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ABSTRACT

This dissertation, “Script and Song in Pindar and Aeschylus”, begins from the simple fact, often obscured by political and social distinctions, that Pindar and Aeschylus were poetic contemporaries and found success with the same audiences across the Greek Mediterranean. I argue that they also shared a poetic outlook which reflected large-scale shifts in the conceptualization of poetry during their historical period. This perspective stems from their awareness of a written poetic tradition that was by then several centuries old, and which produced a corresponding concern for the future material longevity and reperformability of poetic objects. In particular, new realities of reperformance required a substantial reexamination and redefinition of the temporal conception of poetic voice to fully integrate the ever more decisive role of writing in facilitating poetic performances. I argue that Pindar and Aeschylus responded to their changing poetic reality by developing a scriptory poetics that allowed them to adjust their compositional style to reflect and reveal their poetry as fixed in writing, thus inhabiting a temporality shaped by the physical text as well as the presence of an author or an audience.
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INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter of his seminal 1985 study *Poesia e pubblico nella Grecia antica*, Bruno Gentili set forth a definition of oral poetry that has transformed the study of Classics.¹ For a work to be called oral, he claimed, it must fulfill at least one of the following conditions: “(1) oral composition (extemporaneous improvisation); (2) oral communication (performance); (3) oral transmission (memorized poetic tradition).”² Gentili fashioned his definition to be as broad as possible so as to include texts whose performative nature had previously been overlooked by scholars. In particular, Gentili intended his idea of orality to recuperate the conditions – musical, social, or political – that originally framed the performance, and thus dictated the composition of the corpus generally referred to as Archaic Greek lyric poetry. Even if they had been written down at some point, Gentili declared these works to be characterized by what he called a “performance psychology”,³ a fundamental assumption that Greek lyric poetry is designed for an oral relationship between performer and audience. More importantly, Gentili claimed, the contextual conditions surrounding poetic orality were highly variable, affected by the passage of time no less than by changes of location. Each poet and poem would demand its own embedded analysis to bring to light the character of its original oral form.

As Gentili’s approach to oral performance was gaining ground in the field of Greek lyric poetry, the study of Greek tragedy was undergoing its own reconfigurations as scholars called for a greater recognition of the context in which the plays were performed. Although this approach did not share Gentili’s strong emphasis on the oral nature of performance, it can nevertheless be seen as a related development insofar as this new approach identified the key to the interpretation of tragedy in its nature as a performative (and performed) poetic form. Led by the work of such scholars as Froma Zeitlin and Simon Goldhill, the past decades have seen the emergence of a new understanding of Greek tragedy as a product of the political and cultural environment of

¹ Gentili (1985).
² Gentili (1988) p. 4. This and all subsequent quotations are taken from the English translation of Cole.
fifth-century Athens. By focusing attention on the ways in which tragedy subtly engaged with the questions of justice, gender, and religious practice at Athens, this approach has broadened our understanding of how the tragic genre emerged from the culture of the fifth century, and has pointed to important ways in which the initial performances of tragedy resist analysis according to modern conceptions of the theater. The impact of these new models on the study of Greek poetry in the past three decades can hardly be overstated. Indeed, it could be said that in the period since the publication of *Poesia e pubblico*, Gentili’s desire to place the public and performative character of Greek poetry at the center of scholarly investigation has largely been achieved.

Yet the widespread acceptance of Gentili’s broad definition of oral poetry has not been accompanied by a similarly complex approach to the roles that writing played within this multiform conception of orality. Under the rubric of Gentili’s three conditions, there is potential for a great degree of variation. Gentili’s definition does not, and is not intended to, present a monolithic picture of oral poetry. But it is easy to lose sight of just how wide a variety of compositional modes can be included in his broad category. An orally composed poem, such as a Wordsworthian ode, may be preserved and transmitted only in written form. Conversely, an orally performed poem, such as a Shakespearean play, may be composed entirely in writing.

In order to appreciate how writing might be part of a fuller picture of oral poetry in Archaic Greece, we need to gain a better sense of how written technology functioned within a culture of oral performance. As I hope is already clear, I do not wish to dispute the basic assumptions of Gentili’s position and even less would I want to reopen the longstanding debate which sets written and oral poetry in antagonistic opposition. Rather, I would like to explore how an approach that rejects the polar opposition of these two categories can enrich our understanding of Greek poetry as something at once oral and written. As Andrew Ford has rightly noted, it is possible to grant considerable significance to the conceptual influence of writing without succumbing to the

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4 See especially Goldhill (1986), Winkler and Zeitlin (1990), and the collected articles in Zeitlin (1996).
5 On Wordsworth’s complex claims of oral composition, see Bennett (2007).
Havelockian position that “makes the alphabet an autonomous agent in intellectual history.” By recognizing that writing was an embedded, organic feature of Greek societies in the archaic era, one which did not threaten, but enriched and expanded the oral nature of poetic compositions – we can gain a more thorough appreciation for the contextual forces that helped to shape the song culture of the period.

There are many ways in which writing may interact with oral poetry as we have defined it. One may preserve an oral poem in written form at any time, and there is no need for such ‘literate’ status to preclude the fulfillment of any of Gentili’s criteria. But not all acts of writing carry the same force, and we must attend to the specific roles that writing can play within the broad realm of oral poetics. These functions are indeed conditioned by their socio-cultural and historical contexts, but they are no less shaped by the poet’s own idiosyncratic voice and vision. As we explore to the range of possible approaches to writing, our picture of the heterodox world of Greek poetry is enriched by increased detail and descriptive specificity. Of course, sometimes the addition of written documentation to an oral poem will prove little more than a tangential detail: a “factual” or “incidental” aspect of the poem’s history, but not one that is fundamentally embedded in the nature of the poem itself. But at other times, the use of writing is an essential feature of oral poetics. The grand scale of Homer’s epics or the “bookish” allusions of Aristophanes depend on a conceptual framework that is only made possible by written technologies. This fact does not render these poets any less oral, but it does mean that their specific orality cannot be fully appreciated without a detailed understanding of the role played by writing.

This study explores one such aspect of the interaction of writing with oral poetry: how the consciousness of written transmission can significantly alter the “performative psychology” of a poetic work. In Homeric studies, Egbert Bakker has already demonstrated how scholarly sensitivity to how a poem imagines its own performance can help to illuminate the unspoken assumptions and concerns which underpin and structure a poetic work. It is in a similar vein that I approach the texts of Pindar and Aeschylus. I argue that the work of these poets, composed for oral performance in the first half of the

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8 See especially Bakker (1996) and Bakker (2005).
fifth century, was shaped to an exceptional degree by Pindar and Aeschylus’ awareness of and sensitivity to the use of written transmission to facilitate the oral performance of their compositions. I hope to demonstrate that both poets fashioned their performative texts in response to the contemporary prevalence of writing as a means of transmitting poetic compositions. As a result, their works themselves exhibit an embedded performativity which reflects a desire to grapple with the implications written technologies may have on the art of poetry and the role of the poet. It is my contention that such a transformation of performative disposition underpins the corpora of both Pindar and Aeschylus and, furthermore, that these transformations are so closely aligned in their principal concerns that they are most productively examined as a single, linked phenomenon.

I describe this change as the invention of a scriptory poetics. Throughout archaic Greece, poetic culture remained an overwhelmingly oral affair with respect to performance. Within this oral framework, one radical capacity of writing rested with its ability to produce sounds at a distance, enabling the author to “speak” without being physically present. This type of writing can thus, in the words of Jesper Svenbro, “logically claim to be ‘oral’” insofar as it is “a machine for producing sounds.” At times this verbal power was thought of as a property of the written object itself, an oggetto parlante whose inanimate material fixity could express the speech of its author. Such objects – funerary monuments that called out to passersby, temple dedications that spoke of their devotion to a certain god – were thought to be imbued with an almost magical capacity to speak through the metaphorical tongue that had been inscribed upon them. But not all writing spoke for itself. In particular, poetic texts, intended for oral performance, required an additional step – a translation into the living voice of a

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9 There were, of course, exceptions to this rule. As early as the seventh century BC we find poetry beginning to explore modes of written “publication”, see below pp. 12-4.
10 A feature identified by Goody and Watt (1968) p. 53. Even if one can no longer claim that this is an inherent feature of writing per se, it is central to the Greek conception of poetic writing in its earliest formulations. So Ford (2003), Bakker (1997).
12 Steiner (1993).
13 Tueller (2010).
14 Furley (2010).
performer – before they were able to express the words of their absent composer. The poet’s words might be conveyed by a written object, but performance – the act which conferred the poem’s status as song – relied on the true voice of a living singer. When we think about the written form of a poetic text, it is as a facilitator, but not as a part, of a poetic performance. The poet’s work would be memorized by actors and singers who made no use of written documents during the performance event.

The written text was therefore not the same thing as the poet’s song, but rather served indirectly as a means to bring about its performance. It was not capable of producing an oral performance on its own, and thus relied on performers whose singing would complete its task of remote communication. In this sense, the early written texts of Greek poetry can be thought of as “scripts”. A script is a transitional, mediating object. It allowed for the poem to be fixed in writing, but only in order to enable its oral performance. These objects had no active role in actual performance, and the extent of their use in preparation for these events was also likely to be limited. But as a mediator between poet and performer, the script is a remarkable thing. It allows the poet to convey his words without being physically present, and thus the script is able to produce poetic performances even in the poet’s own absence. It permits, in other words, the poetic work to be distinguished from its author. The operation of the script itself is highly circumscribed; its function is limited to its mediating role and is therefore not necessarily implicated in the act of either poetic composition or performance. But as appreciation for the script’s mediating function grew, the perception of its impact began to be felt in realms of the poetic sphere beyond those in which the script was actively employed. The effect was not an unambiguous or literal one, not as clear cut as a change in the mode of transmission, but it constituted a figurative, atmospheric influence: a sense that poetry was becoming scriptory. I contend that for Pindar and Aeschylus, this broadly figurative idea of the scriptory nature of song gave rise to a concerted meditation on the character of

16 Following Nagy’s categorization, a text is defined as a script when “the written text is a prerequisite for performance” but (unlike the more restricted category of “scripture”) this performance presupposed as a necessary condition of the text’s “publication”; Nagy (1996) p. 112.

17 The small number of true “readers” who would have engaged these texts silently does not bear on the dynamics of poetic performance.
poetic expression: the development of a scriptory poetics that would be expounded and explored throughout the poets’ works.

The works and careers of Pindar and Aeschylus offer a number of discernable connections which might, at first glance, offer fertile grounds for a comparison. Both were active in the first half of the fifth century BC and found success with the same audiences across the Greek Mediterranean. At the same time it was once communis opinio that the two poets were divided by political ideology: Pindar, the aristocratic poet of tyrannical and oligarchic regimes, Aeschylus, the democratic playwright of the new order. But such claims are difficult to prove and they are, furthermore, challenged by our limited surviving evidence, which suggests that both poets were equally at home amongst various types of political structures. One is thus justified, I believe, in treating Pindar and Aeschylus as poetic contemporaries in the full sense of the term. This historical correspondence is further borne out by a number of thematic parallels that are evident in the poets’ extant work: most notably, both offer accounts of Agamemnon’s murder and the vengeful matricide of his son, and both narrate the events surrounding the Argive attacks on the city of Thebes. In addition, there are any number of less prominent thematic commonalities and one must imagine that even more overlap would appear in the great body of texts that are now lost to us. There is moreover a great range of figurative images – be it through metaphor, simile, epithets, metalepsis, and periphrasis – which connect the two poets on stylistic grounds. My aim is not, however, to make positive claims connecting the historical careers of the two poets. They may or may not have met in Athens or at Hieron’s court in Syracuse, and may or may not have influenced the form and content of each other’s subsequent poetic production. Even if it were possible to demonstrate that these similarities are the result of positive contact and influence between the two poets (and such historical certainty is all but impossible given

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19 See Finley (1955).
20 Much of the presumed political disparity arises from the circumstantial fact that the majority of Pindar’s surviving works are epinician compositions, which necessarily are biased towards the aristocratic class who competed in the athletic competitions.
the evidence now available), it would add little to our picture of the broader concerns which underlie the poets’ scriptory perspectives. Without contextualized historical foundations, the analysis of discrete thematic or figurative similarities tends to devolve into purely formal analysis without much purchase on larger questions of poetic outlook. To explore the question of scriptory poetics, we must look beyond superficial or biographical correspondences to discover more deeply embedded harmonies that emerge from the structure of the poems themselves.

A desire to place the poetry – rather than the poets – in dialogue demands that we address the question of genre, the factor which would seem to pose the greatest obstacle to the comparison of Pindar and Aeschylus. The marked distinctions, in terms of formal and contextual conditions for performance, that set the so-called lyric odes of Pindar apart from the dramatic works of Aeschylus have generally led to a more or less rigid segregation – overt or implicit – of the poets by most contemporary scholars. It is my contention that these seeming disparities can, if pressed, reveal otherwise imperceptible, shared poetic features. Since generic identity is profoundly linked to expectations for poetic performance, attention to genre opens a particularly rich avenue in respect to the poets’ understanding of the scriptory nature of their poetry.

In light of recent trends in Classics, the mention of genre might be thought to imply the idea of function – the role that a poem was meant to play, the social, cultural, or religious task that its performance fulfilled. Thus it is held that Pindar’s epinician odes served to celebrate the athletic victor and effect his reintegration into his homeland, while Aeschylean tragedies were designed for the democratic festival of the Great Dionysia, when the Athenian polis both celebrated and examined its own core beliefs. Whether such a definition is appropriate for individual texts or corpora is not a question to be debated here. But, as I argue in some detail in the opening chapter of this study, I

23 So Kurke (1991) claims that “…in terms of its poetics, [Pindaric] epinikion was the antitype to tragedy” p. 6. Notable exceptions amongst recent scholarship are Crotty (1982), Nagy (2000).
24 See the contributions to Depew and Obbink (2000) and more recently, Swift (2010).
25 The drastic circumscription of Pindar’s epinician odes to their “encomiastic function” is the result of Bundy (1962) whose influence on Pindaric studies and beyond is difficult to underestimate. The social and political contextualization of his work along these lines was heralded by the work of Crotty (1982) and Kurke (1991).
26 Good introductions to this approach are found in Goldhill (1986), Hall (2009).
believe that a functionally driven sense of genre has only limited value to an effort to examine cross-generic sympathies.

Rather than look to a poem’s generic function, I suggest that formal properties – particularly those tied to performance – are better guides to the similarities and differences that should be taken into account in comparing the poetry of Pindar and Aeschylus. From this perspective, we can see the two poets’ work as aligned in certain broad respects. Both can be classed as choral poets, making use of the traditional forms of melic composition intended for performance by a group of singers. This common feature entails a number of ancillary parallels, such as the central importance of music and dance within performance and the creation of a performative hic et nunc, an imaginary reality that exists within the realm of the singers’ words and actions. At the same time, in this shared choral identity there are also important differences that distinguish the poets’ compositions. Most immediately significant is the divergence of dictional mode: the voice in which the poet’s work is presented. Pindar’s odes are primarily monologic (diegetic) in voice, presented as the first-person expression and narration of a single speaker who claims to be the poet himself. By contrast, Aeschylean drama is dialogic (mimetic), a polyphonic exchange between multiple speakers, none of whom claims to be the poet. Taking account of this structural divergence is an inherent and necessary feature of a comparative treatment of the two poets. But I hope to demonstrate that, when viewed through the lens of scriptory poetics, these differences provide a remarkably fertile ground for exploring the underlying similarities in the poets’ conception of their work and in their composition’s shared “performative psycholology”.

The Importance of Writing

One pressing question is why Pindar and Aeschylus should be so acutely concerned with the idea of writing when by the end of the sixth-century BC, as they started their careers, the technical and conceptual revolution made possible by the introduction of alphabetic writing in Greece had been underway for nearly three centuries.27 In order to answer this

question, we must take stock of what is at issue when we talk about writing and literacy in Archaic Greece.

Following the groundbreaking work of Parry and Lord, debates both inside and outside of the discipline of Classics sought to chart the contours of “orality” and “literacy” as socio-political identities with inherently distinct characteristics and effects. Writing was treated as though it had a single, identifiable essence and its advent in Greece was thought to have sparked an almost automatic process of forward progress. More recently, the idea that writing carries a set of intrinsic attributes has been more or less rejected and scholars have generally adopted a more contextually driven model that looks to the particular manifestations of writing under specific social and political conditions. By examining varieties of writing across the four continents, scholars have begun to put together a heterodox picture of writing and literacy, demonstrating how the influence of written technologies differs significantly depending on the cultural context in which they are put to use. Western models of writing that were once thought to demonstrate universal truths are now understood to be highly contingent, and many of our less well founded assumptions about the impact of writing have been contradicted by evidence of alternate approaches to literacy around the world.

This new, contextualized approach to writing has also had important consequences for our understanding of the history of written technology in the ancient Greek world. Even in the context of Archaic Greece, reactions to writing differed greatly from city to city, and – most importantly for our present investigation – were highly modulated by the type and purpose of written activity. Public inscriptions conceptualize the written word in a way that differs greatly from dedicatory graffiti and these again are distinguished from funerary and sculptural inscription. The great range of written evidence that has survived

28 Parry (1971), Lord (1960), Lord (1995). Important contributions to the debate have been made by Havelock (1963), Havelock (1986), Goody (1968), Ong (1982). A good bibliographic survey of work in Classics is offered by Fantuzzi (1980) and Thomas (1992). More recently, as the localized nature of writing and literacy has become better understood, scholarship in the area has become much more specialized in approach, with few venturing the types of broad claims that once characterized the debate.

29 As Rosalind Thomas has argued that “the effects or implications of literacy [are] heavily dependent on whatever society is using it. The variety in the possible uses of literacy is now abundantly clear […]. They seem very largely determined by the customs and beliefs, not to mention the political and social system, already in place.” Thomas (1992) p. 22. See also, Andersen (1989).
points to a variegated and diverse reaction to writing throughout the Greek Mediterranean, and we must assume that many more facets of this complex picture have been lost to the passage of time. Furthermore, although the interrelationship of written and oral modes of communication and memory is a fundamental aspect of certain types of writing, not all writing should be thought of as the visual representation of speech. Often the graphic function of written communication stands entirely outside the realm of the spoken word, creating its own systems of signification beyond the oral capacities of language. As Rosalind Thomas has argued, the early period of writing in Greece reveals the exploration of a broad range of possible approaches to the written word, many of which we do not yet fully understand. Therefore we must not just avoid drawing universalizing conclusions about the impact of alphabetic writing or literacy from the evidence of archaic Greece, we should also be attentive to distinctions within the Greek context which, from the start, contained a multiplicity of “literacies” within it.

One general trend that emerges with some clarity from this complicated picture is the veritable explosion of diverse and heterodox forms of writing throughout the Greek world in the sixth century. Epigraphic evidence from this period is far greater that of the previous two centuries, and we begin to find inscriptions of all types – public legal declarations, religious dedications, as well as funerary monuments both public and private. We find a significant increase in the use of public writing across the Greek world as laws and proclamations were committed to stone and bronze for all to see, and coins carried written messages alongside iconic representations. But the broad proliferation of civic writing also witnessed the development of localized traditions, such as the political institution of ostracism at Athens or the large-scale inscription of trade laws in merchant cities such as Eretria, Argos, and Elis. In Syracuse, the sixth-century temple to Apollo was inscribed along the pediment to identify the maker of the temple columns: kala erga

30 Thomas (1992) esp. chapters. 4 and 5.
31 The importance of using the plural, “literacies”, is reflected in the title of a recent volume on Greco-Roman approaches to writing: Johnson and Parker (2009).
34 Gagarin (2008) p. 82.
in honor of the god.\textsuperscript{35} Outside of the civic context, inscriptions were also abounding.\textsuperscript{36} The incorporation of writing, particularly for grave markers, developed a confident, almost formalized style that reflects a degree of comfort with and command of the written form as its use became more widespread.\textsuperscript{37} The language of dedicatory and funerary monuments begins to shift away from what Svenbro has called their earlier egocentric disposition, in which inscriptions voiced in the first person beckoned to passers-by to converse with the dead.\textsuperscript{38} No longer asserting their status as \textit{oggetti parlanti}, these stone and metal monuments cede their previously internalized agency to that of the reader, whom the sculptor could now rely upon to engage correctly with words set in stone or bronze.\textsuperscript{39} At the same time, vase painters begin to deploy letters both to label the figures on their work and as decorative features in their own right.\textsuperscript{40} This is the great period of so-called nonsense inscriptions: written objects that do not convey their messages through grammatically coherent expressions, but rather rely on the visual power of the alphabet itself to communicate meaning.\textsuperscript{41} One of the most fascinating examples of this practice, dating to the late seventh and early sixth centuries, is the dedication of \textit{abecedaria} graffiti at the temple of Zeus Semios at Mt. Hymettos.\textsuperscript{42} The dedications found at the temple often contain only a single letter, or a list of letters, most often in alphabetical order, as if the mere fact of inscribing the written form was an act of devotion to the god of symbols.\textsuperscript{43} Lead curse tablets, which begin to appear around the sixth century primarily in Attica and Sicily, demonstrate another intriguing way in which writing was working its way into Greek thinking. The tablets, on which spells to harm an enemy by “binding” are inscribed, adopt the material form of the written document into their magical formula. The creator of the tablet would ask that his foe be, through sympathetic magic, made hard and fast just like the lead on which his words were

\textsuperscript{36} Immerwahr (2008).
\textsuperscript{39} This is not to say that literacy at this time was prevalent, but that the use of inscription had developed a tradition which assumed that those who could read would be familiar with its forms.
\textsuperscript{40} Slater (1999), Lissarrague (1999), Osborne and Pappas (2007), Hedreen (2009).
\textsuperscript{42} Langdon (1976), Thomas (1992) p. 60.
\textsuperscript{43} Henrichs (2003) pp. 50-2.
written. Most often these early tablets inscribe only the name of the intended victim; the written word alone was powerful enough to work the spell.

Within this boisterous outpouring of written texts, one of the most significant shifts is not documented by epigraphic evidence and has left little trace in the historical record. Perhaps the most important of all the modes of writing that flourished in the sixth century was the emerging genre of written prose. The rise of prose writers is generally associated with the intellectual climate of the eastern Mediterranean and the so-called Ionian Enlightenment, but prose writers were found throughout the Greek world in the sixth century. Setting aside the poetic forms that had dominated all areas of Greek wisdom, these prose authors set out their theories of natural history, physics, and the divine in prose treatises. They wrote ethnographic, mythical, and local histories, and even set out to analyze the work of the great poets, offering interpretations of their verses in the new language of prose. We know the names, and even possess fragments of the work of some of these figures: Anaximander of Miletus, Akousilaus of Argos, Hecataeus of Miletus, Theagenes of Rhegium, Heraclitus of Ephesus, Pherecydes of Athens. But for the most part the period remains murky and our sense of the importance of these authors is mostly gleaned from the writings of the successors on whose work their groundbreaking prose experiments had such a profound impact.

Within the world of poetry, it is evident that writing was an influential force from more or less the time of its introduction to Greece. Amongst our earliest evidence of writing are verse graffiti that demonstrate an interaction between writing and poetry that can be traced to the first experiments with the new alphabetic technology. The famous “Nestor’s cup” found in Pithacusae and dated to c. 730-20 and the Dipylon vase from Athens (dated c. 740-30) both record short lines of verse which allude to broader poetic

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45 Goldhill (2002).
46 The evidence for writers of this period is reviewed, with bibliography, by Granger (2007) pp. 412-6. Overviews of the debate concerning the written or oral status of these texts are found in Ferrari (1984), Laks (2001), Palù (2005). For a slightly more heterodox picture, see the contributions to Robb (1983).
49 Fowler (1996).
50 The extreme claim that writing was adopted in Greece in order to preserve poetic works has been put forward by Powell (1991).
traditions.\footnote{Watkins (1976), Thomas (1992) pp. 58-9, West, S. (1994), Osborne and Pappas (2007) pp. 133-5.} This evidence cautions against too readily dismissing the idea that writing did not significantly impact on how poetry was received in the earliest phases of its use in Greece.\footnote{Henrichs (2003) pp. 46-7, Powell (2009) pp. 238-40.} In the sixth century, poetic inscriptions continue to document the intersection between written and oral poetic culture. Our rich trove of funerary epigram reveals a poetic tradition adapting to new possibilities of written communication.\footnote{Day (2010), Baumbach, Petrovic and Petrovic (2010).} As kouro\"s sculptures began to incorporate verse epigrams inscribed across a figure’s legs,\footnote{See Lorenz (2010).} and temple dedications were regularly adorned with lines of poetry,\footnote{Furley (2010).} the question of whether such poems were still primarily intended for oral performance becomes hard to determine. Certainly, even if oral performance were still envisaged, an added element of graphic presentation, of the visual aesthetics of the written form, had begun to enter into the world of poetry. Yet most poetic texts from the period were not preserved in stone, and the signs of writing that are to be found in such compositions differ markedly from their inscriptional counterparts.\footnote{For a sense of the range, see the explorations of Detienne and Camassa (1988), Rosenmeyer (1997), Carson (1998).} Poems begin to wonder about tokens, prints, and stamps – exploring myths and metaphors of writing, as Deborah Steiner has called them, that hint at the poet’s awareness of writing without explicitly naming the new technology.\footnote{Steiner (1994) pp. 4-5.} One of the most dynamic of these reflections on writing is the use of so-called sphragis in lyric poetry of the sixth century, most notably in the work of Theognis, but also in contemporary hymns.\footnote{On Theognis, see Ford (1985), Pratt (1995), Edmunds (1997). On the general form and development of the topos, Kranz (1961).} The sphragis imprinted the poet’s identity on his work, like a stamp on a coin or a seal, both to safeguard and to identify the composition for the future.\footnote{Steiner (1994) pp. 89-90.} Although the sphragis is not proof of the poet’s use of writing, it mirrors the dual aspects of possession and material safekeeping that frequently emerge in early Greek experiments with the written form. The author’s stamp verifies the authenticity of his first-person speech, and the poet ensures that his voice will be recognized in the words
sung by subsequent performers. The form hints at the emerging awareness that writing has enabled a degree and kind of separation and distance between author and poem that had not previously been imagined. And as poets began to think of their compositions as possessing their own future apart from, and indeed far more expansive and long-lasting than, that of their makers, they also began to explore new categories of authorship enabled by the written word.

One might be tempted to treat poetry as yet another micro-climate in the contextual geography of writing in Archaic Greece. But as even my brief survey of examples above serves to demonstrate, we should be wary of assigning a single role or character to the poetic use of writing. The elegiac verses of Theognis are as concerned with the implications of written technology as those of the funerary epigrams whose meter they share, but the form this interest takes is far from uniform. Whereas the epigrams explored the new possibilities of their permanent material status, Theognis’ speech looks to how writing can enable a metaphoric permanence of oral reperformance and the preservation of his voice through the faithful repetition of his song. Poetic experimentation with written technology did not follow a single course of evolution nor did it manifest itself in a homogeneous or predictable fashion. Throughout the archaic period we find poets who variously expose and conceal, confront and deny the influence of writing on their work. Just as Gentili has shown us that we must treat poetic orality as a prismatic and multiform concept, so poetic literacy also needs to be considered in the plural: as a heterodox collection of poetic literacies that are constantly renegotiating their relationship to the world around them.

Choral poetry, with its distinctive formal properties, carves out its own odd space within this multifaceted world of poetic literacies. It is generally true that the impact of the new technologies of writing on poetry in archaic Greece is distinguished from other forms of early literacy by the continued importance of oral performance. But this general truth takes on a particularly charged significance when applied to choral poetry. More than other contemporary forms of poetry, choral song was tied to its ephemeral, occasional character by the central importance of musical and visual aspects that

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60 Of course, poetry was not the only form of writing to retain a close tie between spoken and written communication.
functioned alongside the verbal components in performance. When we speak of choral poetry in its sixth- and fifth-century contexts, we should remember that it was as much a spectacle of (now lost) music and dance as of the words which have been transmitted across the millennia. In fact, one of the remaining mysteries surrounding the use of written technology for the preservation of melic song is the question of how it might have conveyed information concerning music and dance. Was there musical notation that accompanied written texts, as there came to be in the Hellenistic period? Or does the omission of such details reflect the continued hybrid status of the choral script, which relied on the oral transmission of elements beyond the words themselves? Given the state of our evidence, it seems unlikely that these questions will ever be conclusively answered. But whatever the capacity of writing to convey non-verbal information, its limitations in the face of the insistently performative nature of choral poetry remain all too plain. Because the spectacle of oral performance, with the attending components of music and dance, is essential to the identity of archaic Greek melos (including tragedy), it requires a greater imaginative leap to conceive of a written text as an integral part of these choral songs. Even when it is their de facto function, it is difficult to see exactly how written melic texts can be “machines for sound”, when their silent materiality appears so obviously incompatible with the dynamism of the oral performance which they enable. It is therefore unsurprising that it was not until this relatively late period that composers of melic song found ways to integrate writing with their idea of choral poetics.

It is my contention that by the end of the sixth-century awareness of the inescapable role of writing in preserving and transmitting poetic compositions had reached a critical phase for poets working in these most emphatically performative genres. And I argue that this awareness spurred Pindar and Aeschylus (and likewise Simonides, Bacchylides, and

62 As Thomas notes, such combination of oral and written communication was a regular phenomenon across the Greek work. Thomas (1992) p. 76, also Henrichs (2003).
63 Indeed, it is possible that the archaic poets’ own difficulty in accepting this seemingly illogical relationship between written text and oral performance is also the motivation behind contemporary scholarship’s general rejection of writing as a significant factor in archaic Greek poetic composition.
countless other poets whose names or works are lost) to actively confront the hybrid nature of their poetic works, exploring their dual status as both performed and written, occasional and immortal, ephemeral and materially permanent. This reconfiguration required the poets to develop a model of written fixity that incorporated oral performance and, more importantly, one that included an idea of authorship robust enough to link the poet to a future performance from which he would himself be absent. Scriptory poetics, as defined in this study, is designed to achieve precisely that. On the one hand, the scriptory perspective of the poet mobilizes a broad conceptual framework in which the material, written script must function in concert with living agents of reperformance so as to bring a poet’s song to life. On the other hand, the script is able to transmit the authority of the poet’s own voice so that the composer of a written script can be seen as responsible for a poetic performance without actually participating in it.

This scriptory dynamic extends the spatio-temporal range of the poem, linking it across time and space to the contrasting indexes of its composition and performance. In the script’s past stands the poet, the absent author of the song who has imbued the written object with his words but also with the marker of his authorial presence. In its future lies the possibility of performance, bringing the silent script back to life through the voices of the poet’s vicarious reperformers. The spatio-temporal distance that the script is able to bridge produces a scriptory landscape of detachment in which the acts of composition and performance stand at a reciprocal remove from one another. While there is a literal aspect to this operation – a historical reality of composition and reperformance – it is the figurative, imaginary dynamic of this scriptory mindset that best reflects the poets’ engagement with the complexities of their new poetic world. Pindar and Aeschylus situate the often vertiginous displacements of this spatio-temporal matrix at the heart of their work, deploying complex dictional tropes and figurative structures to explore how their poems may navigate the distances that scriptory poetics requires them to travel. The poet himself must stand apart from his work, trusting in the scriptory structure to ensure its proper performance. This distance is already present in nuce in Homer’s great epics, whose stichic verse form was, like the elegiacs it so closely resembles, more readily detached from its immediate performance context than the complex cola of choral song.

64 Ford (1992), Bakker (2005).
But for *melos*, the acceptance of a gap between composition and performance demands a far more sophisticated frame of reference, and a firmer comprehension of the role that writing – as an agent of fixity, ownership, and material presence – had come to play within Greek culture more generally.

Our understanding of developments in melic song culture certainly suggests a growing use of writing in this period. The increasingly pan-Hellenic status of exceptionally accomplished composers is likely to have lead to a more regular transcription of their poems in written form, whether to be retained as *agalmata* by the patron, to travel in lieu of the poet himself (who “performed” in more locations than he could physically visit), or to spread the fame of the composition in other locations.65 Traveling choruses allowed for the frequent exchange of song between different cities at central religious sites such as Delos and Delphi, leading to the greater commodification of melic poetry.66 But how these poems came to be written down, whether by the poet in the act of creation or by a scribe after the poem had been composed orally, is not a question for our present study. The scant evidence for this period severely limits any attempt to give an account of these technical aspects of the history of poetic writing. We have little non-inscriptional evidence of writing from before the third century B.C. and none from the fifth century, so even speculative claims about the form that scripts would have taken cannot be ventured. Our earliest accounts of the use of writing for poetic composition or performance come from the late fifth and early fourth century, but give little beyond the most cursory sense of how written texts might have been used and are nevertheless products of a later period of poetic production and performance. Rather than attempt a chiefly speculative history of material conditions – a study of what types of writing medium were used, how many people would have had access to the script, or how components of music and dance were recorded – we will follow the lead of the evidence we do possess, namely the poetic works themselves. These texts prompt us instead to identify the key developments of the period in terms of a new conceptual apparatus that reconfigured the basic structures of poetic expression on the model of the script.

A watershed moment, if one is needed, can be identified in the late sixth-century with
the emergence of tragedy. Although it has often gone unnoted in discussions of how and
why poetry found new expression in tragic drama, the fundamental generic property of
the form, i.e. the fully mimetic dialogue between multiple characters, is predicated on the
concept if not, perhaps, the literal use of a written script.\footnote{The point is made by Segal (1986) pp. 77-8, also Wise (1998), Henrichs (2003) pp. 56-7 en passant.} The polyphony of tragic
performance, which requires multiple actors to take on the various roles of the mimetic
drama, necessitates that the poet be divorced from the performance of his poetry. Even if,
as some assert, the playwright participated in the inaugural performance of his work, he
would still have needed to rely on the other performers to impersonate the full range of
characters to whom his words had given voice.\footnote{This fact is perhaps reflected in Aristotle’s developmental model of tragedy, in which poets first participated in their dramas as actors and were subsequently left off the stage entirely: (Rhet. 1403 21-4), discussed by Clay (1998) p. 27.} Thus tragedy embraces the separation of
poet from performance that writing has made possible, adopting a form that relies on an
extreme and unmistakable instantiation of written culture. Connected to the separation of
poet and performance is a second poetic assumption that is based on the concept of a
written script: the unity of the poetic work.\footnote{On the development of the idea of poetic unity in Greek thought, see Ford (1997).} With the full mimesis of tragic drama, the
author’s role was not simply to compose the poem, but to represent the unarticulated
foundations that linked the disparate voices of polyphonic performance into a single,
unified dramatic poem.

Recognizing the necessarily scriptory nature of the tragic genre presents us with an
elegant double paradox. On the one hand, the most emphatically, inherently performative
of all the kinds of Greek poetry is also revealed to be the most dependent on the written
word. On the other hand, the full mimesis made possible by the adoption of writing
entails that the poet never speaks in his own voice about the scriptory poetics that is
embedded at fundamental levels of his work.\footnote{“In tragedy, where the poet never speaks in his own person, this kind of self-conscious
textuality [i.e. such as is found in lyric] can work only implicitly, behind the dramatic spectacle.” Segal (1986) p. 97.} Yet this latter fact does not mean that
tragedy is unable to reflect on its own scriptory nature. Mentions of writing and its uses
are prevalent throughout tragedy from our earliest extant examples.\textsuperscript{71} As Patricia Easterling has argued, the idea of written preservation and transmission had clearly, and by no means accidentally, entered into the imagination of the tragic poets in much the same way as had the idea of the theater in which their plays were performed.\textsuperscript{72}

Aeschylus often refers to written texts in his dramatic compositions. All of our extant plays as well as a good number of fragments preserve moments of direct engagement with written technology. In a famous segment of the enigmatic \textit{Dike} fragment, Justice herself is said to record the evil deeds of men upon the \textit{deltos} of Zeus to ensure that their future punishments will not be neglected.\textsuperscript{73} Elsewhere Aeschylus readily refers to writing, be it public inscriptions,\textsuperscript{74} tablets or papyri to be conveyed by messenger,\textsuperscript{75} or embossed metal letters on a hero’s shield blazon.\textsuperscript{76} But the clearest picture of Aeschylus’ consciousness of writing emerges not from these explicit mentions, but from what I will describe as his symbolic and allegorical representations of scriptory forms. Yet, as tragedy developed and the shape of the genre grew more distinct, the explicit representation of written technologies became an increasingly prominent element of the dramatic stage.\textsuperscript{77} By the latter half of the fifth century tragedy and, even more emphatically, its para-genre, comedy,\textsuperscript{78} had come to incorporate ever more insistent meditations on writing and written technologies into the heart of their dramatic vision.

\textsuperscript{71} Easterling (1985) pp. 4-5.
\textsuperscript{72} Easterling states that the way that tragedians refer to writing “seems to me exactly comparable with the vague way in which the tragedians allude to their own medium, the theatre. There are many instances of self-reference in Greek tragedy, but there is no explicit use of play-imagery or of words which have an unequivocal reference to contemporary institutions: words like \textit{τραγωδία}, \textit{θέατρον}, \textit{δράμα} would be too ‘modern’, just the kind of anachronism that is studiously avoided.” Easterling (1985) p. 6.
\textsuperscript{74} Ag. 1334.
\textsuperscript{75} Sup. 946-9.
\textsuperscript{76} Sept. 434, 468, 646-8. Discussed below pp. 164-80.
\textsuperscript{77} All three playwrights composed plays with the title \textit{Palamedes}, most likely dramatizing the hero’s greatest accomplishment, the invention of writing. These plays are now lost, and the few remaining fragments tell us little about their form or content. Had these texts survived, we would possess the ideal means to trace the development of tragic approaches to writing through the perspectives of the genre’s three greatest practitioners.
\textsuperscript{78} On comedy as paratragedy, see Silk (2000).
indication of the signal importance of writing on the tragic stage.79 Phaedra’s letter to Theseus allows her to speak false words from beyond the grave and doom her stepson to his untimely end.80 Somewhat differently, Iphigeneia’s letter, dictated by the illiterate priestess and read out onstage at her insistence, enables the pivotal recognition of the estranged siblings, Iphigeneia and Orestes, in the Iphigeneia in Tauris.81 And it is surely no coincidence that the first representation of silent reading in the Greek world asserts its connection to the world of the stage three times over when Dionysus, the god of the theatre, is found reading a text of Euripides in Aristophanes’ paratragic comedy, the Frogs.82

Fragments from Euripides’ Theseus (fr. 382 N = Athen. 454b-c) and Agathon’s Telephos (TrGF 39 F4 = Athen. 454d) provide an even more unambiguous glimpse of tragedy’s preoccupation with writing.83 Both passages, preserved in Athenaeus’ Deipnosophistai, contain an ekphrastic description of letters as perceived by an illiterate herdsman. The lively ekphrases turn the word into a riddle:84 the sigma is described as a “lock of hair” or a “Scythian bow”, the epsilon a “trident on its side”. And as the rustic describes each letter in turn, the audience “read” his oral performance (perhaps as they gazed upon the word itself), learning that the letters spell the name of Theseus. The conceit is traced back by Athenaeus to Sophocles’ now lost satyr play, Amphiaraos, in which it is claimed that a character danced out letters onstage (τὰ γράμματα […] ὄροφον Αθην. 454f), and forward into the work of the fourth-century dramatist Theodectas of Phaselis. But the most fascinating example that Athenaeus records, and the one that introduces his dramatic musings, comes from so-called Alphabet Show of the comic poet Callias.85 Although many details of the play remain obscure, the extant fragments present us with a drama in which the chorus was composed of the 24 letters of

79 Torrance (2010).
80 See the detailed treatment of Goff (1990).
82 Harris (1989) p. 84.
83 As Svenbro comments regarding these instances of explicit contemplation, these moments make “visible what is normally concealed in the theater – that is, writing.” Svenbro (1988) p. 186.
84 This is the motivation for Athanaeus’ quotations.
the Ionic alphabet. The play seems to have been an intensely paratragic affair, and may even have included Euripides and Sophocles as characters on the stage. The Alphabet Show not only borrows the topos, familiar from tragic drama, of explicit meditation on written script, but explores its more ribald potentials in the context of paratragic meditations. Like its tragic models, Callias’ play presents the written word as a thing of joy and wonder, an accomplishment intriguing enough to entertain a sophisticated theater audience, and one which gained much of its appeal from its deep connections to the tragic stage. These fragments present celebrations of the technology of writing in its most basic form, and offer clear evidence of an appreciation for, even delight in, the close bond between tragedy and the written word.

For Aeschylus, meditation on how drama relies on writing does not take such overt and concrete forms. Rather, the need to understand the full range and the implications of his scriptory poetics compels the playwright to embed his explorations of written technology within larger, more illusive structures of symbolic meaning. As we shall see, at those times when he does examine writing explicitly, he incorporates it in a broader semiotic field, such as the shield devices of the Seven Against Thebes, or encodes it tacitly within the actions of his characters, as with the frenzied prophecies of Cassandra in the Agamemnon, the recognition scene between Orestes and Electra in the Choephoroi, or the military expedition of Xerxes in the Persai. The interpretation of these scenes as driven by scriptory concerns is not an anachronistic retrojection. We may, perhaps, find early confirmation in Aeschylus’ ancient readers that these moments were understood as the implicit meditations on writing and scriptory poetics. In the allusive engagements of Sophocles and Euripides, we can see the subtle forms of Aeschylus’ scriptory figurations brought more clearly into literal expression. The insistence in Sophocles’ Trachiniae on the written form of Heracles’ prophecies explicitly recasts Cassandra’s ravings in terms

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86 Pöhlmann (1971).
88 Gagné (forthcoming 2011).
89 Rosen (1999), Slater (2002).
91 In this respect, these passages are not unlike the abecedaria graffiti found at Mt. Hymettos.
of written technologies.\(^{92}\) Similarly, when Euripides reconfigures the recognition scene of *Choephoroi* as the meeting of Iphigeneia and Orestes in the *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, he transforms the tokens of recognition – the lock and the footprints which he had ridiculed in his *Electra* – into a written document.\(^{93}\) Euripides draws out the scriptory themes that are subtly embedded in the Aeschylean scene, making his interpretation explicit through the use of a true *deltos* to facilitate the recognition.\(^{94}\) Although I cannot offer any detailed examination of such richly allusive moments in this study, the fact that Aeschylus’ successors were compelled to adapt his scriptory figurations to suit their own dramatic compositions can help the modern reader to better appreciate the subtle forms of Aeschylus’ often enigmatic and illusive scriptory imagination.

Non-dramatic melic genres, such as the epinicians, partheneia, dithyrambs, and paians that Pindar composed, did not depend on written technology for their existence. But by the beginning of the fifth century they were nonetheless also beginning to confront the question of writing. Perhaps influenced by the success of dramatic composition, lyric poets developed an interest in the possibilities of writing for the purpose of their own poetic works. Bacchylides offers one expression of this cross-generic experimentation in his fourth dithyramb, where the influence of dramatic form is unambiguous. The dithyramb is composed in a fully dialogic (mimetic) mode: the poem is comprised entirely of the exchange of paired stanzas between a Chorus of Athenians and King Aegeus as they anticipate the arrival of Theseus at Athens.\(^ {95}\) Not only are the characters fully mimetic, but without an authoritative narrator, the poem exists entirely within the imaginary *hic et nunc* in which the action unfolds.\(^ {96}\) By contrast with Bacchylides, Pindar


\(^{94}\) Segal (1986) pp. 102-5.

\(^{95}\) The prominence of Theseus in these passages may simply be coincidental, or it may be a result of Theseus’ characterization as a civilizing hero. Particularly apposite in this regard is the means by which he conquered the Minotaur, marking his progress through the labyrinth with a thread – a feat not unlike that of writing itself.

does not adopt the formal features of tragedy in his poetic experimentations. Rather his exploration of the scriptory nature of his compositions exploits the presence of a first-person voice of the poet within his monologic (diegetic) works. In so doing, Pindar provides us with an almost inexhaustible range of authorial reflections on his poems’ scriptory status.

Pindar’s desire to place himself unmistakably at the heart of his compositions, to ensure that his voice be heard in the oral performances of his poetry, might at first seem to mitigate against the type of scriptory interest exhibited by his dramatic contemporary. But in fact, by drawing attention to his role in the creation of his poems, Pindar uncovers an expansive field for scriptory exploration. Because scriptory poetics finds its dynamic potential in the distance between the poet and his song, that is, in the gap that the script opens up between an author and the performance of his work, Pindar’s insistent inclusion of his authorial, compositional voice within the performative language of his poetry yields a heightened level of consideration and exploitation of the spatio-temporal characteristics of the scriptory structure. Techniques such as “oral subterfuge” create the impression of *ex tempore* composition which permits the poet to appropriate the vicarious performing voices that will turn his words into speech. The poet is thus able to participate in the performance of his composition, even if he is not physically present. He turns the moment of performance into a re-enactment of his own compositional activities, unsettling the *hic et nunc* reality of performance through the introduction of alternative spatio-temporal locations. Conversely, Pindar regularly balances these moments of the poet’s vicarious presence against indexical statements that refer not to the moment of performance, but to an act of composition that precedes the oral performance. Whereas oral subterfuge turns the performance into a compositional event, these prospective moments deny the performance a stable *hic et nunc*, placing the anticipated oral expression of the song in the future of its own performance.

This operation of doubled temporal deixis was first explored by Giovan Battista D’Alessio, who demonstrated that Pindar often makes use of two interdependent but conflicting deictic *origines*, that of the poem’s composition (what D’Alessio calls

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97 The term was coined by Carey (1981) p. 5.
“Coding Time”) and its subsequent performance (“Receiving Time”). At times, compositional claims of the author cannot be located within the parameters of the poem’s performance in receiving time (thus constituting oral subterfuge), but shift the indexical center backward to the time of the poem’s composition. The doubling of the poem’s indexical center calls attention the author’s absence from the performance, to the spatial and temporal distance between the poem’s two points of *hic et nunc*. As D’Alessio explains:

Pindar does *not* pretend in these cases to stage his songs as impromptu performances; instead he dramatizes the process of their creation – their history *before* the performance – even creating in some cases a *gap* between text and performance. The expected text is replaced by another one, a mimesis of the process of its own production. The poet exploits the separation between text and performance while apparently effacing it.

Through his exploitation of temporal deixis, Pindar stages the double status of his poetic speech, which belongs simultaneously to two times (composition and performance) and two voices (the poet’s and the performer’s). Pindar’s temporal deixis exposes the separation that is tacitly exploited by tragedy in its own, fully mimetic staging. Both poetic forms rely on two distinct *origines*, with a first beginning that corresponds to the author’s act of composition and a second that occurs when the text is performed. These compositions are located, to paraphrase Charles Segal, both in the physical, public space of oral performance and in the imagined, conceptual world of the script.

We can see this double status being explored in the opening image of *Olympian 6*, where Pindar meditates on the proper way to begin his song. The passage has been rightly praised as amongst the poet’s most compelling, and its value as a complex reflection of Pindar’s own conception of his poetic work has often been noted. Adapting the elements of monumental architecture to his own, poetic ends, Pindar offers an extended figurative

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99 D’Alessio (2004) p. 270. Although the majority of D’Alessio’s examples are drawn from Pindar, he argues that conflicting temporal deixis “is by no means a Pindaric, or even a Greek, idiosyncrasy, but it is also widely attested in songs from different cultural contexts.” p. 271. But I believe that his evidence makes clear that the frequent and sophisticated use of the device by Pindar (detailed pp. 284-92) stands in contrast to that of other archaic Greek poets.
meditation on (and as) the beginning of his poem. In constructing a song, Pindar declares, the poet must erect a glorious façade at the beginning of his work, standing it up like golden columns for all to see (1-4):

χρωσέας ὑποστάσαντες εὕτειχὲι προθύρῳ θαλάμου
κιόνας ὡς ὁτε θαντὸν μέγαρον
πάξσιμεν· ἀγχωμένου δ’ ἔργου πρόσωπον
χωθεθεμεν τηλαιαγες.

Standing up golden columns under the well-built forecourt of the chamber, let us fix them as a palace wondrous to behold. At the start of a work it is necessary to set down the far-shining façade.

The comparison of poetic composition to architectural construction allows Pindar to expose the double nature of his poem’s beginning. The mode of construction he describes at first appears paradoxical: buildings are not begun from the outside, but from unseen foundations hidden within. However, the shining façade is the first thing seen by a visitor, the “performative” beginning of the building, though not its structural foundation. By this logic, Ford notes, it is not the “song as text that will be ‘gazed at’ and ‘far-gleaming,’ but the performance and the fame that it creates.”¹⁰¹ We are invited to see the poem at the moment of its reception, to admire the shining beginning of oral performance. But the paradox of the image also points to the poem’s other beginning, the beginning of construction which fixes (πάξσιμεν) and sets (θεμεν) the physical text into a solid and immovable form; the firm material of the poem’s other foundation in the hands of the “encoding” poet, hidden from view by the shining spectacle of its dynamic performance. The unstable image offers a hint of how the dual status of the text as both written composition and oral performance results in “a double vision or a double language, of a backstage, of something hidden behind or beneath.”¹⁰² Pindar’s double image offers a new type of sphragis, one which imprints the poem with its own hybrid nature and thus ensures that its performance is always marked by the scriptory relationship between the poet and his song.

Pindar’s imaginary architecture is not, of course, a literal written object. But the language of material construction and monumental fixity links the proem of Olympian 6

to a broader discourse of inscriptional monuments that preserved the memory of a
victor’s fame. These material correlates to the poet’s epinician odes provided the melic
poet with a clear model of how a fixed, material text could offer a permanent
commemoration of an athlete’s accomplishments. As Deborah Steiner has shown, Pindar
engages in an oblique and highly figurative meditation on written textuality which often
takes the form of an appropriation of the attributes of physical permanence that were the
distinctive property of these material agalmata. Although these passages are not explicit
declarations of the written status of Pindar’s poems, they are, as Steiner insists, “no less
revealing [of attitudes towards writing] than direct reports.” Pindar “inscribes” his own
metaphorical agalmata with his poetic text, but unlike the physical objects on which
they are modeled, Pindar’s written monuments are never fully fixed, never tied to a single
place or moment. His written objects always incorporate the mobility and spatio-temporal
instability of the script.

The metaphoric, often enigmatic character of these scriptory meditations in both
Pindar and Aeschylus arises from the poets’ still inchoate sense of how poetic
performance and written fixity function in concert. Their images do not mask or obscure
a more lucid, rational understanding and we should not ask them to speak in the analytic
terms of later philosophical discourse. But these flitting figurations, in their paradoxical
and confounding beauty, offer us a glimpse of two exceptional poets grappling with the
exciting and unsettling prospects of a shifting poetic landscape. The character of this
figurative exploration is best exemplified by Pindar’s most explicit reference to writing.
The passage, which serves as the opening to Olympian 10, is also the first attested usage
of the verb anagignôskô with the meaning “to read aloud” or “recite”:

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\text{Tôn Ólýmmpoínìsavn ãnáγγnuòtē μοι}
\text{Ἀχεστρότου παιδα, πόθι φανός}
\text{έμᾶς γέγραπται.}
\]

Read out to me the [name of the] son of Archestratos, the Olympic victor, which

103 Thomas (2007).
104 Steiner (1994) p. 100. As Haun Saussy has observed, “the distinction between writing and the
‘forerunners of writing’ assumes a conceptual universe of which achieved writing already forms a
106 Steiner (1994).
has been written on my heart.

Despite the unambiguous reference to writing (ἀνάγγελε, γέγραψατο), the lines are clearly metaphorical, replacing the material object on which writing would normally be inscribed with the poet’s own phrên. Pindar internalizes the act of writing, casting his internal organs as a script which can mediate the distance between composition and performance.107 Aeschylus adopts a similar phrasing when, in the course of the kommos of the Choephoroi, Electra calls on her brother to write her laments in his phrên (τοιαύτῃ ἄκουσον [...] ἐν φρεσίν γράφως 450).108 Both poets set the image of writing in tension with the idea of an oral performance. For Aeschylus, the emphasis is on Orestes’ oral perceptions; he hears (ἀκούσων) the words that he must inscribe in his heart, a fact that is emphasized in the Chorus’s rejoinder (<γράφως>109 δι' ὀπων δὲ συντέτρωσεν μὴθον ἡμών φρένων βάσει 451). For Pindar, the combination of oral performance and written script is filtered through the lens of scriptory distance, relating the hic et nunc of performance to an earlier moment of the song’s composition. The name has been written (γεγραντα), now it will be read out. The poet’s apostrophe, which calls on an unidentified group to vocalize his composition, establishes a strong deictic marker within the hic et nunc of performance. Yet it also exposes a tension between the poet’s physical connection to his poetic work (something that has been written inside his own body) and his reliance on surrogates to give voice to his words in performance. The vocalization that Pindar calls for has already been achieved by the performers’ impersonation of the command. Pindar fuses his own voice with that of his performers, conflating the spatio-temporal distance that the passage brings to light. Pindar dramatizes the complex scriptory relationship between poet and performers, and through this single, merged enunciation replicates the spatio-temporal instability of the scriptory poem itself.

**Overview**

My inquiry into this world of Pindar and Aeschylus’ scriptory poetics is structured in two parts: the first two chapters work in conjunction to establish the historical and

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107 So Steiner (1994) p. 27.
108 Aeschylus employs similar images elsewhere: Sup. 179, 991, Eum. 275.
109 Suppl. Klausen. With or without the conjecture, the Chorus place clear emphasis on Orestes’ aural perception.
methodological basis for the investigation, while the remaining chapters examine the thematic and metaphorical language through which the poets explore the various facets their scriptory world.

In chapter one, “A Question of Voice”, I establish a foundation for comparing the work of Pindar and Aeschylus. The formal distinctions that separate Pindar's lyric odes from Aeschylus' dramatic compositions are defined according to the voices with which the poets tell their tales (i.e. narrative or dramatic); what Gérard Genette has called “dictional mode”. There are stark differences between the two authors: the total absence of an authorial voice in Aeschylus’ fully dramatic plays stands in marked contrast to the almost tyrannical first person that Pindar employs throughout his narrative compositions. Yet, despite their seeming incompatibility in this respect, I identify two complementary poetic elements which question and transcend this primary opposition: oratio recta and apostrophe. These formal features are unique in that they at once bridge and highlight central differences between the dialogic form of drama and the monologic form of Pindar's lyric compositions (Plato’s mimetic and diegetic modes). Examination of these features thus allows the poets’ divergent voices to be compared along similar lines. More importantly, Pindar and Aeschylus make use of these two tropes in closely related ways, exploring questions of the vocal identity and authority which result in complex and often enigmatic spatio-temporal configurations.

In chapter two, “A Voice from the Past”, I connect the poets’ interest in new temporalities of poetic enunciation to their growing sophistication about the technology of writing. I show how a complex set of shifts brought the long-developing appreciation of how writing impacted on Greek ‘song culture’ to a critical juncture. The distinctive temporal characteristics of Pindar’s and Aeschylus’ approach to direct speech and apostrophe, outlined in chapter one, are here shown to map directly onto to the key features of this new conceptualization of poetry. The temporal and vocal explorations enabled by the manipulation of dictional mode reflect the poets’ understanding of their scriptory compositions’ hybrid nature, paradoxically possessing both the material fixity and temporal stability of writing and the occasional, ephemeral status of oral performance. Central to this conception is the figure of Homer, who stands as a model for
the fifth-century poets through the well-established tradition of rhapsodic reperformance – a voice from the past who helps them trace the contours of their new poetic world.

Following these theoretically foundational discussions, the remaining three chapters explore the figurative registers through which Pindar and Aeschylus engage in this parallel project of poetic reinvention. I identify three central themes – tools, snakes, and ghosts – which cluster around the poets’ charged uses of direct speech and apostrophe and which help to map the contours of the scriptory matrix. These themes highlight and help the poets articulate the complicated temporality of poetic speech, drawing the formal characteristics of *oratio recta* and apostrophe into the content and plot of their poems. Each chapter concentrates on one of these themes, pairing central passages by each author with supporting evidence from other works of Pindar and Aeschylus as well as their close contemporaries. Thus the key comparison of chapter three, “Tools”, is between Pindar’s *Olympian* 13 and Aeschylus’ *Seven Against Thebes*. Both texts center on a physical tool, respectively Bellerophon’s bridle and the shields of the Argive attackers, which represents the materiality of the poetic script in its instrumental and temporally dynamic character: a mediating object that allows communication between otherwise isolated agents. Chapter four, “Snakes”, focuses on the embodiment of scriptory song through reperformance. In this chapter I examine how the heroes of the *Choephoroi* and *Olympian* 8 are able to inhabit and give human form to the symbolic snakes who play a pivotal role in the action of both poems. I suggest that the protean figure of the snake provides a critical model for understanding the mimetic transformations of scriptory performance. Chapter five, “Ghosts”, compares the ghostly apparitions of *Pythian* 8 and *Persai* as representations of the scriptory poet’s special brand of immortal speech.
PART ONE SCRIPTED VOICES
Before we can begin to examine the nature of scriptory poetics in Pindar and Aeschylus, we must first establish a foundation for the comparative analysis of their work. There are, as noted in the introduction, significant differences between the two poets’ compositional practices which need to be taken into account in order to properly situate my central claim, that Pindar and Aeschylus are closely aligned in their awareness of and response to the new poetic realities that follow from the increasingly central role of writing in the world of Greek song. It is my contention that the decisive category of difference is not to be found in external factors such as political conditions, ritual context, or perceived social value. Rather what most critically distinguishes the work of Pindar from that of Aeschylus is fundamentally a question of voice, by which I mean the discursive or dictional mode in which their poems are composed.

Put simply, the voice of Pindar’s melic odes is primarily diegetic, presenting monologic narration in the first person of the “poet”. By contrast, Aeschylus’ dramatic compositions are fully mimetic, representing dialogic exchange without any authorial or narrative frame. The voices of our poets’ works are thus distinguished both in kind (narrator vs. actor) and in number (one vs. many). Such a fundamental divergence of poetic form presents a significant obstacle to comparative analysis, but at the same time, I hope to demonstrate that it is precisely by attending to this critical dissimilarity that we can identify the common ground for exploring these poets’ underlying sympathy of approach. Dictional mode is an essential feature of a poem’s internal performative structure: what Claude Calame has called the “complex interplay of discursive constructs and enunciative masks” that each poet deploys in the creation of poetic performance.

The vocal or dictional properties of a poem shape how texts become an oral performance.

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1 When speaking of the “poet” or “author” in this sense, I refer to the persona loquens who takes responsibility for the composition of the poem, not the historical person. For an overview, as well as a subtle engagement with ancient approaches to this distinction, see Clay (1998). The fraught question of whether Pindar’s poems were performed by a chorus or a single voice does not bear on this distinction as it is primarily a matter of external performance conditions rather than internal strategies for performance. The implications of the debate with respect to re-performance, elegantly explored by Morgan (1993), will be examined in chap. 2.
The speaking voices that the poet sets within his compositions determine the shape and character of his poems’ instantiation as song, thus these characteristics provide an important indication of how the poet imagines his work will be performed and received. Dictional mode is therefore the basic category through which a scriptory outlook can be located.

A model of poetic differentiation based on voice is by no means novel. In fact, it is one of the earliest coherently articulated structures of poetic categorization, put forth by none other than Plato himself in book three of the Republic. Plato’s framework, part of the first formulation of a theory of mimesis, is elegant in the simplicity of its comprehensive categories. Following from the claim that all poetry is a kind of narration (διήγησις), Plato’s Socrates sets out three possible styles of speech (what I refer to as dictional modes) in which such narrative can be composed: plain narrative (in the voice of the poet), imitation (in the voice of someone else; ὁς τις ἄλλος ὄν 393a7), or a mixture of the two. Although these distinctions in voice are loosely aligned with specific genres of poetry – the plain narrative style corresponding primarily to dithyramb, the wholly mimetic mode to tragedy and comedy, and the mixed to epic amongst others (394b8-c5) – the relevant distinction is not one of genre, in contrast to later formulations of the tripartite structure, but, as Genette correctly discerned, of dictional mode. For Plato, voice, not genre, was the critical distinguishing characteristic of poetic expression, and the key feature that demanded examination and theorization.

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4 Rep.3.392d5-6: Ἄρι ὁν ὀνού ἕτοι ἄπλη δημήσει ἔ διὰ μιμήσεως γεγομένη ἔ δι᾽ ἀμφοτέρων περαινόντων;
I should note that I employ the terms diegetic and mimetic as representing the same order of magnitude in terms of categorization, despite the (opposing) hierarchical structures in which Plato and Aristotle originally situated them. Cf. the critique of Genette by Kirby (1991) pp. 113-9. In this study I share Genette’s limited interest in the categorization of poetry (i.e. verbal art) alone and therefore the hierarchical structure that allows both Plato’s and Aristotle’s theories to explain plastic as well as verbal arts are of little concern. My terms follow the division of Mieke Bal, who states that there are “two types of ‘speakers’ […] in a narrative text; one [diegetic mode] does not play a role in the fabula whereas the other [mimetic] does. Bal (1997) p. 8
5 Genette (1992) pp. 60-72. The distinction of enunciative voices by genre, where the essential properties of lyric, epic, and tragedy are aligned to their characteristic mode of speech (most commonly the schema lyric: diegetic, tragedy: mimetic epic: mixed) emerged centuries after Plato ventured his modal formulation and would have been unrecognizable to the fourth-century philosopher.
The details of exactly how Plato’s limited definition of mimesis, set out in book three of the Republic, comes to function within the broader structure of his still evolving theory of mimesis, especially as explored in its wider sense in Republic 10, will not concern us here. It is sufficient to note, with Halliwell, that the narrow definition of mimesis with which Plato begins serves as a heuristic device that sets in “sharp focus” the ideas of likeness and assimilation that will be explored in the later discussion. More pertinent to our present purposes is the fact that, in this first formulation, Plato employs distinctions inspired by poetic practice – distinctions that were most likely already familiar to his audience – in order to draw attention to the essential characteristics of the mimetic mode that he is beginning to explore. The subsequent broad appeal of Plato’s taxonomy is witnessed by the fact that it is followed not only by Aristotle, but by the scholarly tradition in Alexandria and Rome. At the same time, however, evidence from even earlier poetic works, such as the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, suggests that Plato is himself drawing upon an already established tradition of analyzing the categories of poetic speech. Plato, it would seem, has appropriated the term mimesis towards his new, philosophical ends. Plato seeks to clarify his complex theoretical position by introducing it in terms that were already familiar as technical categories of poetic speech.


10 This assessment is further supported by usages in Aristophanes Thesmophoriazousai (156, 850). See Stohn (1993). The use of words from the mim- root in Pindar and Aeschylus, who intend to demonstrate a quasi-technical sense of “imitation”, is discussed by Else (1958) pp. 77-9.

11 As Ford describes the effect, “the ‘miming’ aspect of Platonic mimesis is an archaism resurrected with the support of the most scientific outlook of his day.” Ford (2002) p. 217 also pp. 94-5.
expressions, but they share the fundamental identification of voice as the essential property of poetic typology.

More than two centuries before Plato began to explore the idea of mimesis in his Republic, the Homeric Hymn to Apollo makes use of the term μμείσθαι to denote the poetic technique of vocal impersonation. Describing the unparalleled beauty of the Delian maidens’ singing, the poet lauds their ability to imitate the voices of others (162-4):

πάντων γ' ἄνθρωπων φωνὰς καὶ χρωμβάλαστιν
μυμείσθ' ἱσαοιν· φαίη δὲ χεν αὐτὸς ἐκαστος
φθέγγεσθ'· οὕτω σφιν ζαλὴ συνάφηπεν ἀοιδή.

And they know how to imitate the voices and sounds of all men. Each man would say that he himself was speaking, so beautifully joined is their song.

The activity represents a technical accomplishment in the realm of poetic composition or performance. The imitation is a result of the Delian maidens’ poetic skill and knowledge, and results in the production of a beautiful song with the power to enchant its audience. The language of the passage seems to demonstrate a specialized terminology that is in keeping with the poem’s overall interest in the details of poetic production and performance.13

The precise nature of the praise for the Delian maidens is a matter of debate,14 but I believe that the lines are most fruitfully read as a reflection of interest in dictional mode. The passage describes the virtuosic interweaving of many different voices and sounds into a single poetic composition and performance. The strong focus on the multiplicity of the objects of imitation is reflected in the emphatic position of pantòn at the beginning of the first hexameter. It is the range of voices that the women can impersonate that renders their performance so exceptional. Read in this manner, the description is not unlike Plato’s own, much later description of the “versatile imitator”15 who can readily perform the voices of any number of men and whose speech “will be wholly through imitation of

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14 It has often been thought that the passage hinges on the singers’ ability to mimic dialectic characteristics; Ford (2002) p. 94, Halliwell (2002) p. 18 with bibliography at n. 43.
15 The term is that of Belfiore (2006) p. 89.
voices and gestures, or include some small bits of narrative.” (397a3-b2).\(^{16}\) Both texts single out the incorporation of multiple voices and sounds into a single song as a broadly recognized feature of skillful poetry. But where Plato argues that the imitator’s skill is ethically problematic, the author of the *Hymn* deems prowess in this sphere to be worthy of praise and singles it out as the most important distinguishing characteristic of the Delian maidens’ special song.\(^{17}\)

It is, however, noteworthy that although the *Hymn* exalts the skillful blending of dictional modes, the maidens’ vocal imitation is said to produce a confusion about the identity of the speaker. The *Hymn* describes the girls’ mimetic utterances as being misleadingly close to those whose voices they resemble, at times resulting in misunderstanding and even misattribution. Each imitation is so exact as to be indistinguishable from the original – even by the original himself: \(\phi\alpha\iota\varsigma \ \delta\varepsilon \ \kappa\varepsilon\nu \ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma\ \varepsilon\kappa\alpha\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma \ /\ \phi\theta\varepsilon\gamma\acute{\iota}\varepsilon\theta\omicron\). The concise language of the poem once again resists interpretation, but I take the expression to be an expansion of the earlier praise of the multiplicity of the voices imitated by the maidens, now concentrating on the fidelity of the likenesses. The focus on the maidens’ range is emphasized by the specification *hekastos*, implying that many of those hearing the performance would have been treated to a personalized imitation. Again, the multiplicity of imitation is brought into relief. But now it is expressed in terms of mistaken identity and a correspondingly unsettled sense of individual agency. The puzzling result is elegantly expressed in the contrast between actual and potential speech: a man might say that the maidens’ speech was his own, but such a voice is only theoretical, preempted even within the syntax of the poem by the mimetic performance of the singers. The skillful manipulation of dictional modes may be a feature of poetic excellence, but such songs can also erode the boundaries of identity. As an imitator, a singer must perform in the voice of another and thus split his own

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\(^{16}\) Plato’s description mentions non-human sounds as well as voices, perhaps echoing the ambiguous sense of \(\chiν\rho\omicron\mu\betaα\omicron\lambda\alpha\omicron\sigma\tau\omicron\nu\nu\) in the *Hymn*, which may refer to the sounds made by musical instruments similar to castanets, see Peponi (2009) pp. 49-51. The expansion of mimetic impersonation to include non-human sounds adds a level of complexity to thinking about poetic voice but does not alter its fundamental properties.

\(^{17}\) The incorporation of mimetic speech is also a feature of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* itself, one of the characteristics that distinguishes the longer, more complex hymns from their shorter counterparts. On the use of direct speech in the major Homeric hymns, see Beck (2001) pp. 55-7.
identity as well as that of the object he imitates. It is precisely this type of confusion that lies at the heart of Plato’s objections to mimetic compositions. But, as the *Hymn* demonstrates, the potential for vocal confusion was recognized long before Plato subjected the realm of song to his rigorous ethical standards. In both texts, the fluctuating, uncertain status of the speaking subject is as an essential characteristic of mimetic diction. Whether viewed positively or with suspicion, at the heart of these early examinations of dictional mode was a vocal ambiguity inherently tied to the imitative, and thus twofold, nature of mimetic diction.

In addition to illustrating how Plato’s tripartite taxonomy of dictional mode extended many points of interest that had been alive in the poetic sphere for over a century, the *Hymn* offers a glimpse of the complex ways in which poets approached these questions from within their own compositions. As practicing poets like the author of the *Hymn*, Pindar and Aeschylus explored the question of poetic typology through poetic rather than analytical means. But for our two poets, this exploration was not a descriptive activity that explicitly addressed itself to questions of poetic voice. Rather, their sustained meditations on the properties and powers of dictional modes were accomplished through the active manipulation of the voices of their own poems. As I stated above, the essential distinction between Pindar and Aeschylus is found in this feature of their work, the former composing in the diegetic mode, the latter in the mimetic. But, when examined in the practical reality of their poetic compositions, this modal distinction reveals itself to be a boundary that is by no means fixed or insurmountable. For it is precisely in their desire to blur the distinctions and unsettle the fixed properties of poetic voice that we find a poetic sympathy that joins the two poets in dialogue.

There are two key poetic features, or tropes, by which Pindar and Aeschylus temporarily disrupt the primary dictional mode of their compositions: *oratio recta* and

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18 For Plato, the kind of polyphony described in the *Hymn* must, by dint of its very multiplicity, be injurious to a man’s singular virtue (397d1-398b4). *Republic* 3 focuses on the effect that this assimilation has on the poet or performer, while the impact on the audience is not discussed until book ten. Halliwell (2002) pp. 76-80.

19 As Nagy notes, the maidens’ performance should also be understood as a model for subsequent reperformances, a further complication of vocal registers which will be explored in the next chapter. Nagy (1990) p. 376.

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apostrophe. By transgressing the established order of poetic voice, these tropes allow the poets to trace and reconfigure the limits of the modal categorization of their compositions (respectively diegetic and mimetic). These tropes are not directly linked, but they are related in complex ways through their individual bearing on questions of dictional mode. In this chapter I will seek to outline how these tropes are deployed by our poets so as to reflect a more pervasive interest in questions of poetic voice and performance. These insights will serve as the foundation for our investigations of shape of Pindar and Aeschylus’ scriptory poetics in the rest of the study. After clarifying the basic definitions and properties of these tropes, I will address each in turn, establishing the frequency of their occurrence in Pindar and Aeschylus and examining the specific characteristics that are brought to bear on questions of poetic voice. These more detailed assessments will be illustrated by an exemplary poem from the corpus of each author: Pindar’s Olympian 6 and Aeschylus’ Agamemnon (with special reference to the parodos). These poems are selected because their multiple instances of both oratio recta and apostrophe provide us with ample material through which to illustrate the range and complexity with which our poets make use of these tropes.

Definitions
Our first trope, oratio recta, or direct speech, is mimetic speech embedded within the speech of another figure; it is the impersonation, or imitation, of the first-person speech of someone other than the framing speaker.\(^{20}\) It is distinguished from its close relation, indirect speech (oratio obliqua) by the mimetic diction of the embedded quotation: “He said ‘I’m a grasshopper’” is an example of direct speech, while “He said he was a grasshopper” is indirect. Apostrophe is defined as the sudden introduction of a (new) second-person address. A second-person address is most often considered apostrophe when the addressee is absent, but the trope is more properly understood as an address without a corresponding response.\(^{21}\) Particularly in the context of dramatic poetry, where

\(^{20}\) Similar definitions are offered by Bers (1997) pp. 5-9, and Beck (2005). The integrity of the category, at least within Homeric epic, is called into question by Bakker (2009). See n. 39 below.

\(^{21}\) This definition follows the ancient model, cf. Quint. 4.1.63-70, 9.3.24; Hutchinson (2010) pp. 96-7 with bibliography. The modern definition of apostrophe as an address to an absent figure stems from an interest in the idea of a “lyric” self, a Romantic concept which is best excluded
multiple characters inhabit the performative *hic et nunc*, the primary criterion for identifying apostrophe does not rest on the question of physical presence but the fact that an appeal to a second figure goes unrequited.

Both apostrophe and *oratio recta* are tropes of fictional communication: *oratio recta* is the impersonation or imitation of the first-person speech of someone other than the “actual” speaker; apostrophe is the second-person address or invocation of an addressee who is not “actually” present insofar as he or she does not meet the primary speaker’s address. Hence they carry comparable mimetic (or imitative) force, whether employed by a dramatic character on the stage or the *persona loquens* of a lyric poem. While of course these tropes realize their dictional force in the context of specific works, these two tropes are distinguished by the fact that they possess their own vocal identity. Whether they appear within a poem that is itself primarily mimetic, diegetic, or mixed in dictional mode, *oratio recta* and apostrophe maintain certain vocal properties that are internal to the tropes themselves. Yet, precisely because they are already internally coded to exhibit certain qualities of mimetic and diegetic speech, these tropes are specially positioned to create moments of pointed reflection on the broader dictional character of the text in which they are deployed.

In both mimetic and diegetic texts, *oratio recta* introduces a momentary instance of the mixed mode. In principally diegetic poetry, the introduction of mimetic diction through embedded first-person speech necessarily results in a momentary transfer into the mixed genre. In purely mimetic compositions the effect is somewhat more complex. The doubly mimetic diction of “speech in speech” redoubles the mimetic mode of expression. But at the same time (and the complexities of this point will be central to our investigations in this chapter) the hierarchical relationship of the mimetic voices temporarily establishes a mixed mode and thus casts the framing mimetic speaker as a kind of diegetic narrator.

The effect of apostrophe on mimetic and diegetic texts is less clearly discerned than that of *oratio recta*, but its transformative power is if anything even greater. Through the introduction of a real or imagined interlocutor, apostrophe triggers a binary exchange

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from treatments of archaic Greek poetic practice, see Culler (2002) esp. chap. 7, also Prynne (1988).
between diegetic and mimetic diction, skipping over the mixed mode. The mode of apostrophic diction is determined not by the speaker alone, but by the relationship between speaker and addressee. By invoking an interlocutor, even one who necessarily remains silent, the primary speaker sets himself within a new performative framework, calling into vivid reality the uncertainties at the heart of early fifth-century concerns about poetic voice.

Through their special ability to effect a poem’s dictional character, both apostrophe and oratio recta can, as they do in the hands of Pindar and Aeschylus, produce flashpoints that expose larger concerns about the nature of poetic voice. Both tropes temporarily recalibrate a poem’s dictional mode by introducing a problematic new voice: either the embedded speaker of oratio recta or the silent interlocutor of apostrophe. This fictional or imagined second voice enters into a dialogue of sorts with the main speaker, calling into question the speaker’s own dictional status. At the same time, these tropes recalibrate a song’s performative landscape. The vocal characteristics that are inherent to apostrophe and oratio recta also possess a spatio-temporal aspect insofar as the new voices which they introduce are imbued with the immediacy of unmediated, hic et nunc presence. Through their direct vocal contact with a primary speaker, these secondary figures present an alternate, often competing claim to presence within the world of a song. The performative reality claimed by a poem’s primary poetic diction is thus inflected by the spatio-temporal claims of these secondary voices. The poetic world represented by a poem’s primary dictional mode, whether mimetic or diegetic, can be called into question and reconceived in light of the often jarring polyphony that the tropes of apostrophe and oratio recta are able to introduce. These tropes do not simply allow our poets to express their thoughts about the formal structure of their compositions; they provide a platform for exploring how the manipulation of vocal characteristics can reconfigure the perceived realities of poetic performance.

Before beginning our investigation of these tropes, it is useful to note that although apostrophe and oratio recta share a number of important characteristics with respect to dictional mode, they are always employed in a balanced manner. Homer, for example, employs direct speech throughout his epic poetry, whereas apostrophe is a marked figure, occurring only rarely and with compelling effect on the narrative. The inverse is true of
Pindar and Aeschylus, who make regular use of apostrophe but are far more sparing with direct speech. This quantitative imbalance is, as in Homer, inversely proportional to the qualitative force of the tropes. Because it occurs less frequently, *oratio recta* becomes the marked form in our poets, and its use always demonstrates the strong dictional character described above. Apostrophe, by contrast, must be separately activated to realize its full effect. Pindar and Aeschylus make use of various strategies to produce this function in apostrophe. In order to discern what these strategies are, and understand how and when apostrophe becomes dictionally marked, we will be guided by the always activated trope, *oratio recta*. We will therefore begin our investigation by charting the more readily identified contours of direct speech in section one (“Lending Voice”). We will then be able to adopt these insights as a frame for the subsequent analysis of the more oblique dynamics of apostrophe in section two (“The Stage is Set”).

1. LENDING VOICE

*Oratio recta* is not a common feature of the poetry of Pindar or Aeschylus, but it occurs often enough to attribute its use to a deliberate compositional decision by the poet and to allow for the perception of consistent features and themes in its occurrences. Twelve of Pindar’s forty-five surviving epinician odes (just over one quarter) contain one or more instances of direct speech.22 Pindar’s work in other genres only survives in a highly fragmentary state and statistical assessments cannot be ventured with great confidence.23 But the limited evidence that we do have suggests that direct speech was employed in a comparable manner in Pindar’s non-epinician poems.24 Each of our six surviving Aeschylean tragedies makes use of *oratio recta* on at least one occasion.25 Surviving

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23 The paucity of the generic corpora makes broad claims impossible and the highly fragmentary nature of the majority of the individual poems means that instances of direct speech (especially brief ones) might have been present in lines that have now been lost.

24 Hymn fr. 43 SM, Pae. 2.73-5, Pae. 4.39-?, Pae. 7b.?-42, Pae. 8a.14-?. Less certain are fr. 157, said to be the direct speech of Silenus, and fr. 168b, which the scholia attribute to Heracles.

25 Pers. 402-5, Sep. 580-9, Sup. 402, 584-7, Ag. 126-55, 206-17, 410-26, 577-9, 590-2, Ch. 569-70, 575, 680-7, 829, Eum. 511-2, 757-60. I follow communis opinio in excluding the *Prometheus Bound*, and its single instance of *oratio recta* (647-54). In addition, there are three instances in
fragments from other Aeschylean tragedies and satyr plays reveal three further passages of embedded speech, but unfortunately it is not possible to extrapolate a more general sense of frequency in view of the vast number of lost works. Within our extant examples, Aeschylus uses direct speech freely in both lyric and stichic passages of his plays and, although the dynamics are slightly altered by the distinctions of specific dramatic contexts, these instances do not display marked differences in the aspects we will focus on.

This section will examine three central correspondences in the use of *oratio recta* by our poets: tension between framing and embedded speaker, the consistently asymmetrical structuring of communication within embedded episodes, and the preponderance of prophetic and forward-looking themes within embedded speeches. As I will demonstrate, in each of these key aspects Pindar and Aeschylus distinguish themselves from the established usage of the trope. This marked deviation from normal practice draws attention to the use of *oratio recta* and signals the poets’ critical disposition with regards to the trope. Furthermore, each of the ways in which Pindar and Aeschylus change the poetic function of direct speech bears directly upon fundamental questions of poetic voice. Both poets shift the trope so that it reflects and intensifies the spatio-temporal properties of dictional mode. As we will see, the unusual form of Pindaric and Aeschylean *oratio recta* represents the concerns of scriptory poetics at its most basic structural level. These points of disruption which momentarily recast established dictional mode provide a first glimpse of the larger and far more complex interplay of voice that constitutes Pindar’s and Aeschylus’ radical experiments in scriptory poetics.

*Framer and Framed*

The formal structure of *oratio recta* establishes a hierarchy between the framing speaker, who imparts his voice, and the embedded speaker whom the framer momentarily impersonates. An understanding of how Pindar and Aeschylus exploit the complexities of

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which objects are given voice in *oratio recta*: Sep. 434, 647-8 and Ag. 1334. A treatment of all possible instances is provided by Bers (1997) pp. 25-43. I reject a number of passages that Bers adduces as direct speech, Ag. 176-8, and 448-9, Ch. 313-4, on the grounds that gnomic or generalized utterances do not represent true impersonations of an embedded speaker’s words.

26 *fr.139.4-5Radt (Myrmidons), fr.159.4Radt (Niobe), fr.78.24Radt (Theoroi).*
this embedded relationship will be the first and most essential component of our analysis of the trope. Our poets not only deploy the trope so as to dramatically expose the contours of this formal structure, but dynamically activate the interface of divergent dictional mode to call the spatio-temporal status of both voices into question. This practice represents the foundational structure on which all subsequent views of performative polyphony are based, and is the crucial characteristic of Pindar and Aeschylus’ unique approach to the trope of *oratio recta*.

In archaic Greek poetry, the parameters of vocal hierarchy in *oratio recta* are regularly established through the use of linguistic markers (so-called “*inquit formulae*”) to introduce and conclude the *oratio recta*, and to signal the shift in voice from narrator to embedded speaker. Following the established tradition of hexameter formulae, the presence of these markers was both expected and highly formalized, and their absence, for example famously at *Iliad* 1.17, was cause for comment. The formal rigidity of the framing language in poetry of the mixed enunciative mode, such as that of Homeric epic or Stesichorean lyric, is reflective of the separation of the narrative voice of the poet from the figures of the mythical past whose exploits he is recounting. Archaic Greek poetry in the mixed mode occasionally transgressed the firm boundary between the poet and his subject, such as when Homer apostrophizes his characters in diegetic narration, or when Stesichorus offers his apology to Helen in the second person in his famous *palinode*. But these moments of anachronistic proximity are the exception, notable for drawing attention to and even breaching the unspoken border between the poet and the subjects of

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30 Alexander Beecroft has recently argued that the *palinode* sets out a clear poetic preference for the epichoric over the panhellenic. If he is correct, the “proximity” of Stesichorus and his subject through the second-person address would be a further element of this localizing stance. Beecroft (2006). That the account of Stesichorus’ blinding by Helen on account of his false tale represented a mimetic element of lyric performance is argued by Sider (1989). For the mimetic performance of the *palinode*, see Beecroft (2010) pp. 152-70.
his tale.\textsuperscript{31} The same is not true, however, of Pindar or Aeschylus, who both regularly expose, explore, and erase the spatio-temporal distance that separates the voices of framer and framed.

Starting with Pindaric practice, we find a structure that at first appears to place considerable distance between framing and embedded speakers. Like Homer and Stesichorus, Pindar most often frames embedded speeches with the semi-standardized \textit{inquit} formulae that distinguish and separate the poet from the mimetic speaker whom he impersonates.\textsuperscript{32} Furthermore, all instances of direct speech in Pindar’s surviving work, whether in epinician or other genres, are characterized by their location within a mythical narrative of events long past, a fact that increases the formal separation of voices through the additional degree of contextual distance.

But in Pindar’s deft hands, the emphatic separation of voices in fact results in precisely the opposite. Such a temporal disjunction between framing narrator and embedded speaker is to be expected in Homer or Stesichorus, who are, to use Andrew Ford’s term, “poets of the past”, looking back from their narrative posts to the heroic exploits of a bygone age.\textsuperscript{33} For Pindar, whose poems balance mythical narrative with present (and future) tense description\textsuperscript{34} and regularly highlight the speaker’s present circumstances through the use of indexical language,\textsuperscript{35} the limitation of \textit{oratio recta} to the sphere of the mythical past is an overt choice designed to place special focus on the

\textsuperscript{31} The bold strokes of this claim are warranted when confronting the difference in narrative posturing between poetry that is primarily mixed in enunciative mode and that which is primarily diegetic or mimetic. The relationship between Homeric narrator and his embedded characters is far from simple, a fact that is well reflected, for instance, in Bakker’s claim that the \textit{Odyssey} in particular “pushes the lack of a hierarchical relation between a primary narrator who ‘quotes’ and characters or secondary narrators who are ‘quoted’ to the point of outright competition.” Bakker (2009) p. 129. Nevertheless, I think Bakker underestimates the power of \textit{inquit} formulae in establishing a clear hierarchy of voice even within oral performance. Thus I cannot wholly agree with his claim that “what happens [in Homeric \textit{oratio recta}] is not a withdrawal of the fictional narrator or an act of quotation, but the performer shifting from one role into another, from narrator to character…” pp. 126-7. This is, of course, what literally happens in single person performance of mixed mode texts, but it is not an accurate description of the performance’s effect.

\textsuperscript{32} The exceptions are numerous and will be treated individually as they arise. See also my discussion of Pindar and Aeschylus’ reformulation of Homeric \textit{inquit} formulae in chap. 2.

\textsuperscript{33} Ford (1992).

\textsuperscript{34} Mackie (2003) pp. 45-7.

\textsuperscript{35} The use of strong deictic language in Pindar is wonderfully explored in the contributions to Felson (2004).
relationship of the two voices within the poem. Since the mimetic diction of *oratio recta* brings the words of the embedded speaker into the *hic et nunc* regardless of the chronology of the narrative, allowing mythical characters to speak in the first person of *oratio recta* is a way to bring the past into the present. But because Pindar’s relatively infrequent use of the trope is set within the context of an emphatically asserted spatio-temporal frame of the poet’s own performative *hic et nunc*, the dictional hierarchy is not so clear cut as it is in Homer. The introduction of a new first-person voice, albeit one framed by and subordinate to the poet, transforms the parameters of Pindar’s diegetic poems. The embedded voice is inevitably set in contrast to the strong voice of the first-person narrator of the poems; and the status of the narrator’s performative present is now gauged against a past speech rendered present through that same narrator’s skill. The poet’s diegetic present must find space for a mimetic voice from the past, and the conflation of the two spatio-temporal realities recalibrates the properties of both voices.\(^\text{36}\)

We can see the dynamic clearly at work in the first direct speech in *Olympian* 6. The brief embedded speech explicitly links the voices of past and present, as Pindar adduces Adrastus’ expression of admiration and longing for his dead comrade Amphaiaraos as a model for his own poetic task (12-8):

> Ἄγησια, τίν ὄνομα ἐτοίμος, ὃν ἐνδίκας ἀπὸ γλῶσσας Ἀδραστὸς μάντιν Οἰκλείδας ποτ’ ἐς Ἀμφιάραον φθέγξατ’, ἐπὶ κατὰ γαι’ αὐτὸν τέ νυν καὶ φαινόμας ὑπὸν ἠμαρθύνεν. ἐπὶ δ’ ἐπείτα πυρὰν νεκροὶς τελευθέντων Ταλαίονίδας 15 εἴπεν ἐν Θῆμασι τοιοῦτον τι ἐπορ’ Ἱδέων στρατιάς ὀφθαλμὸν ἐμὸς ἀμφότερον μάντιν τ’ ἀγαθὴν καὶ δοὺς μάρτυσθαι.’ το καὶ ἀνδρὶ κόμῳ δεσπότα πάρεστι Συρακοσίῳ.

*Hagesias, yours is that ready praise which Adrastus once spoke with just tongue to the seer, son of Oicles, Amphaiaraos, when the earth had swallowed him and his glorious horses. When the seven pyres of dead had been consumed, the son of Talaus made such a speech in Thebes “I desire the eye of my army, both noble seer and spearman.” So likewise this [speech] befits this Syracusan man, ruler of the komos.*

From the start the voice of the embedded speaker is presented in direct relation to that of the framing narrator and his words are explicitly linked to Pindar’s poetic aims. The easy

movement across broad swaths of time is not unusual for Pindar, who often uses the briefest mythologically significant mention – a place or a name – to shift his gaze from the *hic et nunc* of his performative world to the past.\(^{37}\) But here it is noteworthy that it is speech itself that motivates the short excursus into the past. In fact, the narration as such is little more than an elaborate *inquit* frame through which the poet emphasizes the verbal connection between the worlds. The relative pronoun introducing the myth sets Adrastus’ speech as the pivot between the two times, directly aligning Adrastus’ voice with Pindar’s. Likewise, the abrupt return to the present following the quoted speech again pivots on the identical nature of Adrastus’ speech and that of the poet; “the present and past”, Hutchinson comments, “are being strikingly juxtaposed and related”.\(^{38}\) The ready words of the past can serve Pindar in the context of epinician praise as well as they did the mourning hero, and the poet adopts them verbatim; or rather, the poet yields his speaking voice to his embedded proxy, allowing the first-person utterance of his mythical speaker to stand in place of his own speech. Fusing his own voice with one from the past, Pindar momentarily inhabits the same present tense as his embedded speaker. The enunciation is neither wholly past nor present but split between two voices that participate in the same enunciation. The temporary shift in dictional mode effaces the boundary between the worlds.

Pindar does not usually draw such an unambiguous equivalence between himself and his embedded speakers.\(^{39}\) More often connections across the shift in dictional mode are established through subtle resonances and parallels between the two voices. The poet engages in a kind of shadow-play of voice on voice, bringing himself into an unspoken conversation with the voices of his mimetic impersonation. But the absence of direct equivalence between the voices does not preclude the type of strong comparison that is so overtly drawn in *Olympian* 6. The relationship between framer and framed is developed through what Andrew Miller has dubbed the “associative mode” by which an agglomeration of thoughts, connected thematically or through parataxis, produce

\(^{37}\) See e.g. Bonifazi (2004), Nünlist (2007).


\(^{39}\) There are only two other points at which a comparable isomorphism of speech is explicitly claimed by the framing narration: O.4.17-25, P.8.55-60.
arguments that can be perceived though not articulated.\textsuperscript{40} Whether explicitly signposted or not, the vocal juxtapositions of Pindar’s use of direct speech enable the poet to bridge the spatio-temporal divide between present and past, incorporating distant voices into his song and thus destabilizing the implicit structure of his own poetic diction.

Aeschylus achieves a similarly destabilizing effect through the use of \textit{oratio recta}, but he achieves this outcome by different means. In contrast to the absolute chronological hierarchy that we found in Pindar, the embedded speakers of Aeschylean \textit{oratio recta} are never voices from the mythical past. When Aeschylus allows one of his characters to impersonate the speech of another figure, the speaker in \textit{oratio recta} is always a member of the same world as the framing speaker. The utterance being quoted may have taken place in the primary speaker’s past, or even in an imagined future, but there is never so great a division between the two that they could not potentially face each other on the stage (though not necessarily within the plot of a given play). But, if we consider the distinctions in our two poets’ primary dictional mode, we can see that Aeschylus’ rejection of temporally distanced \textit{oratio recta} permits the dramatic poet to achieve a spatio-temporal disruption analogous to what we find in Pindar. Where Pindar’s totalitarian first person is made uncomfortably to share his \textit{hic et nunc} with a voice from afar, the stable \textit{hic et nunc} of Aeschylus’ mimetic figures is unsettled through the internalization of a secondary voice that is normally external.

Since there is no contextually hierarchical relationship between framer and framed – either speaker could be imagined to achieve \textit{hic et nunc} presence within the drama – Aeschylus’s use of \textit{oratio recta} is concentrated almost entirely on questions of formal dictional hierarchy. This is particularly important for the dramatic poet, who is primarily concerned with the power of \textit{oratio recta} to momentarily invest a mimetic speaker with the properties of a diegetic narrator. The mimetic nature of embedded speech effects a doubling or splitting of the \textit{hic et nunc} of the dramatic scene, creating an additional degree of polyphony that is uncomfortably contained in the voice of a single mimetic speaker. At the same time, the distancing apparatus of the \textit{inquit} formulae, which are employed by Aeschylus in a manner much like that of Pindar, introduces a formal separation of voices that emphasizes the distance between the framing speaker, who is

\textsuperscript{40} Miller (1993).
present within the performative *hic et nunc*, and the disembodied voice of his embedded imitation. The relationship between Aeschylus’ framing and embedded speakers manifests important correspondences with Pindaric usage in the blurring of spatio-temporal boundaries. In order to see how the trope is able to effect a similar disruption of poetic diction within Aeschylus’ dramatic texts, we may turn to the first instance of direct speech in the *Agamemnon*, found within the lengthy *parodos* with which the Chorus introduce the action of the play.

The speech that first concerns us is that of the seer, Calchas, whose prophecy to the Atreidai is the central element in the first narrative section of the ode, in which the Chorus relate the events that, ten years previous, occasioned the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis and enabled the Greeks to sail to Troy.\(^4\) I quote the passage at length, so that we may appreciate the interaction between Calchas and the Chorus (123-59):

\(\text{κεδνός δὲ στρατόμαντις ἰδὼν δῶ ῥήμασι διοσοῦς Ἀτρείδας μαχίμους ἐδά γα λαγοδάίτας πομποῦς ἄρχας, οὔτω δ’ εἰπε τεράζων· \)}
\(\text{χρόνῳ μὲν ἄρχει Πιημοῦ πόλιν ἀδε κέλευθος, πάντα δὲ πύργων κτήνη πρόσθε τὰ δημοπλήθη Μοῖρᾳ λαπάξει πρὸς τὸ βίαν·} \)
\(\text{οἶον μὴ τὸ ἄγα θεόθεν κνεφάσῃ προτυπεν στόμων μέγα Τροίας στρατωθὲν. οἴκτω γὰρ ἐπίθενος Ἀρτέμις ἀγνὰ πτανοῖον κυσί πατρὸς αὐτότοκον πρὸ λόχου μογερὰν πτάκα θυμόνοιον· στυγεί δὲ δείπνον αἰετῶν. οὖλον οὖλον εἰπὲ, τὸ δ’ εὖ νυκάτω.} \)
\(\text{τόσον περ ἐπίθεφον ἀ καλὰ δρόσοις ἀέπτοις μαλερῶν λεότων πάντων τ’ ἀγρονόμων φιλομάστοις θηρῶν ὑβρισάλοις τερπνά, τούτων αἰετὶ ξύμβολα κράναι, δεξία μὲν κατάμοφα δὲ φάσοματα ἤμον δὲ καλέω Παιάνα, μὴ τινας ἀντιπόλους Δαναοῖς χρονίας ἐχενήδας ἄπλοιας τεύχῃ, ὀπευδομένα θυσίαν ἐτέραν ἀνομόν τιν ἀδαιτον, νεικέων τέχτονα σύμφυτον, οὐ δεισήνορα. μύμει γὰρ φοβερὰ παλίνορτος οἰκονόμος δολία μνάμων Μήνις τεκνόποινος.’} \)

\(^{4}\) The broad thematic and narrative importance of the *parodos* is given excellent treatment in the now standard work by Lebeck (1971) esp. chap. 1.
The august seer of the army saw the two natures of the two Atreidai recognizing the conducting chiefs in the warlike hare-feasters. And thus speaking he interpreted the portent. “In time this path captures the city of Priam and Fate will wipe out the people’s entire store of beasts from before the city. May no god-sent pollution cast a shadow over the bit sent forth to reign in great Troy, for chaste Artemis feels pity for the wretched hare begrudging the winged dogs of her father who devoured it and its young before their birth; she loathes the feast of the eagles. Cry woe, woe, but let the good prevail.

For the beautiful goddess is thus well disposed towards the dewy seed of fearsome lions and to the bosom-loving young of all wild creatures she is a joyous delight. She demands a compensation be made for these. The portent is favorable but also inauspicious. I call upon Apollo Paian, that she does not send adverse winds against the Danaans to hold us immobile in port, urging another sacrifice, a lawless one that makes no feast, a kindred crafter of strife that fears no man. For an unrelenting housekeeper, frightening and deceitful, remains, Wrath that remembers, child-avenging.” These were the fates from the traveling birds that Calchas shrieked out, together with great goods, to the royal house. And in the same voice cry woe, woe, but let the good prevail.

As is common in both Pindar and Aeschylus, a connection between the framing voice of the Chorus and the embedded speaker is established through a series of subtle alignments and verbal parallels. The Chorus’s description of Calchas’ authority (κεδνός) closely echoes their earlier confident self-identification as authorized to narrate the events that took place at Aulis (κύριός είμι 104). The subtle parallels are developed throughout the speech, but for our present purposes we may take note of two important points of

42 While not an exact synonym for κύριός with its legalistic resonance, the term κεδνός denotes a comparable combination of elevated status and trustworthiness, as when Pindar speaks of the πατρώια κεδνα πολίων κυβερνάσεις (P.10.72). The word derives from the verb κηδομαί (to have concern for) and is relatively common in epic and lyric poetry. The connection extends to the content of the passage, which establishes the provenance of Calchas’ speech (namely his understanding through visual perception (ιδὼν... ἐδάτη)), much as the Chorus earlier claimed their own narrative mandate on the basis of their divine inspiration.

43 On the relationship between the Chorus and Calchas, see Bers (1997) pp. 30-1, who notes how the Chorus’s refusal to relate the gruesome conclusion to the episodes stands in marked contrast to the granting of “substantial space and directness” to Calchas’ oratio recta. By contrast, Degener describes the Chorus as wholly mistrustful of Calchas, going so far as to “mock” him. Degener (2001) pp. 65-7. More subtle is the position of Gantz, who claims that the Chorus
contact which help to illuminate the spatio-temporal play resulting from the juxtaposition of voices.

The first echo establishes the oddly inverted relationship of the Chorus and their embedded speaker. The first words of Calchas’ speech establish the seer’s temporal perspective at Aulis, looking forward to the expedition and ultimate victory over Troy. His language mirrors the chronological concern expressed by the Chorus at the start of the anapaestic opening section: δέκατον μὲν ἕτος τόδ’ ἐπεὶ Πριάμου / μέγας ἀντίδικος... This is the tenth year since the great opponent of Priam... (40-1). But the Chorus’s view is retrospective, looking back to the time of Calchas’ speech from the very point in the future towards which his own prophetic language will soon gesture. The clear foregrounding of these two inverted temporalities in the first words of each exposes the complex temporal relationship that underpins this mimetic interweaving of framing and embedded voices. Within the authoritative frame of the Chorus, Calchas’ speech is a remembered event of the past. But, when the seer is granted his own first-person voice, it is the hic et nunc of the Chorus that is relegated to the distance of a future time.

The destabilizing spatio-temporal interplay of the two voices is vividly rendered in the second point of contact, brought about through the close resemblance of the eagle portent interpreted by Calchas to the vulture simile with which the Chorus had earlier described the Atreidai. The transformation of the Chorus’s powerful imagery into the literal omen has been much discussed, but its role in creating a sense of proximity, and even verbal contact, between framer and framed has been largely overlooked. My next chapter will return in detail to this passage. For the moment it is sufficient to note that the intricate exchange of attributes between the two images creates the sense that the Chorus truly shares a single voice with the speaker embedded in its song, that – despite the anachronism of the claim – the hierarchically related speakers inhabit the same plane of speech and reference.

believe in and support Calchas’ narrative of the events at Aulis, but are wrong to do so. Gantz (1983) pp. 69-78.


45 Similar is the juxtaposition, explored with great subtlety by Simon Goldhill, of Artemis comparisons in Od. 6, the first spoken by the narrator, the second by Odysseus, who will soon take the narrator’s roll over for himself. Goldhill (1988b).
Such subtle correspondences between framer and framed are set in relief by the unique lyric structure of the Aulis narrative which features Calchas’ *oratio recta*. Within the complex movement of the *parodos*, the first account of the events at Aulis (lines 104-59) forms a formally self-contained song-within-a-song, distinguished from its surrounding sections by a marked difference in meter and especially by the repetition of a refrain at the end of each of its three stanzas:46 αὐλίνων αὐλίνων εἰπὲ, τὸ δ’ εὖ νικάτω (121, 138, 159). The refrain connects the song, but it would be misleading to describe its threefold iteration as mere repetition. The initial use of the refrain lends a sense of ritual to the Chorus’s words;47 emerging from their emotional narration, the ritually charged vocatives introduce a heightened focus on their choral authority.48 Then, taking advantage of the formal structure of the ode, Aeschylus places the second instance of the refrain in the middle of the embedded speech. Without any formal distinction of the voices through the customary *inquit* formulae, it is impossible to determine whether the refrain is voiced by the Chorus or by the internal, mimetic figure in the midst of whose speech it occurs. Are the words an unexpected interruption—through which the Chorus reassert their status as primary speaker—or rather a prophetic echo of a song that has yet to be sung? The boundary between framer and framed cannot be located and as a result the spatio-temporal identity of the performative *hic et nunc* has become correspondingly opaque. The final iteration of the refrain comes at the end of an *inquit* formula. Where earlier the boundary between voices could not be determined, now the Chorus explicitly align their voice with that of the embedded seer.49 The uneasy harmony of embedded speaker and framing narrator is unmistakable, freely declared by the Chorus themselves as they reflect upon the speech they have just impersonated.50

48 Against the Chorus’s ritualizing language, we must set the seer’s own, highly performative, almost ritual invocation of Apollo at 146: a counter song which threatens to unsettle and overpower the triadic song of the Chorus. On reference to paianic language within tragedy, see Rutherford (1994-5), Ford (2006) p. 291, Swift (2010) chap. 3.
50 Griffith is perhaps overly literal when he claims, on the basis of the connection drawn here, that “line 138 should be included within the words quoted from Calchas himself.” This retrospective
In both of our poets, the unsettling of the hierarchy between framer and framed erodes the foundations on which the spatio-temporal reality of the primary speaker is based; the blending of voice bleeds into the representation of a performative *hic et nunc*. The powerful presence of the embedded speaker’s voice threatens to collapse the dramatic coherence and dictional integrity of the framing speaker. In impersonating the speech of Calchas, the Chorus’s ritual refrain propels them across time, but this mobility also threatens the mimetic fidelity of their location in the palace of Klytemnestra at Argos. Aeschylus allows his Chorus to step outside their accustomed dictional mode, but in doing so they lose their sure mimetic footing. Likewise for Pindar, the immediacy of the embedded speaker’s voice merges past and future, moving the first person of the poet into an uncharted realm outside of straightforward chronology. In *Olympian 6* the voices of Adrastus and Pindar are fused into one; neither speaker can fully inhabit the world of the other, but nor can they remain entirely within their proper spheres. The hierarchical polyphony of *oratio recta* points to the boundaries of dictional mode on which the poets rely to bring their compositions into performative reality. But as the charged use of the trope prompts a more concerted examination of these dictional parameters, it also calls into question the stability of poetic voice as a means of establishing a cohesive performative *hic et nunc*.

*And in Response*

Having examined the relationship between framer and framed, we now turn our attention to how the voices within the frame of *oratio recta* relate to each other. In archaic Greek poetry of the mixed dictional mode, direct speech is almost always dialogic in nature. Embedded characters speak and are spoken to in turn. Indeed, the formal language of hexameter epic developed in such a way as to facilitate the representation of exchange of speech, boasting a rich store of formulaic lines to signal responsive speech,\(^{51}\) and even the marked lack thereof.\(^{52}\) Such reciprocity of exchange between embedded speakers is rarely found in Pindar and Aeschylus. The mimetic voices of *oratio recta* in our authors are

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"correction" undermines the temporal play and confusion which the progression of the refrain is designed to produce. Griffith (2009) p. 43 n. 82
most often isolated figures within their embedded narratives, speaking with an
immediacy that is denied to those with whom they interact. Instead, the asymmetry of this
internal structure forces the embedded speakers into an anachronistic dialogue with the
voices that frame and impersonate their speech.

Although lack of response is the rule rather than the exception in Pindar and
Aeschylus’ oratio recta, it is not for that reason normative. In other poets, formulaic
descriptions of silence counteract the uncertainty that a lack of response might otherwise
create. By contrast, Pindar and Aeschylus do not offer the comfort of explicit
explanation. Silence, and in particular the narrative repression of embedded response,
creates a void: a sense of distance and opacity that stands in opposition to the immediacy
created by the trope of direct speech. The suppression of embedded interlocutors points to
the framing narrator and allows his voice to inhabit the space in which we would expect a
second embedded mimetic speaker. Thus it is as a subset of the relationship between
framer and framed that we should approach this internal dynamic. The silences that
surround the vividly embedded voices of oratio recta provide our poets with another
means of highlighting the spatio-temporal instability thrown into relief by their
manipulation of dictional mode.

For Pindar, the powerful silence with which oratio recta is almost always met is
developed through the distancing structures that we found associated with the embedded
speakers themselves.\(^{53}\) The internal asymmetry of oratio recta is regularly emphasized by
a corresponding imbalance in the status of the participants in the embedded conversation.
As we saw in Adrastus’ speech above, death can separate an embedded speaker from his
desired addressee.\(^{54}\) More often, the interlocutors are divided by nature: god and man.\(^{55}\)

\(^{53}\) Although it is his standard practice, Pindar does not exclude dialogue entirely from his oratio
recta. Of 19 discrete episodes of oratio recta, three present a verbal response in oratio recta. The
exceptions are the exchange between Pelias and Jason in Pythian 4, Cheiron’s response to Apollo
in Pythian 9, and Zeus’ response to Polydeuces in Nemean 10. In the latter two instances, the
internal dialogue can be seen to fit with the broader concerns of Pindar’s normal model of non-
response (e.g. the unequal status of interlocutors, the impossibility of direct communication, and
the central importance of prophecy and questions of time in the content of the speeches). The
speeches of the latter part of Pythian 4 are, like the poem itself, a true exception to established
Pindaric usage. In line with the unusually epic structure and tone of the narrative itself, Pindar
here alone adopts the traditional epic forms of oratio recta, presenting his embedded speakers in

\(^{54}\) So also P.8.44-55.
Most dynamically, knowledge of the future – the subject to which we will turn in a moment – functions to differentiate internal speakers. The construction of an internal hierarchy which corresponds to the relationship between poet and embedded speakers offers further ground for Pindar to explore the questions of voice which underpin his interest in the trope of *oratio recta*.

For an illustration we turn to the second case of direct speech in *Olympian* 6. Where the speech at the poem’s opening explicitly exposes the upending of dictional hierarchies by linking the poet’s voice with that of his embedded speaker, the second speech approaches the relationship between framer and framed more obliquely, making use of the dynamics internal to the embedded discourse to explore how the use of direct speech reverberates within the broader dictional structure of the poem. The isolation of the embedded speaker turns our attention once again to the relationship between framer and framed, further unsettling the hierarchies of voice which characterize the trope. The more subtly developed, second *oratio recta* is set within an extended mythical narrative, of a kind fairly common in epinicia, that draws attention to the victor’s immortal ancestry. This particular tale concerns the fate of Iamos, the son of Apollo with the mortal Evadne, herself the daughter of Poseidon. The circumstances are as follows: At the time of his birth, Iamos’ maternal grandfather, Aiptos, consulted the Pythian oracle and learned that his grandson was the son of Apollo, fated to become a distinguished prophet (49-51). Grown to manhood, Iamos desires confirmation of his extraordinary status and lineage. He travels to the banks of the Alpheos and calls upon his divine progenitors, Poseidon and Apollo, and receives a response from the latter.

As Pindar narrates the scene, Iamos’ query, reported in loose *oratio obliqua*, is met by the unmediated voice of Apollo in *oratio recta* (57-66):

> τεσπνάς δ’ ἐπεὶ χρυσοστεφάνου λάβεν
> καρπὸν Ἡβας, Ἁλφεώ μέσοι παταβαίσ ἐκάλεσοε Ποσειδάν’ εὐρυβίαν,
> ὀν πρόγονον, καὶ τοξόφορον Δάλου θεοδότας σκοπόν,
> αἰτέων λαοτρόφον τιμάν τιν’ ἐὰν κεφαλά, ἕτος ὑπαίθριοιος, ἀντεφθέγγατο δ’ ἀπιστήσ
> πατρία ὀσσα, μετάλλασον τε νυν. Ὅροο, τέκνων,
> δεύορ πάγκοινον ἐς χώραν ῥεν φάμας ὑπόθεν.’

55 O. 1.75-85; 6.16-17, 62-3; 8.42-46; 13.67-9; P. 3.40-42; N. 10.76-79, 80-88;
56 On myths of divine ancestry, Köhnken (1971) pp. 94-103.
But when he had attained the fruit of lovely, golden-crowned Youth, he went into the middle of the Alpheos and called out to broad-ruling Poseidon, his progenitor, and to the bowman and guardian of god-built Delos, and asked, under the night sky, that some honor be bestowed upon him that would aid his people. And in response his father’s clear voice replied and came to him “Arise, my son, follow hence my speech into a land shared by all.” And they went to the steep rock of the lofty son of Kronos and there he bestowed to him a double treasury of prophecy…

In contrast to the earlier Adrastus narrative, which was introduced precisely to sponsor and authorize the poet’s speech, there is no evident link between the poet and embedded speaker. The extended narrative of Iamos’ genealogy has run for thirty-four lines (more than half the poem prior to Apollo’s speech). Throughout the narrative the poet has not spoken in the first person, having last done so when he introduced the mythical tale at lines 24-8. By the time Apollo’s divine voice rings out in oratio recta, the mythical world of Iamos’ ancestors has long been the uninterrupted focus of the poem. Likewise, there is no marked reappearance of the poet’s first person following the conclusion of the speech.

The narrative is structured so that Apollo’s words first resonate against silence of the other characters inhabiting the mythical tale. The shadowy paraphrase through which the poet presents the speeches of these other mythical actors sets the words of Apollo in stark relief. The god’s speech is introduced as a response to Iamos through a variation on the hexameter formula for a spoken response (άντεφθέγγατο δε). But the vivid immediacy of his words is not matched by his interlocutor. Apollo straightaway establishes his presence through the power of his voice, addressing Iamos with a bold imperative and vocative combination and building dramatic tone in his subsequent deictic reference (δεύγο). The god’s speech creates its own hic et nunc; his words call special attention to their mimetic diction, emphasizing the formal immediacy of oratio recta through deictic

57 Only after his speech has been introduced in this manner does the narrator announce the god’s arrival by Iamos’ side on the river bank from which he has just uttered his prayer. The light hysteron proteron almost suggests that Apollo’s presence is indistinguishable from his speech, that he is present only in verbal form. Cf. Carne-Ross (1976) p. 19, Dickson (1990) pp. 114-5. As a voice emerging from oratio recta, this lack of physical properties corresponds nicely to the god’s disembodied impersonation by the diegetic poet.
references to both time and space. But the mimetic reality of Apollo’s verbal appearance contrasts with the mediated silence and hazy remoteness that characterizes his interlocutor, Iamos. Apollo’s dynamic speech is isolated within the mythical frame; his performative address is met by silence.

The use of *oratio recta* turns the god’s appearance into a double apparition: to Iamos beside the Alpheos but also to the *hic et nunc* of the poetic present. The formal isolation of Apollo’s voice within the poem means that the performative power of his direct speech cannot be fully discharged within the mythical narrative in which it is located. The vivid presence of his address is marked in its lack of a commensurate response. The suppression of Iamos’ voice draws our attention to the poet, whose narrative role is responsible for bringing the god’s voice into vivid reality, but who suppresses his own voice by ceding the first person to his embedded speaker. The power of Apollo’s unmediated words is signaled both by the poet, who introduces the divine speech with the marked term *artiepês ossa*, and by Apollo himself, who makes self-conscious reference to his voice as the vehicle through which Iamos’ glory will be attained (φάμας ὅπως ἔγινον).

The power of Apollo’s direct speech not only overshadows his mortal interlocutor within the myth, it also eclipses the poet’s own voice, effacing the *hic et nunc* reality of poetic performance through the force of its own more dynamically deictic expression. The imbalance that governed the relationship between Apollo and Iamos extends to that between framer and framed. The formal hierarchy of *oratio recta* is upended through the overpowering vividness of the embedded imitation.

The final elements of the Iamos tale, in which the young man makes the journey to the hill of Kronos as dictated by Apollo to receive his divinely apportioned gifts, are narrated in an oblique tone which contrasts strongly with the unmediated impersonation of Apollo’s speech beside the Alpheos. The subsequent events refer to further speech by the god, but his words are now veiled by those of the diegetic narrator (65-71):

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65
ένθα οἱ ὁπασὲς θησαυρὸν δίδυμον
μαντοσύνας, τόσα μὲν φωνὰς ἀκούειν
ψευδέων ἐγνωστόν, εὐτ’ ἄν δὲ θραυμαχανὸς ἐλθὼν
Ἡρακλῆς, σεμνὸν θάλος Ἀλκαῖδάν, πατρὶ
ἐστὶν τε κτίσθ’ πλευστόβρυστον τεθυμὸν τε μέγιστον ἄεθλων,
Ζηνός ἐπ’ ἀκροτάτῳ βωμῷ τότ’ αὐχροστήμιον θέσθαι κέλευσεν,
70
ἐξ οὗ πολυκλειτον καθ’ Ἐλλανάς γένος Ἰαμιδάν
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There he gave to him a double treasury of prophecy, to hear then the voice that knows no lies and when battle-bold Heracles, the holy shoot of Alkaidai, should come, to establish for his father a festival full of men and the greatest ordinance of games and he commanded him at that time to establish his oracle by the highest altar of Zeus, whence the race of the Iamidai have been renowned throughout Greece…

The narration echoes Apollo’s first-person speech in referring to the god’s phone. And likewise in the narrator’s account, the ability to hear the unerring voice of Apollo is identified as part of the divine benefaction that Iamos received. As a prophet, Iamos is endowed with the special ability to hear the god speak – just as the poet has allowed all to do through the use of oratio recta; the speech itself is a gift from the god. But where the mimetic voice of Apollo was able to fuse the gift and its explanation in a single utterance, the poet must stand at a remove, explaining events without enacting them. This distancing effect, reclaiming the hic et nunc of the diegetic present, is continued in the description of the second element of Iamos’ double treasury: the foundation of a sacred shrine at Olympia. Another divine speech must be imagined to accompany the imparting of this second gift, as supported by the enunciative keleusen at the end of the passage. But this second divine command is only perceived through silence, in the space created by the narrator as he steps away from the embedded voice that had, only moments before, so powerfully possessed his own.

The muting of the embedded speaker’s powerful voice in the shift to the oblique sphere allows Pindar to regain his hold on the chronology of the poem. With this final element of the mythic episode, the inverted hic et nunc of Apollo’s epiphanic speech is replaced by a diachronic temporality. As the narrative returns to the poet’s present time, Pindar fixes the site at Olympia as the locus of a progressive chronological extension that stretches from Iamos down to his victorious descendant, Hagesias. The vibrant proximity of Apollo’s speech, rendered momentarily present through the power of oratio recta, has been mediated through the distancing effect of a repressive oratio obliqua. The god’s voice is concealed within the poet’s; the artiepês ossa recedes into the remote past, its power contained within the frame of Pindar’s song. But the effect of the god’s brief mimetic appearance is still felt. The journey that Pindar initiated at 24-8, when his poetic mules carried the tale back into the mythic past, has been appropriated by the voice of
Apollo, whose directions to follow his voice from within the embedded myth have transported the framing narration to Olympia and the *chresterion* of the Iamidai. The internal dynamics of speech and non-response are slowly drawn into the interaction of poet and embedded speaker to create a complex nexus of interwoven voices in varying temporal registers.

Aeschylus, like Pindar, does not permit dialogue in *oratio recta* and his embedded speakers are likewise isolated within the hierarchical frame of direct speech. As in Pindar, this isolation results in a reconfiguration of the relationship between framer and framed. But because Aeschylus does not limit his *oratio recta* to the mythical past, the effects of this internal asymmetry are even more readily felt within the voice of the primary speaker. At times Aeschylus even explicitly links the internal relationship to the formal hierarchy of *oratio recta*, figuring the embedded speech as an address directed to the framing speaker, either in the past or the future. Thus at *Agamemnon* 590-3, Klytemnestra quotes the reproaches that were recently laid at her feet, closely echoing in her *oratio recta* the words with which the Chorus had addressed her earlier in the play. The embedded speech is an act of aggression against the Chorus – the queen commandeers their voice in her biting impersonation – but it also sets the triumphant language of Klytemnestra’s *hic et nunc* expression against the earlier scene, destabilizing her own mimetic integrity as well. Such moments of exaggerated overlap between the internal and external structures of *oratio recta* reflect the central importance of the trope’s dictional force. They are clear illustrations of how the framing speaker can become dislocated from the *hic et nunc* reality of his own voice through the impersonation of another. But even when the framing speaker is not explicitly implicated in the speech that he impersonates, he nevertheless mediates the internal asymmetries of direct speech. And, much as we found in Pindar, the structures of internal communication imposed by the framer reflect back on his hierarchical engagement with the voices that he has embedded in his own.

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58 This point is made with great subtlety by D.S. Carne-Ross who details how the poet’s “movement” is appropriated by Apollo and Iamos when they move from the Alpheos to the hill of Kronos in Olympia after Apollo’s speech: Carne-Ross (1976) p. 20. More recently, see Calame (forthcoming).

59 καὶ τίς μ’ ἐνύπτων εἶπε, ἃ φυσικῶν διά / πεισθείσα Τροίων νῦν πεπορθήσασθα δοκεῖ; / ἡ κάρτα πρὸς γυναικὸς αἴρεσθα λέαρ.”
Turning once again to the *Agamemnon parodos*, we can see that the complex structure of the ode results in precisely this sort of mediated interweaving of figures internal and external to direct speech. When Calchas’ prophetic speech is concluded, his words – as we saw earlier – are linked directly to the speech of the Chorus with no indication that his speech was met with a verbal response within the embedded scene. After the formal closure of the speech at 156-9, the Chorus break off their narration and offer a prayer to Zeus. The “hymn” begins with a sudden shift in theme and meter and runs for 23 lines across three stanzas. It comes as a surprise when, with no corresponding shift in meter, the Chorus resume their Aulis narrative at line 184. In this second narrative section, the Chorus relate the events which followed the seer’s speech, including a second instance of *oratio recta* in which Agamemnon expresses his views on the plight of the Greeks and his own mortal dilemma. Agamemnon’s speech is clearly linked to the earlier direct speech of Calchas, but their precise relationship is unresolved.

The exact chronology across the hiatus is difficult to determine. The internal interruption of the hymn functions like a choral song within the choral song, creating a sense of temporal extension within the Aulis narrative despite the fact that it is an expression of the Chorus’s concerns within the *hic et nunc*. Nevertheless, it remains unclear what, if any, delay has taken place between Calchas’ interpretation of the eagle portent and Agamemnon’s response. When the Chorus begin their narrative anew, they detail the dreadful conditions and adverse winds which kept the Greek troops from setting sail, but no larger timeframe is given to relate this period of stagnation to Calchas’ earlier warning of such delays. The events of this second narration are marked as subsequent to those of the earlier narration by the conjunction *kai toth’* (184), however the specific temporal relationship is remarkably opaque. Against this upending of

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61 In this respect the hymn functions as a kind of internal analogue to the *parodos* itself, which is a dramatic representation of the time in which the beacon will travel from Troy, even though its subject matter ranges across the past.
62 Barrett (2007) reads the events as linked “but only vaguely”. In describing the impenetrable chronology of the passage, he speaks of “dizzying anachronies [which] are accompanied by other temporal devices that deserve notice: repetition and extreme summary that verges on ellipsis.” p. 262. Schein suggests that “the relative spatial and temporal vagueness in the lyric portion of the parodos has to do with the Chorus’ way of viewing human events in the perspective of a divine or cosmic order, not unlike the perspective of Kalkhas himself.” Schein (2009) p. 390.
chronological certainty, a connection between Calchas’ speech and Agamemnon’s response is ensured by the seer’s presence following the hymn, his speech represented in a brief oratio obliqua (198-204):\(^{63}\)

\[\text{επει δὲ καὶ πιθοῦ}
\text{χείματος ἀλλο μῆχαρ}
\text{βριθύτερον πρόμοιον}
\text{μάντις ἐκλαγὲν προφέρων}
\text{Ἄρτεμον, ὡστε χθόνια βάχ-
\text{τροῖς ἐπιχρούοντας Ατρεί-
\text{δας δάχυν μὴ κατασχεῖν.}}\]

*But then the seer shrieked to the leaders for another, graver means against the harsh storm, calling upon Artemis, so that the sons of Atreus struck the earth with their scepters but could not hold back their tears.*

Paradoxically, this narrative insistence on the connection between the two speeches highlights their disjunction – be it merely a formal product of narrative or with an added temporal element – since by drawing the speakers, though not their speeches, into such proximity the lack of dialogue becomes all the more striking. The use of the verb *klazô* in line 201 establishes a particularly strong link to Calchas’ earlier speech, which was described in the closing frame with the compound *apoklazô* (156). The echo suggests a parallelism between the two utterances, if not an outright unity.\(^{64}\) The suppression of Calchas’ voice within the oblique mode, contrasting with the strong first person accorded to him earlier, stands as a foil for the introduction of Agamemnon as a second embedded speaking figure in the *parodos*.

Agamemnon’s speech is not introduced as a “response” but as a self-standing utterance with a standard *inquit* formula devoid of interlocutive force despite the deliberate reappearance of Calchas as a speaker in oratio obliqua. Once the speech itself begins, this sense of isolation only grows stronger. Agamemnon’s words are more self-directed than engaging any external party (206-18):\(^{65}\)

\(^{63}\) Bers (1997) p. 33, would limit the *oratio obliqua* here to the invocation, Ἄρτεμον, but I believe that the whole clause detailing “other, heavier means” (πιθοῦ /χείματος ἀλλο μῆχαρ / βριθύτερον πρόμοιον) should be taken as reported speech.

\(^{64}\) Bers (1997) p. 33, “The powerful *verbum dicendi* repeats, in simplex form, the word used at 156 to close the OR, but Calchas’ awful words are not allowed to come to the surface; rather their effect is seen in the Atreidæ’s gesture, striking the ground with their staves.”
The old lord spoke, saying “Grave destruction is it to disobey, but grave too should I cut down my child, prize of my house, staining a father’s hands with the streams of a virgin sacrificed upon the altar. Which of these things is devoid of evils? How can I be a deserter and break faith with my allies? For it is right to crave with an overly-spirited drive a wind-stopping sacrifice and the blood of a virgin. Yes, let this be good.

The disruption of dialogue between the two embedded speakers is reflected in the internal dynamics of the speeches, with Calchas invoking the gods (ἵμοι δὲ καλέω Παιάνα) and Agamemnon addressing his anguished questions to no one in particular. The speeches are not directed at each other. Rather it is the voice of the Chorus which sets them in dialogue while at the same time orchestrating our keen perception of the disjunction. Agamemnon’s oratio recta is not structured in direct relation to the Chorus. Instead the speech triangulates the three different voices of the parodos, setting the already established contrast between internal and framing temporal structures against, on the one hand, the chronological tension within the internal episode itself – represented by the lack of direct communication between Agamemnon and Calchas – and, on the other, the role of the Chorus in further unsettling this internal chronology through their interruption of the narrative – exemplified by the hymn to Zeus and the subordination of Calchas’ second speech in oratio obliqua.

Agamemnon’s final words, eu gar eiê, resonate as a clear rearticulation, in both language and position, of the ailinon refrain that formed the key point of contact between
the Chorus and Calchas throughout the earlier speech. The use of the modified refrain in Agamemnon’s speech establishes the ultimate embedded response to Calchas’ words as a rejoinder of sorts to the intricate interweaving of Chorus and embedded speaker that came before. The anachronistic song is stretched out, across the Chorus’s intermittent “hymn to Zeus” to express itself in one final refrain. All three speakers function together to present a unified picture of the discontinuous communication within the Chorus’s narrative. The proximity of expression found in the interplay between the Chorus and Calchas is recast by Agamemnon’s distant response. Agamemnon takes up the role of interlocutor separated from the seer not by time, as the Chorus were, but by the narrative structure in which the Chorus present his words. The effect of this restructuring is to call our attention back to the hierarchical relationship of the speakers, reasserting the narrative role of the Chorus just as they are about to abandon this function in the face of the horrors that it would require them to relate. The Chorus’s ultimate silence, framed in terms of the inescapability of time and fate, returns once more to the power of Calchas’ words: τά δ’ ἐνθεν οὔτ’ εἶδον οὔτ’ ἐνέπω· τέχναι δὲ Κάλχαντος οὐκ ἄκραντοι. What then occurred I neither saw nor will I speak it. The arts of Calchas were not unfulfilled (248-9). Even without permitting Calchas to speak again in the first person, the Chorus are forced to reflect on the destabilizing effect that their impersonations have had. The narrative command that they asserted with such certainty at the beginning of the ode has been eroded by the internal polyphonies produced by their orationes rectae.

Voice Past and Future
So far our examination of Pindar’s and Aeschylus’ use of oratio recta has concentrated on characteristics that are primarily formal in nature. Nonetheless, we found that the structural features that characterize shifts in dictional mode between framing speaker and embedded voice were distinguished by a consistent impact on the spatio-temporal properties of poetic speech. One might be inclined to attribute this tendency to the inherently temporal properties of the trope of oratio recta: to see Pindar’s and Aeschylus’ propensity to engage with questions of poetic time and space as little more than an organic outgrowth of the use of the trope itself. In truth, the causal chain runs in the

opposite direction. In order to appreciate the central role that *oratio recta* plays in allowing Pindar and Aeschylus to formulate their new understanding of poetic voice in the world of the script, it is necessary to recognize that these spatio-temporal features are consciously sought out by our poets: that they are in fact the very reason why the poets rely on *oratio recta* to explore their poetic concerns.

There are certain themes which facilitate a far more complex appreciation of the spatio-temporal domain that *oratio recta* is so ideally positioned to expose, and none more so than prophecy, which adds its own intrinsically problematic chronology to the structure of embedded speech. In both Pindar and Aeschylus, we find that an intensification of the formal structure of *oratio recta* is achieved through the regular pairing of the trope with speech that is prophetic in theme or content. The spatio-temporal aspect of embedded mimesis, which destabilizes the hierarchy of poetic chronology by establishing an alternative *hic et nunc* to that of the framing speaker, is corroborated and exaggerated by the fact that the speeches themselves most often focus on questions of time.

The vast majority of the embedded figures whom Pindar allows to speak in direct speech impart knowledge of the future.\textsuperscript{66} There are strong similarities between the figure of the mantis and Pindar’s own forward-looking poetic voice, especially in the epinician odes.\textsuperscript{67} However, Pindar’s regular combination of prophetic speech and *oratio recta* cannot be explained by generic considerations; it is a consistent feature of Pindaric direct speech across generic boundaries whereas, by contrast, the epinician *oratio recta* of his contemporary Bacchylides exhibits no interest in mantic themes.\textsuperscript{68} More importantly, the prophets embedded in Pindar’s mythic digressions are separated from the poet by the chronological structure of the poems which imposes an important distinction with respect

\textsuperscript{66} The speeches that I determine to be prophetic in either theme or content are: O.6.16-17; O.6.62-3; O.8.42-46; O.13.67-9; P. 3.40-42; P.4.13-57; P.8.44-55; P.9.30-36, 39-65; N. 10.76-79, 80-88; I. 6.43-49, 52-54; 1.8.35-45, Hymn fr. 43 SM, Pae. 2.73-5, Pae. 4.39-?, Pae. 8a.14-?. It is possible that Erginos’ speech in *Olympian* 4 should also be included in this list, as argued by Suarez de la Torre (1988) p. 90.

\textsuperscript{67} The voice of the prophet in Pindar’s epinicia is treated at length by Athanassaki (1990). See also Suarez de la Torre (1988), Suarez de la Torre (1989), Suarez de la Torre (1990), Dickson (1990), Schmid (1996) pp. 46-57. The subject of prophets in general is treated by Duchemin (1956), Anastase (1975) pp. 261-80.

\textsuperscript{68} Nor does Bacchylides show interest in using *oratio recta* to convey prophecy in his dithyrambic poetry.
to their perceptions of the “future”. As Hilary Mackie explains, although the future events foretold by embedded figures “lie in the future from the standpoint of myth” they are nevertheless “well known to the poet and his audience and, from their perspective, already long past.” The suggestively complex relationship described by Mackie is redoubled by the repeated use of *oratio recta* to convey embedded prophecies. Mantic statements of the past are brought into the *hic et nunc* of direct speech to produce a matrix of conflicting and conflated temporalities and view-points.

Nowhere is Pindar’s complex play between forward-looking mantic speech and the problematically embedded vitality of *oratio recta* more dynamically on display than in Medea’s extended speech in *Pythian 4*. The Colchian prophetess is granted control of the narrative in the poem’s second stanza and offers a complex prophetic vision in uninterrupted *oratio recta* for more than forty lines (longer than the entirety of many of Pindar’s extant odes). Her words, situated in an uncertain *hic et nunc* within the mythical past and ranging across many generations of Battidai past and future, stand in stark contrast to the insistent spatio-temporal frame established by the poet at the outset of the ode: σάμερον μὲν χρῆ ὁ Παρμάνδης / στάμεν ἂν ἄνδρι φίλωι / σταματήτι. *Today it is necessary for you to stand beside a man who is a friend* (1-2). Medea’s bold speech is an extreme example of how the mantic speech of an embedded figure can unsettle the *hic et nunc* of the poet’s voice. We cannot now examine in detail the complex resolution of her words, which result in the poet taking up the spatio-temporal position of his embedded speaker and addressing his own words to the mythical heroes to whom Medea’s speech was directed (59-63). This results in an unprecedented departure from established modes of Pindaric composition in the subsequent – almost epic (or Stesichorean) – extended narrative of the Argonauts. Similarly destabilizing effects can also be identified in the less exceptional speeches of *Olympian 6*, where a consistent focus on mantic insight runs throughout the

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69 Mackie (2003) p. 80, also pp. 87-8 in which she outlines some of the important distinctions between the epinician poet and the figure of the mantis: “Unlike the prophetic speakers in epinician myth […], the poet cannot be so bold as to make definite assertions about what the future may hold.”

70 The use of apostrophe by the poet here, to address Battos in the mythical past, is exemplary of the spatio-temporal power of the trope that we will examine in the next section.
As we saw above, not only is Apollo’s speech a prophetic utterance, but its articulation imparts a prophetic power to its addressee. The oversized mantic force of Apollo’s speech matches the passage’s emphatically mimetic character, which threatens to overwhelm the compositional choices of the poet long after the oratio recta has been concluded. Just as his voice emerges from the past into the hic et nunc through direct speech, the foresight of the god’s prophecy reaches out of the embedded future of the mythic narrative to control the future of the poet himself. And yet, although Apollo’s voice is experienced as an unmediated expression of his presence, the chronology of the poetic frame precludes the possibility of following the god’s words to their true mantic destination except through the poet’s narration. At the same time that Apollo’s speech erodes the stable hic et nunc of the poet, one cannot look to the future through the vivid speech of Apollo without recalling the distance that stands between the poet and this utterance of the past. The poet can share the god’s prophetic voice, but not his mantic vision. No matter how successful his embedded impersonation may be, or how faithfully it relocates the god in the vivid reality of the present Pindar, like Adrastus, cannot efface the boundaries of time and space that separate him from the all-knowing mantic “eye”. The worlds of the two voices cannot be reconciled. What the embedded speaker sees as future, the poet must look upon as past. But if both figures occupy the poem’s hic et nunc, if both claim the authority to speak in their own voices, then the incompatibility of a “then” that cannot be shared by both speakers makes it difficult to locate a poetic “now”.

Oratio recta with mantic content occurs less regularly in Aeschylus than in Pindar, but there is still a strong sympathy between the theme and trope. For Aeschylus, whose

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71 The poem’s clear focus on themes of prophecy is in part stipulated by the laudandus’ Iamid lineage, but the thematic resonances are so close to those found in other poems in which the victor does not claim membership in a long line of seers that this particular detail does not preclude generalization. In addition to the early invocation of Amphiarao in his guise as inspired seer, all of the figures of the Iamos myth are engaged in prophetic discourse to some degree: Iamos becomes a prophet following his encounter with Apollo and even Aipytos is said to have learned of his grandson’s future power by consulting the Pythian oracle and to report the prophecy (ὡς μάνει) to his subjects (47-52). On the fascinating history of the Iamidai, see Flower (2008).

72 The following constitute direct speech in Aeschylus that is prophetic in content or theme: Sep. 580-9 (434, 647-8), Ag. 126-55, 206-17, 410-26.
gaze is trained on questions of prophecy throughout the extant plays,\textsuperscript{73} the idea of mantic speech need not always be approached literally. Because \textit{oratio recta} is not limited to the past in Aeschylean drama, oftentimes impersonated speeches may be prophetic in the sense that they anticipate events which lie in the future from the perspective of the primary speaker.\textsuperscript{74} We will see the powerful effect that such “prophetic” speeches can have when we examine Orestes’ peculiar use of the trope in the \textit{Choephoroi} in chapter four.\textsuperscript{75} When direct speech is employed to convey truly prophetic content, however, the resulting temporal and spatial disorientation creates an effect similar to that which we found in Pindar. At the same time, the temporal proximity of Aeschylus’ embedded speakers to the framing voices which impersonate them means that the impact on the poem’s chronology is experienced with greater immediacy, heightening the already powerful play of voice upon voice.

In the \textit{Agamemnon parodos}, for example, \textit{oratio recta} is used to convey a past prophecy that has direct bearing on the present circumstances of the Chorus’s framing speech. Calchas’ prophetic interpretation of the savage eagles looks forward to a future that the Chorus are about to experience, in which they will themselves have recourse to strikingly similar bird imagery. The harmony of their voices and songs across time is matched by their anachronistic perspectives on the same event: the sacking of Troy by the Argives. What stands ten years in the future for Calchas is an immediately present experience for the Chorus. And as the Chorus train their gaze back towards his prophecy at Aulis, Calchas is, like his direct speech, already participating in the knowledge of that future time. By the time they sing their retrospective \textit{parodos} narrative, the Chorus have caught up with Calchas’ prophetic insight. Both speakers await the return of Agamemnon, though with differing vantages on the (still) future event. The effect replicates that which we found at work in Pindar, whereby the unstable hierarchy of framing and embedded speech is made unquestionably temporal by the mantic content of the \textit{oratio recta}. The incompatible chronologies of the two speakers and, more importantly, the incongruous nature of their respective relationships to time itself

\textsuperscript{73} See, for example Peradotto (1969), Adrados (1989), Roberts (1984).
\textsuperscript{74} As we find at \textit{Sup.} 402, \textit{Ch.} 569-70, 575, 718, \textit{Eum.} 757-60 and \textit{fr.78a24 (Theoroi)}.
\textsuperscript{75} Below, pp. 203-5.
becomes the unequivocal message of the juxtaposition of voices. Prophetic content is an essential element in the creation of this poetic time-scape, helping not only to delineate its contours but to lay the ground on which the meeting of incongruous voices can take place.

The contrast of a retrospective unfolding of time set against a forward-looking prophetic speech brought vividly into the present through oratio recta is continued in the play’s first stasimon, where another embedded voice from the past offers mantic visions of the past’s future in direct speech. In this second choral song, the domôn prophêtai lament Helen’s departure to Troy and the grief that it will bring. The interweaving of voices that we found in the parodos is continued in the first stasimon through the lack of a clear demarcation at the end of the prophets’ speech. The lack of a boundary again allows the Chorus to share in the prophetic voice that they impersonate. The temporal uncertainty of the speech, a question of duration as much as of chronology, is paired with a geographical doubling, blurring the location of the seers and the house that they so emphatically invoke in their opening words: ἰὼ ἰὼ δῶμα δῶμα καὶ πρόμοι (410). Like Helen herself who is split between Argos and Troy (ἰὼ λέχος καὶ στῆμοι φιλάνοφες 411), the seers’ location cannot be pinned down to either place. The indexical language of the embedded speaker excludes the framing Chorus from both the time and space created by the utterance. But the use of oratio recta means that the distanced Chorus are paradoxically able to share the power of the past mantic declaration, having already come to know the truth of its predictions. Mirroring the effect produced by Calchas’ speech, the mantic content of the prophets’ speech enhances the innate capacity of oratio recta to create a spatial and temporal matrix that bridges past and present.

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77 The speech is concluded at different points by editors, either at line 415, 419, or 426. The conservative position is argued, albeit not without hesitation, by Bers (1997) p. 37. The more expansive reading, which I support, is defended by Athanassaki (1993-4) p. 150 with bibliography. If the speech is extended to 426, as the force of the closing lines at 427-8 would suggest, then the content of the speech is doubly mantic, making internal reference to the interpretations of the house’s ὀνειρόφαντοι (420ff.)
78 Athanassaki (1993-4) passim.
2. The Stage is Set

In contrast to the relatively infrequent occurrences of *oratio recta* in the poetry of Pindar and Aeschylus, apostrophe is commonly employed by both poets. In dramatic texts the use of second-person address is often unremarkable, arising naturally over the course of mimetic dialogue. On occasion, however, drama can deploy the second person in a manner that calls into question the configuration of mimetic speakers.\(^7^9\) Diegetic poetry, on the other hand, does not assume an interlocutor for its narrator. Use of the second person is therefore always constitutive of a contextualization of the narrative voice that is otherwise unarticulated within the poem, yet not all instances of second-person address are equally powerful in this regard. The apostrophes of interest to us in exploring Pindar and Aeschylus’ scriptory poetics are those which actively deploy internal dictional structure of the trope to create a problematic or uncertain relationship between the speaker and addressee. Often this manifests itself as an asymmetry or hierarchy between speaker and addressee, much like the consistent dynamic that we found in Pindar’s and Aeschylus’ use of *oratio recta*. Silence on the dramatic stage or the revelation of an unexpected, or unexpectedly vivid, addressee in diegetic poetry create a destabilizing effect that momentarily reconfigures the “scene” the poem has constructed for itself. Like *oratio recta*, apostrophe not only momentarily reconfigures a given poem’s dictional mode but restructures the established *hic et nunc* in which the poetic voices are located. Where *oratio recta* turns our attention to the identity of the primary speaker, apostrophe demands that we look beyond the voices that we hear to question what other silent figures may be present in the poem.

A Second Person

Both apostrophe and *oratio recta* are tropes able to increase the number of figures within the imagined world of a poem’s performance. Apostrophe does not, however, achieve this end through vocal polyphony like *oratio recta*. Direct speech reduplicates a single voice, splitting one speaker into two (or more) through embedded mimesis. Apostrophe,

\(^7^9\) In a recent article, G.O. Hutchinson has argued for the importance of attending to second-person address when its force is more than “merely conventional”, even within dramatic texts. Hutchinson (2010) p. 97. Hutchinson looks specifically to “family reunions” as moments in which the second person is imbued with increased significance.
conversely, maintains the vocal unity of the primary speaker while creating for itself an unlimited number of potential addressees. Whether or not the addressee is able to respond, apostrophe results in the perception of a second person created by but also participating in the discourse of the primary speaker. Through this power of external generation, apostrophe fills the poetic stage – be it literal or figurative – with characters whose un-heard voices could potentially meet the primary speaker with the same level of verbal immediacy. Despite this inherent potential for speech in the *hic et nunc*, the silence of these secondary voices means that their presence is, as in *oratio recta*, mediated by the framing speaker. The addressee is embodied through the primary speaker’s exhortation but, when no verbal response is offered, the dialogic partner remains contained within the second person, embedded in the voice that invokes him. The result is a shadow-world of voiceless figures who fill the performative *hic et nunc* created by the primary speaker’s words.

The mimetic dialogue of Aeschylean tragedy employs the second person as its standard means of establishing communication between mimetic figures onstage. When a character addressed in the second person offers a verbal response, the basic structure of mimetic dialogue is maintained. When, however, there is no response from the addressee, the address unsettles the dialogic frame and is classed as apostrophe. A simple instance of this type of confusion is found in the *Agamemnon parodos*, when the Chorus call out to Clytemnestra in the final period of their opening anapaests:

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sú dé, Τυνδάρεω
θύγατερ, βασίλεια Κλυταμήστρα,
tí χρέος; tí νέον; tí d' ἐπαιωθομένη
τίνος ἄγγελίας
πειθοὶ περίπεμπται θυσοκεῖς;
...
toútων λέξασ' ὁ tι καὶ δυνατὸν
καὶ θέμις αἶνει
παιῶν τε γενοῦ τήδει μερίμνης,
ἵ νῦν τοτὲ μὲν κακόφορον τελέθει,
totē δ' ἐκ θυσιῶν ἄναφαίνεις
ἐλπίς ἄμυνει φοντιδ' ἀπληστον
† τὴν θυμοφθόρον λύπης φρένα. †
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But you, daughter of Tyndareus, queen Clytemnestra, what is afoot? What is the news? What have you learned putting faith in what message to send around making burnt sacrifices?

…

Telling of these things whatever Right permits, be a cure for this concern which is evil-minded at times, at others by the sacrifices you reveal becomes a hope that fends off insatiate thoughts, †the heart-wrenching feeling of pain.†

The passage offers a compelling demonstration of the performative nature of the trope, and more specifically, how the dramatic staging of Aeschylus’ poem is called into question by the generative powers of apostrophe. Because Klytemnestra is a character in the play, who will in fact soon add her voice to the polyphony of the stage, the Chorus’s apostrophe to her at the beginning of the parodos will have a different effect depending on whether or not Klytemnestra is physically present on the stage. In addition to raising fascinating questions about Aeschylean dramaturgy, this ambiguity nicely points out how apostrophe generates a kind of speech through silence. If, as is often asserted, Clytemnestra is onstage at the time of the Chorus’s address despite the fact that her entrance has not been formally introduced following standard tragic convention,80 Clytemnestra stands as a possible mimetic interlocutor for the Chorus. The extended address to Clytemnestra has a clear dialogic intent. The Chorus anticipate that Clytemnestra will respond to the questions that they have posed (λέξασα 97), that her answer will have an immediate and positive effect on their understanding and disposition (παρέων τε γένος 99). Their apostrophe to her would then represent one of the most powerful elements grounding the Chorus to the hic et nunc of the staged action of the play just before they engage in the chronological displacement of the Aulis narrative, which follows immediately after the passage just quoted. At the same time, Clytemnestra’s silence, and the Chorus’s indifference to it, create a barrier to dialogic communication onstage, and an awareness of the lack of dialogue in the face of urgent questions, that will persist until the end of the Chorus’s song, when they once again turn their attention to the queen. If, on the other hand, Clytemnestra is not present to hear the Chorus’s appeal, the seamless transition to the lyric narrative that follows signals that the

80 Although he does not hold to the position himself, Taplin rehearses the arguments in support of Clytemnestra’s early entry. Taplin (1977) pp. 280-2 with bibliography.
Chorus do not in fact expect any response. As the watchman’s prayer to the gods with which the play began resulted in the arrival of the beacon from Troy – greeted with an emphatic address (ὤ χαίψε λαμπτήρο νυκτός, κτλ. 22-4) – so the Chorus’s prayer-like call to Clytemnestra is able to summon the physical form of the queen, who will arrive onstage at the end of the Chorus’s song.

Both of these dramatic possibilities are explored later in the play, when the appearance of Cassandra unambiguously demonstrates a failed address between figures onstage followed by repeated apostrophe to a figure who is not physically present within the mimetic hic et nunc of the action. Clytemnestra is herself the source of the first element through her refusal to comprehend or accept Cassandra’s silence in the face of her commands. Although the Trojan captive had been present onstage since the entrance of Agamemnon at line 783, it is only after the king has re-entered his palace more than two-hundred lines later that Clytemnestra turns her attention to her husband’s captive, addressing the Trojan princess by name: εἶσο σιμίζου καὶ σὺ, Κασσάνδραν λέγω (1035). Cassandra does not respond, maintaining her silence until Clytemnestra herself departs in a rage, unwilling to waste any more time addressing the girl in vain. Throughout the episode Cassandra’s silence stands in marked contrast to Clytemnestra’s increasingly frustrated attempts to establish communication with the girl. In her attempts to engage the silent princess, Clytemnestra seeks a reciprocal, if not symmetrical, exchange with her addressee. Instead Clytemnestra finds herself in a triangulated conversation with the Chorus, who fill the silence where Cassandra’s

81 As argued by Fraenkel (1950) ad 83ff. This is also the considered position of Taplin, who argues that Clytemnestra appears onstage between lines 255 to 258, with “a slight preference for 258”. Taplin (1977) p. 287, cf. pp. 282-8.
82 Thalmann offers an elegant assessment of Cassandra’s refusal to speak: “Only one character in the play can resist Clytemnestra, and that is Cassandra. Lines 1035-1071 represent a failed persuasion-scene which contrasts with the successful one with Agamemnon. Cassandra meets Clytemnestra’s attempts to persuade her to enter the house […] and characteristic verbal ironies (e.g., 1055-1058) with silence. Whatever Cassandra’s motives – contempt, indifference, preoccupation with her suffering – this silence is a brilliantly effective response. To try to resist Clytemnestra on her own terms would be dangerous and probably futile; but silence, the apparent absence of any response at all, is the one attitude that renders Clytemnestra’s skill with language impotent.” Thalmann (1985) p. 228.
83 A fact reflected in the dialogic force of the negative condition εἰ… μὴ δέχῃ λόγον, which, as Fraenkel notes, retains the strong force of “receiving” the words of one’s interlocutor, i.e. attaching sense to sound. Likewise Goldhill stresses the importance of speech and communication in this initial approach to Cassandra. Goldhill (1984) pp. 82-3.
response should be heard, re-enforcing and rearticulate Clytemnestra’s words,\textsuperscript{84} producing a kind of echo chamber in place of a truly dialogic exchange.

Once Clytemnestra has left the stage, Cassandra begins to speak, but her words are not addressed to the Chorus with whom she shares the \textit{hic et nunc}. Throughout the episode – a rich and complex scene that we will revisit in the next chapter – Cassandra makes use of the second person to fill the stage with an alternate cast perceptible to her alone. After her first dramatic apostrophes to Apollo are shouted out with complete disregard for the Chorus’s incomprehension and rebukes,\textsuperscript{85} Cassandra continues to fill the stage in a dizzying dance across time and space, apostrophizing the future woes of the house of Atreus and her own youthful haunts even as she maintains her imagined exchange with Apollo\textsuperscript{86} – all the while leaving unanswered the confused Chorus’s attempts to join her conversations. The power of apostrophe hinted at in the \textit{parodos} is now given full reign, unsettling the dialogic exchange between the characters onstage and creating a separate communicative field that resists the parameters of the dramatic mimesis. Like the Watchman and the Chorus before her, Cassandra’s mantic apostrophes are also generative of dramatic action, predicting her own murder and that of Agamemnon, but also the eventual arrival onstage of Apollo and the Furies.\textsuperscript{87}

It is worth noting briefly that the exploitation of Cassandra’s prophetic status to facilitate this unsettling of the play’s enunciative boundaries in time and space mirrors that which we found in our earlier examination of \textit{oratio recta}.\textsuperscript{88} The thematic overlap is significant. In the Cassandra-scene, as in other Aeschylean uses of apostrophe that demonstrate an analogous ability to reconfigure the time-scape of the surrounding drama, the temporal properties of mantic utterance are harnessed to place the marked second-person address within a spatio-temporal sphere distinct from that of the primary dialogue.

\textsuperscript{84} Pillinger examines how the Chorus and Clytemnestra are oddly aligned in this initial attempt to engage Cassandra. Pillinger (2009) pp. 24-5.
\textsuperscript{86} Lines 1107, 1138-9, and 1156-9.
\textsuperscript{87} The Chorus understand this latter component clearly: ποίαν Ἥρινθον τῆνδε δόμασιν κέλη ἐπορθούαξεν; (1119). On the important connections between Cassandra’s exchange with the (as yet) unseen Apollo, see Knox (1972) esp. p. 111. On the presence of the Furies, Prins (1991) p. 178, Frontisi-Ducroux (2007).
\textsuperscript{88} Athanassaki singles out Cassandra’s speech in the \textit{Agamemnon} as encapsulating “the essential features of mantic discourse” which she traces in Pindar’s embedded speech. Athanassaki (1990) p. 95.
Corresponding to the spatio-temporal transgressions of embedded mantic utterances, the mantic apostrophe moves across the drama’s unseen boundaries and produces anachronistic dialogues that fill the stage with specters of voices past and future.

Since Pindar’s poems do not contain the dialogic exchanges that form the heart of tragic drama, it is perhaps all the more surprising that we find the melic poet making regular use of apostrophe to non-divine figures.91 Within epinician, the apostrophizing of laudandi seems to have been an established, though not necessary, component of composition.92 But despite its somewhat standardized form, Pindar’s second-person addresses to his victors retain a strong deictic force, locating the diegetic narrator within a temporally and geographically circumscribed communicative event.93 Moreover, unlike his contemporary Bacchylides, Pindar at times supplements or displaces the laudandus of an epinician by apostrophizing other figures in the second person, thus expanding the simulated conversation to include figures whose real or imagined presence is not required by generic conventions.94 These apostrophes can be addressed to named or unnamed attendants of uncertain status, to geographic locations, or to inanimate objects of various kinds.95 One consistent feature of these varied objects of apostrophe is that they are asked

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91 The possibility for non-correspondence between the scene described within the poem and the external circumstances of performance is discussed in the next chapter.
92 The one Bacchylidean exception is 13.190 where the poet apostrophizes a non-descriptive group of young men whom he calls on to aid in his song: νίκαν τ’ ἐρυμυδέα μέλπετ’, ὦ νέοι. Cf. Pindar I.8.1.
93 Apostrophes to named figures, not the laudandus: O.6.22, 6.88; P.5.45-54; 6.15-20; 8.72; N.2.24-5; 5.41-2; 7.58; 8.44; I.2.1, 31; 2.47-8 (πολίτες); 7.31-4; 8.1 (νέοι); Pa.6.121-2 (νέοι); Pa.8.1 (seers); fr.122.1-7 (young girls); Apostrophes to unnamed figures, not the laudandus: O.1.18; 8.92 (Zeus?); 9.6-16, 40-1, 47-8, 54; 10.1-2; P.4.277-8; 6.1; 10.51-2; 11.38; N.1.13; 3.9-11 (Muse?); 4.36-7; 5.48-9 (unclear if to City or the laudandus); 5.50-4; 7.77; 80-1; 9.34-7; 10.21; I.2.12; 3.15; 4.35; 5.24, 38-42, 51, 62-3; 7.20 (Thebes?); 8.7, 62; fr. 43?, Pa.7b.2; Pa.21.1-2; fr.94b.76-7; fr.107ab; fr. 180; fr.188; fr.194; fr.215a. To places: O.5.4; 8.1-2; 9.17; P.2.1-3; 8.98; 12.1-5; N.1.1-5; 7.50; I.1.1-2, 6; 7.1-15; fr.33c; Pa.6.1-6, 10-11, 124-30, 132; fr.76; fr.96 (Sirios); fr.195. To body parts or inanimate objects: O.1.4-5; 2.1, 89; P.1.1-10; 3.61-2; N.3.26-8; 4.44; 5.3; fr.123.1; fr.127.3-4.
to participate in the composition or performance of the poem in which they are addressed. The apostrophized figures are thereby incorporated into the discourse of the poem, and while they are never endowed with a mimetic voice of their own (as are the characters of the dramatic stage), they can be understood to tacitly participate in a continued performance of the poem. At these moments, the diegetic diction of Pindar’s poems shades into a mimetic mode, surrounding the primary speaker with a cast of potential interlocutors with whom his narration might – but never does – translate into dramatic dialogue. The same approach to apostrophe is found in Pindar’s non-epinician poems, where his use of the second person spans a similar range of addressees, from gods and the Muses, to mythic figures, collaborators named and unnamed, and his poetic patrons, be they men or cities.

 specification 6 again presents a remarkably rich picture of how these varied apostrophes can function within Pindar’s principally diegetic poetry. In addition to apostrophizing the victor, Hagesias, by name or patronymic on three separate occasions (12, 77, 80), the poem directs apostrophes to two additional named persons, Phintis and Aeneas, who become something like characters on Pindar’s poetic stage (22, 88-93). The scholia respectively identify these men as Hagesias’ charioteer and Pindar’s assistant. These biographical assertions have drawn little skepticism from modern scholars despite the manifest lack of evidence in their support. Pindar himself offers no information about the men apart from their names, but they are both explicitly drawn into collaboration with the poet. Phintis is called upon as the poet prepares to “travel” into the mythical space of the Iamos narrative to yoke the poet’s chariot of song (22-5):

\[
\text{ω Φίντις, ἄλλα ζευγάν ἢθη μοι οθένος ἡμῶν,}
\text{ἀ τάχος, ὁφρὰ κελεύθῳ τ' ἐν καθαρᾷ}
\text{βάσομεν ὄχχον, ἱκομαί τε πρὸς ἄνδρῶν}
\text{καὶ γένος.}
\]

\begin{center}
Phintis, yoke for me now the strength of mules, quickly as possible, that we may ride our chariot along the clear path, and I may arrive at the ancestry of these men.
\end{center}

\footnote{Olympian 6, 37c ω Φίντις: οὗτος ἵοι ἴνοχος τῆς ἀπήνης. 148a ὅτι οὐινον νῦν ἐταίρους, Αἰνέα: ἀποστρέφει τὸν λόγον πρὸς Αἴνεαν τὸν χοροδιδάσκαλον.}

\footnote{See, for example, the commentary of Hutchinson (2001) pp. 385-6, 414-5.
The structure of the address establishes Phintis as an aid to the poet. He is a silent interlocutor, whose attendance and participation is nevertheless needed for the poet’s compositional journey to continue.

Aeneas too is a collaborator of the poet, named only in relation to the discursive frame established by the poet’s second-person address: ὅτι τούτων νῦν ἐταίρους, Ἀϊνέα, πρῶτον μὲν Ὅραν Παρθενίαν κελαδῆσσαι. Now rouse your companions, o Aeneas, first to call out in celebration of Hera Parthenia (87-8). But unlike Phintis, Aeneas’ role is not simply to attend the poet in silence. Rather, he is called upon to join in an unheard harmony guiding the voices of his companions. The complex figuration of Aeneas’ silent song is developed as the extended apostrophe progresses:

ἔσοι γὰρ ἄγγελός ὀρθὸς, ἥμικόμων σκυτάλα Μοισάν, γλυκὺς κρατήρ ἀγαφθέγκτων ἀοίδάν· εἰπόν δὲ μεμνάσθαι Συρακοσσαίαν τε καὶ Ὀρτυγίας.

For you are a faithful messenger, the dispatch of the fair-haired Muses, a sweet mixing-bowl of loud-sounding songs. Tell them to remember Syracuse and Ortygia.

How are we to understand the nature of the song that Pindar calls on Aeneas and his companions to perform? In one sense the apostrophe anticipates a vocal event, outside of the poet’s discursive field, in which Aeneas will fulfill the command and in turn engage his comrades in song. Yet, as Hutchinson notes, the poet’s instructions are also already “fulfilled in the act of uttering them”, for the poet’s speech performs the very function that it demands of its addressee.96 Pindar’s voice is fused with that of the silent Aeneas in the single apostrophic enunciation which contains both call and response. A polyphony of dialogue is reproduced in the isolated voice of the poet’s apostrophic address. This vocal redoubling results in an unsettling of the spatio-temporal reality of the poetic performance, setting the poet’s own voice against an imagined future performance by Aeneas and his companions which vitiates the need for the poet’s presence. The spatio-temporal friction of the paradoxical address is borne most heavily by the poet himself. The uncertain status of his apostrophe fractures the coherence of Pindar’s own hic et nunc, casting doubt over where he stands in relation to the scene that he has created.

around him.

To anticipate somewhat the arguments that will be made in the next chapter, we should also note that the highly metaphoric language that echoes and intensifies the temporal complexities of the apostrophe are bound up with the dynamics of scriptory performance (89-91). Pindar identifies Aeneas in three distinct ways: first in the relatively unproblematic guise of an angelos orthos, and then metaphorically as the èukomôn skutala Moisan and glukus kratēr agaphthenktôn aoidan. In the first of these metaphoric figurations the living Aeneas is described through the attributes of the inanimate written text; he is a messenger but he is also the message itself (συντάλα), the physical embodiment of the song in its graphic state. At the same time, the poet invokes his role as the vessel (κορτήρ) in which the song’s sound (γραφθέγκτων ἀοιδάν) will be (re)generated. Like the poem itself, Aeneas is a hybrid, representing the work both as material text and as oral performance.

Extending the Frame
As we have already noted, there are clear points of overlap between the use of apostrophe and oratio recta in Pindar and Aeschylus. Both tropes are pointed ways in which the dictional mode predominant within the poem is disrupted by the introduction of a voice or character who transgresses the established structure of vocal expression. The two tropes are twinned not only in their special ability to unsettle the primary dictional mode of a given poem, but also in their capacity to turn this momentary interruption into a broader meditation on the parameters and characteristics of poetic voice. It is therefore unsurprising that our poets often deploy oratio recta and apostrophe in concert. By combining the destabilizing features of both tropes in hybrid form, the poets can explore a broader range of dictional possibilities. When used in close proximity, the two tropes not only re-enforce each other but create a nexus of vocal disjunction that opens a

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98 Hutchinson (2001) p. 417 notes that ἀγραφθέγκτων ἀοιδάν “now stresses the audible performance” of the poem in contrast to the συντάλη, a “striking word [that] clashes effectively with those around it [and] must […] carry some idea of the Spartan device [for written communication].”
window onto the broader issues at the heart of how scriptory poetics restructures the basic characteristics of poetic voice and performance.

For Aeschylus, whose speakers in direct speech are already potential interlocutors for their framing voices, the marriage of *oratio recta* and apostrophe collapses further the distinction between enunciative fields while at the same time bringing their divergence into greater relief. The juxtaposition of the two tropes is deployed to powerful effect in the *Agamemnon parodos* through a subtle interweaving of the elements that we have examined separately above. The invocation of Clytemnestra at line 83 is positioned in the anapaestic introduction so as to stand as a foil for the embedded speech of Calchas whom the Chorus soon after impersonate. Not only are the two non-primary enunciative figures linked by their proximity within the Chorus’s speech, they are interwoven through the figure of Apollo, *Paian*, with whom the voice of each is intimately identified. Calchas’ embedded speech finds its truest performative power in the seer’s invocation of Apollo Paian. The force of Calchas’ invocation of Apollo through his generically and ritually charged name stands in contrast to the Chorus’s own ritual refrain and highlights the power that the seer’s voice has attained within the Chorus’s song. Through his appeal to Apollo, Calchas wrests control of the *hic et nunc* from the Chorus, performing his own song within the frame of the Chorus’s impersonation. The language of this charged moment within the *oratio recta* resonates with that used by the Chorus in their apostrophe to Clytemnestra, when they state that in granting a response she would become for them *paiôn* – that is, that her speech, if articulated, would share with Calchas the performative *hic et nunc* of his apotropaic prayer to Apollo. The apostrophe to Clytemnestra is coded with the same performative language of Calchas’ embedded speech, establishing a bridge between the two characters, both of whom are made present through the mediation of the Chorus.

When Clytemnestra makes her true verbal entrance at the end of the *parodos*, she is once again introduced by an address of the Chorus:

> ἦκω σεβίζων σόν, Κλυταιμήστρα, χράτος·
> δίξῃ γάρ ἐστι φιλός ἀρχηγοῦ τείν
> γυνᾶς· ἐγκυμωθέντος ἁρ.AddSingleton θρόνου.
> σὺ δ' εἴ τι κεδὼν εἴτε μὴ πεπουμένη
> εὐαγγέλουσιν ἐλπίζων θυηπολέεις.  

76
I come reverencing your power, Clytemnestra. For it is just to honor the wife of the leader when that man’s throne is left vacant. And if you have learned anything faithful or not so that you offer sacrifice with hopes of good-report, I will hear you gladly, do not keep a grudging silence.

The Chorus’s words echo the language of the Aulis narrative. Their appeal to her kratos recalls the kratos of the Argives which they claimed themselves to be authorized to recount (104) and, more pointedly, their desire to hear a faithful report from her (τι κεδνόν) echoes their earlier characterization of Calchas as the kednos stratomantis of the expedition (123). The verbal attributes shared by Chorus and seer are now assigned to Clytemnestra, who will soon fill the stage with tales of her own non-verbal means of communication through the beacon fires. The Chorus also rephrase their earlier apostrophe, renewing their expression of curiosity over Clytemnestra’s sacrifices: τίνος ἀγγελίας / πειθοὶ περίπεμπτα θυσιακείς; (86-7) = εὐαγγέλουσιν ἐλπίοις θυσιολέις (262) And in their eagerness to induce Clytemnestra to speak, the potential silence that they urge the queen to renounce renews the prospect of a non-response to which their earlier address succumbed. Clytemnestra’s reply, full of unknown guile and cunning dissimulation, represents the play’s first foray into true mimetic dialogue.

The artful interweaving of Clytemnestra’s unheard voice into the verbal tapestry of the parados endows her ultimate appearance onstage with a greater weight than it might otherwise possess. Through her further appropriation of the Watchman’s introductory speech in her aphoristic language (εὐάγγελος μέν, ὦσπερ ἢ παροιμία, / ἐως γένοιτο μητρός εὐφρόνης πάρα. 265-6) she seems to have been present from the play’s outset (as she will remain a presence throughout the play, even when she has exited the stage). Clytemnestra is first embodied through the Chorus’s apostrophe and only later by her own physical and verbal presence on the stage. A similar effect is produced by the subsequent arrival of Agamemnon returned from Troy. Following the model of Clytemnestra, Agamemnon emerges from his embedded impersonation by the Chorus

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100 Göthe notes, quoted by Fraenkel (1937) p. 1, “daß jede Person, außer Clytemnestra, der Unheilverketterin, ihre abgeschlossene Aristeia hat, so daß jede ein ganzes Gedicht spielt und nachher nicht wiederkommt.”
and arrives in three-dimensions at center stage. His visible presence marks the final transfer of the Chorus’s retrospective lyric narrative into the *hic et nunc* of the dramatic sphere, and with it the past action of the play comes fully into the present. The juxtaposition of Agamemnon’s two forms and two voices has often gone unremarked, but it is of central significance for understanding how the dictional models explored in the lyrics of the *parodos* inform the dramatic action that follows. As Gregory Hutchinson has remarked in a description of the *Redepaare* in the *Seven Against Thebes* that is no less relevant to the *Agamemnon*: “the [early dramatic] poets are not indifferent to the distinction between what is seen onstage and what is reported from another place or time. It is this distinction that they wish to exploit.”

Through the play of apostrophe Clytemnestra, the *Unheilverketterin*, has laid the ground for her husband’s dynamic transgression of poetic time and space. By placing the luxurious tapestries before him, her empowered speech invites him to reenact “before our eyes” the sacrilege of which the *parodos* has already shown him guilty. The dialogue between the two engages in a twofold re-enactment through which the temporal extension of the play itself is enfolded within the chronology of the narrative events; Agamemnon finds himself repeating the error that he made in Aulis, both ten years and 600 lines earlier.

The comparative brevity of his compositions means that Pindar cannot not achieve the same extended interplay of apostrophe and *oratio recta* that Aeschylus can produce over the course of a play or trilogy. But Pindar also makes regular use of the complementary nature of apostrophe and *oratio recta* to heighten the complexity of the dictional register. On occasion Pindar employs the Homeric practice of apostrophizing the embedded figures of mythical narratives, though rarely in combination with direct speech. More frequently he makes use of apostrophe in close proximity to mythical

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101 Hutchinson (1985) p. 103.
102 Lebeck (1971) p. 76.
103 Apostrophes to figures within the mythic frame are found at O.1.36, 45, 51, P.4.59, 175; I.6.19 (anticipated); I.8.21 (anticipated), Pa.2.1-4, 104-5; fr.81. On P.4.59, see above p. 63. One striking example of apostrophe within a speech in *oratio recta* is found at P.4.89, where the unidentified speaker engages in a brief mythical narrative about Iphimedeia’s sons, addressing one (Ephialtes) in the second person: έν δε Νάξω φεντί ουκείν λεπτόν Οφιμεδέας παιδιών, Ὡτον καὶ σε, τὸλμάς Ἐπιάλτα ἔναξ. Interestingly, this type of spatio-temporally discordant embedded apostrophe is also found once in Bacchylides, whose narrative style tends in general to be more “Homeric” than that of Pindar, on which see Fearn (forthcoming). The apostrophe is found in
episodes in a way that encourages comparison and connection between them, often using apostrophes to more clearly designate the boundaries of these narrative interludes. When the mythical narrative includes *oratio recta*, the invocation of a second-person addressee strongly juxtaposes the two aberrant dictional modes, creating a higher degree of enunciative instability than either trope would produce on its own.

The multiple figures of apostrophe in *Olympian 6* are deployed in just this fashion in relation to the poem’s two embedded speakers. The brief narrative focusing on Adrastus’ speech to Amphiarao, which, like all Pindaric *oratio recta*, internally models the posture of unreciprocated address, is framed by apostrophes at its beginning and end. The opening apostrophe is to the *laudandus*, Hagesias, who is invoked in the second person as the object of Pindar’s own desire for communication: ἀγησία, τίν δ’ αἴνος ἐτοίμος, ὁν ἐνδύκαις ἀπο γλώσσας Ἀδραστος (12-3). The fusion of the poet’s framing voice with that of his embedded speaker is doubled through the apostrophe by an analogous integration of his second-person addressee. But the silent Hagesias remains fixed within the frame, pulling the poet back into his immediate poetic scene even as the embedded myth enters into the *hic et nunc* through direct speech.

At the conclusion of the mythic narrative, after he has reasserted his narrative control with the bold claim to serve as future witness to Hagesias’ virtue, Pindar turns to another second person, his helper Phintis, to allow him to continue along his poetic path. The apostrophe to Phintis serves a transitional function, marking the conclusion of the Adrastus narrative and the start of the genealogy of Iamos. In such close proximity to the Hagesias apostrophe and subsequent direct speech of Adrastus, the address to Phintis brings the crowded enunciative field of the poem into view. There will be some delay before Apollo’s *oratio recta*, and the two voices will not find themselves in such close proximity, but with a second apostrophe to Hagesias and a further one to Aeneas following the close of the second narrative, the same pattern of polyphonous interweaving of frame and embedded myth will again come into view. Phintis, who has

Bacchylides’ eleventh epinician ode, where Artemis is the object of an extended second-person address following on the heels of an account of her aid in the foundation of Metapontion. The second person bridges the gap between mythical past and the *hic et nunc* of the ode, which concludes soon after. There is, however, no *oratio recta* in the mythical narrative proper. On the play of voice in the ode, see Calame (2000), Currie (2010).
traveled with Pindar through the time and space of myth, now finds himself joined (or has he been replaced?) on the poet’s stage by Aeneas and his companions, whose own unheard melodies spin the poet out into an unseen future.

The over-population of Pindar’s cast of interlocutors stands in contrast to their uniform silence, which is all the more strikingly felt in contrast to Apollo’s prophetic interruption at the close of the myth, which has brought him even more firmly into the *hic et nunc* than any of these second persons. The ever changing objects of Pindar’s direct address affect the poet’s voice as well, for although each instance of apostrophe serves to fix the poet in a *hic et nunc* appropriate to his poetic task, the combination of addresses dilutes his temporal and spatial location. The unmooring of the poet’s voice from a discernable *hic et nunc* is further effected by the singular indexical grounding of Apollo’s voice, which planted itself so firmly within the ground of the mythical tale as to overrun its boundaries. Apollo’s words, ringing out from the ancient banks of the Alpheos, were themselves sufficient to create movement in those around him, not just his embedded addressee, but the poet as well. Now, returned to the poet’s frame we find that the dictional foundations have themselves become unstable.
In the last chapter we explored how Pindar and Aeschylus exploit the dictional properties inherent to *oratio recta* and apostrophe in order to expand and to recalibrate their poems’ spatio-temporal dynamics. Now we must ask why this happens in the first place; what motivates our poets to activate this interface of complex and contradictory dictional modes within their compositions? To answer this question we must move into the world beyond the texts themselves to take account of the historical environment in which Pindar and Aeschylus were producing their dictionally mobile compositions. For the question of how and why these shifting voices underpin Pindar’s and Aeschylus’ scriptory poetics is deeply linked to the conditions for poetic production and performance in the first half of the fifth century.

In this chapter we will examine how the increasingly regular reperformance of Pindar’s and Aeschylus’ poetry contributed a new urgency to their contemplation of the scriptory nature of their compositions. In particular, we will see how the emerging importance of written texts allowed for a distinction between the act of composition and performance that laid the foundation for these poets’ notion of scriptory poetics. After an initial examination of the historical conditions that ushered in these conceptual developments, we will explore how our poets turned to other types of poetry – most prominently Homeric epic – to find models for their new idea of poetry. We will see that the hypersensitivity to dictional modes – to the question of voice in poetry – reflected in Pindar’s and Aeschylus’ pointed use of apostrophe and *oratio recta* is tied up with thoughts about reperformance, most often imagined through a Homeric lens. And finally, we will examine how our poets re-imagined Homer in ways that suited their own poetic purposes as they grappled with the idea that their compositions were not simply increasingly reliant on scripts but were, in fact, scriptory in their very nature.

1. **The Poet Sings Again**

The radical reconfiguration of poetic outlook that I believe Pindar and Aeschylus to have undertaken in their compositions was not the result of any single transformative event but
of a confluence of factors new and old that brought long simmering reflections to a critical point. Our poets were influenced by circumstances resulting from the explosive spread of non-poetic writing practices in the latter part of the sixth century as well as by prose writers of the period, whose treatises had an important impact on fifth-century prose and most likely our poets too.\(^1\) But the most significant shifts were those that took place within the ambit of melic poetry itself.

Until recently, the fifth-century performance of Pindar’s and Aeschylus’ poems was widely considered to be occasional in nature. The authors composed their poems with an eye to a single performance, the context of which – it was claimed – was the primary determinant of the poem’s content and tone, be it a single year’s celebration of the Great Dionysia, the triumphal return of an athletic victor, or the celebration of a particular marriage or religious festival. Were this in fact the case, the question of whether Pindar and Aeschylus committed their poems to writing would have little bearing on the poet’s idea of his work, since poetry composed for a single performance occasion would retain nearly all of the essential properties of oral composition even if written technology were employed at some stage.\(^2\) It is, however, becoming increasingly clear that neither Pindar nor Aeschylus was likely to have expected his poems to be performed only once (or only one time that really mattered) and it is worth pausing for a moment to properly appreciate how widespread and predictable the practice of repeat performance had grown by the first half of the fifth century. Of course, reperformance does not prove the use of writing, but it is difficult to imagine the kind of practice we now understand to have been in place at the time to have developed without the aid of writing.\(^3\) But our concern is less for the mechanics of reperformance than for the impact it had on our poets as they began to consider the many future iterations of their poems that reperformance would entail.

Evidence for the reperformance of tragedy, which is far more plentiful than that for other melic forms, has recently become the object of serious scholarly consideration and

\(^1\) For a more detailed discussion of these conditions, see above pp. 9-14.
\(^2\) Such poetry would stand closer to “transcript” than “script”, following Nagy’s model. Composition before the event would preclude true oral composition (that is, composition simultaneous with performance), but the occasional poems would nevertheless retain a vestige of the basic unity of composition and performance as a result of being designed for a single performance context.
the latest analyses have revealed a remarkably rich, heterodox landscape of the early Nachleben of fifth-century dramatic texts. In the last decade, our understanding of ancient drama has undergone fundamental shifts following Oliver Taplin’s ground-breaking demonstration that there was regular reperformance of Athenian tragedy both across the Attic peninsula and throughout the Mediterranean by at least the beginning of the fourth century BC.  

More recently, scholars such as Eric Csapo have uncovered a history of dramatic reperformance that was underway significantly earlier. Claims of dramatic reperformance within the fifth century represent a radical departure from the established scholarly position since such a practice would represent reperformance that was foreseen (and even intended) by the playwright. That there is still some skepticism surrounding such claims is likely a result of what Csapo aptly identifies as “the romantic notion, still dear to classical scholarship, that all the expense and labor that went into the production of an ancient drama was sacrifice designed for a single immolation – a potlatch for the god Dionysus and the glory of Athens.” However, we can now conclusively demonstrate that tragedies were being reperformed by the middle of the fifth century and, although there is no uncontested proof that this practice was already in place by the end of the sixth century, the circumstantial evidence in support of an earlier date, when taken all together, is undeniably compelling.

In Attica, the institution of the Rural Dionysia, though not well understood, seems to have provided a platform for reproduction of tragedy throughout the demes in the winter months. Inscriptional evidence dates such reperformance to the middle of the fifth century, but construction of deme theaters emerges somewhat earlier, with archaeological evidence from the earliest construction at Thorikos dating to the end of the

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5 Csapo (2010) p. 84.
6 As Csapo asserts, “we have by c. 440 BC certain evidence for five regular festivals where dramatic performances took place, and certain to possible evidence for fourteen. […] There is every reason to believe that these numbers represent only the view of the ‘tip of the iceberg’ permitted by the random and fortuitous survival of the evidence.” p. 103.
7 Paga (2010) p. 357, Csapo (2010) pp. 92-4, Whitehead (1986) pp. 215-6. As Csapo notes, the naming of Sophocles and Aristophanes as didaskaloi in IG 13 970 perhaps suggests that the playwrights were in fact present at these local reperformances of their works.
sixth century.⁸ The construction of theaters does not prove tragic performance,⁹ but it provides a strong indication that the popularity of the relatively new genre resulted in reperformances outside of the annual celebration of the Great Dionysia at Athens. Support for the inference that these theaters are a signal of repeat performance can be found in the anecdotal account of the negative reception of Phrynichus’ Sack of Miletus. According to Herodotus, the staging of the play soon after the city’s defeat in 494 was so disturbing to the Athenian audience that the demos not only fined the playwright but banned the tragedy from further reperformance (καὶ ἐπέταξαν μηκέτι μηδένα χράοθαι τούτῳ τῷ δράματι. 6.21.13-14). That there was need for an explicit prohibition in the unusual case of Phrynichus’ play signals that the reperformance of tragedies staged at the Great Dionysia was a natural expectation for the successful playwright even in the first decades of the fifth century.

Nor was the reperformance of tragedy limited to the Attic peninsula. From its earliest instantiations, the broad popularity of tragedy is evidenced by the eager reception of the new dramatic form throughout the Greek Mediterranean. Athenian tragedy was especially beloved in Southern Italy and Sicily, where scenes from tragic dramas had become regular subjects for vase painters from at least the beginning of the fourth century.¹⁰ There is, however, compelling evidence that the region’s appreciation for the genre developed significantly earlier. In Sicily, we can point to a number of literary sources that report on the early success of tragedy amongst the island’s Greek-speaking communities. Sicily had its own local tradition of dramatic mime that coincided with, and may have pre-dated, the arrival of Attic tragedy,¹¹ a fact which most likely contributed to the rapid and enthusiastic acceptance of Athenian tragedy in the region. In particular Hieron of Syracuse, a great patron of poetry in all its forms,¹² is said to have contracted Aeschylus

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⁹ Csapo (2010) p. 96. While it is possible that the deme theaters exclusively hosted non-dramatic melic performances, such as dithyrambs, or even rhapsodic performances of epic poems. Given that we have little evidence whatsoever concerning the performance of either dramatic or non-dramatic poetry, and that the few inscriptions which we do possess include mention of dramatic performance, any claims that the performances were restricted to a certain type of performance are pure speculation.
for a reperformance of his *Persians* and to have commissioned a play, the *Aitnaeae*, in celebration of the city’s re-founding. Whether or not these events in fact took place as related by the notoriously unreliable biographical tradition,\(^{13}\) we can understand the narratives as a clear reflection of the enormous success of Aeschylean tragedies at the Syracusan court. As the fact of the *Aetnaeae* composition makes clear, some exportation of tragedy from Athens to Syracuse took place during Aeschylus’ lifetime and it is unlikely that such an event would have occurred in a vacuum. Rather, it would seem to point to a more widespread circulation and reperformance of tragic compositions, one of which Aeschylus was himself well aware.

Although we know that tragedies were being performed in Hieron’s court from the beginning of the fifth century, there is no firm archeological evidence for a theater construction in Syracuse before the late fifth century. This lack of evidence reflects a common pattern of permanent structures lagging well behind the institution of dramatic performance,\(^{14}\) but it is also further confirmation, if any were needed, of how easily the deficiencies of historical evidence can skew our perceptions of performance history. In Syracuse, we can rely on the wealth of literary testimonials to piece together a rich poetic culture where the archeological record remains inconclusive. In Metapontum and Elea, by contrast, we find archeological evidence suggesting sixth-century theater constructions,\(^{15}\) but we can only hazard theories as to what type of performances were staged there; within this hypothetical realm it is as plausible to posit the (re)performance of tragedies as it is to assert the opposite. We know that these areas of Magna Grecia were commissioning work from other pan-Hellenic poets during the early fifth century,\(^{16}\) and there is no reason to assume that these song-loving populations were any less interested in tragic drama than their Sicilian neighbors.

\(^{13}\) On the ancient biographical tradition, see Fairweather (1984), Lefkowitz (1981), Graziosi (2002).

\(^{14}\) This was certainly the case in Rome, where the established tradition of dramatic performance long precedes the construction of a permanent theater. Goldberg (1996) esp. pp. 267-9.

\(^{15}\) Csapo suggests that the southern-Italian version of the Melanippe myth in Euripides’ *Captive Melanippe* may indicate “that the play was written with production in Herakleia or Metapontum in mind.” Csapo (2010) p. 98.

\(^{16}\) E.g. Bacch. 9, Pindar O.10 and 11.
Evidence for fifth-century tragic performances throughout the rest of the Greek Mediterranean is sparse, offering little in the way of evidence apart from what we know of the fifth-century theater constructions at Argos, Dion, and possibly Chaeroneia.\footnote{Csapo (2010) p. 99, with bibliography p. 114.} However, we must beware of treating evidence from this period as decisive. The lacunose and unrepresentative picture from Magna Grecia, where theaters exist without a record of performance and performances are recorded where no theater construction can be found, should serve as a warning against drawing either positive or negative conclusions on the basis of what scraps of evidence have come down to us from the period. The gaps in our knowledge are so great that, as Csapo warns, the “random and fortuitous” record that we now possess cannot reasonably be treated as “data” in any meaningful sense.\footnote{Csapo (2010) p. 103, see n. 17 above.} If we rely on the meager information that is available, we are likely to construct for ourselves an account that is distorted by millennia of attrition. What is more, we should be especially skeptical of our own, emphatically Athenocentric account of tragedy in the fifth century when, as Johanna Hanink has recently shown, this perspective is colored to a remarkable degree by fourth-century Athenian political narratives which sought to reclaim Athens’ past glory through the rhetorical repatriation of the city’s dramatic legacy.\footnote{Hanink (2010).}

Like his dramatic counterpart, Pindar was until quite recently thought to have composed for one-off performance and the occasional nature of his compositions was considered beyond doubt. Compared with the relatively rich record of dramatic production in the fifth century, we have no explicit evidence of Pindaric performance, either in the original context or on later occasions, before the end of the fifth century. Based on the broad fame that Pindar’s poetry had achieved within a few decades of its initial composition, it seems most likely that reperformance occurred regularly across a wide range of locations,\footnote{The claim first made by Herington (1985) pp. 48-50, has in the wake of Morgan (1993) been taken up by numerous scholars.} and in recent years a number of scholars have suggested a wealth of possible contexts for reperformance.\footnote{Hubbard (2004) pp. 71-2, Loscalzo (2003) pp. 96-119, Currie (2004) and Morrison (2007) pp. 15-23. For Paeans, see Rutherford (2001) pp. 175-78.} But although reperformance cannot be positively adduced in the case of Pindar, his poetry itself furnishes us with a rich store of...
evidence which illuminates how the idea of reperformance was entering into the poet’s
vision.

As Kathryn Morgan demonstrated in a groundbreaking article whose full impact is
still being absorbed nearly twenty years after its publication, the undeniable ambiguity of
Pindar’s poems as regards their own performance (fuel for many decades of heated
debate on the subject) is in fact a reflection of and a strategy for the multiple audiences
and contexts in which the poet imagined his works would be performed. Before
Morgan’s intervention, the desire to treat Pindar’s compositions as intended for a single,
unrepeatable performance had been the cause of much scholarly to-ing and fro-ing, first
to determine the exact location and circumstances of that performance, and later in an
attempt to reduce the many inconsistencies and paradoxes of Pindar’s poetry to conform
to a single, historical moment. But Morgan’s model of a multiplicity of perspectives
within a single poem showed these oppositions to be a red herring. With the poet’s own
eye trained on a variety of possible performance contexts, one should not expect his
compositions to reflect a single vision of song. Thus it is possible to understand the
seeming inconsistencies in Pindar’s diction as a result of his multiple, and often
contradictory, expectations for the many reperformances of his songs: the temporal
confusion produced by Pindar’s use of the future tense to point to an event that seems
already to be taking place in the performative present can be attributed to the poet’s
anticipation of the continued reperformance of his song; the difficulty of determining

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23 The biographical approach of Wilamowitz being the most notable model, but also as a result of
the more recent interest in the odes’ political influences, exemplified, in extreme form, by the
work of Pfeijffer (1999c).

24 One paradigmatic example is the debate over Pindar’s problematic use of the future tense to
refer to the performance of his own compositions. In an attempt to reconcile the gesture to an
understanding of Pindar’s poetry as occasional in nature, Bundy declared that the poet made use
of the so-called “encomiastic future” which, he claimed, was not a future at all; Bundy (1962) pp.
21-2. So critical was the resolution of this problematic temporal perspective that new
interpretations were still being ventured nearly than half a century later: Slater (1969), Cerri
(1996), Pfeijffer (1999b). Even more vehement has been the quest to determine a fixed, uniform
identity for the narrative voice (the persona loquens) of Pindar’s poems, which has been the
subject of vigorous back and forth since the seminal article of Lefkowitz (1963); a collection of
her articles on the first person in Pindar was published as Lefkowitz (1991). Contrasting views
have been put forth by Felson Rubin (1984), D’Alessio (1994), Anzai (1994). A related debate
has raged over whether the performance of Pindar’s poems was choral or monodic, Heath (1988),
whether Pindar’s compositions were intended for performance by a chorus or a monodic singer is shown to be a non-issue as both types can be included in the poet’s broad vision of poetic reperformance; the debates surrounding the location of performance are rendered moot, because no one place was imagined to be the single site of performance. As Andrew Morrison quite succinctly asserts, Pindar’s “poems are not, and were never meant to be, one-off, never-to-be-repeated shows. The premiere is not the only performance that matters, nor is its audience the only relevant one.”

Further, not only are the many paradoxes presented by Pindar’s texts resolvable in light of multiple performance contexts, these paradoxes can be understood as a positive strategy by the poet to enable such reperformance. As Christopher Carey has argued, Pindar intentionally obscures details of his poems’ initial performance so that his compositions might more easily “enter into a larger repertoire of circulating song.” That is, Pindar created his poems with the goal of reperformance in mind. Recent work on Pindar’s compositions has begun to demonstrate the sophisticated internal structures through which Pindar’s poetry anticipates a response to the complex and contradictory demands of these multiple reperformance contexts. Whether through contradictory deictic markers, iterative scenes, or anachronistic tenses, Pindar regularly destabilizes the sense of a specific performance by introducing “another setting which features performance as a recurrent event.” This destabilization of the performative hic et nunc does not merely allow the poet to anticipate his poems’ future reperformances. Like the disruptive effects achieved through the use of apostrophe and oratio recta, these moments of uncertainty permit the poet to contemplate the new, scriptory character of his compositions.

The fact that both Pindar and Aeschylus would have been aware of, indeed anticipated their poems reperformance in a multiplicity of contexts has important consequences for how they formulated their scriptory poetics. From our earliest sources, Greek poetry involves the tacit claim that continued performance will contribute to the

immortal fame such poetry confers. But as the practice of reperformance becomes more prominent, thoughts about the form and importance of a poem’s future become more explicit: the character of poetic “immortality” develops in accordance with performance practice. Pindar and Aeschylus could not maintain the earlier, vague notion that their poetry would be repeated, because they not only foresaw, but confronted within their lifetimes, the real and concrete future of poetic reperformance.

In adopting a more concrete vision of their poetic future as an unending cycle of reperformance, Pindar and Aeschylus could no longer even tacitly adhere to longstanding models of oral poetics based on the idea of “composition in transmission.” They knew that their work would find voice in countless, unidentified reperformers reproducing an identical song at any number of occasions in any number of places. It was not, therefore, possible for them to imagine their work as participating in “an ongoing, intersubjective, hermeneutic project” where each performance would determine the shape of (indeed, recompose) their work for a new audience. They needed a scriptory conception of reperformance in which a lopsided admixture of new conditions (e.g. the performance venue, audience, or occasion) assembled around a central constant: the unchanging poetic text. Without the opportunity for “composition in transmission”, the poem must contain within itself the ability adapt to new conditions and to speak to different audiences in any number of contexts. And it was precisely this malleability of voice within a fixed text that is able to anticipate its reperformance that Pindar and Aeschylus sought to realize through their scriptory poetics. Throughout the archaic period, Greek poets had been slowly adapting their compositions to comprehend the implications of a poetic script, but it is, I argue, in the choral poetry of Pindar and Aeschylus that we encounter the most sustained and sophisticated response to this new poetic landscape. As reperformance of a written script became an ever more central element of their poetic reality, these early fifth-century poets discovered that the scriptory nature of their work opened untold avenues for poetic innovation.

As Herwig Maehler noted nearly a half a century ago, Pindar is the first poet to speak explicitly of the endurance of his songs. Maehler (1963) pp. 90-3.
For a discussion of this development, see the introduction to this study.
In hexameter poetry, the conceptual shift to the idea of a shared fixed script serving as the basis for reperformance had already taken hold in the sixth century under the rhapsodic tradition. In an influential discussion of the sixth-century reception of Homeric epic, Walter Burkert describes the period as one of radical change, as rhapsodes replaced singers (aoidoi) and “creative improvisation [gave] way to the reproduction of a fixed text, learned by heart and available also in book form.”32 Rhapsodes were still deeply embedded in Greece’s oral song-culture: they engaged in oral performance of Homer’s poems for great crowds at public festivals and introduced the Homeric poems to audiences that had most likely never encountered the epics in written form. But, significantly, these singers “did not claim to produce texts of their own in public performance, but were bound to the name of one author of the past, Homer.”33 In this respect, rhapsodic reperformance represented a radical departure from earlier bardic practice. Rhapsodic reperformances distinguished the words of “Homer” contained in his poetic scripts from the performers who translated those words into sound.34 Perhaps for the first time in the Greek world, a clear separation was drawn between the acts of poetic production and poetic performance.

The rhapsodic revolution of the sixth century had a profound and lasting impact on the song-culture of ancient Greece through the introduction of a new model of oral poetry as reperformance. Taking full advantage of the technological advances of writing to fix a poetic text on which future reperformances could be based, the rhapsodes demonstrated how reperformance could reanimate the script of an absent poet.35 This model of

32 Burkert (1987) p. 48. Of course, to speak of the sixth-century written texts of Homer as existing in “book form” is somewhat anachronistic, but this infelicitous choice of words does not invalidate the broad spirit of Burkert’s claim.
34 Burkert (1987) p. 49. As Burkert notes, the impossibility of performing an epic poem in its entirety further contributes to the perceived separation of text and performance. On the question of epic unity in the late sixth century, see also Ford (1997).
35 The importance of a written script, whose integrity had to be preserved in the face of potential rhapsodic interpolation, finds testimony in accounts of the so-called Peisistratid recension, which would date to precisely this period if it could be proved to have happened. Graziosi (2002) pp. 206-8, with bibliography.
rhapsodic reperformance provided our choral poets with a critical conceptual tool. By disentangling the acts of composition and performance, rhapsodic performance paved the way for scripted reperformance of all types of poetry, and more importantly, for the self-reflective scriptory poetics that Pindar and Aeschylus set out in their own compositions. But if the rhapsodic transformation of Homeric epic was an important precursor of new attitudes in melic poetry, it was Homer himself, the poet-author behind the texts that the rhapsodes so freely reperformed, who emerged as the clear exemplar and model for poets working under these new and exciting conditions.

Outside of, but not unrelated to, the reperformance culture of the rhapsodes, attitudes towards Homer and his poetry underwent a significant shift during the sixth century. For as the use of writing established a basis for distinguishing between the acts of composition and performance, it permitted a corresponding shift in how people thought about these actions. As Goody and Watt noted in their seminal, if now also justly criticized, analysis of writing in ancient Greece, the introduction of writing in Greece not only preserved an author’s work but meant that, over time, a critical response to the fixed works of the past could begin to develop.\textsuperscript{36} It is particularly in the sixth century that we begin to see the written status of poetic texts create a new, critical sense of literary history and a more self-conscious approach to the interpretation of past poetic works.\textsuperscript{37} In Ionia, where new forms of writing, especially prose treatises, were beginning to emerge, Homer’s works were regularly consulted, interpreted, and criticized in a variety of forms. Most famously, pre-Socratic philosophers like Xenophanes and Heraclitus attacked the ethical status of Homer’s poetry, but their criticisms must be understood within a broader discourse of allegorical interpretation that was emerging at the time.\textsuperscript{38} This highly technical debate is symptomatic of the more general shift in attitude as thinkers had come to treat Homer’s poems as fixed texts whose meaning could be debated but whose words were no longer in flux.\textsuperscript{39} It is no coincidence that this same period gave rise to the first attested treatise on Homer’s poetry, Theagnes of Rhegium’s now lost allegorical

\textsuperscript{36} Goody and Watt (1968) pp. 42-9, 67-68.
\textsuperscript{37} As Lloyd notes, this result is not a necessary consequence of the use of writing, but happened to obtain in ancient Greece, Lloyd (1987) pp. 72-3.
\textsuperscript{38} On the “exclusionary”, “allegorical”, and “rationalizing” stances taken by early philosophical writers in relation to the epic poetry of Homer and Hesiod, see Morgan (2000) pp. 46-67.
interpretation of the epics, and the first formulations of the Homeric biographies, a tradition which would flourish for many centuries.

The realm of poetry, not yet isolated by the conceptual distinction between poetry and prose, was also implicated in this shift in attitude towards Homer and his poetic legacy. Xenophanes composed his attacks on Homer in verse, after all, and throughout the late sixth and early fifth century we find poets quoting passages from Homer in a manner that mirrors the increasingly critical stance of the prose writers towards the epic tradition. The practice of verse quotation of past poets implicitly points, as Andrew Ford has argued, “to an idea of a Homeric text in the sense of a fixed and definite source of his words.” Rather than alluding to a broad and amorphous epic tradition, these poets ascribe lines to a “particular author” in order to claim “a deeper appreciation” of the wisdom and quality of verses that have been imitated by many. For practitioners of elegiac poetry, quoting Homer’s hexameters, as do Simonides (fr. 19 West) and the anonymous author of an Athenian dedicatory inscription in honor of Kimon’s victory over the Persians in 479, is facilitated by metrical convergence: the epic hexameter can be slotted without alteration into the first, hexameter line of the elegiac distich. The ease of quotational practice was perhaps further encouraged by longstanding connections between elegy and poetic inscription, permitting the form a more comfortable relationship to the idea of a poem as a text fixed in writing. But we also find quotation and named identification of Homer in melic compositions, such as Simonides’ famous connection of Homer and Stesichorus in fr. 564 PMG = 273 Poltera (οὐτω γὰρ Ὅμηρος ἰδέ Στασίχορος ἐγω εἰς λαοῖς). And

41 Graziosi (2002).
42 See Goldhill (2002).
43 Why he did so is a matter of scholarly debate. A good range of views are represented by Most (1999), Osborne (1998) and Granger (2007).
46 Perhaps also fr. 20 West
48 On early elegiac inscriptions see Furley (2010). It is, however, important to remember that elegy also developed within a performative tradition, on which see Faraone (2008) chaps 4, 5, and 6.
Pindar follows Simonides’ practice when he mentions Homer by name in his *Pythian* 4: τὸν δ’ Ὀμήρου καὶ τόδε συνθέμενος ὄημα πόρον[ε] (277).49

But Homer is not just a source of words to be quoted by the fifth-century melic poet. The epic poet is also, as another Pindaric passage demonstrates, an important model for thinking about poetic practice.50 The reference comes midway through *Isthmian* 3/4 when, after an extended discussion of Ajax’s glorious career, Pindar notes that the hero has been honored by Homer in song (55-60):

> ἀλλ’ Ὀμήρος τοι τετίμαξεν δι’ ἄνθρωπον, ὁς αὐτοῦ πᾶσαν ὄρθωσας ἠμέταν κατὰ ὄμβδον ἔφρασεν θεοπείοις ἐπέων λοιποῖς ἀθύρειν. τούτο γὰρ ἄμαντον φωνάζει ἔρπει, εἰ τις εὖ εἰπῇ τι, καὶ πάγκαρσιν ἐπὶ χρόνα καὶ διὰ πόντον βέβαιεν ἐγγκάτων ἀκτὶς καλῶν ἀβιστος αἰεὶ.

> But Homer honored him amongst mortals, straightening the entire tale of his virtue when leaning upon his staff of divine verses he spoke it out for future men to sing. For a thing goes forth with an immortal voice, if someone speaks it well. And over fertile land and sea the flame of his noble deeds traveled unquenchable for all time.

The passage is a depiction of Homer’s compositional technique, as imagined by Pindar, incorporating elements of scriptory practice into this scene of past poetic practice. Pindar’s depiction of a moment in the life of the great poet of the past allows us to witness Homer’s coding time, the point at which the physically present poet fashions his verses. At first the picture seems to conform to our conception of an “oral” Homer. In Pindar’s depiction, the bard unfolds his tale in seemingly spontaneous oral composition, leaning on his staff for support (κατὰ ὄμβδον). But in the vivid detail of the poet poised upon his *rhabdos*, Pindar introduces a clear reference to the tradition of rhapsodic performance through which Homer’s compositions enjoyed their rich and multiform *Nachleben*. The initial allusion is given fuller elaboration in the subsequent claim that Homer had in mind such future reperformance when he first composed his verses.

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49 The Pindaric passage seems to evince a much more subtle engagement with the epic text than its Simonidean counterpart. The language of the designation is itself allusive, incorporating an elegant variation on the hexameter line: ἄλλο δὲ τοι ἐξέκο, ὥδ’ ἐνι φρεσὶ βάλλει σήμι. (7x II., 7x Od.).

In Pindar’s portrait, Homer anticipates the future reperformances that await his newly composed verses. He is, like Pindar, a scriptory poet. And to ensure that the import of this densely packed subordinate clause does not go unnoted, Pindar rephrases the key feature of his Homeric portrait in the remaining lines of the passage. Homer’s divine verses – his *thespesia epea* – Pindar now states baldly, will find immortal voice (*ἀθόρυβον φωνάειν*) in the singers of the future. His songs will travel over land and sea because Homer has spoken them well and thus made it possible for others to do the same. Both composer and reperformer share a single indefinite pronoun (*τις*); to bring Homer’s songs to life is a common task shared by all those who come into contact with the script. But the reduplication of the agents involved with the song also points to the confusion of identity and multiplication of voice that is central to this type of reperformance. Pindar’s Homer is not just a singer, but a poet of scripted song who anticipates the future reperformance of his work even as he presides over its composition. He is thus ready to share his divinely inspired voice with others as a poet who, as Privitera explains, wishes “to provide a song of praise that rhapsodes would be able to repeat forever, wherever they were.”

To borrow a page from Haun Saussy’s elegant interpretation of the play between orality and writing in the *Odyssey*, Pindar’s portrait of Homer has replaced the image of the “imperfect, inauthentic repetition” of the oral poet with the “singular, permanent, and self-evident” communication of written transmission, which speaks openly and equally to all interlocutors, present and future.

Pindar’s figuration of Homer in *Isthmian 3/4* signals the new perspective that an acute awareness of reperformance establishes for composers of *melic* poetry in the first decades of the fifth century. Poetry must look forward to the *loipoi* who will give voice to mute scripts in future performance and it is for these men (as an audience of vicarious, future selves) that the poet now crafts his verses. The scope is not limited to a single moment of secondary performance, but comprises countless iterations in which the text will yet again be given life and find its immortal voice in the mouths of new performers, in new places and times. The expansion exceeds the author’s ability to anticipate the conditions of these performances and the task of prefiguring them thus becomes an exercise in

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poetic imagination. For Pindar – and also, as we will see, for Aeschylus – Homer is the prototype, the “poète par excellence” who models through the contours of his own posthumous career the unforeseen future that the fifth-century melic poet also hopes to enjoy.\textsuperscript{53} As a long-dead predecessor who continues to enjoy a degree of presence and power through his verses – texts fixed by writing which still find voice in continued reperformance – Homer presents a paradigm for our poets as they contemplate the dual nature of their own compositions. As in Pindar’s portrait, Homer can perfectly balance the spatio-temporal paradoxes of scriptory poetry; he maintains the integrity of his own voice, tied to the unique and inalienable moment of poetic composition, but at the same time he permits and even invites the vocal multiplicity that successful reperformance entails. Thus even as his verses are dispersed across time and space in the polyphonic performances of his many impersonators, Homer is understood to possess a personal style and identity that his voice is heard in each of these performative iterations.\textsuperscript{54} In the remainder of this chapter we will examine just how Pindar and Aeschylus made use of this Homeric model to fashion their own scriptory poetics.

2. Ready Words
The paradigmatic quality of Homer’s poetry is seen clearly in those moments when Pindar mentions the epic poet by name, whether as a positive or (as in the case of the famous rebuke of \textit{Nemean 7}) a negative model for his own poetic project.\textsuperscript{55} Yet Homer surfaces as an exemplary figure for the compositional dilemmas of our fifth-century poets.


\textsuperscript{54} On textual fixity as a necessary for stylistic analysis, see Saussy (1996) p. 310: “Simply as a point of method, to draw attention to whatever in a text is a fact of language [as analysis of oral composition does] is to neutralize that set of markers that literary reading knows as the components of ‘style.’ A style may be unique—certainly the use of the word coupled with an individual’s name tends to suggest as much in modern literary discussions—but a language should have more than one speaker.”

\textsuperscript{55} Briand (2001) gives a comprehensive overview of occurrences. One passage that is often cited as an example of the antagonistic stance that Pindar takes towards his epic predecessor is fr. 52h: Ὄμηροι [δὲ μὴ τρὶ[π τὸν κατ’ ἀμαξίωτον ἰόντες, ἀ[λλ’ ἀλ’]λοτρίας ἀν’ ἐποίες κτλ. However, the lacunose nature of the papyrus fragment makes it impossible to determine whether the negative tone reflected in Snell’s reconstruction is in fact original to the poem. For an analysis that stresses this agonistic aspect of Pindar’s relationship to Homer, see Loscalzo (2003) esp. chap. 1.
with far greater frequency than Pindar’s few explicit references to him would suggest.\textsuperscript{56} Both Pindar and Aeschylus perceive Homer’s verses (and voices) as possessing a special spatio-temporal quality by dint of their regular reperformance, a feature that harmonizes perfectly with their own conception of the scriptory nature of poetic speech.\textsuperscript{57} Because of his unique vocal properties, Homer is fundamental to the use of oratio recta in both Pindar and Aeschylus. And the distinctive voice of the epic poet can be heard with special clarity in those moments when Pindar and Aeschylus expose the vocal instabilities of their own compositions.

Homeric epic is the exemplar of the mixed dictional mode. He is the poet who most demands to be quoted, but he is also the voice of quotation, of mimetic representation and vocal dissimulation. In fact, it is the difficulty of distinguishing Homer’s voice from that of his embedded speakers that most powerfully exposes the overlapping dynamics of diegesis and mimesis that so fascinate Pindar and Aeschylus.\textsuperscript{58} Homer “hides himself”, as Plato says, when he makes use of oratio recta, yet his voice can still be identified behind the speeches of his characters.\textsuperscript{59} This uncertainty of voice is compounded in rhapsodic reperformance, where the polyphony of Homer’s mixed diction is redoubled by an additional level of performative mimesis. The reperformers of Homer’s epics must impersonate the bard as well as the many characters whose voices are mimetically embedded in his poems.\textsuperscript{60} The single person of the rhapsodic performer gives voice to a diverse range of speakers from across time and space, bringing them all into harmony through the act of reperformance. The performance of a scriptory song obscures the already nebulous relationship between poet and embedded speaker by further embedding

\textsuperscript{56} Nagy, though approaching them from a perspective very different to my own, also notes that Pindar and Aeschylus use a remarkably similar conceptual framework in their appreciation of Homer’s exemplary status. Nagy (2000).
\textsuperscript{57} See above, chap. 1.
\textsuperscript{59} Εἰ δὲ γε μηδαμοῦ ἐαυτὸν ἀποκρύπτοιο ὁ ποιητής, πάσα ἄν αὐτῷ ἄνευ μιμήσεως ἡ ποίησις τε καὶ διήγησις γεγονοῦσα εἶπ. Ἰνα δὲ μὴ εἴπης ὅτι οὐκ ἂν μανθάνεις, ὅπως ἂν τὸ τότε γένοιτο ἐγὼ φρόσο. Rep. 393c11-d3.
\textsuperscript{60} The mimetic nature of the performance of Homeric embedded speech is discussed by Bakker (2009).
the internal poetic hierarchies within the frame of a mimetic reperformance. The poetic voices are thus ever more tightly interwoven, blurring the boundaries between poet and performer, text and song, past and present.

Pindar’s reliance on Homer as a model for vocal mutability is particularly evident in the clustering of epic allusions around occurrences of oratio recta in his poems. There are a number of formal reasons for this connection which should be acknowledged before looking towards thematic questions. Throughout his poetry, Pindar’s engagement with Homer at the most basic level of word-choice is noteworthy for the later poet’s frequent reconfiguration of what we now understand to be Homer’s “formulaic” language.61 Because speeches and speech-making are a central component of epic narrative, the hexameter tradition boasted a well-established and sophisticated formulaic vocabulary for the description and narration of speeches.62 Given the prevalence of speech-formulae in Homer, it should come as no surprise that Pindar exercised his brand of creative reconfiguration on this sphere of the Homeric lexicon with some frequency, reformulating well-worn hexameter formulae such as “winged”, “gentle”, and “sweet-voiced words” to fit his melic compositions.63 A wonderful example is found in Pythian 6, where Homer’s common description of a speech as pteroenta epea is reworked as litotes: χαμαπετές δ' ἄφ' ἔπος σύν ἀπέρωσεν (37). The formal connection of shared structural vocabulary is even more keenly felt in the language which frames Pindar’s direct speeches. The lyric poet employs elements of the standardized formulae of hexameter speech, but unlike, for instance, Stesichorus or his contemporary Bacchylides, Pindar imposes a novel reworking on each iteration of the standard form, offering a new re-engagement with the hexameter model with every embedded speech. The rarity and isolation of Pindar’s speeches imbues this engagement with the most familiar elements of the hexameter tradition with an almost paradoxically consistent sense of novelty; each instance exhibits a freshness

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61 Hummel (1993), Hummel (1999), Sotiriou (1998). Pindar himself may have understood the frequent repetitions in the hexameter epics in a similar way, since traditional techniques of oral composition were likely still in use in the sixth and fifth centuries: Egoscozabal (2004), Sideras (1971), Garson (1985).
within its particular context, but taken together the many reformulated allusions create a cohesive picture of Pindar’s deep connection to epic language and models in these moments of transition between dictional modes.

Pindar’s manipulation of Homeric allusion to reconfigure the relationship between embedded and framing speaker in is exemplified by the subtle usage in *Isthmian* 6. The mythical narrative relates an episode in which the great hero Herakles offers two speeches, first a prayer then a prophecy, on behalf of his comrade, Telamon. The language framing Herakles’ speeches is, as Privitera remarks, of a particularly epic character. Before beginning his first speech, Herakles stretches up his hands in prayer following a typically Homeric formulation, and the *inquit* introduction to the speech is adopted almost verbatim from the Homeric lexicon: αὕδασε τοιοῦτον ἔπος (42) ~ ἔπος ηúdea (*Il.6.54*). Following the hero’s initial prayer, the immediate dispatch of the bird omen maps easily onto Homeric models as does the reintroduction of Herakles’ speaking voice. Since such borrowings from hexameter are common in lyric, the density of allusion might be thought unremarkable in this passage if not for the final framing element, following the conclusion of Herakles’ second speech: ὃς ὢρα εἰπὼν αὐτίκα / ἔξετ’ (54-5). The formulation is undeniably Homeric, a variation on the full-line formulae found commonly in the Homeric epics (*Iliad*: ἤτοι ὃ γὰς εἰπὼν κατ’ ἄρ’ ἔξετ’ τοιού δ’ ἀνέστη; *Odyssey*: ὃς φάθ’, ὃ δ’ αὔτις ἄρ’ ἔξετ’ εὐξέστου ἐπὶ διόρου). Pindar’s strong enjambment of the verb, marking the end of the mythic digression and juxtaposed against the return of the poet’s own voice in prayer to the

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64 Privitera (1982) *ad loc.*
69 *Il.1.68*, 101, 2.76, 7.354, 365. Also found at *Od. 2.224*.
70 17.602, 24.408; ὃς εἰπὼν κατ’ ἄρ’ ἔξετ’ ἐπ’ ἑσχάμη ἐν κοννήρα 7.153; ἄρ’ δ’ αὔτίς κατ’ ἄρ’ ἔξετ’ ἐπὶ τρόνου ἐνθεν ἀνέστη 18.157, 21.139, 166; ἄρ’ δ’ ἐλθὼν κατ’ ἄρ’ ἔξετ’ ἐπὶ προσίχνει μελάθρῳ, 19.544; ὃς Ἰτα φωνῆσας κατ’ ἄρ’ ἔξετο, Τηλέμαχος δὲ 16.213; ἄρ’ δ’ ὄ γ’ ἐπ’ οὐδόν ἰῶν κατ’ ἄρ’ ἔξετο, καὶ δ’ ὄρα τίρην’ / θηρέεν ἐυπλείην, μετὰ δὲ μνηστήριον ἔπεσε 17.466-7; ἄρ’ δ’ ὄ γ’ ἐπ’ οὐδόν ἰῶν κατ’ ἄρ’ ἔξετο· τοῦ δ’ ἵσαν εἰσ’ / ἲδ’ γελώοντες καὶ δεικνύοντ’ ἐπέσεσον 18.110-11.
Muses (ἦλθεν ἐμοὶ δὲ μακρών κτλ.), is also highly reminiscent of Homeric hexameter phrasing, where the verb *hezeto* frequently occurs in line-initial enjambment.\(^\text{71}\) But unlike the Homeric formulae, where the speech of the now-seated speaker almost always finds a response (hence the formulaic line ending, τοῖοι δὲ ἄνεστι), Pindar’s Herakles takes his seat in isolation, his only response is far in the future – in the voice of the poet recounting his tale. The dynamic deployment of the allusive *inquit* frame results in a breach of the poem’s dictional hierarchy of the type we explored in the previous chapter. The striking juxtaposition of framer and framed sets the poet in dialogue with a distant interlocutor whose voice he has just impersonated as speaking from within his mythical tale. The dictional shift that brought Herakles’ voice momentarily into the *hic et nunc* is not diffused or contained by the concluding *inquit* frame, but is rather permitted to continue its incursion into the present and to enter into the ambit of Pindar’s discursive field. But the anachronistic exchange is not limited to the two speaking figures, the poet of the present and the hero of the past: through the concerted manipulation of Homeric language – specifically the formalized language of hexameter *inquit* formulae – Pindar triangulates the spatio-temporal complexities of the passage through the voice of Homer as well. The poet from the past, the model for poetic reperformance and the temporal and geographic durability of the poet’s voice, now attends Pindar’s own transmission of voice through time, shepherding the embedded speaker into the *hic et nunc* of Pindar’s performative present through the allusively embedded reperformance of his words.

The influence of Homer’s voice over Pindar’s *oratio recta* extends beyond the frame of direct speech into the content and tone of the speeches themselves. Returning to the rich speeches of *Olympian 6* which guided our inquiry in the last chapter, we can see the close pairing of dictional mode and Homeric allusion at work in Adrastus’ speech at the start of the poem. A scholion notes that the words Pindar quotes in the voice of Adrastus were in fact taken from the epic *Thebaid* (ὁ Ἀσκληπιάδης φησὶ ταύτα εἰληφέναι ἐκ τῆς κυκλικῆς Θηβαϊδος).\(^\text{72}\) Pindar’s speech is not a perfect hexameter, but it is sufficiently hexametric for Bernabé to print a close approximation as a certain fragment.

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\(^{71}\) ἑξετο is found in line-initial enjambment at Il.1.48, 2.42, 8.443, 15.150 22.275, 23.235, 350, 24.597 Od. 1.437, 2.14, 417, 4.136, 6.236, 14.31, 21.243, 392, 22.240, 23.89.

\(^{72}\) Scholia vetera. So too the scholia recentiora: εἴπεν ἐν ταῖς Θήβαις ὁ ὦς τοῦ Ταλαίου ὁ Ἀδραστὸς τοιοῦτον τι ἐπος· ποθὼ ιδεῖν δηλονότι τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν τῆς ἐμῆς στρατιᾶς.
in his *Poetae Epici Graeci*.\(^7\) If the attribution is correct, the embedded speech gives voice not only to the words of Adrastus but also to those of the author of the *Thebaid*, most likely thought to be Homer himself.\(^7\) Pindar’s *ainos hetoimos*, as he designates Adrastus’ speech, is not only “apt”, but also “ready-to-hand”;\(^7\) the words have already been spoken by the hero, but more remarkably, they have already been spoken by Homer. The coded language of Pindar’s frame functions as an Alexandrian footnote *avant la lettre*, signaling the allusive nature of the quotation. But this is not a simple allusion. Set within *oratio recta*, the act of quotation is made explicit and the embedded speaker is made to stand as a surrogate for the embedded poet. As such, the embedded speech becomes a reperformance of Homer’s epic, a mimetic conjuring of the epic poet within the melic song. The *hic et nunc* of first-person speech, which Pindar so overtly claims to share with the embedded speaker, stands as an analogue for the immediacy of reperformance. By renewing the performative power of Homer’s scriptory verses through the voice of his embedded speaker – whose voice Pindar in turn impersonates in *oratio recta* – Pindar parallels his own poetic future as a voice to be made present through the voices of others. As Pindar asserts, the speech of the past poet is identical to his own. Homer thus offers the melic poet his model for embedded speech, but as well as a blueprint for the more comprehensive mimetic project of poetic reperformance. The model of Homer’s scriptory epics will be the basis for Pindar’s own poems. For, like Homer, the fifth-century melic poet speaks both with his own voice and with those of others, internally, through the use of *oratio recta*, and externally, through the fact of scriptory reperformance.

Like Pindar, Aeschylus manipulates the alternative first-person voices introduced through *oratio recta* to reveal Homer’s paradigmatic role in defining the complementary relationship between the internal narrative structure of his poems and the external expectations of scriptory reperformance. Although the epic poet is never mentioned by

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\(^7\) *Fr.* 10 (=5K., A) Bernabé (1996). The attribution is further supported by Sotiriou (1998) p. 169, who notes the numerous parallels with constructions found in our extant epic sources. See also Suarez de la Torre (1988) p. 68.

\(^7\) The allusive nature of the quotation is noted by Kurke (1990) p. 89. On the view that the *Thebaid* would have been considered the work of Homer in the fifth century, see Ford (1997) p. 88, Fitch (1922), Nisetich (1989) p. 1, Lloyd-Jones (2002) pp. 2-3.

\(^7\) Carne-Ross (1976) p. 10.
name, poetic quotation and allusion, especially in conjunction with *oratio recta*, allow Homer’s texts to be reperformed on the Aeschylean stage just as they are within Pindar’s poems. And this allusive engagement results in a similarly self-conscious reflection on the bifurcated, scripory nature of Aeschylus’ own dramatic compositions.

The harmony of our poets’ view of Homer is clearly evidenced by Aeschylus’ deployment of the same formulaic phrasing from the Homeric *Thebaid* that Pindar quotes in *Olympian* 6. In the *Seven Against Thebes*, Aeschylus inserts the allusion into the mouth of the messenger reporting back to Eteocles on the enemy’s battle array: ἐκτὸν λέγομ’ ἄν ἀνδρα σωφρονέστατον / ἄλκην τ’ ἁριστον, μάντιν, Ἀμφίμαρω βίαν (568–9). Like Pindar, Aeschylus couples his allusion to the hexameter formula with direct speech. The phrase is not itself used within a quotation, but serves to introduce the only moment of true *oratio recta* in the play. The messenger, the ekphrastic story-teller on the stage, is thus recast as a rhapsode, voicing the narrative of the epic poet, at the very moment when he most fully performs the mixed diction of Homer’s poems. The sophisticated scripory engagement of poetic communication presented in this play will be examined in further detail in chapter three. For the present, we will turn once again to Calchas, the seer of the Trojan expedition, and complete our examination of the scripory dynamics of the *Agamemnon parodos* by exploring how Homeric allusion is employed to highlight the complex dictional combinations of that remarkably sophisticated melic passage.

Scholars have long noted the extreme epic tenor of the *Agamemnon parodos* and the essential role that this opening choral passage plays in adding heightened force to the Homeric themes that run throughout the play. The ode is noteworthy both for the unusual, highly dactylic meters in its second section and for the multiple marked allusions to the Homeric epics, the *Iliad* in particular. One rich strand of this allusive tapestry is the pairing of Aeschylus’ two embedded speakers, Calchas and Agamemnon, whose Homeric counterparts engage in an analogous verbal exchange in the first book of the

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76 The allusion is noted by Hutchinson (1985) *ad loc.*

As in Pindar, the quotation of the Homeric text is coupled with embedded speech, redoubling the perceived impersonation and recasting the oratio recta as a kind of reperformance. Because of the length and complexity of the parados narrative in comparison to the Pindaric passages examined above, we can trace a more developed engagement with the Homeric source-text through the multiple points of allusive contact.

The sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis as described in the parados does not feature explicitly in the Iliad, but it has often been suspected that Homer alludes to this component of the Trojan cycle in the first book of the Iliad, when Agamemnon rejects Calchas’ instructions on the basis of the poor results of past prophecies (106-8):

Oh prophet of evils, never have you said anything of use to me; always is it dear to your thinking to prophesy evil and not once have you spoken a good word or brought a good [deed] to completion.

If Agamemnon’s rebuke is indeed motivated by his memory of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, the passage looks back to a time before the stage in the war narrated in the Iliad, to the events which first brought the Achaeans from Greece to Troy. Where the Iliad represents Agamemnon’s recollection of the prophet’s past actions, Aeschylus inverts the temporal vantage by drawing attention to the fact that the Agamemnon of the parados has – as yet – no doubt of Calchas’ claims: ἤγεμὼν ὁ πρέσβυς νεών Ἀχαιῶν, μάντιν οὕτινα ψέγων (154-6). The temporal inversion is coupled with a dictional shift, taking the words which Agamemnon speaks in oratio recta in the Iliad and putting them in the mouth of the Chorus, here functioning as a kind of framing narrator. And as the Chorus adopt the words of Homer’s mimetic characters, the embedded speakers of Aeschylus’

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79 Also helpful is the fact that, unlike quotations from the Thebaid, we can identify the context from which Aeschylus’ Iliadic allusions are drawn.
80 Iphigenia is not mentioned in the Iliad, where Agamemnon’s three daughters Χρυσόθεμες καὶ Λαοδίη καὶ Ιφιάνασσα (9.145) are still alive. The earliest reference to Iphigenia is found in the Cypria, fr. 15, on which see Janko (1982) who cites the comments of Lobel (1965), where she is distinguished from Iphianassa, thus making it probable that Aeschylus understood Iphigenia’s death to be assumed, though never explicitly mentioned, by the Iliad narrative.
parodos are made to speak in the language of the Homeric narrator, as Calchas warns of the powerful memory of wrath (154-5):

μίμει γὰρ φοβερὰ παλίνορτος
οἰκονόμος δολία, μνάμων Μήνις τεχνόπονος.

For an unrelenting housekeeper, frightening and deceitful, remains, a wrath that remembers, child-avenging.

The use of the first word of the Iliad, possibly considered the “title” of the epic in the fifth century, alludes not only to the events narrated by that poem and made possible by the sailing from Aulis, but to Calchas’ own meta-poetic prophecy at Iliad 1, in which the seer claims to recount the wrath of Apollo (69-77):

Кάλχας Θεστορίδης οἰωνοπόλων ὅφ' ἄριστος,
ὅς ἔδη τὰ τ' ἐόντα τὰ τ' ἐσσόμενα πρὸ τ' ἐόντα,
καὶ νῆσσο' ἤγησατ' Ἀχαιῶν Ἰλιὸν εἰσο
ἵν διὰ μαντοσύνην, τὴν οἱ πόρο Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων·
ὁ οὐφ' ἐν φρονέων ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπεν·
ὡ Αχιλεὺ κέλεια με Δίῳ φίλε μυθήσασθαι
μήνιν Ἀπόλλωνος ἐκατηβελέται ἀναστος·
τοι γὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω· οὐ δὲ σύνθεο καὶ μοι ὁμοσοιον
ἡ μέν μοι πρόφρων ἐπειν καὶ χεριν ἀρίξτειν·

Calchas the son of Thestor, by far the best of the augurs, who perceived the things that are, and will be, and have been, and lead the ships of the Achaeans to Ilium by means of prophetic skill, which Phoebus Apollo gave to him. He stood up before them well disposed and spoke: “Achilles, dear to Zeus, you command me to recount the wrath of Apollo the lord who shoots from afar. And yes, I will say this to you, but you consider and swear to me that you will readily defend me with word and deed."

The Homeric description of Calchas demonstrates a strong resemblance to Hesiod’s portrayal of the Muses in the Theogony, as both are said to possess special knowledge of past, present, and future. Because his prophetic vision is not subject to human temporal constraints, the seer resembles the divine Muses who inspire epic song and his words are thus imbued with an additional layer of poetic fertility. In his discussion of the Iliad passage, Andrew Ford has argued that the commonly noted similarity between Calchas and the Muses is further developed through the “titling syntax in line 75 [which] suggests

81 Theog.38: εἰσογεία τὰ τ' ἐόντα τὰ τ' ἐσσόμενα πρὸ τ' ἐόντα.
that the Wrath of Apollo is a seer’s account of events that are later reincorporated into the poet’s Wrath of Achilles.” ¹⁸² Like Homer himself, Calchas is a singer of mênis whose speech is a kind of poetic performance embedded within the larger epic text.¹⁸³ Ford also observes that the identification of Calchas as a “pathfinder” introduces another point of overlap between mantis and poet. The Iliad represents Calchas as possessed of a “gift of prophecy [that] enables him not only to see deeply into the present and future but also to lead the Achaean ships to Troy.”¹⁸⁴ Given the significance of the idea of a road or path as a metaphor for poetic production throughout Homer,¹⁸⁵ Ford reads this line as a further indication of the passage’s figuration of Calchas as “proto-poet” finding the path of song for the Trojan cycle.

The characterization of Calchas as he appears in the Iliad helps to broaden our understanding of the Aeschylean representation of the mantis, who claims to find the “path” to Troy in the first words of his speech (κέλευθος 126), and recounts the “child-avenging Wrath” which might well be understood, in light of the Homeric Calchas’ “titling syntax”, as an epicizing title for the Agamemnon itself. A relationship to the epic Muses similar to that set out in Homer is hinted at by the Chorus’s description of Calchas’ prophetic vision and understanding. Their narration stresses Calchas’ visual perception of the double eagle portent that attended the Argive forces at Aulis (123-5):

िदवन द्यो ल्यमाय दृशयोय
अत्रेयावस मांचयोज्य एदाय लागडायताः
पोम्पोय त अयघायः ओव्यो द’ इप्ये तेर्ग्षवोन।

Seeing the two bellicose sons of Atreus in the double boldness [of the eagles] he knew the hare-devouring beasts to be escorts of the command. And thus speaking he prophesied…

Calchas’ vision is not unlike that of the Muses of Homer, who see things that are only known by the poet through report, as is stated in the famous invocation that precedes the catalogue of ships: ύμείς γὰρ θεαί ἔστε πάρεστε τε ῶστε τε πάντα, / ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος

¹⁸³ For discussion of other poet-figures within the Homeric epics, see Segal (1994), Goldhill (1991) pp. 56-68.
¹⁸⁵ On which see the seminal study of Becker (1937).
105

In both texts, the seer is imbued with poetic knowledge alongside his temporal insight. In the *Agamemnon*, however, this double nature of the seer is triangulated through the poetic tradition itself. When Aeschylus’ Calchas warns of the wrath that Agamemnon’s deed may incur, he not only takes on the role of “proto-poet” but alludes to himself doing so in Homer’s text. And through the vivid presentation of his words in *oratio recta*, Aeschylus turns the allusion into a reperformance. Calchas, speaking vicariously through the polyphonous song of the Chorus, emerges as he would from the voice of the rhapsodic performer. But his words do not simply replicate his epic role. Aeschylus’ Calchas anticipates his Homeric figuration, which still lies in the future from the perspective of the internal narrative, while at the same time looking back to the history of his textual past, to the poem that sings the Wrath of Achilles in which he is called on to sing the Wrath of Apollo.

There are three distinct layers of temporal interaction between the Homeric poem and the *Agamemnon* *parodos*. Insofar as it serves as the poetic inspiration and model for Aeschylus’ composition, the *Iliad* stands in the distant past, the product of the long-dead epic poet. In relation to the events at Aulis which the Chorus relate, by contrast, the *Iliad* stands in the future; the narrative of the Trojan war is as yet unknown to the Achaeans as they set out towards Priam’s shores. However, the *parodos* is itself a narrative of the past within the action of the *Agamemnon*; from the Chorus’s perspective, the Trojan war has just ended and the events of Homer’s epics have been concluded (the *Iliad*) or are still in progress (the *Odyssey*, which will become the more dominant of the extant Homeric epics as the play develops). The palimpsest of the two texts allows the poet to fashion an anomalous time-scape of inversions and juxtapositions. The topsy-turvy relationship between the two scripted texts is echoed by the vocal reversals that place the words of Homer’s embedded characters in the song of Aeschylus’ Chorus and allows them to

86 The Chorus do not share with Calchas, or the Muses, the certain knowledge of autopsy and at the crucial moment, it is an explicit claim not to have been present, not to have seen, that justifies their silence: τὰ δὲ ἐνθέν οὐτὶ εἶδον οὐτὶ ἐνέπτω (248).

87 As Barrett perceptively notes, following on from his brief discussion of Atossa’s mantic dream in the *Persae*, one can discern “two important qualities of narrative in Aeschylean texts: first, that a narrative of even relatively simple temporal structure can prove to be quite complex, and, second, that this structure may articulate with the drama’s broader engagement with time.” Barrett (2007) p. 257.
impersonate the voice of the Homeric narrator in the double mimesis of oratio recta. Calchas, quoting himself from within his embedded speech, is the fixed point of vocal unity. And yet, his speech is the most complex reperformance, since Aeschylus’ allusive re-purposing of his meta-poetic words reenacts a poetic performance already embedded in the Homeric source-text. The seer, therefore, more than any other figure in the parodos, stands apart from himself in time and space. As was detailed in the last chapter, Calchas anticipates the song of the Agamemnon Chorus who will impersonate his words; he brings his own voice into harmony with theirs across the temporal divide through his performative expressions – the ailinon refrain and the invocation of Apollo Paean. But Calchas also transcends the boundary of the drama’s spatio-temporal plane, entering into dialogue with the Iliad’s narration of his subsequent actions. Calchas’ prophetic voice thus fuses the dictional polyphony of the parodos with the literal polyphony of Homeric reperformance, opening up the boundaries of Aeschylus’ dramatic world to encompass the temporal extension, material history, and concomitant enunciative distance (or rather, mediation) of Homer’s epic poems within the emphatically present, performative hic et nunc of the play’s fully mimetic action.

As we saw in the last chapter, it is the interweaving of multiple moments of transition between dictional modes that supplies the parodos with the power behind its exceptional spatio-temporal structure. This technique of slowly accumulated resonance, a hallmark of Aeschylean style more generally, finds a parallel in the development of the ode’s Homeric interface. It is possible, for instance, to trace Calchas’ characteristic path-finding through the length of the parodos, from the earliest expression of the Chorus’s thoughts about the war through to their announcement of Klytemnestra at the close of the song.

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88 A subject well treated in the seminal works of Lebeck (1971), Fowler (1967), and Zeitlin (1965).
89 The theme is first introduced in the Chorus’s opening meditation on the ten years that have passed since the Argive fleet departed; it is developed through their claim to sing the “pathlike power” of the Trojan expedition ( Odyssey 103) and continued through the repetition of that same adjective, “pathlike”, in their subsequent description of the portentous eagles ( Odyssey 157); and in both of these marked formulations lies an echo of the winged sea-journey of the vultures in the Chorus’s earlier simile ( ἄγαν ἐβελθόν ἐφεσοῦμεν 52). The idea of paths and traveling again emerges in the course of the Hymn to Zeus, where the Chorus express
Aeschylus employs this extended epic modeling to refract the multiple voices contained in the *parodos* through the lens of Homer’s own dictional variety. The many voices of Homer’s *Iliad* are deployed in the ode so as to enact a critical reperformance of the epic narrative.

The central interest in how manipulations of voice structure this allusive stance is exemplified by the simile with which the *parodos* begins. Early in the anapaestic opening of the *parodos*, the Chorus introduce a bird simile of undeniably Homeric origin (48-62):

\[
\text{μέγαν ἐκ θυμοῦ κλάζοντες Ἀρη}
\]
\[
\text{τρόπον αἰγυπτών,}
\]
\[
\text{οὐ' ἔκπατιοι ἠλέγει παίδων}
\]
\[
\text{ὑπατοὶ λεχέον στροφοδινοῦνται}
\]
\[
\text{πτερύγων ἑρετμοῖοι ἑρεοσόμενοι,}
\]
\[
\text{δεμνικήθη}
\]
\[
\text{πόνον ὀρταλίξων ὀλέσαντες·}
\]
\[
\text{ὑπατος δ' ἄων ἢ τίς Ἀπόλλων}
\]
\[
\text{ἡ Παν ἡ Ζεὺς οἰωνόθροσον}
\]
\[
\text{γόνον ὀξυβόαν τόνδε μετοίκων}
\]
\[
\text{ὑπερόποιον}
\]
\[
\text{πέμπει παραβάσιν Ἐρινύ.}
\]
\[
\text{οὔτω δ' Ἀτρέως παίδας ὁ κρείσσων}
\]
\[
\text{ἐπ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ πέμπει ἕξινος}
\]
\[
\text{Ζεῦς πολυάνορος ἀμφί γυναικός.}
\]

*Shrieking a great war from their breasts, in the manner of vultures, who in extreme grief for their children high above their beds wheel around, rowing with feathered oars, having lost the unfledged labor of their nestlings. But high above some Apollo or Pan or Zeus hears the sharp-shouted lament of these settlers and sends a late-revenging Fury to the transgressors. Thus great Zeus Xenios sends the children of Atreus against Alexander, because of the many-manned woman.*

The simile is rightly famous, comparing, with strong Homeric overtones, the Atreidai’s war cry (κλάζοντες Ἀρη) to the cries of vultures lamenting the loss of their young what is often thought to be the guiding principle not only of the *Agamemnon*, but of the trilogy as a whole τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὄδοσαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν (176-8), and ultimately through the almost inconsequential aside that announces the arrival of Clytemnestra at the conclusion of their song: πέλοπτο δ' οἶν ἃ 'πι τοῦτοις εἰ πρᾶξις, ὡς θέλει τόδ' ἀγίστον Αἰαίς γαίας μονόφρουρον ἔρχοσ (255-6). Retaining the spatial force of ἀγίστον as supported by the geographic specificity of Αἰαῖς γαίας, thus making Clytemnestra the metaphoric end of the path (the ἔρχοσ) back to Argos, towards which the Chorus now travel (ἵκεοι σεβίζον σῶν Κλυταιμήστρα κράτος 257). The spatial metaphor is dismissed by Fraenkel (1950) *ad loc.*

107
Like Knox’s “lion in the house”, the wailing birds are comparable to many characters in addition to the Atreidai; the resonances of their cries shift over the course of the trilogy, and the image is soon recast by the Chorus as the eagle omen of their subsequent dactylo-iacmic song.

Two specific Homeric source passages for the parodos simile, one from the Iliad and one from the Odyssey, have generally been identified by scholars. The first instance is found in the midst of the Patrocleia to describe the shouts of the raging battle (16.428-31):  

And Patroclus saw them from the other side and jumped from his chariot. And they, just like vultures with their hooked talons and crooked beaks shriek aloud from upon a high rock when they are warring, so the men shrieked as they rushed at each other.

The second occurs in book 16 of the Odyssey, at the emotional climax of Odysseus’ first meeting with Telemachus following his return to Ithaca (213-221):

Thus speaking he took his seat, and Telemachus embraced his dear father, pouring tears of lamentation. And desire to weep arose in both of them, and they wailed clearly, louder than birds, sea-eagles or vultures with hooked talons, whose young hunters have stolen before they are fledged. Thus did they let fall

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90 Knox (1952).
91 Heath (1999a) p. 20: “The simile conjures up for different readers Agamemnon, Menelaus, Helen, and Clytemnestra, Iphigenia, Thyestes and his children.”
92 Garner notes the elegant Aeschylean parallel with the paternal grief that the Iliadic Zeus will face at the death of his son, Sarpedon, which immediately follows this simile. Garner (1990) p. 42.
pitiful tears from their brows and the light of the sun would have set upon them lamenting, if Telemachus had not addressed his father all of a sudden.

As Fraenkel notes, “the principal motif [of lamentation for lost offspring] clearly comes from the Odyssey passage, but there the birds only lament in pain: the element of war-cry is contributed by the Iliad.”

The Homeric patrimony of this Aeschylean image is beyond dispute, but I would like to suggest a third simile model which reveals a far richer engagement with Homeric figurations of speech and which helps to explain the fourfold recurrence of the verb across the parodos: the famous simile which marks the resumption of the narrative and the return to battle following the catalogue of ships (3.1-9):

And then when each side was arrayed with their commanders, the Trojans marched forward with a shriek and cry just like birds, like the shriek of cranes in the sky, who have fled the winter and unimaginable storms and fly with a shriek from the flows of Ocean bringing death and doom to the men of the Pygmies and from high in the air bring forward the evil strife. And so the Achaeans marched forward in silence breathing might, eager in their breasts to come to each other’s defense.

The passage employs the noun klangê, a transparent cognate of the verb klazô, to compare the Trojans’ war-cries to the shrieks of birds. Like the parodos simile, the Iliad 3 simile offers a detailed picture of the circumstances and actions of the cranes the broad outlines of which are not unlike those of the Atreidai as the Chorus describe them departing for Troy. The threefold repetition of the noun klangê, which generates the

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94 Not a great obstacle to adducing this passage as a model for Aeschylus, when one considers that the Odyssey passage employs the synonym, χλαῖος.
95 Many scholars, ancient and modern, have sought to solve the mystery of the battle between the cranes and the Pygmies. The best treatment is Muellner (1990).
strong perception of similitude in the Homeric model,\textsuperscript{96} finds correspondence in the repetition of the verb \textit{klazō} throughout the \textit{parodos} as a whole. Like the crane simile, the point of comparison on which the \textit{parodos} comparison hinged, namely the shouts of the Atreidai who are described as “shrieking” (\textit{κλάζουντες}) like vultures, recurs at a number of points throughout the Chorus’s song. It is used twice to describe the prophetic speech of Calchas, first in the \textit{inquit} frame which concludes his extended speech \textit{oratio recta} (156-9):

\begin{quote}
\textit{toiáde Kálchas ἔτιν μεγάλοις ἂγαθοῖς ἀπέκλαγηςν}
 \textit{μόροσιν ἀπ' ὀρνίθων ὀδύων ὀίκοις βασιλείαις:}
 \textit{τοῖς δ' ὀμόφωνοιν}
 \textit{αὐλίνον αὐλίνον εἰπέ, τὸ δ' εὗ νυκᾶτο.}
\end{quote}

\textit{These were the fates from the traveling birds that Calchas shrieked out, together with great goods, to the royal house. And in the same voice cry woe, woe, but let the good prevail.}

And again, following the Hymn to Zeus, when his speech is briefly reintroduced in \textit{oratio obliqua} before Agamemnon offers his response (198-204):

\begin{quote}
\textit{ἐπεὶ δὲ σαὶ παροῦ}
 \textit{χείματος ἄλλο μῆχαρ}
 \textit{βριθύτερον πρόμοιον}
 \textit{μάντις ἐκλαγέον προφέρων}
 \textit{Ἀρτεμίν, ὡστε χθόνα βάκτροις ἐπιχρούσαντας Ἀτρεί-}
 \textit{δας δῶχου μὴ κατασχεῖν.}
\end{quote}

\textit{But when the seer shrieked to the leaders for another, graver means against the harsh storm, calling upon Artemis, so that the sons of Atreus struck the earth with their scepters but could not hold back their tears.}

The verb \textit{klazō} is not commonly used to describe verbal communication and its application to Calchas’ speech imparts a bestial quality to his words,\textsuperscript{97} a fact which further integrates the embedded speaker into the figurative sphere of the initial similitude.

One effect of this echo, which serves to establish a close connection between the two

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{96} Silk (1974) p. 16.
\textsuperscript{97} Silk (1974) p. 18, Heath (1999b) p. 22, Schein (2009) p. 391. LSJ cites only two instances in which the verb is used of articulate sound, both times in the \textit{parodos}, at Ag. 174 and 201. Interestingly, the verb is also found in the framing introduction to Cassandra’s speech in \textit{oratio recta} at Pindar \textit{Pae.} 8a.10. Rutherford (2001) p. 235.
\end{flushright}
speeches of Calchas while at the same time creating a strong sense of distance between the seer and his interlocutor, Agamemnon, is to bridge the digression from the main narrative that is introduced by the Chorus’s “Hymn to Zeus”. However, the Chorus’s interjected prayer is also implicated in the patterning of shrieks through a further instance of the key term of similitude within the Hymn to Zeus itself.

The Hymn to Zeus is throughout concerned with speech and communication, beginning with a confession of aporia as to how to address Zeus: εἰ τόδε ἀρτὸς φίλον κεκλημένοι, τοῦτο νῦν προσευνέποι; (160-3). The theme dominates the entire first strophe (οὐκ ἔχω προσευνάσας κτλ.) and is continued in the antistrophe in which the Chorus’s refusal to narrate the events that took place before the ascendance of Zeus (οὐδὲ λέξεται πῶν ὄν 170) leads to another mode of invoking Zeus, now formulated in generic terms (ἐπινίω), rather than according to nomenclature (and we may here be reminded of the close connection between names and song genres in the dactylo-ionic triad, discussed in the previous chapter). It is in this context that we once again find the verb klazô: Ζήνα δὲ τίς προφόρων ἔπινιω πλατζών κτλ. (174). From within their aporetic digression, the Chorus find themselves appropriating the enunciative stance of their embedded speakers, employing the verb which characterized the speech of the Atreidai and Calchas to find a voice suitable to the prayer they wish to utter (τίς προφόρων).

The repetition of the verb klazô throughout the parodos places the disparate voices of the Chorus’s song into a dialogue of sorts, albeit often by highlighting the lack of actual dialogue between speakers. But the verb is also interwoven with voices from the Homeric simile as it pivots between the sound of men and birds. The act of comparison between men and birds, which is already redoubled in the Iliadic passage by the presence

98 The fact that the Homeric simile is used at the conclusion of an extended interruption of the narrative which is more firmly connected with the narrator’s indexical sphere (his retrospective distance from the events is heavily emphasized in the invocation of the Muses at 2.485ff.) is yet another way in which this passage from Iliad 3 is well suited to the Aeschylean context and its analogous digression in the form of the Hymn to Zeus.

99 Fraenkel offers an excellent account of how these words reflect a live concern, rather than being mere “liturgical relics” or “ornament”. Fraenkel (1950) ad loc.

100 Gould (1978) might call this a reflection of Aeschylus’ authorial voice, which subjugates individual “character” to the thematic development of the drama as a whole. See also Lebeck (1971).

101 On the structural analogy of bird omens and similes in Homer, see Bushnell (1982).
of the andres Pygmaioi within the simile’s vehicle, is first made explicit in the parodos through the formal structure of an extended simile which draws a direct comparison between the shouts of the Atreidai and those of vultures (κλάζοντες Ἀρη τρόπον αἰγυπτῶν).\textsuperscript{102} But Aeschylus soon shifts his comparison into the metaphorical mode, employing the verb klazô and its cognates to imbue his human speakers with a degree of animalistic inarticulacy which is at odds with the verbal expressions to which the verb is applied. The Homeric precedent enables us to see beyond these discrete metaphoric resonances, to understand how the repetition of the verb following the initial simile unites the embedded speakers of the parodos in a metaphoric similitude akin to that of extended Homeric simile. This translation of repetition, from simile to metaphor, allows us to hear the nascent strains of reperformance in the Homeric patterning of the noun klängê across the simile. Homer has already offered a model of the scriptory reduplication of voices in the polyphony of his extended simile. But more importantly, the allusion recasts the entirety of the parodos as a meditation on the interchangeability of voice across time and space.

The extension of the Homeric model throughout the parodos is also apparent in the way that Aeschylus exploits the crane simile’s sophisticated internal shift, moving from the initial tenor – the screams of the Trojan host (Τρό̄ξ μὲν κλαγγῇ) – to a very different final tenor – the silence of the Achaeans (οἱ δὲ ἄρ’ ἵσαν στῆ… Ἀχαιοῖ). This type of shift, carried out across the vehicle, is one of the most dynamic features of Homeric simile, one that is not present in either of the traditionally adduced Homeric models, but is taken up in the Aeschylean simile, where the second tenor (οὔτω δ’ Ἀτρέως παις ὁ χρείωσον ἐπ’ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ πέμπει ξένιος Ζεὺς πολυάνοφος ἀμφὶ γυναικὸς 60-2) is directly inspired by the divine theme with which the vehicle draws to its close (ὑπατος δ’ ἄων ἦ τις Ἀπόλλων ἦ Πᾶν ἦ Ζεὺς οἰωνοθροοον γόνον ὑξυβόον τῶνδε μετοίκων, ύστεροσοιον πέμπει παραβάσιν Ὑπαθήν 55-9). Even more compelling, to my mind, is the parallelism of the structure of the parodos as a whole which mirrors the Homeric simile’s progression from cacophony to an unexpected,

\textsuperscript{102} Easterling also notes the Homeric resonances of Aeschylus’ specific choice of αἰγυπτοῖ to represent the birds of the simile: Easterling (1987) p. 56-7. There is a consistent and compelling interest throughout the Oresteia in the formal feature of simile and similitude itself, beginning with the watchman’s self-description, κυνὸς δύση (3).
inverted silence. The Homeric simile provides Aeschylus with a model for his many voices, allowing him to connect the enunciations of the embedded speakers, and to further interweave those with the voice of the Chorus, so that they find precedent in epic verse and thus engage in a type of poetic reperformance even as they are themselves mimetic reperformances. But there is a further voice within the Chorus’s song: that of the doomed Iphigenia who, like the Achaeans at the close of the Iliad 3 simile, meets the raucous polyphony of the preceding verses with an equally potent silence.

Agamemnon’s daughter enters the parodos once her father has accepted the brutal necessity of her sacrifice. Although she never speaks in oratio recta, her appearance is narrated with a strong focus on her capacity for speech. The virgin is first described in her attempt to escape her fate with prayers and supplications that are entirely disregarded; her impotence in the face of her father’s decision is presented in terms of the powerlessness of her speech (229-31):

\[ \text{λιτᾶς δὲ καὶ χληδόνας πατρόφους} \]
\[ \text{παρ' οὐδὲν αἰών τε παρθένειον} \]
\[ \text{ἐθεντο φιλόμαχοι βραβῆς.} \]

But the allies dear to the chief took no account of her prayers, her cries to her father, and her virgin youth.

Iphigenia’s ineffectual imprecations cannot properly be classed as indirect speech, as her utterances are presented only as objects (like herself, the δόμων ἀγαλμά 208) of the Greek soldiers’ scorn. The formal suppression of Iphigenia’s words – in contrast to the polyphony of the earlier voices – is echoed in their futility within the narrative sphere, a dynamic which will characterize the remaining account of the voiceless virgin’s sacrifice.

The effort to silence Iphigenia is soon made an explicit subject of the narrative, as Agamemnon resorts to force in order to ensure a more literal stifling of his daughter’s speech. The Chorus’s graphic depiction of the forcible restraint of the young girl comprises the remainder of their account of Iphigenia’s death. In a continuation of the initial fusion of voice and self, the violent muzzling (βία χαλινών) is the only physical harm that the Chorus relate. Iphigenia is one with her voice. Even a cursory glance at the

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proportion of the passage devoted to questions of speech reveals the consistent focus on the verbal aspect in framing Iphigenia’s fate. Her forced silence is set against Agamemnon’s own continued speech (πατήρ μετ’ εὐχέαν 232), by contrast she must rely on visual signals to convey her now muted pleas for mercy (ἀπ’ ὁμοτος βέλει φιλοίκτης 241). Her silence is described as conspicuously visual (πρέπουσα τῶς ἐν γραφαῖς 242) and contrasted with her speech in a still more distant past, when Iphigenia sang with joy at her father’s table. The graphai to which Iphigenia’s silence is compared are almost universally translated as “paintings”, following from the visual emphasis in the preceding lines. But this reading of the term, which recurs in a similar context in the speech of Iphigenia’s doublet Cassandra, overlooks the other common meaning of “written document” or “text”, a sense which fits well the poetic theme of the subsequent lines: ἕπει πολλάκις πατρὸς κατ’ ἄνδρῶνας εὐτρωπεῖς ἔμελθεν (243-5). The contrast, then, is between the past poetic performance and the present silencing of song in textual form. Iphigenia’s voice is no longer her own (as indeed, she is but a shadow cast on the stage by the Chorus’s melic narrative). The scenes of her earlier paeanic performance represent an idealized isomorphism of coding- and receiving time, but now her speech is fixed in graphai, held frozen in the past by the Chorus’s refusal to reperform her words. Iphigenia’s silence is marked as unusual, and unnatural – a corrupted state akin to that of her perverted sacrifice. But another kind of “written” voice, now pushing ironically into the play’s internal future, can be heard in Agamemnon’s zeal to restrain Iphigenia’s speech lest it bring a curse upon his house (237). The silencing of the virgin sacrifice has not in fact deprived her voice of power since her unspoken cries for vengeance will indeed be heard, as the events of the tragedy will reveal, by her mother, Clytemnestra.

Like the silent Achaeans at the close of the crane simile, Iphigenia’s marked non-speech inverts the polyphonous sound-scape that the parodos has hitherto developed by

106 This second usage is discussed at greater length below. The term γραφή and its cognates are used with some degree of frequency in Aeschylus with reference to writing. On the general use, see Easterling (1985) p. 4, and below, chap. 6.
107 Zeitlin (1965).
offering a negative figuration of the speeches that have come before. The language of this final section resonates with the themes and motifs of the previous speakers, allowing Iphigenia to stand as a silent capstone to the *parodos* as a whole. The fact that Iphigenia’s erstwhile songs are expressly stated to have been paeans (τριτόποιον ὑπότμον παυόνα) places the girl alongside the two other singers of paeans in the *parodos*, Clytemnestra and Calchas, as a speaker with command of a generic register that is inaccessible to the Chorus. Like Calchas, she meets Agamemnon as her unresponsive interlocutor, and she shares the seer’s ability to speak to a future audience. But in the circumstances that meet her at Aulis, she is also a doublet for the Chorus. Her age (αἰὼν τε παρθένων) and voiceless strength (ἀναύδῳ μένει) recall the Chorus’s claim, in that key passage, that their age (οὐμφυτος αἰὼν) still permits them to sing the Argive might (κυρίως εἰμι θροειν ὁδιον χράτος) relying on their own battle-strength of song (μολπάν ἄλκαν).

The virgin’s silence seems to derive from the same source that provides the Chorus with their verbal power. Yet conversely, Iphigenia also shares what we might call the Chorus’s verbal impotence, and the pitiful effect of her unrealized desire to address the soldiers (*προσεννέπειν θέλουσι*) echoes back through the Chorus’s own uncertainty earlier in the ode as how to address Zeus (ἐλ τὸδ’ αὐτοῖ φίλον κελλημένοι, τοῦτο νν προσεννέπο). Both fail in their apostrophes; the virgin is unable to find an interlocutor amongst the Argive host as the Chorus cannot find a way to invoke the god.

Most notably, Iphigenia and the Chorus are fused by the parallel, performatively simultaneous but chronologically distinct, silencing of their speech. The description of Iphigenia’s silence serves as an introduction to the Chorus’s own refusal to narrate her death. The Chorus break off their account before they reach the ultimate violence which the girl’s forced muzzling anticipates, allowing Iphigenia’s silence to stand as the metonymic narration of her death. In describing how she has been rendered mute, they can themselves remain silent about the true end of her voice and her life (248–9):

\[
\text{τὰ δ’ ἐνθεν οὗτ’ εἴδον οὗτ’ ἐννέπο:}
\text{τέχναι δὲ Κάλχαντος οὐκ ἄχραντοι.}
\]

108 μολπάν ἄλκαν, though highly corrupt, is the reading accepted by most modern editors.
The things which then took place I neither saw nor will I speak; the arts of Calchas were not unfulfilled.

The final contrast between the Chorus’s silence and Calchas’ (now fulfilled) prophecy substitutes for a narration of the girl’s death, locating her fate within the plane of temporal destabilization created by the dialogue between the Chorus and the voice of the embedded seer. And as the Chorus attempt to justify their position, they seek to articulate their discomfort with prophetic speech. They spurn the special temporal insight of the prophet and reject knowledge of the future before it has come, equating prophecy, in a famously difficult construction, with what has been the choral attempt at its antithesis, namely lamentation (251-3):

τὸ μέλλον
ἐπεὶ γένοιτ' ἐν κλόους· πρὸ χαρέτω
ίσον δὲ τῷ προστένειν.

The future, may you hear it when it comes. Before then, let it be gone, for [not to do so] is the same as to bewail it in advance.

But what is this future to which the Chorus refer? Their own narrative silence looks only to the past, to fates which have already been sealed but continue to work upon the present and future. Their song has brought the past events of Aulis too jarringly into the present, as if the words spoken then, and the deeds then done, were being played out once again, reperformed and reenacted by the Chorus, as indeed they are.

Although Aeschylus’ manipulation of the Homeric simile is not a literal quotation, it represents a sophisticated allusive interface with the language and structure of one of Homer’s most compelling depictions of the nature of the voices embedded within his epics. The allusion permits the playwright to draw upon his epic predecessor and to make use of Homer’s narrative voice in order to establish a basic foundation for the internal reperformances of the parodos to be analogized to poetic reperformance more broadly. Like Pindar, Aeschylus looks to Homer’s inquit formulae and to the speeches of his epic heroes to guide his own practice of quotation. But in the parodos we find a further level of modeling through the elegant and concerted reformulation of one of Homer’s most affecting depictions of human enunciation. The tragic poet repurposes the epic simile, first signaling its formative influence on the Chorus’s song through the unmistakable epic
resonances of the ode’s opening simile, and then exploring the implications of the similitude as he traces it through the speeches which the Chorus impersonate on the stage. The polyphony of past voices within the *parodos* is framed by Homer’s words, emphasizing that each of the Chorus’s quotations is itself an act of poetic reperformance. Nor do the Chorus themselves remain untouched by the force of this rhapsodic modeling, but as their voice and verbal authority become increasingly fused with that of their embedded speakers, their own song too becomes a reperformance that is transported through the multiplicity of time and space created by its internal polyphony.

3. **The Mantis Speaks**

Homer’s epics provide Pindar and Aeschylus not only with ready words for quotation but with a model for the dynamics of their own scriptory poetics. By embedding the voice of Homer within their own compositions, our poets are able to signal the importance of understanding poetry as a reperformative activity. The voices of their songs, like those of Homer, are spatially and temporally mobile, making use of the powers of the script to bring themselves to life in remarkable ways. These moments of quotation point to the presence of Homer’s scriptory epics within the choral poems of Pindar and Aeschylus. But to fully reveal the scriptory mechanisms that they have themselves created, our poets cannot rely on the model of the epic poet alone. They must establish the presence of their own scripts, and show themselves to be as capable of their epic forebear of traveling across space and time.

It is the mimetically generative capacity of apostrophe that permits our poets to most dynamically reveal their works as grounded in multiple spatio-temporal realities, but joined through the unifying power of the script. Through its power to mediate between the multiple contextual realities of a poetic work, the script serves as a point of fixity and unity within the broader polyphony of scriptory mobility. The use of apostrophe establishes a clear relationship between these disparate points, binding, but also calling into relief, the unspoken mechanisms that unify a scriptory poem. Apostrophe takes up the complex spatio-temporal landscape sketched by *oratio recta* and puts it to work. Its mimetic force places the multiple vision of a scriptory *hic et nunc* before our eyes, staging the scriptory matrix for all to see. In the two readings that follow, we will see
how Pindar and Aeschylus deploy this apostrophic stance to help demarcate the role of script, using the silent figures of apostrophe to tacitly shape the voices that we hear within their songs.

We turn first to Pindar’s Isthmian 8, a poem whose understated sophistication is often overlooked, but which provides a fine example of how Homer’s epic model is transformed by the apostrophic voice of melos to signal the full range of Pindar’s scriptory poetics. The poem’s central narrative excursus draws on Homeric epic to destabilize the performative hic et nunc. The myth itself is presented through a complex series of spatio-temporal dislocations, as Achilles’ fame is viewed proleptically through the lens of his parents’ marriage, or more accurately, through the divine orchestration of that union. The events are in fact the prophetic vision of Themis, vividly related in oratio recta as the goddess advises Zeus and Poseidon against their erotic designs on the Nereid Thetis. In addition to its epic theme, the passage is perfused with Homeric language, producing a remarkably dense allusive web across the brief narrative. But it is the way in which Pindar embeds this reperformance of the Homeric text within his own that most concerns us here.

The framing structure in which Pindar sets Themis’ oratio recta is remarkable even if we take account of dynamic nature of direct speech in Pindar. The goddess’s speech is introduced by an unmistakable inquit formula (ἐἶπε δ’ εὔβουλος ἐν μέσοις Θέμις And wisecounseling Themis spoke amongst them. 31), but after having signaled the beginning of an embedded speech the poet continues to relate Themis’ words in oratio obliqua, mediating her prophecy through his own, still clearly audible narrative voice. It

109 In this respect, Pindar anticipates the elegant narrative structure of Catullus 64.
110 Themis speaks in words associated with hexameter epic: ὀπάξω, στεροπή, ἀφθιτός, ἔγκυολιζώ. Particularly noteworthy is the use of the adjective ἐναλέγκιος to facilitate her description of Achilles. The term is regularly used in hexameter similes (there are 26 instances in Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns) but is not found elsewhere in Pindar and rarely occurs outside of the hexameter tradition. Here it is employed within an obvious reference to hexameter epithet forms, ἱερός Ἀριν, and πόδας ὄκυς Ἀχιλλεύς/ ποδάρχης δίος Ἀχιλλεύς, bringing the epic borrowing into even sharper focus. (The formula πόδας ὄκυς Ἀχιλλεύς is mentioned by the scholia vetera in reference to Pindar’s description of Achilles’ youthful speed in N.3.51-3, where an explicit allusion is made to the epic tradition: στείνοντι ἐλάφως ἤνευ κυνών δολίων θ’ ἔρχεν· ποσὶ γὰρ κράτεσσε, λεγόμενον δὲ τούτο προτέρων ἐπος ἔχο.)
111 The Pindaric phrasing resembles the Homeric line formula: ὅ όφιν ἐν φρονέων ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπεν· (II. x9, Od. x7).
is with some sense of delay, then, that Themis begins her true oratio recta some five lines later, and the tension between the framing voice of the poet and that of his embedded speaker is brought into focus at this belated moment of dictional transition. Themis’ first words interrupt the poet with a bold imperative: ἄλλα τὰ μὲν παύσατε. But now you stop these things (36). Her words are notionally directed at Zeus and Poseidon, and refer to their erotic furor over the young Thetis, but Themis’ address also curtails Pindar’s speech. As such, the brusque apostrophe which begins her true oratio recta can (despite the plural)¹¹² be understood as addressed to the poet, the framer of her embedded speech, as much as to the gods who inhabit her mythical hic et nunc. Her words serve to wrest her voice from the mediated narration of the poet into the clear hic et nunc of direct speech.¹¹³ The dislocation of the poet is thus actively effected by his embedded speaker, who mimetically apostrophizes the voice that enables her vocal apparition. Themis’ injunction insists, in effect, that Pindar set aside his own script in favor of Homer’s.

The scriptory force of Themis’ apostrophe, producing a kind of parallel dialogue between Pindar and his Homeric exemplar, can only be fully appreciated in the broader context of Pindar’s ode, in which the melic poet has continually employed apostrophe to establish the complex spatio-temporal mobility of his own composition. Throughout the poem Pindar creates a web of contradictory apostrophes and emphatic first-person statements that constantly reposition the poetic hic et nunc, calling attention to the spatio-temporal relationship between performance and composition. In so doing, Pindar reveals the scriptory nature of his poem, pointing to the multiple realities contained within its multiform structure. The effect of revealing this scriptory matrix is most clearly discerned in the ode’s opening strophe (1-8):

Κλεάνδρῳ τις ἀλιξία τε λύτρον εὐδοξῶν, ὦ νέοι, καμάτων
πατρὸς ἄγγειλόν Τελεσάρχου παρὰ πρόθυρον
ιὸν ἄνεγερσένω
κόμων, Ἰοθμιάδος τε νίκας ἀποινα, καὶ Νεμέα
ἀέθλιον ὑπὶ κράτος ἐξεύθες· τῷ καὶ ἔγώ, καὶπερ ἄχνυμενος
θυμόν, αἰτέσσαμι χρυσόν καλέσαι
Μοίσαι. ἐκ μεγάλων δὲ πενθέων λυθέντες

¹¹² In fact, in the context of choral performance, the plural would easily be understood as an address to the group of singers.
¹¹³ As Burnett (2005) has noted, Themis is granted a remarkable degree of control, governing even the “cosmic order” of the poem, p. 114.
For your agemate Kleandros, o young men, let one of you go to the shining gate of his father Telesarchos and rouse the revelries, an honorable recompense for his toils and reward for his Isthmian victory, and since he was best in the contests at Nemea. And likewise I, although pained in my heart, must call upon the golden Muse. Freed from great sorrows, let us not fall into a lack of crowns, nor should you offer service to troubles. Bringing an end to our intractable ills, let us sing a sweet tune even after toil.

The ode oscillates between two discordant points, the vivid polyphony of a performative **hic et nunc** and the solitary event of Pindar’s poetic composition. Unseen, but readily felt, between the two lies the poem’s fixed script, linking the contradictory perspectives through the unity of their single song.

The apostrophe to the unspecified band of *neoi* in the first lines turns our gaze first to the poem’s sense of its own performance. The geographic specification, locating the event at the victor’s home, points to an even more circumscribed vision of the song; we are asked to imagine the moment of its premiere recital, the first time that the poet’s script was translated into living song. Yet the poet’s command indicates a postponement of this event: the direction to the young men assumes that they have not yet begun to sing. There is then a sense of anticipation, a hint that the song’s performance is not yet underway, which exposes the distance between the script and its oral instantiation. Although Pindar avails himself of the idea of the script, it is not primarily to the possibility of untold future reperformances that this scriptory perspective directs us, but backwards, to the point in time before the poem has found its first voice in song.

Pindar follows up on this his initial, paradoxically retrospective, apostrophic injunction to his band of performing *neoi* with an even more decisive consideration of his own compositional role in the poem’s construction. Pindar compares his task to that of the youthful chorus (τὸ καὶ ἐγήγο), but his desire is not to rouse the *komos* but to invoke

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the Muses as inspiration for his song. The poet’s emotional reference to his own suffering heart places emphasis on his isolation from the performers whom he has just addressed.\(^{116}\) Pindar is not yet present within the performative *hic et nunc*. We have moved backwards. The poem’s first sentence seemed to anticipate the song’s immediate performance, but now, with divine inspiration yet to be requested, we must await the poet’s act of composition as well.

As the poem progresses, the *hic et nunc* of Pindar’s addresses becomes more difficult to locate. He shifts first to a first-person plural that can be understood to group him either with the Muses, in the ambit of his poetic composition, or with the *neoi* whose presence signals the commencement of the poem’s reception. He describes his unnamed companions as freed from great suffering, connecting the thought to the distress that Pindar has just claimed attended his poetic composition (ἀχνύμενος θυμόν). But mention of the need for crowns (στεφάνων) evokes the attendant circumstances of the poem’s premiere.\(^{117}\) This uncertain temporality is intensified in the following clause which, despite its clear formal and thematic parallels to the preceding command, is shifted markedly by the use of the second-person singular: μὴ τε θέσεις. It has been suggested that Pindar uses the second person here to address himself,\(^{118}\) as elsewhere he speaks to his *thumos* as a participant in his compositional choices.\(^{119}\) But such clarity is not afforded by the passage under consideration, particularly in light of the subsequent return to the first-person plural within the context of an unmistakably performative command: γλυκώ τι δομῳσόμεθα (8). The apostrophe must, therefore, also admit of an external interlocutor, conceived as a participant in the performance of the song.

The dynamic instability of these opening lines, which never fully inhabit an identifiable *hic et nunc*, has the effect of displacing the song from all of its possible instantiations and thus places the entire weight of the poem’s integrity, both performative

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\(^{116}\) On the “personal” tone of the first-person claims in this poem, see Lefkowitz (1963) and, for a slightly revised assessment, Lefkowitz (1980). I treat the question of Pindar’s biographical tradition with relation to this poem at greater length in Uhlig (forthcoming).


\(^{118}\) Lefkowitz (1963).

and compositional, on the presence of the silent script. The untenable paradox of the poem’s spatio-temporal polyphonies can only be resolved through the sense that the poet’s apostrophes are grounded in a traveling reality, the fully mobile hic et nunc of the scriptory text. This almost fully mimetic scene represents the true dynamism of the poem, which is able to contain any number of competing realities within its scriptory poetics. And it is this breadth of voice, the scriptory poem’s ability to readily contain its own contradictions, that will be mirrored and enacted in the anachronistic dialogic exchange between Pindar and Themis.

The deep structural symmetry between epinician frame and embedded myth is signaled by the unusual nature of the poet’s final apostrophe before beginning the Themis narrative, which is addressed to the nymph Aignia as a character within the mythic past: σέ δ’ ἐς νάσον Οἰνοπιὰν ἐνεγκών κοιμάτο, δίον ἐνθα τέχες Αἰακῶν βαρυσφαράγων πατρί κεδνότατον ἐπιχθόνων. But carrying you off he set you down on that island, Oinopia, where you bore shining Aiakos, the mortal most beloved to his loud-thundering father. (21-3). It is uncommon for Pindar to make use of this type of apostrophe, often found in Homer, which transgresses the boundary between the hic et nunc of the narrator’s present and the world of the distant past his words depict. And Pindar calls attention to his bold formulation by the emphatic placement of the second-person address at the beginning of the new strophe. Here the shift in register is undoubtedly inspired in part by the epic coloring that will soon dominate the ode. But more significantly, the unexpected incursion of the apostrophe into the mythical sphere is a signal of the important relationship between the dictional figurations within the epic narrative and Pindar’s own melic voice within the framing stanzas. The interpenetration is further supported by the subtle interweaving of Pindar’s claim that (even) the gods have heard of the fame of the Aiakids of which the poet is himself now singing: ταῦτα καὶ μακάρων ἐμέμναντ’ ἀγοραί (26). The anachronistic conceit, that the poet’s song informs the gods (of the past) as much as theirs do his, is reaffirmed by Themis’ later admission that she knows of Peleus’ virtue through report (φώτις). The expression is out of keeping with Themis’ omniscient stance, almost as though “the poet forgets who is speaking and for
the moment speaks for himself,” revealing his voice to have traveled, following the course of his apostrophe, into embedded narrative; into the world of the myth and the powerful prophetic voice of Themis.

Apostrophe allows Pindar to reveal the spatio-temporal instability of his ode, not as a failure, but as a mark of its command of scriptory poetics. Here too Themis is a model for his scriptory vision. That Pindar can share her voice, indeed allow her to fully inhabit the *hic et nunc* of his song, is mark of his scriptory understanding and prowess: by embedding her song, he shares with Themis her remarkable vocal power. As Pindar asserts in the concluding frame following her speech, *the fruit of Themis’ words did not perish* (44-8):

> ὤς φάτο Κρονίδαις<br>ἐννέποισα θεά· τοι δ’ ἐπὶ γλεφάροις<br>νεύσαν ἄθανάτου ἐπέων δὲ καρπός<br>οὐ κατέφυνε· φαντὶ γὰρ ξύν’ ἀλέγειν<br>καὶ γάμον Θέτιος ἄνακτα, καὶ νεαρὰν ἐδειξαν σοφῶν<br>στόματ’ ἀπείροιοιν ἠρετὰν Ἀχιλέος·

*So spoke the goddess to the sons of Kronos. Nor did the fruit of her words perish, for they say that the lord considered the common good in the marriage of Thetis, and the mouths of the wise revealed the youthful excellence of Achilles to the ignorant.*

The closing frame of the *inquit* formula is, like the introduction to Themis’ speech, emphatically Homeric, but now the language echoes the relatively common invocation of the epic muse, ἔννεπε Μοῦσα, joining it, and Themis, with the *thea* of the first line of the *Iliad* and imbuing the goddess’s words with the inspirational power of the epic Muse. That this epic allusion is indeed meant to signal a special appreciation of the poetically productive power of Themis’ words is made clear by the fuller articulation which follows. The narrator claims that Themis’ words have given rise to mortal report – or better, to a poetic tradition of Achilles’ valor which is borne on the mouths of the wise (σοφῶν στόματα). Like the figuration of Homer in *Isthmian* 4, Themis’ words look to

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120 Farnell (1930) *ad loc*.

121 It is possible to see a further hexameter exemplar if we note the specificity of these lines, which refer to the νεαρὰν ἀρετάν Ἀχιλέος which will be revealed to the ἀπείροιοιν. The reference is not to Achilles’ life in general, but to his early exploits, the very adventures that Themis mentions at the close of her speech, when she commands that Chiron be told the news in
the future, not just in their prophetic content, but in their power to inspire song in men to come. Like the Muses, Themis is able to direct her prophetic words to multiple audiences at once, a feature which Pindar explores through the pairing of thematic and formal devices which reveal the full compass of her influence.

As Apollo did in *Olympian 6*, Themis will also exert control over the ode itself long after the *hic et nunc* reality of her words has been obscured. Following the goddess’s speech, the poet continues to narrate the epic feats of Achilles, maintaining the Homeric tone that Themis’ words have introduced into the poem. Not only does the language of the narrator retain its strongly epic character, but he makes clear reference to the epic tradition surrounding the hero, offering an overview of the many hexameter poems that told of the hero’s fate. Hesiod’s *Hypothékai* is already suggested by Themis’ own words, but in cataloguing the names of Achilles’ greatest foes – Telephus, Memnon, and Hector – Pindar directly alludes to the three major epics recounting Achilles’ deeds, the *Cypria*, *Aetheopis*, and *Iliad*. But it is when the poet speaks of Achilles’ death that he once again most clearly returns to his meditation on Themis’ role within his poem. For death, Pindar asserts, was not end of Achilles’ glory since his grave was attended by the immortal song of the Muses (56-8):

> τὸν μὲν οὐδὲ θανόντ' ἀοιδαὶ ἐπέλιπον,
> ἀλλὰ οἱ παρὰ τὸ πυράν τάφον θ’ Ἐλισώνωι παρθένοι
> στάν, ἐπὶ θρήνον τε πολύφωμον ἔχεαν.

*Nor did the songs leave him when he was dead, but the Heliconian virgins stood by his pyre and his grave and poured upon it a many-voiced lament.*

The event described here has a double valence. On one level, the passage refers to the tale (preserved in our extant sources by *Od.24.43*-84) that the Muses sang the dirge at Achilles’ funeral. But at the same time, Pindar’s language extends to comprise the many-voiced reperformances of Achilles’ many poems, whose words and reperformances

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his immortal cave: ἰόντων δ’ ἐς ἄφθιτον ἄντρον εὐθὺς Χήρωνος αὐτίκ’ ἀγγελίαι (41). The reference points to the Hesiodic *Ὑπαρχεία Χήρωνος*, discussed at length in chap. 5.
123 The common attribution of the whole of the Trojan and Theban Cycles to Homer in the fifth century is discussed above, n. 78.
are inspired by the same Muses whose first song for Achilles is here described.\textsuperscript{125} The singing continues long after Achilles’ mortal death, and indeed after Homer’s – a double reperformance that simultaneously restages the hero’s death and the epic verses which invest it with poetic \textit{kleos}.

As he transitions away from the Homeric narrative, Pindar appropriates the power of the epic song for his own composition. The song of the Muses lives on in Pindar as he once again bids his unnamed band of performers to raise their voices in celebration (61-4):

\[
\text{τὸ καὶ νῦν φέρει λόγον, ἔσουσαί τε Μοισαῖον ἄρμα Νυκολέος}
\text{μνάμα πυγμάχου κελαδῆσαι. γεφραίσετὲ νῦν,}
\text{ὁς Ἰσθμιοῖς ἐν νάπος}
\text{Δωρίων ἔλαξιν ἀελίνων·}
\]

\textit{And even now the tale is carried forward, as the chariot of the Muses races to sing a monument for the boxer Nikokles. Celebrate him, who took the Dorian celery in the Isthmian grove.}

Pindar’s apostrophe once again places his song within the \textit{hic et nunc} of epinician performance, but the words and power of the epic song has been incorporated into the mobile voice of his scriptory song. Pindar demonstrates that his own apostrophes, like that of Themis, can generate song and move the world of his performance through its limitless possibilities. Within the broad-ranging landscape of his scriptory poetics, Pindar can incorporate the voice of Homer with the multiform and capacious \textit{hic et nunc} of his scriptory composition.

It is with a similar interest in the scriptory properties of his own composition that Aeschylus approaches the so-called Cassandra-scene of the \textit{Agamemnon}. As we will see, the scene recasts the complex spatio-temporal dynamics of the \textit{parodos} in the rich landscape of apostrophe, transferring the quotational stance of \textit{oratio recta} into a fully realized vision of Aeschylus’ mimetic script. Much as in Pindar’s \textit{Isthmian} 8, the model of the Homeric script, expressed in the allusive diction of \textit{oratio recta}, is adapted to the mimetic demands of the \textit{melic} composition through the pointed use of apostrophe. The many parallels between the two great lyric moments of the \textit{Agamemnon}, the \textit{parodos} and

\textsuperscript{125} As Fitzgerald notes, the Muses’ dirge also replaces the elided marriage song which the Muses are said to have sung at the marriage of Peleus and Thetis. Fitzgerald (1987) pp. 8-9.
the Cassandra-scene, have long been noted. The two scenes are paired both in length and in structural sophistication, and represent the two most significant reflections on the dramatic action of the play. But, as I hope to demonstrate, the connection between the two scenes runs deeper, to the core of the Agamemnon’s exploration of its own scriptory poetics within the parameters of dramatic mimesis.

There is a special quality to Cassandra’s role within the Agamemnon – and the Oresteia trilogy more broadly – that has been variously attributed to the unique attributes which characterize her position both within the internal dynamics of the drama and within what may best be called the “meta-theatrical” structure of the play (understood as those places where the drama seems to reflect on and expose its own theatrical nature). As Bernard Knox observed in his incomparable essay “Aeschylus and the Third Actor”, the singularity of Cassandra’s role within the Agamemnon is tied to her position as third actor (τρίτος ἀρχηγός). The innovative status and unexpected appearance of a third actor within Aeschylean drama maps on to the determined silence and subsequent idiosyncratic speech of the young captive. As the first, and most powerful instantiation of the third actor’s extra voice, Cassandra is a flash-point in the trilogy where the formal features of the drama’s construction and performance are revealed and explored. Cassandra’s mantic powers, deployed to spectacular effect in unsettling the hic et nunc of the dramatic stage, represent an internal correlate to her uncertain role within the trilogy’s structure. As Knox describes her, Cassandra “interrupts the dramatic action – blurs and almost suspends dramatic time; in Cassandra’s possessed song the past, present, and future of Clytemnestra’s action and Agamemnon’s suffering are fused in a timeless unity which is shattered only when Agamemnon in the real world of time and space (which is also the world of mask and stage) screams aloud in mortal agony.”

As we will see, Cassandra’s ability to enter into this timeless space is a direct reflection of the scriptory poetics that

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126 The full parodos occupies a remarkable 220 lines (or 13% of the play) while the Cassandra dialogue, the longest in the play, takes just over 250 lines (15%). As Goldhill notes, the similar length of the scenes is matched by their “corresponding importance”. Goldhill (1984) p. 81.
127 Knox (1972). Knox links the special deployment of Cassandra as the third actor in the Agamemnon to the other third actor figures in the trilogy: the abrupt, one-line role of Pylades in the Choephoroi and finally Apollo himself in the Eumenides whose voice has been the motivation behind the speeches of the previous two third actor characters.
underlie the drama as a whole. Her special status lies in her unique access to the scriptory realm that lies beyond the *hic et nunc* of the dramatic performance.

Cassandra’s visions create a time-scape akin to that of the embedded speakers of the *parodos*. Both scenes are driven by the reperformance of moments from the past within the *hic et nunc* of the dramatic stage. But unlike the Chorus, Cassandra looks both backwards and forwards and, more importantly, because the mode of her engagement is entirely mimetic and dialogic (that is, relying upon apostrophe rather than *oratio recta*) she does more than simply import the past into the present, she moves the spatio-temporal center of the stage with her every word. In what follows, we will explore this imagined stage created by Cassandra’s apostrophic diction, and with it the figuration of a fully mimetic scriptory poetics that it seeks to reveal. From her unique position, both within the *hic et nunc* of the dramatic action and in the atemporal, unseen realm of prophetic knowledge, Cassandra is able to disclose the unstable spatio-temporal nature of the scriptory poem.

As noted in the previous chapter, the powerful role that apostrophe plays in the Cassandra-scene is clear from the moment when attention is first drawn to Cassandra’s silent presence on the stage.\(^{129}\) Klytemnestra’s unreciprocated address to the captive sets off not only the subsequent 35 lines of un-successful dialogue, but also the asymmetrical dynamics of apostrophe that will govern the entire scene. Freed from the verbal demands of the queen who has returned inside the house, Cassandra expresses her fear and desperation to Apollo: ότοτοτοτότοι πότοι δὴ. / ὁπολλον ὁπολλον. (1072-3). Despite their erratic, disjointed tone,\(^{130}\) Cassandra’s first words formally echo Klytemnestra’s insofar as they, like the inaugural apostrophe, find no response. Unlike Clytemnestra, however, Cassandra apostrophizes a silent addressee who is not even present on the stage.\(^{131}\) The mimetic asymmetry signals a new interest in the generative power of apostrophe.


\(^{130}\) Taplin (1972) p. 73. Mazzoldi and others suggest that Cassandra’s first utterances should be categorized as “glossolalia”, unintelligible speech which resembles coherent language. Mazzoldi (2002) p. 146, with bibliography n. 5.

\(^{131}\) Robin Mitchell-Boyask makes the interesting suggestion that Cassandra’s words here, and her subsequent invocations of Apollo, are addressed to a statue of the god which would have been
As they had in the face of Clytemnestra’s futile engagement of Cassandra, the Chorus step in to fill the silent space, offering an interpretation of Cassandra’s words even as they censure her combination of paean and threnos: τί ταῦτ’ ἀνωτότυξας ἁμφὶ Λοξίου; /οὐ γὰρ τοιοῦτος ὡστε θρηνητοῦ τυχεῖν. Why do you cry ototo thus about Loxios? For he is not such as to enjoy one who laments. (1074-5) Cassandra responds to the Chorus by repeating her cries to Apollo verbatim, or rather, she does not respond to the Chorus at all, but continues to address herself to the god.132 The incompatibility of their enunciations opens a spatio-temporal – and in effect scriptory – gap between the two speaking figures. It is the first indication, one that will only become more emphatic, that the play’s speakers no longer appear to share the same space or to be engaged in the same performance. While the Chorus vainly attempt to understand the (to them) unintelligible parameters of her words, Cassandra engages in a dialogue with an unseen and unheard interlocutor.

The dramatic disjunction is, as many have noted, beautifully reflected in the radical formal structure of inverted epirrhematic amoibaion which finds Cassandra’s excited lyric stanzas met by the Chorus in trimeters for the first portion of their exchange. The inability of their voices to meet on any plane compounds the sense that they are not engaged in the same performance, are not enacting the same script. Even in Cassandra’s first brief utterances the power of the metrical contrast can be felt. Cassandra’s wholesale repetition of her words draws attention to the rhythmic, almost incantatory, nature of the captive’s cries and the already ritual force of the internal anaphora, ὀπολλὸν ὀπολλὸν.133 The redoubled doubling hints towards melos – a suppliant’s refrain drawing power out of each iteration. In the background stands the refrain from the parodos (ἄλλον ἄλλον εἶπε, τὸ δ’ εὔ νικάτω) with which Cassandra’s words share both their present onstage. The attraction of this reading is undeniable. Were such visual component of the skene implicated in Cassandra’s words, it would both heighten the meta-theatrical impact of the scene itself as well (as Mitchell-Boyask notes) as offering a further link between Cassandra and the figures in the trilogy’s subsequent plays, especially the Eumenides. Although Mitchell-Boyask falls short of presenting a conclusive case in favor of such use of a “stage prop” in the Oresteia, the presence of one would nevertheless be compatible with the claim that Cassandra addresses someone who is not “present” onstage insofar as a sculpture does not represent an actor with the ability to speak in response. Mitchell-Boyask (2006) pp. 285-90.


internal anaphora and their polarity of sentiment. But where we may hear a nascent song, the Chorus find a simple tautology, and although they reformulate the language of their reaction – in marked contrast to Cassandra’s identical expression – the import of their words remains the same, as they once again censure the Trojan princess for dusphêmia.

The spatial distance between Cassandra and the Chorus is the first aspect of the scriptory rupture to explore. Cassandra’s initial invocation of Apollo is followed by two fully apostrophic addresses in which she first blames the god for bringing her to her death in Argos (1082, 1087). Together the apostrophes authenticate the sense, already evident from her earlier exclamations, that Cassandra is engaged in a (one-sided) dialogue with the god. But more than that, they confirm that Cassandra’s perceptions reach beyond the limits of what the Chorus (and the external audience whose role they here closely mirror) can discern. When Cassandra asks the god where he has brought her (ά ποί ποτ’ ἧγαγές με; πῶς ποίαν στέγην; ah, to what end have you brought me? To what house? [1087]), she signals that she has arrived onstage in the company of the god. She addresses her words to him because she recognizes Apollo – not the Chorus whose words meet hers in the performative hic et nunc – as her true interlocutor. The unseen space that Cassandra shares with the divinity becomes the object of her inquiry as she questions the god about their new location. And when she expands her accusations in the following stanza, her evocative description of the house of Atreus signals the symbolic nature of the place which she describes. The house, which Cassandra calls hated by the gods, complicit in many things, murderous (1090-1), is not the literal location to which she had come but her place in the narrative, in the script which she knows she is about to perform. Cassandra and her unseen interlocutor inhabit a place which the Chorus cannot understand. The Chorus insist that Apollo can only be addressed through proper, formal measures (as they earlier turned their own prayers to Zeus), and they presume to answer

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134 As Winnington-Ingram has argued, the ailinon refrain is of central importance for the Cassandra Scene and, in a less concerted fashion, for the Agamemnon as a whole. Winnington-Ingram (1954) pp. 26-7.

her query about her location (πρὸς τὴν Ἀτρειδῶν) because they cannot see (literally as well as figuratively) the real target of her words.\textsuperscript{136}

The Chorus can conceptualize Cassandra’s inspiration as an internalization of the divine force which would invest Cassandra with the god’s insight and thus become a kind of unheard or undifferentiated oratio recta (μένει τὸ θείον δουλία περ ἐν φρενί. \textit{The divine [spirit] remains although her mind is enslaved} (1084)), but they cannot understand her to be conducting a dialogue from which they are excluded. The marginal status of the Chorus becomes a reflection on the scene itself, offering an internalized, yet distinct, perspective on the dialogue which Cassandra is performing before their eyes. Their separation from her, and from the scene in which she finds herself embedded, marks a rift between the two performances. The Chorus have access to Cassandra’s song, but not to the world of the script from which it emerges. They can see her performance, but they cannot understand the unseen and unheard voices that motivate the words that they hear. The Chorus recognize, are forced to recognize through Cassandra’s performative apostrophes, this lack on their part; they are isolated from that latent element which initiates Cassandra’s words, from the scriptory power that imbues the text with its performative voice.

As Cassandra continues her apostrophic address to the god, she extends the aural and visual range of the scene to which she alone is responding. At the same time, her expanded vision begins to introduce a temporal dimension to her apostrophic drama. At first Cassandra’s para-drama moves into the world of the past, tracing the misfortunes of earlier generations of Pelopidai. Voices from the house’s past greet her ears. She hears the cries of murdered children, calling their woeful appearance before her a “testimony” of their sufferings (μαρτυρίοις γὰρ τοιοῦ ἐπειθόμαι. / κλαίομενα τάδε βρέφη σφαγῶν / ὀπτάς τε σώματα πρὸς πατρὸς βεβηρωμένας. \textit{I am persuaded by these testimonies. These babes bewailing their slaughter, their cooked flesh devoured by their own father} [1095-7]).\textsuperscript{137} As she gazes on the past horrors of the house, the earth stained

\textsuperscript{136} For Goldhill, the Chorus’s subsequent hyperbolic claim to speak truth (ἐγὼ λέγω σου· καὶ τάδ’ οὖν ἔφης ψῆφι 1089) only further reveals the distance between the Chorus and their would-be interlocutor, the prophetess of Apollo. Goldhill (1984) p. 83.

\textsuperscript{137} The deictic force of τοιοῦδε indicates that Cassandra’s perception of the murdered children, whether aural or visual, constitutes the “testimonials” to which she refers.
with gore and the slaughter of children, Cassandra’s keen senses become clear to the Chorus. They do not share her vision, nor do their words enter into a truly reciprocal dialogue with her, but their prior knowledge of the scene enables them to confirm the vision seen only by Cassandra (1093). The Chorus perceive Cassandra’s mantic power as residing in her vision of events at which she was, is, or is not yet physically present; the Chorus will later remark, echoing the Odyssean model that runs throughout the scene: θαυμάζω δέ σοι, / πόντου πέραν τραφείοισιν ἀλλόθροισιν πόλιν / κυρεῖν λέγουσαν, ὅσπερ εἰ παρεστάτεις. I marvel at you, for being raised far across the sea in a foreign city, you speak with authority, as if you had been present. (1199-1201). But in truth, Cassandra is present to witness the scene that she describes. Through her access to the realm of the script, Cassandra is able to participate in the unseen world, stepping fully into the hic et nunc reality of the feast of Thyestes. Her reperformance is fully mimetic, and unlike the orationes rectae of the parodos, her apostrophic stance brings the past figures into full three-dimensional presence before her; her visions have their own voices, smells, and sounds fully perceptible to her, but hidden from the Chorus (and the external audience). The outlines of Cassandra’s script may already be familiar to the Chorus, but without access to the scriptory world she sees, they cannot become part of its mimetic reality.

In the next stage of her spatio-temporal dislocations, Cassandra moves out of the past and into the future. Now even the vague hopes that the Chorus may have had of understanding her words are vanished. But to the audience, it becomes apparent that the script on which she now relies is in fact that of the very play which she performs. The unseen drama now permits Cassandra to look aghast upon her own death alongside Agamemnon at the hands of Klytemnestra. As Klytemnestra and her murderous actions appear on her unseen stage, the mantis speaks in interrogatives, trying to understand the events that are unfolding: τί ποτε μηδέτα; / τί τόδε νέον ἥχος μέγα; μέγ' ἐν δόμοις τοίσδε μηδέτα κακόν, ἀφετόν φίλοι, δυσίατον. What is being plotted? What is this great new grief? A great evil is hatched inside this house, unbearable to kin,

138 Fraenkel rejects the idea that this second detail exclusively denotes the feast of Thyestes, though this seems the most likely candidate. Fraenkel (1950) ad loc. See also, Neitzel (1985).
139 The key adjective of the Chorus’s verbal authority in the parodos, κύριος, is transferred to Cassandra in the verb κυρεῖν.
impossible to heal (1100-3). Her words echo those that the distraught Chorus used to describe their own worries about the future at the start of the third stasimon, which they performed onstage before a still silent Cassandra: τίπτε μοι τόδ’ ἐμπέδως / δείμα κτλ. The shared language signals a shift in Cassandra’s visions, from the unseen events and people that haunt the past of the Agamemnon’s mimetic characters (and are thus analogous to the Chorus’s parodos narrative) to the action of the drama at hand, albeit still displaced from the hic et nunc perception of the Chorus. Cassandra’s words no longer represent an alternative performance whose temporal and geographic movement stands separate from the dramatic scene of the play’s physical staging. Now she is performing the Agamemnon itself, but in a way that, to paraphrase Knox, transcends the limits of dramatic space and time. Cassandra returns to the Chorus’s earlier perception of dread, but also anticipates the future action of the play. She can see these future events before her although she does not know how, or cannot bring herself to describe them (1109). On her unseen stage, Cassandra can witnesses Klytemnestra, already engaged in the brutal murders which she will soon perpetrate offstage, and in despair she addresses a plaintive apostrophe to her unnamed killer: ιὼ τάλαινα, τόδε γὰρ τελείζ; (1107). Before the events transpire within the dramatic action, the prophetic Cassandra stands as witness to the net and the bath, to Agamemnon’s fall at the hands of his knife-wielding wife – just as she was able to witness the testimony of the long-dead children of Thyestes. In a final, undirected apostrophe (ἄδα, ἰδοὺ ἰδοὺ [1125]), Cassandra invites her audience (both on- and offstage) to see before them the visions that she witnesses, to join with her in lamenting her own impending death. But again, she is alone in her vision. And although their own hic et nunc performance will soon catch up with the knowledge that Cassandra has now gleaned from the atemporal script, the Chorus remain uncomprehending, their reality locked into the spatio-temporal parameters of what they can see before them.

These murders, when they do take place, will themselves be hidden offstage. Neither the Chorus nor the audience will truly see, as Cassandra herself insists they will (ἐποψεοθάμι 1246), the deaths that comprise the play’s central event. Only Agamemnon’s disembodied cries will signal the violence that is taking place inside the

140 The ode is well treated by Scott (1969).
141 Knox (1972) p. 114.
Cassandra’s proleptic description of the bloody murders is therefore also the most vivid performance of the play’s brutal climax. Yet Cassandra does not offer the only vision of the murders. After the events have been completed, Klytemnestra will reperform them once again in her triumphant return to the stage following the murders and attended by the dead bodies of her victims. The drama thus mirrors the offstage death with two twinned reperformances, paired proleptic and analeptic views on this central missing action. Paired with Agamemnon’s offstage cries, the three iterations of the event are united in their phantasmic apparition on the stage through voice alone (Cassandra’s excited descriptions, Agamemnon’s cries of pain, and Clytemnestra’s vaunting re-enactment), but they are distinguished by their temporal relationship to the mimetic drama. Agamemnon’s cries from offstage claim identity with the hic et nunc of the dramatic action whereas Cassandra (and somewhat differently, Clytemnestra) enacts a meta-performance that both relies on and calls attention to the unseen script that guides the action of the play.

Each representation of the murders offers a slightly different perspective on the multiple worlds of the drama, opening an even greater gap through which the scriptory mechanics of the performance can be understood. Cassandra is particularly well suited to bring this dynamic into focus precisely because of the apostrophic nature of her engagement with the script. Her embodied status – and the implied embodiment of her invisible interlocutors – forces us to take seriously the claim that this alternate world is possessed of a hic et nunc reality, albeit one which is able to occupy contradictory spatio-temporal coordinates. In contrast to the oratio recta of the Chorus, who brought the voices of the past onto the stage by acting as a surrogate for the real actors (in both senses of the word) of the events at Aulis, Cassandra does not share her physical self with these

142 In Bassi’s words, “whether we think of these missing visual data as constituted in the script or the play in performance, they necessarily refer to what is not seen with the bodily eye and thus to the priority (if not the primacy) of the script. Another way of putting the matter would be to say that the grammar of the play (the structure of the plot) is in conflict with its rhetoric, that is, with the script’s recurring references to an unfulfilled desire to see.” Bassi (2005) p. 263.

143 Diggle (2005) describes Klytemnestra’s astonishing “action replay”: “So there [Klytemnestra] stands, with the axe in her hands, and the corpse of Agamemnon before her, lying in his bath, shrouded in the robe, the fishing-net, as she calls it, with which she entwined him. And as she speaks she re-enacts the murder. She murders him again in mime. We cannot see the murder as it happens, because the conventions forbid that, but we can see it re-enacted after it has happened.” p. 216.
non-present figures so much as allow herself to be partially transported into the realm
script where these figures are always present. But through her apostrophic engagement
with the scriptory realm, this unseen reality is in turn reflected onto the *hic et nunc* of the
performative stage through Cassandra’s own embodied presence there.

Before the uncomprehending gaze of the Chorus, Cassandra becomes an embodied
reperformance of their *parodos* song as her own voice takes on the multiple roles that
they had impersonated: she is the prophetic Calchas, looking beyond what they can see
and assuming the authoritative narrative control to which they too lay claim; she is the
silent Iphigenia, the victim whose unspoken words become more powerful than those of
the men who do violence to her; she is Agamemnon as well, with whom she arrived
onstage and whose brutal fate she will soon share, considering the futility of agency
under the constraint of divine will; but most centrally, Cassandra adopts the voice of the
Chorus themselves, transmitting voices from beyond the physical plane of the stage to
create an unseen drama. But as Cassandra’s apostrophe’s demonstrate, this is not the
purely vocal drama of *oratio recta* but the fully embodied, dialogic exchange of the
dramatic stage.

In the second portion of Cassandra’s prophetic performance, when her expressions
shift away from the excited apostrophes of her lyric outbursts, we find that a further layer
of signification is added to this already complex meditation on scriptory poetics.
Cassandra’s trimeters are in a sense a reperformance of the song that she has just brought
to an end. The formal transition is marked by the mantis herself, who promises that she
will now reveal her prophecy more clearly:

> Now no longer will my prophecy be glimpsed through veils like a newly married virgin… no longer will I speak in riddles. (1178-83).

Cassandra proves to be her own best interpreter, making good on the Chorus’s remark, even before she began to

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144 And likewise, unwittingly, by the Chorus whose inability to comprehend Cassandra’s “end point” τέρμα δ’ ἀμητανό (1177) combines the road imagery and ideas of *telos* that have been a consistent theme of the play with a meta-textual reflection on the formal shift that the scene is about to make.

145 The imagery here has often been linked to Iphigenia’s representation in the *parodos*, not to mention Helen’s in the second stasimon. See the discussion in Mitchell-Boyask (2006) p. 279 with bibliography.
speak, that she would need a *hermêneus toros*. In her interpretive guise, Cassandra replays the scenes that she has just lived through, now without the dramatic apostrophe that erected a boundary between the Chorus and her scriptory visions. As the scriptory spectacle continues to take place before her eyes, Cassandra again invites the Chorus to share in her visions, now attempting to describe what she knows and directing her words to the Chorus rather than to her unheard interlocutors within the parallel drama. Yet Cassandra’s strong apostrophic stance is not entirely lost, it is merely redirected towards the physical trappings of her mantic state – her priestly garb – which is clearly visible to both Chorus and audience:

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τί δή έμαυτής καταγέλωτ' ἔχω τάδε,
καὶ σκήπτρον καὶ μαντεία περὶ δέην στέφη;
σὲ μὲν πρὸς μοίρας τῆς ἐμῆς διαφθείρω.
ἵτ' ἐς φθόρον· πεσόντα γ' ὦδ' ἁμεβόμαι.
ἄλλην τιν' Ἀτης ἀντ' ἐμοὺ πλουτίζετε. (1264-8)
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*Why do I still hold on to this [adornment] that mocks me, this scepter and the prophet’s garland around my neck? I destroy you now before my own fate arrives; go to your doom. Thus I answer your fall [with my own]. May you enrich another in my place with your madness.*

The action – visible, physical and present upon the stage – stands in contrast to the permutations of Cassandra’s unseen experience. She has revealed the unseen script that lies beneath the dramatic performance. Now she can show how her own physical presence on the stage is merely a manifestation of this larger scriptory realm. Her apostrophe to her priestly adornments places the material reality of the performative *hic et nunc* within the same spatio-temporal uncertainty that governed the unseen realm of the script. Cassandra shows that she can travel with the unstable world of the para-drama.

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147 As Pillinger notes, “Cassandra suffers a peculiar kind of detachment and splitting of the self, one part of which is faithful to the spirit of the original composition, one of which is committed to reframing it for a new audience.” Pillinger (2009) p. 19
148 μαρτυρεῖτε 1184, ὀρᾶτε 1217, ἰδοὺ 1269.
149 The one exception is the brief apostrophe to Apollo directly before this act, which provides a foil against which to understand the dynamically re-configured apostrophic stance that now engages only with what is physically present on the stage.
even while positioning herself unambiguously within the “real world” of the dramatic action.

Cassandra’s trimeter reperformance also reveals a scriptory aspect of her mantic experience that had not fully come to light in the course of the melic drama: namely her ability not only to experience the full script of the *Agamemnon* – the play in which she appears – but of the entire *Oresteia* trilogy, although her role on the stage will soon be over. Cassandra’s excited *melic* performance reflected her scriptory access to the central event of the *Agamemnon*, her brutal murder alongside the Argive king. But as her extended meditations in trimeter demonstrate, her special prophetic comprehension of the drama of which she forms but a part stretches further – as fitting with her transcendent position as *tritagonist* – through the full range of the plays’ development. We can see this extended scriptory insight most clearly in Cassandra’s description of the chorus of Furies perched atop the house of Atreus. As Frontisi-Ducroux notes, the image not only reflects the inescapable legacy of the family’s inherited guilt, but conjures the singing Furies who will comprise the Chorus of the trilogy’s final play.150 The representation of the Furies, who slowly emerge throughout the first two plays before their fully embodied appearance at the bidding of Clytemnestra’s shade at the beginning of the *Eumenides*, is one of the most complex and sustained figurative themes in the trilogy. Like the speaking tritagonists, the physical arrival of the Furies is an unexpected event within the drama. When they finally emerge in their fully embodied horror,151 the avenging spirits have so long remained a silent and unseen presence within the trilogy that their arrival, like Cassandra’s speech, represents an unexpected incursion of the world of the script into the *hic et nunc* dramatic performance.152 Cassandra’s anticipatory perception of the Furies’

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151 The ancient biographical tradition tells of how the physical appearance of the Furies, conjured by the dead Clytemnestra’s powerful magic was such a fearful spectacle that women were caused to miscarry on the spot. If we set aside the idea of a literal premiere in which the audience were taken aback by the appearance, we can see that the anecdote reflects the novelty that their appearance in the flesh represents within the trilogy’s own internal grammar. Easterling (2008) pp. 223ff., Frontisi-Ducroux (2007) pp. 165-7.
role as dramatic Chorus marks their sympathetic ability to negotiate the boundary between the seen and unseen scriptory space of tragic mimesis.

Mirroring her proleptic vision of the Furies, Cassandra incorporates another element of the trilogy’s future development when she foretells the eventual requital of her murder by Orestes (1279-5),\textsuperscript{153} whose return to Argos will comprise the drama of the \textit{Choephoroi}. This vision of the dramatic future is repeated in Cassandra’s final prayer to Helios and leads, somewhat obscurely, to her last words before entering into the house of Atreus, and passing through the doors that she has already addressed as the \textit{gates of Hades}.\textsuperscript{154} Lamenting the general condition of man, Cassandra gives her ultimate assessment of her fate:

\begin{quote}

ιὼ βρότεια πράγματ'· εὐτυχοῦντα μὲν
σαία τις ὁν πρέπειεν· εἰ δὲ δυστυχοί·
βολαῖς ὑγρόσοιν σπόγγος ἤλεγεν γραφήν·
καὶ ταῦτ' ἐξείνων μᾶλλον οἰκτίροι πολύ. (1327-30)

\textit{Io, the affairs of mortals. When they are fortunate, a man is like a shadow. But if they suffer misfortune, the wet sponge destroys the writing with a stroke. And I pity far more the latter than the former.}
\end{quote}

The riddling language of her gnomic assertion recalls the image of Iphigenia, who awaited her own violent fate in a kind of written silence (πρέπουσα τῶς ἐν γραφαῖς).

Now, trading on the polyvalence of the verb \textit{prepô}, which can denote conspicuity both in terms of uniquely distinguished features or of clarity of perception, the peculiarity of Iphigenia’s silence within her written text (itself synonymous with her death) is translated into a more general meditation on the relationship between human ephemerality and the permanence of writing. And, as conclusion to Cassandra’s emphatically performative revelation of the nature of scriptory poetics, the mantis asserts that the presumed

\textsuperscript{153} ὁυ μὴν ἄτμοι γ' ἐκ θεών τεθνήξομεν.

\textsuperscript{154} The marked terms of this claim 'Ἀδου πύλας δὲ τάσσ' ἐγὼ προσενέπω: return to the question of proper language with which Cassandra’s punning speech began.
durability of the physical text is, in fact, entirely dependent on human fortunes. The powerful voice of the fortunate man can make his words shine out even in the dimmest light, but for one who fares badly, no written fixity will save his words from being blotted out in an instant. Cassandra’s prayer, like Iphigenia’s, will reach the ears of her avenger even through the shadows of her death, and thus her fate is far less pitiable than that of those who are silenced forever. The means for this preservation is the continued human access to transcendent space of the trilogy’s script, from which Cassandra can glean a clear vision of her future. Apollo’s curse, that Cassandra’s prophecies would only be understood in retrospect, is thus transformed into the positive temporal model of the script, which permits the poet to find his most powerful voice through the belated temporality of future reperformance.

The complex spatio-temporal dynamics that we have traced though the multiple voices contained within Pindar’s and Aeschylus’ poems offer us our first vision of how our poets imagined their world of scriptory poetics. At its most essential, their interest hinges on the question of voice and is revealed in their eager explorations of the dictional modes and stances that may be invented and adapted to take advantage of a reconfigured conceptual landscape. The sometimes confounding and dizzying impression left by their experimentations in this new scriptory realm is a signal of the still inchoate nature of their understanding. But their struggles should not be confused with a sense of loss or a longing for a purer form of voice. Far from lamenting a lost golden age, Pindar and Aeschylus exuberantly borrow the language and models of the past as they strive to work out how the uncertain landscape of their scriptory world will reshape their voices in space and time. The open-ended creativity of their unresolved relationship to the possibilities of scriptory poetics offers a glimpse of the still magical power and turbulent beauty that lies under the surface of their words.
PART TWO  PLAYING PARTS
The examination of dictional mode in the first part of this study has served to establish a foundation for the claim that Pindar and Aeschylus are scriptory poets, and that their work often reflects the poets’ profound interest in this exciting and challenging quality of their poetic output. Now we turn our attention to an examination of what this scriptory world looked like: what figures and images did the poets use to represent the novel and uncertain dynamics of scriptory reperformance, and how did they conceive of their own authorial role within the scriptory future of their compositions?

We should from the outset keep in mind that scriptory poetics, as imagined by Pindar and Aeschylus, is an exploration of the theoretical conditions under which their compositions could become song. As such, it constitutes a moment in the intellectual, rather than material, history of Greek poetry. It is undoubtedly the case that this figurative reconfiguration coincided with significant developments in dramaturgy and the concrete uses of writing for the purpose of preserving poetic compositions. But while these areas merit study in their own right, they fall outside the scope of the present investigation. My interest is focused specifically on the abstract possibilities of scriptory poetics which Pindar and Aeschylus sought to understand and express through their work. In the remaining chapters, I offer a preliminary sketch of what I believe to be the key conceptual and figurative models used by Pindar and Aeschylus in order to elucidate their vision of scriptory song.

The notion of scriptory poetics comprises a range of interlocking models that furnish insight into the various components of the scriptory matrix. Because of the spatio-temporal complexity of scriptory composition and reperformance, the individual elements are most clearly understood when they are approached from different perspectives. Thus the roles of the material script, the embodied reperformer, and the poet himself are each explored through different metaphorical models: those, respectively, of the tool, the snake, and the ghost. There is, naturally, much interaction between these different figurative forms. And while they are best examined individually, they should be jointly understood as meditations on the contours of scriptory song.

The dictional tropes of apostrophe and oratio recta that have guided our investigation so far will still play an important role in flagging points of heightened interest in the
scriptory nature of our poets’ art. But the primary concern of the remainder of the study will be to examine how these tropes function within the larger context of the poets’ scriptory vision. That is, I will now seek to understand how the formal structures of apostrophe and *oratio recta* are integrated into a larger project of scriptory exploration. This picture is comprised of three key thematic areas, each of which provides the poets with a figurative model through which they can explore an aspect of their poems’ scriptory world.

The first thematic area I examine is the notion of the tool. The model of a physical device serves as a metaphor for the concept of a material script, and allows the poets to contemplate how their scriptory poems will be put to use by future reperformers. As opposed to other models of written preservation that were available at the time – most prominently that of the monumental stone – the functional transferability of the tool highlights the spatio-temporal mobility of scriptory songs, thus differentiating them from texts that are less dependent upon reperformance. At the same time, the intermediary quality of the tool helps to align it with the script’s position at the critical juncture between poet and reperformer.

In the next chapter, our focus shifts to the role of the reperformer himself, whose bodily mimesis of the poet’s words is reflected in the image of the snake. The protean, chthonic figure of the snake is characterized by its changing appearance and mutable identity. Scriptory poetics adopts these properties as a model for understanding the almost magical transfer of voice from poet to reperformer. The figure of the snake allows us to look at the question of scriptory poetics from the perspective of reperformance. How does a scriptory poem become song again? How does a belated, mediated repetition attain the full status of the performative *hic et nunc*?

In our final examination, we turn to the poet himself. Through the figure of the ghost, the strange, almost spectral presence of the poet is shown to be the indispensably unifying principle of the scriptory structure. The idea of spatio-temporal mobility that makes multiple reperformance possible not only permeates the notion of the physical script and the embodied reperformer, but transforms the scriptory poet himself. The role of the author becomes part of the figurative scriptory imagination, and the poet is
invested with the mystical and transcendent power of a ghost, a figure able to return from the dead through the scriptory properties of his song.

The figurative nature of this picture arises from the language and poetic practice of Pindar and Aeschylus. For although these poets are, I argue, deeply concerned with the theoretical underpinnings of their work, they remain practitioners, not theoreticians, and accordingly express themselves through the symbolic and metaphoric structures that belong to their art – even when exploring questions that we might, in light of Plato and Aristotle, consider to fall within the province of philosophical discourse.¹

This poetic approach to theoretical problems is nicely mirrored in the thematic prevalence of prophecy and dreams throughout the passages that we will be examining. We have already seen how the spatio-temporal mobility of prophetic utterance is a key analogue to the poets’ representation of their scriptory voice. Now, paired with the equally elusive status of dream-vision,² the idea of an atemporal prophetic voice will become a critical emblem of the poets’ scriptory imagination. Since prophecy and dreams disrupt the notion of a *hic et nunc*, they guide our thoughts towards the spatio-temporal dynamics at work in the poets’ compositions. But, equally important is the figurative excess which these exceptional communicative modes introduce into the poetry of Pindar and Aeschylus. Prophecies and dreams represent a model of the type of dense and enigmatic thinking that characterizes our poets’ understanding of their scriptory poetics. And, as objects of investigation and symbolic interpretation outside of the poetic sphere, the presence of dreams and prophecies within their poems encourages us to look to similarly symbolic or coded messages within the works themselves.

There is no better example of this figurative excess than Atossa’s dream in Aeschylus’ *Persai*. Upon her first arrival on stage, the queen beguiles us with the claim that she has had a dream more vivid than she has ever had before. She duly recounts details of her vision: a chariot, driven by her son, and yoked before it two women, one dressed in Persian garb, the other in Greek; the latter breaks free of the harness and the chariot is overturned. Given the context of the play, the ominous import of the dream is clear: Xerxes will not be successful in his expedition against the Greeks. But Atossa is

not finished with her tale. When she awoke, the queen continues, and went to offer libations she was visited by a portent: two birds; an eagle chased and killed by a hawk. The portent reperforms the dream, and in so doing complicates the picture. This added layer of symbolism asks that we reflect on how the same vision may take on multiple forms or be seen from different perspectives. We, alongside Atossa, the astonished spectator to these fearful sights, are invited into a world where strikingly different figures can be joined together by an unseen, and perhaps unknowable, bond. These dreams and portents open the poets’ compositions to realms that transcend mere literal significance. At the same time, they offer a brief but insistent glimpse of how the poets imagined the transformational power of scriptedness to reconfigure their own poetic world. These special moments of spatio-temporal disruption stand at the furthest limits of scriptory potential, but they present a powerful reminder of the full range of what the poets’ songs can do.
We begin our examination of the various figurations of poetic scriptedness we find throughout the works of Pindar and Aeschylus with the notion of the tool. The concept of a tool – an implement which is designed to be manipulated in order to achieve a goal that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to attain – is fundamentally a simple one. However, the idea of a poetic tool inevitably raises the far thornier question of the nature of poetry itself. In the twenty-first century, our thoughts naturally turn to the implements of written technology: pen and ink, typewriter and printing press for the modern world; stylus and papyrus, chisel and plinth in ancient times. Implicit in such images is an ideal of poetic objecthood that has been at the center of the western tradition for many centuries. But, as I hope to demonstrate, Pindar and Aeschylus did not conceive of their compositions as poetic monuments but as scriptory songs. Their poems were created as reperformative events, inseparable from the fully embodied spectacle that would bring them to life in countless future iterations. Hence, while the literal tools of writing do occasionally crop up in the poetry of Pindar and Aeschylus, they are not what the poets thought about when they imagined a poetic tool. Since their idea of a poem was inherently performative, the tool that our poets were concerned to understand did not help to produce a written object, it was itself a written aid: a script for reperformance.

The tool represents the script in its physical form, a fixed object that conveys the encoded writing of the poet’s text. Yet, the script is not a substitute for or equivalent of a poem. It is an intermediary that can preserve and transmit the inherently performative nature of the scriptory poem, a tool to turn the poet’s words into a living event in a future time and space. As the term implies, the tool can only function as an implement to be wielded, either by the author who encodes it or by the reperformer who brings its silent message back to life. As such, the tool inhabits an uncertain position within the spatio-temporal matrix of scriptory poetics. Its material form is the essential repository able to hold fast the poet’s ephemeral voice. Yet its role is not static, since it must also act as a conduit to carry the poet’s composition to its many reperformers across time and space. The spatio-temporal mobility afforded by the tool forms the essence of scriptory poetics,
but such mobility depends on a material aid which in itself has none of the dynamic qualities which it confers.

Soon after Pindar and Aeschylus sketched these first formulations, western poetics abandoned the model of the scriptory tool, except in circumscribed dramatic contexts. But we should be careful not to confuse the clarity of our hindsight with the objectives of the poets themselves. For Pindar and Aeschylus the script was not a consolation prize or a step on the way to a more satisfyingly robust idea of written materiality. Rather they found in the idea of the tool a richer means of exploring the stubbornly material aspects of scriptory poetics within an emphatically performative sphere. Materiality was not an accomplishment towards which either poet labored, their shared goal was reperformance and the physical script was but a tool to enable it. Thinking of the script in this way allowed our poets to explain the hybrid nature of works which were emphatically performative and yet reliant on an inanimate materiality. The model of the tool helped them imagine a scriptory world in which the conditions for poetic performance were unfolding in exciting and unfamiliar ways.

The problem, then, for our poets was to find objects that would allow them to concretize the idea of a scriptory tool for reperformance. Unsurprisingly, they found figurations of this still inchoate notion of the script in a wide array of instruments and appurtenances. Nonetheless, the most fertile areas tended to be those with some connection to the poet’s art. On occasion this meant looking to the tools closest to hand, namely the musical instruments that formed an integral part of Greek poetic performance.\(^1\) As a tool, the script resembles traditional musical instruments in a number of key respects. It was an object that required skill and ingenuity both to produce and to operate. It was – or was fast becoming – an essential facet of the poet’s creative process as he shaped his compositions to take advantage of the possibilities that it could offer. And although – like a musical instrument – the script underpinned and made poetic performance possible, it was not an actor or agent within the poem except when deliberately gestured to in a kind of self-referential mimesis.

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Some of the influence of the notion of the script can be seen in the novel ways that Pindar and Aeschylus imagine the role of musical instruments within their poems. Pindar does not renounce the traditional melic trope of calling for instruments to be taken up for song. But, at the same time, he occasionally imbues his instruments with a problematic sense of agency that challenges established notions of how a tool might function in a performative context. We find a notable example at the opening of his first Pythian, when Pindar apostrophizes the golden lyre, and praises its ability to subdue those who perform and listen to its sounds and even the gods themselves. The instrument is represented as a tool to be wielded by musical performers, but also as a discrete entity with a certain power and agency of its own. The potential for (re)performance rests not only with the musicians who take up the tool, but with the tool itself. The instrument, I suggest, is being imbued with the qualities of the scriptory tool. For it is this new notion of a poetic ‘instrumentation’ that generates the desire to instill performative potential into the material object.

A similar perspective can be found in the fragments of Aeschylus’ Edones, a play which detailed the problematic arrival of Dionysus and his disciple, Orpheus the mousomantis, at the court of Lycurgus. The play, now mostly lost, is known to have been an important influence on Euripides’ own extremely meta-theatrical dionsysiac tragedy, the Bacchai, and is likely to have contained much metapoetic and metatheatrical meditation by Aeschylus himself. Our longest fragment, an anapaestic passage most probably voiced by the Chorus, describes the raucous new instruments that have been introduced alongside the worship of the new god, Dionysus. At first the poet places the instruments in the hands of performers: ο μὲν ἐν χεροῖν βόμβυκας ἐχων τόρνου κάματον, δακτυλόδεικτον πόμπλησι μέλος [...] ὁ δὲ χαλκούδετοις κοτύλαις ὀτοβεῖ. One has in his hands the bombukes, wrought upon the turning-lathe, and fills it with a fingered song [...] Another sounds the kotylae, bound in bronze. (fr. 57.2-6 Radt). But as

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3 Similar, though less extreme, is N.4.44ff. ἐξύψωσε, γλυκεία, καὶ τόδ’ αὐτίκα, φόρμωξ, / Λυδία σὸν ἀρμονία μέλος πεφιλημένον/ Οἴνωνα τε καὶ Κύπρος, ἐνθ’ Τέρσις ἀπαρχέι / ὁ Τελαμωνιάδας.
4 fr. 60 Radt: τίς ποτ’ ἐσθ’ ὁ μουσόμαντις, ἡ μίλλος ἀδρατοῦς ὁν σθένει. The reasons for assuming that Orpheus is the character described are presented by West (1990) p. 29.
the fearful sonic picture evolves, the instruments themselves take on an unseen agency, becoming mimics capable of producing their own organic sounds: ταυρόφθογγοι δ' ύπομυστώντα ποθὲν ἐξ ἀφανοὺς φοβεροί μὲν τυ[μ]πάνοι δ' εἰκὼν ὁσθ' ύπογαίων βροντῆς φέρεται βαρυταρβής. *The fearsome, bull-voiced mimics bellow from an unseen place and from the tympanos the terrible likeness of thunder is borne as if from underground* (fr. 57.8-11 Radt). As with Pindar’s lyre, the dionysiac instruments have become agents in their own right, producing fearful sounds as if they were animate creatures themselves.

The attribution of such outsized power to the instrumental tool reflects the poets’ burgeoning excitement at their transforming understanding of this centrally important aspect of poetic performance. Yet, the figurative use of musical instruments to discuss another poetic tool is prone to much confusion and potential blurring between the highly proximate tenor and vehicle of the image. When deployed in just the right manner, the metaphoric representation of the musical instrument can – as in the case of Pindar’s first *Pythian* – elegantly convey how the performative potential of the traditional tools of song could be adapted and transformed by the new tools of scriptory poetics. More often, however, our poets turn to other areas of their generic and performative spheres which were less likely to confuse or obscure the properties of scriptedness they sought to explore. In Pindar’s epinician odes, the richest vein is found in the appurtenances employed by the athletic victors whose accomplishments the poet is commemorating.6 The javelins, discus, and chariots of the *agôn* and the wreaths of the victory celebration are all appropriated by the poet to explore the complex materiality of his poetic enterprise. For Aeschylus, the world of the theater, comprised of the props, costume and mask, provided the playwright with his principal resource for thinking with and about tools.7 In addition, both poets regularly draw upon the methods of conveyance – especially wagons and ships – that carry their scripts throughout the Greek Mediterranean. It is in this spirit that Pindar presents his famous programmatic statement at the opening of *Nemean* Five (1-5):

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I am no sculptor who makes idle statues to be fixed upon a single pedestal. But on every merchant vessel, o sweet song, go out from Aegina announcing that Pytheas, the mighty son of Lampon won the crown of the pankration in Nemea…

The contrast between the material fixity of the sculptor’s work and the dynamic mobility of Pindar’s song, emphasized by the shift to the second person address in line two, has to various ends been noted by a great number of scholars. But this binary comparison elides the role of the vessel (ἀλατος) in conveying the poem across the sea. Whereas sculpture rests upon a pedestal (βαθυμί), song is entrusted to a ship. The latter is no less possessed of material fixity than the former, but the craft is capable of the kind of movement that is denied to the statue-base. The mobility of the ship enables it to function as an intermediary, connecting unbridgeable points through a kinetic motion that is not simply compatible with, but is inherent to its physical integrity. The image, at once a literal and metaphoric description of the reperformative future that Pindar imagines for his poem, fuses the necessarily material nature of the scriptory tool with the very vessel that will carry it as cargo.

Yet for all of the ship’s material solidity, at the center of the image is still the apostrophized aoida. The insistent duality of passage helps to illuminate the poetic process that is imagined through the idea of the tool. While a tool must be physically robust, it is not self-sufficient in its materiality. Monuments are complete entities in and of themselves. By contrast, the tool must be put to use. This attribute is evident in the Greek terms technê and mēchanê, which denote not just the tool as physical object, but equally the abstract ability to harness and exploit its potential. The tool’s physical integrity and permanence becomes productive only in light of its use. Through its

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intrinsic fusion of the fixed and the transitory the tool presents a crucial metaphor for the contradictory nature of the poetic script, and re-contextualizes a physical object as at once solid and fluid. In Pindar’s nautical image, this hybrid status is represented through the reciprocal relationship of ship and song. The solid vessel exists in order to carry a cargo that cannot travel without aid because of its immaterial nature. Yet the song’s continued immateriality is only possible because of the material structure on which it relies for its transport.

The dynamic and constructive materiality of the scriptory tool is exemplified by the metaphoric image of the cork, a device used by fishermen to suspend their nets in the sea. Both Pindar and Aeschylus portray the cork in a similar fashion, floating above the waters while the rest of the fishing apparatus lies hidden in the depths of the sea. For both poets, the cork is a symbol of the material tool’s perseverance when faced with the obscurity of submersion. Below the waterline, one is lost to the world of the living, but the cork is notable for its ability to hold itself just above the boundary of the abyss. This common understanding of the figurative power of the cork is elaborated in slightly different ways by the two poets, and the diverging details offer some especially rich insight into their complex – and at times contradictory – understanding of the qualified materiality their scriptory poetry has started to embrace.

The spatio-temporal properties of the cork are the primary concern of the Aeschylean passage, which comes at the close of the central kommos in the Choephoroi. The authenticity of the lines has been questioned by modern editors, but I believe that their propriety not only to the scene, but to the trilogy as a whole makes a strong case for their inclusion.10 Especially apposite in the context of the Oresteia is the cork’s partnership

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10 The lines are printed (and attributed to Electra) by both Page and Garvie. Murray, by contrast, places them in brackets (and attributes the entire speech to Orestes). The need for intervention in the text is assumed from the lack of symmetry in the 13 lines of exchange between Orestes and Electra (497-509). This seeming imbalance in the speeches can be resolved in a number of ways that critics have generally ignored, either by positing missing (rather than interpolated) lines, or – as I indeed advocate – by attributing the entire speech to Orestes alone. This latter solution is supported by the admittedly limited manuscript evidence since there is a cessation of paragraphus markings in M. Further, there is little logical reason to object to Orestes taking up the exclusive speaking role at either line 497 or 502. It is universally accepted that at this point in the play the Electra character is elided from the action. It is clear that Electra does not speak after line 507 and that Orestes takes over full responsibility for the dialogue with the Chorus; why should this shift not take place a few lines earlier? On the (quite tenuous and almost entirely
with the world below the surface, which activates the trilogy’s central thematic concern with another tool: the net. But whereas the trilogy’s representation of the net is usually as an emblem of deception and slaughter, here the cork permits a kind of continuity after death (503-7):

Ορ καί μὴ ξελείψῃς οπέρμα Πελοπιδῶν τόδε, υώτω γάρ οὔ τεθνηκας ούδέ περ θανών.

[Hl.] παιδες γάρ ἀνδρὶ κληδόνες σωτήριοι 505 θανόντι φελλοί δ’ ὄξ αὔγουσι δύτουν, τὸν ἐκ βυθοῦ κλωστῆρα σφίζοντες λίνου.

Do not erase this seed of the Pelopidai, for in this way the dead one has not died. For children are the speaking preservers of a man who has died, like corks that hold a net, saving the linen thread from the abyss.

Like corks suspending the nets under the waters, children preserve the fame of the dead and thus keep part of them alive. The transcendent partnership between net and cork is mapped onto the value of generational continuity but also, in the context of Orestes and Electra’s prayers to their dead father, onto the idea of communicating with the dead. But the cork provides a very circumscribed version of immortality which relies on the material mediation between above and below, between the world of the living and that of the dead. The metaphor of erasure which introduces the simile draws a direct parallel between the continued visibility of the cork and the verbal perpetuation that is made possible through writing. The physical connection enabled by the cork is like that of the literal script, which stands as a fixed intermediary between the author and those who seek to make his words live on. The juxtaposition of the two images places focus on the instrumental character of writing to maintain what is no longer present, delivering a part of what is below back to the surface.

As much as the cork simile illuminates the idea of a written text, it also draws attention to a degree of complexity which inheres in the performative nature of the scriptory tool. In the clear structure of similitude, it is evident that the paides themselves

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subjective) additional arguments against the inclusion of 505-7, see Garvie (1986) and Sier (1988) ad loc.


are assimilated into the material status of the cork. The material instrument is not inert, but is invested with the living voice (κληδόνες) of the human agents who employ it. The same conflation is made even more emphatically in Pindar’s formulation in the final triad of Pythian 2 (76-80):

άμαχον κακόν ἀμφοτέροις διαβολάν ύποφάτιες,
όργας ἄτενες ἀλωπέκουν ἱκελοι.
κέρδει δὲ τί μάλα τούτο κερδαλέον τελέθει;
ἀπὲ γὰρ ἐννάλιον πόνον ἐχώσας βαθὺν
σκευὰς ἐτέρας, ἀβάπτιστος εἰμὶ φελλός ὡς ὑπὲρ ἔρως ἄλμας.

Those who trade in slanders are an intractable evil for all involved, like foxes they are unbending in their passions. What benefit does this cunning produce? For while the rest of the tackle is held laboring in the depths of the sea, I am unsinkable, like a cork, above the boundary of the brine.

As in the Aeschylean passage, the corks and leaden weights function in a reciprocal relationship as two facets of the same operation.13 The cork remains in view above the water although the rest of the poetic mechanism is weighted down in obscurity. As a material object, it is fixed only in relation to its position at the boundary of the sea (ἔρως ἄλμας), at the point of contact between seen and unseen, living and dead, present and past. Through its connection to what is below the surface, the cork retains access to the unseen without itself being subject to the same fate. All poets must eventually sink beneath the waves, but those who know how to send their songs traveling over the sea, as Pindar claims to do just before the passage quoted,14 possess a tool that also allows them to remain abaptistos.15 The poet openly assimilates himself to his material tool, but – as we saw above in our discussion of the sailing poem of Nemean 5 – it is the paradox of the scriptory tool that this very inert materiality is what enables the poet’s voice to retain its living spirit and float above the depths.

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13 Most (1985) p. 109. On σκευὰς ἐτέρας as the lead weights that hold down the nets, rather than the nets themselves, see Most (1987) pp. 569-71. See also, Gentili and Bernardini (1995) ad loc.
14 τόδε μὲν κατὰ Φοίνικας ἐμπολάν / μέλος ὑπὲρ πολλὰς ἄλος πέμπτως 67-8.
15 The connection between these two maritime images is noted by Most (1985) p. 109 n. 73.
1. **Athena’s Gift**

In Pindar’s thirteenth *Olympian*, the mediating power of the tool as a model for the unique materiality of scriptory poetics is explored through the figure of the bridle. Since its primary function is to join two disparate agents – the rider and his horse – the bridle perfectly instantiates the ability of the material script to yoke author and reperformer in a shared endeavor. For Pindar, it is not the literal use to which the bridle may be put but the conditions of its first discovery that hold out the richest avenue for exploration. The tale remains focused on the bridle’s mediating character but explores how this quality was present in the object at the point of first creation. This shift allows Pindar to graft the tool’s inherently intermediary status onto the more subtle relationship between its creator and subsequent users. The delineation of roles mirrors the scriptory dynamic in which the poet and reperformer are joined through the medium of the script, and I hope to show that the myth is structured so as to present a more pointed meditation on the nature of the script as tool. Pindar’s narrative allows us to see both the encoding of the tool and its receipt by the reperformer. The intermediary position of the bridle serves as a nexus between these two spheres, and the divergent relationship each actor has to the material medium.

The main stage for these explorations will be the ode’s central account of how Athena entrusted the bridle to Bellerophon to harness the winged Pegasus. But before Pindar begins his mythical tale, he offers an explanation of sorts for his interest in the bridle. At the close of the first triad the poet turns his praise to the victor’s homeland, lauding Corinth for its threefold claim to technical invention (16-22):

\[
\text{πολλά δ’ ἐν καρδίας ἀνδρῶν ἐβάλον}
\]
\[
\text{Ὡραὶ πολυάνθεμοι ἀφαία σοφίσμαθ’, ἀπαν δ’ εὐφόντος ἐφ’’ν.}
\]
\[
\text{ταὶ Διωνύσου πόθεν ἐξέφανεν}
\]
\[
\text{σὺν βοηλάτα χώριτες διθυράμβοι;}
\]
\[
\text{τίς γὰρ ἵππειος ἐν ἐντεσον μέτρα, 20}
\]
\[
\text{ἡ θεόν ναοῖν οἰωνών βασιλέα δίδυμον}
\]
\[
\text{ἐπέθηκε’;}
\]

*Many ancient contrivances did the many-blossomed Hours place in the hearts of men [there]. And all of the work belongs to the discoverer. Whence did they*  

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16 “What […] emerges from the myth in *Olympian* 13 is the suggestion that the function of the bridle is not so much an instrument of dominance as of revelation.” Dickson (1986) p. 131.
reveal the Graces with the ox-winning dithyramb of Dionysus? And who established the measures for equine implements, or the double king of birds on the temples of the gods?

The three areas of innovation catalogued in the passage range over a broad sphere of human endeavor: poetry, war-craft, sacred architecture. But it is possible, in a more metaphorical spirit, to see all three inventions as bearing upon the realm of poetic production, each expressing a different aspect of the multiform nature of song in the age of the script. The description of the dithyramb, in its first rendition by the Graces themselves, represents poetry in its most emphatically performative and ephemeral character. By contrast, the architectural innovation, fixed in stone or bronze, reflects the opposite pole, the reified monument of a written text. And in the middle we have the metron, the bridle. The mediating tool is endowed with both tangible and kinetic properties. It is fixed (ἐπεδήμη) like the finials upon the temple, but imbued with the animate mobility of the beasts on which it will be used (ἰππείοις ἐν ἐντεουμ).

Such a poetically charged reading is suggested by the metapoetic resonances found throughout the passage, most notably the framing language which speaks of the inventions as erga and sophismata. Pindar introduces his brief meditation with a crisply enigmatic claim: ἀπαν δ’ ἐψφόντος ἐφογον. The gnomic assertion, following on the claim that the Horai had granted Corinth many sophismata, helps to draw out the poet’s understanding of the poetic connection between the three, seemingly disparate inventions he goes on to list. The term sophisma is generally limited to the realm of action – a stratagem or clever method – that cannot properly refer to a material object. In the passage under discussion, however, it is clear that this restricted definition is expanded

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19 On the connection between such “winged” architecture and song, see Power (2011).
20 Metra is an accepted poetic designation by the end of the fifth century, meaning either stichic meter or, especially in the plural, verses. Reference to the contemporary performative sphere is found in the adjective boêlatês, which is thought to denote the prize awarded in dithyrambic competition. In addition, the predominant focus on the Horai and the Graces, the only identified agents before the mention of the Muse that signals the end of the catalogue (22), gives the passage as a whole an strongly metapoetic tone.
21 The term perhaps also resonated with the idea of poetic performance, both through its connection to the verb σοφίςζωμα, with its well established poetic meaning, and in its own right, as attested by its use in Ar.Ra.17, 872, 1104.
somewhat, to include not only the contrivance of dithyrambic performance, but also the physical objects – bridle and gable – that comprise the remainder of the catalogue. The implicit widening of meaning is glossed by the term *ergon*, which encompasses both senses of the English noun “work”: an action or its material result. The broader conceptual range of the latter term is imposed on the former, for which it functions here as a kind of definitional synonym. But Pindar’s potentially confusing choice of the term *sophisma* to describe the Corinthian innovations is not accidental, for it points to the mental properties required by discovery of any kind. This stress on the need for an active agent in the process of innovation is picked up in the gnomic parentheses not by the term *ergon*, but by the far more ambiguous participle *heurontos*. The genitive turns the discovery into a possession, but of what kind and, more importantly, of whom remains unclear. The verb *heuriskô*, which Pindar regularly applies to his own task of poetic composition, points to the inventor – the *Horai* or the Graces whose agency is duly noted – but also to a retriever, the one who happens to find something and makes it his own. In the case of the Corinthian discoveries, the unspecified *tis* of the latter two innovations may well be, like the goddesses mentioned earlier, the inventor of the devices, but he may also be a finder, someone who, like Bellerophon, takes up an unfamiliar gift and puts it to work. The duality of the term is evident in Pindar’s self-reflexive use of the verb, which often finds the inventive poet relying upon the Muses for his inspiration. The poetic discovery, like that of the Corinthians, is a shared endeavor possessed – in its many forms – by more than one *heurôn*.

When, after a lengthy interlude, the poem takes up the mythical account of Bellerophon’s exploits, the identity of the *heurôn* is the central concern of the narration. In Pindar’s portrayal, the critical role of Athena in supplying Bellerophon with the bridle complicates the picture of the hero’s discovery. The goddess’s indispensable intervention is highlighted in the poet’s gnomic reflections on the tale: τελέι δὲ θεῶν δύναμις καὶ τὰν παρ’ ὀρχων καὶ παρὰ ἑλπίδα κούφαν κτίσαιν. (83). But, more

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22 Even if we take the genitive as denoting source, the idea is still primarily an expression of ownership.
23 Dickson (1986) p. 125 esp. n. 16.
24 O.3.4; O.9.80; Cf. P.12.22.
effectively, the poet conveys Athena’s imparting of the bridle with a vividness hardly afforded to another actor in the tale. The primary means through which the goddess’s actions are rendered so lucid lies in the use of oratio recta, which brings Athena firmly into the performative hic et nunc. Her words, themselves a bold command, begin the mythical account by breaking through the impasse of Bellerophon’s impotent desires (63-9):

[---transcribed text---]

Athena’s epiphany is a moment of clarity and truth, a hupar ex oneirou. Her words are lucid and direct; an analogue to the certain power of the gift which she bestows. The speech is characterized by unambiguous indexical markers. Athena ties herself to her addressee, Bellerophon, through the use of the forceful second person interrogative and vocative combination at the opening of her speech (eũdeĩς…βαολένα;) and through the subsequent density of imperatives (ἀγε, δέκεν, δεῖξον). In addition, Athena confers the same vivid presence to the bridle she brings with her, referring to the object with a deictic signal (φυλτρον τόδε ἵππεον). The verbal gesture brings the object into the dynamic reality created by Athena’s oratio recta and binds the material gift to the speech itself. The bridle is thus imbued with the power of her words, and in her absence will remain “encoded” as a material representative of what was said. When the moment of clarity, in which the goddess’s presence ensured the truth of her communication, has passed, her divine words leave their mark on the bridle. This tool is left as a script for Bellerophon, a

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26 There is no indication, as in many Pindaric epiphanies, as to whether Athena has appeared in bodily form to Bellerophon or simply through her voice. On purely verbal epiphany see Vernant (1974), Dickson (1990), also Pucci (1998) chap. 5 and Pucci (1994).
material intermediary between the single moment of Athena’s appearance and the hero’s implementation of her commands.

The importance of the material reduplication of the bridle is evident in the close modeling of Athena’s speech on Homeric dream apparitions. Athena’s words replicate (and thus reperform) the communications of epic dream scenes, both true and false.\(^\text{27}\) Her speech, like those that we explored in the previous chapters, is a kind of performative palimpsest, re-deploying a Homeric speech in the voice of a different speaker. But unlike the hexameter paradigm, Pindar pairs the goddess’s words with an inanimate marker, the bridle. The function of this so-called *apport* is to confirm the validity of the divine epiphany, to verify the true presence of the god once the dreamer has awoken.\(^\text{28}\) Such physical markers are entirely absent from Homeric dream-visions and Pindar’s decisive use of the device is a clear sign of his interest in the concept of a material intermediary to fix and convey speech beyond the moment of its articulation.\(^\text{29}\)

Yet the bridle is not merely a sign of the epiphany. Its function, like that of a script, requires implementation. Unused, the bridle is meaningless. In order to mediate the verbal exchange, it must be put into service. Bellerophon will only complete the communicative sequence begun by Athena’s unrequited speech when he finally places the bridle on the winged horse, performing the instructions encoded in the object. But to do so, Bellerophon must be able to perceive the encoded message of the *apport*.

As the *heurôn* of an exotic new tool, Bellerophon does not immediately grasp the mechanics of the bridle as mediating script. The clarity with which Athena’s speech is revealed to the audience is not shared by the hero, who merely seems to hear her through the uncertain perception of the dream. Where the speech is initially presented in a stark framing introduction as a true event (φώναξε δ’), the closing frame reflects Bellerophon’s far less certain viewpoint: κνάναις ἐν ὀρφνά / κνώσσοντι οἱ παρθένος τόσα εἰπεῖν / ἔδοξεν. *These things the virgin of the dark-aegis seemed to say to him slumbering in the night.* \(^\text{70-2}\) Focalization has shifted over the course of

\(^{27}\) Most famously, the false dream of *Il.* 2.22ff. addresses Agamemnon in the same manner: εὗδες Ατρόκος νιὲ δαήφονος ἱπποδύμου; Similar language is found in Patroclus’ apparition to Achilles at *Il.* 23.68ff. and Athena’s to Penelope at *Od.* 4.803ff.

\(^{28}\) Harris (2009) p. 43.

\(^{29}\) In fact, Pindar’s *O.* 13 is the first extant instance in Greek literature of an *apport* left to confirm a dream epiphany. Harris (2009) p. 43.
Athena’s address and the certain, declarative language with which the speech was introduced is correspondingly exchanged for the descriptive realm of semblances;\textsuperscript{30} Athena does not “speak”, as the initial framing language states, but only “seems to speak” to Bellerophon.\textsuperscript{31}

Unsure of what the tool might mean, Bellerophon does not immediately set about his hitherto delayed undertaking, rushing off to master the long-desired stallion. Instead, the hero gathers the bridle from his side and goes in search of a human mantis; he needs the apparition explained and confirmed.\textsuperscript{32} Bellerophon can no more understand the fixed status of the appor that than the fleeting moment of Athena’s apparition. The full extent of his incomprehension is made clear when, preempting the goddess’s instructions through his conversation with the seer, Bellerophon reveals (δειξένυ) the bridle to the mantis, not to Poseidon as Athena had instructed (πατρὶ δειξοῦν).\textsuperscript{33}

Athena’s powers of divine communication – especially her ability to invest objects with the force of her words – are unavailable to the hero and thus he must work to gradually uncover the relationship between the object and the goddess’s speech. Bellerophon’s initial bafflement at the bridle fits into a larger pattern that is reflected in the many mythic accounts of the hero’s life. Throughout archaic literature, the inability to comprehend written communication is a hallmark of Bellerophon’s character. While this trait is best represented by the paradigmatic narrative of Bellerophon’s sufferings as a result of his ignorance of Proteus’ letter (a popular theme of late fifth-century tragedy), variants of this problematic illiteracy can be traced back to Homeric epic.\textsuperscript{34} In his re-

\textsuperscript{31} The use of the verb δοξέω is a regular construction for dream description in the fifth century, signaling the special status of the dreamer’s perception. Kessels (1978) pp. 198-200. Cf. Aesch. Ag. 16-17 ὅποιν δ’ ἀείδειν ἦ μνήμεσθαι δοξέω, / ἐπινοοῦ τόδ’ ἀντίμολον ἑντέμον ἄκος.
\textsuperscript{33} As Dodds notes, this type of “secondary elaboration” was not uncommon with ambiguous dreams received through incubation, but it is hard to see that Bellerophon’s experience would need such clarification. Dodds (1951) pp. 111-4, Harris (2009) Ch. 1.1-3.
\textsuperscript{34} Deborah Steiner notes the Homeric Bellerophon’s general inability to interpret symbolic language, and writing in particular, Steiner (1994) chap. 1, passim. On the possible interpretations of the Homeric Bellerophon episode by fifth-century tragedians, see Easterling (1985) p. 5. On Bellerophon’s representation in Euripides, see Jouan (1966) p. 284 n. 2.
telling of Bellerophon’s invention of the bridle,\textsuperscript{35} Pindar draws on this traditional attribute to explore the hero’s relationship to the tool insofar as it reflects the conceptual framework of the material script. But unlike those failed encounters with writing from which Pindar draws the theme, the narrative of \textit{Olympian} 13 presents a Bellerophon who learns to make use of the scriptory tool to accomplish his greatest feat.

Like the script in its fully reified form, the bridle is incapable of conveying its encoded message without a human reperformer to give voice to its mute words. For Bellerophon, the \textit{mantis}, Polydios, will serve as a teacher and model of this operation by offering a reperformance of his own for the hero to observe. Polydios, \textit{qua} seer, serves as an intermediary between the divine and mortal worlds.\textsuperscript{36} This special status, analogous to that of the bridle, establishes the seer as a living correlate to the inanimate \textit{apport}. In his exchange with Polydios, Bellerophon offers his own unwitting reperformance of all that has occurred (\pi\omicron\delta\omicron\alpha\nu\upsilon\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\tau\alpha\nu\nu), but it is the seer who echoes the words of the goddess, instructing the hero – albeit in \textit{oratio obliqua} – to fulfill Athena’s commands (79-82). As noted above, the gnome which follows Polydios’ speech elides not only his, but Bellerophon’s role in the endeavor. Yet for Bellerophon, Polydios’ interpretative reperformance is indispensible. Athena may have imbued the \textit{apport} with the meaning of her words, but for her mortal interlocutor and recipient of the gift the shared subjectivity of bridle and goddess remains opaque. To see the bridle as script, Bellerophon must witness Polydios’ reperformance to confirm that the goddess is behind it – that it has her stamp.

The evolution of Bellerophon’s conception can be traced throughout the passage in the language used to describe the bridle. The narrator introduces the object with the neutral definition of \textit{chrusampux chalinos} (65, golden-filleted bridle), denoting both the function and the materiality of Athena’s gift. But in the words of the goddess herself, the bridle becomes a \textit{philtron hippeion} (69, an equine charm). The shift in conception is bold. The periphrasis is a signal of the object’s novel status, but it also reflects Athena’s understanding of the bridle’s abiding connection to the animal on which it will be used.

\textsuperscript{35} Pindar’s significant reworking of established variants of the myth is discussed by Hubbard (1986) pp. 29-33.

and, more importantly, its almost magical, transformative power.\(^{37}\) Athena’s definition expresses her unwavering control over and understanding of the object that she bestows upon Bellerophon. She can foresee its future use even when he cannot. When Bellerophon awakes, the terminology shifts to register his evolving perception of the bridle. First he views it as a *teras* (73, a portent), as though uncertain what kind of a thing the bridle is. Although the term links the *apport* to Athena’s apparition, the abstract concept of *teras* corresponds to Bellerophon’s ignorance of the nature of their connection. He recognizes the wondrous quality of the bridle, but its meaning remains obscure. The materiality of the bridle begins to emerge as he recounts the event to Polydios, when he calls it *damasiphrôn chrusos* (78, mind-conquering gold). Finally, when he sets out to apply the bridle to the winged horse, Bellerophon is able to share Athena’s understanding of the object which once again takes shape as a charm or spell, a *pharmakon praû* (85, a gentle drug). Bellerophon can comprehend the *apport* as its encoder intended. Moreover, he recognizes his own role as reperformer, and takes up the object as his scripted tool. And it is with these twinned insights he is able to put the bridle to use and with it perform its purpose.

The description of the bridle as a magic charm or drug aligns it with Pindar’s own perception of poetry, which is variously called *pharmakon* (N.4.1), *philtron* (P.3.64) *epaoitai* (P.3.51).\(^{38}\) Like the golden *phorminx* of *Pythian* 1 discussed at the beginning of the chapter, the activated poetic tool exerts its power in all directions, enchanting all who come into contact with it. Bellerophon’s bridle, now fully realized as a script, can transcend its material nature and once again communicate the mandate of the goddess through the hands of its reperformer. The qualities the script takes on when properly understood by its maker and its reperformers activate the potential that lies dormant in the unused tool.

As Bellerophon, joined through the bridle with Athena and the divine Pegasus sets off on his many adventures across the Greek world, Pindar takes up his own poetic tool, launching his missiles of song like an instrument into the air with the aid of the Muses


Like the bridle, each time the instruments are taken up they regain the spontaneous vitality of their first encoding; an “oral subterfuge” in material form. But just as Bellerophon’s discovery was positioned within a long line of mythical endeavors taking place in the city favored by the Horai, Pindar’s own poetic innovation is seated firmly within a temporal frame. His current endeavor, like those of the future, relies on divine revelation:

τά τ' ἐσούμενα τὸτ' ἀν φαινη σαφές. / νῦν δ' ἐλπομαι μὲν, ἐν θεῷ γε μᾶν / τέλος. Those to come, may I reveal them clearly when it is time. For now we can only hope, for telos rests with the god. (103-5). Once revealed, however, the tools remain fixed for all to discover. So Pindar instructs his unspecified listener, another unnamed tis to take up the role of reperformer through his own discoveries (107-15):

And as many [victories] to which Lycian Apollo’s altar, the lord ruling over the Arcadians, will bear witness, and Pellana and Sikyon and Megara and the rich cities below steep Aetna and Euboia, these, if you look, will you discover throughout all of Hellas, more than a man could see. Come, join the dance with light feet. O Zeus Teleios, grant reverence and the sweet fortune of delights.

The poem’s addressee will find the scripts of the victor’s deeds throughout the Greek word and through them will be able to add his own light feet to the dance. Throught the repetition of the verb heuriskō, which guided the initial discussion of Corinthian innovation, the model of Bellerophon’s discovery is now explicitly linked to Pindar’s own poetic production. The poet has crafted a tool for the future, a script for reperformers to discover and make anew.

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39 Pindar claims to hurl his javelin like a rhombos, appropriating the whirling motion of the so-called “bull-roarer”. The athletic tool and musical instrument are thus fused in his exuberant metaphor: ἐμὲ δ' εὐθὺν ἀκόντων / ἱέντα δομήον παρὰ σκοπόν οὐ χρή / τὰ πολλὰ βέλεα καρτύνειν χεροῖν. / Μοίσας γὰρ ἀγλαοθόνοις ἕκων / Ὀλυμπιάδαιαίν τ' ἔβαν ἐπίκουρος.
2. SPEAKING SHIELDS

In his appropriation of the tools of the athletic *agôn*, Pindar adapts the sportsmen’s apparatus to serve as models for the functioning of scripted poetics. The actual endeavors of his *laudandi* are almost entirely displaced from his epinician odes, superseded by the poet’s concern for his own complex undertaking. In the *Seven Against Thebes*, Aeschylus employs a similar technique, transformed for the stage. At the heart of the play he places a series of paired speeches, each a description and interpretation of the shield of one of the city’s attackers. The speeches take up the tools as scripts for reperformance, dramatizing the function of the scripted object when invested with its full mediating power. By centering the action of his play on the attackers’ tools, Aeschylus displaces nearly every other conceivable event from the drama. There is no battle, no encounter between foes; the play consists solely of the playwright’s dramatic meditation on his own scripted poetics.

In contrast to Pindar’s *Olympian* 13, where Athena’s first-person encoding formed the crucial moment of the narrative, Aeschylus, in the *Seven Against Thebes*, wholly elides the encoding event, positioning both author and tool offstage and outside of the dramatic action. His concern is entirely with the complex process of reperformance and the difficulty of accessing the encoder through the medium of a material object. For Aeschylus it is not the yoking power of the bridle, but the dividing potential of the shield that will serve as conceptual model for the inanimate script. In the play’s central scene, Eteocles encounters the unseen attackers of his city through their shield blazons, relying on the intermediary instruments to gain access to the character of his foes. He attempts to bridge the gap between friend and enemy through the very tools designed to be an impenetrable defense, ensuring the separation of foes.

This division between Pindar’s and Aeschylus’ approach to the physicality of the script is not surprising given the fact that the distinct genres in which they primarily composed presented somewhat different problems for reperformance. Significantly, the absence of a clearly demarcated authorial voice from tragedy – as opposed to the strong first-person statements of the Pindaric author-figure throughout his lyric compositions – results in a much more pointed concern about the how the author will be perceived through a mediating text. In addition, the differentiated characters of drama necessitate a
certain polyphony in reperformance that complicates the arithmetic equivalence between encoder and reperformer, even if the drama is not staged with a full ensemble cast. Hence an additional layer of complexity is incorporated into the reperformer’s task of gaining access to the encoder of his script. The obstacles to successful mediation between agents separated by space and time are thus greater and more varied. The scriptory tool retains the same properties within its material form, but the *technē* through which it achieves its proper execution in reperformance becomes even less certain.

From the very outset of the play, the demarcation of the spatio-temporal distance between the shields’ offstage encoding and onstage reperformance is a constant theme of *Seven Against Thebes*. The play is notable for its rigid geography; the dramatic action is claustrophobically contained within the walls of Thebes while the din of the marshalling army rings all around.40 The messenger introduces himself in the play’s opening lines as the one figure able to travel between the world of the stage, inside the city’s walls, and the unseen plane beyond: ἵκω σαφῆ τάξειθεν ἐκ στρατοῦ φέρον, αὐτὸς χατότης δ’ εἶμι ἔγὼ τῶν προσμάτων· (40-1).41 Like the prophet Tiresias whose forewarning Eteocles has just recalled (νῦν δ’ ὡς ὃ μάντις φησίν 24), the messenger’s literal eye will provide those within the city with a kind of mantic insight into the world beyond the stage (66-8):

καὶ ἔως τὰ λαιπὰ πιστὸν ἰμεροσκόπων ὀφθαλμον ἔξω, καὶ σαφήνεια λόγου εἰδώς τὰ τῶν θύραθεν ἀβλαβής ἔση.

*And I will make my eye a trusted day-scout for the future, and you will be safe knowing the affairs beyond the gates through the clarity of my report.*

But within the equivalence between Oedipus’ seer and Eteocles’ lies an important difference. While the blind mantis perceived the future by sound alone, as we are reminded by Eteocles’ description,42 the messenger’s insight will be emphatically visual; he will convert the objects that he has seen, namely the images on the attackers’ shield

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41 Bacon (1964) p. 29.

42 (*ἐν όσι* νομῶν καὶ φρεσίν, πυγὸς δίχα, χαστηρίους ὀνομάσας ἀψευδῆ τέχνη· 25-6)
blazons, into a *logos* for Eteocles. On the one hand, the mention of Tiresias at the play’s outset is a reminder of the trilogy’s two earlier plays that cast Eteocles as a reperformer of the deeds of his father and grandfather. But the messenger’s literal *ophthalmos* also establishes a contrast with those earlier events that brings the uniquely visual and material qualities of Eteocles’ endeavor into relief. The tools must be reperformed by the messenger and Eteocles (and the audience) will only encounter with them verbally, yet the inanimate materiality of the shields is fundamental to their representation. Unlike the living omens that speak to true seers, the shields are mute tools that can only mediate between living agents. The meaning of the shields is locked within inarticulate metal until it is brought back to life by the messenger’s ekphrases. The messenger’s eye is capable of sight, but not insight. And as inanimate tools, the shields require an extra degree of reperformance which will translate them into voice before the work of interpretative reperformance is possible. The uninspired prophecy of the messenger’s speeches brings the tools to life upon the stage and thus transforms the mediating objects into an ekphrastic battlefield.

The messenger’s ekphrastic descriptions of the attackers’ shields exhibit an obvious epic inheritance, drawing on the rich tradition epitomized by the famous depiction of Achilles’ shield at *Iliad* 18.478-608 and evident throughout the extant epic corpus. In contrast to earlier models, the shields of the *Seven* are decorated with words as well as images. Three shields bear lettering as part of their blazons and all are framed within a discourse of material communication that draws heavily on the notion of a written object. The explicit incorporation of writing into the *Redeapaare* distinguishes the scene from its

43 This is, in some respects, a hyperbolic rendering of the basic function of the messenger as defined by de Jong (1991) pp. 9-10.
44 Eteocles “reenacts and condenses his father’s and his father’s father’s experiences by treating the emblems of the shields as riddles and by converting these riddles into curse and oracle.” Zeitlin (1982) p. 20. Also Hutchinson (1985) ad 24-7.
45 The prominent visual component is noted by Benardete (1968) pp. 13-14 who draws a further contrast with Eteocles himself, who must “manage the tiller of the ship of state with his eyes open.” We cannot, of course, rule out the possibility that such visual/verbal play also occupied a central position in Aeschylus’ construction of the two earlier plays, *Laius* and *Oedipus* (as, indeed, it does, though in quite different terms, in Sophocles’ *OT*). The materiality of the shields is stressed by Steiner (1994) pp. 49-60.
46 Thus they cannot be thought of as “props”, as is argued by Chaston (2010).
epic forebears, but it also makes the Seven unique within the extant Pindaric and Aeschylean corpora as the most extended representation of explicit, rather than figurative, written communication. Since the shields are only present on the stage as scripts for the messenger’s words, the shield inscriptions are represented as speeches, and are reported in the messenger’s ekphrases in oratio recta and obliqua. The connection between dictional mode and considerations of writing set out in the first section of this study is thus unambiguously placed not only at the heart of the play but at the climax of the trilogy of which it was the final play.48

The messenger does not simply report on the shields, but offers a picture of both the blazon and its encoding agent, turning both oral and written, flesh and metal, components of his account into texts for reperformance. The juxtaposition of the two elements of the script’s encoding offers an unclouded glimpse of what more literal scripts – particularly fully mimetic, dramatic scripts – normally adumbrate: the reperformer’s uncertain relationship to both the flesh-and-blood encoder of the script and the material tool which preserves and transmits his words.

While the messenger examines the shields offstage, Eteocles and the Chorus of Theban women wage a verbal battle that prefigures that of the Redepaare.49 From within the city walls, the Chorus react to a very different visual messenger arriving in the form of the dust that rises into the air from the marshalling army (ἅναυδὸς σαφὴς ἔτυμος ἄγγελος 82).50 The extended lyric expression of panic that follows is sparked by this visual signal, but as the song progresses the Chorus’s fear is increasingly concentrated on the terrifying sounds that meet their ears: ὄπλοκτυπ’ ὠτὶ χρύμπτει βοῶν (84);51 ἀκούετ’ ἦ ὦν ἀκούετ’ ἀσπίδων κτύπον; (100); κτύπον δέδορχα:52 πάταγος ὦν ἐνὸς δορός

49 The time of the messenger’s absence is in fact dramatically represented by the Chorus’s song, as noted by Nünlist (2009) pp. 86-7.
50 The image of a rising dust-cloud is common in Homeric battle description, e.g. Il. 3.10-4, as are descriptions of battle din, to which the Septem Chorus soon turn, e.g. 3.1-9 the introduction to the passage just cited.
51 The text is uncertain, but see Hutchinson (1985) ad loc. If ὠτὶ (or ὥοι GKQ2pcPsscr) stands, it would represent a clear echo of Eteocles’ earlier description of Teiresias: ἐν ὄσι νομῶν.
52 κτύπον δέδορχα is the text printed by Page and thus accepted here. If it is the correct reading, as opposed to δέδοχα (suggested by Askew and preferred by Murray), I believe that the idea of sight must be understood as a metaphorical attempt to render the vividness of the Chorus’s sonic perception. So Hutchinson (1985) ad loc.
The sonorous description presents the military hardware – the whirling chariot axles, the clanging swords and spears, the blasting trumpets and braying horses, and, above all, the shields – in aural form, representing the materiality of the martial tools in its sonic, rather than visual, aspect. Yet, as Eteocles’ violent reaction to the women makes clear, their vivid descriptions bring the unseen Argive attackers, and more specifically their weapons, into the city and onto the stage. The exchange thus anticipates the messenger’s own introduction of objects from the outside, in the form of his ekphrastic reports. Like Cassandra’s visions, the Argive attackers offstage emerge from an unseen realm that encroaches on the spatio-temporal stability of the drama. But the unseen figures of the Seven Against Thebes are not uninvited visitors: they are intentionally conveyed onto the stage so as to be translated and interpreted in the *hic et nunc*. And it is through the material mediation of the shields, which provide a bridge between what is present and what is not, that the staged characters and audience alike are invited to experience them.

The messenger loses no time upon his return, immediately commencing with his ekphrastic reports and inaugurating the series of seven paired speeches which constitute the scene. The order in which the shields are presented, culminating in the inevitable pairing of brother against brother, has been the subject of extensive study in the last half-century. The multivalent concept of *kosmos*, introduced by Eteocles at the opening of his first response (397), will be one of the central themes of the exchange. Yet to understand how the complex orderings of the scene are constructed, we must first examine the tripartite structure of author, reperformer, and shield that is the sustained and invariable foundation of the *Redeapaare*. By working progressively through the shields of seven heroes at seven gates, Aeschylus is able to distribute across these multiple iterations the polyphony of meaning that Pindar assembled in the single image of the bridle. In so doing, the dramatic poet is able to tease out subtle variations that are not

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53 For more detailed discussion of this introductory scene, see Benardete (1967), Thalmann (1978) pp. 85-93, and more recently Edmunds (2002), Stehle (2005).

54 The connection is noted by Bacon (1964) p. 29. So too, Zeitlin (1982) p. 30: “These two scenes are both opposites and doublets of each other. As a confrontation between two opposing attitudes, the first scene is, in fact, a rehearsal of the other.”


elaborated on in Pindar’s concise narrative. At the same time, the profusion of elements – the Argive and their seven shields, the messenger’s report, the responses of Eteocles and the Chorus, the Theban shields and men who are chosen by Eteocles to face the attackers – can distract from the basic formulation of scriptory poetics which underpins the scene.

The essential components of encoder, tool, and reperformer that constitute the scriptory system are already set out in the first paired speeches, despite the fact that the shield device is devoid of lettering. In fact, the simplicity of the shield device, representing the night sky with moon and stars, permits a thorough appreciation of the complexity of scripted poetics that the scene entails. The messenger’s reperformance seeks to bring both author and script onto the stage through his embodied verbal representation. But the distinction becomes blurred, and Eteocles is unable to discriminate between the encoder and the object that he has produced. The messenger distinguishes, albeit in similar terms, the qualities – especially the sonic register – that are produced by the brutish Argive, Tydeus, from those that belong to his brazen shield and trumpet.\footnote{57 The fearful, bronze bells on Tydeus’ shield shriek out, eager for battle: ὑπερφρών, a word without any intrinsic linguistic resonances, to mean that the shield is boastful \textit{huperkompos}, speaking in silent words. At first he imbues the shield itself with agency, calling the \textit{nux} (night) of the blazon a \textit{mantis eponumos}; the image on the shield has become a sign capable of foretelling its own future. Then, in an even bolder conflation, he claims that the shield represents the speech of Tydeus himself (400-6):}

\begin{quote}
καὶ νόκτα τεύτην ἦν λέγεις ἐπ’ ἀσπίδος
ἀστροιοι μαρμαρίσσονταν οὐρανοῦ νυρεῖν –
tάχ’ ἄν γένοιτο μάντις ἄνοια τινί.
εἰ γὰρ θανόντι νῦξ ἐπ’ ὀφθαλμοῖς πέσοι,
τῷ τοι φέροντι σῆμα ὑπέρχομπον τόδε
γένοιτ’ ἄν ὅρθους ἐνδίκως τ’ ἐπώνυμον,
καῦτοι καθ’ αὐτοῦ τήνδ’ ὑβριν μαντεύονται
\end{quote}

Eteocles, however, focuses all of his attention on the shield, as if the tool were his sole interlocutor. Although he starts his speech by dismissing the power of the blazon, Eteocles soon makes clear that he understands the shield to convey its own verbal message, as if inscribed with speech like the shields of the subsequent warriors. He takes the messenger’s claim that the shield device is \textit{huperphrôn}, a word without any intrinsic linguistic resonances, to mean that the shield is boastful \textit{huperkompos}, speaking in silent words. At first he imbues the shield itself with agency, calling the \textit{nux} (night) of the blazon a \textit{mantis eponumos}; the image on the shield has become a sign capable of foretelling its own future. Then, in an even bolder conflation, he claims that the shield represents the speech of Tydeus himself (400-6):
And this night that you say is upon his shield, shining with the stars of heaven, soon may this folly be his mantis. For if night should fall upon his eyes in death, then this boastful symbol would be right and justly named for him who bears it and he would prophesy this violence for himself.

The messenger’s reperformance of the inanimate image instills the inanimate tool with so rich and convincing a verbal texture that the man behind the implement is no longer fully recognizable. Eteocles directs himself towards Tydeus, but it is the ‘speech’ of his shield that guides his response. Tydeus is boastful, but only through the language of his tool. He foretells his own death, but in encoded, symbolic speech that is only articulated through the messenger’s reperformance. The fixed images on the blazon are more powerful transmitters of sense than the man who fashioned them.58 The degree to which Tydeus and his shield device have become inseparable in Eteocles’ perception is made clear when, as a result, he sets against Tydeus a man who hates boastful speech: στυγούνθ' ὑπέρφορονας λόγους (410). The reiteration of the messenger’s term huperphrôn, now explicitly linked to the realm of logos, and more specifically of human speech, serves as a kind of gloss on Eteocles’ reperformative fusing of author and inanimate script. Eteocles makes no mention of the shield of Melanippos, the Theban champion chosen to face Tydeus. The defender is selected based on his inborn character: σπαρτών δ' ἀπ' ἀνδρών, ὃν Ἀρης ἐφείσατο, ἕξειστ' ἀνείται, κάρστα δ' ἔστ' ἐγχώριος (412-3). For those outside the walls, Eteocles must perceive the men through their tools; inside he knows the man.

The conflation of warrior and shield is only possible because both the shield and its bearer remain offstage and unseen. Both thus become objects of the messenger’s ekphrastic description which translates his first-hand perception into a verbal performance of their absence.59 The man’s voice is subsumed by that of the tool, the

58 The notion of shield production in the Redepaare, like that of writing at the time, makes little distinction between the man who designs the blazon and the one who effects the physical labor.

59 The contrast between seen and unseen is suggestively explored in the stimulating, albeit wildly speculative, reading of David Wiles. Building on the work of Bacon (1964), Wiles has suggested that the entire Redepaare was staged so as to be “animated by the departure of Theban warriors, equipped with spectacular shields.” The literal arming of the Theban defenders would thus highlight the wholly verbal manner in which the Argive warriors and their shields are presented within the play. I would certainly agree that the Theban shields are nowhere subjected to the play.
mediating object that will bring his words (be they articulate or, as with Tydeus, merely symbolic) onto the stage. This basic dynamic, in which the onstage reperformers merge warrior and shield, encoder and material script, is repeated throughout the subsequent paired speeches. The conflation of the two unseen figures, the mute tool and the flesh-and-blood warrior, is not a failure of the messenger’s presentation or of Eteocles’ interpretation; it is a sign of the inherent nature of reperformance which cannot but take this stance in order to bring the script back to life.

The necessity of merging encoder and message becomes evident as the introduction of true written messages further expands the range of possibilities for communication through the intermediary. Three of the Argive attackers bear writing on their shield blazons. Capaneus, posted to the second gate, bears the image of a man who “speaks in golden letters ‘I will set the city aflame’” (χοισοῖς δὲ φωνεὶ γράμμασιν ‘Πρήσω πόλιν.’ 434). At the third gate, Eteoclus too carries a man boasting “in a string of letters that not even Ares will cast him from the ramparts” (γραμμάτων ἐν ξυλλαβαίς, / ὄς οὐδ' ἄν Ἀρῆς οὖ' ἐχθράωι πυργωμάτων 468-9). And finally, the shield of Polyneices, the final attacker to be named, displays the goddess Dike expressing her support for a warrior: “I will lead this man into the city and he will be returned to the home of his birth” (Δίξη δ’ ἄφ’ εἶναι φήσιν, ὄς τά γράμματα / λέγειν “Κατὰξω δ’ ἄνδρα τόνδε καὶ πόλιν / ἐξει πατρίδαν δομάτων τ’ ἐπιστροφάς.” 646-8). The material properties of the writing on each shield are emphasized in the messenger’s reports. The letters on Capaneus’ and Polyneices’ blazons are said to be fashioned in gold (χοισοῖς […] γράμμασιν 434; χοισότευκτα γράμματα 660) and Eteocles’ shield is praised for its craftsmanship (ἐσχισμάτωτα δ’ ἀσπίς οὖ σμικρὸν τρόπον 465). But at the same time, the messenger reports on the letters as if they were speaking (φωνεὶ 434; λέγει 646) or, in the case of Eteocles, as if their bearer were speaking through them (βο全面发展7 δὲ χούτος 468). And in keeping with this notion, the letters are presented as speech acts in the messenger’s accounts, or rather, scripts for speech acts to which he himself gives voice in the course of his reperformance. The distinction between oratio recta and obliqua follows

between visual and verbal register that is applied throughout to the shields of the attackers. But without any clear indication from the text, I find it difficult to credit the idea that the warriors were armed onstage throughout the drama. Wiles (2007) pp. 267-9.
the structure set out in the response to Tydeus’ shield: the blazon’s themselves speak through the messenger in the unmediated *hic et nunc* while the shield whose words are attributed to the warrior, Eteoclus, are set at one remove through indirect speech.

In addition to their written communications, the three lettered shields all depict men, rather than gods or cosmic forces, on their blazons. This second shared attribute further sets them apart from the other shields described in the scene. All three of the metallic warriors function as “mimetic doublet[s]” of the flesh-and-blood warriors who bear them. The added layer of correlation results in an especially robust conflation of the shield devices with their written messages and the heroes whom they mirror in their anthropomorphic images. The shields are themselves scriptory tools, but through their iconographic representation of both encoder and his words, they are able to expose the performative nature hidden within the inanimate object. Far from being able to give voice to their own verbal expression, the shield blazons explicitly incorporate the figure of a human actor to produce their lettered messages. In this respect, Aeschylus further distances the shields from the *oggetti parlanti* popular at the time. In his excellent treatment of the relationship between the ekphrastic shields of the *Redepaare* and other shields from the period, Carmine Catenacci demonstrates that Aeschylus sets out a series of shields unlike any that existed at the time, inventing his own wholly poetic set of images to adorn the blazons. The imagined objects represent a kind of static drama in which the anthropomorphic figure depicted upon the blazon articulates “the action which he is performing or about to perform.” Not unlike the painted singers on red-figure vases, the ekphrastic shields of the *Redepaare* pour forth their words as if in the act of

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61 Catenacci (2004) pp. 170-5. When writing is found on physical shields from this era, it is generally employed for simple identification, either of the figure represented on the blazon (a technique familiar from vase painting) or of the shield’s bearer, as is the case with the letter-device shields which became popular in the fifth century for polis identification. Alternatively, writing on shields is found expressing *kalos pais* phrases which appear as unconnected to the imagery of the shield device (again, similar to the kindred *kalos* inscriptions found in vase painting from the period).
63 The parallel is drawn by Catenacci (2004) p. 175. On singing vases, Lissarrague (1990) chap. 6 shows the famous image of a chorus of six armed men, each equipped with a different shield blazon, seated upon dolphins each singing the same (self-identifying) words, ΕΠΙ ΔΕΛΦΙΝΟΣ. Also Lissarrague (2007) pp. 152-3.
enunciation. The speaking figures show the origins of the words, reflecting the role of the encoder in producing the words. At the same time they gesture towards the necessity of reperformance to give true voice back to the words inscribed on the object. The lettered shields thus incorporate the essential quality of the written script, which cannot properly be separated from the performances it is intended to facilitate.

In spatial terms, the ekphrastic descriptions raise the problem of the author’s physical absence from the scene of reperformance. The action encoded in the blazon must be completed by an agent other than its creator while still maintaining a connection to the man behind the shield. The tools convey the identity of the warriors and thus enable the reperformer to communicate with the encoder of the words that he is voicing. This mediated contact is made possible by the conflation of the warrior and his tool, an operation which threatens to place the agency of the encoder in the hands of the distant man who will reperform his words. The imbalance, and its cost to the encoder, is evident in the depictions of the first two lettered images. The shields are brought to life, conveying the voices of the men behind them, but the active reperformance results in a violent perversion of the encoders’ intentions.

In the case of Capaneus, the warrior’s impious boasting, reported by the messenger in oratio obliqua, is set in parallel to the speech inscribed on his shield. As Deborah Steiner notes, the clear similarities between the two expressions of boastful arrogance allow the voice of the living man to be integrated “into the no less daunting message of the shield.” Just as the hero finds reflection in the naked man on his blazon, his own ephemeral utterance is matched with and subsumed by the one that is fixed upon his shield. Through his own verbal play, Eteocles deepens the conflation that is already apparent from the messenger’s report. The Theban king attributes the nakedness of the warrior on the shield blazon to the voice of the living man (κάποιαμνάς ον στόμα 441). The manner of the connection is specifically that of speech, the overriding focus

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64 Steiner (1994) p. 52.
of the entire response. For Eteocles, the man and shield function as one and speak with a single voice. Thus by disarming the shield’s verbal force, Eteocles is able to defeat its bearer. He hears the tool, but speaks to the man behind it. Similar in effect is the representation of Eteocles, whose single, written vaunt is turned against the “two men” who will be vanquished in battle: the real warrior and the hoplite on the blazon. In both cases the conquest of the shield cannot be distinguished from the triumph over the man.

The final exchange brings us to the inevitable pairing of brother against brother at the seventh gate. Now Eteocles must step into the reperformance as an agent in a manner that he has heretofore eschewed, taking up the role of defender against the device. But in this heightened exchange, Eteocles will reject the established mode of reperformance through his refusal to accept the mediating function of the shield. The precarious nature of Eteocles’ active participation in the unseen script of his foe is compounded by the mirrored identities of the brothers, whose unsustainable reduplication is a product of the “unstable arithmetic” of the house of Laius. The messenger’s description of Polyneices and his diploun sêma resembles that of Capaneus insofar as the writing of the shield is paired with the words of the hero himself. The warrior is once again conflated with the human figure on his blazon. But unlike the earlier lettered shields, the speech depicted is not of the wrought human figure but of the goddess who accompanies him. Polyneices’ own speech, reported in oratio obliqua, is thick with generic resonances, mingling prayer, boast, and song in staccato outbursts. Matching his brother’s excitable speech, Eteocles too resorts to emotionally charged prayer and lament. But when he begins his proper (prepei) response, turning his attention to the shield, Eteocles’ concern is not for the hero, but for the speaking goddess on the blazon. Unable to contemplate sharing the shield with his brother, just as he is unwilling to share the crown, Eteocles does not accept the script as it has been encoded. Instead of confronting the warrior and vanquishing him through the medium of his tool, Eteocles attempts to displace his brother within the shield’s

67 καὶ τώδε κόμπῳ κέρδος ἄλλο τύπτεται. (437); ἢ γλώσσα ἀληθῆς γίγνεται κατάγομος. (439); εἰς οὐρανόν /πέμπει γεγονέν την κυμαίνοντ' ἐπὶ. (442-3); στόμαρχος ἐστι' ἀγάν (447).
69 The phrase is coined by Zeitlin, who explores how Oedipus’ status as “both one and many” informs all of the dramas set in Thebes. Zeitlin (1990) pp. 139-40.
iconography. He is unwilling to reperform his brother’s script, forcing both men to an unsustainable perversion of the mediated relationship that they share through the tool.

Eteocles’ rejection of the mediating power of the shields in his confrontation with his brother is enabled by a structural shift set out by three non-lettered shields which precede the final pairing. Like the earlier warriors, the identities of these Argive attackers are closely aligned with the iconography of their shield blazons, but they display a much different, and more complex, linguistic or performative conflation which further develops the conceptual reach of the scriptory tool. The terrible Hippomedon, whose fearful size is reflected in the writhing coils of the fearsome serpent, Typhon, is almost entirely displaced in both the messenger’s report and Eteocles’ response by the seemingly living image of his blazon. In a lone exception from his established practice, Eteocles makes recourse to the shield blazon of his Theban defender, pairing Hippomedon with a man who bears the figure of Zeus, the vanquisher of Typhon, on his own shield. The remarkable vitality of the serpent blazon elicits fear in the messenger (ἐφημέρα δινήσαντος: οὐκ ἄλλως ἔρω. I shuddered at its whirling, I will not deny it. 490). But his wonder is directed towards the craftsman of the shield, who, for the first and only time within the Redepaare, is distinguished from the warrior who bears the device (491-2):

ος σηματουργός δ' οὐ τις εὐτελῆς ἄρι ἦν
ὁσις τόδ' ἐργων ὄψαςεν πρὸς ὁσπίδι,

The blazon-maker was no cheap-jack, whoever it was who fixed this work upon the shield.

As the power of the inanimate tool increases, the warrior behind the shield is eclipsed. His role in the creation of the image is elided as an unnamed and unknowable maker (ὁστις) takes priority in the mind of the messenger. Likewise, Eteocles no longer sees the

71 As will be shown in the next chapter, the snake is an especially potent symbol of the script’s need for animation. The living quality of the serpent on Hippomedon’s blazon is further reflected in the serpent simile which begins Eteocles’ response: πρῴτων μὲν Ὄγκα Πάλλας, ἢτ’ ἀρχύππολες/ πύλαις γείτων, ἄνδρος ἐχθαῖρονος ὕψοιν, / εἰρήξει νεοσσών ὡς δράκοντα δύσχιον (501-3).

72 In fact, so compelling is the image that the messenger begins to speak about the shield in the midst of his description of the warrior and has to correct himself so that his listeners understand: Ἰππομέδοντος σχῆμα καὶ μέγας τύπος / ἄλω δὲ πολλῆν, ὁσπίδος κύκλον λέγω (488-9).
Argive as acting through his shield, but rather as collaterally implicated in the true battle waged between the blazons: εἰ Ζεύς γε Τυφώ ναρτερώτερος μάχη, / εἰκὸς δὲ πράξειν ἄνδρας ὃδὲ ἀντιστάτας; (518-9).

Parthenopaeus, the ambiguous metic who takes up the fifth gate, displays an awareness of the intricacies of the script that places the Argive in a much more demonstrably active engagement with his tool than has been seen heretofore. Although the two figures on his shield, the Sphinx and the Theban whom she has conquered, prefigure the διπλοὸν σῆμα of Polyneices, his stance with regards to the blazon more closely anticipates that of Amphiaraos, the sixth warrior who will refuse to bear a message on his shield. Parthenopaeus does not put his faith in the shield, but in his sword which he values – sacrilegiously – more than Zeus and above his own eyes (529-30). His trust in his tools presents an unsettling new understanding of Eteocles’ earlier claim that “signs do not make wounds and warriors’ bells and plumes do not bite without a sword” (398-9).73 Now the fields of weapons and symbols are joined in the subtle scriptory perspective of this ambiguous warrior. The opposition on which Eteocles based his boast is shown to be a mirage. Even as the shield fails to provide Parthenopaeus with a mimetic doublet, the hero’s own body appropriates the iconographic power of the inanimate tool. The messenger devotes extra time to the description of the young hero’s appearance; his lovely face, his downy cheeks. But Parthenopaeus’ fierce gorgon-eye is his true shield blazon,74 and reveals his true character to the messenger (536-7):

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\text{ὁ δ’ ὡμόν, οὐ τι παρθένων ἐπώνυμον}
\text{φρόνημα, γοργόν δ’ ὄμη ἔχων, …}
\]

*He has a savage mind, in no way befitting his virginal name, and a gorgon’s eye.*

Parthenopaeus’ body is already inscribed with its own mimic doublet. The man-boy is able to represent himself through the flesh and thus has no need of a mirror in his blazon. Instead, Parthenopaeus adorns his shield with an image of his enemy (φῶτα Καδμείων ἐνα 543). The shield is his boast, an iconographic translation of his imagined speech. The shield’s arrogant stance does not overshadow Parthenopaeus; it stands in front of his

74 The connection between γοργόν and Γοργώ/γοργόπες is made by Hutchinson (1985) *ad loc.*
body as an added layer of protection: ὁνειδὸς ἐν χαλκηλάτῳ / σάκει, κυκλωτῷ
οὕματος προβλήματι, (539-40) Parthenopaeus remains outside of the action that his
blazon depicts. He is not implicated in the scene, but rather produces the script that will
guide the action for reperformance by an anticipated foe.

Amphiaraos adopts a stance similar to that of Parthenopaeus, but his method of
preemption is unique in a number of respects. The all-bronze shield the seer carries is
famously devoid of a blazon since Amphiaraos rejects the world of semblances for the
world of reality. Equally important is the fact that Amphiaraos is the only attacker whose
own words (rather than those on his shield) are related by the messenger in oratio recta.
Within the highly charged verbal arena of the Redepaare the seer’s ability to speak with
his own voice, rather than with his shield, takes on an extraordinary significance. By
refusing to entrust his words to the material of his shield, Amphiaraos insists that the
messenger bring his own, unmediated speech back to Eteocles as his report. And the
messenger takes pains to make clear the origins of the words: λέγει δὲ τοῦτ᾽ ἔπος διὰ
οτόμω. But the speech of the prophet cannot be understood apart from the complex
temporal structure that he, alone of the attackers, is able to perceive, and which grounds
the individual tools of scripted absence within time as well as space.

Both Parthenopaeus and Amphiaraos, in their different ways, look forward to the
inevitable reperformance of their blazons when they eventually encounter their unseen
foes. The forward-looking perspective of the shield devices is already reflected in
Eteocles’ response to the first shield, which he claimed would prophesy (μαντεύσεται
406) its bearer’s death. In the subsequent written shield texts, this proleptic stance is
adopted by the blazons themselves, which speak in the future tense of actions yet to be
carried out. The significance of his shared temporal perspective which arises from the
scripted nature of the shields and is inseparable from Eteocles’ own interpretive and
kledonomantic engagement with them, can only be fully appreciated in light of the one
other type of shield-writing found in the fifth century: post-bellum inscriptions on shields
taken as spoils. It was a common practice throughout antiquity, attested in both literary

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75 The future tense, often noted by critics, contributes to the overall proleptic tone.
76 ἀρήσε 434; οὐδ’ ἄν … ἐκβάλοι 469; κατάξω … ἔστει 647-8.
and material sources, to write atop the captured arms of a foe as a way of turning the tool into a dedicatory agalma and victory monument. Catenacci notes the temporal contrast between the shields of the Seven Against Thebes and such retrospective testimonials. Rather than record an action that has already been accomplished, Aeschylus’ shields are inscribed with words that look forward with performative intent: their writing is intended to do battle, not to preserve its memory.

The complex temporal interplay is illuminated by Eteocles’ reaction to the boasting shield of Eteocles which we have already touched upon briefly above. Incorporating both victims into the fixed materiality of the scriptory tool, Eteocles looks forward to their display as spoils of war (478-9):

 iota kai dy' andore kai polom' et' aspidoz
e'lon lafuroiz doma xosimhosi patroz.

So taking two men and the city on his shield, he will decorate the house of his father with spoils.

Displayed in this way “what the shield shows is literally true: Ares cannot cast this image from the ramparts” where it will remain fixed as decorative spoilia. The Theban seizes upon the temporal naiveté of his opponent by appropriating the performative voice of the shield. Paradoxically, his strategy takes advantage of the tool’s scripted character in order to deprive it of the temporal function inherent in the object qua script. When Eteocles’ reperformance affixes the shield to the Theban house of Megareus, he vitiates the agency of the blazon’s author and insists that his shield function as a monument rather than a tool.

Eteocles’ blazon is “re-inscribed” by Eteocles in reperformance, turning the meaning of its words into something entirely unanticipated by its author. Neither Parthenopaeus nor Amphiaraos leave themselves open to this possibility. Parthenopaeus is fully aware that his shield will come into the performative and interpretive purview of his enemies. Thus he anticipates the appropriation of his blazon by preemptively placing the image of

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78 Notably, the literal retrospective inscription of the shields is imagined in Euripides’ account of the myth (Eur. Phoen. 573-6). See Steiner (1994) p. 76.
80 Benardete (1968) p. 8.
his enemy on the shield “so that the greatest number of missiles will hit that man” (ὦς πλεῖον ἐπὶ ἀνδρὶ τὸ δ’ ἱάπτεσθαι βέλη, 544). In this way it will not be the encoder, but the reperformer himself who will face the uncertain fate of future performative iterations. But the temporal span of Parthenopaeus’ shield also looks backwards – to the history of Thebes and of its delivery from the hated Sphinx at the hands of a man who only plunged the city into greater hardship. The selection of the Sphinx is no coincidence, connecting Parthenopaeus’ threatening blazon to the past of the city and to the house of Laius in particular.\footnote{Zeitlin (1982) pp. 102-3.} That this history was most likely treated, whether as a central or peripheral theme, in the preceding two plays of the trilogy only heightens the temporal authority of the tool, establishing a clear connection between the ekphrastic script and the scripted drama in which it is located.

The divinely inspired prophet, Amphiaraos, looks to the future without the aid of a tool. His mantic eye is able to see his own future as well as that of those around him. He foretells his own downfall and that of Polynieces and declares the Argive endeavor hateful to gods and men. More importantly, the seemingly unscripted temporal mobility of Amphiaraos’ speech is deeply interwoven with the order of the Redepaare itself and thus with Aeschylus’ own scripted poem. The messenger’s report on Amphiaraos begins not with an account of his visions of the future, but with the hyperbolic, asyndetic catalogue of insults that the seer directs at Tydeus. In the speech, presented in oratio obliqua, Amphiaraos blames Tydeus for the Argive misadventure, looking back to his earlier poor advice to Adrastus (571-5):

κακοίοι βάζει πολλὰ Τυδέως βίων,
τὸν ἄνθρωπόν την, τὸν πόλεως ταράκτωρα,
μέγιστον Ἀργεῖ τῶν κακῶν διδάσκαλον,
Ἐρυνύς κλητήρα, πρόσπολον Φόνου,
κακῶν δ’ Ἀδραστοῖ τῶνδε βουλευτήριον.

He addresses Tydeus with many insults [calling him] murderer, disturber of the city, the greatest teacher of evil in Argos, conjurer of the Furies, servant of slaughter, and Adrastus’ council in these [present] evils.

The insults incorporate an Argive history that is otherwise entirely opaque within the
At the same time, they recall the appearance of Amphiaraos in the messenger’s first report, on the selfsame savage Tydeus. There Amphiaraos checked the unreflective impatience of the great fighter, refusing to let him progress without the sanction of the omens. The responson of the two reports gives an indication of the complex temporal structure of the scene as a whole. The ordering and regimentation of the Argive heroes as presented by the messenger has more than one dimension, as is made clear by his first account of Amphiaraos (375-9):

I may speak knowing well the affairs of our attackers, how each obtained his lot by the gates. Tydeus roars by the Proetean gates, but the seer will not permit him to cross the Ismene, for the sacrifices are not propitious.

The messenger controls the speech that he delivers to Eteocles, but outside the city gates Amphiaraos is the first author of the Argive battle line. Now, hearing the seer’s belatedly reported speech to Tydeus, our attention is drawn to the restructuring power that the messenger has deployed throughout his ekphrastic reperformance. Together, these two portraits of Amphiaraos produce the perception of an inconsistency between the messenger’s onstage, ekphrastic reperformance and the unseen and unmediated ordering and encoding of the shields that takes place beyond the dramatic action. The kosmos of the scene is that of reperformance, to which even the prophet with his unadorned shield is made subject.

As author of the order, Amphiaraos’ mantic voice extends from the first Argive champion to the last. The empty blazon of the seer allows his words to travel throughout the shields of the other Argive heroes, encompassing their collective future in the pervasive capacity of his prophetic vision. As Zeitlin observes, Amphiaraos’ “shield continues to signify even in its silence – in fact, because of its silence.” Zeitlin (1982) p. 115. The shield is like his prophetic eye, which sees beyond the confines of time and space.

82 Our evidence for the background to Tydeus’ and Polyneices’ marriages to the daughters of Adrastus is detailed by Hutchinson (1985) ad loc.
83 As Zeitlin observes, Amphiaraos’ “shield continues to signify even in its silence – in fact, because of its silence.” Zeitlin (1982) p. 115. The shield is like his prophetic eye, which sees beyond the confines of time and space.
Redepaare, and in his speech, reperformed by the messenger onstage, he anticipates Eteocles’ response to the final shield. The mantis grants Eteocles his insight into Polynoeices’ blazon, while his shield presents a model of the inherent interchangeability of the scriptory tool. His empty blazon can contain those of all the other warriors, and this permeability renders the tool a more potent script than the impervious vaunting devices alongside which it will be mustered.84 And as the unseen correlate to the structuring, analytical role played onstage by Eteocles throughout the Redepaare,85 Amphiaraoos and his blank shield unwittingly set out the script for the Theban’s final, corrupted reperformance. By questioning the support of Dike in his censure of Polynoeices, Amphiaraoos provides Eteocles with the language of interchangeability that will allow him to usurp his brother’s shield as his own. “What justice” (τίς δίκη), Amphiaraoos asks Polynoeices in the hic et nunc of the messenger’s reperformance, “will extinguish its maternal spring?” (584). Polynoeices may bear Justice on his blazon, but what Justice and – more importantly – for whom?

For Eteocles, the seer’s question suggests that there is a fissure between scriptory tool and encoder, an opening through which he, as a reperformer of the shield, attempts to enter into the encoder’s realm. In adopting this new stance, Eteocles rejects the structure of scripted reperformance on which he has relied thus far. He tries to assume the role of Amphiaraoos and to see the scriptory tool as something not yet fixed. But Eteocles’ temporal insight, unlike that of the mantis, is entirely reliant on the scriptory tools at his disposal. As he tries to dislodge himself from the confines of Polynoeices’ shield, his interpretive powers falter.86 He reaches for the wrong tool, using the language of the mantis to elide his brother’s agency.87 At first it would seem that Eteocles questions the authenticity of Justice, but it is in truth her support for his brother which he calls into

84 One cannot but think of the tradition, not mentioned in Aeschylus’ play but certainly known to him, in which Amphiaraoos is not killed in battle, but swallowed into the earth along with his chariot. This personal characteristic of mediation and unique movement between spheres is certainly reflected in the powerful symbolism of his blank shield device.
86 The point is made with a somewhat different emphasis by Steiner (1994) p. 59.
87 He adopts not only Amphiaraoos’ questioning of Dike and expression of disdain for the expedition against Thebes, but the seer’s focus on Polynoeices’ name and his relation to the land of Thebes. Zeitlin, by contrast, sees Parthenopaeus as Eteocles’ main model in this speech. Zeitlin (1982) pp. 142-4.
doubt (662-71):

If virgin Dike, the child of Zeus is with him in his deeds and thoughts, then soon will this be so. But since Dike has not looked upon him or granted him honor, not when he escaped his mother’s dark womb, nor in his childhood, nor as he came into his youth, nor when hairs began to cluster on his chin, I do not believe that she will stand beside him now as he bears evils into his fatherland. For then would Dike truly be a fraud in name, if she attended to this man in his brazen plans.

Eteocles calls the encoded language of the blazon into question, rejecting the shield’s identification of Dike – who declares her own name in a separate identifying inscription on the shield that often goes unnoticed (Δίκη δ’ ἄφ’ εἶναι φήσιν 646). Eteocles insists that the goddess cannot take up Polyneices’ cause, indeed, that she has never supported him at any time. He, not his brother, should be the figure on the shield, for – he asks – “what man is more just than I?” (τίς ἄλλος μᾶλλον ἐνδυνάμωτερος; 673).

Eteocles sees himself in the shield device but is unwilling to hold the tool in common with his brother. He is not satisfied with taking up his part as reperformer of the device, he wants to make himself its encoder as well. This is the signal expression of Eteocles’ inability to share his identity with his true, living double. The polar opposition of the nearly indistinguishable brothers is the touchstone of Eteocles’ self-perception. He cannot share his brother’s voice lest his own be lost. He thus seeks to usurp his brother’s role and to erase him from the shield just as he has deposed him and expelled him from their common fatherland.

But for all of Eteocles’ insistence, the true script cannot be circumvented. The futility of his refusal to reperform his Polyneices shield is confirmed in their ultimate encounter, which will see both brothers take common possession of the land in death (as set out by
their father’s curse in 726-33). And as Eteocles arms himself for battle, taking up the literal tools of war that have been the engine of the meta-theatrical drama up to this point, he demonstrates how he is already embedded in the role set out for him by the kosmos of the scene, already reperforming the poet’s drama. This moment of broader self-reflection is underlined by the Chorus, who mark Eteocles’ exit not by turning their attention to the battle that is taking place offstage, but by remembering the events of the trilogy’s previous plays. Eteocles’ unsuccessful attempt to deny the absent presence of the author and to repudiate the mediating properties of the scriptory tool cannot simply be counteracted by the character’s death. The tragic poet must demonstrate his ultimate mastery over the dramatic structure of the trilogy as a whole. His voice does not rely on one reperformer for its fidelity. The polyphony of all the voices on the stage – and of all the performative iterations of his poem – ensures that the poet’s tool will be put to its intended purpose.

88 The suggestion that the arming was a component of the dramatic staging is made by Schadewaldt (1961) and taken up by Bacon (1964) pp. 34-6.
In the last chapter we examined how Pindar and Aeschylus explore the materiality of scriptory communication through their manipulation of the notion of the tool. We saw how both poets portray instruments, such as the shields of the *Seven Against Thebes* or the bridle of *Olympian* 13, as a special kind of physical object that is able to mediate the time and space separating coder and receiver. In particular, the externalized status of these inanimate objects enables them to function as intermediaries; wholly synonymous with neither encoder nor receiver, these objects represent a shared possession that can connect across an otherwise insuperable distance. And yet, the inanimate material cannot convey the message inscribed in the intermediary instrument without the aid of an embodied performer who brings the words to life. As scripts, these objects must be reperformed so that the living voice of their initial encoding can again be heard. The conceptual framework of this further element, which requires the physical embodiment of the scriptory poem by the reperformer, will take up our attention now.

For the poets of the early fifth century, imagining the future reperformance of their scriptory poems was not simply a question of verbal impersonation but of incarnation. To bring a script back to life it was not enough for the reperformer simply to speak the words of the poet; he had to enter into a fully embodied mimesis of the role(s) set out for him in the text. The aspect of embodied reperformance that is at issue here has little connection with the material nature of the script itself, since it is not the reified script that the reperformer must inhabit but the voices contained silently therein. For Pindar and Aeschylus, the physically transformative power of scriptory poetics was as indispensible and compelling an element of their new poetic landscape as verbal mimesis. While steeped in the obscure and at times mystical forces of religious ritual, the ability of poetic reperformance to bring about a physical transformation was not a feat of magic but the product of the fully conscious embrace of structures of scriptedness. The scriptory poetics of our poets was a question of the human body as much as of its ephemeral voice: a visceral matter of animal flesh.

Within the poetry of Pindar and Aeschylus, it is the image of the snake that constitutes the most potent representation of the physical embodiment on which scriptory
reperformance relies. With its deep connections to the prophetic powers of Pythian Apollo, to birth and physical transformation, and to the chthonic sphere and the underworld, the figure of the snake resonated in the Greek poetic imagination from its earliest stages.1 Snakes play a key, if infrequent, role in the bestiaries of Homer’s extended similes and form an even more central component of his presentation of divine portents. The snake is at once a metaphorical representative of human behavior and an allegorical symbol through which the gods communicate the future to mortals. It thus displays a close poetic kinship with another prophetically important animal: the bird, whose connections to fifth-century ideas about reperformance were explored in part one of this study.2 But whereas the bird, with its ready connections to sound and poetic articulation, came primarily to help explore the sonic range of poetic reperformance, the poets of the early fifth century deployed the figure of the snake to represent the more physical aspects of their scriptory songs.

The powerful corporality of the snake comes across most readily in those moments when the animal’s literal physical presence permits an interaction with men. Thus in Pindar’s Pythian 4, the giant snake represents the last impossible physical challenge that Jason must overcome with the aid of Medea’s magic before securing the golden fleece. The snake is described with reference to its appearance (γῆιν 249) and especially its incredible size: ὃς πάχει μάκει τε πεντηκόντερον ναῦν κράτει, / τέλεσον ἀν πλαγιὰ ὀδάρου. (245) The comparison with an inanimate object of human craftsmanship highlights the terror that a animal might be so large. A ship of the same size would not be frightening because its inanimate nature renders it incapable of action without human rowers to lend it their power and a steersman to give it a course. More than its size, it is the idea that something of such great mass could yet, within its animate flesh, be possessed of a living spirit that renders the giant serpent so fearsome. Similarly Philoctetes, in a fragment of Aeschylus’ play of that name, recounts how his defeat by a snake irreparably deformed his body: οὐ γὰρ ὁ δράκων ἀνήκεν, ἀλλ’ ἐνώξασεν / δεινήν ἄρομάτων ἐμφυος ποδὸς βλαβεῖν. (fr. 252 Radt) The point of physical contact creates a bridge between the two and permits the snake to transform the

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2 See above, pp. 107-14.
hero’s body. Less sinister are the two serpents sent by Apollo who feed honey to the newborn Iamos in the myth of Olympian 6. Their eyes shimmering silver (γλαυκώπες) – a mark of their animate but also changeable and divinely inspired physicality – they protect the fragile young babe by bringing him the nourishment that he would otherwise have from his mother’s breast.

Within the metaphoric sphere, snakes are no less physically potent and maintain both their fearsomeness and their special ability to come into contact with and even enter the human body. As we saw in the previous chapter, it was the serpentine Typhon on the blazon of Hippomedon who brought the metal of the inanimate shield closest to a living thing. In Aeschylus’ Suppliants, the Danaids pray to prevent their capture by escaping their physical bodies: τὸ πᾶν δ’ ἀφαντὸς ἀμπητής ἀιδνός ὡς / κόνις ἀπερθε πτερύγων ὀλοίμαν. (782-3). When the women fail to attain their goal, they see their aggressor, the Egyptian herald, as a snake coming towards them on two legs (895-6): μαμμᾶ πέλας δίπους ὄφις / ἐχίδνα δ’ ὦς με [...]. The image hovers between beast and man, a composite of the two that is nevertheless unmistakable in its presence before them (πέλας). In the Persai, Ares is capable of reaching men on the battlefield with the murderous, snake-like power of his gaze: κυάνεον δ’ ὀμμασι λεύσων / φονίον δέργαμα δράκοντος (81-2). The eyes of the snake, denoted by the descriptive epithet that they share with the goddess Athena, are a locus of exceptional power as capable of transmitting deathly poison as their teeth or tongue. Pursuing the violent metaphor in the opposite direction, Pindar casts the death of Neoptolemus in his sixth Paian as a reperformance of Apollo’s slaughter of the serpent Pytho at Delphi. The killing, which takes place on the very omphalos where Apollo’s victory over the great snake brought both god and place their name and oracular fame, draws on the resonances of Apollo’s

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3 Something similar may also have occurred in the now lost Kressai, which later sources suggest relied on magic learnt from snakes to bring Glaucus back from the dead. Cf. Apollodorus 3.3.1-2 and Hygenus Fabulae 136. Sommerstein (2008) pp. 122-3.

4 The important role of the eyes in establishing the snake’s protean nature is reflected in the etymological connection between the δράκων and the verb δέργομαι (aorist participle, δρακών), on which see Garvie (1986) p. 77.

5 Above, p. 172.

6 And before the audience, as the herald of their description is onstage beside them.

great triumph to imbue the latter event with a broader significance with respect to the god’s power.\textsuperscript{8}

This is not to say Pindar and Aeschylus never bring snakes to bear on the aural sphere. In the shield ekphrases of the \textit{Seven Against Thebes}, snakes play a direct role in depicting the sonic register when Tydeus is said to shriek in battle like a snake (\textit{κλαγγαίων ύς δράκων βοή 381}). But this description of the sounds made by the living man emphasizes that the noise derives from an animate agent, rather than his inanimate shield, which emits the same sound, but without the corresponding figurative comparison (\textit{ὑπ’ ἀσπάδος δὲ τῷ / χαλκῆλατοι κλάζουσι 385-6}).\textsuperscript{9} Tydeus’ similarity to the snake is primarily based on their shared corporeal status and it is this quality of the two agents that produces the equivalence between their cries. Pindar too presents snakes as bearers of sound, as in the opening of the fragmentary second Dithyramb, where he describes the noise made by Athena when she shakes her aegis: \textit{Παλλάδο[ξ] αἰγίς μυρίων φθογγάζεται κλαγγαίς δρακόντων} (Dithyramb 2. 17-8 = \textit{fr. 70bSM}). Here too, however, the sonic description of the snakes is made to bear on the physicality of its source. The living snakes of Athena’s distinctive armor are mentioned within the context of a dithyrambic performance. The passage begins with a discussion of the noise made when choruses of the past performed songs full of sigmas (\textit{τὸ σῶν κιβδήλων ἄνθρωπων ἀπὸ στομάτων}, [Dithyramb 2.2 = \textit{fr. 70bSM}]) and the subsequent description of the sounds of the snakes seems to be inspired by this initial focus on poetic performance.\textsuperscript{10} The false (\textit{κιβδηλων}) sigma of the human performers stands in contrast to the true sibilants of the snakes, whose bodies match the sound.\textsuperscript{11} The implication is that Pindar’s reperformers, who “revel in sibilants”,\textsuperscript{12} know how to make their own bodies serpentine as the singers of the past did not.\textsuperscript{13}

But perhaps most essential for Pindar and Aeschylus is the way that the snake’s physicality is invested with the power of prophetic expression, creating a link between

\textsuperscript{9} The resonances of the verb \textit{κλάζω} and its cognates are discussed above, pp. 107-114.
\textsuperscript{10} Porter (2007) p. 2.
\textsuperscript{12} D’Angour (1997) p. 338.
\textsuperscript{13} Whether the claim relates to the circular dance of the \textit{kuklos choros}, as D’Angour suggests, is not readily discernible from the extant fragments. D’Angour (1997) p. 342.
the spatio-temporal dynamics of the verbal script and the corporeal concerns of embodied mimesis. This connection is well illustrated by the portentous snakes sent by a wrathful Hera to punish the newborn Herakles in Pindar’s first *Nemean*.¹⁴ The two snakes easily make their way into the recesses of the house, displaying the uncannily physical malleability that permits them to enjoy a proximity to humans that is denied to most creatures. As they prepare to ensnare Herakles and his brother in their jaws, the young hero takes note of their presence and kills them. The death is recounted in vivid detail: Herakles wraps his hands around the serpents’ throats and throttles them, slowly squeezing the life from their monstrous bodies (ἀγχομένοις δὲ χρόνος / ψυχάς ἀπέπνευσεν μελέων ἀφάτων 46-7). The encounter transpires in silence, the unsung chords (μελέων ἀφάτων) of the serpents’ deaths experienced entirely through bodily contact as the erstwhile victim vanquishes his would-be killers. The physical power of the scene is palpable, as the most savage and bestial of heroes tastes battle for the first time (πειράτο δὲ πρώτων μάχας 43).¹⁵

Catching sight of the event, the midwives let out a horrified cry that pierces the hermetic closure of the scene. Soon the seer Tiresias is called to the house to interpret the event. What follows is an extended prophecy delivered in *oratio obliqua* in which the orthomantis outlines the entire future course of Herakles’ life (61-72):¹⁶

\[\text{δὸ δὲ οἱ φράζε καὶ παντὶ στρατῷ, ποίας ὀμιλῆσει τύχας,} \]
\[\text{όσους μὲν ἐν χέρσῳ κτανόν,} \]
\[\text{όσους δὲ πόντῳ θήρας ἀϊδροδίκας;} \]
\[\text{καὶ τίνα σὺν πλαγίῳ} \]
\[\text{ἀνθρῶν κόρων στείχοντα τὸν ἐχθρότατον} \]
\[\text{φᾶ ἐ διαώσειν μόρον.} \]
\[\text{καὶ γὰρ ὅταν θεοὶ ἐν πεδίῳ Φλέγχρας Γεγάντεσοιν μάχαν} \]
\[\text{ἀντιάξωσιν, βελέων ὑπὸ ὑπαίωι κείνου φαιδίμαν γαία} \]
\[\text{πεφύρσεοθαι κόμαν} \]

¹⁴ This theme was also the subject of Paian 20 (=fr. 52uSM), which seems to deal with the death scene in a similar way.
¹⁵ On Herakles’ animal nature, see Burkert (1979) Ch. 4.
And he explained to him and to the entire crowd what fortunes he would meet, what beasts he would slay on land, and what lawless creatures in the sea. And which man, approaching with twisted overabundance, he told that he would repay with the most hateful of fates. And [he said] that when the gods stood against the Giants in battle in the plain of Phlegra, by flights of his missiles would their shining hair be sullied with earth. But he himself in uninterrupted peace for all time would have a most desirable portion of rest as payment for his great toil, in the most pleasing home, receiving blooming Youth as his lawful wife and feasting by the side of Zeus and praising his holy law.

The seer is able to foretell all of Herakles’ future struggles, the beasts that he will encounter on land and sea, the suffering and toils that he will undergo at the hands of Eurystheus, his battles alongside the Olympian gods and triumph over the Giants, and his ultimate immortalization and marriage to Hebe. The future depicted is as emphatically physical as the portent itself. The strains and toils of the conflicts to come replicate the feat first achieved in Heracles’ victory over the snakes. His future physical prowess is present from the outset, as are the monstrous and terrible foes against whom he will battle. Tiresias is able to glimpse each subsequent confrontation in the newborn hero’s single encounter with the snakes. The snakes contain all of these moments throughout Herakles’ mortal life within their own bodies. Their appearance at his birth functions as a corporeal palimpsest in which each future event is already present. It is the special characteristic of the serpent to embody these many individuals across time and space in its own living flesh.

Tiresias’ prophecy adapts the portentous event as a verbal narrative, a catalogue of Herakles’ adventures that looks back to the long poetic tradition associated with the great hero. Pindar himself alludes to this history in his introduction to the myth, when he claims to meet with Herakles through the medium of ancient tales (33-4):

**And I readily meet with Herakles in the great peaks of virtue, rousing the ancient tale…**
Through his appropriation of Tiresias’ prophetic narrative, Pindar recounts these previously sung exploits in his own poem, but it is the snakes – in their insistent corporeal presence – who bring the deeds of the poetic tradition to light and allow Pindar himself to come into contact with the hero (ἄντεχόμαι). The snakes serve as a corporeal pivot, a point of embodied union where the full life and exploits of the hero are commingled in a single living body. The spectrum that is rendered incarnate by the snakes is palpably present to the seer, who presents a catalogue of all the creatures of the future that he perceives within the snakes (ποίατι…δοσονυσ… δοσονυσ), and it is also open to the poet, who can meet with the man of the past through the portentous animals who bring his life into a single moment of embodied presence.

1. ἘΚΑΡΑΚΟΝΤΩΘΕΙΣ Δ’ ἜΓΩ
Within the extant Aeschylean corpus, there is no better illustration of the snake’s ability to pinpoint the uneasy balance between the animate and inanimate mediation of scriptory poetics than the Choephoroi. The snake at the breast, the horrifying vision of Clytemnestra’s portentous dream, is the organizing image of the play. The figure of the serpent merges beast and babe, milk and blood, entwining killer and victim in an embrace of intimate cruelty. Announced by an authorless cry of fear, the toros oneiromantis in the enigmatic words of the Chorus (33-4), the snake dream offers multiple interpretive possibilities and opens a conceptual field of vast range and potency. As Goldhill observes, the dream becomes a “symbol”, explicitly tied to the act of “interpretation” and “re-definition” through the characters’ various attempts to understand its meaning. But beyond mere interpretation, the multivalent figure of the

18 On the filial theme, see especially Dupont (2001) pp. 74-90.
21 Goldhill (1984) esp. p. 155. The dream is subjected to explicit interpretation on three distinct occasions. The first, reported by the Chorus, is the initial response of Klytemnestra, who follows the καταλό ανεμάτων in dispatching Electra and the Chorus to make libations at the tomb of Agamemnon (32-54). The second occurs at the conclusion of the kommos, when Orestes learns of the dream and offers his own conflicting explanation (523-53). The final interpretation is that of
suckling snake adds a further dimension to the symbolic matrix of the play by permitting the characters themselves to deliberately inhabit the scriptory song of which they are a part. Through their interaction with the figurative power of the snake – by turns metaphoric, allegorical, and literal – the speaking actors, and none more so than Orestes, reflect on their own role in giving life and voice to the same symbols that are embodied by the serpent in the dream-text.

The most significant event prefigured by the dream vision is Orestes’ matricidal encounter with Klytemnestra which will take place at the culmination of the drama. Yet, by confining the murder to the final quarter of the play, Aeschylus places the central focus of the staged action on the preliminaries to the deed itself. This is not a question of planning: the dolos is quickly devised, a haplous muthos as Orestes himself declares (554). Rather the action of the play is concerned with establishing the conceptual parameters which will permit Orestes to go through with the matricide. Orestes’ preparation is accomplished progressively through a series of moments acted out onstage: the return of the exile; the incantation of the kommos; the revelation of the dream; and finally, at the critical moment, the communication (and re-performance) of Apollo’s prophecy. Each event represents a further step in Orestes’ transformation into the agent who can commit the unthinkable deed of killing his own mother. In the process, Orestes will also be literally transformed, disguised as a foreigner to report the false tale of his own death.

Well before the details of Klytemnestra’s serpent dream have been revealed by the Chorus, the recognition scene between Orestes and Electra establishes the critical foundation upon which the symbolism of the snake will rest. The scene presents a meditation on the limits of objecthood, extending even to those special objects, agalmata, that have been imbued with the transcendent power of the divine. The signs of Orestes’ presence that Electra finds by her father’s tomb are turned into representatives of the script at its most basic level. The simple message of these objects – Orestes was here –

Klytemnestra as she recognizes that the dream has in fact prophesied her death at the hands of her son (908).


23 The serpent dream was, however, already a part of the tradition through Stesichorus, so some inkling of the content of the dream may have been possible from its first mention at line 32. See discussion below, p. 200.
expresses the fundamental characteristic of scriptory communication: the absent author. Yet it is equally fundamental that the scriptory communication counterbalance the absence of its encoder with the living breath of reperformance. The script cannot function alone. The opening exchange reveals the necessity of a further element, the animate embodiment of the encoded object. As the play progresses, and Orestes’ mastery of encoding and re-enactment develops, it will be the role of the snake to allow the young exile to step into his new role as both avenger and matricide, to contain within his own body the contradictions of the action that he must perform. But Orestes cannot gain this understanding on his own. He must first explore the power, and the dangers, of a world of scripts through his reunion with his sister – each playing the part of encoder and reperformer of the other – before he is able to embrace both roles himself.

The play begins with the arrival of Orestes, whose return as *timaoros* has been amply foreshadowed in the *Agamemnon*. The text of this opening scene is notoriously lacunose, even by the standards of the *Choephoroi*’s universally problematic text. We are fortunate to have a handful of lines preserved for us through the writings of and about other authors, but the true extent of what has been lost remains unknown and unknowable. Nevertheless, the nine lines that are reproduced in most modern editions, whatever the extent of the gaps between them or, indeed, their original order, clearly represent Orestes offering a prayer to Hermes *Chthonios* and dedicating a lock of hair to the grave of his father – the same lock which Electra will discover when she later approaches the tomb in her own lamentation (6-7):

\[\ldots \pi\lambda\delta\kappa\alpha\mu\omicron\ \Iota\nu\acute{\alpha}\chi\omicron\\varphi\omicron\pi\tau\acute{\omicron}\rho\omicron\omicron\nu\omicron.\]
\[\tau\omicron\nu\ \delta\epsilon\upsilon\upsilon\tau\rho\omicron\omicron\nu\ \delta\acute{e} \tau\omicron\nu\delta\omicron\ \pi\nu\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\]

\[\ldots \text{lock of hair, an offering to Inachos, and this second, a dedication of grief.}\]

With the dedication of the lock, Orestes supplements his words with a physical token, a synechdochic surrogate cut from his own head. The lock is imbued with the import of Orestes’ prayer and is meant to retain the meaning of his words after the occasion of

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24 Roberts (1985).
26 Possible variations are presented and evaluated by West (1990) pp. 229-33.
speech has passed.\textsuperscript{27} Unlike the shields of the \textit{Seven Against Thebes}, whose encoded import was significant precisely due to the total absence of the shields’ “authors” from the dramatic stage,\textsuperscript{28} the dramatic action of the \textit{Choephoroi} opens with a scene of encoding in which we are permitted to view the moment of composition, to witness the “true” intention of the author as he imbues an object with the meaning of his words. Yet, just as with Athena’s gift to Bellerophon in Pindar’s \textit{Olympian} 13, far from rendering his script unproblematic, the subsequent disjunction of coder and encoded text will produce an interpretive opacity that threatens to obscure them both.

The lock, as a physical part of the speaker’s body, is an integral and natural extension of Orestes’ words and is thus addressed, as they are, to his dead father. The words and the offering represent the first articulation of the play’s overarching theme of communication between the dead and living (4-5):\textsuperscript{29}

\begin{quote}
*tύμβου δ’ ἐπὶ θηρύσω πατρὶ
χλύειν, ἀκούσαμι.*
\end{quote}

\textit{I speak out beside this mounded tomb for my father to hear and listen.}

The prayer, and thus the lock which represents it, is directed explicitly to Agamemnon, whom Orestes hopes to reach in the underworld through the mediating locus of his tomb. After the dedication he addresses his father in the second person (\textit{οὐ γὰρ παρὼν ὄμωξα σῶν, πάτερ, μόρον / οὐδ’ ἔξετενα χεῖρ’ ἔπ’ ἐκφορὰ νεκροῦ. For I was not present then to lament your fate, father, nor did I stretch out my hand to the procession of your corpse. 8-9}). Orestes laments his previous absence and thus expresses his hope that his belated return will allow him to communicate with the world below. Yet, in order to encode the lock with his message, Orestes must sever the hair from the rest of the body. It cannot be dedicated without becoming divorced from its point of origin, removing its

\textsuperscript{27} On the religious significance that the dedication instills into the subsequent recognition, see especially Pucci (1967).

\textsuperscript{28} A similar contrast might also be drawn with Klytemnestra’s beacon speech in the \textit{Agamemnon} (281-316), where the distant fires bring the message of Troy’s downfall back to Argos. Cf. Goldhill (1984) p. 126. In that scenario, however, Klytemnestra is fully master of the symbols (\textit{τοὐδείς τοι οὐκ ἄφθορῳ φωνέω 312}) and is able to reperform their silent message onstage, giving full and faithful body and voice to the fiery lights (\textit{τέχναι τοιούτοιν σύμμοιλόν τε σειλόμενον λέγω 315}).

\textsuperscript{29} So Pucci (1967) p. 368. This theme will be explored in greater detail in next chapter.
author from control over its subsequent fortunes. The silent lock will still be able to communicate, but it will be to a different, unintended addressee, and it will do so through visual, not verbal, means. Orestes is not aware of this potential when he places the lock on the tomb, but through his observation of his sister’s response to it he will come to understand the basic mechanics of scriptory poetics.

The arrival of Electra and the Chorus of captive women interrupts Orestes’ prayer to his father. Orestes quickly identifies his sister, and in his curiosity about the women’s procession he curtails his own funerary dedications and chooses to observe the women undetected and learn the purpose of their visit to the tomb. Orestes returns to a position ekpodôn, out of the action – though not off stage – allowing the events surrounding his father’s tomb once again to take place without him. His companion in this self-effacing (albeit temporary) step away from the central action of the stage, Pylades, is addressed by name, signaling the silent presence of the third actor, whose own status as non-participatory observer of the drama will finally be brought to bear at the play’s crucial moment, when he steps into a speaking role in response to Orestes’ desperation. At the end of this brief prologue, however, it is Orestes who joins Pylades as unheard and unseen witness to the speech of Electra and the Chorus. Orestes’ withdrawal recreates the earlier condition of his absence from the tomb and from the house, but now his absence is firmly situated within the hic et nunc action of the present, and with his encoded dedication left behind to mark his return.

Electra first takes notice of the lock at the close of the libation rituals and draws the Chorus’s attention to the νέος μύθος (166), a designation which at first seems to align

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31 Orestes’ quick recognition of Electra presents a clear contrast to her own extended doubts about her brother’s identity. It is noteworthy that in his Sophoclean and Euripidean guises, Orestes is not permitted to act as voyeur. Sophocles makes explicit the denial (80-5): ὌΡ. Ἀρ’ ἐστὶν ή δύστυχος Ἡλέκτρα; θέλεις / μείνωμεν κἀστοι κἀνακουσόμεν γόον; / ΠΑ. Ἡμιστα: μηδὲν πρόσθεν ή τὰ Λοξίου / πειρώμεθ’ ἐρθείς, καὶ τὸν τόν θρηστεύειν / πατρός ἥνουτες λοιπόν τοῦτα γὰρ φέρει / νύκτην τ’ ἐφ’ ἤμιν καὶ κράτος τῶν δρωμένων.
33 As many have noted, the discovery seems to come in response to the Chorus’ prayer for an ἅνερ ἀναλυτήριον δόμον (160-1). Solmsen (1967) p. 4, Fitton Brown (1961).
34 The phrase νέος μύθος is likely also directed at establishing the novelty of Aeschylus’ treatment of the recognition scene through the dedication of a lock of hair in comparison with
the object with her father, the lock’s original addressee. But Electra cannot perceive the
lock’s intended purpose. The initial introduction of the lock as a *mythos* suggests that it
belongs to the verbal realm, but Electra describes her subsequent examination of the
object in exclusively visual terms: ὅρω (168); δοξάω (170); ἰδεῖν (174); ἰδεῖν (176);
προσεἴδεται (178). Looking at the lock, Electra senses that it must have an origin, an
author, but its mute visual cues cannot reveal its past to her. In her quest for its owner,
she searches for a body to which the lock might be rejoined, and paradoxically identifies
herself as the only possible donor: οὐχ ἔστιν ὅστις πλήν ἐμοῦ κεῖσαι νῦν. *No one
apart from myself could have cut it* (172); αὐτοίοιν ἠμῖν κάρτα προσφερῆς ἰδεῖν. *And
to my own [hair] how closely you can compare its looks.* (176). Still relying wholly on
literal, visual indicators, Electra cannot grasp the true nature of the object before her. In
the face of the author’s complete absence, Electra usurps his role, claiming his agency as
her own, much as singers in the oral tradition appropriated each other’s verses and names.
She does not know how a scriptory poem should be reperformed. And in her confusion
she up-ends the process, offering herself, the receiver of the encoded message, as the
agent of its creation, unable to see the author behind her re-performative role.

When the Chorus suggest that Orestes may be the source of the lock, Electra at first
makes use of the same clues of visual resemblance to test this proposition: μᾶλλον
ἐχεῖνον βοστρύχοις προσεἴδεται. *It most resembles the hair of that man* (178).35 But
where she could complete the visual comparison of the lock to her own body and, more
importantly, gauge its presence against her own past actions, Electa’s identification of the
lock as belonging to her brother does not bring the absent Orestes fully into her presence.
For Electra, this erstwhile part of her brother’s body, now isolated and distinct from its
source, is no longer endowed with a vital connection to its origin. She accepts that the

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35 The verisimilitude of the *Choephoroi* recognition scene has been the subject of criticism since
as least as early as Euripides’ *Electra*. There is, logically, no way for Electra to know what her
brother’s hair looks like after his many years of absence, but in this, as in many other aspects, we
must accept that the logic of Aeschylus’ symbolism is more powerful than the mundane
lock belongs to him, but she cannot credit that he has himself dedicated it at the tomb. The lock is an offering, nothing more. It is likely, Electra asserts, that Orestes has sent the offering in the care of a courier rather than coming himself to their father’s grave (180). His hair, and not he, is present, and she will only extend her belief to the former.

Electra’s doubt is tempered by the hope that Orestes may indeed have returned. She struggles to understand whether it is possible that he has come in person, and as she does so, her conceptual grasp of the lock undergoes a transformation; where once she saw an object, now she begins to recognize a script. This change in the status that Electra accords the lock is signaled by a corresponding expansion of the vocabulary that she uses to describe it. At first, Electra and the Chorus refer to the object almost exclusively as part of a human body: βοστρωχος (168), ἔθειρω (175), βοστρωχος (178), χαίτη (180), and once by the broad moniker δώρον (177). These terms stress the corporeal nature of the lock and, by implication, its natural connection to a living donor with whose physical body the dedication might at least be re-united, if not rejoined. As she begins her extended speech of reconsideration (183-204), Electra reprises her earlier position, shedding tears as she looks upon the lock (πλόκαμον ἱδούσῃ τόνδε 187). The physical description paired with a term of visual perception reaffirms her literal understanding of the object. But as her hopes increase, Electra wonders if she might apply a different label, that of aglaisma (192-4):

εἰὼ δ’ ὅπως μὲν ἀντιχωρεῖ τάδ’ αἰνέσω,
εἶναι τόδ’ ἄγλαιμα μοι τοῦ φιλτάτου
βρῶτων Ὀρέστου – σαίνομαι δ’ ύπ’ ἐλπίδος.

For how can I openly declare that this is the adornment of that dearest to me of mortals, Orestes – hope fawns on me.

The contrast between the two semantic fields is repeated in even stronger terms in the following lines (195-200):

εἰὼ εἴχε φωνήν ἐμφρον’ ἄγγέλου δίκην,
ὅπως διφοροτις οὕσα μὴ ἑκανυσούμην,
ἀλλ’ ἤ σάφ’ ἤνει τόνδ’ ἀποσπύσαι πλόκον,
εἴπερ γ’ ἄτ’ ἐχθροῦ χρατῶς ἤν τετμιμένος,
ἤ ξυγγενῆς ὃν εἴχε συμπενθεῖν ἔμοι.

36 It is only much later that this term comes to have the generalized meaning of “ornament”.

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Electra is of two minds (δύσφοροντις). When she believes the lock to come from her enemies, she sees it only as a body-part (πλόκαμον 187; πλόκον 198). But when she allows herself to imagine that her brother is its origin, it takes on the character of a symbolic object (ἄγαλμα 188; ἄγαλμα 201). As we saw in the last chapter, the terms agalma and aglaisma participate in a special discourse that attaches to certain objects thought to be possessed of a divine power closely associated with exceptional linguistic, and especially written, communication. Within the Oresteia these terms have an even more pointed resonance, having been conspicuously applied to the human sacrifices of Iphigenia and Cassandra and Agamemnon in the Agamemnon. In the earlier instances the terms signal the uneasy mingling of animate and inanimate nature that results from the transformation of a living, human body into a sacrificial object. Here Electra deploys the terms to reflect a similar transmutation, that of (part of) her brother’s body as it is transformed into the dedicatory object on her father’s tomb.

Electra’s shift in terminology is reflected in the modes of perception that she associates with the lock. Despite her newly expanded understanding of its symbolic potential, the object will remain opaque until Electra knows its origin and intention. To learn these things, she must “hear” and not “see”. She hopes that the lock itself will speak for its author and serve as a messenger (ἄγγελου δίκην) for what is unseen. This is not merely a question of communication, but of the mediated, encoded, and segregated communication of scriptory poetics. As Electra comes to understand the lock as more than simply a body-part, she becomes more acutely aware of the distance that separates the script from its author. And it is in her realization of this basic quality of separation that Electra begins to yearn for more than a purely visual engagement with the object before her; she wants to hear its voice (εἶδον ἐξειραμένην). The voice that Electra longs for

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37 ἄγαλμα, (of the smell of human sacrifices) Ag. 1312; ἄγαλμα, (of Iphigenia and Helen, respectively) Ag. 208; 741.
is not that of Orestes, but of the lock, of the scriptory object itself. But the lock, like the tools and armor examined in the previous chapter, has no agency of its own. In order to speak, not only must it be imbued with the message of its encoder, but it must be reanimated in embodied reperformance. Electra cannot believe in the message or recognize its author without hearing its voice reperformed for her in the *hic et nunc*. Without the living medium of an actor to impersonate and embody its author, the lock will remain mute and meaningless.

Electra is not immediately granted the proof of voice that she craves. Rather she is presented with another inanimate encoding of her brother’s body: the footprints he has left on the earth around the tomb (206-12):

καὶ μὴν στίβοι γε, δεύτερον τεχμήριον, 
ποδῶν ὁμοῖα τοῖς τ’ ἐμοίσιν ἐμφερείς.
καὶ γὰρ δο’ ἐστών τώδε περισσαφά ποδοίν, 
αὐτοῦ τ’ ἐξείνου καὶ συνεμπόρου τινός.
πέρναν τενόντων θ’ ὑπογραφαί μετρούμεναι 210
εἰς ταύτῳ συμβαίνουσι τοῖς ἐμοῖς στίβοις.
πάρεστι δ’ ὠδίς καὶ φρενών καταφθορά.

*And look – footprints! A second token, answering exactly to those of my feet. But there are traces of two feet, of that man and some companion. The undersides of the sinews and outlines measure equally to my own footprints. I am awash in pain and confusion.*

The prints are a second, unintended, encoding by the author of the lock; marks left in the ground as a result of his presence at the tomb. The δεύτερον τεχμήριον offers Electra an opportunity to reperform her interpretation just as Orestes reperformed his dedication at the opening of the play (δεύτερος πενθητήμιος 7). Now less resistant to the symbolic power of the lock, Electra quickly aligns the footprints with the modalities of written textuality, declaring the prints to be inscriptions: περισσαφά ποδοίν (207) and πέρναν τενόντων θ’ ὑπογραφαί (209).39 Like the lock, the footprints are markers of Orestes own body, formed from his feet and sinews. But the prints are not objects – as is the lock

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39 Steiner (1994) p. 35. Somewhat more subtly, the prints are twice referred to by the unusual term, στίβοι (205, 210), the same one that Apollo uses to unmask Hermes’ deceitful double footprints in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes (352, 353), a text that is considered by a number of contemporary scholars to be a meditation on writing. Bergren (1982) and less explicitly, Steiner (1994) pp. 42-4. Cf. also Ag. 411.
– but mere vestiges: shadow images of Orestes positive form. These negative traces are not simply further removed from their author; they were never truly part of him, and their very existence is predicated on his absence. And yet, the inscriptions on the earth are more faithful bearers of their author’s intent, since they reflect not only his desire to honor his father’s grave but his former physical presence and agency in the dedicatory ritual.

When Electra compares her brother’s prints to her own, she does not this time confuse herself about their source but easily recognizes Orestes as their true creator. And yet the identical nature of their footprints – the ease with which she might step into them – does not bring her any closer to their absent author. Her recognition of his agency in the prints only heightens the distance between them. Electra does not take up the role of re-performer; she does not inhabit Orestes’ absent body filling the space marked out by his empty footprints. Although she can sense the agent behind the prints, she does not know how to put herself in contact with him by allowing him to become present through her; sharing her body and voice to bring him into the hic et nunc. She only feels her brother’s absence more keenly. Rather than a joyful reunion, this is at once the moment of Electra’s greatest distance from, and deepest longing for, the author of these texts. In her pure isolation, her only company is her own anguish (πάθεσι τ’ ὑδίξ καὶ φρενῶν καταφθορά 211). The pathos of Electra’s confused longing reminds us of the profound uncertainty that motivates the poet to regularly explore the scripitory nature of his work.

Electra’s despair is not only put on view for the audience, but also for her brother as internal audience on the stage. As Rush Rehm has argued, Orestes’ silent observation of the Chorus’s first song turns the site of the tomb into a kind of onstage theater, a “self-referential, or metatheatrical, space.” When Orestes and Pylades move off to the side, watching the women dance around the tomb, they present an onstage performance of the

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act of viewing that the audience are themselves engaged in. The scene which follows is itself a kind of reperformance of Orestes’ monodic prologue in full choral expression. The women trace their grief in bloody wounds across their cheeks and rend their clothes, mirroring Orestes’ cutting of the lock. But the women’s traces of grief remain part of them, held in their still living flesh. They mark their bodies, but do not divide them; author and text remain united. And when Electra finally begins her own prayer, the young woman echoes her brother in addressing her first words to Hermes Chthonios (124). The repetition furthers the sense of double mimesis, Electra re-performs the script of her brother’s prayer, but now with Orestes, the unknown author, as silent audience.

It is well to note that this frame of theatrical self-consciousness was already at work in the dedication of the lock itself, which is declared to be a deuterōs penthētērios by Orestes as he places it on his father’s tomb (7). Another lock, we are lead to understand, has been dedicated to the river Inachos when Orestes passed into Argos. The onstage dedication then re-enacts a first ritual act that we must imagine to have been performed before the action of the play commenced. Orestes’ action is a repetition, a reperformance, that looks back in time to a lost moment between the close of the Agamemnon and the beginning of the Choephoroi. Thus even before it becomes a text for Electra, the lock points to the poet’s role in crafting these plays, weaving together the temporal strands of the action as Cassandra had done under Apollo’s possession. Orestes arrives already a re-performer of an earlier script, encoded beyond the limits of the stage. But the onstage dedication is also a dramatization of that previous act of composition, and it will be the central concern of the subsequent recognition scene to properly re-perform the script that he has created. Now the encoder stands watching as his sister encounters the scripts left by his earlier action. But in the face of her inability to reperform the texts, he is powerless to reach her or to lessen her grief.

Stepping out of his silent observation, Orestes reveals himself and instructs Electra to exchange her sorrowful words for a prayer of thanksgiving. He tells her that she has come

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44 The focus on Orestes’ visual perception is well elucidated by Goldhill (1984) pp. 105-6.
45 On the significance of the chthonic god in the play as a whole, see Garvie (1970).
46 The precise dynamics of the dedications remain unclear. But the suggestion, put forth by Solmsen (1967) p. 4, that both dedications are enacted in the course of the prologue would seem to be invalidated by the fact that only one lock is found by Electra in the subsequent scene. Garvie (1986) ad loc.
into view (εἰς ὄψιν ἣμεις 215) of the one she has been seeking, that her prayers have been answered. The sight (opsis) of Orestes, fully present before her, is unlike her visual engagement with his earlier parts and traces. Now her brother, the author, stands before her in his true and unmediated embodiment. Electra responds with disbelief. Her incomplete understanding of the scriptedness of the lock and footprints, seeing them either entirely divorced from their author (as was the case with the lock) or from their reperformer (the footprints), leaves her at an impasse when the three come together. Her brother demonstrates to her how the lock matches both of their heads and how both can fit their feet into the prints by the tomb. But even as he draws her attention to the way that the scriptory tokens connect him, their encoder, to her, their receiver and would-be reperformer, Electra cannot fully comprehend the spatio-temporal dynamics at work.

This is not a problem of communication. Orestes could not be more plain in expressing his identity (216-9):

Ηλ. καὶ τίνα σύνουσθά μοι καλουμένη βροτῶν;
Ορ. σύνοιδ᾽ Ὀρέστην πολλά σ᾽ ἐκπαγγουμένην.
Ηλ. καὶ πρὸς τί δήτα τυγχάνω κατευματῶν;
Ορ. ὅδ᾽ εἰμί· μὴ μάτεν' ἐμοῦ μᾶλλον φίλον.

El: What man do you know me to have called for?
Or: I know that you have longed terribly for Orestes.
El: And in what way have I finally hit upon that for which I prayed?
Or: I am he. Search not for anyone more dear.

Orestes is baffled that his sister cannot recognize him in the flesh when she had seen his hand in the dedication of the lock and the footprints by the tomb (225-8). Now that she sees (ὄρωσα) she does not know him, but where she seemed to see (ἐδόκεις ὀράν) him through the tokens, she knew that it was he. But Electra cannot square his statements with her certain knowledge of his absence, gleaned through the tokens by the grave. Now Orestes is offering to reperform the texts that Electra does not know how to embody. Playing the role which he authored himself, Orestes demonstrates his growing sophistication in exploiting the power of scriptory poetics. But for Electra, the complex layering short-circuits her still tentative understanding of the objects before her. She claims that he is tricking her (ἀλλ᾽ ἦ δόλον τιν᾽, ὦ ξέν', ἀμφὶ μοι πλέκεις; Are you
weaving some deception around me, stranger? 220);47 that he is making her an object of ridicule (ἀλλ’ ἐν παραβολῇ τοῖς ἐμῶις γελῶν θέλεις; Do you wish to make a fool of me before my foes? 222). She cannot see any other way to explain his presence before her. Even when she tries to credit his claims, she does not even know how to address him, since she cannot understand that he is truly present, and is indeed who he claims to be (ὡς ὄντ’ Ὄρεστην τῷ ἔγω σε προσενέπω; Shall I address you as the one who is Orestes? (224). She sees deception where Orestes presents a true embodiment of scriptory reperformance.

It is only when Orestes reveals his own encoded object – a cloak made for him by Electra herself – that she is able to fully accept her brother’s presence (231-2):

ιὸδο δ’ ὑφασμα τοῦτο, σής ἔργον χερός, 
σπάθις τε πληγὰς, ἐν δὲ θήρειον γραφήν –

*Look at this weaving, the work of your hand, of the blows of your shuttle, and in it the image of a hunt.*

The woven garment, which is also the symbol of Klytemnestra’s past and Orestes’ future deceit,48 stands as the first fully realized script of the play.49 Orestes’ description points both to the moment of its encoding (σπάθης πληγὰς) and to the message that it bears (θήρειον γραφήν). Electra looks upon the object of which she knows herself to be the author and can recognize Orestes as its reperformer – literally giving body to the cloak that he wears on his back. The moment of full recognition comes with the completion of the circle, as author, script, and re-performer are together onstage.

The slow unfolding of the recognition scene and extended lyric *amoibaion* of the subsequent *kommos* draw focus away from the dream, first introduced by the Chorus in the *parodos* (32ff.), until the play’s mid-point. In their initial description, the Chorus gave no indication of the dream’s content, only the fearful and uncertain nature of its arrival and the resulting decision to offer libations at Agamemnon’s tomb. Once his reunion with

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47 The *dolos* will, however, be deployed by Orestes against his mother.
48 Sider (1978), who claims that the cloth would have been “held up” rather than worn by Orestes, p. 26. The same term that is applied to Electra’s weaving, ὑφασμα, is used by Orestes in displaying his dead mother and Aigisthus at 1015: πατροκτόνον θ’ ὑφασμα.
49 As Steiner has noted, the weaving also represents the culmination of a progression “moving from an ‘excerpt’ to an ‘imprint’ to a full-fledged pictogram.” Steiner (1994) p. 35.
his sister has been fully achieved, the characters’ attention returns to the dream – the reason for the women’s unusual and fortuitous visit to the tomb. At Orestes’ bidding and encouragement, the Chorus relay Klytemnestra’s report: that she dreamt she gave birth to a serpent (τεχεῖν δράκωντ’ ἐδοξέην 527) and wrapped it in swaddling clothes as if it were a child (παιδὸς δίνην 529), but that when she brought it to her breast to nurse the snake drew blood mixed in with her milk (ἐν γάλακτι θρόμβων αἴματος σπάωα 533). From this point Electra will remain silent, her role within the meditation on scriptory poetics now replaced by Klytemnestra and her dream-text.

The use of the dream trope in the unfolding of the matricide is not an Aeschylean innovation. Stesichorus too made use of a snake dream in his Oresteia, but it seems clear even from our limited evidence that Aeschylus significantly altered the content and function of the dream in his dramatic treatment. Stesichorus places the main focus on Orestes’ patrimony, representing Orestes, the young Pleisthenid king, as born from the head of his serpent father.50 By contrast, in Aeschylus it is Klytemnestra who gives birth to the serpent and suckles it at her breast. The alteration shifts the emphasis to the matrilineal relationship, and the mixture of blood and milk that the snake draws from Klytemnestra’s breast establishes a clear model for the moral and emotional ambiguity of Orestes’ matricide.51 Moreover, the reconfiguration permits the ultimate accomplishment of the matricide to comprise an onstage reperformance of the dream by fully embodied agents. Orestes and Klytemnestra will both participate in the reenactment, their actions determined by a script that has already been clearly established.

The dream, like the lock and the weaving, is an encoded message possessed of the fundamental qualities of a script. And Klytemnestra’s perception of the dream (ἐδοξέην 527) is like Electra’s understanding of the lock and prints, through which she seemed to see Orestes (ἐδόξεις ὅραν 228). And like the earlier objects, the snake is perceived visually (ἀν οὐτοί μᾶταιον ὅψανον 534, as Orestes claims). The snake dream is not an object per se, in that it is devoid of the material status possessed by those earlier tokens of recognition. It does not point us to the script as mediating object, but to the shared

physicality which scriptedness makes possible.\textsuperscript{52} It is in relation to this potentiality that the unique symbolism of the snake, as living portent, is brought to bear. The dream can function as a script insofar as it sets out a fixed dynamic to be enacted by a specified number of agents but without any internal ability to bring these actions to fruition. But it contains an added element, the corporality of the living actor, whose body – like the snake’s – must be able to enter into and adapt to the symbolic roles that it is asked to play. Like a script, the dream must be reperformed, but it is also itself already a performance.

The centrality of the idea of embodiment and of the necessity of reperformance in establishing the scriptory – rather than merely portentous – character of the dream is made vivid through Orestes’ immediate desire to re-enact it, casting himself in the role of the serpent. Orestes recognizes the similarities between himself and the snake; they are bound together (\textsuperscript{543}συγκόλλως) and twinned just as Electra was twinned with her brother through the lock and footprints. Born from the same source (\textsuperscript{544}τὸν ἀὐτὸν χῶρον ἔκλητῶν ἔμοι) and suckled at the same breast (\textsuperscript{545}μαστὸν ὀμφέχασον ἔμον θρεπτήμον), the snake, like Electra, is an interchangeable double of Orestes himself. But Orestes does not confuse the similarities for identity. He sees himself in the snake and understands that it is possible to embrace and inhabit its role. And he recognizes that to participate in the dramatic action he cannot simply act as his own agent, he must also become the beast at his mother’s breast (548-50):

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{58}δεὶ τοῖς νυν, ως ἔθρεψεν ἐκπαγγὼν τέρας, θανεῖν βιαώς; ἐκδρασαντοθείς δι’ ἐγὼ κτεῖνον νυν, ως τούνειον ἐνεπεί τόδε.
\end{quote}

Then she, as she nurtured the terrible portent, must die violently. I, having become the snake, will kill her, as the dream tells me to.

The transformation, at once literal and metaphoric, follows the dream script (ὡς τούνειον ἐνεπεί τόδε). Through his mastery of the poetics of scriptory embodiment, Orestes can become the serpent ready to reperform the drama with his own body.

\textsuperscript{52} In this respect, we may draw a contrast with Bellerophon’s dream in O.13, analyzed in the previous chapter, where the material status of the \textit{appor}t represented the central nexus of symbolic power within the episode.
One might think that his adoption of the dream-script and his role as serpent would suffice to prepare Orestes to enact the matricide, but Aeschylus presents one final examination of scriptory poetics before bringing the play to its climax. Orestes’ *dolos*, commanded by Apollo to match that with which Klytemnestra killed Agamemnon, will also be set out in a manner that exploits the special spatio-temporal dynamics of scriptory poetics, and its ability to transpose speech into the voice of a reperformer. With respect to key characteristics, the *dolos* is both a contrast and a parallel to the dream portent.\(^53\) Like the dream, the *dolos* is prophetic, but where the latter is adopted at the clear instructions of Apollo (Λυξίας ἐφήμωσεν, ἃναξ Ἀπόλλων, μάντις ἀφενθής τὸ πρόν. 558-9), the origins of the former are left enigmatically obscured.\(^54\) Orestes, not Klytemnestra will be the author of the *dolos*; he will compose it onstage in full view of the audience, not in the dark recesses of the house (μυχόθεν 35). For Orestes to perform his drama, it will require, like the snake, a bodily transformation, but now set in the language of the stage – of costume and disguise – rather than the uncertain realm of metaphoric embodiment and transmutation. Orestes and Pylades will literally play the part of Phocian strangers, concealing their true identities with travelers’ clothes and foreign sounding speech (560-4):

\[
\begin{align*}
& Ξένῳ γὰρ εἰκῶς, παντελῆ σαφῆν ἔχων, \\
& ἡξὼ σὺν ἄνδοι τῷ ἐφ’ ἐρχείους πύλας \\
& Πυλάδη, ξένος τε καὶ δοῦξένος δόμων. \\
& ἄμφω δὲ φωνὴν ἱσσομεν Παρνησίδα, \\
& γλώσσῃς αὐτὴν Φωκίδος μιμουμένω.
\end{align*}
\]

*In the guise of a stranger, wearing full traveling attire, I will go into the palace gates with Pylades here, a stranger and ally of the house. We will both speak in the Parnassian tongue, imitating the battle cry of the Phocians.*

Just as with the dream, the *dolos* will rely on the ability of scriptory poetics to transmute identity and to separate author from reperformance. Orestes, fully in command of his script, will serve both as author and reperformer, becoming another speaker when he takes up the false words that he has crafted for himself to impersonate.

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While the later aspect, Orestes reperformative function within the *dolos*, is clear from his use of disguise, his agency in crafting the language of his imagined drama is dynamically demonstrated by his emphatic use of direct speech, twice within the course of seven trimeter lines, in his subsequent description of his plan (565-76).

καὶ δὴ θυρωφόνοις οὕτως ἂν φαινόμα φρενὶ
δέξαιτ', ἑπειδὴ δαιμονὰ δόμος ἱκανοὶς-
μενοῦμεν οὕτως ὡστ' ἑπεικάζειν τινὰ
δόμοις παραστείχοντα καὶ τάδ' ἐννέπειν-
τί δὴ πύληι τὸν ἰκέτην ἀπείργηται
Άγιοθος, εἰπὲ ὦ ἄνθροπος παρὼν;' 570
εἰ δ' οὖν ἀμείψω βαλὸν ἐφεσίων πυλῶν
κάκεινον ἐν θρόνουιν εὐρήῳ πατρός,
ἡ καὶ κολών ἐπειτὰ μ' ὁι κατὰ στόμα
ἐρεῖ, σάφ' ἴθη, καὶ κατ' ὀφθαλμοῖς καλεῖν,
ποιν αὐτὸν εἰπέν 'ποδαπός ὁ ξένος;' νεκρὸν
θήσω, ποδώκει περὶβαλῶν χαλκεύματι.

And if none of the doormen receive us with a welcoming mind, since the house is possessed by evils, we will wait so that someone passing by the house may wonder and say "Why does Aigisthus keep this suppliant outside his door, if he is at home and knows of the situation?" But if I enter into the palace gates and find that man on the throne of my father, or if arriving he speaks to me, know this, that laying eyes on him, before he can say "What country is the stranger from?" I will kill him, embracing him with swift bronze.

Orestes is composing his own sciptory poem, with lines for actors in the case of two possible outcomes that are being (pre-)performed now by their author at the moment of composition – a proleptic impersonation of the characters who might give voice and body to this speech in reperformance. It is not long before Orestes’ sciptory composition is made good and his own words are echoed back to him in the voice of the *oiketes*: εἰέν, ἀκοῦω: ποδαπός ὁ ξένος; πόθεν; (657). Like the murder itself, which will be all but enacted onstage, we will see and hear, as we did not in the *Agamemnon*, the words of Orestes’ compositional *oratio recta* articulated by other characters within the play.

Orestes first exchange with his mother will begin with a different type of reperformance, but one which reflects a kindred mastery of the peculiar spatio-temporal properties of embodied sciptory performance. Disguised as the Phocian traveler, 

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55 Segal (1985b) p. 17.
Daulieus, Orestes no longer encodes the speech of his future interlocutors, but composes the imagined language of his fictional past. The hero is inventing his script as he goes; having divided himself between two states of fact and fiction through the conceptual framework of scriptory poetics, he can move through space and time (not unlike Cassandra in the previous play) orchestrating the events onstage and fabricating a verbal past to match his self-constructed future. Nothing of past, present, or future is beyond his reach. As the foreigner, Daulieus, he commands his own fully embodied impersonation and while verbally impersonating the equally false speech of Strophius, bringing him to life as well in the *hic et nunc* of the action (677-88):

\[
\text{An unknown man chanced upon me who was unknown to him – his name was Strophius of Phocia, I later learned from our conversation – and, having inquired and learning of my journey, he said “Since, stranger, you are traveling to Argos, remember to tell the parents of Orestes that he is dead. Do not forget! For whether the opinion of his dear ones will be to fetch him, or to bury him as a metic, a stranger for ever more, bring their instructions back to me. For as it is a bronze urn keeps the ashes of a man who has been well lamented.”}
\]

The deception is about identity, but in a markedly spatio-temporal manner that signals its scriptory foundation. And as he relates the tale of his own death, he encases it in the embedded temporality of past speech made present (εἶπε 677; εἰπέ 682; ἀκούσας εἶπον 688). So confident is Orestes in his control of the scriptory dynamic that he dares to

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56 The centrality of Orestes’ active deception to Aeschylus’ dramatization of the myth can be seen even more clearly through comparison with Sophocles’ quite different approach. Where Orestes’ false speech is the keystone of the *Choephoroi*, Sophocles assigns the role of *pseudangelos* to the Paedagogus in his *Electra*, presenting us with a hero constitutionally incapable of sustaining any type of verbal or physical dishonesty in the face of his sister.
mention his own name (τεθνεώτ' Ὄρεστην εἶπέ). And so certain is he of his ability to balance the many identities that he has taken on that he is willing to falsify his own death—an event of which he is both the author and reperformer—and to do so before the gaze of the mother who gave birth to him.\(^{57}\) As disguised performer, Orestes distances the reperformance from the author of his words, turning the latter into an object (λέβης χαλκεός 686) not unlike the scripts which he exchanged with Electra in the play’s opening scene.\(^ {58}\) But as its author, he knows that his true identity is not lost in the body that gives voice to his false speech.

When the final encounter between mother and son is at hand, Orestes no longer has recourse to his self-scripted transformation. He must, finally, take up the role of the serpent that he so brutally boasted to inhabit. Klytemnestra, having recognized Orestes after the murder of Aigisthus (ξυνήμα τούπος ἐξ αἰνίγματων 887), bears her breast before him,\(^ {59}\) forcing him to face her as true embodiment of the dream-script (896-8).

επισμεξ, ὦ παῖ, τόνδε δ' αἴδεσαι, τέχνων,
μαστόν, πρός ὦ σὺ πολλὰ δὴ βρίζων ἀμα
οὕλουσιν εἰξημελξας εὑτραφες γάλα.

*Hold back, son, have reverence before this breast, my child, from which you often sleepily drew nourishing milk sucking upon it with your gums.*

Despite all of his conceptual preparation, Orestes falter at the final reenactment and it is only through the insistence of Pylades that he is able to return to the script (899-902):

Ορ. Πυλάδη, τί δράσω; μητέρ' αἴδεσθω κτανεῖν;
Πυ. ποῦ δὴ τὸ λοιπὸν Λοξίου μαντεύματα
tά πυθόχρηστα, πιστὰ t' εὐφρονίματα;
ἀπαντας ἐχθροῦς τῶν θεῶν ἴγου πλέον.

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\(^{57}\) Again Sophocles presents a commentary on the boldness of the *dolos*, where Orestes’ inability to go through with the deceit in the face of his sister’s grief (1180ff.) stands in contrast to his earlier boastful confidence in the stratagem (59-64): Τί γάρ με λυπεῖ τοῦθ', ὅταν λόγῳ θανόν / ἐξόγιοι σωθῷ κἀξενέγκουσαν ἀλέον; / δοκῶ μὲν οὐδὲν ὧμα σὺν κέρδει κακόν; / ἢ δὴ γὰρ εἴδον πολλάκις καὶ τοὺς σοφοὺς / λόγῳ μάτην θηρόκοκτας· εἰσ', ὅταν δόμουσι / ἐλθοῦσιν αὐτός, ἕκτετίμησι τε πλέον.

\(^{58}\) An interesting suggestion made by Rush Rehm, that further connects the two scenes, is that in claiming to be dead, Orestes is also reperforming the role of his dead father, whose return from the underworld had been the central theme of the *komnos*. Rehm (2002) pp. 85-6.

\(^{59}\) The gesture also recalls the multivalent lion symbolism of the *Agamemnon*. Knox (1952) pp. 23-4.
Or: *O Pylades, what should I do? Do I dare kill my mother?*

Py: *What would the future hold for the prophecies of Apollo made clear at Pythia or of trusted oaths? Make all men your enemies before any of the gods.*

With the reaffirmation of Apollo’s oracle, itself recast in a sort of reperformance by the hitherto silent Pylades,⁶⁰ the necessity that Orestes perform his identity as snake is joined with the identity play of the *dolos* of which Apollo was also the ultimate cause. The harmony of these two prophetically inspired scripts reflects the mirrored dynamics of poetic reperformance and oracular interpretation – that is, of the prophetic poetics of scriptory performance. The inescapability of reperformance, here set out as a divine imperative, is already encoded in the script. The actor must step bodily into the role set out for him. The action may be delayed but it cannot be avoided.

As the verbal exchange prefiguring the deed itself draws to its close, it is Klytemnestra who makes explicit the scene’s reliance on the dream-text when she recognizes Orestes as at once her son and the serpent at her breast (929):

> oî ἄγα τεκόνσα τόνδ’ ὀφίν ἕθεφψάμην.

> *O – I have given birth to and nurtured this serpent.*

Her words echo those that Orestes used when he first voiced his keen desire to participate in the scriptory reperformance (ὡς ἔθεψεν ἐκπαγλον τέρας). The term that he used then, *teras*, has a double valence, meaning both “portent” and “beast”. In his initial, autonomous interpretation, Orestes could see the animal in both its symbolic and corporeal nature. Now, within the fully embodied reenactment of the script, the language is unambiguous: he has truly become *ensnaked*.

In order to arrive at this status, Orestes has had to physically embody the multiple layers of signification – seen and unseen, literal and figurative, past and future – that finally permit him to perform the action of the play’s most vividly present moment. The insistent physicality and emphasis on the somatic realities of the matricide,⁶¹ the visceral power of Klytemnestra’s bare breast – itself an emphatically corporeal reperformance not only of the dream text, but of the action of Homer’s *Hecuba*⁶² – force us to conceptualize

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⁶¹ Aeschylus’ emphasis on the “physical meaning” of the relationship between mother and son, is the focus of the discussion by Segal (1985b) pp. 17-8.

⁶² On the allusion, see O’Neill (1998).
Orestes’ metamorphosis in its most physical form. He has, of course, not literally been turned into a snake, but in his physical embodiment of the role of snake, it is his own living body that must experience and enact the action of the script.

It was through the play’s opening scene – which set out most clearly and deliberately the dynamics of scriptory poetics as they bear upon the play’s central questions of bodily presence and the physical nature of identity – that Orestes developed his ability to dissociate and multiply his body through external symbols. Now, at the close of the play, when he has put this skill to the test, Orestes repents his action. And his despair at having performed the deed echoes what Electra felt when scriptory action eluded her. As he steps away from the matricide, the snake stops being Orestes’ own dedicated symbol. His moment of embodiment has passed and he will soon have to contend with a chorus of snake-haired Erinyes who embody the creature in far more terrible and fearsome ways than Orestes can yet imagine. The terrible price that the furies will demand of the matricide in the Eumenides is adumbrated in the final lines of the Choephoroi. While the Chorus congratulate Orestes for having rid the house of “two serpents” (δυοῖν δρακόντων 1047), the young man begins to have visions of the gruesome Erinyes appearing before his eyes (1048-50):

\[ \text{Oh, oh, these servant women, like Gorgons, dark-robed and enlaced with dense snakes. I can remain no longer.} \]

Once the means for his triumph, the snake will now become embodied by the force of retribution. At the close of the play we are forced to contemplate the darker truths of what it means for scriptory poetics to be vindicated by matricide; to enable, through the embodied dynamics of the snake, the most unthinkable murder and then be seamlessly translated into the most terrible figures of hate and rage. For in the Eumenides it will not

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63 This is not the first time that Klytemnestra is associated with a snake. Once in the Agamemnon she is referred to by Cassandra as a serpent (Ag. 1233) and at the beginning of the Choephoroi, before the content of the dream has been revealed, Orestes himself likens her to an adder (248-9). On the characterization, see Whallon (1958) pp. 272-3.
be the ephebic Orestes but the ancient chthonic Furies, who have worked their way slowly through the trilogy, who find their own, serpentine embodiment as the Chorus of its final play.

2. WALL AND STAGE

In his eighth Olympian, Pindar paints a more optimistic picture of how the terrible physicality of the snake bears upon the embodied reperformances of scriptory poetry. Pindar deploys a snake portent to explore some of the same concerns about the embodied quality of poetic reperformance, but where Aeschylus used the materiality of scriptory objects to aid his demonstration of the need for a human actor to bring the script back to life, Pindar draws a contrast. The ode pits inanimate physicality against the power of the living spirit drawing attention to the limitations of monumental fixity. Although brief in comparison with the extended meditation of the Choephoroi, the ode sets out a dense matrix of prophecy, direct speech, and poetic tradition from which emerges a positive vision of the awesome potential of embodied reperformance represented by the snake.

The snakes appear within the central mythical narrative of the poem, which recounts how Aiakos was brought to Tory to aid Poseidon and Apollo in the construction of the city’s wall. As mortal sunergos in the divine endeavor, Aiakos’ presence is needed to enable the wall’s ultimate destruction, a fact which is highlighted from the outset of the tale (31-6):

τὸν παῖς ὁ Λατοῦς εὐρυμέδων τε Ποσειδᾶν,  
Ἱλὼ μέλλοντες ἐπὶ στέφανον τεῦξαι, καλέσαντο συνεργόν  
teixeoe, ἤν ὅτι νῦν πεπρωμένον  
ὁρυμένων πολέμων  
πολιορκθοίς ἐν μάχαις  
λάβον ἀμπνεύσας καπνὸν.

[ Aiakos, ] whom the son of Leto and broad-ruling Poseidon, when they were going to build the battlement in Ilion, summoned to work with them on the wall, which was fated in the surge of wars to breathe fierce smoke in city-sacking battles.
The motivation for Aiakos’ role in the wall’s construction is not here explicitly articulated.\(^{64}\) Rather, the vivid description of the future event places the narrative within a broader timeframe of divine and human events; immovable destiny determined at some point in the past set in relief against the bleak human future of war and destruction. Much more than in Aeschylus’ treatment, the temporal dimensions will be key to Pindar’s representation of the snake. As the representative of embodied reperformance, the snake not only permits us to understand how a man may be transformed into another through mimetic reperformance, but also how this operation can be brought about across vast distances of space, and more importantly, time; how through its countless reperformative iterations, the scriptory poem is inhabited by any number of actors, each bringing the voices of the past to life again through their own bodies. Through the already complex chronological matrix of this introductory portrait, Pindar presents the wall as a locus of heightened temporal charge. A place where time can profitably be explored.

An important reason that the wall is readily susceptible to a strong association with temporal concerns arises from the fact that Pindar is reworking a Homeric scene of widespread renown. The Homeric model, from the seventh book of the *Iliad*, recounts how Apollo and Poseidon resented the Achaians for constructing their own wall around their camp to rival the one which they themselves built around the city of Troy, and how Zeus assured them that at the war’s end the Achaian wall would be destroyed and erased from human memory.\(^{65}\) Already, then, in Homer’s text, we encounter a contrast between the longevity of the wall’s divine construction and the transience of a similar human endeavor drawn in the sharpest terms.\(^{66}\)

For all of its allure, it is not the scene from book seven but its continuation in book twelve of the *Iliad* that has most fascinated critics ancient and modern.\(^{67}\) In a brief digression at the opening of the book, Homer describes the Achaian wall’s ultimate destruction, as the Olympian gods join forces with the divine rivers of Troy and wash all

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\(^{64}\) As Burnet notes, it has been suggested that the tale is a Pindaric innovation, but this seems unlikely. Burnett (2005) p. 213. For the argument in favor of Pindaric innovation, see Carey (1989a).

\(^{65}\) 7.433-66.

\(^{66}\) Scodel (1982).

\(^{67}\) For an overview, see Porter (2011).
traces of the wall from the plain. This return to a previously concluded episode, without any further development in relation to the subsequent progression of the narrative, is highly unusual for the epic poet. Even more remarkable, however, is the temporal quality of the digression in book twelve, which looks well beyond the boundaries of the war and the poem itself to recount the only significantly developed proleptic narrative of the *Iliad*. Moreover, the proleptic stance also connects the narrative with the poet himself, pulling the narrative forward into direct comparison with the poet’s present time. Andrew Ford reads the passage from book twelve as one in a series of moments that show “the epic’s interest in signs as concrete devices for making fame last.” For Ford, who sees the excursus as a sign of Homer’s extreme distrust of writing (what he calls the “failure” of monumentality), the poet’s self-positioning in relation to the event is key to understanding the wall’s significance. By placing the destruction outside of the time-frame covered by the *Iliad*’s narrative, and more importantly by relating the event “from a different perspective from the rest of the epic” as if “looking back on his heroes […] from outside his poem”, Homer marks out this passage as particularly important for understanding the temporal dynamics of his own epic narration as he responds to the idea that his poem is a written object. A similar, though more optimistic interpretation of this remarkable passage was also prevalent amongst critics of Pindar’s time. As James Porter has recently shown, by the fifth century, the wall and its destruction had come to be a

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68 12.3-33.  
69 As Grethlein points out, explicit temporal juxtaposition between past and present circumstances commonly accompanies the description of important material objects in the Homeric poems; Grethlein (2008) pp. 40-3.  
72 Ford (1992) pp. 148, 9. The special positioning of the narrator is effected through the use of the “key word” ἡμιθεοί, which “suggests that the heroes are not just earlier men but a quite separate “race” between present men and gods.” p. 148. The point is also made by Scodel (1982). The word ἡμιθεοί appears only here in Homeric epic, a fact which leads Gregory Nagy to argue that “whereas ἑρώες is the appropriate word in epic, ἡμιθεοί is more appropriate to a style of expression that looks beyond epic.” Nagy (1999) p. 160. Pindar himself may have been sensitive not only to the broader metapoetic import of the *Iliad* passage, but to the marked nature of the term. Pindar does not generally use the word – unlike his contemporaries, Bacchilides and Simonides, the latter of whom employed it in order to emphasize the distance between the present and the mythic past (fr. 18 PMG). Yet, remarkably, Pindar deploys it three times in the course of Pythian 4, his most “epic” composition, likely signaling his understanding of the charged epic history of the term.
symbol of the poet’s art, and more importantly, of his ability to “construct” poetic fictions that were – unlike a physical wall – immune to the effects of mortal time. The wall, now gone from view but preserved in Homer’s verse, became what Porter dubs a “temporal sphragis”, locating the poet in time while also demonstrating his ability to transcend its limitations through his poetry.73

But in order to appreciate Pindar’s highly sophisticated engagement with his Homeric model, we must return to Olympian 8 and examine how this narrative reperformance of an epic scene unfolds.74 Having brought the gods and hero to Troy, Pindar gives no account of the events surrounding the wall’s construction. His narrative skips directly to the end, when the work has been completed. It is then that three silvery snakes appear before the three laborers. They try to jump up onto the newly built wall; two fall to their deaths and one survives. Apollo then interprets the portent, telling Aiakos that the omen signals two things: that the wall will be destroyed where Aiakos’ hand has made it and that his progeny, in the first and third generations, will contribute to its destruction (37-46):

γλαυκοὶ δὲ δράκοντες, ἐπεὶ κτίσθη νέον, 
πύργον ἐσαλλόμενοι τρεῖς, οἱ δύο μὲν κατευθὸν, 
αὐθ’ δ’ ἀπετύχομεν ψυχαὶ βάλον, 
eἰς δ’ ἐνόροιοι βοῶσαίς. 40
ἐννέπε δ’ ἀντίον ὁμοίων τέρας εὐθὺς Ἀπόλλων·
‘Πέργαμος ἀμφὶ τεαῖς, ἠρώς, χερὸς ἐργασίαις ἀλάσκεται· 
ὡς ἐμοὶ φάσμα λέγει Κρόνιδα 
πεμφθέν βαρυγήθουσιν Διός·
οὐχ ἄτερ παιδών σέθεν, ἀλλ’ ἀμα πρώτοις ἀρέσται 45
καὶ τετάτοις’. 75 ὃς ἡρα θεὸς σάφα εἰπαῖς

But, when [the wall] was newly built, silvery snakes tried to leap upon the tower, three of them. Two fell to the ground and died there in a daze, but the one sprang upon it with a war-cry. And pondering the omen before him Apollo spoke straight out “Pergamon is taken around the work of your hands, hero, thus the apparition spoke to me, sent by the son of Kronos, deep-thundering Zeus. Not without your children, but they will be lead by the first and the third ones.” Thus spoke the god clearly…

73 Porter (2011) p. 32. The ancient critical discussion of this scene can be traced to the fifth century and most likely began significantly earlier, see Porter (2011).
74 On poetic quotation as reperformance, see above, pp. 95-117.
75 On this notorious crux, see Gildersleeve (1885) ad loc., Hubbard (1987).
The description of the snakes draws attention to their physical presence. They are introduced with reference to their color, but the term *glaucos* does not simply signal their gray hue. In Homer and other archaic Greek poetry the term is imbued with the sense of glistening, as in the sea or moon and stars. The shimmering quality of their scales points first to their motion, and later to their inherently changeable and varying appearance. But more critically for our discussion, it places an emphasis on the corporeal nature of these attributes. This suggestive picture of an unstable, but always physical, mutability, is elaborated through the pointed use of metaphor in the subsequent narration. Pindar deploys his epic model to emphasize the corporality of the creatures’ actions. Through the deft manipulation of markedly Homeric vocabulary, Pindar permits the snakes to inhabit a space midway between men and beasts, between his own text and Homer’s. The snakes leap up (*ἐσαλλόμενοι*) onto the wall like Iliadic heroes leaping from their chariots or like Hector leaping upon the Achaian wall (*πύλας καὶ τεῖχος ἐσώλτο* 13.679). The verb stresses the physicality of the action – only one will complete the leap successfully – while also hinting at the creatures’ anthropomorphic possibilities. This effect is enhanced by the equally Homeric language that is used to describe the deaths of the two failed leapers. Like Homer’s warriors, they fall into the dust and lose their *psuchai*. Even though the word holds little of our modern conception of “soul”, the attribution of *psuchai* to the snakes casts their deaths as almost human, since the term is rarely found applied to animals in our extant archaic texts. For the surviving snake, the metaphoric frame intensifies with the use of the verb *boaô*, recalling the battle cry of the Homeric warrior and paired with yet another term commonly associated with

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76 *ἐξ ὀχέων σὺν τείχεσιν ἄλτο χαμάζει*. (11x).
78 ἐπὶ γαῆ / χαμάζε / or ἐν κοινῷ / κάππεσεν (6x). The verb only appears in the aorist in Homer giving a stronger allusive force to Pindar’s *κάππεσον*. In Homer, however, the verb is almost always line initial, thus enjambed from the preceding line, and followed by detail of the location of the fall. The spareness of Pindar’s construction, without specification of the place from or to which they fell within the clause, is markedly un-Homeric.
79 Loss of ψυχῆ as a periphrasis for death (24x).
80 See Heath (2005) pp. 47-9 with bibliography. The same term is used of the snakes killed by Herakles in N.1 (γχομένοις δὲ χρόνος / ψυχαῖς ἀπέπνευσεν μελέων ἄφάτον. 46-7).
81 As we saw above, similar language is used at Sept. 381.
martial epic, enorouδ.\textsuperscript{82} The introduction of vocal expression emerges from the expressly physical description, placing the animal’s capacity to produce sound within the framework of his bodily exertion.

Through the dissonant and metaphorical use of Homeric vocabulary, the physicality and sense of the snakes’ bodily substance stands in harmony with their almost protean changeability. The wall, by contrast, is depicted as fixed and unmoving (ντίοθη). Like the shield of Aiax, one of the descendants of Aiakos included in the prophecy, the tower stands as an immovable bulwark.\textsuperscript{83} The prophecy elaborates on – and also complexifies – this relationship between the two central symbols of the passage. The dynamic and animate corporality of the snakes displays the qualities necessary for embodied reperformance, a feature which is all the more striking when seen in contrast to the static and inanimate wall. But it is only through Apollo’s elucidation of the portentous event, with its multiple layers of reenactment, that the passage demonstrates the full symbolic potential of the snakes to represent scriptory reperformance.

Apollo’s speech is delivered in the unmediated \textit{hic et nunc} of direct speech, the formal structure most open to considerations of poetic reperformance and scriptedness. Although the speech is relatively brief it is, like so many of the speeches that we have examined so far, a highly charged node of meaning with competing and complementary implications. The layering of voice over voice and text over text is itself an essential characteristic of the reanimation of a poetic script, and it is fitting that \textit{Olympian} 8, with its primary focus on the transformative potential of a single moment of physical presence should demonstrate this fact with particularly richness. In what follows, I will try to isolate the key elements of this complex harmony.

The most immediate way in which Apollo’s words constitute a reperformance is through their relationship to the snakes themselves. As if working from the same script, Apollo reenacts the snakes’ appearance, translating their physical display into a verbal message. The speech, which is framed within the poet’s narrative by clear markers of embedded speech (ἐννέπεξ 41; ὅς \ldots εἰπώς 46), also contains a further embedding: Apollo’s conscious quotation – or rather paraphrase – of the snakes themselves (ὅς ἐμοί

\textsuperscript{82} cf. \textit{Il.}.10.486; 11.149; 11.217; 16.783.

\textsuperscript{83} \textit{[Αίας] φέρων σάρκος ἥμετε πύργον} (3x).
φόσμα λέγει 43). The choice of language to describe the portent is significant. In introducing Apollo’s speech, the narrator referred to the snakes as a *teras*, an ambiguous word that can mean both “omen” and “beast”. The term acknowledges the unstable status of the three snakes, who are both literal, corporeal agents within the narrative and symbolic vessels that allegorically and metaphorically represent figures other than themselves. But for Apollo, the snakes are a *phasma*, a visual cue that nevertheless speaks to him and from which he discerns the script for his own reperformance. For the narrator, Apollo seems almost to be in conversation with the surviving snake, speaking to its “face” (ἀντίον 41), perhaps even “responding” to it, as the adverb can indicate when paired with a verb of speaking.\(^{84}\) But Apollo knows that the snakes too are reperformers, and discerns the source of their message as coming from Zeus (Κρονίδα / πεμφθὲν βαμυγδούπου Διός 42-3). Apollo sees the snakes’ reperformance and immediately comes into communication with the author of the script. The divine *mantis* readily sees how the terrible portent bears on the lives of those who witnessed it.

At the same time, however, the snakes are themselves reperformers of the work of Apollo, aided by Poseidon and Aiakos, in building the wall. The cadre of three workmen – two divine and one human – is matched in a perfect inversion by the three snakes – two dead and one surviving – who try to leap onto the newly built wall.\(^{85}\) The snakes do not faithfully reenact the construction that has already taken place so much as translate the completed actions of gods and man into the form of their future consequences. (In this way their appearance mirrors Apollo’s “translation” into words.) As the narrator demonstrated at the outset of the myth, the wall’s destruction was already built into the moment of its construction (πεμφωμένον 31). The script for both the workmen and the snakes is the same, but the two reperformances with their differing temporal axes diverge markedly. The snakes signal the underlying connection through their actions and Apollo points to (σῶφα 46) their enigmatic relationship to the deeds which he and his collaborators have just performed.

Beyond the wall itself, the basis of the correspondence between the snakes and the builders is the divergent status of one member of the group of three. Amongst the

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\(^{84}\) E.g. [τὸν δ’] ἀντίον ἡδία (72x).

workmen, Aiakos is distinguished by his mortality. Amongst the snakes, the survivor is distinguished by his escape from death. The difficulty of seeing Aiakos in the figure of the triumphant serpent, not to mention the accompanying problem that the gods must then be represented by the dead snakes, has long been a source of critical debate. But the aberrant status of Aiakos, on which the connection ultimately rests, is brought to the fore in Apollo’s speech. Apollo employs the vocative, hērōs, to make clear that the prophecy is intended for Aiakos alone. Poseidon, who will remain unmentioned until the narrative’s end, either does not need interpretation to grasp the portent’s meaning, or does not care, or both. The isolation of Aiakos as Apollo’s sole addressee is mirrored in the prophecy itself, which singles him out as the cause of Troy’s future destruction. Nowhere is Aiakos’ mortality explicitly mentioned, but Apollo’s prophetic words offer an active description of what it means for Aiakos, a mortal man, to work alongside the gods.

The tension between divine and human construction, and the divergent relation to time which they enjoy, is already at the heart of Homer’s treatment of the wall. Here we can see how Pindar recasts the Iliadic paradigm, making Aiakos’ an asset rather than a shortcoming. Unlike a monument, the logic of the script is predicated on absence. The author must depart so that the reperformer can take his place and give new life to his words. Truly the snakes cannot reperform the work of the gods, for once completed it stands fixed and immovable like the wall itself. There is space around Aiakos’ action (ἀμφὶ τεαίς, ἦρως, χερός ἐφαγοίας 42) for another to step in, to inhabit his place and let out a war cry. For Homer, whose wall was constructed in parallel to, and in some ways on analogy with, the performance of funeral rites for the countless men fallen in battle, death brings with it the threat of erasure. The construction of the Homeric wall – the symbol of the written word – postpones but does not fully prevail over the ultimate anonymity of mortality. But for the fifth-century interpreter of the passage, this fate has been overcome in the wall’s poetic survival. The potential for reperformance – not yet fully integrated into the conceptual landscape of the Homeric text – turns the wall’s

87 Pindar inverts the Homeric paradigm, making Apollo the speaker and Poseidon the silent companion where in the Iliad it was Poseidon who verbalized the position of the gods.
destruction into the moment of its greatest glory and most enduring presence. In this inverted world of scriptory reperformance, where death itself permits immortality through the bodies of others and the physical integrity of the written word is nothing in comparison to the power of a human being to re-animate the voice of the dead through the medium of his own body, the snakes can stand as they do – living for mortal and dead for deathless.

The continuity of this particular type of mortal reperformance is nowhere more emphatically delineated than in the coda to Apollo’s interpretation. Not without your children (οὐχ ἄτεχθαι Παύλων σεθεν 45), he stipulates, but they will be lead by the first and the third ones. The specification comes unexpectedly at the start of the new triad, but even this belated position is perfectly in line with the import of this further detail of the future reperformances of the wall. Aiakos and the snakes will find themselves re-embodied in the subsequent generations of Aiakos’ progeny who will return to Troy and do battle upon the wall that their ancestor helped to construct. They will fulfill the metaphoric promise of the warrior-snakes, using their mortal bodies to reperform the snakes’ leaps and deaths and cries. And through toppling the wall of their forebear, they will repeat and reperform the moment that was already set out at the point of its construction. Aiakos will eventually meet his end. So too his descendants will perish, even as progressive generations of men re-fight the battles of their fathers. But the wall, as it continues to be destroyed and rebuilt, will always provide a locus for the reperformance of their script and hence for their re-embodiment in a new generation of re-enactors.

In closing his narrative, Pindar gives one final nod to his Homeric model, demonstrating his deference to and appreciation of the text that he is, in some sense, reperforming. Adopting the proleptic stance of Homer’s book twelve narration, Pindar negotiates the transition from mythical past to poetic present by noting the exceptional nature of Aiakos’ good fortune: τερπνόν δ’ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἰδιόν ἔσσεται οὐδέν (an equal joy will never be had again by mortal men) (52). The simple future tense of the

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88 I paraphrase Porter (2011) p. 31. It is unclear whether Porter refers in this description to Homer’s original intention or the interpretation of his later readers. I borrow his words in the spirit of the latter.
89 Huxley (1975) p. 27-8.
verb *essetai* positions this future within the here and now, in the poetic present, rather than in a distant past of the myth just recounted. Although it is hardly unusual for Pindar to look forward beyond the temporal limits of his poem, such gestures are most commonly found within the laudatory or poetically self-reflective passages of his works. He rarely employs a proleptic voice with a clear a connection to the mythical past and the uncommon gesture permits him to mirror Homer’s temporal stance, not by creating a sense of unexpected proximity to the audience, as Homer does, but by bringing the mythical past into an unfamiliar bond with his poetic present.\(^90\) The moment establishes his feeling of kinship with the epic poet of long ago, with whom he communes through his own poetic reperformance.

Within the laudatory frame of the poem, the wall finds resonance with the island of Aegina which stands like a fixed and immoveable column in the sea (25-30). The island is, of course, the home of Aiakos and also of the victor, whose many family members appear in great number throughout the poem’s opening and closing stanzas. The island is the script of the Blepsiads, who with each victory offer an embodied reperformance when they declare long-oared Aegina to be their homeland (*ἐξένεπε ναυτέων / πάλια δολιχήρετμων Αἴγιναν πάτωταν* 19-20). Like Aiakos, the Blepsiad clan breathes their strength into new bodies across the generations (*μένος / γῆρας ἀντίπαλον* 70-1), re-embodied each other as they prove their strength in athletic competition. The string of family victories, each new one reperforming the deeds of the last, brings a kind of immortality as well—crossing into the underworld where the dead can learn of the glory of the living (*καταχρύσετε δ’ οὖν κόνις συγγόνων κεδνάν χάριν. 80*).\(^91\) Their script, like Aiakos’ and Pindar’s, is learned through corporeal experience,\(^92\) a reperformance brought to life through the living body of each man who takes it up.

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\(^{90}\) We may think of the quotation of Adrastus in direct speech in *O.6*, discussed above at pp. 44-5, 99-100.

\(^{91}\) Segal (1985a) pp. 209-11.

\(^{92}\) Lines 59-65: τὸ διδάξεσθαι δὲ τοι / εἰδότι ὁμιλοῦν ἂνγωμον δὲ τὸ μὴ προμαθεῖν / κωφότερα γὰρ ἀπειράτων φρένες. / κείνα δὲ κείνος ἂν εἶποι / ἔργα περαιτέρον ἄλλων, τίς τρόπος ἄνδρα προβάσει / ἐξ ἱερῶν ἀέθνων μέλλοντα ποθεινοτάταν δόξαν φέρειν.
We have now explored how Pindar and Aeschylus envisioned their scriptory poems as tools for reperformance and how they imagined that reperformance in terms of the embodied mimesis of living agents. Throughout our discussions, the figure of the poet has featured as a critical element within the complex network of scriptory transformation. The idea of the tool, as exemplified by Bellerophon’s bridle and Eteocles’ shields, asks us to imagine the mediation of scriptory poetics as an operation that is shared between a reperformer and the original author of the work. Similarly, the embodied mutations of the scriptory snake, reflected in Orestes’ deceptions and Aiakos’ portent, look not only to the physically present reperformer, but also to the absent author who enabled the actor’s mimesis. In our efforts to untangle the complex workings of these scriptory structures, the shadowy figure of the poet has come in and out of view – it is now time to turn our attention fully to the makers of scripted song.

The idea of an author is a persistent and inescapable element of any scriptory structure. Yet within the scriptory framework of Pindar’s and Aeschylus’ compositions, the voice of the poet does not emerge from the same place or in the same manner as that of his embodied reperformers, nor is his presence wholly absorbed by the mediating function of the tool. The scriptory poet must in a basic sense remain separate from his creation; indeed, the very possibility of a scriptory poetics is predicated on the relative detachment of the work from its author. It is the distance which separates the poet from the work he has crafted that makes possible the structure’s characteristic spatio-temporal mobility. The poet is thus at once present and absent within his scriptory creation. He inhabits his work, but as part of its past rather than of its reperformative future. His words are carried forward, but the poet himself is left behind. And yet, it is clear that the poet imparts more than his words when he entrusts his composition to the future. His scriptory composition also carries with it something of the poet’s own voice as it travels through the permutations of its reperformative future. Ghost-like, the poet haunts his creations as they find new voices and bodies across time and space. And accordingly it is in the figure of the ghost that we must look for the poets of our scripted songs.
Encounters with ghosts are nothing new within the poetry of Pindar and Aeschylus. Narratives of *katabasis*, a typical element of Indo-European and Near Eastern myth, can be found throughout archaic Greek poetry.¹ Most famously, Homer recounts Odysseus’ journey into the underworld in search of Tiresias, but we also know that there were poetic traditions relating the *katastases* of Heracles, Theseus, and, most importantly for this study, Orpheus. In addition to mortals’ descents into the underworld, ghosts sometimes arise from below the earth to address the living, as does Patroclus appearing to Achilles in a dream at the beginning of *Iliad* 23. The exceptional nature of such encounters between the dead and the living is a characteristic that remains constant,² but our discussion must also take note of the significant changes that such traditional mythical tropes had undergone in the centuries separating Homer’s compositions from those of Pindar and Aeschylus. By the end of the sixth century, not only had the conditions for poetic performance changed, the rising popularity of hero cults, mystery religions, and the occult had also transformed Greek thinking about the role played by the dead in the life of the living.³

The early history of what later antiquity refers to as Orphism or the Mysteries is difficult to assess with any certainty, but it is evident that by the end of the sixth century the nebulousy defined religious ideas generally associated with mystery religion had gained an important foothold throughout the Greek world. Whatever the details of individual cultic practice and belief – and it is clear that there was great variation throughout the Mediterranean⁴ – this new thinking about the form and meaning of death clearly influenced the compositional choices of Pindar and Aeschylus.⁵ But it is important to distinguish between linguistic and thematic resonances and the somewhat thornier question of actual adherence to or participation in these rites. Neither Pindar nor Aeschylus presents a coherent vision of the afterlife, and any passage adduced in favor of

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² Rose (1950) p. 258.
a single account is almost invariably contradicted within the poet’s own work. Leaving aside these vexing and inscrutable details, we can see that the broad interests and ideas of mystery and hero cults supplied Pindar and Aeschylus with a critical model for thinking about their own uniquely poetic concerns for the afterlife: the posthumous fate that they would experience through their own scripted compositions. For our scriptory poets, however, death was a state to be confronted even while living, since the departure of each poetic composition into its reperformative future figuratively enacted the poet’s death through his separation from his creation.

It is not surprising that the mysteries should have held a special attraction for poets contemplating the idea of a poetic afterlife. The archetypal poet-hero, Orpheus, was one of the most important mythical figures within the early development of mystery cult. Orpheus owed his special status in eschatological belief to his successful *katabasis* and his exceptional musical skill. These two attributes are often paired in the mythic tradition. Thus Orpheus’ success in gaining Eurydice’s freedom from the underworld is said to have been achieved through his poetic skill, charming the fearsome gods of the underworld with the sweet sound of his lyre. Aeschylus’ interest in the mythical poet is demonstrated by the prominent role accorded to Orpheus in the Lycurgus trilogy, a work which displayed the strong influence of the mysteries. Although little of the trilogy remains, it seems that the eschatological facets of Orpheus’ character were an important theme, especially of the second play, the *Bassarides*. Eratosthenes tells us that the tragedy dramatized Orpheus’ death at the hands of Dionysus following his *katabasis*, and it is probable that the play explored or alluded to the death-like initiation rituals of mystery cult. Pindar’s interest in Orpheus’ connections with mystic promises of an afterlife is more difficult to trace. He is not mentioned amongst the heroes named in the vision of metempsychosis presented in *Olympian 2* (56-80), and the brief appearance of Orpheus as one of the Argonauts in the fourth *Pythian* draws attention only to his poetic skill, according him the exceptional status of *aoidân patêr*. There is little in our extant

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7 The evidence is assembled by West (1983) p. 4, see also Brisson (1995).
8 West (1990) pp. 26-50
Pindaric texts that suggests Orpheus’ role in the life of the dead beyond a tantalizing mention of “golden-lyred Orpheus” at the end of what remains to us of a fragmentary threnos (fr. 128c SM).¹¹ Had more of the threnoi survived, it is likely that we would have a far richer picture of Pindar’s engagement with this critical point of contact between poetry and mystery cult in the early fifth century.¹² As things now stand, we must be content with the fragments that survive, just as we must with what remains of Aeschylus’ Lycurgus trilogy, and try to piece together a sense of how the poets made use of this rich tradition from other, more accessible vantage points.

Critical to understanding the broad meta-poetic valences of ghosts and necromancy in our poets is Aeschylus’ Psychagogoi, the dramatic poet’s most developed representation of the world of the dead. The play, which recasts the nekyia of Odyssey 11 for the tragic stage, is generally presumed to have been the first of an Odyssean trilogy which included Penelope (likely recounting Odysseus’ arrival back in Ithaca) and Ostologoi (concerning the aftermath of the killing of the suitors), possibly concluding with a Circe as the connected satyr-play.¹³ The name of the play, which does much to define the probable identity of the Chorus, locates the dramatic action within the sphere of mystic necromancy. The ritual invocation of the dead is partially preserved in the longest of the extant fragments.¹⁴ It is likely that the incantation comprised a lengthy portion of the play, as is the case with the kommos of the Choephoroi, and that the intensity and virtuosity of the Chorus’s necromantic song (or songs) represented much of its theatrical power.¹⁵

¹¹ For an analysis of the epithet, see Cannatà Fera (1990) p. 156.
¹² The most suggestive passages are frs. 131bSM and 133SM. For discussion of their possible significance, see Rose (1936), Cannatà Fera (1990) pp. 185-7, Holzhausen (2004). Of greatest interest to the present study is fr. 131bSM, in which Pindar speaks of the ζωόν δ’ ἐτί λείπεται εἰδωλόν. This connection between ghostly apparitions and the idea of an immortal soul is then linked, in a most suggestive manner, to the dreams of living men, on which see Johnston (2008) pp. 91-2.
¹⁴ Fr. 273a Radt.
¹⁵ Sommerstein (1996) p. 350. I believe that Sommerstein is too hasty in asserting that the central focus of the drama on the Chorus’s invocation would have produced a play without “much movement or tension”.

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The passage invokes the gods of the underworld and Hermes Chthonios, the divine protector of the lake beside which the necromancers’ practice their arts.\textsuperscript{16} The language of the fragmentary prayer is in keeping with the mystic or magical tone one would expect to find used in such ritual,\textsuperscript{17} and exhibits similarities both with the kommos of the Choephoroi and with the invocations of the Persai to which we will soon turn. The passage also emphasizes a critical element of Aeschylus’ adaptation of his epic model. In their prayer, the Chorus ask that the spirits of the dead be sent up to them from under the earth: \textit{έσομον ἀνεῖναι ποταμοῦ στομάτων [I ask you to] send up a swarm from the mouths of the river [sc. Styx]} (fr. 273a10 Radt). Whereas the Homeric Odysseus must descend into the underworld, Aeschylus allows the spirits of the dead to be summoned back into the light and onto the tragic stage.\textsuperscript{18} The physical journey of the Homeric Odysseus is replaced by the Chorus’s verbal incantation. In Odyssey 11, Odysseus conducts his elaborate sacrifices to the dead in silence (11.24-50), now it is the brilliant song of the Chorus that heralds the mystic encounter between living and dead.

The central motivation of the play, like that of the Homeric nekyia, is to permit Odysseus to hear Tiresias prophesy his future.\textsuperscript{19} Part of the speech is preserved as fragment 275 Radt:

\begin{quote}
\begin{verbatim}
έσωδιος γὰρ ψόθεν ποτώμενος
ὀνθωσε περί κηδόν χαλώματι:
ἐκ τοῦτο ἦκανθά ποντίου βοσκήματος
οἵρει παλαιὸν δέρμα καὶ τριχοφυτέ
\end{verbatim}
\end{quote}

For a heron, flying over head, will open its bowels and strike you with dung from which the spine of a sea creature will rot your aged skin and hairless [scalp?]

Although the bestial and scatological content of the fragment might at first appear comic in tone, it is perhaps better understood within the context of the more earthly elements of

\textsuperscript{16} Fr. 273.1 Radt. On the location, see Lloyd-Jones (1981) p. 22.
\textsuperscript{17} But see the discussion of Henrichs (1991).
\textsuperscript{18} Cousin (2005).
\textsuperscript{19} It has been suggested that other ghosts were also brought onto the stage, in the model of Odysseus’ many encounters in Odyssey 11. Sommerstein (1996) p. 349-50, Bardel (2005) p. 91. This claim is supported by the Chorus’s call for the swarm (έσομον) to be sent up from Hades, but there is little other evidence beyond inference from the Homeric model.
mystery ritual. The details of the event described remain somewhat obscure, but the passage was compelling enough to its ancient interpreters to be adapted to describe the miraculous nature of Aeschylus’ own death. Certainly one can imagine how the old age and repellent physical deterioration that Tiresias prophesies might stand in contrast to subsequent promises of a better fate that awaits Odysseus in his afterlife. Furthermore, even the limited information that survives demonstrates that the prophecy looks forward beyond the scope of the trilogy, foretelling a death that will not otherwise be represented within the dramatic action. As such, the Aeschylean scene adheres to the structure of its Homeric precedent. Within the Odyssey, Tiresias is accorded a special role as mantis and voice from the underworld. His prophetic instructions guide Odysseus through the subsequent trials of his nostos, thus placing him in a position of near correspondence to the Muse of the epic poet through his knowledge of the full scope of the hero’s journey from a special vantage point outside of the constraints of time. Moreover, the final details of the Homeric Tiresias’ speech elucidate the inland journey that awaits Odysseus after his return to Ithaca has been completed, an enigmatic future that lies outside the boundaries of Homer’s epic. It is this detail in particular that establishes Tiresias’ special authority within the epic and serves to assimilate his character to that of the poet himself. In adopting this metapoetic quality for his own representation of the seer, Aeschylus demonstrates his appreciation for Homer’s authorial self-representation by adapting the analogy to fit his own scriptory concerns. Now, rather than seek out the voice of epic totality amongst the shades of the underworld, the figure of the author is

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21 The detail may be an attempt to reconcile the two contradictory traditions of Odysseus’ death: the peaceful, inland old age promised by Tiresias in the Odyssey and the marine-themed death “from the sea” at the hands of his son, Telegonus. On the opposition, see Hansen (1977). There are potential connections with medical/magical use of excrement as a fertility balm, on which see von Staden (1992).
22 Hadjicosti (2005).
conjured onto the stage in order to perform the role of the poet whose ghostly presence provides the unifying structure for the many voices of his scripted drama.24

The Homeric allusion that underpins the *Psychagogoi* reminds us of the key role that the epic poet played in framing the idea of scriptory poetics for both Pindar and Aeschylus. Homer, whose own voice, as we saw in chapter two, is brought back from the dead through the allusive quotations of fifth-century poets,25 serves as the model for the kinds of ghostly apparitions that they envision in their own scriptory future. The mimetic reperformance of the dead poet conjures his presence within the work of his successors, bringing his spirit back into the world of the living. This desire to raise the dead once more into the light is equally evident throughout Pindar’s work. For although Pindar at times claims that his songs descend into the underworld, to inform the spirits of the dead of the accomplishments of the living, the journey is always undertaken by a surrogate, not by the poet himself.26 Pindar is concerned with remaining above the earth. His scriptory poetics enable him to remain *abaptistos*, as he puts it in the cork simile, uncovered by the shroud of death. Homer is the crucial model for both our poets, but Pindar’s most lucid representation of the spectral mechanics of the poetic afterlife is in fact found in an encounter with another poet of the past. It is the ghost of Archilochus, whose appearance to Pindar is described in the second *Pythian*, in the stanza before his attention is turned to the scriptory function of the cork, who reveals the odd character of the poet’s life after death (54-6):

\[\text{e}i\delta\text{o}n \text{ga}\rho \text{e}k\alpha\zeta \text{e}\omega \text{t}a \text{p}\omega\lambda\lambda' \text{e}n \text{\American][\Greek]{\alpha} \text{m}\alpha\chi\alpha\nu{\iota}\。\text{p}\omega\gamma\epsilon\rho\omicron\text{\American}{\Lambda} \text{\Greek}{\chi}l\omicron\omicron\nu\text{\American}{\beta} \text{a} \text{r}u\text{l}\omicron\omicron\nu{\iota}\text{\American}{\epsilon} \chi\theta\epsilon\omicron\nu \text{p}i\text{\American}{\alpha}n\omicron\nu{\nu}n.\]

*Standing at a distance I saw the slanderous Archilochus in great difficulty, grown fat on his bitterly spoken enmities.*

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24 A similar authorial function is attributed to the ghost of Klytemnestra, whose appearance at the beginning of the *Eumenides* serves to orchestrate the furies’ fearful binding song. Prins (1991).
25 See below, pp. 95-117.
26 Segal (1985a). We may contrast the vision of song in the underworld represented in the new Sappho, on which see Hardie (2005).
The language of the passage points to Archilochus’ fame as an iambic poet, but we know from elsewhere that Pindar also considered him to be an important influence in the realm of epinician. More important than such generic concerns is the amachania in which Pindar claims the dead poet finds himself. Unlike Pindar who has discovered the scriptory cork, the mechanê through which he will escape the gloom of death, Archilochus struggles to reveal himself, and remains at a distance despite the fame of his song. As the subsequent discussion of Radamanthus makes clear, Pindar’s thoughts are guided by the kind of immortality promised by the mysteries. It is not enough for one’s name to live on, the poet must know how to arise into the light through the reperformance of his compositions.

1. The Future of the Dead

The Persai is unique among the extant dramas of Aeschylus as both the only play that was not originally part of a connected trilogy and the single known example in his corpus to take on a subject of contemporary, rather than mythical, history. As such it presents a particularly charged expression of the playwright’s notion of the distinctive qualities of dramatic time, and of the scripted poetics from which his plays emerge. What is more, the action of the play, revolving around the central scene of the invocation and ultimate appearance of the ghost of the dead king Darius, provides us with our most vivid and concentrated view of Aeschylean necromancy and its relationship to the special spatio-temporal nature of the poetic script.

Set in the Persian capital at Sousa, the play establishes a structure of spatio-temporal juxtapositions that informs every aspect of the drama. As the Persian court awaits news of the military expedition, the Greek audience is able to view itself from the outside. The play inverts the space of its performance, transposing the stage into the distant world of the enemy and renders Greece a vague and foreign land. Even before the action begins,

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28 Ὅ.9.1-2: Τὸ μὲν Ἀρχιλόχου μέλος / φωναῖν Ὀλυμπία, καλλίνικος ὁ τριπλός κεχλαδῶς
29 Although unusual, contemporary events were not entirely excluded from tragedy in the beginning of the fifth century. In addition to the Persai, we have evidence of contemporary themes as the subject of at least two plays by Phrynichus. On the general compatibility of mythic and historical themes within the tragic context, see Hall (1989) pp. 62-76, Grethlein (2010) p. 74.
the *hic et nunc* of the performance is a meditation on absence and presence that exults in the possibilities of the dramatic imagination. This core paradox is exploited and intensified by the dramatic structure of the play, which is organized around iterations of a basic model of the anticipation and realization of return from afar. These moments reenact and reflect upon the fundamental spatio-temporal tension of the drama, placing the question of the stage on the stage in the form of actors who bridge the distance between absence and presence. The basic problematic of the play’s *hic et nunc* is thus renewed throughout the drama as the two worlds of its performance are made to encounter each other again and again. We meet the longed-for messenger bearing news from the West, whose ability to convey the news of distant events to the anxious Sousans comprises the play’s first extended episode. So too Xerxes, whose ignoble return from Greece completes the action of the drama. At the heart of the play Darius, returned from an even greater remove, stands before the Persians in ghostly splendor. The apparition of the dead king creates a specially charged rift in the spatio-temporal fabric of the play. His *hic et nunc* presence brings the underworld to the stage and, as with the inverted nekyia of the *Psychagogoi*, situates the past and future in the unmediated present of the drama.

An appreciation for the spectacular quality of Darius’ appearance onstage is built into the language of the scene. An immeasurable distance normally separates the dead Darius from the living land of Sousa, whose very soil is exalted by the possession of his body. To bring their dead king into view, the Chorus deploy all of their skill in crafting their prayers. Their invocations, directed piously to the gods of the underworld and to the earth itself, are marked by powerful, ritually evocative repetitions and emphatic imperatives. The Chorus must labor to bring the dead back into the light, an effort that, as the kommos of the *Choephoroi* shows, is far from certain of success. The Chorus’s imprecations are not addressed to the gods alone; they must also be heard by Darius. In contrast to the gods, the dead king does not have ready access to the world above and the

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33 The use of repetition, mainly anaphora, is marked beginning at strophe β. Imperatives run throughout, and are incorporated into the repetition through the refrain at the end of strophe and antistrophe γ: βάσανα πάτερ ἄγαν Ἀμιάν, οὗ. (662 = 671).
Chorus cannot be certain that their prayers have reached his ears: νέφθεν ἄγα κλύει μοι; Does he hear me, I wonder, from below? (639).35

The Chorus have not labored in vain. Darius heeds their calls from his seat in the underworld and undertakes to return to Sousa in answer to their pleas. Upon his appearance, Darius himself draws attention to the exertion and acute emotion of the Chorus in their prayers for his return. The king offers his own account of the prayers that they have just performed, noting the effort – of both Atossa and the old men – that has gone into the realization of his return. The dead king tells of how he trembled at the sight of his wife pouring libations at his tomb, and how he heard the piteous laments of the Chorus calling for his return (682-8).36

The combined efforts of Atossa, the Chorus, and the groaning earth itself have carried word of Sousa’s misfortune to Darius in the underworld. Yet it is his own labor in returning his spirit to the light (ἔνεφθεν ψυχήν ἐς φῶς, 630) that takes pride of place at the culmination of Darius’ account (658-92):

\[
\text{έστι δ’ οὐκ εὐέξοδον}
\]
\[
\text{ἄλλος τε πάντως, χοί κατά χθονός θεοί}
\]
\[
\text{λαβεῖν ἁμένους εἰσοῦν ἰ’ μεθέναι.}
\]
\[
\text{690}
\]
\[
\text{ὁμως δ’ ἐκείνος ἐνδυσαμενός ἐγὼ ἴρω’}
\]

There is no easy exit [from the underworld] by any means; the gods below the earth more readily accept those arriving than let them depart again. But nevertheless, being honored amongst them, I have come.

The living have made their powerful imprecations, but in order to fulfill their prayers the ghost must endeavor to make the difficult escape from the confines of Hades. His departure from the realm of the dead reverses the natural order. Men enter the underworld without difficulty, but the gods do not readily let them emerge again into the light. That Darius has been able to do so is, as we will see, a testament to his power, a mark of his

36 The adjective used to describe the Chorus’s laments is ψυχαγωγός, a term which later came to be used in a technical sense to describe the emotional effect of a dramatic performance on its audience. Hunter (2009) p. 37. Although there is no evidence for such technical usage at the time of Aeschylus’ composition, it is possible that such meta-theatrical resonances were already beginning to emerge and further influencing the playwright’s connection between necromancy and poetic performance.
semi-divine status. The return of the king, uniting the structurally segregated worlds of living and dead, is a disturbance of the natural fabric of time and space. His presence casts the present into a ghostly relief, uniting spheres that should remain disparate and unsettling the stability of the *hic et nunc*. The effort needed to achieve this extraordinary condition is no small matter, and its accomplishment rests upon an unstable asymmetry inherent in the encounter between worlds.

The fundamental dissonance of Darius’ presence in Sousa is revealed in the first words spoken by the king. Addressing the Chorus of old men who have prayed for his return, the ghost invokes the common status that he shared with the Persian elders while still alive. He calls them age-mates (*ήλικές θ’ ἠβης ἐμῆς 681,* a designation which elides the great chasm that now divides the lives of the living men of the Chorus from the timeless death of the ghost before them. Darius may wish to look upon the Chorus of elders as his erstwhile companions. For the Persian elders, however, the dead king is no longer like them. He is at once a man and nothing like man. Neither wholly flesh nor fully material, existing both inside and outside of mortal time, he is, in the words of the Chorus’s incantatory prayer, a man and a grave, an *éthos* hidden in an unknown form: *φύλος ἀνήρ, φύλος ὁχθος, φύλα γὰρ κέκευθεν ἡθη* (647-8). When he appears before them in the flesh, the Chorus find themselves at a loss. They can neither countenance to look upon him or to address him in speech (694-6):

\[
\text{σέβομαι μὲν προοιδέσθαι,} \\
\text{σέβομαι δ’ ἀντία λέξαι,} \\
\text{σέθεν ἀφχαίω περὶ τάρβει.}
\]

*I am too awed to look upon you, too awed to speak back, past fear of you surrounds me [even now].*

The Chorus’s alienation from Darius, as he seeks to bring himself into dialogue with them, is reflected in the formal structure of the scene. The excited rhythms of the Chorus’s continued lyric expressions jar against the steady trimeters and tetrameters of

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37 The connection is strengthened by Darius’ first words, *ὅ πιστά πιστῶν ἠλικές θ’ ἠβης ἐμῆς / Πέρσας γεραιοί, which echo the Chorus’s own self-description at the opening of the play: Τάδε μὲν Περσῶν τῶν οἰχομένων / Ἐλλάδ’ ἐς αἶαν πιστά καλεῖται (1-2). Darius repeats his claim that the Chorus are his age-mates later in the scene where it is paired with an explicit reference to their shared experience in life: ἕν γὰρ σαφῶς τόδ’ ἵστ’, ἐμοὶ ἔσπερες ίμης, / ἀπαντες ἡμεῖς, οἷς κράτη τάδ’ ἐσχομεν* (784-5).
the king’s speech, a rhythmical mirror of the asymmetry of the exchange. Darius reacts to the Chorus’s trepidation with frustration. It was, after all, the Chorus who prayed for his return (697-9):

\[
\text{άλλ’ ἔπει κάτωθεν ἵλθον σοὶς γόοις πεπεισμένος, μὴ τι μασιστήρα μύθον ἀλλὰ σύντομον λέγον εἰπὲ καὶ πέραινε πάντα, τὴν ἐμὴν αἰδὼ μεθεῖς.}
\]

*Now that I have returned from the underworld in compliance with your laments, speak quickly and tell me all; do not drag out our exchange – you must put aside your reverence of me.*

The irony of Darius’ words, like that of Orestes’ speech to the incredulous Electra, is a mark of the incompatible spatio-temporal understanding of the two figures. Darius, whose power to transcend the boundaries of death has granted him a special insight into the malleability of time and space, cannot comprehend the Chorus’s disorientation in light of his wondrous feat. The Chorus, bound by the spatio-temporal limitations of the *hic et nunc*, insistently refuse to address their prayed for interlocutor. Even after they have been chastened by Darius, they continue in their frightened lyrics, offering a formal response to their own baffled antistrophe rather than turning their speech towards the king.  

The uncertainty expressed by the Chorus is not misplaced. Darius is a double figure on the stage, both present and absent in his ghostly form. On the one hand, the dead king is a fully embodied actor (in both senses of the word) and subject to the constraints of the performative *hic et nunc*. His actions and speech are contingent upon the same spatio-temporal conditions that apply within the drama, a fact reflected in his early admonitions to the Chorus to hurry their speech lest they squander their time together (692-3, 698-9). Yet, at the same time, Darius is not fully participant in the dramatic action. He stands apart from the Chorus and Atossa, ignorant of their present concerns and unable to do anything to alleviate them. This double nature invests the figure of Darius with a unique status within the drama as a figure able to embody the spatio-temporal mobility of the scripted drama within the confines of the *hic et nunc*. As such, his appearance represents

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38 The structure of the scene as a whole is discussed by Michelini (1982) pp. 31-40.
39 δίωμαι μὲν χράοισασθαί, / δίωμαι δ’ ἄντια φάσθαι, / λέξας δύσλεκτα φίλοιοιν (700-2).
a moment of theatrical self-reflection facilitated by the ghostly figure who at once embodies and enacts the paradox of scripted reperformance.

In a recent article on the paradoxical temporalities involved in Darius’ appearance, Jonas Grethlein has argued that the apparition should be understood as a *mise en abyme*; a moment which encapsulates the broader theatrical program of the play within a single scene. For Grethlein, Darius is a representative of the play’s own internal past and his presence on the stage calls attention to how the drama as a whole reenacts events that have already taken place.\(^{40}\) Put another way, Darius calls attention to the spatio-temporal juxtapositions of the play’s mimesis through the paradox of his spectral appearance on the stage. He is a reflection of the entire work, a physical embodiment of the very idea of tragic performance.

Grethlein turns his insight into Darius’ special position within the *Persai* towards an examination of the play’s idea of “history”, but his model is also well suited to illuminating Aeschylus’ interest in the scriptory qualities of the play. For while Darius does, in some respects, represent the vanished past of the Persians, his status outside of the living world permits him a spatio-temporal mobility that is as readily located within the future as in the past. This spatio-temporal transcendence is, however, marked by a single limitation: although he is physically present, Darius cannot fully participate in the action of the stage. As such the dead king’s role within the *Persai* is more closely aligned with the play’s scriptory self-awareness than it is with its “historical” consciousness. The ghostly Darius is a reflection of the spatio-temporal flux on which the *hic et nunc* of the drama is founded. His spectral presence holds up a mirror to a pervasive absence at the heart of the action: that of the work’s absent author. As an actor unable truly to share the stage with the characters who have called him forth, Darius embodies the paradoxical qualities of the ubiquitously absent poet. Like the playwright himself, who commands the full range of the drama’s spatio-temporal matrix but cannot himself fully enter the performance that he has created, Darius appears onstage without inhabiting it.

The appearance of Darius’ ghost sparks a pointed engagement with the drama’s own scripted status. But this moment of *mise en abyme* is not an isolated event. The complex conditions of the scriptory poet’s present absence are explored throughout the play, and

the charged resonances of Darius’ arrival are anticipated in the scenes leading up to the critical moment. First the Chorus’s laments and then, more insistently, the messenger’s reports establish a grammar of absence and presence which situates the necromantic core of the play within a broader mediation on the spatio-temporal properties of scripted poetics. Both of these earlier scenes play with the potential of dramatic performance to conjure voices from elsewhere. And each resonates with the model of scripitory absence that Darius’ arrival throws into relief. While neither of the preceding scenes achieves the fully embodied realization of the absent poet they prefigure, their more limited figurations produce a sense of lingering absence within the play, a futile desire to bring what is gone back into presence, that sheds light on the basic dynamic of scripitory absence with which the play is concerned. Furthermore, the attempts of the Chorus and messenger to verbally impersonate and import distant figures and voices into the *hic et nunc* of the play stand in marked contrast with the full embodiment of Darius onstage. The essential distinction illuminates both the power of the poet’s true voice and the paradoxical nature of his presence within the play.

In each of these preparatory scenes, tropes of dictional manipulation allow for the integration of what is distant into the dramatic *hic et nunc*. The Chorus play with the power of their voice to reenact events from beyond the limits of the stage and, through their own reperformance, to bring characters into view who are not, and will never be, bodily present within the drama. Likewise the messenger effectively imports the bloody clashes and terrible sufferings that have taken place on distant shores. His accounts of the battle at Salamis and the long, hard retreat of the Persian troops transport the throngs of soldiers across the seas which now separate the messenger from these earlier events. Key to the messenger’s role is his ability to convey the sounds and speech of the conflict. His use of *oratio recta*, the only true instance in the play, brings not only the Persians but also their Greek adversaries into the Persian citadel and onto the stage. The malleability of space, time, and voice within the performative sphere will by now be familiar as a hallmark of the poets’ concern with the nature of their scripitory poetics, but the *Persai*

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41 We may contrast the vivid battle description with the relative lack of battle narrative in the *Seven Against Thebes*, where the representation of the battle is almost entirely displaced onto the verbal conflict of the *Redepaare*. For discussion of the play, see above pp. 161-80.
offers a unique glimpse of the human aspect of this spatio-temporal fluidity. As the necromantic core of the _Persai_ reflects, it is the ability of men to bridge these distances that is at the heart of the drama.

The _parodos_ of the Chorus provides a particularly fine introduction to the nature of the play’s interest in the spatio-temporal character of scripted poetics. In the course of their opening song, the Chorus adumbrate, but do not fully engage, the idea of bringing absent figures into the drama through the mediating power of their bodies and voices. In their anapaestic entry, the Chorus identify themselves as the appointed guardians of the Persian riches, the only ones remaining in a land that has been emptied of its men. The Chorus must stand in for those who are absent.

The Chorus present a catalogue of the generals in the Persian forces, tracing the geography of the empire from their current location in Sousa to Egypt and Lydia in the west and Babylon in the east. In the first of many allusions to Homer, the passage not only mirrors the form of an epic catalogue but is permeated with language borrowed from or highly reminiscent of hexameter formulae. Beyond structure and vocabulary, the catalogue achieves a particularly epic feel through its retrospective account of the marshaling of the forces. The Chorus’s vivid memory of the past event recalls the anachrony of the Iliadic catalogue of ships by returning to the start of a conflict that the poet has chosen to represent beginning _in medias res_. However, the scripted nature of the Aeschylean Chorus allows the playwright to transform the temporal dissonance into a meditation on reperformative absence. Unlike the Homeric narrator, who stands apart from his subject, the _Persai_ Chorus present a visual mirror of the mobilized troops as they march into the orchestra to the martial beat of their anapaestic song. They are not an exact match for the great warriors whom they name; they insist that they are awed by

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42 On the powerful effect created by the play’s lack of a prologue, see Michelini (1982) pp. 77-8.
46 Anapaests are regularly used in tragedy at the outset of the _parodos_, but the martial theme of the Chorus’s song in the _Persai_ would, I suggest, have re-activated the military overtones of the anapaestic meter. On the traditional uses of anapaests, see West (1982) pp. 53-4.
the sight of the forces just as they will be later in the presence of Darius.\footnote{\textit{φοβεροί μὲν ἰδεῖν δεινοῖ δὲ μάχην / ψυχῆς εὐτλήμονι δόξῃ} (27-8), \textit{φοβερῶν ὤψιν προσιδέσθαι} (48)} In fact, it is precisely the inescapable differences – in age, role, and place – that separate the Chorus and the generals they describe that lends power to their performative surrogacy. The Chorus are a substitute for the now absent host, an imperfect proxy that can nevertheless bring the past into presence once again. The Chorus reperform the departure of the Persian army as actors not fully identified with the roles that they portray. The fissure between the two groups of men, the absent soldiers and their aged surrogates, points to the potential limitations of scripted reperformance. The formative event, the true encoding of the script, can never be directly experienced through future iterations. The moment of creation is necessarily also the moment of departure.

The immensity of the distance, both spatial and temporal, between the \textit{hic et nunc} of the Chorus and the departure of the troops is beautifully expressed in the subtle metaphor at the close of the anapaestic section of the \textit{parodos} (59-64):

\begin{quote}
τοιόνδ' ἄνθος Περσαίδος αἰας
οἴχεται ἀνδρῶν,
οὐς πέρι πᾶσα χθὼν Ἀσίης
θρέψασα πόθῳ στένεται μαλερῷ,
τοκεῖς τ' ἄλοχοί θ' ἡμερολεγόδον
τείνοντα χρόνον τρομέονται.
\end{quote}

\textit{Such a bloom of men has departed from the Persian land, [men] whom the whole land of Asia nourished and now groans for with a terrible longing; parents and wives shudder as the time stretches out day by day.}

As Asia is emptied of men, the wives and mothers count the days and tremble at the time as it stretches out between them and the distant men. The metaphoric use of the verb \textit{teinò} accords an almost material quality to the notion of time, as if it had a physical presence. Through the subtle play of language, the image of the men’s absence is filtered through a spatio-temporal lens which suggests that the recollection of their departure should be understood in terms akin to that of the poetic script. The men of Asia, the authors of their own martial expedition have left behind only the void of their departure. This is what is left to be reperformed by those remaining in the Persian city. The creation
of their absence can be recalled, but in doing so, the mediating distance of the script that permits this reperformance is also brought into view.

A similar engagement with the idea of scriptory absence emerges later in the parodos, as the Chorus draw their account of the departure of the Persian force to a close. The crossing of the Hellespont through the astonishing contrivance of the bridge of ships is both a rupture with the land of Asia, the hic et nunc of the Chorus, and a yoking of the disparate worlds. Yet it is not the host, as they maniacally endeavor to lash their cables and fix fast the sea, who now make their way into the conjuring space of reperformance. The action of the soldiers is now too distant, too essentially removed from the experience of the Chorus to compel them to embody its reenactment. Instead, the Chorus turn their gaze inward to consider their own reaction to the faraway events they are recounting.

The emotional response of the Chorus, as they begin to suspect the subtle hand of atê at work in the westward march of their army, is expressed as the fear arising in their phrên. They feel a sense of foreboding as they imagine that the absent men may not return. Their lament for the abandoned city is at once for the absence that they now feel and for the greater one which they fear will come. The heightened emotion of the Chorus’s song, marked by their exclamatory language, is mirrored in the rhythmical shift of the ode, from the ionics that have predominated since the end of the anapaestic introduction to the lecythia that will command the ode’s final stanzas. With this shift in register the Chorus moves into more nakedly unmediated expression, and at the same time the most pointed moment of scripted reperformance (115-25):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ταὐτά μοι μελαγχότων} & \quad \text{στρ. δ.} & 115 \\
\phiρήν ἄμυσσεται φόβῳ – & \quad \text{\textit{ant. δ.}} & 120 \\
\text{όδ Περσικοῦ στρατεύματος} – & \quad \text{καὶ τὸ Κισσίων πόλιμῳ} & \\
\text{τοῦδε μὴ πόλις πούθη-} & \quad \text{ἀντίδουπον ἄσεται,} & \\
\text{ται, κένανδρον μέγ' ἄστυ Σουούδος} & \quad \text{όδα, τούτ' ἔπος γυναικοπλή-} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

48 The focus on the marshalling of the army in the Persai parodos finds a parallel, to some degree, in the narration of the events at Aulis in the parodos of the Agamemnon.
49 τὸν ἀμφιθέμουν ἐξαμεμίας / ἄμφοτέρως ἄλλον / πρῶτα κοινὸν ἀιᾶς (130-2).
50 φιλόφρονος γὰρ ποτισσαίονος τὸ πρῶτον παράγει / βροτόν εἰς ἄρχων Ἅτα, / τόθεν οὐκ ἔστω ὑπὲρ θνα- /τὸν ἀλλύξαντα φυγεῖν (111-14).
Thus does my black-robed heart rend me with fear – Oa, the Persian forces – May the city not learn from this that the great citadel of Sousa is emptied of men.

And the Kissians will sing a response – Oa – the crowd of women calling out this word as they tear their fine linen garments.

The formal relationship of the stanzas is highlighted by the extra-metrical responsion of the cry of woe, $\textit{oa}$. In the strophe it is the Chorus’s own grief and fear, rending their $\textit{phrenes}$ as if in mourning,$^{51}$ that produces the interjection. When it is repeated in the antistrophe, the origin of the expression of grief is less clear. The second stanza of the pair introduces the women of Kissia, who – it is claimed – will echo the Chorus in their own song, matching grief with grief. The second exclamation, then, would seem to be that of the women; the literal $\textit{antidoupon epos}$ that the Chorus themselves describe. The description of the women neatly matches that which the Chorus apply to their own emotional reaction. The figurative language of clothing and costumes, a pervasive theme throughout the play,$^{52}$ is transformed from the metaphoric black robe of the Chorus’s mind ($\mu\epsilon\lambda\alpha\gamma\chi\iota\tau\omicron\nu\phi\acute{\eta}$) into the rich mantles of their phantasmagoric female counterparts ($\beta\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon\omicron\upsilon\omicron\upsilon\delta^{'} \, \epsilon^{'} \nu \pi\acute{\epsilon}\pi\omicron\upsilon\omicron\zeta$). The imagery interweaves the garments rent in grief, and with it the voices of lamentation. The second cry veers towards $\textit{oratio recta}$, as the Chorus almost ventriloquise the women’s sung response. Yet the true voice of the women is held at bay, their echo imagined within an unspecified future. The Chorus postpone the threnodic amoibaion, flirting with the idea of a sung exchange without bringing it into full verbal presence.

The effect of this double identity of the Chorus in the opening scene is to focus our attention fully on the question of embodied presence on the stage. The Chorus are there themselves, but they are also able to summon shadowy figures from afar, figures whose own absence becomes part of the Chorus’s bodily form.

As the Chorus play out these moments of scripted absence, they are themselves suffering yet another absence, that of a messenger who will bring news of the Persian

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51 Garvie (2009) $\textit{ad loc}$.

campaign against the Greeks. The vacancy they feel is not one of past departure, but of anticipated return. From the opening of their song the Chorus signal this concern: κοῦτε τις ἄγγελος οὐτε τις ἱππεὺς / ἀστρι τὸ Περσῶν ἄφονειτα. No messenger or horseman has arrived at the city of the Persians. (14-15) and it is against this backdrop that the dictional play of their parodos must be set. The city awaits news of the fate of its absent citizens. Indeed the action of the entire play can be said, to paraphrase Oliver Taplin, to dramatize the anticipation of Xerxes’ wretched return. Yet unlike the Agamemnon, which displays a similar anticipatory stance in the wake of an overseas military expedition, the Persai is built solely around the idea of reversing the absence at the core of the play.\(^5\) And since absence can only be remedied by presence, this operation is a matter of literal return. Much is made of the elaborate mechanai which have allowed the Persian army to make its way from Asia into Europe. Yet their return is not aided by the cunning contrivance, nor is there a correspondingly ingenious device for conveying news of the army’s fate across the great distance that now separates them from the city. Clytemnestra’s beacon lights brought a symbolon of the fall of Troy immediately to Argos and established the symbolic structure of the Oresteia as a dance between the concrete and the imaginary. In the Persai, men alone bear messages and must travel distances to do so. It is only when a messenger has returned from Greece – a place so distant that the Queen is not certain of its location – that those who remained behind in Sousa can learn of their countrymen’s fate.

For the messenger, as for Darius, the return is an arduous one and he rejoices at his fortune in reaching Sousa alive: καύτως δ’ ἀέλπιως νόστιμον βλέπω φῶς. And I myself did not expect to look upon this homecoming day. (261) The expression is superficially anodyne but takes on a weightier tone in light of the next visitor to the stage. The difficulty of the army’s return to Asia is a central element of the messenger’s report, comprising the second longest speech of the scene. The travails of the defeated forces, as they make their way slowly across the hostile land of Boeotia, Macedonia, and Thrace, are evocatively narrated and the length and detail of the description draws an implicit contrast with the ease of their outbound journey.\(^5\) But it is in his account of the battle

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\(^5\) The emptiness of Asia is a recurrent theme of the play; Harrison (2000) p. 71.

itself that the messenger offers the most complex picture of the distance that separates the Persian troops from the stage and it will be this element of the messenger’s report that most concerns us here.

Upon his arrival, the messenger immediately conveys the broad outlines of the disaster to Atossa and the Chorus. The army has been destroyed, the great riches of Persia wiped out in a single blow.\(^{55}\) When Atossa demands an account of the disaster from its archê, the messenger commences an extended narrative of the events at Salamis, which gives content and shape to the catalogue of the dead that he has already delivered. The messenger derives much of his authority from his status as eyewitness to the battle and his account is marked by highly vivid visual details.\(^{56}\) An equally, if not more significant feature in establishing the messenger’s reliability is the powerful aural component of his narration. A kind of dictional *enargeia* in which sounds, and ultimately *oratio recta*, add a vivid presence to the account, the messenger’s sonic descriptions bring the battle into the ears of his audience, both onstage and off-, as if the distant events were being reperformed within his narrative.

The messenger’s account of the battle is from the outset a matter of speech. The entire catastrophe was set off, the messenger reports, by a single man who came from the Greek host to address Xerxes. His deceitful speech, recounted in *oratio obliqua*, is deemed so powerful that the messenger attributes agency to an unidentified *alastêr* or *kakos daimon*.\(^{57}\) With the Persian king duped by the cunning words of the Greek envoy, the messenger paints a picture of the sonic landscape as the battle inches closer. At daybreak, the Persians realize that they have been outwitted and outmaneuvered. Before they can catch sight of the Greek ships ammassed against them, the sounds from the enemy line reach their ears and strike fear in their hearts (388-98):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{πρώτον μὲν ἦξὶ κέλαδος Ἑλλήνων πάρα} \\
\text{μολὴτηδ' ἐυφήμησεν, ὄρθιον δ' ἀμα} \\
\text{ἀντὶ ἅλαξε νησιωτιδὸς πέτρας} \\
\text{ἡξὼν φόβος δὲ πάοι βαοβάροις παρῆ} \\
\text{γνώμης ἀποσφαλείοιν οὐ γάρ ὡς φυγῇ}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{55}\) ὃς ἐν μιᾷ πληγῇ κατέφθασαν πολὺς / ὀλβος, τὸ Περσῶν δὲ ἄνθος οἴχεται πεσόν (251-2).
\(^{57}\) ἦξεν μὲν, ὦ δέσποινα, τοῦ παντὸς κακοῦ / φανεὶς ἀλάστωρ ἢ κακὸς δαίμων ποθέν. (353-4).
First the melodious racket of the Greeks sounded out around us with a peal, and at the same time the high-pitched echo cried back from the island’s cliffs. Fear was in the heart of every Persian, and their wits were lost. The Greeks then sung a holy paian, in no way planning to retreat, but rousing themselves for battle with sturdy courage. And the trumpet lit up that whole place with its blast. And straightway they struck the briny depths of their path with the stroke of their plashing oars and, moving swiftly, they were all soon plain for us to see.

The density of sonic detail is remarkable, bringing the din of the naval preparations into vivid reality on the stage. The sounds of the Greek troops as they move about the ships rise up through the air and rebound off the rocky cliffs around them, the shrill cry of the battle trumpet mixes with the prayers of the soldiers and the plash of their oars. Within the messenger’s cacophonous account, the detail of the tumult echoing off the nearby rocks is described with special care. The dense fabric of sounds arising from the Greek ships is variously portrayed as raucous (ἠχοῦς ἐλαχίστας) and melodic (μολύπηδον) and both aspects are reflected in the shouting (ἀντήλαλαξε), high-pitched (ὄρθων) response of the rocks. By enjambling the subject, ἐχό, the poet presents an elegant formal mirror of the sound’s belated arrival.58

The complex sounds of the messenger’s speech also resonate with sounds from beyond the immediate context and literal meaning of his words. These figurative echoes situate the messenger’s aural portrait within a broader development of the theme of absence and presence that is developed through the play. On the one hand, the martial echoes harken back to the ventriloquised amoibaion of the parodos, where the Chorus created a response for their cry of grief through their brief act of choral projection. Now we hear the shouts of the Greeks rebounding from cliffs that will soon be filled with Persian dead and the Chorus’s postponed lament finds its true echo in the messenger’s double reperformance. Looking forward, the line-initial position of the enjambed ἐχό does more than call attention to the formal properties of the description, it presages the

58 Garvie (2009) ad loc.
reverberating appearance of Darius who will soon be brought onto the stage in glorious response to the Chorus’s pleas. The noun ἑχό is phonetically reminiscent of the first-person verb ἥκο, a term that is regularly found in the same position in the trimeter. Notably, within the Persai the form is only used by Darius, upon his return from the underworld: ὁμοί δ’ ἐκείνος ἐνδυναμεύον ας ἐγὼ / ἡμώ (691-2). But the line-initial use is common in Aeschylean and tragic trimeters to signal the arrival of a new actor onstage. So common is its use in tragedy, that the verb form takes on an almost generic quality, a marker of the scriptory drama orchestrating the mimetic reperformance. But here, as with the Chorus earlier, the arrival of the Greeks’ distant echo in Sousa does not herald a new voice onstage; it is an old sound echoed once more in the messenger’s reperformance. Darius stands apart from this idea of scripted belatedness, not an echo but a ἥκο, a real arrival from the world beyond the stage.

The polyphony of the messenger’s initial description is traced through his narrative. Shouts and groans characterize his report of the entire confrontation. But the central sonic detail is the messenger’s impersonation of the Greek battle-cry. For, when the ships finally come into view, the sounds of the Greeks become correspondingly clearer and the Persian observer is able to report hearing their exact words (401-5):

\[
καὶ παρὴν ὅμοι κλῶειν
πολλὴν βοήν ἌΩ παιδεῖς Ἑλλήνον, ἵτε,
ἔλευθεροῦτε πατρίδ’, ἔλευθεροῦτε δὲ
παιδας, γυναίκας, θεῶν τε πατρώων ἔδη,
θήμας τε προγόνων νῦν υπὲρ πάντων ἀγών.'
\]

59 Notably, in Aeschylus, the verb is elsewhere employed to assert an actor’s presence in a manner that similarly contrasts with a possible absence. Thus it is used by the messenger introducing himself, and his eyewitness authority, to Eteocles in the Seven Against Thebes (40), by Orestes upon his return to Argos at the beginning of the Choephoroi (3), and by Aigisthos, emerging from the palace later in that same play (838). The verb also appears in the Agamemnon, where it is employed by the Chorus as they turn their attention to Klytemnestra at the end of the parodos (258) and in the Eumenides as Orestes supplicates Athena (236).

60 Most subtly, the paian of the Greeks seems to invest the blows of battle with its musical qualities. The verb paiò, reminiscent of the noun pai/on/pai/on and at times a homophone of the verb epaeidò, is used four times throughout the narrative (396-7, 408-9, 415-6, 425-6). Each instance repeats the line-initial position of παιάν ἑφύμουν (393), and three out of the four are paired with a specific sonic detail.
And it was possible at the same time to hear their loud shout: “Sons of Greeks, come, free your fatherland, free your children, your wives, the seats of your paternal gods, and the graves of your ancestors! Now we fight for all!”

The dissonance of this protreptic address to the Greek troops in the voice of the Persian messenger who is himself in dialogue with the grieving Queen and Chorus of Persians is a forceful dramatic move. The combination of two powerful dictional tropes, oratio recta and apostrophe, has the effect not only of turning the messenger into a conduit for the absent Greek troops, but of placing his interlocutors in the position of the enemy forces who have just triumphed over their kinsmen. The comparative weakness of the Persian response, given only the most cursory description by the messenger, highlights the vivid presence that has been accorded to the voices of the Greeks: καὶ μὴν παρ’ ἠμῶν Περσίδος γλώσσης ὄρθος ὑπεντίαζε, κοὐχέτ’ ἓν μέλλειν ἀκμή. And on our side the din of the Persian tongue responded, and it was no more time to delay. (406-7). The ventriloquised exchange points to the absence that still underpins the messenger’s report. The vivid presence of the distant and foreign Greek voices that he impersonates calls attention to the gulf between the Sousan stage and the far-off battle. And even more distant are the voices of those who have departed from the Persian capital.61 The men whom the Persians long to hear can only reach the capital in a muted echo.

The lingering sense of absence in the messenger’s attempts to bring the distant battle into the hic et nunc can be linked to the characterization of his report as a kind of fixed, written text which he is bringing to light through his speech. At the outset, he offers to unfurl the sufferings of the Persian troops as if unrolling a book in which their tribulations had been fixed in writing: πᾶν ἀναπτύξαν πάθος (254).62 The metaphor is repeated by the Queen nearly word for word in her response (294), placing clear emphasis on the idea that his words not only spring from elsewhere, but rely on the fixity of written mediation in order to be reperformed in Sousa.63 In line with this focus on

63 Grethlein has rightly emphasized the importance of memory in the messenger scene, but the repeated allusion to written documentation suggests that the act of memory is not here synonymous with oral tradition, “passed on by one person to another”, as he claims. Grethlein (2007) p. 370.
written commemoration, the catalogue of Persian dead which the Messenger then relates demonstrates clear affinities to the Athenian casualty-list inscriptions of the time.\textsuperscript{64} That the messenger’s version of the list is an emphatically performative – and dialogic – act, wholly dependent on the bodily presence of the performer to recount each detail, does not weaken this connection. Rather it reflects the scriptory perspective of the dramatic poet, who does not see the written text as an object to be considered in and of itself, but as a vital tool for reperformance, a task here taken up by the messenger. No great focus is placed on these scriptory objects, as the concern of the drama is to explore the human dimension of reperformance. But they lurk behind the messenger’s words, gesturing towards a secondary level of absent otherness that will only be fully realized through Darius’ arrival onstage.

The Homeric allusion embedded at the close of his battle description signals an especially pointed connection between the messenger’s account and the poetics of scripted reperformance. Regretting the incompleteness of his narrative, the messenger expresses the impossibility of giving a full account of the disastrous battle (429-32):

\begin{quote}
κακῶν δὲ πλήθος, οὐδ’ ἂν εἰ δέχ’ ἡματα
στοιχιγμοῦν, οὖν ἂν ἐκπλήσσαι σοι. 430
εὐ γὰρ τὸ δ’ ἵσθι, μηδάμ’ ἡμέρα μιᾷ
πλήθος τοιούτων ἀνθρώπων θανεῖν.
\end{quote}

_The fullness of misfortunes, I could not tell of its whole extent even if I listed events in order for ten straight days. But know this well: never has such a number of men died on one single day._

The language is borrowed from the _recusatio_ that introduces Homer’s catalogue of ships (II.2.488-90):\textsuperscript{65}

\begin{quote}
πληθῦν δ’ οὖν ἂν ἐγὼ μυθῆσομαι οὐδ’ ὀνομῆνω,
οὐδ’ εἰ μοι δέχα μὲν γλώσσα, δέχα δὲ ὀς τὰμ’ εἶν,
φωνῇ δ’ ἄφορητος, χάλκεον δὲ μοι ἣτος ἐνεῖ.
\end{quote}

_The full account I could not speak nor name [them all], not if I had ten tongues and ten mouths, and an unfading voice and heart of bronze within [my breast]._

\textsuperscript{64} Ebbott (2000).

Both speakers face the challenge of recounting an event of greater magnitude than they can physically convey. But where the Homeric narrator expresses his limitations in terms of his powers of speech – his tongue, mouth, voice, and heart – the Aeschylean messenger focuses on the limited time allotted to him. The dramatic poet transforms the ten tongues of Homer’s oral poetics into the ten days of the messenger’s scripted reperformance. As Grethlein notes, it is a plausible approximation of the amount of time needed for a full reperformance of a Homeric epic.66 But tragedy, allotted only a single day (ἡμέρα μία), must contain multiple moments within its single performance. The contrast points up the generic parameters which distinguish tragedy, and tragic performances, from their epic predecessors. But the unmistakable formal difference of the two genres also suggests a less clearly defined distance that separates the epic and dramatic poets as they consider the problem of bringing the past to light. The concern will be echoed by Darius when he urges the Chorus to speed their exchange (692, 698-9), a marker of how the performative temporality of drama – illustrated here by the allusive engagement with the Homeric model – structures the scriptory outlook of the play.

None of the elaborate play of time, space, and voice found in the Chorus or the messenger is necessary with Darius. His very presence contains the spatio-temporal paradox that these earlier scenes endeavor to elucidate. His alienation from the hic et nunc is explicit. He knows nothing of the Persian conflict, save what he has learned from watching the hordes of dead arrive in Hades (706-8). His ignorance of events is striking, a perfect antithesis of the messenger’s astounding knowledge.67 What ill has befallen the city, he asks his wife, and which of his sons now leads the army? What forces have been lead against the Greeks, and how has the army made its way across to Europe? (715-37). Darius’ arrival onstage entails the overt incorporation (indeed, the embodiment) of the structural dynamics of absence and presence that have heretofore haunted the play and its players. Now the intangible sense of absence has been given ghostly form on the stage, and we are able to contemplate what it means to bring these two worlds into contact.

Darius stands, as the poet does, in an uneasy balance with the rest of the drama. He is isolated even as he stands amidst his former countrymen and wife, and unable to find his

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67 A different perspective on the relationship of the two figures is set out by Barrett (1995) p. 541.
way into the present. The configuration mirrors that of the scriptory poet in relation to his work. No longer part of its reperformative present and future, the author of the play cannot enter into true dialogue with the characters of his creation. Within this formal dynamic, it is Darius’ identity, as former king and master of all Asia, that lends his ghostly presence the certain power to captivate and command. Despite – or perhaps because of – his displacement from the action of the stage, Darius’ regal voice possesses a manifest authority that is unparalleled within the play. Like the poet himself, Darius’ distance from the world of the *hic et nunc* only increases his potency and royal dominion. And although he stands outside of the present, he demonstrates his mastery over the temporal and spatial spheres through his ability to see both past and future. The long catalogue of Persian kings with which he begins his series of monologues reveals the profound reach of the king’s authority, tracing the source of his rule deep into the past and ultimately to the beneficence of Zeus himself. And his insight into the future sufferings of the Persians develops seamlessly into a much more localized direction of the dramatic stage – instructing Atossa to leave the proscenium and change her costume – that sets the global fate of the empire and the play’s own stagecraft equally under his control.

Darius’ return does not represent the absent presence of reperformance, in which the *hic et nunc* actor tries to conjure what is distant into being once more, but the present absence of the poet, whose voice permeates all but cannot himself take part in the vital moment of his poem’s reperformance. The qualitative difference between his engagement with the play’s underlying interest in scriptory poetics is represented by his unique antipathy towards Xerxes’ Hellespont bridge, expressed in the initial, tetrametric portion of his speech. Upon learning that Xerxes had constructed the contrivance to cross from Asia into Europe, Darius expresses grief at his son’s imprudent decision. The king

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70 Lines 832-6. Atossa’s absence from the remainder of the play has posed something of a conundrum for critics, cf. Dworacki (1979). Within this scriptory reading of the drama, her absence can be understood as an aspect of the play’s unseen action. Instructed by the poetically potent Darius, her actions need not be completed on the stage any more than the events of Tiresias’ prophecies must be fulfilled before our eyes. In both instances, the absent action signals the power of the absent poet, who commands a scriptory world that transcends the limits of the dramatic stage.
traces the Persian’s woes back to this single act, the yoking and enslavement of the flowing waters of the straight.

So remarkable is Xerxes’ feat that, were it not for external corroboration, one might almost imagine that Aeschylus invented the detail of the Hellespont bridge. As an historical event, the construction of the bridge was an awe-inspiring endeavor, especially given the technological limitations of the time. Nevertheless, the importance accorded to the event within Aeschylus’ *Persai* is extreme even in the context of this disproportionate accomplishment. The bridge is present in the imagination of the play from the start.\(^{71}\) To those left behind in Sousa, it is a wondrous device, binding the Persian troops to the Asian land from which they have departed. The Chorus praise the cunning and craftsmanship of the man who has bound the sea with *laophoroi machanai* (114), but suggest that his ingenuity may not be sufficient to overcome the *dolomêtis apatê* of the gods (115). Indeed, although the bridge is able to convey the army across the aqueous boundary between the world of Asia and that of Europe beyond, it fails to maintain the connection and cannot ensure the return of the men whose departure it hastened. Darius’ condemnation of the bridge rests on his insight into the will of Zeus, who has prophesied that the divine waters should not be mastered by mortal hands (745-8). Xerxes’ ignorance of this edict has led him to act in contravention of the gods, who now thwart his endeavor sending forth disasters as if from a flowing spring (742-3).

The somewhat surprising focus placed on the bridging of the Hellespont as the seed of the Persian disaster offers a number of avenues for interpretation. The emphasis on Xerxes’ *hubris* certainly reflects a political and ethnic bias of the Greek playwright’s characterization of his enemy; not even Xerxes’ own father can condone his outrageous and sacrilegious behavior. But the rich and puzzling language of Darius’ speech may also be understood in a different way: as a reflection on the scriptory themes that we have been tracing through the play. As noted earlier, Aeschylus’ descriptions of the Hellespont bridge link the device to the idea of the scriptory tool. The language of physical *mechanai*, of binding, joining, and fixing fast, is applied to the device throughout the play. In Darius’ formulation these attributes turn ominous.\(^{72}\) Xerxes enslaves and fetters

\(^{71}\) Hall (1996) p. 160.

the waters, driven by madness to seek mastery over the sea (745-51). This nightmarish image of the scriptory bridge is anticipated in the development of the drama by Atossa’s especially vivid dream of her son holding the reigns of his unstable chariot (176-99). And as in the queen’s vision, it is Xerxes’ inability to control his tool that turns the bridge image from good to ill.

Darius presents his son’s transgression as a kind of temporal dissonance. Transforming the flow of the ford from land to sea, his hammers fashioning the waters into a physically permanent tool, Xerxes has prematurely enacted a scripted future (739-41):

φεῦ, ταχείᾳ γ’ ἤλθε χρησμὸν προάξις, ἐς δὲ παίδ’ ἐμὸν
Zeús ἀπεσκημένεν τελευτήν θεοφάτον: ἐγὼ δὲ πού
διὰ μακροῦ χρόνου τάδ’ ἠφύουν ἐκτελευτήσειν θεοὺς;

Alas, quickly has the accomplishment of the oracles come to pass; Zeus has brought about the completion of his decrees through my son. I suppose that I believed the gods would bring these things to completion far in the future.

Seen through the lens of scriptory poetics, Xerxes action is a reperformance, enacting the long-standing (i.e. scripted) prophecy of the gods. Xerxes is but the instrument of Zeus, who brings his prophecy about through the unsuspecting young king (ἐς δὲ παίδ’ ἐμὸν). But Xerxes does not know that he is reenacting a script that has already been fixed. The insistence placed on the temporal dimension of the deed, an action that has come about tacheia despite having been known dia makrou chronou, connects Xerxes’ ignorance to his temporal impotence. As Darius later warns, the young king cannot stand outside of time as the dead king does. Xerxes is still subject to the vicissitudes of the hic et nunc, where the flow of time cannot be fixed: κοινής παρὰ καλών / κρητής ὑπεστίν, ἀλλ’ ἐτ’ ἐξεπαιδήσεις.73 (814-5) The foundations of ills are not yet fixed, but still are fluid.74 The construction of the bridge is a transgression of Xerxes’ role, an attempt to control the divine mechanisms of scriptory poetics. It is as though the young king thinks himself a poet, the forger of a script that will enable him to cross between worlds. But he does not

73 ἐξεπαιδήσεις Schütz, ἐισπαραδεύεται ΥΟ, ἐκπληνθεύεται (melius fort. εἰσπληνθο-) Tucker.
74 The combination of metaphors of construction and watery flows is not, as Garvie states, an incoherent image, but elegantly reprises the language of the Hellespont bridge. Garvie (2009) ad loc.
possess the knowledge to manipulate time and place. Darius, from his vantage amongst
the dead, has long held the knowledge that might have saved his son from error. But even
he could not foresee when the reperformance of the divine prophecy would take place.

When the long-anticipated Xerxes finally appears onstage, he is chastened. Dressed in
rags, he is a pale imitation of his gloriously dead father. In his lamentations, the
defeated king offers a final perspective on the weight of his father’s absence (913-7):

\[\text{λέλυται γὰρ ἐμῶν γυῖων ὄμη,}
\text{τήνδ’ ἠλικᾶν ἑιδόντ’ ἀστόν,}
\text{εἴθ’ ὠφελέν, Ζεῦ, κάμε μετ’ ἀνδρόν}
\text{τὸν οἴχομένων}
\text{θανάτον κατὰ μοῖρα καλύψαι.}

*The strength of my limbs has been loosed. And as I look upon the age of these
citizens, I wish, o Zeus that the lot of death had covered me as well alongside
those departed men.*

Xerxes’ words echo the Homeric formula of death in battle, λύσε δὲ γυῖα, equating his
defeat with the death that he longs to have suffered. But this living death does not
enable Xerxes to achieve the timeless power of hisghostly father. His arrival inaugurates
the extended threnodic amoibaion which concludes the drama. The humbled king and
Chorus enumerate the dead who have been lost in the expedition against the Greeks, but
their words have no power to conjure the spirits back into sight. The dead have departed
from the stage and all that remains is a reperformance of their absence.

2. A Dream of a Shade

If the presence of Darius unsettles the dramatic *hic et nunc* of Aeschylus’ *Persai* by
requiring the play’s actors to confront their own belated status as agents reperforming
actions scripted for them in another time and place, Pindar’s Eighth *Pythian* asks us to
examine this paradox of reperformance from the opposite perspective, seeing the poet
himself displaced by the shifting spatio-temporal status of the work of which he is the

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(2008).

76 Variations, including λύντο δὲ γυῖα, and ὑπέλυσε δὲ γυῖα, are also regularly found. In total
the formula and its variants appear 24 times in the *Iliad.*

77 Deforge (2008).
author. In the tragic composition, the impossibility of the poet’s presence within the drama gives rise to the ghostly apparition whose paradoxically present absence allows the poet to contemplate his own displacement from the stage. In Pindar’s non-dramatic poems, representing the voice of the poet within his own work does not pose such formal challenges. But the lack of a generic obstacle does not mean that the lyric poet is untroubled by the problematic process of appearing within his scriptory creations. In fact, Pindar’s ready use of the poetic first person reveals an even greater degree of interest in mapping the role that scriptory poetics has created for the poet. With a polyphonic future of reperformance already inscribed in his works from the moment of composition, the poet must transform his relationship to his song in order to accommodate the conditions of its scriptory future. The eighth Pythian ode offers a paradigmatic vision of the mediated polyphony of reperformance, drawing on each of the essential figurative representations of scriptory poetics – the tool, the snake, and the ghost – as well as the dictional tropes of oratio recta and apostrophe in order to present a complex composite image of the poet’s new conception of his craft. The composite scene interweaves all of the elements which we have heretofore examined individually, demonstrating not only Pindar’s singular ability to condense the manifold complexities of his art into a single, reverberating image, but the underlying unity of the idea of a scriptory poetics which binds each of these elements together.

The ode celebrates the victory of yet another Aeginetan youth, Aristomenes, who won the boxing competition in the Pythian games of 446 BC. If the dating of the poem to 446 BC is correct, the ode would be our latest extant work by the poet, perhaps accounting for the increased complexity of his figurations of scriptory poetics.

78 On the prevalence of Aeginetan victors within our extant Pindaric corpus, see the contributions to Fearn (2011).
79 If the dating of the poem to 446 BC is correct, the ode would be our latest extant work by the poet, perhaps accounting for the increased complexity of his figurations of scriptory poetics.
The passage imagines the songs of the past, sung by many but now silenced in Pindar’s urgency to remain in the present and not to lend his gentle lyre to the cumbersome and inexhaustible (μαχαγορίαν) voices of the past. Rather his skill (μαχανά) will give wing to the victor’s most recent (νεώτατον) accomplishments. The claim, anchored by the poet’s apostrophic address to his subject, is unusual in Pindar’s work. Not all of Pindar’s epinician odes contain a mythical narrative, nor does he ever feel constrained to recount the entirety of a mythical tale. But the poet’s explicit rejection of the past in favor of the present is unusual, and reflects the ode’s heightened interest in the complex spatio-temporal dynamics of scripted reperformance.80

So ends the second antistrophe, but the poet’s promise is not kept. No sooner has the epode begun than the song begins to inch into the past, recalling the earlier victories of Aristomenes’ clan – the wrestling prowess of his maternal uncles, Theognetos and Kleitomachos – as templates for the feat of the young laudandus. As if lured into the very act of retrospective comparison which he had expressly renounced, Pindar moves subtly into a mythical account, though the tale is drawn from the Theban cycle – the myths of Pindar’s own patria – not the exploits of the Aeginetan Aiakidai (38-42):81

aũξων δὲ πάτραν Μειδυμδάν λόγον φέρεις,
tον όνπερ ποτ’ Όυιλέος παῖς ἐν ἐπταπύλοις ἰδόν
ὑιοὺς Θήβας αἰνίζατο παρμένοντας αἰχμά.

80 Similarly Martin notes how the poem’s dynamic temporal and physical landscape pushes “the limits of choral poetic art, [and] demands that we, in turn, expand our critical horizons to find new ways to understand and describe its ancient artistry.” Martin (2004) p. 343.
At first the transition seems relatively unexceptional. Through his exaltation of the family line, Aristomenes has earned the praise that Amphiaraos once offered to his own son; that he reflected the noble character of his father. Just as he did in Olympian 6 when quoting Adrastos’ words of praise for the dead Amphiaraos – a scene taken from the same Theban cycle – the poet cites the doubly applicable speech as the hinge between worlds, since it is equally suited to the *hic et nunc* as to the past event for which it was first spoken. In the now familiar mode of his *oratio recta*, Pindar steps into the role of Amphiaraos, taking up the seer’s words as his own and fusing their voices in a single utterance.

The theme of generational continuity, connection between family past and present, is central to the correspondence. But the fusion of voice through the poet’s *oratio recta* adds an additional layer of interaction that complicates the levels of correspondence. Although the quotation is not directly imported from the hexameter, as it was in Olympian 6, its allusive force is nonetheless made clear by the poet’s reference to the *deuteran hodon* traveled by the Epigonoi. The terminology of the epic *hodos*, or path of song, was a well established trope from the earliest known examples of Greek poetry and is deployed here to signal Pindar’s conscious appropriation of an epic precedent. Just as the late-born warriors follow in the tracks of their fathers, Pindar himself retraces the epic poet’s path of song. The self-reflective expression takes on an added significance in light of the poet’s earlier rejection of the songs of Aegina that have been sung by many (25-8). Now, by contrast, he is willing to travel the paths of his poetic predecessors, taking up a tale from the *Thebaid* to illuminate the glory of his *laudandus*. Nor is this epic borrowing a low-key affair. Pindar does not simply adapt the subject matter of those earlier songs, rather he uses the trope of direct speech to call attention to his echo of the

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82 In many ways, Adrastus’ speech in O.6 functions as an inverse model for that of Amphiaraos in P.8.
83 On the importance of mantic genealogies, see Johnston (2008) p. 113.
This reperformance of an epic predecessor extends the question of generational continuity with which the passage is concerned into the ambit of the poet. Pindar’s imitative speech turns the quotation into a signal of yet another instance of generational continuity, that between Pindar and his epic forebear. The poet becomes the figurative son of the epic poet who scripted his words — exalting his poetic patrimony just as the laudandus, Aristomenes, exalts his family line. In one moment of polyphonic dissonance, Pindar is joined with seer and poet through his quotational speech, while at the same time standing in a filial relationship with them as the inheritor of their gifts.

The difficult redoubling of the correspondences produced by the formal structure of the poet’s quoted speech is compounded by the content of the speech itself. It is not without reason that Pindar calls Amphiaraos’ words riddling (αἰνύξατο). There is much that is and remains obscure about this dense and intricate speech. Introduced by a gnomic assertion that a father's innate noble character is evident also in his sons, Amphiaraos speaks in almost cryptic terms of the portents that he sees foretelling the fate of his own son, as well as that of his former comrade, Adrastus, and his son, the here-unnamed Aegialeus (43-55):

"οὐδὲ εἶπε μαρναμένων·
'φυὰ τὸ γενναίον ἐπιφέρει
ἐκ πατέρων παιοὶ λήμα. θεόμαι σαφές
δράκοντα ποικίλον αἰθαῖς Ἀλκμάνν' ἐπ' ἀσπίδος
νομίζων πρῶτον ἐν Κάδμου πύλαις.
ο δὲ καμάν προτέρα πάθα
τόν ἀρείονος ἐνέχεται
δρακόντος ἄγγελία
Ἄδραστος ἥρως· τὸ δὲ οἴκοθεν
ἀντία πράξει. μόνος γὰρ ἐκ Δαναῶν στρατοῦ
θανόντος ὀστέα λέξεις νιόυ, τύχα  θεῶν
ἀφίξεται λαῷ ὑπὲν ἀβλαβεὶ
Ἄβαντος εὐρυχόρους ἄγιας.

Thus he spoke of the warring men: “the noble character of fathers shines forth in the nature of their sons. I see clearly the variegated serpent on the shining shield that Alkman wields before the gates of Kadmos. And the hero Adrastus who

86 Given the few fragments that remain to us of the Thebaid, there is no way to positively determine the degree to which Pindar’s quotation allusively engages with its epic model. Based upon the degree to which such open allusiveness characterizes his other quoted speeches, it is likely that the passage in question was also marked by strong epic allusion.
labored in the earlier struggle now meets with the message of a better bird. But at home, he will find the opposite. For alone of the host of Danaans he will gather the bones of his son, by the caprice of the gods he will come to the broad dancing lanes of Abas with his men unharmed.”

It is unclear precisely how the details of Amphiaraos’ mantic speech bear on the excellence of Pindar’s laudandus beyond the initial gnomic assertion.\(^{87}\) Yet the close alignment between the poet and embedded mantis is unequivocal, a connection that is further emphasized in the closing frame of the speech to which we will soon turn. Within the speech itself, the poet’s interest in the seer’s words can be felt in the multiple layers of symbols, omens, and prophecy which are laden with markers of scriptory engagement. Amphiaraos’ insight into the blazon upon his son’s shining shield draws upon the discourse of scriptory tools as conveyors of encoded meaning. The tool enables Amphiaraos to reperform his son’s nature in his own speech, having gleaned its essence through his clear vision (\(\theta\alpha\varepsilon\omicron\mu\alpha\ \sigma\alpha\phi\varepsilon\zeta\)) of the shield. The similarity between this single interpretive scene, narrated through an ekphrastic direct speech, and the Redepaare of Aeschylus’ Seven Against Thebes, perhaps a signal of a common understanding of a now-lost passage of the epic Thebaid or of a more direct channel of influence between the two poets,\(^{88}\) demonstrates the powerful scriptory figuration associated with the image of the encoded shield. Yet the well-crafted device of the Pindaric tool does not represent the destabilizing mimetic warriors of Aeschylus’ play, but the even more faithfully mimetic drakôn poikilos, whose ability to represent the embodied presence of the warrior is a symbol of the shared spirit of father and son.\(^{89}\)

In the second half of the speech, Amphiaraos turns his gaze towards his erstwhile comrade, Adrastus. The seer reports that the hero is now favored by a better bird (\(\acute{\alpha}\omega\epsilon\iota\omicron\omicron\varsigma\ \ddelta\nu\nu\chi\omicron\varsigma\)) than attended him in the previous conflict. The mechanism through which the seer is able to foretell Adrastus’ survival remains obscure within Amphiaraos’ mantic utterance. The avian messenger is not explicitly located either on the warrior’s shield or in the air. The uncertainty surrounding this second portent resonates with the

\(^{87}\) Pfeijffer (1999c) \textit{ad loc}. On the narratological utility of this prophecy, see Athanassaki (1990) p. 103–4.

\(^{88}\) The connection between the two texts and their relation to an epic predecessor is explored by Nagy (2000). On the role of Amphiaros in the epic cycle, see Johnston (2008) p. 113.

\(^{89}\) Cf. my discussion of snakes above, chap. 4.
description of the snake, whose vivid form on Alkman’s shield is reflected in the ambiguous adjective *poikilos*, a term which applies equally to the living serpent’s quicksilver appearance and the exceptional craftsmanship with which the metallic device was wrought. It was this very duality of the snake which allowed Amphiaraos to see himself in his son. But in the case of Adrastus, the generational connection is as obscure as the portent itself. For while Adrastus is fated to survive this second expedition against Thebes, his nostos will be marred by the death of his son. How the opposition of Adrastus and his son, set antia within the mantis’ speech, are related to the ominous bird is not made clear. But the breach of generational continuity seems to lead the poet’s thoughts back to his own task, signaled by the dancing streets in which the mourning Adrastus’ homecoming is situated. This final detail seems to intimate that Pindar’s relation to the past is marked by rupture as much as by connection. The poet shares his voice with the world of the past, yet he recognizes that patrimony does not always produce identical results.

This idea of rupture is also contained within the alignment of Amphiaraos, the embedded speaker, and the poet who transmits his voice anew. As the poet and speaker fuse their speech in anachronistic harmony, blurring the borders of past, present, and future, their shared voice displaces each speaker from the firm context of a *hic et nunc*. There can be no continuity where the boundaries of time and space can no longer hold. The spatio-temporal uncertainty that arises from this vocal blending is intensified by the ambiguous status of Amphiaraos, whose own locus within the mythical frame is almost impossible to pin down. In his framing introduction, the poet straightforwardly locates the seer as present at Thebes: Ὅικλεος παῖς ἐν ἐπταπύλοις ἰδὼν / νιόν Ὁῆβας (39-40). He is an eyewitness to the marshalling Epigonoi, as indeed his own words reflect: θεόμαι σαφές [...] νομίζωντα πρῶτοι ἐν Κάδρου πύλαις (45-7). But despite this insistence on Amphiaraos’ spatial proximity to the scene which he describes and interprets, his relationship to the men before him is far from certain. According to most traditions, Amphiaraos was either killed or swallowed living into the earth at the time of

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the first Argive attack on Thebes. Pindar recounts the event, in the latter version, in his ninth *Nemean* ode. This fact is not mentioned or alluded to in any way in *Pythian* 8, but a tacit understanding that Amphiaraos does not participate in the second expedition underpins the entire speech. The figure of Amphiaraos is, like his speech, split between the past and future, the earth and the underworld, the mortal and the divine. He is no longer a speaker amongst the living, but returns ghost-like to the site where his spirit lives on in his son. The silence surrounding this central narrative detail marks its signal importance. Amphiaraos’ displacement from the objects of his speech constitutes a spatio-temporal transgression analogous to the position of his speech within the poem. Like Darius, whose separation from the tragic stage of the *Persai* produced a *mise en abyme* that reflected the poet’s own distance from his work, Amphiaraos’ spectral presence at Thebes mirrors Pindar’s displacement from the future reperformances of his sciptory creation. Amphiaraos is already unable to fully occupy the present of his initial utterance beside the Theban gates. All the more so, then, the mimetic reperformance of his speech within the epinician song destabilizes the idea that an author may be truly present to express his own words.

Yet for all of the uncertainty about Amphiaraos’ status, the passage is remarkable for the overt connection drawn between the poet and the embedded speaker. So closely intertwined are present and past at both the beginning and end of the myth that it is difficult to locate the joints at which the embedded tale can be excerpted from the frame. This blurring of spatio-temporal boundaries through the shared speech of seer and poet is most evident at the conclusion of the *oratio recta*, where Pindar unmistakably expresses his identification with the speaker (55-7):

| τοιαύτα μέν | 55 |
| εφθέγξατ' Ἀμφιάραος. χαίων δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς Ἀλκάνα στεφάνωι βάλλω, ὅαινω δὲ καὶ ὑμιν | |

*Thus did Amphiaraos speak. And I too delight to pelt Alkmaon with garlands, and to sprinkle him with song*

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92 N.9.24-7, also N.10.8-9.
93 For the argument that Amphiaraos sees into the future from the time of the first Argive attack, see Van 'T Wout (2006).
The poet shares in the charis of his embedded speaker and embraces their common voice even as he returns to inhabit his own first-person expression. But in this remarkable closing frame Pindar does not claim to take up the words of Amphiaraos to fittingly praise his laudandus, as he did at the opening of the speech. Now Pindar’s garlands of song are directed at the long-dead Theban warrior whom the ghostly Amphiaraos once praised. Alkman has taken the place of Aristomenes in Pindar’s hic et nunc. It is as if the poet has entered into the mythical landscape, as though the vividness of his oratio recta has allowed the past to replace the present.

The conflation is not without its own motives. For straight away we learn that Pindar’s uncanny harmony with the world of the past is not simply a product of his own desire to move into the world of his poem, but equally of the ability of these mythical figures to reach into the world of the poet. In the final lines of the excursus, what Pfeijffer has dubbed the “coda” to the myth, the poet recounts how Alkman once appeared to him as he traveled the road to Delphi. It is because of this encounter that Pindar so willingly adopts Alkman as the object of his song (56-60):

χαίρων δὲ καὶ αὐτός Ἀλκμάνα οτεφάνοιοι βάλλω, ὡς νὰ δὲ καὶ ὑμνη, γείτων δὲ καὶ κτείνον φύλαξ ἐμῶν ὑπάντησεν ἰόντι γὰς ὀμφαλόν παρ' ἀοίδιμον, μαντευμάτων τ' ἐφάπαντο συγγόνοις τέχναις. 60

And I too delight to pelt Alkman with garlands, and to sprinkle him with song, since he is my neighbor and guardian of my possessions who once encountered me as I journeyed to the songful navel of the earth, and he set about his inborn skill of prophecy.

94 Pfeijffer (1999c) states that this section of the ode (55-60) functions “as a kind of ‘coda’ after the myth. A transition is made from heroic past to present; Alcmaeon, who featured in the myth, becomes the topic of the following section. He is dealt with from the poet’s personal perspective.” p. 540.

95 The figure of the apparition is not specifically identified by the poet. It is generally accepted that Alkman, named in the preceding line, is the person referred to, but the possibility that Amphiaraos may be intended has been forcefully argued by Hubbard (1993). The attraction of the latter option is clear given the close correlation between the poet and seer up to this point, but I believe that such an interpretation requires an unacceptable strain on the syntax of the text. Further, Hubbard’s reading would obviate the thematic resonance of the final assertion of Alkman’s mantic patrimony (μαντευμάτων τ’ ἐφάπαντο συγγόνοις τέχναις), which recalls Amphiaraos’ earlier claim that Alkman has inherited his father’s noble nature.
The epiphanic coda re-enacts the formal structure of the speech, bringing poet and mythical figure into the same spatio-temporal plane, though now the juxtaposition is brought about through the ghostly apparition of the dead hero rather than the poet’s own verbal acrobatics. The encounter effaces the spatio-temporal distinctions within the poem, allowing the disparate planes to be united in the poet’s own past. The only clear separation is between the past of Pindar’s journey and the present circumstances of his laudandus. Pindar distances himself from the hic et nunc celebration and aligns himself with the transient dead who appear from beyond as guardians along the paths of song.

The metaphoric physicality of his song, an object with which Pindar can pelt and sprinkle Alkmaon, merges with the physical possessions over which Alkman keeps guard. The path that the poet travels to Delphi, the earth’s songful center, is a correlate to the deuteran hodos of the Epigonoi and also to the broad-dancing streets (εὐφυχρόους ἀγνιάς 55) to which Adrastus will return. The resonance ties the ghostly encounter to Pindar’s own act of poetic creation. But the poet is dislocated even within the insistent material and spatial grounding of the coda. His poetic power is unshaken, but his location in both time and space has come to be unmoored. The world of the dead is more vivid to him than that of the living, and he too is drawn into this shadow space, removed from the hic et nunc of his poem even as he asserts his own voice within its reperformance. The resulting confusion is expressed at the conclusion of the ode (95-100):

ἐπάμεροι· τί δέ τις; τί δ’ οὖ τις; σκαράς ὄναρ 95
ἀνθρώπος, ἀλλ’ ὅταν ἄγιλα διόδοσος ἐλὴ,
λειμπρὸν φέγγης ἐπεστὶν ἀνδρόν καὶ μελίχος αἰών.
Ἄγινα φίλα μάτερ, ἐλευθέρῳ στόλῳ
πόλιν τάνδε κόμιζε Δί καὶ χρέοντι σύν Αἰακῷ
Πηλεῖ τε κάγαθῳ Τελαμώνι σύν τ’ Αχιλλεί.

Men of a day, what is a man, and what is not? Man is the dream of a shade. But whenever god-given splendor arrives, men enjoy the shining light and gentle life. O my dear mother, Aegina, care for this city on its free sailing with Zeus and great Aiakos and Peleus and with noble Telamon and Achilles.

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97 “[T]he poet is not dead. But in a way that the performance of this poem, more than most, makes astoundingly clear, he is the voice of the dead.” Martin (2004) p. 354.
The apostrophe, *epameroi*, opens Pindar’s address to an unusually broad audience. The poet turns his gaze toward the whole of mankind, each life bound by a proverbial day but joined together in their perpetually circumscribed re-emergence. Pindar has stepped into the world of the shades, but man too is nothing more than a shadow; a dream vision that blurs the boundaries of identity and presence. And yet, within this extreme expression of the unstable mutability of the poet’s voice through the polyphony of his scripted song, the poet also finds solid ground once more in the island of Aegina, the site of his victor’s birth. Now, with an apostrophe to the land herself, Pindar calls upon the glorious past of the island, invoking the Aiakid heroes whose tales he passed over earlier in the ode. But even this closing gesture does not fix the poet in time or space, for his words send the *polis*, deictically located under his metaphoric feet, sailing across the waves on a free voyage (ἔλευθερος Ϝώριος) that joins the poet with the great heroes of Aegina’s past. In this perpetual journey across the pathless sea the poet steps into the unstable world of his scriptory song. Man is the dream of a shade, but as the uncertain genitive of the laconic gnome reveals, even that definition cannot tell us whether we are dreaming of ghosts or are ourselves a dream within the ghost’s own mind.

The unmooring of Pindar’s poetic voice and the related existential confusion expressed in the final lines of the ode arise centrally from the poet’s concern with the scriptory nature of his composition. The polyphony of countless scenarios for reperformance is refracted through the poet’s own voice, displacing him from the *hic et nunc* and compelling him to consider the ghostly role that he is destined to play in the future of his scriptory composition. The poetic work is never complete, but exists within a process of embodied reperformances, mediated through the scriptory tool. This scriptory world is an echo chamber of manifold points in time and space, but underpinning this polyphony the absent poet continues to emerge as the unseen originator of and ghostly presence in his song.

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99 The connection between this final gnome and the apparitions of the myth and its integration into the realm of the narrator is nicely made by Lefkowitz (1977) p. 216. For the reading of σημά as “ghost”, see Nagy (1990) p. 195.
101 I.e. the genitive can be equally well understood to function as subjective or objective within the construction. See the discussion of Toohey (1987) p. 78, with bibliography.
As Pindar’s eighth Pythian reveals, the complex matrix of scriptory models functions to establish a unique role for the poet. He cannot comfortably inhabit the eternal *hic et nunc* of ephemeral performance, but neither can he imagine his poem to be fully detached from himself, as an autonomous written object. The scriptory poet needs to situate himself between these poles, a ghostly presence that allows him to occupy his composition without compromising the absence on which its spatio-temporal mobility rests. Both Pindar and Aeschylus explore the qualities of this model of spectral authorship in their work, illuminating the unsettling as well as enthralling possibilities that it has introduced. The parameters for this investigation are determined by the formal constraints of genre: while the lyric poet questions the stability of his first-person voice, the dramatic playwright seeks a role for himself amongst the many characters of the stage. Yet the essential challenge that confronts both poets is the same: to find a place for the poet within the world of the script.
CONCLUSION

This study has set out to demonstrate that a comparative examination of the poetry of Pindar and Aeschylus reveals their shared approach to the critical question facing the practitioners of choral melos in the first half of the fifth century. As the practice of reperformance, and with it the role of writing, became an increasingly decisive element of the poet’s world, Pindar and Aeschylus developed a scriptory poetics which allowed them to explore the implications of this new poetic landscape in their works. Their approach to this concern diverged from the paths taken by contemporaries, who were confronting the same question in a range of different ways. Yet Pindar and Aeschylus pursued the issue in a strikingly connected manner, despite the manifest distinctions between the poetic forms in which they worked.

Within the fragments of Simonides’ wide-ranging corpus, we see writing explored as a question from a more concrete, materially aware perspective, developing a play on the relationship between the plastic arts and poetry that has remained a vital strand within poetics to this day. Bacchylides, by contrast, seems to have eschewed a direct confrontation with the written character of his poetry, opting rather to engage in heterodox experiments with formal possibilities of vocal expression. Sophocles placed writing center-stage, with many kinds of written text readily – and it would seem unproblematically – incorporated into his tragic dramas. Working alongside these other poets, Pindar and Aeschylus are linked by their desire to invent their own, distinctively poetic understanding of the written word, one that would look to the functional resources of the script as a medium not just for the transmission of words but for the transformation of poetic voice.

As we have seen, the question at the heart of Pindar’s and Aeschylus’ scriptory poetics is how a poetic composition can retain both its capacity for oral performance and its connection with an author’s voice once it has been entrusted to a material script. Through the manipulation of dictional modes and the figurative representation of the multiform nature of their scriptory poems, Pindar and Aeschylus draw attention to the expressive transformations that informed and motivated their poetic work. The often dizzying complexity of their scriptory representations is a mark of these poets’ fervent
desire to bring their developing vision of a scriptory world more fully into view. To expose their scriptory foundations, these compositions upend and disrupt the stable plane of their performative reality, questioning the very voices through which they speak. But from the paradoxical perspectives and discordant harmonies of this unstable realm of the script, Pindar and Aeschylus are able to create a poetic landscape of captivating and subtle beauty. And through the destabilizing force of their scriptory poetics they ensure that their own voices would be able to speak clearly across a span of time that even they could not have imagined, as they continue to command our wonder and attention after many centuries.

The broader implications of this argument, on which I offer some preliminary thoughts, point in a number of directions. The first centers on the position that Pindar and Aeschylus occupy in our historical conception of Greek literature. In view of the originality of their scriptory poetics, we are, I think, invited to review long-held assumptions about the archaic or traditional nature of these poets’ work. Despite their often archaizing language, neither Pindar nor Aeschylus was archaic in his mindset. Rather, products of an age in which the Greek Mediterranean underwent significant, wide-reaching changes in nearly every area of public and private life, they were themselves involved in a radical rethinking of the art of poetry.

A second, related point concerns methodological assumptions which have often led scholars to segregate these poets. By taking seriously the fact of their contemporaneity, we not least question the premium that recent scholarship has placed on genre and performance contexts as determinative of poetic form. In relation to a world of Panhellenic reperformance, in which poets actively anticipated – even lived to see – the varied future of their compositions, we ought to beware of artificially circumscribing the poet’s aims to a unique performance context. Somewhat thornier, but equally important, is the issue of generic identity. There is of course much to be gained from attending to the specific attributes and strategies emerging within distinct genres. At the same time, readings based entirely on generic properties can easily obscure or elide important questions that do not express themselves in generically identifiable or motivated features. This point is especially pertinent to the fifth century, when the growing popularity of so
many new forms of poetry, most obviously tragedy, encouraged the transgression of traditional generic boundaries as an important avenue of poetic creativity.

Perhaps most centrally, I hope this study may point to the need for a more balanced understanding of the role that writing played for the poetic imagination of the ancient world. We have, for many decades, been caught within a binary opposition between writing and orality that has distorted and balkanized discussions of the subject. Even those who do not see writing and orality as placed in opposition, have remained – with certain notable exceptions – tacitly resistant to embracing the written word as an integral feature of our ancient poetry. I hope that the readings presented in this dissertation may contribute to a still emerging appreciation of how attention to writing can enrich our understanding of the Greek poetic world.
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