Conceptions of Time in Greek and Roman Antiquity

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Table of Contents

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Introduction: From theoretical to practical time in antiquity

This volume[1] compiles essays that focus on conceptions of time in Greek and Roman Antiquity. By conceptions, we mean ways in which time was conceived, not how time was measured or materially represented.[2] Thus, no chapter here is centred on astronomy, clepsydras, or watches. Likewise, none of the essays in this volume directly addresses how humans perceived time, e.g., when bored or excited etc., personally or subjectively, *à la* Bergson (1907, 1934). Instead, time is considered here as a speculative or literary or political object, as can be inferred and theorised from the examination of ancient texts that are not necessarily explicit as to how they conceive of time. This is therefore a study of individual and collective representations. In these respects, this volume is heir to Darbo-Peschanski (2000a), which it supplements and updates in the domains of philosophy, history, literature, medicine and grammar.[3] However, it differs by featuring studies on the Roman world alongside those on the Greek. Moreover, being shorter (8 vs. 22 chapters), it privileges one approach, namely the way in which the various views of time are put into practice or "realised" (i.e., 'made real'), e.g., by becoming literary, political, or medical material capable

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[1] This book originates in and expands upon the UCA[JEDI] project MIDISHUC "Micro-diachrony in Human Sciences and Conceptions of Time" (https://bcl.cnrs.fr/rubrique442), whose purpose was to understand how conceptions of time can arise or change under the pressure of external factors, taking the example of Classical Greece. Two hypotheses were envisaged within this project. First, that conceptions of time in different fields, e.g., in history and philosophy respectively, may affect each other. Second, linguistic categories may unconsciously affect thought categories, and/or vice versa. We return to this last idea in Section 3.

[2] Regarding the measurement of time, it is important to read Hannah 2009. On measurement in general in Antiquity, see Lloyd 1987. See also several of the chapters in Ben-Dov and Doering 2017, along with chapters on how time was experienced. That book has more material on the Middle-Eastern than on the Greek and Roman world. Visual arts are barely touched upon here (although see S. Papaioannou's chapter, from a literary viewpoint), but were treated from the perspective of time in Strawczynski 2000 and Kim 2017. Because the bibliography on time is immense, this introduction favours references from approximately the last twenty years.

[3] The reader is referred to that volume and especially to its introduction, in which the problems of time and "temporalisation" are elegantly cast in philosophical terms, most of which also apply to the present volume. Important references are made there to previous literature.

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of acting on "real life." For this reason, no study here is limited to the speculative aspect of the reflection on time. For example, eternity and the relations between time and eternity are not addressed.[4]

This introduction returns to several notions useful to the present volume by first discussing the cyclical/linear distinction, which proves a more efficient paradigm than has recently been recognized. The present chapter also offers overviews on three "realisations" of temporal conceptions: Those that occur in human life (Section 2), in language (Section 3), and in literature (Section 4). After this contextual material, Section 5 presents the chapters of the book and its composition.

1 Cyclicity and linearity

The epistemology of the anthropology of the Ancient Greeks popularised the view that Greeks conceived of time as cyclical, at least as represented since Nietzsche's works, e.g. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*'s concept of the *Ewige Wiederkunft* ('eternal return').[5] Nonetheless, this view has been challenged in two respects. First, cyclicity is not necessarily an intrinsic feature of time, but rather of the elements that help people witness time elapse, as Aristotle has it:[6]

> Καὶ γὰρ ὁ χρόνος αὐτὸς εἶναι δοκεῖ κύκλος τις· τοῦτο δὲ πάλιν δοκεῖ, διότι τοιαύτης ἐστὶ φορᾶς μέτρον καὶ μετρεῖται αὐτὸς ὑπὸ τοιαύτης. ὥστε τὸ λέγειν εἶναι τὰ γιγνόμενα τῶν πραγμάτων κύκλον τὸ λέγειν ἐστὶν τοῦ χρόνου εἶναί τινα κύκλον· τοῦτο δέ, ὅτι μετρεῖται τῇ κυκλοφορίᾳ· παρὰ γὰρ τὸ μέτρον οὐδὲν ἄλλο παρεμφαίνεται τῷ μετρουμένῳ, ἀλλ' ἢ πλείω μέτρα τὸ ὅλον. (Arist. *Ph.* 223b28 – 224a2)

> Even time is thought of as a sort of circle. And this opinion again is held because time is the measure of a circular motion, and is itself measured by a circular motion. So to say that the things which happen form a circle is to say that there is a sort of circle of time – and that is because time is measured by the circular motion [of the heavens], while there is nothing else to be seen in what is measured, except for the measure, or the several measures which constitute the whole.

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4 The major reason for this omission is that the subject has been if not exhaustively, at least extensively treated, (see, on the philosophical side, from Plato to Augustin, Brague 1982, Sorabji 1983, D'Anna 1999, Thein 2001, 2017, Gourinat 2002, Hoffmann 2017, among many others).
5 See also Eliade 1949.
6 This is typically how mythical time works (see Dumézil 1935 – 1936 for a synoptic description across cultures).

This passage is quoted in Sorabji (1983, 184),[7] who goes on to say, "[in the Greek literature] we do not find the radical thesis (...) that time itself, as we might say, and not just time as a measure, or the events in time, may be cyclical (p.185)." As Winand (2003) observes (interestingly, calling this position *radical*, too), cyclical stances are extremely rare, because they imply that "cyclical [time] denotes a time that forms a loop; when a revolution is accomplished, we necessarily go through all the points of the cycle again"[8] (our translation). Consequently, seasons or rituals must be seen as paradigmatic rather than cyclical: they follow and reproduce a pattern.

In contrast, Gödel's (1970[3] [1949[1]]) rationale, based on Einstein's relativity theory, may lead to a "radical thesis." The argument reads as follows: If simultaneity is relative, as Einstein proposes, there is no actual simultaneity. Likewise, succession becomes illusory, in a way, and is due to our mode of perception.[9] There are only "nows" that depend on the observers or the viewpoints, none of which are actual "objective" viewpoints. "If the experience of the lapse of time can exist without an objective lapse of time, no reason can be given why an objective lapse of time should be assumed at all" (p.561), an idea which leads K. Gödel to an idealistic conclusion. Although he does not use the word *cyclical*, which is not suitable for his conception, since cyclicity still rests on the view that time elapses, he entertains the idea that "round trips" in time are possible, thus permitting instances to be lived twice, thrice or more.[10]

The second challenge to the idea that the Greek conception of time is cyclic is that linearity is not absent from Ancient Greek culture, as has been noted since the early 20th century. Caillois (1963) and Vidal-Naquet (1991) even argue that

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7 The excerpt is also discussed here in S. Ashton's chapter.

8 "Cyclique désigne un temps qui forme une boucle; quand une révolution est achevée, on repasse alors nécessairement par tous les points du cycle" (p. 21).

9 Hoy 2013 shows that Parmenides' view of time is amenable to that derived from the relativity theory of physics, whereas Heraclitus' view rather resembles quantum physics. Both share the idea that the notion of succession is not successful in capturing the reality of time. See also R. Hutchins' chapter on the idea that some aspects of Lucretius' philosophy prefigure Einsteinian relativity.

10 In this respect, Harold Ramis' movie *Groundhog Day* offers an interesting thought experiment. The character played by Bill Murray is stuck in a temporal loop, so he lives the same day every day (same events in the same order on the same day). However, in contrast with the other characters, he remembers the day before, so a desynchronisation arises. Thus, he several times experiences fake simultaneity with the other characters, fake because it is different each time, since he is able to take into account the events he lived the day before, which gives the impression that he is travelling in the past and is able to change it, although he always exists on the same day.

the linear conception is prominent. According to Fränkel (1931), the Greek world gradually left cyclicity and adopted a linear temporal conception after the archaic period.

However, as Darbo-Peschanski's (2000b, 14–15) well-taken examination shows, this novel (somewhat teleological) stance contained its own weaknesses, because it allowed for the possibility that Greek conceptions of time were not single or double, but multiple, and, depending on the period or the discourse type under consideration, a different view of time appears. This phenomenon resulted in radical judgements such as that of Lloyd (1975, 205–214) that "there is no Greek conception of time." Empedocles' and Lucretius' are two of the many conceptions featured in Antiquity not reducible to linearity or cyclicity, as S. Ashton and R. Hutchins respectively show in this volume (see also S. Dunning's chapter).

However, cyclicity and linearity remain useful concepts. For example, cyclicity is prominently featured in studies on practical timing, e.g., on seasons, calendars, astrology, rituals, etc. (Ben-Dov and Doering 2017) and is most prominently operative in religious texts and discourses (Pirenne-Delforge and Öhnan 2003, in particular Somville 2003). Although not reducible to these notions, 'human' time is based on regularities.

2 Human time

An important aspect of time is that it is an object of which human beings are aware and which they consider in their reading of the world and in their social practices. As shown by S. Ashton in this volume, in Empedocles the universe is read through the prism of human life, so its development can be seen as passing through the same stages (embryo, birth, etc.). Time is most discernible in diseases, in which regularities can/must be observed and used by the good physician to treat the patient (on this, see V. Longhi's contribution on Hippocrates and Galenus).

Moreover, time's use is subjective, varying from one human being to another, and is subject to interpretation and manipulation. For example, time can become a political tool. As pointed out by Darbo-Peschanski (2000b, 16), referring to Lévêque & Vidal-Naquet (1964) and Loraux (1997), Clisthenes' reforms established a political time with the variability of the assemblies. The coexistence of this democratic timing and the reference to previous customs, based on the families and their lineage, played an important role in the political life of Classical Athens. Rulers of various sorts played on the calendar and feasts, elections, etc. to maintain power or elicit the benevolence of citizens or subjects. On this topic, S.

Dunning's chapter is particularly enlightening, taking the viewpoint of the Roman Emperors. In this domain, the concept of recursion is more operative than cyclicity. Nevertheless, human time is not always a conscious matter. Part of its deep conception is also so assimilated that it is accessible only indirectly. The examination of language permits such access.

3 Time and language

That thought and language may influence each other is far from a new idea. The modern version of this idea dates back to Sapir and Whorf (see Whorf 1956) and Benveniste (1958). Sapir and Whorf claimed that crosscultural differences are related to differences in language, notably in the lexicon. This phenomenon is illustrated in a number of studies, for example, regarding auditory and olfactory perception (Dubois 2000). Benveniste (1958) argued that Aristotle's thought categories exactly match that suggested by grammatical items (quality in ποῖος, quantity in πόσος, etc.).[11] This hypothesis can be seen as neo-Sapir-Whorfian in the sense that it posits an influence of language on thought, but considers that grammatical categories are at play rather than the lexicon, as in the original formulation.

Sapir-Whorfian and Benvenistian ideas led to the "linguistic relativity hypothesis," which claims that, as linguistic categories differ by language, thought categorisations must do so as well, under the influence of language.[12] The hypothesis applies to intralinguistic categorisation when we consider diachronic change. The hypothesis has a weak flavour, famously put forth by Slobin (1996), which goes as "thinking for speaking." It is thought that thinking accompanies speech preparation, viz. is covert speaking, and thus is informed by lan-

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11 Benveniste also wrote on time. See Benveniste 1959, 1965, in which he draws a fundamental distinction between linguistic time, constructed on the basis of speaking time, and calendrical time, based on a reference point (say, Jesus' birth).

12 Linguistic relativity has been strongly and virulently opposed, usually by contenders of universal grammar. See Berlin and Kay 1969 against Whorf's original phrasing (colours are managed universally across languages), and McWhorter 2014 against the more recent and subtle conceptual view. The latter has it that linguistic relativity is weak, banal and circular, and that evidence for it was elicited with bias: Language being always involved, we deal only with linguistic categories (see also *infra* the "thinking-as-speaking" hypothesis). However, recent experiments successfully avoiding these biases nevertheless appeared to support relativity (Casasanto 2016). For a history of the various ways linguistic relativity has been envisaged, see Björk 2008.

guage.[13] In the MIDISHUC project,[14] we endorsed a strong flavour of linguistic relativity, since, as we shall see, the correlation of language and thought categories goes beyond the speaking process and touches upon general and abstract conceptions.

(Strong) linguistic-relativity approaches have been popular when speaking about time. They are subjacent as early as 1975 in a Unesco series of essays on the diversity of temporal conceptions across civilisations (see Unesco 1975, in particular Ricoeur's introduction). From a completely different perspective, Boroditsky (2001) experimentally shows that Mandarin Chinese speakers have a vertical conception of time[15] while English speakers exhibit a horizontal vision.[16] This difference is due to their native language. To describe temporal relations, English uses spatial items such as *ahead* and *forward*, which suggests movement on the horizontal plane.[17] In contrast, Mandarin sometimes uses similar spatial metaphors, but it prominently features morphemes such as *shàng* ("up") and *xià* ("down") to describe the timeline. For example, *shàng* characterises events that precede the moment of speech, whereas *xià* is applied to events that follow it (Scott 1989).

In the MIDISHUC project, the two hypotheses (interdisciplinary and language-thought influences) were formulated for Classical Greece and its temporal conceptions. Classical Greece provided a vantage point for assessing these influences since the history of thought turned in that milieu. History, philosophy and medicine were founded or refounded in Classical Greek antiquity (nourished by the 6th Century *Miracle grec*, Prince 2006). Faure, Golfin and Grasso (2019) show that the concomitance of those modifications may not be due to chance. In particular, they point out that Thucydides adopts a view of historical time in which progress (i.e., linearity) is a key feature (as opposed to the view of Herodotus and arguably previous thinkers: Golfin 2003). Also not by chance is the place that movement occupies in thinking on time, especially in Aristotle, admittedly with a lag with respect to Thucydides and linguistic change. Even if a moving

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13 Another form of "thinking for speaking" would be that linguistic influence mainly occurs in performance. Such pragmatic views are reviewed in Kramsch 2014, in the framework of applied linguistics. We did not address this question, although these approaches may be fruitful in studying, e.g., Plato's philosophical dialogues.

14 See fn. 1.

15 This stance is often advocated from historical and anthropological perspectives as well. See Larre 1975 among many others.

16 This perspective must be considered in terms of dominance, since the other dimension is also accessible and is used in both languages (see, a.o., Winand 2003, 20).

17 That spatial relationships are used to think of time is known as the "localist view". It is featured prominently in the study of prepositions (for Ancient Greek, see Luraghi 2003).

object can return to its original location, the emphasis on movement focusses on time as a (linear) development. There is a before and an after (ὁ χρόνος ἀριθμὸς κινήσεως κατὰ τὸ πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον 'time is the number of motions with respect to the before and the after,' Arist. *Ph.* 219b1), and time is seen as continuous (ἡ κίνησις οὕτω *συνεχὴς ὥσπερ* καὶ ὁ χρόνος 'movement is continuous, as time is,' Arist. *Metaph.* 1071b7).

At the same time, in Classical times the Greek language underwent important changes in its use of moods, tenses and aspects. First, the perfect gradually loses its aspectual value to take on a temporal value (Chantraine 1927[18]). Chantraine's demonstration is particularly convincing regarding Plato's *Parmenides*. Note that the work that is the most innovative with regard to the usage of verbal tenses is also that which displays a vision of time that is borderline in Plato's philosophy, which gives the impression that there is a correlation between the two phenomena. The second point is that the expression of relative tense became more precise thanks to the full grammaticalisation of the oblique optative (Faure 2010, 2014). To illustrate, consider the following passage from Plato's *Symposium*, in which Alcibiades praises Socrates, insisting on his valour in war.

> Καὶ θαυμάζοντες ἄλλος ἄλλῳ ἔλεγεν ὅτι Σωκράτης ἐξ ἑωθινοῦ φροντίζων τι ἕστηκε. τελευτῶντες δέ τινες τῶν Ἰώνων, ἐπειδὴ ἑσπέρα ἦν, δειπνήσαντες—καὶ γὰρ θέρος τότε γ᾽ ἦν—χαμεύνια ἐξενεγκάμενοι ἅμα μὲν ἐν τῷ ψύχει καθηῦδον, ἅμα δ᾽ ἐφύλαττον αὐτὸν εἰ καὶ τὴν νύκτα ἑστήξοι. ὁ δὲ εἱστήκει μέχρι ἕως ἐγένετο καὶ ἥλιος ἀνέσχεν· ἔπειτα ᾤχετ᾽ ἀπιὼν προσευξάμενος τῷ ἡλίῳ γὰρ θέρος τότε γ᾽ ἦν. (Pl. *Symp.* 220d2–4)

> They said to one another in wonder: 'Socrates has been standing there in a study ever since dawn!' The end of it was that in the evening some of the Ionians after they had supped—this time it was summer—brought out their mattresses and rugs and took their sleep in the cool; thus they waited to see if he would go on standing all night too. He stood till dawn came and the sun rose; then walked away, after offering a prayer to the Sun. (tr. Fowler)

The interesting terms are ἕστηκε, ἑστήξοι and εἱστήκει. The various stems of the Greek verb famously hold aspectual meanings. While the present stem ἵστη- expresses imperfectivity and the aorist stem στη- expresses perfectivity, the perfect stem denotes retrospectivity (to use Hewson's 2006 words), or result (in more traditional phrasing). Hence ἑστηκ- in ἑστήξοι and εἱστήκει involves the idea of standing rather than getting up or having gotten up. The stem is featured in six forms (here illustrated in the third person), three of which are featured in

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18 Rijksbaron 2018, chapter 2 argues that the perfect value lasted longer than P. Chantraine claimed it did, while Faure 2020, 81 claims that both positions are compatible if we consider both the pragmatic and the semantic levels. Hewson 2006 offers a balanced view of the system of tenses and aspects in Ancient Greek, principally valid for Classical Greek.

the text: The indicative perfect ἕστηκε, the indicative imperfect εἱστήκει, the indicative future perfect ἑστήξει, the subjunctive ἑστήκῃ, the optative perfect ἑστήκοι and the optative future perfect ἑστήξοι. The variation between ἕστηκε, ἑστήξει and εἱστήκει illustrates this point: The three forms allow a variation according to past (εἱστήκει), present (ἕστηκε) and future (ἑστήξει) time. Moreover, the expansion of the oblique optative, especially to the future, from Pindar, allows for the transposition of these relations to the past. Thus, ἑστήξοι in the embedded interrogative in the text denotes a state that is posterior with respect to the imperfect ἐφύλαττον, which is in the past. Never before could Greek language express such precise temporal relations as that of the future in the past. If the perfect stem adopts a temporal value, ἑστήξοι expresses anteriority with respect to a future-in-the-past reference point. Also with respect to the past, but from a lexical viewpoint, E. Golfin (this volume) highlights different conceptions among Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon. They are certainly specific to each author, but the variation could reflect or rest upon a deeper linguistic change.

These linguistic modifications seem to have taken place more quickly than is normally expected of language change.[19] They are furthermore reflected in grammatical theory, which originated with Plato and Aristotle in the 5th Century and did not contain a term to designate aspect, while mood (ἔγκλισις) and time (χρόνος) are perfectly categorised (Lallot 1998, 58, 172–178; 2000). Thus, the concept of linearity that necessarily accompanies time/χρόνος, but not aspect, re-enters the picture, absent a teleological point that Greek thought has yet to attain.

However, the examination of grammarians must proceed carefully for two reasons. First, aspect is not completely absent from Greek thought and it plays an important role in Stoic grammar according to some interpretations (see G. Manetti, this volume). Moreover, the notion of aspect may have been difficult to conceive of in general. For example, Sanskrit grammarians seem to have encountered the same difficulty as the Stoics. The grammarian Bhartṛhari's view of time and tenses in his *Vākyapadīya* revolves around temporal succession rather than aspect, although Sanskrit distinguishes aspects, at least in its early stages (Panikkar and Bäumer 1975, 81–82). Hence, cyclicity and linearity coexist, and one or the other is linguistically foregrounded, depending on the text. Classical Greek has means to express chronology and instant succession more precisely than in the previous stages of the language, and this capability may have influenced writing and thought.

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19 Labov 2010, 389 reports that three or four generations are the minimum for a linguistic change to be achieved.

Quite interestingly, Winand (2003) independently arrived at a similar conclusion regarding an unrelated language. The Ancient Egyptian verb system mixed tenses and aspects, but was originally aspect-dominant and later became time-dominant. He notes that this change correlates with a cultural change, in both the literature and the arts (pp. 31–34):

> In the oldest texts, in which a private individual introduces him- or herself to posterity, we note that the temporal perspective is almost completely lacking. (...) The dead simply list the functions that the king gave to them. They use only resultative perfect forms. (...) Later, what might be called 'anecdotique' arises in autobiographies, i.e., mentions of particular episodes that render the individual exceptional with respect to previous or contemporary people. Such texts arise only in the 5th dynasty, in which punctual accomplished forms are used to express sequence-of-time facts.[20]

Consequently, in both Ancient Greek and Egyptian a clear correlation shows up between the ability to envisage (and tell) events in chronological order and the availability in the language of grammatical material that expresses the sequence of tenses.[21] This type of correlation is also observed by Casasanto (2016), as well as the difficulty of inferring a causal relationship. However, diachronic facts permit us to conclude in favour of causality,[22] since both languages lacked the sequence-of-tenses precision at the same time that they lacked narrative precision. The change to a finer-grained system of tenses seems to have aroused the latter.

As is visible from the references we made to several of its chapters, this volume expands upon the idea that thought and language influence each other. However, it widens the perspective to go beyond language. Alongside E. Golfin

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20 Our translation, emphases ours. Original text: "Dans les textes les plus anciens où le particulier se présente à la postérité on constate une absence quasi-total de perspective temporelle. (...) Le défunt se borne à énumérer les fonctions qui lui ont été confiées par le roi. Pour ce faire, il utilise uniquement des formes de parfait résultatif. (...) Dans un deuxième temps, se fait jour dans les autobiographies de ce qu'on pourrait appeler de l'anecdotique c'est-à-dire la mention d'épisodes particuliers qui singularisent la destinée d'un individu par rapport à celle de ses devanciers ou de ses contemporains. Il faut attendre la 5e dynastie pour voir apparaître des récits de cette sorte où se révèle l'emploi de formes de l'accompli ponctuel pour exprimer des faits en séquence temporelle" (p. 32).

21 On the influence that time conceptions have upon tense conceptions, see Dyke 2013 for a bird's-eye view of the literature of the past fifty years. For example, scholars like Ludlow 1999 argue for an intermediate third term between language and thought, namely reality, and "agree that tensed language and thought are irreducible and indispensable, but they think the best explanation of this is that they reflect an irreducibly tensed reality" (Dyke 2013, 342).

22 This is not tantamount to saying that narrative tenses are or are meant to be the exact reflections of real or experienced time. Nevertheless, they are translations of real time. On this, see Ricoeur 1984, 92–113, 147.

and G. Manetti, it features essays that study the interactions between conceptions of time and experiences. Temporality and temporal flow are particularly operative notions in this regard. A few words have already been said about grammar, history and philosophy. In the next section, we mention some questions posed by "realisations" of temporal conceptions in literary approaches.

4 Time and narrative literature

Narrative literature offers questions that are now well-known. We introduce them before showing the perspective some chapters of this volume use to address them.

Building on some previous studies, Ricoeur (1983) showed that the narrative task is to merge three temporal levels, which correspond to three types of *mimesis*. First, the narrative text takes into account the order of actions (*Mimesis* I); then, it treats them so they fit into a plot (the *mise en intrigue/*'emplotment,' "the operation that turns a simple succession into a configuration,"[23] *Mimesis* II). Finally, this result is filtered by the reader (*Mimesis* III): It is the "intersection between the world that the poem configures and the world in which the actual action unfolds itself and its specific temporality."[24] Consequently, "hermeneutics' task is to reconstruct all the operations by which a work stands out against the opaque background of living, acting, suffering and is offered by an author to a reader who receives it and thereby changes his or her acting."[25]

In addition, Genette (1983) accounted for the variety of temporalities that the emplotment stage involves. Events vary in order, duration and frequency. For example, they need not appear in the order in which the recounted (sometimes fictional) events took place. Operations such as *analepses* or *prolepses* are quite often displayed in the literature. Similarly, a text can play on duration, e. g., (our examples), by (re)presenting a six-month stay in Oslo in three lines or a

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23 Our translation. Original text: "L'opération qui tire d'une simple succession une configuration" (p. 102).

24 Our translation. Original text: "L'intersection, donc, du monde configuré par le poème et du monde dans lequel l'action effective se déploie et déploie sa temporalité spécifique" (p. 109).

25 Our translation. Original text: "C'est la tâche de l'herméneutique de reconstruire l'ensemble des opérations par lesquelles une œuvre s'enlève sur le fond opaque du vivre, de l'agir et du souffrir, pour être donnée par un auteur à un lecteur qui la reçoit et ainsi change son agir" (p. 86).

short encounter in the street in 200 pages. Finally, the same event can be related once or several times in order to, for example, vary the viewpoints.[26]

The treatment of the types of *mimeses* and timings is also different across narrative types, particularly between history and fiction. Regarding *mimesis*, Ricoeur (1984, 12) says: "I am reserving the term *fiction* for the literary creations that lack the ambition of the historical narrative in constituting a true narrative. (...) [Historical and fictional narratives] are not opposed by the structuring activity involved in narrative structures as such but by the aim to tell the truth which defines the third mimetic relation."[27] Regarding time, whereas in history narrative describes past events, in fiction the relation to the past is only metaphorical: "Past tenses first express the past. Then, by a metaphorical transposition that preserves that which it bypasses, they express the entry into fiction without direct (but maybe with oblique) reference to the past as such."[28]

This distinction impacts two chapters in this volume and the way the past is envisaged. Golfin's chapter considers the three major extant classical Greek historians: Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon.[29] The frequency and use of the lexicon referring to the past shape the way they conceive of history and they undertake to tell it. The interactions are particularly interesting between the facts that the historians report and analyse (which are in the recent past) and events that occurred in the remote past. In one case, the remote past is seen as nourishing the narration, as a source of the told events (Herodotus, who prefers the stem ἀρχ-), while, in Thucydides, a gap is felt between the two periods (παλ- is predominant).

In contrast, part of Papaioannou's article is concerned with the history of Rome, but as fictional material. Interestingly, however, it is not used directly in the narrative. Instead, it is featured in the *Aeneid* as *ekphrases*, i.e., intrinsically temporal material is frozen by its iconographic representation and then reintroduced into time by the necessary linearity of the description. This impres-

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26 See the introduction of de Jong and Nünlist 2007 for an application of these concepts to ancient literature.

27 Our translation. Original text: "Je réserve le terme de fiction pour celles des créations littéraires qui ignorent l'ambition qu'a le récit historique de constituer un récit vrai. (...) En revanche, ce qui les oppose ne concerne pas l'activité structurante investie dans les structures narratives en tant que telles, mais la prétention à la vérité par laquelle se définit la troisième relation mimétique."

28 Our translation. Original text: "Les temps du passé disent d'abord le passé, puis, par une transposition métaphorique qui conserve ce qu'elle dépasse, ils disent l'entrée en fiction sans référence directe, sinon oblique, au passé en tant que tel" (Ricoeur 1984, 112).

29 Much more on time in Greek literature is found in de Jong and Nünlist 2007 from a narratological perspective.

sive and vertiginous sophistication is an interesting challenge to narratology specialists, even when equipped with the elaborate tools that have been developing over the past approximately sixty years. Some theories have nevertheless recently arisen that tackle the relationship of description to narration. The trade-off between the two is addressed in the discussion of narratised description vs. descriptised narration in Mosher (1991).[30] In the Achilles'-shield scene in the *Iliad* (Book 18), one is nested inside the other: Hephaistos' fabrication of the shield (descriptised narration) involves narratised descriptions of parts of the shield, per Chatman (1990, 33–34).

5 Conceptions of time and their effects: survey of the book

Apart from this introduction, the book is composed of seven chapters. Although different, they all address the tension between an underlying and explicit conception (and representation) of time and its conscious and unconscious application, management or use[31] in medicine (V. Longhi), politics and religion (S. Dunning), and literature and writing (E. Golfin and S. Papaioannou), or its reinvestment in other philosophical thought (S. Ashton, R. Hutchins, and G. Manetti). This tension is observed through a careful examination of texts, many of which are fragmentary. The authors pay particular attention to the lexicon.

Giovanni Manetti ("The Debate on the Question of 'Tense' and 'Aspect' in the Stoics' Linguistic Theory") delves into the understanding of time that Stoic grammatical theory reveals. While time does not exist *per se* (the past is gone, the future is not yet and the present is inconsistent), it is a crucial category for understanding verbal forms. However, building upon a proposal by Ildefonse, Stoic time can be seen κατὰ πλάτος, as an extension, in both human experience and language, which captures the definition of the various verbal forms and their meanings. The present (ἐνεστώς) appears to be pivotal and everything is measured with respect to it. Nevertheless, what aspect is and what time is in

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30 "In contrast to the narratised description, in which a description is disguised as a narration, descriptised narration disguises a narration as a description." "Descriptised narration characterises a passage whose formal qualities are or seem to be predominantly narrative, but whose ultimate function reveals itself to be descriptive" (p. 427).
31 This "application, management or use" can be seen as a rephrasing of Darbo-Peschanski's 2000b "temporalisation."

tenses, according to Stoic thought as transcribed in Stephanus' scholium to Dionysius Thrax, is not a trivial matter. In particular, all sorts of interpretations have been put forth, depending upon whether aspect (e.g., παρατατικός "imperfective," συντελικός "perfective") or time (e.g., παρῳχημένος "past") is considered the spine of the system. Both time and aspect translate as χρόνος into the Greek of the Stoics, an intricacy that obliges us to conclude that, although aspectual distinctions were thought and reflected upon, they were not conceived of as a family of phenomena separate from time proper. Instead, they overlap and serve a similar logical purpose.

This preliminary study is followed by three articles by Susannah Ashton, Richard Hutchins and Vivien Longhi. Reading them in parallel is interesting, notably because of the analysis the former two make of the polysemous terms αἰών and *aetas* in two poet-philosophers. In particular, both terms mean 'age,' 'era' or even 'eternity,' but also 'lifetime.' This polysemy is used in two admittedly very different philosophical systems—those of Empedocles and Lucretius. Different though they may be, these two visions of time are grounded in the nature/life of the elements and *in human experience or perception*, rather than in, e.g., speculation or measurement. Other commonalities rest in time's fluctuating nature and the role of (haphazard) chance. However, the reasons for these phenomena are very different: The interaction between Love and Strife for Empedocles and materialism for Lucretius. V. Longhi's chapter, albeit based not on a philosophical corpus but on a medical treatise by Galenus, shows that nature and the elements also ground Galenus' (novel) vision that diseases are paced by crises.

In "Chance, Relativity, and Empedocles' Cycle(s) of Time," Susannah Ashton embarks on an exploration of the conception of time in Empedocles' corpus. Empedocles is familiar with circling and whirling imagery, and the alternation between Love and Strife in his system gives the impression of cycles. Late testimonia and scholia were also interpreted as indicating that Empedocles' view of time was cyclical, and moreover abiding by timetables and numbered/measurable and steady timings. S. Ashton shows how these views are both anachronistic and deterministic: in Late Antiquity, especially Neoplatonism, there was a tendency to conflate various systems, particularly in integrating Pythagorean conceptions. Positing timetables supposes that (fixed) time is a condition or that there are rules by which the world abides in its development. These views fit neither with other (thus far overlooked) testimonia by Aëtius nor with Empedocles' own philosophy, in which uniform measurements of time are explicitly rejected (the duration of events being rather changing and unstable). Time elapsing is hinted at as being relative and the operation of chance (συγκυρέω) plays an important role in the interaction of the four elements. A careful examination of the analogy between cosmogony and zoogony shows that cosmic time is influenced

by mortal genesis and change. In fact, early generations of human beings were grown from earth, much as plants are, but also depended on the duration of the day, which varies because the cosmos varies, which in turn affects gestation. In fact, human lifetimes and the cosmos' timespan are both called αἰών. This "biological" conception of time gestures toward both an iterative temporality (gestation and birth recur) and an incommensurable variation, since the cosmos, especially the sun, is in constant transformation and time is defined by it. Likewise, nothing in Empedocles indicates that Love and Strife, the two forces that rule the cosmos, exchange places regularly. Hence time is the product rather than the frame of cosmic life.

In "Lucretius' Theory of Temporality: *Aetas* in *De Rerum Natura*," Richard Hutchins sets out to analyse *aetas* in Lucretius' *De rerum natura*, Book Five and its *prima facie* discrepancy with the conception of time offered in Book One. As shown by the analysis of a passage of Book One, Lucretius' materialism paves the way for an objective view of time, based on nature. Nevertheless, in Book Five *aetas* means 'time,' but in its variation, which depends on the movement of atoms. This factor could make time a relative phenomenon; these movements are unpredictable, which would result in "interconnected webs of temporalities." Moreover, even if time is neither subordinated to human perception nor envisaged as depending upon perspectives, our conception of it is mediated by perception (*rebus ab ipsis / consequitur sensus* 1.459 – 460), since time is a relational entity between the motions of atoms and human perception. In contrast, in Book Five, time (*aetas*) is presented not as an *euentum* but as an active force that has an effect on the material changes of the earth, which went through several stages. In fact, human beings also acquired knowledge through the observation of bodies in the sky and seasons passing. As did M. Serres, R. Hutchins suggests that Lucretius' conception of time foreshadows modern, ecological worries, with respect to, e.g., climate change.

Vivien Longhi's chapter ("Le temps des crises chez Galien") focusses on Galenus and how he envisages the timing of diseases in his treatise *De diebus decretoriis*. The famous physician also bases his view of time on nature. As per ancient medicine, diseases developed according to a fixed calendar, in which important stages are marked by *crises*. Crises are important moments, as they serve as the occasion for the intervention of a physician. Determining "good" crises (ἀγαθαὶ κρίσεις) is crucial in that acting at the right moment is the best means of salvaging the patient. Galenus engages in a dialogue with Hippocrates, which results in both a clarification of its famous predecessor's doctrine and a new theoretical frame. Regarding the former, careful taxonomies of critical days are provided (7 and its multiples are particularly of interest), and attempts are made to define when exactly pathologies start. On the other hand, mathe-

matical and theoretical considerations are not sufficient. Galenus reinserts into the natural order the critical timing of diseases. Pathological timing is viewed as a reflex and an outcome of the natural world. Nature is ordered and paced, and crises are conceived of as its interventions in the regulation of and thus fight against disease, an anti-natural force. This renewed conception is philosophically grounded in Aristotle.

The next three studies—by E. Golfin, S. Papaioannou and S.B. Dunning—are explorations into temporal layering and the representation of past periods in narrative and history. While the first concerns the way historical writing envisages the mythical and historical past in a narration that is more or less related to the present, the second examines how myths and history are reinvested in epics, with a high degree of literary play. Finally, the third delves into the long duration of the Roman State and the transformation of the term *saeculum* from the Republic to Christianity.

Emmanuel Golfin's chapter ("La compréhension du passé chez les premiers historiens grecs: Étude sur les emplois de πάλαι et d'ἀρχή") adopts a lexical viewpoint to delve into the conception of history that their relation to past involves in the historians of the Greek classical era. The words meaning 'past,' 'ancient,' 'old,' etc. are comprehensively studied. Thucydides primarily uses words built upon and related to πάλαι, surprisingly given that he is identified as the author of an ἀρχαιολογία. His enterprise is to explore what is knowable or at least conceivable, compared to what relates to the origins, ἀρχαῖος, conceived of as inaccessible. In contrast, Herodotus favours the root ἀρχ-. His investigation of other periods (and other places) is alone valuable, e.g., who invented or discovered something. Grasping this past is moreover instrumental to understanding the present time. Finally, Xenophon is puzzling. Although his *Hellenica* are a follow-up on Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, his aim does not seem to be the same, and no clear conception of history arises from his usage of the vocabulary of the past.

In "Temporality and ekphrastic narrative in the *Aeneid*," Sophia Papaioannou sets out to analyse *ekphrases* in the *Aeneid* and show how the interplay and intertwining between narrative and description reveal layering and interferences between time and space, and among temporalities. What the three pieces of art that the chapter examines (paintings of Juno's temple, Daedalus' sculptures, Aeneas' shield) share is their narrative nature. They tell a story frozen by the very fact that they are material objects, but revived by the description (sometimes mediated by an intradiegetic or an intraintradiegetic spectator) and the reading time. The narratives are not always told linearly or at a regular pace, but room is made for lingering and regressions. All this, which is true of all ekphrases, must be recast in an epic frame and finds a specific form in the proj-

ect of the *Aeneid*. S. Papaioannou disentangles this entwining and demonstrates how Virgil skillfully concentrates disordered moments in a single, dense instant, in which the layering of viewpoints reintroduces temporalities and supports the Augustan propaganda that his reign is a recurrence of the Golden Age.

Susan B. Dunning ("The Transformation of the *Saeculum* and Its Rhetoric in the Construction and Rejection of Roman Imperial Power") focusses on the term *saeculum*, whose history is intricately intertwined with that of the Roman Republic and Empire. The word is not a mere description of a period (whose duration has varied). From the very beginning (as an Etruscan term), it had religious and political connotations, being especially used as an era characterised by an exceptional end or beginning. Political power dwells upon the possibility of emphasising the former or the latter. In particular, throughout the history of the Roman Empire, Augustus and his heirs used the creation of the *Ludi saeculares* and played on the chronology of *saecula* to depict their reigns as the coming of a new age, while the Christian authors employed the term conversely (first as a translation of αἰών in the *Gospels*). Tertullian, with his position towards public games, may have been pivotal in this meaning change. *Saeculum* was so intimately linked to the emperors that it came to carry a negative connotation for the Christians; that is, it came to denote the transient and temporary world, fated to perish and the opposite of their highest value, namely the Kingdom of God and eternal life.

These various essays show that time proves difficult to grasp and that *a priori* conceptions are challenged when "realised" by and confronted with experience. Time is an objective, measurable phenomenon. Moreover, its conception and representation must be shared to make social life possible. However, challenges arise from that which should ground this very objectivity, namely Nature and interpersonal usage. On the one hand, Nature is variable, and therefore so must be the timings that build upon it. On the other hand, the social and interpersonal use of time necessarily supposes a viewpoint or perspectivisation (assumed or not), and time becomes an object that can be manipulated. We hope that the studies collected here help clarify how this apparent discrepancy is possible and thus pave the way toward further explorations of this tension and its resolution by thinkers and human beings in general.

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The debate on the question of "tense" and "aspect" in the Stoics' linguistic theory

Abstract: This essay offers an in-depth discussion of the widely debated question as to whether the Stoics arranged their system of tenses on an aspectual basis, as originally suggested by Pohlenz (1939). Many subsequent authors embraced this hypothesis, while others rejected it. The first part of the chapter discusses the Stoic theory of time from a geometrical-physical perspective, in order to evaluate its compatibility with the theory transmitted by grammarians, and particularly by a scholium to Dionysius Thrax by the 7th-century Byzantine commentator Stephanus. The essay then analyses the various forms of *diairesis* proposed for Greek tenses by modern authors who have investigated this topic (Pohlenz, Barwick, Versteegh, Berrettoni, Mársico). Finally, it adduces the main reasons in support of the hypothesis that the Stoics adopted the category of aspect, which was already to be found in their metaphysical reflection on space, time, and movement, prior to its application to the field of tenses, as reported by grammarians.

1 Premise

It is well-known that the linguistic categories identified by the Stoics lie, through the mediation of Alexandrian and Roman grammarians, at the basis of the grammatical tradition extending down to the present day. In addition to the classification of the so-called parts of speech (μέρη τοῦ λόγου), which were increased from Aristotle's three[1] to six,[2] the Stoics' work is important for its systematisation of Greek verbal tenses.[3]

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1 Or four, depending on whether, in addition to the ὄνομα, ῥῆμα, and σύνδεσμος, we consider the ἄρθρον a part of speech: see Pinborg 1975, 72–75.
2 It seems as though Zeno and Cleanthes initially acknowledged five parts of speech: proper name (ὄνομα), common noun (προσηγορία), verb (ῥῆμα), article/pronoun (ἄρθρον), and conjunction (σύνδεσμος). Later Antipater added a sixth: adverb (μεσότης). See Pinborg 1975, 99.
3 See Frede 1987, 305 and ff.; Ildefonse 2000, 301: "La scholie de Stephanos atteste que la théorie des temps est [...] constituée dans le stoïcisme."

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It has often been repeated that the Stoics proposed a description of the Greek tense system that either implicitly or explicitly acknowledged the presence of a category for aspect. This opinion first took hold with the publication of an important essay by Max Pohlenz (1939, 177; it was formulated again in 1948: It. transl. 79 ff.), in which he explicitly argued that the Stoics' grammatical system featured a classification of tenses on an aspectual basis. According to Pohlenz, this particular perspective derived from the fact that the original language spoken by some early Stoic philosophers was a Semitic one, in which the category of aspect was manifest (Zeno, the founder of the Stoic school and the main deviser of the theory of the tenses, hailed from the Phoenician city of Citium, on the island of Cyprus; Chrysippus came from Cilicia). This would have influenced the Stoics' analyses of the Greek language, leading them to identify a similar category within it. In this respect, several authors have regarded the Stoics as having foreshadowed the discovery of the grammatical category of aspect.

In the modern age, the grammatical category of aspect began to be explicitly identified over the course of the 19th century through the studies carried out, on the one hand, on Indo-European languages and, on the other, on Slavic languages. As far as the study of Indo-European languages is concerned, in handbooks of comparative linguistics it became a standard practice to provide a short reference to the Stoic theory before the chapter on *Aktionsart*. Comparative-historical linguistics applied the notion of "aspect" to various languages deriving from Indo-European, particularly Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin, attributing this category to the *Ursprache* itself. Some scholars even went so far as to posit that in the *Ursprache* itself only aspectual determinations were to be found, and that temporal ones only emerged at a subsequent stage (Berrettoni 1989a, 34–36).

In the wake of Pohlenz, the thesis that the category of aspect exists in the Greek tense system attributed to the Stoics has been endorsed by various other scholars, including: Robert H. Robins (1951, 35), Karl Barwick (1957), Jan Gonda (1962, 17), Peter Colaclides (1966), Cornelis H. M. Versteegh (1980), Jean Lallot (1985), and Claudia T. Mársico (2003). Other scholars instead reject this view, for instance: J. Lohmann (1953, 173 ff.), Rolf Hiersche (1977), and Pierangiolo Berrettoni (1989a and 1989b).

2 Preliminary definitions of "verb"

Before delving into this topic, we need to dwell briefly both on the notion of verb and on that of tense/time in ancient thought.

As is widely known, the first significant characterisation of the verb is provided by Plato, in the *Sophist* (262a). He defines it as "the mode of signification

that is applied to actions." After Plato, the important novelty occurs in which Aristotle inserts the notion of "time" into the definition of the verb. Indeed, in *De interpretatione* (16b6) Aristotle defines the verb as "that which, in addition to its proper meaning, carries with it the notion of time" (προσσημαίνει χρόνον). A similar interpretation is also found in Chapter 20 of the *Poetics* (1457a14–15): "A verb is a composite sound (φωνὴ συνθετή) with a meaning, indicative of time (μετὰ χρόνου), no part of which has a meaning by itself." As we can see, the notion of "time" is essential for the very definition of a verb; as such, it crops up again and again in the later tradition.

From this point of view, the Stoics represent an exception. Indeed, in his *Περὶ φωνῆς* Diogenes of Babylon (*SVF* 3.213.22) provides a definition of the verb without ever mentioning the notion of "time:"[4] "ῥῆμα δέ ἐστι μέρος λόγου σημαῖνον ἀσύνθετον κατηγόρημα" ("the verb is that part of speech which indicates a non-composed predicate"[5]).

Dionysius Thrax's *Techne* defines a verb as "an indeclinable word indicating time, person and number, and showing activity (ἐνέργεια) or passivity (πάθος)." This definition is closely reminiscent of Aristotle's. Dionysius further identifies eight accidents (παρεπόμενα) in relation to verbs: moods (ἐγκλίσεις), voices (διαθέσεις), species (εἴδη), forms (σχήματα), numbers (ἀριθμοί), persons (πρόσωπα), tenses (χρόνοι), and conjugations (συζυγίαι) (*Techne*, 13.1).

Of all the notions pertaining to the accidents of verbs, "tense/time" is the most problematic. In relation to this notion, we find constant references to Stoic sources, which can be subdivided into two spheres. The first is the philosophical sphere, with passages from Simplicius, Stobaeus, Plutarch, Sextus Empiricus, Alexander of Aphrodisias, and Philo; these authors discuss time from an essentially physical standpoint. The second sphere is the linguistic-grammatical one, associated with the Byzantine scholia to Dionysius Thrax's *Techne* and certain passages from the works of Roman-Era grammarians such as Priscian and Varro. A particularly significant role among commentators of the *Techne* is played by the scholiast Stephanus, a 7th-century Byzantine grammarian with

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4 See Ildefonse 2000a, 301: "À la différence de la définition aristotélicienne du verbe, qui inclut le temps de manière essentielle, la définition stoïcienne du verbe n'inclut aucune caractérisation temporelle – ce qui est remarquable."

5 To understand this definition it is necessary to refer to the Stoic classification of predicates as σύμβαμα, παρασύμβαμα, ἔλαττον ἢ σύμβαμα, ἔλαττον ἢ παρασύμβαμα. A παρασύμβαμα is a predicate without nominative attached. A σύμβαμα is a predicate with nominative attached. The latter can be divided in ἀσύνθετον e σύνθετον. Cf. Pinborg 1975, 89, which follows Müller 1943.

a remarkable theoretical-philosophical background who has left us a crucial commentary on section 13 of the *Techne*, which discusses verbs in particular.

3 Physical time

Given that in his classification of Greek verbal tenses (*G.G.* 1.3.250.26 – 7) Stephanus explicitly refers to the Stoics, it is useful to start by examining the theories about time developed by that philosophical school, as witnessed by various different sources, most of which have been brought together in the *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*.

We should bear in mind that the Stoics' theory of tenses, as illustrated by the scholiast Stephanus, did not stem from any independent grammatical interest, as might be the case with a linguistic theory nowadays, but was rather part of their broader philosophical system.[6]

First of all, the Stoic theory of physical time entailed an idea that was paradigmatic in the ancient world and which can be traced back to Aristotle. In the *Physics*, Aristotle had defined time as constant movement, where "part of it was and is no longer, while part will be and is not yet" (*Ph.* 217b34).

This perspective challenged the actual existence of the present, the νῦν, which seemed impossible to grasp, as it constantly appeared to be caught between the past and the future. According to Aristotle, "the instant (the now, νῦν) is the continuity of time [...]; for it connects the time which has gone by with that which will be, and it is the limit (πέρας) of time, since it is the beginning of one time and the end of another" (*Ph.* 222a10 ff.).

Zeno defined time as "an interval (διάστημα) of movement" (*SVF* 2.510), whereas Chrysippus, drawing upon and refining Zeno's definition, contended that physical (or real) time "is an interval (διάστημα) of the world's movement, since it is according to time that each thing moves and subsists" (*SVF* 2.509; 510).

Chrysippus' addition reflects the idea of explicitly connecting extension to the movement of bodies, according to Stoic physics. Strictly speaking, the extension in question is not that of time, which – as one of the four incorporeals (ἀσώματα) (along with void, place, and the λεκτόν)[7] (*SVF* 2.331) – cannot have any

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6 See Ildefonse 2002a, 302: "Compte-tenu de la systématicité stoïcienne, je soutiendrai que la théorie grammaticale des temps ne pouvait pas ne pas entretenir un lien systématique fort à la logique tout entière, ainsi qu'avec la théorie physique et éthique du temps. On notera que le même terme χρόνος désigne d'ailleurs le temps physique (time) et le temps grammatical (tense)."

7 Cf. Ildefonse 2000b, 47 ff.

extension; rather, it is a property which belongs to bodies and their movements. As Caujolle-Zaslawsky (1985, 39, nn. 9–10) explains, the model underlying this theory of time is the journey from one point to another: time is the amount of space travelled. However, the Stoics did not confuse the nature of time with that of space; the fact is that the incorporeal nature of time makes it difficult for us to grasp it via sense-perception. It is only possible to access it indirectly, via the movement of bodies.

Time, like void, extends endlessly in two directions: towards the past and towards the future. The past (παρεληλυθότα) and the future (μέλλοντα) are unlimited (ἄπειροι).[8] By contrast, the present (ἐνεστώς) is limited (πεπερασμένον) (*SVF* 2.520; 2.509.1) and represents an intersection between these two infinite dimensions.

According to many scholars, Stoic theory presents a paradox (the so-called "temporal paradox") in relation to the present (as *time*). Indeed, on the one hand, which is to say from a geometric standpoint, the present does not exist, because infinite spaces can be divided infinitely, as can every moment of time, according to a testimony provided by Stobaeus (*SVF* 2.509.1): "since the division of continuous things can proceed to infinity, according to this distinction every moment of time can be divided infinitely, so that, strictly speaking (κατ᾽ ἀπαρτισμόν), no time exists (μηθένα... ἐνεστάναι χρόνον), although it is possible to speak of it in a broad sense (κατὰ πλάτος)."[9] Therefore, according to Chrysippus and to the Stoics more generally, there is no present instant which is an indivisible part of time. For what we usually imagine to be the present is actually nothing but a composite of past and future. Not even a speck of these two realities can be regarded as the present moment. Chrysippus and all Stoics thus considered the notion of present to be an inane one.

However, time does exist in those grammatical forms which describe and define it. To overcome this contradiction, one may use – as Berrettoni (1989b, 264) suggests – the opposition to be found in the Stobaeus passage between a strict or exact (κατ᾽ ἀπαρτισμόν) meaning of time and a broad one (κατὰ πλάτος). In other words, the present cannot exist from a physical-geometric point of view, which coincides with the notion of time in the strict sense (κατ᾽ ἀπαρτισμόν), yet it is possible to speak of it in broad terms (κατὰ πλάτος) (*SVF* 2.509). No

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8 It must be noted that the opposition between πεπερασμένος (finite) and ἄπειρος (infinite) only holds in relation to time as viewed from a physical perspective (*SVF* 2.520); in the case of verbal tenses, the opposition is between ὡρισμένος (definite) and ἀόριστος (indefinite).

9 A passage from Plutarch (*SVF* 2.519) confirms and further defines this conception. The expression κατὰ πλάτος, however – as we will see later – can also have a second meaning; see Ildefonce 2000a, 305.

doubt, the κατὰ πλάτος sense of the present – according Caujolle-Zaslawski, followed by Berrettoni (1979b, 266) – is the linguistic one. This is confirmed by the distinction which scholiasts constantly draw between the philosophers' perspective, according to which the present does not exist, and the grammarians', in which it does. Stephanus himself invokes this distinction (*G.G.* 1.3.248.16 – 23):

> There are three times, but in truth there are two, past (παρεληλυθώς) and future (μέλλων). For that which occurs (πραττόμενον) has either occurred or will occur, but is never present. Indeed, philosophers describe two (sc. times): for they say that, if the axis of the universe, in moving, produces time, then this is always in motion and never present (οὐδέποτε δὲ ἐνίσταται), [...] in such a way that the present (ἐνεστώς) never exists (ἔστιν). The more precise judgement provided by grammar defines a very short time (ἀκαριαῖον χρόνον) and calls it the present (ἐνεστώς), so that it may be possible to provide verbal inflections consistently and with due precision.

Berrettoni (1989a, 53; 1989b, 264) further notes that according to the *Etymologicum Magnum* (820, s.v. ὦγον) "the present is short (ἀκαριαῖος) and only exists while it is being uttered (ἅμα τῷ λέγεσθαι)." The term ἀκαριαῖος means "as short as a hair,"[10] and is used figuratively to express the dimension of an instant.

The two treatments of the present – the philosophical and the linguistic – are apparently mutually contradictory, but, as Caujolle-Zaslawsky (1985, 22) suggests, they can also be explained as stemming from the opposition between two different kinds of representation, which we might define respectively as the physical-objective point of view and the psychological-subjective one. According to the former perspective, representations of the past and future correspond to something which objectively exists in nature. According to the latter perspective, those who struggle to think of the present imagine they are grasping something objective when they are in fact creating an image that corresponds to a merely human and subjective experience: "Il n'y a pas de présent, seulement un sentiment du présent, ou, plutôt de présence" (*ibidem*). Caujolle-Zaslawsky (1985, 22) goes so far as to suggest that Stoicism replaces the "concept" of the present with that of its "representation," which becomes its only mode of existence. Indeed, according to the same scholar (*ibidem*, 27), we can identify a second line of enquiry, after Zeno and Chrysippus, which developed a sort of corollary to the phys-

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10 See Berrettoni 1989b, 264, n.15: "It should be born in mind that ἀκαρής, ἀκαριαῖος, both derived from κείρω, 'to cut short, clip', especially of hair (see examples in LSJ, s.v.) properly meant 'too short to be cut': when referred to time, according to a metaphor which was frequent non only in the philosophical jargon but in common usage as well, it was meant to capture the (obviously illusory and fallacious in re) indivisibility which common sense attributes to the present."

ical perspective on the issue of time. In this case, time is approached from an ethical standpoint, according to which there is no contradiction between the fact that something does not exist from a physical point of view and the fact that it actually exists for human beings. So while *in nature* we only have the past and the future, *for human beings* there is only the present: for we experience and envisage everything in the present. Therefore, memory is the present awareness of the past and hope is an attempt to envisage the future on the basis of "now." The present tense, then, seems false from the physical point of view, but from the human point of view it appears to be the only tense capable of enunciating actual truths: "Si nous nous exprimions de façon exacte, nous indiquerions dans tous nos énoncés le caractère de présence actuelle de notre énonciation" (*ibidem*, 27).

Besides, from the point of view of human experience, the present not only exists, but acquires so much importance as to make us aware of the other two times, the past and the future, by contrast to what occurs in the case of animals, which only have a sense of the present (cf. Cicero, *Off.* 1.4.11).

Indeed, the present – when transposed from the sphere of physical things to that of subjective human experience, i.e., when spoken of in a broad sense (κατὰ πλάτος) – is assigned a superior mode of existence than the past or future. For, from this perspective, the present is the only time that truly exists (ὑπάρχει), whereas the past and the future only have a derivative subsistence (ὑφεστάναι).[11]

However, this interpretation of Françoise Caujolle-Zaslawsky as we have illustrated it so far is not shared by another scholar who has worked a great deal on ancient grammar and in particular on the theory, not only linguistic, of the Stoics: Frédérique Ildefonse, who proposes another point of view on the question of the two meanings associated with the concept of time. Ildefonse starts from a reinterpretation of the expression κατὰ πλάτος, contained in fragment 509 of the second volume of the *SVF*, according to which the phrase would not mean 'in a broad sense', but rather 'according to a certain extension' ('selon une certaine étendue'): this interpretation would make the two conceptions of time coherent, without forcing them to be framed in two different spheres, such as the physical and the psychological, respectively, as was the case with the interpretation of Caujolle-Zaslawski. Instead, Ildefonse's reading would link the determinacy of the present to the extent of the ongoing process. It is worth quoting in its entirety the crucial passage from Ildefonse's text:

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11 With regard to the distinction between a full existence (ὑπάρχειν) attributable to the present and a derivative or weakened existence (ὑφεστάναι) attributable to the past and the future, see the two testimonies attributed to Chrysippus: *SVF* 2.509 and 518. On the meaning of the distinction between the two verbs, see Goldschmidt 1972.

> Françoise Caujolle-Zaslawski soulignait l'inexistence physique du présent stoïcien, sa seule consistance comme réalité psychologique. Je soutiendrai pour ma part que les Stoïciens déterminent le présent par référence à l'action, selon une certaine étendue, qui est précisément le procès en cours, considéré dans son extension, et qu'une telle détermination du présent est essentielle à leur éthique. Le temps est réinterprété comme temps du procès. Comme le dit Pierangelo Berrettoni (1989c, 162), dans la perspective stoïcienne, la description du temps coïncide avec celle de l'action, ou de la partie de l'action, qui y est incluse. Ou, comme il l'écrit dans un autre article (1989a, 52), le présent n'est pas envisagé comme un point, mais plutôt comme une extension dynamique entre les deux autres positions temporelles, le passé et le futur: c'est un présent de tension. Sous les divisions du temps apparaît donc la nécessité stoïcienne de remonter à l'acte qui les détermine.

In line with this interpretation it must be emphasised that the verb ὑπάρχειν belongs to the philosophical tradition. In Aristotle it chiefly indicates the inherence of a predicate in a subject. For the Stoics, instead, ὑπάρχειν describes the presence of an event, the actuality of a situation deriving from a cause or process. Ultimately, it describes an activity (Hadot 1969). A predicate exists "according to a certain extension" when it derives from the actualisation of the action attributed to a subject, on which the action in question is predicated. For example, as argued by Chrysippus (*SVF* 2.509), walking (περιπατεῖν) only exists for me when I am walking (ὅτε περιπατῶ); when I am sitting or lying down, it does not exist. We should not forget that, according to the Stoic school, the predicate is an incomplete λεκτόν and ranks among the incorporeals (ἀσώματα).

4 Grammatical time

From a strictly grammatical perspective, the present is not only granted some form of existence, but even acquires a privileged position, which makes it the tense *par excellence*, the one which, in a way, is intrinsic to every verb (Berrettoni 1989, 54; Benveniste 1965/1974; Manetti 2018; see also Manetti 2017). Grammatical time is thus theoretically framed in different terms from philosophical time. Dionysius Thrax's definition of the tenses is rather meagre:

> The tenses are three in number – present, past and future. *Of these* the past tense contains four varieties – imperfect, perfect, pluperfect, and aorist. There are three relationships (συγγένειαι) between these tenses, namely between present and imperfect, perfect and pluperfect, and aorist and future.[12] (*Techne*, 13.8).

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12 Translation by Alan Kemp 1986, 355. See the commentary on this passage in Lallot 2000, 291 ff.

As we can see, time undergoes a division into three categories: ἐνεστώς (present); παρεληλυθώς (past), and μέλλων (future). While the present and the future cannot be further subdivided on account of the fact that the actions which take place in the times they refer to are uncertain, the past can be subdivided into four categories: παρατατικός (imperfect); παρακείμενος (perfect); ὑπερσυντέλικος (pluperfect); and ἀόριστος (aorist). The criterion for their subdivision is their distance from the present: the perfect is the closest to the present, the imperfect more distant, and the pluperfect the most distant. Unlike the first three categories, the aorist does not in itself indicate any distance from the present, although it can do so when it occurs in conjunction with an adverb like ἄρτι or πάλαι (*G.G.* 1.3.249.19 – 23).[13] Up to this point, Dionysius does not add any aspectual determinations, but only provides temporal ones related to these tenses' distances from the moment in which action occurs. The aspectual dimension only becomes significant in the *Techne* when Dionysius outlines the relationships between the six tenses under consideration (*Techne*, 13, 8).

Building upon Dionysius Thrax's subdivision of tenses and his reference to their affinities (συγγένειαι), Stephanus sets out to transpose Dionysius' terms according to a terminology and conceptualisation which he attributes to the Stoics, and which has been interpreted as being organised on an the basis of aspect. Here is a translation of the most important passage from the famous scholium (*G.G.* 1.3.250.26 – 251.25):

> The Stoics define the "present" (ἐνεστώς) as "imperfective (non-completed) present" (ἐνεστὼς παρατατικός[14]), as it extends both towards the past and towards the future: for he who says "I am doing" (ποιῶ) shows that he has done (ἐποίησε) something and that he will do (something).
>
> The "imperfect" (παρατατικός) they define as "imperfective past" (παρῳχημένος παρατατικός): for he who says "I was doing" (ἐποίουν) shows that he has done (ἐποίησε) the major part but has not yet completed it, and that he will do so in a short time; for, if this minor part is also done, this will make a complete past (τέλειον παρῳχηκότα): the form "I have written" (γέγραφα), which is called "perfect" (παρακείμενος) because the completion of the activity is recent.

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13 This raises the question of the "derivative system" of tenses, which is extensively discussed by Mársico 2003, 64 ff. See also Versteegh 1980, 341 and – from a different perspective – Ildefonse 2000a, 307 ff.

14 The term in the scholium comes to be part of the oppositional pair παρατατικός vs. συντελικός / τέλειος. Since the second term is normally translated as 'completed,' the first has often been translated as 'non-completed.' However, alternative translations have also been recorded, such as 'durative' or, more recently, 'extensive' (see especially Caujolle-Zaslawisky 1985 and Lallot 1985). The whole pair has also been translated as 'imperfective' vs. 'perfective' (see Colaclides 1969), a translation which has the merit of being perfectly aspectual. See Berrettoni 1989a, 36.

The present and the imperfect, insofar as they are both non-completed (ἀτελεῖς), are akin (συγγενεῖς); hence, they also make use of concordant verbal forms such as "I am striking" (τύπτω) and "I was striking" (ἔτυπτον).

The "perfect" (παρακείμενος) is called "perfective (completed) present" (ἐνεστὼς συντελικός), whose past (παρῳχημένος) [is called] "pluperfect" (ὑπερσυντέλικος); so as each (of these) is a past (παρῴχηται) in a completed form (τελείως), they appear to make use of the same defining letters, as in "I have struck" (τέτυφα) and "I had struck" (ἐτετύφειν); and just as, compared to "I am doing," "I was doing" has a greater quantity of past, so "I had done" (has a greater quantity of past) compared to "I have done."

The aorist (ἀόριστος) is akin to the "future" (μέλλοντι) on account of its indeterminacy (κατὰ τὴν ἀοριστίαν); for as in the case of the form "I will do" (ποιήσω) the quantity of future is indefinite (ἀόριστον), so in the case of the form "I did" (ἐποίησα) the quantity of past (is indefinite). If we add the adverb "just now" (ἄρτι) to the aorist, it becomes "perfect" (παρακείμενος), as in the case of "I did (something) just now" (ἐποίησα ἄρτι), which becomes "I have done" (πεποίηκα); if we add the adverb "a long time ago" (πάλαι), it becomes pluperfect (ὑπερσυντέλικος), as in the form "I did (something) a long time ago" (ἐποίησα πάλαι), which becomes "I had done" (ἐπεποιήκειν). But this "a long time ago" is itself indefinite, and it is necessary to add a specification of quality: "two, five, ten years ago, etc." In the case of the "future" (μέλλων), the clarification of the quantity of future is given in the "future perfect" of Attic: "will have been soon eaten, soon found, soon done."

The "aorist" (ἀόριστος) has been called such by contrast to the "perfect" (παρακείμενος) and "pluperfect" (ὑπερσυντέλικος), which define a segment of time, the first by entailing the unexpressed notion of "a short time ago," the other – the pluperfect (ὑπερσυντέλικος) – "a long time ago."

And if one were to wonder why the "future," which entails the indeterminacy of the future, is not called "indefinite future," he should know that the answer is readily to be found. The "aorist" has been given a name that marks the erasing of determinations, whereas about the future, qua future, nothing is posited: why should what is not posited be erased through indeterminacy?[15]

For Lallot (1985, 72), according to Stephanus' scholium, the Stoics developed a classification for the four tenses (present, imperfect, perfect, and pluperfect) whereby each verbal form is characterised by a temporal trait (present "ἐνεστώς" vs. past "παρῳχημένος") and an aspectual one (non-completed "παρατατικός" vs. completed "συντελικός");[16] this classification is schematically illustrated in the following table:

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15 As Ildefonse 2000, 312 ff.; 1997, 222 shows, Stephanus's testimony is for the most part confirmed by that of another scholiast, Charax (*G.G.* 4.2.413.30 – 415.17), who does not mention the Stoics, but proposes a division of the time on the one hand according to completeness and incompleteness, on the other according to determination and indeterminacy.

16 The issue of an inextricable intertwining of tense and aspect in verbal forms is also raised by Claudia Mársico 2003, 45, n. 5: "En cuanto al aspecto, los escuetos testimonios dan cuenta de la aplicación de una categoría que podemos llamar aspectual, pero esta no está aislada y parece estar ínsita en la noción misma de tiempo." Lallot 2000, 293 also underlines, with re-

Table 1: Tense and aspects in Stephanus' scholium

ASPECT TENSE	non-completed (παρατατικός)	Completed (συντελικός)
Present (ἐνεστώς)	Present	Perfect
Past (παρῳχημένος)	Imperfect	Pluperfect

This table can be expanded by taking into consideration, for each tense mentioned in Dionysius Thrax's *Techne*, (i) the Stoic definition to which Stephanus' scholium refers, (ii) the completeness or incompleteness of the action described, and (iii) the temporal distance with respect to the present:

Table 2: Tense and aspects in Stephanus' scholium and Dionyius Thrax

Denomination provided in Dionysius Thrax's *Techne*	Stoic definition according to Stephanus' scholium	Completeness of the action	Definition of distance with respect to the present
"present" (ἐνεστώς)	"imperfective (non-completed) present" (ἐνεστὼς παρατατικός)	incomplete (ἀτελής)	
"imperfect" (παρατατικός)	"imperfective (non-completed) past" (παρῳχημένος παρατατικός)	incomplete (ἀτελής)	
"perfect" (παρακείμενος)	"perfective (completed) present" (ἐνεστὼς συντελικός)	complete (τέλειος)	definite (ὡρισμένος)
"pluperfect" (ὑπερσυντέλικος)	"perfective (completed) past" (παρῳχημένος συντελικός)	complete (τέλειος)	definite (ὡρισμένος)
"future" (μέλλων)	"indefinite future" ἀόριστος μέλλων		indefinite (ἀόριστος)
"aorist" (ἀόριστος)	"indefinite past" ἀόριστος παρῳχημένος	complete (τέλειος)	indefinite (ἀόριστος)

gard to the Stoic theory of time, a close interrelation of the category of time and that of aspect: "Les grammairiens héritaient ici d'une tradition prégrammaticale (ou protogrammaticale?), notamment stoïcienne, qui avait mis en évidence, dans le signifié des différents 'temps' du verbe, une étroite imbrication du temporel (avant *vs* après, proche *vs* lointain) et de l'aspectuel (accompli *vs* inaccompli, extensif *vs* perfectif)."

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Stephanus' commentary assigns considerable importance to the concept of "present:" the Stoic term for the tense corresponding to this concept, namely ἐνεστώς, constitutes a linguistic innovation compared to the term commonly used, namely παρών, which represents the present as *presence*[17] and stability. This word change reflects the change in the conception of time which occurred between the Classical and the Hellenistic Age: the objective notion of time expressed by the term παρών was replaced by a different notion, expressed by the term ἐνεστώς, which was then transmitted to Roman culture.

A linguistic analysis of this term shows that it is the perfect participle of ἐνίστημι, meaning 'to begin.' Hence the meaning of the linguistic form χρόνος ἐνεστώς would be time "which exists insofar as it has begun."[18] This interpretation is confirmed by the scholiast's commentary on Dionysius Thrax (*G.G.* 1.3.404.1), who states that the present is called ἐνεστώς "based on the fact that it has begun and is present" (ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνεστηκέναι καὶ παρεῖναι). The Romans accurately translated ἐνεστώς as *in-stans*, i.e., "the time which has begun and, as such, hangs over us" – a translation which conveys not only the morphology but also the overall meaning of the composite form *impendere.*

As Berrettoni (1989a, 58–59) notes, the present is seen, in a dynamic and non-static way, as "that portion of time that exists, 'impends' now (νῦν) inasmuch as it started before." The fact that it is described using a perfect form shows that the present is seen as "a portion of time that retrospectively connects the νῦν to an anteriority in which the beginning of this portion is located; at the same time, however, inasmuch as *quod inchoatum est non est perfectum*, this portion is prospectively stretched out towards the future."

Moreover, the present, as conceived by the Stoics, cannot be represented as a point (which is instead what the English term *instant* implies). According to the Stoic theory of time, "part of the present time (ἐνεστηκότος) is future (μέλλων) and the other past (παρεληλυθός)" (*SVF* 2.517).

Priscian develops his definition of "present" along the same lines:

> Praesens tempus hoc solemus dicere, quod contineat et coniungat quasi puncto aliquo iuncturam praeteriti temporis et futuri nulla intercisione interveniente [....], ut si in medio verso dicam "scribo versum" priore eius parte scripta, cui adhuc deest extrema pars, praesenti utor verbo dicendo "scribo versum," sed imperfectum est, quod deest adhuc versui quod scribatur. (Prisc. *Inst.* 8.414–415)[19]

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17 See Lohman 1953, 181; Berrettoni 1989a, 56; 1989b, 266.

18 See Berrettoni 1989b, 272.

19 "We usually call present the time that contains and unites as in a point the conjunction of the past and the future, without any division intervening [...] as if in the middle of a verse I said 'I write a verse', when the first part of it has been written, but the last part is still missing; I use the

The two definitions of the "present" provided by Stephanus and Priscian seem largely consistent with what we know about the Stoic theory of time. Considering that – as we have seen – the linguistic form χρόνος ἐνεστώς means "existent inasmuch as it has begun," it is hardly surprising that Stephanus' commentary presented two forms of ἐνεστώς: ἐνεστὼς παρατατικός and ἐνεστὼς συντελικός. The former is what is translated (no doubt imprecisely) as "present." The latter refers to that part of the present which is such insofar as it is an extension into the presence of a process which began in the past and which has been brought to completion: from a morphological standpoint, it is the "perfect."

In the Stephanus passage quoted above, considerable importance is also assigned to a discussion of the relations of "kinship" (or "affinity") (συγγένειαι) between tenses. As Stephanus notes (*G.G.* 1.3.250.4–5), these relationships are established on the basis of both morphological and semantic criteria (κατὰ τὴν φωνὴν καὶ κατὰ τὸ σημαινόμενον).

The present and the imperfect are akin on account of the fact that they are both imperfective (non-completed or extensive, παρατατικοί); the difference between the two is that the present extends towards the future, whereas the imperfect extends towards the present (*G.G.* 1.3.250.5–14) and – as is noted later on (250.29–31) – also towards the future. This claim, namely that it extends not just towards the present but also "towards the future," has struck many scholars as paradoxical (Caujolle-Zaslawsky 1985, 21; Mársico 2003, 66). To illustrate this "paradoxical" phenomenon, Lallot (1985, 72), followed by Berrettoni (1989a, 59–60), provides a schematic representation in which the imperfect (παρῳχημένος παρατατικός), which Lallot calls "extensive," is described as a line which begins in the past and extends beyond the moment t_0 of the utterance:
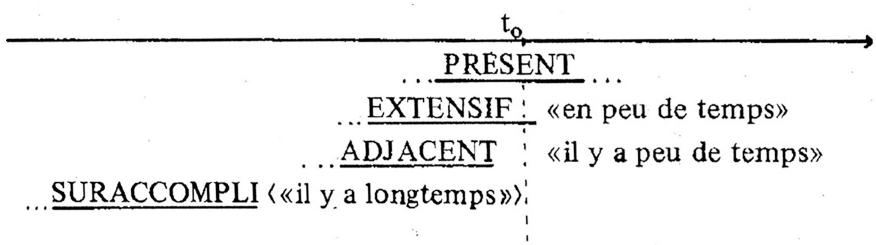

Figure 1

I would like to advance an interpretation that, if correct, would allow us to normalise the definition of the imperfect and bring it in line with the current one. To this end, we should regard the future of which Stephanus speaks (ἀλλὰ ποιήσει μὲν, ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ) not as "future" with respect to the moment of utterance – which is to say at a time which has not yet come to pass at the moment of speech – but rather as "prospective," to quote Benveniste (1959/1966, 239): as a time which is future in relation to the past moment of the event described and which hence remains anterior to the time t_0 of the utterance. One example would be the following sentence: "On the Ides of March in 44 BC, Caesar was going to the Senate, where, shortly afterwards, *he would be killed* by the conspirators." The verbal form "would be killed" is precisely a "prospective tense:" it identifies a time subsequent to the moment in which the past action described by the speaker is set. This action extends from the past to the moment of the enunciation, yet not beyond it. This is indeed the semantic definition of the "imperfect" in its usual sense, which may coincide with that of παρῳχημένος παρατατικός, if that future form (ποιήσει μὲν, ἐν ὀλίγῳ χρόνῳ) is interpreted as a "prospective" tense.[20]

Furthermore, the perfect and pluperfect are akin insofar as they are both completed (συντελικοί, τέλειοι), the only difference being that the perfect is used for actions which have occurred at a relatively short distance from the present, whereas the pluperfect is used for actions which occurred a long time ago (*G.G.* 1.3.249.16–18; 22–23).

Finally, the aorist and the future are akin because both are indefinite (ἀόριστοι) insofar as they do not indicate any temporal distance from the present.

5 Reconstructions of the Stoic diairesis

On the basis of Stephanus' scholium, various attempts have been made to reconstruct the διαίρεσις (or τομή) by which the Stoics are believed to have organised their theory of tenses. We will consider some of the schematic representations that have been proposed, and which are essentially of two types: 1) the first type bases the division on a temporal category; 2) the second type bases the division on an aspectual category.

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20 This interpretation makes compatible the definition of the Greek imperfect with the aoristic uses frequent in the narrative texts. I thank Richard Faure for this suggestion.

5.1 Max Pohlenz's reconstruction

The first schematic representation in chronological terms was proposed by Pohlenz (1939, 177) and is – in the author's intention – entirely aspectual. Pohlenz argued that, in classifying tenses, the Stoics set out from aspectual distinctions and only subsequently sought to identify what time each verbal process was associated with. By including determinacy and indeterminacy among aspectual forms, Pohlenz has the division start with the distinction between determinate (ὡρισμένοι) and indeterminate tenses (ἀόριστοι). The former are further subdivided into imperfective (παρατατικοί) and perfective tenses (συντελικοί), each of which has a present (ἐνεστώς) and a past (παρῳχημένος), while the latter are subdivided into past (παρῳχημένος) and future (μέλλων). Here is the schematic representation proposed by Pohlenz:
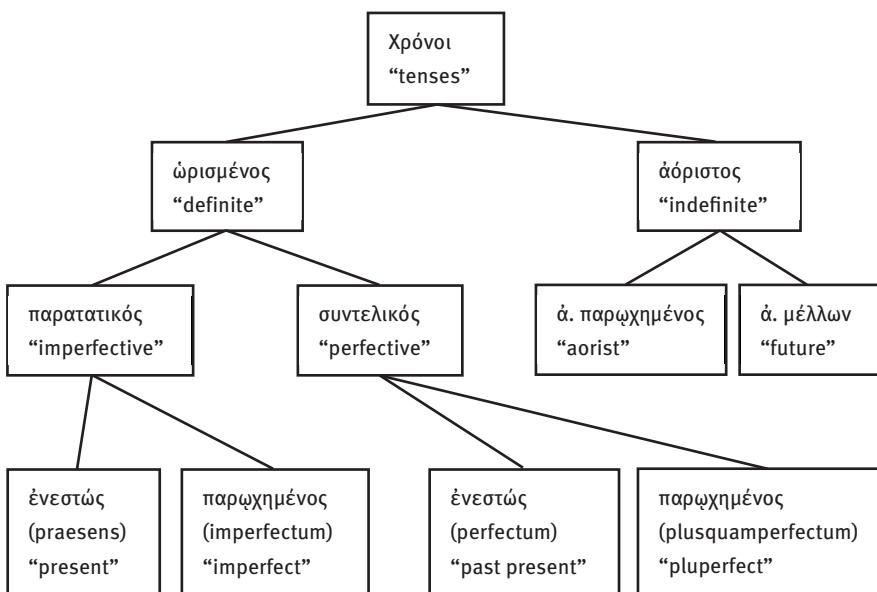
Figure 2: Pohlenz's reconstruction of Stoic *diairesis*

Pohlenz's schematic representation has been criticised from various angles. First of all, Mársico (2003, 49) has objected that the opposition between ὡρισμένος and ἀόριστος is not aspectual (as Pohlenz would have it), but temporal, given that what it is designed to emphasise is the determinacy or indeterminacy of the quantity of time in relation to the moment of enunciation. In this respect, the idea that the primary division lies in this opposition goes against Pohlenz's

own intention to credit the Stoics with developing the notion of aspect and to stress its importance.

Similarly, Berrettoni (1989a, 40–41) argues that Pohlenz's classification (διαίρεσις) of linguistic forms is not homogeneous, because after having established that the notions of ὡρισμένος and ἀόριστος on the one hand, and those of παρατατικός and συντελικός on the other, are aspectual (*Aktionsarten*) and not temporal (which, as we have seen, is false in the case of the first pair), and after having admitted that the notions of ἐνεστώς, παρῳχημένος, and μέλλων are *Zeitstufen* (levels of time), he divides the tenses first of all by aspect (into ὡρισμένοι and ἀόριστοι), thereby incongruously mixing tenses and aspects.

Finally, Versteegh (1980, 349–350) accuses Pohlenz of having failed to take account of the fact that παρατατικοί tenses are neutral with respect to the ὡρισμένος / ἀόριστος opposition insofar as they do not determine the temporal distance between the action and the present of enunciation. Moreover, it must also be emphasised that the ἀόριστος must be classified as a συντελικός tense, as is shown by the scholiast's note, according to which the name "aorist" is due to the fact that this verbal form does not define when the action *was* performed.

5.2 Barwick's reconstruction

The second schematic representation we will consider is that proposed by Barwick (1957, 51 ff.). Despite the fact that the author ranks among those who favour an aspectual interpretation of the Stoic classification of the tenses, the διαίρεσις representation he proposes starts from an essentially temporal subdivision between present, past, and future; each of these is then further subdivided according to aspectual variants related to duration (παρατατικός), perfectiveness (συντελικός), and definiteness (ἀόριστος). As in Pohlenz's case, it must be objected that the definiteness does not concern aspect, but tense.[21] Here is the scheme Barwick proposes:

5.3 Versteegh's reconstruction

The third form of διαίρεσις we will take into consideration is that of Versteegh (1980, 353), which presents itself as explicitly and entirely aspectual. Indeed,

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**21** See Márisco 2003, 48.
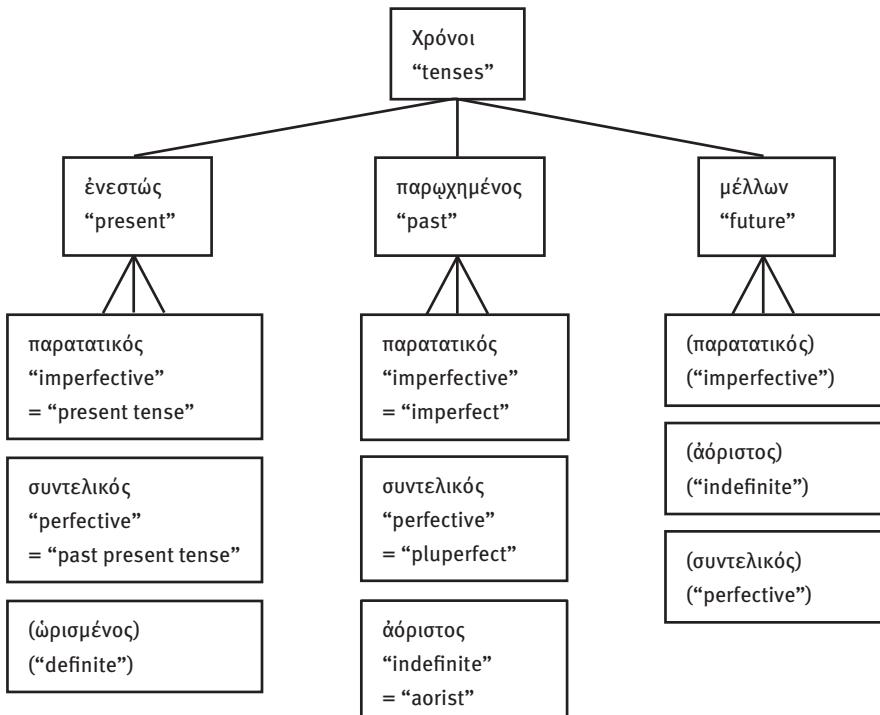
Figure 3: Barwick's reconstruction of Stoic *diairesis*

as the primary division the author proposes that between tenses with an imperfective aspect (παρατατικοί, *tempora infecta* according to Varro's[22] version) and tenses with a perfective aspect (συντελικοί, *tempora perfecta*). The former are subdivided into the present, imperfect, and future tenses, the latter into the perfect, pluperfect, and aorist tenses. Within this latter group, a further subdivision is made between definite (ὡρισμένοι) and indefinite (ἀόριστοι) tenses. The former include the perfect (ἐνεστὼς συντελικός) and pluperfect (παρῳχημένος συντελικός), which are characterised by the fact of expressing and defining the relative time distance between the action described and the present of enunciation. The latter group is represented only by the aorist, which is instead indeterminate in terms of the distance from the present (*ibidem*, 352), unless it is combined with an adverb of time. One problem with this schematic representation is that it separates the aorist from the future, which Stephanus' scholium (*G.G.* 1.3.251.9 ff.)

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22 Cf. Varro *Ling.* 9.54.

instead presents as "akin" insofar as they share the same "indeterminate" character. Here is Versteegh's schematic representation:

According to Versteegh (1980, 353), the data from Varro supports the thesis that the opposition between παρατατικός and συντελικός constituted the basis of the Stoics' verbal system. It was subsequent developments – represented by Apollonius Dyscolus, Dionysius' *Techne*, and the discussions of later Latin grammarians – that adapted what was an essentially aspectual division to a fundamentally temporal system.

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                          Χρόνοι
                          "tenses"

           παρατατικός                    συντελικός
           "imperfective"                 "perfective"

   ἐνεστώς      παρῳχημένος    μέλλων
   "present"    "past"         "future"           ὡρισμένος      ἀόριστος
   = "present   = "imperfect"  = "future          "definite"     "indefinite"
     tense"                      tense"                          = "aorist"

                                              ἐνεστώς         παρῳχημένος
                                              "presente       "past"
                                              = "past         = "pluperfect"
                                                present
                                                tense"
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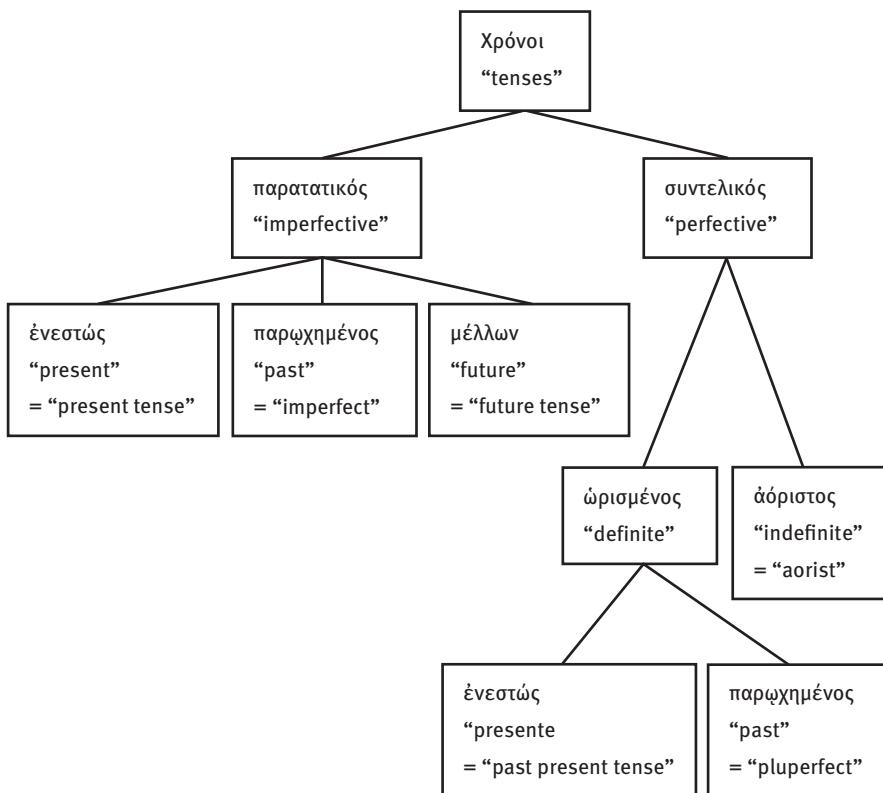
Figure 4: Versteegh's reconstruction of Stoic *diairesis*

5.4 Pierangelo Berrettoni's reconstruction

The fourth proposal of a *diairesis* we will take into consideration is that of Pierangiolo Berrettoni (1989b), who is a member – indeed, the leading representative

– of that group of authors who deny that the Stoics identified an aspectual category in their treatment of the tenses. Berrettoni also attempts to explain why such an interpretation of the Stoic theory of tenses emerged and he identifies two reasons (1989a, 35–36). The first is that the Stoics defined the perfect as a form of the present (ἐνεστώς), thereby establishing two different and specific forms of "present." As this seemed inconceivable, scholars were led to infer that the two forms of χρόνος ἐνεστώς must differ on account of some semantic content other than the strictly temporal one.

The second reason lies in the fact that in Stoic terminology, alongside somewhat traditional terms correctly associated with time, such as ἐνεστώς (present), παρῳχημένος (past), and μέλλων (future), we find terms such as παρατατικός and τέλειος / συντελικός: interpreting the latter as "completed," it seemed obvious and natural to interpret the other term as "non-completed" (see note 14). Therefore, scholars have argued that the Stoics, who considered both the present and the perfect to be present forms, distinguished the two from the point of view of aspect, by regarding the former as παρατατικός ("non-completed") and the latter as συντελικός ("completed").

Faced with these interpretations, Berrettoni (1989a, 39) raises the question as to why the Stoics, who made such careful use of terminology, continued to refer to (allegedly) aspectual determinations as χρόνοι (tenses). Naturally, one might think of some sort of compromise between the acknowledgement of a new phenomenon and the use of traditional terminology. It is also conceivable – Berrettoni argues – that the Stoics found themselves at that stage of scientific research in which, to quote Kuhn (1970, 55), one recognises "that something is" without being able to recognise "what it is" – the latter constituting the final stage of research. According to Berrettoni, however, the Stoics were fully aware that their notions concerned tense. Berrettoni (1989a, 59) thus reaches the following conclusion:

> (a) a careful, complete and at the same time natural reading of the scholiast's text and (b) a close examination of the terminology lead us to the conclusion that the Stoics did not single out a category other than tense, a recognition for which Greek linguistics totally lacked any premise, both cultural in the broad sense and paradigmatic in the disciplinary sense. Rather they intended to expound a theory of verb wholly within that which we would now define [as] the category of tense, a theory which, above all, was coherent with their theory of time.

If only in passing, Berrettoni (1989b, 258 ff.) too offers some remarks allowing us to develop a schematic representation of the tenses, which appears entirely temporal in nature. Its peculiarity lies in the fact that it arranges the three tenses according to a strictly binary division, by exploiting the concept of "contradivision"

(ἀντιδιαίρεσις) or "division by opposition." In such a way, the first distinction that is drawn is between past tenses and non-past tenses. The latter are subdivided into present and future, making the future the most remote tense with respect to the group of past tenses, and the present a neutral term:
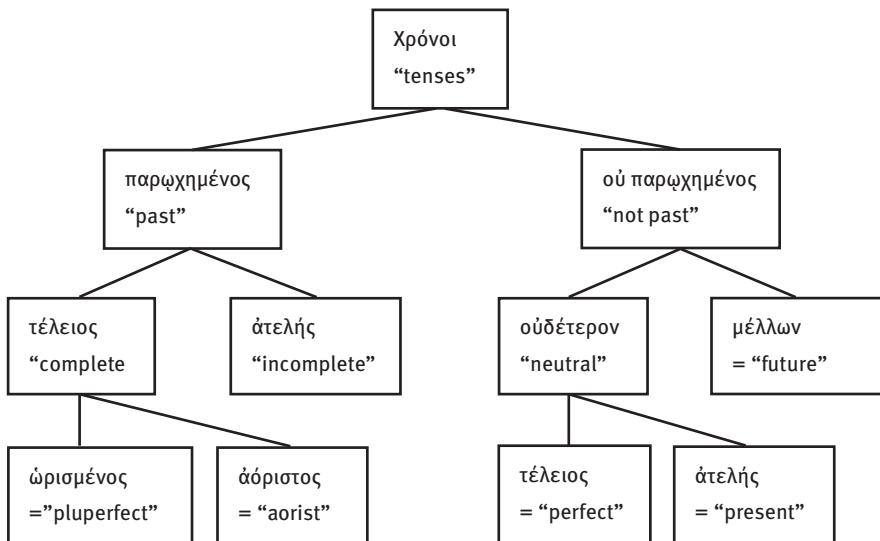

Figure 5: Berrettoni's reconstruction of Stoic *diairesis*

Not even Berrettoni's schematic representation is exempt from criticism. As Mársico (2003, 51–52) notes, it fails to explain why the temporal division of verb forms is followed by the τέλειος – ἀτελής distinction and the ὡρισμένος – ἀόριστος distinction, which do not appear consistent with the first. Secondly, no room is left for an analysis of the "affinities" (συγγένειαι) between them; thirdly, the perfect, which is a definite tense (ὡρισμένος), falls outside the framework of this distinction.

5.5 Claudia Mársico's reconstruction

Finally, we will consider the reconstruction provided by Claudia Mársico, which strongly emphasises the aspectual dimension of the Stoic classification, crucially noting that what we may describe as the aspectual category does not occur in isolation, but always in conjunction with the category of tense (see n. 16). This

scholar provides two highly innovative contributions to the theory of the Stoic classification of tenses.

The first is her reflection on the ways in which the Stoic διαίρεσις has been reconstructed in the various cases. Mársico (2003, 45) notes that traditional classifications have chiefly revolved around the opposition between tense and aspect, when in reality a more in-depth reading of Stephanus' scholium reveals that there are four categories we need to take into consideration, not two: 1) The category of tense, which manifests itself in the tripartite form of the opposition between "present" (ἐνεστώς), "past" (παρῳχημένος), and "future" (μέλλων). 2) The aspectual category, related to the opposition between "imperfective" ("extensive"), (παρατατικός) and "perfective" (συντελικός); 3) the category of determinacy, which opposes "definite" (ὡρισμένος) to "indefinite" (ἀόριστος), and concerns the temporal quantity (πόσον) which the various verbal forms presuppose. Mársico stresses that, although this category has sometimes been interpreted as an aspectual one,[23] it is not, given that Stephanus' text clearly states that the indeterminacy of the aorist and the future concern the quantity of past and present indicated by the respective tense and not its duration or perfection. 4) The category of affinities (συγγένειαι) between tenses. Mársico dwells on this specific point, emphasising its importance (Mársico 2003, 52ff.).

By viewing all four categories in relation to one another, what we get is a far more complex picture and one more faithful to the sources – particularly Stephanus' scholium. It must be stressed that in the schematic reconstruction proposed by Mársico (2003, 55), the first τομή has an aspectual character insofar as it draws an opposition between "imperfective" (παρατατικός) and "perfective" (συντελικός). Perfective tenses are subdivided in relation to the category of temporal determinacy. The determinate forms are the perfect, pluperfect, and Attic future (or future perfect, which in the schematic representation is presented as the "συντελικός ὡρισμένος μέλλων"). The indeterminate forms are the aorist and future, which from the point of view of their affinities (συγγένειαι) can turn into determinate forms: the aorist can turn into the perfect and pluperfect, the future into the future perfect. Here is Mársico's schematic representation:

The second contribution provided by Mársico's essay lies in her reinterpretation of the sources concerning the Stoic doctrine of time. This scholar focusses in particular on two testimonies, from Sextus Empiricus and Alexander of Aphrodisias respectively, which support an aspectual reading of the Stoic classification of tenses. Both testimonies raise the problem of the continuity and boundaries

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23 This is the case, for instance, with the reconstruction of Stoic diairesis provided by Barwik 1957, 51ff. and Pohlenz 1939, 177, as we have seen.
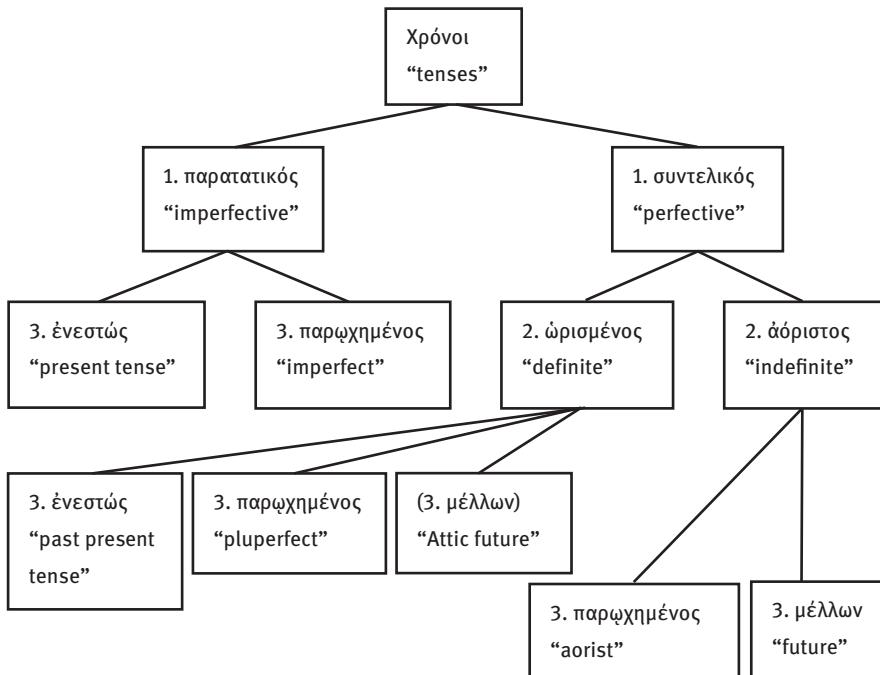
Figure 6: Mársico's reconstruction of Stoic *diairesis*

between tenses. More specifically, the Sextus Empiricus passage (*Math.* 10.91) presents within a philosophical framework the aspectual opposition we have found in the grammatical sphere. This passage occurs in the context of a debate between Diodorus Chronus and an unspecified group of "dogmatic" opponents – which Crivelli (1994, 490 – 491) identifies as Stoics. The debate concerns, first of all, the question of physical time and movement and, secondly, that of the value and truth of utterances. In this passage, the author draws a distinction between "perfective" (συντελεστικοί) and "imperfective" (παρατατικοί) utterances, adducing examples that are formulated, respectively, in the present for the latter type and in the perfect for the former. The importance of this passage lies in its emphasis on the fact that the aspectual opposition between "imperfective" and "perfective" was part of the general philosophical system before it was envisaged as a grammatical distinction.[24]

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24 On the convergence between the philosophical and the grammatical use of the term παράτασις, which indicated an aspectual dimension (the durative or extensive), see Hoffmann 1983, 2ff.

6 Conclusive remarks on the aspectual character of the Stoic theory of tenses

Notwithstanding the no doubt interesting and insightful observations made by Berrettoni, who rejects the idea that it is possible to identify an aspectual dimension in the Stoics' theory of tenses, some considerations can be advanced in support of this choice.

First of all, it may be noted that although the Stoics failed to produce an explicit system for Greek verb tenses from a fully aspectual perspective – for this only occurred in the 19th century, with the birth of comparative linguistics – it is undeniable that the notions of παρατατικός and συντελικός are aspectual ones and lie at the basis of the classification proposed by the Stoics. As we have seen, these are framed within a more broadly philosophical rather than strictly linguistic perspective. Moreover, as noted by Versteegh (1980, 353), the aspectual character of these notions is confirmed by the data from Varro, who was strongly influenced by the Stoic theory: in his work we find a system centred on the opposition between *infectum* and *perfectum* (*Ling.* 9.54).

Secondly, in his second article ("Further Remarks on the Stoic Theory of Tenses," 1989b), Berrettoni himself stresses how, when speaking of the present, what the Stoics had in mind was that specific meaning of the term which we would classify as the "progressive form" today,[25] i.e., a clearly aspectual form: something that would agree with what the Stoics categorise as παρατατικός and call ἐνεστώς.

Thirdly, the impression that the Stoics did not develop a category other than tense may also derive from a particular interpretation of Stephanus' scholium. As Lallot (1985, 74) clearly highlights (250, 26 ff.):

The author notes Proclus' definition of time as the "measure of the extension (παράτασις) of being."

25 See Berrettoni 1989b, 264–265: "It is certainly not by chance that, dealing with the present tense, the Stoics always referred to that Sonderbedeutung of this form which we would ascribe today to the 'progressive aspect': according to Stephanus' account 'he who says 'I am doing', manifests both that he did something and that he will do'. [...] What is sure is that their explicit treatments of the present tense have reference to its progressive function. As for the latter, it seems particularly apt to reconcile the language's imposition, we would like to say, of a form somehow referring to the present with the actual non existence of a present time." From a theoretical standpoint, all this is connected to the Stoics' original choice to replace the classic term for the present form, namely παρών, which implies immobility and fixity, with the newly coined word ἐνεστώς, which instead entails a dynamic and progressive dimension".

> J'énonce tout de suite ce qui me paraît le paradoxe majeur de ce texte: partant d'une ter-
> minologie typiquement aspecto-temporelle, qu'il n'a manifestement pas l'intention de ré-
> cuser, le scholiaste réussit, sans en avoir l'air et comme sans en avoir conscience, le tour
> de force d'en donner une interprétation purement temporelle.

Indeed, according to Lallot (*ibidem*, 73), in the scholium the four tenses are op-
posed in terms of "temporal gradation," meaning that they present quantitative-
ly different degrees of temporal distance between the end of the action and the
present time of speaking. This would make the aspectual traits redundant. Lallot
continues:

> Tout se passe comme si, malgré des intuitions (à nos yeux) bien orientées qui reconnaissent
> une réelle autonomie de l'aspectuel par rapport au temporel – chez les Stoïciens [...] – les
> grammairiens s'étaient enferrés dans une difficulté de description du système verbal grec,
> faute d'avoir disposé (ou su user) de l'outil conceptuel qui leur était indispensable pour la
> surmonter.

As Caujolle-Zaslawsky (1985, 37 and 45, n. 30) notes, the Stoics' point of reference
in their treatment of time – whether they ever sought to develop a science of
grammar or not – is their general metaphysical conception. This led them, on
the one hand, to develop grammatical and linguistic considerations and, on
the other, to reach conclusions that go in a very different direction from that
which has historically been pursued by the discipline of grammar. In order to
understand how things really are, it is necessary to abandon Pohlenz's idea
that the Stoics were influenced by the presence of the category of aspect in Se-
mitic languages, and that this led them to identify a similar phenomenon in
Greek. In this regard, it can be observed that even Aristotle had referred to the
aspectual value of the "perfect" and the "present" (*Metaph.* 1048b25 ff.) in
order to distinguish between actions which are "perfect" from the very instant
they are accomplished (as in the case of "seeing") and actions that take time
to be accomplished (as in the case of travelling from Athens to Thebes).

At the same time, the Stoics – especially Zeno, who had been Diodorus
Chronus' pupil – sought to find a way to connect the notions of time, action,
and movement in a different way from his master, by dissolving the latter's no-
tion of the indivisible instant into a physical present made up of past and future.

Judging from the reference provided in Stephanus' scholium, it is most likely
that the Stoics developed a grammatical theory, albeit a very different one from
what was to become the official grammar of verb tenses in Greek. As Frédérique
Ildefonse (2000, 301–302) argues:

> La théorie grammaticale [des Stoïciens] des temps ne pouvait pas ne pas entretenir un lien systématique fort à la logique toute entière, ainsi qu'avec la théorie physique et étique du temps. On notera que le même terme χρόνος désigne d'ailleurs le temps physique (time) et le temps grammatical (tense).

The Stoics' predominantly philosophical-metaphysical perspective made their theory largely unsuited to the traditional tripartite division into present, past, and future found in Greek tenses. Hence, they chose to focus not so much on the tenses, as on the more abstract values of "extension" and "completion," which are aspectual values.

Further proof of the Stoics' use of aspectual categories is provided, in Stephanus' testimony in the commentary on Dionysius Thrax, by the presence of two possible distributions of the tenses, which Stephanus strives to reconcile. On the one hand, we have a strictly temporal classification, whereby the past tenses (imperfect, perfect, aorist, and pluperfect) are grouped together and, at the same time, set in contrast to the present and future tenses (the future simple and "Attic" future). On the other hand, we have a second classificatory principle that divides the tenses not according to a chronological criterion, but to what we might describe as a fully aspectual one: "extension" and "completion." The analysis of the affinities between the various tenses (present – imperfect, perfect – pluperfect, aorist – future) conforms to this second principle and is accompanied by the explanation that the morphological affinities are due to more deep-seated causes; conversely, this suffices to reveal the genuinely Stoic origin of the analysis.

To conclude, we would like to mention the interesting considerations proposed by Frédérique Ildefonse (1997, 215 ff.; 2000, 307) regarding the role assigned to the concept of "determinacy" within the Stoic theory, also in connection with the classification of temporal forms. The scholar does not bother to take a clear position on whether this classification is organised on a temporal or an aspectual basis,[26] but she emphasises the fact that the Stoic interest, in the logical context, is to reach the maximum determination of a statement. From this point of view, a "contradivision" (ἀντιδιαίρεσις) procedure such as the one identified by Berrettoni (1989b, 258 ff.) as the typical Stoic procedure in the classification of temporal forms, would be functional in order to reach a maximal determination of the meanings of temporal forms. In fact, a first division according to completeness (perfection) and incompleteness (imperfectiveness) tends to define (in a specifically Stoic way) the traditional surface division

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26 Cf. Ildefonse (1997; 2015): "L'enjeu fondamental de la sous-division selon la complétude et l'incomplétude touche au caractère – aspectuel ou non – de la théorie stoïcienne des temps."

between past, present and future. What is determined with this division specifically concerns the process to which the temporal form refers, observing whether it is in progress (as in the case of the extensive present and the extensive past, which are ἀτελεῖς) or whether it is already completed (as in the case of the present perfect and pluperfect, which are τέλειοι) (Ildefonse 2000, 307 ff.).

In this case it seems to me that in any case a purely aspectual determinacy is at stake, which concerns in particular not the time, but the way in which the development of action is seen, even if the verbal form – as often happens in many languages (cf. Comrie 1976, 9) – merges the aspectual dimension with the temporal one.

In a second moment, the classification procedure that tends to the maximum definition is completed by taking into consideration the amount of time (the temporal πόσον) that separates the moment of enunciation from the moment in which the referenced process is placed: from one hand the temporal forms that determine this distance (such as in the case of the perfect and the pluperfect) and on the other the forms that leave indeterminate the temporal πόσον of this distance (as in the case of the aorist and the future) (Ildefonse 2000, 309 ff.; 1997, 219).

Furthermore, the logic of the maximum definition of the character of the action (or process) finally determines the need to find means to move from incompleteness to completeness and from indeterminacy to determinacy by means of temporal adverbs (as, for example, ἄρτι or πάλαι) or taking in consideration the problem of the amount of time that can be added (πρόσληψις) to a form to be completely determined (Ildefonse 2000, 307; 1997, 219).

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Susannah Ashton
Chance, relativity, and Empedocles' cycle(s) of time

Abstract: The recent publication of 12th century scholia that temporalize Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle has prompted a wave of new studies on the subject of time in Empedoclean thought. The scholia suggest various temporal quantifications for different phases of the cycle, thus implying that Love and Strife's interchange occurred according to a strict, pre-determined timetable. However, this paper argues that a cosmic timetable is conceptually incompatible with key features of Empedoclean cosmology and biology. This paper takes its cue from a suggestive testimony by Aëtius, which claims that the sun's passage temporally varies throughout the Cosmic Cycle. By considering the implications of this depiction of temporal relativity, as well as the impact of chance upon biological and cosmological process, I argue that Empedocles' depiction of time cannot be understood through the interchange of Love and Strife alone; it is also crucial to consider the fluctuating interactions of the four rhizomes. By exploring the rhizomes' impact upon time in cosmic and biological terms, I suggest how we might overcome the limitations of deterministic approaches and negotiate the discernible parallels between the temporality of the Cosmic Cycle and the multiple temporalities of mortal 'life cycles'.

> παυομένης γὰρ καὶ τῆς Φιλίας μετὰ τοὺς ξ′ χρόνους, οὐκ εὐθὺς ἤρξατο
> ποιεῖν ἀπόσπασιν τὸ Νεῖκος, ἀλλ᾽ ἠρέμει
>
> For Love also rests after the sixty time periods, and Strife did not bring about separation straightaway, but remained still.
> Arist. Physics (Schol. b ad b29, fol. 91r, l. 6)[1]

Since the definitive resurgence of the "Cosmic Cycle" interpretation of Empedocles' fragments in the 1960s, the question of time has become central to studies

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of his philosophy.[2] By postulating a cosmos that periodically interchanges between a state of total separation of the "rhizomes" (ῥιζώματα) under Strife and their total mixture under Love, Empedocles evidently paid meaningful attention to the way in which time unfolds on a cosmic scale.[3] Accordingly, scholars such as M.R. Wright have maintained that Empedocles demonstrates "a deliberate (and perhaps a pioneer) assertion that time is cyclical."[4] Yet with the publication of the 12th century Florentine scholia in 2001, scholarly interests have increasingly turned to validating another consequential claim: that the Cosmic Cycle and the stages of zoogony within it were quantified by Empedocles into specific units of time (χρόνοι).[5] This line of argument has been developed in particular by Oliver Primavesi, who has asserted that "the coming to be both of the *Sphairos* by Love and of "our world" by Strife occurs in accordance with a *timetable* of a fixed number of time units."[6]

Although complete texts of Empedocles were available in Byzantium around the time of the scholiast's inscriptions, concerns have been raised over the scholia, not least by their original editor Marwan Rashed who, until his 2014 publication, initially hesitated behind agnosticism regarding their authenticity.[7] After all, the scholiast does not directly quote Empedocles. Rather, they append

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2 The Cosmic Cycle has been interpreted in various ways (helpful summary in Graham 1988), but generally conveys the idea that supreme power over the cosmos is cyclically passed between two forces called Love and Strife, which influence interactions between the four components of the cosmos: earth, aether, water and fire. Love influences different components to mix together, whereas Strife influences these mixtures to separate, causing cosmological generation and change. Under Love's influence they eventually mix together into one perfect whole, called the Sphairos. Under Strife's influence they gradually separate into four distinct masses.

3 Earth, aether, water, and fire are described as ῥιζώματα in B6. I use the term "rhizome" as opposed to the more traditional "elements" or "roots" because it evokes Empedocles' depiction of a cosmos in constant transformation. As Macauley 2005, 285 explains, rhizomes "have no true beginning or end; instead, they are an overflowing middle that grows in all directions." Cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1987.

4 Wright 1981, 182. See Bollack 1965, 97 for a more thorough discussion of Empedocles' "cyclical" view of time. Claims that the ancient Greeks held a cyclical conception of time are common in scholarship, for example Eliade 1949; Cornford 1952, 168; Olney 1980, 229; Hübner 1985, 148–157; Harris 1988, 53; Vidal-Naquet 1998; Vamvacas 2009, 220; D'Angour 2011, 108, 116 ff.; Prier 2011, 133; Marincola 2012, 308; Rahman 2014, 21.

5 First published by Rashed in 2001, with supplementary material published in 2014. Five of these *scholia* (b, c, d, g, j) suggest that the Cycle accorded with numerically quantified time. See also Primavesi 2005; 2006; 2008; 2016 and Sedley 2005, 353–356; 2007, 67 ff.

6 Primavesi 2016, 12–13 (Primavesi's emphasis). Šćepanović 2012, 159 expresses a similar sentiment.

7 Rashed 2014, 341.

a series of otherwise unattested comments onto an *Aristotelean* text. Furthermore the scholia, which were written some 1,600 years after Empedocles composed his poetry, explain Empedocles' ideas with suspiciously Neoplatonic language.[8] Finally, and of particular significance to this paper, the usage of the "time units" proposed by the scholiast (i. e., ξ´ χρόνους; ρ´ χρόνους) postdate Empedocles by nearly a millennium.[9] In light of these difficulties, Rashed has acknowledged that Empedocles himself was unlikely to have given a rigorous explanation of the precise length of time which constitutes a "χρόνοι."[10] Yet this has not impeded attempts to quantify the Cosmic Cycle.

Primavesi has favoured an early suggestion made by Rashed, and proposes that a single "χρόνος" is equivalent to an αἰών, rendered as one century in the manner of a Latin *saeculum*.[11] Thus, according to Primavesi's most recent reconstruction, Love and Strife ensure that all of the rhizomes (earth, aether, water, and fire) remain as "single limbs" for "20 times" (2,000 years), form "chance combinations" for "30 times" (3,000 years) and uniformly coalesce into the Sphairos for "40 times" (4,000 years).[12] Sedley, on the other hand, has construed the cosmic timetable through the lens of the daemon's punishment for "thrice ten thousand" ὧραι in fragment B115 (τρίς μιν μυρίας ὥρας) and proposes that

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8 Particularly suspect are *scholia* a and f which mention "the intelligible" (διανοητός), see Rashed 2001 and Sedley 2007, 69 n.106. The evident Platonic influences on the scholiast are perhaps underemphasised in Primavesi's 2016 "tetractys" hypothesis. Although Empedocles is frequently linked with the Pythagorean tradition, particularly due to his doctrine of reincarnation, attempts to assimilate Pythagoreanism and Platonism were hallmarks of later Platonic traditions. If Primavesi's reconstruction is correct, it could equally be reasoned that the scholiast had demonstrable motivation to align Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle with Pythagorean numeration.
9 For example, χρόνοις ξ is first evidenced in the TLG by Theon of Alexandria in the 4th century AD (*Commentaria in Ptolemaei syntaxin mathematicam i-iv,* p. 930).
10 Rashed 2014, 339.
11 Rashed 2001, 258; Martin & Primavesi 1999, 192–193; Primavesi 2005, 256; 2006, 28. In addition to a lack of evidence that Empedocles construed an αἰών as 100 years, postulating αἰών as a Latin *saeculum* is particularly anachronistic since fifth century Greeks expressed different ideas about the maximum length of a human life (on *saeculum*, see Dunning, this volume). Herodotus reports that Solon (Hdt. 1.32.8–9) claimed the limit is set at seventy years (ἐς γὰρ ἑβδομήκοντα ἔτεα οὖρον τῆς ζόης ἀνθρώπῳ / προτίθημι) and also reports a variety of figures for the Egyptians (2.142.7), Persians and Ethiopians (3.22–23), which sit above and below a century.
12 After the Sphairos, Primavesi situates whole natured beings (3,000 years), reproductive beings (2,000 years) and separation into four masses (2 x 1,000 years). Since my discussion of time in this paper addresses issues which are pertinent for both double and single zoogony models of the Cosmic Cycle (see below n.35), I do not commit myself to either view here.

the whole Cosmic Cycle totals 1,200,000 years "from *sphairos* to *sphairos*."[13] The implications of such suggestions can be discerned in Primavesi's illustrations of the Cosmic Cycle, which more closely resemble a gargantuan cosmic clock; a neatly demarcated timetable in which the various stages of genesis and cosmic change occur according to fixed lengths of measured time.[14]

This paper will not be an attempt to throw another hat into the ring, filled to its brim with proposals of numbers and quantifications of χρόνοι. Nor will it categorically deny the significance of the scholia, along with any of the excellent work which has enabled us to better understand their meaning. Rather, the following discussion concerns the deterministic framework of time implied by a cosmic timetable, and whether this is conceptually compatible with Empedoclean thought.

The first half of this paper addresses this issue of temporal determinism. I will argue that a deterministic timetable is conceptually challenged by Empedocles' explicit rejection of uniform measurements of time, his insinuation that temporal passage is in fact relative, and finally by the significant impact of chance upon both cosmogony and zoogony. In the second half of this paper, I propose an alternative way of understanding Empedocles' depiction of time, by considering the oft noted parallel between cosmic and mortal lifecycles.[15] By exploring the complex processes that inform the length of mortal lifecycles,

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13 Sedley 2007, 68 – 69. There is, however, a significant difference between vaguely defining the span of time over which a single individual undergoes a series of reincarnations, and claiming that every single lifespan, event and occurrence in the whole cosmos must conform to a prescribed timeframe. It should also be cautioned that ὥρα has a notably flexible meaning, spanning seasons, years, days, or even the relative sense (like καιρός) of the "right time" to enact something. Since the following lines (B115.7– 12) detail Empedocles' "seasonal" journey between aether, the sea, the earth, and the sun, the seasonal implications of ὥρα were likely no accident. Although Sedley cautions against "any assumption that these 'times' are to be defined simply as some fixed measure of years understood in human terms," he nonetheless concludes that an "age" will "presumably also have a numerical value in years." Sedley cites Anaximander's precise figures for cosmic distances and Censorinus' (*DN* 18.11) much later report of Orpheus' figure for the Great Year (120,000 years) whereby the heavens return to their exact prior state. Yet it is not possible to verify whether this Great Year figure was even closely contemporary with Empedocles. Contra Primavesi, Sedley suggests that an αἰών denotes the duration of a complete round of the cycle. Despite modern English connotations of an eon, translating Empedocles' αἰών as "aeon" or an "age" is, however, anachronistic. Although this meaning begins to emerge in the fifth century, it is conveyed by χρόνος, not αἰών (see Šćepanović 2012, 178, 182 304). Αἰών always remains closely entwined with the sense of "lifetime," even when it develops the sense of "eternity" in Plato and Aristotle (see *Cael.* 279a22– 28).
14 Primavesi 2016, 24.
15 E.g. KRS 1983, 288; Palmer 2009, 266; 2016, 45 ff..

I will suggest that Empedocles encourages his audience to think about how cosmic time is, in turn, informed by mortal genesis and change. This, I will conclude, is epitomised by the significance afforded to the term αἰών in his fragments. Overall, I hope to demonstrate that the notion of a cosmic timetable obscures some of Empedocles' more intriguing ideas about the way in which time unfolds. By exploring these ideas and contemplating their ramifications, this paper will establish how the scholia have inadvertently triggered a significant philosophical problem. Namely, in a cosmology characterised by constant flux and change, is it even possible for its various stages to be neatly delineated into fixed spans of time?

1 The problem with a cosmic clock

When studies affix Empedoclean time to a gargantuan cosmic clock, it is as though "Time" (χρόνος) ultimately governs its figureheads: Love and Strife. With their individual dominance constrained to opposing sides of the clock face, the actions of Love and Strife must deterministically comply with this time frame, requiring that the diverse generative processes taking place among the rhizomes occur in absolute concert with Love and Strife's power.[16] With everything measured, change can uniformly adhere to a prescribed order.

Time is easily viewed in this way. We comprehend it ourselves through clocks and calendars; the rotations of the sun and the pathways of the stars. We grow up practicing experiments with time (t) providing a fixed Newtonian constant when we measure speed in classrooms. This desire for temporal certainty is frequently projected upon ancient cultures, for whom the question of time is often examined firmly through the lens of the celestial sphere. Interests often lie with how ancient cultures measured and calendarised time, as though early Greek comprehensions were so limited as to have their eyes fixed *solely* to the sky as opposed to the processes erupting around their feet and through their own bodies.

Ostensibly, this focus upon temporal measurement complies with Empedocles' reputation as an advocate of cyclical time. I previously quoted Wright's assertion that Empedocles made "a deliberate (and perhaps a pioneer) assertion

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16 I am exclusively interested in Empedocles' depiction of time during cosmological periods (i.e. not during the Sphairos). Specifically, the duration of cosmological periods and whether standard celestial measurements of time are appropriate for Empedoclean philosophy. Contra Bollack 1965, 132–133; 1969b, 156, 159–161, the following arguments should not be understood as a denial that time *passes* during the Sphairos' period of rest (on this see Sorabji 1983, 82).

that time is cyclical." In support of her statement, Wright quotes a line from Aristotle's *Physics* (223b32–33, transl. Wright), in which Aristotle states the following: "to say that things come into being form a circle is to say there is a cycle of time."[17] This entire passage from the *Physics* is worth quoting in full:

> Ἀλλοίωσις μὲν οὖν οὐδ᾽ αὔξησις οὐδὲ γένεσις οὐκ εἰσὶν ὁμαλεῖς, φορὰ δ᾽ ἐστίν. διὸ καὶ δοκεῖ ὁ χρόνος εἶναι ἡ τῆς σφαίρας κίνησις, ὅτι ταύτῃ μετροῦνται αἱ ἄλλαι κινήσεις καὶ ὁ χρόνος ταύτῃ τῇ κινήσει. διὰ δὲ τοῦτο καὶ τὸ εἰωθὸς λέγεσθαι συμβαίνει· φασὶ γὰρ κύκλον εἶναι τὰ ἀνθρώπινα πράγματα καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν κίνησιν ἐχόντων φυσικὴν καὶ γένεσιν καὶ φθοράν. τοῦτο δ᾽, ὅτι ταῦτα πάντα τῷ χρόνῳ κρίνεται, καὶ λαμβάνει τελευτὴν καὶ ἀρχὴν ὥσπερ ἂν εἰ κατά τινα περίοδον· καὶ γὰρ ὁ χρόνος αὐτὸς εἶναι δοκεῖ κύκλος τις. τοῦτο δὲ πάλιν δοκεῖ διότι τοιαύτης ἐστὶ φορᾶς μέτρον καὶ μετρεῖται αὐτὸς ὑπὸ τοιαύτης.

> Neither qualitative modification nor growth nor genesis has the kind of uniformity that rotation has: and so time is regarded as the rotation of the sphere, inasmuch as all other orders of motion are measured by it, and time itself is standardised by reference to it. And this is the reason of our habitual way of speaking; for we say that human affairs and those of all other things that have natural movement and become and perish seem to be in a way circular, because all these things come to pass in time and have their beginning and end as it were "periodically;" for time itself is conceived as "coming round;" and this again because time and such a standard rotation mutually determine each other.
> Arist. Ph. 223b22–32, transl. Wicksteed & Cornford

Wright's suggestion that Empedocles anticipates these ideas is understandable, considering Empedocles' own preoccupation with circling and "whirling" imagery (B26.1; B17.25; B17.29; B110.8), as well as the periodical recurrence of the total separation and mixture of the rhizomes.[18] Yet when it comes to combining cyclical time with fixed measurements and timetables, there is nonetheless a crucial distinction to be made.

To apply a timetable to Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle is to suggest that Empedocles did not merely conceive of time as a means of measuring the duration of events, but of determining them. This would require the entire process of cosmology to adhere to a similar uniformity as that of the rotation of the heavens. As indicated above, this could only be achieved if Love and Strife maintained absolute control over the temporal durations of the diverse generative processes taking place among the rhizomes. As advocates of the scholia have reasoned, this control is evidenced by the famous oath in B30, wherein Strife's actions accord with a fulfilling duration (τελειομένοιο χρόνοιο). It is this fragment which

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17 Also discussed by Sorabji 1983, 185. On Aristotle's understanding of time see Coope 2005, for his use of χρόνος see Annas 1975. Šćepanović 2012 reviews uses of χρόνος until Plato, who is seemingly the first to use χρόνος to refer specifically to celestial rotations.
18 Cf. Trépanier 2003, 407–408.

possibly inspired Aristotle's discussion upon which the scholiast's notes are appended and which appears to confirm that Love and Strife's control over cosmology was temporally determined.[19] However, as I will argue, this oath is not as indicative of a cosmic timetable as has been presumed.

2 The oath

Fragment B30 is often postulated as the strongest supporting evidence for the claim that the Cosmic Cycle occurred according to a fixed framework of time. Indeed, Primavesi refers to it as "the one extant reference to the cosmic timetable by Empedocles himself."[20] This understanding is motivated by the cosmic setting in which this fragment is typically framed, a point to which I return in the latter

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19 I do not address Aristotle's comment concerning "equal times" (δι' ἴσων χρόνων) (*Ph.* 252a31) in the main body of this paper for two reasons. Firstly, it is crucial to take account of the brevity of Aristotle's complaint and the surrounding context. This remark in the *Physics* comes after a lengthy digression about motion and time (251b11–29) (see Primavesi 2005, 246–253; 2006, 33–36 on the relation between Love and Strife with rest and motion). Aristotle asserts that time can only exist with motion, and states that "all orderly succession requires proportion (τάξις δὲ πᾶσα λόγος) (252a15)." When Aristotle moves on to discuss Empedocles, he claims that Empedocles postulated alternating cessation and recurrence of motion, thus giving us an "ordered succession" (τάξιν γὰρ ἤδη τιν' ἔχει τὸ τοιοῦτον) (252a23–24). Accordingly, when placed within Aristotle's framework of understanding about ordered succession, proportional motion, and time, Aristotle's complaint is hardly surprising. In addition to failing to supply a sufficient cause of Love and Strife's alternation, Empedocles also failed to give any account of how this alternation of motion was proportional for equal lengths of time. This is not conclusively a case of Empedocles failing to explain his own comment, but possibly a case of Empedocles failing to explain his cosmology to the satisfaction of Aristotle's rigid standards. Secondly, since Aristotle directly quotes B30 in *Metaph.* 1000b14–16, scholars often surmise that Aristotle's comment about "equal times" in *Physics* is inspired by B30 (e. g. O'Brien 1969, 80–85), yet there is no conclusive evidence to confirm this. In fact, I later propose that Aristotle's discussion in the *Metaphysics* indicates that B30 may not refer exclusively to the Cosmic Cycle, but also lifecycles, which would problematise suggestions that B30 inspired Aristotle's "equal times" comment in the first place. Indeed, difficulties are even flagged in the scholia, with Primavesi 2005, 254 describing the scholiast's interpretation of Aristotle's equal times as "unconvincing" since they "restrict the equality of the periods to their being multiples of ten."

20 Primavesi 2016, 25. See also Vlastos 1947, 161; Wright 1981, 191; Graham 2005, 362–363; Sedley 2005, 347. By contrast, see Bollack 1969b 159–160 who argues that τελειομένοιο χρόνοιο "ne désigne pas une certaine durée qui arriverait à son terme, la période attribuée à l'une des deux puissances, mais le temps en soi (...) le temps mesurable tout entier." I do not agree with Bollack that this moment constitutes "l'origine du temps," rather that τελειομένοιο χρόνοιο (like περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο) specifically designates the time which passes during the cosmological period.

half of this paper. Briefly, fragment B30 seemingly narrates the moment when Strife breaks into the Sphairos, and thus initiates another Cosmic Cycle. Accordingly, B30 describes what is often analogised as a "battleground" between Love and Strife. They are unable to occupy the same space and the Cosmic Cycle therefore unfolds as they successively advance and retreat.[21] Due to the description of an "oath" (ὅρκου) according to which Strife rushes upon its honours in a "fulfilling duration" (τελειομένοιο χρόνοιο), it has been suggested that this interaction is temporally conditioned, with the oath strictly allocating a predetermined time during which Love or Strife can enjoy supremacy over the other.[22] However, I would counter that the oath agreed between Love and Strife does not bind them to a strict remit of time. Rather, the emphasis of the oath rests upon the fact that they must interchange with one another:

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ μέγα Νεῖκος ἐνὶ μελέεσσιν ἐθρέφθη
ἐς τιμάς τ' ἀνόρουσε τελειομένοιο χρόνοιο
ὅς σφιν ἀμοιβαῖος πλατέος παρ' ἐλήλαται ὅρκου.

But when Strife had grown great in the limbs
it rushed upon its honours in the fulfilling duration,
which has been laid out for them in reciprocal alternation by broad oath
B30

Elsewhere in his fragments, Empedocles favours the modified Homeric phrase περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο (B17.29; B110.8). His substitution of τελειομένοιο here gestures towards the fact that Strife's possession of these honours must come to an end.[23] However, simply because this duration is "fulfilling" when Strife rushes upon its honours does not necessarily imply that this action was temporally determined. Rather, a switch in perspective could just as easily show that the duration fulfilled is an outcome of Strife's actions, not a cause. The oath need not specify a predetermined duration in which Love and Strife must complete their supremacy over the cosmos. Instead, it guarantees that they must respectively be allowed to act until the rhizomes have totally united, or thoroughly separated from one another. This is reinforced by the participial form of τελέω.

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21 As at B35.12. See Vlastos 1947, 257; Wright 1981, 207; Graham 1998, 307–8; Betegh 2016, 415–420. My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this note, who helpfully also gestures towards Hes. *Theog.* 746–752 on the interchange of Day and Night for comparison.
22 There has been a fair amount of confusion concerning how to construe what is in exchange here. E. g. Inwood 2001; Wright 1981. Primavesi 2005, 259 states that the "period of rule" is to be given and taken "in exchange." O'Brien 1969, 82, 275 (criticised by Primavesi ibid.) takes σφιν as governed by ἀμοιβαῖος, thus the honours of Strife are the object for exchange.
23 See below n.24.

Rather than a static objective to be fulfilled, Empedocles instead depicts a developing process of fulfilment.[24]

I will return to the question of why Empedocles arguably favoured a more flexible understanding of "fulfilling time" in due course. Before doing so, it is first crucial to contextualise the incompatibility of a cosmic timetable within the broader scheme of Empedoclean thought. With this, I turn to the celestial sphere. As the paradigm of measured time for Aristotle, and the basis of the 16,000 and 1,200,000 year long timetables which the scholiast has inspired, one might expect that the uniform rotations of the heavens would offer some inspiration for a thinker seeking to align his cosmology with a cosmic timetable. However, a curious testimony from Aëtius indicates that when it comes to Empedocles, commonplace assumptions about the nature of time do not suffice.

3 The slow moving sun

Ἐμπεδοκλῆς· ὅτε ἐγεννᾶτο τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος ἐκ τῆς γῆς, τοσαύτην γενέσθαι τῷ μήκει τοῦ χρόνου διὰ τὸ βραδυπορεῖν τὸν ἥλιον τὴν ἡμέραν, ὁπόση νῦν ἐστιν ἡ δεκάμηνος· προϊόντος δὲ τοῦ χρόνου τοσαύτην γενέσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν, ὁπόση νῦν ἐστιν ἡ ἑπτάμηνος· διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τὰ δεκάμηνα καὶ τὰ ἑπτάμηνα, τῆς φύσεως τοῦ κόσμου οὕτω μεμελετηκυίας, αὔξεσθαι ἐν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ †ᾗ τίθεται νυκτὶ† τὸ βρέφος.

Empedocles: when the race of human beings was born from the earth, the day lasted for as long a time as ten months last now because the sun moved slowly, but as time went on the day came to last as long as seven months do now. This is why both ten month embryos and seven month ones, since the nature of the world took care to arrange matters in this way, grow in a single day †in which† the embryo †is placed at night†.

A75, transl. Laks & Most

According to Aëtius' testimony, corroborated by Tzetzes (*Ex.* 42) and gestured towards by Proclus (B69), Empedocles claimed that when the human race was earthborn (ἐκ τῆς γῆς), the slow moving sun caused the day to last as long as ten months do now, and later as long as seven months after the sun had gathered speed.[25] At this time, an embryo would grow in the belly of the earth in a single day, having been placed there at night. It is because of this, it is alleged, that double bearing (διγόνους) women of Empedocles' generation are able to de-

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24 Thus capturing the essence of περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο/ περιπλομένοιο κύκλοιο in B17.29, B26.1, B110.8 (see Bollack 1969b, 159), themselves adaptations of the Homeric περιπλομένων ἐνιαυτῶν which emphasise the stagnancy of Odysseus' journey (*Od.* 1.16) or the Achaeans' campaign (*Il.* 2.295–296) as the years impassively continue rolling on.
25 As in Anaxagoras B9 and B12.

liver their children at both seven and ten months.[26] From a temporal perspective, this detail has profound implications.

Empedocles explicitly challenges the assumption that time can be consistently and therefore uniformly measured, by taking the standards against which it is universally quantified (celestial rotations) and claiming that these revolve at a changing pace throughout the Cosmic Cycle. The reason underlying the sun's change of speed is not indicated anywhere by Empedocles himself. O'Brien has formulated a solution according to which the movement of the sun varies depending upon the predominant influence of Love or Strife upon it. During increasing Strife, he suggests, its pace quickens, while under increasing Love it slows down.[27] However, it should also be noted that Tzetzes records a far less structured explanation, and asserts that the sun's slow pace is more generally due to "the irregularity and instability caused by the destruction" of the Sphairos (διὰ τὸ ἄτακτόν φησι τῆς φθορᾶς καὶ ἀστήρικτον) (*Ex.* 42.17–25). Irrespective of the cause, this stands in explicit contrast with the principle of cyclical time that Aristotle postulates in *Ph.* 223b22–32, according to which a standardised notion of time is possible precisely due to the constant uniformity of the heavenly rotations. Indeed, the sun's passage does not only speed up as the cosmos develops, thus being durationally equivalent to ten months for some mortals, and a day for others. Moreover, the sun itself does not always move, nor does it always "exist."

Everything in the Empedoclean cosmos derives from the mixture and separation of the four rhizomes: nothing permanently dwells in a particular arrangement. Although the sun is often depicted as one of the four rhizomes, as a cognate of fire (e.g., B71.2: (...) ὕδατος γαίης τε καὶ αἰθέρος ἠελίου τε), the entity itself does not always hang in the sky where we might expect it to. During the Sphairos, the sun, along with everything else in the cosmos including the earth's "shaggy body," have not yet been separated into their recognisable forms (ἔνθ' οὔτ' Ἠελίοιο δεδίσκεται ἀγλαὸν εἶδος / οὐδὲ μὲν οὐδ' αἴης λάσιον δέμας οὐδὲ θάλασσα) (Plut. *De fac.* 926e).[28] Even as Strife begins to break more entities loose from their mixture, another passage from Aëtius informs us that when the first living beings began to erupt from the ground in the form of trees, the moving sun had yet to be distinguished (A70). Due to the fundamental flux of Empedoclean cosmology, the very celestial bodies through which time is measured as standard are also participant in a process of being mixed together and

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26 Empedocles' discussion references an ancient medical debate concerning the "unviability" of seven or eight month foetuses, see Hanson 1987.

27 O'Brien 1969, 46–53. See also Bollack 1965, 187; Ferella 2019, 82.

28 Cf. B27 and Simpl. *In Phys.* 1183.30–1184.18.

torn apart. Accordingly, these strange but revealing details provided by Aëtius preserve the comprehensive approach of Empedocles, who was clearly contemplating the temporal consequences of his unique cosmological ideas.

Denis O'Brien has dismissed Aëtius' testimony as an issue, claiming that "the point of [Aëtius'] passages is not (...) that time (...) goes faster or slower, which would raise considerable difficulties. The sun changes its speed against a standard of time (the equivalent of a present 'day') which is constant."[29] Yet O'Brien fails to recognise what is at stake in this. Certainly, Aëtius' testimony does not imply that time itself "goes faster or slower." This is clear from the fact that the growth of mortal embryos do not always align with the movement of the sun. If "time," that is, an abstract durative force which affects all things equally, was moving faster or slower, then mortal growth would also move faster or slower, and there would, accordingly, be no perceptible change. Mortals would still take a single day to grow, and there would be no discrepancy between the passage of the sun and the standard day long growth of embryos. However, the implications are far more consequential than this. The duration of the growth of a human embryo may not change at whichever point of the Cycle it occurs – whether the passage of the sun has slowed down to ten months, or sped up to seven. However, *relative to the growth of the embryo*, the duration of a contingent event (say, the rising and setting of the sun) does indeed go faster or slower. Empedocles is peering through the lens of relativity, and this suggests a far more nuanced depiction of time and temporality than a cosmic timetable could possibly convey.

With the introduction of the slow moving sun, the duration of a year – or any fixed measure of time – dilates and contracts as the Cosmic Cycle unfolds, complicating any claim that Empedocles' Cycle was affixed to a framework of 16,000 or 1,200,000 years. Indeed, using years to temporally determine the interchange of Love and Strife is inherently problematised by the fact that solar years do not always exist, are not consistent, and, according to Tzetzes, vary in duration precisely *because of* the instability and irregularity initiated by Love and Strife's contest. Although one could certainly suggest that Empedocles claimed that the Cycle took place over the durational equivalent of 16,000 or 1,200,000 years, as "we" would measure them, the testimony of Aëtius nonetheless raises a crucial, and underdiscussed aspect of Empedoclean time. In a cosmos tangled in a perennial flux, where spatial entities are constantly changing in mixture to form birds, bushes and badly behaved gods (B117) – why do we, as modern read-

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29 O'Brien 1969, 48 n.1.

ers of these fluctuating processes, expect time to be expressed in a fixed and absolute way?

The constant flux and change of Empedoclean cosmology has significant ramifications for propositions that it adheres to a cosmic timetable. For Empedocles' cosmology to be temporally determinate, the complex changes which the cosmos undergoes would have to unfold in a fixed and predetermined way. As I have stated, this would be hypothetically ensured by the influence of Love and Strife over how the rhizomes interact.[30] Indeed, if Love and Strife possessed unequivocal control over the ways in which the rhizomes mix together or separate, they could presumably ensure that all of the necessary changes to render the total mixture or separation of the cosmos took place in the span of time allegedly allotted to them. However, such a tidy, and indeed mechanistic, reconstruction of this cosmology is catastrophically thwarted by the rogue interactions of the four rhizomes. Empedocles does not describe the rhizomes as behaving in a uniform way, nor does he present them as being under the deterministic sway of Love and Strife. Rather, the rhizomes' behaviour is often put down to the most unpredictable force possible – chance.

4 Chance and time

Chance has proved a confounding feature of Empedoclean cosmology for both ancient and modern readers. Aristotle, loyal to his own teleological inclinations, found chance particularly difficult to justify as a cosmological force, especially since Empedocles did not only apply it to the formation of organic beings, but also to the motions of cosmic masses (*Ph.* 198b; *Gen. corr.* 333b-334a). Although modern scholars will typically feature "chance combinations" as a stage of zoogony in reconstructions of the Cosmic Cycle, the impact of chance's intrusion are rarely explored, particularly with regards to fixed frameworks of time.[31]

Chance occurs in diverse ways in the fragments, but predominantly it is used to describe interactions between the rhizomes.[32] In B53, the movements of the

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30 Although B73 and B75 imply Love acting as a "craftsman" (see Trépanier 2019, 295; Bollack, 1965, 114; O'Brien 1969, 214) this need not extend beyond Love's agency in drawing these different elements together into mixture.

31 Two significant exceptions who recently explored the implications of chance (though not from the perspective of time) are Gregory 2007, 88–93; 2013, 170–172 and Trépanier 2003; 2017. See also Guthrie 1962, 159–164 on chance in Empedocles and its reception by later commentators.

32 Simpl. *In Phys.* 330.31–331.16.

aether are described thus: "it *happened to* be running in this way at that time, but often otherwise (οὕτω γὰρ συνέκυρσε θέων τοτέ, πολλάκι δ' ἄλλως)." B59 describes the mixture of rhizomes (here δαίμονες) deriving from the way each one chanced, resulting in the birth of many things, continuously (αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κατὰ μεῖζον ἐμίσγετο δαίμονι δαίμων, / ταῦτά τε συμπίπτεσκον, ὅπηι συνέκυρσεν ἔκαστα, / ἄλλα τε πρὸς τοῖς πολλὰ διηνεκῆ ἐξεγένοντο). In B104, Empedocles describes a process in which "the most narrow [rhizomes] happened to fall" together (καὶ καθ' ὅσον μὲν ἀραιότατα ξυνέκυρσε πεσόντα).[33] Finally in B98, Empedocles describes the mixture of blood, motivated by Cypris, as Chthon chances upon Hephaistos, rain, and aether: cognates of the four rhizomes (ἡ δὲ χθὼν τούτοισιν ἴση συνέκυρσε μάλιστα / Ἡφαίστωι τ' ὄμβρωι τε καὶ αἰθέρι παμφανόωντι, / Κύπριδος ὁρμισθεῖσα τελείοις ἐν λιμένεσσιν, / εἴτ' ὀλίγον μείζων εἴτε πλεόνεσσιν ἐλάσσων· / ἐκ τῶν αἷμά τε γέντο καὶ ἄλλης εἴδεα σαρκός.). These interactions, though guided by the influences of Love and Strife, occur in the way that they do according to the chance encounters (stressed by συγκῠρέω) which happen to occur as the rhizomes chaotically rush through one another (δι' ἀλλήλων) (B21.13–14; B26.3–4).[34]

It seems likely that chance is a particularly potent force at the outset of the cosmogonic process, with regularities increasingly emerging as time unfolds. This is indicated by Aristotle's claim that Empedocles formulated a proto "survival of the fittest" zoogony, as well as Aëtius' oft discussed description of the four stages of phylogenesis.[35] As Aristotle explains in the *Physics*, Empedocles urged that creatures "having been suitably formed by the operation of chance, survived (ταῦτα μὲν ἐσώθη ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου συστάντα ἐπιτηδείως) (198b30–31, transl. Wicksteed & Cornford)," thus accounting for the regular formation of diverse species in Empedocles' day.[36] Such operations also impact the development of

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33 This fragment possibly refers to mixtures that engender intelligence (B106), possibly explaining the rhizomes being described as "narrow (ἀραιός)," cf. B2.

34 Regardless of whether or not chance interactions occur only under increasing Love (per Wright 1981, 212; Dudley 2012, 143; Primavesi 2016, 24 etc.), the impact of chance upon *any stage of zoogony* in the Cycle still problematises claims that the stages of zoogony, and consequently the Cycle as a whole, can be specifically and predictably quantified.

35 Discussed principally with regards to proposed single or double zoogonies. See O'Brien 1969, 196 ff. for thorough summary of arguments prior to the lively debates in the 1960s on this matter; also Long 1994; Graham 1988; 2005, 424. See Sedley 2005; Rashed 2011; Palmer 2016 for more recent suggestions post publication of the Strasbourg Papyrus. Cf. Simpl. *In Phys.* 371.33–372.9.

36 Even within those successful species, Aristotle implies that chance still occasionally rears its head for unlucky individuals, specifying that unsuccessfully combined creatures "otherwise perished, *and still perish* (ἀπώλετο καὶ ἀπόλλυται) (198b31)."

advantageous characteristics in mortal beings, such as the shape of the spinal column, which derives from the accidental fracture of the spine due to the sharp movement of an embryo (Arist. *Part. an.* 640a19 – 22, cf. B97). This process is further detailed by Aëtius' testimony of phylogenesis (A72) which explains that the way in which the rhizomes interact develops over four stages, from the initial generations of plants and animals existing as distinct parts, to unsuitable (likely chance) combinations, to complete beings, and the final stage in which complete beings are able to reproduce.

The prominence of chance within the fragments has deterred the vast majority of scholars from asserting that Empedocles' philosophy betrays notions of ontological determinism or eternal recurrence, in the manner of the Stoics he would later inspire.[37] Each turn of the Cycle will unfold in a unique way, and the same individuals will not be perpetually born in the same place, at the same time, and bearing the same appearance. Yet although few scholars would go so far as to say that Empedocles' cosmos is ontologically determined, it is strange that the same caution is not observed when it comes to the question of time. Let us take the formation of "blood and flesh" as an example.

Blood and flesh are crucial for the survival of any vertebrate, yet as Empedocles makes clear in B98, their formation is a matter of chance. While it can be assumed that the rhizomes will eventually combine into the roughly equal mixture required for blood and flesh, the rate at which this occurs depends entirely upon a chance encounter. Thus every component of an organic being, from the blood of mammals to the leaves on a tree, derives from the rhizomes chancing their way into a successful mixture. Following this, as Empedocles' descriptions of "man prowed cattle" (B61.2) and "faces without necks" (B57.1) makes evocatively clear, these component parts must also find their way to successful combination with one another in order to form a more thoroughly mixed being, ultimately driving the cosmogonic process closer to the perfect mixture of the Sphairos. Although Love and Strife facilitate this by encouraging different rhizomes to mix or separate, the mixtures that they initially form and thus the time which unfolds before these mixtures become more regular, are unpredictable outcomes of chance.

The presence of chance in the fragments has, unsurprisingly, proved bothersome for some scholars keen to comprehend Empedocles' cosmology in a more

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37 See Sorabji 1983, 182–190 for fuller discussion, also Trépanier 2003. Notable exception in Barnes 1982, 379–380. Graham 1988, 305–306 discusses "eternal recurrence" in Empedocles, though seemingly not in the strict Stoic sense.

fixed and ordered way.[38] However, Empedoclean evidence, particularly when it inspires a general consensus among ancient doxographers, should not be disregarded simply because it does not align with what we might expect from a cosmology governed by ostensibly dominant forces such as Love and Strife. Chance encounters figure prominently in the fragments. Accordingly, the where and (crucially) *when* of zoogonic and cosmological development is postulated as being at least partially informed by happenstance interactions between the four rhizomes. Due to this, the case that all of the layered cosmological activities which take place in Empedocles' vision can fit into a defined span of 16,000 or 1,200,000 years becomes manifestly more difficult to justify. Since Love and Strife do not possess absolute control over the interactions between the rhizomes, this will inevitably mean that their paths to total mixture and separation will take different, and ultimately unpredictable, lengths of time.

At the beginning of this paper, I suggested that the Florentine scholia have conjured the image of a gargantuan cosmic clock; a neatly demarcated timetable in which the various stages of genesis and cosmic change occur according to fixed lengths of measured time. The microcosm is constrained by the macrocosm. Yet with chance impacting *when* certain cosmic and biological developments will occur, and the changing pace of the sun implying that cosmic time cannot be uniformly measured, the notion of a cosmic timetable, and indeed a temporally determined cosmology, is difficult to sustain. The crucial question which remains is how Empedocles actually did formulate the passage of time in his cosmology.

For the remainder of this paper, I will make the case that Empedocles' depiction of time during the cosmological periods iterates a more biological understanding of temporality. By this, I refer to the fact that the Cosmic Cycle is predicated upon the very same fundamental interactions which inform a mortal lifecycle: Love encourages different rhizomes to mix together, and Strife encourages them to separate. While the Cosmic Cycle is often depicted as a temporally determined interchange between Love and Strife, in the case of mortal lifecycles, the interchange between Love and Strife is neither temporally determined nor uniform. Instead, the length of a mortal life is predicated upon a far more com-

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38 E. g. Inwood 2001, 66 – 70; O'Brien 1969, 214. Bollack (esp. 1965, 52, 68 – 69, 72) is particularly dubious of haphazard chance and suggests that Aristotle misunderstood Empedocles, who actually meant to describe the "fortune" or "success" of beneficial mixtures. Yet this is difficult to square with a fragment like B53, which does not concern mixtures, beneficial or not, and additionally shows chance causing aether to run in two different ways. It should be noted that a haphazard understanding of Empedoclean chance is also suggested by Plato in *Laws* 889b1-c6.

plex web of interactions between Love, Strife, and the four rhizomes.[39] Arguably, this is even demonstrable in Aëtius' curious testimony about the slow moving sun. As I will propose, Empedocles appears to have directly attributed the lack of temporal uniformity in the earliest stage of a mortal life to the constant and historical flux of the surrounding cosmos.

5 Nocturnal saplings

Perhaps the most fascinating feature of Aëtius' testimony, and one which is yet to be thoroughly explored, is that the "standard of time" proposed is not the passage of the sun, but the embryonic growth of a human being. This growth always spans the duration of seven or ten months, regardless of whether the embryo is in the earth or in a womb, and irrespective of the cosmic preponderance of Love or Strife.[40] This passage demonstrates Empedocles' engagement with a popular topic of discussion in ancient medical circles, as he seeks to explain how some seven month babies are born alive (Tzetz. *Ex*. 42) and thus the lack of uniformity in the gestation of human beings.[41] Superficially, Empedocles' explanation for this phenomenon is rather arbitrary. It is not immediately apparent why foetuses which are born at seven or ten months should be able to survive simply because at some earlier time "the day lasted for as long a time as ten months last now" and later for seven months.[42] However, when read against another fragment, B62, I would suggest that Empedocles attempted to explain this through the unique processes of his cosmology:

> νῦν δ' ἄγ', ὅπως ἀνδρῶν τε πολυκλαύτων τε γυναικῶν
> ἐννυχίους ὄρπηκας ἀνήγαγε κρινόμενον πῦρ,
> τῶνδε κλύ'· οὐ γὰρ μῦθος ἀπόσκοπος οὐδ' ἀδαήμων.
> οὐλοφυεῖς μὲν πρῶτα τύποι χθονὸς ἐξανέτελλον,
> ἀμφοτέρων ὕδατός τε καὶ ἴδεος αἶσαν ἔχοντες
> τοὺς μὲν πῦρ ἀνέπεμπε θέλον πρὸς ὁμοῖον ἱκέσθαι,

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39 Indeed, how else could Empedocles explain the vast difference between the αἰών of (for example) a human and a bird? These coexist under the same cosmic preponderance of Love or Strife, yet the length of their lifetimes are incredibly varied.

40 See O'Brien 1969, 52–53; Bollack 1965, 187. It is generally assumed that Love is more preponderant when humans were earthborn and Strife when they reproduce.

41 See above n.26.

42 Bollack 1969b, 531–533 explains this through a complex scheme of numeration: "la gestation devient prisonnière des nombres." In what follows, I will argue that the explanation may be qualitative rather than quantitative.

οὔτε τί πω μελέων ἐρατὸν δέμας ἐμφαίνοντας
οὔτ᾽ ἐνοπὴν οἷόν τ᾽ ἐπιχώριον ἀνδράσι γυῖον.

Come then: how fire, separating off, drew upward the nocturnal saplings
Of much weeping men and women—
Hear this. For my tale is not aimless nor ignorant.
First, whole natured beings sprang up from the earth
Possessing a share of both, of water as of heat.
These fire sent upward, wishing to reach what was similar to it;
As yet they displayed neither the lovely framework of limbs
Nor the voice and the organ that is native to men.

B62, transl. Laks & Most (slightly amended)

As Ferella has recently outlined, B62 illustrates "fire's more general action in cosmological and zoogonic generation", which "raises many and diverse things out of the earth."[43] Thus the fire which has separated off (κρινόμενον πῦρ) in B62 is likely a reference to the sun, or at least an early iteration of it.[44] As an aggregate of fire, and influenced by Strife, the sun draws up the fire which resides in mortal bodies, seeking like for like, thus enabling them to be born.[45] Yet there remains some controversy regarding what kinds of mortal bodies B62 refers to.

Scholars disagree as to whether the ἐννυχίους ὄρπηκας of men and women in line two are the same as the "whole natured" beings in line four, and indeed whether the latter are humans, plants, or what Bollack describes as human prototypes, "assimilés à des végétaux."[46] As is often pointed out, Simplicius introduces B62 by claiming that Empedocles used the birth of whole natured beings to anticipate his description of the differentiation between male and female bodies, thus implying that there is some developmental connection between the two. As Ferella has inferred, this would position whole natured beings as "the direct ancestors of the current generation of men and women."[47] This is supported by the framing of B62, which will explain *how* human saplings were drawn up into existence, with οὔτε...πω in line seven indicating that the whole natured beings

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43 See Ferella 2019, 76–77, 82–83.

44 On the form of the sun at this stage see Wright 1981, 216; Long 2017, 7.

45 This process is also demonstrated in P. Strasb. Gr. Inv. 1665–6, *ens*. d10–14. See Ferella 2019, 84 n.45 and Trépanier 2019, 286 on role of Strife regarding fire.

46 Bollack 1969b, 429, 510. See also Graham 2010, 428–429; Ferella 2019, 80–83; Trépanier 2019, 285–286. My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for drawing my attention to this distinction.

47 Ferella 2019, 83 n.42. As Ferella also points out, whole natured beings result from a much later zoogonic development than plants and trees in Aëtius' phylogeny (A70, A72). This problematises the claim that whole natured beings "must be plants," per Trépanier 2019, 285–286.

will develop human attributes. Accordingly, I agree with Bollack that Empedocles is here evoking vegetal human prototypes which, like plants, are yet to be differentiated into two sexes.[48] Yet there is also disagreement concerning the identity of the ἐννυχίους ὄρπηκας, with Trépanier recently asserting that "it is probably better to understand the 'benighted shoots' as plants."[49]

Trépanier comes to this conclusion by following a number of other scholars, including O'Brien and Wright, in positioning B62 against another testimony from Aëtius, mentioned briefly above:[50]

> Ἐμπεδοκλῆς πρῶτα τὰ δένδρα τῶν ζῴων ἐκ γῆς ἀναδῦναί φησι πρὶν τὸν ἥλιον περιαπλω-θῆναι καὶ πρὶν ἡμέραν καὶ νύκτα διακριθῆναι

> Empedocles says that trees were the first living beings to rise up out of the earth, before the sun began its circular movement and before the day and night were separated

> A70, transl. Laks & Most

Wright and Trépanier connect these fragments by claiming that ἐννυχίους ὄρπη-κας must refer to this time before night and day are distinguished. I begin with two general objections. Firstly, if this took place before night and day were distinguished, why would Empedocles define these human embryos with an epithet which exclusively depicts the night? Indeed, in A70 Aëtius does not state that some iteration of the sun (i.e., celestial fire) does not yet exist, only that it has not yet "spread around (πρὶν τὸν ἥλιον περιαπλωθῆναι)." This may refer to the celestial fire having not yet "concentrated (ἀλισθεὶς)" into the body of the sun (see B41), or more broadly to the idea that the sun had not yet begun travelling around the cosmos.[51] Yet considering Empedocles' consistent claim that growth is initially the result of celestial fire drawing up chthonic beings from the earth, the most intuitive way of understanding A70 is that the sun (or some iteration of celestial fire), is constantly present at this point, thus seriously problematising the conclusion that ἐννυχίους is a suitable epithet.[52] Secondly, Aëtius specifically states here that *trees* rose up before night and day were separated, whereas B62.1–2 and A75 specifically refer to *human* embryos or "saplings," which we know came into being later than plants (A70). Although

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48 See A70 on bisexuality of plants. See O'Brien 1969, 206–207; Ferella 2019, 83; Trépanier 2019, 285. On botanical or "vegetative" language in Empedocles see Long 2017, 5 n.17.

49 Trépanier 2019, 286.

50 O'Brien 1969, 206; Wright 1981, 54 n.170.

51 My thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this note on B41.

52 See O'Brien 1969, 183 n.2. With an aggregate of fire constantly present, this presumably provided the necessary conditions for the fecund world to shoot forth.

Trépanier seeks to resolve this by stating that "the point of calling them the shoots" of men and women "would then be to anticipate the eventual continuity between those first forms of life and the more differentiated forms that succeeded them," this distinction is not necessary.[53]

A third Aëtius testimony (A81) records Empedocles' claim that the first males were "born from the earth" in the east and south, and females towards the north.[54] Since plants are bisexual, the males and females described here must refer to animals, if not human beings specifically. Indeed, logically speaking, the earliest men and women must have been earthborn, since they could not have been generated from sexual reproduction. These men and women, I propose, are the ἐννυχίους ὄρπηκας described in B62.2, thus demonstrating that earlier iterations of human beings were grown from the earth in the very same manner as plants. What remains to be explained is their odd designation as "*nocturnal* saplings." It is this which finally brings me back around to the slow moving sun, which I will argue utilises the vegetal character of human embryos in order to explain the lack of uniformity in their growth.

Aëtius' testimony of the slow moving sun explicitly describes a time "when the race of human beings was born from the earth (ὅτε ἐγεννᾶτο τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος ἐκ τῆς γῆς)," thus implying a continuity with those which are later born in the womb. These earthborn humans are therefore presumably drawn up by the fire of the sun, as in B62.1–2. Yet crucially, Aëtius claims that human growth (αὔξεσθαι) took place in a single day from when the embryos are "placed at night (†ῇ τίθεται νυκτί†)."[55] It is this, and not an undifferentiated night and day, which I would argue explains their designation as "nocturnal saplings (ἐννυχίους ὄρπηκας)" in B62.[56]

As I have already stated, Aëtius plainly asserts that only plants and trees emerged from the earth before the sun began its motions, thus implying that the temporal passage between night and day was in motion by the time vegetal humans (sexually differentiated or not) began to develop.[57] It is Empedocles' emphasis on the fact that these early iterations of humans are planted *during the*

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53 Trépanier 2019, 286.

54 (…) τοὺς μὲν πρώτους ἄρρενας πρὸς ἀνατολῇ καὶ μεσημβρίᾳ γεγενῆσθαι μᾶλλον ἐκ τῆς γῆς, τὰς δὲ θηλείας πρὸς ταῖς ἄρκτοις.

55 This text is marked as corrupt, though major editions (including Bollack and Laks & Most) often retain ῇ τίθεται νυκτὶ, which is marked on the MSS. Diels 1879, 427–428 deleted νυκτὶ, though I hope that this discussion clarifies how ῇ τίθεται νυκτὶ makes sense in the passage. See defence in Bollack 1969b, 533.

56 See Bollack 1969b, 531–533 on locative use of νυκτὶ.

57 See Ferella 2019, 83 n.42.

night which arguably explains the temporal relativity depicted in the passage of the slow moving sun. If we take it as a given that (on average) a day is equally divided between the duration of night and that of sunlight, when the sun begins to move faster and the interchange between night and day happens more frequently, human embryos which grow in the womb still receive the same amount of sunlight throughout the duration of their growth as their earthborn ancestors, when a day lasted for either seven or ten months.[58] Accordingly, rather than a single long stretch of night and day, the embryos now conceived by double bearing (διγόνους) women receive the required amount of celestial fire intermittently, as night and day interchange with greater frequency.

With this context, I would suggest that Empedocles' interest in the passage of the sun relative to the growth of a human embryo makes far more sense. Empedocles does not simply accept the lack of uniformity in mortal growth, but seeks to explain it by means of the fluctuating cosmos in which this takes place. Although it is Strife which is responsible for drawing the fire of a mortal body towards the sun, the conditions which affect mortal temporality are far more complex. Namely, Empedocles suggests that mortal temporality arises through an intricate dance between Love and Strife, the constant development of mortal mixtures, and finally, the changing rhythms of their external environment. As Wright has noted, "the correlation of nine and seven month births with the earlier cosmic days of nine and seven months' duration suggests that Empedocles was attempting to find a connection between the development of man and the growth of the world."[59] This, I would argue, is markedly revealing of Empedocles' approach to the concept of time.

When understood in the context provided by B62, Aëtius' testimony arguably shifts Empedocles' depiction of time sharply away from fixed timetables towards a more biological iteration of temporality. Namely, during the cosmological phase of the Cycle, the passage of time is guided by interactions between the myriad component parts of a diverse cosmos. Rather than using "time" as an explanatory force in and of itself, the strange case of the slow moving sun suggests that Empedocles was far more fascinated with the question of *how* these temporalities emerge. By presenting a relative temporal relationship between the sun and an embryo, neither of which develops in a uniform way, Empedocles does not present the concept of time in absolute terms, claiming that mortals submit

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58 Aëtius elsewhere draws a connection between earthborn plants and embryos in the womb on the basis that they grow "from heat which separates (αὔξεσθαι δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐν τῆι γῆι θερμοῦ διαιρόμενα, ὥστε γῆς εἶναι μέρη, καθάπερ καὶ τὰ ἔμβρυα τὰ ἐν τῆι γαστρὶ τῆς μήτρας μέρη·) (A70)," implying the mutual importance of fire in their processes of growth.
59 Wright 1981, 10.

to fixed spans of time due to vague oaths or deterministic forces. Instead, Empedocles seeks to explain how the passage of time is informed and impacted by the myriad moving parts of a cosmos embroiled in constant transformation.

Through the unique conditions of his cosmology, Empedocles addressed an empirical reality of the world: the lack of uniformity and predictability of mortal lifetimes. Accordingly, what remains to be explored is how this understanding of mortal temporality is reflected in the way that Empedocles presented the passage of cosmic time. As opposed to attempting to fit genesis and cosmological process into a fixed span of cosmic time, I would suggest that a more fruitful approach is to flip this perspective. Namely, to think about how cosmic time is *informed by* these processes of genesis and change. New interpretive possibilities are introduced, by returning to B30 and its temporally vague setting of "fulfilling time."

6 Lifecycles

As mentioned above, B30 is typically read as a narration of the moment when Strife breaks into the Sphairos, and thus initiates another Cosmic Cycle. However, I will suggest in what follows that the sources which preserve B30 do not unambiguously suggest that this fragment should be understood in a cosmic framework. Instead, there is reason to believe that the cycle described is not the cosmic interchange of Love and Strife, but the biological cycle of living beings.

The oath is quoted verbatim in two ancient sources: Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and Simplicius' commentary on the *Physics*. I begin with the latter. In his commentary (*In Phys.* 1184), Simplicius is expanding upon Aristotle's complaints that Empedocles fails to provide a cause for the interchange of Love and Strife, which Empedocles claims occurs "by necessity." First, Simplicius discusses B31 and the initiation of motion in the Sphairos when Strife resumes its campaign for cosmic dominance. Accordingly, Simplicius frames his discussion around the very same cosmic interchange from total Love to increasing Strife which is usually assumed to be the topic of B30. Simplicius then continues on this topic of cosmic interchange, quoting B115 and stating that Empedocles "asserts that through necessity and oaths each of them [i.e., Love and Strife] prevails in turn (διὰ γὰρ τὴν ἀνάγκην καὶ τοὺς ὅρκους τούτους ἑκάτερον παρὰ μέρος ἐπικρατεῖν φησι)."[60] Immediately following this, however, Simplicius makes an important and underdis-

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60 On Simplicius' use of B115 in this passage with regards to the question of whether Empedocles wrote one poem or two, see Osbourne 1987, 36–37; Inwood 2001, 15–18; challenged by O'Brien 1995, 434–435.

cussed distinction when he introduces fragment B30: "Empedocles says that these things also happen *during the predominance of Strife* (λέγει δὲ καὶ ταῦτα Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἐπὶ τῆς τοῦ Νείκους ἐπικρατείας)." Considering the fact that, up to this point, Simplicius has been explicitly discussing the cosmic interchange of Love and Strife, and specifically the moment when Strife breaks into the Sphairos, this distinction is crucial. Rather than setting B30 in the context of cosmic interchange, Simplicius instead makes the point that Love and Strife also interchange *during* the predominance of Strife (ἐπὶ τῆς τοῦ Νείκους ἐπικρατείας). In doing so, Simplicius indicates that B30 is not necessarily a reference to the cosmic interchange between Love and Strife. Rather, Simplicius appears to have moved on to their localised interchanges which result in the manifestation and destruction of mortal beings.

Crucially, Aristotle's discussion in the *Metaphysics* appears to set fragment B30 in a similar context. Although Aristotle seemingly gestures towards the cosmic interchange of Love and Strife in this passage (1000b10 – 13), the topic which Aristotle is broadly discussing here is mortal perishability. There is no mention of fixed measures of time or cosmic timetables. Rather, Aristotle is ruminating upon the fact that Strife, despite being perceived as a force of destruction, is responsible (if indirectly) for the generation of mortal beings: "trees sprouted, and men and women, / the beasts and birds and water nurtured fish, / and the long lived gods (δένδρεά τ᾽ ἐβλάστησε καὶ ἀνέρες ἠδὲ γυναῖκες, / θῆρές τ᾽ οἰωνοί τε καὶ ὑδατοθρέμμονες ἰχθῦς, / καί τε θεοὶ δολιχαίωνες) (1000a31 – 33)."[61] In trying to surmise the distinction between mortality and immortality, Aristotle states that Empedocles gives an inadequate explanation of the actual process of change between destruction and being, "except that it is so by nature (αἴτιον οὐθὲν λέγει ἀλλ᾽ ἢ ὅτι οὕτως πέφυκεν) (1000b13 – 14)." It is at this point that Aristotle quotes B30, potentially setting the fragment in a far different context than is typically assumed.

It could be argued that the fragment itself also suggests this reading. Significantly, it is not clear whether σφιν in line three refers to Love and Strife or, as some scholars have proposed, the rhizomes.[62] If it is the latter, it is conceivable that the alternation described does not only encompass the macrocosmic interchange of Love and Strife, but also their microcosmic interchanges as they form mortal beings. Indeed, Empedocles' description in B30 of the "limbs" (μελέεσσιν) in which Strife's strength grows could equally apply to the limbs possessed by living beings (B20, B62, B63, B82, B101) as it could to those of the Sphairos,

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61 Quoting B21.9 – 12.

62 I.e. Bollack 1969b, 160; Laks & Most 2016, 453.

especially since Empedocles elsewhere refers to the limbs of Sphairos with γυῖα (B31).[63] If this is indeed the case, "fulfilling time" cannot be justified as a reference to a fixed timetable. Although mortal lives pursue a broad temporal rhythm, they do not unfold for a determined or predictable length of time. Instead, the essence of mortality, an αἰών, is defined by what I claimed above is the true focal point of this fragment: the interchange between mixture and separation. In mortal terms, between "life" and "death."[64]

Despite the possibility of this alternative reading, it should be cautioned that the evidence is still not clear enough to wholly reject a reference to the cosmic interchange between Love and Strife in B30. However, the assumption that we must choose between a cosmic or mortal cycle perhaps misses the point. Indeed, this ambiguity merely emphasises the fact that this interchange, and the "fulfilling time" which intercedes it, does not only occur cosmically, but in the unceasing process of "life" and "death" experienced by every single living being within it.

The fact that Empedocles discerned a parallel between the Cosmic Cycle and the lifecycle of mortals has been well established in scholarship.[65] Indeed, Aristotle's comments concerning cyclical time in the *Physics* demonstrates that this parallel was present in the popular consciousness by the fourth century at least. Yet acknowledging the fact that B30 might also describe the interchange of Love and Strife within a mortal body significantly reframes how we ought to conceive the "fulfilling time" during which this exchange happens. Crucially, for any given mortal, there is no fixed timetable determining *when* Love and Strife will interchange with one another, only that it *must eventually happen*.[66] Accordingly, if we take those principles which impact the length of a mortal lifecycle (αἰών) – chance, relativity, and flux – is it not conceivable that those same factors influence the length of a Cosmic Cycle? As I propose in the final section, this is implied by the fact that the cosmos is not only said to possess an αἰών of its own, but that it is constituted of them.

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[63] See Bollack 1969b, 432–433 on limb terminology.

[64] See Long 2017 on mortality and immortality in Empedocles. On the fallacy of life and death see B8.

[65] See above n.15.

[66] Compare Anaximander B1, see Bollack 1965, 158–159.

7 The living cosmos

Empedocles' cosmos has been described by some as a living entity.[67] The total separation of the rhizomes arguably mirrors the process of decomposition experienced by mortal beings, projected upon a macrocosmic scale. Equally, the Sphairos, in its abject stillness, could be regarded as a peaceful death concluding a lifetime of transformations which occur during the period of the many. Yet this comparison is seemingly made explicit in fragment B16, in which Empedocles describes the boundless lifetime (ἄσπετος αἰών) of the Cosmic Cycle. It has been frequently noted by scholars that αἰών, possessing the sense of a "lifetime," is the most prominent temporal term in Empedocles' surviving poetry.[68] However, despite αἰών consistently referring to lifetimes elsewhere in the fragments, scholars including Wright, Inwood, and Graham have opted to translate αἰών in B16 with the more general sense of "time."[69]

Conceptually speaking, I would counter that characterising the cosmos as being in possession of a "boundless lifetime" is more commensurate with Empedocles' cosmology. As Šćepanović has outlined, the constant changeability of the cosmos, which ensues from interactions between the very same four rhizomes which constitute living beings, more aptly implies that the Cosmic Cycle possesses its own "life." Yet this parallel also has implications from a temporal perspective. Arguably, the living cosmos is conditioned by the very same variables which govern an organic being: it is subject to the peculiar whims of chance, it is a whole which is only comprehensible through its deeply complex parts, and its "life" is subject to so many variables that one cannot possibly know when its end (so to speak) is destined to arrive. Indeed, it is in those periods of "fulfilling time" when Love and Strife are exchanging cosmic power, that the eternally extant rhizomes come to experience mortality. Fire runs through water, and aether into earth; colliding to form the likes of humans and wild beasts (γίνοντ᾽ ἄνθρωποί τε καὶ ἄλλων ἔθνεα θηρῶν) (B26.4).[70] Accordingly, the lifecycle of the cosmos

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67 Wilford 1968, 108; Keizer 2010, 62.

68 The prominence of αἰών in Empedocles' fragments prompted Primavesi to suggest that the scholiast used χρόνοι as a replacement for Empedocles' αἰών, construed as one hundred year time units, see above n.11. See Šćepanović 2012, 126–143 for recent summary of uses.

69 Wright 1981, 174; Inwood 1992, 213; Graham 2010, 350–351. See Šćepanović 2012, 138 and Keizer 2010, 61–62 for "cosmic life" reading. See also Bollack 1969b, 155.

70 Although Bollack 1965, 70–72 claims that "la diversité des espèces s'explique d'abord par l'acte décisif d'Aphrodite," he provides a helpful discussion of how diversity "résulte d'une recherche de l'organisme en quête de son propre équilibre," in harmony with a given creature's surrounding environment.

does not merely parallel the lifecycles of mortal beings, it is constituted of them. This much is implied in the fragmentary remains of the Strasbourg Papyrus:[71]

> πά]ντηι δ᾽ ἀίσσοντα [διαμπ]ερὲς οὐδ[αμὰ λήγει
> π]υκνῆισιν δίνηισ[ιν ᵕ | – ᵕ ᵕ | – ᵕ ᵕ] τ . [– –
> ν]ωλεμές, οὐδέ πο[τ᾽ | – ᵕ ᵕ | – ᵕ ᵕ | – ᵕ ᵕ | – –,
> πολλ]οὶ δ᾽ αἰῶνες πρότερ[ον ᵕ ᵕ | – ᵕ ᵕ | – –,
> πρὶν] τούτων μεταβῆνα[ι ᵕ | – ᵕ ᵕ | – ᵕ ᵕ | – –,
>
> πά]ντηι δ᾽ ἀίσσο̣γ[τ]α̣ διαμ[περὲς οὐδαμὰ λήγει·

> They incessantly shoot forth <everywhere>, continually
> In crowded whirls . . .
> Constantly, and never . . .
> Many lifetimes first . . .
> <Until>, from these, they passed over . . .
> And they incessantly shoot forth everywhere, <continually>

> P. Strasb. ens. a(ii) 3–7[72]

Due to the fragmentary nature of this section of papyrus, it is unclear whether Empedocles is describing a particular stage of the Cosmic Cycle, or the Cosmic Cycle as a whole.[73] Regardless, what can be stated is that this fragment appears to frame an expansive period of time. Crucially, Empedocles does not describe this period by stating a number of years, or indeed, any other manner of fixed or quantified measurement. Instead, Empedocles depicts the passage of time through the lens of the *many lifetimes* which unfold. Yet this is not all.

To return briefly to the image of the gargantuan cosmic clock referenced throughout this paper, this framework gives the impression that Empedocles conceived of time's passage in a determinate and uniform way. Yet in the Strasbourg papyrus, Empedocles paints a far more chaotic picture, stating that the rhizomes move in "crowded whirls" in their fulfilment of "many lifetimes." It

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71 B26 epitomises the careful balance that Empedocles was attempting to strike between admitting Parmenides' requirements of τὸ ὄν (B2) and the fact that the phenomenal world does undergo change. See especially KRS 1983, 283; 288; Inwood 1992, 40; Curd 2004, 128–131, 206; McKirahan 2005, 163–164; contra Palmer 2009, 324–328 who claims the Sphairos takes this role. See also Palmer 2016.

72 Textual supplements in lines 1 and 4 from Trépanier 2017. For further discussions of these lines see Martin & Primavesi 1999, 190–191; Trépanier 2003, 407–408.

73 For the former view see especially Martin & Primavesi 1999, 186–191. The latter has been convincingly suggested by Trépanier 2017, which arguably better complements the Strasbourg papyrus' position in Book 1, where we might expect a more general exposition of the Cycle. I do, however, disagree with Trépanier's translation of πολλοὶ δ᾽ αἰῶνες as "many ages," on which see above n.13. See also Ferella 2019, 81.

is hard to resist the impression that this "whirling" imagery, particularly as it characterises the formation of mortal beings, was not intended to draw a parallel between mortal and cosmic lifecycles. Yet by presenting temporal passage through a mortal lens, Empedocles visually evokes a process which erupts beyond the confines of a uniform Cycle.

From this perspective, I suggest that genesis is not depicted as being determined by a temporally fixed interchange between Love and Strife. Rather, the duration of the Cosmic Cycle is arguably informed by the myriad interweaving and intersecting cycles of life experienced by the rhizomes. By using αἰών to encompass the lifecycles of both mortal beings and the cosmos, Empedocles commits to a nuanced portrayal of time as something which may always unfold in a particular direction, and even to predictable ends, but which resists being construed in a fixed or uniform way. Thus the "crowded whirls" of the rhizomes, whipped by the tension between Love and Strife into a frenzy of genesis, growth and destruction, form their own "cycles of time." These unfold "constantly," exploring the blooming diversity of the cosmos as "many lifetimes" are completed, until they eventually migrate back to the Sphairos, thus fulfilling the Cosmic Cycle. In the language of cyclical time and temporality, Empedocles' "crowded whirls" arguably add necessary texture to Empedocles' depiction of time, not sufficiently conveyed by a cosmic timetable. The seeming stability of Love and Strife's interchange tempts us to quantify all things into a clocklike mechanism specifying determined timeframes. Yet here, in the fragments, is a tumultuous explosion of different temporalities which interact, impact and intersect with one another as they whirl through the ever evolving, and ever changing cosmos.

8 Conclusion

By considering the inner workings of Empedoclean cosmology, I have argued that attempting to restrict the manifold activities of the rhizomes within a uniform, predetermined, and quantified timetable offers limited insight into Empedocles' depiction of time. Love and Strife do not possess unmitigated dominance over the rhizomes, rather they are ultimately guides towards the type of interactions which take place, whether mixture or separation. Instead, the temporality of the Cosmic Cycle, reflecting the lifecycles which constitute it, results from a far more complex interplay involving the four rhizomes. At times the land is travelled by whole natured creatures without genitals or limbs (B62), at others by "naked arms (...) bereft of shoulders" (B57.2). Sometimes the cosmos itself changes in form, with the aether running in unpredictable directions, the earth drifting up on high (A35), or the sun revolving at such a slow pace that

a human child will be born before it completes a single rotation. A fixed framework of time does not admit this blossoming of life through the chance interactions of the rhizomes, the incessant flux of the world in which mortals exist, nor the dilation and contraction of measurable time as these processes roll eternally on.

These elements of Empedocles' philosophy demonstrate an astute awareness of the fact that although the world boasts certain rhythms and certainties, the myriad interactions which constantly unfold between its component parts makes it impossible to determine how a life, or the life of the cosmos, will unfold. Therefore to claim that Empedocles did not merely use time to measure change, but to determine it, instantiates unnecessary restrictions upon both his conception of cosmology and his conception of time. By attempting to fit Empedocles into our own standard parameters of time, and particularly those indiscriminately assumed of ancient cultures, we arguably deprive ourselves of a comprehensive understanding of Empedoclean thought. Duration may not be fixed, or even (at times) measurable, but it can be comprehended through the intricate interactions which occur between every being in the cosmos. By exploring this, we can draw closer to an Empedoclean comprehension of time as something which is not only measured, but lived.

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Richard Hutchins

Lucretius' theory of temporality: *Aetas* in *de Rerum Natura*

> "Henceforth space by itself, and time by itself, are doomed to fade away into mere shadows, and only a kind of union of the two will preserve an independent reality." -Hermann Minkowski

Abstract: This chapter investigates temporality in Lucretius' *De rerum natura*. Beginning with a short survey of recent discussions of temporality in scholarship on Lucretius, the chapter presents a close reading of 1.449–63, a passage in which Lucretius presents his theory of time directly. Lucretius argues that time is not a universal, a priori category independent of the material world, but is a *sensus* that arises from the motions of the atoms. This section concludes by suggesting that time in Lucretius has both objective and subject aspects to it that are inextricable. The discussion then turns to Book Five to examine Lucretius' use of *aetas* to indicate time as dependent on the changing material *status*, or condition, of the earth. The chapter concludes with a new reading of the final lines of Book Five in which Lucretius says that "little by little time (*aetas*) draws forth each and every thing. (5.1454)" While Lucretius seems to reify *aetas* as an immaterial force moving time forward, on closer reading it becomes clear that Lucretius has remained consistent with his theory that time is based on the motions of the atoms.

1 An environmental theory of temporality

We are accustomed to isolate time and segment events that happen in time. The result is the image of a timeline along which events are plotted and causally related to one another. This chapter investigates a thoroughly different, non-modern, ecological view of time in Lucretius' *De rerum natura*.[1] While ecology is a modern scientific concept, this chapter will discuss Lucretius as a forerunner of ecological thinking about time. Lucretius is distinctive among extant Classical authors for his commitment to an explicitly materialist theory of time. In his view, time is not a universal, a priori category separate from the material

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[1] For *De rerum natura* (or *On the Nature of Things*, as it is usually translated into English) I will sometimes use the abbreviation *DRN*.

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world, but is dependent on the motions of the atoms.[2] In what follows, I will first survey recent scholarship on Lucretius' theory of temporality. I will then look closely at an important passage in Book One of *De rerum natura* where Lucretius details his materialist theory of temporality. Finally, I will put Lucretius to the test by investigating whether he follows his own theory of temporality when he describes time in *DRN* Book Five. For reasons of space, I cannot explore every reference to time in Lucretius. Instead, I focus on his use of the term *aetas* ("age," "era," "lifetime") and his discussion of how early humans learned time from their observation of the heavenly bodies, limiting my investigation to *DRN* Book Five.[3] I argue that Lucretius uses *aetas* to indicate time, but time as dependent on atoms in motion or on the motion of the earth or of the heavens. *DRN* Book Five is a fitting place to examine Lucretius' thinking about temporality because there he presents his *Kulturentstehung*, or history of the rise of culture from nature. *DRN* Book Five is, therefore, a history in which time hews closely to the material world and is ultimately isomorphic with it.[4] In outlining Lucretius' theory of temporality and testing the consistency with which he discusses time in *DRN* Book Five, I hope to show how paying attention to the way Lucretius talks about time can raise wider questions about the relationship between human discourse about time and the natural world from which the human sense of time emerged.

For Lucretius, human notions of time emerge from the perception of matter in motion. This view of temporality has large implications, since it would suggest that there are as many time-scales and temporalities as atomic processes at work. According to this view of temporality, the natural world and human society would be interconnected webs of temporalities, related at all levels of materiality. As will be discussed shortly, Lucretius thinks that there is a temporality to local atomic events, but also, more mysteriously, that time can be predicated of the earth as a whole.[5] These views are surprisingly modern, even Einsteinian, since they suggest a web of temporalities interacting with, and relative to,

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2 I will use the words "temporality" and "time" interchangeably in this chapter to indicate that time and atomic motion go hand in hand for Lucretius, but I mean to distinguish Lucretius' notion of time from non-materialistic views of time. For discussions of temporality in classics, see Holmes 2012, 323; Holmes 2016; Payne 2016; Bianchi 2012.

3 This article focuses on descriptions of the emergence of human ideas of time in Book Five of *De rerum natura*, where Lucretius presents a genealogy of human notions of time. For an important, recent reading of the relationship between time and perception in Books One and Four of Lucretius, cf. Zinn 2016.

4 For a discussion of material and temporal isomorphism in Lucretius, cf. Serres 2000, 164; Luciani 2000.

5 *DRN* 1.469. See discussion below.

each other.[6] Because, for Lucretius, time is isomorphic with atomic motion, *DRN* offers a very inclusive theory of temporality. Far from the notion of the timeline or calendar time, temporality in Lucretius is highly complex. Lucretius' theory of regional and earth temporalities also suggests that he does not have a universal, disembodied notion of time. How could time be a universal for him when it is based on the flowing together and flowing apart of the atoms? Instead, there is a relative and perspectival nature to Lucretius' discourse about time, just as there is a relational nature to his discourse about the atoms. At the same time, Lucretian temporality is not completely relative since he is ultimately a realist. That is, his notion of time depends on the reality and physicality of the atoms.

Lucretius' thinking about time also implies that different temporalities can conflict. For instance, the linear, onward march of civilisation could be seen as destructive of the complex nonhuman temporalities of the natural world, such as the life cycles of plants or animals forced to live according to civilisation's grid and at the mercy the endless expansion of the human footprint, an aspect of Lucretius' thinking about temporality relevant to contemporary environmental thinking.[7] Lucretius' thinking about human and natural temporalities as potentially conflicting can seem strikingly modern. As the late historian of science Michel Serres has stressed, elements of Lucretian reason, such as his physics of particles and flows, and his proto-quantum conceptions of indeterminacy, such as the *clinamen*, or "swerve," have become legible to us only 2,000 years after the fact. Only now are we in a position to confirm them as "right."[8] For instance, Serres sees in Lucretius' atom-based temporality possibilities for conceiving of time as folded, twisted, reversible, aleatory, stochastic, cloud-like, geometrical, and as containing the possibility of eddies of local time within larger temporal movements.[9] While Serres' discussion of the potentialities of Lucretian physics for thinking about time is beyond the project of this chapter, he is asking us to consider the larger implications of the details of Lucretius' theory of temporality discussed below.[10]

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6 For Lucretius as a forerunner of certain modern theories of time, cf. Holmes 2016, 24–9.
7 For the clash of human and animal temporalities in Lucretius, cf. Hutchins 2020.
8 For the *clinamen*, cf. *DRN* 2.218–219. For Serres' discussion of Lucretius as having a physics of solids and liquids, cf. Serres' 2000, 11.
9 Serres 2000, 152.
10 Serres 2000, 68; Holmes 2016, 26.

2 Lucretius' theory of temporality

One of the most important features of Lucretius' theory of temporality is the fact that it is simultaneously a subjective and objective notion of time. Lucretius' concept of time is neither completely anthropocentric nor nonhuman.[11] In *De rerum natura* Book One, Lucretius explains his atomic theory of time as follows (1.449–63).[12]

> Nam quaecumque cluent, aut his coniuncta duabus
> rebus ea invenies aut horum eventa videbis.
> coniunctum est id quod nusquam sine permitiali
> discidio potis est seiungi seque gregari,
> pondus uti saxis, calor igni, liquor aquai,
> tactus corporibus cunctis, intactus inani.
> servitium contra paupertas divitiaeque,
> libertas bellum concordia, cetera quorum
> adventu manet incolumis natura abituque,
> haec soliti sumus, ut par est, eventa vocare.
> tempus item per se non est, sed rebus ab ipsis
> consequitur sensus, transactum quid sit in aevo,
> tum quae res instet, quid porro deinde sequatur;
> nec per se quemquam tempus sentire fatendumst
> semotum ab rerum motu placidaque quiete.

> For whatever things we have a name for, either you will find these to be properties of these two things [viz. atoms and void] or you will see them to be accidents of them. A property is that which is never able to be disjoined or excluded without a mortal cut, for example: weight from stone, heat from fire, wetness from water, touch from all bodies, intangibility from the void. On the contrary, slavery, poverty, and wealth, liberty, war, concord, and everything else by whose coming and going the nature [of an atomic compound] remains unharmed—these things, as is fitting, we are accustomed to call accidents. Time likewise does not exist in itself, but from the things themselves there follows a sense of things done in past time, next of what things remain in the present, then finally of what would follow afterwards. Nor should it be claimed that anyone has a sense of time in itself removed from the movement and calm rest of things.

Here, Lucretius outlines his theory of temporality by declaring that he will discuss "whatever things we have a name for" (*quaecumque cluent*, 1.449). By

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[11] For discussions about the subjectivity or objectivity of time in Lucretius, cf. Caujolle-Zaslawsky 1980, 285–306; Luciani 2000, 92–9. Zinn 2016. Luciani notes that time is not subordinated to human perception and, therefore, is not anthropocentric, but neither does time take on meaning without human perception.

[12] *DRN* 1.449–463; Loeb Classical Library; All translations are my own.

speaking in this way, Lucretius seems not to want to limit himself to discussing only obviously material things, but to include abstract concepts as well, showing how they too must fall into one of the two categories that he lays out at the start of the passage.[13] Things are either "properties" (*coniuncta*) or "accidents" (*eventa*). The connotations of the specialised vocabulary that Lucretius uses here are important: *coniuncta* suggest things that are "joined with" or "yoked to" other things, hence essential to the identity of the atomic compound that they are part of.[14] As Lucretius then explains, *coniuncta* can be "disjoined" (*seiungi*, 452) or even "removed" (*seque gregari*) "by a mortal cut" (*permitiali / discidio*, 451–2), dealing a death blow, so to speak, to the identity of an atomic compound.

Lucretius' language throughout this passage is the language of atoms and atomic compounds, of things yoked in essential ways and of things cut or separated in ways that remove the essence of the thing in question. Despite the serious and even technical cast to the passage, Lucretius' Latin is also performative of what he is saying.[15] For instance, the *se* in *seque gregari* (452), performs what it says by separating *se* from *gregari* by means of tmesis. The verb *segregari* most likely connotes a flock of sheep in which a lone sheep, *se*, wanders off from the flock or *grex*.[16] In a brilliant reading of this passage, Stephen Hinds has pointed out that *se* is not a Latin prefix. Once separated from *gregari*, *se* loses its semiotic force, becoming a linguistic non-entity, since it is no longer a prefix and it has not become the reflexive pronoun *se*. It is simply not a Latin word. Lucretius' language thus stages the way that an atomic compound, once separated from the *coniuncta* that shares its essence, loses its identity, just as *se* loses its identity as a Latin linguistic entity when separated from *gregari*.[17] The performative language here is appropriate because Lucretius is also implying that names are related to the atomic compounds that they signify.

The passage is organised, first, by an analysis at the atomic level of things and, second, by an evaluation of the effects of atomic motion on the human sense of time (*sensus*, 460; *sentire*, 462). In the second half of the passage, Lucre-

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[13] Luciani 2000, 88 notes that *cluent* (1.449) is an efficient way of turning the discussion to things that humans have given names to and that therefore are likely not completely to lack existence.

[14] For the importance of connotations in Lucretius' philosophical Latin and their difference from the connotations of their Ancient Greek equivalents, cf. Sedley 1998, 35–61.

[15] For a study of performative language in Lucretius and Epicurus, cf. Shearin 2015.

[16] For the famous passage in which Lucretius compares lambs, seen at a distance, to atoms seen from the human threshold of perception, cf. *DRN* 2.317–322; West 1969, 13–14.

[17] Hinds 1987, 450–53.

tius details the material basis of time with his discussion of "accidents" or *eventa* (458). Here too, the connotations of Lucretius' specialised language are important. An *eventum* is literally an "out-come" (*e-ventum*).[18] Lucretius defines an *eventum* as not essential to the identity of an atomic compound but as nevertheless related to it by being an "outcome" from it. Here, Lucretius comes close to the discourse of emergence, becoming, or supervenient properties, and he prepares the reader for this rather abstract discussion of time by beginning with examples of other named things that count as *eventa*. Notable is the first term in the list, *servitium* ("slavery," 455), the only direct mention of slavery in *DRN*. Lucretius clearly considers slavery not to be an essential property of a human being, but an accident, what we might call a "social fact." Lucretius then defines an *eventum* as something *quorum / adventu manet incolumis natura abituque* ("by whose coming and going the nature [of an atomic compound] remains unharmed," 457). By speaking of the "coming" (*adventu*) and "going" (*abitu*) of *eventa*, Lucretius is resuscitating the latent metaphor of *venire* ("to come or go") in *eventum*, further emphasising that an "event" is grounded in the comings and goings of atomic motion. Lucretius does not make it entirely clear that he considers *tempus* an *eventum*, but he does conclude his list of examples of *eventa* with a discussion of time. He does this by linking his later analysis of time to his list of examples of *eventa* with the adverb *item* ("likewise," 459) and uses *consequere* (460) and *sequere* (461) to describe time as something that "follows from" or "follows along with" the atoms, just as the other abstractions in his list of examples of *eventa* were "out-comes" of atomic motion.[19]

Lucretius then turns to his atomic theory of temporality, arguing that time exists but that it does not exist *per se*, as he says: "Time likewise does not exist in itself (*per se*), but from things themselves there follows a sense (*sensus*) of things done in past time" (*tempus item per se non est, sed rebus ab ipsis / consequitur sensus*, 459–60). While Lucretius is describing time here as arising from sense impressions of atomic motion, it is important to emphasise that, for Lucretius, time is neither entirely objective nor subjective, exterior nor interior, human

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18 Cf. Bailey 1954, 670-672. Bailey 1964, 300–309. Luciani 2000, 89. Bollack 1983, 323 notes that Lucretius' choice of *eventa* as a translation for Epicurus' συμπτώματα removes connotations of chance from Epicurus' term in favour of connotations of history in Lucretius' use of *eventa*.
19 Bailey understands *tempus* as a special case of *eventa* (1954, 675). For further details about how Lucretius links his discussion of the properties and accidents of atomic compounds with his discussion of time here, cf. Luciani 2000, 89; Zinn 2016. Zinn argues that time is an *eventum*, is real, and is ultimately something perceived and, therefore, closely tied with the relationship of the various human *sensus* to each other, to memory, and to atomic motion. In other words, Zinn argues that time is a second-order, complex form of perception

or nonhuman, but immanent to the life of all things. While Michel Serres was interested in Lucretius' theory of time as containing the potential for thinking about multiple different, non-modern kinds of temporality, Lucretius is here focussed on time as a *sensus*, that is, time as something that emerges from the interplay of the atoms and the living being who perceives the motion of the atoms.[20] There is thus the implication that any *sensus* of temporality is limited by the capacities of the living being doing the sensing. This is because, as Lucretius explains in the passage above, temporality has two sides, the objective side of the atoms and the subjective side of the perceiver. But even so, the subjective side of time might potentially be quite wide-ranging, since Lucretius' term for the subjective experience of time, *sensus*, is a word that for Lucretius includes an extensive variety of related faculties: the five senses, perception, feeling, pleasure, pain, emotion, and thought.[21]

Time, for Lucretius, is therefore a relational entity that emerges from the interplay of atomic motion and the capacities for sensation in a living being. What needs to be emphasised is that Lucretius closely connects the sensation of time to the life-processes of the living beings capable of sensing it. In doing so, Lucretius leaves open the possibility that any animal with the faculty of perception could have some apprehension of time. In his discussion of time as a *sensus*, Lucretius seems to be following Epicurus, who argued that time "is to be reasoned about only by that to which we attach this peculiar thing [i.e., time] and especially by which we measure it against other things" (μόνον ᾧ συμπλέκομεν τὸ ἴδιον τοῦτο καὶ παραμετροῦμεν μάλιστα ἐπιλογιστέον).[22] In other words, we attach, or "we weave in together" (συμπλέκομεν), time with many things as an accident, and yet the basis of time—what we attach the idea of time to (ᾧ)—is the atoms. Sextus Empiricus expands upon this idea by adding that "<Epicurus defines times as> an accident of accidents that accompanies days and nights and seasons, inner feelings and rest therefrom, and movement and repose."[23] These Greek sources about Epicurus present time as something *we* entangle with physical motion, like the motions of day and night, the seasons, and durations of feeling, rest, and repose. In speaking this way, Epicurus is implicitly opposing a view that would see time as separate from experience. But in doing so, he also notes the contribution of the perceiver to a sense of time.

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20 Zinn 2016, 127–32.

21 Glidden 1979, 155; Zinn 2016, 131; Zinn 2019, 131.

22 *Ep. Hdt.* 72.

23 *Math.* 10.219. Warren 2006, 364 notes that the reference to comparative measurements of time is meant to show how we use primary measurements, like night, day, and the seasons, comparatively to measure the duration of other things.

In the passage above from Book One, Lucretius characterises time as something that "follows from" (*consequere*, 460; *sequere*, 461) the motions of the atoms. The reason that Lucretius emphasises matter's contribution to time, while Epicurus highlights the role of the human perceiver, seems to be that Lucretius considers time a special case among the *eventa*, all of which are emergences from atomic motion. Lucretius' discussion of time is part of his discussion of the other *eventa*, and therefore, like them, time is an emergence from matter in motion. Another possible reason that Lucretius emphasises matter's contribution to the sense of time is that Lucretius wants to stress the naturalness of time, as against religious meanings of time or of the motions of the heavens. By locating contributions to time in both atomic motion and in human perception, Lucretius can claim later in Book Five of *De rerum natura* that early humans, who lacked cognitive capacities like language and reason in the state of nature, still had a naturally empirical sense of time, as will be detailed below. What is clear from both Lucretius and Epicurus, however, is that time is a relational entity. Neither the motions of the atoms alone nor human perception alone produce a sense of time. Lucretius underlines this at the end of the passage above, when he says, "Nor should it be claimed that anyone has a sense of time in itself removed from the movement and calm rest of things" (*nec per se quemquam tempus sentire fatendumst / semotum ab rerum motu placidaque quiete*, 462–3).

There are potentially worrying implications in Lucretius' idea that time is based on atomic motion. The biggest concern has to do with the reality of history. Once the atoms involved in a historical event have dispersed, what is the ontological status of the history of that event? As James Warren has shown, the fact that the atoms of a historical event have scattered back into the void does not necessarily mean that history does not exist for Lucretius. It only means that historical events do not exist "in themselves" (*per se*) apart from their atomic makeup. Atoms have to be involved in a historical event for that event to have existed at all, but the reality of the history of that event, once the atoms have fallen back into the void, is not a question that Lucretius seems particularly interested in addressing in the passage above. However, Lucretius does offer the example of the events of the Trojan War, which he argues do not exist by themselves (*per se*), as he says just after the passage above: "Furthermore, when they say that Tyndareus' daughter was kidnapped and that the Trojan people's subjugation by war exist (*esse*), we must see to it that they do not force us to admit that these [events] exist in themselves (*per se*)."[24] Lucretius does not say explicitly what he thinks about the present existence of the past events of the Trojan War,

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24 *DRN* 1.464–66.

only that the events can never be said to exist *per se*. Instead, Lucretius asserts that historical events are "out-comes" (*eventa*) or "things conducted" (*res gestas*, 1.478), located either in the earth as a whole or in the specific regions in which they happened (1.472–3). As Warren has shown, this only need mean that history does not exist by itself (*per se*) apart from atomic motion.[25] Of course, humans have a *sensus* of historical events after they are over, which makes it likely that Lucretius thinks that historical events exist in some attenuated sense, just not *per se*.[26]

But if historical events only exist as an emergence from a specific geographical region or from the earth as a whole, what is the physical bearer of them in the present? If, for Lucretius, to exist is to exist somewhere, where is the past now? After the citadel of Troy has ceased to exist, will the history of that place will also cease to exist? Or maybe, broadening the physical location to which a past event is tied, the Trojan war can be said to have emerged from the earth as a whole or, once that has collapsed, from the universe as a whole, or in the final analysis and as a last resort from individual atoms, which are everlasting. But as Warren suggests, it would be strange for Lucretius to think that historical events might ultimately be predicated of particular atoms, that is, that atoms could build up historical properties as they meander through eternity, even though all other physical bearers for an event have disintegrated.[27] Warren concludes his analysis of this difficult passage by emphasising that Lucretius does not give us a compelling reason to think that the past ceases to exist once a material location for it is no longer there. What he does, Warren claims, is show that past events are unalterable, knowable, and that statements about them are true if they correspond with what actually happened. That makes it look like Lucretius thinks the past does exist somehow, but the ontological question of how the past exists and where it exists in the present is left indeterminate, because it is not the issue Lucretius is primarily addressing when he presents his theory of temporality in the passage from Book One above.[28]

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25 As Warren puts it (2006, 371): "Do these *eventa* therefore now exist *per se*? Lucretius neither wants to admit that Helen of Troy exists now, nor does he want to claim that her being kidnapped somehow exists *per se*. Instead, he has to find some way to avoid the potential threat of "detached" *eventa*, which might then have to be accepted as existing *per se*. The problem is not that the past as a whole is not there to be talked about at all so much as the less controversial claim that Helen is no longer around to be talked about."

26 Cf. Zinn 2016, 133.

27 Warren 2006, 374–377, 382.

28 Warren 2006, 385.

3 The temporality of the earth

Let us now turn to Book Five of *De rerum natura* to observe how Lucretius' theory of temporality shapes the way he speaks about time. I hope to show that Lucretius' discourse about the temporality of the earth is consistent with his theory of time in Book One. In the passage below, Lucretius uses *aetas* to indicate time as dependent on matter in motion and on the conditions of the earth, and argues that the earth (*terra*) deserves to be called "mother" (*mater*) because, like a mother, it was once young, but has now grown old (5.821–36).[29]

> Quare etiam atque etiam maternum nomen adepta
> terra tenet merito, quoniam genus ipsa creavit
> humanum atque animal prope certo tempore fudit
> omne quod in magnis bacchatur montibu' passim
> aeriasque simul volucres variantibu' formis.
> sed quia finem aliquam pariendi debet habere,
> destitit, ut mulier spatio defessa vetusto.
> mutat enim mundi naturam totius aetas.
> ex alioque alius status excipere omnia debet,
> nec manet ulla sui similis res: omnia migrant,
> omnia commutat natura et vertere cogit.
> namque aliud putrescit et aevo debile languet,
> porro aliud concrescit et e contemptibus exit.
> sic igitur mundi naturam totius aetas
> mutat, et ex alio terram status excipit alter,
> quod tulit ut nequeat, possit quod non tulit ante.

> Therefore, again and again the earth, having acquired it, rightly has the name "mother," since by herself she created the human race and produced at nearly a fixed time every animal that runs wild all over the great mountains and at the same time the aerial birds with their various forms. But since she must have some limit to giving birth, she stopped, like a woman worn out by old age. For time changes the nature of the whole world, one stage of things ought to take up everything from the other, and no thing remains similar to its former self: all things move from their arrangement, nature changes all things and forces them to alter themselves. For one thing rots away and languishes weak with age, another thing grows up and comes forth from things we scorn. So, in this way time changes the nature of the whole world, and one stage takes up the earth from another, so that she cannot bear what she did and can bear what she did not before.

Here, Lucretius sketches the beginning of life on earth. While at first appearing to indulge in a mythological explanation for the origins of life, he is in fact using the transparent personification of mother earth (*terra mater*) to explain the tem-

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29 *DRN* 5.821–36.

poral stages of the earth in terms of conditions of matter (*materies*).[30] Lucretius uses the personification of *terra mater* as a framework for his real task, the material explanation of life rooted in the change and transformation of the atoms, as he says: "all things move from their arrangement, nature changes all things and forces them to alter themselves" (*omnia migrant / omnia commutat natura et vertere cogit*, 830–1).[31] Monica Gale has pointed out that Lucretius is careful to emphasise the artificial nature of such personifications, which remain literary and that he avoids claiming that the personified entity is divine.[32] The personification of *terra mater*, unfortunately, depicts the fertility of the early earth in a highly gendered way—as wild, irrational, and ultimately as a resource. By implication, only the less fertile, older earth is depicted as the kind of orderly, rational place for male-centered culture to begin.[33]

The image of mother earth in the passage above is also used as a framework for marking time, since like the life cycle of a mother, the earth, Lucretius claims, has gone through stages of more, and then less, fertility, as he says, "one stage (*status*) takes up the earth from another, so that she cannot bear what she did and can bear what she did not before" (835–6). In the early stages, mother earth "created by herself" (*ipsa creavit*, 822) every animal "that runs wild (*bacchatur*) all over the great mountains and at the same time the aerial birds with their various forms (*variantibu' formis*)" (824–5). But Lucretius is also keen to highlight the limits of nature's fertility. The fecundity of the young earth eventually had to come to an end, as he says: "But since she must have some limit (*finem*) to giving birth, she stopped, like a woman worn out by old age" (826–7). The prehistoric earth produced a wild variety of plants and animals no longer in existence because of the material makeup of the planet at that time, but that earlier physical composition had to change and consequently the fertility of the earth inevitably declined.

Lucretius is not clear about what exactly happened. Diodorus Siculus, however, provides a fascinating account of Epicurus' view on why the earth stopped producing animals by herself and became unable to produce such a wide variety of animals: "The earth becoming more and more hardened by both the fire round

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30 For the pun *terra mater/materies*, cf. *DRN* 1.249–70; 2.991–1022; Anderson 1960, 6–11; Snyder 1980, 39; Nugent 1994, 183–6. For the etymological word-play on *humanum* ("human," 5.823) and *humus* ("ground"), cf. Schrijvers 1999, 15 and n. 46. For the analogy of the ages of the earth as similar to the life-cycle of a woman, cf. Gale 2009, 170.
31 For the idea that Lucretius often uses transparent allegories as an occasion for emptying them of their religious content by explaining them in terms of atomism, cf. Gale 1994, 40.
32 Gale 1994, 39, 132–3.
33 Nugent 1994, 183–6.

the sun and the winds at last could no longer produce any of the larger animals, but they were born by the sexual mixing of ensouled beings."[34] This seems to suggest that Epicurus thought that something like climate change caused the loss of the primeval earth's fertility, but only to the point that the earth herself stopped creating animals. The animals were then on their own to begin procreating for themselves. The first half of the passage implies that from the changes in the atoms that constitute the earth there emerged the earth's life "stages" or "conditions" (*status*, 829, 835).[35] Lucretius makes it clear that the temporal stages of the earth are not separate from its material changes but driven by them. Lucretius' theory of temporality in Book One, viz. that time is an *eventum* of atomic motion from which a *sensus* emerges, is consistent with his description of mother earth here as having different stages or conditions of fertility which are the different times of the earth.

Lucretius repeats this main point twice as a refrain: "So, in this way time changes the nature of the whole world, and one stage takes up the earth from another (*mundi naturam totius aetas / mutat et ex alio terram status excipit alter* (834–5)."[36] At first, it might seem that Lucretius is talking about *aetas* ("time") as a measure independent of the world, since he makes *aetas* the subject of the sentence. But he then explains *aetas* as a *status* ("stage," "condition") of the earth, after which another *status* "takes up" the earth (*excipere*, 829; *excipit*, 835).[37] Here it is the *status* of the earth, its material condition, that relays the earth onto different stages of its life cycle. Lucretius underlines the same point by using the similarity in the sounds of *aetas*/*status* to create a semiotic link between them that underscores the connection between the atomic condition of the earth, its *status*, and the time of the earth, its *aetas*. And yet, the syntax of the phrase *mundi naturam totius aetas / mutat* makes it look like *aetas* is an agent driving forward the earth's stages, towards less and less fertility. The syntax presents time as an independent entity causing changes in matter. This is the opposite to how Lucretius should talk about time were he to follow his theory of temporality in Book One. There, he argued that time is an *eventum* that emerges from the atoms, from which we derive a *sensus*. While the syntax of the refrain here—

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34 Diod. Sic. 1.7.6: Τὴν δὲ γῆν ἀεὶ μᾶλλον στερεουμένην ὑπό τε τοῦ περὶ τὸν ἥλιον πυρὸς καὶ τῶν πνευμάτων τὸ τελευταῖον μηκέτι δύνασθαι μηδὲν τῶν μειζόνων ζῳογονεῖν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα μίξεως γεννᾶσθαι τῶν ἐμψύχων.

35 Costa 1984, 102.

36 The refrain is stated almost verbatim earlier in the passage at 5.828–9.

37 The metaphor is that of a relay. Luciani 2000, 119 notes that Lucretius at first presents *aetas* (5.828) as itself the cause of change, but quickly afterwards describes nature as regaining its active role in the process of becoming.

mundi naturam totius aetas / mutat—in which Lucretius emphasises his main point, is misleading, it nevertheless suggests that time is dependent on the motion of the atoms by coupling *aetas* with *status* to create a semiotic complex that enacts his point that the time of the earth is an outcome from the motion of its atoms.[38] David West has commented that the following sentence also strangely uses relative clauses as subjects: "so that *what bore* cannot, and *what could not bear before* can" (*quod tulit ut nequeat, possit quod non tulit ante*, 836).[39] This use of relative clauses as subjects seems motivated by the fact that each relative clause (*quod tulit*; *quod non tulit ante*) stands in for each *status* of the earth. The final lines of the passage, therefore, can be interpreted as emphasising the different material powers of the young earth vs. the old earth. In the conclusion to the passage, Lucretius recapitulates his main point, that the material powers of the earth just are its "time" or "age" (*aetas*).

4 The temporality of the heavens

By depicting the time of the earth as driven by its material *status*, Lucretius is stressing the naturalness of time. While Epicurus emphasises the human mind's contribution to the sense of time, as discussed above, Lucretius focusses on the contribution of the earth and the heavens to the human sense of temporality. This is why it makes sense to characterise Lucretius' discussion of time in *DRN* as a discussion of temporality. He comes close to Elisabeth Grosz's statement that: "The force of time is not just a contingent characteristic of the living, but is the dynamic impetus that enables life to become, to always be in the process of becoming something other than what it was."[40] By defining time as a relationship between atomic motion and a living being's *sensus* of that motion, Lucretius can claim that early humans in the state of nature, who have not yet developed language or reason, still had a sense of time (5.973–81).[41]

> nec plangore diem magno solemque per agros
> quaerebant pavidi palantes noctis in umbris,
> sed taciti respectabant somnoque sepulti,
> dum rosea face sol inferret lumina caelo;

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38 For the idea of "coupling" as creating a semiotic complex between two or more words, cf. Levin 1971, 177–93.

39 West 1964, 102.

40 Elisabeth Grosz 2005, 8.

41 Lucretius' depiction of pre-rational, pre-linguistic humans as having a sense of time seems to leave open the possibility that nonhuman animals could have a sense of time.

> a parvis quod enim consuerant cernere semper
> alterno tenebras et lucem tempore gigni,
> non erat ut fieri posset mirarier umquam
> nec diffidere ne terras aeterna teneret
> nox in perpetuum detracto lumine solis.

> Nor did they [prehistoric humans] used to seek the day and sun through the fields with great grief, wandering terror-struck in the shadows of the night but kept waiting, silent and buried in sleep, until the sun with rosy torch spread his lights over the sky. For since from childhood they had always been accustomed to see darkness and light arise at alternate times, it was impossible that they could ever marvel or despair that eternal night would possess the world with the sun's light having been withdrawn for ever.

Here, Lucretius describes how prehistoric humans, before reason, language, and culture, slowly built up concepts of time (*alterno...tempore*, 978). At this stage of prehistory, humans lack any idea about the heavenly bodies beyond the ones that they "had always been accustomed to see" (*consuerant cernere semper*, 977). They have a natural sense of time that is based on the alternation of night and day, a purely empirical sense of time that lacks any accretion of mythological or religious connotations. The weakness of their imaginative faculties has the benefit that their experience of time cannot become a source of fear because it hews so closely to the physical reality of the celestial bodies in motion, as Lucretius says: "it was impossible that they could ever marvel (*mirarier*) or despair (*diffidere*) that eternal night would possess the world with the sun's light having been withdrawn for ever. (979 – 81)" Here, Lucretius seems to be casting a critical glance at ancient anthropologies that depicted early humans as fearing that each night was the end of the world, depicting them as wandering terror-stricken at night in search of day (*pavidi palantes noctis in umbris*, 974).[42] But Lucretius makes clear by his use of *diffidere* ("to despair" "to mistrust," 980) that he is also referring to the Epicurean doctrine of empirical learning from nature or πρόληψις ("initial grasp"), implying that because prehistoric humans had not learned to distrust their senses, they did not fear night. Their natural experience of night and day was salubrious and true.

A πρόληψις is an initial grasp of a concept, a first glimpse of an idea, that builds up in the mind through repeated interactions with things in the world as they impinge on the senses.[43] Here, early humans build up a sensual familiar-

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[42] Manil. 1.69; Stat. *Theb.* 4.282. Cf. Bailey 1954, 1479.

[43] Diogenes Laertius (10.33) says, "By πρόληψις they mean a sort of apprehension or a right opinion or notion, or universal idea stored in the mind. That is, a recollection of an external object often presented." Anthony Long provides helpful commentary, "[A πρόληψις is] a generic notion of any type of object of experience: the concept naturally evoked by the name of that

ity with the oscillations of night and day through repeated impressions of those things impinging on their sensoria, without the use of reason or language to elaborate or extend the meanings of these perceptions. The clunky Latin in lines 979–80 seems motivated by Lucretius' need to emphasise that the emergence of wonder (*mirarier*) or mistrust (*diffidere*) in the senses was not even possible for such humans because of their close attunement to material reality.[44] To render the lines literally, they say: "It was not the case that it be possible that wondering and mistrusting [of the senses] arise" (*non erat ut fieri posset mirarier umquam / nec diffidere*). The addition of *fieri* underscores the impossibility of the emergence of wonder and mistrust of the senses among pre-rational, pre-linguistic humans. As an empiricist, Lucretius is advocating that one trust the senses as bearers of the truth of the natural world, rather than letting the false opinions of mythology and religion lead one astray through the abuse of reason and language when applied to the motions of the heavens.[45] Here, the regular alternations of night and day lead to a familiarity and to a no-frills *sensus* of time gleaned directly from nature, without the application of reason. Lucretius shows that prehistoric humans had no false beliefs about the gods because they had no false beliefs about the heavens. As Gordon Campbell puts it: "Here the early humans are simply unable to wonder at the sun because of its familiarity, and so do not pay it any mind. Thus, equally, they are unable to form false opinions about it."[46]

Lucretius continues his story, later in Book Five, of early humans developing a sense of temporality from interaction with the material world. At this later stage, humans have gone beyond their familiarity with the oscillation of night and day to develop a sense of the order and arrangement of time based on the turning of the seasons, years, and heavenly bodies. But everything changes when they attribute that order to gods due to lack of knowledge (5.1183–93).[47]

Praeterea caeli rationes ordine certo
et varia annorum cernebant tempora verti,

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thing." Long adds, "Normally it will be synthesised out of repeated experiences of something external. (1987, 89)" Sabine Luciani 2000, 94, 103–4 argues that there can be no πρόληψις of time itself in Epicurus or Lucretius, but rather only a *sensus* of time, of the sort which arises from perception of matter in motion and not the perception of time itself, which has only a secondary existence.

44 Gale 2009, 182 points out that early humans, by lacking wonder, were in this respect psychologically better off than their modern counterparts. Cf. Gigandet 1998, 201 n. 1.

45 Furley 1978, 16; Blickman 1989, 176–7.

46 Campbell 2003, 236.

47 *DRN* 5.1183–93.

nec poterant quibus id fieret cognoscere causis.
ergo perfugium sibi habebant omnia divis
tradere et illorum nutu facere omnia flecti.
in caeloque deum sedes et templa locarunt,
per caelum volvi quia nox et luna videtur,
luna dies et nox et noctis signa severa
noctivagaeque faces caeli flammaeque volantes,
nubila sol imbres nix venti fulmina grando
et rapidi fremitus et murmura magna minarum.

Moreover, they observed that the systematic operations of the sky and the various times of the years revolved in a fixed order, and they were not able to understand the causes by which this arose. Therefore, they took as a refuge [from perplexity] for themselves the handing over of all this to gods and thought that all things bend to their will. They located the abodes and sacred spaces of gods in the sky because night and the moon are seen to revolve through the sky—moon, day, and night and the stern stars of night and night-wandering torches and flying flames, clouds, sun, storms, snow, winds, lightnings, hail, and rapid roarings and great murmurings of threats.

Bailey has called the logic of the passage "chaotic."[48] West has understood it as an attack on the belief that heavenly bodies are astral gods. I will try to synthesise both positions, since I believe both are partly correct. In staging his attack on the idea that heavenly bodies are gods, Lucretius focusses on the celestial bodies that cause fear if not understood scientifically, such as the moon, flaming bodies, thunder, and lightning.[49] Lucretius begins by speaking from his own contemporary, scientific perspective, that is, in his own voice, when he describes the motions of the heavens as *rationes* ("systematic operations" "orders" 1183), a very Lucretian way to depict them. He then says that prehistoric humans *cernebant* ("discerned" "observed," 1184) those *rationes* in the sky and the *varia annorum...tempora* ("various times of the years"). This way of putting it merges Lucretius' own sense of time, as based on systematicity of nature, with the perspective of the early human observers whose story he is narrating in a kind of Free Indirect Discourse. Lucretius describes the early humans in his own rationalist empiricist discourse, as if the early humans' direct, prehistoric perception of the heavens were no different from his own. But these early humans, while able to perceive the celestial bodies directly, are not able to know their causes (*nec poterant quibus id fieret cognoscere causis*, 1185), as Lucretius does. For this reason (*ergo*, 1186), Lucretius says, they took as a "refuge for themselves" (*perfugium sibi*) the "handing over" or "betraying" (*tradere*, 1187) of all

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48 Bailey 1947, 1511.
49 West 1969, 127–8.

things to gods.[50] By betraying all things (*omnia*, 1186, 1187) to gods, they are in effect betraying their natural relationship to the truth of physical reality. That is, they are betraying the naturalness of their observations of time as based on matter in motion.[51] Lucretius seems motivated to blend his voice with the prehistoric humans he is describing because he is presenting a genealogical account of how their need for refuge from the perplexities of nature has had consequences up to his own day. The mistake that these early humans made begins a tradition—call it mythology or religion—that "betrays" (*tradere*) the natural experience of time, imposing false, additional meanings onto the motions of the heavenly bodies. Ironically, by seeking refuge for their ignorance, early humans betray their natural connection to the physical basis of time and, thereby, to the *ratio* of the natural world. As Lucretius exclaims a few lines after the passage above, by betraying their natural sense impressions of time to astral gods, "they have given birth to tears for future generations" (*quas lacrimas peperere minoribu' nostris!*, 1197).

While Bailey called the logic of the passage chaotic and West saw its coherence in Lucretius' critique of sky gods, I would reconcile both positions. It is important to note that the style of the passage changes dramatically from 1190 onwards. The epanalepses of the second half of the passage create a sense of emotion and chaos, as Bailey claimed. But Lucretius deploys this stylistic change, I would argue, as part of the critique that West argued for. After line 1190, Lucretius is no longer speaking in his own voice. Rather, he is voicing the perspective of the prehistoric humans as their increasing fear leads them to divinise the celestial bodies, a build up of emotion that ends in a chaotic decision. It is worth noting that the description of heavenly bodies becomes more and more emotional and terror-inducing in a way that gives voice to the perspective of the early humans as they themselves become more and more fearful of the heavenly bodies and lose their earlier sense-based familiarity with the systematicity of the heavenly bodies and, consequently, time. Lucretius gestures towards the early human perspective on these events through his careful choice of poetic language. For instance, the "stern signs of night" (*noctis signa severa*, 1190) anthropomorphises the stars as "stern," "grave," or "punitive" (*severa*), letting us

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50 While "to hand over" is the more common meaning of *tradere*, in this context the more specific meaning of "betray" seems operative because the word can be seen as focalised from Lucretius' perspective. Cf. Gigandet 1998, 181 for a convincing reading of *tradere* here as "entrust" (*confié*), a reading that would see *tradere* as also having the potential to be focalised from the early human perspective.

51 Costa 1984, 133 argues that *perfugium* (5.1186) suggests a desperation on the part of early humans to explain what was incomprehensible to them. For a detailed study of the origins of religion in Lucretius, cf. Gigandet 1998, 169–200.

see them from the perspective of the prehistoric humans who are in the first stages of imagining the stars as punitive gods. At the end of the passage, Lucretius allows us to hear the sky as early humans did, as a soundscape replete with "great murmuring threats" (*murmura magna minarum*, 1193).[52]

Lucretius concludes Book Five by stating directly that the motions of the heavenly bodies "taught" humans time. Here, Lucretius implicitly contrasts the limits of nature with the limitlessness of empire's desire for war and profit, discussing the latter just prior this passage (5.1436–9).[53]

> At vigiles mundi magnum versatile templum
> sol et luna suo lustrantes lumine circum
> perdocuere homines annorum tempora verti
> et certa ratione geri rem atque ordine certo.
>
> But the sun and moon, the watchmen of the world, scattering their light around the great revolving region of heaven, thoroughly taught humans that the times of the years revolve and that all things are administered by a fixed system and in a fixed order.

Lucretius begins by calling the sun and moon the "watchmen of the world" (*vigiles mundi*, 1436), an anthropomorphism that would seem to come close to divinising the sun and moon, the very thing Lucretius argued against in the passage discussed just prior to this one.[54] Here, the anthropomorphism seems to function as a critical irony. It is targeted at contemporaries who, like the prehistoric humans who invested the celestial bodies with divinity, still see the stars and planets as gods. For Lucretius, the sun and moon are "watchmen," I would argue, only in the ironic sense that, if we think about them as Lucretius does, as the material motions from which a sense of time emerges, they watch out for religious misinterpretations of their motions. That is, their lack of anthropomorphic meaning does one thing for us: it guards against our turning them into gods. Unlike in the previous passage, here Lucretius speaks in his own voice, stating his materialistic theory of temporality directly. The universe (*rem*) is a fixed physical order and system (*ratione*), as Lucretius says: "all things are administered by a fixed system and in a fixed order" (*certa ratione geri rem atque ordine certo*, 1439). Lucretius describes how, in this self-organising universe, the motions of the heavenly bodies "thoroughly taught" (*perdocuere*, 1438) humans that the

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[52] The alliteration of *m* sounds seems motivated to enact the aural experience of hearing thunder from the point of view of early humans, as a threat.

[53] *DRN* 5.1436–1439.

[54] Gale 2009, 213 notes that the language here echoes the earlier account, discussed above, of the origins of religion at 5.1183–4.

"times of the years revolve" (*annorum tempora verti*). Here too, the fact that the sun, moon, and stars "thoroughly taught" humans time implies that no further teaching or meaning of the heavenly bodies is warranted, since the direct perception of time from the physical motions of the heavens was sufficient for early humans to understand the meaning of the motions of the heavens. No further mythological or religious meaning should be added.[55]

5 Material time

Lucretius concludes Book Five approximately fifteen lines later, summarising the evolution of humanity from prehistory to the Roman Republic. He claims that "time" (*aetas*, 1454) and "reason" (*ratio*, 1455) were the main drivers of the evolution of culture, thereby linking the time of history, the time of moral development, and the time of physics to his description of human anthropology (5.1454–7).[56]

> sic unumquicquid paulatim protrahit aetas
> in medium ratioque in luminis erigit oras;
> namque alid ex alio clarescere corde videbant,
> artibus ad summum donec venere cacumen.
>
> In this way, little by little time draws forth each and every thing and reason raises it onto the shores of light. For they saw in their mind one thing grow clear from another, until they arrived at the highest peak of the arts.

By the time he reaches his conclusion to Book Five here, Lucretius has already shown that the human *sensus* of time emerges from the material conditions of the earth and the motions of the heavenly bodies. Lucretius' mention of time (*aetas*) here, despite the fact that he has made it the subject of *protrahit* ("draws forth," 1454), cannot be understood as a metaphysical or immaterial entity moving history forward. How could an atomist like Lucretius, given everything he has said about time up to this point in Book Five, claim that an independent, *per se* notion of time draws history forward? To do so would be strikingly inconsistent with his theory of temporality in Book One and his depiction of time in Book Five. The language of the phrase in question, however, re-

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55 Lucretius is hinting at Epicurus' concept of τὸ προσδοξαζόμενον, the "false addition of opinion" or "imported assumption" of religious or mythological meaning to natural phenomena. *Ep. Hdt.* 62. Cf. Gale 1994, 132.

56 Cf. Luciani 2000, 117–77.

veals a clue. As Leonard and Smith have noted, *protrahit* is a material metaphor, meaning to "drag out" or "drag forward."[57] The complete phrase, *protrahit...in medium*, seems to mean "to make public" or "make visible."[58] But I would argue that the metaphor in the phrase is mixed, since Lucretius may also have in mind the idea of dragging forth a ship from sea onto land, a metaphorical valence made possible by the end of sentence: *in luminis...oras* ("onto the shores of light," 1455). While Lucretius seems prima facie to claim that time (*aetas*) is the driver of history, the materiality of the metaphor that he uses to say this reinforces the link, established throughout Book Five, between time and the material motion.

This material reading of *aetas* at the close of Book Five is in agreement with Elisabeth Asmis' argument that a central theme throughout Book Five is the growth of the human mind via interaction with the "systematicity" or "order" (*ratio*) of the natural world.[59] Thus, like *ratio* ("reason"), *aetas* ("time"), as has been argued throughout this chapter, is a relational entity. It is neither purely subjective nor objective, interior nor exterior, human nor nonhuman, but a development from the history of the interaction of the mind with the natural environment. As such, Lucretius' theory of temporality is a thoroughly relational one. But this relationality is, paradoxically, also what makes it a deeply realist theory of time. As mathematician and relativity theorist Hermann Minkowski predicted in 1952, "Henceforth space by itself, and time by itself, are doomed to fade away into mere shadows, and only a kind of union of the two will preserve an independent reality."[60] Lucretius would add to Minkowski's assertion a third element: that from time and space emerges a *sensus* of time that develops over the course of history, thereby highlighting the interplay of the subjective and objective aspects of human temporality as it develops over time.

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57 Leonard and Smith 1968, 245.

58 Cp. Verg. *Aen*. 2.122: *hic Ithacus vatem magno Calchanta tumultu protrahit in medios*. Cf. Bailey 1954, 1549.

59 Asmis 1996, 763–78.

60 Minkowski 1952, 75.

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Vivien Longhi
Le temps des crises chez Galien

Abstract: Timing of crises in Galenus. This chapter explores one aspect of the ancient physicians' thought on time, namely the creation of the complex calendars of the diseases' rhythm and the crises' timing. Galenus' doctrine of critical days receives a special attention, as is exposed in his treatise *De diebus decretoriis*. The Pergamene physician revises Hippocratic knowledge on diseases. It makes it more precise, by deciding on certain temporal aporias that were left unsolved. In addition, he grounds the theory of crises in Aristotelian philosophy. In fact, crises are explicitly conceived of as natural phenomena, borrowing their elegant regularity from the φύσις. Even if accidents can affect this well-ordered timing, it must be assumed that the healing power of Nature is active in the body to posit a correct diagnostic.

La médecine ancienne apparaît comme un art du temps par excellence. Elle est confrontée à la finitude de l'existence (βίος βραχύς), comme le rappelle le premier des célèbres *Aphorismes* hippocratiques, attentif à l'extrême instabilité des choses humaines[1]. Le médecin doit aussi cultiver la technique qui lui permet de saisir la bonne occasion, le moment opportun pour agir. Un dernier enjeu fondamental de l'art est enfin de prévoir le développement des maladies et leurs jours de crise. Temps humain, temps opportun pour l'action thérapeutique et durée des maladies sont donc les trois pôles de la réflexion des médecins anciens sur la temporalité. À quoi l'on pourrait ajouter que certains techniciens interrogent la place de leur art dans le cheminement historique de l'humanité[2]. Certaines de ces questions ont été traitées : c'est le cas du motif de l'occasion propice au soin[3] ainsi que des thèmes de l'âge du patient et de la vieillesse[4]. Je me concentrerai donc sur la question du temps des maladies.

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1 *Aph.* 1.1 : Ὁ βίος βραχὺς, ἡ δὲ τέχνη μακρὴ, ὁ δὲ καιρὸς ὀξὺς, ἡ δὲ πεῖρα σφαλερὴ, ἡ δὲ κρίσις χαλεπή. «La vie est courte, l'art est long, l'occasion fugitive, l'expérience trompeuse, le jugement difficile.» Toutes les traductions proposées dans cet article sont personnelles sauf mention contraire.

2 Par exemple Hippoc. *VM* 1–7.

3 Le καιρός médical dont la perception permet la bonne intervention technique a été étudié par M. Trédé 2015, 155–193.

4 Sur la vieillesse, voir notamment Magdelaine 2003 pour la *Collection hippocratique*, et Boudon-Millot 2018 pour Galien.

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La médecine antique fait une grande place au pronostic de la durée du mal[5]. Un simple relevé du lexique utilisé par les médecins pour désigner les fièvres suffit à prendre conscience du souci du détail qui est le leur pour décrire leurs fluctuations temporelles[6]. Les crises, moments de résolution du mal qui suivent souvent son exacerbation, servent à forger cette temporalité irrégulière[7]. Les médecins anciens sont donc persuadés que la plus grande part des maladies fébriles et aiguës, mais aussi certaines maladies chroniques[8] se résolvent en des jours identifiables (les jours de crise), et après avoir donné lieu de façon plus ou moins claire à un certain nombre de signes pathologiques, eux-mêmes situés en amont de la solution du mal et en des moments bien précis (les jours critiques). La complexité de la théorie des crises est déconcertante pour nous et l'était déjà dans l'Antiquité[9]. Le raffinement et le sens du détail d'un Hippocrate et d'un Galien sur les crises peuvent laisser le lecteur moderne incrédule. La théorie «décroche» en effet probablement largement des seules données issues de l'observation par extrapolation[10]. Les accès critiques des maladies ne sont toutefois pas sans aucun fondement : ils se constatent encore dans certaines pathologies, par exemple dans la malaria. On a pu supposer qu'elle était très répandue dans le monde méditerranéen ancien et avait servi de modèle pour la réflexion hippocratique sur le temps[11]. Les fluctuations des maladies, qui ont une place si importante dans les observations des médecins anciens, pourraient alors être en partie justifiées par une prévalence de pathologies à fièvre récurrente dans le bassin méditerranéen. L'exploitation thérapeutique de calculs

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5 La réflexion sur le temps est structurée par l'exigence du pronostic, voir Langholf 1990, 232–254.

6 Fièvres «éphémères» mais aussi «tierces», «quartes», «septanes», «nonanes», «hémitri-tées», «synoches» ou «continues»...un bon aperçu de cette richesse terminologique se trouve dans la *Collection hippocratique*, *Epid.1* 24 (éd. Jouanna, p. 34). La récurrence des accès fébriles est donc décrite très minutieusement dès les premiers textes médicaux. Voir Longhi 2017 et 2020, 160 – 164 pour des exemples de calendriers critiques des maladies.

7 Sur le sens de la notion dans la médecine hippocratique voir Langholf 1990, 79 – 117, Pigeaud 2006 et Longhi 2020, 140 – 170.

8 Cette distinction de «l'aigu» et du «chronique» déjà présente dans la *Collection hippocratique* se trouve ensuite notamment chez Arétée de Cappadoce, Caelius Aurelianus, Soranos et d'autres médecins, Roselli 2004, 164 – 165. Voir Gal. *Di.Dec.* 2.5 = K 9.866.4 pour la démonstration que les maladies chroniques ont aussi des accès et des crises, quoique parfois atténués à mesure que le temps passe.

9 Elle aurait été rejetée notamment par Asclépiade de Bithynie, considéré comme le fondateur du courant de médecine méthodiste. Voir Vallance 1990, 94 et note 5. Galien le critique deux fois à ce propos dans *Cris.* 3.8 (= K 9.735) et *Di.Dec.* 1.6 (= K 9.798 – 799).

10 Langholf 1990, 106 – 118 et Longhi 2018.

11 Grmek 1994, p. 277.

aussi complexes sur la durée des maladies est aussi souvent soulignée par les médecins eux-mêmes. Pour Galien comme pour Hippocrate avant lui, la connaissance des crises permettra de ne pas se tromper sur le régime à délivrer au patient tel ou tel jour (*Di.Dec.* 2.5 = K 9.869.11 : τὸ μὲν οὖν πιστὸν ἢ ἄπιστον τῆς κρίσεως εἰς τὸ καλῶς διαιτᾶν...διαφέρει· «La connaissance de ce qui est certain ou incertain dans la crise fait la différence pour établir le bon régime»). «Le plus habile à pronostiquer est donc aussi le meilleur médecin» (*Di.Dec.* 1.11 = K 9.827.2 – 3). Même si l'importance accordée par les Anciens aux crises a été largement contestée par la médecine moderne[12], on peut faire l'hypothèse qu'une telle conception du temps avait un intérêt psychologique pour faciliter le soin, une sorte d'effet *placebo* qui n'est pas explicitement formulé. Elle permettait au médecin antique de revendiquer sa présence au chevet du malade lors des moments décisifs, les fameux jours critiques. De tels calendriers pouvaient en outre permettre au patient de mieux résister à la violence du mal : en segmentant le temps selon des temps forts de la maladie, où mobiliser tout son courage, et des temps faibles, où étaient permis un peu de repos et de relâchement, la douleur devait sembler moins pénible et répétitive. Les crises et jours critiques étaient comme autant de haltes, d'étapes et de rencontres avec le praticien sur le chemin de la convalescence.

Le traité des *Jours critiques* de Galien reprend et prolonge le questionnement hippocratique sur le temps des crises avec pour ambition de déterminer précisément quels jours sont les plus favorables pour qu'adviennent des crises salutaires[13]. Il est impossible de rendre compte dans le détail, dans les limites d'un article, de l'ensemble des réflexions galéniques, très riches et parfois d'une extrême complexité[14]. En revanche, on s'attachera à celles des explications

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12 Les houleux débats sur les crises sont très sensibles dans les articles médicaux de l'*Encyclopédie* de Diderot et D'Alembert, sur lesquels je reviendrai. Voir Pigeaud 2006, 56 – 60 pour un commentaire de la position de Philippe Pinel. Le clinicien affirme que «le plus souvent la solution de la maladie, quand elle n'a point été troublée dans son cours, s'annonce sans trouble et de manière calme», sans «l'appareil imposant des symptômes que décrit Galien» (*Méthode d'observer en médecine*).

13 Le chapitre 2 du livre 1 (= K 9.774) expose clairement l'objectif de l'ouvrage : établir, recenser et rendre raison des différences entre les jours critiques (διαφοραὶ τῶν κρισίμων ἡμερῶν). Le traité des *Crises* a quant à lui distingué les différents types de crise possibles.

14 Ce traité en trois livres occupe la deuxième partie du volume 9 des œuvres complètes de Galien éditées par Kühn, dernière édition en date accompagnée d'une traduction latine, à laquelle nous emprunterons toutes nos citations du texte grec (= K 9). L'article «crise» de l'*Encyclopédie* de Diderot et D'Alembert, écrit par le médecin Théophile de Bordeu, témoigne parfaitement de l'extrême richesse de la doctrine : il a des dimensions monumentales à l'échelle des articles médicaux de l'*Encyclopédie*, puisqu'il comporte dix-huit pages (IV, 471b-489b), dont

données par le médecin de Pergame qui tendent à dissiper les obscurités de la *Collection hippocratique* sur la question du temps, ou à en rendre certains présupposés explicites. La réflexion galénique offre en outre un cadre théorique résolument nouveau pour penser le temps pathologique, désormais conçu ouvertement comme reflet et résultat du mouvement naturel.

1 Explicitation et systématisation des savoirs hippocratiques sur le temps

Sur la question du calcul de la durée des maladies, comme sur d'autres questions médicales, Galien veut clarifier, ordonner, et systématiser l'enseignement d'Hippocrate. Son prédécesseur n'aurait en effet pas donné selon lui «un seul enseignement» facilement accessible sur les jours critiques (οὐ μίαν ἐν ἅπασι τοῖς βιβλίοις ἐποιήσατο κρισίμων ἡμερῶν διδασκαλίαν, 2.5 = Κ 9.872.9 – 10)[15]. Au contraire, les données observées par l'illustre et admirable fondateur de la médecine seraient plutôt éparses. Galien poursuit donc une exégèse serrée des écrits hippocratiques où la théorie est présente, soit les *Épidémies I-III*, le *Pronostic* et les *Aphorismes* (*Di.Dec.* 1.3 = Κ 9.781). Tant et si bien que le médecin s'efface même parfois derrière les observations précises menées par Hippocrate (2.5 = Κ 9.867.15 – 17 : εἰ δὲ καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς πείρας ἐφεξῆς ἀναμνημονεύσαιμι, μακρότερος μὲν ὁ λόγος ἔσται, πιστότερος δ' οὐδὲν μᾶλλον, «si en outre je rappelais les résultats de mon expérience, mon discours en serait allongé, mais pas du tout plus convaincant»)[16]. La rhétorique de la fidélité à Hippocrate cache mal des modifications assez substantielles introduites en réalité dans la conception hippocratique du temps. Trois aspects du travail d'exégèse et de systé-

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une bonne partie consacrée à la théorie galénique. Pour la bibliographie sur la question des jours critiques chez Galien, voir Sudhoff 1929, 5 – 9, Garofalo 2003 et Cooper 2011 pour une traduction de la version arabe du traité. Plus récemment Jackson Miller 2018 traite du problème du temps chez Galien en se concentrant principalement sur l'innovation qu'est la prise en compte des heures du jour dans le calcul des crises. Notons enfin la tenue en février 2020 d'un «workshop» à l'université de Berlin intitulé «Kairos, Krisis, Rhythmos. Time and Time Awareness in Ancient Medicine .» Le programme que j'ai pu consulter faisait une bonne place à la réflexion galénique sur le temps.

15 Galien rejoint là les commentateurs modernes : Langholf 1990, 136 – 140 parle de « lack of explicitness» à propos des écrits hippocratiques.

16 En d'autres lieux Galien se départit de cette image de pur exégète en évoquant des observations à grande échelle qu'il aurait menées lui-même sur plus de quatre cents patients pour calculer les durées des maladies (2.7 = Κ 9.873.6 *sq.*).

matisation auquel se livre le médecin de Pergame seront analysés : Galien produit des taxinomies méticuleuses des jours critiques ; il précise la manière de délimiter les périodes et les crises des maladies ; il cherche à résoudre le problème de la définition du début de la pathologie.

Le médecin de Pergame veut établir une claire taxinomie des durées pathologiques[17]. Ces classements ont un sous-bassement axiologique : il s'agit d'opposer différents types de jours critiques selon leurs bénéfices pour le patient, leur capacité à voir se dérouler une «bonne crise» et donc selon leur puissance salutaire[18]. Une opposition fondamentale dans les maladies est ainsi celle du sixième et du septième jour. Au livre I du traité sur les *Jours critiques*, le nombre 7 apparaît comme celui qui voit se terminer le plus grand nombre de maladies de façon favorable (καὶ γὰρ καὶ πλείστους κρίνει καὶ τελείως, 1.4 = K 9.784.l. 9). L'affirmation est toutefois relativisée : si ce septième jour permet souvent la guérison du malade, le changement peut aussi s'opérer à ce moment-là vers le mal. En ce cas, les patients mourront plus tard (ἔν τινι τῶν ἐφεξῆς κρισίμων ἀπόλλυνται, 1.4 = K 9.785.3). Des exceptions viennent, on le voit, nuancer les classements galéniques, qui doivent éviter de se heurter à des observations factuelles par excès de dogmatisme. Rien d'aussi net et systématique ne se trouvait toutefois dans les observations cliniques d'Hippocrate dont Galien se revendique pourtant[19]. On rencontrait même dans les *Épidémies* des listes importantes sans presqu'aucun jour critique multiple de sept et le *Pronostic* privilégiait quant à lui le nombre 4[20]. En prétendant s'abstenir de tout ajout, tel un parfait exégète, Galien réorganise donc en fait les savoirs dont il hérite. Par

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17 τάξωμεν, 1.3 = K 9.783.18 ; τάξιν τῶν κρισίμων, 2.5 = K 9.865.10. Les jours décisifs entrent dans différentes catégories : on trouvera souvent le mot στοῖχος pour désigner ces «groupes» de jours qui ont des caractéristiques communes, et qui sont plus ou moins favorables pour le sort du patient.

18 Le lexique de la puissance, de la supériorité revient constamment à propos des jours critiques de la maladie. Δύναμις, 2.5 = K 9.869.17 ; ὑπεροχή, 2.4 = K 9.856.l. 2 ; οὐχ ὁμοτίμους, 2.7 = K 9.873.16. Dès la *Collection Hippocratique* les médecins ont coutume d'opposer de vraies crises qui sauvent le patient à des crises apparentes qui annoncent des rechutes ou la mort. Voir, par exemple, la définition donnée par Galien dans *Cris.* 3.3 = K 9.706.14 *sq.* où sont énumérés quatre éléments essentiels qui permettent de définir une ἀγαθὴ κρίσις.

19 C'est en effet seulement dans un autre pan du corpus, les œuvres à tendance philosophiques et cosmologiques, souvent d'ailleurs exclues dans l'Antiquité, de la *Collection hippocratique*, qu'on rencontre la claire valorisation du nombre 7. *Fœtus de sept mois* (*Septim.*) 9 (Littré 7, 448) compare les étapes de la grossesse à celles de la maladie et accorde de l'importance au 1er et au 7ème jour. Voir aussi, toujours d'époque classique, *Chairs* pour la prégnance du nombre 7 dans la croissance humaine (*Carn.* 19), ainsi que le tardif traité des *Semaines*, qui répond aussi à une logique septénaire. Pour cette numérologie voir Giorgiani 2014, 143–150.

20 *Collection hippocratique*, *Epid.1* 26 (Jouanna, p. 37–39), *Prog.* 20 (Jouanna, p. 57–59)

opposition à ce jour «roi» (βασιλεύς, 1.4 = K 9.786.17) qu'est le septième jour, le sixième jour apparaît quant à lui comme un «tyran» (τύραννος 787.1), qui se plaît à faire souffrir et à prolonger l'agonie de ceux qui connaissent alors une crise. Même quand elles semblent résolutoires, les crises qui ont lieu le sixième jour donneront en effet lieu à des rechutes (ὑποτροπιάζει γὰρ ἐνίοτε τὸ νόσημα, κἂν ἀκριβῶς δόξῃ λελύσθαι, «il y aura rechute parfois, même si la maladie semble parfaitement résolue», 1.5 = K 9.791.16). On le voit, le jour «tyran» met à mal la faculté de prévision du médecin, et menace de prolongements capricieux de la maladie. L'image politique rappelle l'imprévisibilité du temps pathologique, déconcertant, malgré toute l'acribie du médecin déployée pour le circonscrire.

Cette σύγκρισις du sixième et du septième jour est exemplaire de la manière dont Galien ordonne ses connaissances sur la durée des maladies : il s'interroge successivement sur la valeur respective de tel ou tel jour et sa supériorité par rapport à d'autres (ὑπεροχή) pour dénouer les maladies. On pourrait citer en ce sens la discussion concernant les quatorzième et quinzième jours. Multiple de sept, le quatorzième jour hérite de la puissance du «nombre roi» dont nous venons d'observer la salutaire efficacité. Quand les principaux symptômes, paroxysmes de fièvre, urines, crachats, n'ont pas d'évolution significative au jour critique mentionné, Galien peut affirmer que la maladie sera plus longue ou bien fera des rechutes[21]. Certains jours sont même tout à fait déclassés et dégradés, puisqu'ils ne peuvent pas voir se dérouler une crise : c'est le cas par exemple du 12ᵉᵐᵉ et du 16ᵉᵐᵉ jour (1.4 = K 9.787.16). L'on pourrait observer d'autres bilans sur «l'ordre des jours critiques» (comme 2.8 = K 9.875.13 *sq.*)[22].

Galien renforce aussi la notion de jours «annonciateurs» ou «révélateurs» (ἐπίδηλοι) permettant d'anticiper la crise. Le quatrième jour annonce ainsi régulièrement le septième jour salvateur et critique. Le mot se trouvait certes dans la *Collection hippocratique*, mais exprimé une seule fois dans les *Aphorismes* (2.24 = Littré 4, 476, 11[23]). L'idée est répétée en revanche plus d'une dizaine de fois dans le traité de Galien (par exemple 1.11 = K 9.820.14 – 15 : πάνυ γὰρ ἀκριβῶς παραφυλάξαντες ἐπὶ τῶν ὀξέως νοσούντων, εὕρομεν ἐπίδηλον ἀεὶ τὴν τετάρτην τῆς ἑβδόμης, «si l'on surveille avec toute la précision nécessaire ceux qui souffrent de maladie aiguë, on trouvera que le quatrième jour est souvent annonciateur du septième»). Il faut concrètement entendre que le médecin doit observer ce qui se passe au quatrième jour pour tenter de pronostiquer si le

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21 C'est le cas en *Di.Dec.* 1.7 = K 9.807.16, pour une maladie dont les signes critiques apparaissent au 15ᵉᵐᵉ jour et non dans la nuit salutaire du 13ᵉᵐᵉ au 14ᵉᵐᵉ jour.

22 Sudhoff 1929, 5 – 7 en traite d'autres.

23 L'adjectif est aussi employé dans *Chairs*, à propos des étapes du développement de l'enfant.

septième jour verra ou non se produire une crise favorable. C'est donc un couple numéral, principalement le couple 4/7, mais pas seulement, que le médecin doit garder à l'esprit plutôt que de simples dates. On pourrait voir là une ressemblance avec des modes de pensée religieux du temps, qui font correspondre entre eux des rituels séparés par un intervalle de jours précis, tel événement anticipant tel autre (qu'il suffise de penser à la Pentecôte des chrétiens, cinquante jours après Pâques).

Galien précise en outre les règles de calcul de certaines unités de mesure importantes pour le décompte du temps pathologique. Il fixe ainsi la durée normale d'une période, qui restait floue chez Hippocrate[24]. La période parfaite est un cycle de trois semaines (2.8 = K 9.876.9). Elle dure vingt jours moyennant un système de calcul par inclusion (qui n'aboutit donc pas au chiffre 21 comme on s'y attendrait spontanément) familier des anciens médecins comme des musiciens, et que Galien voyait déjà à l'œuvre dans le *Pronostic* hippocratique (*Prog.* 20)[25]. Ce sont des multiples de cette période de vingt jours qui détermineront les périodes des autres maladies, qu'elles durent quarante, soixante, quatre-vingt ou cent vingt jours.

Galien s'interroge aussi sur les moments de crise eux-mêmes (1.8 = K 9.810 – 811). Cela peut s'expliquer par l'importance de l'enjeu : de la détermination du jour où a vraiment lieu une crise, dépend ensuite l'ensemble du schéma critique d'une maladie, donc son pronostic et, avec lui, la date des visites du médecin. Si la crise dans son épure est un mouvement brusque vers la santé (Μόνη τοίνυν ἁπλῶς κρίσις ἡ εἰς ὑγείαν ὀξύρροπος μεταβολή, «la seule crise au sens plein du terme est celle qui opère un basculement soudain vers la santé» *Cris.* 3.2 = K 9.703.13), il existe toutefois des crises qui ont une certaine durée (αὐτὸν τὸν χρόνον τῆς κρίσεως, «le temps propre de la crise», *Di.Dec.* 1.8 = K 9.810.8). Elles ont alors des καιροί, des phases (ἀριθμὸν τῶν κριτικῶν καιρῶν, 810.9). Ces trois étapes sont respectivement le «début du paroxysme critique», le «début du mouvement critique» et «la fin de la crise» (810.17 – 18). Cette analyse fine permet de mieux «dater» une crise : si le médecin ne parvient pas à savoir par exemple si elle a lieu au 9ème ou au 10ème jour, et donc si elle est une «bonne crise» ou une «mauvaise crise», il doit considérer que la crise a véritablement lieu le jour où se sont produits deux de ses trois καιροί critiques, deux de ses

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24 Langholf 1990, 104 – 105 pour les périodes des *Épidémies I-III* et p. 97 – 99 pour celles du *Pronostic*.

25 Pour l'addition des semaines par inclusion et non par exclusion (*Di.Dec.* 2.4 = K 9.855 – 856). Sur ce système de décompte chez Hippocrate, voir Langholf 1990, 97 – 99, et Jouanna 2013, 217. Voir Longhi 2020 pour l'intérêt pragmatique qui peut être retiré de ce calcul un peu flou, 161 – 164.

trois phases (811.1–2). Galien remarque aussi à ce sujet que son mentor lui-même détermine parfois la date des crises approximativement, quand il s'agit de maladies plutôt longues (περὶ τὴν εἰκοστήν, «autour du vingtième jour», peut-on ainsi lire chez Hippocrate, 2.5 = K 9.862.1). Cela le conduit à affirmer qu'au-delà de vingt jours de maladies, les crises sont alors moins ponctuelles et souvent plus étales (863). Hippocrate avait donc raison de se donner de la souplesse quand il recensait les jours de crise des maladies de longue durée.

Galien soulève enfin le problème du commencement des maladies. Comment faire un pronostic correct en effet si on ne peut appréhender précisément le début d'une pathologie ? Face à la diversité des façons de tomber malade «il semble difficile de fixer le début d'une maladie» (Τίνα δ' οὖν ἀρχὴν τῷ νοσήματι θέσθαι προσήκει, χαλεπὸν εἶναι δοκεῖ, 1.6 = K 9.795.17–18). Cela pourrait bien relever de «l'indéterminable» (ἀναίσθητον, 796.1), et il y a toujours le risque que les patients ne s'en aperçoivent pas. La solution trouvée par Galien est de faire de la fièvre le point de départ le plus sûr pour une pathologie. Contrairement à des symptômes mineurs, il est plus difficile de la laisser échapper facilement, qu'on soit médecin ou malade (797.13–798). Le début de la maladie s'observe concrètement, il ne relève pas d'un pur parti pris théorique comme voudraient le croire des opposants, qualifiés de «sophistes»[26]. Il faudrait idéalement pouvoir percevoir le commencement de la fièvre à l'heure près, pour établir le calendrier critique de la maladie au mieux, sans risquer «la destruction de l'art médical» (Galien ne donne pas ici dans l'euphémisme, 798.6). Sur ce point encore, la recommandation hippocratique n'était ni si précise, ni si explicite et systématisée, contrairement à ce qu'en dit son exégète (798.12–15) : les médecins des *Épidémies* prenaient régulièrement pour point de départ soit l'alitement, soit la fièvre, soit même, certes plus rarement, d'autres signes encore (comme l'insomnie)[27]. L'essentiel de cette solution galénique repose sur un pragmatisme assumé, comme cela apparaît clairement un peu plus loin au livre 2.1 (= K 9.842.17–843.3) : «les commencements des maladies ne se fixent pas d'après la

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[26] Le médecin de Pergame fulmine régulièrement contre ceux qui veulent nier ou fragiliser la théorie des jours critiques. Il les compare à des «accusateurs» (δεινοὶ τῶν κρισίμων κατήγοροι, 1.3 = K 9.778.11) et des «sophistes» (K 9.783.9). Contre cette poignée d'hommes qui s'acharne à ne pas adhérer à la théorie et à qui est dénié le qualificatif de «médecin», Galien argue d'un consensus allant même jusqu'au médecins empiriques (2.7 = K 9.875). Il rappelle qu'il s'appuie quant à lui sur la tradition la plus solide : Archigène, Héraclide de Tarente, Philotime, Dioclès, mais encore et surtout Hippocrate. Tous auraient compris l'intérêt des crises et des jours critiques (*Di.Dec.* 1.2 = K 9.775.1–7).

[27] Jouanna 2016, p. 48 de la notice : «ce qui indique régulièrement l'apparition de la maladie, c'est l'apparition généralement d'une forte fièvre... et le début de l'alitement .» Pour le cas d'insomnie qui marque le début de la maladie cf. *Epid.3* 17.11, p. 105–106 Jouanna.

raison (ἐκ λόγου), mais au moyen de leurs propres manifestations (ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς ἐναργείας), je veux dire qu'il y a commencement quand en premier lieu le malade lui-même l'a ressenti clairement (ᾔσθετο σαφῶς), quand la maladie l'a attaqué de telle sorte qu'il a le désir d'en faire part à un des médecins du voisinage.» Une telle méthode de définition du début de la maladie, tout en donnant une place de choix à la sensation du patient, a un grand mérite : elle garantit la possibilité du pronostic médical des jours critiques puisqu'aucune maladie ne peut tout bonnement exister avant que le médecin ne soit appelé à la constater...

2 Le temps des crises : une dynamique naturelle

Un autre trait majeur de la conception du temps pathologique de Galien, outre la systématisation et l'explicitation des savoirs hippocratiques, consiste dans l'analyse des causes de l'ordre critique des maladies. Galien expose plus clairement que ne le faisait la médecine antérieure les raisons qui font que les crises répondent à des lois générales de nature. Il veut fonder par des éléments de philosophie naturelle l'existence des crises, qui ne sont ni pures chimères de théoricien ni observations éparses de médecin empiriste.

   Une première question pourrait s'imposer, au regard de la prévalence de certains nombres, le 4 ou le 7, dans la temporalité établie par Galien : le médecin croit-il à la force du nombre pour expliquer l'ordre régulier des maladies ? Autrement dit, les systèmes critiques relèvent-ils d'une forme de pythagorisme ? On trouve chez Galien quelques expressions ambiguës: «car si Keleanaktidès a eu un frisson au quatre-vingtième jour, qu'il a eu une fièvre aiguë et a connu la crise par une forte transpiration, il est évident que *le nombre vingt a une très grande puissance*, μεγάλην δύναμιν ἔχει, parce que le quatre-vingtième jour est uniquement un multiple de vingt» (2.5 = K 9.865.10 – 12). Le doute est toutefois vite dissipé. Il est affirmé à plusieurs reprises dans le traité que la connaissance des jours critiques n'est qu'*un* des savoirs sur lesquels s'appuyer pour décrypter le sens et la durée de la maladie. Il faut y ajouter une appréhension plus complète du mal qui repose sur l'étude de ses symptômes, à savoir la nature des excrétions, les signes de coction et les évacuations de matière[28]. Haro donc sur le médecin qui croirait pouvoir comprendre la maladie sans observer le patient, par une pure connaissance théorique des jours critiques (1.7 = K 9.803.12 : «si un

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28 Cf. par exemple *Di.Dec.* 1.11 = 9.819.6, où l'on trouve l'expression fréquente τὰ τῆς πέψεως, pour le résultat de la coction. Pour les évacuations voir 1.10 = 9.817.3.

médecin pense que les jours critiques peuvent tout, il est ignorant plutôt que savant»). Il ne faut pas se concentrer seulement sur les calendriers mathématisés des maladies, comme si les jours critiques étaient des entités abstraites du reste du monde naturel. On ne peut pas être pythagoricien sur ce point : «je m'étonne qu'un homme comme Pythagore ait été à la fois aussi sage et ait pu attribuer une telle puissance aux nombres» (3.8 = K 9.923.9–10)[29]. Galien utilise l'expression de «nature du jour» (ἡ τῆς ἡμέρας φύσις, 1.7 = K 9.803.10–11), et le mot «nature» est à entendre là dans son sens fort. Les jours critiques appartiennent bien à un monde d'ordre et de lois plutôt qu'ils ne déterminent seuls la maladie.

Le savant recommande ainsi au bon médecin qui veut être expert des crises de prendre conscience de l'ordre réglé de toute chose (*Di.Dec.* 2.2 = K 9.843.9– 844.8) :

> Il faut que celui qui juge de cela [le temps des crises] soit un spécialiste de la nature, et sache avec précision que cette dernière pourvoit parfaitement à tout et qu'elle fait preuve d'une prévoyance (πρόνοιαν) supérieure pour nos corps, et que, comme nulle autre, elle a recours, pour ses propres mouvements, à des temps ainsi ordonnés (τεταγμέναις). Il est possible de s'en rendre compte dans mon traité De l'Utilité des parties du corps humain. Y a été en effet exposé précisément quelle est la supériorité technique de nature pour façonner le vivant, pour ce qui relève de la croissance embryonnaire, de la gestation et de l'accouchement. Pour chaque animal, la temporalité propre (οἰκεία προθεσμία) de son espèce se conserve exactement, pour tous les embryons en croissance, car la nature a toujours de façon évidente des mouvements ordonnés (τεταγμένας). Et c'est de façon ordonnée qu'après l'accouchement aussi se fait la croissance de chaque animal. Le perfectionnement (τελείωσις) et le déclin (παρακμή) se font en des temps bien définis (χρόνοις ὡρισμένοις). En outre, quiconque a lu les livres sur les Facultés naturelles, et parmi eux, ceux qui traitent point par point de chacune des actions de la nature, est convaincu, je pense, combien les mouvements de nature sont plein de prévoyance et d'ordre (τάξεως).

Il y a une analogie entre le cheminement réglé de la maladie (nommé régulièrement par le médecin τάξις τῶν κρισίμων, cf. 1.3 = K 9.783.l.18, et 2.5 = K 9.865.10) et l'évolution de tout être naturel dans le temps, qui répond aussi à un certain ordre, exprimé là encore par τάττω et ses dérivés. Le modèle de la génération des animaux est central pour justifier l'existence de moments critiques des maladies. Les calendriers pathologiques sont explicables par ceux de la croissance embryonnaire, eux aussi bien définissables selon des nombres précis. En faisant ce rapprochement ici mais aussi à d'autres endroits de son traité,

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29 Sur Galien et Pythagore, voir Langermann 2008, 102 *sq.*

Galien systématise une comparaison hippocratique[30]. On la trouvait aussi sous forme de simple allusion chez Aristote à propos des larves d'insecte[31]. Un passage de la *Physique* fait d'ailleurs de la crise un mouvement d'altération *naturel*[32]. Il apparaît que Galien rejoint clairement le Stagirite sur ce point. S'il y a des mouvements d'altération selon la nature, les crises en font partie, puisqu'elles sont réglées et exhibent un bel ordre temporel, lisible, repérable et évident, du moins aux yeux du médecin.

Le texte suivant explicite encore la relation entre périodes critiques et nature (*Di.Dec.* 2.2 = K 9.845.2–13) :

> Il faut donc que le médecin qui veut être digne, s'il en est, de l'art d'Hippocrate, commence à juger des faits avec cette conviction bien ancrée (πεπεισμένον) que la nature est chose ordonnée (τεταγμένον), et que, quand elle domine la matière (ὕλης), ses mouvements (κινήσεις) s'inscrivent dans des rapports de proportions bien définis (ἀναλογίαις τισὶν ὡρισμέναις) et des périodes ordonnées (περιόδοις τεταγμέναις). Et les choses qui se produisent sans raison et bouleversent l'ordre, quand la nature ne domine pas totalement la matière mais se trouve entravée et empêchée de se mouvoir selon ses mouvements propres, ce sont des accidents qui lui arrivent (αὐτῇ συμπίπτει). Celui qui sera convaincu de cela, ensuite, avec l'expérience, comprendra en outre que le septième jour fait partie des jours critiques, et qu'il est en même temps sûr, résolutoire, sans risque et accompagné de bons signes.

Dans ce bref exposé physique il se précise que la nature a des mouvements ordonnés quand elle domine la matière mais que s'opposent à eux d'autres phénomènes, sans régularité, qui sont des *accidents*. On voit comment la dichotomie clinique entre ordre critique des maladies et pathologies étales et irrégulières trouve ici un soubassement physique et philosophique. L'absence de crise dans une maladie témoigne de mouvements désordonnés de la matière que la nature ne contrôle pas. Elle manifeste la malignité du mal et l'emprise de la pathologie, force contre nature qui domine alors les forces de guérison[33]. Hip-

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30 Hippoc. *Oct.* 9, pour l'existence de «crises» dans les couches, comme il en est pour la santé et la maladie.

31 Arist. *Hist. an.* 553a11.

32 *Arist. Ph.* 230b3-b6 : «Mais qu'en est-il de l'altération ? N'est-ce pas la même chose ? Certaines seraient-elles forcées et d'autres naturelles, par exemple chez ceux qui sont libérés (de la fièvre) en dehors des jours critiques et ceux qui en sont libérés pendant les jours critiques ? Les premiers donc subissent une altération contre-nature, les autres selon la nature.» (Trad. Pellegrin).

33 Pour la définition de la maladie comme phénomène contre nature voir *MM* 2.3 = K 10.86–87: « On a montré qu'il existe dans le corps trois dispositions physiques contre nature : ce sont celles des causes, des états maladifs et des symptômes. Pour les causes, c'est, par exemple, la pléthore ou la corruption. Pour les états maladifs, c'est par exemple, l'inflammation ou la plaie. Pour les

pocrate est encore une fois loué à l'occasion de ce raisonnement philosophique, cette fois comme l'inventeur de l'opposition entre des mouvements naturels beaux et ordonnés et l'agitation déréglée de la matière. Pourtant sur ce point encore, le modèle de Galien était loin d'être aussi explicite. La régularité des crises était certes chez lui liée à celle des saisons (*Aph.* 3.8 ; *Hum.* 13). En revanche, malgré de brefs éloges de la nature, dans un passage philosophique du *Régime* (*Acut.* 1.15)[34], dans les *Épidémies VI* (*Epid.*6 5.1) ainsi que dans le plus tardif traité de l'*Aliment* (*Alim.* 15 et 39), probablement d'époque hellénistique[35], aucun passage hippocratique ne développait une telle conception de l'ordre naturel ni ne faisait de lien explicite entre φύσις et crises. On reconnaît plutôt en fait une forme d'aristotélisme derrière cette définition d'une nature qui par ses mouvements ordonnés impose forme à la matière, hormis quand des accidents viennent affecter sa régularité (συμπίπτω)[36]. Ce dernier verbe reste bien marqué par le sens qu'il a chez le Stagirite[37]. Le *Timée* de Platon n'est pas non plus absent de cette conception galénique d'une matière pathologique déréglée que la nature démiurgique ne parvient malheureusement pas toujours à dominer. Face à ce risque de désordre, la connaissance des jours critiques, et notamment celle de la force du septième jour permettra au médecin, nouveau démiurge, de percer et de déceler l'ordre naturel de la guérison, par-delà les soubresauts pathologiques.

Ces deux principes de l'ordre et du désordre qui organisent le monde ne peuvent être compris qu'au moyen du λόγος (*Di.Dec.* 3.1 = K 9.901.8 – 12). La «raison» médicale doit prendre le relais de «l'expérience» (ἐμπειρία) pour discerner le sens profond des crises, après que ces dernières ont été correctement observées au chevet du patient et répertoriées dans des calendriers complexes. Si la crise est le reflet des mouvements ordonnés de la nature chez le malade, si elle est au corps ce que le mouvement réglé des astres est au cosmos, on comprend mieux alors l'association faite par Galien entre crise et jugement au tribunal[38], ou encore entre crise et décision «royale», à propos du nombre 7 (1.4 = K 9.786.17).

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symptômes, c'est, par exemple, la pâleur ou l'amaigrissement. » (traduction de J. Boulogne 2009, 107).

34 Longhi 2020, 154 – 155 et 170 – 171 pour les crises et les saisons.

35 Galien cite le traité de *L'Aliment* en *Di.Dec.* 1.11 = K 9.823.3 – 4. Il en a fait un commentaire désormais perdu, Jouanna 2017, 534. Voir Jouanna 2003, sur cette nature que Galien réinvente à partir de sa lecture d'Hippocrate.

36 Voir Moraux, 1981 et Hankinson 2008, 225 – 230, pour des remarques sur le rôle d'Aristote dans la physique galénique des causes.

37 Voir Holmes 2015, pour une étude sur le sens de ce mot chez les médecins anciens.

38 *Cris.* 3.1 = K 9.704, où se rencontre la métaphore du procès.

Dans un cadre de pensée où la nature est une force de régularité qui s'impose à la matière, où elle est louée pour le bon ordre qu'elle instaure (comme c'est le cas dans *Jours critiques* avec une référence à *De l'Utilité des parties du corps humain*), la crise peut être dotée d'une valeur morale, en ce qu'elle est le moment de la maladie où la φύσις révèle ses bienfaits. La conception d'une nature providentielle et sa personnification comme démiurge autorisent la réactivation des sens politiques et juridiques de κρίσις, en revanche disparus de la notion hippocratique de crise[39].

Le temps critique des maladies une fois réinscrit dans un ordre naturel plus vaste qui l'englobe, Galien pourra montrer en quoi les mouvements corporels spécifiques que sont les crises ont partie liée avec des mouvements plus généraux du cosmos. Le livre III des *Jours critiques* explique les liens de causalité entre déplacements des astres et temps des maladies[40]. La régularité qu'on constate dans le développement embryonnaire comme dans les maladies, dans le monde sublunaire pourrait-on dire, tant il est vrai que Galien aristotélise, tient aux mouvements des astres. Ce sont eux qui viennent ordonner toute chose dans le monde de la matière (3.1 = K 9.901.10 – 12). Le soleil est bien entendu le premier d'entre eux à imposer son «rythme» aux étants naturels et au corps humain (3.2 = K 9.901.18 – 902.2 : Πάντων μὲν τῶν ἄνωθεν ἄστρων ἀπολαύομεν τῆς δυνάμεως, ἀλλ' ὁ μάλιστα κοσμῶν τὰ τῇδε καὶ ῥυθμίζων καὶ διατάττων ὁ ἥλιός ἐστιν. «Nous jouissons de la puissance de tous les astres du ciel, mais celui qui par excellence ordonne et dicte son rythme ici, et organise les choses, c'est le soleil .») Il est impliqué notamment dans le passage des saisons, mais aussi dans la fructification, la génération, la reproduction (3.2 = K 9.902.1 – 6). Au second rang, vient la lune. Sa force est dérivée de celle du soleil et elle influe elle aussi sur les corps animaux, les moments des règles (καταμηνίων προθεσμίας[41], 3.2 = K 9.903.3) et les périodes des crises épileptiques (ἐπιλήπτων περιόδους). La lune est largement impliquée dans le calendrier critique des maladies, comme cela est rappelé ensuite par un emprunt aux «astronomes égyptiens» (3.6 = K 9.911.16 – 912.2) : «La lune montre naturellement parmi les jours ceux qui seront propres à la maladie, mais aussi à la santé. Si en effet elle s'aligne avec des

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39 Longhi 2020, 140 – 143.

40 C'est ce point qui a retenu le plus l'attention des commentateurs modernes : Garofalo 2003, Cooper 2011 b, 128 – 132, Nutton 2008 et Cooper 2013.

41 Sur ce mot qui revient à plusieurs reprises dans la réflexion de Galien sur le temps, voir Chantraine 2009, s.v. θεσμός. Il peut avoir les sens de «date limite, prescription» dans le langage technique et administratif attique. De nombreux sens juridiques sont attachés au mot θεσμός, comme c'est aussi le cas pour κρίνειν. Pour les règles, καταμήνια, rappelons que le mot est justement composé du «vieux nom de la lune» (Chantraine, 2009, s.v. μήν).

planètes bien tempérées, que l'on appelle bienfaisantes, elle rendra les jours salutaires. Si elle s'aligne avec des astres mal tempérés, elle rendra les jours nocifs .» Et Galien de rapporter ces considérations à l'enseignement hippocratique des *Épidémies*, alléguant des remarques du savant de Cos sur le lien des maladies aux saisons (3.7 = K 9.914.4 *sq.*). Mais le pronostic astrologique du médecin de Pergame va en réalité bien au-delà de ce que laissait voir la médecine de ses prédécesseurs grecs[42].

Dans ce cadre théorique, il reste à expliquer que des maladies au déroulement irrégulier se rencontrent dans l'expérience et que le médecin puisse parfois échouer dans ses prévisions. Il ne faudra pas dans ces cas en venir à croire que le temps de la maladie ne suit absolument aucune règle. Au contraire, ce sont des événements extérieurs, inattendus, ou des erreurs humaines qui viennent s'interposer dans le cheminement naturel de la guérison et déjouer tous les calculs. Ainsi, si, en nature, le quatrième jour est toujours annonciateur du septième, qui voit généralement se produire une crise favorable, des irrégularités peuvent apparaître[43]. De mauvaises thérapeutiques, choisies par un piètre médecin, peuvent fonctionner comme autant de «fausses notes» dans le «rythme» critique (τοσούτων πλημμεληθέντων) et venir le perturber (1.11 = K 9.822.17)[44]. «Car le mouvement de la nature se produit dans des périodes ordonnées selon sa raison propre (λόγον ἴδιον), et à chaque fois qu'il est empêché de respecter ses périodes, c'est à cause de faux pas introduits en lui de l'extérieur (τῶν ἔξωθεν εἰς αὐτὴν ἁμαρτανομένων[45])» (1.11 = K 9.822.18 – 823.3). Galien énumère ensuite

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42 Il n'y a pas de pronostic établi par l'observation des astres dans la *Collection hippocratique* (voir Nutton 2008, 18, avec la note 8 pour la bibliographie sur Hippocrate). Le fragment 64 de Dioclès de Caryste (Van der Eijk 2000, 128 – 131) évoque l'intérêt de l'astrologie pour le pronostic, mais ce passage du *Prognostica de decubitu* est très problématique. Van der Eijk, 2001, p. 135 – 137, rappelle que rien chez Hippocrate ni Dioclès ne vient confirmer l'affirmation du pseudo-Galien.

43 «Si quelque élément extérieur [au mouvement naturel] (τῶν ἔξωθεν) inattendu (ἀδόκητον) se produit en sus, nous y reviendrons, soit que la maladie se meuve violemment vers sa crise, ou bien de façon obscure, soit que la résistance (δύναμις) du malade soit forte ou bien au contraire faible, il faut alors bien faire attention et déterminer s'il va mourir avant le septième jour ou bien s'il sera jugé après» (*Di.Dec.* 1.11 = K 9.821.2 – 7)

44 Le verbe revient à plusieurs reprises dans tout ce passage. Il désigne littéralement ce qui fait entorse au μέλος, se situe «en dehors» de la «phrase musicale .» Voir Chantraine 2009, s.v. πλημμελής, mot dont il est remarqué qu'il appartient aussi au vocabulaire du culte dans la *Septante*. Voir Pigeaud 2006, p. 46 – 51 et Longhi 2020, 155 note 203, pour la notion de de «rythme» en médecine, qui trouve ici chez Galien un très net fondement analogique.

45 La traduction par «faux pas» a l'intérêt de ne pas trahir les sens généraux d'ἁμαρτάνομαι («erreur dans le jugement, dans un geste ou dans la conduite» selon Chantraine, 2009, s.v.), tout

une série d'accidents qui peuvent venir détériorer (βλάπτειν) le pronostic (1.11 = K 9.824.15). Calamités domestiques, vision d'événements effrayants, mauvaises nouvelles, voisins bruyants, insomnie… la liste est longue. Le passage se termine par une affirmation : seul celui qui connait l'enseignement d'Hippocrate distinguera la «force des faux pas» (τῶν ἁμαρτανομένων δυνάμεως, 1.11 = K 9.829.8–10), et l'impact qu'ils peuvent avoir sur l'ordre critique des maladies. Peu importe finalement que le cadre théorique de cette réflexion soit bien plus aristotélicien (et même galénique) qu'hippocratique.

Galien offre donc une très riche réflexion sur la temporalité des maladies marquée par sa volonté d'expliciter l'enseignement de l'Hippocrate des *Épidémies I-III*, du *Pronostic* et des *Aphorismes*. Cette analyse, présentée souvent par son auteur comme pure exégèse, conduit en réalité à modifier substantiellement la conception du temps qu'on trouvait chez les médecins d'époque classique. Galien ratifie définitivement la supériorité de certains nombres, dont le 7, critique et salvateur par excellence, et le 20, qui définit la durée des périodes. Il s'interroge aussi sur la forme exacte que prennent certains moments de la pathologie : les crises elles-mêmes, autour desquelles tout s'organise, ainsi que le début des maladies, point zéro de tout le calendrier. Certaines des apories hippocratiques de la réflexion sur le temps sont ainsi résolues. En outre, Galien attribue la temporalité critique des maladies aux mouvements réglés de la nature. Les crises, par leurs phases ordonnées et prévisibles, sont le reflet et l'effet d'un mouvement naturel de guérison qui œuvre contre le dérèglement de la pathologie. Si certains accidents peuvent venir affecter ce mouvement, il n'en reste pas moins qu'il faut supposer à l'œuvre cette force guérisseuse de nature pour établir un bon pronostic et des calendriers critiques. Les astres qui influent sur les maladies manifestent ce lien de causalité entre temps du monde et temps du corps. Hippocrate était loin d'être aussi explicite et c'est en réalité une physique aristotélicienne qui permet à Galien d'opérer cette clarification décisive sur les causes naturelles du temps critique.

Mais la clarification philosophique expose le système à une accusation de dogmatisme. Il sera maintes fois reproché au médecin de Pergame d'avoir hypertrophié la part de l'astrologie dans sa recherche sur le temps pathologique[46]. En systématisant les règles de calcul des jours critiques, en accordant une importance majeure à certains chiffres ou à certaines périodes, Galien a pu sembler «décrocher» en grande partie de l'observation. Sa réflexion se serait écartée de

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en étant applicable à la question spécifique de la *progression* des maladies qui intéresse Galien. Progression d'ailleurs entravée par des «erreurs» du malade et de son entourage.

46 Pour la critique de ce Galien astrologue à la Renaissance, voir Penutto 2008 et Cooper 2013.

la prudence empirique qui est au contraire attribuée aux écrits hippocratiques par la modernité[47]. En voulant perfectionner la compréhension du temps pathologique, Galien aurait trahi l'esprit du père de la médecine. Certains articles médicaux de l'*Encyclopédie* de Diderot et D'Alembert, s'inscrivant dans le mouvement de la clinique naissante, témoignent de la disgrâce dans laquelle s'abîme la doctrine galénique des jours critiques. Ainsi sous la plume de D'Aumont, à l'entrée «Galénisme» trouve-t-on ce réquisitoire sans appel (*Encyclopédie* VII, 435a-437b) :

> «Ainsi, en distinguant le système physique de Galien d'avec ce qui appartient à Hippocrate, on voit que ce système porte à faux partout ; qu'il n'a aucune réalité ; qu'il n'a par conséquent contribué en rien au progrès de la science de la Médecine. Ce qu'on peut y apercevoir de moins défectueux, c'est qu'il n'était pas absolument incompatible avec la doctrine d'Hippocrate [...] Mais une des choses qu'on peut reprocher avec le plus de fondement à la secte galénique, c'est d'avoir répandu beaucoup d'obscurité dans la supputation des jours critiques ; parce qu'ils ont voulu assujettir des connaissances acquises par l'expérience, par l'observation, à des opinions frivoles ; les uns ont cru avoir trouvé la cause de la force de ces jours dans l'influence des astres, & particulièrement de la lune ; les autres l'ont rapportée à la puissance ou à la vertu des nombres ; cependant ils auraient dû l'apercevoir manifestement dans celle de la maladie même, c'est-à-dire dans les efforts, dans les exacerbations qui opèrent visiblement la coction, & qui sont eux-mêmes des causes très remarquables de la gradation, des progrès de cette coction, qui règle les jours critiques.»

Ce jugement n'est pas le seul mot de la modernité et l'article «crise» rédigé par le médecin Théophile de Bordeu pour l'*Encyclopédie* ferait voir un avis plus modéré sur la doctrine galénique. Il soulève bien néanmoins, malgré son ton polémique, les difficultés inhérentes à l'entreprise galénique de systématisation et de rationalisation de la temporalité des maladies.

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[47] Voir Longhi 2018 pour des rappels sur ces jugements positifs sur Hippocrate au XVIIIe siècle.

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Sophia Papaioannou

Temporality and ekphrastic narrative in the *Aeneid*

Abstract: An epic ekphrasis, being a self-contained narrative unit, interacts with time in multiple ways, and the intensity, depth, and complexity of this interaction depends on the familiarity of the readers/focalisers with the theme of the ekphrastic narrative. Virgil's longer ekphrases (the murals in Juno's temple, the sculpture of the temple of Apollo Cumanus, and the Shield of Aeneas) exemplify three diverse experimentations with narrative temporality. All three consist of several smaller individual depictions that are thematically independent and narrate a complete story. Each of these units may be interpreted independently, with the emphasis set on the particular historical moment that is pictorially dramatised, or functions as a section of a longer historical sequence. The rules that govern narrative chronology in each ekphrasis vary: they are distinguished by the disruption or cancelling of linear time, due to regular intertextuality including the discourse with contemporary politics. Finally, the lingering on specific narrative details over others in several panels, on all three ekphrases, in combination with chronological regressions and violations of linearity, underlines the self-referential character of these pictorial compositions.

A literary ekphrasis, the verbal description of an artwork, is a form of narrative in progress, which traces the attentive and reflective gaze at an elaborate synthesis. At the same time, an ekphrasis also is an attempt towards interpretation of this narrative in progress. The interpretation may be realised by the narrator, who composed the ekphrasis, or by a focaliser, an internal reader of the same narrative synthesis. The narrator's gaze interacts with and complements the focaliser's own, as both aim at interpreting the visual narrative on the basis of their respective familiarity with the depicted theme, all the while approaching the ekphrasis from different chronotopes.[1]

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1 In his seminal article entitled "Narrate and Describe: The Problem of Ekphrasis" Don Fowler [Fowler 1991] identified focalisation as a distinct way in which a literary ekphrasis interacts with the surrounding narrative. Focalisation allows an interpreter to identify more than one reading perspective of a pictorial description, including the perspective of the artist, observer, commissioner of the artwork, author, and of their respective audiences.

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Time is an integral part of a narrative[2]—the interaction of time and narrative is inextricable and reciprocal, and operates on several levels: a narrative is a process that develops over time; the reading of a pictorial narrative takes a certain amount of time during which other activity is paused; the process of narration itself follows distinct order of time (linear, *ab ovo*, regressive, *in medias res*, foreshadowing, spread over different zones/eras—mixing mythological, quasi-historical, and historical time—, a combination of more than one order); the reading of an ekphrastic narrative in particular is set simultaneously into the "historical" time of the narrative, the "historical" time of the focaliser(s), which is different from that of the narrative, and the historical time of the external reader(s). The interaction of the various levels of historicity of time is ideally outlined in one of Pliny's famous villa letters, *Epistle* 5.6.41:

> vitassem iam dudum ne viderer argutior, nisi proposuissem omnes angulos tecum epistula circumire. neque enim verebar ne laboriosum esset legenti tibi, quod visenti non fuisset, praesertim cum interquiescere, si liberet, depositaque epistula quasi residere saepius posses. praeterea indulsi amori meo; amo enim, quae maxima ex parte ipse incohavi aut incohata percolui.

> I should have been trying long ago not to say too much, had I not suggested that this letter should take you into every corner of the place. I don't imagine you will find it tiresome to read about a spot which could hardly tire you on a visit, especially as you have more opportunities if you want an occasional rest, and can take a seat, so to speak, by putting down the letter. Besides, I have been indulging the love I have for all the places I have largely laid out myself or where I have perfected an earlier design. (tr. Radice 1963)

Pliny argues that his villa deserves a lengthy description because it is a spectacle worth visiting even mentally. To enjoy this spectacle one needs to have as much detail thereof as one can offer. Additionally—and this is where I would like to emphasise—he points out that the reader can choose their own time and pace to mentally traverse this spectacle. By equating the function of the letter to cancel temporal and spatial distance between the writer and the addressee, to the description of an artistic representation or ekphrasis, Pliny also equates the actual visual tour of his villa to the mental (through reading) tour thereof. At Pliny's recommendation, further, the reader of *Epist.* 5.6, who traverses the villa mentally, may choose to follow their own observation pace and subject the mental tour to their own temporality: at their leisure, they may pause and rest or reflect, and finish the tour at a later time or the next day, something that may not be an option during a physical tour. This control of the letter-reader/mental viewer of the *descriptio* (the Latin transference of the term "ekphrasis," which, inter-

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2 Currie 2007, 2: "time is a universal feature of narrative."

estingly, conceives the reproduction of the artistic narrative as a written text) over the time, pace, and intensity of study of the *descriptum*, is the great advantage of the perceptual experience over the actual study.

According to Chinn (2007, 269–272),[3] another issue raised in Pliny 5.6, that is directly relevant to the understanding of temporality in an epic ekphrasis, is the issue of self-referentiality that determines the composition mechanism of an artistic representation: in the closing theoretical section of his letter, Pliny parallels his own descriptive practice to that of Homer and Virgil (5.6.43–44),[4] and even though the parallelism concerns the length of the description, temporality is crucial, because a lengthy description may be tiring, and this possibility requires expansion of viewing/"narrative" time (this expansion typically is translated into segmented viewing over a period of time whose length is now determined not by the descriptor but by the viewer):

> [43] vides quot versibus Homerus, quot Vergilius arma hic Aeneae Achillis ille describat; brevis tamen uterque est quia facit quod instituit. vides ut Aratus minutissima etiam sidera consectetur et colligat; modum tamen servat. non enim excursus hic eius, sed opus ipsum est. [44] similiter nos ut "parva magnis," cum totam villam oculis tuis subicere conamur, si nihil inductum et quasi devium loquimur, non epistula quae describit sed villa quae describitur magna est.

> [43] You know the number of lines Homer and Virgil devote to their descriptions of the arms of Achilles and Aeneas: yet neither passage seems long because both poets are carrying out their original intention. You see too how Aratus traces and tabulates the smallest stars, but because this is his main subject and not a digression his work does not lack proportion. [44] It is the same with me, if I may "compare small things with great." I am trying to set my entire house before your eyes, so, if I introduce nothing irrelevant, it is the house I describe which is extensive, not the letter describing it. (tr. Radice 1963)

The length of the description aside, Pliny's privileging the textual over the sensual experience[5] treads carefully around the issue of accuracy, for it leaves some

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3 Pliny's famous parallelism of the tour around his villa to the study of the letter that describes this tour is treated also in Goldhill 2012, 99–105, emphasising the issue of attention: the desideratum for the visitor of the villa and the reader of its description is the attentive gaze which observes every single detail. In his analysis, Goldhill observes the applicability of Pliny's comments to Aeneas' attentive gaze in the three ekphrases discussed in this paper.

4 On Pliny's villa description at *Epist*. 5.6 as metapoetical, an allegory for formulating a theory of ekphrasis-reading that combines several ancient ekphrastic theories, and also as self-referential, see Chinn 2007, who additionally argues that Pliny's understanding of ekphrasis may offer an ancient theoretical basis for the modern use of the term in literary criticism.

5 On Pliny introducing his villas as texts to be read, see Myers 2000, 127, and Bergmann 1995, 410.

questions on the politics of spatiality that the ekphrastic narrative follows. Pliny does not mention the criteria that determined the particular order. This arbitrariness in determining the order by which the individual parts of the villa will be presented introduces a different understanding of temporality when applied to the reading of an epic ekphrasis which usually records some story and spreads across time.[6] This second type of temporality that is entwined with the *fabula*-structure of the epic ekphrasis, and its interaction with the first form of temporality identified in Pliny's account, which concerns the reading pace of the pictorial text, depends on the length of the *descriptum*, and prioritises some units over others,[7] will be discussed below with reference to the lengthier ekphrases of the *Aeneid*.

How Virgil's ekphrastic images relate to time? How does Virgil's manipulation of historical and mythological time in the compendium of Roman history on the Shield of Aeneas (*Aeneid* 8) relate to the understanding of time as an element of plot construction in the other two major ekphrases in the *Aeneid*, specifically the story of the Trojan war depicted on the murals of Juno's temple at Carthage (*Aeneid* 1) and the sculpture on the gates of the temple of Apollo at Cumae by Daedalus (*Aeneid* 6)? All three artworks consist of several smaller individual depictions of thematically independent status, narrating a complete story. The arrangement of these independent narrative units/pictorial panels does not necessarily reflect their actual placement on the overall visual synthesis, nor is space meant to be rendered realistically. In fact, space on Virgilian ekphrases is highly fluid and as such an indication for the malleability of the reading of the respective artwork.[8] The double possibility to view each panel both as independent, self-contained narrative and as segment of a more complex synthesis, a *series*, introduces additional perspectives for its compositional dynamics. More to the point for the present argument, these elaborately conceived narratives invest part of their nuanced composition in the complex way they engage with time. The rules that govern narrative chronology in each ekphrasis vary, but in all three temporality is marked by the disruption or cancelling of linear time, while Virgil's experiment with historiography in the ekphrasis of Aeneas in *Aeneid* 8 engages in dialogue with Augustus' political understanding of temporality based on regularity and projected recurrence, as, following Augustus' reform of the Roman calendar, the apprehension of time, in particular anniversary time, changes, and political and religious events recur not simply every year but

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6 An overview on the highlights of approaching space in ancient ekphrasis, see Paschalis 2002.
7 On space and time in Pliny's ekphrastic narratives in particular, see Riggsby 2003.
8 Contrary to Laird's understanding of ekphrasis as static, consisting of "obedient" and "disobedient" items: Laird 1993.

on a day after an identical interval every year. Linearity is also problematised in the Cumean sculptural synthesis, whose assessment presupposes regular interaction with Catullus 64. Finally, the lingering on specific narrative details over others in several panels, on all three ekphrases, in combination with chronological regressions and violations of linearity, underlines the self-referential character of the compositions.

1 Carthaginian mural paintings (Aen. 1.450–495)

On the paintings that decorate the walls of Juno's temple at Carthage Aeneas interprets the theme of the ekphrasis under the preoccupations of his situation at the time. Lost and shipwrecked in search of a friendly host, he translates the presence of the pictorial narrative of the Trojan War (*Aen.* 1.450–495) as a valuable sign informing him of the locals' familiarity with the Trojan legend and their pro-Trojan feelings (*Aen.* 1.450–452 *Hoc primum in luco nova res oblata timorem / leniit, hic primum Aeneas sperare salutem / ausus, et adflictis melius confidere rebus*, 'in this grove for the first time the appearance of a new situation softened his fear; here for the first time Aeneas dared to hope for safety, and trust that his battered situation will take a turn to the better'[9]). The reading he produces is an ekphrasis of his own making, based a) on his personal memories and b) on his subjective interpretation of the pictorial material before him. It is important to distinguish as much as to realise that in their great majority the narratives recorded on the temple walls have not been experienced personally by Aeneas. This means that during the action described in most of these panels (including the ambush of Troilus, the slaughter of Rhesus, Priam's appeal to Achilles, the supplication of the Trojan women to Minerva) Aeneas was not present to witness the events; with the exception of the single panel that depicts the hero himself in the pictorial composition (1.488 *Se quoque principibus permixtum adgnovit Achivis*, 'he recognised himself, too, amidst the Achaean leaders')—a panel particularly fuzzy in the details, since it is impossible to pinpoint the episode in question, its placement in the chronology of the Trojan War, and the role of Aeneas therein—no other narrative explicitly attests to Aeneas' active participation or even his personal presence. This deliberate distancing of the narrator from the time of the action in the narrative is significant in view of accessing Aeneas' ekphrastic reading as an epic in performance, a composition that tampers with the notion of poetic memory as the memory of the epic bard who composes from

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9 Translations of the *Aeneid* throughout are mine.

memory, and in its metapoetic meaning that is defined within the context of literacy and denotes a demiurge's embrace of the preexisting literary tradition. For like an epic performer Aeneas composes *with* memory.[10] He does not recall events that he eye-witnessed, but has in mind the various traditional accounts, Greek as well as Latin, of each of the epic events narrated on the panels.[11]

Aeneas introduces each of his lengthy ekphrases as a tour—a technique elevated to a method of ekphrastic study in Pliny's villa tours. He surveys closely every panel on the Carthaginian mural (1.453 *Namque sub ingenti lustrat dum singula templo...*, 'for he surveys every single item inside the huge temple') prior to identifying them. The text of the first ekphrasis reproduces a series of episodes, mostly battles, with an emphasis on Greek, primarily Achilles' victories or Trojan defeats, most of them involving Hector more or less directly.[12] The serial arrangement of the panels presents a challenging puzzle: is their arrangement on the mural synthesis the same as the course Aeneas' gaze follows while marveling at the pictures (*Aen.* 1.456–457)?

> videt Iliacas <u>ex ordine</u> pugnas / bellaque iam fama totum vulgata per orbem
>
> He sees the battles of Troy in order, and wars already spread by fama through the entire world.

The intriguing detail is the specification of the arrangement "in order (*ex ordine*)." The mural panels comprise, in the order viewed by Aeneas, depictions of "Atreus' sons and Priam and Achilles raging against both" (458)—the full story of the *Iliad*, Achilles' μῆνις first against Agamemnon (though not Menelaus directly) and then, once Patroclus is dead, against the Trojans (though not Priam personally). As the account of the artwork unfolds, however, it becomes increasingly difficult to understand what sort of "order" is meant. The episodes recorded according to Aeneas' reading do not follow the chronology of the Trojan legend:[13]

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10 Rubin 1995; Minchin 2001.
11 For a basic bibliography on the much-discussed first ekphrasis of the *Aeneid*, see Barchiesi 1997, 280–281; to the studies selected by Barchiesi I would add Williams 1960, Johnson 1976, 99–105; Clay 1988; Leach 1988, 311–319; Lowenstam 1993, 37–49; Barchiesi 1994, 109–124; Fowler 1991; Smith 1997, 26–43; Putnam 1998, 23–54.
12 The Hector-centered reading of the panels is advanced in Smith 1997, 26–43.
13 The table is adapted from Clay 1988, 202, though I do not share his view that Aeneas must be looking at a series of discrete panels. Lowenstam 1993, 43–44 and La Penna 2000 both investigate the possible thematic significance of this anachronous sequence, but neither tries to connect it with Aeneas' viewing process.

A. Two Scenes of War (466–468)	Epic Cycle	~
B. Death of Rhesus (469–473)	*Iliad* 10	3
C. Death of Troilus (474–478)	*Cypria*	1
D. Peplos offered to Athena (479–482)	*Iliad* 6	2
E. Mutilation and Ransom of Hector (483–487)	*Iliad* 22–24	4
F. Aeneas among the Achaeans (488)	???	
G. Memnon (489)	*Aethiopis*	6
H. Penthesilea (490–493)	*Aethiopis*	5[14]

Aeneas' violation of the Epic Cycle chronological order signifies a different type of order; the very term *ordo* on occasion may refer equally to time and space.[15] The chronological tabulation of the ekphrastic narrative above discourages an association of *ordo* with time. Similarly speculative is the suggestion that the phrase *ex ordine* (*Aen.* 1.456) represents spatial order (the way the panels are arranged on the walls).[16] The *descriptio* conspicuously lacks modifiers of distinct location, and the vagueness in the meaning of the local adverbs that do exist and mark this *ordo* argues against such a spatially determined arrangement. Only two of the panels are introduced with some information regarding a spatial placement, yet both introduce locations that are not precisely situated: the Rhesus panel is set "not far from here (*nec procul hinc...* 469)," and the Troilus panel is "on the other side (*parte alia...* 474)." The panel of the Trojan suppliants is introduced with a modifier usually denoting time, *interea...* (479), and similarly the transition to the panel depicting Priam's supplication of Achilles is effected by

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14 I agree with Boyd 1995, 80, that the chronological reversal of the Memnon and Penthesilea episodes at the closure of the Carthaginian ekphrasis can alert the reader to suspect of bias in Aeneas' selective gaze.

15 According to the *OLD* s.v. 1e, *ex ordine* can refer to chronological sequence ("in [chronological] order"), but also to spatial arrangement ("in a row"). On the ambiguity of the phrase, see Clay 1988, 202 and Barchiesi 1994, 116–118. Ravenna 1974, 16–17 lists occurrences of *ex ordine* and similar phrases in Virgilian and later ekphrases: the sense often seems to hover between the chronological and the spatial. Should we embrace the view that *ex ordine* is tied to chronological sequence, we must accept that Aeneas is looking at the events from the war depicted in their proper narrative sequence, but we can attribute the temporal disorder of the description to the direction of his gaze: he would be looking back and forth over the artwork, focussing on some scenes while omitting others.

16 This is actually the view supported also by Putnam, among others; in Putnam 1998, 26, Aeneas sees "the scenes of battle in a row..., the smaller spacings of Carthaginian art (*ordo*) taking their restricted place in the grander sphere (*orbis*) [*Aeneid* 1.457] of what humankind as a whole knows."

means of an adverb that may indicate place as well as time, "then, next," *tum*...
(485).[17]

The puzzling ordering of the Trojan narrative painted on the Carthaginian mural may be explained only thematically, according to Servius (ad *Aen.* 1.456):

> EX ORDINE: hoc loco ostendit omnem pugnam esse depictam, sed haec tantum dicit quae aut Diomedes gessit aut Achilles, per quod excusatur Aeneas, si est a fortioribus victus.

> EX ORDINE: in this passage [Virgil] shows that the whole battle has been depicted, but he mentions only the deeds of either Diomedes or Achilles, so that Aeneas is excused if he is defeated by stronger men. (my translation)

According to Servius, Aeneas reads the murals selectively, by focussing on panels which revolve around Achilles and Diomedes. A thematically based composition may accommodate, even endorse the lack of clarity in the administration of time and space, while it precludes a single correct reading. The open text thus produced transforms the ekphrasis into a miniature epic composition, while the disruption of serial chronology highlights the self-referential character of the synthesis, because it transforms the account of the Trojan-War Cycle into a compartmentalised narrative chain—a sequence of episodes that are replaceable and ever flexible in their arrangement.

2 Daedalus' sculptures (Aen. 6.20–35)

The Cumean ekphrasis draws from the epic world of Theseus. It emphasises the prehistory of the Minotaur story, specifically the events that brought Theseus to Crete, and the thematic link through the panels is *dolus*. In Daedalus' narrative of Theseus' Cretan labour, the hero's victory over the monster is never reported, while in none of the episodes leading to it Theseus is explicitly mentioned. The various episodes, like the panels in the Carthaginian synthesis, are not arranged in chronological order: they are meant to be seen as individual narrative blocks, in the pattern of the independent epics of the archaic tradition of orality, that may be utilised in more than one epic composition. In this respect the mon-

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17 To this end Putnam's methodology falls short, when he focusses on the spatial meaning of the adverbs that introduce the various panels, for not every panel is introduced or even is inclusive of a marker of location. Such constrictions led Putnam to rather enforced compromises, such as, e.g., in his discussion of *interea*, 'in the meantime', the temporal adverb that introduces the middle panel of the frieze, the supplication of the Trojan women before Minerva; cf. Putnam 1998, 32.

umentalised epic on the Apollo temple at *Aen.* 6.20 – 35 celebrates yet another experiment with epic composition in performance.

As with the study of the Carthaginian mural synthesis, Aeneas' reading of the Cumean ekphrasis is interrupted and remains incomplete (1.494 – 495~6.33-34 *quin protinus omnia perlegeret oculis...* 'and everything throughout would their eyes have scanned, but now [came Achates...]'). The first panel on the gates captures the death of Minos' son Androgeos (20 *in foribus letum Androgeo*, 'on the doors is the death of Androgeos'). According to popular tradition, the youth, a prince of Crete and son of Minos and Pasiphae, was the innocent victim of a treacherous plot. He participated in athletic games in Athens and won every prize but also became friends with the family of the Pallantidai, the political rivals of King Aegeus who fearing a future alliance between his rivals and Crete ambushed and murdered the young Cretan prince.[18] The depiction of Androgeos' death stresses the element of deceit and the tragedy of an untimely and unjust death, and as such reaches backwards to the murder of Troilus by Achilles, depicted on the Carthaginian ekphrasis, that was similarly associated with deceit and an ambush. What is more, the name of Androgeos appears in a setting of deception again, in the account of Troy's fall in *Aeneid* 2.370 – 393. There we meet another Androgeos, a Greek warrior, who, unsuspected, walked up to Aeneas and the Trojans without realising their deceptive disguise as Greeks. The Trojan Androgeos is a Virgilian invention and is deliberately introduced in the particular moment of the Trojan narrative, precisely in order to evoke, in the innocence and tragedy of his unforeseen death, the plight of the Cretan Androgeos.[19]

Similarly to the Carthaginian ekphrasis, the spatial continuity of the panels on Daedalus' work is once again difficult to pinpoint (four vague adverbs of location are mentioned: *tum,* 'then' at 20; *contra,* 'on the opposite side', at 23; *hic,* 'here', at 24 and 27, which may function as adverbs of time, as well), and similarly non-linear is their chronological order (Pasiphae's infatuation with the

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18 This is the version reported in Diodorus Siculus 4.60.4. Sources, however, vary as to the exact circumstances of Androgeos' death, even though all agree that the Athenians are responsible. According to Servius (ad *Aen.* 6.14), Androgeos was murdered upon his triumph by the Athenians and the Megarians through envy; Plutarch in his *Life of Theseus* (15.1) writes that Androgeos "was thought to have been treacherously killed," without stating explicitly his personal opinion on the matter; and Ps.-Apollodorus (3.157) notes that the youth was sent, out of envy, by King Aegeus to fight the Marathonian bull, and was killed by the beast.

19 On *dolus*, the murder of the Cretan prince Androgeos, and the allusion to the story in the invention of the Greek Androgeos as first victim to the deception plotted by Aeneas and his men, see Rauk 1991.

bull and the birth of the Minotaur actually precede the drawing of the lots scene, and possibly even the murder of Androgeos). Most notably, in reminiscence of the reproduction of the Trojan narrative on the Carthaginian ekphrasis, the account of Theseus' Cretan adventure is given from a thematically determined scope, similarly centered on tragic death, deception, and treachery. The treacherous murder of Androgeos brings about the undeserved death of the seven innocent youths whom the Athenians were ordered to pay in retribution, an episode depicted next on the gates (20 – 22)—space and time coincide appropriately. The gates, further, freeze, literally monumentalise, the moment as time stops (notice the employment of the present tense) at the very instant the lots are about to be drawn to determine the unfortunate victims (22 *stat ductis sortibus urna*, 'there stands the urn, the lots now drawn' [the arrest of time is strongly emphasised in Fairclough's translation for the LOEB series, with the addition of the adverbs "there" and "now"]); all gazes, of the intradiegetic youth and Theseus, the extradiegetic viewer Aeneas, and the readers of the *Aeneid* across time, are fixed upon the urn that holds the lots—a collective gaze that emphasises the tragic irony of justice as means of punishment for a crime of deception.

Lines 23 ff. transport the location of the narrative to Crete (does *contra* imply the placement of Crete across the sea from Athens, or the positioning of the Cretan stories on the Cumean gates opposite the lot-drawing scene?), and refer summarily to depictions that transcribe selectively the events that led to the Minotaur: the *dolus* employed by Pasiphae to mate with the bull; the Minotaur in some vague posture; the enamored Ariadne; the construction of the labyrinth. The language behind the depiction of Pasiphae echoes Dido and her own infatuation for a forbidden love that brought about her tragic downfall. The *regina* on lines 28 – 30 is Ariadne, for she is the one associated with the thread by means of which Theseus managed to retrace his steps out of the labyrinth.[20] The parallels between Ariadne and Dido are even more pronounced, given that Catullus' deserted Ariadne in poem 64 is widely acknowledged as one of Dido's most prom-

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20 The association between Pasiphae and Dido is fully developed in Pike 1993. Virgilian critics who identify the *regina* on line 28 with Pasiphae and read the panel on 28 ff. as a thematic extension of the one immediately prior that told of Pasiphae's infatuation for the bull, include Segal 1965, 643; Rutledge 1971–72, 111; and Otis 1963, 284 n. 1. A connection between Ariadne and Dido is already recognised in Pöschl 1962, 150 and 207 n. 17; also Putnam 1987, 188, and, more strongly, Casali 1995. Fitzgerald 1987, 63 n. 14 has detected Virgil's intention to fuse the two Cretan royal females and thus characterises line 28 as "deliberately ambiguous."

inent literary models.²¹ Indeed, how could one study the theme of the next panel, the depiction of the labyrinth, aptly described by Virgil as, *hic labor ille domus et <u>inextricabilis error</u>,* 'here that laborious construction and the inextricable error' (27) and Theseus retracing his steps back with Daedalus' assistance two lines later (*Daedalus ipse <u>dolos tecti ambagesque</u> resoluit, / <u>caeca</u> **regens filo vestigia**,* 'The very Daedalus dissolves the deceptions and ambushes of the building, as he was directing the blind steps with the file', 29–30), and not recall Catullus' Theseus at 64.113–115, as he was 'directing his wandering steps with a slender file, so that the maze, impossible to trace by sight, may not confuse him as he was exiting the labyrinthine turnings of the building (<u>er-rabunda</u> **regens** tenui **vestigia filo**, / ne <u>labyrintheis e flexibus egredientem</u> / <u>tecti frustraretur inobservabilis error</u>)?'

The labyrinth is called *inextricabilis error*, which is actually a literal translation of the term (cf. *Oxford Classical Dictionary* p. 810, s.v. "Labyrinth"). The pictorial "labyrinth" of the Daedalean description parallels the "labyrinth" of Trojan memories evoked in the mind of Aeneas in Book 1 once faced with the narrative of the Trojan War legend on the Carthaginian mural—memories which revolve around some act of deception and treachery. The Minotaur may be contained only inside a *dolus* (*dolos tecti ambagesque*, 'the deceptions and ambushes of the building,' 29) invented by the same genius who first facilitated his birth by means of another *dolus*, and later caused his destruction: Virgil innovates again when he attributes not to Ariadne but to Daedalus the *dolus* of the file (**Daedalus ipse** *dolos tecti ambagesque resoluit,* 29); Theseus' own presence remains shadowy, hidden behind hic *caeca vestigia* (30), while the contribution of the artist underscores the self-referential element of the narrative.

The Cumaean ekphrasis, like the Carthaginian one, remains incomplete because Aeneas' study is interrupted by the entrance of Achates and the Sibyl (33–35). This incompleteness has already been remarked by Virgil's early commentators: Servius Danielis claims that there is more to see on the gates, when he notes at 6.33 (on *quin protinus omnia*): *ostendit plura fuisse, quam dixit, depicta*, '[sc. the phrase *quin protinus omnia*] shows that more panels have been depicted that those he reported.' Sergio Casali (1995) has put forth the most inviting speculative completion, by arguing that Aeneas left behind un-

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21 The verbal similarities between Ariadne's description in Catullus 64 and Virgil's enamoured Dido as portrayed in *Aeneid* 4 corroborate the conversation between the two famous heroines, and they are noted in Williams 1972, 358 ff., ad *Aen*. 4.316–363 passim. Papaioannou 2006 has asserted Ariadne's strong presence behind the fashioning of Dido in Book 1, and specifically in the banquet scene during which Dido's love for Aeneas is first kindled. The most systematic treatment of Catullus' reception by Virgil is Petrini 1997.

read a single panel, which narrates the abandonment of Ariadne by Theseus at Naxos. Even though his thesis cannot be substantiated, his arguments are based on the observation of crucial verbal allusions that operate beyond the level of mere window references. And these allusions are concentrated on the common language that Virgil and Catullus employ, as illustrated above, to describe the labyrinth and the story of the file in their respective texts: a labyrinth, in other words, evokes a labyrinth, both a literal and a metacompositional one.

In both *Aeneid* 6 and Catullus 64 the labyrinth and its conquest are told in artistic representations, respectively a sculptured relief and a scene embroidered on a bedspread. A text-in-the-text alludes to another text-in-the-text; in Casali's words (1995, 5), "the Virgilian text in the text not only tells the story of Ariadne, but tells it by alluding to the story of Ariadne as told by Catullus," even though "the essential element of the text alluded to," the abandonment of Ariadne by Theseus, is left unmentioned. The identification of desertion as the theme of the last panel left unobserved by Aeneas on Daedalus' sculpture, suggests that Virgil's story of Theseus concludes with the panel with which Catullus' account began,[22] emphasising deception and intertextuality by regressive temporality.

3 Aeneas' shield (Aen. 8.625-728)

The conscious textuality of the ekphrasis on Aeneas' shield is introduced with the phrase *clipei non enarrabile textum* (8.625) a 'network of inextricably intertwined components' (*textum*), which are 'impossible to tell apart in order to put together a straight and single story' (*non enarrabile*)—a very rare adjective[23] that echoes the likewise rare *inextricabilis* (*Aen.* 6.28), used to qualify the labyrinthine mental architecture of Daedalus' composition at Cuma. Thorough examinations of Virgil's ekphrastic account of Vulcan's artwork abound in recent decades and have graced modern *Aeneid* readers with a bounty of insightful in-

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22 On Daedalus as a reflection of Virgil, see also Putnam 1987, 183 ff.; Barchiesi 1994, 114. For Casali 1995, 7, Virgil's identification with Daedalus represents "a striking mise-en-abyme: Daedalus, the creator of the friezes, portrays himself in the friezes, just as Virgil portrays himself in him."

23 *Enarrabilis* is, according to the *OLD*, s.v., a "very rare" adjective that means something that may be related, represented, or explained. Described as such, the *descriptio* on the Shield a) is acknowledged as a narrative, a piece that tells a story; and b) is declared impossible to narrate, represent, or explain. The term is not found in literary texts prior to the *Aeneid*, and it is reasonable to argue that it has been coined by Virgil and used hapax in his epic.

terpretations.[24] My reading will focus more closely on the contribution of temporality to the operational rules that underline the multitextual character of the Shield, as these are implicitly signaled through the description of the Shield as a *non enarrabile textum*—an amalgamated composition of multiple texts, a narrative that despite the sequential chronology of the episodes depicted therein, is "layered rather than linear."[25]

The content of Vulcan's work reproduces moments from the History of Rome.[26] The pictorial synthesis on the Shield shares an important structural similarity with the *descriptio* on the Carthaginian mural. The content of the Shield is summarily captured with the heading *illic res Italas Romanorumque triumphos...* *pugnataque in ordine bella* ('there [Vulcan depicted] Italian affairs and the triumphs of the Romans... and wars fought in order', 8.626; 629), which rephrases the caption of the theme narrated on the Carthaginian murals, at *Aen.* 1.456, *Iliacas ex ordine pugnas*, 'battles fought in order'. The verbal proximity is deliberate, and asserted as such already by Servius (ad *Aen.* 8.625): *non enarrabile textum: bene "non enarrabile": cum enim in clipeo omnem Romanam historiam*[27] *velit esse*

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

25 Boyd 1995, whence the quote (p. 73), offers the most satisfying interpretation in terms of the multiple logical inconsistencies that are accounted in Virgil's style of pictorial narration, arguing that in the ekphrases of the *Aeneid* what is depicted is more important than the manner of its depiction; visual information that leads to visualisation and narrative description are not necessarily identical, but they are complementary: the narrative is necessary to arrange in order the visual information.

26 Most of the literary sources and intratextual networks fed by the text of the Shield are identified in Eden 1975, on *Aen.* 8.608 – 731. Putnam 1998, 119 – 188 and 234 – 240, is the most detailed and dense proposition of a design in Virgil's arrangement of the various units on the Shield.

27 For Dietz 1995, the term history refers explicitly to Roman history; also Horsfall 1991, 57 n. 9. Lazzarini (1984) correctly observes that Servius distinguishes between *historia* and *fabula* when referring to narrative—a distinction Servius makes ad *Aen.* 1.235. *Fabula* applies to a sequence that is "contrary to the normal course of events, whether it happened or not (*contra naturam, sive facta sive non facta*)," while *historia* refers to a narrative sequence "according to the normal course of events, whether it happened or not (*secundum naturam... sive factum sive non factum*)." It is interesting to note that linear chronology (the normal course of events) is more important than reality—facts that have not taken place may be part of history as long as they can plausibly be part of a linear narrative sequence.

descriptam dicendo "illic genus omne futurae stirpis a Ascanio _pugnataque in or-_
dine bella," carptim tamen pauca commemorat, sicut in primo ait "videt Iliacas ex
ordine pugnas," nec tamen universa descripsit, '"impossible to narrate" is well
said: for although in saying "there were the entire lineage of their progeny to
come, beginning with Ascanius, and the wars that they fought in order" he
means that all of Roman history is depicted on the shield, he nevertheless men-
tions a few items selectively, just as in book one he says "he sees the Trojan bat-
tles in order," but then he did not depict everything (emphasis mine).' According
to Servius, further, the phrase _genus omne... Ascanio_ rephrases with more preci-
sion the comprehensive rubric of line 626, _res Italas Romanorumque triumphos._

The pictorial history of Rome is an open composition, marked by the delib-
erate lack of phrases of specific placement, which cancel spatial sequence, but
given the interfusion of time and space in these markers, as observed in the ear-
lier ekphrases, temporal order is problematised, as well. The Shield ekphrasis
opens with two phrases that begin identically, with the same strong demonstra-
tive: _illic res Italas Romanorumque triumphos_ (626) ~ _illic genus omne futurae /_
stripis ab Ascanio pugnataque in ordine bella (628–629). The second phrase re-
states in more specific diction the first: the Roman and Italian achievements
will be narrated from the early days of the Roman nation, and these deeds
will be mostly martial deeds "in order (_in ordine_)." Still, the rubric promises a
comprehensive visual narrative of the heroic Roman past (_omne genus... stripis_
etc.), a statement that does not correspond to the content of the ekphrasis.

The _ordo_ by which the deeds of Aeneas' descendants are recorded seems to
follow a linear, descending timeline, and observe thematic affinity and continu-
ity, as several of the stories are told in units of smaller episodic narratives. The
opening cluster centers on Romulus: it comprises the she-wolf and the twins, the
rape of the Sabines, the ensuing war and the reconciliation, at 630–641. The
treason of Mettus (642-645), the attack against Rome by Lars Porsenna and the
exiled Tarquin in the course of which occurred the heroic deeds of Cocles and
Cloelia, follow next, at 8.646-651.

The Republican period is represented by two thematic complexes, compris-
ing at least five panels which in turn elicit additional episodes. The three open-
ing panels (8.652-662) date to the Gallic attack traditionally set in 390 BCE. The
Gallic attack that nearly led to the sack of Rome represented the first major crisis
for the Roman Republic by a foreign enemy. The Republic recovered shortly and
fast, yet the Roman Senate in the years immediately following turned against
Manlius, the champion of the Capitol, whom they saw as a threat on account
of his great popularity among the people, and, by false accusations, they con-
demned him to death for sedition in 385 and executed him by throwing him
down from the Tarpeian rock. Manlius' story as implied by Virgil is narrated

in Livy 6.11–20,[28] but tradition was not unanimous and it is believed that Manlius' heroic defense of the Capitol during the Gallic invasion was invented later, after his sedition and execution.[29] The mention of the Tarpeian rock evokes another infamous legend of the Roman past, the betrayal of Rome to the Sabines by Tarpeia, the daughter of the governor of the citadel on the Capitoline. Tarpeia's treason is intended to be recalled, and strong evidence to this constitutes the amplitude of gold (*aurum*) in the description of the invading Gauls at 655-662; the very word occurs no less than four times (655 *auratis...*; 659 *aurea caesaries... aurea vestis*; 660f. *lactea colla / auro innectuntur*), while the two finite verbs that describe the appearance of the gold-imbued Gauls, *lucent* (660) and *coruscant* (661), are both verbs of brightness, enforcing the glitter of gold.[30] A similarly strong emphasis on gold and brightness envelops the battle of Actium—the waves of the Actian sea, the backdrop of the battle, glitter with gold because they are made from gold (*maris... imago aurea*, 'the golden image... of the sea,' 672)—the rubric is set on the opening line of the longest and central episode of the ekphrasis, and directs the gaze of the viewer(s).

The two panels that close the Republican narrative (8.666–670) celebrate the two protagonists of the Catilinarian conspiracy (one of the major crises of the late Republic), the conspirator Catiline and Cato the Younger who embodied righteousness (*pietas*)[31] and the ideal *homo Republicanus*, the Senator who in the trial of the Catilinarian conspirators argued for their execution (rather than life-imprisonment, the alternative punishment proposed earlier by Julius Caesar). Catiline and Cato are set in the Underworld, the former in the Tartarus amidst the great sinners (668f.), the latter as a judge of the Underworld, rewarding the pious (670). In historical time polar opposites, Cato and Catiline in death

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28 Feldherr 2014, 304, suggests that Manlius' silenced *seditio* is reflected in the detailed reference to Catiline and his punishment—a thematic link that conveniently bridges the gap in time from the early to the late Republican period.

29 For the story of Manlius Capitolinus and the history on the *seditio*, see Münzer, "Manlius (51)," RE xiv.1167–74; Oakley 1997, 476–493; Jaeger 1993; Martin 1990, 49–72; Kraus 1998, 141–156.

30 Feldherr 2014, 302, offers a different reading of temporal understanding in light of all this density of lighting surrounding Tarpeia: it is "a visual manifestation of how Roman history itself moves toward brightness and certainty."

31 An allegorical reading of the pictorial narrative as testament to the four virtues on the golden *clupeus virtutis* presented by the Senate to Augustus has been proposed as early as Drew 1927, 26–31; more akin to the political message of the *descriptio*, Otis 1963, 341–342, reads the Shield as a triumph of the traditional Roman qualities, specifically *virtus*, *consilium*, and *pietas*, over unjustified violence across the history of the Roman nation.

"collaborate:" they infiltrate the Underworld, the space where mythology and history intersect, and become indistinguishable from the heroes of mythology.

The entire second half of the ekphrasis (671–728) is devoted to the battle of Actium, which towers over the entire synthesis not only by its length, the great detail, and the dramatic narrative style, but also by the emphasis on the present. Roman historical time ends with Augustus, and ends triumphantly. Once the grand central piece is added, the narrative is complete: this time Aeneas' narrative gaze is not interrupted—on the contrary, the thorough study of this closural panel is enforced by a series of internal gazes (Apollo, Augustus, Agrippa) that focalise various moments of the Actian episode from the naval battle to the parade of surrendering nations. On the other hand, this time Aeneas is not involved with the content of the narrative in any way: he does not recognise what he sees and is not emotionally engaged with the narrative—he just marvels and enjoys an aesthetically impressive spectacle whose sequence he does not comprehend, and it would be tempting to suggest that he allows his gaze to be led by the many powerful internal gazes.[32] In theory, then, he may cancel linear chronology and rewrite the past by opting a different combination of the panels.[33] Aeneas' role as reader and interpreter is assumed by Virgil's readers, who are expected to react emotionally to the recollections of Roman history, especially the more recent ones that coincide with their own memories and experiences, individual as well as collective. The development of Roman history around the triumph of Actium, in particular, introduces a new understanding of temporality, according to which the present is both the end of history and the beginning of a new era for the Roman people. The placement of Actium at the center stresses the circularity of the Shield and by association the circular arrangement of Roman history on the Shield's surface—a serial setting that cancels linear chronology and introduces an understanding of time based on repetition and recurrence[34]—aligned with the calendric politics of Augustus, specifically the establishment of a new calendar or *Fasti Anni Iuliani*, that was based on a circular, recurrent understanding of

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32 On the presence of multiple levels of internal spectators and the respective focalising perspectives that affect perception of each panel, and by means of the intensity of the internal gaze translates image into reality, see Feldherr 2014, 288–299.

33 Feldherr 2014, 299: "The transition from ekphrasis to narrative sets the internal viewer on the path to construct the history depicted on the image by taking part in the course of events."

34 Feldherr 2014, 300–312 on Virgil's dialogue with Roman historiography and his reasons behind foregoing strict temporal sequence, including his intention to make the external readers grasp the circular, comprehensive composition and appreciate the recurrence and circularity of time by stepping outside of it.

time.[35] This new calendar contained a list of the days of the year and significant anniversaries that occur on them every year after a precise number of days, next to the traditional Republican Fasti or *Fasti Consulares*, that observed a linear understanding of time as they recorded a list of the magistrates for each year and the notable events that took place in those years.[36] Circular time underscores the theme of continuity of Roman history—emblematised on the Shield by the annual celebrations in the aftermath of Actium led by the Salii and the Luperci, the two most ancient Roman colleges of priests (8.663-666).

The opening and closure of the *descriptio* with common appeal to seriality (629 *in ordine* ~ 722 *longo ordine*) causes the readers to observe, once again, the absence of "order" and specification in the fuzzy spatial arrangement of the panels, and the circular organisation of space and time through a ring composition. The first panel, the she-wolf with the Roman twins, is introduced without any marker of location; the next one opens with the abstract *nec procul hinc* (635), and, along the same lines, the panels that follow are introduced with similarly vague modifiers of place: *post idem* (639), *haud procul inde* (642), *nec non* (646), *in summo* (652), *atque hic* (655), *hic* (663), *hinc procul* (666). The specification *in summo* (652) may refer simultaneously both to the depiction of Manlius on the top of the citadel and to the placement of the Gallic attack at the top of the Shield,[37] just like the recurrence of expressions designating the "middle" in the description of the Actium story a little later (*in medio*, 675; *in mediis*, 696; *medio in certamine*, 700), causing one to wonder where *exactly* this middle might be.[38] The employment of this technical vocabulary of mentally determined rather than physically produced order elicits the same associations to a selective composition that does not reproduce an archetype with precision as much as presents it anew. It underscores the architectural character of the pictorial narrative facing Aeneas' wonder gaze and forges a ring composition which metaphorically may stand for the outer frame encircling the Shield, and also for the circular under-

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35 The intercrossing of linearity and circularity is aptly observed in one of the mottoes of the Augustan era, *novus ordo saeclorum*, with *ordo* signaling seriality and progression, and *saecula* underscoring repetition, the cyclical understanding of time.

36 On the ideology of rewriting time and the understanding of time behind Augustus' new calendar policy, see Feeney 2007, esp. chapters 5 and 6.

37 Servius, ad *Aen.* 8.652, identifies the summit with the Capitoline.

38 Servius is the earliest such case of a troubled mental viewer / interpreter uncertain to decide whereto the "middle" refers: *in medio: utrum clipeo an mari?* (ad *Aen.* 8.675).

standing of historical time at the core of Augustus' ideology of the return of the golden age.[39]

4 Conclusion

A narrative ekphrasis is marked by the arrest and manipulation of time in space. Temporality is particularly prominent in a narrative description that is composed by several friezes or episodes, which may be conceptually and thematically self-contained and at the same time constitute a part of a longer synthesis. In their dual cognitive function the order of the segments of an ekphrasis determine the progression of the narrative course. An ekphrasis emphasises temporality, further, through digressions—detailed descriptions of friezes, that stop narrative flow by prompting the reader to elicit the longer story (or variants of the story). Virgil's three longer ekphrases are exemplary pieces of arrested temporality of this type. In their individual structure they experiment with the interaction of narrative progression and static visuality. The inclusion and emphatic placement of markers of time and place strongly suggest to read the ekphrases as series of multiple different, self-contained episodes / panels. At the same time, since all three ekphrases narrate events well-known from mythology and history, each of the panels potentially is a micro-ekphrasis of its own, for the present (the actual depiction) triggers the recollection of the past and the future simultaneously. This locking of past, present, and future in a single moment is best illustrated in the depiction of the battle of Actium, the longest of all individual friezes in the *Aeneid*, made particularly prominent through the fuzziness in the arrangement on space of the events depicted therein. Virgil's artful blending of descriptive language, temporal specification, and graphic art has composed a narrative depiction which transcends the boundaries of space (the Shield) and time (the depiction includes at once both the naval battle of Actium and the aftermath across several years and moments).

At the same time, the linear progression of time in all three narratives is disrupted by circular or regressive motions, denoting the relevance and artificiality of temporality, and, by consequence, its subjection to manipulation. The politi-

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39 From an intradiegetic perspective, Aeneas has just witnessed a community that experiences the golden age (Pallanteum) and the next day is presented with an ekphrastic depiction of the impending return of the golden age suggested as the aftermath of the Actian triumph. Feeney 2007, 162, has observed that the Shield was shown to Aeneas on August 13 (the date is based on the festival in honour of Hercules Aeneas attended the previous day in Pallanteum), which anticipates the date of the triple triumph of Octavian in 29 BCE.

cisation of time becomes prominent in the pictorial narrative on the Shield of Aeneas, which offers a summary version of Roman history that emphasises ideology, source editing, and fact controlling through studied use of temporality, and alludes to Augustus' systematic policy to revise chronology at Rome by means of introducing a new calendar that promotes repetition through anniversaries of religious and civic ceremonies. The openness of all three Virgilian ekphrases suggests that the reader of history, understood as an orderly arrest of time within space in the broader sense, may use critical reading to overwrite a preset narrative.

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Emmanuel Golfin

La compréhension du passé chez les premiers historiens grecs : Étude sur les emplois de πάλαι et d'ἀρχή

Abstract: Understanding the past in the first Greek historians: Study of the uses of πάλαι and ἀρχή. Comparing the ways Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon use words of the family of ἀρχή and πάλαι makes possible an understanding of their conceptions of past in historical narration. Herodotus, who favours ἀρχή, seeks to delve into the origins as deep as possible, while Thucydides prefers πάλαι and examines the remote past from the present's viewpoint. Despite his primary use of ἀρχή, Xenophon is not concerned with the origins. These lexical differences have several consequences: refusal of the hellenocentrism; invention of a global, if not universal history by Herodotus; starting point of a linear and progressive view of time in Thucydides; conception of a past whose limit is recent, from the point of view of a present in crisis in Xenophon. The limitations of the sources constrain the historians to pay special attention to the myths. When including the latter in their works, all of them apply a rational filter (albeit different). Herodotus is aware that anything can arrive on the long run and is welcoming for the myths. In Thucydides the myths come as a confirmation of what he found out about the relationship among cities. Finally, Xenophon shows that myths are rhetorically exploited for ideological purposes.

Pour savoir comment les anciens Grecs se représentaient le temps, on peut recourir à bien des matériaux que nous fournissent les textes ou l'archéologie, à propos de l'organisation d'une journée dans une cité, d'un mois ou d'une année, avec les circonstances qui rythment une existence, les divers âges des femmes et des hommes, certains événements marquants, les fêtes. Il peut sembler également pertinent de s'intéresser aux historiens dont le travail a pour but de mettre en forme un savoir qui a le temps sinon pour objet, du moins pour cadre. Pour un historien, le temps est à la fois un matériau, un flux à mettre en forme et le résultat de son travail, car, à travers tel ou tel sujet d'étude, il en donne une image et une compréhension.

Il peut être particulièrement fécond de regarder de près les textes des historiens grecs dans la mesure où ils ont accompli les premiers la tâche non seulement de recueillir des faits, de les lier entre eux pour en faire un récit

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cohérent, mais aussi de les intégrer dans une chronologie, c'est-à-dire de positionner les événements dans un ordre temporel, de découper le temps en périodes, d'établir des concordances entre plusieurs calendriers, afin de dater des faits concernant des cités ou des peuples différents.

De plus, en dehors de toute considération sur la validité de son contenu, dont il ne saurait être question ici, le texte historique contient un discours sur le temps – qui n'est pas forcément théorisé, mais que nous pouvons interroger.

Autre élément intéressant : les premières œuvres historiques que nous avons conservées intactes sont celles de trois historiens de l'époque classique qui se suivent d'une génération à une autre : Hérodote, Thucydide et Xénophon[1]. Par-delà l'originalité de chaque auteur, il est possible d'examiner si en trois générations la conception et la construction du temps changent. Le temps ancien – passé – et le temps présent sont-ils conçus avec des constantes, des évolutions, voire sous l'angle d'un perfectionnement ?

Pour avoir une première réponse à la question complexe de la conception du temps chez les historiens antiques, nous étudierons la manière dont ils élaborent et (re)créent le passé. Ce thème permettra d'entrevoir comment les historiens anciens organisent le temps dans son amplitude la plus grande, si et comment ils explorent le temps long, plus difficile à mettre en forme qu'un présent restitué au jour le jour, lorsqu'on le vit. L'appréhension du passé implique une distance, un écart, un important décalage entre le temps de l'écriture et le temps des faits.

La pertinence d'une comparaison entre Hérodote et Thucydide tient à ce que, même si leur sujet d'étude est différent, ils abordent de nombreux thèmes communs, au point de l'un et l'autre se compléter ou se contredire[2]. Quant à la

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1 Hérodote a vécu environ de 490 à 425 ; Thucydide naît vers 460/455 et meurt vers 399 tandis que Xénophon naît vers 430 et meurt vers 350 (sur les vies des historiens : Hdt. : Jacoby 1913, Legrand *Introduction* 1932, Dewald 2002 ; Thuc. : Canfora 2006 ; Xen. : Delebecque 1946–47 et 1957, Anderson 1974, Lee 2017).

2 Ainsi la plupart des événements auxquels Thucydide se réfère dans l'*Archéologie* figurent déjà dans l'*Enquête* d'Hérodote. Hornblower 1996, 138–139 en donne la liste : la question du sédentarisme des anciens Athéniens (Thuc. 1.2.5 ; Hdt. 1.56 sq.), le nom des Grecs (Thuc. 1.2–3 ; Hdt. 1.56), l'occupation de la Grèce par les Pélasges (Thuc. 1.3.2 ; Hdt. 8.44), les thalassocraties de Minos et de Polycrate de Samos (Thuc. 1.4 ; Hdt. 3.122), les coutumes vestimentaires grecques (Thuc. 1.6 ; Hdt. 5.87), les actions ou les constructions comme critères de grandeur (Thuc. 1.10.1–2 opposé à Hdt. 3.60), la grandeur passagère des cités (Thuc. 1.10.1–2 ; Hdt. 1.5), les Cadméens (Thuc. 1.12 ; Hdt. 5.57–61), les royautés héréditaires et leurs prérogatives (Thuc. 1.13.1 ; Hdt. 6.56 sq.), la fondation de Marseille (Thuc. 1.13.6 ; Hdt. 1.166 sq.), les navires éginètes et athéniens (Thuc. 1.14.2–3 ; Hdt. 6.49–50 ; 85–93 ; 7.144), la guerre lélantine (Thuc. 1.15.3 ; Hdt. 5.99), la faiblesse des réalisations des tyrans en Grèce ancienne (Thuc. 1.17 ; Hdt. 1.64 et 5.78), le renversement des tyrans par Sparte (Thuc. 1.18.1 ; Hdt. 5.65 et 92), l'*eunomia* de Sparte

confrontation entre Thucydide et Xénophon, elle se justifie pleinement, dans la mesure où Xénophon continue ouvertement l'œuvre de Thucydide.

Un relevé détaillé des préférences que chaque historien manifeste pour formuler le passé fera ainsi apparaître des choix qui, s'ils ne s'avèrent pas quantitativement décisifs, indiqueront néanmoins des tendances marquées. Ces choix permettront ensuite d'examiner comment chaque historien considère le passé dans un écart plus ou moins ample avec le présent, s'il s'agit pour lui de l'explorer et de quelle manière, enfin de mesurer quel rapport chaque auteur établit entre histoire et mythe, avec lequel le passé a des frontières poreuses.

1 À la recherche du passé ancien : les récits rétrospectifs

Bien qu'Hérodote, Thucydide ou le Xénophon des *Helléniques* soient considérés comme des historiens[3], l'essentiel de leur travail relève plutôt d'une chronique du temps présent ou du passé proche. Hérodote est né pendant les guerres médiques et il a vécu peu après, il en a connu les conséquences. Même ce qui les a précédées, à partir de la constitution de l'empire perse par le roi Cyrus (550 – 549 av. J.-C.), relève d'une histoire somme toute assez récente pour lui. Ses parents ou ses grands-parents en ont été les contemporains. Thucydide a par-

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(Thuc. 1.18.1 ; Hdt. 1.65), la chute des Pisistratides (Thuc. 1.20.2 ; Hdt. 5.55), le vote des rois de Sparte (Thuc. 1.20.3 ; Hdt. 6.57), le bataillon de Pitanè (Thuc. 1.20.3 ; Hdt. 9.53), l'admiration que suscitent les faits anciens (Thuc. 1.21.1 ; Hdt., *Prooimion*), l'histoire en tant que production d'apparat (Thuc. 1.22.4 *contra* Hdt. *passim*). À cette liste s'ajoute la guerre de Troie, sur le traitement de laquelle portait notre étude comparée (Golfin 2000 – 2001).

3 Le plus ancien des trois, Hérodote, tient à se distinguer des historiens qui l'ont précédé au VIe siècle, auteurs de *Généalogies* ou de *Périégèses/Périples*, et que l'historiographie antique désigne du nom de «logographes .» Ce sont Hécatée de Milet (vers 555 – 485), Acousilaos d'Argos (VIe siècle av. J.-C.), Phérécyde d'Athènes (dont les *Histoires* sous forme de généalogies ont été publiées vers 465), Scylax de Caryanda (vers 550 – 475), Dionysos de Milet (contemporain du roi Darius qui régna de 521 à 486). Voir Jacoby *FGrH, ad loc.* Sur les rapports entre ces premiers historiens et Hérodote, qui est lui aussi un «logographe» : Pearson 1975 et surtout Fowler 2006. Sur l'utilisation que fait Hérodote des sources anciennes pour l'élaboration de son récit : Forsdyke 2002. Thucydide, quant à lui, mentionne le logographe Hellanicos de Lesbos, auteur de nombreux ouvrages de mythographie et d'ethnographie, entre autres une histoire de l'Attique, Ἀτθίς, dont l'historien de la guerre du Péloponnèse s'est servi mais qu'il critique (par exemple en 1.97.2). Dès l'origine se sont posés les problèmes qui se posent à tous les historiens : établissement d'une chronologie rationnelle et commode (grâce à des généalogies ou à des listes de personnes réelles telles que les prêtresses d'Héra à Argos chez Hellanicos), recueil des sources et témoignages, mise en forme d'un récit.

ticipé comme stratège à la guerre du Péloponnèse. Xénophon a lui aussi connu cette guerre. Il a pris part à l'expédition des mercenaires grecs destinée à aider Cyrus le Jeune dans sa lutte contre son frère Artaxerxès II et a été élu stratège commandant de l'arrière-garde des «Dix Mille» après la défaite de Counaxa (401 av. J.-C.). Quelques années après, il est incorporé aux troupes du roi de Sparte Agésilas qui combat en Asie. Enfin, de retour en Grèce, il a vécu lui-même les déchirements entre Athènes et Sparte. Tous les trois écrivent donc ce qu'on appellerait de nos jours de l'«histoire contemporaine», à condition de donner à cette notion une acception assez large[4].

Cependant, parallèlement, ils écrivent tous des développements plus ou moins amples, le plus souvent sous forme de digressions, sur des événements appartenant à un passé bien plus ancien, qui déborde le cadre temporel limité du récit principal. Thucydide dans l'Archéologie, au livre I, brosse le tableau de l'histoire de la Grèce depuis ses origines. Dans la Pentékontaétie, il revient sur la «période des cinquante ans» qui a suivi les guerres médiques et précédé la guerre du Péloponnèse. Hérodote, lorsqu'il est amené à évoquer un peuple confronté à l'expansion de l'empire perse, prend toujours soin de donner, entre autres renseignements, des précisions sur les origines et l'histoire de ce peuple. C'est vrai pour les cités ou les peuples grecs, par exemple les Spartiates, mais aussi pour les Barbares, tels que les Mèdes, les Égyptiens, les Scythes et bien d'autres encore. Pour Xénophon, de telles analepses sont plus rares, mais il fait des allusions au passé, plus ou moins ancien, voire parfois à la mythologie.

Ces discours sur le passé sont-ils identiques d'un historien à l'autre ? Quelle est en eux la part de l'exactitude, de l'invention ? Que pouvaient savoir du passé ancien les historiens grecs du Ve siècle et de la première moitié du IVe siècle ? Leurs récits s'affranchissent-ils des mythes et jusqu'à quel point ?

Un moyen de répondre, au moins partiellement, à ces nombreuses questions consiste à faire une étude des termes employés de préférence avec leur signification.

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[4] Par «histoire contemporaine» nous entendons l'étude du présent ou d'un passé très proche, c'est-à-dire une période à laquelle appartiennent à la fois l'historien qui produit un récit, une analyse ou une interprétation de ce passé proche et ceux à qui il s'adresse. Dans la mesure où il explique que dès les premiers symptômes de la guerre entre Athènes et Sparte, ayant conscience de son importance, il s'est mis au travail et a enquêté dans chaque camp, Thucydide est un «historien du présent» (Darbo-Peschanski 1989, 653–675 ; Rousso 2012, 37–42). Mais même Hérodote écrit une histoire contemporaine car son récit «parle du temps de l'historien» et «se fonde en posant comme inaccessible à l'observation un autre temps que le temps présent ou le temps des hommes» (Rousso 2012, 38). Voir aussi Hartog 2005, 77 : pour les historiens antiques, «la volonté de vérité implique de s'en tenir au présent : il n'y a d'histoire ‹véritable› qu'au présent.»

2 Une question de vocabulaire

Pour désigner «le passé», le grec dispose de multiples expressions : τὰ παρεληλυθότα, «le temps qui s'est écoulé», τὰ πρότερον, (τὰ) πρῶτα, (τὸ) πρῶτον, «auparavant», «antérieurement», «les événements qui ont précédé », Toutes ces tournures sont imprécises. On rencontre aussi τὰ παλαιά et τὰ ἀρχαῖα, littéralement «les faits anciens». Ces deux expressions sont les plus significatives car tous les renvois au passé peuvent être ramenés à deux catégories distinctes qu'elles définissent : les actions qui ressortissent à l'«ancien», que représentent l'adverbe πάλαι et ses composés, et celles qui se rapportent à «l'origine», à ce qui est «premier» ou «primitif», que marquent les mots de la famille d'ἀρχή.

Le sens originel du verbe ἄρχω semble être «marcher le premier, faire le premier, prendre l'initiative de» et pour le nom féminin ἀρχή «le sens de ‹commencement› est plus ancien ‹que celui de commandement ou souveraineté›, attesté dès l'*Iliade*»[5]. Les philosophes utilisent ce nom pour désigner les principes, les premiers éléments, «le premier emploi remontant, dit-on, à Anaximandre»[6]. P. Chantraine conclut : «Il faut trouver comme étymologie un thème ou une racine **arch-* se rapportant à la notion de faire le premier ou de marcher le premier.» M. Casevitz précise que «le rapport au présent est plus marqué avec ἀρχαῖος» qu'avec παλαιός et qu'implicitement dans les mots de la famille d'ἀρχαῖος le passé «affleure le présent et l'explique»[7].

Πάλαι signifie «autrefois, il y a longtemps», parfois au sens d'«auparavant». Il est attesté chez Homère, où il s'oppose à νέος. «C'est en fait un terme de sens général au vaste champ sémantique», commente Chantraine, qui rappelle que l'adverbe pourrait reposer sur la même racine que τῆλε, «au loin», et le béotien πήλυι. Un rapprochement avec le mycénien *parajo* («vieux» pour les personnes, les tissus, les chariots) est proposé par les étymologistes, mais reste hypothétique. M. Casevitz confirme, après examen de nombreux exemples pris chez les auteurs archaïques comme chez les tragiques ou Démosthène, la signification spatio-temporelle de παλαιός : «L'éloignement, la discontinuité, la différence sont plus marqués par παλαιός»[8].

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5 Chantraine 1999, *ad loc.*

6 *Ibid.*

7 Casevitz 2004, 134 – 135.

8 Casevitz 2004, 134. Pour un panorama des valeurs sémantiques de chaque famille de mots, outre les notices du *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* de Chantraine, on verra

Un examen lexicologique attentif montre que les historiens grecs emploient les deux familles de mots pour renvoyer au passé. Cet usage n'est pas indifférent, vu la distinction de sens que nous avons signalée. En comparant la fréquence et la signification de ces deux familles de mots dans chacune des œuvres, il sera possible de mettre en évidence une façon propre à chaque historien d'élaborer et de concevoir le passé. Cela permettra de dessiner des évolutions d'un auteur à l'autre. Des tableaux comportant les différents champs sémantiques des deux familles lexicales donneront une vue d'ensemble qui permettra la comparaison. Nous n'aborderons ici qu'en passant les historiens Hécatée et Hellanicos, qui ont influencé respectivement Hérodote et Thucydide. En effet, comme nous n'avons conservé que des fragments de leurs oeuvres, les leçons tirées des expressions qu'ils emploient pour désigner le passé ne sauraient être significatives.

2.1 Chez Hérodote

2.1.1 Occurrences et emplois des mots de la famille d'ἀρχή chez Hérodote

On relève dans l'ensemble des *Histoires* un total de 112 occurrences pour cette famille, en comptant uniquement le nom ἀρχή, l'adjectif ἀρχαῖος et l'adverbe ἀρχῆθεν. Si l'on ajoute les emplois pertinents des verbes ἄρχω/ἄρχομαι et les occurrences, toutes intéressantes, du verbe ὑπάρχω, le total atteint 175. Nous avons évidemment rejeté les passages qui se rapportent à un commencement d'ordre géographique ou à une simple mise en œuvre[9].

A	Position en début de série : point de départ, du passé vers le présent, avec le sens de « commencement » ou « origine »
1.2	L'enlèvement d'Io par les Phéniciens « fut le premier incident qui commença la série des torts (τῶν ἀδικημάτων πρῶτον τοῦτο ἄρξαι). »
1.4	À partir de l'enlèvement de Médée de Colchide, « les Grecs furent gravement coupables ; car ils commencèrent les premiers à porter la guerre en Asie (προτέρους ἄρξαι στρατεύεσθαι ἐς τὴν Ἀσίην) avant que les Asiatiques la portassent en Europe. »
1.5	Selon les Perses, la guerre de Troie signe le commencement de l'hostilité entre les Perses et les Grecs (τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ἔχθρης τῆς ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας).

Benveniste 1973[2], 97 pour πάλαι, Benveniste 1976[2], 144 *sq.* pour πρῶτος, ainsi que Weil 1985, 28–37 et Jouanna 2004, 21–36.
9 Nous avons repris les traductions de Legrand en harmonisant celles des mots-clés, de même pour πάλαι plus loin.

suite

A	Position en début de série : point de départ, du passé vers le présent, avec le sens de «commencement» ou «origine»
1.5	Le projet d'Hérodote : raconter comment les Grecs se sont affirmés à partir des premières offenses qu'ils ont subies de la part des peuples voisins (τὸν δὲ οἶδα αὐτὸς πρῶτον ὑπάρξαντα ἀδίκων ἔργων ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας).
1.116	«En commençant par le commencement» : Ἀρχόμενος ἀπ' ἀρχῆς.
2.51	À partir du moment où certains d'entre eux commencèrent à habiter avec les Athéniens (ἤρξαντο), les Pélasges ont été considérés comme des Grecs.
2.154	À partir du moment où des Ioniens et des Cariens se sont installés en Égypte (ἀρξάμενοι), les Grecs ont mieux connu l'histoire de l'Égypte.
3.25	Hypothèse : «Si Cambyse avait ramené son armée en arrière, il se serait, à la suite de l'erreur initiale (ἐπὶ τῇ ἀρχῆθεν γενομένῃ ἁμαρτάδι), conduit en homme sage.»
3.31	«Tel fut, dit-on, le premier acte qui commença la série des forfaits de Cambyse.» Πρῶτον μὲν δὴ λέγουσι Καμβύσῃ τῶν κακῶν ἄρξαι τοῦτο.
3.75	Le commencement de la dynastie des Achéménides : «Préxaspe exposa à partir d'Achaiménès (ἀρξάμενος ἀπ' Ἀχαιμένεος) la généalogie de Cyrus en ligne paternelle.»
4.43	L'Achéménide Sataspès, n'ayant pas accompli le périple de la Libye qui lui avait été imposé au lieu de la peine de mort, se voit infliger le châtiment prévu à l'origine (τὴν ἀρχαίην δίκην).
5.28 et 30	Le commencement des malheurs pour les Ioniens : ἤρχετο Ἴωσι γίνεσθαι κακά/ ἤρχετο κακὰ γίνεσθαι τῇ Ἰωνίῃ.
5.97	Qu'Aristagoras ait réussi à convaincre les Athéniens de venir au secours des Ioniens asservis par les Perses représente un tournant dans l'histoire grecque : «Les navires athéniens furent l'origine des malheurs pour les Grecs et pour les Barbares (ἀρχὴ κακῶν ἐγένοντο Ἕλλησί τε καὶ βαρβάροισι).»
7.47	Xerxès demande à Artabane s'il peut encore être opposé à l'expédition contre la Grèce comme il l'a été à l'origine (τὴν ἀρχαίην γνώμην). Emploi peu pertinent. De même 7.160 : quelques concessions par rapport au discours premier ; 7.184 : les troupes fournies à l'origine (τὸν ἀρχαῖον ὅμιλον) par les peuples d'Asie pour l'expédition de Xerxès.
7.148	Les Argiens étaient instruits dès l'origine (κατ' ἀρχάς) des dangers que les Perses faisaient courir à la Grèce.
7.220	La Pythie a été consultée par les Spartiates au sujet de la guerre contre les Perses «dès son origine» (κατ' ἀρχάς).
8.15	Les amiraux perses n'attendent pas que les Grecs aient l'initiative du combat naval (μάχης ἄρξαι).
8.22	Thémistocle appelle les Ioniens et les Cariens à se souvenir qu'ils sont à l'origine du conflit gréco-perse : ἀρχῆθεν ἡ ἔχθρη πρὸς τὸν βάρβαρον ἀπ' ὑμέων ἡμῖν γέγονε.
8.84	Comment aurait commencé la bataille de Salamine selon les Athéniens : οὕτω λέγουσι τῆς ναυμαχίης γενέσθαι τὴν ἀρχήν.
8.128	Quelle fut l'origine de l'entente entre le Perse Artabaze et Timoxénos, stratège de Skionè (ἀρχήν).

suite

A	Position en début de série : point de départ, du passé vers le présent, avec le sens de «commencement» ou «origine»
8.142	Les Lacédémoniens demandent aux Athéniens de se rappeler que les guerres médiques ont dû leur origine à l'attitude hostile d'Athènes envers les Perses et qu'elles visent à défendre l'Attique (περὶ τῆς ὑμετέρης ἀρχῆθεν ὁ ἀγὼν ἐγένετο).
9.21	Le commencement de la bataille de Platées : ἀρχήν (de même 9.22 : κατ᾽ ἀρχάς, 28 : ἀρχήν, 36 : μάχης ἄρχουσι, 37 : μάχης ἄρχειν, 40 : μάχης ἄρξαι, 46 : ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς, 48 : ἐς τὰς ἀρχαίας τάξις/ἐπειδὴ οὐκ ὑμεῖς ἤρξατε τούτου τοῦ λόγου, ἀλλ᾽ ἡμεῖς ἄρχομεν, 57 : ἀρχήν, 60 : ἀρχήν).
9.66	Le choix de Mardonios pour représenter l'autorité de Xerxès en Grèce mécontente Artabaze «depuis le commencement de la campagne» (αὐτίκα οὐκ ἠρέσκετο κατ᾽ ἀρχάς).
9.80	L'enrichissement des Éginètes tire son origine (ἀρχήν) de leur achat auprès des hilotes d'objets en or que ceux-ci ont dérobés dans le camp perse.
9.103	Le commencement de la bataille de Mycale : αὐτίκα κατ᾽ ἀρχάς.

B	Le motif du premier responsable
1.95	Les Mèdes commencèrent les premiers à se dégager du joug assyrien : πρῶτοι ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν Μῆδοι ἤρξαντο ἀπίστασθαι.
1.130	Crésus attaqua le premier Cyrus (ἄρξαντα ἀδικίης).
3.49	Les Corcyréens ont pris les premiers l'initiative d'un acte coupable envers Périandre, fils de Kypsélos, tyran de Corinthe : πρότεροι οἱ Κερκυραῖοι ἦρξαν ἐς αὐτὸν πρῆγμα ἀτάσθαλον ποιήσαντες.
4.1	Les Scythes les premiers, en attaquant les Mèdes dans leur territoire d'Asie, ont été coupables d'injustice (πρότεροι ὑπῆρξαν ἀδικίης), selon Darius.
4.119	Les Scythes ont les premiers offensé les Perses par une guerre : Εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς ἔατε οἱ πρότεροι ἀδικήσαντες Πέρσας καὶ ἄρξαντες πολέμου.
6.67	Démarate, roi déchu de Sparte, annonce que sa déchéance sera l'origine de malheurs ou de félicités pour les Lacédémoniens (ἄρξειν Λακεδαιμονίοισι ἢ μυρίης κακότητος ἢ μυρίης εὐδαιμονίης).
6.119	La colère de Darius contre les Érétriens s'explique «parce qu'ils avaient pris l'initiative de l'offenser les premiers» (ἀρξάντων ἀδικίης προτέρων) en incendiant Sardes.
6.133	Miltiade justifie son expédition contre Paros par la culpabilité première des Pariens, qui ont participé à la bataille de Marathon aux côtés des Perses : πρόφασιν ἔχων ὡς οἱ Πάριοι ὑπῆρξαν πρότεροι στρατευόμενοι τριήρεϊ ἐς Μαραθῶνα ἅμα τῷ Πέρσῃ.
7.8, 9, 11	Xerxès justifie son expédition contre les Grecs en invoquant leur culpabilité première : ὑπῆρξαν ἄδικα ποιεῦντες/Ἕλληνας ὑπάρξαντας ἀδικίης/τοῖσι ὑπαργμένοισι ἐξ ἐκείνων.

suite

B	Le motif du premier responsable
9.78	Un Éginète invite Pausanias à mutiler le cadavre de Mardonios afin de détourner les Perses de l'envie de «prendre l'initiative d'outrages envers les Grecs» (μὴ ὑπάρχειν ἔργα ἀτάσθαλα ποιέων ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας).

C	Ἀρχή comme origine, point de butée temporelle, limite en-deçà de laquelle l'historien ne sait rien. Mouvement de remontée du présent vers le passé, le plus près possible des origines. Le superlatif ἀρχαιότατος est privilégié
1.56	Le peuple athénien, autochtone, est d'origine pélasgique, les Péloponnésiens, eux, ont une origine hellénique (τὸ ἀρχαῖον).
1.105	Le temple d'Aphrodite Ourania est «le plus ancien de tous les temples (πάντων ἀρχαιότατον ἱρῶν) élevés en l'honneur de la déesse.»
1.149	Les villes d'origine (πόλιες αἱ ἀρχαῖαι) des Éoliens étaient au nombre de onze après que les Ioniens se furent emparés de la douzième, Smyrne.
1.173	Les Lyciens «tirent leur origine antique de la Crète» (ἐκ Κρήτης τὠρχαῖον γεγόνασι) qui, «dans les temps anciens» (τὸ παλαιόν), était peuplée tout entière de Barbares.
2.43	L'Héraclès des Égyptiens appartient à la deuxième génération des dieux (au nombre de douze), qui est née de la première génération des dieux (au nombre de huit) dix-sept mille ans avant le règne d'Amasis. Cela explique que, pour les Égyptiens, Héraclès soit «un dieu antique», du temps des origines, τις ἀρχαῖός ἐστι θεός.
2.50	Le plus ancien culte de Poséidon est trouvé chez les Libyens, qui l'honorent «dès l'origine» (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) : à partir de cette apparition un culte ininterrompu s'établit.
2.52	D'après ses recherches, l'oracle de Dodone est «le plus ancien qu'il y ait chez les Grecs» (ἀρχαιότατον τῶν ἐν Ἕλλησι χρηστηρίων). L'historien remonte au-delà de l'institution de l'oracle pour distinguer un temps, non daté, mais qui a duré, où les Grecs invoquaient les dieux sans leur avoir donné de nom personnel, et un temps où ils apprirent à connaître leurs désignations individuelles.
2.104	«Seuls parmi tous les hommes, les Colchidiens, les Égyptiens et les Éthiopiens pratiquent la circoncision depuis l'origine (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς)», pratique qui est d'origine égyptienne.
2.113	Le sanctuaire d'Héraclès situé dans la Bouche Canopique du Nil symbolise la continuité du temps : la coutume d'hospitalité envers les esclaves «continue à exister, telle jusqu'à mon temps qu'elle a existé dès l'origine (ὁ νόμος οὕτως διατελέει ἐὼν ὅμοιος τὸ μέχρι ἐμέο ἀπ' ἀρχῆς).»
2.145	Faisant partie dans la théogonie égyptienne «des huit que l'on dit être les premiers dieux», Pan est un dieu très ancien (ἀρχαιότατος).
4.108	Les Gélons, peuplade scythe, sont à l'origine des Grecs (Εἰσὶ οἱ Γελωνοὶ τὸ ἀρχαῖον Ἕλληνες).
4.117	Les Sauromates parlent mal la langue scythe depuis l'origine (ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀρχαίου).

suite

C	**Ἀρχή comme origine, point de butée temporelle, limite en-deçà de laquelle l'historien ne sait rien. Mouvement de remontée du présent vers le passé, le plus près possible des origines. Le superlatif ἀρχαιότατος est privilégié**
5.16	À l'origine (τὸ μέν κου ἀρχαῖον), les Péoniens du lac Prasias, avant de fournir pour leurs habitations lacustres trois pieux par femme épousée, dressaient en commun tous les pieux nécessaires à la collectivité.
5.57	Les Géphyréens prétendent tirer leur origine d'Érétrie (τὴν ἀρχήν), alors que, d'après Hérodote, ce sont des Phéniciens.
5.88	Le costume de lin sans agrafe n'est pas «anciennement» (τὸ παλαιόν) ionien, mais carien ; car le costume des femmes grecques à l'origine (ἐσθὴς ἡ ἀρχαίη) était identique pour toutes et correspondait au costume dorien.
5.122	Les Gergithes sont les restes des Teucriens des origines (τῶν ἀρχαίων Τευκρῶν).
6.106	Les Athéniens qualifient leur cité de «cité la plus ancienne» (πόλιν ἀρχαιοτάτην).
6.119	Les descendants des Érétriens établis par Darius en Kissie y habitent encore du temps d'Hérodote tout en conservant leur langue originelle, le grec (φυλάσσοντες τὴν ἀρχαίην γλῶσσαν).
7.154	Camarine était à l'origine (τὸ ἀρχαῖον) aux Syracusains.
7.161	Le député grec auprès de Gélon de Syracuse dit que les Athéniens représentent «le peuple le plus ancien de la Grèce» (ἀρχαιότατον μὲν ἔθνος).
7.176	Les Grecs décidèrent de reconstruire le mur «primitif», originel (τὸ μέν νυν τεῖχος τὸ ἀρχαῖον) des Thermopyles, que les Phocéens avaient construit «anciennement» (ἐκ παλαιοῦ), parce qu'il était tombé partiellement en ruine sous l'effet du temps (ὑπὸ χρόνου).
9.45	Alexandre de Macédoine trahit le camp perse par considération pour ses origines grecques : αὐτός τε γὰρ Ἕλλην γένος εἰμὶ τώρχαῖον.
9.46	L'expression πάλαι ἀπ'ἀρχῆς, «depuis longtemps dès l'origine», désigne le début des guerres médiques, depuis que les Grecs ont rassemblé une armée qui doit affronter celle de Mardonios. Πάλαι renvoie à un passé peu lointain, ἀπ'ἀρχῆς à l'origine comme point absolu. On trouve des emplois similaires pour un cours d'eau retrouvant son lit d'origine (l'Halys en 1.75, l'Euphrate en 1.186 et 191, le Nil en 2.99) et en 4.159, où Hérodote compare le nombre des habitants de Cyrène sous Battos et sous son fils à celui des colons initiaux, pour dire qu'il est resté le même.

D	**Lié au concept d'origine, ἀρχήν ou ἀρχῆθεν peut signifier «qui existe de tout temps», «de toute éternité», «depuis les origines»**
1.131	Après avoir fait la liste des dieux élémentaires auxquels les Perses vouent un culte, l'historien ajoute : Τούτοισι μὲν δὴ θύουσι μούνοισι ἀρχῆθεν. «Ce sont là les seuls dieux à qui ils sacrifient de tout temps.»
2.28	À propos d'un phénomène météorologique : «Il est naturel que, de régions très chaudes, aucun souffle ne vienne ; c'est de ce qui est frais que soufflent ordinai-

suite

D	**Lié au concept d'origine, ἀρχήν ou ἀρχῆθεν peut signifier «qui existe de tout temps», «de toute éternité», «depuis les origines»**
	rement les brises. Qu'il en soit donc de ces choses comme il en est et en a été de tout temps (ὡς ἀρχὴν ἐγένετο).»
3.80	«L'envie est innée chez l'homme de tout temps» : φθόνος δὲ ἀρχῆθεν ἐμφύεται ἀνθρώπῳ, c'est-à-dire «depuis l'apparition de l'homme .»

E	**Certains emplois d'ἀρχαῖος ont le sens d'«antique» et soulignent l'éloignement dans le temps ou le caractère vénérable (on s'attendrait à trouver παλαιός)**
1.155	Crésus demande à Cyrus de ne pas détruire la ville de Sardes même si elle s'est révoltée contre son autorité parce que c'est une «ville antique» (μηδὲ πόλιν ἀρχαίην ἐξαναστήσῃς).
1.171	Les Cariens revendiquent «l'antique sanctuaire» (ἱρὸν ἀρχαῖον) de Zeus Carios pour prouver leur autochtonie.
2.24	La trajectoire «antique» du soleil (ἐκ τῆς ἀρχαίης διεξόδου), sa trajectoire normale, première.
4.62	Les Scythes se servent pour le culte d'Arès d'un «antique sabre de fer» (ἀκινάκης σιδήρεος ἀρχαῖος).
6.133	Les Pariens attaqués par Miltiade doublent la hauteur de leur «antique muraille» (τοῦ ἀρχαίου <τείχεος>).

F	**Le motif du «premier inventeur» est rendu par l'adjectif πρῶτος ou l'adverbe πρῶτον**

2.1.2 Occurrences et emplois des mots de la famille de πάλαι chez Hérodote

On relève dans l'ensemble des *Histoires* 57 occurrences pour cette famille, représentée par l'adverbe πάλαι et l'adjectif παλαιός[10], qui se répartissent selon trois valeurs différentes : le passé ancien révolu, le passé ancien qui garde un lien avec le présent, et un passé récent à l'échelle d'une existence humaine.

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10 Un relevé complet figure dans Powell 1960, *ad loc.*

A	Valeur de passé ancien indéterminé, éloigné, discontinu, opposé au présent et révolu, avec la signification de «jadis» ou «anciennement»
1.5	«Des cités qui jadis étaient grandes, la plupart sont devenues petites ; et celles qui étaient grandes de mon temps étaient petites auparavant.» Τὰ γὰρ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλα ἦν, τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν σμικρὰ γέγονε· τὰ δὲ ἐπ᾽ ἐμέο ἦν μεγάλα, πρότερον ἦν σμικρά.
1.26	L'ancienne ville d'Éphèse : τῆς παλαιῆς πόλιος.
1.144	Le prix donné jadis (τὸ πάλαι) aux vainqueurs des jeux en l'honneur d'Apollon Triopien.
1.157	Fondation ancienne (μαντήιον ἐκ παλαιοῦ ἱδρυμένον), impossible à dater, du sanctuaire des Branchides consacré à Apollon, près de Milet.
1.171	«Jadis (τὸ παλαιόν), sujets de Minos et appelés Léléges, les Cariens occupaient les îles ; ils ne payaient point de tribut, aussi loin que me permette d'atteindre la tradition (ὅσον καὶ ἐγὼ δυνατός εἰμι <ἐπὶ> μακρότατον ἐξικέσθαι ἀκοῇ).»
1.173	«Jadis (τὸ παλαιόν) la Crète était peuplée tout entière de Barbares.»
1.173	Jadis (τὸ παλαιόν) le territoire des Lyciens s'appelait la Milyade.
2.15	«Jadis (Τὸ πάλαι) on appelait Égypte la Thébaïde.»
2.44	Grâce à ses recherches, Hérodote sait qu'Héraclès est un «dieu ancien» : Τὰ μέν νυν ἱστορημένα δηλοῖ σαφέως παλαιὸν θεὸν Ἡρακλέα ἐόντα.
2.179	Naucratis, première et unique ville égyptienne jadis (τὸ παλαιόν) concédée aux Grecs.
3.6	D'anciennes jarres de vin (ἐπὶ τὸν παλαιὸν <κέραμον>).
3.37	D'anciennes sépultures (θήκας παλαιάς) profanées par Cambyse.
3.58	Les vaisseaux étaient «anciennement tous enduits de vermillon» (Τὸ παλαιὸν ἅπασαι αἱ νέες ἦσαν μιλτηλιφέες), dans un passé reculé antérieur à la tyrannie de Polycrate de Samos et situé plutôt à l'époque homérique.
4.11	La Scythie appartenait jadis aux Cimmériens (αὕτη λέγεται τὸ παλαιὸν εἶναι Κιμμερίων).
4.35	Les hymnes anciens (τοὺς παλαιοὺς ὕμνους) qui se chantent à Délos.
4.116	À partir du moment où les Sauromates s'installèrent en Scythie, leurs femmes retrouvèrent l'ancien mode de vie des Amazones, leurs aïeules (διαίτῃ ἀπὸ τούτου χρέωνται τῇ παλαιῇ), c'est-à-dire aller à cheval à la chasse ainsi qu'à la guerre.
4.180	Les anciens ornements (τὸ πάλαι ἐκόσμεον) que revêtaient pour une fête religieuse des jeunes filles libyennes avant qu'elles n'adoptent les usages grecs.
5.58	Les Ioniens appelaient les livres «diphtères», « peaux», en raison de l'ancien usage (ἀπὸ τοῦ παλαιοῦ) de peaux de chèvres ou de moutons.
5.88	Le costume de lin sans agrafes que les Athéniens firent prendre à leurs femmes n'était pas anciennement (τὸ παλαιόν) ionien.
6.88	L'ancienne ville d'Égine : τὴν παλαιὴν καλεομένην πόλιν.
6.109	Quel était le rôle du polémarque jadis (τὸ παλαιόν) chez les Athéniens.
7.51	Le proverbe, cette «parole ancienne» (τὸ παλαιὸν ἔπος).
7.59	Le promontoire de Serrheion est un territoire qui appartenait jadis (τὸ παλαιόν) aux Ciconiens.
7.61	Les Grecs appelaient jadis (πάλαι) les Perses Képhènes.
7.62	Tout le monde jadis (πάλαι) appelait les Mèdes Ariens.
7.74	Les Lydiens s'appelaient jadis (τὸ πάλαι) Méoniens.

suite

A	Valeur de passé ancien indéterminé, éloigné, discontinu, opposé au présent et révolu, avec la signification de «jadis» ou «anciennement»
7.89	Les Phéniciens habitaient jadis (τὸ παλαιόν), à ce qu'ils disent eux-mêmes, sur les bords de la mer Érythrée.
7.91	Les Ciliciens s'appelaient jadis (τὸ παλαιόν) Hypachéens.
7.95	Jadis (τὸ πάλαι), au dire des Grecs, les Éoliens étaient appelés Pélasges.
7.108	La contrée des environs de Strymée où coule le fleuve Lisos s'appelait jadis (πάλαι) Gallaïque.
7.129	Passé géologique : la Thessalie était jadis (τὸ παλαιόν) un lac, lorsque n'existait pas encore la gorge du Pénée pour écouler le trop-plein des eaux.
7.142	Jadis (τὸ πάλαι) l'Acropole d'Athènes était fortifiée d'une palissade.
7.176	Aux Thermopyles, il y avait jadis (τό γε παλαιόν) une porte dans le mur qu'avaient construit les Phocéens.
8.31	La Doride était jadis (τὸ παλαιόν) la Dryopide.
8.73	Les Arcadiens et les Cynuriens sont fixés dans le Péloponnèse là où ils habitaient jadis (τὸ πάλαι).
8.137	Jadis (τὸ πάλαι), même les familles princières étaient pauvres.
9.26 – 27	Comparaison entre les exploits passés et présents des Tégéates et des Athéniens : καινὰ καὶ παλαιὰ ἔργα/καὶ τὸ παλαιὸν καὶ τὸ νέον/οὔτ᾿ ὦν καινὰ οὔτε παλαιά/παλαιά τε καὶ καινὰ λέγειν/Παλαιῶν μέν νυν ἔργων ἅλις ἔστω.
9.73	Avant d'être enlevée par Pâris, Hélène l'a été jadis (τὸ πάλαι) par Thésée.

B	2ᵉᵐᵉ sens : πάλαι désigne un passé ancien, voire très ancien, dont la durée n'est pas datée, avec le sens de «depuis longtemps»
1.8	«Depuis longtemps (Πάλαι) les hommes ont découvert les sages préceptes qui doivent servir à leur instruction.» Il s'agit d'usages lentement établis depuis des âges très anciens.
1.60	La distinction entre Grecs et Barbares s'est opérée «depuis assez longtemps» (ἐκ παλαιτέρου).
1.127	Les Perses supportaient mal depuis longtemps (πάλαι) d'être sous l'autorité des Mèdes.
5.81	Les Éginètes se souviennent de l'inimitié qu'ils ont depuis longtemps (ἔχθρης παλαιῆς) envers les Athéniens.
5.106	Histiée de Milet explique à Darius que c'est parce qu'il est loin d'eux que les Ioniens se sont révoltés, accomplissant «ce qu'ils désiraient depuis longtemps» (ποιῆσαι τῶν πάλαι ἵμερον εἶχον).
8.62	Thémistocle affirme que la cité de Siris en Italie appartient aux Athéniens «depuis longtemps déjà» (ἐκ παλαιοῦ ἔτι).
8.142	Les Lacédémoniens disent aux Athéniens que ces derniers sont les champions de la liberté depuis longtemps (τὸ πάλαι), c'est-à-dire depuis les temps anciens.

C	**3ème sens : πάλαι fait référence à un passé récent, défini par un faible écart entre le passé et le présent du locuteur ou renvoyant à un événement survenu du vivant d'un personnage du récit**
1.45	Crésus rappelle à Adraste l'avertissement qu'il avait eu en songe quelque temps avant qu'il tue involontairement son fils (πάλαι).
1.124	Harpage enjoint à Cyrus de se révolter contre le Mède Astyage qui a voulu se débarrasser de lui. «Tu sais tout cela depuis longtemps (πάλαι).» Cela renvoie à l'enfance de Cyrus, soit quelques années antérieures.
2.162	Amasis s'apprête «depuis longtemps» (πάλαι) à se rendre auprès du roi d'Égypte Apriès.
9.45–46	«Depuis longtemps» (πάλαι) renvoie à un passé de quelques heures ou de quelques jours, avant la bataille de Platées.

2.2 Chez Thucydide

L'étude à laquelle s'est voué Thucydide est celle de l'impérialisme athénien, que la langue grecque exprime aussi par le nom ἀρχή, de ses effets – peur, oppression, guerres civiles – et des efforts que les autres cités font pour le contrer. Cet impérialisme trouve son apogée dans la guerre du Péloponnèse, événement récent et en tant que tel connaissable[11]. Pour expliquer l'impérialisme athénien, Thucydide doit remonter à son établissement : les guerres médiques, la création de la ligue de Délos et son évolution dans les cinquante ans qui ont suivi. D'où la Pentékontaétie au livre I[12]. De plus, au livre I, dans l'Archéologie, il brosse un tableau de la Grèce primitive, dans une optique de synthèse historique, qui laisserait transparaître les progrès accomplis par les Grecs sur une très longue durée. Même s'il est à bien des égards une «construction mentale» obtenue à partir des données du présent, Thucydide laisse entendre que ce passé ancien a une incidence sur le présent, qu'il crée même une nécessité[13]. Le présent résulte

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[11] Sur les ignorances de Thucydide – et des Grecs de l'époque classique en général – par rapport au passé ancien et sur le choix d'un sujet d'histoire contemporaine, on lira les remarques de Finley 1981, 19–40.

[12] Au sujet des intentions de Thucydide dans la Pentékontaétie et de l'interprétation de cette section, nous renvoyons à Gomme/Andrewes/Dover (vol.I) 1962, *ad loc.* et à Delorme 1992. Voir également Westlake 1955, 53–67 ; Accame, 1968 ; French, 1971, Hornblower (vol. I) 1991, *ad loc.*, Pritchett 1995.

[13] Comme le sous-entend Périclès à propos de l'empire athénien lorsqu'il dit à ses concitoyens (2.63.2) : «Cet empire, vous ne pouvez plus vous en démettre, au cas où la crainte, à l'heure actuelle, pousserait vraiment certains de vous à faire, par goût de la tranquillité, ces vertueux projets. D'ores et déjà, il constitue entre vos mains une tyrannie, dont l'acquisition semble injuste, mais l'abandon dangereux.» Sur l'Archéologie : Gomme/Andrewes/Dover (vol. I) 1962,

de ce que le passé a créé, qui est ineffaçable. À son tour, pour désigner le passé, il emploie les mots de la famille d'ἀρχή et de πάλαι.

2.2.1 Les mots de la famille d'ἀρχή

D'après notre relevé, il y a 46 occurrences des mots de la famille d'ἀρχή[14]. Pourtant si on retranche les emplois du verbe ἄρχω/ἄρχομαι, qui ne se réfèrent pas tous, il s'en faut de beaucoup, à des faits du passé, on n'a plus pour toute l'œuvre que 12 emplois d'ἀρχαῖος et 12 d'ἀρχή, dont seuls 9 sont pertinents. Thucydide utilise une fois ἀρχαιολογεῖν et une fois ἀρχαιότροπος.

Le plus fréquemment, ces occurrences renvoient au commencement de la guerre du Péloponnèse[15] qui coïncide avec le début des malheurs de la Grèce, comme l'affirme le Spartiate Mélésippos reconduit à la frontière de l'Attique : Ἥδε ἡ ἡμέρα τοῖς Ἕλλησι μεγάλων κακῶν ἄρξει[16]. L'origine de l'injustice commise à l'égard des Platéens, du désordre à Athènes consécutif à l'épidémie de peste, de l'occupation de Délion par les Athéniens, est chaque fois l'occasion de préciser un point de départ dans un temps relativement peu éloigné de celui où écrit l'historien[17].

En revanche, lorsqu'il cherche à savoir l'origine du complot d'Harmodios et Aristogiton contre les tyrans d'Athènes, de l'hostilité des Ambraciotes à l'encontre des gens d'Argos d'Amphilochie ou encore l'origine de Perdiccas, roi de Macédoine[18], il se place dans un passé éloigné, voulant trouver le point de départ d'un fait qui a des répercussions au temps de la guerre du Péloponnèse. S'il se tourne vers le passé, abordant telle ou telle alliance, hostilité, réaction de population, etc., c'est parce que ce passé joue un rôle dans le conflit qu'il a choisi d'étudier. Il revient sur l'Athènes primitive, antérieure au synœcisme de Thésée, parce qu'il y voit l'explication du comportement des Athéniens en 431, lorsque Périclès regroupe les paysans de l'Attique dans Athènes. La colonisation grecque

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ad loc., Romilly 1967, 240–298, Nicolai 2011. Rengakos 2006, 286–291 analyse le passage sous l'angle de la technique narrative et de l'organisation temporelle.

14 Pour des références précises voir Bétant 1961, *ad loc.*

15 Thuc. 1.1.1; 1.23.1; 1.25.4; 1.53.2; 1.53.3; 1.78.4; 1.81.5; 1.118.2; 1.144.2; 2.67.4; 2.95.2; 3.86.2; 4.85.1; 5.20.1; 5.26.4.

16 Thuc. 2.12.3. L'expression, qui marque un jalon et, du point de vue de Mélésippos, le commencement d'une série de malheurs du présent vers l'avenir, fait écho à celle d'Hdt. 5.97 et sera reprise par Xén. *Hell.* 2.2.23, preuve d'une certaine continuité d'un historien à l'autre.

17 Thuc. 2.74.3; 2.53.1; 4.98.1.

18 Thuc. 4.59.1; 2.68.2; 2.99.3 et 5.80.2.

en Sicile n'étant pas indifférente au jeu des alliances qui se nouent en Sicile au moment de l'expédition athénienne de 415, il lui consacre quelques chapitres[19]. Si le stratège Démosthène précise que les Messéniens habitent la région de Pylos «depuis toute antiquité», cela signifie que ceux-ci, familiarisés avec les lieux et hostiles aux Lacédémoniens, pourront aider les Athéniens dans leur installation à Pylos, en territoire ennemi[20].

Le superlatif ἀρχαιότατος est absent de toute l'œuvre à l'exception d'un endroit. En 2.15.4, Thucydide se sert des données fournies par l'emplacement des anciens temples à Athènes pour retrouver la physionomie de la cité avant le synœcisme de Thésée. Les vestiges de ces temples sont soit sur l'Acropole même, soit au sud de l'Acropole. Parmi ces sanctuaires il y a celui de Dionysos de Limnai, «en l'honneur de qui sont instituées les plus anciennes fêtes de Dionysos (τὰ ἀρχαιότατα Διονύσια), qui se font dans le mois d'Anthestérion, le douzième jour, comme c'est l'usage également, encore aujourd'hui, chez les Ioniens d'origine athénienne.» Par cette remarque il rejoint la démarche intellectuelle d'Hérodote, et il fournit l'indice qui lui permet de déduire sa connaissance, ce qu'Hérodote ne fait pas toujours. En 1.21.2, les ἀρχαῖα ne sont pas «les temps premiers», «l'antiquité», mais «le passé», moins ancien et dans un sens plus vague. «Malgré l'habitude commune qui veut, quand une guerre est en cours, qu'on la juge la plus importante, puis, quand elle a cessé, qu'on admire davantage les événements passés (παυσαμένων δὲ τὰ ἀρχαῖα μᾶλλον θαυμαζόντων), <la guerre du Péloponnèse> se révélera néanmoins, à consulter la réalité même, plus importante que ces derniers.»[21]

2.2.2 Les emplois de πάλαι ou παλαιός chez Thucydide

Comme E.-A. Bétant, nous avons relevé 69 occurrences de cette famille lexicale. Τὰ παλαιά ou τὰ πάλαι désignent les faits qui se sont produits «il y a longtemps» (passé révolu), ou «qui existent depuis longtemps» (passé non révolu). J. de Romilly traduit par «les temps anciens». On pourrait même écrire «la période archaïque», si Thucydide ne prolongeait les παλαιά jusqu'à l'époque des guerres médiques. L'adjectif et l'adverbe impliquent une idée de vieillesse, d'ancienneté et d'éloignement. Ils sont présents massivement dans le livre I, où il est le plus

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19 Respectivement 2.15–16 et 6.2–6.

20 Thuc. 4.3.3 : οἰκείους ὄντας αὐτῷ τὸ ἀρχαῖον.

21 Derrière la vérité générale qu'il énonce, Thucydide place vraisemblablement ici une allusion à la guerre de Troie, événement qui est le fondement de toute la tradition «historico-mythologique» de la Grèce.

question d'histoire ancienne. On peut établir la nomenclature suivante, selon la fréquence des thèmes auxquels est associée l'idée d'ancienneté[22].

A	Παλαιός renvoie à des traités ou des serments «anciens» par lesquels deux cités, deux peuples sont liés et qu'ils doivent renouer, preuve que le passé n'est pas révolu
2.22.3	«En vertu d'anciens liens d'alliance» : κατὰ τὸ παλαιὸν ξυμμαχικόν.
3.68.1	«En vertu des anciens traités de paix que Pausanias avait conclus après la guerre médique» : κατὰ τὰς παλαιὰς Παυσανίου μετὰ τὸν Μῆδον σπονδάς.
3.86.3	«En vertu de l'ancienne alliance (κατά τε παλαιὰν ξυμμαχίαν)» existant entre les habitants de Léontinoi de Sicile et les Athéniens.
5.1.1	Allusion à d'anciens torts dont les Déliens auraient été coupables (κατὰ παλαιάν τινα αἰτίαν) et qui justifient aux yeux des Athéniens leur expulsion de l'île de Délos.
5.30.4	Les anciens serments qui liaient les Corinthiens aux villes grecques de la côte thrace : περὶ τῶν παλαιῶν ὅρκων.
5.42.1	Les Béotiens ont rasé la cité de Panacton «sous le prétexte d'anciens serments (ὅρκοι παλαιοί) jadis échangés à propos de cette place par Athènes et la Béotie.»
5.43.2	Les Lacédémoniens n'ont pas accordé à Alcibiade une considération en rapport avec «l'ancienne proxénie du passé» (κατὰ τὴν παλαιὰν προξενίαν ποτὲ οὖσαν), que ses ancêtres exerçaient vis-à-vis de Sparte, et à laquelle son grand-père avait renoncé.
5.44.1	Les Argiens préfèrent s'allier aux Athéniens, en se disant qu'une cité anciennement amie (ἀπὸ παλαιοῦ), vivant comme eux en démocratie et possédant une puissance maritime considérable serait à leurs côtés en cas d'hostilités.
5.80.2	Les Argiens et les Lacédémoniens renouvellent leurs anciens serments (τοὺς παλαιοὺς ὅρκους) avec les peuples de Chalcidique.
7.33.4	Les stratèges Démosthène et Eurymédon renouent une ancienne alliance (ἀνανεωσάμενοί τινα παλαιὰν φιλίαν) avec le roi Artas d'Iapygie, qui leur a fourni cent cinquante hommes de trait.

B	Παλαιός désigne d'«anciens désaccords» appartenant à un passé ancien non révolu
4.79.2	Les anciens différends de Perdiccas avec Athènes : φοβούμενος δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς τὰ παλαιὰ διάφορα τῶν Ἀθηναίων.
8.3.1	Le roi de Sparte Agis se procure des fonds pour la guerre contre les Athéniens sur le dos des gens de l'Œta, en raison de l'ancienne hostilité (κατὰ τὴν παλαιὰν ἔχθραν) qu'ils ont contre Sparte.

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22 Nous citons les traductions de Romilly/Bodin/Weil en harmonisant les expressions clés.

C	Παλαιός s'applique à un usage ancien : τῷ παλαιῷ τρόπῳ, «à l'ancienne façon»
1.5.3	«Jusqu'à nos jours une grande partie de la Grèce vit à la manière ancienne (τῷ παλαιῷ τρόπῳ), du côté des Locriens Ozoles, de l'Étolie, de l'Acarnanie et des pays continentaux situés dans la région.»
1.10.2	La cité de Sparte est organisée en différents bourgs qui n'ont pas connu de synœcisme. Cette absence de centralisation correspond à l'ancien usage jadis partout en vigueur en Grèce (τῷ παλαιῷ τῆς Ἑλλάδος τρόπῳ).
1.10.4	Les navires grecs, lors de l'expédition contre Troie, n'avaient pas de plats-bords continus, mais étaient disposés «à l'ancienne mode» (τῷ παλαιῷ τρόπῳ), c'est-à-dire à la façon qui prévalait du temps de Minos où la piraterie régnait dans la mer Égée.
1.24.2	Phalios, Corinthien descendant des Héraclides, fut le chef d'Épidamne, colonie de Corcyre, homme «que l'on avait, suivant la règle ancienne (κατὰ τὸν παλαιὸν νόμον), fait venir à cet effet de la métropole.»
1.49.1	La première bataille navale racontée, celle de Sybota, qui opposa la flotte corcyréenne, appuyée par quelques navires athéniens, à la flotte corinthienne, est encore menée selon la tactique ancienne (τῷ παλαιῷ τρόπῳ) rudimentaire, qui la rattache aux batailles navales de jadis.

D	Le superlatif παλαίτατος désigne «le plus ancien connu», qui est «le plus ancien connaissable», mais non pas l'événement premier, initial
1.4	Minos n'est pas forcément le premier Grec à avoir possédé une flotte, mais il est «le plus ancien personnage connu par la tradition (παλαίτατος ὧν ἀκοῇ ἴσμεν) qui ait eu une flotte et conquis, pour la plus grande partie, la maîtrise de la mer aujourd'hui grecque.»
1.13.4	«Le plus ancien combat naval que nous connaissions (Ναυμαχία τε παλαιτάτη ὧν ἴσμεν) oppose les Corinthiens aux Corcyréens, et il a eu lieu de même, autant qu'on puisse dire, deux cent soixante ans avant le début ‹de la guerre du Péloponnèse›.»
1.18.1	Passé non révolu : Sparte «bien qu'ayant subi, après l'établissement de la population dorienne actuelle, les luttes civiles les plus prolongées que nous connaissions (ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ὧν ἴσμεν χρόνον στασιάσασα), vécut pourtant dans l'ordre depuis le temps le plus ancien (ὅμως ἐκ παλαιτάτου καὶ ἠὐνομήθη).» La démarche intellectuelle part du présent, s'enfonce dans un passé lointain, reculé, différent du présent, et essaie de repousser les limites de la zone d'ombre de l'inconnu. Même si Thucydide n'est pas en mesure de donner la date précise à laquelle commença l'εὐνομία de Sparte, il montre la continuité entre le passé et le présent.
4.2.1	À propos de la Sicile : «Elle fut colonisée dès l'origine (τὸ ἀρχαῖον) et occupée, au total, par les divers peuples qui suivent.» Τὸ ἀρχαῖον signifie «au commencement des temps», «dès l'origine des choses». Mais, dans l'énumération des peuples ayant vécu en Sicile, παλαίτατοι qualifie les plus anciens habitants de l'île que la tradition connaisse, aussi loin que l'on remonte dans le temps.

E	Dans l'Archéologie le passé est constamment désigné par τὰ παλαιά ou (τὸ) πάλαι
1.1.2	L'histoire qui précède la guerre du Péloponnèse est divisée en deux périodes : τὰ πρὸ αὐτῶν indique la période qui va, dans le sens inverse de la chronologie, des événements immédiatement antérieurs à la guerre du Péloponnèse jusqu'à la guerre de Troie, qui occupe une position centrale dans la digression ; l'ère qui précède la guerre de Troie est nommée τὰ ἔτι παλαίτερα, «les époques plus anciennes encore», le neutre pluriel renvoyant l'image d'un passé ancien multiforme et complexe.
1.2.1	Le territoire qui s'appelle de nos jours la Grèce n'était pas habité de façon stable dans les temps anciens (πάλαι).
1.3.1	«La faiblesse qui marquait les temps anciens» : τῶν παλαιῶν ἀσθένειαν.
1.20.1	Dans la conclusion de l'Archéologie, Thucydide emploie uniformément παλαιά pour désigner toute la période du passé qui précède la guerre de 431.
1.21.1	Les faits mentionnés par l'historien doivent être considérés comme suffisamment établis «pour des faits anciens» (ὡς παλαιὰ εἶναι).

Le παλαιός, «l'ancien», s'il n'a pas la prétention de renouer avec l'antiquité première, implique néanmoins un lien étroit avec le passé ancien, qui est loin d'être révolu : l'ancienneté est d'autant plus proche qu'on s'éloigne davantage, sur le plan géographique, de l'épicentre de l'hellénisme que représente Athènes. Πάλαι ne fixe pas de fondation ; il ne définit donc pas une date, mais une période, un espace de temps.

Là où on attendrait l'adjectif ἀρχαῖος Thucydide préfère παλαιός, par exemple à propos du premier combat naval connu. Sans doute veut-il suggérer qu'il y eut – ne serait-ce qu'à cause des données de la poésie épique – d'autres combats navals avant celui-là.

2.3 Chez Xénophon

2.3.1 Emplois des mots de la famille d'ἀρχή chez Xénophon : affaiblissement du sens d'ἀρχή

Xénophon recourt davantage que Thucydide aux mots de la famille d'ἀρχή : pour un corpus d'une taille bien inférieure, nous avons relevé 31 occurrences, dont 27 avec une signification pertinente. Cependant, sauf exception, les occurrences de ce domaine lexical ne font pas entrevoir un abîme temporel comme chez Hérodote. Il est rare que Xénophon remonte au passé des origines. L'ἀρχή ne renvoie pas à l'état «primitif» ou «antique» de quelque chose, mais reçoit le

sens d'«ancien», de «vieux», sans nécessairement impliquer un grand éloignement dans le temps par rapport au récit principal[23].

A	Position en début de série : commencement, point de départ d'un processus, du passé vers le présent ; ἀρχαῖος signifie «originel»
2.2.23	«L'on commença à démolir les murailles au rythme des joueuses de flûte, dans un grand enthousiasme, tous pensant que ce jour marquait pour la Grèce le début de la liberté (νομίζοντες ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν τῇ Ἑλλάδι ἄρχειν τῆς ἐλευθερίας).» Xénophon pose un jalon dans son récit, l'arrêt des hostilités, la fin de la guerre du Péloponnèse et le début d'une autre ère, mais le passage est ironique dans la mesure où les hostilités vont continuer autrement : il n'y a pas de repos au mouvement violent de l'histoire.
2.4.42	L'antique constitution d'Athènes (τοῖς νόμοις τοῖς ἀρχαίοις) désigne le régime démocratique institué à Athènes par Clisthène.
3.4.25	Tithraustès, nouveau satrape de Sardes, demande au nom du Grand Roi que les villes grecques d'Asie lui paient l'ancien tribut (τὸν ἀρχαῖον δασμόν), celui d'avant les guerres médiques, – qui continua parfois à être versé après 480 et le fut à nouveau à partir des traités d'alliance de 412–411 entre Sparte et le Grand Roi.
5.1.31	Les clauses du traité de paix qu'Artaxerxès, à l'initiative d'Antalcidas, propose aux Grecs sont que les villes d'Asie ainsi que Clazomènes et Chypre lui appartiennent, que toutes les autres villes sont autonomes, à l'exception de Lemnos, Imbros et Skyros, qui «comme à l'origine appartiendront aux Athéniens» (ὥσπερ τὸ ἀρχαῖον εἶναι Ἀθηναίων).
3.2.31	Les Lacédémoniens rabaissent la puissance d'Élis en Élide. Toutefois, et malgré le mauvais traitement qu'Agis avait subi de la part des gardiens du sanctuaire d'Olympie, ils n'expulsent pas les Éléens de la présidence du sanctuaire de Zeus Olympien, «quoiqu'elle n'appartînt pas depuis l'origine aux Éléens» (καίπερ οὐκ ἀρχαίου Ἠλείοις ὄντος) parce que les gens de la Pisatis qui leur disputent cette présidence sont des campagnards qui ne savent pas administrer le sanctuaire.
6.3.1	L'hostilité des Athéniens envers les Thébains en 371 tient autant aux dramatiques développements de l'histoire récente qu'au passé ancien. Les Athéniens sont indignés par l'attitude des Thébains vis-à-vis de peuples et de cités avec lesquels eux-mêmes entretiennent de bons rapports. «Ils les voyaient faire la guerre aux antiques amis de la cité (ἐπὶ φίλους ἀρχαίους τῇ πόλει), les Phocidiens, tandis qu'ils anéantissaient des villes qui avaient montré aux Athéniens autant de fidélité dans la guerre contre le Barbare que d'amitié.» Pour les sanctionner, ils décident de ne plus participer aux opérations militaires que les Thébains mettront sur pied. L'événement fondateur auquel renvoie l'ἀρχαῖος est les guerres médiques.

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[23] Pour le lexique employé par Xénophon, on verra Sturz 1964 (peu commode d'utilisation) et Gautier 1911. Les traductions sont empruntées à Hatzfeld mais avec une harmonisation pour ἀρχή et πάλαι.

suite

A	Position en début de série : commencement, point de départ d'un processus, du passé vers le présent ; ἀρχαῖος signifie «originel»
7.1.44	«À Sicyone jusqu'alors la constitution était restée conforme aux antiques lois.» Ἐν δὲ τῷ Σικυῶνι τὸ μὲν μέχρι τούτου κατὰ τοὺς ἀρχαίους νόμους ἡ πολιτεία ἦν. Il s'agit du gouvernement aristocratique des débuts de l'existence de Sicyone.

B	Ἀρχή ne renvoie pas à un état primitif, mais a le sens d'«antique», d'«ancien», sans impliquer un grand éloignement dans le temps par rapport au récit principal
2.3.7	Les anciens citoyens de Samos (τοῖς ἀρχαίοις πολίταις).
2.3.27	Critias reproche à Théramène d'avoir changé d'attitude à mesure que la tyrannie des Trente se mettait en place. «Si vous réfléchissez, vous constaterez que personne plus que ce Théramène ne blâme la situation présente et ne se met en travers lorsque nous voulons nous débarrasser de quelque chef du parti démocratique. Et à coup sûr, si dès le commencement il avait adopté cette attitude (Εἰ μὲν τοίνυν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ταῦτα ἐγίγνωσκε), il aurait été alors notre adversaire, mais enfin on n'aurait pas le droit de le considérer comme un méchant homme.»
2.3.28	Selon Critias, Théramène a été le premier à promouvoir un rapprochement entre Athènes et Sparte (νῦν δὲ αὐτὸς μὲν ἄρξας τῆς πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους πίστεως καὶ φιλίας). Il n'est donc pas conséquent avec lui-même, puisqu'il se rétracte alors que c'est lui qui a déclenché le mouvement politique. Il était nécessaire que l'installation d'une oligarchie à Athènes aboutît à une répression violente à l'encontre de ses plus farouches opposants. Critias attribue à ἀρχή la valeur de fondation induisant tout un processus politique.
2.3.30	Accusant Théramène devant le Conseil, Critias remonte dans son passé et expose son évolution politique : «Estimé au commencement (ἐξ ἀρχῆς μὲν τιμώμενος) par le parti populaire en raison des mérites de son père Hagnon, ‹il› a été le plus disposé à transformer la démocratie pour en faire le régime des Quatre-Cents.» Critias veut prouver qu'il est dans la nature de Théramène de trahir son camp.
2.3.35	Théramène se défend : «Ce n'est pas moi, certes, qui ai commencé à parler contre ‹les stratèges de la bataille des Arginuses› (οὐκ ἦρχον δήπου κατ'ἐκείνων λόγου), mais ce sont eux qui ont déclaré que, malgré l'ordre qu'ils m'avaient donné, je n'avais pas recueilli les victimes de la bataille près de Lesbos.»
2.3.38	Théramène distingue deux périodes dans la tyrannie des Trente, l'une modérée et juste, l'autre caractérisée par l'injustice. C'est le régime qui a changé : Ἐπεὶ δέ γε οὗτοι ἤρξαντο ἄνδρας καλούς τε κἀγαθοὺς συλλαμβάνειν, ἐκ τούτου κἀγὼ ἠρξάμην τἀναντία τούτοις γιγνώσκειν. L'ἀρχή signale un commencement qui est une rupture radicale avec ce qui précède et un changement qui s'inscrit dans la durée.
3.5.2	L'origine de l'hostilité entre Sparte et les autres cités puissantes de Grèce, c'est l'argent des Perses, distribué au parti anti-lacédémonien dans chaque cité, pour créer un «deuxième front» en Grèce et affaiblir les Lacédémoniens en Asie Mineure (ἄρχεσθαι).

suite

B	Ἀρχή ne renvoie pas à un état primitif, mais a le sens d'«antique», d'«ancien», sans impliquer un grand éloignement dans le temps par rapport au récit principal
4.2.23	La plupart des contingents argiens, thébains et athéniens regagnent leur camp d'origine, à proximité de Némée : εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον στρατόπεδον.
5.2.32	Le Spartiate Phoibidas s'installe avec ses hommes dans l'Acropole de Thèbes de sa propre initiative. Cela lui est reproché à Sparte, mais le roi Agésilas prend sa défense en mettant en avant l'aspect favorable que son action crée pour Sparte. «C'était un antique principe (ἀρχαῖον εἶναι νόμιμον) de laisser les gens prendre de pareilles initiatives.» Principe dont l'ancienneté est impossible à dater, mais que son ancienneté affecte d'un signe positif.

C	Le motif du premier responsable
3.5.3	Les Thébains prennent l'initiative de déclencher les troubles (ἄρξει πολέμου) qui vont rejaillir sur Sparte. L'ἀρχή est un point de départ qui suscite une réaction en chaîne – des conflits locaux qui s'étendent de place en place – prévisible et impossible à arrêter, sauf par une intervention des grandes puissances.
3.5.4	Les Phocidiens, demandant le secours de Sparte, commencent par se disculper d'être les premiers agresseurs en reprenant la même formule : οὐκ ἤρξαντο πολέμου. Ils disent avoir été victimes de l'agression des Locriens, contre laquelle ils ont réagi.
6.5.37	Cleitélès de Corinthe signale l'impasse qu'il y a à vouloir discuter sur le premier responsable de torts. Si une cité veut en attaquer une autre et que cette dernière n'a commis aucune injustice envers elle, cela ne la protégera pas d'une agression. «Je veux bien qu'on puisse discuter pour savoir qui a eu les premiers torts (τίνες ἦσαν οἱ ἄρξαντες ἀδικεῖν) ; mais pour nous, une fois que la paix a été établie, peut-on nous accuser d'avoir attaqué aucune cité […] ? Cela n'a pas empêché les Thébains de pénétrer sur notre territoire.»
6.3.6	Callias explique que, même si les guerres sont voulues par les dieux, il revient aux hommes de ne pas les commencer : ἡμᾶς δὴ χρὴ ἄρχεσθαι μὲν αὐτοῦ ὡς σχολαίτατα, ὅταν δὲ γένηται, καταλύεσθαι ᾗ δυνατὸν τάχιστα. Le commencement est un élément déclencheur, qui entraîne un processus de vengeances et contre-vengeances.

D	Le motif du premier inventeur est représenté par le terme d'ἀρχηγέτης : «fondateur de ville», littéralement «commandant au commencement»
6.3.6	Callias évoque le temps des origines dans le mythe du don de l'agriculture par Déméter aux Athéniens. Lorsqu'elle s'exila de l'Olympe après l'enlèvement de sa fille Perséphone, Déméter enseigna l'agriculture à Triptolème, fils de Céléos, roi d'Eleusis. Elle lui offrit un char sur lequel il parcourait la terre en semant des grains.

suite

D	Le motif du premier inventeur est représenté par le terme d'ἀρχηγέτης : «fondateur de ville», littéralement «commandant au commencement»
6.5.47	Les premiers à qui Triptolème montra les mystères de Déméter furent Héraclès, «fondateur» de la nation lacédémonienne (τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἀρχηγέτῃ), et les Dioscures. Les Héraclides et Héraclès sont appelés ἀρχηγέτας, «héros fondateurs de la race» dans le discours de Proclès de Phlious aux Athéniens. L'ἀρχή est le temps mythique qui donne son commencement à une réalité destinée à exister longtemps par la suite, sous une forme ou une autre. C'est un lieu commun de l'histoire mythique de Sparte.
7.3.12	Les habitants de Sicyone font d'Euphron un héros fondateur (ἀρχηγέτην τῆς πόλεως), quoiqu'il ait été de son vivant un tyran. Ils lui rendent un culte, sans doute pour avoir contribué à la grandeur de leur ville. Xénophon commente avec ironie la conception que les hommes se font de la vertu quand un souci patriotique les anime : Οὕτως, ὡς ἔοικεν, οἱ πλεῖστοι ὁρίζονται τοὺς εὐεργέτας ἑαυτῶν ἄνδρας ἀγαθοὺς εἶναι. Par une invocation fallacieuse du passé, les hommes font des entorses au bien.

E	Ἀρχή comme origine, point de butée temporelle, limite en-deçà de laquelle l'historien ne sait rien. Mouvement de remontée du présent vers le passé, proche des origines
4.8.5	Accueillant à Sestos, dont il est harmoste, les Lacédémoniens que les Perses de Pharnabaze et les Athéniens de Conon ont expulsés des villes d'Europe, Dercylidas leur dit de garder courage «en songeant que, même en Asie Mineure, qui avait depuis les origines appartenu au Roi (καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, ἣ ἐξ ἀρχῆς βασιλέως ἐστί), il y avait Temnos (…), Aigai, et d'autres endroits où l'on pouvait habiter sans être sujet du Roi.» Cette pensée résignée, en contradiction avec la politique lacédémonienne de lutte contre la mainmise perse en Ionie, s'inscrit dans un discours sur l'histoire qui ne reflète pas la réalité historique.
5.2.7	Mantinée, sous la contrainte des Lacédémoniens qui s'en sont rendus maîtres, démolit ses murs, et sa population «est répartie en quatre bourgs, comme elle l'avait été à l'origine», διῳκίσθη δ' ἡ Μαντίνεια τετραχῇ, καθάπερ τὸ ἀρχαῖον ᾤκουν. Le démantèlement de la ville (diœcisme) constitue un retour à la forme primitive de la ville, lorsqu'elle était constituée de bourgs rapprochés sans centralisation. Le premier synœcisme de Mantinée ayant eu lieu au VIᵉ siècle, c'est à une situation antérieure à celle du VIᵉ siècle que les Spartiates exigent que les Mantinéens reviennent. Le passé est ici synonyme de moindre évolution, arriération. Ancienneté non située.

F	Liés au concept d'origine, ἀρχή ou ἀρχαῖος peuvent signifier «qui existe de tout temps», «depuis toujours», «de toute éternité»
3.2.22	L'adjectif ἀρχαῖον s'applique à un usage antique établi depuis toujours : les Éléens empêchent le roi des Lacédémoniens Agis de demander à Zeus une guerre victorieuse, sous le prétexte que depuis toujours l'usage interdisait de consulter le dieu à l'occasion d'une guerre de Grecs à Grecs (λέγοντες ὡς καὶ τὸ ἀρχαῖον εἴη οὕτω νόμιμον, μὴ χρηστηριάζεσθαι τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἐφ' Ἑλλήνων πολέμῳ). Agis repart sans avoir sacrifié.
4.4.6	Les partisans de l'oligarchie à Corinthe, fuyant les massacres qui ont eu lieu dans leurs rangs, veulent sauver leur cité de l'influence d'Argos et la rétablir «comme elle avait été, et depuis toujours», ὥσπερ ἦν καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς. Corinthe est en train de perdre son autonomie et d'être rattachée à Argos, dont elle reçoit jusqu'au nom. L'ἀρχή est un retour à la situation antérieure et originelle, établie de temps immémorial. Ce qui est premier est aussi ce qui est le meilleur.

2.3.2 Emplois des mots de la famille de πάλαι chez Xénophon : πάλαι représente une ancienneté toute relative

Les mots de la famille de πάλαι sont peu représentés chez Xénophon. Nous avons relevé 15 occurrences, et qu'il s'agisse d'un passé révolu ou d'un passé toujours relié au présent, l'événement ancien auquel l'historien se réfère n'est pas daté.

A	Valeur de passé ancien indéterminé, éloigné, discontinu, opposé au présent avec la signification de «jadis/anciennement» ou d'«ancien» pour παλαιός. L'événement butoir se place souvent pendant la guerre du Péloponnèse
1.6.1	Pour indiquer un changement d'année (406), Xénophon, outre une éclipse de lune, fait allusion à l'incendie de «l'ancien temple d'Athéna à Athènes», ὁ παλαιὸς τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς νεὼς ἐν Ἀθήναις. Il s'agit du temple d'Athéna Polias sur l'Acropole, détruit par les armées perses en 480, puis reconstruit. Il remonte aux temps reculés de l'histoire d'Athènes (époque archaïque).
3.2.21	Πάλαι signale des griefs anciens entre deux cités. Les Lacédémoniens décident de faire la guerre aux Éléens en 400 pour des causes qui remontent aux alliances conclues entre différentes cités du Péloponnèse et Athènes après la paix de Nicias. L'addition des griefs crée une haine tenace. «Pendant les opérations de Dercylidas en Asie, vers la même époque, les Lacédémoniens, qui avaient d'anciens ressentiments (πάλαι ὀργιζόμενοι) contre les Éléens, d'abord parce que ceux-ci avaient autrefois (adverbe ajouté par Hatzfeld) conclu une alliance avec Athènes, Argos et Mantinée ; ensuite que, comme ils prétendaient avoir infligé aux Lacédémoniens une condamnation, ils persistaient à les exclure du concours hippique et gymnique – et ce n'était pas tout : le jour où Lichas avait confié son attelage à des Thébains, au

suite

A	**Valeur de passé ancien indéterminé, éloigné, discontinu, opposé au présent avec la signification de «jadis/anciennement» ou d'«ancien» pour παλαιός. L'événement butoir se place souvent pendant la guerre du Péloponnèse**

moment de la proclamation des vainqueurs, quand Lichas était entré dans le stade pour couronner son cocher, ils l'avaient, lui, un vieillard, expulsé à coups de fouet ; plus tard (τούτων δ'ὕστερον), quand Agis avait été envoyé pour offrir à Zeus un sacrifice, suivant l'avis donné par un oracle, les Éléens l'avaient empêché de demander au dieu une guerre victorieuse, sous le prétexte que, depuis toujours (τὸ ἀρχαῖον), l'usage interdisait de consulter le dieu à l'occasion d'une guerre de Grecs à Grecs, si bien qu'il était reparti sans avoir sacrifié – toutes ces causes de ressentiment firent donc prendre aux éphores la décision de mettre les Éléens à la raison.»

4.6.1   Les Achéens demandent aux Lacédémoniens de les soutenir dans leur lutte contre les Acarnaniens, en particulier à Calydon, «jadis ville étolienne» (Καλυδῶνα ἣ τὸ παλαιὸν Αἰτωλίας ἦν), où les Achéens doivent tenir une garnison. Ancienneté non datée.

7.4.12   Les Éléens s'emparent de Lasion, cité d'Élide, «qui leur avait appartenu jadis, mais qui présentement participait à la Ligue arcadienne» (τὸ μὲν παλαιὸν ἑαυτῶν ὄντα, ἐν δὲ τῷ παρόντι συντελοῦντα εἰς τὸ Ἀρκαδικόν).

B	**Πάλαι désigne un passé ancien non révolu dont la durée n'est pas datée, avec le sens de «depuis longtemps»**

3.5.5   Les Lacédémoniens s'apprêtent à attaquer les Thébains. Parmi leurs motifs, on trouve des torts anciens et plus récents, les uns remontant à la fin de la guerre du Péloponnèse, les autres à l'expédition d'Agésilas en Asie, en 396. «Ils leur en voulaient depuis longtemps (πάλαι ὀργιζόμενοι) d'avoir revendiqué contre eux, à Décélie, la dîme réservée à Apollon, et de n'avoir pas voulu marcher avec eux sur le Pirée ; et ils les accusaient d'avoir persuadé les Corinthiens aussi de ne pas faire partie de cette expédition. Ils se souvenaient également de la façon dont les Thébains avaient interdit à Agésilas de sacrifier à Aulis, et dispersé les membres des victimes arrachées à l'autel, et ils n'oubliaient pas non plus que les Thébains ne faisaient pas partie de l'expédition d'Agésilas en Asie.» La revendication de la dîme date de la fin de la guerre du Péloponnèse ; la marche sur le Pirée est celle que l'armée commandée par Pausanias fit en 403 contre les démocrates athéniens hostiles aux Trente tyrans et réfugiés au Pirée[24]. Le refus du sacrifice symbolique à Aulis eut lieu juste avant qu'Agésilas n'embarque pour l'Asie, en 396. Les événements ne remontent pas au-delà de l'année 404.

4.8.12   Grâce à l'argent de Pharnabaze, le stratège athénien Conon fait relever les Longs-Murs d'Athènes. Du coup, les Lacédémoniens envoient une ambassade auprès de

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24 *Hell.* 2.4.30.

suite

B	Πάλαι désigne un passé ancien non révolu dont la durée n'est pas datée, avec le sens de «depuis longtemps»
	Tiribaze, général des armées du Grand Roi. Les autres cités grecques font de même, ce qui empêche la paix d'aboutir. Pourtant les Lacédémoniens avaient présenté une paix «telle que le Roi pouvait la désirer depuis longtemps» (πάλαι ἐπεθύμει).
5.1.36	En vertu des clauses de la paix d'Antalcidas, qu'ils réussissent à faire admettre aux Thébains, les Lacédémoniens rétablissent l'autonomie des cités béotiennes par rapport à Thèbes, comme elles le désiraient depuis longtemps, οὗπερ πάλαι ἐπεθύμουν. Ils mettent ainsi fin à la Confédération béotienne, qui ne sera reconstituée qu'en 371. L'adverbe πάλαι fait sans doute allusion à la période de la guerre du Péloponnèse, où les dissensions existaient au sein de la Confédération béotienne.
6.5.35	Lorsque les Lacédémoniens, dont le territoire est envahi par les Thébains, ont besoin de l'aide des Athéniens, leurs anciens ennemis, ils leur promettent d'exiger des Thébains le paiement de la dîme, exigée depuis longtemps. Ce thème ancien remonte aux guerres médiques. Les vainqueurs des Perses avaient convenu de percevoir une dîme des Thébains parce que ceux-ci avaient été du côté des Perses lors de l'expédition de Xerxès et de Mardonios[25]. Or ils ne l'ont jamais reçue. L'argument ressort lorsqu'il est opportun : Νῦν ἐλπὶς τὸ πάλαι λεγόμενον δεκατευθῆναι Θηβαίους.
7.1.44	Depuis longtemps, Euphron de Sicyone en a assez de la domination orgueilleuse des Lacédémoniens : πάλαι μὲν χαλεπῶς φέρων τὸ φρόνημα τῶν Λακεδαιμονίων, ce qui justifie son coup d'État en faveur de la démocratie. Xénophon ne précise pas quand cette domination a pris place ni que le régime oligarchique en vigueur à Sicyone a été fortement renforcé par l'intervention de Sparte en 418–417, au moment où celle-ci consolidait son autorité dans l'ensemble du Péloponnèse[26].

C	Πάλαι se réfère à un passé récent défini par un faible écart entre le passé et le présent du locuteur ou renvoyant à un événement survenu du vivant d'un personnage du récit
1.5.19	Dorieus, originaire de Rhodes et commandant deux vaisseaux de Thourion, est capturé par les Athéniens. Il est depuis longtemps exilé d'Athènes et de Rhodes (πάλαι φυγάδα), à cause d'un décret athénien qui l'avait condamné à mort[27].
4.1.29	Ἐκ παλαιοῦ renvoie à des relations d'hospitalité : Apollophanès de Cyzique est «depuis longtemps l'hôte de Pharnabaze.» Ancienneté toute relative.

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25 *Hell.* 6.3.20 et Hdt. 7.132.
26 Thuc. 5.81.2.
27 Thuc. 3.8.1.

suite

C	Πάλαι se réfère à un passé récent défini par un faible écart entre le passé et le présent du locuteur ou renvoyant à un événement survenu du vivant d'un personnage du récit
4.8.3	Dercylidas, harmoste lacédémonien à Abydos, est présenté comme étant depuis longtemps un ennemi de Pharnabaze (καὶ πάλαι πολέμιος ἦν αὐτῷ), ce qui explique que le satrape apporte son aide à l'Athénien Conon. Xénophon ne date ni l'origine ni les circonstances de la brouille[28].
5.1.28	Antalcidas est «depuis longtemps l'hôte d'Ariobarzane», ξένος ἐκ παλαιοῦ τῷ Ἀριοβαρζάνει.
5.4.5	Les polémarques de Thèbes attendent «depuis un certain temps» (πάλαι κελευόντων : quelques heures) les femmes que Phillidas, secrétaire des polémarques, leur a promises.
6.5.8	Les gens du parti de Callibios, à Tégée, ont envoyé «depuis un certain temps» (πάλαι μὲν ἐπεπόμφεσαν) des hérauts pour demander du secours aux Mantinéens. Xénophon ne précise pas quand a eu lieu cette action.

Nous pouvons donc récapituler les différents relevés par les tableaux de fréquences suivants, sachant que les nombres obtenus doivent être mis en relation avec la taille des corpus respectifs, qui diffère beaucoup d'une œuvre à l'autre.

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28 Le passage fait référence à *Hell.* 3.1.9 *sq.*

Tableau 1 : Fréquence des mots de la famille de πάλαι faisant référence au passé

	πάλαι	παλαιός	dont comp. παλαίτερος	dont superl. παλαίτατος	παλαιόπλουτος	Total	Taille totale du corpus	Écart-réduit
Hdt.	23	34	1	0	0	57 (0,03%)	184 947	-0,19272076
Thuc.	20	48	1	3 + 1 (adv.)	1	69 (0,05%)	150 173	1,082334026
Xen.	10	5	0	0	0	15 (0,02%)	66 514	-0,889613266

Le calcul de l'écart-réduit montre que les différences entre les auteurs ne sont pas significatives pour les mots appartenant à la famille de πάλαι (écart-réduit < 3).

Tableau 2 : Fréquence des mots de la famille d'ἀρχή faisant référence au passé

	ἀρχή	ἀρχαῖος	ἀρχῆθεν	ἀρχαιότροπος	ἀρχαιολογεῖν	ἄρχειν ou ἄρχεσθαι	ὑπάρχειν	Total	Écart-réduit
Hdt.	67 (49 pertinents)	37 (dont 0 comp. et 5 superl.)	8	0	0	56 (19+37)*	7	112 0,06% (plus les verbes 175)	1,129854009
Thuc.	12**	12 (dont 0 comp. et 1 superl.)	0	1	1	20***	4	26 0,02% (plus les verbes 50)	0,771257899
Xen.	5 (+3 ἀρχηγέτης)	11	0	0	0	12 (5+7)	Non pertinent	19 0,03% (plus les verbes 31)	0,35859611

* À ce total s'ajoutent 11 verbes au moyen ayant la valeur de «commencement géographique».

** 13 en comptant 6.20.4. Sur les 12 occurrences, bien peu renvoient aux origines anciennes.

*** Sur 21 occurrences à l'actif et 55 au moyen, seules 20 sont pertinentes, c'est-à-dire font référence au passé ancien et/ou à l'idée d'origine.

Pour les mots de la famille d'ἀρχή, le calcul de l'écart-réduit montre également que les différences entre les auteurs ne sont pas significatives (écart-réduit < 3) [29].

Tableau 3 : Comparaison de la répartition des mots des familles de πάλαι et ἀρχή

Famille lexicale	Hdt.	Thuc.	Xen.
Πάλαι	57	69	15
Ἀρχή	112	26	19

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29 Pour ce qui est des premiers historiens dont nous n'avons que des fragments, on relève chez Hécatée de Milet les expressions suivantes qui se réfèrent au passé : οἱ παλαιοὶ Ἕλληνες («les anciens Grecs appelaient οἴνας les vignes», où l'adjectif renvoie à l'époque mythique de Phytios fils d'Orestheus fils de Deucalion) [Jacoby *FGrHist* 15 = Müller *FHG* 341] ; Σχεδὸν δέ τι καὶ ἡ σύμπασα Ἑλλὰς κατοικία βαρβάρων ὑπῆρξε τὸ παλαιόν («Presque toute la Grèce fut jadis habitée par des barbares») [Jac 119 = Mü 356] ; τῶν στοιχείων εὑρέτην à propos de Cadmos [Jac 20 = Mü 361] ; Ἡσίοδός τε καὶ Ἑκαταῖος καὶ Ἑλλάνικος καὶ Ἀκουσίλαος καὶ πρὸς τούτοις Ἔφορος καὶ Νικόλαος ἱστοροῦσι τοὺς ἀρχαίους ζήσαντας ἔτη χίλια («les hommes du temps des origines vivaient mille ans») [Jac 20 = Mü 361] ; γέγειος ὁ ἀρχαῖος : «γέγειος – antique – chez Hécatée» [Jac 362 = Mü 366]. Chez Hellanicos : «Phaiax fils de Poséidon et de Kerkyra fille d'Asopis, d'où est venu le nom de l'île de Corcyre, qui s'appelait auparavant (τὸ πρίν) Drépanè et Schéria» [Jac 77 = Mü 45] ; l'île de Sicile s'appelait auparavant (πρότερον) Sikania [Jac 79a = Mü 51] ; dans le décompte du temps de l'histoire de l'Attique (τῆς Ἀττικῆς χρονογραφίας) : ἀπὸ Ὠγύγου... ἐφ' οὗ γέγονεν ὁ μέγας καὶ πρῶτος ἐν τῇ Ἀττικῇ κατακλυσμός, Φορωνέως Ἀργείων βασιλεύοντος... μέχρι πρώτης ὀλυμπιάδος, ὁπόθεν Ἕλληνες ἀκριβοῦν τοὺς χρόνους ἐνόμισαν, ἔτη συνάγεται χίλια εἴκοσιν («d'Ogygos – fondateur de Thèbes –, sous lequel eut lieu la première grande inondation de l'Attique, alors que Phoronée régnait à Argos, jusqu'à la première olympiade on compte mille vingt ans, sachant que les Grecs ont tenu un décompte précis des périodes») [Jac 47 = Mü 62] ; «Antipatros et Euphronios disent dans les *Mémorables* que Lasos d'Hermionè fut le premier à instituer les chœurs cycliques, mais les auteurs plus anciens (ἀρχαιότεροι), Hellanicos et Dicéarque, disent qu'il s'agit d'Arion de Méthymne» [Jac 86 = Mü 85] ; τοὺς ἀρχαίους ζήσαντας ἔτη χίλια («les hommes du temps des origines vivaient mille ans») [Jac 202 = Mü 89] ; Hellanicos et Aristodémos affirment que les Hellanodiques furent d'abord (τὸ μὲν πρῶτον) au nombre de deux, puis finirent par être dix [Jac 113 = Mü 90] ; Hellanicos ne connaît pas l'histoire des cités nouvelles nées d'Olénos et de Pylène, mais il les mentionne comme si elles étaient encore dans leur établissement d'origine (ἐν τῇ ἀρχαίᾳ καταστάσει) et «les cités qui ont été fondées ensuite et après le retour des Héraclides, Makynia et Molycria, Hellanicos les range parmi les cités primitives (ἐν ταῖς ἀρχαίαις καταλέγει)» [Jac 118 = Mü 111] ; Hellanicos est mentionné par Denys d'Halicarnasse comme faisant partie des «anciens historiens» (τῶν παλαιῶν συγγραφέων) [Jac 31 = Mü 127] ; à propos d'Achille et du Scamandre, Hellanicos emploie l'expression ὑπὸ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον [Jac 28 = Mü 132] ; dans la cité égyptienne de Plinthinè a été découverte pour la première fois (πρῶτον εὑρεθῆναι) la vigne [Jac 175 = Mü 155] ; les historiens des Athéniens Hellanicos et Philochoros [et d'autres] rappellent que «Moïse a été le chef tout à fait premier et ancien des Juifs (σφόδρα ἀρχαίου καὶ παλαιοῦ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἄρχοντος)» [Jac 47 = Mü 156].

En revanche, en comparant sur la base du tableau précédent les auteurs deux à deux, dans leur usage des deux familles de termes, on constate que, si la différence de répartition entre Hérodote et Xénophon n'est pas significative (χ^2, p > .24), elle l'est entre Hérodote et Thucydide, d'une part (χ^2, p < .0000001), et entre Thucydide et Xénophon, d'autre part, (χ^2, p < .003). Ce sont ces différences qui font l'objet d'interprétation dans la suite de ce chapitre.

3 Essai d'interprétations

Une analyse qualitative confirmera ces observations statistiques. Il s'agit en effet à présent de voir quelles implications ont les préférences lexicales des historiens sur leur conception du passé. Nous soulignerons des constantes et des évolutions.

3.1 Hérodote archéologue et Thucydide paléographe

Hérodote en tant qu'historien narrateur élabore un récit des faits anciens et, ce faisant, construit aussi un discours sur le passé. Il en va de même pour Thucydide qui, au sein d'une trame consacrée à une guerre contemporaine, propose sa vision du passé, ne serait-ce que dans l'Archéologie et dans la Pentékontaétie. Une telle affirmation est plus difficile à tenir à propos de Xénophon, car, lorsqu'il évoque des faits anciens, il ne remonte guère en-deçà de la guerre du Péloponnèse.

L'usage du vocabulaire révèle que les historiens diffèrent, voire s'opposent : Thucydide privilégie le lexique lié à παλαιός là où Hérodote et, dans une moindre mesure, Xénophon préfèrent la famille d'ἀρχαῖος. L'antiquité que chacun (re)constitue prend place dans un discours sur l'hellénisme différent.

En termes d'exploration du passé, si cela ne prêtait à confusion, mieux vaudrait donc parler, à propos du tableau que Thucydide brosse de l'histoire ancienne de la Grèce au livre I et de son approche générale du passé, de «paléographie» – au sens littéral d'«écriture sur les temps anciens» – plutôt que d'«archéologie»[30]. L'historien athénien étend même cette période de l'époque

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30 Qu'il existe en français deux noms formés avec deux préfixes différents ne semble pas dû au hasard, mais paraît refléter la valeur des étymons anciens, même si les dictionnaires insistent peu là-dessus. Le nom «archéologie», qui désigne à partir de la fin du XVIIIe siècle «l'étude systématique des civilisations disparues», a été emprunté directement à la fin du XVIe siècle au grec ancien ἀρχαιολογία attesté dès l'époque classique («légende ou histoire de l'antiquité», par

reculée de la Grèce jusqu'aux années précédant la guerre du Péloponnèse, qui touche pour lui à l'histoire contemporaine[31]. Du passé Thucydide privilégie «l'ancien», connaissable ou, à défaut, concevable, par rapport au «primitif», l'ἀρχαῖος, absolument inconnaissable. À l'opposé, Hérodote envisage le passé en archéologue qui recherche les traces du passé le plus ancien, entre autres par le motif du premier responsable ou du premier découvreur, persuadé que ce passé inaugural est en soi intéressant et qu'il livrera les clés de la compréhension du présent. Le passé ancien est d'ailleurs constitué de couches temporelles, du niveau le plus récent jusqu'aux temps les plus reculés, à l'instar de l'écriture même de l'historien d'Halicarnasse, à qui il arrive dans un même paragraphe de «superposer» les époques. Sa prose suit alors une structure annulaire ou symétrique faite de paliers temporels qui se succèdent, avec descente dans le passé ancien et «remontée» dans le temps du récit principal[32].

3.2 Pour Hérodote, le passé ancien a une existence en soi et comme tel il peut et il doit être recherché

Dès le *Prooimion* et à de nombreuses reprises, l'historien d'Halicarnasse exprime l'idée que le passé le plus lointain doit être recherché. Certes, c'est parce qu'il explique le présent, mais ce lien de causalité n'est pas toujours avéré. En réalité, Hérodote, conscient de la longue durée, affecte d'un critère positif le passé : il valorise les origines en tant qu'elles recèlent une part importante de vérité sur les hommes.

Pour lui le passé est quantifiable ; même si le passé lointain n'est pas toujours facile à positionner dans l'échelle du temps, il reprend à son compte une méthode de datation par générations, qu'il trouve par exemple chez Hésiode, en lui conférant une valeur scientifique parce qu'il la systématise. Il s'agit de compter par générations : trois générations équivalant à cent ans, une gé-

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exemple dans Platon, *Hipp. Maj.*, 285d), tandis que «paléographie» est une création latine, puis française, récente (1681 puis 1706), pour signifier la «science des écritures anciennes» (Rey 1992). Le nom «paléologie» n'existe pas, bien que l'on trouve chez certains auteurs grecs le verbe παλαιολογεῖν, par exemple Appien (App. *Hist. Rom.*, 6.1.2), avec le sens d'«étudier des choses anciennes».

31 L'Athénien a vécu cette guerre et y a participé comme stratège jusqu'à son échec à Amphipolis (4.104.4 et 5.26.5).

32 Au sujet du style d'Hérodote, outre l'étude fondatrice d'Immerwahr 1966, on verra Wood 1972, Lang 1984, Lateiner 1989, Golfin 1999, Bakker 2006, Wesselmann 2016. Sur la composition annulaire : van Otterlo 1944 et Beck 1971.

nération équivaut donc à 33 ans environ. La transmission généalogique par règnes successifs est un moyen très ancien de dater les événements. Là où Hérodote innove, c'est dans la volonté affichée de faire de ces généalogies un décompte raisonné du temps[33].

Grâce à cette unité de mesure, Hérodote remonte le plus loin possible dans le passé. Il est vraisemblable que ce sont les Égyptiens qui lui ont donné conscience de la longue durée. Il explique en effet qu'il a pu voir dans le temple de Karnak à Thèbes les statues de bois, sans doute entreposées aux Propylées sud, représentant chacune un grand prêtre, de père en fils : cela rendait visible, concrète, la succession des générations, l'épaisseur de la durée à très grande échelle, et ces statues prouvaient aussi l'ancienneté de la présence humaine sur terre. «Ils faisaient voir que, du premier roi à ce prêtre d'Héphaïstos qui régna le dernier, il y eut 341 générations humaines, et, dans l'espace de ces générations, autant de grands-prêtres et de rois.»[34] Si l'on applique l'unité qui mesure la durée d'une génération, on obtient le nombre – la moyenne – de 11 355 ans. L'exactitude du nombre en elle-même importe peu, elle révèle la prise de conscience de la longue durée dans laquelle s'enracine l'histoire des peuples[35]. Plus loin, Hérodote fait reposer la longue durée non plus sur la génération matérialisée par une statue, mais sur un décompte des années, qu'il attribue aussi aux Égyptiens. «Les Égyptiens affirment avoir de ces chiffres une science certaine parce que de tout temps ils tiennent le compte des années et le consignent par écrit.»[36]

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33 Hdt. 2.142 : γενεαὶ γὰρ τρεῖς ἀνδρῶν ἑκατὸν ἔτεά ἐστι. Même s'il n'applique pas toujours l'équivalence entre les générations et le nombre d'années qu'elles représentent (1.7 : 22 générations équivalent à 505 ans), il faut voir dans cette innovation une tentative d'uniformiser et de quantifier le temps passé. Sur les généalogies comme moyen de datation voir Mitchel 1956, Osborne 2002, 501 et Mosshammer 1979.

34 Hdt. 2.142.

35 Hérodote ajoute en 2.143 – 144 : «Ils m'introduisirent à l'intérieur du temple, qui est grand, et là ils me montrèrent en les comptant des colosses de bois en aussi grand nombre que j'ai dit ; car chaque grand-prêtre érige en ce lieu, de son vivant, une statue de lui-même ; en me montrant ces statues et en les dénombrant, les prêtres me firent voir que chacun de ces personnages était le fils d'un père compris dans la série. [...] Ainsi donc, [...] tous ceux que représentaient les statues étaient tels et très différents des dieux.» Le nombre de 330 pharaons environ mentionné en 2.100 doit être minoré en raison de dynasties qui ont régné en même temps lors de périodes intermédiaires.

36 Hdt. 2.145. Pour les différentes façons qu'a Hérodote de construire la chronologie, voir Ball 1979, Golfin 1999, 15 – 68, Cobet 2002.

3.3 Pour Hérodote, le passé occupe un vaste espace et le plus ancien passé connu n'est pas forcément hellène

La conscience de la longue durée historique implique que les racines du temps connues ou connaissables ne sont pas toujours grecques, il s'en faut de beaucoup. Son sujet – la rencontre entre la Grèce et les Perses – conduit Hérodote à s'intéresser à presque tous les peuples connus de son temps. En effet, chaque fois qu'il est amené à parler d'un peuple confronté au péril perse, Hérodote donne à connaître ce qu'il a appris à son sujet sur le plan géographique, sociologique, ethnographique et il se renseigne aussi sur ses origines. Chaque peuple a son histoire, qu'il s'agisse des Lydiens, des Scythes, des Libyens, des Égyptiens[37]. L'*Enquête* est donc une «histoire-monde», une «histoire du monde» ou des peuples[38].

A-t-il pour autant une connaissance unifiée du passé ? Rien n'est moins sûr, car, malgré l'usage des généalogies, on ne décèle pas forcément de bases chronologiques harmonisées entre les différents peuples ou cités-États qu'il étudie. Il semble difficile d'établir qu'Hérodote s'est basé sur un comput unifié ou qu'il a essayé lui-même d'en élaborer un à partir des différentes sources en sa possession[39].

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37 Sur la place de l'autre chez Hérodote : Hartog 1980.

38 Sur la notion d'«histoire-monde», voir Inglebert 2014, 210 – 218, qui estime qu'Hérodote n'a pas écrit une «histoire universelle» dans la mesure où il omet de décrire certains peuples de l'*oikouménè*, en particulier de l'Occident. Cependant son champ d'investigation, compris entre le récit des guerres médiques, l'exposé des causes qui ont fait que des cités grecques ont mis en échec la puissance perse et la description des peuples concernés de près par cette puissance, est très vaste. Par «histoire-monde» Boucheron/Delalande 2013 conçoivent une nouvelle forme d'histoire dont ils précisent au dos du livre qu'elle a pour fin, dans un monde globalisé dont l'Europe n'est plus forcément le centre, de «redécouvrir les contacts, les frottements et les incompréhensions qui ont accompagné la mise en relation des différentes parties du monde depuis le Moyen Âge jusqu'à nos jours». Rien n'empêche d'élargir le propos à l'Antiquité et de considérer qu'à certains égards le récit d'Hérodote répond à ce projet.

39 Pour la Lydie, il remonte environ à 1200 av. J.-C. (1.7). Pour l'Assyrie le commencement se situe vers 1132 (1.95), pour l'Égypte, on l'a vu, vers 12 000 av. J.-C. (pour ce qui est du temps où les pharaons étaient des hommes, 2.142). Il qualifie les Scythes de «peuple le plus récent» (4.5 : νεώτατον), apparu vers 1500 (4.8). L'événement le plus ancien connu pour les Grecs serait l'enlèvement d'Io, fille d'Inachos, roi d'Argos (1.1 – 2), événement antérieur à la guerre de Troie, qu'Hérodote date vers 1280. Cependant l'historien mentionne également des usages grecs – en particulier religieux – qui sont bien antérieurs. Voir Inglebert 2014, 215. Les différences dans les dates ne signifient pas l'absence d'un effort de synchronisme, mais révèlent bien plutôt la diversité des histoires des peuples, sachant que la limite qui retient l'historien d'aller plus en

La partie de l'enquête hérodotéenne qui illustre le mieux cette perspective ouverte est sans doute la recherche du πρῶτος εὑρετής, c'est-à-dire du premier homme ou du premier peuple à avoir découvert quelque chose d'utile, une connaissance, un objet digne d'intérêt, à avoir établi un usage curieux promis à une grande fortune par la suite[40]. La notion s'applique à plusieurs domaines. Ce peut être la politique, avec l'inauguration d'un règne nouveau, par changement de dynastie. Ainsi Agron est le premier Héraclide à avoir été roi de Sardes[41], les Mèdes furent les premiers à se détacher du joug assyrien[42], Mîn est le premier roi d'Égypte de nature humaine : avant lui, des dieux régnaient sur le pays. Inaugurant la royauté humaine, il est donc au commencement de l'histoire égyptienne[43]. Autre motif : l'installation d'un groupe ethnique dans une zone géographique donnée. Les Ioniens et les Cariens qui s'installèrent en Égypte furent les premiers hommes de langue étrangère à s'y établir ; Philaios fils d'Ajax fut le premier de la famille de Miltiade qui devint athénien[44]. Il y a aussi des nouveautés en matière religieuse. Gygès «est le premier Barbare à notre connaissance qui ait consacré des offrandes à Delphes (πρῶτος βαρβάρων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν ἐς Δελφοὺς ἀνέθηκε ἀναθήματα), après Midas fils de Gordias, roi de Phrygie.»[45]. Ce sont les Égyptiens qui ont distingué douze dieux et leur ont donné un nom particulier[46]. Les premiers, ils développèrent les pratiques cultuelles, attribuant des autels et des temples aux dieux et les représentant par des statues. Les Athéniens sont les premiers des Grecs à avoir sculpté les statues d'Hermès ithyphalliques[47]. En matière de religion, l'Égypte joue un rôle prééminent pour l'invention des πανηγύριες, fêtes religieuses réunissant tout le peuple. «Ce sont les Égyptiens qui, les premiers des hommes, célébrèrent de grandes fêtes religieuses nationales, des processions faisant cortège aux dieux ou accompagnant des offrandes (Πανηγύρις δὲ ἄρα καὶ πομπὰς καὶ προσαγωγὰς πρῶτοι ἀνθρώπων Αἰγύπτιοί εἰσι οἱ ποιησάμενοι) ; et les Grecs en ont appris

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profondeur dans le passé est son refus d'intégrer un dieu comme ascendant d'un roi humain (par exemple 6.53).

40 Asheri 1988, XLVIII : «Hérodote s'est intéressé au problème du ‹premier responsable›, ou coupable, du conflit entre l'Asie et l'Europe comme il s'est intéressé au ‹premier inventeur› de chaque chose.» Le critique fait aussi une liste de tous les motifs qui ont poussé les hommes à s'impliquer dans les guerres médiques.

41 Hdt. 1.7 : πρῶτος Ἡρακλειδέων βασιλεὺς ἐγένετο Σαρδίων.

42 Hdt. 1.95 : πρῶτοι ἀπ' αὐτῶν Μῆδοι ἤρξαντο ἀπίστασθαι.

43 Hdt. 2.4.

44 Hdt. 2.154 et 6.35.

45 Hdt. 1.14.

46 Hdt. 2.4 : Δυώδεκά τε θεῶν ἐπωνυμίας ἔλεγον πρώτους Αἰγυπτίους νομίσαι.

47 Hdt. 2.51.

d'eux la coutume.»[48] Il en donne la preuve : «Chez les Égyptiens, on constate que ces cérémonies sont célébrées depuis beaucoup de temps (ἐκ πολλοῦ τεο χρόνου), tandis que, chez les Grecs, c'est récemment (νεωστί) qu'elles commencèrent de l'être.» Les Égyptiens les premiers se sont fait une loi de ne pas s'unir à des femmes dans des sanctuaires et de n'y pas entrer en quittant des femmes avant de s'être lavés ; ils ont inventé la doctrine de l'immortalité de l'âme ainsi que celle de la métempsycose[49]. Les cultes grecs sont presque tous issus de cultes égyptiens antérieurs : «À l'exception de Poséidon et des Dioscures, d'Héra, d'Hestia, de Thémis, des Charites et des Néréides, les autres personnages divins existent chez les Égyptiens de tout temps (αἰεί κοτε).»[50] À cette liste, il faut ajouter Dionysos, dieu introduit tardivement en Grèce[51]. Hérodote souligne que les Égyptiens attribuèrent aux dieux une individualité en donnant à chacun une appellation, ajoutant de nouveau que la théologie des Grecs est un héritage égyptien récent[52].

Le motif du πρῶτος εὑρετής signale aussi une invention proprement dite, objet ou technique : le dithyrambe, inventé par le citharède Arion de Méthymne, l'art de souder le fer par Glaucos de Chios, la monnaie d'or et d'argent, le commerce de détail, le jeu de dés, les osselets, le jeu de ballon, et autres, par les Lydiens, les règles d'étiquette de la cour instituées par le roi mède Déiokès pour conférer au roi un statut d'exception, l'organisation de l'armée par son petit-fils Cyaxare, les panaches sur les casques, les emblèmes distinctifs sur les boucliers pourvus de courroies intérieures par les Cariens[53]. Les Égyptiens sont crédités d'une foule d'inventions importantes, dont certaines auraient été reprises à leur compte par les Grecs. Ils ont inventé l'année, qu'ils ont divisée en douze parties, ont perfectionné le calendrier, qui comporte douze mois de trente jours, plus cinq jours, ont inventé la géométrie, née du calcul de la superficie des lots de terre attribués par le Pharaon à son peuple[54]. Le roi Nécos est le premier homme qui a prouvé la rotondité du continent africain par l'envoi de marins phéniciens[55].

Si certains usages viennent d'ailleurs, Hérodote montre en quoi les Grecs les ont adoptés et parfois perfectionnés, adaptés. Il ne dénie pas aux Grecs leur part

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48 Hdt. 2.58.

49 Hdt. 2.64 et 2.123.

50 Hdt. 2.50.

51 Hdt. 2.49.

52 Hdt. 2.52-53.

53 Respectivement Hdt. 1.23; 1.25; 1.94; 1.99; 1.103; 1.171.

54 Hdt. 2.4.

55 Hdt. 4.42.

d'invention, mais il les englobe dans un ensemble plus vaste, qui est le monde entier connu de l'époque, Europe, Asie, Afrique.

Une telle approche explique le «philobarbarisme» d'Hérodote ou son refus de l'hellénocentrisme, que certains auteurs anciens lui ont reproché[56]. La curiosité d'Hérodote est universelle. Son œuvre est la première encyclopédie historique du monde occidental. D'où l'importance accordée à l'exploration du passé jusque dans ses plus lointaines racines[57].

3.4 Pour Thucydide, le présent est le point central et il diffère radicalement du passé

À la différence d'Hérodote, Thucydide réduit la focale et se concentre sur un événement circonscrit dans le temps et dans l'espace, la guerre du Péloponnèse, qui durant vingt-sept ans concerna exclusivement le monde grec[58].

À ses yeux, le présent de la guerre du Péloponnèse n'a rien à voir avec le passé, y compris celui des guerres médiques, en termes de bouleversements, de forces en présence, de territoires sur lesquels s'installe la guerre. Thucydide considère le passé à la fois comme une longue période de faiblesse sur tous les points de vue – effectifs militaires, matériel, tactique, puissance des cités – et comme ce qui prépare le présent, dans la mesure où il y cherche ce qui est en germe et qui ne va cesser de croître. En cela il a une vision «évolutionniste» de l'histoire. Il a conscience d'un mouvement continu de progrès des sociétés grecques à travers le temps[59]. Les Barbares l'intéressent peu sur ce plan.

Le progrès n'est en aucun cas d'ordre moral – il s'en faut de beaucoup –, il est dans l'ordre de la puissance ($\delta\acute{u}\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$), notion complexe, qui correspond à des capacités militaires, à des forces chiffrables, à la possession d'un empire ou d'une zone d'influence, qui suppose qu'une cité comme Athènes ou Sparte contrôle d'autres cités. C'est une notion qui est foncièrement dynamique et qui

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56 En particulier Plutarque dans son essai *De la malignité d'Hérodote* (Περὶ τῆς Ἡροδότου κακοηθείας, *Mor.* 854e-874c).

57 Sur la place d'Hérodote dans l'historiographie : Momigliano 1982 et 1983, Fowler 2006, Hornblower 2006, Nicolai 2011, Matijašić 2018.

58 Même s'il écrit que la guerre du Péloponnèse «fut la plus grande crise qui émut la Grèce et une fraction du monde barbare», et qu'«elle gagna, pour ainsi dire, la majeure partie de l'humanité» (1.1.2), Thucydide ne développe presque pas le point de vue barbare sur ce conflit entre Grecs. Jamais par exemple il ne s'intéresse à l'histoire concomitante de l'empire perse pour elle-même.

59 Voir Romilly 1966, 143–191 et Golfin 2003, 9–29.

par certains aspects est similaire à une force dans la science physique. En effet, les relations internationales sont régies par des rapports de forces permanents, et même si ces forces sont sujettes à variations et déséquilibres incessants, les rapports de forces en tant que tels demeurent, ils sont dans la nature des choses[60].

La minoration du passé et sa recherche toujours effectuée à la lumière du présent, la dévaluation des origines prouvent que Thucydide a une haute conscience de la durée et que le temps, telle une flèche, est orienté dans une seule direction, du passé vers le présent, de la faiblesse vers l'accroissement des forces. Une telle courbe doit cependant être nuancée car l'œuvre tend à montrer le processus de déclin de la puissance d'Athènes suite à de mauvais choix politiques après son acmé au moment du gouvernement de Périclès.

3.5 Chez Xénophon : un manque d'intérêt pour les origines

Même s'il préfère le lexique d'ἀρχή à celui de πάλαι, l'auteur des *Helléniques* est peu intéressé par la recherche des origines. L'histoire qu'il écrit se rapproche davantage d'une chronique ; elle porte sur les années qu'il a lui-même vécues, de la guerre du Péloponnèse (continuation de l'œuvre de Thucydide) à l'hégémonie de Sparte et aux échecs de l'hégémonie entre Sparte, Thèbes et Athènes, dans la première moitié du IVe siècle. Xénophon ne remonte que rarement en-deçà de 431, avant la guerre du Péloponnèse, ou de 490 – 480, période des guerres médiques[61].

Comment expliquer, si c'est possible, un tel désintérêt ? Xénophon ne livre guère de façon explicite sa conception de l'histoire. À la différence de Thucydide ou d'Hérodote, il n'expose pas ce qui serait sa méthode de travail ni ses objectifs – ou très peu. Une explication peut cependant être déduite d'un passage-clé des

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60 C'est dans leur dialogue avec les habitants de l'île de Mélos que les Athéniens exposent le plus clairement, et le plus froidement, l'idée que le plus fort commande et exerce sa domination contre la cité qui est plus faible : «Une loi de nature fait que toujours, si l'on est le plus fort, on commande ; ce n'est pas nous qui avons posé ce principe ou qui avons été les premiers à appliquer ce qu'il énonçait : il existait avant nous et existera pour toujours après nous, et c'est seulement notre tour de l'appliquer, en sachant qu'aussi bien vous ou d'autres, placés à la tête de la même puissance que nous, vous feriez de même.» (5.105.2) Sur ce dialogue voir Méautis 1935, 250 – 278, Liebeschuetz 1968, 73 – 77, Gomme/Andrewes/Dover, *HCT* IV 1970, 155 – 192, Macleod 1974, 385 – 400, Bosworth 1993, 30 – 44 et les analyses plus récentes de Hornblower vol. III 2008, 216 – 256. Sur la notion de puissance : Romilly 1947, Woodhead 1970, Terray 1990.
61 Sur la composition des *Helléniques* : Hatzfeld 1930 et 1933, MacLaren 1934, Henry 1966, Rahn 1971, Gray 1989, Riedinger 1991.

Helléniques. En 404, l'historien montre qu'on s'attend à ce que la fin de la guerre du Péloponnèse constitue un point de départ vers un nouveau mode de relations entre cités grecques. Or il n'en est rien. L'ἀρχή comme «commencement inaugurant un changement» est illusoire. Athènes a fait la paix avec Sparte suivant les conditions que celle-ci a dictées. Lysandre entre dans le Pirée. Une courte scène évoque la délivrance des esprits. «L'on commença à démolir les murailles au rythme des joueuses de flûte, dans un grand enthousiasme, tous pensant que ce jour marquait pour la Grèce le début de la liberté (νομίζοντες ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν τῇ Ἑλλάδι ἄρχειν τῆς ἐλευθερίας).»[62] Le passage est ironique. Des dangers imminents menacent encore Athènes et le monde grec tout entier. L'arrêt des hostilités marque le début d'une autre ère, celle de la puissance renforcée de Sparte, qui voudra s'étendre au détriment des autres cités grecques. En un sens, Xénophon reprend la lecture thucydidéenne de l'histoire, faite de rapports de forces incessants et instables[63].

Exclusivement préoccupé d'histoire contemporaine, Xénophon s'intéresse davantage au réseau complexe des relations entre les cités durant sa période – autrement dit à une temporalité et une causalité horizontales – qu'aux couches superposées des causes primitives, anciennes et moins anciennes, formant une temporalité verticale. Cela montre sans doute que le motif de l'origine n'a pas sa place dans l'histoire récente. Le recours au passé fait comprendre le présent pour autant que ce dernier est intelligible. Mais il n'y a pas de repos au mouvement violent de l'histoire. Comme chez Thucydide, alors que c'était moins le cas chez Hérodote dont les digressions créent des variations dans le rythme du récit[64], le temps de la tranquillité n'existe pas pour Xénophon, et surtout, les événements paraissent de moins en moins intelligibles[65].

Xénophon découpe le temps historique en deux périodes, l'avant et l'après-guerre du Péloponnèse[66]. La guerre du Péloponnèse est l'événement pivot : elle est à l'origine de bouleversements tellement importants que ce qui lui préexistait paraît éloigné dans le temps et sans effet. Il y a l'avant et l'après-guerre du

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62 *Hell.* 2.2.23.

63 Sur les ressemblances et les différences qui existent entre Xénophon et Thucydide, voir Wood 1966, Tamiolaki 2008 et 2014 ; sur sa place dans l'historiographie : Dillery 1995, Luraghi 2017.

64 Long 1987.

65 La confusion qui s'accroît au livre 7 à mesure qu'avance le récit n'est pas le résultat d'une maladresse de Xénophon, mais le reflet d'une époque difficile à analyser. Voir Henry 1966, Riedinger 1991, Tuplin 1993, Golfin 1999, Pelling 2017. On sait que l'ouvrage se clôt sur un constat pessimiste (*Hell.* 7.5.27).

66 Toutes les éditions des *Helléniques* soulignent que la seconde période commence en 2.3.11, par exemple Hatzfeld (1936–1939), CUF ou Krentz (1989–1995), Warminster. Sur l'importance capitale de la guerre du Péloponnèse pour Xénophon : Colin 1933, Luraghi 2017.

Péloponnèse comme il y avait pour Thucydide, dans une moindre mesure, l'avant et l'après-guerre médique. Ainsi, en 5.1.31, Xénophon expose les clauses du traité de paix que le roi des Perses Artaxerxès, à l'initiative d'Antalcidas, propose aux Grecs : les villes d'Asie ainsi que Clazomènes et Chypre lui appartiennent, toutes les autres villes sont autonomes, à l'exception de Lemnos, Imbros et Skyros, qui «comme à l'origine appartiendront aux Athéniens (ὥσπερ τὸ ἀρχαῖον εἶναι Ἀθηναίων)». Ce dernier point renvoie à une situation datant du milieu du Vᵉ siècle, où ces trois îles étaient peuplées de clérouques athéniens. Hérodote raconte comment Miltiade, lorsqu'il soumit la Chersonèse de Thrace, s'empara aussi de Lemnos, vers 500 av. J.-C. Quant à Skyros et vraisemblablement Imbros, c'est Cimon, fils de Miltiade, qui les mit sous la dépendance d'Athènes, vers 478[67]. Le passé originel en question n'a donc rien de très ancien, tout au plus un siècle. Toutefois dans l'intervalle se place la guerre du Péloponnèse, qui est tellement décisive que les situations qui existaient avant elle paraissent beaucoup plus éloignées dans le temps – d'où l'emploi de l'adjectif ἀρχαῖος pour désigner ces faits d'avant 431.

3.6 Chez Thucydide et Xénophon, le passé est au service de la progression du récit par l'enchaînement des causalités

Si Xénophon fait des incursions dans le passé, il ne laisse pas ce passé envahir son récit. Il n'est jamais qu'annexe, et ne figure que parce qu'il éclaire les attitudes et les décisions du moment. L'historien donne l'impression de vouloir toujours avancer dans sa narration, et de n'introduire des fragments du passé à l'intérieur du présent – le présent que constituent les événements qui se succèdent – que lorsque c'est absolument indispensable à la compréhension des faits[68]. N'accordant au passé qu'une portion congrue, il arrive fréquemment que manquent les références à certains faits anciens.

Ainsi, dressant un bilan des sentiments que les Athéniens ont envers les Thébains en 371, il explique qu'ils tiennent autant aux dramatiques développements de l'histoire récente qu'au passé ancien[69]. Les Athéniens sont indignés par l'attitude des Thébains vis-à-vis de peuples et de cités avec lesquels eux-

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67 Voir Hdt. 5.140 pour le rôle de Miltiade et Thuc. 1.98.2 pour l'action de Cimon.
68 Sur le style de Xénophon : Gray 1989, Riedinger 1991, Tuplin 1993 et surtout Gray 2014, qui explique en quoi consiste la «simplicité» du style de Xénophon, et Rood 2017, 268 – 272 pour qui la caractéristique principale du style de Xénophon dans les *Helléniques* est la variété («variety»). Pour un exemple d'analyse d'une brève unité narrative, voir Golfin 2003b.
69 *Hell.* 6.3.1.

mêmes entretiennent de bons rapports. Pour les sanctionner, faute de pouvoir faire plus, ils décident de ne plus participer aux opérations militaires que les Thébains mettront sur pied, au nom de l'amitié ancienne qui les lie aux cités de Platées et de Thespies ainsi qu'aux Phocidiens. Ces derniers sont désignés comme de «vieux amis», φίλους ἀρχαίους[70], auxquels les Thébains font la guerre. En fait, les Phocidiens ont toujours été alliés des Lacédémoniens[71]. L'affirmation de Xénophon suppose donc un changement d'alliance, qui demanderait une explication, qu'il ne fournit pas. En 456, les Athéniens se rendirent maîtres de la Phocide et en 448, lors de la guerre sacrée, ils enlevèrent le culte delphique aux Delphiens pour le confier aux Phocidiens[72]. Thucydide écrit que Démosthène comptait sur l'amitié de toujours des Phocidiens avec Athènes pour qu'ils lui fournissent de l'aide dans son expédition en Étolie[73]. Par ailleurs, en 404, les Phocidiens s'opposèrent à la destruction d'Athènes[74]. On peut donc considérer que les Phocidiens sont désignés comme «vieux amis» d'Athènes par référence à leur action durant les guerres médiques. En effet, ils ont été avec Léonidas aux Thermopyles ; leur territoire a été ravagé par les Perses que guidaient les Thessaliens, farouches ennemis des Phocidiens ; ils ont dû se réfugier sur le Parnasse ou chez les Locriens Ozoles. Enrôlés contre leur gré dans l'armée mède, ils ont refusé de s'associer à l'invasion de l'Attique, et ont même envoyé, avant la bataille de Platées, un contingent de mille hommes dans l'armée de Pausanias[75]. Xénophon cependant ne nous donne pas toutes ces informations.

Lorsqu'il entreprend de rechercher les origines, Xénophon – comme Hérodote ou Thucydide –, développe une narration régressive complexe. Ainsi en est-il, en 3.5.2, des hostilités entre Sparte et les autres cités puissantes de Grèce, qui tirent leur origine de l'argent que les Perses ont distribué aux hommes politiques de chaque parti anti-lacédémonien dans les cités pour créer un «deuxième front» en Grèce et par là affaiblir les Lacédémoniens en Asie Mineure, domaine réservé du Grand Roi. De fait, les Thébains prennent l'initiative de déclencher des troubles (ἄρξει πολέμου) qui vont rejaillir sur Sparte. L'ἀρχή, qui n'a rien d'une ancienneté primitive, est un point de départ qui suscite une réaction en

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70 *Hell.* 6.3.1.

71 *Hell.* 3.5.3; 4.3.15; 6.1.1.

72 Comme le rappelle Underhill 1979, 236, en se référant pour le premier événement à Thuc. 1.108.3, pour le second à Thuc. 1.112.5. En 1.111.1, Thucydide écrit que pour une action en Thessalie, les Athéniens «s'adjoignirent des Béotiens et des Phocidiens, avec qui ils étaient alliés».

73 Thuc. 3.95.1 : κατὰ τὴν Ἀθηναίων αἰεί ποτε φιλίαν.

74 Plut. *Lys.* 15.

75 Hdt. 7.203 et 207; 8.32–33; 9.17; 9.31.

chaîne, en l'occurrence des conflits locaux qui s'étendent de place en place, prévisible et impossible à arrêter, sauf par une intervention des «grandes puissances». Les Phocidiens, demandant le secours de Sparte, commencent par se disculper d'être les premiers agresseurs en reprenant une formule utilisée par les Béotiens : οὐκ ἤρξαντο πολέμου[76]. Ils disent avoir été victimes de l'agression des Locriens, contre laquelle ils ont réagi. L'attitude qui consiste à se disculper d'être le premier fautif est traditionnelle, le «premier responsable» faisant toujours figure d'impie d'un point de vue juridique et psychologique, alors que celui qui réagit à l'agression par une agression en retour est considéré comme dans son bon droit. À l'origine de l'acte des Thébains, il y a cependant la volonté des Perses de voir les Grecs s'entre-déchirer. Et à l'origine des heurts en Asie entre les Perses et les Lacédémoniens d'Agésilas, il y a le désir ancien qu'ont les Perses de contrôler les cités d'Ionie. Qui est responsable ? Le récit donne l'impression que cette région de la Méditerranée ne peut être l'enjeu que d'intérêts contradictoires, inconciliables, source de conflits incessants. La remontée aux origines des actions suit un enchaînement analogue à une longue spirale – un mouvement annulaire – qui rend sensible le lien entre les événements à travers le temps. Même si Xénophon ne remonte pas loin dans le passé, mais s'en tient aux origines récentes[77], il mentionne les griefs que les cités ont les unes contre les autres et leur origine complexe.

3.7 Mouvement régressif et «mur du temps»

Le récit d'Hérodote obéit à une double dynamique, celle d'une progression chronologique, des premières confrontations entre Grecs et Barbares d'Asie jusqu'au conflit de 480 – 479 contre les forces de Xerxès et celle d'une exploration à rebours du passé, par analepses et selon des couches «sédimentaires», avec recherche des origines.

D'un point de vue méthodologique, Hérodote sait certaines choses sur le passé reculé par ce qu'il a pu voir lui-même (en tant qu'αὐτόπτης[78]), suite à une enquête sur le terrain (ἱστορία[79]), grâce à des entretiens avec des témoins ou des personnes savantes de son temps, qu'ici ou là il a pu rencontrer (ἀκοή[80]), par ses

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76 *Hell.* 3.5.4.

77 Peut-être considère-t-il, en tant que continuateur de Thucydide et, dans une moindre mesure, d'Hérodote, que ces derniers ont déjà effectué l'exploration en profondeur du passé.

78 Voir par exemple Hdt. 2.29.

79 Voir entre autres Hdt. 1.1; 2.118.

80 Hdt. 2.29.

lectures[81]. Même chose pour Thucydide, qui affirme dans sa seconde préface[82] avoir enquêté dans les deux camps belligérants par souci d'exactitude et d'objectivité.

La démarche régressive qui consiste à partir du présent pour explorer le passé le plus ancien pose une question évidente : jusqu'où la raison humaine par ses divers moyens de connaissance peut-elle remonter et atteindre ?

Dans sa recherche du premier responsable, du premier inventeur, des origines, Hérodote se heurte à ce qu'on pourrait appeler un «mur du temps»[83], c'est-à-dire un au-delà ou, plus exactement, un en-deçà auquel il n'a pas accès. Il y a nécessairement une barrière au-delà de laquelle il n'est pas possible de remonter, une part irréductible d'inconnu. Hérodote, Thucydide et les savants grecs de l'époque classique en savaient beaucoup moins sur les premières civilisations grecques que nous. Ainsi ignoraient-ils non l'existence, mais du moins l'organisation dans le détail des civilisations minoenne et mycénienne[84]. Si on leur avait présenté une tablette en linéaire A ou B, ils n'auraient pas su la lire. La disparition de l'écriture grecque hiéroglyphique ou syllabique, les destructions sur lesquelles s'ouvre la période dite des «temps obscurs» ont effacé durablement les connaissances[85]. Cela dit, même pour nous qui disposons grâce à l'archéologie de moyens perfectionnés pour explorer le passé ancien, vient un moment où la connaissance régressive se heurte à un mur.

En réalité, les Grecs gardaient un souvenir des temps immémoriaux : Hérodote et Thucydide, s'ils ne parlent pas de la civilisation minoenne comme

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81 L'historien cite par exemple l'*Iliade* et l'*Odyssée* d'Homère en 2.116.

82 Thuc. 5.26.5.

83 Nous reprenons ici – avec un sens différent – l'expression de Jünger 1959. Dans cet essai, l'auteur s'interroge en précurseur sur les problèmes du monde moderne tels que les changements climatiques ou les manipulations génétiques et interprète les bouleversements nés de l'essor de la science et des techniques comme un changement de cycle temporel : le cycle «historique» ou temps des hommes et des héros inauguré par Hérodote, qui a succédé au cycle mythique, ferait place au XXe siècle à un nouveau cycle, mêlant science, irrationalité et spiritualité.

84 Visitant la forteresse de Mycènes au Ier siècle de notre ère, le géographe Pausanias relie ce qu'il voit à ce qu'il sait de la tradition et de la légende d'Atrée et d'Agamemnon, mais il n'est pas en mesure de décrire et d'expliquer ce qui fait la spécificité de la civilisation mycénienne telle que l'archéologie récente – surtout depuis le XXe siècle – l'a révélée (2.16). Il tente d'interpréter les vestiges de Mycènes «en établissant une chronologie compatible avec l'histoire mythique archaïque» (Schnapp 1993, 54 – 55).

85 Sur la méconnaissance du passé ancien de la Grèce, et en particulier de l'ère qui a précédé l'alphabet, voir Finley 1981. À propos des «temps obscurs», il convient d'être prudent, les découvertes archéologiques pouvant toujours modifier notre jugement et montrer que la cassure avec l'ère mycénienne antérieure fut moins brutale qu'on le croit (Schnapp-Gourbeillon 2002).

nous, citent Minos. Thucydide le considère comme un roi qui a véritablement existé[86]. Remontant au plus lointain passé connu, il inclut le roi de Crète dans l'histoire réelle, s'opposant à Hérodote qui l'exclut au profit de Polycrate de Samos[87].

3.8 Mythe et histoire

Pour connaître le passé reculé antérieur aux faits avérés, les historiens ne disposent le plus souvent d'autres sources que les récits fondateurs attachés à chaque cité, les légendes mêlant héros humains et divinités, – la mythologie. Les nombreux récits mythiques, non datés, renvoient à un passé antérieur au temps humain connu.

Hérodote intègre le mythe à l'histoire[88]. Pour lui, le mythe a une valeur historique. Contrairement à ce que l'on dit parfois, il n'est pas absolument an-historique[89]. Cela ne signifie pas que l'historien pense lui-même en «mythographe». Bien au contraire, rationaliste du Ve siècle, il a un regard critique et extérieur sur les contes fabuleux, les généalogies qui intègrent des divinités, les récits fondateurs de cités ou de peuples[90]. Le nom μῦθος, peu employé, a

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[86] Thuc. 1.4.

[87] Hdt. 3.122.

[88] Sur la question des rapports entre mythe et histoire, depuis Cornford 1907 et Nestle 1940, la bibliographie est abondante : voir Buxton 1999, Gehrke 2001, Boedeker 2002, Saïd 2011, Burkert 2011, surtout 3 – 41 et 42 – 65.

[89] Smith 1990, 1037 donne une définition claire de cette notion complexe : «À quoi reconnaît-on un mythe ? C'est d'abord un type particulier de récit dont le modèle a été donné par les histoires des dieux de la Grèce antique. Toutefois, bien des mythes ne sont pas des histoires de dieux, ce sont des histoires de héros mais distinguées des contes ou des légendes, ce sont des histoires d'ancêtres mais distinguées des récits historiques, des histoires d'animaux distinguées des fables. La plupart des sociétés opèrent elles-mêmes une classification des divers types de récits, dans laquelle il est facile de reconnaître la catégorie des mythes ; ceux-ci, à la différence des contes qui ne sont que des inventions, sont reconnus pour vrais par les sociétés qui les racontent alors que, contrairement à ce qui se passe pour les récits historiques, il n'y a pourtant là, aux yeux de l'observateur étranger, pratiquement rien de vraisemblable.» La raison en principe rejette le mythe, elle l'exclut et le chasse, comme l'affirme Platon à propos des récits mythologiques qui, prêtant aux dieux des traits humains et des passions humaines, trahissent leur nature fictive et mensongère (*Rep.* II 377b-379b). Cela dit, le philosophe invente lui-même des mythes pour donner à entendre ce que la raison à elle seule ne peut expliquer.

[90] Saïd 2011, 78 – 80 rappelle qu'Aristote considère Hérodote comme un μυθολόγος (*GA* 3.5.756b 5 – 10), que Strabon l'inclut parmi les μυθογράφοι (1.2.8) ou que Cicéron voit dans son œuvre d'*innumerabiles fabulae* (*Leg.* 1.5). Pour autant, le jugement critique qu'il exerce sur les récits qui

d'ailleurs dans son œuvre une valeur négative et s'applique à des récits légendaires qu'il juge absurdes et irrecevables[91]. Hérodote n'est donc pas crédule – comme on le lui a parfois reproché –, mais le plus souvent il rationalise le mythe, lui ôtant tous ses éléments surnaturels, effaçant ce qui lui semble relever du fictif et ne retenant qu'une version vraisemblable des faits. On voit cela dès le début de l'œuvre, puisqu'il remplace le mythe grec d'Io métamorphosée en génisse par la version perse réaliste d'un enlèvement de la fille du roi d'Argos par des marchands phéniciens[92].

Le raisonnement d'Hérodote repose sur la vraisemblance. Ainsi, lorsqu'il critique la légende achéenne selon laquelle Hélène a été emmenée à Troie et a causé la longue guerre que rapporte la tradition, il la remplace par une version rationalisée, celle des prêtres égyptiens auprès desquels il s'est informé, qui dit qu'enlevée par Pâris, Hélène, du fait de vents contraires, est allée en Égypte, où elle est restée, et que les Troyens assiégés ne furent pas en mesure de la rendre aux Grecs puisqu'elle n'était pas chez eux[93]. S'exprimant ensuite en son nom, Hérodote affirme adhérer au récit égyptien au nom de la vraisemblance, expliquant que jamais les Troyens n'auraient accepté de faire une guerre aussi longue et meurtrière pour satisfaire l'amour entre Pâris et Hélène. «Il n'était pas au pouvoir des Troyens de rendre Hélène ; ils disaient la vérité, et les Grecs ne les croyaient pas.»[94] Hérodote contredit donc Homère et n'a pas plus confiance dans les récits des poètes épiques que Thucydide[95]. Cependant, si le critère d'Hérodote est le vraisemblable, ce vraisemblable n'est pas forcément le nôtre dans la

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lui sont rapportés – même s'il les rapporte –, l'expression de ses doutes ou le retrait de sa responsabilité empêchent de ranger l'historien parmi les mythographes. Nous reprenons à notre compte la distinction que fait Lévi-Strauss 1964, 19–20 : «L'exercice et l'usage de la pensée mythique exigent que ses propriétés restent cachées ; sinon on se mettrait dans la position du mythologue qui ne peut croire aux mythes, du fait qu'il s'emploie à les démonter.» Une chose est d'énoncer les mythes, de vivre avec eux et par eux, autre chose est de les prendre comme objet d'étude.

91 Le nom n'est employé que deux fois (Powell) : en 2.23 pour dévaluer le discours d'Homère, des poètes antérieurs ou d'Hécatée sur le fleuve Océan auquel serait liée l'originalité du cours du Nil et en 2.45 pour s'opposer au mythe grec du sacrifice d'Héraclès en Égypte. Voir les analyses de Détienne 1981, 99–104, qui conclut que pour l'historien le «mythe» est «tantôt rumeur grise, parole d'illusion, séduction mensongère, tantôt récit incroyable, discours absurde, opinion sans fondement» (104).

92 Hdt. 1.1-2, où le même traitement réaliste est appliqué aux légendes d'Europè et de Médée.

93 Hdt. 2.113–119.

94 Hdt. 2.120 : Ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ εἶχον Ἑλένην ἀποδοῦναι οὐδὲ λέγουσι αὐτοῖσι τὴν ἀληθείην ἐπίστευον οἱ Ἕλληνες.

95 Dans le même passage, il fait part de sa prudence : εἰ χρή τι τοῖσι ἐποποιοῖσι χρεώμενον λέγειν.

mesure où, pour justifier l'existence – illogique – de la guerre de Troie, il intègre le divin dans le devenir des hommes. «La divinité, – je déclare ici ce que je pense (ὡς μὲν ἐγὼ γνώμην ἀποφαίνομαι) –, disposait les choses en vue de rendre manifeste aux yeux des hommes par la ruine complète des Troyens qu'aux grandes fautes les dieux infligent de non moins grands châtiments.»[96]

Il arrive toutefois que l'historien n'applique pas le critère sélectif de la vraisemblance et développe certains récits, accepte certains détails qui apparaissent comme des mythes par leurs aspects fantaisistes ou irrationnels. C'est précisément sa conscience aiguë de la longue durée et son intérêt pour ce qui relève de l'origine qui l'amènent à incorporer à son *Enquête* des événements antérieurs à l'histoire humaine connue ou connaissable à son époque, par exemple antérieurs à Polycrate de Samos, en qui il voit une limite[97]. Il intègre Héraclès dans la généalogie des rois de Sparte. Il laisse penser que les dieux ont peut-être joué un rôle jadis sur terre. Il distingue trois âges dans l'histoire, avec pour chacun le souci manifeste d'une recherche de la plus grande ancienneté. Il y aurait eu d'abord un «temps des dieux», sur lequel l'historien ne dit presque rien si ce n'est qu'il laisse entendre qu'il correspond à une ère où les dieux sont nés et régnaient seuls sur terre[98]. Le «temps des héros» qui suit est une période durant laquelle dieux et héros interviennent au milieu des actions humaines[99]. La race des hommes est donc apparue un jour, comme l'historien le laisse entendre, sans donner davantage d'explication[100]. Dans cette période, la plus grande ancienneté chiffrée est celle d'Héraclès d'Égypte, apparu 17 000 ans avant le règne du pharaon Amasis, alors que l'Héraclès grec serait apparu environ 900 ans avant l'époque de l'historien[101]. Une partie du *logos* égyptien a pour fin d'exposer, d'après une patiente enquête, qu'en de nombreux points la Grèce est plus récente que l'Égypte, en particulier dans le domaine de la théologie, qui n'échappe pas non plus à l'histoire. À côté des divinités égyptiennes les plus anciennes – Pan, Héraclès ou Dionysos –, Hérodote remonte aussi, dans son histoire religieuse de la Grèce, au moment où, chez les Pélasges, la division

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96 Hdt. 2.120.

97 Hdt. 3.122.

98 Hdt. 2.53. Sur la question du temps des hommes et du temps des dieux voir Vidal-Naquet 1981, 69 – 94, Darbo-Peschanski 1987, 25 – 38, Golfin 1999, 493 – 497.

99 2.144 : «C'est, disaient <les prêtres égyptiens>, antérieurement à ces hommes que ceux qui régnèrent en Égypte étaient des dieux vivant en société avec les humains.»

100 Hdt. 2.15. C'est avec la même préoccupation qu'on voit le roi égyptien Psammétique faire une expérience pour «savoir qui sont les plus anciens des hommes», ἀνευρεῖν οἳ γενοίατο πρῶτοι ἀνθρώπων (2.2).

101 Respectivement Hdt. 2.43 et 2.145. Sur l'importance de l'Égypte dans les *Histoires* : Lloyd 1975 – 1988.

polythéiste ne s'était pas encore produite. Ce n'est qu'au prix d'un long écoulement de temps que le panthéon s'est imposé[102]. La troisième période est celle du «temps des hommes». Plus récente, elle correspond, d'après les commentateurs, au VIIe siècle av. J.-C. Pourtant les chiffres que fournit parfois l'historien conduisent à une ancienneté bien plus grande : de Mîn (Ménès), le premier roi humain d'Égypte, à Séthos, il y eut 341 générations humaines, soit, selon les calculs d'Hérodote, 11 340 ans, en l'espace desquels, d'après les prêtres de Thèbes, «aucun dieu ne parut sous la forme humaine»[103]. Ces estimations chiffrées, pour erronées qu'elles soient, montrent combien la vision qu'a l'historien du passé est à la fois ample et contradictoire, non systématisée[104].

Thucydide pense que, dès lors qu'un fait se situe loin dans le temps passé ou qu'il vient d'un espace lointain, il est déformé et acquiert un caractère légendaire qui le renforce. Dans l'Archéologie, il défend les faits tels qu'il les a établis, par contraste avec le traitement que leur réservent les poètes ou les logographes. Passant au crible de son jugement les faits du passé, qui sont «incontrôlables» (ἀνεξέλεγκτα), il ajoute : τὰ πολλὰ ὑπὸ χρόνου αὐτῶν ἀπίστως ἐπὶ τὸ μυθῶδες ἐκνενικηκότα. «Leur ancienneté a valu à la plupart d'entre eux de prendre un caractère mythique excluant la créance.»[105] Le μῦθος n'est donc pas forcément faux pour Thucydide, mais il relève d'un autre domaine que l'histoire, et le nom perd son sens premier de «récit» ou de «parole raisonnable»[106]. Pour autant, Thucydide rejoint Hérodote lorsqu'il essaie d'extraire du récit mythique les éléments vraisemblables qu'il peut comporter.

Une question se pose toutefois. Amené à «reconstruire» le passé à la lumière du présent, Thucydide ne déforme-t-il pas la réalité ? Ne réécrit-il pas l'histoire en appliquant sur tous les faits humains une «grille de lecture» qui les déforme, une grille de lecture idéologique, qui serait une autre sorte de μῦθος ? Il est sûr qu'il simplifie l'histoire des temps anciens de la Grèce, examinés sous le seul prisme de la puissance et de ses moyens. Minos est un roi qui contrôle la mer,

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102 Hdt. 2.52.

103 Hdt. 2.142.

104 Nous partageons la conclusion de Cobet 2002, 411 : «The twofold division of mythical and historical time does not really apply to Herodotus.»

105 Thuc. 1.21.1.

106 Chantraine 1968, 719 note ce changement de sens, que confirme l'entrée μῦθος du lexique de Diels-Kranz : «Le sens des mots de la famille ‹de μῦθος› a évolué après Homère. De la valeur de ‹paroles dont le sens importe, avis, ordre, récit›, on est passé à celle d'‹histoire, mythe, fable›.» Si dès Pindare (*Olympiques* 1.47) ou Hérodote (2.54) le nom signifie «légende» par opposition à λόγος, «récit confirmé par des témoignages», l'adjectif μυθῶδες au sens de «fictif, fabuleux» apparaît pour la première fois chez Thucydide (*loc. cit.*) pour être ensuite repris par Platon dans cette acception (*Rep.* 522a). Sur le changement de sens de μῦθος voir Calame 1999.

lutte contre la piraterie pour avoir des revenus stables ; Pélops et ses descendants ont pu s'implanter et s'imposer dans le Péloponnèse grâce à leur fortune, à leur puissance et à l'appui du peuple ; Agamemnon a eu la prééminence par son pouvoir naval et la peur qu'il inspirait, comme les Athéniens au Ve siècle ; Thésée, auteur du synœcisme de l'Attique, est un autre Périclès, puissant et intelligent. Tous ces exemples prouvent que Thucydide lit le passé à la lumière des événements récents et que les mêmes causes les expliquent[107]. D'où sa prédilection pour l'adverbe πάλαι : Thucydide explore le passé à partir du présent et non l'inverse[108].

En rationaliste du Ve siècle, Thucydide pense que, par-delà les différences de situations, il y a un invariant source de savoir : la nature humaine et l'existence des rapports de forces ou de puissances. Cet invariant rend possible la formulation d'une histoire synthétique de l'humanité. D'où la célèbre phrase : «Si l'on veut voir clair dans les événements passés et dans ceux qui, à l'avenir, en vertu du caractère humain qui est le leur, présenteront des similitudes ou des analogies, qu'alors on juge <les faits rapportés> utiles et cela suffira : ils constituent un trésor pour toujours.»[109] Dans cette perspective, les traces qui subsistent du passé ne servent qu'à mettre au jour une évolution perceptible dans le présent. Le fait que ces traces et l'évolution présente soient visibles protège d'un discours abstrait. Par ailleurs, l'évolution présente ne constitue qu'un aboutissement provisoire de la manifestation de la puissance.

Chez Thucydide, l'ἀρχή «se résout» en πάλαι dans la mesure où l'ἀρχή consiste en un mouvement allant du présent au passé des origines, au temps du commencement absolu, alors que πάλαι est du domaine du relatif et de l'avéré : l'adverbe fait référence à certains moments du passé auxquels l'historien peut remonter, y compris très loin, mais en sachant qu'il est contraint de s'arrêter à l'obstacle de l'inconnu. Ainsi, ce que les Grecs connaissaient des Cyclopes et des Lestrygons leur venant des poètes, la seule affirmation à laquelle Thucydide se risque pour l'histoire ancienne de la Sicile, c'est de citer leurs noms, comme s'ils recouvraient une réalité historique par-delà celle, fabuleuse, transmise par Homère et d'autres poètes[110]. Thucydide doute que les textes poétiques recèlent une

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107 Thuc. 1.4; 1.9.2; 1.9.3–4; 2.15.2. Voir Kallet 2001, 25–26.

108 Certains commentateurs voient d'ailleurs dans l'Archéologie et la Pentékontaétie du livre I moins une histoire du passé reculé de la Grèce jusqu'à la guerre du Péloponnèse que des passages d'argumentation rhétorique visant à étayer la thèse de l'importance de la guerre du Péloponnèse et de la peur de Sparte face à la montée en puissance d'Athènes.

109 Thuc. 1.22.4.

110 Thuc. 6.2.1. Sur l'histoire des premiers peuplements et de la colonisation de la Sicile, pour autant qu'on puisse la connaître, on lira, entre autres, Dover 1953, 1–20 et Finley 1988.

vérité historique, mais il les utilise faute de mieux. De même, il est précurseur en matière d'utilisation des vestiges ou des usages anciens pour la connaissance historique, faisant preuve d'une attitude d'archéologue[111].

Quant à Xénophon, même si nous avons vu qu'il s'intéressait peu au passé ancien, il intègre au moins une fois le mythe à son récit historique. L'Athénien Callias rappelle le don que fit Déméter de l'agriculture aux Athéniens. Lorsqu'elle s'exila de l'Olympe après l'enlèvement de sa fille Perséphone, Déméter enseigna l'agriculture à Triptolème, fils de Céléos, roi d'Éleusis. Elle lui offrit un char sur lequel il parcourait la terre en semant des grains. Or les premiers à qui Triptolème montra les mystères de Déméter furent les Dioscures et Héraclès, que Callias désigne du nom d'ἀρχηγέτης, «fondateur» de la cité lacédémonienne (τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἀρχηγέτῃ)[112]. Un tel rappel renvoie, par-delà Héraclès, à ses descendants, les Héraclides, que l'on présente traditionnellement comme les maîtres du Péloponnèse à partir de Téménos qui réussit à dominer le Péloponnèse, les Héraclides se partageant les trois royaumes d'Argolide, de Messénie et de Laconie. Il a pour fin de prouver que les Athéniens et les Lacédémoniens sont liés par des liens d'amitié voulus par les dieux et qu'il n'est pas juste qu'ils se fassent incessamment la guerre.

Xénophon ne propose pas de «vision» du passé. Pas de démarche «archéologique» chez lui ; aucune digression rétrospective qui dépasse le cadre temporel qu'il s'est fixé. Tout juste donne-t-il quelques aperçus, très brefs, le plus souvent figés, de faits antérieurs à 411. Au lecteur alors de les décrypter, pour un résultat généralement peu satisfaisant. Cela ne signifie pas que l'histoire grecque antérieure à 411 et même à la guerre du Péloponnèse soit totalement évacuée des *Helléniques*, mais les passages les plus nombreux, les plus amples et les plus intéressants dans lesquels le passé fait le sujet d'un renvoi et d'une réflexion font partie de discours, directs ou indirects, autrement dit sont intégrés dans une argumentation. Avec Xénophon le passé en tant qu'objet d'étude objective de l'historien, si tant est qu'une telle notion soit possible, disparaît entièrement au profit d'un passé subjectif, utilisé par des orateurs pour servir à leurs fins. Le passé est donc forcément déformé. Il n'existe plus en tant que tel, mais fait l'objet d'un discours dont il est inséparable. À partir de là, les questions d'argumentation – tout ce qui renvoie à une utilisation sophistique du passé – vont

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111 En 1.8.1, il utilise le mobilier funéraire des tombes mises au jour à Délos comme une preuve que les îles des Cyclades ont été anciennement occupées par des peuples originaires de Carie. Voir Hornblower 1991, 30 et Knoepfler 2020, 26, qui écrit que Thucydide découvre l'archéologie «comme science des vestiges matériels, avec la possibilité qu'elle offre d'apporter des lumières sur une histoire abolie dans la mémoire des hommes».

112 *Hell.* 6.3.6.

prendre le pas sur le problème de la vérité, qui hantait Thucydide. Car si chez Thucydide aussi le passé est constamment «convoqué» dans les discours des orateurs, ceux-ci n'en ont pas le monopole : les faits, donnés par l'historien, sont là pour établir ou rétablir la vérité. Avec Xénophon, au contraire, la figure de l'historien, instance supérieure aux personnages qu'il dépeint et dont il rapporte les propos et les arguments, s'efface presque complètement. Dans une large mesure, l'histoire cède le pas à l'idéologie. Le passé devient un réservoir de références utilisées à des fins politiques[113].

Thucydide historien est à la recherche de la «cause» ou de la «motivation la plus vraie», τὴν ἀληθεστάτην πρόφασιν[114], qui dépasse les motifs immédiats ou les prétextes. Cette cause n'a pas sa source dans le passé lointain. Il sait en effet qu'un grand nombre de difficultés et d'obstacles entravent la possibilité même de connaissance du passé. De toute façon, la vérité selon lui ne se situe pas dans le temps, mais dans certaines lois ou certains principes qui transcendent le temps et sont éternels : la puissance, les rapports de forces, la peur qui naît de la confrontation avec une autre puissance supérieure à soi. La puissance agit comme une sorte de nécessité, peut-être de type tragique. Cela dit, c'est parce qu'il a une connaissance du passé ancien, du passé récent et du présent que Thucydide a pu poser des passerelles entre eux et ainsi déterminer un comportement constant des hommes et des groupes.

À l'opposé, Hérodote croit qu'une part importante de savoir et de vérité gît dans l'ancien. Le lien avec le passé des temps très reculés n'est pas entièrement rompu. Il est possible de remonter aux origines. Du moins est-ce une sorte de réflexe qu'il a pour connaître le présent, preuve qu'il y a pour lui un *continuum* entre les différentes époques ou générations. La recherche et la valorisation du passé ancien et du temps des origines prouvent qu'Hérodote est conscient de la durée, de l'amplitude du temps. La «cause la plus vraie» des guerres médiques doit être cherchée dans le passé le plus ancien, dans la confrontation première des deux civilisations, grecque et perse. Pour paraphraser Thucydide, Hérodote raisonne en termes de «cause la plus ancienne», τὴν ἀρχαιοτάτην πρόφασιν. Cette cause, c'est un acte d'enlèvement de femme, autrement dit une violence, une offense. Cette offense ancienne, la suite des temps ne fait que la perpétuer. Il y a là un schéma explicatif qui ressortit au motif, lui aussi tragique, de l'injustice suivie de sa vengeance et de sa contre-vengeance, selon un cycle sans fin, à quoi il faut ajouter l'ὕβρις de Xerxès.

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113 Sur les discours dans les *Helléniques* : Gray 1989, 79 – 140, Baragwanath 2017.
114 Thuc. 1.23.6 (Romilly traduit l'expression par «cause la plus vraie»).

Cela dit, le passé revêt une autre dimension pour Hérodote. Homme curieux de tous les us et coutumes, désireux de garder le plus possible la trace de tout ce qui fut, partout dans le monde connu, parce qu'il sait que le temps, puissance active, modifie, voire efface tout, il lui confère une épaisseur considérable. Avec lui, on mesure l'immensité géographique – horizontale – du monde et l'immensité verticale du temps, sa profondeur. Le temps atteint tout : les hommes, les cités, les coutumes, les objets, mais aussi les contrées (il a conscience du temps géologique[115]) et même les dieux. Contrairement à Thucydide, il ne laisse jamais entendre que ce passé a été inférieur au présent, car le changement qu'induit le temps, force mobile, est universel, et en tant que tel affecte autant le présent que les autres époques. À l'historien revient la double tâche de garder trace de ce qui fut, de lutter contre l'oubli[116] et de rendre justice au temps dans le mouvement incessant duquel les êtres et les choses sont pris[117].

Pour Xénophon, le passé a surtout une importance d'ordre moral : il offre des exemples de comportements exemplaires qu'utilisent les différents orateurs, mais que l'historien moraliste retient lui aussi. Il pourrait reprendre à son compte ce propos que tient l'harmoste lacédémonien Dercylidas aux habitants d'Abydos pour leur rappeler le lien qui les unit à Sparte : «Montrer à des amis tombés dans le malheur la solidité de son attachement, voilà qui mérite un souvenir éternel (τοῦτ᾽ εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον μνημονεύεται).»[118] Une attitude généreuse, dévouée, est digne de mémoire et peut apparaître comme un remède à la difficile lecture du présent. La fin des *Helléniques* dresse en effet un constat assez accablant de la situation de la Grèce. Elle est prise dans l'impasse de guerres intestines incessantes sans qu'aucune hégémonie – spartiate, athénienne, thébaine – s'impose, ce qui serait le gage d'une certaine stabilité. «Malgré la victoire que chacun prétendait avoir remportée, chacun ne fut visi-

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115 Hdt. 7.129 explique qu'avant l'apparition de la gorge du fleuve Pénée, par où s'écoulent les eaux, la Thessalie était un immense lac.

116 Tel est le programme qu'il s'assigne dans le *Prooimion*, 1.1–5.

117 Pour Hérodote, le temps est à la fois un rythme de vie quantifiable, un flux dans lequel s'enchaînent les événements et une sorte de «principe actif» qui fait advenir les faits en rapport avec le divin. La préférence de l'historien pour le lexique d'ἀρχή s'explique sans doute aussi parce qu'il est contemporain des philosophes et savants présocratiques, qui emploient ἀρχή aussi bien au sens de «commencement» que de «principe» ou «élément premier» (Diels/Kranz III, Index, 75–77). Le temps comme flux rappelle à certains égards la mobilité telle que la pense Héraclite. Voir Golfin 1999.

118 *Hell.* 4.8.4. Le programme que l'historien expose dans une brève phrase va dans le même sens. «Parmi les événements je raconterai ceux qui méritent une mention, mais je passerai sur ceux qui n'en sont pas dignes.» Τῶν πράξεων τὰς μὲν ἀξιομνημονεύτους γράψω, τὰς δὲ μὴ ἀξίας λόγου παρήσω. (*Hell.* 4.8.1)

blement plus riche ni en cités, ni en territoires, ni en autorité qu'avant la bataille <de Mantinée> ; et l'incertitude et la confusion furent plus grandes après qu'avant dans toute la Grèce (ἀκρισία δὲ καὶ ταραχὴ ἔτι πλείων μετὰ τὴν μάχην ἐγένετο ἢ πρόσθεν ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι). »[119]

Autant de générations d'historiens qui se suivent, autant d'appréhensions différentes du passé : vertical, originel, stratifié, connaissable, creuset des possibles pour Hérodote, fini, ancien, borné ou invérifiable, point de départ d'un mouvement progressif irrésistible chez Thucydide, réduit à sa part récente, réservoir d'exemples, englobé dans un présent en crise dans lequel le temps semble illisible et immobile pour Xénophon. Une telle variété dans l'approche du passé pour une discipline somme toute récente – l'histoire est née à la fin du VIᵉ siècle – signale l'originalité de chaque auteur. Elle permet aussi de mesurer quel effort a représenté une telle entreprise visant à arracher à l'oubli et à l'irrationnel les destinées des cités et des peuples par l'élaboration d'un discours sur le mémorable, c'est-à-dire ce qui est jugé digne de souvenir. Le domaine ou «espace» historique ne concerne pas seulement les rois, les chefs, les guerres, mais de très nombreux autres aspects humains. Dans ce cadre historique, le discours sur le passé, quoique difficile, est possible et il acquiert une grande valeur car, grâce à lui, chaque historien, à sa manière, a pu donner une mesure de l'amplitude temporelle – avec ou sans repères chronologiques et dates clés – dans laquelle s'inscrit l'existence de chaque cité ou de chaque peuple. Une telle amplitude a sans nul doute permis aux contemporains de mieux se connaître et de mieux connaître le monde, la profondeur temporelle ayant pour corollaire l'extension dans l'espace. Pour le dire autrement, explorer le passé, c'est aussi en même temps élargir l'espace, qui, pour un Grec lecteur ou auditeur d'Hérodote, Thucydide ou Xénophon, ne se réduit pas à l'horizon de sa cité ni même de la seule Grèce.

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119 *Hell.* 7.5.27. Grayson 1975, 31–44, Riedinger 1991 et Tuplin 1993 ont bien montré comment, pro-lacédémonien par conviction, Xénophon a du mal à rendre compte de certains échecs de Sparte et, plus généralement, à développer une interprétation rationnelle de la crise du monde grec dans la première moitié du IVᵉ siècle. Sur la déformation historique chez Xénophon, voir aussi Lévy 1990 et Pontier 2010.

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Susan Bilynskyj Dunning

The transformation of the *saeculum* and its rhetoric in the construction and rejection of roman imperial power

Abstract: The Roman conception of the *saeculum* ("age" or "generation") became charged with political significance from the Late Republic onward. The *saeculum* was linked with imperial authority during the reign of Augustus with his foundation of the *ludi saeculares* ("Saecular Games"). Augustus recalculated the *saeculum* and created a new chronology for his Games, which celebrated the *princeps*' ability to lead Rome into a new era of peace and prosperity through divine favour and the establishment of his dynasty. Later emperors legitimised their political authority by utilising what I call "*saeculum* rhetoric" in official contexts across a range of media. By the end of the second century CE, Christian authors had started developing a new rhetoric that redefined the *saeculum* as "this present world", in contrast with expectation of eternal life in a "world to come." This survey reveals that in Roman conceptions of time, the *saeculum* was not used as a tool for formal periodisation or commemoration, nor can it be categorised using strict dichotomies (e.g. linear/cyclical time, progress/regress). The *saeculum* is best understood by observing its original ritual context, which emphasised above all the beginning of an emperor's reign through competition with the past and promises for a bountiful future.

1 Introduction

During the Imperial period, Roman emperors could legitimise their authority by identifying their reigns as the beginning of a new age or *saeculum,* which was linked to the performance of a religious festival called the *ludi saeculares,* or Saecular Games. In its original sense, the Latin term *saeculum* was interpreted as a "generation" or "lifetime"; we find the word used in this sense in Roman

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comedy.[1] A more specific definition was developed in the Republic, which set the *saeculum* as a period of one hundred years, the longest span of a human life.[2] Later, the term came to indicate "the present generation or age", or could be applied to a period of history (e.g., the "Golden Age").[3] With the performance of Augustus's Saecular Games in 17 BCE, the *saeculum* was recalculated as a period of one hundred or one hundred and ten years (also associated with the limit of a human lifespan), which became the longest fixed interval in the Roman conception of time.

This investigation shows how the *saeculum* assumed greater significance through its association with the *ludi saeculares* during the Empire, as well as its reinterpretation in Christian contexts in Late Antiquity. There is a long history of scholarship on both the *ludi saeculares* and the *saeculum,* although no work has addressed their histories in full in relation to one another.[4] Through the Saecular Games and the use of what I call "*saeculum* rhetoric," an emperor advertised his role in establishing his dynasty, maintaining good relations with the gods, and ushering in an age of peace, a technique for legitimising political authority over time, not merely space.[5] I give some key examples of this *saeculum* rhetoric from literary, numismatic, and epigraphic contexts.[6] From the third century CE onward, another version of Christian *saeculum* rhetoric emerged that pitted the present *saeculum* of the world against a Christian conception of an afterlife or eternity. As this analysis demonstrates, any discussion of Roman conceptions of time must take into account the political and religious motivations behind interpretations of the *saeculum* over many centuries.

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1 Cf. Ter. *Eun.* 246; Plaut. *Mil.* 1079.
2 Censorinus *DN* 17.13 = F 38 Cornell et. al. 2013; Var. *L.L.* 6.11.
3 Cf. Cic. *Balb.* 15; Verg. *Ecl.* 4.5.
4 On the history of the *ludi saeculares,* see e.g. Nilsson 1920, Gagé 1934, Pighi 1965, Rantala 2017 (on the Severan Games); Dunning 2020 (on the Republican precursors to the Games); for editions and discussion of the inscriptions associated with these Games, see Pighi 1965, Moretti 1982–1984, Schnegg-Köhler 2002, Schnegg 2020; on coinage, see e.g. Scheid 1998, Sobocinski 2005 (on Domitian's coinage); on the *saeculum* in Roman contexts, see e.g. Diehl 1934a–b, Haase/Rüpke 2006, Hall 1986, Dunning 2017, Hay 2017 and 2019; on the *saeculum* in Christian contexts, see Markus 1970 and Orbán 1970.
5 Hay (2017 and 2019) discusses the *saeculum* in the late Republic and early Empire in terms of what he calls "saecular discourse," a very broad description of the process of periodisation of history influenced not only by the Etruscan *saeculum,* but also by Greek philosophy and mythology of the Golden Age. The choice of "saecular" to describe this discourse is somewhat misleading, as it covers the use of other Latin temporal terminology beyond *saeculum* (*aetas, aeuum, tempus*).
6 A fuller analysis of the several hundred examples of *saeculum* rhetoric in these media and their relationship to the *ludi saeculares* can be found in Dunning (forthcoming).

In the latter portion of this chapter, it is shown that the Roman *saeculum* does not fit tidily into recent discussions of linear/cyclical time, progress, or measurement and periodisation, nor has the influence of the *saeculum* been accounted for in previous investigations of legends and symbols for disseminating imperial authority.[7] It is demonstrated that while the progression of Roman *saecula* cannot be described as fundamentally cyclical, neither was the *saeculum* linear: it lacked an identifiable end, unlike the Etruscan conception of *saecula*. In literature and historiography, imperial "*saeculum* rhetoric" did not result in any widely-recognised scheme of periodisation using the names of emperors, apart from the famous reign of Augustus that would be held up as an ideal and eventually associated with the return of a "Golden Age." Imperial *saecula* were in origin commemorative and focussed on beginnings, on the promise of ages of security and affluence connected with the rise of dynasties. By necessity emperors ignored the endings of *saecula,* and competed with an Augustan past to promise a glorious future. The Christian conception of the *saeculum,* however, stood in opposition to imperial ideology, and emphasised the temporal quality of "this present age" by looking forward to its definitive end in the face of eternity.

2 The Republican roots of the *ludi saeculares*: the *ludi Tarentini*

The connection between the *ludi saeculares* and the *saeculum* in the Republic found in Censorinus and later authors is the result of their studies being conducted through the lens of Augustan reworking of history. In modern scholarship, it is rarely made clear that these early performances of the *ludi saeculares* were originally called *ludi Tarentini* and were not explicitly linked with the concept of a *saeculum.* This Republican predecessor of the Saecular Games was a rite attributed to the ancient Valerian clan that came to be celebrated in a civic context. The Valerii claimed a connection with the founder of rites offered at a region in the Campus Martius called the Tarentum, where the Saecular Games would later be held. This legendary ancestor, sometimes presented as the consul Valerius Publicola in 509 BCE, instituted sacrifices in return for divine aid in a time of illness or conflict.[8] Romans had a religious obligation to preserve family rites, but by 249 BCE, during the First Punic War, the Tarentum cult had passed from gentilician to civic control (a very rare occurrence), and was then called the *ludi Tar-*

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7 Cf. Noreña 2011.

8 Val. Max. 2.4.5; Verrius Flaccus in Festus, *Gloss. Lat.* 420; Plut. *Vit. Publ.* 21; Zos. 2.1–3.

entini.[9] According to Varro, these Games were to be repeated one hundred years later, during the Third Punic War, but there is no evidence that this interval was called a *saeculum*.[10] Discrepancies in chronologies for the *ludi Tarentini* are likely due to a Valerian desire to manipulate dates to connect these rites to famous ancestors. Thus, the Republican history of the *ludi saeculares* must be understood as the partially fabricated history of the *ludi Tarentini,* which only assumed a connection with the *saeculum* during the time of Augustus.[11]

3 *Saeculum* rhetoric in the Republican and Augustan periods

The origins of imperial *saeculum* rhetoric can be traced to developments in the late Republic, which are examined in this section. The *saeculum* of the Roman imperial period derived its significance from two Republican sources: an Etruscan version of the *saeculum* linked to a human lifespan, and a fixed period of time that appears to have been set at one hundred years. By the late Republic, Romans had developed a habit of interpreting various portents as signs of the "end of the age." While Augustus would adapt Republican conceptions of the *saeculum* by associating it with a series of Republican games and sacrifices that would form the inspiration for his *ludi saeculares,* these traditional rites were called *ludi Tarentini* during the Republic and were not originally linked with the *saeculum*.

3.1 Roman and Etruscan concepts of the *saeculum*

The Latin term *saeculum* originally meant "age" or "generation", and was thus closely connected with the conception of the span of a human life, rather than having overtly political connotations. Our surviving evidence for the Republican understanding of the *saeculum* comes from references to Varro's *De saeculis* in Censorinus. Varro distinguished between natural *saecula,* which varied in

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9 Varro in Censorinus, *DN* 17.8.

10 Varro recounts that according to the Sibylline Books, the *ludi Tarentini* were to "occur every hundred years" (*utique ludi centesimo quoque anno fierent*, *ibid*.). Given Varro's study of the *saeculum* discussed above, it would be strange for him to neglect to use the term if it held significance for the name or the celebration of these *ludi*.

11 This is discussed in full in Dunning 2020.

length according to the longest-lived person in a generation, and civil *saecula,* which were calculated from a city's foundation. But Varro obscured this distinction in his discussion of the Etruscan *saeculum,* in which the first *saeculum* of a state or city began with its foundation and ended after the gods sent portents revealing the death of the eldest person born on its founding day. According to Varro, his Etruscan contemporaries claimed that their people had entered their eighth *saeculum,* and the *nomen Etruscum* would be destroyed in the tenth.[12]

The precise relationship between the Roman and Etruscan *saeculum* is unclear, but Varro also associated the passing of *saecula* with the Roman nation in a prophecy that the city would last twelve hundred years.[13] In addition, L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi, a Republican historian working in the second century BCE, referred to a chronological system of hundred-year *saecula* calculated from Rome's foundation.[14] Thus, while Etruscan ideology assigned the *saeculum* a definitive end,[15] a concept that would influence the Roman *saeculum* of the Late Republic, its linear chronology concluding with the extinction of a nation would cease to be emphasised after its connection with the *ludi saeculares,* as will be discussed below.[16]

In the final years of the Republic, Romans became fascinated by the idea of the "end of an age," which was sometimes (but not always) identified with the term *saeculum.* Texts that described the political upheavals of the first century BCE connected the end of a Roman *saeculum* with Etruscan prophecy.[17] Other sources enumerated signs of political change and turmoil without explicitly identifying them as omens indicating a *saeculum* shift.[18] Luke and Hay have ar-

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12 Censorinus, *DN* 17.1–6.

13 *Ibid.* 17.15.

14 *Ibid.* 17.13; F 38 Cornell et. al. 2013.

15 Cf. Haase and Rüpke 2006.

16 For further discussion of Etruscan conceptions of the *saeculum*, see e. g. Briquel 1990, Guittard 2007, Santangelo 2013, 115–127.

17 Plutarch associated a change of generation (γένος) in 88 BCE with Sulla's rise to power: he recorded a tale that some Etruscans approached the Senate to interpret various portents as the sign that a new generation had begun (*Vit. Sull.* 7.2–4). A text referred to as the "Prophecy of Vegoia" warned that the eighth *saeculum* was coming to a close (*Gromatici ueteres* 1.350); while some have identified this passage as a translation of an Etruscan text into Latin from the Republic (cf. Huergon 1959, Guittard 2004), Adams makes a convincing case on linguistic grounds that it is a work from the Imperial period (Adams 2003, 179–182).

18 Cf. Cic. *Cat.* 3.9 for 63 BCE; my thanks to the anonymous reviewer who suggested that from Cicero's account of his words, Lentulus seems to have tried to manipulate Etruscan concepts of *saecula* for political purposes. Cf. Cass. Dio 41.14 for 49 BCE, which connects Pompey's arrival at Dyrrhachium with the eldest senator of a generation.

gued that Sulla was the first political figure to link his ascendency with a new *saeculum* as a means to establish his power, but this view is controversial, and strong evidence in favour of it is lacking.[19] Ultimately, the Late Republican appearance of "new age" portents and their connection with the political sphere provides the first hint of what I call *saeculum* rhetoric in the imperial period: the use of the specific term *saeculum* across various forms of media to legitimise one's authority as founder of a new age (and often a new dynasty) characterised by stability and prosperity.

3.2 Creating the Augustan *ludi saeculares* of 17 BCE: a new chronology for the *saeculum*

The *saeculum* of the late Republic provided Octavian with a powerful tool for creating a narrative of his role in bringing peace and unity to Rome after civil war, and allowed the new *princeps* to establish a model for imperial *saeculum* rhetoric. References to a *saeculum* change appear again in Roman literature during Octavian's ascendency, but it is debatable to what extent Octavian had control over this *saeculum* rhetoric from the beginning.[20] As Augustus, he was the first to associate the rites at the Tarentum with the arrival of a new *saeculum* in 17 BCE: with the help of Ateius Capito, his advisor on legal and religious affairs, he was able to create a ritual sequence blending innovation and tradition.

Augustus and Ateius Capito's decision to imbue the gentilician cult of the Valerii with the significance of the *saeculum* was likely influenced by the directions of the Sibylline Books (as interpreted by the college of *quindecimuiri*) that prescribed the repetition of the *ludi Tarentini* after one hundred years; they were also able to take advantage of the abiding interest in *saeculum* change that characterised the Late Republic. The *princeps* may have been advised in these rites by important members of the Valerian clan who rose to prominent positions in this period.[21] While several defining characteristics of the *ludi Tarentini* were retained

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19 Cf. Luke 2014, 16–17, 44–56; Hay 2017 and 2019, 219–222. Weinstock (1971, 191–197) remains agnostic as to whether or not Caesar associated himself with a new *saeculum*.

20 There is a similar debate about Octavian's control over interpretations from an early date of *sidus Iulium,* the star or comet that appeared during the funeral games for Julius Caesar in 44 BCE: cf. Pandey 2013.

21 M. Valerius Corvinus was a staunch supporter of Augustus. M. Valerius Messalla Rufus, who sided with Caesar in the civil wars, wrote a treatise called *De familiis,* a study of old Roman *gentes,* that could have served as a reference for Augustus and Ateius Capito (Pliny, *HN* 35.8; cf. Cornell et. al. 2013, l. 385–389). Other Valerii also held influential positions under Augustus and

– sacrifices of black victims at the Tarentum over three nights, the performance of *ludi*, the supervision of the rites by the *quindecimuiri* – the ritual sequence of the Augustan *ludi saeculares* included many new elements rooted in other Republican religious performances, such as the singing of the *Carmen Saeculare*.[22] Sacrifices were also offered during the day on the Capitoline and Palatine hills to Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, and Diana.

These Augustan innovations to the *ludi saeculares* also entailed rewriting the traditional chronology of the Republican celebrations in the *Fasti* and in the *commentarii* of the *quindecimuiri*. The dates of the Valerian tradition were difficult to reconcile with Augustus's desire to hold Saecular Games during his reign: the (probably legendary) celebrations of 509 and 348 BCE were associated with Valerian consuls, and the *ludi Tarentini* of 249 and 146/149 BCE were held roughly one hundred years apart. In order to create a tradition of regular celebrations, Augustus and Capito constructed a carefully calculated *saeculum* of one hundred and ten years that permitted a continuing association with the Valerii for their chronology of the first two celebrations of the Games in 456 and 346 BCE (when M. Valerius Maximus and M. Valerius Corvus were consuls) (cf. Table 1).

The Saecular Games of 17 BCE were very different in character from the expiatory performances offered at the Tarentum during the crisis of the First Punic War: they celebrated Augustus's success and establishment of peace at Rome after long civil wars, and promised that this security would endure for future generation under Augustus's heirs. The transfer of the former gentilician cult from the civic realm into the imperial sphere permitted the emperor and his family to play a central role in establishing good communications with the gods to ensure Rome's peace and prosperity. In fact, the old association between the rites and familial tradition was refashioned through their advertisement of Augustus's dynasty, since in 17 BCE Augustus had adopted the two sons of his heir Agrippa, and Agrippa officiated at the daytime sacrifices alongside the *princeps*.[23] The emphasis on birth in the new *saeculum* was not limited to the imperial family, but encompassed hope for a new generation of Romans:

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served in the college of *quindecimuiri sacris faciundis:* Messalla Rufus's sons M. Valerius Messalla (Rüpke 2005, 140 – 149, 1351) and Potitus Valerius Messalla (*ibid*. 138 – 156, 1352), and Corvinus's son M. Valerius Messalla Messallinus (*ibid*. 143 – 149, 1351). The Valerian connection with the *ludi saeculares* is discussed in full in Dunning (forthcoming).

22 Cf. expiatory hymns sung by choruses in procession: Livy 27.37, 31.12; Julius Obsequens, *Liber de prodigiis* 27a, 34, 36, 43, 46.

23 Cass. Dio 54.18; Suet. *Aug*. 64. Cf. *Acta* of the *ludi saeculares* of 17 BCE = Schnegg-Köhler 2020, 28, 30, 32. It is also possible that Livia and Julia could have joined the 110 *matronae* in a *supplicatio*, but no female names survive in the *Acta* that describe the events.

through the deities who received worship (Juno, Diana, Ilithyia, Terra Mater), as well as the participation of *matronae* and children, the rites emphasised marriage, fertility, and childbearing. The combination of old and new elements in the ritual sequence and character of the *ludi saeculares* perfectly expressed Augustus's presentation of himself as the "renewer" of Republican religion. Augustus's success at adapting a Republican tradition can be measured by the choice of future emperors to respect the lengthy intervals between the games, rather than holding lesser "saecular" celebrations more frequently in order to enhance the glory of their own dynasties.

Table 1: Dating of early *ludi saeculares,* Pre- and Post-Augustan Chronologies

	1st ludi	2nd ludi	3rd ludi	4th ludi	5th ludi
Cassius Hemina (fl. second half of second cent. BCE)[a]				146 BCE	
Calpurnius Piso (*c.* 180–120 BCE)				146 BCE	
Gnaeus Gellius (fl. 120–100 BCE)				146 BCE	
Valerius Antias (fl. c. 80–60 BCE)	509 BCE	348 BCE (*text is corrupt*)	249 BCE	149 BCE	
Varro (*c.* 116–27 BCE)			249 BCE	149 BCE	
commentarii of the *quindecimuiri* (first cent. BCE)	456 BCE	346 BCE	236 BCE	126 BCE	17 BCE (*attested by many others*)

[a]Censorinus, *DN* 17.10–11 is the source for all authors and their dates for the Games, unless otherwise noted. Dates for Hemina, Piso, and Gellius follow Beck/Walter 2005 and for Antias, Rich 2005; all other author dates follow *Der Neue Pauly.*

3.3 Augustan *saeculum* rhetoric

The evidence for *saeculum* rhetoric from Augustus's lifetime demonstrates that while the term was originally defined as the newly established 110-year interval between celebrations of the *ludi saeculares*, it came to be connected with Augustus's religious authority and span of life. At first, this rhetoric was in the hands of

Augustan poets, rather than proceeding from imperial advertisements. As early as the late 40s BCE, Virgil had referred to a new *saeculum* displaying all the characteristic imagery of the Golden Age in *Ecl.* 4, but there is much debate concerning to whom it is dedicated; later at *Aen.* 6.792–794, Virgil explicitly names Augustus as the founder of *aurea saecula,* and similar rhetoric is found in Horace and Ovid.[24] Later in Augustus's reign, *saeculum* rhetoric began to be advertised in official contexts, such as an inscribed altar from Gallia Narbonensis (*CIL* 12.4333) and in the *Res Gestae* (*CIL* 3.774).[25] Nowhere in the surviving evidence do we find Augustus himself verbally identifying his life or reign with a new "Golden Age:" this language is lacking in his inscriptions and coin legends, and there is nothing in the ritual sequence of his *ludi saeculares* that would encourage such an identification (e.g., Saturn did not receive sacrifice, nor are such themes presented in Horace's *Carmen Saeculare*). Non-verbal representations of a new Augustan "Golden Age" are likely portrayed on the Ara Pacis and elsewhere, however.[26] Thus, imperial *saeculum* rhetoric does not necessarily equate with presentation of one's reign as a Golden Age, although much scholarship has been written on the subject.[27]

Augustus's efforts to promote himself as the founder of a new age in 17 BCE took on a different character after his death, according to Suetonius, who recorded that various suggestions were made for accolades to his memory. An unnamed Roman proposed that the entire span of Augustus's life be called the *saeculum Augustum,* "Augustan age."[28] This flattering proposition was an indication of the success of the *saeculum* rhetoric that Augustus had fostered and encouraged, but it also points to a major problem with all such imperial ideology: to what extent will his successors uphold the claims to power of a previous ruler?

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24 "Augustus Caesar, son of a god, who will found again a golden age in Latium amid fields once ruled by Saturn" (*Augustus Caesar, diui genus, aurea condet/saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arua/Saturno quondam*). Cf. Hor. *Carm.* 4.6.42 (13 BCE); *aurea saecula* in Ov. *Ars am.* 2.227 (2 CE) and *felicia saecula* in *Tr.* 1.2.103–105.

25 That the Narbo inscription responded to and utilised Augustus's official rhetoric recalls Noreña's discussion of a similar phenomenon in the advertisement of imperial virtues (2011, 245–298).

26 Cf. Holliday 1990.

27 This includes the fragments of the cippus bearing the *Acta* of his *ludi saeculares* and the legends on his coinage issued in 17 BCE to commemorate the Games. In fact, the only overt references to an Augustan Golden Age appear to be in Virgil: Barker (1996) notes Horace appears to have taken issue with Virgil's portrayal of the *aurea saecula,* perhaps due to his deep misgivings about the nature of gold. On Augustus's reign as a Golden Age, cf. Williams 2003 and Feeney 2007.

28 Suetonius, *Aug.* 100.3.

At the same time, the concept of an "age of Augustus" recalls the Etruscan version of the *saeculum,* in that it equates its duration with Augustus's lifespan, but diverges from the original idea by focussing on the deeds of a single powerful individual, rather than on the lifespan of the longest-lived citisen in a generation. By pinpointing the start of the age to Augustus's birth (rather than an anonymous person whose death was revealed by portents), it gave Augustus a form of authority over time that went beyond the *saeculum* rhetoric that the *princeps* had encouraged in his own lifetime, and indeed beyond that of all future emperors who would utilise this rhetoric for their own ends.

Thus, the Augustan adaption of Republican concepts of the *saeculum* for the *ludi saeculares* of 17 BCE established the first expressions of imperial *saeculum* rhetoric. While the *princeps'* official advertisements of his "new age" were not at times as strongly stated or broadly dispersed as those of his successors, the ideology he fostered allowed for a "hybrid" *saeculum* that was a reinterpretation of the Roman and Etruscan models, with the beginning of an age associated with a founding figure who operated with divine blessing. If Augustus were indeed the first Roman to utilise time in this way, it would link him to many other examples of "agent-punctuated" temporal cycles that were "manipulated by a charismatic power", as Lazar discusses in her study of the relationship between time and political authority across many periods and societies.[29] It is important to observe that at this time the *saeculum* was still closely connected to the celebrations of the Saecular Games, which were rooted in the topography of the city of Rome, and thus Augustan *saeculum* rhetoric (and that of his successors, Claudius and Domitian) was chiefly centred on the "Eternal City."[30] Benoist describes this relationship between the "eternity" of the emperor and the city of Rome in rich detail in his monograph, demonstrating that the *ludi saeculares* were one of a number of ceremonies at emperors' disposal that allowed them to link their authority and dynasties with *Roma Aeterna.*[31]

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29 Cf. Lazar 2019, 95.

30 Chiefly, but not exclusively: a handful of examples appear outside of Rome, as with the Narbo inscription discussed above, or coins advertising the *ludi saeculares* of 17 BCE from Colonia Patricia, Hispania (*RIC* 1² 138–139).

31 Cf. Benoist 2005: on the *ludi saeculares,* see 237–208; on the relationship between the *aeternitas* of city and emperor, see 309–33.

4 *Saeculum* rhetoric in the reigns of Claudius, Domitian, and Antoninus Pius

Augustus's efforts to establish his authority through the connection of his reign with the *saeculum* created a model for future emperors to emulate through their performances of the Saecular Games. Yet the strength of *saeculum* rhetoric lay in the infrequency with which the Games were celebrated, and thus only a handful of emperors were able to fully capitalise on its potential. In this section, Claudius's recalculation of the length and starting point of the *saeculum* is discussed: it is shown that he made such modifications in order to hold the Games during his reign, thus establishing two competing series of *ludi saeculares* according to Augustan and Claudian chronologies. Not all agreed with Claudius's decision, and some writers started referring to the *saeculum* to critique not only the Claudian Games, but also his reign, thereby establishing a negative version of *saeculum* rhetoric for later generations. While Domitian's *ludi saeculares* adhered to the Augustan chronology and escaped censure, *saeculum* rhetoric was also used to criticise his reign.

4.1 *Saeculum* rhetoric and the *ludi saeculares* of Claudius (47 CE)

The second and third imperial celebrations of the Saecular Games were held in 47 CE under Claudius and in 88 CE under Domitian. Claudius revised the chronology of the Games to gain the opportunity to hold them during his reign, and constructed a scheme to reconcile Augustus's 110-year *saeculum* with 100-year *saecula* calculated from the foundation of Rome (cf. Table 2). As with Augustus's creation of the *ludi saeculares*, the new Claudian *saeculum* was rooted in Republican tradition, since 100-year *saecula* linked with Rome's duration were attested as early as the second century BCE in a fragment of Calpurnius Piso.[32]

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[32] Censorinus *DN* 17.13 = F 38 Cornell et. al. 2013. Since the Claudian *ludi saeculares* established a model for commemorating Rome's foundation that would be followed by Antoninus Pius and Philip I, Benoist distinguishes between celebrations of *ludi saeculares* proper and what he calls *jubilés* (2005, 273–308); this distinction is useful as a reminder of certain possible differences in timing, ritual, and location between the Games of Augustus, Claudius Domitian, and Severus on the one hand, and the celebrations of Antoninus Pius (of which we know almost nothing) and Philip I on the other. Since all of these celebrations (apart from Antoninus's) are referred to as *ludi saeculares* in ancient sources, and since Claudius's jubilee-style Saecular Games seem to

Table 2: *Dating of* saecula/ludi Tarentini/ludi saeculares, *Augustan and Claudian calculations*

Republican *ludi Tarentini*			509 BCE (Valerius consul)		348 BCE (Valerius consul)	249 BCE	146/ 149 BCE		
Augustus: 110-year *saeculum*			456 BCE (Valerius consul)		346 BCE (Valerius consul)	236 BCE	126 BCE	17 BCE (Games held)	
Claudius: 100-year *saeculum*	753 BCE (foundation of Rome)	653 BCE	553 BCE	453 BCE	353 BCE	253 BCE	153 BCE	53 BCE	47 CE (Games held)
Claudius: 110-year *saeculum*			504 BCE (Valerius consul)		394 BCE (Valerius consular tribune)	284 BCE	174 BCE	64 BCE	46 CE (Valerius consul)

The ritual sequence of Claudius's Games seems to have followed Augustus's model: Claudius emphasised his dynasty's connections with the new *saeculum* through the participation of his two heirs Nero and Britannicus, and, like Augustus, erected an *Acta* inscription in the Campus Martius. But Claudius competed with Augustus by linking his celebration with the neglected office of censor, which he assumed in 47/48 CE to expand Rome's *pomerium*.[33] His decision to revise the *saeculum* of the Saecular Games may be related not only to his censorship, but also his interest in Etruscan studies, since the Etruscan *saecula* began with a state's foundation. Claudian *saeculum* rhetoric appeared outside of Rome and in epigraphic contexts very soon after the Games were held, as may be seen in an inscription from Herculaneum, the *Senatus Consultum Hosidianum,* which records that it was composed *felicitati saeculi instantis*.[34] Ancient authors either mocked Claudius for holding the Games too early,[35] or they employed *saeculum*

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have been ritually very similar to Augustus's (cf. *ibid.* 288–290), I have chosen to adhere to the original naming system.

33 For a discussion of Claudius's extension of the *pomerium,* see Poe 1984.

34 "... for the felicity of the approaching age" (*CIL* 10.1401). The inscription was set up in September 47 CE, three months after the Saecular Games were held.

35 Plin. *HN* 7.159; Suet. *Claud.* 21.2 and *Vit.* 2.5; Zos. 2.4. Pliny and Suetonius put great emphasis on the formulaic proclamation of the Games that "no one had ever seen or would see again," recalling a line from the Augustan *Acta* (Schnegg-Köhler 2020, 20) and recalling the Etruscan reckoning of the *saeculum* with the age of the longest-lived person in that generation.

rhetoric in a negative fashion to criticise Claudius's policies and look forward to the age of the next emperor.[36]

4.2 *Saeculum* rhetoric and Domitian's *ludi saeculares* (88 CE)

After the performance of Claudius's *ludi saeculares* in 47 CE, the position of the festival in Roman society and religious practice was less clearly defined: a new explanation of the significance of the rites, derived from the age of the city of Rome, had been set against the tradition established by Augustus. Domitian's celebration of the Games in 88 CE could not, therefore, be a simple matter of ful-filling expectation by following precedent. His decision to hold the Games aligned the performance with Augustan tradition, but placed them in a difficult situation: Domitian's *ludi saeculares* could either reduce the weightiness and im-portance of the Claudian *ludi saeculares,* or run the risk of losing their own sig-nificance by comparison with Games held within recent decades and living memory. Yet this latter scenario was not the end result of his celebration: ancient sources confirmed the legitimacy of Domitian's *ludi saeculares* over and against those of Claudius, despite the later memory sanctions issued against the unpop-ular emperor.[37] This approval was in part due to Domitian's close imitation of the Augustan model, heavily advertised in his massive coin issue of 88 CE: his em-ulation of Augustus is indicative of general Flavian tendencies to legitimise their dynasty, established after civil war, by claiming to restore the Republic and Augustan traditions of empire, particularly through the medium of coin-age.[38] Domitian also strove to surpass Claudius by assuming the role of censor "in perpetuity" in 85 CE.[39] As in Augustus's day, poets supported the emperor's *ludi saeculares* through *saeculum* rhetoric, although they made a clearer connec-tion between the arrival of the new age and the rites duly performed according to

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36 Sen. *Apocol.* 1.1, 3. Seneca proclaimed that Claudius's *death* was "the beginning of a most happy age" (*initium saeculi felicissimi*).

37 The Fasti Capitolini recorded in Domitian's lifetime state that his *ludi saeculares* were the sixth in their series, when the Augustan Fasti had counted his celebration as the fifth, thereby completely ignoring the Games of 47 CE (*CIL* 1², p. 29). Zosimus describes Claudius's departure from the Augustan pattern in negative terms, while Domitian "maintained" or "guarded" (φυλάτ-τειν) the traditional calculations (Zos. 2.4).

38 On Domitian's impressive series of coins to commemorate his *ludi saeculares,* see Sobocinski 2006; on Flavian "restoration" coins types, see e. g. Buttrey 1972, Komnick 2001, 165 – 171, 179 – 185, and Hurlet 2016, 29 – 33. For a broader discussion of these subjects, see Boyle 2003, 41; Gun-derson 2003; Rüpke 2012, 10; Dunning, forthcoming.

39 Cf. Jones 1973.

tradition at the Tarentum.[40] Due to the destruction of inscriptions connected with Domitian after his death, we are unable to tell if *saeculum* rhetoric was used in these official contexts as well as in his coinage.

Tacitus was partly responsible for ensuring that the memory of the *ludi saeculares* of 88 CE would be positive by denigrating the Claudian chronology and highlighting the careful attention to Domitian's Games, since he did not wish to undermine his own official role as a *quindecimuir* in seeing to their accuracy.[41] But he and other Romans still used negative *saeculum* rhetoric to criticise Domitian's policies.[42] Although Domitian's name was erased from the record of the *ludi saeculares* in the Fasti Capitolini, his Games themselves did not suffer official attempts to obliterate their memory: the praise of Domitian's *ludi saeculares* and criticism of Claudius's demonstrates that the commemoration of the Games could be preserved even when they were dissociated from the emperor.[43] Thus, the Saecular Games of the first century CE demonstrate that imperial authority over time was not unlimited: emperors who desired to connect their reigns with Rome's chronology would have to turn to *saeculum* rhetoric if they were not able to hold the Games according to the set schedule.

4.3 Antoninus Pius's *saeculum* rhetoric (148 CE)

The connection between the *saeculum* and the Saecular Games loosened from the second century CE to the Severan dynasty. Antoninus Pius may have celebrated Rome's nine hundredth birthday in the 140s CE following the pattern set by Claudius,[44] but his use of *saeculum* rhetoric in numismatic and epigraphic contexts never explicitly mentions the *ludi saeculares* or any other festival, and thus we may conclude that he did not hold the Saecular Games proper, perhaps to avoid Claudius's fate. Antoninus and his successors would use *saeculum* referen-

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40 Stat. *Silu.* 1.4.16–18; 4.1.17–21, 35–39; Mart. 4.1 and 10.63.

41 Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 11.11.

42 Tac. *Agri.* 3.1 and 44.5; Mart. 10.63.1–4; Plin. *Ep.* 10.2.

43 Flower 2006, 242.

44 Aur. Vic. *Caes.* 15.4. Geissen (2005, 168) observes that an Alexandrian coin issue may celebrate a new *saeculum* in 145 CE, when Marcus Aurelius and Faustina the Younger were married. Prior to Antoninus, Hadrian had issued an *aureus* between 119 and 122 CE that proclaimed a *saeculum aureum*, which is likely to be connected with his Parilia celebrations in 121 CE to celebrate the birthday of the city (cf. RIC 2.136; Poe 1984, 78–80). This was the first time that the phrase "Golden Age" appeared in imperial coinage or inscriptions. It is unclear as to whether any future rites were inspired by Hadrian's *saeculum* and Parilia rites.

ces in an increasingly formulaic style,[45] which provided the inspiration for Septimius Severus's use of the *saeculum* in coins and inscriptions at the beginning of his reign; the abundance of numismatic evidence from this period indicates that Severus had planned early on to celebrate the Games in 204 CE.[46]

Thus, by the second century CE, *saeculum* rhetoric was seen as so desirable for legitimising a new reign or dynasty that Antoninus's successors began to divorce it from the *ludi saeculares,* no longer confining it to imperial coin or inscriptions created in years in which the Games were held. There is no surviving evidence that this *saeculum* rhetoric received criticism for being separated from the original Games in the way that Claudius's recalculations were disparaged by some writers, but more frequent use of the *saeculum* would eventually result in the weaking of the concept, as emperors in rapid succession boasted of the "new age" of their short-lived reigns.

5 The *saeculum* rhetoric of Septimius Severus, Philip I, and emperors of the third century CE

The *ludi saeculares* of Septimius Severus and Philip I (also known as "Philip the Arab") followed the Augustan and Claudian *saecula* respectively. Both emperors used their Saecular Games and *saeculum* rhetoric to showcase their families, their wives and sons, and connect the longevity of their dynasties with the promise of new ages. Philip was able to make special use of the timing of his Games, which celebrated Rome's millennium, and was the last of the *ludi saeculares* to be held: later emperors would attempt to capitalise on the significance of his *saeculum* to the point that they even reused coin legends that advertised Philip's Games, but these efforts only weakened the force of *saeculum* rhetoric in the late third century CE.

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45 E. g. coins such as RIC 3.309 (138–161 CE, obv. Antoninus, on rev. a personification of Felicitas and the legend FELIC SAEC COS IIII), RIC 3.709 (161–180 CE, obv. Faustina Minor, on rev. two infants seated on a throne with stars above their heads and the legend SAECVL FELICIT), RIC 4.56a (193 CE, obv. Clodius Albinus, rev. Felicitas with legend SAECVL FEL COS II S C); inscriptions such as AE 1993, 1787 (Mauretania Tingitana, 144 CE, refers to the "most august age," *augustissumo saeculo*) or CIL 2.5232 (Lusitania, 167 CE, refers to the deified Antoninus as "prince of all ages," *omnium saecu/lorum principi*).

46 A typical example is RIC 4.664 from 194 CE, with the legend SAECVLO FRVGIFERO COS II and an image of the personified Saeculum Frugiferum.

5.1 *Saeculum* rhetoric and the *ludi saeculares* of Septimius Severus (204 CE)

Severus's Games, like those of Domitian, emulated Augustus's ritual sequence and retained all the key events of the earlier performances. The opening line of his *Acta* inscription stated that his Games were the seventh in the series established by Augustus, following upon the sixth Games, those of Domitian: Claudius's celebrations were ignored.[47] At the same time, Severus strove to outdo his predecessors: the *cippus* recording the events of his Games at the Tarentum loomed larger than its predecessors and provided far more ritual details. This inscription listed the names of far more of its participants, including women, children, and actors, thereby advertising the families who had risen to prominence in the new Severan age.[48] The bond between imperial dynasty and the new age was performed more explicitly than ever before: through the religious performances presided over by Severus, his wife Julia Domna, and their sons, Romans could situate themselves within a community headed by the imperial family who performed the Saecular Games on behalf of all Romans for the arrival of the Severan *saeculum*.[49] Severus continued to advertise his new age in official coinage and inscriptions across the Mediterranean on an unprecedented scale, firmly cementing the connection between time and the emperor in his subjects' consciousness.[50] As with the successors of Antoninus Pius, *saeculum* rhetoric continued to be appropriated by members of Severus's family in their coin issues.[51]

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47 Severan *Acta* 1.1 (Pighi 1965, 140; Schnegg 2020, 288).
48 The surviving fragments include the names of *matronae* and Vestal Virgins who participated in the *sellisternia* and *supplicatio,* children who sang in the choruses for the *Carmen Saeculare,* and actors involved in the *ludi scaenici,* in addition to the names of the *quindecimuiri.*
49 For the most recent discussion of the Severan *ludi saeculares* and their significance for the legitimisation of his dynasty, see Rantala 2017.
50 E.g. *RIC* 4.137 (203–208 CE, obv. Severus, rev. Caracalla and Geta sacrificing); *RIC* 4.263 (202–210 CE, obv. Septimius Severus, rev. Severus and his sons); *CIL* 3.75 and *CIL* 6.40623 (inscriptions from Philae, Egypt, 206 or 211 CE and Rome, 209–211 CE, bearing the formulaic opening "in the happiest age of our lords," *felicissimo saeculo dominorum nostrorum*).
51 E.g. *RIC* 4.590 (211–217 CE, obv. Caracalla, rev. Felicitas and SAECVL FELICITAS S C) and *RIC* 4.2.145 (218–222 CE, obv. Elagabulus, rev. personification of Securitas with SECVRITAS SAECVLI).

5.2 Third-century *saeculum* rhetoric and Philip I's *ludi saeculares* (248 CE)

The last of the *ludi saeculares* were held under Philip I in 248 CE, following the Claudian series. Philip I chose to hold Saecular Games to celebrate Rome's millennium, and thus broke tradition with Antoninus Pius's decision to commemorate the new *saeculum* without connecting them to the Games. The surviving evidence is unclear as to how closely Philip integrated elements of Augustus's ritual sequence into his celebration, but he does appear to have emphasised newer rites, such as beast hunts, as attested in historical accounts and displayed on his coinage.[52] As with the Severan coin issues, Philip's wife and young son feature prominently in his coinage to advertise his new dynasty.[53] Philip was not criticised for following Claudius's chronology: Körner observes that ancient sources for Philip's celebration attribute Games to Claudius and Antoninus Pius without referencing the Augustan sequence, indicating their lack of importance after the Severan Games became a distant memory.[54] Rome's millennium afforded too powerful an opportunity to overlook to capitalise on *saeculum* rhetoric, and as we have observed, emperors tended to compete with their predecessors in order to leave a more memorable mark upon the "new age" of their reigns.

After Philip, *saeculum* rhetoric in the chaotic third century CE was almost completely dissociated from the Saecular Games as emperors continuously advertised via coinage that their reigns would be sources of concord and stability for the empire. Their issues contained many novel formulas, such as "piety of the age" or "restorer of the age."[55] The use of certain legends has led some scholars to assume that some of these emperors (e. g., Gallienus or Carausius) held or intended to hold *ludi saeculares,* but these arguments are misinterpretations of reused coin types that looked back to Philip's Games as a form of *saeculum* rhetoric.[56] The Saecular Games of Severus and Philip had highlighted the importance

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52 Cf. *Hist. Aug.: Gordiani Tres Iuli Capitolini* 33.1–3; Jerome, *Chron.* 2262–2263; the reference to Philip's Games in Eutropius 9.3 does not mention beast hunts.

53 E.g. *RIC* 4.3.225 (248 CE, obv. Philip II, rev. goat and low column inscribed COS II, and SAECVLARES AVGG // III.); *RIC* 4.3. (248 CE, obv. Otacilia, rev. hippopotamus and SAECVLARES AVGG // S C.)

54 Körner 2002, 251.

55 E.g. *RIC* 5.1.32 (260–269 CE, obv. posthumous portrait of Valerian II with legend PIETAS SAECVLI); *RIC* 5.1.52 (270–275 CE, obv. Aurelian, rev. RESTIT SAECVLI).

56 In support of Gallienus's Games: cf. Cerfaux/Tondriau 1957, 376 and De Blois 1976, 128, basing their arguments on coins such as *RIC* 5.1.273 (253–268 CE, obv. Gallienus, rev. an antelope or gazelle with SAECVLARES AVG); for Carausius, cf. Webb 1933 and Barker 2015, and coins such as *RIC* 5.2.391 (286–293 CE, obv. Carausius, rev. lion with SAECVLARES AVG).

of the city of Rome within the broader empire, associating the city's *aeternitas* with the emperors and their families and giving assurance that their dynasties would enjoy a similar longevity.[57] But these Games could not retain their significance if held too frequently, and since their performance was intimately linked with the city of Rome, the link between city and emperor was gradually broken, since many emperors in this period spent little or no time in that city. On the other hand, *saeculum* rhetoric could be divorced from its original ritual context to create accessible formulas that could be quickly distributed via coins; few emperors reigned long enough for inscriptions to be set up that utilised such formulas. The result of this process was the inevitable weakening of imperial *saeculum* rhetoric to vague promises of peace and security.

6 Christianity and *saeculum* rhetoric

By the end of the third century CE, Diocletian's establishment of a more stable regime allowed *saeculum* rhetoric to appear more frequently again in inscriptions alongside imperial coinage. From this point onward, the practice of using such rhetoric in formulas in epigraphic contexts across the Mediterranean far outpaced its use in coins, and continued to be used after the Christianisation of the empire. At the same time, Christian authors were developing an alternative meaning for the *saeculum* that recalled the negative rhetoric applied to Claudius and Domitian's reigns: in this usage, the *saeculum* stood for the transient world, in contrast with the permanence of a future age in the reign of Christ. These two forms of *saeculum* rhetoric coexisted throughout the centuries; even after the fall of Rome itself, Byzantine emperors continued to advertise themselves as rulers over "new ages."

6.1 Constantine and Christian imperial *saeculum* rhetoric

Both the Augustan and the Claudian series of the *ludi saeculares* ended after the ascendency of Christianity at Rome. There is no record of Saecular Games being held in 314 or 348 CE, during the reigns of Constantine I and Constantius II, because of the adoption of Christianity as the official state religion and the gradual abandonment of Roman religious traditions. For Aurelius Victor and Zosimus, the failure of these Christian emperors to hold the Games led to disaster for

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57 Cf. Benoist 2005, 290–308.

the Roman state, leading to moral decline and the loss of territory and influence.[58] Yet Constantine's *saeculum* rhetoric portrayed a very different image of his reign, displaying his blessed status as a ruler granted divine sanction and protection in the establishment of a new "golden age:" the *aureum saeculum* appeared frequently in the poetry of his urban prefect, Optatianus Porfyrius. In the end, *saeculum* rhetoric throve under Constantine, appearing in coins, inscriptions, and literature, and outliving recollections of its original connection with the Saecular Games.[59]

Constantine had looked back to Augustus and Septimius Severus as models of imperial authority associated with new ages, and in doing so created a new archetype for his successors. Later emperors could model themselves on different styles of kingship, especially that of Constantine,[60] and *saeculum* rhetoric took on a new life in the Greek East as it became habitual for Byzantine emperors to present their reigns as the beginnings of new golden ages.[61] *Saeculum* rhetoric appeared in imperial coinage until c. 367 CE, in epigraphic contexts until the fifth century, and in literature well into the sixth century.[62]

By the sixth century, imperial *saeculum* rhetoric was fully divorced from its original associations with the *ludi saeculares,* and had to be adapted to bear the burden of history. Many ages and many emperors had come and gone, and a new ruler needed to establish his authority as an emperor participating in an ancient tradition of security and just leadership, while simultaneously outdoing all his forbears. As a result, the idea that an emperor *renewed* the glory of past ages, above all the ancient Golden Age, became ever more popular: in earlier centuries this description of the *saeculum* was very rare in official media, and appeared chiefly in literature that looked back to Virgil's *Ecl.* 4, which Christians in Late Antiquity often interpreted as a prophecy of the birth of Christ. This tendency to look backward, to take the past as the starting-point for an ideal reign, stands in stark contrast with a new form of *saeculum* rhetoric that arose in Christian

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58 Aur. Vic. *Caes.* 28.2 (c. 360 CE); Zos. 2.7 (fifth or sixth century CE).

59 Cf. numerous coins such as *RIC* 7.185 (314–317 CE, obv. Constantine, rev. FELICITAS PERPETVA SAECVLI), the *Carmina* of Optatianus Porfyrius, and inscriptions from across the empire, e.g. *CIL* 8.2241 (307–340 CE, from Thignica, Africa Proconsularis, with the formula "in the most blessed age of our lords," *beatissimo saeculo ddd*(*ominorum*) *nnn*(*ostrorum*)).

60 Magdalino 1992, 8.

61 Whitby 1992, 86–87.

62 Cf. *RIC* 9.10 (with the legend GLORIA NOVI SAECVLI, perhaps issued in 367 CE to commemorate Gratian's reception of the title *Augustus*); *CIL* 6.1796d.96 (467–472 CE, Rome, "on behalf of the blessedness of the age," *pro beatitudine saeculi*), and such texts as Symm. *Ep.* 1.13 and *Or.* 3 (mid-fourth century CE) and Corippus *In laudem Iustini minoris* 3.76–82; 4.132–141 (566–568 CE).

contexts during the second century CE, which looked forward to an "age to come."

6.2 The origins of Christian *saeculum* rhetoric in opposition to empire

Even as the emperors of the second and third centuries were developing *saeculum* rhetoric, a new Christian usage of *saeculum* was being developed that drew upon Hebrew and Greek antecedents, and which was in full flower by the time of the Latin apologists. In Latin renditions of Judeo-Christian scripture and liturgical texts, *saeculum* was often chosen as the equivalent of Hebrew 'ōlām and Greek term αἰών, which were frequently used in expressions of royal or divine power. The choice of *saeculum* in these contexts is significant: it might not seem to be the obvious candidate. Latin has a wealth of words for concepts of "time:" *aeuum, aetas, saeculum, tempus.* The word most closely related to αἰών is *aeuum,* 'eternity; age, generation; time', yet *saeculum* was chosen instead, almost certainly because of its pre-existing associations with imperial Roman power that were ultimately derived from the Saecular Games.[63]

In Christian scripture, αἰών and *saeculum* could have a range of meanings, most commonly indicating "the present age, this world," as at Matthew 38:20, where Jesus says, *et ecce, ego uobiscum sum omnibus diebus, usque ad consummationem saeculi.*[64] In 1 Timothy 1:17, a further range of meanings is demonstrated: *regi autem saeculorum immortali, inuisibili, soli Deo honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. amen.*[65] Christ is hailed as ruler of "the ages," that is, of all past, present, and future ages in this world, but the doxological *saecula saeculorum* (from a Greek coinage based on Hebrew expressions) extends this power into a future world or eternity.

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63 A fuller discussion of the relationship between 'ōlām, αἰών, and *saeculum* is found in Dunning (*forthcoming*). Nadjo (1990, 41–42) suggests that *saeculum* was chosen over *aeuum* due to the latter word's association with poetic discourse; while it does appear often in poetry, *aeuum* occurs not infrequently in prose authors such as Pliny the Elder and Tacitus. In fact, αἰών has a poetic character in Judeo-Christian texts, where it regularly appears in doxological invocations, and thus *aeuum* as a translation might be thought to better capture the spirit of the original word.

64 καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος. ("And behold, I am with you always, until the ending of the world.")

65 τῷ δὲ βασιλεῖ τῶν αἰώνων, ἀφθάρτῳ, ἀοράτῳ, μόνῳ θεῷ, τιμὴ καὶ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν. "To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory unto ages of ages. Amen."

In response to imperial *saeculum* rhetoric, a new form of *saeculum* rhetoric that relied heavily on the scriptural use of αἰών was developed across communities of Latin-speaking Christians. The earliest surviving appearance of this rhetoric occurs in Latin apology of the second century CE and seems to have gone hand-in-hand with the first Latin translations of scripture. In pre-Vulgate Latin renditions of Greek texts, *saeculum* is often chosen to translate αἰών where the Vulgate gives *mundus;* we find examples of this usage in Tertullian and Cyprian.[66] Christian writers paired *saeculum* with the adjective *saecularis,* 'worldly, temporal'. An adjective such as *mundialis* could just as easily have served to express the idea, and while such usage was not uncommon, *saecularis* carried political and religious connotations.[67] At all occurrences, the choice of *saeculum* either in a strictly Latin context or as a translation of a Greek word inevitably brings a passage into dialogue with imperial *saeculum* rhetoric. The link between the *saeculum* and the emperor's claim to supreme authority over the known world advertised in the very public contexts of spectacles, coinage, and official inscribed texts would have proved offensive to early Christian groups, who assigned this power to their deity alone, so the use of *saeculum/saecularis* should be understood to carry a political weight, especially in early Christian polemic and martyrdom accounts.[68]

6.3 *Saeculum* rhetoric in Christian apology

At the end of the second century CE, Christian writers like Tertullian had begun to utilise a new meaning of *saeculum* that contrasted the eternity of the afterlife with the present state of the world. Tertullian used the term frequently; in a typ-

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66 E.g. John 16:20: *saeculum enim gaudebit, uos uero lugebitis* (Tertullian, *Coron.* 13): "For the world will rejoice, but you will mourn;" or John 15:19: *Si de saeculo essetis, saeculum quod suum esset amaret: sed quia de saeculo non estis et ego elegi uos de saeculo, propterea odit uos saeculum* (Cyprian, *Ep.* 58.6): "If you were of the world, the world would love its own, but since you are not of the world and I chose you out of the world, the world hates you."
67 For example, *mundialis* was employed by Tertullian in *De spect.* 9, but he used it here in the sense of "belonging to nature/natural world."
68 Studies of the *saeculum* in Christian contexts include Harrison 2011, esp. 97–117, 126, 146–164 and Orbán 1970; but these are not situated in the context of the whole history of the *ludi saeculares* and imperial rhetoric. Nadjo (1990, 41–42) gives a hypothetical scheme of how the *saeculum* came to be interpreted as a "generation, world" by tracing its use in Republican literary contexts (from Plautus, *Truc.* 12–13, *Trin.* 283 to Catullus 14.23 and 43.8), but he does not give sufficient attention to the influence of imperial *saeculum* rhetoric or terminology in Judeo-Christian contexts.

ical example, his treatise on games and spectacles written between 197 and 202 CE, just prior to the Severan *ludi saeculares* in 204 CE, he portrayed the *saeculum* in a negative light, e. g.,: *utinam ne in saeculo quidem simul cum illis moraremur! sed tamen in saecularibus separamur, quia saeculum dei est, saecularia autem diaboli.*[69] For Tertullian, the *saeculum* no longer referred to a specific generation or period of time for an individual human or for the Roman empire, but it had come to encompass the entire present age of human existence. At the same time, Tertullian's rejection of spectacles and attribution of *saecularia* to the devil constituted an attack on Severus's display of imperial power: for the apologist, the emperor was not ushering in a new age and long-lived dynasty blessed by gods, but was offering empty promises of temporary security presided over by demons. Elsewhere, Tertullian used the *saeculum* to separate Christians from the power structures of Rome: *Non enim et nos milites sumus – eo quidem maioris disciplinae, quanto tanti imperatoris –; non et nos peregrinantes – in isto saeculo – sumus?*[70] Christians were foreigners in "this world" because they belonged to another realm in which they served as soldiers under a divine Emperor. This assertion need not be a complete rejection of the power of the Roman emperor, for it implies that Christians still had to live their daily lives in a strange country, *isto saeculo,* yet it destabilises imperial claims to universal authority over the ages, a theme that appears again and again in Tertullian.[71] Other apologists (such as Cyprian) would continue to use the *saeculum* in similar fashion in their writings.[72]

6.4 *Saeculum* rhetoric in martyrdom accounts and funerary inscriptions

Christian *saeculum* rhetoric was not confined to apologetic texts, but continued to be used in other genres and in funerary inscriptions in regions across the Mediterranean. This rhetoric appears to be an expression of identity that was widely shared among many Christian groups who had very distinctive traits derived

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69 "Would that we did not even dwell in the world together with these wicked people! But nevertheless we are separated from them in worldly things, since the world is God's, but worldly things are the devil's." (*De spect.* 15.8)

70 "For are not we, too, soldiers – indeed, subject to all the stricter discipline, that we are subject to so great an emperor? Are not we, too, in this world, foreigners?" (*De exhortatione castitatis* 12)

71 See e. g. *Adu. Marc.* 3.7 and *Apol.* 2.6.

72 Cf. Cyprian, *De dominica oratione* 19 and *Ep.* 58.1.

from their own local contexts and identities. Since "dying to the world" was essential to Christian conceptions of martyrdom, early *Acta* frequently employ *saeculum* rhetoric. For example, in the account of Perpetua's martyrdom from around 204 CE, she wrote of herself and her fellow prisoners after a comforting dream that "we began to have no hope in the present age/world."[73] Later, the narrator described a fellow prisoner named Secundulus who died in prison as being "called forth from the *saeculum*."[74] In the *Vita Caecilii Cypriani,* the narrative described how Cyprian "spurned worldly ambition" and was "set straight from worldly error" by a friend who later entrusted him with his family "when he was departing from the world."[75] In each of these cases, the range of meanings of *saeculum* and *saecularis* have been extended to more general forms of authority and privilege in the "present age," not necessarily those directly proceeding from the imperial sphere; we find this usage also in Tertullian and Cyprian.

Yet the martyrs' rejection of "this age" is at the same time a rejection to imperial claims to authority over the world. This is especially clear in the record of another early group of martyrs from North Africa, in which a Christian named Speratus tells the proconsul that he cannot swear by emperor's genius because he does not recognise the *imperium huius seculi,* "the authority of this age."[76] The repeated use of *saeculum* in such a condemnatory fashion would have had a jarring effect on a Latin-speaking audience that had been exposed to imperial advertisement of the "felicity of the age" or the "security of the age" in coinage and inscriptions for two centuries.

Funerary monuments for deceased Christians echo the language of martyrdom accounts not only by describing hope in an eternal life, but also by exhibiting numerous formulas that mention the faithful's passage out of "this *saeculum*," or describe the amount of time a person has lived "in this *saeculum*." There are dozens of such inscriptions from across the empire that were created well into the sixth century. In a fourth-century CE example from Lusitania, it is said of a young woman who died in childbirth that she "withdrew from the

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73 *coepimus nullam iam spem in saeculo habere* ...: *Passio Perp.* 4.10 = Heffernan 2012, 107.
74 *Secundulum uero Deus maturiore exitu de saeculo adhuc in carcere euocauit* ... (14.2 = *ibid.* 116) "But Secundulus God called from the world by an earlier end while he was still in prison ..."
75 *ambitionem saeculi sperneret* (*V. Cypr.* 2.7 = Rebillard 2017, 206; second half of the third century CE); *a saeculari errore correxerat*; ... *de saeculo excedens* ... *commendaret illi coniugem ac liberos suos* ... (*ibid.* 4 = *ibid.* 221).
76 *Speratus dixit: Ego imperium huius seculi non cognosco* ... *quia cognosco domnum meum, regem regum et imperatorem omnium gentium.* (*Passio Sanctorum Scilitanorum* 6 = Rebillard 2020, 96) "Speratus said: I do not recognise the authority of this age ... since I recognise my Lord, the king of kings and emperor of all nations."

world (*recessit de saeculo*)," a formula found as early as 235 CE in other regions.[77] There are many variations on this formula from this and other provinces that express that idea that the deceased has passed away from the world: *migrauit e saeculo, discessit a saeculo*, etc., which recall the phrases of martyrdom accounts described above.[78]

Thus, the rhetoric of martyr acts and funerary texts expands our understanding of the Christian *saeculum:* eternity was always present to the individual who had departed from the "present age," and did not function merely as a further historical period after the end of the world. In fact, the *saeculum* itself came to be used for a scriptural and liturgical expression for an infinity of ages: "unto ages of ages, *in saecula saeculorum.*"[79] In the context of epitaphs, the relationship with imperial *saeculum* rhetoric had become more distant: the funerary formulas were inspired by the same kind of Christian rhetoric found in literature that set the *saeculum* ruled by the Roman emperors against all time and eternity ruled by God. It is likely that the uses of *saeculum* in literary contexts operated in dialogue with the oral practices of Christian communities, influencing the way these groups thought and talked about how to die well. A martyr's death was the Christian death *par excellence,* and thus it is not surprising that *saeculum* rhetoric associated with martyrdom accounts would be echoed on funerary monuments for the faithful who had died from other causes (and not in direct conflict with Rome's Empire). Further study of the vast number of these texts is needed; we may conclude that *saeculum* rhetoric was not restricted to the literary sphere, but played a vital role in expressions of belief at different levels of Christian societies.

7 Interpreting the Roman *saeculum*

As this survey has demonstrated, the significance of the Roman imperial *saeculum* was bound up with religious ritual and the communication of imperial ideology; it was not used as a tool for historical analysis. It is difficult to define properly the Roman *saeculum* using modern categories, e. g., linear vs. cyclical time, progress vs. decline, Lazar's primitivism vs. eschatology,[80] or theories of period-

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77 *AE* 2001, 1168.

78 Cf. CIL 5.6738 (Vercelli/Vercellae, Transpadana), 5.8587 (Aquileia, Venetia and Histria); ICUR 1.473 (Rome).

79 The expression is a translation of a Greek coinage based on Hebrew models; for a fuller discussion, see Dunning (forthcoming).

80 Cf. Lazar 2019, 130–131.

isation. A more fruitful approach situates the *saeculum* in its original ritual context, in which the Saecular Games commemorated the arrival of a new age with a focus on present happiness, with a glance backwards to add the weight of tradition to the glory of the festivities, and hope for the preservation of Rome's blessed state in a vaguely-defined future period. Christian opposition to the imperial *saeculum* drew attention to the neglected "end of the age," which heralded the completion of the series of finite *saecula*.

7.1 Periodisation or commemoration?

Under the empire, ancient historians did not attempt to use the *saecula* established by Augustus and Claudian to indicate formal periods within Rome's history, although the *saeculum* could be used in other contexts to discuss the qualities of different periods.[81] Thus, the *ludi saeculares* do not properly fit into discussions of ancient forms of periodisation such as the decline from a Golden Age, or an identification of historical periods with the human aging process.[82] The *saeculum* was more closely connected with the religious performance that gave it its significance, and the earliest forms of imperial *saeculum* rhetoric were forms of commemoration of the *ludi saeculares* created in the same years as the celebrations: coin issues, and the *cippi* at the Tarentum. Domitian, Severus, and Philip took pains to imitate the coin types of their predecessors in order to underline the accuracy and legitimacy of their rites: they had kept the memory of the *ludi saeculares* intact and passed it on to a new generation. The very performance of the Games communicated the arrival of the new age to Roman people, providing them with the memory of spectacles that "no one would live to see twice." For the average Roman, it mattered little how the Games were numbered in their chronologies: the *saeculum* held its influence if the festivities were something grand and novel, and that power was diminished if there still lived a memory of previous Games, as was the case with Claudius's *ludi saeculares*. Above all, the Saecular Games were advertised as religious rituals that permitted Rome to continue to enjoy the gods' favour: their celebration and commemoration served as reminders of the emperors' ability to preserve divine goodwill and Roman piety.

When *saeculum* rhetoric was used outside the immediate context of the *ludi saeculares*, its power was dependent upon the extent to which it appeared con-

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81 For alternative forms of Roman qualitative periodisation, cf. Hay 2017 and 2019.
82 Cf. Besserman 1996, 5 – 8; Le Goff 2014, ch. 1.

nected to a genuine "new age." When the Antonines began to divorce *saeculum* rhetoric from the Games, they did so by looking back to the memory of Rome's nine hundredth anniversary under the founder of their own dynasty, Antoninus Pius. Third-century emperors who reused coin types that proclaimed the Saecular Games of their predecessors likely did so as reassurance of their ability to maintain the stability and prosperity guaranteed with the arrival of the most recent *saeculum*. The weakest forms of *saeculum* rhetoric were those that had become merely formulaic in the coin legends and inscriptions of Late Antiquity: lacking rootedness in past rites, they offered only vague promises of future security.

7.2 Linear or cyclical time? Progress or decline?

Imperial *saecula* were not entirely linear. While the Etruscan *saecula* had succeeded one another in a strictly linear fashion, with the death of the longest-lived individual in a generation revealed by portents until the end of the *nomen Etruscum,* the "new age" of the Saecular Games was associated with the birth and renewal of Rome's population at set intervals. No limit was ever placed on the number of imperial *saecula* in Rome's history: on the rare occasions their duration was examined, it was understood that they would continue in perpetuity.[83]

It is tempting to assume that Romans always interpreted the *saeculum* of the *ludi saeculares* as a form of cyclical time derived from the concept of a returning "Golden Age," since at times they themselves used such language. For example, Horace in his *Carmen Saeculare* never called Augustus's new age "golden," but he wrote of prayers for bountiful crops and the return of moral habits of bygone days; he also referred to the *saeculum* as a "cycle (*orbis*)."[84] On such a basis, Benoist situates the *ludi saeculares* among rites belonging to cyclical time, which he describes as those rituals that were held either according to the agrarian calendar or according to "mythic time."[85] The Republican precursors to the Saecular Games, the *ludi Tarentini,* could be viewed as participating in mythic time insofar as their foundation was connected with the legendary Valesius, but there was no

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83 Cf. the opening of the Severan *Acta,* which declare that the Games are to be held "for the security and eternity [of the empire] (*pro secu*]*rita*[*te*] *adque aeterni/t*[*ate*] [*imperii*]) (cf. Pighi 1965, 140 – 175; Schegg 2020, 290 – 292 leaves a lacuna in place of *imperii*)."

84 Cf. *Carm. saec.* 17– 24; *Carm.* 4.6.42.

85 Benoist 1999: on agrarian cyclical time: 130 – 133; on mythic time: 123 – 129; on the *ludi saeculares:* 173 – 192.

hint of an agricultural connection at this period. Augustus's indirect associations between his *ludi saeculares* and the Golden Age have a stronger connection to the cycles of the natural world, although human rather than agricultural fertility is emphasised, as discussed above. According to such a model, emperors presented the Saecular Games as initiating the beginning of a new cycle, a *saeculum aureum,* of general wellbeing for the state and its people after some period of distress and upheaval.

The problem with such an interpretation is that if the Golden Age needed to be renewed, the *saeculum* must have experienced a decline in quality through its own Silver, Bronze, and Iron periods. For this reason, it is essential to recognise that throughout the history of the Saecular Games, emperors who held the Games never verbally identified their individual *saeculum* as *aureum* in official contexts, but instead used imagery connected with the Golden Age (such as that of the Augustan *Ara Pacis*) to deliver such a desirable message of renewal more discretely.[86] We only see the phrase *saeculum aureum* in official contexts in a single coin legend of Hadrian, who did not hold the *ludi saeculares,* and in a handful of epigraphic formulas from Late Antiquity.[87] Emperors benefitted from direct references in literature to (re)foundings of golden ages; they seem to have actively encouraged the practice to a greater extent during and after the reign of Constantine.[88] Thus, the construction of the imperial renewal "Golden Age" was the result of interactions between imperial rhetoric (both text and image) and the creativity of ancient authors, a relationship described by Galinsky in his discussion of Augustan literature.[89]

In fact, any attempt to define the *saeculum* as either "cyclical" or "linear" reveals the inherent instability in imperial attempts to legitimise authority via the medium of time. In order for the *saeculum* to be most effective at communicating an emperor's power, attention had to be focussed on the present: the arrival of a new age in his own day. The celebration of the *saeculum* would involve some effort to look backward at past periods of stability and forward with hope for a blessed future, but given that many emperors who celebrated the Games or used *saeculum* rhetoric did so after periods of civil upheaval, no mention was

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86 Scholarship on Augustan art and the Golden Age is vast: see e.g. Zanker 1987; Galinsky 1996, 141–224.

87 Cf. *RIC* 2.136. The earliest inscriptions with *aureum saeculum* appear during the reigns of Valentinian and Valens in Numidia: cf. *CIL* 8.7015 (364–378 CE).

88 E.g. among the Julio-Claudians: Verg. *Aen.* 6.792–793; Ov. *Ars am.* 2.227; Sen. *Apocol.* 4; from Constantine onwards: Optatianus Porfyrius, *C.* 19.2–4; Symm. *Or.* 3; Corippus *In lauden Iustini minoris* 3.76–82.

89 Galinsky 1996, 225–287.

ever made of the eventual ends of their own ages, which would imply the end of their dynasties. Benoist offers a partial solution to this issue by discussing how emperors could peg the linear time of commemorations of events in their reigns and the lives of their families onto the cyclical time of the calendar and its rituals, yet the fact remains that no living emperor would want to identify an end to his *saeculum* and dynasty.[90] Horace may have already perceived the weakness in Augustus's efforts to promote his new *saeculum:* he observed that nature can cyclically repair itself, but human individuals (and their heirs) are confined to linear lives of birth and death, and cannot be replaced.[91] Koselleck has written of the modern worldview that places emphasis on historical progress, observing that each "present" once existed in a past imagination as an idealised future.[92] Imperial *saeculum* rhetoric offered hope for the future by assuring Rome of its present good fortune, but its imagined future was rooted in competition with successful models of the past, as emperors of later centuries demonstrated how closely they had emulated Augustus or Constantine. The "end of the age" is only found in the negative *saeculum* rhetoric of Seneca and Tacitus, or in its Christian variation that looked to the end of all human lives, and of all ages of the world.

8 Conclusion

The Roman conception of the *saeculum* underwent a radical transformation from the Republic to Empire through its association with the *ludi saeculares*. Augustus's redefinition of the term as a defined period of one hundred and ten years merged Etruscan and Roman traditions to demonstrate that his Saecular Games were a "one-in-a-lifetime" event, while his encouragement of *saeculum* rhetoric in official and literary contexts connected the *princeps'* life, and the duration of his dynasty, with a new age of peace and prosperity for Rome. Other emperors would take up and adapt this rhetoric for their own performances of the Saecular Games, with Domitian and Severus celebrating them according to the Augustan *saeculum*, and Philip I following Claudius's reversion to a *saeculum* of one hundred years. From the second century CE onward, *saeculum* rhetoric could be employed even in years when the *ludi saeculares* were not held, since it was such a useful tool for legitimising imperial power. So desirable

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90 Benoist 1999, 193–267.

91 Cf. Hor. *Carm.* 4.4.7.

92 Koselleck 1979.

was it to associate one's reign with a new age that imperial *saeculum* rhetoric survived into the Christian era, beginning in the reign of Constantine and continuing for several centuries, long after the Saecular Games ceased to be held.

From the second century CE, a new kind of *saeculum* rhetoric was developed among Christian groups in opposition to imperial expressions of authority over the Roman world and time itself; this understanding of the *saeculum* was initially derived from the translation of Hebrew and Greek scriptural terminology. The Roman emperors could proclaim their power to preside over prosperous new ages, but Christian apologists emphasised that the *saeculum,* the world itself, was ultimately in decline and would come to an end, after which the new age of Christ would begin. These writers sought to convey that imperial boasts of absolute power *in hoc saeculo* were meaningless when compared with eternal, divine authority over all ages. Such rhetoric was particularly suitable for early martyrdom accounts and funerary inscriptions, and it would continue to influence later Christian writers, particularly Augustine.[93] Thus, the Christian use of *saeculum* looked to the future and placed far more emphasis on the ends of human lives and empires, and of the world itself, than any imperial *saeculum* rhetoric.

The celebration of the Saecular Games, the creation of inscriptions, or the issue of commemorative coins could signal rebirth and renewal for the Roman world, but they were not entirely cyclical in nature: a *saeculum* came to a definitive close before another opened. Emperors could not risk embarrassment by drawing attention to the finite nature of their dynasties that they had so closely associated with *saecula,* and therefore focussed on the beginnings of ages. The Christian *saeculum* was by definition limited and destined for an end: only in the scriptural expression *saecula saeculorum* does the *saeculum* transcend the boundaries of time "in this world" and pass into eternity.

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93 Cf. Aug. *De ciu. D.* 15.1; Markus 1970.

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Index locorum

Index nominum

Index rerum