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THE FUTURE OF THE PAST

WHY CLASSICAL STUDIES STILL MATTER
ATHENIAN DIALOGUES IV

Edited by Georgios K. Giannakis, Theodore Papanghelis and Antonios Rengakos

ACADEMY OF ATHENS

TRENDS IN CLASSICS

The Future of the Past

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Why Classical Studies still matter

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In Honor of Professor Nicolaos Conomis

Preface

The apprehension lurking behind the present volume's title goes back many decades; in the meantime classical humanities have been alive enough to keep prompting and making worthwhile the question of their continuing value both as institutional discipline and cultural player. At their bluntest, doubts are often formulated in terms of the perceived deadness of ancient Greek and Latin; and, as a rule, the obituarists do not bother to make subtle distinctions between dead and useless. In mid-nineteenth century England when knowledge of the classical languages, especially Greek, was figured as a status and class marker, a badge of cultural identity, a cardinal issue in pedagogy and educational reform, even a banner of political activism and a talisman against barbarism, a Right Honourable gentleman could wax eloquent on the irrelevance of knowing that the word for liver is *iecur* in Latin and ἧπαρ in Greek as against the usefulness of being able to locate the organ and of being savvy about the ways to keep it in healthy condition.

Of course, usefulness, as commonly understood, is a slippery terrain on which to fight in defence of classics, since utilitarians will be quick to occupy the practical high ground; and anecdotal as it may sound the one about the liver, the Right Honourable gentleman's disdainful tone back then seemed to chime with changing perceptions of educational values and goals amid the leaps and bounds of natural sciences and the vocational signals coming from rapid industrialization. Under the changing circumstances only eccentrics could airily claim that mastery of the grammatical rigours of Greek and Latin was a shortcut to intellectual and moral superiority, but then even Matthew Arnold's clarification that it is not vocabulary and grammar but getting acquainted with the substance of classical authors that helps us know ourselves and the world did not sound compelling enough to those eager to champion a scientific rather than a literary education.

Now, it has to be admitted that holistic and noble claims about the value of classical humanities often seem to make a virtue of vagueness and with the chronicle of iconoclasm enriched by ever new chapters over the recent decades such claims are apt to be seen as so much metaphysics in some quarters today. Scrambling for new defence positions classicists latched on to the idea of 'critical thinking' or 'mental discipline' as the peculiar bestowal of a humanistic education only to be apprised of experiments showing that learning stenography or Korean may be equally or more effective for this purpose — which goes to show, among other things, that in their casting about for more pragmatic and less high-flown arguments classicists risk selling themselves short.

One might be forgiven for thinking that we have had our fill of theoretical expositions on the relative merits of classics and other disciplines; in any case,

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nothing was further from the mind of the Athens conference organisers than yet another round of apologetics for the classical humanities, and little in the way of *pro domo sua* pronouncements is to be found in the papers collected here. The best part of the conference's purpose will have been fulfilled if the picture emerging from the contributions is that of a confident discipline which conducts its business in full awareness of the ever changing epistemological, social and cultural contexts while also interrogating the conceptual categories under which it pursues the study of the ancient material and pondering its relevance to various issues of contemporary interest; and if a number of new perspectives may be put down to needs generated by external pressures, it will, I think, be obvious that much that is new, stimulating and fascinating is the result of *intra muros* developments.

Etched on my memory from my postgraduate days in the Cambridge of the early 80's is a metaphor deployed by Tony Woodman and David West in the epilogue of a slim collective volume under the title *Quality and Pleasure in Latin Poetry* published in 1974. Referring to the explosion of theories in the twentieth century and their impact on Latin scholarship, they wax epicolyrical: 'We have heard the rumblings of the great critical storms of the century, and the waves have beaten on our shores. But have they reshaped the coastline?' In the light of hindsight, what the two classical scholars sensed back then was no more than a fresh breeze from the quarters of New Criticism; and little did they know that more was on the way from the Aeolian recesses of Theory. *venti, velut agmine facto, qua data porta, ruunt et omnia turbine perflant*: structuralism with its surplus of codes, semiotic officiations, boas deconstructors, anthropological, feminist and postcolonial lucubrations, gender studies, New Historicisms, philosophies of materialism, ever expanding contextualisations, sprawling re-contextualisations and intriguing versions of 'paradoxical' humanities, or post-humanities, where the human subject is being resolutely de-centred.

Beyond what one might see as undertheorised tame formalism as against an overtheorised surrender to the abstractions of Theory, the new reality is one of radically changing perceptions, perspectives and agendas which work to re-evaluate notions and ideas about what constitutes the classic, about the classical tradition and its European-Western exclusivities, and especially about the crucial question of value which is inextricably bound up with our discipline's durability, in other words with the future of the classical past both at the institutional level and within the broader cultural sphere.

The three days of the conference have reflected some, if not all, of the re-orientations I am referring to, although it seems to me that no tectonic movement considerably high on the Richter scale was registered, simply because the *causa efficiens* eventually declined our invitation. It is, I believe, a good thing that, in dealing with such important issues as the strategic reasoning, the dissolution of the unitary self into ontological fragmented beings, the prevailing educational utilitarianism or

the medical ethics, several papers unfolded a subtle argument oriented towards the future without forfeiting the idea of the classical past's persistent exemplarity. Intelligently reckoned with, the issue of such exemplarity, even if you happen to disagree with its perceived effects, imparts to the discourses of classical scholarship an interest all of their own.

It is also a good thing to hear, as we have heard, that the classical tradition can be much more than the glorified foundation of a western identity and can function as a catalyst for critical and pluralist reflection not only on differences but also on the universals arguably shared by other major civilisations and traditions of thought. It is also good for our intellectual vigilance to be reminded, as we have been reminded, that our classical texts are versatile enough to foreshadow or reflect our modern concerns and anxieties while holding the promise that, subjected to ever new readings, they will continue to do so in the future — a future which, as a couple of papers have reassured us, will see the *grande dame* of classical scholarship marching hand in hand with the technology savvy towards new horizons and experiences.

To sustain the sailing metaphor: hazards may be lurking along the re-shaped coastline, from the neglect of a solid classical training, to the sloppy or cavalier treatment of our textual material (the reverse of the slow reading required by a paper) or to a fundamentalist relativism driven by ideological obsessions. Yet I am confident that on balance our classical studies stand to gain a future which in many respects will be more rich, more inclusive, more exciting, more connected and interactive with other fields of knowledge and research.

Antiquity is (as we know and have heard) both familiar and alien, and its fascination is that while it commands a certain amount of pious genuflections before a demonstrably formative past it also has a knack for constantly and refreshingly contributing to our modernity and its evolving conceptual mechanisms; and because it involves its students in narratives of mandatory diachrony, it is also unique in shaping an intellect capable of better understanding the constructedness and historicity of cultural phenomena. Beyond the celebrations of Antiquity's classical value, it is, I think, its heuristic cultural value that seems more likely to ensure what we have been musing upon during the conference: the future of its past.

On behalf of the organisers I would like to express warm thanks to all those who worked with unfailing devotion for the best possible result in preparing our conference: to the Board of Directors of the Kostas and Eleni Ourani Foundation, the Secretary General of the Academy of Athens, Prof. Christos Zerefos, the Director of the Centre for the study of Greek and Latin Antiquity, Academy of Athens, Prof. Thanassis Stefanis and the Centre's researchers.

Theodore Papanghelis

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Part I: **Now and Then: From the Present to the Past and into the Future**

Roderick Beaton

Civilisation or Civilisations? New Contexts for the Ancient Greek Achievement

Abstract: What do we mean by 'civilisation'? The word and many of the associations it carries today are the product of the European Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, which drew on an understanding of the ancient Greek past. But civilisations also exist in the plural. Defined by anthropologists as 'complex societies', very many have existed at different times and in different places in the history of our planet. When ancient Greek civilisation is viewed in that context, its defining characteristics emerge as: 1) continuity to today; 2) worldwide influence; 3) concepts of liberty and the rule of law (*isonomia*) as delineated by Herodotus.

Keywords: Ancient Greece, civilisation, complex societies, Enlightenment, Europe, Herodotus, liberty, rule of law

What do we mean by 'civilisation'? The word comes, via French, from a Latin word meaning 'civic' or 'civil', which in turn derives from the Latin for 'citizen'. In the eighteenth century, the time of the Enlightenment in Europe, those two, closely related, qualities of urban life, and particularly the rights and duties of the citizen, came to be held up as the blueprint for a bright, rational, forward-looking modern world — in effect, the world of the 'West' as we know it today. Cities go back a long way in human history, at least 5,000 years. But the idea of citizenship, including civil rights and civic duties, was spelt out for the first time in the city-states of ancient Greece. The Greek word for a city was (and is) *polis* — the origin of a raft of English words all connected to the same basic idea: politics, politician, politic, polite, police (law and order were in there at the beginning, even if not enforced in quite the ways we're familiar with).

The voluminous French *Encyclopédie*, published between 1751 and 1772, and often taken as a kind of manifesto for the new ideas of the Enlightenment, does not have a separate article on 'civilisation'. But the word does appear three times, most substantively in an article by Louis de Jaucourt, published in 1765, devoted to 'historical lives': there, 'civilisation' is presented as the gift of "the illustrious dead, the sages of antiquity, ... sacred shades, the objects of veneration."[1]

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1 Jaucourt 1765 (my translation).

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This makes ‘civilisation’ sound like an abstract quality, and deeply embedded in Greco-Roman antiquity — always, of course, as viewed through the prism of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Ever since that time, the concept has been loosely expanded to embrace all forms of rational enquiry, especially in the sciences and what we would now call technological innovation, the pursuit of commerce and prosperity, and an elaborate aesthetics governing the arts. ‘Civilisation’, when we use the word in this abstract, generalised sense today, means a good deal more than just the sum of those keywords. And even during the last three centuries, once the word itself had become current, it has often meant rather different things to different people.

For some, it means the flourishing of the arts, more or less equivalent to human creativity. The classic 1969 BBC TV series and accompanying book by Kenneth Clark, with that one-word title, was a history of the visual arts as they had developed in western Europe since the fall of the Roman empire a millennium and a half ago.[2] But the contradictions at the heart of this understanding of ‘civilisation’ have long been recognised. Whatever the European thinkers of the Enlightenment may have hoped for, the actions of ‘civilised’ Europeans, both before and after their time, hardly lived up to them. The American poet Ezra Pound, who had been living in London since before World War I, reflected shortly after it was over that all this destruction had been “For a botched civilization, / For an old bitch gone in the teeth.” A few years later, in 1930, the inventor of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, in a book known in English as *Civilization and its Discontents*, suggested that civilisation itself was responsible for the mental distresses that he observed in his patients.[3] More recently, historians such as Niall Ferguson have focused instead on the political, economic, and scientific achievements of the modern ‘Western’ world. Prehistorians, looking back beyond a time when written records existed, search for its most distant origins in the emergence of the earliest urban societies.[4]

Common to all these different approaches is the assumption that ‘civilisation’ is an abstract noun in the singular. At its origin and heart lie the enduring cultural achievements of Greek and Roman antiquity. In the modern British school curriculum, ‘Classical Civilisation’ (where it still exists) is implicitly a tautology. And that is without even considering those parts of the world and those communities where attempts have been made either to hijack the study of the ‘classical’ past to a far-

2 Clark 1980.

3 Pound 1948, 176; Freud 2002.

4 Ferguson 2011; on prehistory, see e.g. Wengrow 2010.

right, white supremacist agenda, or to reject the subject wholesale in an apparent validation of that attempted appropriation.[5]

A far more significant, and rational, challenge to the Enlightenment construction of civilisation as singular and abstract comes from the disciplines of archaeology, anthropology, the social and political sciences. For at least a century now it has been customary in these discourses to think of 'civilisation' not so much (or not only) in the singular and as a uniquely European creation, but also in the plural and shorn of the ethical and political baggage that comes with its particular manifestation in ancient Greece and Rome. From this perspective, very many different civilisations have existed at different times and in different places in the history of our planet. Acknowledging this was the starting point for a second BBC TV series, *Civilisations*, also focused on the fine arts, that was aired in 2018 and explicitly billed as a remake of the previous one.[6] Historians have long recognised that the Aztecs, the Incas, ancient Egypt, India and China (the last uninterruptedly for 3,000 years) had all created urbanised societies, artistic achievements and monuments of their own which share many of the characteristics of 'civilisation' in the abstract, often existing quite independently of the Greco-Roman world that we habitually call 'classical antiquity'.

Civilisations, in the plural, are defined by archaeologists and anthropologists as 'complex societies'. And once you define them like that, you easily begin to find more and more of them. The archaeologist David Wengrow, in a controversial book jointly written with the anthropologist, the late David Graeber, has argued that 'complex societies' have existed in prehistory and in more recent times that have been organised in ways quite different from those famous examples — and has even questioned the centrality of *cities* at all.[7]

In a modern context, the American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington defined 'a civilization' as "the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species." Huntington's celebrated essay of 1993, 'The clash of civilizations', three years later expanded into the book of the same title, identified no fewer than nine different, competing civilisations in existence at the time.[8]

5 These subjects are explored more fully in several chapters of the present volume.

6 Beard 2018; Olusoga 2018.

7 Graeber and Wengrow 2021, 432 and *passim*. See also Wengrow 2010 and Tainter 1988, 41: "A civilization is the cultural system of a complex society. The features that popularly define a civilized society — such as great traditions of art and writing — are epiphenomena or covariables of social, political, and economic complexity. Complexity calls these traditions into being. […] Civilization emerges with complexity, exists because of it, and disappears when complexity does."

8 Huntington 2002, 26–27 (Map 1.3); 43 (quoted).

These rather different, by now very well established but also evolving, ways of thinking about 'civilisations' (in the plural) open up alternative perspectives on the cultural achievement of the ancient Greeks — not necessarily in conflict with the one inherited from the Enlightenment, but enriching it by allowing us to view ancient Greek civilisation within a much broader context. Classicists and ancient historians have been doing this for years, of course, in a whole variety of different ways, perhaps most evidently in the branch of the field now known as Classical Reception. In the remainder of this chapter I propose to set out two potentially new approaches that I have found useful in my own recent and ongoing work.

In my book, *The Greeks: A Global History*, I took advantage of the minimalist, anthropological definition of *a* civilisation — as a 'complex society' — to propose that the history of the Greeks (understood as all those who have spoken and written the Greek *language*) needs to be seen as the story not of a single, foundational civilisation, but rather of a whole series of *different* civilisations, partly interlocking, but partly also constituted and functioning quite independently of one another, over a long period of time: Mycenaean, Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, early modern (including Ottoman) and modern/Western.[9]

That is only one of a number of different possibilities open to the historian. Like any such attempt it rests on conscious choices — in this case to privilege the remarkable longevity of the Greek language through a continuous written record. I did not, at least overtly, in that book make any attempt to evaluate or weigh up the achievements of any one of those multiple Greek civilisations against another. I am not, indeed, sure how one would go about it, without introducing too great an element of subjectivity. But I did want to put Pericles and the building of the Acropolis inside the same covers as the anonymous scribes in the service of the Bronze Age palaces, as Marcus Aurelius and Julian the Apostate, as Byzantine iconoclasm and authors such as Michael Psellos and Anna Komnene — and certainly in the company of the movers and shapers who since 1821 have created the modern Greek nation state as we know it today.

The second perspective I want to discuss in this chapter is more tentative. Essentially it revisits that dichotomy between 'civilisation' in the singular and 'civilisations' in the plural, between an abstract idea and the concrete manifestation of certain types of human society. By all means, when we talk about the civilisation of the ancient Greeks, let us recognise it as one among many — including potential rivals to the 'West' today, as well as vanished civilisations from the past. But, precisely when viewed within that context, are there objectively identifiable characteristics that would justify us in treating *this* particular civilisation as a defining

9 Beaton 2021, 3–5.

instance, in other words, synonymous with the concept of 'civilisation' in the abstract?

I can think of three.

The first is the thread of continuity that runs from classical Greece to classical Rome, to medieval Christendom, via the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Enlightenment and hence to the globalised civilisation of today (to the extent that such can be said to exist). Whether we think of 'European' or 'Western' civilisation as a single evolving process or as a series that we can separate out under a variety of different names (Greek, Roman, medieval, Byzantine, modern European or Western, or even global), the fact is that each stage was built upon the foundations of those that went before; a common thread runs through them all and can be traced all the way from ancient Greece and Rome to today.

Civilisation, in this sense, and in the singular, is one of the most powerful ideas in the world today. It touches us all, at once emotionally and rationally; it touches on our very sense of identity (whoever and wherever we happen to be); it is equally at home in politics and the arts. Civilisation is an idea that transcends differences of ethnicity, geography, language, political system, or religious faith. In the course of its 2,500-year history it has adapted to the most drastic changes imaginable in every one of these. And yet, struggle as we may to pin down exactly what we mean by it at any given moment and in any particular situation, it is immediately recognisable.

The second characteristic, closely linked to the first, is the fact that, for good or ill, no other civilisation has yet left its mark on the entire planet, far transcending the limits of Western political dominance or influence. (Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' may well be becoming more acute and more imminent; but there is no corner of the world where Western-derived technologies, medicines, even the outward trappings of dress and political language, have not penetrated.) However one might try to define 'civilisation' (in this singular sense), there's no getting away from its link with *power*. Without the power to maintain order at home and to defend the homeland from rivals beyond its borders, no political or philosophical ideas, no developed and sophisticated arts, no discoveries in science or inventions in technology are going to gain the widespread and long-lasting recognition and assent that are inseparable from any idea of civilisation. The idea itself may sit uneasily with the realities of political, military, and economic power; but without them it could never have come into existence, or having once done so, have survived long beyond the moment of its birth. Europe's role, during the last five centuries, in exporting its distinctive brand of 'civilisation' has had profound impacts all over the

globe. This is something that needs to be recognised and understood, a cause not well served by either triumphalism or moral hand-wringing.[10]

The third characteristic is a little more complicated. Here I cannot deny that an element of subjectivity is bound to creep in — the subjectivity both of the original sources and of anyone who reads them in the context of our own times. But what I am looking for is an idea, or a set of ideas, that has retained its hold on the imagination of generations, ever since it first came to be formulated in words that we can still read. This brings me to two short passages from the 'father of history', Herodotus, that I suggest help to define the civilisation that began with the Greeks in the fifth century BCE and in its current form we call 'European' or 'Western' today.

It all begins with the Persian Wars, and the way that the Greeks began to redefine themselves in their aftermath. Herodotus memorably sets out to record the deeds of men on both sides, and (even more important), the *causes* of their actions. Why had the Greeks (some of them) resisted the Persian invaders? In one of many imaginary speeches that enliven his narrative, a pair of Spartans confront a Persian dignitary and give this explanation of their countrymen's motives:

> What it is to be a slave you well know from experience, but you have never experienced liberty, to find out whether it tastes sweet or not. If you *were* to experience it, you would be urging us to fight for it not just with spears, but also with axes.[11]

Herodotus must have grown up literally alongside the new concept of liberty, or political freedom (*eleutheria*). The word seems to have become current among the Greeks very shortly after the final battle of Plataea in 479 BCE.[12] But liberty, as Herodotus and his contemporaries understood it, was not absolute or unbounded. Another of those imaginary speeches, this time addressed to King Xerxes himself, explains why: "Enjoying liberty, the Greeks are not in every respect free: they are subject to law, which they hold in far greater awe than your subjects do you."[13] In this way the political freedom that the Greeks had fought to defend in the Persian Wars became inseparably embedded in an older concept, fundamental to the Greek *polis*, namely the rule of law, or *isonomia*.

So my third defining characteristic of ancient Greek civilisation, which links it directly to the civilisation we call Western today, and which I would argue defines

10 The positive case is made by Ferguson 2011, xxvi and *passim*; MacLennan 2018, xii and *passim*. For the opposite trend among recent historians, see, for example, Elkins 2022.

11 Hdt. 7.135 (my translation).

12 Raaflaub 2004, 60, 79, 86, 256. The earliest use of word may be in Pindar, *Pyth.* 1.71–80, probably written in 478 BCE.

13 Hdt. 7.104 (my translation).

the very *idea* of civilisation in the abstract, is the articulation of a concept of political freedom, based upon the rule of law. And in that idea, and in its extraordinary durability across the centuries, must surely lie something, at least, of the 'future of the past', or the reason *Why Classical Studies still matter*, which is the subject of this volume.

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Richard Hunter

Another Journey: Odysseus and the Future of Greek Studies

Abstract: In Greek literature itself, the past and the future are inextricably interwoven; no less than modern students of Classics, the ancients too very often turned to the past in order to try to grasp the future. This paper uses one very important example of that drive for understanding, Homer's *Odyssey*, as a pattern of the different models of exploration which confront us today. In particular I will be concerned with the narratives of the past which are told by Odysseus and others and with the Underworld of Book 11 and the prophetic figure of Teiresias, from whom, like Odysseus himself, we have much to learn. A text which for centuries has been read as an allegory for our own lives may also suggest future directions of travel.

Keywords: allegory, memory, νόστος, Odysseus, *Odyssey*, Teiresias, Underworld

The figure of Odysseus always comes to us freighted with an overload of significance; whether already in Athenian tragedy of the classical period, in the moralising philosophy of the Hellenistic and imperial periods, in the overlapping pagan and Christian cultures of late antiquity, or in the vision of modern Greek poets, Odysseus is never just Odysseus — he is a repository for hopes, fears, and our creative imaginations. He is the go-to allegory, a man for all seasons, the man who must resist the temptations of a life of delusion and pleasure in favour of the pursuit of the truth and the true home of the wise and virtuous; his homecoming, in being a 'forgetfulness of all he had suffered' (*Odyssey* 13.92) and in the grip of the deepest sleep 'very like death' (*Odyssey* 13.80), may be seen either as transport to a promised blessedness or the calm death that many of us wish for, or of course both. Odysseus carries so much on his shoulders (and I will return to these shoulders), we should hardly resist seeing in him the past and the future of the study of Greek and Roman antiquity, now adrift — as some seem to think it is — without a compass, geographical or moral,

This is a virtually unchanged text of a talk given at the Academy of Athens in November 2022. As befitted the occasion, that talk drew in part on work I had published elsewhere, and I have not sought to remove those overlaps here. So too, I have added only the most necessary footnotes and bibliographical references; to do otherwise would have been fundamentally to change the nature and purpose of the text as it was composed. I hope that those whose work I have exploited here but who do not receive due acknowledgement will take my silence in that spirit.

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with no obvious direction home and in constant search of a *telos*, both 'purpose' and 'end'. Aristophanes of Byzantium and Aristarchus seem to have thought that they had found that *telos*, but very few have followed the grammarians' lead.[1]

Nowhere perhaps might we feel closer to *this* Odysseus than in Book 11 of the *Odyssey*, the book of the really dead, set in a world freighted, like the Academy of Athens, with the ghosts of the 'heroic' past. Odysseus visits that past, and its ghosts tell him and us their stories — or fragments of them, never more than that. Nowhere perhaps in the Homeric epics is there such a rich display of other stories which might have been told, but are here silenced — the Underworld teems with the fragments and summaries of epic poems which we will probably never recover; it is an echoing repository of story, replete with an overwhelming sense of how much we have lost and how much we could learn, if only we knew how to and where to look. Book 11 itself has often been thought to be a palimpsested text, bearing the scars where different poems and different versions have been awkwardly stitched together, itself almost an image of the only view of the past we will be allowed to grasp, a past without 'flesh and bones' (*Odyssey* 11.219) which always slips out of our hands 'like a shadow or even a dream', as the ghost of his mother slipped from Odysseus' grasp (*Odyssey* 11.207–208). Moreover, even the stories which the ghosts tell are not, of course, unmediated — they come to us only indirectly, veiled by Odysseus' self-presentation and the spin he puts upon his narrative. We cling to what James Porter called a 'fantasy of classicism',[2] the idea that we can be in direct contact with the great figures of the past, but Odysseus (like us) must be selective both in his attention and in his narration, in his — if you like — presentation of the evidence. Book 11 is a paradigmatic lesson in the difficulties of interpreting the texts and objects we are lucky enough to have, just because they have somehow, unlike ourselves, escaped death. Not, of course, that this is a concern limited to Book 11. The *Odyssey* as a whole teaches us still crucial lessons about reading competing narratives of the past (Helen and Menelaos in Book 4), how imaginative fiction can be more 'real' than alleged documentary history (Odysseus' Cretan tales), and how we always ourselves have to fill in the gaps in order to make any kind of sense of what we are told.

The loudest silence of all in Book 11 is perhaps these days rarely commented upon, but it was discussed in antiquity — a familiar pattern (and a familiar silence) in the history of modern literary scholarship. The ghosts of the past are not in fact all dead white males, but where are the Trojan ghosts, the ψυχαί of such major figures as Hector and Andromache? Homer's Underworld, or rather Odysseus', shuts

1 On the 'Alexandrian end' of the *Odyssey* cf. Hunter 2023, citing earlier literature.

2 Porter 2006, 301–302.

out ‘the other’, the peoples of the east for example, as surely as Classical studies has so often in the last decades been accused of so doing. Porphyry suggests that this was an act of kindness by Persephone who did not ‘send up’ any Trojan ghosts because she knew of the mutual hostility between Odysseus and them, and Eustathius regards this choice of Homer as convincing (πιθανῶς) for similar reasons. Virgil presumably reflects such discussion in *Aeneid* 6 when he brings the ghosts of the Greek warriors at Troy into Aeneas’ field of vision, but then scatters them, nameless and terrified (vv. 489–493). The teeming ghosts of the vanquished are certainly there in the interstices of Homer’s text: when Odysseus tells Achilles (or rather does *not* tell him) of his son Neoptolemos’ role in the sacking of ‘the city of Priam’ (*Odyssey* 11.533), we can hardly fail to recall the cyclic story of Neoptolemos’ savage killing of Priam at the altar of Zeus Herkeios (*Little Iliad* fr. 16 Bernabé). Priam’s ghost is indeed there — both revealed and concealed in the deliberate web of Odysseus’ words. As so often, Homer shows us how to read the suppressions and deceptions with which we are presented every day, particularly by those in positions of authority. All visions of the past are of course partial, not just because we lack the necessary evidence, but because (though this is itself a partial explanation) too often we find what we are looking for.

Be that as it may, Classics (and I will continue to use this term, though it now seems to require an apologetic footnote — like this one) is not of course just a matter of ‘seeing corpses’ (*Odyssey* 11.49), as Teiresias puts it in asking Odysseus why he has come on this ‘other journey’ (*Odyssey* 10.490), but it is hardly surprising that the notion of Classical studies as a kind of necromancy has often floated up the trench, itself very ghost-like; Wilamowitz himself succumbed to this temptation. Take Sophocles’ last play, the *Oedipus at Colonus*, a drama full of Odyssean structures and echoes. Somehow it seems *right* that this last (for us) play has at its centre a blind man who carries the weight of tradition and the past with him, a figure modelled in part upon the Teiresias whom Odysseus meets in the Underworld. The blind man, who takes his secrets to the grave, ends his journey in Athens, surrounded by sacred figures and terrified old men, who react as if they really have ‘seen a ghost’. As for Teiresias himself, the one man whose *phrenes* and *noos* remain intact post-mortem, he was to become the deathless embodiment and bearer of pagan Greek tradition, both immemorially old and ever renewed, like the Dionysiac rites which Teiresias champions in Euripides’ *Bacchae*, the prophet of the past and the future who, in his blindness, has ‘seen it all’.

Other models are available to us. Instead of Teiresias, there is the Proteus of *Odyssey* 4 — the half-model for, half-parody of Teiresias — and perhaps the patron deity of the prose and poetry of later antiquity, which has seen such a wonderful revolution in attention in recent decades. Like Proteus, however, the sense of what

our shared subject is can slip through our fingers. Anglophone classicists at least now regularly encounter flattering Siren-calls to the grandiose delusion of a claim to an all-encompassing omniscience of 'everything which happens over the fertile earth' (*Odyssey* 12.191), but one in which nothing is *really* understood. As antiquity well understood, the Sirens play upon man's innate desire to know and always know more; that is one of the completely admirable drivers of the outpouring of work in the field of 'Classical reception'. The Sirens, however, offered Odysseus both what was in his (dis)comfort zone, the story of Troy and the Greek past, and things of which he had no knowledge at all but for which he yearned (*Odyssey* 12.184–190). In the end, Odysseus needed a precisely measured trench in order to get the ghosts to speak, just as he could only hear the Sirens because of the restraints which restricted entirely free movement. Classics (and here again the English term is potentially misleading), a demonstrably flexible institutional unit within the humanities, offers us a structure (an imperfect and restricting one certainly) to try to make those ghosts speak to us. We should think very hard before we abandon our trench (a term of ambiguous resonance which I use deliberately) in the hope of finding a better vantage-point, whether institutional or intellectual, from which to try to understand Greek and Roman antiquity. Different choices, of course, face different academic communities and different intellectual agendas; there are, I think, hopeful signs that this is now coming to be recognised.

In one of the most famous parts of Book 11, Teiresias tells Odysseus of his own future after the killing of the suitors:

αὐτὰρ ἐπὴν μνηστῆρας ἐνὶ μεγάροισι τεοῖσι
κτείνῃς ἠὲ δόλῳ ἢ ἀμφαδὸν ὀξέϊ χαλκῷ, 120
ἔρχεσθαι δὴ ἔπειτα, λαβὼν εὐῆρες ἐρετμόν,
εἰς ὅ κε τοὺς ἀφίκηαι, οἳ οὐκ ἴσασι θάλασσαν
ἀνέρες οὐδέ θ' ἅλεσσι μεμιγμένον εἶδαρ ἔδουσιν·
οὐδ' ἄρα τοὶ ἴσασι νέας φοινικοπαρῄους,
οὐδ' εὐήρε' ἐρετμά, τά τε πτερὰ νηυσὶ πέλονται. 125
σῆμα δέ τοι ἐρέω μάλ' ἀριφραδές, οὐδέ σε λήσει·
ὁππότε κεν δή τοι ξυμβλήμενος ἄλλος ὁδίτης
φήῃ ἀθηρηλοιγὸν ἔχειν ἀνὰ φαιδίμῳ ὤμῳ,
καὶ τότε δὴ γαίῃ πήξας εὐῆρες ἐρετμόν,
ἕρξας ἱερὰ καλὰ Ποσειδάωνι ἄνακτι, 130
ἀρνειὸν ταῦρόν τε συῶν τ' ἐπιβήτορα κάπρον,
οἴκαδ' ἀποστείχειν ἕρδειν θ' ἱερὰς ἑκατόμβας
ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι, τοὶ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσι,
πᾶσι μάλ' ἑξείης. θάνατος δέ τοι ἐξ ἁλὸς αὐτῷ
ἀβληχρὸς μάλα τοῖος ἐλεύσεται, ὅς κέ σε πέφνῃ 135
γήρᾳ ὕπο λιπαρῷ ἀρημένον· ἀμφὶ δὲ λαοὶ
ὄλβιοι ἔσσονται. τὰ δέ τοι νημερτέα εἴρω.

Homer, *Odyssey* 11.119–137

> But when you have slain the suitors in your halls, whether by guile or openly with the sharp sword, then go abroad, taking a shapely oar, until you come to men that know nothing of the sea and eat their food unmixed with salt, who in fact know nothing of ships with ruddy cheeks, or of shapely oars, which are a vessel's wings. And I will tell you a most certain sign, which will not escape you: when another wayfarer, on meeting you, shall say that you have a winnowing fan on your stout shoulder, then fix in the earth your shapely oar and make handsome offerings to the lord Poseidon — a ram, and a bull, and a boar that mates with sows — and depart for your home and offer sacred hecatombs to the immortal gods who hold broad heaven, to each one in due order. And death shall come to you yourself away from the sea, the gentlest imaginable, that shall lay you low when you are overcome with sleek old age, and your people shall be dwelling in prosperity around you. This is the truth that I tell you.

These famously riddling verses have generated a huge modern bibliography, but not even that can blunt their mysterious power. Odysseus is told to 'go' (no mention of the mode of locomotion, certainly not of Greek sailing) until he reaches people 'who do not know the sea and eat their food unmixed with salt' (not apparently, as we do, for the sake of our blood-pressure). Who are they? Ancient scholars, unsurprisingly, came up with more than one answer to this question. One of the most powerful ancient readings of these verses is that of Neoplatonist allegory, most familiar to us from the account of Porphyry in his third-century AD *On the Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey.* For Porphyry, the Homeric Odysseus is a man and the embodiment of a soul which has passed through 'every stage of *genesis*' in its wanderings and now returns to its real spiritual and intellectual world, 'far from the turbulent waves of everyday, embodied existence'; those who 'do not know the sea and its salt' are those beyond all the pains and salty bitterness of the material world; the soul has returned to its true home. Those, however, who have, with great struggle, sought to put the bodily passions and their pains behind them, must make reparations to the gods of the material world by further struggle until they are so 'far from the sea' that the tools which represent it, such as an oar, are utterly unknown. Then finally the soul will be at peace in the intelligible world (*Cave* 36).

Neoplatonist allegory is not to everyone's taste … Some half a century or so before Porphyry, the Christian Clement of Alexandria had his own allegory to tell: when Odysseus is introduced by Athena in Book 1, stuck on Calypso's island and wishing for death as he longs to see the smoke rising from his native land (*Odyssey* 1.48–59), this shows that he is one of those who, as attached to the material world as seaweed to rocks at the sea's edge, has no thought for immortality, the truth and our real homeland in God's heaven where there is true light, but cares only for smoke or, as we might say, the banal smoke and mirrors of everyday deceptions (*Protrepticus* 9.86). Both the pagan Porphyry and the Christian Clement bear vivid witness to why the constantly reinvented Homer still matters, and the basic idea upon which both (in their very different ways) elaborate, that Odysseus stands for

all of us in our struggles and that the *Odyssey* is, as it were, just that, namely the paradigmatic odyssey of all lives, is — to return to where I started — as familiar to us now (think perhaps above all of Kavafis' *Ithaki*) as it was to the Homeric interpreters of late antiquity. We can no longer, I think, do without the idea of life's odyssey and of life as an odyssey. These interpretations are a striking manifestation of the persistent attempt throughout both antiquity and modernity to appropriate Homer, whether in whole or part, for particular intellectual and discursive agendas important to those proposing the interpretations. It was not difficult for ancient readers to find what they were looking for in the generous capaciousness of the Homeric texts. Antisthenes' famous explanation of Odysseus' epithet πολύτροπος as designating his wisdom and mastery of the 'tropes' of language (Schol. Hom. *Od.* 1.1l Pontani = Antisthenes fr. 187 Prince) turns the hero, *inter alia*, into an Antisthenes *avant la lettre*.

As is now well recognised, the journey to find people who do not know what an oar is and have no knowledge of the sea uses a folktale motif attested from several cultures.[3] One such Greek story, usually told of St Elias, is of a sailor who, wanting nothing further to do with the sea, travelled with an oar until someone failed to recognise it and there he stayed; that story is (in part) an aetiology for why chapels to the saint are found on mountain-tops, though it would in fact be easy enough to produce a reading along Porphyrian lines: the saint finally reaches a place where he can contemplate and worship his god in peace, and there he stays. Many, however, see in the *Odyssey* story an implicit aetiology for why Poseidon was in several places worshipped inland; at the very least, Odysseus will pay honour to Poseidon in an area which did not know him before. The planting of the oar is both a closural moment and a marker of new beginnings. In most such stories, the traveller settles down once the sea is so far away that people do not know it, but Odysseus will return home, and that is important; I shall come back to this. The more, however, that one reflects on this story, on the figure of Odysseus as a kind of 'everyman' or pilgrim (both in pagan and Christian readings) and on the importance of the sea to Greek self-identity (think of the cry of Xenophon's mercenaries, 'θάλαττα θάλαττα' (*Anabasis* 4.7.24)), the more tempting it becomes to read Teiresias' words as indeed a mythic aetiology, but one for the more modern Greek diaspora to new worlds and, particularly, to the New World; history teaches us that that diaspora has been inextricably linked also with the idea of, and sometimes the longing for, return, and νόστος is the very first word which Teiresias speaks to Odysseus after the old man has drunk the blood. The return to the homeland is always 'difficult/painful', as Teiresias predicts it will be for Odysseus (*Odyssey* 11.101). In such a mythic reading,

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3 Cf. Hansen 1977 and 1990.

'Those who do not know the sea' does not mean (significantly, at least) those who have literally never seen the sea, but rather those who do not (yet) understand what that signifies, who have not been exposed to what we might call the 'culture of the sea', Greek culture, in other words. If Odysseus carried an oar with him, Alexander carried Homer, and the epic poems are, like Odysseus' oar, a potent, perhaps the most potent, image of the spread of Greek culture, ancient and modern, or at least how that spread could be (and has been) imagined.[4]

As for myself, I first read Homer in a country which has been one of the greatest beneficiaries of the Greek diaspora, Australia, and though I was offered the chance to read Homer, not in fact because of the diaspora in any simple sense, but rather because I attended a school built very firmly on an English model, the significant Greek presence in Sydney (and, even more so, in Melbourne) meant that Greece (both ancient and modern) soon came to seem not quite as far away as it might otherwise have done. The very first piece of real, joined-up Greek I read was Xenophon's account in the *Anabasis* of how it is possible to catch bustards ('their meat is wonderful') in the deserts of the Euphrates (*Anabasis* 1.5). It may be that this text would seem less than ideal for Beginners Greek classes today, but in 1960s Australia it seemed very exciting.

If Odysseus and his oar can, on a macroscopic level, point us towards the Greek diaspora, towards the gnawing need always to satisfy the Aristotelian desire to know and, more mundanely, to seek new places of settlement, the image has another smaller-scale significance for those of us involved in the teaching of Greek studies, most notably (but not exclusively) ancient Greek studies. If the diaspora was, in many cases, forced upon Greeks by terrible and violent acts, modern teachers of Greek studies are compelled, both by their own commitment to the subject and by institutional pressures, to pursue an intellectual diaspora, the need to spread the word, to win over new recruits for the subject and the language of Poseidon, or risk (so it is always claimed) a fairly rapid withering. Whereas Teiresias gave Odysseus a clear sign, however riddlingly phrased — Odysseus was unlikely to meet two people who both called his oar a 'chaff-destroyer' — *we* are given no clear sign, just a snowstorm of ambiguous indications that our subject has now reached a point of decision. Moreover, although St Elias stayed where he was, ἐξ ἁλός 'away from the sea' (at least on one reading of that phrase), Odysseus, like Plato's philosopher returning to the cave, perhaps the other most famous classical Underworld where all those false shadows compete for attention, will have, like us, to return to his starting-point, to see, as we would put it, to business. There can be no secure retreat (in any sense of the term) — even the mountaintop hermit will be

4 Dio Chrysostom 53. 6–8 is a very telling passage here, cf. Hunter 2018, 22.

plagued by uncertainties. How, then, will we tell the false shadows from those of substance in the murky academic fairground of competing chances and pot-luck games? The very difficult choices to be made, for example about the centrality of the ancient languages to the study of the ancient world, will presumably importantly depend on the end in view, and here there is certainly no unanimity, though there is no shortage of Sirens offering their advice.

Teiresias' prophecy of Odysseus' death is pointedly set against Proteus' prophecy of Menelaos' post-mortem transportation to the blessed 'Elysian Plain' 'because [he was married] to Helen and was Zeus's son-in-law' (*Odyssey* 4.561–569). Lucian was famously to grant Odysseus a place with the lucky ones after death, but what kind of death might Classics experience and how blessed is the afterlife which awaits our subject. Will it be a 'gentle' one, at the end of a long and prosperous, if rather complacent, old age, with expenses-paid transportation to the Island of the Blessed, the academic equivalent of a seat in the House of Lords 'far from the turbulent waves of everyday, embodied existence', as Porphyry might have described that institution, or will it be the *Telegony* model — death by a thousand stingray cuts, the constant seep of poison into the bloodstream of the subject, destroying it from within? We must not either imagine or wish that the future of the study of the past will be the same everywhere, any more than the critical orthodoxies and assumptions of our subject have been universal throughout the world of classical study over the last century and a half (to go no further back). So too, the challenges in different places are different. For one thing, the study of the Greek and Roman past is very differently institutionalised (and very differently labelled) in different countries. In France, Germany and Italy 'Classics' (and here the name really is an anglophone misnomer) is a very different beast from the subject in the UK, where successive governments and University administrations have downgraded the status of the Humanities in schools and universities and eroded (and this is important) the salaries of those who teach and research in the subject, while vastly increasing the workload, so that academic life is not necessarily as attractive as it once was. In Greece, there are very real challenges to the study of Greek and Latin, which have, I think, far more to do with the traditional (and perhaps unique) place of, particularly, ancient Greek in the school curriculum and with changes in society at large, reflected in higher education, than with the arguments about the subject which have occupied so much time recently in Anglophone countries. The reasons for studying Greek antiquity in Greece cannot, on any model, be quite the same as they are elsewhere and that simple fact should be properly acknowledged; there is also, of course, some hard thinking and hard planning about the future of the disciplines needed in Greece, and here again there are, I believe, hopeful signs. As for the Anglophone world, this is hardly monolithic, whether socially or culturally, and the

pressures driving debate about the future of the subject in the UK (let alone Australia) must, in many particulars, inevitably differ from those which have raged in the US; what is important is that those on both sides of the Atlantic learn from the variable experience, and the mistakes and successes, of those on the other side.

Why does it matter? As countless generations of undergraduate essays have struggled to tell us, Odysseus' trip to the Underworld proves not strictly 'necessary', despite what Circe tells him about this 'other journey', and despite what Odysseus learns there about the past, the future and, we might think, about himself. The view that the Humanities, like Odysseus' trip to the Underworld, are 'not necessary', in the sense of 'necessary to the economic prosperity of the state' is one which it is not hard to find, either openly expressed or veiled by soft words of apparent sympathy. We have been here before. The Platonic Socrates famously banned poetry, above all Homer, from his ideal state. In the tenth book of the *Republic*, Socrates admits that he too is 'enchanted' by Homer's poetry and would be glad to be able to allow it a place in the ideal city (607c5–7), but only if it could be shown that poetry is not only pleasurable, but also beneficial in the well-ordered state. 'Enchantment' is not enough: poetry must also do us and the state good, it must be ὠφέλιμον. In an extraordinary passage, Socrates memorably describes the irrational and emotional appeal of performed epic poetry as like the power still exercised over us by someone we once loved but from whom we force ourselves to keep away, because we recognise that this persistent desire is doing us no good (607e4–6). Are we to say the same of the Classics and their study? How broad and long-term a view of the ὠφέλιμον are we to take? One thing we can say in Socrates' defence is that he was much more concerned with the state of our souls than with the economic well-being of the State.

Above all it matters, because we owe it to the past to remember. Memory and its loss is one of the great driving narratives and anxieties of our own age.[5] We all take our daily dose of Vitamin D in a desperate attempt to persuade the ghost of dementia to pass by our house and visit another, but we all sadly know those who have failed in the attempt. The awfulness of this illness has even spawned its own genre of jokes, just as the source of terrible fears (and indeed memories) do. In some contexts, memory is what we live by. Far from wanting to forget, we insist (and rightly so) that our children learn to remember wars and genocides, whereas Herodotus famously reports that the Athenians imposed a heavy fine upon Phrynichus because his drama on the capture of Miletus 'reminded them of their own misfortunes' and they appear to have tried to erase the 'memory' of the play itself (6.21). Severe dementia is sometimes described as a kind of living death, and in the

5 This and the following paragraph borrow from Hunter 2021.

Homeric Underworld memory is indeed erased, at least until the blood has been drunk, but — and this is where we must pay attention — the dead also charge the living with the preservation of their memory. It is easy enough to smile at Elpenor, a rather dim young man who had too much to drink and killed himself by falling off Circe's roof, when he asks Odysseus to build him a *sēma* on the shore 'for even those who come after to learn of' (*Odyssey* 11.75–76); this may be a 'delusion of grandeur', as Alfred Heubeck calls it, but Odysseus recognises his responsibility to the dead and carries out Elpenor's request to the letter. At least as early as the fourth century BC, the 'tomb of Elpenor' was shown (and the relevant verses presumably quoted) in Campania, near where Circe's dwelling had been identified on one version of Homeric geography. Elpenor is one of history's little people, an entirely ordinary forgettable person, a nobody (rather than a 'No man'), except that he should not be forgotten.

We too owe it to the past not to allow that past, whether 'classical' or not, to disappear, not ourselves to drink the darkwater of Lethe which wipes out individual and collective memory. The terrible events we are witnessing in Ukraine are a stark reminder of how remembering the past is inseparable from care for the present. There are, however, other insidious dangers also to the life-giving presence of historical memory, if one can compare small with great. Without our often awkward attempts to make that leap of understanding which engagement with the past always entails, society will become a bleak wasteland where we will no longer be able to talk to the ghosts, even after we have offered them our blood; once gone, the memory and the knowledge will not return. Those of us who live, as I do, in a country which, several very long years ago, chose the self-satisfaction of retreat and isolation over openness, argument, and engagement may well feel such dangers even more acutely. The Greek model serves to remind us of what is at stake in such engagement and such remembering, just as the epic song of traditional cultures works to preserve the memory, not necessarily of historical truth, but of something much more important.

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Margalit Finkelberg

Julian's School Law, Cultural Capital, and the Future of Classics

Abstract: The article disputes the validity of the theory of canon-replacement, which is one of the main factors that have led to problematization of the classical legacy in contemporary discourse. Proceeding from the early Christian reception of Greco-Roman cultural legacy as a case-study, it argues that the theory in question cannot be supported by robust historical evidence. Time after time, rather than being thrown away, the cultural capital accumulated in the past is re-used in accordance with the needs of the groups that rise to social and cultural prominence.

Keywords: canon-formation, Church Fathers, cultural canon, Pierre Bourdieu, reception, *paideia*

1

Let me start with an historical example. In the year 362 of the common era Emperor Julian (331–363), the last pagan ruler of the Roman empire, initiated a law which prohibited Christian educators from teaching classical texts of ancient Greece. Julian's main argument was as follows: it would be immoral to teach Homer and other 'Hellenic' (that is, pagan Greek) authors without sharing their religious beliefs: "when a man thinks one thing and teaches his pupils another, in my opinion he fails to educate (ἀπολελεῖφθαι … τῆς παιδείας) in the same measure as he fails to be an honest man".[1] As far as we can judge, the law had never been implemented, for in less than a year Julian was killed in a battle against the Persians, and the 'Hellenic Renaissance' that he tried to set off came to an end. Nevertheless, Julian's School Law left so strong an impression on the Christians that they kept discussing it for centuries, invariably interpreting it as an anti-Christian conspiracy designed to deprive them of access to what was dubbed in antiquity 'Hellenic education' (*hē Hellēnikē paideia*).[2]

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1 Julian. *Ep.* 36. Tr. E.W.C. Wright, slightly modified.

2 For a historical overview of Christian response to Julian's School Law, see Hardy 1968, 132–134; Kaldelis 2007, 146–149.

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The first to react was Julian's contemporary Gregory of Nazianzus (329–390), who in his youth studied in Athens at the same time as the future emperor.[3] Shortly after Julian's death, Gregory issued two invectives against the emperor and his reforms. His attack on Julian's School Law was especially acrimonious. "How did it come into your head", he asks the late emperor, "you silliest and greediest of mortals, to deprive the Christians of the *logoi*?".[4] Gregory proceeds to argue that, contrary to Julian's claim, Greek language and literature are not the property of the pagans but, rather, constitute a common legacy of all: the emperor's attempt to turn Christians into barbarians devoid of rational thinking (the word *alogia* is used here) is utterly unacceptable.[5]

Note that Gregory's claim that Julian's School Law was intended to deprive the Christian children of Hellenic *paideia* was in fact unfounded: it was the teachers, not the students, who were Julian's target.[6] Everything points in the direction that by this move he tried to prevent Christianization of the Greco-Roman legacy, that is, its reception in the spirit of the Christian doctrine. To put it in his own words: "I think it is absurd that those who expound the works of these writers [*sc*. Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Thucydides, Isocrates, Lysias] should dishonor the gods they honored".[7]

That these concerns were well justified can be seen from the *Address to Young Men*, a famous essay in which Gregory's friend and another fellow student, Basil of Caesarea (330–379), admonishes Christian youths to study the cultural legacy of Greece. Here is how its opening part is concluded:

> That it is, therefore, that I have come to offer you as my counsel — that you should not surrender to these men once for all the rudders of your mind, as if of a ship, and follow them wherever they lead; rather, accepting from them only that which is useful, you should know that which ought to be overlooked. What, therefore, these things are, and how we shall distinguish between them, is what I shall teach you from this point on.[8]

In what follows, St Basil instructs Christian youths to read pagan texts not like "those who take poisons along with honey", stopping their ears "no less than

3 On Gregory and Julian's School Law, see Radford Ruether 1969, 162–167; Kaldelis 2007, 158–164.

4 *Or*. 4.101. Tr. C.W. King.

5 *Or*. 4.102–103; cf. 4.79.

6 Cf. Hardy 1968, 142; Kaldelis 2007, 148. An analogous prohibition supported by similar arguments but directed against the pagan teachers was issued by Justinian in 529, see *Cod.Just*. 1.5.18.4, cf. 1.11.10.2. See further Constantelos 1964; Rohmann 2016, 97–99.

7 Julian. *Ep*. 36 ἄτοπον μὲν οὖν οἶμαι τοὺς ἐξηγουμένους τὰ τούτων ἀτιμάζειν τοὺς ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶν τιμηθέντας θεούς.

8 *Ad adolescentes* 1.5. Tr. R.J. Deferrari and M.R.P. McGuire, slightly modified.

Odysseus did … when he avoided the songs of the Sirens” and paying no attention “when they depict men engaged in amours or drunken, or when they define happiness in terms of an over-abundant table or dissolute songs”, and above all “when they narrate anything about the gods, and especially when they speak of them as being many and these too not even in accord with one another”.[9] That St Basil’s treatise was twice translated into Syriac[10] attests to the wide popularity it enjoyed.

There can be little doubt that Gregory of Nazianzus fully shared this approach.[11] Compare, for example, his *Oration* 43:

> … and as we have compounded healthful drugs from certain of the reptiles, so from secular literature we have received principles of inquiry and speculation (τὸ μὲν ἐξεταστικόν τε καὶ θεωρητικόν), while we have rejected their idolatry, terror, and pit of destruction.[12]

The same attitude will be later adopted by St Augustine, as well as many others.[13]

Several decades after its publication, Julian’s School Law was attacked by the Church historian Socrates of Constantinople, or Socrates Scholasticus (380–439). His main argument ran as follows. While it is true that Jesus and Apostles never regarded ‘Hellenic education’ (ἡ Ἑλληνικὴ παίδευσις) as issuing from divine inspiration, they also never banned it or claimed it is harmful. Accordingly, “by not prohibiting Hellenic education they left the decision to consideration of those who are interested in it”; moreover, while “the Scriptures, deriving as they are from divine inspiration, lead those who follow them to piety and the life of purity”, they “do not instruct us in the art of *logoi* (τέχνην … λογικήν) which would enable us to successfully withstand those who oppose the truth”.[14]

Note that the Christian critics of Julian’s School Law saw the main benefit of ‘Hellenic *paideia*’ in the mastering of the art of *logoi*. They had good reason for this. From the days of the Sophists, Greek educational tradition had been focused on the acquirement of verbal communication skills — a broad semantic field covered by the word *logos* and its cognates. In Plato’s *Protagoras*, Socrates asks the greatest of the Sophists about what qualifications his young protégé Hippocrates would acquire by becoming his student. Protagoras’ reply is the quintessential formulation of the principles of the ‘new education’ he and the other Sophists promulgated: “He

9 *Ad adolescentes* 4.1–4.

10 In the fifth and the seventh century. In 1403, it was translated into Latin by Leonardo Bruni. See Browning 2000, 867.

11 See further Radford Ruether 1969, 164–165.

12 *Or*. 43.11, tr. Radford Ruether.

13 *De doctrina Christiana* 2.40.60 (‘Despoiling the Egyptians’).

14 *Hist. Eccl.* 3.16; tr. Anonymous. On Socrates Scholasticus and Julian’s School Law, see Buck 2003.

will learn good judgement (*euboulia*) in both private affairs, in order to manage his own household in the best manner, and public ones, in order to be able to speak and act for the best in the matters of the state" (318a).

The formula 'to be a speaker of words and performer of deeds' (μύθων τε ῥητῆρ' ἔμεναι πρηκτῆρά τε ἔργων), which emerges as early as the Homeric *Iliad* (9.443), gives adequate expression to the Greeks' belief in the importance of the spoken word — provided that it is translated into actions. But the concept of *logoi* that the Sophists introduced emphasized the fact that, as distinct from its synonyms (for example, the word *muthos* used in the Homeric verse), *logos* stands not just for 'discourse' but specifically for the discourse that is based on argument, that is, on rational thinking. This is the only kind of discourse that leads to persuasion, thereby bestowing power and influence on those who have mastered it.

The main idea that the 'new education' conveyed was, therefore, that of social and personal advantages acquired thanks to one's cultivation of verbal skills issuing from argumentative discourse — a 'gymnastics of the mind', as Isocrates, who several decades later institutionalized this kind of education, put it. It was indeed Isocrates who laid the foundations for the Greek, Roman, and, eventually, modern system of education, in that he saw the objective of *paideia* in stimulating the students to mobilize their intellectual abilities in order to realize their full potential as human beings.[15] The foundation on which this system was based was the standard corpus of classical texts: Homer and other poets formed the basis of the study of grammar, which also included the explication of poetic texts, whereas the next stage, at which rhetoric was studied, focused on orators and historians.[16]

The early Christians were not interested in the Greco-Roman legacy for its own sake. But they were very much interested in that, alongside being good Christians, their children will have access to instruction and training (Gregory's τὸ ἐξεταστικόν τε καὶ θεωρητικόν comes to mind here) that would allow them to successfully cope with both practical and intellectual challenges in their private and public life, as well as to competently discuss and interpret the Scripture. St Augustine (354–430) even argued that Hellenic *paideia* derives from divine providence, for the Christian teacher needs it in order to better understand the Scripture (*de Doct. Christ.* 2.40.60–61). All the attempts to replace it with a wholly Christian system of education based on an alternative corpus of texts (and such attempts did take place, see below) failed to produce a viable alternative to a centuries-long educational tradition. The choice was, therefore, between the adoption of the 'Hellenic *paideia*' and

15 Cf. Marrou 1964, 128: "It was Isocrates, not Plato, who became the educator of the fourth-century Greece and, after that, of the Hellenistic and then the Roman world" (my translation).

16 For a detailed account, see, e.g., Browning 2000, 857–862.

cultural retrogression. We all know what happened next. Christianity did adopt the Greco-Roman curriculum, and it became one of the foundations of what centuries later came to be known as the Western Canon.

2

The historical episode involving Julian’s School Law lies at the crossroads of Western cultural history. Had the law been sustained over a long period of time, the ban on the Christian teachers would have most probably led to marginalization of the classical canon in the increasingly christianized world and to its eventual demise. The reception of classical antiquity in Rabbinic Judaism may serve as an example. It is well attested that, parallel to giving their children the traditional Jewish education, some Jews (as a rule, members of the elite) also sent them to pagan teachers (of whom Julian’s friend Libanius was one),[17] in order that they may acquire elements of Hellenic *paideia*. Just as their Christian counterparts, the Rabbinic authorities regarded pagan learning as neutral in respect of the religious doctrine and therefore did not prohibit it.[18] As a result, not a few members of the Jewish community became closely acquainted with Greco-Roman cultural tradition. Yet, Hellenic *paideia* did not become integrated into the Jewish system of education; as a result, it has played no part in Jewish educational tradition from antiquity to the present.

It is reasonable to suppose that the same or a closely similar outcome would have been achieved had the Christian purists prevailed. To quote Anthony Kaldelis, “We should not forget that there were always Christians who were ready to basically agree with Julian and refuse to even ‘nibble on the learning of the Greeks’.”[19] The alternative canon to which they aspired would have probably consisted of such works as those of the two Apollinarii, father and son, whose response to Julian’s School Law was to initiate the reproduction of the Old Testament in the verse of Homer and Pindar, and of the New Testament after the fashion of Platonic dialogues. According to the unflattering assessment of Socrates Scholasticus about half a century later, “…and their efforts count now as being equivalent to what has

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17 See, e.g., the intriguing *Letter* 502, with Stern’s commentary, in Stern 1980, 595–596.

18 Naeh 2011.

19 Kaldelis 2007, 155. On “a strong and well established tradition of Christian disapproval with any traffic in secular knowledge”, see also Hardy 1968, 139–140. The examples include Arnobius, Tertullian, John Chrysostom, among others.

never been written".[20] That is to say, in this case too, the cultural legacy of Greece and Rome would have been either lost with the end of paganism or turned into an antiquarian curiosity with no social or cultural relevance worthy of mention.[21]

However, it was the middle way that prevailed, not in the least because the early Church Fathers who promulgated Hellenic *paideia* were themselves highly educated men well at ease with Greek literary tradition. They enjoyed their Hellenic learning and openly exhibited it. Thus, in Gregory of Nazianzus' *Letters* and *Orations* Homer is quoted or alluded at no less than 29 times, Plato 16 times, Pindar nine, Euripides six, and so on, whereas in his *Invectives against Julian* classical references and allusions were so numerous that in the sixth century Pseudo-Nonnus had to write a commentary to explain them for Christian readers.[22] Thanks to their influence, the classical legacy of Greece and Rome survived and became part of the school curriculum, so much so that the *Iliad*, alongside the Psalms, served as the principal school-text up to the fall of Byzantium. The pagan and Christian texts were copied in the same scriptoria, treasured in the same libraries, and quoted in the same context: a balance between the Judeo-Christian and Hellenic tradition became a cultural norm.[23]

But the survival had a price. When planted on a new soil, the texts of pagan antiquity began to be read through the prism of the Christian set of values. As we have seen, it was precisely the outcome that Julian tried to prevent. As St Basil's treatise clearly demonstrates, in order to become acceptable to Christian readers, the classical texts had to undergo an adjustment to their beliefs and values. That this adjustment is only rarely reflected in the body of the texts does not mean that it did not take place. It must have been expressed in the exegesis, both oral and written, in lectures and lessons delivered at schools, in readers' response, as well as in other forms of reception which made the traditional canon relevant to the society dominated by other cultural groups than those that had created it.

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20 *Hist. Eccl.* 3.16 τῶν δὲ οἱ πόνοι ἐν ἴσῳ τοῦ μὴ γραφῆναι λογίζονται; my translation. On Socrates Scholasticus and the Apollinarii, see Speck 1997.

21 There is no evidence that the destruction of pagan books initiated by Justinian in the sixth century affected the corpus of texts that formed the school curriculum: Justinian's ban on pagan books targeted philosophy (primarily Epicureanism and its offshoots), religion and magic, none of which was part of the curriculum. For a general discussion, see Rohmann 2016, 102–109; on philosophy, see Browning 2000, 862–864.

22 Radford Ruether 1969, 174–175; Kaldelis 2011, 716. Cf. also O'Connell 2019.

23 Cf. Browning 1992, 147: "It was a commonplace of Byzantine rhetoric, ecclesiastical as well as profane, to quote side by side a tag from Homer and a passage from the Scriptures, most often from the Psalms".

Century after century, the readers turned to the cultural heritage of Greece and Rome in order to adjust it to their own needs and to use it in accordance with their own agenda. This seems to be the main reason why the corpus of classical texts of ancient Greece and Rome has retained its role as a cornerstone of Western cultural tradition. Unexceptional as it may seem, this conclusion finds itself at variance with some influential theories addressing the issue of canon-formation.

3

One of the main arguments that have led to problematization of the classical legacy in contemporary discourse is that the Western canon, one of whose cornerstones classics happens to be, is seen as the main if not the only vehicle for perpetuation of the distribution of power, in that it constitutes a cultural capital to which the underprivileged groups have no access. To quote one of the most influential books in contemporary canon studies, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron,

> because they correspond to the material and symbolic interests of groups or classes differently situated within the power relations, these Pedagogical Actions always tend to reproduce the structure of the distribution of cultural capital among these groups or classes, thereby contributing to the reproduction of the social structure.[24]

While Bourdieu admits that more often than not cultural capital is the object of struggle between the dominating and the dominated groups, he sees this struggle as unproductive and the attempts of the dominated groups at appropriating it as illusory.[25] Accordingly, a thorough cultural transformation, or 'a genuine inversion of the table of values', is the only real alternative to the system of reproduction that Bourdieu and his school envisage.[26] That is to say, when the formerly underprivileged groups come to power, the only way to guarantee their cultural domination

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24 Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 11. Elsewhere, the authors define the social function of the traditional educational system as "reproducing the class relations, by ensuring the hereditary transmission of cultural capital", *ibid.* 199.

25 Bourdieu 1984, 165: "It is an integrative struggle and, by virtue of the initial handicaps, a reproductive struggle, since those who enter this chase, in which they are beaten before the start ... implicitly recognize the legitimacy of the goals pursued by those whom they pursue, by the mere fact of taking part". See also Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 23–24.

26 Bourdieu 1984, 168. See also Bourdieu 1990, 41–46.

would be to replace the old canon by a new one.[27] This is the theoretical basis of calls for canon-revision in which classical antiquity is one of the main targets.

I fully concur with Bourdieu's thesis that a cultural canon represents the agenda of the groups that dominated in the society to which this canon originally belonged. What I see as problematic, however, are the conclusions that they draw from it. As far as I can see, the calls for canon-replacement that they instigated are based on a theoretical template which has no historical parallels — or at least no such parallels that would last long enough to take root. Much more widespread are the efforts to appropriate the inherited canon while making it relevant to social and cultural groups that had no access to it in the past. To return to our initial example, there can be no doubt that the corpus of classical texts of ancient Greece and Rome reflects the system of values of the pagan civilization which created it. We have seen, however, that during the transition to Christianity it was not replaced by another set of texts. On the contrary, it was at this stage that it became canonical in the full sense of the word.[28]

The Christian appropriation of Greco-Roman cultural legacy is particularly well-positioned for a critical examination of the issue of canon-formation. But the case of Julian's School Law is far from being an isolated historical episode. Even a cursory examination of randomly selected examples referring to what happened in the past as a result of transition from one dominating social group to another suggests that the thesis of canon-replacement is not substantiated by historical fact.[29] The plays of Corneille, Racine and Molière, firmly associated as they are with the zenith of French absolutism, continued to be the pivot of French education also after the Revolution. Generally speaking, the whole of Europe became dominated by the middle classes without apparently feeling a need to get rid of the cultural capital accumulated in the period of upper-class domination. The same would be true of the status of Pushkin and other canonical Russian authors in the post-revolutionary Russia: after some short-lived attempts to cancel the 'bourgeois culture', the old canon was re-established as an integral part of the curriculum. In our own days, Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*, which sets out to 'reread' the western 'cultural archive' in order to make it relevant to the former colonial nations who took no part in its formation, or Pat Barker's *The Silence of the Girls*, presenting the

27 Cf. Bourdieu 1993, 107–108.

28 Cf. Browning 2000, 867: "Neither in the Greek east nor in the Latin west did the church attempt to set up its own schools in opposition to existing traditional schools. … The church never followed the example of the Jewish communities, who set up their own schools, because, unlike the Jews, it did not see itself as a perpetually marginalized minority".

29 See Finkelberg 2003.

events within the Homeric *Iliad* as being focalized by a woman, offer fitting examples of both the appropriation of the canon and its adjustment to the agenda of the formerly underprivileged and under-represented groups.[30] Over and over again, rather than being thrown away, the cultural capital is re-used in accordance with the needs of the groups that rise to social and cultural prominence. Rather than of canon-replacement, we should, therefore, speak of canon-appropriation.[31]

Two qualifications, however, should be kept in mind here. First, as we saw above, rather than staying in its pristine form, during the process of reception the old canon becomes re-interpreted in accordance with new systems of values. Second and no less important, the canon never becomes appropriated *en bloc*, with no interference with its original nomenclature. New texts constantly enter the inherited canon, whereas some of the former canonical works are pushed to the margins or simply left behind (the comedies of Menander, lost in the period of the transition to Christianity, may serve as an example). Yet rather than resulting in canon-replacement, these processes of inclusion and exclusion diversify the canon and bring it up to date, thus guaranteeing its perpetuation. As John Guillory put it in his *Cultural Capital*,

> When we read Plato or Homer or Virgil in a humanities course, then, we are reading what *remains* of the classical curriculum after the vernacular revolutions of the early modern period. The fact that we no longer read these works in Greek or Latin, or that we read far fewer classical Greek or Latin works than students of premodern school systems, represents a real loss; but this loss must be reckoned as the price of the *integration* of these works into a modern curriculum.[32]

Cultural canon is not a Procrustean bed designed to get those works that are deemed undesirable at a given historical moment to be pushed out of the curriculum: it is a dynamic cultural artifact which is found in a permanent state of flux.

30 Said 1993, 59; Barker 2018. As far as I can judge, the Bourdieu school partly acknowledges this phenomenon but sees it as due to the fact that the formerly underprivileged groups sometimes misrecognize the social function of the so-called 'legitimate culture'. However, the Jacobin defense of the teaching of Latin, the example of the appropriation of the 'legitimate culture' by formerly underprivileged groups that Bourdieu and Passeron adduce, can hardly account for the universal character of the phenomenon. See Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 23–24.

31 It has already been pointed out by Bourdieu's critics that his theory makes no provision for the phenomenon of cultural transition, proceeding as it does from "an apparently homeostatic system of reproduction", see Guillory 1993, 58.

32 Guillory 1993, 51 (Guillory's emphasis).

4

As far as the students of antiquity are concerned, the above discussion would seem to bear a twofold message. On the one hand, we can be reasonably certain that the calls for pushing the legacy of Greece and Rome out of the contemporary cultural canon have no future. A capital, even a cultural one, is not a thing to be thrown away. This was clear to St Basil as early as the fourth century CE. In the concluding part of his *Address to Young Men*, he wrote:

> For it would be disgraceful that we, having thrown away the present opportunity, should at some later time attempt to summon back the past when all our vexation will gain us nothing.[33]

At the same time, it is mandatory to recognize that the once privileged position of classical antiquity cannot be sustained any longer. The classical world can no longer be approached without regard to other civilizations and other cultural traditions. This is why we should also look in the direction of non-classical civilizations of the ancient world, both those which, as the ancient Near East and Egypt, were in constant contact with the Greco-Roman world, and those which, as ancient China or India, may be profitably compared with it. Joint academic programs with relevant departments would assist (and are already assisting) in the formation of a global canon which would embrace the great works of literature, philosophy and art from all over the world, with the classical canon as an integral part of it.

Furthermore, whether we like it or not, we should be prepared for readings of the ancient texts which may lie very far indeed from the messages with which these texts were originally informed. It seems, however, that a degree of creative misinterpretation is essential for keeping texts from the past alive and relevant for generations to come. After all, only in virtue of such cultural adjustment did these texts stay relevant to countless generations of readers and have eventually survived. Otherwise, they would be in danger of turning into antiquarian objects with no meaningful connection to the world of the living.[34] Accordingly, alongside the cultivation of their professional expertise, the classicists of the future should be open-minded towards the spectrum of contemporary reception of ancient Greece and Rome.

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33 *Ad adolescentes* 10.6 αἰσχρὸν γὰρ τὸν παρόντα καιρὸν προεμένους, ὕστερόν ποτ᾽ ἀνακαλεῖσθαι τὸ παρελθόν, ὅτε οὐδὲν ἔσται πλέον ἀνιωμένοις.

34 Cf. Jauss 1970, 10: “A literary work is not an object which stands by itself and which offers the same face to each reader in each period. It is not a monument which reveals its timeless essence in a monologue”.

This open-mindedness, however, should come with a caveat: under no circumstances should we compromise our mission of the bearers of in-depth knowledge about classical antiquity. Scholarship exists side-by-side with reception, each playing its own role: while reception is a predominantly spontaneous process of adaptation of a text from the past to the current historical context, scholarship is an analytic activity which addresses the text as an object of study in its own right. Rather than merely adjusting the text to hermeneutic attitudes prevailing at a given historical moment, the scholars' task is to approach it critically and, whenever possible, to try to reconstruct its original form and meaning.[35] Both scholarship and reception are vitally important for the survival of our discipline, so that the classicists of the future should be trained so as to be interpretatively generous in their teaching and rigorous in their scholarly research.[36]

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35 See Finkelberg 2014.

36 This paper originates in the inaugural lecture at the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities delivered in December 2005 (Finkelberg 2006). It has benefited from the criticism of several colleagues, among whom I particularly wish to thank Richard Janko. I would also like to thank the organizers of the Future of the Past conference for their warm welcome and hospitality.

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Hans-Joachim Gehrke

The Ancient World: Past, Present, and Future of Europe

Abstract: Shared notions of history are crucial for collective identities. This also applies to Europe. In this context, it is tempting to look for the unifying elements by separating themselves from the Other as the ultimate foreigner, comparable to the procedures common in nationalism. In this way, myths of Europe have emerged, such as the idea of a fundamental West–East antagonism. The text contrasts this with a differentiated picture of European history. It leads back to the roots, to the cultures of antiquity. After being definitely shaped in the Roman Empire, they had a significant impact on European civilisation. In this way, beyond all differences, essential commonalities become visible that long precede the formation of the individual nations. They will also be sustainable in the future if we do not forget their origin.

Keywords: community of destinies, conflict and debate, democracy, discourse, education, identity, language, rule of law, scientific method, self-image

1 Introductory remarks

Europe is a construction of the ancient Greeks. The beautiful Phoenician princess whom Zeus abducted in the form of a bull and took to Crete is perhaps its symbol. This alone shows us that East and West were not rigidly divided at that time. Much more important than this well-known myth, however, was the intellectual measurement of the world by the Greek philosophers and scholars of the Archaic period. Even today, the border between Europe and Asia is the same that Anaximander, Hecataeus of Miletus and others drew across the Hellespont and the two Bosporus. And yet this border is not the work of nature, but of man. It is a construction based on the rules and lines of geometry, which as such, as a mathematical discipline, was also invented at that time. However, this has an advantage: it is a construction that can help us to work and build further when we ask ourselves what Europe is and, above all, what is the deep bond that holds its inhabitants, the Europeans, together.

The stones of this edifice are to be found above all in history. In the case of any collective identity, it is true that it is essentially based on a common history. In the case of Europe, an artificial entity from its origins, this is true to a very special degree. It is precisely in this sense that common experiences form and sustain the

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identity of being European. Europe: that is its history. We should be aware of this in order to protect Europe and its culture and to develop it for the future. And certainly, with a joint effort.

But what do we have in common? What unites us? Again, this does not happen by itself. Unlike nations that have grown over centuries, it is not readily apparent. It has not yet become an integral part of a collective memory through long and repeated cultivation of memory, through public celebrations and commemorative rituals, through teaching, exhibitions, monuments, national literature. But it is precisely this that gives us more freedom to search for what constitutes Europe's common history; much is not predetermined. In addition, there are not only memories that create bonds, but also stories of terrible contrasts, conflicts and wars.

We cannot ignore the fact that there have been, and still are, differences and conflicts. History is an empirical science and, therefore, based on evidence and reality. It is precisely the conflicts that are part of the history of Europeans. But this is the key: if we understand European history as the common history of Europeans, then what we have in common is that Europeans have always had common experiences, in conflict and in reconciliation, in war and in peace, that they have felt these common experiences differently and that they judge them from different perspectives. It is this *concordia discors* that is the essence of European history.

It is here that we must look for the building blocks on which to construct our specific European history. I would like to briefly outline some of these, which seem to me to be particularly important. The fact that they can be discussed and that others can be added, that they can be weighted differently and judged differently, is in itself specifically European. We must avoid one-sidedness and take many perspectives into account if we are to seek a history of Europeans in this sense.

The focal points I have chosen are based on the aforementioned difference of sharing the same experiences and the same events that affected all or many people. It is therefore a matter of common destinies that have been perceived and processed in different ways. In this respect, what has been assumed for other collective entities also applies to Europe, in the sense that Leopold Ranke, one of the founders of modern academic history, formulated it in his first major work: "What can unite individuals and nations in a closer relationship if not participation in the same destiny, if not a common history?".[1] In this sense, Europe has a common destiny, it is, so to speak, a community of destiny ("Schicksalsgemeinschaft").[2] This aspect will be

1 Ranke 1957, 8.

2 The term is used in the sense in which the Austrian socialist Otto Bauer (1882–1938) used it for the definition of nation, see Bauer 1907, 112: "S*chicksalsgemeinschaft bedeutet nicht Unterwerfung unter gleiches Schicksal, sondern gemeinsames Erleben desselben Schicksals* in stetem Verkehr,

the focus of the following observations and reflections. There has been a constant exchange of ideas in Europe about these destinies — which are not least connected with the different experiences of conflict I mentioned earlier — and about much more. Europe has thus also become a community of discourse and a community of conflict.

2 Europe as a common destiny

2.1 Starting point: The (Roman) Empire

Let us look at the destinies that historically unite Europe. Obviously, we must go back to a time before the emergence of nation states, and this takes us back to antiquity. This fits in well with the 'inventors' of Europe, the ancient Greeks. Their culture had already become a world culture in antiquity, especially after Alexander's expedition. Contacts with the civilizations of the Near East, from which the Greeks had already learned a great deal, led to intensive processes of exchange. And in this configuration, Greek civilization had a profound influence — this alone is a highly significant phenomenon in world history — on those who subjugated Greece and the Hellenistic empires, i.e. the Romans. The Greeks, however, as Horace said, one of their most important poets, "captured the savage victor and introduced the arts into rustic Latium".[3] The fact that the Romans took over Greek culture, shaped it in their own way and passed it on to the rest of the world was decisive for the history of Europe: it was the destiny of the first European civilization, which had emerged in Greece in all its cosmopolitanism, to be developed by

fortwährender Wechselwirkung miteinander... Nicht Gleichartigkeit des Schicksals, sondern nur das gemeinsame Erleben und Erleiden des Schicksals, die Schicksalsgemeinschaft, erzeugt die Nation. Gemeinschaft bedeutet nach Kant *'durchgängige Wechselwirkung untereinander'.* (Dritte Analogie der Erfahrung: Grundsatz der Gemeinschaft) Nur das in durchgängiger Wechselwirkung untereinander, in steter Beziehung aufeinander erlebte Schicksal bringt die Nation hervor." ("*Community of destiny does not mean submission to the same destiny, but common experience of the same destiny* in constant intercourse, continuous interaction with each other.... It is not the sameness of destiny, but only the common experience and suffering of destiny, the community of destiny that creates the nation. According to Kant, community means *'continuous interaction with one another'* (Third analogy of experience: principle of community). Only destiny experienced in continuous interaction with one another, in constant relation to one another, produces the nation."). Cf. especially Langewiesche 2008, 63–66.

3 *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes* | *intulit agresti Latio* (Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.156–7).

the Roman Empire. In this respect, the Roman Empire is a very special European community of destiny, indeed a central core of Europe.

This can be shown easily and in detail in history itself. Contrary to what we are taught, the Roman Empire did not end with the end of antiquity, whenever this may be dated. We usually speak of Byzantium and the Byzantine Empire, and there is even an academic discipline called Byzantine Studies. In the West, we often speak of the German Empire as the successor to Charlemagne's Frankish Empire. Historically, i.e. in terms of their respective contemporaries, this is not correct: The so-called Byzantines were "Romans", "Rhomaioi", and the modern Greeks could still be called "Romioi", and Greekness "Romiosyne".[4] Charlemagne bore the Roman imperial titles of "Imperator" and "Augustus" after the transfer of the emperorship to the Franks (*translatio imperii*). His empire was the Roman Empire, not unlike its eastern part to which the empire had passed under Otto the Great.

Crucially, the Roman Empire was conceived as a universal or global entity. In other words, it was a political entity that was never nationally defined. Rather, it encompassed different nations and, as in the Roman Empire of antiquity, even the function of ruler was not tied to persons of a particular ethnic origin. At the same time, it was always clear to its contemporaries that the Roman Empire would exist as long as the world existed: according to the Christian view, it was the last empire, after which came the terrible events of the Apocalypse and the Last Judgement.

The Empire provided a solid political and legal framework within which life could develop. This was characterized by the great collection of laws decreed by the Emperor Justinian (527–564), the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*. On the one hand, it reflected the greatest achievements of Roman law in the previous millennium; on the other, as a fundamental legal system, it had a long-term impact on the future. In the eastern part of the Empire, which was dominated by Greek culture and language, two of the most important emperors, Basileios I (867–886) and his son Leon VI (886–912), ensured that it was edited and translated into Greek in order to keep it alive. In my country it still had some legal force until it was replaced by the new Civil Code (*Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*) on 1.1.1900, which was heavily influenced by the old principles. In general, important provisions and principles of Roman law have survived. They still form an essential part of the rule of law.

Repeatedly, the people in the affected areas — and these were mainly, though not alone, in Europe after the break-up of the unity of the Mediterranean world — have held on tenaciously to the Empire and its idea. This also affected all those who were not directly part of it or even in competition with it. And so, it simply did not

4 One may think particularly at the collection of poems published by the famous Greek poet Jannis Ritsos under the title Ρωμιοσύνη in 1954, set in music by Mikis Theodorakis.

go away: After the great catastrophe of Constantinople, the “Third Rome” was born in Moscow, and the imperial title remained “Tsar”. And this “Rome” formally lasted until the revolutionary events of 1917. In the West, too, the Empire fell victim to the great changes brought about by revolution. It was dissolved by the Emperor himself on 6 August 1806. But by then the French Revolution had found its own emperor, Napoleon (1804). And not long afterwards, the last remaining emperor of the old empire, Franz II, took the title of emperor of Austria and was now also known as Franz I. Thus, there was one empire in three forms. The great battle of Austerlitz on 2 December 1805 between France, Russia and Austria was a battle of three emperors — with Franz himself embodying two empires, the Old Empire and the Austrian Empire. Even after its fall, the Empire lived on in some way, as an idea and with all its traditions.

This permanence and power, strong in all change, was also linked to religion. Despite the persecutions, the development of Christianity was encouraged by the existence of the Roman Empire. After Constantine the Great established the link between the Empire and the Church of the Christians, the Church developed in harmony with the Empire. Like the Empire, the Church was universal. It maintained this principle even when the Empire was in crisis and partially dissolved. With the Empire, the Church was also able to combine the idea of unity with that of duality or even plurality. But according to the claim, the Patriarch in the Second Rome represents the “Ecumenical Patriarchate”, and the Pope in Rome regularly gives the blessing “urbi et orbi”, “to the city and to the world”.

All these connections are almost obvious in one particular coat of arms, the double-headed eagle, as we know it as the symbol of the Orthodox Church. However, since the time of the Palaiologans, it has also symbolized the Roman Empire — unity in double form — and was also introduced in the West (under Emperor Sigismund, 1411–1437). It remained the symbol of the Old Empire, and was then transferred to Austria. Consequently, it is also the coat of arms of the Russian Federation. At a glance, then, these foundations of European traditions can be seen in the Roman Empire in two forms.

2.2 State and Church(es)

The union of church and state in the form that was launched by Constantine constituted a crucial nucleus of the tradition, but did not fail, on the other hand, to constitute a heavy burden. In the two empires this union took a different form. In the East, where there was a direct continuity with the ancient empire of Rome, the position of the emperor was also very strong within the Church. One speaks of caesaropapism. But the relationship between emperor and ecclesiastical institutions was by no

means free of conflict. The emperor was not an absolute ruler; on the contrary, he was subject to the dictates of God. This was overseen, if nothing else, by the Patriarch, who could totally oppose the sovereign.

Things were completely different in the West, where the ancient empire had practically crumbled and only to a certain extent survived in the Germanic kingdoms, especially in the reign of the Franks. In times when everything was insecure, it was the representatives of the Church, the bishops in many regions and, not least, the Pope as the unchallenged spiritual head in the West, who also took care of worldly welfare. Moreover, the notion of a universal empire (also in connection with the East) remained vital within the Church. For this reason, the conferring of imperial dignity by the pope, for the first time on Christmas Day in the year 800 at the coronation of Charles as emperor, played an essential role.

Bishops also had important political functions in the medieval world, especially in the Western Empire. It was in the interests of both the ruler and the pope to decide on their investiture. Again, it was part of the emperor's self-image that he was the protector of the Church and had to ensure its well-being. He even supported the papacy in its disputes with secular opponents in Rome and in its efforts to reform the Church. On the other hand, the popes, strengthened by this, also asserted their claim to superiority over the emperors: as Christ's representatives on earth, they also broke the emperor's power when in doubt.

All this led to a very heated conflict, the Investiture Controversy, as early as the 11th century. But even after that, the relationship remained as tense as ever: the Pope relied on Scripture, the Councils and the rules and regulations of the Church, i.e. canon law. The emperor was supported in his claims to supremacy by the legal experts who, in the Corpus Iuris, brought to light more and more documents relating to the great power of the Roman emperors. Contrasts of this kind also cast a shadow over the history of the following centuries, such as the conflicts between Pope Innocent IV (1243–1254) and Frederick II (1212–1250), or the Avignon captivity of the Church ordered by Philip IV the Fair. The Church did not recover from this blow, as evidenced by the Great Western Schism and the formulation of the theory of the supremacy of the Councils (conciliarism).

But the worst was yet to come: weakened by these problems, the Church, still barely able to regulate the spirituality and behavior of the clergy, was also tainted by political interests, corruption and nepotism. From the 14th century onwards, it had to contend with an increasingly popular religious sentiment and various attempts at reform. All this culminated in the Reformation, which spread across central and western Europe after the publication of Martin Luther's theses. Using the new medium of the printing press, new religious movements developed very quickly, all of them based on the Gospel: in particular, in addition to the Lutheran

orientation, there were the Reformed groups based on the theologians Ulrich Zwingli and Jean Calvin, and many others.

Enormous energies were involved; it was not just a matter of life and death, but of the eternal salvation of souls. Those who believed otherwise became heretics and were brutally persecuted. The Church reacted with a drastic internal reform, and the many conflicts turned into real religious wars, with massacres and bloodshed, but also with considerable political consequences, especially in France, Britain and the whole of Central Europe. The mighty French kingdom threatened to disintegrate, and in England there were civil wars and dictatorship. Finally, the empire in the West was about to fall apart altogether: The Thirty Years' War, a religious war between Catholics and Protestants in the Empire, became a true European war with the intervention of other powers, especially France, Sweden and Spain. It left a trail of blood across central Europe and affected neighboring regions.

Europe's religious wars, however, had significant consequences far beyond Europe. They gave rise to nothing less than the modern state, with its monopoly on the use of force. But it was precisely this monopoly that in this epoch had to be asserted not only against the traditional local powers, from warlords and robber barons to nobles and ecclesiastical princes, but also against the various religious parties that fought bitterly against each other. The monarchs, on the other hand, had to strengthen their position and eventually force everyone under their rule. The fact that there should be only one superior power in a state, i.e. a monopoly, was the only guarantee of internal peace. Thus, the Greek term for the order of a state, *politeia*, became the police! Thinkers such as the Frenchman Jean Bodin and the Englishman Thomas Hobbes (inter alia, translator of Thucydides) provided the intellectual foundations. The principle became established during the period of absolute monarchy, especially in France. And even after the revolutionary disempowerment of the monarchies, the idea of a monopoly on the use of force remained in the principle of popular sovereignty.

At the same time, these principles implied a religious neutrality of the state: precisely because it had to be superior to religious energies and powers in order to maintain internal harmony and peace, it had to stay out of religious conflicts. Thus, the modern state — unlike the Roman Empire — is not founded on or linked to religion. We talk about secularism, laicism and the separation of church and state — and we also know that there will always be debates about this, for example about allowing symbols that are considered religious in public spaces or institutions. They are inevitable, given the potentially explosive power of religion, which has not gone away; we must endure them and make sure we keep them within peaceful limits. This is what European history teaches us.

2.3 Self-government, democracy and the rule of law

There is a strong common European tradition behind the concept of popular sovereignty, dating back to Greek antiquity. Let us not forget that the term “popular sovereignty” is nothing more than a literal translation of the Greek word “demokratia”. Nevertheless, our modern democracies are by no means copies of the Athenian democracy. But they would not have been possible without it, and the winding paths that lead from ancient Athens to us lie at the heart of Europe’s common destiny. What matters is not so much the legal and administrative details as the underlying principles. The main point is that individuals belonging to a political community decide autonomously on community matters. This means that they subordinate themselves to certain rules which they have given themselves and which they themselves control: the law. In this form, self-determination guarantees freedom.

How wide the circle of individuals involved in decision-making processes should be was the subject of heated debate, even civil war, in ancient times. And yet, even in antiquity, the basic principle that this circle should include all those concerned was unambiguously accepted. Plato’s Protagoras gave voice to this principle with an unprecedented formulation: that ‘decorum’ and ‘law’ (αἰδώς and δίκη), the foundations of common political life, should be relevant to the lives of all individuals and not be reserved for experts.[5] This was also discussed, and not infrequently there was a confrontation, even a violent one, about the best order, between democracy and oligarchy, ochlokratia and aristocracy, freedom and tyranny.

The organization of community life in Rome and the Roman cities was not very different. Of course, these were not democracies in the strict sense, but the principle remained that the individuals who make up a community should participate in an appropriate way and govern themselves. Indeed, it can be said that the Roman Empire, with its immense size, could only exist and function because, like the Hellenistic kingdoms, it could be based on thousands of autonomous cities.

In the European Union, we talk about the principle of subsidiarity, which means that as many things as possible should be regulated at the lowest possible level, i.e. at the grassroots, close to the people. This was indeed the case in ancient times. Thus, it is fair to say that the government of the Roman emperors was close to the people. In fact, it was in the cities of the Roman Empire that the concept of citizen was born. In principle, these communities were based on free citizens (even if in reality it was often a small circle). In the word *civitas* there is *civis*; and the proud “civis Romanus sum”, also used by the Apostle Paul, guaranteed everyone a fair trial (or so it was claimed).

5 Pl. *Prt.* 322a–323a.

Many of these cities also managed to survive the caesuras that marked the transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, maintaining a certain degree of autonomy. As early as the 11th century, what was essentially the ancient model of the city, based on a form of structured self-government, began to spread with impressive speed throughout Europe, even far beyond the borders of the ancient Roman Empire. Travelling through many European countries, for example, one immediately recognizes the common elements of these cities (urban planning, market squares with town halls, distribution of churches, etc.) and quickly feels familiar with them.

In addition to the civitas model, there were other forms of civic participation in the context of monarchies: the corporate participation of the nobility, the clergy and the communities. Urban and rural communities could join together in confederations, as in the Swiss cantons. The Confoederatio Helvetica, or CH for short, was a particularly European state. As early as the Middle Ages, self-governing communities had developed a concept of independence and sovereignty, as the famous Italian jurist Bartolo von Sassoferato put it: *civitas sibi princeps* — and *princeps* here is the Roman emperor, the highest form of state authority according to well-known Roman law.

In the course of the above-mentioned religious wars and related conflicts, people in the countries concerned struggled in theory and practice to find the right order for the now strong state. As elsewhere, especially during the Enlightenment, guidance was sought in antiquity, in this case especially in the debates on the proper order of the state, one of the central themes of ancient political theory. Following Plato and especially Aristotle, but also Polybius, Cicero and Livy, people developed their own concepts. The idea of the supremacy of law became essential. Even the ruler had to bow to the laws, or at least they kept his power in check. Ideas such as social contract and constitution prevailed, together with practical experience, which became principles, especially in the crucial principle of the separation of powers. The recourse to corporate representation, mentioned above, made it possible to extend participation and co-determination to areas larger than a municipality. In the combination of Stoic principles and Judeo-Christian principles of the value of the individual human being as a creature of God, human rights based on natural law were formulated.

With the revolutions in America and France, these ideas and principles were put to practice. From there they spread with incredible speed in Europe and in the territories colonized by Europe, already in the first decades of the 19th century, in Italy, Spain, Germany, Serbia, Greece, South America. It was in this age of revolutions that the common destiny became particularly apparent. In the Greek struggle for freedom, in particular, it was vividly expressed in the commitment of the fighters themselves and in the diverse sympathies of the Philhellenes.

The principles of the rule of law and the separation of powers are therefore reflected not least in the independence of the judiciary, the third branch of government, which is a particularly valuable asset among European principles and at the same time a striking example of common ground, from the supreme courts of the individual countries to the courts of justice in Europe. Here, essential European ideas have already become reality, and in a highly effective way. And yet the Court of Justice itself, since the time of the ancient Greeks, has also been a forum for conflict and dispute, albeit in a peaceful form: *concordia discors*, again under the banner of respect for the opponent, at least formally.

3 Europe as a community of discourse

This peculiar combination of difference and commonality is particularly evident in the discussions and debates that Europeans hold among themselves or with external interlocutors. The opinions and positions are different, but the terms of the debate are similar, and the starting points and assumptions are comparable: despite linguistic differences, the same language is spoken. In short, Europe is also a community of discourse, and this is evident with unparalleled clarity in the cultural sphere, in the realm of the mind and the arts.

The discourse that Europe has with itself and with others is in many ways a continuation of the debates of antiquity, between Greeks and Greeks, Egyptians and Greeks, Persians and Greeks, Greeks and Jews, Greeks and Romans, and so on. In the same way, European culture is in dialogue with antiquity. This dialogue with antiquity remained uninterrupted in the eastern part of the empire and in those western areas where there were no sharp cultural breaks in Late Antiquity. Significantly, the transfer of the empire to the Franks brought with it a major reform of the Latin language and script, and a marked revival of ancient culture, literature and learning. We are talking about the Carolingian Renaissance, which provided the intellectual basis for the revival of the Roman Empire in the West.

And above all: renaissances happen all the time. Europe has often been strengthened by its constant and extensive recourse to antiquity and has even come into contact with Mediterranean cultures. Even in the Eastern Islamic cultures, and from there to Spain, much of antiquity was preserved, especially in the case of philosophy. This heritage was also enriched with practical knowledge such as medicine, mathematics, astronomy and geography through Indian and Persian influence. A koine, a common language of scholars that ignored or transcended religious divisions, was thus gradually formed or continued. Its most privileged home was

the multicultural environment of Muslim Spain, and its influence was not least due to Jewish polyglot scholars.

For all the differences in detail, the common basis was the works of Aristotle. Above all, the works on logic set the standard. In the Greek-speaking East they were read in the original; elsewhere they were studied in Arabic or in Latin translations from Arabic. In this way, a real intellectual movement was born in Europe: Scholasticism, for which Aristotle was THE philosopher, *the teacher of those who know*, as Dante called him.[6] In intellectual circles there was a culture of dispute and discussion, lively, sharp and polemical, sometimes even balancing opposing positions, not very different from the ancient Greek sophists or the commentators on the Torah and the Koran. Such debates were always about similar issues and were conducted according to common rules and methods. The universities, founded from the Middle Ages onwards and a highly characteristic expression of medieval — and indeed European — culture, were the places of learning, fostered not least by such debates.

What did it mean for the Occident to become acquainted with the Greek spirit in its own linguistic garb? From the 13th century onwards, this began in places where Western Europe was already more orientated towards the East, in Sicily and southern Italy. A milestone in this process was the founding of the University of Naples, whose name it bears today, by the universally minded emperor Frederick II. The works of Aristotle were now translated directly from the Greek original. Finally, direct contacts increased, forced by the negotiations between the threatened empire in Constantinople and the powers of the West.

Humanism, inaugurated by Francesco Petrarch in the form of a debate on classical Latin, thus acquired its own physiognomy: the link between Latin and Greek, a link that took shape above all in Florentine intellectual circles and was fostered by the presence of Greek scholars such as Demetrius Chalkokondyles (1423–1511); the latter, for example, was one of the teachers of Johannes Reuchlin (1455–1522), who in turn became one of the great educators of my country. In the age of humanism and the Renaissance, classical antiquity became the absolute standard. Under the banner of the *ad fontes* principle, antiquity became a model and the object of new research, carried out with an unprecedented critical approach.

The bearers of this culture were first and foremost the scholars, who created a *res publica litterarum*, in whose tradition we still stand today, in our republic of letters. But it was in the universities that the elites of the principalities, themselves characterized by an increasingly complex organization, were trained. Finally, through grammar schools and high schools, humanism spread to the cities, overshadowing

6 *Il maestro di color che sanno* (Dante, *Divina commedia Inf.* 4, 131).

the old monastic schools. The common language was Latin, but the practice of translation was also widespread. More and more people communicated in the different national languages. Humanists, such as the poets of La Pléiade in Paris and Jan Kochanowski in Poland, promoted and even perfected writing in the national languages. In the end, multilingualism was the order of the day, and translation was commonplace. In this way, the range of expression was expanded. And people could always understand each other.

Diversity and unity, expansion and not obstruction of exchange: Europe spoke and still speaks about the same things in different ways. And when one came across words that could not be translated, one could learn new nuances, admire the richness of the other language and grow in respect for the other. In his major speech at the Sorbonne (26 September 2017), one of Europe's oldest universities, French President Emmanuel Macron highlighted this multilingualism as a positive element of European culture and even acknowledged the importance of the untranslatable: "En quelque sorte, le Sisyphe européen a toujours son intraduisible à rouler. Mais cet intraduisible, c'est notre chance! It is the part of the mystique that exists in each of us, and it is the part of the confidence that exists in the European project. It is the fact that, at a given moment, because we do not speak the same language and because we have this part of incongruous and irreducible difference, we decide to work together when we should have separated. Je revendique cette part d'intraduisible, d'irréductible différence, parce que je veux imaginer Sisyphe heureux".[7]

It was in this environment that new observations and interpretations of nature were developed. Based on rigorous observations and calculations of the solar system (by experts such as Nikolaus Kopernikus, 1473–1543) and a new understanding of experience, scholars such as Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) founded new scientific methods based on experimentation, laying the foundations of modern science. These were remarkable European innovations. But even here there were — and still are — references to Greek philosophy. Two leading quantum theorists, both Nobel laureates of the 20th century, Erwin Schrödinger (1887–1961) and Werner Heisenberg (1901–1976) may suffice as examples. In any case, antiquity remains a source of reflection and inspiration.

As might be expected, this is all the more true of disciplines explicitly dedicated to classical culture. This was and is not only about science, but also about the education of the individual, beyond any limitation in a nationalistic sense, but rather in a universal respect for one's own and other's traditions, in the sense of humanism, the *studia humanitatis*. Much could be added in analogy to what has been said

7 https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2017/09/26/initiative-pour-l-europe-discours-d-emmanuel-macron-pour-une-europe-souveraine-unie-democratique (accessed 2023/06/28).

so far: Europe as a community of art, painting, music, literature. All these cultural expressions were born and developed under the inspiration of antiquity, but also under the banner of exchange, communication and receptivity: a give and take both in contact and at the level of the text. Works of art from one country were received in another and thus became European. Translations became masterpieces with a value of their own: in my German literature class at school, I happened to read Shakespeare's 'Hamlet' in the translation of the Romantic August Wilhelm Schlegel. There is no space to say more. But it will not be difficult for the reader to add to my few examples.

4 Europe as a community in conflict: War and Peace

The history of Europe is also marked by debate and confrontation in their extreme forms, namely violence and war. "The life of Europe is the energy of great confrontations": these are Ranke's words again.[8] Violence and war are intertwined with everything I have said so far. They cannot and must not be silenced. But we must not lose ourselves in them, nor allow ourselves to be discouraged by them. That is why I use the expression "community of conflict", which the Czech historian Jan Křen used to describe the conflictual relationship between Czechs and Germans.[9] From this perspective, it is also possible to see a relationship in the conflict. Of course, it is a relationship that is threatened by failure, even catastrophic failure; but it can also succeed and overcome failure, as long as it is not denied: it must be admitted, honestly. And that is what history, as a scientific discipline, should do.

Let us note, then, that Europe has very often been united above all by enmity, and that it has often directed its energies outwards, always in the name of noble aims, as in the case of the Crusades. This could go as far as perversion, as when the Christian crusaders turned against Christian Constantinople. Later, however, especially in times of catastrophe, a sense of belonging to a single community could mature, as can be seen in *De Europa* by the humanist Ennea Silvio Piccolomini, who, as Pope Pius II, called in vain for a crusade to liberate Constantinople. Several attempts were made to change the situation. It was an arduous task, not least because of the many conflicts with the Ottoman Empire over the centuries, known as the Turkish Wars. These are events that have profoundly shaped Europe's self-image

8 Ranke 1957, 221.

9 Křen 1990/1996.

and have left their mark to this day, whether we like it or not. But it is also true that Europe has not always been of one mind.

In many wars, especially the religious wars mentioned above, Europe tore itself apart. The lines of conflict did not always or primarily run along national borders. Colonialism, a particularly problematic phenomenon in European history, was from the outset, as the competition between the Iberian states of Spain and Portugal, an expression of the European community of conflict, a race for world domination. It ended with the First World War, "the great catastrophe",[10] the "primeval catastrophe" (*Urkatastrophe*) of the 20th century, which a contemporary, the painter Franz Marc (1880–1916), could already describe as a "European civil war".[11] With the Second World War, which in many ways grew out of the First and was triggered by Hitler's Nazi Germany, Europe seemed to have come to an end.

But what happened next, again in the wake of a catastrophe, shows the crucial feature of the European community of conflict, namely its ability to overcome wars. A particularly striking example is the Peace of Westphalia of Münster and Osnabrück (1648), which ended the particularly brutal and protracted Thirty Years' War after years of negotiations, compared to which the Brexit negotiations were a pleasant chat. Characteristically, it established a peace order that explicitly allowed for confessional differences, even antagonisms, and allowed for national interests, balancing them in such a way that the relatively stable system of European equilibrium could emerge — which in turn shaped the European community of destiny. The empire in the West, called the "Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation", was organized in such a complex way that it was almost unmanageable, but as an order of regulated conflicts it is now highly praised by historians.

Above all, it is what has happened in Europe over the last 75 years that allows us to be optimistic. Those who were enemies during the most terrible of wars, in some cases enemies for centuries, have come closer together and have lived together in peace for an incalculable length of time. In the light of the historical narrative I have traced here, I find it very significant that the decisive step towards a greater European Union was taken in Athens in 2003, in the reconstructed Stoa of Attalus, with a view to our deepest historical traditions. Reconstructed and reconstruction — these words may remind us that we cannot take this history for granted. We must constantly rediscover and re-examine it, from different perspectives, with divergent interpretations, in debate and discussion: in *concordia discors*.

We, as historians and classicists, the modern republic of letters, know something about debate and discussion, *linguae francae* and translation. It is therefore

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10 Kennan, 1979, 3.

11 Marc 1915.

our task, above all, to keep reminding Europeans of the crucial point: that Europe has more in common than is generally believed, because it is older than the nation-states that almost destroyed it. Since antiquity, it has grown through various processes of exchange and demarcation, even in conflict, into a community of destinies. In this way we can work for the future by working on the past.

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Part II: **Intertextuality and Interdisciplinarity**

Edith Hall

The *Iliad's* Pre-Echoes of Future Apocalypse

Abstract: The Homeric *Iliad* has exerted an incalculable influence on later representations of war and our attitudes to heroism, masculinity and combat. It celebrates gargantuan consumption of cattle, precious metals and timber as well as the destruction of human lives. This aspect contributes to its epic grandeur and the excitement and aesthetic elevation we feel as we read it. But the environmental crisis facing us in the twenty-first century suggests that it is time for a new, ecologically sensitive reading of the poem which exposes the cavalier attitudes to natural resources it depicts. We need to repurpose the *Iliad* to help us change our attitudes towards nature and recognise the limits to the materials with which it can supply us. This is crucial if we the planet, and the study of classical literature, are to have a future at all.

Keywords: Homer, *Iliad,* Ecocriticism, Environment, Consumption, Timber, Bronze

1 Weighing down the Deep-Breasted Earth's Expanse

> Sing, goddess, of the dreadful wrath of Peleus' son Achilles.
> It afflicted the Achaeans with manifold causes of grief,
> and sent to Hades the brave souls of many heroes,
> leaving their bodies as spoils for dogs
> and every bird of the air. Zeus' plan was being fulfilled.[1]

So opens the *Iliad*, composed around 2,750 years ago. An erudite ancient scholar commented on the last phrase, "Zeus' plan was being fulfilled".[2] The scholar says that Earth begged Zeus to relieve her of the weight of the multitude of people, who were behaving impiously. So Zeus first brought about the Theban War, which destroyed large numbers, and afterwards the Trojan one, "with Momus as his adviser, this being what Homer calls the plan of Zeus, seeing that he was capable of destroying everyone with thunderbolts or floods". Momus, 'Blame', was the sinister son of Night and brother of Misery (Hesiod, *Theogony* 214); he recommended as an

1 Homer *Iliad* 1.1–5. This and all translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

2 Scholiast D on *Iliad* 1.5. I have slightly adapted the version of West 2003, 80–83.

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alternative to thunder or floods the Judgement of Paris. Thus the Trojan War came about, resulting in "the lightening of the earth as many were killed".

The scholar then quotes a fragment of the lost epic *Cypria*, which narrated the events preceding the war itself:

> There was a time when the countless tribes of humans roaming constantly over the land were weighing down the deep-breasted earth's expanse. Zeus took pity when he saw it, and in his complex mind he resolved to relieve the all-nurturing earth of mankind's weight by fanning the great conflict of the Trojan War, to void the burden through death. So the warriors at Troy kept being killed, and Zeus' plan was being fulfilled.[3]

A similar tradition was recounted in the early epic *Catalogue of Women* attributed to Homer's approximate coeval, Hesiod: "high-thundering Zeus was devising wondrous deeds then, to stir up trouble on the boundless earth; for he was already eager to annihilate most of the race of speech-endowed human beings... Hence, he established for immortals, and for mortal human beings, difficult warfare…pain upon pain".[4] John Perlin suggests that these traditions are mythical responses to the historical depopulation as the Mycenaean world disintegrated.[5] The fall of Troy and the notion of an apocalyptic threat to the survival of the human race have thus been linked in the mythical imagination since the archaic age.

2 The *Iliad* and the shaping of the modern mind

In the epic *Iliad*, Homer introduces the earliest detailed account of the people who were the ancient Greeks. The second book of the poem produces, via a catalogue of the more than a thousand Greek ships that sailed to Troy, a list of the communities who in the mid-8th BCE century regarded themselves as being united because they could enjoy poetry in Greek and had long ago fought together in the siege of Troy. The *Iliad* was performed at festivals where these self-governing Greeks, from diverse communities, met as equals in communal sacred spaces to worship their shared gods, and in doing so invented the competitive athletics contests of which we read an account in *Iliad* book 23 and possess a descendant in the Olympics. The poems recited at these gatherings were the collective cultural property of the independent-minded

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3 *Cypria* fr. 1, slightly adapted from the translation of West 2003, 82–83.
4 Slightly adapted translation by Most (2018, his fragment no. 155) 256–259 of supplemented papyrus *P. Berol.* 10560 95–16.
5 Perlin 1991, 8.

Greek warrior peasants wherever they sailed and were fundamental to the transmission of their values. They remained so until the end of pagan antiquity.

Greek epic poems originated in oral composition and had been developed in the process of being memorised, repeated, supplemented and adapted over the course of decades and (parts of them at least) centuries. But between 800 and 750 BCE, Greek culture changed forever. Some resourceful Greek-speakers, probably traders, borrowed the signs used by the ingenious Phoenicians to represent consonantal sounds, added some extra signs to indicate vowels, and used them to write down in Greek their already canonical authors. In inscribing them, no doubt the poet-scribes (perhaps one was an individual really called Homer) made changes which ornamented the language and improved poetic structure.

The classical Greeks knew that the *Iliad* was aesthetically superior to other epic poems because it is not made up of episodes loosely strung together. It is unified by one incident during the Trojan War, a period of a few weeks when the great warrior Achilles became incandescently angry with both his overlord Agamemnon for disrespecting him, and his Trojan enemy, Hector, for killing Achilles' beloved friend Patroclus. But the poem looks backwards and forwards in time to engage the listener with the war's antecedents and consequences.

The *Iliad* created the very core of the Greek sense of self for at least twelve centuries subsequently. Along with the *Odyssey*, it formed the basis of the education of everyone in ancient Mediterranean society from the 7th century BCE; Hegel was correct in seeing that "Homer is that element in which the Greek world lived, as a human lives in the air".[6] Even from pre-Roman days it was not only the Greek world. For a thousand years countless schoolboys living under the Macedonian or Roman empires, whose first languages were Syrian, Scythian, Nubian or Gallic, learned their alphabet through the first letters of Homeric heroes' names, developed their handwriting by copying out Homeric verses, and the art of précis by summarising individual books.[7] They also committed swathes of Homeric hexameters to memory (in Xenophon's *Symposium* 3.5 Niceratus says that his upper-class father required him to learn *all* of Homer by heart), and studied them in early manhood when they were learning to be statesman, soldiers, lawyers, historians, philosophers, biographers, poets, dramatists, novelists, painters or sculptors.

The *Iliad* continued to be read across the Byzantine world for another millennium. Its preservation despite the rising Ottoman threat to Byzantine Greek culture was guaranteed once the fourteenth-century humanist Francesco Petrarch had acquired a copy via a contact in Constantinople. The text was translated into Latin

6 Hegel 1923 (1837), 5.29.

7 See Marrou 1956, 162, and Pack 1967, nos. 2707, 1208.

and began to be read in learned circles in the west; it was printed in the original Greek in Florence in 1488. This precious printed edition unleashed a flood of translations into Latin and modern languages and inspired painters, dramatists and poets alike. Homer became central to the western curriculum; European colonialism ensured that the *Iliad* made its way across empires on every continent. It was included, for example, in the list of Christian books supplemented by pagan authors constituting the *Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum*. This was designed by Jesuits in Rome in 1599 and exported across the planet by the Society of Jesus' missionaries.[8]

The curriculum was in turn adopted by Western humanists. John Ruskin stressed that it even does not matter whether or not Homer is actually read, since "All Greek gentlemen were educated under Homer. All Roman gentlemen, by Greek literature. All Italian, and French, and English gentlemen, by Roman literature, and by its principles".[9] In the 20th and 21st centuries, Homer has long since ceased to belong to the western world but has become a cultural property familiar on every continent.[10] The subterranean impact of the poem on our species' global psyche may not be over-estimated.

In the case of the *Iliad*, no later author could ever again make a fresh start when shaping a narrative or a visual representation of a quarrel between a self-regarding monarch and his able lieutenant, a council of gods, a siege war, an athletics contest, a viewing of an army from a city wall, a husband parting with his wife and baby, a redemptive meeting of deadly enemies, a hero's funeral, a smith at work, animals being sacrificed, workers reaping, trees being chopped down or a vast ransom of precious metals put on public display. In literary critics' definitions of sublime art, especially 'epic' poetry, massive scale and the evocation of the infinitude of natural resources became an aesthetic requirement largely as a result of the tonal effects of the *Iliad*, thereby inspiring and legitimising the activities of every agent of extractive industrialisation and colonialism in history.

The Homeric *Iliad* is therefore a foundational text in the culture not only of the Mediterranean world and Europe but of the planet. This article makes the case that we can make it foundational to our struggle to save that planet from disaster. It argues that the *Iliad* can be read to expose the deepest contradictions underlying the environmental crisis which we humans have created — it is a priceless document of the mindset of the early Anthropocene. This matters because the ways in which humans view their environments are informed by representations of nature in their art and literature, especially in canonical texts that have been widely

8 Hall 2021, 36.

9 'The mystery of life and its arts' (1868), first published as Ruskin 1869.

10 Graziosi and Greenwood 2007; Hall 2008; McConnell 2013.

translated, adapted, visualized, enacted, and included on the curriculum. How the poets of the *Iliad* depicted relationships between people and the physical world around them has fundamentally affected how we imagine those relationships, too.

Canonical artworks shape the way we see the world and act upon and within it: our "response to the physical world is mediated by our social and literary creation of it".[11] Amitav Ghosh has proposed in *The Great Derangement* that the generic expectations of the western novel, in which weighty individual characters act autonomously in front of circumscribed backdrops, and often struggle valiantly with shortage of natural resources, have scarcely been congenial to evolving a more sustainable attitude to the natural world.[12] Perhaps the violence done to the environment across the Anthropocene has been authorized, if not exacerbated, by the celebration of the exploitation of nature by man in the foundational *Iliad*.

3 The *Iliad* as post-apocalyptic poem?

The Greeks of the archaic age had already asked whether the Trojan War was designed by Zeus to reduce the human population in order to relieve Mother Earth of her burden. The *Iliad*'s apocalyptic visions of elemental cataclysm and the erasure of human civilization are responses to a real sense of precarity and fear of natural catastrophe in the future. Reading the poem in detail reveals anxieties about seismic events, tsunamis, storms, floods, wildfires, plagues and famines that were structural to the archaic Greek imagination, as to other Ancient Near Eastern texts, and are once again to our 21st-century world. But the poets of the *Iliad* may have been responding more specifically to their awareness, drawn from poetry and storytelling as well as material remains, of the great Mycenaean palace civilisations that had collapsed in Greece and Crete at the end of the Bronze Age. The *Iliad* contains distant memories of everything the Mycenaeans had suffered before their civilisation disintegrated — famine, plague, fire, flood, menacing waves, earthquake, whirlwinds, destruction of the works of man. Its poets' visions of apocalypse therefore look forward as expressions of anxieties about potential future catastrophe, but backward to remembered reality.

Yet, central to the ideology of the *Iliad* is the idiom of infinitude, an assumption that the physical earth, its contents, and the resources needed by humans, are somehow limitless. The implied infinity is temporal as well as spatial and quantitative.

11 Rudd 2007, 35.

12 Ghosh 2016, esp. 3–84; see König 2022, xxiv.

The glory of the heroes, who were larger and stronger than those of today, will be forever unperishing. The *Iliad* knows no possibility of the entire extinction of the human race. Most ancient Greeks seem to have celebrated their power over the environment and to have seen man as 'the orderer of nature',[13] and the poem's distinctive idiom of supererogation, of gargantuan scale and limitlessness, was much admired by ancient literary critics. It was regarded by Longinus as lending it true sublimity or elevation. Homer wins the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* because his evocation of improbably enormous quantities and distances enhances its impact.

4 The limitless world of the *Iliad*

Although there are similar, if shorter, scenes in Mesopotamian Literature, perhaps the most horrifying picture of planetary destruction in the entire ancient repertoire is to be found in the Greek *Iliad*. It is formed in the visual imagination, suitably enough, of the lord of the dead, Hades or Aidoneus, 'The One Who Makes Things Unseeable'. When the gods marshal themselves for war towards the climax of the epic, we are presented with a terrifying picture of a world split in two by an earthquake (20.56–65):

> Then the father of men and gods thundered terribly
> on high. From underneath, Poseidon shook
> the boundless earth and the steep peaks of the mountains.
> The roots of Ida with its many fountains were all shaken,
> and her summits, and the Trojans' city and the ship of the Achaeans.
> Underneath, Aidoneus, lord of those below, was terrified,
> and in his terror leapt from his throne and shouted,
> fearing that above him Poseidon the Earthshaker would cleave the earth,
> and reveal his habitations to mortals and immortals,
> dreadful in appearance and slimy, so even the gods abhor them.

Hades feels the tremors shaking the very matter out of which the earth above and around him are made. He fears a vertical chasm will split the horizontal surface of the earth to reveal his damp demesne in the deepest Underworld.

A distinctive feature of Hades' view of the world is that its constituents are 'boundless' — earth is 'without limit'.[14] A crucial difference between the 21st-century perception of the earth and that of Homer's audience, and most generations since

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13 Glacken 1976, 117–118.

14 γαῖαν ἀπειρεσίην (20.58).

him, is that we now know there are limits to the earth and all its resources. The notion that we need to acknowledge the terrifying limitedness of natural resources was at last popularized in 1953 in Fairfield Osborn's *The Limits of the Earth*, where he observed that the history of Greece and Rome "assumes the character of a prologue to modern times".[15] Trying to imagine ourselves into a mindset where there were always new lands to conquer, new forests to chop down and new seams of ore to mine, is an impossibility. But we can begin to glimpse what it felt like by examining the idiom of infinitude that informs Hades' view of the limitless earth and numerous other magniloquent Homeric expressions.

Timber from the forests of Ida is repeatedly said to be of unutterable extent, unspeakable, infinite (*aspetos*), as unspeakable (*thespesios*) as the bronze war equipment of the Achaeans when they march forth (2.457),[16] its gleam reaching the heavens (see section 6). The flocks of sheep and goats that Iphidamas had promised as an additional bride price for his wife before he left for Troy were unutterable (*aspeta*, 11.245), in addition to the more prosaic quantity of a hundred cattle he had already put down as a deposit (see section 5). The Hellespont is 'boundless', without limits (*apeiron*, 24.545), as is the land of Troy that raises its voice to lament Hector (24.776). The Trojans march making a clamour like cranes fleeing from wintry storms and 'boundless (*athesphaton*) rain' (3.4). A false concept of ecological and environmental limitlessness is therefore as key to the depiction of the wrath of Achilles in the *Iliad* as the never-ending questioning of the exact power relations between man and natural phenomenon, man and god, and god and natural phenomenon.

Priam tells Helen he once saw the 'multitudes' of Phrygians encamped along the river Sangarius (now called the Sakarya, in which the pollution is currently rising at an alarming rate).[17] Andromache says that her father had received 'ransom past counting' (*apereisi(a)*) for her mother after taking her captive (6.427), a formula that occurs nine other times in the *Iliad*;[18] Agamemnon applies it to the recompense he is prepared to pay Achilles (9.120). Chryses brought 'ransom past counting' for his daughter Chryseis (1.372); Peisander and Hippolochus say that their father will offer Agamemnon 'ransom past counting' for their lives (11.134). Menesthios' mother was purchased by her husband in exchange for 'a bride-price beyond counting' (16.178).

Another term that often implies an infinite quantity is the adjective *murios*, which in the plural can also mean 'ten thousand' (Hesiod, *Works and Days* 252); the

15 Osborn 1953, 17.
16 ἀπὸ χαλκοῦ θεσπεσίοιο.
17 πλείστους Φρύγας, 3.185; İhlas News Agency 2019.
18 Kirk 1990, 216 on lines 6.425–428.

opening sentence of the *Iliad* says that Achilles' wrath would inflict 'measureless pains' on the Achaeans (1.2), but just before the end of the poem it is Priam who laments Troy's 'countless (*muria*) sorrows' (24.639). The pain the Trojans feel when Sarpedon dies is 'unbearable, unceasing' (16.549). Achilles predicts his death will cause Thetis 'infinite (*murion*) grief in her heart' (18.88): Aeneas' fear of Achilles causes him 'measureless grief' (20.282), just as terror of the enemy can be felt 'infinitely' (*aspeton*, 17.332). The River Scamander intends to conceal Achilles' corpse beneath 'infinite (*murion*) shingle' (21.319–320). Hector had paid for Andromache with 'innumerable (*muria*) bride-gifts' (22.472).

Homer sometimes provides visual images to help his listener envisage uncountable multitudes. Achilles says that he would not accept gifts from Agamemnon even if they were equivalent to all the wealth of Orchomenus, or Egyptian Thebes, 'where the houses contain the most treasures, and there are a hundred gates, through each of which drive out two hundred warriors with horses and chariots'; not even gifts 'as innumerable as grains of sand or dust' will suffice to reconcile them.[19] The Trojan forces are as myriad as leaves and flowers in spring (2.468); Iris, disguised as Polites, tells Priam the Achaeans' numbers are as those of leaves or grains of sand (2.800). Hector addresses his 'tribes of uncounted allies';[20] the Achaeans' helmets and weaponry glitter as they flow thick and fast from the ships, like snowflakes sent by Zeus fluttering as they are blown along by the North Wind (19.357–361).

There is also outrageous hyperbole. Nestor recalls slaying Ereuthalion, the biggest and strongest man he ever saw, whose huge prostrate bulk sprawled over a vast area (7.155–156). Later he claims, implausibly, that in a long-ago battle against the Epeians he single-handedly felled fifty chariots and killed the two warriors riding in them: a display of valour and battlefield slaughter (*aristeia*) of no fewer than a hundred battlefield killings in one incident (11.747–749). The Trojan king Erichthonius had three thousand mares grazing in his pasturelands (20.221). There is especial enormity to the outsize world inhabited by the gods. Hera's chariot has curving bronze wheels with eight spokes, whereas nearly all Bronze Age and Early Iron Age depictions have just four, and only occasionally six.[21] Athena's helmet has two horns and four golden bosses, and is 'fitted out with the men-at-arms of a hundred cities', an image designed to suggest the huge size of both helmet and wearer.[22] It is beyond

19 ὅσα ψάμαθός τε κόνις τε (9.381–385); see Kirk 1985, 245 on line 2.800. Leaves are usually symbols of renewability rather than multitude; for sand in this latter sense see 9.385.
20 μυρία φῦλα περικτιόνων ἐπικούρων (17.220).
21 ὀκτάκνημα (5.723). See Kirk 1990, 133 on lines 5.722–723; Lorimer 1950, 319.
22 χρυσείην, ἑκατὸν πολίων πρυλέεσσ' ἀραρυῖαν (5.744). See Kirk 1990, 135 on lines 5.743–744.

the capacity of the human imagination to visualize a helmet on a scale that can accommodate individual depictions of a hundred cities and their attendant soldiers, presumably in multiples of a hundred. Athena fells Ares and he stretches out across seven plethra: a plethron is a measure approximately equivalent to 100-foot square, or a quarter of an acre (21.407). The sense of unbelievable scale even enters the poem's acoustics. Ares and Poseidon both bellow as loud as nine or ten thousand warriors in battle (5.859–860, 13.148–149; see also 18.219–220).

But infinity is temporal as well as spatial, quantitative and sensory, and often indicated by adjectives with a prefixed 'privative alpha', an 'a' with a negativizing sense; the repeated initial alphas condition the poem's pessimistic emotional and acoustic impact. Agamemnon's sceptre, made by Hephaestus, is 'forever imperishable' (*aphthiton*, 2.46, 186). Hector believes that if he kills Achilles, his glorious reputation will be spoken of by men in days to come and will never die. Helen's griefs are unceasing (3.412), as the tales told by old men can be, says Iris in disguise as Polites to Priam. War is unabating (*aliastos*), as can be battle, din and lamentation (14.57, 12.471, 24.76). The fire that gleams from Diomedes' arms is unwearying (*akamaton*, 5.4), an Ancient Near Eastern motif, too.[23] Achilles is 'insatiable (*akorētōn*) of war'. Both divine laughter and human shouting can be 'inextinguishable' (*asbestos*). So is Hector's courage as he faces Achilles before their final showdown. A fit of trembling can be boundless, or unceasing (*aspeton*). The sense of infinitude affects everything. Hera 'rages unceasingly (*asperches*)'; Achilles believed his wrath against Agamemnon would never end; Achilles tells his horses he intends to drive the Trojans to a 'surfeit of war' (19.423).

Unlike the *Iliad's* humans, its immortals, at least the supreme couple, Zeus and Hera, and their favourite messenger, Iris, do seem aware that there are specific if extremely remote limits inherent in the cosmos, at least to the earth and sea, and that a people known as the Ethiopians live faraway near the streams of Ocean that encircle the world (23.205–206). But other geophysical boundaries are deep beneath the earth in Tartaros, where neither sun nor wind can reach them, rather than knowable by living human beings. Zeus tells the furious Hera that he is unconcerned about her anger, even if she should go to the deep place where Iapetus and Cronus now reside at the 'nethermost bounds (*peirath*') of earth and sea' (8.478–479). Hera lies to Aphrodite, saying that she is about to travel to 'the limits (*peirata*) of the all-nurturing earth' (14.200), where Ocean, 'from whom the gods are sprung' (14.301)

23 Kirk 1990, 53 on line 5.4.

and Tethys live, but are endlessly quarrelling.[24] Iris tells the Winds that she needs to travel via the stream of Ocean to the land of the Ethiopians (23.205–206). We are required to imagine Hera grasping the entire bounteous earth in one hand and the shimmering sea in her other when Hypnos prescribes how she is to take her oath to him (14.271–273).

This distinctive idiom of gargantuan scale and unboundedness, 'Homer's characteristic evocation of dimension beyond measurement',[25] is a constituent of the poem's grandeur imitated by emulators and parodists such as Aristophanes and Lucian,[26] and admired by ancient literary critics. Longinus regarded it as lending Homeric epic, especially the *Iliad*, true sublimity or elevation. Longinus identifies as sublime the evocation and deliberate magnification of huge distance, between earth and heaven, encompassed by Eris' stature or the length of divine horses' strides (*Iliad* 4.441–443; 5.770; *On the Sublime* 16). In Longinus' conflation of two passages about Poseidon, whose coming makes forests, mountains, Troy and the Achaeans' ships all quake, the literary critic says that Homer singles out a 'majesty' that surpasses even the Theomachy.[27] Homer is himself 'swept away by whirlwind' when he describes Hector raging like Ares, wielder of the spear, like a wild fire among the mountains in the thickets of a deep wood (16.605).[28] Longinus praises Euripides' intermittent grandeur by quoting a simile from the *Iliad* in which Achilles is compared with a wounded lion working himself up to fight;[29] both the literary critic and the tragedian were responding to the unforgettable imprint on the poem that Homer's refashioning of the lion has left, whether as threatening marauder or victim of the human hunt.[30]

24 οὐδ᾽ εἴ κε τὰ νείατα πείραθ᾽ ἵκηαι/ γαίης καὶ πόντοιο 8.478–479; πολυφόρβου πείρατα γαίης (14.200). See Bergren 1975, 21, 106–107 and 111 on *peirar* referring to the ends of the earth, the limit of the human world, in early Greek poetry, including *Iliad* 14.200–201, 14.301–302; see also *Hymn to Aphrodite* 226–227, Hesiod *Works* 168 and *Theog*. 333–335, 622, 738, 809. On the formidable powers with which Ocean is invested in the *Iliad*, albeit 'with the lightest of touches', see Ali 2019, 241–242.

25 Heiden 2008, 187.

26 Hall 2006, 344–349; Hall (forthcoming).

27 *On the Sublime* 9; this is a conflation of two Iliadic passages: 21.388 (confused in the quotation with 5.750), and 20.61–65.

28 On the *Sublime* 9.

29 On the *Sublime* 15; *Iliad* 20.170.

30 Lonsdale 1990, 1.

5 The (meta)physics of the *Iliad*

The *Iliad*'s evocations of scale, infinity, and the chaotic beauty of elemental and feral nature are some of the characteristics that makes it speak so loud to a modern age riven with anxiety about Armageddon. During Achilles' apocalyptic fight against the River Scamander, Homer introduces a crucial simile that encapsulates the conflicted relations between man and environment that characterise the entire world of the poem. The great river-god behaves like a stream of water whose course a gardener has tried to divert (21.258–264):

It was like when a man guides the flow of a stream of water from a murky spring, leading it through his plants and gardens with a mattock in his hands, creating dams in its course.

> As it flows along, all the pebbles underneath are swept along with it,
> and it rolls quickly onwards with a gushing sound.
> and it overtakes even the man who is guiding it.
> That was how the streaming wave continuously overtook Achilles,
> despite his swiftness. For the gods are more powerful than men.

Man knows how to interfere in nature in order to make it serve his ends but cannot predict the full consequences of that interference. For something — the ancients called it the gods — is more powerful than men.

Investigating the relationship between the physical world, human action and metaphysical, divine power reveals a complex picture. The poem at times offers a cosmic or 'god's-eye-view', especially in descriptions of the gods watching combat from elevated places, and in the similes and on the shield, but the dominant perspective is that of humans bound within claustrophobic local horizons. The boundary between divine corporeality and constitution by a sentient force field, element or material entity is porous. The lines dividing divine, human and even animal and elemental spheres are likewise permeable. Humans can be children, grandchildren of more remote descendants of gods; there is a striking group who are offspring of rivers and water-nymphs. Humans may know that a god is manipulating a natural phenomenon, but they are frequently unaware of it. The difficulty of knowing whether a god is behind an environmental event is emphasized in the extraordinary variety of similes comparing human figures and actions, in the main narrative, to other phenomena in nature. We hear little about the actual elements and weather conditions in the main narrative, and instances of pathetic fallacy are few. Wild fauna of all kinds share the elemental and meteorological world of the heroes, too, but like weather and the elements, preponderate in similes.

6 Changing interpretations of the *Iliad*

The most influential interpretation of the *Iliad* in modern times, Simone Weil's extraordinary essay '*L'Iliade* ou le poème de la force', '*The Iliad*, or The Poem of Force', was written as war broke out in 1939 and first published in 1940. I am in complete agreement with her identification of physical compulsion and violence and their tragic consequences as the central subject-matter of the epic poem. One reason why Weil's essay in hindsight seems so significant is that her account of the annihilation of Troy seems almost eerily to have anticipated the genocides and wholesale destruction of entire cities by both conventional and nuclear bombs which, when she was writing, the humans waging World War II were about to inflict on themselves and on the other organisms with which they share Planet Earth. But another reason for her essay's importance is that it theorised and came to represent the new revulsion that had first appeared at the dawn of the 20th century against the epic's celebration of martial violence. It was the carnage of the Boer War and especially in the Western Front trenches which led to the warriors of the *Iliad* being reassessed and dislodged from their plinths as exemplars of manly heroism.

More recently, it took the rise of feminism in both scholarship and public culture for the plight of the epic's women, locked in the brutal patriarchal system of commodity exchange it depicts, to receive the gender-sensitive readings they deserved. In the 21st century, at the same time as the idea of the 'Anthropocene' has made a mark on the public imagination, and some geologists are dating its inception to the Bronze Age, creative artists have just begun to respond to the sense of excessive consumption and ensuing apocalypse that underlies the *Iliad*. But, with a few notable exceptions,[31] scholarship has lagged behind. Our new awareness of the urgency of the global ecological crisis facing us makes it now a pressing obligation to reassess the Homeric warriors' rapacity towards their natural environment.

During the last few decades, there have been new initiatives in ecological thinking about human literary culture, and these initiatives are beginning to be acknowledged and implemented by classicists as well. In a forthcoming monograph I fuse these approaches with both a more old-fashioned aesthetic appreciation and interest in the relations between the humans performing and profiting from the labour required by the mode of production in any human society.[32] This reveals the *Iliad*'s absolute erasure of mining and transporting ore to smithies, and meagre emphasis on hard domestic or agricultural drudgery. The bifurcated approach, blending

31 See especially Schliephake 2017 and 2020; König 2022.

32 Hall 2025.

ecological thinking with Marxist interest in human modes of production and the labour they entailed, suggests questions ask about the *Iliad*'s 'political ecology' and 'environmental unconscious', and the methods used to try to answer them. This project is the basis for my forthcoming monograph, *The Iliad, Poem of the Anthropocene* (Yale University Press 2025).

This article argues that the *Iliad* can help us fight back against this dire new stage in the history of humanity. A green reading shows that the seeds of environmental catastrophe were already sown by warfare millennia ago: on many occasions, "the antinomies that structure the modern sense of nature (nature and culture, nature and art) seem easily traced to Greek origin".[33] This foundational text in the culture of the world can be instrumentalised in our attempt not only to prevent World War III but to rescue our planet and all the living organisms we share it with from disaster.

7 Excessive Consumption in the *Iliad*

The sheer volume of timber that the *Iliad* assumes was expended on the Trojan War — for ships, arms and fortifications, fires, cooking, funeral pyres — is breathtaking and in mediated aesthetic form is related to the real-world deforestation of the eastern Mediterranean in the same historical period. Mount Ida in particular is regarded as a source of 'limitless' wood. The importance of wood to the economy of the Bronze and Iron Ages is spectacularly revealed in the Iliad's many similes comparing warriors felled on the battlefield with trees being chopped down, and warriors successful in battle with loggers. But humans are also compared with natural events, such as wildfires and rivers in flood, that threaten entire forests. In the *Iliad*, trees may be magnificent, but their purpose is to be exploited by human beings. Tree-felling and carpentry in the poem have long been read by scholars as symbolizing man's commendable shaping of nature into civilization, but their poetic presentation can equally be interpreted as proleptically visualizing the deforestation that has always gone in tandem with man's destruction of his environment.

Although there are occasional nostalgic glimpses of a pastoral life when shepherds tended their animals in the mountains, forests were ruthlessly destroyed throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages, on plains, in valleys and on mountains, to make way for cereal crops and pasturing of livestock. The *Iliad* portrays farmers as desperately vulnerable to elemental and meteorological phenomena, while celebrating

33 Holmes 2017, xi.

over-consumption in the form of the supererogatory quantities of domesticated animals, especially cattle, devoured by Achaeans and Trojans alike. The world of the similes also portrays chaotic complicated interactions, involving metal tools and weapons, between humans, trees and domesticated livestock as well as creatures of the wild. Armed humans and animals are both hunters and hunted in a frenzied dialectic. The terms of the comparison shift constantly, creating confusion as to the precise significance of humanity in relation to the animals it domesticates: are all humans like animals, or does inferior social class make a human like an animal under the power of its pack, flock or herd leader? The permutations are seemingly (almost) infinite: the unruly world of Homeric analogy can never make up its mind.

Dogs disrupt the boundary between feral and tame animals, subservient to and cooperating with humans as guard-dogs and hunting hounds, but also ranging wild across the landscape to scavenge, an ever-present threat to human corpses. Disruption to fixed conceptual and ideological categories is also caused when the effect of the poem's customary idiom of infinitude is punctured by a sudden observation that sounds more appropriate to Hesiod's authorial persona; on these rare occasions, we hear a poetic voice better suited to a struggling peasant farmer than to one of Homer's wealthy men who sacrifice many hecatombs and pay 'infinite' bride-prices and ransoms from their unbelievably enormous flocks and herds. Thetis sounds more like a Boeotian farmer's wife than a goddess when we hear that she had given Achilles windproof cloaks before he left for windy Troy (16.224). A simile imagines two indigent farmers fighting over a tiny patch of land (12.421–423). Another visualizes a poverty-stricken woman weighing the wool she must spin 'to earn a meagre wage for her children' (12.433–435). Pandarus left his horses at home because he knew fodder would be in short supply at Troy (5.202–203). Hector is aware that war entails lavish consumption of capital (18.288–292). Agamemnon knows that the timber of the ships at Troy has begun to rot irretrievably (2.134–135).

Woodland was cleared at an appalling rate to supply the fires for the vats in which crude ore was smelted and for the anvils on which bronze weapons and iron tools were crafted by smiths. But 'work' in the *Iliad* primarily means exertion on the battlefield. The poem, while revelling in hyperbolic accounts of the consumption, feel, appearance and sound of fabulous artefacts and bronze weapons, erases all sign of the vast human labour required to get workable bronze, iron, gold and tin as far as the smithy. There are nearly 450 instances of words related to or compounded with 'bronze' in the *Iliad*. No wonder an ancient tradition arose that Homer had himself been blinded by the bronze arms and armour worn by the resurrected Achilles at his tomb. The poem seems overwhelmingly to celebrate the glare of bronze on the battlefield and its deadly consequences, but on one occasion the poet acknowledges that the sight would distress any but the most hard-hearted

of witnesses (13.343–344), as the hard labour and extractive practices it would have necessitated must surely distress us today.

The greatest metal artefact in the *Iliad* is the new shield Hephaestus makes for Achilles, which depicts cosmic entities such as the sun and stars and Ocean running around its circumference. Humans are depicted in two communities, one at peace and one at war. Although the peaceful community has been celebrated as an ideal both in and beyond the Academy ever since World War II, and read as Homer's humanist vision of the desirability of peace, the shield can equally be interpreted as containing terrifying details even within the apparently peaceful ritual, civic and agricultural scenes. These imply that, from a timeless cosmic perspective, human existence even inside supposedly 'civilised' society is frighteningly precarious, unstable, dangerous and unfair, or, as Thomas Hobbes described life *outside* society, 'poor, nasty, brutish, and short'.[34] A reading inspired by environmentalist Aldo Leopard suggests that we focus, rather, on the image of the circular Ocean as a symbol of the sort of sustainable and mutually beneficial relationship with nature that humans should be evolving.

Book 21 of the *Iliad* portrays the culmination of Achilles' wrath in his fight with the River Scamander, and an elemental confrontation in the conflict between Scamander and Hephaestus' fire. We witness cataclysmic flood and conflagration, the wholesale destruction of life — botanical and zoological as well as human — in scenes of aesthetically brilliant but nightmarish elemental mayhem unparalleled in the rest of the poem; they offer a vision of what the world might have become if Hera had not acted to stop this elemental aquatic apocalypse, merely in order to save Achilles to fight another day. Images of clogged rivers, trees and soil torn from riverbanks, dying humans and other fauna, expanses of water on fire and winds driving fire across flatlands, consuming everything in its path, are terrifyingly suggestive of the scenes of natural and manmade disaster that confront us on news channels today. Achilles directly causes 'natural' catastrophe by his careless assault on the River; in the same book, we are offered that unique and environmentally prescient simile where a gardener's thoughtless interference in nature, by attempting to divert a stream in an orchard, produces unexpected and far from welcome results (21.258–264, see section 5 above).

34 Hobbes 1651, 13.9.76.

8 Fighting back: The *Iliad* as poem *for* the anthropocene

Planet Earth has existed for 4.5 billion years and life for about 3.5 billion. Modern hominids appeared only 500,000 years ago, but people as we know them only emerged about 70,000 years before our era. The *Iliad* shows that the seeds of environmental catastrophe were already sown by warfare at the dawn of civilisation less than ten thousand years ago. Reading the *Iliad* ecologically gives us a new interpretation to add to the previous shifts in its meaning and repurposing across time. But my objective is also to encourage the epic's readers to action in our current battle for the survival of our planet's ecosystems. We need Achilles to go green and make do with just one tripod hereafter.

Marlene Sokolon has argued that we can repurpose the *Iliad* for our turbulent times by reinterpreting it as an early example of protest poetry. We can leverage Achilles' "challenge to authority, anger at injustice, and confrontation with the fragility of the human condition". The *Iliad* "provides insights into why human beings protest, connects political poetry to philosophic questions, and highlights the human being as a perennial protester who must face the inevitable choice of safety or perilous political action".[35] Emily Katz Anhalt, similarly, believes that retelling the story of Achilles' rage can help us to "see the costs of rage and violent revenge and to cultivate more constructive ways of interacting".[36] Sokolon and Katz are not thinking specifically about protesting against the failure of our rulers and industrialists to address continuing human depredation on the environment, but their points are well taken.

The wars in Ukraine and the Middle East have retarded international cooperative initiatives aimed at reversing climate change. They have also already caused many thousands of deaths. Journalists and poets have inevitably begun to draw parallels with the tragic conflict portrayed in the greatest classical war poem, the Homeric *Iliad*. As we watch the bombardment of Ukrainian and Palestinian cities and the terror of refugee women and children, the tears of the widowed Andromache in the *Iliad* feel to many of us more agonisingly relevant than at any time since World War II.

The poem not only foresees innumerable fatalities and the annihilation of Trojan civilisation. It also predicts the total depopulation of what is now north-western Turkey and describes aggressive and irreversible Bronze-Age deforestation to provide

35 Sokolon 2008, 49.

36 Katz Anhalt 2017, 3.

the vast amounts of timber and metal needed to support both naval and land militias and to clear land for arable farming and livestock grazing, cooking and sacrifice. There has always been cavalier abuse of natural resources by humans in conflict.[37] Within a few weeks, the Russian invasion destroyed substantial parts of the Ukrainian infrastructure and poisoned its rivers and forests. But it is also causing irreversible damage to the global environment.

The terrible immediacy of the new wars has pushed the environmental crisis disastrously much further down humanity's list of priorities. But the conflicts are also directly and immeasurably exacerbating pollution. The *Washington Post* reports on the 'untold volumes of toxins and pollutants' recently released into the atmosphere.[38] Cluster bombs and thermobaric rockets ignite massive clouds of poisonous aerosols. Wildfire risk and biodiversity loss will blight Ukraine for generations. But they will also blight the world, bringing food crises, and threats of radiation from damaged nuclear plants reaching across eastern Europe and poisoning the Baltic, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. The war has sent oil and gas prices soaring, incentivising searches for new natural sources. Profit-driven fuel providers are cynically using the war as an excuse to make a high-carbon future unavoidable.

To end, however, on a cautiously optimistic note: the trees of Mount Ida have recently been protected by protestors — at least temporarily — from devastation by the contemporary mining industry. Part of the area was declared to be a national park in 1993, but the Turkish state subsequently sold land and mining rights for an enormous sum to the Canadian mining company Alamos Gold Inc. The proposed mining project is just twenty kilometres from Troy. In 2017 the Turkish project partner, Doğu Biga, began felling thousands of trees and removing the entire soil down to the bare rock. Around 200,000 trees were cut down. Cyanides began to be used for gold extraction, putting drinking water supplies at risk.[39]

But the extent of the tree clearance and destruction of natural environments were detected by satellites and drones. Images were collected by a Turkish environmental organisation, and a large protest camp was set up in 2019. Operations were successfully stalled, and the Turkish government removed Alamos' mining licences. The company has responded by registering a claim against the Republic of Turkey with the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes. It was reported in 2021 that the two of its subsidiaries directly involved, Alamos Gold Holdings Coöperatie U.A., and Alamos Gold Holdings B.V. "will file an investment treaty claim against the Republic of Turkey for expropriation and unfair and inequitable

37 Hughes 2014.

38 Nirappil, Duplain, Timsit and Villegas 2022.

39 Davies 2019; Gottschlich 2019.

treatment, among other things, with respect to their Turkish gold mining project. The claim will be filed under the Netherlands Turkey Bilateral Investment Treaty (the "Treaty"), and is expected to exceed $1 billion, representing the value of the Company's Turkish assets".[40]

People's action can work. It has, for the time being, saved some of the last remaining forests of Mount Ida, where the wood, regardless of what Homer's heroes say, never has been infinite. By accessing the *Iliad*'s ecological unconscious, now more than three millennia old, we can, as humans, enrich our struggle to ensure a better future. The *Iliad* is not only the poem *of* the Anthropocene; it has the potential truly to become the poem *for* the Anthropocene.

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Bernhard Zimmermann

On the Reception of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* in German-Language Philology and Literature

Abstract: One hundred and fifty years ago, Friedrich Nietzsche's libellus "The Birth of Tragedy" was published, provoking philology and inspiring literature. The paper discusses the reception of Nietzsche's study with some significant examples from philology and literature.

Keywords: classical languages, educational institution, Friedrich Nietzsche, philology, Wilamowitz-Moellendorff

The young philologist from Basel gave his 1872 work the programmatic title *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik*, with the intention of answering a controversial question that has been discussed *in extenso* since Aristotle's *Poetics*: the origin of tragedy.[1] Full of self-confidence, Nietzsche describes his book in a letter to Friedrich Ritschl (1806–1876) on January 30, 1872 as "hopeful for our science of antiquity, hopeful for German nature, even if a number of individuals perish from it".[2] As this letter makes clear, Nietzsche's agenda was much greater than an advance in philological or historical knowledge. His intention, rather, was to leave behind the closed world of philology, and he used public lectures to address this larger audience "on the future of our educational institutions", hoping to attract and appeal to a younger generation of philologists. Nietzsche was well aware of the provocative character of the *Birth of Tragedy*: it is "after all, something more like a manifesto that demands a loud response".[3]

And indeed, this *libellus*, with its adoption of aesthetic categories along the lines of Schopenhauer and Wagner, was a provocation to the philological world. With its — in modern terms — interdisciplinary approach, involving anthropological and

Translated by Rachel Bruzzone

1 Cf. Lanfester 1994 and Schmidt 2012.

2 "Hoffnungsvoll für unsere Alterthumswissenschaft, hoffnungsvoll für das deutsche Wesen, wenn auch eine Anzahl Individuen daran zu Grunde gehen"; in: Colli/Montanari 2003, 281–282.

3 "Doch etwas von der Art eines Manifestes und fordert doch am wenigsten zum Schweigen auf".

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religious considerations, it represented an enormous challenge. Its departure from convention was heightened by the absence of any scholarly apparatus and by the fact that it dispenses with traditional methods of philological analysis, alongside secondary literature. In a letter to his friend Erwin Rohde (1845–1898) of March 15, 1872,[4] as in the letter to Ritschl, Nietzsche emphasizes his pedagogical intent, the "idea of an educational institution" ("Bildungsanstaltgedanken"), which he pursues with his writing. In language with religious implications, he states that an exclusive community has already formed throughout Europe, from Moscow to Florence — "only from the brave philologists I hear nothing – dull – dull – Silent! Silent! as they say in translations of Shakespeare".[5]

But the reaction of the philological guild was not long in coming. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, also an alumnus of Schulpforta, tore apart Nietzsche's writing mid-1872 in his pamphlet *Zukunftsphilologie*! *eine erwiderung auf Friedrich Nietzsches „geburt der tragödie*". Wilamowitz was less concerned with producing a scholarly review than with objecting to the didactic intent of the work. Contesting Nietzsche's theses, he emphasizes that the genuine Greek being ("Wesen") is not characterized by an "eccentric, barrier-breaking orgiastic mysticism", but by a "striving for measure in all things". Wilamowitz concludes his remarks with a sneering attack on the community Nietzsche wants to create with *The Birth of Tragedy*: "let him gather tigers and panthers to his knees, but not Germany's philological youth, who, in the asceticism of self-denying labor, should learn to always seek truth alone, to free their judgement by willing surrender, so that classical antiquity may grant only to them that imperishable favor that the muses promise, and in this fullness and purity, classical antiquity alone can grant the content in her breast and the form in her spirit".[6]

The formulation that the Greek spirit is characterized by a "striving for the measure in all things" gestures toward the source of Wilamowitz' polemic: the aesthetics and understanding of Greece of Winckelmann and of Weimar Classicism, which found its theoretical expression in Winckelmann's thoughts on the imitation of Greek works in painting and pictorial art. Similar ideas about poetic

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4 In: Colli/Montanari 2003, 296–297.

5 "Nur von den wackeren Philologen höre ich nichts – stumpf – dumpf – Mum! Mum! wie es in den Shakespeareübersetzungen heißt".

6 In: Gründer 1969, 55: "sammle er tiger und panther zu seinen knieen, aber nicht Deutschlands philologische jugend, die in der askese selbstverläugnender arbeit lernen soll, überall allein die wahrheit zu suchen, durch williges ergeben ihr urteil zu befreien, auf dass ihr das classische altertum jenes einzig unvergängliche gewähre, welches die gunst der Musen verheisst, und in dieser fülle und reinheit allein das classische altertum gewähren kann den gehalt in ihrem busen und die form in ihrem geist".

expression are evident in Goethe's *Iphigenia in Tauris*. Such theories derive from Thucydides' Periclean *Epitaphios* (II 40, 1): "We love the beautiful with moderation and simplicity, and wisdom without softness" (φιλοκαλοῦμέν τε γὰρ μετ' εὐτελείας καὶ φιλοσοφοῦμεν ἄνευ μαλακίας), says Thucydides. Winckelmann responds in an unmistakably Stoic style: "The general distinguishing mark of the Greek masterpieces is, ultimately, a noble simplicity, and a quiet grandeur, both in their position and in their expression. Just as the depth of the sea always remains calm, no matter how furious the surface, so the expression in the figures of the Greeks, despite all passions, shows a great and composed soul".[7]

Thirty years later, Wilamowitz took another swipe at Nietzsche. The school reform of the Prussian Gymnasium in 1900 pushed back against the previously untrammeled dominance of the classical languages Greek and Latin in the curriculum of the Gymnasium, and ended the monopoly of sole admission to studies from the humanistic Gymnasium. Traditional humanistic education came under pressure. In 1901, Wilamowitz reacted to the reform with an educational policy paper, *Der griechische Unterricht auf dem Gymnasium* (*The Greek Lessons at the Grammar School*), which contains a great deal of remarkable information on the reformation of the study of Greek. Classroom hours dedicated to the language were reduced, and the relationship between language lessons and reading and on the canon of school authors changed, but, above all, the curriculum took on a decidedly anti-modernist tenor. With regard to the reading of philosophical texts in Greek, he writes: "Now, however, we see many young people going astray and some perishing because they are enraptured by a dangerous philosophy or semi-philosophy, and now also by Nietzsche. The situation is better abroad". And a little later, while elucidating the grammar school reading canon, he writes: "Plato in Greek, Goethe in German, Paul in religious education: these three heartfelt heralds, working together, will strengthen our sons' souls with a spirit that will make them immune to the contagions of the worst poisons of the present".[8]

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7 Winckelmann 1995, 20: "Das allgemeine vorzügliche Kennzeichen der griechischen Meisterstücke ist endlich eine edle Einfalt, und eine stille Größe, sowohl in ihrer Stellung als im Ausdrucke. So wie die Tiefe des Meeres allezeit ruhig bleibt, die Oberfläche mag noch so wüten, ebenso zeiget der Ausdruck in den Figuren der Griechen bei allen Leidenschaften eine große und gesetzte Seele".

8 Wilamowitz 1995, 83: "Nun sehen wir aber zahlreiche Jünglinge in Verirrungen geraten und manchen zu Grunde gehen, weil sie von einer gefährlichen Philosophie oder Halbphilosophie, jetzt von Nietzsche, berückt werden. Das ist im Auslande besser. … Platon im griechischen, Goethe im deutschen, Paulus im Religionsunterrichte, diese drei Herzenskündiger zusammen wirkend werden unseren Söhnen die Seele mit einem Geiste stärken, der sie gegen die Ansteckungen durch die schlimmsten Gifte der Gegenwart immun macht".

In his *Introduction to Attic Tragedy* (*Einleitung in die griechische Tragödie*) which precedes the commentary to Euripides' *Herakles*, revised several times in the years after 1889, Wilamowitz poses the question "What is Attic tragedy?". A concise definition of the genre can be regarded as another, albeit late, answer to Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*: "An Attic tragedy is a self-contained heroic saga, poetically arranged in a sublime style for performance by an Attic civic chorus and two or three actors, and intended to be performed as part of the public worship in the sanctuary of Dionysus".[9] And in the next sentence he adds: "This is without a doubt a definition with which aesthetic theory can do nothing". Philology, as a part of the study of antiquity, should only be concerned with clarifying the facts, what is provable, reality.

Wilamowitz clearly saw that the educational value that had been attached to Greek lessons throughout the 19th century could no longer be saved. With his educational reform after 1809, Wilhelm von Humboldt had created an institutional anchor for the teaching of the classical languages at the humanistic Gymnasium and at universities on the basis of the image of Greece that had been developed in Wieland's, Goethe's and Schiller's Weimar. The study of antiquity, especially works of Greek literature, was considered to serve not only the acquisition of knowledge, but also to a great extent the development of the personality. Education in the broadest sense was thought to take place through study; philology thus becomes in a quasi-religious exaltation a service to humanity. Friedrich August Wolf summarizes the program succinctly when he writes: "Studia humanitatis ... encompass everything by which purely human education and the elevation of all mental and emotional powers to a beautiful harmony of the inner and outer man is promoted".[10]

As a consequence of this view, philology becomes pedagogy. Whoever masters philological methods, especially those of textual criticism, is also thus regarded as broadly intellectually engaged. The narrowing of Humboldt's broad educational ideal is already evident in a practical curricular implementation a few years later, which Johann Wilhelm Süvern (1775–1829) undertook for the Prussian grammar schools between 1816 and 1819. Language drill came to the fore, as the pupils had

9 Wilamowitz 1959, 108: "Eine attische Tragödie ist ein in sich abgeschlossenes Stück der Heldensage, poetisch bearbeitet in erhabenem Stile für die Darstellung durch einen attischen Bürgerchor und zwei bis drei Schauspieler, und bestimmt als Teil des öffentlichen Gottesdienstes im Heiligtum des Dionysos aufgeführt zu werden. Das ist ohne Zweifel eine Definition, mit welcher die ästhetische Theorie so nichts anfangen kann".

10 Wolf 1807, 45: "Studia humanitatis ... umfassen alles, wodurch rein menschliche Bildung und Erhöhung aller Geistes- und Gemütskräfte zu einer schönen Harmonie des inneren und äußeren Menschen befördert wird".

to translate Greek authors into Latin. The lion's share of grammar school instruction was in Latin and Greek, and only the "Abitur" at the Gymnasium, which was thus always a humanistic one, offered access to university studies and served as a means of social selection.

Examination of Wilamowitz' reaction to Nietzsche's writing against this background makes clear the discourse on educational policy in which they both took part. Both Nietzsche and Wilamowitz aim to reach the youth more generally, not simply the academic world. Wilamowitz sees classical languages and texts as a bulwark against the seductions of modernity. Those who occupy themselves thoroughly and sacrificially, almost ascetically, with the classics are immune to all the temptations of the present, he believes, because they have acquired a clear mind and, in accordance with the ideal of the Greek aristocratic σωφροσύνη (*sophrosýne*), the conduct of life based on rational insight, are at rest within themselves. Nietzsche contrasts this conception of the bright, beautiful and immaculate Greece with an image of Greece that is characterized by the desire for the ugly, by the will "to pessimism, to the tragic myth, to the image of everything terrible, evil, mysterious, destructive, fatal, at the bottom of existence".[11] Nietzsche replaces philology with psychology and anthropology. Both, however, are not only concerned with education, but with an attitude toward life that grows out of philology. Nietzsche wants to gather around himself a community of initiates, of Dionysus mystics. When Wilamowitz employs Christian ideology in his pamphlet against Nietzsche, speaking of the need for the youth to strive for truth "in the asceticism of self-denying labor", philology becomes a monkish existence of a community of truth-seekers. Both men's claims are absolutist. Both view philology as demanding the whole person. Nietzsche and Wilamowitz' view of Greek literature cannot deny its roots in antiquity. Wilamowitz is, of course, in the tradition of Weimar Classicism: von Humboldt's educational reform and 19th century philology, as a leading science, was in constant dialogue with popular literature of the time, especially at the beginning of the century. Goethe and Schiller engaged in lively intellectual exchange with the philologists of the era such as Friedrich August Wolf and Gottfried Hermann. The stance that the study of Greek literature leads to measure and proportion is shaped by the Aristotelian concept of μεσότης (*mesótes*), with balance as the only thing worth striving for, and by the popular philosophical concept of σωφροσύνη (*sophrosýne*). Nietzsche, on the other hand, transfers the rhetorical concept of the dithyramb, a genre with precursors in Attic comedy and Plato, and which Horace goes on to develop further in his Pindar Ode (IV 2) to

11 Colli/Montanari 1988, 16: "zum Pessimismus, zum tragischen Mythus, zum Bilde alles Furchtbaren, Bösen, Räthselhaften, Vernichtenden, Verhängnisvollen, auf dem Grunde des Daseins".

describe an unbridled poetic creative power, into a comprehensive anthropological pattern of explanation that contrasts the bright Greece with a dark Greece determined by irrationality.[12]

The consequences of Wilamowitz' assault on Nietzsche's *Libellus* are well known.[13] Nietzsche's ideas exerted extraordinary influence both inside and outside academia. German-speaking classical studies, however, remained long under the spell of Wilamowitz' criticism. The world of philology, influenced by Wilamowitz' assault, pointedly ignored Nietsche's *Libellus* (or read it but feigned otherwise). The impact of *The Birth of Tragedy* on scholarship, by contrast, is too great to be discussed in this context. Although Nietzsche's ideas were adopted and developed further by subsequent scholars, this was usually done without mentioning his name. In the 20th century, however, and especially in the period after the Second World War, there was a revival of interest in Nietzsche's writing in classical philology — an interest fed above all by problems and questions that are either central to Nietzsche's writing or are addressed in passing. Of particular note are the preoccupation with the religious dimensions of Greek culture and literature and with its non-Greek, Eastern origins. Drama as a multimedia event, with music and dance as essential components, has also come to the fore in recent years.

Critical examination of the *Birth of Tragedy* made its core ideas accessible to philological research. This began with Nietzsche's friend Erwin Rohde, who in his book *Psyche, Seelencult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen* (Freiburg ²1898) cannot deny his dependence on Nietzsche, although he does not mention him. In poetic diction reminiscent of Nietzsche, Rohde describes the nocturnal celebration of the Thracian cult of Dionysus, in which he sees a kind of collective ecstasy ("a kind of mania, a tremendous overexcitement of its essence"), which ends in "an overexcitement of sensation up to visionary states".[14] This line of reception leads to the work of Jane Ellen Harrison, for whom destruction, rooted in the unconscious, is a central element of Dionysian religion. Subsequent scholarship has included that of Walter F. Otto, as well as Eric R. Dodds. In his groundbreaking work *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Dodds is clearly indebted to Nietzsche, although he does not quote him, either. In his autobiography, however, he reports that in his youth he devoured Nietzsche with enthusiasm.

Philology, especially German-language philology, remains fascinated by the search for origins and studiously conceals the footsteps in which it stands. Even a

12 Cf. Zimmermann 2010.

13 Cf. von Reibnitz 1992, 2; Silk/Sterne 1981, 157–225.

14 Rohde 1898, 27–28.

philologist and scholar of religion of the stature of Walter Burkert changes registers when he talks about the origins of tragedy (*Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual*, 1966), and — much like Rohde — is not afraid to let a scene of sacrifice in ancient times arise before our inner eye:[15]

"The τραγῳδοί were originally a troupe of masked men who had to perform with lamentation, song, and costume, and at the end they were allowed feast on goat. It is possible that the custom was at home in Icaria, where seriousness and "satyr-like" fun may have mingled in a curious way. Rudiments of an agon, competition between several groups, could arise at an early date. The shift to a high level of literature, and the adaption of the elements of heroic myth remains, of course, a unique achievement. Nevertheless, it is based on pre-existing elements: the use of masks, song and dance at the θυμέλη, lamentation, the music of the flute, and the name τραγῳδία. All of these combined in the basic situation of sacrifice: a man face to face with death".

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15 Burkert 2007, 26.

Therese Fuhrer

On the Concept of 'Slow Reading' in Latin Language and Literature

Abstract: The techniques of so-called 'slow reading' or 'deep reading' are taught in Classical Philology as an academic discipline in an exemplary manner. This is necessary not only because we lack a pragmatic approach when dealing with so-called 'dead' languages, but also because the surviving texts are for the most part of an extremely high aesthetic and intellectual standard. The deliberate reduction of reading speed was declared by Nietzsche to be an indispensable prerequisite of a good philologist, and recently there has been an increased interest in this concept, often with reference to Nietzsche. In what follows, I argue that teaching and research in the field of Latin language and literature are neither conceivable nor justifiable without traditional training in the technique of close and thus slow reading.

Keywords: science of reading, 'dead languages', Friedrich Nietzsche, grammar, rhetoric, hermeneutics

1 Preliminary remarks

The process of slow reading has always been familiar to classical philologists, as reading Greek and Latin literature requires precise and thus time-consuming linguistic and literary analysis. This is necessary not only because we do not have pragmatic access, since Greek and Latin are so-called 'dead' languages, but also because in most cases the preserved texts have pronounced aesthetic, artistic and intellectual ambitions. Two fundamental complications usually arise when we want to read, understand and interpret texts of classical Greek and Latin authors: (1) We have to cope with the difficulty of highly complex languages, with texts that we usually cannot read fluently but which we effectively have to translate into our own language first — apart from the fact that the transmission of the texts often makes basic understanding difficult. (2) The mode of expression and the subject matter are pre-modern; the interpretation of the content of our texts is therefore far more difficult and controversial than in modern literatures.

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The question of whether classical ancient languages and literatures should continue to be the subject of teaching and research at schools and universities will certainly be answered positively by all or most classicists. Current educational policies that limit the importance and scope of the Classics are countered by representatives of the discipline with a wide range of arguments, which I will only briefly outline here: (1) We deal with a corpus of highly reflective, aesthetically excellent literature, which remains fundamental and indispensable for the (self-)understanding of Western culture. However, this is true regardless of whether we read the texts in the original — which is still our professional goal. (2) Dealing with language, especially syntax, and translating texts into one's own language develops linguistic competence and analytical and logical thinking. (3) Learning ancient languages and their grammar facilitates access to many modern languages. Arguments (2) and (3) are controversial and empirically falsifiable.[1]

The question remains of whether or why it is worth the great effort involved in learning the ancient languages in order to be able to read the texts in the original and to understand them adequately. To answer the question, I would like to refer to the techniques and skills of slow reading that we constantly reflect upon and practice professionally in Greek and Latin studies. While reading comprehension in modern spoken languages is based on the fact that the grammatical dissection of sentences is automatic and supported by pragmatic and nonverbal communication, the mental processes of syntactic analysis operate differently when we read texts written in 'dead' languages. These are no longer exposed to the processes of grammaticalization of idioms newly formed in the active use of language;[2] they are languages that are read (spoken only for practice or fun). I thus prefer the term 'reflective' instead of 'dead' languages.

This specific feature of ancient languages requires cultural techniques of reading, understanding and translating texts, which our disciplines have developed and refined in a long tradition of research and teaching to a greater extent than other (pre-)modern philologies. So, I am not primarily concerned here with the high quality of the texts (which other literatures also claim for themselves), but with the reading culture of linguistically and aesthetically sophisticated literature:[3] the method

1 For the discussion, see Bracke/Bradshaw 2020; Beyer/Liebsch/Kipf 2019.

2 On the phenomenon, cf. Fruyt 2011, 661f., who also discusses the processes of forming new lexemes through 'agglutination', lexicalization and 'reanalysis', which are also to be considered in ancient Latin — albeit not as diachronic phenomena.

3 See Graf 2015, 190: "Complex texts usually require a high degree of attention to their linguistic and formal form, the coherence of the text as well as an interested openness to the thematized contents, i.e. a slow, thorough, analyzing or interpreting reading, in some cases a philologically precise text-critical procedure" (my translation).

of slow, thorough, analytical or interpretative reading and the precise textual and literary criticism that has a long tradition in classical philology.

I will first define the concept of 'slow reading' with reference to current trends and discussions about the phenomenon (section 2), then situate it in the tradition of (pre-)modern literary criticism, focusing on Friedrich Nietzsche's reflections on the role of reading in philology (section 3). Finally, using selected phenomena of the Latin language and their relevance in literary texts, I will try to show that the importance of slow reading can also be justified with arguments from research on Latin grammar and syntax (section 4).

2 Definitions of slow reading

'Slow reading' can be defined as conscious and intensive reading, especially of literary works[4] In contrast to the — probably more familiar — concept of 'close reading' established in literary criticism since the advent of New Criticism, which can mean the intensive reading of a specific text or text section or merely text-immanent interpretation, the concept of 'slow reading' focuses on the reading tempo and thus sets itself apart from the techniques of 'speed reading'. The concept of slow reading should be understood without the concentration or limitation to text-immanent analysis implied by the term 'close'.[5]

The term 'slow reading' is the subject of popular science discussion and research on several levels. In addition to arguments from cognitive science, approaches from the psychology of learning or speech therapy, where it has proved useful as a way of treating dyslexia,[6] there are the interests of philologists and readers of literature of all genres.[7] Slow reading is contrasted with 'skimming' techniques and praised

4 For the current discussion in research on slow reading, see Newkirk 2011; Mikics 2013; Lönnroth 2017; Mohrhard 2018.

5 On the difference between 'close' and 'slow reading', see Culler 2010; Mohrhard 2018, 59–68. See also Hallet 2010 on the contrast between 'close' and 'wide reading'.

6 See Newkirk 2011 and the book review by Kelly Gallagher (author of *Readicide: How Schools Are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It*): Newkirk's research is welcome "at a time when skimming and click-and-go reading have become the norm for our students" (https://www.heinemann.com/products/e03731.aspx, last visit June 13th, 2024).

7 A vehement advocate of the "slow tempo of literature" is Lindsay Waters, Executive Editor for the Humanities, Emeritus, at Harvard University Press. See also Johan Schloemann, "Lernt gut lesen, das heißt langsam", in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung* no. 236, Oktober 14, 2015; Watkins 1990: "What, then, is philology? Let me conclude with the definition of philology that my teacher Roman Jakobson gave (who got it from his teacher, who got it from his): 'Philology is the art of reading slowly'."

because it helps the reader to "understand the text better, to feel greater enthusiasm in the reception of the reading and to build up a long-lasting and intensive relationship with the text and the author".[8] Even without scientific legitimacy, the concept of slow reading is often promoted in the overall context of the 'slow movement' as a therapeutic tool in stressful everyday and environmental situations.[9]

3 On the history of the concept of slow reading: Friedrich Nietzsche's appeal to learn to read

The method and reading practices of close and thorough analysis and the hermeneutical reflections on it also have a historical dimension. They are documented for the exegesis of religious or secularly defined canonical texts in various pre-modern (Persian-Zoroastrian, Jewish-Rabbinic, early Christian, pagan-classical) and modern cultures — one may think of the upswing and boom of hermeneutics in Europe since the 17th century —, primarily with the aim of opening texts to ever new 'readings' in the sense of 'interpretations'.[10] The 'time' and 'speed' factors in the process of reading and interpretation play a subordinate role in ancient or (pre-)modern hermeneutics. It is a commonplace of the *praefationes* of classical Greek and Latin literature that the author, having invested considerable time and energy in writing and being therefore able to promise quality, is entitled to demand similar time and effort from the reading or listening audience.[11] However, I am not concerned here with the forms and performances of (slow) reading described in ancient literature[12] but rather with the demands that the texts themselves make on their readers through the complexity of their linguistic structure and aesthetics, assuming that these texts require us modern readers to read slowly to satisfy those demands.

Before giving an illustrative example of this in the next section (4), I would like to offer some further reflections on the concept of slow reading, in line with the

8 The quotes are from Mohrhard 2018, 7 (my translation).

9 "With slow reading, we take our time" (https://slowreadingjoyce.wordpress.com/, last visit May 20th, 2024); "The power of slow reading in fast times: I am a slow reader, and that's a good thing" (https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2015/the-power-of-slow-reading-in-fast-times/, last visit May 20th, 2024).

10 See Hartmann 2015; Zetzel 2018, 121–157; Mohrhard 2018, 53–58.

11 Thus, for example, Lucr. 1.50–3; Phaedr. 3 prol. 1–16; Mart. 5.80; cf. also Plat. *Phdr*. 227b8. For the slowness in reading as a concept in teaching grammar, cf. Dion. Thrax, *Gramm.* 2 ("On reading").

12 On this topic, see the contributions in Johnson/Parker ^{2}2011; Gurd 2012.

appeals of Friedrich Nietzsche, himself a trained classical philologist and professionally engaged with the texts of Greek and Latin literature.

The German term *langsames Lesen*, translated as 'slow reading' in English editions, apparently goes back to Friedrich Nietzsche, sometimes paired with the (musical) term *lento*. The locus classicus is the "preface" to *Morgenröthe* (1886), where Nietzsche 'proclaims' in the last paragraph (§ 5):[13]

> Let us proclaim it, as if among ourselves, in so low a tone that all the world fails to hear it and us! Above all, however, let us say it slowly ... This preface is late, but not too late — what, after all, do five or six years matter? A book like this, a problem like this, is in no hurry; we both, I just as much as my book, we are friends of the *lento*. It is not for nothing that I have been a philologist, perhaps I am a philologist still, that is to say, a teacher of slow reading. I even come to write slowly. At present it is not only my habit, but even my taste — a perverted taste, maybe — to write nothing but what will drive to despair every one who is 'in a hurry'.[14]

> ... sagen wir es, wie es unter uns gesagt werden darf, so heimlich, daß alle Welt es überhört, daß alle Welt uns überhört! Vor allem sagen wir es langsam ... Diese Vorrede kommt spät, aber nicht zu spät, was liegt im Grunde an fünf, sechs Jahren? Ein solches Buch, ein solches Problem hat keine Eile; überdies sind wir beide Freunde des lento, ich ebensowohl als mein Buch. Man ist nicht umsonst Philologe gewesen, man ist es vielleicht noch, das will sagen, ein Lehrer des langsamen Lesens: — endlich schreibt man auch langsam. Jetzt gehört es nicht nur zu meinen Gewohnheiten, sondern auch zu meinem Geschmacke — einem boshaften Geschmacke vielleicht? — Nichts mehr zu schreiben, womit nicht jede Art Mensch, die „Eile hat", zur Verzweiflung gebracht wird.[15]

Nietzsche wrote these lines seven years after he had given up his professorship of classical philology in Basel (1869–1879), when he was travelling through Italy and other countries, two years before mental disorders interfered with his work.[16] The theme of *Morgenröthe*, written in the form of aphorisms in the early 1880s, is the analysis of human life and culture on the basis of a symptomatology which he describes in the preface as "work in the depths" (§ 1: "Arbeit der Tiefe"), himself being "a 'subterranean man' at work, one who tunnels and mines and undermines":[17] The aim is to question — to "undermine" — and reassess the commonly

13 Nietzsche added the preface in 1886 on the occasion of the new edition of *Morgenröthe*, which he wrote in 1880/81 and which had received little attention until then. See Schmidt 2015, 9.

14 Transl. Hollingdale 1997/[10]2007, 5 (Daybreak. Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality).

15 *KSA* 3, 17 (with Nietzsche's blockings).

16 See Schmidt 2015, 7–9. On the parallels between reading and travelling that Nietzsche often draws by using travel metaphors to describe the reading process, see Benne 2005, 158f.

17 *KSA* 3, 11: "In diesem Buche findet man einen 'Unterirdischen' an der Arbeit, einen Bohrenden, Grabenden, Untergrabenden. Man sieht ihn, vorausgesetzt, daß man Augen für solche Arbeit der Tiefe hat —, wie er langsam, besonnen, mit sanfter Unerbittlichkeit vorwärts kommt ...". See Schmidt 2015,

held trust in morality and religious ideas and, above all, to dismantle the "philology of Christianity".[18]

Slow reading is thus supposed to be an analytical, critical, even subversive form of reading. Nietzsche claims this ability for himself and his readings, and he sets out the result in his *Morgenröthe*. He sees himself also as the slow writer (§ 5: "I even come to write slowly"), placing himself on a par with the authors he has read and interpreted as a classical philologist. He is a 'teacher' in the sense that he wants to impart to his pupils the ability of slow reading, which he possesses as a reader of classical Greek and Latin texts.

When he asks his addressees to read carefully at the end of the preface, he is calling — with his sometimes almost unbearable self-confidence — for an engagement with *his own* text: "learn to read me well", the understanding of which depends on the reader being a "perfect reader and philologist" (§ 5).[19] Moreover, Nietzsche's ideas about what "slow reading" and "lento" can and should achieve are not reading instructions specifically for *Morgenröthe*, but generally for his books.[20] He demands an attitude and reading competence that he learned as a student in Bonn and Leipzig when studying ancient authors and texts, and which — at least in his first years as a professor of Classics — he will have taught his pupils at the Basel Gymnasium and his students at the university in the Classics.[21] His ideal reader should be a philologist who, in the tradition of Friedrich Ritschl, whose model student he was in Leipzig, thoroughly practices the 'statarian', cyclical (re-)reading of all his writings.[22] In

67f.: When Nietzsche speaks of "slow" progress, he does not mean the time it took him to write *Morgenröthe*, which took only 18 months; he then urged the publisher to publish it quickly.

18 *KSA* 3, 79 (§ 84): "Die Philologie des Christentums". On Nietzsche's confrontation with (Christian) morality and exegesis, see Schmidt 2015, 17–20 and 32–37; Bishop 2022, 253–258.

19 *KSA* 3, 17: "Meine geduldigen Freunde, dies Buch wünscht sich nur vollkommene Leser und Philologen: l e r n t mich gut lesen!"

20 See also *Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten* (*KSA* 1, 648f.): "Der Leser, von dem ich etwas erwarte, muß drei Eigenschaften haben: er muß ruhig sein und ohne Hast lesen, er muß nicht immer sich selbst und seine 'Bildung' dazwischen bringen ... Wenn der Leser dagegen, heftig erregt, sofort zur That emporspringt, wenn er vom Augenblick die Früchte pflücken will, die sich ganze Geschlechter kaum erkämpfen möchten, so müssen wir fürchten, daß er den Autor nicht verstanden hat." Cf. *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister*, *KSA* 2,1, 436 (§ 137): "Die schlechtesten Leser sind die, welche wie plündernde Soldaten verfahren: Sie nehmen sich Einiges, was sie brauchen können, heraus, beschmutzen und verwirren das Uebrige und lästern auf das Ganze." See Benne 2005, 153 and 203.

21 On Nietzsche's career as a student and professor of classical (Greek *and* Latin) philology, see Benne 2005, 20–26 and 46–68; Bishop 2022, 241–244.

22 Ritschl calls reading the most important activity of the philologist; see Benne 2005, 46–48; Bishop 2022, 239–243. Cf. Benne 2005, 157: "Sein idealer Leser soll ein guter Philologe sein, der

Nietzsche's words from *Ecce Homo*, his ideal is "a reader such as I deserve, one who reads me as the good old philologists read their Horace".[23]

With his image of the perfect reader, Nietzsche does not have the parochial, pernickety scholar in mind nor the concentration on words, the *Wortphilologie*, which he himself later satirically pilloried as a philology of "micrologists".[24] He constantly criticized the pedantry of the historical-critical method of classical philology and felt a growing unease about his discipline.[25] Nevertheless, in a certain sense he always remained a disciple of Ritschl's.[26] In his Basel lectures published as *Encyclopaedie der klass. Philologie* (1870/71), he muses on "the methods of reading", that we have to "read the same texts over and over again", and on "the method of understanding and assessing something that has been handed down to us", namely that one must "learn to read again".[27] He considers the "task of philology as a means of transfiguring one's existence and that of the rising generation".[28]

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unermüdlich die philologische, d.h. die statarische, zyklische Lektüre aller seiner Schriften praktiziert." On Ritschl's distinction between statarian and cursory reading, see ibid. 63f.

23 *Ecce Homo* (1888/9), ch. 5 (*KSA* 6, 305): "... ein Leser, wie ich ihn verdiene, der mich liest, wie gute alte Philologen ihren Horaz lasen." The chapter opens with the statement that his writings had not yet been understood by anyone, if anyone had noticed them at all. See Benne 2005, 157f.

24 See the quote from "Autobiographisches aus den Jahren 1868/69" at Güthenke 2022, 189 with n. 89: "narrow-hearted, frog-blooded micrologists" ("engherzige, froschblütige Mikrologen").

25 See Bishop 2022, 242–248. In a letter to Erwin Rohde in November 1868 (*KSB* 2, 344), he calls his professional colleagues "the swarming breed of philologists" and mocks "all the mole-like efforts, the full cheek-pouches and the blind eyes, the joy over the captured worm" ("das wimmelnde Philologengezücht ... das ganze Maulwurfstreiben, die vollen Backentaschen und die blinden Augen, die Freude ob des erbeuteten Wurms"). The translation is from Bishop 2022, 243.

26 On Ritschl's lasting influence on Nietzsche, see also Benne 2005, *passim*, esp. 22: "Der Irrtum, dem die Forschung bis heute unterliegt, besteht darin, der historisch-kritischen Kärrnerarbeit überhaupt jede Bedeutung für Nietzsche abzusprechen. Kaum jemand scheint erkannt zu haben, dass sich seine philologiekritischen Äußerungen in erster Linie gegen die Existenzform des Philologen, gegen den Berufsstand richten und nicht gegen die Wissenschaft als solche." Cf. Güthenke 2022, 126 who juxtaposes the "overspecialized, dust-blind 'micrologist' satirized by Nietzsche and the antlike but somehow still spiritually beneficial condition of Ritschl's scholar."

27 *Encyclopaedie der klass. Philologie,* in: *KGW* 2,3, 373: "Die Methode, etwas Überliefertes zu verstehen und zu beurtheilen. ... Da die Überlieferung gewöhnlich die Schrift ist, so müssen wir wieder lesen lernen. Wir müssen wieder lesen lernen: was wir, bei der Übermacht des Gedruckten, verlernt haben"; ibid. 404: "Über die Methode zu lesen. ... Oft Lesen ders. Schrift ist viel wichtiger als zerstreuende Vielleserei." See Benne 2005, 152–154, with reference to Ritschl (cf. above n. 22) and Theodor Birt and August Boeckh who made similar demands.

28 *Encyclopaedie*, ibid. 437 (in the last paragraph): "In diesem Sinne wünsche ich Ihnen die Aufgabe der Philologie gezeigt zu haben: als ein Mittel, sich und der heranwachsenden Jugend das Dasein zu verklären". The English translation is from Bishop 2022, 237.

Even when Nietzsche's own scholarly abilities were questioned by the philological guild after the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872)[29] and after he had withdrawn from academics, he continued to consistently promote the philological practice of slow reading, not only in the preface to *Daybreak*: the appeal to careful, accurate, reflective and critical reading runs through almost all of Nietzsche's works.[30]

4 Reflections on slow reading in classical philology — and on (Tacitean) Latin

Following on from Nietzsche's words, I would like to briefly explain how the concept of slow reading defined at the beginning can be substantiated as a method as well as a specific feature of reading in classical studies. Let us return to the question of the significance of slow reading in literary studies, and in classical philology in particular, and how it can be justified methodologically — and perhaps also theoretically. I cannot present results based on the findings of science of reading, cognitive psychology, neurosciences, philosophy of language or empirical research.[31] However, I think that a concept of slow reading can be outlined, based on arguments from literary and linguistic studies and not least on experience with classical authors and texts.

As textual and literary scholars, we are interested in the language and the literary procedures and strategies with which an object is represented in the text. Our core competence focuses not only on the question of 'what', but also particularly on 'how', i.e. the form of description and modelling of what is said in the text. Most of ancient Greek and Latin literature is rhetorically shaped, in the sense that it looks beyond mere communication of thought and aims to produce a calculated rhetorical

29 Not least by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff who accused Nietzsche of unclean scientific work in his pamphlet *Zukunftsphilologie!*. On the dispute between Nietzsche and Wilamowitz, see Güthenke 2022, 188–193; Benne 2005, 155 and 275f.; Bishop 2022, 244f. See also the contribution by Bernhard Zimmermann in this volume.

30 See the comprehensive reflections on this topic by Benne 2005, 151–237.

31 See the collection of essays in Rautenberg/Schneider 2015; Seidenberg 2013. Rautenberg/Schneider 2015, 97 speak of "reading mode" (*Leseweise*), i.e. "the techniques by which readers … acquire all habitual forms of enactment of the vocal or non-vocal representation of texts and their historical manifestations … Furthermore, the parameters of intensity and speed of reading, which partly correlate with reading aloud or quietly, slow or fleeting reading, reading once or repeatedly, and selective reading are included" (my translation).

effect upon the reader. Its aesthetic structure aims at a formulation appropriate to the subject matter and, like modern rhetoric, at the persuasive presentation of facts and arguments. Its language is artfully structured by wording, word order, figures of style, syntax, and in poetry it is also 'bound' by meter.

Let us consider some phenomena of Latin literary language for further illustration. The Latin syntax often does not reveal clear discourse relations between the information given in detail; rather, the texts try to avoid or even prevent certainty in the interpretation. The Latin language offers special possibilities for the suggestive or insinuating conveyance of information through syntactic abbreviations, for instance the asyndeton or mere juxtaposition.[32] Participial clauses and *ablativus absolutus* constructions, can, as is well known, contain information whose connection with the content of the overall statement does not necessarily have to be made clear by an adverbial clause: it can be understood as temporal, causal, modal, concessive or conditional. We have to fill in these semantic gaps, i.e. analyze the word order and sentence structure in detail, before we understand or at least can try to interpret the statement.[33] The ancient Latin 'native speaker' obviously did not need this explicitness.[34] As non-native speakers, we must therefore first move "from syntax to information structure",[35] and this can only be done by slow reading.

I take Tacitus as an example, as a prominent representative of the so-called *Kunstprosa*.[36] The historian Hayden White argues that there is also a "content of the form", and so the question arises as to how a piece of information is charged with meaning by being reproduced at a certain point in the text or paired with certain other statements, without defining the exact discourse relations.[37] With reference to Tacitus' historiographical writing, the question arises as to how the presentation of historical 'facts' can acquire a certain meaning by means of lexical or syntactical

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32 See the recent study by (the late) Adams 2021.

33 On the "semantics of information structure", see Devine/Stephens 2019; on "placement constraints and liberties in Latin constituent order", see Spevak 2010, esp. 13–26; on word order as a means to structure meaning and information, see Devine/Stephens 2006; Danckaert 2012, 10–14; and the exhaustive chapter in Pinkster 2021, 948–1137.

34 On the supplementary work that an ancient reader must perform in order to decode the "elliptical sentence-valued construction" of an abl. abs. on the basis of his (prior) knowledge of the respective context of utterance, see Glei/Philipps 2018 (p. 188: "elliptische satzwertige Konstruktion").

35 This is the subtitle of the monograph by Devine/Stephens 2019.

36 On the difference between artistic or belletristic prose (*Kunstprosa*) and scientific or technical language, see Clackson/Horrocks 2011, 215–222. For the analysis of a poetic text, see Worstbrock 1963, 122–167, on Virgil's *Aeneid*.

37 White 1987/[2]1990. On the topic of discourse relations, see Asher/Lascarides 2003, especially xvi–xvii and 28f. On Tacitus see Fuhrer 2021 and 2022.

features used in the text to connect parts of the discourse, i.e. by the relations that logically connect two or more discourse segments.

Tacitus' style is predominantly paratactic, a phenomenon referred to as *brevitas*, 'pointed style' or 'epigrammatic style'.[38] The paratactic style allows an open offer of a plurality of information. On the other hand, it is precisely the asyndetic juxtaposition of words that makes it possible to connote the content in a certain way. Through the arrangement, structuring or the omission of information, an interpretation can be insinuated, suggested or provoked. The reader is thus prompted, allowed or required to make causal or antithetical connections that are not made explicit in the text or to fill gaps left open by the sentence structure.[39]

It should therefore be clear that rapid reading is counterproductive to any convincing and meaningful interpretation of a Tacitean text. Slow reading prevents or at least limits misunderstandings and hasty conclusions and always opens up new insights into the complexity and deliberate openness that the Tacitean text quite obviously aims to establish.

5 Conclusions – Nietzsche's *lento*

I would like to return to Nietzsche, to a metaphor that he uses to describe the analytical process of reading. I quote once again from the "preface" to *Morgenröthe* (§ 5):

> For philology is that venerable art which demands of its votaries one thing above all: to go aside, to take time, to become still, to become slow — it is a goldsmith's art and connoisseurship of the word which has nothing but delicate, cautious work to do and achieves nothing if it does not achieve it *lento*.

> Philologie nämlich ist jene ehrwürdige Kunst, welche von ihrem Verehrer vor Allem Eins heischt, bei Seite gehn, sich Zeit lassen, still werden, langsam werden —, als eine Goldschmiedekunst und -kennerschaft des W o r t e s , die lauter feine vorsichtige Arbeit abzuthun hat und Nichts erreicht, wenn sie es nicht lento erreicht.[40]

Nietzsche considers philology an "art which demands … to go aside, to take time, to become still, to become slow"; he calls it "a goldsmith's art", a "connoisseurship of the word" to do "delicate, cautious work" by doing it "*lento*". What he calls the "art"

38 For references see Fuhrer 2021, 317f.

39 On juxtaposition in Tacitus, see Pelling 1993/2012, 64/287; on insinuation see Dench 2009, 394–399, on the suggestive style, see Develin 1983; on Tacitus' appendix style, see Oakley 2009, 205.

40 *KSA* 3, 17. The translations are from Hollingdale 1997/[10]2007, 5.

of the "goldsmith" describes the active and constructive process in which a text is repeatedly read anew and differently, evaluated, provided with further arguments for understanding and so made readable for others.[41] For Nietzsche, reading itself was a metaphor for keeping a text's meaning fluid.[42]

He concludes the preface as follows (§ 5):

> — this art does not so easily get anything done, it teaches to read well, that is to say, to read slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and after, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers.
>
> — sie selbst wird nicht so leicht irgend womit fertig, sie lehrt gut lesen, das heisst langsam, tief, rück- und vorsichtig, mit Hintergedanken, mit offen gelassenen Thüren, mit zarten Fingern und Augen lesen.[43]

The image of the mental "doors" ajar ("doors left open") refers to the idea of reading as movement and as an exploratory walk through open doors into and out of the mental spaces opened up by reading. The metaphor of openness relates to the idea from the beginning of the preface that a text is like a deep mine that can be opened up by the philologist, "a 'subterranean man' … who tunnels and mines and undermines" (§ 1).

Finally, I would like to cite another sentence by Nietzsche that precedes the one quoted above:

> But for precisely this reason it [i.e. the "goldsmith's art"] is more necessary than ever today, by precisely this means does it entice and enchant us the most, in the midst of an age of 'work', that is to say, of hurry, of indecent and perspiring haste, which wants to 'get everything done' at once, including every old or new book.
>
> Gerade damit aber ist sie heute nöthiger als je, gerade dadurch zieht sie und bezaubert sie uns am stärksten, mitten in einem Zeitalter der 'Arbeit', will sagen: der Hast, der unanständigen und schwitzenden Eilfertigkeit, das mit Allem gleich 'fertig werden' will, auch mit jedem alten und neuen Buche.[44]

41 See Benne 2005, 157f.; cf. ibid. 105: "Der Text, dessen Eigenschaften und Bedeutungsumfang noch näher zu bestimmen ist, stellt keinen Fakt, sondern ein Artefakt dar, zu dessen Herstellung viel Geduld und Könnerschaft nötig sind" (cf. ibid. 257 on the difference to the deconstructivist readings).

42 See Benne 2005, 203 and 211: "Flüssighaltung des Sinns" as against "Sinnerschließung" which is not Nietzsche's aim.

43 *KSA* 3, 17.

44 Ibid.

This sounds like an advertising slogan for classical philology and its tradition of inculcating skills that are “more necessary than ever today”, namely, as Nietzsche says in the concluding sentence quoted above, in reading texts “slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and after, with reservations”.

My plea for slow reading is not a critique of rapid thought and action — the skills currently most in demand — but a contrastive insistence on the values that classical philology pursues and promotes in universities and schools: the ability to read simple and complex texts slowly and thoroughly, accurately and critically, to dissect sentences grammatically, to develop syntactical awareness; the ability to recognize constructions of meaning that may be straightforward or multi-layered, to understand hidden allusions and to identify signs of manipulation.

I conclude with what I believe is a strong thesis: Greek and Latin studies are neither conceivable in research and teaching without the practice of slow reading, nor can they be justified in their position at school and university unless they develop the capacity to preserve, practice and develop the cultural techniques of critical or even subversive reading, not only — and perhaps not necessarily — of Nietzsche’s texts, but of more famous, more difficult and more subtle texts, such as the Greek and Latin classical writings that are more relevant — at least to our European tradition.

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Sophia Papaioannou

Reflective Discourse and the Augustan Paradigm: The Origins of Modern Critical Debate

Abstract: Reader–response criticism and cultural studies are two very popular, and very diverse in their objectives, modern theoretical approaches of cultural output. Both have been employed widely since the Age of Augustus to contextualize cultural products and offer the possibility of rival alternative readings. Both presuppose close, slow and careful reading. In the present chapter, I will discuss how this process of critical, culturally determined response has been articulated in emblematic literary passages of the Augustan Age. The Augustan tradition of layered reading builds on a well-established tradition of contextualization and interpretation that originates in Roman comedy and sets in motion an intellectual process that has directed a systematic process of reframing and revising complex intertextual narratives.

Keywords: ekphrasis, intertextuality, reflective discourse, topographic memory

1 Introduction

To all those who believe in the Bloomian idea of the reflective quality of all cultural production, the "future" as perceived by people across the centuries, who share the cultural products of western education, has been and will continue to be founded on a system of contextualization principles methodologically determined by the Classics. The core of this system is "close reading",[1] which is combined with reflection and purports to the creation of interpretative frameworks which allow the subject under interpretation to transcend the limitations of time and the cultural momentum it meant to serve upon conception, and become a meaningful narrative

1 "Close" reading is a presupposition for most recent interpretative trends: reader–response theorists engage in close readings of texts as they build interpretations based on the reader's personal response to the text. Close reading enables deconstructionists to identify inherent contradictory meanings in texts. Through close reading critical theorists study how the readers of a text respond to social markers, such as race, class and gender. A more focused version of "close" reading is "slow" reading, explored in Fuhrer's chapter in this volume.

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across time.[2] Interpretation or critical response, at the core of Roman imperial culture and the cultural traditions emanating therefrom, is the signature production of the Augustan age, with its emphasis on complexity. A cornerstone of the ideology behind Augustan iconography, this complexity becomes no less a major source of inspiration for Augustan literature, both for the creation of works that are similarly nuanced, and for forging a rival, informed reaction to Augustus' narrative.[3] Complexity presupposes the generation of composite intertexts within the mind of diverse individual readers of a single narrative, and the extraction of different meanings according to the individual readers' experiences, set of referents and training in reading complex cultural narratives.

Reader–response criticism and cultural studies are two very popular, and very diverse in their objectives, modern theoretical approaches of cultural output. Both have been employed widely since the Age of Augustus to contextualize cultural products and offer the possibility of rival alternative readings. Once a cultural narrative, in the broader sense, including both literature and artwork, as well as literary descriptions of artwork (actual or imaginary), is dissociated from its creator and is surrendered to critical reception, its meaning cannot be controlled, despite efforts to the contrary by powerful elites across time. In the following pages I will discuss how this process of critical, culturally determined response has been articulated in emblematic literary passages of the Augustan Age. The Augustan tradition of layered reading builds on a well-established tradition of contextualization and interpretation that originates in the earlier period of Roman literature, specifically Roman comedy, and sets in motion an intellectual process that has directed to this day the way we approach, and often even overwrite, intertextual narratives, as a result of their compositional flexibility that enables reframing and revision of their story.

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2 These ever-meaningful composite intertexts epitomize Barthes' definition of the goal of a cultural narrative as a synthesis that prompts the reader to become "no longer a consumer but a producer of the text" (1974, 4).

3 On the complex and reflective character of Augustan monumental iconography, see especially Hölscher 1984; Zanker 1987 and 1997; Galinsky 1996; Wallace-Hadrill 2008; Pollini 2012. On Roman topography as a structured and meaningful "text" promoting Augustus' narrative of the *respublica restituta*, see, for example, Leach 1988; Jaeger 1990; Edwards 1996; Favro 1996; Rehak 2006; and more recently Pandey 2018.

2 Reflective discourse on visual memories

Multivocal cultural readings of Augustan art are ideally reflected in Vergil's ekphrases. The murals decorating the walls of Juno's temple at Carthage defy a single and definite reading. The narrative theme celebrated thereupon is universally known: the Trojan war (also a classical theme for inspiration in the artistic traditions of both Greece and Rome across the centuries).[4] The pictorial narrative echoes with multiple reading audiences, yet, each reader responds to it differently: Aeneas sees hope, and reads in it a pro-Trojan reception of the Trojan war, even though most of the panels celebrate the cruelty of Achilles; still, the murals decorate the temple of Juno — logically, a pro-Trojan text could not decorate the walls of a temple honoring Juno. The commissioner of the artwork is Dido, who upon meeting Aeneas declares her admiration for the Trojan people. Then again, the Trojan war narrative as recorded on the murals is reported through the gaze of Aeneas — it is actually a sample of imposing critical response: we, the external readers who try to form our reading on the basis of the "text" that Aeneas unravels before our eyes, have our reasons to doubt the comprehensiveness of the ekphrasis disclosed: Aeneas identifies the panels on the basis of his own criteria, in the order he decides, disregarding epic chronology and imposing his own emotional reading of the individual panels upon our own.[5] In addition to the complexity of the meaning behind the multiple relationships between art, author and audience, the ekphrasis stresses the influence of audience response through close reading in the process.

Reflective discourse is an *act* and a *process,* as much as a *product*. As a dynamic process it is foremost cognitive, the outcome of a series of logically linked thoughts that are triggered or formulated through visual stimulation, literally or mentally, when we do not actually see what we interpret, but we have it verbally described to us with such vividness and detail that we virtually recreate or visualize it in our mind. An act of interpreting through reflection then is also an act of "reading"/viewing something.

In the Carthaginian murals, Aeneas has personal experience of the events he "reads", and so inhibits our own reading by applying and then projecting *his interpretation* of the visual text instead of *the text itself.* His "reading", on the other hand, of the shield he receives in *Aeneid* 8, concerns a "text" meant for others to interpret: the narrative on the shield consists of a series of famous episodes from Roman

4 The bibliography on the ekphrases in the *Aeneid* is ample; important studies on the Carthaginian ekphrasis include Putnam 1998a; La Penna 2000; Beck 2007; Dufallo 2013, ch. 5; Kirichenko 2013.

5 For a comparison between the linear reading and the non-linear viewing, see Giuliani 2003, 27–29.

history, attested in several sources, including artistic ones, and so, subjected to assessment in diverse contexts.[6] Vergil asks readers to imagine the legendary character Aeneas in the act of contemplating a shield, which itself depicts a triumph far in Aeneas' future, though in the past of Vergil's readers. The readers are prompted to consider the interactions between Vergil's narration and the art it depicts, between Aeneas as viewer and the "text" he attempts to read, and between themselves and representations more generally. The description of the pictorial narrative on the shield as a *non enarrabile textum* (*Aen.* 8.625), a network of inextricably intertwined components (*textum*), which are impossible to tell apart in order to put together a straight and single story (*non enarrabile*),[7] seems to distinguish the art of viewing from that of reading, and privilege the importance of the former, over that of the latter. The shield becomes a visual text by which a viewing agent can connect with Roman history across time — or rather with a carefully composed version of Roman history determined by the selection of certain episodes and introduced in a particular (chronologically, but not only, determined) order;[8] just through this experience of viewing and deprived of any verbal explanation, Aeneas creates some cultural context for himself that partakes of the Roman narrative on the shield, insofar as the shield and its narrative inspire him and confirm his mission.

Though all Augustan poets share a deep interest in readers, texts and the construction of meaning, none examines this process more self-consciously than Ovid, who, throughout his corpus publicizes and politicizes the act of "reading" the Augustan Text (the multitextual narrative of the restituted Republic) by making reading, or rather the reader-response process, the subject of his writing, and by blurring the

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6 The bibliography on the Shield of Aeneas is enormous; the most important earlier studies are collected in Putnam 1998b, 234 n. 1; Gurval 1993, 209–247; Fowler 1991, 25; Williams 1981, 11. Putnam 1998b, 119–188 and 234–240, provides a comprehensive analysis of the pictorial narrative on the Aeneas' shield, directed primarily by metapoetics; illuminating is also his argument on the spatiality of the ekphrasis. Important studies that appeared in the past quarter century or so include Farrell 1997, 222–238 (esp. 224–226); Harrison 1997, 70–76; Bartsch 1998, 322–342; Ratkowitsch 2001, 233–249; Feldherr 2014.

7 *Enarrabilis* is, according to the *OLD*, s.v., a "very rare" adjective, not found in literary texts prior to the *Aeneid*, that means something that may be related, represented or explained. Described as such, the *descriptio* on the divine shield a) is acknowledged as a narrative, a piece that tells a story; and b) is declared impossible to narrate, represent or explain.

8 See Boyd 1995, on the multiple logical inconsistencies in Vergil's style of pictorial narration; visual information that leads to visualization and narrative description are not necessarily identical, but they are complementary: the narrative is necessary to order the visual information; on p. 73, Boyd defines the pictorial narrative of Vulcan's artwork as a text that is "layered rather than linear" in terms of chronology. On temporality and reflective discourse in the Vergilian ekphrases, see recently Papaioannou 2022.

boundaries between writer, reader and text. In the diptych comprising *Am.* 1.11 and 1.12, he describes the process of elegiac courtship, and by extension elegiac composition, as a fluid drama that requires the exchange of written messages of a particular type conveyed through an intermediary who may also have access to the content of these letters and may intervene and manipulate it.[9] In the *Metamorphoses*, the artistic agon between Minerva and Arachne pits in opposite corners two clashing interpretations of the Augustan Text: Minerva, the authority of artistic creation, composes a perfectly obedient pictorial narrative that celebrates canonicity; Arachne, a par to the goddess in talent and artistic expression in every respect, experiments with a composition that observes the exact opposite trend, alike in method and message, for it is disobedient on several levels,[10] underlining the reactionary narrative theme that challenges a leading motto of the principate — *novus ordo seclorum*.[11] Also, the act of reflecting on a textual composition typically starts before the agent engaged in this kind of mental discourse realizes that he is interpreting. In those initial stages, interpretation is part of the interpreter's first acquaintance with the object of interpretation. The critical reader realizes that he is reflecting critically and communicates this realization to the audience of his interpretation, while the process is already under way. In this case, the audience needs to revert to the beginning of the reading process, identify it as interpretation and retrace the step of reading, now treating it as interpretation. When the Ovidian reader reads through Minerva's tapestry he does not know the topic of Arachne's ekphrasis; once however he realizes that Arachne treats the same ideas from an alternative perspective, he acknowledges that he needs to readjust the methodology of reflecting, on the basis of the element of antagonism which emerges to direct the process of assessing the particular content of the two tapestries.

In the *Tristia* collection, Ovid identifies himself with his compositions, which, due to the poet's exclusion from Rome, take his place and traverse the city in his stead. In *Tristia* 1.1, the sad Ovid, confined in exile, sends his book — his embodiment — to Rome; in *Tristia* 3.1, the book has espoused Ovid's reading perspective, as the entire poem is a monologue spoken by the book itself. *Tristia* 2 opens with

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9 On the narrative dynamics of the *Amores* 1.11+12 diptych, see Papaioannou 2008.

10 On obedient and disobedient ekphrases, based on what can or cannot be visually perceived, see Laird 1993.

11 Barchiesi/Hardie/O'Gorman, among others, offer fundamental arguments in favor of approaching Ovid and Augustus as two rival composers of competing representational projects. See Barchiesi 1997, esp. 7–11 and 43–44; Hardie 1997; O' Gorman 1997. On Augustus' image-making, see n. 3 above. On the reading of Minerva and Arachne as rival readers of the Augustan text, important studies include Harries 1990; Feeney 1991, 190–194; Rosati 2002, 292–297; Feldherr 2002 174–175; Oliensis 2004, 286–296.

the admission that Ovid suffers because of his readers' response to his writings, and in particular to *Ars Amatoria* — NOT because of the writings themselves!

> Carmina fecerunt, ut me cognoscere vellet
> omine non fausto femina virique meo:
> carmina fecerunt, ut me moresque notaret
> iam pridem emissa Caesar ab *Arte* mea.
> (*Tr*. 2.5–8)

> My poems have made so that men and women would wish to know me — not a happy omen for me. My poems have made so that Caesar should brand me and my way of life from my *Ars* which had already been sent forth.[12]

As Gibson has noted, “the author here is a passive figure; it is his *carmina* which have independently caused people to wish to know him, and it is his *carmina* which have caused Caesar's response to the *Ars Amatoria*”.[13] Ovid's poems, in other words, offer a *reading* of the Roman social *mores*, and it is to this reading that Caesar reacts. This reading of social behavior (motivated by an interest in the psychology of the erotic pursuit) is combined with an overview of Roman topography in what is probably the first overview of the Urbs, in *Ars* 1, where Ovid identifies many of Augustus' recently built or sponsored monuments as appropriate landmarks for mapping the pursuit of women:

> Tu quoque, *materiam* longo qui quaeris amori,
> ante frequens quo sit disce puella loco.
> (*AA* 1.1.49–50)

> And you who likewise are after *material* for an enduring love, learn first of all what locations a woman loves to visit.

Ovid's emphasis on reading goes hand in hand with the transformation of the Roman cityscape, which is introduced as material potentially fit for compositions subject to readings that intend to serve or comment on the socio-political momentum. The politicization of architecture (and the transformation of Roman mapping and identity as a result) is essential for advancing the Augustan ideology, and it is celebrated as such in the *RGDA* (esp. 19–21). In response to Augustus' architectural remodeling of the capital, elegiac poetry advances its own mapping of urban Rome,

12 Translations throughout are mine unless otherwise noted.
13 Gibson 1999, 21.

which becomes the backdrop for the realization of love.[14] The speaker of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* designs his own Roman landscape, at *AA* 1.67–88, as he identifies specific monuments on the Forum and the environs, including the porticos of Livia and the Danaids, the theatres of Pompey and Marcellus, the temple of Isis, a Jewish synagogue, Fora, the Circus Maximus, and on top of all the temple of Palatine Apollo, Augustus' most prominent addition on the Palatine and, in Ovid's cityscaping, the vantage point through which the mapping of Rome is assessed.

3 Reflective discourse and topographic memory

The *Art of Love* was published in 2 CE, shortly after the completion of Augustus' reforms, including his building program, and comprises an almost instant response to (and immediate appropriation of) the *Princeps*' new cityscape.[15] Less than a decade later, transplanted in Tomi against his will, Ovid in his *Tristia* conveys a different statement on the Augustan cityscape. In *Tristia* 3.1, Ovid's new book, the speaker of the introductory elegy of the collection, arrives in Rome and becomes the eyes through which the exiled poet reacts to topography: the book encounters a cityscape that has been revised so thoroughly that the reader/book becomes confused. The book's ultimate destination is the Palatine; the course that it is instructed to follow is the archetypal tour of the hill as mapped out by Evander and Aeneas (*Aen.* 8.306–369), the first tour of Augustan Rome in the course of Roman mythochronology. In Book 8 of the *Aeneid*, Vergil's audience receive their first tour of the early site of Rome through the eyes of Aeneas and his host and leader of the tour, King Evander, the legendary founder of the area. Simultaneously with the sojourn, Aeneas receives information about a set of monuments with cardinal significance, for the essence of historical Rome in Vergil crosses paths with the Roman historiographical and annalistic tradition that had formulated and controlled the broadly embraced memory of the Roman past.[16]

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14 Several studies of the formation of the erotic subject through travel in the reconstructed city include Edwards 1996; Boyle 2003 (discussing *AA* 1.1.49–50 on pp. 19–20); Welch 2005.

15 On Rome as memorialized in the topographical descriptions recorded in the texts of the Late Republican and Augustan authors, see the collection of essays in Östenberg/Malmberg/Bjørnebye 2015 (especially the papers by Corbeill/Spencer/O'Sullivan); also Davies 2017.

16 On the topography of Evander's Pallanteum as a historical palimpsest asserting the continuity of Roman history, see Wiseman 1987, 390–395; White 1993, 182–190; Fantham 1997; Klodt 2001, 11–36; Marincic 2002; Papaioannou 2003; Lowrie 2009, 168–172.

Aeneas' visit to Pallanteum, according to Vergil's narrative, spreads over two days. On the day of his arrival, he witnesses the anniversary celebration of a festival in honor of Hercules' passage through Latium that helped establish peace and civilization in Latium — a passage that triggered Roman cultural memory and left its indelible marks on the Roman topography. The following day, Aeneas familiarizes himself with a location that will host the core of the Roman capital in the generations to come. Several of the sites and monuments mentioned were built much later. Next to the Carmental gate and shrine (337–8), the ruins of Janus' town on the Janiculum (355–7), the Argiletum (346), the grove where the Arcadians saw Jupiter (351–2), and above all the community of Pallanteum itself (359–61), Aeneas also sees several famous landmarks that came into existence during later times, but would have been familiar to the Romans of his day: the Asylum grove on the Capitoline (342), the Lupercal, presumably the location where the she-wolf suckled Romulus and Remus (343), and which had been restored in Vergil's time by Augustus (cf. *RGDA* 19), the Tarpeian rock (347), the Forum and the Carinae (361). The anachronisms are not the only innovation in Vergil's account of the early days of Rome. Vergil's description corresponds to topographic reality, and it presents the era of early Rome as an actual, orderly historical narrative.

Like Vergil's Aeneas Ovid's new book makes its way through a new city in the company of a guide, who in this case remains conveniently anonymous. Allegedly instructed by this guide on the landmarks and monuments expected to see and the roads to traverse, as these have been recorded in the earlier literary mappings-interpretations, including those of Ovid himself and Vergil, the book fails to identify them. As a result of this confusion, the book tries to produce a new reading of the Palatine cityscape, put together on the basis of the topographical *signa* it selects. This reading, however, lacks coherence, because the book is not aware of the cultural and political context tied to each of this *signa* (or because it sticks to the landmarks Ovid remembers standing in those same locations prior to his exile), hence the topographical narrative the book produces is different from the one Augustus wishes to advertise through these landmarks, many of them added to the Palatine landscape by the *princeps* himself. Additionally, according to the reading advanced by Pandey, the itinerary chosen by the book becomes an indirect critique of Augustus' interventions on the traditional Republican landscape. The book vaguely identifies as starting point of its itinerary the *fora Caesaris* (27) — without specifying which forum is meant —, before it reaches the Temple of Vesta (29) and the building next to it, "the small palace of ancient Numa" (30). Then the book turns off the path to the Palatine and passes through the *porta Palati* (31), the main entrance to the hill, before it reaches the location "where Rome was first founded" (32), a paraphrasis for the temple of Jupiter Stator, and finally the house of Augustus, which

seems to have "doorposts conspicuous for their shining arms and a house worth of a deity" (34: *fulgentibus armis/conspicuos postes tectaque digna deo*), clearly toying with the double function of the place as both the house of Augustus and the temple of Apollo built next to it. The phraseology that describes each monument elicits recollection of additional monuments that either are silenced or have been replaced, and prompts the reader to put together his own travelogues along the same route but through potentially different monumental *signa*. Since each of these *signa* was carriers of political and historical meaning, the composition is subject to diverse interpretations depending on the knowledge, perspective and allegiance of the readers.[17]

Nicolet/Favro have argued that mapping the urban center of Rome developed in the Augustan period,[18] yet the earliest surviving poetic transcript of a journey through the city of Rome is recorded in the speech of the Choragus in Plautus' *Curculio*, a composition no less nuanced than its Augustan counterpart descriptions of similarly serving as malleable commentary on contemporary cultural and political trends.[19]

At Plautus, *Curc*. 462, the extradramatic Choragus character takes the stage, turns to the audience and offers to guide them through the Roman Forum (*Curc*. 466–486) — even though the play is set in Epidaurus:

> In the interim and until he comes back, I'll show in which place you can easily find which sort of person, so that no one strives too laboriously if he wants to meet someone, be it a man of vice or a man without vice, be it worthy or a worthless character. Anyone who wants to meet a perjurer should go to the assembly place. Anyone who wants to meet a liar and a braggart must look for him at the temple of Venus Cloacina, and anyone who wants to meet rich and married wasters must look below the colonnaded hall. In the same place there will also be grown-up prostitutes and men who ask for formal guarantees from prospective debtors. Those who contribute to shared meals are on the fish market. At the lower end of the market decent and wealthy people stroll around; in the middle part of the market next to the open drain are the mere showoffs. Arrogant, garrulous and malevolent people are above the Lake, ones who boldly insult their neighbor for no good reason and who have enough that could in all truth be said about themselves. Below the Old Shops there are those who give and receive on interest. Behind the temple of Castor there are those whom you shouldn't trust quickly. In the Tuscan Quarter there are the people who sell themselves. In the Velabrum you can meet the miller or the butcher or the soothsayer or those who turn or give others the opportunity

17 See the discussion on the travelogue of the book in *Tristia* 3.1, and the multiple ambiguities resulting *en route* causing recurrent questions that problematize the Augustan rewriting of the Palatine, in Pandey 2018, 120–129. For Michalopoulos 2021, the Roman map in *Tristia* 3.1 captures an idealized image of Rome, designed to offer Ovid a mental escape and so help him endure the reality of his exile in Tomi.

18 Nicolet 1991; Favro 1996.

19 My analysis of the *Curculio* topography follows Papaioannou 2021, 23–33.

to turn. [Rich and married wasters at the house of Leucadia Oppia]. [Trans. De Melo (2011), Loeb, with minor changes]

The Choragus identifies eleven individual locations in the Forum, yet several of them were not in use or cannot be identified with precision in Plautus' day:[20] the *Comitium*, the convention point of perjurers (470); the temple of Venus Cloacina, the hangout place for liars and braggarts (471); the/a basilica, where afflicted husbands and prostitutes are found (472–473); the *Forum Piscarium* ('fish market'), a problematic location, probably the food market, and the hangout for dining-club members (474, *conlatores symbolarum*); the lower part of the Forum (475), where wealthy and noble citizens gather; the *Cloaca maxima* (476), a gathering place for those who like to show off; the area 'beyond' the Lake (*supra lacum*), a space in the Forum that has not been identified, and a hangout for sinister characters (477–479); the *veterae tabernae*, the traditional location of the bankers (480); the temple of Castor (481), a place frequented by people with bad credit; the Etruscan quarters, yet another location in the Forum favored by prostitutes (473); and, finally, the Velabrum, hangout place of the merchants prone to cheat — bakers, butchers and soothsayers (484).

The Choragus offers simultaneously a topographical overview of the Roman Forum and an overview of the *palliata* — critics additionally argue that the Choragus actually sees both the locations he identifies and representatives of the groups of people he ties to each of these locations.[21] Yet, archaeological studies on the topography of early 2nd-century Rome inform us that the forum spreading before the eyes of the Choragus was not the same as the one described in the text. Rather, Plautus' description reflects contemporary Roman cognitive understanding of geographical space, which in turn dictates the topographical inaccuracy, purporting to comment indirectly through it on the impending transformation of the Roman civic landscape: indeed, a few decades later the greater area of the Forum will undergo transformation and from an area of private and commercial activity will become one of public, political significance.

The Choragus' arrangement of architectural monuments and physical locations in association with individuals of distinct social/professional classes reflects the fluidity of the Roman civic landscape at the turn of the 3rd c. BCE — a landscape very much under construction. In the year 210 BCE a great fire broke out on the

20 On the topography of the Choragus' tour, see Sommella 2005 and Goldberg 2018.

21 Fundamental study on the political reading of this unique comic passage is Moore 1998, 131–39; 219–22, identifying additional parts in Plautus' plays where Roman topography and Roman life disturb and blend the boundaries separating the world of the spectators from Greek dramatic time. Moore's mapping is revisited in Marshall 2006, 40–42.

north side of the Roman Forum, where a series of shops (*tabernae*), including the bankers' shops, the *tabernae argentariae*, were located. Livy offers a detailed description of the catastrophe (AUC 26.27.1–4):

> a fire […] broke out in several places at once about the Forum. At the same time the seven shops (*tabernae*) which later were five, and the bankers' offices (*tabernae argentariae*), now called Tabernae Novae, caught fire; then private houses (*privata aedificia*) took fire — for there were no basilicas then — the quarries [*lautumiae*; a stone-quarry district on the east slope of the Capitoline], and the Fish Market [*forum piscatorium*; located behind the *tabernae* and north of the Forum] and the *Atrium Regium*. The Temple of Vesta was saved with difficulty chiefly by the aid of thirteen slaves, who were purchased by the state and manumitted.

The destruction came at a time of major changes for Rome, as it was becoming the leading power of the Mediterranean. A century and a half prior to Actium, the influx of great wealth offered the leaders of the Republic a similar opportunity to rewrite and reinterpret civic space through rebuilding.[22] Several of the locations identified in the Choragus' tour were affected and underwent reconstruction in the years immediately following the catastrophic fire of 210. By the time the *Curculio* is composed, the architecture of the Forum was radically redrawn and extensively renovated. Anticipating Ovid's walking tour through a landscape that is a composition filtered through complex rules, the Choragus prompts his audience to capture in their memories the current image of the lower forum, a shapeless space that is ever evolving in the comic imagination — an image soon to disappear in light of the sweeping architectural changes that will transform it in the following decades into a well-defined, fixed and controlled square.

4 Reflecting on Roman compositions from a temporal distance

In the last section of this chapter, I would like to focus on how readers of a different era and not necessarily sufficient knowledge have embraced the experience of Aeneas and Ovid's book as a model of reflecting upon artistic narratives and interpret them inside a cultural context that contemporary readers create. My case study will be an emblematic piece of monumental Roman narrative and political significance,

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22 On the transformation of the Roman Forum into a politically-determined public space during the 2nd and the 1st centuries BCE, and the architectural changes in the area, see recently Russell 2015, esp. 43–95.

the Arch of Titus, showing how the very arch since conception did not intend to inform the public so much as to inspire a sense of shared purpose — notwithstanding the narrative dynamics of culturally determined imagination to compensate for the readers' potential ignorance.

The Arch of Titus is a prime example for observing cultural studies at work across centuries and study postculturalism at work. The monument is what historian Pierre Nora calls a *lieu de mémoire*, a "site of memory" — a physical place or object that acts as a container of collective memory. For Nora, sites of memory should have three aspects, material, symbolic and functional, which need to co-exist. These sites, further, are created from a combination of memory and history, and their primary mission is to stop time and block the process of forgetting.[23] In his important multivolume work *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,[24] Nora argues that people are obsessed with memory because they have fragmented it through historical consciousness, a diachronic application of reader-response criticism. This criticism, which is determined by individual perspectives, firm cultural readings, has caused people as a community to move from holistic, shared memory (and group identity) to fragmentary sites of memory trying to preserve some part of the grandeur of the ancient past reflected in the monument. This fragmentation has rendered monuments or sites of memory ever open to new readings, depending on the cultural recontextualization of each ancient monument across centuries. The Arch of Titus is a unique site of memory, for it has existed for almost two millennia and has become with remarkable consistency the mirror to reflect multiple different cultural and political perspectives, often contradictory among themselves.[25]

The dedicatory arch was built to preserve the memory of Roman victory over Judaea in 70 CE. Since the beginning, it was conceived as a readily accessible pictorial text annotated with an inscription that comprises only the most essential information:

> Senatus/Populusque Romanus/
> Divo Tito Divi Vespasiani F(ilio)/Vespasiano Augusto

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23 In his *Between Memory and History*, the 1989 English translation of his introduction to his 1984 anthology titled *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, Nora talks about the sites of memory as "physical sites within which legacies of memory have crystallized and toward which there is an attempt to historicize" (Nora 1989, 7). The same term, which in Nora's broad definition accommodates many different texts, from legends, to stories, to concepts, is defined more narrowly in relation strictly to physical sites where commemorative acts take place in Winter 2009.

24 Translated in English and edited in three volumes by Lawrence Kritzman (= Nora 1996).

25 A recent reference study on the Arch of Titus and its meaning across the ages as a site of memory is Fine 2021, an output of the Yeshiva University Arch of Titus Project.

> The Senate and the People of Rome, to the divine Titus Vespasian Augustus, the son of the divine Vespasian

The interior artwork depicts the triumphal parade of Titus bringing the spoils of Judaea, the sacred objects of the Temple of Jerusalem (the golden Showbread Table and the seven-branched Menorah), to Rome. The Temple objects painted golden yellow, projected grandeur, triggering memories of triumph and glory for the Romans. Further, they communicated the definite subjugation of the Jewish nation and culture, including, of course, Jewish religion — a leading cause for rebelliousness on the Jewish part. For Ida Östenberg, this emphasis on the display of religious objects of distinct geographic and ethnic origin (other than Roman, of course) on monumental art is unique in the history of artistically representing Roman triumphs, and striking as a result. It foremost shows that Jewish culture and the Jewish religion were entwined, and were understood by victor and defeated alike, and reflected as such.[26]

This at once powerful and malleable narrative attracted across the centuries reactions by an incredible variety of audiences, including the Church from Medieval times onwards, artists, literary authors and politicians, all the way to the appropriation of the seven-branched golden Menorah by the State of Israel to become the emblem bridging ideally the old and new, and standing not just for Jewish emancipation, but actually for Jewish national assertiveness. The statement by Ari Berman, the President of Yeshiva University, on the occasion of the completion of the Arch of Titus restoration project by YU, aptly captures this cultural reading:

> The Arch of Titus has a unique place in Jewish memory. Celebrating Jewish catastrophe, it has been an open sore for Jews for nearly two millennia. But in the twentieth century this symbol which represented exile and destruction was redeemed to represent salvation and return. For in the years after the creation of the Jewish state, the seven-candled menorah, the exact same one that had been carved on the Arch of Titus nearly 2000 years ago, became the symbol of the seal of Israel.
>
> (Fine 2021, xvii)

Ari Berman's postcultural reading of the Arch of Titus stands at the end of a long and impressive series of close reflections on this monument across the centuries, ideally attesting to the inherent power of Classical narratives to invite diverse readings which feed on each other while simultaneously attempting to overwrite each other. As such, the political embrace by the Jewish state of an emblematic visual statement of Roman authority over forces of destabilization, comes at the end of a

26 Östenberg 2021, 34.

long process of close reinterpretations that began with the restoration of the monument in its present form under the sponsorship of Pope Pius VII. As the frieze and the inscription were preserved only on the side towards the Colosseum, Pope Pius took advantage of the opportunity to add his own reading of the monument and direct the new cultural context of the Arch. The new inscription runs as follows:

> Insigne religionis atque artis monumentum/vetustate fatiscens/Pius Septimus Pontifex Maximus/ novis operibus priscum exemplar imitantibus/fulciri servarique iussit/ anno sacri principatus eius XXIIII
>
> As a very remarkable monument of both religion and art/had weakened from age,/Pius the Seventh, Supreme Pontiff,/by new works on the model of the ancient exemplar/ordered it reinforced and preserved/in the 24th year of his sacred leadership.

This monumental inscription mirrors Titus's memorial inscription. Pius has planned his inscription to look like the twin of Titus, in size, the font chosen, its arrangement on the surface of the monument, its length, and above all the vocabulary employed, which comes from the traditional Roman political and religious terminology (*pontifex maximus, exemplar, principatus*).[27] Through this inscription on what was at the time one of the most conspicuous monuments of the ancient Roman past still visible, Pius ranks himself next to Titus and claims to be the spiritual successor of the Roman emperors. Additionally, by restoring a distinguished *lieu de mémoire* left unfinished, Pius projects himself as the gatekeeper not just of Titus' memory, but more broadly of the very cultural message which the Roman emperor originally intended to advance through this Arch — a message conveniently open and transhistorical.

5 Conclusion

Augustan literature canonized reflective discourse in the understanding of the human experience. In literary texts across the generic spectrum participants in a group setting are called to interpret and assess alternative perspectives by challenging simultaneously rival assumptions. This process sits today firmly at the core of transformative learning regardless of discipline, as it requires critical reaction to and ongoing dialogue with one's cultural surroundings; the latter may involve a small group, the community, or even one's life experience more broadly. Additionally,

27 On the politics and ideology behind Pius VII's restoration of the Arch, including the construction of a new inscription, see Caffiero 2021.

in-depth study of Augustan literature, arguably a major expression of the Classical literary production, involves training in understanding and appreciating the function of complexity and ambiguity, concepts that have been at the foundations of organizational theory over the past decades, and have operated as a lens through which the many facets of organizational life, including strategic thinking, decision-making, persuasion policies and client management, have been understood and refined. Training in the Classics, especially the literature of the Augustan era, enables perceptive readers to comprehend the ever more pervasive presence of ambiguity in social constructs, and master central ideas of complex systems that govern the human existence, including the smooth interaction among heterogeneous agents, the inevitability and importance of nonlinearity, and the need to ever adapt, learn and evolve.

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Part III: **Patterns of Politics and “Socio-Culture”**

Michael B. Cosmopoulos

The Mycenaean Legacy: Patterns of State Formation in Western Civilization

Abstract: State formation is a multifaceted process, influenced by complex socio-political, economic, and cultural factors. Drawing upon evidence from Iklaina, one of the main capitals of the Mycenaean state of Pylos, this paper examines the formation of states in ancient Greece and emphasizes the recurring patterns observed both in ancient Greek and modern European state formation. It highlights foundational governance models and underscores the crucial role of warfare in shaping state systems. This analysis aims at shedding light on the factors that affect state formation throughout history.

Keywords: State formation, Mycenaean, Pylos, Iklaina

1 Introduction

State formation is a multifaceted and intricate process, shaped by the interplay of complex historical, socio-political, economic, and cultural factors. It is this interplay that forges the development of polities, influencing the evolution, interactions, and sustainability of states over time. To understand the dynamics of this process, it is essential to examine how various factors contribute to the patterns that forge the creation of states through history.

Among these factors, warfare plays a particularly transformative role to the creation of centralized and bureaucratic governance structures, large armies, and efficient taxation systems, ultimately leading to the emergence of modern states. Historically, warfare has accelerated the process of state formation through the forcible integration of new territories and the subsequent need for effective administration systems, leading to the transformation of loosely structured societies into organized, modern states with defined boundaries and governance systems.[1]

Sincere thanks are expressed to the editors for inviting me to contribute to this volume in honor of Professor Nikolaos Conomis. I am honored to participate in this recognition of a scholar, whose many decades of scholarship have significantly advanced our understanding of the classical world.

1 Tilly 1975; cf. the chapters in Kaspersen and Strandsbjerg 2017. For theoretical approaches to state formation, see the overview in Vu 2010.

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Another factor is technological and administrative advancements, which enable more effective rule over larger territories through improved communication, transportation, and record-keeping. Additionally, the European state system was shaped significantly by international dynamics, including colonialism and the influence of powerful empires, mirroring the competition and interactions between European states in their colonial policies.

Economic factors have also played a crucial role in the formation of states. The evolution of economies towards increasingly more complex trade networks and industrial economies has had profound implications for state formation. In the early stages, the development of agriculture and the subsequent need to manage and distribute resources necessitated the creation of organized structures of governance. As societies progressed, the rise of trade, both domestic and international, required more sophisticated economic policies and regulatory frameworks. This evolution of economic systems not only shaped the administrative contours of states, but also influenced their external relations, as trade became a vital aspect of inter-state dynamics.

Cultural developments have also been integral to the process of state formation. The shared beliefs, values, and practices of a population form the foundation upon which states are built and maintained. In the early phases of state formation, cultural homogeneity often played a role in unifying populations, while in later stages, the challenge was to integrate diverse cultures into a cohesive national identity. The influence of religion, language, art, and tradition in shaping national identities cannot be overstated. Furthermore, cultural interactions and exchanges, sometimes facilitated by conquests or trade, have historically contributed to the evolution of state identities, affecting everything from legal systems to educational policies.

In western democracies, the concept of the social contract has also been a factor affecting the evolution of state formation. Rooted in philosophical thought and practical necessity, the social contract represents the agreement between the governed and their governors, defining the rights and responsibilities of each. In antiquity, this was often implicit, embedded in the fabric of societal norms and governance practices, but in modern times it has become more explicit, encapsulated in constitutions and legal frameworks. This evolution reflects the growing complexity of societal structures and the increasing emphasis on individual rights and democratic governance, shaping how states are organized and how they interact with their citizens.

The study of the factors that affect state formation in different periods and geographical regions reveals diachronic underlying patterns that profoundly affect the development of political systems. Given that the earliest states in the Western world emerged in ancient Greece, a thorough examination of Greek state formation is pivotal to our understanding of these enduring patterns. Specifically,

the development of the polis in the early historical periods of Greece was forged by factors similar to the ones at play in recent periods.

The frequent warfare among Greek city-states, much like the military engagements in later European history, played a crucial role in their political evolution. The need for defense and military prowess led to the development of organized political structures and citizen armies, paralleling the military-driven state consolidation seen in Europe. Technological and administrative advancements in ancient Greece, such as the development of sophisticated systems for governance, record-keeping, and infrastructure, also find their parallels in the evolution of modern European states. These advancements were crucial in managing the affairs of the polis and laid the foundation for future administrative and technological progress in state governance.

Economic factors were also pivotal. The development of trade, particularly maritime trade in city-states like Athens, necessitated the creation of laws and administrative systems to regulate commerce and manage resources. This mirrors the role of economic transformations in the development of European states, where the growth of commerce and capitalism catalyzed political organization and governance structures.

Cultural and ideological developments in ancient Greece, such as the emphasis on civic identity and philosophical inquiry, can be seen as forerunners to the nationalism and Enlightenment thought that shaped modern Europe. The Greek emphasis on rational thought, debate, and the pursuit of knowledge influenced European intellectual and cultural developments, underpinning the evolution of modern states.

The concept of the social contract, while philosophically formalized in modern times, has its roots in ancient Greek democracy, particularly in the idea of citizens actively participating in governance. Greek city-states, especially Athens, developed early forms of democratic governance, where free citizens had a say in state affairs, laying the groundwork for modern concepts of citizenship and civil rights.

The gist of the matter is that, particular circumstances aside, the patterns underlying the processes of state formation in the western world echo some of the patterns that are first observed in ancient Greece. The Greek city-states provided early models of organized political structures, established forms of governance, economic development, cultural identity, and administrative efficiency. These elements shaped the formation of states and the political landscape in Europe, demonstrating a continuity that bridges ancient and modern political history.

Understanding these historical connections is essential. Ancient Greek state formation is not a phenomenon isolated from our world today, but part of the same socio-political, economic, and cultural continuum, providing useful insights into the mechanisms that lead to the creation of states. By recognizing historical continuities

and influences, we develop a better understanding of the enduring principles of state governance and political evolution. This understanding helps us to see modern state formation in the western world not as a series of isolated events, but as part of a long historical continuum. Additionally, identifying fundamental drivers of state development that transcend particular eras can reveal diachronic patterns of politics and power dynamics relevant even in contemporary contexts. Thus, the study of Greek state formation becomes an indispensable tool in comprehending and analyzing the formation and development of states in the western world.

2 State formation in ancient Greece

The emergence of the ancient Greek polis represents a significant milestone in the history of political organization in the western world and can be attributed to a confluence of economic, social, military, cultural, and political transformations.[2] Traditional, 'formalist' definitions of city-states, rooted in Aristotle's legal/institutional criteria for polis and citizenship, adopt a neo-evolutionary and teleological view of Archaic communities as 'imperfect' or 'incomplete' city-states.[3] Recent scholars express, however, skepticism about this universal application of static criteria to the political formations of different periods and advocate for more 'substantivist' definitions, based on the realities of each period.[4] In this framework, the political institutions of the Early Iron Age and the Archaic period are not seen as stages in the development towards the 'perfect' Classical city-state, but as elements of an open-ended and unpredictable process of political and social change.

Where scholars agree, is that the polis was both a territorial unit with an urban center and its surrounding territory *and* a power unit with an integrated community of citizens, formalized public institutions, and an ideology of allegiance and loyalty to the community. These are characteristics that can be identified with certainty in

2 The bibliography on the formation of the Greek polis is vast. Some important works are Sakellariou 1989; Hansen 2006; Van der Vliet 2011; Davies 2018.

3 For example, Finley (1978, 34) talked about the 'embryonic form' of the Greek polis. Along similar lines, Austin and Vidal-Naquet (1977, 40) think that the meaning of such terms as *demos*, *polis*, *politai* in the Early Iron Age, based on their meaning in the Homeric epics, was 'less full' than their later meanings. Murray (1993, 62–63) associates the development of polis with the process of urbanization and Morris (1986, 104) sees in the polis "the rudimentary outlines of a polity on the verge of statehood". Schmidt (2004, 1376–1377) emphasizes that the usage of the term *polis* in Homer is associated more with the physical characteristics of a settlement, rather than the spirit of a community.

4 See the discussion in Duplouy 2018, 9–14, 47–48 and Hansen 2006, 41–42.

the political communities of many parts of Greece after 700 BC and which seem to have been born out of the social and economic developments of the 8th century.[5]

The origins of this political organization and ideology can be traced back to the small, self-sufficient communities, possibly chiefdoms, that emerged after the collapse of the Mycenaean palaces, in the 11th and 10th centuries.[6] As power was consolidated by the *basileis* (the 'big-men' ruling those chiefdoms), centralized political and religious institutions were formed in the settlements that served as their seats, while the territories around those settlements were consolidated in 'land-people' units — the *damoi*. It is in those *damoi* that the structure and inner dynamics of the later city-states began to be formed by the 9th century, as the *basileis* increasingly formalized their offices and established power-sharing system through short-tenured offices and collegial boards. The increase in the population of those settlements would have been a major factor in turning them into the political, social, economic, and religious centers of *poleis*.[7] At the same time, the increase in the number of burials may indicate the rise of an egalitarian ideology, which seems to have been in place by the end of the 8th century.[8] Still, elites continued to dominate the political scene until the end of the Archaic period, by which time the emergence of the hoplites as a political force had taken full effect.[9]

Overall, early *poleis* did not emerge in a vacuum, but were the products of centuries of socio-political developments going back to the Mycenaean palatial states. Earlier objections to such a continuity were based on the idea of a complete and utter destruction of the Greek world at the end of the Palatial period, an idea that now is outdated and debunked. Although the collapse of the Mycenaean world brought deep changes to the socio-political and economic organization of the Greek world, those changes caused only a *partial* restructuring of life and were less intensely felt in non-palatial areas and in spheres of activity that had previously

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5 The developments during the eighth century are discussed in Snodgrass 1980, 15–84 and Osborne 2009, 35–99; cf. Raaflaub 1993, 50–51 and Whitley 2020, 161–162. For the definitions and historical development of the concepts of *ethnos* and *polis* see Morgan 2003, 4–10.

6 The term 'pre-state' is offered by Donlan (1989, 16–17) as an alternative to Runciman's (1982, 352–353) 'semi-state', a polity which has no potential for statehood. For Runciman, the transition to the 'proto-state', a stage which inevitably culminates in statehood, occurred in the eighth century.

7 Donlan 1989, 5, 21, 25–26; Ault 2019, 151–152. Osborne (2009, 74–88) offers a critical analysis of fertility and mortality as factors affecting population growth.

8 Morris 1987, 143–145 and 1998, 24; for a critique of Morris's opinions, see Kistler 2004, 150–175 and Anderson 2005, 185 and n. 31.

9 Raaflaub 1993 and 1997; Donlan 1997; Morris 1998 and 2000, 155–191. For the importance of the assembly of citizens for communal life, see Raaflaub 2013, 76–77. This 'teleological' approach to the emergence of democracy is questioned by Foxhall (1997, 61–62).

operated outside the influence of the Palaces. A gap or barrier between the Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age never occurred and many elements of Mycenaean socio-political organization survived into the early historical periods.[10] Therefore, to fully grasp the origins of historical states in Greece, it is essential that we understand the processes that led to the creation of Mycenaean states.

3 The formation of Mycenaean states

Through much of the 20th century, the emergence of Aegean states, particularly the Mycenaean ones, was interpreted through broad evolutionist models, accepting an evolution from chiefdoms to states.[11] The mechanisms leading to the formation of new states are either integrative or coercive, but in recent years there is a growing consensus that state formation is better understood through models that integrate both integration and coercion.[12]

In the Aegean, state formation theories have ranged from Childe's diffusionism to Renfrew's focus on indigenous political economies and the concept of "Early State Modules". Overall, however, they were based on evidence from major palatial sites, like Mycenae or Knossos, and placed strong emphasis on centralized power structures as seen in the remnants of the great palatial centers. As scholarly understanding deepened, the focus shifted to include the role of peer-polity interactions, the management of wealth and surpluses by regional elites, and the impact of external stimuli on the development of Aegean states.[13] A significant advance in our understanding of Mycenaean state formation was made by James Wright, who proposed that the chiefdoms from which Mycenaean states were formed emerged at the onset of the Mycenaean period, as authority and power became centralized under preexisting lineages led by "Big Men" — factional or kin leaders who had gained prestige and status through a combination of adventurous achievements and access to prestige items from the Cyclades and Crete.[14] Chiefdoms replaced the unstable

10 Dickinson 2006; Maran 2006; Middleton 2010; Papadopoulos 2014, 186; also Papadopoulos 1993, 195, where the Dark Age is called a "mirage"; Whitley 2020, 263–264.

11 Along the lines of Service's (1975) band-tribe-chiefdom-state scheme or Fried's (1967) egalitarian-rank-stratified society line.

12 Yoffee 2005, 15; cf. Scheidel 2013, 11–14 with further references.

13 Childe 2013, 22–40; Renfrew 1972; 1975; 1986.

14 Wright 1995; 2001; 2004, 70–73; 2008, 243; 2010, 814–815. Cf. Kilian 1988.

authority of those Big Men, as their authority gradually became institutionalized and led to the formalization of their power during the period of the Shaft Graves.[15]

In more recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on the significance of regional diversity in understanding the paths toward social complexity. This perspective highlights the important roles played by non-palatial sites and agents in the emergence of layered systems of power and authority, marking a shift from top-down explanatory models focused on major centers to more nuanced, bottom-up approaches that take into account the forces at play at all levels of society. This evolving understanding has led to critiques of the earlier neo-evolutionary models. While these models provided a structured and comparative framework, they often forced diverse societies into predetermined molds, overlooking the unique trajectories of different communities. Current research underscores that state formation is not a linear progression from simple to complex political forms but is instead a fluid, diverse, and dynamic process. This complexity is evidenced by the varying degrees of integration and 'stateness' that different Mycenaean polities exhibited, demonstrating the multitude of paths toward social complexity.[16]

A prime example of this ever-unfolding approach to the study of Bronze Age state formation is the Mycenaean state of Pylos. The Pylian state merits special attention due to the unparalleled wealth of archaeological and textual evidence produced from years of intensive exploration. Excavation of the palatial capital at Ano Englianos (known as the Palace of Nestor) has uncovered over 1,000 Linear B tablets, providing invaluable data about the operation of the Pylian state.[17] These data have been supplemented by decades of intensive fieldwork conducted outside the Palace of Nestor, including excavation of tombs by Spyridon Marinatos and George Korres, and surface surveys such as the Minnesota Messenia Expedition, the Pylos Regional Archaeological Project, and the Iklaina Archaeological Project.[18]

The combined evidence from this fieldwork has enhanced significantly our understanding of several key aspects of the Mycenaean state of Pylos, setting the stage for an in-depth study of the wider issue of state formation in ancient Greece.

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15 A modified timeline for this process is suggested by Petrakis (2010), who dates the beginning of the institutionalization of the power of those chiefs early in the Middle Helladic period and considers the rise of monumental burial mounds of the turn of the second millennium as the manifestation of the high status of specific kin groups.

16 Feinman 2000, 211; Renfrew 2001, xi; Yoffee 2005, 28–31; Pauketat 2007, 3–4; for the Aegean, see Hamilakis 2002, 10–12; For a different view, see Marcus and Feinman 1998, 6. For grades of 'stateness', see Scott 2017.

17 Blegen and Rawson 1966; Bennett and Olivier 1973 and 1976; Bennet 1995; Palaima 1988; 2003; 2004.

18 Korres 1990; McDonald and Rapp 1972; Davis 2008; Cosmopoulos 2016.

4 The Mycenaean state of Pylos

The current model for the formation of the Pylian state was advanced by Bennet and Shelmerdine.[19] According to this model, during the Middle Helladic period (ca. 2200–1700 BC), Messenia comprised numerous regional loci of power. Towards the close of this period and the dawn of Late Helladic (abbr. LH) period in the early 17th-century, increased competition among the rulers of these centers precipitated the establishment of chiefdoms. Over the course of LH I–II (ca. 1700–1420 BC), Ano Englianos progressively ascended as a prominent center, attaining control of western Messenia (the Hither Province of the Linear B tablets) during the LH IIIA1 period (ca. 1420–1370 BC) and of eastern Messenia (the Further Province) during LH IIIA2 (1370–1330).[20] The mounting regional dominance of the Palace, eclipsing rival centers, is archaeologically visible in new tholos tombs proximal to the palace and abandoned tholoi elsewhere.[21] By the end of LH IIIB (1330–1200 BC), Ano Englianos ruled over an integrated domain spanning some 2,000 km^2 across both provinces.

A notable limitation of both textual and survey data lies in their chronological scope. As Bennet astutely observes, the dominance of the Palace over this large territory reflects the situation of the final years of the 13th century, offering no insights into the political landscape of earlier periods.[22] Moreover, surface survey ceramics typically cannot be dated with precision, impeding the reconstruction of the historical development of sites known through surface investigation. Establishing precise chronological shifts in settlement history requires systematic excavation of non-palatial sites, but beyond Ano Englianos, the only other systematically excavated settlements are Nichoria, identified as the Further Province district capital **ti-mi-to-a-ko*, and Iklaina, identified as the Hither Province district capital **a-pu*^{2}.[23]

19 Bennet 1995; 1999; 2007; Bennet and Shelmerdine 2001; cf. Davis and Bennet 1999.

20 Bennet 1995, 600.

21 H. Morris 1986; Bennet 1995; 2007; Davis 2022.

22 Bennet 2013, 244.

23 For Nichoria, see Rapp and Aschenbrenner 1978; McDonald and Rapp 1972; McDonald, Coulson and Rosser 1983; McDonald and Wilkie 1992. For the identification of this site with **ti-mi-to-a-ko*, see Shelmerdine 1981. For Iklaina, see Hope Simpson 1981, 117: F17–F18; Bennet 2008; cf. Davis 2008; Cosmopoulos 2006.

5 A historical outline of Iklaina

The Mycenaean settlement of Iklaina is located at the western edge of an extensive plateau stretching from the modern village towards the Ionian Sea. Marinatos first tested the site in a brief 1954 excavation,[24] after which the site remained unexplored until the 1990s, when Korres included it in his list of Marinatos' unfinished excavations and suggested that I continue the investigation of the site. The Iklaina Archaeological Project (IKAP) was established in 1998 under the auspices of the Athens Archaeological Society. It is an interdisciplinary research program organized by the University of Missouri-St. Louis and funded by the Greek Professorship at that university, and also the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Science Foundation, and the Institute for Aegean Prehistory. It integrates regional survey, excavation and scientific analyses to explore the process of state formation in Mycenaean Pylos.

The first phase of the project was an intensive surface survey of an area of ca. 22 km^2 from Ano Englianos in the north to the Mycenaean site of Koukounara in the south, which revealed that Iklaina was by far the largest site in the region.[25] The second phase, an ongoing systematic inter-disciplinary excavation that started in 2008, has brought to light a prosperous settlement that thrived from around 1600 BC until about 1200 BC, featuring formal and monumental architecture, residential buildings, and industrial workshops (Figure 1).

It appears that the history of the site encompasses four distinct phases:[26]

Phase 1 (LH IIA – LH IIB, possibly into early LH IIIA1): a large terrace (Terrace V) was built at the plateau's west edge, supporting a now largely destroyed building (Building A) with a paved courtyard in front of its west façade. Reused orthostates discovered in that area may indicate the existence of a now destroyed Early Mycenaean orthostate building.

Phase 2 (LH IIIA1 – LH IIIA2 Late) was a phase of architectural expansion. Terrace V continued to be used, but a large five-room rectangular structure was built (Building T) on top of it and a monumental building (Building X) to the east. Additional buildings were erected to the north and south of Building T, including House B, House A, and Unit K. To the south, Building T was bounded by a courtyard and an open-air shrine. A Linear B tablet (IK X 1) was found in a refuse pit to the north of

24 Marinatos 1954, 309; Hope Simpson 1981, 117.

25 Cosmopoulos 2016.

26 Cosmopoulos 2018; 2019.

Building T, containing a personnel list on one side and a catalogue of manufactured goods on the reverse.

Fig. 1: Aerial photograph of the Iklaina site. © Iklaina Archaeological Project.

Phase 3 (LH IIIA2 Late–LH IIIB Middle) was a period of further expansion. It did not involve changes to the orientation or function of the preexisting buildings, only the monumentalization and formalization of the most important ones. The area of Terrace V was expanded with the construction of a massive (24.3 x 8.2m) rectangular platform built in the Cyclopean style. Its purpose was to support a two- or three-storey monumental building, constructed with ashlar masonry, the "Cyclopean Terrace Building", or CTB (Figure 2). It was decorated with beautiful frescoes and it is possible that it housed a megaron. The CTB became the main architectural focus of the site, visually dominating the landscape; the ashlar blocks, frescoed interiors and exterior plaster denote its formal character. This monumentalization and formalization are compatible with high-echelon administrative complexes, raising the possibility that the CTB constituted Iklaina's administrative center.

Fig. 2: Reconstruction of the CTB. © Iklaina Archaeological Project.

The CTB complex was bordered to the south and east by a courtyard with hard-packed clay loam floor and a paved piazza from which started two paved roads: the South Road led to the open air shrine and the East passed in front of Building X and, through a Gate, led to the residential sector of the site. A network of built stone drains and another network of clay pipes for water distribution served the houses of this sector.

All the structures of this phase were destroyed violently in an advanced stage of LH IIIB, around 1250 BC, as a result of human agency — a violent act of war.

Phase 4 was the final phase in the life of the settlement. The destroyed monumental buildings were never rebuilt and their area was abandoned; in the residential sector new buildings, mostly industrial workshops, were constructed on top of the houses of Phase 3, but with a different orientation. This phase was short-lived, terminating in late LH IIIB–early LH IIIC, after which the settlement was abandoned.

6 Interpretation

To contextualize and assess the historical trajectory of Iklaina, we must compare it to those of the two other systematically excavated sites, Ano Englianos and Nichoria. Ano Englianos exhibits early architectural sophistication and continuous urban expansion already in the beginning of the Mycenaean period, with connections

with Crete apparent in the use of orthostate construction as early as LH II and in the magnificent finds from the grave of the Griffin Warrior;[27] monumental buildings were erected by LH IIIA.[28] In the beginning of LH IIIB, some sectors of the site went out of use following a destruction by fire of the Hilltop and the Lower town.[29] After this destruction, the Hilltop was leveled and the pre-existing buildings were combined in larger complexes: Buildings B and C became parts of the Main Building, Building A was incorporated in the Southwestern Building, and additional buildings were constructed and preexisting buildings reconfigured.[30] The megaron now appeared for the first time. The size of the entire site in this period is estimated at 12.4 ha. In some late phase of LH IIIB some changes in the circulation plan and remodeling occurred, resulting in significant increase in the storage and, possibly, administrative capacity of the Palace. The size of the site in this final phase appears to have been about 14–15 ha.[31]

At Nichoria, a much smaller settlement of about 4–5 ha., a LH II building was succeeded by the LH IIIA1 megaron. Several new buildings were constructed in LH IIIA2, which continued to be in use without major disruptions until the end of the life of the site, in LH IIIB. Monumental buildings, advanced urban infrastructures, Linear B records, and large-scale decorative programs with frescoes are not attested.

The comparison of these two sites to Iklaina leads to important conclusions about the relative functions and hierarchical positions of all three sites. Until the middle of LH IIIB, both Iklaina and Ano Englianos share characteristics of top-tier, primary centers (monumental architecture, sophisticated urban infrastructure, evidence of bureaucracy in the form of Linear B tablets), a fact that challenges the notion that Iklaina functioned as a secondary center; Nichoria, on the other hand, lacks all of these characteristics, which supports its classification as a secondary center. This raises questions about the settlement hierarchy and the process of Iklaina's integration into the state of Pylos, necessitating a reevaluation of the current model for the formation of the Pylian state.

As discussed above, this model posits that the unification of the Pylian state started at the start of LH IIIA. However, at Iklaina, there are not any discernible markers for annexation, peaceful (e.g., substantial changes in the architectural layout and design of the settlement) or violent (extensive destruction horizon) between the beginning of LH II and the middle of LH IIIB. The only potential marker

27 Davis and Stocker 2016; Stocker and Davis 2017.
28 Blegen, Rawson and Taylour 1973, 3; Nelson 2017, 353.
29 Blegen and Rawson 1966, 19, 34, 423.
30 Nelson 2017, 361–362.
31 Bennet and Shelmerdine 2001, 136; Bennet 2007, 34.

of annexation appears to have been the destruction of the monumental buildings around the middle of LH IIIB. The subsequent abandonment of the formal areas, coupled with the emphasis on industrial activities, is compatible with a violent take-over and a demotion of the site from an independent administrative to a dependent industrial center.[32] In turn, this would mean that the territorial expansion and subsequent unification of the Pylian state occurred very late in the Mycenaean period.

A late formation of the Pylian state impacts our views of the form of the polities that preceded this state. It means that, until the closing decades of the Palatial period, Messenia was not one large unified state, but several micro-polities, independent small states with an urban core and a rural territory. A late unification of this state could also explain some of the characteristics of Pylian administrative organization, such as decentralized authority and duplication of administrative structures, traits typically associated with young states that are still in the process of integration and stabilization.[33]

These aspects of Pylian administration suggest that, at the time of its collapse, the transition to a fully integrated state was still underway and that the state was actively engaged in the process of incorporating other polities into its complex administrative system. Because these small peer polities consisted of an urban core surrounded by farmland containing smaller units of settlement, their morphological characteristics may have been akin to city-states,[34] a possibility supported by the evidence from Iklaina. The unification of the Pylian state was the result of the forcible annexation of those micro-polities by the increasingly more powerful polity of Ano Englianos, highlighting the importance of warfare as a driver in the process of state formation.

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32 This interpretation should be taken with caution. Given the complexity of political relationships, the binary model of total annexation vs complete independence does not always reflect reality and may oversimplify the nuanced spectrum of the modes of political integration of one state by another. These can range from familial alliances to threats of aggression or gradual integration into a broader political entity (Cosmopoulos 2019).

33 For duplication of structures, see Galaty 1999, 15–17. Duplication exists in officials with similar duties at the levels of the palace (*qa-si-re-u* and *du-ma-te*) and the district capitals (*ko-re-te* and *po-ro-ko-re-te*): H. Morris 1986. The most recent scholarship on the decentralized aspects of the Pylian state suggests that various local *damoi* and sanctuaries were considerably independent of palatial control (Lupack 2008 and 2011; Halstead 2011, 231–232).

34 Parkinson and Galaty 2007, 125.

7 Conclusions: Revisiting the formation of the Pylian State

The evidence from Iklaina contributes significantly to our broader understanding of Mycenaean state formation by illuminating important aspects of this process. For example, it challenges the notion of a homogeneous, pan-Mycenaean route to state formation and underscores the varied nature of sociopolitical complexity in the Late Bronze Age. The unification story of the Pylian state, as evidenced by Iklaina, contrasts with the much earlier integration in regions like the Argolid or the absence of such unification in areas like Corinthia. These regional variances, now more pronounced with the new data from Iklaina, highlight the distinct and divergent paths Mycenaean polities took toward statehood.

Another important aspect is the prominence of war and violence as significant drivers in the process of state formation. The evidence from Iklaina, suggesting a violent conquest around 1250 BC, exemplifies the impact of warfare in the emergence and expansion of early states. This pattern of aggressive unification and expansion is a recurring theme, extending from the Mycenaean era to the classical city-states of Greece to modern European nation-states.

A related aspect is the two-tiered administrative structure of the unified Pylian state, involving a top-tier central administration based in the Palace of Nestor, and second-tier semi-autonomous administrative units based in the district capitals of the state. This kind of governance system appears to have been the product of the forced unification of pre-existing independent micro-polities, which preserved part of their previous autonomy and became district capitals. This Mycenaean two-tiered system, a later version of which is seen in the federal states of the historical periods, was a product of military conquest and once again highlights the complexities and coercive strategies inherent in state formation during the historical periods.[35]

In essence, the story of state formation in ancient Greece, from the Mycenaean states to the Classical poleis, is marked by diverse paths and models. The Mycenaean state of Pylos exemplifies the complex and multifaceted nature of political developments in ancient Greece and the western world, where regional particularities and independent trajectories were pivotal in shaping the unique character of each state and polis. The complexity of the factors affecting state formation underscores the importance of considering regional contexts and individual developmental paths in understanding the evolution of political and social structures.

35 Beck and Funke 2015; Blome 2020.

The intricate dynamics of state formation in ancient Greece, from the Mycenaean period to the end of antiquity, offer useful insights into the influences shaping the formation of modern states in the Western world. The evolutionary path of ancient Greek states, marked by regional diversity, independent development, and gradual integration, has had a lasting impact on the conceptual and practical frameworks of state-building in Western civilization.

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Simon Goldhill

The Future of Classics: The Cost of Forgetting

Abstract: This article shows first how imagining the future is integral to classical writing, for which the anticipation of retrospective evaluation and memorialization is fundamental. How this imagining is shaped changes over time and community, not least with the coming of Christianity. There are complex narrative modellings of how the future is conceived. Consequently, the very notion of the classical tradition becomes a mode of disavowing or veiling the work of partial selection involved in its construction. Second, it shows how Classics as a discipline has repeatedly imagined and even proposed its own transformation, and even its own dismantling, as a response to the politics of culture and education. Current arguments about the future of Classics should be viewed within this long trajectory.

Keywords: Classical tradition, conceptualizing the future, disciplinary history, politics of culture, development of Christianity.

From the very beginning, what we call the western classical tradition has been obsessed with its own future. The *Iliad*, the first and founding text of Greek literary culture, is structured not only around the choice of Achilles between a short life with immortal future fame or a long life without renown, but also around the promise of epic itself to construct and perpetuate the fame of its hero, 'for future generations to know'.[1] Each and every reading of the *Iliad* performs this act of perpetuating the hero's future renown, by singing his narrative. What is more, the literary narrative itself — which is never approached by readers or audience as a *tabula rasa* but always within the framing of generic expectations, inherited knowledge, and constructed expectations of cultural value — dramatizes the anticipation of retrospective meaning. Its celebrated ring structure, where book 24 echoes book 1, is only the largest structural form by which Achilles' ending and the text's ending are set in tension with each other. The temporality of deferral, integral to epic narrative, repeatedly stays and anticipates a future fulfilment. The imagination of the future is a principle of ancient epic, and fundamental to how modernity's response to the past is constructed: our future is formed through how we imagine the past to have prepared it for us.

1 Lynn-George 1988; Nagy 1979; Goldhill 1991, 69–93. Footnotes here are designedly minimal, and include only directly salient works, each of which has further bibliography.

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A principle of epic, but not uncontested. 'What is it worth dying for?' is the foundational question of the *Iliad*,[2] but already in the *Odyssey* there is a question of the *Iliad*'s response. When Odysseus meets Achilles in the Underworld in book 11 of the *Odyssey*, he praises Achilles in his own Iliadic terms for his achieved fame beyond death; but Achilles answers bitterly in famous words: 'Do not try to talk around *death*', he states, 'I would rather be a hired worker on earth than king over all the dead' (*Od.* 11.488–90). The man who insisted on his own *timê*, to the point of self-destruction, now declares his willingness to experience any humiliation for the sake of a life on earth. The *Odyssey*, whose hero indeed suffers a string of humiliations to regain a long life amid his possessions, entraps Achilles with a redraft from the imagined future of how the imagined future had been evaluated in the *Iliad*. The *Odyssey*'s complex narrative (*poikilos*, as Aristotle called it [*Poet* 1459b]), with the retrospective tales of Odysseus' *apologoi*, and its series of lies like the truth, dramatizes the tension between the tales that are told of the past and the possibilities of the future — and does so with brilliant and twisting ironies. When Penelope reports her dream to the disguised Odysseus, a dream in which an eagle turns out to be a disguised Odysseus returning in vengeance, Odysseus himself in disguise, returned, interprets the dream to mean that Odysseus will return in disguise for vengeance (though Penelope rejects such an interpretation). What work is necessary to make the future a fulfilment of its anticipation? Reading the signs, asking for omens, giving prophecies, plotting, planning, failing to recognise the signs, failing to plot adequately — all key elements of the *Odyssey*'s narrative — each stage the desire to make the future a necessary product of its past anticipation. This desire is framed by the *Odyssey*'s narrative of redrafting stories of the past. This tension between the will to make the future a necessary result of the past and the constant and fractured retelling of the past forms a key vector of the *Odyssey*'s perspective on human action and language within a divinely determined world.

The syntax of future possibility — and with it the fragility of certainty about the future — is built into the language of epic. The counterfactual is a repeated trope of Homeric Greek, which has been well discussed by critics[3] — and even seen as necessary for its narrative: 'A constituent part of our sense of the present moment is an imaginative investment in some of the futures that might come out of it.'[4] Or as Morson insists, 'For there to be eventness there must be alternatives'.[5] The

2 Lynn-George 1988.

3 Lang 1989; Morrison 1992; Nesselrath 1992; Purves 2019, 93–116; and especially Louden 1993. See also Levy 2015; Ferguson 1997.

4 Bernstein 1994, 29.

5 Morson 1994, 22.

counterfactual is used, first of all, to mark significant junctures in the plot: what might have happened but didn't happen serves to emphasize the significance of the event that is a turning point.[6] Second, there are specific moments where the traditional motifs of myth are set at risk and re-asserted. Thus Paris would have been killed by Menelaus, *had not* Aphrodite snatched her hero from the battlefield and transported him to the bedroom he shares with Helen. Or Patroclus would have captured Troy, *had not* Apollo driven him from the walls. This story, Homer's account, is also a redrafting — or maintaining — of tradition. Third, the counterfactual can thus act as a form of editorial comment, where the poet implicitly enters the narrative to indicate its shaping. This expression of the self-conscious manipulation of narrative possibility is essential also to the ethics of the epic and thus its ideological parameters. As Michael Lynn-George in particular has articulated, the narratives of possibility and of possibilities denied, tested and hoped for, constantly inform the representation of Achilles as agent.[7] For all the rhetoric of fate and the enactment of prophecy, humans and gods remain aware of alternative routes of action, attempt to affect such alternatives, and the tension between choice and inevitability determines the tragic emplotment of the epic. The counterfactual is the grammar that underlies this emplotment. Human agency in Homeric epic is articulated between the fated plot and the need to recognize and control the uncertain possibilities of the future.

When lies are like the truth, what, then, happens to the perpetuation of *kleos* in the words of men? This challenge from the *Odyssey* will echo through the classical tradition, not just in the continuing representation of Odysseus as an iconic figure of manipulative rhetoric and misplaced glorification, but also in the continuing and necessary struggle of the classical tradition to construct itself *as a tradition*. Retelling the story of the past to construct a valued future is tradition in formation. Tradition, to paraphrase Heidegger, functions as a rhetorical term to make the past look self-evident, as if it is a fixed, necessary and monumental entity. Yet tradition requires constant work first to determine what it is — the normative acts of exclusion and inclusion, which texts count and which do not — and secondly to maintain it as significant to the present — against the dual pressures of forgetting and contestation — does *this* or *this* past pass the test of significance for the present and future? As with the narrative of the *Odyssey*, we classicists keep telling different stories of the past to make the future seem a necessary fulfilment, a fated end that needs to be struggled for.

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6 These three categories follow Louden 1993.

7 Lynn-George 1988.

Epic remains a model for this process of constructed tradition. Demosthenes gives a marvellous example of how the political process, too, demands such work of a memorialized future. Demosthenes' Funeral Oration, his version of the institutionalized speech over the war dead, is inevitably a text where self-conscious acknowledgment of tradition is high, both because it is a heavily conventional genre, and because the conventions demand a tour of the historical traditions of the city. As Nicole Loraux writes: 'the funeral oration reveals an ever more imaginary installation of the city in a time that is ever more timeless'[8] — the city stretching into the future unchanged as it has been in the past, unchanged. In his speech Demosthenes recalls the Athenians' fight against the Amazons, the Athenian support of the Heracleidai, and of the Seven Against Thebes, and then he transitions to events closer to the present time (60.9):

> τῶν μὲν οὖν εἰς μύθους ἀνενηνεγμένων ἔργων πολλὰ παραλιπὼν τούτων ἐπεμνήσθην, ὧν οὕτως ἕκαστον εὐσχήμονας καὶ πολλοὺς ἔχει λόγους ὥστε καὶ τοὺς ἐν μέτροις καὶ τοὺς τῶν ᾀδομένων ποιητὰς καὶ πολλοὺς τῶν συγγραφέων ὑποθέσεις τἀκείνων ἔργα τῆς αὑτῶν μουσικῆς πεποιῆσθαι: ἃ δὲ τῇ μὲν ἀξίᾳ τῶν ἔργων οὐδέν ἐστι τούτων ἐλάττω, τῷ δ᾽ ὑπογυώτερ᾽ εἶναι τοῖς χρόνοις οὔπω μεμυθολόγηται, οὐδ᾽ εἰς τὴν ἡρωϊκὴν ἐπανῆκται τάξιν, ταῦτ᾽ ἤδη λέξω.
>
> Now, I have left out many deeds that are classed as myths [*muthoi*]. Of the events that I have recalled to mind, each has provided many charming stories [*logoi*], so that our writers of poetry, whether recited or sung, and many historians, have made the deeds of those men the themes of their art. But now I shall be describing deeds, which, though in merit they are not inferior to these former events, because they are closer in time, have not yet become myth [*memuthologeitai*] or even been raised to heroic rank [*tên hêrôikên taxin*].

Demosthenes does not merely refer back to what he has discussed as myth, but specifically as events 'classed as myth', τῶν ... εἰς μύθους ἀνενηνεγμένων ἔργων: he acknowledges the work of classification between myth and other categories. These events have provided *logoi* for the multiple public voices of the city, different genres of writing. Myth is not opposed to *logos* here, as Plato would have it. But the more recent endeavors of the city, Demosthenes continues, because they are closer in time, have not yet become myth — μεμυθολόγηται — 'been told as myth', nor even have they entered the rank of the heroic. The implication is that as time passes so contemporary events in history will become myth. 'Heroic rank' may imply that in the future events of today will be the subject of epic poetry, or that its heroes will become cult figures as with the men who fought at Marathon. As time passes, the status of stories changes. Myth is reserved for the stories of the deep past. Where

8 Loraux 1986, 131.

Thucydides demands that his history is a 'possession for all time', Demosthenes suggests that history passes into myth over time. Our future is to become myth.

The Funeral Speech is a fifth-century redesign of the memorialization provided by epic, now for the democratic *polis*. The *epitaphios logos* sets itself against epic (as does the historiography of Herodotus and Thucydides), but here in Demosthenes' version we see a self-conscious discussion of the very dynamics of how the future is anticipated within the framework provided by epic. Demosthenes marks the variety of genres — poetry of various types, historiography — as competing models of memorialization, but allows that what now is memory of great deeds will in the passing of time become something else, namely, myth. Demosthenes locates himself between pasts and futures — the plural matters — because the pasts change as they become more distant and the future will respond differently, over time, to these changing pasts. Both the future and the past are subject to the changing frameworks of human memorialization.

This epic sense of acting 'for future generations to know', recalled in performance as an exemplary past, becomes a mainstay of rhetorical theory too. [Ps-] Longinus[9] instructs his pupils that they should try and imagine what Homer, Plato, Demosthenes or Thucydides would have said (*Subl.* 14); then, he adds, that it would be better to imagine how would Homer, 'had he been here…listened to what I have written' — to have the past as judge of the present. But, he concludes (*Subl.* 14):

> Yet more inspiring would be the thought: with what feelings will future ages through all time read these my works? If this should awaken a fear in any writer that he will speak in a way unsuited (*huperhêmeron*) to his own life and time (*chronou*), it will necessarily follow that the conceptions of his mind will be crude, maimed and abortive, and lacking the ripe perfection (*chronon*) which alone can win the applause of ages to come.

A rhetorician — any writer — should see himself not just to be following the exemplars of the past (the heroes of mythic proportions), nor even to imagine oneself judged by such paradigms, but also and most inspiringly to see oneself read and valued in every generation (*pas aiôn*) — all time — in the future, and, what's more, to recognize that only with such a perspective can a true sense of oneself in time lead to a fulfilment of a writer's potential. Everyone must anticipate a future that will remember his past excellence. The present, which will always find it hard to live up to the past, must always have an eye on the future when this present will be in turn a (mythic) past. The longing for a lost past is transformed by the anticipation of future memorialization.

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9 On the sublime, see Porter 2016.

This long tradition of the classical construction of a future — in poetry, rhetoric, history, theory — is itself transformed by the coming of Christianity, and its new conceptualizations of temporality. I have written at length elsewhere on this topic.[10] Here, I will make two general points, each with an example, which will be of relevance to my overall case. The first concerns the role of the afterlife and the apocalyptic theology in which it is expressed. Whereas in the classical Greek tradition agency is integral to a hero — taking action, verbal and physical — and, consequently, waiting is constructed as a dead time of unfulfillment, for Christian ideology waiting itself becomes an ideal — waiting for the death which transforms this deathly life into the blissful life after death that is the Christian promise. Waiting is transvalued in Christian theology. To await the Second Coming — to watch and wait, 'because you do not know the day or the hour' (Mat. 25 13) — is the Gospel's demand, which will become for the monk the life of constant prayer enjoined by Paul. The prediction of the future demands that our future is one in which we watch and wait. Vigilance, a vigil, is required. For Christians, the Gospels demand, anticipating, waiting, expecting is what the faithful do, all the time. That is how the time of everyday life is now to be inhabited.[11]

Augustine shows how tortured this waiting can be. His *Confessions* is studded with the rhetoric of *quamdiu? quamdiu?*, 'How long, O Lord, How long' — as he waits for the coming of grace which will bring about his conversion. Yet Augustine also theorizes this waiting for a future transformation in a remarkable passage of commentary on the Psalms (*Enarrationes in Psalmos* 102: 16):

> Sunt enim qui praeparant conversionem, et differunt, et fit in illis vox corvina, "Cras, cras". Corvus de arca missus, non est reversus. Non quaerit Deus dilationem in voce corvina, sed confessionem in gemitu columbino. Missa columba reversa est. Quamdiu: Cras, cras? Observa ultimum cras: quia ignoras quod sit ultimum cras, sufficiat quod vixisti usque ad hodiernum peccator. Audisti, saepe soles audire, audisti et hodie: quam quotidie audis, tam quotidie non corrigeris. Tu enim secundum duritiam cordis tui et cor impoenitens, thesaurizas tibi iram in die irae et revelationis iusti iudicii Dei, qui reddet unicuique secundum opera sua [Rom. 2.5–6].

> There are those who make preparations for their conversion, and delay; in them comes into being the voice of a raven, "tomorrow tomorrow" [*cras*/*cras*=caw/caw]. The raven was sent from the ark, and did not return. God does not seek delay in the voice of a raven, but confession in the moaning of a dove. The dove, sent out, returned. How long: tomorrow, tomorrow. Look to the last tomorrow. Because you do not know what the last tomorrow is, let it be enough that you have lived as a sinner until today. You have heard, you are used to hearing often, you have heard today too: as many times as you hear, you will not change. For 'according to the

10 Goldhill 2022.

11 Goldhill 2022, 85–100.

> hardness of your heart and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against you in the day of wrath and the revelation of the just punishment of God, who will repay each man according to his deeds.' [Rom. 2.5–6]

The raven is a model of the continuing deferral of the hesitant convert. He 'goes out but does not return' — where 'return' is the *termus technicus* for the repentance required by *conversio*. *Conversio* requires *revertere*. The dove, by contrast, goes out and comes back. But this symbolic contrast is expressed in terms of voice. The dove moans in penitence; but the raven caws, which in Latin sounds *cras, cras*, 'tomorrow, tomorrow'. *Cras cras* is precisely what Augustine himself declared in his own hesitant journey towards his own conversion in the *Confessions*.[12] *Quamdiu* 'How long?' was his redrafting of the biblical language of pleading [Ps. 13] into his desperate awareness of the waiting for grace. Augustine models his own experience through the raven, hears his own dilatory travel towards God in the cry of the bird. 'You have heard…' he repeats, and his repetition overlaps three sorts of hearing: his injunction against the failed hearing of the sinner; his insistence on the revelatory pun of *cras cras* ('hear!'); and the remembrance of his own text, the *Confessions* ('you have heard…'). He goes on to dismiss the sinner's deferral of repentance with a quotation from St Paul (Rom. 2.5.6), a reminder that the day of judgment will end such delays with terrible punishment. But this text also affords Augustine another telling pun. The problem of the hesitant repentant is precisely in his *duritiam* ***cordis*** and ***cor*** *impoenitens*. The repetition of *cor* is obscured in the King James translation ('after thy hardness and impenitent heart', which follows the Septuagint), but here is surely made to sound out significantly. The ***cor****vus* lurks in the ***cor*** of the hesitant, as the *vox* of the raven is heard in the *cras cras* of delay, Augustine's own voice of despair. Noah's raven who does not return becomes a potent image of the time-bound incapable convert, waiting for, but resisting, a tomorrow of grace.

Augustine's waiting is fully part of a Christian theology of inhabiting time, whereby the anticipation of death and the anticipation of the Second Coming makes the present constantly defined as a sort of death (*vita mortalis*) until the true life after death (*mors vitalis*) comes.[13] To live a life with a (Christian) eye on the future is not — as in Longinus — to see yourself memorialized in the eyes of future generations, but to wait for your own transformed future, as part of the transformation of the world.

The second transformation of the future in Christianity is even more comprehensive. Immediately after his conversion experience in the garden, Augustine

12 See *Conf.* 8 12 28: *quamdiu quamdiu cras cras*.

13 Ricoeur 1984, 5–31; Kennedy 2013, 1–42; Hartog 2020; with Conybeare 2016.

runs to his mother, Monnica. Now, thanks to his conversion, they recognize together, Augustine will no longer seek a wife, nor any 'hope of this age (*saeculi*)', nothing the age can offer. He and his mother will no longer seek the immortality of family, 'the grandchildren of my flesh' (*nepotibus carnis meae*).[14] Immediately on conversion, Augustine and Monnica, son and mother, recognize that he has rejected the possibility of the future of their family, a rejection of the most insistent injunction of both Greco-Roman and Jewish communities, namely, the continuity of the family — a fulfilment of the most shocking radicalism of Christianity's call to change. Conversion, that immediate moment, is to transcend the *saeculum*, the time that is the mundane world, in the name of *vitae vivere*, to live for a life beyond; and conversion is a rejection of the immortality of the generations which drives so much of Greco-Roman and Jewish moral and social expectation. The relation of the self to the future has been fundamentally altered, and with such a transformation comes a disruption of the social relations and the moral imperatives of those social relations, which both Jewish and Greco-Roman society upheld. Augustine's personal transformation is also a sign and symptom of a new insistence on the individual in relation to God rather than to a network of social relations. Augustine's conversion means the designed and willed loss of what the classical world understood as the future: children and the continuity of the family line.

What I hope to have shown so far — albeit within the limited scope of a short chapter — is four things. First, the imagination of the future is integral to classical writing, and made an explicit theme both in literary works and, with a more explicit theoretical buttressing, in works of rhetoric, rhetorical theory and, later, in theology. The anticipation of retrospective re-evaluation and memorialization is integral to the performance of classical writing, to its future. Second, such self-placement in time — such self-understanding — is embedded within different intellectual, cultural, social and theological regimes of thinking — and transforms over time and jurisdiction. Most strikingly, the inheritance of Greek thinking that stretches back to Homer and which privileges the future fame of human agents, is radically altered by Christianity, not least in its willingness to desert the family and the city as the twin loci of memorialization, continuity and status. To imagine the future is an ideologically charged and normative act that, however untimely, is always produced from within a particular time and place — and has its own purposiveness. Third, there are complex narrative modellings of how the future is conceived. The profoundly self-reflexive demand of Augustine to hear — to *get* — the word '*cras*' is articulated within the tradition of normative commentary (for which the sermon is the most performative type), while the retrospective narration of Odysseus enacts

14 *Conf.* 8 12 30.

a verbal journey backwards, a *nostos* of a sort, that constructs re-telling, with all its fractures and promises, as the necessary mode of future fame. Fourth, the very notion of the classical tradition is all too often used to disavow or veil the work of selection, partiality, and active preservation that forming a privileged, instrumental and normative relation with the past entails. Tradition is never self-evident nor fixed: the future of the past is under constant formation.

I stress these four points — and start with antiquity — in part because in many recent discussions of the future of classics as a discipline, it would seem that the complexity and variety of how classical antiquity itself imagines its own privileged future, projects and promotes an idea of itself as a tradition, and contests the fixity of its own past — in the present and in the future — has all too often been forgotten. And forgotten to the cost of the coherence and nuance of the important political and cultural arguments at stake. Irony is perhaps too feeble a word to capture the trivialization of the past that these shrill arguments about preservation and destruction of the classical tradition mobilize.

To approach the current debate, however, let us begin (again) in the nineteenth century, since it is so often the nineteenth century's perspective of classical antiquity that has prompted the discipline's twenty-first century debates and anxieties: it has become the past against which the future is to be articulated. And as with my discussion of antiquity, it must be noted from the start, that my comments must be restricted to stay within the scope of a short chapter.

It should not be a revelation that nineteenth-century intellectual life was dominated by an obsession with the biblical and classical pasts — and by the relationship between them.[15] When Prime Minister Gladstone wrote a pamphlet — it is over 100 pages long — expressing his views on how the Providence of God's plan and the Homeric poems could be reconciled, it sold 125.000 copies.[16] The sales figures of the second printing were boosted not just by Gladstone's status, but also by the excitement of Schliemann's recent discovery of Troy. Schliemann had toured Britain to lecture on his remarkable uncovering of Homer's city — it need not be a concern here about what he had actually excavated — and his public lectures were introduced by no less a personage than Prime Minister Gladstone. The discovery of Troy was international news and deserved the light of such political publicity. Similarly, when Tischendorf found the Codex Sinaiticus and whisked it out of the monastery of St Catherine to Russia and then to the British Museum, this too was a revelatory moment, not just for theologians but for an international public.[17] The facsimile of

15 Howard 2000; Bennett 2019; Goldhill and Jackson Ravenscroft 2023.

16 Gange 2009.

17 Goldhill 2021, 45–49.

the manuscript when it went on sale became a very expensive best-seller with tens of thousands of copies immediately purchased. Discoveries from antiquity changed how a broad public — and not just an elite academy — understood the past and their own present.

This palpable and extensive excitement about such discoveries was fostered because a *genealogical* link with the classical and biblical pasts was integral and formative in the cultural identity not just of Britain but of the nation states of Europe. This was an era obsessed with origins — from the origin of species in the hands of Darwin or Chambers, to the origin of the earth itself led by Lyell's geology, to personal psychological formation with Freud's primal scenes, to society's or civilization's origins thanks to Maine or Marx or Bagheot or Spencer or Buckle or Tylor...[18] At the most general level, ancient Greece and the Bible offered two differing, privileged models of an originary past through which the West could assert its sense of its own destined cultural and political primacy. Matthew Arnold — iconically — made Hellenism and Hebraism the twin and interlinked matrices through which modern British culture should be evaluated — and, for many people, he defined how a self-understanding in cultural terms could be expressed.[19] Ancestry grounded authority: religious, cultural, and political power was rooted in genealogy.

Now, there is an evident tension in this double trajectory of pagan (to use a Christian word) and Christian beginnings. The self-description of Christianity from its earliest days demanded its own disjunction from the values, culture and intellectual apparatus of the society of Greece and Rome in which it took shape (and, even more violently, from the Judaism in which it was born).[20] Yet from the start, too, there was a profound complicity both with the culture of Greek in which Christianity's founding texts were written and, as Christianity developed, with the structures of Roman power it took over to establish Christendom. When Gladstone wrote his pamphlet and his huge books trying to link Homer and the Bible, he was consciously contributing to this long tradition of attempted assimilation between the biblical and the classical pasts as authoritative origins. Such an assimilation proved deeply contentious — Gladstone was mocked by his learned contemporaries — but at every level in the search for authority, the past and which genealogies counted prompted bitter arguments. Catholics and Protestants fought furiously over the early church and the possibility of apostolic succession or reformation. Nation

18 Goldhill 2020a; 2023.
19 DeLaura 1969; Anderson 1971; Collini 1994; Goldhill 2002, 213–231.
20 Becker and Reed 2003; Lieu 2003; Boyarin 2004; Dunn 2006; Carleton Paget and Lieu 2017; Vinzent 2019; Sandwell 2021.

states competed over their privileged descent as Aryans. Genealogy from the past was a battleground of politics, identity, culture — because it mattered so intently.

The same cannot be said of today. To claim privileged descent from antiquity — biblical or classical — would be to marginalize oneself as an extremist, a nationalist who has not learnt from the history of the twentieth century and its painful demonstration of the dangers of such ideology, an ideology that the Second World War, as much an any intellectual argument, has made unacceptable. True, there are groups which do make such claims, and sometimes do so very loudly, and use such loudness to effect instrumental political interventions, but mainstream culture constructs the past otherwise. For contemporary western thought, I would argue, *difference* rather than genealogy is the dominant mode of self-understanding. The past of antiquity has indeed become another country, not the motherland which nourishes us. So whereas for Victorian Protestants what happened in the first century in Palestine was crucial to understanding how contemporary Christianity should be shaped (the argument from genealogy), such anxieties play almost no role in today's Christian polemics. Even professional classicists will hesitate — rightly — to claim that democracy simply finds its roots in antiquity, but, rather, will immediately point out the exclusion of women and slaves, the difference between direct and representative democracy, the question of scale, and the huge rupture between antiquity and now, concluding that the centuries in which democracy was absent and denigrated as a political system means that modern democracy is an invention of modernity, even and especially when it looks back to Athens in the fifth century for its justification (or mystification). When John Stewart Mill declares that the battle of Marathon as an event in history is more important in British history than the battle of Hastings, his demand to see Britain lined up with ancient Greece against the East can seem in today's society quaint at best and damagingly Orientalist at worst. Or just wrong. (It is less often noted that this much-quoted remark was made in a review of George Grote's field-changing history of Greece, and is a knowing intervention in liberal politics and its appropriation of Greek democracy.)[21] The otherness of antiquity was already part of the nineteenth-century idealism of ancient Greece (ancient Greece was always lost and longed for, even in the genealogical argument). When men who desired men read Plato, and found a model for their own sexuality, it was because they could idealise ancient Greece as a lost and ideal place.[22] But even that idealism will inevitably look painfully naïve to contemporary eyes, more attuned to hierarchies of power and the complex history of sexuality.

21 *Edinburgh Review* Oct. 1846, 283. For the politics, see Turner 1981.

22 Dowling 1994 remains seminal. For further bibliography, see Goldhill 2016a, 315–317, to which can be added Eastlake 2019; Butler 2022.

Even in intellectual history, where it is possible to write that philosophy is 'a series of footnotes to Plato' or that 'the entirety of philosophy is conceived on the basis of its Greek source', what follows from such claims is not a simple glorification of Greek writing as a model to follow but a critique of the buried life of concepts — or a more challenging historicization of how ideas travel.[23] Paradigmatically for the nineteenth century, Richard Wagner saw his 'Music of the Future' (*Zukunftsmusik*) as a re-invention of a classical past with which he was in a longing and ruptured genealogical link. The future, his future, needed this genealogy. He declared he would give years of his life to experience one day at the festival of the Great Dionysia in fifth-century Athens.[24] Most modern classicists would worry about the lack of coffee, aspirins and their mobile phone. Genealogy from antiquity has been largely replaced by difference from antiquity.

Now, I start with this very general map not simply to show that contemporary western society has its own particular way of exploring how and why the past matters to it.[25] After all, every era has its strategies of forgetting or re-articulating a relationship with a past or with pasts. Between different times and different communities, there are multiple, different ways of engaging with antiquity, for sure. Rather, I want to explore current public, historical understanding of why or how classical antiquity can or should matter, and suggest that debates in this arena have depended on some profound losses in terms of self-understanding, losses that stem from trivializing the complexity of the past and its view of the future — as we look forward. If we do want to discuss the future of classics, it is essential to understand its pasts — please observe that plural — and how such pasts are worked into the present to imagine a future.

So can we imagine a nineteenth-century past in a more productive way than is currently so prevalent? Can we investigate with more self-conscious attentiveness how our own contemporary desires work to construct the nineteenth century we need?

I wish to open discussion (again) by asking whether the *excitement* of understanding the ancient world has disappeared. That is, have we lost the thrill and sense of deep significance that invested the nineteenth century's passionate engagement with the antiquity that grounded their values and imagination of the future? Does the loss of a privileged genealogical link with the classical past mean that classical antiquity can no longer have the significance it held in the nineteenth century? In some ways, the answer is bound to be in the affirmative: in general

23 Whitehead 1979, 39; Derrida 1978, 81.

24 Goldhill 2011, 125–152.

25 Koselleck 2004.

terms, classics no longer holds the place in the academy and in the popular imagination that it did hold in the nineteenth century; but the passion for why the past matters has not necessarily and wholly dissipated, though I do think that some of the dominant current forms of excitement reveal a worrying confusion, and, indeed, ignorance. There have been a set of recent public arguments about classical antiquity and its teaching in the future that culminated — at least for now, as I write — in a bruhaha in America and subsequently across Europe, about the Princeton Department of Classics, and specifically its willingness to allow some students to complete courses in classics without the ancient languages, and, further, about the claim attributed to Dan-el Padilla-Peralta, professor of Roman history at Princeton, that if classics cannot get its act together with regard to its chequered history concerning elitism, racism and imperialism — exclusionary privilege — then it would be better to 'burn it down'.[26] It is a rather depressing inevitability that the press through which this story has been disseminated, has exaggerated, twisted and distorted all sorts of aspects of the case and taken considerable advantage of the fact that Professor Padilla-Peralta is not only not white but also came to America as an undocumented immigrant.[27] The story prompted a lot of words about the future of classics — in the context of a self-promoting war over culture and its values — and I will take it as my case study for what follows. It will show how the lack of historical understanding dangerously distorts the future of classics.

Dan-el Padilla-Peralta is for sure not the only classicist involved with an attempt to ask classicists to look at the history of their discipline with a critical gaze, especially with regard to its contingent or endemic connections with the practices of social and political exclusion. Nor is Princeton the only department to engage in such debates. But the combination of the facts that Dan-el Padilla-Peralta is not white and that Princeton is Princeton, allowed the press to indulge its obsession with privilege, on the one hand, and race, on the other — a heady and toxic brew. The case became embroiled with wider arguments about race on campus, other members of the classics department, and its bitterness swung precipitously into the wider public media. Simple and obvious rejoinders were easily lost in the noise: how many departments of classics allowed courses in translation, how many great books courses did precisely the same, why was it useful in an American educational economy to attract student numbers, and to move towards higher technical achievements only in graduate school, how many classicists *did* graduate with excellent language skills, how many more could benefit from such a course and in

26 For a range of such arguments, see Culham and Edmunds 1989; Nussbaum 1997; 2010; Jenkins 2015; Hanink 2017; Zuckerberg 2018; Postclassicisms Collective 2020; Adler 2020; Spawforth 2023.
27 Pedilla Peralta 2015.

what ways? There are, of course, few universities in the world that have not had such discussions within their departments of classics.

Yet what is perhaps most striking for a discussion about the future of the discipline is how little focused attention was actually given to the history of the discipline. In particular, commentators on all sides studiously avoided how regular and how heated such discussions about the future of the importance of ancient Greece and Rome have been. Indeed, much as preservation of an inheritance and longing for a lost past are endemic to classicism, so too, it seems, are contestations of such ideology, contestations that are often violent in their extreme rhetoric and desire for change. I will focus shortly on the nineteenth century when the disciplinarization of the subject in its modern form was shaped, but first we should remember that the nineteenth century was certainly not the first moment of such vitriolic argument.

The violence of the Reformation in Europe has multiple vectors of causality, but one such vector was the rediscovery of ancient Greek sources for the Christian bible by western scholars. Erasmus was a key figure in this intellectual rediscovery.[28] His watchword — which became the banner of the reformers — was *ad fontes*: a biblical injunction in itself to return to the sources, the sources of truth, at one level, and, at another, the Greek sources of scripture. Learning Greek became an essential project of any serious reformation scholar, supported in the republic of letters by each other's efforts. The revelations of such a movement found a touchpaper in the first words of the Gospel of John: what did *Logos* mean? Erasmus retranslated the Gospels into Latin from the Greek text, and his changes to the Vulgate, the standard and much-loved version attributed to Jerome, caused shock and outrage. Instead of *in principio erat verbum*, he wrote *in principio erat sermo*. Perhaps even more shockingly, he could find no authoritative manuscript of Paul that included the one crucial sentence that was the proof text for the notion of the Trinity — the so-called Comma Johanneum (1 John 5:7), and therefore deleted it from his text. This change seemed to its opponents to threaten the whole establishment of church and state — to threaten the basis of personal belief and religious truth.[29] It is in such a fevered context that his religious opponents could insist that learning Greek was 'the fount of all evil' — to return *ad fontes* was in their eyes to open the 'fount' of sin. Indeed, to know Greek was declared 'a heresy'![30] That is, to study the language in which the Gospels were written would lead to eternal damnation. To study Greek would lead

28 Goldhill 2002, 14–59; Jardine 1993.

29 MacDonald 2016.

30 Rummel 1989, 132; Erasmus *Antibarbari CWE* 23: 32; *EE* 4: 400–411 [*Ep.* 1167].

you to burn in the fires of hell for ever. Martyrs indeed were burned at the stake for their philological commitments.[31] For self-preservation… burn it down!

The quarrel between the ancients and the moderns in seventeenth-century France did not result immediately in the sort of physical violence in which the Reformation was born. Yet it should not be forgotten that this *querelle* was not merely an aesthetic spat in the salons of Paris. Rather, it went to the heart of how the state was to be represented — how French cultural identity was to be understood. The figure around whom the *querelle* was articulated, after all, was Louis XIV. The moderns claimed that the triumphs and perfected rule of Louis and the church with its perfected religion surpassed everything in antiquity and thus a new language and new literature was needed. As Perrault famously wrote: *La docte antiquité dans toute sa durée/ A l'égal de nos jours ne fut point éclairée*, 'Learned antiquity in all its time was never enlightened to equal our days'.[32] Modernity claimed enlightenment for itself. What's more, France's new literary institutions would be under the control of the state and would speak the language of the state. The 'ancients' argued that the test of time, embodied in the status of the classics, was the proper route of evaluation. The very image of the state with an absolute monarch at its head was at stake, and, with it, the church's dominance over the narratives of the past. When Karl Marx wrote that 'the French Revolution was enacted in Roman dress', he was also marking that the *querelle* had a long afterlife, and that the rejection of the power of the monarchy in France inevitably turned to antiquity for its ideological authority — as the citizens cried 'burn it down'.

In recent public debates on the future of classics, it has become a determinative vector of the heated rhetoric that classics in the nineteenth century was complicit with racism, imperialism and elitism. It is not hard to demonstrate such points with detailed readings of nineteenth-century texts, nor hard indeed to show the consequences of such texts and of the learning that subtend them, although such detailed readings are surprisingly rare in the debates. Stereotypes are easier to bandy. I have had my go at uncovering the richness and complexity of such writing through the Protestant histories of the Jews; Charles Kingsley's racism; genealogical claims of classical authority; and at greatest length, the hundreds of novels following on from Bulwer Lytton's *Last Days of Pompeii*.[33] I have argued too that classical Greece provided a model of political revolution that over the century was tempered and controlled by the increasing institutionalization and disciplinarization of the study

31 For the exemplary case of van Flekwyk, see Goldhill 2002, 31–32.

32 Perrault's poem *Le siècle de Louis le Grand*, read at the Academie Française, and then published in 1687.

33 Goldhill 2011, 153–244; 2016b; 2020a; 2020b; 2023.

of antiquity — though a promise of sexual revolution based on antiquity grew.[34] Greece, through its imagination of another world, offered to idealists and reformers a resource to conceptualize transformation, not conservatism. Here, too, is a source of the excitement with which classics was invested in the nineteenth century: it became a battleground of conceptualizing cultural and social transformation.

Yet what is often forgotten is the degree to which the place of classics in the curriculum and in the public imagination was *challenged*. Learning Greek was attacked as the epitome of useless knowledge in a century which adored the useful.[35] The place of classics in the curriculum should be expunged, cried the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Robert Lowe, Oxford educated classicist, because it is useless.[36] Henry Sidgwick, the famous reforming philosopher, who gave his name to the current Cambridge Humanities Campus, the Sidgwick Site, declared that the university should positively 'exclude Greek' from the University curriculum. William Sellar, the Oxford-educated professor of classics at St Andrews, chipped in 'No liberal mind will regret [its] abolition'.[37] Even Matthew Arnold, prophet of Hellenism, thought Greek should be removed from the curriculum, because it blocked access to education for so many. These are not marginal figures: a leading politician, leading public intellectuals, a professional classicist at the height of his career, all argue for the dismantling of classics as it is taught, studied and valued in Victorian society. Burn it down…

Classicists have been threatening the existence of their own field for centuries — not because they want the field to disappear but because they want it to *change*. Both Sidgwick and Sellar were passionate liberal educational reformers. And *transformation* is exactly what Padilla Peralta was encouraging and why he was both lionized and excoriated.[38] The point is at one level a simple one: although tradition often represents itself — masquerades — as stable, immutable, uncontroversial, there has in fact been a long history of often bitter, violent and society-changing argument about what the classical tradition means and what its status is, in education, culture, self-understanding. And so, for us now, too — rightly.

The claim of tradition — a commonplace in education as in religion — acts upon society to keep things as they are. Tradition is not a given, but always needs to be constructed, asserted, maintained — performed. It is a way of authoritatively locating oneself in the present by determining that such an authority, such a sense

34 Goldhill 2002.
35 Goldhill 2002, 178–245.
36 Goldhill 2002, 195–213.
37 Sidgwick 1867, 141; Sellar 1867.
38 See Padilla Peralta 2021.

of placement, comes from a historically privileged continuity: a line, an ancestry, a promise. Tradition not only presents the past as self-evident but brings with it a set of normative claims about value, status and belonging. Tradition is how cultural ideology writes its history.

Tradition becomes a matter of debate when *fitting in* has become a pressing issue; when rupture from the past demands attention and produces dissent; when cultural ideology begins to fracture. Then tradition becomes turbulent. A stimulus to conflict and a place for conflict, rather than a strut and stay of belonging. Dan-el Padilla Peralta's insistence on the need for change (and he is far from alone in this) is because simply to continue in the same way as in the past has become intolerable, because the established — traditional — privilege of education comes at too great, too *damaging* a cost to too many underprivileged members of society, to society as a whole. Classicists cannot claim simply to be curators of the heritage of the past — as if it were a straightforward business to declare what does count about the past and who, then, will be allowed entrance to the museum of antiquity, and at what cost, and who will be its gatekeepers.[39]

The professional discipline of classics can and *should* take a lead in this project of much needed transformation. But to make this transformation possible, a properly nuanced history of classics as a discipline is also needed and a properly nuanced history of classics as a discipline should make tradition anything but self-evident. In much of the current discussion of the future of classics, the nineteenth century has emerged in a naïve, blanched image, an oversimplified negative picture that fits the political case to be made. The complexity of how the nineteenth century explored the value of the past for its contemporary politics is replaced by the self-serving and smugly certain assertion of our modern transcendent difference.

Antiquity has changed and still is changing; the study of antiquity has changed and is still changing; how we understand the relation between antiquity and the study of antiquity has changed and is still changing. If we do want to influence the future of classics it does require us to understand the multiple and changing pasts that make up classics as a tradition of scholarship, its complexity, conflicts and development. We need to understand how antiquity imagined its future. To oversimplify the nineteenth century is to project a self-serving image of the past, which can only oversimplify our own investments and engagements in the present. The self-critique and self-awareness I am advocating requires a certain humbleness, on the one hand — a humbleness that recognizes that we too are likely to appear the mistaken forefathers of a new understanding in the future. It should stop us being too self-righteous. At least *ideally* it should. On the other hand, it is an intellectual demand

39 On the history of the term heritage, see Swenson 2013.

that we acknowledge the need to comprehend the *situatedness* of scholars in the past and today, as best we can: such self-critique is the beginning of understanding others.[40] How we write our own past can also reveal our failings and misapprehensions as well as our triumphant transcendence of the errors of the past. If we, as classicists, want to get the past as right as we can — and I am happy with this sentence as an opening salvo; of course 'right for whom?', 'right how?', and so forth remain insistent questions — nonetheless if we do think it is important to get the past of antiquity as right as possible, we have the same duty to get the more immediate pasts as right as possible too. That way we might approach the future in a more informed and less shrill, self-serving and un-self-aware manner — that recognizes how the future of classics has repeatedly been and must remain an unending and contentious question.

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40 For the term situatedness see Postclassicisms Collective 2020, 144–160.

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Douglas Cairns

Hubris, Ancient and Modern

Abstract: Hubris is increasingly theorized in disciplines such as psychology and business studies as a term of art with real explanatory power, providing opportunities for dialogue between ancient and modern theories and concepts. Not only do ancient and modern hubris share a solid conceptual core, but dialogue between ancient and modern conceptions can be productive in making us reflect on our profession as classicists and the role of that profession in our current predicaments as citizens of increasingly polarized and unequal societies.

Keywords: hubris, inequality, meritocracy, business studies, psychology

Hubris[1] is still with us — in so many ways: whatever the news agenda, one can almost guarantee that commentators will reach for the ancient Greek concept as a way of diagnosing the failings of leadership that underpin contemporary threats, crises, and catastrophes. It was only a matter of time before someone applied the term to the attitude of UK government advisor, Dominic Cummings, in expecting the British public to believe that, in violation of lockdown restrictions imposed to check the spread of Covid-19, he drove to a beauty spot in northern England to "test his eyesight".[2] According to UCL psychologist Robert West, a member of the UK government's expert advisory group on behavioral science, the Cummings fiasco was "playing out like a Greek tragedy with the protagonists trapped by their own proclivities to self-destruct — in his case by his hubris and inability to say sorry". In a more reflective vein, Yuval Noah Harari hoped that the Covid-19 pandemic would (but feared that it would not) engender humility rather than hubris

1 For the purposes of this article, I shall use hubris, no italics, for both the ancient concept and the modern. I draw freely on two much larger contributions to Cairns, Bouras, and Sadler-Smith 2024. Both this paper and the larger project with which it belongs have benefited greatly from two sources of funding, (a) an Advanced Grant awarded by the European Research Council (ADG 74108, Honour in Classical Greece) and (b) an Anneliese Maier Research Prize awarded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. I thank both the ERC and the AvH for their support. I am grateful also to Pia Campeggiani, Mirko Canevaro, Kleanthis Mantzouranis, and Eugene Sadler-Smith for much helpful discussion, to Antje Junghanß, Bernhard Kaiser, and Dennis Pausch for their support in holding the AvH award, and to the organizers of the Athens conference on "the future of the past" for the opportunity to present the paper before such a distinguished audience.
2 *Guardian* 25 May 2020: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/may/25/cummings-row-risks-breach-of-public-trust-says-psychology-expert (last visit June 13th 2024).

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in bringing human beings in general and scientists in particular to accept their intellectual and existential limitations.[3] As for US politics, "Hicks, hubris, and not a lot of masks" was the *Guardian* headline that greeted the news that Donald Trump had himself caught Covid.[4] Back in the UK, as Boris Johnson's administration became engulfed by a number of scandals, initially arising from the administration's promotion of and attendance at numerous parties while the rest of the country was locked down, *Guardian* columnist, Marina Hyde, commented: "Like me, you probably cannot BELIEVE that after hubris comes nemesis. If only there'd been some clue to this in all that Ancient Greek stuff Boris Johnson is forever wanging on about."[5] As Johnson's mendacious regime gave way to the incompetence of Liz Truss in the summer of 2022, the chaos created by chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng's disastrous mini-budget brought another flurry of hubris-headlines.[6] The comparative absence of such headlines under Truss's successor, Rishi Sunak, might perhaps be counted as one of that beleaguered administration's few successes.

One response to the proliferation of references to hubris in contemporary media would be to dismiss the phenomenon as merely a reflex, a clichéd slogan, a fossilized and garbled version of the ancient concept that represents no more than an isolated fragment of an ancient value-system in modern political discourse.[7] And yet, in contemporary disciplines such as psychology and business studies, hubris is increasingly theorized as a term of art with (what its proponents believe to be) real explanatory power. A crucial catalyst here has been the British politician, Lord David Owen, former Labor Foreign Secretary and founder of the Social Democratic Party. In 2007 Owen published *The Hubris Syndrome: Bush, Blair and the Intoxication of Power*, focusing largely on the role of Bush and Blair in the invasion of Iraq in 2003.[8] This was followed in 2008 and 2009 by two articles on the same subject, the longer of the two written jointly with Duke University psy-

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3 *Guardian* 20 April 2020: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/apr/20/yuval-noah-harari-will-coronavirus-change-our-attitudes-to-death-quite-the-opposite, (last visit June 13th 2024). On the difficulty of realizing this aspiration, see Cartwright and Ray 2023.

4 *Guardian* 2 October 2020: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/oct/02/hicks-hubris-masks-week-donald-trump-caught-covid, (last visit June 13th 2024).

5 *Guardian* 17 December 2021: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/dec/17/party-hangover-boris-johnson-prime-minister-leadership-contest, (last visit June 13th 2024).

6 E.g. "Kwasi Kwarteng was logical choice as chancellor but hubris was his downfall", *Guardian* 14 October 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/oct/14/kwasi-kwarteng-logical-choice-chancellor-hubris-downfall, (last visit June 13th 2024).

7 Along those lines, see Vincent Azoulay in *Le Monde*, 29 December 2018 (https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2018/12/29/aujourd-hui-l-hubris-designe-le-comportement-d-emmanuel-macron-de-carlos-ghosn-ou-de-l-homme-face-a-la-nature_5403433_3232.html, last visit June 13th 2024).

8 Joined more recently by Owen 2018 on Donald Trump.

chiatrist, Jonathan Davidson, and diagnosing the syndrome in US presidents and UK prime ministers over the previous century. This body of work led in 2011 to Owen's foundation of the Daedalus Trust, dedicated to exploring "for the public benefit the effects on decision making of leaders in all walks of life who suffered personality change — commonly known as hubris — while in office and who in the words of Bertrand Russell became 'intoxicated by power'".[9]

In specifying the symptomatology of the proposed "hubris syndrome", Owen and Davidson give the following checklist of symptoms:[10]

1. A narcissistic propensity to see their world primarily as an arena in which to exercise power and seek glory; NPD.6
2. A predisposition to take actions which seem likely to cast the individual in a good light — i.e. in order to enhance image; NPD.1
3. A disproportionate concern with image and presentation; NPD.3
4. A messianic manner of talking about current activities and a tendency to exaltation; NPD.2
5. An identification with the nation or organization to the extent that the individual regards his/her outlook and interests as identical; (unique)
6. A tendency to speak in the third person or use the royal "we"; (unique)
7. Excessive confidence in the individual's own judgement and contempt for the advice or criticism of others; NPD.9
8. Exaggerated self-belief, bordering on a sense of omnipotence, in what they personally can achieve; NPD.1 and 2 combined
9. A belief that rather than being accountable to the mundane court of colleagues or public opinion, the court to which they answer is: History or God; NPD.3
10. An unshakable belief that in that court they will be vindicated; (unique)
11. Loss of contact with reality; often associated with progressive isolation; APD 3 and 5
12. Restlessness, recklessness and impulsiveness; (unique)
13. A tendency to allow their "broad vision", about the moral rectitude of a proposed course, to obviate the need to consider practicality, cost or outcomes; (unique)

9 See "Note to all visitors to this site" at http://www.daedalustrust.com (last visit June 13th 2024).

10 Owen and Davidson 2009, 1398; simplified at http://www.daedalustrust.com/about-hubris/. See also Sadler-Smith 2019, 54–68. Abbreviations indicate where a given symptom is shared with a disorder recognized in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (fourth edition, 2000); APD = Anti-Social Personality Disorder; HPD =Histrionic Personality Disorder; NPD = Narcissistic Personality Disorder. For a recent statement in favor of the adoption of the Owen-Davidson checklist by psychiatrists, see Selten 2023.

14. Hubristic incompetence, where things go wrong because too much self-confidence has led the leader not to worry about the nuts and bolts of policy; HPD.5

In the course of its seven-year existence, the Daedalus Trust worked with the Philosophy Group at the Maudsley Hospital in London (a charity that promotes dialogue between psychiatrists and philosophers on the understanding of mental illness), but also with scholars in business studies and in particular with Surrey Business School. Business and management studies in particular has given rise to a further current of contemporary research on hubris, focusing on its effects in senior leadership and management. The roots of this approach go back to a seminal article by Richard Roll of UCLA's Management School entitled "The hubris hypothesis of corporate takeovers", published in 1986.[11] Since then the number of published articles, chapters, and books on the topic has shown a consistent upward trend. A flurry of studies in the 2010s has seen hubris research in business and management blossom into a synthesis that combines theoretical work, case studies, and empirical data (both quantitative and qualitative) and includes significant inputs from the behavioral and brain sciences, as well as other novel research areas such as computational linguistics. Business researchers have identified hubris as a significant factor in leadership derailments and corporate failures in contemporary business and management and sought to offer suggestions on how its destructive effects might be obviated. Building on the insights of psychology and behavioral economics into phenomena such as the winner effect,[12] optimism bias,[13] hyper core self-evaluation,[14] self-enhancement,[15] the Dunning-Kruger effect,[16] self-aggrandizement and epistemic hubris,[17] the business studies litera-

11 Roll 1986. Cf. Kahneman 2011, 258; Sadler-Smith 2019, 71–73.

12 First observed in Landau 1951. See Robertson 2012 and cf. Sadler-Smith 2019, 42–44.

13 Sharot 2011; O'Sullivan 2015; cf. Kahneman 2011, 245–265, esp. p. 255: "Most of us view the world as more benign than it really is, our own attributes as more favourable than they truly are, and the goals we adopt as more achievable than they are likely to be. We also tend to exaggerate our ability to forecast the future, which fosters optimistic overconfidence. In terms of its consequences for decisions, the optimistic bias may well be the most significant of the cognitive biases."

14 Hiller and Hambrick 2005; Simsek, Heavey, and Veiga 2010.

15 See Sedikides and Gregg 2008.

16 By which (to quote the title of Kruger and Dunning 1999) "difficulties in recognizing one's own incompetence lead to inflated self-assessments". For a topical application, see Polly Toynbee on Liz Truss's premiership, *Guardian* 6 February 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/feb/06/leftwing-economic-establishment-liz-truss-small-state (last visit June 13th 2024) (and cf. n. 6 above).

17 See Eckhaus and Sheaffer 2018; Asad and Sadler-Smith 2020; Sadler-Smith and Cojuharenco 2021.

ture — as summarized and analyzed in a recent book by Sadler-Smith (2019) — is beginning to assemble large amounts of data linking CEOs' and leaders' personality traits, the trajectories of their businesses in the marketplace and the nature and outcomes of their decisions. These data demonstrate relationships between power, prior successes, praise, self-confidence, the tendency to under-estimate risk, detrimental business practices and decisions, and unintended negative business outcomes that are certainly not trivial for the individual concerned, the organizations they lead, or even entire industries and economies.[18]

These modern identifications of the phenomenon of hubris raise two questions: (a) what claims lie behind them and (b) how does modern hubris relate to the ancient concept? First, it is clear that in enumerating symptoms and classifying them according to whether they are unique to the hubris syndrome or shared with other syndromes such as narcissistic personality disorder, histrionic personality disorder, or anti-social personality disorder, the Owen-Davidson approach is rooted in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*). To that extent, it is vulnerable also to the generic criticisms that the *DSM* routinely attracts — for example, that it is a product not of the identification of distinct, separate, biologically rooted entities, but of the ways that professional practice in specific historical and cultural contexts reifies and medicalizes complex patterns and processes of human social behavior, effacing the social and political in favor of the subjective and personal.[19]

The business studies approach draws on this tendency, but is more multifactorial and open-textured, drawing on data from a range of sources that might help confirm its hypotheses.[20] This approach relates hubris to a variety of securely attested cognitive biases and personality traits, and though it draws on hypotheses about the bases for these traits in the body and in the brain, its primary orientation is practical — about observing patterns of behavior, their causes, and their consequences, as they play out in narratives of business processes, with a view to guarding against the dangers of certain patterns whose recurrence is empirically verifiable. But in fact, though both approaches believe that there are features of the hubristic individual that we can pin down and identify as typical, neither is *just* about the classification of allegedly distinct personality types — they are also

18 An additional, though less prominent, subcurrent of research — related to the business studies approach in some respects — is the recourse to the notion of hubris in philosophical accounts of intellectual arrogance and the absence of epistemic humility. See e.g. Tanesini 2023. For hubris as the absence of epistemic humility in science and academia, see Cartwright and Ray 2023.

19 See e.g. Greenberg 2013 on *DSM* 5.

20 See, e.g., the range of approaches canvassed in Sadler-Smith 2019.

about how these personality types manifest themselves in action and especially how they affect decision making in particular social (political, institutional) contexts. Despite its focus on subjective symptoms and behavioral tendencies, Owen and Davidson's hubris syndrome — described as "a disorder of the possession of power" — is a personality change that takes place in certain specific circumstances. There is an interaction between character and situation, and the contextual element is in fact central to Owen and Davidson's definition. The business studies approach is, if anything, yet more open to the idea that characteristic features of hubris may be the product of social and cultural factors, and perhaps also to the suggestion that the identification of the syndrome itself is at least partly a matter of what we attend to and the patterns we construct to explain it.

The importance of context suggests something of fundamental importance about hubris, both ancient and modern. Whatever the dispositional, psychological, and biological underpinnings of the ancient or the modern phenomenon, we (both ancients and moderns) locate our conventional, discursively constituted understandings of such states in wider patterns that are fundamentally narrative-like in form. The operative model for the interpretation of ancient or modern hubris should be, as it is in the case of emotion (ancient or modern), that of the script, a prototypical narrative or set of narratives of how the phenomenon in question is regarded as playing out in practice and in context.[21] One might note, for example, that not only does ancient hubris have the prototypical, script-like character that Aristotle (in Book 2 of the *Rhetoric*) attributes to emotions, but it is also, in that account, a script within a script, namely a script for a form of slighting or disrespect (*oligōria*) that is one of the causes of anger.

If it is better to think of both ancient and modern hubris as scripts that *include* subjective dispositions as a factor rather than simply *as* subjective dispositions and nothing else, then that is already one point of overlap between them. A more specific example of significant overlap lies in the way that modern hubris is associated with various forms of cognitive bias that involve asymmetrical tendencies to privilege self over others in ideation, evaluation, and behavior. Sadler-Smith, for example (2019, 83), cites a study in which 81% of a sample of 2000 entrepreneurs engaged in business start-ups rated their chances of success as 7 out of 10, and no fewer than 33% rated them at 10 out of 10, in spite of data suggesting that in the UK and the US fewer than 50% of new businesses survive for more than five years. This is a bias not just towards optimism, but also about the extent to which our own qualities, talents, and efforts are sufficient to determine outcomes. Biases of that sort are pervasive and widely attested. More general forms include

21 See Cairns 2022, 7 and *passim* (with further references in 7 n. 15).

the "better than average effect",[22] the phenomenon (mentioned above) of "self-enhancement" — thinking more positively about oneself than objective criteria would warrant (for example the tendency to rate ourselves as better than others or better than average on a range of qualities) — or the even more general Fundamental Attribution Error (Actor-Observer Bias),[23] by which we tend to regard others' behavior (especially their faults) as deliberate, typical, and expressive of their overall character, by contrast with our own faults, which we tend to regard as isolated, atypical, and situationally conditioned, together with its corollary, the so-called Self-Serving Bias, according to which our successes are our own work, while our failures are situational.

An important point here is that the usage of hubris itself (especially in ancient, but also in modern contexts) bears out the existence of such biases: ancient hubris, in particular, is a label one applies to others' behavior, not to one's own. Individuals rarely predicate it of themselves.[24] This is most likely true also of modern hubris — none of the "textbook" cases enumerated in the literature seems to involve a person openly acknowledging hubris on their own part. In modern as in ancient contexts hubris seems to be an *observer*'s evaluation or a *victim*'s accusation. This is one reason why the search, in some of the modern business studies literature, for the tipping point at which positive and justifiable self-confidence becomes excessive — the identification of objectively verifiable criteria for a condition regarded, fundamentally, as a matter of individual psychology rather than relationality — may be misplaced. Hubris is not only a narrative scenario; it is a narrative that is always focalized from a certain point of view. It is virtually a given of the script as narrated that the hubris in question is someone else's. Hu-

22 See Alicke and Govorun 2005.

23 See Jones and Harris 1967; Jones and Nisbett 1971; Ross 1977.

24 Characters in drama describe their own behavior in such a way that *others* will readily construe it as hubris (e.g. Menelaus at Soph. *Aj.* 1087–1090, with the chorus-leader's comment at 1091–1092) or confess remorsefully to behavior that has been or might be regarded as hubris by others (e.g. Men. *Epit.* 895–899, 908–922). Occasionally, they also accept others' charges of hubris in a way that, in context, highlights their own shamelessness (e.g. Creon at Soph. *OC* 883, with Oedipus' comment at 960–961). The disguised Dionysus is an exception in the matter-of-fact way in which he describes the hubris with which he has humiliated Pentheus at Eur. *Bacch.* 616: here it is unclear whether we are intended to accept the double standard by which the hubris of gods is — unlike that of mortals — beyond criticism or to conclude that gods fall short of human moral standards. With Dionysus' lack of compunction we might contrast the shame of Euripides' Electra (*El.* 900–902) with respect to her desire to engage in conduct — νεκροὺς ὑβρίζειν — that she knows is widely condemned.

bris is less an objective label for a specific and determinate set of factors than someone's *interpretation* of another's attitudes and behavior.[25]

There are, of course, some significant differences between ancient and modern hubris,[26] but also many points of overlap. Chief among these are over-valuation of one's own importance, powers, and abilities and a corresponding disregard for the constraints imposed by the claims of others; a tendency to minimize the role of external factors, especially luck, in one's success; and a corresponding tendency over-confidently to underestimate risk. The tendency to minimize both risk and the role of luck in success, for example, is prominently thematized in some of Aristotle's remarks in the *Rhetoric*. The discussions of fear and pity in 2.5 and 2.8, for example, consider not only the dispositions that give rise to these emotions, but also those that inhibit them. Both fear and pity require a sense that we are vulnerable to misfortune (fear: 1382b29–30; pity: 1385b16–17); people who believe that their current good fortune makes them invulnerable are disposed not to fear (1382b33–1383a3) or to pity (1385b19–21, 29–31), but to hubris. Fear requires a sense that one is potentially in a position to suffer; those who are (or who think they are) exceptionally fortunate do not have that sense, but are instead *hubristai*, contemptuous of others and over-confident, typically as a result of wealth, strength, abundance of friends, or power (1382b33–1383a3). Pity likewise requires a sense of one's own vulnerability (1385b17), with the result that those who think they are exceptionally fortunate do not show pity, but behave with hubris (*hubrizein*, 1385b21); these are people who think that they possess all good things, and so think they are not in a position to suffer anything untoward (1385b21–3). To be in this "hubristic condition" (*diathesis*) is precisely to think that nothing can possibly go wrong (1385b30–1).

The *Politics* also recognizes this tendency (4.11, 1295b6–11):

> When someone is exceedingly beautiful or strong or nobly born or rich, or the opposite — i.e. exceedingly poor or weak or lacking in honour — it is difficult to follow reason; for the former tend rather to become *hubristai* and large-scale offenders, while the latter tend excessively towards petty crime and low-level depravity, and their acts of injustice are in the first case caused by hubris and in the second by villainy.

Here, hubris springs from a mistaken belief that qualities that one possesses by luck or accident of birth are to be taken as signs of superior worth. In a similar

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25 This is a point that Aristotle makes clear not only by embedding his account of the hubris-script in his wider account of anger-scripts, but in his stipulation that anger is a response not simply to belittling *tout court* but to what the victim *construes* as belittling (*Rh.* 2.2, 1378a31).

26 See the introduction and many of the chapters in Cairns, Bouras, and Sadler-Smith 2024.

way, at 7.15, 1334a25–28, we are told that war compels people to be just and to show *sōphrosunē*, whereas enjoyment of good fortune and leisure in time of peace makes them *hubristai.* There is thus a relation between hubris, how well things are going for a person, and how likely that person thinks this is to continue that forms a direct point of comparison between ancient and modern hubris.

This tendency to minimize the role of luck and fortune, in both ancient and modern conceptions, leads to a complementary under-estimation of risk, precisely because it involves an over-estimation of the extent to which individuals are able to foresee and determine the outcomes of their actions and their futures. This tendency is central to the managerial explanations of hubris in the modern literature, but it is also fundamental to many traditional narratives of hubris in ancient literature. A prime example would be the presentation of Xerxes' expedition against Greece in both Aeschylus and Herodotus. For the ghost of Xerxes' father, Darius, in Aeschylus' *Persians*, the hubris of Xerxes and his followers culminates in acts of sacrilege, sacking temples and dishonoring the gods (807–813); but these acts derive from forms of over-confidence that Darius describes as "over-boastful thoughts" (827–828) that so far exceed human limitations that they arouse the anger of the gods (820; cf. 808). Their punishment will serve as a warning against such conduct for all human beings, "For hubris bursts out in bloom [*exanthein*] and bears as its fruit a crop of calamity [*atē*], from which it reaps an abundant harvest of tears" (821–822). Alert to that possibility, others should avoid the complacency and greed that have undone the Persians (824–826):

> Observing that such are the penalties [*epitimia*] for deeds like these, remember Athens and Greece: let no one waste great prosperity by despising his present fortune and lusting for more.

These strictures are directed at the Persian forces as whole, but Xerxes as leader of the expedition is also fully implicated (827–831):

> Zeus is indeed a chastiser of over-boastful thoughts [*phronēmata*], a hard assessor [*euthunos*].[27] Therefore, given that he lacks sense, instruct my son with well-reasoned admonitions to stop harming the gods with over-boastful boldness.

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27 The term *euthunos* refers to the Athenian practice of examining the conduct and probity of magistrates at the end of their term of office (on which see Fröhlich 2004). Aeschylus presents the moral universe whose norms the Persians have violated in the light of Athenian democratic institutions. One of the functions of this and many similar mechanisms in fifth- and fourth-century Athens was to limit the power of (and check the potential for hubris in) those who exercised prominent roles in civic and political life. Athenian democratic institutions in general

This explanation echoes throughout the play, even before it achieves explicit form in the pronouncements of the ghost — other characters also emphasize how the Persians have ignored the unpredictability of divine favor and the role of the gods in all human prosperity. The Messenger, for example, explains Xerxes' failure to suspect a divinely inspired reversal with reference to his confidence (372–373), which the Queen interprets as a tendency blindly to believe that things will always go well (601–602) — the same phenomenon that Darius describes, in his warning of the consequences of hubris, as "despising one's current fortune" (825).[28]

This pattern obtains also in Herodotus' account of the expedition. Xerxes' ambitions extend to the creation of a Persian empire that encompasses all the lands on which the sun shines, equaling "Zeus' heaven" in its extent (7.8γ1–2). He is confident that his and his nation's good fortune can only continue — god is guiding Persian destiny for the best, and the Persians themselves have only to follow (7.8α1). His uncle, Artabanus, sees the dangers: he notes that confidence does not always precede success (7.10α), and gives good grounds for caution (7.10α–δ) in the tendency of great armies to fall victim to smaller ones as a result of divine resentment (*phthonos*) of humans who think big (7.10ε). This plan, he adds later, "increases hubris" (7.16α2),[29] a verdict that is endorsed, after the expedition's final defeat, by the Athenian statesman, Themistocles, at 8.109.3: Greek victory was not achieved by human effort alone; rather, the gods and heroes resented (*phthonein*) that one man, an impious and wanton man, who committed gross acts of sacrilege, who actually lashed and bound the sea, should rule Asia and Europe. These are textbook cases of hubristic politics and hubristic leadership, as explored in recent discussions of the phenomenon in contemporary societies: we see (a) the

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sought to ensure that power was typically shared among individuals, that terms of office were limited, and that processes were in place to foster transparency and accountability. We might note that structures and institutions of this kind recognize that social and political conditions contribute to the situational and contextual aspects of hubris. For an overview of these and other aspects of classical Athenian democracy, see Hansen 1991.

28 Cf. Darius at 725, 739–42, with the chorus at 94–115, 158, 515–516, 921, the Queen at 161–164, 472–477, 724, the Messenger at 345–347, 353–354, 362, 454–455, and Xerxes himself at 909–912, 942–943.

29 When Artabanus reflects that his initial objections to Xerxes' project lay in the fact that it "increased hubris", he is, to be sure, commenting on a plan that took no account of the Greeks' rights to their independence, their autonomy, their martial prowess, or anything else. In that sense, the hubris of the Persian expedition dishonors the Greeks whose subjugation is the expedition's aim. But that is not the thrust of Artabanus' argument, conceived as an attempt to dissuade Xerxes. That argument, instead, focuses on the risks of over-reaching, the risks involved in assuming that there is no risk, that success to date is testimony to merit and that such success can only continue — a form of hubris that can also be qualified as "thinking big".

effect of previous success; (b) failure to recognize the role of luck in success; (c) megalomaniac ambitions and unrealistic beliefs that they can be achieved;[30] (d) a reckless attitude towards risk. They differ only in that, in these conventional Greek narratives, these illusions of control and of perpetual good fortune threaten boundaries between human and divine *timē* (honor) that the gods do not fail to police.

There is one additional factor: in downplaying the role of chance and minimizing the element of risk ancient and modern hubrists are also, implicitly or explicitly, inflating their own role in their success. They attribute their current and previous successes to personal qualities that they believe will ensure yet more success in future, mistaking luck for merit. That such a misconception would be a feature of the ideology called meritocracy, a term popularized by Michael Young's 1958 volume, *The Rise of the Meritocracy*, was part of the warning that Young's dystopian satire was originally intended to sound. But that warning went unheeded, and meritocracy became, with no irony whatever, a rallying cry of both left and right, the stated aim of Theresa May when she became UK Prime Minister in 2016, just as it had been of Tony Blair before and after his election, and of Bill Clinton and Barack Obama in the United States.[31] Recent years have seen a flurry of denunciations of meritocracy, from articles by commentators such as Kwame Anthony Appiah to monographs by James Bloodworth, Jo Littler, Daniel Markowits, and others, all emphasizing that the nightmare that Young foresaw has now come to pass.[32] The case against meritocracy is twofold: the argument that suggests itself most intuitively is that meritocracy does not achieve what it purports to achieve — entrenched forms of inequality ensure that some have many more and much greater opportunities to develop and demonstrate merit than others; meritocratic mechanisms can be gamed by those with wealth and power;

30 Cf. Plato's characterization of Alcibiades at *Alc.* 1, 105a–e, a passage that draws heavily on Herodotus' depiction of Xerxes and his ambitions in Book 7 of his *Histories*.

31 For Blair, Clinton, Obama and May, see Sandel 2020, 70 (with frequent recurrence esp. to Blair, Clinton and Obama, *passim*). For Young's own protest at Blair's use of the term, see "Down with meritocracy", *Guardian* 29 June 2001 (https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2001/jun/29/comment, last visit June 13th 2024).

32 Appiah's article is "The myth of meritocracy: who really gets what they deserve?", *Guardian* 19 October 2018 (https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/oct/19/the-myth-of-meritocracy-who-really-gets-what-they-deserve, last visit June 13th 2024). For book-length studies, see Bloodworth 2016; Littler 2018; Markowits 2019; Goodheart 2020; Major and Machin 2020; Sandel 2020; Todd 2021. For a more charitable interpretation of the notion as an unrealized ideal, see Mandler 2020, and for a critique of the anti-meritocratic critique and a defense of the principle and practice of meritocracy, see Wooldridge 2021.

the playing field of equal opportunity is never really level; and so on. The more fundamental argument is that, even if it were achievable, meritocracy would not be desirable, both because it is unjust and because it is socially divisive. Indeed, on this line of argument, meritocracy is socially divisive because it is unjust: it privileges some citizens over others and exalts certain skills and qualities over others — it does not treat all members of society as free and equal but sets winners against losers in ways that are inimical to the common good. Its tendencies are exclusive, elitist, and anti-democratic. In both its theoretical, ideal form and in the flawed, practical steps that governments and societies have taken to bring it about, meritocracy entrenches and perpetuates injustice. It is one of many distasteful ideologies that find essentialist reasons for extreme inequality.

The rise of meritocratic ideology has coincided with the increases in material inequality that have characterized in particular the UK and the US since the 1970s and with the financialization and deindustrialization of those economies in the same period. The myth that meritocracy obtains has coincided with a marked decline in the "social mobility" that meritocracy allegedly promotes.[33] Several of the critics of meritocracy point out that this has also brought a decline in recognition and respect for the traditional skills of working-class industrial communities.[34] But Michael Sandel in particular has described this in terms of hubris — indeed, as *meritocratic hubris*.[35] Meritocratic hubris generalizes the talents and skills in which merit supposedly lies as those that matter most of all in a society. It entails at best indifference towards and at worst contempt for those who allegedly fail to manifest those qualities.

Sandel's account deserves particular attention because it is the one contemporary application of hubris that really pays sufficient attention to the second-personal,[36] relational, socio-political aspects of the concept. Though the political-psychological approach to hubris, as championed by David Owen, and the business studies approach (as summarized by Sadler-Smith) do sometimes refer to the hubrist's contempt for others and their views, they rarely accord modern hubris the same degree of second-personal focus that is typical of ancient hubris — their versions of hubris do not fully accommodate Aristotle's (accurate) observation

33 See Major and Machin 2020, 18–24, 27–53.

34 See especially Goodheart 2020.

35 See Sandel 2020, 25, 30, 42, 44, 49, 89, 104, 120, 134, 144–145, 151, 177, 183. Cf. already Young [1958] 1994, 97.

36 By "second-personal" I refer to what Stephen Darwall has called the "second-person standpoint" (Darwall 2006, 2013a, 2013b), defined as "the perspective you and I take up when we make and acknowledge claims on one another's conduct and will" (Darwall 2006, 3).

that ancient hubris is a way of going wrong about others' claims to honor as well as one's own.[37] Though the "Daedalus Trust" approach to hubris was developed by a politician and applied originally to political leadership, it gives hubris only a limited role in politics. Sandel gives it a much more fundamental role, one that reflects the importance of ancient hubris not only in ancient politics but also in ancient norms of social interaction and in ancient popular and philosophical ethics.

Sandel is also right to see meritocratic hubris against the background of an economy of esteem and the politics of recognition.[38] Citing Honneth, Durkheim, and Hegel for the fundamental insight that the pursuit of social justice is driven by the struggle for recognition,[39] Sandel observes that

> Economic concerns are not only about money in one's pocket: they are also about how one's role in the economy affects one's standing in society … [Working-class] voters want … a greater measure of contributive justice — an opportunity to win the social recognition and esteem that goes with producing what others need and value.[40]

In referring, at the same point in his argument, to the recognition of all citizens' contribution to the common good, Sandel also refers to Aristotle.[41] This is wholly apposite, for Aristotle was also (though Sandel does not say so) a critic of meritocratic hubris. We saw already that, for him, hubris and the failure to appreciate the role of fortune in success go hand in hand. Additionally, in line with his overall definition of hubris, Aristotle also makes it clear that the overconfidence, sense of invulnerability, and absence of epistemic humility that hubris entails also involve illegitimate forms of contempt for the claims of others that are a major source of socio-political division. The hubris that (as we saw from *Rhetoric* and *Politics* passages cited above) is typical of the rich, the well-born, the powerful, and the beautiful, not only leads them to believe that they deserve the esteem and recognition that they receive on the basis of those qualities, but also involves the assumption that they deserve esteem in other respects and other forms of advantage as well. This in turn involves arrogant contempt for others' claims to

37 Arist., *Rh.* 2.2, 1378b23–31. The difference between ancient and modern conceptions in this respect is not total: Owen and Davidson include contempt for others' advice as symptom 7 of "hubris syndrome" (Owen and Davidson 2009, 1398); cf. Sadler-Smith 2019, 60–61 on Margaret Thatcher's contempt for senior colleagues.

38 Economy of esteem: see Brennan and Pettit 2005; politics of recognition: see above all Honneth 1995; cf. Fraser and Honneth 2003.

39 Sandel 2020, 208–211.

40 Sandel 2020, 206.

41 Sandel 2020, 209.

recognition.[42] Just so, according to Aristotle in the *Rhetoric*, the rich, thinking that their wealth is a measure of their worth, believe themselves worthy of other things as well in a way that is both arrogant and hubristic (2.16, 1390b32–1391a2):

> The characters which accompany wealth are plain for all to see. The wealthy are *hubristai* and arrogant, being affected by the acquisition of wealth (for they are so disposed as to think that they possess all good things; and wealth is a kind of standard of value of everything else, so that everything seems purchasable by it).

"In a nutshell", as Aristotle puts it "the character that belongs to wealth is that of a lucky fool" (1391a1, 13–14).

By the same token, there is a false, misplaced form of *megalopsuchia* (commonly translated "magnanimity") that, unlike true *megalopsuchia* (Aristotle's term for the demeanor, conduct, and lifestyle of those who both are and consider themselves worthy of great things), rests not on *aretē* (virtue), but on luck. As he writes (*Eth. Nic.* 4.3, 1124a29–b6):

> Those who possess such goods [of fortune, such as power and wealth] also become supercilious and *hubristai*; because without virtue it is not easy to bear success appropriately; being unable to bear it, and thinking themselves superior to the rest, they despise them, and do whatever they fancy. They imitate the *megalopsuchos* without being like him, and do this in so far as they are able: they cannot act in accordance with virtue, so they just look down on other people. For the *megalopsuchos* is justified in looking down on other people — his estimates are correct; but the majority do so at random.

The political implications of this are played out in the fifth book of the *Politics*, where *stasis* (civil strife between different factions in a state) is explained in terms of competing and partial or incomplete notions of equality or justice "based

42 With the hubris of those who are fortunate enough to be beautiful, strong, nobly born, or rich at *Pol.* 4.11, 1295b6–11 (cited above), cf. the view at *Rh.* 2.9, 1387a13–15 that those who possess such natural goods (as nobility of birth or beauty) can be in some sense worthy of other goods such as wealth and power. The wider context of 2.9 presupposes that there is kind of justice or appropriateness in such individuals obtaining such goods. But if so, the *Politics* passage shows that these qualities can be the basis of unjust (hubristic) claims as well, in which case they would seem to be based on the confusion of luck with merit. Cf. *Pol.* 3.12, 1282b27–30, against the argument that skin color, height, or any other such advantage might warrant a greater share (*pleonexia*) of political rights. A study by Andrea Fazio (2021) suggests that beautiful people are less favorably disposed to redistributive strategies than the population at large, because they are subject to the delusion that the advantages secured by their physical attractiveness are theirs on merit. On "the beauty-is-good stereotype", by which "From an early age, in both sexes and across cultures, attractive people are judged to be smarter, kinder, and more honest", see Sapolsky 2018, 88, 443.

on worth" (*kat' analogian, kat' axian*, 5.1, 1301a25–33, 1301b35–39).[43] Though democrats (according to Aristotle) go wrong in arguing that their equal status as freeborn individuals entitles them to equality in all respects, oligarchs make a complementary error in believing that their superiority in one respect, namely their wealth, entitles them to superiority in other respects. As far as the rich are concerned, this is the error that makes them "lucky fools" in the *Rhetoric*. As in the *Rhetoric*, it leads them seek more honor than they deserve and in particular to hubris (a particular way of seeking more honor than one deserves). The rich have more in material terms, but their greater share of material prosperity leads them also to claim a greater share of *timē* — their *pleonexia* is not just material. Rulers' pursuit of greater shares of *timē* and *kerdos*, like their hubris, provokes the excluded to engage in *stasis* (*Pol.* 5.2–3, 1302a38–b10):

> For people are stirred up against each other by reason of profit [*kerdos*] and honour [*timē*], not in order that they may acquire them for themselves, as has been said before, but because they see others — in some cases justly and in other cases unjustly — claiming a larger share [*pleonektountes*] of them. Other causes are hubris, fear, excessive predominance, contempt, disproportionate growth of power; and in a different way bribing the electorate, slighting, pettiness, dissimilarity. Of these, the power possessed by hubris and *kerdos*, and their mode of causation, is almost obvious; for when those in office show hubris and *pleonexia*, people engage in faction, both against each another and against the constitutions that offer the opportunity to do so; and *pleonexia* arises sometimes from the private and sometimes from the communal.

Though *pleonexia* and hubris here are focalized from the point of view of the excluded, there can be an element of legitimacy in that assessment, in so far as the many do have a claim to consideration, even though it is not in Aristotle's view absolutely justified — a stable constitution will accommodate egalitarian claims based on freedom, although it should also, in Aristotle's view, accommodate claims to greater shares based on differential notions of worth.[44]

Aristotle thinks that all notions of justice and equality are, at least in some sense, notions of justice and equality *kat' axian* (even the democratic notion, which can be seen as a form of arithmetic equality, is based on *axia*, even if only from a democratic perspective). But *axia* is not merit.[45] Though we often translate it as "worth" or "desert", even in those senses its meaning is wider than and different from the contemporary English-language notion of "merit". The main pur-

43 For a detailed account of Aristotle's argument here, with further references, see Cairns, Canevaro, and Mantzouranis 2022 (and note also the follow-up in Cairns, Canevaro, and Mantzouranis 2023).
44 See *Pol.* 5.1, 1301a35–39, 1302a2–8. Cf. 3.9–13 in general.
45 Cf. and contrast Schofield 1996, 849–850.

pose of that notion in contemporary discourse is to designate forms of skill, talent, and industry that mark individuals out for greater influence, reward, and status. Merit is a matter of achievement.[46] We need only contrast the democratic notion of *axia*, one of equal claims based on equal freedom: this marks out free from unfree, but is not about merit in the sense of possessing talents, putting them to use, and expecting reward. From this alone we see that *axia*, for Aristotle, is not tied to any specific claim or any specific content; it is the name for what is involved when people believe that their claims are grounded in some notion of value.[47] *Axia* is fundamental to the politics of recognition.

That said, alongside democratic conceptions of justice *kat' axian* based on free birth and oligarchic conceptions based on wealth, Aristotle also considers aristocratic conceptions based on virtue (*aretē*),[48] and there is no doubting that for him *aretē* is the paramount criterion of *axia.*[49] In this case, we do have a claim based on something like merit, and those who possess the relevant qualities are recognized as having the greatest claim to citizenship, leadership, and political rights.[50] Yet the application of that principle would not, on Aristotle's understanding of it, give rise to meritocratic hubris, first because (in considering claims to inclusion and leadership in actual, functioning constitutions) Aristotle is clear that the claims of *aretē* cannot be used to silence other legitimate claims,[51] and second because, in an actual or in an ideal constitution, the rule or predominance of the virtuous would entail that the constitution should embody the fundamental concern for justice (which requires respecting others' rights both to material goods and to non-material goods such as security and esteem) and for the common good that are integral to Aristotelian *aretē*. Aristotelian virtue requires action for the sake of the noble (*kalon*), rather than action in the narrow self-interest of oneself

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46 Thus merit, as typically understood, differs from both "being *axios*" in Greek and being "deserving" or "worthy" in English in so far as one can be *axios*/deserving of negative outcomes as well as positive, whereas merit (as a noun) typically justifies only positive outcomes. But while we say "she was appointed on merit" and tend not to say "she was dismissed (or demoted) on merit", it makes perfect sense to say "her dismissal was merited". In other European languages the distinction between "merit" and "desert" is even more elusive, and the merit that we associate in English with talent, effort, and reward is just a variety of desert.

47 See Campeggiani, forthcoming a and b; cf. Canevaro and Rocchi, forthcoming.

48 See *Eth. Nic.* 5.3, 1131a25–29, *Pol.* 3.5, 1278a19-20, 3.9–13 *passim*.

49 See *Eth. Nic.* 4.3 on *megalopsuchia*, esp. 1123b26–30, 1124a25–29.

50 *Pol.* 3.9, 1280b29–1281a8, 3.11–12, 1283a19-26, 3.13, 1284a1–3, 5.1, 1301a39-1301b1. See also *Pol.* 7–8 *passim* on the mutual entailment between individual virtue and the best or ideal form of state and the mechanisms required to foster the excellence and the flourishing of both individual and state.

51 Again, see *Pol.* 3.9–13 *passim*, esp. 3.9, 1281a9–10, 28–32, 3.12–13, 1283a14-1384a2. If the good are simply put "in charge of everything", then everyone else is dishonored (3.10, 1281a28–32).

or one's class. Despite the meritocratic orientation of Aristotelian ethics and politics, a meritocratically inflected state of an Aristotelian sort would not lose sight of the common good. In any case, Aristotle is patently aware that such a state remains an unrealized and perhaps unrealizable ideal; and he clearly sees the dangers that arise when actual states elevate one criterion of value over all others. In particular, s*tasis*, as discussed in *Politics* 5, is the result when one section of the community comes to feel that its claims to recognition are being held in contempt.

Not only do ancient and modern hubris share a solid conceptual core, but their comparison can be productive in making us reflect on our profession as Classicists and our current predicament as citizens of increasingly polarized and unequal societies. We cannot claim that Classics inevitably makes us more reflective, self-critical, or open-minded people; but it is by no means impossible that it should. Though there is plenty in the subject matter of our discipline that was originally used and is still used to perpetuate deplorable forms of inequality, there is also a great deal that can help us interrogate and challenge the politics of inequality and exclusion. Probably the dominant theme in contemporary critiques of meritocracy — for example in the books by Sandel and Markovits — is the role of education, especially higher education, and especially heavily marketized forms of higher education, in the development of meritocratic elitism. Those of us who teach in universities, and especially those of us who teach Classics in UK and US universities, are in many cases complicit in providing the credentials of meritocracy for an elite that is increasingly divorced from the rest of society. The ills of meritocratic hubris depend not just on individual psychology, but on social and political conditions, conditions that we as academics, as Classicists, help to create. To do Classics is a political act in a political context. Its practice in most parts of the developed world is often geared to the performance and enhancement of forms of social and cultural capital from which most people are excluded. In Scotland, education in Classical subjects is now vanishingly rare in the state sector and therefore inaccessible to the 96% of the population who attend state comprehensive schools. In my own university, Scotland's largest and highest-rated internationally, students from private schools take 40% of the places overall and a much higher percentage than that in Classics, despite the fact that the privately educated represent only 7% of the UK and 4% of the Scottish populations. Private secondary and elite higher education are among the main ways in which existing inequalities are leveraged to secure the meritocratic credentials that will in turn justify and entrench those inequalities. The discrepancies between winners and losers that these tendencies promote are fundamentally aspects of the politics of recognition. Mainstream Classics has a tendency to foster varieties of antiquarianism whose practitioners spend most of their working lives on things that matter

only to other Classicists. By contrast, the issues discussed in this paper are among the many on which contemporary theories and concepts can be brought into genuine and productive dialogue with ancient theories and concepts, and on which the study of both ancient and modern approaches can have fundamental implications for our practice not just as scholars, but also as citizens. We need to engage with other disciplines and to face up to the political context of our academic endeavors. We cannot and should not try to understand the ancient world in a vacuum.

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Tonio Hölscher

On the Powers and Dangers of Collective Identity: History in the Mirror or through the Window?

Abstract: The basic claim of this contribution will be to argue against identitarian uses of history and to plead for critically investigating societies of the past to widen our experience of possible and alternative forms of human culture. The goal of Classical Studies should not be to identify — or dismiss — authoritative traditions of an *own* past as a foundation of Western cultural identity. Rather, Classics should aim to provide and explore a fruitful field of *differing* forms of human culture for critical reflections and discussions on the multiple possibilities of human social practice.

Keywords: collective identity, cultural memory, Greek identity, historical research, inclusive/exclusive, 'self' and 'other', social coherence, solidarity

1 Preliminaries

Theoretical reflection on categories, notions and terms by which we try to understand history is an obvious requirement of all serious research. We develop and use terms and notions from our own thinking and apply them to societies that have thought differently and carried out their lives with different concepts. How far can we develop terms that capture the otherness of former societies? Or are there general terms that have validity beyond the boundaries between us and those historical societies?

Thanks for criticism and suggestions, on the occasion of lectures, go to Hans-Joachim Gehrke, Anja Klöckner and Wulf Raeck; for resolute friendly opposition to Aleida Assmann; for reading various versions, with helpful comments, criticism and encouragement, to Manfred Berg, Jonas Grethlein, Lucian Hölscher, Christoph Selzer and Michael Sommer; for constant inspiring accompaniment up to the present version to Fernande Hölscher. I have tried to take all the various concerns into account, but I am sure that I have not eliminated them all. Last but not least, I am most grateful to Nancy Winter for a healthy linguistic revision of my English text. For a much more comprehensive German version of this essay, see Hölscher (2024).

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This question arises particularly sharply with the term and notion of collective identity which recently has gained an almost irresistible significance for describing historical societies but is at the same time of utmost actuality in political discourses, decisions and practice of our own days. This means that, in using this term, we must give answers on two opposing levels: On the one hand, what do we impart to historical societies by applying the notion of collective identity to them? On the other hand, what are we imparting to our own societies by grounding today's concepts of identity in historical traditions? How appropriate is the concept of identity for them? and how healthy is it for us? As historians, we are not only responsible for the right understanding of the past, but we are also, consciously or unconsciously, weaving the net of notions and concepts of our own time.

2 Two uses of history: mirror or window?

There are two approaches to the historical past that are fundamentally different regarding what we expect from history for ourselves.[1]

The first access is history as a founding resource and power for the present. In this sense historical traditions of one's own community are regarded as the origin and foundation of its present state, conveying by its old age authority and legitimacy to the heirs and the inherited positions of this cultural, social and political tradition. This is the common denominator from the Renaissance over classical humanism to Pierre Nora's "Lieux de mémoire" and present-day concepts of cultural memory. History, in this sense, serves to create identity: The upholders of this approach look into their 'classical' past as a mirror in which they try to discover — if not themselves, at least some fundamental aspects of themselves, the roots of their own essential cultural equipment, from which they expect to understand themselves and to legitimize their models of cultural practice.

This is a basically narcissistic position by which we are mainly confronted with ourselves — which is open to fundamental criticism and involves problematic consequences for the societies of the present.

First, we should know ourselves sufficiently through our own (critical) life-experience: so, our alleged 'counterparts' of the past will bring us little new knowledge and insight about ourselves. History as a look into the mirror is basically

1 The following considerations on history as a gaze into the mirror versus out of the window have much in common with Hans-Joachim Gehrke's categories of intentional versus rational history. See Foxhall/Gehrke/Luraghi 2010.

tautological, it provides us with a comfortable resting place for our self-consciousness, nothing more.

Second, the past can by no means provide us with legitimization, for cultural practices, whether traditional or newly conceived, are either good or bad as such, but they do not gain any authority from their age.

Third, and above all, history as a look into the mirror is the basic factor in creating identity. Identity, however, as I will argue, is a basic, almost pandemic disease of, and a great social threat to, present-day societies. Wars are fought worldwide for national, cultural or religious identity, societies and communities disintegrate through the search of individual groups for their identity. Identity is the great opposite to solidarity — but historians continue to insist in identitarian traditions as the foundation of present-day culture.

Fourth, it is this identitarian approach to history, and in particular to the Classical past, that leads some vanguards of progress, particularly in the United States, to discredit this 'contaminated' past altogether: They look into the mirror, and when they do not find in it their desired self-image, they throw away the mirror.[2]

The counter-position to this perspective is history as a look out of the window. It means looking out from our own house of culture towards other ways of cultural life, past as well as present, with curiosity for other societies and cultures. It means, instead of self-concerned identity, taking a critical distance from the self, opening one's eyes to alternative ways of life, strengthening the sense of mutual solidarity, and developing creative imagination for new forms of one's own social and cultural practice.

Of course, the view out of the window is also related to the subject of the viewer. To stay with the metaphor: it is human subjects who have made the window, who look from it in specific directions, who direct their gaze to specific objects and phenomena, who react to what they see and integrate it into their previous experience of the world. The subject cannot be eliminated even when looking out of the window. Nevertheless, it makes a big difference whether the viewer does this in search of selfness or of otherness. This is the perspective I will adopt in this essay.

3 Problems with identity

For two generations the concepts of identity and alterity, both individual and collective, have become basic categories in the analysis of historical as well as contemporary

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2 On — and against — search for identity in Classical Studies, see Grethlein 2022.

societies.[3] An important general approach to these categories has been developed in the Freiburg project "Identitäten und Alteritäten", led by Hans-Joachim Gehrke from 1997 to 2003.[4] However, in spite of these efforts, there remains a worrying proliferation of these categories: The term 'identity' is booming in a totally uncontrolled way in titles of books and articles. There are productive as well as meaningless uses. Regarding Greek antiquity, it has long been seen what enormous power a new panhellenic identity imparted to the allied Greeks in the wars against the Persians, and with what massive polis identity Athens and Sparta then established their spheres of power in Greece. Early on, Christian Meier employed the concept of political identity to describe the intense civic spirit and the 'emergence of the political' in classical Athens;[5] more recently, Christoph Ulf and Erich Kistler portrayed with great power the 'emergence of Greece', with its communities of tribes and city-states as the 'formation of a Hellenic identity'.[6] On the other hand, however, identity has deteriorated into an inflationary label for all kinds of socio-cultural commonalities: From ceramics to architecture, lifestyle to burial practice, sports to warfare, urban structures to landscapes, economy to religion, language to memory, there is no subject that could not be subsumed and dealt with under the cover of cultural identity. In this terminological proliferation, there are three problematic tendencies: First, identity and alterity have increasingly become ubiquitous passepartout for all kinds of cultural qualities and differences that they often conceal more than explain. Secondly, a pronounced consciousness of collective identity is assumed throughout world history, without asking whether this is meant as a universal anthropological constant of mankind or as a historical phenomenon of specific societies. Thirdly, more or less consciously, every society or social group is granted an absolute moral right to its unbreakable identity. In so doing, historical societies are often anachronistically judged by today's standards.

These assumptions imply various general questions that seem not to be given sufficient attention in historical research — and which, last but not least, have consequences for our own cultural habitus. In what follows I will argue for a critical approach to these terms, and in this I feel encouraged by some authors who have argued in the same direction: the German historian Lutz Niethammer in his book *Kollektive Identität. Die heimlichen Quellen einer unheimlichen Konjunktur* (2000); the Italian anthropologist Francesco Remotti in his volumes *Contro l'identità* (1993)

3 Marquard/Stierle 1979; Gleason 1983; Stachel 2005; Jenkins 2008; Coulmas 2019. See also the books quoted in n. 7. Application in Classical Archaeology: Shear 2021, 21–26.

4 Fludernik/Gehrke 2004.

5 Meier 1979.

6 Ulf 1996; Ulf/Kistler 2020. For Greek identity in general, see Gehrke 2008.

and *L'ossessione identitaria* (2010); and the French philosopher François Jullien under the title *Il n'y a pas d'identité culturelle* (2016). They have found little attention because the Zeitgeist was blowing in a different direction. At present, however, there may be some signs of a turnabout: Florian Coulmas, analyzing *Das Zeitalter der Identität* (2019), speaks of the "specter of identity" that dominates, like a genie from the bottle, all present-time discourses. Even more resolutely, Yasha Mounk describes *The Identity Trap* (2023) as the almost inevitable result of a well-intentioned policy to strengthen suppressed or marginalized social groups which counterproductively leads to the polarization and fractionalization of those societies.[7]

The aim of the following considerations and reflections is to bring together two discourses that are normally conducted separately, and to draw consequences for both fields. In discourses on present-time societies, the identity of political, social, cultural and anthropological communities has gained an almost fundamental significance for their self-identification and cohesion.[8] It forms the basis of an ever-expanding identity politics for these communities, which is often pushed forward with imperative confidence but is rarely discussed critically in terms of its ambivalent consequences. In historical research, especially on early periods, identity has advanced to become a key notion of cultural, social and political commonality.[9] Collective identity is understood as constitutive for the emergence of ethnic units, political states and other communities, and in this sense, it is usually seen as a positive impulse for the formation of complex collective structures. In this context, phenomena of life practice as well as material culture are often understood very largely in terms of collective identity.

Cross-references between these discourses are rarely made. Yet, they could become fruitful in both directions. Especially in the historical disciplines they could strengthen the awareness that research on distant historical periods does not take place in innocent distance to present-time actuality.

In this sense, I am going to argue for two different objectives. First, for understanding the historical past, a precise terminological definition of what we can usefully mean by collective identity; second, for shaping the present, an analysis of the fundamental goals and effects, positive and negative implications of concepts of identity.

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7 Niethammer 2000; Remotti 1993; 2010; Jullien 2016; Coulmas 2019; Mounk 2023.

8 See especially Coulmas 2019.

9 Pohl/Mehofer 2010.

3.1 Definitions

Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper have subjected the term 'identity', as a category of scientific analysis, to a sharp and salutary critique and proposed a scale of less grandiloquent but more precisely differentiating designations of collective affiliations of various kinds and intensities.[10] They did not find much of a following, but it is worth going in this direction.

In order to clarify the meaning of collective identity and alterity it is necessary to make a clear distinction between an object-oriented meaning of factual commonality and a subject-oriented concept of fundamental ideological identity.

Identity of distinctive marks, features and characteristics. On a primary level, individual beings as well as collective entities constitute themselves by some sort of factual sameness against otherness. Identity in this sense is a category of identification of individuals and collectives from an external perspective. In collective communities, this sameness manifests itself in their common material culture, common social practices and common cultural concepts. Speaking in this sense of collective identity means using this term as an object-oriented category of cultural commonality. It defines communities and the social roles of their members on the basis of their cultural repertoire and resources. For the sake of terminological clarity, I would prefer to speak of a community's cultural profile, world, or kosmos.

Identity of essence. On a secondary level, identity and alterity signify an emphatic ideological consciousness of the 'self', whether individual or collective, in essential opposition to the non-self of 'others'. Identity in this sense is a category of essential self-determination from an internal perspective. It is the explicit response to the question "Who am I?" and "Who are we?" and a conscious concept of what this self not only is, but what it knows and intends to be — and it makes the unconditional claim to the fundamental rights of this self. On this level the self is no longer objectively described but intentionally privileged from its own perspective. From this perspective, the other becomes a — mostly negative — counter-image of the self. In this sense, identity and alterity are categories of ideological construction: Factual sameness becomes intentional kinship, factual difference becomes essential alterity. By emphasizing this dichotomy, the concepts of identity and alterity develop a strong potential of political and social dynamics.

10 Brubaker/Cooper 2000.

3.2 Alarming effects

Emphatic identity is far less innocent than it may appear: By its claim for its rights, it generates not only attitudes of collective self-concern and self-righteousness, but also forces of defensive walling-off and aggressive self-assertion. Hitler's crimes were an excess of identity. Today, in Germany and elsewhere, conservative voices advocate national leading cultures ('Leitkulturen') of identity, with foreseeable consequences. Right-wing extremists appear under the name of 'Identitarians'. National identities explode in wars worldwide.

In a wider sense, too, concepts of identity imply worrying social prospects. In the middle of our societies, identity is exclusive: Those who do not belong to the group of identity are not only different 'others' but ideological 'aliens'. And this potential of exclusion is even enhanced by founding identity on concepts of cultural memory: Those who do not share the same cultural memories — Turks in Germany, Palestinians in Israel — have no access to the prevailing cultural identity.[11]

On a more general level, identity implies mostly a latent tendency towards conservative rigidity. Although recent cultural theory has developed concepts of permanent fluidity of individual and collective identity, the intention and claim of identities is their permanent validity. Staying identical with, and true to oneself is considered an almost unquestionable ethical value, independent of its content. Thus, identity of persons and communities has become a sort of sacred anthropological right that is founded on emotions and largely eludes rational criticism. Of course, social and political communities must be founded on common values. But these values should be based on rational choices, not on pre-determined postulates of irrational identities — be they German, Western or otherwise.

In this context a basic question arises that is rarely reflected upon: whether identity and alterity in this emphatic sense are universal anthropological categories — or rather specific states of aggregation of specific historical societies. In this context, we should be aware that identity and alterity only moved to the center of social discourses in the 1970s to the 1990s. What does this mean for the historical reach of these notions? Are they conceived in the specific situation of the last two generations? Do we risk projecting our own self-perceptions — and our actual social concepts and problems — onto former historical societies?

At present we live in an age of the selfie. The photograph of the self is the technique of an obsessive, almost pandemic habitus of self-concern, self-centeredness,

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11 On the concept of cultural memory, see J. Assmann 1992; 2018[2]; A. Assmann 1999. It must be stressed, as both Assmanns have clearly underlined, that cultural memory does not *eo ipso* imply 'identitarian' positions, but the dangers pointed out here seem evident.

self-assertion, self-determination, self-righteousness, and self-pity. At first glance, this might seem to be a private matter of individuals and groups, but the inherent danger in this is the dissolution of social solidarity. For solidarity in its true sense is not limited to one's own group. In fact, identity is the counter-concept to solidarity.

Regarding history, we should ask whether the question "Who am I?" or "Who are we?" was so much at the center of social and political discourse in all societies of the past. And if at all, whether they were asked, and determined the social and political practice, in all situations of life. Could it not be that previous societies had mostly other problems than "who they were", and that they lived and acted in many situations, or even in entire epochs, not on the level of emphatic subject-oriented identity but on that of functional and object-oriented cultural practices?

At this point, we may turn to Greek archaeology where we find an instructive broad spectrum of cultural attitudes, from wide openness to fixed identities, with strong historical changes.

4 Archaeology, identity and alterity

The new rise of the Greek world, after the collapse of the Mycenean palace culture, was achieved through the formation of a variety of political units and social communities. Historical research has drawn a complex picture of the formation of tribes and city states, of social classes, gender and age groups, of family clans and hetairies. These communities developed a common Greek culture of life with multiple local differentiations of social roles and cultural practices. The question is, however, to what extent was there a factor of conscious identity at work here that would have gone beyond these common social and cultural practices?[12]

In general, of course, there were strong concepts of identity and alterity in the ancient world that shaped the actors in their attitudes and practices of cultural and political life: with demarcations of Greeks against other ethnicities and cultures, of single cities against other cities, of social groups against other groups, and so on. But these concepts were not present everywhere and always in the same way, they were in constant flux, the boundaries were fluid, changing from one epoch to another, varying between different communities and groups, with different intensities, from largely absent to emphatically effective.

Archaeology is a difficult field for discussing questions of identity and alterity. For archaeology disposes only of material objects that do not reveal how they were

12 See lastly, with strong emphasis on the category of collective identity, Ulf/Kistler 2020.

valued by their historical users.[13] To give an example from recent history: Coca Cola was imported in the 1920s from the USA to Europe as a trendy beverage. In 1949, however, it was forbidden in communist China and soon afterwards boycotted by French leftists, throughout the Eastern Bloc and in the Arab League as a symbol of American capitalism, while by now it is accepted everywhere without any strong cultural meaning. The significance Coca Cola once had as a symbol of cultural identity is not essentially inherent in the bottles or the drink itself: it is a potential that can be attributed to them and written off again. Future archaeologist who may excavate Coca Cola sherds will have difficulties in finding out their cultural significance.

4.1 Permeable identity boundaries in Archaic Greece

Instructive insights into the problematic of identity and alterity can be expected from situations in which objects from one cultural origin are transferred to other contexts.[14] Here it becomes particularly evident that material objects from foreign cultures get their meaning not from their intrinsic essence but through cultural and ideological attributions and evaluations on the part of their users and viewers. Among such attributions of meaning identity versus alterity is but one of several options. In 8th century BC Athens, an Athenian aristocrat was buried with a bronze bowl from Phoenicia with incised figurative decoration (fig. 3).[15] If we ask for the cultural significance given to this object by its Greek owners, various explanations could be put forward: They could have appreciated the bowl because of its economic value, its social prestige, its aesthetic beauty, its figurative themes, its material durability or its functional form — but how far an opposition between Greek and alien culture or even a concept of identity and alterity played any role remains totally open.

There are remarkable testimonies of cultural permeability. From the 9th century BC Greek drinking vessels were exported to the Levant.[16] At the multi-ethnic emporion of Al Mina on the coast of Northern Syria, where fragments of such vessels were found in considerable quantities, they might possibly be referred to banquets

13 See Hall 1997, 128–131; 2012; Pohl/Mehofer 2010; Baitinger 2016; Gehrke 2016. Gehrke proposes a new theoretical concept of defining identities by interpreting material culture in its broader cultural context. This is a step towards more objective results, though there remains the old problem that contexts too are not objective facts but scholarly constructs.

14 For a general approach to Transcultural Studies, see Abu-er-Rub/Brosius/Meurer/Panagiotopoulos/Richter 2019.

15 Kübler 1954, pl. 162.

16 Luke 2003.

of Greek merchants, but this is purely hypothetical. And in cases of single sherds found in the interior of Syria this is very improbable. More convincingly, these finds were explained as testimonies of Greek exports for oriental-style banquets. Certainly, such sporadic finds cannot be taken as evidence of Greek cultural practice, let alone of Greek cultural identity.

At the opposite end of the Greek world, we find a flourishing symposion culture at the commercial emporion of Ischia-Pithekoussai, with the famous drinking cup in Greek style, inscribed with a Greek sympotic inscription referring to the Greek mythical hero Nestor (fig. 4).[17] Here, we have obviously to do with a group of Greek traders who celebrated Greek-style symposia. They may have invited some participants from other countries, and in any case, they must have feasted in view of many foreign merchants present at this site. So, one can imagine that they must have felt some sort of cultural affiliation and coherence with their Greek-speaking compatriots. Nevertheless, we can only speculate how far this experience was valid, how strong such differences were felt, how far 'Greekness' and otherness were superseded by other affiliations, such as social groups, cross-cultural trade cooperation or competition, etc.

On the other hand, Greek drinking vessels were also found in the chieftain's residence of Torre Satriano in northern Lucania where indigenous elites celebrated great banquets without apparently assuming a Greek identity in any precise sense.[18] Sympotic culture was an overarching social practice that served to create social coherence within participating members of elite groups but not to express any sort of commonality or identity between the wide-ranging elites of various societies celebrating symposia.

In general, the Greeks were very much interested in the provenience of their cultural objects. They appreciated helmets from Corinth, craters from Laconia, marble from Paros, textiles from Ionia, purple from Phoenicia, silphium from Cyrene in Libya, bronze from Tartessos beyond Gibraltar — but significantly there is no difference made between Greek and non-Greek products, and certainly not between cultural identity and alterity. The relation between Greece and other Mediterranean cultures in the archaic age should not be conceived in terms of identity and alterity but of participation.

As Jonathan Hall has convincingly demonstrated, an explicit consciousness of Greek identity *versus* alien alterity developed only rather slowly and came to full fruition only in the Persian Wars.[19] In archaic times, a common name for a Hellenic

17 Buchner/Ridgway 1993, 219, 245–250; Murray 1994; Wecowski 2014, 127–139, 251–263.

18 Osanna 2009. Already cited by Gehrke 1016, 10.

19 Hall 2002, 172–228.

country and a community of Hellenes came into use only gradually, to varying extents and in specific situations. It is true that only participants of Greek descent were admitted to the Olympic Games; and when the ruler Kleisthenes of Sikyon wanted to marry off his daughter Agariste, he invited suitors from all over Greece, but not from other peoples. Yet this was an expression of self-evident commonality, not of emphatic identity. The same is true for the Greek city-states and tribes: they represented communities with a certain coherence, also with enmities against other cities and tribes, but hardly with a specific, different ideological or cultural bond in the sense of a strong identity.

4.2 Greece and the Orient in archaic times

The great antithesis of "East" versus "West", Orient versus Occident, is the classic case for studying identity and alterity. It has two sides, both attesting the enormous power of identity construction: One of them belongs to modern historical research, the other to the history of antiquity itself.[20]

In his famous book *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said powerfully described how the modern West had created and imposed an image of the "Orient" that was an absolute negative antithesis to the ideal-typical self-image of European-American societies.[21] A striking example from archaeological research is the evaluation of a specific type of bronze protomes adorning huge bronze craters, which first were imported from the Near-East to Greece (fig. 5) and then imitated by Greek artists (fig. 6). Scholars have interpreted the differences in a revealing way as fundamentally antithetical and at the same time in the sense of clear Greek superiority: the oriental "scheme" are characterized by their "persistent, self-sufficient, indifferent attitude", whereas the Greek "figures" are praised for their "clear structure imbued with a genuine Greek sense of form", "conscious, alert expression of the face", "bright spirituality", "liveliness and activity" — an achievement of transformation "that one cannot admire enough".[22] Quite certainly, however, the Greek artists imitated the oriental models not with the intention of opposing them with an identity of their own, but to come as close as possible to their artistry. There can be no doubt that their main aim was not the assertion of Greekness but integration into the great cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean. The equivalent in Classical Philology is

20 On Greece and the Orient, see Burkert 1984; West 1997; Rollinger/Ulf 2004; Gunter 2009; Zenzen/Hölscher/Trampedach 2013; von Bredow 2017.

21 Said 1978.

22 Herrmann 1972, 83–84.

Bruno Snell's famous book, still worth reading, with its problematic title *The Discovery of the Mind* in early Greece — as if the cultures of Mesopotamia and Egypt had been lacking a 'mind'.[23]

The extensive reception of cultural goods from the Orient during the archaic period, from the alphabet and mythology to the practice of banquets and to countless forms of artistic imagery and material equipment led to an enormous change of Greek culture but had nothing to do with Greek identity.[24] The alphabetic script, which was taken over in the 9th century from Phoenicia and modified for the exigencies of the Greek language, became soon a genuine element of Greek cultural practice. The Hittite and Mesopotamian myths of the origins of the world and the gods or of great heroes defeating wild monsters and dangerous fiends were remodeled into a mythical past of the Greek world.[25] The custom of banquets reclining on couches, according to oriental traditions, was to become the fundamental form of Greek aristocratic commonality.[26] All these new elements did in no way change any kind of Greek 'identity', they were integrated into the Greek cultural repertoire and served to integrate Greece into the surrounding cultures. In this sense, it has long been observed that Homer, in the epic of the *Iliad*, does not portray the heroic Greeks and Troians as fundamentally alien to each other: They have the same gods, comparable political and social structures, the same culture of life.[27]

4.3 Ideological identities in Classical Greece

The creation of new forms of emphatic identity in the Persian Wars of the early 5th century BC has been extensively analyzed, most powerfully by Edith Hall in her book "Inventing the Barbarian" of 1989.[28] From her title it becomes evident that emphatic identity is not a pre-given anthropological constant but a result of cultural, social and political construction. As Hans-Joachim Gehrke has shown, the Greeks developed from this identity their power for defeating the Persians, but on the other hand they also laid the foundations for the eternal conflict between "East" and "West" that continues to our days.[29] The relevant phenomena are well-known: Greeks and non-Greeks were conceived according to a general cultural, ethical,

23 Snell 1946.
24 See the works cited in n. 20.
25 West 1997.
26 Wecowski 2014.
27 Dihle 1994, 7–21.
28 Hall 1989.
29 Gehrke 2000.

religious and political antithesis. This antithesis is fortified by a strong cultural memory of mythological precedents, such as the conflicts between Greeks and Amazons, Greeks and Trojans etc. And it is materialized in symbolic cultural objects, such as the courageous Greek lance versus the cowardly bow and arrow of the Persians or the virtuous naked Greek body versus the effeminate dressed body of Orientals.[30]

Fortunately, however, things are not that easy. As is well known, scholarly judgements on this antithesis differ widely. Some scholars see in the Greeks a blatantly negative image of the Persians as archenemies, while others recognize in them a high regard for their ancient culture and human solidarity with the fate of their opponents.[31] A consensus will not be reached as long as one thinks in general terms of 'the' Greeks and 'the' Persians. For the Greeks' thoughts, attitudes and practices were often ambivalent and varied greatly in different cultural and social contexts.

First, the attitudes varied in different media and their specific social situations. Around 460 BC, the battle of Marathon was depicted in the great public painting of the Stoa Poikile as an achievement of heroic patriotism, under the protection of gods and mythical heroes, led by Miltiades and other glorious Athenian protagonists.[32] Shortly before, Aeschylus brought his tragedy "The Persians" to the stage, in which he made the defeat of the Persians at Salamis the subject of great empathy from the perspective of the Persians themselves.[33] And at the same time painted vases for private symposia describe the victory of the Greeks with blatant violence (figs. 7 and 8) and even with metaphors of crude homosexual abuse.[34]

Secondly, the real interactions between Greece and Persia developed in different ways in different areas of life. In the realm of politics, the rifts were deep, and in the realm of lifestyle the Greek ideal of virtuous simplicity was conceived in opposition to Persian luxury. The entire world *could* be seen as divided between Greeks and Persians. But at the same time trade between Greece and the Levant via Cyprus continued without interruption; in the field of science, the high esteem of expert knowledge from the Orient was maintained; and in the field of religion, no divide was created between Greek and foreign gods. The ideological antithesis of identity and alterity remained confined to political and social life, while in many

30 Miller 1997; Miller/Hölscher 2013, 388–414.

31 Most divergent: Hall 1989 and Gruen 2011, 67–85.

32 Hölscher 1973, 50–84; de Angelis 1996.

33 Grethlein 2010, 74–104.

34 Hölscher 1973, 38–49; Raeck 1981, 101–163; Hölscher 2000, 301–304; Muth 2008, 239–267; Miller/Hölscher 2013, 396–402 (T. H.). Eurymedon oinochoe with homosexual scene: Schauenburg 1975; Wannagat 2001; Gerleigner 2016; Lichtenberger 2023.

other sectors of life, the former openness remained. All attitudes had partial validity in different fields of life.[35]

Further ambivalences occur over the course of time: The constructed counter-image of the Orient could be remodeled to meet new historical conditions. In the generation of the actual battles, vases depict fierce fights of triumphant Greeks in perfect hoplite armor or with naked athletic bodies against weak and defeated enemies in luxurious patterned dresses (figs. 7 and 8). Around the middle of the 5th century, however, when the war was brought to an end, the Persians are represented in vase-paintings as pious worshippers of the gods similar to Greek piety (fig. 9). And at the end of the century, when the Greeks themselves had adopted the ideals of luxury and felicity, the luxurious lifestyle of the East is praised on painted vases and highly valued in real life, in Athens and elsewhere in Greece (fig. 10).[36]

This is a process of great psychological complexity. When the Greeks in the early 5th century BC developed their new self-concept of normative simplicity, they projected the negative counter-concept of a luxurious lifestyle onto the Persians. Yet, opulence and luxury, *habrosýne*, had been the highest values of the leading classes in Greece itself until the Persian Wars: noble Greeks appear on late archaic vases in richly decorated clothing (fig. 11). Thus, the antithetical image of the Persian 'others' as the great foe was in many respects a suppressed former self-image of the Greeks themselves, and the new ideals of two generations later were a total reevaluation of this classical post-war antithesis.

After all, the ideology and psychology of identity and alterity are in many respects unstable. They change according to the changing experiences and challenges of life. And yet, they make a claim to absolute and lasting validity. This is what makes them dangerous.

5 Conclusion

We will not shape the classical past into a mirror-image of ourselves, nor ourselves into a mirror-image of classical antiquity. Rather, we should look out of our cultural window to the past in order to widen and sharpen our experiences. From this short outlook I would propose to draw three conclusions, two for scholarship, one for ourselves.

35 See the spectrum of contributions in Zenzen/Hölscher/Trampedach 2013.

36 Raeck 1981, 101–163; Hölscher 2000, 300–314; Miller/Hölscher 2013, 388–414 (T. H.).

1. As historians, we should make use of the notion of identity in a precise sense, in order to avoid fashionable but useless generalizations. Whatever terms we adopt, we must distinguish between object-oriented definitions and descriptions of factual political, social and cultural commonality on the one hand and subject-oriented assertions and claims of ideologically based identity on the other. When describing cultural phenomena, we should focus less on the diffuse category of identity than on the actual cultural goods, practices, and concepts and their functional interaction; for material culture and social practices had primarily concrete tasks and purposes within the communities, while the formation of community as such was usually a secondary motive. On the other hand, the notion of essential-ideological identity in its emphatic meaning is helpful for analyzing the specific subjective concepts with which communities create an awareness of their communality, affirm themselves in this awareness and use this concept explicitly as a category of determining their 'self' vis-à-vis 'other's, mostly to strengthen their own forces in situations of conflict, aggressive or defensive.
2. When we deal, as historians, with emphatic collective identity we must be aware of the fact that this is not an innocent anthropological right but a consciously constructed claim, implying ambivalent and potentially dangerous consequences of exclusion and confrontation. The formation of strong collective identity is always an ambivalent process, strengthening one's own group and excluding others. Community identity should therefore not be celebrated as an unequivocally grand historical process but should be judged in its complex ambivalence.
3. With regard to the present, we should not make ourselves guilty of promoting a category of social attitude that potentially leads to exclusion and conflict. Strengthening social and political identity groups leads to political practices of pushing forward one's own claims instead of acknowledging the rights of other, underprivileged groups. Identities must not be strengthened but defused, borders must not be marked but bridged. Identity is the opposite of solidarity. What we need is social coherence and solidarity beyond — and against — identities.

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Illustrations

Fig. 3: Phoenician bronze bowl from tomb in the Athenian Kerameikos. Athens, Kerameikos Museum. 8th cent. B.C. © Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Culture.

Fig. 4: Greek drinking cup with sympotic inscription, so-called 'Nestor cup'. Ischia, Pithecussai Museum. Late 8th cent. B.C. © DAI Rome (R. Sansaini).

Fig. 5: Oriental bronze protome of votive cauldron. Olympia, Museum. 8th cent. B.C. © DAI Athens.

Fig. 6: Greek bronze protome of votive cauldron. Athens, National Archaeological Museum. Ca. 700 B.C. © DAI Athens.

Fig. 7: Red-figure kylix, Greek warrior defeating Persian foe. Edinburgh, National Museum of Scotland. Ca. 470 B.C. © National Museum Scotland.

Fig. 8: Red-figure oinochoe, Greek warrior defeating Persian foe. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts. Ca. 460 B.C. © 2024 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Fig. 9: Red-figure lekythos, Persian nobleman with wife performing sacrifice. Goethe-Universität Frankfurt, Institut für Archäologische Wissenschaften. Ca. 440 B.C. © Institut für Archäologische Wissenschaften der Goethe-Universität Frankfurt.

Fig. 10: Red-figure column-krater, symposion of youths in oriental costume. Salerno, National Archaeological Museum. Ca. 400 B.C. Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Athen 90 (1975) pl. 38, 2.

Fig. 11: Red-figure amphora, kithara-player with attendants. Paris, Musée du Louvre. Ca. 520–510 B.C. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre)/Hervé Lewandowski.

Part IV: **New Stances, New Perspectives**

Antonios Rengakos

Classical Studies (*Altertumswissenschaft*) in the Anthropocene

Abstract: This paper explores the intersection of Classical Studies with the emerging field of inquiry known as the Anthropocene, which describes the current geological epoch marked by significant human impact on the Earth's systems. It delves into the implications of the Anthropocene for humanity, emphasizing the urgency of addressing environmental challenges. The discussion navigates through contrasting perspectives, including scientific, humanistic, and posthumanist views, examining their interpretations of the Anthropocene and its implications for society. Central to this exploration is the role of ancient myths, particularly the figure of Gaia, in framing narratives about human-nature relationships and environmental degradation. Drawing from Greco-Roman antiquity, scholars such as Haraway, Stengers, and Latour incorporate these myths into their analyses, offering alternative perspectives on humanity's relationship with the natural world. The paper concludes by highlighting the enduring relevance of ancient myths in the Anthropocene era, as they provide a means of grappling with the complexities and uncertainties of contemporary reality.

Keywords: Anthropocene, posthumanism, ancient myth

1 Anthropocene

This paper is an attempt to describe the place and significance of Classical Studies in a relatively new field of inquiry that emerged at the turn of the century and has grown rapidly over the past twenty-two years. This field, denoted by the term “Anthropocene” and first described by geologists, is primarily the province of geology, but it soon attracted the interest of the natural sciences and the humanities — as well as a number of other fields. It has also become the subject of literary works, visual art exhibitions, theatre and film performances, and is now even influencing so-called ‘pop culture’. In other cases, such widespread dissemination and publicity would have raised the specter of faddism and trivialization, but in this case such denigration would be premature and perhaps unfair. In geological terms, the Anthropocene is a highly critical phenomenon for humanity, the silencing, repression and underestimation of which, or more generally the theoretical and practical complacency in dealing with it, could even be described as a moral offence.

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A more general observation may be useful at this point. The intense mobility that has been observed in the humanities over the last fifty years or so is generally a reflection of the rapidly changing contemporary social reality that humanistic studies, through their successive theoretical, conceptual and methodological 'turns' and 'constructions', seek to describe, interpret and understand. The *Altertumswissenschaft*, in particular, must follow and participate in this endeavor, albeit with critical vigilance if it is not to risk its seriousness and credibility. This means, on the one hand, that classical scholars would be well advised to engage in this dialogue only when they have something substantial to contribute to the relevant debates, and not out of an obsessive urge to confirm in every way and under every circumstance the relevance and usefulness of the knowledge offered by their 'classical' texts. On the other hand, trivial issues, which are generally inflated and declared to be the subject of heavyweight theories and research because they seem trendy or because they are used by certain new currents in the humanities for self-promotion and to secure resources for their own survival, should be left aside.

The term 'Anthropocene' was coined in 2000 by the Nobel Prize-winning atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen and the limnologist Eugene F. Stoermer.[1] Despite its widespread use, the term has not yet been accepted by the relevant international associations and committees of geologists, which is not surprising given the history of the term 'Holocene', the official name for the current geological epoch, which took more than a hundred years to gain acceptance after it was first proposed. Since the Earth, the object of their science, has a history of about 4.6 billion years, geologists (like astronomers) obviously work on time scales that can seem dizzying to humanists.

The Holocene Epoch is characterized by the end of one of the many glacial periods in the Earth's history that were unfavorable to human life, by a consequent rise in temperature and by an unusual stability of the planet's ecological conditions that lasted for about twelve thousand years. This stability is responsible for the birth and development of human civilization as we know it today, from the permanent settlement of groups of people, agriculture and the manufacture of tools, the creation of social institutions, the invention of writing and all the other means of storing and transmitting knowledge, to the modern revolution in fields such as neuroscience, biotechnology and information technology.

Since the end of the 19th century, but especially since the middle of the 20th century, there has been an increasing destabilization of the planet's ecosystem. Today, not only has it been established by incontrovertible scientific methods and measurements that the delicate balance of the biosphere, the hydrosphere, natural

1 Crutzen/Stoermer 2000.

climatic variations and the atmosphere has been disturbed, but it also seems that the culprit behind these changes has been identified, and that it is none other than 'man' and his various activities. Crutzen and Stoermer used these findings to formulate their diagnosis of the end of the Holocene and the emergence of a 'new' geological epoch to replace or succeed it, which they aptly named the 'Anthropocene' (with the *-cene* component, as in the Holocene, derived from *kainos*, the Greek word for 'new').

However, the Anthropocene is not just a geological term; it is also a diagnosis of contemporary reality and a prediction of the future linked to human actions and practices. This prediction, inherent in the Anthropocene, is essentially dystopian in nature, because it is based on the assumption that the exploitation of the planet's natural resources will reach (or has already reached) a tipping point at which the prospect of sustaining human life on the planet itself becomes uncertain.

Its key diagnostic character is largely responsible for the widespread and immediate acceptance of the concept of the Anthropocene, which allows us to immediately grasp the dramatic changes in the environment and the extent of the responsibility that humans seem to bear for them. In this sense, man is given the status of a geophysical force like the volcanoes, seismic energy, ice or large meteorites that hit the Earth, only his impact is considered even more powerful and destructive than these. Due to its conciseness and clarity, its inclusion and consideration of previous theoretical studies and research moving in the same direction, as well as a pervasive sense and experience of many people in their untheorized everyday lives, the term and concept of the Anthropocene did not need the pronouncements of the institutionalized bodies of geologists to become widely accepted by both the scientific community and the general public.

However, the aforementioned huge time spans and the differences between them that this concept highlights also contribute to the intense feel and vividness of the term 'Anthropocene'. The 12 millennia of the Holocene, which more or less overlap with known 'human history', the subject of the humanities or other 'historical sciences', do not even amount to a second of the Earth's 4.6 billion years of life. The same is true of the Anthropocene, whatever its beginning and duration may ultimately turn out to be. However, the density of events threatening flora, fauna and the planet as a whole seems to have reached alarming proportions during the Anthropocene. Humanity has faced many and varied crises in the past, but never one as complex and multidimensional as this one, which is not only technical and ecological, but also economic, political, social, cultural and ethical. Worse still, many experts argue that the catastrophic developments are already out of control and may be irreversible.

The anxiety and 'vertigo' caused by our anthropocentric temporalities is due to the fact that our perception of time, as shaped by (European) modernity, has conditioned us to distinguish the non-human from the human, and in particular the temporality of the earth from the 'anthropocentric' temporality of history. The difference between them is, of course, not only quantitative, however awe-inspiring the figures may be. The difference lies primarily in the fact that history and historical time are shaped by the choices and actions of human beings as intelligent and free beings, whereas the temporality of earth and nature, misnamed 'history', obeys natural laws and causality. On the one hand we have man as a rational subject and the field of freedom, on the other hand we have man as an irrational object and the field of necessity, on the one hand history and culture, on the other hand nature and all the attendant distinctions that define modernity (spirit – matter, mind/ratio/soul – body, cognition – sense, mental/inner world – sensible/outer world, res cogitans – res extensa). Such distinctions also have a hierarchical, evaluative aspect, deriving from the rational and spontaneous self-consciousness of the theoretical and practical subject. The Kantian "I think" (Ich denke) and "I do" (Ich handle) is the ultimate principle which, by manifesting itself as free self-consciousness and self-purpose, simultaneously constitutes, conceptualizes and evaluates reality as its object.

2 Man

As can be seen from the above, the adoption of the term by both the natural sciences and the humanities is not only due to the external characteristics of the 'Anthropocene', but also to its conceptual content. The crucial point here is the meaning of the first component of the term, anthropo-, meaning 'human', which brings us back to humanism and post-humanism, as these two currents are currently negotiating the conceptual content of 'humanity'.

However, the meaning of the term 'man' as used by Crutzen and Stoermer in 'Anthropocene' has little to do with the humanities or with humanism and post-humanism. Rather, it is a purely scientific use of the word to denote the natural species 'human', i.e. one among many other species with which natural history and zoology are concerned. Understood as a geophysical force belonging to the natural world, man is just as much a blind, unintentional and purposeless force as the other geophysical forces. In this perspective, man is not the subject and creator of history, but the subject of objective processes that take place in his absence and "without his knowledge".

Things are different, however, when Paul Crutzen speaks of a "huge task" for (natural) scientists and engineers to "have to show society towards ecologically sustainable management of the planet in the Anthropocene era". This requires appropriate behavior at all levels and possibly large-scale geoengineering, e.g. climate optimization", a "daunting task" that "lies ahead for scientists and engineers to guide society towards environmentally sustainable management during the era of the Anthropocene. This will require appropriate human behavior at all scales, and may well involve internationally accepted, large-scale geo-engineering projects, for instance to 'optimize' climate". These proposals echo the modern Cartesian view of man as "master and possessor of nature" (maître et possesseur de la nature). Crutzen, like many other mainly natural scientists (chemists, biologists, geographers, etc.), adopts and exaggerates the anthropocentrism of modern humanism by stressing the Promethean character of man, based on science and technology. In other words, man is seen here, on the one hand, as a self-acting and free subject, outside the earthly, physical reality, which he treats as a passive and inert object and with which, to repeat Kant's famous phrase, "he can do what he wants". On the other hand, an explicit or implicit conviction of the natural scientist is the idea that man is a free practical subject whose actions are governed by moral laws formulated by himself and who ultimately chooses the good, which in this case is the useful application of his technological means.

The extreme and more consistent view of humanity assumed here is expressed by the so-called 'ecomodernists', who claim that the disasters highlighted by the Anthropocene are due to the fact that humanity is not yet understood anthropocentrically to the extent that it can and should be understood, or that it has not yet differentiated itself from other beings to the extent that is appropriate to its nature. This means that human interventions have such dangerous and catastrophic consequences for our living conditions in the Earth System only because human action has not yet sufficiently freed itself from its dependence on natural history. This conviction is at the heart of the Ecomodernist Manifesto, which proclaims, among other things, that "knowledge and technology, applied with wisdom, might allow for a good, or even great, Anthropocene", and that "a good Anthropocene demands that humans use their growing social, economic and technological powers to make life better for people, stabilize the climate, and protect the natural world".[2]

In the humanities, however, there are some, such as the American philosopher Roy Scranton, who see the Anthropocene as the definitive confirmation of anthropocentrism, without trusting man and without sharing the technocratic optimism

2 An Ecomodernist Manifesto. A Manifesto to Use Humanity's Extraordinary Powers in Service of Creating a Good Anthropocene, http://www.ecomodernism.org (accessed April 2024).

of the natural scientists. According to this pessimistic current, the destruction of the environment by man is irreversible. All that remains for man in the "Anthropocene" is to "learn to die", that is, the Socratic-Platonic "study of death" followed by other thinkers such as Cicero, Seneca, Montaigne or Spinoza. From this insight, Scranton argues, follows the importance of the humanities because, as he writes, "we will need a new way of thinking our collective existence. We need a new vision of who 'we' are. We need a new humanism — a newly philosophical humanism, undergirded by renewed attention to the humanities".[3] In addition to ancient Greek philosophy, however, this new humanism includes ancient epic and dramatic poetry, as well as historiography and works from other traditions.

The importance of the humanities in general, and of the study of antiquity in particular, is self-evident here and needs no further discussion.

The situation is different with posthumanism, whose contribution to deepening the debates on man, humanism and the Anthropocene must be acknowledged, regardless of whether one accepts or rejects its positions.

The posthumanist conception of the 'Anthropocene man' moves in exactly the opposite direction to that of the ecomodernists. The recognition of man as a geological force in the Anthropocene amounts to the transcendence and abolition of modernity's hierarchical opposition between subject and object, culture (or history) and nature, historical time and natural (geological) time. This is why posthumanists speak of a hybrid formation they call 'natureculture'. Posthumanists accept the diagnosis of the planet's dramatic ecological situation, but reject the extreme anthropocentrism already expressed in the linguistic form of 'Anthropocene' and openly expressed in the aforementioned humanist interpretation of it, and draw exactly the opposite conclusions from the latter. The plight of the environment discussed in the context of the Anthropocene is useful and crucial, according to posthumanist theorists, mainly because it reveals the devastation and impasse to which the fantasies of omnipotence of modern anthropocentric thought have led. In the face of the dizzying 'deep time' of Earth's history, the insignificance of man and the inadequacy of the fundamental proposition of anthropocentrism, according to which 'man is the measure of all things', are further highlighted. What is required in the present situation is the radical 'decentralization' and weakening of man, so that the non-human agencies manifesting themselves in the Anthropocene can fully develop and occupy their proper space.

To do this, however, it is necessary to revise and reformulate all of man's hitherto dominant conceptions, concepts and interpretations of himself, nature, culture and society, as well as of his relations with other living and non-living beings, and

3 Scranton 2015, 19.

in this endeavor the use of diverse and heterogeneous sources and forms of knowledge and discourse is both permitted and required. The guiding principle here is, on the one hand, the displacement of man from his privileged position and the abandonment and critique of the traditional anthropocentric perspective, which is in fact androcentric and especially carnophallogocentric; on the other hand, the adoption of a way of thinking that takes into account and restores what the anthropocentric perspective has obscured, silenced, repressed and suppressed.

Posthumanist positions are expressed by thinkers such as the recently deceased French sociologist Bruno Latour. For the Anthropocene, Latour urges the need for a philosophical stance according to which we can only control the planetary consequences of human actions if we admit that humans voluntarily give up the ontological and epistemological privileges granted to them by traditional anthropocentrism and share the 'fate' of agents who do not fall under the subjective-objective distinction:

"The point of living in the epoch of the Anthropocene is that all agents share the same shape-changing destiny, a destiny that cannot be followed, documented, told, and represented by using any of the older traits associated with subjectivity or objectivity. Far from trying to "reconcile" or "combine" nature and society, the task, the crucial political task, is on the contrary to *distribute* agency as far and in as *differentiated* a way as possible — until, that is, we have thoroughly lost any relation between those two concepts of object and subject that are no longer of any interest any more except in a patrimonial sense".[4]

Latour and his fellow travelers in posthumanism recognize agency and autonomy in all kinds of entities, animate and inanimate, material and immaterial, physical and cultural, hybrid, real and fictional, without any distinctions or hierarchies. Instead, they emphasize the essential connections between them.

In this context, posthumanists also turn to Greek antiquity. Of particular note is the strong presence of ancient Greek myths in posthumanist theories and accounts of the Anthropocene. The remainder of this paper explores this phenomenon in order to demonstrate the significance of posthumanists' use of ancient myth and its implications for the role and meaning of antiquity in the Anthropocene.

4 Latour 2014, 15.

3 *Gaia* (Earth) and Myth

As far as archaeology is concerned, a rough overview of posthumanist texts dealing with the Anthropocene reveals the conspicuous presence of myths from Greco-Roman antiquity, and even myths of a certain kind. For example, in the work of three of the most prominent posthumanist theorists of the Anthropocene, the American professor of the history of consciousness and feminist studies Donna Haraway, the Belgian philosopher, chemist and historian of science Isabelle Stengers, and the aforementioned Bruno Latour, the ancient Earth deity Gaia (Χθών) appears in the context of their analyses of the relationship between humans and nature in the Anthropocene. As Haraway writes, "Gaia figures the Anthropocene for many contemporary Western thinkers".[5] In the conceptual field generated by Gaia (Χθών) and the other ancient Greek — female — chthonic deities, similar mythical traditions of other places and continents are then incorporated.

Space does not allow me to develop here the place of the Gaia myth in the usually hermetic texts of the posthumanists. We will limit ourselves to pointing out just one such text, which is crucial and common to the three theoretical thinkers mentioned above, and in which we can see the importance of the study of antiquity (Altertumswissenschaft) in the Anthropocene.

From Johann Jakob Bachofen's famous theory of ancient matriarchy (*Das Mutterrecht*, 1861) to contemporary feminist ecology, the ancient Greek myth of Gaia has been used to highlight elements and aspects of human life that have been lost in the course of modern history as a result of the "Rationalisierung" and "Entzauberung" of the world (Max Weber) and the domination of nature by human science and technology. As the goddess of the earth and mother of the gods, Gaia is a living, physical being who, as women's studies scholars have convincingly argued, is not subject to the forms of modern reason, since such a female figure could never be understood, recognized or controlled within the framework of a patriarchal order. It is from this perspective that the reception of the 'Gaia Hypothesis' by the British chemist James Lovelock and the American biologist Lynn Margulis in the last two decades of the last century is interpreted. Lovelock's 'Hypothesis', first formulated in the early 1970s and then developed into a comprehensive geobiological theory with the help of Margulis, argues that the Earth is a bio-governing system, i.e. an organism capable of creating and regulating the conditions that make its own life possible. Because Lovelock named this organism after the ancient Greek mythological deity Gaia, his theory was denounced as unscientific, obscurantist, mystical, etc.

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5 Haraway 2016, 51.

The concept of the Anthropocene, however, created the conditions for a different perception of both Lovelock's theory and the ancient myth of Gaia, as well as of myth in general.

In the work of these authors, Gaia is used as a concept in opposition to the distinction and dichotomy between nature and history associated with modern anthropocentrism. These theorists seek to decentralize and disempower humans, to abolish the separation of nature and history, and to empower and emphasize Gaia as a distinct force and action. However, the crucial element of interest they all share lies elsewhere: All three, drawing on Hesiod's *Theogony* and other ancient texts, emphasize the dark, destructive dimension and power of Gaia.

According to Latour, for example, "Gaia, Ge, Earth, is not a goddess properly speaking, but a force from the time before the gods", "prolific, dangerous, savvy, the ancient Gaia emerges in great outpourings of blood, steam, and terror, in the company of Chaos and Eros."[6] The French sociologist's use of the ancient myth has a Platonic, ironic connotation: on the one hand, he criticizes it and distances himself from it; on the other, he points out and implies through it features of the planet that are inaccessible to traditional, anthropocentric scientific discourse, while, like Plato, he himself invents a kind of "myth". He thus transforms, among other things, the Gaia of mythology into a hybrid created by mythology and science, which, as he writes "threatens us, while we threaten it".

Similarly, Stengers and Haraway both emphasize the need to construct new, compelling narratives that allow us to break free from the anthropocentric, i.e. androcentric, perspectives and practices that have led to the Anthropocene and its threats. Such narratives do not seek scientific 'objectivity', nor do they offer bright utopias as antidotes to the dark present, but they do propose new ways of being and living in the world, and they do call for political action. In their own theoretical constructs, both researchers use Gaia, the chthonic deity associated with creation and destruction, to describe the planet's balance disturbed by anthropocentric/androcentric practices.

For Stengers, Gaia is an unpredictable, dark and pernicious force that infiltrates and threatens everything. The Belgian philosopher associates Gaia with the 'sixth great extinction' of species that she believes is currently taking place.

Finally, Haraway refers to Gaia in the form of Χθών, the goddess of the earth and the underworld, to whom she also attributes the qualities of the terrifying and the formless. Haraway associates Χθών with other dark female deities of ancient Greek mythology, such as the Gorgons and especially Medusa, the Harpies or the Furies,

6 Latour 2017, Third Lecture: Gaia a (finally secular) figure for nature.

alluding to the responsibility and guilt of patriarchal, male-dominated humanity for the current state of the earth and nature.

All three thinkers incorporate ancient mythical deities into their theories, through which they attempt to explain the destruction of nature and the constant threat and insecurity of life that lurks in the Anthropocene.

It is clear, however, that the emergence and strong presence of ancient myths in our time is far from accidental or merely decorative and aesthetic. The pernicious impact of human activities on the environment has transformed nature into something alien, unfamiliar and frightening to human beings; and it is the experience of this transformation that has given rise to the explanatory use of ancient myths, revealing their interpretive potential and relevance.

Myth, argued the great German theorist Hans Blumenberg, offers man a way of confronting the pressing indeterminacy of reality, which he cannot bear because it does not lend itself to conceptual knowledge and thus terrifies him. Blumenberg calls this indeterminacy the 'absolutism of reality'.[7] Myth, in other words, weakens this 'absolutism of reality'. The initially anonymous, unknown, unknowable, threatening and meaningless real is named, incorporated into a sequence of events, made meaningful and thus 'tamed'. The terrifying and monstrous nature of the world is subdued and the world itself is "made in an initially not moral but physiognomic sense of the word "friendlier". This is a question of man's need to listen to myth in order to feel at home in the world."[8]

In this way, the ancient myth, an integral part of the study of antiquity, continues to demonstrate its importance and function in the Anthropocene, confirming the Neoplatonist Salutius' well-known statement about this literary genre: *ταῦτα δὲ ἐγένετο μὲν οὐδέποτε, ἔστι δὲ ἀεί*.[9]

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7 Blumenberg 1979, 9.

8 Op. cit. 127.

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James I. Porter

Philologies of the Present for the Future

Abstract: Philologies of the past are always conducted from a moment in the present, though they do their best to efface this fact about themselves. What happens when philology is addressed *to* the present? There is a long unrecognized history of philology that was conducted off-site and off-label by writers who were marked on racial, ethnic, and disciplinary grounds as ineligible to practice philology in its conventional academic forms or else chose to opt out of these forms for similar reasons; they were thus obliged to produce a philology of their own present. Examining this troubled history of (counter)philology can lead to a more robust template for philologies of the future that students and scholars can carry out by becoming philologists of their own experiences in the present, given their experiences of ethnic, religious, or political inequality, while also becoming better philologists of the past.

Keywords: black theory, counterphilology, decolonization, discrimination, fascism, *nigra philologica*, philology

1 Introduction

Philology as it is conventionally understood is the study, typically the loving study (true to its etymology), of language as manifested through the study of texts, their meaning, transmission, classification, translation, and so on. Its origins in the West lie in classical Greece. It reached its full flower only in Hellenistic Alexandria and eventually found its way into Europe during the Renaissance. By the nineteenth century, philology branched out to cover all ancient and modern languages and literatures. Today it is the unspoken method that underlies every study of texts read as texts. But that is not all there is to philology, and this very developmental picture of "philology eternal" (*philologia perennis*), while canonical today, has much that is questionable about it, having itself been filtered through Western classicizing traditions. It is the story that philology most often tells about itself.[1]

In some quarters, philology is thought to have provided the foundation of the humanities *tout court*. That is the argument of James Turner's 2014 book *Philology:*

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1 See the canonical account of Rudolf Pfeiffer (Pfeiffer 1961; 1968; 1976). The roots of this account reach back to the nineteenth century.

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The Forgotten Origins of the Modern Humanities.[2] Turner supports his claim by yoking, correctly in my view, the study of language to the study of history and to historicism, the method developed in the nineteenth century that privileges historical perspectives as a guide to knowledge — a science of the past. Turner is right to claim that "historicism, with its insistence on comparison and genealogy, replicated itself in the DNA of the modern humanities".[3] And to the extent that the project of the humanities cannot be decoupled from the historical products of the language of peoples and their lives, it is no overstatement to claim that philology has a claim to having once been "the queen of the sciences."[4] The question now is whether that claim remains valid for us in the twenty-first century. Is philology still regnant? Will it be this a century from now? Recent events remind us what can happen to queens. Nonetheless, the genealogical argument, if true, cannot be easily swept aside. What was affects what is, and to this extent it is true that philology continues to be a part of the genetic makeup of the humanities today. And yet, objections to philology, both material (the loss of language learning) and ideological (the skepticism towards such knowledge), are threatening to unseat its significance. Can philology have a future at all? Much depends on how we understand philology.

Turner's argument is reassuringly sweeping, but I would say that his object, "philology," for all its breadth, is too narrowly defined, while his subtitle, "The Forgotten Origins of the Modern Humanities," is misleading. The origins of philology are not quite as forgotten as he would have us believe. Erich Auerbach, often cited as the inventor of comparative literature (though his training was in Romance philology), relied on Vico's broad understanding of philology to reach a compelling definition that deserves our attention today. Neither Auerbach nor Vico play much of a role in Turner's book. Yet both have much to teach us about the resilience of philology, and especially its unlimited potential — not least its potential to overflow narrow academic boundaries. Both do so by reaching beyond the humanism that Turner's book sets out to defend, in part by excluding philosophical inquiry from his quest. But the origins of philology owe everything to philosophical inquiry in both the narrow and broad sense. Theagenes of Rhegium (*fl.* 520) was said to be the originator of philology (*grammatikē* and *hellēnismos*, understood as the study of the Greek language and of style).[5] But he also seems to

2 Turner 2014.

3 Turner 2014, x.

4 Pollock 2015, 2.

5 DK 8A1a (Schol. in Dion. Thrac.).

have read the *Iliad* as an allegory of the physical world.[6] Democritus' preserved titles indicate a healthy interest in Homeric interpretation. Metrodorus of Chios was a pupil of Anaxagoras and a Homeric allegorist. After the so-called Presocratics, the Sophists were the next contributors to literary philology, then Plato and Aristotle. In the Hellenistic period, a clash between the philosophical and grammatical students of Homer, once fused in the person of Theagenes (at least by reputation) and his fifth-century and fourth-century successors, came to a head with the philological war waged by Aristarchus of Samothrace, the Librarian of Alexandria and editor-in-chief of Homer, against Crates of Mallos, a philosophically-minded literary critic of Homer. Since that time, the battle lines have been drawn and redrawn, and Turner is only the latest entrant in this skirmish. The clash between these two fields of knowledge (philology and philosophy) is unfortunate. Philosophy is the love of wisdom, philology is the love of words. What is wisdom without words or words without wisdom? Empty, both Vico and Auerbach say. But let us pick up the story with Auerbach.

2 Auerbach and Vico

Auerbach's earliest recorded view of literary and cultural value appears in his dissertation from 1921: "the wealth of events in human life which unfold in earthly time constitutes a totality, a coherent development or meaningful whole, in which each individual event is embedded in a variety of ways and through which it can be interpreted".[7] He was careful to underscore the "infinite" character of these events in all their "wealth," but also the concrete "sensuousness of life" that they encompassed. He further noted that a perfect grasp of any such totality is forbidden. As a consequence, a scholar is thrown back upon some less than perfect means of intuiting the logic of events — call this feeling, intuition, or speculation. The inquirer, less a scientist than a human being who is moved by human requirements and is subject to all-too-human limitations, interprets, but "often unconsciously." And when she does, she is driven as much by "practical and ethical needs" as by scholarly ones.[8]

Philology is the name that Auerbach gives to such interpretive activity. It was Vico, the Neapolitan student of rhetoric and the author of *New Science* from

6 DK 8A2 (Schol. in Hom., *Il.* 20.67 [Porphyry]).
7 Auerbach 1921, 38; trans. mine.
8 "Vico and Herder" (1932) in Porter, ed. 2016, 11.

1725, who provided Auerbach with his model, and not his fellow Romance philologists. His contemporaries emphasized style and aesthetics in literary cultural products that floated free of time in the form of near-abstractions, hypostases, or timeless truths. And they did so partly in reaction to the dry positivism of nineteenth-century Romance philology. Perhaps one could call this a belated Romantic revolt against historicism, which truly was the undisputed queen of the sciences in the humanities even at the turn of the twentieth century. In sharp contrast, Auerbach at times appears to be conducting something more akin to historical sociology, though his studies went much deeper than this. He took philology beyond the love of words, literature, and style and directed it towards a broader goal, which is neatly summed up in his final book from 1958: "the systematic context of all human history ... is Vico's subject, which, in line with Vico's own terminology, *we may equally well call philology or philosophy*".[9] Such study "is concerned with only one thing — mankind".[10] And in his most famous article, "Philology of World Literature" ("*Philologie der Weltliteratur*," 1952), he coined a new phrase to cover the expanded activity of the new kind of scholar that he was envisaging: "*Weltphilologen*," "philologists of the world," and not "of the word."

Auerbach's coinage has an audacious ring to it. Philologists of the world do not practice world philology as this is understood today. Auerbach truly believed that his role was to offer something like a philosophical and ethical grasp of the human condition as this could be read out of literature, which is where he found "the reality of the world" (*die Weltwirklichkeit*) most poignantly expressed.[11] But he meant more than this, because earthly, this-worldly philology was for Auerbach a philology with direct implications for the present and not just the past. It is here that Auerbach opens up a promising avenue for a future philology, or rather for plural philologies of the future. But before looking ahead, we need to look back.

9 Auerbach 1965, 16; 1958, 16.

10 Auerbach 1965, 16; emphasis added.

11 "Philology of World Literature," in Porter, ed. 2016, 255; trans. modified.

3 From the Nuremburg Race Laws to Racism in Classical Philology

Philology in the modern era was never quite a harmless academic pursuit. Classical philology from the turn of the nineteenth century onward was founded on a conscious exclusion of the Semitic world — not only the ancient Hebrew world but the totality of Near Eastern civilizations.[12] Nevertheless, classical philology as this took root in Germany carried in its DNA a strain of anti-Semitism (despite its debts to the then nascent biblical philology) that carried over into its offspring philologies. Orientalism was only one of its features. As philology evolved over the course of the nineteenth century, it often helped to underwrite and legitimize national, colonial, and imperial aspirations, in the first instance by treating languages and their products as possessions to be had. Conducted in the language of the conquerors, philology became the arbiter of the languages of the conquered. It was indeed regnant in this formative period and until the middle of the nineteenth century, when history and the hard sciences usurped its place. After the second World War, the situation of philology drastically changed, in part as a response to the atrocities of the war and in part owing to a new self-reflexive turn that made the history of philology into one of philology's own objects. The books by Maurice Olender and Suzanne Marchand are two signal contributions to this change of focus.[13] In my own work, it was my confrontation with Nietzsche's philology and the context in which he was operating and against which he was reacting that made the darker aspects of this history vivid for me for the first time.[14] Not long afterward, I learned that Erich Auerbach, a German Jew, was a victim of this history even as his philology was an attempt to push back against it, long before he was forced into exile when the Nuremburg Race Laws took effect in 1935 and had to flee to Istanbul.[15] I came to appreciate that no study of Classics can be complete if it ignores its own historical conditions of possibility or remains blind to the residual traces of this history in its own conduct in the present.

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12 Grafton 1981; 1999; Porter 2000, ch. 5; Kurtz 2019.

13 Olender 1989; Marchand 1996.

14 Porter 2000, esp. chs. 4 and 5.

15 Porter 2008; Porter, ed. 2016.

4 Philology and Colonialism

More recently, these residues have threatened to obscure the positive potentials of even a philology made conscious of its own past. Calls can be heard urging an exorcism of these pasts under the banner of decolonization. Sirad Ahmed's *Archaeology of Babel: The Colonial Foundation of the Humanities*, is a particularly radical version of this approach.[16] Ahmed believes that the very methods of philology, its historicism and its search for cultural origins through language, are tainted by their colonial legacy. In its zeal to collect and categorize foreign cultures, post-Enlightenment philology helped to produce the category of race itself. His prime exhibit is William Jones, a pioneer of comparative philology in Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit, whose research laid the groundwork for modern Indo-European studies. But Jones was also employed by the supreme court of the East India Company and, as Ahmed writes, "his studies occurred within a colonial context and were meant to serve colonial rule" (37).

The argument is powerful and not easily dismissed on purely factual grounds, though it is far from clear from Ahmed's own account that Jones was a witting participant in this colonial project, and in places he concedes that Jones was anything but this. What makes Ahmed's general argument compelling at first glance is not the implication of guilt by association. This is, I believe, its weakest claim. It is that the knowledge reaped under the British and later European empires mimicked the global, totalizing, and universalizing pretensions of colonial empire itself. If it is true that the very idea of literature is a Western colonial construct, that the (Goethean) idea of *Weltphilologie* was minted in the mid- to late eighteenth century in combination with these developments, that the historical turn in the human sciences was not only coincident with empire but also yoked to its empire *of* knowledge, power, and prestige, and that the resurgence of a "new philology" over the past few decades is a direct heir to these earlier processes — if all this is indeed the case, then those of us who are concerned with and about philology have some serious soul-searching to do. We might also do well to recall that Greek philology in the Periclean and then in the Alexandrian age was itself born of empire, privilege, cultural chauvinism, and other inequities. Surely, classical philology is heir not only to nineteenth-century imperialism but also to a

16 Ahmed 2018. Subsequent references to this work appear in parentheses.

much longer and largely ignored imperialist past. *Philologia perennis* or *imperium perenne*?[17]

In a different quarter of academia but at the same moment, another challenge to the foundations on which philology rests has been brewing. Racism is pervasive in our society, and classical studies are no exception. Whence the current calls for a deep reflection on and even a cleansing of residual traces of racism in Classics, despite the efforts made in "the 'diversity and equity industry,'" which, as scholars like Sasha-Mae Eccleston and Dan-el Padilla Peralta argue, tokenizes students and scholars of color, in effect monetizing their racial identities.[18] The colonial legacy here rears its ugly head again, even if this happens to some extent against the academy's best intentions. Some of the language these two scholars use resonates with Ahmed's critique. But the tenor of their call to arms has a different feel. To deny the truth of their experience of racism and their sheer "bewilderment" whenever they feel called out in the seminar room, in pubs at Oxford, and on the streets where they live, or whenever they are met with relative deafness in the profession and with "the demand to perform [their] indebtedness, in conjunction with the concussive force of gaslighting, racial terror, quotidian racism (sometimes called microaggressions) and other pressures," would be a mistake. I believe their sincerity when they say it is "vexing to hear so much metaphorical talk of chains and emancipation in reception-oriented criticism" (these are more than mere "micro-aggressions" for them) and when they notice the "even more vexing" pressure to "remove one's work from what was understood as lived experience, as if that detachment were the exclusive sign of intellectual rigor." Philologists at their best seek to recover the lived experience of those in the past. What about the lived experience of philologists in the present?

I am more partial to the anti-racist arguments of Eccleston and Padilla Peralta than to the anti-colonialist arguments of Ahmed, though they, too, urge a decolonization of Classics. For one thing, they are admirably speaking to the present, one they know all too well, and they are outlining a positive practice for the future. Not coincidentally, their arguments display a marked affinity with Auerbach's stated "practical and ethical" imperatives (their subtitle reads "*Ethos* and *Praxis*"). Their thinking is aligned with other recent critiques within the field that are seeking to shine a light on the particularities of classical study in North America, and especially in the United States, where racism, elitism, and other exclusionary pasts

17 See Porter 2011 on the imperialism that made possible and informed Hellenistic aesthetics. More work remains to be done in this arena and in other areas not covered by Ahmed, e.g., Malay traditions (Maier 1988 and Proudfoot 2003).

18 Eccleston and Peralta 2022.

have shaped the current state of the field. I am thinking of the work of Emily Greenwood, Patrice Rankine, Marthura Umachandran, and Lorna Hardwick. A more recent and decidedly more challenging approach, marrying Afro-pessimism and philology in constitutive "exile" — a novel *nigra philologica* — has been offered by David Marriott.[19]

The value of these contemporary approaches, undertaken as they mostly are by practicing classicists, lies in their reminder that philology needs to become even more self-aware, more cognizant of its own historical conditions of possibility, and more alert to these historical residues in its own operations in the present. While these scholars are mounting powerful counterphilological arguments from within their fields, they are dedicated to invigorating the discipline, and they have positive countersuggestions to show for it. These include recommending more expansive inclusion in the profession, diversified curricula, personal life-transformations in the name of field- and world-transformations and deep structural change, and a doubling down on philology as a "love of language" understood as a respect for the rich dialogism and "hybrid plurality" of language itself.[20] They also advocate for studies in the reception of classics, where what is revealed is the very real fluidity, instability, and political volatility of classical inheritances rather than their hopeless ideological contamination. A host of additional scholars of Classics, too many to name, are at the vanguard of attempts to remake the field so that it can be responsive to the current precarious environment that is affecting all of academia.

A perspective like Ahmed's is significant. I, too, believe we must confront the historical realities that condition our disciplines. But I am concerned that his method is flawed. It is backward-looking and not forward-looking. It remains as beholden to history and to historicism as the philology it impugns. It operates with the very tools (concepts and methods) that it wishes to discredit. And it is tone-deaf to the fact that many of the philologists whom it charges with colonial negligence were themselves resisting the circumstances in which they lived. At the end of the day, Ahmed risks throwing the baby of philology out with the bathwater of colonialism. Let me expand a bit on my hesitations about his study, less in the spirit of refutation than in that of correction. For I believe that its method, approach, and findings, combined together, produce a one-sided view of philology and its potentials.

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19 Greenwood 2022; Rankine 2019; Umachandran 2022; Hardwick 2021; Marriott 2024, esp. 44–136.

20 Greenwood 2022, 193.

5 Babel in Ruins

Ahmed's premise is that philology was a colonial enterprise. Therefore, he reasons, all philology after its formative stages around the turn of the nineteenth century is tarnished by the tools of empire. The tarnishing runs deep, and it reaches into the very core of what philology takes to be its purpose. To assert this kind of claim, Ahmed must make assumptions about what the goal of philology was and is, and it is here that his argument overreaches itself. Ultimately, the problem is not simply that he misreads the history of modern philology. He also restricts the scope of what philology's powers are and historically have shown themselves to be.

It is only natural that Ahmed's argument should scant the full profile of modern philology. His conclusions are extrapolated from a single case study, that of William Jones. Ahmed cannot conceal the impressive accomplishments of Jones, "a late eighteenth-century British polymath," who "single-handedly translated the most influential works, arguably, of the Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit traditions." Nor can he conceal the idealistic aspirations that drove Jones's various projects:

> Displaying a mastery of Asian tongues even more improbable then, Sir William Jones published nuanced renderings of Hafiz in 1771, the *Muʿallaqāt* in 1782, and *Śakuntalā* 1789. Though spread across two decades, these translations were part of a unified project: Jones intended them to revolutionize European poetry, releasing it from the grip of *ancien régime* neoclassicism. Just as he had hoped, Romantic writers both inside and outside England located radically different aesthetics in the works he translated and turned to them as models for their own poetry. Goethe in particular immersed himself in these works before he formulated the idea of *Weltliteratur*. (1)

The problem for Ahmed is that

> before they became a part of Romanticism and world literature, these translations were the products of British colonial rule. Jones published each of them alongside philological studies that served the East India Company conquest of Bengal. These studies — including the first colonial grammar of an Asian language, codifications of both Muslim and Hindu law, and the discovery of the Indo-European language family — helped lay the groundwork for the philological revolution. In fact, they disseminated its cardinal principles: language pertains to history, not divine providence or the laws of nature; each language produces its own history; and the history disclosed by literature belongs to national peoples. (1–2)

It is here that the return to philology under the auspices of the so-called New Philology from the 1980s and 1990s inserts itself as Jones' rightful successor in Ahmed's genealogy. "The relationship between colonial rule and the philological revolution has been excised from disciplinary histories of the humanities," and

even postcolonial critics endorse the progressivist elements of Jones' enterprises (2). The situation is all the more deplorable, Ahmed believes, because of the indelible imprint that "the philological revolution" made on the humanities: it "precipitated an epistemic transformation so vast that it has, in fact, never ceased to define the humanities" (2). The force of this epistemic change "lay in its singular capacity to comprehend every language, literature, and legal tradition — and hence to provide Europeans transhistorical and suprageographic knowledge about the colonized (among much else)." As a result, "philology's centuries-old claim to be emancipatory is itself a colonial legacy" (2). Ahmed's study aims to return, not to philology, but to philology's "suppressed history" (2).

Ahmed is right to point out that European-based philology was part of a larger Enlightenment project of comprehending knowledge on an encyclopedic and universal scale. It is also true that the project aimed to investigate national histories through their linguistic products in the belief that languages encode history and give us access to varied pasts. But in Ahmed's eyes, the project backfired and ultimately failed. Instead of disclosing non-European peoples' histories, philology erased their histories. Texts served to disembed linguistic artifacts from the unwritten practices that had produced them and kept them afloat. Ripped from their contexts, the alleged windows onto history — authoritative texts — reified their objects. Fluid, transient, heterogeneous, and embodied realities were translated into mute, arrested, frozen, and immutable forms. And those forms were recruited into a totalizing project whose goal was to "reconstruct a global map of human history and hence to acquire total historical knowledge" (3). A cascade of new categories, never seen before, were invented: literature, world literature, national literatures, proto- and pre-histories (most notably, Proto-Indo-European), and historical and evolutionary schemes, culled for the most part from the elite ("literate and clerical") topsoil of non-European cultures (46). Owing to these foundations, which spell out the remit and dictate the very tools of philological inquiry, all study of language, literature, and the past in the postcolonial West is complicit in this history. "None of us are free, none of us to blame" (7). "We are [all] inheritors of a colonial legacy" (10).

Armed with a search warrant like this, Ahmed goes on to implicate a surprisingly long line of scholars in this colonial inheritance. Philologists and thinkers as diverse as Nietzsche, Gandhi, Nehru, Auerbach, and Edward Said are ensnared in the problematic that he lays out. All endorse, unwittingly, the colonialist philological project, whether owing to their Orientalism, their "commitments to realism and secular criticism" (39), their wish to conserve textual pasts, or their commitment to the value of historical inquiry.

The last charge is especially revealing. Ahmed writes that the "historical method inevitably reduces human activity and political praxis solely to what the written record can represent" (46). In theory, this may be true, though in practice it is anything but true. Philologists are typically the first to recognize that the written record is only one strand in the tangled skein of cultures and societies that comprise the object of their inquiries. But this still leaves wide open the question of exactly what it is that historical method erases and how anyone can tell exactly what this erasure was of. This is one of the Achilles' heels of Ahmed's critique. In seeking to recover what philology excludes, he is forced to imagine what can no longer be seen — not because it has been rendered invisible by historical methods, but because it has been buried by history itself. What is lost are those discursive "practices [that] shunned literary inscription and historical transmission," in particular the demotic practices of the illiterate and disempowered classes that "cannot ... be reconstructed historiographically" (12), and are now all but lost to history.

I say "all but," because here Ahmed runs into the problem that plagues so much of conventional philology too. To be able to claim a loss, one has to point to the clues that indicate the loss. And this is just what Ahmed does. F.A. Wolf ran into this problem with his study of Homer in 1795.[21] Ahmed takes the same path. Reading Jones's and more recent and more scholarly translations of early texts, he claims to be able to unearth "the discursive practices [that] these texts appropriate": "The rhetoric of nonnormative desire in Hafiz, nonstate sovereignty in the *Mu'allquāt*, and the prehistoric earth in *Śakuntalā* each contain the trace of languages that were not recorded and that consequently resist philological analysis" (46). But this is strange. If Ahmed is referring to practices that are not textually encoded, why does he believe that he can inspect them in their textualized counterparts? What does it mean to read something that is "not recorded"? It is one thing to say that colonial philology ignored objects that its own frameworks made invisible and quite another to say that the objects ignored never made it into the written record at all. Exactly what are the traces that Ahmed claims to be able to see?

The examples he provides beg the question he raises. In fact, they demonstrate the circularity of his approach, for each instance of a pre-colonial oral discursive practice that he points to already encodes, as if presciently, its own resistance to colonial textualization. Thus, in the Vedic *Śakuntalā*, "a truly ecological sensibility belonged neither to sacred groves nor to *adivasis* in general but rather to the *necessarily prehistorical refusal of all human appropriation* ... — except what was necessary for bare survival" (5). The italicized phrase is no longer a question of

21 Wolf's approach was more subtle but equally circular. Porter 2000, 75–76.

historical reconstruction. It is a piece of divination, and a highly Romantic one at that. "Without fetishizing literature at all, we could insist that something fundamental to it lies outside history and consequently cannot be approached philologically," Ahmed writes with a conviction that surprises (6). This is a reverse fetishism, a fetishism of ahistorical origins. If "to romanticize is to reify or idealize a historical entity" (13), here we see how *an ahistorical entity* is being reified and idealized. And yet, all this is being posited from within a historical framework as something that once existed before the modern imposition of historical time, hence as something that is simultaneously prehistorical and ahistorical.

Ahmed is frank about his method:

> My starting point is not history. I did not arrive at my description of these discursive practices by studying an empirical object (nor do my descriptions presume to explain any such object). I arrived at them instead by working back from the philological revolution through various non-Western legal and literary traditions in an effort to discern the traditional practices the new philology cannot see. These practices are, therefore, ideal from the beginning: they are *what I posit* to be the philological revolution's negative image. Only such an imaginative act can realize the new philology's ambition to recover the languages that prior philology had ignored. (13; emphasis added)

Has Ahmed escaped the historical paradigm that he is criticizing? Or is he not rather embodying it with his imaginative extensions? Clearly, he is retracing the steps of philology in his own way. Western philology, too, sought to recover prehistorical roots, primordial languages of desire, "the originary" (or "the earth"), Proto-Indo-European roots, and so on (44–45). If Jones sought "the recovery of Asian languages in their 'pure' forms as alternatives to European cultural and political decay" (61), how is Ahmed not replicating Jones's goals and approach? Ahmed is wise enough to confess his own complicity in this all-determining paradigm. "None of us are free, none of us to blame." And, as he notes, his own preferred method, which he calls "archaeology," is itself historical: "Archaeology is itself, of course, a mode of historical understanding. But in the chapters that follow, it turns historical method against itself" (45). In actual fact, Ahmed's own arguments are turned against themselves.

Standing back for a moment, I have three principal criticisms of Ahmed's approach, and these are interrelated. The first is that it is founded on a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy. Classical philology, which I know best, did indeed display an anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic bent in its modern formation. But that surely does not make all subsequent philology anti-Judaic or anti-Semitic. The same is true of colonialism. Contemporary attempts in classical philology to decolonize and otherwise challenge the classical disciplines seek to deprivilege the very idea of Western classicism, and this is a good thing. But some of the best examples of classical

philology from the past sought to achieve a similar end, sometimes using historicist methods and at other times challenging them.

Second, modern philology is not an ideological monolith. The modern philological tradition in the West contains counterphilological tendencies of its own that Ahmed simply overlooks. If it is the case that "to end coloniality it is necessary to end the fictions of modernity" and "to illuminate the darker side of modernity," as Walter Mignolo, a leading voice in contemporary decolonial theory, writes, then Nietzsche, Said, and Auerbach certainly should be included in that critical project.[22]

Third, Ahmed's study operates with an unnecessarily narrow view of philology. Philology took no one form in the modern era. On the contrary, its practices have been remarkably elastic and in ways elude both the humanistically reductive approach of Turner and the aggressively decolonializing approach of Ahmed. The remainder of this essay will offer a quick synthesis of these three points. I want to close by returning first to Auerbach's expansive definition of philology, which he derived from Vico, and then to a handful of additional examples that extend the reach of philology in a similar spirit beyond the pale of its customary definition.

6 Philologies of the Present

Vico, more than any other figure, set Auerbach on the track of a much enhanced and broadened vision of philology. As Auerbach writes in the preface to his abridged German translation of Vico's *Scienza Nuova* from 1924, "Vico understands by philology everything that we label as the human sciences today: all of history in the narrower sense: sociology, national economy, history of religion, language, law, and art; and he demands that these empirical sciences should become one with philosophy".[23] As radical as the thought was at the time, this is not all that Auerbach took from Vico. Twelve years later, still working through Vico, who continued to serve as his mainstay throughout the entirety of his career, he published an essay titled "Vico and the Idea of Philology" (1936). The essay ends with a summation and a warning. Vico, Auerbach writes, grounded the idea of philology not in texts but in "a faith in what is common to all human beings":

22 Mignolo/Walsh 2018, 110; 111.

23 Auerbach 1924, 29.

> It is in this sense that we can understand philology as the epitome (*der Inbegriff*) of the science of the human, insofar as all humans are historical beings. Its very possibility consists in the assumption that people are able to understand one another and that there exists a world of and for humanity that is common to us all, to which we all belong, and thus to which we can all gain admission. *Without a belief in this world* there would be no science of the human race in history, and thus no philology.[24]

With the mention of "historical beings," Auerbach means that individuals, like all things in the world, have always been conditioned by their situation in time and place. He does not mean that they have always been aware of this fact or that they have necessarily understood the fundamental contingency of their lives in historical terms. There are different names for this kind of understanding: religion, superstition, myth, philosophy, morals, and even historiography all step in, each in their own way, to account for the contingency that comes with human existence. Auerbach continues, now in a darker tone, at the close of the essay:

> It bears remembering that Vico did not understand what he took to be common to all people (*das Gemeinsame-Menschliche*) as in any way a matter of education or progressive enlightenment (*durchaus nicht in einem gebildteten, aufgeklärten, und fortschrittlichen Sinn*). Rather, what all human beings hold in common is the entirety of historical reality, in all its greatness and its horror (*sondern in der ganzen, großen und schrecklichen Wirklicheit der Geschichte*). Not only did he see historical individuals in their totality; he also saw that he was himself a human being and that it made him human to understand them. But Vico did not create the human race in his own likeness; he did not see himself in the other. Rather, he saw the other in himself. He discovered himself, as a human, in history, and the long-buried forces of our common nature stood revealed to him. This was Vico's humanity, something far more profound — and far more perilous — than what we normally associate with the word. Nevertheless — or, perhaps, precisely for this reason — it was Vico who discovered our common humanity, and held it fast.[25]

Written as Auerbach was being stripped of his professional identity by the Nazis and published when he was living as an exile in Istanbul, the essay is a virtual philological *credo*, and the same is true of its conclusion. Statements like these tell us why it is wrong to issue platitudes about philology's complicity with Western oppression or its automatic enrollment in the project of Enlightenment progress, or about its unthinking servitude to an ideologically tainted historicism. 1936 was a moment of reckoning, and Auerbach was living through it as a witness and a victim. Like Vico, he recognized that at times, and probably more often than we

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24 "Vico's Idea of Philology" ("*Vico und die Idee der Philologie*"), in Porter 2016, 35; emphasis added.
25 Ibid.; emphasis added. This was Auerbach's lasting position. See "The Philology of World Literature" (1952), in Porter 2016, 254.

care to admit, more darkness than light shines through human events. Such is the nature of historical reality and of our common humanity. Both harbor a potential for greatness and for horror. All of Auerbach's writings are imbued with the same *ethos* that makes his philology a *praxis* that is beholden to the circumstances in which it was produced. Philology is nothing less than the means by which these circumstances come to be registered and, if we are lucky, understood.

Two further instances of Auerbach's engaged scholarship from the same moment are worth singling out. The first is a much-cited essay from 1938 called "*Figura*," which examines supersessionist typological readings of the early and later Christian theologians. The second is the opening chapter to *Mimesis*, which turns on a comparison of Homer and the Hebrew Bible and was composed in 1941, as he underscores in the German original, published in 1946. The chapter explicitly takes aim at fascism in Germany. Indeed, the very focus on the Hebrew Bible and on one of its most disturbing scenes in the contemporary context, the sacrifice of Isaac (typologically identified as a figure for Christ's passion), made its inclusion in the book an act of civil disobedience. In a subtle but not quite inaudible level, Auerbach was confronting history as he was living through it and defying the powers that were controlling its fate.[26]

Auerbach is only one of countless examples of a kind of philology that stands miles apart from the garden variety that defines the discipline as it is usually understood and as both Turner and Ahmed define it too. It is an example of a philology that is conducted off-site and off-label by writers who were marked on racial, ethnic, and disciplinary grounds as ineligible to practice philology in its conventional academic forms, or else chose to opt out of these forms for similar reasons. Here I have in mind writers and thinkers as diverse as Benedict Spinoza in the seventeenth century, Jacob Bernays and Nietzsche in the nineteenth century, and Sigmund Freud, Erich Auerbach, Simone Weil, Rachel Bespaloff, Horkheimer and Adorno, Victor Klemperer, and Hannah Arendt in the twentieth century, though this is only a partial list. In response to their times, these writers, a great many of whom not coincidentally happened to be Jewish, turned their focus from the past towards life in the present and the everyday. They produced philologies that worked otherwise, or as Emily Greenwood puts it, "otherhow."

By this "other" philology, I do not mean philology that is focused by the study of remote cultures through their linguistic products, but something else: a study undertaken by writers and scholars who are obliged to confront harsh and often unthinkable realities in the present that distort the realities of both the past and the present. Whether it was by inclination or by circumstance, the tendency of the

26 Auerbach 1938; 1946, ch. 1. For discussion, see Porter 2008; 2017.

writers just named was to produce untimely insights into conventional materials, for example, those prized by accepted theology or classicism (as in Bernays's bold revision of tragic catharsis),[27] or else into entirely unconventional materials, such as the language of the Third Reich, in a way that conventional academic philology was ill-equipped to do. In these cases, philology was itself forced into exile. In the process, the objects of philological study were themselves transformed. Self-evident facts suddenly became sites of potentially treacherous reading. Meaning was no longer a theoretical luxury. Lives and not only careers were in the balance. Philology, having run up against the hard limits of reality, acquired what might be called a "fourth dimension." Here I am supplementing a category that is missing from Sheldon Pollock's seminal essay, "Philology in Three Dimensions."[28] A few brief indications will help to illustrate the point.

Spinoza was branded a heretic for the way he reinterpreted the Hebrew Bible in a radically unorthodox fashion, thereby depriving the Holy Scripture of its status as revealed and sacred truth and demonstrating how it was a thoroughly human and deficient product. He turned philology against itself with the same assuredness as F.A. Wolf would later display when he deprived the Homeric poems of their pristine and hallowed authenticity, likewise deploying the latest arsenal of biblical philology. Spinoza was using philology to intervene in the Dutch Republic in which he lived in order to secure intellectual freedoms for its subjects.

Jacob Bernays was a Jew who was not allowed to teach at a German university. His own work ran from classical antiquity to Judaica to Spinoza's grammar of the Hebrew language to reflections on religion and modernity. His privately kept notebooks, or what has survived of them, are a treasure trove of reflections that provide a roadmap to his own counterphilological stances.[29] His philological interventions work along similar lines, albeit in a more muted fashion.[30]

Nietzsche practiced a counterphilology throughout the whole of his academic career, some of it in his more conventional-*looking* philology (it was anything but conventional), for instance, in his studies of Democritus, Diogenes Laertius, and Greek rhythm. He attacked the inadequacies of the profession of classicists for the narrowness of their focus and for their failure to acknowledge their own historicity as creatures of the present or their role as instruments rather than as agents of their culture. His critique of Orientalism in modern philology is easily overlooked,

27 See Porter 2015.

28 Pollock 2014.

29 Gründer 1988. On Bernays, see Glucker/Laks/Barre 1996, an important collection; further, Porter 2024.

30 See Porter 2015.

as is the fact that he designated Bernays "the most brilliant representative of a philology of the future" before he adopted the sobriquet for himself.[31] Once he left the university, he carried the same methods of critical philology with him. His proof texts were no longer Greek and Latin editions or scholarship. They were the phenomena of modern European culture, of which he made himself its leading and most provocative diagnostician.

Sigmund Freud produced a reading of Exodus that rivals Spinoza's in its attack on revealed Scripture in *Moses and Monotheism* (*Der Mann Moses*), which he published in 1939. To make his argument, Freud had to intrude on the preserve of biblical scholars, and he did so with the zeal of a rambunctious disruptor. Freud notoriously produced a heretical reading of Moses by making him into an Egyptian, not a Jew, and by rendering Judaism a reaction formation to the trauma of its original and originary dislocation. And yet, far from vilifying the Jewish religion, Freud in fact preserved its integrity by bringing to light its powerful inner fantasies and by depriving contemporary anti-Semitism of its putative object and its own phantasmatic claims to being *judenrein*, free of the Judaism it reviled. This is the original impetus of Freud's study, which represents both a philology of the Jewish uncanny, one that is anchored in the sheer persistence of Jews and Jewishness, despite their persecution over the millennia, and a counterphilology of the present rather than an archaeology of the past. The fact that he wrote the work during the Nazification of Austria and completed it in exile in England on the eve of World War II speaks volumes about the historical situatedness of his essay.

A year later, Victor Klemperer, a Romance philologist and a colleague of Auerbach's, was obliged to sit out the war in Dresden, to wear a yellow star, to live in a *Judenhaus* with his Aryan wife, and was prohibited from reading books of any kind, since these were considered contraband. Itching, nonetheless, to make something of his philological skills and to respond to his situation, he switched objects and turned his sights on the language of the Third Reich itself, as he heard it on loudspeakers, on the street, at parades, in the factory where he worked, and in the symbols and language of propaganda-filled posters and visual objects wherever he encountered them. The outcome was *LTI: Linguae Tertii Imperii*; *Notizbuch eines Philologen* (1947). Klemperer's starting point was the belief, which he shared, that the spirit of an epoch is expressed in its language:

> For just as it is customary to speak of the face of an age or of a country, so it is also usual to characterize the spirit of a particular epoch as its language. The Third Reich speaks with a terrible uniformity both in what it said at the time and in its legacy: through the unbounded

31 Letter of 2 June 1868. See Porter 2000, 15 and 273–286 for discussion.

> exhibitionism of its grandiose architecture and through its ruins, through its unique brand of soldier, the men of the SA and SS which it elevated to the status of ideal figures on myriad different and yet indistinguishable posters, and through its motorways and mass graves. All of this is the language of the Third Reich, and of course there will be mention of all these things in the following pages. But if you have practised your profession for decades, and practised it with great pleasure, then you are bound to have been shaped more by it than by anything else, and it was thus the language of the Third Reich, both literally and in a non-figurative, philological sense, which I clung to with absolute determination and which became my balancing pole across the monotony of every ten-hour shift in the factory, the horror of house searches, arrests, physical abuse, and so on.[32]

Auerbach, Weil, Bespaloff, Horkheimer, and Adorno all turned to Homer as a way of grappling with the horrors of the war that surrounded them. None of these had specialized training in classical philology. All five were forced into exile. And all five engaged in a philology that was *itself* exiled from its customary seats. They produced a kind of writing that is neither academic nor truly legible as literary "reception" as this is recognized in the academy today. Their works are instead examples of engaged writing that comes from authors whose lives were fully entangled in their personal and historical circumstances. They were practicing a philology of the present for the sake of the present and the future.[33]

Hannah Arendt is probably the least obvious example of philology of the present, the everyday, and in exile. But her reading of the transcripts of the Eichmann trial that was held in Jerusalem from April to December 1961, the opening of which she witnessed in person while on assignment for *The New Yorker* magazine, is a further extension of the philology that was practiced two decades earlier by Auerbach and his peers. All were intervening in their present moment, all were passing judgment on it, scrutinizing its idioms, and filing reports from the field. Most importantly, all were responding to historical realities that were scarred by acts of violence. All were learning to confront the potential for violence that history inevitably reveals, and never more poignantly and painfully than in the historical present in which it is felt. Arendt's book is subtitled "A Report on the Banality of Evil." Her object, however, is not evil *per se* but the shortcomings of justice when it attempts to take the measure of an unspeakable crime that assumes the appearance of an everyday reality for its perpetrators. Like Auerbach's Vico-inspired philology, her work is as much concerned with human communication as it is with the limits of human comprehension.

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32 Klemperer 2013, 10.

33 Bespaloff 1943; Novis 1940; 1941 (Weil's anagrammatic pseudonym was Émile Novis); Horkheimer and Adorno 1944 (first edition published in 1944).

Taking our cue from the efforts of each of these figures, we can learn how counterphilologies have the potential to challenge existing notions of what constitutes a text, its interpretation, and its ideological and cultural value, but also, more radically, what constitutes the proper object of philological study. Tapping into these alternatives is the way any practice of philology can ensure that it has a future beyond tomorrow. Classics can be a part of this future, but it does not have to be the whole of it.[34] Nevertheless, given its long history, classical philology has much to teach us today.[35] The hope here is that by examining this troubled history of philology we can arrive at a more robust template for philologies of the future, practices that students and scholars can carry out in their own lives by becoming philologists of their own experiences in the present, given their experiences of ethnic, religious, or political inequality, and then, possibly, also becoming better philologists of the past.

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34 Cf. Altschul 2010, esp. 163, a passage that resonates with Auerbach's call for a worldly philology: "A philology for the present requires an acceptance of its worldliness, of its functions and effects in the world today, and this means accepting that the questions we have inherited from the nineteenth century need not have the same value that they had at their inception."

35 Greenwood 2022, 192, is insightful: "The argument that we [classicists] *just* teach the languages, the literatures, the history, and the material remains of ancient Greece and Rome … is historicism as a preemptive rhetorical gesture that is anti-historicist in shrugging off any responsibility for one's agency as scholar practitioner in the state of the discipline and its *modus operandi*." This is not to deny the relevance of historicity, for "philology is restless. It travels in the wake of the languages that are its subject, object, and medium, it travels as history moves, and it travels with theory" (187).

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Jürgen Paul Schwindt

Philology in Motion: The Future of Classical Studies and the 'Philological Turn'

Abstract: The 'philological turn', the turn of philology upon itself, is the prerequisite for the survival of the discipline in the future. Far from losing sight of its object in the process of self-reflective immersion, philology will ensconce itself at the nerve center of all societal struggles for the sovereignty of interpretation in the relevant discourses: at the roots of language and thought. Herein, and nowhere else, lies philology's political force — that it gives a voice to the preparation of politics in language and text. Hence, philology functions as the 'perpetuum mobile' in the formation of tradition. In an emphatic sense, it is what ensures future, what makes it.

Keywords: athematic *vs.* thematic readings, basic philological research or (philology's) foundational research, figures of thinking/figures of thought, gesturality, interdisciplinarity, philological turn, radical politics, theory of philology.

1 Preliminary remarks

In recent days, Classical Studies has developed a number of strategies for securing its survival in a time of extreme ideological upheavals. It has pulled out many a stop — apologetics, affectations of significance, and overaccommodation among them — in order to safeguard its position within the canon of disciplines considered relevant for the present. Yet the more zealously it aims at asserting itself against the assaults from without, the deeper does it sink into the murky muck of a debate which is in danger of losing all orientation regarding the purpose(s) of the Liberal Arts and Humanities.

It is Classical Philology, in particular, that has resigned itself to filling the role of a useful idiot at far too many universities. One translates, comments, mediates — and provides a present oblivious to history and tradition with arguments for no longer dealing with the foundations of 'all that'. By now, the result of this subjugation under the needs of the present may be observed on all sides. Classical Philology

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ekes out a vestigial existence as an annex of the omnicompetent Cultural Studies; or else, as '*ancilla historiae sive philosophiae*' (difficult to decide which is worse). It is a long time since it was in a position to autonomously set the topics that the contemporary academic world would want to discuss with passion. With neurotic zeal, it continues to obey the fatal logic of the 'findings', the incessant unearthing of material hitherto unknown. Territorial gains rather than the gaining of a self — for Classical Philology remains incapable of reflecting and meditating on the challenges that are involved when an attentive Modern eye falls on the written remnants of a bygone epoch. Still, it does not realize what it means when one mind recognizes another *qua* language.

Philology is not a science dealing with objects, but a form of scholarship concerned with their relationship to words: with their genesis, their history, their 'sublation' (*Aufhebung*) in words; and with the fact that all of this may only be had in the prism or mirror of a philology that *dia*- and, if you will, *epi*logues with the texts. In this manner, philology *qua* scholarship of words also embodies the leap from the 'then' to the 'now'. There is no future but where the present is experienced emphatically. The safeguarding of the future does not depend on the discipline's 'building of bridges', or its trying to connect with this or that debate; it only attains to form in the here and now. Consequently, and paradoxically, it is precisely its disregarding any prospect of a future — a total turn *ad se ipsam* — which enables *philologia* to not forfeit its right to the future. This is also how I define the 'philological turn'.

2 The 'Cultural Turns' and the turn of philology towards itself

Not so long ago, Germanophone Classical Studies gathered at the 35th *Große Mommsen-Tagung* at Freie Universität Berlin. "Die Altertumswissenschaften und die *Cultural Turns*" ("Classical Studies and the Cultural Turns") was the topic of this collective of researchers, visibly resolved to press forward and ahead.[1] One may well call it a curiosity that — initially, at any rate — the 'philological turn' had not been mentioned in the program announcing the conference; and it may have been better that way. For in this manner, we might escape the unfortunate end that (so it would seem) befalls all of those 'turns' sooner or later — or so I thought to myself, who had been called upon to develop prospects for the future position of Latin Philology

1 "Die Altertumswissenschaften und die *Cultural Turns*. Forschungen zur Klassischen Antike im (inter)disziplinären Dialog" (May 3 to 5, 2019 at FU Berlin).

within academia, culture, and society in a keynote lecture. Very few of us will be prepared to bet all that much on our continuing to celebrate, with messianic fervency, all of these 'turns' as scholarly or scientific crossroads in one or two hundred years. In distant times, we shall surely still be thinking about spaces and images, bodies and souls, genders and identities, the forming of nations and modes of colonizing. Yet the political zeal will surely subside eventually.

The fact that philology provoked so little interest will undoubtedly have to do with its capability to diminish itself beyond recognition before each and all that arouses its own attention. It is the art of disappearing, of methodical self-belittlement. It vanishes in and behind the objects, which it aims at putting in the picture as texts. To describe the form of its presence will immediately require something that I wish to promote with some emphasis also in the framework of this international volume.[2] For one would indeed hope that what one may justifiably maintain with regard to so many things of everyday life does not hold true for our discipline: namely that one need not understand what is at work, and how — so long as it does work. Even in Classical Philology, I think, the word has spread that certain procedures of self-elucidation, of accountability are altogether indispensable for philology as part of its engagement with its objects, lest the handling of objects not turn into an arbitrary action among others. For the sake of what is at stake, there is thus a need for reflecting on 'what' philology is capable of, and 'how'. Such reflection on the own activity is itself a 'turn'; and this is how we used the phrase 'philological turn' when Philology and Philosophy, Linguistics, Literary Studies, and the Arts first met at Heidelberg University in 2002 to pose the question of the 'philological question'. Later commentators noted that this 'turn' had occurred along with a turning away from the 'cultural turns' flourishing at the time. While this may not be entirely wrong, it does not address the matter at heart.

To elucidate the latter, it may seem permissible to briefly recall the prehistory of the 'philological turn', and to explicate our notion of disciplinary collaboration. In so doing, certain peculiarities of philology — including its temporal regimen, hence also a notion of the future — will come into view.

3 The prehistory of the 'philological turn'

The theory of philology belongs to the great unfinished projects of the Classicistic and Romanticist epochs in German intellectual history. In lectures, programmatic

2 Cf. Schwindt 2017b.

writings, essays, and aphorisms, Friedrich Schlegel, Friedrich August Wolf, and August Böckh laid the foundation for the work on the theoretical fundamentals of philological 'sciences'. Curiously enough, philology's foundational research has never become a recognized branch of Literary and Linguistic Studies in the two hundred (and some) years since. By reducing the reflexive apparatus of (for instance) literary history — tuning it down to the needs of teaching linguistics and literature — the theoretical impulses were already pragmatized by the generation following immediately upon Schlegel, Wolf, and Böckh. After the theoretically minded Wolf came the literary historian Gottfried Bernhardy; after the programmatically ingenious Böckh — in Heidelberg — the polyhistor Christian Felix Bähr. Nietzsche's 'untimely meditation' "Wir Philologen" ("We Philologists", of 1875/1876) remained fragmentary.

Evidently, the theory of philology is in demand only during phases of upheaval and crisis in the discipline's history. The success of the philological paradigm in the 19th and during the first half of the 20th century has not been advantageous for the theoretical profiling of the discipline. Success stories are not called into question — or only by way of exception. Since the end of the 1980s one may observe, in both Germanophone and international philology, something like a gradual reconsideration — or else, a renewed consideration — of the necessity to be concerning oneself with the foundations of philology. Scarcely published, Paul de Man's "Return to Philology" was overshadowed by the author's involvement in the (Belgian) collaboration with the Nazi occupiers, which came to light at the same time.[3] Thus it was a little book by Heinz Schlaffer — *Poesie und Wissen* (*Poesy and Knowledge*), published soon after — which offered wholesome food for thought.[4] Unsurprisingly, the edition of Friedrich Nietzsche's philological *Nachlaß* also revivified the thinking about philology. Glenn W. Most dedicated an entire series of international conferences and ensuing volumes to the professional profile of philological activity: central segments and functions of philology were examined, such as the collecting of fragments, the editing of texts, and the writing of commentaries (*Aporemata. Kritische Studien zur Philologiegeschichte*).[5] Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht collected his contributions to Most's enterprise in the volume *The Powers of Philology* — first published in the United States, then also in German.[6]

3 De Man 1982.

4 Schlaffer 1990.

5 Most 1997–2002.

6 Gumbrecht 2003.

4 Internal interdisciplinarity

The aforesaid works were already organized along the lines of a thoroughgoing division of labor. Yet the interdisciplinarity of the 'philological turn' — as I understand it — means not so much a merely functional collaboration of the various disciplines, differentiated according to purposes and areas of application, but rather a readiness and capacity to already unfold an object in its (intra-)disciplinary treatment in such a way that its complexity — that is, in this particular case: the object's (genuine) interdisciplinarity — may become manifest. Put differently: during the object's philological treatment, one will sooner or later reach a point, where recourse to expertise from other disciplines becomes indispensable. To discern that point — and to accurately mark out the site of a respective recourse — is part and parcel of the philological art. Interdisciplinarity can only be achieved by those who work on their own object with a certain profundity. A superficial contact with each and all may yield some degree of gratification for the aficionados of research clustering; but an intensive assessment of the object is more important by far.

Consequently, what we see in the announced philological turn is not so much the resistance to other models found, as the case may be, unsatisfactory, but rather an encouragement to concentrate on the core business of our discipline, which — may times and circumstances change or not — does remain the prerequisite for any specialist and transdisciplinary discussion. Our sights should be set on how one might increase the attractiveness of philological approaches for the study of antiquity (and, as will go without saying, not *only* thereof).

5 *Terrae incognitae*

Should there have been grounds for doubting the productivity of philological procedures, then these were certainly not lying in the challenge posed by the 'cultural turns'. (Represented by Walter Haug and Gerhart von Graevenitz, this debate was conducted in the 1990s).[7] The actual reason was the dwindling conviction that — after centuries of their interpretation and reinterpretation — one might still extricate a new thought from the texts.

Now, it is not only becoming increasingly difficult to persuade people even of that which has been discerned as correct long ago; but by no means is it also the case that everything knowable is already known. I could easily reference a dozen

7 See Haug 1999 as well as the rejoinder by Graevenitz 1999.

of examples for '*terrae incognitae*' even in the literatures we call classical. While we do cultivate the presumption of being well-informed about what an expert was considered to be during the time of Augustus, we still do not deem it needful to study the slender repertoire of technical texts handed down to us alongside Livy's historical work with greater intensity than hitherto the case. For instance: what has been performed philologically with regard to Hyginus' *Astronomy* (considered to be Augustan by some scholars, and still by the *Budé* editor, André Le Bœuffle)[8] is just enough for taxing the extent of that which (still) remains in need of clarification. From the viewpoint of literary studies, we might say the same with respect to Vitruvius.[9] Beyond its routine exploitation (being carried out on all sides), entire continents of knowledge lie dormant and unknown even in the seemingly well-known — or else, were once known and then lost again.

6 The new in the old, the foreign in the familiar

Graver than the carelessness in dealing with allegedly second-rate authors — even of the Classical phase of Latin literature — is the negligence, wherewith we read the better-known authors. Understandably concerned with recommending them to posterity as worth reading, we all too often reduce the texts to diverse 'messages', the topicality of which ought to be manifest even to the least knowledgeable. Nor would this be objectionable at all, so long as we did not earnestly believe that the authors themselves had worked with a view to such a distribution of attention. In their consideration for systematics and rounding off, thematic readings destroy any interest in the willful peculiarities of these works.[10] This is how habits of reading, routines of perception come about, which are to immunize against a confrontation with the unexpected. Conventions and traditions, reading groups, circles, and schools develop as a result; and it is a fact well-known: where a school has emerged, free thinking is in danger. As Cicero puts it so beautifully in his introduction to *De natura deorum*:

8 *L'Astronomie d'Hygin*. Texte établi et traduit par A. Le Bœuffle, Paris 1983.

9 Yet see now the nuanced and profound works by Giovanna Laterza (currently at the *ETENA* [*Étudiants Entrepreneurs en Alsace*], Strasbourg); most recently: Laterza 2018a and Laterza 2018b.

10 Cf. my reflections in Schwindt 2012; and therein spec. the section "Wer schützt die athematische Literatur?", 296–298.

> Indeed the authority of those who profess to teach is often a positive hindrance to those who desire to learn; they cease to employ their own judgement, and take what they perceive to be the verdict of their chosen master as settling the question. (1, 10, transl. Rackham)[11]

The only thing more dangerous than a school is the success of interpreters, inasmuch as it spoils them, rendering them indolent and unresponsive to the impertinence of the texts. Yet the self-assurance and arrogance of the educational elite in Classical philology also happens to be the good fortune of those who read for pleasure.

For what can be seized by a swift attack is conquered; but the cumbersome remains unwieldy and may only be opened up by reiterated attempts — if at all. Hence it was the encounter with cumbrous texts that — in the past thirty years — recurrently pushed the boundaries also of the philological method, which we had adopted in our engagement with the texts. Only in the confrontation with the complex and the most difficult may one have an experience that causes philology to render itself thematic; and (as I shall add) it must do so, lest the inquiry into the texts — in all its noetic and procedural steps — come to conspicuous harm. It was this experience that — by tying in with Paul de Man’s 1982 slogan (the “Return to Philology”) — called upon us to proclaim the ‘philological turn’ in 2002.[12]

7 Philology as a fundamental science or: Mathematics also speaks in sentences

We inquired into the peculiarity of philological inquiry, into a ‘*proprium*’ of philological activity graspable in terms of the theory of science.[13] In 2004, within the structural and developmental plan of our university, we demanded the foundation of an “Institute for Basic Philological Research” (“Institut für Philologische Grundlagenforschung”), for the first time. In our proposal, we wrote that the task were “to explore the categorial groundwork of our philological, i.e. linguistic and literary, activity”. Developing a theory of categories was, we submitted, not only the prerequisite for a decision on the scientificity of philological *modi operandi*, but also the condition of possibility for well-founded interdisciplinary exchange. As per our proposal, such a morphology of the philological understanding of texts and literature

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11 (*Q*)*uin etiam obest plerumque iis qui discere volunt auctoritas eorum qui se docere profitentur; desinunt enim suum iudicium adhibere, id habent ratum quod ab eo quem probant iudicatum vident* (Cicero, *De natura deorum*, post O. Plasberg ed. W. Ax, Leipzig ^{2}1933 [reprint: Stuttgart 1980]).

12 See above, p. 236 with n. 3.

13 See Schwindt 2009.

could not be developed in any other way than on a broad, interdisciplinary basis. Hence one would also have to enter into conversations with other faculties, insofar as they also work with sentences and could not get by without advanced hermeneutics, logistics, and heuristics. The philological, philosophical, historical, theological disciplines should thus be joined by the mathematical, natural, and medical sciences. We pointed out that anamnesis, diagnostics, aetiology, therapy were not only key concepts in medicine, but also in textual criticism. No less evident are the connections with juridical hermeneutics.

Back then, we were thinking about very specific projects — the work on which was to demonstrate the characteristics of a philological approach in the respective sciences and forms of scholarship. Let me only mention the notions and concepts of 'the subject': that is to say, the configuration and representation of subjects in sentences and texts; also, the question concerning the role played by their treatment in philosophy, law, mathematics, and the natural sciences; as well as the examination of premodern hermeneutics — in collaboration with Classical, Near and Middle Eastern Studies, with Legal, Natural, and Medical History.

Needless to say, a theoretical treatment of philology is *not* literary theory — at least not *prima specie*.[14] The theory of philology keeps in sight the entirety of approaches and perceptions, the preparations and operations in the field of textual investigations. Accordingly, we soon began to assess the philological field in more fundamental ways, and to seek out the peculiarities of philological activity in their specific relations to time and space, fiction and factuality, history and politics, theology and art. Religious studies (the rituals of philology), ethnology, and cultural anthropology also became relevant points of reference.

8 Foundational research: inverted

Well, in 2004 we were not successful. Back then, the term "*Philologische Grundlagenforschung*" ("Basic Philological Research") had — and still has — a different connotation in large swaths of our discipline: one conceives of this word as referring to the finding, preparing, editing of, and commenting on, texts (*vulgo*: sources) — ideally hitherto un- or little known. Rarely has a concept been abused to such an extent. In medicine, for instance, it has always signified research into the molecular-biological (especially the human-genetic) fundamentals. Yet in Linguistics and Literary Studies, it has become a cover concept for all those indubitably respectable

14 Concerning the difference of these disciplines, see Bohle/Krauss/Neutzler 2018, 9–11.

activities, without the unpretentiously diligent preliminary work of which every theoretical exertion would be grasping at nothing. Yet that small conceptual manipulation has led to a metaplasm of the research environment, wherein, all at once, there is no (longer any) room for theoretical performances in the language, (that is) the language of the administrative elites at our universities. Since the national and transnational institutions providing funding for research have been focusing on promoting editorial and commentarial projects under this header, it has been even harder to counter that exclusivist understanding of ‘basic research’.

9 Foundational research: set right

Evidently, the basic philological research envisioned by *us* is not one that would exalt itself beyond the many other conceivable activities in the field of philology. Neither does it have an advantage over them, nor does it trail them. It is not metaphilology, but philology. The ‘turn’, or movement, which we are here referring to, opened up in the interaction with the objects themselves. Even in the tiniest rhetorical operations — for instance, in the discernment of an anacoluthon, of a figure of displacement, in the filling of a gap, in the supplementation of a noetic step — something is necessary, which cannot be sufficiently legitimized by referring simply to this or that device of poetics or rhetoric, i.e. of literary theory. Pointedly put: philology’s *vis imaginandi* or *supplendi* is always already part of the deal; and this requires that good grounds be given — at least, so long as philology claims a certain scholarly dignity.[15]

In this perspective, the ‘philological turn’ signifies the avoidance of evasive movements. We confront the texts, as well as what we do with (regard to) them. This is not a heroical image. One ought not to mock it, but for once actually expose oneself to the experience of the object. Consequently, it is the ‘object’, its withstanding impetus — in other words: that which is ‘thrown against’ us, the sheer factuality of what seems to face, and come towards, us as what is thematic in the text — which leads philology to where its own activity or inactivity are grasped as something that corresponds to the *intentio textus* as counter-tension.[16]

15 Splendid preparations in the field of what she calls a “poetics of research” may be found in Tardin Cardoso 2009 and 2011.

16 Cf. my considerations concerning the problem of epistemic reading in Schwindt 2017a, 39–40.

10 “*Zukunftsphilologie*” (“future philology”)

One may see how easily, but also how necessarily, something else results from the set pieces of literary theory — such as the doctrine of motifs and themes, or of the objects and their epistemological treatment — in the horizon of philology. Now we are contemplating the text in the realm of possibility of an experience, which might not begin with the text, nor end with us. By way of example, we are considering our philological activity as something that, by encountering the resistive, the withstanding text, enables the emergence of something new — and of a future.

Taught by an eye attentive to the manifold limits staked out for the philological activity, the ‘philological turn’ sets modesty against the self-assurance of traditional basic philological research (*Grundlagenforschung*). We are still approaching the issue. Yet we have *already* touched upon certain topics, which may render manifest the difficulty of the task. We have referred to the form of presence or absence (“the art of disappearing”), and mentioned the way and manner of philology’s relation to the object, when it unfolds the latter’s (genuine) interdisciplinarity; or when it aims at answering to the object’s resistance (i.e. its sheer positivity) by virtue of a counter-tension. We have also briefly touched upon the need for justification regarding its bridging effect qua *vis imaginandi* or *supplendi*. On these grounds, questions arise — such as that of philology’s figurative powers, or concerning its treatment of space. These questions are inseparable from the text, and may only be excluded from philological practice at the cost of its no longer counting as scholarly — a price I consider too high.

Yet the ‘philological turn’ may also whet our attention for all the small and sizeable decisions, which must be made when dealing with texts. It may broaden the view to include the grand and modest dramas, which take place in the shadow of the texts.

At once, a reconsideration of the capacities of philology enables us to gain an impression of the magnitude and significance of the task posed by every text. One may edit, and comment on, Sophocles and Plato, Propertius and Horace, even without being on a par with their texts. There are countless examples, which demonstrate how easily an unwieldy text may be turned into one that flows undisturbedly. It pertains to the stupidities in the history of philology that — by means of rectifications — precisely the most unpoetic heads attempted to lecture authors, who had happily eluded ordinary linguistic usage.

11 Machine philology

Even so, reflecting on the philological method and the specificity of its relation to objects may contribute to the development of reading methods, which take into account all the little and great problems linked to philological practice. In this way, it may simultaneously face the pressing challenges of the present: the lack of a challenge inherent in ingratiating oneself, giving in to the opportunism and the service mentality of research institutions funding outsized projects; and the excessive challenge posed by the realm of the intelligent machines for our philological cerebrum.

Under the pressure of having to deliver results quickly, a certain attitude and method of reading have established themselves, which are geared towards skimming and exhausting texts. We habitually read with a view to contents. The same aim is shared by cursory reading, which promises to deliver facts, information, data in the shortest time possible. It seems that the methods of the Digital Humanities point in a similar direction. Machines are now taking over the optimization of the process. What millions of individual readers could not reap in the grand harvest, they perform consummately. Yet are they also capable of taking up — and on — the cumbersome?

The problem of the machine would seem to be that it reminisces too much, where the *memoria* of man is quickly stretched to its limits. It overextends the concept of literary-historical recollection, when the Ancient *kat' anthrópinon* — 'that which is appropriate to man' — no longer comes into consideration as a yardstick of literary criticism. It may open up new possibilities, where it reveals the grimace of the ordinary behind the façades of a seemingly 'original' diction. Yet machines reproduce a human, all-too-human positivism, which consists in identifying, in transferring the peculiar into the general, the characteristic into the generic, the idea into the system. Accordingly, the criticism of the machine should be connected to a criticism of the (ordinary) philological mindset.

12 The temporal regime of philology

Yet philology is more than the mere methodic comprehension of sentences and thoughts. Rather, its practice of reading opens up paths into otherwise impassable terrain. It does not resolve the aporiae of language, but points them out and maintains them, wherever possible, in a condition of productivity. It discerns — not so much notions and ideas, but — figures of thought (*Gedankenfiguren*), which, put into the perspective of intellectual history, may become figures of thinking

(*Denkfiguren*).[17] Philology is the medium, wherein the text may well maintain its claims to continuing influence, even in distant times. I hope that the distinction, which I am trying to make here, will be clear. What distinguishes the philological from the historical treatment is that: philology preserves the claim to continued significance of all the interpretations and readings, which is not actualized in a historical approach — for reasons that would have to be detailed at another occasion (for instance, at a conference concerned with the differences of philological and historical interpretation).[18]

According to this view, there would be a peculiarity — I would say, a strength — of philology in the fact that its temporal regime is such that it does not aim at the signposting of topical effects and contemporary proprieties, but — and in this it resembles its objects, or at least the literary ones among them — at the manifoldness of potential interpretations, which are to be preserved unconditionally. Lest I be misunderstood: this is not a commentary on the ill-fated debate, recently (re)kindled between the Cologne Romanist Andreas Kablitz and my Heidelberg colleague, the Romanist Gerhard Poppenberg. By no means do I plead the case for an epistemology that puts postmodern arbitrariness in the place of firm knowledge (a position Kablitz imputes to Poppenberg).[19] Instead, I argue for recognizing the affluence of well-founded, scholarly assumptions about the constitution of texts.

What is at stake here is a specific temporal form of philological activity, which evidently will not service a concern for politico-topical opportunities as well as it does indeed serve the need to exhaust the whole realm of potential interpretations. It is not within the purview of philology to decide, which of these possibilities might attain to what sort of evidence at a given (or some other) time. It shares this abstention from judgment with its object, literature.

13 In the *nucleus*: the political aspect of philology

Inquiries into the form of literary knowledge and cognition as well as into the structure of the philological judgment have demonstrated that the similarities are greater than one had been willing to acknowledge for the longest time. This renders an acknowledgment of philological activity in terms of the philosophy of science a precarious endeavor. Accordingly, our Anglophone colleagues do not speak of the

17 See Schwindt 2008.

18 See the more extensive considerations in Schwindt 2011.

19 See Kablitz 2018 and the reply by Poppenberg 2019.

science (of literature), when they mean 'philology', but subsume it under the header of the 'Arts and Humanities'. From this, my colleague in Bloomington, Michel Chaouli, has drawn the consequence that we — meaning, the philologies — would have to "unlearn criticism", in order to be state-of-the-art.[20] I would rather say that criticism must be kept open for the self-criticism of literature to such an extent that the philological method may draw a profit therefrom, specifically with a view to furthering its self-elucidation — now also in the closest contact with its object, the texts. Yet be that as it may. For the moment, it is only of import that this much be put on record: what happens to be untimely about philology is nothing as would be detrimental to scientificity (so-called). Today, as the faculties in the Humanities have run into what may well be their most difficult crisis yet (not only in Germany, but also in France, in Italy, in Great Britain, and in the United States), we will not win the struggle for the scientific dignity of the Arts and Literary Studies by copying the popular jargon of the cultural sociologists deemed conceptually more satisfactory, nor by working with theoretical frameworks borrowed from other disciplines, which appear as mere appliqués on the body of philology — both being practices that have become customary everywhere. Rather, we must gain a foothold and establish ourselves at the neuralgic point of the societal debates, struggling for interpretational sovereignty in the discourses of relevance: at the roots of language and thought. Granting that (philological) criticism is not a form of scholarship characterized by ordering and decision-making (not a *téchne epitaktiké*, as Plato puts it in the *Politikos*), it still does not let itself be relegated into districts, in which the essential decisions have already been made. Rather, it attempts to reach the place(s), where these decisions are (still) in the making, and where their disciplinary unfolding may not even be in sight yet. Incidentally, herein, and nowhere else, lies philology's political force — that it gives a voice to the preparation of politics in language and text.[21]

14 Philology *in actu* I

Hence it is by concentrating on its core business that the 'philological turn' aims at establishing new and different ties with other fields. I would like to show by way of an example, how philological reading(s) may unfold implications that cannot but challenge and stimulate interdisciplinary discussions. Until very recently, the *Lives*

20 Comment during the *workshop* "Philologie und Kritik", organized by Chaouli on June 21 and 22, 2018 at the *Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School of Literary Studies* at FU Berlin.

21 Cf. Schwindt 2016.

of the Caesars by Suetonius had been treated in a historical vein, for the most part (or else, in terms of generic and literary history). The main concern was the credibility (and the disposition) of what is (re)presented. One roamed in said *œuvre* as if it were naught but a gigantic storage of information. Initially and primarily, one sought a method for classifying that data — naturally, along the lines of 'false' or 'correct'; and with a view to interests of knowledge, status, and (political) factions. A mere glance at the same work's history of reception in the arts and literature of the 19th century could have drawn attention to the fact that — aside from factual or verisimilar knowledge — something else is also being transported and stored, here. It was always also about the form of statements, momentary impressions, chains of images, occasional stories, scenarios, gestures. Since all of this does not immediately disclose itself to a mind focused on the processing of information, much remained in the dead angle of a cast of attention proceeding excerptively. It is only a longer, second look at (and consideration of) the text, which reveals the tiny and tiniest patterns pertaining to the structure of something political that, at first, has little in common with its seasoned sibling, even as it turns out to be a gamete for greater stimuli, upon closer inspection.

Thus — and by virtue of a consistently philological reading — Chiara Cavazzani's as yet unpublished master's thesis entitled "Caligulas Raum. Eine kurze Pathographie" ("Caligula's Space. A Short Pathography") unfolds a whole cosmos of submerged impulses and movements in time and space. In obsessively detailed explorations of the 'mad' Caesar's motoric activity, she outlines the network of correspondences relating to bodies and spaces, individuals and society, to the center and the peripheries of power. She elicits, how the epilepsy of the emperor is turned into the structural simile of his unconnectedly nervous politics. Of course, Cavazzani does not present causalities, but offers us the phenomena in parataxes. The ruler's experience — and employment — of time also follow the swings of a discontinuity, which articulates itself physico-physiognomically and politically in the forms of asyndesis.

The spatio-political gestures, too, are read back onto the emperor's body: be it the bridge of Baiae, or that between the Palatine and the Capitol; be it the forceful appropriation of foreign, cultic and religious spaces, or the accumulation of names and cognomina — everything obeys the centrifugal movement of disintegration and decentering. The long-standing center of power is shifted, displaced, emptied. A form of "interspatiality" emerges, which is described as the congenial locus for that strangely unruly ruler. By recourse to this pregnant and succinct example, Foucault's concept of 'heterotopia' comes to be justified in philological terms — quasi *en parergo*.

Said (way of) reading develops a considerable dynamics, when confronted with Cavazzani's interpretation of the portrait of Germanicus, which inaugurates the *Life of Caligula*. The space and time of Caligula's father ever follow a conservative (in Cavazzani's wording: "*cum*-servative") impulse. The character and politics of Germanicus are consistently geared towards soundness and calculability, towards continuity and a safeguarding of the tradition(s). In Caligula's politics, by contrast, the old Augustan model of an integrative imperial order disintegrates. Its place is taken by a gloomy space of a politics guided by creative instincts, which loses itself in the unconnected, delirious images of an autocracy that constantly switches between putting itself into play, and removing itself therefrom.

The philological way of reading operates very close to the turf. It nists in the tiny and the tiniest waymarks, the particles and prepositions. It is a reading for pleasure — whose meaning emerges gradually, if at all. Yet then it may pose a serious challenge to the historico-identificatory mode. Another, a last example: once more, I am having recourse to a text from the *Lives of the Caesars* by Suetonius, since it is here that the rivalry between the reading methods competing within the Classical Studies is almost palpable.

15 Philology *in actu* II

By recourse to the narrative concerned with the death of Augustus, an intensive reading may also gain a structural image of the Augustan principate's poetics — or, more simply put, of its make; or, perhaps more to the point: of its gait; and indeed, the latter is rather apt.[22] How did the emperor move during his last days? Which paths did he take, which did he avoid? How did he see the world (in the eyes of his biographer)? In which ways did he turn towards, or away from, it? How did he speak to it? What did he comment on — and when, how, on which occasions? Is it even possible for there to be 'occasions' in the life of an emperor — or does he, in fact, just create them? He, the center of significance … Indeed, what could be the meaning of significance in a human life which is significant *par excellence*; and how does one speak about it, if everything is significant? What constitutes a 'narrative', in *this* case?

22 The following two subsections ("Philology *in actu* II", and "Gestures, not deeds! Or: The field of radical politics") have been taken from a text, which was published in a volume edited by Grandl/Möller 2020, 31–37, here: 32–33 and 36–37. They have been revised for the present purpose.

Besides, how did he relate to himself? Was he body or spirit? How did the latter interact? How did he die — if die he did! (A question that also poses itself with regard to the cases of Tiberius and Caligula, in particular). Assuming that he died: what happened to his corpse, his body, his words, his decrees; and what is the biographer's view of said spirit, said body? What does a writer say or do, when his client's *bíos* has ended? How does he mark out the transition — and is there such? What is required for such a changeover; and when or how does a movement across something take place — questions, and still more questions. Yet there are also some preliminary answers. We saw that the emperor's movements in space had already obeyed the laws of the theatre, of stage and spectacle — long before we find his life condensed into the pointed *bon mot* of the mime of life. We also saw how he prepared himself for the last grand exchange … As the narrative comes to a close, this begins with the scene in which he hands over his duties to Tiberius during the censorial sacrifice of purification (§97.1). Later, he gives each of his companions forty pieces of gold, so that they may buy Alexandrian goods exclusively — thereby responding to the friendly gesture(s) of homage (§98.2).

> More than that, for the several remaining days of his stay, among little presents of various kinds, he distributed togas and cloaks as well, stipulating that the Romans should use the Greek dress and language and the Greeks the Roman. (§98.3, transl. Rolfe)[23]

One will perceive that the anecdote is the congenial medium for preparing the change of spheres and *status* — once the subject matter of biography has been shifted into the light of death, once a biography becomes a narrative of passing.[24] The anecdote is the form, in which trivialities — I do not wish to say: are treated as something great, but, for once (relieved of the pressure to produce significance), they are looked upon as something that potentially represents — or replaces, or is — that which is great. This is no trifle! The anecdote partakes of the significativeness of its characters, while transforming it into something other than what is expected. For it does not gain significance by way of narrative contextualization, but — counterintuitively — by rendering thematic the exception. Consequently, the anecdote does not initially provide anything that would suggest a connection with general knowledge; rather, it offers something that runs counter to this connection,

23 (*S*)*ed et ceteros continuos dies inter varia munuscula togas insuper ac pallia distribuit, lege proposita ut Romani Graeco, Graeci Romani habitu et sermone uterentur* (C. Suetoni Tranquilli *De vita Caesarum* libros VIII rec. R.A. Kaster, Oxford 2016).

24 A detailed interpretation is soon to be published in Schwindt 2024 (opening lecture at the annual conference of the research group “La poésie augustéenne”, June 2014 at Trinity College of Dublin University).

in that it insists on the disconnectedness of its object. Its name protects the anecdote, because that which it states is neither specifically authenticated, nor indeed intended for being disseminated further. The anecdote ensures that knowledge (otherwise) unvouched for is transmitted even so. Qua literary form, it plays with the epistemic status of its object: it shifts the latter into the precariousness of unauthenticated science, and simultaneously keeps alive its claim to be influencing the images and the kind of faith, which grow so well-precisely on this ground. Anecdotes are the advocates of nescience — being the unknown life, otherwise overshadowed by the discourses concerned with significance.

Earlier, I declared something similar with respect to philology. It is the advocate of all those forms of reading, which — for now, and for whichever reason — are not having their day …

16 Gestures, not deeds! or: The field of radical politics

In philological readings, the historiography of Suetonius may therefore be revealed as a field of gestures, or (as I call it in my research on the poetic texts of Augustan literature) of “radical politics”; and, if the impression does not deceive, the anecdote is that form of communication, which commemorates the *acta* as *gesta* — to make use of a distinction, which my Heidelberg assistant Maximilian Haas has called to mind with reference to Varro’s definition (*De lingua Latina* 6.77).[25] Should it be

25 Within the framework of a talk entitled “Zur Gestualität der Texte” on December 19, 2016, given before the *SFB* 933 “Materiale Textkulturen”, at the German Department of Heidelberg University. See Varro: *Tertium gradum agendi esse dicunt, ubi quid faciant; in eo propter similitudinem agendi et faciendi et gerendi quidam error his qui putant esse unum. Potest enim aliquid facere et non agere, ut poeta facit fabulam et non agit, contra actor agit et ‹non› facit, et sic a poeta fabula fit, non agitur, ab actore agitur, non fit. Contra imperator quod dicitur res gerere, in eo neque facit neque agit, sed gerit, id est sustinet, tralatum ab his qui onera gerunt, quod hi sustinent* (“The third stage of action is, they say, that in which they *faciunt* ‘make’ something: in this, on account of the likeness among *agere* ‘to act’ and *facere* ‘to make’ and *gerere* ‘to carry or carry on’, a certain error is committed by those who think that it is only one thing. For a person can *facere* something and not *agere* it, as a poet *facit* ‘makes’ a play and does not act it, and on the other hand the actor *agit* ‘acts’ it and does not make it, and so a play *fit* ‘is made’ by the poet, not acted, and *agitur* ‘is acted’ by the actor, not made. On the other hand, the general, in that he is said to *gerere* ‘carry on’ affairs, in this neither *facit* ‘makes’ nor *agit* ‘acts’, but *gerit* ‘carries on’, that is, supports, a meaning transferred from those who *gerunt* ‘carry’ burdens, because they support them” [*On the Latin Language. Books V–VII*, transl. by R.G. Kent, Cambridge, MA/London 1938, ²1951]).

permissible freely to outline the problem here at issue, I would say that gestures are a form of action, which is suited to establishing a politics sans (or prior to its) ratification. It is without responsibility and unsynchronized. It is the daguerreotype of man at the moment, where it gives itself a (particular) constitution — without consideration for consequences. The compatibility with a (given) social environment is entirely irrelevant for the quality of the constitution or institution, which this action is capable of enacting/representing/effecting. In gestures, the actions of the protagonists are conceived (of) in a radical manner. (At this point, we would have to treat of the paradox that 'pure' history enunciates itself in the tumultuous and tainted form of the anecdote). For this reason, historical scholarship is not attentive thereto (or else, not specifically). History is not–at least not particularly — interested in pure forms. Without a struggle, it thus cedes to us philologists and literary scholars the entirety of that wide field, where history expresses itself in the forms of literature. I would not dare to call 'Ancient History' what I have here briefly sketched as a form of reading after, and according to, the 'philological turn'. Yet without a doubt, the wide field of gesturality — which opens up in philologically radical readings preferably — does border on the 'actual' history and 'actual' politics of Ancient History. Its object would be the kind of politics that articulates itself within, aside from, or prior to, the politics sanctioned by centuries of calibration and compromise. It is distinguished from Freud's and C.G. Jung's diving expeditions into the abysses of individual and collective consciousness by a disinterest in codes and encryption, in the language of symbols and communication. It is distinguished from the games of New Historicism by its disinclination to engaging in the pathos of rehabilitating the subcultural and sub-literary.

17 Postlude

At the end, it may seem permissible to throw a glance at how the story continued in Heidelberg! The projected "Institut für Philologische Grundlagenforschung" ("Institute for Basic Philological Research") was not established in 2004. It took twelve years indeed, until — after many intermediate steps (some small, others big), among them the endowment of an advancement award for 'basic philological research' in 2005 — the "International Coordination Center 'Theory of Philology'" was inaugurated at Heidelberg University's Department of Classical Philology in 2016. Together with our partner institution — the "Centro de Teoria da Filologia" in Campinas, São Paulo — we have been coordinating a number of activities in the field of foundational research with respect to philology. Once a year, the representatives of the most diverse approaches to the study of philology come together in Heidelberg:

the core of our group is made up of colleagues from universities and other research institutions in Basel, Berlin (AdK, BBAW, FU, HU, ZfL), Bielefeld, Budapest (ELTE), Campinas, Gießen, Frankfurt a.M., Halle, Copenhagen, Marbach, Munich (LMU), Osnabrück, Paris, Santiago de Chile, São Paulo (UNIFESP), Weimar, Wuppertal, and Zurich. The members of this work group represent focuses as various as the philology of editing and textual criticism, archive studies and librarianship, the history of cultures and ideas, the philosophy of science, the study and theory of literature, as well as the theory of philology.

All of us share the conviction that a methodically comparative view of our object — philology — will necessarily enrich our dealings with the texts. In the fall of 2019 (hence prior to a longer break caused by the pandemic), Melanie Möller and I — in cooperation with Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum, a professor of Ancient Near Easter Studies, and Bernd Roling, a professor of Medieval and New Latin — invited the group to the newly established ‘Einstein Center Chronoi’, in order to discuss the relationship of “Philology and Time”. Of late, research into the epistemology of time and its experience in premodern societies is being performed at that center. An analysis of the experience and consciousness of time, as transmitted in the respective texts, cannot be separated from a reflection on the philological method being used. The question of the time of philology — the temporality of its dispositions and activities, of its terms and concepts — took center stage during the (as yet unpublished) presentations of the aforementioned workshop. Hence the temporal statutes of philological work were being examined. Inquiry into the temporal constitution of philology implied intriguing queries — such as that concerning the temporality of its categories; but also regarding the rank, which it concedes to the past and the future in its operations. ‘Philology and Nostalgia’, as well as the concept of “Zukunftsphilologie” (“Future Philology”) — recently revivified by the Sanskritist Sheldon Pollock, and intermittently rendered programmatic at FU Berlin — were topical at our conference.

In the meantime, the reprocessing of the early history of (professional) philology in Germany has also been provided for. In cooperation with the colleagues of Halle University and its “*Interdisziplinäres Zentrum für die Erforschung der Europäischen Aufklärung*” (“Interdisciplinary Center for the Research on the European Enlightenment”, IZEA), the members of the “International Coordination Center, ‘Theory of Philology’” have recently begun to investigate the “Genealogy of Philology”, and specifically the “formative phase of the Classical, Biblical, and Modern Philologies (1777–1818)” — a project funded by the DFG.

Not long ago, we also obtained an excellent research library: the collection of more than 7000 books from the literary estate of the Frankfurt Comparatist Werner Hamacher, who left us far too early, and was closely connected to our endeavor,

right from its start. Hamacher is an important link between German, French, and US American approaches to the task of tying back in with a theoretically founded discussion about philology.[26] His estate contains a number of letters and other texts penned by the most important advocates of a 'return to philology': Maurice Blanchot, Peter Szondi, Jacques Derrida, and (of course, and above all) Paul de Man. We are aiming at accessing Hamacher's *Nachlaß* in connection with the *Deutsches Literaturarchiv* (German Literature Archive, DLA) in Marbach.

18 *Ad posteros*

In conclusion, I would like to voice a desire (if I may). It is my wish that–at some point during their qualification, and quite irrespective of the attractiveness and significance of the objects, for the sake of which they resolved to study in this field–each and all, who decided on studying philology, would arrive at (or be led to) the point, where, for once, they would come to terms with what they are actually doing, when they ponder and evaluate letters, syllables, words, *kola*, and sentences; when they work with — seek and collect, survey and order, read and interpret, edit, explicate, understand, assess and compare, recommend and reject, read and reread, forget and remember — passages, texts, and books. There will be no harm in knowing, on which terrain they are moving — no harm in knowing the times and spaces; the modes of approaching; the disciplinary ceremonial; the questions of power and a lack thereof; the roles, masks, and theatrical props; the instruments of scholarship and science; that whole drama of dealing with something, whereof we still do not know, whether it must overcome us, so that we may overcome it; or whether we must manage and master it, so that it will not overwhelm and overpower us. They will then also be more capable of comprehending philology as an integral study of understanding. For, along with philology, they will have learned the general science of exchange and interaction — meaning, criticism and hermeneutics. In the end, after having performed really well, they will not even be all that melancholy about having only studied philology (and, perchance, also Ancient History and Archeology).

In the process of methodical self-elucidation — and in no danger of losing the object due to its having immersed itself into its own doings — philology recognizes itself as the art of obtaining the object. Yet it gains the latter by developing a stance against, or countering, the 'object' — even as it always remains in touch with that very object. Said sort of resistance would seem to be the most consummate

26 To only mention two of the most important writings in our context: Hamacher 2009 and 2010.

expression of its strangely refracted sovereignty. Resistive, as it should be, philology is thus both creative and precise, an art and a science. This is *my* way of interpreting the balance of power between philology and its texts. The point is not to overwhelm or master, but to sustain and withstand the conflict — to keep open the game or match — as long as possible. Hence philology is the '*perpetuum mobile*' of forming traditions. In an emphatic sense, it is what crafts and ensures a future. The disquiet it institutes in this way we should not deem a vexation, but a methodical godsend (and probably also one of intellectual history). The unrest is the best gift philology may give us. It shows us that the philological question has not been decided yet; and thus the 'philological turn' is also not a singular and unique occurrence. It describes the possibility of an experience, which is always open to — and free for — all, who have not ceased to ask questions.

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The Future of the Classical Past

Abstract: Knowledge of the classical past is essential if humanity is to have a future, given the Hellenes' contributions to literacy and constitutional government. Much new knowledge can still be learned from scientific and technological advances. In particular, there will be many new papyri, certainly from Egypt and Herculaneum and quite possibly from the bottom of the Euxine Sea, rendered legible by advances such as the use of 'artificial intelligence' to read the interiors of rolled-up scrolls without opening them. Even such fragmentary discoveries as the Callatis papyrus, which may contain a poem by Simonides on the Persian Wars that mentions Xerxes, are capable of yielding unknown and exciting texts.

Keywords: Papyri, scrolls, artificial intelligence, Herculaneum, Euxine, Simonides, Persian Wars

As Lucretius showed in *De rerum natura* 5, technologies of increasing complexity, from the control of fire to the invention of computers, have been integral to the advance of civilization, as well to the multiplication of its problems, including the worsening of its internecine wars. We animals called humans have long since passed the stage of throwing verbal insults at each another or hurling sticks and stones, 'progressing' to firing off 'tweets' or missiles instead. Inspired by the rediscovery of the atomic physics of Democritus, technology has brought us the power not just of Prometheus' spark of fire, but of Zeus's thunderbolts themselves and worse. Thus the past will have a future only if humanity has a future. By making his *Iliad* end with Priam's ransom of his son's body from his killer Achilles, Homer shows us that true greatness means overcoming war and hatred in favour of our shared humanity: even our seemingly worst enemy may one day be our friend. Ultimately we are all mortal human beings, unable to live forever like the Homeric gods.

The forces of unreason, which we must call barbarism, lie deep in our shared human nature, as Thucydides well knew. They are unleashed by harsh necessity and human ignorance, but above all by human greed and aggression. For humanity to be able successfully to resist these forces, we will continue to depend upon the intellectual resources provided by the thinkers of the ancient Mediterranean world, and especially the contributions of the Greeks, which we all need to be a possession for ever, truly a κτῆμα εἰς αἰεί. We have heard many reasons from other speakers as to why this remains true. My own two favorites are these. The first is the conversion of the Phoenician 'syllabary without vowels' or 'alphabet without vowels' into

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a true alphabet, a technology which accurately encodes human speech by representing each phoneme of natural language, including the vowels, by using a different sign for each. This invention occurred before 800 BCE. Since the earliest known alphabetic inscription, which I believe to be in Greek, has been found in Italy at Gabii near Rome, I hold that the alphabet was invented not in Greece itself but at Pithecussae on the island of Ischia near Naples in Italy, among the large community of Hellenes and Phoenicians who lived together there even before that date.[1] By making writing simple and accurate, so that anyone could use it, the invention of the alphabet enabled the transformation of oral literature into written form. It led to the development of texts of all kinds, from verses like these on Nestor's cup to sophisticated philosophical arguments in prose. Above all, the invention of the alphabet enabled easy communication between people in different places and in different times, vastly expanding human consciousness. It enabled humans to think in new, more accurate, and more permanent ways.

However, such progress need not be lasting; if just one generation fails to learn to read properly but reverts to relying on speech and images, or on soundbites and 'tweets', much rationality will be lost, just as when the clumsy literacy of the Aegean Bronze Age was lost in the catastrophic collapse of Mycenaean palatial society. In our world, this risks happening not only if civilization were to collapse from a widespread rejection of it but because people's brains are being rotted and hollowed out by the herd mentality and mob violence promoted by social media. It will be even worse if a lazy reliance on 'artificial intelligence' deprives people not only of the ability to remember anything or to read complex written arguments, but also of the ability to make and analyse such arguments, resulting in a general resort to violence in word and deed and a desire to blow everything up. One also fears the influence of 'deep fakes' on our ability to tell truth from falsehood.

The second great innovation that we owe to the Hellenes is the development of mechanisms for diffusing political and judicial power and preventing its excessive concentration in the hands of a small group or a single person, whatever may be their merits or their crimes. We do not need all the practices of radical Athenian democracy in order to avoid letting a single man centralize power in his own hands, but one mechanism really overdue for revival is ostracism. The lack of such mechanisms, or their failure, has been the greatest barrier to human flourishing, turning world history into a long and dismal parade of despots.

The diversity of constitutions in the city-states of ancient Hellas, as studied by Aristotle, ranging from states like Sparta reliant on their enslaved neighbours to supply labour, to states with increasing levels of equality before the law and with

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1 See Janko 2015 (= Janko 2017).

trial by jury, and their resultant and very divergent histories, are essential knowledge for humankind. We must also be aware of the all too easy reversion of the Hellenistic world to government by kings, and the violent transformation of the fairly democratic Roman Republic into an autocracy that may have at first been enlightened but soon ceased to be so. This pattern continued, to the detriment of republics, for fifteen hundred years. The slide back toward tyranny evident in the last hundred years, and especially in the last decade with its increasing risks to the survival of civilization and of the entire planet, should serve to remind us that freedom from dictatorial leaders must be fought for by every generation, as it was here in Athens twenty-five centuries ago. Human freedom will only continue if humans are taught, and inspired by, the history of that struggle and others like it, and learn from history the many ways in which our societies can be made to work better than by being ruled by self-serving demagogues exploiting an ignorant public, or by hate-mongering fraudsters and ultra-nationalist criminals.

But here I wish to focus on what the modern fruits of ancient science can teach us about Hellenic and Roman thought and technology. It is commonly thought that classical scholars are ploughing old fields that will yield no new discoveries, and that all we can do to keep our field fresh and relevant to the wider public is to reinterpret it in terms of the ever-changing world of the present and indeed of that world's reception of antiquity. This is far from true; international cooperation in sharing the fruits of scientific advance continues to add much to our knowledge. Classical studies have long been in the forefront of this effort. For instance, methods developed for cryptography in World War II were essential for Michael Ventris' extraordinary decipherment of the Linear B tablets, with no access to a bilingual inscription, as the earliest form of Greek.[2] During that time, classicists like my teacher John Chadwick worked alongside mathematicians like Alan Turing to develop and use new methods for code-breaking like computers.

In the distant days when a digital file was still a stack of punch-cards or a reel of paper tape, and you had to submit a job in the evening, let it run overnight, and pick up the printout from the laboratory in the morning, classicists were already using computers to shed new light on our old texts. We were the true pioneers in digital humanities, long before that term had ever been dreamed of. David Packard and Marianne Moore founded the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae data-base of ancient Greek texts in 1972. Well before the TLG had become available on just a few purpose-built Ibycus computers, a Scottish clergyman interested in the statistical stylometry of the letters of St Paul, the Reverend A.Q. Morton, had already created the first

2 See Chadwick 1968; Robinson 2002.

machine-readable texts of Homer and Hesiod.[3] With the help of Dr Chadwick and Dr John Dawson at the wonderful Literary and Linguistic Computing Centre at Cambridge,[4] he kindly let me use his texts to create the first key-word-in-context concordance to all of early Greek epic in 1977.[5] For their help I will always be profoundly grateful. Computerized analysis of that body of data formed the basis of what was then the expected conclusion: statistical analysis of the frequency of archaic elements in the epic language showed that Homer's poems reached a fixed form that is earlier, by a considerable margin, than Hesiod's or the Homeric Hymns, and that the *Iliad* is prior to the *Odyssey*.[6] It is odd that a widespread belief in the inversion of this sequence, as advocated by the great Oxonian philologist Martin West,[7] and the parallel insistence by Gregory Nagy that the poems only acquired fixed form far later[8] (a reversion to the theories of Friedrich Augustus Wolf), have thrown Homeric scholarship into a deep and regrettable confusion from which it has yet to recover. Medievalist friends, who have successfully applied similar statistical methods to achieve a consensus over the relative linguistic dating of poetic corpora in Old English and Old Norse,[9] have urged me to be more polemical in combating the near-consensus among Homerists that my statistical methods have proved precisely nothing.[10] But I continue to believe that truth will win out in the end just because it is simple and irrefutable, however many obscurantist arguments are

3 For his remarkable life and achievements see https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/feb/05/the-rev-andrew-q-morton-obituary (accessed 8 Oct. 2023).

4 Now subsumed into Cambridge Digital Humanities (https://www.cdh.cam.ac.uk/, accessed 13 June 2024), its illustrious history seems never to have been written.

5 All I had to input was the fragments of Hesiod and the Epic Cycle. This concordance was never published, as it was in transliteration and had no accents, but I deposited a bound copy of it in the Classics Faculty Library in Cambridge. It was invaluable to me in writing *The Iliad: A Commentary. IV. Books 13–16* (Cambridge 1993).

6 Janko 1984. For additional results of this approach see Janko 1979; 1993; 2012. Milman Parry concluded that Homer dictated both his epics much as we have them, as he stated most clearly in Parry 1971, 451; West's objections (2000) are simply not cogent. In favour of their origin as oral dictated texts see now Ready 2019, and Lane Fox 2023, 118–28.

7 For West's original claim that the *Theogony* 'may well be the oldest Greek poem we have' see West 1966, 46. For his last views on the genesis of the Homeric poems see West 2011, with the judicious review by Ford 2012.

8 See, among many similar works, Nagy 1996. I showed why Nagy's approach is unsatisfactory in my review of this book in Janko 1998, and forbear to repeat myself. For many of the same criticisms see West 2001, and Čolaković 2019, 12–14.

9 Cf. for instance Gade 2001; Neidorf 2014, particularly the chapters by T. Bredehof, R.D. Fulk, and M. Hartman; Sapp 2022.

10 I thank particularly M.M. Males, who invited me to give a keynote address to a conference in Oslo on the linguistic dating of poetic corpora in these fields.

raised against it. Even before social media, abetted by artificial 'intelligence', enabled some people to bury truth under mountains of falsehood, it would have been a sad waste of my remaining years and abilities to try to correct the record by interminably rebutting the infinite variety of illogicalities that several Homerists have dreamed up on this topic.

Recent progress in another technology that computers have made possible, namely digital imaging and high-resolution scanning, is contributing yet more to our knowledge of the ancient world. Hellenistic astronomers like Hipparchus of Samos had made extraordinary advances in understanding the solar system. Archimedes had already applied to its complex motions the latest skills in engineering.[11] He or a successor created the first analogue computer, a unique mechanism that was found by divers on the sea-bed off the coast of Antikythera in 1901.[12] But it was only through advances in X-ray imaging that we learned that neither Charles Babbage nor Alan Turing were the first to invent computers. The historians of science Derek de Solla Price, and recently Tony Freeth and others,[13] have used digital X-ray tomography of the industrial, not the less precise medical variety, to see into the encrusted interior of the mechanism, revealing that its gears were machined to an accuracy that was only attained again during World War II. High-resolution surface scanning has revealed that the user-manual engraved on its surface used the Corinthian (and therefore Syracusan) month-names, which links it to Archimedes.[14]

Progress in the digital imaging of texts largely came about from NASA's efforts to map distant planets, so remote from the sun that hardly any light reaches them. Image enhancement has recently been used to discover the writing lying under palimpsests, yielding new texts by the comic poet Menander,[15] the orator Hyperides,[16] the scientist Archimedes,[17] the philosopher Porphyry,[18] and most recently part of book 23 of the *Orphic Rhapsodies* in a codex at St Catharine's Monastery on Mount Sinai.[19]

In the late 1990s a team at Brigham Young University led by Steve and Susan Booras applied multi-spectral digital imaging to the carbonized library of eight hundred scrolls from Herculaneum containing philosophical texts, in which black ink

11 Cic. *Rep*. 1. 21–2.

12 de Solla Price 1959; Jones 2017.

13 Freeth et al. 2021.

14 Iversen 2017.

15 D'Aiuto 2003, esp. 266–283 with plates 13–14.

16 Carey et al. 2008.

17 Netz, Noel, and Wilson 2011.

18 Chiaradonna, Rashed, Sedley, and Tchernetska 2013.

19 Rossetto 2021; D'Alessio 2022.

lies on blackened papyrus, making the papyri almost illegible to the human eye. However, in the infra-red spectrum the ink is readily visible. They imaged the entire collection in Naples in 1999.[20] The existence of these images has revolutionized the study of the five hundred or so Herculaneum scrolls that were opened manually in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Such images enable these texts to be properly read away from Naples and edited, often for the first time. They also permit us, when combined with advanced mathematical techniques,[21] to reconstruct some of these ancient books almost in their entirety. The first work to be reconstructed was Philodemus' *On Music* IV,[22] shortly followed by the first part of Philodemus' *On Piety*.[23] I have myself reconstructed four books of Philodemus' *On Poems*, one of them containing 222 columns of text.[24] A refinement of such techniques, hyperspectral imaging, has even enabled Kilian Fleischer to read more accurately Philodemus' *History of the Academy*, where the author himself had added to his original draft further passages on the back of the papyrus-roll (this sheds an interesting light on how ancient books were written).[25]

Many further discoveries await us from Herculaneum. Almost three hundred or so Herculaneum scrolls or parts of them still remain unopened from the original discoveries of 1752–4. Several teams are working to detect the ink on the interiors of such rolled-up papyri by using X-ray phase-contrast scans from a particle-accelerator or synchrotron.[26] Brent Seales of the University of Kentucky was the first to read the interior of a leather scroll excavated at a synagogue in En Gedi in Israel in 1971, by flattening it out digitally; it turned out to contain the start of *Leviticus* in Hebrew.[27] But the ink in this scroll contains iron, which is easier to reveal with X-rays, whereas most ancient scrolls have carbon-based ink made from soot and gum arabic with only small traces of metallic elements such as lead (Pb). At a conference at the J. Paul Getty Museum in California in 2019, Seales showed that he could train a computer by machine-learning to recognize visible carbon-based ink in Herculaneum papyri that have already been opened.[28] Seales and his team have now been able to resume their work, which the pandemic interrupted, and have obtained X-ray phase-contrast scans of the highest possible resolution of all the rolled-

20 Booras and Seely 1999, 95–100.

21 Essler 2008.

22 Delattre 1989; 2007.

23 Obbink 1996. Sadly, this work remains unfinished.

24 Janko 2000; 2010; 2020.

25 Fleischer 2022, 52–61; 2023.

26 Fleischer 2022, 63–71.

27 Seales et al. 2016.

28 Janko, Blank, Seales, and Lapatin 2019.

up papyri in Paris. In March 2023 a prize was announced, the 'Vesuvius Challenge', for the first person to use 'artificial intelligence' to recognize legible text within the interior of unopened rolls.[29] At the time of writing[30] it is clear that the prize will be won, since we have already been able to decipher scans of the interior of *P.Herc.Paris.* 4, which may well contain one of the other books of Philodemus' *On music*.[31] This new technology opens the way to recovering over the next few years many scores of texts from the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, which will be better preserved than the existing corpus and will contain many hitherto unknown works.

Other spin-offs from such technologies provide new information too. In 2014, I was kindly allowed to study the Derveni papyrus in the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki. The Derveni papyrus, so important for the fifth-century enlightenment and the religious reaction against it later in the fifth century, is not only carbonized, like the Herculaneum papyri, but mounted under glass, which they are not. Its fragments, separated mechanically by Anton Fackelmann in 1962, are almost illegible in ordinary light. The glass means that 'conventional' photographs, taken with a microscope such as papyrologists normally use, are plagued by terrible reflections. Even multispectral images done by a team from Brigham Young University have turned out to be relatively unhelpful.[32]

While I gazed in despair at the blackened fragments, an archaeologist who was working at the next desk in the laboratory, Demosthenes Kechagias, offered to help. He was using a digital USB microscope to study and photograph textiles recovered from a tomb of the sixth century BCE, and kindly lent it to me. At first the reflections proved to be just as bad, but eventually I found that, if I brought the head of the microscope down to the level of the glass, the reflections retreat to the edge of the image, leaving an area in the middle without them. Tiny microphotographs can be stitched together to make images far superior to those that we had before. My first 5,000 images of the papyrus have enabled a much better reconstruction of the heavily damaged opening columns. A second set of 5,000 images in the infra-red spectrum enabled for the first time the reading of many letters that had not been read in visible light.[33]

Three other Greek papyri are as old as, or older than, the Derveni papyrus: the late fifth-century *P. Daphne* 1, containing lyric poetry;[34] fragments of a scroll from

29 https://scrollprize.org/ (accessed 13 June 2024).

30 1 Nov. 2023.

31 Nicolardi and Parsons 2024.

32 I thank Roger MacFarlane of Brigham Young University for allowing me access to the complete set of MSI images that were made in 2007. Cf. MacFarlane and Mastro 2019.

33 Janko 2022, with colour plates 1–5, 12.

34 Pöhlmann and West 2012; Alexopoulou and Karamanou 2014.

the tomb of Philip II of Macedon at Vergina in Pieria, which is resisting multiple efforts on my part to read more than a few letters of it;[35] and a third from Mangalia in Romania, ancient Callatis. Since none of these was carbonized, they are extant only as tiny pieces.

The survival of fragments of the Callatis papyrus is particularly miraculous. Found as a complete roll in a Macedonian-style tomb in 1959, it disintegrated upon exposure to damp and air, and was said to have disappeared completely. In fact its remnants had been taken to Moscow for conservation, and were tracked down and returned to Romania in 2010. When I tried to photograph its 224 tiny fragments with ordinary light I could see hardly any ink; only with digital infrared microphotography did writing appear. The hand dates from the later fourth century BCE. Although only detached words survive, there are enough to show that this roll contained a poem in Doric dialect about the Persian Empire, and mentioning Xerxes (or Artoxerxes, i.e. Artaxerxes).[36] Unfortunately its metre is not determined. The *Persica* of Choerilus of Samos was an epic in the same mixture of dialects, based on Ionic, that was used by Homer; hence this is excluded.[37] Recently, however, Ewen Bowie suggested to me that it might be by Simonides, who, according to the *Suda*, wrote a poem in Doric dialect on the reigns of Cambyses and Darius, on 'Xerxes' sea-battle', on the battle at Artemisium in elegiacs (it is not clear whether this refers to one poem or two), and on the battle of Salamis in lyric,[38] which would have been in Doric dialect. Alternatively, the papyrus could contain the lost beginning of Timotheus' *Persians*.

35 Janko 2018, 195–197.

36 Janko et al. 2021.

37 Cf. Choerilus frr. 1–2, 5–12 *PEG* (Bernabé) = frr. 316–30 *SH* (Lloyd-Jones and Parsons). Frr. dub. 21–24 *PEG* (= adesp. epic. frr. 904–5, 937 *SH*) are also in Ionic; whether fr. dub. 25 (= adesp. epic. fr. 950 *SH*) also is (*P. Genav.* inv. 326, 5th cent. CE) is unclear. Parts of a hexameter epic, which is of uncertain date and origin but in Doric dialect, about a battle involving a warlike son of Pharnaces survive in *P. Oxy.* 2524, which was copied in the third century CE. Pharnaces' son Artabazus, leader of the Parthians and Chorasmians in 480 (Hdt. 7. 66), stood high in Xerxes' esteem (Hdt. 8. 126, 9. 41) but fled after the battle of Plataea (Hdt. 9. 89). This text, assigned to Choerilus (*PEG* frr. dub. 13–20 Bernabé = *SH* anon. frr. 928–35 Lloyd-Jones and Parsons), could in fact be by Simonides.

38 *Suda* σ 49, γέγραπται αὐτῷ Δωρίδι διαλέκτῳ ἡ Καμβύσου καὶ Δαρείου βασιλεία καὶ Ξέρξου ναυμαχία, καὶ ἡ ἐπ' Ἀρτεμισίῳ ναυμαχία δι' ἐλεγείας· ἡ δ' ἐν Σαλαμῖνι μελικῶς. This is obviously different from his elegiac poem on the battle of Plataea (*P. Oxy.* 3965), which is in Ionic dialect (cf. Boedeker/Sider 2001).

In one respect, the content of the Callatis roll is less important than its existence: for its discovery confirms that, just as Xenophon states in his *Anabasis*,[39] by 400 BCE books packed in wooden boxes were a major part of trade between the rest of the Greek world and the settlements around the Euxine. A joint project between the University of Southampton and the Bulgarians has been exploring the bed of the Black Sea for the remains of ancient shipping. Within a few months of its initiation in 2016, the Black Sea Maritime Archaeology Project had located and imaged with three-dimensional photogrammetry no fewer than forty-one wrecks off the Bulgarian coast, such as the perfectly preserved wreck of a Greek merchant-ship of a type depicted on Attic vases of the fifth century BCE.[40] When, during prehistory, postglacial sea levels rose enough for salt water to flow through the Bosporus into the Black Sea, the heavier brine sank below the fresh water of what had been the greatest fresh-water lake in the world, and this water therefore lost its oxygen. These anoxic waters contain no marine life at all below depths of about 140 metres, and have to be explored by robots. Such conditions preserve shipwrecks far better there than anywhere else in the oceans. Among the cargoes that we may hope to be perfectly preserved should be boxes of books such as Xenophon records.[41]

There are thus three places in the world where we may hope to recover substantially more of the lost books of antiquity. The first is Egypt, where the dry climate has already yielded so many papyri. The second is Herculaneum, where more excavations at the Villa of the Papyri are urgently needed before Vesuvius erupts again and covers the site with lava for the third time in the last two thousand years. The third place is the shipwrecks on the bottom of the Black Sea. There will be papyrus-rolls and Byzantine manuscripts on parchment down there too, for us to rescue and read if humankind chooses; we will find the means if we seek them. There is so much more to discover, if only the barbarians amongst us do not blow up the world first.

39 ἐνταῦθα ηὑρίσκοντο πολλαὶ μὲν κλῖναι, πολλὰ δὲ κιβώτια, πολλαὶ δὲ βίβλοι γεγραμμέναι, καὶ τἄλλα πολλὰ ὅσα ἐν ξυλίνοις τεύχεσι ναύκληροι ἄγουσιν (*Anabasis* 7.5.14, describing the cargoes of shipwrecks at Salmydessus that he saw in 400 BCE).

40 BBC News, 20 Oct. 2018; Pappas 2018.

41 Cf. Janko et al. 2021, 72–3 with references.

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Part V: **Language, Linguistics and Philology**

Franco Montanari

The Language and Culture of Ancient Greece in Today's World

Abstract: In everyday life, we encounter the abiding presence of ancient Greek and Roman civilization while engaging in all sorts of activities, even if the ancient foundations of such activities are often evident only to those who have received a good classical education. Examples can be found everywhere: from newspapers to business and commerce, to mathematics, physics, and natural science. But it is above all in the realm of education that knowledge of ancient civilization proves to be essential, and indeed ineradicable.

Keywords: Ancient Greek language, argumentation, classical education, classical languages, grammar, rhetoric, scientific terminology

Notwithstanding the expectations from its title, my essay will not deal with Greek and Latin linguistics. Instead, I would like to reflect upon two related subjects, both of which have long been central to my thinking. The first subject is the science of grammar, understood as the description of how a given language functions; the second subject is the science of argumentation, i.e. the rhetoric, understood as a methodology for the organization of thought and for the construction of persuasive discourse. The sciences of grammar and rhetoric both constitute essential disciplines within the field of humanistic inquiry and are also forms of knowledge that came into being in Ancient Greece and continue to have a fundamental place within modern life. It is almost too easy, therefore, to discuss them within the framework of the continuity and the endurance of classical heritage.

It was the thinkers of ancient Greece — both philosophers and philologists — who definitively posed the question of linguistic propriety and, along with this, the question of how to describe a language systematically. The attempt to achieve a systematic understanding of how language works took its first steps among the philosophers, who invented categories to describe linguistic phenomena. The Peripatetics built upon the foundations laid by Aristotle; the Stoics revolutionized the way etymology was understood and analyzed (including the etymologies of proper names) and they created a comprehensive system for describing the different parts of speech. In the Hellenistic era, these developments — together with parallel developments in philology and textual exegesis — led to the birth of a new science, the *téchne grammatiké*, or the science of grammar, that is to say, *the scientific and systematic description of language*, which employed principles, categories, and

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terminology that would later be passed on from the Alexandrians to the Romans, and would ultimately prove to be definitive acquisitions within Western thought. Indeed, it is the Greeks who are responsible for the fact that, even today, when we want to describe a language, or when we want to teach a language starting from the basics, we use concepts and terms such as *letters, vowels, consonants, parts of speech, gender, number, tense,* and *mood*. Thus, whether linguists or schoolteachers, we continue to employ the basic elements of a science whose foundations were laid in ancient Greece, and which passed from Greece to Rome and Byzantium, and finally came down to us.

My second subject is *rhetoric* — another essential element of the cultural patrimony that we have inherited from the Greeks. In the ancient world, the term *rhetoric* indicated the science of argumentation, the art of speaking or writing — that is to say, the art of using language — in a manner that is correct, effective, persuasive, and appropriate to the circumstances within which one must communicate. In his treatment of the subject, in *Rhetoric* Aristotle describes the types of oratory in a systematic fashion (Book I, ch. 3, 1358 a 35 ff):

> Any given speech is composed of three elements: a person who speaks, the thing about which he speaks, and the person to whom he speaks. The purpose or goal of the speech is directed toward the latter person, that is to say, the listener. And this listener is, of necessity, either a spectator, or else a judge; and if he is a judge, he must be a judge either of past events or of future ones. With regard to future events, the person who judges is the citizen in the Assembly; with regard to past events, it is the juror in the courtroom; with regard to the orator's abilities, it is the spectator. As a result, there are of necessity three types of rhetorical speeches: deliberative, judicial, and epideictic.

The three types are therefore defined as, first, the *genos symbouleutikón* (or *genus deliberativum*), which comprises speeches delivered in political assemblies or in other deliberative bodies; second, the *genos dikanikón* (or *genus iudiciale*), comprising speeches delivered in the courtroom, along with other kinds of judicial oratory; and third, the *genos epideiktikón* (or *genus demonstrativum*), which refers to speeches delivered during public occasions, such as official ceremonies, solemn rites, and so forth. Already in the fifth century BC, the landscape of public oratory, with its various genres, was composed of those very elements which Aristotle would a little later codify and which indeed remain with us even today. One only has to think of modern politics, lawsuits, and public ceremonies to realize how pervasive and how important this 'invention' of the ancient Greeks still is in the contemporary world. And lord knows how much we all would benefit, if the art of expression and the techniques of argumentation were studied with greater diligence by those who give speeches nowadays, in all three areas specified by Aristotle.

This past summer, I had been trying to decide which aspects of these subjects I wanted to discuss with you in this meeting, when I came across a curious article in the *Economist* — a magazine I have been reading regularly for some years now. The article in question was dedicated to a recent discovery regarding the species *Australopithecus prometheus*.[1] Don't worry! I will not be speaking about prehistoric anthropology, since indeed I am not qualified to do so in the first place. Instead, as I was reading, I found myself wondering if all scholars of prehistoric anthropology would be able to fully understand the reason behind the definition of this species, that is to say, the motivation for choosing this specific name for it. If the answer is *yes*, then to them I say *bravo*! If the answer is *no*, then I cannot help but wonder how someone can study a phenomenon without precisely understanding its definition. However that may be, certainly the scientist who first baptized this ancient ancestor of ours must have known the myth of Prometheus, and the meaning of that myth, and so he or she must have had a classical education. Hats off to this person, at least!

As I was reflecting upon these questions, I recalled that some years ago, for fun, I decided to keep a list of the references to the ancient world that I encountered in daily life, especially those that seemed to be more or less intentional and readily recognizable. The resulting collection of passages was quite interesting, and I thought it would be worthwhile to dust off the old notebook in which I collected them. It took me quite a while to find it, but in the end, I managed to do so, and I thought that this lecture might be a good opportunity to make use of those old notes of mine once again.

Here is one example. In another issue of the *Economist,* I had read an article about the problem of North Korean nuclear rearmament. The article was entitled 'Disclosing Pandora's Box'; but in the body of the text there was no reference to the figure of Pandora, nor any explanation of her mythical box. The image was evidently chosen in order to express a specific concept concisely and vividly, to distill into one phrase an idea that could serve as the title of the article and would catch a reader's eye. In other words, the expression had been called in as a linguistic prop — a means of bolstering the text's effectiveness by appealing to a shared resource, a phrase so familiar that it evokes an image without the need of any further explanation. Indeed, if the phrase had to be glossed or explained at length, it would lose a large part of its efficacy. Put differently, the image is striking only if it is immediately perceived and if the force of all of its implications is immediately evident. If the cultural background underpinning those implications

1 *The Economist*, 30 July–12 August 2022, '*Australopithecus prometheus* is a million years older than previously thought.'

is no longer present to the reader, then the communicative gesture will be a failure, or at least it will be extremely weakened. Thankfully, some traces of the classical inheritance are still among us — at least, among persons with a certain level of education.

Leaving aside some other examples of the same type that I had collected, I come now to finish with a rather amusing case. Some time ago, one of the most widely-read Italian newspapers presented a review of an American TV series called *Men Versus Beasts* in which I came across the following clever remark: "The episode was presented by the Olympic champion Carl Lewis, but not even Homer would have been able to adequately narrate this epic duel, which pitted a brown bear against the world-champion hot-dog-eater in a race to consume 40 würstel… In the end, the bear won." The learned reference to the epic poet *par excellence* admittedly constitutes a pleasant touch of irony, and certainly some of the newspaper's readers will have caught and appreciated it — provided that they had at least a little exposure to classical culture. It remains doubtful, however, that Carl Lewis had been aware he was competing with Homer, or that the brown bear and the professional eater had drawn any inspiration from their heroic predecessors in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

It is easy to see how incidents like these (and the many I left out) might make someone ask in frustration: couldn't we simply eliminate Greek and Latin? Couldn't we just forget about the Greeks and the Romans and live our own lives in the modern world? Couldn't we begin anew, from a *tabula rasa*, and jettison all these tedious references, which require years of effort and study even to be simply understood?

Now, it can be fun to indulge in cantankerous remarks like these, and indeed I could go on at length before I ran out of examples. But I would like to submit that this is not simply a game, not simply a 'treasure hunt' for the innumerable references to Greek and Roman culture that can be found everywhere in our daily lives. Anyone who has sufficient expertise need only look around with an attentive and critical eye, and he or she will immediately discover how every moment of our lives is pervaded by the Greco-Roman heritage — from the words we use, to the concepts we think with, to the ways in which we argue and behave; not to mention the architecture, the monuments, the walls, and even the very rocks and stones that we find in our cities. For better or worse, then, the answer must be '*no*' — we cannot free ourselves from the Greeks and the Romans, simply because *we find them everywhere we look*: from democracy to tyranny, from *thalassotherapy* to *heliotherapy*, from bibliography to geothermics, from ellipses to parallaxes, from photons to leptons — the latter of which in particular feel quite familiar to me, with their Greek names, even though I know next to nothing about particle physics. And why in the world do we say that someone who is afraid of crowds

suffers from *agoraphobia*? If by chance there existed someone who had never seen a *telephone*, but by some strange twist of fate knew ancient Greek, the first time this person saw a telephone, or heard someone speak of a telephone, he would have no problem understanding what its purpose was, and he would even be able to explain its purpose to someone else quite easily.

Nowadays, loss of the ability to communicate and express oneself clearly, especially in writing, is increasingly highlighted. Generally, the problem is regarded as affecting the young, but it does not affect them alone. Certainly, however, it does represent a more serious obstacle for those who are only beginning to find their path in life and are starting to construct their own future. Every so often, the alarm is sounded: adolescents have an ever smaller vocabulary; they are unable to compose effective sentences with clarity of vocabulary and syntax; the basic structures of language seem to be foreign to them, as do the basic techniques for constructing effective arguments. In the long-term, we seem to be running the risk of living in a world where the better part of the population communicates via monosyllables, exclamations, clichés repeated in every context, short phrases with the most elementary syntax. What's next? to speak with grunts and physical gestures? The most recent editorial on this subject that I personally have read came from England. In my own country, Italy, I believe that we are faring somewhat better, thanks to our public school system. But how long will such a situation last? Or rather, what choices must we make so that it does last, or maybe even improves?

One of the most chilling examples of the debasement of language can be found in the speech of those who are trying to sell us something. In today's world, it is impossible not to have noticed this language, and it is impossible not to have had the thought: "This person must be swindling me." But sometimes the individual is not trying to deceive you; instead, he or she is simply unable to compose a coherent discourse in a given language (and sometimes they will attempt to be more persuasive by employing terms deriving from multiple languages, with all the improprieties that this usually entails). Maybe anyone who intends to pursue a career involving communication with the general public should be legally required to have a degree in Languages and Literature, with at least a few courses taken in Latin and Greek? What would you all say? — any career that involves explaining or describing something, from the characteristics of a shoe to the obscure provisions of economic legislation; any career that entails a communicative component, like writing a user's manual, whether it be for a household appliance or a computer; or like guiding tourists in a foreign city, or explaining public services to the locals.

In economically advanced societies, like our own, it is essential to be able to communicate. For, on the one hand, even an extraordinary product or service will remain useless, unless someone can adequately explain its purpose, its function,

and its capabilities; and on the other hand, buyers will necessarily make wrong decisions, or even be really deceived, if they are unable to understand critically the advertising employed to market a given product. We could state it as a general principle (and one with enormous implications): if a message is formulated badly, or if it is interpreted incorrectly, the result is a breakdown of communication, and the harm that ensues is easily imaginable. Modern individuals must be able to make use of the global market to their own advantage, and, at the same time, they must be able to defend themselves from potential threats within the global market. One must be able to communicate one's own ideas, understand the ideas of others, and make the necessary choices that follow. In other words, in the modern world it is vital for *everyone* to possess the tools of language and of argumentation — and thus, perhaps my talk has not strayed as far as it may have seemed from the two subjects I mentioned at the beginning: grammar and rhetoric. Modern individuals need a good basic education, both in the sciences and in the humanities; they need some background in history, in philosophy, in the history of art and music, languages and literature, Greek and Latin, mathematics, physics, and the natural sciences.

The situation is indeed serious, from both an economic and a social point of view — unless, that is, we are willing to accept the idea of a society in which only a very small number of individuals has the cultural and intellectual tools necessary to make well-informed decisions, from the basic decisions of every day to those decisions we may make only once in a lifetime. Such an *élite* would, in any case, be formed of citizens with a solid general education, which would include ancient culture, among other subjects. But if we want to make progress in society as a whole, we need not to *reduce*, but rather to *increase* the number of individuals who possess the tools required for understanding the world and for living a good life. And when I say that knowledge of the classical world belongs among those tools, I mean to say that we cannot eliminate the Classics, but I also mean to say that we cannot isolate the Classics, monumentalize the Classics, or plaster over the Classics.

For in fact the classical heritage is precisely the opposite of a single, homogenous block, consisting of unchanging received ideas. To the contrary, what we call 'the Classics' is a great web of contradictions and contestations, of differing ideas and approaches, which, in the course of history, have produced outcomes that vary tremendously and sometimes are even diametrically opposed to one another. This is the reason why the Classics remain so stimulating and provocative. If we have the proper background, we can turn to them for inspiration; but the 'Classics' are never definitive, they never stand alone; instead, they always stand in relation to other Classics and to the contemporary thinkers of every epoch. The

Classics are not mystically eternal; on the other hand, they are also not struggling to survive: for they are always present, alongside us. In short: we need to cultivate the Classics — not only the Classics, but certainly also the Classics.

Every so often one hears the tiresome and cliché question: "What is the use of studying classical languages and culture?" It is tempting to respond, admittedly with a certain degree of frustration and arrogance: "No use at all; for *you*, it has no use at all." Perhaps it is becoming clear that the distinction between what is useful and what is useless is not as evident as it seems to be to some of our fellow citizens, addicted as they are to their smartphones and other screens; perhaps, that which is called useless has a certain utility and a certain *raison d'être* all its own. Given the socio-cultural changes we are facing today, the study of classics should play an essential role, indeed a leading role, in modern life, for at least the following two reasons. First, history cannot be avoided: the long shadow that the past casts upon our present world cannot simply be ignored. Second, given the option of understanding or not understanding, it is always better to understand.

Therefore, we cannot get rid of the Greeks and the Romans. And in fact, the opposite idea — the idea that we could, or should, free ourselves of the classical heritage — would be rather strange, given that these ancient cultures are in effect the roots out of which our present world has grown, and from which our present world receives nourishment. The Greek and Roman past forms the life-giving sap of the tree of which we, in the present, form the branches and leaves. Indeed, I would like to insist upon this image of a tree, with its roots in the past and its leaves in the present and future. I want to fully commit myself to this metaphor, precisely because I would like to challenge certain recent interpretations which have attempted to call into question the metaphor's validity, like that of the philosopher and historian of philosophy Giuseppe Cambiano.[2]

Cambiano argues that the botanical metaphor does not offer any good reasons for defending the classics, because, as he says, it is all too easy to rebut that, if we take the metaphor seriously, we should concentrate our intellectual efforts on studying the tree itself, and we should leave the task of digging around in the earth and examining the roots of the tree to a select few specialists. Moreover, Cambiano states:

> This argument has a strongly teleological nature, and it leads one to the conclusion that the present is the inevitable fruit of the past, and that in no way could the present possibly have been different from what it is. We would thus have a history written only by the winners —

2 G. Cambiano, *La naturalizzazione degli antichi*, in *Rimuovere i Classici?*, a cura di Franco Montanari, Einaudi Scuola 2003, pp. 45 sgg., esp. 50–51; F. Montanari, ibid. pp. 89–90.

> a history which Walter Benjamin spoke of, a history written by winners who only speak about themselves, and who look to the past only for that which justifies their present.

Cambiano's considerations provide much food for thought. In the first place, among other things they confirm the idea that the Classics always present various alternatives and are always open to multiple readings — even at this broader level of interpretation. If we wanted to remain within the metaphor, we could respond that no botanist would only study the leaves of a tree without also taking into consideration its roots. But such a response runs the risk of degenerating into a rhetorical exercise, the elaboration of a complex and trivial allegory. Cambiano in fact is right to assert that the metaphor can give rise to a teleological interpretation and that the risks inherent in this are real. But that does not mean that the metaphor must be abandoned; it means that the *interpretation* of the metaphor should be the subject of discussion and analysis — of discussion and analysis which take into consideration the primary goal of rhetorical strategies of expression and argumentation, namely, the attempt to explain and to communicate a concept.

The goal of the botanical metaphor — like that of other biological metaphors — is not to depict a historical inevitability which supports the interpretation of history presented by the winners. Instead, the goal of the botanical metaphor is to depict an organic and inescapable relationship which is *like* a biological relationship but remains in the end a historical relationship — a relationship whose present outcomes have been determined by the attitudes and the choices adopted by past actors in the course of time; a relationship whose future developments depend on the choices that are being made even in the present. The thread that links past and present and future is one of *understanding*, not one of historical *necessity*; it is a thread made up of *choices*, not one determined by *fate*. And in order to make well-informed choices — even, one hopes, good and just choices — it is necessary to know the history of what has come before us. To return to the details of the metaphor, one could say that those roots must be continually watered and fertilized, in such a way that they continue to exert a decisive influence on the growth of the branches and the leaves; otherwise, the tree dies. The classics thus travel through time as our ever-present companions; they do not disappear, and they do not remain fixed: they change alongside us.

What we need to eliminate, instead, is the almost religious notion that the great classics of Greek and Latin literature (and those of other literatures, too) can somehow provide us with permanent and forever valid solutions to the problems of human society; in other words, the idea that they have formulated eternally-valid answers to the questions that humans face. This is not the case, nor could it possibly be the case, and the reason for this is precisely a historical one. The great classics, whether from antiquity or from any other period, are important because

they pose problems, not because they offer solutions. In the classics we confront the central questions of human life brought to the fore and articulated with clarity; but when the classics offer answers, they offer answers that are historically rooted and inevitably bound up with their time periods and their respective cultures.

Take the example of Sophocles' *Antigone.* To simplify in the extreme, the basic problem that this play poses is the question of who ought to make the fundamental ethical decisions regarding our lives, who ought to propose the answers to the eternal questions that humanity faces: should these decisions be made by secular, political authorities, or should they be determined by religion? These days in Italy there is an intense debate over questions regarding natural death and assisted suicide, and society seems to be torn between the idea that such decisions should be in the hands of the Parliament alone, or else that they should be dictated above all by religious authorities (which in Italy are particularly present and influential). This same conflict — between secular politics and religion — violently afflicts other modern states in our day, for instance in the Muslim world, as we have seen recently and continue to see in the news. It is the very problem that Sophocles articulated in the *Antigone*, a problem which continues to confront us and will do so for as long as humanity continues to exist: every epoch and every culture will need to address the problem in its own way, with the tools of its time. The *Antigone* helps us to understand the problem, it helps us to reflect upon the problem with honesty and with clarity of mind; by grappling with the *Antigone*, we learn to think about the fundamental issues at stake in this conflict and we become aware of their implications for human society.

Herodotus comes to mind as another example. In Book 2 of his *Histories*, Herodotus accepts the Egyptian priests' version of the events leading up to the Trojan War. In their account, Alexander (i.e. Paris) abducted Helen from Sparta and while returning to Troy, he stopped in Egypt. There, the Egyptian King Proteus learned Paris' story and decided to punish him for having violated the laws of hospitality vis-à-vis Menelaus; he therefore seized Helen and the goods that Paris had taken from Sparta. Paris thus returned to his homeland without his booty. Subsequently, a great Achaean army arrived at Troy and demanded the restitution of both Helen and the stolen goods; the Trojans of course responded that they could not restore Helen nor the goods, simply because they did not have them. The Greeks, however, thought that the Trojans were lying to them, and they continued their siege. Thus, only after destroying the city of Troy did they learn the truth, and Menelaus went to Egypt to get back his wife and his property. Herodotus remarks that, in his opinion, Homer knew this version of the story, but he intentionally ignored it, insofar as it was less suited to epic poetry. Herodotus then concludes this section by adducing the reasons why he believes the version of the

story recounted by the Egyptian priests: in his opinion, neither Priam nor the Trojans could have been so foolish as to subject their entire city to such danger simply because Paris wanted to live with his beautiful paramour — and all the more so, given that Paris was not even the heir to the throne (in fact, the heir was Hector). Moreover, Herodotus remarks, even if they had thought of resisting the Greeks at first, the subsequent death and destruction would surely have convinced the Trojans to surrender. It makes sense, then, that the Trojans were unable to restore Helen, precisely because they did not have her, whereas the Greeks continued to fight because they did not believe the Trojans' declarations of innocence. The tragic result was a devastating war, the futility of which became clear only at its very end. Herodotus remarks that in his opinion a divine power had set these events in motion, in order to make men understand how terrible is the punishment that awaits those who commit injustice. Paris was guilty of a grave fault, and as a result he brought his family, and his entire homeland, to complete destruction, thanks in part to a tragic and fatal misunderstanding.

It would be almost too easy to draw bitter connections between this story and recent events; but this is not the reason why I have recalled Herodotus' extraordinary narrative. For Herodotus, the events leading up to the Trojan war are of great importance, both because of their moral and religious significance (which he expresses with great force), but also because of their significance within his overall vision of the history of his people. At the beginning of Book 1, after mentioning the abductions of several mythical heroines, Herodotus reports that, according to the Persians, the Trojan War was the ultimate cause and origin of the hostility between themselves and the Greeks: all of the subsequent, episodic confrontations were part of this same story, which ultimately led to the great Persian invasion, which in turn would end with a Greek victory and the rout of the invading army after the Battle of Salamis (480 BCE). Later interpretations of history (well after Herodotus) would view Alexander the Great's expedition to conquer the East as a kind of revenge taken by the West upon the Persians — and thus, just one more episode in an eternal conflict between Europe and Asia. It is a story marked by great destruction and by the loss of many lives — tragedies which, to judge by historical accounts, have come in great, seemingly inevitable waves, notwithstanding the progress made by human society. The Napoleonic invasion of Russia forms another part of this story. Even if historians might not entirely agree with such an analysis, one nevertheless thinks of the unforgettable fresco of events narrated by Tolstoy in his *War and Peace*. And then there are, of course, more recent events, the events of our own time, darkened by the long shadow of earlier conflicts, of ancient and modern tragedies which humankind, with all its culture and civilization, seems incapable of bringing to an end.

A story of such proportions inevitably enters into territories where myth and history coexist, separated, if at all, only by a very subtle boundary. And this is not only true of the ancients. Even today, the question of the relationship between myth and reality in the story of Troy (to speak only of this) continues to be the subject of assiduous research and endless discussions: indeed, the intensity of the debate regarding the degree of historicity in the Trojan myth is perhaps unparalleled. In recent decades, the question has been reopened, and the ruins of Troy have begun once again to offer material for heated and epoch-making discussions among scholars. How much of the myth belongs to historical reality, and how much derives from the imagination of the poet (or the poets)? What, indeed, is the relationship between factual, historical occurrence and its mythical or literary elaboration? What is the relationship between real events and their rhetorical representation? And to what extent do such relationships influence modern reconstructions of great episodes of human history, such as the expedition of Alexander the Great, or Napoleon's Russian campaign, or the two World Wars of the twentieth century?

Clearly, as far as Herodotus the historian was concerned, Priam, Paris, Achilles, Hector, Helen, Menelaus, Agamemnon were all individuals who actually existed; the Trojan War was real; the destruction and the loss of life it involved were real. And yet Herodotus subjects the Homeric account of the war to a critical analysis, and in the end, he decides that things cannot have happened in the way Homer describes. In Herodotus' view, the poet selected a version of the story that was suitable to his own ends, because the truth of the matter was not fit for an epic poem. Herodotus therefore rejects a fundamental aspect of the Homeric narrative: he maintains that Priam and the Trojans could not have been so foolish as to act as Homer says they did. At this point, however, Herodotus stops, he does not take the argument any further. If he had taken the argument further, if he had followed his skepticism to its logical consequences, he might have concluded that the Trojan War and its protagonists had never existed at all, but instead were the products of poetic imagination. In this way, one of the essential pieces of his historical account, as he himself envisioned and articulated it, would have come crashing down, leaving in its ruins a beautiful poem, but also a huge gap in the historical record. Herodotus, therefore, stops short of following his reasoning to its furthest logical conclusions. But consider: if instead Herodotus had pursued his argument with relentless logical coherence, and if he had denied even the smallest kernel of historical truth to the Trojan myth, he probably would have been wrong: for in fact modern research has concluded that there is at least some historical truth in the myth — even if the debate continues to rage regarding its exact extent and character.

Thus, the 'father of history' — as he has been called — invites us to interpret events historically, he invites us to subject even authoritative accounts to rational investigation, he shows us how to examine received traditions with a critical eye, how to listen cautiously to the stories that people tell us. And yet, at the very same time, he also reveals the limits and the risks of such an approach, which can lead to the opposite errors of hyper-criticism and excessive skepticism. Herodotus therefore encourages us to carve out a space for the freedom of thought, a space that is generous, but also demanding; a space that is suspicious, but not despairing. For there is no harm in believing, but great harm can come from believing for bad reasons. This is one of the lessons that the Classics can teach us. And if they taught only this one lesson, for me that would still be enough reason to keep them in my own life, and in the lives of those I care about, and it would be enough reason to defend their presence within the systems of education that form the citizens of our modern world.

Daniel Kölligan

The Future of the Past: From Regional Studies to Human Heritage Research

Abstract: The paper argues that while there may be no intrinsic reason for giving preference to the study of European antiquity, it remains an indispensable part of human self-description as part of the general endeavor of understanding history and cultural productivity. Research need not end in a blind alley of compartmentalized paradigms. Taking the changing views on language relationship in antiquity and the early (European) modern age as an example, the paper traces the interplay between new data, insights and theories.

Keywords: Aeolism, language harmonies, language and identity

1 Human artefacts

In the discussion about the future of the studies of antiquity, a question that became ever more urgent since the end of the 19th c., it has become a topos to refer to this era, from a European or more broadly "Western" perspective, as that which is closest and at the same time foreign to us, in the famous formulation of Uvo Hölscher, as the "nächste Fremde" (Hölscher 1965). One may e.g. compare the discourse about sexual norms and behaviour in late antiquity with that of our own times to see that the dividing lines between acceptable and deprecated behaviour were quite different and probably do not meet many modern observers' expectations.[1]

The traditional argument for studying antiquity as the era producing norms and moral values still applicable in modern times has been fundamentally questioned e.g. by Friedrich Nietzsche, and no one would probably still claim today that reading classical authors from Homer via Plato to Vergil will make anyone a morally better (not to mention superior) being — any dictator, mass murderer, or terrorist may enjoy reading these authors, too, and many German Nazis did.[2]

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1 Cf. Leppin 2019, 278–285.

2 On the classicist agenda of the Nazi regime, cf. Chapoutot 2016.

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The alternative, positivist approach to antiquity embracing all areas of science instrumental for its study was championed e.g. by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, cf. in his *Geschichte der Philologie,* 1921, 1: "Because the life [sc. of antiquity] we struggle to understand is a unity, our science is a unity."[3] While this avoids the problem of morality, it seems to lack a motivation for its subject area except maybe for knowledge for its own sake.[4] While for a Platonic *academia* and an Aristotelian *lyceum* this would be self-sufficient and indeed the highest possible goal of human existence, modern utilitarianism is not satisfied with an answer which may be suspected to hide personal interests beyond an alleged common good: why should tax payers finance a few people's fun? And, more generally, why should in an ever more connected world the "Western" position of what is closest to it be relevant for other world regions and societies which have their own "closest foreign" historical antecedents just as worthy of study? Any argumentation in favour of European antiquity as privileged as against the rest of world history runs the risk of perpetuating imperialism, as diluted as it may appear. Rather, human cultural production in general is worthy of study and commitment, irrespective of its contingent circumstances such as the place and time where it came into being: cheers to Argentinian tango in Finland, to the Bach Collegium Japan and to playing Sophocles on stages all over the world. On the other hand, it is for practical reasons not likely that everything can be studied everywhere, and probably each area of the world should at least focus on that part of human history that is most easily accessible to it, which for some time to come may still be those artefacts of human productivity found in physical proximity, without, of course, getting out of touch with more general pictures of human history. This should ensure that research on each area is not neglected, and that information becomes available to the international research community. Beyond a fruitful pluralistic view of human productivity, there may be two further points worthy of discussion, viz. the interdependence between data and the social environments in which they are discussed (2), and why we cannot ignore either of them (3).

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3 "Weil das Leben, um dessen Verständnis wir ringen, eine Einheit ist, ist unsere Wissenschaft eine Einheit."

4 Cf. Grethlein (2018, 1): "In the end, the classical canon fell victim to the positivist endeavour to cover the entire ancient material — from administrative inscriptions to the smallest scraps of papyrus" („Dem positivistischen Bestreben, das gesamte antike Material — von der Verwaltungsinschrift zum kleinsten Papyrusfetzen — zu erfassen, fiel letztendlich der klassische Kanon zum Opfer".)

2 Constructing facts

2.1 History

Societies cannot forgo reflecting on and constructing their own past, and by extension have a notion of the general past of humankind. In bad cases, this is simply equated with one's perceived own history, as when G.F.W. Hegel denies that there is a history of Africa, because in his theory statehood is a prerequisite for history and in his view, Africa was a continent without states,[5] or in the traditional ancient and medieval Iranian dualism of Eran vs An-Eran positing 'us against the rest'. Societies dispensing with this necessity and not investing in historical research cannot but replace it with ideology, i.e., with views of the past not based on evidence. In the end, this may lead to totalitarian attitudes, the suppression of information and free speech, often denouncing the latter as ideological itself and attacking the humanities among their first enemies.[6] Those who ignore the call of Enlightenment (Germ. *Aufklärung*) to "dare and (at least try) to know for themselves" (*sapere aude*), run the risk of being told by others what to believe: the option is either to form one's own view of the past or to accept what others say about it. This requires research in all areas of the human past, and it requires societies to allow the deferment of possible answers and changing their view of the past. Research is often expected to give quick answers, but it is equally and perhaps more important to develop and ask questions and to keep them open and not to jump to premature conclusions. The idea is not new that history is constantly being rewritten and every generation needs to do this on its own and find its own relationship towards the human past. Ranke put it this way:

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5 Cf. in the lecture series on the philosophy of world history (*Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, ed. Hoffmeister 1955, 216f.): "In this main part of Africa, no history can actually take place. There are only chance events, surprises that follow one other. There is no goal, no state to pursue." ("In diesem Hauptteile von Afrika kann eigentlich keine Geschichte stattfinden. Es sind Zufälligkeiten, Überraschungen, die aufeinander folgen. Es ist kein Zweck, kein Staat da, den man verfolgen könnte."), cf. also Kimmerle 1993.

6 Cf. e.g. Foucault 1966, 376: "Les «sciences de l'homme» font partie de l'épistème moderne comme la chimie ou la médicine ou telle autre science; ou encore comme la grammaire et l'histoire naturelle faisaient partie de l'épistème classique. Mais dire qu'elles font partie du champ épistémologique signifie seulement qu'elles y enracinent leur positivité, qu'elles y trouvent leur condition d'existence, qu'elles ne sont donc pas seulement des illusions, des chimères pseudo-scientifiques, motivées, au niveau des opinions, des intérêts, des croyances, qu'elles ne sont pas ce que d'autres appellent du nom bizarre d'«idéologie»."

> History is always being rewritten ... Each epoch and its main direction make it their own and apply their views to it. Praise and blame are distributed accordingly. This goes on until one no longer recognises the thing itself. Then nothing can help but to return to the original message. But would one study it at all without the impulse of the present? ... Might a really true history ever be possible?[7]

As pointed out by Luhmann (1987, 118), history is not the sequence of events on a string of causality. For systems operating with what he calls "Sinn", which applies to social and psychological systems, history is characterized by random access to the meaning of past or future events, i.e., precisely by *skipping* sequentiality. Systems create their own history by legitimizing access to specific events in the past — Luhmann's examples are the destruction of the (Jewish) Temple, the crowning of the king by the pope, or, on a personal scale, one's wedding, one's first jail sentence, etc. — or by adding a *telos* to the future.[8] History can only be

7 „Die Historie wird immer umgeschrieben ... Jede Zeit und ihre hauptsächliche Richtung macht sie sich zu eigen und trägt ihre Gedanken darauf über. Danach wird Lob und Tadel ausgeteilt. Das schleppt sich dann alles so fort bis man die Sache selbst gar nicht mehr erkennt. Es kann dann nichts helfen als Rückkehr zu der ursprünglichen Mitteilung. Würde man sie aber ohne den Impuls der Gegenwart überhaupt studieren? ... Ob eine völlig wahre Geschichte möglich ist?" Cf. Leopold von Ranke, *Tagebuchblätter* 1831–1849, in: *Das politische Gespräch und andere Schriften zur Wissenschaftslehre*, Halle, 1925, 52, quoted here from Elias 1969, 14.

8 1987, 118: "Finally, it should be noted that history can be constituted in the special sense dimension of time. History is not to be understood here simply as the factual sequence of events, according to which the present can be understood as the effect of past causes or as the cause of future effects. What is special about the history of meaning is rather that it allows free access to the meaning of past or future events, i.e. a skipping of the sequence. History comes into being through the release of sequences. A system of meaning has history to the extent that it limits itself through free access — be it through certain past events (the destruction of the Temple, the coronation of the emperor by the pope, the defeat at Sedan; or on a smaller scale: the wedding, the dropping out of studies, the first sentence to prison, the "coming out" of the homosexual), be it through finalisation of the future. History is therefore always: present past or present future; always: distancing from pure sequence; and always: reduction of the freedom thus gained of erratic access to everything past and everything future." — „Schließlich ist festzuhalten, daß in der besonderen Sinndimension Zeit Geschichte konstituiert werden kann. Unter Geschichte soll hier nicht einfach die faktische Sequenz der Ereignisse verstanden werden, derzufolge Gegenwärtiges als Wirkung vergangener Ursachen bzw. als Ursache künftiger Wirkungen verstanden werden kann. Das Besondere an der Sinngeschichte ist vielmehr, daß sie wahlfreien Zugriff auf den Sinn von vergangenen bzw. künftigen Ereignissen ermöglicht, also ein Überspringen der Sequenz. Geschichte entsteht durch Entbindung von Sequenzen. Ein Sinnsystem hat in dem Maße Geschichte, als es sich durch freigestellte Zugriffe limitiert — sei es durch bestimmte vergangene Ereignisse (die Zerstörung des Tempels, die Krönung des Kaisers durch den Papst, die Niederlage von Sedan; oder im kleineren: die Hochzeit, der Abbruch des Studiums, die erste Verurteilung zu einer Gefängnisstrafe, das "coming out" des Homosexuellen), sei es durch Finalisierung der

processed within the psychological and social system's basic unit *Sinn* and Ranke's ideal of a return to the "original communication" in order to arrive at the "really true history" is itself only possible within this sphere of "meaningful" operation which makes the idea of an extra-processual *Ding an sich*, an event in itself without any observer, pointless. The historical "fact" is only available with its interpretation.

2.2 Linguistics

The discussion of Labov (1975) about what a linguistic fact is, may be illuminating here: as he shows, it is gained by abstraction from "environmental noise", i.e., by the system-internal reduction of the complexity the system is confronted with in the interaction with its environment (Germ. *Umwelt*), e.g. regarding the interpretation of phonetic signals as representing phonemes:

> ... We do not demand narrow phonetic transcriptions of utterances, in fact reject them as inadequate unless they accompany a broader transcription, because they fail to include the linguistic facts as to whether nasalization, rounding, glottalization, etc., make a difference in that language. Thus omission of data and the simplification of transcription is one way of stating linguistic facts (p. 8).

Thus, what is needed for further processing, is information in the sense of Gregory Bateson as "a difference that makes a difference."[9] Self-description obeys the same principle, i.e., it is another instance of the reduction of complexity, and hence it is to be expected that speakers produce contradictory evidence claiming that they do not use a linguistic feature which in fact they do:

> It is not news to say that people will say one thing and do another. (Labov 1975, 32)

> We were quite surprised [...] to find case after case where subjects used syntactic structures in the most natural kinds of social interaction, after their most conscientious introspection reported these forms to be quite impossible for them. (Labov 1975, 33)

This also applies to the difference in perception and production: speakers may hear sounds as identical in what could be minimal pairs, but at the same time be

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Zukunft. Geschichte ist demnach immer: gegenwärtige Vergangenheit bzw. gegenwärtige Zukunft; immer: Abstandnahme von der reinen Sequenz; und immer: Reduktion der dadurch gewonnen Freiheit des sprunghaften Zugriffs auf alles Vergangene und alles Künftige."

9 Cf. Bateson 1972, 381: "The technical term 'information' may be succinctly defined as any difference which makes a difference in some later event."

consistent in producing them differently, e.g. *sauce* and *source* in varieties of English which Labov recorded in New York.[10]

This permanent reshuffling of description and self-description, including constant shifts between what is presumed to belong to oneself and what is deemed "foreign", need not, however, lead to world views completely out of touch with each other, as Elias 1969, 18 describes it for the historical sciences:

> In the field of historical research, it is still far more the rule than the exception that the efforts of researchers who worked three or more generations ago lie as dead books in libraries.[11]

An extreme view of such compartmentalized and "incommensurable scientific paradigms" has been proposed by Kuhn in his famous essay on *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* first published in 1962, spawning a fierce debate about the history of science. But it seems difficult to uphold such a strong version of paradigms as completely closed systems that can neither communicate with other views nor gradually develop into others.[12] Individuals may of course stick to one Wittgensteinian "language game" and one view of the world, ignoring further evidence as "external noise": Christopher Columbus seems to have stuck to the idea that he had discovered a part of the East Indies for all his life — he died in 1506, i.e., after publications ascribed to Amerigo Vespucci in 1503 and 1505 had made it clear that he had actually reached a different continent.

2.3 Changing views on language relationships

To take an example from linguistics which shows that preconceived ideas, i.e., system-internal states and structures, guide information retrieval and research, yet may be overcome as further data are acquired and new aspects are taken into account and processed, we may look at two cases of the classification of languages changing in European history.

10 Cf. Labov 1975, 37.

11 "Im Bereich der Geschichtsforschung ist es noch weit mehr die Regel als die Ausnahme, dass die Bemühungen der Forscher, die vor drei oder mehr Generationen arbeiteten, als tote Bücher in den Bibliotheken liegen."

12 As Phillips 1977, 110, inspired by Wittgenstein, puts it: "Individuals can learn to play more than one language-game. […] I consider it a mistake to regard paradigms as closed systems."

2.3.1 From Aeolism to the Tower of Babel

After the Roman conquest of Greece in 146 BC, the question of the relationship between the conquerors and the conquered perceived as culturally preeminent also applied to their respective languages. Latin was believed by some scholars to be a dialect of Aeolic Greek or at least to be partly based on it. The Greek Dionysius of Halicarnassus (60 BC – after 7 BC), living and working in Rome for at least 22 years, states in his *Antiquitates Romanae* (1.90.1):

> Ῥωμαῖοι δὲ φωνὴν μὲν οὔτ᾽ ἄκρως βάρβαρον οὔτ᾽ ἀπηρτισμένως Ἑλλάδα φθέγγονται, μικτὴν δέ τινα ἐξ ἀμφοῖν, ἧς ἐστιν ἡ πλείων Αἰολίς. τοῦτο μόνον ἀπολαύσαντες ἐκ τῶν πολλῶν ἐπιμιξιῶν, τὸ μὴ πᾶσι τοῖς φθόγγοις ὀρθοεπεῖν, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα ὁπόσα γένους Ἑλληνικοῦ μηνύματ᾽ ἐστὶν ὡς οὐχ ἕτεροί τινες τῶν ἀποικησάντων διασῴζοντες.
>
> The language spoken by the Romans is neither utterly barbarous nor absolutely Greek, but a mixture, as it were, of both, the greater part of which is Aeolic. And the only disadvantage they have experienced from their intermingling with these various nations is that they do not pronounce all their sounds properly. But all other indications of a Greek origin they preserve beyond any other colonists. (Cary [Loeb])[13]

As the quotation shows, the supposed underlying reason for the similarity between languages was cultural contact such that, as Stevens 2006/2007, 116, states, "mixed cultures [...] produced mixed languages." "Aeolism" thus reflects the awareness of the cultural and social influence of Greek on Roman society, and, from Dionysius' perspective, this explanation of Roman linguistic origins adds to his general picture that "the Romans have achieved universal power because they were originally and are still essentially Greeks" (Stevens 2006/2007, 118), only with a funny accent. However, the idea of an Aeolic origin was not (just) a matter of covert revenge of the vanquished against the occupying forces. It is attributed also (and even) to Cato the Elder (234–149 BCE), traditionally seen as a dyed-in-the-wool anti-hellenic Roman (which is probably exaggerated), by Lydus (Var. fr. 295 Funaioli = Lydus *Mag*. R. 1.5), who claims that Cato wrote in his book on Roman antiquity that

> ὁ Ῥωμύλος, ἤ οἱ κατ᾽ αὐτόν, δείκνυται κατ᾽ ἐκεῖνο καιροῦ τὴν Ἑλλάδα φωνήν, τὴν Αἰολίδα λέγω, ὥς φασιν ὅ τε Κάτων ἐν τῷ περὶ Ῥωμαικῆς ἀρχαιότητος ... Εὐάνδρου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων Ἀρκάδων εἰς Ἰταλίαν ἐλθόντων ποτὲ καὶ τὴν Αἰολίδα τοῖς βαρβάροις ἐνσπειράντων φωνήν.

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13 Cf. Stevens 2006/2007, 115. The term "Aeolic" itself is quite vague, however, for most ancient authors it meant either roughly "any Greek that is not Ionic, Attic, or Doric", cf. Hainsworth 1967, or more specifically, Lesbian, cf. Méndez Dosuna 2015, 460.

Romulus, or those around him, displayed the Greek language at that time, I mean the Aeolian, as Cato says in the work on Roman ancient history … since Evander and the other Arcadians had come to Italy at some point and spread the Aeolian [language] among the 'barbarians'. (Manuwald [Loeb], adapted)

Also Quintilian (ca. 35–100 CE) took it up, cf. in his *Institutio Oratoria*:

1.5.58 *Sed haec divisio mea ad Graecum sermonem praecipue pertinet; nam et maxima ex parte Romanus inde conversus est, et confessis quoque Graecis utimur verbis ubi nostra desunt, sicut illi a nobis nonnumquam mutuantur.*

But this classification of mine mainly means Greek, because Latin is largely derived from that language and we also openly use Greek words where we have none of our own, just as they sometimes borrow from us. (after Russell [Loeb])

1.6.31 *Continet autem in se multam eruditionem, sive ex Graecis orta tractemus, quae sunt plurima praecipueque Aeolica ratione, cui est sermo noster simillimus, declinata.*

It involves much erudition, whether we have to deal with words coming from the Greek, which are very numerous and are chiefly derived from Aeolic (this is the dialect which our language most closely resembles)… (Russell [Loeb])

The idea apparently had its heyday in the 1st c. BC. Without ever becoming a matter of doctrine, it was an object of discussion with positions ranging from the idea that Latin as a whole descended from Greek to less drastic claims about individual Latin words as borrowed from Greek. It then saw a "rapid move into obscurity in the 1st c. AD, after which it is taken up only by the grammarians"[14] such as Priscianus in the 6th c. AD. It survived, however, somewhat subliminally into the nineteenth century, as can be seen e.g. in Ross (1859)[15] who still tried to defend this ancient idea against the then recent and sweeping demonstrations of comparative philology championed by Bopp (1833) and many others.[16]

14 Stevens 2006, 122.

15 Cf. also Mühmelt 1965, 70.

16 Cf. also slightly earlier W. v. Humboldt's "Essay on the Best Means of Ascertaining the Affinities of Oriental Languages", presented at the Royal Asiatic Society of London in 1828 (published 1830, *GS*, vi, 78–84), cf. Morpurgo Davies 1998, 101.

2.3.2 From language harmonies to language trees

With the Christianization of Europe the Bible became the primary narrative that world history had to fit into. From late antiquity till modern times, this world view derived all languages from the three Biblical languages Hebrew, Greek and Latin, and it was Hebrew that was most often thought to have been the universal language of mankind originally. While early patristic authors like Tertullian (ca. 150–220) and Lactantius (ca. 250–325) did not yet favour one particular language as the unique origin, heavyweights like Hieronymus (348–420) and Augustine (354–430) declared Hebrew to be the mother of all languages ("omnium linguarum matrix", Hieron. *In Sophoniam* 3.18), a view canonized in Isidor of Sevilla's influential *Etymologiae* from the early 7th c.: in book 9, in the chapter *de linguis gentium,* he states that the *linguarum diversitas* is caused by the confusion of languages after the building of the tower of Babel:[17]

> *Linguarum diversitas exorta est in aedificatione turris post diluvium. Nam priusquam superbia turris illius in diversos signorum sonos humanam divideret societatem, una omnium nationum lingua fuit, quae Hebraea vocatur.*
>
> The diversity of languages arose with the building of the Tower after the Flood, for before the pride of that Tower divided human society, so that there arose a diversity of meaningful sounds, there was one language for all nations, which is called Hebrew.
>
> *Tres sunt autem linguae sacrae: Hebraea, Graeca, Latina, quae toto orbe maxime excellunt.*
>
> There are three sacred languages — Hebrew, Greek, and Latin — which are preeminent throughout the world. (Barney 2006, 191)

In early modern Europe, scholars tried to connect the languages known to them such as German, Dutch and French with those sanctioned by the Holy Scripture in so-called "harmonies", especially with Hebrew as the language closest to or identical with the language Adam conversed in with God in paradise.[18] An early work

17 Cf. also Vineis/Maierù 1994, 155–158, Klein 1999, 27.

18 This also implied for some scholars that after the resurrection of the dead and the final judgment humans (in heaven at least) would converse in Hebrew again, cf. e.g. in Petrus Galatinus in his *De arcanis catholicae veritatis* (Basel 1550): *Quemadmodum enim ante linguarum divisionem in turri Babel factam, universa terra unius erat labii, ita in resurrectione generali omnes homines una loquentur lingua, Hebraica scilicet, qua primi parentes in paradiso loquebantur* "For as it was before the division of languages due to the building of the tower of Babel, namely that the whole earth spoke one language only, so all humankind will use one language only after the resurrection, namely Hebrew, which our first ancestors spoke in paradise." Cf. also Klein 1992, 186f.

dedicated to this attempt is Sigismundus Gelenius' *Lexicon symphonum, quo quatuor linguarum Europeae familiarum, Graecae scilicet, Latinae, Germanicae ac Slavinicae, concordia consonantiaque indicatur*, published in Basel in 1537, followed by similar works like Konrad Gesner's *Mithridates. De differentiis linguarum tum veterum tum quae hodie apud diversas nationes in toto orbe terrarum in usu sunt* from 1555,[19] with a collection of examples drawn from a great variety of languages, including e.g. Armenian from which Gesner notes, among other words, *Chahanaim* as the presumed Armenian form corresponding to Hebr. *Chohen* — the Armenian form is actually *kʿahanay*, pl. *kʿahanaykʿ*, and it is borrowed from Syriac *kahnā*. The use of the Hebrew ending *-im* added to the Armenian word betrays, if it is not simply a mistake, the attempt to make other languages look as similar as possible to Hebrew. Hieronymus Megiser's *Thesaurus polyglottus* from 1603 "includes comparative data from about four hundred languages, which are linked hierarchically to Hebrew",[20] the famous *Harmony* by Étienne Guichard from 1606, *Harmonie étymologique des langues … où se démontre que toutes les langues sont descendues de l'hébraïque*, uses the *permutatio litterarum* in order to reach its goal, i.e., words are derived from those found in other languages (and ultimately in Hebrew) by the addition, subtraction, transposition, and inversion of letters, a method already advocated by Johannes Avenarius (1516–1590) in his *Liber radicum seu lexicon ebraicum* (Wittenberg 1568), deriving e.g. Germ. *kurz* 'short' from the Hebrew root *k-ṣ-r* 'brevity',[21] and also used by Georg Cruciger in his *Harmonia linguarum quatuor cardinalium hebraicae graecae latinae et germanicae* from 1616, published in Frankfurt am Main, probably the most detailed attempt to identify Hebrew roots in the other three languages.[22] The Semitic principle of triconsonantal roots served as the basis for identifying cognates in the other languages, e.g. Hebrew *d-k-r* 'perfodere, transfigere, configendo perimere' in Greek **θρ**ά**ξ**, **τρ**α**χ**ύς, **δρ**ά**κ**ων, Latin ***draco***, ***trux***, ***truculentus***, ***Turca*** and German ***Türcke***, ***Trotz***, ***drucken***, ***Drach(e)*** and ***dreist***.[23]

While most scholars in the 17th c. thus opted for Hebrew as the original language from which all others were said to descend, there were also other voices, e.g. that of the architect John Webb (1611–1672) who favoured Chinese, which he assumed Noah had brought to the east, in his *Historical Essay Endeavouring the Probability that the Language of the Empire of China is the Primitive Language*

19 Cf. also Klein 2004, 12.
20 Simone 1997, 162.
21 Cf. also Klein 1999, 48–50.
22 Cf. Klein 1992, 303; 2004, 21.
23 Cf. Klein 2004, 21.

from 1669, mostly because of its writing system using symbols for entities which he thought revealed the true nature of things.[24] But opinions on the comparative merit of writing systems varied and maybe unsurprisingly also later there were European scholars who among these praised the alphabet as the highest possible achievement, e.g. Rousseau in his *Essai sur l'origine des langues* from 1761 and Hegel in his *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* from 1830 (3rd ed., III §459):

> These three ways of writing correspond fairly exactly to the three different states in which we can consider men gathered into nations. The painting of objects is suitable for savage peoples; the signs of words and propositions, for barbaric peoples; and the alphabet, for civilised peoples.[25]

> The alphabet is in itself the more intelligent (way of writing); in it the word, which is the most dignified way of expressing the ideas of intelligence, is brought to consciousness and made the object of reflection.[26]

As for the primeval language, even Flemish was proposed, by the — surprise — Flemish scholar Abraham Mylius (1563–1637; *Lingua belgica*, Leiden 1612)[27] and by Johannes Goropius Becanus (1519–1573) in his *Origines Antwerpianae, sive Cimmeriorum Becceselana novem libris complexa* (Antwerp, 1569), where he proposed that despite the Babylonian confusion of languages, one of Noah's sons, Japhet, who did not partake in the construction of the tower, continued to use the original language of humankind.[28] His fanciful explanations, including those of Biblical names, by the means of Dutch words such as *Adam* as *haat-dam* 'a dam against the hate (of the snake)' soon became the object of satire and G.W. Leibniz (1646–1716)

24 One might see this as a repetition of the Stoic idea of etymology which tried to find this by the study of words. On Webb, cf. Frodsham 1964.

25 "Ces trois manières d'écrire répondent assez exactement aux trois divers états sous lesquels on peut considérer les hommes rassemblés en nations. La peinture des objets convient aux peuples sauvages; les signes des mots et des propositions, aux peuples barbares, et l'alphabet, aux peuples policés."

26 "Die Buchstabenschrift ist an und für sich die intelligentere; in ihr ist das Wort, die der Intelligenz eigentümliche würdigste Art der Äußerung ihrer Vorstellungen, zum Bewusstsein gebracht, zum Gegenstande der Reflexion gemacht." One is tempted to compare W. v. Humboldt's ideas about the ideal language type realized by inflecting languages, as they are best at succinctly expressing principal and concomitant concepts, in contrast e.g. to isolating languages, in which, in his view, the expression of grammatical information by single words distracts the mind from the main points of the utterance; cf. for a discussion Morpurgo Davies 1998, 111–114.

27 Cf. Metcalf 1953.

28 Cf. also Klein 1992, 298f.

even coined the term *goropisieren* 'to goropize' to denote such arbitrary attempts[29] in his *New treatises about the human mind* (*Neue Abhandlungen über den menschlichen Verstand*), vol. 3. ("about words"), ch. 2 ("about the meaning of words"):

> Theophilus. [...] *And in general one must not give credence to etymologies except when one has a lot of concordant testimony, otherwise one goropises.*
> Philalethes. *One "goropises"? What does that mean?*
> Theophilus. *One says so because the strange and often ridiculous etymologies of Goropius Becanus, a learned physician in the sixteenth century, have become proverbial.*[30]

The discussion about the original language and its relation to both ancient and modern languages was complicated by further questions that were often discussed at the same time, mixing theological, patriotic or *avant la lettre* nationalistic and other interests into the debate.[31] One pivotal question was whether language in general was to be seen as of divine or human origin. In early modern theorizing the former was often taken for granted, based on the authority of the Bible, which presented God as conversing with Adam and telling him to give names to all things created (Gen. 2:20) and which presented the story of the tower of Babel (Gen. 11) as an explanation for the multiplicity of languages in the world.[32]

29 Cf. also Droixhe 1978, 54.

30 "Theophilus. [...] *Und im allgemeinen darf man den Etymologien keinen Glauben schenken, als wenn man eine Menge zusammenstimmender Zeugnisse hat, sonst goropisiert man.* Philalethes. *Goropisiert man? Was heißt das?* Theophilus. *Man sagt so, weil die seltsamen und oft lächerlichen Etymologien des Goropius Becanus, eines gelehrten Arztes im sechzehnten Jahrhundert, sprüchwörtlich geworden sind.*" Probably Goropius felt encouraged for his explanations because the German-Dutch mystic and reformer Hendrik Niclaes (ca. 1501–1580), founder of the "family of love", to which Goropius belonged, declared Dutch to be the holy language of the books of his confraternity; cf. Delfos 1958, 87. For similar ideas related to German cf. Justus Georg Schottelius (1612–1676) in his *Ausführliche Arbeit Von der Teutschen HaubtSprache*, Braunschweig 1666, 19 ("So sol dennoch nunmehr im gegenteihl die Teutsche Sprache durch zustimmung der Hebraischen / den Griechen und Lateinern selbst vorleuchten / und ihnen nicht allein ihren eigenen verborgenen Uhrsprung und Ankunft in vielen entdekken / sonderen sol auch ihre folgere und vertretere [...] auf den rechten Weg bringen.")

31 Cf. for German Huber 1984.

32 The Adamic language itself was often thought to be so rich in synonyms as to contain all the words found in the post-Babylonian languages, cf. e.g. in Nicolaus Cusanus' *Compendium* ch. 3: *primam humanam dicendi artem adeo fuisse copiosam ex multis synonymis, quod linguae omnes postea divisae in ipsa continebantur. Omnes enim linguae humanae sunt ex prima illa parentis nostri Adae, scilicet hominis, lingua*, "The original human art-of-speaking was so replete with synonyms that in it were contained all the languages that were later separated out. For all human languages derive from that first language of our parent Adam, i.e., man" (Hopkins 1996), cf. also Klein 1992, 29.

Connected with this, there was a discussion about the language of humans vs the language of angels[33] — which looks like a distant echo of the tradition of the "language of men vs language of the gods" found in various Indo-European cultures.[34] The language of Adam and Eve was often seen as the perfect model of language "ordered and constructed according to the rules of reason",[35] and this view was often accompanied by the complaint about the imperfection of human language caused by the fall of man out of paradise, and by attempts to reform and improve human language in order to restore it to its original perfect state, "both for an educational and 'civic' purpose, and also in order to improve scientific and philosophical communication or to enhance religious and political peace."[36] The discussion about the relationship between language and thought, knowledge and logic permeates the works of among others Bacon, Descartes, Leibniz, and the grammar of Port Royal, and the idea of a "universal grammar" common to all languages was current, based on the idea that all languages must have such common features qua product of the divinity and/or the human mind; "universal grammars" in this sense, mainly based on Latin grammar, were published up to the 18th c.[37] Language change presented one of the greatest challenges to linguistic thought in these centuries. Two basic explanations were offered: a) "change was attributed to the use that human beings make of languages and to the element of whim which it involves (the 'common people' are often quoted as a cause of change as well)";[38] this apparently explained the gradual corruption and degeneration of languages, moving away ever more from the perfect "Adamic" state; b) others like John Locke and Thomas Hobbes, however, ventured the opposite view, i.e., to see language as a basically arbitrary product of the human mind without any natural basis and therefore liable to change.[39]

As pointed out above, the steady increase of data may bring a specific research "paradigm" to an end. This was also the case of the idea of a *harmonia linguarum* based on Hebrew:[40] works like those of Hieronymus Megiser (1554–1619) made it ever more difficult to find plausible traces of it in other languages. He published a

33 Cf. Simone 1997, 152: "a classic Thomistic theme, which also turned up in Dante", Klein 1992, 185–202; most scholars assumed that angels (and demons) qua incorporeal beings communicated their thoughts directly without the need for oral or written transmission.

34 Cf. Watkins 1970.

35 Simone 1997, 152.

36 Simone 1997, 154. Cf. also Klein 1992, 280–296.

37 Cf. Simone 1997, 155.

38 Simone 1997, 155.

39 Cf. for further discussion Klein 1992, Lepschy 1994 and 1998.

40 Cf. also Klein 1992, 307–317.

collection of the Lord's prayer in forty languages (*Specimen quadraginta diversarum atque inter se differentium linguarum et dialectorum; videlicet, Oratio dominica, totidem linguis expressa*, Frankfurt 1593) and a dictionary comprising vocabulary from 400 languages listed under semantically corresponding Latin lemmas, without, however, an attempt to connect them etymologically (*Thesaurus polyglottus: vel dictionarium multilingue: ex quadringentis circiter tam veteris, quam novi vel potius antiquis incogniti orbis nationum linguis, dialectis, idiomatibus et idiotismis, constans*, Frankfurt 1603). He published the first Turkish grammar in German in 1612 and in 1623 a dictionary of the language of Madagascar (*Dictionarium der Madagascarischen Sprach*) remarking (p. 76) that this language could not be connected with any other language known to him: "...weil eine eigne sprache in gemelter Insul gebreuchlich / welche sich sonst mit keiner andern in der Welt confirmirt."[41] Also Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540–1609) renounced the *harmonia* model in his work on the classification of European languages (written 1599, published 1610), the *Diatriba de europaeorum linguis*, arguing that the eleven main languages ("matrices") identified by him were in fact unrelated to each other.[42]

The rise of comparative philology was not least furthered by additional data: when Sanskrit became known to European audiences, its similarities with Latin, Greek and other European languages made a hypothesis about some kind of connection between them unavoidable, and, as is well known, it was Sir Williams Jones' (1746–1794) who spelt the idea out in detail in his discourse delivered to the Asiatic Society (which he had founded himself on January 15th, 1784) on February 2nd, 1786:

> The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists; there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the Gothic and the Celtic, though blended with a very dif-

41 Cf. Klein 1992, 310.

42 Scaliger divides the languages of Europe into four major families, going by the word for 'god', i.e., the *deus*-type (Romance), the *theos*-type (Greek), the *godt*-type (Germanic) and the *boge*-type (Slavic), and seven smaller groups, Albanian, Tartar, Basque, Hungarian, "Finno-Lappic" (Finnish and Sami), Irish and Breton. On this scholar, in many aspects ahead of his times, cf. Grafton (1983/1993), and for the general context Grafton (1994).

> ferent idiom, had the same origin with the Sanscrit; and the old Persian might be added to the same family. (Jones 1824, 28–29).[43]

This was a substantial change of how the relationships between the languages known to Europeans at that time were seen and on the methodological level of how further language relationships could be discovered — something impossible before the development of the comparative method. One such discovery / proof was that of Heinrich Hübschmann in 1875, who showed that Armenian was an independent branch within the Indo-European language family and not a part of Iranian as it had been assumed before this. This implied that, from now on, all the Iranian-looking words formerly suspected to be inherited were to be treated as loanwords: the history of the Armenian language had to be re-written.

43 This is not to deny, of course, that there were precursors noting similarities between European and/or non-European languages, be it in connection with the view of Hebrew as origin of all languages or independent from this, e.g. Giraldus Cambrensis (Gerallt Cymro, Gerald of Wales, ca. 1146–1223) who stated in his *Descriptio Cambriae* (1194) 1.15: *Notandum etiam, quod verba linguae Britannicae omnia fere vel Graeco conveniunt vel Latino. Graeci Ydor aquam vocant, Britones Duur ; salem Hal, Britones Halein;' Mis, Tis, pro ego et tu, Britones autem Mi, Ti ; Onoma, Enou ; Penta, Deca, Pimp, Dec.* "It is noteworthy that almost all words in the British language correspond either with the Greek or Latin, the Greeks say ὕδωρ for water, the Britons *dwr*; salt is ἅλ(ς), in British, *halen*; they say *Mis Tis* for me and you, the Britons say *Mi Ti*; ὄνομα ('name') equals *enou*; πέντε ('five') *pump*; δέκα ('ten') *deg*." (It is unclear which Greek words are meant to be *Mis Tis*, cf. Dimock 1868, 194: "As to where Giraldus found his Greek *Mis* and *Tis*, for *I* and *You*, is beyond my Greek scholarship.") In his *Itinerarium Cambriae* 1.8 he notes: Hal *enim Graece*, Halein *Britannice*, Halein *similiter Hibernice*; Halgein*, g interposita lingua predicta. Item* sal *Latine — quia, ut ait Priscianus, in quibusdam dictionibus pro aspiratione ponitur* s*; ut* Hal *Graece* sal *Latine*; hemi, semi; hepta, septem — sel *Gallice, mutatione* a *vocalis in* e*, a Latino; additione* t *literae*, salt *Anglice,* sout *Teutonice*. (cf. Dimock 1868, 77). In the 16th c., the Italian merchant Filippo Sassetti (1540–1588), who dwelt in Goa in 1583, noted correspondences between Italian and Sanskrit ("Sanscruta … lingua … nella quale sono molti de'nostri nomi") naming the numerals '6' (cf. Ital. *sei* : Skt. *ṣaṣ*), '7' (*sette* : *sapta*), '8' (*otto* : *aṣṭa*), '9' (*nove* : *nava*), and the words for 'god' (*dio* : *devas*, *devo*) and 'snake' (*serpe, serpente* : *sarpa, sarpant*) — his letters were published only much later, however, in the 19th c. (Marcucci 1855; cf. Droixhe 1978, 76; Muller 1986). The German Christian missionary Benjamin Schulze (1689–1760), who was active in South India, published grammars of Telugu and Hindustani and worked on the translation of the Bible into Tamil, noted the similarities between the numerals of Latin and Sanskrit, etc. Most scholars, however, explained such convergences as due to language contact.

3 Language and identity

As the examples have shown, social, political and religious changes affect the views about languages and language relationships. As an integral part of social and individual identity, discourse about language is constantly subject to socio-political change, negotiating integration and separation, affirmation and denial: how do Greek and Latin relate to each other, how can the existence of the many different languages on earth be explained in the light of a single original "Adamic" language in paradise, etc. The answers that are given are not a matter of linguists only, as shown by modern nationalist discourse about origins, homelands, being autochthonous, denying the factual existence or the right to exist of others including their language, history, and culture. As is well known, there is no shortage of examples for the suppression of languages, usually proclaimed to be enacted for the welfare of its victims, e.g. the "terreur linguistique" during the French revolution against other languages and language varieties (including Breton, Basque, Picardian and Provençal) in the name of a common language for all French citizens,[44] the ban on sign languages in schools as promoted at the *Second International Congress on the Education of the Deaf* (*ICED*) in Milan in 1880 by oralists, formally rejected only in July 2010 at the *21st ICED* in Vancouver,[45] the system of residential schools in Canada, operating since the 1880s until the late 20th c., suppressing indigenous languages and cultures[46] and currently Ukrainian as object of Russian war propaganda denying its existence or status as a language different from Russian.

4 Summary

The study of the human past is indispensable for any society aspiring to a self-determined future, and European antiquity is one of the pieces in the puzzle of human history to be studied for an ever-richer picture of human life and cultural productivity. Research need not end in incommensurable compartmentalized silos of specialization or conflicting world views. A pluralistic view of past human productivity including European antiquity without excluding the study of the

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44 Cf. the infamous *Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d'anéantir le patois, et d'universaliser l'usage de la langue française* by Abbé Henri-Baptiste Grégoire (1750–1831) published in 1794.

45 On the history of the debate, cf. Tellings 1995.

46 Cf. Hanson et al. 2020.

other world regions may open research to a broader comparative and fruitful study of what it meant and what it means to be human. It is only then that one may reasonably follow St. Paul's advice in 1 Thess. 5.12 πάντα δὲ δοκιμάζετε, τὸ καλὸν κατέχετε "Test everything, and hold fast to what is good."

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Wolfgang de Melo

Re-establishing Communication Between Linguists and Classicists: A Philologist's Plea

Abstract: As the field of classical studies progresses, scholars are becoming more and more specialized. While this is only to be expected, and is not a problem in and of itself, we need to ensure that language skills remain a cornerstone in our teaching, otherwise we run the risk that unfounded assertions and fashionable dogmas take over the discipline. This article provides several examples where lack of elementary language skills is combined with toxic ideologies; the Grievance Studies Affair should serve as a warning to our field. Linguists and language teachers also need to do more to make the technical side of our subject more accessible; I discuss possible solutions that can help us to improve our students' language skills.

Keywords: 'active method' of language teaching, elitism, Grievance Studies Affair, linguistics, John McWhorter, Hermann Menge, racism, sexism, sight translation, slavery, 'woke religion'

> O dulces comitum ualete coetus,
> longe quos simul a domo profectos
> diuersae uariae uiae reportant.
>
> (Catull. 46.9–11)

> Farewell, o sweet gatherings of companions,
> whom, after we wandered far from home together,
> different roads bring back in different manners.

Thus ends Catullus' forty-sixth poem, in which he celebrates the arrival of spring and travelling to distant lands; and although his friends are going on different journeys, eventually they will all return to the same place and hold a joyful reunion. Perhaps the beginnings of Classics in the modern era could also be described as *dulces comitum coetus*, 'sweet gatherings of companions'. But the days when one scholar could be active in every area of the field are long gone; a steady increase in knowledge has made it inevitable that one individual would not be able to advance several subdisciplines at once. This is normal and to be expected, but with specialization comes fragmentation. Scholars of Classics have embarked on very different routes, and the comparative philologist reconstructing the intricacies of the Indo-European verb system tends to have little interaction with the literary expert

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studying the influence of Virgil on later epic. We have wandered far from home, but will there be a happy reunion?

My little piece is a plea for such a reunion, or at least for an attempt to re-establish contact between the different areas of Classics. Renewed contact is particularly important between literary studies and the field of linguistics and philology. My main reason for saying this is that language skills, once taken for granted, have been in a constant decline among scholars of literature for years, if not decades. Perhaps such a decline of linguistic background skills is less of a problem in art and archaeology, but the student of literature would benefit enormously from fresh engagement with those whose main occupation is language in all its facets.

What I am about to say in this piece may not make me a particularly sweet travel companion, and perhaps even a downright difficult one, but my words are not intended as criticism with the aim of causing needless discomfort. Rather, my goal is renewed dialogue for the sake of advancing Classics as a discipline, but also of making sure that its foundations remain solid. But how much of a problem is there?

1 Problem… what problem?

Having taught Latin, and to a lesser extent also Greek, for more than two decades, the decline in language skills is blatantly obvious to me. The outstanding students of today do still achieve a mastery of Latin and Greek that is as good as that of their predecessors decades ago, but these are the ones who deliberately specialize in the technical disciplines, in linguistics and philology, prose and verse composition, meter, and textual criticism. Many students finish their undergraduate careers without the ability to write a simple story in Latin or Greek. This matters because it means that they are unable to analyze original texts competently; stylistic nuances go unnoticed, and instead they have to rely on translations. Yet however good a translation is, no translation can simultaneously do justice to all aspects of a text, and of course each and every translation is also a product of its own time, overemphasizing some elements of the original and neglecting others.

Not everyone agrees that language skills are in decline. In a recent piece for *BMCR*, Clifford Ando, whom I greatly respect as a scholar and as a person, made a statement that deserves to be quoted in a fuller form (Ando 2022):

> Finally, there was a time when one often read in reviews in Classics remarks of the form, "I wanted to like this book, but then I discovered that the author didn't know Greek." (…) Since something like all authors of books in classical studies once passed qualifying exams in Greek and Latin, I have always been inclined to discount such statements. What they are voicing, it seems to me, is an aesthetic judgment, which, from lack of a relevant apparatus, they put in

> moral terms. Instead of saying, "I don't like the form of this scholarship, or recognize its topic as pertinent to the field as I understand it," they write: "The author of this book is not really, or is not fit to be, a classicist." What one wants from these people, and what BMCR asks them to provide, is a reasoned account of why they find the argument of the book under review to be unsuccessful.
>
> On this reading, what "knowing Greek" amounts to is a cultural construct with many different significations, few of which receive substantive articulation and none of which commands universal assent. It's a shorthand about politics, which is to say, it reflects an anxiety about the discipline and its boundaries, and our place and the place of work (and persons?) who discomfit us in respect of those boundaries. And it says something about Classics that this anxiety is expressed as an anxiety about language. One thing, but only one of the things, that we might say about this anxiety-about-language, is that it effects a translation of a political and aesthetic position into a technical one. It's a distraction, and a disguise — a sort of strategic ambiguation.
>
> Some years ago I spoke on a panel about graduate education at the SCS. I expressed concern, even ire, on that occasion about the role of sight translation exams as barriers to entry to the profession of Classics. What professional skill does the sight translation exam test? On what occasion after one's qualifying exams will one have to write an article, or prepare a chapter, or write a book, without access to a dictionary? The more serious issue is obviously that "we" use sight translation exams as threshold requirements to join the profession not simply because we don't think about language competency in sophisticated ways. We do so because we have trouble agreeing on other lowest-common-denominator definitions of "Classics" whose competencies we could test. The intolerable price that we undoubtedly pay is the exclusion of many bright and creative minds from the profession.

Clifford Ando is a deeply thoughtful scholar, and elements of what he says here resonate with me; but there are also aspects I disagree with strongly. When I was a student, I heard professors complain about the deplorable lack of language skills in many of my fellow students; I heard them say that the current generation lacked elementary competence and would never be able to rival their forebears. By now I am old enough to have seen the transformation of several of these fellow students, not necessarily into better scholars than they were, but into professors repeating exactly the same lines about the decline in language skills. Strangely enough, one only ever encounters people who think of themselves as the last of the Mohicans, as the last generation of competent classicists, and never people who consider themselves to be part of the first generation that is rubbish. For this reason, but also because I, too, have encountered too many colleagues who say 'person X does not know Latin or Greek' as shorthand for something else, I have a great deal of sympathy for Ando's views.

But while it is a noble thing to wish to see the good in everyone, and to imagine that every classicist is competent in Latin and Greek because they sat elementary qualifying exams at some point, it is an undeniable fact that there are people who publish in the field and who do not know Latin and Greek. And by 'not knowing

Latin and Greek', I do not mean minute stylistic nuances or obscure points of diachronic morphology, but basic, elementary facts of morphology and syntax. Less than three weeks before Ando's piece appeared, I published a book review, also in *BMCR* (de Melo 2022), in which I sadly had to point out that the sheer number of basic grammar mistakes in this work made it a deeply problematic teaching tool. I am happy to write off a mistake here or there as slips that can happen to anyone; but when the errors pile up like this, they are, unfortunately, an indication of linguistic incompetence, even if the author happens to be a tenured professor who at some point must have sat elementary qualifying exams. I do not wish to single out the author of this book, as this situation is becoming more and more common. Denying this is not being generous and open-minded; denying this is deliberately closing one's eyes to a new reality.

My second point of disagreement concerns the value of sight translation. Again, I do not disagree entirely: it is of course correct that no established scholar will ever need to write an article or a book without access to a dictionary or similar tools. But arguing that for this reason sight translation is not a good way to assess students is missing the point. Language study is not simply one discipline among many, it is a foundational subject, the cornerstone, of most subdisciplines in Classics. That, of course, is to be expected in a field which is based on the study of texts; and in that sense, Classics is no different from subjects like French or Arabic: even if we are not required to communicate in Latin or Greek, unlike our counterparts in modern languages, we are working on texts, whether we study Neo-Platonic philosophy or the history of slavery, and reading texts requires a decent knowledge of the languages they are written in. That does not mean that language has to be the be-all and end-all of everything for everyone, but basic competence is a must, and that competence can be assessed easily and straightforwardly through translation exams. By all means, we should let students sit such exams with a dictionary; I would be the last person to argue against the use of dictionaries in exams, and I would not want students to mess up because they do not know one word and then misinterpret everything. But given the foundational status of language for our discipline, some test of linguistic competence is perfectly sensible, be it sight translation or, if that is not palatable, essay writing in Latin or Greek (I have a feeling that if given the choice, most students would prefer sight translation). Classics is not that special, and if our colleagues in French or Arabic do not decry language tests as elitist, then neither should we. Like Ando, I want to see many creative minds in Classics; but let us not set up a false dichotomy between language skills and creativity. At the end of the day, creativity on its own is not enough; creativity must have something to work with, and in the case of Classics that something is texts, and reading texts requires language skills.

But this leads us to an inevitable question: if there is a crisis in language competence, why do people fail to see it, or pretend not to see it so that they will not have to do anything about it?

2 Sacrificing language competence on the altar of ideology

Unfortunately, language competence is all too often sacrificed on the altar of ideology. This ideology can come in an obvious, extreme form, but also in more subtle, yet equally pernicious guises. Sadly, I had to witness the extreme form of this in 2020, while I was a member of the Classics Faculty Board at Oxford; in that period, the faculty came under attack by a group of 'open letter' writers, who took their inspiration from a connected group at Cambridge, which in turn had links to US institutions. This extreme form alleges, without any real evidence, that the subject of Classics is intrinsically toxic, that it is harmful to ethnic minorities, the working classes, and students who are lesbian, gay, or transsexual; these claims are levelled especially against the technical disciplines, such as the study of language, meter, or textual criticism. I have dealt with this topic elsewhere (de Melo 2023a and b) and do not wish to repeat my arguments here. However, I would like to add two comments. First, what surprised me more than the sudden rise of this 'woke religion' (to use the term coined by McWhorter 2021) was how quickly faculties and departments in the US and Britain buckled under it; the sheer reluctance of some tenured, senior colleagues to speak up was as much of a shock to me as what — from my perspective — looks like the opportunistic co-option of such tenets by others whose careers had stalled and who saw this as an opportunity to advance them again. And second, it is my hope that colleagues in continental Europe will not laugh off the situation in the Anglosphere as something that could not happen elsewhere; when I observed its rise in the US, I was naive enough to believe that the UK would be immune to it — alas, how wrong I was!

The more subtly insidious forms of ideology assert that the study of language is no more and no less important than the study of other areas of Classics, and that therefore it should not be given a special place in Classics education. The first part of this assertion is of course not wrong, and I am not hubristic enough to believe that what I do is more important than what an ancient historian does. However, the second part of the assertion is misguided, and is, in fact, a wrong conclusion. Language study is a foundational subject; not everybody needs to take it to the highest

levels, but without some language training, the ancient historian will struggle to assess sources competently.

The end result is the gradual displacement of language studies by other concerns, concerns which in and of themselves are not wrong, but which can easily go in the wrong direction when not underpinned by serious philological work. Two Plautine examples should suffice.

In 2021, Gellar-Goad published a companion volume to Plautus' *Curculio*; I reviewed this book for *Exemplaria Classica* (de Melo 2021b). Several aspects of the book are commendable: chapters 5–7, on stagecraft, metatheatre, and the famous speech of the *choragus* (ll. 462–486), are overall thoughtful and intelligent. On the other hand, the treatment of music, song, and dance is unsatisfactory because the discussion of meter is so cursory as to be unhelpful. Most translations by Gellar-Goad are tone-deaf, using slang and coarse language regardless of whether Plautus was being colloquial or solemn. And scholarly issues such as the transmission of the text are not even touched upon. Instead, there is a certain obsession with issues of race and slavery. Slavery is of course pertinent to the plot, since one of the main characters is a slave-girl who turns out to be free-born, but the way Gellar-Goad deals with the issue does little to help his readers understand the play. The comparison of Roman farms to 'concentration camps', built as the result of '(toxic) masculinity' (p. 61), is simply inappropriate and offensive; and as for Gellar-Goad's notion that the slave-girl might feel forced to pretend being in love with the young man she ends up marrying, this may well chime with his ideas of gender and oppression, but does not tally with l. 673, where she insists that she is keen to marry him even after she has become free and has the freedom to turn him down. I was reminded of the last lines of a poem by Christian Morgenstern, *Die unmögliche Tatsache*: 'weil [...] nicht sein kann, was nicht sein darf' ('what may not happen, cannot be'). The issue of race, on the other hand, should be irrelevant to the *Curculio*; it would make sense to discuss it in a companion volume to the *Poenulus*, but here it feels shoehorned in, as the topic *du jour*, and with ideas that are, quite frankly, bizarre: we are told that the Romans were 'diverse' (p. 1), that they were not white (pp. 66–67), that they had curly hair (again pp. 66–67). It feels as if Gellar-Goad had a diversity quota to fill, and as if he as a white man had to apologize for his existence or at the very least for being a Classicist. Throughout the book, one gets the impression that he is more interested in social activism than in scholarly pursuits. This saddens me, as I have seen enough of Gellar-Goad's work to know that he has so much more to contribute.

The second example is a book on Plautus' *Epidicus*, published by Tracy in 2021. Her work is intended as a teaching tool: Lindsay's text is accompanied by a brief introduction, explanatory notes, and a prose translation. I reviewed this book for

BMCR (de Melo 2022, mentioned above). Many of the problems we saw in Gellar-Goad's work apply to hers as well. The introduction is problematic insofar as it focuses almost exclusively on the oppression of women and slaves. Of course, these are topics worthy of discussion and reassessment, but an introductory textbook on comedy should also tell us what makes a comedy a comedy: what was considered funny in Plautus' times, and which of the jokes still work, and which ones do not? And if we are talking about oppression, there is a fundamental question that is not addressed at all: to what extent does a Plautine play reflect reality, and to what extent is it a deliberate, humoristic, distorted exaggeration? A fair answer to that question would require nuance, but nuance would go against the grain of this type of book; outrage and anger seems to be all that is aimed for. Perhaps it is little surprise, then, that no effort has gone into the language notes, which are full of the most elementary mistakes: in l. 515, *sis* 'if you will' (< *si uis*) is parsed as the present subjunctive of *esse*, and in l. 552, it is claimed that the passive participle of *censere* is the non-existent *censitum*; it would be easy to expand this list. Some of the errors also reveal the author's personal biases: in l. 217, the colourless *illam* is rendered as 'that chick', creating an opportunity to complain about Plautus' sexism elsewhere; and in l. 711, *malum* 'damn' is absurdly treated as a term of address for a slave, artificially adding to the list of injustices committed against the oppressed.

Perhaps we should not be surprised when US Americans or Canadians writing about Roman comedy bring up topics that have more to do with current politics in their home countries than with the ancient world; after all, North American universities have become heavily politicized spaces, with the sad consequence that all too often tenure and career advancement are not simply dependent on academic achievement, but on holding the 'right kind' of political views. And perhaps what these academics are saying is not even always problematic. To be sure, much of it is dubious, for example the naive view that men (at least if they are white, 'cis-gender', and heterosexual) are the source of all evil, while women are unequivocally among the oppressed (even if they were wealthy enough to own slaves). That said, some of their opinions are of course correct, for example when they state that slavery was often cruel; but that is also obvious, and the constant preaching to the choir does get a bit tedious.

Am I complaining simply because these academics are not writing the books I would have written? Well, yes and no. Yes, in the sense that I believe that the sheer number of elementary grammar mistakes in a book like Tracy's is unacceptable, and that I, or many undergraduate students for that matter, could have done better on that front. But also no, in the sense that I do not mind if people want to talk about the many difficult, problematic, and cruel aspects of the ancient world. I would say, though, that their book titles should give some indication of what they are doing. I

asked for review copies of Gellar-Goad and Tracy because I was interested in scholarly approaches to these plays, not in their ideas of social justice.

For me, the real problem arises when social justice doctrine replaces the technical elements of scholarship; when authors are either not willing or not competent to tackle language and metre; and when publishers publish their books anyway, out of their own incompetence or out of fear that they might get cancelled if they refuse to publish a work that espouses the dogmas of the day. The real problem arises when authors talk about issues with a moral dimension and when we, the readers, know the conclusion in advance; because that means that the conclusion is either banal ('slavery was bad' — surely we can all agree on that), or based on 'social justice' dogmas where only one conclusion is allowed ('men bad, women good').

At this point I should at least mention the 'grievance studies affair', which is not directly related to Classics, but is highly relevant to the future of the field (fairly neutral discussion in Mounk 2018). Three writers, Peter Boghossian and James A. Lindsay from the US and Helen Pluckrose from the UK, created an elaborate hoax that consisted in sending fake articles to academic journals in various humanities subjects between 2017 and 2018. What the articles had in common was that they all had the 'right kind' of conclusions, the sort of answers that chimed with the 'social justice' prejudices of the individual disciplines. So even though the submissions were deliberately grotesque and exaggerated, quite a few of them found approval: of the twenty-one submissions, four were published (but retracted after the discovery of the hoax); three were accepted (but then not published after the discovery of the hoax); a further four were sent back for revision; and one was still under review when the hoax was uncovered. Nine papers were rejected. One may well be surprised that any of the papers got accepted, given how absurd they were: perhaps the best-known, published as Wilson (2018) in *Gender, Place & Culture*, had the title 'Human reactions to rape culture and queer performativity at urban dog parks in Portland, Oregon'; it argued that dog parks and nightclubs were 'rape-condoning spaces' and that men should be trained like dogs to improve their behavior. When the hoax was uncovered, political commentators on both the right and the left of the political spectrum interpreted its significance in ways that fit their preconceived notions. Conservative pundits jumped to the conclusion that academia is corrupt, useless, and no longer fit for purpose; but while I acknowledge that the fact that any of these papers got accepted is a problem in and of itself, we should not lose sight of another fact, namely that for example none of the sociology journals accepted the bogus submissions. Left-leaning academics preferred to brush off the entire episode, claiming that it did not say anything of value since there were no control groups (e.g. Hughes and Aldous 2018), or that the three writers were simply ignorant of how peer review worked; that strikes me as just as disingenuous as the

conservative response. The main lesson that can be learned is, I believe, that humanities subjects can be perfectly rigorous and serious, but that this objectivity is under threat when open-minded academic enquiry co-opts identity politics and political agendas. It is a danger that Classics is currently facing, and if we do not do our best to avert it, it could destroy the subject.

3 Linguists must do better, too

If the preceding sections gave the impression that all the blame lies with literary scholars, and that linguists are paragons of virtue, then the following paragraphs will hopefully rectify that impression. We must do better, too. The way I see it, the biggest problem with classical linguists is that sometimes they are prone to lose their connection to actual texts. This can happen in three ways.

The first issue arises when Indo-European scholars shut themselves off from those working on individual languages and do not take their needs into account. At the University of Leiden, Alexander Lubotsky is overseeing the *Indo-European Etymological Dictionary* project, a project I admire and respect; but at times I cannot help but feel exasperated, too. Perhaps my biggest pet peeve with the project as a whole is that it ignores loanwords. So, for instance, the Latin and Greek etymological dictionaries discuss only those words that are inherited in these languages from the Indo-European proto-language. Of course these are the only words relevant for the reconstruction of Indo-European, but such a procedure makes the dictionaries much less useful for the average classicist than more traditional etymological dictionaries. A student of Latin may well be interested in the fact that *catamitus* 'Ganymede / catamite' comes from the Greek name *Ganymedes*, via Etruscan *catamite*, and that the second meaning arose because Ganymede did more than serve wine. But no such information is available in the dictionaries of the series, and that makes them less appealing to an audience of classicists.

The second way in which linguists create more problems than they solve is when they study language synchronically, but their theories are elaborate without having predictive power. We can see this especially with the study of word order: Devine and Stephens (2006; review: de Melo 2007) is an incredibly detailed examination of Latin word order, based on principles of generative grammar, and in order to understand it fully, one has to have some background in Chomskyan syntax as well as in truth-conditional semantics (a solid understanding of lambda-calculus is taken for granted). Yet in practice the work does not advance our knowledge much: it summarizes the excellent descriptive findings of earlier scholarship and incorporates them into a theoretical framework, but, say, scholars wishing to write

a Latin text would not get anything out of the book that they could not have known beforehand. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the test of a good theoretical framework is whether or not it allows us to make accurate predictions that were not possible before, or whether or not it can make the same predictions as other models, but with a simplified theoretical apparatus. If the words in a passage of Cicero were completely scrambled up, would the theory allow us to recreate the original word order? If we had a Latin text in which all finite verb forms were replaced by infinitives, would a new theory of tense and aspect allow us to predict the correct forms more accurately, or more elegantly (i.e. with less theoretical apparatus), than the previous models? If not, we are dealing with theory for the sake of theory. But theories have the unfortunate tendency to become obsolete more quickly than data.

Finally, linguistically trained classicists can unwittingly create issues when they try to introduce linguistic concepts into their writing, even though these concepts do not fulfill any useful function. Recently, I was asked to assess the work of a colleague; as he is quite junior and not yet tenured, he shall remain anonymous. There is no doubt that this is a bright, talented scholar with a great deal of potential; but the use of fancy linguistic terminology with no deeper purpose is not something I espouse. In one of the presentations I got to see, he mentioned *eggcorns*, a term coined by Geoffrey Pullum; even in linguistic circles, this is not a common expression. An *eggcorn* is the modification of a pre-existing word because it has been misheard or misinterpreted; *eggcorn*, from *acorn*, is itself an example of the phenomenon, as is *old-timers' disease* for *Alzheimer's disease*. This type of popular etymology is interesting and worth studying, but in the context of the presentation, it was mere decoration. Yet to me this kind of decoration felt rather off-putting. A display of learning without real purpose and without deeper study makes linguistics look silly. It is attitudes like these that led a fellow student of mine to complain about linguistics; she said, with Horace (*ars* 139), *parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus*, and sadly, I cannot blame her. So what can we do?

3.1 Applying linguistic insights to grammar teaching

It never ceases to amaze me how little linguistic research trickles down into actual language teaching. Here would be a golden opportunity to apply our theoretical insights in order to help students to learn the ancient languages more quickly, but it is consistently missed. When one of the traditional works used to teach Latin prose composition to German students, Hermann Menge's *Repetitorium der lateinischen Syntax und Stilistik*, was 'updated', the authors of this revised version stated that they had taken linguistic research of the past decades into account (Menge,

Burkard, and Schauer 2000: xii–xv and xviii–xxii), but in practice it is only lip service that is paid to these noble ideals. The ablative (2000, 464–541), for instance, is divided into three broad categories, the ablative proper, the locative, and the instrumental. Each of these three categories then has further subcategories; the instrumental even has an '*ablativus militaris*' as a subcategory! I have some sympathy for the three broad categories; after all, the various ablative endings in the different Latin declension classes continue morphs of three distinct Indo-European cases, the ablative, the locative, and the instrumental, and in Sanskrit these are still separate cases with separate functions. However, the morphological merger in Latin was not accompanied by phonological attrition, so it presupposes an earlier functional merger, with the ablative becoming little more than the case for adjuncts. Their precise meaning is dependent on the lexical meaning of the words involved and the precise syntactic constellations; in a sentence such as *Caesar omnibus copiis in Galliam peruenit*, 'Caesar arrived in Gaul with all his troops', *omnibus copiis* is a 'military' ablative simply because the noun refers to military troops accompanying a military leader. We should be teaching students such basic facts instead of asking them to think what precise subcategory a specific instance of the ablative belongs to, an undertaking which brings to mind a phrase containing angels and the head of a pin, and which makes Aulus Gellius look like a well-adjusted member of society rather than a pedant's pedant.

The treatment of *cum*-clauses is equally frustrating (2000, 840–863, divided over several sections). Even the most modern school grammars still tell us that *cum* is combined with the indicative whenever it means 'when', and with the subjunctive when it means 'because' or 'even though'; students then have to learn terms like *cum temporale*, *cum causale*, *cum concessivum*, but no one tells them how one and the same word can mean 'because' or 'even though', and most of them do not dare to ask. Again a linguistic angle would simplify matters. Students could be taught that *cum* really only means 'when', but if an author wants to tell the reader that the logical link between subordinate and main clauses goes beyond the purely temporal, the subjunctive is used. The precise logical link is left vague, hence interpretations (rather than meanings) along the lines of 'because' or 'even though'. None of these further interpretations ever became grammaticalized, unlike in English and German, where *while* / *Weile* can still function as a noun, but also as a subordinator with different meanings: English *while* can still have a temporal meaning, but it can also mark a contrast, whereas German *weil* does not have temporal interpretations any longer and must be taken as causal.

I firmly believe that grammar teaching in schools and universities could turn from painful drudgery to interesting or even exciting opportunity if linguistic

insights were taken on board as a matter of routine. However, in most universities we are a far cry from this ideal situation.

3.2 The 'active method': a useful tool, not a panacea

Long gone are the days when most Classics lectures were delivered in Latin. However, in their stead we now have societies promoting spoken Latin and Greek. Although many such organizations are currently springing up, the phenomenon is by no means new; as an undergraduate in the late 90's, I attended some workshops held by such societies. What is new, however, is the changing demographic: the workshops I attended were predominantly organized and attended by older academics and retired school teachers, while today organizers and participants are most commonly graduate and undergraduate students.

The proponents of the 'active method' make many valid points. There are four basic language skills that we assess when admitting foreign students whose native language is not English: listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. For the classical languages, on the other hand, university courses exclusively focus on the last two, and sometimes in fact only on reading. However, it is argued that the four skills are not independent of each other. While we value reading skills the highest, since we learn Latin and Greek mostly in order to analyze ancient texts, such reading skills are said to improve in a more natural way and much faster when students also learn the other three skills. Thus, time spent on the active method is not to be regarded as a distraction and will lead to greater competence in the traditional skills in the long run.

To a large extent I agree with the proponents of the active method. I can attest first hand that being able to speak an ancient language is hugely motivating; the average Classics student dreads being asked by a student of modern languages to 'say something in Latin or Greek' and has a nagging sense of inadequacy about his or her language skills. Being able to hold a basic conversation in Latin or Greek gives students a feeling of achievement and a certain drive.

That said, some misgivings remain, and our enthusiasm should be tempered with a dose of realism. First of all, what does 'natural' actually mean in the context of second-language acquisition? Second-language acquisition differs from first-language acquisition in many important respects: for example, the amount of exposure to a second language is much more limited; and even more importantly, after the critical period for first-language acquisition is gone, motor skills are more difficult to acquire, and memorization requires greater input. This means that pronunciation needs to be taught explicitly, that paradigms have to be learned from books, and that syntactic rules need explanation. The active method can help students to

improve and deepen their skills, but it would be naive to think that progress could be made solely by relying on classroom dialogues in ancient languages. A further problem with the concept of 'naturalness' is that we do not have any genuine spoken Latin or Greek from antiquity. In every language with a written form, the spoken variety is marked by shorter and less complex sentences as well as other divergences. However, that kind of Latin and Greek is lost to us, and while the comedy dialogues of Menander or Terence preserve some features of spoken language, they are of course highly artificial. The closest we can come to real spoken Latin from antiquity are the transcripts of Church councils, but even those have been redacted to eliminate false starts and anacolutha. Students learning spoken Latin and Greek should be aware that their endeavors are extremely artificial. And finally, while I strongly believe that skills in speaking and listening can improve our reading abilities, the transfer is nevertheless somewhat limited: the Latin and Greek texts we have are for the most part highly literary, so that even a native speaker in antiquity would have required some study in order to process them properly, and they span many centuries, during which the language changed considerably, which further limits the possibility of skill transfer.

3.3 More language outreach and training for beginners

Universities these days are heavily involved in outreach activities. Lecturers regularly go to schools where Classics is not taught as a subject and talk about their specific areas of expertise. This is a very welcome development and advertises the subject to pupils who would not otherwise get a chance to hear about it. I feel greatly honored to have been invited to quite a few schools for such talks. But it is my hope that language will be given a much more prominent place in such outreach activities. It is not enough to talk about literature and culture; school children should also learn about language in all its facets. In my experience, such talks are generally met with great interest, whether they are on the reconstruction of Indo-European or on the evidence for how Greek and Latin were pronounced.

Yet however valuable such in-person talks are, they inevitably reach only a limited audience. That is why some of our outreach needs to go online. The most successful online outreach resource is now *Antigone Journal* (https://antigonejournal.com/), which publishes articles on every field within Classics. I strongly encourage my linguistics colleagues to write for *Antigone*; such articles often find a wide readership: a piece I did on grammatical gender (de Melo 2021a) got more than 25,000 views within a year, a number which compares favorably with the perhaps dozen views my articles in print journals tend to get.

And finally, universities need to take into account the changing demographics of their students. Oxford and Cambridge have done so in an exemplary way, providing *ab initio* language classes. Such classes are, in effect, an acknowledgment that more and more students who want to study Classics come from schools where Latin and Greek were not taught, but also that language training is a necessity for anyone who wants to become an expert in the field and not feel like an imposter. It is my hope that other universities will follow suit rather than choose the route of abolishing language requirements.

4 Final thoughts

Classics is at a crossroads; its future as an academic discipline is not as certain as I would like it to be. One of the biggest threats to the subject is a decline in linguistic competence, not because students today are less talented than they used to be, but because practitioners of the subject are sidelining language teaching, often for ideological reasons.

The first step to resolving this problem is acknowledging its existence. Different fields within Classics need to start engaging with each other again. Scholars of literature need to put their area of research on a firmer footing by learning more about language and linguistics. And linguists need to make their work more accessible to others instead of living in a bubble.

A paper about the past of the subject can always rely on previous research and biographical resources. The future is of necessity less certain. But therein lies a chance: the past cannot be changed, but the future is what we make of it. That is why my paper is not just a description of the current situation, but also includes a plea. I do not have the certainty of Catullus' *reportant* in the indicative, but I do wish, in the subjunctive, that there may be a *reportent*. May we engage with each other again and start learning from one another afresh.

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Georgios K. Giannakis

"The Future of the Past": Historical and Comparative Linguistics as Partners of Philology

Abstract: Classical philology and historical linguistics are disciplines of the past, and in this sense, they are reflective and retrograde enterprises, as using the methodological experience of the present they seek to reconstruct and reconstitute a picture of the past. The study deals with methodological issues of confronting and understanding the past through its fragmentary attestation, providing illustrative examples that involve linguistic, philological and cultural testimonies and practices in reconstructing, analyzing and digesting the past with the eyes of modern man. Finally, it discusses one case study of sociohistorical and cultural reconstruction that applies the comparative method and aims at reconstructing the name-giving institution in ancient Indo-European societies.

Keywords: comparison, historical method, Indo-European languages, interdisciplinarity, linguistics, linguistics and philology, metaphor, name-giving in antiquity, poetic formula, reconstruction

1 Introductory remarks

My claim of the past in this brief intervention will be mainly from the vantage point of a historical linguist or, to use an old-fashioned term, of a 'comparative philologist'. This leads me to view things from the perspective of the remote past where the testimonies come few and piecemeal and often hypothetical, with philology, among several other disciplines of the past, lending a crucial helping hand. Calvert Watkins, a towering figure in historical and comparative linguistics, concludes a short note on the theme of philology by giving his definition of what philology is: "Philology", he says, "is the art of reading slowly", and then he hastens to explain that he does not claim full authorship of this definition, since as he says, this has a long history: he took it from his teacher, Roman Jakobson, who took it from his, and that one from his, in a line that goes back at least to Nietzsche if not even further back (see Watkins 1990, 25). This kind of metathesis or resignation from claiming full and authentic ownership of a statement is no stranger to the history of ideas, since one speaks of a chain of events and ideas, a cumulative effect of the past in general and the scholarship of the past in particular on the state of our knowledge

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about this past in the present moment: what often seems like a leap in the advancement of knowledge is rather a long series of small steps, not infrequently unnoticed or unnoticeable mo(ve)ments in stasis.

The quest to know one's past has become modern man's obsession ever since his liberation from the fetters of absolutism and unquestioned dogmatic belief in the fate of things, and his passage to rationalism and rule-governed solutions took place, especially during the 19th century and the 'scientific' investigation of the whole of antiquity, a fact captured by Ankersmit in the following manner: "The discovery of the distance between the individual and sociohistorical reality made Western man aware of his past with an intensity hitherto unknown. The past became an enigma, and modern historiography was created to meet the challenge" (1994, 78). Historical linguistics has its own share in this development. Historical linguists, like prehistoric archaeologists and other specialists in 'paleosciences', are accustomed themselves to working with small fragments or traces thereof, often with only their imprints and shadowy presence, in making something of a whole and reconstructing past moments of the languages they study. Reconstruction is largely guesswork, i.e. detect, recognize, and weave together traces that the past has left behind in relic form, hence it is subjective and entirely the work of *under*standing and *inter*preting. Thus, much of what is stated is the 'under' and the 'inter' subject matter (both prefixes projected back to local adverbs, on which see more in section 2.1 below), and, as will be seen in a while, of another long list of 're-' actions.

As put by Zachary Sayre Schiffman in his book *The Birth of the Past* (p. 9), "Any study of the birth of the past must necessarily confront a basic methodological problem: where to begin?". To this statement one could add, two tail-like clauses such as the following: "where to stop" and "how to proceed", and this seems to be one of the crucial issues that we tasked ourselves to answer in the Academy of Athens meeting, among other issues. However, the terminal points, 'beginnings' and 'ends', as well as the 'processes' are fundamental methodological tools for any historical analysis, be that linguistic and philological, cultural or of any other kind: the first two relate to data, the last one to the method and interpretation. To be sure, one of these "other issues" is the nature of our confrontation with the past, an issue that may very well determine our overall stance towards the past and our utilization of this past in our lives today. One thing is certain, we have a fragmentary picture of the past as recovered through its traces here and there. Thus, our first (sweet or bitter) acknowledgment is that the past as we know it is a 'fragment', a fragment of a long repertoire of events, ideas, facts, and other things, which becomes "a meto-nymy of receding presence", as elegantly described by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht 2003, 13, in perfect consonance with André Malraux's dictum that what are ruins today were no ruins at the time that generated them. They are, thus, subject to *metaphorizing*

(μεταφέρειν) in the literal and in the extended senses of the word as transposing, transferring and carrying across or to another plane, from the plane of the past to that of the present. This involves re-building the past by means of its fragments, renewing and reasserting it each time we come to terms with it. Otherwise, the past remains a foreign and unexplored or unexplorable land.

2 The past as fragment and its reading

From this perspective, our fragmentary knowledge of the past is based on the idea of an “ever emergent past”, a picture of the past that we build continuously not only by means of material or other evidence but also by means of our understanding of the past each time we think of it or dare to approach it. In this sense, our idea of the past is subject to a long series of composite concepts with the prefix RE- concerning our envisioning and reflective thinking of this past, a kind of constant return to it or better attempt to return to it, e.g. re-constructing, re-making, re-constituting, re-stituting, re-creating, re-thinking, re-flecting, re-seeing and re-membering, re-covering, re-peating, re-living, re-organizing and re-shuffling, and many more re-prefixed terms or actions, ultimately re-interpreting and re-ad(d)ing (spelled thus intentionally). The last notion of ‘reading’ as ‘re-ad(d)ing’, in addition to its playful yet intentionally meaningful re-syllabification, is in a sense part or better the consummation of all reflective thinking, a ‘re-’ action in the literal sense of the word, since it involves the collaborative effort of many recognizant and reflective acts and fields of knowledge in modern man’s struggle to make sense of the past, which is nothing but a nostalgic or wishful romantic return to it, a revisiting or, since the past is somewhere and at some time inaccessible, a recalling of this past, a kind of *anaklesis* (ἀνάκλησις) of the past from its recesses by the living, i.e. an effort to call to memory and communicate with the past. This ‘anakletic’ character of philology’s object is an operation in the realm of the procedures prefixed with “RE-” and all their ramifications referred to above.

Thus, bridging the past with the present involves, let us say, (i) the author’s text (the past as was), (ii) the text available today as has come down to us, (iii) a metatext that is needed to understand the two texts,[1] i.e. the filling of the gap that separates the

1 By ‘text’ we refer here literally to the availability of textual evidence but also to all types of other evidence (not written), such as remnants of material nature (archaeological sites and their constructions), artistic representations (usually housed and preserved in museums and such places), cultural, mythological and other such information that help ‘write’ a narrative of the past by re-constructing it by means of the combined evidence available.

two texts (and here we have all the *re*-activities referred to above, especially in that of *re-ad(d)ing*), that involves the reading-through-interpretation and *qua* reconstruction), something like the context, and finally (iv) the personal stance, be that of the individual skilled and specialist researcher or the general interpreter as viewer of the past, or, as explained by Beard 2000, 6: "The questions raised by *Classics* are the questions raised by our distance from 'their' world, and at the same time by our closeness to it, and by its familiarity to us. In our museums, in our literature, languages, culture, and ways of thinking". In this process all sorts of deflection and reflection intervene so that what we get is a rough approximation of what the past was, or as said again by Beard 2006, 7: "Its aim [*viz*. of the Classics] is also to define and debate *our* relationship to that world". However, this process is in a sense what we call 'censorship', i.e. subjective interpretation by each one of us according to our intentions, aims, possibilities and capacities, intellectual faculties and otherwise.

2.1 On 'interpretation' and 'understanding'

The process of *interpretation* needs the 'inter' part, the intermediary to understand the object of inquiry in its etymological sense. This component may also define the methodological procedure and the technique that are applied in the interpretation of the past, namely *inter*-disciplinarity. According to one etymological analysis of the word from Latin *interpres, -tis*, i.e. Indo-European **enter* + root **per-/*por-* 'to come between, to cross' with a *t*-extension and syncope of the root vowel (i.e. **enter-per-t-*), with the compound meaning something like 'what comes in between, the intermediary or intermediator', what facilitates the dialog between our world with that of the ancients (as per Nussbaum referred to in EDL s.v.; differently elsewhere). This is an operation that is the prerequisite for elucidating what is hidden in the background (or the underground) as the basis of the meaning of the term *understanding*, lit. 'standing under' (see Old English *understandan* 'stand under or between, hence understand'). The adverb or preposition *under* is from IE **n̥dher* 'under, below', i.e. understanding is bringing to the surface and making intelligible what is hidden (lit. stands) underneath: two local adverbs/prepositions make here possible the topography of the past and the way of approaching it, namely *inter* and *under* in the (mental) activities of interpretation and understanding, the former as the prerequisite of the latter, the one a deductive process, the other the completed state of this deduction. The deductive operation is a kind of selective remembrance, i.e. choosing what to remember and count and what to forget and exclude from our consideration and construction of the past. This implies that interpretation involves selection, a writing-in and writing-off, i.e. the decision by the interpreter as to what to include and consider in the interpretation and what to exclude from it, exactly

what censorship does. As readers of the past, we become, or perhaps still better have or ought to become censors, in the etymological sense of the parent word of Latin *census* as separating by counting and calculating, it is in a way a κρίσις, an evaluation and judgment of sorts. We leave out of the picture of the past some part or parts, making thus interpretation a largely selective and intentional process.[2] In a sense, the past is what the past itself allows us to know about it, and at the same time what we are able to make of this past. Reading the past is largely filling gaps, an interactive operation, or, as normally referred to, ‘healing scars’ in the body of the evidence: in textual editions this is done by various conventions, for instance, brackets and dots of various shapes and other devices; in linguistic reconstructions by means of asterisked forms that stand for the hypothetical proto-form of a lexeme or grammatical category or some intermediate but unattested stage of the language or the grammatical category, e.g. the reconstructed proto-forms **k^{w}elos*/**k^{w}olos*/ **k^{w}(V)k^{w}los* for τέλος, πόλος and κύκλος, respectively (terms that express important concepts in Ancient Greek and Indo-European, all from root **k^{w}el-* ‘turn, move in a circle’), or the reconstructed proto-form **aĝn̥-dhos* for ἀγαθός, ‘the upholder of the good of the group (*αγα-)’, be that the movable wealth of cattle (ἀγέλη) or the military group (ἄγημα, etc.), see also the items ἄγω, ἀγών, ἀγός, ἄξιος, perhaps even ἄγος ‘religious awe, curse to be expiated’, and a long list of derivatives, also seen in names like Ἀγαμέμνων (lit. ‘he who thinks of the (military) group’, within a heroic context of the time);[3] or by the addition of plastered portions for the missing parts in archaeological reconstructions, and so on and so forth in other paleosciences. One could say that in the western world (and not only in this) there is an obsession with the whole picture, even though one may have only little bits and pieces of the original state of the imagined whole: remnants are there to stimulate the creation of the whole by guessing its completeness. In this way, reconstruction as the guiding principle of the reception of the past has developed into an artistic enterprise and, ultimately, into a wholly different discipline in all fields that study the past.

2 See also the idea of “intentional history” developed in the essays in Foxhall et al. 2010, i.e. the idea that history “is the projection in time of the elements of subjective, self-conscious self-categorization which construct the identity of a group as a group” (Foxhall/Luraghi 2010, 9), something that is no strange to people who try to develop the idea of “frameworks”, i.e. “of ‘fixed points’ in the past [that] serve as a foundation of belief in the truth of the past for most societies” (p. 9).

3 For a detailed and exhaustive treatment of the etymology and the semantics of this word group in Ancient Greek and Indo-European, see Anttila 2000.

3 The part-to-whole relation

In dealing with the past, we seem to move within the purview of the relation of part to whole, just as when conducting an etymological investigation, trying to make out the whole by means of its parts that are available to us or the other way around, analyzing the whole (real or imagined) into its constituent parts and recomposing it by putting together these parts into their proper position. Between part and whole there is always a mysterious link, an attractive chain of emotions, imagination and reconstruction: one imagines the whole picture by means of a small fragment of it or by means of a partial vision of the whole picture. The whole is imagined, it is reconstructed, although the risk of misconstruction is ever present: there are possible defects or missing parts which are not visible, or even destroyed or misconstrued elements of the whole. Or, in other instances, the whole leads to a wrong or partially wrong picture of things. The real issue here is to place the whole-part association into a system of relations, or, in Ankersmit's phrasing, "[…] the really interesting contrast is […] between the general statement and the historical narrative" (1994, 82), meaning that the historical facts amassed (i.e. the collected data) must be put into a system if they are to have some explanatory value. In language, this is very common, especially in reconstructions of older linguistic features, the task of historical and comparative linguists. This point can be clarified by cases of double or multiple attestation of the inscriptional text in ancient authors and in the inscription itself, as in the following illustrative example from Pausanias and the actual inscription from Olympia discovered in two fragments in 1876 and 1879, and which exhibits the original dialectal features (highlighted with bold characters in version (b) below; (c) is the original inscription as given by Jeffery 1990):

(a) (Paus. 5.24.3) – a dedication by the Lacedaemonians on the statue of Zeus:

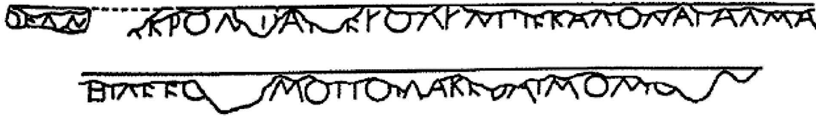
δέξο ἄναξ Κρονίδα Ζεῦ Ὀλύμπιε καλὸν ἄγαλμα ἱλάῳ θυμῷ τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις

(b) (IG V, 1, 1562; Olympia, Laconian alphabet; discovered in 1876 and 1879; c. 490 BC?):

[ΔΕΞ]Ο̣ **F**Α̣Ν[Α]Ξ̣ ΚΡΟΝ[Ι]Δ̣Α{Ι} **Δ**ΕΥ[4] ΟΛΥ**Ν**ΠΙ̣Ε̣ ΚΑΛΟΝ ΑΓ̣ΑΛΜΑ
ͰΙΛ**ΕF**Ο[Ι̣ ΘΥ]ΜΟΙ Τ̣ΟΙ<**Λ**> ΛΑΚΕΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΟ̣[ΙΣ]

4 Unless the text is misread, and the correct reading is rather: ΚΡΟΝ[Ι]Δ̣Α ΙΕΥ with < Ι > being the grapheme for Z giving the name ZEY (as suggested by Richard Janko).

(c) Jeffery, *The Local Scripts*, Pl. 37, nr. 49 (c. 490 BC?):



The version in (a) is the reproduction of the text as produced by Pausanias, making it ‘smoother’ by eliminating some ‘strange’ dialectal features. However, the second version of the text offers the full and actual state of the language of the time and the place it represents, reflecting the reading of the inscription given in (c). The inscription itself performs the task that the historical linguist would have to do, to reconstitute the old features of the language of the inscription and add them back to the text. In this case, we have a ready-made solution, but in most other cases this is not so, and we must do the corrective or reconstructive procedure, adding an element of plausibility to the reconstruction, which is usually quite different from the certainty that the inscription itself gives us.[5] This example illustrates the modus operandi in the reconstructive work, since the bridging of the gap between imagined and real corresponds to bridging the gap between what one imagines the past to have been like with the actual picture of the past, thus offering a rational solution to a mismatch between real and hypothetical. For a more complex case, see the discussion in section 4 below.

However, this is only a small sample by way of illustration of what issues one faces when dealing with the past in general. A total picture of the past is simply and plainly impossible because it is absent as a present reality; it is a reality of some

5 It was a happy development for the knowledge of the past the discovery of the oldest texts, first inscriptions and then whole narrative texts, those “bricks baked in Hell and written by the demons” (see Chiera 1957 [1933], 42), as said somewhere in the Quran for the old texts of Sumer written on clay tablets and baked in fire to last in time. Along with other testimonies of material nature, these tablets have served as the diaries of the human past, telling the story that modern man made of this past. As said by George G. Cameron in the preface to Chiera’s book 1957, vi: “[…] the minor finds of archeology, could tell but half a tale without the inscriptions; that they and the texts on clay, stone, and parchment are mutually complementary; that the one interprets the other and is incomplete without the other”. Coupled by finds of other fields of antiquity, the textual evidence has a narrative power that is the loudest of all as it speaks directly and clearly; all other evidence, no matter how important it is, remains supplementary to the philological and linguistic analysis of the textual material. For instance, we know of the Shield of Achilles from the detailed description of Homer (*Il.* 18.478–608), and not from any material finds of it; its later imagined recreations are based on the Homeric text regarding its structure and depictions.

other time and place different from ours. Perhaps, it is preferable this way: the past is a common property to us all, thus qualified by a multiplicity of sorts, but its reception is a personal matter; there are as many pasts as are individual eyes that gaze at it, minds to contemplate it, or individual moments that this past is dealt with — a "plurality of histories" one would say: another long series of notions and actions prefixed with πολυ- 'multi-, many-, much-', polymorphous, multileveled and multangular. As further put by Gumbrecht 2003, 22: "Whenever the tradition is made to speak to us, *something comes forth that was not there before.* This can be exemplified by any historical content. Whether it is a work of poetry or the knowledge of an important event, what gives itself in the tradition *will come into existence as something new each time,*" what we could call 'emergent past' or still better 'ever emergent past', or, as put by Schwindt (this volume), "[…] philology is the '*perpetuum mobile*' of forming traditions", capping this apophthegmatic phrase by adding in an explanatory guise the sentence, "The unrest is the best gift philology may give us" (see further Swenson 2013). The field of mythology provides a good parallel here: myths are (and stay) relevant to us today in so far as we re-interpret them and update them to today's concerns, i.e. in so far as they are remythologized. Roy Harris defines myth as "[…] a cultural fossil, a sedimented form of thinking that has gone unchallenged for so long that it has hardened into a kind of intellectual concrete" (2002, 1). Thus, old myths fill our lives today as "intellectual concrete", just as do so many other old things; tradition is powerful and having become "a sedimented form of thinking", the more we try to get disentangled from it the more immersed in it we seem to become. So is the past in general, be that myth, language, literature, history of ideas, art, all that we term 'past' (see also Robert 1881, Shapiro 1994). Therefore, as subjects at the present time, if we are the mediators (*interpreters*) between the past and the future, the past follows us, because it is with(in) us, an "ever present presence". We seem to be carriers of the past, or perhaps even its offspring, as we are also its creators by re-creating and re-generating it. However, as things stand, we are condemned to live with the past ever mingling it with and transforming it into the present. And this turns out to be what philologists have been always doing, translating the past into the present and projecting it onto the future. In this sense, perhaps this defines somehow the future of the past, i.e. its potential of keeping its translatability (thus also its transmissibility) to all presents imaginable, and this is no fast process but takes time, it takes patience, perseverance and endurance; it simply becomes renewable and re-knowable (i.e. re-interpreted), in perpetual flux and enrichment, it thus becomes eternal and somehow immortalized, with the fundamental processes for this being *interpretatio* and *translatio*, interpretation and

transference (cf. μεταφέρειν earlier) of the past onto the present.[6] This process (or pattern) of transference may look linear but in reality it follows a curvy course as is infiltrated by the modern sieve of understanding, giving in the end a new shape as is reinterpreted on each occasion and each period of time: things remain similar but not identical; they are transformed through history into new or renewed forms and functions (what is called by Harris the 'iterative transference model', p. 11). Harris further adds:

> As is indicated in the famous dictum attributed to Simonides of Ceos (that painting is mute poetry and poetry a speaking picture), it has long been assumed in the Western tradition that two apparently disparate forms of communicational enterprise — pictorial and verbal — go hand-in-glove: there is a deep level of collusion between them. But it is a *cultural collusion*, built up over many centuries by *social demands and practices*; not a correspondence automatically built into our brains, or the brains of our primitive ancestors. Nevertheless, so familiar has it become in Western thinking that *it now passes unnoticed* (or, which amounts to the same thing, is regarded as *'natural'*) (Harris 2002, 8–9; emphasis added).

The transference of the past to the present is a "cultural collusion" (a dynamic process of repeated becomings), stipulated by the "social demands and practices" over time (regenerated and reinterpreted), it thus "passes unnoticed" and ends up being "natural": this amounts to what *tradition* is.

And yet we should not forget that reading the past, thus philology, is the basic prerequisite of history and historical knowledge, therefore of tradition. History, then, in both its general sense and in its etymological conception as 'knowledge; inquiry', knowledge that comes to us from knowing and narrating (i.e. re-telling) the past, from becoming an ἵστωρ (a term cognate to ἱστορία and English *wisdom* or German *wissen*, all from root **woid-* 'know', cf. verb ϝοῖδα), thus 'one who knows; a wise man', in the original sense of the word as conceived by Homer or Hesiod and the early authors.[7] By the way, the connection of these concepts, i.e. of history and historical knowledge, is both a linguistic and an intellectual operation; it is linguistic because language and its knowledge reveals it open right in front of us in a telling way saying something about its 'inner spirit' (to use an anachronistic term of early linguistic practice of the 18th–19th centuries), i.e. its germinal sense, and its relation to reality and to things, i.e. its real reference, in what came to be known under the rubric "Words and Things" (Germ. *Wörter und Sachen*); it is also an intellectual

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6 However, together with Ankersmit, a clarification is in order: "Interpretation is not translation. The past is not a text that has to be *translated* into narrative historiography, it has to be *interpreted*" (1994, 33).

7 The term ἱστορία in the modern sense of history is first introduced by Herodotus, but the association of history with inquest is as old as the term itself.

operation, because it takes precisely the knowledge and ability to read the past as a *histor* and interpret it in its original context and its subsequent development as well as its relevance to modern man. This procedure is a holistic approach, what was captured by Boeckh's idea of *Encyklopädie*, where history becomes at the same time the *explanans* and the *explanandum*, both the means to interpret and explain things and the thing itself to be explained. Along with Turner, we can assure ourselves that, "Because philology's legacy survives in ways we build knowledge today, the excavation of the philological past becomes an effort at once of historical reconstruction and present-day self-understanding" (2014, xiii). And these are the tools of the language and its analysis.

On the other hand, etymology is a procedure that combines hermeneutics and history with linguistics, i.e. good philology and historical knowledge, two fundamental pillars of interpretation. Anttila puts this combinatory approach in the following way:

> The intimate connection between hermeneutics and history should be a truism, as well as the identity of history and philology. These are transitive notions, and thus also philology and semiotic are drawn together. In short, all four integrally engage concepts like *anamnesis*, *re-search*, *re-enactment*, *knowledge of what is known*, "imposition of order into chaos" [...]. Or this kind of semiosis is detective work, nicely emphasized by etymology (Anttila 2000, 10; emphasis added).

History seems to be the all-pervading force, clarifying what otherwise remains vague or dark, an idea captured by Hans-Georg Gadamer in the emblematic dictum: "[...] what makes sense can be understood at sight, and what does not can be understood 'historically'" (2004, 182). This statement may be used as a general guide in our inquiry. Classical philology is not an introverted, inner-looking and static discipline, nor is it confined to the strict technical temporal borders in which we usually understand this discipline, the study of classical antiquity alone. Like languages, classical philology has its own rapprochements, prehistoric relatives, ancient siblings, and more recent descendants. Antecedents and descendants are historical concepts, that of siblings is a comparative notion and will be dealt with in the next section. For now, the historical dimension is our concern. It should, however, be noted that although the concept of origins is historical, it is often approached through comparison and is intertwined with the notion of cognacy, i.e. the genetic relation among languages.

This aspect of classical philology is (or should be) of special interest to philologists as is, by definition, to historical and comparative linguists or comparatists in general. There has been and still is a rich activity in this area, although there is always a danger of losing the measure and creating a loose frame where everything goes. It goes without saying that this perspective should be kept in check and not

allow a havoc (Anttila's "chaos", see above) to develop. With respect to this point, Michel Foucault emphasizes the role of history in humanities but at the same time hints at the dangers and the lurking pitfalls:

> History constitutes, therefore, for the human sciences, a favourable environment which is both privileged and dangerous. To each of the sciences of man it offers a *background*, which establishes it and provides it with a *fixed ground* and, as it were, a *homeland*; it determines the cultural area — the chronological and geographical boundaries — in which that branch of knowledge can be recognized as having validity; but it also surrounds the sciences of man with a frontier that limits them and destroys, from the outset, their claim to validity within the element of universality (Foucault 1966 [1970]: 405; emphasis added).

As will be seen next, the "background", the "fixed ground" and the "homeland" of classical philology are supplemented — perhaps more correctly, are defined and determined — in addition to history, also by comparison, foremost the comparison between genetically related linguistic (and perhaps philological) traditions.[8] In this way, one can trace the course (beginnings and procedures) as well as the spinning of the thread (the relations) that links the past with the present, even with the future, of classical philology. But this thread is full of knots, meeting points with the course of other traditions, some of which may be of genetic relation but also of typological nature, a major concern of debate and dispute in many quarters today, not only in philological studies.

As becomes clear here, knowledge of the past involves a kind of re-enactment, which of course is an issue of interpretation, and thus of application of the historical method. For historical linguistics in particular, this re-enactment identifies with the reconstruction of older — as a rule unattested — stages of the languages. Such a 're-enactive' and 're-constructive' process in language inevitably also has some implications to philological investigation, as the research perspective is expanded and receives a special power to penetrate the linguistic past more effectively. As stated in a characteristic way by Lass 1997, 24: "The past is not after all anything very special; it's simply a present that doesn't exist any more," or to remind ourselves of the famous dictum by Benedetto Croce, "all history is contemporary history." Lass goes further saying that one makes steps towards studying and interpreting the past by utilizing the state of things and the lessons of the present (what is captured under the so-called Uniformitarian Principle),[9] adding (1997, 24):

8 As samples of this procedure, one could see works like Benveniste 1969/1973, Durante 1970 and 1976, Watkins 1995 with many predecessors, and in a wider philological and cultural context, West 2007; in a more formal(istic) approach, see Schmitt 1967, and Matasović 1996.

9 See, among others, Christy 1983, Morpurgo Davies 1998, 210 *et passim*.

> The apparently harmless *re-* of 'reconstruction' may be (benignly) disingenuous. The past's apparently peculiar ontological status allows us to encounter it only indirectly, through theoretical judgements about what we take to be its witnesses; and even some of these are themselves products of theoretical operations. A subject matter like this must be based on some kind of rational standards; if the past itself is unavailable, the only possible source for them is enabling argumentation based on projections from the present.

Carr 1987, 22 has this to say on this: "But a past act is dead, i.e. meaningless to the historian, unless he can understand the thought that lay behind it. Hence 'all history is the history of thought', and 'history is the re-enactment in the historian's mind of the thought whose history he is studying'. The reconstitution of the past in the historian's mind is dependent on empirical evidence. But it is not in itself an empirical process, and cannot consist in a mere recital of facts", and this requires on the part of the historian a good amount of *re-flective* thinking. Similarly, as stated by Ankersmit 1994, 84, we cannot really verify any statement about the past as the past no longer exists. What we can do instead is what we normally do, namely make inferences about the past and build constructions of it by means of the fragmented evidence that we have in our disposal today, or as put by Ankersmit himself, "[…] whether we see historical narrative as a conjunction of statements or as a whole, in neither case can we meaningfully speak of a correspondence between historical reality and historical narrative" (1994, 87), and again, he issues the warning that "showing (the past) and suggesting a proposal (as to how the past should be looked at) form a road to knowledge of the past and an indication of how to deal with it" (1994, 88), and still further, "Historical insight has no cognitive character but is essentially a proposal as to how the past should be looked at. *It is not knowledge but an organization of knowledge*" (p. 95; emphasis added). In other words, the 'reading' of the past is an attempt or a proposal about the past; this past is then the product of interpretation, the usage of all faculties available to man to understand it.

In his work *The future of science* (reference in Parry 1971, 2), the 19th-century French orientalist Ernest Renan asks the following important epistemological question with regard to the points discussed above: "How can we grasp the physiognomy and originality of primitive literatures, if we do not penetrate into the moral and intimate life of the nation, if we do not place ourselves on the same standpoint of humanity which it occupied, in order to see and to feel as it did; if we do not watch its life, or rather if we do not share its life, if only for a moment?" (1891, 273). The crucial point here is "watch its life" or better still "share its life", what historical work *qua* and *via* philology really does.

The study of the past is no simple matter; it rather is a complex issue, and we can superficially touch it here and only in so far as there is a direct relevance to the

topics to be discussed below.[10] When referring to the historical method and what is meant by historical knowledge, Collingwood states:

> Historical knowledge is the knowledge of what mind has done in the past, and at the same time it is the *redoing* of this, the *perpetuation of past acts in the present*. Its object is therefore not a mere object, something outside the mind which knows it; it is an activity of thought, which can be known only in so far as the knowing mind *re-enacts* it and knows itself as so doing. To the historian, the activities whose history he is studying are not spectacles to be watched, but *experiences to be lived through* in his own mind; they are objective, or known to him, only because they are also subjective, or activities of his own (Collingwood 1946, 218; emphasis added).

In plain words, 're-doing', 're-enactment' and 're-living' of the past, of "a-no-longer existing historical reality" (Ankersmit 1994, 85), delineate the historian's task, which is that he seeks to capture the spirit of a past event or a series of past events that are the subject of his investigation. Such a re-enactment of the past will make easier the interpretation of this event in an objective way. A little later Collingwood explains his thought saying that historical knowledge is "that special case of memory where the object of present thought is past thought, the gap between present and past being bridged not only by the power of present thought to think of the past, but also by the power of past thought to reawaken itself in the present" (1946, 294).

All these are complex and tantalizing issues that continue to feed heated debates among the specialists, philologists and historical linguists alike. Perhaps the following statement by the historical linguist Raimo Anttila points to the right direction as to how to tackle the matter. He says (1989, 385–386):

> One can grasp the concept of truths like the Pythagorean theorem or the comparative method, one can explain realities like thunder and lightning, but one must *understand* historical deeds and movements, personalities, and works of art. Conception, explanation, and understanding are important factors in historical study [...]. To understand means to be able to set oneself into the assumed circumstances and to see the (mental) relations of things [...]. We study history in order to make the present understandable through the past, but the past would be inaccessible to us, if we could not use our own experience to interpret the traces of past life and societies. In other words, *synchrony*, *diachrony*, and *syncrisis* are intimately connected, as in linguistics (emphasis added).

We can only add that history and historical knowledge are not mere events in a line of development from past to the present, but a synthesis of all types of movement, synchronic pictures and diachronic maneuverings, leaps and slowdowns, direct but

10 For a general survey, see the essays in *Encyclopédie de la Pléiade*, vol. A: *Histoire et ses méthodes*; see further Carr 1987 and Cannadine 2002.

mainly oblique and sideways movements: all these characterize the course of history and thus also of its interpretation. In a similar vein, Posner quite emphatically states that "[...] philology is the life-blood of historical linguistics. [...] as diachronic linguistics requires theoretical support from synchronic linguistics, synchronic study would itself be crippled without the insights provided by a historical perspective" (1990, 349). It is this historical perspective that becomes a common topos in our quest here, but with a comparative purview as well, two perspectives that are integral parts of both historical linguistics and classical philology.

To further strengthen this character of historical interpretation, we appeal to comparison as stated by Richard Martin who says: "What experimentation is to science, comparison should be to philology — a way to test hypotheses and produce new ones that account for more of the data, more economically" (2003, 119). However, what one compares and for what purpose matters, but the essence of the matter remains the same: Comparison may bring to philology another perspective and, who knows, perhaps new horizons. To this end Martin continues his argument by adding the claim that "In fact, a twenty-first-century philology without strong affiliations to social anthropology, folkloristics, and performance study is increasingly untenable and in danger of exhausting itself on hermetic quests into the endlessly intertextual" (ibid.).

The comparative approach should not be understood as a rejection or replacement of the method established in each of the disciplines of historical and comparative linguistics and philology; what is intended instead by our reference to it is to guide a confluence of various techniques into a common middle line and cast thus a "third intermediary glance" and another possibility of viewing the research subject(s) of historical linguistics and philology. We should let Calvert Watkins speak of this approach in his own characteristic manner (1995, 11):

> The Greek poet Pindar was a historical personage, who practiced his craft and earned his livelihood commemorating in song the accomplishments and virtues of other contemporary personages of a specific historical time and place, Greece and Sicily of the 5th century B.C. Pindar was a product of his own times. But it can only increase our awe before his genius to know that in some of his formulas and themes, some of his genres and subgenres, some of his training and his role in society, he was still part of a cultural tradition, verbally expressed, which reached back thousands of years. It can by the same token only enhance our wonder at Pindar's art to hear his elemental words of water, gold, and fire echoing and reverberating from Celtic ringforts to Indic ritual enclosures:
>
> ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ, ὁ δὲ χρυσὸς αἰθόμενον πῦρ
> ἅτε διαπρέπει νυκτὶ μεγάνορος ἔξοχα πλούτου
>
> (Pind. *Ol.* I.1–2).

> Best is water, but gold like burning fire
> by night shines out beyond all lordly wealth

The comparison of prehistoric languages implies comparison of prehistoric social conventions as well. The reconstruction of cultural features by means of lexical analysis is the province of linguistic paleontology, which together with etymology is the most composite type of reconstruction and for which one employs all available approaches and all related disciplines. We could define culture as a system of concepts, symbols, associations, acts and ways of behavior and attitudes of a group of people or of a society. All elements of this system have a close association with the language, not so much as a system of correspondences — which is rather difficult to prove and most likely not true — but as a communication system by means of its symbols. However, at least according to one school of thought, language is not merely the way the world is expressed linguistically but it is also a means of reorganizing this world through its symbolic system (see, among others, Humboldt, Sapir, Whorf and others and the idea of linguistic relativism).

As a communication system, language can be studied as an autonomous system with its own structure, function and development. Yet, it is also part of society and social evolution, and at the same time the mechanism expressing it by means of its system of symbols of communication (*signes de communication*; cf. Benveniste 1974, 91ff.). Thus, language is a functional part of the sociohistorical and cultural context of the society that operates with and reflected on these symbols. In this sense, the study of language is also a guide to social reality. The fundamental vehicle in this activity is the lexicon of the language and the establishment of its meaning in the course of time. As remarked by Palmer:

> In plotting the sense-range of words we register the contextual (i.e. collocational) distributions (this is their purely linguistic distribution) and their cultural distributions, that is the situations in which they are found to occur. In tracing the ramifications of meaning the linguist [...] will find himself compelled to take into account the whole range of human concerns [...]. Precisely because speech is embedded in the speaker's world, it is often possible to deduce from language information about historical contacts, social structure, religious beliefs and practices, folklore, techniques, and so on (Palmer 1972, 341).

In the spirit of these words, next we will consider one final example that highlights the comparative method and its merits in 'defining' the future of the past.

4 On the linguistics-and-philology partnership: name-giving in Indo-European

By way of exemplifying how this reconstructive work is conducted in language and its possible impact on social institutions and beliefs, lets us briefly discuss and summarize the procedure in one area, namely the name-giving act in ancient Indo-European societies, by appealing to linguistic and philological material.[11]

Throughout ancient Indo-European languages we have a peculiar usage of the lexical collocation 'fashion a name; put/place a name' in name-giving expressions, in what seems to be a lexical syntagma deriving from PIE **(H)nomn̥ dhē-* which was used on special occasions at name-giving ceremonies and rituals.

Etymologically (and in some cases also semantically) equivalent expressions reflecting a common inheritance are found in many IE branches like Gk. ὄνομα τίθεσθαι (also verb ὀνοματοθετέω and noun ὀνοματοθεσία), Skt. *nā́ma dhā-* (cf. also the terms *nāmadhéya*, *nāmakaraṇa* 'name-making/-giving'), Hitt. *laman dai-* (with initial *l-* equaling *n-*), Lat. *nomen faciō* and *nomen in-dō*, and more similar expressions from other languages.

Below we give the philological documentation of the linguistic facts of this formulaic expression that seems to support the cultural interpretation that follows.

4.1 Indic

In the oldest text of the Indic branch, the RigVeda, we find the combination of the verb *dhā* 'put; make' with the word *nā́ma* 'name' in hymns whose context is clearly ritual or in invocations to various divinities. The formula *nā́ma dhā-* seems to occupy a central position in these contexts, sanctifying as it were the overall occasion or the event of placing the name, as in the following passages (translations of the Vedic excerpts are taken from Jamison/Brereton 2014; the relevant items are emphasized in bold characters):[12]

11 For a more detailed discussion of this formulaic expression in name-giving contexts, see Giannakis 1997, 105–116; cf. also Ivanov 1981, 139ff. and Hahn 1969.

12 Other relevant passages from the RigVeda are: 1.155.3, 1.185.1, 9.75.2, 10.5.2, 10.71.1, and more can be found in other Indic texts.

RV 10.49.2ab

mā́ṃ **dhur** índaraṃ **nā́ma** devátā
diváś ca gmáś ca apā́ṃ ca jantávaḥ

Upon me they **conferred the name** Indra among the gods — the creatures
of heaven and earth and of the waters.

RV 1.6.4

ā́d áha svadhā́m ánu
púnar garbhatvám eriré
dádhānā nā́ma yajñíyam

Certainly, just after that they once again roused his embryonic state
[= kindled the fire] according to his nature,
acquiring for themselves a **name** worthy of the sacrifice.

RV 6.48.21cd

tveṣáṃ śávo **dadhire nā́ma** yajñíyam
marúto vr̥trahám̐ śávo

the Maruts **assume** his vibrant power, his sacrificial **name** — his
Vr̥tra-smashing power.

RV 1.103.4

tád ūcúṣe mā́nuṣemā́ yugā́ni
kīrténiyam maghávā nā́ma bíbhrat
upaprayán dasyuhátyāya vajrī́
yád dha sūnúḥ śrávase **nā́ma dadhé**

This is for him who is accustomed to it. Bearing the name "bounteous," a
name to be celebrated through these human generations,
the mace-bearer was advancing to smash the Dasyus when he **took for
himself the name** "son (of strength)" for fame.

In a different genre of Indic literature, the *Gr̥hyasūtras* (various rules for domestic rites), we find a description of a name-giving ritual whereby the collocation *nā́ma dhā-* is used for giving the name to the newborn. In fact, the very name of this ritual, *nāmadheya* 'name-placing' or 'name-making', is a combination of *nā́ma* and a nominal derivative of the root **dheh₁-* (Indic *dhā-*). The underlying idea is that a name

is ‘fashioned’ for the newborn and then ‘placed’ upon it as its most distinctive feature. Note, for instance, RV 10.71.1ab, *bṛ́haspate prathamáṃ vācó ágraṃ|yát praírata nāmadhéyaṃ dádhānāḥ* ‘O Bṛhaspati, (this was) the first beginning of Speech: when they [= the seers] came forth, giving names’. Besides *nāmadhéya*, in Sanskrit, also the terms *nāmakaraṇa* (from *nā́ma* and *kṛ* ‘make’) and *nā́ma dā-* ‘name-giving’ are used. The distinction between these terms is not always clear, but they all seem to be old. This ceremony preserves an important feature of the name-giving ritual, the placing of the child on the knees of the father (e.g., *Kauś. CS.* 58.14ff.). Placing the child on the knees of the father may also explain, in addition to other features of the ritual, the use of specifically the verb *dhā-* with its two meanings, ‘make’ and ‘place’. We will return to this point later.

4.2 Greek

Ancient Greek provides equally strong evidence, ranging from the earliest attestation of the literary language to Hellenistic and koine times. We will limit the discussion to only a few examples. First, let us look at the following passage from Homer’s *Odyssey* 19.401–404:

> τόν ῥά οἱ Εὐρύκλεια φίλοις ἐπὶ γούνασι **θῆκε**
> παυομένῳ δόρποιο, ἔπος τ’ ἔφατ’ ἔκ τ’ ὀνόμαζεν:
> “Αὐτόλυκ’, αὐτὸς νῦν **ὄνομ’** εὕρεο ὅττι κε **θῆαι**
> παιδὸς παιδὶ φίλῳ”
>
> And, as he finished his evening meal, Eurukleia **laid** him
> upon his very knees, and spoke him a word and named him:
> “Autolukos, now find yourself that **name you will bestow**
> on your own child’s dear child”. (tr. R. Lattimore)

For our purposes, this passage is doubly interesting: not only does it attest the lexical combination ὄνομα ... θῆαι (the verb is from the root **dheh₁-*), but it also makes reference to the practice of placing the child on the father’s (here it is the grandfather’s) knees in the context of offering him his name. In the same context, a few lines later (l. 406), Autolykos answers by saying, γαμβρὸς ἐμὸς θυγάτηρ τε, **τίθεσθ’ ὄνομ’** ὅττι κεν εἴπω ‘my son-in-law and daughter, give him the name I tell you’, where again the formula τίθεσθε ὄνομα is used. Similarly in *Od.* 18.5, Ἀρναῖος δ’ **ὄνομ**’ ἔσκε: τὸ γὰρ **θέτο** πότνια μήτηρ ἐκ γενετῆς ‘he had the name Arnaios, for thus the lady his mother called him from birth’. Cf. also *Od.* 8.554.

As amply explained by Hahn (1969), this formula is not restricted to naming a child only, but its application extends to naming other objects, a city for instance,

as in Aristoph. *Birds* 809–810, πρῶτον **ὄνομα** τῇ πόλει/**τίθεσθαί** τι μέγα καὶ κλεινόν ‘first give the city a name, big and famous’. A few lines later (l. 814) we read again, Σπάρτην ὄνομα καλῶμεν **αὐτήν** ‘shall we call it Sparta?’, where a different expression, ‘to call by a name’, of the same type as Latin *urbem Romam nomen nominant* ‘they call the city Rome by name’ is used (cf. also ὀνομάζω, ὀνομαίνω, etc. used in similar ways but without the heavy semantic and cultural load that the specific formula carries). But again in the next line of the same passage we have a switch back to the formula under consideration: Σπάρτην γὰρ ἂν **θείμην** ἐγὼ τὴμῇ πόλει ‘(the name) Sparta I would give to my city’ (with the noun ὄνομα understood), and yet in line 817, τί δῆτ’ **ὄνομ’ αὐτῇ θησόμεσθ(α)** ‘what name then shall we put on it?’, the full formula is used.

The same formula is also used in the New Testament, e.g. Mark 3.16, καὶ **ἐπέθηκεν** τῷ Σίμωνι **ὄνομα** Πέτρον, with a Latin translation, ***imposuit** Simoni **nomen** Petrus,* and a Gothic rendering, *jah **gasatida** Seimona **namo** Paitrus* ‘and he gave (lit. put) Simon the name Peter’. In Mark 3.17 the same combination of words is used and with similar renderings in Latin and Gothic. The Latin and Gothic renderings contain semantic, not etymological, equivalents of the Greek verb ἐπέθηκεν: *imposuit* in Latin, and *gasatida* (from *satjan* ‘set’) in Gothic.

4.3 Hittite

The evidence from the Anatolian branch is provided by Hittite and is interesting in two respects: first, in preserving the old phraseology of the Indo-European formula, and second, in hinting at a possible institution or ritual of name-giving. In KUB 24.8 iii 7 we read: *nuššiššan šanizzi **lām-an** ^{LU}HUL-lu **daiš*** ‘and he gave him the fitting name Bad’ (CHD s.v. *lāman*). In Hittite the word *lāman* ‘name’ is the derivative of PIE **(H)nom̥n̥* with *l-* for *n-* by dissimilation, and *daiš* is the preterite of *dai-,* from PIE **dheh$_1$-*. In the same document (l. 13) we read: *nuššikan NÍG.SI.**SÁ**-an **ŠUM-an daiš*** ‘and he gave him the name Just’, where *ŠUM-an = lāman.* In the *Song of Ullikumi* (KUB 33.93 iii 14) we find instead another verb, *pai-* ‘give’, in a periphrastic combination with *daiš.* The text reads as follows: *nu šanezzi **ŠUM-an*** [*TUR-li(?) p]e-eš-ki-u-wa-an **daiš*** ‘and he (viz. Kumarbi) undertook to bestow [on the child] a fitting name’ (CHD s.v. *lāman*). Earlier in this passage, we find a good description of the process of the name-giving ceremony. In translation the text runs as follows (the Hittite text of Ullikummi is m. A III 11–12, after Güterbock 1952, 152ff.):

> And the Fate-Goddesses and [Mother-Goddesses the child lifted (or: took)], [and] on Kumarbi’s knees they placed him. Kumarbi over this son to rejoice began, and to fondle him he began, and [his] dear name (or: the dear name [to the child]) to give he began.

Although there are parallel texts in other non-Indo-European traditions of the area (such as Hurrian myths describing similar events, but also in the *Genesis* and elsewhere), judging from the comparative evidence of other Indo-European languages an Indo-European practice is very likely.

4.4 Latin

In Latin there are two verbs, both etymologically originating in the root **dheh₁-*, which combine with the word *nomen* in name-giving contexts. These are the verbs *faciō* and (*in-*)*dō.* In addition to the examples from the New Testament mentioned earlier, there is plenty of textual evidence of such collocations from various sources. Hahn 1969, 117–118, 124 cites a number of passages which clearly point to the inherited character of *nomen facere* or *nomen indere*, as the following excerpts:

Plautus *Men.* 77:

> *iuventus* ***nomen fēcit*** *Peniculo mihi*
>
> the young men **made** (for) me the **name** Peniculo.

Men. 1126:

> *Menaechmo* ***nomen*** *est* ***factum*** *tibi*
>
> the **name** M. was **made** for you.

Virgil *Georg.* 1.137–38:

> *navita tum stellis numeros et* ***nomina fēcit*** *Pleiadas*
>
> and then the sailor **gave** the stars their number and **name**, Pleiades.

In the next example from Plautus (*Capt.* 69) the verb *indō* is used instead:

> *iuventus* ***nomen indidit*** (perf. tense) *Scorto mihi*
>
> the young men **put** upon me the **name** Scorto.

4.5 Germanic

In the Germanic branch we have not etymological but semantic equivalents reflecting this formula. We saw earlier the rendering in Gothic of the passage from the New Testament. In Old English the rendering is done by means of the verb *gesette* with *noma* in the N version, while the W version for Mark 3.16 has the verb *nemde* 'named' in lieu of the formula, but for 3.17 the combination *naman onsette* is used instead. Both *gesette* and *onsette* derive from the verb *sattan* 'set, place'. The other verb which is used in a few cases in combination with 'name' is *scyppan* 'make, fashion' (cf. Mod. Eng. *shape*), as in *Beow.* 78, ***scop** him Heort **naman*** 'he made/fashioned him the name Heort'. Here again the reference is to a name-giving context, and these examples constitute good evidence for the survival in Germanic of the old poetic formula **(H)nomn̥ dheh$_1$-.*

4.6 Celtic

Although the presence of an etymological equivalent in Celtic is not certain, semantically equivalent expressions are quite common. In Welsh we have the verbs *dodi* and *rodi,* in Cornish the verb *ry,* and in Breton *ober* and the participle *gret,* as in the following examples: For Welsh: *Pwyll* 620, *Gwri Wallt Euryn a dodyssom ni arnaw ef* 'Gwri Golden-Hair is the name that we gave him'; *BDe.* 3.5, *a Dauyd a rodet yn enw arnaw* 'and David was given to him as a name'. For Cornish: *O* 135, *y rofhynwyn the'n pushes* 'I give names to the fishes'. For Breton: *Patrice* 568, *pe hano eta Autro a vo gret anezan?* 'what name, Sir, shall be given to him?'. See also Hahn 1969, 202.[13]

13 Reconstruction can be conducted not only on the basis of etymological cognates but also by means of semantic equivalents, and the material discussed in this section is a good case in point. As has been stressed by other scholars (e.g. Campanile 1993, Watkins 1995, and others), the lexical means may change or may be partly or wholly replaced by synonyms, but the core of the meaning and the function remains the same. In such cases, the comparative method allows a certain degree of flexibility in its operation, and the comparison can be made on the level of *thematics* rather than on strictly morphophonological or lexical, i.e. etymological grounds. Regarding old formulas and their significance for reconstruction of poetic language, Watkins has this to say 1994, 690: "Cognate formulas, like cognate cultural institutions, may but need not be accompanied by cognate linguistic expression. Lexical substitution and cultural change in the course of millennia may leave only the semantic feature of the original expression present. Put very simply, we have the preservation of the *signifié* (and its associated cultural nexus), but a renewal of the *signifiant*. But this must not mask the fundamental fact of the preservation of an inherited unitary formulaic and thematic 'deep structure'," and completes his understanding of the formula by saying that "*theme* is the deep structure of formula" (1995, 17).

In archaic societies the name was considered an essential part of its carrier, in a way the person identifies with his name.[14] Giving a name to a child was and still is an act of creation. In many cultures one is not considered a 'full person' until one has a name to identify with, whereas in many traditions there is also the belief that the nameless child is vulnerable to many evils, and so by providing the newborn with a name one frees the child from evil and danger.[15] We certainly know how much they valued fame and reputation, much of which is inherited along the family line and is reflected in the name the individual carries, evidenced by expressions like Gk. ὀνομακλυτός, Skt. *nā́ma śrútyam,* or Old Irish *animgnaid* (see *DIL s.v.),* Toch. A *ñom-klyu* and B *ñem-kälywe*, all meaning 'of famous name; renowned', or by the traditional formula κλέ(ϝ)ος ἄφθιτον from Greek and *ákṣiti śrávas* from Sanskrit, 'everlasting fame'.[16]

An important step in the process of naming the child is the holding of the child by the father (or some other close kin, particularly a male member of the family) and placing it in his knees, an act also reflected in the language of the lexical collocation we have been discussing. The use of the verb **dhē-*, which in this context is a prime example of a performative speech act, may refer to the three stages of the name-giving process: first, making a fitting name for the child (one meaning of the verb, cf. Eng. *do* or Lat. *faciō*), second, placing the child on the knees of the father (cf. Gk. ἐπὶ γούνασι θῆκε 'placed on the knees' seen earlier), and finally, giving the name (e.g. ὄνομα ... θῆαι 'you shall bestow a name', and other combinations seen above).

In at least Greek, Hittite, and Sanskrit texts we have some reference to this custom.[17] Terms like Lat. *sublatio*, Greek ἀναιρέω, Old Irish *glūn-daltae, lit.* 'child of knees', and Old Norse *knésetja* 'placing on the knees' also testify to the same fact, especially with regards to the process of adoption. In the Roman tradition, the *pater-familias* can reject or acknowledge paternity by raising the child up to his knees, whereby the child becomes *genuīnus,* i.e., part of the family (a word play, perhaps also (folk) etymological allusion, between *genus* 'birth' and *genu* 'knee'!). In addition to any legal consequences (i.e. adoption of the child), there is a significant symbolism in the act of placing the child on the father's knees, especially with respect to the process of legitimation and giving it a name.

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14 See also Gonda 1970, 7ff.

15 See, for instance, the belief in ancient India seen in *ŚB* 6.1.3.9 (after Gonda 1970, 35): "One should give a name to the boy who is born, for thereby one frees him from evil"; also 6.1.3.20: "To Agni (the great place for the ritual fire) when built up one gives a name; thereby one keeps away evil from him (it)".

16 See Schmitt 1967, 55ff. and 60ff., and especially 91ff.

17 Especially for Hittite, see also Hoffner 1968, 198–203.

4.7 The significance of the knees

One may ask why the knee acquired such an important function. We are not sure of all the reasons and details, but the knee was considered by many peoples as the center of strength, vitality, and generative power, seen in examples like the following from the *Iliad* 4.313–314:

> ὦ γέρον, εἴθ’, ὡς θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι φίλοισιν,
> ὥς τοι γούναθ’ ἕποιτο, βίη δέ τοι ἔμπεδος εἴη
>
> Aged sir, if only, as your spirit is in your bosom,
> so might your knees be also, and the strength stay steady within you,

or 19.352–354:

> ἡ δ’ Ἀχιλλῆϊ
> νέκταρ ἐνὶ στήθεσσι καὶ ἀμβροσίην ἐρατεινήν
> στάξ’, ἵνα μή μιν λιμὸς ἀτερπὴς γούναθ’ ἵκοιτο
>
> She dropped the delicate ambrosia and the nectar inside the breast of
> Achilles softly, so no sad weakness of hunger would come on his knees.

The same can be said of numerous other passages, especially of the epics: knees are part of the qualities of the epic heroes as they offer one of the most needed properties, speedy feet (e.g. ὠκύπους ‘swift-footed’, often said of the epitome of the epic hero Achilles, but also of horses, etc.). The knee was also thought to be the seat of paternity, life and generative power. In this respect it is interesting to note an etymological association frequently made by some Indo-Europeanists between the words for ‘knee’, **gonu,* and ‘produce, give birth’, *$*genh_1$-*, also seen in Latin between the words *genu* ‘knee’ and *genus* ‘birth’ referred to above. Such associations may belong to the stock of folk-etymology, but for the study of social institutions this does not really matter.

5 Pragmatics and the metaphorical context

We should emphasize here an important parameter in the reconstructive operation which relates to the pragmatic aspects of the use of a certain lexical collocation that seems to underlie an element of cultural history. Pragmatics is a crucial criterion in that it functions as a check that measures the degree of realism of the reconstructions. This criterion involves the matching of formal with material elements, i.e. the

linguistic evidence is matched by evidence from related disciplines, such as philology, history, archaeology, ethnology, myth, etc., in other words the interdisciplinarity of the procedure takes first position once again. A reconstruction must fit the historical and cultural *realia* of the specific cultures compared, as elegantly put by Matasović 1996, 92:[18]

> Comparative (genetic) pragmatics can be thought of as a discipline that explores how the relationships between author, text, and society are realized in linguistic communities that use genetically related languages. The results of such research can then be used to reconstruct these relations for the PIE linguistic community. In such a way, comparative pragmatics stands in between comparative linguistics and the comparative theory of culture, because it synthesizes and relates the results of both of these disciplines.

However, much of linguistic expression and function is metaphorical, i.e., the meaning comes not in a straight and direct way but often follows oblique paths in its realization through metaphors. Metaphors are cultural artifacts, that is, they deal not so much with language as a system of forms and rules as with the social function of language as a means of communication with clear reference and anchorage to place, time, cultural and situational context. Thus, the interpretation of metaphors is only possible through the knowledge of the wider sociohistorical and cultural context which generates and feeds the specific metaphors each time.

Metaphor is an inherent feature of human language, but it is in poetic language where it is fully exploited. It is the way of putting together form and meaning that makes the connotative function possible, i.e. the metaphorical usage of language. It is worth quoting here a passage from Wellek/Warren with regards to this relation. They say:

> Instead of dichotomizing 'form-content', we should think of matter and then of 'form', that which aesthetically organizes its 'matter'. In a successful work of art, the materials are completely assimilated into the form: what was 'world' has become 'language'. The 'materials' of a literary work of art are, on one level, words, on another level, human behaviour experience, and on another, human ideas and attitudes. [...] in a successful poem or novel they are pulled into polyphonic relations by the dynamics of *aesthetic purpose* (1956, 241).

In this passage, there is reference to an important feature of poetic language, the "aesthetic purpose", which in a way creates the conditions and the demand for a harmonious agreement between material (i.e., the world at large and our knowledge or perception of it), form and meaning. It is precisely such an aesthetic purpose which, in a multitude of ways, mechanisms and means, disturbs the norms and the

18 See also Campanile 1974, 253–254.

established rules in the organization of language and builds its marked types, like metaphors, which are part of poetic language. The lexical collocation that we examined by way of illustrating the workings of the comparative method is precisely such a linguistic expression, and for the gleaning of its meaning there is no simple one-to-one or linear approach. Instead, the triptych *synchrony*, *diachrony*, and *syncrisis* seems to be the sole path of ‘reading’ its denotative value together with all its connotations: aesthetics is fully ingrained in this procedure, as is in all interpretation of the past, an idea best exemplified in works of art other than texts, e.g. sculptures, paintings, architectural structures, or even myth, and other representational works.

What we did here is primarily a sociohistorical linguistic and cultural reconstruction, that is trying to recreate the *background* or the context that supports an old institution, but the implication may also concern us today in the sense that we realize how deeply rooted in the tradition certain things still are. The important point to be made with this example is that philology and historical linguistics combined into a method of analyzing and interpreting a fragment of old poetic language, also reconstructing a fragment of cultural history, ultimately an old institution. This may not be irrelevant to modern humanity in that these things live on in modern societies regardless of whether one notices them, or they remain unnoticed: they simply underlie individual or collective behaviors, attitudes, deeply ingrained in our social context beliefs, and ultimately religious or cultural institutions that still define and determine our lives today.

6 Concluding note

Classical philology and historical linguistics are disciplines of the past. In this sense, they are reflective and retrograde enterprises, as using the methodological experience of the present they seek to reconstruct, in an abductive and deductive manner, and reconstitute a picture of the past. Here a number of crucial methodological issues are raised concerning the historian’s attitude towards the subject of his research such as how to make the data selection, the trustworthiness of the sources, the hierarchy of the available evidence or filling existing gaps in it, how the present relates to the past, how far can the interdisciplinary approach reach, how realistic or plausible are the reconstructions and how can the historian safeguard against all sorts of dangers and overgeneralizations, and many more similar issues. All these questions concern the core of historical research and largely determine the method applied and consequently the results obtained; they are ultimately questions of all disciplines that study the past, wholly or individually for the entire

Alterthumswissenschaft. This has always been like that. Now the issue is how to keep this τέχνη alive and strong and to expand it into new territories and meet new challenges, or, to use Ordine's wording, to (re)assert "the usefulness of the useless", i.e. "[...] the idea of the usefulness of those forms of knowledge whose essential value is wholly free of any utilitarian end" (quoted from the English translation 2017, 1). One's reply to this challenge is also the measure of one's vision and contribution to its future. One would say that this future is both its past, its present and its future combined: retention and innovation are two key terms that come to mind as a possible solution. The former keeps the long tradition and the rich heritage alive; the latter transfuses new and fresh blood into this tradition. The two can lead to something that looks like the old but is also different from it. And as 'fashion' seems to sweep the path of the new, and new trends, shifts and drifts appear, also by way of rebaptizing and revamping programs of study and curricula or even institutions, learned societies and other such organizations that deal with the past (e.g. Society for Classical Studies for the up to a few years ago American Philological Association (established in 1869), or Historische Sprachforschung/Historical Linguistics for previous (since 1852) Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung, etc.), the future of philology may also involve some renaming! Normally, such changes come as the result of shifting or changing attitudes, if not of paradigms (in Kuhn's sense or, in fact, we have instead of 'canon-replacement' a 'canon-appropriation', on which see Finkelberg, this volume), in the way the scholarly community views the field, and this is precisely what happened in the above two cases. It is not clear whether the study of the classical world is undergoing a "pre-paradigm period" and therefore is in a transitional phase into something new or it is simply a momentary 'crisis' or 'turn'. In Kuhn's sense again, a pre-paradigm period is "[...] regularly marked by frequent and deep debates over legitimate methods, problems, and standards of solution" (1962, 47–48): the future will show what direction things go and mainly what characteristics the future of the past will choose to be identified with.

In concluding, it would be fitting to have 'the word come out of the horse's mouth'; thus, we will have Friedrich Nietzsche utter the closing statement and answer the question often posed in the opening paragraph of this study. In his book *The Dawn: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality* (§ 5) he says, among other things:

> "[...] Philology is now more desirable than ever before; thus it is the highest attraction and incitement in an age of 'work': that is, of haste, of unseemly and immoderate hurry-skurry, which is so eager to 'get things done' at once [....] Philology itself, perhaps, will not so hurriedly 'get things done.' It teaches how to read well, that is, slowly, profoundly, attentively, prudently, with inner thoughts, with the mental doors ajar, with delicate fingers and eyes".

After 140 years separating our time from Nietzsche's statement (in 1881), his words are equally valid today as were then: Philology is reading slowly and should stay that, but "with the mental doors ajar".

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