

# Ariadne's Thread and the Labyrinth of Myth



# Ariadne's Thread and the Labyrinth of Myth:

*Studies in Honour of Professor  
Ariadne Gartzou-Tatti*

Edited by

Athanassia Zografou, Agis Marinis,  
Anton Bierl and Helen Gasti

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## INTRODUCTION

The present collection of studies is offered with sincere love and deep appreciation to Ariadne Gartziou-Tatti as a minimal recognition for her wholehearted contribution to the study of ancient Greek myths, as well as the religious and political institutions that are in various ways connected to the mythical world, and for her long-standing and pioneering role in the Greek University.

Throughout history, the human mind has consistently woven the fabric of experience into narratives. Despite the plethora of sources and the diverse methodologies employed in its examination, antiquity resonates most prominently in contemporary consciousness through the enduring narratives of ancient Greek myths along with the aura of quests and the reflections and re-narratives they generate.

As the title of this volume implies, Greek myths constitute a labyrinthine world, both intriguing and enigmatic. Numerous variations of basic plots, sometimes parallel and sometimes intersecting, form a huge multi-layered construct with passageways and bridges linking diverse historical eras, places, and events. This virtual hypertext contains not only the most ancient narratives but also their potential future versions.

Ariadne Gartziou-Tatti has been serving at the University of Ioannina since 1973, holding the position of Emerita since 2017. She holds the distinction of being the first professor of Classics in Greece to occupy a chair in Ancient Greek Mythology and Anthropology of the Ancient World from 1993 to 2009. These two disciplines, Mythology and Anthropology, have been central to her scientific journey from its start.

After graduating from the newly established University of Ioannina (Department of Philology), Ariadne Gartziou-Tatti pursued further studies in Paris. It was there, within the environment of the Louis Gernet Research Centre (later known as AnHiMA), that she laid the first foundations for her future pursuits. In the light of Levi Strauss's analyses, Jean-Pierre Vernant's Social Anthropology, and Historical Psychology, the mythical narratives of the ancient Greeks sparked an inquiry that connected the imaginary world of gods and heroes with religious practices, politics, and history. It was in

this milieu that the concrete world of myth — encompassing not only human protagonists but also animals, plants, and artificial objects — began to be minutely examined alongside abstract indigenous categories<sup>1</sup>. After long centuries of studying myths using one-dimensional or even dismissive models of interpretation, and often anachronistically opposing myth to reason, there has been a surge of publications attempting to take mythical variants seriously. This involves evaluating, among other factors, their cultural and social context<sup>2</sup>.

Ariadne Gartzziou-Tatti embraced this shift with enthusiasm, adopting the anthropological approach as a valuable tool for the study of classical texts, especially Homer and Tragedy. At the same time, she remained open to narratology and other more traditional methods of inquiry, advocating for a multifaceted engagement with myth and literature<sup>3</sup>. Myths, though closely tied to oral modes of transmission, survive for us chiefly through their artistic and literary crystallizations — a fact now widely acknowledged. In other words, mythic narrative constitutes the point of intersection between ancient Greek literature and religion.

As a student of Pierre Vidal Naquet, Ariadne Gartzziou-Tatti not only shared his methodological approach to antiquity but also his keen sensitivity to issues of politics, justice, and marginalized social groups. Her research project, “Supplication and Asylum in Ancient Greek Mythical and Political Thought”<sup>4</sup>, reflects a longstanding area of interest. Beginning with her dissertation, her work has focused primarily on issues concerning vulnerable groups (particularly adolescents), the status of strangers and the persecuted (examined through the lenses of supplication, asylum, captivity, and punishment), women’s agency, as well as concepts such as deviation, the validity of laws and agreements, and symbols of power. War and peace

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the themes that were studied see, among others, P. Ellinger, “Vingt ans de recherches sur les mythes dans le domaine de l’Antiquité grecque”, *Revue des Études Anciennes* 86 (1984), 7–29.

<sup>2</sup> Gartzziou-Tatti 2000c, 2005, 2010c.

<sup>3</sup> Homer: Gartzziou-Tatti 1992, 1994–1995, 1995, 2003, 2004b, 2000a, 2007b, 2010b, 2014a–b, 2014b, 2020b and d, 2021a, 2023b. Tragedy: 1994, 1997, 2000b, 2004b, 2009–2010, 2022b.

<sup>4</sup> ESPA (Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework) 2014–2020 (MIS 5004944).

emerge as two pivotal themes that inform and connect all of the above areas of study<sup>5</sup>.

Greek polytheism has been another major focus of research at the Louis Gernet Centre. Ariadne Gartzziou-Tatti's work foregrounds the gods both as central protagonists of myth and as integral components of a complex cultic system. In addition to a monograph dedicated to Poseidon, she frequently turns her attention to lesser-studied figures such as Iris, Hermes, Boreas, and others, always with close attention to the literary contexts in which they appear.

Two other important fields have captured her interest. The first is the so-called 'Orphic question', which encompasses areas such as associations with mysteries, magic, and philosophy, forming a nebula that remains unexplored in some respects. In relation to Orpheus, Ariadne Gartzziou-Tatti brought together scholars in two collective studies that, while serving as accessible works, remain valuable Greek-language introductions to the Orphic question<sup>6</sup>. The second field is divination as presented in myths and supported by historical, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence, particularly in Epirus<sup>7</sup>. In both cases, Ariadne Gartzziou-Tatti has fostered reflection on ancient testimonies and bodies of sources that have been at the center of significant debates, reshaping our understanding of the life of the ancient Greeks. These include the golden lamellae, the Derveni papyrus, and the oracular tablets of Dodona. Particularly significant was the support provided by Ariadne Gartzziou-Tatti through her efforts in the successful proposal submitted to UNESCO by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Ioannina, in collaboration with the Directorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, for the inclusion of the unique treasure of the lead tablets of Dodona in the UNESCO 'Memory of the World' register<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Ephebes: Gartzziou-Tatti 1985, 1992, 2021b; Women: Gartzziou-Tatti 2013b, 2019c, 2020e, 2022b.c.f. *infra* note 5. War and Peace: 1994-1995, 2007a, 2013a, c, 2019a, d. Punishment: 2004a, 2010a, 2014a. Law and power: 1995, 2004a, 2017d. Cf. Concerning deviation, see note 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Eleftherotypia. Istorika* "Ορφείας και ορφισμός" and "Ορφισμός και μετεμψύχωση" (23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> December 2004). Cf. Gartzziou-Tatti 1996, 1999a, 2020c, d.

<sup>7</sup> Gartzziou-Tatti 1990a, 2010b, 2016, 2018b, 2020e, 2023a. Cf. *Eleftherotypia. Istorika* "Αρχαία Ελληνικά Μαντεία" (19<sup>th</sup> February 2004) and "Μαντική" (22<sup>nd</sup> September 2005) dir. by A. Gartzziou-Tatti.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/memory-world/register2023>

The integration of scientific fields and approaches is also evident in Ariadne Gartziou-Tatti's scholarly work. For instance, the conference on "Hybrid and Extraordinary Beings", along with its subsequent publication, exemplifies a quintessential interdisciplinary effort, bringing together perspectives from History, Archaeology, Medicine, Criminology, Philosophy, and Art History. At the same time, it fosters a dialogue between the past and present on the crucial issue of otherness<sup>9</sup>. Additionally, Ariadne Gartziou-Tatti has consistently collaborated, often taking on leadership roles, with Research Centers both in Greece and internationally, such as CIERGA, AnHiMA, Sosipolis, and the Centre for Odyssean Studies. The organization of the 15th International Conference of CIERGA in Ioannina in October 2015<sup>10</sup>, held under extremely challenging economic conditions, was another effort to sustain the international scientific dialogue at the University of Ioannina.

The common denominator of all these scientific interests and related actions is the study of the mythical world as a living material, inseparable not only from the broader study of Antiquity but also from contemporary reflections on issues related to humanity and culture. This is why a significant part of Ariadne Gartziou-Tatti's work and creativity has been dedicated to a unique effort to disseminate knowledge within Greek society, whether in various educational settings, medical associations, or among art-loving audiences<sup>11</sup>.

This volume is conceived as a gesture of acknowledgment, friendship, and gratitude from a number of colleagues and collaborators in research projects, but most importantly, from friends. This ὄμιλος is united with Ariadne through a common interest in classical antiquity, particularly in myth, as well as through the bonds of φιλία, cultivated through collaborative work and scholarly dialogue — an extension of Ariadne's congenial spirit. The book is divided into four sections reflecting the scholarly interests of Ariadne Gartziou and the currents of thought most relevant to her research endeavours: I. "Travelling with Homer"; II. "Heroines and the *Polis*"; III.

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<sup>9</sup> Gartziou-Tatti 2017a, based on the Proceedings of the Conference *Hybrid and Extraordinary Beings. Deviations from "Normality" in Ancient Greek Mythology and Modern Medicine* organized in Ioannina University (May 26–27, 2017), cf. Gartziou-Tatti 2017b, 2018a.

<sup>10</sup>15<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Center for Ancient Greek Religion Studies (CIERGA) (1–4 October 2015), *Plants in Religious Representations and Practices of the Ancient Greeks*.

<sup>11</sup> Characteristic from this perspective will also be her upcoming participation in the Committee on Culture of the Municipality of Ioannina.

“Rituals, Place and Memory”; IV. “Mythical Figures and Currents of Thought”.

## Outline of the Volume

The first section, entitled “Travelling with Homer”, highlights a prime area of interest of Ariadne Gartzou-Tatti, namely the Homeric world. Antonis Tsakmakis in the opening paper, entitled “Emotions and Profit. Homeric Supplication as a Negotiation”, explores the dynamics of supplication in Homeric narratives, from both epics, focusing on characters like Achilles, Agamemnon, Priam, and Odysseus. Supplication is depicted as a form of negotiation, involving reciprocity and the pursuit of mutual benefit, while it also problematizes decision-making at crucial turns of the plot. Indeed *hikesia* tests values, individual character, and social dynamics. Far from being treated as a routine procedure, supplication scenes in Homer establish a connection between psychology, ideology, and poetics. While the hero's mental state, emotions, personal priorities, and rational calculations are emphasized throughout most supplication scenes, moral and aesthetic principles also come into play. Furthermore, between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, a transition from the heroic ethics of warfare to the aristocratic ethics of nobility can be discerned.

The second chapter of this section, by David Bouvier, deals with the depiction of “Achilles' shame” on an Attic sarcophagus in the Archaeological Museum of Ioannina (no. 6176), which depicts the scene of Hector's ransom on its main side. As Bouvier argues, by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, this representation is not unique and can also be found, based on the same model, on other sarcophagi from the necropolises of Tyre and Tarsus in particular. These sarcophagi have been studied, but little attention has been paid to the remarkable novelty of Achilles turning his head away to avoid Priam's gaze. In the iconographical tradition, this scene introduces the theme of remorse, revealing Achilles ashamed of his past actions. A comparison with the depiction of this scene on Attic vases from the Classical period reveals a radically different conception and helps to confirm the originality of this sculptural theme.

The next paper, by Menelaos Christopoulos, is entitled “Hanging Helen (Pausanias 3.19-20)”. It examines a unique passage in Greek antiquity that recounts the mortal revenge taken on Helen for her role in causing the Trojan War, involving her hanging from a tree on the island of Rhodes. The author explores this narrative in conjunction with other instances where the death penalty is demanded for Helen, although never carried out. Additionally,

Christopoulos examines, via a number of passages, especially from Herodotus, Euripides, and Theocritus, the association of Helen with trees in cults, particularly as a figure linked to the growth and beauty of young girls. In this regard, he explores possible reverberations of the mythical story related by Pausanias. On a more general note, the author foregrounds the theme of Helen's immortality and sheds light on the complex and multifaceted portrayal of Helen in ancient Greek literature and culture.

“Exploring the Life of Homeric Chryseis or Composing Female Biographies in Antiquity” is the title of Dimitris Kyrtatas' paper, which considers the challenges of writing biographies of women in antiquity, especially in terms of the reliability of available sources. He invokes, among other examples, Bishop Palladius and his account of the life of female ascetics, as well as the *Life of St Macrina* written by her own brother, Gregory of Nyssa, with its multiple intertextual connections. In this light, Dio's oration on Chryseis, in dialogue form, claims a special place in the history of literature. Remarkably, this dialogue about a silent and inexpressive woman is conducted with a rather talkative and opinionated female pupil of his. In a broader discussion of women's biographies, the author points out that, aside from their words, even their character and emotions were often inferred from external events rather than reliably documented.

A remarkable aspect of Homeric reception is highlighted by Helen Gasti in her contribution with the title “*Ilias Latina* 228–232: A Comment on Hector's Arming Scene”. The *Latin Iliad* is an epitome of the Homeric epic, probably composed by Baebius Italicus, likely dating from the Age of Nero. Baebius abbreviates the *Iliad* to about one twenty-fourth of the whole (a mere 1070 hexameter verses), thus applying major omissions and condensations. Gasti's paper specifically discusses Hector's arming scene in the *Ilias Latina*, which is modeled on the pattern of Paris' arming scene in the *Iliad*. Through careful textual analysis, the author demonstrates how Baebius' narrative rearranges the order of Hector's armour; for instance, it introduces the helmet first, symbolizing his strength and leadership. The paper illustrates how the replacement of Paris' arming scene by Hector's is fully justified in terms of the moral and poetic criteria adopted by Baebius.

A further distinct area of Homeric reception is highlighted by Athanassia Zografou in her chapter entitled “...Single-hoofed Horses Flee': Extraordinary horses from Epic Poetry to Late Magic”. This paper emphasizes the significance of “extraordinary horses” in epic poetry, particularly in the *Iliad*, and their subsequent role in magical spells and rituals. Zografou firstly discusses the formula μόνουχες ἵπποι in an early spell (1<sup>st</sup> cent. BCE–1<sup>st</sup> cent.

CE), imbued with Homeric colour, whose attribution to Philinna of Thessaly, given the region's reputation for both magic and horses, is hardly fortuitous. Among other texts, the paper focuses on a recipe titled "Homeric Assistant...", which utilizes a three-line unit from the Iliadic *Doloneia*. Beyond the general appreciation of Homeric poetry or superficial textual similarities, the ritual re-use of these Iliadic formulas and verses, as the author shows, also stems from their context within the *Iliad* and their ability to encapsulate various episodes of the Trojan Cycle.

The next section of the volume delves into the broader theme of "Heroines and the *Polis*", encompassing several essays that analyze dramas by Aeschylus and Euripides, alongside a discussion on the contemporary reception of Euripides. Agis Marinis initiates this section with his essay titled "The Danaids' Prayers to Zeus in the Parodos of Aeschylus' *Supplikes*: 'Otherness' and Ritual Ambiguity". Marinis' analysis of the entrance-song of Aeschylus' *Supplikes* focuses on the Danaids' prayers to Zeus, which occupy a central position within the parodos and serve as their persistent plea for divine protection. By examining the chorus' interactions with the divine, Marinis aims to illuminate the religious mindset of the Danaids and their intricate relationship with the gods. The author foregrounds the significance of Zeus as a central figure in the play, emphasizing the themes of divine power and justice. As Marinis endeavours to demonstrate, the elevated plea for protection and salvation voiced by the Danaids, through their distinctive ritual speech, is best understood against a mythical backdrop that elevates at least some of the Danaids beyond mere mortal existence.

The next contribution, by Andreas Markantonatos, focuses on Euripides, titled "Euripides' *Suppliant Women*: Politics, Religion, and Rhetoric in Athens and Eleusis". In this essay, the author argues that the Eleusinian setting of Euripides' *Suppliant Women*, with its mystic connotations of happiness in the afterlife, mirrors the play's strong and continuous rhetorical emphasis on the eternal glory bestowed upon the war dead through state funerals and elaborate festivals. These rhetorical parallels make the audience work in new ways to structure their experience of the Athenian *polis*. Indeed, by juxtaposing a unique blend of political and religious values and employing impressive declamatory techniques and rhetorical devices, the play underscores the idea that both the war dead, who offered their lives for the sake of the polis, and the devoted initiates, who placed their lives in the hands of a merciful divinity, have mitigated the fear of death and questioned the fragility of humanity and the unpredictability of human affairs.

Another Euripidean play provides the focus for Anton Bierl's chapter which follows: "Scenarios of Myth and Ritual between Crimea and Attica or Dionysus and Artemis: Euripides' Intricate and Self-Conscious Play with the Cultural Pattern of Substitution and Compensation in *Iphigenia in Tauris*". This essay explores the complex relationship between myth and ritual in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*, particularly examining the nuanced cultural dynamics of substitution and compensation in a metaritual manner. As a prime instance, the resolution of the *Oresteia* is fragmented and perpetually postponed. Indeed, the explanations offered by Athena as a *dea ex machina*, though rooted in religious reality, actually deconstruct and reassemble the city-state ritual to reveal its delicate balance between order and disorder. This is accomplished through metatheatrical, ritual, and performative strategies. It is no coincidence that the core of the play centers on the tablet, symbolizing the inscription of a message through writing and its spoken delivery, which brings performative speech into the spotlight.

The next paper, by Ioannis Konstantakos, is entitled "Praxithea's War: Euripides' *Erechtheus* and the Dramaturgy of Human Sacrifice". As the author argues, the theme of human sacrifice is more pronounced in the dramaturgy of Euripides compared to Aeschylus and Sophocles. Since most of the Euripidean tragedies of this category were produced in the course of the Peloponnesian War, the theme of sacrifice may be read as a parable for the human cost of the long conflict. By tracing the development of this theme throughout Euripides' works, the author enables us to observe the poet's evolving responses to the grim consequences of war. In *Erechtheus*, a drama staged in 423 or 422 BCE, the sacrifice of the Athenian king's daughter sets off a chain of devastating events, resulting in the annihilation of the royal family and leaving Queen Praxithea alone in the world. The play thus serves as a reflection on human loss at the conclusion of the Archidamian War.

The final contribution in this section reaches into the area of the modern reception of ancient drama. Lucia Athanassaki, in her chapter on "Ariadne and Phaedra in Knossos and Athens in Jennifer Saint's retelling of the Theseus Saga" concentrates on Saint's novel *Ariadne*, which offers a fresh perspective on the mythical story of Theseus by focusing on the intertwined narratives of Ariadne and Phaedra in Knossos and Athens. Saint's retelling challenges traditional versions by giving voice to the female characters. Ariadne's pivotal role in aiding Theseus against the Minotaur is particularly highlighted, showcasing her agency and contribution to the hero's success. Indeed, Jennifer Saint's novel answers a question innumerable generations of audiences and readers must have wondered about: did Ariadne and

Phaedra ever meet after the former's escape? Looking at how the two heroines' trajectories interlock and interact, and giving voice to their own, feminine, perspectives on their fortunes, Jennifer Saint's narrative emerges thus as a long overdue response to an ancient saga that has traditionally privileged male achievements and represented female reactions, as imagined mostly by men.

The third section, "Rituals, Place, and Memory", encompasses several studies germane to Ariadne Gartzidou-Tatti's interest in ritual practice. The first essay of this section, by Nanno Marinatos, refers to "A Wounded Goddess from Akrotiri, Thera", discussing a fresco situated within a shrine in Akrotiri, Thera. The author concentrates on a sunken chamber at the north end which served as a sacred chapel and was decorated with religious imagery. The real focus of the north wall was a seated figure believed to be a goddess due to her central position, while also drawing special interest to her wounded foot. Remarkably, a crocus blossom with two red stigmas is painted exactly below the wound. As Marinatos proposes, an etiological myth may most probably be traced behind this representation, which ought to be interpreted in correlation with the shrine depicted on the East Wall of the chamber. In this light it is reasonable to assume that an animal had been sacrificed inside the shrine and that, after its slaughter, its blood was poured over the horns as a libation.

Within the same sphere of blood rituals lies Stella Georgoudi's contribution entitled "Sacrificial Animals and Greek Divinities: Between Texts and Images". The study compares various sources, particularly vase paintings, inscriptions, and votive reliefs, to analyze the portrayal of animals being led towards the altar in sacrificial scenes, along with the depiction of the divinity itself. Georgoudi has focused primarily on Athenian and Attic documentation, although she occasionally refers to other sources. She further concentrates on sacrifices offered to three divine figures: Artemis, Demeter, and Herakles, the latter being closely associated with Demeter and her mysteries. Honouring these three divinities, especially Artemis and Demeter, large-scale processions and sacrifices are organized, occupying an important place in the festive calendars of Attic demes. Georgoudi's study takes into account specific wording on inscriptions, settings, gestures, and other details from iconographic evidence in a complementary manner.

The next paper, "Spartan Religion, Especially Archaic: How Odd?", is authored by Paul Cartledge, who revisits one of the most challenging topics within ancient Greek religion. In this densely composed paper, Cartledge explores the complex domain of Spartan religion, emphasizing its distinctive

features and the difficulties of interpreting it authentically. His analysis revolves around several Spartan religious ‘peculiarities’; for instance, the notion, as emphasized by Herodotus, that Spartans collectively, as a people, were uniquely both pious and, as we might say, superstitious. An example of this is when, in the summer of 479, the Spartans declared that their much-needed military assistance to their allies north of the Isthmus would not be possible immediately, as they were in the midst of celebrating the annual Hyacinthia festival in honour of Apollo of Amyclae. The cult of Aphrodite Areia, or “Warlike”, poses another enigma, as does the worship of abstractions such as Fear (*Phobos*) or Shame (*Aidôs*).

Elias Koulakiotis contributes the final paper in this section: “Landscape, Religion, and Memory in Ancient Macedonia: Alexander and the Plants”. As he points out, trees and plants, as constituent elements of both artificial and natural landscape, conceptualize activities that take place within them, thus acquiring broader political significance. Koulakiotis begins with a well-known document: the Athenian ephebic oath, which invokes, among several divinities, olive trees and fig trees. Indeed, it appears that the landscape preserves certain sacred features that should not be perceived as mere scenery but also acquire narrative function. An eloquent example is the presence of ivy in India, revealed to Alexander during his Asian campaign. This plant is associated with the god Dionysus and, by extension, with his mythical expedition to the East. As the author argues, landscapes, far from merely offering the backdrop for the action, actually acquire a deeper significance, being capable of condensing and codifying religious and political messages.

The fourth and last section focuses on mythical figures and currents of thought, expanding the ambit of the volume to the domain of ancient philosophical and mystical currents and showcasing another area congenial to Ariadne’s intellectual forays. Ioannis Perysinakis opens the section with his essay on “Mythical Images in Plato’s Re-evaluation of Archaic Moral Values in Some of his Early and Transitional Dialogues, and the *Republic*”. The author, beginning with an overview of several important publications engaging with the role of myth in Platonic works, discusses the use of mythical stories in Plato’s dialogues as a vehicle for tackling philosophical questions and foregrounding moral values. He discusses, for instance, how Socrates’ words are likened, in *Meno*, to Daedalus’ sculptures, always in motion, emphasizing the dynamic nature of his teachings. Perysinakis’ analysis also touches upon the way Socrates utilizes mythological figures to formulate his argument in the *Apology*, comparing his experience with Palamedes’ and Ajax’s on the basis of unjust verdicts. Overall, this essay

directs our attention on the presence of myth in Platonic philosophical discourse, which enables the exploration of complex ideas and values through engaging narratives that resonate with the audience.

The next paper, by Maria Liatsi, is entitled “Unfulfilled Desires and Pain in Ancient Thought: Suffering from the Limits of Freedom”. Through the lens of ancient philosophy and mainly Aristotle, with particular attention paid to his terminology, the paper examines the concept of longing and desire and how societal standards can clash with natural inclinations, causing distress and conflict within the individual. Indeed, in Aristotle's view, complete freedom from longing and, consequently, the total elimination of pain never occurs. As Liatsi points out, ancient thought draws a clear distinction between two worlds: one characterized by necessity, persistence, permanence, and immortality, and the other by instability and perishability. In this sense, the pain of an unfulfilled longing (mainly an erotic longing especially since it is closely tied to our animal nature, thus striking at the core of our essence), is at times unbearable, for it reminds us of the absolute limit of our freedom, namely our mortality.

The final essay, by Alberto Bernabé, engages with the *Fourth Orphic Hymn* to Sky. Bernabé discusses the hymn in the light of ancient traditions about the figure of Οὐρανός, as evidenced particularly by Hesiod and the *Derveni Papyrus*. Remarkably, this Orphic hymn focuses on a divinity that had diminished significance in mythical and religious history after the archaic epic. As Bernabé points out, the hymn presents Οὐρανός not only as a spatial concept but also as a divine figure endowed with multiple functions and epithets — including “father cosmos” (line 3), a phrase that merges the notions of “cosmos” (physical space) and “father” (divine being). Undoubtedly, the most remarkable aspect of this text is its philosophical orientation, presenting the Sky not only as the physical space of the cosmos but also as the celestial sphere enveloping the earth and rotating above and below it, representing an essential component of the necessary, eternal order of the world.

## Publications by Ariadne Gartziou-Tatti. A Selection<sup>12</sup>

(1985), *Pâris-Alexandre: un héros inachevé*, PhD. Paris.

(1986–1987), “Le *Dionysalexandros* de Cratinos”, in: *Mètis* 1, 325–332.

(1990a), “L’oracle de Dodone. Mythe et rituel”, in: *Oracles et mantique en Grèce ancienne* (Actes du colloque de Liège, mars 1989), *Kernos* 3, 175–184.

(1990b), “Η συμβολή του Μ.Ι. Finley στη μελέτη της οικονομίας και της κοινωνίας της αρχαίας Ελλάδας”, in: *Δωδώνη: Φιλολογία* 19, 31–45.

(1992), “Pâris-Alexandre dans *l’Iliade*”, in: A. Moreau (ed.), *L’Initiation* (Actes du colloque international de Montpellier, 11–14 Avril 1991), Montpellier, 73–92.

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**PART I:**  
**TRAVELLING WITH HOMER**

# EMOTIONS AND PROFIT. HOMERIC SUPPLICATION AS A NEGOTIATION

ANTONIS TSAKMAKIS

This study deals with Homeric *hikesia*; it is neither about *hikesia* in general (at any time, at any place), nor in any particular text. It does not deal with historical facts — with events that happened — but rather discusses fictional episodes from literary texts of a distinct poetic genre: episodes narrated as if they had happened, presented in accordance with specific artistic conventions, and located at a specific place in a particular literary work. For this reason, narrative features and poetological implications will be also taken into account.

In Homer there is no rigid distinction between formal acts of supplication and purely verbal entreaties, but rather a continuum which encompasses a wide range of possibilities. Speakers who use the verb γουνοῦμαι (or λαμβάνω γούνων, τὰ σὰ γούναθ' ἰκάνομαι/ικάνω, ἰκετεύω) sometimes perform formal gestures, but these verbs may also be used metaphorically, to increase the intensity of a request, or in situations where clasping one's knees is practically impossible or inappropriate (as in *Od.* 6.141–148, where Odysseus addresses Nausicaa). Such cases are not essentially different from direct requests which do not include a reference to a performative speech act<sup>1</sup>. At the other end of the continuum, the ritual actions performed by a suppliant can vary, as they may (but need not necessarily) combine falling to one's feet, touching or kissing the knees, hand or chin of the *supplicandus* etc. Because of this diversity, scholars are not fully in agreement as to which cases should be considered supplications and which not. The intensity of the

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<sup>1</sup> The metaphorical use of γουνοῦμαι etc. is widespread in the *Odyssey*: 3.92, 4.322, 5.449, 6.149, 9.266–267, 10.521, 11.66, 13.231, 13.324. In the *Iliad* it occurs in 15.660 in narrator text and 665 in speech: Nestor's pathetic and highly rhetorical appeal to the Greeks in an extreme situation, and, respectively; on 18.457 see below n. 17. In the *Odyssey* ἰκέτης and ἰκετεύω are used freely for persistent pleas (*Od.* 11.530, 15.277) and for a stranger's request for protection (*Od.* 14.511). ἰκάνω will not be considered here; on this verb, see Létoublon 1980.

suppliant's emotions — closely tied to the gravity of the crisis and the imminence of the threat — can serve, alongside references to gestures and vocabulary, as a decisive criterion in cases of ambiguity. This rationale leads us to an approach which favours the inclusion rather than exclusion of such cases, provided that they are given prominence in the text<sup>2</sup>.

Supplication is a form of interaction between two people (in rare cases a group is involved instead of a person; in Homer no supplication occurs at a sacred place). The pre-history of the relationship between the two parties can vary; they may be relatives, associates, enemies, or foreigners who have never met before. Positive response to the supplication is expected to establish a social or emotional bond between the two parties, or to confirm, restore or improve a pre-existing tie<sup>3</sup>. Bodily contact manifests the suppliant's intention to approach the *supplicandus*, a desire to be accepted and recognized; it can also involve an implicit promise of loyalty and devotion. At the same time, as emotions are associated with a bodily experience, touching the body can be seen as a means of triggering an emotional response, i.e. making the *supplicandus* feel sympathy for the suppliant<sup>4</sup>.

Among the various types of social contact, supplication situations are distinguished from other forms of interpersonal interaction by a double peculiarity: In the first place, there is an extreme power imbalance. The suppliant acknowledges, directly or indirectly, complete helplessness and despair and this is also reflected in the accompanying submissive gestures<sup>5</sup>. The framework of *hikesia* guarantees that the suppliant not only buys time (especially in situations in which a person is facing a lethal threat), but also will be listened to — this is perhaps the only tangible benefit definitively granted to a suppliant through the ritual act (and the suppliant's words deserve an answer). In contrast, the *supplicandus* has the means to solve the current problem. Accordingly, the suppliant initiates a decision-making process, bringing us to the second peculiarity of supplication situations, which is that the *supplicandus* is absolutely free in his decision. The suppliant's real or symbolic self-humiliation entails the complete abandonment of any expectation and confirms the full authority of the other party to prioritize the criteria which they regard as valid and relevant. It is for this

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<sup>2</sup> Naiden 2006 and Page 1959, 307 also argue for a generous approach, in contrast to Gould 1973. In this paper, the term supplication (*hikesia*) is used throughout for 'Homeric supplication'.

<sup>3</sup> Naiden 2006, 116–117.

<sup>4</sup> See Purves 2019, 169–170 on the "bidirectionality of the gesture".

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Gould 1973, 94–95; Burkert 1996, 85–90 (on rituals of submission).

reason that, behind the apparent repetitiveness — a consequence of its ritual character — *hikesia* is such an engaging situation in literature. A narrator has the opportunity to approach a particular state of affairs from any possible angle and enact different values. It follows that suspension is inherent in supplication. From a narratological point of view, any action is suspended and attention is diverted from deeds to verbal acts; this entails focalization through the protagonists, whose mental state (thoughts and emotions) become manifest (usually, there is implicit focalization even in abridged narratives which contain no dialogue).

While for the suppliant *hikesia* is a problem-solving strategy, a last means of overcoming a crisis or coping with a threat when no other options are available, the other party has no compelling reason to accept the supplication. In numerous cases some sort of recompense is in sight: this can range from gifts already brought along, to the expected gratitude of the suppliant etc. Although the prospect of even the most certain and substantial profit does not predict a positive response on the part of the *supplicandus*, reciprocity is a principal force in the decision-making process of a supplication. And while emotions also play a role in the decision (e.g. pity for undeserved suffering or fury against a hated enemy who is supplicating for his life), mutual profit appears to be the ideal goal of this open-ended process<sup>6</sup>. Thus, supplication can be regarded as a condensed form of negotiation, or more specifically as its final stage<sup>7</sup>: a final offer proposal<sup>8</sup> (an entreaty, combined with an implicit or explicit bid for material or moral benefit) is on the table and the *supplicandus* must decide<sup>9</sup>. The *supplicandus*, however, may have not intended to be involved in a negotiation, so that the response may vary in terms of the degree to which one of the two fundamental elements of a negotiation, cooperation and competition<sup>10</sup>, can be suppressed. However,

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Naiden 2006, 79–82. Emotions, however, are not separated from rationality. Even if they are pre-reflective, they make sense, being more or less transparent expressions of the way humans respond to challenging situations; cf. Schmitt 1990, 157–166.

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the decision appears to be unilateral, while negotiation ideally is a joint decision-making process (Zartman 2008, 51).

<sup>8</sup> It is also the only proposal; hence, it functions as a reference point which inevitably influences the options of the other side (an ‘anchor’); cf. Thompson/Neale/Sinaceur 2004, 12–13.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Alden’s analysis of the most detailed ‘supplication’ in *Iliad* 9 (Alden 2000, 203–205). The issue of moral benefit is ignored by Wilson 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Faure 2003, 4. The behaviour of *supplicandi* allows for their classification as more antagonistic or co-operative (problem solving); cf. Faure 2003, 5–6, who mentions a third type, cognitive. (The first type corresponds to the forcing model, according

regarding the decision-making process as an implicit negotiation can be a heuristic tool that enables focussing on cost and benefit, needs, tactics, risks, values, and cultural context. Ultimately, even if the *supplicandus* refuses to regard a *hikesia* as an opportunity for potential gain, this question may be present in the minds of the audience.

Although the rationale behind a person's response to a plea seems to be essential for the interpretation of supplication narratives, this intriguing issue has not been systematically treated in scholarship. In the following, we will explore the dynamics of Homeric supplication scenes in order to ascertain the reasons behind each decision. This analysis can enhance the interpretation of the narrative but also shed light on the function of supplication in the context of Homeric poetics. The main part of this paper is devoted to the *Iliad*, which includes more supplication scenes in the main narrative than the *Odyssey*, which will be discussed in the last section.

### ***Iliad* 1: Agamemnon and Zeus**

The Iliadic plot unfolds between two corresponding pleas: two respectable fathers (Apollo's priest Chrysis and the aged king of Troy, Priam) approach the camp of the Achaeans to plead for the return of their children (Chrysis' daughter is Agamemnon's booty after a raid; the corpse of Patroclus is kept by Achilles after his murder in battle)<sup>11</sup>. While Priam's supplication in *Iliad* 24 develops into an elaborate narrative which expands on the course of a typical *hikesia*, the Chrysis scene in *Iliad* 1 technically is not a supplication. The outcome of these two episodes is crucial for the launching of the plot and the completion of the epic, respectively; gods play a pivotal role in both.

The first narrative is introduced as the explanation for the μῆνις of Achilles, the theme of the poem, which has been announced in *Il.* 1.1. The connection of the Chrysis episode with Achilles' wrath is anticipated in the narrator's answer to his own direct question immediately after the proem, namely "What god drove them to fight with such a fury?" (1.8)<sup>12</sup>: it is Apollo, who has sent a plague on the Achaeans (1.10). While the connection between the plague and the quarrel between the two heroes remains unclear, the reason

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to Lickson/Maddux's classification (1986, 27). The second type is further subdivided into three styles: accommodating, where you give in; compromising, where you are prepared to give something; and collaborative or problem-solving.)

<sup>11</sup> Comparison of the narratives: Reinhardt 1961, 63–68.

<sup>12</sup> All translations are from R. Fagles' Penguin edition (Homer, *The Iliad*, New York 1990). References to the Greek text only by number are to the *Iliad*.

for Apollo's anger is disclosed without delay: Agamemnon dishonoured Chrysis, Apollo's priest (1.11–12).

Chrysis arrives at the Achaean camp with the aim of exchanging his daughter for gifts. He does not supplicate, so that he does not come into physical contact with Agamemnon, but the sacredness of his mission is emphasized by the garlands on his golden sceptre (which hints at his connection with Apollo). His request is addressed to both the Achaeans as a whole and, in particular, to the two sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaus (1.15–16, 17–18). In this way, all the leaders are indirectly involved in the deliberation, a first insinuation of Agamemnon's dissonance with public opinion (cf. 1.22–23) and of his responsibility for the disaster that is to follow (on the appeal to both the Atreids, see below). Apart from the offer of ἄποινα, the priest utters a solemn wish that the gods might grant the Achaeans victory and a safe return. Although the Achaeans unanimously approve Chrysis' words, in the sense that they find his request fair, and what he offers satisfactory<sup>13</sup>, Agamemnon remains unmoved. Failing to acknowledge the priest's standpoint — his grief, his generosity, and, above all, his support from a god —, Agamemnon treats Chrysis as a powerless suppliant, while in truth he is neither powerless nor a self-humiliating suppliant. Exacerbated by the visitor's boldness and dignity, Agamemnon humiliates the priest himself. But although he assumes the unconstrained authority of a *supplicandus*, he does not provide any rationale for his decision — a necessary convention in rejected Homeric supplications<sup>14</sup>. Agamemnon strives to avoid any loss, but he neither comprehends the risks (failing to realize that for the good of his army he needs to accept the supplication), nor does he discuss his own needs openly or share his rationale with others<sup>15</sup>. Thus, Agamemnon's response does not come across as the negative outcome of a negotiation, but rather as a consequence of his refusal to negotiate and make an ultimately rational decision. The disclosure of his thoughts is postponed until later on, when he is forced to defend himself before the Achaeans — and to negotiate with them.

Upon his return, Chrysis prays to Apollo. The stereotypical mention of his previous offerings to the God (1.33–52) stands in bold contrast to Agamemnon's neglect of the benefits of reciprocity. The god satisfies his

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<sup>13</sup> Chrysis' behaviour aims at a win for both parties: his approach in the negotiation can be classified as 'collaborative' (see Lickson/Maddux 1986, 27).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Naiden 2006, 106, 129.

<sup>15</sup> It is important that "[t]he *apoina* are intended to compensate Agamemnon for the prestige goods and therefore the status in the fluid system that the captive woman represents to him" (Wilson 2004, 42).

plea for revenge, and sends a plague on the Greek camp. After nine days, Achilles initiates a consultation and the seer Calchas makes it clear that the only possible remedy for the disaster is the return of Chrysis' daughter. Agamemnon again refuses angrily, but now elaborates on the reason: he is fascinated by the girl's appearance, character and skills, so much so that he prefers her to Clytaemnestra (1.113–115). This statement illustrates the egocentric mentality which undermines Agamemnon's interaction with others; it is a belated justification for Chrysis' dismissal, not a response to the present crisis. Thus, it threatens to destabilize all the groups Agamemnon belongs to, his family as well as the army. His reply reveals that his terms of reference for evaluating the 'evil' of losing Chryseis have to do with his own satisfaction, as opposed to the interests of the whole camp. It is an irony that the Iliadic plot originates in Agamemnon's efforts to retain possession of an abducted woman, whereas it was the abduction of Helen that caused the Trojan War. Whilst he is the leader of an expedition whose purpose is reparation and revenge, he remains heedless of the consequences of his own actions. His contempt for social bonds, a consequence of his ill-conceived perception of his own political power as unrestrained and self-sufficient, culminates in his demand to take Briseis from Achilles as recompense for the loss of Chrysis' daughter. Thus, he activates a knowledge structure that nourishes opposition rather than negotiation and settlement. In order to settle a conflict, he creates a new enemy, Achilles, and inflicts emotional pain on him. Rejecting the value of any kind of soft power (the benefits of piety, social acceptance, public opinion)<sup>16</sup>, he sticks to the privileges of his hierarchical position. He refuses to pay for his mistakes and to share the common fate of his army, and thus provokes further disaster. The only role of reciprocity is to secure his own rights.

The first ordinary supplication in the *Iliad* is also instigated by Agamemnon's disruptive behaviour. As soon as Briseis departs from Achilles' tent accompanied by Agamemnon's envoys, Achilles asks his mother Thetis to supplicate Zeus and request the crushing of the Achaeans in the battles to follow. The hero reminds Thetis that Zeus is indebted to her (1.394–406), so that the present favour would be due recompense for her previous services. Thetis arrives at Olympus and approaches Zeus, performing the full sequence of ritual supplication gestures (she touches both his knees and

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<sup>16</sup> Soft power depends more on willing interpreters and receivers (Nye Jr. 2005, 16), but Agamemnon clearly is not investing in this.

chin, a sign of urgency, familiarity and self-confidence)<sup>17</sup>. This is one of the very few Homeric supplications addressed to a god. Since it is futile to tempt a god with promises, Thetis makes no assurances: the negotiation centers on risks rather than rewards. Thetis' first speech begins like a prayer, after which her past services to the god in word and deed are mentioned. Reciprocity calls for the fulfilment of her plea. The etymologically related notions of τιμή and τίσις dominate the first, short speech<sup>18</sup>. The speech tellingly suggests Zeus' responsibility for preserving moral order in the world. He, however, remains silent; the suspense that results from this silence is a challenge for Thetis who, now adopting a more personal note, affirms (1.514–516) that if Zeus does not help her, she will be the most dishonoured of all Gods (ἀτιμοτάτη, 1.516). It is obvious that rejecting Thetis' plea would not only humiliate a divinity, but also cancel Zeus' role in the world — in both divine and human spheres — and, consequently, in the world of poetry as well. In the context of heroic epic, which is based on the values of merit, honour and reciprocity, the failure of the supreme god to pay due tribute to a goddess would be unthinkable, because it would harm the very substance of the epic world. However, what cannot happen in heroic epic, where everything depends on the will of the supreme god, *can* happen in a different, more playful kind of poetry. In his reply, Zeus reveals the true reason for his initial hesitation, which, he reassures Thetis, will not affect his decision: he is afraid of Hera's grumbling about him supporting the Trojans. As a result, a comical turn is given to the situation — an amusing instance of marital strife. The impending threats of a God's failure to assure moral order in the world and of the debasement of the honourable Thetis are now set against a macho husband's malaise in anticipation of a trivial row with his wife (Thetis' past assistance to Zeus is similarly comic in character, so that the two cases are comparable, making the decision easier). Epic is set against comedy. This is a unique *hikesia* where it is the *supplicandus* rather than the suppliant who buys time, but heroic poetry yields only temporarily to farce. Concluding his reply, Zeus solemnly promises that Thetis' request will be satisfied. He emphatically accompanies

<sup>17</sup> The expression τὰ σὰ γούναθ' ἰκάνομαι is also used by Thetis to Hephaistos (18.457), when she visits him to request new armour for Achilles. Thetis does not perform any gestures; the reversal of expected supplication motifs (bodily contact, appeal to reciprocity) is remarkable: Thetis is greeted by her hand being clasped first by Charis, and then by Hephaistos (18.384 and 423). Hephaistos, unprompted, recalls how Thetis saved him in the past (18.395–405). The scene is an example of the importance of honour and reciprocity among the gods, corroborating our interpretation of Thetis' supplication in *Iliad* 1.

<sup>18</sup> 1.505, 507, 508, 510 bis; the theme figured prominently in Achilles' first cry to Thetis (1.353, 356).