

Wonder and the Marvellous from Homer to the Hellenistic World

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Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	iv
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	v
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	vi-vii
0. Introduction: The Poetics of the Marvellous from Homer to the Hellenistic World	
1. Aulus Gellius Reads Greek Marvels: A Roman View of Greek Wonder	8-36
2. The Importance of <i>Thauma</i> : Theoretical Approaches to the Relationship Between Wonder and Literature	10-19
3. The Path to Paradoxography: New Perspectives on Greek Wonder from Homer to the Hellenistic Paradoxographical Collection	19-27
4. The Art of <i>Thauma</i> : Nature, Artifice and the Marvellous	27-36
1. Wondrous Visions: Charmides as <i>Agalma</i>	37-62
2. Plato's Marvellous Young Men: Theaetetus and Charmides as <i>Thaumata</i>	39-42
3. Critias the Poet, Charmides the Actor	43-46
4. <i>Thauma Idesthai</i> : Wonder, Divine Artworks and the Ekphrastic Tradition	46-52
5. Reading <i>Thauma</i> : Paradoxography and the Textual Collection of Marvels	52-62
1. Collecting <i>Thaumata</i> : the Emergence of the Paradoxographical Collection	63-103
2. Taming Zoological <i>Thaumata</i> : Archelaus the Egyptian's <i>Idiophue</i> and the Ptolemaic Court	68-74
3. <i>Thaumata</i> and the Ethnographic Tradition: Herodotus and the Edges of the Earth	74-80
4. Re-activating <i>Thauma</i> : Paradoxography and the Aristotelian Tradition	80-91
5. Textual <i>Thaumata</i> : Paradoxography and the Poetics of Hellenistic Literature	91-101
1. The Sound of <i>Thauma</i> : Music and the Marvellous	101-103
1. Homer the Proto-Paradoxographer: Poetry, Music and Science in Antigonus' <i>Collection of Marvellous Investigations</i>	104-131
2. Giving Voice to the Dead: <i>Thauma</i> and the Lyre in the <i>Homeric Hymn to Hermes</i>	108-112
3. Hermes' Songs and Signs: <i>Thaumata</i> and <i>Sēmata</i>	113-116
	116-123

4. Collapsing Boundaries: Epiphanic <i>Thauma</i> , <i>Choreia</i> and Song	123-131
4. The Experience of <i>Thauma</i> : Cognition, Recognition, Wonder and Disbelief	132-164
1. Recognition, Realisation and <i>Thauma</i> : the Meeting of Priam and Achilles	137-145
2. Marvels at the Margins: Geographical and Mythic Innovation in Euripides' <i>IT</i>	145-153
3. Wonders Beyond <i>Mythoi</i> : Recognition and <i>Thauma</i> in <i>IT</i>	154-159
4. Marvels at the Centre: Delphi, Athens and <i>Thauma</i> in Euripides' <i>Ion</i>	159-164
5. Near and Distant Marvels: Defamiliarising and Refamiliarising <i>Thauma</i>	165-204
1. The Wonder of Nephelococcygia: Aristophanes' <i>Birds</i> and the Edges of the Earth	169-176
2. Familiar <i>Thaumata</i> : the Bird-Chorus' Wondrous Travels	177-187
3. The Wonder of Athens: Thucydides and <i>Thauma</i>	187-204
6. Words or Wonders? Talking <i>Thaumata</i> in Fourth-Century Athens	205-228
1. Demosthenes the Marvel-Monger	208-215
2. Aeschines the Actor	216-222
3. Ekplektic Eristic: Talking Marvels in Plato's <i>Euthydemus</i>	222-228
7. Making Marvels: <i>Thaumatopoiia</i> and <i>Thaumaturgia</i>	229-254
1. The Meaning of Marvel-Making: Theatrical <i>Thaumatopoiia</i>	231-236
2. Sympotic <i>Thaumatopoiia</i> : Wonderworking in Xenophon's <i>Symposium</i>	236-243
3. <i>Thaumatopoiia</i> and Perspective in Plato's <i>Republic</i> and <i>Sophist</i>	243-248
4. Socratic Marvel-Making: <i>Thaumatopoiia</i> in the Cave	248-254
8. Epilogue: <i>Thaumata Polla</i>	255-277
1. <i>Thauma</i> as the Beginning of Philosophy – or <i>Nil Admirari</i> ?	256-265
2. Mediating Between Gods and Men, Nature and Artifice: <i>Thauma</i> in Hero of Alexandria's Mechanical Treatises	265-271
3. <i>Mera Miracula: Thauma</i> , Textuality and the Marvels of Gellius' <i>Noctes Atticae</i>	272-277
<i>Bibliography</i>	278-309

Wonder and the Marvellous from Homer to the Hellenistic World

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is the first serious examination of the significance of wonder and the marvellous as a category of experience in the Greek world from Homer to the early Hellenistic period. I argue that wonder and wonders, far from being a tangential concern of the Greek literary tradition, constitute a constant and central theme in Greek culture. Over the course of the thesis I examine texts from a range of literary genres (for example, early Greek hexameter poetry, tragedy, comedy, historiography, philosophy, oratory, Hellenistic paradoxographical collections) to present a diachronic view of the place of wonder and the marvellous in relation to several key Greek cultural themes. I show that wonder is an important term of aesthetic response in the Greek world; that it occupies a central position in concepts of what philosophy and literature are and do; that it becomes a means of expressing the manner in which the realms of the human and divine interrelate with one another; and that it is central to the articulation of the ways in which the relationships between self and other, near and far, and familiar and unfamiliar were conceived. Moreover, this thesis is the first attempt to analyse the sources and literary models that helped to underpin, thematically, structurally and ideologically, the ancient literary mode of paradoxography ('marvel-writing') which emerged fully in the Hellenistic period. It provides a much needed starting point for the production of reassessments of the impact of wonder as a literary critical and cultural concept in later periods and contexts.

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I would also particularly like to thank Gregory Hutchinson and Richard Rutherford for offering useful advice over the course of the early stages of this thesis, and Oliver Thomas for kindly sharing his unpublished work on the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* with me.

Last, but not least, I am very grateful to Peter Agócs and to my family for their unfailing support.

List of Abbreviations

AB = Austin, C. and Bastianini, G. (2002) *Posidippi Pellaei Quae Supersunt Omnia*. Milan.

ARV² = Beazley, J.D. (1963) (2nd ed.) *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*. 3 Vols. Oxford.

Burstein = Burstein, S.M. (1989) *Agatharchides of Cnidus: On the Erythraean Sea*. London.

CVA Australia I = Cambitoglou, A. and Turner, M. (eds.) (2008) *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum: Australia [Fasc. 1]*. The Nicholson Museum, The University of Sydney: *The Red Figure Pottery of Apulia*. Sydney.

CVA British Museum 2 = Smith, A.H. and Pryce, F.N. (eds.) (1926) *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum: Great Britain. British Museum 2*. London.

CVA Naples III = Rocco, A. (1954) *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. Italia 24. Napoli, Museo Nazionale 3*. Rome.

Dindorf = Dindorf, W. (1855) *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Odysseam*. 2 Vols. Oxford.

DK = Diels, H. and Kranz, W. (1951-1952) (6th ed.) *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. 3 Vols. Berlin.

Erbse = Erbse, H. (1969-88) *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem (Scholia Vetera)*. 7 Vols. Berlin.

Et. Mag. = Gaisford, T. (1848) *Etymologicum Magnum*. Oxford.

FGE = Page, D.L. (1981) *Further Greek Epigrams*. Cambridge.

Greene = Greene, W.C. (1938) *Scholia Platonica*. Haverford.

Harder = Harder, M.A. (2012) *Callimachus: Aetia. Vol. 1*. Oxford.

IG XI, 2 = Dürnbach, F. (1912) *Inscriptiones Graecae XI. Fasc. 2. Inscriptiones Deli*. Berlin.

LCS I = Trendall, A.D. (1967) *The Red-Figured Vases of Lucania, Campania and Sicily. Vol. I: Text*. Oxford.

- LCS II = Trendall, A.D. (1967) *The Red-Figured Vases of Lucania, Campania and Sicily. Vol. II: Plates*. Oxford.
- LM = Laks, A. and Most, G.W. (eds) (2016) *Early Greek Philosophy*. 9 Vols. Cambridge, MA.
- Olson-Sens = Olson, S.D. and Sens, A. (1999) *Matro of Pitane and the Tradition of Epic Parody in the Fourth Century BCE: Text, Translation, and Commentary*. Atlanta, GA.
- P. Cair. Zen. I = Edgar, C.C. (ed.) (1925) *Zenon Papyri: Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire. Vol. I. (Cat. 79)*. Cairo.
- Peintre de Darius = Aellen, C., Cambitoglou, A. and Chamay, J. (1986) *Le peintre de Darius et son milieu: Vases grecs d'Italie Méridionale*. Geneva.
- Pf. = Pfeiffer, R. (1949) *Callimachus. Vol. I: Fragmenta*. Oxford.
- PGR = Giannini, A. (1966) *Paradoxographorum Graecorum reliquiae*. Milan.
- PhV² = Trendall A. D. (1967) (2nd ed.) *Phlyax Vases*. London.
- P. Oxy. = Grenfell, B.P. and Hunt, A.S. (1898–) *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. London.
- PPSupp. = Trendall A. D. (1952) ‘Paestan Pottery: A Revision and a Supplement’. *PBSR* 10: 1-53.
- RVAp II = Trendall, A.D. and Cambitoglou, A. (1982) *The Red-Figured Vases of Apulia. Volume II: Late Apulian*. Oxford.
- RVP = Trendall, A.D. (1987) *The Red-Figured Vases of Paestum*. London.
- Sb. = Sbardella, L. (2000) *Filita: testimonianze e frammenti poetici*. Rome.
- SH = Lloyd-Jones, H. and Parsons, P. (eds.) (1983) *Supplementum Hellenisticum*. Berlin.
- Sp. = Spanoudakis, K. (2002) *Philitas of Cos*. Leiden.
- TrGF Kannicht = Kannicht, R. (2004) *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta. Vol. 5.1, Euripides*. Göttingen.
- TrGF Radt = Radt, S. (1999) *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta. Vol. 4, Sophocles*. Göttingen.

0. Introduction: The Poetics of the Marvellous from Homer to the Hellenistic

World

cum e Graecia in Italiam rediremus et Brundisium iremus egressique e naui in terram in portu illo inclito spatiaremur, quem Q. Ennius remotiore paulum, sed admodum scito uocabulo ‘praepetem’¹ appellauit, fascēs librorum uenaliū expositos uidimus. atque ego auide statim pergo ad libros. erant autem isti omnes libri Graeci miraculorum fabularumque pleni, res inauditae, incredulae, scriptores ueteres non paruae auctoritatis: Aristēas Proconnesius et Isigonus Nicaeensis et Ctesias et Onesicritus et Philostephanus et Hegesias; ipsa autem uolumina ex diutino situ squalabant et habitu aspectuque taetro erant. accessi tamen percontatusque pretium sum et, adductus mira atque insperata uilitate libros plurimos aere pauco emo eosque omnis duabus proximis noctibus cursim transeo; atque in legendo carpsi exinde quaedam et notaui mirabilia et scriptoribus fere nostris intemptata eaque his commentariis aspersi, ut qui eos lectitarit ne rudis omnino et ἀνήκοος inter istiusmodi rerum auditiones reperiatur.

Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 9.4.1-5

When we were coming back to Italy from Greece and reached Brundisium, after disembarking from the ship onto land we were strolling about in that famous harbour, which Quintus Ennius – using an epithet which is somewhat obscure, but extremely erudite – called ‘auspicious’. We saw bundles of books placed out for sale. Straightaway I eagerly went over to the books. Now, all of these books were in Greek, full of marvellous stories, unheard of things, unbelievable things, by ancient writers of no little authority: Aristēas of Proconnesus and Isigonus of Nicaea and Ctesias and Onesicritus and Philostephanus and Hegesias. But the rolls themselves were filthy from long decay, repulsive in condition and appearance. Even so I approached and asked their price, and attracted by their marvellous and unexpected cheapness I bought very many books for very little money, and I went through them all swiftly over the course of two nights. And in the course of reading I picked out certain things from them and noted them down, marvellous things almost completely unexplored by Latin writers, and I scattered these things in these writings of mine, so that anyone who reads them will not be found to be completely uncultivated and ἀνήκοος [= not having heard something, ignorant] when hearing matters of this type.²

The paradoxical mixture of repulsion and attraction which suffuses this account of Aulus

Gellius’ supposed encounter with Greek writers of wonders in the second century CE is

¹ Gellius has already cited the full Ennian line (*Brundisium pulcro praecinctum praepete portu*, Enn. *Ann.* 457) at *NA* 7.6 in a lengthy discussion of use of the adjective *praepes*, which is usually applied to birds and literally means ‘straight-flying’ or ‘swift-flying’, but comes to mean ‘well-favoured, auspicious’ through its association with augury. On the augural meaning of *praepes* in this Ennian line see Skutsch (1985) 615; cf. Fisher (2014) 64-68 on the use of *praepes* and augural language in Ennius’ *Annales* in general.

² Throughout this thesis all translations are my own.

characteristic of responses to the marvellous in Greek texts in both the Roman and the modern world. This double-edged reaction is not the only ambivalent attitude which marvellous material and the feeling of wonder it induces tends to provoke. Pleasure and disgust, intellectual curiosity and mental stultification, a sense of seriousness and a sense of frivolity: these are all familiar and simultaneous responses to the intrusion of unfamiliar and surprising marvels by the time Gellius writes his own miscellanistic collection, the *Noctes Atticae*. In this thesis my aim is to untangle these seeming paradoxes, as well as to investigate the meaning of wonder and wonders in the Greek world more broadly.

The concept of wonder has a long literary and cultural history in antiquity which has not yet really been opened up. Greek engagement with the marvellous originates at the very beginning of the literary tradition. Homer presents a world full of visual marvels linked to the divine, from the Shield of Achilles to epiphanic appearances of the gods themselves before mortals. Already in the Homeric poems, the marvellous is linked to the transgression of boundaries between the human and divine realms, and also between the natural and the artificial. Wonder becomes a paradigmatic response to visual art, music and poetry in the Greek world, characteristic of those uncanny moments when the boundaries between humans and gods, inside and outside, the familiar and unfamiliar collapse. Over time, continuities, complexities and differences in the treatment of wonder and the marvellous begin to emerge. Some fundamental questions quickly arise once wonder is put under the spotlight in this way: what constitutes a marvel in Greek culture? What sorts of attitudes do marvels provoke? Do concepts of wonder and the marvellous change over the time from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period? If so, why? Does the treatment of wonder in Greek culture influence the marvel-traditions of later periods?

I will start to open up some of these questions by examining Gellius' description of his brush with wonder-inducing Greek material in Brundisium in more detail. By opening my discussion with a second-century CE response to Greek marvels and concepts of the marvellous, rather than starting with Homer at the beginning of the Hellenic literary tradition, it is my hope that the resonance and importance of wonder as a means of communicating both within and between literary traditions and cultures in antiquity will begin to emerge.

1. Aulus Gellius Reads Greek Marvels: A Roman View of Greek Wonder

One of the most striking aspects of the way Gellius' encounter with books containing marvels in the *Noctes Atticae* is framed is the manner in which wonders are presented as distinctly Greek. For some reason, Gellius takes the time in the middle of his own miscellanistic collection to provide this supposedly autobiographical sketch which emphasises that the practice of composing books entirely full of stories which provoke wonder is something that Greek writers might do, but certainly not Roman ones. All of the texts which Gellius purports to stumble across are in Greek, and they do not contain the occasional smattering of *mirabilia* – these books are absolutely stuffed full of marvels (*omnes libri Graeci miraculorum fabularumque pleni*). Furthermore, this kind of material is supposedly almost impossible to find in native Latin writers: unlike Greek writers, those fashioning Latin texts have scarcely attempted to compose this kind of material (*scriptoribus fere nostris intemptata*) – at least according to Gellius.

This emphasis on the Greekness of this marvellous material is clearly an attempted distancing effect on Gellius' part. The fact that the books are by ancient writers (*scriptores ueteres*), and that the rolls are themselves clearly so old that they have become

filthy and decayed through long neglect (*uolumina ex diutino situ squaliebant et habitu aspectuque taetro erant*), serves a similar purpose. The suggestion seems to be that by the second century CE, marvels now truly belong to the Greek past. The undertone in this passage is clear: marvellous material is dangerous, alluring, and potentially destructive. There is even perhaps a sense that the overindulgence in *mirabilia*, this concentration on wonder, has itself led to the decay of Greek culture itself.³ Are the squalid *uolumina* metonymic stand-ins here for Greek cultural power? Is an unhealthy interest in marvels to blame for this cultural decay, at least from a Roman point of view?

At the same time, there is a strong sense in this passage that marvellous Greek material is inherently ambivalent and double-edged: tawdry and cheap, as the physical condition and price of the books which are discovered shows (*mira atque insperata uilitate libros plurimos aere paucio emo*), yet simultaneously authoritative and attractive, worthy of Gellius' enthusiasm as he rushes avidly forth to buy the rolls in bulk. After all, these writers are of no small authority (*non paruae auctoritatis*), as Gellius himself admits. In fact, the authors mentioned are all figures associated with what would later come to be termed the paradoxographical tradition. By Gellius' time, each of these writers was renowned for either their ethnographic accounts of far-off places, travel narratives or historical writing which contained, at least in part, descriptions of natural and man-made wonders. The first writer mentioned, Aristeas of Proconnesus, is the oldest of those whose work Gellius claims to have found in Brundisium, a semi-mythical epic poet who

³ It is striking that the image of filthy and decaying Greek book-rolls occurs elsewhere in the context of Graeco-Roman cultural exchange: the story of the transfer of Aristotle's books from Scepsis to Sulla's library in Rome which Strabo tells at *Geographica* 13.1.54. In Strabo's account there is a similar figurative use of the image of the decaying book-roll to express the decline of Greek cultural power in the East and the increasing importance of the West in terms of cultural and political power after Aristotle's books are hidden in a trench, causing them to decay, before eventually being sold to Apellicon and then taken back to Rome by Sulla: βιβλία ... κατὰ γῆς ἐκρυσαν ἐν διώρυγί τινι. ὑπὸ δὲ νοτίας καὶ σιγῶν κακωθέντα ὁπότε ποτε ἀπέδοντο οἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ γένους Ἀπελλικῶντι τῷ Τηίῳ πολλῶν ἀργυρίων τὰ τε Ἀριστοτέλους καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοφράστου βιβλία ... εὐθὺς γὰρ μετὰ τὴν Ἀπελλικῶντος τελευτὴν Σύλλας ἦρε τὴν Ἀπελλικῶντος βιβλιοθήκην ὃ τὰς Ἀθήνας ἐλὼν. Of course, in Strabo's case the image is complicated by the fact that, unlike Gellius, he himself is a native writer of Greek situated in a Roman context.

supposedly lived in the seventh century BCE. Aristeas was famous in antiquity both for his supposed shamanic ability to leave his body and travel to distant lands, and for the composition of an epic poem called the *Arimaspea*, which told of his journey to the land of the Scythians and Issedones in the far north and described the things which he learned on his travels about the one-eyed Arimaspeans and Hyperboreans who inhabited the very furthest northern edges of the earth.⁴ The most detailed and famous account of Aristeas' abilities and poem is found in another later account of a distant land, the Scythian *logos* in book four of Herodotus' *Histories* (4.13-16). But it was not the content of the *Arimaspea* alone which was considered to be marvellous in later periods. Aristeas himself also later appears as a marvel at the beginning of a Hellenistic marvel-collection.⁵ We can also see that the work of several other writers mentioned by Gellius was drawn upon by Hellenistic paradoxographers within their own marvel-collections from the few extant texts of this sort which remain to us today. Isigonus of Nicaea, a paradoxographer of the first century BCE or first century CE, wrote a work entitled Ἀπίστα, which had at least two books and seems to have contained marvels relating to the natural world (particularly wondrous bodies of water); this text was itself drawn upon and excerpted by later paradoxographers in their own marvel-collections.⁶ The doctor and historian Ctesias (late fifth century-early fourth century BCE) is the writer mentioned by Gellius who is best-known to us in the modern world: his historical and ethnographic accounts of eastern lands, *Persica* and *Indica*, provided material for later paradoxographers as well.⁷ Philostephanus of Cyrene (third century BCE) was a pupil of the man who was probably

⁴ See Bolton (1962) 119-41 for a discussion of Aristeas' life, and pp. 74-118 for a discussion of the potential form and content of the *Arimaspea*.

⁵ See Apollonius Paradoxographus 2 (*PGR* p. 120-23).

⁶ See *PGR* pp. 146-48 for fragments and testimonia relating to Isigonus.

⁷ For example, the Hellenistic paradoxographical collection of Antigonus of Carystus (see *PGR* pp. 31-109 for the text of this marvel-collection) contains many marvels which ultimately derive from Ctesias work: see e.g. entries 15b, 145, 150, 165-66; cf. entries 17 and 20 in Apollonius Paradoxographus' marvel-collection (see *PGR* pp. 128-31). On the relation of Ctesias' work to Hellenistic paradoxography, see Nichols (2018) 3-16.

the first to compile a paradoxographical collection, the famous Hellenistic poet and scholar Callimachus of Cyrene. Philostephanus is known to have produced verse epigrams on paradoxographical themes and was himself cited in later marvel-collections.⁸ The two other authors mentioned by Gellius are both known for writing histories about Alexander the Great which probably contained ethnographic marvels relating to the lands he visited on campaign: Hegesias of Magnesia (third century BCE) and Onesicritus of Astypalaea (c. 380-300 BCE), a man who we know actually accompanied Alexander on his Eastern travels.

But what precisely is Hellenistic paradoxography? And what form did the marvel-collections which have just been mentioned take? These are questions which this thesis will answer in great detail, but before beginning to provide answers it is worth returning to the rest of Gellius' account in order to examine what he claims to go on and do with these texts. For by looking at how Gellius treats them, we will begin to gain a sense of how paradoxography itself works. This is because, as will soon become clear, Gellius is himself writing in a paradoxographical mode at this moment in the *Noctes*, plunging into the texts of the past and avidly seizing any attractive or relevant *mirabilia* he needs to adorn his own work. Throughout this passage, Gellius presents himself as the ultimate connoisseur of marvels, a perfect paradoxographer exercising necessary Roman discernment to neuter the potentially dangerous and distracting power of these Greek *thaumata*. Gellius knows precisely how to properly prune and cull this material (*in legendo carpsi exinde*); he knows which marvels need to be noted down (*notaui mirabilia*); he knows how and where and when to scatter and arrange marvels in his own writings (*eaque his commentariis aspersi*). His description of his method here recalls the discussion of the wider methodology of the *Noctes Atticae* as a whole which has already

⁸ See *PGR* pp. 21-23 for testimonia and fragments relating to Philostephanus' paradoxographical output.

been mentioned in the preface of the work. There we are told that unlike the many other authors of miscellanies Gellius has just mentioned – especially Greek ones – who read and wrote down many varied things indiscriminately for the sake of sheer quantity (*illi omnes et eorum maxime Graeci, multa et uaria lectitantes, in quas res cumque inciderant ... sine cura discriminis solam copiam sectati conuerrebant*, NA pr. 11), he himself excerpts only a few things (*modica ex his eaque sola accepi*, NA pr. 12) which either facilitate learning (*ingenia prompta expeditaque ad honestae eruditionis cupidinem ... ducerent*, NA pr. 12) or save people from shameful ignorance (*homines ... a turpi certe agrestique rerum atque uerborum imperitia uindicarent*, NA pr. 12). This is a claim repeated again here as Gellius supposedly passes through Brundisium: a smattering of the Greek marvellous, sprinkled through the Latin *Noctes* just as Gellius likes to sprinkle Greek words throughout his own work, will ensure that no reader of his will ever be considered ‘ἀνήκοος’ (ignorant). Even the detail that the material for the *Noctes Atticae* has been hastily read and culled from the filthy Greek bookrolls over the space of two nights (*eosque omnis duabus proximis noctibus cursim transeo*) recalls Gellius’ explanation of the title of the work as a whole, which he names after the time and place – at night, in Athens, in winter – where he purportedly put together the collection (*ex ipso loco ac tempore hibernarum uigiliarum ‘Atticas noctes’ inscripsimus*, NA pr.10).

Except, of course, it is not Attica where Gellius supposedly culls marvels from these books for his collection, but Italy. And this is not the only way in which Gellius’ attempt to distance Roman culture from a marvellous mode of writing does not stand up to much scrutiny. In fact, this passage exemplifies one of the main principles in connection with the discovery and writing of marvels in antiquity which this thesis as a whole will make very clear: wonders are always to be found much closer to home than first suspected. The very location of this anecdote hints at this. It is on the way back from

Greece that Gellius encounters Greek marvels: far from leaving the Hellenic world behind, that most Greek characteristic of all, a taste for abundant wonder, seems now to be found in Italy. In fact Brundisium, the main Italian port to Greece in antiquity, is a natural setting for an encounter which mediates between the two cultures of Greece and Rome. Just as Gellius himself has physically journeyed to and from Greece through Brundisium, the Greek marvel collections have made a parallel journey from Greece to Rome through the same port, and it is through Brundisium again that this material is about to be translated from Greek to Latin as Gellius returns *e Graecia in Italiam*. Perhaps this is why he takes such pains to mention Quintus Ennius in relation to his return to Brundisium. Gellius is setting himself up here as a sort of heir to Ennius, a writer who will turn Hellenic *thaumata* into appropriate Latin *mirabilia* just as Ennius brought hexameter epic from Greece to Rome. In this sense, then, Brundisium really is an ‘auspicious’ place, as the Ennian epithet which Gellius uses to describe the port suggests, since this seemingly chance encounter with Greek marvels has the potential to elevate the author of the *Noctes Atticae* to the head of the Latin miscellanistic tradition. “As Ennius translated Greek hexameters into Latin epic, I will transform distracting Greek *thaumata* into useful Latin *mirabilia*”, Gellius almost seems to say to us in this passage.⁹ But is Gellius’ potential claim to innovation true? Have native Latin writers really resisted the lure of the Greek marvellous before Gellius came along to put them straight?

The answer to these questions soon becomes clearer as we continue through the passage and Gellius makes a good show of exhibiting the results of his two nights’ reading. He offers up various incredible stories about wondrous barbarian tribes which

⁹ Brundisium is of course already an extremely resonant location in Latin literature, a fact which helps to explain why Gellius refers to it as *portu illo inclito* at the opening of 9.4 (see Lindermann (2006) 122). The most famous examples of the port’s importance in the Roman literary tradition are probably its place as the supposed location of Pacuvius’ birth and Virgil’s death (see Gowers (2012) 212-13), and as the end point of Horace’s journey with Maecenas in the final line of *Sat.* 1.5 (*Brundisium longae finis chartaeque uiaeque est*, 104).

he has picked out for his readers, mentioning (9.4.6), for example, Scythian cannibals called Anthropophagoi who inhabit the far north (*Scythas illos penitissimos, qui sub ipsis septentrionibus aetatem agunt, corporibus hominum uesci eiusque uictus alimento uitam ducere et ἀνθρωποφάγους nominari*), one-eyed Arimaspians (*homines sub eadem regione caeli unum oculum in frontis medio habentes, qui appellantur Arimaspi*), men from the same region whose feet are turned backward (*homines ... uestigia pedum habentes retro porrecta, non, ut ceterorum hominum, prospectantia*), men whose hair turns white in childhood who can see better in the night than the day (*homines, qui in pueritia canescant et plus cernant oculis per noctem quam interdiu*), and Sauromatae who only eat once every two days (*Sauromatas ... cibum capere semper diebus tertiis, medio abstinere*). Gellius then adds to this account of wonders by mentioning that in his Greek books he has read of Africans who are able to perform spells with their voices – a claim which he notes he has also come across in the seventh book of Pliny’s *Natural History* (*id etiam in isdem libris scriptum offendimus, quod postea in libro quoque Plinii Secundi ‘Naturalis historiae’ septimo legi, esse quasdam in terra Africa hominum familias uoce atque lingua effascinantium*, 9.4.7).

It seems strange that Gellius should mention a Latin writer here after playing down any Roman interest in *mirabilia*. But what is even stranger is the fact that every marvel Gellius has so far mentioned in this passage, including those listed above, is also found in the seventh book of Pliny’s *Natural History*, reported in the same order.¹⁰ The most likely scenario seems to be that Gellius has not stumbled across any Greek books at

¹⁰ At *HN* 7.9-26. See Holford-Strevens (1988) 30-31, 50-51, Gunderson (2009) 185, Keulen (2009) 200-201 and Howley (2018) 114-20, 123-34 on Gellius’ dependence on Pliny in this particular passage. On Gellius’ contested relationship with Pliny in general see Holford-Strevens (1988) 121-22, Keulen (2004) 238-41, Gunderson (2009) 181-85 and Howley (2018) 112-56. On Pliny’s interest in *mirabilia* in the *HN* see Beagon (1992) 8-11, (2005) 17-24, (2007) 19-40 and (2011) 80-86, Conte (1994) 85-86, Murphy (2004) 18-22 and Naas (2011) 57-70.

all, but has excerpted all of this material from a single book of Pliny.¹¹ In Gellius' world, despite his protestations, marvels are firmly Roman already.¹² Nevertheless, there is a sense in Gellius' account that there is something distinctively Greek about wonders and the feeling of wonder: the writing of marvels is clearly something of a contested practice by this period. On the one hand, the authority of Greek writers of the past makes writing about marvels a desirable thing, although it simultaneously becomes difficult to differentiate one's own work from the rich tradition of wonder-inducing material which the Greek world is able to offer. But perhaps the most obvious reason why Gellius' attitude towards *mirabilia* is so ambivalent is the fact that the contents of the *Noctes Atticae* as a whole can to some extent be placed under the heading of marvel-writing. It is clear that the miscellanist's aim in the *Noctes*, as hinted in the preface, is to provide material which is pleasurable or cultured or useful (*aut uoluptati legere aut cultui legisse aut usui meminisse*, NA pr. 11) without much extraneous material which cannot provide either pleasure or profit (and preferably both simultaneously). As it will transpire, this is not so different from the purpose of *thaumata* in the Greek tradition – at least by the time we reach the production of paradoxographical collections in the Hellenistic period.

There is another reason why Gellius' supposed encounter with Greek textual marvels has significant ramifications for the purpose and effect of the *Noctes Atticae* as a whole. The supposedly rare and exceptional material which constitutes the kind of *mirabilia* which Gellius is talking about here also inherently raises questions about the nature of belief itself. Is it really possible to trust the authority of previous writers when

¹¹ See Holford-Strevens (1982) 65-68 on the seemingly fictional nature of the anecdote at NA 9.4.

¹² In fact, Roman interest in collecting marvellous material goes back at least to Varro and Cicero: the former is said (at Macr. *Sat.* 3.15.8) to have written a book entitled *Gallus De Admirandis*; the latter supposedly wrote a book of marvels entitled *Admiranda*, which is cited twice in Pliny's *Natural History* at 31.12 (*Cicero in admirandis posuit*) and 31.51 (*quod admirandis suis inseruit M. Cicero*). Pliny also made great use of the work on marvels of his contemporary Mucianus in his *Natural History*: on the contents and purpose of Mucianus' work see Ash (2007) 1-17.

it comes to *res inauditae, incredulae*? By this period the rich textual tradition of wonder has made marvel-writing into an extremely contested mode, one which almost by definition entails questions of fictionality and belief. Is it any wonder then that Gellius' own account of an autoptic encounter with textual marvels should itself turn out to raise numerous questions of believability? By the second century CE, it is not only the content of the material described which is beyond belief, but even Gellius' marvellous description of his wondrous encounter with the marvel-writing of the past.

It is precisely this marvel-writing of the past which this thesis concerns itself with. It is the first attempt to analyse the sources and literary models that helped to underpin, thematically, structurally and ideologically, the ancient literary mode of paradoxography ('marvel-writing') which emerged fully in the Hellenistic period. This ancient 'marvel-writing' went on to exercise a profound influence over medieval, Renaissance and early modern literature of (pseudo-)science, geography, ethnography and travel, as the Classically-inspired literary culture of Europe increasingly came into contact with the new cultures and natural phenomena of a more globalised world. By drawing out the full significance of wonder as a category of experience in the Greek world for the first time, my study fills a crucial gap in the study of ancient culture.

Through the study of texts from various different genres my assessment of the importance of *thauma* as a category of experience in the Greek world from the Archaic to the early Hellenistic period will show that wonder and wonders, far from being a tangential concern of the Greek literary tradition, constitute a constant and central theme in Greek culture from the earliest times. Moreover, by tracking *thauma* in this way, as a mode of thought in Greek culture, through the use of various literary forms in a full diachronic sweep, it is possible to open up new perspectives on a variety of related cultural themes. Foremost among the aspects of Greek culture which look different when

viewed ‘thaumatically’ are the development of a terminology of aesthetic response relating not only to traditions of visual art, but to texts themselves; the notion of what philosophy is and what it was thought to do in the Greek world; the ways in which the realms of human and mortal were thought to touch upon, or remain separate, from one another; and the manner in which the relationships between self and other, near and far, and familiar and unfamiliar were conceived. In short, the main aim of this thesis is to put *thauma* on the critical map and to demonstrate that wonder and the marvellous are concepts which we can – and should – take much fuller account of when considering Greek culture more broadly.

2. The Importance of *Thauma*: Theoretical Approaches to the Relationship Between Wonder and Literature

How, then, to approach the question of what wonder means in Greek culture from Homer onwards? It quickly became clear when first examining this issue that it is first necessary to attempt to understand the terms the Greeks themselves used to describe and refer to the experience of wonder, rather than working backwards by applying modern conceptions of wonder as a category of experience to the ancient material. This is of special importance when examining the history of wonder in antiquity, due to the frequently negative associations which surround wonder and the marvellous in our contemporary culture. These negative connotations have been heavily influenced by the development of a rhetoric which aims to dismiss and ‘banish wonder’ which gained particular traction during the Enlightenment. These negative attitudes concerning the pernicious power of marvels in the Age of Reason have been well-documented by scholars working on the concept of wonder in other fields, particularly in Daston and Park’s magisterial study of

the marvellous in the political, religious and scientific realms in the West from 1150-1750.¹³ An awareness of these negative attitudes is thus important for my study because to a certain extent they account for the erasure of the study of wonder by Classicists working on periods before the Hellenistic age, despite the fact that wonder, as this thesis will show, plays an important role in Greek thought long before the first paradoxographical collections were compiled.

With this in mind, it is initially necessary to take a lexicographical approach, in order to begin to map out the position and significance of wonder in Greek culture. This will make it possible to work outwards from ancient terms which are somehow connected to ideas about wonder, and to attempt to survey and explain the categories of experience to which these terms are applied.¹⁴ This approach is, however, only a starting point: my study does not depend on the appearance of particular words in every single case, though it has often proven useful and productive to begin with an examination of the use of certain terms in a given work, in order to establish how the construction of thought and theme works in those texts as a whole.

The most important textual signpost pointing towards the Greek experience of wonder is the use of some form of either the noun θαῦμα or the verb θαυμάζειν, or one of their various cognates. One of the chief difficulties in studying Greek concepts of

¹³ Daston and Park (1998).

¹⁴ For a description of the advantages and inevitable pitfalls of this lexical approach, see Leigh's (2013) study of *polypragmosyne*: the ancient conception of curiosity and meddlesome behaviour. Cf. Kenny (1998) and (2004) for a comparable approach to curiosity in the Early Modern period. D'Angour's (2011) study of Greek concepts of the 'new' has proved equally useful to me in formulating my own approach, as have works on wonder and the marvellous in other areas. Some of these: Bishop (1996) and Platt (1997) on wonder in Shakespeare; Kareem (2014) on eighteenth-century fiction and wonder; Greenblatt (1991), Daston and Park (1998), Campbell (1999), and the collected papers in Evans and Marr (2006) (esp. Kenny (2006) on the metaphorical collecting of curiosities) on wonder from the Early Modern period onwards. Todorov (1970), which includes a theoretical discussion of the nature, form and definition of the marvellous in relation to the fantastic as a broader genre, has also influenced my thinking throughout this thesis, particularly in the way he examines the notion of the marvellous in relation to the uncanny (*unheimlich*), a concept which itself inherently places the relationship between the familiar and the unfamiliar under the spotlight.

wonder springs from the inherent slipperiness of the word θαῦμα, which can refer both to objects which cause wonder and astonishment (cf. the use of ‘a wonder’ or ‘a marvel’ in English), and to a more abstract feeling of wonder, surprise or astonishment.¹⁵ A few examples picked at random make this distinction clear: in the *Iliad*, Achilles describes his old armour, which Hector has stripped from Patroclus, as ‘a marvel to see’ (τεύχεα δ’ Ἴηκτορ | δηώσας ἀπέδυσε πελώρια, θαῦμα ιδέσθαι, *Il.* 18.83-4), while his new armour is later made into ‘a marvel’ by Hephaestus’ wondrous ability to portray a field which looks as if it has just been ploughed as it simultaneously shines in black and gold (ἡ δὲ μελαίνετ’ ὀπισθεν, ἀρηρομένη δὲ ἑώκει, | χρυσεῖη περ ἑοῦσα· τὸ δὲ περὶ θαῦμα τέτυκτο, *Il.* 18. 548-9). But in book ten of the *Odyssey* we find *thauma* referring to a much more general feeling of astonishment or wonder which grips Circe when Odysseus remains unexpectedly impervious to her drugs (θαῦμά μ’ ἔχει ὥς οὔ τι πῶν τάδε φάρμακ’ ἐθέλχθης, *Od.* 10.326). As these examples demonstrate, one of the most striking aspects of objects which are labelled as ‘marvels’ (θαύματα), at least in archaic poetry, is their visual appearance, and it is highly likely that the word θαῦμα and its cognates are derived from the verb θεᾶσθαι – to see, gaze at, behold.¹⁶

The appearance of θαῦμα in reference to this kind of feeling is paralleled by the use of another term which is applied to the effect of the marvellous: the noun ἐκπληξίς and its associated verbal form, ἐκπλήσσειν. Words from this root often refer to a more extreme sense of wonder than θαῦμα, a feeling of astonishment so strong that it causes both a cognitive and somatic reaction.¹⁷ The literal meaning of ἐκπλήσσειν, ‘to strike out,

¹⁵ Greenblatt (1991) 22 designates the double aspect of wonder as both a thing and a feeling as an integral part of its effect; cf. Neer (2010) 67 on the doubleness of *thauma*: “in Greek as in English, one wonders at wonders. The word itself shuttles between ‘here’ and ‘there’”.

¹⁶ See Prier (1989) 82; Beekes (2010) 535 is more tentative and suggests that it is possible, though not certain, that θαῦμα is a sort of verbal noun related to θεᾶσθαι. In antiquity itself *thauma* was already etymologically derived from θε- root words denoting vision, seeing and sight: see *Et. Mag.* 443.37-48.

¹⁷ Aristotle emphasises the strength of ἐκπληξίς in his *Topica* by defining it as an ‘excess’ of θαῦμα (δοκεῖ γὰρ ἡ ἐκπληξίς θαυμασιότης εἶναι ὑπερβάλλουσα, 126b17-18).

drive away, expel from [i.e. the senses]’, hints at this more extreme effect, which can take on the character of a sort of debilitating mental and emotional stasis. These are not the only terms which may signpost us towards the experience of wonder – others such as ἄγασθαι, τέρας and δεινός will appear frequently in this study – but these are certainly the most powerful and indicative ones. Over the course of this thesis, the tracing out of the differences in usage between terms related to θαῦμα and ἔκπληξις will begin to make clearer the varied range of the spectrum of responses to the marvellous which occur over time in Greek culture.

My assessment of the importance of wonder as a category of experience in Greek thought from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period, across multiple texts and genres, builds on the limited amount of work on *thauma* in Greek culture that has appeared to date.¹⁸ Among recent studies, Richard Neer’s work on the place of *thauma* as an important aesthetic term in relation to Classical sculpture provides a particularly important model for my own study.¹⁹ For the first time, Neer examines the significance of the creation and evocation of wonder in relation to the visual arts, and concludes that as a term relating to aesthetic response in the Greek world “the importance of wonder can hardly be overstated” and that “[t]hauma is, in fact, a basic and hugely neglected element of Greek thinking about depiction”.²⁰ In his introduction, Neer even writes that his own

¹⁸ As Hardie (2009) 5 n.10 notes in his introduction to a recent and very useful edited volume on paradox and the marvellous in Augustan literature and culture, “[s]tudies of wonder in antiquity appear not to be numerous”. The few studies which do exist tend to focus on particular authors or genres: cf. Nenci (1957/8), Prier (1989), Hunzinger (1993) and (2018), Fisher (1995) on Homer and early Greek hexameter poetry, Jouanna (1992) 223-36 and Kazantzidis (2018) 31-61 on the Hippocratic Corpus, and Barth (1968) and Hunzinger (1995) on Herodotus. Ní Mheallaigh’s (2014) study of Lucian concludes (pp. 261-77) with a significant overview of the importance of marvels and the ‘wonder-culture’ of the Roman empire in the Imperial period, after my own study ends. Two exceptions to the general tendency to focus on single authors or genres are Mette (1960), a brief study of the use of *thauma*-words from Homer to the Classical period, and Hunzinger (2015), an excellent and welcome study which begins to outline the importance of *thauma* in aesthetic terms. See now also the essays on miracles and wonders in various texts and periods in antiquity in Gerolemou (2018).

¹⁹ Neer (2010), especially the introduction and chapters one and two.

²⁰ Neer (2010) 57.

conclusions about the importance of *thauma* suggest that “[w]e need to make the Classical strange again, uncanny; we need to restore its wonder”.²¹ This invocation to ‘restore the wonder’ of the Classical period is something my own study wholeheartedly attempts to achieve, since Neer’s work on the place of *thauma* in Greek thinking of depiction needs to be extended to Greek ideas about all sorts of literary, visual and cultural representations.

Outside Classics, the concept of wonder has assumed an increasingly significant place in critical theory and cultural history over the last few decades.²² In recent years New Historicist critics have shown a special interest in the nature and function of wonder and the marvellous in relation to literature and culture. In particular, the founder of New Historicism, Stephen Greenblatt, has picked up on the potential of wonder in the practice of cultural poetics as a useful theoretical concept which is able to mediate between inside and outside, subjects and objects, and texts and contexts.²³ In his 1990 article, “Resonance and Wonder”, Greenblatt places wonder at the very heart of his own critical approach, stating that rather than necessarily seeking to approach works of art “in a spirit of veneration” (as he perceives the approach of some Formalist critics to do), he seeks rather to approach them “in a spirit that is best described as wonder”.²⁴ The importance of approaching texts with a marvelling eye is reinforced when Greenblatt ends his article by affirming the place of wonder in the practice of New Historicism as a whole, declaring

²¹ Neer (2010) 2.

²² See n. 14 above for recent studies of wonder and the marvellous in other fields which have particularly influenced my approach in this thesis.

²³ Greenblatt (1991) 16: “Someone witnesses something amazing, but what most matters takes place not ‘out there’ or along the receptive surfaces of the body where the self encounters the world, but deep within, at the vital, emotional center of the witness”. Cf. Greenblatt (1991) 22: “For the early voyagers, wonder not only marked the new but mediated between outside and inside”. See also Neer (2010) 68 on *thauma*: “to wonder, in Greek is to be poised between two possible modes of existence, to shimmer between what we might be tempted to call subject and object”. Cf. Hunzinger (2018) 263-34 on *thauma* as an ‘in-between’ state.

²⁴ Greenblatt (1990) 19.

that “it is the function of new historicism continually to renew the marvelous at the heart of the resonant”.²⁵

Greenblatt’s theoretical approach to wonder is of great importance to my own study, not only because it provides a new way of thinking about the interactions between wonder and the effect of literature, but also because his work on wonder as a theoretical concept bears a complicated relation to the concept of wonder in antiquity which has not been probed enough. The year after “Resonance and Wonder”, Greenblatt returned to the place of wonder in both New Historicism and in Western culture in his 1991 monograph *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*. In this work, he focuses on the integral place of the marvellous in European responses to the New World, exploring how and why “[w]onder is ... the decisive emotional and intellectual experience in the presence of radical difference”.²⁶ The influence of textual accounts of marvels from antiquity on later European responses to people and cultures perceived as radically other is drawn out at several points in Greenblatt’s study.²⁷ In particular, Herodotus’ *Histories* is named as the key text which “had instituted certain key discursive principles that the many subsequent attacks on his veracity and the ensuing oblivion did not displace”.²⁸ Greenblatt sketches out the importance of Herodotus as the figurehead of a long tradition of historiographical responses to the marvellous by drawing heavily on the work of François Hartog, in particular his 1980 monograph *Le miroir d'Hérodote*.²⁹ As the editor of the University of California Press series, *The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural*

²⁵ Greenblatt (1990) 34. On the importance of wonder to the aims and practice of New Historicism and on how shifting the objects which we think of as marvels provokes radically different interpretations see Gallagher and Greenblatt (2000) 9, 12.

²⁶ Greenblatt (1991) 14.

²⁷ Ancient discussions of the properties of the earth’s edges were particularly influential, as Greenblatt (1991) 22 notes: “The discovery of the New World at once discredits the Ancients who did not know of these lands and, by raising the possibility that what had seemed gross exaggerations and lies were in fact sober accounts of radical otherness, gives classical accounts of prodigies a new life”.

²⁸ Greenblatt (1991) 123.

²⁹ Hartog (1980). On the importance of Herodotus as the shaping force of later responses to wonder see Greenblatt (1991) 123-28.

Poetics, in which the English translation of *Le miroir d'Hérodote* first appeared, Greenblatt was well aware of Hartog's pioneering approach to the concept of wonder in Herodotus' *Histories* even as he conducted his own study of Renaissance attitudes towards wonder, and is correct when he adduces that "Herodotus is at once a decisive shaping force and a very marginal figure" in his own inquiry.³⁰ But Herodotus is not the only pivotal figure in the development of a discourse of the Greek marvellous in antiquity, and the historiographer's own attitude to marvels is itself shaped by a complex tradition relating to wonder which must be examined in more detail. It is one of the aims of this thesis to fill in some of the gaps left in this vision of the influence of ancient discourses of wonder on later European approaches to the marvellous, especially in relation to the meetings between different cultures and peoples.

It is therefore because of the special place which wonder holds in recent historicising approaches to literature, and because of the influence which responses to the marvellous in antiquity go on to have on responses to marvels and the marvellous in Western culture, that a thorough examination of the place of *thauma* in the Greek world from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period is long overdue. My own double-edged interest in both the cultural poetics of Greek wonder, and in Greek wonder's place in the practice not only of cultural poetics, but in subsequent Western discourses of the marvellous more generally, will hopefully be clear throughout. But this is not my only focus; one of the most attractive aspects of working on relationship between the marvellous and texts in antiquity is the fact that wonder is a concept that mediates between formalist and

³⁰ Greenblatt (1991) 122. Hartog's *Le miroir d'Hérodote* first appeared in English in 1988 as *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*. Cf. Pelling (1997) 64-65, where the potential for the productive application of Greenblatt's ideas in *Marvelous Possessions* to Herodotus is noted.

historicist approaches to literature.³¹ One particular idea which I return to and re-examine through the lens of Greek wonder is Viktor Shklovsky's concept of 'defamiliarisation', first outlined in his influential 1916 essay "Art as Technique". Shklovsky's claim, in its broadest terms, is that "[t]he technique of art is to make objects unfamiliar", due to the fact that over time our day to day perception becomes habitual and automatic, rendering objects over-familiar and unremarkable.³² In other words, the strangeness and wonder of objects is deadened over time, and it becomes the task of the artist to 're-activate' these feelings in the reader, listener or viewer. It is this artistic phenomenon of "making the familiar seem strange again" that he calls 'defamiliarisation'. Shklovsky turns to Aristotle as a significant antecedent to his own ideas about the defamiliarisation effects which occur on a lexical level in poetry when he notes that "[i]n studying poetic speech ... we find material obviously created to remove the automatism of perception ... According to Aristotle, poetic language must appear strange and wonderful".³³

Shklovsky is referring here to Aristotle's comments at *Rhetoric* 1404b8-14 on the necessity of making language strange (δεῖ ποιεῖν ξένην τὴν διάλεκτον) because such language provokes wonder, and wonder is itself pleasurable (θαυμασταὶ γὰρ τῶν ἀπόντων εἰσίν, ἥδὺ δὲ τὸ θαυμαστόν). In this thesis, I probe the significant connection between defamiliarisation and wonder which Shklovsky hints at here, demonstrating that in antiquity there was a firm interest not only in creation of effects of defamiliarisation, but in what I have termed 'refamiliarisation' effects as well: that is, making what is unfamiliar and wondrous actually seem extremely familiar.³⁴ Furthermore, this examination of the

³¹ As Greenblatt himself notes (1990) 19: "Wonder has not been alien to literary criticism, but it has been associated (if only implicitly) with formalism rather than historicism. I wish to extend this wonder beyond the formal boundaries of works of art, just as I wish to intensify resonance within those boundaries".

³² Shklovsky (1916), translated in Lemon and Reis (1965) 12.

³³ Shklovsky (1916) in Lemon and Reis (1965) 21-22.

³⁴ Pelling (2016) has recently demonstrated the importance of considering the creation of effects of 'refamiliarisation' as well as defamiliarisation in his study of Herodotus' Persian stories.

connection between wonder, defamiliarisation and refamiliarisation is timely because, as Kareem notes in her study of eighteenth-century literature and wonder, the concept of defamiliarisation has again become influential in cognitive approaches to literature.³⁵ The connections I draw between wonder, defamiliarisation, and refamiliarisation will therefore be of interest in relation to these recent cognitive approaches to defamiliarisation.

Much work still remains to be done in terms of teasing out how the tradition of marvel-writing in antiquity can shed light on later conceptualisations of the connection between wonder and literature: by filling a crucial gap in the intellectual and cultural history of wonder in Western culture, this thesis provides a much needed starting point for the production of re-assessments of the impact of wonder as a literary critical and cultural concept in these later periods and contexts.

3. The Path to Paradoxography: New Perspectives on Greek Wonder from Homer to the Hellenistic Paradoxographical Collection

The significance of *thauma* in Greek culture from the Archaic period onwards has been little explored and often misunderstood in scholarship. By bringing texts from many different genres into dialogue with one another and viewing them through the lens of wonder, this thesis uncovers new meanings in some of the most familiar texts of the ancient literary and philosophical tradition. Due to the paucity of detailed work on the importance of *thauma* as it pertains to the rhetoric, form and aesthetic effects of ancient Greek texts and genres, and in the light of Richard Neer's work on the importance of

³⁵ See Kareem (2014) 6-7 on how defamiliarisation has recently attracted the attention of literary critics and psychologists alike as a special feature of literariness: cf. Miall and Kuiken (1994) and (2009).

thauma in the sphere of Classical art, in this thesis I have chosen to focus predominantly on Greek literary texts from the early Greek hexameter tradition to the early Hellenistic period. Since it is impossible to begin to make sense of subsequent attitudes towards *thauma* without examining the associations of the marvellous from the early Greek hexameter tradition onwards, the Homeric poems are the earliest texts which are examined here with *thauma* in mind. The chronological end-point of my study lies in the early Hellenistic period, with the emergence of a new and very different type of text: the paradoxographical collection. These texts are marvel-collections which attempt to astonish the reader through the juxtaposition of canonical literary texts of the past with contemporary scientific writing: they represent the first textual collections of marvels in the Western tradition. In giving a literary form to his collection of wonders, however, the paradoxographer draws on certain aspects of the experience and aesthetic of wonder that are in fact much older. In order to address the complexity of the cultural tradition which the paradoxographer is drawing upon my study does not follow a strictly chronological order from Homer onwards. Instead I work thematically, adopting an approach influenced by New Historicism and cultural poetics which deliberately juxtaposes texts from different contexts and genres, placing them in dialogue with one another to explore evolving continuities and ruptures in the discursive use and resonance of the marvellous over time.

Moreover, this thesis enacts, in the form and arrangement of its chapters and themes, one of its own central discoveries concerning the aesthetic and emotional resonance of *thauma*, as a concept, in ancient literature and culture. It is an experiment in reading and writing ‘thaumatically’ through the juxtaposition of texts from previously disparate genres and periods in order to create unexpected connections, startling discontinuities and radically new perspectives. This kind of reading and writing is

essential to the poetics of the paradoxographer as well. I thus take my cue from the first texts in the Western tradition which claim to exist for no other purpose than causing the reader to wonder: paradoxographical collections. Throughout this thesis I attempt to demonstrate the power of a paradoxographical style of reading and writing while examining this omnivorous genre in detail for the first time, as well as providing an archaeology of the highly varied sources – poetry, ethnography, historiography, drama, oratory and the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle – which all combine to form the marvellous mode of writing which comes to exercise such an influential pull on the later European ethnography and travel narratives which are so central to Greenblatt's *Marvelous Possessions*.

The thesis falls into two main sections (chapters one to three, and chapters four to seven). In my first three chapters I will demonstrate that *thauma* from Homer onwards is a paradigmatic response to visual art, music and poetry in Greek culture. It is particularly associated with the moments when the boundaries between humans and gods, inside and outside, and the familiar and unfamiliar collapse. Wonder begins as a response to overwhelming visual stimuli, but rapidly comes to serve as a model for all manner of aesthetic response, whether to the size of an impressive building, the movement of a tragic chorus, a mythical or geographical narrative, or a particularly beautiful performance of music or poetry. The first three chapters aim to follow the development of *thauma* as a model for aesthetic response from the Archaic to the early Hellenistic period: at first restricted purely to visual objects and then expanded to voices, songs and oratorical performances before finally emerging as a paradigm of *textual* response. This story runs parallel to the emergence of literature itself as a concept in the Classical period; it contributes to a developing sense of what literature itself actually is, what it does, and

what effect it has; and it also allows us to see what particular literary forms were best able to produce or to critique the effect of the marvellous.

Over the course of chapter one ('The Art of *Thauma*: Nature, Artifice and the Marvellous') I explore the place of *thauma* as a term of aesthetic response by examining the complicated relationship between visual, verbal and textual *thaumata*. I start with a reading of Plato's *Charmides* to trace out the main themes of the following discussion. In this dialogue the boundaries between the inanimate and animate are blurred as the beautiful Charmides is compared to a wonder-inspiring statue. The marvellous effect of Charmides' beauty is emphasised in a way which allows Plato to draw out the potentially dangerous results of falling under the influence of visual spectacles which leave the observer open to the potentially stultifying and misleading effects of *thauma*. The power of *thauma* in the phenomenal realm is one of Plato's prime concerns regarding wonder, and one which I will return to in chapter seven. Here, however, I turn to drawing out the strong connection between *thauma* and the visual in Greek literature in the period before and after Plato's *Charmides* by concentrating on the importance of *thauma* in the tradition of poetic ekphrasis. By their very nature passages of ekphrastic description highlight tension between the verbal and the visual and are often replete with the language of wonder. By concentrating on the relationship between ekphrasis and *thauma* from Homer onwards, it is also possible to see more clearly the transition from the conception of a marvel as a purely visual object or as an oral report, to the sense of a marvel as something which is written down.

In chapter two ('Reading *Thauma*: Paradoxography and the Textual Collection of Marvels') I demonstrate that *thauma* gradually becomes an aesthetic response to purely literary form by re-examining the purpose and poetics of Hellenistic paradoxographical collections: the first examples of dedicated textual marvel-collections in the Western

tradition. I begin by outlining the range and scope of this material, before examining how the production of paradoxographical collections can be seen as a textual manifestation of a new and increasingly influential interest of Hellenistic monarchs in the collection of objects which inspire *thauma*. The relationship between paradoxography and the two generic traditions with which these texts have been aligned in previous scholarship, namely ethnography and Peripatetic scientific writing, is then thoroughly re-assessed. I show that the previous tradition of Greek ethnographic writing is of particular significance in terms of the *form* which Hellenistic paradoxographical collections take by examining Herodotus' treatment of the marvels associated with the earth's furthest edges in the *Histories*. The influence of early Hellenistic paradoxography's Peripatetic background is then examined in the context of the place of *thauma* within the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophical traditions as a whole. For Aristotle and Plato, *thauma* was a vital catalyst to kickstart the process of philosophical or scientific inquiry, and its production becomes in this period an important aim of texts which purported to engage the reader in new ways, such as Callimachus' *Aitia* or the paradoxographical collection. In this respect paradoxography shares more in common with other contemporary Hellenistic poetic genres than has previously been acknowledged, as the end of the chapter will demonstrate.

In chapter three ('The Sound of *Thauma*: Music and the Marvellous') I begin by examining certain aspects of Hellenistic paradoxography's engagement with the poetry and music of the past before turning to the significance of *thauma* in ancient conceptions of music, choral song and dance more generally. I take the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* as a case-study through which to explore the rich relationship between music, *sēmata* and *thauma* in the Greek imagination. I show that *thauma* plays an essential role in ancient religious thought as an effect that accompanies epiphanic encounters between gods and

humans. As such, it is also associated with the collapse of strict boundaries between the realms of mortal and immortal, something that in the archaic oral culture takes place especially in ritual, music and song. Within the ritual space created by song-performance, *thauma* allows this collapse of boundaries between men and gods to occur. It is intimately connected to sensory effects of music, dance and song which allow the ritual space of performance to become for men, temporarily at least, equivalent to the kind of marvellous utopian existence available to the gods at all times on Olympus. Greek texts explore these effects of *thauma* from the *Odyssey* onwards, where we are introduced to the performances of the strange, semi-divine Phaeacians before Odysseus. Later texts build on the associations between *thauma*, music and song established in the *Odyssey*: examples I examine include the thaumatic impact of the *choreia* of the Delian Maidens in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, and the Apollonian epiphany of Arion in Herodotus' *Histories*.

In the second main section of my thesis, from chapter four onwards, I build on the understanding of *thauma* as a category of experience outlined in the first three chapters by narrowing my focus and examining the significance of wonder and the marvellous in texts of the late Classical period. I argue that by the late fifth century BCE the place of *thauma* and *thaumata* within the literature of the past has established wonder as a concept which helps to mediate encounters between the Greek and wider, non-Greek worlds, as well as between men and gods. But as the boundaries of contemporary intellectual discourse begin to shift, so too do ideas about the causes and effects of wonder. As a result, in various literary genres over the course of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE in Classical Athens, a distinctive rhetoric of wonder and the marvellous developed which established *thauma* not only as an instinctive reaction to difference, but also as something which can be found closer to home. As *thauma* increasingly becomes a means of

defamiliarising experience, of making the familiar strange again and worthy of renewed attention, we find, over the course of the Classical period, the development of a new and deeply ambivalent attitude towards wonder and its effects.

In chapter four ('The Experience of *Thauma*: Cognition, Recognition, Wonder and Disbelief') my aim is to explore the increasingly complicated status of *thauma* in the intellectual discourse of late fifth-century BCE Athens. Over the course of this chapter I begin to do this by focusing on connections between *thauma* and concepts of cognition, recognition, belief and disbelief in that quintessentially Athenian genre: tragedy. I begin by examining the *thauma* and recognition in Homer, as a means of contextualising the interpretation of *thauma* and *ekplēxis* as emotional and cognitive responses to scenes of *anagnōrisis* in Athenian tragedy – a connection which Aristotle outlines in the *Poetics*. I then turn to Athenian tragedy itself, and the plays of Euripides in particular, to demonstrate how *thauma* and its effects have become an object of intellectual concern by the time we reach the later work of Euripides, where the question of what effect *thauma* and *thaumata* can have on the mind is a contentious one. In this chapter I focus on Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris* (c. 414 BCE) and *Ion* (c. 413 BCE) to illustrate the playwright's interest in the potential of the tragic recognition scene to raise questions concerning the nature of *thauma* and (dis)belief in relation to broader questions of the contemporary relevance of the mythic tradition itself.

In my reading of *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Ion*, another significant aspect of the way in which *thauma* is configured as a category of experience in this period is brought to the fore: wonder is something which is able to render the unfamiliar familiar and the familiar unfamiliar, in ways which destabilise boundaries and cultural oppositions that were previously clearly drawn. In chapter five ('Near and Distant Marvels: Defamiliarising and Refamiliarising *Thauma*') I explore the significance of this dynamic

and its effects in more detail. I argue that in the texts of the late fifth and early fourth centuries BCE one can see an increasing tendency to shift the definition of *thaumata* from objects which are inherently distant or unfamiliar, to objects which are more familiar but which thus come to be re-assessed in new ways. In texts which comment upon Athens' increasing imperial power during this period, it is notable that one way of expressing and implicitly problematising Athenian dominance is by representing Athenian customs, practices, objects and people as somehow wondrous and by suggesting that the city of Athens herself may now be the greatest 'marvel' of all. In this chapter, I examine the ambivalent attitudes which this new concept of specifically Athenian *thauma* provoked, by concentrating on the place of marvels and the marvellous in Aristophanes' *Birds* and Thucydides' *History*. I show that in *Birds* Aristophanes approaches his contemporary society with the estranging eye of an ethnographer in order to defamiliarise the everyday world of Athens and potentially nudge the audience towards a re-assessment of their place in the world. In doing so Aristophanes picks up on the importance of the theme of distant wonders and untold riches at the edges of the earth in Athenian public discourse, hinting particularly at its capacity to incite a dangerous and over-daring sense of desire (*eros*) for imperial conquest – an issue which was in the air at the moment of the play's first production in 414 BCE in relation to Athens' campaign against Sicily. In his account of the Sicilian expedition Thucydides subjects the same idea – the place of *thauma* within the discourse of imperial Athens – to an even more brutal and disillusioned scrutiny. Whereas Aristophanes' *Birds* hints at the potentially dangerous and deceptive power of marvels and the marvellous, Thucydides' *History* emphasises this aspect of *thauma* much more strongly, explicitly showing the results of wonder's ability to skew strategic perspectives and perceptions. As this chapter will demonstrate, we find that this potentially misleading aspect of *thauma* is attributed above all else to the power of

language on its hearers as the late fifth century turns into the fourth: in both of these works, it is perhaps that most Athenian of all manmade products, rhetoric, which is now able to wield the greatest thaumatic power.

It is this conception of the intensely thaumatic power of language itself which chapter six ('Words or Wonders? Talking *Thaumata* in Fourth-Century Athens') seeks to draw out more clearly. I begin to explore the place of *thauma* in contemporary rhetoric by examining the ways in which Demosthenes and Aeschines fling the language of wonder back and forth between themselves as they battle it out over the course of their dikastic duel. An increasingly combative use of the discourse of wonder is equally evident in the development of the discipline of *philosophia*, as Plato's ambivalent attitude towards *thauma* suggests. *Thauma* may famously be the 'the beginning of philosophy' (*Theaetetus* 155d), but its power is often shown to be double-edged and potentially deceptive in Plato's dialogues, especially when it is associated with the types of mimetic representations created by poets, actors or sophists.

These conflicting attitudes towards the place of wonder in the philosophical tradition are explored further in chapter seven ('Making Marvels: *Thaumatopoiia* and *Thaumaturgia*'). In this chapter I return once again to the significance of wonder as an affective and cognitive effect on individuals and collective audiences, especially in relation to mimetic artistic representations. It is increasingly clear that as philosophy began to engage with the ethical effects of performances and of rhetorical speech on the souls of spectators and audiences, the very power of mimesis to evoke feelings of astonishment and overwhelm the viewer comes under suspicion as something deceptive and artificial. The famous Cave Allegory in Plato's *Republic* illustrates these anxieties surrounding the manipulation of wonder: it is the very displays of shadowy *thaumata* made by *thaumatopoiioi*-like men which are said to captivate and mislead the bound

prisoners. In this chapter I offer a reading of this famous philosophical passage through the lens of *thauma* which opens up new perspectives on both the *Republic* and Plato's conception of philosophy more widely. Moreover, a comprehensive overview of the evidence for *thaumatopoiia/thaumaturgia* (marvel-making/wonderworking), a specific form of Greek performance tradition, is presented for the first time, as well as an examination of the power of *thauma* and *thaumatopoiia* in a philosophical text which offers an alternative yet complementary viewpoint on conceptions of the power of *thauma* and its relation to the formation of philosophy as a discourse in this period: Xenophon's *Symposium*.

As this summary suggests, texts from many different genres are purposefully brought into dialogue with one another throughout this thesis. As the practice of the paradoxographers makes clear, the wondrous ability of texts to relate to each other and to talk both backwards and forwards with each other is one of the key aspects of the creation of a sense of wonder itself, as marvels became textualised and transformed into a sort of written *Wunderkammer*. It is in this respect that this study most truly embodies one of the key discursive practices which is connected with *thauma* in the period with which this study concerns itself: it is difficult to talk about *thauma* without slipping to some extent into the poetics of Greek wonder.

Chapter One

The Art of *Thauma*: Nature, Artifice and the Marvellous

καὶ ἅμα ταῦτ' αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ὁ Χαρμίδης εἰσέρχεται. ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν, ὦ ἑταῖρε, οὐδὲν σταθμητόν· ἀτεχνῶς γὰρ λευκὴ στάθμη εἰμὶ πρὸς τοὺς καλοὺς· σχεδὸν γάρ τί μοι πάντες οἱ ἐν τῇ ἡλικίᾳ καλοὶ φαίνονται· ἀτὰρ οὖν δὴ καὶ τότε ἐκεῖνος ἐμοὶ θαυμαστὸς ἐφάνη τό τε μέγεθος καὶ τὸ κάλλος, οἱ δὲ δὴ ἄλλοι πάντες ἐρᾶν ἔμοιγε ἐδόκουν αὐτοῦ· οὕτως ἐκπεπληγμένοι τε καὶ τεθορυβημένοι ἦσαν, ἥνίκ' εἰσήει· πολλοὶ δὲ δὴ ἄλλοι ἐρασταὶ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὀπισθεν εἵποντο. καὶ τὸ μὲν ἡμέτερον τὸ τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἦττον θαυμαστὸν ἦν· ἀλλ' ἐγὼ καὶ τοῖς παισὶ προσέσχον τὸν νοῦν, ὥς οὐδεὶς ἄλλος· ἔβλεπεν αὐτῶν, οὐδ' ὅστις σμικρότατος ἦν, ἀλλὰ πάντες ὥσπερ ἄγαλμα ἐθεῶντο αὐτόν. καὶ ὁ Χαιρεφῶν καλέσας με, τί σοι φαίνεται ὁ νεανίσκος, ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες; οὐκ εὐπρόσωπος; ὑπερφυῶς, ἦν δ' ἐγώ.

Plato, *Charmides* 154b-d

And as he was saying this, in comes Charmides. Now I, my friend, am no judge. I am simply a 'white line' when it comes to beautiful people.¹ For almost all lads at that time of life seem beautiful to me. But right at that moment that boy seemed to me to be a marvel both in terms of his size and his beauty, and everyone else seemed to be in love with him, since they were so astonished and bewildered when he entered. And many other lovers trailed in his wake. Now our behaviour – that's to say that of the older men – is no wonder. But I was paying attention to the boys as well, and none of them looked elsewhere, not even the smallest, rather everyone gazed at him as if he were a statue (*agalma*). And Chaerephon called me over and said: "How do you like the young man, Socrates? Is he not good looking on the outside?" "Preternaturally so," I said.

The importance of *thauma* as a term of reacting to the visual arts in the Classical period has recently been explored in Richard Neer's study of the effects of Archaic and Classical sculpture, which suggests that the pursuit of *thauma* increasingly drives artistic

¹ This is a common proverb which seems to mean something like 'I am unable to judge correctly', 'I am indiscriminate'. The imagery is from the realm of building and architecture: the use of a white chalk line as a straight rule would not be very helpful if the stone or marble being cut were white itself. See Σ ad. *Chrm.* 154b Greene: ἡ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς λευκοῖς λίθοις στάθμη λευκὴ οὐ δύναται δεικνύναι, διὰ τὸ μὴ παραλλάττειν καθάπερ ἡ διὰ τῆς μίλτου γιγνομένη, ὥς Σοφοκλῆς Κηδάλωνι [= fr. 330 *TrGF* Radt] 'τοῖς μὲν λόγοις τοῖς σοῖσιν οὐ τεκμαίρομαι, | οὐ μᾶλλον ἢ λευκῷ λίθῳ λευκὴ στάθμη'.

innovation over the course of the Classical, and into the Hellenistic period.² But *thauma* is not only a key term in relation to visual art. It is also a response which eventually comes to be associated with the effects of written texts on their readers. Over the course of the Classical period and into the Hellenistic age, the written text itself becomes the most powerful example of what a *thauma* is and does. In this chapter I will begin to examine certain aspects of the relationship between the visual, the verbal and the textual which are explicitly shown to elicit wonder from very early on in the Greek literary tradition, particularly in passages of ekphrasis, before moving on to explore the relationship between text and *thauma* more fully in the next chapter, taking Hellenistic paradoxographical collections as my primary examples. But it is first worth turning to the image of the beautiful young Charmides as a wondrous *agalma* in the Platonic dialogue which bears his name to introduce some of the main themes of my discussion. In many of Plato's works, the framing scenes or opening details of the narrative foreshadow the eventual philosophical outcome of the dialogue.³ *Charmides* is no exception to this tendency: the sense of wonder which surrounds the young man on his entrance will go on to colour our response as the dialogue draws on. Charmides' wondrous effect on the assembled company in this scene is explicitly caused by his beautiful appearance. The astonishment this beauty causes in his viewers is in fact so great that it is akin to the kind of aesthetic response which artworks provoke. There is something uncanny about Charmides in Socrates' description here – he is a moving, living man compared to a perfectly-formed, static, inanimate statue: an *agalma*. This explicit comparison of a human being to an *agalma* from the point of view of the assembled company is somewhat

² See especially Neer (2010) 20-103.

³ Reece (1998) shows how the erotic motifs in the opening of *Charmides* are worked out in the dialogue's discussion of *sophrosyne*. Many other recent works have demonstrated the significance of the opening scenes of Platonic dialogues in relation to the later main philosophical discussion: cf. e.g. Clay (1992), Tschemplik (1993), Johnson (1998), Rudebusch (2002), Gonzalez (2003), Segvic (2006), Trivigno (2011), Kaklamanou and Pavlou (2016), De Sanctis (2016).

unusual.⁴ But the inversion of this comparison, the idea that an inanimate statue or artwork is actually in some sense ‘alive’, has a long history in Greek culture.⁵ In fact, the ability of an artwork or object of craft to move itself in some sense is an archetypal *thauma* from Homer onwards. What does Plato mean then by inverting this idea, comparing a young man to a marvellous artwork, and what is the significance of this gesture in the broader context of *Charmides*? And what does Plato’s use of the connection between visual artworks and wonder here tell us about the place of *thauma* in Greek literature and culture in this period?

1. Wondrous Visions: Charmides as *Agalma*

As the passage quoted above demonstrates, the immediate response of the assembled company to Charmides’ entrance into the palaestra is one of sheer astonishment. Even the young boys who are present are physically transfixed with amazement at the same time as their minds are thrown into turmoil and confusion (ἐκπεπληγμένοι τε καὶ τεθορυβημένοι ἦσαν) by Charmides’ marvellous beauty (θαυμαστὸς ἐφάνη τό τε μέγεθος καὶ τὸ κάλλος). The sudden, imposed fixity of the stunned audience, physically paralysed by *eros*, contrasts with Charmides’ onrushing entrance; we might expect the spectators to

⁴ There is another prominent example of a living human being compared to an *agalma* while focalised through the eyes of another in Euripides’ *Hecuba*: Polyxena is compared to an *agalma* by Talthybius, who tells how she bares her breasts before she is slain (μαστούς τ’ ἔδειξε στέρνα θ’ ὡς ἀγάλματος | κάλλιστα, 560-61). In this case the comparison to an *agalma* also has a distinctly erotic tinge, just as it does at the beginning of the *Charmides* (cf. Scodel (1996) 111-28 on the erotic aestheticisation of Polyxena in the *Hecuba* and Iphigenia in the *Agamemnon* at the moment of their respective sacrifices, and Thalmann (1993) 143-48 and Steiner (2001) 197, 207 on the connection between *eros* and *agalma* in the *Hecuba*). Another striking aspect of this comparison is the fact that Polyxena is on the verge of death at this moment and is about to change from an animate to an inanimate being. The antithesis between animate/inanimate and living/dead is crucial to the perceived power of the *agalma* as an artwork: the simile is therefore especially apt at this point in the *Hecuba* as it reflects Polyxena’s transitional state as she approaches her inevitable end.

⁵ Cf. Steiner (2001), Hersey (2009) and Neer (2010) on the idea of animated statues in general; cf. Faraone (1987) 18-21 on Hephaestus as the animator of statues, and Morris (1992) 215-37 on Daedalus as the creator of animated statues.

be described as statuesque rather than Charmides himself. The pun on *thauma* in the phrase ἤττον θαυμαστὸν ἦν alerts us to the importance of the idea of wonder as an aesthetic response at this point. On the one hand, this is a vaguely humorous repetition which picks up on the description of Charmides' marvellous physical qualities to make a joke at the expense of the older males in the dialogue, who are portrayed as predictably reacting to the erotic charms of a younger man – nothing to wonder at in that type of response, Socrates tells us. But at the same time this pun keeps what is and is not a cause of wonder foremost in our minds just before we reach the climax of the account of Charmides' charms, the comparison of his form to that of a statue. At this point the description suddenly collapses the boundaries between the animate and the inanimate: are the viewers here lusting after a young man, or a work of art?

The choice of the word *agalma* here increases the sense that the visual effect of Charmides' entrance is truly marvellous. There might even be a further boundary being collapsed here – that between mortal and god. An *agalma* suggests that the statue in question is a depiction of a god rather than that of a man and hints that the representation is a special cause of delight.⁶ The wondrous effect of his appearance can even be seen as a sort of pseudo-divine epiphany.⁷ The very boundaries between gods and men, inanimate and animate objects are seemingly challenged by the young man's marvellous beauty. Indeed, Socrates picks up on this sense that Charmides' physique somehow goes 'beyond the bounds' of what is natural in his response to Chaerephon when he affirms that the young man is indeed 'exceedingly' (ὕπερφυῶς) beautiful. The adverb takes on the sense

⁶ Other words for statues, such as ἀνδριάς, are much more common for depictions of mortals (especially real-life mortals rather than mythical figures). Platt (2011) 90 sums up the wondrous effect which the connection of *agalmata* to the divine sphere tends to produce: "the *agalma* projected a glorious radiance that pertained to the immortal sphere, but was also closely bound to the material significance of precious objects, simultaneously encompassing the notion of things mysteriously alive and the splendid, 'thaumastic' effects of superior craftsmanship".

⁷ Steiner (2001) 130: "the youth's advent and appearance have all the qualities of a divine epiphany". Cf. Platt (2011) 56: "In the vocabulary of archaic Greek experience, an epiphany functions as the ultimate form of *thauma*".

of ‘preternaturally’ here in conjunction with the use of *agalma*; the idea is that this is not a normal, human sort of beauty.⁸ There is, however, a certain ambivalence inherent in this description. The use of *agalma* hints that Charmides’ looks are worthy of the gods themselves. In the Classical period, the surface appearance of a sculpture becomes particularly important in creating a dazzling thaumatic effect, and Charmides is certainly able to do that.⁹ But on the other hand, a potential superficiality and hollowness are being hinted at here. Is Charmides all surface just as a statue is? Or is he beautiful on the inside as well as on the surface?

In fact, Socrates’ conversation with Chaerephon only makes sense if we bear Charmides’ status as an *agalma* in mind, and realise that by this point in the dialogue the contradiction between surface appearance and inner intellectual capacity has already been strongly established. The possible content of the interior spaces of statues seems to have fascinated the Greeks.¹⁰ The issue of what is inside Charmides soon becomes a similar object of fascination to Socrates and his friend Chaerephon. Immediately after the young man’s entrance Chaerephon tells Socrates that Charmides’ current clothed form pales in comparison with his naked body: his beautiful face would be an object of no interest whatsoever if only he would strip his clothes off and reveal his astonishing physique (οὗτος μέντοι, ἔφη, εἰ ἐθέλοι ἀποδῦναι, δόξει σοι ἀπρόσωπος εἶναι, 154d). But Socrates wants to strip Charmides down even further. He is not so much concerned with what lies

⁸ On the significance of the deliberate use of ὑπερφύως here to mean “preternaturally” see McAvoy (1996) 73. On Charmides’ beyond human qualities cf. Reece (1998) 66: “There was, then, something unreal about Charmides’ attractiveness. He was like a sculpted image, with a superhuman beauty, whose admirers temporarily forgot that they were looking at an individual with a distinctive face and a distinctive identity”. Cf. Power (2011) 85 on the “praeternatural valency” of Charmides as a superhumanly beautiful *thauma* which occupies “an ontologically intermediate position between divine and human”.

⁹ See esp. Neer (2010) 142 ff. Cf. Stewart (1990) 40 on this point: “A perfect finish attracts a customer or delights a god: the work becomes a ‘wonder’ (*thauma*), one of the most powerful terms of commendation in the Greek language”.

¹⁰ See Steiner (2001) 79-134; cf. Neer (2010) 124: “Classical drapery insists that *there is something beneath the carved surface*”; see also 142 ff. on the importance of drapery for the creation of the suggestion that statues have some sort of interior life.

beneath Charmides' drapery, but with what lies within the young man himself: is his soul well-formed? (εἰ τὴν ψυχὴν, ἣν δ' ἐγώ, τυγχάνει εὖ πεφυκώς, 154d). Chaerephon promises that Charmides is indeed just as well-made on the inside as he is on the outside (ἀλλ', ἔφη, πάνυ καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθὸς ἐστὶ καὶ ταῦτα, 154e) – but this remains to be tested. Socrates duly declares that he will 'strip' the young man and visually inspect what lies beneath (τί οὖν, ἔφη, οὐκ ἀπεδύσαμεν αὐτοῦ αὐτὸ τοῦτο καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα πρότερον τοῦ εἶδους, 154e). Furthermore, Charmides' very own drapery is involved in perhaps the dialogue's most memorable moment. Socrates gets a chance to 'see inside' Charmides when he comes and sits beside him (ὁ δ' ἐλθὼν μεταξὺ ἐμοῦ τε καὶ τοῦ Κριτίου ἐκαθέζετο, 155c). The young man is even more breathtakingly beautiful close-up than Socrates had realised, with the result that he is unable even to describe the look which Charmides gave him with his eyes (ἐνέβλεψέ τέ μοι τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἀμήχανόν τι οἶον, 155d). Socrates responds with a look of his own and is overwhelmed with *eros* when he catches a glimpse of what lies beneath Charmides' cloak (εἶδόν τε τὰ ἐντὸς τοῦ ἱματίου καὶ ἐφλεγόμην καὶ οὐκέτ' ἐν ἑμαυτοῦ ἦν, 155d). Of course, Socrates is gazing at the young man's naked body beneath his cloak, but this moment adds to the play with the idea of inside and outside which has consistently been associated with Charmides in this dialogue, as there is perhaps a suggestion that Socrates can see what kind of soul he has at the same time.¹¹ By the end of this opening scene, most of the main concerns of the subsequent dialogue, such as the contrast between the inside and outside of bodies, the nature of *sophrosyne* and its relation to wondrous and erotic sights, are already very clear.

¹¹ See McCabe (2007) 12-14 on the play with the idea of Charmides' inside and outside at the moment when Socrates catches sight of what lies beneath his cloak.

2. Plato's Marvellous Young Men: Theaetetus and Charmides as *Thaumata*

It is helpful at this point to pause and think briefly about another Socratic young man who is also strongly associated with thaumatic effects of a very different sort. As he is presented in his eponymous dialogue, Theaetetus is in many respects the polar opposite of Charmides. Clever, brave and undoubtedly ugly, the young mathematician is explicitly figured as a youthful double of Socrates from the very opening scenes of the dialogue in terms of both his marvellous military bravery and obvious intellectual abilities. While the first image we get of Charmides is of stunning youth and beauty, in the *Theaetetus* the first image we get of Socrates' interlocutor is Euclides' description to Terpsion of a youthful warrior cut off in his prime, grievously injured in battle and scarcely clinging on to life (ζῶντι καὶ μάλα μόλις· χαλεπῶς μὲν γὰρ ἔχει καὶ ὑπὸ τραυμάτων τινῶν, 142b). Terpsion replies that it is not at all strange that Theaetetus has been praised by others for his bravery in battle at Corinth; in fact it would have been strange and 'much more marvellous' if he had not been the kind of man who wins praise by his actions (καὶ οὐδὲν γ' ἄτοπον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πολὺ θαυμαστότερον, εἰ μὴ τοιοῦτος ἦν, 142b).

This opening description of Theaetetus' marvellous bravery is not without a purpose, for this is the first described aspect of his behaviour which recalls that of Socrates himself, whose own brave martial exploits were well-known.¹² These are mentioned at several points in Plato's dialogues, not least in the reference to Socrates' return to Athens (in May 429 BCE) after fighting at Potidaea in *Charmides*' opening lines (ἤκομεν τῇ προτεραίᾳ ἑσπέρας ἐκ Ποτειδαίας ἀπὸ τοῦ στρατοπέδου, οἷον δὲ διὰ χρόνου ἀφιγμένος ἀσμένως ἦα ἐπὶ τὰς συνήθεις διατριβάς, 153a). Socrates' ability to withstand

¹² For an excellent overview of Socrates' military career and its depiction in Plato's dialogues see Nails (2002) 264-65.

the rigours of campaign and fight bravely at Potidaea also figures prominently in Alcibiades' repeated mentions of the 'marvellous' aspects of his behaviour in the *Symposium*.¹³ His bravery in the retreat from Delium (424 BCE) is also mentioned both in that dialogue (221a-c) and in the *Laches* (181b), where Socrates' own brave conduct provides a starting point for the wider discussion of *andreia* itself.

Theaetetus' military exploits will turn out to be equally impressive. But on Socrates' first meeting with the young man it is his intellectual qualities alone that elicit wonder. This becomes apparent before Socrates even meets Theaetetus in the flesh, when Theodorus praises the young man at length (143e-44b):

καὶ μὴν, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐμοὶ τε εἰπεῖν καὶ σοὶ ἀκοῦσαι πάννυ ἄξιον, οἷον ὑμῖν τῶν πολιτῶν μειρακίῳ ἐντετύχηκα. καὶ εἰ μὲν ἦν καλός, ἐφοβούμην ἂν σφόδρα λέγειν, μὴ καὶ τῷ δόξω ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ αὐτοῦ εἶναι· νῦν δέ — καὶ μή μοι ἄχθου — οὐκ ἔστι καλός, προσέοικε δὲ σοὶ τὴν τε σιμότητα καὶ τὸ ἔξω τῶν ὀμμάτων· ἥττον δὲ ἢ σὺ ταῦτ' ἔχει. ἀδεῶς δὴ λέγω. εὖ γὰρ ἴσθι ὅτι ὦν δὴ πάποτε ἐνέτυχον — καὶ πάννυ πολλοῖς πεπλησίακα — οὐδένα πῶ ἡσθόμην οὕτω θαυμαστικῶς εὖ πεφυκότα. τὸ γὰρ εὐμαθὴ ὄντα, ὡς ἄλλω χαλεπόν, πρᾶον αὖ εἶναι διαφερόντως, καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις ἀνδρεῖον παρ' ὄντινόν, ἐγὼ μὲν οὕτ' ἂν ὥρόμην γενέσθαι οὔτε ὁρῶ γιγνόμενον· ἀλλ' οἱ τε ὀξεῖς ὥσπερ οὗτος καὶ ἀγχείνοι καὶ μνήμονες ὡς τὰ πολλὰ καὶ πρὸς τὰς ὀργὰς ὀξύρροποι εἰσι, καὶ ἄττοντες φέρονται ὥσπερ τὰ ἀνερμάτιστα πλοῖα, καὶ μανικώτεροι ἢ ἀνδρειότεροι φύονται, οἱ τε αὖ ἐμβριθέστεροι νωθοὶ πῶς ἀπαντῶσι πρὸς τὰς μαθήσεις καὶ λήθης γέμοντες. ὁ δὲ οὕτω λείως τε καὶ ἀπταίστως καὶ ἀνυσίμως ἔρχεται ἐπὶ τὰς μαθήσεις τε καὶ ζητήσεις μετὰ πολλῆς πραότητος, οἷον ἐλαίου ρεῦμα ἀγοφητὶ ρέοντος, ὥστε θαυμάσαι τὸ τηλικούτον ὄντα οὕτως ταῦτα διαπράττεσθαι.

Well, Socrates, I think it's very worthy of me telling, and well worthy of you hearing, about a young man I have met with, one of your fellow citizens. And if he were beautiful, I would be very much afraid of speaking, in case I might seem to desire him. But as it is – and don't be aggrieved with me – he isn't beautiful, in fact he resembles you with his snub nose and protruding eyes (though these features are less pronounced in him than in you). Indeed, I speak fearlessly. Be assured

¹³ E.g. at *Symp.* 219b, where Socrates' ability to withstand the cold while on campaign at Potidaea is one aspect of his many wonder-inspiring achievements (πρὸς δὲ αὖ τὰς τοῦ χειμῶνος καρτερήσεις – δεινοὶ γὰρ αὐτόθι χειμῶνες – θαυμάσια εἰργάζετο τὰ τε ἄλλα ...), as is his ability to stand in one spot considering a philosophical problem for an entire day while on campaign, a feat which causes some Ionian soldiers to wonder at him (συννοήσας γὰρ αὐτόθι ἕωθεν τι εἰστήκει σκοπῶν, καὶ ἐπειδὴ οὐ προύχῳρει αὐτῷ, οὐκ ἀνίει ἀλλὰ εἰστήκει ζητῶν ... θαυμάζοντες ἄλλος ἄλλω, 220c).

that of all of those I have ever met – and I have associated with very many – I have never yet seen anyone so marvellously gifted by nature. He is quick to learn, beyond the capacity of other people, and unusually gentle, and on top of all this he is brave compared to any other. I would not have thought such a combination could exist, nor do I see it coming into existence. Instead, those who are sharp and shrewd and with good memories like him are usually quick to anger too, and darting off they are swept away just like ships without ballast, and they are more frenzied than courageous, and those who are steadier are somewhat dull in approaching their studies and are weighed down with forgetfulness. But this young man approaches his studies and inquiries with great gentleness, smoothly, without stumbling, and effectively, like a stream of oil flowing soundlessly, with the result that it is a marvel how he accomplishes these things at such an age as his.

The words of Theaetetus are as surprising and worthy of listening to as any marvel. His uncanny physical resemblance to Socrates more than reiterates the point: this young man is a wonderful interlocutor in an intellectual sense, clearly cast as a sort of potential youthful double of Socrates himself.

The contrast with Charmides could not be starker. Theaetetus is certainly not an object of aesthetic *thauma* in the way that Charmides is, but nevertheless wonder plays a very important part in his characterisation. Out of all of Socrates' interlocutors, Theaetetus is the one who wonders most intently at the type of problems which occupy Socrates himself, as we see at *Theaetetus* 154c:

σ μικρὸν λαβὲ παράδειγμα, καὶ πάντα εἴσει ἃ βούλομαι. ἀστραγάλους γάρ που ἔξ, ἃν μὲν τέτταρας αὐτοῖς προσενέγκῃς, πλείους φαμὲν εἶναι τῶν τεττάρων καὶ ἡμιολίους, ἐὰν δὲ δώδεκα, ἐλάττους καὶ ἡμίσεις· καὶ οὐδὲ ἀνεκτὸν ἄλλως λέγειν· ἢ σὺ ἀνέξει;

Take a small example, and you will know everything that I mean. There are, let's suppose, six knuckle-bones. If you place four beside them, we say that the six knuckle-bones are more than four – half as many more. But if you place twelve beside the six knuckle-bones, we say the six knuckle-bones are fewer – half as many fewer. And surely it's not acceptable to say this? Or will you accept it?

Theaetetus goes on to wonder at the problem to the extent that he ends up in a state of temporary *aporia* (καὶ νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς γε, ὃ Σώκρατες, ὑπερφυῶς ὡς θαυμάζω τί ποτ' ἐστὶ ταῦτα, καὶ ἐνίστε ὡς ἀληθῶς βλέπων εἰς αὐτὰ σκοτοδινιῶ, 154c). Mathematics is the marvel here, not a beautiful body or a sophistic display or a work of art, things which, as we shall see later, are the causes of a very different type of marvelling in Platonic dialogues.¹⁴ In fact, this type of wonder is truly the only beginning of real philosophy, as Socrates himself goes on to tell Theaetetus (μάλα γὰρ φιλοσόφου τοῦτο τὸ πάθος, τὸ θαυμάζειν· οὐ γὰρ ἄλλη ἀρχὴ φιλοσοφίας ἢ αὕτη, 155d).

For Charmides, in contrast, wonder as it exists for Socrates and Theaetetus – the wonder that leads to curiosity and cognitive advancement – is completely alien. In Plato's view, the amazement caused by real-world objects is a potentially dangerous, deceptive and cognitively paralysing one which must be avoided if possible, or handled carefully if not. Charmides *himself* presents a particular risk: he is a desirable object of wonder who physically embodies the distracting and stunning potential of marvelling at the objects of the phenomenal realm. Over the course of the dialogue it emerges that there is little intellectual material inside Charmides at all: like a bronze statue, his exterior causes him to become an object of wonder while he remains somehow hollow at the core.

3. Critias the Poet, Charmides the Actor

The point of the emphasis placed on Charmides' appearance is obvious enough. He is wondrously beautiful on the outside – but not much lies beneath. It does not take long for this suspicion, raised by Socrates' initial focus on Charmides' external appearance, to become apparent. Soon after the boy's grand entrance, Socrates embarks on a conversation

¹⁴ I will return to these alternate forms of Platonic marvelling in chapters six and seven.

with Charmides about the nature of *sophrosyne* in his customary elenctic style. But Socrates' questions are not directed directly at Charmides alone for very long. His cousin and guardian Critias soon has to step in and take over the answerer's role once Charmides' initial ideas – that *sophrosyne* consists of 'doing everything in an orderly and calm fashion' (σωφροσύνη εἶναι τὸ κοσμίως πάντα πράττειν καὶ ἡσυχῇ, 159b), or that *sophrosyne* is the same thing as having a sense of shame (αἰσχύνεσθαι ποιεῖν ἢ σωφροσύνη καὶ αἰσχυνητὸν τὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ εἶναι ὅπερ αἰδῶς ἢ σωφροσύνη, 160e) – both founder.

In fact, it soon turns out that Charmides' third definition of *sophrosyne* – that it is 'minding one's own business' (ἄρτι γὰρ ἀνεμνήσθην ὃ ἤδη τοῦ ἡκουσα λέγοντος, ὅτι σωφροσύνη ἂν εἴη τὸ τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πράττειν, 161b), merely parrots ideas which really belong to Critias. Socrates immediately suspects that this is the case, and after struggling to defend the proposition at any length Charmides, glancing significantly at Critias, confirms his suspicion. He excuses his own difficulties by claiming that the original author of the idea he has been advancing probably did not actually know what it meant either (ἀλλ' ἴσως οὐδὲν κωλύει μηδὲ τὸν λέγοντα μηδὲν εἰδέναι ὃ τι ἐνόει. καὶ ἅμα ταῦτα λέγων ὑπεγέλα τε καὶ εἰς τὸν Κριτίαν ἀπέβλεπεν, 162b). Critias' response to Charmides' move is telling (162c-d):

καὶ ὁ Κριτίας δῆλος μὲν ἦν καὶ πάλαι ἀγωνιῶν καὶ φιλοτίμως πρὸς τε τὸν Χαρμίδην καὶ πρὸς τοὺς παρόντας ἔχων, μόγις δ' ἑαυτὸν ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν κατέχων τότε οὐχ οἷός τε ἐγένετο· δοκεῖ γάρ μοι παντὸς μᾶλλον ἀληθὲς εἶναι, ὃ ἐγὼ ὑπέλαβον, τοῦ Κριτίου ἀκηκοέναι τὸν Χαρμίδην ταύτην τὴν ἀπόκρισιν περὶ τῆς σωφροσύνης. ὁ μὲν οὖν Χαρμίδης βουλόμενος μὴ αὐτὸς ὑπέχειν λόγον ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνον τῆς ἀποκρίσεως, ὑπεκίνει αὐτὸν ἐκεῖνον, καὶ ἐνεδείκνυτο ὡς ἐξεληλεγμένος εἶη· ὁ δ' οὐκ ἠνέσχετο, ἀλλὰ μοι ἔδοξεν ὀργισθῆναι αὐτῷ ὥσπερ ποιητῆς ὑποκριτῇ κακῶς διατιθέντι τὰ ἑαυτοῦ ποιήματα.

And it was clear that Critias had been distressed for a while and was eager for distinction in the eyes of Charmides and those present, and

having scarcely restrained himself before, he was no longer then able at all. For it seems to me that what I had suspected before was completely true, that Charmides had heard his answer about *sophrosyne* from Critias. And so Charmides, since he did not want to play the answerer himself, began to nudge Critias towards it, and pointed out that he had been refuted. But Critias could not bear this, and seemed to me to be angry with him just as a poet is angry at an actor who recites his works badly.

Here a second simile is added to the earlier idea of Charmides as a wonder-inducing *agalma*. Charmides is now an actor, and Critias has become a poet. There is of course a joke here as well: Critias *was* an extremely prolific writer and poet, known to have written hexameter and elegiac poems, tragedies and a satyr play, as well as numerous prose works of various sorts.¹⁵ What is most important here, however, is the sense that Critias has been providing Charmides with an intellectual ‘script’ by providing pre-prepared answers for the discussion with Socrates about the nature of *sophrosyne*. At this point in the dialogue, then, we have been introduced to two similes which indelibly colour our view of Charmides as a Socratic interlocutor. He is beautiful and provokes a paralysing sort of wonder, like an aesthetically beautiful *agalma*, and his intellectual performance has been compared to that of an actor performing someone else’s text – at least up until the point here when he mischievously performs in a way which his director/the author of the text he is performing (i.e. Critias) fails to anticipate.

How are these two images linked, and how do they relate to the wonder Charmides inspires in his viewers? One answer suggests itself by thinking about other instances in Plato where Socrates’ implicit and humorous criticism of Charmides’ reliance on Critias’ ideas is echoed. One such place is the discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of using written texts at the end of the *Phaedrus* (274b-278e). Just as writing cannot defend

¹⁵ For an overview of Critias’ literary career see Nails (2002) 110-11. Solon was famously Critias’ ancestor (see *Chrm.* 155a; *Tim.* 20e), and it is possible that he saw himself as a similar sort of statesman–poet: see Wilson (2003) 187 on Critias’ mimicry of Solon.

itself properly and is only able to repeat the same things when questioned (δόξαις μὲν ἂν ὥς τι φρονούοντας αὐτοὺς λέγειν, ἐὰν δέ τι ἔρη τῶν λεγομένων βουλόμενος μαθεῖν, ἔν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταῦτόν ἀεί, 275d) rather than being able to adapt itself to the argument at hand, leading to the need for its ‘father’ to step in and protect it (πλημμελούμενος δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἐν δίκη λοιδορηθεὶς τοῦ πατρὸς ἀεί δεῖται βοηθοῦ· αὐτὸς γὰρ οὔτ’ ἀμύνασθαι οὔτε βοηθῆσαι δυνατός αὐτῷ, 275e), so too Charmides is incapable of standing up to the rigours of Socratic questioning when advancing a Critian line. Just like a text, he soon needs his (literal) guardian to step in and take over. The problem with both writing, and with relying on the intellectual ideas of another without examining them for oneself, is thus essentially the same for Plato: in both cases, the ideas being voiced belong to someone else.

In other philosophical and rhetorical works of the fourth-century BCE the same sorts of problems are shown to occur even if the text happens to be one’s own. Certain wonderful pre-planned rhetorical effects may be reliably wielded by a speaker, but the written text can never *adapt* effectively to new and unexpected arguments that are put to it in the cut-and-thrust of living debate. This is one of the reasons why Socrates in the *Phaedrus* equates written texts with painted figures: figures in a painting may give the appearance of life, but they, like written texts, are unable to speak to the precise question put to them, remaining silent instead (καὶ γὰρ τὰ ἐκείνης ἔκγονα ἔστηκε μὲν ὡς ζῶντα, ἐὰν δ’ ἀνέρη τι, σεμνῶς πάνυ σιγᾷ, 275d).¹⁶ As we shall see, this quality of *seeming* to be alive – the animation of inanimate material – is one of the qualities most strongly associated with the arousal of *thauma*.¹⁷ We see this problem outlined even more clearly in the thoughts of one of Plato’s contemporaries, the rhetorician Alcidas. In his treatise

¹⁶ Plato is obviously drawing on and complicating an established parallel between performed speech and artistic object here: cf. e.g. the opening of Pindar’s *Nemean* 5 for the comparison of statue and song.

¹⁷ See especially chapter three on this quality in connection with the lyre in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*.

Against the Sophists, Alcidas argues for the supremacy of creating extemporised speeches rather than relying on pre-prepared written speeches, in terms which recall some of Socrates' arguments in the *Phaedrus*. In a passage at 27-28 he argues that speeches written down beforehand are the 'images and outlines and imitations of speeches' (εἰδωλα καὶ σχήματα καὶ μιμήματα λόγων) of speeches made up on the spot, and we can think of them in the same way as we think about 'bronze statues and stone monuments and pictures of living things' (χαλκῶν ἀνδριάντων καὶ λιθίνων ἀγαλμάτων καὶ γεγραμμένων ζώων) because these works of art are similar imitations of real bodies (ἀληθινῶν σωμάτων) which might provide pleasure when looking at them (τέρψιν μὲν ἐπὶ τῆς θεωρίας ἔχει), but which ultimately offer nothing of use (χρῆσιν δ' οὐδεμίαν) beyond that. He goes on to weigh up one of the advantages of using a written speech – the ability to deploy astonishing effects – with the concomitant disadvantages of this approach (28):

τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ὁ γεγραμμένος λόγος, ἐνὶ σχήματι καὶ τάξει κεκρημένος, ἐκ βιβλίου μὲν θεωρούμενος ἔχει τινὰς ἐκπλήξεις, ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν καιρῶν ἀκίνητος ὢν οὐδεμίαν ὠφέλειαν τοῖς κεκτημένοις παραδίδωσιν. ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἀνδριάντων καλῶν ἀληθινὰ σώματα πολὺ χεῖρους τὰς εὐμορφίας ἔχοντα πολλαπλασίους ἐπὶ τῶν ἔργων τὰς ὠφελείας παραδίδωσιν, οὕτω καὶ λόγος ὁ μὲν ἀπ' αὐτῆς τῆς διανοίας ἐν τῷ παραυτίκα λεγόμενος ἔμψυχός ἐστι καὶ ζῇ καὶ τοῖς πράγμασιν ἔπεται καὶ τοῖς ἀληθέσιν ἀφωμοίωται σώμασιν, ὁ δὲ γεγραμμένος εἰκόνι λόγου τὴν φύσιν ὁμοίαν ἔχων ἀπάσης εὐεργεσίας ἄμοιρος καθέστηκεν.

In the same way a written speech, which has one form and arrangement, has certain astonishing features (τινὰς ἐκπλήξεις) when consulted from a book, but being incapable of movement at critical times, it provides no benefit to the user. And just as real bodies are much less well-formed than beautiful statues, but they provide very many benefits in getting things done, so is the speech which is spoken from the mind on the spur of the moment ensouled and living and keeps up with events and is like those real bodies. But the written speech has a nature which is like a mere image of a real speech and is devoid of all ability.

Premeditation and planning supposedly lead to guaranteed *ekplēxis* here, but at the expense of the ability of one's argument to move around of its own accord and adapt to

the current situation: precisely what Socrates describes in the *Phaedrus*. There is a deeper dichotomy implied by Alcidas' words here – that between style and content. Ekplectic devices can be pre-prepared with a particular stunning effect in mind, he seems to be saying, but the sacrifice this entails is the loss of the ability to move around within an argument. Here again pre-written/pre-prepared speeches have become only imitations of 'real bodies' (τοῖς ἀληθέσιν ἀφωμοίωται σώμασιν) and are not themselves truly alive – though the implication is that such speeches might give such a marvellous and thrilling approximation of being alive that it becomes almost impossible, at least for the audience, to tell the difference.¹⁸

Either becoming a producer of, or falling prey to the *thauma* created by these astonishing pre-planned performances, is a risky business, at least in Plato's view. The comparisons of Charmides to an *agalma* and an actor are both parallel to, and equally prescient of, the eventual aporetic outcome of the dialogue, and even the eventual disastrous outcome of Charmides' life. Socrates' failure to have any real effect on the young man is particularly poignant given Charmides' continued association with Critias and their eventual violent ends. Both men lost their lives after involvement with the tumultuous regime of the Thirty: Critias as the notoriously violent leader and figurehead of the group, and Charmides as a member of the Piraeus Ten.¹⁹ There is a perhaps a hint of future trouble, poignant or chilling, depending on how you look at it, at the very end of the dialogue (176b-d). There Charmides promises to obey Critias' advice to attach himself to Socrates, and says he would be acting badly if he did not obey his guardian and follow his orders (εἰ μὴ πειθοίμην σοὶ τῷ ἐπιτρόπῳ καὶ μὴ ποιόην ἃ κελεύεις, 176c). Charmides

¹⁸ Cf. McCoy (2009) 49-51 and Muir (2001) 62 on the contrast between living, moving speeches and inanimate text here.

¹⁹ See Nails (2002) 90-4, 108-13 on the involvement of Critias and Charmides with the actions of the Thirty; for recent discussions of the relevance of the later political careers of Charmides and Critias in relation to Plato's dialogue see Danzig (2013) 486-519 and (2014) 507-24; Flores (2018) 162-88.

even admits that he will resort to force in order to carry out these instructions if necessary (ὡς βιασομένου, ἔφη, ἐπειδὴ περ ὁδε γε ἐπιτάττει· πρὸς ταῦτα σὺ αὖ βουλεύου ὅτι ποιήσεις, 176c). Socrates responds that no living man could oppose Charmides if he decided to use force (σοὶ γὰρ ἐπιχειροῦντι πράττειν ὅτιοῦν καὶ βιαζομένῳ οὐδείς οἶός τ' ἔσται ἐναντιοῦσθαι ἀνθρώπων, 176d). On the one hand the tone is joking, an obvious reference to the difficulty of resisting Charmides' erotic charms. But nonetheless, there is still an uncomfortable hint at the notoriously forceful involvement of these two figures in the later violence associated with the period of the Thirty's power.²⁰ Within the setting of the dialogue, the young man's status as a wondrous object of *eros*, and his inability to make much headway with his attempts to engage in philosophic thinking, really matter: by the end of the dialogue, the failure of Socratic philosophy and the inability to resist certain types of *thaumata* are shown to have a terrible price.

4. *Thauma Idesthai*: Wonder, Divine Artworks and the Ekphrastic Tradition

In *Charmides*, *Theaetetus* and numerous other dialogues Plato plays with the original, distinctly visual aspects of *thaumata* and compares and contrasts these objects of the phenomenal world with the *thaumata* of philosophical reasoning, which are not visible at all. Why does Plato return to the lure of wonder so frequently in his dialogues? And why does he hit upon *thauma* as one of the most powerful (and potentially disturbing) effects of verbal and visual artworks alike?

To begin to answer this question, it is necessary to examine the connection between wonder and vision in Greek culture from the archaic period onwards.²¹ This

²⁰ See Beversluis (2000) 157.

²¹ Prier (1989) provides the best overview of the strong connections between *thauma* and vision in his phenomenological account of sight and appearance in Archaic Greek poetry; see also Hunzinger (1993), (2015) and (2018) on *thauma* and the visual from Homer onwards; cf. D'Angour (2011) 134, 148-50 on

connection is extremely strong. In early Greek hexameter poetry, sight is the sense most clearly linked to the marvellous.²² In Homer and Hesiod the formulaic phrase ‘θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι’ points to this, and it is primarily their impressive visual aspects that make phenomena explicitly labelled as *thaumata* wonder-inducing. For example, impressive weaponry or armour is often said to induce wonder in its beholder, especially in the *Iliad*: the chariot prepared by Hera and Athene to aid the Achaeans (τῶν ἦτοι χρυσέη ἵτις ἄφθοιτος, αὐτὰρ ὑπερθε | χάλκε’ ἐπίσσωτρα προσαρηρότα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι, 5.724-25) and Rhesus’ golden armour (τεύχεα δὲ χρύσεια πελώρια θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι | ἥλυθ’ ἔχων, 10.439-40) are both described as wondrous to look at. Achilles’ original set of armour too is an object of great *thauuma*, as Achilles himself describes the sight of it in the hands of Hector after the death of Patroclus (τὸν ἀπώλεσα, τεύχεα δ’ Ἑκτώρ | δηώσας ἀπέδυσσε πελώρια θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι | καλά, 18.82-84). Beautiful houses or palaces and their contents are described as similarly visually striking, both in the *Iliad* (e.g. Thetis’ visit to Hephaestus’ abode, complete with marvellous self-propelled tripods: τρίποδας γὰρ εἰκοσι πάντας ἔτευχεν | ἐστάμεναι περὶ τοῖχον ἐϋσταθέος μεγάροιο, | χρύσεια δέ σφ’ ὑπὸ κύκλα ἐκάστω πυθμένι θῆκεν, | ὄφρα οἱ αὐτόματοι θεῖον δυσαιάτ’ ἀγῶνα | ἦδ’ αὖτις πρὸς δῶμα νεοίατο

the connections between the concept of novelty and *thauuma*, dazzling light, vision and responses to visual artworks in ancient Greek culture.

²² There are a few exceptions in early Greek hexameter poetry which designate sound or speech as a *thauuma*, though in general the question of the relation of *thauuma* to what is heard is explored much more intensely later in the Greek tradition. The exceptions which we do find in Archaic poetry include Telemachus’ ever more daring speeches in the *Odyssey*, which increasingly astonish Penelope and the suitors as the narrative proceeds (see 1.381-82: ὣς ἔφαθ’, οἱ δ’ ἄρα πάντες ὁδᾶξ ἐν χεῖλεσι φύντες | Τηλέμαχον θαύμαζον, ὃ θαρσαλέως ἀγόρευε, repeated at 18.410-11; 20.268-69). But it is not primarily the sound of Telemachus’ speech or the even the speech itself which causes the *thauuma* in these cases, but the overall impression created by the rapid change in his behaviour. More ambiguous perhaps is the suitors’ wondering response at *Od.* 4.638-39 (ὣς ἔφαθ’, οἱ δ’ ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἐθάμβεον· οὐ γὰρ ἔφαντο | ἐς Πύλον οἴχεσθαι Νηληϊῶν) to the report that Telemachus has dared to go to Pylos without their prior knowledge. In this case it is not only Telemachus’ unexpected behaviour, but the surprising nature of the report which has caused this awestruck response. This second example is very much the exception to the general rule that Homeric *thauuma*, in terms of its sensory basis, is grounded primarily in the visual. An even more interesting example is Hes. *Theog.* 834, where the many voices and sounds which Typhon utters are said to be ‘marvels to hear’ (θαύματ’ ἀκοῦσαι). Pindar picks up on this unusual Hesiodic passage in his own description of the wonder of Aetna (whose eruptions are actually caused by Typhon, who is imprisoned beneath the mountain) near the beginning of *Pythian* 1, where he puts his own twist on what ‘hearing’ a marvel is by claiming that even hearing a *report* of Typhon’s angry outbursts, rather than seeing him, or hearing the noises he makes, is enough to constitute a *thauuma* (θαυμάσιον προσιδέσθαι θαῦμα δὲ καὶ παρεόντων ἀκοῦσαι, *P*1.26).

θαῦμα ιδέσθαι, 18.373-77) and in the *Odyssey* (e.g. Telemachus and his companions marvel at Menelaus' palace: οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες | θαύμαζον κατὰ δῶμα διοτρεφέος βασιλῆος, 4.43-44).

Other, more elaborate objects of craft elicit even greater wonder from their viewers. In longer passages of epic ekphrasis the designation of a beautiful object of (often divine) material craft as a *thauma idesthai* becomes a *topos* of ekphrastic form from Homer onwards.²³ The shield of Achilles in *Iliad* 18 is the most important and obvious example. In fact, the creation of *thauma* is revealed to be one purpose of the construction of Achilles' new shield even before Hephaestus sets to work making it. The god tells Thetis that his aim is to ensure that future viewers will wonder at the shield which he crafts, and this ability to cause future *thauma* is explicitly modelled as a consolation for the fact that he is unable to protect Achilles from his inevitable death (18.462-67):

τὴν δ' ἡμείβετ' ἔπειτα περικλυτὸς ἀμφιγυήεις·
θάρσει· μὴ τοι ταῦτα μετὰ φρεσὶ σῇσι μελόντων.
αἶ γάρ μιν θανάτοιο δυσηχέος ὧδε δυναίμην
νόσφιν ἀποκρύψαι, ὅτε μιν μόρος αἰνὸς ἰκάνοι,
ὥς οἱ τεύχεα καλὰ παρέσσειται, οἷά τις αὖτε
ἀνθρώπων πολέων θαυμάσσεται, ὅς κεν ἴδῃται.

Then the famous lame god replied to her: "Take heart, and do not let these things trouble your mind. If only I could hide him away far from screeching death, when dreadful fate reaches him, as surely as beautiful armour will be his, such that anyone among the multitude of men will marvel at it, whoever sees it".

²³ The best discussion of the importance of *thauma* as a reaction to ekphrasis and as a means of poets making claims for the power of their own art remains that of Cunningham (2007) 65-66, who argues that *thauma* is "[t]he prophetic word of the ekphrastic" and that the "thaumaturgical force" surrounding the ekphrastic object is something that "writing and writers want to share, and are in fact claiming by proxy, by analogy, by such intermedial intrusions into the text". For other good discussions of the importance of *thauma* in ekphrasis see Gutzwiller (2002) 96-97; Becker (1992) 12-13, 18-19 and (1995) 29-37, 110, 129; Race (1988) 56-67; and Squire (2013) 159-63.

Achilles' possession of the ultimate object of divine craft comes to symbolise his liminal position between gods and men, a position which attracts a wondering response from others. Furthermore, the potential *thauma* which the shield will inspire in the future is parallel to the workings of *kleos* itself as a compensation for Achilles' mortality. As such, we here find the first hint that the ekphrastic passage to follow, and the *thauma* it both describes and causes, is in some sense analogous to the sense of wonder the listener putatively feels at hearing the accounts of heroic *kleos* enshrined within the *Iliad* itself.²⁴ The scenes on the shield reinforce this idea. One of the main reasons for the guarantee of this future *thauma* is presumably the combination of movement and voice on Achilles' shield, which renders it a special wonder to look upon. In fact, the reaction of the young women who stand and marvel at the sight of the men whirling about and dancing to the sound of flutes and lyres potentially models the ideal wondering response to the ekphrasis itself (κοῦροι δ' ὀρχηστῆρες ἐδίνεον, ἐν δ' ἄρα τοῖσιν | αὐλοὶ φόρμιγγές τε βοὴν ἔχον· αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες | ἰστάμεναι θαύμαζον ἐπὶ προθύροισιν ἐκάστη, 18.494-96). The figures on the shield seem almost to be alive, as the depiction of two forces clashing and fighting depicts figures who are like 'living mortals' makes clear (ὠμίλεον δ' ὥς τε ζωοὶ βροτοὶ ἦδ' ἐμάχοντο, 18.539). The fact that the shield, a work of plastic art, somehow manages to involve movement and sound as well is one of the primary aspects of the wonder it inspires; it creates the impression that in some sense the work itself is a living and breathing object. The play between the animate and the inanimate, the static and the illusionistic impression of realism that this creates is of the utmost importance, as the 'great marvel' of the depiction of the ploughed field being black, although it is made of

²⁴ For the view in antiquity that ekphrastic objects in some sense reflect the poet's own verbal craft cf. Σ ad. *Il.* 3.126-27 Erbse on Helen's tapestry, which depicts the battles of Trojans and Achaeans: ἀξιόχρεον ἀρχέτυπον ἀνέπλασεν ὁ ποιητὴς τῆς ἰδίας ποιήσεως. See also Becker (1995) 55 on this comment.

gold, emphasises (ἡ δὲ μελαίνετ' ὀπισθεν, ἀρηρομένη δὲ ἐώκει, | χρυσεῖη περ ἐοῦσα· τὸ δὴ περὶ θαῦμα τέτυκτο, 18.548-49).

In the description of Achilles' shield the essential ingredients of ekphrastic *thauma*, the verbal depiction of movement and sound in a description of a seemingly static and voiceless work of visual art, become essential *topoi* of the ekphrastic tradition. The Hesiodic *Scutum* bears witness to the importance of these ekphrastic elements: the shield itself is immediately designated a θαῦμα ιδέσθαι (140), and various details are singled out as especially worthy of wonder, such as the fearsome snakes which are described as 'burning' (τὰ δ' ἐδαίετο θαυματὰ ἔργα, 165); the figure of Perseus floating off the ground, (ἐν δ' ἦν ἠυκόμου Δανάης τέκος, ἱππότη Περσεύς, | οὔτ' ἄρ' ἐπιψαύων σάκεος ποσὶν οὔθ' ἐκὰς αὐτοῦ, | θαῦμα μέγα φράσσασθ', ἐπεὶ οὐδαμῇ ἐστήρικτο, 216-18). Sight, sound and movement are often combined: deadly Fate glares and bellows loudly (δεινὸν δερκομένη καναχῆσί τε βεβρυχυῖα, 160); the Gorgons rush after Perseus and the shield rings out sharply as they do so (Γοργόνες ἄπλητοί τε καὶ οὐ φαταὶ ἐρρώοντο | ἰέμεναι μαπέειν· ἐπὶ δὲ χλωροῦ ἀδάμαντος | βαινουσέων ἰάχεσκε σάκος μεγάλῳ ὀρυμαγδῷ | ὀξέα καὶ λιγέως, 230-33); women cry out and rend their cheeks, looking as if they are alive (αἱ δὲ γυναῖκες ἐυδμήτων ἐπὶ πύργων | χαλκέων ὀξὺ βόων, κατὰ δ' ἐδρύπτοντο παρειάς, | ζωῇσιν ἵκελαι, ἔργα κλυτοῦ Ἥφαιστοιο, 242-44). Other details present an especially hyperbolic rendering of the thaumatic features of the Iliadic shield (314-20):

ἀμφὶ δ' ἵπυν ῥέεν Ὠκεανὸς πλήθοντι ἐοικώς,
πᾶν δὲ συνεῖχε σάκος πολυδαίδαλον· οἱ δὲ κατ' αὐτὸν
κύκνοι ἀερσιπότες μεγάλ' ἥπυνον, οἳ ῥά τε πολλοὶ
νῆχον ἐπ' ἄκρον ὕδωρ· παρὰ δ' ἰχθύες ἐκλονέοντο·
θαῦμα ιδεῖν καὶ Ζηνὶ βαρυκτύπῳ, οὗ διὰ βουλὰς
Ἥφαιστος ποίησε σάκος μέγα τε στιβαρόν τε,
ἀρσάμενος παλάμησι.

And around the rim Ocean was flowing as if in full flood, and it was surrounding the highly-wrought shield on all sides. And upon

it were high-soaring swans calling loudly, and many were swimming on the water's surface. And beside them the fishes were being driven in confusion. It was a wonder to see even for deep-thundering Zeus, through whose designs Hephaestus made the great and sturdy shield, joining it together with his hands.

The Hesiodic *Scutum* is the first major example we have of a work which plays with the thaumatic *topoi* of ekphrasis initiated in the extant tradition by the description of Achilles' shield in *Iliad* 18.²⁵ But this importance of *thauma* in ekphrasis never diminishes. In fact, by the time we reach the Hellenistic period, the power of *thauma* within ekphrastic description is explored in increasingly sophisticated ways. The sense that the distinctions between the living products of nature and the products of human craft which imitate those natural beings are collapsing is particularly prevalent. A new emphasis on the capability of the artwork to speak and move as if it were alive is yoked to a parallel amplification of the sense that the *thauma* of the work of visual art being described also applies to the poet's verbal art.

Furthermore, the invented object of the poetic description often points, even more emphatically than Homer's shield, to the poem itself. This is certainly the case in the ekphrasis of the goatherd's cup in Theocritus' first *Idyll*, where we find a much more explicit connection between the parallel processes of visual, verbal and textual artmaking. *Thauma* is referred to most directly when Theocritus, in his most forceful gesture of this kind in the poem, directs our response towards the cup-as-poetry at the end of the ekphrasis, when the acanthus curling round the cup is described as 'a wonder of the world of the goatherd: a marvel to astonish your heart' (αἰπολικὸν θάημα· τέρας κέ το θυμὸν ἁτύξαι, 56). The cup itself is offered in exchange for song within the narrative of the *Idyll*: Thyrsis' song – and by extension, Theocritus' own bucolic song – is therefore held up as

²⁵ See Martin (2005) 158-60 for discussion of other passages in the *Scutum* which make hyperbolic use of references to sound, spectacular sights, colour and movement in comparison to the description of the Iliadic shield.

inspiring a similar sense of *thauma* as the cup. Moreover, *thauma* has already been hinted at in the beginning of the ekphrasis, through the choice of the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus* as the model for the description of the ivy tendrils that surround the cup just as the Ocean surrounds the shield of Achilles (29-31):

τῷ ποτὶ μὲν χεῖλῃ μαρύεται ὑψόθι κισσός,
κισσὸς ἐλιγρὺσφω κεκονιμένος· ἅ δὲ κατ' αὐτόν
καρπῷ ἔλιξ εἰλεῖται ἀγαλλομένα κροκόεντι.

High up on the lip winds ivy, ivy sprinkled with helichryse,
and along it curls round the ivy tendril exulting in its yellow
fruit.

Gutzwiller has correctly pointed out that the description of the ivy which entwines itself around the mast of the ship in the following passage of the *Homeric Hymn* (38-41) forms the background to Theocritus' version here:

αὐτίκα δ' ἀκρότατον παρὰ ἱστίον ἐξετανύσθη
ἄμπελος ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα, κατεκρμνῶντο δὲ πολλοί
βότρυες· ἄμφ' ἱστὸν δὲ μέλας εἰλίσσετο κισσός
ἄνθεσι τηλεθάων, χαρίεις δ' ἐπὶ καρπὸς ὀρώρει·

Now along the topmost part of the sail a vine spread out this
side and that, and many clusters of grapes hung from it. Ivy
was circling around the dark mast, blooming with flowers, and
lovely fruit grew on it.

The rapid and spontaneous appearance of ivy winding its way over the ship is one of a series of *thaumata* through which Dionysus manifests himself to the pirates on board the ship in the *Hymn* (τάχα δέ σφιν ἐφαίνετο θαυματὰ ἔργα, 34). The point of this echo is to imbue the Theocritean cup with the same sort of wondrous feeling as the description of Dionysus' series of epiphanic *thaumata* in that poem. Gutzwiller describes this perfectly: “[w]hat Theocritus has done here is to recast a miracle, which was acceptable under the

terms of archaic religious thought, into a description of an object of art, marvelous in that its motion suggests either supreme artistic workmanship or the naïve imagination of the goatherd”.²⁶ Theocritus’ own careful use of language in these lines demonstrates the way in which striving for mimetically realistic effects in order to produce *thauma* is an aim of his own art as well. The complex word order in these lines reflects the intertwined nature of the plants described, with the mimetic potential of the text on the page activating yet another source of *thauma* for the reader as Theocritus creates a visual representation of the artefact he is describing through words.²⁷ This kind of play with the look of the written text on the page reminds us of other Hellenistic innovations which perhaps aim at a similar sort of *thauma*: the so-called ‘pattern-poems’ (*technopaignia*), and the increasing use of acrostics in verse of the period.²⁸

In addition to this play with the verbal, the visual and the written there is one more crucial sense in which the *thauma* of the specifically written text is increasingly activated in Hellenistic literature. The ability to transform conventionally prosaic or technical material into an aesthetically pleasing epigrammatic text becomes itself a *thauma* in the Milan Papyrus epigrams of Posidippus. In this collection the language of *thauma* takes on a programmatic significance in the descriptions of wondrous engraved stones which open the collection. In this section, labelled *Lithika*, the precious stones which are described become objects of amazement through their combination of wondrous natural properties and skilful applications of human craft. Unlike contemporary prose technical treatises on such stones, such as those of Theophrastus, the ekphrastic descriptions of gems in Posidippus’ epigrams do not aim at elucidating the causes or context of these

²⁶ Gutzwiller (1986) 254; cf. Hunter (1999) 78 on the way “one Dionysiac miracle prompting amazement (*h. Dion.* 37) is used to describe another” in this passage.

²⁷ Cf. Hunter (1999) 78 on the mimetic qualities of the word order here, which reflects the movement of the plants.

²⁸ See Luz (2010) for an overview of use of *technopaignia* and acrostics in this period.

naturally occurring *thaumata*.²⁹ Instead the aim of these epigrams is to provoke, as Krevans astutely points out, “not the satisfied ‘aha!’ of understanding, but the round-eyed ‘oh!’ of wonder”.³⁰ This ‘aesthetic of wonder’ is created primarily by the speaker's focus on the combination of the naturally wondrous properties of stones and the marvellous human *technē* involved in gem carving. This emphasises the sense that nature’s own artwork is in some way competing with, or even now actually subject to, the creative abilities of ordinary humans. Three closely connected epigrams (13, 15 and 17 AB) in the *Lithika* make the focus on this particular combination of natural and manmade *thauma* very explicit:

κ[ερδα]λέη λίθος ἦδε· λιπα[ινομένη]ς γε μὲν αὐτῆς,
[φέγγο]ς ὅλους ὄγκους, θαῦ[μ’ ἀπάτη]ς, περιθεῖ·
ῥ[γκων] δ’ ἀσκελέων, ὠκὺ γ[λυπτὸς λ]ῖς ὁ Πέρσης
[τε]ῖνων ἀστράπτει πρὸς καλὸν ἥελιον.

This is a crafty stone. When oiled a light runs around its entire mass, a wonder of deception. But when the mass is dry, straightaway the carved Persian lion flashes forth, extending himself towards the beautiful sun.

λοῦ ποταμῖδός κελάδων ἐπὶ χεῖλεσιν, ἀλλὰ δράκοντος
εἶχέ ποτ’ εὐπώγων τόνδε λίθον κεφαλῇ
πυκνὰ φαληριόωντα· τὸ δὲ γλυφὲν ἄρμα κατ’ αὐτῷ
τοῦθ’ ὑπὸ Λυγκείου βλέμματος ἐγλύφετο
ψεύδει χειρὸς ὅμοιον· ἀποπλασθὲν γὰρ ὁρᾶται
ἄρμα, κατὰ πλάτεος δ’ οὐκ ἂν ἴδοις προβόλους·
ἦι καὶ θαῦμα πέλει μόχθου μέγα, πῶς ὁ λιθουργὸς
ἰτὰς ἀτενιζούσας οὐκ ἐμόγησε κόρας.

Not a river sounding upon its banks, but the well-bearded head of a snake once held this stone, thickly crested with foam. The carved

²⁹ On the strong link of the papyrus to the content of contemporary prose treatises see Krevans (2005) 88; cf. M. Smith (2004) 109 for the idea that in the *Lithika* Posidippus reworks the scientific prose of Theophrastus’ writings on stones in the same way as a real-life craftsmen works up gems into beautiful aesthetic objects.

³⁰ See Krevans (2005) 91; cf. Krevans (2011) 126: “In paradoxography, science is converted into ecphrasis: stop, look, and wonder”. See Bing (2005) 134 and Krevans (2005) 89-92 on the similarities in thematic content between Posidippus’ *Lithika* and contemporary paradoxographical collections. See M. Smith (2004) 105 and Elsner (2014) 159-62 for a more general discussion of the repeated use of the language of *thauma* in the *Lithika*.

chariot upon it, like a white mark on a fingernail,³¹ was carved by the eyesight of Lynceus. For a chariot is seen to be formed there, but on the surface you cannot see anything that projects out. This is the great wonder of his toil, how the stone-cutter did not damage his eyes while looking intently.

σκέψαι ὁ Μύσιος οἶον ἀνερρίζωσεν Ὀλυμπος
τόνδε λίθον διπλῇ θαυμάσιον δυνάμει·
τῇδε μὲν ἔλκει ρεῖα τὸν ἀντήεντα σίδηρον
μάγνης οἷα λίθος, τῇδε δ' ἄπωθεν ἔλῃ,
πλευρῇ ἐναντιοεργός· ὃ καὶ τέρας ἐξ ἐνὸς αὐτοῦ,
πῶς δύο μιμεῖται χερμάδας εἰς προβολάς.

Look hard at what Mysian Olympus has uprooted: this stone marvellous because of its double power. On the one side it attracts the iron pitted against it easily, like a magnet. But on the other side it thrusts away causing the opposite effect. And the marvel is how one stone on its own imitates two stones with its impulses.³²

In the first epigram (13) the combination of human and natural *thaumata* is emphasised – the stone has a naturally astonishing lustre when oiled, a lustre made all the more marvellous when the engraved Persian lion is spotted. The special abilities of either man or nature to make stones something to wonder at are then examined in turn. In epigram 15, the stone itself is not said to have any particular exceptional qualities, but it soon becomes something to marvel at due to Lynceus' labour. In epigram 17, the magnetic stone described needs no human helping hand to become doubly wondrous because of its inherently paradoxical qualities. In each case, Posidippus' ability to transform the dry scholarly material of the Peripatetic school on the subject of stones into a series of intricate and interconnected textual 'gems' is surely intended to provoke a concomitant sense of double wonder at his own skill as a writer. What makes the Milan Papyrus particularly interesting is the fact that here a new element has been introduced into the

³¹ The meaning and interpretation of the phrase 'ψεύδεϊ χειρὸς ὅμοιον' has long puzzled scholars: see Gow (1954) 198 and Gow and Page (1965) 500–501 for the suggestion that this phrase refers to white marks on fingernails.

³² The meaning of εἰς προβολάς is ambiguous: see Pajón Leyra and Sánchez Muñoz (2015) 32–33 on possible interpretations of this phrase.

already conventional ekphrastic contest between the verbal and the visual: there is no longer a simple implied contest between verbal and plastic skill, but an entanglement between the visual, verbal and textual works of human artists. Posidippus' achievement in creating an artwork out of the seemingly intractable material provided by previous prose literature turns the text itself into the ultimate object of aesthetic craft, which naturally causes *thauma* in the reader. In the world of the book, the sculpting of radically different genres out of the raw material of the literary tradition now becomes the most wondrous craft of all. It is this process which lies at the heart of the aesthetics of the Hellenistic paradoxographer, as the next chapter will demonstrate.

When viewed from this angle it becomes easier to understand why a writer working in an excerpting and miscellanistic mode can, contrary to modern value judgments about the aesthetic quality of such texts, come to be seen as an extremely accomplished and wonder-inducing artist in their own right. In the Hellenistic period it is the paradoxographer who takes this search for artistic *thauma* to its logical extreme and produces marvels of his own through the deft and surprising manipulation of pre-existing writings. The emergence of paradoxographical collections therefore need not be viewed as a strange, unmotivated and pointless aberration, but as a cultural manifestation of the tendency to strive towards the production of artistic works which aim at arousing *thauma* first and foremost. It is this production of textual *thauma* which I will continue to examine in relation to paradoxographical collections in the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Reading *Thauma*: Paradoxography and the Textual Collection of Marvels

89. ἴδιον δὲ καὶ τοῦτο, νεκρῶν τινων τοῦ μυελοῦ σαπέντος ἐκ τῆς ῥάχεως
ὀφίδια γίνεσθαι, ἔαν πρὸ τοῦ τελευτᾶν ὄφεως τεθνηκότος ἐλκύσωσι τὴν
ὀσμήν. καὶ τινι καὶ ἐπιγραμματίῳ περιπεπτώκαμεν Ἀρχελάου, οὗ καὶ
πρότερον ἐμνήσθημεν, ὃς περὶ τῶν θαυμασίων καὶ τοῦτο καταγράφει, καὶ
φησι·

πάντα δι' ἀλλήλων ὁ πολὺς σφραγίζεται αἰὼν·
ἄνδρὸς γὰρ κοίλης ἐκ μυελοῦ ῥάχεως
δεινὸς γίνετ' ὄφιν, νέκυος δειλοῖο σαπέντος,
ὃς νέον ἐκ τούτου πνεῦμα λάβη τέρας,
τεθνεότος ζωὴν ἔλκων φύσιν· εἰ δὲ τόδ' ἐστίν,
οὐ θαῦμα βλαστεῖν τὸν διφυῆ Κέκροπα.

Antigonus of Carystus, *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* 89

89. And this is also strange: little snakes are born out of the rotten spinal marrow of dead men if they breathe in the stench of a dead snake before death. And I have encountered an epigram on this theme by Archelaus, whom I mentioned before, who writes on marvels and says this:

Long life puts its own stamp on each thing, marking one by another,
for from the marrow of the hollow spine of a man
a terrible snake is born, from a wretched corpse that has rotted away,
a snake which draws new breath from this prodigy,
dragging a living nature from a dead man: and if this is the case,
it is no wonder that the bi-formed Cecrops blossomed forth.

By the time we reach this graphic poetic account of spontaneous generation by Archelaus the Egyptian, cited in a Hellenistic paradoxographical collection attributed to Antigonus of Carystus (fl. c. 240 BCE) called *Ἱστοριῶν παραδόξων συναγωγή*, the reader has already encountered eighty-eight tantalisingly brief accounts of equally enigmatic *thaumata*.¹ Without explanation, reasoning or context, we have been asked to marvel at

¹ This paradoxographical collection survives in a single ms. copy (Cod. Pal. graec. 398), now in Heidelberg. See *PGR* pp. 32-115 for an edition of the remaining fragments. The name 'Antigonus' is inscribed at the collection's opening and most probably refers to Antigonus of Carystus, a third-century BCE author associated with the court at Pergamon, who wrote a work entitled *Lives of Philosophers* and probably also

many brief and bizarre accounts of zoological wonders, such as mice on the island of Gyaros who are able to gnaw through iron (τῆς δὲ Καρυστίας καὶ τῆς Ἀνδρίας χώρας ἐστὶν πλησίον νῆσος, ἢ καλουμένη Γύαρος· ἐνταῦθα οἱ μύες διατρώγουσιν τὸν σίδηρον, 18), nanny-goats which turn around and face the sun as soon as it starts to go down (ὅταν τάχιστα ὁ ἥλιος τραπῇ, ἀντιβλέπουσαι αὐτῷ αἱ αἰγες κατάκεινται, 60), and oxen in Phrygia who are able to wiggle their horns (ἐν Φρυγίᾳ δὲ βοῦς εἶναι, οἱ κινουῦσι τὰ κέρατα, 75). The epigram cited above, by the author Antigonos has earlier referred to as ‘Archelaus the Egyptian’ (Ἀρχέλαος Αἰγύπτιος, 19), is certainly a longer and more obviously artful treatment of paradoxical themes than most other entries in this marvel-collection.² Read in isolation, Archelaus’ epigram appears to represent a typically Hellenistic poetic production, a skilful transformation of a bizarre scientific theory concerning spontaneous generation into an artful poetic form which is comparable with Posidippus’ transformation of the scientific prose of Theophrastus into epigram in his *Lithika*, or Aratus’ recasting of Eudoxus of Cnidus’ scientific astronomical prose work into hexameters in his didactic *Phaenomena*.³

For the modern reader, it is perhaps tempting to excerpt this excerpted epigram of Archelaus from its broader context, ignoring the surrounding paradoxographical prose and the relation of that prose text to the more polished lines of verse which this entry

produced treatises on sculpture, art history and diction. Musso (1976: 1-10, 1977: 15-17 and 1985: 9) argues against Antigonos’ authorship of the *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* and suggests that it is the product of later Byzantine scholarship, but the dating of at least the core of the collection to the third century BCE seems secure, as the authors cited date from either the time before Antigonos of Carystus was active, or are roughly contemporaneous with him. Dorandi (1999) xi-xxxii and (2005) 121-24 also believes that the attribution to this Antigonos is uncertain, and suggests that another, unknown Antigonos may be the author. Although it is not possible to attribute the collection to Antigonos of Carystus with certainty, the arguments for Antigonian authorship put forth by Wilamowitz (1881) 16-26 remain compelling (cf. Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 401 n. 89); as a result I assume Antigonos of Carystus is the author, though none of my arguments depend on this attribution.

² Archelaus the Egyptian is also known as Archelaus of Chersonesus, (see e.g. Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 409c: Ἀρχελάῳ τῷ Χερσονησίτῃ). This Chersonesus is presumably Chersonesus Mikra (Χερσόνησος μικρά), an Egyptian settlement very close to Alexandria (see e.g. Strabo *Geography* 17.1.14).

³ For the use of verse in paradoxographical collections, and the effect of prosimetrum which sometimes ensues, see Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 399 and Bartoňková (1999) 63-67.

contains. This temptation becomes stronger if we examine the entries which come before and after Archelaus' epigram. The preceding prose entry clearly anticipates the theme of spontaneous generation which the epigram explores by presenting us with an instance of a living body expelling another living biological form of a completely different species. This marvel, however, is presented very differently from Archelaus' polished verse (*Collection* 88):

ἐν δὲ τῷ σώματι τῶν ἀνθρώπων γίνεσθαι οἶον ἰόνθους μικροῦς· τούτους δὲ
ἐάν τις κεντήσῃ, ἐξέρχεσθαι φθειράς, καὶ ἐὰν ὑγρὰσῃ τις, νόσημα τοῦτο
ἐμπίπτειν ὥσπερ Ἀλκμᾶνι τῷ λυρικῷ καὶ Φερεκύδει τῷ Συρίῳ.

Small boils appear on men's bodies. And if someone pricks these, lice come out. And if someone has a moist nature, this illness befalls them, just as happened to Alcman the lyric poet and Pherecydes of Syros.

This prose *thauma* ultimately derives from a longer passage in Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* (556b28-57a3), which Antigonus has here abbreviated and adapted before turning to Archelaus' much more stylistically polished epigram on a similar theme concerning the generation of one biological form from another. In fact, Antigonus turns to Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* (557b6-8) once again as a source for the ninetieth entry in his marvel collection after citing Archelaus' epigram. This consists of a single sentence, and once more puts the wondrous process of spontaneous generation under the spotlight: "Aristotle says that an animal is born in wax, which seems to be the smallest animal and is called *akari* [i.e. a type of mite]" (ὁ δὲ Ἀριστοτέλης [λέγειν] ἐν κηρῷ φησιν γίνεσθαι ζῷον, ὃ δὴ δοκεῖν ἐλάχιστον εἶναι καὶ καλεῖσθαι ἀκαρί, *Collection* 90).

These three marvel-entries are typical of Antigonus' method throughout his *Collection of Marvellous Investigations*. They encapsulate some of the issues which modern readers have faced when presented with Antigonus' work. Why does the paradoxographer choose to cite and adapt these texts where and when he does? Is there

any point and purpose in his choices and his method of ordering his material? Is there anything really wondrous about the material he chooses to focus on at all?

These questions have proved difficult to answer. Like many later miscellanistic texts, Antigonus' *Collection* has been primarily seen as a random assemblage of knowledge with no overriding literary purpose: a mess of text fit only to be mined and plundered for the occasional useful snippet of geographical or prosopographical information, or an intriguing textual variant, or a few precious lines of poetry. This approach has led to many misunderstandings about the nature of these texts. These have been compounded by the perceived failure of paradoxographical collections to fit in with preconceived generic norms of ancient historiography or scientific prose literature, two modes of writing with which paradoxographical collections have been seen to share certain similarities, both in terms of thematic focus and style. Furthermore, the perceived difficulty of discerning any immediately explicit aesthetic principles behind the composition of these texts has only exacerbated matters further. As the entries from paradoxographical collections cited throughout this chapter demonstrate, the reasons behind the paradoxographer's presentation and arrangement of material are not immediately obvious to the reader. As a result of all of these factors, it would be an understatement to say that Hellenistic paradoxographical collections have not enjoyed high critical esteem in recent centuries.

But to berate these texts for their failure to conform to supposed standards of ancient historiography or scientific and technical treatises is to miss the point entirely. The paradoxographical collection aims first and foremost to make the reader marvel, and the very form of these texts is inextricably tied up with this aim. In this chapter it is precisely the nature, purpose and poetics of these paradoxographical collections which will be re-examined, in order to demonstrate that as texts which, as products of excerption

and radical abbreviation, are very self-consciously created out of other texts, these purely textual *thaumata* ask us to wonder at the new possibilities provided by the world of the Hellenistic library, as much as at the oddities of the natural world. The paradoxographer's principles of arrangement may seem opaque at first glance, but a closer look will reveal that there is more to these texts than first meets the eye.⁴

In the first section, I will examine the range and scope of the material from the paradoxographical collections which remain to us, and briefly outline previous approaches to paradoxography in modern criticism. In the second section, the renewed interest in literary collections of natural *thaumata* in the early Hellenistic court of the Ptolemies will be examined in relation to a concomitant increase in the production, collation and collection of textual *thaumata* which took place in Alexandria during this same period. I will then turn to the two most influential generic antecedents of the Hellenistic paradoxographical collection in sections three and four. First, I will show that the accounts of *thaumata* described in the Greek ethnographic tradition, particularly in the *Histories* of Herodotus, are a significant influence on the framing of the Hellenistic paradoxographical collection, before turning to the place of *thauma* and *thaumata* in the philosophical and scientific writings of Aristotle and his followers, and the significance of their ideas on the conception of the overall purpose and effect of paradoxography as a whole. The chapter will conclude with an assessment of the relation of the paradoxographical collection to other general trends exhibited in Hellenistic texts of other literary genres.

⁴ In this respect, the paradoxographical collection should be seen as an important precursor of later 'miscellanistic' styles of writing, which often reveal the presence of complex structures on closer examination of the author's presentation of material. For recent reassessments of the complicated structural strategies adopted in miscellanistic texts, often in the face of implicit or explicit authorial denials of such ordering, see e.g. König (2007) 43-68, Klotz and Oikonomopoulou (2011) 22-27 and Morgan (2011) 70-73 on the miscellanistic quality and ordering principles of Plutarch's *Quaest. conv.*; cf. Vardi (2004) 169-86 and Howley (2018) on Gellius' *NA*; Smith (2014) 47-66 on Aelian's *NA*; Wilkins (2000) 23-37, Jacob (2000) 85-110 and Jacob (2013a) on Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*. See also König and Whitmarsh (2007) 31-34 on strategies for ordering disorderly miscellanistic knowledge in Imperial prose more generally.

1. Collecting *Thaumata*: the Emergence of the Paradoxographical Collection

Paradoxographical collections, which are essentially catalogues of marvels presented to the reader with little contextual information and seldom any authorial comment, begin to appear in the early Hellenistic period. The term ‘paradoxographer’ was not used in the Hellenistic period and is not found until the Byzantine age, where it first appears in the work of the twelfth-century scholar John Tzetzes (ὁ παραδοξογράφος, *Chiliades* 2.35.154).⁵ Nonetheless, the corpus of these texts, when viewed together, reveal certain formal rhetorical properties and features which show that we are dealing with a well-defined mode of writing. The titles of these collections, which often include elements such as ‘θαυμάτων/θαυμασίων συναγωγή’, ‘παράδοξων συναγωγή’, ‘περὶ παραδόξων’ or ‘περὶ θαυμασίων’, are preserved in ancient testimonia and make clear that the capacity of the entries contained within to provoke wonder is the primary focus of this mode of writing.⁶ In their earliest form, these marvel-catalogues consist predominantly of strange zoological or geological observations which are starkly juxtaposed to one another.⁷ These observations are cited from the works of previous (usually named) prose or verse authors, and are almost always completely devoid of any explanatory context. It is this lack of

⁵ It was Westermann’s edition (1839) which introduced the term paradoxography to the modern world. Cf. Wenskus (2000) 309-12 on the history of paradoxography. Giannini’s edition (1966) similarly groups collections of marvels under the term ‘paradoxography’. See Pajón Leyra (2011) on the notion of paradoxography as a distinct literary genre in antiquity.

⁶ See Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 380 on the emergence of marvel-collections with titles along the lines of Περὶ θαυμασίων in the Hellenistic period. See each author entry in *PGR* for testimonia of the titles of the respective paradoxographical collections. Cf. also the titles of later Roman marvel-collections: the title of Cicero’s *Admiranda* is preserved in Pliny’s *HN* (31.12; 31.51), and Varro’s *Gallus De Admirandis* in Macrobius (*Sat.* 3.15.8). See also pp. 96-97 below on a rare authorial comment in Antigonus’ paradoxographical collection which makes clear that the excerption of the ‘strange and paradoxical’ (τὸ ξένον καὶ παράδοξον) is the aim of his work.

⁷ Peculiar ethnographic *thaumata* are very occasionally included, though this is extremely uncommon in the earliest collections. The move towards the inclusion of ethnographic entries in paradoxographical collections does, however, become more common as time goes on: see p. 72 below on Greek paradoxography under the Roman empire.

context which often renders the entries surprising and seemingly inexplicable. The paradoxographer does not claim to have undertaken autoptic research to confirm the truth of these *thaumata*, and the evidence behind each wondrous observation reported is almost always entirely neglected. Instead, the name of the original textual authority in which the *thauma* has been found is often included as an authorising gesture which implicitly guarantees the marvel's veracity.⁸

The first paradoxographical collection of which we have knowledge was produced by Callimachus in Alexandria: it is possible that he invented this mode of writing. The marvels in Callimachus' collection seem to have focused mainly on rivers and geological oddities, and were arranged geographically. This is reflected in the collection's title, Θαυμάτων τῶν εἰς ἅπασαν τὴν γῆν κατὰ τόπους ὄντων συναγωγή (*Collection of Marvels From Every Land Arranged According to Places*).⁹ We do not possess Callimachus' marvel-collection in its entirety, but a sizable chunk of it is excerpted and used in Antigonus' *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* (entries 129-73).¹⁰ Antigonus introduces the Callimachean material in the one hundred and twenty ninth entry of his own collection as follows:

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| <p>129. πεποιήται δέ τινα καὶ ὁ Κυρηναῖος Καλλίμαχος ἐκλογὴν τῶν παραδόξων, ἧς ἀναγράφομεν ὅσα ποτὲ ἡμῖν ἐφαίνετο εἶναι ἀκοῆς ἄξια. φησὶν Εὐδόξον ἱστορεῖν, ὅτι ἐν τῇ κατὰ Ἱερὸν ὄρος θαλάττῃ τῆς Θράκης ἐπιπολάζει κατὰ τινὰς χρόνους ἄσφαλτος. ἡ δὲ κατὰ Χελιδονίας ὅτι ἐπὶ πολὺν τόπον ἔχει γλυκείας πηγὰς.</p> | <p>And Callimachus the Cyrenaean has also made a collection of marvels, from which I have recorded all which were seeming to me to be worthy of hearing. He [Callimachus] says that Eudoxus reports that bitumen comes to the surface at certain times in the sea in the region of the Sacred Mountain in Thrace. But the sea below the Chelidoniai [Islands] has sweet-tasting springs over a large space.</p> |
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⁸ Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 382-89 on the inclusion of source 'citations' as a means of emphasising the credibility of the marvels reported in paradoxographical collections.

⁹ This title is listed in the *Suda* s.v. Καλλίμαχος; see also the mention of Callimachus' ἐκλογὴν τῶν παραδόξων at Antigonus *Collection* 129. On Callimachus' prose work and the strong interest in both paradoxography and aetiology which it exhibits, see Krevans (2004) 173-76 and (2011) 124-26.

¹⁰ On Antigonus, see above p. 63 n. 1. For the remaining fragments and testimonia of Callimachus' paradoxographical collection, see fr. 407-11 Pf. and *PGR* pp. 15-19.

The following entries (164-66) are typical of the Callimachean geographical and geological marvels which Antigonos transmits:

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| <p>164. ἐν δὲ Λυγκήσταις Θεόπομπον φάσκειν τι εἶναι ὕδωρ ὀξύ· τοὺς δὲ ἐκ τούτου πίνοντας ὥσπερ ἀπὸ τῶν οἴνων ἀλλοιοῦσθαι. καὶ τοῦθ' ὑπὸ πλειόνων μαρτυρεῖται.</p> | <p>He [i.e. Callimachus] says that Theopompus says that there is a type of bitter water among the Lyncestae. And those drinking from it become confused in their minds, just as they do from wine. And this is attested by several people.</p> |
| <p>165. τὸ δ' ἐκ τῆς πέτρας Ἀρμενίων ἐκπίπτον Κτησίαν ἱστορεῖν, ὅτι συμβάλλει ἰχθῦς μέλανας, ὧν τὸν ἀπογευσάμενον τελευτᾷ.</p> | <p>He [i.e. Callimachus] says that Ctesias reports that the water flowing out from the rock in Armenia spits out black fish which kill whoever tastes them.</p> |
| <p>166. περὶ δὲ πυρὸς Κτησίαν φησὶν ἱστορεῖν, ὅτι περὶ τὴν τῶν Φασηλιτῶν χώραν ἐπὶ τοῦ τῆς Χιμαίρας ὄρους ἔστιν τὸ καλούμενον ἀθάνατον πῦρ· τοῦτο δέ, ἐὰν μὲν τις ὕδωρ ἐμβάλῃ, καίεσθαι βελτίον, ἐὰν δὲ φορυτὸν ἐπιβαλὼν πῆξῃ τις, σβέννυσθαι.</p> | <p>And concerning fire he [i.e. Callimachus] says that Ctesias reports that there is a so-called 'immortal fire' near the land of the Phaselitai on Mount Chimaera. And this fire, if someone casts water on it, burns more intensely, but if someone throws flammable material straight into it, is extinguished.</p> |

This strong interest in marvels involving water, fires and similar geological phenomena seems to have been a staple of the genre from Callimachus onwards, and is found in most of the other extant collections.¹¹

Other paradoxographical collections dating from the Hellenistic period include *On Marvellous Things Heard* (Περὶ θαυμασίων ἀκουσμάτων), attributed to Aristotle in antiquity and transmitted to us within the Corpus Aristotelicum, but now almost universally attributed to an unknown writer of the Peripatetic school.¹² A collection

¹¹ For good overviews of the contents of the extant paradoxographical collections see Ziegler (1949) 1137-66, Wenskus (2000) 309-12, Giannini (1963) and (1964), Schepens and Delcroix (1996), Hansen (1996) 2-16, Pajón Leyra (2011).

¹² The Ps-Aristotelian *On Marvellous Things Heard* consists of a 'core' of third-century BCE Peripatetic material which was expanded over time. On the place of the *On Marvellous Things Heard* within the third-century BCE paradoxographical tradition, see Flashar (1972) 50-5 and Vanotti (2007) 46-53.

entitled Ἱστορίαι θαυμάσιαι (*Marvellous Investigations*) by an author known as Apollonius Paradoxographus, dated to the second century BCE, also mostly consists of accounts of geographical and zoological marvels of the natural world.¹³ There is some evidence that local historians of the third century BCE specialised in paradoxographical collections focusing on local marvels. The Lesbian Myrsilus of Methymna was said to have produced a work entitled Ἱστορικὰ παράδοξα (*Marvellous Investigations*), while Nymphodorus supposedly composed a collection called Περί τῶν ἐν Σικελίᾳ θαυμαζομένων on the marvels of Sicily. Forms of verse paradoxography also developed: as well as the already mentioned epigrams of Archelaus the Egyptian, whose work I will return to in more detail in the next section, we possess paradoxographical epigrams by one of the writers whose work Gellius supposedly found in Brundisium, Philostephanus of Cyrene, a pupil of Callimachus who seems to have built on his teacher's paradoxographical interests in a work entitled Περί παραδόξων ποταμῶν (*On Marvellous Rivers*).¹⁴

As we move into the second century BCE the production of marvel-collections continues unabated. Athenaeus claims that Polemon of Ilium, a prominent periegetic writer, wrote a Περί θαυμασίων (*On Marvels*), while the historian and geographer Agatharchides of Cnidus is said to have produced a *Collection of Marvellous Winds* (Συναγωγή θαυμασίων ἀνέμων).¹⁵ There are also three extant anonymous Greek paradoxographical collections from the Roman period. The *Paradoxographus Florentinus* concentrates entirely on marvels connected with water, while the *Paradoxographus Vaticanus* (second century CE) and *Paradoxographus Palatinus* (third

¹³ Pajón Leyra (2014) 204-305 notes that there is an as yet unpublished Oxyrhynchus papyrus dating from the second century CE which preserves Apollonius Paradoxographus' Ἱστορίαι θαυμάσιαι 49.1.1-6.

¹⁴ On Gellius' mention of Philostephanus see chapter one pp. 8, 12-13 with n. 8.

¹⁵ On Polemon's interest in marvels, see Angelucci (2014) 9-25.

century CE) exhibit the customary mixture of natural marvels.¹⁶ Another collection from the second century CE survives: the *Περὶ θαυμασίων* (*On Marvels*) by Phlegon of Tralleis, a Greek freedman of the emperor Hadrian. In terms of focus, this collection differs from its antecedents, mostly concentrating on bizarre transformations and prodigies relating to human rather than animal bodies.¹⁷ This shift towards material which focuses on marvels relating to the human rather than the animal realm is also seen in a fragmentary Oxyrhynchus papyrus (*P. Oxy.* II 218), which dates to the third century CE. It seems to preserve the remains of a paradoxographical collection by an unknown author with descriptions of strange customs and other ethnographic details.¹⁸

Modern critical assessments concerning the reasons for the emergence of paradoxographical collections in the third century BCE have tended to focus on three essential causes: decadence, decay and distraction.¹⁹ The assumption that paradoxographical collections aim at a serious historiographical or scientific purpose which they manifestly fail to fulfil is the cause of much of the critical disappointment which this material has attracted. This disappointment is summed up by Schmid-Stählin's evaluation of paradoxography as "*ein Parasitengewächs am Baum der historischen und naturwissenschaftlichen Literatur*" – a peculiarly botanical image which would no doubt have appealed to the natural scientific interests of the paradoxographers themselves.²⁰ The consensus remains that the paradoxographical collection "is to be regarded as a

¹⁶ For an overview, translation and commentary of the *Paradoxographus Vaticanus* see Stern (2008) 437-66.

¹⁷ On the unusual focus of Phlegon's collection, see Hansen (1996) 11.

¹⁸ *P. Oxy.* II 218 was originally published in Grenfell and Hunt (1899) 35-39; for a new edition and commentary on this papyrus see now Pajón Leyra (2014) 304-30.

¹⁹ For the rhetoric of 'decay' and 'decadence' which surrounds paradoxographical collections see e.g. Giannini (1963) 248 on paradoxography as a degenerate and late development of original interest in the unknown. Cf. Wenskus (2000) 309-12: "19th- and 20th-cent. philologists regard the interest in *mirabilia* mostly as a phenomenon of decadence", and Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 378: "time and again, paradoxography is depicted as a symptom of decay, as a degeneration of the original, healthy spirit of curiosity and inquiry that was the hallmark of Ionian culture from Homer onwards to Herodotos".

²⁰ Schmid-Stählin (1920-24) 237, cited at Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 378.

pervverted, or misdirected product of Aristotelean research”.²¹ Fraser’s monumental study of Alexandria under the Ptolemies goes further in explaining the apparent degeneration of a once ‘pure’ (i.e. properly Greek) Aristotelian scientific spirit, by linking the alleged new interest in this material with a supposed native Egyptian (i.e. Eastern and decadent) love of marvellous stories.²² In addition to the irresistible lurch into the realm of the marvellous which the Egyptian land and people supposedly caused, Fraser proposes that Greeks in Alexandria were inevitably led towards an interest in paradoxography, and a concomitant and unavoidable intellectual decline, through the presence of too much written material in the Alexandrian library: on this model, the presence of too many books in Egypt was catastrophic for the scientific and historiographical abilities of the ethnic Greeks, as it “distracted their minds from speculation and historical reflection and turned them towards the collection and explanation of obscure events and phenomena”.²³ The groundless charge that the collection of *thaumata* represented an inexorable intellectual decline or deviation from reason prompted by contact with the Other, or a comforting escape from serious engagement with the increasing cultural complexities of the real world, is also present in more recent examinations of paradoxographical collections.²⁴ These assumptions about the supposed lack of intellectual interest or value in this material lead people to allege that these collections must have been aimed at a popular audience, which is also supposedly an automatically credulous audience.²⁵

²¹ Fraser (1972) i. 774. On the relationship between Aristotelian research and paradoxography cf. Giannini (1963) 261-62; Romm (1992) 92; Stramaglia (2006) 303; Stern (2008) 442; Vanotti (2007) 25-26.

²² On the supposed prominence of marvels in Egyptian stories see Fraser (1972) i. 675, 685.

²³ Fraser (1972) i. 551.

²⁴ Cf. especially Gabba’s (1981: 53) view of the ‘escapist’ nature of paradoxography: “The extension of geographical knowledge after Alexander encouraged contact with distant peoples, to whom strange customs could be attributed, and with previously unknown countries, where stories of the most fantastic kind could be located. The result was the emergence of a literature which was specifically and explicitly paradoxographical; in some cases, for instance that of Callimachus, learned research was involved; but the result for the most part was a pseudo-historical literature, popular and escapist”.

²⁵ Cf. Giannini (1963) 248; Jacob (1983) 122: “Cette littérature répond sans doute à une demande du public de l’époque et la rapide prolifération de ces recueils indique l’existence d’un ‘marché’”. Cf. Hansen (1996) 9: “It [i.e. paradoxography] is a kind of popular literature, writing that aims to be broadly accessible by

These views, however, do not take sufficient account of the status and meaning of wonder within the Greek literary, philosophical and scientific traditions by the time that the first Hellenistic marvel-collections began to appear. In short, they do not take sufficient account of *thauma* itself: it is only by thinking about the place of wonder within Greek culture that the point and purpose of these texts becomes clearer. In the next three sections I will examine the historical and literary contexts in which the very first paradoxographical collections were produced both to suggest why there was such a strong focus on specific types of *thaumata* in these texts, and to sketch out the relationship between paradoxography and related contemporary literary discourses.

2. Taming Zoological *Thaumata*: Archelaus the Egyptian's *Idiophue* and the Ptolemaic Court

Over the course of the early third century BCE, the production of textual collections of marvels took off apace in line with the increasing general emphasis on the processes of ordering knowledge which took shape together with the development of great libraries in various centres of power and learning.²⁶ The zoological and geological focus of most extant paradoxographical collections is significant when the wider ideological import of the taming and collection of actual natural *thaumata* under the rule of the early Hellenistic monarchs is considered. The textual collation of geological and zoological *thaumata* in Hellenistic paradoxographical collections represents a sort of symbolic control over the

making minimal demands on its readers by concerning itself more with content than with style and by entertaining rather than challenging”.

²⁶ For recent appraisals of the relationship between the acquisition and collection of texts and imperial political and cultural power in ancient Greece and Rome see e.g. Johnstone (2014) 347-93, Woolf (2013) 6-9, Jacob (2013b) 57-81. Cf. König and Whitmarsh (2007) 8-10 on the Hellenistic antecedents for the textualization and ordering of knowledge in the Roman Imperial period. On the library of Alexandria and Ptolemaic power, see e.g. Erskine (1995) 38-48 and Gutzwiller (2007) 19-23.

earth's most wondrous natural resources. Ptolemaic interest in natural *thaumata* certainly seems to have extended to the zoological as well as the geological realm. Many sources attest that the acquisition and subsequent display of exotic animals was a particular fascination of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.²⁷ According to the second century BCE historian Agatharchides of Cnidus, whose *On the Erythraean Sea* focuses on Ptolemaic exploration of areas around the Red Sea, Philadelphus was the first Ptolemy to pursue elephant hunting and similar exotic zoological endeavours with the aim of bringing animals which nature had separated together in one location – in other words, Philadelphus was a collector of zoological *thaumata*.²⁸

The most famous report of Philadelphus' zoological obsessions is found in a lengthy account in Diodorus Siculus, probably derived from Agatharchides' work. Diodorus describes the king's love of hunting, collecting and displaying unusual animals in Alexandria (3.36-37), and claims that Ptolemy not only delighted in hunting and capturing elephants for the very practical purpose of waging war (ὁ γὰρ δεύτερος Πτολεμαῖος, περί τε τὴν τῶν ἐλεφάντων κυνηγίαν φιλοτιμηθεὶς ... ἐλέφαντάς τε συχνοὺς πολεμιστὰς περιεποιήσατο), but even valued the acquisition of unknown beasts for the sake of widening the knowledge of unseen and unusual animals among his fellow Greeks (τῶν ἄλλων ζώων ἀθεωρήτους καὶ παραδόξους φύσεις ἐποίησεν εἰς γνῶσιν ἔλθεῖν τοῖς Ἕλλησι).²⁹ A group of opportunistic hunters soon realised that great rewards were at stake

²⁷ See Hubbell (1935) 68-67, Rice (1983) 86-87 and Burstein (1989) 4-10 on Ptolemy Philadelphus' particular interest in collecting unusual and exotic zoological specimens.

²⁸ ... ὅτι Πτολεμαῖόν φησι τὸν μετὰ τὸν Λάγου πρῶτον ἐλεφάντων θήραν συστήσασθαι, ἀλλὰ γὰρ καὶ τῶν ὁμοιοτρόπων, καὶ τὰ τῇ φύσει κεχωρισμένα τῇ προνοίᾳ συναγαγεῖν ὑπὸ μίαν οἴκησιν, Agatharchides fr. 1 Burstein.

²⁹ Cf. also Diod. Sic. 3.18.4, Strabo 16.4.5-7, 17.1.5 on Ptolemaic elephant hunting. See Casson (1993) 247-60 on Ptolemy II's particular interest in the acquisition of elephants. There are multiple ancient accounts which suggest that elephants played an important part in the self-fashioning of Ptolemaic kingship during this period, especially in terms of warfare and royal spectacle. In particular, the possession of elephants became a way of connecting one's own kingship to Alexander's subjugation of eastern realms. On the use of war elephants and elephant iconography by successor kings, especially the Ptolemies and Seleucids, as a means of connecting their own regimes to Alexander's legacy in the East see Scullard (1974) 120-45 and Alonso Troncoso (2013) 254-70.

for capturing rare animals, and embarked on the dangerous, and eventually successful, pursuit of a gigantic, thirty cubit long snake (ἓνα τῶν ὄφεων τριάκοντα πηχῶν).³⁰ The animal was captured and tamed, Ptolemy was mightily pleased, and the snake was soon put on display, where it became the most astonishing sight for tourists in his realm (τοῖς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν παραβάλλουσι ξένοις μέγιστον παρεχόμενον καὶ παραδοξότατον θέαμα). According to the account of Hellenistic writer Callixeinus of Rhodes (c. second century BCE), which is preserved in excerpted form in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* (197c-203b), astonishing and unusual animals from far-off lands subject to Ptolemaic influence were among the impressive creatures displayed by Philadelphus in the 270s BCE during his famous Dionysian procession through Alexandria, including one hundred and thirty Ethiopian sheep, three hundred sheep from Arabia and twenty from Euboea, twenty six Indian and eight Ethiopian cows, one white bear, fourteen leopards, sixteen panthers, four caracals, three panther cubs, one giraffe, and one Ethiopian rhinoceros (πρόβατα Αἰθιοπικὰ ἑκατὸν τριάκοντα, Ἀράβια τριακόσια, Εὐβοικὰ εἴκοσι, ὀλόλευκοι βόες

³⁰ Cf. Aelian *NA* 16.39, which recounts the story of two huge Ethiopian snakes brought to Alexandria for Ptolemy Philadelphus; three large snakes were also presented to his successor Ptolemy Euergetes. There is also evidence preserved in the Zenon archive that the presentation of unusual animals to Ptolemy could play a useful political role in this period. In *P. Cair. Zen.* I 59075, a letter dated to 257 BCE, we find the local ruler Toubias, who controlled territories in the region of Ammanitis in Palestine (an area then under Ptolemaic control), enclosing a copy of the note he sent to Ptolemy along with his guest-gifts (ὕπερ τῶν ξενί[ων] τῷ βασιλεῖ, 6-7). The note reveals the nature of the gifts (9-12): two horses, six dogs, one wild mule from an ass, two white Arabian asses, two foals from wild mules, and one foal from a wild ass (βασιλεῖ Πτολεμαίωι χαίρειν Τουβίας. ἀπέσταλκά σοι ἵππο[υς] δύο,] κύνας ἕξ, ἡμιονάγριον ἕξ ὄνου ἓν, ὑποζύγια [Ἀρ]αβικὰ λευκὰ [δύο,] πώλους ἕξ ἡμιοναγρίου δύο, πῶλον ἕξ ὄναγρίου ἓνα. εὐτύχει, 9-12). These animal gifts are perhaps not as immediately astonishing as some of the creatures Ptolemy is said to have been given, such as the giant snake mentioned in Aelian. Still, we should be careful not to dismiss the unfamiliar nature of this gift (cf. Callixeinus' mention of sheep and cows in Philadelphus' procession, and see below pp. 87-88 on the wondrous goats and sheep of Arabia in Herodotus), which seems to contain several rare wild animals and crossbreeds. See Hauben (1984-1986) 89-93 on the ways in which Toubias' animals fit in with Ptolemy's zoological concerns; for detailed discussion of the precise nature of each equid mentioned in Toubias' letter, see pp. 94-110. Moreover, crossbred equids particularly fascinated Aristotle, since they inevitably raised questions concerning sterility and hybridity (see e.g. his discussion of various hybrid equids at *Gen. an.* 746b-49a and *Hist. an.* 575b-78a; cf. Groisard (2018) 153-70 for discussion of Aristotle on hybrid equids); Toubias' gift of unusual crossbred equids might therefore have piqued Philadelphus' known zoological interests in a similar fashion.

Ἰνδικοὶ εἴκοσι ἕξ, Αἰθιοπικοὶ ὀκτώ, ἄρκτος λευκὴ μεγάλη μία, παρδάλεις ἰδ', πάνθηροι
ις', λυγκία δ', ἄρκηλοι γ', καμηλοπάρδαλις μία, ῥινόκερως Αἰθιοπικὸς α', 201b-c).³¹

It is now worth returning to the entry from Antigonus' *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* cited at the beginning of this chapter – Archelaus the Egyptian's epigram about the spontaneous generation of vipers from rotting human spinal marrow – with the wider ideological import of the taming and collection of actual natural *thaumata* under the rule of the early Ptolemies in mind. Two fragments of similar epigrams belonging to Archelaus are cited earlier in the *Collection*, along with a contextual note from Antigonus which reveals that the Egyptian epigrammatist was probably attached to the Alexandrian court of either Ptolemy II Philadelphus (309-246 BCE) or Ptolemy III Euergetes (c. 284-222).³² Antigonus explicitly states that the purpose of Archelaus' epigrammatic *thaumata* is to elucidate paradoxical zoological matters to the reigning Ptolemy (*Collection* 19):

καὶ τις Ἀρχέλαος Αἰγύπτιος τῶν ἐν ἐπιγράμμασιν ἐξηγουμένων τὰ παράδοξα
τῷ Πτολεμαίῳ περὶ μὲν τῶν σκορπίων οὕτως εἶρηκεν·

εἰς ὑμᾶς κροκόδειλον ἀποφθίμενον διαλύει,
σκορπίοι, ἢ πάντα ζωοθετοῦσα φύσις.

περὶ δὲ τῶν σφηκῶν·

ἐκ νέκυος ταύτην ἵππου γράψασθε γενέθλην,
σφηκας· ἴδ' ἐξ οἶων οἷα τίθησι φύσις.

And a certain Archelaus the Egyptian, the one who explained astonishing matters to Ptolemy with his epigrams, spoke in this way concerning scorpions:

Into you Nature dissolves a putrefied crocodile,
O scorpions, Nature who makes everything alive.

And like this concerning wasps:

³¹ See Rice (1983) 82-99 on the significance of this part of Ptolemy's procession and its use of Dionysus' triumphal return from India as an opportunity to display exotic animals.

³² Page (1981) 21 suggests that Archelaus' patron was either Ptolemy II or III; Berrey (2017) 61 thinks Ptolemy III is most probable, as does Fraser (1972) i. 779; Voutiras (2000) 388-89, however, suggests Ptolemy IV Philopator.

Make a note of this birth from the corpse of a horse: wasps!
Look! What Nature makes from such material!

The epigram about the spontaneous generation of snakes with which this chapter began, along with these poetic fragments about the generation of scorpions from dead crocodiles and wasps from dead horses, are most likely derived from an epigram collection by Archelaus entitled Ἰδιοφυῆ (*Peculiar Forms*), of which we have other testimonia and fragments relating similar sorts of zoological marvels.³³ In fact, a few other marvels described in these surviving fragments also focus specifically on examples of wondrous spontaneous generation, just as those in Antigonus' paradoxographical collection do.³⁴

³³ See *FGE* pp. 20-24 and *SH* 125-29 for the longer extant epigrams; cf. *PGR* pp. 24-28 for a comprehensive overview of all the remaining fragments. The title of this work, which Archelaus seems to have been best known for, is specified at Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 409c (Ἀρχελάῳ τῷ Χερρονησίτῃ ἐν τοῖς Ἰδιοφυέσιν), Diogenes Laertius 2.17 (γεγόνασι δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι τρεῖς Ἀρχέλαοι ... ὁ τὰ Ἰδιοφυῆ ποιήσας), and Σ ad. Nic. *Ther.* 823 (Ἀρχελάος φησιν ἐν τοῖς Ἰδιοφυέσιν). Fraser (1972) i.778 asserts that the *Idiophue* "was probably in prose", but this was before the discovery of the Posidippus Milan Papyrus, when the use of such 'technical' titles in connection with epigrams was thought to be almost impossible. Berrey (2017) 61 also states that Archelaus produced prose works, but there is no proof of this: the only fragments we have of Archelaus' actual Greek are in verse. In addition to Antigonus 19, we are also told by Varro (*Rust.* 3.16.4) that Archelaus wrote 'in epigrams' (*Archelaus in epigrammate ait* ...). On the evidence for Archelaus' life and poetry see also Page (1981) 20-24; Fraser (1972) i. 778-79; and Berrey (2017) 61-62. It is possible that more than one collection of poems with this title was produced under the early Ptolemies. In fact, a Ptolemaic king may himself have written a poetic Ἰδιοφυῆ, since an epigram praising Aratus' *Phaenomena* is preserved in the *Vita Arati* and is said to have been written by a 'King Ptolemy in his Ἰδιοφυῆ' (Πτολεμαῖος μέμνηται ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐν Ἰδιοφυέσιν): see *FGE* pp. 84-85, *SH* 712 and Martin (1974) 10 for the epigram and surrounding prose text from the *Vita Arati*. The possible identity of this unknown Ptolemy has been debated: Page (1981) 84 suggests Ptolemy II or III; Fraser (1972) i. 592 (with vol. ii. 841 n. 305) and i. 780 (with vol. ii. 1090), and Berrey (2017) 31, 62 opt for Ptolemy IV. There is, however, no other evidence for a Ptolemaic Ἰδιοφυῆ, and there may be a textual corruption in the text of the *Vita Arati* at this point: see Maass (1892) 79: "*scriptum videtur tale quid olim fuisse* ὥς καὶ Ἀρχελάος Ἰδιοφυέσιν ἃ προσφωνεῖ Πτολεμαίῳ τῷ βασιλεῖ". On the likelihood of textual corruption here see also Voutiras (2000) 392-93.

³⁴ See also Varro *Rust.* 3.16.4 for other verses from Archelaus on the generation of bees from dead cows (βοὺς φθιμένης πεπλανημένα τέκνα), wasps from dead horses and bees from dead calves (ἵππων μὲν σφῆκες γενεά, μόσχων δὲ μέλισσαι). Other zoological *thaumata* which later ancient writers claim Archelaus wrote about include: moray eels, which have teeth similar to vipers and come up onto the land to mate with them (see Σ ad. Nic. *Ther.* 823); a 'katablepas' (lit. 'downward-looking' animal), which seems to have been a bull/antelope-like creature capable of turning living beings into stone like a Gorgon (see Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 409c and cf. 221b; cf. also Pliny *HN* 8.77 and Aelian *NH* 7.5); a basilisk snake (see Aelian *NH* 2.7); female partridges who conceive when they hear the voices of male partridges (see Varro *Rust.* 3.2.4); goats who breathe through the ears instead of through the nostrils (see Varro *Rust.* 2.3.5); and hares whose age can be determined from the number of their orifices (see Varro *Rust.* 3.12.4-5 and Pliny *HN* 8.218).

The fragments of Archelaus' epigrams preserved in Antigonos' *Collection* thus provide us with a tantalising window onto what seems to have been a flourishing tradition of Ptolemaic verse paradoxography. These epigrams for Ptolemy reflect the wider ideological import of the acquiring and taming of actual natural *thaumata* in third-century BCE Alexandria. The presentation of such poems to the king himself (whichever Ptolemy he may have been) seems even more apt in such a context. In fact, Archelaus' verse paradoxography can be seen as a symbolic textual manifestation of a broader desire for the possession, subjection and classification of natural *thaumata* in the Ptolemaic period.³⁵ Although the strange biological processes which form the content of Archelaus' epigrams may seem uncontrollable and unruly, the epigrammatist's smooth and sophisticated poetic handling of these natural wonders is anything but disorderly. In fact, the epigram form, with its relative tautness of expression and general insistence on controlled and pointed diction, provides an ideal medium in which to articulate this symbolic taming of natural wonders. But the ability to arouse *thauma* is not confined to verse alone. As we shall see, the clipped form of the prose entries in paradoxographical collections has many similarities to the epigram form in terms of the creation of wonder through the curtailment of wider contextual framing, and both the prose and verse resources of the Hellenistic library were utilised to yield new *thaumata* as writers worked to re-organise and re-form knowledge itself in an effort to create impressive new bodies of purely textual marvels.³⁶

³⁵ Cf. Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 406, who suggest that the activities of paradoxographers can be seen as a "literary counterpart to the activities of explorers and hunters". See also Bing (2005) 135 on Posidippus' *Lithika* as an expression of Ptolemaic interest in expanding cultural and scientific knowledge in conjunction with their desire for territorial expansion and control over material wealth and, more generally, Romm (1992) 84 on Greek travel narratives and ethnographic accounts of eastern lands written in the wake of Alexander's conquest as texts "with imperial ambitions of their own, paralleling at a cognitive level the sallies of the great generals of the age".

³⁶ On the paradoxographers' dependence on the world of the library see Schepens and Delcroix (1996) 388-89.

Before turning to consider the way in which this re-organisation of knowledge was accomplished at the level of the individual paradoxographical collection, the emergence of these texts in the period must be examined in relation to two of their most influential generic antecedents: first the treatment of the marvels of nature in the ethnographic writing of the past, and then the role of *thauma* and *thaumata* within the philosophical and scientific framework created by Aristotle and his followers.

3. *Thaumata* and the Ethnographic Tradition: Herodotus and the Edges of the Earth

As noted above, modern scholars have often berated the writers of paradoxographical collections for their lack of adherence to a proper sense of historiographical or scientific purpose. To expect that a paradoxographer was attempting to produce historiography or Aristotelian science in the first place is of course to misunderstand the fact that this type of text has its own unique aesthetic and form. This is not, however, to say that the tradition of Greek historical writing did not play an influential part in the paradoxographer's conception of his own art. The work of Herodotus looms large in the background here. The first half of the *Histories* in particular shows the expectation that ethnographic discussions should include mention of any particular *thaumata* (or rather *thōmata*, in the Ionian dialect).³⁷ Like the marvels of the epic tradition, actual physical entities which are designated as Herodotean *thōmata* are often visually impressive objects of astonishing magnitude or beauty.³⁸ But it is not visual objects alone which constitute Herodotean *thōmata*: unusual customs and traditions discovered in the course of the historian's inquiry are equally likely to be held up as marvels which simultaneously foster curiosity

³⁷ See Jacoby (1913) 331-32, Hartog (1988) 230-31, Hunzinger (1995) 48 n. 6 and Munson (2001) 234-42 on the inclusion of a region's *thaumata* as a conventional element of ethnographic descriptions.

³⁸ On the strongly (though not exclusively) visual emphasis of Herodotean wonder, see Hartog (1988) 230-37, Hunzinger (1995) 50-51 and Priestley (2014) 58.

about other cultures while testing the boundaries of belief and credulity.³⁹ Paradoxographical collections, which put forth a series of *thaumata* culled from the works of other authorities, similarly present the reader with reports which invite questions about the believability of previous traditions, although, unlike Herodotus' *Histories*, there is little evidence of the paradoxographer's own weighing-up of the evidence for each report, as every marvel is presented as an indisputable fact. As already noted, the focus of Hellenistic marvel-collections also remains firmly fixed on the *thaumata* of nature rather than those of human culture, whereas Herodotus does not make such firm distinctions. In terms of the form, however, in which accounts of *thaumata* relating to distant lands and peoples are narrated in the *Histories*, there are some very significant similarities to the way *thaumata* are presented in later paradoxography.

For example, it has been noted that Herodotean *thōmata* tend to provide a temporary excursion from the primary narrative of historical events in the *Histories*, and that multiple marvels often cluster together within the first four books of Herodotus' work.⁴⁰ Rather than offering up one marvel about distant lands at a time, Herodotus presents us with multiple descriptions of increasingly bizarre *thōmata* in a dense, almost catalogic form which perhaps reflects the supposed abundance of such strange and wondrous phenomena in exotic locations.⁴¹ This tendency is nowhere more apparent than in Herodotus' discussion of the inhabited lands at the edges of the earth (the *eschatiai*), in which the creation of a more extreme sense of wonder in the reader is emphasised as the narrative moves further and further out into descriptions of the world's extremities.⁴²

³⁹ Wonder and inquiry are strongly linked in the *Histories*: cf. Munson (2001) 233-34, 259 and Priestley (2014) 70.

⁴⁰ On the connection between *thōma* and narrative excurses in the *Histories* see Hartog (1988) 234, Gould (1989) 58 and Hunzinger (1995) 62-63.

⁴¹ See Romm (1992) 91-93 on the tendency in the ethnographic tradition towards the creation of a catalogic effect in descriptions of marvels at the earth's edges, and the effect this has on Herodotus' presentation of *thōmata* in the *Histories*.

⁴² See Karttunen (2002) 457-74 on the connection between *thōmata* and the earth's edges in the *Histories*. On the increasing prevalence of encounters with the marvellous the further one travels towards the

It is in book three that we are introduced to a prolonged discussion of the inherently wondrous nature of the world's most extreme peripheries. Herodotus begins his description with the basic contention that these areas, simply by dint of being located in the furthest known locations, seem to produce the finest and rarest of all natural goods (αἱ δ' ἐσχατιαί κως τῆς οἰκεομένης τὰ κάλλιστα ἔλαχον, 3.106). It is thus clear from the start that the geographical extremes of the known world are to be linked with extremities of description and content. Herodotus first mentions the very eastern limit of the world, India (τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τὴν ἡῶ ἐσχάτη τῶν οἰκεομένων ἡ Ἰνδική ἐστι, 3.106). He has already described this land of strange geological and zoological *thōmata* in detail in the immediately preceding sections (3.98-105). For example, earlier in that description we were treated to the fabulous report of the extraction of gold in India involving ants smaller than dogs and bigger than foxes (ἐν δὲ ὧν τῇ ἐρημίῃ ταύτῃ καὶ τῇ ψάμμῳ γίνονται μύρμηκες μεγάθεα ἔχοντες κυνῶν μὲν ἐλάσσῳ, ἄλωπέκων δὲ μέζῳ, 3.102). The reader has thus already been primed for the parallel and comparable wondrous collection of fine objects said to be found in Arabia, the southern extremity of the world (πρὸς δ' αὖ μεσαμβρίας ἐσχάτη Ἀραβίη τῶν οἰκεομένων χωρέων ἐστί, 3.107).

In the dense description of the marvels of Arabia which follows, Herodotus adopts a mode of description which later paradoxographical collections come to echo: a compact list of increasingly marvellous objects and customs is quickly built up to reinforce the impression that this distant land is teeming with *thōmata* as yet unfamiliar to the Greek world.⁴³ Herodotus first lays out Arabia's special claim to possession of the most beautiful

peripheries, away from the Greek 'centre' of the world, see Redfield (1985) 110 and Gould (1989) 94. Cf. also Hartog (1988) 232-33, Hunzinger (1995) 62 n. 60 and Priestley (2014) 58 on the increasing 'escalation' of wonder in the *Histories*' narrative of the *eschatai*.

⁴³ Cf. Romm (1992) 84-93 on the emphasis on abundance and diversity in Greek descriptions of the *thaumata* of India: this emphasis on the abundance of the biological forms found in such places increases the sense that the lands at the edges of the earth are unruly and disorganised and therefore in need of 'conquering' by the Greeks in order to tame their strangeness.

and wondrous objects by beginning with a description of the region's abundance of rare spices such as frankincense, myrrh, cassia, cinnamon and gum mastic (ἐν δὲ ταύτῃ λιβανωτός τέ ἐστι μούνη χωρέων πασέων φυόμενος καὶ σμύρνη καὶ κασίη καὶ κινάμωμον καὶ λήδανον, 3.107). He then goes on to treat the collection of each of these spices in turn, with the exception of myrrh, which he claims is the only one that is easy to obtain. It becomes apparent that rather than simply listing successive fabulous stories of the collection of each spice, Herodotus is linking the transitions between each section of his excursus in a skilful and purposeful way, connecting further relevant discussion of the wondrous nature of Arabia's zoology to his wider description of spice collection in order to present a forceful image of this region's abundance in every sort of marvel belonging to the natural world. The effect of these complex transitions is crucial in creating the escalating sense of wonder which binds the description of Arabia to the historian's wider argument about the earth's extremities.⁴⁴

This becomes clearer when we examine each method of spice collection. The first spice to be gathered is frankincense (3.107). The action begins when storax, a fragrant tree resin, is burnt to ward off the small, winged, multi-coloured snakes (ὄφεις ὑπόπτεροι, σμικροὶ τὰ μεγάθρα, ποικίλοι τὰ εἶδεα, 3.107) which guard the frankincense: this then allows the spice to be collected safely. In passing, Herodotus notes that these winged snakes are the ones which attack Egypt on a seasonal basis (οὗτοι οἱ περ ἐπ' Αἴγυπτον ἐπιστρατεύονται, 3.107). This links back to an earlier moment in the *Histories*' Egyptian *logos* (2.75), where Herodotus makes a controversial autoptic claim concerning these same Arabian snakes:

⁴⁴ See Pelling (2000) 172 on the "host of careful transitions" in *Histories* book two: Herodotus makes use of a similar method in this instance.

ἔστι δὲ χῶρος τῆς Ἀραβίης κατὰ Βουτοῦν πόλιν μάλιστα κη κείμενος, καὶ ἐς τοῦτο τὸ χωρίον ἦλθον πυνθανόμενος περὶ τῶν πτερωτῶν ὀφίων· ἀπικόμενος δὲ εἶδον ὅστέα ὀφίων καὶ ἀκάνθας πλήθει μὲν ἀδύνατα ἀπηγήσασθαι, σωροὶ δὲ ἦσαν ἀκανθέων καὶ μεγάλοι καὶ ὑποδεέστεροι καὶ ἐλάσσονες ἔτι τούτων, πολλοὶ δὲ ἦσαν οὗτοι. ἔστι δὲ ὁ χῶρος οὗτος, ἐν τῷ αἰ ἄκανθαι κατακεχύαται, τοιόσδε τις, ἐσβολὴ ἐξ ὀρέων στεινῶν ἐς πεδίον μέγα, τὸ δὲ πεδίον τοῦτο συνάπτει τῷ Αἰγυπτίῳ πεδίῳ. λόγος δὲ ἐστὶ ἅμα τῷ ἔαρι πτερωτοῦς ὄφιος ἐκ τῆς Ἀραβίης πέτεσθαι ἐπ' Αἰγύπτου, τὰς δὲ ἴβις τὰς ὄρνιθας ἀπαντώσας ἐς τὴν ἐσβολὴν ταύτης τῆς χώρας οὐ παριέναι τοὺς ὄφεις ἀλλὰ κατακτείνειν.

There is a place in Arabia very near the city of Buto, and I went to this region to learn about the winged snakes. When I arrived there I saw a huge number of bones and backbones of snakes, impossible to describe in full: there were heaps of backbones, some large, some smaller, and some smaller still: and these were very many. And this place where the backbones lie, is something like this: a pass out of the narrows of the mountains into a broad plain, and this plain joins with the plain of Egypt. It is said that at the start of spring winged snakes fly from Arabia towards Egypt, but the ibis birds meet them in the mountain pass and not only do they prevent the entry of the winged snakes, they kill them.

The second mention in book three of these marvellous flying snakes thus adds to the sense that we are moving towards an increasingly wondrous sphere, as the narrative moves geographically to the southernmost limit of the world. If – Herodotus almost seems to say to us – the mere remains of these dead winged Arabian snakes caused me to stop and wonder in Egypt, that land full of marvels (πλεῖστα θωμάσια ἔχει ἢ ἡ ἄλλη πᾶσα χώρα, 2.35), then how much *more* marvellous is Arabia, home to trees full of live winged snakes. Arabia here becomes the producer and point of origin of one of Egypt's most bizarre zoological wonders, and the overall point is clear: the further out from the Hellenic centre of the world one travels, the more marvellous the natural phenomena one witnesses or hears about are likely to be.

The tendency of *thōma* to provide opportunities for continued, rolling excursions is also manifested in Herodotus' mention of these creatures within his broader description of Arabia's rare and wondrous spices, for the mention of the snakes provides Herodotus with the opportunity to transition smoothly into an impressive display of Ionian scientific

thinking. Herodotus embarks on a complex discussion of marvellous zoological matters at the edges of the earth by claiming that the presence of winged snakes in Arabia alone is explained by an important principle which underpins nature's broader biological balance. He tells us that according to the Arabians, such is the ferociousness and mobility of these winged vipers that, if left unchecked by Nature, these creatures would indeed have filled up and conquered not only Egypt, but the entire earth (λέγουσι δὲ καὶ τόδε Ἀράβιοι, ὥς πᾶσα ἂν γῆ ἐπίμπλατο τῶν ὀφίων τούτων, εἰ μὴ γίνεσθαι κατ' αὐτοὺς οἶόν τι κατὰ τὰς ἐχίδνας ἡπιστάμην γίνεσθαι, 3.108). But as it is the proportion of predators and prey which the animal world contains remains balanced because of the fact that the female winged snake kills the male during mating, before her young avenge themselves on her for the death of their father by tearing their way out of her womb, as happens also with conventional (unwinged) vipers in other lands (τῷ γονεῖ τιμωρόντα ἔτι ἐν τῇ γαστρὶ ἔόντα τὰ τέκνα διεσθίει τὴν μητέρα, διαφαγόντα δὲ τὴν νηδὺν αὐτῆς οὕτω τὴν ἑκδυσινποιέεται, 3.109).⁴⁵ This comparison of the behaviour of the winged Arabian snakes with that of more conventional unwinged vipers has the effect of making the zoology of Arabia seem both familiar and strange, as well as giving an impression of scientific accuracy and authority far removed from the increasingly fabulous descriptions about to come.

After this zoological meditation Herodotus moves swiftly back to the theme of Arabian spice collection, shifting from winged snakes to another unconventional winged creature, described only as 'bat-like', which attacks men bound in protective ox-hides as

⁴⁵ On this passage see Thomas (2000) 139-50. Due to the zoological focus of these marvels, which contrast with the cultural focus of many other *thōmata* in the *Histories*, Herodotus' two claims in this excursus about unusual and violent animal parturition (the first concerning vipers, the second about lion cubs which cause the lioness to give birth once alone, since her first litter end up tearing her womb out with their claws: ἡ δὲ δὴ λέαινα ... ἅπαξ ἐν τῷ βίῳ τίκτει ἓν ... ἐπεὶ ὁ σκύμνος ... ὁ δὲ ἔχων ὄνυχας θηρίων πολλὸν πάντων ὀξύτατους ἀμύσσει τὰς μήτρας, αὐξόμενός τε δὴ πολλῷ μᾶλλον ἐσικνέεται καταγράφων, 3.108), are among the very few *thaumata* that are explicitly cited from his work in later paradoxographical collections. Cf. Antigonus *Collection* 21 on both the lioness and the viper and Pseudo-Aristotle *Mir. ausc.* 165 on the viper.

they collect cassia (θηρία πτερωτά, τῇσι νυκτερίσι προσείκελα μάλιστα, καὶ τέτριγε δεινόν, καὶ ἐς ἀλκὴν ἄλκιμα, 3.110). The vague description of the winged animal is important because there is a gradual movement in this section from the winged snake – a creature which is definitely not a bird but nevertheless happens to have wings – to this bat-like creature, which has more in common with a true bird than a winged snake, but still does not seem to be a bird proper. The reason why Herodotus focuses above all else on the winged nature of this ambiguous bird-like creature becomes clear when we reach the description of the next method of obtaining an exotic Arabian spice: the collection of cinnamon with the help of giant birds.⁴⁶ Wings are once more at the forefront of our attention, as Herodotus describes how the giant Arabian birds carry the cinnamon off to nests which men cannot reach (ὄρνιθας δὲ λέγουσι μεγάλας φορέειν ταῦτα τὰ κάρφεια ... φορέειν δὲ τὰς ὄρνιθας ἐς νεοσσιὰς προσπεπλασμένας ἐκ πηλοῦ πρὸς ἀποκρήμνοισι ὄρεσι, ἔνθα πρόσβασιν ἀνθρώπων οὐδεμίαν εἶναι, 3.111). These birds are lured back down by men who place dead oxen, asses and beasts of burden below (βοῶν τε καὶ ὄνων τῶν ἀπογινομένων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ὑποζυγίων τὰ μέλα διαταμόντας ὡς μέγιστα κομίζειν ἐς ταῦτα τὰ χωρία, καὶ σφεα θέντας ἀγχοῦ τῶν νεοσσιέων ἀπαλλάσσεσθαι ἐκὰς αὐτέων, 3.111). The birds then collect the offerings and carry them back to the cinnamon-filled nests, which cannot bear the extra weight and fall down, cinnamon in tow (τὰς δὲ ὄρνιθας καταπετομένας τὰ μέλα τῶν ὑποζυγίων ἀναφορέειν ἐπὶ τὰς νεοσσιὰς, τὰς δὲ οὐ δυναμένας ἴσχειν καταρρήγνυσθαι ἐπὶ γῆν, τοὺς δὲ ἐπιόντας συλλέγειν, 3.111). This method of collection is explicitly marked as an event which is even more wondrous (τὸ δὲ δὴ κινάμωμον ἔτι τούτων θωμαστότερον συλλέγουσι, 3.111) than those which have preceded it, highlighting an ongoing escalation of wonder in the narrative.

⁴⁶ Detienne (1994) 14-20 emphasises the contrasts and similarities between the collection of cassia and cinnamon through the use of specifically bird-like animals, but does not focus on the use of winged creatures as a means of transitioning from marvel to marvel in the Arabian excursus as a whole.

This sense of escalating wonder is further reinforced when the collection of the fragrant gum called ledanon is explicitly marked in this way (τὸ δὲ δὴ λήδανον, τὸ καλέουσι Ἀράβιοι λάδανον, ἔτι τούτου θαυμασιώτερον γίνεται, 3.112). In this case, we have moved away from wondrous winged creatures in a way which might first strike the reader as rather arbitrary, but the placement of this method of collection at the end of Herodotus' catalogue of spicy Arabian marvels is actually an important point of transition into the next segment of the broader Arabian excursus.⁴⁷ Unlike the previous methods of spice-collection, the gathering of ledanon does not involve a wondrous winged creature, but rather the humble male goat, whose beard collects the sticky substance like tree gum (τῶν γὰρ αἰγῶν τῶν τράγων ἐν τοῖσι πώγωσι εὐρίσκεται ἐγγινόμενον, οἷον γλοιός, ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλης, 3.112). By ending with this example of spice-collection Herodotus is able to shift the narrative more easily once more, this time from marvellous spices to wondrous caprids – from spice-bearing goats to two astonishing kinds of sheep (3.113):

δύο δὲ γένηα οἷων σφι ἔστι θώματος ἄξια, τὰ οὐδαμόθι ἐτέρωθι ἔστι. τὸ μὲν αὐτῶν ἕτερον ἔχει τὰς οὐρὰς μακράς, τριῶν πήχεων οὐκ ἐλάσσονας, τὰς εἴ τις ἐπεῖη σφι ἐπέλκειν, ἔλκεα ἂν ἔχοιεν ἀνατριβομένων πρὸς τῇ γῇ τῶν οὐρέων· νῦν δ' ἅπας τις τῶν ποιμένων ἐπίσταται ξυλουργεῖν ἐς τοσοῦτο· ἀμαξίδας γὰρ ποιεῦντες ὑποδέουσι αὐτὰς τῇσι οὐρῇσι, ἐνὸς ἐκάστου κτήγεος τὴν οὐρὴν ἐπὶ ἀμαξίδα ἐκάστην καταδέοντες. τὸ δὲ ἕτερον γένος τῶν οἷων τὰς οὐρὰς πλατέας φορέουσι καὶ ἐπὶ πῆχυν πλάτος.

They have two kinds of sheep worthy of wonder which are found nowhere else. One type has a long tail, no less than three cubits long. If one were to allow them to drag these tails, they would wound themselves through rubbing them on the ground. But instead every shepherd there knows at least this much carpentry: enough to make little carts which they tie under the tail, binding each sheep's tail to its own cart. The other kind of sheep has a tail a full cubit broad.

⁴⁷ These wondrous cinnamon birds also turn up as a *thauma* in Antigonus' *Collection* (entry 43) via Aristotle's discussion at *Hist. an.* 616a6-12.

This final example of Arabia's natural marvels ends Herodotus' excursus on the southernmost limit of the world. A brief description of the world's westernmost limit, Ethiopia, follows (3.114). This balances the brief opening reiteration of the wonders of the easternmost limit of the known world, India, with which Herodotus began his discussion of the earth's *eschatiai* (αἱ δ' ἐσχατιαὶ κως τῆς οἰκεομένης τὰ κάλλιστα ἔλαχον ... τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τὴν ἡῶ ἐσχάτη τῶν οἰκεομενέων ἡ Ἰνδική ἐστι, 3.106). After a brief survey of the northernmost limits of the world (3.115-16), where the Arimaspians' supposed collection of gold from griffins parallels the Indians' endeavours against the giant ants of the extreme east, the discussion of the nature of the inherently wondrous properties of the earth's edges concludes (αἱ δὲ ὧν ἐσχατιαὶ οἴκασι, περικληΐουσαι τὴν ἄλλην χώραν καὶ ἐντὸς ἀπέργουσαι, τὰ κάλλιστα δοκέοντα ἡμῖν εἶναι καὶ σπανιώτατα ἔχειν αὐταί, 3.116).

The collection of multiple marvels narrated in a dense, almost catalogue-like style and connected through oblique transitional motifs, which we find in Herodotus' Arabian excursus, is a literary form which is echoed in the structure of later paradoxographical collections, in which the connections between entries are also often not as arbitrary as they may first appear.⁴⁸ On closer inspection, most paradoxographical collections can be seen to link *thaumata* together in loose thematic clusters which enable the reader to consider the possible relationships between each marvel.⁴⁹ Moreover, when entries are viewed in relation to one another, and within the wider context of the work as a whole, it is usually possible to discern more complicated principles of arrangement, whereby

⁴⁸ Priestley (2014) 84 notes that paradoxographical works bear some resemblance in their structure to Herodotus' marvel-passages, but I would go further and suggest that the effect upon the reader shows similarities in both cases, as does the use of complex transitional techniques.

⁴⁹ Jacob (1983) 128, Hansen (1996) 4-5 and Krevans (2011) 125 have recognised the importance of thematically connected sequences of *thaumata* within Antigonos' paradoxographical collection.

certain keywords are used to create implicit and explicit links which allow skilful transitions between entries.⁵⁰

A fresh example, a sequence of zoological *thaumata*, taken this time from the pseudo-Aristotelian *On Marvellous Things Heard*, demonstrates these principles of loose thematic ordering and shows how one of the aims of the paradoxographical collection is to allow new and unexpected connections to be drawn between previously disparate *thaumata* (9-12):

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| <p>9. αἱ ἐν Κεφαλληνίᾳ αἶγες οὐ πίνουσιν, ὥς ἔοικεν, ὥσπερ καὶ τᾶλλα τετράποδα, καθ' ἡμέραν δὲ πρὸς τὸ πέλαγος ἀντία τὰ πρόσωπα ποιήσασαι χάσκουσιν εἰσδεχόμεναι τὰ πνεύματα.</p> | <p>The goats in Cephallenia do not drink, it seems, as other quadrupeds do. Instead, every day, after turning their faces towards the sea, they open their mouths wide and take in the air.</p> |
| <p>10. φασὶν ἐν Συρίᾳ τῶν ἀγρίων ὄνων ἓνα ἀφηγεῖσθαι τῆς ἀγέλης, ἐπειδὴν δέ τις νεώτερος ὢν τῶν πῶλων ἐπὶ τινα θήλειαν ἀναβῇ, τὸν ἀφηγούμενον θυμοῦσθαι, καὶ διώκειν ἕως τούτου ἕως ἂν καταλάβῃ τὸν πῶλον, καὶ ὑποκύψας ἐπὶ τὰ ὀπίσθια σκέλη τῷ στόματι ἀποσπάσῃ τὰ αἰδοῖα.</p> | <p>They say that in Syria one wild ass within the herd is the leader. And whenever one of the younger ones mounts a female, the leader of the herd becomes angry, and he chases the young ass until he catches him, and stooping under his hind legs he tears off his genitals with his mouth.</p> |
| <p>11. τὰς χελώνας λέγουσιν, ὅταν ἔχῃως φάγωσιν, ἐπεσθίειν τὴν ὀρίγανον, ἐὰν δὲ μὴ θᾶττον εὔρῃ, ἀποθνήσκειν. πολλοὺς δ' ἀποπειράζοντας τῶν ἀγραυλούντων εἰ τοῦτ' ἀληθές ἐστιν, ὅταν ἴδωσιν αὐτὴν τοῦτο πράττουσαν, ἐκτίλλειν τὴν ὀρίγανον· τοῦτο δὲ ὅταν ποιήσωσι, μετὰ μικρὸν αὐτὴν ὀρᾶσθαι ἀποθνήσκουσαν.</p> | <p>They say that tortoises, whenever they eat vipers, eat wild marjoram afterwards, and if they do not find any quickly, they die. And many rural people, making trial of this to see whether it is true, pull up wild marjoram whenever they see a tortoise, and whenever they do this they see the tortoise die within a short space of time.</p> |

⁵⁰ Romm (1992) 91 suggests that the catalogic effect of listing ethnographic *thaumata* was a key aspect of Ctesias' writings on distant lands, though the fragmentary nature of his extant work makes it difficult to ascertain fully how this effect was created in practice. Certainly Nichols' suggestion (2018: 3-16) that Ctesias' *Indica*, with its inclusion of many marvels and focus on a single geographical area, can be seen as a 'bridge' between fifth-century BCE historiography and third-century paradoxographical collections is compelling, though the fragmentary state of the *Indica* once again makes detailed comparison difficult.

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| <p>12. τὸ τῆς ἰκτίδος λέγεται αἰδοῖον εἶναι οὐχ ὅμοιον τῇ φύσει τῶν λοιπῶν ζῴων, ἀλλὰ στερεὸν διὰ παντὸς οἶον ὁστοῦν, ὅπως ἂν ποτε διακειμένη τύχη. φασὶ δὲ στραγγουρίας αὐτὸ φάρμακον εἶναι ἐν τοῖς ἀρίστοις, καὶ δίδοσθαι ἐπιζύόμενον.</p> | <p>It is said that the penis of the marten is not like that of other animals. Instead it is hard at all times, like a bone, no matter what the circumstances are. And they say that the penis of the marten is the best remedy for strangury and is given in powdered form.</p> |
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In the above examples several key themes are reiterated in different ways, in order to bind together the otherwise disparate entries. The unexpectedly airy diet of goats in Cephalonia is most obviously paralleled by the tortoise's strange dietary habit of washing down vipers with marjoram. In between these entries concerning odd zoological eating habits, we are told about the propensity of the angry adult ass to castrate his younger rivals. The sudden intrusion of genitalia is echoed by the focus on the marten's endless erection, which comes after we are told of the tortoise's dietary requirements. At the most obvious level there is an alternating arrangement of theme here. But on another level all four of these marvels can be linked together under an alternate heading of 'unexpected things animals put in their mouths': goats gape with their mouths open to drink the sea air, asses tear off genitals with their teeth (note the inclusion of the seemingly redundant detail 'τῷ στόματι'), tortoises can only put snakes into their mouths if they are well-seasoned, and even humans occasionally take in powdered marten penis (presumably orally?) when suffering from strangury.⁵¹

When viewed in this way, the transitions and connections between entries echo those in Herodotus' descriptions of ethnographic *thōmata*, as well as being reminiscent

⁵¹ Similar connections spread out and ripple through the other entries in the initial section on zoological marvels in *On Marvellous Things Heard* (entries 1-30). Just before we reach the examples discussed here, we are told in entry four that goats seek out a certain herb when injured (cf. the tortoise needing wild marjoram); birds eat things from the mouths of crocodiles in entry seven (cf. the unexpected eating habits on display in 9-12); hedgehogs can tell which way the wind is blowing and change direction as a result in entry eight (cf. goats turning their faces to the air in entry 9); after entries nine to twelve (cited in the main text), we return to the eating habits of birds in entry thirteen, which tells us that woodpeckers peck so far into trees in search of food that the trees collapse (cf. birds and food in seven, and the following description of another bird eating in entry fourteen: pelicans swallow mussels and then vomit up the shells).

of some of the ordering principles discerned in later miscellanistic texts. In these, a ‘latching-on’ technique allows seemingly disparate material to hang together, as one bizarre subject somehow tumbles effortlessly into another.⁵² This sense of one marvel tumbling into another is essential to the aesthetic of paradoxography as a whole: the ability of texts to communicate back and forth in unexpected dialogue with one another is key to the creation of surprising continuities and discontinuities which arouse the bafflement and wonder that the paradoxographical collection is aiming for. This effect is further reinforced by the paradoxographer’s methods of excerpting his source texts, as the next section will demonstrate.

4. Re-activating *Thauma*: Paradoxography and the Aristotelian Tradition

The ethnographic tradition is not the only mode of writing from which paradoxography draws. As mentioned earlier, the strong connection between the traditions of Peripatetic philosophy and science and the work of the Hellenistic paradoxographers has often been noted, especially in respect of the themes and content of their works.⁵³ But the significance of the place of *thauma* within Aristotle’s conceptual framework of philosophy and science as a whole on the paradoxographers’ conception of their texts has not yet been examined fully. The most explicit and significant Aristotelian discussion of the place and purpose of *thauma* in philosophy comes at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, where we find Aristotle echoing Socrates’ mention in Plato’s *Theaetetus* (155d) of the importance of *thauma* as the beginning of philosophical inquiry.⁵⁴ Aristotle

⁵² Cf. Pelling (2000) 171-90 on this ‘latching-on’ technique and the sophisticated principles of arrangement in Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae*.

⁵³ See above pp. 72-73.

⁵⁴ See chapter one p. 46 on *Tht.* 155d. I will return to Plato’s conception of the place of *thauma* in philosophy in chapters six and seven.

expands Plato's formulation, linking wonder to a recognition of ignorance which spurs desire for philosophical knowledge (*Metaphysics* 982b12-21):

διὰ γὰρ τὸ θαυμάζειν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ νῦν καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἤρξαντο φιλοσοφεῖν, ἐξ ἀρχῆς μὲν τὰ πρόχειρα τῶν ἀτόπων θαυμάσαντες, εἶτα κατὰ μικρὸν οὕτω προϊόντες καὶ περὶ τῶν μειζόνων διαπορήσαντες, οἷον περὶ τε τῶν τῆς σελήνης παθημάτων καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν ἥλιον καὶ ἄστρα καὶ περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς γενέσεως. ὁ δ' ἀπορῶν καὶ θαυμάζων οἶεται ἀγνοεῖν (διὸ καὶ ὁ φιλόμυθος φιλόσοφος πῶς ἐστίν· ὁ γὰρ μῦθος σύγκειται ἐκ θαυμασίων)· ὥστ' εἶπερ διὰ τὸ φεύγειν τὴν ἄνοιαν ἐφιλοσόφησαν, φανερὸν ὅτι διὰ τὸ εἰδέναι τὸ ἐπίστασθαι ἐδίωκον καὶ οὐ χρήσεώς τινος ἔνεκεν.

Through wonder men now begin, and first began, to philosophise: from the beginning they wondered at strange things which were near at hand, and then progressed step-by-step and raised questions about greater matters, such as the changes of the moon and the sun and the constellations and the origin of everything. And the man who is perplexed and who wonders feels that he is ignorant (and for this reason the lover of myth is in some way a philosopher, for myth is composed of wonders). As a result, if it was to escape ignorance that men philosophised, it is clear that they pursued understanding for the sake of knowing, rather than for some practical use.

For Aristotle, *thauma* is thus able to motivate the pursuit of knowledge itself by encouraging the recognition of one's own ignorance concerning the object, matter or phenomenon which is the cause of such wonder.⁵⁵ Wonder acts as a sort of protreptic to philosophy and the attainment of knowledge: a spur to curiosity which is initially useful, but which is to be discarded and replaced by knowledge once the causes of a given phenomenon have been understood. Philosophy therefore stems from *thauma*, and it is possible to wonder at and philosophise concerning matters both big and small (in size and significance), near and far.

Aristotle makes this point again in a slightly different way in his *de Partibus Animalium* (645a15-17), where he issues a protreptic towards the study of animal bodies

⁵⁵ I will discuss the relationship between *thauma*, recognition, ignorance and knowledge in Aristotle's work in more detail in chapters four and five.

by arguing that it is easier for us to begin inquiring and gaining knowledge of creatures which are familiar and accessible to us before turning to weightier matters concerning the heavens, which are much further away and therefore more difficult to contemplate and understand fully. For this reason, the study of even the lowest animals (τὴν περὶ τῶν ἀτιμωτέρων ζώων ἐπίσκεψιν) is worth undertaking because of the fact that there is something wondrous in every aspect of the natural world (ἐν πᾶσι γὰρ τοῖς φυσικοῖς ἔνεστί τι θαυμαστόν).⁵⁶ For Aristotle, the *thauma* generated by the contemplation of even the smallest biological problem affords the chance to philosophise and ultimately, in due course, to move towards the understanding of greater and more impressive phenomena.

There are indications that this Aristotelian conception of *thauma* as a crucial starting point for further inquiry lies in the background of the production of Hellenistic paradoxographical collections. In this regard it is particularly striking that the connection between *thauma* and inquiry seems to have influenced Callimachus, the first named producer of a marvel collection of whom we are aware. To judge from the surviving fragments of his *Collection of Marvels From Every Land Arranged According to Places*, Callimachus' marvel-collection focused primarily upon geological and geographical *thaumata*, especially wondrous bodies of water. But his paradoxographical collection is not the only work to exhibit such an interest in unique geographical features in particular locations: his *Aitia* also deals with such features in connection with cultural and historical particularities.⁵⁷ This sense of a connection between Callimachus' interest in

⁵⁶ See Lennox (2001) 172, Nightingale (2004) 262-65, Poulakos and Crick (2012) 301-304, Thein (2014) 217-18 and Tipton (2014) 68-69 on the place of wonder within Aristotle's defence of and protreptic towards the study of lower animals. See Balme (1972) 122-24 on the unusual nature of this passage in the *Part. an.* I will return to the importance of the near/far antithesis which Aristotle draws in relation to *thauma* in chapter five, pp. 167-68 with n. 5.

⁵⁷ See Prioux (2009) 121 on the parallelism between the *Aitia* and Callimachus' paradoxographical collection in terms of the pronounced interest which both works exhibit in the geography (especially rivers) of the west (especially Magna Graecia). The continuities between Callimachus' interest in aetiology and paradoxography have also been noted by Fraser (1972) i. 774, Krevans (2004) 173, and Acosta-Hughes and Stephens (2012) 17.

paradoxography and aetiology is further strengthened if we turn to the *Aitia* itself and note the role which wonder plays at a crucial transitional point between two discussions of cultic practices in book two of the poem. In the first *aition* (fr. 43-43a Harder) of this book, Callimachus, apparently conversing with and questioning the Muses, exhibits his own scholarly knowledge by providing a catalogue of Sicilian cities before Clio answers the poet's question about the foundation cult of Zancle. The transition into the next *aition* then begins (fr. 43b1-4 Harder):

ὥς] ἡ μὲν λίπε μῦθον, ἐγὼ δ' ἐπὶ καὶ τ[ὸ πυ]θέσθαι
 ἥ]θελον – ἥ γάρ μοι θάμβος ὑπετρέφ[ε]το – ,
 Κ]ισσοῦσης παρ' ὕδωρ Θεοδαΐσια Κρη[ῖ]σαν ἐ]ορτὴν
 ἥ] πόλις ἡ Κάδμου κῶς Ἀλῖαρτος ἄγ[ει]

In this way she ended her account, but I was full of desire to learn this as well – for truly my wonder was nourished – why near the waters of Kissousa does the city of Cadmus, Haliartus, celebrate the Theodaisia, a Cretan festival ...

The poet's astonishment at Zancle's cult, and Clio's explanation of its provenance, here fuels a further desire for aetiological answers, this time in connection with a seemingly unrelated question concerning the reasons why the Theodaisia is celebrated in both Crete and at Haliartus in Boeotia. Crucially, it is wonder which here feeds the scholar-poet's child-like curiosity, and becomes the starting point for renewed inquiry, as well as being the impulse which encourages the transition from one *aition* to the next.⁵⁸ Like Aristotle's philosophical inquiries, Callimachus' aetiological questions find their starting point in

⁵⁸ On *thambos* as a response to Clio's answer to Callimachus' obscure question, see Hutchinson (1988) 44. Cf. Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004) 59 on the use of wonder to link the Haliartus episode to the seemingly unrelated discussion of Sicilian cities which precedes it; see also Harder (2012) ii. 303 and 362 on *thambos* as a transitional device which reveals "how Callimachus pretended that amazement and curiosity were the impulses that accounted for his choice of subjects". See Cozzoli (2011) 424-27 on the significance of *thambos* in fr. 43a Harder, and on the narrator's pose of child-like curiosity and wonder in the *Aitia* as a whole. On the general significance of the child-like posturing of the *Aitia*'s narrator see Snell (1953) 271-76.

wonder, and the contemplation of one small point of cultural interest has the potential to nurture a pursuit of knowledge concerning what may at first seem radically separate matters.⁵⁹

There is, however, an additional complication when it comes to nurturing the reader's curiosity about those very problems of Aristotelian inquiry that the paradoxographical collections tend to focus on, which is precisely that the works of Aristotle and his Peripatetic followers have already provided a ready-made explanatory framework in which to contextualise many natural *thaumata*. This has the potentially disastrous effect of curtailing the budding philosopher's ability to start with small and unexplained natural marvels near at hand, before moving on to weightier matters of philosophy. Due to the assiduous scientific and philosophical work of scientific thinkers from the Ionian school down to Aristotle, certain natural *thaumata* had perhaps already become *too* familiar. A process of defamiliarisation was necessary before nature might seem sufficiently strange again. This is precisely what the paradoxographical collection offers to the reader. Rather than building up and explaining the causes and context behind a given phenomenon in order to nurture a desire for further knowledge – a process which we see enacted somewhat comically in Callimachus' *Aitia* – the writer of paradoxography adopts an almost diametrically opposed strategy in order to achieve the same effect. Phenomena which are already relatively well-contextualised and explained are stripped back, pared of their explanatory framework, and made to astonish again.

With this in mind, the seemingly puzzling methods which the paradoxographer adopts with respect to his source texts begin to make more sense. Luckily for us, some of the source texts which lurk in the background of certain sections of some extant

⁵⁹ See Fantuzzi and Hunter (2004) 59-60 on the similarity between Callimachus' inquiries and the Platonic/Aristotelian notion that philosophical inquiry originates in wonder.

paradoxographical collections survive, allowing us to examine the intricacies of the paradoxographer's excerpting art in closer detail. Perhaps the most fascinating example is a large central section of Antigonus' *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* (26-115) which makes extensive use of Aristotle's *Historia Animalium*, and permits us a close-up view of paradoxography's relationship to Aristotelian biology. Many of the *thaumata* which Antigonus culls and adapts from the *Historia Animalium* are part of much longer zoological discussions in which Aristotle has contextualised and explained the biological phenomena which he is documenting at great length. In almost every case in Antigonus' *Collection*, however, the paradoxographer neglects to adapt any of this wider contextual padding in his own work. In fact, Antigonus actually emphasises that the removal of Aristotle's explanations of the causes of phenomena relating to the animal world are an integral aspect of his own paradoxographical art in a brief authorial comment in his text, a rare moment where he explicitly discusses his principles of selection and composition. After relating a marvel excerpted from Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* Antigonus comments (*Collection* 60) that Aristotle took great care in his works and explained things without extraneous information (ὁ γε Ἀριστοτέλης ... πάνυ πολλὴν ἐπιμέλειαν πεποιημένος ἐν τοῖς πλείστοις αὐτῶν καὶ οἷον ἔργῳ, οὐ παρέργῳ χρώμενος τῇ περὶ τούτων ἐξηγήσει). He also notes that Aristotle wrote almost seventy books on matters relating to animals, and that he focused on explaining matters rather than narrating them in these works (τὰ γοῦν πάντα σχεδὸν ἑβδομήκοντα περὶ αὐτῶν καταβέβληται βιβλία, καὶ πεπείραται ἐξηγητικώτερον ἢ ἱστορικώτερον ἐν ἑκάστοις ἀναστρέφεσθαι). In contrast, Antigonus notes that his collection focuses only on the selection of strange and incredible content from these Aristotelian works (πρὸς τὴν ἡμετέραν ἐκλογὴν ἐκποιεῖ <τῶν> προηρημένων αὐτῷ τὸ ξένον καὶ παράδοξον ἐκ τε τούτων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιδραμεῖν). As this explicit comment makes clear, Antigonus' primary aim within his marvel-

collection is the evocation of a sense of the strange and incredible through the deliberate curtailment of Aristotelian explanation.

The deliberate effects of Antigonos' striving for the strange through this method of excerption and adaptation can be seen more clearly if we examine some of his *thaumata* alongside Aristotle's original discussions. The three short successive marvels which form the seventy-third to the seventy-fifth entries in Antigonos' collection are a good example of the paradoxographer's typical treatment of his source texts:

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| 73. | τῶν δ' ἰχθύων τὸν σκάρον μόνον
μηρυκάζειν. | [And Aristotle says that] the parrotfish is
the only one which chews the cud. |
| 74. | τοῦ δὲ λέοντος οὕτως εἶναι τὰ ὀστᾶ
στερεά, ὥστε πολλάκις κοπτομένων
πῦρ ἐκλάμπειν. | [And Aristotle says that] the bones of the
lion are so hard that often fire flashes
forth from them when they are struck. |
| 75. | ἐν Φρυγίᾳ δὲ βοῦς εἶναι, οἱ κινοῦσι τὰ
κέρατα. | [And Aristotle says that] there are cows
in Phrygia which wiggle their horns. |

When stated in this bare form these enigmatic and puzzling statements encourage the reader to marvel at the peculiarities of the natural world, while simultaneously testing the boundaries of credulity. Do we really believe that a trip to Phrygia could result in an encounter with cow horns of a type we have never experienced before, or are we to doubt the veracity of this claim despite the fact that Aristotle himself supposedly said it?

In fact, Aristotle really did say all of these things, as well as all the other claims attributed to him in Antigonos' paradoxographical collection. If, however, we turn to Aristotle's biological works we find that the paradoxographer has always been very careful to cherry-pick his *thaumata* out of the vast zoological discussion in a way which distorts their original meaning. Two mutually-reinforcing strategies are employed to achieve this goal. The paradoxographer either selects the unusual exceptions to various biological rules which Aristotle lays out carefully in the first place, or he strips away the

complicated reasoning which the philosopher builds up to explain away an apparent inconsistency or anomaly. The cud-chewing parrotfish is a good example of the combination of these two methods. In the *Historia Animalium* this fish's unusual masticatory habit is mentioned in a long discussion about different types of animal stomach. This wider discussion makes clear why Aristotle sees fit to mention the parrotfish's strange habit here, since one element which he consistently comments on in this work in relation to the form of an animal's stomach and digestive processes is its dentition. For example, Aristotle observes that horned viviparous quadrupeds which do not have teeth in both jaws also have four-chambered stomachs and chew the cud (τῶν τετραπόδων καὶ ζωοτόκων ὅσα μὴ ἔστιν ἀμφώδοντα τῶν κερατοφόρων, τέτταρας ἔχει τοὺς τοιούτους πόρους· ἃ δὴ καὶ λέγεται μηρυκάζειν, 507a34-36). He goes on to observe that the structure of the gut, like the structure of the stomach, differs depending on whether an animal has teeth in only one jaw (as cud-chewing ruminants do), or in both jaws (διαφέρει δὲ καὶ ἡ τῶν ἐντέρων φύσις ἑκατέροις τῶν εἰρημένων ζώων, τοῖς τε μὴ ἀμφώδουσι καὶ τοῖς ἀμφώδουσι, 507b27-29). For example, no animal with teeth in only one jaw has a straight gut (ἔχουσι δ' ἓν καὶ ἀποφυάδας τῶν ἐντέρων, εὐθύντερον δ' οὐδὲν ἐστὶ μὴ ἀμφώδουν, 507b33-34). The digestive system of oviparous animals is the next matter of discussion: after an overview of the structure of snakes we arrive at the question of the nature of fish stomachs. We are told that all fishes have one simple stomach, rather than a stomach with multiple chambers as ruminants do, though the shape of this stomach does vary (ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἰχθύσιν ἔχει τὰ περὶ τὰ ἔντερα καὶ τὴν κοιλίαν· μίαν γὰρ καὶ ἀπλὴν ἔχουσι, διαφέρουσιν τοῖς σχήμασιν, 508b8-10). At this point Aristotle mentions the parrotfish, a fish with a gut-like stomach which appears to chew the cud and seems, at first glance, to be an outlier in the careful taxonomy of stomachs which has just been laid out (ἐνιοὶ γὰρ πάντα ἐντεροειδῆ ἔχουσιν, οἷον ὃν καλοῦσι

σκάρον, ὃς δὴ καὶ δοκεῖ μόνος ἰχθὺς μηρυκάζειν, 508b10-12). According to Aristotle's system, if the parrotfish really were a ruminant it would possess a four-chambered stomach as well as only one jaw full of teeth: as it is, the verb δοκεῖ takes on its full force here as the parrotfish, with its singly-formed gut-like stomach, must be a fish after all – even if the action of scraping at coral with its beak-like protrusion does make the animal look as if it is chewing.⁶⁰ In Antigonus' *Collection*, however, the parrotfish is not *thought* to eat like this: the paradoxographer simply asserts that this fish chews the cud (τῶν δ' ἰχθύων τὸν σκάρον μόνον μηρυκάζειν). With the removal of a few crucial words, Aristotle's careful discussion of fish stomachs is obliterated, and in its place a baffling *thauma* arises.

A similar paradoxographical manoeuvre takes place when it comes to the pyrotechnical potential of lion bones. In the *Historia Animalium* Aristotle uses the fact that lion bones can apparently act as a flint-like substance as a proof of their extreme hardness (στερεὰ δὲ πάντων μάλιστα ὁ λέων ἔχει τὰ ὀστᾶ· οὕτω γάρ ἐστι σκληρὰ ὥστε συντριβομένων ὥσπερ ἐκ λίθων ἐκλάμπειν πῦρ, 516b9-11). Aristotle is very much concerned with the relative hardness of animal bones in this part of his discussion rather than their flame-producing potential, but the paradoxographer's careful act of adaptation again manages to shift the emphasis of the original source text. In the *Historia Animalium* Aristotle does not get into a detailed explanation of why lion bones happen to be so hard, though he does provide a more detailed discussion in the *de Partibus Animalium*, where it transpires that lion bones are supposedly hard enough to act as flints because the bones of bulky male flesh-eating animals which obtain food by fighting are naturally harder than the bones of other animals, with the result that the bones of the lion (perhaps the fiercest

⁶⁰ Cf. *Part. an.* 675a4, where Aristotle again affirms that this strange fish is unique in having teeth in only one jaw, hence the *apparent* chewing motion that the fish makes.

flesh-eating animal Aristotle can think of) are hard enough to give off sparks when struck together (διὸ τὰ τῶν ἄρρένων σκληρότερα ἢ τὰ τῶν θηλειῶν, καὶ τὰ τῶν σαρκοφάγων (ἡ τροφή γὰρ διὰ μάχης τούτοις), ὥσπερ τὰ τοῦ λέοντος· οὕτω γὰρ ἔχει ταῦτα σκληρὰν τὴν φύσιν ὥστ' ἐξάπτεσθαι τυπτομένων καθάπερ ἐκ λίθων πῦρ, 655a12-16). From the paradoxographer's truncated and context-free adaptation of the relevant passage in the *Historia Animalium*, however, it is not clear how hard lion bones are in relation to those of other animals, or why they might be able to give off sparks at all.

The mobility of cow horns in Phrygia also turns out to be a more logical phenomenon than first imagined, as Aristotle's longer discussion of the general composition of animal horns makes clear. At *Historia Animalium* 517a20-23 he observes that most horns are solid at the tip and hollow at the point where they attach to the bone which juts out of the head of the animal (τῶν δὲ κεράτων τὰ μὲν πλεῖστα κοῖλά ἐστιν ἀπὸ τῆς προσφύσεως περὶ τὸ ἐντὸς ἐκπεφυκὸς ἐκ τῆς κεφαλῆς ὀστοῦν, ἐπ' ἄκρου δ' ἔχει τὸ στερεόν). There are some types of cattle, however, which are exceptions to this general rule, like those from Phrygia, whose horns attach to the skin of the head rather than to the solid bone of the skull. For this reason they are able to move their horns freely just as they move their ears (τὰ δὲ κέρατα προσπέφυκε μᾶλλον τῷ δέρματι ἢ τῷ ὀστῷ· διὸ καὶ ἐν Φρυγίᾳ εἰσὶ βόες καὶ ἄλλοι οἱ κινουσι τὰ κέρατα ὥσπερ τὰ ὄτα, 517a27-30).⁶¹ In Antigonus' paradoxographical version of this observation, however, the relatively straightforward explanation that horns are able to move if they are attached to movable skin as opposed to fixed bone is completely excised. Aristotle's note that such animals

⁶¹ Aristotle may be referring to cattle with scurs (known as 'Wackelhörner' in German), movable 'horns' created by incomplete horn growth which is not attached to the skull (see Kysely (2010) 1241-46 for a discussion of the 'loose horns' phenomenon in cattle and archaeological evidence for such bovids in Eneolithic central Europe). For other ancient accounts of the movable horns of Phrygian cattle see Oppian *Cynegetica* 2.90-95 and Pliny *HN* 11.125; cf. Aelian *NH* 2.20 (describing the movable horns of cattle in Erythrae) and 17.45 (on the movable horns of Ethiopian flesh-eating bulls; cf. also Diodorus Siculus 3.35.7).

are found in Phrygia *and elsewhere* (ἐν Φρυγίᾳ εἰςὶ βόες καὶ ἄλλοθι) is also carefully neglected, giving the impression that the wiggly-horned Phrygian animals are a truly exceptional *thauma* worthy of particular wonder. As these examples show, Antigonus has not arbitrarily plucked sentences from his source text in an unexamined fashion. Instead, the paradoxographer carefully chooses his *thaumata* by picking up on natural exceptions, and then systematically stripping them of their carefully-constructed explanatory framework. As suggested above, this deliberate neglect of any context, which places these zoological observations within a broader biological system, acts to heighten a sense of paradox and wonder through the deliberate suppression of any sense of the causes of each given phenomenon, and acts in turn to re-stimulate the primordial Aristotelian wonder felt at the initial observation of strange and inexplicable zoological specimens or processes. If we read Hellenistic paradoxographical collections with their kind of treatment of their source texts in mind, the texts as a whole begin to make more sense as interlocutors in a philosophical tradition which situates its origins in *thauma* itself.

5. Textual *Thaumata*: Paradoxography and the Poetics of Hellenistic Literature

There is one other important respect in which the paradoxographical collection can be seen as echoing contemporary Hellenistic intellectual and literary trends. The brevity and lack of any contextual framework associated with the *thaumata* created by the paradoxographer's preferred methods of excerption also align the paradoxographical collection with another contemporary textual genre: the literary epigram collection. In chapter one, it was mentioned that the connections between the *content* of Hellenistic paradoxographical collections and the Posidippus epigrams on the Milan Papyrus have recently been recognised, although the similarities of *form* apparent between the epigram

collection and the paradoxographical collection have not yet been explored.⁶² In many respects the systematic stripping away of any contextual information that surrounded the *thaumata* of paradoxography in their source texts is akin to the manner in which the literary epigram's relative concision and absence of a clear context of utterance or inscription encourages the reader to fill in resulting interpretative gaps, deriving pleasure from the imaginative engagement which the supplementation of contextual knowledge provokes: a process which Bing has termed 'Ergänzungsspiel' in relation to Hellenistic epigram.⁶³ The re-stimulation of inquiry which the paradoxographical collection encourages through its manipulation of *thauma* bears many similarities to the response provoked by the 'Ergänzungsspiel' of epigram, with the reader prompted to speculate about the possible causes of each marvel, and encouraged to try to fill in the now renewed gaps in explanation. This potentially starts the chain of philosophical inquiry afresh, with the possibility of eventually moving on to the contemplation of even weightier philosophical matters lying ahead.

Far from representing the shoddy end-product of an inadequate Hellenistic scientist trying and failing to produce a set of usable 'research notes', or of a shambolic historian missing the point when it comes to framing a coherent historical narrative, the paradoxographical collection becomes yet another manifestation of a complex

⁶² See chapter one p. 60 n. 30 on the similarities of content between the Posidippus' epigrams of the Milan Papyrus and contemporary paradoxographical collections.

⁶³ See Bing (1995) 115-31 on the 'Ergänzungsspiel' in relation to Hellenistic epigram; cf. also Hunter (1992) 114 on the use of literary epigrams as "a provocation to speculation"; this speculation becomes a hallmark of the genre as a whole: "Perhaps no literary genre makes such a direct appeal to the reader's powers of intellectual reconstruction, to the *need* to interpret, as does that of the epigram". For further analysis of reader-response, supplementation and 'Ergänzungsspiel' in Hellenistic epigram see e.g. Meyer (2007) 187-210, esp. p. 209 on the reader's realisation of the meaning of the poem through supplementation and the relation this bears to the paradox created by the removal of contextual information: "In Hellenistic epigram, the implied reader can be identified with those strategies of the text which let him participate in an active and creative way in the realization of the poem ... Epigrammatists underline ambiguities and paradoxes typical of the genre, made more potent with the loss of epigram's original context on the monument". For the act of supplementation as an essential aspect of the aesthetics of Hellenistic art as well as poetry see Zanker (2004) 72-102.

engagement with intellectual, philosophical and literary trends on the part of Hellenistic scholars and poets. Furthermore, by entering the world of the paradoxographers, we witness a change in the conception of what an appropriate object of *thauma* might be in the Hellenistic age: now the text itself has cemented its place as possibly the most marvellous object of all. Far from being a manifestation of decline, the emergence of paradoxography as a mode of writing in the third century BCE attests to changing attitudes concerning the effects and causes of wonder itself.

Chapter Three

The Sound of *Thauma*: Music and the Marvellous

7. ἴδιον δὲ καὶ τὸ περὶ τὰ ἔντερα τῶν προβάτων· τὰ μὲν γὰρ τῶν κριῶν ἔστιν ἄφωνα, τὰ δὲ τῶν θηλέων εὐφωνα. ὅθεν καὶ τὸν ποιητὴν ὑπολάβοι τις εἰρηκέναι, πολυπράγμονα πανταχοῦ καὶ περιττὸν ὄντα:

ἐπτά δὲ θηλυτέρων οἴων ἐτανύσσατο χορδὰς.

8. οὐχ ἦττον δὲ τούτου θαυμαστόν, καθωμιλημένον δὲ μᾶλλον τὸ περὶ τὴν ἐν τῇ Σικελίᾳ ἄκανθαν τὴν καλουμένην κάκτον· εἰς ἣν ὅταν ἔλαφος ἐμβῇ καὶ τραυματισθῇ, τὰ ὀστᾶ ἄφωνα καὶ ἄχρηστα πρὸς αὐλοὺς ἴσχει. ὅθεν καὶ ὁ Φιλητᾶς ἐξηγήσατο περὶ αὐτῆς εἰπας:

γηρύσαιτο δὲ νεβρὸς ἀπὸ ζωὴν ὀλέσασα,
ὀξείης κάκτου τύμμα φυλαξαμένη.

Antigonus of Carystus, *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* 7-8

7. This property of the entrails of livestock is also strange: the entrails of rams are unmelodious, while those of ewes are melodious. From this it is possible to understand what the poet [i.e. Homer], who is in all respects desirous of knowledge and painstaking, said:

“He strung it with seven gut-strings from female sheep”. (= *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 51)

8. And no less marvellous than this, but even better known, is this fact concerning the prickly plant in Sicily called ‘cactus’. Whenever a deer treads upon this plant and is wounded, its bones become unmelodious and useless for the manufacture of *auloi*. For this reason Philitas expounds on this plant when he says:

“Let the fawn which has lost its life sing,
the fawn which has avoided the sting of the sharp
cactus.” (= Philitas fr. 18 Sb. = fr. 20 Sp.)

In the opening of Antigonus’ *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* it is not the scientific intricacies of Aristotle’s zoological works which are thrust to the forefront of

the reader's attention, but rather the world of the music and poetry of the past. A group of eight thematically connected marvels speak back and forth to each other on the subjects of music, voice and voicelessness. The first entry is derived from Timaeus, who reports that cicadas sing on the Locrian side of the river Halex, but remain silent on the Rhegian side, and that the Locrian citharode Eunomus was aided in a contest at Delphi with the Rhegian citharode Ariston when a cicada fell on his lyre and sang (τῶν τεττίγων τοὺς μὲν ἐν τῇ Λοκρικῇ ᾄδειν, τοὺς δὲ ἐν τῇ Ῥηγίων ἀφώνους εἶναι ... εὐημερήσαντος δ' οὖν τοῦ Ῥηγίου ἐν τῷ ἀγῶνι ἐνίκησεν Εὐνόμος ὁ Λοκρὸς παρὰ τοιαύτην αἰτίαν· ἄδοντας αὐτοῦ μεταξὺ τέττιξ ἐπὶ τὴν λύραν ἐπιπτὰς ᾄδεν, *Collection 1*). This is followed by the report that Heracles, annoyed by their sound while trying to sleep, prayed for the cicadas in Rhegium to become voiceless (Ἡρακλῆς ἐν τινὶ τόπῳ τῆς χώρας κατακοιμηθεὶς καὶ ἐνοχλούμενος ὑπὸ τῶν τεττίγων ἠϋξάτο αὐτοὺς ἀφώνους γενέσθαι, *Collection 2*), and then by another cicada-based marvel: in Cephallenia these insects are found only on one side of a river and not on the other bank (καὶ ἐν Κεφαλληνίᾳ δὲ ποταμὸς διείργει, καὶ ἐπίταδε μὲν γίνονται τέττιγες, ἐπέκεινα δὲ οὐ, *Collection 3*). The next marvel tells of frogs on Seriphus which are wondrously silent (οὐδ' ἐν Σερίφῳ δὲ οἱ βάτραχοι φθέγγοντα, *Collection 4*), followed by a contrasting report from Myrsilus of Methymna about marvellously noisy nightingales in Lesbos near the tomb of Orpheus' head in Antissa: these birds are more tuneful than nightingales found elsewhere (ὁ δὲ Μυρσίλος, ὁ τὰ Λεσβιακὰ συγγεγραφώς, φησὶν τῆς Ἀντισσαίας, ἐν ᾧ τόπῳ μυθολογεῖται καὶ δείκνυται δὲ ὁ τάφος ὑπὸ τῶν ἐγχωρίων τῆς τοῦ Ὀρφέως κεφαλῆς, τὰς ἀηδόνας εἶναι εὐφωνοτέρας τῶν ἄλλων, *Collection 5*). The focus on the tunefulness of certain birds continues in the next entry, which concerns partridges in Attica and Boeotia: some are melodious while others are weak-voiced (ἐν τῇ Ἀττικῇ καὶ Βοιωτίᾳ πέρδικας, ὧν τοὺς μὲν εὐφώνους, τοὺς δὲ τελείως ἰσχυροφώνους ὁμολογεῖται γίγνεσθαι, *Collection 6*).

The final two entries in Antigonus' initial grouping of marvels, cited in full above, demonstrate in an especially pointed form the paradoxographer's multi-layered engagement with the thaumatic power of both the oral and written poetry of the past. The successive citations from the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* and from the work of the early Hellenistic poet Philitas of Cos once again reveal the paradoxographer's typically Hellenistic interest in literary games involving his source texts, a phenomenon which I explored in the previous chapter. At the beginning of the present chapter I want to build on this discussion further by examining the reasons behind Antigonus' inclusion and juxtaposition of these two particular poetic citations within the opening section of his paradoxographical collection. I will show that Antigonus is interested in *hHerm.* as a text which allows him to play upon the connection between *thauma* and music as it is reflected in both the poetic *and* the scientific traditions.

hHerm. is an especially apt text for Antigonus to include in his marvel collection. Out of all the texts in our extant corpus of Homeric hymns, this one is by far the most explicitly thaumatic. *Thauma* is an almost constant reaction to the god's activities and achievements, starting from the moment of his birth, and it is the ability to see the marvellous potential of the familiar material of the world around him, and to make use of the marvellous in the everyday, which enables Hermes to prove his divine parentage. Hermes' most marvellous invention of all, the lyre, is inherently imbued with the ability to provoke *thauma* in an audience in every single performance. As an instrument created out of the everyday familiar material of nature, which goes on to produce exceptional marvels of culture, the lyre is depicted as an object which transcends established boundaries and simultaneously creates new links between previously unconnected realms. Perhaps the most important areas which the lyre is able to connect in new ways within the *Hymn* are the separate realms of god and man. We see this in action in the

poem itself during Hermes' two musical performances, each of which has an explicitly marvellous effect within the narrative, hinting at the complex interrelationship between musical performance, *thauma* and the boundaries between gods and mortals.

This effect is complicated in the second half of the *Hymn*, when Hermes' second musical performance even manages to provoke wonder in a fellow god, his elder brother Apollo. Mortals often marvel, especially at divine epiphanies, but this portrayal of a god's marvelling response is extremely unusual. It hints at the significant place the lyre is presented as occupying not only in the relationship between gods and humans, but within the everyday experience of both. As I will show below, by the end of the narrative the *Hymn* has thus given us an aetiology not only of the lyre's existence, but also of its intensely thaumatic effect. In fact, the effect of *thauma* is continually associated with aetiological accounts of the origins of various musical and choral genres in the Greek tradition. This is a theme which will be explored further in this chapter's final section as I move onto the broader connections between *thauma*, music, song and *choreia* in *Odyssey* 8 and the Delian half of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* as case-studies of the interconnections between all of these elements in the Greek poetic and musical tradition. The importance of *thauma* in Greek *mousikē* will become even clearer in the final case-study at the end of this chapter, when I turn to the presentation of another wondrous musical performance: Herodotus' epiphanic and god-like vision of the citharode Arion in the *Histories*. Again we will see that musical *thauma* plays an integral role in the process of blurring the boundaries between gods and men, an issue which I will continue to examine in the next chapter. But before reaching back and further examining the relationship between *thauma*, music and song from early Greek hexameter poetry onwards, I will now return to Antigonus' reception and appropriation of the intensely thaumatic impact of music in his own marvel-collection.

1. Homer the Proto-Paradoxographer: Poetry, Music and Science in Antigonus'

Collection of Marvellous Investigations

For Antigonus, *hHerm.* is an ideal text through which to explore how familiar, everyday aspects of the natural world around us are able to induce *thauma*. In this respect, the paradoxographer has picked up on the potential of *hHerm.* to stand as an antecedent to his own poetics: just as the *Hymn* describes the combination of disparate parts of everyday nature to produce a stunning instrument of thaumatic effect, so too does Antigonus' own work involve the dismemberment and re-assembly of previous poetic and scientific texts, which are then bound together to induce wonder in the reader. Perhaps this is why Antigonus is so keen to cast the poet of *hHerm.* – whom he here designates as Homer – as a sort of 'proto-paradoxographer'.¹ In one of the relatively rare explicit authorial comments in his *Collection* Antigonus here praises the poet as “in all respects desirous of knowledge and painstaking” (πολυπράγμονα πανταχοῦ καὶ περιττὸν ὄντα). As Matthew Leigh has recently pointed out, these two terms take on an unusually positive sense here: rather than denoting a pedantic and useless sort of scholarship, as they do elsewhere, they have become terms of approbation, reflecting a sense of intellectual and scholarly rigour on the part of the poet which could equally be extended to the art of the paradoxographer himself.² In this way, Antigonus tries to cast Homer in his own image, making the poet into a sort of 'πρῶτος εὐρετής' (accidental or otherwise) of paradoxography itself.

¹ It is not uncommon for ancient authors to attribute *Homeric Hymns* to Homer, as Antigonus has suggested here. See e.g. Thuc. 3.104 (δηλοῖ δὲ μάλιστα Ὅμηρος ὅτι τοιαῦτα ἦν ἐν τοῖς ἔπεσι τοῖσδε, ἃ ἐστὶν ἐκ προοιμίου Ἀπόλλωνος); cf. Ar. *Av.* Σ ad. 575 (ὁ δὲ ἐν ἑτέροις ποιήμασιν Ὅμηρου φασὶ τοῦτο φέρεσθαι. εἰσὶ γὰρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ὕμνοι). On the widespread attribution of *Homeric Hymns* to Homer in antiquity see Faulkner (2011) 175-78.

² Leigh (2013) 189-90 on Antigonus' citation of the *hHerm.* here, and pp. 188-94 on Antigonus and “the aesthetic of the paradoxographer” in general.

Furthermore, by casting the poet in his own image in this way, Antigonus lays claim to the authority of the Homeric poetic tradition for the sort of inquisitive Aristotelian interest in natural wonders which the paradoxographer's collection espouses, almost as if the poet of the *Hymn* understood that there is "something wonderful in all aspects of nature", even in the "study of the lowest animal", long before Aristotle formulated it as such in his *Parts of Animals*.³

Antigonus is helped in his aim of fusing the Homeric and Aristotelian traditions by the fact that the line he cites does exhibit a sort of scientific concern prescient of the interests shown in Aristotle's biological works. The thing which allows Antigonus to link the poet to his claim that sheep produce more melodious gut-strings than rams is the detail that Hermes chose female sheep (θηλυτέρων ὄϊων) rather than rams to string the first lyre. There is no other extant source for this claim about the relation between sex, gut-strings and sound, with the exception of a mention in a later paradoxographical collection, the *Paradoxographus Palatinus* (c. third century CE?), which uses Antigonus' collection as one of its sources.⁴ Despite the lack of evidence for this precise claim about the nature of gut-strings according to sex, this idea does have a sort of plausible Aristotelian flavouring. There is certainly plenty of interest in the differences between ewes and rams, and the differences between the sounds created by the voices of male and female animals, in Aristotle's biological works.⁵ Theophrastus of Eresus is even said to have produced a

³ For detailed discussions of Aristotle's argument concerning *thauma* and the study of animals at *Part. an.* 645a15-17 see chapter two p. 93 and chapter five p. 167 n.5.

⁴ *Paradoxographus Palatinus* 20: ἐπὶ τῶν ἐντέρων τῶν προβάτων φησὶν Ἀντίγονος τὰ μὲν τῶν κριῶν ἄφωνα εἶναι, τὰ δὲ τῶν θηλέων ἔμφωνα· οὐ λεληθέναι δὲ τοῦτο τὸν ποιητὴν. φησὶ γάρ· ἐπτά δὲ θηλυτέρων οἴων ἐτανύσσατο χορδὰς. Clearly the author of the *Paradoxographus Palatinus* is using Antigonus' paradoxographical collection in order to present the same claim in a truncated form.

⁵ On the differences between the sounds created by voices of male and female animals in general, cf. e.g. *Arist. Hist. an.* 538b12 (female animals have sharper and thinner voices than male animals, except for the cow, which has a deeper voice than the bull); 544b32 (the female animal has a sharper voice than the male, and the younger animal has a sharper voice than the elder); 545a22 (male animals which are gelded assume the voices of their female equivalents); 581a17 (the voices of male humans begin shrilly but deepen upon maturation); 581b6 (women have higher voices than men, younger women have higher voices than older

treatise entitled *On the Different Sounds Produced By Animals of the Same Species* (Περὶ ἑτεροφωνίας ζῴων τῶν ὁμογενῶν).⁶ Antigonus seems to have extended this Peripatetic interest here in order to make his claim even more marvellous: according to Homer, there is apparently not only a difference between the voices of male and female animals, but even between the sounds their bodies make when used to provide the ‘voice’ of an instrument.⁷

The juxtaposition of the presentation of Homer as a sort of ‘proto-paradoxographer’ with the next marvel concerning Philitas of Cos’ knowledge about the type of deer bone needed for the manufacture of melodious *auloi* again demonstrates that the connections between entries in Antigonus’ paradoxographical collection are both sophisticated and thematically motivated. Moreover, this entry also focuses on the wondrous creation of a ‘living’ voice out of a dead and voiceless animal.⁸ In contrast to the positioning of ‘Homer’ in the previous entry, the presentation of Philitas as another kind of ‘proto-paradoxographer’ with scientific interests dictating his poetic output is perhaps less surprising, given the Hellenistic poet’s famed scholarly activity. But even so, Antigonus slightly exaggerates the Coan’s status as a writer who prefigures his own paradoxographical and natural scientific interests. Famed in antiquity as a ‘ποιητὴς ἄμα

women, boys have higher voices than men, and as a result girls’ *auloi* are tuned more sharply than those of boys).

⁶ This treatise is mentioned as a work of Theophrastus at Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 320a and Diog. Laert. 5.2.43.

⁷ Antigonus’ claim that Homer really wrote θηλυτέρων ὄϊων has been subject to some doubt. It is intriguing that all of the manuscript copies of the poem read συμφώνους (harmonious) rather than θηλυτέρων (female), a reading which only Antigonus transmits. Most editors and commentators have dismissed Antigonus’ reading, usually on the basis that συμφώνους makes more thematic sense in relation to a lyre (see e.g. Càssola (1975) 520, West (2003) 116, Thomas (2009) 304-305 n.31 and forthcoming commentary *ad loc.*, and Richardson (2010) 162). Vergados (2007: 737-42 and 2013: 269-70) has recently proved the exception to this general tendency, supporting Antigonus’ reading on the basis that paradoxographers tend to transmit their texts fairly faithfully.

⁸ Antigonus may also be drawing a connection between *hHerm.* and Philitas’ poem here: both Spanoudakis (2002) 209 and Lightfoot (2009) 49 n. 12 suggest that Philitas’ words may be from a sympotic context, as they seem to constitute a call for music on the *aulos* in a riddling form; *hHerm.* can itself be seen as a sort of aetiological narrative for the future place of the lyre at the symposium. At the end of the first group of entries of his *Collection* Antigonus thus juxtaposes two examples of instruments which derive from the natural world and yet find a home in a later sympotic context.

καὶ κριτικός' (Strabo *Geog.* 14.2.19), Philitas certainly did exhibit an interest in philological and grammatical scholarship in the testimonia and fragments of writings relating to his work which remain to us.⁹ But there is no evidence from these relatively meagre remains that Philitas was chiefly interested in natural science in the same way as, for example, Aristotle was. That is not to say that Philitas was not at all interested in this kind of technical or scientific material concerning the natural world, just as many subsequent Hellenistic poets were, but it is clear that Philitas cannot be held up as an obvious 'proto-paradoxographer' predecessor for Antigonos as a figure such as Aristotle or Callimachus can be.¹⁰

Antigonos is nevertheless keen to reinforce this impression: soon after the mention of the deer-bone *auloi*, the paradoxographer is even more explicit in his praise of his predecessor's supposed scholarly and scientific interests. A little later in the *Collection of Marvellous Investigations*, Philitas is again mentioned in connection with Antigonos' discussion of unusual similarities and differences between animal species and wondrous forms of animal birth (ἴδια δὲ καὶ περὶ τὰς συγκρίσεις καὶ ἀλλοιώσεις τῶν ζώων, ἔτι δὲ γενέσεις, 19). As his first example of this type of marvel, he plunges into a lengthy entry on a topic which is a staple of both paradoxographical collections proper, and of texts which aim at inducing a temporary paradoxographical flavour: the process known as *bugonia* by which bees are spontaneously generated from dead oxen.¹¹

⁹ On Philitas' life, works and famed status as the archetypal Hellenistic scholar-poet see e.g. Pfeiffer (1968) 88-93, Sbardella (2000) 3-75, Dettori (2000) 19-49 and Spanoudakis (2002) 19-74.

¹⁰ For example, in the fragment cited by Antigonos the use of 'τύμμα' for thorn has been regarded as indicative of an interest in the use of medical terminology (see Sbardella (2000) 148, Spanoudakis (2002) 215 and Manakidou (2012) 115). But, as Bing (2003) 342-43 points out, Philitas' interest in the relationship between the dead fawn and the cactus thorn in this fragment is probably predominantly lexical, and not paradoxographical or 'scientific' as Antigonos seems to suggest: "No doubt the κάκτος pricked Philitas' interest in recherché words. It was not just that the plant was exotic and exclusively Sicilian, as Theophrastus had pointed out; the word itself confirms its regional pedigree in its earliest appearances". See further Bing (2003) 330-48 on Philitas' lexical researches in general and how they may have influenced his poetry.

¹¹ Virgil's two versions of the generation of ox-born bees at *Georgics* 4.281-314 and 4.538-58 are of course the best known poetic descriptions of the phenomenon in ancient literature: on Virgil and *bugonia*, see e.g.

Antigonus begins his entry about the spontaneous generation of living creatures from dead animals by noting that it is especially in Egypt that living bees are produced from dead oxen, flying out from their sawn-off horns, which protrude out of the ground after the animals are buried in certain places (ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ τὸν βοῦν ἐὰν κατορύξῃς ἐν τόποις τισίν, ὥστε αὐτὰ τὰ κέρατα τῆς γῆς ὑπερέχειν, εἴθ' ὕστερον ἀποπρίσῃς, λέγουσιν μελίττας ἐκπέτεσθαι, 19).¹² He then notes that Philitas took a particular interest in this phenomenon precisely because he was 'of an inquiring mind' (ὃ καὶ φαίνεται Φιλητᾶς προσέχειν, ἱκανῶς ὢν περίεργος, 19) – like a paradoxographer himself, or so Antigonus seems to hint. Once again, we see that by using the literary texts of the past in this way to cast their authors as proto-paradoxographers, Antigonus is taking pains to invent a tradition for his own miscellanistic mode of writing. At the same time, this return to and re-use of familiar texts of the literary past allows the paradoxographer to offer a wondrous new view on these works which potentially surprises and stimulates our interest anew. Moreover, for Antigonus, the presence of these marvels buried within the texts of the past is itself part of the *thauma* of his own collection: the opening section of the *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* thus not only hits upon the thaumatic potential of music, but implicitly promotes the world of the text itself as an equally wondrous realm capable of preserving the paradoxographical interests of the past, present and future.

Kitchell (1989) 193-206, Habinek (1990) 209-23 and Morgan (1999) 105-49 (further references can be found in each of these works).

¹² See chapter two pp. 77-78 for a discussion of the other epigrams on spontaneous generation attributed to Archelaus which Antigonus transmits along with Philitas' verses at *Collection of Marvellous Investigations* 19.

2. Giving Voice to the Dead: *Thauma* and the Lyre in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*

It seems then that Antigonus clearly saw the thaumatic potential of *hHerm.* while compiling his collection of marvels. But what can we say about the place of *thauma* in the *hHerm.* itself? Hermes' stringing of the lyre with seven melodious (and possibly distinctly female) strings in line 51 of the *Hymn*, which Antigonus cites, is the culmination of a long description of the tortoise's wondrous transformation from voiceless living animal to inanimate, yet articulate object. This process begins with Hermes' first address to the tortoise at the moment he stumbles upon it by chance (30-38):

σύμβολον ἤδη μοι μέγ' ὀνήσιμον, οὐκ ὀνοτάζω.
χαῖρε φυὴν ἐρόεσσα χοροϊτύπε δαιτὸς ἐταίρη,
ἄσπασίη προφανεῖσα· πόθεν τόδε καλὸν ἄθυρμα
αἰόλον ὄστρακον ἔσσο χέλυσ ὄρεσι ζώουσα;
ἄλλ' οἴσω σ' εἰς δῶμα λαβών· ὄφελός τί μοι ἔσση,
οὐδ' ἀποτιμήσω· σὺ δέ με πρότιστον ὀνήσεις.
οἴκοι βέλτερον εἶναι, ἐπεὶ βλαβερὸν τὸ θύρηφιν·
ἧ γὰρ ἐπηλυσίης πολυπήμονος ἔσσεαι ἔχμα
ζώουσ'· ἦν δὲ θάνῃς τότε κεν μάλα καλὸν ἀεΐδοις.

Here's a sign in front of me, a great source of profit: I do not dismiss it!
Hail my companion of the feast who beats out the dance, lovely in form,
welcome is your manifestation! Where did you get this beautiful
plaything from, this dappled shell you have put on, tortoise living in the
mountains? But taking you up I shall carry you into the house. You will
be of some benefit to me, I shall not dishonour you. You will profit me
first of all. "Better to be at home, since outside is harmful" (= Hesiod,
Works and Days 365). For you will be a defence against woeful attack
while you live, but if you die, then you will be able to sing beautifully.

Hermes' persistent anthropomorphisation of the tortoise is immediately clear from his initial address to the animal as his 'companion of the feast who beats out the dance' (χοροϊτύπε δαιτὸς ἐταίρη). This hints at the future status of the dead tortoise: she will 'beat out the dance' as a lyre in symposia yet to come, a paradoxically energetic

manoeuvre for a lifeless animal, and encourage dancing in others. There is a hint here as well that the tortoise has been eroticised and already cast as a sort of sympotic *hetaira* when Hermes first bumps into her seductively ‘sashaying along’ (σαῦλα ποσὶν βαίνουσα, 28) outside Maia’s cave.¹³

This anthropomorphisation of a living animal which will become a strangely vocal inanimate object reflects Hermes’ famed ability to cross boundaries, since the lyre itself is an object which embodies the transgression of various conceptual borders.¹⁴ The tortoise suits Hermes’ purpose in this respect since it is already an animal which skirts boundaries by its very nature, as the infant god’s speech makes clear. As a creature which paradoxically carries its own home on its back, the tortoise is constantly poised on the boundary between inside and outside, as Hermes’ bantering use of the Hesiodic line “better to be at home, since outside is harmful” (οἶκοι βέλτερον εἶναι, ἐπεὶ βλαβερὸν τὸ θύρηφιν, 36 = *Works and Days* 365) draws out.¹⁵ Moreover, Hermes’ promise to take the living tortoise which dwells outside in the mountains (χέλυσ ὄρεσι ζώουσα, 33) into the house (οἶσθ σ’ εἰς δῶμα, 34), for Hesiod a place of safety, is undercut by the fact that the animal’s transition into a lyre which is played indoors at the feast will involve prising it forcibly away from the home on its back.

The antithesis between inside and outside is not the only one which is overturned here. The tortoise is by definition a liminal animal which also hovers between the status of animal/*hetaira* and living/dead from the very moment of Hermes’ first encounter with his future lyre. But it is the animal’s ability to provide a living voice through its death that is emphasised most in the next section of *hHerm*, as Hermes sets about turning his ‘lovely

¹³ See Thomas (forthcoming) *ad loc.*; cf. Vergados (2013) 248. For the continued eroticisation of the tortoise lyre later on in the *Hymn* see lines 475-78.

¹⁴ On Hermes’ ability to cross borders in general see Vernant (1983) 127-175; on borders and Hermes in *hHerm*. specifically cf. Kahn (1978), Clay (2006) 98-103 and Thomas (2009) 278-81.

¹⁵ See Vergados (2013) 24 on Hermes’ citation of the *Works and Days* and how it relates to the distinction between outside and inside which the tortoise inherently blurs in this *Hymn*.

plaything’ (ἐρατεινὸν ἄθυρμα, 40) into a singer by gouging out her soft flesh (αἰῶν’ ἐξετόρησεν ὀρεσκώϊοιο χελώνης, 42).¹⁶ This strange transition from silent living animal to singing dead instrument is reinforced by the repetition of the phrase ‘ἐρατεινὸν ἄθυρμα’ in line 52 at the moment Hermes begins to play the lyre for the very first time. Hermes’ first address to the tortoise therefore clearly hints at her future function as an instrument. The importance of the tortoise’s ability to sing beautifully in death (ἦν δὲ θάνης τότε κεν μάλα καλὸν ἀείδοις, 38) becomes clearer as the *Hymn* goes on, since we will see that the lyre possesses a voice which can be used in variety of contexts to make even the gods marvel, and which turns Hermes himself into a source of wonder. *hHerm.* seems to suggest that the lyre inspires this thaumatic response at least in part due to its inherently paradoxical nature as a dead animal which is able to replicate the voice of an animate creature.¹⁷

The marvellous paradoxes surrounding the lyre’s creation remain an important aspect of the literary tradition surrounding the instrument’s invention by Hermes. Sophocles picks up on this in his version of the story of Hermes’ theft of Apollo’s cattle in the satyr-play *Ichneutai*. In this play the satyr-chorus’ astonished and fearful reaction to the lyre is stressed several times. After being frightened by the overwhelming new sound of Hermes’ instrument, the satyrs beg the nymph Cyllene to tell them who or what

¹⁶ Burkert (1983) 39 places an even greater significance on the connection between death and song here, claiming that “[a]ny new creation, even the birth of music, requires ritual killing. Underlying the practical use of bone-flutes, turtle-shell lyres, and the tympanon covered with cowhide is the idea that the overwhelming power of music comes from a transformation of and overcoming of death”. The paradox of the beautiful ‘living voice’ of an instrument emanating from the dead body of an animal is also present in the riddling lines referring to a conch-shell trumpet which Athenaeus cites (*Deipnosophistae* 457a) and attributes to Theognis (1229-30): ἦδη γάρ με κέκληκε θαλάσσιος οἴκαδε νεκρός, | τεθνηκῶς ζωῶ φθεγγόμενος στόματι.

¹⁷ There is perhaps a further note of irony here if the author of the *Hymn* is implicitly contrasting the unimpressive voices of real-life tortoises with the beautiful future voice of the tortoise-lyre. The nature of the voice of the tortoise was certainly a matter of interest in later Greek texts: Aristotle, for example, discusses animal voices and claims that all oviparous quadrupeds have weak voices, and the tortoise’s voice in particular consists of a low hiss (τῶν δ’ ἐχόντων γλῶτταν καὶ πλεύμονα ὅσα μὲν ὥτοκά ἐστὶ καὶ τετράποδα, ἀφίησι μὲν φωνήν, ἀσθενῇ δέ ... τὰ δὲ στιγμὸν μικρόν, ὥσπερ αἱ χελῶναι, *Hist. an.* 536a); on later Greek views concerning the tortoise’s voice see Vergados (2013) 258.

it was below ground which ‘sang with a divine voice’ (ἐν τόποις τοῖς[δε τίς νέρθε γᾶς ὧδ’ ἀγαστῶς | ἐγήρυσε θέσπιν αὐδά[ν, 249-50). Cyllene replies that the contrivance they heard making the noise belongs to Hermes, who himself inspires both fear and wonder due to his growth and to the astonishing abilities which have quickly manifested themselves despite the fact that the infant god was born only six days ago (ὁ δ’ ἀ]ῦξεται κατ’ ἥμαρ οὐκ ἐπαικότα | ἀγα]στός, ὥστε θαῦμα καὶ φόβος μ’ ἔχει, 277-78). Sophocles goes on to locate the reason for the satyrs’ wonder at the lyre in the paradox of the instrument’s status as an inanimate object with a voice (299-300):

XO: καὶ πῶς πίθωμαι τοῦ θανόντος φθέγμα τοιοῦτον βρέμειν;
 KY: πιθοῦ· θανὼν γὰρ ἔσχε φωνήν, ζῶν δ’ ἄναυδος ἦν ὁ θήρ.

Chorus: Yet how am I to believe that such a voice roars out of something dead?

Cyllene: Believe it! The creature possesses a voice while dead, but while living it was voiceless.

In *Ichneutai* as in *hHerm.* the lyre floats between various antitheses – living/dead, animate/inanimate, voiced/voiceless, animal/instrument – in a way which accounts to a great extent for its thaumatic effect. As I noted in chapter one, the strange collapse of boundaries between animate and inanimate, and living and dead, is a primary means of creating wonder when it comes to gazing at *visual* objects; here the transgression of that boundary stretches into the *aural* realm as well.

3. Hermes’ Signs and Songs: *Thaumata* and *Sēmata*

But how is the potentially wondrous aural effect of the lyre articulated in *hHerm.*? Over the course of the *Hymn*, the marvellous results of Hermes’ performances with the lyre are increasingly emphasised. Immediately following the description of the stretching of the

sheep-gut strings which Antigonus later cites in his paradoxographical collection comes the account of Hermes' first performance (52-59):

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τεῦξε φέρων ἐρατεινὸν ἄθυρμα
πλήκτρῳ ἐπειρήτιζε κατὰ μέλος, ἢ δ' ὑπὸ χειρὸς
σμερδαλέον κονάβησε· θεὸς δ' ὑπὸ καλὸν ἄειδεν
ἐξ αὐτοσχεδῆς πειρώμενος, ἥντε κοῦροι
ἤβηται θαλίῃσι παραιβόλα κερτομέουσιν,
ἄμφι Δία Κρονίδην καὶ Μαιάδα καλλιπέδιλον
ὥς πάρος ὠρίζεσκον ἑταιρείῃ φιλότῃτι,
ἦν τ' αὐτοῦ γενεὴν ὀνομακλυτὸν ἐξονομάζων·

But when he had crafted it, after taking up the lovely plaything he started to try it out in a tuned scale with a plectrum, and by his hand it resounded terrifyingly. And the god tried it out improvisationally and sang beautifully in accompaniment, just as young men in the prime of youth taunt each other with banter at feasts: he sang about how Zeus son of Cronus and Maia with beautiful sandals used to flirt with friendly intimacy, and named his own renowned lineage.

The simile describing Hermes' first experimental song again hints at a possible sympotic context for the future use of the lyre, just as Hermes' initial teasing address to the tortoise prefigured the future use of the instrument. Now during the god's first performance his extempore singing is compared to the impromptu sung banter which young men hurl at each other at the symposium. It is not such banter, however, which Hermes goes on to offer in this case, but a hymn very much like *hHerm.* itself.¹⁸ Hermes must sing for himself at this point because as an infant god who has not yet confirmed his place among the Olympians (at least in the eyes of the other gods), he does not seem, at least at this point in the narrative of the poem, to have anyone (human or otherwise) to sing praises of his *thaumata erga*. His own description of Maia's seduction by Zeus thus provides him with a weighty genealogy and acts as implicit self-praise which justifies his claim to a

¹⁸ For example, Hermes' hymn here begins with his own conception and an account of his lineage, just as *hHerm.* itself begins with the conception of the god (see lines 3-12). On the strongly hymnic features of Hermes' first song, see Vergados (2013) 4-12 and Thomas (forthcoming) on *hHerm.* 52-61.

place on Olympus.¹⁹ This also creates a *mise-en-abyme* effect, as the poet of *hHerm.* describes Hermes performing nothing other than the present hymn to Hermes. I will return to the significance of this *mise-en-abyme* effect for the thaumatic power of the *Hymn* as a whole below, but for now it is worth turning to the other *thaumata erga* which Hermes undertakes before he picks up his lyre and sings for the second time.

Before we reach Hermes' second thaumatic performance it is made clear that the young god's verbal *thaumata* are repeatedly and explicitly paralleled by his ability to manipulate visual *sēmata* throughout the narrative. This ability to exploit *sēmata* is enabled by Hermes' facility for the creation of marvellous inventions which combine previously disparate familiar objects of the natural world: first the lyre, and then the deceptive sandals which allow the infant god to mislead Apollo in the search for his cattle by further confusing the twisting tracks which Hermes has forced the livestock to create by walking backwards.²⁰ The sandals are ingeniously created through the connection of disparate parts and they specifically parallel the lyre in their wondrous effect as objects of Hermes' *mētis*.²¹ In fact, they are first explicitly named as *thaumata* at the very moment of their creation (79-81):

σάνδαλα δ' αὐτίκα ῥιπὴν ἐπὶ ψαμάθοις ἀλίησιν
ἄφραστ' ἡδ' ἀνόητα διέπλεκε, θαυματὰ ἔργα,
συμμίσγων μυρίκας καὶ μυρσινοειδέας ὄζους.

Immediately on the sands of the sea shore he began to weave together sandals, unthought of and unimaginable, marvellous works, mixing together tamarisk and myrtle twigs.

¹⁹ See Vergados (2013) 4-5.

²⁰ On the relationship between Hermes' wondrous inventions see Clay (2006) 113: "Hermes' sandals, the θαυματὰ ἔργα, resemble the god's other inventions in that disparate things ... are joined together ... to produce something new and unheard of".

²¹ On *thauma* as a natural reaction to *mētis* in *hHerm.* cf. Kahn (1978) 106-109 and Clay (2006) 131-32.

Hermes' *thaumata erga* and the poet's own art are here aligned, as innovative and unusual compound words (ἄφραστ' ἤδ' ἀνόητα) are used to express the novelty of Hermes' invention.²² By this point in the narrative we might already begin to suspect that the bard of *hHerm.* is as inventive as Hermes: the creation of the sandals is one of the first hints that we are meant to wonder at the bard's *thaumata erga* most of all in this *Hymn*.

The parallel created between the wondrous sandals and the wondrous lyre is reinforced further by the fact that a few lines later Hermes is said to have improvised (αὐτοτροπήσας, 86) the sandals, just as his invention of hymnic song on the lyre arises in an improvisatory manner (cf. ἐξ αὐτοσχεδίας πειρώμενος, 55). It is Hermes' ability to make something appear out of nothing, to metamorphose a product of culture out of nature, which creates a sense of wonder in those who are on the receiving end of such transformations. But it is not only the inventions themselves, but also the products and the effects they facilitate, that cause *thauma* in this *Hymn*. In the case of the lyre, these products consist of the instrument's melodies and the vocal performance it enables, in that of the sandals, the concealment of the cow tracks and the increase of confusion this entails.

We see this in action when Apollo is explicitly struck by wonder at the *sēmata* which Hermes' invention has created during the cattle-rustling (218-25):

ἵχνιά τ' εἰσενόησεν Ἐκηβόλος εἶπε τε μῦθον·
ὦ πόποι ἦ μέγα θαῦμα τόδ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὀρώμαι·
ἵχνια μὲν τάδε γ' ἐστὶ βοῶν ὀρθοκραιράων,
ἀλλὰ πάλιν τέτραπται ἐς ἀσφοδελὸν λειμῶνα·
βήματα δ' οὔτ' ἀνδρὸς τάδε γίγνεται οὔτε γυναικὸς
οὔτε λύκων πολιῶν οὔτ' ἄρκτων οὔτε λεόντων·
οὔτε τι κενταύρου λασιαύχενος ἔλπομαι εἶναι
ὅς τις τοῖα πέλωρα βιβᾶ ποσὶ καρπαλίμοισιν.

²² Shelmerdine (1981) 111 suggests that the poet is using deliberately novel adjectives to describe Hermes' novel invention here seeing as neither ἄφραστος nor ἀνόητος appear anywhere else in Homer, Hesiod or any of the other *Hymns*.

And the god who shoots from afar noticed the tracks and said:
 “Oh! What a great marvel I see with my eyes! These are indeed
 the tracks of the straight-horned cattle, but they are turned
 backwards towards the asphodel meadow. And these footsteps
 come from neither a man nor a woman nor grey wolves nor bears
 nor lions. Nor do I think that a shaggy-necked centaur is the one
 who makes such monstrous tracks with his swift feet.

Apollo’s exclamation at the sight of the tracks plays with *thauma* in an especially rich manner. The formulaic line ὦ πόποι ἦ μέγα θαῦμα τόδ’ ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὁρῶμαι is uttered only by mortals in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, often as a result of the recognition of divine presence.²³ Throughout the poem Apollo’s ceaseless wonder at Hermes’ works is reminiscent of the marvelling response of mortals at the actions or presence of gods.²⁴ As well as contributing to the humorous tone of the *Hymn* as a whole, the fact that Apollo reacts to Hermes’ actions in a typically ‘mortal’ way emphasises that the young god is actually worthy of his place on Olympus after all, as his fellow god reacts to his deeds with awe. This is later confirmed when Apollo’s astonishment at Hermes’ misleading *sēmata* is reiterated at 342-43: τὰ δ’ ἄρ’ ἵχνια δοιὰ πέλωρα | οἷά τ’ ἀγάσασθαι καὶ ἀγανοῦ δαίμονος ἔργα (“the tracks were doubly monstrous, the sort of thing worthy of wonder, the work of a glorious god”). The monstrous and wondrous tracks prompt Apollo’s recognition of Hermes as a δαίμων for the first time. Again, his feeling of wonder is reminiscent of how mortals react to divine epiphanies.²⁵ It is by wielding the power of

²³ Cf. *Il.* 15.286, where this line is uttered by the Achaean Thoas, who is amazed that Hector has survived Ajax’s attack and realises that one of the gods has saved him (τις αὐτε θεῶν ἐρρύσατο καὶ ἐσάωσε, 15.290); cf. *Il.* 20.344, where Achilles has just had a mist shed over his eyes by Poseidon and is amazed that his spear has missed Aeneas, whom he (rightly) assumes must be dear to one of the immortal gods. Cf. also the slight variant of this line at *Od.* 19.36, where Telemachus says “ὦ πάτερ, ἦ μέγα θαῦμα τόδ’ ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὁρῶμαι” when, led by Athene, he sets off with Odysseus to remove the shields and helmets from the hall before they kill the suitors and sees the house glowing, with the result that he supposes that there is “surely one of the gods who hold wide heaven inside” (ἦ μάλα τις θεὸς ἔνδον, οἱ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσι, 19.40).

²⁴ On the unusual nature of the way in which Apollo reacts with *thauma* not only at the *visual* effect of Hermes’ *erga*, but even to the very sound of Hermes’ performance on the lyre, see Lather (2017) 140-44.

²⁵ See Vergados (2013) 463-44; cf. Turkeltaub (2003) 31-32 on *thauma* as an element of epiphany scenes in epic poetry and Platt (2011) 56-57, 64-65, 68-72 on *thauma* and divine epiphany in general, especially in the *Homeric Hymns*.

thauma, then, that Hermes is able to turn the tables on his elder brother and firmly assert himself as the more powerful god at this point in the *Hymn* – a paradoxical achievement given that Hermes is still only one day old.

The marvellous *sēmata* created by the combination of the deceptively reversed cow tracks and Hermes’ wonderful shoes are structurally parallel with the marvellous product of his other thaumatic invention in the poem: the music of the lyre and the song which accompanies it.²⁶ Both the visual *sēmata* and the musical performances are *thaumata* produced by Hermes, and both are types of epiphanic manifestations of the god’s power. The effect of Hermes’ first performance on an audience is not made clear to us within the *Hymn*, as no internal audience is present. This is possibly a reflection of his stature at this early point in the poem, since the infant god has not yet gained enough power to command an audience of his fellow gods.²⁷ This is not the case, however, after Hermes’ second performance, where we find the lyre’s future patron, Apollo, praising the astonishing musical performance in the strongest terms (439-46):

νῦν δ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ πολύτροπε Μαιάδος υἱέ
 ἧ σοί γ' ἐκ γενετῆς τάδ' ἅμ' ἔσπετο θαυματοῦ ἔργα
 ἧέ τις ἀθανάτων ἧέ θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων
 δῶρον ἀγαθὸν ἔδωκε καὶ ἔφρασε θέσπιν ἀοιδήν;
 θαυμασίην γὰρ τήνδε νεήφατον ὅσσαν ἀκούω,
 ἦν οὐ πῶ ποτέ φημι δαήμεναι οὔτε τιν' ἀνδρῶν,
 οὔτε τιν' ἀθανάτων οἳ Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσι,
 νόσφι σέθεν φηλῆτα Διὸς καὶ Μαιάδος υἱέ.

But now come on and tell me this, son of Maia with many wiles: did these marvellous works follow straight from your birth, or did one of the immortals or one of mortal men bestow this glorious gift and show you divine singing? For I hear this marvellous newly-spoken/newly-slain voice, which I say that no mortal or immortal who holds Olympus has ever yet learnt, with the exception of you, tricky son of Zeus and Maia.

²⁶ Cf. Steiner (1994) 44 on the lyre and the cattle tracks as the two “message-bearing tokens of the first half of the poem”.

²⁷ See Clay (2006) 103-51 and Vergados (2013) 4-5 on Hermes’ process of maturation and its relation to his two songs in *hHerm*.

Apollo's first mention of Hermes' 'marvellous works' relates both to his preceding song, as the reference to his 'divine singing' (θέσπιν ἀοιδήν) in the following lines makes clear, and also to the 'glorious gift' (δῶρον ἀγαθόν) of the lyre itself. It also covers all of the infant Hermes' other inventions and actions in the *Hymn*. But at this point, the particular cause of Apollo's present wonder is the 'wondrous voice' (θαυμασίην ... ὄσσαν) of the instrument which he has just heard. The quality of this wondrous voice is described as νεήφατον, a word which, as Oliver Thomas has pointed out, could mean both 'newly-slain' and 'newly-spoken'.²⁸ Once again, the lyre's ability to straddle boundaries is what lends it its thaumatic power. In *hHerm*, this power is something that affects even gods. This is important, since elsewhere in the *Homeric Hymns* *thauma* is a *topos* of the human response to, and recognition of, the epiphanic revelation of god to man.²⁹ *hHerm*. self-reflexively turns this *topos* on its head: Hermes' powerful performance is the final piece of evidence which ensures Apollo's recognition of his younger brother as a god truly deserving of his place on Olympus. The very end of Apollo's long praise of Hermes reinforces the importance of *thauma* in this process of quasi-epiphanic revelation and recognition when the god once again returns to the astonishing nature of the performance he has just experienced in line 455: "I am astonished, son of Zeus, at how lovely your lyre-playing is" (θαυμάζω, Διὸς υἱέ, τάδ' ὥς ἐρατὸν κιθαρίζεις). Wonder, then, is certainly the keynote effect of Hermes' musical performances as a whole, as Apollo's repeated emphasis on his astonished response demonstrates. Furthermore, since this is an

²⁸ See Thomas (forthcoming) *ad loc.*

²⁹ On *thauma* as a usual response to divine epiphany in the *Homeric Hymns* see esp. Platt (2011) 64-70 and Richardson (2010) 102 on *hAp.* 134-39. For examples from the *Hymns*, cf. Anchises' sense of wonder at Aphrodite's sudden appearance before him (despite the fact she initially presents herself in human form) in *hAph.* (Ἀγχίσις δ' ὀρόων ἐφράζετο θαυμαινέν τε | εἶδος τε μέγεθος τε καὶ εἴματα σιγαλόμεντα, 84-85), the astonishment of the pirates (ἔσταν ἄρ' ἐκπληγέντες, 50) at Dionysus' wondrous manifestations (τάχα δέ σφιν ἐφαίνετο θαυματὰ ἔργα, 34) in *hDion.*, and the Cretan sailors' wonder at Apollo in dolphin guise at the end of the Pythian half of *hAp.* (οἳ μὲν ἄρ' ἐνθ' ἔθελον νῆα σχεῖν ἢ δ' ἀποβάντες | φράσσασθαι μέγα θαῦμα καὶ ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδέσθαι, 414-15).

aetiological narrative about the invention of the lyre, *hHerm.* suggests that this wonder carries over into every subsequent divine or human performance with the instrument. This, I suggest, is really where the power of wonder and divine epiphany in *hHerm.* comes into play, as the next section will demonstrate.

4. Collapsing Boundaries: Epiphanic *Thauma*, *Choreia* and Song

Unlike the other major *Homeric Hymns*, *hHerm.* does not describe to its audience a moment of epiphanic and wonder-inducing revelation of god to mortal within the narrative itself.³⁰ In other *Homeric Hymns*, in particular those to Demeter (2), Apollo (3), Aphrodite (5), and Dionysus (7), epiphanic *thauma* is indeed a constant keynote of the meetings of gods and mortals. Why, then, is *thauma* not explicitly connected in *hHerm.* to the epiphanic revelation of the titular god to mortals? It seems that the answer lies in the nature of Hermes himself in this *Hymn*. Since Hermes is a figure who delights in boundaries and who has not yet quite proven his own place on Olympus at the beginning of the narrative, it is fitting that he is hymned in a way which probes the boundaries between mortal and divine much more intensely and self-referentially than other hymns through the *mise-en-abyme* effect employed, which also makes the god's wondrous inventions obvious paradigms for ritual and sung praise of the gods in the real world. Another way in which the *Hymn* self-referentially explores the boundaries between the realms of gods and mortal is by depicting *thauma* as a paradigmatic response to music and as a signifier of the meeting point between the divine and human realms.

³⁰ On the unusual treatment of the epiphany theme in this poem see Vergados (2011) 82-104 and Cursaru (2012) 42-48.

We also see this in the *Odyssey* when the poet describes Odysseus' wonder at the skilful dancing of the Phaeacian youths, accompanied by the bard Demodocus' lyre-playing. This scene becomes an archetypal depiction of the astonishing effects of marvellous *choreia* on its audience (8.261-65):

κῆρυξ δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε φέρων φόρμιγγα λίγειαν
 Δημοδόκῳ· ὁ δ' ἔπειτα κί' ἐς μέσον· ἀμφὶ δὲ κοῦροι
 πρωθῆβαι ἴσταντο, δαήμονες ὀρχηθμοῖο,
 πέπληγον δὲ χορὸν θεῖον ποσίν. αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς
 μαρμαρυγὰς θηεῖτο ποδῶν, θαύμαζε δὲ θυμῷ.

And the herald approached bearing the clear-voiced lyre for Demodocus. And he then moved into the middle, and the boys in the prime of youth, skilled in dancing, took up their positions around him, and they struck the sacred dancing floor with their feet. And Odysseus was gazing at the flashing of the feet, and he was marvelling in his heart.

The Phaeacians' excellence and frequent indulgence in *choreia*, like their love of constant and care-free feasting, is one of the most notable manifestations of their supra-human qualities and uncanny closeness to the gods.³¹ The wondrous effect that the blurring of the boundaries between the mortal and human realms is able to provoke is similarly depicted in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, where the description of the marvellous performance of the Delian Maidens depicts the potential which the *thauma* of successful human choral activity has to mediate between the realms of men and gods (149-64):

οἳ δέ σε πυγμαχίῃ τε καὶ ὀρχηστῷ καὶ ἀοιδῇ
 μνησάμενοι τέρπουσιν, ὅταν καθέσωσιν ἀγῶνα.
 φαίη κ' ἀθανάτους καὶ ἀγήρωσ' ἔμμεναι ἀνὴρ,
 ὃς τότε ἔπαντιάσει, ὅτ' Ἴαονες ἀθρόοι εἶεν·
 πάντων γάρ κεν ἴδοιτο χάριν, τέρψαιτο δὲ θυμόν
 ἄνδράς τ' εἰσορόων καλλιζώνους τε γυναῖκας
 νῆας τ' ὠκείας ἢ δ' αὐτῶν κτήματα πολλά.
 πρὸς δὲ τόδε μέγα θαῦμα, οὐ κλέος οὔποτ' ὀλεῖται,

³¹ On Demodocus' lyre-playing and the dance of the Phaeacians as the archetypal scene of wonder-inducing *choreia* see e.g. Power (2011) 82-85, Kurke (2012) 228 and (2013) 153-54, and Olsen (2017) 5-11.

κοῦραι Δηλιάδες Ἑκατηβελέταο θεράπναι·
αἶ τ' ἐπεὶ ἄρ' πρῶτον μὲν Ἀπόλλων' ὑμνήσωσιν,
αὗτις δ' αὖ Λητώ τε καὶ Ἄρτεμιν ἰοχέαιραν,
μνησάμεναι ἀνδρῶν τε παλαιῶν ἠδὲ γυναικῶν
ὕμνον ἀείδουσιν, θέλγουσι δὲ φῦλ' ἀνθρώπων.
πάντων δ' ἀνθρώπων φωνὰς καὶ κρεμβαλιαστὺν
μιμεῖσθ' ἴσασιν· φαίη δέ κεν αὐτὸς ἕκαστος
φθέγγεσθ'· οὕτω σφιν καλὴ συνάρηρεν ἀοιδή.

And mindful of you [Apollo] they [the Ionians] delight you with boxing and dancing and song, whenever they have set up a gathering. A man present then when the Ionians are gathered would think that they were immortal and un-aging: he would see the charm of everything, and be delighted in his heart while looking at the men and the women with beautiful girdles, and the swift ships and their many possessions. And in addition there is this great wonder, the fame of which will never come to an end: the Delian Maidens, servants of the Far-shooter. After they have first hymned Apollo, they then in turn hymn Leto and Artemis pourer of arrows, and then mindful of the men and women of the past they sing a song, and they enchant the tribes of men. And they know how to imitate the voices and rhythmic rattling of castanets of all men. Each man would think he himself is speaking – so beautifully does their song hang together.³²

In *hAp.* the events of the Ionian festival on Delos are focalised through the eyes of a deliberately anonymous ‘everyman’, a hypothetical spectator who demonstrates the desired and ideal effect that witnessing the festival and the accompanying performance of the Delian Maidens would have on anyone who happened to be present. Within the ritual space of the festival, the Ionian participants seem to become immortal and un-aging (ἀθανάτους καὶ ἀγήρω, 151), two attributes which only the gods, or objects created by the gods, can truly possess.³³ The Ionians are thus portrayed as closer to the gods than mortals ordinarily are during the festival itself, seemingly occupying a liminal space between gods and men (similar to the state of the Phaeacians in the *Odyssey*) which the ritual activity in honour of Apollo has opened up, while the Delian Maidens’ wonder-

³² Here reading κρεμβαλιαστὺν (rhythmic rattling of castanets) rather than the common variant βαμβαλιαστὺν (chatter, incomprehensible babble) in line 162: for summaries of the arguments for the former and against the latter see Peponi (2009) 41- 60.

³³ See Kurke (2012) 225 on the overtones of divinity associated with this phrase in early hexameter poetry.

provoking performance creates an impression of divine presence which draws the audience in and causes the Ionian spectators to ‘fuse’ or ‘merge’ in some sense with the choreuts themselves.³⁴

This ability which the *thauma* arising from song, dance and music for the gods has to create a space within which the divine and human realms might touch upon one another is thus essential to the self-reflexive workings of *hHerm.* as a narrative which both describes and enacts the confirmation of the young Hermes’ status as a divinity. This is because a human performance is conceived of as a fragment or echo of an eternal, divine music – just as the Phaeacians’ endless dance, song and feasting echo the enviable and marvellous lifestyle of the gods, so too does mortal *choreia*, especially in a festival context, simultaneously represent and provide a form of vicarious access to the gods’ wondrous musical activities. For this reason Hermes’ wondrous lyre-playing, with its ability to astonish even the gods, is simultaneously one of the means by which he eventually proves his right to inhabit the divine rather than the mortal realm, and a mode of playfully signalling the young god’s temporarily indeterminate status, as he partakes of an activity seemingly more befitting the human realm and hymns himself with the lyre. Furthermore, *thauma* is associated within the narrative of *hHerm.* not with the description of a god’s revelation to a mortal, but with the inventions and actions of Hermes himself. Since the lyre is the foremost of these inventions it becomes visually manifest evidence of Hermes’ power and symbolic of the thaumatic power of the entire bardic tradition. The *thauma* associated with the manifestation of a god is thus transferred to the instrument itself, and the aetiological nature of the *Hymn* makes clear that all subsequent lyre performances partake of this effect. Moreover, the *mise-en-abyme* effect created by the

³⁴ See especially Kurke (2012) 223-4 and (2013) 146-60 on the significance of *thauma* in *hAp.* for the creation of this kind of impression of divine presence.

two wondrous performances described in the narrative further reinforces this effect. For this reason, as the *Hymn* progresses, it becomes clear that we are ultimately supposed to wonder at the epiphanic embodiment of Hermes we see made manifest before us as the *Hymn* is performed: the singer himself. By performing the *Hymn* the bard brings the realms of men and gods closer together by becoming a visually manifest stand-in for Hermes the lyre player. The audience's marvelling response to the bard is thus a reflection of Apollo's wondering response to Hermes, and vice versa.³⁵

This sense that a solo performer may in some manner represent a wondrous epiphanic manifestation of a god through the medium of musical or poetic performance is not confined to *hHerm.* alone. In Herodotus' *Histories*, this wonder-inducing aspect of music and song is strongly hinted at in another literary representation of lyre-playing: the famous story of Arion and the dolphin in book one (1.23-24). At the very beginning of this account, Herodotus describes the well-known narrative concerning the abduction, sea dive and subsequent rescue of the citharode Arion by dolphins as a *θῶμα μέγιστον* (1.23). The reasons for this wonder become clear in the description of Arion's musical performance at *Histories* 1.24. Here the marvellous collapse of firm boundaries between humans, gods and animals is described in a way which makes us reflect further on the nature and effect of musical performance in Greek thought. This begins when Arion beseeches the pirates to allow him to dress himself in his citharodic costume and sing on the quarter deck of the ship's stern before killing himself as they have demanded:

τοὺς δὲ ἐν τῷ πελάγει ἐπιβουλεύειν τὸν Ἀρίονα ἐκβαλόντας ἔχειν τὰ χρήματα. τὸν δὲ συνέντα τοῦτο λίσσεσθαι, χρήματα μὲν σφι προϊέντα, ψυχὴν δὲ παραιτούμενον. οὐκὼν δὴ πείθειν αὐτὸν τοῦτοις, ἀλλὰ κελεύειν τοὺς πορθμέας ἢ αὐτὸν διαχρᾶσθαι μιν, ὥς ἂν ταφῆς ἐν γῇ τύχῃ, ἢ ἐκπηδᾷν ἐς τὴν θάλασσαν τὴν ταχίστην· ἀπειληθέντα δὴ τὸν

³⁵ Cf. Vergados (2013) 13: "If the god's song causes wonder in his audience, the poet's performance lays claim to a similar effect".

Ἀρίονα ἐς ἀπορίην παραιτήσασθαι, ἐπειδὴ σφι οὕτω δοκέοι, περιδεῖν αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ σκευῇ πάσῃ στάντα ἐν τοῖσι ἐδωλίοισι ἀεῖσαι· ἀείσας δὲ ὑπεδέκετο ἑωυτὸν κατεργάσασθαι. καὶ τοῖσι ἐσελθεῖν γὰρ ἡδονὴν εἰ μέλλοιεν ἀκούσεσθαι τοῦ ἀρίστου ἀνθρώπων ἀοιδοῦ, ἀναχωρῆσαι ἐκ τῆς πρύμνης ἐς μέσῃν νέα. τὸν δὲ ἐνδύντα τε πᾶσαν τὴν σκευὴν καὶ λαβόντα τὴν κιθάρην, στάντα ἐν τοῖσι ἐδωλίοισι διεξελθεῖν νόμον τὸν ὀρθιον, τελευτῶντος δὲ τοῦ νόμου ῥῖψαί μιν ἐς τὴν θάλασσαν ἑωυτὸν ὥς εἶχε σὺν τῇ σκευῇ πάσῃ.

But when they were at sea the pirates plotted to throw Arion overboard and take his money. When he realised this he entreated them and offered his money to them, begging for his life. But he did not persuade them: instead the sailors ordered him to either kill himself, so that he might be buried on land, or to cast himself into the sea immediately. Arion, being between a rock and hard place, begged them (since their will was such) to allow him to stand on the quarterdeck in his full citharodic garb and sing. And after singing, he promised, he would finish himself off. The sailors, pleased by the opportunity of hearing the best singer in the world, withdrew from the stern to the middle of the ship. Arion, after putting on his full garb and taking up his cithara, stood on the quarterdeck and went through the *nomos orthios* in full, and after finishing the *nomos* he cast himself into the sea clad in his full citharodic costume.

The emphasis placed on Arion's appearance in this passage is striking. The fact that Arion performs these actions in his complete citharodic garb is stressed no fewer than three times (τῇ σκευῇ πάσῃ ... πᾶσαν τὴν σκευὴν ... τῇ σκευῇ πάσῃ) in a few lines.³⁶ This suggests that his visual appearance is as significant as the music which emanates from the lyre.³⁷ Here we once again catch sight of the original visual reference of *thauma*: it is not the aural aspect of Arion's song alone which provides its wondrous impact, impressing the pirates and drawing the dolphin towards him, but the whole sensory experience of the citharodic performance.

The importance of the combination of the visual and aural aspects of Arion's performance becomes clear once the potential meaning of his citharodic σκευή is

³⁶ On the unusual nature of Herodotus' repeated emphasis on Arion's σκευή cf. Power (2010) 25-27, Gray (2001) 14-15 n. 15 and Herington (1985) 16-17.

³⁷ Cf. Power (2010) 11: "A powerful visual impact is made even before the music begins. The *kithara* alone inspires wonder and curiosity".

examined. Timothy Power has suggested that the citharode's σκευή is not only essential in marking the performer out from other people and signifying that he is “a musical magician capable of wonders”, but that the σκευή even suggests that the musician is to be seen for the duration of the performance as some sort of epiphanic manifestation of a god (in this case Apollo).³⁸ Several details in Herodotus' description of Arion's reappearance after his marvellous dive and rescue reinforce this suggestion (1.24):

καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἀποπλέειν ἐς Κόρινθον, τὸν δὲ δελφῖνα λέγουσι ὑπολαβόντα ἐξενεῖκαι ἐπὶ Ταίναρον. ἀποβάντα δὲ αὐτὸν χωρέειν ἐς Κόρινθον σὺν τῇ σκευῇ, καὶ ἀπικόμενον ἀπηγέεσθαι πᾶν τὸ γεγονός. Περίανδρον δὲ ὑπὸ ἀπιστίης Ἀρίονα μὲν ἐν φυλακῇ ἔχειν οὐδαμῇ μετιέντα, ἀνακῶς δὲ ἔχειν τῶν πορθμέων. ὥς δὲ ἄρα παρεῖναι αὐτούς, κληθέντας ἱστορέεσθαι εἴ τι λέγοιεν περὶ Ἀρίονος. φαμένων δὲ ἐκείνων ὥς εἴη τε σῶς περὶ Ἰταλίην καὶ μιν εὖ πρήσσοντα λίποιεν ἐν Τάραντι, ἐπιφανῆναί σφι τὸν Ἀρίονα ὥσπερ ἔχων ἐξεπήδησε· καὶ τοὺς ἐκπλαγέντας οὐκ ἔχειν ἔτι ἐλεγχομένους ἀρνέεσθαι.

And the pirates sailed away to Corinth, but they say that the dolphin picked Arion up on its back and dropped him off at Taenarum. After landing there he went to Corinth with his citharodic costume and on arrival narrated everything that had happened. Periander, being of a naturally suspicious disposition, put him under guard and did not release him, and kept a careful eye out for the sailors. When they arrived, they were summoned and asked if they had anything to say about Arion. After they said that he was safe in Italy and that they had left him doing well at Taras, Arion appeared, looking just as he did when he had leapt overboard. And the pirates were astonished and, being confuted, were not able to deny it any longer.

It seems then that Herodotus is playing here with various senses and causes of wonder in his description of this θῶμα μέγιστον. First, he explores the nature of seemingly unbelievable stories and the marvelling reaction they provoke. Periander's explicit disbelief of Arion's story (Περίανδρον δὲ ὑπὸ ἀπιστίης), and his testing of both Arion and the pirates, echo the reader's potential scepticism concerning Herodotus' own

³⁸ See Power (2010) 25.

narration of *thaumata* in the *Histories*. The fact that Arion's story turns out to be true, despite the seemingly unbelievable story of his rescue by a dolphin, is a warning to us at this early point in the *Histories* to be careful about our own potential disbelief of Herodotus' more unlikely accounts.³⁹

Furthermore, Herodotus again draws attention to the citharodic σκευή here (ἀποβάντα δὲ αὐτὸν χωρέειν ἐς Κόρινθον σὺν τῇ σκευῇ). It is specifically as a citharode with all his accoutrements that Arion approaches Periander's court, and it is in his citharodic σκευή that Arion will confront the pirates once again. The sense that there is something god-like in the appearance of the musician is also emphasised by the fact that the moment of Arion's re-appearance is explicitly staged as a sort of quasi-divine epiphany (ἐπιφανῆναί σφι τὸν Ἀρίονα); at the same time his sudden re-appearance causes a natural sense of astonishment purely due to the fact that the pirates think that he is already dead – are they afraid because they think Arion is a god, or a ghost, or both?⁴⁰ Arion therefore transgresses several seeming boundaries with his sudden epiphany here, being both alive and dead, human and divine. No wonder the pirates are astonished. Moreover, the result of Arion's sudden appearance is the same as the archetypal response to divine epiphany itself: astonished wonder and paralysing fear, as the pirates' reaction makes clear (τοὺς ἐκπλαγέντας). Arion is not just a human singer in the moment of his citharodic performance of a *nomos* to Apollo, but a representation of the god himself, who allows those watching and listening to access, in some sense, the divine realm.

This becomes clear from another aspect of the Arion story. Just as *thauma* is presented as an integral aspect of the birth both of the hymnic genre and the later sympotic

³⁹ On the way in which Periander's initial disbelief tallies with the reader's (and possibly Herodotus' own) initial scepticism about Arion's story see Packman (1991) 400.

⁴⁰ See Power (2010) 27: "The second surprise appearance of Arion in front of the sailors is configured as a divine epiphany – specifically, Arion in the fullness of his citharodic persona resembles none other than Apollo *kitharoidos*". Cf. Lonsdale (1993) 93-94 on the 'quasi-divine status' of Arion in Herodotus' tale.

uses of the lyre in *hHerm.*, so too is it shown to be an essential aspect of the aetiology of a certain form of song in book one of the *Histories*. In Herodotus' account Arion is presented as the *πρῶτος εὐρετής* of the dithyramb: the singer who first made, named and taught this kind of song (*διθύραμβον πρῶτον ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡμεῖς ἴδμεν ποιήσαντά τε καὶ ὀνομάσαντα καὶ διδάξαντα ἐν Κορίνθῳ*, 1.23).⁴¹ Arion's status as the marvellous performer in Herodotus' account suggests that *thauma* implicitly bleeds over into the genre of dithyramb itself.⁴² As both an emotion and cognitive state which, in Richard Neer's terms, inherently acts as a 'synapse' between outside and inside, wonder becomes in this way the paradigmatic response to music and song which brings gods and men into closer contact with one another. *Thauma* is the response that this blurring of the boundaries between mortal and divine provokes, and as a result it becomes integral to all subsequent acts of ritual music-making, dance and song.

⁴¹ See D'Alessio (2013) 113-18 for a discussion of what this passage means in relation to the genesis of dithyramb; on the relation between Herodotus' passage about Arion and his aetiology of the dithyrambic genre, see Lonsdale (1993) 93-94, Csapo (2003) 91-92, Csapo and Miller (2007) 10-11, Steiner (2011) 304, Pavlou (2012) 517-18, Kowalzig (2013) 34, and Hedreen (2013) 187.

⁴² In Bacchylides 17, *thauma* plays a similarly important role in the aetiological account of the paean, with Theseus' wonder-inducing reappearance on the deck of the ship after his dive into the sea framed as a marvellous quasi-divine epiphany, and leading in this case to an enthusiastic paean from the fourteen Athenian youths and maidens which is identified as a precursor, again, of the current ongoing performance. Theseus' reappearance, like the typical epiphanic appearance of a god, is a cause of *thauma* for all of the mortals who witness it (*θαῦμα πάντεσσι*, 123) and can be read as an aetiology of the paean itself because it acts as the immediate cause of the outbreak of the Athenians' choral song and casts Theseus as a *de facto chorēgos* (see Calame (1996) 207-208, Fearn (2007) 255, and Pavlou (2012) 537 n. 95 on Theseus as *chorēgos* in Bacchylides 17; cf. also Hedreen (2011) 494 on the depiction of Theseus leading a dance as *chorēgos* on his arrival in Crete on the François Vase).

Chapter Four

The Experience of *Thauma*: Cognition, Recognition, Wonder and Disbelief

γέρων δ' ἰθὺς κίεν οἴκου,
τῇ ρ' Ἀχιλεὺς ἴζεσκε δίφιλος· ἐν δέ μιν αὐτὸν
εὖρ', ἔταροι δ' ἀπάνευθε καθήατο· τὼ δὲ δὺ' οἶω,
ἥρως Αὐτομέδων τε καὶ Ἄλκιμος, ὄζος Ἄρηος,
ποίπνυον παρεόντε· νέον δ' ἀπέληγεν ἐδωδῆς
ἔσθων καὶ πίνων· ἔτι καὶ παρέκειτο τράπεζα.
τοὺς δ' ἔλαθ' εἰσελθὼν Πρίαμος μέγας, ἄγχι δ' ἄρα στὰς
χερσὶν Ἀχιλλῆος λάβε γούνατα καὶ κύσε χεῖρας
δεινὰς ἀνδροφόνους, αἱ οἱ πολέας κτάνον υἱᾶς.
ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἄν ἄνδρ' ἄτη πυκινὴ λάβῃ, ὅς τ' ἐνὶ πάτρῃ
φῶτα κατακτείνας ἄλλων ἐξίκετο δῆμον,
ἀνδρὸς ἐς ἀφνειοῦ, θάμβος δ' ἔχει εἰσορόωντας,
ὥς Ἀχιλεὺς θάμβησεν ἰδὼν Πρίαμον θεοειδέα·
θάμβησαν δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι, ἐς ἀλλήλους δὲ ἴδοντο.
τὸν καὶ λισσόμενος Πρίαμος πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπε·
“μνήσαι πατρός σοιο, θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ' Ἀχιλλεῦ,
τηλίκου ὥς περ ἐγών, ὅλοῦ ἐπὶ γήραος οὐδῶ”.

Iliad 24.471-87

And the old man went straight to the house where Achilles dear to Zeus was accustomed to sit. He found him there, but his companions sat far off; two of them alone, warrior Automedon and Alkimos, scion of Ares, were busily attending to him. And Achilles had just turned away from his food, from eating and drinking, and the table still lay beside him. Unnoticed by them great Priam came in, and then after standing next to him took Achilles' knees in his hands and kissed his hands, the terrible man-slaying hands which had slaughtered many of his sons. And just as when suffocating madness has come over a man, who has killed someone in his own country and comes to the country of other people, to the house of a wealthy man, and wonder takes hold of those who look at him, in this way Achilles wondered seeing godlike Priam, and the others wondered as well, and looked at each other. And Priam entreated him, and said this to him: “Remember your father, godlike Achilles, of similar age to me, on the deadly threshold of old age”.

The climactic meeting of Achilles and Priam in the middle of the *Iliad*'s final book has long been considered one of the most moving episodes in the entire Greek literary tradition. Wrath, the emotion which is held up in the poem's first line (μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά,

Πηληιάδεω Ἀχιλῆος, 1.1) as the essential motivation of the *Iliad*'s entire narrative, and which is at the forefront of Achilles' mind from the moment he loses Briseis, finally gives way to pity over the course of this encounter. The emergence of pity as the foremost emotion aroused in Achilles, and by extension in us the audience, has been emphasised by recent critics as perhaps the most essential element in the success of book twenty-four as a fitting closure to the action of the *Iliad* as a whole.¹ But pity is not the only emotional keynote which this scene explores. Before pity is provoked by Priam's supplicatory actions and words, it is wonder which is thrust to the forefront of our attention. Achilles first marvels at Priam's sudden quasi-epiphanic appearance, but as the scene draws on it becomes clear that this is not the only aspect of their mutual wonder which these lines draw to our attention. For wonder is also one of the predominant emotional responses which the young warrior and the old king feel in each other's presence at the mutual recognition of the similarities which exist between them, as well as an effect of the cognitive realisation that their current situations are perhaps not as diametrically opposed as they might have appeared at first glance. In this chapter it is precisely the double-edged impact of *thauma* as both an emotional and cognitive response that I want to explore in more detail.

I have chosen to focus on the concept of recognition and the use of recognition as a plot device in the Greek literary tradition more broadly precisely because *anagnōrisis* is configured from Homer onwards as producing an inherently astonishing effect on both the emotional and the cognitive level. Not only is *thauma* consistently conceived of as an emotional reaction to the recognition that what was initially perceived to be radically 'other' is in some sense uncannily familiar and vice versa, it is also seen as a sort of

¹ Especially in the influential reading of the *Iliad* as a poem with pity at its heart which Macleod (1982) 14 puts forth: cf. his thoughts on the place of the final book within Homer's overall conception (p. 8): "if the description of suffering and the evocation of pity are the very essence of poetry as Homer conceives it, then Book 24 is a proper complement and conclusion to the rest".

catalyst which kickstarts the cognitive processes of realisation and learning which potentially ensue as a result of this recognition. By the end of the fifth century BCE the potential impact of the emotional and cognitive effects of *thauma* are subject to an increasing level of scrutiny. On the one hand, *thauma* is increasingly seen to play a vital role within the realm of intellectual endeavour as a force which is able to highlight ignorance, provoke curiosity and act as a spur towards the acquisition of new or modified knowledge. But at the same time, it takes on an increasingly ambivalent aspect as the notion that *thaumata* can be fabricated by humans of their own accord, rather than being produced by and belonging to the natural world or divinely sanctioned by the gods, takes hold. It is in Plato's work that we can most clearly see the culmination of these two responses to *thauma*: on the one hand, wonder becomes the origin of the newly defined field of 'philosophy' itself, but at the same time it has also become a deeply questionable and potentially distracting effect in the hands of anyone but the 'true' philosopher.

But before returning in the next chapters to the significance of *thauma* in the newly codified genre of philosophical writing which Plato's work represents, certain aspects of the position of *thauma* in the intellectual climate of the late fifth and early fourth centuries BCE need to be examined over the course of this chapter and the next in order to demonstrate how and why responses to *thauma* and *thaumata* started to shift over the course of the fifth century BCE. I will begin in this chapter by examining the place of pity and *thauma* in the meeting between Achilles and Priam in *Iliad* 24, a scene which has often been read as a precursor of Greek tragedy in its thematic focus and emotional intensity, before turning to Aristotle's later reading in the *Poetics* of the relationship between *thauma* and *anagnōrisis* in fifth-century Athenian tragedy. This will be followed by an examination of how these themes work in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris* (henceforth *IT*) and *Ion*. Throughout the meeting between Achilles and Priam, the

constant interplay between nearness and distance, familiarity and unfamiliarity, in both literal and metaphorical terms, contributes to the increasing sense of wonder which both men feel in each other's presence. In the recognition-scenes of tragedy the *thauma* provoked by this interplay between nearness and distance becomes even clearer, as the unfamiliar can suddenly appear familiar, or the familiar oddly unfamiliar. Of the Athenian tragedies which remain to us it is the work of Euripides that probes the potential of *thauma* and recognition in the theatre most intensely. Euripides' stance towards *thauma* is particularly illuminating for several reasons. His particular interest in and alignment with the most pressing trends in his contemporary intellectual climate is a *topos* of criticism on the tragedian, who was already called 'the philosopher of the stage' in antiquity. By assessing his treatment of recognition and *thauma*, it becomes possible to discern some of the ways in which wonder fits into contemporary theatrical and intellectual thought.² Furthermore, Euripides' later plays seem to exhibit an intense interest in the workings of recognition, a tragic plot-device which is almost always inherently wondrous. The most famous example of this interest is of course in Euripides' *Electra* (508–84), where he re-works the recognition scene between Electra and Orestes in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* (164–

² The description of Euripides as a 'philosopher of the stage' is first attested at Vitruvius *De Arch.* 8 pr. 1, where the tragedian is said to be a pupil of the Presocratic philosopher Anaxagoras (*Euripides, auditor Anaxagorae, quem philosophum Athenienses scaenicum appellaverunt*). The first attested uses of this appellation in Greek are found in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* at 158e (ὁ σκηνικὸς οὗτος φιλόσοφος) and 561a (τοῦ σκηνικοῦ φιλοσόφου Εὐριπίδου). See Wright (2005) 226–337 for a comprehensive discussion of Euripides' designation as 'philosopher of the stage' and the influence of contemporary intellectual trends and philosophical ideas in his 'escape-tragedies' set in distant lands (*Helen, IT, Andromeda*). On aspects of Euripides' plays which are influenced by and reflective of contemporary intellectual trends see Reinhardt (1960) 227–56 and Winnington-Ingram (1969) 127–42, who sees Euripides' work as merely superficially clever rather than genuinely philosophical; cf. Allan (1999–2000) 145–56. In contrast, Dunn (2017) 447–67 suggests that Euripides was not only influenced by contemporary intellectual and cultural trends but was a "contributor on several fronts to the intellectual ferment of late-fifth century Athens" (p. 448). On Euripides' development and refashioning of contemporary sophistic ideas, such as the nature and relativity of *aretē*, the power of rhetoric, the relationship between appearance and reality and the *nomos/physis* antithesis within his plays see especially Conacher (1998).

245). But as we shall see, several other Euripidean plays are equally concerned with recognition and its wondrous effects.³

The power of the tragic recognition scene to provoke wonder, disbelief and questioning of even our most basic assumptions becomes one of Euripides' predominant concerns in his later plays, some of which are set in very unusual locations. Towards the end of the fifth century, Euripides probes the potential of distant settings most intensely in three plays which share certain similarities of theme, plot and setting, *IT* (c. 414 BCE), *Helen* and *Andromeda* (both first produced in 412 BCE). All three of these plays begin with endangered female protagonists trapped in distant lands that lie towards the edges of the earth. Iphigenia has been transported from Aulis to the Taurian Chersonese in the north, Helen is residing in Egypt instead of Troy, while Andromeda is bound and awaiting rescue in Ethiopia near the south-western boundary of the known world.⁴ In both *IT* and *Helen*, a heroic Greek male arrives in these distant locales and a series of complicated (mis)recognitions soon ensue; the fragmentary state of *Andromeda* makes it difficult to say much about the play with certainty, but it is clear that Perseus arrives in Ethiopia and encounters Andromeda there, just as Menelaus finds Helen in Egypt and Orestes meets Iphigenia on the Taurian shore. In this chapter I will examine the connection between recognition and *thauma* in *IT* and show how both of these themes touch upon another central Euripidean concern in that play: the mythic tradition. I will end the chapter by turning to another Euripidean work which was very probably produced within a few years

³ For recent treatments of the relationship between the recognition-scenes in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi* and Euripides' *Electra* see e.g. Davies (1998) 389-403, Torrance (2011) 179-92 and (2013) 14-33, and Zeitlin (2012) 361-78. On Euripides' exploitation of *anagnōrisis* as a device which enables 'ever new inventions' (*immer neuen Erfindungen*) see Reinhardt (1960) 242.

⁴ The Ethiopian setting of *Andromeda* is situated in the far-west, as fr. 145 *TrGF* Kannicht, which describes the monster approaching Andromeda from the Atlantic (ὅρῳ δὲ πρὸς τὰ παρθένου θοινάματα | κῆτος θοάζον ἐξ Ἀτλαντικῆς ἀλός) suggests. See also see Klimek-Winter (1993) 259, Wright (2005) 128-29 and Collard and Cropp (2008) 151 n.1 on the distant setting of *Andromeda*.

of *IT*, *Helen* and *Andromeda*: the *Ion* (c. 413).⁵ *Ion* does not at first glance seem easily comparable with these three plays since, far from focusing on the plight of endangered women in distant lands, it concentrates on the life of a young man who dwells in Delphi, the very navel of the Greek world. But when examined more closely, *Ion* can be seen to share some of the most pressing concerns of other Euripidean plays of this period. *Ion* may live at the very centre of the world, but he has been abandoned by his absent parents in the same way as *Helen*, *Iphigenia* and *Andromeda* have been left stranded at the edges of the earth, and his own identity turns out to be anything but fixed and well-centred, as the uncanny familial recognitions (and misrecognitions) of the play gradually reveal. Both *IT* and *Ion* are concerned with astonishing familial recognitions in unexpected locations. Both focus on a paradoxical interplay between spatial nearness and distance. This interplay results in *thauma*, which brings the veracity and reliability of mythic discourse itself into question while simultaneously mediating between self and other, near and far, and familiar and unfamiliar. But before turning to Euripides it is worth examining the wonder-inducing meeting between Achilles and Priam more closely.

1. Recognition, Realisation and *Thauma*: the Meeting of Priam and Achilles

During the climactic meeting between Priam and Achilles in *Iliad* 24 the wonder provoked by Priam's unexpected arrival provides the main point of contact between the tenor and vehicle of the strangely paradoxical simile that follows even before the marvelling reactions of Achilles and his fellow comrades and spectators (ὥς Ἀχιλλεύς

⁵ *Helen*, a play which shares many thematic and structural similarities with *IT*, could be examined in great detail along these lines in tandem with *IT* and *Ion*: due to constraints of space and the fact that I discuss below many of the issues which I would discuss in relation to that play in my reading of *IT*, I have chosen to focus on *Ion* instead, since the location of *Ion*'s action at the centre of the world provides a geographical counter-point to the distant settings of *IT* and *Helen*.

θάμβησεν ἰδὼν ... θάμβησαν δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι, 483-84) are explicitly noted by the narrator. Just as a murderer arriving in a foreign land causes those present to wonder because of the unexpectedness of his arrival and the sense of awe and dread which surrounds a person who has polluted themselves with such a deed, so too does Priam's arrival provoke a natural sense of astonishment. The paradoxes of this simile are multiple. Priam is compared to a murderer, and yet it is the hands of his son's murderer that he is kissing (δαινὰς ἀνδροφόνους, 479); he is like a man in the land of strangers after fleeing far from home, when in fact he is already in his homeland, which is occupied by hostile strangers (ὅς τ' ἐνὶ πάτρῃ | φῶτα κατακτείνας ἄλλων ἐξίκετο δῆμον, 480-81). The poet dwells on these paradoxes and the resulting wonder they provoke at the very beginning of the meeting between these two enemies to hint towards the ensuing reversals (of Achilles' wrath and, temporarily, of Priam's fortunes) which are about to take place. This also ensures that, in addition to pity, the sense of astonishment apparent at the very opening of this momentous encounter continues to make itself felt in the rest of the episode.

The wonder which arises in this scene has two main causes. The first is the way in which Priam's unseen entry to Achilles' hut and sudden appearance in front of the assembled company is deliberately framed as a sort of divine epiphany.⁶ The second is the inherently wondrous impact of processes of recognition and self-realisation which depend upon an interplay of various kinds of nearness and distance, both literal and metaphorical. I begin with the epiphanic aspect of the passage. As a rule, when a guest visits a host in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* they are immediately noticed on approach by those present.⁷ Unusually, this is not the case here: Priam's initial entry completely escapes the

⁶ See chapter three for a more detailed discussion of the inherent connections between the gods' epiphanic manifestations and mortal *thauma*.

⁷ See Macleod (1982) 126 and Richardson (1993) 320-21 on the departure from the usual Homeric motifs associated with the entrance of guests here. The only real parallel to this sudden and unseen approach in Homer is Odysseus' sudden appearance from his goddess-given cloud during the supplication of Arete at *Od.* 7.142-45. In this passage it is significant that Odysseus' unseen entrance is heavily aided by Athene:

attention of Achilles and his attendants (τοὺς δ' ἔλαθ' εἰσελθὼν Πρίαμος μέγας, 477), so that he is able to creep up on the greatest Achaean warrior completely unawares and stand beside him (ἄγχι δ' ἄρα σταῖς, 477), like the unexpected arrival of a god beside a mortal. The epithets used to describe Priam as he appears in front of Achilles further reinforce the sense that his sudden manifestation is somehow akin to a divine epiphany. Before the simile, Priam is described as μέγας. This is the only use of this epithet in connection with Priam in the *Iliad*. It is well-chosen in this context as it hints both at his nobility and emphasises the stunning visual impact of his arrival, since magnitude is an aspect of astonishing visual objects which is often presented as a prime cause of their wondrous effect. The impact of the sight of 'great Priam' is then conveyed by the paradoxical simile; after which Achilles is explicitly said to wonder at the sight of 'godlike' Priam (Ἀχιλλεὺς θάμβησεν ἰδὼν Πρίαμον θεοειδέα, 483). This is not a redundant epithet at this point in the narrative: Priam is godlike in Achilles' eyes precisely because of the manner of his surprising, unexpected and almost supernatural entrance.⁸ The sudden epiphanic *thauma* which explicitly opens the encounter between the young Achaean warrior and the Trojan king continues implicitly through the whole scene, and is connected to the sense that the gods are somehow present in the background of this meeting, and that the reversals which ensue as a result of this meeting are divinely sanctioned. This is not surprising given that the meeting has indeed been encouraged and enabled by the gods. In fact, Priam's unusual epiphanic and wonder-provoking appearance has itself already been prefigured by

his arrival is thus, like Priam's, a sort of divine epiphany by proxy which provokes a similar reaction of wonder (θαύμαζον δ' ὀρόωντες, 7.145) when the goddess chooses to make Odysseus manifest.

⁸ Richardson correctly recognises the weightiness of this epithet at this moment and connects it to Priam's unseen entrance (1993) 322: "At this momentous point it is appropriate to speak of 'mighty Priam' entering unseen, and it helps to prepare for the shock of surprise when he is suddenly seen, present in all his greatness". Macleod (1982) 127 is also right that this epithet is "more than a generic and decorative one" because "[i]t corresponds to Achilles; and it makes Priam his equal (cf. 629-32): Priam in his turn addresses him as 'god-like' (486)". But the choice of this epithet goes much further than both Richardson and Macleod suggest, since it relates to the similarity of Priam's entrance and its effect to the method and effect of a divine epiphany.

Hermes' similar disguised appearance to him earlier on in the book (24.352-467), an encounter between god and mortal which acted as a catalyst for the old king's successful journey across the empty battlefield towards his younger foe, and which proleptically echoes the encounter between an older and a younger man which will take place once Priam reaches Achilles' dwelling.

Already in this passage, in the very first moments of the meeting between the two enemies, there are hints of the mutually respectful and reciprocal relationship which is about to be established between Priam and Achilles. These relate to the combination of vision, *thauma* and the implied presence of the gods' power which Priam's epiphanic appearance suggests. In the old man's opening words, Achilles is addressed as 'similar to the gods' (θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ' Ἀχιλλεῦ, 486). On the one hand, this apostrophe is a rhetorical *captatio benevolentiae* of the most basic kind which aims to flatter Achilles through the common enough comparison of warrior to god – though of course, Achilles really is as close to a god as any mortal can be. But at the same time, this epithet gives us a hint of how the scene might be focalised from Priam's perspective: just as Priam seems to approach godhood from Achilles' point of view due to his wondrous ability to appear where he is not expected, from Priam's Achilles has already repeatedly demonstrated his ability to loom large in his enemy's life by snatching away the lives his nearest and dearest. Already then, in the initial glimpses exchanged between the two, we can discern the traces of that explicit and mutual wonder at each other's godlikeness which will increasingly envelope both characters until the point when we reach the end of their initial interaction (24.629-32):

ἦ τοι Δαρδανίδης Πρίαμος θαύμαζ' Ἀχιλῆα,
ὅσσοις ἔην οἷός τε· θεοῖσι γὰρ ἅντα ἔφκει·
αὐτὰρ ὁ Δαρδανίδην Πρίαμον θαύμαζεν Ἀχιλλεύς,
εἰσορόων ὄψιν τ' ἀγαθὴν καὶ μῦθον ἀκούων.

Then indeed Priam son of Dardanus wondered at Achilles, at how big he was and what sort of man he was: for he was like the gods. But Achilles wondered at Priam son of Dardanus, looking upon his noble appearance and hearing his speech.

This mutual wonder at the end of the climactic meeting creates an effect of ring composition; it also emphasises the importance of *thauma* to the process of mutual recognition and realisation which both Priam and Achilles have undergone. The initial wonder which Achilles feels towards Priam imbues the old man with an aura of divine sanctity and power that finally helps to unlock the young man's sense of pity, and allows this one supplication to be successful, unlike all the many previous supplications of the *Iliad* which are immediately and coarsely rejected.⁹

The constant interplay of nearness and distance during the central meeting of book twenty-four is the second central cause of the *thauma* which this scene as a whole provokes. Achilles' initial astonishment is caused by the literal proximity of someone who has previously been, and should by all rights remain, far away from him. At the start of their meeting, Priam is his enemy and he is the killer of the old man's sons; his own friend Patroclus' death can be attributed to Priam's son Hector and in some sense to Priam personally as Trojan leader. His wonder at Priam's appearance is not only because of its unexpected suddenness, but also because the person in front of him, as a result of their enmity, is a manifestation of extreme otherness. And yet it does not take long before both men find they have more in common than first anticipated. The paradoxes and inversions of the opening simile, which casts Priam as a young man who has slaughtered others and found himself in a foreign land – a young man who, like Achilles, has blood on his hands and is unable to return home – provides perhaps the first hint of this. The most striking

⁹ Before this moment, every supplication made in the *Iliad* has been rejected: see Macleod (1982) 15-16 for examples.

and wonder-provoking collision of nearness and distance in this passage, however, is surely the way in which Achilles seems to recognise his own father in the father of his enemy. Priam's exhortation to remember Peleus (μνησai πατρός σοῖο, 486) explicitly encourages Achilles in some way to recognise his own father's plight, not least because Peleus was both a famous provider for the exiled (most obviously Patroclus), and a notorious exile himself, banished by his father for the murder of his half-brother Phocus.¹⁰ Achilles does indeed think of his own father after Priam's opening speech, as his desire for weeping at the thought of Peleus at 24.507 (ὥς φάτο, τῷ δ' ἄρα πατρός ὕφ' ἡμερον ὄρσε γόοιο) makes clear. It is worth remembering as well that Achilles has already configured his own grief for Patroclus as a father's for his child (ὥς δὲ πατήρ οὗ παιδὸς ὀδύρεται ὅστέα καίων, 23.222): another unexpected similarity between the two men. By the end of their meeting, both Achilles and Priam have recognised the similarity of their mutual suffering and have discovered that they are closer to one another than they first envisaged. This sort of recognition is not just a renewed understanding of the other, but can be termed a kind of tragic 'realisation' enabled by wonder – a form of recognition which encompasses a discovery of the universality of death, suffering and grief in the human condition and one's place in it – which provokes a renewed sense of wonder at the closeness of an object which was once thought of as being radically distant.¹¹

This type of wonder, especially in cases where it is caused by the unexpected recognition or recollection of familial relationships, prefigures some of the uses of *thauma* in later Greek poetic genres, especially Attic tragedy. For this reason, Homer's attention to the evocation and effects of *thauma* in the middle of book twenty-four is another way in which Richardson's assessment of the meeting between Priam and

¹⁰ See Heiden (1998) 4-6.

¹¹ See Rutherford (1982) 159-60 on the tragic realisation which takes place in the scene between Achilles and Priam in *Il.* 24; cf. p. 147 on 'realisation' as a broader form of *anagnōrisis* which is involved in the attainment of self-knowledge in later Athenian tragedy.

Achilles as “the most dramatic moment in the whole of the *Iliad*” seems especially apt.¹² In the way this episode exposes the uncanny similarities between the two enemies, and in its movement from an initial sense of surprised astonishment (which we might term wondering at difference) through to pity, empathy and back to astonishment again (which we might term wondering at similarity), it certainly seems to resemble some of the most moving confrontations between tragic characters in the later dramatic tradition. Furthermore, the wondrous recognition of the self in the other, and the other in the self, accounts to some extent for the general power and appeal of fifth-century Athenian tragedy to its audience. Often mythical events placed at a spatial and temporal remove from contemporary Athenian life nevertheless show themselves in tragedy to be directly relevant to everyday life. For example, the action may be set over there, in Thebes, in the past, but somehow it applies (often uncomfortably, almost never simply) to the here and now in Athens as well.¹³ The *thauma* which this process of recognition involves operates on a cognitive level as a means of forcing an audience to reconsider its own perspective, though the emotional impact of the strange and dislocating effects which this type of unexpected wonder produces is equally significant.

Aristotle well recognised the importance of the dual cognitive and emotional role of wonder in tragedy. Within his wider discussion in the *Poetics* of the connection of tragic *anagnōrisis* to the creation of pity and fear, he repeatedly emphasises the importance of the astonishment which ensues from unexpected recognitions in tragic theatre.¹⁴ For Aristotle, the type of wonder aroused by sudden and unexpected

¹² Richardson (1993) 323.

¹³ See e.g. Zeitlin’s (1990) 130-67 seminal work on Thebes as a *topos* in Athenian tragedy

¹⁴ Aristotle first introduces an explicit connection between *anagnōrisis* and *ekplēxis* at *Poetics* 1454a2-4. Here he suggests that a ‘better sort’ of recognition takes place when the actions in the theatre are committed out of ignorance rather than knowingly, and that this ignorance is then followed by a recognition of the characters’ true situation. In such cases the recognition is both fitting and astonishing (βέλτιον δὲ τὸ ἀγνοοῦντα μὲν πράττειν, πράξαντα δὲ ἀναγνώρισαι· τό τε γὰρ μίαιρον οὐ πρόσσεστιν καὶ ἡ ἀναγνώρισις ἐκπληκτικόν). The impression that *ekplēxis* is the effect which a skilful portrayal of *anagnōrisis* naturally causes is reinforced by Aristotle’s later suggestion that the very best type of recognition-scene is one which

anagnōrisis has both a cognitive and emotional effect on the audience which is intimately connected to a person's supposed ability to learn from mimetic representations.¹⁵ Aristotle's insistence on the potential cognitive as well as emotional power of the evocation of *thauma* in the tragic theatre is in line with his views elsewhere about wonder's status as a necessary 'beginning' of philosophy: a crucial spur to curiosity which causes someone to become aware of their initial ignorance and strive to replace it with knowledge (διὰ γὰρ τὸ θαυμάζειν οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ νῦν καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ἤρξαντο φιλοσοφεῖν, *Metaphysics* 982b12-13). Aristotle even goes so far to suggest that the philosophical lover of wisdom and the lover of myth – and presumably those who enjoy viewing tragedy can be termed lovers of myth – are naturally the same person, since both philosophy and myth are full of wonders (ὁ δ' ἀπορῶν καὶ θαυμάζων οἶεται ἀγνοεῖν – διὸ καὶ ὁ φιλόμυθος φιλόσοφός πῶς ἐστίν· ὁ γὰρ μῦθος σύγκειται ἐκ θαυμασίων, *Metaphysics* 982b17-19).¹⁶

In the time that elapsed between Homer's portrayal of the wondrous and pitiful meeting of Achilles and Priam and Aristotle's formulation of the place of *thauma* in tragic theatre and in philosophical endeavour, wonder has taken on a double-sided and potentially contradictory role in the Greek intellectual tradition. On the one hand, *thaumata* are the natural material of mythic discourse and other types of account which

follows naturally from the events themselves: in this case, *ekplēxis* arises from the probable series of events, just like in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* or Euripides' *IT* (πασῶν δὲ βελτίστη ἀναγνώρισις ἢ ἐξ αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτων, τῆς ἐκπλήξεως γιγνομένης δι' εἰκότων, οἷον ἐν τῷ Σοφοκλέους Οἰδίποδι καὶ τῇ Ἰφιγενείᾳ, εἰκὸς γὰρ βούλεσθαι ἐπιθεῖναι γράμματα. αἱ γὰρ τοιαῦται μόναι ἄνευ τῶν πεπονημένων σημείων καὶ περιδεραιῶν εἰκὸς γὰρ βούλεσθαι ἐπιθεῖναι γράμματα. αἱ γὰρ τοιαῦται μόναι ἄνευ τῶν πεπονημένων σημείων καὶ περιδεραιῶν, 1455a15-20). Lucas (1968) 172 argues that the article here (τῆς ἐκπλήξεως) suggests that Aristotle is suggesting that *ekplēxis* is caused by the process of *anagnōrisis* in general, rather than by the specific 'best type' of *anagnōrisis* mentioned here alone.

¹⁵ Halliwell (1987) 111-12 well describes the broader conception of the relationship between wonder, recognition and understanding which underpins Aristotle's thoughts about the place of *thauma* in tragic plots and actions at *Poetics* 1452a4ff: "The 'sense of wonder' to which he refers is an experience which startles and challenges our capacity to understand what we witness in a play, but it is not one which allows for a deep or final inscrutability: wonder must give way to a recognition of how things do after all cohere 'through probability or necessity'". I will return to the connection between *thauma*, learning, pleasure and recognition in Aristotle's thought in more detail at the beginning of the next chapter (see pp. 166-68).

¹⁶ See chapter two pp. 91-92 for further discussion of this important passage of the *Metaphysics*.

originate from spatially or temporally distant domains.¹⁷ The spatial or temporal distance of *thaumata* often causes the reliability and believability of accounts which purport to describe such objects or phenomena to be questioned. This tendency manifests itself in different ways in different genres over the course of the fifth century BCE. For example, in Herodotus' work accounts of marvels must be carefully discussed in relation to the relative weight of personal autopsy and the reliability of hearsay – though the later reception of Herodotus' discussions of the ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά of past and/or distant lands shows that his handling of marvels was a major contributing factor to the historian's reputation for lies, despite his open consideration of the relative reliability of his various sources.¹⁸ Elsewhere we begin to see evidence of an increased self-consciousness about the believability of the mythical tradition in general: perhaps the most famous example being Pindar's First *Olympian*, where the 'many marvels' (θαύματα πολλά, 28) of a potentially deceptive tradition of poetic myth are put under the spotlight.¹⁹ It is all of these varying reactions to *thauma* which Euripides focuses on in *IT*, as the next two sections will demonstrate.

2. Marvels at the Margins: Geographical and Mythic Innovation in Euripides' *IT*

It is significant that Euripides seems to have turned his attention to astonishing recognitions in unexpected locations over the course of a few consecutive years, 414-412 BCE. Both *Helen* and *Andromeda* can be securely dated to the City Dionysia of March

¹⁷ See chapter two pp. 80-91 on the relationship between *thaumata* and the earth's edges in Greek ethnographic writing.

¹⁸ See the next chapter pp. 172-76 for further discussion of some of the earliest evidence for Herodotus' reputation as a liar by the end of the fifth century in Aristophanes' *Birds*, where it is precisely the language of Herodotean ethnographic *thauma* which Aristophanes parodies in order to expose the fantastic and unbelievable nature of the new utopian society of Nephelococcygia. Cf. Priestley (2014) 209-22 on the development of the 'Herodotus the liar' theme in the historian's reception in antiquity more generally.

¹⁹ I will return to Pindar's view of the relationship between *thaumata* and the mythic tradition below pp. 151-53.

412, from comments found in Aristophanes' parodic re-working of central scenes from both plays in *Thesmophoriazusae* (411 BCE), and from further information found in the scholia to that play and also to *Frogs* (405 BCE), where Dionysus makes reference to reading and enjoying Euripides' *Andromeda* (καὶ δῆτ' ἐπὶ τῆς νεῶς ἀναγιγνώσκοντί μοι | τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν πρὸς ἑμᾶντὸν ἐξαίφνης πόθος | τὴν καρδίαν ἐπάταξε, 52-54).²⁰ Although it is not possible to date either *IT* or *Ion* with such pinpoint precision, it is relatively certain that both plays were first produced between 414-412. The stylistic and thematic similarities which these plays share have led to suggestions that either *IT* or *Ion* might have been the third play in Euripides' trilogy of 412, along with *Helen* and *Andromeda*, though there is no firm way to confirm or exclude either suggestion.²¹ Stylometric analysis of the trimeters yields a date of c. 414 for *IT* and c. 413 for *Ion*, which, although it is again impossible to confirm the precise year in which either play was performed,

²⁰ At *Thesm.* 1060-61 Echo, a character in Euripides' *Andromeda*, appears and declares that last year in the very same place (presumably the Theatre of Dionysus) she joined with Euripides and aided him in the dramatic contest (ἥπερ πέρυσιν ἐν τῷδε ταύτῳ χωρίῳ | Εὐριπίδῃ καὶ τῇ ξυνηγωνιζόμενῃ); cf. Σ ad. *Thesm.*, 850, which confirms that *Helen* was produced very recently (τὴν καινὴν Ἑλένην: ὑπόγυον δεδιδραγμένην). We know that *Andromeda* and *Helen* were produced together in the previous year in the same trilogy from Σ ad. *Thesm.* 1012 (Ἀνδρομέδαν: πιθανῶς· συνδεδιδάκται γὰρ τῇ Ἑλένῃ); cf. Σ ad. *Frogs* 53, which confirms that *Andromeda* was produced in the eighth year before *Frogs*, which we know was performed at the Lenaia in 405 (τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν: τῶν καλλίστων Εὐριπίδου δρᾶμα ἡ Ἀνδρομέδα ... ἡ δὲ Ἀνδρομέδα ὀγδόῳ ἔτει προεισηλθεν). This gives a date (with inclusive counting) of 413/12 for *Helen* and *Andromeda* and 412/11 for *Thesm.*: further evidence from *Thesm.* supports a date of 411 (see Austin and Olson (2004) xxxiii-xxxvi for a full discussion).

²¹ In his edition, Diggle (1981a: 242, 306) suggests a date of c. 414 for *IT* and c. 413 for *Ion*. In contrast, Wright (2005) 44-55 argues at length for a Euripidean 'escape-trilogy' in 412 BCE consisting of *Helen*, *Andromeda* and *IT*, a suggestion also supported by Jordan (2006) 20. Wright supports his dating with the suggestion (p. 50) that *IT* may be being subtly parodied by Aristophanes in the final scenes of the *Thesmophoriazusae*, after the more obvious parodic references to *Helen* and *Andromeda* earlier on in the play (for similar suggestions about the potential references to *IT* at the end of *Thesm.* See Hall (1989) 52 n. 71, Bobrick (1991) 67-76, Sommerstein (1994) 237, Cropp (2000) 62 and Kosak (2017) 215. Kyriakou (2006) 42, however, disagrees and calls the suggested allusions "very tenuous". Cf. also Wright (2006) 23-48 for the suggestion that *Helen*, *Andromeda*, *IT* and *Cyclops* were performed as a tetralogy in 412 BCE. On the performance of *IT* in the context of the Athenian campaign against Sicily in 415-13 BCE, see Kosak (2017) 219. Zacharia (2003) 3-7 suggests that verbal similarities between *Helen* and *Ion*, and the increased interest in Ionianism and empire which *Ion* perhaps exhibits as a result of the aftermath of the failed Sicilian expedition, point to a trilogy consisting of *Helen-Andromeda-Ion* in 412 BCE. Cf. Parker (2016) lxxvi-lxxx on the metrical basis for dating *IT* to c. 414 BCE. For a more speculative alternative approach to the metrical dating of *IT* (suggesting that the play is a pre-415 work which may date from as early as 419) see Marshall (2009) 141-56 and (2014) 11-12.

certainly supports the view that all of these plays were produced over a relatively short span within the period c. 414-412.

It is no coincidence that Euripides should have turned his attention to the wondrous and often simultaneously disturbing effects and problems of the near and far over the course of the years 414-412 BCE. This period was a tumultuous one as Athenian imperial might turned westwards in 415 and embarked upon the ambitious invasion of Sicily, which ultimately proved disastrous by the winter of 413. Over the course of this crucial period, in which Athenian imperial hopes veered from wildly optimistic to crushingly pessimistic, Euripides' continual, pronounced interest in the relationship of the Hellenic centre of the world to its more distant and potentially astonishing peripheries reflects, in no simple manner, contemporary concerns about the relationship of Athens to other places and societies which at one moment appear very different, and at another similar. This is a dynamic which I will continue to examine in the next chapter.

For now, however, I want to explore how these concerns play out within the *IT* in relation to the perceived nature of wonder and its effects in that play. Language connected to *thauma* appears more frequently in *IT* than in any other surviving Euripidean work.²² Throughout the play Euripides consistently emphasises the inherent wonder of distant and exotic geographical locations through the repeated appearance of *thauma* and its effects. By the end of the prologue of *IT*, the unusual and potentially wondrous nature of the play's geographical setting, and its treatment of conventional mythical tradition, has already become self-evident to the audience. Usually the immediate geographical frame of a Euripidean play is made clear in the opening lines, but it is not until we reach line thirty (μ' ἐς τήνδ' ὤκεισεν Ταύρων χθόνα) that *IT*'s setting is revealed in Iphigenia's

²² See Budelmann (forthcoming) on the prevalence of *thauma* in *IT*.

opening speech – unprecedentedly late for a Euripidean prologue.²³ Before we reach this point, however, Iphigenia focuses on Aulis, the location most intimately connected to her past fate (1-9):

Πέλοψ ὁ Ταντάλειος ἐς Πῖσαν μολῶν
θοαῖσιν ἵπποις Οἰνομάου γαμεῖ κόρην,
ἐξ ἧς Ἀτρεὺς ἔβλασεν· Ἀτρέως δὲ παῖς
Μενέλαος Ἀγαμέμνων τε· τοῦ δ' ἔφυν ἐγώ,
τῆς Τυνδαρείας θυγατρὸς Ἰφιγένεια παῖς,
ἣν ἀμφὶ δίνας ἅς θάμ' Εὐριπος πυκναῖς
αὔραις ἐλίσσων κυανέαν ἄλα στρέφει
ἔσφαξεν Ἑλένης οὔνεχ', ὥς δοκεῖ, πατὴρ
Ἀρτέμιδι κλειναῖς ἐν πτυχαῖσιν Αὐλίδος.

With swift horses, Pelops the son of Tantalus, after going into Pisa, wedded the daughter of Oenomaus who gave birth to Atreus. And Menelaus and Agamemnon were Atreus' children. From Agamemnon I was born, Iphigenia, the child of the daughter of Tyndareus. Near the eddies which the Euripus with numerous breezes often turns about, making the dark-blue sea roll, my father – so it's claimed – sacrificed me to Artemis, for the sake of Helen, in the famous mountain clefts of Aulis.

The delay before the revelation that Iphigenia is in fact no longer in Greece at all allows the audience's geographical expectations to be manipulated. Iphigenia focuses at the very beginning of the prologue on the idea of swift movement and travel from one location to another, not only with respect to her own swift dislocation from the famous clefts of Aulis, which she describes at length before revealing her current location, but also by picking out the episode in her own ancestral history which is most strongly related to the idea of travel: Pelops' journey to Pisa for his famous chariot race (1-2). The connection between geographical dislocation and mythical innovation, and the surprising effects which ensue from the combination of these two factors, is in this way made immediately apparent from the play's opening lines.

²³ Wright (2005) 129.

Euripides certainly did not invent the story of Iphigenia's presence in the Taurian land wholesale, as Herodotus' description of Scythia and other northern lands in book four of the *Histories* demonstrates. In Herodotus' account, however, Iphigenia is not said to have carried out sacrifices among the Taurians: instead, she is the deity to whom the Taurian people sacrifice any Greeks who happen to have washed up on the shore (τὴν δὲ δαίμονα ταύτην τῇ θύουσι λέγουσι αὐτοὶ Ταῦροι Ἰφιγένειαν τὴν Ἀγαμέμνονος εἶναι, 4.103). There is one other play which we know about which may have focused on the aftermath of the siblings' escape from the Taurians. This is Sophocles' *Chryses* (fr. 726-29 *TrGF* Radt). The play possibly depicted the events which occurred after Orestes and Iphigenia fled from the north with the statue of Artemis in tow and Thoas in pursuit. But even if we accept that Sophocles' play focused on this later stage of the escape – and the fragmentary remains we have do not make the events of the plot at all clear – the action is certainly not set in the far-off land of the Taurians.²⁴ The precise location of this territory was itself a matter of dispute in the fifth century, though it seemed to be located somewhere towards the north-eastern edges of the known world, with the Taurians themselves conceived of as a sort of 'semi-mythical' race.²⁵ This setting is certainly unusual, if not unique, for a tragedy, as is the placement of both Iphigenia *and* Orestes in

²⁴ The Roman Republican tragedian Pacuvius produced a play entitled *Chryses* which may be based on the plot of Sophocles' *Chryses* (see Warmington 1936: 192-209). Its remaining fragments suggest that the plot follows the version of the story concerning the aftermath of Iphigenia and Orestes' escape which is related by Hyginus (*Fabulae* 120-21). He tells us that after fleeing from the Taurian land with the Artemis statue, the siblings arrive at Sminthe (location unknown, but probably in the Troad), where Chryses, the child of Agamemnon and Chryseis, helps his newly-discovered half-brother Orestes to kill the pursuing Taurians. Iphigenia, Orestes and Chryses then go to Mycenae together with the statue of Artemis. On this version of the myth and its possible relation to Sophocles' *Chryses*, as well as other possible versions of the story involving Chryses, Orestes and Iphigenia, see Lloyd-Jones (1996) 340-43. Wilamowitz (1883) 257-58 is sceptical about any close relationship between Sophocles' *Chryses* and Pacuvius' play; cf. Slater (2000) 315-16, who notes the uncertainty surrounding the connection between the summary found in Hyginus' *Fabulae* and the play: he suggests that Pacuvius is more likely to have imitated or adapted a Euripidean plot than a Sophoclean one. There is a probable allusion to Sophocles' *Chryses* in Aristophanes' *Birds* (see Σ ad. *Birds* 1240), which would provide a *terminus ante quem* of 414 BCE for Sophocles' play, and suggests that his *Chryses* predates Euripides' c. 414 *IT* (see p. 146 n. 21 above on the dating of that play), although see Marshall (2009) 141-56 for a re-assessment of the primacy of Sophocles' play and the date of *IT*.

²⁵ See especially Hall (1987) 427-33 on Euripides' conception of the location of the Taurians in *IT*. On ancient confusion over the identity and location of the Taurians, see Cropp (2000) 48 and Hall (2012) 66.

the Taurian land. In fact, it is highly probable that Orestes' rescue of his sister and the Artemis statue is a mythical innovation on the part of Euripides, who seems to combine accounts of Iphigenia's escape from Aulis and removal to the far north-eastern edges of the world with Orestes' famous wanderings in order to depict a novel and unexpected familial recognition in an unfamiliar setting.²⁶

The question of the novelty of myth and of the general reliability of the mythical tradition – in both its previous incarnations in the poetry of the past, and in its present Euripidean form – becomes one of *IT*'s most pressing and self-conscious concerns. Euripides lays the groundwork of this incessant questioning from the play's first word: Πέλωψ. Putting the name of Iphigenia's somewhat dubious ancestor into her mouth as her very first word is not a thoughtless detail on Euripides' part. Throughout the play Pelops' grisly fate at the hands of his father Tantalus, as well as his own sometimes morally questionable actions, are repeatedly called to mind with special reference to Iphigenia's own position as a Tantalid who also now has a very special connection to human sacrifice, since Pelops' past parallels Iphigenia's own situation in one main way: both were involved in a form of failed sacrifice at the hands of their own fathers.²⁷ The importance of Pelops for Iphigenia's own thinking about her unexpected position in the Taurian land is made clear not long after the prologue. Here Iphigenia ponders the supposed fate of her ancestor by questioning the received accounts of the mythical tradition concerning Tantalus' gory banquet for the gods (380-91):

²⁶ See e.g. Wright (2005) 113-15, O'Brien (1988) 98, Zeitlin (2011) 451, Burnett (1971) 48, 73-75 on Euripides' probable mythical innovations in *IT*.

²⁷ The significance of Pelops in *IT* is generally acknowledged, but the degree to which he can be seen as a model for any single character in particular is debated. Unlike Sansone (1975) and O'Brien (1988), Kyriakou (2006) denies that there is an overall similarity between the escape plot of *IT* and the escape of Pelops and Hippodameia from Oenomaus, but agrees that there is an affinity between Iphigenia and Pelops in particular throughout the play, since his connection to (potentially failed) sacrifices is strong (see esp. 12-13, 276); cf. also Hartigan (1991) 90.

τὰ τῆς θεοῦ δὲ μέφομαι σοφίσματα,
 ἥτις βροτῶν μὲν ἢν τις ἄψηται φόνου
 ἢ καὶ λοχείας ἢ νεκροῦ θίγηι χεροῖν
 βωμῶν ἀπείργει, μυσαρὸν ὥς ἡγουμένη,
 αὐτὴ δὲ θυσίαις ἥδεται βροτοκτόνοις.
 οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως ἔτεκεν ἄν ἡ Διὸς δάμαρ
 Λητῶ τοσαύτην ἀμαθίαν. ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν
 τὰ Ταντάλου θεοῖσιν ἐστιάματα
 ἄπιστα κρίνω, παιδὸς ἡσθῆναι βορᾷ,
 τοὺς δ' ἐνθάδ', αὐτοὺς ὄντας ἀνθρωποκτόνους,
 ἐς τὴν θεὸν τὸ φαῦλον ἀναφέρειν δοκῶ.
 οὐδένα γὰρ οἶμαι δαιμόνων εἶναι κακόν.

But I censure the clever contrivances of the goddess. For any mortal who has come into contact with slaughter or who touches childbirth or a corpse with his hand, she [i.e. Artemis] keeps away from her altars, thinking that he is polluted. But she herself delights in man-slaying sacrifices! It is not possible that Leto, the consort of Zeus, gave birth to such great stupidity. But no: Tantalus' banquet for the gods, that they enjoyed eating a child – that I judge to be unbelievable. Instead I think that the people who live here, who are themselves man-slaughters, attribute their own low deed to the goddess. For I believe that no god is wicked.

This moment is a crucial one in the action of *IT*, since Iphigenia has been informed of the arrival of Greek strangers on the shore and is beginning to steel herself for her part in the sacrifice, unaware that her brother is among those newly-arrived men. In this passage Iphigenia refuses to ascribe a lust for human sacrifice to the goddess Artemis herself, blaming instead the bloodthirsty Taurians for the supposed necessity of the planned slaughter. A key part of Iphigenia's argument about the nature of Artemis is that the story of the feast served to the gods by her ancestor Tantalus is not to be believed. The thrust of Iphigenia's argument seems to be that Artemis cannot be desirous of human sacrifices from the Taurians because the human sacrifice element of the Tantalus episode itself cannot have happened. These lines, however, have long raised questions over what precisely it is in the Tantalus episode which Iphigenia is judging to be incredible. Is she denying that Tantalus' feast ever took place? Or that even if the feast did take place, the gods certainly did not eat Pelops? Or that even if the feast took place, and the gods ate

Pelops, they did not enjoy it?²⁸ Iphigenia's declaration at this point in *IT* has a very specific antecedent which is also concerned with this supposed failed sacrifice: Pindar's first *Olympian*.²⁹ The use of the word ἄπιστα at *IT* 388 with reference to the feast of Tantalus specifically recalls lines 25-40 of Pindar's poem, where the well-known account of Tantalus' crime is completely rejected, first with the seeming denial of Pelops' dismemberment and subsequent acquisition of an ivory shoulder as something untrue (28-29):

ἦ θαύματα πολλά, καὶ πού τι καὶ βροτῶν
φάτις ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθῆ λόγον
δεδαιδαλμένοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις
ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι.

Yes, truly, marvels are many, and even, I suppose, what mortals say too
(that is, stories elaborated above the true account with variegated lies)
deceives us.

Pindar goes on to claim that *Charis* (Grace), is the specific cause that makes the unbelievable believable in such cases (30-35):

Χάρις δ', ἅπερ ἅπαντα τεύχει τὰ μείλιχα θνατοῖς,
ἐπιφέρεισα τιμὰν καὶ ἄπιστον ἐμήσατο πιστόν
ἔμμεναι τὸ πολλάκις·
ἀμέραι δ' ἐπίλοιποι μάρτυρες σοφώτατοι.
ἔστι δ' ἀνδρὶ φάμεν εἰκόδς ἀμφὶ δαι-
μόνων καλά· μείων γὰρ αἰτία.

But Grace, who fashions all gentle things for mortal men, through bestowing honour, contrives to make even the unbelievable believable most of the time. But future days are wisest witnesses. It is right for a man to speak well of the gods: the blame is less.

²⁸ Burnett (1971) 63-64 sees this as a simple case of Iphigenia clearing Tantalus' name "with her explicit repudiation of his banquet", but there is more ambiguity involved than this. For the various possible interpretations of these lines see Sansone (1975) 288-89 and Kyriakou (2006) 143-45.

²⁹ Platnauer (1938) 93 notes that *Ol*.35 ff. is a relevant comparison here, while Whitman (1974) 10 goes further and suggests that *IT* 380-391 contains an "echo of Pindar's First *Olympian* Ode". Wolff (1992) 310 n.5 and Parker (2016) 142-43 suggest that Iphigenia's version here explicitly recalls Pindar's *Ol*.36-53.

After this, Pindar purports to present the true version of the myth – one which does not attribute the evil of eating human flesh to the gods (36-40):

υἱὲ Ταντάλου, σὲ δ' ἀντία προτέρων φθέγξομαι,
ὅπότε' ἐκάλεσε πατὴρ τὸν εὐνομώτατον
ἔς ἔρانون φίλαν τε Σίπυλον,
ἀμοιβαῖα θεοῖσι δεῖπνα παρέχων,
τότ' Ἀγλαοτρίαιναν ἀρπάσαι

Son of Tantalus, contrary to tradition I will say of you that when your father invited the gods to that most well-ordered feast and to his dear Sipylus, providing to the gods a feast in return for previous hospitality, then the god with the shining trident seized you ...

In *IT*, Iphigenia's rejection of the report of Tantalus' feast echoes Pindar's reluctance to attribute deeds to the gods which may force him to speak ill of them. Furthermore, Pindar's rejection of the well-known version of Pelops' fate anticipates Euripides' own practice in this play: previous versions of myth are rejected because of their potential to cause wonder and thereby provoke questions of belief and disbelief, while innovative new versions of mythic stories which seem in some sense to correct the previously dominant versions are presented as authoritative and truthful. Although it seems that wonder is an obvious response to the more unbelievable aspects of a given mythical story, there is also a suggestion – both in *Olympian* 1 and in *IT* – that even the seemingly believable version of any given account only succeeds in substituting wonders of its own for the discredited wonders of the previous, rejected variant of the tale.³⁰ It is this potentially problematic aspect of mythic discourse which Euripides thrusts into the spotlight in the recognition scene of *IT* in a starker form than in any other scene in his surviving plays.

³⁰ On the way in which the version of Pelops' story favoured by Pindar can itself be viewed only as a different type of *thauma* as opposed to a complete banishment of the thaumatic see Howie (1983) 190 and Bundy (1986) 9.

3. Wonders Beyond *Mythoi*: Recognition and *Thauma* in *IT*

The prolonged and surprising recognition scene which follows in *IT* (636-901) goes on to reinforce this sense that the supposed ‘real world’ of the action presented in the theatre is just as wondrous and unbelievable as the version of Pelops’ story which Iphigenia objected to so vehemently earlier in the play. In antiquity, the recognition scene of *IT* was particularly admired by Aristotle. In the *Poetics* the philosopher seems to pick up on the fact that the play is dominated by Euripides’ complicated handling of the recognition theme: he repeatedly holds Euripides’ play up as one of the two tragedies which deserve to be admired most for their treatment and handling of tragic *anagnōrisis* (the other being Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus*).³¹ Aristotle’s liking for *IT*’s treatment of recognition is related to the sheer length of the emotionally heightened scene between the siblings, in which two separate recognitions are portrayed in two separate ways. Orestes first realises that the Greek-speaking priestess on the Taurian shore is actually his sister after a letter is read out loud, a device which Aristotle thought especially skilful and wonder-inducing since Euripides manages to insert this recognition token naturally into the plot.³²

³¹ See *Poetics* 1455a16-21; cf. 1452a32-1452b7 and 1454a3-7. Modern critics and scholars have tended to lavish more attention on Aristotle’s admiration for Sophocles’ *OT*, and have tended to neglect his praise for *IT* in line with general critical responses to both plays: see Belfiore (1992) 359-77 on the reasons for Aristotle’s intense interest in *IT*, despite the play’s relative lack of appeal to modern critics and audiences. Cf. also White (1992) 221-40 on the ethical dimensions of both *OT* and *IT* which led to these two particular plays being held up as Aristotle’s favourite tragedies in the *Poetics*.

³² This is the ‘best’ type of recognition according to Aristotle (*Poetics* 1455a16-19), since the *ekplēxis* arises from the natural and probable sequence of the plot, rather than being artificially contrived and inserted into the plot through recognition tokens which serve no other purpose (see the discussion of this passage above pp. 143-44 n. 14). Cf. Aristotle’s general preference for tragic plots which generate *thauma* from unexpected events that nevertheless seem to have occurred due to design or probable sequence, such as when the statue of Mitys falls by chance but nevertheless kills Mitys’ murderer, as if by design: ὁ γὰρ θαυμαστόν οὕτως ἔξει μᾶλλον ἢ εἰ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου καὶ τῆς τύχης, ἐπεὶ καὶ τῶν ἀπὸ τύχης ταῦτα θαυμασιώτατα δοκεῖ ὅσα ὥσπερ ἐπίτηδες φαίνεται γεγονέναι, οἷον ὡς ὁ ἀνδριάς ὁ τοῦ Μίτυος ἐν Ἀργεὶ ἀπέκτεινεν τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ θανάτου τῷ Μίτυι, θεωροῦντι ἐμπροσθέν· ἔοικε γὰρ τὰ τοιαῦτα οὐκ εἰκῇ γίνεσθαι· ὥστε ἀνάγκη τοὺς τοιοῦτους εἶναι καλλίους μύθους, *Poetics* 1452a5-11.

Iphigenia then comes, by alternate means, to realise that one of the shipwrecked Greek travellers is in fact her own brother when she questions Orestes about items relating to their youth in Argos about which only her brother could know (798-26), culminating with a final piece of information relating to the siblings' grandfather Pelops which forces Iphigenia to believe what initially seemed to be unbelievable.

Orestes' recognition of his sister begins to take shape from line 636 onwards. After learning from a conversation between Orestes and Pylades that her brother is actually alive, Iphigenia, not realising that Orestes is one of the two strangers in front of her, decides to send a writing-tablet home to Argos, where she thinks he is now located. Orestes and Pylades realise who Iphigenia is after she returns with the writing tablet and decides to recite its contents aloud for the two strangers to hear and remember as a precaution in case of the physical loss of the tablet and its message on the long sea journey home (759-87). Orestes' initial recognition of his sister emphasises the wonder and disbelief which this realisation causes (793-97):

δέχομαι· παρείς δὲ γραμμάτων διαπτυχὰς
τὴν ἡδονὴν πρῶτ' οὐ λόγοις αἰρήσομαι.
ὦ φιλότατη μοι σύγγον', ἐκπεπληγμένος
ὅμως σ' ἀπίστωι περιβαλὼν βραχίονι
ἐς τέρψιν εἶμι, πυθόμενος θαυμάστ' ἐμοί.

I accept it. But leaving aside the folding leaves of the letter I shall choose first pleasure without words. O sister dearest to me, though I am astonished, nevertheless, embracing you with disbelieving arm, I shall come to delight, having learnt things which are wondrous to me.

The utter astonishment which Orestes feels on the recognition of a familiar relative in an unfamiliar location is soon paralleled by Iphigenia's own response once she overcomes her disbelief and accepts that the Greek stranger who has washed up on the Taurian shore is actually her brother. But before Iphigenia can come to recognise that this is the case,

an elaborately-structured stichomythia takes place in which Pelops, the relative whose situation most closely echoes Iphigenia's own circumstances, plays a crucial part (806-809):

Ιφ. ἀλλ' ἡ Λάκαινα Τυνδαρίς σ' ἐγείνατο;
Ορ. Πέλοπός γε παιδὶ παιδός, οὗ 'κπέφυκ' ἐγώ.
Ιφ. τί φήεις; ἔχεις τι τῶνδ' ἐμοὶ τεκμήριον;
Ορ. ἔχω· πατρώων ἐκ δόμων τι πυνθάνου.

Iphigenia: But did the Spartan woman, the daughter of Tyndareus, bear you?
Orestes: Indeed she did: to the child of Pelops' child, whose son I am.
Iphigenia: What are you saying? Do you have some proof of this for me?
Orestes: I have it. Inquire about something from our father's house.

The first two proofs – the story of the golden ram of Atreus and Thyestes told through Iphigenia's weaving, and the report of Iphigenia's Aulis bath and the removal of a lock of hair – are known to Orestes through hearsay alone from his other sister Electra (λέγουμ' ἂν ἀκοῇ πρῶτον Ἥλέκτρας τάδε, 811).³³ The third piece of evidence – the one which actually clinches the successful recognition – is the only one which is thoroughly autoptic, and thereby presumably more reliable, than the rest (822-26):

ἃ δ' εἶδον αὐτός, τάδε φράσω τεκμήρια·
Πέλοπος παλαιὰν ἐν δόμοις λόγχην πατρός,
ἣν χερσὶ πάλλων παρθένον Πισάτιδα
ἐκτήσαθ' Ἴπποδάμειαν, Οἰνόμαον κτανών,
ἐν παρθενῶσι τοῖσι σοῖς κεκρυμμένην.

But the things which I myself have seen, these proofs I will tell to you: [I have seen] hidden in your maiden bedroom the ancient spear of Pelops in the house of our father, the one which he brandished in his hands when he obtained the maiden from Pisa, Hippodameia, killing Oenomaus.

³³ See Cropp (2000) 222 and Torrance (2013) 39-43 on the relation of the recognition-scene in *IT* to its Aeschylean predecessors.

The link between Iphigenia and Pelops is thus strengthened yet again by the mention of this important ancestral object, which simultaneously becomes a catalyst for the realisation that the two siblings are intimately connected, despite the previous distance which existed between them. Moreover, this final moment of recognition involving Pelops' spear leads to a recapitulation of the themes surrounding Iphigenia's discussion of the possibility of Tantalus' banquet for the gods, with the link between the unbelievable 'myth' and *thauma* once again highlighted. The idea that the wonder created by the recognition transgresses the very boundaries of what can be said in words is picked up again by Iphigenia's response at the moment she recognises her brother (838-40):

ὦ κρεῖττον ἢ λόγοισιν εὐτυχοῦσά μου
 ψυχά, τί φῶ; θαυμάτων
 πέρα καὶ λόγου πρόσω τάδ' ἀπέβα.

O my soul, more good-fortuned than words can
 tell! What shall I say? Beyond wonders and
 beyond words these events have turned out!

These words echo Orestes' recognition, cited in full above (793-97). The importance of the meeting's unexpected geographical location helps to create an additional sense of wonder at the moment of *anagnōrisis*. Throughout *IT*, Euripides plays with familiar tropes of recognition in unfamiliar geographical locations to probe the nature and boundaries of *thauma* and its relation to belief and disbelief.³⁴ The traditional antitheses between familiar, unremarkable objects or events, and unfamiliar, wonder-inducing objects or events are continually inverted. The importance of the language of *thauma* to the impact of the recognition scene is further reinforced by the very end of the siblings'

³⁴ See further Budelmann (forthcoming) on the language of (dis)belief in relation to *thauma* in *IT*.

reunion, where we find the chorus offering a brief comment which picks up on the language used by Orestes and Iphigenia throughout the recognition-scene (900-901):

ἐν τοῖσι θαυμαστοῖσι καὶ μύθων πέρα
τάδ' εἶδον αὐτὴ κοῦ κλύουσ' ἀπ' ἀγγέλων.

These events are wonders and beyond myths! And I
myself have seen them, rather than hearing them from
messengers!

The emphasis on the fact that these sights have really been seen by the chorus and not only heard by report (τάδ' εἶδον αὐτὴ κοῦ κλύουσ') has a further resonance here, as it reflects the audience's own experience of having witnessed the recognition scene immediately beforehand. The audience's response is also reflected at the end of the play in the reaction of Thoas, the hostile barbarian king of the Taurians, to the escape of Iphigenia and Orestes (1317-24):

Θο. πῶς φήεις; τί πνεῦμα συμφορᾶς κεκτημένη;
Αγ. σώϊζουσ' Ὀρέστην· τοῦτο γὰρ σὺ θαυμάσῃ.
Θο. τὸν ποῖον; ἄρ' ὃν Τυνδαρίς τίττει κόρη;
Αγ. ὃν τοῖσδε βωμοῖς θεὰ καθωσιώσατο.
Θο. ὦ θαῦμα· πῶς σε μείζον ὀνομάσας τύχω;
Αγ. μὴ 'νταῦθα τρέψῃς σὴν φρέν', ἀλλ' ἄκουέ μου·
σαφῶς δ' ἀθρήσας καὶ κλύων ἐκφρόντισον
διωγμὸν ὅστις τοὺς ξένους θηράσεται.

Thoas: What are you saying? What favourable gust of good luck did she obtain?

Messenger: She was rescuing Orestes. You will wonder at that!

Thoas: What Orestes? The one the daughter of Tyndareus bore?

Messenger: The one whom the goddess consecrated for herself at these altars.

Thoas: O wonder! How can I call you by a greater name and hit the mark?³⁵

³⁵ Line 1321 has long troubled commentators uncomfortable with the idea of a vocative address to *thauma*. See Diggle (1981b) 89-91 for possible emendations, and Kyriakou (2006) 418-19 for a good summary of the various interpretations of this line. Markland's suggestion that μείζον should read μείον is defended by Diggle but rightly rejected by Cropp (1997: 40-41 and 2000: 254), who notes that the rhetorical point of this question is the suggestion that the very term and concept of wonder is insufficient to express the enormity of the events just described and witnessed in the theatre. Cf. Parker (2016) 322-23 for discussion of reasons why this vocative address to θαῦμα should be maintained.

Messenger: Don't turn your mind in that direction: listen to me instead!
After observing clearly and hearing think out a means of pursuit
to hunt down the strangers.

The chorus' final judgement that the recognitions which they have just witnessed are 'beyond wonders', and Thoas' astonished response to the improbable events which have just taken place before his eyes, both raise questions about what the appropriate response to the mimetic power of drama – and to mythical stories in general – should be. Throughout *IT*, the antitheses between familiar, unremarkable objects or events and unfamiliar, wonder-inducing objects or events are thus continually inverted as Euripides plays with familiar tropes of recognition in unfamiliar geographical locations to probe this issue metapoetically in relation to the power of tragic *thauma* on the audience of the theatre itself.

4. Marvels at the Centre: Delphi, Athens and *Thauma* in Euripides' *Ion*

In the action of Euripides' *Ion* *thauma* is similarly presented as a natural reaction to the inversion of the familiar and the unfamiliar. In stark contrast to *IT*, *Ion* is set at the very centre of the Hellenic world: the *omphalos* at Delphi. Throughout the action there is a constant interplay between Delphi and the location which would have seemed closest of all to the original audience: Athens. As the play draws on, each location appears to be sometimes near at hand, sometimes distant.³⁶ By the end of the play the manipulation of the near and the far exposes the uncanny familiarity of unexpected events right at the centre of the world. *Thauma* is again manipulated by Euripides in ways which intertwine with this dynamic. The centrality of this interplay between near and far is made most clear

³⁶ On the constant interplay between the words ἐκεῖ and ἐνθάδε in the play (e.g. at 24, 251, 384-45, 645, 1278) see Loraux (1990) 177; on the near/far dynamic and its connection to Athens and Delphi see Zacharia (2003) 22 and Griffiths (2017) 236.

by Ion's response to his unexpected recognition of Xouthos, who claims (falsely) to be his father (585-86):

οὐ ταὐτὸν εἶδος φαίνεται τῶν πραγμάτων
πρόσωθεν ὄντων ἐγγύθεν θ' ὁρωμένων.

The appearance of things at a distance is not the same as when
they are seen close up.

These words – which anticipate later Platonic conceptions of the relationship between *thauma* and perspective, as I will demonstrate in a later chapter – have been taken as a programmatic statement about the action of the play as a whole.³⁷ Certainly, this antithesis between the near and the far becomes one of the central structuring principles of *Ion*. In some respects the unique position of Delphi at centre of the world suggests that the appearance of unfamiliar marvels in this location is unlikely if the customary geographical expectation that the further away from the Greek centre one travels, the more likely one is to encounter *thaumata* is adhered to rigidly. But in another, more paradoxical sense, the idea of Delphi as the rightful domain of the marvellous is not as bizarre as it might at first seem: its very status as the dead centre of the entire known world lends it a remarkable power of its own, symbolised not least by the wondrous nature of the *omphalos* itself – as Hesiod had already made clear with his description of the placement of the Delphic stone itself as a ‘wonder for mortal men’ (θαῦμα θνητοῖσι βροτοῖσι, *Theog.* 500).

Ion's two lengthy ekphrases reinforce the sense that in this play wonders lurk at the very centre of the world as opposed to the edges of the earth. The first ekphrasis (184-218) consists of the chorus' description of the images on the temple at Delphi. Despite

³⁷ See Lee (1997) 226 on the programmatic nature of this statement. See chapter seven pp. 244-48 for discussion of Platonic configurations of this sentiment and its connection with *thauma* and its effects.

the familiarity of the images the chorus is viewing, the recognition of these scenes is still able to provoke a marvelling response (190-200):

ἰδοῦ, τᾷδ' ἄθρησον·
Λερναῖον ὕδραν ἐναίρει
χρυσέαις ἄρπαις ὁ Διὸς παῖς·
φίλα, πρόσιδ' ὅσσοις.

ὁρῶ. καὶ πέλας ἄλλος αὐ-
τοῦ πανὸν πυρίφλεκτον αἴ-
ρει τις· ἄρ' ὅς ἐμαῖσι μυ-
θεύεται παρὰ πῆναις,
ἀσπιστὰς Ἰόλαος, ὅς
κοινοὺς αἰρόμενος πόνους
Δίῳ παιδὶ συναντλεῖ;

Look, observe this! The son of Zeus slays the Lernaian hydra with a golden sickle. Friend, look over here with your eyes.

I see. And near him another man raises a torch blazing with fire. Is it the man whose story is told at my loom, the shield-fighter Iolaus, who takes up common labours with the son of Zeus and endures them with him to the bitter end?

There are striking similarities between the chorus' viewing of the temple at the beginning of the play, and the later ekphrasis of the tent adorned with *thaumata* which Ion constructs, and within which he almost meets his end at his own mother's hands (1141-45):

λαβὼν δ' ὑφάσμαθ' ἱερὰ θησαυρῶν πάρα
κατεσκίαζε, θαύματ' ἀνθρώποις ὁρᾶν.
πρῶτον μὲν ὀρόφῳ πτέρυγα περιβάλλει πέπλων,
ἀνάθημα Δίου παιδός, οὗς Ἡρακλῆς
Ἀμαζόνων σκυλεύματ' ἤνεγκεν θεῶι.

And after taking the sacred tapestries from the storeroom he began to spread them as coverings, marvels for men to see. First he threw over a covering of robes as a roof, an offering from Zeus' son, which Heracles offered to the god as spoils from the Amazons.

The constant focus throughout the play on external, monstrous dangers points out the irony of Ion's real situation: that it is not dangers from without which are a threat to him, but his own family. In fact, it is the failure to recognise what is truly familiar which motivates the central action of the play.³⁸

On the other hand, although Ion and Creusa do not explicitly recognise each other immediately, there are hints of an uncanny feeling of kinship from their very first meeting. The opening interaction between them reveals an implicit relationship between the two in a way which is completely lacking in Ion's meetings with Xouthos. For Ion, his Athenian mother is immediately an object of wonder who is able to catch his attention. This is apparent at 247-48 when Ion is astonished by Creousa's tears, which for her shows his good upbringing:

ὦ ξένε, τὸ μὲν σὸν οὐκ ἀπαιδεύτως ἔχει
ἐς θαύματ' ἐλθεῖν δακρύων ἐμῶν πέρι·

O stranger, your behaviour – this coming to wonder at my tears –
shows that you are not uneducated.

In contrast to Ion's cold and non-committal response to the revelation that Xouthos is his supposed father, mother and son seem to share an immediate concern for one another, suggesting elements of a wondrous subconscious *anagnōrisis*.³⁹ On closer inspection, we find that throughout *Ion* the distant is much closer than it might at first glance seem.

One other strand of imagery contributes powerfully to *Ion*'s way of representing the multiple intersections between the near and the far, the familiar and the unfamiliar. Birds, always potential signifiers of the ability to travel to distant places, take on a

³⁸ See Lee (1997) 22; cf. Danek (2001) 55.

³⁹ Lee (1997) 187. See also lines 262-63, where Creousa's Athenian lineage fills Ion with an immediate sense of respect and awe (ὦ κλεινὸν οἰκοῦσ' ἄστὺ γενναίων τ' ἄπο | τραφεῖσα πατέρων, ὥς σε θαυμάζω, γύναι).

particular significance in relation to Ion himself.⁴⁰ Ion mentions three birds during his temple-cleaning monody: first an eagle, which he terms ‘messenger of Zeus’ (ὦ Ζηνὸς | κῆρυξ, 158-9), then a swan (κύκνος, 162), and finally a more ambiguous ‘new bird’ (ὀρνίθων καινός, 171). Here then at the beginning of the play we find a mixture of familiar and unfamiliar birds which cause the first of a series of unexpected avian intrusions into the play’s action – intrusions which will eventually culminate in the recognition of mother and son.⁴¹ The connection between bird imagery and Ion is strengthened when Ion himself is described as a ‘new son’ (ὁ καινός ... γόνος) (1202) at the point towards the end of the play where we find bird imagery returning most explicitly. The unwanted avian incursions into the temple precinct during Ion’s temple-cleaning monody prefigure the paradoxically welcome intrusion of a dove, which saves Ion from certain death by preventing him from drinking poison, at the play’s climax (1202-1206):

ἦ δ’ ἔζετ’ ἔνθ’ ὁ καινὸς ἔσπεισεν γόνος
 ποτοῦ τ’ ἐγεύσατ’ εὐθὺς εὐπτερον δέμας
 ἔσεισε κάβάκχευσεν, ἐκ δ’ ἐκλαγξ’ ὅπα
 ἀξύνετον αἰάζουσ’· ἐθάμβησεν δὲ πᾶς
 θοινατόρων ὄμιλος ὄρνιθος πόνους.

But the bird landed where the new son had made a libation, and tasted the drink: immediately it shook its fair-winged body and became frenzied like a Bacchant, and wailing, it screeched out a voice hard to interpret. And the whole gathering of feasters wondered at the sufferings of the bird.

The wonder of the assembled crowd at the monstrous images of Ion’s tent is transmuted into astonishment (θάμβησεν δὲ πᾶς, 1205) at the monstrous fate which overcomes the bird, a symbol of Ion himself, though the fact that the recognition of mother and son

⁴⁰ Cf. Giraud (1987) 84 and Zeitlin (1989) 144 on the strong connections between Ion and birds in this play; see also Hoffer (1996) 297-99, Griffiths (2017) 238 on the significance of birds and bird imagery throughout the play.

⁴¹ See Lee (1997) 174 on *Ion*’s multiple “surprising intrusions”.

succeeds without disaster soon after this moment soon becomes the most wondrous aspect of the play as a whole.

In both *Ion* and *IT*, Euripides inverts the antithesis between the near and the far to establish the wonder of the familiar as a category of experience which forces his characters – and the audience – to question their most basic and deeply-held assumptions. The displacement of the familiar into unusual contexts can also have new and unexpected effects. This idea, namely that wonder can be something found near at hand, becomes particularly important when the concept of recognition is considered. Whereas the astonishment provoked by the distant often entails complete ignorance of the object provoking wonder, the wonder of the familiar often involves a recovery of knowledge, a recognition that in itself is able to provoke an often disconcerting sense of wonder due to the uncanny closeness of the object of wonder to its subject. Rather than associating *thauma* with the unusual or the unfamiliar, in this play we see a radically different conception of what the wondrous might be: the ordinary as well as the extraordinary, the familiar as well as the unfamiliar. This type of *thauma*, based on the unexpected mutual entwining of near and far, holds just as much potential to surprise, delight, or disturb, as the next chapter will demonstrate.⁴²

⁴² Cf. Daston and Park (1998) 311 and Kareem (2014) 55 on the importance of viewing wonder not only as something associated with the unfamiliar, but as (in Kareem's words) "a category within the aesthetics of ordinary experiences".

Chapter Five

Near and Distant Marvels: Defamiliarising and Refamiliarising *Thauma*

ὥσπερ γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς ξένους οἱ ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρὸς τοὺς πολίτας, τὸ αὐτὸ πάσχουσιν καὶ πρὸς τὴν λέξιν· διὸ δεῖ ποιεῖν ξένην τὴν διάλεκτον· θαυμάσται γὰρ τῶν ἀπόντων εἰσίν, ἡδὺ δὲ τὸ θαυμαστόν ἐστιν. ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τῶν μέτρων πολλὰ τε ποιεῖται οὕτω καὶ ἀρμόττει ἐκεῖ· πλέον γὰρ ἐξέστηκεν περὶ ᾧ καὶ περὶ οὗς ὁ λόγος· ἐν δὲ τοῖς ψιλοῖς λόγοις πολλῷ ἐλάττω.

Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1404b8-14

For just as men are affected in a certain way by strangers and in a certain way by their fellow-citizens, they are affected in the same way by verbal style. Therefore it is necessary to make language ‘strange’: for people are wonderers at things which are distant, and the wondrous is pleasurable. In cases of verse, many things produce this effect and it suits that medium: for the things and people found in that discourse are more out of the ordinary. In prose this is true to a much lesser extent.

In his discussion of appropriate rhetorical style (*lexis*) in the third book of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle sets forth a claim about the nature of effective rhetorical speech which will go on to reverberate through the subsequent literary critical tradition. He suggests that the task of the effective speaker is to make what is familiar to the listener appear somehow strange, unfamiliar and wondrous again. This claim makes one shift which takes place over the course of the fifth century BCE abundantly clear: *thauma* is no longer necessarily aroused by an externally visible physical object, event or action, but is now often a response to the effects of *language* alone. By the time that Aristotle composes the

Rhetoric in the latter half of the fourth century BCE, the conceptualisation of speech as something able to cause wonder has become concrete.¹

In the above passage Aristotle uses a simile to explain the effect which he expects successful rhetorical style to provoke. He describes the sense of wonder created when language is ‘made strange’ as akin to that felt in the presence of a foreigner from far away, a feeling which differs greatly from that experienced in the presence of a fellow citizen. Aristotle then goes on to suggest that one of the primary means of making everyday language strange, pleasurable and wondrous is through the use of metaphor (καὶ τὸ σαφὲς καὶ τὸ ἥδὺ καὶ τὸ ξενικὸν ἔχει μάλιστα ἢ μεταφορά, 1405a8-9).² In the first book of the *Rhetoric* Aristotle claims that both learning and wondering are pleasurable, that wondering at something implies a desire to learn, and that all things connected to learning and wondering, such as mimetic representations which we can learn from, are inherently pleasurable (καὶ τὸ μανθάνειν καὶ τὸ θαυμάζειν ἥδὺ ὥς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ· ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῷ θαυμάζειν τὸ ἐπιθυμεῖν μαθεῖν ἐστίν, ὥστε τὸ θαυμαστὸν ἐπιθυμητόν ... ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸ μανθάνειν τε ἥδὺ καὶ τὸ θαυμάζειν, καὶ τὰ τοιάδε ἀνάγκη ἡδέα εἶναι, οἷον τό τε μιμούμενον, ὥσπερ γραφικὴ καὶ ἀνδριαντοποιία καὶ ποιητικὴ, καὶ πᾶν ὃ ἂν εὔμεμιμημένον ᾗ, καὶ ἢ μὴ ἥδὺ αὐτὸ τὸ μεμιμημένον, 1371a31-b8).³ He posits a similar idea at *Poetics* 1448b when he suggests that mimetic objects are pleasurable to contemplate even if the objects they depict are inherently unpleasant. The reason Aristotle gives for this observation is that learning is always pleasurable, for philosophers and lay people alike, because it involves processes of inference and recognition of what each

¹ The treatise has been dated to 340-35 BCE since the latest historical events alluded to in this work fall in this period, though it is likely that Aristotle re-worked his ideas about rhetoric over a longer period of time (see Kennedy (1991) 299-305).

² See Moran (1996) 387-89 on the importance of the connection between strangeness and wonder here in light of Aristotle’s subsequent argument in the *Rhetoric*.

³ For a detailed discussion of the interrelationships between pleasure, learning, wonder and recognition in Aristotle’s thought (especially in the *Poetics*) see Halliwell (1986) 73-81. Cf. Warren (2014) 67-77 on the connections between learning, pleasure and *thauma* at *Rhet.* 1371a, *Poet.* 1448b and *Part. an.* 644b.

element of something (e.g. an image) means (αἴτιον δὲ καὶ τούτου, ὅτι μανθάνειν οὐ μόνον τοῖς φιλοσόφοις ἥδιστον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὁμοίως, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ βραχὺ κοινωνοῦσιν αὐτοῦ. διὰ γὰρ τοῦτο χαίρουσι τὰς εἰκόνας ὁρῶντες, ὅτι συμβαίνει θεωροῦντας μανθάνειν καὶ συλλογίζεσθαι τί ἕκαστον, οἷον ὅτι οὗτος ἐκεῖνος, 1448b12-17).

Later in book three of the *Rhetoric*, he claims that metaphor is itself pleasurable precisely because it produces learning (τὸ γὰρ μανθάνειν ῥαδίως ἢ δὴ φύσει πᾶσιν ἐστί, τὰ δὲ ὀνόματα σημαίνει τι, ὥστε ὅσα τῶν ὀνομάτων ποιεῖ ἡμῖν μάθησιν, ἥδιστα. αἱ μὲν οὖν γλῶτται ἀγνώτες, τὰ δὲ κύρια ἴσμεν· ἡ δὲ μεταφορὰ ποιεῖ τοῦτο μάλιστα, 1410b10-13). This learning stems from metaphor's ability to elucidate similarities between previously disparate objects which have never been compared in this way before, and its power to encourage the recognition of the familiar within the unfamiliar.⁴ This is not too dissimilar from the process of recognising similarities and connections which Aristotle considers to be essential to the practice of philosophising in general (δεῖ δὲ μεταφέρειν, καθάπερ εἴρηται πρότερον, ἀπὸ οἰκείων καὶ μὴ φανερῶν, οἷον καὶ ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ τὸ ὅμοιον καὶ ἐν πολὺ διέχουσι θεωρεῖν εὐστόχου, *Rhetoric* 1412a11-13).⁵ For Aristotle, it is clear that the effect of recognising unexpected connections between things which do not

⁴ Aristotle hints at this in his earlier discussion of metaphor in the *Poetics*, when he states that the ability to discern likenesses between things is something which cannot be taught, although it is an essential attribute of a good metaphor-maker (τὸ γὰρ εὖ μεταφέρειν τὸ τὸ ὅμοιον θεωρεῖν ἐστί, 1459a7). On the element of *anagnōrisis* inherent in Aristotle's conception of metaphor, see Swiggers (1984) 44 and O'Rourke (2006) 158.

⁵ The interplay between the familiar and unfamiliar, near and far, and the wonder caused by the recognition of potential connections between the two is also implied at the beginning of the *Metaphysics* (982b12-15) when Aristotle notes that wonder is the beginning of philosophy because it encourages us to move on to wondering at things far off after first marvelling at the workings of matters near at hand (see chapter two pp. 91-92 on this passage in the *Metaphysics*). This idea also underlies Aristotle's exhortation (*Part. an* 644b29-645a17) to study the nature and bodies of animals and plants before turning towards weightier matters relating to the divine, since we live near at hand among these organisms and can wonder at and therefore learn about them with less difficulty (see chapter two p. 93 on this passage). Thein (2014) 214-18 also notes the strong connection between Aristotle's thoughts on knowledge, learning, pleasure and wonder at *Rhet.* 1404b, 1460a, *Met.* 982b, and *Part. an* 644b-645a.

normally belong together contributes to creating and sustaining wonder on both aesthetic and philosophical levels.⁶ This wonder then goes on to encourage learning.

These observations concerning the power and potentially wonder-inducing effects of ‘making language strange’ certainly have a long afterlife in later literary critical discussions of literary and poetic style. One of the most obvious recapitulations of this idea occurs in the Romantic period when Coleridge states that Wordsworth’s aim in the *Lyrical Ballads* was “to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind’s attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us”.⁷ But it is within Russian Formalist thought that by far the most influential re-visiting of Aristotle’s claims about the wonderful power of making language strange are found, with Viktor Shklovsky’s concept of ‘defamiliarisation’ – i.e. the claim that “[t]he technique of art is to make objects unfamiliar” – explicitly based on Aristotle’s comments at *Rhetoric* 1404b.⁸

But where do the roots of Aristotle’s own idea lie? Was he the first to suggest that language itself can produce wonder and make the familiar unfamiliar, and vice versa? These are the fundamental questions which this chapter will explore, turning first to Aristophanes’ *Birds* and then to Thucydides’ *History*. In both of these works, the ability of language itself to cause its audiences to marvel, and the ease with which words can alter perceptions as a result, are shown to be issues of great importance in Athens, a society which is itself now held up as an object of *thauma*. In these texts this has a

⁶ O’Rourke (2006) 171-72 aptly summarises Aristotle’s conception of wonder as an integral effect of metaphor: “Vital to metaphor is the contrast between the familiar and the strange, which is the hallmark of wonder ... Metaphor is a continual reminder of the strangeness of things all around: the marvellous in the quotidian ... With its power of estrangement metaphor arrests our habitual relationship with the world. The miracle of metaphor is its power to evoke marvel and astonishment”.

⁷ Coleridge describes Wordsworth’s poetic practice thus in chapter XIV of his *Biographia Literaria* (1817).

⁸ For more on Shklovsky and defamiliarisation see the Introduction pp. 25-27.

radically dislocating effect, since the rhetoric of wonder which begins to inform Athens' view of its own political and military predominance contributes to distorted perceptions of the true extent of the imperial might of the city state, leading the Athenians (at least, in Thucydides' view) to overreach themselves. In both of these authors, the unease caused by the sense that *thaumata* are no longer simply exceptional objects of the natural world or of divine craftsmanship, but are now the result of manmade (often deceptive, and often linguistic) craft, is articulated through continual shifts and re-assessments of the relationship between the near and the far, both in literal, spatial terms and in more metaphorical senses. Aristotle's use of an image concerning foreigners and citizens to express processes of linguistic defamiliarisation thus draws upon a deeper and more complex view in this culture of the changing role of language itself – a role which *thauma* now finds itself an ever more important part of, as the next two chapters demonstrate. But first, to begin to explore the status of *thauma* in Athenian society and culture in the last quarter of the fifth century BCE, it is necessary to turn to a work which, on the face of it, has very little to do with Athens as a real-world location at all.

1. The Wonder of Nephelococcygia: Aristophanes' *Birds* and the Edges of the Earth

In Euripides' *Ion*, as we saw at the end of the last chapter, birds become ideal signifiers of the confusion between the near and far, the familiar and unfamiliar. At around the same time as Euripides wrote that play, Aristophanes' *Birds*, performed at the City Dionysia of 414 BCE, also hits upon the figure of the bird as a means of exploring spatial transgression and its effects. One such effect is the ability to bridge easily the gap between the human and the divine, since birds are capable of crossing not only terrestrial geographical boundaries at will, but are even able to move vertically between the mortal

realm of earth and the sky, the preserve of the gods. In *Birds*, the geographical and conceptual transgression linked to these creatures is firmly connected to *thauma*, as Aristophanes indulges in a humorous form of para-ethnography to emphasise, at least initially, just how radically different and distant the fantastic utopian society of Cloudcuckooland supposedly is from the corrupt world of contemporary Athens. Towards the end of the play, however, Aristophanes takes advantage of the spatial inversions which the natural movement of birds allow to turn the radically distorting lens of *thauma* back upon Athenian society itself.

The groundwork for this eventual inversion of ‘near’ and ‘far’ is laid from the very opening words of the play. Euelpides’ first complaint that the protagonists’ constant ‘wandering up and down’ (τί, ὦ πόνηρ’, ἄνω κάτω πλανύτομεν | ἀπολούμεθ’ ἄλλως τὴν ὁδὸν προφορουμένω, 3-4) has reached the point that he no longer knows where on earth he is (ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ ποῦ γῆς ἐσμεν οἶδ’ ἔγωγ’ ἔτι, 9) hints at the spatial and linguistic inversions which are to follow; despite referring to travel over the surface of the earth at this point, the words ‘ἄνω κάτω’ will soon be shown to refer to literal vertical as well as horizontal movement.⁹ The sense of spatial inversion is further reinforced by the gradual realisation that the expected locations of the protagonists’ longed-for escape – the wondrous and pleasing edges of the earth – must in their turn be rejected. At the beginning of the play the edges of the earth are initially presented as the expected location of *thaumata*. Peisetairus’ ludicrous claim, when interrogated by Tereus’ bird-slave, that he is a Libyan bird (ὑποδεδιῶς ἔγωγε, Λιβυκὸν ὄρνειον, 65) seems to hint at Africa as a proverbial location of exotic animals, while Euelpides’ claim to be a Phasian bird from the opposite side of the world (ἐπικεχοδῶς ἔγωγε Φασιανικός, 68) reinforces the sense that, initially at least, the world’s extremities are to be regarded as the home of the exotic

⁹ Cf. Rusten (2013) 314 on the new vertical perspective of space which the play establishes.

and unusual.¹⁰ But this assumption quickly breaks down once Tereus' house is finally reached. When asked to use his birdly experience of travel to suggest a location free from Athenian *polypragmosyne*, Tereus automatically recommends a city beside the Red Sea, which here seems to mean the furthest edges of the Persian empire (ἀτὰρ ἔστι γ' ὅποیان λέγετον εὐδαίμων πόλις | παρὰ τὴν ἐρυθρὰν θάλατταν, 144-45). But this suggestion is immediately rejected by Euelpides on the basis that Athenian power is able to reach everywhere by sea these days (145-48) – as a result, escape to the marvellous ends of the earth is no longer possible.¹¹

The sense of spatial collapse between periphery and centre is emphasised still further by the entrance of the chorus, where we find familiar Mediterranean birds flocking together with their more far-flung cousins. Euelpides expresses amazement at the unusual sight, but Peisetairus remains unmoved. Of course, this fits with Euelpides' role as comic buffoon in this play; still, it is notable that Peisetairus never seems to wonder at anything, even going so far as to chastise the birds for going around with their beaks agape, as if they are constantly wondering at everything (μὴ περιπέτεσθε πανταχῇ κεχηνότες· | ὥς τοῦτ' ἄτιμον τοῦργον ἐστίν, 165-66).¹² Peisetairus' consistent lack of wonder seems to be connected to his increasingly dominant role as the play proceeds. Euelpides, however, seems to reflect the audience's likely reaction to the sight of the comic chorus. His exclamation on the entrance of the Persian Mede bird that this bird is particularly out of place (χοῦτος ἔξεδρον χροῖαν ἔχων, 275) even manages to reflect collapse of the distinction between the literal and the metaphorical which will soon come to dominate

¹⁰ On Libya as the location of exotic animals cf. Ronca (1992) 147 and Dunbar (1995) 156. On the proverb "Libya always brings forth some new thing" (ἂν Λιβύη φέρει τι καινόν, first attested in Aristotle's biological works and already described by him as a *παροιμία*, see Arist. *GA* 746b8 and *HA* 606b19) see Ronca (1992), Romm (1992) 88-89 and D'Angour (2011) 109.

¹¹ I will return briefly to Euelpides' comment on p. 188 below. Cf. Amati (2010) 215 and Bowie (1993) 106 on the impossibility of escape from Athenian imperial power in *Birds*.

¹² On the birds' wondering response here see Konstan (1997) 9: "The gaping mouth is a standard Aristophanic image for dumb wonder"; cf. Arrowsmith (1973) 143, who attributes the fact that the birds are "agape with wonder and desire" to their zeal for "the unknown frontiers of boundless conquest".

the play, since these words echo those referring to an ill-omened augury in Sophocles' *Tyro* (οὗτος ἔξεδρον χροῶν ἔχων, fr. 654 *TrGF* Radt).¹³ Here Euelpides' re-use of Sophocles' expression is just as out of place as the bird he is describing, while the sense of religious awe connected with an ill-omened bird has been similarly displaced on to a sense of wonder at the exotic.

It seems then that even before Peisetairus' plan begins properly to unfold, the familiar distinctions between the world's centre and its peripheries have already started to crumble, and the process of playing with the familiar and unfamiliar has already begun. This is reinforced by the strong Herodotean echoes that surround the most important structural aspect of *Nephelococcygia*: the city wall.¹⁴ At 550-52, Herodotus is recalled when Peisetairus instructs the birds to build a wall around the city out of baked bricks:

καὶ δὴ τοίνυν πρῶτα διδάσκω μίαν ὀρνίθων πόλιν εἶναι,
 κάππειτα τὸν ἀέρα πάντα κύκλῳ καὶ πᾶν τουτὶ τὸ μεταξὺ
 περιτειχίζειν μεγάλαις πλίνθοις ὅπταϊς ὥσπερ Βαβυλῶνα.

Well then, I instruct this first of all: make a single city of birds, and then surround all of the air and everything which lies between heaven and earth in a circle with big kiln-baked bricks just like Babylon.

The detail 'kiln-baked bricks' (πλίνθοις ὅπταϊς) specifically recalls Herodotus' description of the moulding and baking of the bricks out of which the massive wall at Babylon was constructed (ὀρύσσοντες ἅμα τὴν τάφρον ἐπλίνθουν τὴν γῆν τὴν ἐκ τοῦ ὀρύγματος ἐκφερομένην, ἐλκύσαντες δὲ πλίνθους ἱκανὰς ὥπτησαν αὐτὰς ἐν καμίνοισι, 1.179) and makes clear that Herodotus' account of one of the proverbial seven wonders

¹³ Cf. Dunbar (1995) 232 and Sommerstein (1987) 214.

¹⁴ On the general importance of the wall as a boundary marker and the spatial ramifications this has in the play see Kosak (2006) 173-80.

of the world is what Peisetairus has in mind here.¹⁵ The wondrous nature of the Herodotean wall is made even clearer by the messenger speech narrating its construction. The messenger begins by emphasising the structure's tremendous dimensions (1125-29):

κάλλιστον ἔργον καὶ μεγαλοπρεπέστατον·
ὥστ' ἂν ἐπάνω μὲν Προξενίδης ὁ Κομπασεὺς
καὶ Θεογένης ἐναντίω δὺ' ἄρματε,
ἵππων ὑπόντων μέγεθος ὅσον ὁ δούριος,
ὑπὸ τοῦ πλάτους ἂν παρελασαίτην.

A most fine and most magnificent work, so wide on top that Proxenides of Boast-town and Theogenes could drive two chariots past each other with horses as big as the Wooden Horse [i.e. the Trojan Horse] attached to them.

Here we are immediately thrust into the Herodotean rhetoric of wonder, with the focus on extreme size (μέγεθος ... πλάτους), and the labelling of the structure as a *κάλλιστον ἔργον καὶ μεγαλοπρεπέστατον*, which recalls the proem of the *Histories* and its stated claim of keeping alive the *ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά* (1.1). In fact, the messenger even makes explicit reference to Herodotus' description of Babylon's wall at *Histories* 1.178-79 by claiming that the birds' structure allows *two* chariots to be driven around the top of the wall by Proxenides and Theogenes (apparently a pair of well-known braggarts); in Herodotus' version the fact that *one* four-horse chariot could manoeuvre on top of Babylon's wall is a prime cause of the overwhelming magnitude and *thauma* of the wall's construction as a whole (ἐπάνω δὲ τοῦ τείχεος παρὰ τὰ ἔσχατα οἰκήματα μουνόκωλα ἔδειμαν, τετραμμένα ἐς ἄλληλα· τὸ μέσον δὲ τῶν οἰκημάτων ἔλιπον τεθρίπῳ περιέλασιν, 1.179).¹⁶

¹⁵ Cf. Dunbar (1995) 374 and Sommerstein (1987) 233 on the Herodotean echo. Fornara (1971) 28–29 argues (rightly) that this is a rare specific verbal parody of a particular Herodotean passage, rather than just a vague allusion to the historian's style.

¹⁶ Cf. Dunbar (1995) 595 on the intensely allusive Herodotean language.

Furthermore, the description which the messenger then gives of thirty thousand cranes from Libya and ten thousand storks helping to build the wall only increases the sense that Herodotus' focus on measurement, scale, large numbers and supposed extreme accuracy is being parodied here (1130-41):

ΑΓ. τὸ δὲ μῆκός ἐστι, καὶ γὰρ ἐμέτρησ' αὐτ' ἐγώ,
ἑκατοντορόγιον.
ΠΕΙ. ὦ Πόσειδον, τοῦ μάκρους.
τίνες ὠκοδόμησαν αὐτὸ τηλικουτονί;
ΑΓ. ὄρνιθες, οὐδείς ἄλλος, οὐκ Αἰγύπτιος
πλινθοφόρος, οὐ λιθουργός, οὐ τέκτων παρῆν,
ἀλλ' αὐτόχειρες, ὥστε θαυμάζειν ἐμέ.
ἐκ μὲν γε Λιβύης ἦκον ὡς τρισμύρια
γέρανοι θεμελίους καταπεπωκυῖαι λίθους·
τούτους δ' ἐτύκιζον αἱ κρέκες τοῖς ῥύγχεσιν.
ἕτεροι δ' ἐπλινθούργουν πελαργοὶ μύριοι·
ὔδωρ δ' ἐφόρουν κάτωθεν εἰς τὸν ἀέρα
οἱ χαραδριοὶ καὶ τᾶλλα ποτάμι' ὄρνεα.

Messenger: And the height – for I measured it myself – is a hundred fathoms.

Peisetairus: O Poseidon! That's high! Which people built this to such a height?

Messenger: Birds, and no one else: no Egyptian brick-bearer, no stonemason, no carpenter was present, instead they built it with their own hands, with the result that I marvel. From Libya thirty thousand cranes who had gulped down foundation stones arrived, and the corncrakes were working them with their beaks. Another ten thousand storks were making bricks, and the curlews and the other river birds were bringing water up to the sky.

Again, Aristophanes has picked up on Herodotus' penchant for detailing large measurements when designating a distant manmade object as something to be marvelled at.¹⁷ The messenger's asides concerning his own response to witnessing the marvel of the wall also manipulate the stance of the Herodotean narrator in a new and humorous way, first through the use of a Herodotean-style autoptic verification of detail in the aside that

¹⁷ On Herodotus' frequent recourse to large numbers and the language of measurement to describe the magnitude of his *thōmata* see Hartog (1988) 230-37, Welser (2009) 375 and Priestley (2014) 57.

the height of the wall is one hundred fathoms, then by the announcement that the effect of the wall on the eyewitness was one of wonder.¹⁸

These humorous references to the importance of autoptic accounts of distant marvels are not the only instance in which Herodotean-style rhetoric of ethnographic *thauma* is exposed to ridicule in *Birds*. Aristophanes again takes a swipe at ethnographic descriptions of *thaumata* when Tereus warns his fellow birds that they are about to hear plans about the wall from Peisetairus which are completely unbelievable (ἄπιστα καὶ πέρα κλύειν, 416), even before the first foundations of the marvellous wall of Nephelococcygia are laid. From the very moment of its initial conception, the wondrous nature of Nephelococcygia is constantly undercut, even by Peisetairus himself, as a sense of scepticism regarding the very believability of any object labelled as a marvel gradually arises. This becomes clearest when the chorus' exhortation to wonder at the speed with which the fortifications were erected is quickly taken up by Nephelococcygia's founder, who equates the fact that the wall is worthy of wonder with its utterly fictitious nature (1164-67):

Χο. οὗτος, τί ποιεῖς; ἄρα θαυμάζεις ὅτι
οὕτω τὸ τεῖχος ἐκτετεῖχισται ταχύ;
Πε. νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς ἔγωγε· καὶ γὰρ ἄξιον·
ἴσα γὰρ ἀληθῶς φαίνεται μοι ψεύδεσιν.

Chorus: You there, what are you doing? Are you astonished that the wall has been built up so swiftly?

Peisetairus: Indeed I am, by the gods: because it's worthy of astonishment. For truly it seems to me to be equal to lies.

Peisetairus' words here provide a concrete hint that the marvellous wall which is being described may in fact be marvellous not because of its size, but because of the fact that it

¹⁸ Cf. Sommerstein (1987) 274-75 and Dunbar (1995) 596-99 on the Herodotean phraseology here.

does not exist at all: this is a structure created purely with words, a discursive wall which comes into being, when required, through language itself. This interpretation becomes more likely when the structure's seeming defensive purpose is undercut almost as soon as it has been completed, during a scene in which the messenger Iris does not even notice the wall's existence, passing through it completely unhindered and ending up confused by Peisetairus' insistence that she has transgressed this new boundary (1199-24).¹⁹

Through these consistent parodic references to Herodotean *thauma* during the scenes of the new city's construction, Aristophanes deliberately aligns this novel society of birds and metamorphosed humans with those of fantastic peoples situated at the edges of the earth in Greek thought. Seeing as Peisetairus' new city is supposedly located at a distant geographical boundary in the sky, in one sense Aristophanes' use of unusual and often far-fetched reports of marvels which may be encountered in reports of lands distant from Greece is fitting, and it is easy to create humour through the simple inversion of usual notions of centre and periphery: the edges of the known world now stretch upwards on a vertical axis, rather than simply expanding out on a horizontal axis from the Hellenic centre. At the same time, however, the injection of ethnographic *thauma* into his play's construction of a supposedly novel society allows Aristophanes to critique the general believability of objects designated as *thaumata*, and the reliability of the ethnographic tradition as a whole. This becomes an increasingly pressing issue as the play draws on and the audience is gradually re-familiarised with the greatest *thauma* of all: Athens.

¹⁹ See Amati (2010) 217, Kosak (2006) 175 and Sommerstein (1987) 4 on Iris' complete ignorance of the wall's presence in this scene.

2. Familiar *Thaumata*: the Bird-Chorus' Wondrous Travels

In the final scenes of *Birds* it becomes clear that it is not really Nephelococcygia, with its wondrous wall, which is now truly deserving of *thauma*, but rather the city of Athens itself. Aristophanes transfigures Athens into an object of *thauma* through the repeated transformation of metaphor and other familiar figures of speech into unexpected and often troubling literalisations as the play draws on.²⁰ This becomes most evident in the play's final scenes as the bird-chorus perform a song describing the *thaumata* they have seen on their travels over Peisetairus' new sphere of influence. The song's stanzas, despite being non-consecutive (1470-81; 1482-93; 1553-64; 1694-1705), are nevertheless clearly connected structurally, thematically and metrically.²¹

Within this song about seemingly distant *thaumata* Aristophanes combines two main generic influences. The first is the ethnographic περίοδος γῆς, which systematically describes the route and geographical features of a (distant) journey.²² The second, of course more common in Aristophanic comedy, is tragedy. In particular, in this specific choral song Aristophanes parodies the tendency of certain Euripidean choruses to sing of how they wish to become birds so that they can flee from whatever troubles are unfolding in front of them.²³ The contrast drawn in these odes between the unpalatable situation faced by the chorus in their present location, and the potentially happier life to be found

²⁰ On the importance of verbal artifice and the literalisation of metaphor in *Birds*, see esp. Dobrov (1997) 95-132; cf. Bowie (1993) 173, Rothwell (2007) 175, Slater (1997) 85-86 and Sommerstein (1987) 3.

²¹ See Parker (1997) 346-50 on the metrical correspondence of these four stanzas, which she terms "lampoon-songs", and their use as a means of marking out the dramatic structure of the play's end. Cf. Moulton (1981) 32, 45-46, Dunbar (1995) 688 and Rusten (2013) 298 on the structure and thematic unity of the song as a whole.

²² See Rusten (2013) 308.

²³ Reinhardt (1960) 240 well sums up the tendency towards the imagery of 'escapism' sometimes found in Euripides' choral odes: "*Euripideische Lyrik konzentriert sich nicht mehr um das tragische Geschehen, verdichtet, deutet nicht mehr, sie bricht aus, fliegt über Land und Meer, schwärmt, tanzt unter den Göttern, wünscht die Welt verändert, evagiert, sehnt sich von hinnen, verallgemeinert*". On Euripidean 'escape odes' and their tendency to evoke distant places see Padel (1974), esp. pp. 228-31 on bird imagery; cf. Swift (2009) 364 on the Euripidean choral 'escape fantasy'.

in far-off places towards the edges of the earth is something which Aristophanes picks up on and re-invents, in order to critique the norms of contemporary Athenian society in *Birds*.

The most pertinent extant example we possess of the type of imagery which Aristophanes is parodying is found in the second stasimon of Euripides' *Hippolytus*, first performed in 428 BCE, long before the first performance of *Birds* in 414. After the shocking revelation that Phaedra has hit upon death as a remedy for her shame (715-31), the geographical scope of Euripides' play is radically expanded in this ode as the chorus react with an anguished wish for a sudden avian transformation (732-34):

ἡλιβάτοις ὑπὸ κευθμῶσι γενοίμαν,
ἵνα με πτεροῦσσαν ὄρ-
νιν θεὸς ἀμφὶ ποταναῖς ἀγέλαις θείη.

If only I were in the steep mountain clefts, where a god might make me
into a winged bird among the flying flocks.

The chorus go on to emphasise their longing for escape by imagining themselves soaring away from their distressing situation in Troezen, and winging their way instead towards the world's very western edges. The geographical movement of the ode tends increasingly towards the fantastic, as the chorus first envisage flying over the Adriatic gulf before they reach the river Eridanus (ἀρθείην δ' ἐπὶ πόντιον | κῦμ' ἐς τὰς Ἀδριηνὰς | ἀκτὰς Ἑριδανοῦ θ' ὕδωρ, 735-37). The Eridanus, the location of Phaethon's fiery chariot crash, was thought to be located towards the westernmost edge of the world, flowing into the outermost sea on the western side of Europe.²⁴ But the chorus' fantastic journey does not

²⁴ The actual location of the Eridanus was a matter of debate in antiquity: see Barrett (1964) 300-301. In his discussion of the earth's edges Herodotus famously dismisses the geographical veracity of the claim that the Eridanus actually exists and issues forth into the sea on the western-most edges of Europe, declaring instead that the river is a mythical invention of the poets (οὔτε γὰρ ἔγωγε ἐνδέχομαι Ἑριδανὸν καλέεσθαι πρὸς βαρβάρων ποταμὸν ἐκδιδόντα ἐς θάλασσαν τὴν πρὸς βορέην ἄνεμον ... τοῦτο μὲν γὰρ ὁ Ἑριδανὸς αὐτὸ κατηγορεῖ τὸ οὐνομα ὥς ἔστι Ἑλληνικὸν καὶ οὐ βάρβαρον, ὑπὸ ποιητέῳ δὲ τινὸς ποιηθέν, 3.115).

stop there: their distress is such that only the garden of the Hesperides, near the Pillars of Heracles, the western end-point of the world – or the ‘sacred boundary of the sky’ (σεμνὸν τέρμονα ... οὐρανοῦ, 746-47) as the chorus term it – seems to offer a potential haven from the horror of Phaedra’s shocking revelations (Ἑσπερίδων δ’ ἐπὶ μηλόσπορον ἄκταν | ἀνύσαιμι τᾶν ἁοι-| δῶν, 742-44).

As might be expected, in Euripides’ later works this imagery is transformed in line with the surprising geographical inversions of the so-called ‘escape plays’ which I discussed in the previous chapter. Since these plays are set in locations near the edges of the earth, it is Hellas itself which becomes an idealised distant space which the chorus longs to escape to, as we see in the second stasimon of *IT* (1089-1152). After learning that Iphigenia has gained the opportunity to break free from her current plight and return home, the chorus long to escape captivity in the Taurian land and similarly return to Hellas and their maiden choral dances. The first strophe, a single lyrical period, is framed by bird imagery as the desire to flee away is outlined (1089-1105):

ὄρνις ἃ παρὰ πετρίνας
 πόντου δειράδας ἀλκυὼν
 ἔλεγον οἷτον ἀεΐδεις,
 εὐζύνετον ξυνετοῖς βοάν,
 ὅτι πόσιν κελαδεῖς ἀεὶ μολπαῖς,
 ἐγὼ σοι παραβάλλομαι
 θρηνοῦς, ἄπτερος ὄρνις,
 ποθοῦς Ἑλλάνων ἀγόρους,
 ποθοῦς Ἄρτεμιν λοχίαν,
 ἃ παρὰ Κύνθιον ὄχθον οἱ-
 κεῖ φοίνικα θ’ ἀβροκόμαν
 δάφναν τ’ εὐερνέα καὶ
 γλαυκᾶς θαλλὸν ἱερὸν ἐλαί-
 ας, Λατοῦς ὠδῖνι φίλον,
 λίμναν θ’ εἰλίσσουσαν ὕδωρ
 κύκλιον, ἔνθα κύκνος μελω-
 δὸς Μούσας θεραπεύει.

Halcyon bird, you who sing lamenting your fate, beside the rocky ridges
 of the sea, a cry well-understood by those who understand that you

loudly mourn your husband ceaselessly with songs like mine – I, a wingless bird, compete with you in wailing, longing for the meeting-places of the Hellenes, longing for Artemis of childbirth, who lives beside the Cynthian hill and the delicate-leaved palm and the flourishing laurel and the sacred shoot of the grey olive, dear to the birth-pains of Leto, and the lake which swirls its water in a circle, where the tuneful swan serves the Muses.

The chorus begin by comparing their lamentation with that of the halcyon, whose human-like cry of mourning is explained by the myth that she is the metamorphosed form of Alcyone, who bewails her dead husband Ceyx. The distant land which the chorus particularly longs for is the centre of the Athenian empire, Delos, home to Apollo and Artemis. There they might resume their native worship of an Artemis who is much less bloodthirsty on Delos than the Taurian goddess in whose cult practices the women are currently forced to participate. Specific markers of the landscape in Delos which relate to Greek cult practices there are picked out as objects of the women's particular longing: the palm associated with the birth of Apollo and Artemis, the laurel sacred to Apollo, and the olive tree. The olive appears for the first time in our extant texts in connection with Delos here; as Athens' sacred tree, undoubtedly it reminds the audience of current Athenian influence over the island.²⁵ The long lyrical sentence ends with the appearance of another bird: this time a species associated with Apollo rather than Artemis, the tuneful swan.

In their opening address to the halcyon/Alcyone, the chorus bemoan the fact that they currently resemble a 'wingless bird' (ἄπτερος ὄρνις, 1095), but as the ode progresses their desire to overcome this difference becomes clear. This culminates in another explicit wish to undergo an avian metamorphosis (1138-42):

²⁵ On the intrusion of the olive-tree into the traditional Delian scene as a marker of Athenian influence see Cropp (2000) 240, Kyriakou (2006) 355 and Hall (2012) 55.

λαμπροὺς ἵπποδρόμους βαίην,
ἔνθ' εὐάλιον ἔρχεται πῦρ·
οἰκείων δ' ὑπὲρ θαλάμων
ἐν νότοις ἀμοῖς πτέρυγας
λήξαιμι θοάζουσα·

If only I could travel along the bright chariot-tracks where the fire of
the fine sun goes! But I would cease the quick movement of the wings
of my back above the rooms of my home.

In fact, these choral addresses to birds seem to have been a technique which Euripides particularly favoured: another example can be found in the first stasimon of *Helen*, where the chorus 'cry out' to the melodious 'tearful nightingale' (ἀναβοάσω ... ἀηδόνα δακρυνέεσαν, 1108-10) just as the chorus of *IT* call out to the halcyon bird.²⁶

After *Birds*, Aristophanes makes fun of Euripides for this tendency again in *Frogs* (405 BCE) by portraying Aeschylus mocking Euripidean choral lyric with a song which opens with an address to halcyons (1309-12):

ἄλκυόνες, αἱ παρ' ἀενάοις θαλάσσης
κύμασι στωμύλλετε,
τέγγουσαι νοτίοις πτερῶν
ῥανίσι χροά δροσιζόμεναι

O halcyons, who chatter beside the ever-flowing waves of the sea,
moistening and besprinkling the skin of your wings with rainy drops!

Aristophanes parodies such tragic avian wishes in *Birds* just before the bird-chorus begins its song about distant *thaumata*, as Peisetaurus' new city is approached by a succession of unpalatable Athenians (a father-beater at 1337-71, Cinesias the dithyrambic poet at 1372-

²⁶ Euripides also turned to the conceit of inverting the conventional wish to flee away from danger towards the world's peripheries in *Helen*. There the chorus sing of Helen and Menelaus' prospective return to Sparta, and add their own wish to flee from Egypt by becoming birds (δι' αἰθέρος εἶθε ποτανοὶ | γενοίμεθ', 1478-79). More specifically, they long to join migrating cranes as they fly over the known world, fleeing from the wintry weather of the north and heading toward Libya in the far south (ὅπα Λιβύας | οἰωνῶν στολάδες | ὄμβρον χειμέριον λιποῦ- | σαι νίσονται, 1479-82), passing over Sparta and bringing news of Menelaus' homecoming (καρύξαι' ἀγγελίαν, | Εὐρώταν ἐφεζόμεναι, | Μενέλεως ὅτι Δαρδάνου | πόλιν ἔλῶν δόμον ἦξει, 1491-94). On the significance of this bird imagery, see Steiner (2011) 310-15.

1409 and a sycophant at 1410-69), all of whom desperately long for a pair of wings to enable them to escape Athens and enjoy the riches of the new utopia in the sky. The approach of the sycophant, the final Athenian longing for wings, is immediately followed by Aristophanes' own take on tragic choral bird imagery, a chorus of actual birds singing about the fantastic lands and *thaumata* which they have overflowed. Aristophanes thus literally reifies the familiar lyrical wish of this type of Euripidean chorus, metamorphosing the figurative language of tragic lyric into a comedic spectacle, as the actors literally don wings in front of the audience.²⁷ His paratragic take on Euripidean choral lyric is exuberantly fused with a parodic re-writing of Herodotean-style ethnography, as the first two stanzas of the Birds' travel narrative demonstrate (1470-93):

πολλὰ δὴ καὶ καινὰ καὶ θαυ-
 μάστ' ἐπεπτόμεσθα καὶ
 δεινὰ πράγματ' εἶδομεν.
 ἔστι γὰρ δένδρον πεφυκὸς
 ἔκτοπόν τι Καρδίας ἁ-
 πωτέρω Κλεώνυμος,
 χρήσιμον μὲν οὐδέν, ἄλ-
 λως δὲ δειλὸν καὶ μέγα.
 τοῦτο τοῦ μὲν ἦρος ἀεὶ
 βλαστάνει καὶ συκοφαντεῖ,
 τοῦ δὲ χειμῶνος πάλιν τὰς
 ἀσπίδας φυλλορροεῖ.

ἔστι δ' αὖ χώρα πρὸς αὐτῷ
 τῷ σκότῳ πόρρω τις ἐν
 τῇ λύχνων ἐρημία,
 ἔνθα τοῖς ἥρωσιν ἄνθρω-
 ποι ξυναριστῶσι καὶ ξύν-
 εἰσι πλὴν τῆς ἐσπέρας.
 τηνικαῦτα δ' οὐκέτ' ἦν
 ἀσφαλὲς ξυντυγχάνειν.
 εἰ γὰρ ἐντύχοι τις ἦρω
 τῶν βροτῶν νύκτωρ Ὀρέστη,
 γυμνὸς ἦν πληγεὶς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ
 πάντα τὰπὶ δεξιᾶ.

²⁷ See Dobrov (1997) 100 and 117 on how the literalisation of the 'would that I were a bird!' *topos* of Euripidean choral lyric is a central underpinning of the *Birds*' plot.

Many things both new and wondrous have we flown over and strange acts have we seen. For there is a certain extraordinary tree that grows somewhat far away from Heart-ford,²⁸ called Kleonymos – useful for nothing, but in other respects cowardly and big. In spring this tree always buds and blooms with vexatious litigation (lit. ‘shows forth figs’), while in wintertime it sheds its shields like leaves.

There is a land far off at the edge of darkness, in a lampless wasteland, where men have lunch and meet with heroes – but not in the evening. At that time it’s no longer safe to meet together. For if any mortal met with the hero Orestes by night, he would be stripped naked and paralysed all down his right side.

The programmatic placement of *καὶνὰ καὶ θαυμάστ’* at the beginning of the song sets up an expectation that we are about to hear a catalogue of distant ethnographic *thaumata*, reminiscent of the programmatic placement of *thōma* at the head of the catalogue of Egyptian customs in book two of Herodotus’ *Histories* (2.35). But it soon becomes obvious that Aristophanes has something different in mind, as exotic *thaumata* from unfamiliar lands are substituted with the defamiliarised practices, people and objects of quotidian Athenian life. The first real *thauma* is the so-called Kleonymos tree – but rather than the expected botanical marvel, the punning on Kardias as both a place name (referring to a colony in the Thracian Chersonese) and as a simple noun (‘heart’, ‘courage’) soon lets us recognise that what is really being described is less a wondrous tree than a cowardly Athenian citizen. The bizarre imagery created through the transposition of man and plant in this first description of the wondrous Kleonymos tree (e.g. *συκοφάντει*, punning on the word’s etymological relationship with the word ‘fig’) is one way in which the familiar meanings of words are shed, and unfamiliar nuances unexpectedly taken up.

²⁸ A pun suggested by Sommerstein (1987) 295 which aptly captures the double-meaning of the Greek wordplay.

The antistrophe continues to play on the conventional imagery of the earth's edges by purporting to describe a land so distant that it lies at the edge of darkness itself. This dark land is reminiscent of the scene of Homer's *Nekyia* in the *Odyssey*: the territory of the Cimmerians, a distant people imagined as living in the north, situated by Homer near the far-off boundary of the world formed by Ocean (ἡ δ' ἐς πείραθ' ἵκανε βαθυρρόου Ὠκεανοῖο. | ἔνθα δὲ Κιμμερίων ἀνδρῶν δῆμός τε πόλις τε, | ἡέρι καὶ νεφέλῃ κεκαλυμμένοι, 11.13-15) in a place which is gripped by perpetual night because of the sun's absence (οὐδέ ποτ' αὐτοὺς | ἡέλιος φαέθων καταδέρκεται ἀκτίνεσσιν ... ἀλλ' ἐπὶ νύξ ὅλοῃ τέταται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι, 11.15-19).²⁹ At first glance, it seems that Aristophanes is describing a typical distant and wondrous semi-mythical locale in which gods and men are close and able to dine together, just as the gods are described as sharing feasts with the Phaeacians in the *Odyssey* (δαίνυνταί τε παρ' ἅμμι καθήμενοι ἔνθα περ ἡμεῖς, 7.203). He goes on to suggest that mythical heroes, such as Orestes, might also lurk in such far-off places, perhaps referring here to the Greek conceptualisation of distant islands (such as the Isles of the Blessed) as fitting locations for deceased heroes.³⁰ It soon becomes clear, however, that this is not really a description of the sunless extremities of the earth but rather a description of the dangers of wandering around Athens at night: Orestes is not a mythical hero, but a common thief liable to strip the unwary of their clothes.³¹

Aristophanes continues to build on this unflattering vision of Athens through the lens of ethnographic *thauma* in the third stanza of the bird-chorus' song as a pseudo-

²⁹ See Dunbar (1995) 691 for further references to the earth's sunless northern edges in Greek literature.

³⁰ See Rusten (2013) 309-310 for the suggestion that this stanza refers to distant islands as fitting locations for heroes such as the mythical Orestes.

³¹ Orestes seems to have been the name or nickname of a notorious cloak-thief in Athens: the chorus have already complained of his exploits in line 712 (εἶτα δ' Ὀρέστη χλαῖναν ὑφαίνειν, ἵνα μὴ ῥιγῶν ἀποδύῃ); cf. Euelpides' complaint about being mugged and stripped of his cloak after being clubbed over the head at night in lines 492-98.

ethnographic tone combines with play on the literal and metaphorical meanings of words (1553-64):

πρὸς δὲ τοῖς Σκιάποσιν λί-
μνη τις ἔστ', ἄλουτος οὗ
ψυχαγωγεῖ Σωκράτης·
ἔνθα καὶ Πείσανδρος ἦλθε
δεόμενος ψυχὴν ἰδεῖν ἢ
ζῶντ' ἐκεῖνον προὔλιπε,
σφάγι' ἔχων κάμηλον ἀ-
μνόν τιν', ἧς λαιμοῦς τεμὼν ὥσ-
περ ποθ' οὐδυσσεὺς ἀπῆλθε,
κᾶτ' ἀνῆλθ' αὐτῷ κάτωθεν
πρὸς τὸ λαῖτμα τῆς καμήλου
Χαιρεφῶν ἢ νυκτερίς.

And near the Shadowfeet there is a certain swamp, where Socrates – never bathing – raises dead spirits. And there Peisander went asking to see the soul which had abandoned him while he was still alive. He had a baby camel as a sacrificial offering; after cutting its throat, just like Odysseus did, he stepped back, and up to him from below, attracted to the deep pool of camel's blood, came Chairephon the bat.

The description of Socrates raising ghosts (ψυχαγωγεῖ Σωκράτης) as the chief marvel of the land of the Shadowfeet is humorous not only due to the ludicrousness of the image in itself, but also because it plays with the literal and metaphorical meanings of the verb for 'soul-leading' or 'spirit-raising' (ψυχαγωγεῖ). Here the term refers to Socrates' actual ghost-raising, at the same time as it reminds us of its growing use as a term referring to the beguiling and seductive nature of rhetoric itself.³² This sense that rhetorical language is increasingly bound up with the effect of *thauma* becomes even more obvious in the final stanza (1694-1705):

ἔστι δ' ἐν Φάναισι πρὸς τῇ
Κλεψύδρᾳ πανοῦργον Ἔγ-

³² On the play with the meaning of ψυχαγωγεῖ see Dunbar (1995) 711-12 and Moulton (1981) 40.

γλωττογαστῶρων γένος,
 οἱ θερίζουσιν τε καὶ σπεί-
 ρουσι καὶ τρυγῶσι ταῖς γλώτ-
 ταισι συκάζουσί τε·
 βάρβαροι δ' εἰσὶν γένος,
 Γοργῖαι τε καὶ Φίλιπποι.
 κάπὸ τῶν Ἑγγλωττογαστό-
 ρων ἐκείνων τῶν φιλίππων
 πανταχοῦ τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἢ
 γλῶττα χωρὶς τέμνεται.

In Denunciation-land, near the Waterclock, there are the tricky
 Tongue-Belly people, who reap and sow and gather in vintages
 with their tongues – and they unscrupulously prosecute with
 them too. They are a barbarian people, Gorgias and
 Philipposes. And after the fashion of these Philippic Tongue-
 Belly people everywhere in Attica the tongue is cut out
 separately.

Wordplay again stretches familiar lexical meanings into unfamiliar territory: ἐν Φάναϊσι
 (1694) refers to a literal harbour on Chios while hinting at the verb φαίνειν, which in this
 case means ‘to inform against someone’ and is supposed to once again bring the practice
 of sycophancy to mind; Κλεψύδρα (1695) is often a name for springs with concealed
 sources (one of which was at the foot of the Acropolis), as well as referring to the law
 courts.³³ The ‘Tongue-Belly people’ are not an exotic, distant tribe, but orators in Athens
 who live and fill their bellies as a result of words, the product of their tongues. These
 people are said to be ‘barbarians’, a charge which contemptuously hints at the famous
 rhetorician Gorgias’ non-Athenian, Sicilian origins, while at the same time maintaining
 the ethnographic tone of this description of everyday Athenian life. It is not known for
 certain who Philippus might be, though clearly he is another Gorgianic orator.³⁴
 Aristophanes completes this fantastic vision with another reference to the overwhelming
 importance of both literal and metaphorical tongues in Athens, focusing on the separate

³³ For the wordplay in this stanza see Hubbard (1997) 31 and Dunbar (1995) 740-44.

³⁴ Cf. Bdelykleon’s reference to ‘Philippus son of Gorgias’ at *Wasps* 421 (Φίλιππον ... τὸν Γοργίου): it is
 not clear if Philippus was literally a son of Gorgias, or, more likely, his student. See Dunbar (1995) 743
 for a detailed discussion of Philippus’ possible identity.

cutting-out of the tongue from the sacrificial animal, an Athenian religious custom familiar from everyday life which sounds plausibly exotic when defamiliarised and presented with a bizarre *aition* through the ethnographer's lens, while simultaneously offering yet another coded insult against the power of rhetoricians' tongues in the Attic lawcourts.

As we can see, as *Birds* draws to a close and the final scenes reveal that this is a play about Athens after all, despite the opening claims to the contrary, there is one aspect of Athenian society in particular which is presented as the ultimate *thauma*: the use and abuse of language itself. By approaching everyday Athenian life with the eye of an ethnographer hungry for *thaumata*, Aristophanes manages to defamiliarise the audience's well-known surroundings, simultaneously encouraging renewed assessments of Athens, her imperial ambitions, their causes, and their potentially dislocating effects. In the play's final choral-songs, the focus on *thauma* in unexpected contexts continues to draw attention to the place of wonder in ethnographic accounts, but there is perhaps also a concomitant and increasing sense that comedy as a genre can itself be framed as a sort of ethnography of Aristophanes' own society.

3. The Wonder of Athens: Thucydides and *Thauma*

This re-definition of *thauma* as a concept which can now be associated primarily with one's own society is a key effect of the process of linguistic defamiliarisation and refamiliarisation which *Birds* presents to its audience. For Aristophanes, this re-definition of the potential boundaries and meaning of wonder is strongly connected to Athens' imperialistic drive, with the fantastic colonisation of the marvellous expanses of the sky

presented as the final frontier of Athenian dominance. The real-world engagement of the Athenians in ambitious political and military activity at the time of *Birds*' first performance in 414 BCE lends an additional power to Aristophanes' focus on the ambivalent nature of Peisetairus' colonisation of the sky. In the summer of 415 the Athenians set out on an expedition against Sicily, which aimed both at quashing Syracusan influence, and establishing Athenian control over the island as a whole. Aristophanes clearly makes reference to the contemporary situation in Sicily at three points within the play, all of which relate to the generals in command of the expedition. At 145-47, Alcibiades' recall to Athens on charges relating to the mutilation of the Herms is hinted at when Euelpides rejects the suggestion of fleeing to the shore of the Red Sea on the basis that the *Salaminia*, the sacred state trireme which was sent to arrest and retrieve Alcibiades, might appear there and haul him off too (οἶμοι, μηδαμῶς | ἡμῖν γε παρὰ θάλατταν, ἴν' ἀνακύπεται | κλητῆρ' ἄγους' ἔωθεν ἡ Σαλαμινία). The role of Nicias in contemporary politics is also referred to twice: first when Euelpides declares that Peisetairus is an even better strategist than Nicias (ὑπερακοντίζεις σύ γ' ἤδη Νικίαν ταῖς μηχαναῖς, 363), and then later when Peisetairus declares that his plan should be put into action at once since there is 'no time for faffing about like Nicias' (ὥρα 'στὶν ἡμῖν οὐδὲ μελλονικιᾶν, 639) – a reference to the older statesman's reluctance to sail against Syracuse.

It is important to stress, however, that the eventual disastrous outcome of the expedition would not yet have been apparent to *Birds*' original audience.³⁵ The overall outcome of the enterprise still hung in the balance at the moment of the play's writing and first production, but that is not to say that contemporary debate over the nature and

³⁵ See Asper (2005) 6-18 on contemporary (positive) attitudes towards the expedition at the moment of *Birds*' production; cf. Dunbar (1995) 2-4 on *Birds* and the contemporary political situation regarding Sicily.

role of Athenian imperialism in relation to Sicily is not in the background of Aristophanes' vision of Peisetairus' quest to colonise the sky. Certainly, the connection between conquest, imperial expansion and *thauma*, and the potential lure of the acquisition and control of objects which can be labelled as *thaumata*, seems to form one strand of contemporary discourse concerning Athenian imperial power which *Birds* picks up on. The importance of *thauma* becomes apparent when we compare Aristophanes' conceptualisation of the newly marvellous nature of Athens during the Sicilian expedition with Thucydides' retrospective vision of the power and effects of wonder in relation to Athens and Athenian self-fashioning during the Peloponnesian War.

Thucydides' view of the place of wonder in Athenian society during this period is, of course, complicated by the importance the concept of *thauma* had assumed in the ethnographic and historiographical tradition. There is undeniably a relative paucity of words relating to wonder and astonishment in Thucydides' work, compared to the frequency of such terms in Herodotus' *Histories*. When *thaumata* in the *History* are examined in detail, it soon becomes clear that very different types of objects are labelled as marvels in this work in comparison to Herodotus' writing, and that the concept of *thauma* is itself now configured in transformed terms. It is certainly not the case, however, that Thucydides' interest in wonder functions as a means of subtly maligning Herodotus' work, or that *thauma* has become an unimportant concept and force in Thucydides' historiographic vision.³⁶ Instead, the relative infrequency of thaumatic language in Thucydides' *History* only renders its occasional appearances more striking.

³⁶ See Priestley (2014) 61-68 on how a divergent attitude towards *thauma* is one of the ways in which Thucydides differentiates himself from Herodotean historiography. Cf. Scanlon (1994) 165-71, who reads Thucydides' references to *thauma* as examples of direct engagement with, and even verbal allusions to, Herodotus' *Histories*. On the relative paucity of *thauma* and cognate terms in Thucydides see also Mette (1960) 67-68.

The significance of wonder to Thucydides' narrative becomes clearest when the appearances of *thauma* and *ekplēxis* within the narrative of the expedition to Sicily in books six and seven are analysed. Just as *thauma* assumes an important place in Peisetairus' founding of a city in the sky, which is portrayed as an imperialistic colonisation, so too does wonder play a key role in the portrayal of Athenian motivation for the Sicilian expedition, a voyage which is framed by Thucydides as a similar sort of colonising venture.³⁷ The potential for wonder is emphasised by the fact that the Athenians are presented as almost entirely ignorant of the reality of the situation in the West before they set out on their expedition. They believe that Sicily is a far-off, mysterious land which sustains a society radically different from their own. At the very beginning of book six, Thucydides stresses that the Athenians were supposedly unfamiliar with the size of Sicily and the number of its inhabitants, and unaware that they were undertaking a war which is similar in magnitude to the one which they were currently waging against the Peloponnesians (ἄπειροι οἱ πολλοὶ ὄντες τοῦ μεγέθους τῆς νήσου καὶ τῶν ἐνοικούντων τοῦ πλήθους καὶ Ἑλλήνων καὶ βαρβάρων, καὶ ὅτι οὐ πολλῷ τινι ὑποδεέστερον πόλεμον ἀνηροῦντο ἢ τὸν πρὸς Πελοποννησίους, 6.1.1). This claim cannot be literally true: it is clear that contact between Athens, Sicily and Italy more broadly had been significant and sustained throughout the fifth century long before 415 BCE: for example, a large contingent of Athenians had visited the island already in 426 BCE.³⁸ This apparent ignorance of the West takes on a wider metaphorical significance over the course of books six and seven, as it becomes increasingly clear that the Athenians are just as unfamiliar with the true extent of their own power as they are of the true nature

³⁷ See Green (1970) 131, Avery (1973) 8-13 (who draws explicit parallels between the colonisation theme in *Birds* and Thucydides) and Kallet (2001) 25 on Thucydides' presentation of the Sicilian expedition as a colonising venture.

³⁸ For the strict factual impossibility of Thucydides' opening claim see D.G. Smith (2004) 33-70, Hornblower (2002) 41-43, 163 and (2008) 5-12, 260.

of the Syracusans. The geographical inversion of the customary location of *thaumata* is part of this distorting process: Athens itself is now more marvellous than the seemingly distant land of Sicily – though Thucydides soon shows that the Syracusans are more similar to the Athenians than the latter could ever have imagined. By mapping the way in which *thauma* intersects with this constant inversion of the concepts of the near and far, familiar and unfamiliar, Thucydides’ conception of the radically distorting and dangerous effects that ensue when people’s capacity for wonder is manipulated becomes apparent. It is this new conception of *thauma* which becomes predominant in the fourth century BCE, as wonder’s ability to connect self and other through potentially distorting processes of (verbal and/or visual) representations seemingly becomes a matter of increasing interest and anxiety.

But before we can understand the role which *thauma* plays in the historian’s vision of the origins and eventual failure of the Sicilian expedition, it is necessary to examine the other most notable passage in which Thucydidean *thauma* plays a vital role: Pericles’ Funeral Oration. For it is here during Pericles’ famous speech in book two that we see *thauma* most transparently associated with Athenian society itself for the very first time.³⁹ Whereas Aristophanes’ *Birds* presents us with the prospect of Athens as the ultimate *thauma* more obliquely, as the paradoxical punchline of a joke, Pericles is unequivocal in his vision of Athens’ ability to induce wonder in all who witness or contemplate the *polis* and her power (2.41.3-4):

μόνη γὰρ τῶν νῦν ἀκοῆς κρείσσων ἐς πεῖραν ἔρχεται, καὶ μόνη οὔτε τῷ
πολεμίῳ ἐπελθόντι ἀγανάκτησιν ἔχει ὑφ’ οἷων κακοπαθεῖ οὔτε τῷ
ὑπηκόῳ κατὰμεμψιν ὥς οὐχ ὑπ’ ἀξίων ἄρχεται. μετὰ μεγάλων δὲ
σημείων καὶ οὐ δὴ τοι ἀμάρτυρόν γε τὴν δύναμιν παρασχόμενοι τοῖς τε
νῦν καὶ τοῖς ἔπειτα θαυμάσθησόμεθα, καὶ οὐδὲν προσδεόμενοι οὔτε

³⁹ The association of *thauma* with Athens is something which very much differentiates Thucydides from Herodotus and his conception of the role and place of *thauma* in historiography, as Priestley (2014) 64-66 points out.

Ὅμηρου ἐπαινέτου οὔτε ὅστις ἔπεσι μὲν τὸ αὐτίκα τέρψει, τῶν δ' ἔργων τὴν ὑπόνοιαν ἢ ἀλήθεια βλάψει, ἀλλὰ πᾶσαν μὲν θάλασσαν καὶ γῆν ἐσβατὸν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ τόλμῃ καταναγκάσαντες γενέσθαι, πανταχοῦ δὲ μνημεῖα κακῶν τε καὶ ἀγαθῶν αἰδία ξυγκατοικίσαντες.

For Athens alone of cities today is even greater, when put to the test, than reports suggest, and it is Athens alone which no enemy who comes up against her feels angry about when he suffers defeat, and none of her subjects resent her, thinking they are ruled by those who are unworthy. And with mighty monuments, and because of the power which we have put forth not without witnesses, we shall be wondered at by people today and by those in the future. We do not at all need a Homer, nor anyone else, to praise us with verses which give pleasure for a moment, but whose interpretation of events will be destroyed by the truth. Instead, we have forced every sea and every land open with our daring, and have established everywhere eternal monuments of our vengeance and our benefactions.

At this point in his oration, Pericles substantiates his earlier claim that Athens is an educational example to the whole of Greece (τῆς Ἑλλάδος παιδευσιν, 2.41.1) by confirming that the reports of her greatness which have so far circulated have not been exaggerated. The now clichéd claim that hearsay leads to false and misleading statements relating to marvels in far-off lands is firmly turned on its head, as Pericles paradoxically claims that in Athens' case, the reality is more astonishing than rumour. Even when put to the test, which in this case seems to imply the autoptic witnessing of great monuments or proofs of great deeds relating to Athenian power (μετὰ μεγάλων δὲ σημείων καὶ οὐ δὴ τοι ἀμάρτυρόν γε τὴν δύναμιν παρασχόμενοι), Athens will remain marvellous.⁴⁰

The wondrous reality of Athens is linked to her empire, mentioned explicitly here for the first and only time in the Funeral Oration, in Pericles' claim that those subjected to Athenian hegemony can bear no grudges in the face of such conspicuous strength and

⁴⁰ Cf. also the fleeting reference to the wondrous nature of Athens just before Pericles' statement here, when he claims that the Lacedaemonians are inferior to the Athenians because they have to cultivate their courageous and manly behaviour by training themselves intensely from a young age, whereas the Athenians do not need to undergo such training because they are born this way. The city is thus worthy to be wondered at for these reasons, as well as those which Pericles will elaborate in the rest of the speech (καὶ ἐν τε τούτοις τὴν πόλιν ἀξίαν εἶναι θαυμάζεσθαι καὶ ἔτι ἐν ἄλλοις, 2.39.4).

worthiness, and even her enemies cannot complain about being beaten by such a power. The present and future wonder inspired by the visible indications of this power is reminiscent of the present and future *kleos* which a god-crafted object, Achilles' shield, is able to provide to the individual warrior in the *Iliad* through the past and future wonder of many men (ἄνθρώπων πολέων θαυμάσσεται, ὅς κεν ἴδῃται, 18.467).⁴¹ But in this case a poet, even a Homer, is not needed to ensure the present and future fame of Athens: the obvious signs and memories of the city's marvellous power at home and abroad will ensure that of their own accord. This power now stretches over every land and sea, with the result that the mysterious and potentially wondrous nature of far-off lands is no longer a geographical certainty, seeing as Athens herself is now the natural domain of *thaumata*. Furthermore, Homer and the mythical marvels which the sort of poetry he created contain, are no longer needed.

But there have already been hints in Thucydides' previous narrative that the potentially distorting and falsifying effects which Pericles claims Homer and the poets produce also might be produced by Pericles' own speech. Although he claims that the mighty and wonder-inducing monuments of Athens attest to the power of the *polis*, we have already been warned early on in book one that the physical remains of the city are a misleading standard by which to judge Athens' power (1.10.2-3):

Λακεδαιμονίων γὰρ εἰ ἡ πόλις ἐρημωθείη, λειφθείη δὲ τὰ τε ἱερὰ καὶ τῆς κατασκευῆς τὰ ἐδάφη, πολλὴν ἂν οἶμαι ἀπιστίαν τῆς δυνάμεως προελθόντος πολλοῦ χρόνου τοῖς ἔπειτα πρὸς τὸ κλέος αὐτῶν εἶναι ... Ἀθηναίων δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο παθόντων διπλασίαν ἂν τὴν δύναμιν εἰκάζεσθαι ἀπὸ τῆς φανεραῆς ὄψεως τῆς πόλεως ἢ ἔστιν.

For if the city of the Lacedaemonians was abandoned, and only the temples and the traces of the infrastructure remained, I think that after a great length of time had passed people in the future would be in

⁴¹ See chapter one pp. 54-55 for further discussion of the relationship between past and future *thauma* in the description of Achilles' shield in *Il.* 18.

complete disbelief that their power matched their renown ... But if the same thing befell the Athenians their power would seem double what it is in reality from the visible remains of the city.

This retrospective view of the inequalities between the most obvious visible traces of Athenian and Lacedaemonian power colours Pericles' claims about Athens' capacity to inspire wonder through great monuments and achievements which bear witness to her greatness. Personal autopsy may be held up as a superior means of forming epistemological judgements, but appearances can, of course, be deceiving.

In fact, as Thucydides' narrative goes on to reveal, the visual manifestations of Athenian power in which Pericles places such trust turn out to guarantee nothing of the sort. *Thauma*, however, is a crucial means by which this sort of optical illusion occurs. As wonder takes over, the potential for misjudgements and miscalculations of magnitude increases. *Epitaphioi logoi*, such as the one delivered by Pericles, naturally overmagnify the objects of their praise, with speakers painting verbal pictures of the city and her people which aim at the glorification and memorialisation of the community and its past and present citizens above all else. We find a humorous yet telling critique of the potential dangers which this sort of intense focus on the city's marvellous nature might produce in Plato's *Menexenus*. Before embarking on his own version of an *epitaphios logos*, Socrates describes how such speeches change his visual and mental perceptions of the city, and even of himself (235a-b):

καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἐγκωμιάζοντες κατὰ πάντας τρόπους καὶ τοὺς τετελευτηκότας ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ καὶ τοὺς προγόνους ἡμῶν ἅπαντας τοὺς ἔμπροσθεν καὶ αὐτοὺς ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἔτι ζῶντας ἐπαινοῦντες, ὥστ' ἔγωγε, ὦ Μενέξενε, γενναίως πάνυ διατίθεμαι ἐπαινούμενος ὑπ' αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐκάστοτε ἔστηκα ἀκροώμενος καὶ κηλούμενος, ἡγούμενος ἐν τῷ παραχρήμα μείζων καὶ γενναιότερος καὶ καλλίων γεγονέναι. καὶ οἷα δὴ τὰ πολλὰ ἀεὶ μετ' ἐμοῦ ξένοι τινὲς ἔπονται καὶ ξυνακροῶνται, πρὸς οὓς ἐγὼ σεμνότερος ἐν τῷ παραχρήμα γίγνομαι· καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνοι ταῦτα ταῦτα δοκοῦσί μοι πάσχειν καὶ πρὸς ἐμὲ καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἄλλην πόλιν,

θαυμασιωτέραν αὐτὴν ἡγεῖσθαι εἶναι ἢ πρότερον, ὑπὸ τοῦ λέγοντος ἀναπειθόμενοι.

And they [i.e. the speakers of the *epitaphioi logoi*] extol the city in every possible way, praising both those who died in the war and our ancestors before us and ourselves, who are still living. As a result of this, Menexenus, I end up thinking of myself as extremely noble when I am praised by them. And each time, listening to them and being enchanted, I am raised up: right there on the spot I think I am bigger and nobler and handsomer. And often some foreign visitors tag along with me and listen: right there on the spot I become more awe-inspiring to them. For they seem to me to be affected in just the same way as I am with respect to me and the rest of the city, believing her to be more wonderful than before after being seduced by the speaker.

Socrates picks up on the potentially skewed effect which verbal images created by orators can create, by claiming that he feels his own physical proportions increase as he listens to the praise of the city and her citizens, and describing precisely the kind of distortion which the creation of *thauma* is able to induce. Although Socrates is obviously exaggerating here, this humorous portrayal of the effects of *epitaphioi logoi* nevertheless contains a more serious critique of the conceptual illusions which wonder-inducing language may help to encourage.⁴² It is this aspect of the power of *thauma* that Thucydides also engages with in his portrayal of Pericles' wonderful vision of Athens in his own Funeral Oration.

But it is only as Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War progresses that the risk of unreflectively falling prey to the distorting power of *thauma* truly becomes apparent. One of the ways in which the danger of *thauma* is demonstrated is through the increasing importance of the idea of skewed and distorted perceptions over the course of the narrative of the expedition to Sicily. In connection with this, we find that the antithesis between the near and the far is continually turned on its head over the course of books six

⁴² On the dangerous effects of the rhetoric of the *epitaphios logos* which Plato outlines in the *Menexenus*' prologue, and on the place of *thauma* in this passage, see Loraux (1986) 264-70.

and seven. Just as Euripides' *Ion* demonstrates the risk of simultaneously wondering at and fearing potential threats from far-off when it is matters close at hand which constitute true hazards, the dangers which might be thought to lurk in the West at the beginning of the narrative of the Sicilian expedition actually turn out to be situated at home, with mistakes in Athens ultimately leading to disaster abroad.⁴³

Before the expedition even sets sail, the ability of wonder to skew perceptions is explored by Nicias in his first speech. Nicias cautions the Athenians to use their capacity to inspire wonder wisely, arguing that the idea of wondrous power far-off is more awe-inspiring than the reality of *thaumata* close up once they are put to the test (6.11.4):

ἡμᾶς δ' ἂν οἱ ἐκεῖ Ἕλληνες μάλιστα μὲν ἐκπεπληγμένοι εἶεν εἰ μὴ ἀφικοίμεθα, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ εἰ δείξαντες τὴν δύναμιν δι' ὀλίγου ἀπέλθοιμεν· τὰ γὰρ διὰ πλείστου πάντες ἴσμεν θαυμαζόμενα καὶ τὰ πεῖραν ἥκιστα τῆς δόξης δόντα.

But the Hellenes there would be especially astonished if we did not turn up at all; second best would be to depart after making a display of our power for a short time. For we all know that the things which are furthest off and which give the least opportunity to put their reputation to the test are wondered at.

These words echo those of Pericles' Funeral Oration on the subject of *thauma*. While Pericles claims that the wonder-inspiring aspects of Athens can be put to the test and not found wanting, Nicias suggests that *thaumata* can lose their power by becoming familiar when seen close up. In contrast to Pericles' view that Athens alone can withstand intense scrutiny at close quarters and remain impressive, Nicias grasps the fact that it is through distance that the potentially thaumatic power of Athens retains its mystique in the eyes of others.

⁴³ See Rood (1998) 133-82 on the connections between mistakes at home and results abroad in the Sicilian narrative; cf. Taylor (2010) 135-87 on the frequent inversion of what is near/far within the narrative of the Sicilian expedition.

What Nicias does not grasp, however, is the fact that it is this same alluring fascination with the distant which enthuses the Athenians in the build-up to the Sicilian expedition. He may be correct in his contention “the things furthest off are wondered at and give the least opportunity to put their reputation to the test”, but he does not take account of the fact that this inability to put matters to the test can also increase desire, if the imagination is gripped by a longing for *thaumata* rather than a fear of the unknown. In fact, Nicias’ constant reminders (and exaggerations) of the extreme distance of Sicily only inflame Athenian desire for the acquisition of potentially marvellous far-off lands, rather than dissuading the *polis* from the difficult enterprise which has been proposed. Nicias seems aware that longing for the distant is a risk in his first speech when he appeals to the older citizens to not be seized by “a harmful desire for things far away” (δυσέρωτας εἶναι τῶν ἀπόντων, 6.13.1), but he fails to recognise the danger his own rhetoric creates, as it repeatedly places the idea of Sicily as a distant land into the minds of his listeners. Ironically, and quite inadvertently, these words create a marvellous distorting effect of their own. Although Nicias expects that his speech will dissuade the Athenians from the expedition, or at the least ensure that his fellow citizens understand the magnitude of what faces them and make cautious plans accordingly (ὁ μὲν Νικίας τοσαῦτα εἶπε νομίζων τοὺς Ἀθηναίους τῷ πλήθει τῶν πραγμάτων ἢ ἀποτρέψειν ἢ, εἰ ἀναγκάζοιτο στρατεύεσθαι, μάλιστα’ ἂν οὕτως ἀσφαλῶς ἐκπλεῦσαι, 6.24.1), his words have the very opposite effect (οἱ δὲ τὸ μὲν ἐπιθυμοῦν τοῦ πλοῦ οὐκ ἐξηρέθησαν ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀχλώδους τῆς παρασκευῆς, πολὺ δὲ μᾶλλον ὥρμηντο, καὶ τοῦναντίον περιέστη αὐτῷ, 6.24.2). Nicias even misjudges the effect of his words on the older Athenian citizens whom he expects to side with him against the youthful impetuosity of Alcibiades and his followers. His rhetoric only serves to remind the *polis* of the potential of wondrous Athenian martial glory and

achievements like those described in Pericles' Funeral Oration, with the result that these warnings inflame the desire for conquest of both young and old alike (6.24.3):

καὶ ἔρως ἐνέπεσε τοῖς πᾶσιν ὁμοίως ἐκπλεῦσαι· τοῖς μὲν γὰρ πρεσβυτέροις ὥς ἢ καταστρεψομένοις ἐφ' ᾧ ἔπλεον ἢ οὐδὲν ἂν σφαλεῖσαν μεγάλην δύναμιν, τοῖς δ' ἐν τῇ ἡλικίᾳ τῆς τε ἀπουσίας πόθῳ ὄψεως καὶ θεωρίας, καὶ εὐέλπιδες ὄντες σωθήσεσθαι.

And a passionate desire to set sail gripped everyone equally: the elder men believed that either they would trample upon the places they were sailing against, or that the great force would suffer no disaster, while a longing for far-off spectacles and sights fell upon the younger men, and they were all extremely confident that they would be alright.

Despite Nicias' warnings against the potentially damaging effects of harmful desire, his warning again increases the Athenians' daring and desperate desire for the possession of far-off lands and the attainment of unknown glory.

The language of longing for the far-off here is reminiscent of the sentiment expressed in Pindar's *Pythian* 3, which describes Coronis' punishment because 'she was in love with things far-off' (ἤρατο τῶν ἀπεόντων, 20) – i.e. she takes a mortal lover despite the fact that she is already pregnant with Apollo's child Asclepius. As a result of this, Coronis becomes one of the many foolish people 'who despise what is near at hand and set their sights on things far away' (ὅστις αἰσχύνων ἐπιχώρια παπταίνει τὰ πόρσω, 22). The near/far dynamic in this poem creates a paradox: a mortal lover should be much closer to the mortal Coronis than a god, but in this instance her longing for what should be much more familiar to her has become strangely transgressive after Apollo's previous attentions. The Athenian situation in Thucydides presents a similar sort of paradox: on the one hand, the Sicilians are continually presented as exotic, distant and desirable, yet as books six and seven progress it becomes clear that the Athenians and Sicilians are actually now very similar to each other in many ways. It is this paradoxical longing

for something unfamiliar yet familiar which causes disaster for the Athenians, just as it does for Coronis in Pindar's poem.⁴⁴

Even more paradoxically, this increased longing for far-off sights is further inflamed by the astonishing spectacles of Athenian power at home, which Thucydides suggests distort Athenian conceptions of the true strength of their hegemony. It is through the figure of Alcibiades that we gain an increasing awareness of the nature of these types of distortion. After warning the Athenians about the dangers of diluting their capacity for inspiring wonder by making themselves over-familiar to the enemy, Nicias turns to the danger that Alcibiades poses to the *polis*. He condemns the younger man for considering only his own interest while exhorting the Athenians to sail, and for thinking about how he might profit from the expedition and be wondered at for his expensive habit of keeping horses (τὸ ἐαυτοῦ μόνον σκοπῶν, ἄλλως τε καὶ νεώτερος ὢν ἔτι ἐς τὸ ἄρχειν, ὅπως θαυματοῦ μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς ἵπποτροφίας, 6.12.2). This hint that Alcibiades has set himself up as a distracting object of wonder to the Athenians is soon confirmed by the younger man's reply to Nicias. Rather than refuting his criticism, Alcibiades instead embraces the suggestion that his life and conduct are an impressive and marvellous sight to behold, and suggests that this approach to his personal life has already yielded results for the *polis*. Nicias may have disparaged the way in which he has set himself up as an object of wonder because of his love of horses, but Alcibiades argues that the rest of the Hellenes now think that Athenian power is even greater than it really is as a result of his decision to enter seven chariots into the races at Olympia (οἱ γὰρ Ἕλληνες καὶ ὑπὲρ δύνανται μείζω ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν ἐνόμισαν τῷ ἐμῷ διαπρεπεῖ τῆς Ὀλυμπιάζε θεωρίας ... διότι ἄρματα μὲν ἐπὶ καθῆκα, ὅσα οὐδεὶς πω ιδιώτης πρότερον, 6.16.2). He goes on to claim that his other

⁴⁴ On the near/far theme in *Pyth.* 3 see Young (1968) 27-68; on the closeness of Thucydides' language to this Pindaric parallel see Cornford (1907) 206, Rood (1998) 177 n. 68, Hornblower (2008) 335 and (2004) 73.

displays of wealth and brilliance in the city also produce an impression of strength in the eyes of foreigners, even if fellow citizens become jealous as a result (καὶ ὅσα αὖ ἐν τῇ πόλει χορηγίαις ἢ ἄλλῳ τῷ λαμπρύνονται, τοῖς μὲν ἀστοῖς φθονεῖται φύσει, πρὸς δὲ τοὺς ξένους καὶ αὕτη ἰσχὺς φαίνεται, 6.16.3). The brilliant, wonder-inducing exterior appearance of power is here confused with power itself, as Alcibiades concentrates on the external appearance and trappings of command throughout his speech.⁴⁵

It is this sense of wonder, and its distorting effects, which Thucydides goes on to suggest are one of the causes of the subsequent negative outcome in Sicily, and nowhere is the potential confusion between the trappings of power and power itself more apparent than in the fleet's embarkation from Athens at 6.30-31.⁴⁶ Like Alcibiades' conspicuous display at Olympia, on setting off the whole fleet becomes a demonstration of power and wealth aimed at all the other Hellenes, a spectacle (θέαν, 6.30.2), rather than an effective expedition against enemies (καὶ ἐς τοὺς ἄλλους Ἕλληνας ἐπίδειξιν μᾶλλον εἰκασθῆναι τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ ἐξουσίας ἢ ἐπὶ πολέμους παρασκευήν, 6.31.4).⁴⁷ In fact, the astonishment caused by the sight of the Athenians setting off echoes, on a broader civic level, the external brilliance of the sight of Alcibiades' lifestyle (6.31.6):

καὶ ὁ στόλος οὐχ ἥσσον τόλμης τε θάμβει καὶ ὄψεως λαμπρότητι περιβόητος ἐγένετο ἢ στρατιᾶς πρὸς οὓς ἐπῆσαν ὑπερβολῇ, καὶ ὅτι μέγιστος ἤδη διάπλους ἀπὸ τῆς οἰκείας καὶ ἐπὶ μεγίστη ἐλπίδι τῶν μελλόντων πρὸς τὰ ὑπάρχοντα ἐπεχειρήθη.

And the expedition became not less famous for astonishment at its boldness and the brilliance of its spectacle, than for the disproportionate strength of the force compared to those whom it was directed against, and also because it was the lengthiest voyage away from home yet

⁴⁵ On the focus on appearances in Alcibiades' speech and its distinction from the reality of the situation see Macleod (1983) 86 and Jordan (2000) 70-71.

⁴⁶ Cf. Jordan (2000) 63-79 and Kallet (2001) 21-84 on the specious nature of Athenian power which the spectacle of embarkation exposes.

⁴⁷ On the connection between the astonishment inspired by the appearance of Alcibiades' wondrous lifestyle and the spectacle of the Athenian fleet setting sail see Jordan (2000) 65 and Kallet (2001) 64.

attempted and there was such great hope for the future in relation to their present resources.

The powerful *thambos* which the fleet inspires here is misplaced, aimed at those in Athens watching the spectacle, rather than at the enemy, as Nicias previously advised. Thucydides portrays the effects of this misplaced sense of astonishment as disastrous: by wondering at the sight of power close to home, it now becomes impossible to judge the true capabilities of Athenian influence abroad.

An important aspect of this misjudgement turns out to be the inability to appreciate how *close*, rather than distant, the military capabilities of Syracuse and the other Sicilian cities are to those of the Athenians. Although Nicias seems to grasp this and warn his fellow citizens about the fact that the Sicilian cities are equipped in a manner very similar to that of the Athenians (παρεσκευασμένοι τοῖς πᾶσιν ὁμοιοτρόπως μάλιστα τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ δυνάμει, 6.20.3), his constant talk of the geographical distance of Sicily from Athens perhaps dilutes this aspect of his message, encouraging his fellow Athenians to confuse spatial distance with cultural difference by inadvertently exoticising the West. Only in book seven, at the point when it has become clear to the Athenians that the expedition is a disastrous miscalculation, does the reality of Syracusan similarity become apparent to the attackers: the Sicilian cities are the only place the Athenians have encountered which are akin to their own city in terms of their way of life – democratic, and powerful in terms of ships, cavalry and size (οἱ μὲν Ἀθηναῖοι ἐν παντὶ δὴ ἀθυμίας ἦσαν καὶ ὁ παράλογος αὐτοῖς μέγας ἦν, πολὺ δὲ μείζων ἔτι τῆς στρατείας ὁ μετάμελος. πόλεσι γὰρ ταύταις μόναις ἤδη ὁμοιοτρόποις ἐπελθόντες, δημοκρατουμέναις τε, ὥσπερ καὶ αὐτοί, καὶ ναυσὶ καὶ ἵπποις καὶ μεγέθει ἰσχυρούσαις, 7.55.1-2).⁴⁸

⁴⁸ See Rood (1999) 162 and Hornblower (2008) 21-22 on the similarities and parallels Thucydides draws between the Athenians and Syracusans as the Sicilian narrative progresses.

In fact, uncanny similarities between the two powers continue to arise as Syracuse takes on the mantle of Athens in the Persian Wars, becoming a brave and free city resisting the Athenians' increasingly tyrannical (and Persian-looking) imperialistic overreach.⁴⁹ The sense of paradoxical similarity and simultaneous reversal is complete when the Syracusans, encouraged by their growing military success, resolve to continue to press their advantage over the Athenians until they have utterly destroyed them on land and on sea to ensure that they are wondered at by everyone at the present and in future time (αὐτοὶ δόξαντες αὐτῶν αἴτιοι εἶναι ὑπὸ τε τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν ἔπειτα πολὺ θαυμασθήσεσθαι, 7.56.2). With these words the ironic reversal of the sentiment of Pericles' Funeral Oration (2.41.3-4), which set up the image of Athens as the ultimate *thauma*, is now almost complete. This reversal is made fully clear when Nicias exhorts his dispirited sailors to continue fighting hard and praises the fleet's metic sailors, rather than Athenian citizens, for being "wondered at through the whole of Greece" as a result of learning the Athenians' language and way of life (ἡμῶν τῆς τε φωνῆς τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ καὶ τῶν τρόπων τῇ μιμήσει ἐθαυμάζεσθε κατὰ τὴν Ἑλλάδα, 7.63.3). Again, the Athenians' notions of near and far have been skewed in relation to the effects of *thauma*, as non-native metics are now objects of wonder through their association with Athens, and might even now be seen as objects of competitive emulation for the dejected citizens of Athens themselves.⁵⁰ From this point on, Athens and her native Athenian citizens are no longer able to inspire *thauma*. The confident and admiring (yet ultimately deceptive) *thauma* and *thambos* which the Athenian fleet attracted as it set sail on this expedition is replaced instead with a different type of astonishment: panicked and disbelieving *ekplēxis* as the

⁴⁹ On the similarity of Athens' imperial ambitions in the *History* to those of Persia against Greece in Herodotus see Rood (1998) 197 and (1999) 141-68, Cornford (1907) 201-20 and Rogkoti (2006) 57-86.

⁵⁰ There are further echoes of Pericles' Funeral Oration here at 7.63.3 as well: see Rood (1998) 193; cf. also Joho (2017) 16-48 on the echoes and reversals of Pericles' Funeral Oration in books six and seven more generally.

Athenians in Sicily look at themselves and recognise the true status of their power away from home as they contemplate their own destruction (καὶ τὸν κτύπον μέγαν ἀπὸ πολλῶν νεῶν ξυμπιπτουσῶν ἑκπληξίν, 7.70.6; ἦν τε ἐν τῷ παραυτίκα οὐδεμιᾶς δὴ τῶν ξυμπασῶν ἐλάσσων ἑκπληξις, 7.71.7).⁵¹

The vision of Athens which Pericles' Funeral Oration paints in words does not stand up to scrutiny in the long run after all. In both Aristophanes' *Birds* and Thucydides' *History*, wonder is now one of the most powerful envisaged effects of the images which the successful rhetorician is able to plant in the minds of his audience. In both of these authors, we can see that there has been a marked change in the way in which the power and effect of *thauma* is conceptualised over the course of the Classical period. Objects which provoke *thauma* are no longer presented as potentially disconcerting because of the strangeness and otherness caused either by their association with the divine realm, or with unfamiliar peoples and locations. Nor is *thauma* used to describe the positive effects of shared experiences between mortals and gods. Instead, an encounter with *thauma* is often imbued with increasingly negative overtones of deception and trickery. Wondrous experiences may be both desirable and enjoyable, but they are also potentially misleading, even dangerous on occasion. *Thauma* has become associated with the act of representation itself, with the arousal of a marvelling response now a means of inverting (and often subverting) an audience's conventional perspectives on their most familiar surroundings and beliefs. It is a powerful effect of mimetic acts of representation which somehow involve the defamiliarisation and refamiliarisation of reality, especially through

⁵¹ See Jordan (2000) 77 on the transformation of the wonder inspired by Alcibiades and the sight of the fleet setting sail in book six into the shocked and panicked *ekplēxis* of book seven. Cf. Hunter (1986) 418 on the importance of *ekplēxis* in conveying the scale of the Athenian reversal in book seven, and Allison (1997) 62-65 on the particular association of *ekplēxis* with the Sicilian expedition. Cf. also the ironic reversal of the earlier misguided *ekplēxis* of the Athenian envoys at the deceptive sight of the Egestans' supposed wealth (μεγάλην τὴν ἑκπληξίν τοῖς ἐκ τῶν τριήρων Ἀθηναίοις παρέϊχε, καὶ ἀφικόμενοι ἐς τὰς Ἀθήνας διεθρόνησαν ὥς χρήματα πολλὰ ἴδοιεν, 6.46.4) to the astonishment of the Athenians in book seven (see Kallet (2001) 78 on this reversal), and Rogkoti (2006) 68-69 on the verbal analogies between the Egestan deception at 6.46 and the astonishing spectacle of the fleet's departure.

the use of rhetoric, which often distorts language for its own ends. It is this notion of the potential power of *thauma* which the next two chapters will explore in further depth.

Chapter Six

Words or Wonders? Talking *Thaumata* in Fourth-Century Athens

ὁ δ' Ἀλέξανδρος ἔξω τῆς ἄρκτου καὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὀλίγου δεῖν πάσης μεθιστήκει, ὁ δὲ Ἀντίπατρος πολὺν χρόνον συνῆγε στρατόπεδον, τὸ δ' ἐσόμενον ἄδηλον ἦν. ἐνταῦθ' ἡμῖν ἀπόδειξιν ποιήσαι, Δημόσθενες, τί ποτ' ἦν ἃ ἔπραξας, ἢ τί ποτ' ἦν ἃ ἔλεγες; καὶ εἰ βούλει, παραχωρῶ σοι τοῦ βήματος ἕως ἂν εἴπῃς. ἐπειδὴ δὲ σιγᾷς, ὅτι μὲν ἀπορεῖς, συγγνώμην ἔχω σοι, ἃ δὲ τότε ἔλεγες, ἐγὼ νυνὶ λέξω. οὐ μέμνησθε αὐτοῦ τὰ μισθὰ καὶ ἀπίθανα ῥήματα, ἃ πῶς ποθ' ὑμεῖς, ὧς σιδηροῖ, ἐκαρτερεῖτε ἀκροώμενοι; ὅτ' ἔφη παρελθόν· “ἀμπελουργοῦσί τινες τὴν πόλιν, ἀνατετμήκασιν τινες τὰ κλήματα τὰ τοῦ δήμου, ὑποτέτμηται τὰ νεῦρα τῶν πραγμάτων, φορμορραφούμεθα, ἐπὶ τὰ στενά τινες πρῶτον ὥσπερ τὰς βελόνας διεύρουσι.” ταῦτα δὲ τί ἐστίν, ὧς κίναδος; ῥήματα ἢ θαύματα; καὶ ἄλιν ὅτε κύκλῳ περιδινὼν σεαυτὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος ἔλεγες, ὡς ἀντιπράττων Ἀλεξάνδρῳ· “ὁμολογῶ τὰ Λακωνικὰ συστήσαι, ὁμολογῶ Θετταλοὺς καὶ Περραιβοὺς ἀφιστάναι.” σὺ Θετταλοὺς ἀφιστάναι; σὺ γὰρ ἂν κώμην ἀποστήσειας; σὺ γὰρ ἂν προσέλθοις μὴ ὅτι πρὸς πόλιν, ἀλλὰ πρὸς οἰκίαν, ὅπου κίνδυνος πρόσεστιν;

Aeschines, *Against Ctesiphon*, 3.165-67

Alexander had gone to the far north, almost outside the borders of the known world, and Antipater was taking a long time to collect his army, and the future was unclear. Set out to us, Demosthenes, whatever it was that you did then, or whatever it was that you said. If you like, I will give the platform up to you until you have told us. But you are silent. I can understand your confusion. The things you said then, I will tell now. Do you not remember his repulsive and unbelievable words? How could you endure listening to them, O iron-hearted men, when he came forward and said: “There are some men who are pruning the city, men who are cutting back the shoots of the people, the sinews of the state have been cut away. We are being stitched up: there are certain men who are first pressing us like needles into tight places”. What sort of things are these, you sly fox? Words or wonders? And again when whirling yourself around in a circle on the platform you said this, as though you were acting out against Alexander: “I admit that I put together the Spartan revolt, I admit that I am causing the revolt of the Thessalians and the Perrhaebians”. *You*, cause the Thessalians to revolt? Could *you* cause the revolt of a village? Would you actually approach a house, never mind a city, where danger was present?

Words or wonders? This challenge, thrown down two-thirds of the way through the *Against Ctesiphon* (330 BCE), is not the first time that Aeschines has confronted

Demosthenes with a charge of marvel-mongering in the course of three speeches aimed at his arch-rival. Already in his much earlier attack on Demosthenes and his political ally Timarchus (*Against Timarchus*, 346/5 BCE), and in his speech defending himself from Demosthenes' claims about his conduct as an envoy sent to negotiate with Philip (*On the False Embassy*, 343 BCE), Aeschines has been quick to reach for wonder as a means of characterising and denigrating his opponent's behaviour. By the time we reach the successive court duels of Demosthenes and Aeschines in the latter half of the fourth century BCE, the use and abuse of *thauma* as a means of fashioning the self and others has already become apparent. In this chapter, I want to draw out how the development of a new self-conscious rhetoric of wonder influences the self-positioning of two distinct modes of discourse: political oratory and philosophical writing.

I will first examine Aeschines' use of language concerning wonder to assess the development of the rhetoric of *thauma* in fourth-century oratory. Aeschines' use of this rhetoric is rendered particularly complex by the fact that the world of the Athenian theatre, with all of its thaumatic representations, never lurks far from the surface in the series of five corresponding speeches which the two orators sling back and forth at each other. Aeschines had famously had a career as a tragic actor before becoming a politician, as Demosthenes repeatedly reminds us, and the Theatre of Dionysus itself exemplifies the fraught dynamic between the two speakers in 330 BCE, in the final doublet of speeches (*Against Ctesiphon* and *On the Crown*), especially because one of Aeschines' main claims regarding the illegality of Ctesiphon's proposal of a civic crown for Demosthenes' service to the *polis* is the fact that this reward was put forward in the theatre.¹ Due to his own acting background Aeschines' accusations about Demosthenes'

¹ Aeschines states his contention clearly at *Against Ctesiphon* 3.34, claiming that the law does not allow crowning in the theatre, instead it should take place at a meeting of the Assembly on the Pnyx (ὁ μὲν νομοθέτης κελεύει ἐν τῷ δήμῳ ἐν Πυκνὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀνακηρύττειν τὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ δήμου στεφανούμενον,

marvel-mongering take on an implicitly defensive tinge, as he suggests that his rival, unlike him, is truly the one covering up his bad intentions by acting and forever aiming to distract his audience with marvellous spectacles. Furthermore, the idea that Demosthenes is ‘play-acting’ in front of the audience goes hand in hand with the charge that he is ‘talking marvels’: that is, relying on language which aims only to astonish, mislead and distract, rather than to aid the *polis* or teach her citizens.

The idea of actually ‘talking marvels’ is also found in Plato’s work. Words, phrases and even whole arguments can now be described as *thaumata*, and those who indulge in producing such material become ‘makers of marvels’ (*thaumatopoioi*) – a category I will explore in more detail in the next chapter. But for now I will focus on one work in which the new concept of ‘talking marvels’ is omnipresent: the *Euthydemus*. This dialogue, which tells of Socrates’ encounter with the eristic arguments of the brothers Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, two self-proclaimed sophists, exposes Plato’s view of the dangers which the desire to induce *thauma* can pose in the wrong hands. In this work, the portrayal of the various forms of *thaumata* the sophistic brothers are intent on producing has an extremely playful, ironic and humorous edge. That is not to say, however, that its treatment of *thauma* lacks a serious purpose: after all, wonder for Plato goes back to the very heart and origin of philosophy itself.² In fact, the ability to wield the power of *thauma* correctly becomes one of the hallmarks of the true philosopher. In contrast, the misuse of the astonishing impact of wonder becomes a cast-iron indication of the incompetence or, occasionally, even the nefarious intent of those men – be they sophists, poets or politicians – who wish to lay claim to true knowledge. This interlinks with one of Plato’s key concerns: the establishment of the definition of the philosopher

ἄλλοθι δὲ μηδαμοῦ, Κτησιφῶν δὲ ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ). On the special resonance of the theatre in the affair of the crown and its related speeches see Hanink (2014) 112-22.

² As I discussed in chapter one pp. 45-46; I will return to Plato’s views on this issue in the next chapter.

proper. As Andrea Nightingale's work on the development of philosophical discourse in the fourth century has so brilliantly emphasised, the very boundaries and definition of philosophical writing in this period were by no means as clear-cut and established as Plato would have us believe, if we were to take his own pronouncements on this issue at face value.³ I will demonstrate over the course of this chapter and the next that *thauma* becomes a vital term within the self-fashioning of philosophical prose as a new and distinct genre in the fourth century BCE, and that various discussions of the purpose and practitioners of *thauma* become one of Plato's key strategies in his dialogues for defining the boundaries of this innovative discourse.

1. Demosthenes the Marvel-Monger

But Aeschines' biting question remains to be answered: words, or wonders? This attack on Demosthenes' use of language is especially pointed at this moment in the *Against Ctesiphon*. Aeschines' vituperative criticism of his rival here reaches a virtuosic pitch, as he moves from discussing Demosthenes' various past misdemeanours in the aftermath of the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BCE, to his cowardice in relation to the events of the present day (331-30 BCE). While Demosthenes wastes his time (at least according to Aeschines) in attempting to drum up anti-Macedonian sentiment, Alexander has now reached, and almost gone beyond, the very borders of the known world. Aeschines even goes so far as to claim that Alexander is now in the far north – apparently a hyperbolic figure of speech rather than a literal reflection of the Macedonian's geographical location.⁴ The implication is clear: the edges of the earth, once the natural home of exotic

³ Nightingale (1995).

⁴ Alexander cannot literally have been in the far north when Aeschines delivered this speech because he had been tied up defeating the Persian empire in the Near East in 331-330 BCE. It seems that Aeschines, when he says 'beyond the Bear', is exaggerating for effect here and possibly resorting to a conventional

natural *thaumata*, have now been thoroughly tamed and familiarised by Alexander. Instead it is Demosthenes, in Athens, who provides *thaumata* now. Aeschines goes on to suggest that these *thaumata*, unlike Alexander's, consist purely of empty words and gestures. His verbal mimicry of Demosthenes' unique figures of speech makes it clear that it is the latter's use of vivid metaphor involving often violent imagery which is being labelled as marvellous: men are accused of 'pruning' (ἀμπελουργοῦσι) 'cutting back' or 'cutting away' (ἀνατετμήκασι ... ὑποτέμνεται) the city or people, the rest of the citizens find themselves 'pushed like needles' (τὰς βελόνας διείρουσι) into narrow places. Aeschines' reading of Demosthenes' characteristic use of metaphor is in fact very sensitive: his opponent does indeed seem to have a particular penchant for such graphic imagery, often medical in nature, and his metaphors most frequently involve the idea of something being torn apart: either the state or himself.⁵ Aeschines thus picks up on a genuine Demosthenic stylistic trait and here attacks it mercilessly through mimicry in a way the audience will interpret as particularly Demosthenic.

It is not Demosthenes' words alone, however, which are being labelled as *thaumata* here, but his movements too. This is clear from Demosthenes' own reference to this precise passage of the *Against Ctesiphon* in his response to that speech, *On the Crown* (18.232):

καὶ μὴν οὐδὲ τοῦτ' εἰπεῖν ὀκνήσω, ὅτι ὁ τὸν ῥήτορα βουλόμενος δικαίως
ἐξετάζειν καὶ μὴ συκοφαντεῖν οὐκ ἂν οἶα σὺ νῦν ἔλεγες, τοιαῦτα
κατηγορεῖ, παραδείγματα πλάττων καὶ ῥήματα καὶ σχήματα μιμούμενος
(πάνυ γὰρ παρὰ τοῦτο, οὐχ ὀρᾷς; γέγονεν τὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων, εἰ τοῦτ' ὁ

turn of phrase, as a scholiast on this passage suggests: ἔξω τῆς ἄρκτου: ἐν ὑπερβολῇ λέγει, ὃ λέγομεν αὐτοὶ ἐν Ὑπερβορείῳ (Σ ad. 3.165.5). For a detailed account of the historical background of the speeches between Aeschines and Demosthenes see Cawkwell (1969) 163-80. Cf. Harris (1995) on Aeschines' career in Athenian politics; Carey (2000) 159-66 and Yunis (2001) 1-17 on the background of *On the Crown*; Yunis (2005) 9-20 on Demosthenes 18 and 19 more generally; and Worthington (2013) 188-91 on the background of the *Against Timarchus*, pp. 202-209 on the embassy speeches, and pp. 294-309 on the trial concerning the crown from Demosthenes' point of view.

⁵ On the plausibility of these images as actual Demosthenic metaphors, see Brock (2013) 193 n.173. On medical imagery in Demosthenes see Wooten (1979) and Rowe (1966).

ῥῆμα, ἀλλὰ μὴ τουτὶ διελέχθην ἐγώ, ἢ δευρὶ τὴν χεῖρα, ἀλλὰ μὴ δευρὶ παρήνεγκα).

And I will not hesitate to say this, that anyone who wants justly to scrutinise an orator rather than maliciously prosecuting him would not have said such things as you now allege, inventing examples and mimicking my words and gestures – for, don’t you see, what happened to Greece really depended on this, whether I uttered this word or that one, or moved my hand this way and not that way!

Aeschines’ mocking question, ‘words or wonders?’ (ῥήματα ἢ θαύματα), is here softened into Demosthenes’ reference to his own oratorical arts as ‘ῥήματα καὶ σχήματα’.⁶ With this phrase Demosthenes is referring to Aeschines’ mention of his use of distinctive figures of speech, as well as his oratorical gestures, as Demosthenes’ censure of Aeschines’ mocking movement of his hands demonstrates (ἢ δευρὶ τὴν χεῖρα, ἀλλὰ μὴ δευρὶ παρήνεγκα), with Demosthenes presumably parodying Aeschines’ parody at this moment in *On the Crown* by waving his hands about.⁷ It is this combination of words and gestures which constitutes the supposedly deceptive, persuasive power of the wondrous oratorical performance.⁸ Aeschines exaggerates Demosthenes’ movements further by describing him in terms more fitting for a dancer than an orator on the βῆμα, when he claims that his words against Alexander were accompanied by whirling about in a circle (κύκλῳ περιδιῶν σεαυτὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος).⁹

⁶ For the complex meaning of the term σχῆμα, see e.g. Goldhill (1999) 4-5.

⁷ On Aeschines’ physical mimicry of Demosthenes’ performance at *Against Ctesiphon* 3.165-67, and Demosthenes’ response to this mimicry at *On the Crown* 18.232, see Carey (2000) 221 n.192 and Hall (2006) 373-74. Cf. Easterling (1999) 154-66 on the performative aspects of the contest between Demosthenes and Aeschines more generally.

⁸ See the perceptive comments of Gotteland (2006: 602) on the connection between Demosthenes’ gestures and the wonder which Aeschines claims is being created as a result here: “La pose et le geste, sans aucun doute, sont censés traduire physiquement l’étonnement de l’orateur”.

⁹ Though undoubtedly exaggerated for effect, Aeschines may be picking up on Demosthenes’ actual oratorical behaviour here. Emphatic delivery does seem to have been a notable aspect of Demosthenes’ personal style, if ancient testimony is to be believed. An anecdote preserved in [Plutarch] *Lives of the Ten Orators* at 845b states that when asked what the first, second and third most important aspects of oratory were, Demosthenes answered “delivery” three times (ᾧθεν ἐρομένου αὐτὸν τινος τί πρῶτον ἐν ῥητορικῇ, εἶπεν “ὑπόκρισις”· καὶ τί δεύτερον “ὑπόκρισις”· καὶ τί τρίτον “ὑπόκρισις”). Plutarch’s *Life of Demosthenes* (11.3) also makes much of the pleasing and wondrous nature of Demosthenic delivery (τοῖς μὲν οὖν πολλοῖς ὑποκρινόμενος ἤρεσκε θαυμαστῶς). See Hall (2006) 369-70 on the way in which later anecdotes about the orators suggest that the performative aspect of speeches was as vital – if not more so – than the content.

This is not the first time Aeschines has criticised Demosthenes for attempting to cast an oratorical spell over an audience through the use of marvellous phrases, arguments and gestures. In fact, Aeschines' very first mention of Demosthenes in the first of his three speeches, *Against Timarchus*, takes a specific swipe at his fellow politician's supposed skill at making a marvellous spectacle of himself through his potentially wonder-provoking speech and gestures (1.94):

καίτοι λογογράφος γέ τις φησίν, ὁ μηχανώμενος αὐτῷ τὴν ἀπολογίαν, ἐναντία με λέγειν ἑμαυτῷ. οὐ γὰρ δὴ δοκεῖν εἶναι αὐτῷ δυνατὸν τὸν αὐτὸν ἄνθρωπον πεπορνεῦσθαι καὶ τὰ πατρῷα κατεδηδοκέναι· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἡμαρτηκέναι τι περὶ τὸ σῶμα παιδὸς εἶναί φησι, τὸ δὲ τὰ πατρῷα κατεδηδοκέναι ἀνδρός. ἔτι δὲ τοὺς καταισχύνοντας αὐτοὺς μισθοὺς φησι πράττεσθαι τοῦ πράγματος· ἀποθαυμάζων οὖν περιέρχεται καὶ τερατευόμενος κατὰ τὴν ἀγοράν, εἰ ὁ αὐτὸς πεπόρνευταί τε καὶ τὰ πατρῷα κατεδήδοκεν.

And yet a certain speech-writer, who is concocting Timarchus' defence, says that I contradict myself. For it does not seem possible for the same man to have been a prostitute and to have eaten up his inheritance: doing wrong in respect of one's body is the act of a boy, he says, but eating up one's inheritance is the act of a man. Furthermore, he says that those who disgrace themselves charge money for the practice. And so he goes around the marketplace marvel-making and acting astonished that the same man has both been a prostitute and eaten up his inheritance.

The anonymous λογογράφος in question here is of course Demosthenes, who will go on to conduct Timarchus' defence. This is the first time that he has been mentioned in the speech, and Aeschines makes sure to imprint a negative image of his behaviour in the minds of the jurors from the outset. He claims that Demosthenes cannot even wait to enter the court before playing to the crowd: instead he goes around the marketplace arguing against Aeschines' anticipated arguments and both acting astonished and spreading astonishment wherever he goes. Aeschines here introduces the verb τερατεύεσθαι, a word he will

For the connections between verbal style and delivery in antiquity, see Fortenbaugh (1986) 252, Sonkowsky (1959) 259-61 and Worman (2004) 3-4.

repeatedly associate with Demosthenes and his behaviour.¹⁰ The word is derived from *τέρας*, a noun which, in its basic sense, denotes either a sign, portent or marvel (usually sent by the gods) which it is possible to interpret, or a monster or monstrosity which deviates from the norms of the natural world.¹¹ The verb *τεραπεύεσθαι* is difficult to translate into English, but seems to combine the dual sense of ‘talking about marvels, talking in a way which causes wonder, marvel-making’; and ‘playing to the crowd with the aim of astonishing and distracting the audience’.¹² The noun associated with *τεραπεύεσθαι* is *τερατεία*, which means something like ‘wondrous talk’ or ‘marvellous material’.

Forms of *τεραπεύεσθαι* only appear twice in our extant literature before Aeschines’ speeches, both times in Aristophanes: once in *Knights* (627) and once in *Frogs* (834). Both instances refer to the use of wonder-inducing language. The use of the verb in *Knights* comes when the Sausage Seller returns and describes how the Paphlagonian broke out into ‘speech hurled like thunder’ (*ἐλασίβροντ’ ἀναρρηγνὺς ἔπη*, 626) and ‘by talking marvels he was pressing the Knights hard’ (*τεραπευόμενος ἥρειδε κατὰ τῶν ἱππέων*, 627). The link between Aeschines’ frequent use of forms of the verb ‘*τεραπεύεσθαι*’ and its use here in a context which suggests the famously aggressive oratory of Cleon has not gone unnoticed.¹³ The word appears in relation to verbal style in *Frogs* as well. At 833-34 Euripides launches his very first attack on his rival Aeschylus

¹⁰ It is possible that Aeschines is not alone in associating this word with Demosthenes: cf. Hyperides *Against Demosthenes* fr. 4, col. 17, where the orator is probably accused of [*τερά*]τεύη, a reading which has been adopted by all editors from Blass onwards (see Whitehead (2000) 411).

¹¹ See *LSJ* s.v. *τέρας* I, II and III.

¹² Certainly ancient scholiasts seem to have recognised the potential of interpreting the verb ‘*τεραπεύεσθαι*’ in senses which covered both marvellous words and marvellous gestures: see the scholion on Aeschines *On the False Embassy* 49, which takes the term in a primarily physical sense: *τεραπευσάμενος: τερατώδες ποιήσας σχῆμα καὶ ἀηδὲς διὰ τοῦ προσώπου καὶ σχήματος* (no. 108, Dिल्s 1992). Cf. Σ ad. Ar. *Eq.* 627: *τεραπευόμενος: ψευδόμενος καὶ μηδὲν ἀληθὲς μηδὲ ὑγιὲς λέγων* (627a, Jones and Wilson 1969), which interprets *τεραπεύεσθαι* as a word with a primarily verbal scope.

¹³ See Gotteland (2006) 602-603 on the association between Demosthenes and Cleon which Aeschines is attempting to draw with his use of this word in his speeches.

by claiming that he is being ‘pompous’ or ‘haughty’ (σεμνός) in his manner in a way which echoes his method of baffling people by using obscure language to talk marvels in his tragedies (ἐν ταῖς τραγωδίαισιν ἑτερατεύετο, 834). In both these cases, Aristophanes uses the verb in instances which constitute rhetorical contests: Aeschines’ use of the same term is equally pointed in its focus on a stylistic trait of Demosthenes’ oratorical performance.¹⁴

In his next speech, *On the False Embassy*, Aeschines returns at several points to the accusation that Demosthenes is relying on the wondrous verbal and visual aspects of his rhetorical performance to distract the assembled citizens of Athens. In this speech, Aeschines defends himself against the accusation that he acted improperly as an envoy, and castigates his opponent for misleading the people by providing dangerous alternate advice about the most advantageous response to Philip’s growing power. At 2.49 Aeschines describes Demosthenes’ deceptive speech to the assembly after the return of the first embassy to Philip:

ἐφ’ ἅπασιν δ’ ἡμῖν ἀνίσταται τελευταῖος Δημοσθένης, καὶ τερατευσάμενος, ὥσπερ εἶωθε, τῷ σχήματι καὶ τρίψας τὴν κεφαλὴν, ὁρῶν ἐπισημαινόμενον τὸν δῆμον καὶ ἀποδεδεγμένον τοὺς παρ’ ἐμοῦ λόγους, ἀμφοτέρων ἔφη θαυμάζειν, καὶ τῶν ἀκουόντων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυσάντων, ὅταν παρέντες τὸν χρόνον, οἱ μὲν τὸν τοῦ βουλευέσθαι, οἱ δὲ τὸν τοῦ συμβουλευεῖν, ἀποδιατρίβωσι τὴν ὑπερόριον λαλιὰν ἀγαπῶντες ἐν τοῖς οἰκείοις πράγμασιν· οὐδὲν γὰρ εἶναι ῥᾶον ἢ πρεσβείαν ἀπαγγεῖλαι.

And last of us all Demosthenes stood up, and making marvels, as he does by putting on his usual shtick, and scratching his head, seeing that the people approved of and accepted my report, said that he marvelled at both sides, both the audience and the envoys; for they were losing time, the former group for deliberating, the latter for giving advice, and all of them were wasting time entertaining themselves with foreign gossip.

¹⁴ With reference to the corresponding speeches between Demosthenes and Aeschines, Hanink (2014) 150-51 notes that it is “striking how often both he [*i.e. Demosthenes*] and Aeschines employ critical vocabulary that is for us first attested in the Aristophanic corpus, and most prominently in the *Frogs*”. The use of τερατεύεσθαι in Aeschines is another striking example of this tendency.

Aeschines here describes Demosthenes' performance in front of the Assembly in great detail to create the impression that he was more interested in creating τέρατα with his oratorical σχῆμα, than aiding the *polis* at this critical juncture. Again, the reference to Demosthenes' σχῆμα applies not only to his words to the Assembly but also to his strange accompanying gestures, with the result that the whole speech is cast as a deliberately deceptive performance. Aeschines is consistent in using the unusual word 'τερατεύεσθαι' to characterise Demosthenes in this way, returning to it again in instances which seem to refer primarily to his attempts to mask the deception of his speaking with the wonder created by his oratorical performance. At *On the False Embassy* 2.98, Demosthenes is accused of lying about the date on which the second embassy set out by resorting to speaking of marvels rather than telling the truth (περὶ οὗθ' οὗτος οὐδὲν ἀληθὲς εἶπεν, ἀλλὰ ψεύδεται καὶ κατηγορεῖν οὐδὲν ἀληθὲς ἔχων τερατεύεται). In the *Against Ctesiphon* Aeschines again returns to the concept of marvel-making not long before he asks whether his enemy is using words or wonders: Demosthenes is once more accused of 'talking marvels' when he hears of Philip's death, with the result that he is able to set up a shrine for Philip's assassin Pausanias (ἐπειδὴ δ' ἐτελεύτησε μὲν Φίλιππος, Ἀλέξανδρος δ' εἰς τὴν ἀρχὴν κατέστη, πάλιν αὖ τερατευόμενος ἱερὰ μὲν ἰδρύσατο Πausανίου, 3.160).

The noun τερατεία is also used with reference to Demosthenes' art in *On the False Embassy*. Aeschines first complains about Demosthenes' characteristic use of τερατεία as something which naturally goes hand in hand with his effrontery (τοσαύτην τόλμαν καὶ τερατείαν ἀνθρώπου, 2.11); towards the end of the speech he suggests that it is a fortunate thing that his rival has no intelligence to go along with the τερατεία of his manner and his ability to put words together (ἐν δὲ εὐτυχοῦμεν οἱ μηδὲν ἀδικοῦντες, ὅτι πρὸς τῇ τερατείᾳ τοῦ τρόπου καὶ τῇ τῶν ὀνομάτων συνθέσει νοῦν οὐκ ἔχει, 2.153). Again,

it is in Aristophanes that we first find *τερατεία*, in a context which suggests it has become a newly coined term of literary criticism by the last quarter of the fifth century. After the first entrance of the chorus in *Clouds*, Strepsiades is astonished and begs Socrates to tell him the identity of the women who have just uttered the awe-inspiring song (αὗται αἰ φθεγξάμεναι τοῦτο τὸ σεμνόν, 314-15). Socrates explains that they are heavenly Clouds (οὐράνιαι Νεφέλαι, 316), who provide judgment and dialectic and intelligence (γνώμην καὶ διάλεξιν καὶ νοῦν ἡμῖν παρέχουσιν, 317), as well as marvellous talk, circumlocution, verbal attack and verbal defence (καὶ τερατείαν καὶ περίεξιν καὶ κροῦσιν καὶ κατάληπιν, 318). Terms such as κροῦσις and κατάληψις come from the technical vocabulary of the sophist's rhetorical arsenal; *τερατεία* too is used as a quasi-technical rhetorical term.¹⁵ Isocrates makes use of *τερατεία* as a rhetorical term in a similar way at the beginning of the *Panathenaicus* (νεώτερος μὲν ὢν προηρούμην γράφειν τῶν λόγων οὐ τοὺς μυθώδεις οὐδὲ τοὺς τερατείας καὶ ψευδολογίας μεστός, 1), claiming that in his younger years he decided to eschew 'mythical material', 'falsity' and 'marvellous talk' which only provides a fleetingly pleasurable effect rather than being truly useful or instructive.¹⁶ By labelling Demosthenes' art using this word, Aeschines' implication about his rhetorical skills is clear: his rival's use of marvellous words and marvellous gestures creates an astounding effect which consistently casts a potentially dangerous oratorical spell.

¹⁵ On the use of κροῦσις and κατάληψις in particular as technical rhetorical or critical terms see Borthwick (1959) 27-28, who notes that both of these terms seem to have their roots originally in musical criticism (i.e. striking or dampening the strings of an instrument), and suggests that in this context that the skilled orator plays upon his audience as a musician plays upon a musical instrument, rousing or quelling them as he wishes. Guidorizzi and Del Corno (1996) *ad loc.* also suggest that these terms were originally found in music criticism, but argue that they are meant primarily in a rhetorical/dialectical sense here. Cf. Dover (1968) *ad loc.* on the use of these words as rhetorical technical terms.

¹⁶ Roth (2003) 76 n. 66 links the use of *τερατεία* in the opening of Isocrates' *Panathenaicus* with similar uses in both Aristophanes' *Clouds* and Aeschines' *Against Ctesiphon*.

2. Aeschines the Actor

But why is Aeschines so keen to cast Demosthenes' oratory and political manoeuvring through the use of language relating to wonder and the marvellous, in a way which emphasises the deceptive effect of his words and their associated gestures? In a simple sense, the repeated references to Demosthenes' conduct in these terms acts to undermine the seriousness of his opponent's charges, by suggesting that he is only aiming to create a distracting spectacle rather than aiding the *polis*. I want to suggest, however, that the main reason for casting this commonplace in terms of 'talking marvels' *specifically* lies in Aeschines' own position as a former tragic actor.¹⁷

Aeschines' status as an ex-tritagonist is repeatedly brought up by Demosthenes and obliquely referred to at several points in Aeschines' own speeches. Demosthenes constantly attempts to portray his theatrical background in a negative light, suggesting that Aeschines' tragic training contributes to his attempts to manipulate the *dēmos* in both of the speeches aimed at his opponent: first in *On the False Embassy* (343 BCE) and next in *On the Crown* (330 BCE). Demosthenes' jibes start early in *On the False Embassy* (19.10) when he refers to Ischander, a fellow envoy, as Aeschines' 'second-actor' (ἔχων Ἰσχάνδρον τὸν Νεοπτολέμου δευτεραγωνιστὴν) when the latter spoke and persuaded people to send ambassadors to all the Greek states to convene and talk about the growing power of Philip. Later in the speech, Aeschines' stint as a tritagonist is referred to as an earlier stage in a disreputable career which has directly contributed to his current dishonest behaviour as a politician (τὰ τελευταῖα δ' ἔναγχος ἐν χορηγίοις ἀλλοτρίοις ἐπὶ τῷ τριταγωνιστεῖν ἀγαπητῶς παρατρεφόμενον, 19.200). Demosthenes returns to this same charge later in the speech, when Aeschines' support for Philip is presented as

¹⁷ On Aeschines' acting career and its influence on the speeches exchanged between him and Demosthenes see Easterling (1999), Hall (2006) 353-92 and Hanink (2014) 134-35.

predictable, since he himself, as a tritagonist, naturally specialised in playing tyrants in the theatre (καίτοι καὶ περὶ τῆς φωνῆς ἴσως εἶπεῖν ἀνάγκη· πάνυ γὰρ μέγα καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ φρονεῖν αὐτὸν ἀκούω, ὥς καθυποκρινόμενον ὑμᾶς, 19.337).¹⁸

Aeschines' response is to paint his opponent also as a sort of actor, though a much inferior type of player: Demosthenes is only capable of and interested in distracting the *dēmos* by making marvels in the marketplace, by shamming and deceiving in a way reminiscent of a certain category of paratheatrical performer: the *thaumatopoiος*. I will discuss the role and status of the *thaumatopoiος* in detail in the next chapter; for now, it is enough to note that this type of performer was conceived of as aiming solely at the creation of *thauma* to distract and entertain an audience, rather than to instruct them about the higher things in life. From Aeschines' point of view, there is a world of difference between his own acting ability and background on the stage and Demosthenes' oratorical play-acting. For this reason, the long apostrophe hurled at Demosthenes at the moment when the *Against Ctesiphon* reaches its account of the aftermath of the battle of Chaeronea is not meant to be purely hyperbolic, but to convey the fact that Demosthenes' aims towards his fellow citizens during his oratorical performance are completely divorced from those that once motivated Aeschines in the theatre (3.152-53):

ἐνθα δὴ καὶ τῶν ἀνδρῶν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἄξιόν ἐστιν ἐπιμνησθῆναι, οὓς οὗτος ἀθύρων καὶ ἀκαλλιερέτων ὄντων τῶν ἱερῶν ἐκπέμψας ἐπὶ τὸν πρόδηλον κίνδυνον, ἐτόλμησε τοῖς δραπέταις ποσὶ καὶ λελοιπόσι τὴν τάξιν ἀναβάς ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον τὸν τῶν τελευτησάντων, ἐγκωμιάζειν τὴν ἐκείνων ἀρετήν. ὃ πρὸς μὲν τὰ μεγάλα καὶ σπουδαῖα τῶν ἔργων τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπάντων ἀχρηστότατε, πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τόλμαν θαυμασιώτατε, ἐπιχειρήσεις αὐτίκα μάλα, βλέπων εἰς τὰ τούτων πρόσωπα, λέγειν ὥς δεῖ σε ἐπὶ ταῖς τῆς πόλεως συμφοραῖς στεφανοῦσθαι; ἐὰν δ' οὗτος λέγῃ, ὑμεῖς ὑπομενεῖτε, καὶ συναποθανεῖται τοῖς τελευτήσασι ὥς ἔοικε καὶ ἡ ὑμετέρα μνήμη; γένεσθε δὴ μοι μικρὸν χρόνον τὴν διάνοιαν μὴ ἐν τῷ δικαστηρίῳ, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ, καὶ

¹⁸ Duncan (2006) 65-67 demonstrates that it is specifically as a *bad* actor that Aeschines is chastised here: Demosthenes is suggesting that Aeschines has never been truly successful at anything he has turned his hand to because he is disreputable by nature.

νομίσαθ' ὁρᾶν προϊόντα τὸν κήρυκα καὶ τὴν ἐκ τοῦ ψηφίσματος ἀνάρρησιν μέλλουσαν γίγνεσθαι, καὶ λογίσασθε πότερ' οἴεσθε τοὺς οἰκεῖους τῶν τελευτησάντων πλείω δάκρυα ἀφήσειν ἐπὶ ταῖς τραγυδίαις καὶ τοῖς ἥρωικοῖς πάθεσι τοῖς μετὰ ταῦτ' ἐπεισιούσιν, ἢ ἐπὶ τῇ τῆς πόλεως ἀγνωμοσύνῃ.

Here indeed it is appropriate to make mention of the brave men whom this man [i.e. Demosthenes] sent out against the obvious danger with omitted or ill-omened sacrifices. Yet he dared to praise the courage of these dead men after mounting their grave with his run-away feet which had forsaken their post. O man most useless for great and serious deeds, but most marvellous in verbal effrontery, will you attempt right now, while looking into the faces of these men in front of you, to say that you must be crowned for the city's disasters? And if he does say it, will you endure it? And does it seem like your memory will die along with your dead? Please imagine for a short time that you are not in the court but in the theatre, and imagine you see the herald coming forward, the proclamation of the proposal about to take place, and consider whether you think the relatives of the dead men will let fall more tears over the tragedies and the sufferings of the heroes about to come on stage, or over the unkindness of the city.

Aeschines here takes a swipe at the fact that Demosthenes was invited to give the *epitaphios logos* for the dead of Chaeronea, despite the fact that he was heavily involved in pushing for the conflict before the disastrous defeat and failed to die with his men on the battlefield. The exclamation 'ὦ πρὸς μὲν τὰ μεγάλα καὶ σπουδαῖα τῶν ἔργων τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀπάντων ἀχρηστότατε, πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τόλμαν θαυμασιώτατε' is therefore not simply an overblown twist on the conventional 'words versus deeds' *topos*, but a condemnation of Demosthenes' stance towards the *polis* at large with specific reference to his conduct before and after Chaeronea. The implication is that the defeat itself, and the subsequent troubles the Athenians have found themselves in, result from Demosthenes' insistence on making himself into an object of wonder with his oratorical performance alone, in order to manipulate his fellow citizens. Moreover, there is a further implicit contrast in this passage with Aeschines' previous acting career. The audience are asked to imagine that they are not in the law court at all, but in the theatre (μὴ ἐν τῷ δικαστηρίῳ, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ): an imaginative leap which was probably not too difficult

to make given that the boundaries between the two spheres were not always clear cut. Aeschines is asking the audience to make this imaginative leap in part because of the fact that the theatre was the location of the proposal of Demosthenes' crown, a location he claims is illegal for such conduct and one he wants to keep at the forefront of the jurors' minds. But the theatre as the location of dramatic performances, and of tragedies in particular, is also being brought to mind here as Aeschines swiftly lurches into a form of emotional blackmail, implying that the relatives of the dead of Chaeronea would find the crowning of Demosthenes, an act which should not take place in the theatre, more worthy of tears than the tragic performances which naturally belong in the same location. At the mention of tragedies, the audience would surely be reminded of Aeschines' own background here, which hints at another implied antithesis. In the past Aeschines *was* able to elicit tears from the *dēmos* legitimately with his tragic art, and supposedly teach the audience too, unlike Demosthenes, who is able to elicit tears in the theatre for all the wrong reasons with his distracting and deceptive wonder-inducing performances.

Of course, despite Aeschines' repeated references to his rival's use of wonder to deceptive purpose, his own practice within these speeches is not so different from the supposed marvel-mongering of Demosthenes. The latter points out Aeschines' own oratorical trickery in his response to one of the claims which is made early on in the *Against Timarchus*. In that speech, Aeschines rails against Timarchus' supposedly shameless public behaviour by comparing it to the conduct of the public figures of old, men like Pericles, Themistocles and Aristeides, who were so self-controlled while giving speeches that speaking with an arm outside one's cloak was considered to be indecorous (τὸ τὴν χεῖρα ἔξω ἔχοντες λέγειν, τότε τοῦτο θρασύ τι ἐδόκει εἶναι, 1.25). As evidence for this claim Aeschines refers to the famous statue of Solon on Salamis with his hand inside his cloak, which everyone has supposedly seen (εἴ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι πάντες

ἐκπεπλεύκατε εἰς Σαλαμῖνα καὶ τεθεωρήκατε τὴν Σόλωνος εἰκόνα, καὶ αὐτοὶ μαρτυρήσαιτ' ἂν ὅτι ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ τῇ Σαλαμινίων ἀνάκειται ὁ Σόλων ἐντὸς τὴν χεῖρα ἔχων, 1.25). The point is reinforced when Aeschines imitates the statue, making the same gesture (σχῆμα) to remind his audience of the restrained posture that Solon himself used to adopt when he addressed the people of Athens (τοῦτο δ' ἐστίν, ὃ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, ὑπόμνημα καὶ μίμημα τοῦ Σόλωνος σχήματος, ὃν τρόπον ἔχων αὐτὸς διελέγετο τῷ δήμῳ τῶν Ἀθηναίων, 1.25).

Timarchus, in contrast, is the complete opposite of Solon (and by implication, Aeschines himself), since he cannot keep anything properly inside his cloak. Instead, Aeschines claims, only the other day he threw off his cloak entirely and rolled around the Assembly like a naked pancratiast (οὔτοσὶ δὲ οὐ πάλαι, ἀλλὰ πρῶην ποτὲ ῥίγας θοιμάτιον γυμνὸς ἐπαγκρατίαζεν ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, 1.26). This vivid image of Timarchus' apparent penchant for indecent exposure is made more effective by the contrasting vision which Aeschines literally creates in front of the audience, using his own bodily posture to contrast with his verbal description of his opponent. By imitating an imitation of Solon, and thus morphing into the image of a well-known simulacrum of a politician of the past, Aeschines uses both his gestures and his tricky rhetoric to change the audience's perspective and make them see something which may or may not be there in reality: something which, as we shall see in the next chapter, is at the heart of the charge of 'making marvels' (*thaumatopoiia*) that is often levelled at one's opponents in texts from the fourth century BCE onwards. Moreover, this tactic of temporarily distorting the audience's perspective was in this case extremely successful. As Christopher Carey has recently pointed out, Timarchus is hampered by Aeschines' clever criticism here no matter how he responds: "[i]f Timarchus opts for a demonstrative performance, it confirms Aeschines' description. If he opts for restraint, his performance becomes more

pallid”.¹⁹ Here Aeschines’ sensitivity to the effects of his own ability to sway the audience’s opinion through the effective use of language and gesture pays off: he wins a difficult case.

Aeschines’ actions here, like his mimicry of Demosthenes’ words and wonders with which I opened this chapter, had a considerable impact on his opponent. This very moment is specifically recalled and the charge refuted two or three years later in Demosthenes’ attempted prosecution concerning Aeschines’ conduct as an envoy. If his remarks at *On the False Embassy* 19.251-52 are anything to go by, Demosthenes is still incensed that Aeschines had mimicked Solon’s statue in order to sway the crowd:

φέρει δὴ καὶ περὶ τοῦ Σόλωνος ὃν εἶπε λόγον σκέψασθε. ἔφη τὸν Σόλων’ ἀνακεῖσθαι τῆς τῶν τότε δημηγορούντων σωφροσύνης παράδειγμα, εἶσω τὴν χεῖρ’ ἔχοντ’ ἀναβεβλημένον, ἐπιπλήττων τι καὶ λοιδορούμενος τῇ τοῦ Τιμάρχου προπετεία. καίτοι τὸν μὲν ἀνδριάντα τοῦτον οὐπω πεντήκοντ’ ἔτη φασὶν ἀνακεῖσθαι Σαλαμίνιοι, ἀπὸ Σόλωνος δ’ ὁμοῦ διακόσι’ ἐστὶν ἔτη καὶ τετταράκοντ’ εἰς τὸν νυνὶ παρόντα χρόνον, ὥσθ’ ὁ δημιουργὸς ὁ τοῦτο πλάσας τὸ σχῆμα οὐ μόνον οὐκ αὐτὸς ἦν κατ’ ἐκεῖνον, ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ὁ πάππος αὐτοῦ. τοῦτο μὲν τοίνυν εἶπε τοῖς δικασταῖς καὶ ἐμιμήσατο· ὁ δὲ τοῦ σχήματος ἦν τούτου πολλῶ τῇ πόλει λυσιτελέστερον, τὸ τὴν ψυχὴν τὴν Σόλωνος ἰδεῖν καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν, ταύτην οὐκ ἐμιμήσατο, ἀλλὰ πᾶν τοῦναντίον.

Let us examine now what he said concerning Solon in his speech. As a way of striking out at and reviling the rashness of Timarchus he said that a statue of Solon, with his cloak thrown back and his hand inside, had been set up as an example of the self-control of those who made popular speeches in the past. And yet the Salaminians say that this statue was erected less than fifty years ago, but from Solon’s time to the present day two hundred and forty years have passed, so that not only was the craftsman who sculpted the statue with this posture not present at this time, but even the craftsman’s grandfather. This then is what he said to the jurors, and he imitated the statue: but he did not imitate the things which would have been much more useful for the city to see than Solon’s posture – his soul and purpose. Instead he did the complete opposite.

¹⁹ Carey (2017) 273.

Aeschines' ability to persuade his listeners by turning himself into a living simulacrum of a statue of Solon which may or may not represent the statesman's true customary posture is surely just as motivated by the aim of arousing a sort of reverent wonder among the jurors as Demosthenes' supposed behaviour is. Furthermore, the attempt to astonish an audience with an image at least two steps away from reality is precisely what Plato labels as 'marvel-making' in the *Republic* and the *Sophist*, as the next chapter will show.

3. Ekplektic Eristic: Talking Marvels in Plato's *Euthydemus*

But before discussing these later dialogues it is necessary to draw out Plato's complicated attitude towards *thaumata* and the boundaries of philosophical writing itself in one of his middle dialogues, *Euthydemus*. Ostensibly the main aim of this dialogue is to expose the differences between Socratic elenchus and sophistic eristic as modes of argumentation: to do so, it purposefully presents multiple seemingly fallacious arguments and, as a result, is often considered to be one of Plato's least philosophically interesting works.²⁰ But one of the weightier themes this playful depiction of Socrates' dealings with a pair of intellectually mediocre sophists interrogates is the potential dangers which ensue from the unbridled evocation of *thauma* in the wrong hands.²¹ In *Euthydemus*, we see that for

²⁰ Chance (1992) 1 sums up modern attitudes towards this work well: "despite its obvious length, its striking artistic merits, and the broad range of topics that it treats, it has been neglected more than any other important dialogue". See Chance (1992) 3-13 for a broader discussion of why *Euthydemus* has not been found philosophically appealing. For more on the relative neglect of this dialogue by modern philosophers cf. Michelini (2000) 509 and Kahn (2000) 97, who suggests that *Euthydemus* is not a serious treatment of philosophical themes precisely because Socrates' interlocutors in this dialogue are intellectually unable to cope with serious philosophy. In recent years the tide of opinion on the philosophical qualities of the dialogue has perhaps started to turn: see especially McCabe's series of sensitive articles (2008, 2013a, 2013b, 2015); Sermamoglou-Soulmaidi's (2014) monograph is also a welcome change in direction in assessing the merits (artistic and otherwise) of this work.

²¹ Michelini (2000) 517-18 notes the prevalence of θαυμάζω and its cognates in the *Euthydemus* and rightly compares this to Isocrates' denunciation of θαυμαστοί (see Isocrates *Helen* 7; *Antidosis* 269; *Panathenaicus* 78), but does not draw out the reasons for the focus on *thauma* in this dialogue. For a full discussion of *thaumatopoiioi* and *thaumatopoiia*, see the next chapter.

Plato it is the *type* of response which wonder provokes in a viewer or listener which is crucial. On the one hand, a naturally-occurring wonder is capable of producing a positive sort of astonishment in the mind. This type of marvel becomes a spur to intellectual development, provoking curiosity and leading to eventual knowledge through learning. But certain types of manmade marvels – especially those which consist of language – begin to provoke an alternative response of physical and mental stasis. This response can be pleasurable as well as terrifying. For Plato, however, this type of reaction is extremely negative. Although wondrous performances may provide pleasure and often appeal especially to the senses, they ultimately lead to a type of stasis that robs the spectator of any sort of moral or intellectual autonomy.

Euthydemus is the dialogue which perhaps encapsulates this aspect of the Platonic rhetoric of *thauma* best. This is immediately clear from the very opening of the dialogue when Crito opens the proceedings by asking Socrates to tell him who he had been talking to in the Lyceum on the previous day (271a-b). Socrates answers that he was talking to two brothers, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus. Crito confesses he does not know either man and supposes that they must both represent a new type of sophist (271c). He then asks Socrates what the particular wisdom which these sophists purport to possess actually is. Socrates' reply hints that *thauma* is going to play an important part in his account of the interaction (271c-d):

οὗτοι τὸ μὲν γένος, ὡς ἐγῶμαι, ἐντεῦθεν ποθέν εἰσιν ἐκ Χίου, ἀπώκησαν δὲ ἐς Θουρίους, φεύγοντες δὲ ἐκεῖθεν πόλλ' ἤδη ἔτη περὶ τούσδε τοὺς τόπους διατρίβουσιν· ὃ δὲ σὺ ἐρωτᾷς τὴν σοφίαν αὐτοῖν, θαυμασία, ὧς Κρίτων· πασσοφοὶ ἀτεχνῶς τῷ γε, οὐδ' ἤδη πρὸ τοῦ, ὅ τι εἶεν οἱ παγκρατιασταί. τούτῳ γάρ ἐστον κομιδῇ παμμάχῳ οὐ κατὰ τὸ Ἀκαρνᾶνε ἐγενέσθην τὸ παγκρατιαστὰ ἀδελφῷ· ἐκείνῳ μὲν γὰρ τῷ σώματι μόνον οἶω τε μάχεσθαι· τούτῳ δὲ πρῶτον μὲν τῷ σώματι δεινотάτῳ ἐστὸν καὶ μάχῃ, ἣ πάντων ἔστι κρατεῖν· ἐν ὅλοις γὰρ αὐτῷ τε σοφῶ πάνυ μάχεσθαι καὶ ἄλλον, ὃς ἂν διδῷ μισθόν, οἶω τε ποιῆσαι· ἔπειτα τὴν ἐν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις μάχην κρατίστῳ καὶ ἀγωνίσασθαι καὶ

ἄλλον διδάξαι λέγειν τε καὶ συγγράφεσθαι λόγους οἷους εἰς τὰ δικαστήρια.

These men, I think, are from these parts [i.e. Greece] by birth, from Chios, though they went out as colonists to Thurii [i.e. South Italy]. But they were exiled from there and have spent many years now in this part of the world. As to your question about what their wisdom is – it is marvels, Crito! These two know absolutely everything: I never knew before what pancratiasts were. For these two are absolutely all-round fighters, not in the way that the famous Acarnanian pancratiast brothers were, for they could only fight with their bodies.²² These two are first of all most formidable in fighting both with their bodies and with that form of combat with which you can defeat everyone: for they themselves are both absolutely wise in armed combat and they can make someone else so as well – for a price. And furthermore they are most mighty at doing battle in the law-courts and in teaching others both to speak and to write speeches for the courts.

Socrates' opening definition of the brothers' particular art as 'θαυμασία' sounds like a flippant throwaway remark, but as the dialogue progresses the force of this mention of *thauma* becomes more apparent as it soon it becomes clear that θαυμασία is the term which is being wielded as a sort of generic label for the type of paradoxical Gorgianic arguments which both Euthydemus and Dionysdorus delight in constructing. The opening comparison of the two brothers to pancratiasts (all-round fighters) is an image which is particularly suited to the argumentative *poikilia* of the pair, since their rhetorical variety is one of the key ways in which they manage to produce astonishment, but at the same time, like the art of the pancratiast, this diversity can prove disastrous for an unprepared challenger.²³ This opening comparison hints at another aspect of Plato's configuration of wonder in this dialogue: the sophists' paradoxical arguments have a thaumatic effect which incapacitates the listener intellectually in the same way as someone on the

²² The identity of these two Acarnanian pancratiasts is unknown: see Hawtrey (1981) 43.

²³ The pancration, which combines elements of wrestling and boxing, involves very few rules, and continues until one participant yields, is incapacitated, or dies, is a fitting metaphor for the brutal intellectual treatment the two sophistic brothers mete out to their opponents until they can resist no more. On the brutal nature of the pancration see Kyle (2014) 29 and Poliakoff (1987) 54-63. Plato uses a similar combat sport, wrestling, as a metaphor for intellectual activity and philosophical endeavour in the *Theaetetus*: on the importance of this imagery in that dialogue see Herrmann (1995) 77-109.

receiving end of a pancratiast's body-blow would be incapacitated. Most of those who listen to the two brothers are transfixed with astonishment as if they are watching an enchanting artistic spectacle, but unlike the effect of properly regulated *choreia*, for example, this type of wonder is presented as both dangerous and pleasurable.

The sense that *thauma* is wielded by this dialogue's sophists as the sort of emotional and cognitive equivalent of a pancratist's stunning final blow is reinforced once Socrates moves into the account of the brothers' initial victim, the young boy Clinias. Clinias' youth is important. The danger that marvellous displays of false learning can have on the young and uneducated is exposed by the brothers' effect on the young man after the initial long passage of eristic argument which culminates at 276b-d. By this point, the two brothers have thoroughly confused their victim, whose inexperience is to blame for his complete inability to cope with the arguments thrown at him. The brothers sense this weakness and question Clinias on whether it is the ignorant or the wise who learn. The young man initially suggests that it is the wise who learn (276a), but Euthydemus soon forces him to assert the opposite (276b-c):

ὕμεῖς ἄρα μανθάνοντες ἃ οὐκ ἠπίστασθε, ἀμαθεῖς ὄντες ἐμανθάνετε.
ἐπένευσε τὸ μειράκιον. οἱ ἀμαθεῖς ἄρα μανθάνουσιν, ὃ Κλεινία, ἀλλ' οὐχ
οἱ σοφοί, ὥς σὺ οἶε. ταῦτ' οὖν εἰπόντος αὐτοῦ, ὥσπερ ὑπὸ διδασκάλου
χορὸς ἀποσημήναντος, ἅμα ἀνεθορύβησάν τε καὶ ἐγέλασαν οἱ ἐπόμενοι
ἐκεῖνοι μετὰ τοῦ Διονυσοδώρου τε καὶ Εὐθυδήμου.

"Then when you learnt the things which you did not know, you learnt them while being ignorant". The youth nodded in agreement. "Then the ignorant learn, Clinias, and not the wise, as you believe". After he had spoken thus the followers of Dionysodorus and Euthydemus roared their approval and burst out laughing, just like a chorus on the cue of their director.

The control which the brothers are able to exert over their young spectators and interlocutors alike is soon made even clearer when Euthydemus presses his advantage and attempts to astonish the assembled company even further (276d-e):

ἐνταῦθα δὴ καὶ πάνυ μέγα ἐγέλασάν τε καὶ ἐθορύβησαν οἱ ἐρασταὶ τοῖν ἀνδροῖν, ἀγασθέντες τῆς σοφίας αὐτοῖν· οἱ δ' ἄλλοι ἡμεῖς ἐκπεπληγμένοι ἐσιωπῶμεν. γνοὺς δὲ ἡμᾶς ὁ Εὐθύδημος ἐκπεπληγμένους, ἴν' ἔτι μᾶλλον θαυμάζοιμεν αὐτόν, οὐκ ἀνίει τὸ μειράκιον, ἀλλ' ἡρώτα, καὶ ὥσπερ οἱ ἀγαθοὶ ὀρχησταί, διπλᾷ ἔστρεφε τὰ ἐρωτήματα περὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἔφη· πότερον γὰρ οἱ μανθάνοντες μανθάνουσιν ἢ ἃ μὴ ἐπίστανται;

Then the adorers of the two men laughed long and hard and cheered, marvelling at the wisdom of the two. But we others were astonished and stayed silent. But Euthydemus noticed our astonishment, and so that we might wonder at him even more, he continued with his questioning and, just as excellent dancers do, he gave a double twist to his questions on this point, and said: “Do those who have learned learn what they know or what they don’t know?”

Already at this early point in the discussion, the sophistic brothers are portrayed as specifically striving after wondrous effects in order to distract their interlocutors and gain an advantage over them both intellectually and psychologically. The stunning effect of this practice is demonstrated by the silence which ensues as a result of the *ekplēxis* caused by the initial line of questioning. In this case, giving in to *thauma* and *ekplēxis* does not spur on the beginnings of philosophical thought: instead, it stultifies and kills real philosophical progress stone dead. Socrates’ emphasis on the impressive thaumatic nature of the sophists’ display is undoubtedly ironic, but as ever with Socratic irony, there is a real warning at its heart: in the wrong hands, the power of *thauma* can cause untold harm.

Soon after Euthydemus begins to attempt to dazzle the assembled company even further with his double-twisted questions, Socrates steps in to try and protect the young Clinias from the brothers’ argumentative trickery (277d-e). First he tells the youth not to wonder that the arguments seem strange to him (ὦ Κλεινία, μὴ θαύμαζε εἴ σοι φαίνονται ἄηθεις οἱ λόγοι, 277d), explaining that Euthydemus and Dionysodorus are acting like those who try to initiate someone into the Corybantic mysteries. Dancing and games form an important part of such an initiation (χορεία τίς ἐστι καὶ παιδιά, 277d), and the two

brothers are doing nothing more than this now (οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ χορεύετον περὶ σὲ καὶ οἶον ὀρχεῖσθον παίζοντε, 277e). Rather than relating to Corybantic rites, however, it turns out that these actions are in fact the first part of the sophistic mysteries (νῦν οὖν νόμισον τὰ πρῶτα τῶν ἱερῶν ἀκούειν τῶν σοφιστικῶν, 277e). Astonishment and silence are the result of the brothers' sophistic dance and play (ἐκπεπληγμένοι ἐσιωπῶμεν, 276d): as a result the young Clinias has no chance to make any real educational progress with this type of interlocutor.

Although it is true that an encounter with Socrates often eventually induces a similarly aporetic state in his interlocutors, this *aporia* does at least have the advantage of alerting whoever is conversing with Socrates that they perhaps do not know as much as they had initially assumed. Often by the end of a Socratic conversation no answer to the original problem posed is immediately forthcoming, but the shedding of false beliefs or the realisation that it is possible to make more progress in a certain direction than initially anticipated is shown to be a positive first step in philosophical thinking. The type of wonder provoked by the eristic arguments on display in *Euthydemus*, however, is entirely opposed to this kind of philosophical movement. Instead, the ekplektic display on show provokes a stultifying inability to think of any reply at all.²⁴ By focusing here

²⁴ There are many other places throughout the dialogue where the distracting and confusing arguments of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus are described as explicitly wonderful. Cf. 283a: the rapt audience is expecting to hear 'wondrous arguments' as Dionysodorus launches into his next speech (ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐβλέπομεν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὡς αὐτίκα μάλα ἀκουσόμενοι θαυμασίους τινὰς λόγους); 283a-b: Socrates tells Crito that Dionysodorus did indeed offer an argument which was wondrous and worthy of hearing (θαυμαστὸν γάρ τινα, ὃ Κρίτων, ἀνὴρ κατήρχεν λόγον, οὗ σοὶ ἄξιον ἀκοῦσαι); 286b-c: Socrates claims to marvel at Dionysodorus' Protagorean 'man is the measure' argument, which he has heard many times before and which always makes him marvel (ἐγὼ δὲ θαυμάσας τὸν λόγον ... πολλάκις ἀκηκοὼς ἀεὶ θαυμάζω); 288a: Socrates is dissatisfied that the sophists' arguments still do not stand up to scrutiny, despite the fact that they have been making a wonderful show of using precise argumentation (τέχνης ... καὶ ταῦτα οὕτως θαυμαστῆς οὔσης εἰς ἀκρίβειαν λόγων); 288b: the other young interlocutor Ctesippus claims that the brothers are talking marvels because they do not seem to care if they are talking complete nonsense or not (θαυμάσιά γε λέγεται, ὃ ἄνδρες Θεούριοι εἶτε Χίτοι εἶθ' ὁπόθεν καὶ ὅπη χαίρετον ὀνομαζόμενοι, ὡς οὐδὲν ὑμῖν μέλει τοῦ παραληρεῖν); 288b: Socrates ironically parries Ctesippus' criticism by informing him that he is in fact wrong, since he has clearly not yet perceived the wonderful nature of his sophistic opponents' wisdom (οὐ γινώσκεις τῶν ξένων τὴν σοφίαν ὅτι θαυμάσια ἐστίν); 294a: Dionysodorus insists on maintaining the ridiculous position that by knowing only one thing, he actually knows everything, and so does everyone else who only knows one thing, with the result that Socrates marvels at his argument (ᾧ

mainly on *Euthydemus*, the crucial differences which Plato draws between two divergent responses to *thauma* begins to make sense, as does the increasing slipperiness of concepts of the marvellous over the course of the fourth century BCE. The message is clear: the astonishing performance of the two sophistic brothers is completely devoid of educative content, a sort of ‘pure spectacle’ which aims purely at delighting and dazzling the audience, and which runs the risk of leading the young and uneducated seriously astray. But, as ever in Plato, there is a degree of ambivalence in this portrayal of *thauma*, since wonder elsewhere becomes a key weapon in Socrates’ own philosophical arsenal, as the next chapter will show.

Ζεῦ, ἔφην ἐγώ, ὡς θαυμαστὸν λέγεις); 295a: Dionysodorus claims that if Socrates agrees to join him in argument he will soon be able to make him agree with his wondrous statements (ἐγὼ ἐπιδείξω καὶ σὲ ταῦτα τὰ θαυμαστὰ ὁμολογοῦντα).

Chapter Seven

Making Marvels: *Thaumatopoiia* and *Thaumaturgia*

μετὰ ταῦτα δὴ, εἶπον, ἀπείκασον τοιούτῳ πάθει τὴν ἡμετέραν φύσιν παιδείας τε πέρι καὶ ἀπαιδευσίας. ἰδὲ γὰρ ἀνθρώπους οἷον ἐν καταγείῳ οἰκῇσιν σπηλαιώδει, ἀναπεπταμένην πρὸς τὸ φῶς τὴν εἴσοδον ἐχούσῃ μακρὰν παρὰ πᾶν τὸ σπήλαιον, ἐν ταύτῃ ἐκ παίδων ὄντας ἐν δεσμοῖς καὶ τὰ σκέλη καὶ τοὺς αὐχένας, ὥστε μένειν τε αὐτοῦ εἰς τε τὸ πρόσθεν μόνον ὁρᾶν, κύκλῳ δὲ τὰς κεφαλὰς ὑπὸ τοῦ δεσμοῦ ἀδυνάτους περιάγειν, φῶς δὲ αὐτοῖς πυρὸς ἄνωθεν καὶ πόρρωθεν καόμενον ὀπίσθεν αὐτῶν, μεταξὺ δὲ τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ τῶν δεσμοτῶν ἐπάνω ὁδόν, παρ' ἣν ἰδὲ τειχίον παρῳκοδομημένον, ὥσπερ τοῖς θαυματοποιοῖς πρὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων πρόκειται τὰ παραφράγματα, ὑπὲρ ὧν τὰ θαύματα δεικνύουσιν.

Plato, *Republic* 514a-b

‘After these things’ I said, ‘compare our nature, with respect to education and the lack of it, to such an experience as this one. See, as it were, men in a cave-like subterranean dwelling, with a long entrance facing towards the light along the entire length of the cave. The men have been in this cave from childhood, bound by their legs and their necks, so that they remain in the same place and see only what is before them, unable to turn their heads around in a circle because of the bonds. The light of a burning fire is above them and a long way off behind them, and in between the fire and the bound men there is a path going upwards, beside which see a little built-up wall, just like the screen which hides the marvel-makers (θαυματοποιοῖς), above which they show their marvels (θαύματα δεικνύουσιν)’.

Plato’s Cave analogy, found at the very beginning of the seventh book of the *Republic*, is possibly the most famous single passage of text in Western philosophy. Plato’s wider attitude towards wonder in this passage plays a role in this image which has often been underestimated. *Thauma* occupies a complex and multi-faceted position in Plato’s philosophical thought. On the one hand, he often portrays the effects of falling prey to the marvellous displays of sophists, poets, rhapsodes, actors and politicians as inherently negative, particularly for the young. But on the other hand, *thauma* also simultaneously

seems to be an unparalleled catalyst to philosophical inquiry, as the young mathematician (and in many ways Socratic *doppelgänger*) Theaetetus demonstrates in the dialogue named after him.¹ This attitude hints that the presence of marvels in Plato's Cave analogy is not an idle throw-away detail. In fact, the *thaumata* mentioned in the final sentence of this passage provide an interpretative key to the image as a whole.

My purpose in this chapter is twofold. I want to examine the introduction and use of the concepts of 'marvel-making' (*thaumatopoiia*) and 'wonderworking' (*thaumatourgia*) in Plato and elsewhere as a means of assessing the way attitudes towards wonder have shifted between Herodotus' *Histories* and the early fourth century BCE. In the process, I take Plato's image of the Cave as a case-study, and suggest a reading of the analogy through the lens of *thauuma* which offers new perspectives on some of the passage's familiar problems. In particular, I want to approach one of the most commented-upon interpretative difficulties in this section of the *Republic*, namely our inability to map each element of the Cave image onto each outlined section of the preceding and interconnected analogy of the Divided Line in a precise one-to-one fashion, from a different angle.² Rather than pointing to some sort of flawed philosophical planning on Plato's part, the fact that these images do not map precisely onto one another actually turns out to be essential to the argument Socrates is making in *Republic* 6 and 7. If we take the cues about how to read this image given to us by Socrates, we discover that the Cave is itself held up as a marvel of sorts, and that distorted mapping, strange perspectives and changing views are at the very heart of the effect of the marvel-maker's art and its effects.

¹ See chapter one pp. 43-46 on the parallels between Socrates and Theaetetus as philosophical *thaumata*.

² Cf. the comprehensive recent discussions of this issue in e.g. Annas (1981) 252ff., Karasmanis (1988) 147-71, Brunschwig (2003) 145-77 and Schofield (2007) 216-31.

But before returning to the Cave, it is necessary to explore the cultural context of ‘marvel-making’ much more broadly. The questions I want to raise have been surprisingly neglected in modern scholarship.³ What exactly is a *thaumatopoios*, and what does his or her art – *thaumatopoiia* – consist of? Why do we start finding these two terms in our extant literature towards the end of the fifth and the beginning of the fourth centuries BCE? These questions will be at the heart of my discussion of marvel-making below. I will first try and establish what kind of actions fall under the umbrella term *thaumatopoiia* (‘marvel-making’) and *thaumatourgia* (‘wonderworking’), another synonymous compound word which begins to appear in this period: I will then return to the Cave analogy to show just how complex and philosophically loaded the use of the marvellous has become in Plato’s hands in this passage.

1. The Meaning of Marvel-Making: Theatrical *Thaumatopoiia*

Compound words denoting artificial manmade marvel-making begin suddenly to appear in our extant literature in the first half of the fourth-century BCE in Demosthenes, Isocrates and Plato. It is clear from looking at late Classical and Hellenistic uses of the term, as well as uses in later texts which refer back to marvel-making in this period, that a variety of actions fall under the umbrella terms *thaumatopoiia* and *thaumatourgia*. The *madeness* inherent in both terms, and the fact the term is itself *made* by being compounded together, is important: artificiality is at the heart of the marvel-maker’s art. Unlike the divine, natural and cultural marvels of the past, the *thaumata* described here

³ Kroll (1935) 1278-82 remains the most comprehensive overview of *thaumatopoiia*. Milanezi (2004) 191-93 provides the best brief discussion of the role of the real-life *thaumatopoios* (see also the very useful tables listing the appearances of terms for entertainers which appear in Athenaeus and on inscriptions on pp. 204-206) while discussing various other types of minor paratheatrical entertainers. Cf. also the brief discussions concerning *thaumatopoiia* in Dickie (2001a) 601-602 and (2001b) 72-73.

are somehow worked by ordinary human hands, as opposed to appearing spontaneously in the landscape or being somehow linked to the power of divine craftsmanship, or to artists with creative powers approaching those of the gods.

The word *thaumatopoiia* appears much more frequently than *thaumatourgia*. Perhaps the defining feature of a *thaumatopoiios* is the fact that he or she specialises in performances in front of a captive audience, particularly in venues such as the theatre or symposium. The actual content of these performances could vary greatly. *Poikilia* is of course intimately connected to the aesthetic impact of *thaumata*, so it is no surprise that the versatility of the marvel-maker becomes one of the prime causes of the thaumatic impact of their performances.⁴ Mime actors, dancers and musicians are strongly linked to the art of the *thaumatopoiios*: this reinforces the sense that the ability to perform spectacles of varying types is a key aspect of the role.⁵ Athenaeus provides us with perhaps the most interesting evidence concerning all of these aspects of the *thaumatopoiios*' art.⁶ In a prolonged discussion of well-known performers of the past, the apparently famous *thaumatopoiios* Xenophon is mentioned, along with his pupil Cratisthenes of Phlius, who astonished the crowds with baffling tricks, such as making fire spontaneously flare up (ἐθαυμάζετο δὲ καὶ Ξενοφῶν ὁ θαυματοποιός, ὃς μαθητὴν κατέλιπε Κρατισθένη τὸν Φλιάσιον· ὃς πῦρ τε αὐτόματον ἐποίει ἀναφύεσθαι καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ φάσματα ἐτεχνᾶτο, ἀφ' ὧν ἑξίστα τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὴν διάνοιαν, 19e). These two *thaumatopoiioi* are mentioned immediately after two other famous figures who made their name in the theatre: Potheinus the puppeteer, who performed in the same theatre as Euripides, and Eurycleides who was

⁴ On the variable nature of the activities which the term *thaumatopoiia* denotes from the fifth-century BCE onwards, see Milanezi (2004) 192.

⁵ For the association between *thaumatopoiioi* and *mimoi* see Milanezi (2004) 192-93; cf. the brief discussion of the relation between Imperial stage-pantomimes and *thaumatopoiioi* at Lada-Richards (2007) 31.

⁶ Stephanis (1988) lists literary and epigraphic evidence of twenty five potential *thaumatopoiioi* in antiquity (see numbers 262, 320, 408, 419, 766, 984, 1031, 1092, 1225, 1304, 1451, 1496, 1785, 1890, 1894, 1914, 2002, 2257, 2285, 2508, 2520, 2258, 2748, 2976, 2989). Of these, nine are mentioned in Athenaeus, the rest in inscriptions.

honoured with a statue in the theatre next to that of Aeschylus (Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ Ποθεινῷ τῷ νευροσπάστῃ τὴν σκηνὴν ἔδωκαν ἐφ' ἧς ἐνεθουσίων οἱ περὶ Εὐριπίδην. Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ καὶ Εὐρυκλείδην ἐν τῷ θεάτρῳ ἀνέστησαν μετὰ τῶν περὶ Αἰσχύλον, 19e).

Many other sources situate the *thaumatopoios* within a theatrical or paratheatrical context. Particularly intriguing is the mention of *thaumatopoiōi* alongside other theatrical artists in numerous choregic inscriptions from Delos in the third and second centuries BCE, which seems to have had a particularly flourishing marvel-mongering scene.⁷ On multiple inscriptions, *thaumatopoiōi* are listed alongside figures such as tragic poets and actors, comic poets and actors, and aulos and cithara players, including several examples relating to one particular *thaumatopoios*, Kleopatra or Kleupatra (*IG* XI, 2 110, dated 268 BCE; *IG* XI, 2 112, dated c. 264 BCE; *IG* XI, 2 113, dated 263 BCE). Other named *thaumatopoiōi* are mentioned on single occasions (cf. e.g. *IG* XI, 2 115, dated 259 BCE; *IG* XI, 2 120, dated 236 BCE; *IG* XI, 2 129, dated 192 BCE; *IG* XI, 2 133, dated 169 BCE).⁸ The use of the actual theatre as the scene of *thaumatopoiia* is hinted at in later sources as well, such as an anecdote found in Plutarch (*Vit. Lyc.* 19.4):

Ἄγῃς μὲν οὖν ὁ βασιλεύς, σκώπτοντος Ἀττικοῦ τινος τὰς Λακωνικὰς μαχαίρας εἰς τὴν μικρότητα, καὶ λέγοντος ὅτι ῥαδίως αὐτὰς οἱ θαυματοποιοὶ καταπίνουσιν ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις, καὶ μὴν μάλιστα, εἶπεν, ἡμεῖς ἐφικνούμεθα τοῖς ἐγχειριδίοις τῶν πολέμιων.

When a certain Attic man mocked Laconian swords for their shortness, and said that the marvel-makers in the theatres swallow them easily, King Agis replied: “And yet we certainly reach the enemy with these daggers”.

⁷ It is interesting that the epigraphic evidence for *thaumatopoiōi* at festivals clusters around Delos in particular, although it is difficult to know what to make of this in terms of specific Delian performance contexts. Given the lack of epigraphic evidence for the inclusion of *thaumatopoiōi* in festivals alongside other theatrical performers in other parts of the Hellenistic world, it is hard to agree with Milanezi (2004) 200-201 that *thaumatopoiōi* are firmly attached to groups of *technitai* of Dionysus; Lightfoot's (2002) 212 assessment that mimes and conjurers in the Hellenistic world were “no less part of the festivals, if on their fringes”, seeing as these figures “are not shown as members of guilds in the Hellenistic period”, is surely closer to the mark. Cf. also Slater's (2004) 155 view that one of the key differences between the Artists of Dionysus and *thaumatopoiōi* is that the former are regulated, whereas the latter are not.

⁸ See Robert (1929) 427-38 on this group of inscriptions dealing with the theatre at Delos.

But the question of how exactly the displays of *thaumatopoiia* related to other kinds of performance within the theatre itself is impossible to answer from the evidence that remains. Did these spectacles compete with the large-scale theatrical performances of tragedy and comedy for the audience's attention, or operate entirely separately from these productions?

There is some evidence that displays of *thaumatopoiia* often functioned as more strictly paratheatrical endeavours, competing with the more established and prestigious forms of performance. The sense that displays of *thaumata* competed with other types of theatrical performance is perhaps strongest in one intriguing passage from Plato's *Laws*. Unsurprisingly, given his attitude towards even the more conventionally educative types of performance, the ability of theatrical *thaumata* to distract and dazzle the minds of spectators is a particular concern of Plato here. In a passage which focuses on the differing appeal of various pleasures to various people depending upon their age, the Athenian Stranger argues that in a contest of different types of performances, where the criterion of victory was pleasure alone (ἀγωνιούμενον ἡδονῆς περί μόνον, 658a), somebody would naturally put on a display of *thaumata* in an attempt to delight an audience (658b-c):

εἰκός που τὸν μὲν τινα ἐπιδεικνύναι, καθάπερ Ὅμηρος, ῥαψωδίαν, ἄλλον δὲ κιθαρωδίαν, τὸν δὲ τινα τραγωδίαν, τὸν δ' αὖ κωμωδίαν. οὐ θαυμαστὸν δὲ εἴ τις καὶ θαύματα ἐπιδεικνὺς μάλιστα ἂν νικᾶν ἤγοιτο.

I suppose it is likely that one man would put on a recitation of epic poetry, just as Homer did, and another would stage a citharodic performance, someone else would put on a tragedy, and someone else a comedy. And it would be no marvel if someone thought they might win by putting on a display of marvels.

The Athenian Stranger goes on to add that he can already predict the winner of this pleasure contest depending on the age of the judges in charge of making the final decision.

Displays of *thaumata* are said to appeal more than any other sort of entertainment to young people, with the result that if children were in charge of judging aesthetic performances, the result would be guaranteed to favour those who displayed *thaumata* (εἰ μὲν τοίνυν τὰ πάνυ σμικρὰ κρίναι παιδιά, κρινοῦσι τὸν τὰ θαύματα ἐπιδεικνύοντα, 658c).⁹ In contrast, the more solemn and weighty performances of tragedy which appeal to older and more educated spectators (τραγωδίαν δὲ αἱ τε πεπαιδευμένοι τῶν γυναικῶν καὶ τὰ νέα μειράκια καὶ σχεδὸν ἴσως τὸ πλῆθος πάντων, 658d), or the rhapsodic performances of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* or the works of Hesiod which appeal to old men such as the Athenian Stranger himself (ῥαψωδὸν δέ, καλῶς Ἰλιάδα καὶ Ὀδύσσειαν ἥ τι τῶν Ἡσιοδείων διατιθέντα, τάχ' ἂν ἡμεῖς οἱ γέροντες ἥδιστα ἀκούσαντες νικᾶν ἂν φαίμεν πάμπλου, 658d).¹⁰

Public displays of *thaumata* to large-scale audiences are therefore portrayed in the *Laws* as a particularly dangerous prospect, due to the fact that they provide pleasure without much educative content to match.¹¹ It is difficult to assess how much truth there is in Plato's worries here, since it is only when we turn to the Roman world in the second century BCE that we encounter an obvious comparandum. In the first and second

⁹ Theophrastus also makes vague mention of such displays of *thaumata* twice in his *Characters*: the man who possesses ἀπόνοια (shamelessness) is said to be the sort who goes around collecting money from those who watch *thaumata* and argues with those who claim they already have a ticket or do not need to pay (καὶ ἐν θαύμασι δὲ τοὺς χαλκοὺς ἐκλέγειν καθ' ἕκαστον παριὼν καὶ μάχεσθαι τούτοις τοῖς τὸ σύμβολον φέρουσι, καὶ προῖκα θεωρεῖν ἀξιοῦσι, 6.4), while the man who possesses 'latently-obtained learning' (ὀψιμαθία), which seems in the *Characters* to mean a liking for things appropriate for boys but inappropriate anyone from an older age group, enjoys sitting through multiple performances of *thaumata* and attempts to learn the songs which go with them (καὶ ἐν τοῖς θαύμασι τρία ἢ τέτταρα πληρώματα ὑπομένειν τὰ ἔσματα ἐκμανθάνων, 27.4). The first mention implies that displays of *thaumata* were put on with the aim of collecting money (cf. the Syracusan dancing-master's purveyance of sympotic *thaumatopoiia* in Xenophon's *Symposium* in section two below), while the second suggests that such displays sometimes involved a musical element and were deemed appropriate for, or thought to appeal appropriately to, younger audience members rather than older male citizens. I will discuss what type of display Plato is thinking of when he refers to *thaumata* here when I return to the *thaumata* of the Cave in *Republic* 7 in section four below.

¹⁰ See Folch (2013) 342-45 and (2015) 131-36 on the relationship between pleasure and the diverse genres and forms included in this hypothetical competition in the context of the wider argument about the necessary nature of the hypothetical society of Magnesia in *Laws*.

¹¹ I will return briefly to the importance of *thauma* in the broader context of the *Laws*' arguments about education in the Epilogue, pp. 256-61.

prologues of Terence's *Hecyra* the failures of the comedy's first attempted performances are explicitly blamed on a severe misfortune (*vitium et calamitas | ut neque spectari neque cognosci potuerit*, 2-3) which prevented the play from being performed successfully: a disaster caused by a tightrope-walker, who competed for the spectators' attention and completely distracted their minds from the weightier theatrical production at hand (*populus studio stupidus in funambulo | animum occuparat*, 4-5). The second prologue hints at yet another theatrical failure: this time the crowd are distracted again by the sudden emergence of a rumour concerning the potential appearance of boxers and the expectation of yet another tight-rope walker: *funambuli eodem accessit exspectatio*, 34).¹² The distracting acrobatic feats of the tightrope-walker are precisely the sort of spectacles which are associated with *thaumatopoiōi*. Although it is of course impossible to say whether a similar incident could have occurred in the context of Greek theatrical festivals, it is nonetheless not difficult to imagine that the spectacles of *thaumatopoiōi* could prove equally distracting if offered at the same time as theatrical performances with weightier themes, narrative complexity, and potentially edifying content – as Plato has indeed hinted while mentioning displays of *thaumata* in the *Laws*.

2. Sympotic *Thaumatopoiia*: Wonderworking in Xenophon's *Symposium*

Theatrical or paratheatrical settings are not the only areas in which the *thaumatopoiōs* frequently plies his or her trade: the symposium is an equally common venue for marvellous performances. The sense that these smaller scale displays of *thaumata* also aim at distracting and capturing the minds of their spectators with amazement is also very

¹² For good discussions of the play's supposed initial failure and its relation to the potential appearance of rival distracting spectacles in the vicinity of its performance, see e.g. Goldberg (2013) 15-18, 86-96; Lada-Richards (2004) 55-82; Parker (1996) 592-601; Sandbach (1982) 134-35; Gilula (1981) 29-37.

clear. There is one extant text which explores the effect of wondrous performative marvels in a sympotic context in great depth: Xenophon's *Symposium*. The dialogue is set in 422 BCE, at the house of the famously rich Athenian Callias. Throughout Xenophon's Socratic dialogue, an antithesis arises between spectacular displays of feats held up as 'marvels', and philosophic questions about 'marvellous' natural phenomena. This suggests that there are now important differences to be drawn between wonder provoked by the gods or the natural world, and wonder provoked by the dazzling – and often deceptive – actions of our fellow humans.

Performative marvels involving bodily display are of particular interest in Xenophon's dialogue, becoming a prime topic of conversation over the course of the drinking party.¹³ The serious philosophical conversation at Callias' symposium is provoked in no small part by the acrobatic feats of a beautiful dancing girl provided by a Syracusan dancing-master, who is on hand to provide entertainment at the host's house from the very beginning of the symposium proper (2.1):

ὥς δ' ἀφηρέθησαν αἱ τράπεζαι καὶ ἔσπεισάν τε καὶ ἐπαιάνισαν, ἔρχεται αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ κῶμον Συρακόσιός τις ἄνθρωπος, ἔχων τε αὐλητρίδα ἀγαθὴν καὶ ὀρχηστρίδα τῶν τὰ θαύματα δυναμένων ποιεῖν, καὶ παῖδα πάνυ γε ὠραῖον καὶ πάνυ καλῶς κιθαρίζοντα καὶ ὀρχούμενον. ταῦτα δὲ καὶ ἐπιδεικνὺς ὥς ἐν θαύματι ἀργύριον ἐλάμβανεν.

When the tables had been taken away and they had poured a libation and sung a paean, a Syracusan man on a *komos* arrived. He was accompanied by a girl, an excellent aulos-player and dancer, one of those able to make marvels, and a boy who was very good-looking and very talented at playing the kithara and dancing. The Syracusan made money by exhibiting them as something to marvel at.¹⁴

¹³ Wohl (2004) 337-63 and Gilula (2002) 207-13 discuss the wider connections between the pronounced interest in bodily display and the philosophical concerns of the dialogue.

¹⁴ There is considerable debate about the precise meaning of the phrase 'ταῦτα δὲ καὶ ἐπιδεικνὺς ὥς ἐν θαύματι ἀργύριον ἐλάμβανεν'. Bowen (1998) 94 notes that this phrase is difficult to interpret and suggests that the meaning is that the Syracusan makes money "in remarkable sums" rather than that the performers are exhibited "as something to marvel at" because the former interpretation also hints at Callias' wealth (and presumably his ability to pay the Syracusan wondrous sums) by extension. Huss (1997) 43-44 and (1999) 121 makes a strong case for emendation of the singular θαύματι to the plural, reading ὥς ἐν θαύμασιν ἀργύριον, suggesting that the meaning of this phrase becomes something along the lines of 'he showed

The girl's art is here described as that of 'making marvels', and she is clearly some kind of female *thaumatopoiios*.¹⁵ With the Syracusan dancing-master's ability to make wondrous amounts of money from the marvellous displays which he directs, Xenophon here links thaumatic display and pecuniary gain in a manner reminiscent of Plato's frequent cynical wordplay on this theme. The *Hippias Major* is a good example. At the beginning of the dialogue Socrates mentions to Hippias that his fellow sophist Prodicus is well known for obtaining a wondrous amount of money through his sophistic *epideixis* and association with the young (ἐπιδείξεις ποιούμενος καὶ τοῖς νέοις συνὼν χρήματα ἔλαβεν θαυμαστὰ ὅσα, 282c). Hippias goes on to confirm that contemporary sophists are marvelled at not only for their performances, but also for the absurdly large amounts that they are able to make. He tells Socrates that even though he is already aware of how much money Prodicus is said to make, and therefore would not be surprised at the fact Hippias makes money too, he would nevertheless marvel if he knew just how great that sum of money was (οὐδὲν γάρ, ὦ Σώκράτης, οἶσθα τῶν καλῶν περὶ τοῦτο. εἰ γὰρ εἰδείης ὅσον ἀργύριον εἵργασμαι ἐγώ, θαυμάσας ἄν, 282d). Hippias even goes so far as to claim that when he gives the money he has made on the road to his father back home in Elis, both his father

them as in performances at a fair'. The phrase is still, however, deliberately ambiguous in meaning and it is clear that the Syracusan means to suggest here both that he displays his performers as something for others to marvel at, and that he makes a marvellous amount of money out of doing so.

¹⁵ As Huss (1999) 121 points out. See Schäfer (1997) 79-81 on what these scenes in Xenophon's *Symposium* suggest about the emergence of professional sympotic entertainers in the second half of the fifth century BCE. The connection between *thaumatopoiia* and sympotic eroticism which Xenophon draws out here is an enduring one if Matro's parodic epic poem *Attic Dinner Party* (late fourth-century BCE), quoted by Athenaeus, is anything to go by. As soon as dinner has ended in that poem the necessary preparations for the symposium are made: hands are washed, garlands are distributed, wine is mixed and the flat cake arrives. This is swiftly followed by the introduction of two wonderworking prostitutes (πόρναι δ' εἰσῆλθον, κοῦραι δύο θαυματοποιοί, fr.1.121 Olson-Sens). See Olson and Sens (1999) 143 on the use of *thaumatopoiioi* here as a humorous suggestion that these *pornai* are not simple dancing girls, but actually able to perform wondrous acts in bed. Cf. also Athenaeus' report of the wedding feast of Caranus the Macedonian, which allegedly involved naked female *thaumatopoiioi* tumbling amongst swords and breathing fire: θαυματουργοὶ γυναῖκες εἰς ξίφη κυβιστῶσαι καὶ πῦρ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος ἐκρίπτεσθαι γυμναί (129d).

and the other citizens marvel and are dumbstruck (καὶ τοῦτο ἐλθὼν οἴκαδε φέρων τῷ πατρὶ ἔδωκα, ὥστε ἐκεῖνον καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους πολίτας θαυμάζειν τε καὶ ἐκπεπλήχθαι, 282e).

The bitter irony here directed at the abilities of sophists to make ludicrous amounts of money is increased by the fact that the same terms are used elsewhere in Plato for the effect of the actual displays of sophistic or rhapsodic performances on their audiences. The astonishment which grips those who view Hippias' sophistic displays – and the piles of money he makes from them – is remarkably similar to that which rhapsodes are said to have on their audiences in another of Plato's aporetic dialogues, *Ion*.¹⁶ This is most obvious when we reach Ion's own discussion of the audience's response to his art, after Socrates first suggests that the rhapsode has an astonishing effect on his spectators whenever he recites epic poetry (ὅταν εὖ εἴπῃς ἔπη καὶ ἐκπλήξῃς μάλιστα τοὺς θεωμένους, 535b). Ion quickly agrees with Socrates and goes on to describe the experience from his point of view (535d-e):

ΣΩ. οἴσθα οὖν ὅτι καὶ τῶν θεατῶν τοὺς πολλοὺς ταῦτα ταῦτα ὑμεῖς ἐργάζεσθε;

ΙΩΝ καὶ μάλα καλῶς οἶδα· καθορῶ γὰρ ἐκάστοτε αὐτοὺς ἄνωθεν ἀπὸ τοῦ βήματος κλαίοντάς τε καὶ δεινὸν ἐμβλέποντας καὶ συνθαμβοῦντας τοῖς λεγομένοις. δεῖ γάρ με καὶ σφόδρ' αὐτοῖς τὸν νοῦν προσέχειν· ὥς ἐὰν μὲν κλαίοντας αὐτοὺς καθίσω, αὐτὸς γελάσομαι ἀργύριον λαμβάνων, ἐὰν δὲ γελῶντας, αὐτὸς κλαύσομαι ἀργύριον ἀπολλύς.

Socrates: And so do you think that you produce the same effects on most of the spectators as well?

Ion: Yes, I know this full well: for each time from up on the platform I look down at them weeping and glaring formidably and totally astonished at my words. For it is very much necessary for me to pay attention to them, since if I make them cry, I myself will laugh at the money I make, but if I make them laugh, I myself will cry at my lost income.

¹⁶ See González (2013) 290 on the “direct line” between rhapsodic *hypokrisis* and sophistic *epideixis*.

The effect of viewing a sophistic *epideixis*, or watching one of Ion's vivid and emotionally manipulative rhapsodic re-enactments of epic poetry, or glimpsing a huge pile of money is precisely the same: both induce a stultifying sense of astonishment.

Xenophon too is playing on this same idea in the *Symposium* as the troupe of entertainers arrives; already we have hints of the negative associations between marvel-making and money-making which go on to affect our view of the displays of *thaumatopoiia* proper later in the dialogue.¹⁷ The main discussion of *thaumatopoiia* and its effects comes at 7.2-4. Here the dancing girl begins to 'work wonders' by performing acrobatic feats upon a potter's wheel which has just been brought in (ἐπεὶ δ' ἦσαν, εἰσεφέρετο τῇ ὀρχηστρίδι τροχὸς τῶν κεραμικῶν, ἐφ' οὗ ἔμελλε θαυματουργήσκειν, 7.2). The compound word *thaumatourgia* is being used in the same way as *thaumatopoiia* here; the two are clearly synonyms denoting the types of spectacular display which are deliberately worked by men or women in an effort to astonish an audience.¹⁸ We have evidence for the type of acrobatic feat described here on fourth-century BCE South Italian vases: a red-figure Paestan skyphos in the Ashmolean Museum (Oxford 1945.43) depicting a naked young woman performing a handstand upon a potter's wheel which is being rotated by a Phlyax actor, is the example which perhaps comes closest to Xenophon's description of the dancing girl's *thaumatourgia* in the *Symposium*.¹⁹ Far

¹⁷ The emphasis on the Sicilian provenance of the dancing-master in the *Symposium* also perhaps hints at the spectacles which will go on to be served up at the symposium later in the dialogue. There is certainly an awareness of Sicilian performance traditions in Plato's dialogues: see e.g. Monoson (2012) 156-72 on the importance of Sicilian theatrical traditions in Plato's philosophical and political thought in the *Republic*. More generally, see Morgan's (2012) 48-54 on the rise of Syracuse as a flourishing literary and theatrical centre over the course of the fifth century BCE.

¹⁸ See Milanezi (2004) 187 on the use of *thaumatourgia* and *thaumatopoiia* as synonyms which denote the same sorts of action in the fourth century BCE; cf. Huss (1999) 348 on the equivalence of *thaumatourgia* and *thaumatopoiia* in this passage.

¹⁹ This skyphos is attributed to Asteas (or his workshop) and dated to the third quarter of the fourth century BCE: the other side of this vase depicts a standing maenad with a tympanon entertaining a seated Dionysus. For plates and discussion of Oxford, Ashmolean Museum 1945.43 see *PPSupp* p. 34, no. 116, pl. V b; *PhV*² p. 58, no. 96 and *RVP* p. 69, no. 33, pl. 24 f-g. Vickers (1999) 74 notes the particular similarities between the scene depicted on this vase and the description of the wonder-working dancing girl's performance in Xenophon's *Symposium*: cf. also Dearden (1995) 81-86. See Marshall (2000) 13-25 for a discussion of this vase and what it might tell us about women and the theatre; cf. also Hughes (2008) 11-12 on vases with

from being rare marvels, these sorts of manoeuvres seem to have become performative commonplaces, as Socrates' response to this display of the dancing girl suggests (7.3-4):

δοκεῖ οὖν μοι τὸ μὲν εἰς μαχαίρας κυβιστᾶν κινδύνου ἐπίδειγμα εἶναι, ὃ συμποσίῳ οὐδὲν προσήκει. καὶ μὴν τό γε ἐπὶ τοῦ τροχοῦ ἅμα περιδινουμένου γράφειν τε καὶ ἀναγιγνώσκειν θαῦμα μὲν ἴσως τί ἐστιν, ἡδονὴν δὲ οὐδὲ ταῦτα δύναμαι γνῶναι τίν' ἂν παράσχοι. οὐδὲ μὴν τό γε διαστρέφοντας τὰ σώματα καὶ τροχοὺς μιμουμένους ἥδιον ἢ ἡσυχίαν ἔχοντας τοὺς καλοὺς καὶ ὠραίους θεωρεῖν. καὶ γὰρ δὴ οὐδὲ πάνυ τι σπάνιον τό γε θαυμασίοις ἐντυχεῖν, εἴ τις τούτου δεῖται, ἀλλ' ἔξεστιν αὐτίκα μάλα τὰ παρόντα θαυμάζειν, τί ποτε ὁ μὲν λύχνος διὰ τὸ λαμπρὰν φλόγα ἔχειν φῶς παρέχει, τὸ δὲ χαλκεῖον λαμπρὸν ὄν φῶς μὲν οὐ ποιεῖ, ἐν αὐτῷ δὲ ἄλλα ἐμφαινόμενα παρέχεται· καὶ πῶς τὸ μὲν ἔλαιον ὕγρὸν ὄν αὖξει τὴν φλόγα, τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ, ὅτι ὕγρὸν ἐστὶ, κατασβέννυσσι τὸ πῦρ.

It seems to me that to somersault into swords is a dangerous show-piece, something not fit for a symposium. Perhaps writing and reading on a potter's wheel while it whirls around is something of a marvel, but I can't think what pleasure it might provide. Nor is it more pleasurable to observe young and good-looking people twisting their bodies out of shape and imitating the wheels of potters than it is to watch them at rest. Of course, it's not at all a rare thing to encounter marvels, if somebody feels a need,

depictions of acrobats on potters' wheels more generally. There are several other vases which portray a female acrobat either performing on a potter's wheel, or apparently gearing up to do so: 1) Sydney, Nicholson Museum 95.16 is a Corinthian type skyphos (c. 325-310 BCE, attributed to an artist related to the Woman-Eros Painter), which depicts a female acrobat doing a handstand on a potter's wheel along with two large birds (see *CVA* Australia I 64-65, pl. 84-85). 2) British Museum F 232 (1814, 0704.566), a Campanian red-figure hydria (c. 340-330 BCE) attributed to the Foundling Painter, shows a scantily-clad female acrobat performing a handstand next to a potter's wheel and tympana (see *CVA* British Museum 2 (Group IV Ea, Red-Figured Vases of Campania and Paestum) p. 6 and pl. 8.4 and *LCS* I 3/112 (p. 375) with *LCS* II pl. 143.3). 3) Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 509 (SA 405), a Gnathia lekythos which depicts a female acrobat on a potter's wheel accompanied by an auletris (see *CVA* Naples III, p. 16, pl. 70.4). Sword-tumbling, another of the wonder-working girl's *thaumata* which has already appeared earlier in the dialogue (μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο κύκλος εἰσηνέχθη περίεστος ξιφῶν ὀρθῶν. εἰς οὖν ταῦτα ἡ ὀρχηστρίς ἐκυβίστα τε καὶ ἐξεκυβίστα ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν, 2.11; see also Athenaeus *Deipnosophistae* 129d, mentioned above p. 238 n. 15, and Pl. *Euthyd.* 294e, discussed below p. 242, n. 21), is also depicted on several vases, often alongside other related acrobatic acts (see Hughes (2008) 9-11 and van den Hoek and Herrmann, Jr. (2013) 180-85). An example of such iconography which pre-dates Xenophon's *Symposium* is Naples 81398 (3232), an Attic red-figure hydria by Polygnotos (c. 450-440 BCE) which depicts girls tumbling and practising various acrobatic feats: a dancing girl prepares to jump over swords accompanied by an auletris, and a girl performs a handstand on a table in a similar pose to the depictions of handstands performed upon potters' wheels described above (see *ARV*² 1032, no. 61; Matheson (1995) 23-25, P 67, pl. 14 a-d; Schäfer (1997) pls. 42-43). Similar examples: 1) Berlin F 3489, an Apulian Gnathia squat lekythos (340-330 BCE) which portrays a female acrobat somersaulting through a ring of swords (see van den Hoek and Herrmann, Jr. (2013) 185, fig. 3; Davies (1971) 151, pl. 47.5). 2) The Hague, Schneider-Herrmann coll. 201, a red-figure Apulian plate (c. third quarter of the fourth century BCE) with a female acrobat somersaulting over a fixed sword (see *RVAp* II p. 609, no. 21/46, pl. 234.1). 3) Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale 2854, a south Italian Gnathia lekythos depicting a female acrobat executing a handstand over a fixed sword (see Davies (1971) 151, pl. 47.2). 4) Geneva, Collection F.C.-A., an Apulian red-figure bell-krater (c. 340 BCE), attributed to the Chevron Group, depicting a female acrobat somersaulting between two fixed swords (see *Peintre de Darius* 199-201).

rather it's possible to marvel just this very minute at the things right in front of you. For example, why does the lamp provide light with its bright flame, but the bright bronze lamp bowl does not provide light, instead giving out onto itself only the reflections of other things? And how does olive oil increase a flame, though it is wet, while water, which is also wet, extinguishes fire?

Socrates is clearly not impressed by the dancing girl's *thaumatourgia*. His insistence here that it is not at all a rare event to encounter marvels makes clear that the sorts of questions provoked by not understanding the causes behind natural, everyday sights and processes in the world around us are what we should really be impressed and excited by, rather than the spectacles artificially developed by human performers.²⁰ The interplay between the near and the far which we have already seen is increasingly connected to the marvellous towards the end of the fifth century BCE is obviously in Xenophon's mind here as well: once again, 'real' marvels are now considered to be found more often surprisingly close to home among familiar objects, rather than far away, or involving rare objects or actions. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the acrobatic postures which the dancing girl performs in this dialogue are frequently encountered in later visual art, and from Socrates' weary mention of such feats here, it is no great stretch to posit that for Xenophon's contemporary readers, sword-dancing and whirling about on wheels while reading and writing were already familiar kinds of sympotic display.²¹

²⁰ In this respect Socrates' words about near and distant objects and topics which provoke *thauma* here in Xenophon's *Symposium* are the closest antecedent of Aristotle's similar way of framing the issue at *Metaph.* 982b12-21 and *Part. an.* 644b-65a (for more detailed discussions of these passages see pp. 91-93, 167 n. 5).

²¹ Cf. Plato's *Euthydemus* again, a dialogue in which the sympotic acrobatic activities of the *thaumatopoios* are aligned with the wonderful verbal trickery of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus' sophistic *epideixis*. When Dionysodorus takes the ridiculous position that the knowledge of one thing entails the knowledge of everything, Socrates challenges him by asking whether he is even able to sword-dance and be whirled about on a wheel (οὐ δῆπου, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, καὶ ἐς μαχαίρας γε κυβιστᾶν καὶ ἐπὶ τροχοῦ δινεῖσθαι τηλικούτος ὢν, οὕτω πόρρω σοφίας ἥκεις, *Euthyd.* 294e) – two wonder-inducing activities which are at the heart of the sympotic performance of the female *thaumatopoios* in Xenophon's *Symposium*. Dionysodorus affirms that he is, of course, able to perform such feats of *thaumatopoia* since there is nothing that he cannot do (οὐδέν, ἔφη, ὅτι οὐ, *Euthyd.* 294e). Plato's implication in *Euthydemus* is clear: the two sophistic brothers are marvel-makers of a similar sort, whose specious, far-fetched argumentation aims only at making their listeners marvel, rather than allowing them to learn or philosophise correctly and productively. Evidently

Socrates' view here is clear: it is the customary material of natural science – and of philosophy – which we should really be wondering about, not a girl whirling about on a potter's wheel. Once again, we see that there is a division being made here between the type of wonder which spurs someone on to further inquiry and involves a mostly cognitive aspect, and that which is purely affective and as a result often leads to the sort of stunned cognitive stasis commonly associated with the term *ekplēxis*. In Xenophon's *Symposium*, the fact that natural marvels provide the material for the former sort of wonder, while manmade marvels are associated with the latter, is laid out in perhaps its starkest form in Socrates' lengthy meditation upon the true nature of rare and familiar *thaumata* – with the irony of course being that educated men such as himself would supposedly never find the sorts of acrobatic marvels displayed in Callias' house worthy of any astonishment. The risk of this type of stultifying astonishment, however, remains for the young, uneducated or foolish, and it is precisely for this reason that *thaumatopoiia* becomes such a worry for Plato and other contemporary thinkers, as the next section will demonstrate in more detail.

3. *Thaumatopoiia* and Perspective in Plato's *Republic* and *Sophist*

There is another aspect of Socrates' speech in Xenophon's *Symposium* which relates to connected concerns surrounding *thaumatopoiia*: the fact that the performance he refers to when he complains about young people twisting their bodies round and imitating the wheels of potters is a mimetic one.²² Some of the problems associated with mimesis in

these sorts of spectacles were already well-worn examples of marvellous sympotic display in the period, as Jones (1991) 190-91 suggests.

²² Gilhuly (2009) 129 picks up upon the thaumatic effect of the mimetic nature of the wonderworking girl's actions upon the potter's wheel: "in this feat, mimesis closes in on itself. The girl enacts the process by which she is objectified, becoming the vessel that depicts her presence at a symposium. She is the material of her own representation – the clay and the pots and the knives and the image and the word. The real and

Plato's work also come to be associated with marvel-making. One important aspect of Plato's treatment of *thaumatopoiia* is its relation to the discussion of artistic mimesis in book ten of the *Republic*, and in the later dialogue *Sophist*. In these dialogues *thaumatopoiia* and mimesis both relate to problems which arise as a result of changes in distance, measurement, proportion and perspective. As we saw in earlier chapters, the relationship between the near and the far and *thauma* in Greek thought in the fifth century is a very complex one. As we might expect, *thauma* comes into Plato's discussions of the near and the far as well, in both a literal and a metaphorical sense.

In *Republic* 10, Socrates argues that mimesis is not the second stage distant from truth (i.e. the second stage away from the Forms), but in fact the third (τὸ δὲ δὴ μιμεῖσθαι τοῦτο οὐ περὶ τρίτον μὲν τί ἐστὶν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας, 602c). Socrates then states that the power of mimesis affects the same part of us as which is affected by visual illusions. He explains this point by noting that the same object does not seem to us to be the same size when it is viewed close up compared to when it is viewed from far away (ταὐτόν που ἡμῖν μέγεθος ἐγγύθεν τε καὶ πόρρωθεν διὰ τῆς ὄψεως οὐκ ἴσον φαίνεται, 602c).²³ Even though the object does not actually change its magnitude in reality, it seems to be a different size depending on where the viewer is stood. Other errors of perception are similar to this kind of effect (602c-d):

καὶ ταῦτὰ καμπύλα τε καὶ εὐθέα ἐν ὕδατι τε θεωμένοις καὶ ἔξω, καὶ κοῖλά τε δὴ καὶ ἐξέχοντα διὰ τὴν περὶ τὰ χρώματα αὐτῶν πλάνην τῆς ὄψεως, καὶ πᾶσά τις ταραχὴ δὴλη ἡμῖν ἐνοῦσα αὕτη ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ· ὃ δὴ ἡμῶν τῷ παθήματι τῆς φύσεως ἢ σκιαγραφία ἐπιθεμένη γοητείας οὐδὲν ἀπολείπει, καὶ ἡ θαυματοποιία καὶ ἄλλαι πολλαὶ τοιαῦται μηχαναί.

representational realms collapse on each other in meaningless mimesis, and there is nothing for the spectators to do but marvel". The importance of ideas about mimesis in this dialogue more generally has also been picked up on by Wohl (2004) 357-58 and Baragwanath (2012) 641, who note that the behaviour of the Syracusan's performers in the *Symposium* seems to shift from performative mimesis to supposedly 'real' actions in the mime depicting the relationship between Dionysus and Ariadne with which the dialogue ends.

²³ Cf. Ion's sentiments at Eur. *Ion* 585-86: see chapter four pp. 159-60 for discussion.

And the same things look bent within water and straight outside of it, and both concave and convex, again because of visual error concerning colours, and every single confusion like this is clearly inherent in the human soul. Three-dimensional painting (*skiagraphia*), which attacks this weakness in our nature, is nothing short of bewitchment, as is marvel-making (*thaumatopoiia*) and all other such artifices.

Skiagraphia and *thaumatopoiia* are here equated with the effect that mimesis itself supposedly has on the spectator. In Plato, both of these terms are interconnected in ways that suggest that a deceptive, spurious appearance of truth is the aim of mimesis. *Skiagraphia*, often translated as ‘shadow painting’, seems to be the use of darker and lighter shades together in such a way as to give figures the impression of three-dimensionality.²⁴ Distance is key to *skiagraphia*: the lengths of lines and/or the colours used only look correct from a distance, and fail to stand up to detailed scrutiny when viewed up close. As Eva Keuls puts it, in the realm of painting, *skiagraphia* represents “the epitome of illusionism ... the device which most intensively exploited the subjectivity and fallibility of human eyesight”.²⁵ The way in which *skiagraphia* exploits this power of illusion seems to be by making things look *more* real rather than less: objects on a flat plane somehow take on the appearance of three-dimensional objects, even though they are just flat depictions of real-life objects. Moreover, the sort of play with distance and magnitude in which the purveyors of *skiagraphia* and *thaumatopoiia* indulge is a key aspect of the sort of ekplektic wonder that these thaumatic objects provoke: this fits with the connection of *thauma* to the visual in general, and to extremes of magnitude (things which are either amazingly big or amazingly small) and distance (things which should be far away appearing closer to you than you imagined, or vice versa) which we find elsewhere long before Plato begins to manipulate these ideas.

²⁴ For a detailed discussion of *skiagraphia* see Bruno (1977) 37; cf. Rouveret (1989) 24-26, 50-59 and Burnyeat (1999) 223-24.

²⁵ See Keuls (1978) 80.

But there is an important development in the way in which these ideas are wielded for philosophical purposes here. Rather than referring in a strictly literal manner to real-life material objects, Plato's discussion of distance and *thauma* also takes on an important metaphorical aspect. This is something which is made clearer in a similar discussion in the later dialogue *Sophist*. As one of the steps in the long conversation with Theaetetus which aims to define what, exactly, a sophist is, the Eleatic Stranger first, in a subsection of the argument beginning at 234b-c, pinpoints the ability to deceive people through the use of visual or verbal mimesis as a key aspect of the sophist's character:

ΞΕ: οὐκοῦν τὸν γ' ὑπὸ σκηνούμενον δυνατόν εἶναι μὴ τέχνη πάντα ποιεῖν γινώσκόμενον τοῦτο, ὅτι μιμήματα καὶ ὁμώνυμα τῶν ὄντων ἀπεργαζόμενος τῇ γραφικῇ τέχνῃ δυνατός ἐστι τοὺς ἀνοήτους τῶν νέων παίδων, πόρρωθεν τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐπιδεικνύς, λανθάνειν ὥς ὅτι περ ἂν βουληθῇ δρᾶν, τοῦτο ἰκανώτατος ὢν ἀποτελεῖν ἔργῳ.

ΘΕ: πῶς γὰρ οὐ;

ΞΕ: τί δὲ δῆ; περὶ τοὺς λόγους ἄρ' οὐ προσδοκῶμεν εἶναί τινα ἄλλην τέχνην, ἣ αὖ δυνατόν ὄν αὖ τυγχάνει τοὺς νέους καὶ ἔτι πόρρω τῶν πραγμάτων τῆς ἀληθείας ἀφεστῶτας διὰ τῶν ὥτων τοῖς λόγοις γοητεύειν, δεικνύοντας εἰδῶλα λεγόμενα περὶ πάντων, ὥστε ποιεῖν ἀληθῆ δοκεῖν λέγεσθαι καὶ τὸν λέγοντα δὴ σοφώτατον πάντων ἅπαντ' εἶναι;

Eleatic Stranger: And so we recognise this I suppose about the person who professes to be able to do everything with a single art: that by producing imitations which have the same names as real things through the art of painting, and by displaying his pictures at a distance, he is able to deceive the unintelligent ones among young children into thinking that he is supremely able to carry out any deed he wishes to do in reality.

Theaetetus: Yes, indeed.

Eleatic Stranger: Well then? Surely we should expect that there is another art concerning words, with which it is again possible to bewitch the young through their ears while they are still standing far-off from the reality of things, displaying images of all things to them, so as to

make it seem that true things are said, and that the man saying them is indeed the wisest of all men about all things?

In this case it is specifically mindless young children who are at risk of believing that one man can make or do all things by virtue of a single art. These children are therefore the ones most at risk of being deceived by this type of man through his use of illusionistic painting or similar mimetic arts. This deceptive use of visual art is shown to have an analogous counterpart in the deceptive use of verbal art; the sophist is further defined as one who can trick young people with words (234c). In this discussion, it is clear that a viewer's literal distance from a mimetic artistic object is parallel to a sort of metaphorical epistemic distance of the mind from truth itself.²⁶

Given that the ability to dazzle someone with deceptive mimetic performances is a key aspect of marvel-making, it comes as no surprise when the Eleatic Stranger concludes that one of the key elements of the definition of the sophist is that he is a *thaumatopoios* as well.²⁷ At 235a-b the idea of the sophist as a type of marvel-maker is first introduced:

ΞΕ: ἄγε δὴ, νῦν ἡμέτερον ἔργον ἤδη τὸν θῆρα μηκέτ' ἀνεῖναι· σχεδὸν γὰρ αὐτὸν περιειλήφामεν ἐν ἀμφιβληστροικῷ τινι τῶν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις περὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ὀργάνων, ὥστε οὐκέτ' ἐκφεύζεται τόδε γε.

ΘΕ: τὸ ποῖον;

ΞΕ: τὸ μὴ οὐ τοῦ γένους εἶναι τοῦ τῶν θαυματοποιῶν τις εἷς.

ΘΕ: κάμοι τοῦτό γε οὕτω περὶ αὐτοῦ συνδοκεῖ.

Eleatic Stranger: Come on then, it's our task not to let the beast escape. For we nearly have him surrounded with one of those net-like instruments which words provide for such things, so he will not escape from the next point.

²⁶ See Nightingale (2002) 228. Cf. also Socrates' very similar argument in relation to painting and mimesis at *Resp.* 598a-d.

²⁷ Cf. e.g. Casadesús Bordoy (2012) 26 and Bernabé (2012) 53-55 on the importance of *thauma* in this definition of the sophist.

Theaetetus: What point is that?

Eleatic Stranger: That he certainly belongs to the class of marvel-makers.

Theaetetus: This seems to me too to be true about that man.

The sophist's art ultimately keeps the young far away from the truth in the same way as illusionistic effects in painting such as *skiagraphia* necessitate a literal distance from the artwork in order to create a convincing image. The sophist's ability to enthrall the young and keep them far away from the truth turns him into a sort of *thaumatopoios*, a marvel-maker who constructs artificial thaumatic arguments which maintain the appearance of reality. Plato's discussion of nearness and distance in relation to *thaumatopoiia* and *thaumata* is therefore a distinctive element of his wider epistemological concerns.

4. Socratic Marvel-Making: *Thaumatopoiia* in the Cave

To return to the Cave. In this passage Plato again meditates upon the many associations surrounding displays of *thaumata* and mimesis, the relationship between the natural and the artificial, and familiar and unfamiliar wonders. Plato activates all these meanings in the Cave to warn against the potentially misleading and stultifying marvels of others – all the while having Socrates himself present a captivating image that does much to arrest and grab hold of the reader. If we focus on the use of wonder in this passage, Plato's wider message becomes clear: certain types of philosophical wonder can lead to educative and cognitive advancement, but in the hands of the wrong people *thauma*, though often pleasurable, can only lead to a state of cognitive stasis. This is a particular danger for the young person who is as yet not sufficiently educated to withstand the potential lure of deceptive thaumatic spectacles. This distinction is in fact made clear within the Cave

analogy itself. As we saw above, for Plato the concept of *thaumatopoiia* involves a series of interlinking issues involving perception, potential deception and mimesis. How then does this relate to the display of shadowy *thaumata* found in the Cave?

It is worth thinking further about how, exactly, the *thaumata* on display might appear to those watching the spectacle. From the description of the fire burning behind the prisoners from a long way off, and the low wall in front of them above which shadows are projected, it seems that we are dealing here with some form of shadow puppet theatre.²⁸ The choice of this particular variety of thaumatic spectacle is especially apt, as the issues involving perception and mimesis which Plato often associates with *thauma* and *thaumatopoiia* are massively accentuated by the way in which the composition of this spectacle is described. The prisoners in the Cave are not only forced to observe shadowy imitations of the objects being held up behind them rather than the objects themselves, but they cannot even observe the true proportions of the shadows which are cast in front of them. This is the result of many factors: their distance from the wall of the Cave will affect their ability to measure the size of each shadow accurately, the use of a flickering fire as a light source presumably results in distorted and moving shadows, and the shadows may differ radically in size from the objects which cast them anyway depending on the relation between those objects and the fire itself.²⁹ The distortions always associated with *thaumatopoiia* are thus in play in the Cave analogy as well.

The spectators in the Cave are thus not only deceived by the fact that they think that the shadows are real objects, but also by the fact that they cannot even grasp the real

²⁸ See Gocer (1999) 119-29 on Plato's use of the idea of shadow puppetry in the Cave analogy.

²⁹ Schofield (2007) 226 notes that the dazzling and flickering nature of the fire would make it hard for the released prisoner to look at the objects casting shadows, but we can apply this principle further and note that even the shadows would be difficult to see clearly due to the moving nature of the light source. Cf. Harte (2007) 208 on potential distortions caused by the relation between the objects casting shadows and their light source. We might also note that the irregularity of the cave wall would also presumably cause the shadows to appear even more distorted to their viewers.

dimensions of these shadows. Nor can they understand the causes of the movements of these objects: instead of understanding that the shadows can only imitate the movements of animate beings, they think that shadows themselves are alive, especially since the voices of the *thaumatopoi*-like men rebound off the wall of the Cave and make the shadows seem to speak. The objects casting shadows are made to look like statues of men or other living things, but they are not living creatures. Instead they have all been constructed out of materials like wood and stone (514c-15a):

ὄρα τοίνυν παρὰ τοῦτο τὸ τειχίον φέροντας ἀνθρώπους σκεύη τε παντοδαπὰ ὑπερέχοντα τοῦ τειχίου καὶ ἀνδριάντας καὶ ἄλλα ζῶα λίθινά τε καὶ ξύλινα καὶ παντοῖα εἰργασμένα, οἷον εἰκὸς τοὺς μὲν φθεγγομένους, τοὺς δὲ σιγῶντας τῶν παραφερόντων.

And now picture this, along this wall there are men bearing all sorts of props which project above the wall, both images of men and other living creatures made out of wood and stone and all sorts of materials. As you would expect, some of the men carrying the props along utter sounds, and some are silent.

The fact that these objects have been constructed out of other materials is very important: these are not *thaumata* which are found in the natural world, the kinds of everyday marvels which provoke the types of questions which lead to philosophical thinking. Instead they are deceptive images which aim to deceive and dazzle the onlooker with *thauma* in the same way as artworks which look ‘as if they are alive’ or ‘as if they are about to speak’ provoke a similar sense of wonder in their viewers.³⁰ The effect of the shadows is comparable – except that the chained viewer in the Cave does not realise that they are caused by artificial and manmade objects.

³⁰ We have already seen in chapter one (see especially pp. 55-57) that wonder is the customary response to statues or other types of artworks which are rendered so realistically that they seem to be on the verge of moving or speaking as though truly alive, and that these supposed attributes of artworks develop as *topoi* in connection with *thauma* in the ekphrastic tradition.

If the shadows are the ultimate in deceptive mimetic spectacles, then the *thaumatopoiioi*-like men must represent the type of people who create these kinds of mimetic sights. In general, the recent voluminous scholarship on this passage has subscribed to one of two views: either the men in control of the *thaumata* which enthrall the prisoners are politicians and legislators, or they represent men who are prominent in the cultural sphere such as poets, artists, playwrights and painters.³¹ There is no need to decide between these groups: both are covered by the designation of the figures controlling the objects in the Cave as being like *thaumatopoiioi*. As we saw in chapter six in the discussion of the use of the marvellous as a keynote of the oratorical contest between Demosthenes and Aeschines, orators, politicians and demagogues by necessity harness the powers of *thauma* to play to the crowd just as poets and artists do. In a similar fashion, *thaumatopoiia* is being used metaphorically here in disparaging reference to the potentially seductive and deceptive art of any public figure who attempts to influence the thought and direction of the rest of society.³²

The power of such representations over the spectator is made very clear by Socrates' vision of the Cave's prisoners. As we saw in an earlier chapter, the effect of these sorts of displays on an audience is often portrayed as one which causes dumbstruck astonishment, an *ekplektic* type of stunned response. It is not by accident then that the absolutely static state of the chained prisoners echoes the position of those who are elsewhere in Plato's dialogues described as subject to the pleasurable but damaging charms of *ekplektic* wonder, since Plato is referring precisely to the same types of figures

³¹ Wilberding (2004) 117-39 provides a comprehensive overview of the many recent suggestions regarding the identity of the people compared to *thaumatopoiioi* in the Cave analogy. Wilberding himself suggests that all of these orthodox views are wrong and that the puppeteers are not orators, demagogues, politicians, or poets. Instead, he suggests that the prisoners are meant to represent these groups, and that the shadows are the *dēmos*. Given the performative bent of *thaumatopoiia*, however, it seems clear that the more conventional readings of this passage cohere more easily with Plato's use of the language of *thauma* in *Republic* 7.

³² Thus McCoy (2008) 130 is correct in noting that: "[w]hat is crucial in the use of this term here [i.e. *θαυματοποιούς*] is that the speakers are performers".

– orators, poets, rhapsodes, demagogues – whom he elsewhere accuses of misleading the general public, and the young in particular, with *ekplektic* and wondrous displays.

Given the emphasis on visual illusion and the power of arresting sights (whether they be actual visual objects, or verbal descriptions of visual objects) at which the introduction of *thaumatopoiia* in the Cave analogy hints, is it necessary for us as readers of Plato to pause and question the power of Socrates' own verbal painting? I believe that we must do so, not least because of way in which the necessity of actually *seeing* the image that Socrates is constructing is emphasised to his interlocutor Glaucon (and by extension, to us). At the very beginning of the account Glaucon is explicitly instructed to see (*ιδὲ γὰρ ἀνθρώπους*, 514a) the men and their surroundings which Socrates is about to describe, and this exhortation is restated as the description progresses (*ιδὲ τευχίον*, 514b). At the end of Socrates' initial illustration of the situation in the Cave, Glaucon responds by explicitly saying that he sees what Socrates has described (*ὁρῶ, ἔφη*, 514b). Socrates then exhorts Glaucon to see again (*ὄρα*, 515b), proceeding to recount how men carrying images of men and other living things cast shadows upon the wall of the Cave. Although Glaucon claims he can see what Socrates is describing, and we can also follow along and imagine what the Cave might look like, it is difficult to understand straightaway what this image is supposed to convey. Socrates has already told us at the very beginning of the analogy that what he is about to say relates explicitly to our education (*ἀπείκασον τοιοῦτόν πάθει τὴν ἡμετέραν φύσιν παιδείας τε περὶ καὶ ἀπαιδευσίας*, 514a) – yet it is difficult to understand immediately how the situation of the prisoners bound in the Cave could relate to this theme. Likewise, although we can visualise various elements of Socrates' description in our minds, the significance of the image being built up in front of us is not easy to grasp. Just as the prisoners in the Cave fail to understand the true significance and causes of the moving shadows on the wall, so too do we fail to grasp the true purpose of

the image built up by Socrates and its relation to our education until we are guided through the image by someone who already understands its meaning.

This point is emphasised further by Glaucon's initial response at the end of Socrates' description: 'This image you speak of is strange', he said, 'and these are strange prisoners too' (ἄτοπον, ἔφη, λέγεις εἰκόνα καὶ δεσμώτας ἀτόπους, 515a). In this case the spatial aspect of the word *atopos* – literally meaning 'out of place' – is also activated in Glaucon's comment, as he implies both that the space of the Cave and people in it are 'out of place', spatially and conceptually distant from his own existence and consciousness.³³ But Socrates reveals that these men are surprisingly much closer to Glaucon than he has realised: 'they are like us' (ὁμοίους ἡμῖν, 515a), he bluntly replies. Socrates has thus managed to make the familiar strange and the strange familiar, to defamiliarise and then refamiliarise the supposed situation of those who are just like us.³⁴ Wonder is a frequent response to this kind of defamiliarisation and refamiliarisation, and it is precisely that response which Socrates' image is attempting to provoke, both in Glaucon and in us. The Cave analogy is itself offered up to us here as an object of *thauma* – though one that potentially offers the possibility of cognitive advancement rather than stasis, as long as we are correctly guided through and eventually manage to move away from the alluring nature of images, whether they are visual or constructed verbally.

In this way, the potential danger of falling prey to wonder-inducing images is a theme which is itself encoded within the Cave analogy. By making a marvel of his own, Socrates by necessity distorts certain elements of his image, increasing the magnitude of some aspects and minimising the importance of others. This causes particular problems

³³ Cf. Nightingale (2004) 97 on the importance of *atopia* later on in the Cave analogy when the philosopher himself will eventually go on to become *atopos* among his own people; this later reversal of the application of *atopia* echoes and transforms Glaucon's use here.

³⁴ Cf. Nightingale (2004) 96 on Plato's "rhetoric of estrangement" in this passage, which "aims to uproot and displace us, portraying the familiar world as strange and the strange reality of the Forms as kindred to the human soul".

when we attempt to harmonise the image of the Cave with what we have previously been told about the Line.³⁵ But the lack of precise harmonisation between these images in *Republic* six and seven is itself no wonder: distortions and changing proportions are after all at the heart of *thaumatopoiia*. Any image which works to arrest our attention and make us marvel is bound to mislead us to some extent, as Plato frequently warns us. The difference in Socrates' use of *thauma* is that it makes us think; it sets us off on the process towards the realisation that it is mathematical and dialectical reasoning which is necessary for us to approach an understanding of the Form of the Good. This is something we only come to realise as the Cave analogy draws on: as Myles Burnyeat notes, "it is only in retrospect that we learn that the Cave has to do with mathematics as well as cultural values (532b-c)".³⁶ From a distance, at first glance, we might think the image of the Cave is only about cultural values. But as Socrates brings us (and Glaucon) closer and closer to his true meaning, we realise close up that the main purpose of this image is to impress the necessity of mathematical and dialectical reasoning upon us. The Cave analogy thus itself embodies the way in which wonder is one of the most dangerous weapons in the arsenal of those who are preeminent in the cultural and political sphere in contemporary Athens, the *thaumatopoiioi*-like men who construct crowd-pleasing marvels for their own ends. But the other face of *thauma* is present in the Cave as well, and its potential as an initial protreptic towards further philosophical endeavour becomes clear: in the right (Socratic) hands, τὸ θαυμάζειν truly does turn out to be the ἀρχὴ φιλοσοφίας.

³⁵ Schofield (2007) 230 best sums up the resulting problems: "The assumption that we are being told to bludgeon everything in the Cave to fit whatever parallels could be identified in Sun and Line has caused much of the interpretative damage".

³⁶ Burnyeat (1999) 243.

8. Epilogue

Thaumata Polla

‘Yes, truly, marvels are many’ (ἦ θαύματα πολλά). This study attests to the truth of Pindar’s famous claim (*Olympian* 1.28). In almost every genre and mode of ancient Greek literary writing, the significance of wonder as a category of experience can be probed in ways which provide radically new and defamiliarising perspectives on familiar material. But amidst this general polyphony, there remain continuities in how *thauma* and *thaumata* are defined, configured and conceived. In this, my concluding chapter, I concentrate on three case studies that will allow me to trace out and reiterate some of the main trends, tendencies, changes and continuities in the treatment of *thauma* in Greek literature from Homer to the early Hellenistic period, while simultaneously pointing towards a few suggestions concerning further directions for the study of wonder and the marvellous in antiquity and beyond.

The first section builds on this study’s discovery of the growing significance of *thauma* as a philosophical concept. Following on from my reading of Plato’s *Republic*, I briefly examine the place of *thauma* in the philosopher’s last work, *Laws*, before turning to Rome in the first century BCE to consider the rise of another philosophical principle relating to *thauma*: the idea of *not* marvelling at anything at all (*nil admirari*). In the second section I turn to the growing impact of *thauma* on ancient discussions of the relationship between nature and artifice by examining the place of wonder in the mechanical treatises of the first-century CE engineer Hero of Alexandria. By demonstrating that his work builds on the long tradition of conceiving of *thauma* as a category of experience which mediates between gods and men, and bridges the gap

between the natural and artificial, I point towards the need for a general re-examination of the place of *thauma* in subsequent philosophical and scientific texts in antiquity, and in Hero's treatises in particular. Finally, in the third section, I once again examine the reception of *thauma* and *thaumata* in Roman culture as something specifically Greek, by returning to the idea of the marvel as a textual phenomenon in the work with which I began this study: Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*.

In each of these sections, I do not aim to be exhaustive or comprehensive either in my summing up or my suggestions for further questions of interest. Rather, in the spirit of Plato and Aristotle, I want to suggest that *thauma* is only a starting point for new – and renewed – inquiry.

1. *Thauma* as the Beginning of Philosophy – or *Nil Admirari*?

Over the course of this study, it has become apparent just how much the importance of *thauma* as a concept in Greek philosophical thinking has been underrated in previous scholarship. By the time one reaches the work of Aristotle and his Peripatetic followers, the significance of *thauma* as a concept is already well-established in the realm of aesthetic and rhetorical theory (see Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*), in biology, zoology and science more generally (see Aristotle's biological writings and the works of the paradoxographers), and also in relation to the notion of what philosophy itself is and does (see Aristotle's *Metaphysics*). For it is in the work of Plato that *thauma* really emerges for the first time as a fully-conceptualised and complex term of philosophical hermeneutics. By the end of the fifth century BCE, the cultural discourse of *thauma* and *thaumata*, and particularly of their effects on audiences and viewers, is fully ready for the complex philosophical uses Plato puts it to. The fact that sight and vision, from the

beginning of the Greek literary tradition, remain the sensory realm in which *thauma* exercises its greatest impact accounts to some extent for Plato's pronounced interest in the concept as a vehicle for expressing more general and complex concerns about human sensory experience of the phenomenal world, mimesis, thinking, and the origins of philosophy itself. At the same time, the fact that *thauma* exercises a simultaneous emotional *and* cognitive effect on its subjects means that it becomes a vital concept in the philosopher's broader exploration of human psychology. For Plato, *thauma* is not only a response to the most unfamiliar and distant objects and experiences, or to experiences provoked by and related to the divine rather than the human realm, as it primarily was in the past – though these associations do remain. It is also the radically ambivalent effect of contemporary manmade spectacles which aim, above all else, to delight and distract. The inherent doubleness and variability which *thauma* possesses as a response to experience which is able to provoke cognitive advancement while at the same time risking a sort of dazzling cognitive stasis is part of what makes wonder such a potent concept in Plato's philosophical arsenal.

This is nowhere clearer than in the *Laws*, Plato's final work. For in this dialogue *thauma* plays a part in the explanation of the workings of human psychology itself. Plato presents us with three old men – an unnamed Athenian, a Cretan called Clinias, and a Spartan named Megillus – who embark upon a discussion of the relative advantages and disadvantages of the legislative practices and constitutions of different cities and cultures in an attempt to define the best laws for the foundation of a new, *almost* ideal state, the 'second best' city (δευτέρως ἂν πόλις οἰκεῖσθαι πρὸς τὸ βέλτιστον, 739a) of Magnesia. As their discussion progresses the question of what the best type of education might be for this new city's inhabitants soon arises. It is in the context of this question that, relatively early on in the discussion, the Athenian Stranger – the *Laws*' dominant, often

Socrates-like guiding philosophical voice – returns to the image of *thaumata*, those puppet-like objects which we have seen being deployed by the strange *thaumatopoi* who populate Plato’s image of the Cave, to describe the workings of human psychology (644d-44e):

περὶ δὴ τούτων διανοηθῶμεν οὕτως. θαῦμα μὲν ἕκαστον ἡμῶν ἡγησώμεθα τῶν ζώων θεῖον, εἴτε ὡς παίγνιον ἐκείνων εἴτε ὡς σπουδῇ τινι συνεστηκός· οὐ γὰρ δὴ τοῦτό γε γινώσκομεν, τόδε δὲ ἴσμεν, ὅτι ταῦτα τὰ πάθη ἐν ἡμῖν οἷον νεῦρα ἢ σμήρινθοί τινες ἐνοῦσαι σπῶσίν τε ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀλλήλαις ἀνθέλκουσιν ἐναντία οὔσαι ἐπ’ ἐναντίας πράξεις, οὗ δὴ διωρισμένη ἀρετὴ καὶ κακία κεῖται.

Let us think this matter over in the following way. Let’s suppose that each of us living creatures is a *thauma* belonging to the gods, made to be either a toy of theirs or for some serious reason. We do not know why we were made, but we do know this much: that the feelings, like cords or strings inside us, both pull us along and, being opposed to one another, in mutual opposition they pull us towards opposite actions, where the dividing line between goodness and badness lies.

The Athenian Stranger goes on to explain that there is one particularly forceful cord pulling inside us which we should always try and follow over all others: ‘the golden and holy cord of reason, which is called the common law of the state’ (τὴν τοῦ λογισμοῦ ἀγωγὴν χρυσοῦν καὶ ἱεράν, τῆς πόλεως κοινὸν νόμον ἐπικαλουμένην, 645a). The pull of this cord is, however, gentle rather than violent, and so needs help to ensure that we follow it rather than the other impulses (ἄτε γὰρ τοῦ λογισμοῦ καλοῦ μὲν ὄντος, πρᾶου δὲ καὶ οὐ βιαίου, δεῖσθαι ὑπηρετῶν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀγωγὴν, 645a).

To begin to unpack this enigmatic image it is necessary to establish what kind of object the Athenian Stranger is comparing every human being to when he suggests that each and every one of us is similar to a ‘*thauma* belonging to the gods’ (θαῦμα ... θεῖον). The most common interpretation of this phrase is something like ‘puppet of the gods’ or ‘divine puppet’, with the ‘cords or strings’ (νεῦρα ἢ σμήρινθοί) inside us corresponding

to the cords which control a marionette-type object. It is important to understand the way in which the *thauma* is thought to function in relation to its cords and strings in this passage as it affects our interpretation of the way in which human psychology, and the gods' influence on our psychology, is supposed to function. Although many previous commentators have built substantial readings of this passage by conceiving of the θαῦμα ... θεῖον as a marionette controlled by external strings, the whole point of this passage is that the cords and strings described are *internal* rather than *external*: as a result the *thauma* described here functions like an automaton rather than an externally controlled marionette.¹ The fact that cords and strings are involved is perfectly congruous with this interpretation of the Athenian Stranger's biological *thaumata* as automata, since we know that ancient automata and self-moving mechanisms were made to move through the use of a system of internal cords which were wound up and operated with the actions of weights, counterweights and pulleys.² In fact, it was the automaton's apparent ability to move itself and become animate without continued input from elsewhere which led to the use of *thauma* as a synonym for such objects, since, as we saw in chapter one, the transgression of the boundaries between animate and inanimate and nature and artifice in objects of art or craft which appear to be so lifelike that they almost move is often said to

¹ For recent interpretations of the θαῦμα ... θεῖον as a type of externally operated marionette see e.g. Kurke (2013) 123 n.1, who suggests that the image describes puppets "worked by strings or wires from above"; see also Moore (2014) 40: "a marionette would seem to be the more appropriate image rather than a wind-up toy"; cf. also Meyer (2015) 178 and Schofield (2016) 135-40. But the mention of cords and strings does not necessarily imply that the *thauma* is externally operated. In fact, the whole point of the image is that these cords and strings are internal impulses which act inside us. For this reason the image necessarily refers to an object operated through the pull of internal cords. We are in fact dealing with the image of an automaton here: it is clear that the mechanisms of ancient automata would have depended on an internal system of cords which used weights and counterweights to cause various motions. Frede (2010) 116 discerns this point and its significance correctly: "Although *thauma* is commonly translated as 'puppet', this translation is misleading if it suggests that humans are mere marionettes whose strings are pulled by the gods. For, as the further descriptions show, the 'puppet's' behaviour is not determined by the higher powers; it depends, rather, on the workings of its own strings. Hence, Plato seems to have in mind wind-up toys that move by themselves, rather than marionettes". Annas (2011) 8 also gets it right: "Plato is thinking, not of puppets on strings, but of toys which move around by themselves (a kind of clockwork wind-up toy)".

² See section two below on the treatises of the mechanic Hero of Alexandria for more detailed descriptions of how wondrous real-life automata actually worked in antiquity.

be a prime cause of wonder, and indeed becomes a *topos* of ancient art criticism and ekphrasis.

Moreover, it is important to note that the common identification of the *thaumata* in this passage with puppets or marionettes is to a great extent a result of the influence of the description of the *thaumata* in the Cave-simile passage of the *Republic*, which was discussed in the last chapter. In that passage, it is clear that the men compared to *thaumatopoiói* are certainly in charge of the objects described as *thaumata* which are causing the shadows being cast upon the wall of the Cave. These *thaumatopoiói*-like men therefore seem to be undertaking some sort of form of shadow puppetry. But it is essential to note that although the shadows in this passage are made to appear through the external agency of the *thaumatopoiói*-like men, they are not seen as such by the people who are watching the performance in the Cave, since the shadows they see displayed before them seem to move *of their own accord*. This is what makes them *thaumata*: the effect is actually one of autonomous motion.³

The Athenian Stranger's comparison of each living being to a θαῦμα ... θεῖον thus returns us to questions concerning *thauma* which have their roots as far back as the Homeric poems: the divide between the human and divine, animate and inanimate, and natural and manmade objects. From Homer onwards, we find spontaneously-moving, automatus objects of divine craft labelled as *thaumata*. For example, divine craft is inextricably linked to the creation of automata when Thetis visits Hephaestus in *Iliad* 18 and catches a glimpse of him in the act of making self-moving tripods (18.372-77):

τὸν δ' εὖρ' ἰδρώοντα ἐλίσσόμενον περὶ φύσας
σπεύδοντα· τρίποδας γὰρ ἐεῖκοσι πάντας ἔτευχεν
ἑστάμεναι περὶ τοῖχον εὐσταθέος μεγάροιο,

³ The issue is complicated by the fact that there is a degree of overlap between the categories of puppet and automaton in antiquity: see Cappelletto (2011) 325, Shershow (1995) 3-4 and Cambiano (1994) 622.

χρύσεια δέ σφ' ὑπὸ κύκλα ἐκάστω πυθμένι θῆκεν,
ὄφρα οἱ αὐτόματοι θεῖον δυσαίατ' ἀγῶνα
ἦδ' αὖτις πρὸς δῶμα νεοίατο, θαῦμα ιδέσθαι.

She found him sweating as he rushed around his bellows; for he was making tripods, twenty in total, to stand around the wall of his well-built hall, and he put golden wheels under the base of each, so that they would be able to make their way into the assembly of the gods of their own accord and go back again to his house, a wonder to see.

The self-movement of these tripods lies at the heart of their marvellous effect and is what renders them a particular 'wonder to see' (θαῦμα ιδέσθαι). These self-moving tripods, and the lifelike moving golden handmaiden which Hephaestus has also crafted (ὑπὸ δ' ἀμφίπολοι ῥέοντο ἄνακτι | χρύσειαι, ζῶῃσι νεήνισιν εἰοικυῖαι, *Il.* 18.417-18), become the archetypal examples of automata in the Greek literary tradition. The connection of these objects to the god's craft in particular is important: once again we see that early conceptions of the marvellous are linked explicitly with the power of the divine. In Plato's *Laws*, the Athenian Stranger hits upon this image of automaton-like *thaumata* as a means of suggesting that humans, like automata, are similarly created by the gods, and that each person also has the capability, if set moving in the right direction, to become an object of wonder. In the *Laws*, Plato thus plays once again on the double-edged nature of *thauma* and thaumatic objects. In the Cave analogy of the *Republic*, *thaumata* represent a dangerous distraction from cognitive advancement when their powers of astonishment are wielded in the wrong hands; on the other hand, the *Laws* establishes that we ourselves might become objects of *thauma*, belonging to the gods themselves, if only we follow the pull of the 'golden cord' of reason which guides us correctly, like the motions of an automaton which are wisely and decorously programmed in advance in accordance with Reason.

The inherent potential doubleness of *thauma* and its effects thus accounts for Plato's use of the image of *thaumata* in the *Laws* and elsewhere. It was not, however, always the case in antiquity that the positive potential of *thauma* as a philosophical concept was recognised. In fact, many Hellenistic philosophical schools went on not only explicitly to disavow the place of *thauma* within philosophy, but even went so far as to advise against succumbing to wonder and its effects entirely. In these philosophical traditions, the potentially disturbing *emotional* effects of *thauma* on the mind and soul are clearly seen to outweigh any positive effects which wonder may produce as a catalyst for (re)cognition and inquiry. The most famous summation of this response to the effects of wonder is surely Horace's *Epistle* 1.6, which begins with a warning about wonder which the rest of the poem goes on to elaborate in more detail (1-8):

nil admirari prope res est una, Numici,
solaque quae possit facere et servare beatum.
hunc solem et stellas et decedentia certis
tempora momentis sunt qui formidine nulla
imbuti spectent: quid censes munera terrae,
quid maris extremos Arabas ditantis et Indos,
ludicra quid, plausus et amici dona Quiritis,
quo spectanda modo, quo sensu credis et ore?

To marvel at nothing, Numicius, is almost the one and only thing which is able to make and keep you happy. Some men can view the sun up there, and the stars, and the seasons passing with the stars' predictable movements, untouched by any emotional disturbance: what do you think of the gifts of the earth, what of those of the sea, which enriches far-distant Arabians and Indians, what of the theatrical shows, the applause, or the favour of the friendly Roman citizen – in what manner, with what feeling and expression do you think they should be viewed?

Horace here warns his addressee Numicius against precisely the sorts of marvellous phenomena we have seen associated with wonder throughout this study. The warning

against marvelling at the sight of phenomena such as the potentially distracting and specious spectacles of the theatre is conventional enough, but Horace goes further here. Even those experiences which philosophers such as Aristotle would encourage us to wonder at above all else – the marvellous phenomena of the natural world and celestial realm – are classed as problematic causes of wonder precisely because they risk opening the viewer up to some degree of emotional disturbance.

This view, which denies wonder a place in both philosophy and everyday life, is very different from the Platonic and Aristotelian attitudes towards *thauma* which have been outlined in the previous chapters. In choosing to examine the potential benefits and difficulties of the art of not marvelling in this *Epistle*, Horace is drawing on attitudes towards philosophical wonder which developed after Plato, Aristotle, and their respective schools.⁴ The principle of not wondering in order to avoid emotional disturbance seems to share certain similarities with Epicurean ideas about ἀταραξία and Stoic concepts of ἀπάθεια, as other texts from the first century BCE onwards which mention the ideal of wondering at nothing make clear. For example, Cicero mentions this principle in his discussion of how best to alleviate grief in book three of the *Tusculan Disputations*. He argues that because evil is harder to bear when it comes unexpectedly, it is best to exercise foresight and be prepared for all emotional disturbances: a key means of achieving this is wondering at nothing when it occurs, and being prepared for anything that might come to pass (*nihil admirari cum acciderit, nihil, ante quam evenerit, non evenire posse arbitrari*, 3.30). Strabo, who was roughly contemporaneous with Horace, offers a Stoically-inflected take on this principle in relation to the natural world in his *Geography*. In the first book, Strabo tells us that he will discuss multiple examples of wonder-provoking

⁴ On Horace's eclectic drawing together of the teachings of various contemporary philosophical schools with this injunction against marvelling, and in this *Epistle* more generally, see e.g. Rudd (1993) 70; Mayer (1994) 157; McCarter (2015) 107-15; cf. Armstrong (2004) 284-85 on the relation of the maxim *nihil admirari* to Epicureanism.

natural phenomena, such as the creation of a new island after the eruption of a volcano under the sea, in order to end his own and others' astonishment through familiarity with these aspects of nature and geography (πρὸς δὲ τὴν ἀθαυμαστίαν τῶν τοιούτων μεταβολῶν ... ἀθρόα γὰρ τὰ τοιαῦτα παραδείγματα πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν τεθέντα παύσει τὴν ἔκπληξιν, 1.3.16). Later in the first century CE, Seneca the Younger offers another such Stoic view of the virtues of not marvelling, when he argues (*Epistulae* 8.5) that nothing except the soul is worthy of wonder, since nothing seems great to a soul which is itself great (*cogitate nihil praeter animum esse mirabile, cui magno nihil magnum est*).

As these texts suggest, the place of wonder remained a matter of considerable debate in Roman philosophy. In fact, it is possible that Plato himself may have been reacting to certain aspects of this tradition of *not wondering* which were discussed by previous thinkers. In later discussions of the thought of Pythagoras and Democritus there is evidence that wonder's place in philosophical thinking was already an issue of concern. For example, Plutarch reports that many people in his day misinterpret the Pythagorean saying that philosophy had given him the advantage of 'wondering at nothing' (ἐκεῖνος μὲν γὰρ ἐκ φιλοσοφίας ἔφησεν αὐτῷ περιγεγονέναι τὸ μηδὲν θαυμάζειν, *Moralia* 44b). There are other extant testimonia of the atomist Democritus' supposed advice to wonder at nothing which again point to the possible emotional disturbance which *thauma* causes as potentially problematic. In the *De Finibus* Cicero notes that Democritus said that the study of natural philosophy should result in a tranquillity of mind or a freedom from fear, a form of happiness which he termed εὐθυμία or ἀθαμβία (*tamen ex illa investigatione naturae consequi volebat bono ut esset animo; id enim ille summum bonum εὐθυμίαν et saepe ἀθαμβίαν appellat, id est animum terrore liberum*, 5.29.87). Strabo associates similar terminology with Democritus, noting that not marvelling at things was approved of by the atomist (and other philosophers) since it is associated with a concomitant lack

of emotional disturbance and therefore with imperturbability (... τὴν ἀθαυμαστίαν ἡμῶν κατασκευάζειν ἐθέλοντες, ἣν ὕμνει Δημόκριτος καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι φιλόσοφοι πάντες· παράκειται γὰρ τῷ ἀθαμβεῖ καὶ ἀταράχῳ καὶ ἀνεκπλήκτῳ, *Geography* 1.3.21).⁵ Although it is difficult to assess precisely how widespread such views were before Plato's time due to the paucity and lateness of the testimonia, it is nevertheless clear that the potentially disturbing emotional effects of *thauma* were a matter of some concern even before Plato wrote, and were certainly of even greater concern in the thinking of many later Hellenistic philosophical schools. In this thesis, I have inevitably been so concerned with marvelling at things that the notion of *not* marvelling – which seems to become more fully developed in the later Hellenistic philosophical schools – is not one that I, constrained both by necessities of space and chronological focus, have been able to investigate in any great detail. But the place of *thauma* as a key term of the philosophical tradition after Plato and Aristotle is certainly an area that would reward further study.

2. Mediating Between Gods and Men, Nature and Artifice: *Thauma* in Hero of Alexandria's Mechanical Treatises

One aspect of change which this study has drawn out in the conception of what *thauma* is and does between the Archaic and the Hellenistic period has been the degree of its relation to the divine and to the natural world. *Thauma* is often strongly associated in Archaic poetry with the gods, as an effect of divine epiphany or of divinely-crafted artworks; of music, song and poetry which somehow involves divine presence. Over the course of the Classical period, the association of *thauma* with human action becomes

⁵ Two fragments preserved in Stobaeus also mention ἀθαμβία as a concept associated with Democritus: see D295 LM = 68 B216 DK (σοφίῃ ἀθαμβος ἀξίη πάντων τιμιωτάτη οὐσα) and D322 LM = 68 B215 DK (δίκης κῦδος γνώμης θάρσος καὶ ἀθαμβία, ἀδικίης δὲ δειμα ζυμφορῆς τέρμα).

gradually stronger, with a concomitant rise in the perception that manmade objects or actions which aim at provoking *thauma* somehow inherently produce potentially deceptive effects. This is not, however, to say that the association between *thauma* and the divine sphere ever disappeared entirely. Instead, the relation of wonder to the gods, and its position as a mediating factor in man's interactions with them, only became more complicated as time passed, rather than ebbing away completely.

As we saw above in the discussion of the divine *thauma* in the *Laws*, by Plato's time the long cultural association of *thauma* with objects created by and relating to the divine goes hand in hand with the simultaneous association of wonder with manmade *thaumatopoiia*: pure spectacles which aim primarily to delight and distract. The fact that the divinely-made *thauma* which is used to reflect upon the workings of human psychology in the *Laws* is an automaton-like object is also significant because it hints at another transgression of conceptual boundaries to which wonder has always been linked: the line between nature and artifice. Since *thauma* is often conceived of as an effect caused by the extreme mimetic verisimilitude of inanimate artworks which somehow seem to turn into animate, living creatures, it is no surprise that the figure of the marvellous automaton object of craft should become a potent means of exploring the dividing line between nature and artifice more generally. Perhaps the predominant reason for the sense of wonder provoked by automata seems to be connected to the fact that the *cause* of such a mechanism's initial movement is unknown, often leading to speculation about the divine or supernatural influence over a supposedly inanimate object's movement, or a sense of uncertainty about whether a given object (usually a simulacrum of a living being), really is a natural or artificial one. Certainly the widespread suspicion of divine agency on seeing actions which appear to occur of their own accord makes sense, since in the absence of a known physical cause for a given event, its attribution to

the gods provides a customary and reliable explanatory framework for what would otherwise be inexplicable.

This tendency to posit divine agency remains a potent aspect of the automaton's thaumatic appeal throughout antiquity. By the late Hellenistic period, there is evidence that *thauma* played a central role in theoretical discussions concerning the purpose, construction and effects of self-moving devices. In this period, automaton-building becomes a branch of the newly emerging discipline of mechanics. The significance of *thauma* in the development of this scientific discipline's own self-fashioning becomes clear when we examine the mechanical treatises of the engineer Hero of Alexandria.⁶ Hero's dates have long been disputed, but he is now generally placed in the latter half of the first century CE, although his writings on automata-making draw heavily on the work of an earlier Hellenistic predecessor, Philo of Byzantium (late third/early second century BCE).⁷ Two of Hero's treatises, *Peri Automatopoiētikēs* and *Pneumatica*, focus in particular on the construction of automatous devices. *Peri Automatopoiētikēs* is concerned entirely with the construction of two complex and very different automata: a moving altar of Dionysus, and a mechanical theatre in which the actions of a Sophoclean tragedy play out in miniature form, whereas *Pneumatica* contains descriptions of various smaller automatous mechanisms. *Thauma* occupies an important position in the proems of both treatises. At the beginning of *Peri Automatopoiētikēs*, Hero explains why the making of automata has appealed to the engineers of the past (1.1.1):

⁶ On the importance of *thauma* and its connection to philosophy in Hero's work, see Tybjerg (2003) 443-66. Berryman (2009) 52-53 disagrees with Tybjerg regarding the importance that actual theorists such as Hero placed on *thauma* in the practice of mechanics, arguing that wonder was valued purely as an effect on the audience rather than something to strive towards for its own sake. On the importance of *thauma* within the discipline of mechanics in antiquity see also Cambiano (1994) 617-21.

⁷ On the question of Hero's dates, which are based on the possible mention of an eclipse dated to 62 CE in his treatise *Dioptra*, see Murphy (1995) 2 and Berryman (2009) 134. See Berryman (2009) 123-30 on Philo of Byzantium and his work.

τῆς αὐτοματοποιητικῆς πραγματείας ὑπὸ τῶν πρότερον ἀποδοχῆς
ἡξιωμένης διὰ τε τὸ ποικίλον τῆς ἐν αὐτῇ δημιουργίας καὶ διὰ τὸ
ἐκπληκτον τῆς θεωρίας.

The field of automata-making was thought worthy of approval by
previous authorities on account of the variety of the craftsmanship
which it entails and because of the astonishing nature of the sight it
provides.

In fact, Hero goes on to inform us that the art of automata-making was simply termed
‘wonder-working’ (θαυματουργία) by previous engineers due to the astonishing nature of
the sights that it afforded (ἐκάλουν δὲ οἱ παλαιοὶ τοὺς τὰ τοιαῦτα δημιουργοῦντας
θαυματουργοὺς διὰ τὸ ἐκπληκτον τῆς θεωρίας, 1.1.7). Hero speaks in similar terms in the
proem of the first book of his *Pneumatica*, when he notes the potentially astonishing
effects which can be created when the power of air, earth, fire and water is harnessed
(1.proem.12-17):

διὰ γὰρ συμπλοκῆς ἀέρος καὶ πυρὸς καὶ ὕδατος καὶ γῆς καὶ τῶν τριῶν
στοιχείων ἢ καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων συμπλεκομένων ποικίλαι διαθέσεις
ἐνεργοῦνται, αἱ μὲν ἀναγκαιοτάτας τῷ βίῳ τούτῳ χρείας παρέχουσιν,
αἱ δὲ ἐκπληκτικὸν τινα θαυμασμὸν ἐπιδεικνύμεναι.

For various compositions are put in action through the combination of
air and fire and water and earth and the joining of three or four elements,
some of which supply the most necessary needs of life, while others put
an astonishing wonder on display.

It is precisely through the combination of the powers produced by these four elements
that the automatic devices which Hero goes on to describe in the *Pneumatica* will produce
their wondrous effects.

Indeed, when we look more closely at the function and effects of the automata
mechanical devices described, it becomes clear that the claims in each proem for the
significance of *thauma* in the mechanical sphere are indeed borne out. One thing that
immediately strikes us is the fact that a significant number of the automata in both

treatises are explicitly connected to temples or to religious ritual more broadly.⁸ The most spectacular example is the automaton described in *Peri Automatopoiētikēs*: a moving altar of Dionysus which contains a figure of the god standing within a miniature shrine before an altar, surrounded by maenads and with a panther at his feet (1.2.1-1.19.5). A figure of Nike stands on top of the shrine above Dionysus. Once the engineer has performed the necessary preparations, this automaton wheels itself out to a predetermined spot, at which point the altar blazes up, milk or water squirts out of Dionysus' thyrsus, and wine pours out onto the panther (1.4.1). Nor are wondrous aural effects neglected as maenads dance in a circle around the shrine to the accompanying sound of drums and cymbals, before Dionysus rotates along with the Nike above his head (αἱ δὲ περικύκλω Βάκχαι περιελεύσονται χορεύουσαι περὶ τὸν ναῖσκον. καὶ ἦχος ἔσται τυμπάνων καὶ κυμβάλων, 1.4.2). All of these actions take place as a result of a complex system of weights, counterweights, pulleys and cords within the automaton.

There are numerous other examples of automatous mechanisms which aim to evoke an epiphanic sense of divine presence in Hero's *Pneumatica*. Again, many of these devices are connected to temples. For example, Hero describes how to construct an altar so that when the fire is lit figures around it pour libations (ἐπὶ τινων βομῶν πυρὸς θυμιαθέντος τὰ παρακείμενα ζώδια σπένδειν, 1.12.1-2), or a snake hisses while the figures pour libations (βωμοῦ ἀναπτομένου τὰ μὲν παριδρυμένα ζώδια σπένδειν, τὸν δὲ δράκοντα συρίζειν, 2.21.1-2), or figures dance around the altar itself (ἐπὶ τινος βωμοῦ πυρὸς ἀνακαυθέντος ζώδια καταφανήσεται χορεύοντα, 2.3.1-2). He even describes the complex mechanisms which enable the doors of a small temple to be made to open automatically when a fire on the altar is lit, and closed when this fire is extinguished

⁸ Cf. Lebrère (2015) 31-53 on our evidence for the use of automata in the earlier Hellenistic world as an aspect of the religious practice of Ptolemaic monarchs.

(ναΐσκου κατασκευή, ὥστε θυσίας γινομένης τὰς θύρας αὐτομάτως ἀνοίγεσθαι, σβεσθείσης δὲ τῆς θυσίας πάλιν κλείεσθαι, 1.38.1-3). No doubt the visitor's marvelling response was meant to be stimulated further still by effects such as the automatic sounding of trumpets on the opening of temple doors, the mechanics of which Hero goes on to describe in detail (θυρῶν ἀνοιγομένων ναοῦ σάλπιγγος ἦχος γίνεται τόνδε τὸν τρόπον, 1.17.1-2). Again, the idea was surely to create an impression of a divine epiphany as a succession of escalating visual and aural *thaumata* potentially greeted the visitor to a temple decked out with automata and automatous devices.

Marvellous automata relating to the religious sphere are not the only type of automatic device which Hero describes in these two treatises. The second book of the *Peri Automatopoiētikēs* moves on to another location which this thesis has shown to be a potent source of *thauma*: the theatre. In this treatise, Hero tells us that his earlier Hellenistic predecessor Philo of Byzantium was well known for his small-scale static automata which displayed versions of theatrical performances in miniature theatres placed atop small pillars. Hero goes on to describe one such display: a performance of the story of Nauplius, possibly based on Sophocles' *Nauplius Pyrkaeus*.⁹ Hero first outlines how these miniature theatre automata operate by telling us that the small-scale performances begin when the theatre doors open and the action proceeds to play of its own accord (2.20.1-2.22.2). A painted backdrop at the back of the theatre changes periodically as figures move on and off the stage and perform assorted movements to narrate the actions of the play. The first scene (2.22.3-4) depicts Greeks repairing their ships, and includes individual figures moving around and using saws, axes and hammers along with accompanying appropriate noises – just like, Hero explicitly tells us, the noises

⁹ On the miniature theatre's probable depiction of Sophocles' *Nauplius Pyrkaeus* see Marshall (2003) 261-79; cf. also Beacham (2013) 15-39.

one would hear in real life (ψόφον ἐποίουν πολύν, καθάπερ ἂν ἐπὶ τῆς ἀληθείας γίνοιτο, 2.22.4). The next scene (2.22.5) shows the recently repaired ships being launched and sailing across the field of vision as dolphins appear to leap out beside them, and then disappear back into the sea, with Hero emphasising again that this is what happens in real life (πολλάκις παρεκολύμβων δὲ καὶ δελφῖνες ὅτε μὲν εἰς τὴν θάλατταν καταδύμενοι, ὅτε δὲ φαινόμενοι καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῆς ἀληθείας, 2.22.5). Mimetic verisimilitude is clearly an important aspect of these miniature performances, despite their reduced scale. After the dolphins have appeared beside the ships, the sea turns stormy and Nauplius appears, holding a torch, with Athene beside him (2.22.5). The ships are then wrecked and Ajax is shown swimming; Athene appears above him on a crane and a lightning bolt (accompanied by the sound of thunder) falls upon Ajax, who disappears from view (2.22.6). The climax of the story thus reached, the theatre doors close, and the miniature performance is over (καὶ οὕτως κλεισθέντος καταστροφὴν εἶχεν ὁ μῦθος. ἡ μὲν οὖν διάθεσις ἦν τοιαύτη, 2.22.6).

These examples show that the questions surrounding the relationship between *thauma* and the gods, *thauma* and the products of human craft, and the dividing line between natural and artificial *thaumata* which developed over the course of the Classical period continued to develop in tandem with developments in scientific and philosophical thinking in the later Hellenistic period. As a result, the development of actual automata mechanisms is an ideal area to focus on as a means of thinking about the continuing importance of *thauma* in religious, philosophical and scientific discourse in the later Hellenistic and Roman worlds.

3. Mera Miracula: Thaumata, Textuality and the Marvels of Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*

At the very opening of this study, Gellius' account of his encounter with Greek paradoxography in Brundisium presented an image of a world in which marvels had taken on a firmly textual form: the battered, slightly seedy job-lot of Greek bookrolls he claimed to have bought there from a bookseller. The development of textual collections of *thaumata*, and the idea of the text itself as something capable of provoking *thauma*, has been one of the key shifts in the concept of what a marvel is and does traced out in this thesis. In this last section, I want to return briefly to the *Noctes Atticae* to examine this idea from a different angle for a final time.

Gellius' encounter with marvels in Brundisium is not the only moment in the *Noctes* in which entextualised marvels make an ambivalent appearance. In book fourteen, we find another anecdote in which Gellius again features as a character in his own work. This narrative relates to Gellius' composition of the *Noctes* itself (14.6.1-3):

homo nobis familiaris, in litterarum cultu non ignobilis magnamque aetatis partem in libris uersatus, 'adiutum' inquit 'ornatumque uolo ire *Noctes* tuas' et simul dat mihi librum grandi uolumine doctrinae omnigenus, ut ipse dicebat, praescatentem, quem sibi elaboratum esse ait ex multis et uariis et remotis lectionibus, ut ex eo sumerem, quantum liberet rerum memoria dignarum. accipio cupidus et libens, tamquam si copiae cornu nactus essem, et recondo me penitus, ut sine arbitris legam. atque ibi scripta erant, pro Iuppiter, mera miracula: quo nomine fuerit, qui primus 'grammaticus' appellatus est; et quot fuerint Pythagorae nobiles, quot Hippocratae; et cuiusmodi fuisse Homerus dicat in Vlixis domo λάρην; et quam ob causam Telemachus cubans iunctim sibi cubantem Pisistratum non manu adtigerit, sed pedis ictu excitarit; et Euryclia Telemachum quo genere claustrum incluserit; et quapropter idem poeta rosam non norit, oleum ex rosa norit.

A friend of mine, not unknown on the literary scene and well-versed with it for the majority of his life, said to me: "I'd like to help you polish up your *Nights*", straightaway presenting me with a bookroll of massive bulk, bubbling over, as he himself put it, with knowledge of every sort. He said that he had put it together from wide and varied and recondite

reading, and that I should borrow from it as much as I thought worthy of recording. I received the book greedily and gladly, as though I'd obtained the horn of plenty, and hid myself away so that I could read it without witnesses. But – by Jupiter! – the things that were written in it were pure marvels! The name of the first man who was called a 'grammarian'; how many famous men were named Pythagoras, and how many were named Hippocrates; what sort of thing Homer meant when he talked about the λαύρη in Odysseus' house;¹⁰ the reason why Telemachus, while lying down, woke up Pisistratus, who was lying next to him, by striking him with his foot rather than touching him with his hand;¹¹ with what kind of bolt Eurycleia shut Telemachus in;¹² and for what reason the same poet has no knowledge of roses, but does know about rose oil.¹³

Gellius' list of *mera miracula* does not end here. He continues in a similar vein (14.6.3-4): the book contained the names of the companions of Odysseus whom Scylla snatched away and tore apart (*quae nomina fuerint sociorum Ulixis, qui a Scylla rapti laceratique sunt*), as well as meditations on a much-debated topic of Homeric geography: the question of whether Odysseus sailed around the 'inner' (i.e. the Mediterranean) or 'outer' sea (i.e. the Atlantic) during his wanderings (*utrum ἐν τῇ ἔσω θαλάσσει Ulixes erraverit κατ' Ἀρίσταρχον an ἐν τῇ ἔξω κατὰ Κράτητα*).¹⁴ There are examples of Homeric verses which are isopsephic (i.e. consecutive lines which, when each letter in the line is assigned a numeric value, add up to the same total), Homeric acrostics spelling out the names of characters, and lines in which each word is a syllable longer than the preceding word (*qui sint apud Homerum versus isopsephi; et quorum ibi nominum παραστιχίς reperiatur; et quis adeo versus sit, qui per singula vocabula singulis syllabis increseat*). Menelaus'

¹⁰ Cf. *Od.* 22.128: ἦν ὁδὸς ἐς λαύρην, σανίδες δ' ἔχον εὖ ἀραρυῖαι; *Od.* 22.137: αὐλῆς καλὰ θύρετρα καὶ ἀργαλέον στόμα λαύρης. On this and the succeeding Homeric passages see n. 19 below.

¹¹ Cf. *Od.* 15.44-45: αὐτὰρ ὁ Νεστορίδην ἐξ ἡδέος ὕπνου ἔγειρεν | λάξ ποδὶ κινήσας, καὶ μιν πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπεν.

¹² Cf. *Od.* 1.441-42: βῆ ῥ' ἴμεν ἐκ θαλάμοιο, θύρην δ' ἐπέρυσσε κορώνη | ἀργυρέη, ἐπὶ δὲ κληῖδ' ἐτάνυσσεν ἱμάντι.

¹³ Cf. *Il.* 23.186: ἥματα καὶ νύκτας, ῥοδόεντι δὲ χρῖεν ἐλαίῳ.

¹⁴ Traces of this famous debate between Aristarchus and Crates concerning the location of Odysseus' wanderings survive in later ancient texts: book one of Strabo's *Geography*, is particularly important in this regard. On the arguments of the two philologists in relation to Homeric geography and this debate see e.g. Porter (1992) 67-114, Romm (1992) 186-90 and Buonajuto (1996) 1-8.

description of his encounter with astonishingly fertile Libyan ewes during his wanderings after the Trojan War is transformed into a zoological question about the ability of livestock to breed three times within a year (*ac deinde qua ratione dixerit singulas pecudes in singulos annos terna parere*).¹⁵ The precise ordering of the multiple layers of Achilles' famous shield is also discussed (*et ex quinque operimentis quibus Achillis clipeus munitus est, quod factum exauro est summum sit an medium*), as are the changes of toponym which certain cities have undergone since Homeric times (*quibus urbibus regionibusque vocabula iam mutata sint*).¹⁶

There are two things which immediately strike us about the *miracula* Gellius lists here. Almost all these 'marvels' are typical questions of ancient literary scholarship, and all relate to Greek figures or texts; most relate to the Homeric poems in particular. In the Homeric scholia, and in other extant testimonia of ancient debates in Homeric scholarship, we find evidence that many of the issues which Gellius here mentions were actually discussed in ancient scholarship on the Homeric text. For example, the seemingly irrelevant question of why Telemachus prods Pisistratus awake with his foot rather than his hand really does seem to have exercised Alexandrian critics: in the remaining scholia

¹⁵ Cf. *Od.* 4.86: τρίς γὰρ τίκεται μῆλα τελεσφόρον εἰς ἐνιαυτόν. This claim of hyper-fertility seems to have caused ancient critics to raise their eyebrows. See Σ ad. *Od.* 4.86 Dindorf: some proposed the ludicrous emendation of τρίς to δῖς in an attempt to bring Menelaus' claim into line with reality (τινὲς γελοῖως γράφουσι "δῖς γὰρ τίκεται." πῶς γὰρ ἰδιὸν τι λέγει περὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ προβάτων), while others seem to have accepted that things might be different in Libya compared to elsewhere when it comes to lambing (διόλου τοιαῦταί εἰσιν αἱ γοναί, οὐχ ὡς παρ' ἡμῖν μόνῳ τῷ ἥρῃ τίκτουσιν). The wondrous hyper-fertility of Libya is something other writers comment upon in antiquity: see Herodotus 4.199 on the three harvest seasons of Cyrene, which he labels a *thōma*: ἔχει δὲ καὶ ἡ Κυρηναίη χώρα, εὐθὺς αὖ ὑψηλοτάτη ταύτης τῆς Λιβύης τὴν οἱ νομάδες νέμονται, τρεῖς ὥρας ἐν ἑωυτῇ ἀξίας θώματος.

¹⁶ The ordering of the layers of Achilles' shield was an early matter of dispute in ancient Homeric scholarship, as Aristotle's reference to the problem at *Poetics* 1461a31-35 attests: δεῖ δὲ καὶ ὅταν ὀνομά τι ὑπεναντίωμά τι δοκῇ σημαίνειν, ἐπισκοπεῖν ποσαχῶς ἂν σημῆναιε τοῦτο ἐν τῷ εἰρημένῳ, οἷον τῷ "τῇ ῥ' ἔσχετο χάλκεον ἔγχος" [= *Il.* 20.272] τὸ ταύτη κωλυθῆναι ποσαχῶς ἐνδέχεται, ὡδὶ ἢ ὡδί, ὡς μάλιστα ἂν τις ὑπολάβοι. The problem here centres around *Iliad* 20.267-72, which tells us that Aeneas' spear passed through two layers of bronze before stopping in the third layer, made of gold, and leaving two layers of tin untouched. The question is how or why the spear would be stopped by (an outer?) layer of gold while managing to penetrate the harder or more internal bronze layers. Aristotle raises this as a Homeric question, but provides no answer. Hellenistic Homeric scholars were equally troubled by such a seeming incongruity, and Aristarchus seems to have athetised lines 269-72 as a result (see Σ ad. *Il.* 20.269-72 Erbse); for the responses of modern critics to this problem cf. Edwards (1991) 323.

on this line there are indications that it was considered (possibly by Aristarchus) to be spurious.¹⁷ This is because it does not seem fitting for Telemachus to use such force, and because the expression *λάξ ποδὶ κινήσας* is also found in the *Iliad* (10.158) when Nestor kicks the sleeping Diomedes awake.¹⁸ One Odyssean scholiast suggested Nestor's action was fitting because old age renders him unable to bend down and touch Diomedes with his hand; for Telemachus, however, there is no such excuse. This argument is obviously absurd, since Nestor has no physical trouble exerting himself in the *Iliad* in general, as Gellius presumably realised. But the unusually vigorous wake-up call, combined with the repetition of an Iliadic phrase, really does seem to have been enough to rouse the Hellenistic critic's suspicions. The other questions mentioned also attracted comment to a greater or lesser degree. This ranged from clarification of the meaning of specific unusual words and comment on stylistic aspects of the text, to infamous full-blown critical debates between famous Homeric scholars, such as Aristarchus and Crates' argument about the geographical location, and by extension the historical accuracy, of Odysseus' wanderings.¹⁹

How does Gellius respond to this book overflowing with Greek literary scholarship? Certainly by this point in the *Noctes*, his persona as an eager yet discriminating literary scholar is already well-developed. As such, we might expect him to approve of his friend's learned book. But his designation of its contents as *mera miracula* is a hint at Gellius' forthcoming negative reaction (14.6.5):

¹⁷ See Σ ad. *Od.* 15.45 Dindorf; this Odyssean problem is also mentioned by the scholiast at Σ ad. *Il.* 10.158 Erbse; see also further discussion of this Odyssean passage at Hoekstra (1989) 233-34.

¹⁸ See Σ ad. *Od.* 15.45 Dindorf: νοθεύεται ὡς διαπεπλάσμενος ἐξ ἡμιστιχίου τῆς κ' Ἰλιάδος (158.) ἐκεῖ γὰρ προσηκόντως Νέστωρ κοιμώμενον Διομήδην ἀνίστησι, κύψαι κατοκνήσας διὰ τὸ γῆρας. Cf. *Il.* 10.157-58: τὸν παρσῆας ἀνέγειρε Γερήνιος ἱππότα Νέστωρ, | λάξ ποδὶ κινήσας, ὄτρυνέ τε νείκεσέ τ' ἄντην.

¹⁹ For discussions of specific Homeric words mentioned by Gellius see e.g. Σ ad. *Od.* 22.128 Dindorf, which defines the word *λαυρή* at *Od.* 22.128 as a 'narrow passage'; cf. Σ ad. *Od.* 1.441-42 Dindorf for traces of a long discussion of the meaning of each word which relates to fastening the door shut at *Od.* 1.441-42; and Σ ad. *Il.* 23.186 Erbse on Homer's mention of rose oil. On ancient discussions of acrostics in the Homeric poems see Hilton (2013) 88-95; cf. Hilton (2011) 385-94 on Homeric isopsephic verses. See p. 273 n. 14 above on the Hellenistic critical debates concerning the location of Odysseus' wanderings.

haec atque item alia multa istiusmodi scripta in eo libro fuerunt. quem cum statim properans redderem, ‘ὄναιό σου,’ inquam ‘doctissime uirorum, ταύτης τῆς πολυμαθείας et librum hunc opulentissimum recipe nil prosus ad nostras paupertinas litteras congruentem’.

These things and many other things of the same kind were written in that book. And rushing to return it to him immediately I said: “May you profit from this display of wide knowledge, most learned man! But take back this most extravagant book: it has nothing at all in common with my poor writings”.

Gellius’ response makes clear that his description of the book’s contents as *mera miracula* was far from a positive one. But this reaction also carries a hint of irony. The *Noctes* is full of discussions similar to the ones which Gellius in this instance disdains. There is, however, one important difference between the discussions in the book belonging to the learned literary friend and the *Noctes* itself: Gellius’ literary discussions almost invariably relate to Latin rather than Greek texts.²⁰

We see once again that for Gellius, wonder and the marvellous have become terms which represent complex responses to the type of textual material in which his own literary output is grounded. On the one hand, he is clearly trying to distance his own miscellanistic text from the style and content of other contemporary works, though it is also clear that his own writing is in many ways very similar. Even typical questions of textual scholarship can now be labelled as ‘marvels’ of a sort in the *Noctes*; it is striking that in this chapter we see the same combination of eager desire and enthusiasm at the opportunity to experience a new text as Gellius takes the book from his friend ‘greedily and gladly’ (*cupidus et libens*), and then eventual disgust and rejection felt towards these

²⁰ See e.g. Gellius’ discussions of textual issues/issues of interpretation/anecdotes about Virgil: *NA* 1.21; 2.6; 2.16; 5.8; 6.20; 7.6; 8.5; 9.9; 9.10; 10.16; 13.27; 16.6; 17.10. Gellius very rarely weighs in on issues relating to Homer or the Homeric text. He does so most explicitly at 3.11, where he criticises Accius for arguing that Hesiod was older than Homer. The emphasis here, however, is on proving Accius wrong, rather than genuinely inquiring about the relative dates of Homer and Hesiod.

textual marvels, just as the marvel-filled Greek texts which he supposedly found in Brundisium are first consumed greedily (*atque ego auide statim pergo ad libros*, 9.4.2), before an inevitable sense of disgust ensues once the marvels they contain are noted down (*haec atque alia istiusmodi plura legimus, sed cum ea scriberemus, tenuit nos non idoneae scripturae taedium*, 9.4.12).²¹ By the time Gellius writes the *Noctes*, wonder has become a way of thinking about how texts relate to other texts, and about the idea of the text itself as a kind of marvel.

This study has shown that it is in the Hellenistic paradoxographical collection that wonder can first explicitly be seen as an important prism through which to view the means by which the relationships between literary texts, and the effects of these relationships, are constructed. As Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* suggests, these relationships become only more complicated once they are transfigured and transformed within the traditions of Latin literature and scholarship. It is no accident that Gellius in his own work configures the marvellous as an intensely Greek textual experience, even when other Roman writers like Pliny are the sources of the information which he is specifically labelling as wondrous and purely Hellenic.²² The Greekness of the concept of wonder in Latin texts is an issue that remains to be explored. This study has shown that some of the most familiar texts from the Archaic to early Hellenistic period provide new perspectives on Greek culture itself when viewed through the lens of wonder. The new perspectives on Greek and Roman culture that can be reached by assessing the impact of the Greek marvellous on Rome – and vice versa – remain to be examined.

²¹ See the Introduction pp. 8-18 on *NA* 9.4. Cf. the similar paradoxical sense of disgust and eagerness which overcomes Gellius when he reports some more marvels found in the work of Pliny the Elder at *NA* 10.12.1-6: *Plinius Secundus ... intoleranda auribus deinde quasi a Democrito scripta tradit, ex quibus pauca haec inviti meminimus, quia pertaesum est ... his portentis atque praestigiis a Plinio Secundo scriptis non dignum esse cognomen Democriti puto*. On Gellius' attitude towards Pliny and *mirabilia* at *NA* 10.12 see e.g. Gunderson (2009) 183-84 and Howley (2018) 135-42.

²² On Gellius' use of Pliny's marvels see Introduction p. 16-17 and n.10.

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