeare (s. XVII), creador de *The Comedy of Errors*. Poco a poco, las fronteras entre tragedia y comedia se tornan difusas y el tema de los gemelos pierde la esencia de lo que fuera en los autores antiguos. Como casi siempre, todo se mezcla para fundirse en la maravilla de la recreación.

La "intercambiabilidad" de los gemelos ha constituido así un motivo literario ampliamente desarrollado desde los clásicos hasta nuestros días con una vasta presencia en el cine[9]. Esta característica ha servido generosamente como recurso en el terreno de la ficción en el que a menudo se encuentran dos protagonistas, uno bueno y otro malo, que permiten la comparación de valores diferentes en personajes idénticos excepto en su grado de "maldad" o "bondad", de suerte que cada uno es la imagen distorsionada de su gemelo o de su clon[10].

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[9] Sería larguísimo mencionar todas las producciones que contienen este tema. Baste citar, para hacerse una idea, *The Iron Mask* (Douglas Fairbanks, 1929); *Wonder man* (H. Bruce Humberstone, 1945); *The Dark Mirror* (Robert Siodmak, 1946); *The Parent Trap* (David Swift, 1961); *Marisol rumbo a Río* (Fernando Palacios, 1963); *Vaya par de gemelos* (Pedro Lazaga, 1978); *Superman III* (Richard Lester, 1983); *Dead Ringers* (David Cronenberg, 1988); *Jack´s Back* (Rowdy Herrington, 1988); *The Parent Trap* (Nancy Meyers, 1998); *The man in the Iron Mask* (Randall Wallace, 1998); *Doppelganger* (Avi Nesher, 1993); *The Third Twin* (Tom McLoughlin, 1997); *The Ring 0: Birthday* (Norio Tsuruta, 2000); *Dopperugengâ* (Kiyoshi Kurosawa, 2003); *The Island* (Michael Bay, 2005); *The Unborn* (David S. Goyer, 2009); *Leaves of grass* (Tim Blake Nelson, 2009), o *Avatar* (James Cameron, 2009). En la mayoría de ellas sus protagonistas gemelares presentan dos caras de la realidad, reflejo de los gemelos míticos, el uno dedicado a la vida contemplativa, el otro a la vida de acción. Pero en la gran pantalla uno de ellos es bueno y el otro malo, encarnando así las fuerzas del bien y del mal que tanto han preocupado al hombre desde siempre, bien representadas con la metáfora de la luz y la oscuridad. Cuando el género es cómico, los gemelos se confunden, intencionadamente o no, y provocan situaciones marcadamente cómicas gracias a los equívocos de los cuales el espectador es cómplice.

[10] Así ocurre, por citar algunas de las producciones más exitosas, en la novela *The Dark Half* (Stephen King, 1989); en *Star Wars: The Last Command* (Timothy Zahn, 1993), donde Luke Skywalker se enfrenta a su clon del Lado Oscuro, o en *Point Blanc* (Anthony Horowitz, 2001), en la que el protagonista debe luchar contra un doble de sí mismo. También en los cómics (*Flash*, *Zipi y Zape*), en las caricaturas (*Earthworm Jim*), en los dibujos animados (*Las aventuras de Junajpu' y la Luna*), en la literatura juvenil (*Julia y el Halcón Maltés* de Manuel Valls), en el cine (*Inspector Gadget*, David Kellog, 1999) y en la televisión (*Sabrina, la bruja adolescente*) puede encontrarse el

El tema de los hermanos distintos[11], no necesariamente gemelos, pero sí complementarios e incluso rivales es muy antiguo y se halla presente en las más diversas culturas[12]. Baste recordar los bíblicos Caín y Abel, que encarnan la oposición entre el bien y el mal, o Prometeo y Epimeteo en la mitología griega, cuyos nombres revelan precisamente sus diferencias: Prometeo, de *pró*, 'antes', *y mêtis*, 'sabiduría, prudencia', es el hermano inteligente, previsor, que se anticipa a los acontecimientos; Epimeteo, de *epí,* 'después', y *mêtis,* 'sabiduría, prudencia', es el que actúa irreflexivamente, sin pensar en las consecuencias de sus actos (Pl. *Prt*. 320c-322d). Su complementariedad es tal que el propio Calderón de la Barca en *La estatua de Prometeo* convierte a los titanes en hermanos gemelos para representar la lucha del hombre consigo mismo que vive la paradoja de una naturaleza ruda y sensible al mismo tiempo. También Miguel de Unamuno recreó en *El otro* (1932) el tema de Caín y Abel en la figura de dos gemelos, Cosme y Damián, casados respectivamente con Laura y Damiana: uno de los hermanos mata al otro y ni siquiera sus mujeres alcanzan a discernir quién es el asesino y quién la víctima. Así, en ocasiones, los personajes contrapuestos no son gemelos y ni siquiera son hermanos[13].

El misterio que los gemelos suponían para los antiguos se ha ido disipando con el tiempo gracias a las investigaciones científicas desarrolladas en el campo de la genética. Asimismo, distintos trabajos en el ámbito de la psicología se han dedicado al estudio de las diferencias de personalidad

mismo tema.

[11] En el cine, este asunto puede verse en el largometraje *Rainman* (Barry Levinson, 1988), en el que los protagonistas no son gemelos, o en *Two much* (Fernando Trueba, 1995), donde Antonio Banderas se hace pasar por dos hermanos gemelos idénticos en aspecto físico, pero opuestos en carácter y personalidad: allí está claro que los gemelos conforman una unidad, dado que "son" la misma persona y el protagonista sólo debe comportarse contrariamente a lo que "es" para convertirse en su propio gemelo. El mito del doble que es, en realidad, una única persona, se recrea también de modo fascinante en la película titulada *El Estudiante de Praga* (Stellan Rye, 1913), así como en *Vértigo* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1958).

[12] Véase Mora 2015: 201-204, quien recoge varios de estos mitos primigenios.

[13] Es también el caso de *Goyescas* (Benito Perojo, 1942) donde Imperio Argentina interpreta a dos mujeres, una rica y otra pobre que compiten por el mismo hombre o *La double vie de Véronique* (Krzysztof Kieslowski, 1991), que cuenta la historia de dos mujeres, Weronika y Véronique, una polaca y la otra francesa, ambas nacidas el mismo día, pero en lugares distintos, huérfanas de madre, dedicadas a la música y que padecen una misma enfermedad, almas gemelas que viven en una sincronía inexplicable.

entre hermanos gemelos, ya sean monocigóticos o dicigóticos, poniendo de manifiesto su tendencia a complementarse. Y es precisamente esta necesidad de compleción la que impele al ser humano a una búsqueda incesante que ha dado lugar a muy diversas manifestaciones literarias. Quizás una de las más conocidas sea la que refleja el discurso de Aristófanes en el diálogo platónico *Banquete* (189d-193d). En esta ocasión, los andróginos representan otra forma de alteridad pues suponen al ser humano en un estado completo y previo al castigo de Zeus, quien los divide en dos con el fin de hacerlos más débiles[14]. Este mito etiológico sirve para dar cuenta del impulso erótico de las personas –y también su tendencia sexual– pero el trasfondo es el mismo anhelo que explica y hasta justifica la fantasía de la alteridad proyectada en un gemelo, compañero y cómplice de nuestros pensamientos y acciones.

Un caso extremo de esta concepción del amor es la alteridad derivada del desdoblamiento de la personalidad como consecuencia del reflejo de uno mismo. La visión de Narciso, profundamente enamorado de su propia imagen reflejada en el agua, muere en su empeño de alcanzar el objeto de su deseo y se transforma en una flor. Este mito constituye un contrario del tema del doble porque el otro soy yo. En este caso, el otro lado del yo no es ese ser monstruoso, temible, salvaje, animal que debe ser domesticado por los dictados de la norma social, sino todo lo contrario, ese ser bello que desconozco, que no alcanzo a ver y que, sin embargo, soy. La historia de Narciso constituye un mito de carácter ejemplar en el que el desdén por el amor de ninfas como Eco redunda en el castigo del protagonista –por ese acto de *hýbris* intolerable para las deidades–. Sin embargo, pone asimismo de manifiesto la necesidad de recorrer el camino del autoconocimiento mediante la contemplación de uno mismo para alcanzar la plenitud. Así, el mito, como toda narración, es susceptible de interpretaciones más o menos subjetivas, aunque todas ellas aportan un mensaje aleccionador. En este sentido, el mito de Narciso muestra distintas facetas de un mismo hecho: el desconocimiento del yo y la búsqueda en el mundo externo de las cualidades que encierra. Esa búsqueda de la gemelidad, tal vez uno de los motores más tangibles que acompaña al ser humano en su cotidiano vivir, subyace en el mito, que se alza como vehículo de sus diversas manifestaciones.

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[14] Libis (2001: 196-200) observa también ciertas semejanzas entre androginato y gemelidad que se relacionan, a su entender, con el incesto.

Travestismo, polimorfismo y metamorfosis

Una manera de convertirse en otro es a través del cambio de indumentaria, que es la forma más superficial de 'dejar de ser' para 'ser otro', aunque esto no convierte a la persona en quien no es, sino que se limita a ocultar su identidad. Existen varios ejemplos significativos de travestismo en la mitología clásica que, sin embargo, no llegan a constituir un cambio sustancial en quienes lo practican, pues todos llegan a ser descubiertos sin poder ocultar en última instancia su verdadera naturaleza. Así, por ejemplo, Aquiles es desenmascarado por Odiseo cuando, disfrazado de mujer, no puede disimular su atracción hacia las armas ofrecidas por el astuto héroe (Stat. *Ach*. I. 819-888) y Penteo es asimismo sorprendido por las bacantes, pese a haber adoptado forma de mujer (γυναικόμορφον, E. *Ba.* 831-833, 854-856) para observar sus ritos dionisíacos y termina su vida despedazado por ellas. En ninguno de los dos casos los travestidos dejan de ser quienes son, como tampoco lo hace la comadreja de la fábula esópica que, si bien sufre una metamorfosis, la reversibilidad de su nuevo estado sugiere que su cambio se encuentra a medio camino entre el travestismo y la metamorfosis:

> "Una comadreja se enamoró de un hombre tiposo y le pidió a la diosa Atenea que la transformara en una mujer para poder conseguir la belleza del amado. La diosa la escuchó y la cambió en forma de mujer. Y el hombre estuvo presto a poseerla. Pero, apenas se hubo celebrado la boda, un ratón corrió bajo la mesa. Y la novia lanzándose al punto, persiguió el ratón por debajo del diván. Porque, incluso si uno cambia de forma, es dominado por su inclinación natural." (Aesop. *La comadreja y Atenea* (Hsr. 50, Ch. 76 (*aliter*))[15].

También Patroclo, revestido de la armadura de Aquiles, suplanta su personalidad a los ojos de los demás combatientes. Pero él no es Aquiles y el precio de su osadía es bien alto. Ve cumplido su deseo de alteridad, de unión con el otro, cuando ve el estremecimiento de todos los guerreros al salir al campo de batalla, por un momento se siente otro, se cree Aquiles. Pero su gozo es efímero como también su propia vida. Su cuerpo en el interior de la armadura simboliza la unión con el del amigo querido: ambos ocupan un mismo espacio físico, ambos son uno, Patroclo es Aquiles; Aquiles, Patroclo. Y es esa misma profunda fusión espiritual y carnal la que provoca que Aquiles arda de dolor al conocer la caída en combate de su

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[15] La traducción es propia.

compañero. El deseo de alteridad provoca en este caso la muerte en la batalla de un Patroclo disfrazado de Aquiles.

El travestismo constituye, por otra parte, un motivo cómico y ridiculizante en la comedia aristofánica, donde los vestidos de mujer de Agatón, Mnesíloco y Eurípides (*Tesmoforiantes*) se combinan con otros tipos de disfraz con los que los personajes transgreden su condición (Boscà Cuquerella 2017: 7-28). Esta es la idea a la que llegan antiguos y modernos ante la fantasía del impostor, que se ve sin solución devuelto a su realidad.

Más cercano a la noción de alteridad se halla el polimorfismo de ciertos personajes mitológicos que tienen la capacidad, voluntaria o no, de adoptar varias formas. Son, por lo general, seres dotados de una flexibilidad natural, como los ríos, cuyo cuerpo es capaz de adaptarse a los accidentes del camino. Un ejemplo claro es el del río Aqueloo quien, en su disputa con Heracles, adopta diversas formas para tratar de huir de su adversario (Ov. *Met.* IX. 1-88). Sin embargo, Aqueloo no hace sino manifestar bajo distintas formas cada una de sus facetas en una metamorfosis múltiple y desesperada que, en última instancia, no logra liberarlo de su derrota. Un polimorfismo semejante en la medida en la que responde a una finalidad concreta, aunque bien distinta a la de Aqueloo, es el que Zeus emplea para lograr sus objetivos amorosos. Tampoco él deja de ser quien es, pero toma la forma que más puede ayudarle en cada momento, ya sea la de un toro, la de lluvia de oro, águila o cisne. Incluso suplanta la personalidad de Anfitrión o la de su propia hija Ártemis para engañar a sus víctimas. Pero su metamorfosis es solo aparente y temporal, un halo pasajero en un mundo superficial.

El polimorfismo de Dioniso, en cambio, forma parte de un simbolismo que trata de explicar la tenue frontera entre lo divino, lo humano y lo teriológico. Sus transformaciones en serpiente, toro, leopardo, león o macho cabrío, o su identificación con el miembro viril, dador de vida y alegoría de la regeneración, se alinean con el efecto embriagador del vino que representa. Él es uno y todos, impulsor de una comunión ritual transformadora que abre un espacio a la alteridad de quien participa en ella. Este efecto renovador permite al individuo dejar a un lado las vestiduras de su ser para moverse libremente en una dimensión espiritual en la que puede sentirse verda-deramente liberado de las constricciones terrenales. Esta transformación mistérica deja espacio al ser humano para vivir su alteridad en plenitud al tiempo que le permite moverse en una dimensión más allá de sus propias limitaciones.

Esta flexibilidad dionisíaca contrasta con la transformación de otros seres que, en su metamorfosis, se ven anclados en una nueva condición estática. Baste recordar el ejemplo de Dafne –o el de Gregorio Samsa–, modelo de alteridad cierto y tangible, quien queda para siempre transformada en un árbol, con todas las implicaciones que ello supone. Ella no tiene opción de regresar a su estado original y se ve presa de su nueva condición; no puede deambular por distintos estados y formas, sino que su metamorfosis el ancla en una transformación perpetua. Así, este mito de alteridad puede bien explicar, de la manera más bella imaginable, realidades bien distintas: piénsese, por ejemplo, en Dafne, huyendo precipitadamente de su agresor, teniendo un accidente en su desenfrenada carrera y quedando, como diríamos en español, 'como un vegetal', que es en lo que se convierte este personaje. Entonces se comprende bien su tragedia bajo la magia de la creación literaria, así como la irreversibilidad de su transformación. Su alteridad se torna inalterable, poniendo así fin a toda otra posibilidad.

Alteridad de gēnero

Existen en la mitología griega, como reflejo del mundo real, seres que no encajan con los estereotipos culturales de sus respectivas sociedades. En la Grecia antigua es conocida la posición de las mujeres, sin excesivo prota-gonismo, por lo general, en la esfera pública, hasta el punto de que resulta sumamente gracioso ver en escena un mundo al revés donde las mujeres toman las riendas del devenir histórico, tal y como sucede en la comedia aristofánica (*Lisístrata*, *Asambleístas*, *Tesmoforiantes*). Pese a esta división de funciones según el género, existen, por supuesto, excepciones. En el plano histórico, Aspasia podría ser una de ellas[16]. En la esfera mítica, destacan personajes femeninos cuyos rasgos masculinos les confieren una sutil integración de la alteridad prohibida y también, en sentido inverso, se encuentran personajes masculinos imbuidos de femineidad. Por una parte,

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[16] Aspasia de Mileto fue una mujer influyente de la Atenas de la época de Pericles, con quien este estuvo unido sentimentalmente. Para un estudio más amplio sobre esta figura y su relevancia, véase Henry 1995.

las lemnias[17] y las Amazonas[18] se comportan, en realidad, como hombres en un cuerpo de mujer. A propósito de las lemnias, Apolonio de Rodasrelata lo siguiente:

> "A estas mujeres el pastoreo de los bueyes, el vestir broncíneas armaduras y el arar los campos fértiles en trigo les era más fácil a todas que las labores de Atenea en las que antes siempre se ocupaban […] cuando vieron la Argo navegando a remo cerca de la isla, en seguida todas juntas, tras vestir sus armas de guerra, acudían a la playa fuera de las puertas de Mirina, semejantes a Tíades devoradoras de carne cruda." (A.R. I. 627-636[19])

Incluso el origen de la transgresión de género de las lemnias es semejante al de las Amazonas[20], ofendidas por sus maridos (Éforo *FGrH* 70 F 60a), pues asesinan a los hombres por despreciarlas a causa de su hedor, furiosas de celos porque ellos prefieren a las esclavas tracias. Es asimismo interesante en este pasaje la referencia a las Tíades como 'devoradoras de carne cruda', signo de transgresión de los límites de la civilización de estas mujeres caracterizadas de 'salvajes' (Martín Llanos 2014: 96-97).

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[17] Las mujeres lemnias fueron castigadas por descuidar el culto de Afrodita. La diosa las impregnó de un olor que provocó el abandono de sus maridos y estas, a su vez, mataron a sus padres y esposos e instauraron la ginecocracia en su comunidad. Véase Apollod. I. 17; A.R. I. 609-910; Hyg. *Fab*. 15; etc. Para un análisis más detallado de este colectivo y sus fuentes, véase Bachofen 2008: 219-243.

[18] Numerosas son las referencias a las Amazonas en los autores antiguos desde Homero (*Il.* III. 189; VI. 186), los trágicos (A. *Eu.* 685-690, *Supp.* 287-289, *Pr.* 415-418, 724-728; E. *HF* 408-419), poetas (Pi. *N.* III. 36-39), historiadores (Hdt. IV. 110-117; Str. I. 3.7, II. 5.24, XI. 5.1-4, XII. 3.9, 14, 21-22, 24, 27, 8.6, XIII. 3.6; Paus. I. 2.1, V. 11.6; D.S. II. 44.2, 45.3, 46.4, III. 52-55, XVII. 77.1; Plu. *Alex.* 46, *Thes.* 26), médicos (Hp. *Aër.* 17), mitógrafos (Apollod. II. 33, 98, 101, *Epit.* I. 16-17, V. 2), etc. Para una lista más detallada de estas fuentes, véase Molas Font 2013: 552 n. 5; Roque 2017: 190. Las obras del *Corpus hippocraticum* se citan según Anastassiou / Irmer 1999, dado que el *LSJ* no contiene las abreviaturas de todas ellas.

[19] Traducción de Valverde Sánchez 1996: 120-121.

[20] Hipócrates (Hp. *Epid.* VI. 8.32) relata los únicos casos clínicos conservados de mujeres que sufrieron una masculinización de sus cuerpos, que comenzó con una amenorrea. Tanto a Faetusa como a Nano, que habían desarrollado una vida normal como mujeres y habían dado hijos a sus maridos, les creció vello y barba y su voz se volvió grave. Los médicos trataron de devolverles la menstruación, en la idea de que esta era el elemento regulador de la feminidad, pero no lo lograron y las pacientes murieron. Para un análisis de este pasaje hipocrático, véase Bonneau 2017: 347-374.

Las Amazonas, por su parte, son independientes, se unen libremente con el sexo masculino y por el tiempo justo que precisan para alcanzar sus fines. Incluso materializan esta alteridad o condición de ser otro distinto del que uno es, a través de la transformación del propio cuerpo[21]. En este sentido, la mastectomía practicada por las Amazonas puede entenderse como un primer paso hacia la cirugía transgénero[22].

Por lo que respecta a su trato con el varón, la literatura ofrece detalles que dejan traslucir el ejercicio del poder femenino de las Amazonas mediante los procedimientos más variados. Por ejemplo, es representativo el testimonio de Hipócrates (), quien describe las lesiones que las madres producían a sus hijos en los primeros años de vida con el fin de minimizar su fuerza física y mantenerlos sumisos:

> "Cuentan algunos que las Amazonas, cuando sus hijos varones son muy pequeños, les dislocan las articulaciones –rodillas o caderas– y, por ello, están cojos y no conspiran los machos contra las hembras; los dedican a oficios artesanales, trabajadores del cuero, del bronce o de cualquier otra actividad que se practique sentado; si esto es cierto, no lo sé, pero sé que tales problemas ocurren si se producen dislocaciones en la infancia temprana." (Hp. *Art.* 53[23])

Mito e historia se entremezclan así para configurar narraciones extraordinarias. En esta línea, son también varios los autores antiguos que relatan míticos encuentros como el de Talestria, reina de las amazonas, y Alejandro Magno, que se unieron para tener un hijo[24]. Algunos como Diodoro de Sicilia (XVII. 77. 1-3) y los latinos Quinto Curcio Rufo (V. 24-32, VI. 4.17) y Justino (XII. 3) le conceden visos de verosimilitud, en tanto que otros como Plutarco

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[21] Molas Font (2013: 551-565) ha estudiado la alteridad de las Amazonas como distopía contrapuesta al ideal griego: son extranjeras, no hablan griego, constituyen una sociedad matriarcal con una reina al frente, son cazadoras, luchadoras, guerreras, ignorantes de las tareas del *oîkos*, no se ataban con el vínculo del matrimonio, practican sacrificios humanos y, tal vez, el canibalismo. Estas características conforman un mundo bárbaro, extraño al mundo griego en su estructura jerárquica y costumbres.

[22] Lo realizaban mediante cauterización, según narran Estrabón (XI. 5.1), Curcio (VI. 5.24-32) y Justino (II. 5).

[23] Traducción de Beatriz Cabellos en Lara / Torres / Cabellos 1993.

[24] Otros ejemplos de encuentros histórico-míticos son los de Teseo y Antíope, de Heracles e Hipólita, y de Aquiles y Pentesilea, tres amazonas que mueren por causa de los héroes con quienes mantienen relaciones amorosas. Véase Apollod. *Epit.* I. 16; Paus. I. 2.1; A.R. II. 962-971; Q.S. I. 594-600.

(*Alex.* 46), Arriano (*An.* VII. 13.2-6) y Estrabón (XI. 5.4) le restan toda credibilidad[25]. En cualquier caso, el mito de las Amazonas se incorpora al imaginario popular de modo que, siglos después, Alfonso X se permite llamar en su *Primera crónica general de España* a las mujeres de los godos Amazonas porque "[f]ueron buenas madres que tuvieron que esforzarse por tener muchas guerras y vicisitudes y estar solas"[26].

En el lado inverso puede situarse la figura de Dioniso, con su exquisita femineidad e indefinición que atrae tanto a hombres como a mujeres. Su sensibilidad, sus cabellos, su naturaleza feliz y felina que contagia a cuanto participa de su embeleso hacen de él un ejemplo vivo de alteridad en eclosión perpetua[27].

A propósito del cambio de sexo, ninguna figura es tan representativa como Tiresias quien, con muchas variantes en el mito (Brisson 1976: 11-115; Loraux 2004: 444-459), tuvo la oportunidad de gozar de la unión carnal desde ambos sexos, siendo alternativamente hombre y mujer. Con todo, Tiresias pasó de un sexo a otro para experimentar una alteridad meramente corporal y no por ello menos interesante desde un punto de vista antro-pológico. Su visión es, sin duda, muy distinta de la del joven Hermafrodito, quien, precisamente por participar de los dos géneros, no siente deseo ni necesidad de compleción con otro ser. Su alteridad, semejante a la de los andróginos, le hace independiente y asocial.

Todos ellos son, pues, seres que encarnan una alteridad que no dejaba de ser pura fantasía en la Grecia antigua. Desde una perspectiva actual, ninguno de estos mitos, incluido el de Tiresias, se halla demasiado alejado de la realidad en un mundo donde ser otro es verdaderamente posible y donde la alteridad ha encontrado asimismo su espacio de aceptación en la sociedad.

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[25] Véase Pomer Monferrer 2014: 75-88, quien estudia con detalle las fuentes histo-riográficas de este encuentro entre Alejandro y las Amazonas.

[26] Estas palabras deben entenderse como una metáfora, más que, tal y como inter-preta Roque 2017: 190, como una ascendencia genealógica de los castellanos, "vía visigodos".

[27] Hipócrates (*Aer*. 22) narra el caso de los Anarieos, quienes, afectados de impoten-cia a causa de la flebotomía en una vena vinculada a la producción del semen y situ-ada detrás de la oreja, decidieron travestirse y vivir como mujeres.

Seres híbridos

El ser pensante se enfrenta a la necesidad de comprender y explicar esas otras facetas menos racionales que conforman el universo de su existencia. Los griegos plasmaron estas inquietudes en su imaginario mitológico a través de figuras de seres de naturaleza híbrida, mitad humana, mitad animal. En su manera de imaginar la alteridad y de representar ese otro yo que también soy, crearon sátiros, de aspecto semihumano y patas de cabra; centauros, mitad hombres, mitad caballos; sirenas o esfinges, mujeres con medio cuerpo de ave o de león, respectivamente; etc. Todos ellos poseen un elemento racional dominante simbolizado en el antropomorfismo de la parte superior de su cuerpo –cabeza y tronco–, en tanto que el resto, menos noble, tiene forma animal. Un caso significativo que presenta la misma distribución en sentido inverso, es decir, cabeza y torso animal y extremidades inferiores en forma humana, es el Minotauro, cuyo comportamiento bestial se corresponde con su morfología. Un paralelo interesante es el establecido por Mario Vargas Llosa en su novela *Lituma en los Andes*. En ella, la alteridad del pishtaco[28], bien estudiada por Bortoluzzi (2013: 98-105), se asemeja a la del Minotauro y, como él, vive en una gruta de laberínticos pasadizos. En última instancia, la antropofagia ofrece a ambos la oportunidad de incorporar otro ser a su propio metabolismo, de suerte que la alteridad se completa a través de un proceso de asimilación alimentaria[29]. Otro caso especial es el de la Gorgona Medusa[30], mujer cuyos cabellos se transforman en serpientes, de suerte que su raciocinio se ve completamente dominado por el simbolismo viperino que envuelve sus pensamientos.

Estos seres híbridos cumplen así la función de dar una respuesta a la irracionalidad del ser humano, impelido en ocasiones a actuar al margen del control de la razón. Los sátiros se sienten arrebatados por los imperativos de una urgencia sexual que los obliga a perseguir incesantemente a las ninfas por los bosques sin pararse siquiera a pensar en la conveniencia o la moralidad de sus actos. El instinto animal se enseñorea de su universo,

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[28] El pishtaco es un personaje de la mitología andina conocido por asesinar a sus víctimas para quitarles la grasa, símbolo de abundancia y riqueza.

[29] Esta idea puede fácilmente vincularse con la famosa frase de herencia hipocrática de Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) "somos lo que comemos". A menudo se ha establecido también una relación entre lo que el hombre come y su ideología con una identificación alimento-doctrina subyacente; véase Vidaurre 1997: 28-29.

[30] Para Vernant (1987: 6), la máscara de Medusa representa la alteridad extrema al enfrentar al hombre con la muerte a través de su mirada petrificante.

donde lo único verdaderamente importante es saciar su apetito carnal. Los centauros, por su parte, son de naturaleza variopinta y singular pues, a diferencia de los sátiros en los que predomina la animalidad, en ellos alterna una inclinación brutal con la educación más exquisita. Baste recordar a Neso y Quirón como representantes de estos dos extremos. El primero, famoso por haber querido violar a la esposa de Heracles, Deyanira, con la excusa de ayudarla a atravesar el río Eveno. El segundo, en cambio, tan cultivado que educó a grandes héroes como Aquiles o Jasón, entre otros muchos, fue, además, instructor del mismísimo Asclepio, dios de la medicina e hijo de Apolo.

Los griegos representaban su mundo de la manera más fidedigna, procurando que la alegoría, en caso de ser imprescindible, fuese al menos descifrable. De este modo, no es casual el hecho de que los centauros, que tienen una capacidad inteligente más amplia que los sátiros, sean medio hombres medio caballos, en tanto que en los segundos predomina la fisiología bestial incluso en su parte 'racional', pues poseen orejas y cuernos de macho cabrío en la cabeza.

En la caracterización de los híbridos de naturaleza femenina se entremezclan unas connotaciones culturales de índole bien distinta. No es difícil observar que, pese a que las Sirenas son aves con rostro y torso de mujer (Hom. *Od*. XII. 39-200; A.R. IV. 892-919), no se caracterizan por una virtuosa racionalidad. El arrebato que provocan constituye una enajenación que altera la propia voluntad semejante a la que, en ocasiones, ocurre en las experiencias de carácter onírico, donde el durmiente desea imperiosamente correr, pero su acción se ve anulada por fuerzas invisibles. Su manifiesto signo negativo para el hombre puede ponerse en relación con el carácter psicopompo que ha querido verse en sus orígenes. Pero es muy posible también que su animadversión se halle ligada a su condición de mujer –no puede olvidarse el concepto hesiódico de la mujer como un mal necesario o la visión misógina de poetas como Semónides de Amorgos–. De hecho, otros seres mitológicos participan también del mundo de los muertos sin implicaciones negativas, como Hermes, dios mensajero que sirve de enlace entre ambos mundos. Las Sirenas son seductoras, racionalmente encantadoras, y su parte animal solo sirve para dar alas al poder de la tentación que representan. Así, en última instancia, su cualidad de ser mixto no es alteridad, pues no tienen parte animal y racional, sino una complementariedad semejante a la de los andróginos, aunque en términos y ámbitos distintos. Así, todo en ellas es bestial a excepción de su voz –a este

fin sirve su morfología humana– y sus alas magnifican la amplitud de la perversión que, como seres femeninos, les es consustancial.

De modo semejante, Escila y Caribdis forman parte del universo de ferocidad femenina. La primera había visto sus extremidades inferiores transformadas en seis perros capaces de devorar cuanto se cruzaba en su camino como consecuencia de la ira de amor de otra mujer, Circe. Esta, despechada porque Glauco la había rechazado por amor a Escila, se vengó de su rival utilizando hierbas mágicas (Ov. *Met*. 14. 1-74). La segunda, personifica la voracidad, pues fue castigada precisamente por engullir los rebaños de Geriones que custodiaba Heracles, motivo por el cual Zeus la castigó convirtiéndola en un monstruo condenado a tragar todo cuanto pasaba por su lado (Hom. *Od*. XII. 104-110, 234-259, 440-446; A.R. IV. 922-982; Apollod. I. 136).

El caso de la Esfinge, de origen egipcio, es aun más complejo, habida cuenta de que se trata de un ser femenino antropomorfo en cabeza y busto, pero con un conglomerado zoomorfo en el resto del cuerpo de variada composición: tronco de perro, patas de león, cola de dragón, y, por si esto fuera poco, alas de pájaro en vez de brazos (S. *OT* 391; Apollod. III. 5.8). Nieta de la Hidra (Paus. V. 5.10, 10.9, 17.11, 26.7, X. 18.6) e hija de la Quimera de tres cabezas –una de león, una de cabra y otra de dragón (Hes. *Th*. 319-326)–, posee una morfología que bien representa su forma de ser: un singular *collage* que refleja su carácter polifacético en grado superlativo. Pero ¿es esto alteridad o suma de elementos? Su aspecto es fiel espejo de su carácter despiadado y cada parte de su cuerpo no viene sino a añadir fiereza a su crueldad, de suerte que se abre una posibilidad de gradación dentro de la propia bestialidad. En consonancia con este modelo, el hecho de que el ser humano posea al mismo tiempo una capacidad racional e irracional no implica necesariamente que vivencie esa dualidad como alteridad, pues no deja de ser quien es para convertirse en otro, aunque experimente distintas formas de ser. De este modo, predomina en cada momento alguna de sus facetas, siendo estas complementarias.

Con todo, la naturaleza híbrida de los seres femeninos no siempre posee unas connotaciones marcadamente negativas, en especial cuando su parte no racional toma la forma de una serpiente, pues en estos casos se halla vinculada a mitos fundacionales como los de Erecteo y Cécrope, primeros reyes míticos de Atenas, cuyo cuerpo de serpiente simboliza la autoctonía. Este es el caso del ser bifronte, mitad mujer, mitad serpiente con quien,

según Heródoto (IV. 9-10), se une Heracles a cambio de recuperar sus yeguas engendrando así a Agatirso, Gelono y Escita, fundadores de los pueblos que llevan sus nombres[31].

La alteridad y la muerte

La relación entre la alteridad y la muerte es un asunto complejo desde el momento en el que, al morir, uno deja de ser quien es sin posibilidad de retorno. El mito, en cambio, se nutre de la fantasía de la reversibilidad y olvida que el cuerpo permanece en el plano terrenal, de forma más o menos efímera según las culturas, épocas y estratos sociales, y que la esencia del ser, en cambio, se disipa. Existen, empero, mitos y creencias que cuestionan la inalterabilidad del ser incluso más allá de la muerte. En este sentido, perder la vida por mantener con firmeza una posición ideológica, lejos de representar un cambio de estado (vida/muerte), refuerza la invariabilidad y la identidad. Y esto sucede tanto en el mito como en la vida real. El caso de Sócrates es ilustrador: tuvo la oportunidad de salvarse de la condena a muerte, pero prefirió renunciar a ser otro distinto del que era. Se situó en el lado opuesto de la alteridad, abrazando una integridad gracias a la cual pasó a la historia como modelo de consecuencia.

Ahora bien, si parece que la muerte pone fin a toda otra posibilidad de alteridad, el mito griego ofrece una alternativa, pues existe, como elección, el camino de morir por el otro o ὑπεραποθνῄσκειν. La intercambiabilidad de las almas en el Hades otorga la oportunidad de seguir viviendo a quien estaba destinado a morir, dejando al arbitrio humano el devenir y abriendo nuevos interrogantes de índole filosófico-moral. Así, la generosidad de Alcestis se convierte en clave de la alteridad de Admeto, pues ofrece su propia vida para que su esposo pueda seguir existiendo. Alcestis elige apagarse para dar continuidad a otra forma de existencia a través de otra vida, dejando en esta ocasión de ser ella misma para dar paso a la vida del otro. Este morir por el otro la magnifica ante la mirada de los dioses, quienes le conceden, a su vez, una nueva oportunidad por tan heroica nobleza. Morir por el otro ofrece así un espacio vital inesperado a quien tiene ante sí el final de sus días.

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[31] En este relato mítico puede verse un antecedente de la figura de la Melusina, de gran relieve en la Edad Media, cuyo carácter telúrico es el que le otorga la facultad generadora de héroes fundadores; véase Roque 2017: 192-193.

De este modo, en el imaginario mitológico vida y muerte se convierten en dos formas de ser –o de no ser– común a cuantos seres abandonan el mundo terrenal para vivir otra vida en el Hades. Allí siendo una sombra de lo que fueron, olvidados de su existencia anterior, hombres y héroes inician una andadura de alteridad donde conservan su forma, su voz y sus atributos en un mundo paralelo al que conocieron en vida. Ese mundo alternativo les permite seguir existiendo, inmortalizados a través de los tiempos, en cierta medida como un producto de la memoria a la que acuden de vez en cuando en sus *nékyiai* ciertos héroes señalados en busca de indicaciones trascendentes para su porvenir en el mundo de los vivos. La alteridad del Hades representa, pues, la memoria, soporte de todos aquellos que nos precedieron.

Como contrapartida, una forma de muerte del ser en vida es el olvido. A él se entregan quienes beben de las aguas del Leteo para entrar en una nueva forma de existencia ajena a todo cuanto les es conocido. Pero también en el mundo de los vivos es posible la alteridad a través del olvido, como sucede en la mítica narración odiseica del país de los lotófagos (Hom. *Od*. IX. 92-99), donde la ingesta de loto implica la pérdida de la propia identidad. El héroe griego rescata a la fuerza a sus compañeros de viaje luchando, como hace la Historia, contra el olvido.

El sueño de la invisibilidad

Existe otra forma de ser otro consistente en no ser a los ojos de los demás. El mito del pastor Giges, relatado por Platón en la *República* (359b-360d), ejemplifica a la perfección esta fantasía de la invisibilidad. Un día, mientras pastaba con su rebaño en tierras lidias, Giges halló el cuerpo de un hombre sin vida con un anillo de oro en la mano. Giges lo tomó y se lo puso. Por la tarde, reunido con los demás pastores, Giges giró distraídamente el engaste del anillo y se dio cuenta de que se había vuelto invisible para los demás que hablaban de él, pero no podían verlo. Para comprobar que esto era así, hizo varias pruebas, girando el engaste a un lado y a otro y en todas ellas volvía a hacerse visible e invisible alternativamente. Satisfecho con sus nuevos poderes, los empleó para seducir a la reina, asesinar al rey y hacerse con el poder.

El anillo es, de esta guisa, un objeto mágico que ofrece al protagonista la oportunidad de ser distinto, de comportarse según los dictados de sus deseos, de transgredir impunemente las leyes. Le ofrece un espacio de

alteridad en el que puede materializar sus pensamientos y llevarlos al plano de la acción. Puede hacer efectiva su fantasía de alteridad porque el anillo hace de él, como dice Platón, "un dios entre los hombres". El filósofo ateniense emplea este mito para cuestionar la virtud de la justicia en el ser humano: ¿hasta qué punto una persona podría continuar siendo justa si tuviera a su alcance la opción de obtener cuanto quisiera sin ser visto por nadie? Piénsese ahora en la actualidad, en pleno siglo XXI: ¿habríamos sido igualmente obedientes a los dictados del estado de alarma si hubiéramos tenido en nuestro poder el anillo de Giges? Con este planteamiento, se abre un espacio donde las distintas posibilidades del yo encuentran un margen de expresión. Los límites impuestos por la presencia del otro se diluyen y su mirada ya no tiene poder de acción sobre los propios designios. De este modo, el yo penetra en una nueva dimensión para explorar los vericuetos de la libertad con pleno poder de elección, pero sumido, en último término, en la más absoluta soledad.

Conclusiones

La alteridad es un fenómeno estrechamente vinculado a la fantasía, pues su propia definición, la condición de ser otro, descarta una materialización tangible en la realidad. El imaginario mitológico griego, reinterpretado a lo largo de la historia, sirve de telón de fondo para explicar esa otra realidad del ser humano, que nace de la fantasía y que necesita ser canalizada, una alteridad de la que todos, en mayor o menor medida, somos partícipes.

El espacio de la alteridad está ocupado por lo que no encaja con las reglas cívicas, lo escandaloso, lo amoral. Los seres míticos reflejan una alteridad deforme que la sociedad occidental trata de normalizar. La alteridad presupone la admisión de un centro que marca una distancia con lo periférico. De lo periférico a lo marginal solo hay un paso y de ahí que las diferencias entre pueblos (griego-bárbaro), clase social (ciudadano-esclavo) o género (hombre-mujer), entre otros, hayan desatado conflictos que han condicionado el devenir histórico, solo por ser diferentes de un punto referencial, central, cualquiera que sea. La alteridad se tolera siempre que la equidistancia se mantenga y cada uno se mantenga en su esfera.

Los relatos de alteridad, ya pertenezcan al plano mitológico o al histórico, expresan la visión del mundo de quien los genera. Son al mismo tiempo narraciones de propiocepción que manifiestan una forma particular de pensar, de creer, de mirar, de construir, en definitiva, de hacer historia. Por

este motivo, la literatura, el cine y las artes plásticas continúan haciéndose eco mediante recreaciones y adaptaciones, pese a la llegada de la ciencia y el triunfo de la racionalidad. Los relatos de alteridad satisfacen, más allá de lo razonable, la necesidad de la mente humana de digerir lo que es diferente, lo que no sigue las normas, lo que no puede disociar y es intrínseco a su existencia: esa otredad que convive con nosotros, a veces muy dentro, y que no necesariamente ha de suponer una amenaza.

En las líneas precedentes, se han podido reconocer a través del mito fenómenos de nuestro tiempo como la presencia del miedo a lo desconocido o el miedo al otro y han aflorado figuras que han puesto de manifiesto que, lo que antes era mito, hoy bien puede ser realidad. Así, es posible establecer puentes entre los mitos de alteridad gemelar y las distintas formas de ser de un único individuo, sean o no causadas por un trastorno disociativo de la personalidad; entre los mitos de héroes que se disfrazan para pasar inadvertidos y el travestismo; entre mitos de personajes imbuidos de ambigüedad y polimorfismo, como el de Dioniso, y figuras míticas y camaleónicas, como la de David Bowie; entre mitos de metamorfosis, como el de Dafne, y crudas realidades, como los accidentes que provocan tetraplejia; entre mitos como el de las Amazonas y la cirugía transgénero, y, por qué no, entre mitos de monstruos arrebatadores, como el de la Gorgona, y amenazas tan presentes, como la pandemia. En unos días en los que nuestro mundo se ha convertido en lo que antes solo podíamos imaginar como un universo de ficción, ya no nos extrañará ver a Hipsípila, a Giges o a Anfitrión, sentados junto a nosotros en el salón de nuestra casa o, lo que es más inquietante, en nuestro propio interior.

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FANTASTIC ANTIQUITY

The Oath of Alexander: ancient fiction and modern political discourse

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In Greece, Alexander III has been known as the greatest king of Macedonia and the conqueror *par excellence*, with supporters[32] and detractors[33] since Antiquity. The Macedonians were so attached to their king that Plutarch describes them as *philobasilei*s ("fond of their king")[34], whereas for city-states in the south, such as Athens or Thebes, Alexander represented the end of their power and freedom (Plu. *Alex.* 11.3; Polyaen. IV. 3.12; D.S. XVII. 8.2-7, 12.1). Contrasting views about Alexander flourished especially in the philosophical schools of the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial period, where Stoics and Peripatetics criticised him for his excessive behaviours, such as too much drinking and luxuries (*tryphe*), his ruthless fights, and the despotic actions taken against his circle[35]. Conversely, some philosophers praised Alexander for his generosity and love for letters (Onesicritus *FGrH* / *BNJ* 134 F 38

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[32] Cf. the adjective φιλαλέξαδρος (fond of Alexander) attributed to Hephaestion in Plu. *Alex.* 47.5, and Ptolemy's and Aristobulus' favourable accounts of Alexander's campaign. As an example, both Aristobulus (*FGrH* / *BNJ* 139 F 10) and Ptolemy (*FGrH* / *BNJ* 138 F 7 *apud* Arr. *An*. II. 12.3-6) insist on Alexander's self-restraint and generosity of spirit in his dealing with Darius' mother, wife and daughters; in regards to Philotas' death, they both try to exculpate their king (*FGrH* / *BNJ* 138 F 13; *FGrH* / *BNJ* 139 F 22 *apud* Arr. *An*. III. 26.1-4): Alexander shows not only clemency –already in Egypt, he was informed of Philotas' plot; however, he refused to believe it, considering his long-lasting friendship with Philotas and the honours conferred to his father Parmenion– but also righteousness and respect for justice, since Philotas was brought in front of the Macedonians and executed after a trial.

[33] Cf., e.g., Callisthenes (*FGrH* / *BNJ* 124) T 8 *apud* Arr. *An*. IV.10.1: Καλλισθένην δὲ τὸν Ὀλύνθιον Ἀριστοτέλους τε τῶν λόγων διακηκοότα καὶ τὸν τρόπον ὄντα ὑπαγροικότερον οὐκ ἐπαινεῖν ταῦτα; Ephippus (*FGrH* / *BNJ* 126) F 5 *apud* Ath. XII. 537e-538b: ἀφόρητος γὰρ ἦν καὶ φονικός· ἐδόκει γὰρ εἶναι μελαγχολικός.

[34] Plu. *Alex.* 47.5: Κρατερὸν φιλοβασιλέα; *Aem.* 24.1: ἀεὶ μὲν οὖν λέγονται φιλοβασίλειοι οἱ Μακεδόνες.

[35] See, for example, the execution of the court historian Callisthenes, Aristotle's nephew (*FGrH* / *BNJ* 126 T 6 *apud* D.L. V. 4-5; T 7 *apud* Plu. *Alex*. 52-55; T 8 *apud* Arr. *An*. IV. 10).

apud Plu. *Alex*. 8.2-3), and portrayed him as a philosopher in arms[36]. A renowned mouthpiece of this view is Plutarch, who celebrated Alexander for his virtues in his *Moralia* (*De Alexandri Magni fortuna aut virtute*). Late Antiquity and the early Byzantine period saw the spread of Christianity; as a result, Alexander, a pagan king, was used in the philosophico-religious discourse as an example of vices from which to steer off. However, in the masses' mind, Alexander retained an occult, magic power, and people kept on wearing lucky charms bearing the image of his face and his name written. This phenomenon was so common that John Chrysostom (*Ad Illuminandos Catecheses* XLIX. 240.23-24) had to ban the use of these amulets in the 4th century AD. Later on, in the 8th century AD, probably because unable to contrast the allure that Alexander had on people, the Church decided to embrace the Macedonian king and incorporate him in the Evangelic message[37]. The 'Christian Alexander' is thus the protagonist of the Byzantine version of the *Alexander Romance* and appeared alongside saints as a champion of Greekness and Orthodoxy in many icons and frescoes in monasteries and churches in Greece[38]. The Byzantine period made Alexander a fully-fledged hero of Graeco-Christian popular culture and a model for, and ancestor of, the Byzantine Emperors (Vasilikopoulou 1999: 1313). It is worth noting that the Macedonian's absorption into the Christian tradition made it possible for people both to stay rooted in the ancient past and to link that past to their present: the Greek scholar Mitsakis has correctly pointed out that in Greek culture Alexander was born an Ancient Greek pagan, but died Byzantine Christian[39].

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[36] For the philosophical discourse around Alexander, see Stoneman 2003: 325-345; Asirvatham 2012: 311-318.

[37] Cf. Amitay 2010 for the creation of the myth of Alexander as a forerunner of Jesus; especially chapter 8 for the comparison between the myths around Alexander and Jesus' lives.

[38] For the Byzantine *Alexander Romance* (recension ε), see Stoneman / Gargiulo 2007: LXXX. A beautiful result of the Christianisation of Alexander is the 16th-century wall painting inspired by Daniel's prophecy of the succession of kingdoms in the Church of Docheiariou on Mount Athos (cf. Daniel VII. 17-18: ταῦτα τὰ θηρία τὰ μεγάλα εἰσὶ τέσσαρες βασιλεῖαι). In the fresco, Alexander and Augustus, called the king of the Greeks and the king of the Romans, sit side by side next to Jesus Christ, winning their own place in Greece's holy mountain.

[39] Mitsakis 1967: 18: "Alexander wird im antiken Griechenland als *Heide* geboren und stirbt als *Christ* in Byzanz".

In the 14th and 15th centuries, there was a growing tendency to present Alexander as an example of righteous Emperor and conqueror of the Persian Empire; at the same time, two new versions of the *Alexander Romance* appeared, namely the Διήγησις Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Μακεδόνος (1388) in verses and the ζ recension in prose. This 'Alexander Revival', as Corinne Juanno (2012: 106-107) describes it, "must be read as an expression of *nationalistic* consciousness" in response to the Ottoman threat upon the Byzantine Empire[40]. Similarly, in the years leading up to the Greek Revolution (1821-1830), the legendary conqueror, transformed into an Orthodox freedom-fighter, was called upon by both the upper and the lower classes of society to free his fellow countrymen from the oppressive yoke of the 'infidel' Turks. The contrast between Greeks and Turks was translated into the opposition between Orthodoxy and Islam[41], and, ultimately, mapped onto the ancient polarity between Greeks and Barbarians, West and East[42]. This idea is immortalised in icons in which Alexander, a new St. George, slays the 'infidel Ottoman oppressor' symbolised by the snake lying at his feet. Thus, the Christianised Alexander, created in the Byzantine period and developed during the Ottoman rule, became an overarching theme in Modern Greek culture, which is still relevant today and paved the way for the use of the Macedonian in contemporary political rhetoric[43].

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[40] Cf. also Clogg 2004: 7-45, for evidence of Hellenic consciousness during the Ottoman rule in Greece up to the Greek Revolution and the birth of the Hellenic state.

[41] Cf. the population exchange ratified by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923: the discrimination between the two peoples was made on the basis of religion, and not of language or ethnic characterisation; see Clogg 2004: 99.

[42] For early occurrences of the dichotomy between Greeks and Barbarians, see Tuplin 1999: 54-57: the term *Barbaros* already occurred in the Archaic period and was not created by the events of 480 BC; however, the Persian attacks on mainland Greece made it a more regular word. For the scholarly debate about the polarity between Greeks and Barbarians in Antiquity, see Said 1987²: 56-57; E. Hall 1989: 99-100; J. M. Hall 1997: 45-48, 2002: 179; Tuplin 1999: 47-53; Harrison 2002: 3-7; Sourvinou-Inwood 2002: 174. See also Skinner 2012: 44: "Greek identities were, from the outset, hybrid, relational, and inventive, meaning different things at different times to different people".

[43] Cf., e.g., Koffos / Stratadaki 1997: 17: Graeco-Christian education has its roots in Alexander's deeds. It is worth mentioning that this book, in which Alexander is praised for his ecumenical civilising plan and for the pedagogic value of his campaign, was written for the students of the Pedagogy degree of the University of Crete.

In 1971, Christos Zalokostas published the book Μέγας Ἀλέξανδρος, ὁ πρόδρομος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (*Alexander the Great, the forerunner of Jesus*). In this book, Zalokostas claims that, by spreading the Greek language to the countries which he conquered, Alexander created the basis for a unified Greek-speaking community ready to accept the Christian message. Therefore, Alexander's world-empire is a forerunner of the Christian one, and the entire Christendom owes its existence to the Greeks.

Zalokostas' idealised Alexander shares many traits with Tarn's Macedonian hero: in his book, the Greek author has his Alexander pronouncing an oath, which is a hymn to peace, brotherhood, equality and love. Although Zalokostas' Alexander is a fictional character, Greek people have particularly welcomed his Orthodox Alexander, and 'his oath' has been used (and abused) several times by different political parties. In this chapter, I aim at discussing the main characteristics of Zalokostas' Alexander and his oath, but also at exploring how fiction and forgery based on ancient history serve the political discourse and various religious and economic interests in Modern Greece.

The author

Christos Zalokostas is a multifaceted figure: in Greece, he is remembered as a successful athlete, writer, politician, and chemical engineer[44]. Zalokostas was born in Athens in 1894 to a wealthy family from Epirus. He married twice: first with Rhoxane Manou, the sister of the wife of King Alexander I of Greece[45], and then with Elli Retsina, a famous tennis player and sister of the politicians Theodore and Alexander Retsinas.

Being a patriot, Zalokostas participated in the Balkan wars (1912-1913), he fought for the revolution in Northern Epirus (1914)[46], and he joined the Greek army during WWI. In the 1930s, he became an active member of the "movement of national intellectual self-awareness" and, together with other Greek artists and intellectuals, he was the founder of the National Society of Writers (Ἐθνικὴ Ἑταιρεία Λογοτεχνῶν). In 1946, Zalokostas took part in the Committee for the Coordination of the National Struggle (Ἐπιτροπὴ Συντονισμοῦ Ἐθνικοῦ Ἀγῶνα) that called a referendum for the restoration of the monarchy of King George II after the troubled period of

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[44] On Zalokostas' life and works, see Stavrou 2008: 918-921.

[45] On the reign of Alexander I of Greece (1917-1920), see Clogg 2004: 89-95.

[46] For the Balkan Wars, see Clogg 2004: 79-81.

the dictatorship of General Metaxas (1936-1941)[47] and the Nazi occupation of Greece (1941-1944)[48]. In 1948, in the years of the post-war civil strife[49], Zalokostas was arrested by the resistance fighters of the KKE, EAM and ELAS[50], and he was led to Kokkinia, where he was sentenced to death by the people's court and considered an 'enemy of the people'; however, he managed to escape.

Zalokostas' patriotism and interest in ancient and modern Greek history are evident in all the books he wrote; among them, three works link Greece's Antiquity to modern times and its geography: Γύρω ἀπὸ τὴν Ἑλλάδα – Ταξιδιωτικά (*Travels around Greece*, 1938) is a travel book which blends the description of places with history and mythology; Τὸ Περιβόλι τῶν Θεῶν (*The Garden of the Gods*, 1944) presents places in Thessaly, Macedonia and Northern Epirus (Albania) and their mythical past; and Ἑλλάς. Ἡ κυρὰ τῆς θάλασσας (*Greece. The lady of the sea*, 1968) offers a study on Greece's nautical power and maritime history, showing the importance of the sea from Antiquity to the 20th century. Of particular interest are his monographs about ancient figures, the epitome of Zalokostas' philhellenism: a) Σωκράτης. Ὁ προφήτης τῆς ἀρχαιότητας (*Socrates. The prophet of Antiquity*, 1962), in which the philosopher's teachings are also presented as the basis of the Greek-Christian culture; b) Κωνσταντίνος Παλαιολόγος (*Constantine Palaeologus*, 1965); c) Μέγας Ἀλέξανδρος, ὁ πρόδρομος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ (*Alexander the Great, the forerunner of Jesus*, 1971); d) Ἰουλιανός ὁ Παραβάτης (*Julian the Apostate*, 1974). Zalokostas died in Athens in 1975.

Zalokostas' Alexander the Great

In the prologue, Zalokostas states that the aim of his book is to show how Alexander saved the "spiritual superiority of the Greeks" (τὴν ψυχικὴ ἀνωτερότητα τῶν Ἑλλήνων, Zalokostas 1971: 6); he describes Alexander as a "philosopher in arms" (ὡπλισμένο φιλόσοφο) and sees in him *the quintessence of the creative spirit of the Hellenic people* (ἡ δημιουργικὴ δύναμη τῆς

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[47] On General Metaxas' dictatorship, cf. Gallant 2001: 157-159; Clogg 2004: 115-119.

[48] On the Nazi occupation of Greece, cf. Gallant 2001: 162-173.

[49] For the post-war civil strife (1946-1949), see Gallant 2001: 173-177.

[50] KKE = Κομμουνιστικὸ Κόμμα Ἑλλάδος, *Communist party of Greece*, founded in 1918; EAM = Ἑλληνικὸ Ἀπελευθερωτικὸ Μέτωπο, *Greek People's Liberation Front*; ELAS = Ἑλληνικὸς Λαϊκὸς Ἀπελευθερωτικὸς Στρατός, *Greek People's Liberation Army*. Cf. Clogg 2004: 121-135.

[Ἑλληνικῆς] φυλῆς, τὸν ἔκαμνε τὸ πενταπόσταγμά της, Zalokostas 1971: 6).
Following Arrian's proem to his *Anabasis Alexandrou*[51], Zalokostas gives the
reasons which prompted him to write his book: he wanted to tell the truth
about Alexander's greatness. In fact, there were no contemporary Macedo-
nian historians who could write about Alexander, and those who wrote
about him either were not able to give him justice or hid the truth and his
"colossal importance" (Zalokostas 1971: 5). Moreover, as Arrian (*An*. VII. 29-
30) did in his so-called 'Apology and Eulogy of Alexander', Zalokostas ex-
cuses the Macedonian king for his mistakes, explaining that his good actions
surpass by far the few instances in which he was wrong[52]. When Alexander
appeared harsh, it was due to the necessity to punish rebellious cities and
those who harmed him; in the description of the execution of Philotas and
Parmenio, Zalokostas justifies the Macedonian king saying that "there's not
always greatness in great deeds (στὰ μεγάλα ἔργα δὲν ὑπάρχει πάντα
μεγαλεῖο)": after all, *the Athenian democracy too killed Socrates and the
Church burnt many people who were an obstacle to the Christian religion*
(Zalokostas 1971: 146).

According to Zalokostas, Alexander is not only "the most extraordinary
military genius of history" (ἐκπληκτικότερη στρατιωτικὴ μεγαλοφυΐα τῶν
αἰώνων, Zalokostas 1971: 78), but he is also characterised by "kind-hearted
thinking" (καλόκαρδη σκέψη) and "liberal disposition" (φιλελεύθερη
διάθεση), thanks to which he is said to be "the first to enlighten the world
with the idea of charity and compassion towards the enemies as well"
(πρῶτος νὰ φωτίσει τὸν κόσμο μὲ τὴν ἰδέα τῆς φιλανθρωπίας ὡς καὶ γιὰ
τοὺς ἐχθρούς, Zalokostas 1971: 60)". Alexander is a charismatic leader with
a magnetic personality, and his soldiers felt the urge to join his venture[53];

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[51] Cf. also Arrian's "second proem" (*An*. I. 12.3-5), in which he states that he is inter-
ested in Alexander's invasion of Asia as it was something magnificent and unprece-
dented, which still needed a worthy description: "no other single man performed
such remarkable deeds, whether in number or in magnitude, among either the
Greeks or barbarians" (ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις ἄλλος εἷς ἀνὴρ τοσαῦτα ἢ τηλικαῦτα
ἔργα κατὰ πλῆθος ἢ μέγεθος ἐν Ἕλλησιν ἢ βαρβάροις ἀπεδείξατο, Arr. *An*. I. 12.4,
translation by Brunt 1976-1983).

[52] Zalokostas 1971: 6: ἔσφαλε βέβαια, μερικές φορές ὁ Μακεδόνας, ὅμως τὰ
προτερήματά του ξεπερνοῦν τὸ ἀνθρώπινο μέτρο καὶ ἐξαφανίζουν τὰ λίγα λάθη
του.

[53] Zalokostas 1971: 117: μαγνητικὴ προσωπικότητα […] ἠλέκτριζε τοὺς στρατιῶτες
ποὺ ἕνωναν τὴν ἀξία τους γιὰ νὰ πετύχει αὐτὸς τοὺς σκοπούς του.

almost as an *ante-litteram* supporter of the *Great Idea*[54], he had the great goal to set "Asian Greece" (i.e. the Greek cities in Asia Minor) free[55].

Alike Tarn's (1948) Alexander, Zalokostas' Macedonian king is a cosmocrator striving to guarantee "universal concord" (πανανθρώπινη ὁμόνοια), and to create one nation living in one single state (ἕνα κράτος, ἕνας λαός, Zalokostas 1971: 224). Zalokostas thinks that only Tarn was able to understand the "real Alexander", described as a "prophet of a better life" and a "world pacifier"[56]. In fact, according to Zalokostas, Alexander's *supreme aim was to unite West and East and to bring peace and happiness to the world* (Γύρευε νὰ ἑνώσει Ἀνατολὴ καὶ Δύση [...] γιὰ νὰ φέρει εἰρήνη καὶ εὐτυχία στὸν κόσμο, Zalokostas 1971: 120)[57]. Having unified and pacified the entire *oecumene* and having preached for peace, equality, love and brotherhood among people, Alexander prepared the world for the Christian message, becoming thus the forerunner of Jesus Christ (Zalokostas 1971: 267-268). Concluding, Zalokostas claims that Alexander the Great was born mortal, lived as a superhuman and died a god[58].

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[54] For the *Great Idea* (Μεγάλη Ἰδέα), see Gallant 2015: 135-136. In 1844, with the term *Great Idea* the politician I. Kolettis presented his plan to continue the fight in order to liberate all the territories in which Greeks were a majority, namely Asia Minor.

[55] Zalokostas 1971: 60-61: ἄνεμος εὐτυχίας συνεπῆρε τὴν Ἀσιατικὴ Ἑλλάδα τὴν πιασμένη ἀπὸ τοὺς σατράπες. Ἔλεγαν οἱ πόλεις: Ἔρχεται ὁ "ἀπελευθερωτής μας" ("a wind of happiness overtook Asian Greece under the satraps. The cities used to say: "Our liberator is coming"").

[56] Zalokostas 1971: 236: μόνο ὁ Tarn μελετώντας τὰ ἀρχαία κείμενα, ἔδωσε στὸν Ἀλέξανδρο τὴ σωστὴ θέση του. Τὴ θέση τοῦ προφήτη μιᾶς καλύτερης ζωῆς, τοῦ εἰρηνοποιοῦ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου. For an assessment of Tarn's Alexander, see Bosworth 2019: 77-95.

[57] For Alexander and his Persian subjects, see Brosius 2003: 171-192; Mossé 2004: 66-72.

[58] Zalokostas 1971: 266-267: γεννήθηκε θνητός, ἔζησε σὰν ὑπεράνθρωπος καὶ πέθανε θεός. Zalokostas reiterates Alexander's divinity on several occasions, e.g., at page 175 the Macedonian king is said to possess divine power (δαιμονικὴ δύναμη); at page 233 his symposium at Opis is equalled to Jesus Christ's last dinner.

The Oath

Σᾶς εὔχομαι, τώρα ποὺ τέλειωσαν οἱ πόλεμοι, νὰ εὐτυχήσετε μὲ τὴν εἰρήνη. Ὅλοι οἱ θνητοὶ ἀπὸ δῶ καί πέρα νὰ ζήσουν σὰν ἕνας λαός, μονιασμένοι, γιὰ τὴν κοινή προκοπή. Θεωρεῖστε τήν Οἰκουμένη πατρίδα σᾶς, μὲ κοινοὺς τοὺς νόμους, ὅπου θὰ κυβερνοῦν οἱ ἄριστοι, ἀνεξάρτητα φυλῆς. Δὲ ξεχωρίζω τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ὅπως κάνουν οἱ στενόμυαλοι, σὲ Ἕλληνας καὶ Βάρβαρους. Δὲν μ' ἐνδιαφέρει ἡ καταγωγὴ τῶν πολιτῶν οὔτε ἡ ράτσα ποὺ γεννήθηκαν. Τοὺς καταμερίζω μ' ἕνα μόνο κριτήριο – τὴν ἀρετή. Γιὰ 'μένα κάθε καλὸς ξένος εἶναι Ἕλληνας καὶ κάθε κακὸς Ἕλληνας εἶναι χειρότερος ἀπὸ Βάρβαρο.

Ἄμποτε σᾶς παρουσιαστοῦν διαφορές, δὲν θὰ καταφύγετε ποτὲ στὰ ὅπλα, παρὰ θὰ τὶς λύσετε εἰρηνικά. Στὴν ἀνάγκη θὰ σταθῶ ἐγὼ διαιτητής σας. Τὸ Θεὸ δὲν πρέπει νὰ τὸν νομίζετε σὰν αὐταρχικό Κυβερνήτη, ἀλλὰ σὰν κοινὸ Πατέρα ὅλων, ὥστε ἡ διαγωγή μας νὰ μοιάζη μὲ τὴ συζωὴ ποὺ κάνουν τ' ἀδέλφια στὴν οἰκογένεια. Ἀπὸ μέρους μου σᾶς θεωρῶ ὅλους ἴσους, λευκοὺς ἢ μελαψούς, καὶ θὰ ἤθελα νὰ μὴν εἶστε ἁπλοὶ μόνον ὑπήκοοι τῆς Κοινοπολιτείας μου, ἀλλὰ ὅλοι μέτοχοι, ὅλοι συνέταιροι. Ὅσο περνᾶει ἀπὸ τὸ χέρι μου, θὰ προσπαθήσω νὰ συντελεστοῦν αὐτὰ ποὺ ὑπόσχομαι. Τὸν ὅρκο ποὺ δώσαμε μὲ τὴ σπονδὴ ἀπόψε, κρατῆστε τον σὰν συμβόλαιο ἀγάπης.

"It is my wish, now that wars have come to an end, that you all will be happy in peace. From now on, let all mortals live as one people, being in harmony for the good of all. See the whole world as your own homeland, with common laws, where the best will govern regardless of their race. Unlike the narrow-minded, I make no distinction between Greeks and Barbarians. The origin of citizens, or the race into which they were born, is of no concern to me. I distinguish them by only one criterion: their virtue. For me, any good foreigner is a Greek and any bad Greek is worse than a Barbarian.

If disputes ever occur among you, you will not resort to weapons; rather, you will solve them in peace. If need be, I shall arbitrate between you. You should not think of God as an autocratic despot, but as the common father of all, and thus our conduct will be like the life of brothers within the same family. I, on my part, consider you all as equal, whether you are white or dark-skinned, and I would like you

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to be not simply the subjects of my commonwealth, but members of it, partners of it. To the best of my ability, I shall strive to make happen what I have promised. Keep this oath which we took tonight with our libation as a contract of love."[59]

Zalokostas' oath takes place in the description of the events at Opis in 324 BC and is built on the ideas of brotherhood, cosmopolitanism, religious faith and equality based on virtue. Following the account of the ancient historians, the author reports that Alexander decided to send back to Macedonia the veterans and the injured, wishing them to enjoy their lives at home after so many toils; however, the soldiers reacted negatively to their king's decision, because they feared he wanted to get rid of them and replace them with the Iranians. To celebrate his reconciliation with the Macedonians, Alexander organises a pan-national symposium (πανεθνικὸ συμπόσιο), which Zalokostas deems "equally important to the Last Supper of Jesus Christ" (ἴσο σὲ σημασία μὲ τὸ μυστικὸ Δεῖπνο τοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, Zalokostas 1971: 233). Then Zalokostas introduces the oath, saying that he is following three ancient authors as sources for Alexander's words: i) Pseudo-Callisthenes, since in book III of the *Romance* he stated that Alexander did not swear his oath to his god Zeus, but to the "God, the father of all human beings" (στὸ Θεό, τὸν πατέρα ὅλων τῶν ἀνθρώπων, Zalokostas 1971: 234); ii) the philosopher Eratosthenes, who wrote the oath down as he believed that Alexander was complying with a divine plan to harmonise the humankind (Ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος ... εἶχε ἐντολὴ "θεόθεν" ν' ἁρμονίσει τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα, Zalokostas 1971: 234)[60]; and iii) Plutarch, who in his *Moralia* described the oath as the Macedonian king's request to all human beings to live in peace and love (Zalokostas 1971: 236).

It is worth noting that, in various instances in his book, Zalokostas claims that he is following an ancient source, and Plutarch and Arrian appear among his favourites. However, he never gives a full quotation: he simply paraphrases and, most of the time, he bends the sources to his religious-political aim, i.e. the representation of Alexander as the promoter of Hellenism and the forerunner of Jesus. In his account of the events at Opis, we

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[59] The translation is based on Martis 1984: 69, who, to my knowledge, was the first to translate it into English. Both the Modern Greek original and the English version of the oath are widely quoted in the Internet with no mention of the name of author and/or translator.

[60] Strabo (I. 4.9) has it that Eratosthenes (*ca*. 285-194 BC) claims that Alexander distinguished between good and bad men, not Greeks or Barbarians.

witness a growing and persistent need for *quotations* from ancient sources (or better, pseudo-quotations, such as the three just mentioned here above), since Zalokostas is trying to make his argument more compelling: the oath was extremely important because it laid the path to the Messiah (Zalokostas 1971: 235) and it is to be considered the "first message of love which the world heard before Jesus' advent" (Zalokostas 1971: 236). In this instance, Zalokostas also gives his only exact quotation of the ancient Greek text of Plutarch, who, "in agreement with Eratosthenes", reported the words that allegedly Alexander "repeated twice during the libation", wishing to establish "among all the human beings concord, peace and community of interest / charitable disposition towards the others" (πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ὁμόνοιαν καὶ εἰρήνην καὶ κοινωνίαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους, Zalokostas 1971: 237; Plu. *Mor*. 330e)[61]. Although the sentence belongs to Plutarch, Zalokostas also attributes it to Eratosthenes, who acts as the main source for the oath. Moreover, Plutarch's sentence is quoted out of its context, as in *De Alexandri Magni Foruna aut Virtute* it is used to describe the general goal of Alexander's campaign, and it does not represent the words pronounced during an oath or a libation. In this respect, it is noteworthy that Zalokostas does not make full use of the eulogy of the Macedonian's achievements at *Mor*. 329b-d, which not only fits his image of Alexander as a cosmopolitan, philosopher-king, but it also recalls the setting of a banquet:

> "This Zeno wrote, giving shape to a dream or, as it were, shadowy picture of a well-ordered and philosophic commonwealth; but it was Alexander who gave effect to the idea. For Alexander did not follow Aristotle's advice to treat the Greeks as if he were their leader, and other peoples as if he were their master (οὐ γάρ, ὡς Ἀριστοτέλης συνεβούλευεν αὐτῷ, τοῖς μὲν Ἕλλησιν ἡγεμονικῶς τοῖς δὲ

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[61] Cf. Polyaen. IV. 3.1: Ἀλέξανδρος ἐστρατήγει πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἐς εὔνοιαν ὑπάγεσθαι ("Alexander planned to unite all mankind to goodwill"; my translation). See also Plu. *Mor*. 330d: ἀλλ᾽ ἑνὸς ὑπήκοα λόγου τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς καὶ μιᾶς πολιτείας, ἕνα δῆμον ἀνθρώπους ἅπαντας ἀποφῆναι βουλόμενος, οὕτως ἑαυτὸν ἐσχημάτιζεν· εἰ δὲ μὴ ταχέως ὁ δεῦρο καταπέμψας τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου ψυχὴν ἀνεκαλέσατο δαίμων, εἷς ἂν νόμος ἅπαντας ἀνθρώπους διῳκεῖτο ("But Alexander desired to render all upon earth subject to one law of reason and one form of government and to reveal all men as one people, and to this purpose he made himself conform. But if the deity that sent down Alexander's soul into this world of ours had not recalled him quickly, one law would govern all mankind". All Plutarch's translations in this paper are by Babbitt 1936).

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βαρβάροις δεσποτικῶς χρώμενος)[62]; to have regard for the Greeks as for friends and kindred, but to conduct himself toward other peoples as though they were plants or animals (καὶ τῶν μὲν ὡς φίλων καὶ οἰκείων ἐπιμελούμενος τοῖς δ᾽ ὡς ζῴοις ἢ φυτοῖς προσφερόμενος); for to do so would have been to cumber his leadership with numerous battles and banishments and festering seditions. But, as he believed that he came as a heaven-sent governor to all and as a mediator for the whole world (κοινὸς ἥκειν θεόθεν ἁρμοστὴς καὶ διαλλακτὴς τῶν ὅλων νομίζων), those whom he could not persuade to unite with him, he conquered by force of arms, and he brought together into one body all men everywhere, uniting and mixing in one great loving-cup, as it were, men's lives, their characters, their marriages, their very habits of life (ὥσπερ ἐν κρατῆρι φιλοτησίῳ μείξας τοὺς βίους καὶ τὰ ἤθη καὶ τοὺς γάμους καὶ τὰς διαίτας). He bade them all consider as their fatherland the whole inhabited earth, as their stronghold and protection his camp, as akin to them all good men, and as foreigners only the wicked; they should not distinguish between Grecian and foreigner by Grecian cloak and targe, or scimitar and jacket; but the distinguishing mark of the Grecian should be seen in virtue, and that of the foreigner in iniquity; clothing and food, marriage and manner of life they should regard as common to all, being blended into one by ties of blood and children." (Plu. *Mor*. 329b-d)

As Dragona-Monachou (2013: 44-46) has discussed, the idea that Alexander "gave effect" to Zeno's *politeia* is anachronistic: Zeno became active in the Stoic school of Athens around 300 BC, about twenty years after Alexander's death in 323 BC; however, she suggests that this chapter is accountable, provided that Plutarch regarded Zeno's cosmopolitanism similar to the idea expressed by the Cynic Diogenes, who lived at the same time as Alexander and they met in Corinth[63]. I agree that Alexander did not "conduct himself

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[62] Cf. Arist. *Pol*. I. 1252b: ὡς ταὐτὸ φύσει βάρβαρον καὶ δοῦλον ὄν. Zalokostas (1971: 60) simply mentions Plato and Aristotle as examples of the old Greek way of seeing the Greeks superior to the Barbarians, which Alexander rejected, as he taught us to be compassionate even towards our enemies.

[63] Cf. Tarn 1948 II: 399: "Few modern writers have had any doubts as to who was the author of this tremendous revolution; it was Zeno, the founder of the Stoic philosophy. But there are several passages in Greek writers which, if they are true, show that the original author was not Zeno but Alexander". I agree with Bosworth (1980:

toward other peoples as though they were plants or animals" and, on several occasions, he welcomed foreigners in his inner cycle (e.g. Ada of Caria or Mazaces); nevertheless, he did so following in his father Philip II's footsteps (Heckel 2008: 52), who had included among his *hetairoi* worthy Macedonians from non-aristocratic families and Greeks. It was in fact common practice for the Argead kings to call deserving foreigners at their court and it was not the result of a 'cosmopolitan plan'. Alexander had understood that the adoption of some features of Oriental etiquette and the Macedonian-Iranian partnership in the administration were a *sine qua non* for the stabilization of his power, but he probably *never thought of his empire as being anything other than fundamentally Macedonian and Hellenic*[64], as the Graeco-Macedonian military training of the *Epigonoi* and the mass-wedding at Susa between Macedonian men and Iranian women (and not *vice versa*, Macedonian women and Iranian men) imply.

Plutarch's passage is a product of the Early Empire and it certainly resonates with Zalokostas' ideas: Alexander is a philosopher king and cosmopolitan leader who does not see the difference between Greeks –kin– and foreigners in terms of race but in terms of virtue; sent by God to harmonise the world, he unites and mixes peoples and their traditions in one great loving-cup, which remind us of a symposiac setting, like the Opis banquet[65]. However, Zalokostas scatters these ideas in his discourse and presents them as Eratosthenes' words three times (Zalokostas 1971: 234, 237), which points at the author's general knowledge of the ancient tradition, but also his freedom in bending the sources to his literary needs.

It is also remarkable that, in regards to Alexander's discharge of the veterans and the army's unrest at Opis, Zalokostas does not follow Arrian (*An.* VII. 7.9-11), who provides the most complete version of the events, with a long speech of the king addressed to his Macedonians and an oath at the

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3-4) that the whole topic of racial fusion and cosmopolitan *politeia* was a creation of the rhetorical schools of the Early Empire and attributed to Alexander. Moreover, Diogenes' cosmopolitanism has a "negative" value: see D.L. VI. 2.38: Ἄπολις, ἄοικος, πατρίδος ἐστερημένος ("with no country, homeless, deprived of a motherland"; my translation).

[64] Cf. Brunt 2003: 50; see also Hammond 2000: 141-160, on the continuity of Argead institutions in Macedonian kingdoms during the Hellenistic era.

[65] Cf. Tarn 1948 II: 440: "I may say at once that the explanation is simply that Eratosthenes' loving-cup did actually exist; it was the greater krater on Alexander's table at Opis".

banquet[66]. On the contrary, Zalokostas even criticises Arrian for his wrong interpretation of Alexander's aims, an interpretation that has influenced and misled modern historians, who, as a result, were not able to grasp Alexander's *creed* (Πιστεύω). In fact, modern historians who have chosen to follow Arrian's account have wrongly assumed that Alexander wanted to unify only the Macedonian-Greeks and Persians, failing to see his cosmopolitan views (Zalokostas 1971: 235-236). Zalokostas' Alexander found virtues in every nation, and with his plan of "concord and fusion of mankind" (συμφιλίωση καὶ συγχώνευση τῶν λαῶν) he aimed at creating "a race which would include the best qualities from every people" (μία ράτσα ποὺ θὰ ἔκλεινε μέσα της ὅ, τι καλύτερο εἶχε ἡ κάθε φυλή, Zalokostas 1971: 222-224).

According to Arrian (*An*. VII. 8.2), the Macedonians were distressed (ἤδη ἐλύπει αὐτοὺς) by three major changes: Alexander's adoption of the Persian attire (ἥ τε ἐσθὴς ἡ Περσικὴ ἐς τοῦτο φέρουσα); the equipment of the barbarian *Epigonoi* in Macedonian style (τῶν Ἐπιγόνων τῶν βαρβάρων ἡ ἐς τὰ Μακεδονικὰ ἤθη κόσμησις); and the introduction of foreign horsemen into the ranks of the Companions (ἀνάμιξις τῶν ἀλλοφύλων ἱππέων ἐς τὰς τῶν ἑταίρων τάξεις). However, Alexander's Orientalising policies and the introduction of Iranians in the army had started long before, after the death of Darius III in 330 BC and before the Indian campaign in 327 BC respectively (Olbrycht 2011: 67-82, 2014: 37-62, 2015: 196-210); therefore we can infer that in reality the Macedonians were most offended by the release of the veterans, as they felt that their military and political role in the Empire was becoming secondary to that of the Iranians[67].

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[66] The events at Opis in 324 BC are variously narrated by all the Alexander-historians: D.S. XVII. 108.3-109.3; Plu. *Alex*. 71.1-5; Curtius X. 2.8-4.2; Iust. XII. 11.5-12.10. Cf. Bosworth 1988: 101: "In this weather of confusion one thing at least is certain: Alexander did make a speech at Opis – or rather several speeches"; Hammond 1999: 249: the actions and the words of Alexander at Opis were recorded in the *Royal Journals* and traded down to Arrian via Ptolemy. For the scholarly discussion over the word 'mutiny', see Howe / Müller 2012: 21-38; Roisman 2012: 36, 2014: 85; Brice 2015: 70-72; Carney 2015: 27-59.

[67] Cf. Sisti / Zambrini 2004: 597-598: Arrian's list of complaints does not explain why the Macedonians reacted so loudly; furthermore, Curtius (X. 2.12) offers another explanation for the Macedonian uproar: for the soldiers, the furlough of part of the Macedonians means that the Asiatic conquest has changed the character of the Argead kingship and that Alexander aimed at establishing his rule in Asia rather than

In response to the soldiers' unrest, Alexander gives a speech (*An*. VII. 9-10) in which he praises his father Philip II for having civilised and made great the Macedonians (*An*. VII. 9.2-5); he reminds them of his even greater achievements (*An*. VII. 9.6-9); and he presents himself as a caring leader who, deserted by his troops, had to seek for protection and help among the Barbarians (*An*. VII. 9.9-10.7; cf. Curt. X. 2.19-29). The king then closes himself in his tent for three days; when the soldiers could not bear it anymore, the reconciliation takes place and Alexander celebrates it with a banquet (*An*. VII. 11.8-9). As I have argued elsewhere (Taietti 2016: 159-178), in the staging of the banquet, Arrian deploys the Herodotean trope of the Persian 'concentric belief': the importance of the various peoples of the empire is correlated to their position, to their propinquity to the Great King (Hdt. I. 134.2)[68]. In the banquet, Alexander represents the centre of power; around him are the Macedonians, then the Persians, and finally all the other folks according to their merits. Arrian stresses that the hierarchy of people is based on their virtue (ἀρετή) and that Alexander prays for concord (ὁμόνοια) and community of power (κοινωνία τῆς ἀρχῆς); Zalokostas shares these three key concepts, but he completely dismisses Arrian's account due to the Persians' prominence over the other Iranians, and says that Tarn and Plutarch are the authors who must be followed for the interpretation of Alexander's cosmopolitan aims. However, a closer look at *De Alexandri Magni Fortuna aut Virtute* shows once again Zalokostas' reshaping and bending of the ancient sources: at the Susa wedding, Plutarch too gives prominence to the Persians, as Alexander unifies in marriage Macedonian and Greek men with Persian women, so to become *one same community*, *one family*, without mentioning the Iranians[69]. Moreover, at *Mor*. 328c-e Plutarch presents Alexander Hellenising the Iranians, teaching them to till the soil, to respect

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returning back to his motherland. Carney 2015: 47: "Hyphasis and Opis caused problems to Alexander not because they were *mutinies* but because they were quarrels that poisoned the relationship between the king and his troops".

[68] See also Badian 1958: 429: Alexander's treatment of the Iranians is far from being equal and cosmopolitan; cf. Briant 2002: 311; Harrison 2010: 227.

[69] Cf. Plu. *Mor*. 329e: "[Alexander] brought together in one golden-canopied tent a hundred Persian brides and a hundred Macedonian and Greek bridegrooms, united at a common heart and board" (ἐφ᾿ ἑστίας κοινῆς καὶ τραπέζης, ἑκατὸν Περσίδας νύμφας, ἑκατὸν νυμφίους Μακεδόνας καὶἝλληνας). […] "[Alexander raised a hymn] over the union of the two greatest and most mighty peoples [i.e. the Macedonian-Greeks and the Persians]" (εἰς κοινωνίαν συνιοῦσι τοῖς μεγίστοις καὶ δυνατωτάτοις γένεσι).

marriage and their parents, and to pray Greek gods: Hellenising means civilising, thus betraying the superiority still given to Greek culture, which is at odds with the idea of cosmopolitanism and fraternity. Plutarch's Alexander is a fictional character, whom Zalokostas reshapes to create the protagonist of his book.

The word κοινωνία ('communion', 'community') has a preeminent role in both Arrian and Plutarch's passages; the term has divided Modern scholarship whether it should be interpreted as a sign of the influence that the Stoic idea of world brotherhood had on the 2nd-century authors (cf. Bosworth 1996: 1-5) or Alexander III indeed believed in the *Unity of Mankind*[70] and aimed at a policy of fusion of people ($Verschmelzungspolitik$)[71]. It is likely that Alexander thought of his empire as a place where Macedonian-Greeks and Iranians would share power, but the Macedonians were destined to hold the most prominent political positions and Greek culture to be the official one (Badian 1965: 160-161; Bosworth 1980: 14; Brosius 2003: 175; Brunt 2003: 50; Taietti forthcoming a, b). Thus, the expression κοινωνία τῆς ἀρχῆς means that Alexander was trying to foster a *conciliatory policy*[72], which did not entail brotherhood or require any systematic plan of racial

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[70] Tarn 1948 I: 54: "Mazaeus' appointment shows that [Alexander] had already made up his mind: Aristotle was wrong; the Barbarians should not be treated like slaves. He knew that Barbarians, like Greeks, must be classified by merit"; 79, 116-117: all the people of the empire might be partners in commonwealth and live in unity of heart and mind; II App. 25, ch. VI: "Alexander at Opis", 434-449; De Mauriac 1949: 107-114; Robinson 1949: 304. For the detractors of the theory of Alexander's *Unity of Mankind*, see Badian 1958: 428-430; Bosworth 1980: 2-18; Nagle 1996: 165-166; Hammond 1997: 187-190: Alexander's Asian policy interpreted as an equal share between Macedonians and Asians in the *administration* of the empire; Worthington 1999: 51-52; Brunt 2003: 50; Gilley / Worthington 2010: 195-197; Borza 2012: 314-317. For the Unity of Mankind in Greek thought, see Baldry 1965, esp. 113-140 for Alexander.

[71] Berve 1938: 135-168; Schachermeyr 1949: 398: fusion for the constitution a new ruling class; Thomas 1968: 258-260: Alexander did not believe in the Unity of Mankind, but that he "intended a fusion of his Greek and Persian subjects cannot be doubted"; Bengtson 1985: 9: "Alexander war der erste, der eine Verschmelzung der Völker, der Makedonen und Perser, ins Auge gefaßt hat", 182: "im Susa Massenhochzeit als Symbol der Verschmelzung der Perser und Makedonen". For a discussion of the term "policy of fusion", cf. Wiesehöfer 2016: 355-362.

[72] Cf. Fuller 1958: 272: *policy of partnership*; Heckel 2008: 52: *policy of inclusion*; Anson 2015: 97-98: *plan of amalgamation*; the union of Europe and Asia to be intended as "universal allegiance to Alexander".

fusion; rather, he was trying to conciliate Macedonian, Greeks and Iranians, i.e. to make them work together and cooperate without aiming at distributing equal rights to them.

The political importance of Zalokostas' Alexander's oath

The oath strongly promotes Alexander's alleged plan of brotherhood and cosmopolitanism, which are seen by Zalokostas as a means to support Hellenic irredentist claims. Nevertheless, the oath also reasserts the uniqueness and superiority of Greek culture, personified by the Hellenic hero *par excellance*, Alexander the Great. In fact, despite his claims for cosmopolitanism, Zalokostas' views remain substantially Greek and Orthodox: the divinity called upon by Alexander in the oath is the Christian God, and a good Barbarian is considered a Greek whereas a bad Greek a Barbarian, meaning that Greek still equals good and non-Greek equals bad. Moreover, Alexander is presented as the leader and the supreme judge in case of controversies: he is second only to God, the father of all human beings.

Zalokostas' Alexander, a philosopher-king, reflects his royalist views and the support he gave to the Hellenic kingship of his friend and brother-in-law Alexander I and George II. Alexander's great actions and his oath aim at fostering and preserving Greek heritage in bordering areas, especially against the pressing neighbouring Slavic peoples. In fact, Zalokostas witnessed the German occupation of Northern Greece, the so-called Κατοχή, and the Germans' collaboration with the Bulgarians in order to bring Greek Macedonia under their sphere of influence in the Balkans; as a fervent Philhellene and royalist, he strongly opposed to the Germans, the Greek communist party, and Slavic peoples, towards whom the members of KKE/EAM turned in the post-war period.

Alexander's oath was also deployed in the late 20th- and 21st-century Greek political discourse by contrasting views[73]: for the right-wing voters, the ideas of Hellenic cosmopolitanism and globalization presented in the oath are not only evidence of the superiority of the Helleno-Christian culture –the only one able to unify different peoples– but also proof of the continuity of Hellenism, which was able to absorb elements of other cultures and to

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[73] For the political appropriations of Alexander's oath, see Antonakos 2015: 11-13.

survive until now. Therefore, Modern Greeks pride themselves for their superior culture and for being the 'real descendants' of the glorious ancient Greeks[74].

Conversely, left-wing voters availed themselves of the oath, completely stripped of Zalokostas' interpretation, as a means to prompt Greeks to welcome the refugees from the Middle East and Africa, who since 2015 have reached the Greek coasts seeking for asylum[75]. The Refugees Crisis has sparked intense political debate in regards to Greece's eagerness and ability –after a long period of economic recession started in 2009– to host the asylum seekers, but also concerns about the European Union's help and handling of human rights. Zalokostas' oath of Alexander and his message of brotherhood became then the left-wing answer to contrast right extremists, such as Golden Dawn[76], who made of πᾶς μὴ Ἕλλην βάρβαρος ("every non-Greek is a barbarian") their own motto[77].

The greater moral and intellectual value of Hellenic culture and the image of the Greek-Orthodox Alexander corroborated by the oath were also used in the so-called 'Macedonian Question'[78]: as the great Macedonian king Alexander was Greek, so was Macedonia. Thus the oath appeared on flyers

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[74] For the moral superiority of Greek culture, see, e.g., Papanicoloaou 2003: 16-18.

[75] For the refugee crisis in Greece, see UNHCR, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees website (https://www.unhcr.org/greece.html; accessed on April 18th 2020) and IRC, the International Rescue Committee website (https:// www.rescue.org/country/greece; accessed on April 18th 2020).

[76] On October 7th 2020, Golden Dawn (Χρυσή Αυγή) was found guilty of running a criminal organization in Greece by the Court in Athens (https://www.nytimes. com/2020/10/07/world/europe/golden-dawn-guilty-verdict-greece.html; accessed on December 1st 2020).

[77] Sarantakos 2014: this motto is still taught is school as an ancient saying, despite the fact that it cannot be found in ancient Greek literature; most likely, it originated in the 5th century AD, as it is attested in Servius' scholium to Aeneid II. 504: *auro barbarico: id est aut multo; aut cultu barbaro, quia barbari copiae magis quam elegantiae student; aut a barbaris capto; aut vere barbaro, id est Phrygio, quia πᾶς μὴ Ἕλλην βάρβαρος. nam et Homerus Phrygas barbaros appellat*. Servius wanted to show that the Barbarians preferred quantity over quality, and that the Greeks considered the Phrygians barbaric (https://sarantakos.wordpress.com/2014/ 09/15/ el-linbarbaro-2/; accessed on December 1st 2020).

[78] On the Macedonian Question, see Danforth 2003: 348-364, 2010: 572-598. See also Heraclides 2021: 111-131 for the "four phases" of the naming dispute between Greece and the Republic of North Macedonia.

during the demonstrations in Thessaloniki in 1992-1995 against the appropriation of the name Macedonia by the Slavic people living in the area we now call Republic of North Macedonia (previously FYROM); this propaganda was supported by the Ministry of Culture, which, in a way, vouched for the oath's authenticity[79].

Conclusions

Zalokostas' oath aims at presenting Alexander as the champion of Helleno-Christian culture, an Orthodox *ante-litteram* who paved the way to Jesus' message. Loosely based on ancient sources, the oath offers a bright example of fantasy and fiction in modern historiography and literature about Antiquity.

Part of the book *Alexander the Great, the forerunner of Jesus*, the oath gained its own separate fame thanks to its reuse and abuse by different political parties in response to issues such as the name dispute with the neighbouring Republic of Northern Macedonia and the refugee crisis. When accepted as true, it is never questioned why we are missing the ancient Greek version, and it is attributed to either Plutarch, Antisthenes (a Cynic philosopher of the late 5th/4th century BC), or Arrian by the wider public.

The oath is visibly a product of the 20th century: in fact, the ancient polarity between Greeks and Barbarians is replaced by the difference between skin colour: the white West and the dark-skinned East. Discrimination based on skin tone is a modern idea, whereas in Antiquity Greeks and Barbarians were judged according to their political status[80]; it was a distinction between free West and enslaved East, democracy *versus* despotism, simplicity against luxury, which became a trope after the Persian wars in the 5th century BC. As Thomas Harrison has pointed out, in Antiquity there was little

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[79] Martis (1984: 68-71, 93-112, and his commentary to the oath http://www.helleniccomserve.com/historical_sources_alexander.html; accessed on April 18th 2020) offers a clear example of the political value that Alexander and 'his oath' had for the Greeks in the tense years of the Macedonian Question. It is worth mentioning that Nikos Martis acted as Government Minister several times between 1950s and 1980s.

[80] There are only a few exceptions: see, e.g., *AR* II. 14: Candaules, the son of the Ethiopian Queen Candace, is described as νυκτίχροος (dark-skinned); *AR* III. 18.6: Candace writes to Alexander, "Do not despise the colour of our skin. In our souls we are whiter and brighter than the whitest with you" (ἐσμὲν γὰρ λευκότεροι καὶ λαμπρότεροι ταῖς ψυχαῖς τῶν παρὰ σοῦ λευκοτάτων).

stress on the biological differences between Greeks and non-Greeks (Harrison 2002: 128).

Zalokostas' book belongs to the composite and ongoing reception of Alexander in Greece: writers and artists shape their Alexander according to their political, cultural, religious or artistic aims; the Greek audience then dialogues with this material and creates innumerable new interpretations of Alexander, a canvas on which they retell their history and shape their present.

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Tolkien y el legado de la tradición clásica

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Introducción

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973) revolucionó el género de la fantasía épica. Pese a que es conocido como el padre de la moderna literatura fantástica, fue también un reconocido académico. Desde 1925 desarrolló su labor investigadora en Oxford, principalmente en el Merton College. Mundialmente conocido por obras como el *Hobbit* (1937) y *el Señor de los anillos* (1954-1955), Tolkien fue un hombre de suma erudición que investigó temas relacionados con el *Beowulf*, la mitología nórdica y poemas como el *Kalevala*. Su enorme cultura y formación fueron una fuente de inspiración constante para él. El propio autor era plenamente consciente de sus influencias:

> "Historias semejantes –dijo Tolkien a propósito de 'El Señor de los Anillos'– no nacen de la observación de las hojas de los árboles, ni de la Botánica o la ciencia del suelo; crecen como semillas en la oscuridad, alimentándose del humus de la mente: todo lo que se ha visto o pensado o leído, y que fue olvidado hace tiempo […] La materia de mi humus es principal y evidentemente materia lingüística". (Carpenter 1990: 144)

Teniendo en cuenta todos estos aspectos y la temática de las historias de Tolkien, en las que abundan enanos, elfos y dragones, es comprensible que se piense que su fuente de inspiración fue básicamente los mitos y las leyendas nórdicas, e incluso su Inglaterra natal, tan carente de mitos en sus propias palabras[1]. No obstante, queremos mostrar a lo largo de nuestro artículo que Tolkien tuvo otras influencias, y que la cultura clásica, tan presente y constante en la vida académica de Oxford, fue una de ellas.

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[1] "I was from early days grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country: it had no stories of its own (bound up with its tongue and soil), not of quality that I sought, and found (as ingredient) in the legends of other lands. There was Greek, and Celtic, and Romance, Germanic, Scandinavian and Finnish (which greatly affected me); but nothing English" (*The Silmarillion*: xi). Las referencias y citas en inglés de este texto proceden de la edición de 1999 (London, Harper Collins).

Beren y Lúthien

Pocas historias hay tan conocidas en el universo de Tolkien como la de Beren y Lúthien. Aunque Tolkien pensó en componerla como un poema épico, nunca pudo finalizarlo. Conocemos su forma final en prosa que apareció en el *Silmarillion* (1977). La historia también inspiró el romance de Aragorn y Arwen, como una segunda pareja de amantes que comparte el mismo destino. Beren, hijo de Barahir, buscó refugio en el reino de Doriath tras la muerte de su padre. Allí se enamoró perdidamente de Lúthien, la hija del rey Thingol y la maia Belian, al verla bailar y cantar. Lúthien también cayó enamorada de él cuando le dio el nombre de Tinúviel, ruiseñor.

Sin embargo, Thingol detestaba a Beren y no aceptaba el matrimonio con su hija. Así que, para deshacerse de él, le encomendó una misión imposible: recuperar uno de los Silmarils, las piedras sagradas creadas por Fëanor, que se encontraban en la corona de Melkor/Morgoth, el señor oscuro. La estratagema empleada por Thingol recuerda a la de Polidectes, que ordenó a Perseo entregarle la cabeza de Medusa sólo para poder quitárselo de en medio (Apollod. II. 4.2). Beren aceptó el desafío y se alió con el rey Finrod para recuperar los Silmarils. Desafortunadamente, fueron capturados por los orcos y llevados a la isla de Tol-in-Gaurhoth, la isla de los licántropos. Allí fueron asesinados uno a uno, cada noche, por un hombre lobo. Afortunadamente, Lúthien escapó de la vigilancia de su padre y fue en busca de Beren. Por el camino fue capturada por los hijos de Fëanor, quienes se consideraban los legítimos dueños de los Silmarils. Ayudada por un sabueso gigante, Huan, el perro de Valinor, Lúthien logró huir y llegó a Tol-in-Gaurhoth. Allí, Huan venció sucesivamente al hombre lobo Draugluin y a Sauron, el lugarteniente de Morgoth, pudiendo así liberar a Beren.

Desde ese momento los amantes emprendieron conjuntamente la misión. Disfrazados, llegaron ante la presencia de Morgoth, quien entró en un profundo sueño al escuchar la canción de Lúthien. De este modo, Beren se dispuso a extraer los Silmarils de su corona, pero cuando estaba sacando el segundo, su cuchillo se rompió, despertando a Morgoth. La pareja logró escapar, aunque el hombre lobo gigante Carcharoth mordió la mano de Beren, tragándose el Silmaril con ella. De vuelta a Doriath, contaron sus aventuras a Thingol, quien finalmente aceptó el enlace entre ambos. Sin embargo, Beren tuvo que partir junto a Huan para cazar a Carcharoth, que estaba asolando el reino. Huan y Beren murieron en el cumplimiento de su misión, aunque antes de morir este último pudo entregar el Silmaril prometido a Thingol. Presa de la más honda tristeza, Lúthien se dejó morir,

llegando al reino de Mandos, el dios de la muerte en el universo de Tolkien. Allí cantó su pena y su canción conmovió al dios de la muerte, que devolvió la vida a la pareja, que vivieron como mortales el resto de sus días.

La historia se inspira en múltiples relatos[2], como el cuento galés de *Culhwch y Olwen*, donde también hay una misión imposible y la cacería de un lobo gigante. Pero también en la propia historia de amor de Tolkien con su esposa Edith, a la que él llamaba Lúthien (véase imagen 1). Se dice que el baile de Lúthien pudo estar inspirado en el que realizó Edith en una pradera de cicutas en 1917[3]. También existió cierta oposición al enlace entre ambos por parte de la familia anglicana de ella al ser Tolkien católico. Es sabido que el tutor de Tolkien, el padre Morgan, le prohibió mantener ningún contacto con Edith hasta que alcanzase la mayoría de edad (21 años). Edith era tres años mayor que Tolkien, un rasgo que este compartía con Beren, menor en edad que su amada elfa. Edith, al igual que Lúthien, tuvo que renunciar a algo preciado para poder estar con su amor: su religión. Al contrario que su marido, ella era anglicana y tuvo que convertirse al catolicismo para poder casarse con él. Tolkien, al igual que Beren, era huérfano y tuvo los mismos problemas iniciales para ser aceptado por la familia de su esposa. Ciertamente, la gran historia de amor del mundo de Tolkien parece haber bebido de las fuentes de su propia vida. Así se lo confesaba a John, su hijo mayor, en una carta poco después de la muerte de Edith (24/01/1972): "I met the Lúthien Tinúviel of my own personal 'romance' with her long dark hair, fair face and starry eyes, and beautiful voice. And in 1934 she was still with me, and her beautiful children. But now she has gone before Beren […]" (Carpenter 1981: nº. 417).

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[2] Shippey 2003: 294: "the wizards' singing contests (from the Kalevala), the were-wolves devouring bound men in the dark (from the Saga of the Volsungs), the rope of hair let down from a window (from Grimms' "Rapunzel"), the "shadowy cloak" of sleep and invisibility which recalls the *heolothhelm of the Old English Genesis B. The hunting of the great wolf reminds one of the chase of the boar Twrch Trwyth in the Welsh Mabinogion while the motif of 'the hand in the wolf's mouth' is one of the most famous parts of the Prose Edda, told of Fenris Wolf and the god Tyr; Huan re-calls several faithful hounds of legend, Garm, Gelert, Cafall".

[3] Carpenter 1990: 76: "Ella cantaba y bailaba para él en el bosque, y de aquí procede el relato que había de dar origen a *El Silmarillion*: la historia de un hombre mortal, Beren, que amaba a la doncella inmortal, Lúthien Tinúviel, a quien había visto por primera vez bailando entre las plantas de cicuta, en medio del bosque".

Imagen 1: Foto de la tumba de Tolkien en el cementerio de Wolvercote (Oxford). Molina Marín archivo personal.

No obstante, las semejanzas de la historia de Beren y Lúthien con la de Orfeo y Eurídice son incuestionables, pero como el propio Tolkien subrayaba la historia es "a kind of Orpheus-legend in reverse" (Carpenter 1981: nº. 193). Tolkien conocía la versión clásica del mito, pero también otras medievales como la de *Sir Orfeo* (s. XIII-XIV) (Tolkien 1975). Por consiguiente, no se contentó con copiarlo o seguirlo. Lo reescribió convirtiendo a Lúthien en un *alter ego* de Orfeo (Beal 2014: 266), cuya canción y voz es capaz de conmover a toda la creación:

"Pero de pronto, algún poder ancestral, heredado de la raza divina, poseyó a Lúthien, y despojándose del inmundo disfraz, avanzó pequeña ante el poderoso Carcharoth, pero radiante y terrible. Levantó la mano, y le ordenó que durmiera diciendo: -Oh, espíritu engendrado del dolor, cae ahora en la oscuridad y olvida por un momento el espantoso destino de la vida. -Y Carcharoth cayó como herido por el rayo […] Entonces de súbito ella escapó de los ojos de Morgoth, y empezó a cantar desde las sombras una canción de tan sobrecogedora belleza y un poder tan encegador que él no pudo dejar de escucharla, y se quedó ciego, y volvía los ojos a un lado y a otro buscando a Lúthien." (*Silmarillion*: 245)[4].

"Orfeo, al reclamar a su querida Eurídice. Su arte que había arrastrado selvas, aves y rocas, que había producido tardanzas a los ríos, a cuyo son las fieras se habían detenido, aplaca con su insólito canto a los de abajo". (Sen. *Her. F*. 569-575; traducción de J. Luque Moreno 2018).

Lúthien y Orfeo realizan una *katábasis* en busca de sus difuntos amados, conmoviendo a los señores del inframundo con su música:

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[4] Las citas en castellano y las páginas referenciadas del *Silmarillion* proceden de la traducción de R. Massera y L. Domènech de 1984 (Barcelona, Minotauro).

"La canción de Lúthien ante Mandos fue la más hermosa de las compuestas con palabras, y la más triste que nadie haya escuchado jamás. Inalterada, imperecedera, se la canta todavía en Valinor más allá de los oídos del mundo, y al escucharla los Valar se entristecen [...] Y cuando Lúthien se arrodilló a los pies de Mandos, sus lágrimas cayeron como la lluvia sobre la piedra, y Mandos se conmovió, él que nunca así se conmoviera antes, y que nunca así se conmovió después". (*Silmarillion*: 254).

"Mientras así decía y movía las cuerdas al son de sus palabras, lo lloraban las almas sin vida: Tántalo no intentó coger el agua huidiza, quedó parada la rueda de Ixión, las aves no arrancaron el hígado, quedaron libres de urnas las Bélidas, y tú, Sísifo te sentaste en tu propia roca. Entonces por primera vez, se dice, las mejillas de las Euménides, vencidas por el canto, se humedecieron de lágrimas; ni la regia esposa ni quien rige lo más profundo, se atreven a decir que no a quien suplica y llaman a Eurídice" (Ov. *Met*. X. 40-48; traducción de Ramírez de Verger / Navarro Antolín 1998).

Hay ciertos ecos de la tradición de Ovidio en la obra de Tolkien (cf. Sundt 2021). No es de extrañar que Tolkien lo considerase una versión a la inversa (cf. Libran-Moreno 2007), ya que es la heroína quien desciende a los infiernos en busca de su amado, al contrario de lo que ocurría en el mito de Orfeo. El descenso a los infiernos era una hazaña exclusiva de los héroes de la cultura clásica (Odiseo, Heracles, Orfeo, Teseo, Eneas, etc.). Lúthien es una *rara avis* entre las heroínas del universo tolkieniano: no sólo destaca por su belleza, sino también por su poder y valor, ensombreciendo en muchas ocasiones al propio Beren. No obstante, este también comparte algunos rasgos del poeta tracio al ser capaz de entablar una profunda amistad con los animales: "...durante cuatro años erró Beren por Dorthonion, como proscrito solitario; pero se hizo amigo de los pájaros y las bestias, y éstos le ayudaron y no le traicionaron" (*Silmarillion*: 222).

El descenso de Lúthien a los infiernos es también diferente. No es un viaje físico, sino una transmigración. Su alma abandona su cuerpo ante la tristeza que soporta y llega así a la casa de Mandos. Se asemeja más a Alcestis que a Orfeo en este sentido. Además, ambas intercambian algo de gran valor para que sus amados vuelvan: la vida (Alcestis) la inmortalidad (Lúthien).

Nümenor

Uno de los ejemplos más claros lo encontramos en el *Silmarillion*, en el capítulo llamado "The downfall of Nümenor" (título en élfico *Akallabêth*, "La sepultada"). Como veremos, Tolkien creó la isla de Nümenor siguiendo de cerca el modelo de la Atlántida griega. Curiosamente en quenya, la lengua antigua o alto élfico, se llama a la caída de Nümenor con el nombre de Atalentë, que rememora poderosamente el nombre de la Atlántida (Carpenter 1981: nº. 257). Nümenor fue una isla creada por los dioses que emergió desde las profundidades del mar y que fue entregada a los hombres por su participación decisiva en la derrota de Morgoth/Melkor, el dios del mal en el mundo de Tolkien:

> "Se hizo una tierra para que los Edain vivieran en ella, y que no era parte de la Tierra Media ni de Valinor, ni tampoco estaba separada de ellas por el ancho mar; pero estaba más cerca de Valinor [...] Y llamaron a esa tierra Elenna, que significa hacia las estrellas; pero también Anadûnê, que significa promontorio de Occidente, Nümenórë en Alto Eldarin." (*Silmarillion*: 353).

La isla de Nümenor recuerda por sus orígenes, forma y geografía a la Atlántida que Platón describió en sus diálogos (*Timeo* y *Critias*). Ambas son creadas por el dios del mar (Ossë/Poseidón), tienen una forma geométrica y realizan sacrificios en honor de los dioses. Además, las dos islas se encuentran en el extremo Occidente. Nümenor al oeste de la Tierra Media y la Atlántida se encuentra más allá de las Columnas de Heracles. En ambas existe un centro claramente definido por la existencia de una gran montaña, que sirve de unión entre el cielo y la tierra. Esa cercanía con lo divino queda reflejada en un mayor desarrollo cultural respecto a otros pueblos. Conscientes de su superioridad, terminan desafiando a los dioses con los que se sentían tan próximos. Los habitantes de Nümenor se muestran "hungered after endless life unchanging" (*The Two Towers*: 286)[5], hasta tal punto que beben elixires o consultan las estrellas en busca de la vida eterna. Curiosamente, en las obras de Tolkien, especialmente entre los elfos, la inmortalidad es vista como un don y una maldición (Mentxakatorre Odriozola 2019). Los atlantes no buscan la inmortalidad, pero su corrupción les ha hecho perder toda moderación, son *hybris* encarnada:

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[5] Las citas y la paginación en inglés para *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* corresponden a la edición de 1966 (London, George Allen & Unwin).

"Mas cuando se agotó en ellos la parte divina porque se había mezclado muchas veces con muchos mortales y predominó el carácter humano, ya no pudieron soportar las circunstancias que los rodeaban y se pervirtieron; y al que los podía observar les parecían desvergonzados, ya que habían destruido lo más bello de entre lo más valioso, y los que no pudieron observar la vida verdadera respecto de la felicidad, creían entonces que eran los más perfectos y felices que estaban llenos de injusta soberbia y de poder". (Pl. *Criti.* 121a-b; traducción de Francisco Lisi 1992)

De este modo, los atlantes mandan sus barcos para conquistar el mundo. Los reyes de Númenor van todavía más allá y deseosos de encontrar la inmortalidad intentan alcanzar Valinor, la isla donde habitan los Valar, los dioses de la Tierra Media. El castigo por su osadía es el mismo. La isla es condenada por los dioses a desaparecer mediante una serie de cataclismos. El mar se traga las islas convirtiéndolas en recuerdos, en paraísos perdidos, en símbolos de lo que les aguarda a los hombres que desafían a los dioses.

La Atenas clásica pudo haber servido como modelo de Númenor al igual que lo fue para Platón de su Atlántida[6]. En cualquier caso, el propio Tolkien reconocía en sus cartas la influencia de la Atlántida en la invención del mito (Williams 2020: 137):

"The Downfall of Númenor [is] a special variety of the Atlantis tradition. That seems to me so fundamental to 'mythical history'–whether it has any kind of basis in real history […] is not relevant–that some version of it would have to come in [i.e., to Tolkien's own legends]." (Carpenter 1981: nº. 154)

"The legends of Númenórë […] are my own use for my own purposes of the Atlantis legend, but not based on special knowledge, but on a special personal concern with this tradition of the culture-bearing men of the Sea, which so profoundly affected the imagination of peoples of Europe with westward-shores." (Carpenter 1981: nº. 227)

"N. (Númenor) is my personal alteration of the Atlantis myth and/or tradition, and accommodation of it to my general mythology. Of all the mythical or 'archetypal' images this is the one most deeply seated

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[6] Vidal-Naquet 2007: 23: "I put forward in the 1960s: namely, that the story of Athens's war against Atlantis, that is of the war of an Athens such as Plato would have wished it to be"; cf. Clare 2021: 63.

in my imagination, and for many years I had a recurrent Atlantis dream". (Carpenter 1981: nº. 276)

"It was too long a way round to what I really wanted to make, a new version of the Atlantis legend. The final scene survives as The Downfall of Númenor". (Carpenter 1981: nº. 294)

Es probable que conociese también trabajos post platónicos y pseudo-históricos como la *Atlantis* (1882) de Ignatius Donnelly (cf. Kleu 2021). Sin embargo, existe una sensible diferencia entre el mito platónico y el de Tolkien. Mientras en el mito griego todos los atlantes perecen, en las historias del autor británico un reducido número de habitantes, liderados por Elendil, consigue salvarse del cataclismo, casi como si fuese una recreación del Arca de Noé. Númenor debía marcar una línea divisoria con lo que sería el comienzo de la saga de Eriol[7], que nunca pudo terminar.

Inspirado por ambas islas, G. R. R. Martin creó Valyria, la tierra de la que proceden los Targaryen, que desapareció igualmente por cataclismos y desastres naturales.

Morannon: La Puerta Negra de Mordor

Mordor, el reino de Sauron, donde reside la oscuridad y la sombra, es uno de los espacios más conocidos del universo tolkieniano. Realmente sobrecogedora es la descripción que el autor hace de la llamada Puerta Negra:

"A la entrada del desfiladero, de pared a pared, el Señor Oscuro había construido un parapeto de piedra. En él había una única puerta de hierro, y en el camino de ronda los centinelas montaban guardia. Al pie de las colinas, de extremo a extremo, habían cavado en la roca centenares de cavernas y agujeros; allí aguardaba emboscado un ejército de orcos, listo para lanzarse afuera a una señal como hormigas negras que parten a la guerra. Nadie podía pasar por los Dientes de Mordor sin sentir la mordedura, a menos que fuese un invitado de Sauron, o conociera el santo y sería que abría el Morannon, la puerta negra." (*El Señor de los Anillos: Las dos torres*: 315-316)[8]

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[7] Flieger 2004: 51: "Atlantis was going to be precisely that in Tolkien's mythology, the line which both divided and connected the Atlantis story and the Eriol-Saga".

[8] Las traducciones al castellano de *Las dos torres* son de M. Horne y L. Domènech de
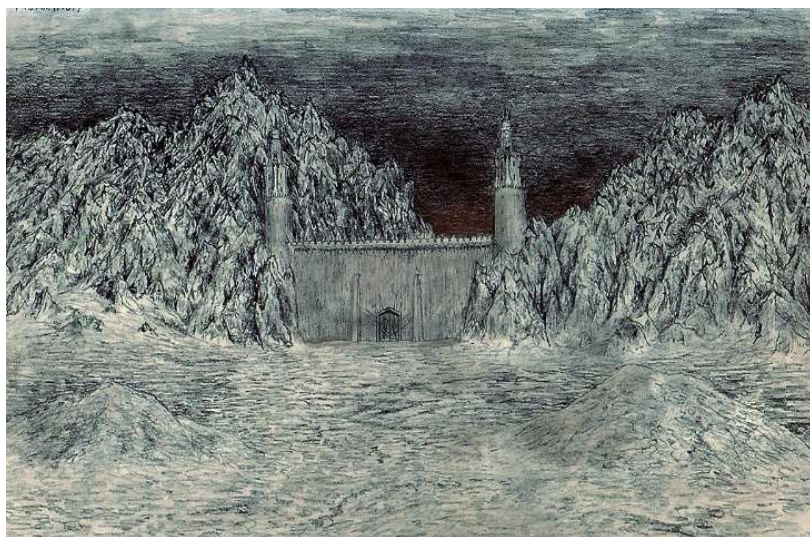
Imagen 2: La Puerta Negra de Mordor. Ilustración de Matěj Čadil.

Morannon, la Puerta Negra, es completamente infranqueable. Incluso cuando los ejércitos de Gil-Galad y Elendil se unen contra Sauron se ven obligados a luchar ante la misma. Ni siquiera Frodo y Sam consiguen traspasarla, puesto que nadie puede entrar o salir sin el permiso del Señor Oscuro[9]. A. Kleczar (2007) ha destacado las similitudes entre Morannon y la llamada Puerta de Alejandro, que supuestamente habría construído para mantener alejadas a las llamadas naciones impías: los pueblos de Gog y Magog[10]:

> "Luego construyó unas puertas de bronce, las fijó en los estrechos entre las dos montañas y las engrasó. La naturaleza del aceite era tal que no podía ser quemado por el fuego ni removido por el hierro. Dentro de las puertas, que se remonta al campo abierto [durante una distancia de 3,000 millas] plantó zarzas, que regó bien, de modo que formaron una densa melena sobre las montañas. Así que Alejandro

la edición de 1991 (Barcelona, Minotauro).

[9] Kleczar 2007: 57: "As such, it symbolizes the isolation of Mordor, but at the same time signifies its permanence: even if a battle is won, evil persists, and with it its symbolic borderline, the Morannon".

[10] Sobre los pueblos de Gog y Magog, véase Molina Marín 2018: 195.

encerró veintidós reyes con sus naciones sometidas detrás de los límites del norte, detrás de las puertas que él llamó el Caspio y las montañas conocidas como los Pechos." (Ps.-Callisth. III. 26, rec. a'; traducción propia a partir de la versión inglesa de Stoneman 1991)

Ambas son dos grandes puertas que cierran el paso de cadenas montañosas que se encuentran en los confines del mundo (véanse imágenes 2 y 3). Los espacios donde se ubican son igualmente similares: desérticos y fríos. Las dos puertas retienen el mal: la de Mordor a los ejércitos de Sauron; la de Alejandro a las naciones impías, identificadas con Gog y Magog, y posteriormente con los hunos. La diferencia es que las puertas de Alejandro protegen a la humanidad del mal, mientras que las de Mordor también ayudan a los orcos[11]. Son un contenedor y una protección a la vez. Un mal que contiene al propio mal (Molina Marín 2021: 209-210). De tal modo que cuando se abren la oscuridad inunda toda la Tierra Media:

"Soplaba el viento, cantaban las trompetas, y las flechas gemían; y el sol que ahora subía hacia el sur estaba empañado por los vapores infectos de Mordor; brillaba remoto, tétrico y bermejo, como a la hora postrera de la tarde, o a la hora postrera de la luz del mundo. Y a través de la bruma cada vez más espesa llegaron con sus voces frías los Nazgûl, gritando palabras de muerte. Y entonces la última esperanza se desvaneció." (*El Señor de los Anillos: El Retorno del Rey*: 212)[12]

En consecuencia, cuando el Anillo es destruido, también lo es la Puerta Negra, ya que, si no existe el mal que alberga, su existencia carece de sentido:

"[…] la tierra se estremeció bajo los pies de los hombres, una vasta oscuridad llameante invadió el cielo, y se elevó por encima de las Torres de la Puerta Negra, más alta que las montañas. Tembló y gimió la tierra. Las Torres de los Dientes se inclinaron, vacilaron un instante y se desmoronaron; en escombros se desplomó la poderosa muralla; la Puerta Negra saltó en ruinas, y desde muy lejos, ora apagado, ora

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[11] Day 2019: 68: "There is a possible inspiration for the Morannon in the legendary Gates of Alexander, built by Alexander the Great in the Caucasus to keep out the barbarians of the north. However, the Morannon, which keeps out the civilized forces of Gondor and its allies, inverts this idea".

[12] Las citas y la paginación en castellano remiten a la traducción de *El Retorno del Rey* de M. Horne y L. Domènech de 1991 (Barcelona, Minotauro).

creciente, trepando hasta las nubes, se oyó un tamborileo sordo y prolongado, un estruendo, los largos ecos de un redoble de destrucción y ruina." (*El Retorno del Rey*: 290)

Aunque es evidente que Tolkien debió conocer la historia de Alejandro Magno, lo que le sirvió de fuente de inspiración fue nuevamente la versión medieval de la misma: el *Romance de Alejandro*.
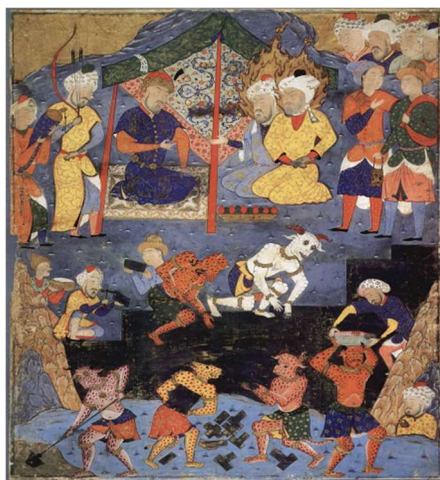

Imagen 3: Miniatura persa del siglo XVI en la que se ve a Alejandro, como Dhul-Qarnayn, construir las puertas que encierran a las naciones impías.

Otros ejemplos menores

El anillo de poder que portan a lo largo de sus novelas Sauron, Isildur, Gollum, Bilbo, Frodo y Sam tiene una fuente de inspiración en la historia de Giges. Heródoto (I. 8-13) es la fuente clásica que dio a conocer la historia de Giges, que tras ver desnuda a la esposa de Candaules por instigación de éste, lo asesinó y se convirtió en rey de Lidia. Platón (*R.* II. 359d-360b) fue quien popularizó la historia introduciendo un anillo que le daba el don de la invisibilidad a su portador:

"Giges era un pastor que servía al entonces rey de Lidia. Un día sobrevino una gran tormenta y un terremoto que rasgó la tierra y produjo un abismo en el lugar en que Giges llevaba el ganado a pastorear. Asombrado al ver esto; descendió al abismo y halló, entre otras maravillas que narran los mitos, un caballo de bronce, hueco y con ventanillas, a través de las cuales divisó adentro un cadáver de tamaño más grande que el de un hombre, según parecía, y que no tenía nada excepto un anillo de oro en la mano. Giges le quitó el anillo y salió del abismo: Ahora bien, los pastores hacían su reunión habitual para dar al rey el informe mensual concerniente a la hacienda cuando llegó Giges llevando el anillo. Tras sentarse entre

los demás casualmente volvió el engaste del anillo hacia el interior de su mano. Al suceder esto se tornó invisible para los que estaban sentados allí, quienes se pusieron a hablar de él como si se hubiera ido. Giges se asombró, y luego, examinando el anillo, dio vuelta al engaste hacia a fuera y tornó a hacerse visible. Al advertirlo, experimentó con el anillo para ver si tenía tal propiedad, y comprobó que así era: cuando giraba el engaste hacia adentro, su dueño se hacía invisible, y, cuando lo giraba hacia a fuera, se hacía visible. En cuanto se hubo cerciorado de ello, maquinó el modo de formar parte de los que fueron a la residencia del rey como Informantes: y una vez allí sedujo a la reina, y con ayuda de ella mató al rey y se apoderó del gobierno." (Traducción de Eggers Lan 1988)

Platón añade un cambio significativo en la historia, y es la consecuencia moral de hacernos invisibles a los ojos de otros. De este modo, utiliza la historia para esgrimir una teoría: ¿si fuésemos invisibles a los ojos de la justicia seríamos perversos? Tolkien nunca reconoció de forma explícita su deuda con Platón en este punto, pero los lectores de *El Señor de los Anillos*, saben cómo evoluciona la personalidad de aquel que lo lleva. El dilema moral se convierte en una degeneración del carácter, porque el anillo es un mal en sí mismo.

Cuando Aragorn entra en Minas Tirith lo hace de incognito, sabedor de lo que su presencia puede provocar en Gondor, al ser el heredero legítimo del último rey. Sin embargo, es reconocido cuando ayuda a curar a sus amigos seriamente enfermos por la maldición del Rey Brujo, ya que "The hands of the king are the hands of a healer" (*The Return of the King*: 296)[13]. Cuando le llega el turno a Faramir, Aragorn le ordena descansar a lo que éste le responde: "¿quién permanecerá inactivo cuando el rey ha regresado?" (*El Retorno del Rey*: 176).

El poder sanador de Aragorn es una rememoración del poder curativo de los reyes desde la Antigüedad hasta el Medievo. En la Edad Media se le conocía como "toque real"[14]. En la Antigüedad personajes míticos como Aquiles y Quirón tuvieron el don de la curación, mientras que otros históricos como Alejandro y Pirro también parecen haber sido reyes

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[13] Las citas y la paginación en inglés para *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* corresponden a la edición de 1987 (London, George Allen & Unwin).
[14] Bloch 2006: 94: "Los reyes de Francia e Inglaterra, por el simple contacto de sus manos, realizado según los ritos tradicionales, pretendían curar a los escrofulosos".

sanadores (cf. Antela Bernárdez 2019). Sin duda, Tolkien tenía en mente los casos de los reyes medievales de Occidente y no los de la Antigüedad. No obstante, la historia también nos recuerda a otro 'rey' del mundo antiguo, ya que podemos ver a Faramir y Aragorn representando los papeles de Lázaro y Jesucristo. Los poderes taumatúrgicos de Cristo, no sólo lo legitimaron como nuevo Mesías, sino como rey de los judíos. En cualquier caso, la historia que podemos leer en el *Retorno del Rey* recupera una de las tradiciones más antiguas de las casas reales occidentales: el poder taumatúrgico de los reyes.

La Isla de los Bienaventurados tiene semejanzas con la tierra paradisiaca de los dioses, los Valar. Valinor es un lugar paradisiaco, un segundo jardín del Edén, incluso cuando Melkor destruye los árboles que iluminaban el mundo, vetado por siempre a elfos y hombres. Muchos de los Valar tienen rasgos de los dioses olímpicos (Pezzini 2021). Manwë es asociado con Zeus. De hecho, al igual que el padre de los dioses, es el menor de todos, tiene un águila como animal mensajero y vive en lo alto de una montaña (Taniquetil). Aulë es Hefesto, un dios herrero, el encargado de forjar la cadena Angainor, similar a la cadena que Hefesto hizo para encadenar al titán Prometeo. Mandos es Hades y, como su *alter ego* griego, solo se conmueve ante la música de Lúthien/Orfeo.

Los dos grandes árboles de Valinor están inspirados en otro elemento de la leyenda de Alejandro: los árboles del sol y la luna (véase imagen 4)[15]. Estos árboles parlantes le profetizan al rey que morirá pronto traicionado por uno de los suyos. Así podemos verlo reflejado en la versión española de la leyenda de Alejandro, el *Libro de Alexandre*:

> "Respusol' el un árbol muy fiera razón;/ "Rëy, yo bien entiendo la tu entençión;/ señor serás del mundo a poca de sazón,/ mas nunca tornarás en la tu región"/ Fabló el de la luna, estido'l sol callado:/ "Matart' an traedores, morrás apoçonado,/ rëy"-diz- "sé tú firme, nunca serás rancado,/ el que tiene las yerbas es mucho tu privado". (*Libro de Alexandre* 2490-2491; edición de Cañas Murillo 1988).

Telperion y Laurelin, los árboles de Valinor, no hablan, pero cumplen la misma función del sol y la luna, emitiendo cada uno de ellos una luz diferente, dorada y plateada. De hecho, es su destrucción, a manos de

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[15] Garth 2020: 40: "The mystical trees of sun and moon in the medieval legends of Alexander the Great, visualized here in a medieval bible and cited by Tolkien as inspiration for the Two Trees of Valinor".

Melkor y Ungoliant, lo que provoca que aparezcan esos astros. Parece, por lo tanto, evidente que Tolkien se inspiró en la leyenda medieval de Alejandro para crearlos.

La historia de los hermanos Elros y Elrond que escogen entre la inmortalidad y la mortalidad está sacada de los Dioscuros, Cástor y Pólux, los héroes gemelos hijos de Leda y Zeus, aunque solamente uno de ellos, Pólux, había sido bendecido con el don de la inmortalidad.
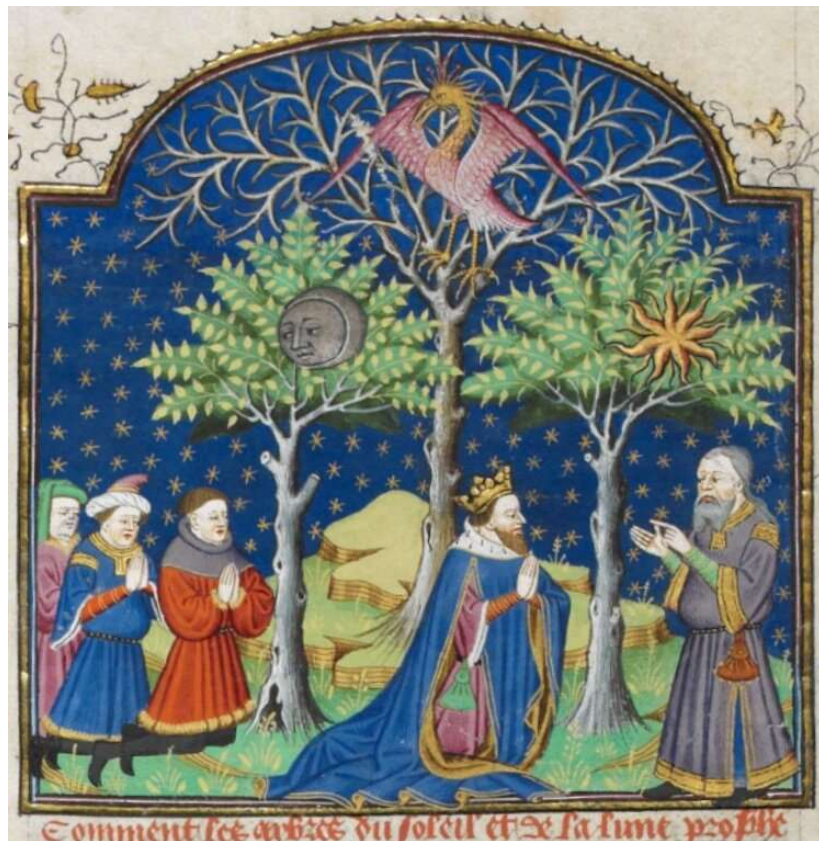

Imagen 4: Miniatura medieval en la que se observa a Alejandro arrodillado ante los árboles del sol y la luna.

Conclusión

Como se ha podido observar Tolkien nunca fue un mero emulador. Incluso cuando es incuestionable que sigue una historia, la reformula hasta el punto de hacerla completamente suya. Su proceso de creación queda muy bien reflejado en esta alegoría de su propio puño y letra:

"A man inherited a field in which was an accumulation of old stone, part of an older hall. Of the old stone some had already been used in building the house in which he actually lived, not far from the old house of his fathers. Of the rest he took some and built a tower. But his friends coming perceived at once (without troubling to climb the steps) that these stones had formerly belonged to a more ancient building. So they pushed the tower over, with no little labour, in order to look for hidden carvings and inscriptions, or to discover whence the man's distant forefathers had obtained their building material. Some suspecting a deposit of coal under the soil began to dig for it, and forgot even the stones. They all said: "This tower is most interesting." But they also said (after pushing it over): "What a muddle it is in!" And even the man's own descendants, who might have been expected to consider what he had been about, were heard to murmur: "He is such an odd fellow! Imagine using these old stones just to build a nonsensical tower! Why did not he restore the old house? He had no sense of proportion." But from the top of that tower the man had been able to look out upon the sea." (Tolkien 1997: 7-8)

No cabe la menor duda que Tolkien estaba pensando en las interpretaciones que se podían hacer de su propia obra, pero fuesen cuales fuesen los cimientos que en los que se fundó su mundo, es incuestionable que creó algo imperecedero y bello. Como el hombre de la torre, J. R. R. Tolkien pudo ver el mar.

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'Go, tell the Ephebians–'. Ancient Greek society, philosophy and warfare in Discworld

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Terry Pratchett's (1948-2015)[1] Discworld series comprises 41 novels plus several short stories and many other 'official' books, such as an atlas, maps and companions, among others. Most of the stories have been adapted for the stage (by Stephen Briggs) and also to graphic novels, videogames, radio and TV[2]. Additionally, there are several works –either fan-made[3] or academic– devoted to exploring the many sides of Pratchett's series. The stories

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[1] For a complete biography of Sir Terence David John Pratchett OBE, see the recent Burrows 2020.

[2] The first adaptations were two animated series by Cosgrove Hall in 1997: *Wyrd Sisters* and *Soul Music*. Later, three live-action adaptations were produced by Sky One: *Hogfather* (2006), *The Colour of Magic* (2008) and *Going Postal* (2010). Finally, there is *Troll Bridge*, an independent short film, premiered in 2019, based on a Discworld's short story. Between the first writing of this paper and the final edition, *The Watch* TV series was broadcasted by BBC America. Right after the cast was announced and the first images were leaked, controversy quickly aroused among Discworld fans about the excessive depart from the original books. Pratchett's daughter, Rhianna, and close associates, like Neil Gaiman, have also dissociated Discworld books from the series. After watching the series, it can be completely confirmed that it was a steampunk-looking hotchpotch of characters and plots loosely inspired by different Discworld novels. In April 2020, a development deal between Narrativia (a production company started by Terry Pratchett in 2012), Movie Pictures and Endeavor Content to 'create truly authentic Discworld screen adaptations' (it really sounds like a pun to *The Watch* series) was announced in a press release (https://discworldmonthly.co.uk/narrativiadiscworlduniverse.php; accessed on May 6th 2020). In November 2020, the cast for a forthcoming animated film adaptation of *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents* was announced. Besides, some other non-Discworld works by Pratchett have been also adapted on screen: *Truckers* (1992), *Johnny and the Dead* (1995), *Johnny and the Bomb* (2006) and *Good Omens* (2019).

[3] There is no contempt for fan-made works. There exist very helpful and well-documented resources mostly directly related with the old L-Space web (http://www.lspace.org; accessed on May 6th 2020), like its Wiki (http://wiki.lspace.org/mediawiki/Main_Page; accessed on May 6th 2020) and *The Annotated Pratchett File* (version 9.0.6, last modified in 2016: https://www.lspace.org/ftp/words/apf/pdf/

are set on a flat-disc world resting on four elephants' backs who, in turn, stand on the top of the shell of Great A'Tuin, a massive turtle that swims through the cosmic sea. A first look could suggest to the profane that Discworld is just another fantasy series, taking into consideration the presence of recurrent elements of the genre, such as magic, gods or multiple intelligent species (human, dwarfs, trolls…). However, Discworld is rather a parody or satire of the so-called Roundworld (a.k.a. the Earth), like Swift's Lilliput, Laputa or Brobdingnag before (cf. Haberkorn 2018). Throughout the whole series, Pratchett satirised a huge range of topics, from Shakespeare (*Wyrd Sisters*) to football (*Unseen Academicals*), including cinema (*Moving pictures*), rock music (*Soul Music*) and Christmas (*Hogfather*), among others.

The most common setting of the novels is the biggest city in the Disc, Ankh-Morpork, which shows clear parallelisms with early modern and Victorian London (cf. Harrisson / Lindner 2019: 88-89)[4]. Its territory is located at the shores of the Circle Sea, which separates it from the continent of Klatch[5]. In that region, bordering Omnia, Djelibeybi, Ur and the sea, there is the country of Ephebe. The name itself points that Ephebe is Discworld's response to Ancient Greece –or, more precisely, Classical Athens[6]. The toponym is obviously based on the Greek word ἔφηβος, 'adolescent, boy'[7]. Moreover, the naming might also point to one of the most recurrent popular ideas about Ancient Greece: pederasty. As it will be shown, Pratchett's depiction of Ephebe does not aim at a precise and nuanced representation of Ancient Greece –or Athens–, but, understandably, "a parody of the popular conception of ancient Athens" (Watt-Evans 2008: 67, 94). Therefore, Ephebe is mainly formed by the humoristic interpretation of the most wide-

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apf-9.0.6.pdf; accessed on May 6th 2020). From now on, the abbreviation *APF* will be used when referring to this resource.

[4] Some of the last novels deal with the introduction of noteworthy technological advances similar to Roundworld's telegraph (*The Fifth Elephant, Going Postal*) and train (*Raising Steam*), for example. Some other devices, such as the imp-powered iconograph (i.e. camera), are already found in the first novels of the series.

[5] Actually, except for the Australia-like continent of XXXX (Fourecks) and some minor islands, Discworld is formed by a sole mass of land. I guess that the Roundworld example of Europe, Asia and Africa can show why it is not an obstacle to continue using this terminology.

[6] Nevertheless, it also included characteristics coming from other Hellenic cities, like Alexandria, Knossos or Sparta, as we will see; cf. Vail 2008a.

[7] It has also been suggested the influence of the city name Thebes; see Vail 2008a.

spread commonplaces about Ancient Greece: philosophy, democracy, mythology, arts and the Homeric cycle. The analysis of these aspects will provide us with a good image of the modern popular reception of Greek history, culture and legacy[8]. This paper aims both at Ancient History/Modern reception scholars and Discworld fans –a duality found in the author himself. It will remain in a middle-ground between both areas as far as possible. Therefore, I beg patience and comprehension to both 'sides' for the alternating obvious clarifications and explanations it implies in certain well-known points for each 'side'[9].

Although some other glimpses to Ephebe can be found in other books[10], this paper is mainly focused on the details found in the novels *Pyramids* (1989) and *Small Gods* (1992) and, more secondarily, on *Eric* (1990) and *The Last Hero* (2001)[11]. The action of the first two books is placed in Ephebe itself in some chapters –although it is not the main setting–; in *Eric*, one part of the book deals with the Tsortean Wars, Discworld's Trojan War; and, finally, in *The Last Hero*, we find clear parallelisms between the legendary Carelinus and Alexander the Great.

Ephebe: Geography, economy and neighbours

In the novels, we only find some passing remarks about the general geographical background, but they undoubtedly transmit a Mediterranean taste. The climate is hot but lightened by a marine, salty breeze. The air also carries the smell of wine (*infra*). The coastal region is rich in olive trees and vineyards (*P*: 286-287; see also *Atlas*: 73). Ephebe's physical description in

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[8] For a similar analysis, but focused on the Roman empire, see Harrisson / Lindner 2019.

[9] Also, I need to apologise in advance for some (bad) puns here and there, and also for the profusion of footnotes. Please, consider both a further pale homage to Terry Pratchett's humour and writing style.

[10] Summarized information about Ephebe can be found in its respective chapter/entry in the *Discworld Atlas* (Pratchett 2015: 73-75; from now on *Atlas*) and the *Discworld Companion* (Pratchett / Briggs 1994: 93-94; from now on *Companion*). The entry on Ephebe remained the same in the following revisions and updates of the *Companion*, with no further significant addition.

[11] In this article, the books will be abbreviated as *P* (*Pyramids*), *SG* (*Small Gods*), *E* (*Eric*) and *LH* (*The Last Hero*). *Pyramids*' and *The Last Hero*'s pages refer to the respective Spanish editions by Random House Mondadori (1999, 2009); *Small Gods* and *Eric* follow the Harper Collins eBook editions (2007).

the books is almost restricted to the city itself[12], placed on the coast alongside some little fishing villages. Ephebe's blindingly white marble buildings cover the rock overlooking the bay where the city lays (*SG*: 83, 124). These buildings are constructed on outcrops or directly cut into the hill (*SG*: 127). The famous lighthouse, one of the More Than Seven Wonders of the World, amazes all the ships arriving at Ephebe's harbour, despite not being useful at all because it was placed only following aesthetical criteria (*P*: 316). There is no need to stress that it corresponds to Alexandria's lighthouse, even though the Discworld's one was designed by Phtagonal, Discworld's Pythagoras as we will see, something chronologically impossible in the Roundworld[13]. The busy harbour manifests the trading vocation of Ephebe[14] and all the city streets lead into it (*P*: 314, 316-317). These streets are serpentine, narrow and stepped in some parts, leaving no room for cart traffic. There are statues of gods and heroes in the main streets' flanks (*SG*: 130, 191; there are also statues in the citadel: *P*: 312).

At the top of the city, there is a citadel where the Tyrant's (*infra*) palace towers over Ephebe. There are only a few details about its appearance. There are fountains and gardens, and rooms seem to be organized around a central courtyard (*SG*: 134-135). The entrance to the palace is protected by a labyrinth. Unlike Knossos, there is no Minotaur dwelling inside, but it is filled with deadly traps[15]. Welcomed visitors are escorted by six guides, each one only knowing one-sixth of the safe route through it (*SG*: 28, 132, 134,

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[12] It exists an adaptation as a graphic novel of *Small Gods* (Friesen 2016). It confirms its clear Greek appearance, as well as it can be seen in the illustrations for Ephebe found in the *Atlas.*

[13] The architect of the real lighthouse was Sostratus of Cnidus: Str. XVII. 1.6; Lucian LIX. 62; Plin. *NH.* XXXVI. 18.83; Posidipp. 23.

[14] Ephebian currency is the *derechmi*, which sounds pretty similar to the Greek drachma, but the *derechmi* is made of bronze instead of silver (*SG*: 66). Fifty *cercs* equal one *derechmi*. One *cerc* may be almost valueless and can be compared with Greek *hemitetartemorion* (1/48 drachma). Five *cercs* is worth one-day livery for a camel (they also rubbed it down and did its feet) (*P*: 334). Finally, in the *Companion* (62, s.v. Currency) is said that obols are the Omnian (*infra*) currency, but they are also used in Ephebe (*SG*: 157, 164, 165, 168).

[15] It is not stated who designed it. However, in the Discworld, there was a certain Gudrun the Idiot who seems to be a mix between Daedalus and Icarus –although many others have made similar tries in world history. He glued swan feathers to his shirt before jumping off the Tower of Pseudopolis. See Pratchett / Stewart / Cohen 2003: 226.

138). Near the palace, it was also found the Library, the second greatest library in the Discworld[16]. The Library was burnt down during the events of *Small Gods* (*infra*), like the Alexandrian one, its Roundworld counterpart. Despite its greatness, it seems that the number of works collected there was way over lower than the amount kept in Alexandria[17]. Above the bronze entry doors, there was the word LIBRVM made of metal letters[18].

Rural Ephebe is only briefly described in the *Discworld Atlas* (75). Its relation with the city is resembling with that between *asty* and *chora* in Ancient Greece. Therefore, as long as the city of Ephebe can be identified with Athens, the rural hinterland might be the Attica. Heliodeliphilodelphiboschromenos is the name of the only inland town we know. The name is a mere concatenation of Greek prefixes and suffixes. This city is only tangentially mentioned in the books, as part of a soldier song named 'The Ball of Philodelphus' (*E*: 121, 123). This seems to be the Discworld's version of the British drinking song 'The Ball of Kerrymuir' (*APF*: 40)[19]. This musical connection is strengthened in the *Atlas*, where this city becomes the seat of the Ephebian

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[16] The biggest one is the Library of the Unseen University of Ankh-Morpork. Nevertheless, it is a magic library and the concentration of knowledge distorts space and time and it is virtually infinite (*SG*: 168).

[17] In *Small Gods*, two different figures are stated: 400-500 (*SG*: 168) and 700 (*SG*: 196). There is no way to establish a precise number for the scrolls possessed by the Library of Alexandria, but even the lowest calculations clearly exceed these figures for tens of thousands. Gellius (VII. 17.3) and Ammianus Marcellinus (XXII.16.13) state that there were 700,000 scrolls when there was a fire during Caesar's attack on Alexandria in 48 BCE. Livy (F 52 Weissenborn-Müller *apud* Sen. *Dial*. IX. 9.5) and Orosius (VI. 15.31-32) give a figure of 40,000 books.

[18] It seems that there is no identifiable and complete equivalent to the Greek language in Discworld. Despite it is stated in the *Atlas* that the country's language is Ephebian, the evidence shows that if so it is strongly influenced by Latatian, which, in turn, resembles macaronic Latin. For example, the title of the book of the Ephebian philosopher Didactylos is *De Chelonian mobile* ('*The Turtle moves*') that mixes both languages. In fact, there are some glimpses of actual Greek words in these books, but the meaning is distorted. 'Eureka' literally means 'Give me a towel!' (*SG*: 307; *Companion*: 94) and 'symposium' means 'knife-and-fork tea' (*P*: 300). Women are excluded from them because "[t]heir brains overheat" (*P*: 292). Ephebian numbers are based on Roman numerals (*SG*: 301).

[19] In the *Companion* (119), it is described as "[a] sort of architectural equivalent of Colonel Bogey".

School of Music, being the Vestigial Virgins Chorus its main attraction[20]. The only other Ephebian place name known is the island of Papylos, in the middle of the Circle Sea. It provides the Ephebian economy with another income: tourism. According to the *Atlas* (75), a lot of hotels are being built by the coast and it has been declared a free-philosopher zone –and, as we will see, it almost implies that the Ephebian population has been banned[21]. These details sound like an echo of what has happened with many little islands in present-day Greece –and in many other places in the Mediterranean as well–, with Mykonos in the lead, that they have been transformed into touristic resorts and have nearly expelled local inhabitants.

The hinterland can supply the urban population and, additionally, some products (figs and olives) are grown for exportation. Also, they manufacture a "fetid" goat cheese[22] and a very strong wine, good for cleaning saucepans and dissolving paint. The puns about the strength of Ephebian drinks and food are recurrent in the books. Literally, it is said that Ephebians "made wine out of anything they could put in a bucket, and ate anything that couldn't climb out of one" (*P*: 304). Ephebian wine or retsina is compared with, used as or directly considered varnish in the books (*E*: 100; *P:* 287, 317[23]). Finally, like in any typical depiction of a Greek meal, Ephebians also smash the plates after it (*P*: 313).

On its border with Ur, there are the Pyrinankles, a mountain range where marble quarries have been established. The workers there have to cope with

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[20] These Virgins are first attested in the aforementioned song. However, in *Eric*'s passage, they are "vestal" and there is no indication of their singing skills. Vestigial virgins are found elsewhere in Discworld's novels devoted to their gods of choice and the name is clearly based on Roman Vestal virgins.

[21] The island is only briefly mentioned in a chaotic account of the Tsortean Wars by Copolymer, a sort of Discworld Homer or rhapsodist (*P:* 300), *infra*. It is also mentioned another island, Crinix, but it is not clearly stated that it is an Ephebian island as well.

[22] This denomination could point to the famous Greek cheese feta despite it is mainly made of sheep milk or, in some cases, as a mix between goat and sheep milk.

[23] In the *Companion* (93), retsina is directly defined as "a kind of paint-thinner". Retsina is the name of a real type of Greek wine. In the *Atlas* (73), when listing Ephebian exportations, it is written 'medicinal wine' instead of simply 'wine'. Another typical Ephebian named product is the "bourzuki", which is interpreted as a type of dog by the protagonists from Djelibeybi of *Pyramids* (*P*: 313; see also *Companion*: 93). The context, however, clearly suggests that the Ephebian word remit to a musical instrument, probably similar to the real *bouzouki*, a popular Greek string instrument.

mythological entities such as Furies (a.k.a. Little Sisters of Perpetual Velocity) and Gorgons[24]. The marble extracted is sent to the city through the river Stiks, a homophonic version of Styx, one of the rivers of Hades.

As aforementioned, Ephebe shares a border with three countries[25]. Rimwards[26], it lays Ur, which shares the name with a Mesopotamian city. Little or nearly no data is given about this country in the novels –nor the *Companion*. In the *Atlas* (82), its inhabitants are described almost as stupid and their main activity is just to exploit their side of the Pyrinankles and export the marble to Ephebe. Ephebian influence is also attested by the theoretical adoption of democracy as Ur's political system –although, in practice, it is not applied due to its inhabitant's apathy. It would be suggesting to draw some parallelisms between Ur and Thrace, a region that received strong Hellenic influence. Moreover, Athens established close political and economic interests in the region, being the exploitation of Mount Pangaion's mines one of the most important[27]. The name of the mountains Pyrinankles could be a reference to a nearby mountain range, the Pirin[28]. However, we must be cautious. Pangaion's mines were for the extraction of silver and gold, not marble[29]. Democracy was not adopted by any Thracian tribe and apathy does not fit the typical image of Thracians in the sources[30], who were often

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[24] Furies (Greek *Erinyes* or *Eumenides*) are firstly mentioned in *Eric* (96), alongside harpies and cyclops, being beasts that an Ephebian sergeant had battled with. Their bird-like appearance fits better with harpies and sirens, indeed. Gorgons in Discworld are not only three sisters, but a whole race (https://wiki.lspace.org/mediawiki/Furies; https://wiki.lspace.org/mediawiki/Gorgon; accessed on May 8th 2020; there is no entry for them in any of the *Companion* editions).

[25] Like Greeks, Ephebians set their own identity against barbarians (*SG*: 133).

[26] Roundworld's cardinal points are not used in Discworld. Directions are hubwards (to the Hub, the central point of the Disc), rimwards (opposite to the Hub), turnwise (clockwise) and widdershins (anti-clockwise).

[27] See a historical outline of these relations in Sears 2015. Amphipolis' location, originally an Athenian colony, seems to have been chosen to control the mines.

[28] Alternatively, the name could refer to the Pyrenees. Curiously, there is a village named Ur in North Catalonia, in the French department of Pyrénées-Orientales.

[29] Nevertheless, in modern times, marble from the Pirin Mountain has been vastly exploited. However, no ancient reference about quarries there in Antiquity was found.

[30] This apathy or stupidity linked with the inhabitants of Ur in Discworld fits better with the Abderites, who appeared as paradigms of foolishness in Greek sources and jokes. Abdera was an Ionian colony on the Thracian coast, first founded by settlers from Klazomenai and refounded by new colonists from Teos. This could be the origin

enrolled in Greek and Macedonian armies. Therefore, it cannot be ascertained that Ur is Discworld's equivalent of Thrace.

With Djelibeybi we are on firmer ground and there is no doubt that is Pratchett's depiction of Ancient Egypt (Butler 2008a; Vail 2008b; *Companion*: 80-81; *Atlas*: 71-72)[31]. The name of the country literally means "Child of the Djel" (*P*: 24). The Djel is the river around which the country flourishes and, therefore, the name echoes Herodotus' (II. 5.1) statement that Egypt was the gift of the Nile[32]. *Pyramids*, the novel in which Djelibeybi is the main setting, introduces all the characteristics typically attributed to Ancient Egypt: pyramids, mummies, pharaohs, countless zoomorphic gods, desert… However, in the time of the events related in the novel, Djelibeybi has lost its former splendour and mightiness, and it has become a mere buffer country, limited to the Djel's fluvial valley (two miles wide and 150 miles long –it remembers Roundworld Gambia; *P*: 24), between the irreconcilable enemies Ephebe and Tsort (*infra*)[33].

The third country Ephebe shares a border with is Omnia (Butler 2008b-c; *Companion*: 174; *Atlas*: 78-79). Omnia is a theocratic state that, during the action of *Small Gods*, is in an expansion process subduing and 'evangelising' its neighbouring countries, being Ephebe its next target. The novel focuses on the dichotomy between the freedom and laicity incarnated by the Ephebians in front of the despotism and bigotry that Omnia represents (Brown 2004: 282-283; Watt-Evans 2008: 93, 225)[34]. It is hard to identify Omnia with a sole Roundworld country, but it is clear that it has been shaped after some

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of the alleged stupidity of the inhabitants of Ur if they are to be identified with the Thracians.

[31] Nevertheless, there are two passing Hellenic details in Djelibeybi. Firstly, the queen makes a surprising arrival rolled up in a carpet (*P*: 411-412). Secondly, it is stated that the queen bathes in asses' milk (*P*: 418). These anecdotes are usually attributed to Cleopatra VII, the last Hellenistic queen of Egypt.

[32] The Egyptian name of the country is also closely bound to the river. "Black land" (*km.t*) is a reference to the colour of the riverside soil. Besides, Djelibeybi also puns on the sweets called Jelly Babies; see Butler 2008a: 127; *APF*: 31.

[33] However, in the novel, Djelibeybi disappears from the Disc and moves to another dimension due to some anomalies caused by the energy stored in the pyramids. This causes that Tsort and Ephebe become neighbours and both rush into war preparations (*infra*).

[34] In *Pyramids*, a similar dichotomy arouses, this time between philosophers' freedoms in front of religions' rigidity.

dark episodes and institutions of the Christian Church[35]. However, after some relevant events in the novel, it becomes a pious, but more respectful and peaceful country (and religion) in the following novels.

Ephebe: democratic tyranny, free slavery

Ephebe's regime is described as a mix of the most known Greek political systems: democracy and tyranny. Formally, it is a democracy[36] and every five years Ephebian citizens choose a Tyrant. Nevertheless, as in the case of Athenian democracy, there are several restrictions to access to citizenship. Therefore, women, slaves, children, strangers, criminals, madmen, poor and frivolous people are excluded (*P*: 263 –it is added there that some others are also disproved for various indefinite reasons–; *SG*: 151). These criteria almost match the Athenian ones[37]. The only main objection is that the poorest Athenian citizens (*thetes*) were not completely excluded from civic participation, even though they could not opt for most of the magistracies until the 4th century BCE. Initially, they could only participate in the Assembly and the *Heliaea*.

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[35] The Omnian Quisition is based on (nobody expects) the Spanish Inquisition. However, a torture instrument named the Turtle (*SG*: 285, 319) resembles the Bull of Phalaris (Pi. *P*. I. 95-96; D.S. IX. 18-19; Lucian *Phal*. 1.11) or Agathocles' 'improved' version of it (D.S. XX. 71.3). The fire of the Library of Ephebe reminds of some episodes like the destruction of the Serapeum of Alexandria and the Library of Antioch or later burnings of pagan or heretic books, like the so-called bonfire of vanities. Omnia's expansion might evoke the Crusades.

[36] Like Greece, Ephebe is popularly considered the 'cradle of democracy'. As it is stated in Discworld books, this explains why it seems to be still in its infancy (*Atlas*: 73). However, it has proven to be quite a stable system and it has remained undisturbed for one thousand years –rather for the lack of consensus between the quarrelsome Ephebians than for their satisfaction with it. This Ephebian invention, apart from Ur, has not been exported elsewhere in the Disc so far (*P*: 263).

[37] 'Frivolous' might be compared with Greek ἰδιότης. This term had several meanings –many denoting an active political role–, but, in some cases, it referred to someone who restrained from taking part in public/political activity. See the references in Rubinstein 1998: 126 n. 7. In this sense, 'frivolous' could be understood as someone who did not care about his own community. However, there could be several reasons for this decision; cf. Mossé 1984: 199-200. Therefore, they were not excluded like in Ephebe, but they did it of their own accord. Actually, *idiotes* could be simply equalled to 'citizen' in some instances. On the *idiotai*, see Mossé 1984; Rubinstein 1998.

In practice, these restrictions entail that only 3% of the 50,000 inhabitants of Ephebe (including city and hinterland) can vote and be elected[38]. We can compare this figure with calculations about this very same percentage for Athens. Certainly, the Athenian population differed from one historical period to another, but if Ephebe stands for Classical Athens, we can use scholars' calculations for the age of Pericles[39], before the demographical fall caused by the Peloponnesian War and the plague. For 431, figures between 40,000 and 60,000 citizens have been posited. Calculations on the slave population are more hypothetical, but they would not have been less than 50,000 and, probably, were far more numerous than this. It is even harder to get precise information on metics (i.e. foreigners). The percentage of citizens can be estimated between 15 and 21.5%[40]. In consequence, Discworld's figure seems to be five to seven times lower than in Ancient Athens, emphasizing the paradoxical restrictive nature of the government of the people. Combining the percentages of citizens and slave population (*ca.* 50%, *infra*), we find that about 23,700 people are free non-voting Ephebians (47.4% of the total population, 94.8% of the free population). This percent-

[38] There are some minor discrepancies about the actual number. In the *Companion* (93-94), it is stated that there are 1,300 voters, about 200 fewer citizens than the real 3% for a population of 50,000 inhabitants (1,500). A percentage of 3% equalling 1,300 people stands for a population of 43,333 Ephebians. Given that this population figure would have been rather rounded off to 40,000 than to 50,000, the percentage of citizen population must be more precisely amended to 2.6%.

[39] Pericles restricted citizenship only to those who were born of both Athenian father and mother in 451/0: Arist. *Ath.* 26.3; Plu. *Per.* 37.3; see Boegehold 1994.

[40] Osborne (1987: 46) considers that citizen families –including, therefore, women and children– accounted for 60,000-80,000 individuals (Hansen (1988: 9) estimates a number between 17,250-23,000 citizens), metics might have not exceeded 20,000 people and the number of slaves could be reasonably established around 50,000. This implies a percentage of 13.27-15.33%. Hansen (1988: 7-28) estimated a likely maximum population of 60,000 citizens (140,000 including the rest of their families), 46,000 metics and 93,000 slaves. This leads to a percentage of about 21.5% of citizens. Stockton's (1990: 15-18) calculations for 431 BCE posits figures of 40,000 citizens and over 10,000 and 100,000 metics and slaves, respectively. For him, citizens represented two fifths (40%) of the adult male population at the most. Adding women, this percentage falls to 20% (and without considering children and other excluded).

age is again too high in comparison with approximated calculations for Classical Athens[41]. Nevertheless, despite non-citizens are an overwhelming majority in Ephebe, they are virtually absent from the novels. Slaves are sparsely mentioned –there is only a noteworthy conversation with one (*SG*: 161-162)– and no Ephebian woman makes an appearance –excluding goddesses' statues. In this aspect, Ephebe is significantly similar to (ideal) ancient Greece, where the best woman was that never left home[42]. Despite its narrowness, Ephebian democracy is way over more participative than Ankh-Morpork that follows the system "one person, one vote"–and this person is the Patrician, the city ruler.

Any member of this restricted civic body can be elected as Tyrant "provided he could prove that he was honest, intelligent, sensible, and trustworthy" (*SG*: 151). This previous 'exam' resembles the *dokimasia* that archons and other officials had to pass before taking the office (Arist. *Ath.* 45.3, 55.2-56.1, 59.4, 60.1). The candidates are then voted by putting black or white balls in various urns. Once elected, this apparently sane and moral man can rule like a frenzied madman during the next five years (*P*: 262; *SG*: 151). In this context, the Tyrant's image is rather shaped by modern and popular standards for the term than for the ancient ones. The old remark "absolute power corrupts absolutely" could be the motto of the Ephebian Tyrants. This pattern of endlessly citizen disappointments after every election seems to reflect modern perceptions of politicians, which never fulfil the voters' hopes. Tyrants –either ancient or modern– are not sympathetic with the idea of resigning once they have seized power.

The Ephebian political system does not provide any institution to counterweight the Tyrant's power[43], apart from the defined length of the office. This

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[41] Taking the figures expressed in note 40, the percentage of non-citizens within the free population is between 77-78.44% for Osborne's calculations, 67.74% in the case of Hansen and a low 55.55% for Stockton's numbers (a percentage that would have been higher including children and other excluded).

[42] As stated above (see note 18), women are excluded from symposia to avoid that their brains get heated. However, in *Small Gods* (267), the heart and not the brain is credit as the origin of thought according to Ephebian philosophy. They are only briefly mentioned as servants bringing some grapes to the Tyrant (*SG*: 152). In Ancient Greece, women, like *hetairai* and artists, were not banned from symposia, quite the opposite. Some women, like Aspasia or Hipparchia, regularly attended to philosophers' symposia where they were not second to anybody. Even, under some circumstances, 'respectable' women attended symposia; see Burton 1998.

[43] Besides the Tyrant, the only known 'political' post in Ephebe is that of his secretary.

type of 'democratic' tyranny that implies 'unlimited' power during a strictly stipulated period of time resembles Archaic-age's figure of the lawgivers or arbitrators (*nomothetai, aisymnetai*, *diallaktai, katartisteres*), such as Solon (Arist. *Pol.* II. 12, 1273b-1274b; Hölkeskamp 1992: 49-58, 74-77; Parker 2007; Wallace 2009). Their main competence was to institute permanent legal and political changes in a period of civic strife and/or economic crisis. There is a historiographical thin line between these figures and tyrants, and often the adscription of particular individuals rather depends on later retrospective considerations than on actual and clearly distinguishable differences. In any case, this position was supposed to be extraordinary and no re-election was implied, despite that, for Aristotle (*Pol.* V. 10.5-6, 1310b), this was a way in which tyrants could seize power. These lawgivers or arbitrators simply stepped down once their term had expired, but no other individual was chosen to replace them right afterwards[44]. However, it is worth noting, that in the Greek cases, we are dealing with pre- or non-democratic societies, unlike Ephebe. The Ephebian Tyrant is supposed to hold full autocratic powers and, in *Small Gods* (151-152, 159-160), he is attested carrying out some diplomatic duties –and some military commandment is glimpsed too–, which, in Athens, were divided among different posts and institutions.

In contrast, democratic officials' power was limited and most of the power was held by the Assembly and the Council. In the Athenian democratic system, the officials were usually elected by lot for a one-year term. The only exception were the *strategoi,* who were elected by voting[45]. The term of this military office was also annual, even though they could be re-elected year after year –another particularity not found in other institutions. Moreover,

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In the time of the events of *Small Gods*, he is a philosopher named Aristocrates – author of a book named *Platitudes* (*SG*: 170). It might be suggested that Aristocrates' position could reflect Plato's (whose real name was allegedly Aristocles: D.L. III. 3) role as advisor of Dionysius II in Syracuse. However, given that most Ephebians are also philosophers, his occupation can be hardly relevant. Additionally, Ephebian ambassadors are attested in *Pyramids* (171), but we are not told how they had been chosen.

[44] This does not exclude that, after some time, the city could look for another lawgiver if the previous' reforms had not worked as expected. That is what happened in Athens with Draco and Solon over a span of nearly three decades at least.

[45] On the *strategoi*, see Rhodes, P. J.: "Strategos. I. Classical Greece". In *Brill's New Pauly* (http://dx.doi.org.are.uab.cat/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e1123850; accessed on 15th May 2020). Certain financial officials were also elected: Arist. *Ath.* 43.1.

there was not a single *strategos*, but a board of ten peers[46] –a fragmentation of individual power also established for the archons. They held extraordinary powers in wartime, but they also frequently had to face legal consequences afterwards if they had gone too far[47]. The Ephebian Tyrant is elected by ballot, unlike what happened in the election of *strategoi* in Athens. They were elected by show of hands in the Assembly (Piérart 1974; Mitchell 2000). The only example of this type of voting system – by ballot – in Athenian institutions is the *Heliaea*, the court. However, they did not use black and white balls, but pierced and solid bronze *psephoi* that were introduced in two jars (Arist. *Ath.* 68-69). It seems plausible that voting by ballot was used for certain procedures in the Assembly, but none of them implied the election of officials[48]. The election method described for Discworld is similar to more modern voting systems, which even have originated the words 'blackball' and 'blackballing'. Therefore, the elected Ephebian Tyrant's five-year term and its uniqueness oppose the basic notions of randomness, annuality and collegiality found in Classical Athens. The Athenian system reduced the odds of abuse of power (Rubinstein 1998: 131-139).

Ephebian democracy and the role of its citizens fit better with modern democracy than with the Ancient Athenian democratic system. In Classical Athens, the citizens' role was far more participative in the *Ekklesia*, the *Heliaea*, the *Boule* and acting as magistrates –of course, depending on their respective social class and age. Therefore, thousands of Athenians played an active role in their city's politics every year (Sinclair 1991: 65-73; Raaflaub 2006: 392-395). Nowadays, people's active participation is nearly restricted to vote every four years to elect their representatives[49]. Certainly, this could

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[46] Additionally, they were assisted and/or inspected by state officers. Also, they received specific orders about their campaign on departure and communicated regularly with the city authorities; see Pritchett 1974: 38-39, 42-56.

[47] Apart from the *euthyna*, the examination that every office-holder had to face after finishing his term. In addition, a *strategos* could be replaced before finishing his service if the Assembly or the Council decided that he was not carrying out his post properly by *eisangelia*: Arist. *Ath.* 43.4, 48.4-5, 61.2; see Pritchett 1974: 4-33, 56-58; Rhodes 2015: 137.

[48] Actually, its main use was to check that the minimum quorum (6,000 participants) had been reached; see Hansen 1977: 131-132. Apart from these instances and its use in tribunals, another procedure that might be considered a sort of voting by ballot is ostracism.

[49] Cf. Cohen 2015: 176: "[Greek] Citizenship, unlike in modern democracies, is not just an equal right to vote but rather a right to govern".

be felt like an oversimplification, but, for example, I guess that not too much people regard being appointed a jury member as an expression of their democratic citizen rights (Arist. *Ath*. 9.1; D. XXI. 224-225; Sinclair 1991: 70-72; Cohen 2015: 172-173) –rather a nuisance. In Athens, on the contrary, there were no 'professional' prosecutors and judges, and the demos also held judicial power. Actually, certain crimes were not judged in court, but in the Council, the Areopagus and the Assembly (Rhodes 2015: 138-139). Therefore, citizens could take part in the three branches of power: legislative, executive and judicial[50]. Finally, Athenians also participated in the institutions of their respective tribe, *tryttes* and deme. In consequence, Ephebians' inactivity in politics opposes Athenian ideology and practice of democracy (cf. Th. II. 40.2)[51]. Ephebian citizens, unlike Athenians, only can actively participate in their city's politics if they are elected as Tyrant. In that case, an Ephebian has the opportunity to enjoy a limitless wielding of power to inevitably return to political irrelevance once the five-year term ends. Both systems share the inherent amateurism of those elected for an office. Thus, the differences regarding the experience of power between Ephebian and Athenian democracies are in a matter of intensity/extension and time: unlimited and brief versus restricted and prolonged.

Apart from voting every five years, the only political right attested for Ephebian citizens is free speech. It is mentioned in relation to an incident with an Omnian emissary in the marketplace, where traditionally everybody can speak whatever they please (*SG*: 158-159). He had been trying to evangelize Ephebians in a rude, provocative way, which included knocking down the statue of the god of wine, Tuvelpit –who happened to be in the crowd and knocked him over with an amphora in turn. Before that, Ephebians have shown their upset by throwing him eggs and vegetables. As Aristocrates, the Tyrant's secretary, points out: "anyone can say what they like in the square. We have another tradition, though, called free listening" (*SG*: 158; cf. X. *Mem*. I. 1.10). Ephebian free speech seems to be the only known limit to the autocratic power of the Tyrant in charge. It is up to the Ephebians to decide if the content of the discourse pleases them or not. However, although it is not completely clear, this freedom of speech seems to be restricted to the

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[50] See, especially focused on the citizens' role in law-making and in the court, Cohen 2015.

[51] It is mentioned in *Small Gods* (151) that the people could also dethrone the Tyrant. Giving that no other civic institution is attested, the only option would be by a general uprising, as long as quarrelsome Ephebians could agree on.

marketplace[52]. This free speech right corresponds with Greek *parrhesia/is-egoria* (Wallace 2004: 221-223). In Athens, this included that any citizen, no matter his status, could take part in the Assembly[53]. Unlike Ephebe, it was not restricted to a sole place, but free speech was legally granted almost elsewhere. However, free speech also entailed that others could express their opinion on somebody else's discourse. Also, the demos' pressure could throw out a speaker from his platform, but it was not perceived as a violation of his free speech privilege (Wallace 2004: 223-228; Liddel 2007: 26-27). It was regarded as an expression of the community's interest, indeed. However, the full extent of this prerogative was limited in practice to Athenian full citizens (Liddel 2007: 25; Konstan 2012: 4-6) –an aspect that is not clear in the case of Ephebe.

Besides democracy and tyranny, slavery stands out as a key institution in Ephebe. Pratchett describes slaves' rights in the books. Slaves must get three meals a day –one of them, at least, including meat–, one day off per week and two-week paid vacation (or "being-allowed-to-run-away") every year (*SG*: 161). These entail that it is more preferable to be a slave than a free man in Ephebe. The only exclusive privileges that the latter possesses are the right to vote and the right to own slaves. He is also "free to drop dead" (*Companion*: 94). Slaves are not attested carrying out heavy work in the books[54]. They are only 'seen' serving in the Tyrant's palace and helping the philosophers (*P*: 269). It is curious to observe how slaves are closely bound with the act of reading, what actually fits ancient Greek evidence (Pl. *Tht.* 143c; Svenbro 1993: 192-193, 2001: 81-83)[55]. Only slaves and scribes actually read books in Ephebe (*SG*: 166-167). On the contrary, Athenian slaves did not only worked in households but also in the fields and mines, where they could hardly avoid heavy work (Plu. *Nic.* 4.2; X. *Vect.* 4.14-16, 23-25, *Mem*. II. 5.2). Accordingly, there were no legal restrictions on the duties they had to carry on.

Generous rights and light work are the reasons why slaves themselves are the most interested ones on keeping untouched this system, even taking up

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[52] This 'limited' free speech resembles what it is popularly believed for Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park

[53] An aspect that drove the Old Oligarch mad: [X.] *Ath.* 1.2, 6, 9.

[54] In the *Companion* (94), it is literally stated that they do not "have to work like a slave".

[55] However, in the Library, they opt for scrolls instead of books to avoid readers calling their slaves every time they had to turn a page.

arms to defend it against those who wanted to abolish it[56]. After twenty years of service, slaves are asked to decide whether they want to buy their freedom or to sign for twenty more years. It comes as no surprise that most of them opt for the latter and slaves are half of the population in Ephebe[57].

It is obvious that Ephebian society is an extremely hyperbolic depiction of the situation of the slaves in Greece, introducing bits of modern labour law. Pratchett's humoristic representation may remind the scholar of the Old Oligarch's bitter lamentation about how slaves and metics had become nearly indistinguishable from Athenian citizens –so you could not even hit them yet ([X.] *Ath.* 1.10-12). Greek slaves were protected from certain transgressions by the law, but rather as their owner's property than as individuals. They were almost defenceless from their master's will (and whip) and they could only seek asylum –for example, in the Theseion in Athens– in case of severe and repeated mistreatment[58]. Slave owners were aware of the counter-productive outcome of recurrent and excessive body punishment and self-control was praised, but there was nothing especially wrong when they were 'reasonable' and 'fair' (cf. X. *Oec.* III. 4, 14.4-7, *Mem.* II. 1.16-17; Arist. *Rh.* 1380a16-19; Hunt 2016: 137-143, 150-151). Basically, slaves were mostly protected against other's than their owners' violence. Nevertheless, any legal action was to be started by the owner –or any other citizen in the case of certain transgressions (Harrison 1968: 167, 169, 171-172; MacDowell 1986: 81). Trials concerning offences committed against slaves were rather focused on protecting their owners' –or other citizens'– rights than the slave's (Harrison 1968: 168-169; Hunt 2016: 151-153)[59].

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[56] A bewildered Omnian garrison commander found himself in the middle of guerrilla warfare in the streets of Ephebe when he decreed the abolition of slavery (*SG*: 202, 273-274). Combatants were not only free Ephebians but rather the slaves themselves. In the same way, the exportation of slaves by Ephebe was aborted after the slaves' refusal to leave the country (*Atlas*: 73).

[57] See note 40. The aforementioned demographic calculations imply a percentage of 33.33-38.46% of the slave population in the case of Osborne, 50% for Hansen and about 52.63% for Stockton. Therefore, in this instance, Pratchett's figures fit better the actual evidence than in the case of citizens.

[58] See the references listed in Harrison 1968: 172-173 n. 3. If the mistreatment was proved, they were not freed but sold to another master.

[59] It is very telling how, according to Aeschines (I. 17), slaves were legally protected from *hybris* to avoid that citizens got used to it and could abuse other freemen; cf. D. XXI. 46-47; Athen. VI. 267a.

Slaves in Ephebe are also protected from mistreatment because of their condition as somebody's property, but they also hold rights as individuals, as seen above. However, in Athens, as long as slaves were not a legal person, an owner might have to confront legal consequences –mostly economical– if his slave had committed an offence (Hyp. *Ath*. col. X. 22; see Harrison 1968: 173-174; MacDowell 1986: 81). As Demosthenes stated, the main difference between free men and slaves is that the latter only had their bodies to answer for their offences. Citizens' bodies were almost inviolable (D. XXII. 55, XXIV. 167; Hunter 1992; Hunt 2016: 146-147). The punishment the jury had decided could be executed either by the master or the public justice (cf. Fisher 2006: 335-336; Hunt 2016: 144). Masters could even kill their slaves and get away with murder. They were legally prevented from it, but they were not to face harsh punishment if so (Harrison 1968: 171-172; MacDowell 1986: 80; Sinclair 1991: 28; Fisher 2006: 336; Hunt 2016: 152-153)[60]. In conclusion, and unfortunately for Athenian slaves, the privileges of Ephebian slaves are far from real historical data. However, the humoristic result is priceless: a slave society whose main protectors are slave themselves. Perhaps was he dropping a hint about our own society?

Ephebian stands for philosopher

Ephebians' looks are directly inspired by the popular image of ancient Greeks. They wear white togas (or sheets, *P*: 269), sandals and long, curly, white beards –and they are mostly bald (*P*: 171, 303; *SG*: 139, 140, 141, 155, 157, 174, 215, 244). Moreover, philosophy seems to be the job with most career opportunities in Ephebe and most of their citizens are philosophers[61]. Actually, one of its main exportations are axioms[62] (*Companion*: 93; *Atlas*:

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[60] The main stress seems to be that only the State had the prerogative to take somebody's life (Andoc. V. 47-48). The main potential consequence of killing own slaves was religious pollution: Pl. *Lg*. IX. 865c-d, 868a.

[61] You only need to throw a brick to find a philosopher in Ephebe (*SG*: 138). The requisite to be accepted as a philosopher is 'only' to have written a book. Then you receive a diploma and a loofah (*SG*: 170; cf. 335). Even though some may make a living by philosophy (see notes 62, 68), many others work in other jobs and they deal with philosophy in their leisure time, like in Ancient Greece; see Rihll 1999: 5-6, 2002: 17-21.

[62] There is also interior demand of philosophical sayings, as the business run by Didactylos and Urn proves (*SG*: 155-157). You can trade some obols, olives or dried squid to get pieces of true philosophical wisdom such as 'It's always darkest before dawn', 'Still, it does you good to laugh' or 'It's a wise crow that knows which way the

73). The prevalence of philosophy in Ephebian society is underlined and confronted with organized religion in *Pyramids* and *Small Gods*[63]. Ephebian polytheistic religion is not omitted[64], but it is supposed to hold a secondary role (*Atlas*: 73; Pratchett / Simpson 2008: 27). This clearly fits the typical image of Greek philosophers –and the Greek society by extension– as rational, almost atheistic or agnostic thinkers. This representation hides the noteworthy superstitious and religious nature of most of the Greek inhabitants, philosophers included[65]. The 'scientific' approach embodied by geometry, philosophy and other disciplines was (is) not mutually exclusive with believing in the divine (Gould 1999). As it is repeatedly stated in *Small Gods*, one cannot believe in facts, they just 'are'[66]. Actually, the real opposition is between critical thinking, broad-mindedness and unconditional scepticism[67], and conformism, close-mindedness and unbreakable faith. As Didactylos says "Not being certain is what being a philosopher is all about" (*SG*: 172).

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camel points.' Cf. Socrates' thinking-shop (φροντιστήριον) in Ar. *Nu*. 94.

[63] From Djelibeybi's perspective, they had strange and unsound beliefs such as the world is run by geometry (*P*: 169-170); see Watt-Evans 2008: 93.

[64] There is a passing reference to Ephebian priests (*SG*: 145). In Discworld, gods simply exist and it is up to you if you want to believe in them or not. However, one must be cautious in his/her statements to avoid any unpleasant retaliation afterwards (*SG*: 142-143, 145). It has already mentioned what occurred when an Omnian preacher knocked down Tuvelpit's statue and the god happened to be within the crowd. The only place where philosophers can safely argue about gods is the Library, under its lightning-proof, copper roof (*SG*: 168). The influence of Greek religion and mythology in Discworld is out of the scope of this paper because several aspects appear through other books of the series.

[65] I think is inevitable to cite here Dodd's classical work *The Greeks and the irrational*.

[66] *SG*: 242: ""You know, I never meant for people to believe in the Turtle," said Didactylos unhappily. "It's just a big turtle. It just exists. Things just happen that way. I don't think the Turtle gives a damn"". *SG*: 261: ""You can't believe in Great A'Tuin," he said. "Great A'Tuin exists. There's no point in believing in things that exist."" *SG*: 262: "And this will go on happening, whether you believe it is true or not. It is real. [...] I don't think the Turtle gives a bugger whether it's true or not, to tell you the truth."" See also note 87; cf. Brown 2004: 284.

[67] Probably, the most blatant example of this permanent doubt is Didactylos' attitude towards the real shape of the Discworld. Despite he has travelled to the edge of the world and seen the turtle, he is still open to change his mind (*SG*: 171-172); see Bussey 2008; Watt-Evans 2008: 94, 225-226.

In general, they are depicted as know-it-all, greedy[68], prone to alcoholism[69], extremely literal and, overall, proud, egocentric[70] and quarrelsome people. From their first appearance in the novels, relations between philosophers are not based on cooperation, but on mutual confrontation (cf. Rihll 1999: 4, 9-10)[71]. The thoughts of some of them are described enough to identify them with actual Greek philosophers. However, they are not true copies of them, but some Ephebian characters assemble aspects of several Greek thinkers and/or one Greek philosopher's characteristics can be found scattered among some Ephebian savants. Obviously, the fact that many of the parodied authors were not contemporary –or did not meet– is not an obstacle for Pratchett and, in consequence, Ephebe becomes an alternate

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[68] It can be quite expensive to hire a philosopher. Didactylos seems to be the only one who offers token prices; see note 62; *SG*: 147, 168.

[69] The philosophers usually meet in taverns (*SG*: 140) and to celebrate their weekly symposia. The consumption of wine helps that their discussions become usually overheated. Ephebian philosophers would have easily found their way to Monty Python's 'Bruces' Philosophers song'. Feel free to change Socrates, Plato or Aristotle with their respective Discworld doppelgänger or any other Ephebian thinker.

[70] *SG*: 261: "That was because no one really paid any attention. They were just working out what they were going to say next".

[71] This first instance occurs in Ephebe's outskirts where an "Axiom testing station" has been installed (*P*: 268-273, 287-288). There, Xeno and Ibid (*infra*) are trying to settle if a turtle can be reached by an arrow. This is an obvious parody and mixing of Zeno's two paradoxes: Achilles and the tortoise, and the arrow paradox (Arist. *Ph*. VI. 9, 239b5-9, 15-18). Despite tortoises are repeatedly pierced by arrows, Xeno blames the quality of the tortoises he has been provided with. Faster tortoises or slower arrows would have worked better. In the previous experiment, a tortoise had been able to beat a hare in a race –probably because Xeno shot down the latter. He alleges that he was trying to join together two experiments and was aiming at the tortoise, but he missed. We found here another combination, in this case between the aforementioned paradox of Achilles and the tortoise, and Aesop's fable (Perry 226). As stated in *Small Gods* (145), a tortoise is "a very useful philosophical animal". Later, there is a possible allusion –or more precisely a vertical version– to the so-called dichotomy paradox when Xeno tries to explain why it is impossible to fall from a tree (*P*: 288; Arist. *Ph.* VI. 9, 239b11-13). In this case, the goal is the floor. Finally, in the *Companion* (93), there is a further mix of Achilles' and the arrow paradox. Xeno claims that an arrow cannot hit a running man. However, given the philosopher's incapacity to understand metaphors, he had to add to the paradox "providing it [the arrow] is fired by someone who has been in the pub since lunchtime".

version of Greece –or Athens– where all the main voices in philosophy literally collide in space and time[72].

The main philosophical division in Ephebe is between Xenoists and Ibidians[73]. The former state that the world is complex and random; the latter that it is simple and follows some fundamental rules (*SG*: 170; *Companion*: 181). The descriptions are vague and the identification of their eponymous philosophers –Zeno and Aristotle (*infra*)– are not helpful. Instead of arguing for two specific philosophical currents[74], it seems more appropriate to posit two broad world understandings, respectively adopted with different particular nuances by different schools. I follow here Furley's (1987: 1-15) differentiation between the Closed World and the Infinite Universe systems. The former is represented by Platonism, Aristotelianism and Stoicism, and they can also be named teleologists; the latter are formed by Democritus and the Epicureans, and they can be called atomists as well. Teleologists match better with Ibidians' world view, while atomists rather coincide with Xenoists'. These identifications appear very clear in the dichotomy between a random (Xenoists) and an ordered (Ibidians) world. Atomists considered that all the nature was composed of tiny, indivisible particles (atoms), which move freely –apart from collisions between them– in the infinite void. There is no further order and purpose in the cosmos and the atomic movement follows no pattern. In contrast, teleologists defended that every natural kind had a goal in the system. Their explanations tended to an organic model, in which every natural form played a specific role in it. Therefore, there is a ruling order in the world.

The other opposition, the one between simple and complex, depends on what these descriptions are applied to. Certainly, teleologism represent a more complicated system *a priori*. Its main objective is to find the function of every form in the cosmic puzzle. However, once discovered, the working

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[72] It is the hilarious version of Raphael's *The School of Athens*, as shown in the illustration found in the *Atlas* (74). The background, however, is a tavern, Ephebian philosopher's natural place.

[73] These are not the only philosophical currents in Discworld: Stoics, Cynics, Epicureans, Stochastics, Anamaxandrites, Epistemologists, Peripatetics, Synoptics (*SG*: 145), Sumtin, Zen (*Companion* 181). As can be seen, it is a mix of actual philosophical schools –both Western and Oriental– and euphonic names.

[74] Bussey (2008) suggests identifying Xenoism with materialism (i.e., Democritus) and, to a lesser degree, with Aristotelianism –a paradox, given the identification of Ibid with Aristotle–; and Ibidians with Pythagoreanism and Platonism.

of the world becomes relatively simple to explain. Moreover, they argued for an eternal, unchangeable reality, so there is no worry about future drastic changes that could tear down the whole model. In contrast, atomism is simple in its explanation of what forms nature. There is a sole type of particle to explain and everything else is reduced to their movements and interaction. Nevertheless, there is no room for general patterns and, in consequence, every aspect has to be explained by itself. Thus, everything must be discovered by experience. All in nature is perishable and, given the inexistence of models, every form needs a different origin every time. Finally, the image of the reality that emerges is way over more complex and it cannot be an ideal state of complete understanding and simplification. In conclusion, the characteristics ascribed by Pratchett to these two Ephebian schools seem to work for their respective Greek equivalent.

Xeno, as stated above (see note 71; cf. Vail 2008a), is clearly the Discworld emulator of Zeno of Elea and the name does not try to conceal this inspiration. He is described as a small, fat and florid man (*P*: 269). Xeno clings into his postulates even if the empiric evidence claims the opposite. As Ibid points out, Xeno seems incapable of distinguishing a metaphor from a postulate (*P*: 288). He is also 'part' of the paradox "Xeno the Ephebian said 'All Ephebians are liars'" (*SG*: 140-141), which switches the original "Cretans" from Epimenides' quote (F 1 Diels-Kranz: Κρῆτες ἀεὶ ψεῦσται). The author of the statement is his rival Ibid, who Xeno accuses of slander. Xeno is also the author of a book with the loose title of *Reflections* (*SG*: 170).

Ibid, in contrast, is described as tall and willowy, but, overall, possessing an inherent air of authority (*P*: 269)[75]. This smart-arse attitude is the most defining aspect of his personality and what clearly upsets more of his colleagues[76]. The ancient Greek philosopher that better fits this description is Aristotle (cf. Vail 2008a). Nevertheless, there are some aspects that might be related to other thinkers. We know the title of some of his treaties: *Principles of Ideal Government*, *Discourse on Historical Inevitability* (*P*: 289), *Civics* (*SG*: 193) and *Discourses* (*SG*: 170). The first one could refer to Aristotle's

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[75] The name is based on the usual academic abbreviation *Ibid*. for *ibidem* ("in the same place"). Given Ibid's apparent knowledge on everything, he might be recurrently cited as the main authority, as his name hints.

[76] As Xeno blurts out while trying to prove his paradox: "The trouble with you, Ibid, is that you think you're the biggest bloody authority on everything" (*P*: 273). However, as Xeno cheerfully reveals, Ibid is not good at geometry, interior decorating and elementary logic (*P*: 289).

Politics, but the 'ideal' aspect of the work matches better with Plato's *Republic*[77]. Moreover, *Civics* stands as a more preferable option as *Politics*' double, given the original meaning of the word ('matters relating to the polis or the citizen')[78], somehow distorted by our modern usage. *Historical inevitability* is the title for a discourse –later published–by sir Isaiah Berlin (1954), a British philosopher (1909-1997), in which he attacked this very same concept and determinism. On the contrary, Ibid seems to defend it when he claims that war against Tsort is inevitable given their common history (*P*: 290-291). *Discourses* is too vague to posit an identification with some certainty[79].

Between the two main groups stands Didactylos, who thinks that "it's a funny old world, […] [a]nd doesn't contain enough to drink" (*SG*: 170). He is an outsider in the philosophical field –and he is proud to stress it. Didactylos differs from the rest of his colleagues because he aims at understanding what is really all about (*SG*: 154), instead of focusing on complex trifles[80]. His approach is not orthodox[81] and his popularity stems from his tavern philosophy[82]. His name ('two-fingered', *SG*: 31) is quite telling –especially if you

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[77] Certainly, *Politics*' books VII and VIII are focused on an ideal state, but probably Plato's work is more well-known among the popular audience. There is an attempt by Ibid to describe the place of war in the ideal republic, but it comes to nothing because philosophers are more interested in food (*P*: 303). However, it is a further hint that points to Plato's work rather than Aristotle's.

[78] *LSJ* s.v. πολιτικός. *Civis* is the Latin word for citizen. However, the book might be devoted to ethics (*infra*).

[79] Perhaps *Rhetorics* or any work from the *Organon* could be suggested. However, the only information we know about it is that it deals with the gods somehow, a topic that does not match these Aristotelian books.

[80] See below what sort of things Ephebian philosophers think about. Didactylos regards most of the books written by his colleagues as useless and vacuous (*SG*: 171, 196). About the alleged logic of the philosophers, he proclaims that it "is only a way of being ignorant by numbers" (*SG*: 341).

[81] His thinking is described as a mix of Epicureans, Cynics and Stoics, summed up in the following quote: "You can't trust any bugger further than you can throw him, and there's nothing you can do about it, so let's have a drink. Mine's a double, if you're buying. Thank you. And a packet of nuts. Her left bosom is nearly uncovered, eh? Two more packets, then!" (*SG*: 154-155).

[82] He is the author of the quotable *Meditations*, with pieces of deep thinking such as "It's a rum old world all right. But you've got to laugh, haven't you? *Nil Illegitimo Carborundum* ["Don't let the bastards grind you down" in cod-Latin, *APF*: 59] is what I say. The experts don't know everything. Still, where would we be if we were all the

are British (*APF*: 59; cf. Kochnar-Lindgren 2014: 89-90)– about his life atti-
tude, especially towards social conventions. Certainly, it comes as no sur-
prise that Diogenes the Cynic is the main inspiration behind the character.
Like him, Didactylos lives in a barrel (D.L. VI. 23)[83] and a philosophical per-
formance involving a lantern came to his mind (D.L. VI. 41)[84].

Nevertheless, there are other elements that cross-refer to other philoso-
phers and scientists. As already stated, Didactylos is the author of a treaty
named *De Chelonian mobile*, in which he tells his journey to the edge of the
Disc, proving its form and that it stands over four elephants and a giant turtle
(*SG*: 25, 166). This is considered a heresy by the Omnians, who believe that
the world is spherical. In this aspect, Didactylos clearly resembles Galileo
Galilei, who also was prosecuted due to his cosmological revolution by the
Church (Brown 2004: 282-283; Clute 2004: 28)[85]. Their respective trials are
also parallel because both seem to retract from their previous statements,

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same?". See more in *Companion*: 77; cf. note 62. The title is too vague to relate it
with any of the treaties allegedly written by Diogenes (*infra*). This philosopher's
books are no longer extant, but he was credited as the author of a dozen books,
seven tragedies and several letters, although their authenticity was cast in doubt al-
ready in Antiquity (D.L. 6.80).

[83] Diogenes' specificity becomes a common rule for Ephebian philosophers (cf. note
113). Not only Didactylos, but other thinkers, like Legibus –he lives in a quite big
barrel and has room for a sauna (*SG*: 169)–, live in them because it is very fashionable
and a sensational philosophical pose (*Companion*: 94).

[84] He strolled in the daylight with a lighted lantern looking for a man –modern ver-
sions specify an 'honest man', as hinted in *SG*: 188. Didactylos, in turn, is blind, so he
does not put oil on it, but he keeps it because it is very philosophical (*SG*: 169) –and,
perhaps, because this kind of pose could get him some money (*Companion*: 77).

[85] I do not completely agree with Bussey's (2008) parallelism between Eratosthenes
and Didactylos because both allegedly proved the real form of their respective
worlds. Eratosthenes estimated its circumference, but there were previous theories
and proofs about the sphericity of the Earth. In the same way, Didactylos' treaty can-
not be considered a groundbreaking study because everybody else in his world (ex-
cept for bigot Omnians) knows that it is disc-shaped (*SG*: 242). The measure of the
Disc –and, therefore Eratosthenes lookalike– corresponds to a certain Expletius (*SG*:
228). Finally, in Legibus' first appearance (see note 113), this philosopher asks for a
pot and string and *AFP* (59) suggests that it is a reference to Eratosthenes' method
to calculate the size of the Earth. However, it does not seem to fit the actual proce-
dure (Cleom. I. 49-120).

but, in the end, they reaffirm themselves with proud, lookalike remarks: "*Eppur si muove*"[86] / "Nevertheless… the Turtle moves![87]"–although Didactylos, in his iconoclastic fashion, throws his lantern to the head of the Omnian Quisition and runs away (*SG*: 188-190). Finally, both Galileo and Didactylos eventually became blind.

Additionally, Didactylos resembles also Plato when telling his own version of the allegory of the cave (*SG*: 210; Pl. *R*. VII. 514a-520a). Didactylos is also the protagonist of an anecdote that in Roundworld's was attributed to Euclid. He was asked by the Prince Lasgere of Tsort how to become learned, but without spending time reading. Didactylos' answer was that there was no royal road to knowledge. This is the same answer that Euclid gave to Ptolemy I when this king has asked him for an easier way to understand the geometry of *Elements* (Procl. *in Euc*. 68)[88]. Didactylos also pronounces the remark "Pray don't disturb my circles" (*SG*: 193) to some soldiers, like the anecdote attributed to Archimedes (see note 115). Finally, Didactylos seems to have coined the term 'tachyon' in Discworld, when combining the Disc's diameter as calculated by Expletius and the speed of light estimated by Febrius. According to his computation, the Sun would have to travel twice the speed of its light to complete its orbit each day (*SG*: 228; *Companion*: 77)[89].

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[86] There are some doubts on if Galileo actually said that. But, as Italians say, '*se non è vero, è ben trovato*'.

[87] The expression is a motto used by a clandestine Omnian movement against the religious authorities. They regarded it almost as a dogma, but when one member says it to Didactylos, he shows one more his permanent scepticism and answers back "That all depends" (*SG*: 194); cf. *APF*: 57.

[88] It seems that it worked for Ptolemy. In Discworld, on the contrary, the prince threatened Didactylos to have his legs cut off. He came up with a method that resembles Huxley's *Brave New World*: Didactylos looked for a dozen slaves that read some selected passages to Lasgere when sleeping. He did not get to know if the method worked: one slave assassinated his master one night (*SG*: 215-216). In *APF* (60), it is wrongly attributed to Aristotle and Alexander the Great.

[89] In Discworld, the Sun and the Moon are the ones who move around the world. Probably, the paradoxical result is due to the method employed by Febrius to get the speed of light. He stationed slaves across the country at dawn to announce when the light reached them. It comes as no surprise that Febrius proved that the speed of light equals that of sound in Discworld. In Roundworld, the term was proposed by the American physicist Gerald Feinberg in 1967.

Although Didactylos is not part of the two main Ephebian philosophical schools, he and his nephew Urn (*Companion*: 240)[90] represent in the book two different confrontations about how to approach knowledge: humanist versus scientific; theoretical/pure versus practical/applied. It is firstly evident in the discussion they hold about which books must be saved from the imminent burning of the Library. Urn wants to save books that show people how to live better –like Grido's *Mechanics*–, while Didactylos prefers those showing people to be people –such as Ibid's *Civics* or Gnomon's *Ectopia*[91].

The first dichotomy (humanistic/scientific) as strict separation rather refers to modern distinctions than ancient ones[92]. In these times of ultra-specialisation, it is easy to forget that many Greek thinkers were more 'holistic' and it was usual that one author dealt with ethics, physics, cosmology or any other discipline[93]. Certainly, this does not exclude that some of them were more interested or focused on certain fields, but the radical opposition found in the novel was no to be found in Antiquity. It should be taken into account that many of these categorisations did not exist back then and, in consequence, these modern distinctions might not be perceived (Lloyd 1974: 136-138; Whitney 1990: 40-50; Rihll 1999: 1-2, 2002: 7-8). Different philosophers posit their own formal divisions of knowledge, but they do not completely fit modern standards and they were quite permeable (Whitney 1990: 23-55)[94].

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[90] Urn's name might be based on a British joke, see *APF*: 59.

[91] Ectopia is a term used in medicine and genetics to describe different dysfunctions, mostly about something out of place. It comes from the Greek word ἔκτοπος ('away from a place, strange'). The title is likely a pun on Thomas More's *Utopia.* Gnomon literally means 'one who knows, discerner' in Greek (*LSJ* s.v. γνώμων) –although it also stands for more prosaic meanings like 'carpenter's square' or 'pointer of a sundial', among others.

[92] The word 'scientist' is relatively recent and was not coined until 1834. Previously, the most widespread term was 'natural philosopher'; see Owens 1991: 32-34. In the novel, Urn's calls himself a 'natural philosopher' (*SG*: 298).

[93] This is not something exclusive of Greek philosophy, but it can be attested in more modern thinkers like Descartes or Kant as well; see Lloyd 1974: 135; Rihll 1999: 10, 2002: 9-11. Precisely, in the books, the multifaceted knowledge of Ibid is what describes him better.

[94] Probably, Aristotle's tripartite division (theoretical, practical and productive) is the most relevant given its later influence. However, he used other categorisations elsewhere in his works; see Whitney 1990: 34-36; Owens 1991; Berryman 2009: 97-103.

The second one (pure/applied) neither works for pre-modern Round-world. Didactylos considers that Urn's inventions cannot be regarded as true philosophy (*SG*: 204, 298). This opposition brings up a popular interpretation of Classical society as indifferent to technological advances, especially in comparison with the development of its intellectual activities. The alleged lack of interest is complemented with blindness about the practical and productive outcomes of their inventions, which did not go beyond curiosities or toys. Several reasons have been suggested to explain the apparently low development of ancient technology[95]. It is too simplistic and deceiving to state that Greeks were not interested in –or were not aware of– any practical outcome derived from their 'intellectual' research –or that they focused their main interest in these utilities. Actually, many mechanics' treaties were written and several complex devices were built[96], especially from the Hellenistic period onwards (Lloyd 1974: 135-136; Berryman 2020: 231-235). Certainly, some Classical authors argued for the superior and virtuous nature of looking for knowledge for its own sake but this does not imply that all of them dismissed outright their practical outcomes, that they despised any 'applied' discipline or that there was a predominance of anti-technological feelings in their societies (Lloyd 1973: 93-96, 1974: 133-139; Whitney 1990: 26-32; Berryman 2009: 42-53, 171-176)[97]. As we will see again in the case of Legibus/Archimedes, this hermetic separation represented by Urn and Didactylos does not work for Hellenic thinkers. In their case, theoretical disquisitions and practical uses were not mutually excluding and they impacted each other and many other fields as well (Lloyd 1973: 91-93; Owens 1991: 34-35; Rihll 1999: 13-15; Schiefsky 2008: 15-16; Berryman 2009: 177-230, 2020: 243-245). In the same way, Greek devices were not only for amusement but several were built with practical purposes in mind (Papp. VIII. 1-2; Lloyd 1973: 105-106; Berryman 2009: 58-60).

This struggle between pure knowledge and utility is also attested in the explanation about why philosophers are not simply confined: "ninety-nine out of a hundred ideas they come up with are totally useless […] the hundredth idea […] is generally a humdinger" (*SG*: 130). Here, there is a version

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[95] Berryman (2009: 39-41) summarizes these different explanations with references.
[96] Given the nature of the evidence, sometimes is hard to know which artefacts were built and worked, and which others were only designs or did not function. See Berryman 2009: 41-42, 174-175.
[97] Whitney (1990: 24 n. 2) provides a complete list of references for refuting this so-called 'anti-technological' prejudice.

of the modern *topos* of the absent-minded professor (like *Back to the Future*'s Emmet Brown, or *Fringe*'s Walter Bishop), who combine true genius with bizarre and almost pointless ideas. Additionally, this is mixed together with an inherent tendency to be careless about everyday aspects, such as getting dressed[98]. This aspect coexists with another modern topic about philosophers, regarded as a bunch of slackers "bright enough to find a job with no heavy lifting" (*SG*: 130; cf. Bussey 2008)[99]. The latter reflects a modern attitude derived from a technologic and utilitarian society, where everything is mainly valued according to its practical outcome. People working on humanities have listened to questions about what is their work good for, or, directly, remarks about its uselessness many times. Therefore, the existence of some Greek currents stressing the superior value of selfless knowledge has been regarded as odd and open to parody.

Probably, Urn and Grido can be Discworld lookalikes of Hero of Alexandria. His works were devoted to mechanics, mechanisms and mathematics. At the same time, Hero is also credited as one of the most innovative Greek inventors (Tybjerg 2005; Berryman 2009: 134-143). In Discworld, Urn builds a device described as "a large, copper-colored ball, hanging in a wooden framework toward the back of the boat. There was an iron basket underneath it, in which someone had already got a good fire going" (*SG*: 202). This description fits very well with the aspect of one of Hero's designs (sometimes named 'steam engine' or *aeolipile*; Hero *Spir*. II. 11)[100]. The main difference, however, is that in Discworld, it is used to boost a boat, something out of reach in Hero's times[101]. Another device based on Hero's designs is found in

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[98] This characteristic appears related to the Discworld version of Archimedes' Eureka story (see note 113). "If you spend your whole time thinking about the universe, you tend to forget the less important bits of it. Like your pants" (*SG*: 131).

[99] Similarly, later on, it is emphasized the key role that slaves carry out so philosophers have time to think about their superfluous things (*SG*: 237). This can also be applied to Greece; however, it can also be suggested that the dependence on slave-workforce was one of the reasons why Classical society did not become a technological society.

[100] In *APF* (61) is wrongly identified as Archimedes' invention. After the engine broke due to overspeed, Urn suggested an improvement of two revolving balls that could open or close the valve depending on the steam pressure. This seems to be based on centrifugal governors found in steam machines.

[101] Although some have claimed that it can be regarded as a predecessor of a steam engine, a closer look at its design shows that it was merely a toy; see Lloyd 1973: 106.

the main temple of Omnia, whose bronze doors are allegedly opened by the breath of God, but in reality, it works by a pneumatic mechanism (*SG*: 75; Hero *Spir*. II. 32.)[102]. The other main invention by Urn in the book is the Turtle, a steam-powered armoured cart. It is a war machine that includes a battering-ram, a scalding-steam-thrower, rotating knives and can contain, at least, thirty men within (*SG*: 289-291, 313, 340). There was no such artefact in the Classical world. The inspiration for it might be a Leonardo da Vinci's design that looks like a conic tank (BM 1860,0616.99)[103].

Urn seems to miss the real potential of his inventions throughout the story. This fact is again related to the popular conception that, in Antiquity, they utterly failed to follow the way that these gadgets opened towards a technological society. It is clear that this interpretation is presentist and omits the overwhelming collateral obstacles they would have had to solve before implementing far-reaching technological innovations (e.g. steam engines; Lloyd 1973: 106-109). This alleged blindness is found in Urn's approach to his own inventions. He seems to regard them as *ad hoc* solutions for particular issues, but it cannot foresee further developments[104] and consequences[105]. This aspect finds a clear expression in the fact that Urn believes is pointless to name his inventions[106]. Urn even seems to flirt with

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[102] The mechanism is widely described in the book (*SG*: 290, 307-309). However, it seems that it was not completely autonomous and the gear-chain was moved by tortured men. Afterwards, Urn unsuccessfully tries to substitute the gates (*SG*: 351, 354); cf. *APF*: 57.

[103] His Discworld double is Leonard of Quirm (*Companion*: 143-144).

[104] For example, it is suggested to him that the boat engine could be used in land, in a cart. Urn's answer is simply "no point in putting a boat on a cart" (*SG*: 204). He regards it as an application of simple principles and he only can imagine its possible utility in mills (*SG*: 205-206). In the case of the Turtle, Urn has to be convinced that the principle for the boat could be applied to terrestrial vehicles –although his first suggestion is to flood the land (*SG*: 249).

[105] While still working on the Turtle, Urn is questioned by Didactylos about if he plans to destroy it once used against the Omnian Quisition. Urn is thinking about keeping it as a deterrent to other tyrants, but Didactylos is afraid that it can be the beginning of an arms race (*SG*: 298). In a way, it can be compared with the shock provoked in the Greek world when the first catapults were employed. The Spartan king Archidamus allegedly exclaimed "O Heracles! The valour of man is at an end" (Plu. *Mor*. 191e, 219a).

[106] *SG*: 205: ""Name?" he said. "It's a boat. A thing, of the nature of things. It doesn't need a name."/"Names are more philosophical," said Didactylos, with a trace of sulkiness."

more advanced concepts, such as electric energy (*SG*: 219)[107], but he only seems to play with them and cannot grasp their real implications. However, Urn's capacity to make complex devices as the boat engine work places him some steps beyond his Greek colleagues. Therefore, Urn is really to blame for his incapacity to see the potential behind his devices giving the technological state of his society[108], unlike the Greeks, who were still in an earlier stage of development.

Phtagonal is the Ephebian mastermind on geometry (*Companion*: 189). Therefore, it could be the doppelgänger of either Pythagoras or Euclid, although the former seems more likely (cf. Vail 2008a). Phtagonal is a bitter person due to his discovery that the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter is "[t]hree point one four one and lots of other figures" (*P*: 309) instead of simply three[109]. For him, this endlessly and imperfect number means that "the Creator used the wrong kind of circles" (*P*: 309). However, it was Archimedes who was more related to the calculation of *pi* in Antiquity (Archim. *Circl*.). In any case, the discovery of irrational numbers was allegedly a big shock for Pythagoreans and some authors even claimed that they drowned the first who spread this knowledge (Papp. I. 2; Iamb. *VP*. 34.246-247; Burkert 1972: 455-465; Hermann 2004: 256-258). Also, number three was central in the Pythagorean system because it defined the All, the world and everything within it (Arist. *Cael*. I. 268a10; Porph. *VP*. 51; Burkert 1972: 467 n. 6, 469, 474-475).

Phtagonal is also credited as the designer of Ephebe's lighthouse (see note 13) following the Golden Rule and the Five Aesthetic Principles. Golden Rule might stand for Golden Ratio or *phi* (φ)[110]. However, it was not firstly defined

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[107] Urn talks about static electricity, describing the sparks that appear if you rub a cat with amber. Precisely, the word 'electricity' comes from the Greek word ἤλεκτρον, 'amber'. Urn fantasizes with multiplying this tiny energy and use it for lightning and as a power source, and store it in jars, like batteries.

[108] Trying to take advantage of his skills, Brutha, the leader of the reformed Omnian Church, proposes to set him out particular problems (in irrigation, architecture), so he can focus in a particular project (*SG*: 351). This seems again a characteristic taken from the absent-minded professor archetype.

[109] He is even open to other round options, like 3.3 or 3.5. In his first appearance, he is measuring this relation in a pie and decides to name this irrational number after it, 'pie' *(P*: 309-310).

[110] There is a compilation of moral aphorisms named *Golden Verses* spuriously attributed to Pythagoras, but I guess they are useless for architecture.

in Greek mathematics by Pythagoreans, but Euclid (VI. *def*. 3)[111]. It is curious that Phtagonal appears related to it, because, like the abhorrent 'pie', *phi* is also an irrational number (1.618…). In the case of the Principles, it has not been possible to find any direct connection between Pythagoreanism and aesthetics. Therefore, it could be a reference to Polyclitus' canon, described in the homonymous treaty. It is lost now, but the book was focused on the human body and sculptures, and Polyclitus aimed at defining artistic perfection through various interrelated mathematical proportions. This mathematic aspect has suggested some kind of Pythagorean inspiration (Tobin 1975; Stewart 1978), although it could have been the other way round (Raven 1951; Pollitt 1995: 22-23). Therefore, in any case, Pythagoras himself was not ever involved in architectural or sculpture theorisation and it was an indirect and unintentional consequence of his thoughts at most.

One of the easiest identifications is that of Legibus with Archimedes[112]. Although aspects of the latter have already appeared in other characters, Legibus is clearly his Discworld double (*Companion*: 143). His cameo in *Small Gods* (128-131) begins as a recreation of the famous Eureka story (Vitr. IX. pr.9-12; Plu. *Mor*. 1094c)[113]. In this case, however, Legibus does not discover how to calculate the purity of a gold crown, but the principle of levers –another discovery attributed to Archimedes[114]. He also starts drawing triangles

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[111] Some scholars have defended that Pythagoreans might have known this number as well; see the analysis in Herz-Fischler 1998: 63-73. See possible pre-Euclid instances of it in Herz-Fischler 1998: 77-99. Actually, the use of φ as the symbol of the Golden Ration was a proposal by the mathematician Mark Barr because he first believed that the Greek sculptor Phidias knew and applied it to his works. Nevertheless, Barr changed his mind afterwards. There have been several suggestions positing that noteworthy Greek buildings, like the Parthenon, were designed following this proportion. Virtually, every ancient famous monument (e.g. Stonehenge, the Great Pyramid) have been the object of similar suggestions.

[112] I wonder if the name Legibus ('law') could be a reference to Archimedes' principle on fluid mechanics.

[113] This anecdote becomes a widespread practice in Discworld, not only by Legibus (in the previous instance he had an idea about the lighthouse) but by the rest of the philosophers as well. Naked philosophers have right of way in the street and it is hinted that Ephebe's hot weather might have attracted philosophers –you do not live long in a cold place if you run out of the bath every time you have a great idea (*SG*: 130; *Companion*: 94). In fact, this seems to be the main reason behind philosophers' expensive fees (see note 68). They require water, soap, towels, loofahs, pumice stones and bath salts. Didactylos never baths (*SG*: 147, 154).

[114] Legibus even paraphrases Archimedes' quote: "Give me a place to stand and with

with a piece of chalk on the wall, which might be based on the anecdote about Archimedes drawing circles during the Roman assault to Syracuse and telling off the soldier who stepped in (Liv. XXV. 31.9; Cic. *Fin*. 19.50; Plu. *Marc*. 19.8-10; Val. Max. VIII. 7, ext. 7)[115]. Legibus, therefore, is the paradigm of the absent-minded professor described above. His "humdingers" were very useful for Ephebe's protection against the Omnian attacks and included "a thirty-foot parabolic reflector on a high place to shoot the rays of the sun at an enemy's ships would be a very interesting demonstration of optical principles […] some intricate device that demonstrated the principles of leverage by incidentally hurling balls of burning sulphur two miles […] some kind of an underwater thing that shot sharpened logs into the bottom of ships" (*SG*: 131)[116]. Legibus' role in the defence of his home city is again inspired in Archimedes, who became a nightmare for the Romans who tried to seize Syracuse. The gadgets here described correspond with some of Archimedes' deadly inventions (Liv. XXIV. 34; Plb. VIII. 5.7 Plu. *Marc*. 15.1-16.3)[117]. Finally, there is a mention of Legibus' screw (*SG*: 203), an obvious reference to Archimedes' screw –whether he was or not the real inventor. The Ephebian philosopher is not only an engineer but also has written a work named *Geometries* (*SG*: 170), a topic to which Archimedes devoted several treaties. Archimedes and Legibus represent again the aforementioned apparent dichotomy between intangible knowledge and practical application (cf. Plu. *Marc*. 14.8, 17.5-12; Lloyd 1973: 94-95; Berryman 2009: 118, 120-123)[118]. Both close this gap and they use their theoretical notions

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a lever I will move the whole world" (D.S. XXVI. 18).

[115] Alternatively, it can be a reference to Socrates' 'lesson' to Meno's slave, which implied drawing geometrical figures (Pl. *Men*. 82b-85b).

[116] Once the Omnians made it to seize Ephebe, they shattered the mirror and look for the inventor. However, because Ephebe is a democracy, they refuse to betray his name (*SG*: 186-187). This response remembers Lope de Vega's play *Fuenteovejuna*. After having killed the evil Commander, all the villagers answer "Fuenteovejuna did it" when interrogated about who the actual murderer was.

[117] The mirror weapon, despite not being mentioned until later accounts (Lucian. *Hipp*. 2; Gal. *Mixt*. III. 2; Zonar. IX. 4), has generated modern discussions (both by classicists and physicists) to prove or dismiss its real viability, especially after Sakkas' experiment in 1973; see Africa 1975; Simms 1977. Even the TV show *Mythbusters* devoted an episode to disprove it (episode 46: "Archimedes' Death Ray" (2006); they had also tested it in episode 16 (2004) and again in episode 157(2010)).

[118] Archimedes wrote also treatises on mechanics.

to actual devices[119]. Therefore, Legibus becomes a bridge between the opposite approaches incarnated by Didactylos and Urn.

'Charcoal' Abraxas is the only openly agnostic philosopher –despite he has talked with the gods (*SG*: 174; *Companion*: 17)[120]. He wrote *On religion* and his alias is obviously a reference to the fact that he has been struck by fifteen lightning so far[121]. Abraxas' reflections focus on how people believe and how they usually shift their faith from the gods themselves to the structure –and the deities end up dying without the so-called believers notice it (*SG*: 176-177). This is a clear criticism of organized religions, especially Christianism[122], which, through the centuries, has evolved into a giant political and economic structure. Abraxas also considers that human belief is what creates gods; therefore, the patriarchal religions are just projections of childhood (*SG*: 231). Epicurus could be posited as a likely model for Abraxas given their attitude towards the gods (Mansfeld 1993; O'Keefe 2010: 155-162; Konstan 2011). Both do not deny their existence, but human behaviour must not be affected by them. Moreover, Epicurus wrote a book called *On the gods*, which can be compared with Abraxas' *On religion*.

Other philosophers are only known by their names and those of their works[123]. Orinjcrates, with his *On the Nature of Plants* (*SG*: 171; *Companion*: 175), can stand for Theophrastus and his works *Enquiry into plants* and *On the causes of plants.* Philo's *Bestiary* is focused on animals, so it could either

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[119] In the description of Legibus' inventions above, it is explicitly stated this step from physics principles (optics, leverages) to real defensive weapons; see Berryman 2020: 233.

[120] Curiously, Abraxas is a Gnostic mystical word.

[121] Abraxas was quite aware of this risk. He had spoken with the gods and he knew that they like atheists because they have someone to point at (cf. *SG*: 231). Despite many thought that he died the last time –they only found his smoking sandals (*SG*: 174)–, it seems that he survived (*SG*: 231).

[122] Given the context of *Small Gods*, it is clear that Christianism (Catholicism) is meant. As seen above (see note 35), Omnia is a theocratic state based on the Church and, precisely, the main plot focuses on how the god Om has seen his power diminished, because nobody, but the young novice Brutha, truly believes in him anymore; see Brown 2004: 282-283.

[123] There is a funny thing about some entries (Ibid, Legibus, Orinjcrates, Pthagonal, Urn, Xeno) in the different editions of the *Companion*. They appear in the original edition of 1994 (*Companion*: 125, 143, 175, 189, 240, 259), but they all vanish in *The New Discworld Companion* (2003) to reappear in *The Turtle Recall* (2012: 195, 223-224, 278, 302, 384, 412).

be Aelian's *On the Nature of Animals* or any of Aristotle's books on zoology, for example[124]. In other cases, we are helpless and it is nearly impossible to make any well-grounded suggestion[125].

Through the novels, there are some other topics that the philosophers talk –or rather, argue– about. These are not based on Greek philosophy, but on more recent thinkers or even coming from other disciplines. The most recurrent is the debate about the equivalence of truth and beauty (*P*: 307; see also *SG:* 131, 154, 237). This is not based on any ancient Greek philosopher's contemplation, but in the last lines of John Keats' poem 'Ode on a Grecian urn'[126]. Ephebian philosophers are also supposed to reflect on whether "Does a Falling Tree in the Forest Make a Sound if There's No one There to Hear It" (*SG*: 131). In Roundworld, this remark is almost a *cliché* for a deep thought, widely represented and versioned in popular media. The first attested form was posited by George Berkeley in 1710. Perception is also the focus of another passing remark found in Discworld: "Is Reality Created by the Observer?" (*SG*: 154). This concept is close to the concept found in physics –especially in quantum mechanics– that the observer changes any phenomenon by the mere act of observation. The wording used in the novel brings it closer to John Archibald Wheeler's Participatory Anthropic Principle. The next idea comes from a humanist thinker, Nicholas of Cusa. The text in the novel is nearly a literal transcription –excluding the quarrelsome bits– of a passage from his *De docta ignorantia*: "I'm telling you, listen, a finite intellect, right, cannot by means of comparison reach the absolute truth of things, because being by nature indivisible, truth excludes the concepts of "more" or "less" so that nothing but truth itself can be the exact measure of truth. You bastards" (*SG*: 139)[127]. Moreover, Ephebian thinkers' have turned Descartes' *Cogito ergo sum* into a kind of non-official motto, expressed by Xeno this way: "We're philosophers. We think, therefore we am" (*SG*: 141). Ibid corrected the grammatical mistake of Xeno ('am' instead of 'are'), which

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[124] The title of Philo's work, however, is a reference to the homonymous medieval books.

[125] Declivities (*SG*: 145); Hierarch's *Theologies* (*SG*: 170); Dykeri's *Principles of Navigation* (*SG*: 212).

[126] "'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'–that is all/ Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know"; cf. *APF*: 34.

[127] Cf. *De docta ignorantia* I. 3.10: "Therefore, it is not the case that by means of likenesses a finite intellect can precisely attain the truth about things. For truth is not something more or something less but is something indivisible. Whatever is not truth cannot measure truth precisely" (Transl. Hopkins 1981: 8).

almost prompted another fight between them. Finally, Ibid, in turn, seems to parody dialectical materialism when he ascertains: "Thesis plus antithesis equals hysteresis" (*SG*: 142)[128].

Ephebian intellectual community is not only made of philosophers. In this select circle, Copolymer, "the greatest storyteller in the history of the world" (*P*: 300; *Companion*: 59), stands out as the only one able to move them with his confusing account of pseudo-historical Ephebian deeds. His narration is focused on the Tsortean Wars, an episode also explored in *Eric*. Copolymer's account is chaotic, full of digressions, repetitions, emendations and confusing details. The repetition is a memory and metric resource often used in Homeric and other epic poems –although it seems is not working very well to Copolymer–, and digressions of different length are also found elsewhere in this genre. Copolymer also tries to introduce some grandiloquent descriptions and epithets. Therefore, Pratchett mixes some recurring elements in epic poetry and, except for Copolymer's sloppy performance, it could be a good Discworld version of the Homeric poems[129]. However, Copolymer should be rather identified with a mere rhapsodist than with Homer or any other great author[130].

Other artists and writers attested in Ephebe are Iesope, "the greatest teller of fables in the world", and Antiphon[131], "the greatest writer of comic

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[128] These concepts can be traced back to earlier authors like Hegel or Fichte; see *APF*: 59.

[129] Copolymer's account includes a Discworld version of the famous phrase from the *Aeneid*: "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentis*" (II. 49). "I fear the Ephebians, especially when they're mad enough to leave bloody great wooden livestock on the doorstep, talk about nerve, they must think we was born yesterday, set fire to it" (*P*: 301-302). Later, he describes Elenor (i.e. Discworld's Helen of Troy) was the "face that launched a thousand camels" (*P*: 311), 'paraphrasing' Christopher Marlowe's "the face that launched a thousand ships".

[130] Copolymer's name is not helpful: it is simply the name of a certain plastic. In *APF* (34), it is suggested that he can be also identified with Herodotus. However, the theme and the genre –a clumsy attempt at epic poetry– does not fit him, although Herodotus' digressions in his work are also noteworthy.

[131] He differs from the general description for the rest of the noteworthy Ephebians (bald head and white long beard). Antiphon seems to be made of pork (*P*: 303). Antiphon was a common Greek name and also it is the term for a type of Christian short chant. It is curious because Omnians, Discworld Christians (see note 35), despised theatre, especially because their plays have gods in (*SG*: 24-25). Christian authors also loathed theatre; see, e.g., August. *C.D.* I. 32-33; Tert. *Spec.*; Chrys. *theatr.*

plays in the world" (*P*: 303; *Companion*: 28, 125). Their names and descripttions are clear enough to identify them with Aesop and Aristophanes, respectively. We know about two different fables by Iesope. The first one is about a fox, a turkey, a goose and a wolf competing to see who could resist more time underwater with weights tied to their feet (*P*: 305). It looks that here Iesope is not relying on his Roundworld lookalike[132]. The second is the famous Aesop's fable of the fox and the grapes (Perry 15; *Companion*: 125)[133]. Antiphon's comedies seem to be slapstick pieces. Although they cannot be merely defined as such, Aristophanes' plays are also full of knockabout gags (MacDowell 1988; Kaimio *et al*. 1990; Griffith 2015). Antiphon also stands out as one of the main defenders of going to war against Tsort (*P*: 311). This pro-war stance is apparently contrary to Aristophanes' opposition to the Peloponnesian War, which could have found its way to his plays[134]. However, he was not, strictly speaking, a pacifist and Aristophanes would have simply been against the war against other Greek states. He praised the heroes of the Persian Wars, so Aristophanes and Antiphon might have agreed on a conflict against foreign enemies[135]. Finally, there is a singular individual that also attends to the philosophers' symposia and nearly does not open his mouth –apart from some occasional encouraging whispers–, but he writes down everything the rest of the attendants say. He is Endos, a paid Listener (*P*: 305-306). He might be identified with the almost anonymous secondary characters recurrently found in philosophical dialogues, like those about Socrates (*APF*: 34).

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[132] Only some loosely-related fables can be posited as possible inspiration: "The Fox and the Goat in the well" (Perry 9), "The Ass with a burden of salt" (Perry 180) or "The Foxes at the Meander River" (Perry 232)

[133] There are no details about how the story goes in Discworld's version. We are only told that it is especially appreciated by farmers, who know the importance to lock up their grapes every night.

[134] Scholars have disagreed about Aristophanes' alleged pacifism in some of his works, especially in *Acharnians*; cf. Gomme 1938; Forrest 1963; Newiger 1981; Bowie 1982; MacDowell 1983; Carey 1993.

[135] Another detail related to Greek theatre is how Vorbis, the head of the Omnian Quisition, dies (*SG*: 323). His death is identical to that of Aeschylus, whose head was hit by a tortoise dropped by an eagle (Plin. *NH*. X. 3.7; Val. Max. IX. 12, ext. 2); see *APF*: 62.

Ephebian warfare

Ephebe's historical enemy is Tsort. This mutual hatred began with the kidnapping of Elenor, which prompted the Tsortean Wars[136]. As stated above, Tsort can be surely identified with Troy in this context (see note 129; cf. Vail 2008c). Nevertheless, this correspondence Tsort/Troy does not work for the events described in *Pyramids* and *Small Gods.* After all, Troy ceased to be a significant regional power after its destruction by the Achaeans. Given the never-ending rivalry between Ephebe and Tsort, it would be tempting to suggest that the latter might represent Persia[137]. There are few details about Tsort in the books[138], but it seems that this possibility cannot stand either. Tsort is not a huge empire, but a country not much bigger than Ephebe. Their respective strength is quite similar and this is the reason why Djelibeybi is kept as a buffer state (*supra*). This mix of characteristics prevents any certain identification. However, this dynamic of permanent contained tension between two similar powers rather resembles the relation between the Roman Empire and, consecutively, Carthage, Parthia and Sassanian Persia.

Tsortean Wars –or rather, their end– are narrated in *Eric*. The protagonists, Eric and the wizzard [sic] Rincewind, are moved there after the former wishes to meet the most beautiful girl ever in the Disc. This is none other than Elenor of Tsort, Discworld response to Helen of Troy[139]. They appear

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[136] Although poor Antiphon did not first get it right due to Copolymer's confusing account and thought that the Ephebians were the ones who had abducted the queen (*P*: 311); see also *E*: 90.

[137] Any reader of the Spanish edition of *Pyramids* might rather think in Sparta because in a strange display of creativity by the translator the name of Tsort is changed to Espadarta, a mix between the word for sword ('espada') and the Peloponnesian polis. Fortunately, Tsort is the toponym that appears in the rest of the books. This is not the only example of odd translation in this edition of *Pyramids*. The philosopher Ibid becomes Ídem and Lavaeolus, Discworld Odysseus, is baptised as Hermosus ('Handsomus').

[138] We are told that Tsort is a desert country –perhaps because of the extreme exploitation of their forests for building wooden horses– and it is culturally similar to Djelibeybi –they worship the same gods and, in a previous historical period, Tsorteans built pyramids; see *P*: 169; *Companion*: 224; *Atlas*: 82. There is a certain Mausoleum of Tsort whose name seems to be based on Mausolus of Caria (*E*: 116)

[139] However, as they are about to realise, nothing lasts forever and, after ten years and rearing several children, Elenor's looks is not what they expected (*E*: 114-115). Anyway, as Rincewind pinpoints, Elenor was born thousands of years before Eric was, so it could have hardly worked (*E*: 97).

inside a dark place, which are about to discover that it is a giant wooden horse[140]. The use of this type of device seems to become a general practice in Tsortean and Ephebian warfare[141], which found its utmost expression in the preparations of the conflict in *Pyramids.* The situation is still more hilarious taking into account that, despite the stubbornness of both sides in keep building wooden horses, they have never actually fooled somebody. In *Eric* (85-91), the Tsorteans brought it into the city before the Ephebian warriors could hide inside. Tsorteans were waiting full-armed around it, after having heard them sawing and hammering all night long and noticing that the horse had airholes[142]. In *Pyramids*, despite thousands of years have passed after this last war[143], both armies push themselves to build their own wooden horses. At the dawn, two ranks of these devices unperturbedly stand face to face. Nevertheless, this does not prevent Ephebians to feel that they still have a winning strategy[144]. We ignore when and how this standstill would have ended because then Djelibeybi reappears between the two armies[145].

   This wider implementation of the wooden horse stratagem is another example of Pratchett's liking to play with the consequences of taking an anecdote and turning it into common practice, like philosophers living in barrels or running out naked from their bathtubs. However, the real point behind these war scenes is to show the stubbornness and blindness of the officers

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[140] Firstly, they think they are inside a ship (*E*: 85). Curiously, some archaeologists defend that the 'horse' was actually a boat; see Ruiz de Arbulo 2009; Tiboni 2016.

[141] In Tsort, they worship Dora, the god horse of war (*Atlas*: 82). The name might stem from the Greek word for 'gift', δῶρον (δῶρα in plural).

[142] Finally, the horse played no actual role in the fall of Tsort. In fact, Eric and Rincewind, after escaping from the Tsortean soldiers, opened a sally port and this is the way the Ephebians stormed into the city. This fact was well-known for later Ephebians, as Copolymer's account proves (*P*: 301-302). Therefore, it is still more illogical that they hold steady with this useless stratagem.

[143] The strategy is exactly the same as during the Tsortean Wars; *P*: 383: "They'll find us, see, and be so impressed they'll drag us all the way back to their city, and then when it's dark we'll leap out and put them to the sword" (continues in note 168).

[144] *P*: 408: "anyone bloody stupid enough to think we're going to drag a lot of horses full of soldiers back to our city is certainly daft enough to drag ours all the way back to theirs. QED."

[145] Remember that Djelibeybi has disappeared and, therefore, there was not a buffer country between each other anymore; see note 33. The only military tactic mentioned in the books, apart from siege and assault, is tortoise formation (*SG:* 289) – although the one who mentions it is an Omnian officer. This formation (*testudo*) was widely used by the Roman armies.

and how they recklessly cause the death of the foot soldiers. Pratchett is not interested at all in a faithful recreation or reinterpretation of ancient warfare. The military action is pushed to the background in *Eric* and there is no actual fighting in *Pyramids* and *Small Gods* (with the exception of the brief passages about the slave uprising in Ephebe; see note 56). Apart from getting some funny gags, Pratchett real concern in these chapters is to stress the absurdity of war in general and the hypocrisy of those in power, who impassively send to a certain death their fellow citizens, for the sake of an inane honour[146]. Therefore, as we will see, some passing details with Classical flavour cover up a broader stance about war.

In Discworld, epic heroes rather look like selfish bullies with lust for glory. They regard the rest of the soldiers as cannon folder and they are prone to strategies that imply a sure carnage and a longer war, so they can gain more honour (*E*: 101-102, 108)[147]. When the Tsortean Wars come to an end, soldiers of both sides are quite satisfied with the outcome and they even backslap their former foes and exchange anecdotes and shields[148], like football players at the end of a game. Evidently, they do not care about how much this war has affected the civilians (*E*: 121). It is all about honour and social graces[149]. After all, in Discworld, the city is burnt, but the country is not annihilated and lasts for thousands of years afterwards.

This honourable and fair warfare seems to echo some ancient idealisations about how war should take place. Certainly, there were some (more

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[146] This is further explored in other books of the series, like *Jingo* or *Monstrous Regiment*.

[147] This is evident in the way these 'heroes' deal with the last assault to Tsort's citadel, where the remnant enemy army is closed and it is throwing big rocks from the heights. The Ephebian generals' strategy is simply to send enough men so some of them can make it until the gates and storm in. In the meanwhile, they are posing for statues and checking that their names find their way properly in the historical accounts (*E*: 102); cf. E. *Andr*. 693-699.

[148] The exchange of shields is especially shocking in relation to Greek warfare. Enemy shields were usually consecrated as a votive offering in sanctuaries because they represented an undisputed claim of the victory against these foes; see Pritchett 1979: 256-276; Lonis 1980: 160; Gabaldón Martínez 2004: 126-130; Mendoza 2019: 114. Cf. note 167.

[149] This type of fraternity even between enemies reminds of the episode of the meeting of Glaucus and Diomedes, who prioritised their familiar guest-friendship and they did not fight each other and even exchanged their armours (Hom. *Il.* VI. 119-236). On honour in Pratchett's novels, see Mendlesohn 2004: 248-257.

or less) universal rules accepted by most of the Greek *poleis* –although it was probably rather for practical reasons than for real fair play[150]. The so-called agonal warfare, mostly represented by pitched battle, was an ideal conception of war, almost like a game or a ritual, which stands against the actual evidence for warfare in Greece indeed (cf. Krentz 2002; Van Wees 2004: 115-117, 150, 2007: 281-282; Wheeler / Strauss 2007: 190-192)[151]. These ideas never completely disappeared, but the real goal of any conflict was to get the victory by any means necessary and appeals for honour were easier when the enemy was not at your gates (Van Wees 2004: 126-128). War was far from being completely regulated and probably chaos was the only main rule in most of the cases[152]. In consequence, proper agonal battles might have been rather exceptional than a common practice. In this ideal agonal warfare, trickery and deception, as found in the wooden horse strat-agem –or storming in through a sally port, indeed–, were excluded. There-fore, it is curious that Tsorteans still congratulate the Ephebians when they have finally succeeded by dishonest methods. In fact, it is more likely that Tsorteans would have been massacred or enslaved (Ducrey 1968: *passim*; Pritchett 1991: 203-312; Krentz 2002: 30-31, 33-34; Van Wees 2004: 148-150). Moreover, the resentment held by both nations during the forthcoming centuries as stated in *Pyramids* makes it harder to accept that they really ended on good terms at the end of the war (cf. Van Wees 2007: 288)[153].

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[150] For example, in Discworld, they cannot fight at night, while raining or during the harvest season (*P*: 381). There were similar non-written rules in Greek warfare. Night battles were almost unfeasible and only one sure instance is known (Epipolae during the Sicilian expedition) and it was a disaster for the attackers. Additionally, it was perceiving as deceitful; cf. Curt. IV. 13.3-10; Plu. *Alex*. 31.11-12; Arr. *An*. III. 10: Pritch-ett 1974: 164-169; Van Wees 2004: 131-132. Bad weather was avoided in warfare: Van Wees 2004: 113. On the harvest, see below.

[151] Hornblower's (2007) approach challenges some conceptions about how war was perceived by ancient authors.

[152] There were some non-written rules but mostly focused on the previous stages and the aftermath; see Van Wees 2004: 134-138; cf. Pritchett 1974: 147. The concept of war without herald or truce (*polemos akeryktos* or *aspondos*), in which normal rules were not applied, precisely stresses the importance of the surrounding circum-stances in opposition to the actual development of the battle; see Wheeler / Strauss 2007: 190; cf. Krentz 2002: 25-27.

[153] Anyway, as we will see, certain accounts could have distorted the real events in the next centuries. This aspect is one of the central topics of the novel *Thud!*, in which the accepted versions by the trolls and the dwarves, respectively, of the Battle of the Koom Valley are discrepant and they have been the fuel of their enmity across the

This attitude is contrasted with that of Lavaeolus, Discworld Odysseus[154] (*E*: 107-110; *Companion*: 140). He is considered a revolutionary military thinker because he looks for strategies that do not imply massacres –what prompts the mistrust of his fellow generals. His methods imply bribery and this is the way he had previously infiltrated within Tsort to find a secret and safer path into the citadel[155]. When the time travellers tell him that his peers will burn down the city, he resignedly says that it sounds like the typical heroic sort of thing they love (*E*: 117-118)[156]. Lavaeolus appears as being much dissociated from the rest of the generals –"a bunch of meat-headed morons" (*E*: 117), in his own words–, loathing this manly and violent culture[157]. Although Odysseus' cunning is contrasted with the brutality of other fighters like Ajax the Lesser or Achilles himself in the Trojan cycle, he also takes part in this brutal world and he does not hesitate when having to slay a man (e.g., Dolon, Rhesus (Hom. *Il*. X) or the suitors) or inflicting physical violence (Thersites: Hom. *Il.* II. 211-279). Odysseus' role in the sack of Troy is not very different from that of the rest of the Achaeans: he took Queen Hecuba as booty[158] and, according to some versions, he was the one who instigated or perpetrated the assassination of the little son of Hector, Astyanax (Procl. *Chr*. 4 West; cf. E. *Tr*. 719-725). The multifaceted nature of Odysseus is clearly exemplified by Homer's epithets, which combine some that highlight

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ages. The book is the search for the truth to stop an imminent war.

[154] Lavaeolus' name is a cod-Latin version for Rincewind, who seems to be his descendant. The subsequent story of Lavaeolus is almost identical to that of Odysseus: the return to his home lasted ten years and he had to deal with seducing witches and sirens, among others. Once at home, Lavaeolus found his house crowded by suitors and initially, he was only recognised by his dog, who died afterwards, like Odysseus' Argos –even though, in Discworld, the poor animal died because it had been carrying Lavaeolus' slippers for fifteen years (*E*: 111-112, 114). Finally, when Rincewind and Eric go to hell at the end of the book (*E*: 180), they find there Lavaeolus, opposite to what happens in the *Odyssey*, where Odysseus is the one who travels there and meets some late friends.

[155] This infiltration resembles Odysseus and Diomedes' raid into Troy to steal the Palladium because, according to a prophecy, Troy would not fall as long as it was kept inside its walls.

[156] Actually, the fire was not finally started by the Ephebians, but by Rincewind, who accidentally drops an oil lamp (*E*: 120).

[157] He even despises the banquets, where they drink and boast about their deeds in Tsort (*E*: 117).

[158] Her story is mostly narrated in Euripides' *The Trojan Women* and *Hecuba*.

his artfulness with others that stress his military prowess[159]. Odysseus' astuteness is not focused on lessening the casualties like Lavaeolus', but many times it has more cruel purposes and effects[160].

The novels also reflect on how certain narratives help to justify going to war and how they endorse an epic and idealised conception of it. War is both a civic duty and a chance to carry out heroic deeds (*E*: 93). Historians and poets many times focus on some superfluous and dazzling details that hide the real facts[161]. In contrast, they do not usually notice the most unromantic aspects: "unlucky generals would get their heads chopped off, large sums of money would be paid in tribute to the winners [cf. Pritchett 1974: 40-42; Van Wees 2004: 30-32]), everyone would go home for the harvest [cf. Goodman / Holladay 1986: 153; Krentz 2002: 27; Van Wees 2004: 102, 106, 113, 121-122]" (*E*: 98). All these elements are simply ruled out when "honor and revenge and duty and things like that" (*SG*: 341) are raised, blinding even the wisest men, like the philosophers. Certainly, honour was not the only driving force behind ancient war, but it is important not to try to rationalize in excess and always look for hidden causes. Honour was a strong enough motive to go to war (Van Wees 2007: 288-290; cf. Pritchett 1991: 438-456). There is no logic in war, as Didactylos points out[162]. The army is depicted as a place with no room for personal initiative, where the soldiers blindly obey even the most suicidal and ludicrous orders from their superiors[163]. Therefore, Pratchett stressed the key role that the warmongering discourses played in creating a favourable state of mind both in society

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[159] He is called 'of many wiles' (πολύμητις, *Il*. I. 311), 'peer of Zeus in counsel' (Διὶ μῆτιν ἀτάλαντον, *Il*. II. 169), 'resourceful' (πολυμήχανος, *Il*. II. 173), but also 'sacker of cities' (πτολίπορθος, *Il*. II. 278), 'of the enduring soul' (τλήμονα θυμὸν, *Il*. V. 670), 'warlike' (δαΐφρων, *Il*. XI. 482 –combined with ποικιλομήτης, 'full of various wiles'), 'famed for his spear' (δουρὶ κλυτὸς, *Il.* XI. 661; δουρικλειτός, XVI. 26). We have only recorded here one instance for every epithet.

[160] For example, he plotted how to get rid of Palamedes. This Achaean warrior was executed after Odysseus had falsified evidence to accuse him of conspiring with the Trojans (Hyg. *Fab*. 105).

[161] On the inexistence of a heroic code in Homer, see Van Wees 2004: 160-162.

[162] According to Ibid, "war makes it very difficult to think straight" (*P*: 291).

[163] In *Eric* (96), it appears a recurrent dichotomy –comic or strained, depending on the genre– found in films and series between a young, tenderfoot graduated officer and an older, seasoned subordinate. The former clings to the manual no matter what, while the latter, who graduated from the University of Life, has a more practical approach.

and the army, creating a false and idealised image of what war really is[164]. The bias in historical and poetic narratives perpetuates centuries-old enmities as seen in *Pyramids*. Despite not having fought for thousands of years, Ephebians consider that the war with Tsort is inevitable due to historical and honour reasons (*P*: 290-291). The rivalry is not perceived as a long-gone episode of their history, but as a quite alive one, like the philosophers' reaction to Copolymer's recital shows (*supra*). They do not have any specific reason to go to war, they simply have to because it has ever been this way[165] –or so they have been told.

Probably, one of the most telling episodes about the difference between these high ideals and the real face of war is the account of the escalation between Tsort and Ephebe in *Pyramids.* After the sudden disappearance of Djelibeybi, two border patrols, one from each country, meet in the new frontier. The respective commanders of these units can chat about this unexpected event and some more prosaic topics, such as the rations. However, they are aware that once the armies arrive in the area, one of them will be annihilated. There is no glimpse of resentment or hate, quite the opposite. There is a tacit understanding and sympathy because there is no real difference between those men (*P*: 347-348). The inherent futility of honour is also underlined when, finally, the Tsortean army seems to be the first that is going to arrive at the frontier and, in consequence, the Ephebian border patrol is about to be annihilated. Then, the Ephebian officer orders one of his men to run to the city and deliver a final message "Go, tell the Ephebians– […] what kept you?" (*P*: 377). These anticlimactic 'last words' sum up well the actual feeling that arouses in those men when they are about to face death. It is not honour, but pure self-preservation what actually emerges.

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[164] Nevertheless, according to Pratchett's opinion, contemporary authors are not to blame for flattering the mightiest warriors: it is safer to not alienate them as long as they are still alive given their aforementioned bloodthirstiness (*E*: 101) –the introduction of the remark "Some talk of Alexander and some of Hercules, of Hector and Lysander" is a reference to the first lines of the march 'The British Grenadiers' (*APF*: 40). Pratchett's commentary reminds one of the reasons put forward by Arrian (*An*. I. pref.2) to justify the choice of Ptolemy and Aristobulus as his main sources: because they wrote when Alexander was already dead and, in consequence, there was no reason for adulation.

[165] Herodotus' preface to his *Histories* specifies that his objective is to trace back the origins of the conflicts between Greeks and barbarians. The first precedent for him is Io's kidnapping by the Phoenicians.

This passage combines two well-known stories about self-sacrifice in Ancient Greece: Philippides' race between Marathon and Athens –he allegedly died right after his arrival–, and the Spartans' last stand at Thermopylae. The former is a later –and now, more popular– version of the real events because the messenger actually ran between Athens and Sparta to ask for military aid against the Persians (Hdt. VI. 105-106)[166]. 'Go, tell the Ephebians–' is clearly based on Simonides' epigram engraved in the burial mound of the Lacedemonians: "Foreigner, go tell the Spartans that we lie here obedient to their commands" Hdt. VII. 238.2). This latter praises the honourable self-sacrifice and the stoical and dutiful acceptance of death, while the Ephebian, in contrast, reproaches his countrymen that they will die due to their slowness. Fortunately for him, the Ephebian army arrives on time and the patrol soldiers can save their lives –for the moment, at least. As we have seen, both armies build their ultimate weapon next: the wooden horses. In the interior of these devices, the soldiers try to banish their fears and honour is very present in their thoughts in two ways. First of all, their honour does not allow them to turn back, as the mother of one of the soldiers had told him before departing that he should come back with his shield or on it (*P*: 384). This is again based on a famous Spartan saying (Plu. *Mor*. 241f), which basically meant that there were only two honourable ways to return home: victorious or death[167]. The Ephebians also think about how they will be praised if they come back triumphantly, no matter what they had actually done on the battlefield. Pratchett's stresses here the paradox about being considered a hero for savage and gruesome acts, which are completely forbidden in normal life[168]. This is not exclusive to ancient warfare and this is expressed

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[166] The first extant story about a messenger between Athens and Marathon is found in Plutarch (*Mor.* 347c-d), but his name was either Eucles or Thersippus. The first to state that Philippides was the one who ran was Lucian (*Laps*. 3).

[167] Returning alive without the shield meant that one had cowardly run away from the enemy; see note 148. Although they were dispatched by Leonidas and allowed to return home, the only two soldiers that survived the battle of Thermopylae suffered the disdain of their countrymen. One of them killed himself and the other acted almost in a suicidal way in the next battle (Plataea) to prove his bravery and/or die in combat –what prompted the Spartans' contempt as well: Hdt. VII. 231-232, IX. 71.

[168] For instance: "Or put the sword to them. One or the other. And then we'll sack the city, bum the walls and sow the ground with salt" (*P*: 383; the first part is in note 143). The detail about salting the soil probably refers to the alleged punishment that Carthage suffered after its defeat by Rome in 146 BCE. However, it was a non-historical detail added by later authors; see Ridley 1986; Stevens 1988; Visonà 1988.

by the fact that the troops inside the horse write letters to their families – using wax tablets and styli–, which fits better with more modern examples. This scene, with an unbearable feeling of fatality floating in the air, seems to come directly from a trench during the Great War.

This historical enmity, however, is put aside in *Small Gods*, when the Ephebian insurrection has succeeded and a coalition against Omnia is formed (*SG*: 274). This does not exclude some tension between the allies, especially because the respective generals think that they are the ones heading the expedition (*SG*: 332). In this episode, Pratchett also includes more realistic notes about what war entails, focusing here on the aftermath. The end of a war is not the end of all wars[169], but the seed for the next one. The Omnian Brutha provides a detailed description of what would happen if the alliance invades his country:

> "You will probably defeat us. But not all of us. And then what will you do? Leave a garrison? Forever? And eventually a new generation will retaliate. Why you did this won't mean anything to them. You'll be the oppressors. They'll fight. They might even win. And there'll be another war." (*SG*: 335)

Honour is only useful to perpetuate eye-for-eye strategies, always excusing oneself because the other did it first (see note 165). Certainly, Omnia had domineered those countries, but the solution cannot simply be that the oppressed turn into the new oppressors. All the societies in history have tried to justify, lessen or hide their real behaviour in battle, many times contrasting their own 'civilized' way of war and motivations with the 'barbarian' approach of their enemies. However, as Pratchett's description clearly shows, there is no significant difference and it is simply hypocritical:

> "When news gets through that a huge enemy fleet has beached with the intent of seriously looting, pillaging, and –because they are from civilized countries– whistling and making catcalls at the women and impressing them with their flash bloody uniforms and wooing them away with their flash bloody consumer goods, […] then people either head for the hills or pick up some handy, swingable object, get

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[169] 'Only the dead have seen the end of war' is a famous saying attributed to Plato. However, this remark –or a similar one– cannot be found in any of his texts. It seems that it was actually written by George Santayana in *Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies* (1922).

Granny to hide the family treasures in her drawers, and prepare to make a fight of it." (*SG*: 337-338)

War and/or invasion for the sake of spreading civilization or democracy to poor 'undeveloped' countries is not an altruistic act, but a lie to justify colonialism and imperialism[170]. The description of this asymmetric trading is a widespread image of how colonial powers ripped off indigenous people, obtaining from them valuable goods in exchange for trinkets. Civilized warfare is simply an oxymoron to conceal what any type of armed conflict implies and how the invasion of foreign lands and the exploitation of its inhabitants is simply for the sake of profit.

As stated, the only aspects that refer to a Classical-like setting are superficial. There are some passing details about the panoply used by the soldiers and the army organization, both Ephebian and Tsortean, which are almost indistinguishable. In this first aspect, it seems there is no much change in the panoply between the Tsortean Wars and the later period, despite many centuries have gone by. The descriptions follow the popular image of Greek soldiers. Weapons are mostly spears (*E*: 88; *P*: 346, 407; *SG*: 338), swords (*P*: 346; *SG*: 334) and shields (*E*: 121; *P*: 384). Bows are only attested for the guards of the Tyrant's palace in Ephebe (*SG*: 133, 189)[171]. This aspect allows drawing parallelism between them and the so-called Scythian archers that were employed as 'policemen' in Athens (Plassart 1913; Bäbler 2005). The rest of the equipment fits the standard image: crested/plumed (*E*: 88, 103; *P*: 290, 343; *SG*: 126, 333) and bronze masked helmets (*P*: 344)[172], breastplates, belts (*P*: 348), scale armour (*SG*: 333)[173]. They also use bugles to call to arms (*E*: 93)[174].

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[170] Another twisted concept is that of preventive warfare, which Pratchett also includes in the list of dishonest reasons to justify starting a war. *P*: 291: "'If we don't attack them, they'll attack us first,' said Ibid. 'S'right,' said Xeno' So we'd better retaliate before they have a chance to strike.'" Probably it is one of the few instances in which Xeno and Ibid agree.

[171] There is also a passing reference to Ephebian bows when Omnians suggest that better bows could be the reason why they are always defeated (*SG*: 24). Bows and arrows also appear, of course, in the test of Xeno's paradoxes; see note 71.

[172] This type of helmet might be resembling of the Corinthian ones.

[173] Copolymer's account (*P*: 300-302) includes shiny armours, spears, shields and swords.

[174] On the use of trumpets in Greek warfare, see Krentz 1991.

Both Tsorteans and Ephebians have elephants in their armies[175]. Firstly, they were regarded as an offensive weapon and the generals pushed to breed bigger animals. Finally, they were set aside because they were rather a risk for their own army than to the enemy's because they easily panicked. Elephants were introduced in Greek warfare in the Hellenistic period, when they produced a noteworthy first shock rather due to their aspect and size. They were especially effective against cavalry because many times horses panicked in front of them. After the initial impact, rival armies found strategies and methods to face them or to turn them against their own troops (Scullard 1974; cf. Sabin / De Souza 2007: 419-421). During the events of *Pyramids*, elephants are only used as pack animals to carry the materials to build the wooden horses (*P*: 342-343). Finally, we have already seen that Legibus' inventions provided the Ephebian army with more exotic key weapons to defeat its enemies (parabolic mirrors, catapults…) –although they seem to be only for defensive purposes.

On the fleet, the only details found in the books is that there are triremes and quinquiremes (*E*: 89). In Discworld, it seems that a part of the rowers are prisoners or galley slaves. This is a popular misconception influenced by more recent historical practices and influential films like *Ben-Hur* (1959). However, both in Greece and Rome, there was no such punishment for criminals or prisoners of war[176]. Rowers could be either citizens, mercenaries, metics or slaves[177]. Depending on their status, oarsmen were placed in upper or lower benches[178]. Ephebian fleet seems to be quite significant and

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[175] There is just a passing reference to cavalry (*P*: 290), probably a patrol squadron.

[176] The only possible instance comes from a Ptolemaic-period papyrus. However, it is not a reference to a galley slave strictly speaking. It says that if a guard fails to find a runaway rower, he would have to take the place in the boat; see Casson 1967: 40-43, 1971: 327-328 n. 22.

[177] Slaves rowing in a vessel must not be confused with galley slaves. Most of them were slaves that went with their masters, who also enlisted as rowers. On ancient oarsmen –both in Greece and Rome–, see Thiel 1954: 74-78; Casson 1966, 1971: 322-328; Van Wees 2004: 62-64, 73, 82-83, 209-213, 218, 309 n. 45; Hunt 2007: 139-140; Krentz 2007: 150; Strauss 2007: 226-228, 234-235; Pitassi 2009: 24.

[178] In this aspect, Pratchett is accurate. While being interrogated, Eric and Rincewind are threatened to be sent as rowers in the Tsortean fleet. If they are collaborative, they will be assigned to the upper bench; otherwise, they will spend the next years in the hellish lowest seats (*E*: 89). In Greek vessels, upper rows were assigned to citizens and it was a way over more pleasant and breezy place to be than in the stifling lowest rows, where the slaves were sent; see Van Wees 2004: 211, 229-230, 2007: 295.

they threaten Omnia with coastal raids if they do not sign the peace treaty (*SG*: 159)[179].

The first sight of the armies described in the novels seems to show they are formed by professional combatants, not by citizen-soldiers like Classical Greece hoplites. They seem to make up a social class different from the civilians[180] and the officers seem to have attended military academies (see note 163)[181]. The only remarkable difference between the armies in *Eric* and the other two books is the presence in the former of a stronger overall aristocratic flavour. The presence of a board of generals –or rather, epic heroes– is very close to the council of *basileis* in the *Iliad*, despite no *wanax* Agamemnon (*primus inter pares*) is known (*SG*: 102-103)[182]. In the same way, it seems that there is a full hierarchy of ranks[183] and the clearly distinguished position of the generals in *Eric* seems to reflect an aristocratic order. In this aspect, it seems to be some Roman terminological contamination and there are Ephebian –and Tsortean– centurions (*E*: 101, 106)[184]. More modern ranks, like sergeant (*P*: 347), are also attested. The soldiers are paid with salt (*E*: 101), a quite spread but untrue popular myth about Roman armies[185].

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[179] The sea dominion reminds of the hegemonic position of Athens and the Delian League. Sea raids were the main strategy of the Athenians during the Peloponnesian War.

[180] Civilians are banned from direct participation. Their involvement is regarded as a violation of the rules of war. While the combatants are fighting each other, civic life seems to go on as usual (*E*: 98-100); cf. Krentz 2002: 27. The evidence for Ancient Greece shows that civic institutions shaped the military organization and armies replicate the polis' working; see Hornblower 2007: 28-34. On the relation between generals and the state, see Pritchett 1974: 34-58.

[181] Some of the subjects are Classical Tactics, Valedictory Odes and Military Grammar (*E*: 96). The only 'similar' institutions could be the Spartan *agoge* –or, to a lesser extent, Athenian epheby– but this training included all the citizen body; see Pritchett 1974: 208-231.

[182] Actually, a sort-of-Agamemnon is mentioned in Copolymer's narration, but no name is given (*P*: 300-301). Alternatively, a board of *strategoi* can be suggested, but the Homeric flavour of the chapter does not back it (*supra*). Moreover, in *Small Gods*, only a general (Argavisti) seems to be in charge of the Ephebian army. Nevertheless, contrary to Homeric heroes, they are not *promachoi* and prefer to wait at the rear.

[183] On the strange nature of military hierarchy for Ancient Greeks, see Hornblower 2007: 35.

[184] The main general in the Tsortean army seems to be named Imperiator [sic] (*SG*: 332). In Rome, the title Imperator was originally a military office as well.

[185] On the payments in Greek armies, see Pritchett 1971: 3-29.

At the same time, soldiers seem to have also farms or fields they have to take care of (*supra*) and there are some passing references, as seen above, about the war as a civic duty. Despite this latter statement, it is not clear that soldiers in the Ephebian army are all citizens. Given the socio-political situation in this country, an army only formed by citizens would not be very numerous, but if non-citizens are included the situation radically changes[186]. Unfortunately, no figures are provided[187]. Pratchett's lack of interest in recreating ancient armies explains why we find mixed or contradictory characteristics. The focus of these chapters are not the tactics or the course of the battles, but the dynamics within the armies and between rank-and-file and officers. In these, more modern images and descriptions of warfare are wanted because they are more familiar –and, therefore, compelling– for the readers, the ultimate object of Pratchett's statements.

In conclusion, the model of the Ephebian army appears more similar to a modern one –with some ancient-like external additions– than to a Classical one. As stated, Pratchett's objective was rather to prompt a reflection about war than to parody ancient battles. Therefore, he prioritised more general ideas, which the reader could identify him/herself with and really leave a mark on him/her about nowadays society[188]. The theme of war appears in several of his novels and, therefore, it is not possible to synthesise here Pratchett's ideas about it. However, as attested here, we can say that Pratchett was not really interested in elaborating on the most gruesome details of war, but on the ways citizens are subtly manipulated to legitimise war. Although set in a fantastic world, the books reproduce messages that sound familiar in our world and they stand as a perennial warning and guide against them.

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[186] The only detail about it is focused on the guerrilla warfare that erupts in Ephebe after the Omnian invasion. In this case, it seems that both slaves and citizens take part, although the numerical superiority of the former implies that they were the main force; see note 56.

[187] The only figure is found in *Eric* (101-102), but it is a general remark about the typical strategies of those insensitive commanders who sent thousands (50,000 in this example) of their men to death.

[188] Probably, the clearest example of it is *Only you can save mankind*, from Johnny Maxwell's series. Published in 1992, the Gulf War and its media coverage clearly influenced the novel, as Pratchett himself admitted.

Carelinus the Great

The deeds of Carelinus are narrated in *The Last Hero*. The identification of this Discworld character with Alexander the Great is undeniable (Pratchett / Simpson 2008: 368-371)[189]. The details about his life are told by the Minstrel to the aged leader of the Silver Horde, Cohen the Barbarian. Carelinus built the biggest empire in Discworld, which covered almost the entire known world[190]. After his conquests, he turned back home and reigned for a few years. When Carelinus died, his sons quarrelled and dismembered the empire (*LH*: 92)[191]. Carelinus' life is clearly shaped following the main outlines of Alexander's. However, the latter never returned home and he only lived for less than three years after the end of his main expedition at the Hyphasis River[192]. Alexander's lack of a legitimate heir at his death –his wife Rhoxane was pregnant at that moment– was precisely one of the main reasons behind the dismemberment of his kingdom by his ambitious generals[193].

There are two prominent anecdotes the book characters argue about: Carelinus' weeping because there were out-of-reach worlds to conquer (*LH*: 92) and the unbinding of the Tsortean knot (*LH*: 80, 119-120). The first is a version of an anecdote found in Plutarch (*Mor.* 466d) and Valerius Maximus (VIII. 14, ext. 2) about Alexander's reaction to Anaxarchus' theory of multiple worlds. However, Alexander's wept because there were infinite worlds and he was not even the lord of one. The story adapted in Discworld is not directly based on Plutarch or Valerius, but in later traditions that transformed

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[189] Certainly, there is no indication that Carelinus was Ephebian, but given his obvious identification, it is worth devoting some lines to him.

[190] Carelinus' dominion covered all the Discworld, with exception of XXXX (Discworld Australia) and the Counterweight continent (controlled by the Agatean Empire, Discworld China).

[191] Alexander's deathbed partly inspired the story of the Tsortese Falchion in the video game *Discworld Noir*. It was a golden sword that the trickster-goddess Errata tossed into a meeting of Discworld Gods of War with the label 'To the strongest'. The episode is based on the myth of the Apple of Discord. However, the inscription remits to Alexander's last will, when he said that his kingdom was left 'for the strongest' (or 'the best man') (τῷ κρατίστῳ); see Arr. *An*. VII. 26.3; Curt. X. 5.5; Iust. XII. 15.8; D.S. XVII. 117.4, XVIII. 1.4; Yardley / Heckel 1997: 292; Antela-Bernárdez 2011. The name of the sword is, obviously, a tribute to the Maltese Falcon.

[192] Even though his descent of the Indus to the ocean was far from being peaceful.

[193] It is possible that the detail about the sons could refer to Charlemagne's kingdom –whose name in Latin (Carolus) might have inspired Carelinus'–, although his grandsons were who really caused the division of the empire.

the original anecdote, as Pratchett himself explained (Pratchett / Simpson 2008: 370). Another detail clearly shows this more recent inspiration. Carelinus cried at the shore of Muntab, Discworld India –or south/ south-east Asia, at least (*Atlas*: 96-98)–, being the place where both Alexander's and Carelinus' expeditions ended. In the story found in ancient sources, no specific place and time are stated for Alexander's weeping and there is nothing that suggests that it was at the end of his campaign. Cohen understands the reason why he cried, but he thinks Carelinus was a cissy.

The Tsortean Knot is obviously Discworld equivalent of the Gordian Knot (Arr. *An*. II. 3; Curt. III. 1.14-18; Iust. XI. 7.3-16: Plu. *Alex*. 18.2-4; Marsyas of Philippi (*FGrH* 135) F 4). In both cases, whoever untied the knot would become the master of the continent –Klatch and Asia, respectively. There are some differences to the original story. Discworld knot tied together two beams of the temple of Offler –a crocodile god that resembles Egyptian Sobek– in Tsort, while, in Roundworld, the knot bound a yoke with the pole of a waggon and it was kept in a temple of Zeus in Gordium[194]. Carelinus cut the knot with his sword; in the case of Alexander, there are two traditions: one tells the same solution that Carelinus, and the other that the Macedonian king simply removed the pole-pin. The members of the Horde consider that Carelinus was a trickster[195], but Cohen takes a more practical approach. He thinks that it was not cheating because it was a good story, but also that the priests hardly could have denounced him, who had a big sword and the whole army waiting outside[196].

Cohen, after knowing the life and career of Carelinus –and what happened with his empire afterwards–, makes a final reflection: "It's what ordin'ry people remember that matters. It's songs and sayin's. It doesn't matter how you live and die, it's how the bards wrote it down." It looks a very appropriate remark in relation to Alexander. He was very aware of these aspects and,

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[194] Although Arrian mentions a palace in the acropolis, this does not mean that was inside it.

[195] They argue that the prophecy said that it has to be 'untied'. In the case of Alexander, the verb used (λύω) left room for other ways to 'dissolve' the knot. Only the later writer Justinus openly condemned Alexander's solution; see Mendoza 2019: 346-350.

[196] Alexander drove away any doubt about the legitimacy of his solution the next day. That night there were thunder and lightning, which were interpreted as a divine sign sanctioning his solution. In consequence, Alexander made a thanksgiving sacrifice to the gods that had shown him the way to untie the knot the next day (Arr. *An*. II. 3.8).

in consequence, he tried to get control of the official account of his expedition. Alexander reply to the poetaster Choerilus is very telling: he preferred to be Homer's Thersites than Choerilus' Achilles (Porph. *ad* Hor. *Ars*. V. 357)[197].

Conclusions

Ephebe is clearly a comical depiction of Classical Greece/Athens that sums up almost all the topics found in popular modern representations of the period[198]. The result is a complex mosaic of different elements, which stresses some of the most noteworthy contradictions, paradoxes and flaws of Classical society. The way Pratchett played with them produced a funny and stimulating alternative recreation of Antiquity, both for the scholar and the layman. As we have seen, there is a well-integrated mix of popular and more 'learned' details that offer different but equally enriching subtexts to these various readers. As the example of Alexander and the multiples world proves, Pratchett's method implied thorough previous research and reading about the themes was going to deal with in the next novel[199]. Certainly, his books did not specifically aim at an academic audience and, given the parodic nature of them, it is fully understandable that he opted for adding the most widespread versions or conceptions about Classical Greece. However, some of the stories are still funnier and more engaging for the learned reader, which can grasp some extra nuances that can be overlooked by the layman. Also, the several stories, characters and ideas found in these books provide to the scholar a good guide about how is the popular conception of Antiquity and can give us clues about the way our discipline is being disseminated in media[200].

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[197] Additionally, in *Monstrous Regiment*, it is stated that the horse of Tacticus, a character mainly inspired by Julius Caesar, was named Thalacephalos, which strongly recalls Alexander's Bucephalus.

[198] Probably the only main popular topic excluded is that of homoerotic relations/pederasty, although, as stated above, the name of the country itself could refer to it.

[199] I have been looking unsuccessfully for a commentary I remember by his assistant Rob Wilkins –if I am not wrong– about how Pratchett got really steeped in the topics of the forthcoming books. See, however, Pratchett 2014. Originally written in 1989, it gives some insight into Pratchett's writing process, hinting at some early ideas about what would become *Small Gods*.

[200] *Pyramids, Eric* and *Small Gods* were published in 1989, 1990 and 1992, respectively. I wonder how later popular representations of the Ancient world (e.g. *Troy*,

The books of Pratchett are not only a particular portrait of Ancient Greece, but they aim at prompting present-day reflections on the reader as well. Some of the topics addressed –honour, war, religion, democracy, critical thought– are universal and the author used them to articulate serious and committed meditations about the contemporary world. Pratchett was not simply interested in creating a fantastic and humorous universe. Discworld is a mirror of our world and the depth of Pratchett's reflections gained ground through the series. Even if set in a fabulous disc-shaped world, the novels emanate a clear sense of present and familiarity. Probably, one of the main reasons behind Pratchett's success and impact is how the most ludicrous world in the multiverse is actually one of the closest and most profound depictions of the universal problems of humankind and our Roundworld.

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Alexander, *300*) would have influenced the novels. I guess that there have been more brawny naked torsos and acrobatic bloodthirsty warriors.

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Armas de mujer. La Amazona cinematográfica y televisiva[*]

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Introducción

Desde sus inicios el séptimo arte se configuró como uno de los elementos más poderosos en cuánto a la transmisión de conocimientos, ideas e inquietudes. Esta capacidad por atraer al público se hizo patente a lo largo del siglo XX, convirtiéndose en el entretenimiento de masas por antonomasia, para hacer más tarde extensible esta cualidad a la consolidación de la pequeña pantalla, y en los tiempos más recientes al triunfo de las plataformas de *streaming* como Netflix o HBO.

En esta consagración del arte audiovisual como parte fundamental de la idiosincrasia de nuestra sociedad, debemos señalar uno de los géneros fílmicos que triunfaría en los albores de la industria cinematográfica con el nombre de cine de péplum. Este género se distingue por la elaboración de películas cuyo elemento común es su eje espaciotemporal: la Antigüedad[1]. A través de estas cintas se hacía presente la recepción del mundo clásico en nuestro propio tiempo, configurándose como un referente visual para varias generaciones. En el caso español, es popularmente conocido el reiterado visionado de películas en las tardes de Semana Santa cuya temática versaba sobre los martirios cristianos y la *caída* del Imperio Romano.

Este cine de péplum, para Antonio Duplá Ansuategui (2011: 93), entró en crisis a mediados de la década de los sesenta del siglo pasado; sin embargo, resurgió de nuevo tímidamente a través de lo que el autor denomina como

[1] Entiéndase aquí el fuerte componente eurocentrista del cine sobre la Edad Antigua, con una atención mayoritaria a las sociedades que vivieron junto al mar Mediterráneo y en Oriente Próximo. Escasa representación recibirán para esta cronología espacios como el continente americano, África, Oceanía o Asia central y meridional.

"efecto Gladiator"[2]. Un renacimiento sin igual para el género, que se consolida en el nuevo milenio a través de películas cuya temática orbita principalmente en torno a los éxitos militares o las biografías de grandes personajes masculinos procedentes de Grecia, Roma, Egipto, Persia, etc. De esta forma, se asentaba un ideal para el público de lo que era el día a día de estas sociedades del pasado, carente en muchos casos de cualquier tipo de rigor histórico y alejado por completo de las innovaciones historiográficas. Serrano Lozano (2012: 51) considera que en estos procedimientos artísticos existe una brecha histórica que separa el contenido de estos, del receptor y del mundo antiguo. La causa de este distanciamiento se debe a la complejidad de los procesos históricos que tuvieron lugar en la Antigüedad y a las dificultades que conlleva su adaptación al medio. Para el espectador, esta fusión entre historia y narrativa supondrá en ocasiones, la fascinación y admiración por un universo lejano y exótico, mientras que, en otras, el peso de la tradición antigua quedará reducida al escenario en el que tienen lugar las aventuras de los personajes[3].

A pesar de que el cine histórico dista mucho de ser una representación fidedigna del pasado, su éxito en la sociedad es completamente indiscutible, tal y como afirma el profesor Duplá Ansuategui (2011: 95): "querámoslo o no, la Roma (y Grecia, y Egipto…) que han llegado a la mayoría de la sociedad en el siglo XX lo han hecho a través del cine, la televisión, las novelas

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[2] A pesar de que la exitosa película de Ridley Scott *Gladiator* (2000) asentó un precedente en cuanto a la renovación de un género caduco frente a las innovaciones procedentes de la ciencia ficción, la fantasía o la distopía, es importante recalcar que este no había muerto del todo. Así, durante la década de los 90 nos encontramos con dos de las series más conocidas del género, como son *Hercules: The Legendary Journeys* (1995-1999), y su icónico *spin-off*, *Xena: Warrior Princess* (1995-2001).

[3] No toda la relación entre el mundo antiguo y el cine o la televisión es, sin embargo, una escenificación directa del primero. Existen películas y series, que toman rasgos de la Antigüedad, aunque su escenografía sea completamente diferente, como es el caso del *reboot* de *Battlestar Galactica* (2004-2009). La ambientación futurista y espacial de la serie choca con una curiosa representación de las religiones cívicas del Mediterráneo antiguo, utilizando en la narrativa un panteón conformado indistintamente por divinidades griegas y romanas, oráculos proféticos inspirados por el de Delfos, y representaciones de ritos y ceremonias reimaginados para la era de la conquista espacial. El argumento de la serie no es otro que el debate entre monoteísmo y politeísmo, a través de la aparición de una religión nueva con rasgos asimilables al cristianismo; véase Klassen 2008; Tomasso (2015).

históricas, el comic o los videojuegos"[4]. Este fenómeno de masas ha supuesto la creación y la consolidación dentro de la historiografía de líneas de investigación que se dediquen al estudio de la recepción del mundo clásico, pues se hace notoria la necesidad de entender nuestra sociedad en tanto que asimiladora del pasado[5].

El abrumador éxito de este género ha correspondido principalmente con la preponderancia de películas o series de temática bélica, y por lo tanto con la proyección de estereotipos mayoritariamente masculinos, influidos por esas grandes figuras de la Antigüedad o por la mitología[6], hasta el punto de que los especialistas hablan de la construcción de un subgénero deno-minado *Sword and Sandal* y cuyo principal receptor no sería otro que una

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[4] La transformación de la industria de los videojuegos durante el inicio de los 2000 se tradujo en el desarrollo de nuevos géneros y franquicias que creasen nuevas cotas de mercado. Así, nacieron sagas multimillonarias con ambientación histórica, como *Total War*, *Assassin's Creed* o *Age of Empires*. A pesar de que el público original *gamer* era masculino, actualmente las franquicias están renovándose, incorporando personajes femeninos con el objetivo principal de atraer a nuevo sector de población. En los últimos años, destacan personajes como Kassandra en la penúltima parte de la franquicia *Assassin's Creed*, *Odyssey* (2018), o *Troy: Amazons* (2020), DLC de la saga *Total War,* que toma como protagonistas a las famosas guerreras de la Antigüedad. Todos estos personajes están construidos a través del estereotipo de la mujer-amazona, abandonando modelos anteriores como el de la damisela en apuros que preponderó en los años 80 y 90. Para una interesante reflexión sobre este fenómeno, véase Pollitt 1991 y su concepto de *Smurfette Principle*.

[5] Como muestra del desarrollo historiográfico de los *Reception Studies*, véase Hard-wick 2003; Kallendorf 2007; Beard 2013, entre otros muchos.

[6] Dávila Vargas-Machuca (2003: 8) expone como la productora Renaissance (crea-dora de las series anteriormente citadas de *Hércules* y *Xena*) explotó al máximo las vivencias de los personajes de estas adaptaciones apoyando la trama en un trasfondo histórico-mitológico, muy alejado de las fuentes clásicas, y en el que se entremezclaban lugares, tiempos y personajes muy dispares. En dichas series, y a pesar de que su temática y escenario se basaba en la cosmovisión mitológica griega, los protagonistas visitaban lugares como Escocia, Tracia, Escandinavia, Mesopota-mia, etc.; interactúan con otros personajes históricos o ficticios, procedentes de diferentes épocas históricas como Julio César, Nefertiti, Thor, Gilgamesh, Zeus, Merlín, etc.; y se entremezclaban en la trama aspectos de la fantasía y la realidad como los gladiadores, samuráis, bufones, zombis, bárbaros, caníbales, etc. Esta amalgama de situaciones tenía como único objetivo satisfacer al espectador, man-teniendo su fidelidad al programa, sin ninguna pretensión o interés por cumplir con la veracidad histórica.

audiencia masculina[7]. Esto no quiere decir que no existan personajes femeninos, reales o imaginarios, con pretensiones heroicas y que incluso podamos apreciar la presencia en estos medios de mujeres dentro del escenario bélico desempeñando un papel activo en la lucha. Si bien estos ejemplos son escasos, nuestro objetivo es analizarlos como parte del legado del mundo clásico. En concreto, nos centraremos en uno de los estereotipos de género más frecuentes en la gran y en la pequeña pantalla: el de la Amazona-Guerrera[8].

El arquetipo de la Amazona-Guerrera. Entre el pasado y el presente.

La guerra, a lo largo de la Historia, ha sido (y todavía es) el fenómeno por excelencia de resolución de conflictos entre distintos grupos humanos. Desde los orígenes de las primeras civilizaciones y como consecuencia de la división sexual de estas, encontramos que esta actividad fue asumida eminentemente por el género masculino. En la Antigüedad, y más específicamente en el mundo grecolatino, la participación en los conflictos armados era una muestra de la ostentación de la ciudadanía, es decir, se trataba de "una expresión de la comunidad políticamente establecida, de la cual las mujeres no eran sujetos de pleno derecho" (Martínez López 2000: 257). Esta

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[7] Este subgénero ha sido caracterizado por sus inexactitudes históricas, así como por su alto contenido violento y sexual, pero su popularidad ha alentado la creación en el imaginario popular de un estereotipo en el que se reduce la importancia del mundo antiguo a las experiencias militares; véase Augoustakis 2015: 64. Algunas de las adaptaciones más conocidas en las dos últimas décadas han sido: *Troya* (2004) de Wolfgang Petersen, *Alejandro Magno* (2004) de Oliver Stone, *300* (2006) de Zack Snyder*, La última legión* (2007) de Doug Lefler, *La legión del águila* (2011) de Kevin Macdonald, *300: El origen de un imperio* (2014) de Noam Murro, o las series de *Spartacus. Sangre y arena* (2010-2013) y *Britannia* (2018-2019). En la fase final de redacción de este artículo, la distribuidora Netflix estrenó una nueva serie, titulada *Bárbaros* (*Barbaren*), dirigida por Barbara Eder y Maurus Ronner.

[8] El origen de la asociación entre Amazonas y por ende mujeres guerreras, podemos apreciarla incluso en la Antigüedad, como muestra App. *Mith*. 103. El historiador narra cómo Pompeyo y su ejército, durante su persecución a Mitrídates, se enfrentaron con albanos e íberos y, tras su victoria, obtuvieron como rehenes y prisioneros de guerra a varias mujeres heridas que habían participado en la lucha: "Éstas eran tenidas por Amazonas, ya sea porque las Amazonas fueran alguna tribu vecina de ellas, llamadas entonces como aliadas, o bien porque los bárbaros de esta parte llamaran, en general, Amazonas a cualquier mujer guerrera" (traducción de Sancho Royo 1980).

mayoritaria realidad no significa que, en el devenir de los siglos, las mujeres no hayan participado nunca, de una forma o de otra, en el ejercicio, mantenimiento y construcción del aparato bélico, y así nos lo demuestran en varias ocasiones las fuentes (Pérez Rubio 2013; Guantes García 2020)[9]. No obstante, su participación era residual y esporádica, en tanto en cuánto estas no recibían ningún tipo de educación marcial, instrucción militar, o posibilidad de acceder al cuerpo de los ejércitos. No se trata de que las mujeres hayan quedado totalmente al margen del fenómeno de la guerra, sino que por las razones anteriormente señaladas su actividad se ha reducido casi siempre a la de no combatientes. No será hasta el siglo XX, al calor de los cambios sociales fruto de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, cuando las mujeres comiencen a incorporarse tímidamente al ejército, pero habrá que esperar todavía a los años 80 y 90 para ver un alistamiento oficial con base jurídica. Pese a este avance de la cuestión en algunos países, a nivel macro persiste la ausencia femenina en ambientes bélicos, consecuencia de la educación y las expectativas sociales que rodean a uno u otro sexo (Jiménez Sánchez 2015: 90-92).

Esta realidad encuentra un reflejo directo en las representaciones cine-matográficas y televisivas, pues durante décadas se configuró como una anomalía el hecho de que una mujer pudiese ocupar el puesto que por *naturaleza* pertenecía a los hombres, es decir, el ejercicio de la violencia y el desempeño de labores militares. Esta intromisión femenina en un mundo de hombres resultó uno de los argumentos predilectos del cine de péplum, inspirándose para esta cuestión en el mito griego de las Amazonas (y en otros episodios)[10]. En la literatura, este era un pueblo extranjero, ajeno al

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[9] En el pasado, la historiografía militar sobresimplificó la amplia dimensión de la guerra como fenómeno social, reduciéndola a cuestiones como el combate y el equipamiento militar, eludiendo diversos aspectos que afectaban a los llamados 'no-combatientes' y entre los que destaca la participación femenina. Con esta afirmación nos referimos a fenómenos como la resistencia, el apoyo económico, las labores de apoyo, las actividades propiciatorias, la reproducción de discursos ideológicos y el mantenimiento del *statu quo*, elementos diversos entre los que hallamos a las mujeres mediante su trabajo como educadoras de la familia e instigadoras del valor masculino. Para una relativización de la envergadura de estas actividades, véase Graf 1984.

[10] Las adaptaciones cinematográficas a este respecto son profusas, para este trabajo solo citaremos algunas de las más destacadas, sin ánimo alguno de exhaustividad: *The Warrior's Husband* (1933), *Tarzán y las Amazonas* (1945), *Coloso y la reina ama-*

mundo de las *poléis* griegas, que se definía por su transgresión en las normas de género impuestas, configurándose como la antítesis de la civilización (Stuller 2010: 17). Las Amazonas eran nómadas y su sistema de gobierno era una monarquía cuyo liderazgo lo ostentaba una mujer, siendo famosas por sus encuentros con héroes las reinas Pentesilea, Hipólita, Antíope, etc. Descritas como hijas de Ares, imitaban a su belicoso padre, desempeñando labores propias del género masculino como la caza y la guerra[11]. Más allá de los avances que está realizando actualmente la arqueología (Mayor 2017: 49-68) en su intento por demostrar si los griegos se basaron para este mito en la existencia real de pueblos escitas en los que las mujeres participaban en la guerra, lo que no puede negarse es que las Amazonas supusieron uno de los mejores ejemplos de alteridad en el mundo antiguo, como expone brillantemente Molas Font (2013: 553), pues éstas: "simbolizaban una alteridad doble: en primer lugar, por ser imaginadas como bárbaras y segundo por ser transgresoras y amenazantes que luchan contra los hombres". Su derrota a manos de los héroes griegos supondría el restablecimiento del orden civilizado patriarcal, donde el hombre domina a la amazona con el correspondiente regreso de estas al hogar o con su muerte (González Mestre 2019: 40).

El peso del mito trascenderá las fronteras del mundo antiguo perdurando en otras sociedades históricas, especialmente al calor del movimiento feminista, convirtiéndose en un elemento reivindicativo del mismo. No obstante, esta pretensión encuentra sus orígenes durante el sufragismo, convirtiéndose en el símbolo de que una mujer podía llevar a cabo las mismas que acciones de un hombre[12]. Esta apropiación será una respuesta

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zona (1960) *Amazonas de Roma* (1961), *Thor and the Amazon Women* o *Las Gladiadoras* (1963), *Las Amazonas* (1973), *Las Amazonas contra los Supermen* (1974), *Kilma, reina de las amazonas* (1976), *Gold of the Amazon Women* (1979), *Hundra* (1983), *La reina de Barbaria* (1985), *América 3000* (1986), *Amazonas y el enigma del talismán* (1986), *Hércules y las amazonas* (1994), *La Amazona Guerrera* (1998), *Amazons and Gladiators* (2001), etc.

[11] Las fuentes literarias de la Antigüedad recogen numerosas menciones a estas mujeres guerreras, desde la *Ilíada* de Homero hasta las *Historias* de Orosio; véase Molas Font 2013: 552. Sin embargo, no se tratará solo de un mito limitado a la idiosincrasia griega, sino que adquirirá también cierta relevancia en la península Itálica, como así nos lo demuestra, por ejemplo, Virgilio (*A*. VII. 803-811) o el hallazgo de sarcófagos funerarios etruscos del siglo IV a.C., en los que podemos encontrar representadas Amazonomaquias (Riedemann 2019).

[12] Algunas autoras han llegado incluso a hablar del nacimiento de un Feminismo

al mismo apelativo que la prensa utilizaba como herramienta de desprestigio social contra las sufragistas (Whalley 2010: 282; Sánchez Gutiérrez 2017: 69).

El reflejo de esta leyenda en el cine se configuró en las narrativas, primero como un mundo exótico con el que el héroe interactuaba, y después como uno de sus principales antagonistas, a través de la representación de una sociedad distópica caracterizada por el descontrol y la ausencia masculina. Sin embargo, será a partir de los 80 cuando comience el proceso de creación de personajes femeninos fuertes, independientes, capaces de combatir en supuesta igualdad de condiciones con los hombres e inspirados por el mito. Algunos icónicos ejemplos serán Ellen Ripley en *Alien* (1979), la princesa Leia Organa en la primera trilogía de la franquicia *Star Wars* (1977-1983), la *Teniente O'Neil* o *G.I. Jane* (1997), *Kill Bill* (2003) o series como la ya mencionada *Xena* (1995-2001), *Embrujadas* (1998-2006) o *Battlestar Galactica* (2004-2009). A pesar de sus cualidades transgresoras, en muchas ocasiones, seguiremos encontrando el mismo esquema misógino enmascarado tras un ideal comercial de liberación de la mujer. Recientemente, ha tenido lugar un incremento de estos personajes femeninos, cuya caracterización se basa en el dominio y la exhibición de cualidades, tanto físicas como psicológicas, que anteriormente habían sido exclusivamente masculinas, entre estas destacará el uso de las armas, la fuerza física o la independencia emocional[13]. Hablamos, de superheroínas como *Super Girl* (2015-presente),

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amazónico, ante la defensa de algunas expertas y militantes feministas sobre la existencia de sociedades matriarcales en el pasado (Sánchez Gutiérrez 2017: 69-70). Asimismo, como resultado de la influencia del sufragismo, nacería *Wonder Woman*, creada por Charles Moulton Marston, doctor en Psicología por la Universidad de Harvard y acérrimo defensor del movimiento feminista, influenciado por sus relaciones sentimentales con la Dr. Elizabeth Holloway y Olivia Bryne (Marfil Díaz 2004; Sanjuán Iglesias, 2004). En el año 2017, se estrenó *Professor Marston and the Wonder Women*, protagonizada Luke Evans, Rebecca Hall y Bella Heathcote. La cinta aborda la biografía de Marston, el nacimiento del cómic y sus influencias, así como la relación poliamorosa habida entre los protagonistas. Asimismo, Cañas Pelayo (2018: 76) aprecia no solo la influencia del movimiento sufragista y del pacifismo en la *Wonder Woman* de Marston, sino que apunta que Patty Jenkins, directora de la adaptación cinematográfica de 2017, buscó una conexión con las primeras reivindicaciones feministas al situar la trama durante la Primera Guerra Mundial y la demanda del voto femenino en Reino Unido.

[13] El interés por estos personajes ha dado lugar a la creación de una amplísima bibliografía a este respecto, véanse como ejemplo Mainon / Ursini 2006; Stuller 2010.

Jessica Jones (2015-2019), *Capitana Marvel* (2019), *Viuda Negra* o la famosísima *Wonder Woman* (2017), así como de personajes inspirados por la Historia, como Lagertha en *Vikings* (2013-presente) o *Mulán* (2020)[14].

Se configurará así un arquetipo, al que hemos denominado como el de la amazona-guerrera, influenciado por elementos procedentes del mito, pero que es extrapolado a distintas sociedades, épocas y escenarios[15]. La primera de las características que lo precisen será la presencia de estos personajes en ginecocracias[16]. Distantes al orden social, su vida transcurrirá en espacios recónditos de la tierra, envueltos por un aura de exotismo o por elementos mágico-fantásticos[17]. Este distanciamiento del mundo conocido será utilizado por los guionistas en nuevas ideas para sus historias, transformando

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[14] Algunas de estas películas tuvieron adaptaciones previas, como *Mulán* (1998) o la serie de *Wonder Woman* (1975-1979), protagonizada por Lynda Carter. Debido a la emergencia sanitaria del COVID-19, algunos estrenos de Hollywood se han visto pospuestos, es el caso de la película en solitario de *Viuda Negra* o la secuela de *Wonder Woman 1984*.

[15] Autores como Augoustakis afirman que se trata de un híbrido que caracteriza a las películas del subgénero *Sword and Sandal*, llegando a hablar de las "Amazonian Gladiators", un mestizo entre las Amazonas y las *Gladiatrix* romanas. El papel de estos personajes se limitaría al rol de antagonistas "who must be gloriusly defeated and crushed" por el héroe masculino (Augoustakis 2015: 64). La publicidad se vale también de este estereotipo, siendo uno de los ejemplos más conocidos el del anuncio de la compañía Pepsi en el año 2004, dirigido por Tarsem Singh e interpretado por unas seductoras Britney Spears, Beyoncé y Pink en su rol de 'gladiadoras'. Las cantantes aparecen en el interior de un anfiteatro romano, en el que el contrapunto masculino lo ofrece el cantante Enrique Iglesias, interpretando a un maquiavélico emperador, que es vencido por las protagonistas a ritmo de 'We Will Rock You' del grupo Queen. Una representación muy similar podemos encontrarla en la serie de *Spartacus. War of the Damned*, en los personajes femeninos de Naevia y Saxa, ambas gladiatrices; véase Pastor Muñoz / Mañas Bastidas (2012); Foka (2015).

[16] Como indica la profesora Iriarte Goñi (2002: 150): "la verdadera Amazona es *ánandros*, es decir, vive «sin esposo». Pero la tradición griega se complace en recrear las diferentes graduaciones en el pacto que estas guerreras podían establecer con los hombres para sobrevivir". En aquellos ejemplos audiovisuales en los que estas mujeres guerreras viven en sociedades mixtas, destacarán por conformar batallones diferenciados según su sexo; sirva como ejemplo el personaje de Valquiria en la película de *Thor: Ragnarok* (2017).

[17] La geografía de las Amazonas a lo largo de la literatura grecolatina es cambiante, denotando el fuerte componente de barbarie que pesaba en la idea de un pueblo compuesto por guerreras para la idiosincrasia de las sociedades del Mediterráneo

los elementos dados por los autores antiguos. Así, *Wonder Woman* crecerá en Isla Paraíso o Isla Amazonas, también llamada Themyscira, una ciudad escondida en la que el mítico pueblo viviría apartado del mundo de los hombres. Lo mismo sucederá en otras tramas, como el encuentro de Vicky el Vikingo en su película del 2011, dónde las Valquirias habitan Isla Valquiria, o la mordacidad del planeta Amazonia en la serie *Futurama* (3x05), en el cuál las mujeres son regidas por un "mujerador". Este concepto será reforzado de nuevo en la serie *DC'S Legends of Tomorrow* (2016-presente), en el capítulo 3x06, mostrando al reino de las Amazonas como un espacio seguro para las mujeres, lugar al que las protagonistas llevan a una Helena de Troya prófuga de su tiempo, con el objetivo de que no vuelva a causar problemas debido a su belleza sobrehumana, y dónde pueda ser feliz lejos del deseo masculino.

Son sociedades gobernadas por y para mujeres, dónde los hombres no tienen cabida o llegan incluso a desaparecer, al desempeñar un papel secundario estrictamente vinculado a la supervivencia de la especie[18]. En cualquier caso, la concepción y la maternidad correrá a cargo de las mujeres, quiénes utilizarán al otro sexo por su capacidad reproductiva. Este es el caso de *América 3000*, una distopía de los años 80, en la cual la sociedad occidental ha sucumbido fruto de sus tensiones internas y dónde los pocos supervivientes han vuelto a un estadio prehistórico[19]. En este mundo, las mujeres o *frau* han obtenido el poder total, viviendo en comunidades exclusivamente femeninas, en las que los hombres o *plugots* son esclavizados.

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antiguo. Como señala Iriarte Goñi (2002: 165): "matriarcado, mundo bárbaro y primitivismo son tres formas de alteridad estrechamente relacionadas por el pensamiento griego". No obstante, estas mujeres vivirán siempre en la periferia de la Hélade (después en los márgenes del Imperio romano), y, en opinión de Molas Font (2013: 552), "preferentemente al norte y este del mar Negro". Las fuentes nos hablan del río Termodón como uno de los límites más aceptados entre el territorio gobernado por las Amazonas y el de los hombres (Amm.Marc. XXII. 8.1-19; Oros. I. 15.1-2; App. *Mith*. 69, 78; Str. XI. 5.1; A.R. II. 370-375).

[18] Sobre la maternidad y la crianza de la descendencia por las Amazonas, véase Apollod. II. 5.9; Oros. I. 15.1; Str. XI. 5.1; D.S. III. 52.

[19] Muy similar será la trama en la película italiana de *Las gladiadoras* (1963), dónde los hombres son tratados como animales por una malvada reina "who defy law and natura, by enslaving their men and living under new and perverse rules" (Augoustakis 2015: 65) y que será doblemente cuestionada por su raza. En esta cinta, al igual que en el caso de *América 3000*, una profecía aventura que un hombre fuerte conseguirá poner fin al matriarcado.

Éstos son seleccionados durante su juventud como *seeder* o *macho*. Los *macho* son utilizados como mano de obra, desempeñando las tareas de cuidado y trabajo forzoso del grupo, mientras que los *seeder* son escogidos por su rebeldía, belleza o por su potencial físico, obligados a procrear con una de estas Amazonas para así continuar la raza humana.

En la serie de aventuras sobrenaturales de los hermanos Winchester, *Supernatural*, durante el capítulo 7x13, aparecen nuevamente las Amazonas. Éstas, diezmadas en el pasado por los hombres, hacen un trato con la diosa Harmonía, que las convierte en monstruos[20]. Para concebir, deben visitar el mundo humano desde la mística sociedad sin varones en la que habitan. Será entonces, durante los dos únicos años de su vida en los que son fértiles, que buscarán ser fecundadas por un hombre, al que seducen, teniendo lugar el parto solo 36 horas después. Sus hijas (pues no hay mención alguna a los hijos varones) crecen hasta la vida adulta en apenas tres días y para poder formar parte como adultas en esta sociedad deberán probar su valía eliminado a su padre biológico, mediante el uso de su fuerza sobrehumana, amputándoles manos y pies. Atisbamos la representación canónica de la mantis religiosa, pero esta vez, protagonizada por adolescentes de quince años. En la película de *Wonder Woman* (2017), Diana es retratada como hija de la reina Hipólita y de Zeus, pero su nacimiento no será uno común, pues su madre la moldea en arcilla y el dios le insufla vida[21].

Sumado a esto, la gran característica que define el arquetipo de Amazona-guerrera es el ejercicio de la violencia y el manejo de las armas. En el origen etimológico podemos atisbar esta cuestión, *a-mazós* significa 'sin pecho', argumento utilizado por los autores clásicos para exponer la amputación del seno por parte de estas madres viriles, las cuáles precisan que sus hijas sepan manejar el arco (Apollod. II. 5.9; Oros. I. 15.1; Hp. *Aër*. 17.). Arriano,

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[20] La serie toma elementos procedentes de la mitología, como el nacimiento de esta especie de mujeres guerreras, resultado de la unión entre Ares y la ninfa Harmonía. Véase A.R. II. 990-995; Q.S. I. 559-562.

[21] Esta es una diferencia notable entre la adaptación cinematográfica y los cómics, pues su creador, William Moulton Marston, imbuyó a su obra de una conciencia feminista, a través de la cuál las Amazonas eran creadas por la diosa Afrodita. Tras el intento de ser capturadas por el héroe Hércules, la divinidad creará para ellas Isla Paraíso o Themyscira, lugar en el podrán refugiarse de los hombres. Del mismo modo, en esta versión de los cómics, Diana nacerá gracias a Hipólita a partir de una estatua de arcilla sin ninguna aportación masculina, como muestra de la partenogénesis tan característica de los mitos griegos; véase Marfil Díaz (2014: 140)

por el contrario, expone que el término derivaría de un escaso desarrollo del pecho derecho, que dejarían al descubierto durante el combate (Arr. *An*. VII. 13.2). Esta mutilación de los senos, conocido como uno de los atributos más representativos de la sensualidad femenina, sirve como símbolo de la virilización o de la virginidad de estas doncellas (Mayor 2017: 78). En cambio, en el imaginario audiovisual, no encontraremos ni un solo ejemplo en el que una actriz que haya interpretado a una amazona se haya vendado un pecho o la trama haya aludido a esta condición[22]. Las películas y las series insisten en la representación de mujeres voluptuosas, atractivas, con armaduras que acentúan los atributos femeninos. Desde una lógica militar, estas restan cualquier posibilidad de supervivencia en la batalla al dejar desprotegidos órganos vitales como el corazón o zonas claves como el esternón[23]. El objetivo estratégico, como apunta Mayor, sería acolchar las corazas "para desviar los golpes lejos del corazón" (Mayor 2017:82). Muy distinta, por tanto, a la imagen erótica y sexualizada que encontramos en este tipo de adaptaciones[24]. En la iconografía del mundo antiguo, observamos a estas mujeres llevando primero la misma panoplia hoplita que los hombres, con jabalinas, lanzas, espadas y escudos, y después, como resultado de la influencia de las Guerras Médicas, se asociarán con el atuendo

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[22] En el año 2004, la actriz Keira Knightley, Ginebra en *El Rey Arturo*, denunció en varios medios de comunicación cómo desde la productora habían aumentado significativamente su pecho en las imágenes promocionales de la película; véase http://posterwire.com/keiras-breasts/; accedido a 25 de noviembre de 2020.

[23] Destacarán especialmente las armaduras ajustadas con forma de senos de Diana y Xena, pero también podemos encontrarlas en otras películas más antiguas como *Nel segno di Roma* (1958) en la reina Zenobia. A esta armadura poco práctica se suma la costumbre de los estilistas de vestir a las Amazonas con faldas cortas, exhibiendo desnuda la zona del abdomen, evocando los gustos estéticos del presente como en *Troya. La caída de una ciudad* (2018) o en los personajes de las Serpientes de Arena en la serie *Juego de Tronos* (2011-2019).

[24] El 20 de octubre de 2016, la ONU nombró a *Wonder Woman* embajadora honorífica para el empoderamiento de Mujeres y Niñas. No obstante, el 16 de diciembre de ese mismo año, hubo de abandonar su cargo ante la presión de varios colectivos que criticaron su imagen excesivamente sexualizada, al tratarse de un mal ejemplo para la educación de las niñas; véase Sánchez Gutiérrez (2017: 75). Lo mismo podríamos aducir de la película *Vicky el Vikingo y el martillo de Thor*, destinada a una audiencia infantil, en la cual las Valquirias-Amazonas entregan toda su ropa para construir la vela que necesitan los protagonistas para continuar su viaje, despidiéndolos completamente desnudas, o al ser comparadas por su gran atractivo físico con las esposas de los vikingos, menos agraciadas que las heroínas.

persa, el gorro frigio, el carcaj y por supuesto, el arco (Graf 2015: 74; Huntingford Antigas 2008: 74)[25].

También harán uso de las denominadas *armas de mujer* (Menéndez Menéndez 2017: 419), es decir, adoptarán actitudes distintas a las masculinas en un combate entre iguales. En primer lugar, destaca el reclamo de su sexualidad o de su cuerpo, como artimaña que sirve para engañar a los hombres. Su irresistible atractivo sexual estará fundamentado en su excepcional belleza física que las convertirá en sujetos deseables, como en el caso de las Serpientes de Arena en la serie *Juego de Tronos*, donde atrapan a su enemigo mediante la exhibición de su desnudez. Seguidamente, el uso de armas alternativas, como el látigo o el veneno, sibilinas y carentes de cualquier honor. En tercer lugar, la manipulación psicológica, en muchos casos asociada a la vulnerabilidad, dónde juegan con su percepción de sujetos desvalidos, necesitadas de protección, para de este modo engañar al contrincante. Ejemplo de ello es el episodio de *Supernatural* anteriormente comentado, en el cual Emma, hija amazona del protagonista, Dean, lo engatusa para matarlo, utilizando como treta una petición de socorro. Por último, otro de sus rasgos es el combate en grupo, en oposición al héroe individual masculino, como escenifican las britanas en *El Rey Arturo* (2004), atacando colectivamente, incapaces de vencer en solitario a su enemigo. En muchas de estas tramas, las guerreras aparecerán motivadas por sentimientos de venganza o por la pérdida de un ser querido y tratarán de atentar, sin éxito, contra el orden patriarcal legítimamente impuesto para al final ser vencidas por los protagonistas varones[26]. No obstante, también

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[25] Quinto de Esmirna (I. 140-150) nos ofrece una escena típica de equipamiento del guerrero, solo que esta vez protagonizada por la reina Pentesilea. Entre sus pertrechos destacan: grebas, coraza, espada, vaina, escudo, casco. Más adelante, suma el hacha y el arco (I. 158, 338-341).

[26] La existencia de las Amazonas o de las mujeres guerreras en el mundo antiguo es asociada al *topos* de la derrota femenina, escenificada en las Amazonomaquias, como las habidas en las metopas del Partenón o en la *Stoa Poikile*. En la literatura son paradigmáticos los episodios mitológicos de Pentesilea y Aquiles (Q.S. I. 593-632) o de Antíope y Teseo (Plu. *Thes*. 26. 2, 28. 2-3). También hallaremos ejemplos históricos, narrados desde la perspectiva masculina, como la 'cobardía' de Artemisia de Halicarnaso en la batalla de Salamina (Hdt. VIII. 87-88) o el reflejo de la revuelta de Boudica contra Roma, que recogen tanto Tácito (*Ag*. 16; *Ann*. 31-37) como Dión Casio (LXII. 2-7).

podrán actuar como heroínas, obteniendo la victoria si se prestan a la colaboración con el héroe, abandonando en cierta forma su espíritu luchador, y redimiéndose, como Xena junto a Hércules (Stuller 2010: 88-89).

Otro aspecto que hemos de analizar es el de las relaciones sentimentales amorosas que mantienen con terceros. Si bien la heterosexualidad es la norma, vislumbrando parejas como la de Diana y Steve Trevor en el universo de *Wonder Woman* o la de Percy y Annabeth en las adaptaciones de las novelas de Rick Riordan (*Percy Jackson y el ladrón del rayo* (2010), *Percy Jackson y el mar de los muertos* (2013)), entre otras. En todas ellas, el mito del amor romántico tendrá su impronta; así, en la adaptación de 2017, Diana solo detonará su potencial contra Ares al conocer que su amado ha muerto altruistamente (Sánchez Gutiérrez 2017: 83-84). Annabeth a pesar de ser descrita como la semidiosa más poderosa del Campamento Mestizo y la más diestra en batalla como digna heredera de su madre, Atenea, será rápidamente derrotada por Percy, su interés romántico, protagonista de la historia, que carece de cualquier entrenamiento militar previo y que es retratado como un patoso. En la secuela de 2013, Annabeth dejará a un lado las armas para dar paso a Clarisse, la nueva antagonista, que encarnará a una de las hijas de Ares, desempeñando la primera el papel de novia y alentadora del héroe.

En contraste con esta situación, encontraremos varios ejemplos en los que estas mujeres, en tanto que hábiles en el dominio de la guerra, son asociadas con la homosexualidad[27]. Aunque la creación de estos referentes ha sido en muchas ocasiones aclamadas por parte de la comunidad LGTBIQ+, en otras se ha tratado del mismo estereotipo de mujer viril, en contraposición con la femineidad normativa. La más famosa de estas relaciones es la habida entre Xena y Gabrielle, con la que los guionistas jugaban para obtener más audiencia, pero que nunca recibió una confirmación oficial, sino que permaneció en el aire hasta el final de la serie (Alesci-Chelini 2004: 5-6). En *Troya. La caída de la ciudad* (2018), aunque la reina amazona reconoce abiertamente su sexualidad, inmediatamente coquetea con el héroe Eneas, "es una pena, eres muy guapo", no como un reclamo a la bisexualidad, sino como parte del viejo tópico en el que la atracción heterosexual siempre supedita a cualquier otro tipo de orientación. Algo similar

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[27] Esta visión contrasta con la que ofrecen las fuentes literarias, en las que las guerreras son percibidas en todo momento como heterosexuales y "por naturaleza, amigas de los hombres" (Mayor 2017: 125); cf. Plu. *Thes.* 26.

sucede en la película animada *Superman: Hijo rojo* (2020), una realidad alternativa donde Superman es comunista y trabaja al servicio de la Unión Soviética. Wonder Woman como personaje secundario de la cinta, en una conversación con el superhéroe, este tratará de besarla, a lo que ella alude "vengo de una isla en la que solo hay mujeres, adivina lo que pasa allí". Tras la sorpresa inicial, Superman expresa un extraño alivio y Diana se muestra algo molesta por la actitud de rechazo del héroe, aun habiéndolo declinado ella primero, demostrándonos como el lesbianismo no es todavía reconocido como una orientación sexual válida por parte de gran parte los creadores artísticos.

Del mismo modo, este arquetipo servirá de excusa para la representación de la promiscuidad sexual femenina, rozando la ninfomanía, con ejemplos como los de Artemisia en *300. Rise of an empire* (2014) o los de las Serpientes de Arena en *Juego de Tronos*. Novedosa será la escena previa al inicio de la relación romántica entre Diana y Steve en *Wonder Woman* (2017), en la que ambos conversan sobre la anómala reproducción en la sociedad ginecocrática de Themyscira. La princesa, ingenua, expone su conocimiento de "los placeres de la carne", gracias a la lectura del ficticio *Tratado de los placeres del cuerpo* de Clío, provocando la burla del experimentado piloto, a lo que ella responde que no disfrutaría de su lectura, pues "se llega a la conclusión de que los hombres son esenciales para la procreación; pero para el placer, innecesarios". Especialmente satírica será la representación de las monstruosas gigantes amazonas de *Futurama*, que condenan a los varones humanos a morir de extenuación mediante la práctica del coito con todas las mujeres del pueblo. A esta tortura, ellos responderán jubilosos, reforzando el estereotipo de los hombres como seres incansables en el sexo[28].

En definitiva, creemos que los parámetros que configuran a las Amazonas modernas en el cine y la televisión tienen muchas similitudes con los

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[28] La influencia de la Amazona-guerrera como una mujer que vive al margen de la civilización y que resulta desafiantemente atractiva debido a su independencia física y sexual, encontrará reflejo también en la industria pornográfica. Así, destacará su sexualización y su alto erotismo, especialmente si su orientación sexual difiere de la norma impuesta: "A multimillion dollar niche within the porn industry features women combatants, most often fighting one another, in styles that include topless wrestling, catfighting to melodramatic plots, and erotic combat that can culminate in one woman straddling another's fase" (Chisholm / Weaving / Bischoping 2016: 287).

episodios que narran las fuentes literarias, aunque se aprecien discrepancias sustanciales provenientes de la idiosincrasia moderna[29]. Estas mujeres destacarán como personajes insólitos que se mueven fuera de la norma social gracias a sus habilidades bélicas, a menudo sobrenaturales, su excesiva sexualización, su inusual estilo de vida, su autonomía sentimental y sexual respecto a la masculina, y su extravagante ejercicio de la maternidad (Whalley 2010: 11)[30].

Si entendemos la popularidad que gozó la imagen de la Amazona en el mundo antiguo, podemos pensar que este interés llegará hasta el extensible al presente, a través de la elaboración de este arquetipo al que se sumarán las problemáticas de género propias de nuestra época. Sin embargo, aunque se trate de subsumir a cualquier guerrera bajo este paraguas, hemos de recalcar que no todas las mujeres armadas son por ende Amazonas, pese a que algunas de sus características nos devuelvan constantemente a esta imagen.

Algunos ejemplos de mujeres guerreras en el cine. De Persia a Britania

Tras haber analizado el arquetipo de la Amazona-guerrera, en el que confluyen mayoritariamente las representaciones que el cine y la televisión hacen sobre las mujeres activas en la guerra, pasaremos a profundizar en la narrativa que envuelve a tres personajes femeninos armados de la Antigüedad o inspirados por esta. Hablamos de la reina Gorgo en *300* (2006),

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[29] Uno de los principales problemas con el que nos encontramos al analizar el arquetipo de la amazona-guerrera es la asimilación que guionistas y productores hacen de figuras provenientes de distintas épocas, cronologías y sociedades. Este es el caso de las Valquirias, procedentes de la mitología escandinava y relacionadas con el campo de batalla, al que acuden con su equipamiento y armadura (Self 2014: 144). Su principal función será la protección y el acompañamiento de los guerreros caídos en combate hasta el Valhalla, así como de las mujeres fallecidas durante el parto. No son humanas, aunque pueden mantener relaciones sexuales con los hombres, pero de cuya unión no nacerán hijos (Self 2014: 151). Hallaremos a estos seres fusionados con algunos atributos de las Amazonas, como en *Vicky el Vikingo y el martillo de Thor* o en los episodios uno y dos de la sexta temporada de *Embrujadas*.

[30] Cowan (2019: 146) añade más elementos a la caracterización de este arquetipo, distinguiendo tres tipos diferentes de amazonas-guerreras: "a) *emergence*, women who step out from the pack and take center stage as warrior-heroines; b) *election*, chosen women who by whatever means become the warrior-heroine; and c) *redemption*, a woman who seeks salvation for herself, but in so doing balances the larger scales of justice in her mythic story-world".

dirigida por Zack Snyder y protagonizada por Lena Headey; de la soberana Artemisia de Halicarnaso, en la secuela *300. Rise of an Empire* (2014), dirigida por Noam Murro e interpretada por Eva Green; y, por último, de la también reina Ginebra, en la versión de *El Rey Arturo* (2004) de Antoine Fuqua, a cargo de la actriz Keira Knightley[31]. Cada uno de estos tres personajes representará una faceta de una mujer armada: así, encontraremos a la líder de un ejército en Gorgo, a la sanguinaria villana en Artemisia y a la libertadora de su pueblo en Ginebra. Todas ellas presentarán elementos comunes que las asemejan, a pesar de pertenecer a sociedades distintas e incluso, en el caso de Ginebra al tratarse de una figura imaginaria, completamente alejada de la leyenda original[32].

En primer lugar, Gorgo es la hija del rey espartano Cleómenes I y esposa de Leónidas, héroe de la batalla de las Termópilas y su tío. En su caracterización en la bilogía de *300*, será el personaje más cercano a las fuentes, pues en el convergerán no solo los datos narrados por Heródoto en sus *Historias*, sino también las *Máximas* de Plutarco sobre las mujeres espartanas[33]. Su

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[31] Esta adaptación del ciclo artúrico abandona la Edad Media, ofreciendo una visión alternativa de la leyenda en la provincia romana de Britania durante el siglo V d.C. En esta versión, Arturo será un caballero romano cristiano, acompañado de sus fieles compañeros, veteranos sármatas. Para esta ambientación, la producción (Mathews 2004: 112) tomó como base el trabajo del medievalista Kemp Malone (1925), quién propuso a través del registro epigráfico (*CIL* III. 12813) que *Lucius Artorius Castus*, centurión romano y prefecto de la Legio VI Victrix, podría haber sido el origen histórico de la leyenda del rey Arturo. Para un estudio epigráfico sobre las problemáticas de esta inscripción, véase Kurilić (2012).

[32] El elemento común que tienen estos tres personajes, especialmente en su representación en las fuentes de la Antigüedad o de la Edad Media, es que todas ellas pertenecen a la aristocracia y ocupan el cargo de reinas. El componente de clase aquí es sumamente ilustrativo, pues una mujer extraña en el mundo de la guerra solo podrá acceder al ejercicio militar como representante del orden social al que pertenece. Algunos de los casos de mujeres guerreras más famosas de la Antigüedad son la reina Semíramis, Boudica, Cartimandua, Zenobia o Fulvia, que, si bien no es reina, será esposa del triunviro Marco Antonio en uno de los momentos políticos más convulsos de la historia de Roma.

[33] Heródoto (V. 51) caracteriza a Gorgo como una mujer muy sagaz ya desde su niñez, al advertir a su padre del engaño de Aristágoras, tirano de Mileto, en su intento por captar la ayuda de Esparta para el bando persa. Algo similar sucederá con una Gorgo adolescente, al descubrir el mensaje oculto enviado por el rey Demarato anunciando la invasión de Jerjes de Grecia, en el interior de una tablilla (Hdt. VII. 239.3-4). Plutarco (*Mor*. 240d-e) también la menciona como una de las protagonistas de sus *Máximas*.

labor principal durante la primera película es actuar como contrapunto femenino en una historia absolutamente masculinizada, pues como aprecia Tomasso (2013: 114) las únicas mujeres con diálogo en la cinta son Gorgo y el Oráculo. Zyner nos presentará una sociedad *igualitaria*, inspirada por el *espejismo espartano* (Molas Font 2004: 120-121), y en la que las opiniones de la reina son apreciadas, en oposición a las visiones de Atenas y Persia, a pesar de mantener el binomio hombre-guerra y mujer-maternidad. Con la llegada del emisario persa, la presencia de Gorgo en el ámbito político será discutida por éste, recibiendo la respuesta imperturbable de la espartana "porque solo las espartanas traemos al mundo hombres de verdad", inspirada en la obra de Plutarco (*Lyc*. 14.8; *Mor*. 240e).

Gorgo será proyectada como la amantísima esposa de Leónidas, quién también la adora, evidenciándose el amor mutuo en la interacción de ambos protagonistas en la tan característica despedida del guerrero que podemos apreciar en las fuentes[34]. En esta escena, Gorgo actuará como la alentadora del valor masculino, recordándole a su esposo su papel como ciudadano, y por lo tanto como guerrero: "regresa con tu escudo o sobre él"[35]. En esta línea narrativa, la reina, como expone Armunias Berges (2018: 208), se identifica con el reposo del guerrero, el modelo de esposa fiel, y así lo escenifica el último encuentro amoroso entre ambos, la noche previa a la partida del rey, como prueba del cariño y respeto que se profesan. No obstante, tras la partida de Leónidas y de sus 300, Gorgo comenzará a desempeñar un papel político más destacado, desmantelado las conspiraciones contra su esposo mientras éste se juega la vida por Esparta. El monarca nunca regresará a su tierra, nunca satisfará el orgullo de su abnegada esposa.

En su ausencia, un advenedizo llamado Terón, comprado por el Imperio Persa tratará de evitar el envío de refuerzos a Leónidas. Gorgo lo descubre y es chantajeada por este en su intento de impedirlo. La coacción se concretará en la entrega-violación sexual de la reina, su único medio para tratar

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[34] El más famoso de estos ejemplos será el que nos proporciona Homero de la pareja formada por Héctor y Andrómaca en la *Ilíada* (VI. 390-495), pero Plutarco (*Mor*. 241e) recoge también la despedida entre Leónidas y Gorgo, solicitando el guerrero a su esposa que vuelva a casarse y a alumbrar hijos para Esparta, cumpliendo así su papel como ciudadana al servicio del estado.

[35] Esta frase de la Gorgo cinematográfica toma como base la obra de Plutarco (*Mor*. 241e), aunque puede entreverse la influencia de pasajes parecidos, en los que las madres espartanas inducen a sus hijos y esposos a morir por su *pólis* o resultar victoriosos; véase Plu. *Mor*. 240f, 241C.

de salvar a su marido y a Esparta. Sin embargo, Terón utilizará el sometimiento de la reina para desacreditarla como adúltera ante la Gerusía, donde ésta se presenta en calidad de esposa, madre y espartana para solicitar ayuda para su esposo y rey. Enfurecida por la acusación y la traición, Gorgo asesinará a Terón. Al caer muerto, de su atuendo sobresaldrán monedas acuñadas por Jerjes, demostrando así su felonía y la lealtad patriótica de la soberana.

En la secuela aparecerá como narradora de esta y con algunos flashbacks que retrotraen al espectador a un período previo a la muerte de Leónidas en las Termópilas. En la última escena, Gorgo, muy distante de las fuentes clásicas, aparecerá comandando a los espartanos en la batalla de Salamina como aliados de Temístocles y los atenienses. Se establece así una comparativa entre la reina espartana y Artemisia, siendo este un recurso habitual en las narrativas que rodean a las Amazonas-Guerreras, al crear una rivalidad entre mujeres, siendo una la heroína-modelo y la otra, la antagonista-villana[36].

En la película de Murro, Artemisia, nacida en Grecia, durante su infancia será violada reiteradamente por los asesinos de su familia. Tras sufrir estas terribles vejaciones será vendida a un tratante de esclavos y encerrada durante años en un barco griego. Posteriormente será hallada moribunda por un guerrero persa, que la recoge y la entrena como mercenaria hasta no tener rival alguno. El rey Darío, impresionado, la pone bajo su protección como comandante de su armada, convirtiéndola en una especie de hija adoptiva, a la que prefiere por encima de su verdadero hijo Jerjes, aunque sin reciprocidad alguna por parte de la guerrera. Artemisia jurará venganza a Grecia y a la muerte de Darío comenzará su andadura como intrigante política. Armunia (2018: 2010) muestra cómo este personaje ocupará uno de los roles femeninos por antonomasia en las cintas de acción, a las que denomina películas de 'violación y venganza', dónde mujeres frágiles e indefensas, tras sufrir humillaciones por parte masculina, mayoritariamente

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[36] Lo mismo ocurrirá en las adaptaciones de *Percy Jackson* anteriormente comentadas, con la sustitución de Annabeth como guerrera por Clarisse, la nueva antagonista, o en *Wonder Woman* (2017), enfrentándose Diana con la doctora Veneno (interpretada por Elena Anaya). Este malvado personaje se caracterizará por la deformación de su rostro y su alianza con los alemanes, debido al amor que siente por el General Ludendorff. En la escena final, Diana será tentada por el dios Ares para acabar con su rival, pero como muestra de su heroicidad la dejará libre en el último momento; véase Deriu 2018:193.

abusos sexuales, tomarán las armas en busca de resarcimiento personal[37]. Esta situación se repite en los casos de Gorgo y Ginebra, siendo esta última torturada brutalmente, aunque no se específica al espectador si fue violada. Sin embargo, a diferencia de la Artemisia cinematográfica, estos otros personajes son presentados como modelos a seguir, que no buscarán venganza, pues su objetivo es y siempre ha sido el bienestar de su pueblo, y no sus motivaciones "egoístas".

Artemisia se valdrá de su influencia dentro de la corte persa para manipular a Jerjes a su favor, "sembrando la semilla de la locura que lo consumiría", instando a su divinización. Desconfiada, elimina a todos los aliados de Jerjes, especialmente a aquellos en los que confiaba y que lo habían criado. Será a ella y a nadie más a quién en el discurso de la película se acusa de orquestar el conflicto, promoviendo la guerra desde su condición de mujer conspiradora, oculta tras la figura de Jerjes como emperador. La narración fomentará también su identificación con la locura, a través de grotescas escenas de ensañamiento con sus enemigos, en las que incluso llega a besar las cabezas cercenadas de los muertos.

A la enajenación de Artemisia, se sumará su avidez sexual sin límites, focalizada en la obsesión que esta siente por Temístocles, el héroe de la película, y que es correspondida por este[38]. Ambos consumarán su deseo mutuo en el acto sexual, dirigido por ella, en una escena marcada por el salvajismo, la locura de la griega, la agresividad y la violencia física, muy diferente a los encuentros románticos entre Leónidas y Gorgo o Arturo y Ginebra. Finalmente, en su último encuentro, en lo que se podría pensar que es una representación de la batalla de Salamina, ambos combatirán hasta la muerte, tras el rechazo de Temístocles de unirse al bando persa. La guerrera, cautivada por sus palabras, será vencida por la superioridad de él, ante la llegada de los espartanos comandados por Gorgo. El héroe ateniense le ofrecerá la rendición, pero esta se negará a aceptarla, muriendo asesinada por la espada de éste, de rodillas y a sus pies. El discurso colonialista de Murro es innegable (Armunias 2018: 210), una clara representación de la

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[37] En una entrevista durante la promoción de la película, Eva Green, actriz que interpreta a Artemisia, la compara con una amazona, enlazando perfectamente con el arquetipo que describimos previamente. Disponible en: https://youtu.be/_6jk BnztgN44; accedido a 1 de diciembre de 2020.

[38] Artemisia es en todo momento una *femme fatale*, propia de Hollywood, actuando como una devoradora de hombres. Este mismo tópico podremos intuirlo en los capítulos mencionados previamente de *Supernatural* y *Embrujadas*.

victoria de la civilización sobre la barbarie, de Occidente sobre Oriente, de la democracia sobre la tiranía, de lo masculino sobre lo femenino. El triunfo final contra los persas, última escena de la película, llegará con la consumación de la venganza legítima de Gorgo y la alianza de esta con Temístocles.

Muy distinta será la representación en las fuentes antiguas de la reina de Caria, Artemisia I, aliada y consejera de Jerjes durante las Guerras Médicas, y de la que Heródoto nos habla con admiración (Hdt. VII. 99, VIII. 67-69, 87-88, 101-103). El historiador nos cuenta como ésta ejercía la tiranía en Halicarnaso tras la muerte de su esposo y durante la minoría de edad de su hijo. Actuó como lideresa en la batalla naval de Salamina y protegió a los hijos de Jerjes cuando este se retiró de Grecia. Como expone Ana Iriarte (2020: 172), fueron muy distintas las visiones posteriores a las *Historias* del historiador de Halicarnaso. Por ejemplo, en la obra de Plutarco (*Them*. 14.4; *Mor*. 870a) se antepone la faceta de Artemisia como cuidadora a la de estratega, y en la de Polieno (VIII. 53), aparece como una traidora a su rey. A pesar de que la Artemisia histórica resultó extraña para la idiosincrasia griega, su imagen en las fuentes se parece mucho más a la de una matrona que a la de una mujer transgresora, aspecto que las películas se encargan de reforzar.

En último lugar, en la creación de Fuqua, Ginebra no tendrá nada que ver con la representación canónica de la reina medieval, esposa del legendario rey Arturo y señora de Camelot. En esta película, Ginebra pertenecerá al pueblo picto que habita el territorio britano al norte del muro de Adriano y será hija de Merlín, líder de los pictos. La heroína será rescatada por Arturo y sus caballeros durante su misión de escolta de Alecto, un niño patricio llamado a ocupar la silla de San Pedro, de vuelta a Roma. La joven habría sido torturada por los obispos de la zona, que tratarían de que abandonase su paganismo, sin éxito. Se impone un contraste entre pagano-cristiano, romano-indígena, invasor-invadido, que solo resolverá Arturo como líder político[39]. La verdadera amenaza de la trama no será el pueblo picto en su intento por recuperar el territorio a través de incursiones a las zonas

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[39] El componente de barbarie puede apreciarse también en la serie de televisión *Britannia* (2018-presente) en la invasión de Aulo Placio, a través de los personajes de la reina Antedia y de Kerra. Destacarán a su vez las adaptaciones inglesas sobre la revuelta de Boudica: *Boudica* (2003), interpretada por Alex Kingston y *Boudica. Rise of the Warrior Queen* (2019), protagonizada por Ella Peel.

abandonas por Roma, sino las invasiones sajonas en la isla, convirtiendo a estos en los sanguinarios antagonistas.

Descubriremos en Ginebra a una guerrera que luchará por la supervivencia de su pueblo, participando en varios de los combates de la película, primero ataviada solamente con un vestido azul, sin armadura y con un arco, y después caracterizada como una bárbara, con símbolos azules pintados sobre la piel, luchando en grupo y siendo todavía el arco su principal arma. La escena más significativa y con mayor carga ideológica de este personaje será su conversación con Lancelot, justo antes de ser atacados por una horda sajona. Se producirá un combate desigual de ocho individuos contra un ejército profusamente armado de bárbaros sajones. Los caballeros de Arturo y la propia Ginebra se encargarán de cubrir la retaguardia, ayudando a la población indefensa a huir, mientras ellos resisten. Durante la espera a la lid, separados de los invasores por un campo helado, Lancelot informa a la joven de que parece asustada, recalcando que se encuentra ante un gran número de hombres ansiosos, consciente de la violación sexual múltiple que esta sufrirá en caso de ser derrotados. Sin embargo, Ginebra responderá provocativamente "tranquilo, no dejaré que te violen" (Blanton 2005: 91), dejando claro su carácter. El final de la historia recuperará los tintes originales del ciclo artúrico, mostrándonos tras la victoria sobre los sajones, la unión del pueblo picto con los romanos que quedan en Britania, simbolizada a través del matrimonio entre Arturo y Ginebra. Ésta actuará como transmisora del poder legítimo, convirtiendo a su marido en el ansiado rey de su pueblo, dando 'origen' a la leyenda que todos conocemos (Blanton 2005: 103).

Estos tres estereotipos son a la vez una pequeña muestra y un repaso general del papel de la relación entre la guerra y las mujeres en el mundo antiguo, visto desde ojos contemporáneos. En este sentido debemos analizar cuidadosamente no ya las similitudes y diferencias concretas entre las respectivas leyendas y las adaptaciones a la pequeña y gran pantalla, sino las causas de la recepción de estos elementos en el presente.

Conclusiones

La comparación entre los mitos y sus representaciones actuales sería un trabajo baldío si no señalamos y destacamos las conclusiones que ello nos permite obtener de las sociedades productoras de cada una de estas representaciones artísticas. Es por ello menester ver el avance y el cambio,

pero ante todo la continuidad de los estereotipos con respecto al género femenino a través del cotejo entre los relatos procedentes de la Antigüedad sobre estas mujeres y sus representaciones en el cine y la televisión. Es evidente cómo, si bien se muestran parcialmente fieles al mito o a la historia, rasgos fundamentales se deformarán hasta resultar en muchos casos meras tramas sin ninguna relación aparente, llegando incluso a tomar solo el nombre de los protagonistas. A pesar de que esto puede achacarse a una simple adaptación del pasado a los gustos actuales, y siendo esto absolutamente cierto, prueba además la transmisión ideológica de los estereotipos en el arte audiovisual actual. De este modo, la comparación que llevamos a cabo a lo largo de este texto sirve para poner en perspectiva los valores ideológicos que transmitimos como sociedad y que recibimos y reimaginamos desde la Historia.

Queda todavía mucho camino para que la divulgación histórica de calidad camine de la mano de los avances historiográficos y sociales, incorporando personajes femeninos fuertes e independientes, capaces de comportarse como quieran, eliminando arquetipos sexistas inspirados en falsos acerca-mientos al pasado. Permaneceremos atentos a la evolución del concepto de la amazona-guerrera y a las nuevas historias que, desde el cine, la televisión, las plataformas digitales o los videojuegos nos hagan reconectar con el mundo antiguo.

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Hunger Games: Katniss e l'evoluzione dell'archetipo fra mito greco e letteratura novecentesca

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Suzanne Collins, autrice della fortunata trilogia Hunger Games (*The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009), *Mockingjay* (2010))[1], ha dichiarato di aver preso molteplici spunti dal mito greco e dalla storia antica per elaborare la trama e la fisionomia dei personaggi che animano la narrazione.

In un'intervista, l'autrice afferma di essersi ispirata in primo luogo al mito di Teseo, il quale si offre volontario per aggregarsi al gruppo di sette ragazzi e sette ragazze che ogni anno devono essere inviati come tributo da Atene a Minosse, re di Creta, per nutrire il mostruoso Minotauro: nelle intenzioni della scrittrice, "Katniss is a futuristic Theseus"[2]; anche i Distretti devono mandare i loro figli a morte certa, come punizione per aver tentato di ribellarsi all'ordine imposto da Capitol City; la giovane poi si offre volontaria come Tributo per salvare la sorella Prim[3].

È sempre l'autrice ad ammettere di aver inserito nella vicenda una versione aggiornata dei giochi dei gladiatori romani (vedi nota 2): i 24 Tributi offerti dai 12 distretti si scontrano in un'area appositamente predisposta, designata anche nel testo originario come "Arena"; inoltre il nome del popolo di Panem deriva dalla celebre espressione "*Panem et Circenses*" che leggiamo in Giovenale (IV. 10.81) e che sintetizzava gli strumenti demagogici usati dal potere, in particolare dagli imperatori romani, per conquistare il favore del popolo e prevenire così eventuali sommosse civili: cibo e giochi del circo. Così avviene anche nella vicenda degli Hunger Games, dove tuttavia buona parte del popolo che abita nei Distretti spesso non ha e non

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[1] Citerò dall'edizione italiana *Hunger Games* (2015) che comprende i tre titoli *Hunger Games*, *La ragazza di fuoco*, *Il canto della rivolta* (Milano, Mondadori). La numerazione delle pagine fa riferimento all'edizione in ebook.

[2] https://web.archive.org/web/20120510092305/http://thehungergames.co.uk/download/a_conversation_with_suzanne_collins.pdf; consultato in data 21 settembre 2020.

[3] Ma non con l'intenzione di salvare gli altri ragazzi (come invece fa Teseo), ipotesi che sarebbe irrealizzabile.

riceve nulla da mangiare, e dove i giochi hanno lo scopo di sottolineare caso mai la condizione di inferiorità dei Distretti di fronte a Capitol City[4].

Suzanne Collins ha dichiarato inoltre di aver tratto ispirazione dai reality show, che presentano aspetti in comune con il comportamento e la funzione del pubblico romano davanti ai giochi dei gladiatori: è il pubblico infatti a decidere la sorte dei partecipanti, se essi continueranno a giocare (dunque a scontrarsi) o se saranno eliminati (vedi nota 2)[5]. Lo stesso meccanismo regola, in *Hunger Games*, le opportunità di continuare a vivere per i giovani Tributi: essi ricevono aiuti solo da sponsor benevolenti (e ricchi).

La trilogia –ora quadrilogia, con l'aggiunta del prequel *La Ballata dell'usignolo e del serpente* (2020)– è diventata un best-seller anche grazie alla fortunata serie cinematografica. Il grande successo ha moltiplicato gli studi sulla trama, sull'ambientazione, sui personaggi. Sono stati quindi individuati e studiati ulteriori elementi che provengono dalla storia e dal mito antico.

Ad esempio, la struttura sociale vede in posizione dominante Capitol City, che esercita il controllo sui 12 distretti circostanti con l'intimidazione e la violenza; nessuno degli abitanti di Capitol City svolge una qualunque attività produttiva primaria; essi si limitano a sfruttare il lavoro degli abitanti dei distretti[6]. Questa struttura richiama evidentemente la società di Sparta: gli Spartani infatti non coltivavano la terra, né praticavano l'allevamento o l'artigianato: queste attività erano affidate agli Iloti e ai Messeni (con la grande differenza che gli Spartani non indulgevano al lusso, neanche nella preparazione del cibo ad esempio, mentre amavano il conflitto; invece gli

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[4] Gli abitanti dei 12 Distretti, che ogni anno vedono un ragazzo e una ragazza estratti a sorte per partecipare ai giochi, nel momento dell'estrazione già li piangono per morti: 23 di loro infatti moriranno in diretta uccisi da qualcuno degli altri. Il fatto che il Distretto del vincitore riceva una dotazione di cibo supplementare non rende i Giochi più graditi, salvo forse ai Distretti 1 e 2, dove si producono rispettivamente oggetti di lusso ed opere murarie, e il distretto 4, addetto alla pesca: questi Distretti, essendo meno poveri, sono più vicini alla mentalità degli abitanti di Capitol City e ne condividono i valori. Gli unici a divertirsi sono gli abitanti di Capitol City, che accompagnao i giochi con spettacoli, feste, scommesse e altre occasioni di divertimento.

[5] L'autrice parla in termini negativi di questo tipo di spettacolo.

[6] I Distretti sono 13, ma l'ultimo è ritenuto disabitato dopo i pesanti bombardamenti effettuati durante un tentativo di rivolta; in realtà è ancora popolato in aree semi-sotterranee, e dunque gode di una certa indipendenza; avrà un ruolo chiave nella guida alla ribellione. Tra i molti studi che si occupano dell'argomento; vedi, ad esempio, Heit 2015.

abitanti di Capitol City non solo amano il lusso, ma a si tengono ben lontani dai combattimenti diretti, che affidano ai Pacificatori).

L'addestramento compiuto dai Tributi prima dell'inizio dello scontro nell'Arena, è costituito da pochi giorni di esercitazioni atletiche e nozioni di sopravvivenza, inframezzate da un pasto giornaliero in comune, come nel gruppo degli Spartiati; la sessione degli Hunger Games che essi trascorrono nella natura selvaggia richiama sia gli "esercizi di sopportazione delle sofferenze" (τὸ περὶ τὰς καρτερήσεις τῶν ἀληδόνων, Pl. *Leg.* I. 633b-c; Schol. *Vet. ad loc.*) che facevano parte degli allenamenti generali, sia la κρυπτεῖα, il periodo che i giovani spartani dovevano trascorrere fuori dalla città, scalzi e senza coperte, vagando giorno e notte per la regione, procurandosi il cibo da soli, anche con il furto, ma senza mai farsi vedere e senza l'aiuto di nessuno; secondo Aristotele e Plutarco, durante tale periodo i giovani potevano uccidere gli iloti colti di sorpresa, in una sorta di caccia all'uomo che somiglia al conflitto fra i Tributi (Plu. *Lys.* 28.1-7; Arist. F 538 Rose = 543 Gigon; Iust. XXIII. 1.7-9, cf. III. 3.6-7).

Secondo Kris Swank (2012a), i personaggi della saga che più si avvicinano ai giovani spartani per allenamento precoce e motivazione al combattimento sono i "Favoriti" ("Careers" nel testo originale), che si offrono come volontari per gli Hunger Games, ponendosi l'obiettivo di conseguire onore per il proprio distretto, insieme ai premi riservati al vincitore e al distretto di appartenenza, oltre al successo e al favore presso gli abitanti/spettatori di Capitol City. I Tributi non usano armi moderne come pistole, fucili o granate, ma lance, spade, archi e frecce, insieme alle tecniche di combattimento corpo a corpo, repertorio tipico degli Spartani. Infine, le donne a Sparta godevano di una particolare autonomia e potevano praticare gli sport e confrontarsi in gare atletiche (attitudini e attività tipiche di Katniss): questi dati, secondo la Swank, sembrano derivare in modo diretto dalle caratteristiche della società spartana.

Altri elementi che invece, secondo la critica, derivano dal mito greco, sono gli aiuti che i Tributi ricevono dagli sponsor senza preavviso, grazie a piccoli paracadute argentei che portano pomate, medicinali, cibo, armi, oggetti utili di vario tipo e messaggi dal mentore. Si tratta dei classici oggetti magici offerti dagli dèi greci ai loro protetti; così secondo Kris Swank (2012b), che cita come esempi i doni offerti a Perseo: il falcetto per tagliare la testa di Medusa (da parte di Hermes), la sacca per riporla, i sandali alati, l'elmo che dona l'invisibilità (custoditi dalle Ninfe Stigie, delle quali solo le Graie

conoscono la dimora). Inoltre la manipolazione delle condizioni atmosferiche dell'Arena da parte della regia di Capitol City, ricorda il modo in cui gli dèi Greci usavano la meteorologia per aiutare i loro protetti o creare difficoltà in chi li aveva offesi. Altro modello narrativo mitico del dono, inteso come aiuto da parte di una persona più potente a favore di una persona più vulnerabile e in difficoltà, è costituito, secondo la Swank (2012b), dai frequenti interventi degli dèi a favore dei loro beniamini Greci o Troiani durante l'assedio a Troia ("gift")[7].

A questi esempi del poema di guerra omerico mi pare che se ne possano aggiungere, in modo altrettanto calzante, esempi che ci vengono dall'*Odissea*: Ulisse riceve da Ino Leucotea il telo che si trasformerà in zattera e lo aiuterà ad approdare sull'isola dei Feaci, evitando gli scogli (V. 313-364); Atena rende Ulisse invisibile mentre l'eroe si sta dirigendo verso la reggia dei Feaci (VII. 14-45); da Eolo, l'eroe riceve l'otre dei venti, che però i compagni apriranno incautamente, causando un allontanamento ulteriore da Itaca (X. 1-79); da Hermes, Ulisse riceve l'erba moly, come antidoto alle arti magiche di Circe (X. 274-306); Atena lo trasforma in un mendicante e successivamente lo rivela nella sua eroicità, mentre l'eroe si trova a Itaca e sta organizzando il rientro ufficiale (XIII. 392-440, XVI. 155-176). È anche vero che Ulisse si aiuta spesso da sé, grazie alla propria astuzia e versatilità. Sui numerosi punti di contatto tra Katniss e Ulisse tornerò fra poco.

In generale, le personalità femminili protagoniste di molte narrazioni contemporanee, di solito giovani, costrette in qualche modo a nascondere la propria identità e ad usare stratagemmi e abilità per combattere i poteri che tentano di imporsi non solo su di loro, ma su ampi gruppi sociali, sono state accostate alle figure delle Amazzoni (Enamorado Díaz 2014)[8], donne

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[7] Esempi tratti dall'*Iliade*: Apollo punisce con la peste il campo greco perché Agamennone non ha voluto restituire al sacerdote Crise la figlia Criseide, bottino di guerra dell'eroe greco (I. 8-52); Teti interviene a consolare e aiutare il proprio figlio Achille (I. 349-430, XVIII. 36-147, XIX. 1-39, XXIII. 120-142); durante il duello tra Paride e Menelao, Afrodite interviene per proteggere Paride, trasportandolo nella sua abitazione (III. 380-448); Diomede viene guarito da Atena (V. 95-165); Efesto fabbrica nuove armi per Achille, quando l'eroe ne viene privato (XVIII. 468-616, XIX. 349-403); Apollo salva Enea (XX. 353-503) e i Troiani in generale (XXI. 544-611); durante il duello fra Ettore e Achille, gli dèi intervengono per favorire Achille, come deciso dal Fato (XXII); Zeus manda Hermes ad accompagnare Priamo che si sta recando da Achille, in modo che nessuno veda il vecchio re (XXIV. 332-467, 677-695).

[8] La studiosa cita altri esempi di donne indipendenti dal mito greco (le donne di Lemno e le Danaidi, che uccisero i propri mariti; Atalanta), dalla storia leggendaria

guerriere indipendenti che avevano una particolare venerazione per la dea Artemide. Secondo Enamorado Díaz (2014: 72), Katniss Everdeen presenta elementi tipici dell'ambiente delle Amazzoni: vive con la sorella e la madre e dunque in un ambiente femminile, deve cacciare per sopravvivere (non è casuale che usi l'arco), è temuta ma allo stesso tempo desiderata, è indipendente e spesso salva dei personaggi maschili; tuttavia la ragazza si presenta in realtà più come una sopravvissuta che come una combattente.

Ma l'archetipo mitico più citato in relazione a Katniss Everdeen è quello di Artemide. La ragazza presenta in effetti molte caratteristiche in comune con la giovane dea (Frankel 2013: *passim*; Bolen 2014: 30-32 e *passim*): si trova a proprio agio nei boschi; cerca di prendersi cura dei giovani, in particolare della sorella Prim e di Rue, il giovane tributo del distretto 11, in modo coerente con il comportamento di Artemide che è *kourotrophos*, nutrice dei giovani (così D. S. V. 73); se dipendesse da Katniss, tutti i tributi si salverebbero; la ragazza uccide solo quando la propria vita è in pericolo o per salvare persone indifese[9]. L'arma preferita dalla ragazza è l'arco, che essa usa con destrezza e, possibilmente, con senso di giustizia, fino alla conclusione, quando uccide la Comandante Coin, la quale aspira segretamente a diventare la nuova guida di Capitol City. Per buona parte della narrazione fa di tutto per astenersi da qualunque approccio di tipo sentimentale, con Gale prima, con Peeta poi; solo progressivamente, non senza dubbi e ripensamenti, inizia ad ammettere i propri sentimenti per Peeta, sentimenti che si concretizzano solo nelle ultime pagine; Katniss aspetta ben 15 anni prima di acconsentire a concepire dei figli.

Quest'ultimo modello interpretativo, che attualmente risulta per lo più condiviso dalla critica, è stato messo in discussione da Auz e Tonti (2016): secondo le studiose, Katniss incarnerebbe l'archetipo di Artemide solo quando indossa la "maschera" della "Ghiandaia imitatrice" (*Mockingjay*).

Le studiose osservano che Katniss si sottopone spesso alla volontà altrui, soprattutto maschile; questo aspetto è in netto contrasto con la personalità di Artemide: Katniss dunque non sarebbe affatto una donna forte e indipendente: la ragazza ha come modello suo padre, che si prendeva cura

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romana (la vergine Camilla), e da altre letterature (56-58); nella fiction contemporanea, vedi gli esiti di queste figure nei personaggi di Wonder Woman, Trinity e Niobe nella saga *Matrix*, Beatrix Kiddo in *Kill Bill*, Ellen Ripley della saga *Alien*, *Mulan*, Lisbeth Salander in *Millennium* e altre.

[9] Ad esempio, quando uccide Marvel che ha ucciso Rue, nel primo volume della saga, cap. 17 e 18.

della famiglia, che le aveva mostrato come andare a caccia e, in generale, come procurarsi del cibo, le ha insegnato a cantare ed è costantemente presente nei suoi ricordi e come fonte di ispirazione. Ma in concreto, essa impara a padroneggiare l'arte della caccia e del tiro con l'arco solo dopo la morte del padre, e solo grazie all'aiuto di Gale, di qualche anno più grande (una tutela maschile, dunque); per ammissione della ragazza, Gale le dona quel senso di sicurezza che Katniss non ha più provato dopo la morte del padre[10]: dunque non si può parlare di reale autonomia e indipendenza, come invece per Artemide[11].

Quando Haymitch, il mentore dei tributi del distretto 12, le consiglia di non ostentare le sue qualità di arciera davanti agli altri tributi, Katniss si adegua; permette agli stilisti (la ragazza è seguita da Cinna, una sorta di secondo mentore) di alterare la sua fisionomia per la presentazione spettacolare dei Tributi al pubblico di Capitol; Peeta, dichiarandole pubblicamente i propri sentimenti durante l'intervista con Caesar Flickerman in diretta televisiva, la rende un personaggio gradito al pubblico e manipola, di fatto, anche il comportamento di Katniss; l'*assist* offerto dal ragazzo sarà fondamentale nell'arena, anche perché motiverà gli sponsor ad aiutarli; ad intercedere in modo diretto presso questi ultimi è poi Haymitch, che le fa arrivare gli oggetti necessari perché lei possa restare in vita; alla fine della sessione degli Hunger Games, Katniss capisce che non potrebbe continuare a vivere senza Peeta; dopo la vittoria negli Hunger Games, il presidente Snow la ricatta e le chiede di comportarsi come una ragazza qualunque, che ha come obiettivo il matrimonio; in seguito, la selezione del suo abito da sposa diventa oggetto di un reality show[12]; alla fine della vicenda, Katniss abbandona del tutto il proprio ruolo di cacciatrice per diventare moglie e madre con Peeta[13].

Insomma, Katniss accetterebbe progressivamente tutte le rimodulazioni proposte dalle figure maschili (il padre, Gale, Peeta, Haymitch, Cinna,

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[10] *Hunger Games:* 88: "Gale mi diede una sicurezza che mi mancava".

[11] Artemide non deve contare su nessuno per la propria sopravvivenza; vedi Auz / Tonti 2016: 18.

[12] Circostanza che trasforma Katniss in poco più di una "paper doll" secondo Auz / Tonti 2016: 23.

[13] *Il canto della rivolta*: 856: "Quello di cui ho bisogno è il dente di leone che fiorisce a primavera. Il giallo brillante che significa rinascita anziché distruzione. La promessa di una vita che continua, per quanto gravi siano le perdite che abbiamo subito. Di una vita che può essere ancora bella. E solo Peeta è in grado di darmi questo".

perfino il presidente Snow)[14], diventando anche uno spettacolo, un fenomeno pubblico e un oggetto di desiderio; sempre secondo Auz e Tonti (2016), essa non adotta un'identità indipendente, e non si oppone a coloro che si adoperano per trasfigurarla, come invece avrebbe fatto Artemide. Katniss ricoprirebbe dunque il ruolo non di Artemide, ma di Hera, Afrodite, Atena.

Il ruolo di Artemide sarebbe piuttosto interpretato dalla ragazza solo quando, su richiesta dalla Comandante Coin e dell'ex stratega Plutarch Heavensbee, riprende i suoi panni di arciera, stavolta accuratamente costruiti, per entrare nel ruolo di Mockingjay, la "Ghiandaia imitatrice", una sorta di *persona loquens* che deve rappresentare, per scelta politica, un'icona da seguire ed imitare per liberarsi dal tirannico dominio di Capitol City; in questi panni, dunque, Katniss rappresenta non se stessa, ma un'immagine costruita a tavolino (Auz / Tonti 2016: 25)[15].

Come spiegare le oscillazioni nel comportamento della giovane eroina? Si tratta semplicemente di fragilità psichiche, o forse è errato cercare di individuare degli archetipi nel personaggio della ragazza? In realtà, l'identificazione tra Katniss e Artemide si trova soprattutto negli studi pubblicati dopo l'uscita delle versioni cinematografiche; le immagini usate per pubblicizzare i film, presentano molto spesso Katniss con arco e frecce, e il personaggio cinematografico, interpretato in modo carismatico da Jennifer

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[14] Poco incisive, secondo le studiose, sarebbero le figure femminili adulte: la madre è instabile dopo la morte del padre; Effie Trinket, benché simpatizzi per i due tributi del Distretto 12, è un prodotto di Capitol City; l'unica figura femminile positiva sarebbe l'amica Madge, la figlia del sindaco, che nel libro le dona la spilla della ghiandaia imitatrice, ma che ha un ruolo minoritario nella trama, tanto che nel film il suo personaggio non compare affatto; vedi Auz / Tonti 2016: 16. Sempre Auz / Tonti (2016: 15) osservano che Katniss aiuta la madre durante la profonda depressione che la colpisce a seguito della morte del marito; anche Artemide aiuta la madre Latona in diverse circostanze (ad esempio, subito dopo essere nata favorisce il parto del fratello Apollo; contribuisce a sterminare i Niobidi, la cui madre aveva offeso Latona); ma lo fa senza provare alcun risentimento nei suoi confronti, a differenza di Katniss.
[15] In aggiunta, Katniss arriva a dire che la sua immagine di Ghiandaia Imitatrice esiste grazie a Peeta: "Alone, I can't be the Mockingjay" (Auz / Tonti 2016: 25), "Da sola, non posso essere la Ghiandaia Imitatrice" (*Il canto della rivolta*: 615).

Lawrence, maschera molte delle fragilità e delle difficoltà interiori manifestate dal personaggio nel libro, che mi sembrano invece fondamentali per comprendere il personaggio, e sulle quali tornerò tra poco[16].

Secondo Tatiana Golban e Narin Fidan (2018), la complessità del personaggio di Katniss non si esaurisce nell'immagine di Artemide; la sua vicenda rispecchia piuttosto lo schema della 'Ricerca dell'eroe' o del 'Monomito', come lo ha definito Joseph Campbell (1949)[17]: l'aspetto più interessante e specifico della vicenda dell'eroina sarebbe definito dallo schema archetipico di Partenza/Separazione – Iniziazione – Ritorno, il cui sviluppo, in questo caso, ha lo scopo di far riflettere anche sulle implicazioni di genere nel percorso tipico.

Quando Katniss inizia il suo percorso, ha come unico obiettivo la sopravvivenza, oltre a salvare la sorellina Prim; ma la ragazza affronta l'Arena usando con naturalezza le sue doti di coraggio, determinazione, compassione, vulnerabilità, in un mondo in cui la violenza è accettata come inevitabile; il modo in cui personaggi e situazioni si muovono intorno a lei a seguito delle sue azioni, la spingono su un percorso interiore che la guida verso una profonda evoluzione psichica: le sfide e le frustrazioni che deve affrontare la portano ad integrare e riconciliare gli aspetti maschili e femminili della sua personalità; Katniss dunque non aspirerebbe a ricoprire un ruolo di genere, né può rientrare in nessuno stereotipo di questo tipo; diventa un'eroina non tanto per le proprie abilità di guerriera e di cacciatrice, ma grazie al percorso nel quale affronta i propri fantasmi interiori, i dilemmi morali, l'esperienza del dolore e della compassione, e il modo in cui prende parte a situazioni che detesta. Con la sua personalità carismatica, e nonostante non intenda muoversi su questa strada, compatta il popolo di Panem e lo guida verso la ribellione e verso una nuova vita; ma consegue

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[16] Auz / Tonti (2016: 20) osservano che quando Cinna deve scegliere per Katniss un abbigliamento scenografico che resti impresso negli spettatori, la trasforma nella "ragazza di fuoco", e non utilizza le sue doti di arciera/cacciatrice.

[17] Le studiose applicano alla teoria di Campbell il filtro proposto da Murdock 2013, che adatta lo schema a eroine femminili: il loro rito di passaggio implica in particolare l'integrazione nella comunità; il percorso femminile è specificamente terapeutico, poiché mira a sanare le ferite della psiche per giungere ad una integrazione degli aspetti maschili e femminili della personalità, con l'obiettivo di giungere alla realizzazione di sé. Le figure maschili che attorniano Katniss non avrebbero la funzione di ostacolare il suo aspetto di Artemide, ma di aiutarla nella crescita personale e sociale.

anche un risultato personale importante: riesce ad entrare in contatto con i propri sentimenti e ad aprirsi all'amore per Peeta e per i loro figli.

Lo schema interpretativo proposto da Golban e Fidan sembra integrare in modo esauriente le proposte fin qui fatte, e appare francamente valido; tuttavia vale la pena analizzare anche altre proposte, che portano a mio avviso ad una comprensione ancora più profonda della protagonista e della struttura della narrazione. Torniamo alle affermazioni di Suzanne Collins: Katniss come "futuristic Theseus" (*supra*). Fra Katniss e Teseo c'è una grande differenza: Teseo parte con l'intenzione di salvare un intero gruppo di giovani; quando arriva a Creta stabilisce una relazione con Arianna e grazie al suo aiuto uccide il Minotauro e porta a compimento la propria missione[18]. Katniss non parte con l'intenzione di salvare l'intero gruppo di tributi: quando si propone come volontaria, lo fa unicamente per salvare la sorella più piccola, e subito dopo essersi offerta, viene presa da un terrore che sembra quasi paralizzarla. Durante il periodo trascorso nell'arena, essa non ha la minima possibilità di salvare l'intero gruppo di giovani, perché, semplicemente, alcuni tra essi sono programmati per uccidere. Katniss può solo limitarsi a non attaccare per prima, a difendere chi si mette sotto la sua protezione, e infine tentare di sopravvivere. È costretta invece a uccidere alcuni degli altri ragazzi, cosa che Teseo non deve fare.

Ma l'aspetto importante che accomuna Katniss e Teseo è il viaggio nel labirinto e il modo in cui riescono a districarsi[19]: Teseo si fa aiutare da Arianna che lo ama, ed essa si fa aiutare a sua volta da Dedalo, ideatore e costruttore del labirinto; la capacità che lo aiuta è la *metis*, l'astuzia. Analogamente, Katniss viene continuamente sostenuta, con estrema delicatezza, da Peeta, che la ama rispettando gli spazi e i tempi dell'eroina; insieme dovranno impegnarsi non solo per risolvere l'enigma violento posto dalle vicende che li vedono come protagonisti, ma anche per dipanare i propri labirinti interiori.

La *metis* e il labirinto ci conducono ad un altro personaggio: Ulisse. I punti di contatto fra Katniss e Ulisse sono stati riconosciuti da Paul Torres (2017). Anche se molti elementi della vicenda di Ulisse rientrano nello schema del

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[18] Salvo tradire e abbandonare la sua aiutante che lo ama.

[19] La Collins stessa afferma di essersi ispirata al labirinto per l'Arena dei giochi (intervista al *New York Times* del 18 ottobre 2018: https://www. nytimes.com/2018/10/18/books/suzanne-collins-talks-about-the-hunger-games-the-books-and-the-movies.html; consultato in data 3 aprile 2021).

'Monomito' o 'Ricerca dell'eroe', vale la pena analizzare anche questi aspetti per arrivare a ulteriori considerazioni. Secondo Torres, i due personaggi sono entrambi restii a lasciare le proprie case e cercare la gloria lontano; Odisseo inizialmente, quando viene convocato, si finge pazzo, e depone la finta pazzia solo per salvare il proprio figlioletto, collocato da Palamede davanti al suo aratro; analogamente, Katniss accetta per salvare Prim. Una volta partiti, il loro scopo principale è tornare a casa –anche se le situazioni sono diverse; condividono il sentimento del *nostos*, la nostalgia, il desiderio del ritorno; preferiscono usare l'astuzia piuttosto che la forza fisica. Entrambi praticano il tiro con l'arco con grande esattezza, un'arma connessa appunto con l'intelligenza, più che con la forza fisica: Katniss mette fine al regime totalitario e ai suoi esiti uccidendo la comandante Coin, come Ulisse usa l'arco per sconfiggere i suoi nemici nella fase conclusiva della vicenda. Ma mi sembra che si possano individuare ulteriori analogie.

Nel prologo dell'*Odissea* si dice che Ulisse cercò invano di salvare i propri compagni; ma non ci riuscì, sebbene lo desiderasse; essi si perdono per la loro stessa follia (I. 5-9): non hanno la capacità di comprensione e interpretazione della realtà di Ulisse; con un comportamento empio, mangiano i buoi del sole; si lasciano sedurre e trasformare in bestie da Circe; aprono l'otre dei venti credendo che contenga delle ricchezze: si lasciano accecare dall'avidità, dalla gola, dalla sensualità. Così Katniss: se solo lo volessero, gli altri Tributi potrebbero sopravvivere alla 74° edizione degli Hunger Games alleandosi tra loro; ma alcuni sono entrati nella mentalità degli abitanti di Capitol City: cercano la visibilità, la ricchezza, un alto tenore di vita: così perdono se stessi. Questo espediente verrà realizzato, e in modo vincente, solo più tardi nell'"Edizione della Memoria" degli Hunger Games.

E ancora: Ulisse si sposta in una sorta di viaggio labirintico, un viaggio costellato di incontri con entità mostruose e violente, come Scilla e Cariddi, il Ciclope Polifemo, i Lestrigoni; analogamente, Katniss deve affrontare esseri e fenomeni mostruosi (gli ibridi) costruiti dalla tecnologia di Capitol City, nonché esseri umani, giovani, adulti e anziani, che hanno un comportamento 'mostruoso'. Inoltre la navigazione di Ulisse è costellata di naufragi: vicino all'isola di Calipso, vicino all'isola dei Feaci; altre volte la sua imbarcazione è preda della tempesta, come quando è spinto ad approdare alla terra dei mangiatori di loto (Hom. *Od.* IX) o quando l'imbarcazione viene sospinta lontano con violenza dalla forza dei venti usciti dall'otre donato da Eolo. Katniss non deve attraversare mai le acque ma, come Ulisse, non decide praticamente mai né se deve spostarsi né se deve viaggiare, né dove

andare; i Distretti tra i quali la ragazza si muove, l'Arena, Capitol City stessa, sono come isole sulle quali Katniss viene sbattuta come in un naufragio, e in cui deve confrontarsi con esseri umani spietati, mostri fabbricati dalla tecnologia che finiscono per diventare mostri interiori. L'eroina spesso reagisce chiudendosi in una dimensione cupa nella qualle sprofonda tra paure e negli incubi.

Ulisse resta solo, perché tutti i suoi compagni muoiono; Katniss si sente spesso sola, in particolare dopo la morte della sorella, la persona per salvare la quale tutto è iniziato.

Katniss è però anche Telemaco, alla continua ricerca del padre: quando il ragazzo si reca a Pilo per avere notizie dai suoi compagni di viaggio, Nestore osserva che il figlio parla come il padre, benché sia giovane (Hom. *Od*. III. 123-125). Nelle primissime pagine della trilogia leggiamo del rimpianto di Katniss per il padre in un incubo ricorrente; la ragazza indossa spesso la giacca del padre (soprattutto quando va a caccia), usa l'arco costruito da lui, ed è grazie ai suoi insegnamenti che riesce a sopravvivere durante gli Hunger Games; quando lei canta, canta sempre e solo le canzoni che lui le ha insegnato; la trilogia si conclude con la descrizione del "libro dei ricordi", che deve contenere, appunto, i ricordi delle persone che sono vissute nel Distretto 12, a cominciare dal padre di Katniss: egli in qualche modo è sempre con lei, benché irraggiungibile. In Ulisse, Telemaco e Katniss opera potente lo stesso sentimento: la nostalgia[20].

Un altro sentimento costante in Katniss è la sofferenza, il dolore, soprattutto per le ingiustizie cui assiste e i numerosi lutti che la colpiscono; e Ulisse è l'eroe sofferente per eccellenza[21].

Ulisse e Katniss sono inoltri accomunati dal travestimento: Ulisse viene reso invisibile da Atena; dichiara al Ciclope che il suo nome è "Nessuno"; Atena lo rende simile a un mendicante; ad Eumeo, Odisseo racconta inizialmente di essere il figlio di un principe cretese. Katniss, dal canto suo, si lascia truccare e vestire per le occasioni pubbliche a Capitol City, diventando "la Ragazza di Fuoco"; accetta di diventare la Ghiandaia

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[20] Il forte rapporto di Katniss con il padre sembra adombrare il rapporto privilegiato tra Suzanne Collins e il proprio padre, le cui esperienze sono la principale fonte d'ispirazione per la vicenda degli Hunger Games.

[21] Ulisse piange ad esempio ogni giorno sull'isola di Calipso, e più volte presso la reggia dei Feaci; quando incontra la madre ai confini della terra dei Cimmerii; è un eroe che soffre, πολύτλας (cf. Hom. *Od.* I. 4: ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν).

Imitatrice, *Mockingjay*, per essere il simbolo della rivolta; si cammuffa per poter entrare a Capitol City e uccidere Snow: anche lei è costretta ad indossare delle maschere per sopravvivere.

Tuttavia secondo Torres (2017: 113-114) i due personaggi resterebbero sostanzialmente differenti: hanno un diverso atteggiamento nei confronti della guerra, poiché Ulisse continua a pensare che la guerra sia un'occasione di gloria, mentre Katniss la vede solo come un'occasione di sofferenza. Inoltre Ulisse, dopo aver raccontato le proprie avventure alla moglie Penelope, sembra non soffrire alcuna conseguenza e rientrare nella propria vita con una certa serenità, anche se con più maturità[22]. Katniss invece è sfigurata fisicamente dalle violente esplosioni che hanno provocato la morte della sorella Prim, e soffre di un grave stress post-traumatico che dopo 15 anni la turba ancora con terribili incubi.

È arrivato il momento di sintetizzare i dati fin qui ricavati. Dunque, nel personaggio di Katniss si possono riconoscere gli archetipi delle Amazzoni, (donna indipendente e guerriera) di Artemide (arciera, *kourotrophos*, non desidera relazioni sessuali), Ulisse (viaggia, soffre, desidera tornare a casa, dalla famiglia, usa la *metis*, si traveste), Teseo (vuole salvare altre vite, deve affrontare labirinti), oltre alla struttura del 'monomito'/'ricerca dell'eroe'. Le difficoltà interpretative sarebbero le seguenti:

1) Secondo Auz e Tonti (2016), Katniss non interpreta il ruolo di Artemide, perché si lascia "modellare" dalle figure maschili che ha intorno; ricoprirebbe questo ruolo solo quando indossa la "maschera" della Ghiandaia Imitatrice;

2) Katniss non interpreta fino in fondo il ruolo di Teseo perché è costretta a uccidere alcuni dei compagni dell'Arena; ma ha in comune con lui il tema del "labirinto";

3) è estremamente vicina all'archetipo di Ulisse (costretta a viaggiare, cerca invano di salvare i compagni, ha nostalgia di casa, senso della famiglia, incontra mostri), ma se ne differenzia perché l'eroe riesce a tornare in patria e sembra non subire conseguenze psicologiche, mentre la ragazza continua a soffrire di una grave forma di stress post-traumatico anche a distanza di anni.

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[22] Tuttavia c'è da sottolineare che l'attenzione per i meandri della psiche inizia più tardi nella letteratura greca.

In tutto ciò, a me sembra che elementi significativi per decifrare la psicologia dell'eroina (che emergono in modo frequente dal testo, ma meno dalla trasposizione filmica), siano il tormento interiore e l'incubo; nessuno di questi elementi appartiene agli archetipi sopra esaminati, né essi vengono totalmente superati.

Tali stati d'animo sono descritti con grande frequenza nel testo; non solo la trilogia si apre e si chiude con un incubo, ma diversi sono gli incubi nel corso dell'intera narrazione, già prima che inizino gli Hunger Games, poiché Katniss sogna in modo ricorrente la morte del padre, saltato in aria mentre lavorava in miniera.

Riporto solo alcuni esempi. All'inizio della storia, nel capitolo 1, la ragazza si sveglia e vicino a lei non c'è Prim, la sorellina minore, che probabilmente è andata a dormire vicino alla madre perché ha fatto un "brutto sogno" (*Hunger Games*: 8); ripensando al padre, fatto a pezzi dall'esplosione di una mina, a Katniss accade di svegliarsi ancora "urlandogli di scappare" (*Hunger Games*: 9); mentre combatte nella prima Arena, viene punta dagli aghi inseguitori e così racconta cosa le accade: "sprofondo in un incubo dal quale mi risveglio ripetutamente solo per trovare ad attendermi un terrore più grande. Tutte le cose che temo di più si manifestano in dettagli talmente vividi da togliermi ogni dubbio sulla loro realtà… In quanti modi guardo Prim morire, rivivo gli ultimi momenti di mio padre, sento il mio corpo squarciarsi?" (*Hunger Games*: 150)[23]; in seguito Katniss commenta così le riflessioni sucitate in lei dai quadri di Peeta che ritraggono scene degli Hunger Games: "Gli incubi – che già mi erano familiari prima dei Giochi – ora mi tormentano ogni volta che dormo. Ma il fedele incubo precedente, in cui mio padre saltava in aria nelle miniere, si è fatto raro. Al suo posto, rivivo variazioni sul tema di ciò che è accaduto nell'arena. Il mio inutile tentativo di salvare Rue. Peeta sul punto di morire dissanguato. Il corpo gonfio di Lux che mi si disintegra tra le mani. La spaventosa fine di Cato in mezzo agli ibridi. Questi sono i miei visitatori più assidui" (*La ragazza di fuoco*: 319); e ancora, sempre durante il Tour della Vittoria, sul treno che li sta portando a Capitol City" Mi appisolo solo per essere risvegliata da incubi che continuano ad aumentare per numero e intensità. Peeta, che passa buona parte della notte vagando per il treno, mi sente urlare mentre lotto per

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[23] Gli aghi inseguitori sembrano qui assolvere, con le loro punture, alla stessa funzione delle Sirene tentatrici (Hom. *Od.* XII) ma in una variante orrorifica: non allettano la vittima con la tentazione dei suoi desideri più grandi, ma la terrorizzano con le sue paure più profonde.

uscire dalla foschia farmacologica che prolunga soltanto i miei orribili sogni. " (*La ragazza di fuoco*: 333); nel Distretto 12, mentre Peeta e Katniss si preparano all'Edizione della Memoria: "— Perché non cerchi di dormire un po'? — dice. *Perché non so come affrontare gli incubi. Non senza di te*[24], penso." (*La ragazza di fuoco*: 418); nella fase finale della vicenda, Katniss torna nel Distretto 12 quasi del tutto distrutto dalle bombe, entra nella sua casa nel villaggio dei vincitori e viene vinta dal sonno: "Mi addormento sul divano dell'elegante salotto. Segue un terribile incubo nel quale sono sdraiata in una fossa profonda e tutti i morti che conosco per nome sfilano uno a uno lì davanti per gettarmi sopra una palata di cenere. È un sogno piuttosto lungo, tenuto conto del numero delle persone, e più mi ricoprono, più fatico a respirare. Cerco di gridare per implorarli di smettere, ma la cenere mi riempie il naso e la bocca e non riesco a produrre alcun suono. E intanto la pala continua a raschiare, ancora e ancora…" (*Il canto della rivolta*: 851)[25]. Nelle pagine conclusive: "Io e Peeta ricominciamo a crescere insieme. Ci sono ancora momenti in cui lui afferra lo schienale di una sedia e aspetta finché i flashback non sono finiti. Io mi risveglio urlando da incubi di ibridi e bambini perduti" (*Il canto della rivolta*: 856); "Peeta dice che andrà tutto bene. Io ho lui e lui ha me. E abbiamo il libro. Possiamo fare sì che i nostri figli capiscano ogni cosa in un modo che li renderà più coraggiosi. Ma un giorno dovrò spiegare i miei incubi. Perché sono venuti. E perché non se ne andranno mai del tutto." (*Il canto della rivolta*: 858)

Katniss spesso piange o è depressa e non vede via d'uscita dalla propria situazione, soprattutto nel terzo libro della trilogia (*Il canto della rivolta*):

"sono sempre un'anima profuga" (821, cap. 24);

"mentalmente confusa"; è la scritta sul braccialetto medico (827, cap. 25);

"uno stato di apatia e narcosi" (831, cap. 25);

"tutti quelli di cui mi fido sono morti" (835, cap. 26);

"mentre intraprendo il mio viaggio nella notte, mi sento sempre più intrappolata, soffocata… mi contorco…Ma per quanto mi sforzi, rimango l'essere mostruoso che l'esplosione delle bombe ha modellato a fuoco nella sua attuale forma" (836, cap. 26);

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[24] In corsivo nel testo: Katniss non ha il coraggio di dire ad alta voce a Peeta ciò che pensa.

[25] La scena sembra reinterpretare l'evocazione dei morti in *Odissea* XI (la νέκυια).

"L'incontro con Snow riapre la porta al mio vecchio repertorio di incubi… un'ondata di immagini terrificanti" (837, cap. 26);

"Dentro di me non c'è che il deserto" (838, cap. 26);

"Sono sola" (844, cap. 27);

"Perché non sono morta? Dovrei esserlo. Sarebbe la cosa migliore per tutti, se fossi morta…" (845, cap. 27);

"Adesso devo concentrarmi sul tipo di suicidio che metterò in pratica" (845, cap. 27);

"Non provo più alcun obbligo di lealtà nei confronti di quei mostri chiamati esseri umani, detesto io stessa essere una di loro" (847, cap. 27);

"Il male è dentro, non fuori" (852, cap. 27).

Questi elementi sono senz'altro legato a fattori autobiografici relativi a Suzanne Collins e al padre, Michael Collins[26]: l'autrice stessa racconta in diverse interviste di essere rimasta profondamente impressionata dai racconti del padre: era studioso di storia e di scienze politiche, ma militare di carriera nell'Air Force; l'autrice aveva 6 anni mentre il padre combatteva in Vietnam, sapeva dove lui si trovasse e cosa stesse facendo; quando vedeva le scene di guerra alla televisione, si preoccupava per lui; quando il padre tornò, iniziò a raccontare la propria esperienza con l'intenzione di rendere accessibili ai figli le dinamiche della storia contemporanea e della guerra in generale, per trasmettere loro una mentalità pacifista; la Collins aggiunge che il padre aveva delle grandi capacità narrative e una profonda consapevolezza di quanto, degli orrori della guerra, i bambini potessero accettare e comprendere.

Questa operazione educativa viene trasposta nella trama di *Hunger Games*: nella conclusione della vicenda, come accennato sopra, Katniss

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[26] I dati che seguono sono ricavati da interviste e dal libro autobiografico per bambini *Year of the Jungle* (2013), dove Suzanne Collins racconta le sue sensazioni da bambina quando il padre era in Vietnam. Anche la serie per bambini *The Underland Chronicles. Gregor the Overlander* racconta di guerre e lotte per salvarsi la vita, con un contesto di difficoltà familiari sullo sfondo. Interviste: http://thehunger games.co.uk/download/a_conversation_with_suzanne_collins.pdf (consultato in data 1 dicembre 2020); http://www.suzannecollinsbooks.com/events.htm (consultato in data 03 aprile 2021).. Nei ringraziamenti finali della trilogia, la Collins ringrazia il padre, "che ha gettato le basi per questa serie con il suo profondo impegno nell'istruire i propri figli sulla guerra e sulla pace" (*Hunger Games:* 860).

decide di tenere vivo il ricordo di tutte le persone del Distretto 12 che non ci sono più: organizza un libro nel quale in ogni pagina sarà collocata prima un'immagine della persona scomparsa, poi tutti i particolari che i sopravvissuti riescono a ricordare; mentre lo scrivono, a più mani, gli abitanti piangono. Ma si tratta di una rielaborazione importante, che servirà anche alle generazioni successive: "… abbiamo il libro. Possiamo fare sì che i nostri figli capiscano ogni cosa in un modo che li renderà più coraggiosi. Ma un giorno dovrò spiegare i miei incubi…. Dirò loro come li supero. Dirò loro che, nelle mattine brutte, mi sembra impossibile trarre piacere da qualcosa perché temo che possano portarmelo via. E che in quei momenti faccio mentalmente un elenco di ogni atto di bontà che ho visto fare. È come un gioco… Ma esistono giochi molto peggiori a cui giocare." (*Il canto della rivolta:* 858)

Come è facile notare, qualunque archetipo mitico sia stato utilizzato per elaborare la figura di Katniss, vi si è necessariamente sovrapposto il filtro della storia del Novecento[27]; della storia e, immancabilmente, della letteratura. In un'intervista, Suzanne Collins ha dichiarato quali sono state le sue letture preferite da adolescente: Betty Smith, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*; Carson McCullers, *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*; George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty Four*; Lev Tolstoj, *Anna Karenina*; Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five. The Children᾿s Crusade*; Madeleine L᾿Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time*; William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*; Jaapter Haar, *Boris*; Emile Zola, *Germinal*; Ray Bradbury, *Dandelion Wine*[28]. Per la maggior parte di questi testi, è facile individuare elementi di riferimento per la trama, l'ambientazione e i personaggi di *Hunger Games*; ma credo che si potrebbe aggiungere la produzione di un altro autore.

Nell'*Ulysses* di Joyce, Stephen Dedalus si reca nello studio del direttore della scuola, Mr. Deasy, per riscuotere il proprio salario; questi ne approfitta per intavolare una conversazione nella quale attribuisce agli Ebrei, con ampia e inconsistente argomentazione, la responsabilità dell'incipiente decadenza dell'Inghilterra; quando chiede a Stephen il suo assenso, il giovane si limita a ripondere (51): "La storia… è un incubo da cui cerco di

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[27] Vedi già Torres 2017: 115-116, che fa riferimento a Campbell per questa osservazione.

[28] http://thehungergames.co.uk/download/a_conversation_with_suzanne_collins. pdf (consultato in data 01 dicembre 2020); oppure http://mediaroom.Scholastic. com/files/Suzanne_Collins_Q&A_on_Letterhead_Mockingjay.pdf (consultato in data 3 aprile 2021).

destarmi" ("History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake")[29]. Partendo da qui, si può rintracciare una serie di indizi disseminati in *Hunger Games* che sembrano far riferimento alla produzione di Joyce.

Ad esempio, la forte presenza del mondo antico: il titolo e la struttura stessa dell'*Ulysses*[30] dimostrano la profonda conoscenza che Joyce aveva del mondo antico in generale, e in particolare dell'*Odissea*, che egli reinterpreta nel dettaglio, abbassandone il livello mitico ad una dimensione borghese; come esposto fin qui, sono presenti molti elementi odissiaci anche nella saga di *Hunger Games.* Inoltre nel mondo di Panem, come si è detto all'inizio, i personaggi di Capitol City o ad essa strettamente connessi, presentano di solito un nome di battesimo romano o greco (Coriolanus, Plutarch, Caesar, Cato, ecc.) seguito da un cognome inglese[31]. Joyce usa un procedimento simile per il nome del protagonista del romanzo autobiografico *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), personaggio che torna anche nell'*Ulysses*: Stephen Dedalus[32], il cui cognome è legato al mito di Teseo: se Stephen è il nome del primo martire cristiano, che dunque rompe con la tradizione precedente, e il personaggio Stephen, *alter ego* dell'autore, decide di uscire dalla tradizione cattolica della propria famiglia per dedicarsi all'arte, analogamente Katniss rompe una gerarchia di potere riconsegnando la libertà al popolo dei Distretti; inoltre la ragazza, come si è detto, nella vicenda si muove in una sorta di labirinto, esemplificato per lo più (ma non solo) dall'Arena; e che esista una connessione tra Arena e labirinto, è stato affermato dalla Collins stessa (ved. n. 28)[33]. Stephen Dedalus compare anche

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[29] Nella sezione *Telemachia, Nestore, La scuola*. Citerò dall'edizione italiana *Ulisse* (1970, trad. G. de Angelis, Milano); citazione occasionale in lingua originale da Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922, Parigi, Shakespeare & co.).

[30] Com'è noto, ogni capitolo può esere abbinato a un personaggio o ad un episodio dell'*Odissea*.

[31] Invece gli abitanti dei distretti hanno per lo più nomi di piante e animali (Katniss, Gale, Prim, Rue, ecc.); vedi Frankel 2012.

[32] Daedalus, con dittongo, è il nome di un personaggio di *The Underland Chronicles* di Suzanne Collins (è un pipistrello che si caratterizza per la sua capacità di orientarsi quindi, potremmo dire per estensione, di muoversi in un labirinto –abilità per la quale i pipistrelli usano un radar interno). Del resto Joyce aveva inizialmente scelto questa grafia per Stephen.

[33] Anche il *Finnegans Wake* offre citazioni dal mondo classico; cito solo l'onomatopea "Brekkek Kekkek Kekkek Kekkek! Koax Koax Koax!" che proviene dalle *Rane* di Aristofane (209-210 e *passim*). Chissà se anche il nome di Finnick Odair, Tributo volon-

nell'*Ulysses*, dove svolge la funzione di Telemaco, e Katniss presenta aspetti in comune con il Telemaco odissiaco, come il sentimento di nostalgia e la ricerca delle proprie radici per trovare un'identità matura (cf. *supra*).

Un altro dettaglio in comune: la seconda Arena in cui Katniss deve combattere per l'Edizione della Memoria, l'isola ricoperta dalla giungla e circondata dal mare, è organizzata come un orologio[34]: allo scoccare di ogni ora si scatena un evento che deve mettere in difficoltà i Tributi. Analogamente, l'*Ulysses* di Joyce ha una struttura "oraria": per ogni capitolo è possibile individuare la fascia oraria in cui si svolgono gli eventi del 16 giugno 1904, dalle 08:00 del mattino in poi.

Qualche dato biografico relativo ai personaggi: il giovane Coriolanus Snow, protagonista del quarto libro della saga (il prequel), ripensa con grande nostalgia alla madre, che è morta prematuramente; il giovane ha conservato di lei una scatola di cipria dal profumo di rosa, che apre e odora nei momenti di solitudine e sconforto; è il motivo per cui amerà le rose per tutta la vita; nell'*Ulysses*, si insiste spesso sul fatto che Stephen indossi il lutto per la morte della madre, per la quale ha un gran rimpianto; e nel secondo capitolo dell'*Ulysses*, Dedalus, mentre assiste lo studente Cyril Sargent, che gli appare trascurato e inerme, pensa al fatto che il ragazzo deve tuttavia essere stato amato dalla madre; ciò lo fa pensare alla propria defunta madre (42), che negli ultimi giorni odorava di "legno di rosa e di cenere umida" ("rosewood and wetted ashes"). Inoltre la famiglia di Coriolanus vive un prolungato periodo di crisi economica, come la famiglia di Stephen Dedalus.

La struttura dei romanzi degli *Hunger Games* non è costituita da semplice prosa: spesso sono citate (e contestualmente eseguite) canzoni che Katniss ha imparato dal padre e che ama cantare anche per sentirlo vicino; questo aspetto è ancora più evidente ne *La ballata dell'usignolo e del serpente*, dove la protagonista femminile, Lucy Gray Baird, canta per professione, o

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tario dell'Edizione della Memoria degli Hunger Games, già vincitore in una precedente edizione, non voglia rieccheggiare l'autore irlandese e/o la sua produzione, o per lo meno l'ambientazione.

[34] *La ragazza di fuoco*: 511, cap. 23: "Un orologio. Vedo quasi le lancette che ticchettano attorno al quadrante a dodici settori dell'arena. Ogni ora inizia un nuovo orrore, una nuova arma degli Strateghi, e finisce quella precedente. Fulmini, pioggia di sangue, nebbia, scimmie… queste sono le prime quattro ore dell'orologio. E alle dieci l'onda."

forse dovremmo dire per vocazione[35]. Troviamo la stessa struttura nel *Dedalus* e nell'*Ulysses*[36]. Si tratta di un elemento autobiografico che appartiene ad entrambi agli autori, sia a Joyce che alla Collins: Joyce aveva velleità canore (Mauri 2020: 24), e la Collins, nei ringraziamenti che seguono *La ballata dell'usignolo e del serpente* (437), ringrazia la madre per le ore trascorse con lei al pianoforte.

Sia gli *Hunger Games* che *Dedalus* si concludono con una decisione che potremmo definire "letteraria": la stesura di un libro della memoria nel primo caso, la decisione di dedicarsi all'arte, alla scrittura, nel secondo; e questo atto assume in entrambi i casi una valenza liberatoria. Stephen Dedalus così dichiara a Cranly: "Mi hai domandato quel che farei e quel che non farei. Ti voglio dire quello che farò e quello che non farò. Non servirò ciò in cui non credo più, si chiami questo la casa, la patria o la Chiesa: e tenterò di esprimere me stesso in un qualche modo di vita o di arte quanto più potrò liberamente e integralmente, adoperando per difendermi le sole armi che mi concedo di usare: il silenzio, l'esilio e l'astuzia" (*Dedalus* 223, cap. 5)[37]. Secondo Jesse Kavadlo (2015: 146), quest'ultima affermazione potrebbe essere benissimo pronunciata da Katniss Everdeen: la ragazza ha usato le stesse identiche armi, silenzio, esilio ed astuzia, con l'aggiunta di arco e frecce, dato che la sua battaglia si svolge anche a livello fisico, oltre che spirituale[38]. Alcuni punti di contatto risultano evidenti se si confrontano

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[35] La canzone "The hanging tree" ("L'albero degli impiccati") è cantata sia da Katniss sia da Lucy Gray Baird, che l'ha composta; "Deep in the Meadow/ Rue's Lullaby" ("In fondo al prato") viene cantata da Katniss per Rue che è in punto di morte e, in seguito, per i propri figli. Lucy Gray Baird canta spesso canzoni da lei composte e musicate, come la "Ballata di Lucy Gray Baird"; oppure canta dei classici ("Oh, My Darling Clementine"; "Keep on the Sunny Side" e altre).

[36] Il *Dedalus* inizia con una canzone per bambini che il padre canta per il piccolo Stephen; la mamma suona sul piano una tarantella per farlo ballare; e così via per tutto il romanzo; anche nella sezione finale, Stephen e Cranly, passeggiando, sentono una canzone di cui l'amico ripete il ritornello (cap. 5). Nel primo capitolo dell'*Ulysses*, Buck Mulligan, ubriaco, canta più volte in modo così roboante, che la sua voce si sente per tutta la tromba delle scale; nel secondo capitolo, perfino il venale Mr. Deasy canta qualche verso; si sentono canti per strada (cap. 3); e così via.

[37] Cito dall'edizione italiana digitale del 2012, *Dedalus. Ritratto dell'artista da giovane* (condotta sull'edizione del 1976, trad. C. Pavese, Milano, Adelphi); dall' inglese *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916, New York, Viking Press).

[38] Non mi risulta che l'autore sviluppi ulteriori confronti tra la Collins e Joyce. A margine, Alberto Rossi, nella prefazione al *Dedalus* (12) definisce il silenzio, l'esilio e l'astuzia come "Armi… alquanto odisseiche".

La ballata dell'usignolo e del serpente e il *Dedalus*: il primo testo racconta come Coriolanus Snow effettui la transizione da ragazzo studioso e intelligente, animato da buoni sentimenti, preoccupato della famiglia e sinceramente impegnato per la sopravvivenza del suo tributo Lucy Gray Baird, a giovane cinico in carriera, pronto letteralmente a passare sul cadavere di chiunque per salire la scala del successo e del potere; questa transizione avviene principalmente nell'ambiente scolastico, nel quale egli si relaziona con i compagni di studi, con il decano Highbottom e con la dottoressa Gaul; si tratta di un ambiente che ha una funzione determinante nella formazione e nelle scelte successive di Coriolanus, non tanto perché egli si sottometta a tutte le indicazioni che gli vengono fornite, ma perché esso gli fornisce le competenze per prendere poi le sue personali decisioni. In modo a mio avviso analogo, nel *Dedalus* l'ambiente scolastico ha un grande spazio non solo dal punto di vista della quantità delle pagine ad esso dedicata, ma proprio per la formazione che offre al giovane Stephen, il quale sceglierà poi in modo autonomo che strada percorrere; anche nel *Portrait* hanno largo spazio le conversazioni con i compagni di corso e con il decano della scuola. In entrambi i testi, all'interno delle strutture scolastiche il comportamento è regolato da norme severe, che prevedono punizioni anche dure, ma che impartiscono una formazione determinante per il futuro dei protagonisti, in un modo o nell'altro[39].

C'è un altro elemento biografico che accomuna Katniss, James Joyce e Suzanne Collins: il sentimento dell'esilio. Come abbiamo visto, durante le sue peripezie a Capitol City o nelle Arene, la ragazza si sente come in esilio, e desidera costantemente tornare a casa; James Joyce visse un esilio volontario fuori dall'Irlanda che iniziò nel 1904 e durò più o meno per tutta la vita; Suzanne Collins ha dichiarato che dall'età di 16 anni ha iniziato a traslocare spesso con la famiglia, per seguire il padre che era militare di carriera ("I definitely know what it feels like to be a stranger somewhere")[40].

A quanto detto aggiungo qualche curiosità: Michael Collins, oltre ad essere il nome del padre di Suzanne Collins, è il nome di un celebre patriota irlandese vissuto tra il 1890 e il 1922 e che morì assassinato durante la guerra civile irlandese; era amico di Oliver St. John Gogarty, il quale fu

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[39] Diversi altri snodi narrativi e dinamiche interiori accomunano Stephen Dedalus al giovane Coriolanus; tuttavia in questa sede non è possibile approfondire oltre l'argomento.

[40] http://www.suzannecollinsbooks.com/events.htm, in risposta alla domanda 8; consultato in data 3 aprile 2021.

coinquilino di James Joyce a Sandycove, nella Torre Martello, nel 1904 (Mauri 2020: 23, 27); che James Joyce abbia sentito parlare di Michael Collins patriota è, se non altro, possibile[41]; del resto il padre di Joyce aveva tendenze nazionaliste, parlava di politica in famiglia, e probabilmente James ne assimilò le convinzioni (Marucci 2013: 13-43, spec. 37).

Il cognome di Lucy Gray Baird è contenuto nel *Dedalus*, anche se in un contesto non perspicuo, in cui il protagonista prefigura di imbattersi negli "squadratori di pietre di Baird in piazza Talbot" (160, cap. 5). Torniamo alla frase di Stephen Dedalus da cui siamo partiti per un confronto con Katniss Everdeen: "La storia… è un incubo da cui cerco di destarmi". Penso che Suzanne Collins e James Joyce abbiano in comune la sensazione di vivere in un mondo straniante; entrambi hanno deciso di raccontarlo attingendo al mondo antico, e in particolare al mito. Thomas Stearns Eliot (1992: 645-646) ha scritto di Joyce che:

> "Usando il mito, e operando un continuo parallelo tra contemporaneità e antichità, Joyce instaura un metodo che altri potranno usare dopo di lui. Essi non saranno imitatori […] È semplicemente un modo di controllare, ordinare e dare forma e significato all'immenso panorama di futilità e di anarchia che è la storia contemporanea […] Invece di un metodo narrativo, noi ora possiamo usare il metodo mitico […] un passo per rendere accessibile all'arte il mondo moderno."

La letteratura serve spesso a cercare di dare ordine a ciò che nella vita concreta non ne ha; e in questa operazione può darsi che autori anche distanti "si parlino" e affrontino esigenze e sentimenti simili con modalità e strumenti in qualche modo paragonabili[42].

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[41] Collins era 8 anni più giovane di Joyce; quando Joyce lasciò l'Irlanda, Collins aveva circa 16 anni; chissà che Joyce non lo abbia conosciuto durante uno dei suoi brevi rientri in Irlanda. Una coincidenza nella coincidenza: sullo stesso giornale vennero pubblicate, nella stessa data (*The Separatist*, 22 settembre 1922), la notizia dell'assassinio di Michael Collins e una recensione positiva dell'*Ulysses* ("'The Separatist' and James Joyce, *Irishtimes* 02/02/1996: https://www.irishtimes.com/ opinion/the-separatist-and-james-joyce-1.27686?mode=print&ot=example.AjaxPageLay out.ot; consultato in data 3 aprile 2021)

[42] Ritengo ciò sia vero nonostante le evidenti differenze tra la struttura aperta e sperimentale dell'opera joyciana e la struttura narrativa classica adottata da Suzanne Collins. L'idea di fondo di *Hunger Games*, come ricordato sopra, parte proprio dalla necessità, per l'autrice, di continuare ad elaborare, a distanza di anni, l'insensatezza

Non sono in grado di dire se le connessioni fin qui elencate siano intenzionali, inconsapevoli o casuali; del resto, secondo Umberto Eco, la materia su cui lavora lo scrittore "esibisce delle proprie leggi naturali ma al tempo stesso porta con sé il ricordo della cultura di cui è carica"; è sempre attiva "l'eco dell'intertestualità…. I libri parlano sempre di altri libri e ogni storia racconta una storia già raccontata" (Eco 1984: 11, 15). Forse già raccontata, ma ripresa in modi sempre nuovi e affascinanti.

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della guerra così come raccontata dal padre. Vale anche qui l'osservazione di Alberto Rossi nella prefazione all'edizione italiana del *Dedalus* (4) sull' "importanza preponderante e quasi unica delle esperienze infantili e adolescenti nella formazione della personalità in genere, e particolarmente di quella dell'artista".

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The Sons of the Harpy: The symbolism of Harpies, from Ancient Mythology to *A Song of Ice and Fire and Game of Thrones*

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The examples of mythological creatures from Antiquity being brought to life by modern-day entertainment are well-known. In the specific cases of television and cinema, the popularity of such subjects and fantasy-themed shows and films has experimented a growth in the past few decades, which does not seem to be slowing, greatly due to the booming number of literary works that take inspiration from such matters. From the moment J. R. R. Tolkien first published *The Lord of the Rings* and its associated works, authors have taken inspiration from his creative spirit and an endless number of fictional worlds has been on the rise.

Modern CGI and artistic interpretations have helped bring elements of ancient myth to life, transforming them according to the artists' views and adapting them into the 21st century. Such conceptual and symbolic evolution often translates into ancient myth being reinvented in a way that may stir from its original meaning and symbolism, whereas, under certain circumstances, it will be found to preserve conservative characteristics, albeit adapted into the authors' work.

A Song of Ice and Fire[1], and the subsequent television adaptation *Game of Thrones*, are amidst fantastical worlds where one can find the expression of ancient myth. George R. R. Martin, its first creator, is known to have taken inspiration from historical events and locations, as well as myths and legends of past eras, in a broad span that mostly focuses on the Ancient and Medieval periods. Such elements in the books will often translate into the show, where the art department has created iconography under the inspiration of many different influences.

Amidst the elements of the Classical era which can be counted in George R. R. Martin's work, one of the most prevalently mentioned throughout the series is the harpy. These hybrid creatures can, in a broader sense, be seen as a chimaera, often represented as having the wings of a bird and the head

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[1] From this moment onwards, it shall be referred to as *ASoIaF*.

of a human female. Throughout the course of (so far) five books and eight television seasons, the harpies in this universe are mostly associated with the plotlines and the character of Daenerys Targaryen, who will assume a growing relevance as the story advances into its ultimate outcome.

If one observes the books which have been released thus far, and up to the second episode in the last season[2], Daenerys Targaryen believes herself to be the last legitimate descendant of House Targaryen, the dragon lords who came from the ancient lands of Valyria and conquered Westeros. The character slowly builds up an ideal of a mission, coming to wish to see herself as a saviour and a liberator. The capacity to achieve this role, however, is extremely troubled by her own internal conflict. Daenerys is constantly divided, as she keeps observing negative consequences in her quest to achieve two major purposes: the abolition of slavery and the conquest of the Iron Throne. The harpy in this world can be seen as an interposition with Daenerys in several ways, which we shall discuss below. As an analysis of Daenerys as a character would require several articles of its own, we will abstain from an observation that may become too in-depth for the purpose of this work; however, when it seems pertinent, it shall be included.

Harpies in Classical Mythology

Before entering an analysis of *ASoIaF* or *Game of Thrones*, and to understand the origins and early symbolism of harpies, one must look to Ancient Greece. According to William Smith's *Dictionary of Mythology* (1873, s.v. Harpiyae), the etymology of the word is connected with theft, and it can be translated, in a more literal manner, as a 'robber' or a 'spoiler'. In the early stages, Harpies are mostly depicted as winged women connected to the winds. By winged women, one cannot imagine the full image of a chimaera just yet. Smith gives the Odyssey (Hom. *Od.* XX. 61-90) as one of the earliest instances, where they appear as the winds of the storm that take away the daughters of Pandareus[3] to become the handmaidens of the Moirae, while Aphrodite spoke to Zeus of their prospective marriage.

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[2] In season 8 episode 2, Daenerys receives the revelation of Jon Snow as Aegon Targaryen, son of her elder brother, Rhaegar, and thus the lawful heir to the Iron Throne.

[3] ἐς Δία τερπικέραυνον, ὁ γάρ τ᾽ εὖ οἶδεν ἅπαντα / μοῖράν τ᾽ ἀμμορίην τε καταθνητῶν ἀνθρώπων / τόφρα δὲ τὰς κούρας <u>ἅρπυιαι</u> ἀνηρείψαντο. All the quotations of Homer are from Monro / Allen 1920.

Another such mention appears in Hom. *Il*. XVI. 149-151, with Podarge being the only harpy named by Homer: following her relationship with Zephyrus, she would have given birth to the "two horses of Achilles, Xanthus and Balius". This is an irregular element in the most general concept, as the harpy is described as a being that was grazing on meadows[4]. A creature grazing by a meadow who gave birth to horses does not seem to evoke an imagery of winged beings, although there is a connection to the wind, through her relationship with Zephyrus, and through the birthing of two horses, Xanthus and Balius, who flew swiftly as blasts of wind ("Ξάνθον καὶ Βαλίον, τὼ ἅμα πνοιῇσι πετέσθην"). Nonetheless, it seems as one exception, which is not unusual in the sense of Greek Myth not being canonical but does stand aside from the general depictions of winged women. As seen by Hard (2004: 53), "two ideas seem to be at work here: a male wind-god and a female wind-spirit would make excellent parents for wind-swift horses; and an ancient folk-belief suggesting that mares could be impregnated by the wind, rather as in Homer's story".

The Homeric representations will be recovered later in this study. In this moment, and in strictly mythological terms, the two key associations of harpies can be divided into two:

1) The harpies as a representation of wind spirits, as seen above. This reflects itself upon the translations of their names: Aello ('wind squall'); Ocypete ('fast flyer'); Celaeno ('obscure', like the sky covered in storm-clouds); Podarge ('fleet foot'). Their depiction as 'winged women' or 'birds with women's heads and sharp claws' match their association with the air element (Grimal 1986: 170);

2) The harpies as messengers of the gods[5], or, in a broader sense, as 'snatchers', who take people away. This has three different repercussions:

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[4] In Homer's words: "Ἅρπυια Ποδάργη / βοσκομένη λειμῶνι παρὰ ῥόον Ὠκεανοῖο", with 'βόσκω' being a verb related to feeding and grazing, and 'λειμών' a noun regarding meadows.

[5] Cf. Varner 2007: 105-106. There are similar creatures that hold the same type of roles in other mythologies, such as the "Garuda bird of India, the Native American Thunderbird, and the Hraesvelgre of Scandinavia", wind deities "responsible for destruction by tornadoes, volcanoes and violent tempests"; the harpies also have similar parallels in "ancient Mesopotamia".

a. One, which is possibly older, in which the Harpies potentially serve functions of a psychopomp. This is seen, for instance, when Telemachus states that he would be more at peace with knowing his father had met a "glorious death in battle" (as pointed by Hard 2004: 57; see Hom. *Od*. I. 241-243), rather than being taken by the harpies. Although it is not specifically stated, it is possible that the harpies were believed to carry those who went missing in combat (Hard 2004: 57).

b. Two, the harpies as executors of the will of the gods, snatching mortals between worlds, but not necessarily carrying them to the world of the dead. This is seen in the case of Pandareos, whose daughters are carried by the harpies to serve the Moirae, just as Aphrodite, who had grown fond of them, had gone to ask Zeus for proper matrimonial alliances.

c. Three, as the executors of vengeance, as seen in the case of king Phineus, who was punished for receiving the gift of sight and sharing the future with the mortals.

There is also another role, which is, however, far latter in its creation, and appears in the context of Vergil's *Aeneid*: that is the role of prophecy, as it is the Harpy Celaeno that tells the protagonist of the epic tale that he would only reach his destination and, as stated by Morford and Lenardon, "found his new city when hunger had compelled the Trojans to eat the tables upon which their food lay" (Morford / Lenardon 1985: 489; see Verg. *Aen*. III. 324-336.):

"From such sea-peril safe, I made the shores / of Strophades, – a name the Grecians gave to islands in the broad Ionic main, – the Strophades, where dread Celaeno bides, with other Harpies, who had quit the halls / of stricken Phineus, and for very fear fled from the routed feast; no prodigy / more vile than these, nor plague more pitiless / ere rose by wrath divine from Stygian wave; / birds they seem, but with face like woman-kind; / foul-flowing bellies, hands with crooked claws, / and ghastly lips they have, with hunger pale."

"But in a trice, / down from the high hills swooping horribly, / the harpies loudly shrieking, flapped their wings, / snatched at our meats, and with infectious touch / polluted all; infernal was their cry, / the stench most vile."

"My men / flew to the combat strange, and fain would wound / with martial steel those foul birds of the sea; / but on their sides no

wounding blade could fall, / nor any plume be marred. In swiftest flight / to starry skies they soared, and left on earth / their half-gnawed, stolen feast, and footprints foul. / Celaeno only on a beetling crag / took lofty perch, and, prophetess of ill, / shrieked malediction from her vulture breast: / "Because of slaughtered kine and ravished herd, / sons of Laomedon, have ye made war? / And will ye from their rightful kingdom drive / the guiltless Harpies? Hear, O, hear my word / (Long in your bosoms may it rankle sore!) / which Jove omnipotent to Phoebus gave, / Phoebus to me: a word of doom, which I, / the Furies' elder sister, here unfold: / To Italy ye fare. The willing winds / your call have heard; and ye shall have your prayer / in some Italian haven safely moored. / But never shall ye rear the circling walls / of your own city, till for this our blood / by you unjustly spilt, your famished jaws / bite at your tables, aye, – and half devour". (Excerpts of Verg. *A*. 320-355; translation by Williams 1910)

Vergil, writing under the principate of Octauianus, used the harpy Celaeno as a narrative device in which she receives a voice and proclaims a prophecy, being a singled-out individual amidst the others. Even in these circumstances, Celaeno states that the Harpies are guiltless, reinforcing their roles as messengers. In other versions, they seem to be the objects of prophecy, rather than the oracles: they were meant to be killed by the Boreads, and the ultimate outcome of such prophecy varies, depending on the source that tells it (in Apollonius, both the Harpies and the Boreads survive, whereas Apollod. I. 19.21, all three harpies suffer their promised doom, and perish).

These mythological depictions, personifications of the wind or the will of the gods, were accompanied by a less mystical element. Even in Antiquity, there are sources that attempt to rationalise myths and present what they suggest as realist solutions and explanations. Attempts to rationalise myths started very early in historical records. There is, for instance, the case of Palaephatus[6], who possibly lived *ca*. 320 BCE (Osmun 1956: 131). He explains the myth as the following:

"The story is told about Phineus that Harpies plundered his property: some people think that these were winged beasts who snatched Phineus' dinner from his table. Here is the truth: Phineus was the king of Paeonia. When he became old his eyesight failed him and his sons died. His daughters, Eraseia and Harpyreia, squandered his property.

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[6] Mentioned in Stern 2003: 77 and studied by Osmun 1956.

So the townspeople said: "Phineus! What a wretched fellow! It's his daughters. Those grasping Harpies are squandering his property." But his neighbours Zetes and Calais, the sons of Boreas – Boreas, by the way, was a man, not a wind – felt pity for him and came to his aid. They chased his daughters out of town, recovered his money and put one of the Thracians in charge of it." (Translation from Stern 1996: 52-53[7], after F. XXII 5-8, Teubner).

In Stern's (2003: 53) third note regarding the myth's rationalisation, he notes that Phineus' daughters, as characters, appear in "extant literature only here and in Tzetzes", which would have been explained by the need of the 'grabbers'/'snatchers' being female characters, and thus leading to the creation of daughters, one of whom, Harpyreia, has received a name that shares its stem with the word 'Harpies'. The myth is therefore explained through the association of mythological creatures to actual people who would have lived in a remote time, and such people's nefarious actions, leading to the doom of their father, would have been moulded into the myth of the snatchers, where the evil intent is externally represented by the iconography of monstrous creatures.

Figure 1: The Harpy, bird with human face, as depicted in a 17th-century illustration by Jean-Baptiste Coriolan

Another of such sources attempting to rationalise the myth of harpies is Heraclitus Paradoxographus, who, in the 1st or 2nd centuries CE, wrote *On Unbelievable Things*, a treaty on Ancient Myth that presents it through his attempt of rationalisation:

"The myth has been handed down that the Harpies were winged women who used to snatch away Phineus' dinner. One may suppose that they were prostitutes who devoured Phineus' estate and then went off and left him without even the bare minimum of food. But if he ever got anything else, they always returned

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[7] In note one of page 53, Stern explains the pun behind the word Harpies (*Harpuiaie*), since the word itself, as seen above, means 'to snatch' or 'to seize'; the word *Harpy* would have derived from the verb *Harpazo*.

and devoured it, and then they departed again – which is typical of prostitutes." (Translation from Stern 2003: 77, after manuscript Vatican 305).

The source pairs the Harpies with other monstrous creatures, such as Scylla, the mythical monster who lived in the Strait of Messina, "the gorgon Medusa", "the sorceress Circe, and the Sirens". The particular grouping establishes a parallel between all, which is that Heraclitus, attempting to provide a rational explanation for these myths, presents them as *de facto* prostitutes, in what Morales (2007: 63-64) calls a "vehicle for *naturalizing misogyny*", and what Stern (2003: 72) considers "an intention to illustrate in short compass a variety of approaches for understanding some of the more problematic ancient myths", in which the latter, especially when "problematic", could be used "to illustrate and expound compet-

A Harpy.

Figure 2: The harpy as a snatcher, carrying away a child. 19th century-work by William Smith.

ing systems of interpretation through which the mythological tradition could be made reasonable or meaningful to a doubting, skeptical audience". This case, however, is already a significant deviation from the myth's early existence.

These depictions, regardless of their attempt at rationalisation, keep to a more general theme that presents harpies as evil, abstaining, however, from their other functions as heralds of divine punishment. The rational portrayal pends towards a negative representation of the female figure, through behaviour that did not fit the established norm, and which always implies extorsion (of goods or property) from the male figure. None of these two rational theses attempts to address their roles as heralds: these women would be acting of their own initiative, rather than being instructed or compelled by an external element. They are not submitting themselves to social norms, and are presenting their own will, in this case, as a motivator of transgression.

The role of a harpy as an instrument of vengeance is one that only slowly develops in Greek myth. In the beginning, as seen above, it is more likely

that they were wind spirits, which is, in part, why they are represented as winged women. This is seen, for instance, in Hesiod's Theogony, where they are described as fair-haired women, daughters of Electra and the Ocean, and not directly connected with punishment. As stated by Hard (2004: 52):

> "[T]he earliest accounts represent the HARPIES as being exactly what their name implies in Greek, 'Snatchers', as female death-spirits who snatch people away causing them to disappear suddenly and without trace. There is no indication that Hesiod viewed them as being in any way monstrous, and they were originally pictured as winged women who looked very similar to Iris, hence their enrolment as her sisters; alarming though they may have been in their nature as snatchers, vase-paintings from the classical period portray them as beautiful".

> "And Thaumas wedded Electra the daughter of deep flowing Ocean, and she bore him swift Iris and the long-haired Harpies, Aello and Ocypetes, who on their swift wings kept pace with the blasts of the winds and the birds, for quick as time they dart along." (Hes. *Th*. 265-270; all translations of Hesiod from Evelyn-White 1914)

One can note that the harpies, creatures of the wind and sisters of Iris, are the children of two deities connected to the ocean, namely Thaumas, a sea-God, and Electra, one of the Ocean's daughters, establishing an additional element to their mythology, and reinforcing their roles as spirits of nature. The triad of Harpies had not yet occurred, and only Aello and Ocypetes are mentioned, although they are described as the sisters of Iris, who is, in herself, a winged deity, connected to the meteorological occurrence of rainbows. Thus, the absence of the third harpy in Hesiod is made up for by the presence of a sister, Iris, who is not greatly distinguished from them as of yet, either hierarchically or in terms of mythological roles.

As seen above, Homer also mentions harpies, although in his works they begin to have some connection with their future roles. This evolution is clearer in the *Odyssey* than the *Iliad*, as seen from what we presented above:

1) Whereas the harpy in the *Iliad* may not even be a winged creature, those of the *Odyssey*, as told by Telemachus and Penelope, already seem to have gained a new classification. In the *Iliad*, as seen above, the harpy Podarge is described as one of the lovers of the western wind, Zephyrus; once more, a harpy appears connected to the wind but is living on earth.

2) However, in the *Odyssey*, harpies are said to have carried away the

daughters of King Pandareus for the Erinyes/Moirae, who appear in Greek mythology connected to the matter of punishment of mortal beings. Thus, throughout the ages, the role of Harpies as instruments of divine revenge or punishment continues to develop.

Whereas the story in the *Iliad* is less prevalent, the *Odyssey* depiction is the most predominant, and will be seen in other works. One of the myths in which this is more evident is that of the Argonauts, described by several ancient sources, of which the most notorious is that of the *Argonautica*, by Apollonius of Rhodes. In this myth, the Harpies begin earning their most usual connotation, by their insertion in the story of King Phineus.

The myth is told in Book 2 (261-526). King Phineus himself has a connection to wind myths, which directs us to the ancestral roots of the harpies. His first wife, according to the myth, was a woman called Cleopatra. This Cleopatra was the daughter of Boreas, who is also a wind divinity. There may be a distant relation between Cleopatra/Boreas and the harpy Podarge in the Homeric myth, the lover of Zephyrus; however, if that is so, this version of the myth does not make it obvious. In this case, King Phineus was cursed and blinded. There are several accounts as to why he was punished with blindness, but the one presented in the *Argonautica* is that of having revealed the future to humankind, after receiving a divine gift for foreseeing.

King Phineus' punishment is further intensified by the harpies, who carry away the intention of keeping him barely alive: whenever food was brought to him, the Harpies would snatch it away, only leaving him the bare minimum essential for life; it is equally noticeable that they are already more deformed, as they have "crooked beaks" (178-239).

The heroes in the *Argonautica* defeat the Harpies at last, and there is a promise made in which it is determined that they will no longer torment King Phineus. The way in which this promise is made creates some connection to ancestral traditions. Following the Harpies' defeat, there is a desire to punish them, in return for the many torments they have brought to King Phineus. However, this action is prevented by divine intervention, and the Harpies are protected. It is Iris who makes a statement, the same Iris who, in Hesiod's *Theogony*, is presented as their sister: "It is not lawful, O sons of Boreas, to strike with your sword the Harpies, the hounds of mighty Zeus; but I myself will give you a pledge, that hereafter they shall not draw near to Phineus." (262-290).

The goddess Iris seems to hold some authority over the Harpies and their fate, and the divine hierarchy seems to place them in a lower plan, in a clear evolution from the *Theogony*, where there is no practical distinction. The harpies have also gained a sister of their own kind, and now make for a total of three, individualising Iris in her function and stirring their roles away. They seem to be beings lacking in willpower: they are described as the hounds of Zeus, which gives a sense of fidelity and obedience, and removes personal decision from their actions. Iris seems to have come to a place of greater authority than these beings, as she is able to vouch for a promise in their name –the Harpies themselves are not able to promise, or would not be heard or believed by the Argonauts who defeat them. In fact, throughout all the *Argonautica*, the harpies do not speak.

This lack of self-will is especially notorious in the theme of transgression and punishment, as well as the existence of an indirect connection with fate. One of the many prophecies that exists in Greek myth is that the harpies will be subjected to future doom and that they will be punished for their actions. If, as seen above, they have no direct power of decision over them, this means that a Harpy is not only enslaved to the will of the gods but also destined to expiate it[8]. Whereas they are the hounds of Zeus and obey his will, they are still predestined to be killed by Zetes and Calais, the Boreads[9], whereas Zeus will remain unpunished by his deeds, as he is the heavenly father and the king amongst the gods. It is a case in which the messenger is punished, and where the blame lies with the messenger of bad news, rather than the creator of punishment. Their character of wind spirits never truly disappears, as can be seen by the fact that even their punishers are said to be the sons of the wind, thus preserving some elements of the original identification.

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[8] As seen in Hard 2004: 52: "if the Harpies simply functioned as 'snatchers' who removed people from the company of the living and disappeared with them, they could hardly acquire any proper myths of their own; but in one story at least, they also appear as persecutors of the living".

[9] Bell (1991: 217) states that "the persistent theme of immortality enters into these stories. The Harpies, like their sister, Iris, were immortal, so it is questionable that they should have had to flee from the sons of Boreas". Regardless of this incoherence, one of the many that can be found in the non-dogmatic Greek Religion, one can verify that even the prophecy of their death implies the presence of wind, as they are meant to be killed by the Boreades, children of the wind, and often represented as being winged themselves.

The physical appearance of a Harpy also seems to evolve through Greek mythology and to transpose itself into Roman myth. As seen above, they start as beautiful, long-haired women. As their role transposes from wind spirits to the "hounds of Zeus" and the bearers of divine punishment, they start transforming into creatures with a far more negative connotation and a monstrous appearance. As seen in Aeschylus:

> "Before this man an extraordinary band of women slept, seated on thrones. No! Not women, but rather Gorgons I call them; and yet I cannot compare them to forms of Gorgons either. Once before I saw some creatures in a painting, carrying off the feast of Phineus; but these are wingless in appearance, black, altogether disgusting; they snore with repulsive breaths, they drip from their eyes hateful drops; their attire is not fit to bring either before the statues of the gods or into the homes of men. I have never seen the tribe that produced this company, nor the land that boasts of rearing this brood with impunity and does not grieve for its labour afterwards." (A. *Eu*. 49-59; translation by Smyth 1926).

In Aeschylus, they are described as worse than a Gorgon. What is less usual is the absence of the winged component, which seems to be a constant in nearly all the depictions of Harpies, whether in art or literature. The circumstance described is, once more, the feast of Phineus, and the function remains identical, as they are the ones who "carry off the feast"; however, their role as divine workers and avengers seems to have been put into question, as harpies, "altogether disgusting", and are "not fit to bring either before the statues of the gods or into the homes of men". In this case, even though Harpies are creatures that do not belong to the realm of mortals, there is a demarcation from the realm of the gods, and they become beings that represent transgression entirely, belonging to neither place and not worthy of even appearing in a temple. As Aeschylus was writing during the 6th–5th centuries BCE, one can observe that the imagery surrounding a harpy has already undergone significant changes since the Hesiodic and Homeric writings.

There is also a version of harpies in which they appear as an inversion of their usual representation. This appears in Hyginus, where harpies essentially appear as reversed sirens (Hyg. *Fab*. 14). Rather than having a human head and the bird of a body –as it is found in some rare representations–, they have the body of a bird and are exclusively humanised by their arms, torso and reproductive system. Much as their appearance may vary, they

are always associated with the feminine, and there is not one instance of a masculine equivalent of a harpy in Greek myth. Their equivalent seems to be in other triads of feminine figures that are usually created for heroes to defeat, such as the Gorgons, or feminine figures connected both to the matters of life and death or prophetic deeds, such as the Moirae. The challenges presented by feminine triads, which always appear as a unity, are a constant.

Harpies in *ASoIaF*

If one is to summarise the complex relationship between harpies and the creation of George R. R. Martin, one can state the following:

1) In ancient myth, Harpies present a mostly negative connotation of punishment. However, they are always presented as heralds. In *ASoIaF*, they are often presented in a higher standing by comparison, as they can appear as deities.

2) Their role as 'snatchers' may be indirectly related to the theft of people's freedoms, as they are associated with slaver cities; however, the Harpy in *ASoIaF* is more of a symbol of punishment and power, serving no function as a psychopomp.

3) The notion of Harpies as creatures of the wind is essentially seen through their iconography, which, in *ASoIaF*, also presents winged women, or half-bird, half-human creatures; this can be seen in several episodes between seasons 2 and 6. However, these harpies often appear with horns and other such additions, unlike the occurrences of Greek mythology.

4) Their main associated character, Daenerys, is connected with fire, punishment and prophecy. The latter is unusual regarding harpies, but not unseen, as it is present in Vergil's *Aeneid*. Daenerys herself has an entire plotline deeply imbibed in prophetical terms. Through her dragons, who are winged creatures, she is also connected to the air element, although has no direct association to the winds.

5) *ASoIaF* harpies have a strong association with the whip, as a symbol of slavery. No such occurrence is visible in Greek myth, where they are, as observed above, more of slaves themselves, subjected to the whims of the gods and predestination.

These essential ideas will now be explored more in-depth in the following pages. They will be divided into two major hypotheses, which create different observation points for potential interpretations of Harpies in *ASoIaF*: one opposes the Harpy to the Dragon, creating a symbolical and mythological conflict between two figures that arise to an almost-divine statue. The other, less obvious, but equally significant, equates Dragon and Harpy, placing Daenerys Targaryen as the discreet but true equivalent of the Harpy in *ASoIaF*. It must be stated, before proceeding with this analysis, that the development of a symbolic, mythological and religious meaning for harpies in the show is very reduced, to a point it is essentially inexistent aside from the association with the ideology of slavery and the creation of a physical image for Daenerys' enemies. In what regards the books, as George R. R. Martin uses the non-reliable narrator device, we will often find incongruences in terms of the real significance of the Harpy, especially in the varying interpretations that Daenerys seems to give them.

The Dragon against the Harpy

The most evident interpretation of the Harpy's role in *ASoIaF* and *Game of Thrones* is that of opposition, creating a conflict of Harpy against Dragon that will prolong itself through a significant part of the series. It is the physical representation of the forces that Daenerys has to oppose in order to achieve her goals[10]. In the books and show alike, harpies appear connected to the cities of Slaver's Bay, and the main character who interacts with them and the so-called 'Sons of the Harpy' is Daenerys Targaryen, the Mother of Dragons.

The first immediate opposition arises from the precise symbolism that precedes their individual associations: the Harpy is connected to slavery and whips, whereas, as Daenerys Targaryen states in season 3, *zaldrīzes buzdari iksos daor*, "a dragon is not a slave". As a matter of thematical principle, the Dragon must oppose the Harpy, due to their different natures. This does not mean, however, that they are completely distant.

There are two immediate connotations that can be made, aside from the obvious fact of Daenerys being the one to interact with the Harpy and the Sons of the Harpy:

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[10] In a similar way as to the creation of the Night King for the show, which embodies a concrete enemy on the side of the White Walkers.

1) Both Daenerys and the Harpies are connected with the element of air. Although her dragons are more often associated with fire, they are winged, air-borne creatures, much like a Harpy.

2) Both Daenerys and the Harpies are connected with a theme of crime and punishment. In Daenerys' case, this notion is dual: on the one hand, for most of the story, she is the one suffering the consequences of the crimes of her ancestors (a frequent motto in Greek mythology); on the other, she often self-assumes a position as a punisher. This can be seen, for instance, when she crucifies the masters of the Slaver Cities in return for the crucifixion of children; when she burns the man who sells the Unsullied to her, as a punishment both for slavery, personal insults and an attempt to enslave and chain her dragon; and (in a show-exclusive move) when she burns the Tarly representatives, for refusing to join her cause, and when she burns Varys, the eunuch, for betrayal. It must be noted that, unlike the Harpies, Daenerys is not acting as a herald of gods or goddesses, but makes these decisions on her own, and follows her own moral compass and definition of justice – that is, she applies justice out of her own will, rather than the will of others. This subject will be returned to in the next few pages, but the viewer and reader receive the information that Daenerys is following her own concept of justice.

3) Both Daenerys and the Harpies are connected with the divine or have supernatural characteristics. Daenerys is a mortal woman, whereas the Harpies in *ASoIaF* are represented as possible deities, which is a different position from that in which they are placed in ancient myth:

> "It is, however, difficult and dangerous, if not impossible, to generalize about the nature of the Greek deities. Many of the preceding remarks apply for the most part only to the highest order of divinity in the Greek pantheon. Such wondrous and terrible creations as the Gorgons or Harpies, who populate the universe to enrich the mythology and saga, obviously represent a different category of the supernatural." (Morford / Lenardon 1985: 83)

Daenerys, not being a goddess, has her unique status represented by marked physical characteristics, unworldly beauty, and her great resistance to fire, which, however, is not an immunity; she is also

able to train and ride dragons, creatures that belong to the realm of supernatural.

In terms of appearance, there are, therefore, two points that can be made:

1) Both the Harpies and Daenerys have a physical appearance that sets them aside from the regular mortals. Whereas the Harpies are initially described as beautiful women with long hair and wings, Daenerys is a character of 'Valyrian' blood, that is, she descends from an ancient civilisation with physical traits that set it aside in the general context, namely silver-gold hair and eyes of unusual colouring, which, in her personal case, assume the shade of violet.

2) As Harpies are further developed in mythology, they begin assuming a character of dreadful and unattractive creatures, monsters that do not belong to the realm of man. This does not happen to Daenerys, who, up to the last instalment of the saga, is described by some characters as the "most beautiful woman in the world", perhaps both due to her unusual appearance and her growing power. However, her dragons are often portrayed as fearsome creatures of dreadful appearance, resulting in show gags such as in season 7, where Jon Snow hesitates to call them "beautiful".

Depictions of Harpies in Greek art have limited influence on how they will appear in George R. R. Martin's world. In the former, they are often represented as winged women with terrible faces, something which overall matches the descriptions given by written sources. Save some exceptions –in which they seem to present strong similarities with sirens–, they do not have any particular characteristic, aside from being winged women: they are entirely anthropomorphic, save the wings. In a symbolic level that inserts itself in religious

Figure 3: Depiction of goddess Ishtar

and mythological contexts, harpies do not seem to achieve a divine status: they are the messengers of the gods, but lack in themselves the status of divinity.

The role of a harpy in *ASoIaF* greatly stirs from this. Daenerys will symbolically face three harpies. The importance of the number three will be discussed in the following pages; for now, one can note the coincidence between the Three Heads of the Dragon, part of the Targaryen family crest, and the Three Harpies which Daenerys Targaryen will have to face in her journey. The three harpies are those of Astapor, Yunkai and Meereen, and the depictions in the books and the show alike share some similarities.

In what regards the show, although each harpy has a distinctive trait, the biggest differences are between the Harpy of Astapor and the Harpy of Meereen, as one has the legs of a bird –more in the fashion of an ancient siren– and the other does not. In the books, harpies have many more elements that transform them into a true chimaera: the Harpy of Astapor is described as having a scorpion's tail, whereas there are references to pointed teeth and the wings of a bat or a dragon[11]. The show's art department seems to take little inspiration from Greek art[12]: in fact, their appearance is far more similar in shape and motives to the representations of ancient Mesopotamian goddesses, such as Inanna/Ishtar.

The metaphoric fight between harpies and dragons does not seem to be a common occurrence in ancient myth. In fact, dragons in Ancient Greece most likely had a different context, being more heavily related to serpent-like figures[13]; dragons in George R. R. Martin's mythology are much closer to later depictions[14], especially those which will become widespread during

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[11] Regarding the relation between harpies and dragons, and how the dragon wings of a harpy may have a symbolic connection to Daenerys, see *infra*.

[12] Regarding Harpies in ancient art, see Giuliani 2013: 219. Harpies and Gorgons are distinguished from the Furies by the depiction of wings.

[13] Varner 2007: 116: "The snake and the serpent have been depicted as goddesses and gods, as holy beings to be worshipped, as dragons, as devils and as symbols of lust, greed and sin – and of death".

[14] Martin seems to have taken his inspiration from medieval heraldry. In an interview to Neil deGrasse Tyson (StarTalk: May 17, 2019: https://www.startalkradio.net/show/playing-the-game-of-thrones-with-george-rr-martin/, 11:00 to 11:30), George R. R. Martin explained that it was during the research stage, when he was looking at medieval heraldry, that he realised his representation of dragons in the *ASoIaF* books was actually one of wyverns, as a dragon has four legs and two wings, whereas a

the medieval period[15]. Another discrepancy is that dragons in Greek Mythology are always depicted negatively, as enemies to be slain by a hero. The negativity surrounding dragons is not a stranger to this fictional universe, as the Targaryens, Daenerys included, are often seen by the Westerosi as foreign conquerors, who did not belong, and who brought destruction with them. However, throughout most of the Dragon *vs* Harpy conflict, the spectator is observing it through Daenerys' point of view, where the Dragon is not an enemy, but part of her nature.

Another distinctive factor of the creator's view on harpies is that, unlike what occurs in ancient myth, they are presented as *de facto* goddesses, which would have their own associated religious rites and cults. They would have first appeared at the Old Empire of Ghis, which no longer exists at the beginning of *A Game of Thrones*, and the said empire was defeated by that of Old Valyria. The latter is the ancestral homeland of the Targaryens, one of many families of dragon lords, thus creating an ancient set-up for the confrontation between the Dragon and the Harpy.

In spite of their significance in the story, the mythology surrounding Harpies is not extensively developed by the author, and little is known about their cult or what they mean to the citizens of Essos. In fact, it can be difficult to determine whether the Harpy is truly a divinity, although it appears in places of worship, or at least as a protector of the cities. The most determinant points towards classifying the Harpy as a goddess in these contexts come from quotes by Daenerys: "Why is that ugly harpy not sitting beside

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wyvern has two legs and two wings. The same interview has Racha Kirakosian, Medieval Expert & Associate Professor of German and the Study of Religion at Harvard University, commenting on Dragons and medieval coats of arms (14:00–15:15).

[15] It has been a long-term subject of debate whether the visual representation of Drogon, Rhaegal and Viserion in the show can be classified as a dragon. Producers David Benioff and Daniel Weiss state that they utilised creative freedom in their depiction, and that the inexistence of dragons in the real world allows them to take such liberties. If one is to observe more traditional representations, however, the three-winged children of Daenerys Targaryen would be more accurately depicted as wyverns, as they have two wings and two paws, whereas a traditional dragon would have four paws and two wings. It has become usual, in the past few years, for CGI teams to adapt literature dragons as *de facto* wyverns, a phenomenon which can be observed, for instance, in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, or the well-known videogame *Elder Scrolls: Skyrim*. The exception goes to *Eragon*, a film where dragon design obeys more traditional canons.

the godsway in Vaes Dothrak among the other stolen gods?" (Daenerys, *A Storm of Swords*).

In the Dothraki culture, which plays a significant role in Daenerys' life, the statues of gods in conquered cities are brought to their central place of religious cult, Vaes Dothrak. In this quote, Daenerys seems to be stating that the Harpy herself is a Goddess. However, as mentioned above, George R. R. Martin often uses the unreliable narrator device, in which characters recall or interpret events in erroneous manners. In other instances, the same Daenerys would think:

> "In the center of the Plaza of Pride stood a red brick fountain whose waters smelled of brimstone, and in the center of the fountain a monstrous harpy made of hammered bronze. Twenty feet tall she reared. She had a woman's face, with gilded hair, ivory eyes, and pointed ivory teeth. Water gushed yellow from her heavy breasts. But in place of arms she had the wings of a bat or a dragon, her legs were the legs of an eagle, and behind she wore a scorpion's curled and venomous tail.

> The harpy of Ghis, Dany thought. Old Ghis had fallen five thousand years ago, if she remembered true; its legions shattered by the might of young Valyria, its brick walls pulled down, its streets and buildings turned to ash and cinder by dragonflame, its very fields sown with salt, sulfur, and skulls. The gods of Ghis were dead, and so too its people; these Astapori were mongrels, Ser Jorah said. Even the Ghiscari tongue was largely forgotten; the slave cities spoke the High Valyrian of their conquerors, or what they had made of it.

> Yet the symbol of the Old Empire still endured here, though this bronze monster had a heavy chain dangling from her talons, an open manacle at either end. The harpy of Ghis had a thunderbolt in her claws. This is the harpy of Astapor." (Daenerys, *A Storm of* Swords, 33951-33960[16])

> "Or would the angry gods of Ghis send their harpies to seize her soul and drag her down to torment?" (Daenerys, *A Dance with Dragons*, 76058).

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[16] George R. R. Martin, 2012: *The Song of Ice and Fire Series*. Bantam Dell E-Book edition. All the references are the respective location numbers for this eBook edition.

Whereas the first stream of thought places the Harpy as a goddess, the latter present it in what seems to be closer to the tradition in Greek mythology. The last quote is particularly significant. She questions whether the angry gods will send the harpies to torment her, the queen. This has a parallel with the well-known myth of Phineus, in which the Harpies are sent to torment the king, with several versions stating that they were envoys of this or another god. In the case of King Phineus, they continually took food from him, only barely allowing him to survive. In the case of Daenerys, the harpies seem to be continually taking her desires away, namely peace and the end of slavery.

Thus, as Daenerys seems to be an unreliable narrator, harpies are presented in different manners. On the one side, they appear as goddesses; on the other, as heralds of the gods of Ghis. Another point in the equation that might give strength to the former hypothesis is the fact that the descendants of this Old Ghiscari Empire call themselves the 'Sons of the Harpy', with the absence of names for other divinities. Neither show nor books have completely cleared this matter.

The identification of local citizens with Harpies takes a practical form after the conquest of Meereen. A rebellious group, made of former slaves and masters alike, engages in attacks against Daenerys' forces, guards, and the people she aims to protect. Even if Ghis had other ancestral gods, of whom the Harpies are the heralds, the fact is that citizens relate to the Harpy far more than to any of these gods, whose names are never mentioned. They are the Harpy's children, and rather than waiting for the Harpy's work to bring punishment, they become her instruments of revenge and decide to do it themselves.

From this stage onwards, the conflict between the Dragon and the Harpy will intensify. In a practical sense, one can almost speak of a conflict between two divinities, both equally ancient, and represented in similar ways. On one side, the Harpy, the first titan, a winged woman. On the other, the Dragon God, which is symbolised, in a functional way, by the figure of Daenerys Targaryen.

Although Daenerys is always presented as a mortal woman, she is one of the most mystical characters in *ASoIaF* and one of those most closely related to magic and the realm of divinity. In this case, one can look at the most figurative sense of Daenerys as the Dragon goddess: from the early moments of the story, she seems to present significant immunity to heat and fire, although she is by no means fireproof, as has been confirmed by the

author in past interviews[17]. But her character of divinity is also expressed through a less obvious connection, in this case, to the moon.

Daenerys' lunar connotations have been shown both in the show and the books. In the second episode of season one, two of her handmaids are telling her the legends of their own people. One states that Dragons come from the moon: the moon is an egg, and in remote times, there would have been a second moon, which wandered too close to the sun. By cracking, it poured thousands of dragons. The other handmaid disagrees, stating that the moon is not an egg, but a goddess, the wife of the sun. In the first version of the tale, the moon is carrying dragons within her, and through her approaching fire, these creatures are unleashed upon the world; in the other, the moon herself is divinity, which is particularly relevant when one observes the words of endearment between Daenerys and her first husband, Khal Drogo. The latter maid's tale meets the idea expressed in the Dothraki language, in which Khal Drogo calls Daenerys "Moon of my life", and she calls him her "Sun and Stars". In an indirect way, Daenerys, associated with the moon, is also associated with the divine moon goddess. This divine moon goddess, in other local cultures, is, figuratively speaking, the mother of dragons, as Daenerys herself will become.

The association of dragons with God-like figures is further developed in the books. When Daenerys thinks of Magister Illyrio's ships, one can read lines in which she ponders about the fact that he gave them Dragon names, the Dragons of Old Valyria, Baleron, Meraxes and Vhagar. In her own words, "in old Valyria before the doom, Balerion, Meraxes and Vhagar had been gods (41813)".

Perhaps the most significant quote regarding the identification of Daenerys as a goddess (whether the Dragon or the Moon) can be found in *A Storm of Swords*:

> "Dany broke her fast under the persimmon tree that grew in the terrace garden, watching her dragons chase each other about the apex

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[17] See the several interviews quoted by Dan Selcke in *Winter is Coming* (2016) (https://winteriscoming.net/2016/05/16/is-daenerys-completely-fireproof-and-does-that-contradict-the-books/; accessed on April 1st 2021). He points to a transcript of a chat with Martin on March 18th 1990 (http://web.archive.org/web/20000615222300/http://www.eventhorizon.com/sfzine/chats/transcripts/031899.html; accessed on April 1st 2021), where George R. R. Martin states that the Targaryens are not immune to fire, that the birth of Daenerys' dragons was a singular occasion, and that she will probably not be able to do it [i.e., go into the fire] again.

of the Great Pyramid where the huge bronze harpy once stood. Meereen had a score of lesser pyramids, but none stood even half as tall. From here she could see the whole city: the narrow twisty alleys and wide brick streets, the temples and granaries, hovels and palaces, brothels and baths, gardens and fountains, the great red circles of the fighting pits. And beyond the walls was the pewter sea, the winding Skahazadhan, the dry brown hills, burnt orchards, and blackened fields. <u>Up here in her garden Dany sometimes felt like a god, living atop the highest mountain in the world.</u>" (44903-44908; my underlining)

In her subsequent reflections, Daenerys comes to the conclusion that the feeling of divinity was far from pleasant:

"*Do all gods feel so lonely?* Some must, surely. Missandey had told her of the Lord of Harmony, worshiped by the Peaceful People of Naath (…). *Poor Lord of Harmony*. Dany pitied him. It must be terrible to be alone for all time, attended by hordes of butterfly women you could make or unmake at a word. (…) The red priests believed in two gods, she had heard, but two who were eternally at war. Dany liked that even less. She would not want to be eternally at war" (44908-44913).

In a stage of deep political and military conflict, Daenerys reflects upon her wishes. Her thoughts derive into the opposition between two gods, which is very similar to the situation that she is living. There is also an opposition between her warring character and her perceived desire for peace: she is convinced of her own wishes for the end of the war, whereas her character seems to be eternally surrounded by confrontation. The conflict between Dragon and Harpy seems almost as much external as it is internal: "Meereen would always be the Harpy's city, and Daenerys could not be a harpy" (80749).

By refusing the former throne of the Harpy, which existed in Meereen prior to her arrival, she makes her first statement in this regard: she gets a modest chair instead, as it is the one more easily available, rather than the most elaborate former throne. She also refuses to have a sculptor replace the statue atop the Pyramid of Meereen with her own, thus refusing to replace the Harpy and become the new subject of worship. There is a distancing from the harpy in her practical gestures, as the antagonism between the two over the central subject of slavery cannot be overcome.

Slavery, in the world of *ASoIaF*, is consistently represented through references of chains. The art department in the show often shows this connotation: the tattoos and sculptures of the harpy often have chains involved as a symbol of slavery and punishment. This is the complete opposite of what is valid for Dragons. They do not do well in chains, as seen by the history of Daenerys' ancestors: when former Targaryen dragons were chained in Westeros, they began to grow weaker, and subsequently faded away.

Daenerys, as Dragon incarnate, feels particularly against the notion of being chained. The conflict is developed differently in the show and the books, although the ultimate result is similar. In the books, the Sons of the Harpy will play a far bigger role; in the show, a significant portion of the plot that occurs in the Slaver Cities is abandoned and diminished, in turn leading to the growth of political conflict, rather than the opposition of smaller local groups bound to ideology and former lords.

The dragon is always dominant. There are three circumstances in which one can visually observe the victory of the Dragon over Harpy: the first, when the Targaryen flag is seen atop the Harpy of Meereen. The second, when the same harpy is brought down from the pyramid. This also represents the three stages of Daenerys' journey against the harpy.

In a first stage, the Dragon and the Harpy must coexist. The flag is over the harpy, but the giant statue has not been destroyed nor pulled down just yet. In this stage, Daenerys is still trying to accommodate, as far as possible, the old customs of Meereen. By comparison to the books, it is also a period where her character as 'The Mother' is more preponderant in personality than that of 'The Dragon'.

During the second stage, which follows the death of Barristan Selmy at the hands of the Sons of the Harpy (a show-exclusive plotline, as Selmy is still alive in the books), the Dragon's rage against the harpy begins to be felt. The giant statue is pulled down. As in the books, there is no replacement. Daenerys does not try to make the Dragon a new deity to be worshipped, nor herself the new figure at the top of the pyramid. This would go against the general theme of her early journey in Essos, as presenting herself at the top of a pyramid would not aid restructuring society in the way which a young Daenerys wishes. It is worth noting the general opposition between Daenerys' proposed and acknowledged theme –the liberation of the free cities and the end of slavery– and the self-determination and proposition of her figure as the one rightful ruler on the Iron Throne. Much as the character ostensibly desires the people's liberation, she pursues an ideal in which it

must be done with her as the leader, with a constant sense of predestination, one which keeps her away from her perceived wishes of being an ordinary woman, of returning to the house with the red door, a theme of her childhood:

> "If she had been some ordinary woman, she would gladly have spent her whole life touching Daario, tracing his scars and making him tell how he'd come by every one. *I would give up my crown if he asked it of me*, Dany thought… but he had not asked it, and never would. Daario might whisper words of love when the two of them were as one, but she knew it was the dragon queen he loved. *If I gave up my crown, he would not want me*. Besides, kings who lost their crowns oft lost their heads as well, and she could see no reason why it would be any different for a queen"[18] (73455-73458).

The last moment of victory seen in the show can be physically observed in the presence of a ship's *Akrostolion*. The *Akrostolion* is a decorative piece, one that is placed at the prow; a famous example is the statue of the Winged Victory of Samothrace, currently in the Louvre. When the Slaver Cities' fleet attacks Meereen, one can see that the ships carrying an *Akrostolion* have a Harpy in its place, representative of their cities' symbol and protector. As Daenerys and her army come victorious from this fight, they presumably take over part of the enemy navy, although this remains unclear. What is certain is that the new navy used to sail to Westeros –which consists of a combination of Targaryen, Dothraki and Greyjoy forces, amongst others– one can see that the fleet has a different *Akrostolion* –in fact, it has several.

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[18] Although it is not the central motif of this study, it is worth noting that the motive of Daenerys' crown is treated very differently in both books and show. Whereas in the books it seems a central object that accompanies her character, the character in the show never receives a crown, although designs have been created by Michelle Clapton, responsible for the wardrobe. Its replacement by intricate braiding styles in the show steers away from one of the central motifs to the book character, which is related to her sense of predestination and mission, belief in otherworldliness, but also the political repercussions of the pursuit or abandonment of her aspect as queen, which once again distances her, in her own vision, from the corpus of characters. In her personal view, Daenerys is not a simple mortal, and cannot abandon her goals both for a matter of mission and of self-preservation. In practical terms, abandoning the crown is abandoning her safety, but a whole analysis would be required to understand how much of it is an effective worry, and how much is a creation of Daenerys' mind, as one of the most complex characters in this fictional universe.

There is the Kraken, the symbol of the House of Greyjoy. Then, there is also the Horse, which is a peculiar detail, as it is used for the Dothraki ships, and the Dothraki were known for never having sailed across the sea; in a symbolical manner, the ships become the Dothraki horses over water. Last, the Dragon *Akrostolion*, which is seen, amidst other cases, decorating the ship that transports Daenerys Targaryen.

Through these three concretisations, one can see the slow but steady progress of the Dragon over the Harpy. First, one observes the Targaryen flag over the Harpy; then, the Harpy gets torn down; then, the Harpy gets replaced. One must notice, however, that the books have not covered this part of the plot yet, and that the show gives no indication as to what happens afterwards in the Slaver Cities, of which Daario Naharis, Daenerys' supporter, is left in charge. The watcher does not know whether the Dragon has truly conquered the Harpy, or whether this victory was merely temporary, and the winged creature will rise once again, bringing back the secular customs of Slaver's Bay.

As for Daenerys herself, it is believed that book and show plots have greatly diverged from, at least, season 4; as per the show, however, Daenerys, the Queen, will end up being punished by her deeds. After destroying a city and murdering innocents, her nephew, Jon Snow –who is, in fact, Aegon Targaryen– will betray her, stabbing the Queen's heart. Jon Snow himself has a mystical connotation both in books and show, as he is a resurrected character and believed to be favoured by R'hllor, the Lord of Light, another God in the *ASoIaF* pantheon. In a way, one could interpret him as a messenger of a god, brought back to life to bring punishment to the enemies of Light; however, this interpretation is very loose, as the motivations behind Jon Snow's ultimate decision to kill Daenerys may be more closely related to the protection of his family on the Stark lineage than any real desire of punishment.

The importance of Threes

Another relevant element to this study is how harpies are related to number three. Earlier sources, such as Hesiod, usually presented only two: Aello and Acypete. However, a third harpy would join in subsequent times, often named Celaeno. This count of three has several occurrences in which it presents a heavy symbolical weight, a notion that is prevalent to several cultural contexts, and was frequent in the Greco-Roman myths: the Three Moirae,

the Twelve Labours of Heracles (three times four), the three-headed dog Cerberus that guards the underworld, to give a few examples.

In the narrative surrounding Daenerys Targaryen, the number three will also be a frequent occurrence. This can start with an observation of her family crest, which represents the Three Headed Dragon. Whilst visiting the mystical House of the Undying, she has a series of visions, in which the notion is picked up yet again. Daenerys sees her older brother, Rhaegar Targaryen, who had died many years past. In his words:

> "He looked up (…) and his eyes met Dany's, and it seemed as if he saw her standing there beyond the door. "There must be one more," he said, though whether he was speaking to her or the woman she could not say. "The dragon has three heads." He went to the window seat, picked up a harp, and ran his fingers lightly over its silvery strings" (Daenerys, *A Clash of Kings*, 24144-24146).

Rhaegar, as a character, sets immense store on prophecy. It is uncertain, at this point, who the three heads of the dragon truly are. The show's creative choices decided to set aside a significant portion of the book's mythological elements, as explained in interviews by the producers in the past; the last published book, *A Dance of Dragons*, does not allow for a sufficient explanation. Daenerys will attempt to find out the answers through the course of the books, as well as the meaning of the remaining prophecies, in a quest which she claims is for truth and self-knowledge:

> ""I have come for the gift of truth," Dany said. "In the long hall, the things I saw… were they true visions, or lies? Past things, or things to come? What did they mean?"
>
> … the shape of shadows… morrows not yet made… drink from the cup of ice… drink from the cup of fire…
>
> … mother of dragons… child of three…
>
> "Three?" She did not understand.
>
> … three heads has the dragon… […] mother of dragons… child of storm… The whispers became a swirling song… three fires you must light… one for life and one for death and one to love… […] three mounts you must ride… one to bed and one to dread and one to love… […] three treasons will you know… once for blood and once for gold and once for love…"" (24204-24214).

This excerpt, taken from *A Clash of Kings*, repeatedly shows Daenerys Targaryen being shown the number three: three fires, three mounts, three treasons. The most important for this study, however, is perhaps the repeated mention of the three heads of the dragon, which, coincidentally, match the fact that she received three dragon eggs, and that all the eggs hatched. She is the mother of three dragons and will face three harpies, just like the three harpies in ancient myth. The three-headed dragon of her house crest also expresses the idea of union in a trinity: three heads working as one being, without individuation, working together towards a common goal.

Another element may be retrieved, once again regarding the number of three and its varying expressions of division or unity. Greek Mythology has a regular presence of three harpies; *ASoIaF* has constant references to three dragons, or three-headed dragons, and that is the number that Daenerys Targaryen will be able to magically bring into the world. This will, once again, return the subject of the existence of a will. Whereas the Harpies in ancient myth do not seem to have developed their own personalities –aside from the one account in which Podarge is the lover of Zephyrus, they do not seem to have any distinctive character traits– the three dragons of Daenerys Targaryen seem to present different characteristics. Drogon, the largest of the three, is always pointed out as the wildest of the dragons, temperamental and often difficult to control; Rhaegal is, perhaps, not as frequently mentioned, but Viserion often appears as the sweetest of the three, and the dragons seem to have their own tempers. See, for instance, a chapter of Daenerys in *A Storm of Swords*:

> "Behind the carved wooden door of the captain's cabins, her dragons were restless. Drogon raised his head and screamed, pale smoke venting from his nostrils, and Viserion flapped at her and tried to perch on her shoulder, as he had when he was smaller. "No," Dany said, trying to shrug him off gently. "You're too big for that now, sweetling." But the dragon coiled his white and gold tail around one arm and dug black claws into the fabric of her sleeve, clinging tightly. Helpless, she sank into Groleo's leather chair, giggling". (34225-34229)

They also have distinctive physical appearances:

> "I would name them all for those the gods have taken. The green one shall be Rhaegal, for my valient brother who died on the green banks of the Trident. The cream-and-gold I call Viserion. Viserys was cruel

and weak and frightened, yet he was my brother still. His dragon will do what he could not.

"And the black beast?" asked Ser Jorah Mormont.

"The black," she [Daenerys] said, "is Drogon." (Daenerys, *A Clash of Kings*, 16527-16530).

"Viserion's scales were the color of fresh cream, his horns, wing bones, and spinal crest a dark gold that flashed bright as metal in the sun. Rhaegal was made of the green of summer and the bronze of fall". (Daenerys, *A Storm of Swords*, 30519-30520).

Therefore, all three dragons have different wills, appearances and personalities, albeit overall usually obeying the general command of their mother, Drogon aside. This is different from what happens with the harpies and seems to yet again mark a structural difference in the element of confrontation between the Dragon and the Harpy, as seen in the first proposal.

Daenerys as the Harpy

How can one connect the Mother of Dragons with the Harpy? It is possible, in a way, that Daenerys Targaryen can be seen as the Harpy herself, in a symbolical manner. As we saw above, she has an interior conflict with her own nature: her connotation as The Mother, and her symbolical existence as The Dragon, the last dragon. By extension, if Daenerys herself is the harpy, she would be the mother of the new Sons of the Harpy. This interpretation is far from being as clear and linear as the former, but it is still worth dedicating some time to.

Throughout the character's journey, she often has moments of deep self-questioning. She goes through several cities in the East, conquering one after another, in her newly-found mission to put an end to slavery. However, she soon experiences several setbacks. The collapse of the economic structure of the cities, together with the cultural habits of many centuries, give rise to these opposing groups. She begins to wonder whether she has unleashed evil upon the world –more precisely, whether she has released monsters, and whether the freedom she brought did not come at a higher cost for the people of the conquered cities: "Freedom to starve?", asked Dany sharply. "Freedom to die? Am I a dragon, or a harpy?" *Am I mad? Do I have the taint?*" (Daenerys, *A Storm of Swords*, 45210).

Daenerys takes these concerns to a new level, becoming increasingly introspective. In a subtle manner, there is an association between the Mother of Dragons and the Harpy that seems to challenge her, and Daenerys wonders not only whether she herself is the harpy, but also whether she has inherited what is commonly known as the Targaryen madness, which took her father to commit tyrannical acts and ultimately led to his demise.

As previously commented, Harpies can be presented by ancient sources as elements of transgression. Whether the interpretation is strictly rational or allows more input of the original myths, they are always women, or feminine creatures, who are not respecting social norms. This is often Daenerys' case.

In this fictional world, heavily influenced by the medieval era, women are not often afforded positions of power. Daenerys achieves power –in itself, this is a transgression. The way in which she achieves this power can also be seen as transgressive: the ritual she performs to rise her dragons from stone is seen as blood magic, and this is severely criticised by the Dothraki. At some point, Daenerys comes to the conclusion that the evil she unleashes on the world may revert upon her own self-concept: "Mother of dragons, Daenerys thought. Mother of Monsters. I am the blood of the dragon, she thought. If they are monsters, so am I." (Daenerys, *A Dance with Dragons*, 65619-65621).

And again in A Dance of Dragons:

> "There is blood on my hands too, and on my heart. We are not so different, Daario and I. We are both monsters" (68453).

> "And are my hands any cleaner [of blood, a comparison with King Cleon]? She remembered what Daario had said – that all kings must be butchers, or meat" (70335).

> "Get the heads of all the noble houses out of their pyramids on some pretext, Daario had said. The dragon's words are fire and blood. Dany pushed the thought aside. It was not worthy of her" (71822).

This vision of Daenerys as the monster and the transgressor is not exclusively internal debate but is also brought into the central conflict of this stage of her journey. Her closest followers see her as a liberator and a promised queen, the fulfiller of a new era about to dawn. The people of the cities she conquers have different perspectives, especially the nobility. Amidst the nobility, one can underline the case of Hizdar zo Loraq, one of her many contenders, but simultaneously one of her suitors: "When my people look

at you, they see a conqueror from across the seas, come to murder us and make slaves of our children" (Daenerys, *A Dance with Dragons*, 68246).

Whichever side she takes, Daenerys seems to be unsuccessful in her reforms. Her acts are destined to failure, as she will always bring harm to one side. The former slaves may revere her at first, but they soon grow weary of extreme poverty, and the impoverished locals will come to suffer from the presence of her dragons to an extent that Drogon, the largest and the wildest, will murder a small child. The former masters fear her and present her as an enemy.

There are attempts at reconciliation, however, between Dragon and Harpy, although such attempts only happen in the books, where the plotline extends through a more significant length. This same Hizdar zo Loraq, who explains the masters' vision, enters a political union with Daenerys, hoping they will, one day, have a son to unite Harpy and Dragon. As Daenerys believes herself to be barren, and to the point the books have reached so far, no such union has occurred.

Another common element between Daenerys and Harpies, even in the traditional Greco-Roman sense, is that of a sense of non-belonging. They are both presented as divided between two worlds. The Harpies, both women and birds, are not entirely human, nor entirely animal. They belong neither in the realm of men, where they punish, nor the realm of the Gods, where they receive instruction. Daenerys, too, belongs to nowhere. In the Eastern cities, and as proven by Hizdar's quote, she is seen as a foreign conqueror who sailed from across the seas. Westeros' reaction to the arrival of the Dragon Queen is only seen in the show, but it does not seem to be one of particular welcome: she has to face active opposition on several fronts, both through the noble houses which ally themselves to the established power of the Lannisters, and through the commoners, who, especially in the North, receive her in a cold, unwilling manner. Essos sees her as a Westerosi queen. Westeros sees her as a foreign conqueror from Essos. The only common element in their vision is that of one who comes to disrupt peace.

The path of Daenerys Targaryen through the course of her journey is, in a practical sense, that of a conqueror. She does not start as a skilled politician, and even though her years in Essos are a time of learning how to govern, her major successes are often achieved through violence. In a way, she can be presented as analogous to the Roman commanders attempting to impose the *Pax Romana*, through conquering a vast territorial space where control

is kept by establishing the army (coincidentally, her death in the show is similar to that of Julius Caesar, as they are both betrayed and stabbed by a former ally, and the aftermath similarly gives rise to a new political system). But conquering, as she will soon realise, is not a peaceful process.

To conquer, Daenerys must engage in ruthless acts which, to those who stand on the other side of the conflict, can seem monstrous. When she comes into the cities of Essos, she decides she wishes to abolish slavery, but having nothing to replace it with, she destroys the economic life of the city and thus leads both Masters and Freedman to starvation and difficulties, something that the character acknowledges and has a heavy weight upon her psyche, but which she is unable to solve. In a way, she can be compared to the harpies in classical myth. From her point of view, Daenerys is the Breaker of Chains, or wishes to be so; however, she acknowledges the atrocities she had to commit to getting to that stage and those which keep occurring in the cities every day. She ends up being the catalyst for the birth of the Sons of the Harpy, who result from the growing issues in the city of Meereen –in this indirect way, she is not the Mother of Dragons, but the Mother of the Harpies. In a less literal sense, she can be compared to the harpies in classical mythology as being the messenger of disgrace, who comes to the world to bring punishment from the gods for the practice of slavery.

The last two predicted instalments of the books have not been released yet, and it is still not absolutely certain how her path will be paved. In this case, one must, for once, turn exclusively towards the show; at this stage, predicting the book outcome is in the realm of speculation. In the show, however, there is a visual detail that is especially relevant in this context. It is important to underline that such a detail is most likely a coincidence regarding the matter we are discussing. In episode five of the last season, Daenerys destroys King's Landing. Depending on the point of view, the reasons can be interpreted in different ways. Some will interpret it as Daenerys finally succumbing to the madness that haunted her ancestors, although that madness itself is still being discussed. Others, such as Emilia Clarke, the actress who played the role since the beginning, believe that she was far from mad, and finally succumbed to grief.

Daenerys' actions in episode five lead to the utter destruction of the city, with men, women and children, civilians and soldiers, perishing as a result. Through the entire duration of the destruction, during which she rides her dragon over the city, we are unable to see her expression. The spectator

only sees Daenerys once more in the last episode of the series' instalment. She appears to her armies, dressed in grey-black, with intricate braids in her hair to symbolise her absolute victory.

Behind her, in what is one of the most well-known and iconic images of season 8, Drogon takes flight. The effect is such as to make it seem like Daenerys herself has grown a set of dark dragon wings. According to the released scripts for the episode, Drogon would have done this at her own request. This iconography can, in an immediate sense, be representative of her consummation as the Dragon Incarnate, the Last Dragon. However, in the books of *ASoIaF*, Harpies are described precisely this way: as having the wings of a bat or a dragon. As the scene occurs precisely after the destruction of King's Landing, where Daenerys acts as a herald of destruction and punishment, one can question whether this could symbolise her consummation as the Harpy. Is the destruction of King's Landing the revenge of the Dragon, or the Harpy's punishment?

Conclusion

The depiction of harpies in *ASoIaF* and *Game of Thrones* has great iconographic and symbolical divergences from the original Greek myth. Whether one follows interpretation one (The Dragon against the Harpy) or interpretation two (Daenerys is the Harpy), evidence of classical motifs is clear, but has developed in a way to contribute to the character's central interior conflict, both internal and external. The most distinctive factor is that the absence of the Harpies' speech and free will in Greek myth is seemingly continued into this fictional world, but Daenerys Targaryen, main opponent or main representative, always acts according to her own will, albeit taking advice from others. Daenerys sits at the top of the hierarchy, not serving the functions of a herald. The theme of punishment is preponderant, but the theme of betrayal is added consistently through the story, both through the three prophecies that accompany Daenerys, and through more practical occurrences, such as the birth of the Sons of the Harpy. In these circumstances, the harpy, albeit silent, is not a passive subject, and assumes its own individuality, enslaving rather than obeying. One can add that observing Daenerys as a harpy adds to another traditional interpretation that may come from Greek myth: the enemy feminine figure that, having fulfilled a punitive mission, must necessarily be killed by a hero.

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