

# **The Conquered and the Conquerors: Representations of Warfare and Combat in Greek and Egyptian Literature**

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## Abstract

This thesis is a study of the ways in which Greek and Egyptian authors reacted to being conquered, focusing particularly on how these reactions were manifested in representations of war. The point of comparison is the Greek and Egyptian diachronic changes in their depictions of warfare and combat, and how these related to respective changes in geopolitical and military supremacy. To examine these changes, texts are selected from four periods: two Greek periods and two Egyptian; two periods of military supremacy (Greek texts from the early-mid Hellenistic period, c. 300–130 BC, Egyptian texts of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasties of the New Kingdom, c. 1550–1186 BC) and two later periods under foreign rule (Greek texts from the Imperial period, c. 200–300 AD, Egyptian Demotic texts from the Graeco-Roman period, c. 300 BC–200 AD). A Preface provides dates and locations for the sources, and sets out principles of transliteration and translation. After considering what the purpose and role of comparison is within studies of the ancient world in the Introduction, this thesis moves on to four chapters that cover important concepts repeatedly brought out in representations of war: the nature of war in terms of semantics and temporality; ethnicity (the identity given to both participants and audience by the authors, studied with particular attention paid to the use of similes and comparisons); gender and sexuality (the presence or absence of women in war, and the application of stereotypically masculine or feminine traits); social status (the structuring of society, from the gods down). The Conclusion draws these threads together, summarising how the Greeks and Egyptians reacted – or did not react – and to what extent ideas of resistance are present in the sources. Although the texts of the conquerors display similar attitudes to many of these concepts, a comparison of the changes that took place in Greek and Egyptian representations of war shows that their reactions to being conquered diverge, revealing different approaches to their culture’s loss of military power.

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## Editions and Abbreviations

The following editions of Greek and Latin texts are used throughout this thesis:

Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De Fato* – Sharples, R. W. (ed.) (1983), *Alexander of Aphrodisias: On Fate: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (London)

Apollonius of Rhodes, *Argonautica* – Fränkel, H. (ed.) (1961), *Apollonii Rhodii Argonautica* (Oxford)

*Batrachomyomachia* – Hosty, M. (ed.) (2020), *Batrachomyomachia (Battle of the Frogs and Mice): Introduction, Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford)

Callimachus, *Aetia* – Harder, A. H. (ed.) (2012), *Callimachus, Aetia*, v. 1 (Oxford)

Callimachus, *Epigrams* – Page, D. L. (ed.) (1975), *Epigrammata Graeca* (Oxford)

Callimachus, *Hymns* – Stephens, S. A. (ed.) (2015), *Callimachus: The Hymns* (Oxford)

Catullus, *Carmina* – Mynors, R. A. B. (ed.) (1958), *C. Valerii Catulli Carmina* (Oxford)

Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* – Rackham, H. (ed.) (1951), *Cicero, De Natura Deorum, Academica*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge, Mass.)

Greek Epic Fragments – West, M. (ed.) (2003), *Greek Epic Fragments from the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC* (Cambridge, Mass.)

Herodotus, *Histories* – Wilson, N. G. (ed.) (2015), *Herodoti Historiae, I-II* (Oxford)

Hesiod, *Theogony, Works and Days* – Solmsen, F. (ed.) (1990), *Hesiodi Theogonia Opera et Dies Scutum*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Oxford)

Hesiod, *Catalogue of Women* – Most, G. W. (ed.) (2018), *Hesiod, The Shield, Catalogue of Women, Other Fragments*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge, Mass.)

Homer, *Iliad, Odyssey, Homeric Hymns* – Monro, D. B. & Allen, T. W. (eds.) (1912-1920), *Homeri Opera, I-V* (Oxford)

Lycophron, *Alexandra* – Hornblower, S. (ed.) (2015), *Lykophron: Alexandra* (Oxford)

Moschus, *Europa* – Hopkinson, N. (ed.) (2015), *Theocritus, Moschus, Bion* (Cambridge, Mass.)

Nemesius, *De Natura Hominis* – Morani, M. (ed.) (1987), *Nemesii Emeseni De Natura Hominis* (Leipzig)

Plato, *Timaeus* – Burnet, J. (ed.) (1978), *Platonis Opera, IV* (Oxford)

Posidippus, *Epigrams* – Austin, C. & Bastianini, G. (eds.) (2002), *Posidippi Pellaei Quae Supersunt Omnia* (Milano)

Quintus of Smyrna, *Posthomerica* – Hopkinson, N. (ed.) (2018), *Quintus Smyrnaeus: Posthomerica* (Cambridge, Mass.; London)

Stobaeus, *Eclogues* – Wachsmuth, C. & Hense, O. (eds.) (1884-1912), *Ioanni Stobaei Anthologium*, I-V (Berlin)

Strabo, *Geography* – Jones, H. L. (ed.) *Strabo: Geography, I-VIII* (Cambridge, Mass.)

Theocritus, *Idylls* – Hopkinson, N. (ed.) (2015), *Theocritus, Moschus, Bion* (Cambridge, Mass.)

Thucydides, *Histories* – Jones, H. S. (ed.) (1942), *Thucydidis Historiae, I-II*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford)

Virgil, *Aeneid* – Mynors, R. A. B. (ed.) (1969), *P. Vergili Maronis Opera* (Oxford)

**The following abbreviations are used for reference throughout the thesis:**

*CDD* – Johnson, J. H. (ed.) (2001- ), *The Demotic Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Chicago)

*CT* – de Buck, A. & Gardiner, A. H. (1935-1961), *The Egyptian Coffin Texts* (Chicago)

*DN* – Lüddeckens, E. (ed.) (1980- ), *Demotisches Namenbuch* (Wiesbaden)

*DWL* – *Demotische Wortliste*, accessed at <https://www.dwl.aegyptologie.uni-muenchen.de/index.php>

*FrGH* – Jacoby, F. (1923-1958), *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker, I-III* (Berlin; Leiden)

*KRI* – Kitchen, K. A. (1975-1990), *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical, I-VIII* (Oxford)

*LES* – Gardiner, A. H. (1932), *Late-Egyptian Stories* (Bruxelles)

*Les.* – Sethe, K. (1924), *Aegyptische Lesestücke zum Gebrauch im akademischen Unterricht: Texte des Mittleren Reiches* (Leipzig)

*LfgrE* – *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos* (1955- ) (Göttingen)

*LGG* – Leitz, C. (ed.) (2002-2003), *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen, I-VIII* (Leuven)

*LSJ* – Liddell, H. G. & Scott, R. L. (1996), *A Greek-English Lexicon, Ninth Edition with Revised Supplement* (Oxford)

*PT* – Sethe, K. (1908-1922), *Die altägyptischen Pyramidentexte nach den Papierabdrücken und Photographien des Berliner Museums* (Leipzig)

*SEG* – *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (1923- ) (Leiden)

*SH* – Lloyd-Jones, H. & Parsons, P. (eds.) (1983), *Supplementum Hellenisticum* (Berlin)

*TLA* – *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, accessed at: <https://aew.bbaw.de/tla/index.html>

*Urk. IV* – Sethe, K. & Helck, W. (1906-1958), *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie, I-IX* (Leipzig; Berlin)

## Preface

### Times, Dates, Places, Sources

The following is intended to help the reader navigate the considerable temporal and spatial scope of this thesis. The following timeline provides dates for the significant political periods and, where relevant, for the reigns of individual kings, using the Dynastic framework provided by Manetho. Dates are also provided for the sources under study in this thesis, as well as for important geopolitical events, to provide a combined reference for the reader that will help them to contextualise the sources, events, and kings mentioned throughout the rest of this work. Time is structured, in the usual ancient style, according to rulers; dates of Egyptian reigns are from Shaw's *The Oxford History of Egypt* (and should be understood as approximate before 664 BC); the Hellenistic period is from Austin's *The Hellenistic World*. Since the physical location of the various stelae and inscriptions that provide the bulk of the New Kingdom material is often crucial for understanding their significance, a map of Egypt is also provided for the reader to reference, annotated with the locations of these sources.

The names of Egyptian kings are given as anglicised versions of the Egyptian, rather than the Greek (so 'Thutmose' not 'Tuthmosis'); where the Greek name is well-known it is given in parentheses. Exceptions are Ramesses and Nectanebo, whose Greek names are conventional in scholarship; for consistency I use Amenmesses (Anglo-Egyptian Amenmessu < *imn-ms-sw*) for Ramesses II's grandson. A similar convention is used for the late Egyptian rulers Petubastis and Inaros, of the eponymous cycle of Demotic narratives.

Date	King	Events	Sources
>3000 BC	<b>Pre-Dynastic Period</b>		Narmer Palette (c. 3150 BC)
3000–2686	<b>Early Dynastic Period</b>		
	<b>First–Second Dynasties</b>		
2686–2125	<b>Old Kingdom</b>		
	<b>Third–Sixth Dynasties</b>		
2160–2055	<b>First Intermediate Period</b>		
	<b>Seventh–Eleventh Dynasties</b>		Tomb of Ankhtify
2055–1650	<b>Middle Kingdom</b>		
2055–1985	<b>Eleventh Dynasty</b>		
1985–1773	<b>Twelfth Dynasty</b>		<i>Sinuhe</i> <i>Shipwrecked Sailor</i>
1985–1956	Amenemhat I		
1956–1911	Senwosret (Sesostris) I		
1911–1877	Amenemhat II		
1877–1870	Senwosret (Sesostris) II		
1870–1831	Senwosret (Sesostris) III		Regnal Year 16: Semna Boundary Stelae
1831–1786	Amenemhat III		
1786–1777	Amenemhat IV		
1777–1773	Neferusobek		
1773–1650	<b>Thirteenth Dynasty</b>		
1650–1550	<b>Second Intermediate Period</b>		
	<b>Fourteenth–Seventeenth Dynasties</b>		
1590–1550	Apophis (Hyksos ruler of Lower Egypt)		
1560–1555	Seqenenre Tao (Theban ruler of Upper Egypt)		
1555–1550	Kamose (Theban ruler of Upper Egypt)		Kamose Stela
1550–1069	<b>New Kingdom</b>		
1550–1295	<b>Eighteenth Dynasty</b> (continuation of Seventeenth)		
1550–1525	Ahmose I	Expulsion of the Hyksos; reunification of Egypt.	
1525–1504	Amenhotep I		
1504–1492	Thutmose I	Conquest and Occupation of Nubia	Regnal Year 2: Tombos Stela Tomb of Ahmose son of Ibana
1492–1479	Thutmose II		Regnal Year 1: Aswan-Philae Inscription
1473–1458	Hatshepsut		Speos Artemidos Inscription
1479–1425	Thutmose III	Battle at Megiddo	Regnal Years 22–42: <i>Annals</i> Regnal Year 47: Gebel Barkal Stela Poetical Stela Tomb of Ahmose Pen-nekhet

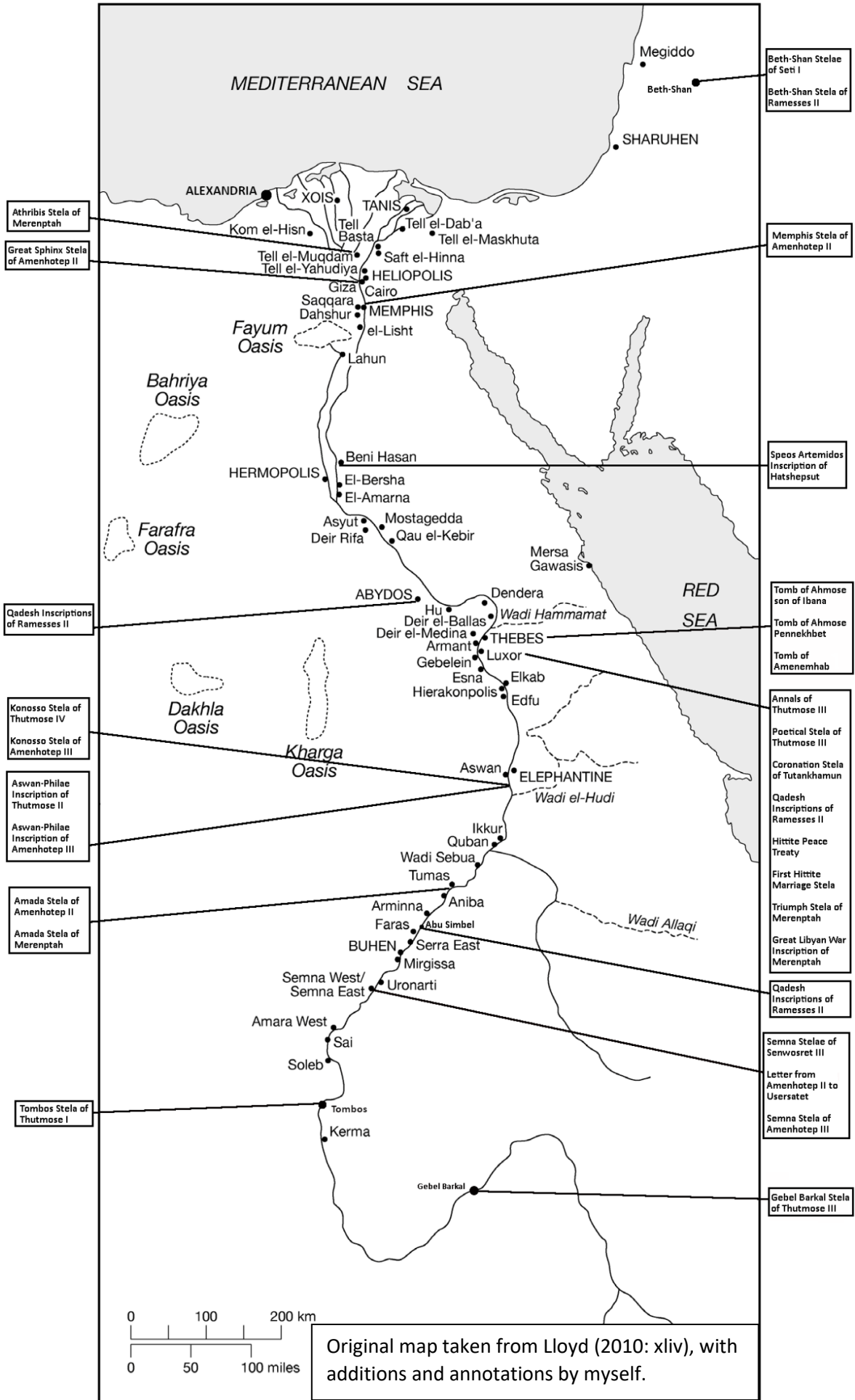
1427–1400	Amenhotep II		Regnal Year 3: Amada Stela Regnal Year 7: Memphis Stela Regnal Year 23: Letter to Usersatet, Viceroy of Kush Great Sphinx Stela Tomb of Amenemhab Inscription of Minmose
1400–1390	Thutmose IV		Regnal Year 8: Konosso Stela
1390–1352	Amenhotep III		Regnal Year 5: Konosso Stela Regnal Year 5: Aswan-Philae Inscription Semna Stela
1352–1336	Akhenaten		
1336	Nefertiti/Smenkhare(?)		
1336–1327	Tutankhamun		Regnal Year 1: Coronation Stela
1327–1323	Ay		
1323–1295	Horemheb		
1295–1186	<b>Nineteenth Dynasty</b>		<i>The Taking of Joppa</i> <i>Apophis and Seqenenre</i>
1295–1294	Ramesses I		
1294–1279	Seti I		Regnal Year 1: First Beth-Shan Stela Second Beth-Shan Stela
1279–1213	Ramesses II	Battle at Qadesh against the Hittites.	Regnal Year 5: <i>Qadesh</i> 1 & 2 Regnal Year 18: Beth-Shan Stela Regnal Year 21: <i>Hittite Peace Treaty</i> Regnal Year 34: First Hittite Marriage Stela
1213–1203	Merenptah	Invasion of Egypt by Libyans.	Regnal Year 5: Amada Stela Regnal Year 5: Triumph Stela Regnal Year 5: Athribis Stela <i>Great Libyan War Inscription</i>
1203–1200	Amenmesses		
1200–1194	Seti II		
1194–1188	Siptah		
1188–1186	Tawosret		
1186–1069	<b>Twentieth Dynasty</b>		
1184–1153	Ramesses III	Multiple attempted attacks on Egypt (the 'Sea Peoples')	

1069–664	<b>Third Intermediate Period</b>		
	<b>Twenty-first–Twenty-fifth Dynasties</b>		Homer – <i>Iliad, Odyssey</i> Hesiod – <i>Theogony, Works and Days, Catalogue of Women</i>
671		Invasion of Egypt by Esarhaddon.	
667–664		Invasion of Egypt by Ashurbanipal; resistance led by (amongst others) Inaros of Athribis.	
664–332	<b>Late Period</b>		
664–525	<b>Twenty-sixth (Saite) Dynasty</b>		Stesichorus – <i>Palinode</i>
664–610	Psamtik (Psammetichus) I	Settlement of Greek and Carian mercenaries in Egypt.	
525		Invasion of Egypt by Cambyses.	
525–404	<b>Twenty-seventh (Persian) Dynasty</b>		Greek tragedies by Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles; comedies by Aristophanes Herodotus – <i>Histories</i> Pindar – <i>Odes</i> Zeno of Elea
490–479		Persian invasions of Greece.	
431–404		Peloponnesian War.	
404–343	<b>Twenty-eighth–Thirtieth Dynasties</b>		Thucydides – <i>Histories</i> Plato Lysias
360–343	Nectanebo II	Reconquest of Egypt by Persia.	
343–332	<b>Thirty-first (Persian) Dynasty</b>		
332–30	<b>Hellenistic Period</b>		
332–323	Alexander the Great	Conquest of the Achaemenid Empire.	

323–309	Alexander IV	323: Ptolemy made Satrap of Egypt.	
305–283 283–246	Ptolemy I Ptolemy II & Arsinoe II		Theocritus – <i>Idylls</i> Callimachus – <i>Hymns</i> c.3 <sup>rd</sup> –2 <sup>nd</sup> centuries: <i>The Battle for the Benefice of Amun, The Battle for the Armour of Inaros</i>
246–222	Ptolemy III & Berenice II	246–245: Invasion of Syria by Ptolemy III; identification of the Lock of Berenice.	Callimachus – <i>Aetia</i> Apollonius – <i>Argonautica</i>
222–30	Ptolemy IV–Cleopatra VII	197: Roman defeat of the Macedonians at Cynoscephalae.  190: Roman defeat of the Seleucids at Magnesia.  146: Sack of Corinth; annexation of Greece by Rome.	After 190: <i>Alexandra</i> After 146: Polybius – <i>Histories</i> c.100–30: <i>Petechons and Serpot</i> c.84–54: Catullus

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30 BC–639 AD	<b>Imperial Roman Period</b>	
30 BC–14 AD	Augustus	Virgil – <i>Aeneid</i>
37–41	Caligula	Philo – <i>Embassy to Gaius</i>
117–138	Hadrian	138: P.Krall
161–180	Marcus Aurelius	176–180: Oppian – <i>Halieutica</i>
176–192	Commodus	
192–639	Roman/Byzantine Emperors	c.180–300: Quintus – <i>Posthomerica</i> c.300 – Tryphiodorus, <i>Sack of Troy</i>



Sources have been titled mostly according to papyrus principles in order to maintain consistency, though this is an imperfect system: where I have considered the text to be not co-extensive with the material upon which it is written or inscribed (e.g. Ramesses II's *Qadesh* texts, known from both temple walls and papyrus), I have given it in italics; where the text *is* co-extensive with the material – primarily stelae, though it should be noted that some of these were inscribed multiple times in different locations – it is not italicised (e.g. Tombos Stela). The notion of 'titles' for Egyptian texts is largely modern and adopted for clarity. These conventions are problematic: for example, Merenptah's 'Israel Stela' is so-named because of the single mention of *ysyriḥ-r*, rather than its content or location. The traditional titles of the *Qadesh* texts of Ramesses II (the 'Bulletin' and the 'Poem') are prejudicial in terms of their form and function, and I have instead designated them *Qadesh 1* and *2* respectively.<sup>1</sup> I shorten the titles of the three main Demotic sources (*The Battle for the Benefice of Amun, The Battle for the Armour of Inaros, Petechons and Serpot*)<sup>2</sup> to *Benefice, Armour, Serpot*.

The bipartite nature of Egyptological use of sources (the original, written in columns or lines, and the modern transcriptions by Sethe, Helck, and Kitchen for the New Kingdom) leads to a bipartite referencing system: column/line numbers are given in the main text, as with the Classical sources; references to the modern transcription are given in the footnotes (*Urk.* IV for the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, *KRI* for the 19<sup>th</sup>).

Given this work is aimed at both Classicists and Egyptologists, and that most readers will have limited knowledge of at least one of the languages, I provide English translations for all texts. All transliterations and translations are my own. Text in square brackets indicates restorations I consider convincing. It is possible that the Demotic signs reading  $\langle nb \rangle . w \langle d \rangle . s \langle nb \rangle$  – English l(ife).p(rosperity).h(ealth) – appended to royal names and words were no longer read and had

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<sup>1</sup> Oakley (forthcoming a).

<sup>2</sup> The latter is called by Volten and Hoffmann *Ägypter und Amazonen*; I have avoided this due to its presupposition of Greek influence, discussed in the Introduction.

become fossilised as determinatives. I have transliterated them, since one could argue the same for earlier hieroglyphic texts; in the Demotic texts they sometimes seem to be meaningfully present or absent; and it is the simplest way in transliteration to represent the Egyptian graphical identification of Serpot with the Egyptian king (her name also being written in a cartouche).

# Chapter 1

## Introduction: Whys, Wherefores, and War

One is a cup from the island of Ischia, a short voyage from Naples, proclaiming itself 'good to drink from' (fig. 1); the other is a ceremonial stone palette from Hierakonpolis in Egypt, depicting the king in two scenes, naming him and identifying his followers and enemies (fig. 2). Nestor's Cup (c. 720 BC) and the Narmer Palette (c. 3150 BC) share two things in common: they are, respectively, amongst the earliest examples of Greek and Egyptian writing;<sup>3</sup> they are also set within the context of war. It is telling that, soon after they conceived of representing words with signs, both the Greeks and Egyptians did so with reference to war.<sup>4</sup> And war remained an important presence in the



Fig. 1: Nestor's Cup, Museo di Villa Arbusto (author's picture).



Fig. 2: Narmer Palette (WikiMedia Commons)



Fig. 3: Domitian smites his enemies at the Temple of Esna (Hallof 2011: 8).

<sup>3</sup> Faraone (1996): 77; Regulski (2016).

<sup>4</sup> Indeed, almost all examples of early Egyptian text and art depict aspects of the violent supremacy of the king, reinforcing his military control of the country (Baines 1989: 476; Campagno 2013: 215).

cultural productions – paintings, reliefs, statues, or texts – of the Greeks and Egyptians well into the Roman period and after Christianisation: in the 5<sup>th</sup>-century AD the Greco-Egyptian Nonnus composed hexameter poems on both the Gospel of St. John and Dionysus' wars in India; over 3000 years after Narmer, the Egyptian king (now the Roman Emperor Domitian) was still smiting his defeated enemies in much the same pose (fig. 3).

The continuous presence of war throughout time and form makes it a useful lens through which to view the Greek and Egyptian worlds. Its pervasive nature meant that sculptors, artists and authors could use it as a thematic canvas on which to paint their beliefs and concerns: it was, as we shall see in Chapter 2, a universal presence in the ancient world. Representations of warfare therefore provide both plentiful and insightful material for analysis of Greek and Egyptian cultures; indeed, the combined facts of its flexibility and frequency (both as a phenomenon in its own right and as a subject for cultural production) mean that war lends itself to a developmental approach. As attitudes to and representations of war changed across time, other concepts changed as well: one could carry out an insightful analysis on the subject of, for example, Greek beliefs concerning death via the medium of war, looking at material ranging from the Parthenon's Centauromachy (438 BC) to the Attalids' Dying Gauls (c. 220 BC) and Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* (c. 270 BC). In essence, a diachronic developmental approach is the basis of this thesis, but instead of death my subject is defeat, or more specifically the attitudes to large changes in geopolitical power. Such an approach to the topic of war has already been undertaken by Clark and Turner in *Brill's Companion to Military Defeat in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (2018); similar questions underpin Raaflaub's *Peace in the Ancient World: Concepts and Theories* (2016) and Bloomsbury's mammoth *A Cultural History of Peace* (2020), since 'peace' in the ancient world very rarely occurred without military defeat. Clark and Turner's statement that 'defeat *brings into focus* new questions and approaches'<sup>5</sup> (emphasis theirs) indicates the benefits of this topic: the consequent change in psyche of a

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<sup>5</sup> (2018): XI.

conquered people necessarily provokes societal reactions that can provide a great deal of material for investigations of those cultures' attitudes to a range of concepts and phenomena.

Yet despite these benefits, as Clark and Turner point out, there is typically very little scholarship on the subject of military defeat;<sup>6</sup> in many ways it feels as though the conquest of the Greeks and Egyptians has exerted greater trauma on modern scholars than on the ancient people, particularly on the literary side. Despite a huge corpus of works existing in both Imperial Greek (the two Oppians' *Cyenegetica* and *Halieutica*, Quintus of Smyrna's *Posthomerica*, Colluthus' *Rape of Helen*, Cassius Dio, Appian, Arrian, the novels) and Demotic Egyptian (the Setne-Khaemwaset stories, the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle, *The Story of Petese Son of Petetum*) there is a lack of corresponding scholarship on these texts compared to those from earlier, more triumphant periods of Greek and Egyptian history. This is felt particularly keenly with military narratives: it is only really within the past fifteen years that positive studies of the *Posthomerica* have begun to multiply; studies of the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle remain scarce, with only three of the texts published (and one, *Benefice*, without a new edition since 1910). This thesis therefore aims to fill scholarly lacunae in terms of both theme and material – and to do so in a twofold manner. Almost all of the work done on the subject of reactions to defeat has been implicitly comparative in its approach, inviting comparison by the reader through the juxtaposition of papers on different cultures, but without explicitly exploring the similarities and differences *between* them. My work is both more explicit in its comparative nature and more focused: instead of looking at a wide range of cultures (which could not in any case be exhaustive), I will examine only Greek and Egyptian material – and only a selection of this material.

The aim of this thesis is to compare Greek and Egyptian reactions to military conquest, and to examine how the geopolitical military reversals of fortune that they suffered (from conquering

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<sup>6</sup> Clark & Turner (2018): XI. That there is no chapter in their work on e.g. Egyptian military defeat is rather indicative of this, but it is a problematic omission in other ways to which I will return.

others to being conquered themselves) were manifested in their representations of warfare, and how changes in military supremacy and independence, mediated through the frame of war, affected representations of social constructs. It is a comparison of two diachronic processes, and how these related to their altered military contexts. Work on this subject has recently been done by Eleni Kefala,<sup>7</sup> who compares one Greek and two Nahuatl texts to examine their reactions to the fall of Constantinople (1453) and Tenochtitlan (1521), and the processing of the resultant cultural trauma. In title and theme her work is similar to this one, but on a smaller scale: she is investigating the reactions to one single event, whereas I am analysing the broader, long-term reversals of power, a more lasting trauma.<sup>8</sup> Sources are therefore taken from periods corresponding to the peaks and then troughs of Greek and Egyptian geopolitical power. The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasties of Egypt and the Hellenistic period represent the zeniths of Egyptian and Greek military supremacy in the eastern Mediterranean, and provide the material of the conquerors; the Hellenistic and Roman periods, when the Egyptians were first ruled by the Greeks, and then both by Rome, provide the material of the conquered. But before justifying the choice of sources, it is necessary first to examine the purposes, dangers, and history of academic comparison, within Classics, Egyptology and beyond.

### **Past, Present, and Future: Comparing Comparativisms**

Comparative Literature seems to exist as a discipline permanently in a state of self-perceived crisis: despite decades of relatively firm establishment (particularly in the United States) ten years ago Behdad and Thomas' *A Companion to Comparative Literature* still felt a pressing need to justify its existence.<sup>9</sup> The modern form of the discipline was, if not born out of, very closely associated with the (superficial) post-war dismantling of the colonial empires, an association seen most clearly in

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<sup>7</sup> (2021).

<sup>8</sup> For the idea of 'cultural trauma' see Kefala (2021: 24-5) and Alexander (2004), who defines it as the reaction to some event or process that damages and permanently alters a society.

<sup>9</sup> Ferris (2011).

landmark works such as Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and Spivak's 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988), both laying bare the destructive effects of Western imperialism and both written by US-based professors of Comparative Literature.

Yet equally, as Said's narrative of the colonial construction of Orientalism makes clear, academics conducting comparative work played a large part in shaping empire themselves, through an essentially qualitative analysis that compared foreign works negatively to Western ones and therefore justified the domination of the colonial powers.<sup>10</sup> Given the prominent role played by comparative studies in both the development and dismantling of empire, problems naturally arise from the disappearance of empire (at least in its classic formulation based around the nation-state). Any modern comparative work (including this thesis) is therefore part of a tradition of constructing and deconstructing Western hegemony, and must reckon with that past – especially when the subject is the oldest Western comparison, between Greece and the East, the millennia-long Orientalism that Said described. But the dissolution of empires does not mean that comparative studies are now able to be carried out unproblematically, and we must look to the present as well as the past to assess how comparative studies are being conducted today, and to ensure that any such study is clear in its purpose.

Said's *Orientalism* was first published in 1978. One year later, Margaret Thatcher was elected Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; one year later, Ronald Reagan was elected President of the United States of America. As comparativists looked around the globe at the remnants of the empires, so too did the neoliberal economists of these Anglophone governments. Over the past forty years they successfully constructed a global system of free-market economics, made it appear to be the default state of the economy,<sup>11</sup> and thus crafted a globalised, capitalist world in which the nation-state's power was/is largely absorbed by trans-national corporations. We must recognise

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<sup>10</sup> This approach may – thankfully – be less widespread today, but it is by no means a relic (Spivak 2009: 609).

<sup>11</sup> Peck (2010): 2.

the role of comparative studies – if not fundamental, at least complementary – in constructing the narrative of neoliberalism.<sup>12</sup>

It is hardly a coincidence that both globalism and Comparative Literature were, until recently, overwhelmingly dominated by the United States of America; Des Rochers' description of 'a field largely dominated by American theorists and schools of thought' could apply equally to both.<sup>13</sup> So too when Spivak mentioned that she was writing her 2003 monograph *Death of a Discipline* (on the failure of Comparative Literature in the US, and its need to be reinvented) from Hong Kong, and predicted that China would be the base for a new practice of Comparative Literature,<sup>14</sup> she foreshadowed its rise to prominence in the discipline and superiority in the globalised world.<sup>15</sup> This synchronicity for both the USA and China strongly suggests that comparative work plays an important role in constructing globalised neoliberalism, the new postcolonial Empire.<sup>16</sup> Damrosch's statement that 'the study of world literature can very readily become ... ideologically complicit with the worst tendencies of global capitalism'<sup>17</sup> is if anything too soft, given their coextensive existence..

So why does this close connection exist? Or perhaps better, why has the extensive marketisation of tertiary education<sup>18</sup> risen alongside comparative work in the humanities? The answer lies in the early practices of Comparative Literature in the 1950s and 1960s, which involved using comparison to find 'sets of image-narrative-philosophemes that seemed to travel without either historical or psychic ballast across the history of literatures and cultures'.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Damrosch (Damrosch & Spivak 2011: 458) attributing the early growth of World Literature at Iowa University to the dean of the Business School.

<sup>13</sup> (2019): 353.

<sup>14</sup> (2003): 84.

<sup>15</sup> As Peck points out, 'China's pathway to neoliberalization has likewise been conjuncturally unique', with a tendency towards greater state control, but it is no more or less neoliberal in the globalist world because of this (2012: 32-3).

<sup>16</sup> Cooppan (2005): 85.

<sup>17</sup> (2011): 456.

<sup>18</sup> See Collini (2018: 15-35) for an overview of the changes to the UK's university system in the past twenty years.

<sup>19</sup> Spivak (2009): 611.

Essentially, the aim was to find commonalities that all (or as many as possible) humans shared.<sup>20</sup> At a time in which race-theory still lingered in the vestiges of colonialism, there was an urgent need for this kind of comparative work to deconstruct these theories. Yet at the same time, it is also not hard to see why this kind of work would benefit corporations. If humans across the world could be reduced to a level playing field – if a comparatist could show in what ways a Singaporean (for example) was like an American – then it would be far easier to a company to expand into this territory and market itself there. Spivak describes this process as ‘the humanities supplementing globalization by providing a world’ to access.<sup>21</sup>

This problematic issue is compounded by the fact that Comparative Studies still has a worrying tendency towards a familial model, in which a typically colonial European literature is sequentially compared to its developments in the many areas colonised;<sup>22</sup> within this perspective, the world is effectively divided up into families, and the various cultures all linked quasi-genetically.<sup>23</sup> Such a genealogical view is still endemic in Classics, which has gone so far as to create its own sub-discipline (Reception Studies) born entirely out of this school of comparativism ‘as a way of asserting its continuing relevance and self-awareness’.<sup>24</sup> This is not to say that good, progressive work has not been done in that field. But the approach, focused on sequence and influence, based upon a foundation of genetic similarity and concerned largely with detecting further similarities, can be less rewarding than more contextual comparisons,<sup>25</sup> and aligns much more closely to the goals of globalisation in constructing a world united by close, detectable, definable cultural connections. Thus this comparative process of assimilation through

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<sup>20</sup> Palumbo-Liu calls them ‘invariants’ (2011: 48).

<sup>21</sup> (2009): 614.

<sup>22</sup> Hayot (2011): 90.

<sup>23</sup> The terms characteristic of Comparative Linguistics also play into this construction of the world, with their ‘mother-languages’, ‘daughter-languages’ etc.

<sup>24</sup> Hutchinson (2018): 111-12. The issue is, if anything, even more firmly entrenched in the field of Egyptology, which from its inception has attempted to sever Ancient Egypt from its Coptic and Muslim inhabitants and cast it as an ancestor and prototype for Western civilisation (Rashwan 2021: 171-3). Besides the literal cultural appropriation going on here, this approach has also hampered studies of Ancient Egypt by trying to fit it into a mould for which it is unsuited (Wengrow 2020: 56-7).

<sup>25</sup> Palumbo-Liu (2011): 49.

chronological and sequential studies is – generally against the aims of their authors – politically damaging in the long term.<sup>26</sup> The process also has the (perhaps sometimes unintended) effect of the dominant subject appropriating and subordinating those less well-established and less prestigious.<sup>27</sup> For all that Haubold might talk of Greek epic as a ‘Near Eastern Genre’,<sup>28</sup> the financial, cultural, and institutional nature of Classics rejects (and will continue to reject) this view. Hence *Brill’s Companion to Military Defeat in Ancient Mediterranean Society*: the title itself denies the plurality of ancient Mediterranean cultures, assimilating them into one big society rather than their respective units, and the editors compound this by having only three of the chapters on ‘Ancient Mediterranean Society’ devoted to non-Greco-Roman cultures, thereby omitting many (such as Egypt or the Jews) entirely.

Classics’ apparently natural affinity for appropriation through comparison leaves it with perhaps some protection from the market; smaller subjects such as Egyptology are at greater risk.<sup>29</sup> Hence a recent issue of the *Journal of Egyptian History* focused specifically on Egyptology and Global History, headlined by Juan Carlos Moreno García’s article ‘Egyptology and Global History: Between Geocultural Power and the Crisis of Humanities’. His argument, essentially, is that due to this ‘crisis of humanities’ (the result of capitalism’s ability to dictate what can and cannot be studied through financial pressure) Egyptology should adopt a more outward-looking comparative approach to survive.<sup>30</sup> In so doing, however, he also argues that Egyptology must ‘escape a narrow utilitarianism, as a mere tool to provide legitimation to ambitious geocultural projects (be they Western or East-Asian), by putting all that experience at the service of new forms of communal construction instead’.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Robbins (2012): 387-9.

<sup>27</sup> Spivak (2003): 11.

<sup>28</sup> (2002). As will become clear, I do not at any rate agree with this assessment, though for different reasons.

<sup>29</sup> Hayot (2012): 227.

<sup>30</sup> Note that his fear is primarily that Egyptology will not be able to survive ‘as a distinctive discipline’, i.e. that it will be appropriated by another (2020: 60).

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*: 60.

The instruction to avoid utilitarianism is of course welcome, but it seems to me that Moreno García's target is mistaken. Throughout his article, he mentions 'capitalism' only once, and that is set within the temporal context of the late Middle Ages;<sup>32</sup> instead, his focus is particularly on China's recent attempts to work comparatively with Egyptian history.<sup>33</sup> But China's aim is not purely 'geocultural' expansion: it is to expand and gain access to markets for Chinese corporations in a way that most benefits Chinese national interests.<sup>34</sup> Geocultural obstacles, whether the borders of the nation-states or the dichotomies between West and East(-Asian), have been and are being stripped away by and for corporations, not people.<sup>35</sup> A global approach to comparative studies that does not at least recognise the problems and threats posed by rampant capitalism (as Moreno García fails to do) is ultimately just part of the problem.

Comparative studies are, however, limited in what they can do. Comparativism's tendency to look pessimistically towards the past and with naïve optimism towards the future has left it playing catch-up. Perhaps once upon a time comparative studies could have moved towards crafting a narrative of a perhaps not isolationist, but disjointed world, instead of constructing the (fictional) level playing field desiderated by capitalism.<sup>36</sup> But the modern, globalised world means that, as Moreno García rather bluntly states, such a move would be 'simply untenable nowadays'.<sup>37</sup> Spivak, pronouncing the potential death of comparativism in 2003, offers a more subtle and nuanced view of the Catch-22 situation in which comparative studies – and indeed the humanities in general – find themselves:

We must accept this [state of the world] because no movement can work without this currency [of globalised capital] now ... We cannot and should not reject this impulse toward generalization, which has something like a relationship with globalization. If we do—and

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<sup>32</sup> Moreno García (2020): 36.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. the inauguration in 2018 of China's first archaeological mission to Luxor, intended to 'promote the cultural heritage of both countries' (*ibid.*: 51).

<sup>34</sup> There is also an aspect of cultural chauvinism: early Chinese Egyptology focused on state formation in order to highlight that China had outlasted Egypt (Xiaodong 2020: 71).

<sup>35</sup> Cooppan (2005): 85.

<sup>36</sup> Spivak (2009): 609.

<sup>37</sup> (2020): 60.

some have the ignorance and/or luxury to do so—we will throw away every good of every international initiative.<sup>38</sup>

Comparison should no longer be based upon a drive towards the assimilation of cultures, the formation of a collectivity or unity of humanity, in some cases genetically linked, which can be exploited across the globe. Rather, we must focus on emphasising the differences and the distinctiveness of people around the world. This is not arguing for any ideas of nationalism, but an internationalist effort ‘to establish a different temporal existence, and hence a different sense of totality, to that which globalization prescribes’.<sup>39</sup> As Spivak says,

Just as socialism at its best would persistently and repeatedly wrench capital away from capitalism, so must the new Comparative Literature persistently and repeatedly undermine and undo the definitive tendency of the dominant to appropriate the emergent.<sup>40</sup>

Comparisons of different parts of the ancient world are removed from some of these issues. But this isolation is not absolute; the humanities are increasingly – and should be increasingly – interconnected, and the direction of research in one discipline can alter the directions of the others: Spivak, whose work on postcolonialism has had such wide-ranging inter-disciplinary effects, began her career as a scholar on Yeats.

Tentative steps in this direction can be seen in Classics with works such as Canevaro’s analysis of Hesiod’s *Works and Days* and the Icelandic *Hávamál*<sup>41</sup> (though this does at times tend towards the globalised generalisation cautioned against by Spivak), and the scepticism of Adrian Kelly and some of his students, on historical and methodological grounds, has led to a number of works that subvert the traditional genealogical approach to comparative Classics.<sup>42</sup> Egyptology has

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<sup>38</sup> (2003): 46.

<sup>39</sup> Etherington & Zimble (2018): 6.

<sup>40</sup> (2003): 100.

<sup>41</sup> (2014).

<sup>42</sup> Christopher Metcalf is the most prominent example with his monograph, and see e.g. Kelly (2008, 2014) and Bonnell (2021), as well as Kelly & Metcalf (2021: 1-15) for an overview of their approach; for other sceptics in Classics see e.g. Most (1998).

tended to avoid comparative literary studies outside the question of Greek influence on Demotic Egyptian texts and *vice versa*,<sup>43</sup> but comparative works by Meskell and Joyce (on Egyptian and Mayan funerary practices) and Miniaci (on Egyptian and European encounters with unknown civilisations) have shown the benefits of comparing Egypt with very different cultures.<sup>44</sup>

I hope that this thesis can draw attention to the issues faced by Classics and Egyptology concerning the practice of comparative studies, and continue to move Classics in particular away from an assimilatory genealogy that risks easily playing into the hands of modern globalisation, ‘an extension of the world-systems of modern capitalism and colonialism’,<sup>45</sup> and appropriating independent disciplines. To compare is, therefore, to flirt with danger: a comparativist must ensure that they are not working (directly or indirectly) to build a system of oppression, either political or intellectual. Instead, comparison should be used – as it was by Said and Spivak – for the purposes of resistance and deconstruction, and this thesis is written in this spirit. One cannot easily apply the political situations of the Greeks and Egyptians I am studying to today’s world; nor, as I have just suggested, should this necessarily be done. But in comparing the ways in which the Greeks and Egyptians reacted to their conquest and subsequent loss of power, and how (if at all) they resisted this process, we may perhaps draw some instructive conclusions as to how – or, indeed, how *not* – to approach our own circumstances. It is this theme, the reaction to reversals of power and the feeling of powerlessness, that motivates and underpins this work.

Yet the particular form of a comparative approach must still be justified. Baines points out – with regard to ancient Egypt, though ‘Egypt’ can be substituted in his words by any other culture or indeed any other object of study – that

those who think they know [or, indeed, are studying] only Egypt ... misled and mislead themselves because they also know another place: wittingly or unwittingly, they inform

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<sup>43</sup> For more on this question see below (pp. 47-51).

<sup>44</sup> (2003); (2020).

<sup>45</sup> Loomba *et al.* (2005): 2.

their approach to ancient Egypt with the *Social Construction of Reality* of the society in which they live.<sup>46</sup>

What, then, are the benefits of comparison? In this, I suspect, we modern scholars are not so different from Homer or the creator of the Narmer Palette some 3000-5000 years earlier, for both of whom the act of comparison – the connection of two theoretically distinct things – is key. Comparisons in the Homeric poems are everywhere. They can be used to indicate the similarity between two things,<sup>47</sup> as at *Iliad* 22.139-42, when Achilles and Hector are compared to a hawk and a dove:

ἤύτε κίρκος ὄρεσφιν ἐλαφρότατος πετεηνῶν  
ρήϊδίως οἴμησε μετὰ τρήρωνα πέλειαν  
ἦ δέ θ' ὕπαιθα φοβεῖται, ὃ δ' ἐγγύθεν ὄξυ λεληκῶς  
ταρφέ' ἐπαΐσσει, ἐλέειν τέ ἐ θυμὸς ἀνώγει

As a hawk in the mountains, swiftest of birds,  
recklessly swoops after a timid dove  
which flees underneath, while the hawk crying keenly nearby  
keeps on lunging at it, and its heart orders it to kill

A similar effect is created on the Narmer Palette (fig. 4). The placement of the defeated enemies of both the king and the falcon on top of one another invites a comparison, as does the anthropomorphised talon, holding a weapon, of the falcon: as the falcon above, so the king below.<sup>48</sup> These comparisons reveal three things. Firstly, and most explicitly, that there *is*, or can be, a connection to be made between Achilles/Narmer and the hawk/falcon, that the composers of the

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<sup>46</sup> Baines (2020a): 422.

<sup>47</sup> Or indeed dissimilarity, as at 22.126-7 when Hector ponders addressing Achilles:

οὐ μὲν πως νῦν ἔστιν ἀπὸ δρυὸς οὐδ' ἀπὸ πέτρης  
τῷ ἀριζέμεναι, ἅ τε παρθένος ἠΐθεός τε

In no way is it now possible, from an oak or from a rock  
to chat with him, like a young girl and boy

<sup>48</sup> Baines (1989): 475.

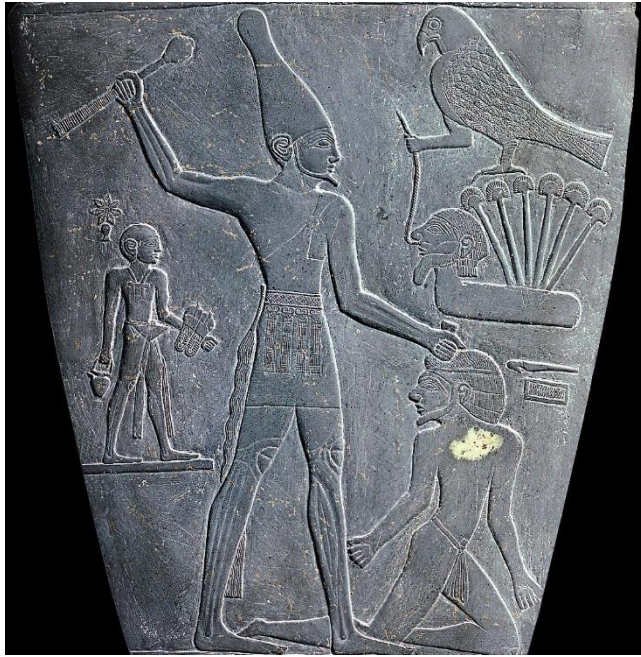


Fig. 4: Detail of the reverse of the Narmer Palette (WikiMedia Commons).

poem and the palette saw a way, or ways, in which the human could share the traits of the animal.<sup>49</sup> Secondly, the comparisons tell us something about Achilles and Narmer: that, like the hawk and falcon, they are fierce, swift, and as the falcon and hawk prey on others of their kind, so do Narmer and Achilles prey on and dominate other humans. But thirdly, and crucially, the comparison goes both ways, and reveals the creators' conceptions of hawks and

falcons: in the case of the *Iliad* that they, like Achilles at that moment, have a fixed, singular intent on their target and will not give up until they have killed; in the case of the Palette that they possess, like the king, a superiority over others, asserted through the violence they inflict on their lessers.

When we find lion similes repeated throughout both Greek and Egyptian representations of war, this allows us to comprehend what a Greek or Egyptian lion was perceived to be: fierce, strong, regal, masculine, and conspicuously solitary. And through the building up of a matrix of similes, the repeated comparison of one figure to different things, we are able to expand our knowledge beyond the individual similes and see that, even though they are not directly compared themselves, a lion was felt to be roughly analogous to (for example) a bull.<sup>50</sup> Through studying Greek and Egyptian representations of warfare together, and by comparing them, each is able to shed light upon the other: what may be more obvious in one can be used via comparison to bring

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<sup>49</sup> The falcon on the Narmer Palette could also represent Horus, god of kingship (Contardi 2016: 28), but this does not particularly affect the point, and at any rate the animal can hardly be divorced from the god entirely.

<sup>50</sup> For more on these two animals as a pairing see Chapter 3 (pp. 113-17).

out similar features in the other or to cast the differences into sharper focus.<sup>51</sup> In doing so, we can therefore see what – if anything – distinguishes the Greek and Egyptian authors' processing of military conquest.

There are broadly two ways to structure a comparative work. The first is via a sequential comparison of the different periods, examining their representations of warfare in their entirety and then summing up and explicitly stating the comparisons and conclusions after the two chapters on the conquerors (the New Kingdom and Hellenistic period) and the two on the conquered (the Imperial Greek and Demotic texts), followed by one over-arching conclusion. This is essentially the same way in which Plutarch structures his *Parallel Lives*, or Feeney his *The Gods in Epic*.<sup>52</sup> There are benefits to such an approach. It is, in general, more accessible to readers only interested in one particular period: someone only concerned with Demotic representations of war could turn straight to that chapter to obtain the information they need. Hence the typical structure of the conference or edited volume, accessible but perhaps less able to consistently and explicitly bring out the points suggested by the comparative juxtaposition of the speeches or chapters. It is perhaps a more hands-off approach from the perspective of the author, involving more targeted interventions in the comparative process.

The second approach, adopted here, is to structure the study according to the principal themes that I want to draw out, and to apply the corpus to each of these themes. Sacrifices evidently must be made, at least in terms of accessibility to those interested in only one period: the scholar of warfare in Roman-period Greek literature will find it less easy to access only the material they want. So too the Classicist may have slightly more trouble obtaining a comprehensive grasp of the Egyptological material, and vice versa. But to pursue the first, segregated approach would be in many ways a betrayal of the purpose of this thesis, which is – not unashamedly, given my

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<sup>51</sup> Sapiro (2011): 229. Meskell & Joyce (2003: 1) more prosaically argue that 'it is through a constant tacking between historical specificities that unexamined postulates are exposed'.

<sup>52</sup> (1991).

stated issues with the field of comparative studies – at least unapologetically comparative. The sacrifices made in pursuit of a thematic structure will be softened by the internal arrangement of the chapters, which adheres more closely to a Plutarchian style: outside of the comparative conclusions, connections will be drawn between periods and texts when particularly illustrative, but aiming to avoid the creation of an excessively tangled web of threads and links that prevents the reader from gaining a coherent understanding of the material with which they are unfamiliar. The thematic structure allows the comparative argument to be continuously and cumulatively constructed towards the conclusion; it also helps draw attention to many of the most important distinctions between the Greek and Egyptian reactions to military upheaval. And in its more compact grouping together of the different periods under study, it also encourages the reader to engage more with the comparative process and think more deeply about what defines and distinguishes the views of New Kingdom and Greco-Roman Egyptians and Hellenistic and Imperial Greek views on ethnicity, gender, power within the context of war – and indeed their conceptions of warfare itself.

### **Periods and Themes**

The overall subject of this thesis is the processing by the Greeks and Egyptians of military conquest, a reversal in fortunes from supremacy to inferiority. Four distinct periods are under study, all defined by either present military success abroad or past and lasting military defeat at home: two Greek, two Egyptian.<sup>53</sup> Any choice of sources for comparison cannot be truly comprehensive, and will always be to some extent arbitrary;<sup>54</sup> the periods selected have been chosen because they

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<sup>53</sup> This distinction is made on the basis, essentially, of language rather than where geographically the material was composed or set up: more of the New Kingdom Egyptian texts are located outside Egypt (e.g. in Nubia or the Levant) than the Hellenistic Greek ones. And given Egypt seems to have been home to a large number of Roman-period epic poets – at least Triphiodorus, Nonnus, Colluthus, and perhaps Claudian as well (Parsons 2007: 156) – it seems entirely possible that the *Posthomerica* was composed there too. The question of how ‘Egyptian’ the Greek texts composed in Egypt is discussed below.

<sup>54</sup> Ferris (2011): 41.

adhere most closely to the theme (the loss of a culture's geopolitical power) and, despite the many differences between them, they are all internally coherent, providing still a sense of Aristotelian unity within the natural disjointedness of a comparative work.

### **The Egyptian 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasties: Royal and Private Inscriptions**

Following a lengthy, multi reign-spanning war between the dynasties of Lower (15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>) and Upper (17<sup>th</sup>) Egypt, the Theban king Ahmose I defeated his Hyksos<sup>55</sup> counterpart in Lower Egypt and reunified Egypt into a new kingdom. The following three and a half centuries, consisting of what we term the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasties, saw a widespread military expansion across two of Egypt's three borders, to the east and the south. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, however, various regional developments caused Egypt's imperial position to contract and reverse, and during the reign of Merenptah the western border was subject to an unparalleled invasion by Libyan groups.<sup>56</sup> Further invasions followed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, repelled by Ramesses III, but over the course of that dynasty the Egyptian kingdom's internal cohesion failed, and the Ramessid dynasty ended with Ramesses XI and Egypt no longer unified.<sup>57</sup> Since this thesis uses sources from periods of military geopolitical supremacy, material from the New Kingdom will be mostly drawn from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasties rather than the 20<sup>th</sup>; for the sake of conciseness, this will be referred to as 'New Kingdom sources' (or similar) throughout the thesis.

Military expansion coincided with a proliferation of monumental military inscriptions: narratives of warfare were presented in far greater detail than in previous periods by both royals and non-royals, in textual and pictorial form. The royal sources were inscribed in hieroglyphs on architectural elements in temples, such as walls or pylons, as well as on stelae set up in temples

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<sup>55</sup> For the complicated modern understanding of the Hyksos see Chapter 3 (p. 105).

<sup>56</sup> The construction of a number of fortresses in the west by Ramesses II suggests a perceived threat had been present for some time (Van De Mierop 2007: 60).

<sup>57</sup> Naunton (2010): 121. See Taylor (2003) for an overview of the end of the New Kingdom.

and prominent locations throughout Egypt's empire (for which see the map above). Three lengthy military narratives from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasties, all of which were inscribed on walls in the Temple of Amun at Karnak, home of one of the preeminent state gods of the New Kingdom, provide the most material due to their scale: the *Annals* of Thutmose III, narrating twenty years of military campaigns; Ramesses II's *Qadesh* texts (also inscribed on the walls of at least four other temples), describing his campaign against the Hittites and battle at Qadesh; and Merenptah's *Great Libyan War*, narrating his defeat of an invasion from Libya.<sup>58</sup>

I supplement these with stelae from the reigns of many kings, particularly the Poetical Stela of Thutmose III and the Beth-Shan Stelae of Sety I and Ramesses II, as well as rock-cut inscriptions commissioned by Thutmose II, Hatshepsut, and Amenhotep III.<sup>59</sup> Some New Kingdom non-royal inscriptions do refer to war, but they are not common:<sup>60</sup> the most extensive are the early-mid 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty biographies of Ahmose son of Ibana and Amenemhab that were inscribed on the walls of their tombs.<sup>61</sup> This material is supplemented by fictional military narratives written during the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty in hieratic on papyrus, *The Taking of Joppa* and *Apophis and Seqenenre*.<sup>62</sup> The royal and non-royal inscriptions are collected largely in Sethe and Helck's *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie* (*Urk.* IV) and Kitchen's *Ramesside Inscriptions: Historical and Biographical (KRI)* respectively, while the hieratic tales are included in Gardiner's *Late-Egyptian Stories*.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> The scholarship on the *Annals* and *Qadesh* inscriptions in particular is considerable: see especially Spalinger (1977), Redford (2003), and Baines (2008) on the *Annals*; Ockinga (1987) and Spalinger (2002) on *Qadesh*; and Spalinger (2012, 2020) for comparison of the two texts. Manassa's commentary (2003) on Merenptah's *Great Libyan War* is a detailed study of the inscription and its context.

<sup>59</sup> On the Poetical Stela see particularly Eyre (1996). The 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty stela inscriptions are collected and studied by Beylage (2002) and Klug (2002); see Maderna-Sieben (2018) for the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty sources, focussing particularly on the eulogies.

<sup>60</sup> This paucity is discussed in Chapter 5 (pp. 254-9).

<sup>61</sup> The religious nature of the tomb, however, means that the context for these biographies is in some ways comparable to that of the royal temple inscriptions, albeit on a much smaller scale. See Gnirs (1996) and Froom (2020) for overviews of Egyptian (auto)biography.

<sup>62</sup> For recent studies on these (and other) Late Egyptian hieratic texts see Manassa (2013) and Di Biase-Dyson (2013). The potentially different agendas behind monumental and papyrus texts are discussed below (pp. 45-6).

<sup>63</sup> For translations of many of the royal texts and the biography of Ahmose son of Ibana see Lichtheim (2006); for the papyrus narratives see Simpson (2003); for the biographies of Amenemhab and of Minmose

Although many of these texts are known from single sources, others such as Amenhotep II's Amada and Elephantine stelae and Ramesses II's *Qadesh* texts were inscribed in multiple locations; *Qadesh 2* was also copied in hieratic on papyrus.<sup>64</sup> Many inscriptions were accompanied by reliefs visualising important aspects of the text (e.g. Ramesses II's First Hittite Marriage Stela, showing the king surrounded by gods with the Hittite princess and king approaching); these – along with other artwork – will be referenced when relevant, although the focus of this thesis lies primarily on the texts.

The textual sources consist of encomia and narratives: sometimes these are distinct, but often encomia will embed short narratives, or the narratives will contain encomia either external to the narrative or spoken internally by characters. The royal narratives themselves vary greatly in length, from short stelae such as Ramesses II's Beth-Shan Stela (22 lines) to Merenptah's *Great Libyan War*, which runs to 79 columns. These texts take broadly two formats in terms of content. One is the *iw.tw*-format, in which *iw.tw* ('one came') to tell the king of some military disturbance that he proceeds to crush;<sup>65</sup> this tended to be used in shorter narratives such as Thutmose II's Aswan-Philae Inscription and Sety I's Beth-Shan Stelae, though it could also be embedded in longer narratives (e.g. *Qadesh* §2.76).<sup>66</sup> The other is the so-called *Königsnovelle*, a term coined by Hermann in 1938 to characterise texts in which the king plays the leading narrative role. On a basic level one could apply the term to any royal monumental narrative with the king as protagonist,<sup>67</sup> but it is normally reserved for those that involve the king presenting a plan to his advisers on a number of possible issues, such as building works or military strategy, and then immediately accomplishing it; the Megiddo episode of Thutmose III's *Annals* adopts this format, as does Ramesses II's *Qadesh 1*, though subversively.<sup>68</sup> In doing so it established the king's position in

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see Redford (2003); for the Ramessid texts see Kitchen's accompanying volumes of translations (1993-2014).

<sup>64</sup> See Spalinger (2002) for the relationship between the monumental and papyrus versions.

<sup>65</sup> Spalinger (1982): 1-33.

<sup>66</sup> *KRI* II.28.1-6.

<sup>67</sup> Loprieno (1996): 284.

<sup>68</sup> Spalinger (1982): 102, 107-9.

society between the gods and the rest of humanity.<sup>69</sup> The term is, however, too broad and imprecise to be considered a 'genre' as Hermann did.<sup>70</sup> The term is better used descriptively rather than prescriptively, denoting a set of motifs or structures which a text could use to emphasise the priorities of the king and his complete superiority.<sup>71</sup> It is important to stress, however, that these categorisations are modern, and there is no evidence that the Egyptians considered them to be mutually exclusive – nor, indeed, were they exclusively used for war.<sup>72</sup>

There were, of course, many changes and differences in military ideology over the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasties, and these will be noted throughout this thesis. But in terms of their wider Mediterranean context, they provide a unified corpus of material that reflects the Egyptian representations of war that accompanied their military supremacy. This New Kingdom corpus offers a broad range of material for study, varying often in date, form, and context, but remaining relatively consistent in its representation of war.

### **Hellenistic Greek Literature: Ptolemaic and Beyond**

Following Alexander's conquests at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, some 700 years after the end of the New Kingdom, the Mediterranean from Sicily eastwards was ruled and settled by Greeks and Macedonians. Three Macedonian successor kingdoms were initially dominant: the Antigonids in Macedon exerted fluctuating degrees of authority over Greece, the Seleucids ruled from Asia Minor to Bactria, and the Ptolemies based in Egypt maintained also several island and overseas territories; these three were supplemented by the emergence of the Hellenising but not Hellenic Attalid kingdom in Asia Minor from the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC onwards. All royal courts, at least early on, attracted authors and artists. The best of these – or at least the ones most favoured by the

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<sup>69</sup> Loprieno (1996): 281.

<sup>70</sup> Spalinger (1982): 103.

<sup>71</sup> Lundh (2002): 9-10; Spalinger (2011): 362.

<sup>72</sup> Spalinger (1982): 232.

manuscript compilers – were concentrated in the early Ptolemaic kingdom under Ptolemies II and III, and the three best preserved Ptolemaic authors – Callimachus, Apollonius, and Theocritus – make up the bulk of the material from this period.<sup>73</sup>

Although many surviving fragments attest to the (relatively) widespread presence of war in literature from the period, especially in reference to battles against the Gauls,<sup>74</sup> the preserved works of authors based at other royal courts tend to have very little to do with war: Aratus, writing from the court of Antigonos II Gonatas (283-239), composed a *Hymn to Pan* apparently celebrating the king's military victory over the Gauls, but has left to us only his *Phaenomena*, an astrological didactic poem; Nicander, based at the court of Attalus III, presumably wrote about war at least in his lost history of the Aetolians, but only two of his works survive, poems on poisons and venoms. The *Alexandra*, attributed to a tragedian named Lycophron based in Alexandria but probably in fact composed at the Attalid court in Pergamum,<sup>75</sup> is set within the context of the Trojan War and thus provides a non-Ptolemaic perspective on war in the Hellenistic Period.<sup>76</sup> Although war is prominent in Polybius' *Histories*, he was from Megalopolis in the Peloponnese and completed his work after the destruction of Corinth and conquest of Greece by the Romans in 146 BC, and (like the Egyptian 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty) thus does not fulfil the criterion of military supremacy; his work will be used to supplement rather than structure arguments.

Exactly how much influence the kings had on the literature produced at their courts is unclear, and there is far less evidence for the nature of the relationship between author and ruler than there is for Roman imperial literature.<sup>77</sup> Poets employed by kings are found as far back as

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<sup>73</sup> For commentaries on Callimachus see Harder (2012) on the *Aetia* and Stephens (2015) on the *Hymns*; for Apollonius' *Argonautica* see the commentaries on Books 3 and 4 by Hunter (1989a, 2015), and Papanghelis & Rengakos' *Brill's Companion to Apollonius Rhodius* (2008); for commentaries on some of Theocritus' *Idylls* see Hunter (1999, 2003). For translations see the relevant Loeb.

<sup>74</sup> Many of the fragments are preserved in *Supplementum Hellenisticum*; see Barbantani (2001) and Visscher (2020) for productive work with this limited material.

<sup>75</sup> For the context of the *Alexandra's* composition see Kosmetatou (2000).

<sup>76</sup> See Hornblower (2015) for commentary.

<sup>77</sup> Hunter (2003): 28.

Demodocus and Phemius in the *Odyssey*, and financial rewards for literature – whether as a payment in the case of Pindar’s *Odes* or as a prize for the winning plays at Athens’ dramatic festivals – were widespread in the Classical Greek world.<sup>78</sup> The sponsorship of Greek intellectuals by Hellenistic royal courts should thus be seen as part of this tradition, with other political motivations: they required Greek immigrants to maintain their Greek society, and to this end sent for and paid authors to work in their cities.<sup>79</sup> In so doing they asserted their new kingdoms’ places in Greek cultural history, and drastically expanded the Greek world.<sup>80</sup> But whether the kings demanded that certain themes be included in this cultural output is unclear. Certainly many of the motifs found in Ptolemaic literature, for example, are seen in other media such as statues or coins,<sup>81</sup> but there is no evidence of the explicitly commissioned literature we find with Pindar,<sup>82</sup> and there are no protestations of authorial freedom similar to those made by the Augustan poets.<sup>83</sup> Minor poets writing poems in praise of Greek cities during the Hellenistic period were often rewarded with rights to citizenship, tax exemption, and honorific decrees,<sup>84</sup> and the relationship between the major poets and the kings should be seen as similar but on a grander scale: financial and legal rewards (including access to the great libraries) for poets able to best praise the royal families and adapt ideological themes to their works.

For sources we are therefore left primarily with the works of the early Ptolemaic poets, the *Alexandra*, and a few other shorter poems such as Moschus’ *Europa* and the anonymously authored *Batrachomyomachia*. Military statuary and reliefs will also be drawn upon when helpful, although, as extant Hellenistic literature is mostly dominated by Ptolemaic productions, these are largely

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<sup>78</sup> Burton (1995): 123.

<sup>79</sup> Hunter (2003): 39. Alexandria consequently produced more poets than any other Greek city (Netz 2020: 373-4).

<sup>80</sup> Krevans & Sens (2006): 193.

<sup>81</sup> As Hunter (2005: 484) points out, ‘[t]he Ptolemaic dimension of some ‘Ptolemaic’ poetry is completely explicit’. See particularly Chapter 5 (pp. 265-8) for evidence of this.

<sup>82</sup> Theocritus’ *Idyll* 16, addressed to the Syracusan ruler Hiero II, is perhaps an exception, though its sincerity is open to doubt (Bulloch 2010: 175).

<sup>83</sup> For Augustan patronage see e.g. Konstan (1995).

<sup>84</sup> Hunter (2003): 26; cf. the decree of the city of Lamia in northern Greece for the poet Aristodama of Smyrna (*SEG* 49.556)

made up of Pergamene works such as the Dying Gauls and the Gigantomachy frieze of the Great Altar. One should never confuse 'Ptolemaic' for 'Hellenistic', but similar approaches to the representation of warfare in the material from Greek Egypt and Pergamum allow at least some cautious extrapolation to take place, suggesting a relatively coherent view on warfare in an era of Greek conquest.

### **The Graeco-Roman Period in Egypt: The Inaros-Petubastis Cycle**

The texts discussed in this thesis for this period, in which Egypt was ruled first by Macedonian kings inside Egypt and then by Roman Emperors who never set foot in the country, are drawn from the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle.<sup>85</sup> These are a group of texts, written in the Demotic Egyptian script on papyrus, that tell various stories of the pseudo-historical Egyptian dynast Inaros<sup>86</sup> and his family, most of them military in nature. The texts were evidently very popular, judging by the volume of papyri over the course of around 400 years containing these narratives,<sup>87</sup> and this popularity perhaps extended cross-culturally as well: the earliest example of one of these stories is an Aramaic inscription inked on a Middle Kingdom tomb wall during the 27<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, though there is no evidence these stories were known to the Greeks.<sup>88</sup>

The historical setting for these narratives is Egypt at the end of the 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, roughly coinciding with the expulsion of the Kushites and Assyrians and reunification of Egypt under the Saite kings; stories concerning these events probably began to be told and formalised at some point during the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty as a means of glorifying their origins.<sup>89</sup> Although these texts probably ultimately derive from the pharaonic war texts of the New Kingdom,<sup>90</sup> the historical context of their

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<sup>85</sup> English translations of these texts are lacking; see Hoffmann & Quack (2018) for German translations.

<sup>86</sup> For the historicity of Inaros see Quack (2006).

<sup>87</sup> Tait (1992): 308.

<sup>88</sup> Jay (2016): 54-5.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*: 133.

<sup>90</sup> Oakley (2022).

narratives was one of decentralisation, the country dominated by the Kushite kingdom to the south (which does not appear in these texts) and dynasts of Libyan ancestry (including Inaros) ruling cities in the Delta.<sup>91</sup>

Only three of these narratives, however, have been published: *The Battle for the Benefice of Amun* (Spiegelberg 1910), *The Battle for the Armour of Inaros* (Bresciani 1964), and *Petechons and Serpot* (Volten 1962); the latter two were re-edited by Hoffmann in 1995 and 1996 respectively.<sup>92</sup> These three texts preserve a very different vision of Egypt to the triumphant kings of the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. In all three narratives Inaros is dead, and Egypt is ruled by the ineffectual Petubastis. Unlike the earlier Inaros narratives, which may have had their origins in a time of Egyptian strength, the composition of both *Benefice* and *Armour* can be dated on palaeographic and linguistic grounds to the early- to mid-Hellenistic period, and *Serpot* to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.<sup>93</sup> Egyptian literature during this period was produced almost entirely within the major temple-complexes,<sup>94</sup> and although the largest of these still wielded some power – as the synodal texts such as the Canopus Decree and Rosetta Stone attest – the texts from this context (particularly apocalyptic and prophetic texts such as the *Demotic Chronicle* and the *Potter's Oracle*) clearly recognise that Egypt is now under foreign control.<sup>95</sup> The published texts therefore serve as Egypt's texts of the conquered, composed – like the *Posthomeric* – away from the centre of geopolitical and military power and in an Egypt that was no longer ruled by Egyptians. They were written during the profound and lasting reversal of geopolitical power that texts such as the *Demotic Chronicle*

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<sup>91</sup> Quack (2016): 63; Naunton (2010): 133-4.

<sup>92</sup> Additional fragments of *Benefice* and *Armour*, including some variant readings, have been published by Tait (2000: 60) and Ryholt (2012: 73-88).

<sup>93</sup> Tait (2010): 743; Hoffmann (1996): 120-4; Hoffmann (1995): 30. Jay (2016: 128) dates *Benefice* and *Armour* to some 400-500 years earlier on the grounds of their historical accuracy, though this seems to underestimate the Egyptians' ability to preserve records of their past and, as she admits, *Armour* in particular contains a number of historical details that do not fit the context of the early 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (*ibid.*: 137). As we shall see, the themes of the texts are also hard to square with a powerful and triumphant Sais-based dynasty.

<sup>94</sup> Jay (2016): 62. As with almost all Egyptian literature from its inception, the authors are anonymous; for more on concepts of 'authorship' see below (pp. 36-46).

<sup>95</sup> For an overview of this genre see Quack (2016): 188-202.

explicitly acknowledge, and less explicitly also reckon with the decline in Egypt's fortunes.<sup>96</sup> *Benefice*, which narrates a battle between the forces of king Petubastis and a group of Asiatics<sup>97</sup> led by a young priest concerning inheritance of the benefice of Amun; *Armour*, which describes a battle between forces loyal to Pami the Younger, son of Inaros, and those loyal to Wertyamonnit, an ally of Petubastis, over the possession of Inaros' armour; and *Serpot*, which tells of the Delta prince Petechons' invasion of India, all react to Egypt's conquest and the conquering success of the Greeks. In their engagement with past literature and past history, they provide a crucial insight into Egyptian reactions (as reflected in these works) towards their loss of military supremacy under the Greeks and Romans.

### **Imperial Greek Epic: Quintus *et al.***

Roman control over the Greek eastern Mediterranean was confirmed by the conquest of Egypt in 30 BC. Unlike in the west, however, there was little Latinisation of the local populations, and Greek remained the language for local administration and literature. And throughout this period under Roman rule, the Greeks produced a huge range of works, dwarfing that of the Hellenistic period: didactic poems on hunting and fishing by the two Oppians, the orations of Dio Chrysostom, histories of Alexander, Rome, and the Jews by Arrian, Appian, and Josephus, the biographies and philosophy of Plutarch, and, most significantly from a modern perspective, large parts of the New Testament of the Bible.<sup>98</sup> In addition to these were also a number of epic poems, at least four of which are set within a context of war: the shorter *Sack of Troy* by Triphiodorus of Panopolis and the *Rape of Helen* by Colluthus of Lycopolis, and the much longer *Dionysiaca* by Nonnus of Panopolis and

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<sup>96</sup> Johnson (1984): 124.

<sup>97</sup> On this racist term, used here to reflect similar the racist connotations of the Egyptian word *Sm*, see the discussion in Chapter 3 (pp. 139).

<sup>98</sup> In terms of hexameter verse alone, the Imperial period contains more works than any other stage of Greek history (Greensmith 2020: 10).

*Posthomerica* by an otherwise unknown poet named Quintus.<sup>99</sup> This latter work, narrating the events of the Trojan War from the burial of Hector to the departure of the Greeks, is the focus for this period, fulfilling the opposite criterion to that used for the previous two periods. It can be dated with relative security to the late-2<sup>nd</sup> to late-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD,<sup>100</sup> during which the Greek world was firmly under Roman control. The *Posthomerica* is a text of the conquered: the Greeks may have had some political and cultural influence, and broadly supported Rome's imperialism,<sup>101</sup> but texts from this period indicate their continued desire to define themselves as Greek<sup>102</sup> – and power ultimately lay with the Roman emperor.

The historical circumstances were a complete reversal of the situation following Alexander's conquests: many of the lands that were part of the Hellenistic kingdoms had been lost to the Parthians, and Rome had complete military supremacy in the Greek world. By the time of Colluthus' and Nonnus' *Rape of Helen* and *Dionysiaca* two centuries later, however, the situation had drastically changed: these authors were part of an Eastern Roman Empire that, despite its name, was culturally and administratively Greek. They were no longer conquered subjects of the empire, but were assimilated to the conquerors: not just Greeks but Ῥωμαῖοι.<sup>103</sup> Whatever the religious beliefs of the authors, the fact that by the time of Colluthus and Nonnus Christianity was

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<sup>99</sup> An overview of the *Posthomerica* and its context can be found in Baumbach & Bär's edited volume *Quintus Smyrnaeus: Transforming Homer in Second Sophistic Epic* (2008). The common epithet 'Smyrnaeus' derives from an overly literal reading of a metapoetic passage in Book 12; for discussion see Greensmith (2018). For a summary of these epics see Greensmith (2020: 12-14).

<sup>100</sup> Maciver (2012): 3. Within this timeframe, the Greek literary movement known as the Second Sophistic took place, which took as its model classical Athenian prose: as Maciver (2012: 17) points out, Quintus, writing epic Homeric poetry, does not align with this movement, and may indeed be reacting against it.

<sup>101</sup> For Rome's paradoxically more ambivalent attitude to their rule over the Greeks see Whitmarsh (2010).

<sup>102</sup> Hadjittofi (2007): 365. To be Greek did not preclude being – to some extent – Roman as well: Bowie's brief overview (2008: 18-19) of early Imperial poetry contains a number of Greeks who, like Quintus, had a Roman *cognomen*; indeed the Roman conquest saw a flourishing of the Greek genre of prose encomia by authors ingratiating themselves with the emperors, particularly after the philhellenic Hadrian (Swain 2013: 2-4), and Greek poets frequently sought Roman patrons from the 1<sup>st</sup>-century BC onwards (Whitmarsh 2013: 138). For the political dimension of genre and form in Greek literature under Rome, and the expression of Greekness, see Whitmarsh (2013: 186-208); as Stephens (2013: 59-60) points out with regard to the novels, the fundamental expression of Greekness was to speak and compose in Greek.

<sup>103</sup> See Chuvin (1991: 26) and Hadjittofi (2007: 376-7) for discussion of Nonnus' *Romanitas*, and Cameron (2004: 344-9) for the assimilation of the Greek literary elite into the machinations of the empire after the drastic reforms of Constantine.

now the *de facto* religion of the empire also presents problems for grouping them together with Quintus, and the marked heterogeneity of imperial epic makes any generalised conclusions untenable.<sup>104</sup> Although useful studies could be done on how these assimilated conquerors represented war in their texts, these poets (as well as the Alexandrian-born, Latin-speaking Claudian) lie outside the thematic scope of this thesis. Triphiodorus, writing roughly contemporaneously to Quintus and on the same subject, is more relevant to our aims, though the differences in length – 14 books of the *Posthomerica* compared to 691 lines of the *Sack of Troy* – mean that most of my analysis will be drawn from Quintus' poem.

### **'Authorship' and Agenda in the Greek and Egyptian Worlds**

This thesis is, primarily, an author-based study, an examination of how attitudes to conquest (as active perpetrator or passive victim) were expressed in texts, and how the creators of these sources reacted to their geopolitical contexts. Yet there is an inherent difficulty to this approach, because authorship as a concept is not uniform. From our perspective ideas of creation, individuality, and ownership are all tied up within the figure of the author, and the weight assigned to any or all of these by those who receive these sources (who may or may not belong to the same culture as the creator) affects the interpretation of who the 'author' was.

Indeed, there may well be no attributed author at all, and the implications of this for identity and creativity are particularly significant for the New Kingdom texts. The earliest extensive compositions we find in Egypt (the Pyramid Texts of the mid-to-late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC) were already highly mimetic, written as if spoken either by the deceased or by the deceased's son.<sup>105</sup> These texts were intended to be personalised for each pyramid, and intimately connected to the occupant: to acknowledge an external author would be unnecessary and would destabilise the relationship

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<sup>104</sup> Greensmith (2020): 21-2.

<sup>105</sup> Allen (2015): 6-7.

between speaker and text by inserting an intermediary.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, the importance of personal experience and agency to the function of these spells further denies the possibility that some ‘author’ could be identified. As presented, the authors of these texts are the speakers, the ‘I’ of the protagonist and the ‘I’ of the author being theoretically identical.<sup>107</sup>

This importance of personal experience to the function of a text proceeds into the non-funerary literature of the Middle Kingdom: as Parkinson points out, ‘[w]isdom is exemplified and validated by the experiences of individuals who possess it, so that the protagonist is easily presented as an author figure’.<sup>108</sup> While this is especially true for the wisdom texts, whose composition was often attributed to the historical figures acting as protagonists and thus guaranteeing, through their antiquity, the essential truthfulness of what is written,<sup>109</sup> it extends beyond this genre. *Sinuhe*, the longest attested Middle Egyptian narrative, is written entirely mimetically, presented as if it were the tomb autobiography of the protagonist, and consequently without any author external to the narrative.<sup>110</sup> To what extent this intentional authorial fictionality was noticeable to the Egyptian readers is unclear, nor is it obvious that any consequent suspension of disbelief proved problematic.<sup>111</sup> It is at any rate the case that all texts are presented as having one single author, regardless of whether they were composed by individuals or through processes of redaction.<sup>112</sup> The anonymity of the composer also extends to the third-person fictional narratives that became increasingly common in the New Kingdom, and in the context of this thesis constitute the Late Egyptian narratives (*Apophis and Seqenenre*, *The Taking of Joppa*) and the Demotic texts (*Benefice*, *Armour*, *Serpot*).

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<sup>106</sup> Allen (2015): 5.

<sup>107</sup> In practice, of course, this was not the case, and hieratic drafts for the spells have the word *mn* (‘whoever’) where the deceased’s name was to be added (Haring 2015: 72).

<sup>108</sup> (2002): 75-6.

<sup>109</sup> Eyre (1996): 415.

<sup>110</sup> Winand (2017): 27; cf. the Late Egyptian text *Wenamun*, written as if it were an administrative report.

<sup>111</sup> Parkinson (2002): 76.

<sup>112</sup> Parkinson (2002): 77.

To some extent the weight of textual tradition may explain why there continued to be no mention of an identified author: texts had never had an external author before, and so there was no need for one to be included even though these narratives were no longer mimetic. But the idea of mediation is also crucial. When a third-person narrative is recorded, there are two options available to the writer, which require the suspension of disbelief in two ways. If the writer attributes an author to these texts then a mediator is introduced between the events and the audience, and the audience must accept that what they are being told is not what happened, but the author's *version* of what happened; they must suspend their disbelief in the author. If no author is attributed, however, there is no mediation between the events and the audience,<sup>113</sup> and their essential truthfulness can be taken for granted; in this case the audience must suspend their disbelief that there is no author. This is the approach taken by the Egyptians. To attach an author to *Sinuhe* would be to question whether these things actually happened to Sinuhe; to attach an author to *The Eloquent Peasant* would be to explicitly acknowledge that those events did not happen, or may have happened differently to how they are recorded. The truth of the text would be, if not dismantled, at least able to be dismantled; it is for this reason that the Egyptian scribes and copyists of texts on papyrus – who *were* frequently named – generally added a colophon attesting that their copy had been done entirely faithfully to the model, thus asserting that no scribal mediation had occurred between the events as recorded and the text in the hands of the reader.<sup>114</sup>

Indeed in the royal monumental texts that preserved narratives of the king's achievements even the identity of the scribes, much less the authors, is difficult to establish.<sup>115</sup> Instead, we are presented with either bare third-person narrative, as with the Demotic texts, or a first-person

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<sup>113</sup> Froot (2007: 3) notes that the blurring of author and protagonist mobilises 'the immediacy of the individual's presence'.

<sup>114</sup> Vernus (1996): 561, though as he points out: '[c]ette tendance est plus souvent proclamée que respectée'. For more on scribal colophons see Ragazzoli (2019: 518-23).

<sup>115</sup> Galán & Llanos (2020): 151.

account of the events as told by the king; both strategies could be used within the same text.<sup>116</sup> As discussed further in Chapter 2, these texts conceptually monumentalised and eternalised the events they recorded, and to acknowledge the existence of an author or even a scribe of these texts would both detract from the king – whose figure was central to the narratives – and call into question the truthfulness of the events by inserting a mediator. This concern with the avoidance of any human interference is apparent in one of the few examples of explicit mention of source material, at *Annals* 1.93-4.<sup>117</sup> After describing the siege of Megiddo, the text turns to administrative affairs:

*r-ntt i<D>.n-nbt hm=f r dmi-pn r hrw-pf hs hn<sup>c</sup> mš<sup>c</sup>=f hs smnw m hrw m rn=f m rn n n<sup>c</sup> m  
rnw nw m-r mn[ft ...]*

Further, everything that his Person had done to this city, to that vile enemy and his vile army, was recorded (lit. ‘made enduring’) day by day, with the name of the journey, the names of the commanders of infantry ...

Entirely absent from this description is any sense of agency. We are not told that it was the military scribes who recorded these details (though it certainly was),<sup>118</sup> nor that anyone recorded them at all: they simply *were* recorded. And in the recording of these events – specified to be on a leather roll, far more enduring than papyrus<sup>119</sup> – they are made to endure. Introducing humans to this process introduces human error, and the geopolitical significance of these texts, which preserve and re-enact Egypt’s dominance, requires that human error be impossible.

Writing was, in fact, considered to be an invention of the gods, particularly Thoth, and was therefore considered to be a divine action.<sup>120</sup> When a human wrote, they channelled these gods

<sup>116</sup> Thus at *Qadesh* §2.166-7 (*KRI* II.55.1-5) a new episode begins: *ist hm=f m-si=sn mi<sup>c</sup> h<sup>h</sup> iw=i hr hdb im=sn* (‘Now, his Person was behind them like a griffon. I was slaughtering amongst them ...’). See Spalinger (2022: 400) for an analysis of the effects of this switching in New Kingdom texts; Derchain (1996: 87) notes the ability of the third-person narratives to provide a more objective and all-encompassing view of the king.

<sup>117</sup> *Urk.* IV.661.14-662.2.

<sup>118</sup> On the increased role of scribes within the military of the New Kingdom see e.g. Ragazzoli (2019: 448-9) and Allon (2020).

<sup>119</sup> *Urk.* IV.662.5; Spalinger (2022): 84.

<sup>120</sup> Ragazzoli (2019): 448-9.

and acted as vessels for their creative forces; thus the ‘authors’ were conceptually the gods, and the identity of their temporary human body was (to some extent) immaterial.<sup>121</sup> The same principle applies to the king’s participation in the writing process. The king is not named as author of any stelae or inscriptions, but – particularly in those written using the first-person – he is certainly suggested to be. The lack of any other author mentioned indicates that when the king speaks in the text, this is also him speaking as composer and, in the third-person narratives, as narrator.<sup>122</sup> To what extent this reflects reality is unclear, but it seems probable that many of the New Kingdom rulers played an active part in the composition of their official texts. As Spalinger points out with regards to Thutmose III and Ramesses II, their narratives clearly show ‘the personal attitudes of the rulers’,<sup>123</sup> and this thesis will show that the same principle holds true for most other kings.

It is also worth considering that in a country where literacy was confined to a miniscule proportion of the population,<sup>124</sup> and in which elite literature was, especially in the Middle Kingdom, largely centralised in the royal court,<sup>125</sup> few individuals would have had greater familiarity with and training in the composition of texts. So it is not unreasonable to suggest that, although the kings were presumably not the sole authors, they did play an active and prominent role in the creation of their texts (and indeed iconography), beyond just dictating a broad political ideology that had to be interpreted and set into highly elaborate and literary form by their scribes. This collaborative process is particularly well represented in the reign of Hatshepsut: the high official (Overseer of the Treasury) Djehuty claims credit for organising the king’s monumental Punt inscription, and is

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<sup>121</sup> Vernus (2016): 275-6. Thoth could also be invoked as guardian of textual integrity and punisher of anyone who made alterations in copying (Ragazzoli 2019: 523). Thoth was associated with the practicing of *maat* (literally ‘truth’), further cementing the conceptual link between writing and truth (Coulon 2000: 109).

<sup>122</sup> How performative Egyptian monumental texts were is, like the identity of their authors, unclear, but royal festivals and celebrations of victory may have involved the king pronouncing his victories and thereby collapsing the distinction between protagonist and narrator (Spalinger 2022: 14).

<sup>123</sup> (2022): 1.

<sup>124</sup> Perhaps around 1%, though the evidence is far from certain (Parkinson 2002: 66-7).

<sup>125</sup> Spalinger (2022): 12; it is important to note, however, that in the New Kingdom the increased role of administrative local scribes gave rise to a more decentralised model of literary circulation (Ragazzoli 2010: 157).

prominent in the accompanying reliefs alongside Hatshepsut.<sup>126</sup> It seems highly likely that with these official, monumental texts, at least, there was no one individual author; yet for the Egyptians the king, to all intents and purposes, was this sole author, as the only individual with agency over the recording of the events, as the mimetic speaker and narrator, and as both patron, participant, and inspiration of the texts. As Spalinger argues, the kings essentially “possessed” ... their biographers’.<sup>127</sup> While we may lack biographical details for individual and identifiable ancient Egyptian authors, we are on firmer ground with our knowledge of their collective composers,<sup>128</sup> and it is the reactions of these collectives – for the New Kingdom texts based in the royal court, for the Demotic texts centred on the Egyptian temple complexes<sup>129</sup> – that are under investigation in this thesis.

The concept of authorship for the Greeks began in much the same way as the Egyptians. The two earliest Greek narratives – the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* – present us with no named author, nor any details about the author’s life. All we know about the narrator is that they are a vessel through which the Muse can help to relate events of the past; the truth of these narratives is presented as depending on the gods and their abilities to remember what humans cannot, told through a combination of human poet and immortal god.<sup>130</sup> Thus the *Iliad* begins μήνιν ἄειδε θεά (1.1 ‘Sing of the anger, goddess ...’), the *Odyssey* with ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε μοῦσα (1.1 ‘Tell me of the man, Muse ...’).<sup>131</sup> Yet already in Hesiod’s *Theogony* there is an explicit reflection, absent from Egyptian texts,<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Galán & Llanos (2020): 153, 165. As the authors note (*ibid.*: 166), Djehuty may have gone too far: his name was erased from the reliefs and chiselled off from his biography.

<sup>127</sup> (2022): 26.

<sup>128</sup> As the examples of Djehuty and Weserneshmet (redactor of two stelae belonging to the 17<sup>th</sup> Dynasty king Kamose and, like Djehuty, Overseer of the Treasury) suggest, composition of the texts seems to have been a duty of the highest officials, and these courtiers are generally well attested through their stelae and tombs.

<sup>129</sup> Jay (2016): 62.

<sup>130</sup> Stoddard (2004): 63.

<sup>131</sup> Beecroft (2010: 61) notes that the use of the oblique dative case in the *Odyssey* makes the author neither subject nor direct object of the process of composition. To some extent this reflects the concept of ‘dual motivation’ seen in the interactions between the human and divine characters of the poems (Katz & Volk 2000: 128); for the idea of ‘dual motivation’ see Lesky (2001: 196-7), and below (p. 238).

<sup>132</sup> See Coulon (2000) for occasional Egyptian scepticism of rhetoric, though never in relation to the king. We do find (particularly in the New Kingdom) protestations of truth-telling in monumental and biographical

that these divine sources of authority for the author may not be authoritative at all, because they are – consciously – not always truthful (lines 27-8):

ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,  
ἴδμεν δ', εὔτ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι.

We know how to say many lies like truths,  
but we know how, if we wish, to sing true things.

And so, if the sources of divine authority can lie, if a text is not inherently true, authority depends on the actual author, and the rhetorical strategies used to bolster their self-presentation.<sup>133</sup> What arises is a distinct sense of personal identity, and a sense that the external composer of a text should be known so that its truthfulness can be relied upon,<sup>134</sup> a mode of thinking that persists to this day: citing an anonymous work (at least, for example, in academia) is viewed as inherently less trustworthy than citing something fully referenced, a distinction that would not necessarily have applied – or even occurred – to the Egyptians. Only a little after Hesiod we find Theognis attaching a literary *sphragis* ('seal') to his work, which guarantees the text belongs to him and that its authority can be derived from him; nor can it be altered by having verses taken or removed.<sup>135</sup> This is entirely contrary to the Egyptian perspective of textual integrity, which was based on retroactivity rather than proactivity. So whereas the authority of an Egyptian text is guaranteed by looking *backwards* – the scribe declaring that they have copied out the text exactly, and naming themselves as guarantors of the text's legitimacy – the authority of the Greek text is guaranteed by looking

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inscriptions, which indicates an implicit concern that texts are not always trustworthy in and of themselves (Coulon 2000: 118-19).

<sup>133</sup> See Stoddard (2004: 63-8) for the ways in which Hesiod emphasises his (partial) independence from the Muses. Despite Hesiod's explicit acknowledgment of the potentially untrustworthy nature of the Muses, however, his invocation of them broadly follows similar conventions to the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Homeric Hymns* (Harden & Kelly 2013: 11).

<sup>134</sup> For more on the ambiguous and potentially antagonistic relationship between the archaic poet and the Muses see Liapis (2017).

<sup>135</sup> Ford (1985): 85-7. For other Greek strategies of constructing authority see e.g. Harden (2017) and Erler (2020).

*forwards*: the author declares to posterity that their text is fixed in that form, and provides their own name as its guarantor.

Once the identity of ‘the author’ has become established in the textual tradition, we return to the issues regarding suspension of disbelief mentioned earlier: the audience must, insofar as it is possible, believe that the author they are reading is narrating the truth, and has the authority to be trusted. But this creates a cascade effect, because once ‘the author’ is accepted as a source of authority, they can be cited by later authors who seek to prove their authority, and these authors can be cited in turn, and so on and so on. The identity of an author is reaffirmed by their successors: if an author is to be cited as a source of authority, they must be made as authoritative as possible, their life fleshed out and augmented by writers seeking to augment the legitimacy of their own works.<sup>136</sup>

And so we come back to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, texts utterly without any authorial details, but also for the Greeks the foundational source of moral and historical authority. The difficulty posed by the marked absence of the author in these poems is evident from the many, conflicting biographies of Homer that spring up throughout antiquity, and which were necessary for the later Greeks who relied upon a complete knowledge of an author’s life, especially when confronted with aspects of a text they found difficult to interpret.<sup>137</sup> The multivalency of these reconstructions, and their practical uses, is made clear by the multitude of cities that claimed Homer to have been one of their citizens, as noted by Cicero (*pro Archia* 19):

*Homerum Colophonii civem esse dicunt suum, Chii suum vindicant, Salaminii repetunt, Smyrnaei vero suum esse confirmant itaque etiam delubrum eius in oppido dedicaverunt, permulti alii praeterea pugnant inter se atque contendunt.*

The Colophonians say that Homer is their citizen, the Chians claim that he is theirs, the Salaminians make their claim, but the Smyrnaeans assert that he is theirs and have even

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<sup>136</sup> For the Greek tradition of biographies of earlier authors see Lefkowitz (2012) and Fletcher & Hanink (2016); for Homer in particular see Graziosi (2002).

<sup>137</sup> Beecroft (2010): 65.

dedicated a shrine to him in their city; meanwhile very many others fight amongst themselves and dispute.

Evidently not all of these claims could be true, but they are indicative of both the importance of the (external) author to the Greeks, and of their desire to constantly reconstruct and elaborate the biographies of their authors. Homer was not the only one to receive many ancient biographies, and nor were the biographies of other authors any more reliable than Homer's:<sup>138</sup> the powerful idea that any experience written about had actually happened to the writer *required* Greeks to create often far-fetched biographies in order to preserve the integrity of their literature.<sup>139</sup> As Whitmarsh remarks, 'the modern instinct to divide author from narrator actually does violence to the fictional conventions of the ancient world'.<sup>140</sup>

So while we may know *of* the authors of many Greek and Roman texts, our knowledge about their actual lives is patchy and, indeed, far more prone to incautious inferences from their works that may obscure them. The authors of the Hellenistic period provide a case in point. About Callimachus, we can be relatively certain that he was from an elite family in Cyrene, and lived and wrote in Alexandria under Ptolemy II and Ptolemy III, but as Stephens notes, 'further details ... are uncertain'.<sup>141</sup> About Theocritus even less is clear: he was probably Sicilian but maybe Coan, and was for at least part of his life associated with the Ptolemaic court.<sup>142</sup> And when we move on to the anonymously and pseudonymously authored texts, like the *Alexandra*, even less is clear: we can infer that the poet was based at a royal court, but where and when are unknown.<sup>143</sup> Ultimately, then, what we can say about the Hellenistic authors is that they were elite males writing at a royal court, which is little more than can be said concerning the composers of the New Kingdom texts

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<sup>138</sup> Lefkowitz (2012): ix-x.

<sup>139</sup> Whitmarsh (2014): 240.

<sup>140</sup> (2014): 238.

<sup>141</sup> (2011): 10-11.

<sup>142</sup> Phillips (2021): 43.

<sup>143</sup> See e.g. Hornblower (2015: 37) and Kosmetatou (2000) for competing arguments.

and indeed the Demotic narratives as well (if we substitute ‘royal court’ for ‘temple complex’). The Greek interest in and desire for an author helps us to group works together into individual oeuvres, though this is complicated by the frequent attribution of pseudonymous works to a more famous author: Theocritus’ *Idylls*, for example, include at least eight poems not by him.<sup>144</sup> This grouping under one name enables us to more easily identify patterns and developments, but from a sociohistorical point of view the effect is largely the same as any consideration of Egyptian authors.

One key difference between the New Kingdom and Hellenistic material is the extent of royal influence in their composition; though much is unclear about the nature of Hellenistic royal patronage, it seems unlikely that the Ptolemaic pharaohs played as active a role in the composition of Alexandrian poetry as the New Kingdom rulers with their monumental texts.<sup>145</sup> But ultimately all court-produced literature is ‘official’, inasmuch as it is funded by a ruler and thus under the auspices of power. The fact that the New Kingdom papyrus narratives under study in this thesis seem to have been from Memphis and Thebes (centres of state power in the New Kingdom)<sup>146</sup> suggests that they were perhaps only a little less ‘official’ than the monumental texts. And in this official capacity, Ptolemaic literature – and any other Hellenistic texts composed at royal courts – is hardly less ideological than those monumental inscriptions, both contributing to and reflecting the royal agenda.<sup>147</sup> This is not to reduce these texts to simple ‘propaganda’, which as Simpson shows is an inappropriate concept for the ancient world, in which all major works of art depended upon public funding;<sup>148</sup> nor should we misapply modern values to these contexts, and view the royal courts, as Spalinger does, as literary environments with ‘no freedom’, where authors lived under constant fear of an ‘autocrat’.<sup>149</sup> The collaborative nature of royally-sponsored literature must be

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<sup>144</sup> Kyriakou (2021): 651.

<sup>145</sup> Hunter (2003): 27.

<sup>146</sup> Manassa (2013): 25.

<sup>147</sup> Hunter (2005): 484. Nor is there a meaningful difference in terms of literariness; the New Kingdom inscriptions are highly stylised texts, and the boundary between hieroglyphic inscription and hieratic writing was hardly absolute, as the examples of *Qadesh 2* and the *Loyalist Teaching*, inscribed on a Middle Kingdom stela and also found on papyrus, show (Eyre 1996: 427, Parkinson 2002: 76).

<sup>148</sup> (1996): 436.

<sup>149</sup> (2022): 10.

stressed. The views and thoughts represented in the texts under study in this thesis simultaneously reflect 'official' ideology and the ideologies of all their individual authors, whether we know their names or not.

For the authors of the Demotic texts and for Quintus the royal aspect recedes (as will become clear throughout the thesis), and so too does any clear historical tether to known individuals or locations; at most we can tell that they were highly educated, Egyptian/Greek, and with access to considerable literary resources that they could draw on for the composition of their own texts. Otherwise they are anonymous, and deliberately so: Quintus self-consciously presents himself as Homer at *Posthomerica* 12.306-10, but '[t]his dynamic merging of Homeric mimesis and Homeric biography' utterly obscures any personal identity.<sup>150</sup> For ease of reading, then, and always bearing in mind the collaborative nature and active fictionality of Egyptian authorship, the following conventions will be used: when discussing New Kingdom texts, 'the king' or 'the tomb owner' stands for 'the collaborative group who composed this text, potentially including the king/tomb owner'; for Demotic texts, '*modern title of text*' for 'the anonymous author(s) who composed the text on this papyrus'. For the Greek sources the name of the author will be used, with the caveat that in many instances, particularly with Quintus, the name is just a name, and that very little can be known about the ancient author otherwise.

### **Greco-Egyptian/Greek and Egyptian: Interactions and Complexities**

Given that this thesis is to some extent predicated on a clear division of material, the question of potential complications from inter-cultural interactions – and influence – between Greeks and Egyptians must be addressed.<sup>151</sup> Now, the idea that there clearly was cultural intermingling

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<sup>150</sup> Greensmith (2020): 6.

<sup>151</sup> The question of Latin literature's influence on Quintus is these days fairly widely accepted, particularly in the case of Virgil's *Aeneid* (for which see Gärtner 2005, cautiously, and more confidently e.g. Greensmith 2020: 38-40, 334) and perhaps Ovid's *Metamorphoses* too (Oakley forthcoming b). The *Posthomerica*'s use of the *Aeneid* is particularly relevant, and will be discussed extensively in Chapter 3.

between Greeks and Egyptians is attested already in the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century BC, when graffiti at Abu Simbel mentions a 'Psammetichus son of Theocles', i.e. a soldier with an Egyptian name and a Greek father.<sup>152</sup> The presence of a Greek community at Memphis (the Hellenomemphites), which was no longer considered Greek when Alexander invaded due to intermarriage with Egyptians, also shows close interrelations.<sup>153</sup> But the question is whether the immigrant poets brought to Egypt by the Ptolemies were sufficiently engaged with the temple-produced Egyptian literature to include it in their works. Despite an increasing amount of scholarly opinion in its favour, however, the actual evidence for this is slight and problematised by the frequent mediation of earlier Greek authors. To take one example, *Argonautica* 4.272-6 certainly references Egyptian stories about Sesostris and his military exploits, but drawing a direct line between Apollonius and Egyptian literature is complicated because Herodotus, whom Apollonius uses extensively throughout his work,<sup>154</sup> narrates Sesostris' conquests himself at 2.102. The mention of cities founded (274-5) by this king on campaign, not part of any Egyptian tradition, indicates that the reference here is primarily to narratives of Alexander's conquest – one of which was written by Ptolemy I himself.

Some of the most prominent arguments in favour of such links have been made by Susan Stephens regarding Callimachus' *Hymns*, but these tend to omit Greek precedents in favour of Egyptian ones. For example, at *Hymn to Delos* 186 Callimachus describes Ptolemy II's rebellious Gallic mercenaries 'expiring in fire', a reference to their stranding on an island in the Delta and subsequent death; for Stephens this is evidence of Egyptian influence – Egyptian kings describe the fire of their uraeus killing their enemies.<sup>155</sup> In this she follows Bing,<sup>156</sup> though no Egyptian sources are cited. But also omitted is the long-standing Greek association between fire and the destruction of enemies in battle present already at *Iliad* 5.4, when Athene kindles a fire on Diomedes' helmet

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<sup>152</sup> Fischer-Bovet (2014): 20.

<sup>153</sup> Torallas Tovar (2010): 19.

<sup>154</sup> See Morrison (2020).

<sup>155</sup> Stephens (2015): 210-11. Cf. *Qadesh* §2.281-2, where Ramesses II says that 'She-on-the-head [the uraeus] was felling my enemies for me; she cast her breath of flame into the faces of my foes' (*KRI* II.86.6-15).

<sup>156</sup> Bing (1998): 131-2.

and shield before he begins to slaughter the Trojans, and more relevantly Bing's own description of the Greek context of the fire.<sup>157</sup> This mention of burnt Gauls occurs in the context of them launching an attack on Apollo's sanctuary at Delphi, at the time of a festival re-enacting Apollo's victory over the serpent Python. The festival included the ritual burning of a tent symbolically containing Python, reflecting the myth in which the snake – like the Gauls – was left to rot under the heat of the sun (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 371). Given that the entire point of this section of the poem is to connect Ptolemy II to Apollo, there is a very clear purpose to this: Ptolemy II has a great victory of equal stature to Apollo's over Python, and so his status as a god equal to Apollo is confirmed.<sup>158</sup> That Bing proceeds to immediately argue for Egyptian influence here, without actually citing Egyptian sources, is indicative of the appropriative nature of Classical comparativism discussed earlier. Similar problems arise with the emphasis on familial continuity found at *Hymn to Delos* 167-170 and Theocritus' *Idyll* 17.56-7, used again by Stephens as an argument for Egyptian influence.<sup>159</sup> Once again there are very clear Greek precedents (*Odyssey* 2.276-7 and *Works and Days* 182), as Stephens acknowledges,<sup>160</sup> similar examples from the other Hellenistic kings,<sup>161</sup> and a very clear point to this patrilineal connection (Ptolemy II was not the eldest son) unrelated to Egypt, and an entirely non-Egyptian context: Callimachus' point is that Ptolemy II is a completely Macedonian (i.e. *not* Egyptian, or even Greek) king.

Further critique can be found in Goldhill's excellent – and perhaps slightly more detached – review of Stephens' 2003 monograph,<sup>162</sup> but I will end by cautioning against the idea that the Ptolemies, in their self-presentation to the Greek world, were influenced by Egyptian culture. This seems to me a fundamental misunderstanding of the power imbalance, inspired by the modern fetishisation of Ancient Egypt under the guise of Egyptomania. The Ptolemies had their own ideals

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<sup>157</sup> Bing (1998): 130-1.

<sup>158</sup> For more on this passage, see Chapter 3 (pp. 122-4).

<sup>159</sup> Stephens (2003): 120-1.

<sup>160</sup> Stephens (2015): 207.

<sup>161</sup> Indeed the first of the successors to become kings were the father and son Antigonus Monophthalmos and Demetrius Poliorcetes, crowned together in 306 BC.

<sup>162</sup> Goldhill (2005).

of self-presentation and their own agendas, and accordingly adapted and twisted suitable elements of Egyptian culture. The famous trilingual sacerdotal decrees – including the Rosetta Stone, origin of modern study of ancient Egypt – are in form typical of similar thanks-giving texts from across the Greek world, and seem largely to have been the result of Ptolemaic ideology and administration (for example their calendrical reforms in the Canopus Decree) being forced upon the priests.<sup>163</sup> To assume that elements found in Ptolemaic Egyptian material indicate Egyptian origins for similar motifs found in Ptolemaic Greek texts – as Stephens does in her discussion of Ptolemaic birth cults<sup>164</sup> – is to entirely miss the point. The dominant influence on any Greek or Egyptian product of Ptolemaic patronage is always the Ptolemies. There is always the potential for crossover, of course, and Greek-reading Egyptians would probably have recognised similar themes in many texts, but whether this was deliberate or coincidence is harder to say. The evidence skews our understanding: the relatively copious supply of pharaonic and Ptolemaic texts in comparison to the paucity of literature from the other Hellenistic courts allows more similarities to be noted (and potential connections to be made) between the former than the latter, despite the evidence of other media (statues, coins, decrees) suggesting the opposite.

Similarly problematic is the question of whether there was Greek epic influence on the Demotic narratives,<sup>165</sup> dependent largely on similarities in plot between *Serpot* and  *Armour* and the cyclic epics the *Aethiopsis* and *Little Iliad*: in the case of *Serpot* and the *Aethiopsis* the shared motif is a male and female warrior fighting and falling in love, in the case of  *Armour* and the *Little Iliad* it is a dispute breaking out over the inheritance of a piece of armour (Inaros' and Achilles' respectively). The latter connection can more easily be argued against: concerns over disputed inheritance

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<sup>163</sup> Simpson (1996): 21-3.

<sup>164</sup> Stephens (2003): 120-1.

<sup>165</sup> See Quack (2016: 71-4) for a balanced view of these issues, and Hoffmann (1995: 22-6; 1996: 49-78) for a more polemical one. Arguments in favour of Greek influence have existed from the earliest publication of these narratives: Volten's title for *Serpot, Ägypter und Amazonen*, is predicated on a connection between Serpot and the Amazon Penthesilea; see Rutherford (2016) for a restatement of these arguments. For recent discussion of Greek and Egyptian interactions in Demotic and Greek literary depictions of Egyptian priests see Escolano-Poveda (2020).

underpinned the myth of Osiris, Horus, and Seth that had defined Egyptian kingship for millennia,<sup>166</sup> and literary adaptations of this story continued to be written into the Roman period.<sup>167</sup> Indeed, this theme also provokes the conflict in *Benefice*, and there the object of dispute (a priestly office) has no parallel in Greek epic.<sup>168</sup> So too the prestige of taking someone's armour, as Wertyamonnit as done with Inaros', is evident in the lists of plunder from the New Kingdom, in which the stripping of the enemy leader's armour in particular is highlighted; in the plunder-list (1.97) of Thutmose III's *Annals* is included:

*ḥsmn mss dḥr nfr n ḥḥ n ḥrw-pf 1 ḥsmn mss nfr n ḥḥ n wr n mk[ti I] [...] mss dḥr n ḥḥ n mšc=f ḥs 200*

The beautiful bronze and leather mail of that enemy: 1, the beautiful bronze mail of the chief of Megi[ddo: 1], [...] leather mail of his vile army: 200.<sup>169</sup>

Both the general motif and specific object of debate in *Armour* therefore have firm Egyptian precedents, and indeed *Armour* differs from the *Little Iliad* in a number of ways, particularly the fact that at no stage do the Achaean soldiers all battle each other as the Egyptians do.

The case of Serpot and Penthesilea is more complex. The plots of *Serpot* and the *Aethiopsis* – particularly in terms of the 'love' between Achilles/Petechons and Penthesilea/Serpot – do not show particular similarity beyond the genders of the characters involved: as Quack points out, in the Demotic text 'die Liebe nicht erst im Augenblick des Todes gestanden wird, sondern im Leben ein Happy-End findet'.<sup>170</sup> Much closer parallels can be found with the mythos surrounding Alexander's conquests, in particular Alexander's meeting with and impregnation of the Amazon queen Thalestris (Diodorus Siculus 17.77.1-3), and his similar interactions in the *Alexander Romance*

<sup>166</sup> Lippert (2013). See Chapter 5 (pp. 217-19) for the increased focus on patrilineal inheritance by New Kingdom monarchs.

<sup>167</sup> Verhoeven (2012): 262.

<sup>168</sup> Indeed Quack (2016: 69) sees the plot of *Benefice* as an allegory for Horus' struggle for his own inherited office.

<sup>169</sup> *Urk.* IV.664.3-5.

<sup>170</sup> (2016): 73.

with Candace (theoretically queen of Meroe, but located in the story somewhere in Mesopotamia).<sup>171</sup> Now, these stories about Alexander are themselves probably based to some extent on the Penthesilea-narrative,<sup>172</sup> given the attempts of Alexander and his biographers to connect him to Heracles, whose Amazonomachy was one of his traditional Labours, and Achilles (see for example Plutarch *Life of Alexander* 15).<sup>173</sup> But it is better to see the narrative of *Serpot* as a response to the stories that sprang up around the conquests of Alexander, since the story can be placed in the Egyptian tradition (after the Persian conquest) of having indigenous kings repeat and outdo the military exploits of their conquerors. Thus in Herodotus Sesostris surpasses Darius by conquering Scythia, but in Diodorus Siculus (and hence post-Alexander) he now makes it to India, as Petechons does in *Serpot*;<sup>174</sup> in a Roman-period narrative (P.Oxy. 5263) he even reaches Italy. *Serpot* seems, therefore, to reflect not an engagement with Greek literature or culture in a direct way, but with folktales concerning an already legendary warrior-king.

### **Principles of Theme and Structure**

The remaining four chapters of the thesis, and the analysis of the sources, deal with various themes in the representation of war. The first looks at war on a broad scale, and Greek and Egyptian concepts of it and its place within their individual geographical and temporal systems; the next three are based more on close reading of individual sources, and concentrate on ethnicity, gender, and social hierarchy. These themes have been chosen both because they all frequently occur within depictions of war – indeed, as we shall see in many cases they are actively used to structure the concept of war itself – and because they are all crucial elements of how a society sees itself and others. This thesis aims to examine the reactions to military conquest, and this involves

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<sup>171</sup> Szalc (2014): 379. For more on the similarities and differences between Serpot and Penthesilea see Chapter 4 (pp. 192-206).

<sup>172</sup> Baynham (2001): 122.

<sup>173</sup> Vorhis (2017): 2.

<sup>174</sup> Ryholt (2013): 61-2.

understanding how the authors viewed (and presented) distinct aspects of their past societies, how or if they differed in these aspects from their conquerors, and in what ways they should change. The themes chosen allow us to take a more nuanced and detailed view of the most crucial underpinnings of the Greek and Egyptian societies that produced these works, and in turn this provides us with a broader understanding of their societies as a whole – and how the post-conquest authors wanted their societies to change.

Chapter 2 ('War and War Again: Causes and Cycles') considers two major issues: first, how both Greeks and Egyptians conceived of war, including the semantic connotations of their terms for it, their views on what a cause for war could be, and how wars could be begun and ended, practically and conceptually. Secondly, I examine the interaction between temporality and war – given the Greeks and Egyptians could perceive time as either cyclical or linear, did war and 'peace' consistently belong to either of these conceptions, or vary according to times or participants? And how did military success or defeat affect the construction of the past and the future?

Chapter 3 ('Imagery, Identity, and Ethnicity') examines the construction of cultural identity through the medium of war, working especially with the frequent use of simile and metaphor (applied to both protagonists and antagonists) in the texts. The imagery is often shared by both Greek and Egyptian sources – and as we shall see the connotations of the comparisons were similar for both cultures – and it acts as an important tool to characterise the opposing military forces and to define both the ethnic identity of the self and the ideal way in which this ethnic identity should be manifested, both in warfare and in the wider society.

Chapter 4 ('Sex and Soldierly') looks at the interrelationship of gender and warfare. A frequently perceived binary of male and female is easily transferred onto the binary warfare typical of the material being studied, where multi-party wars (with e.g. three sides all fighting each other) are largely absent; the concepts of masculinity and femininity are therefore common, and share similar implications in both Greek and Egyptian views of the relationship between gender and

warfare. This coincides, however, with a general lack of representation for women themselves, and the complex relationship between gender as a performative role and sex as a biological concept (not to mention sex as an action, consensual or rape) is productively used to characterise all participants in warfare.

Chapter 5 ('Hierarchies of Power') closes the thesis by considering how narratives of war structure the societies described within them according to power dynamics, from the lowliest foot-soldier to the gods, inseparable from Greek and Egyptian society given their major role and, through their temples and statues, physical presence in everyday life. The interactions between the gods (largely absent from battle but often governing the war), the kings (all to varying degrees divine themselves, and therefore linked to the gods), and the ordinary soldiers suggest differing views on how the societal hierarchy should be structured, inside and outside of a military context.

It must be noted that there are major differences in form between the periods, particularly in terms of the textual media: imperishable and monumental in the New Kingdom, perishable in the others. But in fact this choice of medium is in itself an important aspect in the representation of war, particularly regarding its temporality and audience(s), and accordingly it will be dealt with in Chapter 2. As noted above, the military texts of each period conform in nature, with military narratives making up the bulk of the material; these are supplemented by militaristic encomia for the king in the New Kingdom and Hellenistic period but, unsurprisingly, not in the Roman period or Demotic texts, and this difference will therefore be discussed in Chapter 5.

On a more theoretical level there are two further points to be made about this project. There is some strength to Baines' argument that comparisons should be between similar entities.<sup>175</sup> Yet comparisons are surely more significant and more revealing if there is in fact little obvious

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<sup>175</sup> (2020): 422.

similarity, with what resemblance there is needing to be drawn out by the study.<sup>176</sup> Further discussion of this concept as it applies to the ancient material is undertaken in Chapter 3, but it can apply also to the principles of comparative work. On the face of it, for instance, there is little similarity between Jason, a human on the ground, and Sirius, a star in the sky. Yet, as Jason comes to meet Medea at *Argonautica* 3.957, he climbs into sight and so becomes like Sirius when it also rises into view. With this basic point of comparison established, Apollonius is then able to reflect on and suggest to the reader further similarities between these two fundamentally different entities: both stand out for their beauty, both have something of the celestial or divine about them. But the comparison also underscores a significant difference as well: both bring ‘unspeakable misery’, but Sirius does so to flocks (μήλοισι), Jason will do so to Medea (Μήδεια). Jason and Sirius seem to share just one thing – their direction of travel – but the comparison is nevertheless highly illuminating. Difference is the given in any comparison (*X is like Y, so X is not Y*), and it is therefore differences, not similarities, that motivate a comparative work.

I must also re-emphasise that the subject of comparison in this thesis is not the texts *per se*, but the changes in representation of warfare following the military conquest of the authors’ culture. That both the Greeks and Egyptians eventually suffered unending foreign domination is the point of similarity from which this thesis can move on to make further comparisons, just as Jason’s and Sirius’ risings are the connection upon which Apollonius can build. The similarities in geopolitical historical context, between the conquering Egyptian 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasties and the Greeks after Alexander, and between the conquered Imperial Greek world and Greco-Roman Egypt – and the similar reversal of military fortune that both the Egyptians and Greeks suffered – provide the possibility of comparison. It is the *changes* in representation of war revealed by (comparison of) the texts and artwork of the Greeks and Egyptians that are ultimately being compared, not the

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<sup>176</sup> It is, essentially, for this reason that Comparative Literature has such a large scope: the greater distance between the sources compared, the more insightful the conclusions (Hutchinson 2018: 19-20). Cf. Ready (2011: 15) for this principle with regards to similes.

texts and artwork themselves. While comparison of, for example, the *Posthomerica* with the Demotic texts will be used to underscore and reveal various aspects of the different texts, this is just the means to an end: assessing how Greeks and Egyptians expressed their reactions to their subjection by the Romans and Greeks respectively. As we shall see, they often diverged considerably, and the different approaches to military conquest – from a reactionary defeatism found in the *Posthomerica* to a less pessimistic forbearance in the Demotic texts – reflect the authors' concerns with communal guilt and societal change that govern their views of the past, present, and future of war.

## Chapter 2

### War and War Again: Causes and Time(s)

It is easy in the modern world to view 'war' as a globally and chronologically stable concept: Anglophone domination of international diplomacy suggests that the English term is applicable across the world; the familiarity of the Trojan War, the Peloponnesian War, the Gallic War, and the Hundred Years' War suggest that 'War' has been essentially the same phenomenon throughout history. As with most concepts, however, war is culturally dependent, and one party's view of what constitutes a war can differ from another's, even when both are fighting in the same conflict: one might be waging a civil war, the other battling a rebellion. Even more problematic is the concept of peace,<sup>177</sup> which today is often viewed as the opposite of war, its natural counterpart. But again, the relationship of peace to war is unclear across cultures. We are faced with a chicken/egg issue, of whether peace existed first, only to be disrupted by outbreaks of war, or whether in fact the natural state of things was to be at war, and for peace to be the exceptional event.

The causes and justifications for beginning and ending conflict were numerous, and were an important aspect of how the Greeks and Egyptians wanted to portray themselves; the great effort involved in undertaking large-scale warfare required – officially – legitimate ideological reasons. One of the most common ways in which these issues of justification manifested themselves was in terms of aggression, and whether at any time it could be acceptable to be the party beginning a war. If, on the other hand, wars were ideally only carried out when the first attack had come from the other side, how easily could revenge be used as a motive? And were there any proportional limits: an eye for an eye, or a life for an eye? Related to the question of permanence

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<sup>177</sup> As an example of the greater complexity of 'peace', see Raaflaub's decision to follow up his edited volume on war and peace in the ancient world (2007) with one devoted entirely to peace (2016).

in either war or peace and the validity of revenge is the issue of temporality. A linear view of war might consider it as something that proceeds from its beginning to its end, and then has permanent effects that endure from past to present (and – perhaps – into the future as well). No opportunity for any uprising or reversal is conceivable. Conversely, a cyclical conception of war views the conflict as eternally unavoidable, whether this is because of factors such as the geographical location and nature of the participants, or because neither side is able or willing to enforce a permanent resolution, through peace or destruction. But does the wheel of time spin constantly in the same direction, leading the conquerors to conquer *ad infinitum*, or after one cycle does it spin into reverse, leading the conquerors to be conquered and the conquered to conquer in turn? These connected issues – the nature, responsibility, and repeatability of war and peace – are highly indicative of Greek and Egyptian perceptions of themselves and their enemies, from positions of both strength and weakness; the questions of what they are fighting in, and why they are fighting at all, will form an important basis for the analyses of ethnicity, gender, and status in the following chapters.

### **Terms of Engagement: The Semantics of War and Not-War**

A Greek definition of war might seem obvious. The noun πόλεμος, translated as ‘war’, is so ubiquitous in Greek literary history that it is one of the first words we learn in the language. In educational terms, this is largely justified: in Attic-Ionic prose the Greek term does broadly correspond to a large-scale conflict between two political entities. So Thucydides at 1.1 claims that he has recorded ‘the war of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians, how they warred against each other’ (τὸν πόλεμον τῶν Πελοποννησίων καὶ Ἀθηναίων, ὡς ἐπολέμησαν πρὸς ἀλλήλους),<sup>178</sup> and

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<sup>178</sup> It is worth noting here that although Thucydides describes the war as both Peloponnesian and Athenian, the genitive nouns suggesting the conflict belongs equally to both sides, it is known to us simply as the Peloponnesian War due to the general Atheno-centrism of its reception; the name reflects and reinforces the Athenian perspective and removes that of the Spartans. For the inhabitants of the Peloponnese fighting against Athens, there would be no Peloponnesian War but presumably instead an Athenian or Attic War:

when diplomacy between Athens and Sparta ends and direct conflict arises, he states (2.1) that ‘the war begins’ (ἄρχεται ... ὁ πόλεμος); Polybius (1.13) lists as his subjects ‘the war for Sicily’ (ὁ περὶ Σικελίας πόλεμος), aka the First Punic War, the Libyan War (ὁ Λιβυκὸς πόλεμος), and the Cleomenean War (ὁ Κλεομενικὸς καλούμενος πόλεμος). In these cases the word πόλεμος is recognisable as ‘war’, a series of battles over a long period of time fought by armies. That Polybius’ ‘Libyan War’ was in fact a protracted mutiny by some of Carthage’s mercenaries does, however, indicate that the term was not necessarily constrained by political or legalistic criteria: conflict did not have to be inter-state to be πόλεμος, and the author consequently had a certain flexibility in their categorisation. So what we know of as the Ionian Revolt is called by Herodotus ‘the War against Darius’ (6.2 τοῦ πρὸς Δαρεῖον πολέμου), which suggests both a greater and more even conflict; equally, Polybius’ hatred of mercenaries perhaps leads him to emphasise the seriousness of their uprising by calling it a war: he makes clear at 1.65 that one of the main reasons he is narrating it is to warn of the dangers posed by them and their innate defects.<sup>179</sup> To some extent, then, a πόλεμος is dependent on the size and violence of the battles carried out between the two armies and the significance attributed to it by the author or participants.

The importance of large-scale battles to πόλεμος is suggested also by the epic usage of the word, in which its primary meaning is not, as in Greek from the Classical period onward, a long-spanning, extensive conflict between two armies, but essentially just any form of open armed conflict at all, even single combat (as at *Iliad* 7.173-4).<sup>180</sup> πόλεμος is the most common and important Homeric word for ‘battle’, and is typically used in this sense alongside the close synonym μάχη and a wide range of other epic Greek words denoting military combat.<sup>181</sup> Whereas μάχη fairly

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hence Rahe’s study of the Peloponnesian War, ‘an invitation to reenvision Greek history from a Spartan perspective’ (2019: 5) bears the title *Sparta’s First Attic War*.

<sup>179</sup> The attention given to this mutiny is disproportionate to its immediate geopolitical impact (the annexation of Sardinia by Rome), which Polybius only briefly touches on anyway (Gibson 2013: 160-1); its importance to him seems to be due to a perceived moral degeneracy of the Carthaginians after fighting with the barbaric mercenaries, which will eventually lead to their defeat (*ibid.*: 175).

<sup>180</sup> *LfgE* s.v. πόλεμος.

<sup>181</sup> See Trümper (1950: 122-75) for detailed discussion of these words; in the end, only πόλεμος and μάχη survived into Classical Greek, and indeed only the latter preserved its Homeric meaning.

simply denotes military conflict,<sup>182</sup> however, πόλεμος has greater significance in early Greek epic. Firstly, it stands as a counterpart to λόχος ('ambush') as one of two constituent elements of the broader epic conception of warfare, and Achilles emphasises their parallelism at *Iliad* 1.225-8.<sup>183</sup> The λόχος was, essentially, a military action by a very small group of soldiers to either kill a specific target or to obtain cattle and/or hostages for ransom. Odysseus' and Diomedes' attack on Rhesus' camp in *Iliad* 10 is an example of the former; the latter is referenced both by characters, as when Nestor narrates his participation in a violent cattle-rustling (*Iliad* 11.670-89), and by the narrator (21.34-9) when Achilles' earlier raid on Priam's orchards is described.<sup>184</sup> It is important to note, however, that these latter are all outside the temporal scope of the *Iliad*. Thus the role of λόχος within the war – and within warfare more generally – appears greatly reduced, especially compared to other cyclic epics in which it had greater significance, such as the *Little Iliad* (Odysseus ambushing Helenus, Diomedes' and Odysseus' infiltration of Troy to steal the Palladium, the Trojan Horse) and the *Cypria* (Castor and Pollux fatally rustling cattle, Achilles rustling the flocks of Aeneas).<sup>185</sup>

This πόλεμος-based representation of warfare ties into the second added significance that πόλεμος possesses over μάχη, which is that it can, rarely, be used to denote 'warfare' on a broader, conceptual level in a kind of synecdoche; it should be stressed that this meaning appears to be secondary and a development of its original, primary meaning.<sup>186</sup> By the Classical period, however, it had lost its original sense and, as discussed above, could refer to any prolonged, large-scale conflict, either in specific instances or as a general concept. Indeed, as Thucydides (5.56) makes clear, two enemies (the Argives and Epidaurians) could be described as 'being in πόλεμος' (πολεμούντων) without any battle (what a Homeric poet would in fact have called a πόλεμος) taking place at all.<sup>187</sup> So too Polybius at 14.12 describes the Egyptian revolt against Ptolemy IV as a war

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<sup>182</sup> Trümpy (1950): 128.

<sup>183</sup> Edwards (1985): 18.

<sup>184</sup> Dué & Ebbott (2010): 43-4.

<sup>185</sup> Dué & Ebbott (2010): 82-4.

<sup>186</sup> Trümpy (1950): 129-30.

<sup>187</sup> Though the fact that Thucydides finds this worthy of comment indicates that it is not the norm.

that ‘had neither a battle nor a sea-battle nor a siege nor anything else worth recording’. But, like his Libyan War, the cruelty involved causes him to describe it as a πόλεμος – in stark contrast to the Ptolemies themselves, who refused to use the term in order to deny legitimacy to the rebellion, instead describing it as a ταραχή (‘disturbance’).<sup>188</sup>

Nor is πόλεμος the only term used to mean ‘war’. Although it is exclusively used to refer to ‘war’ as a general phenomenon, specific instances of war can be named in different ways. It can simply be ὁ πόλεμος qualified by the reason for fighting (‘the War for Sicily’), the names of the participants (‘the War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians’), or an adjective, derived from the name of the enemy (Polybius’ ‘Libyan War’ is written from a strongly anti-mercenary perspective). Thus Diodorus Siculus at 13.24 describes the Athenian actions κατὰ τὸν Πελοποννησιακὸν πόλεμον (‘during the Peloponnesian War’). A particular war can also be named through a nominalised, neuter-plural adjective derived from the name of the enemy, the noun πράγματα (‘deeds, affairs’) probably implied.<sup>189</sup> This nomenclature characterises war as a set of events defined by an enemy. The implied πράγματα appears to be used interchangeably with πόλεμος: Thucydides speaks of the ‘Persian War’ at 1.14 (τῶν Μηδικῶν [πραγμάτων]) and 1.90 (τὸν Μηδικὸν πόλεμον); Strabo mentions the Peloponnesian War at 13.1.39 (τῷ Πελοποννησιακῷ πολέμῳ) and 14.2.9 (τὰ Πελοποννησιακὰ).<sup>190</sup> This apparent equivalence suggests that πόλεμος was by this stage perceived as various acts and deeds against an enemy, involving (but not limited to) armed conflict. It was, however, no longer as closely associated with the act of battling itself.

The Greek conception of war, then, seems to have arisen from a combat-focused perspective, originally as a synonym of μάχη (‘battle’), and then expanded to more generally denote

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<sup>188</sup> Johstono (2015): 186.

<sup>189</sup> *LSJ* s.v. Μηδικός.

<sup>190</sup> It is possible that individual authors used the terms to refer to slightly different parts of the war they were describing: Hammond (1957: 101) suggests that Thucydides uses τὰ Μηδικὰ to encompass the wars between the Greeks and Persians from Marathon to Plataea, and ὁ Μηδικὸς πόλεμος to refer more specifically to Xerxes’ invasion of Greece and the alliance of Greeks against him. Across authors, however, the terms are inconsistently used and essentially synonymous.

any prolonged conflict involving instances of armed conflict, becoming simply a synonym of πράγματα ('affairs'), an acknowledgment that πόλεμος no longer just involved two armies clashing on the battlefield. The Egyptian terminology, however, does not undergo this change. As seems to have been the case in early Greek, before πόλεμος developed its secondary, broader sense, Egyptian had no one word that corresponds to 'war' as a large-scale series of conflicts, and to convey this notion the language instead uses a series of words that relate to specific actions in war.<sup>191</sup> So in Ramesses II's account of his war with the Hittites in his First Marriage Stela he describes himself 'bringing an attack to the Land of Hatti' (*inw pḥwy n tš n ḥtš*), 'fighting on the battlefield' (*ḥš ḥr pḡš*), plundering their land (*ḥš.k.n=f-sw*), and then a long period of time in which 'their land was being destroyed and savaged in chaos year on year' (*iw tš=sn šk šd m ḥnw rnpt n rnpt*).<sup>192</sup> Together these elements represent what would be recognisable as war, but there is no one word that semantically connects them.

As might be expected from an official diplomatic text, greater clarity is found in the *Hittite Treaty*, which uses two words to describe the state of war between the Egyptians and Hittites. On the one hand there is the *ḥrwy(w)* that the treaty is supposed to prevent,<sup>193</sup> a term best translated 'hostilities'<sup>194</sup> since it seems to derive from Egyptian *ḥrw* ('enemy'), as modern English 'hostility' is derived from Latin *hostis*; it suggests a personal enmity between the two kings that motivates the conflict. The other phrase used to describe the war is *iw=f ḥr ḥš ḥrm ...* ('he [Muwatalli] was fighting w[ith Ramesses ...'] at line 8;<sup>195</sup> the word *ḥš* ('fight') is, like the Homeric use of πόλεμος, able to denote combat from a duel (e.g. *Sinuhe* B131-4) to a pitched battle between two armies

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<sup>191</sup> Bickel (2016): 49. Indeed, Hannig & Vomberg's (1999) collection of military Egyptian vocabulary (under the title 'Krieg und militär') contains only three words that they translate as 'Krieg' (*ḥš, ḥrwyw, ḥrwyt*), and the latter two are just morphological variants.

<sup>192</sup> *KRI* II.242.15-244.13.

<sup>193</sup> *KRI* II.227.3-6.

<sup>194</sup> *TLA* 120090.

<sup>195</sup> *KRI* II.227.3-4.

(e.g. in Thutmose III's *Annals*).<sup>196</sup> The conflict between the Egyptians and Hittites is represented as a combination of personal hostility and fighting between two kings.<sup>197</sup>

The denotation of war not with a single word but through a combination of two constituent parts also appears to be the case in Demotic. Words for 'battle' are common, particularly the term *qnqn*, which forms part of the omnipresent compound *rm̄ qnqn* ('man-of-battle, soldier').<sup>198</sup> Where in English we might use 'war', however, Demotic uses the words *šh* ('fighting') and *mhl* ('conflict, dispute') joined in asyndeton.<sup>199</sup> So when Petechons contrasts the current situation (*Benefice* 13.17-18), Petubastis' battle against the Young Priest, with earlier times he says *iw=f šm <r> ir nš hb.w n nšy=f ntr.w iw mn šh mhl we=f bw-ir=f hb m-sš=y* ('whenever he goes <to> perform the festivals of his gods without fighting and conflict against him, he never sends for me'), and at *Armour* 23.30 Petubastis protests to Amun that *ir=y ʿ(wy) ir=y dr.t=y r tm tl.t hpr šh mhl* ('I did my best, I did, to not let fighting and conflict arise'). It would seem that, as in the *Hittite Peace Treaty*, war is conceived of as a combination of armed combat and more general enmity between individuals.

The examples of an Egyptian conception of war involving a prolonged series of conflicts between relative equals come from texts specifically concerned with the end of war. These texts almost uniquely deal with a situation in which Egypt fought against a geopolitical equal,<sup>200</sup> and although the content is framed by standard motifs of Egyptian warfare (i.e. their total victory),<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> *Urk.* IV.655.2-3.

<sup>197</sup> As the treaty presents it, this personal relationship is the principal issue, rather than the clashes between armies; only by the kings acting together in harmony rather than against each other in strife can the gods appeased and peace secured (Davies 2018: 147-8).

<sup>198</sup> The word possesses a broad semantic range: documents from the workers' village of Deir el-Medina in the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty use it to denote any form of physical violence, from a husband beating his wife to brawls (Hue-Arcé 2018: 274-5).

<sup>199</sup> *CDD s.v. šh, mhl.*

<sup>200</sup> There were probably precedents – Amenhotep II may have concluded a similar treaty with the Mitanni – so this was perhaps not as unique or ground-breaking as it may seem, but the Hittite treaty appears to attempt a much more legalistic description of past events and future conditions (Ockinga 1987: 43).

<sup>201</sup> Quite literally in the case of the peace treaty, which is surrounded by images of the king smiting his enemies (Bickel 2016: 59-60). Comparisons between the hieroglyphic and cuneiform versions of this text indicate that both sides made slight alterations in order to suggest their own superiority (Mynářová 2011: 242-3).

the traditional militaristic idiom is not well suited to this situation. A repeated series of battles, as suggested in the *Peace Treaty*, implies that the king has not been victorious in any of them, which is inconsistent with the common motif of the immediate success of the king in any given act: so Thutmose III is described at line 5 of his Gebel Barkal Stela as ‘one who overpowers immediately every foreign land’ (*šhm hr-ꜥwy r ḥꜣswt-nbt*);<sup>202</sup> Ramesses II in his Beth-Shan Stela (line 8) ‘speaks with his mouth and acts with his arms so that, at dawn, what he has begun has happened’ (*ꜥd m r=f ḥrw m ꜥwy=f ḥꜥ ḥꜣ n=f ḥpr*).<sup>203</sup> Since in reality the Egyptian kings did not immediately destroy all of their enemies, as Ramesses II’s long conflict with the Hittites and the huge number of campaigns recorded by Thutmose III in his *Annals* makes clear, the king’s capacity for easy and instantaneous military victory was emphasised by casting the wars as a constant sequence of Egyptian victories. The unusual context of the Marriage Stela, the conclusion of war with a diplomatic rather than military event, means that the conflict ends in that text through the kindness and mercy of the king rather than the destruction of the Hittite army, but the overall structure of the war remains the same: repeated destruction of the enemy ‘year on year’.<sup>204</sup>

In more normal circumstances, when the king battled only against minor rulers of the Levant,<sup>205</sup> Egyptian military narratives typically portrayed a single battle in which the king was victorious, and it was therefore made clear that he and Egypt had no equals. Thutmose III’s *Annals* are structured around this premise: after the first campaign they narrate a series of shorter victories that give a sense of the king’s easy triumphs.<sup>206</sup> Even his first campaign against Megiddo, narrated at much greater length, employs a similar strategy in its description of the climactic battle: at 1.86 the army is deployed, the gods lend their support, and *ꜥḥꜥ.n šhm.n ḥm=f r=s ḥr-ḥꜣt mšꜥ=f* (‘then his

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<sup>202</sup> The location of this stela, at the far edge of Egypt’s foreign dominions, adds a slight threat to this statement (Klug 2002: 208).

<sup>203</sup> *Urk.* IV.1229.19; *KRI* II.150.16-151.1.

<sup>204</sup> *KRI* II.242.15-244.13.

<sup>205</sup> Actual war between the great kingdoms was very rare during the Bronze Age: the usual practice was instead for the kings to battle with the individual minor client kingdoms and thus gain tribute and influence (Van De Mieroop 2007: 129).

<sup>206</sup> For the temporality of this narrative structure see below.

Person overpowered it [Megiddo] before his army’); the only reason total victory is not achieved is because of the greed of his army.<sup>207</sup> The focus of this narrative is not on the external conflict with the enemy coalition (which is dealt with rapidly), but on the internal debate with the king’s generals concerning the best strategy (1.24-49).<sup>208</sup> The episode draws on a number of motifs from the *Königsnovelle*,<sup>209</sup> and thereby suggests that the war with the coalition is used as a setting in which the king could show that he was the greatest military strategist.<sup>210</sup>

The term used to denote the military activity against Megiddo is *wḏyt* (column 7).<sup>211</sup> This word is typically translated ‘campaign’<sup>212</sup> and often qualified with an ordinal and the phrase *nt nḥt* (‘of strength/victory’)<sup>213</sup> to describe specific conflicts; its root is the verb *wḏi* (‘to depart’), which suggests that a ‘campaign’ is essentially just the king leaving Egypt. So Ahmose son of Ibana in his tomb biography describes Ahmose I’s war against the Hyksos at columns 7-8 as *swtwt=f ḥr wrt=f* (‘his travels on his chariot’),<sup>214</sup> the war to conquer Lower Egypt presented as the Theban king leaving Upper Egypt with military equipment: it is semantically impossible for large-scale, armed violence to occur outside of the king’s domain.<sup>215</sup> Similarly, any future war between the Egyptians and Hittites in the *Peace Treaty* is characterised as either king ‘transgressing against the land’ of the

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<sup>207</sup> *Urk.* IV.657.16-658.9. Lundh (2002: 84) suggests that the brevity of the battle’s narration is because Thutmose III did not take part, but Spalinger (2020: 80-135) convincingly argues that combat is simply not the aspect of warfare that the king is interested in.

<sup>208</sup> *Urk.* IV.649.11-651.17.

<sup>209</sup> For which see Chapter 1 (pp. 28-9).

<sup>210</sup> Spalinger (2020): 115.

<sup>211</sup> *Urk.* IV.647.14, 709.16

<sup>212</sup> *TLA* 52330.

<sup>213</sup> This terminology was formalised under Thutmose III and used only when the king was actually present on campaign (Galán 1995: 94), meaning that under kings such as Amenhotep III who did not participate in military activities it disappeared from the monumental record (*ibid.*: 97).

<sup>214</sup> *Urk.* IV.3.6.

<sup>215</sup> This sense can be viewed in relation to the *iw.tw* (‘one came’) format of military narratives, someone arriving from outside Egypt to inform the king that battle is necessary, and the king then departing to carry out the battle, though it seems that this form was rarely used to narrate campaigns in which the king did take part (Spalinger 1982: 20).

other (*th r p3 t3*), suggesting that war is essentially conceived of as an active departure from one land into another.<sup>216</sup>

In addition to being geographically limited, a *wdyt* is also strictly temporally defined. In royal texts the introduction of the campaign always follows a specific date: so in the *Annals* Thutmose III's first campaign is introduced by *rnpt-sp 22 3bd 4 prt sw 25 [sš hm=f htm n] t-rw m wdyt tpt nt nht* ('Regnal Year 22, Month 4 of Peret, Day 25: [his Person passed the fort of] Tjaru on his first campaign of strength'); his tenth by *rnpt-sp 35 ist hm=f [hr] dbhy m wdyt mht-10 nt nht* ('Regnal Year 35: now, his Person was [in] Djahy on the tenth campaign of strength').<sup>217</sup> Any given campaign is defined by the one year in which it takes place and cannot conceptually take place outside of this year: specific dates are given for various moments in Thutmose III's Megiddo campaign, such as the king's presence at Gaza, the entry into the Aaruna pass, and the battle,<sup>218</sup> but not for the delayed sacking of the city.<sup>219</sup> It was, therefore, used to define specific conflicts between Egypt and foreign enemies and accordingly structure military narratives: it is used repeatedly in the *Annals* to divide the text into distinct episodes of the king's successes,<sup>220</sup> and Ramesses II in *Qadesh 1* begins the narrative (§3) by saying that he was *m wdt=f snnwt nt nht* ('on his second campaign of strength').<sup>221</sup>

As we have seen, Egyptian representations of warfare did not allow it to occur between peers. To depict this unbalanced power dynamic, therefore, the Egyptian sources tended to represent any conflict as a rebellion, writing from the opposite perspective to Herodotus (with the Ionian Revolt/'War against Darius') and Polybius (with the mercenary mutiny/Libyan War). In the

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<sup>216</sup> Indeed, even the word for 'strength' or 'victory' (*nht*) is increasingly semantically located outside Egypt in the New Kingdom: a king could not be strong or militarily victorious without leaving his land (Galán 1995: 50).

<sup>217</sup> *Urk.* IV.647.12-13, 709.15-16.

<sup>218</sup> *Urk.* IV.648.9-12, 652.13, 657.2-3.

<sup>219</sup> The protracted length of the siege was unplanned and both a practical and ideological problem, hence (as discussed above) the blame cast on the soldiers' greed (Spalinger 2020: 108).

<sup>220</sup> E.g. *Urk.* IV.689.5, 709.16.

<sup>221</sup> *KRI* II.102.7-11.

Old Kingdom we already find descriptions of the king as *nb ḥꜣswt* ('Lord of the Foreign Lands'), suggesting an unqualified rule over Egypt and the rest of the world.<sup>222</sup> He is appointed to this role by the gods, who are similarly portrayed as governing the various lands outside of Egypt: Amun says to Thutmose III at line 6 of his Poetical Stela that *wꜥd=i-n=k ḫ m ꜣww=f wsḥ=f* ('I arrange the land for you in its length and breadth'), *ḫ* here referring to the entire world rather than just Egypt; in Amenhotep II' Great Sphinx Stela it is said (lines 7-8) that *dhn [imn] dꜣ=f m ḥry-tp ꜣnnt irt=f ḫꜥdt itn n r<sup>c</sup>* ('[Amun] himself appoints him as chief of what his eye encircles, what the sun-disc of Re illuminates').<sup>223</sup> Given the Egyptian king is already ruler of the whole world, and appointed as such by the gods, there is no-one – theoretically – with whom he can go to war, since there are no other leaders of independent polities. Every form of conflict the king undertakes is in fact the quelling of a rebellion, a refusal to acknowledge the god-given supremacy of the king. Ramesses II's war with the Hittites is cast in these terms in the First Hittite Marriage Stela:<sup>224</sup>

*ḥ<sup>c</sup>.n sꜥm.n wrw ꜣyw n ḫ-nb ḫrw-pn ꜣḫw n ḥm=f ... iw=sn swꜣḫ ḫꜣw=f ḥr rdt ḫw n ḥr=f nfr ... m nbw ꜣyw n rꜥnw ḫꜣswt ꜣḫy iw-bw rḫ.tw=w ... m ḫw ḥr ḥfnw n m=f nsw-bity wsr-mꜣ<sup>c</sup>t- r<sup>c</sup>-[stp-n-r<sup>c</sup> sꜣ-r<sup>c</sup>] r<sup>c</sup>-ms-sw-mry-imn di ḥnḫ wn.in ḫꜣst-nb m wꜣḫ-tp ḥr rdwy n nꜥr-nfr-pn irwy=f ḫꜣw=f r mr.n=f ... ḥrw=f pf ḫ-pn n ḫḫ nn stwt=f n nn wrw*

Then the great chiefs of every land heard of this mysterious nature of his Person ... and they praised his power, giving adoration to his perfect face ... them being the great lords of Retjenu and mysterious foreign lands that are not known of ... in adoration and reverence to his name, the Dual King Usermaatre-[Setepenre, the Son of Re] Ramesses-Meryamun, given life. Then every foreign land was bowing beneath the feet of this perfect god, he who had made his boundaries<sup>225</sup> as far as he desired ... except that man of this land of Hatti, who did not liken himself to these chiefs

The archaising language, beginning with the first element of this narrative (the auxiliary *ḥ<sup>c</sup>.n*) suggests the divinely ordained state of the world described here: Ramesses' sovereignty of the whole world, enacted through his vassals, is disrupted by one isolated rebel who is dismissively

<sup>222</sup> Zibelius-Chen (1988): 206.

<sup>223</sup> Beylage (2002): 685-8, 722-3; *Urk.* IV.613.2, 1277.8.

<sup>224</sup> *KRI* II.241.3-242.14.

<sup>225</sup> For the nuances of Egyptian 'boundaries' (*ḫꜣw*) see Galán (1995) and below (pp. 67-8).

referred to only with the demonstrative *pf* and so denied any parity whatsoever.<sup>226</sup> When this sole agitator is forced to come to terms the world is put right; the encomium at the start of this text says that for Ramesses *nn wn bštw hrwyw m-ht=f* ('there is no rebellion of enemies behind/after him'),<sup>227</sup> indicating a spatial and temporal enduring pacification.

The term used for 'rebellion' here (*bštw*) is very significant for Egyptian views on warfare, because it is frequently used to describe the enemy in different conflicts. At lines 8-9 of the Gebel Barkal Stela we are told that Thutmose III is a king *ptpt ḥšwt-nb bštw* ('who trampled all the rebel foreign lands'); in *Qadesh 2* (§32) Ramesses II characterises his progress towards Qadesh as *bštw-nbw iw m ksw n snḏwt n bšw ḥm=f* ('all the rebels were coming in prostration through fear of the power of his Person'), and in his Beth-Shan Stela Amun tells him that *ḥsk=k tpw bštw r=k* ('you behead the leaders of the rebels against you'); in Merenptah's *Great Libyan War Inscription* he characterises the invasion of the Libyans (line 18) as *bštw ḥr th.tw=s r-nb* ('rebels violating it [Egypt] every day').<sup>228</sup> So even when there is a conflict led by an independent ruler invading Egypt (as Maryu does with the Libyans), this is still presented as ultimately an act of rebellion.<sup>229</sup> The term *bšw* is almost exclusively used for foreign enemies, and suggests a violent anger that disrupts the natural order of things.<sup>230</sup>

There was, nevertheless, an acknowledgment that the king was not practically able to rule over the entire world; hence he needed to frequently establish and expand his 'borders'. The importance of this idea is seen already in Senwosret III's Semna Stela: after the titulary and date, the text begins with *irt ḥm=f tš rsy r ḥḥ iw ir.n=i tš=i ḥnt=i itw=i* ('His Person made the southern

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<sup>226</sup> This depiction of the war differs greatly from the Qadesh texts, when Ramesses repeatedly lists a number of allies brought by the Hittite king; *Qadesh 2* begins with one such list (*KRI* II.3.6-4.16). In those texts Ramesses is emphasising his skill in battle, and thus needs to highlight the size of the enemy army; here he emphasises instead the perversity of the Hittite king in refusing to acknowledge his supremacy.

<sup>227</sup> *KRI* II.238.5-6.

<sup>228</sup> *Urk.* IV.1231.4; *KRI* II.13.6-9, 150.8, IV.4.8-9.

<sup>229</sup> Indeed the word used most often for 'enemy' is *hrw*, literally 'fallen one' (*TLA* 119960), the past participle suggesting that to be an 'enemy' is to have 'fallen' away from the norm.

<sup>230</sup> Muhlestein (2015): 1476; *TLA* 57640.

border at Heh. “I made my boundary, going further south than my fathers”),<sup>231</sup> and the text stresses the importance of not letting any Nubians past this point.<sup>232</sup> In the New Kingdom, comparable stelae are widespread: Thutmose III mentions at line 13 of his Gebel Barkal Stela (itself erected in a liminal place in Nubia) that he has erected a stela on the west bank of the Euphrates after driving out the ruler of the Mitanni.<sup>233</sup> These *ḥšw* are not boundaries that geographically extend Egypt (which was always defined by the Delta and Elephantine), nor are the stelae ‘boundary-stelae’ that demarcate precisely the Egyptian empire; rather they are commemorations of military victory that eternalise, through the eternalised stone inscription, the memory of the king’s triumph there, and so preserve his influence over the area.<sup>234</sup> They mark and maintain the areas pacified by the king, within which there is no rebellion.<sup>235</sup>

The lands beyond these stelae still rightfully belong to the Egyptian king, but they are temporarily out of his control and must be reclaimed.<sup>236</sup> Ideologically, Egypt does not have external enemies, only rebels – outside Egypt but inside the king’s domain – who must be defeated; in this way he also preserves the sun-god Re, who requires order on earth to make his daily voyage across the sky.<sup>237</sup> Chaos was rebellion, recurring outbreaks of which had to be repeatedly quelled before they could spread out of control, and it was created either outside the land of Egypt (in which case it was *bšḥ*) or inside (in which case it was named as *sbḥ*).<sup>238</sup> The fundamentally internal nature of chaos is indicated by the fact that its divine representation Apophis, who had to be repelled from

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<sup>231</sup> *Les.* 83.21-2. The expansion of Egypt’s borders became an increasingly prominent theme in Middle Kingdom discourse on kingship (Zibelius-Chen 1988: 232).

<sup>232</sup> Ideologically, at least; a smaller companion stela nearby lists all the exceptions to this ban (Eyre 1990: 136-7).

<sup>233</sup> Klug (2002): 208; *Urk.* IV.1232.11-12.

<sup>234</sup> Galán (1995): 136-7. In this the New Kingdom examples differ from Senwosret III’s smaller stela, which, with its legal provisions, does function as a political marker of Egyptian rule.

<sup>235</sup> Langer (2018): 51.

<sup>236</sup> Galán (1995): 129. Ideologically, the king ruled ‘all that the sun-disc encircles’; more practically, he ruled as far as his *ḥšw* (the limits of the king’s influence), beyond which were the *ḏrw* (the limits of the world, in revolt against the king) (*ibid.*: 131).

<sup>237</sup> Assmann (1994): 119.

<sup>238</sup> Muhlestein (2015): 1479.

the sun every day,<sup>239</sup> and who was connected with Egypt's enemies already in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC,<sup>240</sup> could be called 'Apophis the rebel' (*ḥpp sbī*).<sup>241</sup> So any distinction between defensive or offensive warfare, as for example Goedicke suggests with regard to Thutmose III's campaign against Megiddo,<sup>242</sup> is not present in Egyptian ideology. 'Warfare' is neither defensive nor offensive against any external force: it is instead the suppression of rebellion within the king's (infinite) domain; 'peace' is the violent destruction of these rebels, the pacification of all lands such that they accept the king's rule.<sup>243</sup>

### Seeking a Cause for Peace and War

We must now ask what led war to arise. To some extent one could blame the innate characteristics of various cultures: Isocrates in *On the Peace* argues that, because the Athenians are naturally inclined to imperialism, and since imperialism can hardly co-exist with peace, the Athenians are forced by nature to constantly start wars.<sup>244</sup> Similar reasoning is used in the Hellenistic period for the Gauls: in the *Argonautica*, as the Argonauts return home, they pass through the land of the Celts (4.645-8):

δηναιοὶ δ' ἄκτὰς ἀλμυρέας εἰσαφίκοντο,  
Ἥρης ἐννεσίησι δι' ἔθνεα μυρία Κελτῶν  
καὶ Λιγύων περὶ ὄντες ἀδήιοι, ἀμφὶ γὰρ αἰνὴν  
ἥερα χεῦθε θεὰ πάντ' ἥματα νισσομένοισιν.

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<sup>239</sup> Manassa (2003): 45.

<sup>240</sup> Bickel (2016): 53.

<sup>241</sup> Muhlestein (2015): 1480; in more detail Kemboly (2010): 331-7. Similarly, the identification of chaos with the Nile's flood suggests that it is internal to Egypt (Kemboly 2013: 236).

<sup>242</sup> (1980): 203-4.

<sup>243</sup> For more on Egyptian conceptions of peace as a violent act see Bickel (2016), Davies (2018), Mynářová (2011). Greek conceptions of military 'peace' depended on the construction and imposition of friendship theoretically between equals: the victor achieved 'peace' by press-ganging the defeated into an alliance against new enemies, as Philip II did after Chaeronea (Raaflaub 2016a: 127; Squillace 2010: 76). In general, however, the Greeks viewed war as a positive driver of change and development (Alonso 2007: 208) and the opportunity for glory, and although peace could be desired at certain instances (largely for practical rather than idealistic reasons – see Johstono 2018: 176), Greek cults for and treaties on peace were very late developments (Raaflaub 2016b: 3), and indeed for the Greeks 'peace' was temporally limited, achieved by truces of fixed duration (Alonso 2007: 220-1; Rhodes 2008), as opposed to the Egyptian system of temporally limited annual campaigns.

<sup>244</sup> Raaflaub (2016a): 131. See also Xenophon *Poroi* 1.1 for a similar argument (Jansen 2017: 261-2).

After a long time they arrived at the salty shores,  
 and by the plans of Hera through the countless tribes of Celts  
 and Ligyes they passed unharmed: for around them,  
 as they went, the goddess poured a dread mist every day.

The Argonauts are not attacked only because they are not seen; otherwise, the Celts and Ligyes would, by nature, attack any foreigner they laid eyes upon. Polybius throughout his work depicts the Gauls in a similar way, as innately violent and prone to war; it is, as he says (2.7.4), τὴν κοινὴν περὶ Γαλατῶν φήμην ('the common reputation of the Gauls').

The naturally warlike state of the enemy is also brought out in Merenptah's *Great Libyan War Inscription*, which describes the Libyans (columns 21-2) as

*mry[w] mwt msddyw ḥnh ḥṣty=sn tnwy r rḥyt ... wš=w ḥr ḥt ḥr ḥr ḥr ḥr r mh ḥt=w n-mnt  
 iw=sn r ḥ n kmt r wḥṣ ḥrt n rw=sn*

loving death, hating life, their hearts raised against the people of Egypt ... they spend the day traversing the land, fighting to fill their bellies daily; they come to the land of Egypt to seek the needs of their mouths.<sup>245</sup>

Their rebellion is prompted by their nature and inability to control their needs. They are perverse and completely opposite to the Egyptians: a stereotypical characterisation of a good Egyptian, especially in funerary texts appealing to the living, is that they 'love life and hate death'.<sup>246</sup> Given the enemy's motivation for rebelling is not mentioned in other New Kingdom military texts – their attack simply narrated without explanation – we are led to believe that there *was* no rational motivation for them to attack. So Thutmose III's Gebel Barkal Stela describes his battle with the coalition at Megiddo (columns 3-4) as:

*ḥṣwt-nb dmd ḥḥ mi wḥ ḥr r ḥḥ n wnt bhw ... ḥ.n=sn ibw=sn ḥm nn ḥryw m ib=sn ḥr.n-st  
 ḥm pḥty tmṣ-ḥ titi ḥḥtyw=f*

<sup>245</sup> KRI IV.4.13-15

<sup>246</sup> Manassa (2003): 123.

All foreign lands together stood as one, prepared to fight, without flight ... that they came was with stout hearts, without dread in their hearts. The one powerful in strength felled them, the one strong in arm trampled his enemies<sup>247</sup>

Similarly, the narrative of Sety I's First Beth-Shan Stela begins (lines 15-19) with:

*p3 hr hsy nty m dmi n h3-mt-ti nwy=f-n=f rmt 33 ... wn.in hm=f hr di iw p3 mšc tp n imn wsr-pdwt r dmi n h3-mt-ti*

The vile enemy who is in the town of Hammath, he has gathered many men to him ... Then his Person sent the first army of Amun, 'Strong of Bows', to the town of Hammath<sup>248</sup>

No reason for these hostile actions is given: it was the nature of the enemy to rebel, therefore invariably they did. Wars began for only one reason, the denial of the king's authority that naturally manifested itself from time to time, and which had to be prevented from spreading. As discussed above, there is thus no distinction between an offensive or defensive war: every conflict is an offensive strike on an uprising in defence of the world order. Practically, of course, there were many reasons to go to war, often only implied by the monumental texts. The frequency of campaigns in a king's first year suggests that war was undertaken to indicate that he was ready for his role;<sup>249</sup> similarly, although the annexation of Lower Nubia in the early New Kingdom may have been presented as an ideological project, the desire for easy access to Nubia's rich natural resources was clearly also an important factor.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> *Urk.* IV.1229.7-13. Note the superficial similarity of the enemy coalition to the king: they are 'like one', and their hearts are *shim* ('powerful') – but the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural pronouns betray their multiplicity, and although their hearts may be powerful, they are no match for the singular king whose power lies in his physical strength. For the plurality/singularity motif in Egyptian conceptions of war see Chapters 3 and 5 (pp. 118-21, 259-65).

<sup>248</sup> *KRI* I.12.8-11.

<sup>249</sup> Bickel (2016): 54. Herodotus presents the Persian nobleman Mardonius making essentially this argument to Xerxes upon his accession to the throne (7.5).

<sup>250</sup> Zibelius-Chen (1988): 239. For more recent discussions of the Egyptian kings' reconquest of Nubia, particularly their administration of the area, see Morris (2018: 117-40), Valbelle (2021) and Smith (2021); much later the same benefits were stated very pragmatically by Gallus in his 29 BC inscription at Philae (Hendrickx 1991: 58). The temporality of this conquest will be discussed below.

In the Demotic texts, *Benefice* and *Armour* present conflict arising out of a desire to obtain something (wrongfully) held by someone else (the benefice of Amun and the armour of Inaros), after negotiations have failed. So at *Benefice* 3.11-16 Ankhhor asks the Young Priest:

*in i.ir=k iy r t p3 s'nh (n-)rn=f n hp hne i.ir=k iy r t,t=f n qnqne d p3 hm-hl n w' b i.ir=w sdm r hrw=y iw=y <ti.> t=<y>-s n hp i.ir=w tm sdm r hrw=y iw=y ti. t t=<y>-s n qnqne t wnw.t d n3y i.ir=f h' r 'nh-hr s3-ns w c.w.s.*

“Is it to take this very benefice in law that you have come, or is it to take it in battle that you have come?” The Young Priest said: “If my voice has been heard, I will <cause that I> take it in law; if my voice has not been heard, I will cause that <I> take it in battle.” The moment that Ankhhor, the king’s l.p.h. son, heard these things, he raged.

The diplomatic process is more drawn out in *Armour*, but nevertheless after Wertyamonnit’s repeated refusal to return the armour Pami declares (9.27-30) that

*r-iw=w ti. t n=y t hlybš r-bn-iw-n3.w t-t=s r iwnw r-bn-pw=y t-t=s n qnqn r.ir p3 in.nw h' h n kmy db3,t=s mtw p3 mš' p3 t tr=f [gm-t]s iw=y mš' n m p3y=y hry ir.t-hr-r-r=w mtw=y t ty=f hlybš r iwnw*

If I am given the armour, there will be no taking it to Heliopolis unless I have taken it in battle. That the lance will stand in Egypt is because it, and the army of the entire land will [know] that I march in the name of my master Inaros, and I take his armour to Heliopolis.

Conflict arises out of the need to regain what has been lost.<sup>251</sup> Although the fighting in *Armour* is caused by the gods (1.4-8), this is an example of double motivation, the gods exacerbating an inclination towards violence already present in Pami and Wertyamonnit.<sup>252</sup> The loss of the beginning of *Serpot* means that any potential cause for Petechons’ war is missing, but I wonder if one was even given. The accounts of Sesostri preserved in Herodotus (2.102) and the *Argonautica* (4.272-6) mention no reason for that king’s conquests in the east, and although *Serpot* is a fuller narrative of this motif, it may be that the plot was so embedded in pharaonic rhetoric and practice

<sup>251</sup> The Carnarvon Tablet presents Kamose as being motivated by a similar desire to expel the Hyksos: anger that the Egyptians have lost Egypt to Asiatic and Nubian kings.

<sup>252</sup> Cf. Lesky (2001) for a discussion of this phenomenon in relation to the Homeric poems. It will be treated more fully in Chapter 5 (p. 238).

that no motivation was needed. If a narrative began with an Egyptian king (Petechons is acting in this role) attacking eastern enemies who rejected Egypt's authority, context and tradition would make it clear why he was leading an army there.

The idea of battle arising out of the wrongful possession of some item is therefore a prominent difference between the causes of conflict in *Benefice* and *Armour* and most other Egyptian texts. For the Greeks, however, this motif predominates any depiction of war. In early Greek war narratives there are essentially two potential reasons for a war to begin: rustling cattle and raping women.<sup>253</sup> The climax of the Heroic Age in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (lines 162-5) is the Theban and Trojan Wars, fought μήλων ἔνεκ' Οἰδιπόδαο ... Ἑλένης ἔνεκ' ἐγκόμοιο ('for the flocks of Oedipus ... for fair-haired Helen'). Other examples include Amphitryon's campaign against the Teleboeans (over cattle rustled by the latter from the Thebans), narrated at the beginning of the *Shield of Heracles*, Heracles himself against the Dryopes (over cattle rustled from their king Theiodamas), the Dioscuri against Athens (over Theseus raping Helen), and the Dioscuri against Idas and Aphareus (over the latter rustling the former's cattle); in the *Thebaid* the cause of the war was the dispute over which of Oedipus' sons should get his inheritance (fr. 2 West), and although exactly what this inheritance was is not specified in the fragments we possess, it may well have been his flocks as in Hesiod.<sup>254</sup> As we have seen, the *Iliad* avoids the motif of cattle-rustling despite its widespread presence in other early Greek epic, a notable exception coming when Nestor (11.689-84) narrates one such occasion from his youth to Patroclus.<sup>255</sup> Though obviously on a much smaller

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<sup>253</sup> The actual treatment of the women involved will be discussed later in Chapter 4 (pp. 171-81), though the fact that they are analogous to cattle (note the parallel phrasing in the quote from the *Works and Days*) indicates that they are effectively just possessions of men. Indeed as Canevaro (2018: 11) points out, the first woman, Pandora, is a gift given by Zeus to Epimetheus (Hesiod *Theogony* 534-601, *Works and Days* 42-105): being in the possession of men and/or gods is in their very nature.

<sup>254</sup> The motive for war in the *Epigoni*, in which the sons of the protagonists in the *Thebaid* attack Thebes themselves, is revenge, but this can nevertheless be traced back to the cause of the original war, Eteocles taking Polyneices' share of their father's inheritance.

<sup>255</sup> Dué & Ebbott (2010): 82-3. Already for the audiences of the *Iliad* and *Works and Days* there was probably some sense that the presence of cattle in an urban society was detached from the present reality (Athanasakis 1992: 176).

scale, his account of the battle makes clear that it is a typological parallel to the battle taking place at Troy.<sup>256</sup>

In general, then, both women and cattle are equally valid as *casus belli*, the main difference, if there is one, in geographic location (cattle-rustling perhaps more associated with the western Peloponnese).<sup>257</sup> For Herodotus, however, the rape of women is more legitimate: he narrates at 1.1-5 a sequence of rapes that serves as the mythological background to the Persian Wars, concluding with the sack of Troy and ‘the beginning of their hatred of the Greeks’ (1.5 τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ἔχθρης τῆς ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας); rapes also appear as *casus belli* at 2.54-7, 6.65, 6.138, 7.191.<sup>258</sup> Whatever Herodotus’ own thoughts on the legitimacy of this reason (he presents the rationale of 1.1-5 in the mouths of others), the fact that it could be given as a reason so often indicates that it was felt to be a defensible cause for war.

Cattle-rustling reappears in Hellenistic literature, and its pairing with rape as an epic *casus belli* remains. In the ecphrasis of Jason’s cloak in the *Argonautica* two scenes are juxtaposed (1.747-58): the first depicts the Teleboeans and the sons of Electryon fighting over cattle, the second shows Oenomaus attacking Pelops over his daughter Hippodameia. Later Apollonius describes Heracles’ battle against the Dryopes over the cattle of Theiodamas (1.1211-16), and at 4.550-1 he describes the death of Heracles’ son Hyllus: καὶ μιν ἔπεφνον / Μέντορες, ἀγρούλοισιν ἀλεξόμενον περὶ βουσίην (‘and the Mentores slew him as he defended his rustic cattle’). It is notable that the three instances of rustling-related conflict involve Heracles’ closest relatives (his uncles, himself, and his son); given Hyllus was typically son of Heracles by Deianira and normally survived him,<sup>259</sup> the coincidence is striking. Heracles in the *Argonautica* is already a figure of the past, whose many previous exploits appear in Book 2<sup>260</sup> and who leaves the voyage early on; the association of cattle-raids and warfare

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<sup>256</sup> Martin (2000): 59.

<sup>257</sup> See Nobili (2017) for this motif. It is perhaps no coincidence that cattle-rustling in the *Iliad* is narrated by Nestor, king of the south-western coastal city of Pylos.

<sup>258</sup> Wesselmann (2016): 211.

<sup>259</sup> See e.g. Sophocles’ *Trachinian Women*.

<sup>260</sup> Lawall (1966): 125-6.

with Heracles – distant ancestor of the Ptolemies – suggests that for Apollonius such a cause was felt to be an archaic feature of the past, both in terms of the poem’s present (all the instances have already taken place before the main narrative) and his own.

A slight aversion to cattle-rustling as contemporary *casus belli* may also be seen in other Hellenistic poets. It is portrayed as a slightly comedic reason for war in Callimachus’ *Hymn to Artemis*, where Heracles’ battle against the Dryopes is made the punchline to a joke about his gluttony (lines 160-1 ἔτι οἱ πάρα νηδὺς ἐκεῖνη, / τῆ ποτ’ ἀροτριῶντι συνήντετο Θειοδάμαντι – ‘and he still has that belly with which he once met Theiodamas as he ploughed’); Callimachus’ treatment of the Trojan War in the same poem, on the other hand, has a more sombre tone (lines 231-2 Τευκρῶν ἠνίκα νῆες Ἀχαιίδες ἄστεα κήδειν / ἔπλεον ἀμφ’ Ἑλένη Ῥαμνουσίδι θυμωθεῖσαι – ‘when the Achaean ships sailed to grieve the cities of the Teucrians, angered concerning Rhamnousian Helen’). So too in his narration of Heracles and Theiodamas in the *Aetia* (fr. 24) the encounter is framed in terms of laughter (line 3 γέλως, line 13 [ἐξ]εγέλασσε).<sup>261</sup> Callimachus, at least with this story, does not find the stealing of cattle to be a serious cause for war, in contrast to Apollonius. Theocritus – perhaps surprisingly, given he composed ‘ox-herd’ (bucolic) poetry – avoids the subject of cattle-rustling altogether. The traditional cause of the battle between the Dioscuri and Idas and Lynceus was the theft of cattle; Theocritus in *Idyll* 22 instead makes it the rape of the Leucippides by Castor and Polydeuces.<sup>262</sup> This change assimilates the story to the many others involving the Dioscuri and the rape of women (Helen and Theseus, Medea and Jason, Helen and Paris), but may again reflect a reluctance to treat cattle-rustling as a serious cause for conflict. That the women are the daughters of Leucippus (‘White Horse’), and only named as such in the *Idyll*, connects them to an animal (like the original cattle), but a more prestigious and valuable one.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> A potential allusion to *Iliad* 6.483, where Andromache laughs at the baby Astyanax’s reaction to Hector, reinforces the light-hearted tone (Harder 2012: 241).

<sup>262</sup> Nobili (2017): 202.

<sup>263</sup> Cf. the funeral games of *Iliad* 23, in which a mare is second-prize in the chariot race (lines 265-6), and another is a prestigious gift to Agamemnon (lines 296-300).

Then again, the rape of women is also not a particularly productive cause of war in Hellenistic literature. The *Alexandra* focuses particularly on the rape of women as cause for war, and emphatically casts Paris' rape of Helen as the reason for the persistent enmity between Greece and Asia.<sup>264</sup> Moschus' *Europa* also engages with this idea: the eponymous Phoenician heroine dreams at lines 6-15 that Asia and Europe are arguing over her in the forms of women, until (lines 13-15):

ἢ δ' ἑτέρη κρατερῆσι βιωμένη παλάμησιν  
εἴρνευ οὐκ ἀέκουσαν, ἐπεὶ φάτο μόρσιμον εἶο  
ἐκ Διὸς αἰγιόχου γερας ἔμμεναι Εὐρώπειαν

The other woman (Europe), raping her with mighty hands,  
dragged her not unwillingly away, since she said that it was her destiny  
that Europa be a gift from aegis-bearing Zeus.

Zeus will go on to rape her himself (lines 109-10) and bring her to Crete. The imagery of the two continents fighting as women is taken from Aeschylus' *Persians* (lines 181-99), set after Xerxes' defeat at Salamis; Moschus makes clear that this rape of Europa (from which one of the continents will derive its name) will cause all future conflict.

Given her place in Herodotus' rationalisation of the Greek and Asian conflict, however, Apollonius somewhat alters the importance of Jason's rape of Medea in the *Argonautica*. The scene on Jason's cloak discussed above might seem to foreshadow future events: Pelops, like Jason, must take part in a contest under the threat of death from a powerful king (Oenomaus/Aeetes) if he fails, and both end up taking the king's daughter. Oenomaus attacks Pelops over his daughter, who is already on-board Pelops' chariot and leaving with him (1.754), because he does not want to lose her. Yet although Aeetes sends his armies after the Argonauts for Medea, and she is viewed by them as the main issue (4.345), he is not angry because she has been raped, nor is he even particularly angry at Jason. As he makes clear in his threats to his army (4.233-4), he wants Medea back so that θυμὸν ἐνπλήσει μενεαίνων / τίσασθαι τάδε πάντα ('he could sate his spirit in his raging

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<sup>264</sup> Pillinger (2009): 125. The *Alexandra*'s depiction of women will be discussed in Chapter 4 (pp. 186-90).

desire that all these things be avenged'). It is Jason's seizure of the fleece, rather than his rape of Medea (as in Herodotus) that he wants vengeance for, and the object of his wrath is the daughter who betrayed him. He does not want her back to possess her, but to kill her himself. A similar inversion of the idea of rape as the cause for war is also seen in Apollonius' treatment of the Lemnian women in Book 1.<sup>265</sup> Aphrodite had cast a 'savage love' (1.613 τρηχὺς ἔρον) for slave-women upon the men, and therefore caused them to attack the Thracians and rape their women; one might expect, following the Herodotean model, the Thracians to attack in revenge and wipe them out. Instead their punishment comes from the women of Lemnos (1.617-19):

οὐκ οἶον σὺν τῆσιν ἐούς ἔρραισαν ἀκοίτας  
ἀμφ' εὐνή, πᾶν δ' ἄρσεν ὁμοῦ γένος, ὥς κεν ὀπίσσω  
μήτινα λευγαλέοιο φόνου τίσειαν ἀμοιβήν.

They massacred not only their husbands with them [the raped women]  
in the bed, but also the whole male race, so that in the future  
they would not pay the price for the wretched slaughter in turn.

Rape might still be a cause for violence in the *Argonautica*, but it does not necessarily come on or from whom you might expect.

A much more common cause of conflict in the poem is instead the act or fear of piracy. Aetes' anger with Medea stems from her helping the Argonauts steal his golden fleece; in fact, a piratical approach had been expected when the voyage first began. Thus the Greek onlookers state (1.244-5) that ἀντῆμαρ κε δόμους ὀλοῶ πυρὶ δηώσειαν / Αἰήτεω, ὅτε μή σφιν ἐκὼν δέρος ἐγγυαλιξῆ ('on the same day they [the Argonauts] will ravage with destructive fire the home of Aetes, if he does not yield the fleece to them willingly'). Later in the book, the Argonauts fight with the Doliones, who believe that they are pirates, and perform a very efficient and deadly raid: the

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<sup>265</sup> This myth considerably predates Apollonius: already in Herodotus (6.138) it is used proverbially for large-scale murders. Apollonius is, however, our earliest extant source for the causes, which means that the degree to which he innovates in his retelling is unclear. The motif of the mass slaughter of men by their wives is found elsewhere in the story of the Danaids, who married their fifty cousins and then murdered all but one of them, and reflects the particularly Greek paranoia about the dangers posed by women embedded in their mythology (Kelly 2021: 284-8).

description of the battle is short (1.1040-7) and made up entirely of the names of slain Doliones. Given the Argonauts land at night, the typical time for pirate raids,<sup>266</sup> the fears of Cyzicus and his men are well-founded. So although Aeetes is undoubtedly a negative character,<sup>267</sup> his description of the Argonauts (3.589-92) as ληιστήρας ... οἷσι μέμηλεν / ὀθνείους ἐπὶ χεῖρα ἔην κτεάτεσσιν ἀείρειν, / κρυπαδίους τε δόλους τεκταινέμεν ('pirates, who care for raising their hands to a stranger's possessions, and contriving secret tricks') is hardly unfair, and at any rate proven true by Jason's actions.

Piracy has epic precedents, especially in connection with Odysseus, who tells a (fictitious) story about him trying to conduct a raid on Egypt (*Odyssey* 14.257-77); indeed for Thucydides, writing in the 5<sup>th</sup>-century BC, piracy was characteristic of the past before the Trojan War (1.5-8). But it became much more common in the Hellenistic period,<sup>268</sup> particularly in association with the Cretans and Illyrians,<sup>269</sup> and was viewed as a sign of the moral degeneracy of the period, a type of warfare conducted without the usual rituals that would make it legitimate.<sup>270</sup> Further, Jason's initial offer to Aeetes for the fleece was to act as a mercenary and subdue the Sauromatae for him (3.351-3), which makes him what may well have been Polybius' worst nightmare, both mercenary *and* pirate.<sup>271</sup> Assuming he was not the only one to hold these beliefs, the actions of the Argonauts in Apollonius' poem, starting wars as pirates to steal the possessions of others and looking for jobs as mercenaries, are made problematic. They are practitioners of the worst kinds of contemporary warfare, and these practices are emphasised by Apollonius' minimisation of the more traditional epic causes for war, archaising cattle-rustling and rape. But although the primary motive of the

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<sup>266</sup> Chaniotis (2017): 104.

<sup>267</sup> He is, for example, partially modelled on the Cyclops in *Odyssey* 9, including at 3.589-92 (Hunter 1989a: 117).

<sup>268</sup> Gabrielsen (2003): 390.

<sup>269</sup> *ibid.*: 399-403.

<sup>270</sup> Alonso (2007): 218-19.

<sup>271</sup> For Polybius' hatred of pirates as well as mercenaries, see e.g. his characterisation of the enemy Aetolian fleet at 4.6.1 as pirates. Jason's offer to Aeetes has an epic precedent in Bellerophon's service fighting against the Solymi and Amazons for the king of Lycia at *Iliad* 6.184-6. Crucially, however, Bellerophon is forced to do this by the king, where Jason freely offers himself up to Aeetes.

initial aggressor may change, the response and escalation of conflict remains revenge for lost prestige: in the case of Aetes due to the theft of the fleece (4.234 τίσασθαι), with the Lemnian women due to their loss of social status (1.619 τίσειαν).

### **Cycles or Lines? The Repetition (or not) of Warfare**

The idea of revenge or retaliation is therefore crucial to both Greek and Egyptian conceptions of war: the Egyptian king must retaliate to prevent any rebellion spreading further in the world; the Greeks constantly seek recompense for any wrongs they have suffered or possessions they have lost. But revenge is a phenomenon that is very closely linked to temporality, and has important ramifications for the consequence of war. The ancient perception of time is a vast problem, and a full treatment lies well outside the scope of this work: many long monographs have been and will be written on the subject. My aim here is to summarise the main issues and existing scholarship to see how far it is possible to reconcile the Greek and Egyptian conceptions of time, and then examine how the phenomenon of war was presented within these concepts.

In the Greco-Roman world, the temporality of revenge is expressed by Seneca, who connects it closely to anger in his *De ira*; for him, anger is a present feeling, created by a past wrong and expressed as a desire for future good.<sup>272</sup> It is therefore impossible for any feeling of anger to not be followed by violence.<sup>273</sup> And of course once revenge has been achieved by one individual, the one on whom it was exacted is wronged, feels anger, and therefore seeks revenge themselves. Anger is thus fundamentally cyclical, and this connection between cyclicity and anger is seen through the frequent repetition of this motif in the Epic Cycle, where it lends itself both to inter-textual cyclicity of revenge and intra-textual ring composition; it is most famously expressed as the μῆνις of Achilles in *Iliad* 1.1.<sup>274</sup> A similar Egyptian view of anger may be seen in its use as a motif

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<sup>272</sup> Vogt (2006): 60.

<sup>273</sup> *ibid.*: 62.

<sup>274</sup> Cook (2018): 113-15.

in the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle: in *Benefice* Ankhhor begins the conflict with the Young Priest because of his anger (3.15 ḥꜥ), while Petechons refuses to fight for Petubastis for the same reason (13.12 ḥꜥ=f); in *Armour* Wertyamoniut leaves to fight Pami in anger (2.21 ḥꜥly).<sup>275</sup> The idea of ‘anger’ (ḥꜥ)<sup>276</sup> as motivator for warfare is prominent in the New Kingdom as well. The ability of anger to connect past to future and so efficiently structure narratives means that it appears as a precursor to the king’s entry into battle: Ahmose son of Ibana describes Thutmose I’s attack against the Nubians in terms of his anger (column 33 ḥꜥ.in ḥm=f); in *Qadesh* 1 the king enters battle ‘angry’ at the Hittites (§85 ḥꜥrw); Merenptah in his *Great Libyan War Inscription* begins moving against the Libyans having been ‘angered’ by their attack (column 15 ḥꜥrw).<sup>277</sup>

The temporal unity of anger thus manifests itself as a recurring motif in the narratives of war. But the reciprocal nature of revenge is not consistently present; in fact, even outside warfare the idea of cycles of revenge is barely attested in Egyptian sources.<sup>278</sup> Temporally this should not have proved a problem for either the Egyptians or Greeks. It is a commonplace to talk about the distinction between linear and cyclical time,<sup>279</sup> but such a distinction was, ultimately, present for both the Greeks and Egyptians. Linearity and cyclicity were, however, not mutually exclusive temporal concepts but complementary.<sup>280</sup> The manifestations of these ideas of time, although broadly common to both cultures, nevertheless differed in some ways. For a start, the Egyptians

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<sup>275</sup> Notably, however, Petubastis never seems to feel anger himself, despite this emotion previously tending to be the prerogative of the king (Tait 2009: 81-2).

<sup>276</sup> The same word is used both in the New Kingdom and Demotic texts, with very similar sense despite the chronological difference (TLA 114890; DWL 4435).

<sup>277</sup> *Urk.* IV.8.13; *KRI* II.119.6-10; *KRI* IV.4.4.

<sup>278</sup> Baines finds one example from all of Egyptian history, in an oblique reference from the tomb of the First Intermediate Period nomarch Ankhtifi (1999: 15), who in his biography explains how he travelled to Edfu and ended a cycle of interfamilial killing to restore peace to the region, in doing so appropriating the role of the king in travelling outside his region to pacify external disturbance (*ibid.*: 17). Though this phenomenon clearly occurred much more frequently than the textual evidence suggests, it seems that the Egyptians viewed it as extra-legal, and did not adopt processes such as were-gild to incorporate it into a justice system (*ibid.*: 16-17).

<sup>279</sup> Almost all works on time end up revolving around a duality of time: see e.g. all of the chapters in Jones’ 2016 volume (*Time and Cosmos in Greco-Roman Antiquity*), the titles of Vassiliades’ 2018 article ‘Temps cyclique et temps linéaire à la fin de la République’, Assmann’s 1975 foundational work (*Zeit und Ewigkeit im Alten Ägypten*), and Servajean’s 2007 monograph (*Djet et Neheh: Une histoire du temps égyptien*).

<sup>280</sup> Shaw (2019): 2.

had no one word to describe time, instead denoting its constituent parts (e.g. *h3w, rk* – ‘moment’; *p3wt* – ‘primordial time’; *rnpt, tr* – ‘specific temporal span’).<sup>281</sup> Further, the Egyptian hieroglyphic writing system made it clear that the words *nḥh* and *ḏt* represented two different kinds of eternity. *nḥh* was determined by the circle of the sun-disc (☉), *ḏt* by the line of the land (—). The signs indicate how the two words interact with the perceptible world: the sun appears in cycles, once every day, while the land is always present.<sup>282</sup>

On a more fundamental level, *nḥh* is life, always continuing and changing under the sun, while *ḏt* is death, remaining static under the earth; thus the former was associated with Re, the latter with Osiris.<sup>283</sup> The progression of time necessitated the co-operation of these two concepts and gods: every repetition of the day took place alongside the unchanging land, and Servajean stresses that ‘[l]a récurrence temporelle ... de ces mêmes phénomènes est également éternelle’.<sup>284</sup> Taken together, these represent what Assmann describes as a ‘Doppelgesicht der Zeit’, in which the Egyptians’ worldview was shaped by a two-fold distinction between the linked concepts of ‘Zeit und Ewigkeit’.<sup>285</sup> One aspect was cyclical, repeatedly being created and repeatedly perishing, and was primarily characterised by the rising and setting of the sun; the other was unchanging, having only singular moments of creation and destruction. This binary was applied to the whole cosmos, for example the repetitive nature of life with the unchanging nature of death and the repeated copying of texts on perishable papyrus with the eternal copy of a text on stone.<sup>286</sup> ‘Eternity’, however, did not and would not always exist: it had a beginning (*sp tpy*, the ‘first time’)<sup>287</sup> and would at some distant point in the future come to an end when these two aspects of time came together

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<sup>281</sup> Assmann (1983): 193; Borges Pires (2019): 143-4.

<sup>282</sup> Marvelia (2018): 105.

<sup>283</sup> Assmann (1983): 207-12; cf. *CT IV.335* 200d-e, 201d-e & 202a-b, 203a-b. The connection of Osiris with a linear progression of time is due to the fact he is the only god with a ‘past’ (i.e. when he was alive), which he cannot return to (Assmann 1983: 209).

<sup>284</sup> (2007): 105.

<sup>285</sup> The titles of his foundational works on the subject (1983; 1975). For early and slightly dissenting views see Hornung (1981) and Westendorf (1983), but Assmann’s argument remains dominant. Salmas (2017) provides a study of the more quotidian aspects of Egyptian time.

<sup>286</sup> See Allen (1988: 25) for this distinction within the context of Egyptian cosmogonies.

<sup>287</sup> Borges Pires (2019): 149.

and Re combined with Osiris.<sup>288</sup> Thus even eternity for the Egyptians was temporally limited. We should not presuppose that Egyptian conceptions of time remained the same across history and forms of representation – there was clearly a very significant shift with the advent of Christianity, for example – but there does seem to have been a fairly high degree of consistency, at least up to the New Kingdom.<sup>289</sup>

The idea of repetition was crucial, exemplified by the name for the moment of creation. When something is described as ‘the first’, it implies that there must at least be a second, and theoretically also a third, fourth, fifth, and so on. So given the Egyptians named creation ‘the first time/instance’, it indicates that there have since been multiple ‘instances’ and that, essentially, the movement of time in the world is made up of these ‘instances’.<sup>290</sup> It is discontinuous rather than continuous; more the ‘march’ than the ‘flow’ of time.<sup>291</sup> An instance-based view of time is also present in Egyptian king-lists, in which the past is cast as a sequence of distinct rulers who each represented a renewal of the *sp tpy*; their reigns thus conceived of as a ‘second time’, ‘third time’, ‘fourth time’ etc.<sup>292</sup> So too Manetho in his history attaches his narratives to specific reigns, and any story therefore occurs at a defined instance, confined to a fixed time (a king’s reign) rather than spanning multiple periods.<sup>293</sup> Both a human and a royal life were just one of the moments or instances in the whole span of time, and a very brief one, but it nevertheless repeated through the generations, from the furthest past to the most distant future.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Assmann (1975): 25.

<sup>289</sup> There is a notable lack of research into Egyptian conceptions of time in the Late and Greco-Roman periods before the development of Coptic, which makes drawing conclusions about any potential changes very difficult. Xu-Nan (2017) is one of very studies on time in Demotic texts.

<sup>290</sup> Assmann (1994): 113. That in the Egyptian underworld the hours of the night were divided up into distinct spaces to pass *between*, rather than one large area to pass *through*, also suggests an absence of true unity/continuity in Egyptian conceptions of time (Hegenbarth-Reichardt 2006: 21): ‘il n’y a pas un temps, mais des temps’ (Salmas 2017: 54).

<sup>291</sup> Assmann (1975): 42.

<sup>292</sup> Chantraine & Winand (2018): 19.

<sup>293</sup> Dillery (2011): 505-6.

<sup>294</sup> Assmann (1975): 18; Bochi (1994): 56.

The importance of this cyclical repetition is also seen in the Egyptian hemerologies, manuals that stated which ‘instance’ (in this case the day) was good and which was bad.<sup>295</sup> These hemerologies presuppose that every future repetition of a specific instance will be the same as those of the past; they are a way of understanding what every future instance will be. This was of great importance, because the future was largely viewed by the Egyptians as unseeable: although it could be conceived of as coming towards an individual (them therefore facing the future head-on), more often it was thought of as approaching from behind.<sup>296</sup> The same was largely true for the Greeks as well: thus at *Argonautica* 1.618-19 the Lemnian women hope ὥς κεν ὀπίσσω / μήτινα λευγαλέοιο φόνου τίσειαν (‘that **behind them/in the future** they would not pay the price for the wretched slaughter’).<sup>297</sup>

In general, however, Greek conceptions of time are quite different to the Egyptian. Most importantly, the Greeks did have a word for ‘time’ as a concept (χρόνος). Yet despite or because of this, ‘time’ does not seem to be nearly as omnipresent a concept for the Greeks; whereas *nḥh* and *dt* occur frequently in Egyptian texts, χρόνος is rarely discussed by Greek philosophers, and does not appear in Hesiod.<sup>298</sup> This stands out particularly in Hesiod’s description of the Ages of Man (*Works and Days* 109-201), which does not mention ‘age’ or anything related to time at all: instead each ‘age’ is a γένος (‘race’).<sup>299</sup> It is the Romans who emphasise the temporality of this narrative, perhaps under influence of the similar Etruscan theory of the *saecula*.<sup>300</sup> Another important Greek

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<sup>295</sup> Steele (2016): 50.

<sup>296</sup> Chantraine & Winand (2018): 12.

<sup>297</sup> Albritton (2007): 7; with regard to the future, the Romans were literally forward-facing (Shaw 2019: 2).

<sup>298</sup> Albritton (2007): 5.

<sup>299</sup> There is clearly some acknowledgment of temporal cyclicity in terms of the conception of the farming year: the term used to describe a completed year is περιπλόμενος (‘having gone around’), which can also be used spatially – just as enemy soldiers can ‘go around’ a city to surround it (*Iliad* 18.220), so too a year can ‘go around’ (*Works and Days* 386) its cycle (*LSJ s.v. περιπέλομαι*). But even in Hesiod’s poem, so concerned with the repetition of the farming year, there is relatively little focus on the concept of cyclicity (see Nünlist 2007 for a fuller discussion of time in Hesiod, including the very linear *Theogony*).

<sup>300</sup> Vassiliades (2018): 56-7; the myth of the ‘Golden Age’ was much more common amongst the Romans than the Greeks as a literary motif (Feeney 2007: 112). It was an important element of Augustan propaganda (Weisser 2016: 180), presumably because an ‘Age’ could cyclically be returned to, a ‘race’ could not.

word with reference to time was αἰών, which had a broad semantic meaning revolving around the idea of a ‘long period of time in which χρόνος occurs’; it could also mean ‘eternity’.<sup>301</sup> In Plato’s *Timaeus* – one of the rare philosophical discussions on time – it becomes clear, however, that ‘eternity’ for the Greeks was, like for the Egyptians, temporally bounded: we are told (38b) that χρόνος δ’ οὖν μετ’ οὐρανοῦ γέγονεν, ἵνα ἅμα γεννηθέντες ἅμα καὶ λυθῶσιν (‘time, therefore, arose with the universe, so that having been brought forth together they might also be dissolved together’). Thus αἰών is, like *nḥh*, a cycle of time: like *nḥh* it was associated with the celestial bodies, and as a personified figure it was often depicted accompanied by the signs of the zodiac.<sup>302</sup>

The idea of cyclical time was particularly prominent amongst the Stoics, who – following Plato’s description of the universe’s lifetime as a ‘great year’ (μέγας ἐνιαυτός) – believed that the cosmos was born out of fire and would die in fire, only to be born again.<sup>303</sup> Some also took this cyclicity to an extreme level, arguing that every cycle was identical: Nemesius, a philosopher from the 4<sup>th</sup>-century AD, wrote (*De natura hominis* 310) that the Stoics believed ἔσεσθαι γὰρ πάλιν Σωκράτη καὶ Πλάτωνα καὶ ἕκαστον τῶν ἀνθρώπων (‘there will be again Socrates and Plato and every single human’);<sup>304</sup> even the more moderate position, however, was that there would only be small changes each time.<sup>305</sup> Crucially, the Stoics also viewed time as a series of instances: thus there was no ‘present’ instance, since any such thing could be divided up into a past and future instance; the argument, first made by Chrysippus of Soli, third head of the Stoic school, is summarised by the 5<sup>th</sup>-century AD compiler Stobaeus (*Eclogue* 1.260) as οὐθεὶς ὅλως ἐνίσταται χρόνος, ‘no time is wholly present’.<sup>306</sup> The cosmos has two temporal components that act in unison: a constant progression of events, in which one causes the next,<sup>307</sup> and an eternal, non-repeating phenomenon,

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<sup>301</sup> *LSJ* s.v. αἰών.

<sup>302</sup> Jones (2016): 38.

<sup>303</sup> Vassiliades (2018): 53.

<sup>304</sup> Salles (2018): 166.

<sup>305</sup> *ibid.*: 175.

<sup>306</sup> *ibid.*: 139.

<sup>307</sup> For the cosmos as causative sequence of events see Alexander of Aphrodisias (fl. 200 AD) *De fato* 22: τὸν κόσμον τόνδε ... ἔχειν τὴν τῶν ὄντων διοίκησιν αἰδίον κατὰ εἰρμόν τινα καὶ τάξιν προιοῦσαν, τῶν πρώτων τοῖς μετὰ ταῦτα γινομένοις αἰτίων γινομένων (‘this cosmos ... has an eternal management of things, in a

identified by Cleanthes of Assos, second head of the Stoic school, as a cosmic ‘heat’;<sup>308</sup> these are procatarctic and synectic causes of the universe and time continuing.<sup>309</sup>

Such a view seems very similar to that of the Egyptians, who also believed in a temporally bounded eternity that entailed the co-operation of two temporal components: the eternally repeating instances of *nḥḥ* and the constant, unchanging *ḏt*. Particularly interesting is the fact that for both, ‘linear’ time is fundamentally static. Campagno’s analysis of the Egyptian perception is thus relevant also for the Greco-Roman Stoics:

[I]n contrast to the linear time of ‘modern’ societies, which favours the sequence of transformations through which the present is explained, Egyptian linear time is understood in terms of continuity, of the permanence of the primordial order.<sup>310</sup>

One cannot, obviously, apply the Stoic beliefs to all Greeks (just as one should also not assume that the conceptions of time found in Egyptian religious and royal contexts were shared across the whole country). But a conception of time as a sequence of instances with an underlying constancy can be seen in other sources. Zeno of Elea in the 5<sup>th</sup>-century BC invented four paradoxes designed to point out the logical absurdities in a belief that time (and space) could be divided infinitely into a series of instances or distances; that he felt the need for these paradoxes presupposes that their initial assumptions were perceived as largely common-sense. They are known from Aristotle’s description of them (which we should not assume was necessarily done in good faith) at *Physics* 6 239b5-240b7. Despite their clearly false conclusions – that because time was instance-based, it could always be divided into more and more instances; therefore anything passing through time had to complete

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certain sequence and order that moves forward such that the first things to happen are causes of the things that happen after them’).

<sup>308</sup> For the concept of cosmic heat as a unifying constant see Cicero *De natura deorum* 2.28: *cum omnes mundi partes sustineantur calore, mundum etiam ipsum simili parique natura in tanta diuturnitate servari* (‘since all parts of the world are sustained by heat, the world itself is still preserved after such a long time by a similar or identical element’).

<sup>309</sup> Salles (2018): 156-8. ‘Procatarctic’ means that one thing causes another to happen sequentially, ‘synectic’ that one thing causes another to happen contemporaneously. The razing of crops by an army is a procatarctic cause of there being no harvest, the salt remaining in the earth a synectic cause.

<sup>310</sup> (2019): 103.

an infinite number of instances, which is impossible; thus nothing can do anything at all – proving them false without highly developed mathematics posed a serious problem.

Aristotle's solution largely anticipated the Stoic theory of time: one could distinguish between the distance or length of time that was filled with a sequence of instances or smaller distances, and a distance or length of time that permanently indivisibly existed in the same state.<sup>311</sup> Thus there is one time that is eternal and characterised (or able to be characterised) by a theoretically endless sequence of repetitions, intervals of any given length which can contain even smaller intervals; there is also another, equally eternal, time that cannot be divided or altered, but stays in the same state while the other time moves through its intervals. Any action or movement passes both through the cyclical intervals of the first and the linear constancy of the second. While clearly not all Greeks shared this opinion – Zeno the most obvious example – Aristotle's aim seems to have been to show that the common-sense viewpoint that things did move and act could be logically explained. He articulates these beliefs despite the Greek language's evident difficulty in doing so, lacking established, significant terms such as *δι* and *νη* that could succinctly denote important abstract aspects of time and eternity.

Evidence for Aristotle's beliefs outside Greek philosophy has been convincingly shown by Shaw in his 2019 article on the Romans and the future. Starting from the question of why the Romans never established a lasting national debt, he demonstrates that this was because they – and also the Greeks – could only view the future as a series of instances that might take place in a world still in essentially the same state as the present; they did not (or could not) conceive of the future as a constantly changing continuum. So again we find a dualistic view of time: a sequence of repetitive events and a constant, linear sequence underpinning it all.<sup>312</sup> The continuum was

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<sup>311</sup> Huggett (2019).

<sup>312</sup> Cf. Feeney (2007: 49-50) for a broadly similar view, that Greco-Roman time was essentially viewed as a sequence of synchronous events connected by a notion of unbroken linearity. Purves (2010: 127) connects these views of time to views of space, pointing out that Herodotus' narration of the cycle of rapes at the start of the *Histories* creates both an instance-based view of time (rather than one based on a continuum) and a location-based view of space (rather than one based on a synoptic map).

static, the individual instances the only things that could change. Thus any strategic or political decisions were not the result of long-term planning and a desire to constantly improve, but motivated either by opportunity or necessity. As he puts it:

Rather than having future resources of its own, the imperial state was involved in a constant zero-sum struggle with other revenue holding entities, from municipalities to temple complexes, for what were perceived to be the fixed currently available resources.<sup>313</sup>

Examples of an apparent conception of continuous future change are misleading: Vitruvius at *De architectura* 2.8.8 discusses depreciation, but for him this is a fixed decrease in value by 1/80<sup>th</sup> every single year, and so variable neither in quantity nor temporality. It is an event that will occur every year in exactly the same way.<sup>314</sup> This view of the future also had an impact on warfare, which as with financial and political matters was essentially an *ad hoc* phenomenon without any apparent grand strategy behind it. Roman handbooks to military strategy, such as Frontinus' *Stratagems* (written around the end of the 1<sup>st</sup>-century AD) were not theoretical discussions of how best to wage war, involving the management of state and army resources, but instead a collection of case-studies and hypotheticals. Their advice was for discrete instances or events based entirely on past and present circumstances.<sup>315</sup> Despite facing towards it, the Romans could not see a future, and any grand military strategy was accordingly defensive in nature, fortresses built to protect against, rather than take advantage of, the future.

Though studies of futurity in Ancient Egypt are somewhat limited, this model seems plausible for the Egyptians.<sup>316</sup> As already discussed, their dualistic view of time corresponds fairly closely to that of the Greeks and Romans; further, Shaw connects this view of time to the lack of infinite, single-point linear perspective in Greco-Roman paintings and reliefs, a phenomenon also

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<sup>313</sup> (2019): 11.

<sup>314</sup> Shaw (2019): 18.

<sup>315</sup> *ibid.*: 12.

<sup>316</sup> Discussions of futurity are largely concerned with analyses of the linguistic tense and its nuances rather than the abstract concept; see e.g. Vernus (1990), Grossman, Lescuyer & Polis (2014).

not present in Egyptian two-dimensional art.<sup>317</sup> In a military context one can apply this hypothesis to the well-attested processes of the Egyptian conquest and colonisation of Nubia in the Middle and New Kingdoms. A consistent theme of studies on this subject is the essential reactivity of the Egyptian conquest and occupation of the area. Thus Zibelius-Chen concludes that the conquest of Nubia in the New Kingdom was a primarily opportunistic exploitation of a power vacuum;<sup>318</sup> so too Bestock argues that the Middle Kingdom fortresses in the area were constructed as reactions to local leaders and the kingdom of Kush, and she is supported also by Valbelle, who suggests that the Middle Egyptian kings 'built the Second Cataract fortresses, called menenu ... *in response to* the Kushite defenses of Kerma and Dokki Gel' (emphasis mine).<sup>319</sup> Morris' chapter on the New Kingdom conquest of Nubia<sup>320</sup> suggests two principal reasons for the war: revenge (*prima facie* reactive) and plunder/wealth extraction to fulfil an economic need, one of the practices cited by Shaw as evidence for his hypothesis with regard to the Romans.<sup>321</sup>

Nor is there a hint of any long-term planning or development in terms of the actual conquest: Valbelle says that Thutmose I would have planned the conquest 'since his coronation', but this period was in fact just over a year and so, owing to the seasonal nature of campaigning, the conquest was undertaken at almost the earliest possible opportunity.<sup>322</sup> Moreover construction of fortresses was undertaken in distinct temporal phases rather than over a continuous period of time,<sup>323</sup> and although Lower Nubia was immediately integrated into the Egyptian administration,

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<sup>317</sup> Shaw (2019): 20. See Baines' 1985 article (reprinted 2007) for a cognitive approach to the question of perspective in Egyptian art, following on from the work of Schäfer (1974); he is ultimately unable to suggest why full perspective was not used by the Egyptians (2007: 235).

<sup>318</sup> (1988): 239.

<sup>319</sup> Bestock (2021): 273; Valbelle (2021): 327.

<sup>320</sup> (2018): 117-40.

<sup>321</sup> (2019): 4.

<sup>322</sup> (2021): 329. It was also completed within one campaign as essentially a single military event, the first military activity of Thutmose I (Davies 2019: 93).

<sup>323</sup> Bestock (2021): 274; Smith (2021): 388.

Upper Nubia was left under less direct control without any signs of plans to gradually bring it into the fold.<sup>324</sup>

This dualistic conception of time allowed flexibility in representations of the temporality of war. A belief in the fundamental cyclicity and repetitiveness of warfare is present in almost all of the Greek historians: Herodotus presents war as a sequence of reversing cycles in which victory is won and lost, and so ends his work by foreshadowing Athens' rise to take the place of Persia;<sup>325</sup> Thucydides explicitly states that his history is intended to help future readers understand their own presents and futures, since events will constantly repeat in much the same way over and over again.<sup>326</sup> That the Greek historians of the 4<sup>th</sup>-century BC, starting with Xenophon, all began their works at the exact moment a predecessor had finished, indicates a construction of the past that progresses linearly in time (and will progress linearly in the work of the next historian) while constantly repeating the same themes and motifs.<sup>327</sup>

Polybius is much the same: his belief in the fundamental cyclicity of political constitutions – that all would undergo the same changes and progressions – is a key element of his approach to the Romans, and takes up the entirety of Book 6. Since he views it as a law of nature, and human nature is unchanging, it will always recur in the same way,<sup>328</sup> and so past examples should be studied so that they can be applied to the future.<sup>329</sup> The ending to Polybius' work makes clear that this cyclicity is unavoidable, since he added an extra ten books to his original chronological endpoint in order to demonstrate that Roman hegemony was conforming to previous examples

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<sup>324</sup> Smith (2021): 388.

<sup>325</sup> Baragwanath (2012): 289-90; Saïd (2012): 101; Wesselmann (2016): 203; Pelling (2019): 272-3. See Rood (2007a) for a detailed look at how Herodotus emphasises his belief in the cyclicity of time and human actions.

<sup>326</sup> Greenwood (2016): 86; Thucydides' view is summed up by Darbo-Peschanski as 'once we accept that all wars can be reduced to the model of the Peloponnesian War, the future must be confined to the mere repetition of the same pattern' (2016: 185).

<sup>327</sup> Darbo-Peschanski (2016): 179. For Xenophon, the first of the continuators and who frequently plays with the progression of time and the repetition of events, see Rood (2007b, 2012).

<sup>328</sup> Vassiliades (2018): 57-8.

<sup>329</sup> Miltsios (2016): 141-2.

and moving through Polybius' political cycle.<sup>330</sup> Polybius concludes his work with Scipio Africanus Minor predicting, over the ruins of Carthage, that the same fate will also befall Rome, an opinion Polybius describes (38.21) as highly 'statesmanlike and understanding' (πραγματικωτέραν και νουνεχεστέραν).<sup>331</sup> Scipio also appears (38.22) to have quoted two lines of the *Iliad*, spoken by Agamemnon at 4.164-5 and Hector at 6.448-9: ἔσσειται ἡμᾶρ ὅταν ποτ' ὀλώλη Ἴλιος ἱρῆ / καὶ Πριάμοις καὶ λαὸς εὐμμελίῳ Πριάμοιο ('There will be a day when holy Troy will be destroyed, and Priam, and the people of Priam of the good ashen-spear'). There is pointed ambiguity here: Scipio is both Agamemnon, the victorious general announcing his triumph, and Hector, afraid for his city's future; even further, however, Agamemnon's sack of Troy and consequent seizure of Cassandra led to his death, and Aeneas' forced displacement from Troy to Italy resulted in the Roman destruction of the Greeks and their supremacy in the Mediterranean.<sup>332</sup> Polybius therefore concludes his work by situating Rome's triumph within the constantly reversing cycles of Greek warfare against the rest of the world, and predicts that the seemingly omnipotent Rome will in turn also fall.

A cyclically reciprocal view of war is evident in the *Alexandra*. Two passages in the poem extol the Romans and assert their dominance of the entire world (lines 1226-82, 1446-50), and the latter forms the conclusion to the poem, and in particular Cassandra's narration of the series of Greek and Asian conflicts familiar from Herodotus.<sup>333</sup> But although it is clear (or as clear as anything in the *Alexandra* is) that at the time of the poem's composition Rome is supreme, the author does not provide any evidence that it will remain so. By situating Rome's rise to power as part of these endless cycles of Greek warfare, the author of the *Alexandra*, like Polybius, suggests that there will be a day when Rome will be destroyed, like Troy before it.<sup>334</sup> War as a succession of cycles of

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<sup>330</sup> Wiater (2016): 247-8. Rome's previously bright and potentially unique future is thereby thrown into a more pessimistic uncertainty (*ibid.*: 251).

<sup>331</sup> Miltisios (2016): 148.

<sup>332</sup> Wiater (2016): 258, 261.

<sup>333</sup> The passages have been suspected of being interpolations (e.g. by West 2003), but the two recent major studies (Hornblower 2015, McNelis & Sens 2016) convincingly argue that they are integral to the overall structure of the poem.

<sup>334</sup> There is, notably, no open-ended prophecy of the enduring power of Aeneas' descendants, despite precedents existing in both the *Iliad* (20.307-8) and the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (196-7).

revenge was therefore clearly still a valid concept in the Hellenistic period, but it is telling that it appears in authors writing during a period of relative uncertainty,<sup>335</sup> when Rome's long-term supremacy was not yet guaranteed.

We find a very different depiction of the relationship between war and time in the works of the early Ptolemaic period. There are no reversing cycles, only identical ones repeating over and over. Theocritus in his encomium of Ptolemy II (*Idyll* 17) casts the king as the latest in a long line of Greeks who fought – and conquered in – wars against the Other. There is Alexander, described at line 19 as Πέρσαισι βαρὺς θεὸς αἰολομίτρας ('the god with the gleaming diadem, grievous for the Persians'), Heracles 'slayer of Centaurs' (line 20 κενταυροφόνοιο),<sup>336</sup> and finally (lines 56-7) there is born αἰχμητὰ Πτολεμαῖε / αἰχμητᾶ Πτολεμαίῳ ('spearman Ptolemy to spearman Ptolemy'). Ptolemy II is a perfect verbal repetition of his father, and so is suggested to be a perfect repetition in general.<sup>337</sup> The sequence of wars between the Greeks and the barbarians is presented as being Heracles -> Alexander -> Ptolemy I -> Ptolemy II, a constant succession of Greek victories with no reversals.<sup>338</sup> War is still cyclical, but the results are always the same.

Both the *Argonautica* and the *Aetia* treat war from an aetiological perspective that emphasises its continued, unchanging effects.<sup>339</sup> The first major conflict in the *Argonautica* (between humans) occurs at 1.1020-52, when the Argonauts are mistaken for pirates by the Doliones and therefore attacked. The result is an easy victory for the Greeks, and the dead king's wife kills herself out of grief. Apollonius then tells us (1.1067-9) that the local nymphs wept for her,

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<sup>335</sup> The historical context of the *Alexandra* is much debated: McNelis & Sens (2016: 210) and Hornblower (2015: 37) favour mainland Greece after the Roman defeat of Macedon at Cynoscephalae (197 BC), Kosmetatou (2000) the Attalid court after the Roman defeat of the Seleucids at Magnesia (189 BC).

<sup>336</sup> Hunter (2003): 117.

<sup>337</sup> *ibid.*: 138.

<sup>338</sup> Conceivably there is no mention of the Persian Wars because the leading role was played by the democratic Athens rather than a king, but this did not stop the Ptolemies (and indeed also the Attalids) elsewhere connecting themselves to the city; cf. especially the donation by the Attalid kings of statue groups of both Gauls and Persians for a clear example of the successor kings casting themselves as inheritors of Athens' role in defending the Greeks (see e.g. Habicht 1990, 1992).

<sup>339</sup> Harder (2003): 290. In the telling of an *aition* the past was essentially compressed into the present, rendering both the same (Thomas 2019: 283).

καί οἱ ἀπὸ βλεφάρων ὅσα δάκρυα χεῦαν ἔραζε,  
πάντα τάγε κρήνην τεῦξαν θεαί, ἦν καλέουσιν  
Κλείτην, δυστήνοιο περικλεῆς οὔνομα νύμφης.

and as many tears as poured to the ground for her from their eyes,  
all of these the goddesses fashioned into a spring, which they call  
Cleite, the famous name of the ill-fortuned bride.

The sudden switch in tense at 1.1068, from aorist (τεῦξαν) to present (καλέουσιν), indicates the enduring nature of the past battle's effect on the present. Further, at 1.1075-7 we are told that:

ἔνθ' ἔτι νῦν, εὗτ' ἄν σφιν ἐτήσια χύτλα χέωνται  
Κύζικον ἐνναίοντες Ἴάονες, ἔμπεδον αἰεὶ  
πανδήμοιο μύλης πελάνους ἐπαλετρεύουσιν.

Here still now, when the yearly libations for them (the dead) are poured  
by the Ionians dwelling in Cyzicus, forever and always  
they grind the cakes at the mill of all the people.

The repetition of juxtaposed temporal markers relating to the present (ἔτι νῦν ... ἔμπεδον αἰεὶ) emphasises the present and eternally lasting consequences of this battle. The past directly (and smoothly) continues into the present. Similarly, after the Argonauts attack the pursuing Colchians in Book 4 and then escape, the remainder choose not to return home (4.513-15):

ἔμπεδα δ' ἄλλυδις ἄλλοι ἐφορμηθέντες ἔνασθεν.  
οἱ μὲν ἐπ' αὐτῶν νήσων ἔβαν, ἧσιν ἐπέσχον  
ἦρωες, ναίουσι δ' ἐπόνυμοι Ἀψύρτοιο·

Having moored, they dwelt continually here and there.  
Some went onto the very islands on which the heroes  
stayed, and there they dwell, named after Apsyrtus.

Apollonius proceeds to tell us (4.516-21) about the rest of the Colchians and where they settled, emphasising that they (or their descendants) are still present there. Again we see the switch from the aorist tense (ἔβαν, ἐπέσχον) to the present (ναίουσι), that indicates the close connection of past

and present. The past war has an unchanging effect on the present, and there is no reason to doubt that this will change in the future.<sup>340</sup>

So too in Callimachus' *Aetia* we see a similar approach to war. A number of his narratives include war in some capacity, though many are too fragmentary to fully understand the context: fr. 4 seems to reference Minos' conquest of the Greek islands, fr. 93 narrates the siege of Lipara by the Tyrrhenians, fr. 104 is set during the colonisation of Thasos by the Parians. As with the other *aitia*, these presumably stressed the continuity between past and present,<sup>341</sup> and therefore emphasised the importance of past wars to present circumstances.<sup>342</sup> The final episode in the poem – fr. 110, the *Coma Berenices* – breaks from this pattern. It too is set during the context of a war (Ptolemy III's invasion of the Seleucid kingdom during the Third Syrian War), and judging by Catullus' Latin translation (*carmen* 66)<sup>343</sup> seems to have used military language throughout: at line 12 we are told that Ptolemy 'went to devastate the borders of Assyria' (*vastatum finis iuerat Assyrios*), and at lines 13-14 the royal wedding night is cast as a military conflict.<sup>344</sup> The lock of hair, excusing its helplessness, makes reference to a permanent effect of a past war (fr. 110.45-6: διὰ μέ[σσο]υ / Μηδείων ὀλοαὶ νῆες ἔβησαν Ἰθῶ (‘through the middle of Athos, the destructive ships of the Persians sailed’). The reference is to Xerxes' construction of a canal dividing the peninsula of Mount Athos from the mainland, narrated at Herodotus 7.22. This past conflict has permanently marked the natural landscape; it is a precedent for the effect of the current conflict (that will hopefully also end in defeat of the Persian Seleucids), which is that the natural skyscape has been marked by the catastrophised lock of hair. Callimachus, in his last *aition*, moves the timeframe of the poem from

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<sup>340</sup> The large number of similar narratorial prolepses throughout the poem is indicative of Apollonius' desire to connect the mythical past of his narrative to the modern world (Klooster 2007: 75); Callimachus in his *Aetia* uses the same strategy for the same effect (Harder 2007: 86).

<sup>341</sup> Harder (2003): 293.

<sup>342</sup> Harder (2012): 778.

<sup>343</sup> Catullus 66.79-88, which describes an *aition* for a nuptial ritual, is missing from the standalone version of the *Coma Berenices* which survives, but Catullus seems to have translated the rest faithfully, and this *aition* was perhaps present in the *Aetia*; it establishes the idea of a marriage modelled after that of Ptolemy and Berenice into the future (Harder 2012: 846-8; Clayman 2014: 102).

<sup>344</sup> Harder (2012): 807-8.

past-present to past-present-future, and therefore indicates that what was true for the past (i.e. that wars present lasting, unchanging effects) will be true for the future as well.<sup>345</sup> So when we see elsewhere that war has helped to establish the Ptolemies as kings (e.g. through their defeat of the Gauls in the *Hymn to Delos*), we know that they will remain kings through war for all time, as long as the lock of Berenice remains in the sky.

A cyclical structure of war is present in the *Posthomerica*<sup>346</sup> from a narrative standpoint: four heroes come to Troy to help fight the Greeks, and all are killed: Penthesilea in Book 1, Memnon in Book 2, Eurypylos in Books 6-8, and Coroebus in Book 13.<sup>347</sup> Given Quintus was combining three poems from the Epic Cycle (the *Aethiopsis*, *Little Iliad*, and *Ilioupersis*), this was to some extent unavoidable, though it reflects a great degree of repetitiveness in battle. And indeed on a much larger scale, the entire poem, which so often borrows material (particularly similes) directly from the Homeric poems, acts as the third poem in a Homeric 'cycle', filling in the gaps between the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.<sup>348</sup>

In terms of the broader temporal scope of the poem, however, there is very little trace of cyclicity at all. As a poem narrating the interval between the two Homeric poems the structure of the poem is fundamentally linear, and indeed Quintus explicitly draws a straight line between the ending of the *Iliad* and the beginning of the *Odyssey* through verbal parallels at the beginning and end of his own poem.<sup>349</sup> Throughout the poem, the power and function of memory is also emphasised, Quintus going to great lengths to connect his narrative particularly to that of the

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<sup>345</sup> Harder (2003): 304.

<sup>346</sup> For a detailed study of time in the *Posthomerica*, see Greensmith (2020), who looks at the poem's temporality primarily through Quintus' interactions with his literary predecessors, and how these examples of intertextuality present themselves in Quintus' 'temporality of the interval' (p. 291).

<sup>347</sup> Cf. Greensmith (2020: 236): 'Penthesilea, Memnon and Eurypylos are all marked by transience'.

<sup>348</sup> Greensmith (2020): 142.

<sup>349</sup> Greensmith (2018): 261. So: *Iliad* 24.804 ὧς οἳ γ' ἀμφίεπον τάφον Ἕκτορος ἵπποδάμοιο ('So they performed the funeral of horse-conquering Hector') ≈ *Posthomerica* 1.1 εἰθ' ὑπὸ Πηλείωνι δάμη θεοείκελος Ἕκτωρ ('When godlike Hector had been conquered by the son of Peleus'); *Odyssey* 1.4 πολλὰ δ' ὅ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ('he suffered many griefs at sea') ≈ *Posthomerica* 14.630-1 ἔμελλε / πάσχειν ἄλγεα πολλά ('he was fated to suffer many griefs').

*Iliad*.<sup>350</sup> In addition to this emphasis on the past is an equal focus on the future, mediated through the character of Aeneas. At 11.358-99 the Greeks under Odysseus, assaulting the walls of Troy, draw up in a formation that resembles the Roman military *testudo* only to be crushed by Aeneas hurling rocks from the ramparts. That this passage alludes to a similar one found in Virgil's *Aeneid* (9.505-18)<sup>351</sup> creates one link to the future, Quintus establishing his own poem as metatextual successor and narrative predecessor to Virgil's.

More important is the fact that it is Aeneas, ancestor of the Romans, who destroys this very Roman military phenomenon when it is invented by Odysseus; he and his descendants will in turn adapt and perfect this tactic and use it themselves, with much greater success, to conquer Greece. As Greensmith puts it, 'Aeneas *learns how to be Roman* through copying Homer's hero at Troy' (emphasis hers).<sup>352</sup> Quintus crafts a Homeric aetiology for the *testudo*, and in doing so allows a direct line to be drawn from the Greek past to the Roman present.<sup>353</sup>

Looking beyond the narrative of the poem, there are no hints as to the future conflicts between Greece and the east as found in Cassandra's prophecy in the *Alexandra*. Instead we are presented with a very linear temporal view of the future, when Calchas at 13.336-41 orders the Greeks to stop attacking Aeneas by making a prophecy:

τὸν γὰρ θέσφατόν ἐστι θεῶν ἐρικυδέι βουλῇ  
Θύμβριν ἐπ' εὐρυρέεθρον ἀπὸ Ξάνθοιο μολόντα  
τευξέμεν ἱερὸν ἄστν καὶ ἐσσομένοισιν ἀγητὸν  
ἀνθρώποις, αὐτὸν δὲ πολυσπερέεσσι βροτοῖσι  
κοιρανέειν· ἐκ τοῦ δὲ γένος μετόπισθεν ἀνάξειν  
ἄχρισ ἐπ' Ἄντολιν τε καὶ ἀκάματον Δύσιν ἐλθεῖν.

For he is ordained by the glorious will of the gods  
to go from Xanthus to the broad-streamed Tiber  
and found a city, holy and wondrous to future  
people, and he over wide-spread humans  
will be lord; and from him afterwards a race will rule  
as far as the rising and untiring setting of the Sun.

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<sup>350</sup> Greensmith (2020): 205, 220-3.

<sup>351</sup> Gärtner (2005): 114-32.

<sup>352</sup> (2020): 334.

<sup>353</sup> Greensmith describes Aeneas as 'the thread connecting Greek and Roman aetiologies' (2020: 334).

Temporally this prediction of Roman supremacy is unqualified: the future infinitives have no end. Indeed, given their empire is ultimately characterised by the ‘untiring’ sun, it is suggested that as long as the sun rises in the morning and sets at night,<sup>354</sup> the Romans will rule. The vision of time presented in the *Posthomeric* therefore broadly accords with that of the Ptolemaic poets. The lasting effect of the Trojan War is not an endless series of conflicts between Greeks and barbarians as it is in the *Alexandra*, but endless rule for the Romans;<sup>355</sup> Quintus creates ‘an active, accepting and constructive vision of imperial subjectivity’.<sup>356</sup> Like Jupiter at *Aeneid* 1.279 he has given the Romans *imperium sine fine*.

The concept of war establishing royal dominion for all eternity is also found in the New Kingdom sources. As we have seen, the fact that war was essentially conceived of as a repetitive act, defined by numbered campaigns each belonging to a specific year, indicates its use to repetitively enforce Egyptian dominance. It is an act of *nḥh*: as the sun regularly rises and sets, so too the Egyptian king sets out from Egypt, destroys his enemies, and then returns.<sup>357</sup> The preservation of these victories helps to ensure their permanence.<sup>358</sup> The act of carving a narrative

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<sup>354</sup> The subsequent veiling of the face by the star Electra (13.551-9) in sadness for Troy’s fall adds further celestial permanence to Troy’s destruction and Rome’s subsequent rise (Hadjittofi 2007: 370-1, though she interprets the lack of explicit mention of Rome in this passage as evidence of anti-Roman sentiment that is slightly incongruous with the prophecy of Calchas).

<sup>355</sup> The peace guaranteed by Roman rule seems to have been welcomed by the Greek elite, since it ended the dreaded *stasis* of the Greek world (Hardwick 2000: 350). For earlier Greek predictions of unending rule over the Trojans by the sons of Aeneas see *Iliad* 20.307-8 and *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 196-7.

<sup>356</sup> Greensmith (2020): 291. Schubert (2007: 352-5) suggests that the prominence of the Athenians at the end of Book 13 (lines 496-543) indicates that Athens is the *telos* of the poem, as a city of cultural supremacy; given Rome’s dominance has already been explicitly stated, however, this seems unlikely, and although a connection between Troy and Athens is plausible, it is surely only inasmuch as Athens as a symbol of the currently victorious Greeks will be a symbol of their defeat by Rome.

<sup>357</sup> Campagno (2019): 102. The act of victory is itself a repetition of royal behaviour dating back to very early in history, re-enacting the smiting scenes seen already in the Narmer palette; through repetition, a direct chronological line is traced from the present to the distant past (Manassa 2013: 14). For examples of conscious repetition by kings to link past and present see Baines (2019).

<sup>358</sup> The importance of recording victories to the broader Egyptian conception of warfare is indicated by the scribe Tjanuni’s tomb biography, in which he places emphasis on his role in ‘making enduring’ (*smn*) the victories of Thutmose III rather than any fighting he might have done himself (Allon 2020: 53).

on stone monumentalises and eternalises it and ensures that the victory is itself perpetual;<sup>359</sup> the military stelae of the New Kingdom therefore, by recording Egyptian dominance in war, also enforce it on their surroundings by ensuring that every day, every hour, the memory of Egypt's conquest is physically present and so the conquest is, in a sense, repeated every time.<sup>360</sup>

Indeed the concern of the Egyptian texts is primarily the present, and ensuring that this present will last into the future.<sup>361</sup> Many of the texts situate themselves in a fixed instance by giving a date for the events or composition of the text at the beginning. Thus Thutmose III's Gebel Barkal Stela immediately states its date of composition (Regnal Year 47, Month 3 of Akhet, Day 10), as do Sety I's First Beth-Shan Stela (Regnal Year 1, Month 3 of Shemu, Day 10), and Merenptah's Triumph Stela and Athribis Stela (both, somewhat suspiciously, Regnal Year 5, Month 3 of Shemu, Day 3). In the narration of Thutmose III's victory over Megiddo in his *Annals*, this is taken a step further: dates are given at multiple points in the narrative (columns 6, 13, 18, 56, 84), presenting it as a series of instances in which the king leads his army towards victory. That these dates clearly do not correspond to the actual events of the campaign (too many fall on auspicious days to be coincidence) indicates that the Egyptian concern was with fixing the events to specific instances, preferably divinely sanctioned ones, rather than recording an 'accurate' temporal record of the war.<sup>362</sup> The structure of the *Annals* in general, a narration of annual victories of the king in battle, applies the same principle to a larger scale. The king's repeated conquering is eternalised in stone, and will therefore repeat for eternity.<sup>363</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> Loprieno (1996): 281.

<sup>360</sup> Hornung (1967): 155; Zibelius-Chen (1988): 204; Galán (1995): 136-7. The Greeks seem to have only developed this use of monumental narrative relatively late on, realising in the Hellenistic period that 'the monumentalised text of a decree could (also) serve to stabilise for the future the memory of events – or rather, the demos' version thereof' (Luraghi 2010: 257).

<sup>361</sup> Spalinger (2003: 416) characterises the relative lack of connection to the plupast as typical of the *Königsnovelle*. Given this attitude is also consistent across a number of texts that do not otherwise conform to the motifs of the *Königsnovelle* (e.g. Ramesses II's Beth-Shan Stela, Merenptah's Triumph Stela), one could perhaps expand his hypothesis to a broader range of New Kingdom monumental texts.

<sup>362</sup> Baines (2008): 30.

<sup>363</sup> Unusually Thutmose III represents himself in his reliefs writing the *Annals* alongside Thoth, becoming the author of his victory in both a figurative and a literal sense (Allon 2020: 139-40).

In conjunction with the precise dating of the present found at the beginning of many of these texts is a very open temporal ending, present in both the monumental and papyrus sources. Thutmose III's Poetical Stela ends at line 25 with Amun telling the king:<sup>364</sup>

*smn=i-tw hr st-hr n hhw m mpwt ssm=k nhw n dt*

I establish you on the Horus-throne for millions of years, so that you may lead the living forever.

The *Taking of Joppa* concludes (3.11-13) with Djehuty telling his king that:<sup>365</sup>

*mḥ=k pr n it=k imn nsw ntrw m ḥmw ḥmwt iw=w hrw hry rdwy=k r nhḥ dt*

You may fill the house of your father Amun, King of the Gods, with male slaves and female slaves, who are fallen under your feet eternally and forever.

In the penultimate line (23) of Ramesses II's Beth-Shan Stela, we are told:<sup>366</sup>

*ir.n-n=f ḥpš=f rn r nhḥ ḥft-hr ḥšwt-nbt*

His muscle has made a name for him to eternity before all foreign lands.

At the end of Merenptah's *Great Libyan War Inscription* (line 79), we are told of the narrative that:<sup>367</sup>

*spḥr m ḥḥ-nb sšw r dt*

(There is) a copy in every office, written down forever.

Notable in the latter two examples is the strong sense of self-referentiality, explicit acknowledgments that these texts function to preserve the king's victories for all time. The texts

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<sup>364</sup> *Urk.* IV.619.1-2.

<sup>365</sup> *LES* 85.2-3. For *Joppa's* engagement with monumental military inscriptions see Manassa (2013: 76, 82).

<sup>366</sup> *KRI* II.151.13.

<sup>367</sup> *KRI* IV.12.5.

begin in the present, and project these present victories and ensuing domination as far into the future as possible. The effects of these victories are permanent and unchanging.

There is, on the other hand, no permanence or sense of lasting victory in the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle, and this difference is particularly clear in light of the ending to the similarly non-monumental *Taking of Joppa* quoted above.<sup>368</sup> There was clearly still a concern with preservation of the past: as with the monumental New Kingdom texts, it seems that many of the Demotic narratives began with a regnal year date, setting the story at a fixed point in time under a specific king;<sup>369</sup> the preservation of these texts in temple archives also perhaps suggests that these narratives were kept as records of the past.<sup>370</sup> In contrast, however, there is very little mention or concern in the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle for either future or iterative time, no sense of continuity from past to present or repetitive stability.<sup>371</sup> The words *nḥḥ* and *ḏt*, so common in narratives of war in the New Kingdom, appear just twice: at *Serpot* A2.x+22 in a negative statement (thus characterising eternity by what *doesn't*, rather than *does*, happen), and at *Armour* 24.6 in a fragmentary and unclear context. Even the latter is only part of a speech by Petubastis, meaning that no statement as to the permanence of the victories in these texts is made by their third-person narrators.

This cannot easily be explained as due to the natural passage of time between these texts and the New Kingdom, since in many other aspects these narratives do linguistically and thematically engage with the monumental military inscriptions;<sup>372</sup> nor by difference in form, since

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<sup>368</sup> As noted above, there is a dearth of primary and secondary material that means the following conclusions should be treated with some caution; in particular, the fact that the published texts all take place after Inaros' death and under the weaker king Petubastis probably biases the evidence.

<sup>369</sup> Standard issues with the preservation of papyri unfortunately mean that most beginnings have been lost; see Ryholt (2012: 73-88) for the discovery of the beginning (complete with date) of a Tebtunis variant of *Armour* that differs significantly from the Akhmim copy in its ending, and (*ibid.*: 183) for a discussion of Demotic narrative dating formulae.

<sup>370</sup> Xu-Nan (2017): 119.

<sup>371</sup> *ibid.*: 121, 125.

<sup>372</sup> For which see Chapter 3 and in more detail Oakley (2022). At any rate similar language regarding eternity was still being used in the Greco-Roman period: the *TLA* lists at least 71 occurrences of *nḥḥ* and 76

the *Taking of Joppa* concludes, like the monumental texts, by stating that Egypt's enemies are forever subject to the king. Instead there is a distinct sense of uncertainty, with no lasting resolution. After the fixed beginning of the texts, subsequent time is distorted; Egypt's history moves from order to unresolved chaos. This is compounded by the presence in the cycle of multiple narratives involving the same characters and concerning the same theme: so in addition to *The Battle for the Armour of Inaros* we also have *The Battle for the Diadem and Lance of Inaros*, again narrating armed conflict over the theft of an inheritance.<sup>373</sup> The ancient audience with knowledge of all these stories would be well aware that nothing was fully resolved. Unlike Quintus, who explicitly legitimises the conquest of his people and envisages it never ending, the authors of the texts contained in the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle leave open the possibility that the Greco-Roman conquest of Egypt will not have the permanence predicted by both Quintus and the Ptolemaic poets.

### **Conclusion: Knitting Together Semantics, Causes, and Times**

So what is war, and how does it stretch over space and time? To the Greeks, it was a prolonged series of conflicts between two relatively well-matched states, and if equality was not present then it was forced upon the conflict: at Herodotus 7.9β.1 the Persian general Mardonius mocks the unnecessarily deadly Greek obsession with fighting fair and equal battles. For the Egyptians of the New Kingdom, a representation of warfare as a long-lasting phenomenon arising between two equal, independent states is not present in either royal or private texts, with the marked exception of the *Hittite Peace Treaty*. Instead, we find the New Kingdom discourse of war revolving around distinct, repeated campaigns in which rebellions against the king's rightful rulership over the entire world were put down; all conflict was presented as highly asymmetrical, a unified Egypt against

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occurrences of *dt* amongst their corpus of Greco-Roman hieroglyphic inscriptions. The texts, *Serpot* in particular, also heavily archaize (Jay 2016: 140).

<sup>373</sup> Ryholt (2012): 89-102.

numberless rebels. These rebellions were caused by the innate character of the individuals concerned, whose nature it was to periodically rebel against the king, but whose nature was fundamentally inferior to that of the king, leaving them easy to destroy time after time after time. An innate disposition for war is seen in the Greek sources as well: the Athenians of the Classical period are accused of it by Isocrates and Xenophon, but it is most clearly visible in the treatment of the Gauls throughout the Hellenistic period, in both the literature of the Ptolemaic court (as in Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* and Apollonius' *Argonautica*) and Polybius. It was, it would seem, a favoured tactic for legitimising geopolitical and military supremacy. Attributing outbreaks of violence to the nature of the enemy allowed the Greeks and Egyptians to avoid attributing any unnecessary violence to themselves, and rendered their narratives of war much simpler. X attacks Y without reason, therefore Y can respond with conquest.

In both the Hellenistic period and the New Kingdom, warfare fundamentally revolves around the present and future. The monumental inscriptions of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasties explicitly mark the present date to fix that moment of victory in time and thus preserve that time in stone forever, suffering no reverses or undoing. So too in Ptolemaic literature, although war-narratives are often set in the past, they typically reflect present practices. The results of war are stressed as permanent: they pass through the cycles of time repeating themselves in the same way: the Greeks and Egyptians always conquer; the foreigners never do. This fixed view of war's temporality is also present in the *Posthomerica*, in which the present war will proceed in a linear manner towards Rome's conquest of the entire world for all time. No mention is made of any of the trials and tribulations along the way, and equally there is no sense that Rome's conquest can be undone. But in contrast to these three other groups of texts, there is a marked absence of any concept of eternity (or indeed futurity) in the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle, no suggestion that the peace achieved at the end of the narratives will last and the country will return to order under the king. If the results of the wars and battles of this cycle are unstable – and indeed the very nature of the cycle shows that they are – then perhaps the results of the wars at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup>-millennium

BC are too. Indeed, by the time these texts were composed the Persian conquests of Egypt had already been proven not to last, and the possibility that the same will be true for the Greco-Roman occupation is, unlike in the *Posthomerica*, certainly not denied.

Any potential reaction or resistance to conquest is absent from Quintus' poem: in his treatment of the temporality, the causality, and the nature of war he does not differ meaningfully from his Hellenistic predecessors. He certainly differs from his Egyptian counterparts, who clearly do react to the conquest of Egypt: though war may still have similar causes, its temporality is upended. Authors writing post-conquest have a choice to make: either the traditional temporality of war must be changed, or the subjects of this temporality must be changed. The authors of the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle choose the former, and resist the idea that foreign domination will be eternal: Egypt has been defeated in war, therefore war cannot have permanent effects, and so (optimistically) Egypt will one day triumph again. Quintus chooses the latter: war's effects remain permanent, but these effects no longer benefit the Greeks. By consciously *not* reacting to the Roman conquest, by *not* changing the temporality of war, Quintus accepts and enforces Roman rule forever and always.

## Chapter 3

### Imagery and Identity in War: Simile, Metaphor, Self, Other

Moving from broader conceptions of war and how they fit into the Greek and Egyptian worldviews to examine the participants, a prominent feature in almost all of the war-texts considered here is the nearly omnipresent dichotomy of the narrative. There are no complex alliances constantly shifting: there are two sides battling, with one winning and one losing side. In some cases the side favoured by the author is clear: the king's, in New Kingdom texts; Jason's, in his battle against the Earthborn in Colchis. In others it is murky: does sympathy lie with Pami or Wertyamonnit in their conflict over Inaros' armour? Is Jason's 'victory' over Medea – presented in military language with military precedents – something one should support? At the heart of these issues is the problem of identity. What is the identity of the characters, and more importantly, how does this relate to the identity of the audience as constructed by the author?

Within this question of identity is something of a paradox, because one of the most effective ways of characterising someone is by emphasising what they are, in fact, *not*. The use of animals, objects, and phenomena to describe figures enables the author to apply their connotations and associations (drawn from a broader cultural context and, sometimes, specific literary references) without explicitly saying as much: a picture, even a textual one, tells a thousand words. As Innes points out, the use of imagery can be viewed as a 'mark of innate ability ... able to extend the listener's thought in a different but purposeful direction',<sup>374</sup> and this sense of purpose on the part of the authors, the deliberate choice of image to best represent any given character, is key. The question, therefore, is what imagery was used, how and why it was applied to certain

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<sup>374</sup> (2003): 14.

characters, and what this tells us about the identity that the authors want to bestow on those fighting in the texts, and on us reading them.

### **Imagery in Greek and Egyptian Texts**

There are two principal methods of applying imagery directly to characters in a text: simile, in which a character or object is compared to something, and metaphor, in which a character or object is identified as something; also related is association, in which two entities are juxtaposed to transfer qualities between the two. The Greek texts do not drastically innovate with these techniques, in the situations and genres in which they can appear,<sup>375</sup> and the characters to whom they can be applied. In both the Demotic and New Kingdom texts, however, there are significant changes in the use of imagery. From the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty there is a marked increase in the frequency and scope of similes found in royal texts, particularly in terms of animal similes;<sup>376</sup> the major development in the Demotic texts is the application of similes to non-royal Egyptian soldiers.<sup>377</sup>

Imagery can be usefully divided into two categories: animate and inanimate. So in any use of imagery (whether simile or metaphor) there are four comparisons: animate to animate, animate to inanimate, inanimate to animate, inanimate to inanimate; all four are present in the Greek texts.<sup>378</sup> In the Egyptian material, however, comparisons of the inanimate to inanimate are very rare,<sup>379</sup> and comparisons of inanimate to animate (i.e. a stone to a person) are not present at all; there are almost only comparisons of animate subjects.<sup>380</sup> It is more helpful to separate 'animate' again into two categories – human and non-human – because in the comparisons I will be looking

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<sup>375</sup> Fantuzzi & Hunter (2004: 197) point out that Apollonius in his epic uses many similes, while Callimachus in his elegiac poetry does not.

<sup>376</sup> Grapow (1920): 24. For example almost all kings of the New Kingdom incorporated the bull (specifically the *k3-nḥt* – 'Strong Bull') into their titulary (Leprohon 2013: 94), perhaps due to the role played by Kamose ('The Bull is Born') in founding the Dynasty (Hsu 2013: 4).

<sup>377</sup> See Oakley (2022) for further discussion of the Demotic texts' innovations in similes.

<sup>378</sup> Innes (2003): 16.

<sup>379</sup> One example is at *Qadesh* §2.33, when the Egyptian army progresses over the narrow foreign tracks as if they were the roads of Egypt (*KRI* II.13.10-15).

<sup>380</sup> For a thorough compilation of Egyptian comparisons see Grapow (1920).

at this division is crucial. It is not just animate, but specifically human subjects that are most important to the question of identity, and the relationship of these human subjects to the tripartite division of human, non-human, and inanimate imagery is a fundamental part of the construction of their various identities.

The other issue to be treated here is 'ethnicity'. Formalised as an analytical concept in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century as essentially a less problematic alternative to race theory, it is often inconsistently defined and, despite its derivation from Greek ἔθνος, certainly not equivalent to the many terms the Greeks and Romans used to describe what could be called 'ethnic groups'.<sup>381</sup> Ethnicity's proximity to race as a concept still often leads to it adopting some of the worst aspects of scientific racism, particularly the chain of ideas that ethnicities are hereditary and unchanging, that different ethnicities are therefore inherently distinct, and that some are thus innately superior to others (described by Matic' as the 'primordial approach').<sup>382</sup> But the value of ethnicity as a lens of analysis depends on the acknowledgment that it is characterised not by any fixity, but by entanglement and change.<sup>383</sup> Jones' definition of ethnic groups as 'culturally ascribed identity groups, which are based on the expression of a real or assumed shared culture and common descent'<sup>384</sup> is useful because it emphasises two key aspects: the first is ascription, the idea that people can choose how to define others or themselves, whether as individuals or as a collective; the second is the assumption of a shared culture, the idea that the ties that people choose to bind themselves together need have no basis in reality whatsoever.

People can change between them according to political and economic interests:<sup>385</sup> Egyptians, for example, adopted Greek names and ethnicity during the Ptolemaic period to move

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<sup>381</sup> Gruen (2013): 1; Retsö (2006): 14.

<sup>382</sup> Matic' (2020): 36; Candelora (2018): 47-9.

<sup>383</sup> Moreno García (2018): 2.

<sup>384</sup> (1997): 84. She perhaps focuses too much on the internal formation of ethnicity (*ibid.*: 74), without acknowledging the external definition of the ethnicity of other groups (Van der Spek 2009: 134).

<sup>385</sup> Jones (1997): 73.

into a different tax bracket.<sup>386</sup> Differences, perceived and actual, play a large part in these definitions, although one should not emphasise these too much.<sup>387</sup> The act of labelling is key to ethnicity, and so to define others and themselves almost all ethnic groups have used ethnonyms ('Athenian', 'Greek', 'Egyptian') to encapsulate the 'essence' of the group.<sup>388</sup> In many ways, then, ethnicity is akin to imagery, the adoption of stereotypical qualities – whether belonging to an animal, object, god, or ethnic group – in order to characterise an individual through the consequent connotations. If Thutmose III in his Poetical Stela can portray himself at one time as a lion, at another as a crocodile, and indeed at all times as a *k3-nḥt* ('Strong Bull') this does not seem greatly different from the portrayal of the Nubian official Hekanef as an Egyptian in his own tomb but as a Nubian in another's.<sup>389</sup> It is all a question of image.

But just as it benefitted the powerful European nations of the modern period to promote a theory of fixed human races<sup>390</sup> in both the ancient and modern worlds<sup>390</sup> in order to ensure their power, it benefitted the powerful Greeks and Egyptians to create their own official discourses relying upon fixed ethnic characteristics.<sup>391</sup> And since it was, with very few exceptions, the powerful Greek and Egyptian elites that produced the material I am studying, there is very little evidence of the flexible and choice-driven concept of ethnicity that defined people's lives. Indeed in a military context, in which a fixed binary is already present, this effect is exaggerated: as Smith points out, '[c]ompetition and conflict sharpens ethnic polarization'.<sup>392</sup> So despite the multi-faceted and

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<sup>386</sup> Honigman (2003): 81.

<sup>387</sup> Jones (1997): 61.

<sup>388</sup> Hall (1997): 25.

<sup>389</sup> Matić (2020): 47-50.

<sup>390</sup> See e.g. Candelora (2018: 50-2) for this process with regards to the Hyksos.

<sup>391</sup> Moreno García (2018): 3. A Greek belief in environmental determinism, that geography inherently defined and fixed ethnicity and permitted no variation, seems to have been relatively widespread at least by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup>-century BC, and is scientifically described in the Hippocratic *Airs Waters Places* (Thomas 2000: 86) – though this text, despite its orientalising, and potentially ur-orientalising (*ibid.*: 50), approach, displays considerably less 'Greek triumphalism or Greek cultural chauvinism' than found in most other ancient sources (*ibid.*: 93).

<sup>392</sup> (2018): 117. It is, however, worth noting the possibilities provided by war to assimilate rather than differentiate: Nubians had been employed as mercenaries in Egyptian armies as far back as the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC (Schneider 2010: 150-1), and both Greeks and Carians were hired by Psammetichus I, bilingual inscriptions and reliefs indicating the success of their integration (Coussemant 2016: 118-23).

porous nature of the many Greek and Egyptian ethnic groups, in most representations of war there were only two: themselves and others.<sup>393</sup>

And indeed for both the Greeks and Egyptians there were very clear distinctions between these two groups. The desert surrounding the Nile valley and delta rendered it akin to an autochthonous island<sup>394</sup> that ‘adhered to a rigid distinction between Egypt and the outside world’,<sup>395</sup> and defined ethnicity primarily by territory and geography.<sup>396</sup> Surrounding this Nile ‘island’ were three stereotyped groups: the *tmhw* to the west, the *Smw* to the north-east, and the *nhsyw* to the south. All, as discussed in the chapter above,<sup>397</sup> were theoretically under the Egyptian king’s rule but were distinguished from the Egyptians themselves, differentiated by highly formalised clothing and skin-tones in artwork.<sup>398</sup> Egyptian unity was embodied by the king and proclaimed by the omnipresent title *nsw-bity* (‘King of Upper and Lower Egypt’) that preceded his praenomen; it was his task to ensure that his rule was accepted across the world.<sup>399</sup> For the Greeks, however, there was less obvious geographical definition given they were spread across three continents without any unified government, and the *locus classicus* for their understanding of ‘Greekness’ is Herodotus 8.144.2-3, where the Athenians define it as ὁμαίμόν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον καὶ θεῶν ἰδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι ἤθεά τε ὁμότροπα (‘being of the same blood and language, and having common temples of the gods, and sacrifices, and customs of like fashion’).<sup>400</sup> It is

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<sup>393</sup> This idea was, of course, relentlessly exploited by the Athenians in particular, who legitimised their growing control over the Greek world in the 5<sup>th</sup>-century by framing it as a necessity in preservation of the Hellenic self at war with the Persians; this fiction could hold only so long as Persia posed a perceptible threat, and once this was sufficiently diminished the self dramatically imploded into the Peloponnesian War (Price 2001: 375).

<sup>394</sup> McGing (2010): 513.

<sup>395</sup> Schneider (2010): 147.

<sup>396</sup> Smith (2014): 195.

<sup>397</sup> p. 68.

<sup>398</sup> Smith (2018): 114-15.

<sup>399</sup> This is often characterised (e.g. Smith 2018: 122) as the king maintaining *maat* (cosmic order) by defeating the enemy, who occupied areas outside Egypt characterised by *isfet* (chaos). In fact, as discussed in the previous chapter, this is not a particularly accurate construction of the Egyptian worldview, and derives in large part from colonial Western justifications for their violent subjugation of the East (for which see Candelora 2018 with regards to the Hyksos); Allon (2021) further deconstructs the connection between foreigners and cosmic peril. For more on the nature of the king see below (pp. 181, 213-16)

<sup>400</sup> Gruen (2013): 2.

relevant that the Athenians' definition takes place within the context of a war that pitted a foreign power composed of many ethnicities, unified under one king, against many (but not all) Greeks from different cities with different dialects<sup>401</sup> and political systems.

So, the extent to which this complexity of ethnicity was actually represented in depictions of war by both the Greeks and Egyptians is far from clear. This corresponds closely to the actual subjects of the similes, and the effect is most clear in the texts of the Hellenistic period and the New Kingdom. With few exceptions these texts were composed in the context of a royal court.<sup>402</sup> The kings therefore play a relatively prominent role and, given war in the sources was largely limited to royalty,<sup>403</sup> the concentration of the sources on his figure is accompanied by a similar concentration of imagery and concepts of ethnicity. As an individual, however, the king could not be all things and all peoples, and so was frequently (but not always) cast in a mono-ethnic mould: the king stood only for their people's ethnicity. As we shall see, the more diverse and decentralised participants in the battles of the Demotic texts and the *Posthomeric* allow for more nuanced positions.

### **Man and/or Beast: Animal Imagery in Battle**

Animals were used frequently to characterise warriors in both Greek and Egyptian representations of war, and two stand out: the lion and bull. As already mentioned, almost all kings of the New Kingdom had as the first part of the first of their five names *k3-nḥt*, 'Strong Bull'. The bull therefore was a fundamental part of the identity of the only distinct Egyptian soldier (as presented in royal inscriptions), and the fixed combination with the adjective *nḥt* suggests that this was an important aspect of the bull imagery as applied to the king at war: his physical, animalistic strength that

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<sup>401</sup> Although the names of the various Greek ethnic groups (e.g. Dorians, Ionians) often share names with the dialects (e.g. Doric, Ionic), they were not purely linguistic groups (Hall 1997: 153), and the conflation of ethnicity with language remains highly problematic (Candelora 2018: 55). That did not, however, prevent the Greeks from often doing so, as seen e.g. at Theocritus *Idyll* 15.93: Δωρίσδειν δ' ἔξεστι, δοκῶ, τοῖς Δωριέεσσι ('Dorians, I think, are allowed to speak Doric').

<sup>402</sup> See Chapter 1 (pp. 29-30).

<sup>403</sup> For the king's appropriation of warfare as a theme in the New Kingdom see Chapter 5 (pp. 254-9).

allowed him to destroy the enemy.<sup>404</sup> Bull-imagery is also frequently found in the texts:<sup>405</sup> in encomia of the kings it is linked twice with Thutmose III in his Gebel Barkal Stela (lines 8, 15),<sup>406</sup> twice with Sety I in his second Beth-Shan Stela (lines 5, 14-15),<sup>407</sup> and with Ramesses II in *Qadesh 2* (§15, 278)<sup>408</sup> and his First Hittite Marriage Stela (line 12).<sup>409</sup> In most of these examples the bull is typically left either unqualified or with a single adjective. The most expansive bull imagery comes in Thutmose III's Poetical Stela (line 16), when Amun tells the king that he will cause Crete to see him *m k3 rnpī mn ib spd ḥwy n h3.n.tw=f* ('as a young bull, firm-hearted, sharp-horned, who cannot be attacked').<sup>410</sup> The primary emphasis is physical: the bull's youthful vigour and sharp horns make it a threat offensively and defensively. But the mental aspect of the bull is also key: *mn ib* indicates that it is courageous and unswayable,<sup>411</sup> while *spd* can also denote mental sharpness,<sup>412</sup> which gives the bull's mind the same aggressive power as its horns. The mixing of physical and mental strength in bull imagery is repeated elsewhere: thus Ramesses II says at *Qadesh* §2.278 that *tw=i hr.kw r ḥ3 mī k3 spd* ('I was prepared for battle like a sharp bull'),<sup>413</sup> with the king 'sharp' in his preparations and his offensive prowess.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty the feline comparison for the king in battle is often the leopard, which is used to reflect one aspect of the king's aggressive nature:<sup>414</sup> the biography of Ahmose son of Ibana contains one simile (column 33), comparing Thutmose I to a leopard as he kills the enemy

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<sup>404</sup> The extreme sexual potency of the bull is indicated by the fact that, while cow imagery could be used for many women to indicate sexual receptivity, bull imagery was reserved for the king alone, the only one able to be sexually and violently active (Troy 2018: 95).

<sup>405</sup> In iconography, the bull is used as far back as the pre-dynastic Narmer Palette (Hsu 2013: 5), and was often used to characterise the king in the Old Kingdom Pyramid Texts as aggressive and sexually potent (Troy 2018: 95-8). A possible derivation of the White Crown of Upper Egypt from bovine symbolism also indicates the bull's significance (Hendrickx, Förster & Eyckermann 2019: 58).

<sup>406</sup> *Urk.* IV.1230.16, 1233.4; Beylage (2002: 663) associates the bull-imagery here with the idea of the king as 'Herr der Welt'.

<sup>407</sup> *KRI* I.16.5, 11-12.

<sup>408</sup> *KRI* II.7.12-15, 85.6-10.

<sup>409</sup> *KRI* II.238.1-2.

<sup>410</sup> *Urk.* IV.610.3-4.

<sup>411</sup> *TLA* 69950.

<sup>412</sup> *TLA* 500143.

<sup>413</sup> *KRI* II.85.6-10.

<sup>414</sup> Leopard skins had been used ritually since the Predynastic Period to symbolise the rebirth of the king, and in the New Kingdom was used to connect the king to his divine father Amun (Rummel 2003: 111, 127).

leader with an arrow (*ḥr.in ḥm=f r=s mi ḥby* – ‘then his Person raged at it like a leopard’);<sup>415</sup> Thutmose I’s Tombos Stela describes him attacking the Nine Bows (line 11) *mi ḥb rmpy m idr ḥny* (‘like a young leopard amongst resting cattle’);<sup>416</sup> Amenhotep II, in his Amada (line 3) and Memphis (line 34) stela,<sup>417</sup> is compared to a leopard in praise of his military victories.<sup>418</sup> The Memphis stela of Amenhotep II is important for understanding this imagery, since the text culminates in the leopard simile: the king is described as *ḥb nšy m ḥst-nb m t3-pn dt* (‘a leopard who rages in every foreign land and in this land forever’). The word *nšy* (and its variant *nšny*) is associated with Seth, whose animal is typically the determinative (as here): it was used repeatedly in the New Kingdom to indicate the raw, ferocious strength of the king, and its importance here is clear from the spatial and chronological totality of the king’s power.<sup>419</sup> Leopard similes, therefore, seem to suggest two aspects of the king: on the one hand, his individuality and aloneness (leopards very much a solitary animal); on the other, his wild ferocity and strength.

Despite the leopard’s early prominence and associations with rage, it gradually began to decline in usage in favour of the lion;<sup>420</sup> as an example of the latter’s overwhelming frequency in similes, Köhler’s collection of lion-imagery to represent anger takes up nearly five pages of examples, far more than any of the other animals he lists.<sup>421</sup> The gifting of ‘lions’ (probably golden decorations or amulets)<sup>422</sup> by Thutmose III to the general Amenemhab for his prowess in battle, as

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<sup>415</sup> *Urk.* IV.8.13.

<sup>416</sup> *Urk.* IV.85.4-5.

<sup>417</sup> *Urk.* IV.1290.7,

<sup>418</sup> Lorton (1990: 672) notes that leopard-imagery tends to be used in African rather than Asian military contexts, suggesting a degree of localisation to the king’s animalistic qualities.

<sup>419</sup> Klug (2002): 253. The idea of the king possessing a Seth-like rage in battle is an innovation of the New Kingdom; in earlier times this uncontrollable destructive power was something the king needed to battle *against* (McDonald 2002: 158-60).

<sup>420</sup> Iconographic connections between the king and the lion date back, like the bull and leopard, to the Predynastic Period (Hsu 2013: 7).

<sup>421</sup> (2016): 209-13.

<sup>422</sup> Binder (2008): 55-7.

recorded in the latter's tomb biography,<sup>423</sup> also indicates the significant connection between lions, the king (as giver), and war.

The lion was not integrated into the king's name and was therefore not as formalised a part of his identity as the bull, although the close associations of it with Egyptian kingship are seen at *Qadesh* §2.305,<sup>424</sup> when Ramesses II is described as *š-r<sup>c</sup> mš nb ḥpš r<sup>c</sup>-ms-sw-mry-ḫmn di ḥnḫ dt* ('Son of Re, the Lion, Lord of Muscle, Ramesses-Meryamun, given life forever'): the king's leonine nature has become part of his titulary and so a part of kingship itself.<sup>425</sup> It is closely linked to his physical strength (*ḥpš*, written with the 'foreleg of an ox' sign, is a particularly emphatic word for physical power),<sup>426</sup> and becomes part of his 'Son of Re' title, adding a sense of divinity and religiosity to the king's lion-like physical prowess. In Amenhotep III's Aswan-Philae Inscription he is not compared to a lion, but actually identified as one (lines 9-10 *nb-mš<sup>c</sup>t-r<sup>c</sup>-pw mš-ḥsw* – 'Nebmaatre is a savage lion'),<sup>427</sup> and similarly in *The Taking of Joppa* we find (as the only example of figurative language in the text) Thutmose III named (1.12) as *nsw mn-ḥpr-r<sup>c</sup> ḥ.w.s. pš mšw-ḥsw šš šḥmt* ('the king Menkheperre I.p.h., the fierce lion, son of Sekhmet').<sup>428</sup>

Leonine imagery is overall found more frequently throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, used for example in encomia of Sety I (Second Beth-Shan Stela lines 5-6)<sup>429</sup> and Merenptah (Amada Stela line 3),<sup>430</sup> and indeed in Merenptah's *Great Libyan War Inscription* (column 15) replacing the leopard as the animal that figuratively represents rage (*istw ḥm=f ḥḥrw ḥr=sn mš mš* – 'now, his

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<sup>423</sup> *Urk.* IV.892.14-16, 893.8-13. The motif of receiving a reward from the king is common in New Kingdom biographies and tomb scenes and indicates the centrality of the king to self-presentation (Guksch 1994: 52); the lion in this case specifies that it was a military deed being rewarded.

<sup>424</sup> *KRI* II.92.1-5.

<sup>425</sup> *mš* is here written ideographically, which further emphasises its animalistic nature.

<sup>426</sup> Gnirs & Loprieno's translation 'Armeskraft' (2008: 256) is particularly evocative. The word had further religious connotations that will be discussed in Chapter 5 (pp. 224-5).

<sup>427</sup> *Urk.* IV.1666.15. The lion here is determined by the Seth-animal familiar from leopard imagery, which indicates its savagery and increased prominence (McDonald 2018).

<sup>428</sup> *LES* 83.4-5.

<sup>429</sup> *KRI* I.16.5.

<sup>430</sup> *KRI* I.16.5, IV.33.13-16.

Person raged against them like a lion’).<sup>431</sup> Merenptah also places this imagery into the mouths of his enemies (Amada Stela line 6):<sup>432</sup> *st i.ir=n r tnw p3 m3i-ḥs ḥr hb=f* (‘Where can we go? The savage lion is passing through’); by focalising the imagery through the eyes of the enemy the king’s terror is brought out.

We also find two extended lion similes with Ramesses II: at *Qadesh* §2.19<sup>433</sup> he is described as *mī m3i-ḥs3 m int ʿwt* (‘like a savage lion in a valley of flocks’), and in his Beth-Shan Stela (line 20)<sup>434</sup> as *mī m3i-ḥs3 m ihy nt ʿwt* (‘like a savage lion in a stable of goats’). The image of the carnivorous, aggressive king in the midst of passive herbivores is the same as that found in Thutmose I’s Tombos Stela, and the contrast between the savage predator and weak animals emphasises the ferocity of the king.<sup>435</sup> The replacement of Thutmose I’s leopard by Ramesses II’s lion in this simile-formula, however, indicates the increasing preference for the latter’s qualities, and the change was orthographic as well: panther-head determinatives in words such as *pḥty* (‘power’) became more leonine during the New Kingdom.<sup>436</sup> These qualities presumably involved the lion’s greater size and strength compared to the leopard; the greater physical differences between the dominant male and the rest of the pack would also make the lion more suitable as an analogue to the always distinct king.<sup>437</sup> The association between king, lion, and bull is also clear in the images accompanying the texts: in the New Kingdom the king was sometimes depicted with his pet lion in battle, and Ramesses II’s chariot in scenes of the Battle of Qadesh features leaping lions on its side.<sup>438</sup>

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<sup>431</sup> *KRI* IV.4.4.

<sup>432</sup> *KRI* IV.35.1-8.

<sup>433</sup> *KRI* II.9.1-5.

<sup>434</sup> *KRI* II.151.11.

<sup>435</sup> Müller (2009): 130.

<sup>436</sup> McDonald (2002): 303.

<sup>437</sup> See McDonald (2009) for further discussion of these changes. The leopard had more graceful qualities than the lion – it was sometimes depicted with the lotus, a symbol of female sexuality – which perhaps also made it seem unsuitable for the masculinised militarism of these kings (Vernus & Yoyotte 2005: 179).

<sup>438</sup> David (2011): 91.

There are other animals to which the king is compared, although not with the same regularity: Thutmose III, for example, is compared to a crocodile and a jackal in his Poetical Stela (lines 17, 21),<sup>439</sup> although the jackal simile is omitted in the corresponding texts of Sety I and Ramesses II.<sup>440</sup> Falcon imagery is also occasionally elaborated, and, since the king was an embodiment of the falcon-headed Horus,<sup>441</sup> the connection was deep-rooted. Ramesses II tells his charioteer Menna (*Qadesh* §2.216-17) *iw=i r ʕk im=sn mi ḥwt bik iw=i ḥr ḥdb ḥr wʕwʕ ḥr ḥʕʕ r iwtm* ('I will enter among them like the strike of a falcon as I slaughter, massacre, and cast to the ground');<sup>442</sup> later (§2.280) he confirms that this was exactly what he did ('I entered the battle lines, fighting like the strike of a falcon').<sup>443</sup> It is the sense of dynamic, aggressive movement that is brought out here.<sup>444</sup> Sety I's Second Beth-Shan Stela suggests the complementary nature of the falcon to the bull: he is described (lines 14-15) as *ḥkʕ kn mi bik ḥr kʕ nḥt pd bt spd ḥnwty wp [dnḥwy] m ds ʕt=f-nb m bʕ* ('ruler, valiant like a falcon and strong bull, swift-footed, sharp-horned, who opens [his wings] of flint, whose entire body is of iron').<sup>445</sup> The sharpness of both animals – the horns of the bull, the flint wings of the falcon – blurs the distinction between them, and suggests the combination of these characteristics in the king.

The densest combination of the three royal war-animals (bull, falcon, lion) comes in Ramesses II's Beth-Shan Stela. As the king's destruction of foreign enemies is described we are told (lines 19-20): *iw ḥm=f m-sʕ=sn mi kʕ nbwty mi bik m ḥt-pt n ʕpdw mi mʕi-ḥʕʕ m ihy nt ʕwtyw* ('his Person pursued them like the Bull of Ombos (Seth), like a falcon in a flock of birds, like a savage lion

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<sup>439</sup> *Urk.* IV.616.6-10, 617.11-15. The unusually large number of comparisons in this one stela is perhaps intended to reflect the absolute control over all forms of life exercised by both Thutmose III and his father Amun-Re: all achievements and all transformations are due to the omnipotence of the duo (Eyre 1996: 419).

<sup>440</sup> *KRI* I.27.5-10, II.164.

<sup>441</sup> Sabbahy (2021): 22.

<sup>442</sup> *KRI* II.69.6-16.

<sup>443</sup> *KRI* II.86.1-5.

<sup>444</sup> The falcon that represented Horus was an amalgam of various hawk-like Egyptian birds, but seems to have preserved most elements of the peregrine falcon, suggesting a focus on sudden, explosive speed (Podgórski 2010: 71).

<sup>445</sup> *KRI* I.16.11-12; Maderna-Sieben (2018): 201-2.

in a stable of goats').<sup>446</sup> The three creatures are all juxtaposed, and so emphasise that in war the king is divine bull, falcon, and lion together, falcon and lion equated through the parallelism of their similes. The primary characteristic of the similes is brought out as the animals become closer conceptually to the audience: the king starts off like a divine bull, far removed from the human world; he then becomes, as a falcon, part of the human world but outside human society; finally he becomes a very close danger as a predator within a man-made environment specifically designed for protection *against* predators. The terror he causes is palpable, and this is the aim of these similes: the king cannot be attacked or approached, and his inhuman strength, speed, and savagery tear apart the enemy in a bestial way that other humans cannot achieve.<sup>447</sup> The solitary nature of bulls, leopards, male lions, and falcons emphasise that the king is completely different to all others, and it is this difference – accompanied by power and aggression – that allows him and Egypt, of which he is the embodiment, to massacre his enemies in battle.

Falcons, bulls, and lions are all familiar from Homeric battle similes, sharing many – but not all – of their connotations in the Egyptian texts,<sup>448</sup> and likewise they often play prominent roles: the falcon and lion are used to characterise Achilles in his climactic battle with Hector (he is compared by the poet to a hawk, 'swiftest of birds', in a simile at *Iliad* 22.139-42, and equates himself with a lion at 22.262).<sup>449</sup> The lack of extended battle-scenes in surviving Hellenistic poetry naturally reduces the number of similes in that context, but the lion and bull are used at times very pointedly. The lion was very closely linked to Alexander in official iconography, especially coins,<sup>450</sup> due to its associations with Heracles, and so it is no surprise that Alexander is identified as a lion at *Alexandra*

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<sup>446</sup> *KRI* II.151.10-11.

<sup>447</sup> These animalistic qualities of the king are complemented by the numerous hunting scenes that depict him killing the same animals to which he is compared – he is more bullish than a bull, and more leonine than a lion (Bodziony-Szweda 2010: 58).

<sup>448</sup> Animal similes are indeed so common in Greek epic that they are almost a marker of the genre itself (Hawtree 2014: 73).

<sup>449</sup> The comparisons indicate Achilles' physical superiority over Hector, but also his inhuman savagery (de Jong 2012: 95, 125-6). For the role of animals (and animal similes) in Homeric epic see Lonsdale (1990) and Hawtree (2014).

<sup>450</sup> Thonemann (2015) provides a number of examples.

1439, as Heracles had been (line 33). The connection is seen also in Posidippus 65, describing a statue of Alexander, in which he says that the Persians should not be blamed for their rout, since συγγνώμα βουσι λέοντα φυγεῖν ('cattle are forgiven for fleeing a lion'). Used with Alexander, the ultimate Greek warrior, the lion clearly retains its connotations of great power and ferocity against one's enemies.<sup>451</sup> It is, however, used only three times in similes in the *Argonautica*, one of which is at 4.1337-43 describing Jason's shout to his companions. There is very little parallelism between simile and narrative, and Hunter suggests that here it serves as a meta-literary critique of the 'artificiality of the simile form',<sup>452</sup> by emphasising that Jason is *not* a lion, it shows that he is also not a Homeric hero.<sup>453</sup>

The other two cases are more connected with war, and both appear alongside the typical Egyptian companion of the lion, the bull. The first comes with Polydeuces' boxing match against Amycus, king of the Bebrycians (2.1-141). As soon as Polydeuces replies to Amycus' challenge, the latter is compared, in a typical Homeric simile, to a wounded lion in the mountains (2.26-9):

ὥστε λέων ὑπ' ἄκοντι τετυμμένος, ὃν τ' ἐν ὄρεσσι  
 ἄνδρες ἀμφιπέρονται· ὁ δ' ἰλλόμενός περ ὀμίλῳ  
 τῶν μὲν ἔτ' οὐκ ἀλέγει, ἐπὶ δ' ὄσσεται οἰόθεν οἷος  
 ἄνδρα τὸν ὅς μιν ἔτυψε παροίτατος οὐδ' ἐδάμασσεν.

As a lion struck by a spear, which men surround  
 in the mountains; and it, despite being shut in by the crowd,  
 still has no care for them, but all alone stares at  
 the man who first struck him – but did not defeat him.

The lion brings its connotations of power and savagery to Amycus,<sup>454</sup> but it is already wounded by the hunter in the simile that corresponds to Polydeuces, which suggests a pre-determined victory for the Argonaut. Nonetheless, Amycus holds his own against Polydeuces, and Homeric imagery

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<sup>451</sup> The lion is the most significant animal in Homeric similes: the longest simile in the poem (20.164-75) is a lion simile, and there are more lion similes than for any other animal (Lonsdale 1990: 40, 39). In almost all instances it is characterised as rapid, powerful (*ibid.*: 46), and solitary – *Iliad* 5.554-8 is exceptional in being a simile with two lions, but that is because it is applied to the twins Crethon and Orsilochus (*ibid.*: 55).

<sup>452</sup> (1993): 133.

<sup>453</sup> Effe (2001): 204.

<sup>454</sup> Vian (1974): 177.

reappears when the two clash (2.88-9) ἤυτε ταύρω / φορβάδος ἀμφὶ βοῶς κεκοτηότε δηριάασθον ('like two bulls rage and fight over a grazing heifer').<sup>455</sup> As long as the two remain equally animalistic they remain equally matched. This equality, however, drastically changes (2.90-1): ἔνθα δ' ἔπειτ' Ἄμυκος μὲν ἐπ' ἀκροτάτοισιν ἀερθείς / βουτύπος οἶα πόδεσσι τανύσσατο ('Then Amycus stretched himself out, raised on his tiptoes, like a butcher').<sup>456</sup> One might expect the βουτύπος (literally 'cow-slayer') to defeat the bull, but in fact this move allows Polydeuces to defeat him. The move away from Homeric battle imagery of lions and bulls (βουτύπος is not found in Homer) reflects the weakness of Amycus and causes his death, while Polydeuces, remaining a bull, is victorious. The Homeric Greek triumphs over the un-Homeric barbarian. The bull and lion reflect more than just strength in battle: it is specifically Homeric strength in battle, and through this epic imagery the heroes are assimilated to predecessors such as Achilles, Heracles, and Alexander.<sup>457</sup>

Later in the poem we also find the combination of lion and bull imagery in quick succession. After Jason has killed Apsyrtus and thrown the Colchians into disarray, the Argonauts launch a surprise attack (4.484-7):

Κολχίδος ἀγχόθι νηὸς ἔην παρὰ νῆα βάλλοντο  
 ἦρωες, Κόλχων δ' ὄλεκον στόλον, ἤυτε κίρκοι  
 φύλα πελειάων ἠὲ μέγα πῶν λέοντες  
 ἀγρότεροι κλονέουσιν ἐνὶ σταθμοῖσι θορόντες

They moored their ship near the Colchian ship,  
 the heroes, and destroyed the army of the Colchians, as falcons do  
 to the tribes of doves, or as savage lions rout  
 a great flock, leaping into the pens.

The complete superiority of the Greek heroes is evident from the similes, the first of which uses the imagery of Achilles' pursuit of Hector at *Iliad* 22.139-42 to emphasise Greek military victory over barbarian enemies: this will be the last military confrontation of the poem. The two similes are,

<sup>455</sup> The mention of the heifer as a prize – which does not correspond at all to the narrative – suggests this is a conflict just as much about animalistic virility as animalistic strength.

<sup>456</sup> Hunter (2015: 146) points out that this was also the title of a priest at one of Athens' festivals; the religious connotations are more relevant when the word reappears in Book 4.

<sup>457</sup> Hunter (1993): 28-9.

however, also very un-Homeric, because both falcons and lions are (as in the New Kingdom texts) typically characterised as conspicuous, solitary animals: neither appear in the plural in the *Iliad*, outside of Achilles' gnomic statement at 22.262, a scene from his shield at 18.579-86, and the simile applied to the twins Crethon and Orsilochus at 15.554-8.<sup>458</sup> The idea of a pack of male lions or falcons hunting together<sup>459</sup> is absurd within the generic conventions, and the simile thus emphasises how un-Homeric the Argonauts are.<sup>460</sup> More unsettling still is the cause of the Argonauts' attack. Jason and Medea trick her brother Apsyrtus into a meeting, at which Jason treacherously slays him (4.464-70):

αὐτίκα δ' Αἰσονίδης πυκινοῦ ἔκπαλτο λόχοιο  
 γυμνὸν ἀνασχόμενος παλάμη ξίφος ...

...

τὸν δ' ὄγε, βουτύπος ὥστε μέγαν κερεαλκέα ταῦρον,  
 πλῆξεν, ὀπιπέυσας νηοῦ σχεδὸν ὃν ποτ' ἔδειμαν  
 Ἀρτέμιδι Βρυγοὶ περυναίεται ἀντιπέρηθεν.

Quickly the son of Aeson leapt from a thick hiding-place,  
 holding a bared sword in his hand ...

...

and Jason, as a butcher does with a great, strong-horned bull,  
 struck him, having lurked in watch near the temple which was once founded  
 for Artemis by the Brygoi, who dwell nearby on the opposite side.

Jason is linked to Amycus, both described as a βουτύπος ('butcher') fighting against a bull. Apsyrtus, however, is presented as a far more epic and powerful bull<sup>461</sup> than Polydeuces through the application of two adjectives, including the *harpax* κερεαλκέα ('strong-horned').

That the un-Homeric butcher Jason succeeded in killing his extra-Homeric bull while Amycus failed is problematic, and there are also sinister undertones to this passage: although Apsyrtus may in this version be a young man, Apollonius includes reminiscences of the versions in

<sup>458</sup> Lonsdale (1990): 55.

<sup>459</sup> The Greeks seem to have been unaware of lions hunting in packs, and scientific descriptions of them (such as Pliny *Natural History* 8.17-21) as well as epic similes characterise them as always solitary hunters.

<sup>460</sup> So the Iliadic models (5.161-2, 15.323-5, 22.138-44) cited by Hunter (2015: 150) involve only one lion against a multitude of prey, and draw a clear contrast between the Iliadic and Argonautic modes of battle (2015: 150).

<sup>461</sup> He also evokes accounts of the death of Agamemnon at *Odyssey* 4.535 & 11.411 (Hunter 2015: 146).

which he is a young child chopped into pieces;<sup>462</sup> further, given in the Greek world meat from sacrifices was eaten,<sup>463</sup> this quasi-religious simile also borders on cannibalism. The imagery of the Homeric bull is also complicated by the fact that Jason has recently defeated two actual (supernatural) bulls in Colchis at the climax of Book 3; this, however, was only possible due to the charm obtained from Medea. Jason has now lost the charm and is unable to defeat even a metaphorical bull face-to-face, relying instead on sacrilegious treachery. Whereas the Argonauts are presented as a pack of Achilleses, Jason is a sinister, perverted counterpart of the Iliadic hero.

The use of Homeric and un-Homeric imagery indicates Jason's moral and military shortcomings as an individual: military success is achieved in the *Argonautica* either through collective efforts, or through Jason's seduction of Medea. When the imagery of the bull and lion is used and abused by Apollonius, it is to illustrate that there is largely no place in his poem for the individualistic Homeric hero. The fact that a prominent exception is Polydeuces against Amycus suggests that perhaps god-heroes maintain their individual Homeric capabilities, and that there is still a place for divine, individual heroes (such as the Ptolemies)<sup>464</sup> in Hellenistic warfare. Un-Homeric, phalanx-based forces like the Argonauts or the Hellenistic armies conquer, while un-Homeric individuals are either killed like Amycus or problematised like Jason. The bull and lion share most of their characteristics across the Greek and Egyptian texts: strength and ferocity in battle. The Egyptian texts of the New Kingdom use this imagery straightforwardly, emphasising the king's power to crush the enemy in war; the Hellenistic Greek texts can also use this imagery to emphasise the strength of various heroes, particularly with the lion and Alexander.

Apollonius, however, uses the imagery to reflect on the contemporary state of warfare: there is a place for individualistic bullish and leonine heroes, but only when they – like the Ptolemies – are semi-divine, and even then they cannot defeat an entire army, Polydeuces winning only in

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<sup>462</sup> Hunter (1993): 21.

<sup>463</sup> McLnerney (2014): 250-1; Ekroth (2014): 343.

<sup>464</sup> For the divine aspects of the Ptolemies see Chapter 5 (pp. 220-2).

single-combat. Instead, the individual bull Apsyrus, who has left his army behind, falls to the treacherous butcher, and it is not one lion, but many lions, that defeat the Colchian army. The focus on collective force within an army (still led by a king) is best articulated at *Argonautica* 4.273-4: the Egyptian king conquered Europe and Asia βίη καὶ κάρτεϊ λαῶν / σφωιτέρων θάρσει τε πεποιθότα ('trusting in the power and strength of his people, and their courage').<sup>465</sup> This combination of divine, royal figurehead<sup>466</sup> and collective army is the ideal, and the Homeric world is adjusted to Apollonius' contemporary reality. The heroes fight as one unit, as an epic precursor to the Macedonian phalanx. That the Argonauts do in fact form their own proto-phalanx at 2.1072-5, and that this manoeuvre is attributed to Heracles (2.1052-7), semi-divine like the Ptolemies and also their ancestor, reinforces this point.<sup>467</sup> Despite a general focus on collectivity in battle, there is still space for the semi-divine heroes Heracles and Polydeuces to stand out as greater than their fellow soldiers, as a Ptolemaic king should be better than his army despite relying on them to help him conquer his enemies.

There is greater divergence between the Egyptian and Greek texts with similes related to pack-animals. In the Hellenistic texts they are generalised, able to be applied as equally to the Greeks (compared to wolves at *Argonautica* 2.123-9) as barbarians (compared to bees at 2.130-6). With the Egyptian New Kingdom material the divide between individual and collective imagery is almost absolute. As the king is defined by his uniqueness, the opposite holds for his enemies; if they are compared to an animal (which happens far less frequently than the king) it is almost always to pack-animals. In these similes the enemy are presented as gentle and unwarlike animals, totally defenceless in the face of the king. Thutmose III describes his defeated enemies at Megiddo (*Annals* 1.88): [skw]=sn sdr m sly mi rmw m kch sn ('their [troops] were lying on their backs, like

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<sup>465</sup> The collocation of βίη and κάρτος is in Homer always used of an individual (*Odyssey* 4.415, 6.197, 13.143, 18.139); Apollonius' application of the words to an army indicates his focus on the collective in warfare.

<sup>466</sup> Hunter (2015): 120.

<sup>467</sup> Hunter (1993): 32.

fish in the folds of a net').<sup>468</sup> The foreign enemy are fish out of water, helpless against the king. Similar imagery is also used by Merenptah, whose *Great Libyan War Inscription* describes the enemy (column 23) as *mi wḥꜥw ḥr ḥt=w* ('like fish on their bellies'),<sup>469</sup> and in column 46 mentions their cut-off hands being carried back to Egypt *m rmw ḥr mstiw* ('as fish in baskets').<sup>470</sup> The enemy are numerous but easy prey, as unsuited to fighting as fish are to land.

Equal helplessness can be seen in Ramesses II's Beth-Shan Stela, which describes the fleeing enemy (line 22) as *mi šwt ḥꜥdw r-ḥꜥt ḥꜥw* ('like the feathers of birds before the wind').<sup>471</sup> Agency is removed from the enemy, no longer animals but feathers floating in the breeze; meanwhile Ramesses is simultaneously the predator whose attack has only left traces of his victims behind, and the wind that continues to follow them. Merenptah describes the survivors amongst his enemies in his Athribis Stela (R15) similarly: *ḥꜥḥ=sn m sm mḥtt ḥꜥw* ('they live amongst the vegetation like cattle');<sup>472</sup> the reduction of the enemy to peacefully grazing cattle indicates their pathetic nature as animals that can be pastured and killed. The same king describes his victory over Maryu, the leader of the Libyans, as (*Great Libyan War Inscription* column 67): *smḥ-sw ḥꜥw-sw m sf ḥꜥwdt mi ḥꜥdw* ('slaying him, making him into ash, netted like birds').<sup>473</sup> Equating the enemy with domesticated or hunted animals emphasises their inferiority: as humans have mastered the animals, the king has mastered his enemies. A similar effect is seen at *Argonautica* 2.130-4, when the routed Bebrycians are compared to bees smoked out by a beekeeper, and 3.1373-4, when the Earthborn turn on each other like dogs. The domesticity of the animal reflects the Greeks' domination of the enemy.

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<sup>468</sup> *Urk.* IV.659.4.

<sup>469</sup> *KRI* IV.5.1.

<sup>470</sup> *KRI* IV.7.12-13.

<sup>471</sup> *KRI* II.151.12.

<sup>472</sup> *KRI* IV.21.6.

<sup>473</sup> *KRI* IV.10.3-6. Merenptah is unusual in applying similes to an individual enemy; the fact that Merenptah's war was a defensive one to fight off invaders of Egypt, rather than a war of offensive foreign expansion, perhaps caused greater emphasis to be placed on the traumatic would-be conqueror of Egypt to clearly show the king's superiority.

Other collective similes for the enemy, however, are more threatening. At Qadesh §2.49-51 the Hittite army is described: *ḥbs=sn ḏww inwt st mī p3 snḥm m-dī ḥw=sn* ('they covered the mountains and valleys, they were like locusts in the vastness of their number').<sup>474</sup> The imagery is also seen in Merenptah's *Great Libyan War Inscription*: he is told (column 74) *dī=k ḥprw=sn mī snḥmw mī w3t-nb ḥnr m <n>3y=sn [...]* ('you have caused them (the Libyans) to become like locusts, as though every road is covered with their [bodies?]').<sup>475</sup> The locust is individually a small and weak animal, but in a swarm it threatens the lives of all Egyptians through damage to their agriculture: it is similarly used to represent the Hyksos rule of Lower Egypt on a pair of daggers from the tomb of Ahhotep, mother of Ahmose I.<sup>476</sup> The comparison of the dead Libyans to mice in Merenptah's Athribis Stela (R12)<sup>477</sup> also uses the imagery of the enemy as a pest that consumes large quantities of food.<sup>478</sup> It is noteworthy that in both of Merenptah's similes the implied threat of Ramesses' imagery has already been neutralised, proving the king's ability to single-handedly stop these destructive swarms and thus his military prowess.

The connection between the foreign enemy, infertility and the destruction of crops is present elsewhere in the *Qadesh* texts. The Hittite spies tell Ramesses II (*Qadesh* §1.50) that the army is *ḥw-st r ḥc wdb* ('more numerous than the sand of the shore'),<sup>479</sup> and the king repeats this to his army (§1.63 *m rmt ssmw knw mī p3 ḥc* – 'with men and horses as numerous as the sand');<sup>480</sup> when the Hittite king springs his trap (§2.67), we are told: *ist rd.n=f iwt rmt ḥtrw knw ḥw r-ikr mī p3 ḥc* ('Now, he sent forth the men and chariots, many and exceedingly vast in number, like the sand').<sup>481</sup> The desert was considered mysterious and numinous by the Egyptians, inhabited by fantastical beasts and the spirits of deceased kings,<sup>482</sup> but its sandy terrain also made it unfarmable and

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<sup>474</sup> KRI II.19.

<sup>475</sup> KRI IV.11.8-10.

<sup>476</sup> Malek (1997): 210-11.

<sup>477</sup> KRI IV.21.3.

<sup>478</sup> el Magd (2016): 335.

<sup>479</sup> KRI II.112.5-8.

<sup>480</sup> KRI II.115.1-5.

<sup>481</sup> KRI II.112.5-8, 115.1-5, 25.1-7.

<sup>482</sup> Darnell (2021): 1-2, 47.

therefore in opposition to the arable fields of the Nile.<sup>483</sup> The Hittite army of sand threatens Egyptian lives as the desert threatens Egyptian crops.<sup>484</sup> Yet when Ramesses II intervenes (§1.92-3): *irty=f ḥsȳ d r mȳ=f-st bȳw=f ḥr nbt i m i ḥt r=sn n d ḥr.n=f ḥḥ m ḥȳstyw ptri=f-st m i dḥȳw* ('his eyes glared terribly when he saw them, his power flaring like a fire against them: he does not heed a million foreigners, he sees them as straw').<sup>485</sup> The simile is used also at *Qadesh* §2.227-8,<sup>486</sup> Ramesses saying that *imn pȳy=i i t ḥn<sup>c</sup>=i n-sp iry=f-n=i ḥȳswt-nbt m dḥȳy r-ḥȳt=i* ('Amun my father was with me, and on my behalf was making all the foreign lands into straw before me').<sup>487</sup> Ramesses' intervention reverses the imagery: the enemies change from threats to agricultural death (locusts and sand) to dead agriculture (straw) themselves.

The contrast between the enemy and king is absolute: one is numerous, pathetic, but still (in large numbers) a threat to Egyptian agriculture and so life; the other is unique, powerful, and both a defender of Egypt's fertility and, as a bull, a symbol of fertility in his own right. The Egyptian king brings life to his troops, while the foreign enemies threaten death to the Egyptian army only to receive it themselves. Although the Hellenistic texts also use some of the same connotations in the imagery (as with the Argonauts and Bebrycians), it is less frequently and rigidly applied, and despite the Ptolemies' innate superiority compared to their fellow soldiers, it is not as absolute as that of the New Kingdom rulers.

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<sup>483</sup> Darnell (2021): 40-1; the desert was the location for *mȳ<sup>c</sup>w* ('armies' or 'workforces'; TLA 76300) to be sent to (Shaw 1993: 14).

<sup>484</sup> For similar negative connotations of sand see *Benefice* 3.17-18: *ms n=f n ḥȳ<sup>t</sup> ḥȳ<sup>h</sup> m-qty pȳ tw n pr-ḥȳ<sup>t</sup>*, literally 'his heart bore him sand like the eastern desert', meaning 'he seethed with anger'; the destructive, raging power of the sand fits the outraged Ankhhor. Cf. also the use of sand to characterise the foreign nomads living beyond Egypt's borders, named the *ḥryw-ȳ<sup>c</sup>*, 'those on the sand', or *nmiw-ȳ<sup>c</sup>*, 'those who traverse the sand' (TLA 108520, 84190).

<sup>485</sup> KRI II.120.12-15.

<sup>486</sup> KRI II.72.5-15.

<sup>487</sup> KRI II.72.5-15.

## Immortal Imagery: The Divine and the Human

Beyond the animal, but still animate,<sup>488</sup> are the gods and other divine beings.<sup>489</sup> These appear in similes and metaphors in both the Greek and Egyptian material, and in similar contexts: applied primarily to the king, whether a New Kingdom monarch or a Ptolemy. One example of this divine imagery – or association – comes in Theocritus' *Idyll* 17. Although not overtly concerned with warfare, Theocritus emphasises throughout the military power of Ptolemy II by unusually dwelling on the results of his warfare rather than his active participation.<sup>490</sup> And the ultimate cause of these military victories is made clear at the beginning of the poem: Ptolemy's martial qualities are elsewhere emphasised by the close connection in language and position to his father, now a god (17.56-7 σε δ', αἰχμητὰ Πτολεμαῖε / αἰχμητᾶ Πτολεμαίῳ - 'you, spearman Ptolemy [were born] / to spearman Ptolemy'). And in turn the divinised Ptolemy I is connected to the apotheosed Alexander and Heracles, characterised at 17.19-20 by their hostility and success against non-Hellenes, the Persians and Centaurs respectively: Πέρσαισι βαρὺς ('grievous to the Persians'), κενταυροφόνοιο ('centaur-slaying').<sup>491</sup> Divinity and militarism are closely linked. That all three are now gods, and associated with Ptolemy II, suggests that he too possesses a divine, Hellenic identity in battle; he is also associated with Diomedes and Achilles (17.53-6), two of the most prominent Iliadic fighters who would go on to become cult heroes.<sup>492</sup>

Similar associations are found in Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos*, at the centre of which Apollo prophesies Ptolemy II's future greatness within the context of his defeat of the Gauls. The connection to his father is again emphasised in Apollo's introduction of him (170 ὁ δ' εἴσεται ἦθεα

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<sup>488</sup> This term reflects Innes' distinction of comparisons between animate and inanimate entities (2003: 16); the idea of animacy – whether something is, essentially, alive – is not a binary and can differ greatly between cultures. Within the context of this chapter, however, the Greek and Egyptian attributions of animacy are relatively similar: humans, animals, and gods possess it, while objects (things not of flesh and blood) do not.

<sup>489</sup> This chapter will discuss them only within the context of their appearance in figurative language; for their actual participation in warfare see Chapter 5.

<sup>490</sup> Heerink (2010): 389.

<sup>491</sup> Hunter (2003): 117. Cf. above (pp. 91-2).

<sup>492</sup> Heerink (2010): 402. Hunter (2003: 138) argues that the heroes are placed in an ascending tricolon, Ptolemy II superior to both Achilles and Diomedes.

πατρός – ‘he will know the customs of his father’), but the primary point of comparison in this poem is with Apollo. Although the bulk of the god’s prophecy is taken up by his own defeat of the Gauls at Delphi,<sup>493</sup> the first non-conjunction he uses in the description of the conflict is ξυνός (‘common’), and the king and god are intimately linked. The Gauls are not named as such until line 184, and are introduced at (172-3) instead as οἱ μὲν ἐφ’ Ἑλλήνεσσι μάχαιραν / βαρβαρικὴν καὶ Κελτὸν ἀναστήσαντες Ἴαρηα (‘those who raised a barbarian sword and Celtic Ares against the Greeks’), before being called ὀψίγονοι Τιτῆνες (‘late-born Titans’).

In this Callimachus is to some extent innovating. Textual comparisons between human soldiers and cosmic enemies of the gods (whether Giants or Titans) date back at least to Aeschylus’ *Seven against Thebes* (467 BC), where Hippomedon (one of the Seven) bears a shield depicting Typhon (491-6); that Eteocles sends Hyperbius, with Zeus depicted on his shield (511-13), against him indicates the theological significance of this battle.<sup>494</sup> Otherwise, however, very little seems to be made of this analogy before the Hellenistic period in literature. In reliefs the association was more common, with Centaurs, Giants, Titans, or Amazons often linked to the Persians,<sup>495</sup> and the Giants were frequently depicted as crude human figures inferior to the Greek gods.<sup>496</sup> This, then, would appear to be where Callimachus draws his inspiration, and the association between Gauls and Giants was popular across the Hellenistic world: the Great Altar of Pergamum connected the Attalid defeat of their enemies (both Macedonians and Gauls) with increasingly monstrous Giants, less anthropomorphised than in Classical Greece.<sup>497</sup> By adopting this motif Callimachus emphasises the Gauls’ hostility to the entire Greek cosmos, and as the defeater of these Titans Ptolemy is linked (as Hyperbius was by Aeschylus) to Zeus. The actual fight against the Gauls is not narrated in great detail, and instead Callimachus ‘celebra il prodigio della “commune impresa” del dio e di Tolomeo

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<sup>493</sup> Hutchinson (1988): 39.

<sup>494</sup> Hutchinson (1994): 122-5.

<sup>495</sup> DuBois (1991): 53-4.

<sup>496</sup> Vian (1952): 21-2.

<sup>497</sup> Stephens (2015): 208; Quinn (2013): 347. On similar Seleucid use of the Gauls see Visscher (2020: 164).

senza alludere alle avverse condizioni climatiche o all'intervento dei popoli vicini'; what is important is not the battle but the association of the king with the divine.<sup>498</sup>

Ptolemy's victory over his own Gallic enemies is also light on detail: Apollo simply describes the Gauls perishing 'in fire' (186 ἐν πυρί), referring to the stranding of a rebellious group of Gallic mercenaries on an island in the Nile and their subsequent death in Egypt's blazing heat.<sup>499</sup> The event, unlike the Gauls' assault on Delphi, had no significance for the wider Greek world other than providing material for poets to work into praise of Ptolemy. The depiction of him defeating his Gallic enemies seems to have been a popular topic, as indicated by *SH* 958, a poem similar to the *Hymn to Delos*<sup>500</sup> about the defeat of the Galatians that is likely to be about Ptolemy II.<sup>501</sup> The impression one gets from both Callimachus and Theocritus is that Ptolemy II is a very divine, Greek, and militaristic king defined by his actions against his foreign enemies, a panhellenic cosmic force for good.<sup>502</sup> By defeating these enemies Ptolemy was shown to be a legitimate Hellenistic king who could lead through military strength,<sup>503</sup> but even more importantly equal to his contemporaries Antigonos II Gonatas and Antiochus I, who had fought much harder battles against the Gauls.<sup>504</sup>

Associations of the New Kingdom monarch with the divine are more direct than with Ptolemy II: whereas the Hellenistic poets tend to use juxtaposition or metaphor to suggest the king's divine attributes, the Egyptian authors use direct similes. The importance of the divine to the image of the king in battle is made clear in Thutmose III's *Annals*, since the first surviving simile in the text (column 85),<sup>505</sup> as he enters battle at Megiddo, says that

*wḏḥ ḥm=f ḥr wrryt nt ḏꜥm sꜥbw m imꜣw=f nw r-ꜥ-ḥt mi ḥr tmꜣ-ꜥ nb ir-ḥt mi mntw wꜣst it(=f)  
imn ḥr snḥt ꜥwy=f*

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<sup>498</sup> Giuseppetti (2013): 163.

<sup>499</sup> Mineur (1984): 177-8.

<sup>500</sup> Barbantani (2001): 72.

<sup>501</sup> Barbantani (2002-3): 37.

<sup>502</sup> For the role of the Hellenistic poets in constructing Ptolemaic ideology see Chapter 1 (pp. 29-30).

<sup>503</sup> See Gehrke (2013) for the necessity of victory to (early) Hellenistic kingship.

<sup>504</sup> Visscher (2020): 159.

<sup>505</sup> *Urk.* IV.657.5-9.

His Person was proceeding on a chariot of electrum, equipped with his panoply of war, like Horus, strong of arm, lord of action; like Montu of Thebes; his father Amun was strengthening his arms.

The presence of Horus and Amun in these passages is unsurprising: Horus was very tightly connected to kingship, and Amun was the major god of Thebes, the origin of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>506</sup> Montu was associated with war since at least the Middle Kingdom and was primarily linked to Thebes;<sup>507</sup> his intimate connection to the king here is emphasised by his geographical specification ('Montu of Thebes'). Montu is in the texts particularly associated with bravery and athleticism, and the word *ḫni* ('valour'), perhaps a mental counterpart to *nḥt* ('strength');<sup>508</sup> the word is first used as a divine epithet in the New Kingdom, accompanying the increased military self-presentation of the kings, and although it could be applied to a few other male divinities, it was most often used with Montu.<sup>509</sup> Thus in the Gebel Barkal Stela we are told (line 8) that Thutmose III *nsw-pw ḫn mi mnṯw it n it.tw m c=f* ('is a king, valiant like Montu, who takes, from whose hand no-one takes'), at line 16 that *n ḫpr mṯt=f mnṯw ḫn ḫr ptri* ('his likeness does not exist, (he is) valiant Montu on the battlefield').<sup>510</sup>

Similar bravery is also associated with Montu at *Qadesh* §2.37-8, as Ramesses II sets off to the city: *ḫr.c.n ḫm=f šm n ḫr=f mi it=f mnṯw nb wst d.n=f mšdt nt i-r-n-t* ('Then his person went forth face-first, like his father Montu, Lord of Thebes, and he crossed the ford of the Orontes').<sup>511</sup> The liminal nature of this action, as the king at the beginning of his narrative crosses the river towards Qadesh, suggests its importance; that he is compared to Montu (and indeed genetically connected to him)<sup>512</sup> guarantees his future success in battle. Later (*Qadesh* §2.54),<sup>513</sup> when Ramesses II turns to face the Hittite army, he says *msy.n(=i)-wi r=sn iw=i mi mnṯw* ('I presented

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<sup>506</sup> For the fundamental nature of the king's relationship to Horus see Sabbahy (2021: 22-4).

<sup>507</sup> Werner (1986): 56.

<sup>508</sup> Hsu (2020): 90.

<sup>509</sup> LGG VII.214.

<sup>510</sup> *Urk.* IV.1231.2-3, 1233.10-11.

<sup>511</sup> *KRI* II.15.1-10.

<sup>512</sup> For the familial link between god and king see Chapter 5 (pp. 213-23).

<sup>513</sup> *KRI* II.20.11-15.

myself to them, being like Montu’). There is great significance to Ramesses’ action here. The verb *msy* (‘present’)<sup>514</sup> is typically used of a highly reverential action: the goddess of childbirth Meskhenet ‘presents’ herself in Papyrus Westcar to the future kings of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty at their birth in order to proclaim their destiny (10.12-13, 20, 26 *ḥꜥ.n ms.n-sy ms-ḥnt r=f*); Ahmose son of Ibana describes himself ‘presenting’ hands cut off from the enemy to the king after battle in his biography (columns 26-7);<sup>515</sup> elsewhere in *Qadesh 2* foreign chiefs ‘present’ their tribute to Ramesses, Ramesses ‘presents’ stone to Amun for his obelisks, and the Egyptian soldiers ‘present’ themselves to the king after his victory (§2.31, 106, 229).<sup>516</sup> At this moment when the whole world is turned upside down, and the king ‘presents’ himself to the enemy, he remains like the god of war, thanks to whose divine qualities he is able to turn the tide and return the world and social relationships to their rightful state.

Montu’s connotations of martial prowess are contrasted by gods who suggest a more wild and uncontrollable power in the king. Two of the most prominent (especially in similes) are Sekhmet and Seth. More will be discussed concerning Sekhmet in Chapter 5 owing to the femininity that distinguishes her from the other gods,<sup>517</sup> but now we should note that she was very closely connected to royalty, with her name etymologically linked to the Egyptian name for the Double Crown (Sekhmety – ‘The Two Powerful Ones’),<sup>518</sup> and as a leonine goddess she was associated with the untameable rage of the king (a feature shared with Seth).<sup>519</sup> Thus both gods are, for example, connected at *Qadesh* §1.96 (*iw ḥm=f mi swth ꜥ pḥty mi shmt m it nšny=s* – ‘his Person was like Seth, great of strength, like Sekhmet in the moment of her raging’).<sup>520</sup> The connection is twofold, since the verb *nšny* (‘to rage’) is determined by the Seth-animal (Gardiner E20 & E21) and is the

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<sup>514</sup> *TLA* 74700.

<sup>515</sup> *Urk.* IV.7.10-14.

<sup>516</sup> *KRI* II.13.1-5, 38.5-9, 73.1-4.

<sup>517</sup> pp. 231-3.

<sup>518</sup> Sekhmet could be identified with both the White and Red Crowns, and was sometimes depicted wearing the Double Crown (Goebes 2008: 178-9); she was also sometimes given the name *wrt-ḥkꜣw*, another word for the Double Crown (Collier 1997: 23).

<sup>519</sup> Calvert (2013: 49) describes her as ‘perhaps the most vicious of all Egyptian deities’.

<sup>520</sup> *KRI* II.121.6-10.

characteristic behaviour of the god;<sup>521</sup> less explicitly, at §1.87 we are told that the king is *mi swth m it shm=f* ('like Seth in the moment of his power'),<sup>522</sup> with Seth connected not directly with Sekhmet but with the etymon of her name (*shm* – 'power'). In the *Qadesh* texts, Seth has a greater symbolic function: he was associated with the east (i.e. where Qadesh is), and so by being partially or entirely identified with him Ramesses II's dominion over this area is already assured.<sup>523</sup>

The rage associated with Seth and Sekhmet suggests a more ferocious ability in battle than comparisons to Montu. Thus in Thutmose IV's Konosso Stela, the king is compared to Montu and Seth in quick succession to highlight his two key attributes in battle, divine soldiery and divine rage (lines 16-17): *prt in ntr nfr mi mntw m hprw=f-nbw dbw m h<sup>c</sup>w=f nw r-<sup>c</sup>ht nšnw mi swth nbwty* ('The departure by the perfect god like Montu in all his forms, clothed in his panoply of battle, raging like Seth of Ombos').<sup>524</sup> Montu, the Theban war god, and Seth, the fierce god of the east, therefore form a complementary pair acting through the person of the king; this yin/yang association is seen most clearly at *Qadesh* §2.129-31,<sup>525</sup> where Ramesses II tells us how well the battle goes:

*p3 ir=i nb hr hpr tw=i mi mntw tw=i hr stt hr imnty hr kf<sup>c</sup> m smhy tw=i mi sth m it=f m-hr=sn*

All that I did was brought into being: I was like Montu – I was shooting with my right hand, seizing with my left – I was like Seth in his moment before them.

The chiasmus (ABBA) suggests a complementary contrast between Montu and Seth, brought harmoniously together by the king. The two gods are, like the lion and bull, symbols of complete dominance in war.

The main difference between the application of the divine to the New Kingdom and Ptolemaic kings is with the enemy: whereas the Greek texts explicitly equate the barbarians with

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<sup>521</sup> McDonald (2002): 160.

<sup>522</sup> *KRI* II.120.1-5.

<sup>523</sup> Cornelius (1994): 259.

<sup>524</sup> *Urk.* IV.1547.6-8; Werner (1986): 113.

<sup>525</sup> *KRI* II.44.6-45.5.

the divine forces of evil (such as the Giants or Centaurs), the New Kingdom Egyptian texts do not – Apophis, for example, is nowhere to be seen.<sup>526</sup> Instead, the Egyptian texts take the principal god of divine, foreign chaos (Seth) and appropriate him for the king in a way that would be impossible for the Greeks. By using Seth in connection to the Theban war-god Montu, and by applying his characteristics to the king, he is stripped of his threat to Egypt: just like all the foreign lands he is associated with, he belongs to the king.

The *Argonautica* also contains divine imagery, although ‘divine imagery’ as a concept is more complicated in this poem because a number of episodes feature divine characters. Two in particular correspond to the ‘god against forces of chaos’ imagery we have seen applied to Ptolemy II. Both Heracles (1.985-1011) and Jason (3.1354-1404) fight ‘Earthborn’ (Γηγενέες), who recall the more famous ‘Earthborn’, the Giants; the two heroes’ battles thus become mini-Gigantomachies,<sup>527</sup> featuring in Heracles’ case a semi-divine hero<sup>528</sup> restoring order to the Greeks of Dindymon.<sup>529</sup> Divine forces of good and evil also appear in a striking pair of similes at 2.38-43, describing Amycus and Polydeuces staring each other down:

ἀλλ’ ὁ μὲν ἢ ὄλοοιο Τυφώεος ἢ ἐ καὶ αὐτῆς  
Γαίης εἶναι ἕκτο πέλωρ τέκος οἷα πάροιθεν  
χωομένη Διὶ τίκτεν· ὁ δ’ οὐρανίῳ ἀτάλαντος  
ἀστέρι Τυνδαρίδης, οὐ̅περ κάλλισται ἕασιν  
ἔσπερίην διὰ νύκτα φαινομένου ἀμαρυγαί·  
τοῖος ἔην Διὸς υἱός ...

And one seemed to be the monstrous offspring  
of destructive Typhoeus, or even of Earth herself, of the sort that before  
she bore due to her anger with Zeus; but the other was like a celestial  
star – the son of Tyndareus – which has the most beautiful

<sup>526</sup> Cf. Allon (2021), who argues that the Egyptians did not associate their enemies with cosmic disorder, though this should be nuanced a little: it is not to say that the enemy should not be associated with the same broad threat as Apophis (i.e. destabilisation of comic order), just that they are not divinised in the same way as Greek enemies were.

<sup>527</sup> Apollonius emphasises the link to the Gigantomachy in Heracles’ battle by minimising the role of the other Argonauts; as with his more famous battle, Heracles is the only human present (Hunter 1993: 41-2).

<sup>528</sup> Heracles was always liminal in Greek thought in terms of his divinity, neither fully human nor god (Feeney 1991: 95), and early Greek epic presents a very inconsistent view of the hero, at some times performing typical human activities (sacking cities, fighting over cattle), at others divine ones (killing monsters, battling the Giants); see Haubold (2005): 94.

<sup>529</sup> Apollonius’ portrayal of Heracles against the Earthborn parallels Callimachus’ portrayal of Ptolemy II against the Gauls, and fits Apollonius’ emphasis on divine generalship discussed above (pp. 117-18).

gleaming in the night at evening when it appears:  
such was the son of Zeus ...

The comparison of an enemy to a cosmic force of chaos – Typhoeus/Typhon being the last of Earth’s progeny to battle the gods according to Hesiod (*Theogony* 820-80) – is (as noted above) not well attested in earlier Greek epic and has no Homeric model,<sup>530</sup> and considerably raises the tone of a boxing match: fisticuffs between a Greek and a foreigner becomes a cosmic struggle.<sup>531</sup> The imagery does, however, correspond to the ideology of Ptolemy II as guarantor of Greek civilisation seen in Callimachus and Theocritus.<sup>532</sup> Lines 41 and 43 emphasise the semi-divine nature of Polydeuces, the son of both a man (Tyndareus) and a god (Zeus),<sup>533</sup> and so connect him to the semi-divine Ptolemy II; the fact that he is the literal son of Zeus means he must triumph over the only figurative son of Typhoeus, as Ptolemy II’s closeness to his father in Callimachus and Theocritus means he will repeat his triumphs.

The association with the (positive) divine makes Polydeuces unbeatable, and this is also true for Aetes. Our first real description of him comes at 2.1205-6, when Argus says that καὶ δέ κεν Ἄρει / σμερδαλέην ἐνοπὴν μέγα τε σθένος ἰσοφαρίζοι (‘he would even rival Ares with his fearful war-cry and great strength’), and the equivalence between him and Ares is brought out when he puts on armour given to him by Ares himself (3.1225-30).<sup>534</sup> Immediately following his arming he

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<sup>530</sup> Evidence for an early epic poem on the Gigantomachy is lacking, though it is possible it was narrated as part of an epic on Heracles (Vian 1952: 174); the battle seems to have been more popular as a visual rather than textual narrative. In the Hellenistic period similar use of Gigantic imagery in battle is found at lines 6-7 of the *Batrachomyomachia*, when the mice are said to ‘emulate the deeds of the earthborn men, the Giants’: the more than Homeric simile is comedically inappropriate for the un-Homeric mice and frogs taking part in the battle, though it is relevant that there is a legitimate point of comparison, since mice, like the Giants, were believed to have been earthborn (Hosty 2020: 127). The *Alexandra* also uses Gigantic imagery, which is applied to both Achilles (177 Πελασγικὸν Τυφῶνα) and Hector (526-7 Καναστραῖον ... γίγαντα), somewhat complicating the traditional parallelism of the Trojan War with the Gigantomachy (Hornblower 2015: 241).

<sup>531</sup> Cuypers (1997): 71-2.

<sup>532</sup> Hunter (1989b): 88.

<sup>533</sup> This is perhaps also supposed to connect Polydeuces to Heracles, who fought many of Typhoeus’ children in his labours (Cuypers 1997: 72).

<sup>534</sup> Hunter (1989a): 233. The detail that it was the armour worn when Ares killed the Giant Mimas may emphasise Aetes’ control over the ‘Earthborn’ (*ibid.*).

is compared to Poseidon (3.1240-5),<sup>535</sup> and the impression we get from all of this divine association is that Aeetes would be completely unbeatable in battle (3.1232-4):

τὸ μὲν οὐδέ τις ἄλλος ὑπέστη  
ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων, ὅτε κάλλιπον Ἡρακλῆα  
τῆλε παρέξ, ὃ κεν οἶος ἐναντίβιον πτολέμιζεν.

No other could have withstood it [Aeetes' spear]  
amongst those heroic men, since they had left Heracles behind,  
far away, and he alone could have fought it face-to-face.

Only a divine hero could defeat the godlike Aeetes; against mortals he is unstoppable.<sup>536</sup> Jason recognises this himself: the voyage begins as if it might be an invasion of Colchis, a precursor to the Greek siege of Troy (that is certainly the opinion of the Greek onlookers at 1.242-5), but after hearing Argus' description of Aeetes Jason moves to the more successful diplomatic/seductive approach. Divine figures are repeatedly presented as unstoppable and, when they are Greek, it is almost their duty to defeat the foreign threats that represent the latest attempt – after Titans, Giants, Centaurs, and Persians – to destroy Greek cosmic order.

### **Losing their Minds: Imagery without Animacy**

In opposition to Amycus, the son of Zeus Polydeuces is naturally a suitable opponent. But the simile applied to him in that passage elevates his fighting abilities further. His counterpart to the Gigantic imagery used of Typhoeus is that of a star, whose beauty – without any implications of strength – we might think a mismatch for the cosmic threat represented by Amycus. The star is, however, one of the most potent symbols of destructive power. The Homeric model for this simile is *Iliad* 22.317-18, when the gleam of Achilles' spear is compared to the Evening Star.<sup>537</sup> The comparison of

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<sup>535</sup> Poseidon was associated with bulls and fertility (Hunter 1989a: 235), appropriately given Jason's impending trial.

<sup>536</sup> He is in some ways the most Iliadic character in the *Argonautica* (Williams 1996: 477).

<sup>537</sup> Cuypers (1997): 74. The simile also reinforces Achilles' superiority: Hector had just been compared to an eagle (22.308-10), a mighty and fierce bird, but the star is as far above the bird in the sky as Achilles' strength is compared to Hector (Ready 2011: 213).

Polydeuces to Hesperus here indicates that he, like Achilles, will win, but also equates him not with Achilles but with Achilles' spear; Polydeuces is not the wielder of the star-like, deadly weapon – he is the star-like, deadly weapon himself. This implied loss of humanity and animacy makes him all the more destructive: Achilles, as a human, could be talked to by Hector; there is no chance of that happening with the 'inanimate' Polydeuces.

Another star simile is found at *Iliad* 5.5-6, describing Diomedes just before his destructive rampage, and throughout the poem such similes are associated with danger and foreboding for the onlooker.<sup>538</sup> But the most extended use of stellar imagery in the *Iliad*, and the most illustrative of its destructive potential, comes just before Achilles and Hector's climactic fight. As Achilles charges at Hector, Priam sees him (*Iliad* 22.26-31)

παμφαίνονθ' ὥς τ' ἀστέρ' ἐπεσσύμενον πεδίοιο  
ὃς ῥά τ' ὀπώρης εἴσιν, ἀρίζηλοι δέ οἱ ἀγῶναι  
φαίνονται πολλοῖσι μετ' ἀστράσι νυκτὸς ἀμολγῶ,  
ὄν τε κύν' Ὀρίωνος ἐπὶ κλησὶν καλέουσι·  
λαμπρότατος μὲν ὃ γ' ἐστί, κακὸν δέ τε σῆμα τέτυκται  
καὶ τε φέρει πολλὸν πυρετὸν δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν

gleaming as he rushed over the plain like a star,  
which is that of the harvest, and conspicuously its rays  
shine amongst the many stars in the dead of night,  
and which they call by name the dog of Orion.  
It is the brightest, but it is an evil omen  
and brings a great burning heat to wrtched mortals;

When Apollonius uses this simile with Jason, however, the effect is very different. As Medea waits to meet him, she sees him (*Argonautica* 3.957-61)

ὑψὸς' ἀναθρόσκων ἄτε Σείριος Ὠκεανοῖο  
ὃς δὴ τοι καλὸς μὲν ἀρίζηλός τ' ἐσιδέσθαι  
ἀντέλλει, μήλοισι δ' ἐν ἄσπετον ἦκεν οἴζύν·  
ὥς ἄρα τῇ καλὸς μὲν ἐπήλυθεν εἰσοράασθαι  
Αἰσονίδης, κάματον δὲ δυσίμερον ὄρσε φανθείς.

leaping up high like Sirius from Ocean,  
who, beautiful and conspicuous to behold indeed,  
rises, and hurls unspeakable misery on flocks;

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<sup>538</sup> Kelly (2007): 370-1.

so, then, he came, beautiful for her to behold,  
the son of Aeson, and he roused ill-desired weariness with his appearance.

The two main points of the simile are the shining beauty of Achilles and Jason and the threat they are implied to bring with them – in both cases they bring pain on a general, indiscriminate level, but there is an implication that they will bring that pain to the figures they approach (Medea and Hector).<sup>539</sup> Also important is the sense of movement in these similes: the present participles ἀναθρώσκων and ἐπεσσύμενον convey the rapid actions of Jason and Achilles and the immediacy of the focalisation, which sharply contrasts with the descriptions of Medea and Hector that accompany these passages: she ‘has her feet fixed beneath her’ (3.965 ὑπένερθε πάγη πόδας), while Hector spends 31 lines doubting what to do (22.99-130), before his decision is made for him by Achilles’ dreadful arrival and he finally moves – in the wrong direction, away from Achilles (22.131-7).<sup>540</sup> Both Achilles and Jason are therefore presented as aggressive and full of action, in contrast to the paralysed Hector and Medea. The audience are able to tell from the simile, due to our knowledge of epic poetry, that Jason’s arrival heralds danger, while Medea despite being the focaliser cannot, and Apollonius thus emphasises her naivety.<sup>541</sup>

The more sympathetic and helpless portrayal of the victim in the *Argonautica* makes the impressive star-simile ironic, its connotations of destructive power highlighting the differences between Jason and Achilles, rather than elevating Jason to the level of the Homeric hero.<sup>542</sup> Achilles had to fight and kill the greatest Trojan warrior; Jason simply has to seduce a girl already prepared to give him everything he asks for. His eventual battle comes at the end of Book 3, as he fights the

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<sup>539</sup> Coughlan (2019): 872. Sirius was particularly prominent in epic poetry, where its brightness was used to convey destructive power; cf. Aratus *Phaenomena* 334 (Kidd 1997: 308). It was viewed more positively by the Egyptians (Gautschy 2011: 116), though as the anthropomorphised god Sopdu it could be portrayed killing the foreigners to the east over which it had power (Beaux 2015: 19).

<sup>540</sup> The type-scene occurs three times previously in the *Iliad*, and in all those instances the doubter resolves to stand fast (Fenik 1978: 68-9).

<sup>541</sup> Coughlan (2019): 878.

<sup>542</sup> Jason had been compared to a star before, likened to Hesperus as he approached Hypsipyle at 1.774-81 (Hunter 1989a: 202); that simile was more positive, which accentuates the negative tone of this one.

Earthborn (3.1346-1407), during which he is completely invincible due to Medea’s charm and in any case mostly just gets them to kill each other while he hides.<sup>543</sup> The comparisons to Achilles mark Jason as very different to the Iliadic hero – unwarlike, and not in a good way. This continues the portrayal of Jason so far: unspectacular as an individual warrior, whose military victories (as this is suggested to be) are marked by sympathy for the victim rather than admiration for him.

In Egyptian war texts of the New Kingdom, the shooting-star also represents a brutal, unstoppable force.<sup>544</sup> This potential is not entirely novel in the New Kingdom, and is also found earlier in the Middle Kingdom *Story of the Shipwrecked Sailor* (mid-12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty).<sup>545</sup> The serpent encountered by the eponymous mariner describes how he used to live on the island with his family, but (129-32).<sup>546</sup>

*ḥḥ.n sbḥ hḥw pr.n nḥ m ḥt m-ḥ=f ḥpr.n rs nn-wi ḥnḥ ḥm.ny nn-wi m ḥry-ib=sn ḥḥ.n=i mt.kw-n=sn gm.n=i-st m ḥḥyt wḥt*

**Then a star** fell, and they perished in fire because of it; it happened while I was not with (them), they burnt while I was not in their midst. Then I died for them, when I found them as a single pile of corpses.

The suddenness of this episode, and the brevity with which the star’s coming is described, indicate its destructive power. The serpent and his family are associated with the creator god in the narrative, and their near-total obliteration by the star indicates its power to cause a truly cosmic cataclysm.<sup>547</sup>

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<sup>543</sup> A star simile is briefly applied to him in this battle (3.1377-80), but its model is Athene descending to earth at *Iliad* 4.75-8 (Fantuzzi & Hunter 2004: 276-7), not in the midst of battle.

<sup>544</sup> Stars themselves were often considered to be numinous, and able to be identified with gods such as Osiris and Horus (Goebis 2003: 239), and the god Sopdu was an important symbol of rebirth that marked the turning of the year (Beaux 2015: 21). Whether shooting-stars were perceived in the same way is not clear, and there is no sense of animacy in the passages under discussion.

<sup>545</sup> Parkinson (2002): 46.

<sup>546</sup> *MES* 45.7-10. The red colour is used for the rubrication of the manuscript text.

<sup>547</sup> See Parkinson (2002: 139) for discussion of this passage and summary of the earlier literature.

Similar events are narrated, some 300 years later, by Thutmose III's Gebel Barkal Stela. At the beginning of the text (lines 5-6) the king is described:

*sšd=f r imtw pdty 2 mi sbj db=f hrt ʕk m wmt [wn th]i hh=f r=s m sdt ir-st m tm wn ḥbdw hr snfw=sn in ʕht=f sḥr-n=f-st nsrt=f drt ḥftyw=f*

He flashes by between the Two Bows<sup>548</sup> like a star as it crosses the sky, having entered the masses with his breath [attacking] them in fire, having made them non-existent as they lie face-down in their own blood; it was his uraeus that felled them for him, his flame that subdued his enemies.

This description is picked up by the narration of the last of the king's victories, against unnamed enemies to the north, which is introduced at line 33 by the king directly addressing the audience.<sup>549</sup> After setting the scene and time (at night, at the changing of the guard), we are suddenly told (line 34) that *itt sbj m iiy n rsy=sn n ḥpr mitt wd.n=f r=s m ʕk=f n ʕh<sup>c</sup> w<sup>c</sup> im* ('A star came, coming to (the enemies') south, and the likeness has never been; it attacked them in its progress, and not one of them stood their ground').<sup>550</sup> A lacuna follows, which Helck restores as *[smḥ.n=i-sn mi ntyw n ḥpr ḥdb hr snf=sn ḥrw] m gbgbyt ist-rt [nsrt] m-sʕw=sn m sdt r-ḥrw=sn* ('[I slaughtered them like those who have never been, face-down in their own blood, fallen] in heaps. Now indeed, the [flaming serpent (uraeus)] was at their backs, with flame in their faces').<sup>551</sup> If Helck's restorations are correct, the destruction caused by the star thus immediately segues into the destruction caused by the king and his divine flame, as in lines 5-6. Regardless of whether this records an actual astronomical phenomenon (such as a meteor),<sup>552</sup> the text certainly associates and perhaps even identifies the star with the king, and its power in battle should be viewed as analogous to the king's.<sup>553</sup> The star represents the king at his most brutal, incinerating his enemies with no chance of being stopped:

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<sup>548</sup> An area of the sky described in the Pyramid Texts (Goebis 2003: 239).

<sup>549</sup> *Urk.* IV.1238.6-8.

<sup>550</sup> *Urk.* IV.1238.12-15.

<sup>551</sup> *Urk.* IV.1238.16-18.

<sup>552</sup> For a discussion of these possibilities see Winkler (2013).

<sup>553</sup> Klug (2002): 206-7.

like the star in the *Shipwrecked Sailor*, he is cataclysmic for his enemies, a force far beyond human abilities.<sup>554</sup>

Balancing out this destruction, however, is a certain sense of beauty associated with star imagery, the same connection we see especially with Jason and Polydeuces in the *Argonautica*. This paradoxical quality is most clearly expressed in Thutmose III's Poetical Stela, which claims (line 15) that the king will be like *sšd st bsw=f m sđt dī=f idt=f* ('a shooting star sowing its flame and giving out its fragrance').<sup>555</sup> The picturesque and sensory description suggests the star's divine and enticing qualities, though the precise sense here is unclear: *š(š)dt* could mean 'dew', 'fragrance', 'rain'.<sup>556</sup> But according to Amun, Thutmose III will appear like this when *il.n=i dī=i titi=k b šbtj hnd=k ntyw m ww nw b-ntr* ('[Amun] have come to let you crush the eastern land and trample on those in the regions of the god's land'). His celestial beauty and fragrance are intimately bound up in his total destruction of his enemies: he is just as lovely as he is destructive.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, there appears to be a subtle shift in this sense of beauty within the context of war. In Sety I's and Ramesses II's adaptations of Thutmose III's Poetical Stela, the star-simile is very slightly altered.<sup>557</sup> Amun here says *dī=i mš=sn hm=k mi sšd st bs=f m sđt dī=f 𐀀𐀀𐀀=f* ('I will make them see your Person like a shooting star sowing its flame and giving out its 𐀀𐀀𐀀'). The hieroglyph 𐀀𐀀𐀀 (Gardiner N4) could be used, as in Thutmose III's text, as a determinative for *š(š)dt*, but it could also be used ideographically for the word *šnyt* ('storm').<sup>558</sup> The potentially multiple associations of the sign are, however, specified in Sety I's text, because three lines later a simile not found in the Poetical Stela appears: *dī=i mš=sn hm=k mi h[h n sđt mi hprw] n šhmt m 𐀀𐀀𐀀=s* ('I will

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<sup>554</sup> Identification of the king with stars was longstanding, particularly with Orion, also identified as Osiris, and the morning star, also identified as Horus (Goebis 2003: 239-40), though less commonly with the violent connotations that we find in the New Kingdom sources.

<sup>555</sup> *Urk.* IV.615.10-15.

<sup>556</sup> *TLA* 21180.

<sup>557</sup> *KRI* I.27.6-7, II.164.7.

<sup>558</sup> *TLA* 155570.

make them see your Person like a bl[ast of fire, like the appearance] of Sekhmet in her (𓆎).<sup>559</sup> The association with Sekhmet in this simile indicates its more violent nature, and suggests that it should be read *šnyt*: violent, uncontrollable rage is, as noted above, characteristic of the goddess, and the word is associated with Seth in PT 511. This second simile, with its more specified sense, suggests that the first simile should be read in the same way. The pleasant connotations of Thutmose III's text are dispensed with in favour of the star's pure destructive power. This aspect is also seen in Ramesses II's Beth-Shan Stela, where a star simile at line 18<sup>560</sup> begins a succession of vivid imagery that indicates the king's power:

*ḥt<sup>c</sup>=f šsr=f iw=f mī sb<sup>3</sup> sšd m ḥr-ib ḥwt m nḥt ḥ[wn skr]y ḥrw nw pḥww-b ḥr.n=f wrw=sn  
ḥn<sup>c</sup> mš<sup>c</sup>=w iw ḥm=f m-s<sup>3</sup>=sn mī k<sup>3</sup>-nbwty mī bik m ḥt-pt n ḥpdw mī mḥi-ḥs<sup>3</sup> m ḥy nt ḥwtyw  
mī ḥt mḥ.n=s m km<sup>3</sup>w nḥ<sup>3</sup>w ḏ<sup>c</sup> khw m-s<sup>3</sup>=sn ḥr spd nbw iw=w mī šwt ḥpdw r-ḥt ḥw*

he seizes, he shoots, being like a shooting-star in the midst of the multitudes in strength, [plundering and killing] the enemies of the ends of the earth, he has felled their chiefs and their armies, with his Person after them like the Bull of Ombos (Seth), like a falcon in a flock of birds, like a savage lion in a stable of goats, like a fire when it has filled itself with reeds, a terrible storm hurtling after them, sharpening the flame, while they are like the feathers of birds before the wind.

The effect is striking, the compilation of all kinds of imagery – stellar, divine, and animal – creating the impression of the king as an unstoppable force in battle, as he kills at close and distant range. The conclusion of this passage with a simile completely without animacy – the king like a fire fanned by a storm, the enemy like reeds or feathers in the breeze – indicates his unstoppable force in battle, destroying without any hesitation, and capable of defeating any resistance. As with the other semi-divine military stars Polydeuces and Achilles, we are in no doubt that Ramesses II will triumph, as we are in no doubt that Jason will manage to seduce Medea. Foreigners cannot resist: the superiority of the unthinking, unfeeling, celestial Greek or Egyptian is undeniable.

<sup>559</sup> KRI I.27.8.

<sup>560</sup> KRI II.151.9-12.

Returning to the tri-partite division of human, non-human, and inanimate, there is a clear ranking in the way imagery elevates its subjects. Human to human similes (or similes set in a very human context such as fishing or fowling) typically mark the weakness of the subject, whether they are caught fish, netted birds, or bees driven from their hive; the foreign enemy is subjugated by ordinary humans in the simile, and we are given the impression that any given human could be victorious. Animal similes, used more frequently with the protagonists, are more effective, conveying the inhuman qualities of the animal used – in general strength, aggression, and particularly in the Egyptian texts, uniqueness. Whatever the subject of these similes is, it is not fully human, and this unknowable quality produces a sense of unease. The divine similes – which retain animacy but are far superior to humans – in the Greek material are largely used to compare barbarians to cosmic forces of chaos, exacerbating their threat to magnify the deeds of their conqueror; in the New Kingdom texts such potential power is not given to the enemy, the king being the only one able to approximate the gods.

Inanimate similes are more removed from the human experience: whereas with the others one knows that there is some consciousness, something remotely knowable within, inanimate forces such as fire are devoid of this.<sup>561</sup> The subjects of these similes are as far from the human experience as possible, and as a result their terrifying abilities in battle are the greatest; as an inanimate object capable of bringing great destruction from its unreachable position in the sky, the (shooting-)star is the epitome of this. Given that similes – despite their name – function only through the fundamental *dissimilarity* of their contents, their effectiveness depends primarily on

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<sup>561</sup> Fire is, like the star, a potent image used typically when very one-sided battling takes place: the Argonauts are compared to a fire as they massacre the Doliones (*Argonautica* 1.1027-8); Thutmose III's destruction of the Mitanni at lines 6-7 of the Gebel Barkal Stela (*Urk.* IV.1230.5-7) is compared to the effects of a fire; Ramesses II is described burning all foreign lands as he assaults the Hittite army at Qadesh §1.91 (*KRI* II.120.10-11) and is compared to a flame in the encomium that begins Qadesh 2 (§14, *KRI* II.7.6-10). Indeed, accompanying the increased militarism of the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, fire as a whole took on an increasingly hostile sense of antagonism during the Ramessid period (Di Biase-Dyson 2018: 37). With regard to its similar use in the *Iliad*, Ready describes it as 'the elemental instantiation of martial might' (2011: 215).

this difference. The further the object of comparison is from its subject (i.e. ultimately from the human), the more superhuman the subject appears to be.<sup>562</sup>

There are, therefore, two major differences between the use of imagery in the New Kingdom and Hellenistic period. The Greeks use collective animal similes for both themselves and their enemies, owing to the importance of the phalanx to their own practice of warfare; the Egyptians use them only for the enemy to emphasise the uniqueness and superiority of their king. Divine similes are likewise more freely used in the Greek texts for both sides, though in both cases it tends to be warriors already semi-divine (Polydeuces, the Egyptian king) who have this imagery positively applied to them. But the potency of inanimate imagery means that it is used almost identically by the victorious Greeks – albeit somewhat problematically in the case of Jason and Medea – and Egyptians to reinforce their culture’s supremacy over all others.

### **Imagery post-Conquest**

In the Demotic texts and the *Posthomerica* there are considerable changes in the application of imagery. On a broad level, the identities of the participants in war remain the same. In the *Posthomerica* the Greeks, as so often, fight against enemies from the East (in this instance the Trojans). There is some ambiguity concerning the identity of the Young Priest’s men in *Benefice*: the term used is *Sm*, which in contemporaneous hieroglyphic texts still meant ‘Asiatic’ but in administrative documents meant ‘herdsman’.<sup>563</sup> The latter was certainly more common in Demotic texts,<sup>564</sup> but this is largely due to the imbalance in sources, since administrative material far outweighs literary and religious papyri.<sup>565</sup> Given also that the composers of the Demotic and hieroglyphic texts would have been at least part of the same temple-based communities,<sup>566</sup> the

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<sup>562</sup> Ready (2011): 15.

<sup>563</sup> Schneider (2015): 436. For arguments in favour of ‘herdsman’ see Quack (2016): 69.

<sup>564</sup> Rutherford (2000): 114.

<sup>565</sup> Schneider (2015): 436.

<sup>566</sup> Jay (2016): 62.

ethnic connotations of *Ḫm* would have been clear, and I have consequently chosen to translate the word as ‘Asiatic’,<sup>567</sup> the recurrence of Egyptian-Asiatic conflict as a theme in the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle also suggests that acknowledging at least the ethnic undertones of the word is necessary for our understanding of the text and its place within Egypt’s contemporary literary milieu.<sup>568</sup> Thus *Serpot* also narrates war between Egyptians and Easterners, and while the conflict in *Armour* is between two Egyptian factions, a Syrian (Montbaal) plays a significant role in the battle. A further ambiguity is that Inaros (as with most other Delta kings in the 1<sup>st</sup>-millennium BC) was technically of Libyan descent. One could, perhaps, therefore associate the Inarids with the Ptolemies, ‘foreign’ rulers who presented themselves as both foreign and Egyptian. But this is complicated both by the complete absence of Greeks (and indeed almost any evidence of Greek presence in Egypt) in most Demotic texts,<sup>569</sup> and the fact that there is no hint of anything Libyan, or even a mention of Libya: with the exception of Montbaal the warriors are presented as being as Egyptian as any New Kingdom ruler, and seem more aligned with them than the Hellenistic kings.<sup>570</sup>

Given the prominence of the king as subject of figurative imagery in the texts examined so far, it is unsurprising that the changes in the Demotic texts have major ramifications for our conception of Petubastis. But although these changes are, as we shall see, largely negative, it is necessary to emphasise that Petubastis as king, and indeed the position of ‘king’ itself, remains inviolable. After Minnebmaat has battled the Asiatics in *Benefice* he is chided for not following decorum, and although he has saved the king he still acquiesces and honours Petubastis by kissing the ground (*Benefice* 16.17-19). Similarly, although Pharaoh sides with his son Ankhhor and Wertyamonnit in their conflict with Pami in *Armour*, he sits out the battle and acts as a judge in what amounts to a trial by combat on a huge scale. The text avoids the problem of representing

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<sup>567</sup> This problematic translation is chosen to reflect the racist connotations of the Egyptian word, which indiscriminately denoted foreigners from Egypt’s north-east.

<sup>568</sup> For more on this theme in the Cycle see the Introduction (pp. 32-4).

<sup>569</sup> Ray (1994: 255) notes that ‘with a few exception [*sic*], demotic behaves as if Greek hardly existed’.

<sup>570</sup> Schneider (2010): 156.

the king's defeat, and his authority is nominally preserved. Petubastis may not be a king active in battle, but he is still *the* king; the need to maintain royal superiority despite its practical unsuitability for the present king has important effects on these texts.<sup>571</sup>

### A Conquered Star

As we have seen, in both the Greek and Egyptian texts the star (in Greek particularly Sirius) functions as a symbol of prowess in battle that casts its subject as a celestial, unstoppable force. Its close association with the king in the New Kingdom texts, and the weakness of Petubastis in the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle, perhaps explains why it is not found in similes in the latter. Instead we find it associated with certain characters indirectly. When Pekrur sends a letter to Petechons in *Benefice* asking him to join the battle, he asks him (12.21-2) to send also for *p3-mi s3 in-ir.t-r-r=w irm p3y=f 40 rmt n m3y p3syw* ('Pami son of Inaros, with his 40 men of the Island of the Star'); the location is repeated when Petechons sends his own letter (14.3-4) and when Pami meets with Petechons (14.10-12), and suggests a connection between Pami and the star's celestial qualities.<sup>572</sup> Stars are also associated with Pami in *Armour*: in the lengthy description of his armour we are told of one piece (13.7) that it is decorated *n syw sp-2* ('with star(s) twice over'). In a similar vein, the description of Petechons' tent in *Serpot* mentions (2.4) that it had *krbsy n tp n d[r]hr iw=f sr n syw* ('first-class purple material, which was strewn with stars'). The characters are cloaked by stars, and they bring their connotations with them into battle or on campaign. They appropriate for themselves the celestial powers that had belonged to the king, and this is explicitly noted at *Serpot* 2.6, when Petechons' tent is described as being *r-h.t hpr pr pr-3 C.w.s.* ('in the manner of the house of Pharaoh I.p.h.').<sup>573</sup> The qualities of the star still seem to be present – its application only to the

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<sup>571</sup> For more see Chapter 5 (pp. 269-71).

<sup>572</sup> This island is not attested in other sources, which suggests a special connection to Pami in this text (Jasnow 1985: 211).

<sup>573</sup> In the decoration of both the armour and the tent there are parallels with the ritual leopard skins decorated with stars that asserted the celestial qualities of the king (Rummel 2003: 127); Pami's and Petechons' use of this decorative motif indicates their intrusion into previously royal prerogatives.

two leading heroes indicates its importance – and that such an image of superiority is found only in connection with non-royal warriors (and in the case of *Armour* anti-royal warriors) almost literally brings the king down to earth by depriving him of celestial imagery.

In the *Posthomerica* too the power of the star's imagery appears to be preserved. The symbol first appears at 2.102-7, applied not to Achilles but to Memnon when he arrives in Troy:

ἀμφὶ δὲ Τρῶες  
γηθόσσυνοί μιν ἴδοντο κατὰ πτόλιν, ἥνυτε ναῦται  
χείματος ἐξ ὀλοοῖο δι' αἰθέρος ἀθρήσωσιν  
ἤδη τειρόμενοι Ἑλίκης περιηγέος αἴγλην·  
ὡς λαοὶ κεχάροντο περισταδόν, ἔξοχα δ' ἄλλων  
Λαομεδοντιάδης·

All around the Trojans  
rejoiced to see him in the city, as when sailors,  
now weak from a destructive storm, see through the air  
the gleam of the revolving Bear;  
so the people stood around him and rejoiced, and more than the others  
the son of Laomedon.

Memnon's first appearance continues the use of light that Quintus engaged in with Penthesilea in Book 1, and sets him up as her equal.<sup>574</sup> More importantly, however, it casts him as an equal and opposite to Achilles. Priam had seen Achilles in *Iliad* 22 gleaming like the dog star, which brings death to mortals; now the Trojans, and particularly Priam, see Memnon as the bear star that brings joy to humans. From this perspective Priam's hope that Achilles may finally be defeated seems justified, and although the hope will turn out to be in vain, Memnon is a better match for Achilles than Penthesilea and Hector had been.

Achilles' son Neoptolemus inherits his stellar imagery. After leaving Scyros and his mother and grandfather in *Posthomerica* 7, Neoptolemus goes to war, and his first simile post-independence indicates his stellar qualities (7.345-6): φέρον δέ μιν ὠκέα γυῖα / ἀστέρι παμφανόωντι πανεῖκελον ('his swift limbs bore him, utterly like a gleaming star'). ὠκέα γυῖα is a variation on the

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<sup>574</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 82. See Goṭia (2007) for a broader discussion of light in *Posthomerica* 2.

common Homeric epithet for Achilles πόδας ὠκύς, and immediately emphasises that the Greeks have found a new, slightly different Achilles. He is not just any Achilles either, for ἀστέρη παμφανόωντι copies *Iliad* 22.26 παμφαίνονθ' ... ἀστέρ' and so casts Neoptolemus as Achilles at his climax. The intensitive *πανείκελον* ('utterly like'), emphasised through alliteration (*παμφανόωντι πανείκελον*), stresses Neoptolemus' similarity to both the star and his father.<sup>575</sup>

His entrance into battle the next day, before facing Eurypylus, echoes the Homeric simile more fully (8.28-33):

οἶος δ' ἐκ περάτων ἀναφαίνεται Ὠκεανοῖο  
 Ἥλιος θηητὸν ἐπὶ χθόνα πῦρ ἀμαρύσσων,  
 ὁπότε οἱ πώλοισι καὶ ἄρμασι συμφέρετ' ἀστήρ  
 Σείριος, ὅς τε βροτοῖσι φέρει πολυκηδέα νοῦσον·  
 τοῖος ἐπὶ Τρώων στρατὸν ἦεν ὄβριμος ἦρωσ  
 υἱὸς Ἀχιλλῆος.

And swiftly he darted before the steep wall,  
 having mounted the immortal horses of his father.  
 As the Sun when he rises from the bounds of Ocean  
 and casts forth wondrous fire on the earth,  
 when along with his horses and chariot a star is brought:  
 Sirius, who brings sickness full of grief to mortals;  
 of such a sort was the mighty hero when he attacked the army of the Trojans:  
 the son of Achilles.

The basis is the Iliadic simile, and the mention of Ocean at 8.28 calls to mind the Apollonian version (*Argonautica* 3.958), but Quintus also innovates. Whereas in both of the previous examples the beauty and destructive power of Sirius were combined, Quintus separates his simile into two parts. The first, formal object of comparison is the Sun, but the word-order suggests that Neoptolemus is also to be compared directly to Sirius: 8.30-1 ἀστήρ / Σείριος, 8.32-3 ἦρωσ / υἱὸς Ἀχιλλῆος. Thus the Sun characterises his beauty and Sirius captures his threat. In this respect a closer model is *Aeneid* 10.270-5, when Aeneas returns to rescue the Trojan camp. The Rutulians see him:

*ardet apex capiti cristisque a uertice flamma  
 funditur et uastos umbo uomit aureus ignis:  
 non secus ac liquida si quando nocte cometae*

<sup>575</sup> For the exactness of the similarity between Neoptolemus and Achilles see Maciver (2012): 182.

*sanguinei lugubre rubent, aut Sirius ardor  
ille sitim morbosque ferens mortalibus aegris  
nascitur et laeue contristat lumine caelum*

The helmet burns on his head, and from the peak of the crest a flame  
pours, and the golden shield spews forth vast flames:  
no differently than when comets in the calm night  
portentously grow blood-red, or when the burning of Sirius  
– that one which brings thirst and sicknesses to suffering mortals –  
rises and darkens the sky with inauspicious light.

In both passages the original Homeric simile is demoted to second place, and the focus moves onto the new elements (in Virgil the comet, in Quintus the Sun) which primarily emphasise the visual qualities of their subjects. The expansion of the Homeric and Apollonian model and the introduction of fire in both Virgil and Quintus suggests that the latter may have been working with the *Aeneid* in mind.<sup>576</sup> The *Aeneid*'s version has a very sinister, eerie feel to it – there is little movement (Aeneas is *stans celsa in puppi* at 10.291), and the comet was considered a bad omen;<sup>577</sup> it was also, however, linked to Augustan propaganda regarding the death of Julius Caesar,<sup>578</sup> and so at this pivotal moment Aeneas appears as a bad omen to the Rutulians but a portent of future Julio-Augustan greatness to the Roman audience.

The comet's association with the Roman emperors is perhaps one reason why Quintus opts to use the Sun instead, although it is also more fitting for Neoptolemus' characterisation. Whereas Aeneas brings a grim threat, Neoptolemus promises an all-out attack. *πῦρ ἀμάρυσσεν* is used at *Theogony* 827 to describe Typhoeus,<sup>579</sup> and it therefore suggests a terrible aspect of Neoptolemus. Quintus' simile is also more overtly militaristic: Sirius, like Neoptolemus, is equipped with his horses and chariot (8.30), and the simile is therefore less abstract, keeping the audience closer to the battlefield. It is also notable that all the other authors had focalised this simile through the eyes of another (Priam, Medea, and the Rutulians) and therefore added a degree of separation between

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<sup>576</sup> Maciver (2012): 191.

<sup>577</sup> Harrison (1991): 147.

<sup>578</sup> See for example Ovid *Metamorphoses* 15.840-51.

<sup>579</sup> Cf. above (pp. 128-9).

the audience and the image: the simile is how we see them seeing Achilles, Jason, and Aeneas.<sup>580</sup> Quintus, however, presents the simile directly to us, which reinforces the vibrancy of the image.<sup>581</sup> The most obvious effect is to remind us of Achilles, and as with the shorter simile earlier it casts Neoptolemus as a new but different Achilles. But it also engages with the Virgilian version by inverting the simile's first part from an ominous comet at night to the blazing Sun during the day. Virgil expanded the Homeric simile to cast Aeneas as a new Achilles,<sup>582</sup> and Quintus now replaces Virgil's addition with his own, thereby replacing Aeneas with Neoptolemus as Achilles' heir in the epic literary tradition.<sup>583</sup>

In both the Egyptian and Greek texts, the star's cultural heritage as a symbol for cataclysmic destruction in battle manifests itself once more, and specifically links its subjects of comparison to their predecessors to revive past military supremacy. But in both cases there are causes for unease: the star is only subtly evoked in the Demotic texts because the king, exclusively associated with it in the New Kingdom,<sup>584</sup> now does nothing worthy of it; in the *Posthomerica* the removal of the previous focalisation also removes any defence against the image's Typhonian qualities. Previously one could claim that the negative qualities of Sirius do not *truly* apply to Achilles or Aeneas, they just reflect how Priam and the Rutulians see them. But Quintus takes away this intermediary position and presents Neoptolemus' unsettling reminiscences of the gods' greatest enemy objectively. The star remains the same: shining, glorious, and powerful – but times have changed, and its application in these texts suggests that, for Quintus and the Demotic authors, the present is markedly worse than the past.

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<sup>580</sup> Ready (2011): 259.

<sup>581</sup> Maciver (2012): 187.

<sup>582</sup> Harrison (1991): 146.

<sup>583</sup> Achilles had himself been compared to Helios at *Posthomerica* 2.208-11, and Quintus therefore casts Neoptolemus as heir to both the Homeric and his own versions of the Greek hero (Carvounis 2019: xlvii).

<sup>584</sup> Rummel (2003): 140.

## Gods as the Conquered

The use of the divine in similes differs greatly in quantitative terms from previous periods, but in diametrically opposed ways for the Greek and Egyptian texts. They are noticeably more common in the *Posthomeric*, but in the Demotic texts they are almost non-existent: whereas the New Kingdom texts repeatedly compared the king to Montu, Sekhmet, Seth and others, such similes are markedly absent in the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle. This difference is connected to the lower prevalence of the star in these texts, and reflects again the passivity of the ruling king, who as noted above was exclusively compared to the gods in the New Kingdom.<sup>585</sup>

The most significant use of a divine simile comes when Montbaal finally joins battle (*Armour* 22.11-13):  $t[w=f] \text{ } h^{\text{G}} wty iw\text{t}=\text{w} [m-q] ty s\text{h}my n \text{ } \text{t}y=s \text{ } wnw.t n \text{ } h\text{b}ly r-iw=s \text{ } lwlw [hn \text{ } ]Iwy$  ('[he] ga[ve] out slaughter and butchery amongst them, [li]ke Sekhmet in her hour of wrath, when she burns [in] the bushes'). Sekhmet is, as we have seen, one of the oldest divinities associated with the king in battle. That Montbaal is compared to her in a particularly sonorous simile (note the alliteration of  $h\text{b}ly r-iw=s \text{ } lwlw [hn \text{ } ]Iwy$  when Sekhmet's rage is described) suggests that he now occupies the role of the king in battle. But this is problematic because he is not only non-royal, but also only half-Egyptian. When he first appears his foreignness is emphasised: he is accompanied by an army of Medes (*Armour* 19.16),<sup>586</sup> and before he is named his first action is to pray to Baal (19.19) using the standard formula found throughout the text, which emphasises the close geographical connection between god and human. Baal had existed in the Egyptian pantheon for some time, but his continuing connection to Seth, in this period sometimes called 'the Mede', indicates his foreignness.<sup>587</sup> When he finally introduces himself (19.24-5), however, Montbaal emphasises his

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<sup>585</sup> For example, Petubastis is connected in *Armour* with Isis (Petechons sees him wearing her crown at 17.20-1), and while she is a very important goddess for kingship, her presence in a New Kingdom war text would be highly surprising.

<sup>586</sup> The heavy armour he is described wearing (19.12-18) may also be intended to evoke the heavily-armed Greek hoplites (Jay 2016: 150), but his equipment – particularly the chariot he stands on – seems far more reminiscent of the New Kingdom rulers.

<sup>587</sup> Koenig (2007): 234; Assmann (2002): 405. Baal was, of course, not a Median god (Diakonoff 1985: 139-42), but the Egyptians were not precise in their depictions of foreign religions, and in the *Inaros Epic* an Assyrian invokes the Persian Atar, son of Ahura Mazda (Ryholt 2004: 494).

Egyptian heritage instead (*inky mnt-bl s3 ir.t-hr-r-r=w [nt hn] n3 <nt> wb [p3] 3 hl* – ‘I am Montbaal son of Inaros, [who is amongst] those <who are> enemies of [the] land of Syria’) and there is a strong sense of him as a liminal figure, both Egyptian and foreign; his name, a syncretisation of the gods Montu and Baal, embodies this liminality. The combination of these two war-gods already suggests his natural affinity for war, and his display of kingly destruction finally forces the actual king to give in and award victory to the Inarids (23.1-2). By taking royal divine imagery,<sup>588</sup> Montbaal takes victory from the royals and asserts his position as successor to the military kings of Egypt’s past – he is the one who has been fighting against the Syrians, not Petubastis.

Another pointed use of the divine in similes comes at *Serpot* 3.11-12, while Serpot is devastating the Egyptian army. Her destruction is described as [...] *iwt n3 ipt.w p3y* [...] *p3y 3pp p3 i.ir sr[pt.t]* ([...] was amongst the birds, [...] the destruction] of Apophis was what Ser[pot] did’). The queen is compared to the ultimate cosmic enemy, elevating her significance. In earlier literature, one would hardly expect to find a king compared to the force of (negative) chaos,<sup>589</sup> but one would equally not expect to find a foreigner compared to a powerful divine force. Serpot embodies king and foreigner, and the adaptation of divine similes to indicate her conflicting nature casts her as a known unknown, familiar but terrifying. By implication, it also casts her enemy (Petechons) as the enemy of Apophis (Re), and thus indirectly suggests a connection between the Egyptian and the solar deity. Petechons is the figure who must repel the forces of destruction single-handedly, and in this role he supplants the king, just like Pami and Montbaal.<sup>590</sup> The use of divine imagery here

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<sup>588</sup> It is possible that Montbaal may be suitable for the simile because he is somewhat more divine than the other non-royal characters. His name could theoretically be that of a syncretised god Montu-Baal, though any such syncretisation is unattested and the similar personal name Baal-Montu is found only once (Ranke 1935: 93), on an undated stela that also contains distinctly foreign names (von Bergmann 1891: 17), where, as here, it indicates the dual identity of the man as both Egyptian and foreign; Baal is not attested in any other Demotic names (*DN* 597). Montbaal also says that he was commanded to come to the battle by a divine dream (19.27-33), and a character with the same name appears as a seer in P.Carlsberg 125 verso (Ryholt 2012: 89-102). But the military effectiveness of the simile remains, as does its pointed application to a non-royal.

<sup>589</sup> Hoffmann raises this objection (1995: 54) to query what the simile is applied to, but at this stage Serpot is a hostile foreigner and does therefore parallel Apophis.

<sup>590</sup> Cf. also a comparison of Inaros’ battle against a griffin in the *Inaros Epic* to a battle between Horus and Apophis (Quack 2016: 56), Inaros like Petechons acting in lieu of the king.

avoids directly comparing a non-royal Egyptian to a god, while still indicating that, to defeat Egypt's eastern enemies, it is fighters other than the king who must take on his role in battle. The message of the New Kingdom texts that only the king is a divine, unstoppable warrior is lost.

Applying the imagery of the enemy of the gods to an enemy of Egypt is fitting, even if New Kingdom parallels are lacking. But in the *Posthomerica* the applications of divine imagery are more problematic. The first character compared to a divine figure is Penthesilea, who as she leaves for battle (1.179) is said to be οἷη Τριτωνίς, ὄτ' ἤλυθεν ἅντα Γιγάντων ('as Athene was, when she fought against the Giants'). As she goes to fight the Greeks, Penthesilea is paradoxically cast as a quintessential Greek god fighting quintessential non-Greek enemies. This idea appears later (1.516-9), when in a mirroring of Penthesilea's departure,<sup>591</sup> Achilles and Ajax depart to fight her. The Greeks see them,

εἰδομένω παίδεσσιν Ἄλωϊος μεγάλοιο,  
οἳ ποτ' ἐπ' εὐρὸν Ὀλυμπον ἔφην θέμεν οὔρεα μακρά,  
Ὅσσαν τ' αἰπεινὴν καὶ Πήλιον ὑψικάρηνον,  
ὅπως δὴ μεμαῶτε καὶ οὐρανὸν εἰσαφίκωνται

the two seeming like the children of great Aloeus,  
who once said that they would place tall mountains on broad Olympus  
– steep Ossa and high-peaked Pelion –  
so in their eagerness they would reach the heavens.

The twins Otus and Ephialtes are described in more detail at *Odyssey* 11.307-20, where their desire to battle the gods is made explicit.<sup>592</sup> We are also told there that Apollo killed them, foreshadowing Achilles' death in *Posthomerica* 3, but for the moment it is important to note that the two greatest Greek heroes are, as they first enter battle in the poem, compared to cosmic enemies of the Greek gods. Their connotations of destructiveness – usually against Greek figures or orders – in comparison to the apparently pro-Greek Penthesilea, are unsettling. The application of a negative

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<sup>591</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 61.

<sup>592</sup> They were originally distinct from the Giants, but by Quintus' time had become assimilated with them due to their shared gigantic size (Vian 1952: 204).

divine simile to heroes of the same ethnicity as the reader perhaps goes back to *Aeneid* 10.565-8, when Aeneas is compared to the Giant Aegaeon battling Jupiter, an inversion of the Hellenistic comparisons of enemies to the Giants discussed above. The effect there, as here, is deeply unsettling, and indicates Aeneas' increasingly problematic behaviour that ends with him killing the suppliant Turnus.<sup>593</sup>

This imagery is applied to the Greeks throughout the poem.<sup>594</sup> Indeed Achilles' death in Book 3 fulfils the suggestions of blasphemy in the divine similes applied to him thus far.<sup>595</sup> After Apollo has told him to halt his attack (as he does to Diomedes at *Iliad* 5.440-2 and Patroclus at *Iliad* 16.707-9), Achilles at 3.51-2 instead threatens that he will attack Apollo:

ἀλλ' ἀναχάζεο τῆλε καὶ ἐς μακάρων ἔδος ἄλλων  
ἔρχεο, μὴ σε βάλωμι καὶ ἀθάνατόν περ ἔόντα.

But withdraw, far away, and go to the seat of the other  
blessed ones, lest I attack you too, even though you are immortal!

Achilles here echoes Apollo's own warning to Diomedes at *Iliad* 5.440-2 and to himself at *Posthomerica* 3.40-2, and does not show the same restraint as at *Iliad* 22.15-20, when he had held back from attacking the god.<sup>596</sup> Achilles' reversal of status (the human now threatens the god) indicates that he has finally gone too far.<sup>597</sup> It is these words that upset Apollo and prompt him to fulfil his threat; Quintus' decision to not have Paris take part in Achilles' death emphasises Achilles' hubris and hostility to the gods<sup>598</sup> implied by the simile at 1.515-9. Even in death this imagery

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<sup>593</sup> Freund (2008): 82; Esposito (2016): 464.

<sup>594</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 351.

<sup>595</sup> In addition to the example from Book 1 discussed above, in Book 2 Achilles is compared to the Titans while Memnon is compared to Ares – the Ethiopian, not the Greek, connected to the Greek god of war (Greensmith 2020: 143).

<sup>596</sup> Vian (1963): 98.

<sup>597</sup> Diomedes had, of course, actually wounded two of the gods in *Iliad* 5, but in both cases it was with the approval of Athene, and he refuses to fight Ares until he is explicitly told that he can (5.814-34).

<sup>598</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 101.

remains: his bones are said to be 'like those of a tireless Giant' (3.725). More explicitly, his body is described as being (3.392-6)

οἷος ὑπερφίαλος Τιτυὸς πέσεν, ὀππότε Λητώ  
ἐρχομένην Πυθῶ δὲ βιάζετο, καί ἑ χολωθεὶς  
ἀκάματόν περ ἔοντα θοῶς ὑπεδάμνατ' Ἀπόλλων  
λαιψηροῖς βελέεσσιν, ὃ δ' ἀργαλέῳ ἐνὶ λύθρῳ  
πολυπέλεθρος ἔκειτο κατὰ χθονὸς εὐρυπέδοιο ...

As arrogant Tityos was when he fell, when he tried  
to rape Leto as she went to Pytho, and Apollo was angered  
and quickly killed him, although he was untiring,  
with his swift arrows; and he, in his painful gore,  
lay over many *plethra* of the broad plain of the earth ...

Tityos had also been seen by Odysseus in his journey to the Underworld (*Odyssey* 11.576-81), and Quintus explicitly picks up 11.577 ἐπ' ἑννέα κείτο πέλεθρα ('he lay over nine *plethra*') with πολυπέλεθρος ἔκειτο ('he lay over many *plethra*') to stress the justice of Achilles' death. ἀκάματόν περ ἔοντα ('although he was untiring') also picks up ἀθάνατόν περ ἔοντα ('although you are immortal') from Achilles' threat, and adds a sense of ironic justice – Achilles has obtained the punishment he deserves.

Telamonian Ajax had been paired with Achilles in *Posthomerica* 1, the Ephialtes to his Otus, and like his cousin a divine simile is applied to his corpse (5.485-6):

ὃ δ' ἐν κονίησι τανύσθη,  
Τυφῶν ὡς τὸν Ζηνὸς ἐνεπρήσαντο κεραυνοί·  
ἀμφὶ δὲ γαῖα μέλαινα μέγα στονάχησε πεσόνοτος

He was spread out in the dust,  
like Typhon, whom the thunderbolts of Zeus incinerated;  
and all around the dark earth groaned greatly at his fall.

The imagery is again negative, casting Ajax at his death as an enemy of the gods; it has indeed been Athene who is responsible for his death by directing his frenzy against the flocks and provoking his

suicide.<sup>599</sup> As with Achilles, however, it was an unacceptable lust for violence that prompted the divine intervention: Achilles tried to attack a god, Ajax tried to attack his allies, and these actions result in their punishment by the gods, and their transformation into the gods' mythical enemies.

Finally, Locrian Ajax too is compared to a Giant at his death: as he struggles to escape the shipwreck, Athene's crushing of him with a mountain (14.562-5) is said to be

εὔτε πάρος μεγάλοιο κατ' Ἐγκελάδοιο δαΐφρων  
Παλλὰς ἀειραμένη Σικελὴν ἐπικάββαλε νῆσον  
ἢ ῥ' ἔτι καίεται αἰὲν ὑπ' ἀκαμάτοιο Γίγαντος  
αἰθαλόεν πνεῖοντος ἔσω χθονός ...

As before, when warlike Pallas raised the island of Sicily  
and cast it down upon great Enceladus,  
and still it always burns due to the tireless Giant,  
who breathes out blazing inside the earth ...

We are reminded of Achilles' death, with ἀκαμάτοιο Γίγαντος recalling ἀκάματόν περ ἑόντα, and Telamonian Ajax's, who was also compared to Enceladus.<sup>600</sup> Locrian Ajax's guilt is clear: we already know (13.423-4) that Athene will avenge his rape of Cassandra, and the hubris characteristic of Achilles and Telamonian Ajax before their deaths is reflected in his ignorance of Athene's omens (13.427-9) and his boast that he could escape from all of the gods together (14.565-7).<sup>601</sup> The comparison of Locrian Ajax to Enceladus had already been made by Virgil (*Aeneid* 1.44 *exspirantem ... flammis* ≈ *Posthomeric* 14.565 αἰθαλόεν πνεῖοντος),<sup>602</sup> and emphasises that he is a true enemy of the gods.<sup>603</sup> This is in fact the last simile of the poem, and it leaves us with a pessimistic view of the Greeks: they are the Giants and Titans that the gods must defeat, and none exemplify this more

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<sup>599</sup> Greensmith (2020): 311.

<sup>600</sup> Carvounis (2019): 253.

<sup>601</sup> *ibid.*: 247.

<sup>602</sup> Carvounis (2007): 249.

<sup>603</sup> Quintus' version goes beyond previous literary accounts both by actually making him an equal of the Titans in terms of his strength (Carvounis 2019: 243) and by alluding at 14.558 to *Theogony* 693-4, the account of Zeus' destruction of the Titans with his thunderbolt (*ibid.*: 246).

than Achilles and the two Ajaxes. The greatest Greek heroes have turned into the greatest enemies of the gods.

Even Neoptolemus is not without problems: as noted earlier, the star simile applied to him at 8.26-33 already connects him to Typhoeus. The final act the Greeks carry out at Troy is Neoptolemus' sacrifice of Polyxena to appease Achilles, an act that contrary to previous versions in which Polyxena had betrayed Achilles<sup>604</sup> has little explanation beyond the whims of Achilles. The Greeks leave Troy as Giants and sacrificers of humans, and there is a strong sense that they have now transgressed, and that their future defeat is merited punishment by the gods.

By contrast, the Trojans fare better in the divine similes. We have already seen Penthesilea compared to Athene as she goes to war against the Giants. In a similar manner Eurypylos (7.106-11) is compared to Heracles massacring the Centaurs (another parallel to the Giants). The ecphrasis of his shield at 6.200-93 also contains a number of scenes of Heracles defeating chaotic others, in particular the Amazons (6.240-5) and in a very lengthy scene the Centaurs (6.273-85).<sup>605</sup> This aspect of the shield stands out in comparison to the ecphrasis of Heracles' baldric at 10.180-6, now worn by Philoctetes. This contains only images of wild animals and savage battles, and recalls *Odyssey* 11.609-14, where it is worn by the ghost of Heracles in the Underworld. Odysseus says after seeing it *μη τεχνησάμενος μηδ' ἄλλο τι τεχνήσαιτο / ὃς κείνον τελαμῶνα ἐῆ ἐγκάτθετο τέχνη* ('May the crafter craft nothing else, who imbued that baldric with his skill'), and in comparison to the Heracles of Eurypylos' shield, the Heracles of Philoctetes' baldric is far more sinister. Applying these connotations to the respective heroes, Eurypylos appears in a more positive light: he is connected to Heracles in his role as a defender of Greek culture against the 'Other',<sup>606</sup> despite, in this instance, fighting against Greeks.

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<sup>604</sup> Carvounis (2004): 223.

<sup>605</sup> For more on the ecphrasis of this shield see Baumbach (2007: 128-41).

<sup>606</sup> As he had been in the battle against the Giants in the *Argonautica*.

The culmination of the divine similes applied to the Trojans comes in Book 11, when Aeneas defends Troy against the Greek *testudo*. First we find him hurling boulders (11.401-4):

ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἐν οὐρεσι πρῶνας Ὀλύμπιος οὐρανόθεν Ζεὺς  
ἀμφὶ μῆ κορυφῇ συναρηρότας ἄλλυδις ἄλλον  
ῥήξει ὑπὸ βροντῆσι καὶ αἰθαλόεντι κεραυνῶ,  
ἀμφὶ δὲ μηλονόμοι τε καὶ ἄλλ' ὅσα < ...  
... > πάντα φέβονται

As when, in the mountains, Olympian Zeus from the sky shatters  
here and there crags connected around one peak  
with the thunder and blazing lightning,  
and all around the shepherds and <  
their flocks at pasture nearby><sup>607</sup> are all put to flight

The rare monosyllabic ending<sup>608</sup> to 11.401 adds a weighty feel to the passage that indicates its importance, and the comparison of Aeneas to Zeus emphasises how powerful he is; the Greeks in comparison are just shepherds and sheep. Just ten lines later, however, the imagery is elevated further:

μάρνατο δ' ὥς ὅπῳτ' αὐτὸς Ὀλύμπιος οὐρανόθεν Ζεὺς  
ἀσχαλόων ἐδάϊζεν ὑπέρβια φῦλα Γιγάντων  
σμερδαλέων, καὶ Γαῖαν ἀπειρεσίην ἐτίνασσε  
Τηθύν τ' Ὠκεανόν τε καὶ Οὐρανόν, ἀμφὶ δὲ πάντη  
γυῖ' ἐλελίζετ' Ἄτλαντος ὑπ' ἀκαμάτου Διὸς ὀρμῆς.

He battled as when Olympian Zeus himself from the sky  
smote in his anger the arrogant tribes of terrible Giants,  
and he shook boundless Earth  
and Tethys and Ocean and Heaven, and all over  
the limbs of Atlas trembled under the unrelenting assault of Zeus.

The repetition of Ὀλύμπιος οὐρανόθεν Ζεὺς ('Olympian Zeus from the sky') indicates the parallelism. The first is a generalised image of Zeus as god of the weather, as he displays his powers to mortals every day; the second is Zeus at a specific moment in his role as king of the gods and the ultimate, invincible warrior. The repetition of cosmological names in the second simile emphasises

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<sup>607</sup> Hopkinson's restoration.

<sup>608</sup> Sturtevant (1921: 295). The other two such endings in Book 11 are used in a description of Corycus, birthplace of Zeus' great enemy Typhon (79-98).

the epic and universal significance of Zeus' assault, and his complete omnipotence. Aeneas transcends the human world in which the battle for Troy takes place, and becomes something far greater; previously individual Greeks had been compared to Giants and Titans, but now the entire Greek army is characterised as the *ὑπέρβια φῶλα Γυγάντων / σμερδαλέων* ('arrogant tribes of terrible Giants'), an overwhelmingly negative image that depicts Aeneas as the sole guarantor of cosmic order and emphatically recalls the Hellenistic characterisation of the Gauls. After the deaths of the other Trojan leaders, he is now Troy's greatest warrior – as Zeus is to the world, Aeneas is to Troy. This simile comes in a passage that almost certainly has two passages from the *Aeneid* in mind, where the *testudo* is formed by the Greeks at 2.440-68 and by the Volscians at 9.505-20;<sup>609</sup> it suggests that Aeneas has become the Virgilian Aeneas, the Aeneas fated to be ruler of the Trojans at *Iliad* 20.307-8.<sup>610</sup>

Divine imagery and similes are thus used across the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle and the *Posthomeric* in a consistent manner. Such usage is, however, contrary to expectations: in the Demotic texts the imagery emphasises the weakness of the king and his replacement by non-royal figures, particularly those in fact fighting against Egyptians. In the *Posthomeric* the divine imagery emphasises the strength of the Greeks, but in a negative way, and the implied hostility to the gods results in their almost complete destruction at the end of the poem. The Trojans become the ones battling against these Centaurs, Giants, and Titans, and none more so than Aeneas, who in *Posthomeric* 11 becomes a Zeus on earth. It is a recognition that in Quintus' time it is not the Greeks but Aeneas' descendants whose role it is to maintain peace, order, and the fight against the 'Other'.<sup>611</sup>

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<sup>609</sup> James (2007): 151. There is clearly a debt to *Argonautica* 2.1047-89 here as well, but the context and detail suggests that Virgil is the primary model.

<sup>610</sup> Hadjittofi (2007: 360-1) interprets this scene more pessimistically, but it is hard to square criticism of Aeneas' actions with the similes applied to him.

<sup>611</sup> For Greek acceptance of Roman rule in return for preservation of internal and external peace see Hardwick (2000: 350).

## To Be Human(?)

The wider range of similes in previous Greek war texts in comparison to Egyptian means that fewer radically different objects of comparison are introduced in the *Posthomerica*. A detailed study of animal-similes has been carried out by Spinoula,<sup>612</sup> and I mention only the most relevant parts here. Lion-similes are clustered around Books 1-3 and 7-8, i.e. narratives most focused on individual heroes (Penthesilea, Memnon, Achilles, Eurypylos, Neoptolemus), and indicate that the lion remains the greatest and most heroic of the animal-similes,<sup>613</sup> by contrast the unusual comparison of Odysseus to a lone wolf at *Posthomerica* 13.42-9 as he exits the Horse shows that he has become a non-Iliadic hero.<sup>614</sup> The increase in similes in the *Posthomerica* that compare a character to a generic θήρ ('beast') removes the secondary connotations of particular animals, and gives a more sinister and unknowable effect to the characters in keeping with what we have seen so far.<sup>615</sup>

Finally, Quintus applies more animal similes to the entire army than Homer, who tends to favour individuals, and this suggests, like Apollonius, a greater focus on the collective in the poem.<sup>616</sup> A similar effect is found in the Demotic texts. Whereas in the New Kingdom the lion and bull were exclusively applied to the king, and emphasised his conspicuous and unique character, they appear in the Demotic narratives in collectives. The army of women in *Serpot* wear bull-helmets (2.33) and thus gain the strength and virility of that animal in their battle with the Egyptians. At *Armour* 9.18-19, Pekrur tells Petubastis that if the warriors of Wertyamonnit and Pami battle, he will see [nʒ kʒ.w na p]r-spd nʒ mʒy.w na mtʒ ʾrm pʒy=w gʒy n qnqn ('[the bulls of the men of P]isopdu, the lions of the men of Metelis, and their way of fighting'), all the participants rather than just the king becoming these stereotypically militaristic animals. And at *Armour* 18.7-9, a more expansive simile is applied to the Inarids specifically: ʾr=w twt nʒ mʒy ʾr nʒy=w ʾybʒ nʒ kʒ.w

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<sup>612</sup> (2008).

<sup>613</sup> Spinoula (2008): 17.

<sup>614</sup> *ibid.*: 44.

<sup>615</sup> *ibid.*: 184.

<sup>616</sup> *ibid.*: 220-5. Many of the collective similes are death-similes, which suggests a more negative view of war overall (Scheijnen 2017: 17).

*hr n3y=w stbhf n qnqn* ('they were the images of lions in their armour, of bulls with their weapons of war'). It is not the king who has the strength of a lion and bull, but those battling against his faction.

The same is true on an individual level as well: none of the members of Petubastis' faction (such as Ankhhor and Wertyamonnui) have lion or bull similes applied to them. Meanwhile at *Serpot* 3.33 Petechons is compared to both (*iw=f m-qty m3y iw=f hmhm k3 i[w=f] qs nmty* – 'he was like a lion roaring, a bull swollen with power'); at *Benefice* 14.23-6 Minnebmaat appears in dramatic fashion:

*p3 rmt-qnqne iw.t r n3 krw3.w iw=f tm n stbh n qnqne t p3 tp šc p3 r3 n-im=f iw=f m-qty k3 iw=f grg 3bw3*

The warrior came to the shore, equipped with a weapon of war reaching from head to toe, like a bull armed with horns.

The as-yet unnamed warrior comes to rescue the king from the Asiatics, and the simile immediately marks him out as someone who, having received the king's typical imagery, must now perform the king's duty – defeating the enemies of Egypt – for him. The lack of traditional similes for Petubastis indicates his inability to fulfil his role.

The animal similes of the *Posthomeric* almost entirely take place within the rural world, away from the more familiar urban context. There is, however, one notable exception. As Eurypylos routs the Greeks, we are told (6.527-37):

καὶ τότε ἄρ' οἰώθησαν ἀγακλειτοὶ βασιλῆες  
 Ἀτρεΐδαι· περὶ δέ σφιν ὀλέθριος ἴσταθ' ὄμιλος  
 βαλλόντων ἐκάτερθεν ὅ τι σθένε χερσὶν ἐλέσθαι·  
 οἱ μὲν γὰρ στονόεντα βέλη χέον, οἱ δὲ νυ λαᾶς,  
 ἄλλοι δ' αἰγανέας. τοὶ δ' ἐν μέσσοισιν ἐόντες  
 στρωφῶντ', εὐτε σύες μέσῳ ἔρκεϊ ἢ λέοντες  
 ἤματι τῷ ὅτ' ἀνακτες ἀολίσσωσ' ἀνθρώπους,  
 ἀργαλέως δ' εἰλῶσι κακὸν τεύχοντες ὄλεθρον  
 θηρσὶν ὑπὸ κρατεροῖς, οἱ δ' ἔρκεος ἐντὸς ἐόντες  
 δμῶας δαρδάπτουσι, ὃ τίς σφισιν ἐγγὺς ἵκηται·  
 ὡς οἱ γ' ἐν μέσσοισιν ἐπεσσυμένους ἐδάϊζον.

And then the far-famed kings were forsaken,  
the sons of Atreus, and around them a murderous throng stood,  
people hurling from every side whatever they were strong enough to take in their hands –  
some poured forth grievous arrows, others stones,  
others javelins. Those men in the middle  
were turning around, like boars and lions in the middle of an arena,  
on the day when rulers gather together men  
and harshly shut them in, fashioning for them an evil death  
from mighty beasts; and those animals in the arena  
devour any of the slaves that comes near them.  
So they, in the midst of the enemies, slew those rushing at them.

Agamemnon and Menelaus are compared to boars and lions, imagery typical of war similes. But the context is the Roman gladiatorial games,<sup>617</sup> a very un-Homeric feature that makes this simile stand out,<sup>618</sup> the ἄνακτες ('rulers') here are presumably therefore the Roman Emperors. Within the limited context of the Trojan War/arena, the sons of Atreus are far greater than the Trojans/slaves attacking them. But when we expand our scope beyond the walls of the arena their inferiority to the actual ἄνακτες becomes clear – the 'far-famed kings' become beasts fighting to entertain the people.<sup>619</sup> The use of the human, urban world makes the imagery less remote from the contemporary reader,<sup>620</sup> and reminds them that the once glorious leaders of the Greeks are now subject to the Romans.<sup>621</sup>

In the Demotic texts the intrusion of the non-military human world into similes is more noticeable, particularly in *Benefice*. For example, Petubastis says of the Young Priest (9.19-21) that *tw=f ir kmy ḥny ny m-qty w<sup>c</sup> dy iw=f bky iw mn nf ir ḥnmy n-īm=f* ('he has plunged Egypt into a

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<sup>617</sup> Greensmith (2020): 26.

<sup>618</sup> The ἔρκος (literally 'fence' or 'wall') is typically used in Homer to refer to the courtyards of the Homeric palaces (e.g. of Troy at *Iliad* 24.306, of Scheria at *Odyssey* 8.57); its use here for the Roman amphitheatres is jarring.

<sup>619</sup> They are far from the Agamemnon of *Iliad* 11, to whom are applied two particularly gory animal similes that indicate his ferocity (Moulton 1977: 97-8). Throughout the *Posthomerica* Agamemnon is a peripheral figure, barely mentioned in battle other than this passage.

<sup>620</sup> For the practice in Asia Minor at the time of authors creating mythical narratives to connect their individual cities to the present day and to Rome see Franco (2010: 578); we should see Quintus as engaging in this activity on a universal scale.

<sup>621</sup> For a similarly pointed use of the urban in a simile, see *Aeneid* 1.148-53 (the first extended simile of the poem), which has a strong pro-Augustan subtext (MacLennan 2010: 93-4).

state of turmoil, like a sinking ship with no sailor to control it'). Considering the plot of this story is a battle over control of a ship (the God's Bark of Amun), this simile is pointed: the battle for the boat is a battle for Egypt in microcosm. But there is also irony in the simile, because Egypt theoretically does have a sailor there to control it: its king, Petubastis. As this simile indicates, however, he is incapable of steering the ship of state and preventing Egypt from sinking into chaos. The failure of the king in relation to this simile is also reflected in Petubastis' description of the Young Priest's actions thus far: he says (9.17-19) that *w<sup>c</sup> hl n 3m p3 i.ir iy n rsy hq=f p3 gl<sup>c</sup> ht n kmy irm p3 hny 3 n kmy* ('a young Asiatic is the one who has come south; he has plundered the strong shield of Egypt and the great rudder of Egypt'). The 'strong shield' and 'great rudder' refer to Ankhhor and Wertyamonniut, the two major heroes in the king's faction now defeated by the Asiatics; Egypt has lost its rudder and has a helplessly weak helmsman. The fault for this defeat rests solely on the royal family, and it will only be with the arrival of Minnebmaat and the other Inarids that disaster is averted.

The application of similes from the non-military world to the royal family happens elsewhere in the text. When the defeats of Ankhhor and Wertyamonniut are narrated, at 4.24-5.3<sup>622</sup> and more briefly at 9.2, we are told that

*fy p3 [hm-hl] n w<sup>c</sup>b r-hn hr 3nh-hr s3-nsw c.w.s. m-qty p3 nt iw w<sup>c</sup> m3e ir=f iw-db3 'mn(?)' n tw m-qty p3 nt iw w<sup>c</sup>.t mnh-c.t [ir=f irm] p3y=s hm-hl swg*

The [Young] Priest rose against the face of Ankhhor, the king I.p.h.'s son, like what a lion does because of a 'pasturing animal(?)' on a mountain, like what a nurse [does with] her stupid child

The first simile inverts the imagery of 'king as predator amongst wild flocks' seen with Thutmose I in his Tombos Stela (line 11) and Ramesses II in *Qadesh 2* (§19), and the reversal of the simile

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<sup>622</sup> See Oakley (forthcoming c) for the restoration of these lines.

indicates the reversal of the royal family's abilities in war.<sup>623</sup> In the second the Young Priest is compared to a nurse, hardly a terrifying image; that the king's son is just a 'stupid child' in comparison reveals his failure. The sense of inversion is emphasised by the fact that against the Young (*hm-hl*) Priest Ankhhor is reduced to a youth (*hm-hl*) himself. The days of kings such as Thutmose I and Ramesses II as predators massacring their enemies are over; now the enemies are the lions, and the successors of the New Kingdom monarchs are children cowering before their nurses.

After Minnebmaat arrives and battles the Asiatics, the king visits and criticises him for not visiting him after battle. Minnebmaat duly pays obeisance to Pharaoh and kisses the ground before him. Petubastis reciprocates this greeting (16.20-3):

*mš<sup>c</sup> pr-ḳ w.s. r pš mš<sup>c</sup> nt iw iw=f n-im=f tw=f iw pšy=f dnḥ 2 n pšy=f n bnr tw=f r=f hn r=f p<sup>c</sup>y=f n=f š<sup>c</sup> wnw.t šy.t m-qty wštt<sub>χ</sub> rmt<sub>χ</sub> im tšy=f grpt<sub>χ</sub>*

Pharaoh l.p.h. walked to the place where he was, placed his two arms outwards, placed his mouth in his mouth, and kissed him for many hours, like a man greeting his wife.

The mismatch in tone between the overall plot and this simile is striking. The battle between the forces of a united Egypt and a group of Asiatics is reduced to the everyday reality of a man returning home to greet his wife. Petubastis is still the dominant figure in this simile – the kisser, rather than the kissed – and the social hierarchy of Egypt remains officially unchanged.<sup>624</sup> But in its mundanity the imagery again shows that Petubastis is far removed from his predecessors. Egypt does not need a man returning to his wife, a child scared of his nurse, a sailor away from his ship; it needs a king. Spalinger says of the New Kingdom monarch at war that 'Pharaoh was, after all, not far away in heaven; he was always here',<sup>625</sup> and this is certainly the case in the Demotic texts. The application

<sup>623</sup> A similar simile is also applied to the foreign Pharaoh Serpot at *Serpot* 12.2-3, although the species of the predator is lost: *iw=s m-qt[y ...] tp-bw.t šm<sup>c</sup>* ('she was lik[e ...] the cattle of Upper Egypt') (Hoffmann 1995: 116).

<sup>624</sup> For more on the complicated role of Petubastis in the Demotic texts see Chapter 5 (pp. 245-7).

<sup>625</sup> (2011): 221.

of the familiar, human world to these similes divests the king of his mysterious, bestial qualities and shows that Pharaoh I.p.h. is just an ordinary person. He is no true king, and it is left to the family of Inaros to assume this mantle and protect Egypt.

### **Conclusion: Inverted Identity**

We saw in the previous chapter that geopolitical reversals in the Greek and Egyptian worlds did not result in equivalent changes to the representation of time: more precisely, the *Posthomerica* in fact showed almost no change from the perception of time in the Hellenistic period, while the Demotic texts moved from the established temporality of the New Kingdom to an unstable world in which military victories had no guarantee of lasting effects. There is not such a clear distinction between the changing Greek and Egyptian representations of imagery and ethnicity. Both traditions begin with a relatively unproblematised view of their own culture, in which the kings – and other warriors with divine parentage – have the most powerful imagery applied to them, emphasising their role as a figurehead. Meanwhile the enemy are characterised by imagery that makes them innately hostile, whether that means portraying them as destructive collectives such as locusts or as cosmic threats such as Titans. But the conquest of the Greeks and Egyptians causes a number of marked reactions to geopolitical events that are manifested in the sources. Both the Greeks and Egyptians ‘correct’<sup>626</sup> earlier similes to make them appropriate for their present day. They deprive their kings (Agamemnon and Petubastis) of their traditional iconography, moving them firmly into the everyday human world and consequently depriving them also of their military prowess and royal authority, a reflection on the weakness of their historical leaders that allowed them to be conquered.

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<sup>626</sup> See Thomas (1986) for a discussion of this and other methods of referencing previous authors; his article focuses on Augustan poetry, but the theory is equally applicable for Quintus and the Demotic authors.

But the Egyptian and Greek texts diverge in terms of who inherits the old imagery. In the Demotic texts it is other Egyptians, specifically the sons of Inaros and their ally Petechons; thus Montbaal is compared to Sekhmet, Pami and Petechons are associated with stars, and lion and bull similes are used so frequently that their New Kingdom potency is diluted. It is no surprise that warriors who fulfil the military role of the king<sup>627</sup> – whether that be fighting off the Assyrians (Pami in *Armour*), defeating some piratic Asiatics (Minnebmaat in *Benefice*), or conquering the East (Petechons in *Serpot*) – should adopt his imagery as well. Earlier Egyptian king(s) may have failed and consequently lost Egypt to foreigners, but those are failures of the individual king rather than of Egyptians as a whole, and the bestial, divine, celestial powers of the New Kingdom rulers remain present in Egypt and able, perhaps, to resist permanent conquest.

The situation in the *Posthomerica* is rather different. Although there may still be some glorious power amongst the Greeks, most vividly depicted in the simile comparing Neoptolemus to the Sun, this is not straightforward. Neoptolemus may be an *Achilles redivivus*, but the allusions to the *Theogony* show that he is an Achilles hostile to the gods. And this is consistent with the portrayal of Achilles and most of the other Greek heroes. When the Greeks conquered and ruled much of the known world their enemies were cast as cosmic threats to the divine order, eternally defeated by their kings; now that they have been conquered in turn the reverse is true. The Greeks themselves are characterised as hubristic enemies of the gods, desecrators of temples and altars, and therefore rightfully cast down – in the poem (14.427-42)<sup>628</sup> and in real life. The potent divine imagery of the Hellenistic period is applied to their enemy, the Trojan Aeneas, ancestor of their conquerors, who is explicitly saved because of his virtuous character (13.344-9). He, like Ptolemy II, is cast as an analogue to Zeus defeating the divine forces of chaos. Zeus and his family (the gods) are the greatest of divine beings; Aeneas and his family are, therefore, the greatest humans, and

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<sup>627</sup> Characterised ultimately by Prakash as ruling over and subjugating all humans (2020: 193); the king's conceptual rule over all mankind was discussed in Chapter 2 (pp. 65-8).

<sup>628</sup> Carvounis (2019): 186-90.

rightful rulers over the Greeks. The changes in imagery and identity explain the changes in war and time: the Greeks were impious and hostile to the gods, and so they were conquered by the Romans and will remain conquered forever.

The Egyptians as a collective are not problematised in the same way, and if anything their eastern enemies are portrayed even more negatively (or at least more explicitly connected to the destructive Apophis) than in earlier times; like the Greeks, they were deservedly conquered – due to the very human nature of their historical kings, rather than flaws in all Egyptians – but with the military powers of the conquering New Kingdom rulers still present in some Egyptians, perhaps the conquest of Egypt will not last either.<sup>629</sup> The Greek and Egyptian authors thus react to defeat and their own ethnicities in markedly different ways: while resistance of some kind is left possible in the Demotic texts, the idea of resistance to the Trojans/Romans is presented as a cosmic evil in the *Posthomerica*. It is necessary now to narrow our focus once more and examine the changing role of certain individuals within these drastically changed societies.

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<sup>629</sup> Jay's suggestion (2016: 199) that 'stories portraying a militarily victorious Egypt may well have had broad appeal within an increasingly blended society, fostering a more general and potentially cross-cultural sense of "national" pride' is intriguing but perhaps overestimates the texts' active engagement with multiculturalism. There is nothing in them that is particularly anti-Greek, but there is nothing really pro- or anti-Greek in them at all, and the focus is entirely on the Egyptians.

## Chapter 4

### Sex and Soldierly

Within this thesis' increasing focus on the individuals taking part in war, the intersections of sex, gender, and sexuality provide useful data for our understanding of the identification of the self and the other in a military context. The often-constructed binary of war, discussed in the chapters above, could be made to correspond to a similarly constructed man/woman binary. It is specifically the perceived man/woman binary that is under examination here, i.e. the application of gender to humans. Butler's qualms about the universality of 'woman' (whether 'woman' as a descriptive term can be used for different cultures whose constructed gender roles differ from our own)<sup>630</sup> can perhaps be cautiously set aside when applying the term to both the Greeks and Egyptians, but there are too many qualitative differences between men and gods, and women and goddesses, for human gender relations to be straightforwardly applied to the divine sphere;<sup>631</sup> the roles of gods and goddesses in war will be treated in the next chapter. Further, the Egyptian king, qualitatively different from both humans and gods, also complicates any application of a man/woman gender binary, a complexity brought out most fully by Hatshepsut, wife of Thutmose II before she assumed the kingship. Whilst a fuller discussion concerning the nature of the king will also take place in the following chapter, my analysis here will cover his gender roles in interactions with both men and women.

An analysis of gender and warfare is immediately confronted with a marked absence of women as active fighters. In this way 'gender' is unlike other markers of difference such as ethnicity, for whereas characters of differing ethnicity play major roles in almost any representation

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<sup>630</sup> (1999): 4.

<sup>631</sup> Canevaro (2018): 203.

of combat, only characters of one gender tend to take part in battle. Disch states that '[o]f the many possibilities, sexual (and racial) differences have been especially potent for constructing group identities because they can so readily be figured as natural and invoked to stabilize other, more precarious social distinctions',<sup>632</sup> but there is little use of any constructed sexual differences in the texts under consideration: men, by and large, fight only other men. Women appear as active warriors in none of the New Kingdom texts, with the potential exception of Ahmose I's mother Ahhotep (discussed below); in the Demotic texts, Serpot and her sister Ashteshyt are practically the only named female characters at all, and the former is the only named woman to take part in battle. In the Greek texts, the only female warriors are the Amazons, a pseudo-ethnic group made up of any warrior women the Greeks knew of, whether Scythian, Thracian, or Libyan.<sup>633</sup> They appear briefly in the *Argonautica*, are occasionally mentioned by other authors, and play a leading role in *Posthomerica* 1 with their queen Penthesilea, but otherwise women as soldiers are very rare. To be a soldier is to be a man: 'war was a strongly gendered activity which played a significant part in defining gender itself, founded on bodily strength and physical force'.<sup>634</sup> Ferguson and Naylor argue that '[w]omen soldiers typically find themselves in a contradiction: since soldiering is so fully associated with masculinity, female soldiers are at best anomalies, neither properly female nor credibly soldierly',<sup>635</sup> and this is applicable to the female soldiers of Greek and Egyptian texts.

But although women play a minimal role in battles, they have a greater presence and effect in warfare more generally, whether providing material or emotional support, or tending to the wounded.<sup>636</sup> These are figured as positive actions, in which women contribute to their side's potential success, but they are rare in the texts under consideration: Medea, Berenice III, and a few New Kingdom queens<sup>637</sup> are the only real occasions of a woman playing a supporting role in war.

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<sup>632</sup> Disch (2016): 789.

<sup>633</sup> Penrose (2016): 68.

<sup>634</sup> Foxhall (2013): 84.

<sup>635</sup> Ferguson & Naylor (2016): 510.

<sup>636</sup> O'Gorman (2008): 192.

<sup>637</sup> Roth (2002): 23-4. Even then, this more proactive role for the queens appears almost entirely only in iconography and not the texts.

More frequently, women in war are passive. The large number of women present in the lists of plunder from the New Kingdom (e.g. in the biography of Ahmose son of Ibana, Thutmose III's *Annals*, and Merenptah's *Great Libyan War*)<sup>638</sup> attest to the desirability of women as a 'reward' for victory; in the Greek texts, even when they are not enslaved and raped, the role of a woman is simply to allow the author to place the sadness for the loss of a man into the mouths of his characters: lamentation is thus almost always done by women.<sup>639</sup> Women are marginal and somewhat superfluous in the world of war, indicated by the fact that *Benefice* and *Armour* show that it is possible to write a narrative of war without including any women whatsoever.

Gender and sexuality as concepts are more pervasive, and the fact that women are so absent from the battlefield reveals how gendered a space this was. And while *Benefice*, for example, may lack female characters, the simile at 16.21-3 comparing Petubastis and Minnebmaat to a man kissing his wife shows that the gender role performed by the king is still a matter of concern. In earlier periods, the conflict between Jason's abilities as a sexual or martial conqueror,<sup>640</sup> and Merenptah's focus on cutting off the phalluses of his enemies,<sup>641</sup> show that sexuality in male warriors was an important issue. And in the *Alexandra* and *Posthomerica*, the relationship between Paris' sexual and military abilities – already clear in *Iliad* 3, when Aphrodite rescues him from military defeat against Menelaus to give him sexual victory over Helen – plays a key part in the assignation of guilt for the war. Women may not always be present in representations of war, but concerns over sex, in both its biological and erotic meanings, and gender (the regulated performance of acts associated with both meanings of sex)<sup>642</sup> certainly are.

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<sup>638</sup> *Urk.* IV.11.5-14, 669.1-2; *KRI* IV.6.4-12.

<sup>639</sup> In the *Iliad*, for example, Achilles is the only male character to lead a formal lament (Kelly 2017: 90).

<sup>640</sup> See above (pp. 130-2).

<sup>641</sup> E.g. Athribis Stela V11-12 (*KRI* IV.22.6-7), *Great Libyan War Inscription* columns 46-57 (*KRI* IV.7.12-9.2).

<sup>642</sup> As Butler states, 'gender is always a doing' (1991: 34).

## Actors and Amazons: The Hellenistic Period and New Kingdom

Greek culture did have a long tradition of female soldiers in the Amazons, around whom three different myths centred (the Amazonomachies): Heracles' invasion of their land to steal the belt of Hippolyte, their invasion of Athens, and Penthesilea's participation in the Trojan War and death at the hands of Achilles. The first two of these were often linked, with the Athenians constructing a myth involving their hero Theseus to equate him with Heracles; this can be seen in the arrangement of the reliefs of the Athenian treasury at Delphi (fig. 5). In the *Iliad* the Amazons appear as female others to be overcome by a man to prove his worth as a soldier; they validate both Priam's (3.185-9) and Bellerophon's (6.189-91) claim to fame, and in the former case also emphasise the greater size and power of the current Achaean army. As Dowden succinctly puts it, 'Amazons do a lot of dying. It is in fact an important part of the mythical construct of Amazons in general, and of named Amazons in particular, that they should die'.<sup>643</sup> The presence of many 'Amazon tombs' (in fact old Mycenaean chamber tombs) across the various *poleis* emphasises their role in defining the manhood of Greek warriors.<sup>644</sup> Any truth behind the Amazons or their precise location/identity was

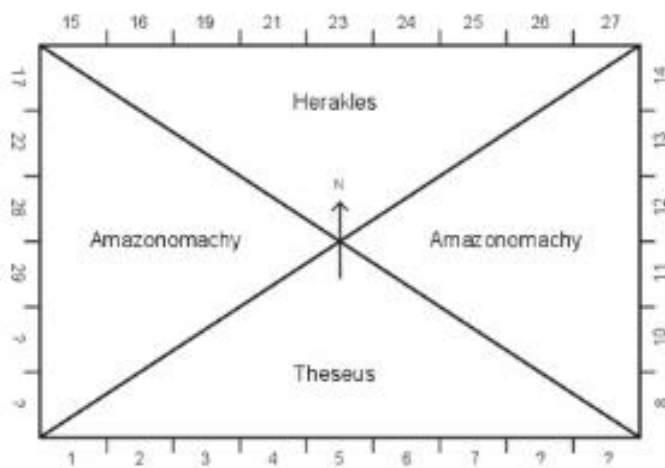


Fig. 5: Arrangement of the metopes of the Athenian treasury at Delphi: Heracles and Theseus are made to be two sides of the same treasury (Gensheimer 2017: 12).

less important than their female identity and the fact that they would be killed by a Greek male. On the other hand, it is notable that, as Dowden points out, Amazons are *killed* (i.e. the fate of men in war) rather than *raped* (the fate of women), and there is rarely any eroticism in the encounter between

<sup>643</sup> Dowden (1997): 117.

<sup>644</sup> *ibid.*: 118.

Greek and Amazon.<sup>645</sup> When they fight, therefore, the Amazons are not so much ‘women’ as ‘not-men’, in much the same way that foreigners are not necessarily one specific ethnicity, but rather just ‘barbarian’ (or ‘not-Greek’); similarly, it does not matter exactly what Centaurs or Giants actually are, just that they are ‘not-human’.<sup>646</sup>

Given the Amazons’ ability to construct the manhood of a warrior, we might expect to find them well-represented in Hellenistic literature, especially given the frequent use of the analogous (from a ‘barbarian’ perspective) Gauls.<sup>647</sup> But militaristic encounters with the Amazons are in fact rare. Even when the all-conquering Alexander encounters the Amazons, it is on sexual terms only. In a dubious passage from his biography (told by almost every source, from Arrian to the *Alexander Romance*),<sup>648</sup> Alexander is approached by their queen Thalestris, who proposes instead of a battle a week-long sexual encounter in order to conceive a powerful child. Alexander conquers the Amazons through his sexual prowess rather than military might: the fact that he is sexually attractive to Thalestris *because of* his military prowess indicates his combined sexual/martial nature. Baynham argues that this episode was invented to justify Alexander’s mass-marriage of his generals to ex-Achaemenid women to unite the two fundamental ‘ethnic’ groups of his nascent empire (Greco-Macedonians and barbarians) and produce accordingly mixed children.<sup>649</sup> By making Alexander’s bride an Amazon this practice was mythologised, and Alexander’s virility emphasised: he was such a great warrior that there was no need to defeat the Amazons, their queen choosing to interact with him using her feminine, rather than masculine, gender modality.

Apollonius would have been aware of his audience’s expectations and preconceptions of the Amazons, and he plays with these throughout Book 2 of the *Argonautica*. As the Argonauts

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<sup>645</sup> Bremer (2000): 53-4. The exception is Achilles and Penthesilea; the Athenian Amazonomachy was provoked by Theseus raping and kidnapping the Amazon Antiope *outside of* battle, analogous to Paris’ rape of Helen or Jason’s rape of Medea (Mills 1997: 30-1).

<sup>646</sup> For a broader discussion of these ideas from a modern, feminist perspective, see Chow (2006).

<sup>647</sup> DuBois (1991): 53-4; Stephens (2015): 208.

<sup>648</sup> Doubtful by almost all the authors who included it, and the more reliable historians such as Ptolemy I apparently did not mention it (Baynham 2001: 118).

<sup>649</sup> Baynham (2001): 126.

travel along the Black Sea coast of Asia Minor, the educated reader of Apollonius knows that they will reach Themiscyra, home of the Amazons and scene of one of Heracles' most famous Labours.<sup>650</sup> Apollonius certainly wants us to consider the possibility that they will emulate Heracles' battle.<sup>651</sup> Phineus' description of the Argonauts' itinerary mentions the Amazons twice: first he specifies their location by Thermodon (2.370-4), the grouping of the Amazons into three *poleis* (2.373-4 πόλεις / τρισσαὶ Ἀμαζονίδων) perhaps recalling the major contemporary 'Other' in Asia Minor, the Galatians (grouped around the three cities of Ancyra, Pessinus, and Tavium);<sup>652</sup> next he explicitly connects them to war by mentioning the temples their queens dedicated to Ares (2.385-7),<sup>653</sup> where some event that he is not allowed to speak of will occur (2.388-91). Our expectations are raised for some sort of battle between the Argonauts and Amazons.<sup>654</sup>

At 2.776-810 the Argonauts are told by Lycus, a local king, how Heracles had pacified the whole land of Phrygia and Bithynia and made it inhabitable as part of his traditional role as guarantor of civilisation.<sup>655</sup> The speech begins with the aftermath of one victory over the Amazons, Lycus first seeing Heracles when he returned bearing the girdle of Hippolyte (2.778-9), and he ends by promising that he will build a shrine to the Dioscuri and send his son with the Argonauts ὄφρ' αὐτοῖο ποτὶ στόμα Θερμώδοντος ('to the mouth of Thermodon itself'), i.e. just before they reach the territory of the Amazons (2.802-10). Apollonius reminds us of the Amazons, and suggests again

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<sup>650</sup> The girdle of Hippolyte (and accompanying Amazonomachy) is the second-most portrayed of his Labours on vases after the character-defining defeat of the Nemean lion (Bremer 2000: 52).

<sup>651</sup> Vian (1974): 164.

<sup>652</sup> At 2.997 this connection is made clearer, the Amazons there divided into φῶλα διάτριχα (three-fold tribes') corresponding to the three tribes of the Galatians. The scholia at 2.373 (and later at 2.989) link the 'Doeantian plain' to the somewhat obscure brothers Doeas and Acmon. These, however, were in fact connected to the city Acmonia and a 'Doeantian plain' in north-east Pisidia (see Robert 1975 for discussion), so on the opposite side of Asia Minor – but somewhat closer to the Galatians.

<sup>653</sup> Whether the queens ruled jointly or successively is unclear; one tradition seems to have depicted the Amazons with two queens, presumably modelled after the militaristic and dual-kinged Sparta (Vian 1974: 195).

<sup>654</sup> An encounter with the Amazons does not seem to have been a regular feature of the Argo mythos, but the 5<sup>th</sup>-century BC Greek historian Hellanicus of Lesbos apparently narrated a version in which the Argonauts joined Heracles in his battle against them (*FGrH* 4 F 106, Fusillo 1985: 176).

<sup>655</sup> Bremer (2000): 52.

that something will occur when the Argonauts reach them. By mentioning Heracles' Amazonomachy, we are made to consider the possibility of another one soon approaching.

As the Argonauts continue, suggestions of battle with the Amazons become more focused. At 2.911-14 they see the tomb of Sthenelus, who had died on his way back Ἀμαζονίδων πολυθαρσέος ἐκ πολέμοιο ('from the valiant war with the Amazons'), in which he had accompanied Heracles. The hero's shade is described (2.918-20):

τύμβου δὲ στεφάνης ἐπιβάς σκοπιάζετο νῆα  
τοῖος ἔών, οἷος πόλεμόνδ' ἴεν· ἀμφὶ δὲ καλῇ  
τετράφαλος φοίνικι λόφῳ ἐπελάμπετο πῆληξ.

He stood on the edge of the tomb, and gazed at the ship,  
just as he was when he went to war, and all around, beautifully,  
his four-plumed helmet was gleaming with its red crest.

The language is very familiar from the *Iliad*, and the adverb πόλεμονδ(ε) ('towards war') is found before Apollonius only 18 times in the *Iliad* and twice in the *Odyssey*, suggesting here epic war-narrative. Nor is this just an evocation of Iliadic battle in general: Sthenelus' helmet, described for over a line (2.919-20), is τετράφαλος ('four-plumed'). This adjective, and its rough synonym τετραφάληρος ('four-crested'), appears in extant Greek literature before Apollonius only four times, all in the *Iliad*. Four-plumed helmets are worn by Athene (5.743), Agamemnon (11.41), Achilles (22.315), and the otherwise minor Epicles (12.384); with the exception of the latter (where the helmet's grandeur emphasises the weight of the rock Ajax uses to crush it), these are the greatest warriors on the Greek side of the Trojan War. Apollonius' assimilation of Sthenelus to such figures again raises the prospect of an Amazonomachy as the Argonauts draw closer to Themiscyra: they repeatedly encounter the results of one epic battle, and there is a sense that another may be on its way.

After picking up four more of Heracles' companions in his Amazonomachy (2.948-61), and so again preparing for battle, the Argonauts finally reach the mouth of the Thermodon (2.964-9):

ἤματι δ' αὐτῷ  
γνάμψαν Ἀμαζονίδων ἕκαθεν λιμενήοχον ἄκρην.  
ἔνθα ποτὲ προμολοῦσαν Ἀρητιάδα Μελανίππην  
ἦρωσ Ἡρακλῆς ἐλοχῆσατο, καὶ οἱ ἄποινα.  
Ἴππολύτη ζωστήρα παναίολον ἐγγυάλιξεν  
ἀμφὶ κασιγνήτης· ὁ δ' ἀπήμονα πέμψεν ὀπίσσω.

The same day,  
they rounded from afar the harbour-containing headland of the Amazons.  
Once upon a time there, Melanippe daughter of Ares came out,  
the hero Heracles ambushed her, and as a ransom  
Hippolyte gave the dazzling girdle into his hands  
for her sister – and he sent her back unharmed.

After mentioning the Amazons at 2.965, Apollonius launches straight into the story he has been building towards for the entire Book, Heracles' Amazonomachy. The first line promises a pitched battle between Heracles and the Amazons, since Melanippe is described as 'daughter of Ares'.<sup>656</sup> But rather than the open warfare (πόλεμος) we might expect from other versions of the battle, we instead get the other component of early Greek warfare, the ambush (2.966 ἐλοχῆσατο);<sup>657</sup> there is, in fact, no 'valiant πόλεμος with the Amazons' (2.912) at all. The Amazonomachy is presented as an interaction between Heracles and Melanippe as individuals (there is no mention of either a Greek or Amazon army), and distinctly remote and in the past: ἔνθα ποτέ ('once upon a time there') at 2.965 foregrounds this episode's distance from the narrative's present, despite it taking place presumably just a few years earlier,<sup>658</sup> and the λόγος was a characteristic of early Greek epic. Any expectations of a large battle between Greeks and Amazons, of the sort mentioned by Priam at *Iliad* 3.184-9, are passed over.

Nor, in the end, is there any encounter between the Argonauts and Amazons: after 14 lines describing the geography of the area (2.970-84) Apollonius finally dashes any thoughts of a battle at 2.985-95:

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<sup>656</sup> For connection of the Amazons to Ares (and Artemis) see Pomeroy (1975: 5).

<sup>657</sup> For the relationship between ambush and battle see Chapter 2 (pp. 57-8).

<sup>658</sup> Heracles is in the midst of his Labours when he takes part in the voyage, and although the chronology of Heracles was always uncertain, he is presented throughout the poem as very much in his prime.

καί νύ κε δηθύνοντες Ἀμαζονίδεσσιν ἔμιξαν  
ὕσμίνην, καὶ δ' οὐ κεν ἀναιμωτὶ γ' ἐρίδηναν·  
οὐ γὰρ Ἀμαζονίδες μάλ' ἐπιτέες, οὐδὲ θέμιστας  
τίουσαι πεδίον Δοιάντιον ἀμφενέμοντο·  
ἀλλ' ὕβρις στονόεσσα καὶ Ἄρεος ἔργα μεμήλει·

...  
εἰ μὴ ἄρ' ἐκ Διόθεν πνοιαί πάλιν Ἀργέσταιο  
ἦλυθον· οἱ δ' ἀνέμῳ περιηγέα κάλλιπον ἀκτὴν  
ἐνθα Θεμισκύρεια Ἀμαζόνες ὠπλιζοντο.

And now they would have delayed and mixed with the Amazons  
in combat, and they would not have fought without bloodshed,  
for the Amazons are not at all gentle, nor are customs  
valued by them, dwelling round the Doeantian plain,  
but groan-causing violence and the works of Ares are their cares

...  
if the breezes of Argestes had not come back  
from Zeus: and with the wind they left the circular beach  
where the Themiscyran Amazons were arming.

Apollonius concludes the Argonauts' Amazonian episode with a discussion of their political system (2.996-1000): no war, just ethnography. The drawn out conditional sentence shows that Apollonius is aware that we are expecting a battle to take place; he even quickly plays with this at 2.985-6, the enjambment of ἔμιξαν meaning we are unsure whether the Argonauts would have 'mixed' with the Amazons in love (like Alexander, and as they did with the Lemnian women in Book 1) or war until the next line.<sup>659</sup> We expected combat, and we expected bloodshed, and Apollonius consciously rejects them, undoing the build-up with a few breezes. He draws attention to the chaotic, disorderly character of the Amazons that typically required them to be defeated by Greek heroes: they do not value *themis* (divinely ordained law) since they are utterly devoted to war, and 2.990 is an inversion in sense of Hector's words to Andromache (*Iliad* 6.490-3) concerning what men and women should occupy themselves with (war and the loom respectively).<sup>660</sup> By failing to fulfil expectations of battle against the Amazons, the Argonauts show that they are not cast from the same mould as Heracles, and that they will similarly fail to fulfil the expectation with which they departed Iolcus at 1.244-5, of acquiring the Golden Fleece through battle against an other (in this

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<sup>659</sup> μίγνυμι φιλότητι is a common epic euphemism for having sex (*LfgE* s.v. φιλότης).

<sup>660</sup> Fusillo (1985): 160.

case foreigners). The threat posed by the Amazons to typical gender roles – and therefore the male-dominated social order – is rendered obsolete by the breezes,<sup>661</sup> Apollonius, unlike most of his Greek predecessors, feels no need to secure male superiority through violence against women.

There are few other references to the Amazons in extant Hellenistic literature. Callimachus describes their founding of Artemis' cult at Ephesus (*Hymn to Artemis* 237-47), and begins by calling them πολέμου ἐπιθυμήτειραι ('greatly eager for war'). But what then follows is a long description of them dancing for Artemis, with no fighting involved; when Lygdamis and the Cimmerians attempt to disrupt it (251-8), there is no battle, just an instant victory achieved by Artemis. When the Amazons appear in the *Alexandra*, at first (993-1007) they fulfil their typical role of dying to men, in Penthesilea's case causing the death of a man (Thersites) even within this stereotypically Amazonian action (999-1000).<sup>662</sup>

Their second appearance, however, is more complicated: it is the third in Cassandra's list of Greek/barbarian conflicts, after Zeus' rape of Europa and Jason's rape of Medea. Theseus' Amazonomachy is narrated, with him accompanying Heracles to seize the girdle and rape Antiope; for this reason the Amazons at line 1335 leave their land ποινὰς ἀθέλκτους θ' ἄρπαγὰς διζήμεναι ('seeking punishment and implacable rape'). The word ἄρπαγή ('rape') and its cognates are used repeatedly both in the opening to Herodotus' *Histories* (13 times in 1.1-4), where it explains why Greece and the barbarians have constantly fought, and in the *Alexandra*, where the Trojan War is caused by Paris' ἄρπαγμα of Helen (line 87). In all those cases, however, women were the victims of the rape, while here they attempt to carry it out, inverting the gender roles further. But as the latest in this long cycle of revenge, the Amazons' behaviour is justified: at their most manly, they are no different from the Greeks. Lycophron points out a certain hypocrisy concerning the Amazons amongst the Greeks, exemplified by the Athenians, whose *Stoa Poikile* celebrated both the Greek

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<sup>661</sup> Apollonius places them geographically far away from the rest of the Greek world, rendering their disturbing nature – which distorts the river they live by – 'safe', out of sight, out of mind (Thalmann 2011: 73, 153).

<sup>662</sup> McNelis & Sens (2016): 114.

victory over Troy – as vengeance for the rape of a woman – and the Athenian victory over the Amazons – thwarting vengeance for the rape of a woman.<sup>663</sup> Through his Amazons, Lycophron collapses the boundary between Greek and the ‘Other’ on a conceptual level: both are as bad as the other, and gender ceases to be as problematic a distinction in the Greek world.

Elsewhere we encounter women who fight in war, but who are not Amazons. The distinction between the Amazons and normal women is crucial: due to their role in validating the manliness of their conquerors, the Amazons must be portrayed as an impressive threat. This is made particularly clear in artwork, where Amazons fight often using the hyper-masculine double-headed axe (instead of the typical Greek spear) and the *pelta*, a moon-shaped shield from barbarian Thrace.<sup>664</sup> But when normal women are depicted fighting (for example in defence of their city) their weapons are household objects: instead of spears or axes they use spits and pestles.<sup>665</sup> The banality of the everyday ‘weapons’ used by women who otherwise conform to feminine gender roles indicates the ridiculousness of women taking part in war.

This attitude to ‘normal’ women fighting appears in the *Argonautica* as well. At 1.612-14 Apollonius describes the fate of the Lemnian men, whose habit of taking too many sex slaves from their battles – and subsequently neglecting their wives – caused the women of Lemnos to murder them. Without any men in their society, the women take on their gender roles, and so they take up both farming and arming themselves in preparation for battle (1.627-30). But when they see the *Argo* approach (1.634-9), this inversion is revealed to be something of an illusion:

αὐτίκα πασσυδίη πυλέων ἔκτοσθε Μυρίνης  
δήια τεύχεα δῦσαι ἐς αἰγιαλὸν προχέοντο,  
Θυιάσιν ὠμοβόροις ἴκελαι, φὰν γὰρ που ἰκάνειν  
Θρήικας· ἢ δ’ ἅμα τῆσι Θεοαντιάς Ὑπιπύλεια  
δῦν’ ἐνὶ τεύχεσι πατρός. ἀμηχανίη δ’ ἔσχοντο  
ἄφθογγοι, τοῖόν σφιν ἐπὶ δέος ἠωρεῖτο.

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<sup>663</sup> For a discussion of the *Stoa Poikile* and its use of gender and femininity, see Castriota (2005).

<sup>664</sup> Shapiro (1983): 107. They were also thought to be the first users of iron, a harder, more deadly metal than bronze, in war (Mayor, Colarusso & Saunders 2014: 476).

<sup>665</sup> Lindblom (1999): 88.

Straight away, with all haste, from the gates of Myrina  
they poured forth onto the shore, having put on their battle arms,  
like flesh-eating Maenads; for they thought, I suppose,  
the Thracians had come. And along with them Hypsipyle daughter of Thoas  
put on the arms of her father, but they were held by helplessness,  
voiceless, such was the fear that hung over them.

The Maenads might seem to be a suitably fearsome group to be compared to, and despite being somewhat chaotic they nevertheless pose some threat to the Argonauts. But although the women seem outwardly like Maenads, they are fearful and silent, and inside remain normal women afraid of fighting. War will return them to the feminine gender roles they had left behind:<sup>666</sup> they are unable to fill the gap left by their husbands.<sup>667</sup>

In the end, however, there is no fighting; Jason is instead invited to meet Hypsipyle and be persuaded that the Argonauts should stay on Lemnos to father children, similar to the narrative of Alexander and Thalestris. When Jason leaves the Argonauts he puts on a cloak given to him by Athene (1.721-3), and which we might therefore expect to have some military connections; war is also brought to mind by the first element of the ecphrasis, a description of the Cyclopes crafting the ultimate weapon, Zeus' thunderbolt (1.730-4). But the thunderbolt is unused, and the next description is of Amphion and Zethus (re)founding Thebes. The city had two foundation myths, the most famous involving Cadmus' killing of a serpent and sowing of its teeth, and then a battle between the men who grew from these teeth.<sup>668</sup> The second had the brothers Amphion and Zethus build the city, using the power of Amphion's golden lyre to move the rocks, and it is this version that Apollonius includes here: when choosing between a martial or peaceful narrative, he chooses the latter. Immediately following this Aphrodite is described with the shield of Ares (1.742-6), but

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<sup>666</sup> See Marcus (1989) for a discussion of the effect war has on women's bodies and the roles they play in society.

<sup>667</sup> Sharrock (2015): 159.

<sup>668</sup> See Ovid *Metamorphoses* 3.50-137.

she uses it as a mirror instead of in battle.<sup>669</sup> On a more general level, Jason's cloak corresponds to the famous ephrases of shields in early Greek epic: Heracles' shield in the pseudo-Hesiodic *Scutum*, and Achilles' in *Iliad* 18. Those are military tools for great military heroes; Jason's cloak, however, helps him not to fight but to seduce. He is compared to the evening star as he walks (1.774-80), and is presented in an erotic context, Hypsipyle compared to a girl awaiting her betrothed; there are no reminiscences of the star-similes from the *Iliad* that presaged destruction.<sup>670</sup> The fact that this episode occurs before any major achievement of the Argonauts suggests it has some programmatic function, and we will see that seduction makes things easier than fighting.<sup>671</sup> In the end Jason's overwhelming eroticism enables the Argonauts to deal with the women of Lemnos, and no fighting is needed. To defeat women Apollonius suggests one must use seduction rather than violence: they are still female enough to return to their normal gender roles when the right men come along.

Women taking an active part in warfare do not fare better elsewhere in Greek literature of this period: Polybius' account of the Illyrian queen Teuta's military activities (2.4-12) is highly negative, and he uses her female identity to explain her failure (2.4.7-9). She rages *γυναικοθύμως* (2.8.12 'as a woman's spirit will do'), and her rash military actions lead to defeat. Like the Lemnian women she is not ordered enough to succeed in war, and throughout Hellenistic literature we see this idea repeatedly applied to women: they are by nature incapable of fighting effectively. The body in Greek thought (and in many other cultures) was weak, prone to excessive emotions, and thus needed to be restrained by the mind; only men were considered capable of this.<sup>672</sup>

There are also instances of women in an active role in combat without physically taking part in the battle. Medea is a girl, at the beginning of *Argonautica* 3 skilled, like Circe, in making drugs

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<sup>669</sup> Similarly, when Hera and Athene visit the house of Hephaestus at 3.36-7, it is described as the *δῶμα ... Κύπριδος* ('house of Aphrodite') rather than the *Ἥφαιστου ... δόμον* of *Iliad* 18.369; Aphrodite takes priority over her male, military-oriented lover/husband.

<sup>670</sup> Kelly (2007): 370-1.

<sup>671</sup> Merriam (1993): 72.

<sup>672</sup> Threadcraft (2016): 208; Butler (1999): 17.

(3.27 πολυφάρμακον)<sup>673</sup> and devoted to Hecate (250-2), but crucially still a virgin (86). She is more than the typical Greek girl – as one might expect, given her status as daughter of Aeetes – but conforms generally to typical gender roles, and seems completely foreign to warfare. When Eros shoots her with his arrow to make her fall in love with Jason, however, βέλος δ' ἐνεδαίετο κούρη / νέρθεν ὑπὸ κραδίῃ φλογὶ εἴκελον (3.286-7 'the arrow burnt within the girl / inside, under her heart, like a fire').<sup>674</sup> The effects are compared in a simile to a woman constructing a blazing fire (3.291-5), and the context of an archer god provoking burning with his arrows thematically recalls the beginning of the *Iliad*, when Apollo fires his plague-bringing arrows at the Greek camp (1.43-53). This too causes great flames, albeit literally (*Iliad* 1.52): αἰεὶ δὲ πυραὶ νεκύων καίοντο θαμειαί ('always the crowded fires of the corpses were burning'). As Apollo's intervention there began the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon (*Iliad* 1.8-9), Eros' intervention here brings Medea and Jason together – but in an increasingly militaristic manner. As the book progresses, Medea continues to flirt with the Iliadic world. As she attempts to get help in meeting Jason (3.654-5), she struggles:

τρὶς μὲν ἐπειρήθη, τρὶς δ' ἔσχετο, τέτρατον αὖτις  
λέκτροισιν πρηγῆς ἐνικάππεσεν εἰλιχθεῖσα.

Thrice she tried, thrice she was held back, and again on the fourth time  
she whirled around and fell down face-first on her bed.

The motif of three attempts and then a final failure on the fourth is found repeatedly in the *Iliad*, including when Diomedes attacks Apollo at 5.436-9 and Patroclus attacks Troy at 16.702-6; it occurs in highly significant moments, often before the death or near-death of a character,<sup>675</sup> and its application here bodes ill for Medea. She is at war with her own mind. There are particular similarities to Patroclus' attempt, since both are trying (in vain) to cross thresholds – Medea her

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<sup>673</sup> Campbell (1994): 39.

<sup>674</sup> φλογὶ εἴκελον is used in Homer to describe a warrior attacking, suggesting a sinister agency for the missile (Campbell 1994: 258).

<sup>675</sup> Kelly (2007): 194-7.

doorway, Patroclus the walls of Troy – and given Patroclus will die soon after his failure, Medea’s inner battle is not likely to end well either.

Having played the part of Patroclus, Medea’s next foray into the *Iliad* sees her become Hector. When Jason approaches her, he is compared to Sirius (3.956-61) in a simile based on the description of Achilles approaching Hector (*Iliad* 22.26-31);<sup>676</sup> as with Patroclus, the imminent doom of Hector suggests things will not go well for Medea. Further, at *Iliad* 22.126-8 Hector imagined that he could talk to Achilles as a maiden talks to a young boy, with the dissociation between Hector’s erotic fantasy and the present situation suggesting he is now unsuited for fighting Achilles; Medea now gets to live out that fantasy, but is undone in words as Hector was in battle.<sup>677</sup> Love is militarised by Apollonius (and Jason), and is just as destructive to Medea as war had been to Patroclus and Hector.

After Medea has undergone these Iliadic experiences in love, however, she becomes herself a more militaristic character, and assumes the active, dominant role in helping Jason acquire the Golden Fleece. Jason’s defeat of the Earthborn and taming of the bulls – his most glorious deed in the poem – is explicitly attributed at 3.1363-4 to Medea; ultimately, credit for this victory should go to her. When it comes to actually obtaining the Golden Fleece (4.145-66), Medea is the active, dominant figure, bewitching the serpent and sending it to sleep; at 4.149 we are told that εἵπετο δ’ Αἰσονίδης, πεφοβημένος (‘Jason followed, afraid’).<sup>678</sup> Earlier he had dynamically approached her as the aggressive party, but here he follows behind her: Medea is now in control in this relationship.<sup>679</sup> This pattern continues for the rest of the book: Medea comes up with the ambush to kill her brother and the other Colchians (4.411-20), and is capable of destroying the bronze man Talos alone,

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<sup>676</sup> See above (pp. 130-2).

<sup>677</sup> Similarly, a depiction of Apollo’s rape of Daphne at a nymphaeum in Hierapolis shows her in military clothing, equating sexual and military conquest (D’Andria 2011: 159).

<sup>678</sup> There is perhaps a recollection here of *Odyssey* 4.276, when Menelaus describes Deiphobus following Helen around the Horse; his subservience and hence failure to adequately perform the role of husband legitimises Menelaus regaining his previous position.

<sup>679</sup> Hunter (1987): 132.

without any help from the men (4.1654 μούνη γὰρ ὄιομαι ὕμμι δαμάσσειν). The Iliadic, military parallels to Medea's actions in love cause her to take on a masculine role and turn the tables on Jason. Her marriage to him takes place with the Argonauts holding their spears instead of the typical torches (4.1155-6): warfare has influenced and permeated her relationship with Jason – and not for the better.

### **Royal Women at War: Crowns and Complexities**

A more positive configuration for female participation in war is seen with the Ptolemaic queens, especially in Callimachus' *Coma Berenices* (*Aetia* fr. 110). Although focusing on the queen and the dedication of a lock of her hair, the context is the Third Syrian War and Ptolemy III's invasion of Mesopotamia. Catullus 66 contains military vocabulary and content that may well have existed in the Callimachean text. As with Apollonius, there is a strong connection between love and warfare: the marriage between Ptolemy and Berenice is presented as a military victory (66.14),<sup>680</sup> as was Jason's seduction of Medea. The relationship is also cast as the reason for Ptolemy's success (66.11-12):

*qua rex tempestate novo auctus hymenaeo  
vastatum finis iverat Assyrios*

In the time when the king, enriched by his new marriage,  
went to lay waste to the Assyrian borders

Being married to Berenice increases Ptolemy's abilities in war and enables him to win, as Medea's love for Jason enabled his victory. But despite the military language used throughout the poem – the cutting of the hair, for example, is compared to an episode from the Persian invasion of Greece (fr. 110.45-6) – Berenice maintains her female identity. She remains at home, supporting her

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<sup>680</sup> Harder (2012): 807-8.

husband from afar, and does not intrude into the battlefield and male gender roles.<sup>681</sup> This, it is suggested, is how women can best participate in war: by remaining women, and using love (and any political or economical resources they can provide) to support their husbands.<sup>682</sup> Female agency is permitted only when it does not intrude on masculinity.<sup>683</sup>

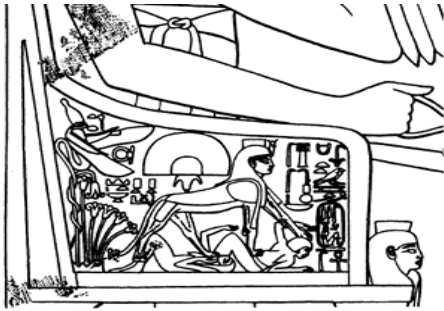


Fig. 6: Tiye as sphinx in the tomb of Kheruef (The Epigraphic Survey 1980: pl. 49).

Active roles for women in battle are even more limited in Egyptian sources of the New Kingdom, and entirely confined to the queens: there are fundamentally no analogues to the Amazons.<sup>684</sup> The most explicit representations of women in war come from the reigns of Amenhotep III and Akhenaten, whose chief wives (Tiye and Nefertiti) at times appear

in military iconography. In the tomb of Kheruef, who was steward of Tiye, we find a depiction of the queen as a sphinx on the side-panel of her throne, trampling female enemies (fig. 6). Nefertiti is also represented in this way on a talatat-block from Luxor (fig. 7), which shows the prominent role that the chief royal women played alongside Amenhotep III and Akhenaten and their increased access to the iconography of kingship.<sup>685</sup> Representations of the queen as a sphinx date back possibly to the Old Kingdom; one example was found in the mortuary temple of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dynasty king Djedefre,<sup>686</sup> but only shows the queen recumbent and wearing the explicitly feminine

<sup>681</sup> Harder (2012): 798. Outside of war, Berenice is allowed to take on more masculine traits: in Callimachus' *Victoria Berenices* (fr. 54) she is connected to Heracles (Harder 2012: 392).

<sup>682</sup> Polybius at 5.83.3 describes Arsinoe III accompanying her husband Ptolemy IV to Raphia, which suggests this ideology was put into practice. See Visscher (2020: 129-33) for similar ideals of marriage in Seleucid literature.

<sup>683</sup> van Oppen de Ruiter (2015): 92.

<sup>684</sup> Hoffmann (2008: 52-3) cites a New Kingdom ostrakon (Cairo CG 25215) depicting a woman fighting in a chariot as evidence for an Egyptian story involving female soldiers, but this is the only such example, and hardly proves any widespread concept of women at war akin to the Greek myths of the Amazons. The tomb of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dynasty nomarch Anta includes, in a scene of a siege, some women fighting back against the attackers (Petrie 1898: pl. 4), but this is an exceptional example.

<sup>685</sup> Roth (2002): 26; Troy (1986): 141.

<sup>686</sup> Fay (1996): 62. More examples are known from the Middle Kingdom, including a life-size one belonging to an unknown royal woman (of which only the bust remains) and a smaller one belonging to Ita, daughter of Amenemhat II (*ibid.*: 28-32).

headdress of Hathor. Tiye's and Nefertiti's sphinxes are unique in their adoption of poses and actions previously limited to the king's sphinx.<sup>687</sup>

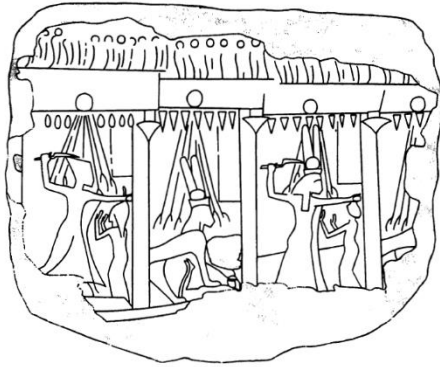


Fig. 7: Talatat block depicting Nefertiti smiting the enemies (Tawfik 1975: 163).

More striking is the talatat-block mentioned above (fig. 7), which shows Nefertiti as a sphinx but also taking part in a war-scene, in the traditional smiting pose wielding the *khepesh*-sword. Thus one might conclude that under Akhenaten the traditionally masculine act of war could encompass women. Yet in the cases of Tiye and Nefertiti, the enemies they are defeating are not

male but female. So although the queens are allowed into the world of war, it is not any war that corresponds to reality. War remains part of the male world, and women could not be configured as fighting against men; they instead act in symmetry with the male king, symbolically destroying female rather than male foreigners.<sup>688</sup> War is ultimately the king's job.

This attitude is seen also in a stela of Ahmose I at Karnak, in which he describes his mother Ahhotep (lines 25-6): *nwt kmt ʿw3.n=s mnfyt=s nbnb.n=s-sy nw.n=s wthw=s inḳ=s tšw=s sgrḥ.n=s šmʿw dr=s bṯnw=s* ('one who took care of Egypt; she gathered its troops, she protected it; she took care of its fugitives, she embraced its refugees; she calmed Upper Egypt, she repelled its rebels').<sup>689</sup> Although the stela acknowledges the prominent role of Ahhotep in the war against the Hyksos (acting as regent for her son),<sup>690</sup> her actions are framed as strategic and defensive: she does not invade Lower Egypt, but instead protects the Theban kingdom and repels invaders. As with Berenice III, she is able to take part in war by acting according to a traditional gender role, in this case as a mother who cares for and embraces her country and people.<sup>691</sup> Similarly, the king's wife

<sup>687</sup> Morkot (1986): 1.

<sup>688</sup> Matić (2017): 117.

<sup>689</sup> *Urk.* IV.21.10-16.

<sup>690</sup> Schoske (2008): 193; Roth (2002): 17-18.

<sup>691</sup> Indeed royal women across the Ancient Near East often played important roles in diplomatic correspondence, though this is not reflected in the king's (i.e. male-produced) texts; see Xekalaki (2007).

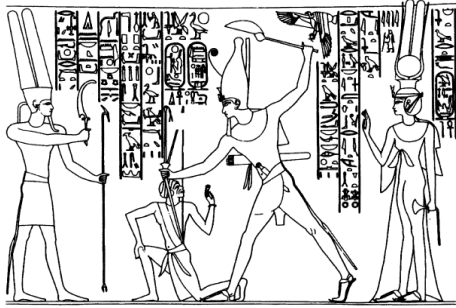


Fig. 8: Ramesses II smiting while Nefertari supports him (Desroches-Noblecourt 1968: pl. 33)

for a brief period – between Thutmose IV and Ramesses II – could be depicted aiding him by providing protection in battle.<sup>692</sup> For example, in a relief from his small temple to Hathor at Abu Simbel, Ramesses II is depicted smiting a Nubian enemy while his wife Nefertari stands behind with her right hand raised in a gesture of support, wearing the Hathoric

crown (fig. 8). The king takes the dominant, active role in war by killing his enemies, but the queen's presence is vital, and she is presented as a complement to Amun, who stands opposite raising the *khepesh*-sword.<sup>693</sup> As with Ptolemy III and Berenice II, a woman can only participate in war with positive effect if she does so while embracing her traditional gender role.

Complicating any easy demarcation of gender and warfare, however, is Hatshepsut: sister and chief wife of Thutmose II, she acted first as regent for her nephew/step-son Thutmose III and then assumed the kingship alongside him, continuing the military activities of her predecessors in both representations and reality.<sup>694</sup> But her existence does not allow for any simple conclusions about the presence of women in war, even if we take her as some exception to prove a rule, because her gender as king is emphatically different to her gender as king's wife: as king her statuary involved physiognomy and dress of both men and women, and within texts pronouns and nouns could be grammatically masculine or feminine.<sup>695</sup> Any modern gendering of Hatshepsut-as-king as feminine is thus not supported by the Egyptian sources. Nor is this an isolated example: the 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty king Sobekneferu was similarly born female, and used similarly complex gender in statuary and nouns/pronouns, as did the late 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty king Tawosret.<sup>696</sup>

<sup>692</sup> Roth (2002): 23-4.

<sup>693</sup> *ibid.*: 25.

<sup>694</sup> E.g. Allen (2002): 17; Morris (2014): 362.

<sup>695</sup> Penrose (2016): 206.

<sup>696</sup> Diamond (2020): 5; McCarthy (2008).

Gods associated with the Egyptian kingship were in fact often complexly gendered: Atum, the creator god, impregnated himself;<sup>697</sup> Osiris, progenitor of kingship, had a penis but was sexually passive in the conception of Horus;<sup>698</sup> Amun, divine analogue for the king particularly in the New Kingdom, could be called both ‘father of fathers’ and ‘mother of mothers’.<sup>699</sup> This complexity extended to the king as well. The king’s throne names attest to the possession of multiple genders: his first proclaimed him to be the incarnation or representative of Horus, but his second (almost as old as the first) made him the equivalent for the Two Ladies, the goddesses Nekhbet and Wadjet who represented Upper and Lower Egypt.<sup>700</sup> That the king could don *idmi*-linen to assume the attributes of Osiris, but also red *ins*-cloth to take on aspects of the goddess Sekhmet,<sup>701</sup> indicates his ability to move between male and female genders. Hatshepsut and Tawosret (like Sobekneferu earlier) acquired these same attributes upon their assumption of the kingship, and as king (as with all their predecessors) they were neither man<sup>702</sup> nor woman, but something beyond that binary.<sup>703</sup> As such, these kings are not exceptions to the general absence of women from war in Egyptian sources, and for the purposes of this thesis they may be classed alongside the other kings of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasties.

### **Cause and Reward: Raping Women in Hellenistic Literature and the New Kingdom**

In general, women in the New Kingdom play no active part in war at all, and exist only as military plunder. The depiction of explicit violence against women, however, was rare, one isolated example coming from the 9<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb of the nomarch Ankhtifi, in which soldiers grab women

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<sup>697</sup> Almansa-Villatoro (2020): 14; Orriols-Llonch (2015): 839-42.

<sup>698</sup> Manniche (2002): 3; Hare (1999): 120; Cooney (2010): 226-7.

<sup>699</sup> Borges Pires (2017): 155; *LGG* I.575-6, III.258-9.

<sup>700</sup> Leprohon (2013): 13-15.

<sup>701</sup> Goebis (2011): 59, 68.

<sup>702</sup> On the similar, albeit less absolute, lack of men in battle in the New Kingdom sources see Chapter 5 (pp. 251-66).

<sup>703</sup> For more on the complex (though not ambiguous, which implies an uncertainty that the Egyptians did not clearly feel) gender of the Egyptian king see Matić (2016) and Oakley (forthcoming d).

by the hair and lead them away.<sup>704</sup> Thus in Thutmose III's *Annals* women are confined to the lists of booty, accompanied by precious metals, weapons, and furniture. Their potential value as prizes is suggested by the order of the lists: in the description of Retjenu's tribute (*Annals* 1.104-6) the first item listed is *s3t wt(t) ʕpr[=s] m [nb]w [h]r h[s]bd n h3st=s* ('the eldest daughter, adorned with gold and lapis lazuli of her land').<sup>705</sup> Then follows her servants, other slaves, horses, chariots, animals, and precious objects; the focus is on the princess, and the implicit emasculation of the chief of Retjenu by Thutmose III, who has deprived him of his most precious female possession. The description of her accoutrements emphasises her visual quality, objectifying her and making her just as much an object of desire as the chariots, armour, and goods also listed: she is subjected to the male gaze, made both beautiful and exotic through the explicit mention of 'her land'. Here the princess fulfils diplomatic goals, theoretically establishing stronger ties between Egypt and Retjenu.<sup>706</sup> The possession of foreign women is used more overtly by Amenhotep II to characterise his own military victories in a monumentalised letter to his viceroy Usersatet: he refers to himself (lines 6-8) as *p3[nb n hmt] m s3-n-g3-r s3mt-ʕ3 m k3-bn mswtt [šr] t nt i-r-rh3 3t nt i-r-ph3* ('the [possessor of the woman] of Babylon, the servant-girl of Byblos, the young daughter of Alalakh, the old woman of Arapkha').<sup>707</sup> His possession of these women (Helck suggests that they may represent specific local goddesses, or just the totality of all women)<sup>708</sup> indicates his dominance of the world and the emasculation of the enemy.<sup>709</sup> The practical and political benefits to the kings of the rape of foreign women are adopted here as a motif to great effect.

Thutmose III's use of the princess of Retjenu in his *Annals* is taken up on a greater scale by Ramesses II in terms of display. He married two different Hittite princesses, and set up three texts

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<sup>704</sup> Matic (2018): 254-5.

<sup>705</sup> *Urk.* IV.669.1-2.

<sup>706</sup> Indeed three foreign wives of Thutmose III, probably brought to Egypt under Hatshepsut, were entombed together; the tomb is published by Lilyquist (2003).

<sup>707</sup> *Urk.* IV.1344.4-7.

<sup>708</sup> (1955): 27.

<sup>709</sup> Redford (1992): 230.

to commemorate these; they are typically referred to as the ‘Marriage Stelae’.<sup>710</sup> The first of these, commemorating the first marriage, was inscribed in at least five locations across Egypt, which attests to the importance Ramesses II wished it to have.<sup>711</sup> No mention is made of the peace treaty established with the Hittites in Ramesses II’s Regnal Year 21,<sup>712</sup> and the focus is entirely on the marriages.<sup>713</sup> But the modern naming of these ‘Marriage Stelae’ is problematic, since it presumes marriage as their focus. In fact, the first text explicitly states a different subject early on (15):<sup>714</sup>

*ḥꜣty-ꜥ m mnw-pn mnḥ n sꜥ pḥt n <nb> ḥpš sꜥ ꜥn swḥi nḥt bꜣw ꜥw šꜣyw ḥprw ḥr nb tꜣwy*

The beginning in this excellent monument of magnifying the might of the <Lord> of Muscle, exalting the valour, extolling the strength of the great and mysterious wonders that happened through the Lord of the Two Lands.

The subject, then, is not the marriage, but the greatness of Ramesses II; the marriage is certainly a witness to this fact, but it is not the central element. As with any royal war text from the New Kingdom the focus is on the strength of the king, so the Hittite princess is not even mentioned until line 32 of the Abu Simbel text. Like Thutmose III’s princess of Retjenu, she is heavily objectified, without a name – and therefore personal identity – until she arrives in Egypt. She retains this objectification when she does reach Egypt: from lines 38-40 of the Karnak text<sup>715</sup> she is never the grammatical agent, and is instead acted on by a variety of men. The most important of these actions is looking at her and her beauty. At lines 39-40<sup>716</sup> the princess is ushered in:

*ḥꜥ.n mꜣ.n-st ḥm=f m nfrt ... ist-rf ḥn[w] ꜥ š[ꜥw] bꜣwt sbꜥ n rḥ.tw=s n sdm.tw=f m r n r nn  
shꜣ.n.tw=f ḥr sꜣw n dꜣywt*

<sup>710</sup> KRI II.233-83.

<sup>711</sup> The second marriage is recorded by only one, much shorter stela (KRI II.282-4), which suggests it was not felt to be as significant.

<sup>712</sup> Cannuyer (2010): 90.

<sup>713</sup> Exactly why there should be a marriage so long after the treaty is unclear, and there may have been significant geopolitical changes in the meantime; reasons for yet another marriage are also unknown (Pernigotti 2010: 42-8).

<sup>714</sup> KRI II.235.13-16.

<sup>715</sup> KRI II.253.7-254.10.

<sup>716</sup> KRI II.253.13-254.6.

Then his Person saw her in beauty ... now, it was a great and mysterious affair, a precious wonder: it was not known, it was not heard in the oral tradition, it is not mentioned in the textual tradition of the ancestors

The climax of her journey to Egypt is the king seeing her, and her beauty is then dwelt on; the sense of mystery mentioned throughout the text is unveiled as the king sees this beautiful woman, a great and novel accomplishment by the gods for the king.<sup>717</sup> The king gazing at his new wife is the culmination of the text and his wars against the Hittites; we are then told (K40):<sup>718</sup>

*wn.in=s nfr.ti hr ib n hm=f mr.n=f-st r ht-nbt m sp mrd n=f nht w3d-n=f it=f pth-b-tw-nn*

so she was beautiful in the mind of his Person, and he loved her more than anything – it was a happy event for him, a victory which his father Ptah-Tatunen ordained for him.

Ramesses II seeing her and enjoying her beauty is his new military victory (*nht*), and his reward for oppressing the Hittites for so many years. Even her Egyptian name – and so new identity – reflects her association with vision and beauty: *m3t-hr-nfrw-r<sup>c</sup>* ('Woman who sees Horus, Beauty of Re').<sup>719</sup> The girl's perfection is subjected to the king's gaze, and by describing it in this text we subject her to the gaze of our mind's eye; the woman is objectified to become the ultimate symbol of Egyptian subjection of the Hittites.

More malicious is the seizure of chiefs' wives rather than children, listed as plunder in Thutmose III's *Annals* (5.22).<sup>720</sup> These serve no political purpose, and instead are just used to emasculate the enemy leaders, raping their wives to emphasise the greater masculinity of the victorious king. The same practice is seen particularly with Merenptah. In his *Great Libyan War Inscription* he mentions that Maryu, the Libyan chief, had brought his wife and children with him to

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<sup>717</sup> For the idea of *b3wt* as a revelatory deed of the gods see Shirun-Grumach (1993): 20-3; for more on the sense of wonder in this text see the discussion in Chapter 2 (p. 65).

<sup>718</sup> *KRI* II.254.7-12.

<sup>719</sup> Cannuyer (2010): 88-9.

<sup>720</sup> *Urk.* IV.698.5.

the battle (column 14 *in.n=f hmt=f hrdw=f*)<sup>721</sup> – she, along with eleven others and their possessions, are seized after his defeat.<sup>722</sup> This reversal is rendered absolute. When the full plunder list is given later, the women, as with Thutmose III, are listed first (column 57),<sup>723</sup> and particular emphasis is therefore placed on Maryu’s failure in masculinity. The same king’s Triumph Stela emphasises the emasculation of the enemy: when the seizure of the chief’s wives is mentioned there (C6-7),<sup>724</sup> the extra detail is added that this was *r-hft hr=f* (‘right before his face’). This is a targeted, direct humiliation that indicates the male superiority of the king over his enemy, stripped of his masculine role before his very eyes.

This focus on emasculation is found throughout Merenptah’s texts, figuratively and literally. Castration of the enemy was a motif since the Narmer Palette,<sup>725</sup> and a sexual dimension to the king’s victory over his enemies – with implied rape – was also generally present in earlier representations of war.<sup>726</sup> But Merenptah takes this to extremes with his repeated focus on the penises of the defeated enemy. In the *Great Libyan War Inscription*, the list of enemies killed (columns 46-57)<sup>727</sup> is given not in the usual way, by the number of hands cut off, but by a mixture of both hands and penises; in particular, a distinction is made between those with uncircumcised or circumcised penises. This focus is seen also in Merenptah’s Athribis Stela (V11-12),<sup>728</sup> where the penises of the enemy are given unusual prominence by being listed before the severed hands; it is perhaps relevant that only those with uncircumcised penises (i.e. those with different penises to the circumcised Egyptians) had both their penises and hands cut off, emasculating to a greater degree those more different from the Egyptians. Indeed, one might see a connection here to the

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<sup>721</sup> KRI IV.4.2-3.

<sup>722</sup> KRI IV.6.4-12.

<sup>723</sup> KRI IV.9.1-2.

<sup>724</sup> KRI IV.14.10-13.

<sup>725</sup> O’Connor (2005): 450.

<sup>726</sup> *ibid.*: 451. Cf. Senwosret III’s Semna Stela, which contains the hieroglyph of a phallus apparently transfixed by a stake to determine the word *hm* (‘to retreat’), equating military defeat with emasculation (Parkinson 1995: 66-7).

<sup>727</sup> KRI IV.7.12-9.2.

<sup>728</sup> KRI IV.22.6-7.

comparisons of the enemy to straw discussed in the previous chapter,<sup>729</sup> their threat to Egyptian fertility turned back on themselves.<sup>730</sup> When Merenptah states in his *Great Libyan War Inscription* (column 46) that there were *ḫwt ḫr-ḫt=sn ḫtp m ḫnyw ḫrntw n ḫst r-bw ḫn<sup>c</sup> ḫpw n ḫst[-nb] wnw ḫn<sup>c</sup>=w m rmw ḫr mstiw* ('female donkeys before them, loaded with uncircumcised penises of the Land of Libya, and hands of [every] land that was with them, like fish in baskets'),<sup>731</sup> it is impossible not to sense the utter emasculation of the enemy: even the donkeys carrying their penises are female.<sup>732</sup>

The issue of women as a cause or reward for war is applied frequently in Greek literature of the Hellenistic period – as throughout its history – to Helen, whose departure from Sparta with Paris began the Trojan War.<sup>733</sup> The *Iliad* is not entirely consistent on how willingly Helen left Sparta: she seems to suggest she was unwilling at *Iliad* 3.173-4, and Paris at 3.444 claims that he 'seized' (ἀρπάξας) her, which suggests some compulsion.<sup>734</sup> But Helen also seems to blame herself, and is the only character in the *Iliad* to indulge in self-abuse rather than just self-blame – so she at least gives some guilt to herself, even if no other characters do.<sup>735</sup>

In the Hellenistic period this debate is addressed most directly by the *Alexandra*. The poem is spoken by Cassandra, perhaps an equivalent to Helen as the most famous post-war, rather than pre-war, rape victim.<sup>736</sup> The question of women's guilt – and their fate in war – is hugely important for the poem: Lycophron examines the Trojan War (and its causes and consequences) from a Trojan

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<sup>729</sup> pp. 121-2.

<sup>730</sup> Matic (2019): 63.

<sup>731</sup> *KRI* IV.7.12-14.

<sup>732</sup> Ramesses III similarly feminises his enemies, comparing them to women both textually and in the architecture of his mortuary temple at Medinet Habu, which features the king surrounded by enemies on the exterior, but surrounded by sexualised women on the interior (O'Connor 2005: 451, 445-6).

<sup>733</sup> For discussion of Helen's guilt (or otherwise) in archaic and classical Greek literature see Austin (1994), who particularly focuses on the myth of her εἶδωλον ('phantom') being taken to Troy instead of her.

<sup>734</sup> Maciver (2011): 693; she is ambiguous in her desires throughout (Nappi 2015: 47). See Morales (2016: 61) for discussion of the word ἀρπαγή, though her argument that it can mean both 'abduction' and 'seduction' seems to gloss over gendered power dynamics.

<sup>735</sup> Worman (2001): 21; Nappi (2015): 48. Suggestions that Helen could return to Menelaus if she wanted to, and must therefore take some blame (e.g. Fuhrer 2015: 60) are misguided: even if the Trojans would let her leave – and there is no indication that they would – *Iliad* 3 shows that Aphrodite certainly wouldn't.

<sup>736</sup> See the discussion of Locrian Ajax above (pp. 150-1).

woman's perspective.<sup>737</sup> For Cassandra, the cause is very explicitly Paris' rape of Helen. When Cassandra moves from her description of Troy's prior destruction to the future one, she says (lines 86-7):

λεύσσω θέοντα γρυνὸν ἐπτερωμένον  
τρήρωνος εἰς ἄρπαγμα, Πεφναίας κυνός

I behold the rushing firebrand, flying  
to rape the dove, the Pephnaean dog

The firebrand is Paris, predicted to destroy his country; the dove/bitch is Helen, picking up her Homeric adjective κυνώπις ('dog-eyed'), applied to her at *Iliad* 3.180 and *Odyssey* 4.145 when she blames herself for the war; Cassandra here removes that blame.<sup>738</sup> Later (lines 102-3) she again describes the rape:

καὶ τὴν ἄνυμφον πόρτιν ἀρπάσας λύκος,  
δυοῖν πελειαῖν ὠρφανισμένην γονῆς

And when you the wolf (Paris) have raped the unwed heifer (Helen),  
deprived of her children, two doves

At lines 147-8 Cassandra lists Helen's 'husbands':

δοιῶ μὲν ἀρπακτῆρας ἀγάσαι λύκους,  
πτηνοῦς τριόρχας αἰετοῦς ὀφθαλμίας

Two she will see as raping wolves,  
winged, lecherous, sharp-eyed eagles

The two here are Paris (again a wolf) and Theseus, who raped Helen when she was young.<sup>739</sup> Paris is clearly guilty – but he is connected to Theseus, a very important Greek hero (at least for the

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<sup>737</sup> West (2003): 86.

<sup>738</sup> McNelis & Sens (2016: 72) suggest that the description of Helen as a bitch characterises her as 'an aggressor', but I see no reason to think that female dogs were viewed as particularly aggressive, and Helen is portrayed as very much the victim in these lines.

<sup>739</sup> Cusset (2001): 68. The repeated rapes of Helen were a feature of early Greek epic: she is, as Anderson says, 'doomed by the epic poets to repeated abduction' (1997: 98).

Athenians), and there is a strong sense that neither Greeks nor Trojans are better than the other. The imagery used to describe Paris and Helen in all three passages is highly familiar from Homeric similes (apart from the firebrand, which has a very specific application to Paris),<sup>740</sup> and it casts Helen as the victim in her own war, a soldier viciously defeated by her rapists/enemies. The physical, military conflict between Greece and the East is emphasised and transferred onto the rape of a woman.

As a counterpart to Paris' rape of Helen at the start of the Trojan War there is Cassandra's rape by Locrian Ajax at its end (lines 357-8):

τῆμος βιαίως φάσσα πρὸς τόργου λέχος  
γαμφαῖσιν ἄρπαις οἰνάς ἐλκυσθήσομαι

on that day I, as a Maenad dove, will violently  
be dragged to the bed of a vulture by curved talons

Cassandra emphasises both her frailness and possessed state by identifying herself as a 'Maenad dove' (φάσσα ... οἰνάς), although given οἰνάς (here 'Maenad') can itself mean 'dove' there is perhaps a greater focus on her frailty and the contrast between that and her madness (itself a consequence of her rejection of rape by Apollo).<sup>741</sup> Meanwhile, the military nature of this episode is shown by the word ἄρπαις, normally 'scimitars' or 'talons', but here also with the connotation of ἀρπάζω. As with Paris, the judgment is unequivocal: Cassandra says (365-6) that ἐνὸς δὲ λώβης ἀντί ... Ἑλλάς στενάξει πᾶσα ('all Greece will lament for the outrage of one man'). The two are equivalent, and while Paris' rape leads to the destruction of Troy, Locrian Ajax's leads to the destruction of the Greek fleet.<sup>742</sup> the lengthy middle section of the *Alexandra*, describing the sufferings of the Greeks on their return voyages, has the rape of Cassandra as its basis.<sup>743</sup>

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<sup>740</sup> McNelis & Sens (2016): 26.

<sup>741</sup> *ibid.*: 19.

<sup>742</sup> Hornblower (2015): 199.

<sup>743</sup> McNelis & Sens (2016): 188.

At lines 314-34 Cassandra narrates the most famous fates of the surviving Trojan women: Laodice is swallowed by the earth, Polyxena is sacrificed, and Hecuba is turned into a dog and stoned. The description of Polyxena's death (323-9) is particularly disturbing:

σὲ δ' ὠμὰ πρὸς νυμφεῖα καὶ γαμηλίους  
ἄξει θυηλὰς στυγνὸς Ἴφιδος λέων,  
μητρὸς κελαινῆς χέρνιβας μιμούμενος,  
ἦν εἰς βαθεῖαν λαμίσσας ποιμανδρίαν  
στεφηφόρον βοῦν δεινὸς ἄρταμος δράκων  
ράισει τριπάτρῳ φασγάνῳ Κανδάονος,  
λύκοις τὸ πρωτόσφακτον ὄρκιον σχάσας.

And you, to cruel nuptials and marriage,  
the hateful lion of Iphis will lead as a sacrifice,  
imitating the libations of his dark mother,  
and at the deep pail will cut your throat –  
you, a garland wearing cow, the butcher a terrible snake –  
and destroy you with the three-fathered blade of Candaon,  
slitting you open as the first-killed offering to the wolves.

Again violent language is used to describe the fate of a woman; she is led to a marriage to Achilles, and is effectively his reward for the victory – but since he died, she must die as well.<sup>744</sup> The horrific language used here emphasises the terrible fate of women in war, both before and after; they are always the victims of men, unable to save themselves.<sup>745</sup>

This theme culminates (lines 1291-450) in the adaptation of Herodotus' opening chapters that sets the Trojan War within the context of all other Greek and barbarian conflicts.<sup>746</sup> These too are at first, as with Herodotus, dependent on the rape of women; we have already seen how Lycophron plays with this in Heracles and Theseus' expedition to Themiscyra and the Amazons' quest for rape in Greece as revenge. Zeus' abduction of Europa is unambiguously a rape (1296 ὕβριν τὴν βαρεῖαν ἀρπαγῆς – 'the heavy outrage of the rape'), as seems to be the case with Antiope

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<sup>744</sup> McNelis & Sens (2016): 110-12. References to Iphigenia (here described as Neoptolemus' 'dark mother') emphasise that women die, terribly, throughout the war (Hornblower 2015: 190-1).

<sup>745</sup> It is telling that Cassandra does not mention that in many versions of the myth Polyxena was sacrificed because she had helped to ambush and kill Achilles (see Battezzato 2018: 8), emphasising her innocence here.

<sup>746</sup> McNelis & Sens (2016): 95-8.

as well (line 1331). The second ‘rape’ is more complicated, since Cassandra, referring to Medea, states (line 1317) that Jason αὐτόκλητον ἀρπάσας κεραΐδα (‘raped the self-invited crow’). This oxymoronic statement<sup>747</sup> plays with the complication of assigning guilt seen with Helen in the *Iliad*, complicating Medea.

Her guilt is also questioned in the *Argonautica*. Although under the influence of Eros, Medea still willingly gives Jason the help he requires to obtain the Fleece and demands to be taken back with him (4.85-6 ἐπὶ νηὶ / φεύγωμεν – ‘on the ship let us flee’). As with the Iliadic Helen, the loss of a woman prompts Aeetes to mobilise his army to take her back, although for a more sinister reason than Menelaus (4.228-35): the Fleece, it seems, is completely forgotten, and he desires only to punish his daughter. The Argonauts recognise the trope they are involved in, and surmise that Medea is the reason the Colchians are hunting them (4.345 Μήδειάν γε, τὸ γὰρ πέλεν ἀμφήριστον – ‘as for Medea, for she was the cause for debate ...’); in response, she makes clear that she left Colchis of her own will because of Jason’s promises (4.360-5), the repeated use of the first-person singular emphasising her own agency. In Lycophron’s words, she would here describe herself as αὐτόκλητος. When she speaks with her aunt Circe, however, (notably in a language that Jason cannot understand) she says (4.734) that she κασιγνήτης πολυκηδέος ἤλιτε βουλαῖς (‘sinned due to the plans of her sister, full of sorrow’). But this is not how Apollonius had described her at 3.681-739, where she was playing on Chalciopé’s concern for her children; Medea is thus shifting the blame away from herself.<sup>748</sup> At 4.1021-3 Medea escalates this rhetoric further in her plea to Arete:

μη μὲν ἐγὼν ἐθέλουσα σύν ἀνδράσιν ἀλλοδαποῖσιν  
κεῖθεν ἀφορμήθην· στυγερὸν δέ με τάρβος ἔπεισεν  
τῆσγε φυγῆς μνήσασθαι, ὅτ’ ἤλιτον.

I did not willingly, with foreign men,  
leave there; but a bitter fear persuaded me  
to think of this flight, when I sinned.

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<sup>747</sup> Hornblower (2015): 462.

<sup>748</sup> Hunter (2015: 187) perhaps charitably describes this version as ‘suitably vague’.

This is certainly not what had been narrated earlier; Medea has now decided to play the unwilling victim,<sup>749</sup> the version seen in Herodotus and the ἀρπάζουσα of Lycophron. She consciously constructs for herself the same debatable status of Helen; she knows that the trope of ‘girl raped by foreigners’ is present in epic and discussions of the Greek/barbarian conflicts, and makes use of that to achieve her own ends. Apollonius’ Medea is every inch the willing/unwilling victim of the *Alexandra*, and relies on the accepted fate of women in war: victims of foreign men.

There is, all in all, relatively problematisation of gender and women in the military texts of the New Kingdom and Hellenistic period. Women are evidently second-best throughout, and both Egyptian and Greek societies show themselves to be deeply patriarchal and misogynistic. But neither are women viewed as posing any real threat: their submission and passivity is taken for granted in the Egyptian sources, where they are typically objectified; in the Greek texts any military threat is avoided – in the *Argonautica* the Amazons, the embodiment of female threat to male dominance, are not engaged with, and the women of Lemnos are disarmed by love – and although there is greater nuance of female victims of war, there is no real question that this is their natural fate. It is, in fact, the masculinity of Maryu’s Libyan invaders that poses a bigger threat to the social order of Egypt, and accordingly they are emasculated and essentially turned into women.<sup>750</sup> The security provided by military dominance and conquest establishes a certain security of gender, and since Greek and Egyptian victory was envisioned to last forever, so too male dominance and the oppression of women is suggested to be secure, unchanging, and eternal.

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<sup>749</sup> Maciver (2011): 698.

<sup>750</sup> Matic (2021): 10.

## **Penthesilea and Serpot: Female Warfare in the *Posthomeric* and Inaros-Petubastis**

### **Cycle**

As we have seen, New Kingdom sources contained no real female warriors, and roles for women in general were limited. The latter remains true in Demotic literature: women do not feature as characters in *Benefice* or *Armour*; the use of women in similes in *Benefice*, discussed above, relates not to their gender but to the all-too-human context. But in *Serpot* we have the most detailed and extensive treatment of a woman in war across Egyptian literature and art.<sup>751</sup> This is not entirely positive, however, since Serpot is a foreigner who at first fights against the Egyptians, and in this respect she has parallels in other Demotic texts: in the *Inaros Epic* and in the story of *Djoser and Imhotep*, the Assyrian armies are led by a woman.<sup>752</sup> Yet those women are not warriors but sorcerers, and do not fight physically: in *Djoser and Imhotep*, it is the latter (the priest and not the warrior-king) who fights the female enemy in a magic duel.<sup>753</sup> For them, battle in a physical sense remains off-limits; for Serpot and her female army, however, this is not the case. The Assyrian sorceress, like Serpot, has an Egyptian name,<sup>754</sup> which suggests that both are projections of concern about Egyptian women and gender onto more stereotypical enemies. Worries about gender transgression are forced, imperfectly, onto the existing template of ethnic conflict.

In both her ethnicity and gender Serpot is liminal. Her name 'Lotus' is Egyptian (although taken from the Levant centuries earlier),<sup>755</sup> but her sister's name Ashteshyt has no obvious etymology and may simply be a 'foreign-sounding' name.<sup>756</sup> Egyptian standard honorifics are applied to her: she is, unusually for foreigners, called Pharaoh (with the feminine *.t* ending),<sup>757</sup> her

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<sup>751</sup> Cf. Hoffmann (1995, 2008) for counterarguments, the most likely being the knowledge of the foreign war goddesses Astarte and Anat (1995: 24). But the inspiration for a *human*, female warrior as a character is likely to stem from folk-tale traditions of Alexander (see Ryholt 2013, and above p. 51).

<sup>752</sup> Ryholt (2004): 501.

<sup>753</sup> Ryholt (2010): 716.

<sup>754</sup> Ryholt (2004): 501.

<sup>755</sup> Ray (2009): 196. It is not, however, clear whether the word was still recognised as foreign during the Ptolemaic period.

<sup>756</sup> Hoffmann (2008): 56.

<sup>757</sup> Ryholt (2004): 485.

name is written within a cartouche, and has the formulaic epithet *ḫ.w.s.* ('l.p.h.'), all things reserved for Egyptian royalty.<sup>758</sup> She also shares the gods of the culture she is opposing, at 2.10 calling out *i.ír n=y nḥt i 3s.t ʔ [...]* *ntr.t ʔ.t wsír* ('give me strength, O Isis the [...] great goddess, and Osiris'). Given elsewhere in the Cycle the gods called upon are always geographically tied to the speaker,<sup>759</sup> this suggests a certain closeness to Egypt. Her feminine identity in a traditionally unfeminine role is confirmed by the fact that she appeals to Isis first, however, and gives her and not Osiris a series of epithets. From her first introduction (2.8) Serpot's dual gender of woman and man are made clear. Her titulary is that of the male Egyptian king, but her name is entirely suggestive of female sexuality, since this was what the lotus traditionally represented in Egyptian art.<sup>760</sup> When Serpot addresses the women and announces her plan (2.25), she says *in-iw=n r rḥ šp=f iw=n sp-sn* ('Will we be able to welcome him? We will, we will!'). The verb *šp* here evidently has military connotations, but elsewhere it can also be used sexually;<sup>761</sup> the confusion between her identity as a male soldier or female lover remains. Finally, after a lengthy series of battles between Petechons and Serpot, we are told (4.26-7):

*[ʔ wnw.t n nwe r-r=f ḥ.t=s r-ír srpt.t ...] bn-pw=s gm m3 n p3 ʔ [nt iw=s n-ím=f ...] ʔ mr.(t) ʔ.t i.ír ʔq [... ʔ wnw.t n nwe] r-r=s ḥ.t=f r-ír p3 úp3y [p3-ti-ḥnsw bn-pw=f gm] m3 n p3 ʔ nt iw=f n-ím-f [...]*

[The moment that Serpot ... saw him before her], she did not know the place on the earth [where she was because of(?)] the great love that entered [her ... the moment] that the prince [Petechons] saw her before him, [he did not know] the place on the earth where he was [...]

That *Setne 1* uses almost identical phrasing (5.1) to describe Setne seeing Tabubu for the first time suggests that the text here is tapping into established language to describe love at first sight, and the context in which this trope occurs (a duel) indicates Serpot's role as both a threat to and lover

<sup>758</sup> Ryholt (2013): 75.

<sup>759</sup> Quack (2006): 501.

<sup>760</sup> Almásy (2007): 32.

<sup>761</sup> *CDD s.v. šp.*

of Petechons, as Tabubu proves to be.<sup>762</sup> Even beyond Serpot her soldiers combine gender roles: they are already women in a man's profession, but the detail (2.33) that they are wearing [d]bn.w n hr k3 ('bull-faced helmets') indicates that they have appropriated this virile animal for themselves. Thus Serpot is fundamentally a figure of dualities: she is at the same time a fighter who is female and foreigner who is Egyptian.

This duality, however, is not entirely positive. When Serpot battles against the Egyptians, she is compared to Apophis (3.12), and the intertextual equation of a female warrior and a mythical, destructive monster is not flattering.<sup>763</sup> Her initial attitude to warfare is positive: she claims (2.25) that p3 shn nfr mtw=n r ir hrp r-r=w ('the best plan is for us to act against them'), an idea that is typical of Egyptian military ideology and most clearly expressed in Senwosret III's Semna Stela (lines 8-10): p4w p4.ty=fy ... knt-pw 3dw hst-pw hm-ht ('(I am) one who attacks the one about to attack ... aggression is bravery, turning the back is cowardice').<sup>764</sup> But it later becomes clear that Serpot is not quite aggressive enough to be an Egyptian: after the initial rout of the Indians, Serpot expresses joy and satisfaction (A2.x+17 nfr.t h3.t=s m-ss – 'her heart was very happy'), but Petechons is dismayed at the failure to wipe out the enemy (A2.x+20): thr h3t p3 irpy p3-ti-hnsw r-db3 [n3y=s mt.wt] d bn-iw mt.t rmt qnqne in ('the heart of the prince Petechons was sad because of [her words], and he said: "This is not the speech of a warrior"'). The implication is, of course, that it is not the speech of an *Egyptian* warrior, and the failure of Serpot to live up to Petechons' Egyptian standards emphasises his superiority over her. In the question of who is more aggressive than who, it should not be forgotten that Petechons is the one invading Serpot's land (2.1 p3-ti-hnsw r p3 t[3 n3 s-hm].wt irm p3y=f m3c ('Petechons [came] to the Land [of the] Women with his army'). For all of Serpot's skill, when faced with Petechons she chooses to give him control of her army (9.x+5-

<sup>762</sup> For other Demotic examples of this motif see Jay (2016): 272-80.

<sup>763</sup> See above (pp. 146-7).

<sup>764</sup> *Les.* 84.1-4. Note also the immediately following sign of what appears to be an impaled penis to describe cowardice: aggression is a very manly frame of mind. For sexual undertones in this stela see Parkinson (1995: 66; 2008: 122).

A2.x+28): *iw=y ti [...]* *mš<sup>c</sup> n pš nš s-ḥm.wt mtw=w ir n=k bšk* ('I will cause the army of the Land of the Women to [...] and do work for you'). As a military leader, the man triumphs over the woman, and it is Serpot's willingness to acknowledge Petechons' superiority that allows her to prosper.

Penthesilea in the *Posthomerica* has, as discussed, a longer cultural history, first appearing in the early epic poem the *Aethiopsis*.<sup>765</sup> Quintus, however, provides the fullest account that survives. From her first appearance she is made highly problematic (1.18-25):

καὶ τότε Θερμώδοντος ἀπ' εὐρυπόροιο ῥεέθρων  
ἦλυθε Πενθεσίλεια θεῶν ἐπιειμένη εἶδος,  
ἄμφω καὶ στονόεντος ἐελδομένη πολέμοιο  
καὶ μέγ' ἄλευομένη στυγερὴν καὶ ἀεικέα φήμην  
μὴ τις ἐὸν κατὰ δῆμον ἐλεγχείησι χαλέψη  
ἀμφὶ κασιγνήτης, ἧς εἵνεκα πένθος ἄεξεν,  
Ἴππολύτης· τὴν γάρ ῥα κατέκτανε δουρὶ κραταιῷ,  
οὐ μὲν δὴ τι ἐκοῦσα, τιτυσκομένη δ' ἐλάφοιο·

And then, from the streams of broad-channelled Thermodon,  
Penthesilea came, cloaked in the beauty of the gods.  
She both desired war, full of groans,  
and was avoiding a greatly bitter, shameful reputation,  
lest someone among her people wound her with reproaches  
about her sister – for whom they nursed their grief –  
Hippolyte. For she killed her with a mighty spear,  
not in fact willingly, but aiming at a deer.

Within the first three lines we are given the key elements of an Amazon: she is foreign, a (beautiful) woman, and militaristic. All of these elements, particularly her foreignness, are emphasised throughout the book; particular attention is given to her axe, described over two lines at 1.159-60 and apparently used in tandem with her spear and bow (1.337-41). These extended descriptions of her axe (a very un-Iliadic weapon) emphasise how foreign she is both to the Greek world and Homeric epic.<sup>766</sup> Similarly, the move from a four-word hexameter at 1.55 describing her warlike

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<sup>765</sup> Shapiro (1983): 107. Scenes of Penthesilea fighting Achilles and accompanied by Ethiopians appear on early black-figure vases, which suggests she was already prominent in this poem (Davies 2016: 49).

<sup>766</sup> See Scheijnen (2017): 10. Pliny the Elder credits Penthesilea with the invention of the battle-axe (*Natural History* 7.201), and the bow, although found in Homer, was typically thought of as a barbarian weapon; that Penthesilea uses both emphasises her barbarian nature (Fratantuono 2016: 210).

nature to an extended description of her beauty at 1.56-61 emphasises the contrast between her femininity and martiality.

But after this introduction Quintus then explains that her arrival is due to her accidentally killing her sister. On a basic level, this affirms her warlike nature, since hunting is frequently used as a parallel to war, and much of the vocabulary is militaristic as well.<sup>767</sup> But the motif of an accidental killing with disastrous consequences has a long history in Greek mythology: in some accounts, for instance, Agamemnon mistakenly killed a deer belonging to Artemis, leading to him killing his daughter Iphigenia and eventually his own death at the hands of his wife.<sup>768</sup> In transgressing her familial role as well as her female role Penthesilea presents a danger to social order in more ways (foreignness, femininity, soricide) than any other warrior, and must therefore be urgently destroyed. Quintus' gnomic statement at 1.32 concerning the Furies (οὐδέ πη ἔστι θεὰς ἀλιτόνθ' ὑπαλύξαι – 'there is no way for the guilty to escape the goddesses') indicates that she will deservedly meet her fate.

Initially, Penthesilea does well against the Greeks. The similes applied to her when she arrives in Troy (e.g. 1.48-51, 63-9, 76-82) are long and descriptive, and indicate the great hope she gives to the Trojans.<sup>769</sup> So too the lengthy description of her arming herself (138-56) emphasises both her beauty and martiality, in particular by comparing her at the end to the ultimate weapon, Zeus' lightning bolt (153-6).<sup>770</sup> When she leads the Trojans into battle, they are compared to sheep following a ram (175), so at this point she has completely inverted gender roles. Further

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<sup>767</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 47-8; Fratantuono (2016): 214.

<sup>768</sup> Kyriakou (2006): 57-8. It is worth nothing, however, that the archaic epic *Cypria* attributes Artemis' anger at Agamemnon to an impious boast, and the motif of an accidental killing seems generally more a feature of tragedy than epic (Sammons 2017: 190). None of Davies' proposed parallels (2016: 46) are mistakes like Penthesilea's, but 'accidental' only inasmuch as they are not pre-meditated. Closer non-tragic parallels to Penthesilea's killing are Herodotus' story of Atys and Adrastus (1.35-45), which in fact borrows many tragic motifs (Chiasson 2003: 8), and Ovid's narratives of Cephalus and Procris (*Metamorphoses* 7.690-862 and *Ars Amatoria* 3.683-746), which perhaps derive from a tragedy by Sophocles (Gibson 2003: 374; Papaioannou 2017: 242).

<sup>769</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 48-9.

<sup>770</sup> *ibid.*: 53.

comparisons of Penthesilea to Athene (179-81), a wildfire (209-10), and a lioness (315-17) confirm her current superiority in war. But when Penthesilea is compared to a heifer trampling a garden (396-400) we get the sense that all is not well: the heifer is hardly a threatening animal, and gardens – like the morale of the Greek army – can be regrown once their owner returns. And just as a heifer does not belong in a garden, Penthesilea does not belong in a battle.<sup>771</sup> We know that Achilles and Ajax will not be absent from the battle for long. The repeated application of the adjective νήπιος (‘naïve’) to characters who suppose Penthesilea might win also suggests her imminent failure.<sup>772</sup>

Meanwhile, most of the twelve Amazons who accompanied Penthesilea to Troy have been killed; in fact, from the beginning of the battle at 2.227, seven of them are killed within the space of 40 lines, and Achilles kills the other five when he enters the battle within three lines (1.531-3).<sup>773</sup> Other than Penthesilea, the women are evidently unsuited to war, and easily killed. At 1.235-7 Podarces kills Clonie, with a gory description:

αἶμα δ’ ὃ γ’ ἀντιθέην Κλονίην βάλε· τῆς δὲ διὰ πρὸ  
ἦλθε δόρυ στιβαρὸν κατὰ νηδύος, ἐκ δέ οἱ ὄκα  
δουρὶ χύθη μέλαν αἶμα, συνέσπετο δ’ ἔγκατα πάντα.

Immediately he struck godlike Clonie; right through her  
came the mighty spear, through her belly, and quickly out of her  
black blood poured from the spear, and all her entrails followed along.

Then at 1.247 Idomeneus kills Bremousa, and her death is compared to an ash tree cut down (1.249-52), which ἀλεγεινὸν / ῥοῖζον ὁμῶς καὶ δοῦπον ἐρειπομένη πρόϊησιν (‘makes both a painful crash and a thud as it is felled’). There is none of the beauty found in Homer’s use of similar plant imagery to represent a dying soldier, seen for example in Gorgythion’s comparison to a poppy (*Iliad* 8.349-53) or Euphorbus’ comparison to an olive tree (*Iliad* 17.53-60): this is a very ugly death. As Lovatt points out, the beauty of Euphorbus’ death retroactively aestheticises his conduct; the ugliness of

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<sup>771</sup> Scheijnen (2016): 88.

<sup>772</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 57.

<sup>773</sup> Fratantuono (2016): 220.

the Amazons' deaths problematises theirs.<sup>774</sup> After the rapid deaths of Euandre, Thermodossa, and Derione, Diomedes attacks two more Amazons (1.260-6):

Ἀλκιβίης δ' ἄρα Τυδείδης καὶ Δηριμαχείης  
ἄμφω κρᾶτ' ἀπέκοψε σὺν ἀχέσιν ἄχρις ἐπ' ὤμοις  
ἄορι λευγαλέῳ· ταὶ δ' ἦύτε πόρτιες ἄμφω  
κάπεσον, ἅς τ' αἰζηρὸς ἄφαρ ψυχῆς ἀπαμέρση  
κόψας ἀχενίους στιβαρῶ βουπλήγι τένοντας  
ὧς αἶ Τυδείδαο πέσον παλάμησι δαμῆσαι  
Τρώων ἄμ πεδίον σφετέρων ἀπὸ νόσφι καρήνων.

As for Alcibie and Derimacheia, the son of Tydeus  
cut off both heads, with the necks, up to the shoulders  
with his baneful sword. Both of them, like heifers,  
fell down – heifers which a vigorous youth instantly deprives of life  
when he has cut the neck tendons with a mighty, ox-killing axe.  
So they fell, defeated by the hands of the son of Tydeus,  
on the Trojan plain, far from their heads.

Quintus dedicates one line (1.261) to a very precise description of their decapitation (specifying that the cut came at the bottom of the neck) in order for us to better visualise the wound; the graphically violent quality of this scene is brought out further by the simile likening their deaths to the brutal beheading of cows, and the emphasis placed on the distance their heads fly through the air.<sup>775</sup> Mutilation of the enemy, including decapitation, is found in Homer normally only as the consequence of extreme anger (e.g. Locrian Ajax's decapitation of Imbrus at 13.202-5 as revenge for the death of Amphimachus, Peneleus' decapitation of Ilioneus at 14.489-505 as revenge for the death of Promachus).<sup>776</sup> No such anger is attributed to Diomedes here; the revenge comes from Quintus himself, punishing the women for performing masculine gender roles.

Finally, Penthesilea's death combines both death-motifs seen with the Amazons so far: Ajax mocks (1.563) and then ignores (1.568) her, while Achilles focuses on her gender in his speech

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<sup>774</sup> (2013): 279.

<sup>775</sup> The simile recalls *Iliad* 18.520-2 and the death of Aretus (Vian 1963: 162), but the bull in Homer's simile is simply killed with a blow to the back of the neck; the decapitation of Quintus' simile is a violent escalation.

<sup>776</sup> van der Plas (2020): 463-4.

(1.575)<sup>777</sup> and then wounds her as soon as he has finished, before they can fight (1.592-5).<sup>778</sup> The first wound receives no elaboration, but when she attempts to supplicate Achilles, he attacks her again (1.612-24):

καί οἱ ἄφαρ συνέπειρεν ἀελλόποδος δέμας ἵππου.  
εὐτέ τις ἄμφ' ὀβελοῖσιν ὑπὲρ πυρὸς αἰθαλόεντος  
σπλάγχνα διαμπεύρησιν ἐπειγόμενος ποτὶ δόρπον,  
...  
εὐσταλέως ἐριποῦσα κατ' οὔδεος· οὐδέ οἱ αἰδῶς  
ἦσχυνεν δέμας ἠΰ· τάθη δ' ἐπὶ νηδύα μακρῇ  
δουρὶ περισπαίρουσα, θοῶ δ' ἐπεκέκλιτο ἵππῳ.

And instantly he pinned her to the body of her wing-footed horse.  
As when someone, round spits over a blazing fire  
spears through bits of offal while hurrying to make a meal,  
...  
she fell gracefully to the ground, but shame did not  
defile her noble body: she stretched out far on her belly  
writhing around the spear, and she lay on her swift horse.

Quintus tells us that she fell gracefully, but this is not what we find in his description. The dehumanising comparison of Penthesilea to offal belittles her, and the following simile at 1.615-18 (comparing her to a tree to which a spear has transfixed a deer) recalls her killing of her sister while hunting to again legitimise her death.<sup>779</sup> The simile also makes the death far more sinister and gruesome. As the simile's implied butcher, Achilles becomes cannibalistic, impaling Penthesilea with his spear as preparation for his meal,<sup>780</sup> and the connotations of this potentially horrific act clash with Penthesilea's supposed beauty as she dies. The description of her as *περισπαίρουσα* ('writhing around') may recall Lycophron's description of Paris as *περὶ σπαίροντι* ('writhing around') when dying from the poisoned arrows of Philoctetes (*Alexandra* 68),<sup>781</sup> and there is a semi-erotic

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<sup>777</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 63.

<sup>778</sup> Scheijnen (2016): 89.

<sup>779</sup> Fratantuono (2016): 227.

<sup>780</sup> Similar cannibalistic undertones are also present in the simile comparing Alcibiade and Derimacheia to cows being butchered (1.260-6), since all livestock were consumed, whether killed for sacrifice or not (Ekroth 2014: 343); cf. Larson (2017) for evidence of deer sacrifice to Artemis, which Penthesilea perhaps becomes the twisted victim of.

<sup>781</sup> See Massimilla (2004) for Quintus' further engagement with the *Alexandra* in the *Posthomerica*.

context to both passages: Paris still provokes desire (*Alexandra* 67 πόθος) as he dies, as will Penthesilea here. Quintus' final statement at 1.629 that Penthesilea 'remained beautiful' (θηλήτη περ ἐοῦσα) is discordant with the preceding twenty lines.

The following two paragraphs contain graphic description of violence, and may be difficult or unpleasant to read

Graphic violence was very rarely depicted in ancient Greek visual arts, and representations of the Amazons were no exception. They may have had a breast bared, and thus been eroticised:<sup>782</sup> through this they were subjected to the erotic pleasure of the male gaze, as they were subjected to the Greek spears, and so their defeat was doubled. But their deaths were not extraordinary. In both presentation and theme, however, there is something distinctly cinematic about Quintus' account of her death, and Lovatt accordingly studies this scene through the lens of modern horror and slasher film-genres.<sup>783</sup> As Pollock points out, studies of past suffering can too often be dispassionate,<sup>784</sup> especially when the greatest violence is latent, as it is with Quintus' similes. It is the task of any study on suffering to emphasise the pain and violence involved,<sup>785</sup> and even if Quintus' victims are fictional, their suffering stands for the victims of Quintus' violent misogyny in real life. The graphic violence of modern horror films (despite their unpleasantness) thus provides a useful tool with which to bring to light the subtle horror of the *Posthomerica's* treatment of Penthesilea and her companions.

Edgar Allen Poe's statement that 'the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world'<sup>786</sup> is fully embraced by Quintus and such movies, and indeed the motif is generally embellished by particularly grotesque deaths. The archetype in modern film

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<sup>782</sup> See Cohen (1997) for the Greek eroticisation of the Amazons.

<sup>783</sup> (2013): 302-8.

<sup>784</sup> (2016): 737.

<sup>785</sup> Pollock (2016): 732.

<sup>786</sup> Poe (1846).

is Marion Crane's death while showering in *Psycho*,<sup>787</sup> and many women in the James Bond films are used for similar effect (a prominent example being Jill Masterson suffocated by being painted entirely in gold in *Goldfinger*).<sup>788</sup> In most cases, the deaths are either explicitly or implicitly punishments for bad behaviour; sometimes the killer is aware of this behaviour, and so is consciously choosing to punish the woman (as in *Goldfinger*), but sometimes, as with *Psycho*, the killer is unaware they are 'punishing' their victim. Rather, it is the writer fatally punishing the woman. The reason that the victims are so often beautiful is that this arouses greater pity but also a voyeuristic pleasure to the male, heterosexual viewer; it is no coincidence that in both *Goldfinger* and *Psycho* the women die naked and, in Jill Masterson's case, actually on a bed. The omnipresence of this motif is summed up by Mulvey's statement that a sadistic method of controlling female sexuality simply 'fits in well with narrative', the male gaze pleased and reassured by the inert female body.<sup>789</sup>

Quintus' depiction of Penthesilea's death relies on a sub-division of this trope, which is the highly misogynistic connection of violent murder to sexual activity.<sup>790</sup> The association between sex and death pervades the slasher and horror genres; indeed, '[k]illing those who seek or engage in unauthorized sex amounts to a generic imperative of the slasher film'.<sup>791</sup> A contrast is repeatedly set up between the sole survivor (a non-sexually active woman) and the victims (sexually active women).<sup>792</sup> Thus in the 1978 film *Halloween*,<sup>793</sup> of the three women, the two killed are the sexually active ones (Annie is killed before sex, Lynda after), while the virginal Laurie manages to defeat the

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<sup>787</sup> Hitchcock (1960); Clover (2015): 23.

<sup>788</sup> Hamilton (1964).

<sup>789</sup> (1975): 22.

<sup>790</sup> Clover argues of horror/slasher films that 'sexual transgressors of both sexes are scheduled for early destruction', 'transgression' in this context largely just sexual activity outside of marriage (2015: 33). Although sexual transgression by both genders is punished in the same way, men and women are not punished in equal numbers: the male gaze demands more female sexual activity, and thus more female death (*ibid*: 34).

<sup>791</sup> Clover (2015): 34. Cf. Lovatt (2013: 303): 'almost inevitably, within the economy of epic, female heroes die'.

<sup>792</sup> Clover (2015): 39.

<sup>793</sup> Carpenter (1978).

killer. Gruesome murder is used to punish sexually active (not even promiscuous) women; the implicit message is that only by staying virginal can a woman live.<sup>794</sup> The combination of gore and beauty is emphatic: the viewer is given pleasure erotically, in seeing these women either naked or barely dressed, and morally, in seeing these women punished for their sexuality with grotesque violence. Quintus replaces sexuality with martiality,<sup>795</sup> but otherwise the execution and rationale is largely identical, and indeed he makes explicit the consumption of the female body through his simile. It is a deeply disturbing assertion of male dominance in war and society more broadly, erotically thrilling the male reader while threatening the woman with horrific violence if she dares not to conform to patriarchal societal values.<sup>796</sup>

Violence against beautiful women appears also at the end of the *Posthomerica*, when Neoptolemus sacrifices Polyxena to Achilles (14.313-19):

Ὡς εἰπὼν κούρης διὰ λοίγιον ἤλασεν ἄορ  
λαυκανίης· τὴν δ' αἶψα λίπεν πολυήρατος αἰὼν  
οἰκτρὸν ἀνοιμώξασαν ἐφ' ὕστατῆι βίότοιο.  
καί ρ' ἦ μὲν πρηνῆς χαμάδις πέσε· τῆς δ' ὑπὸ δειρῆ  
φοινίχθη περὶ πάντα, χιῶν ὡς ἦ τ' ἐν ὄρεσσιν  
ἦ συὸς ἢ ἄρκτοιο κατουταμένης ὑπ' ἄκοντι  
αἶματι πορφύροντι θοῶς ἐρυθθαίνεθ' ὑπερθεν.

So he spoke, and drove the deadly sword through the girl,  
through her throat, and immediately her desirable life left her  
as she groaned pitifully at the end of her existence.  
And she fell face-first onto the ground, and underneath her neck  
was made scarlet all over, as snow in the mountains  
when a boar or bear is wounded by a spear  
swiftly reddens from above with dark red blood.

There is a focus on her beauty and desirability through the connection of *eros* to her life, and the implied description in the simile of her skin as white as snow. But there is also very sensory

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<sup>794</sup> By the end of the movie, of course, the Final Girl is inevitably sexualised anyway, her clothes suggestively tattered – but this is a sexuality that belongs only to us as viewers, not to any characters on screen (Clover 2015: 58). Through the ordeals the Final Girl suffers, we are able to finally and sadistically control and appropriate her sexuality for ourselves (Mulvey 1975: 22).

<sup>795</sup> See Mulvey (1981) for a similar theme in the 1946 film *Duel in the Sun*.

<sup>796</sup> Lovatt (2013): 308.

language applied to her death, audibly (she groans in an ugly manner) and visually (the three different shades of red – φοινίχθη, πορφύροντι, ἐρυθθαίνεθ’ – creating a vivid picture of her bloodied corpse), and the presence of fierce animals in the simile adds savagery to her death.<sup>797</sup> Here Polyxena is not being punished: Quintus deliberately omits the story in which she had betrayed Achilles.<sup>798</sup> Instead, this murder on Achilles’ whims is used to justify the imminent death of many of the Greeks at sea, even if the murderer himself (Neoptolemus) will not be affected.<sup>799</sup> But the effect remains the same: brutal violence against women is used to provide moral and visual pleasure for the male reader. Polyxena’s death functions as a plot device to provoke disgust at the Greeks. Reason must be given for the gods’ hostility to the Greeks (from their voyages home to their present-day subjugation by the Romans) – and the most attractive, and most ‘poetic’ (to quote Poe) way to achieve this is with the grotesque death of a beautiful woman.

Nor does Quintus treat Helen, as causer of the war, in as sympathetic a manner as the Hellenistic authors tend to do. Rather than being the victim of rape, Helen is presented as much more complicit in her departure from Sparta and marriage to Paris. She is hardly even mentioned throughout, only appearing in the narrative five times and rarely speaking,<sup>800</sup> like Polyxena, she serves as more of a plot device than a fully fleshed-out character. When she does speak, however, it is generally to discuss her willingness in the beginning of the conflict. Thus in mourning Paris, or rather her current situation,<sup>801</sup> (10.395-6) she says:

ὡς ὄφελόν μ’ Ἄρπυιαι ἀνηρείψαντο πάροιθεν,  
ὅπότε σοί γ’ ἐπόμεν ὀλοῆ ὑπὸ Δαίμονος Αἴση.

How the Harpies ought to have carried me off before  
that time when I followed you due to the destructive destiny of fate.

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<sup>797</sup> Spinoula (2008): 165-6.

<sup>798</sup> Carvounis (2004): 223.

<sup>799</sup> Nor is there any foreshadowing of his future death at Delphi (Boyten 2007: 334), despite the similar sacrificial context (for which see e.g. Pindar *Nemean* 7).

<sup>800</sup> Maciver (2011): 695.

<sup>801</sup> Tsomis (2007): 206.

The wordplay of Ἄρπυιαι, etymologically derived from ἀρπάζειν ('to snatch, rape'), suggests that Helen is wishing she had been the object of rape (as she is grammatically in line 395) rather than an actor in her own right (as grammatically in line 396). It would have been better for her if she had, like Penthesilea, done less and had things done to her more. At any rate Helen's defence is undermined by the fact that Paris had used the same argument (10.286-7): οὐκ ἐθέλων περ' ἄγον δέ με Κῆρες ἄφυκτοι / εἰς Ἑλένην ('I was not willing: the unescapable Dooms led me / to Helen'). Paris' self-description as an unwilling instigator of the Trojan War is a novel take, and coming while he is pleading for his life, it rings hollow, and suggests that Helen's identical explanation is equally false.<sup>802</sup>

Helen reappears in *Posthomerica* 14 once again attempting to explain why she left Troy (14.155-8):

μή νύ μοι, ὦ Μενέλαε, χόλον ποτιβάλλεο θυμῷ·  
 οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼν ἐθέλουσα λίπον σέο δῶμα καὶ εὐνήν,  
 ἀλλὰ μ' Ἀλεξάνδροιο βίη καὶ Τρώιοι νῆες  
 σεῦ ἀπὸ νόσφιν ἐόντος ἀνηρείψαντο κιόντες.

Do not, Menelaus, cast anger in your heart against me,  
 for I did not willingly leave your home and bed,  
 but the strength of Alexander and the Trojan sons  
 came and carried me off, while you were far away.

She has completely changed her tune now that she must justify her actions: rather than following Paris, as she claimed at 10.396, she was violently taken not just by Paris but by a group of Trojan men, escalating the agents in her abduction.<sup>803</sup> There is a verbal reminiscence of her previous discussion of guilt (10.395, 14.158 ἀνηρείψαντο), and so as Helen wished she had been carried off by Harpies, now she argues that she was in fact carried off by the Trojans instead of leaving willingly.

<sup>802</sup> Maciver (2011): 697; Gärtner (2007): 231.

<sup>803</sup> The lines also pick up Medea's speech to Arete at *Argonautica* 4.1021-2 (Carvounis 2019: 90), which, as we saw above (pp. 190-1), was somewhat deceptive.

The narrator also implies Helen's guilt in his description of her walk through the Greek camp (14.47-53):

ἤύτε Κύπρις,  
εὔτε μιν Οὐρανίῳνες ἐν ἀγκοίνῃσιν Ἄρης  
ἀμφαδὸν εἰσενόησαν ἐὼν λέχος αἰσχύνουσιν  
δεσμοῖς ἐν θαμινοῖσι δαήμονος Ἥφαιστοιο,  
τοῖς ἔνι κείτ' ἀχέουσα περὶ φρεσὶν αἰδομένη τε  
ἰλαδὸν ἀγρομένων μακάρων γένος ἠδὲ καὶ αὐτὸν  
Ἥφαιστον·

like Aphrodite,  
when, in the embrace of Ares, the gods  
watched her out in the open, shaming her marriage-bed,  
in the tight chains of skilled Hephaestus;  
she lay in them, grieving in her heart and ashamed  
before the gathered mass of gods and him,  
Hephaestus.

The obvious points of comparison are the beauty of Helen and Aphrodite, their extra-marital sexual activity, and the shame both feel. The story referenced is told by Demodocus at *Odyssey* 8.266-366, and Aphrodite, although ashamed at being caught, consensually sleeps with Ares; Helen too is ashamed at being caught, and the comparison of her to Aphrodite suggests that she was equally willing to leave Sparta and her husband for Paris.<sup>804</sup> The repeated references to forgetfulness in her dialogue with Menelaus, however, show that her arguments (and her physical beauty) are able to convince the characters of the poem,<sup>805</sup> and there is a sense of injustice that a remorseless, guilty Helen ultimately escapes unpunished. Helen may be marginalised throughout the poem, but Quintus nevertheless makes her at least share the guilt for all the deaths that the Trojan War involved, and in particular her sexuality is to blame. Women, especially beautiful women, are for Quintus a danger that must be contained;<sup>806</sup> when they are not – Menelaus<sup>807</sup> fails against Helen's sexuality both in letting her leave with Paris and in letting her come back unpunished – destruction

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<sup>804</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 317.

<sup>805</sup> Carvounis (2004): 166.

<sup>806</sup> See Kelly (2021) for the similarly misogynistic implications of the succession myth.

<sup>807</sup> Menelaus is a minor figure throughout the *Posthomerica*, appearing prominently only when reunited with Helen. A similar trend is seen on Athenian vases, where Menelaus' appearances are almost entirely confined to the scene of him reclaiming Helen (Stelow 2020: 207).

follows. In the *Iliad* women are often weak and unable to contend verbally or physically with men, but (or perhaps so) are not treated as naturally malicious; in the *Posthomerica* Penthesilea physically triumphs over men, and Helen verbally triumphs over Menelaus, and so in the first and last books Quintus makes women more sinister to men. But whereas Penthesilea is eventually forced to conform, and in doing so is eroticised and aestheticised, Helen can manipulate her conformity to gender roles and consequently survives. Performing as a woman is evidently better for a woman than performing as a man, but the fact that Helen does so with agency rather than passivity makes her ultimately much more of a threat.

In his treatment of the other women – those who remain within their gender role – Quintus is more sympathetic. In his treatment of Cassandra, for example, he agrees with Lycophron (13.420-4):

ἀλλ' οὐ μὰν οὐδ' αὐτὴ εὐφρων Τριτογένεια  
πάμπαν ἄδακρυς ἔην, ἐπεὶ ἦ νύ οἱ ἔνδοθι νηοῦ  
Κασσάνδρην ἤσχυνεν Ὀϊλέος ὄβριμος υἱός,  
θυμοῦ τ' ἠδὲ νόοιο βεβλαμμένος· ἦ δέ οἱ αἰνὸν  
εἰσοπίσω βάλε πῆμα καὶ ἀνέρα τίσατο λώβης.

But nor, indeed, was wise Tritogeneia herself  
totally free from tears, since now, inside her temple,  
the mighty son of Oileus raped Cassandra  
perverted in his heart and mind; but afterwards she hurled  
dreadful suffering on him, and repaid the man for his outrage.

The word used to describe the deed (λώβη) is the same in both the *Alexandra* and *Posthomerica*, and both poems attribute the divine retribution to this act.<sup>808</sup> This is picked up at the end of the poem: when Athene asks Zeus for permission to destroy the Greek fleet (14.427-42), her reason is because ‘the son of Oileus sinned greatly in my temple’ (ἐπεὶ ἦ νύ μοι ἔνδοθι νηοῦ), picking up 13.421 almost verbatim. Meanwhile Athene says of Cassandra (14.437-8) that she was ὀρέγουσαν ἀκηδέας εἰς ἐμὲ χεῖρας (‘often stretching out her guiltless hands to me’). Both poets emphasise the

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<sup>808</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 314.

innocence of the girl, and since she is innocent and performs a passive woman's role (sexual object), Quintus does not feel the need to elaborate on the violence used against her.

Similar positive and sympathetic treatment is given to Andromache. In Book 1 she is the only Trojan sensible enough to realise Penthesilea is doomed against Achilles (1.98-114);<sup>809</sup> in her speech she repeatedly laments her dead husband, and Quintus offers a two-line maxim that casts this mourning as paradigmatic of a good wife. When the Achaeans sack Troy, murder her son, and lead her into captivity, she still focuses on her husband (13.272-86), and Quintus now states two maxims (13.269-70, 287-9) praising her conduct for attempting to kill herself rather than allow herself to be a sex-slave to lesser men;<sup>810</sup> as with Penthesilea, women should die rather than fail to fulfil their typical gender role. We are encouraged to admire and pity her in this situation, because she has remained true to her role of wife and mother. But even so, Quintus cannot resist some erotic voyeurism. When he describes the Greek soldiers snatching Astyanax from her, he uses a simile comparing them to wolves hunting a calf: their action is described (13.260) as μητρὸς ἀποτμήξαντες ἐνγλαγέων ἀπὸ μαζῶν ('cutting (the calf) away from the breasts, full of milk, of his mother'). The lack of any animal specified for the mother encourages us to picture not the cow but Andromache herself, whose swollen breasts (ἐνγλαγέων ... μαζῶν) are the focus of the simile. So too, when the Achaeans first enter Troy, Quintus dwells on the women's nudity as the city panics (13.110-16):

τῆς δ' οὐ τι μίτρης ἔτι μέμβλετο λυγρῆς,  
ἀλλ' αὐτῶς ἀλάληντο περὶ μελέεσσι χιτῶνα  
μοῦνον ἐφ' ἑσάμενοι· ταὶ δ' οὐ φθάσαν οὔτε καλύπτρην  
οὔτε βαθὺν μελέεσσιν ἐλεῖν πέπλον, ἀλλ' ἐπίοντας  
δυσμενέας τρομέουσαι ἀμηχανίη πεπέδηντο  
παλλόμεναι κραδίην, μῶνον δ' ἄρα χερσὶ θοῆσιν  
αἰδῶ ἐπεκρύψαντο δυσάμμοροι·

To some of the miserable women there was no longer care for the mitre,  
but they wandered as they were, with only a tunic  
resting on their limbs; others could not first take either a veil  
or a long robe for their limbs, but trembled at

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<sup>809</sup> Fratantuono (2016): 217.

<sup>810</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 303.

the attacking enemy and were bound by helplessness,  
their hearts trembling, and so only with their nimble hands  
could the wretched women hide their shame;

The imminent brutality of the sack begins with the eroticisation of the victims and the gratification of the reader. After the sack, the women as a whole are again eroticised by Quintus at 14.12-15:

σὺν δ' ἄρα Τρωιάδας καταγίνεον ἄλλοθεν ἄλλας,  
τὰς μὲν ἔτ' ἀδμηῆτας καὶ νήιδας οἷο γάμοιο  
τὰς δ' ἄρ' ὑπ' αἰζηοῖσι νέον φιλότητι δαμείσας,  
ἄλλας δ' αὖ πολιοπλοκάμυος, ἑτέρας δ' ἄρα κείνων  
ὄπλοτέρας ὧν παῖδας ἀπειρύσσαντ' ἀπὸ μαζῶν

They [the Achaeans] rounded up all the Trojan women,  
those still untamed who had no experience of their marriages,  
those who had been recently tamed in love by vigorous youths,  
others already grey-haired, and others younger  
than those, whose children the Achaeans tore from their breasts

References to sexual activity (νήις is common in amatory poetry)<sup>811</sup> and the breasts continue to sexualise the women. Even when encouraging us to pity, admire, and sympathise with them, their primary role remains providing erotic pleasure to the male reader. Although some women of the *Posthomerica* do behave according to Quintus' misogynistic standards, they still cannot escape the male gaze.

The sack of Troy ends with the disappearance of Laodice into the earth in order not to become a slave and the disappearance of the star Electra in order not to see her son's city burn (13.544-60). These women behave properly in war – Laodice refusing to be dishonoured, Electra mourning her male relative – and thus perish in a proper manner. The ending is emblematic of the prominent, multi-faceted role of the Trojan women from the *Iliad* onwards, and this role has been present throughout the book: they are to be admired, to be pitied, and to be fantasised over. And through all of these, they might even make one consider how just the war really was. Quintus ends

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<sup>811</sup> Carvounis (2019): 30.

the book (13.561-2) by pondering this very question: ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν που / ἀθανάτων τάχ' ἔρεξεν ἐὺς νόος ἢ ἐ καὶ οὐκί ('but I suppose / perhaps the good sense of the gods did this, or perhaps not'). His doubt concerning the justness of the war and the wisdom of the gods is clear. Quintus uses the fate of the noble Trojan women to further the anti-Greek perspective that, as we saw in the previous chapter, runs throughout the poem. As with Penthesilea they provide both moral and sexual pleasure to the reader, though in a more indirect manner: their eroticised suffering morally legitimises the sinking of the Greek fleet and their future conquest by Rome.

### **Conclusion: Towards Violence**

In both Hellenistic Greek literature and New Kingdom Egyptian texts there is a fairly consistent attitude towards women in war. Both societies were misogynistic and patriarchal, and female agency was consequently highly regulated and suppressed. Rather than suffering some crisis about the dangers of female appropriation of male gender roles, however, the sources from this period suggest that geopolitical stability and supremacy led to a more secure masculinity. Thus whereas Amazons are present in earlier Greek sources, and are typically crushed by Greek men, they are largely absent from Hellenistic texts in these roles, Apollonius self-consciously avoiding any military confrontation between men and women. In the Egyptian texts the absolute superiority of the king (whether a male or female body performs this role) is always asserted, and any such gender crisis can hardly be conceived. The sole examples of New Kingdom Egyptian women battling, Tiye and Nefertiti, come within this context, but these two queens still depend on the king (whose motifs they borrow) and operate within an entirely female world, trampling on female rather than male enemies; indeed, by performing as female analogues to the king, they gender the king as absolutely

male and, given the king's explicit superiority in comparison with these queens,<sup>812</sup> reinforce and strengthen Egypt's patriarchy.

As passive figures, the attitude to women differs between the Greeks and Egyptians. Both tend to commodify the female victims of war as objects to be desired, but Greek literature also sympathises more with the women, and there is a constant debate about how guilty the women who cause wars really are. Different authors take different views: Apollonius suggests that Medea somewhat cynically taps into this debate to claim to be a victim, while Lycophron emphasises the predatory sexual violence of men. Yet ultimately, the Greek and Egyptian material both indicate that the only appropriate role for a woman in war – other than a few queens – is as its victim.

On the face of it, the increased presence of women as active agents in *Serpot* and the *Posthomerica* might seem to be a positive change. Both Serpot and Penthesilea are certainly successful at first, and Serpot remains superior to all other foreigners. But the two are nevertheless inferior to men. To what extent it is Serpot's gender that renders her inferior is unclear: the fact that only an Egyptian man can defeat her suggests that ethnicity remains her most problematic aspect. The fact that romance is involved, however, suggests that Serpot is only able to continue in her masculine gender role by simultaneously embracing what is expected of her as a woman: marrying and thus accepting functional inferiority to a man. Egyptian concerns about gender, gender roles, and war remain relatively small, and although a female warrior is cast as an equivalent to Apophis, she becomes a positive figure, able to both fight as a warrior and marry as a woman. The portrayal of women in the *Posthomerica* is far more aggressively misogynistic. Penthesilea transgresses in ethnicity, gender, and family, key constituents of maintaining social order. As a result she, and her companions, are brutally murdered, their deaths simultaneously made erotic and disgusting to please the male reader morally and sexually. Other women such as Polyxena die

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<sup>812</sup> The figure of the king is consistently placed in front or on top of the figure of the queen in the reliefs (Matić 2017: 117).

in similar ways only as plot devices; Helen kills more Trojans than any warrior through her deceitful sexuality rather than physical strength; the captured Trojan women have their virtues emphasised but are nonetheless mostly eroticised, so that they are sexually dominated by the characters of the poem and by the reader – albeit with perhaps a few pangs of guilt that question whether the Greeks were right to go into war at all. An air of voyeuristic, violent misogyny pervades this poem.

After being conquered, Greek and Egyptian authors react with an increased focus on the role of women in war. It is slightly unusual that the Demotic texts, which as noted in the previous chapter are more hostile to other ethnicities, should be less hostile to the other gender, but the Egyptians from antiquity onwards were recognised as being more favourable to women than the Greeks, no matter how low a bar that may be.<sup>813</sup> There is ultimately less paranoia about gender in the Egyptian sources, both pre- and post-conquest, than in the Greek. By contrast, Quintus indulges in a vile, offensive type of misogyny that eroticises women and/or uses them as plot devices to manipulate the audience's feelings towards the men. It should perhaps not be a great surprise that, with the Greek world turned upside down and Greek superiority undermined, Quintus should return to 'the vital determining principle in Greek culture'<sup>814</sup> and strive in this way to preserve a Greek man's superiority over something, and to make this superiority as absolute as possible. His solution to the loss of Greek military and political power is certainly reactionary: he violently asserts male power over other targets instead. Any resistance, such as it is, revolves around preserving his own privileges as an elite Greek man. It is a deeply unsettling representation of how a post-conquest Greek views the role of women: not as characters but as erotic moral devices whose primary function is to pleasure the heterosexual, moralising male reader.

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<sup>813</sup> Penrose (2016): 207.

<sup>814</sup> Skinner (2014): 9.

## Chapter 5

### Hierarchies of Power: Status and Strength in War

Having examined the representations of war the two social constructs that most define the various participating groups, it is time now to focus on the individual's role in war, and how it interacts with the broader society of its army. Social status plays an important part in depictions of combat, and encompasses all the people taking part. This also includes the gods: Greeks and Egyptians lived in polytheistic societies where gods were anthropomorphised individuals with many mortal abilities and needs. Gods can eat, drink, walk, talk, and fight; they occupy their own distinct place in society. This is obviously a generalisation, and not a precise theological statement: certain people and schools of thought held differing positions on the presence of the gods and their effects on humans, and these could change drastically over time. Epicureanism developed during the Hellenistic period and spread widely in the Greco-Roman world, and held that the gods were removed from the human world and exerted limited influence on it.<sup>815</sup> The rapid spread of Christianity, especially in the eastern Roman empire, offered a very different view on the role of the divine in human affairs; by the time of Quintus in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD it would have been hard to be unaware of this perspective, even if evidence of direct Christian influence on the poem has proven hard to find.<sup>816</sup> But the omnipresence of temples, statues, and cult festivals in civic life meant that the gods were everywhere.

This attitude is reflected in the depictions of war, where they repeatedly affect events directly and indirectly. In all the periods under study the human social structure was largely similar: at the top a king (whether a Pharaoh, Ptolemy, or Roman Emperor) presided over various stratified

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<sup>815</sup> Warren (2009): 2.

<sup>816</sup> Greensmith (2020): 17-18.

ranks. This is reflected in the depictions of the army as well – the king is always overall commander, present or not, and every other soldier is subservient to him. There is a clearly demarcated hierarchy, variously emphasised, and the differences in the portrayal of infantry, chariots, kings and gods indicates how differences in society were transferred into the world of war, and how in return war reflected society – to either uphold or destabilise the hierarchical structures that affected their composition.

Many of the ideas and themes in this chapter have been considered in the discussions of identity and gender. Social status governs both of these concepts: the king's position on the highest rung of the hierarchical ladder makes him a figurehead who stands for that of the country/army as a whole; flexibility and freedom in gender-roles is dependent on social status, as the isolated exceptions of Tiye and Nefertiti from the New Kingdom attest,<sup>817</sup> and as we shall see even more so when considering divine status. Penthesilea is not, and cannot be, Athene or Artemis, despite her similes and position on the highest hierarchical human rank. Many issues already covered will therefore be raised again briefly; in the *Argonautica* the notions of identity, social hierarchy and (semi-)divinity addressed in Chapter 3 are (as we saw) so densely intertwined in the imagery of combat that they cannot be dealt with separately, while the less frequent use of extended and complex similes in other texts means they have more material.

### **How do you solve a problem like a Pharaoh? God or Not?**

The close connection of social status with the gods is complicated by the presence in society of individuals who straddle the divine/mortal boundary. Not every divine ruler in the Greek world was Egyptian – the divinity of living Seleucid kings was publicly emphasised at least by the reign of Antiochus IV (175-64 BC), who included on his coins the legend ΘΕΟΣ ΕΠΙΦΑΝΗΣ,<sup>818</sup> and

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<sup>817</sup> See above (pp. 178-80).

<sup>818</sup> Erickson (2018): 110.

suggested before that.<sup>819</sup> But it remains the case that almost every text I am discussing was written under a ruler who was also Pharaoh, even if the active participation in that role by the Roman emperors was limited. In their roles of *basileus* or *Caesar*, the nature and extent of the divinity of the Greek and Roman rulers is relatively clear-cut, although with important developments and differences to be traced over time. For the Egyptian kings the picture is more complicated, but also much fuller.

There was always a certain ‘tension’ between the Egyptian king’s human and divine natures,<sup>820</sup> which varied for different kings at different times, and encompasses two related issues: the extent of his divinity and his closeness to the (other) gods. We saw also in the discussion on the king’s gender that human social constructs, and thus the construction of ‘humanity’ itself, could not apply straightforwardly to him.<sup>821</sup> The king was certainly at all times thought to have intimate access to the gods, and in royal iconography was the only one with access to them at all.<sup>822</sup> In practice, of course, access was extended to other humans, both in a temple context (Egypt’s many priests were ideologically appointed by him to maintain divine support for the country)<sup>823</sup> and in society more generally: various stelae from Deir el-Medina, for example, describe very intimate interactions between individuals and their favoured god.<sup>824</sup>

But perhaps a better way of framing the king’s relationship to the gods is not so much in terms of access but agency. While the Deir el-Medina texts do show closeness between human and god, they are framed as the god taking the initiative to intervene: the deity is active, while the human is the recipient of the god’s benefactions.<sup>825</sup> The king is able to approach the gods directly

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<sup>819</sup> Erickson (2018): 104.

<sup>820</sup> For more on this tension see Baines (1998).

<sup>821</sup> pp. 180-1.

<sup>822</sup> Baines & Froid (2011): 7.

<sup>823</sup> Lurson (2016): 182.

<sup>824</sup> Baines & Froid (2011): 9; for some examples see Froid (2007): 219-32. The numerous household shrines and apotropaic amulets from urban sites further suggest the intimate presence of the gods, in both the homes and bodies of the Egyptians (Luiselli 2011: 89-90).

<sup>825</sup> Baines & Froid (2011): 11.

and take on greater agency. Ramesses II's address to Amun as he is overwhelmed by the Hittites (*Qadesh* §2.92-120),<sup>826</sup> for example, is blunt and even critical; comparisons with the pious texts at Deir el-Medina emphasise by contrast the very different relationship between king and god.<sup>827</sup> But the results are similar: the human/king is reliant on aid given by the god in return for the fulfilment of promises. The difference is quantitative – Amun's rewards for Ramesses are greater than those received by the inhabitants of Deir el-Medina – and qualitative, the gods' acts in Deir el-Medina generally involving healing.<sup>828</sup> There are two immediately obvious reasons for this. The first is the scale of the favours Ramesses has done for Amun, enumerated at *Qadesh* §2.101 *ḥrp=i-n=k tš-nb dwd r sḏf pšy=k ḥtp-nṯr* ('I directed every land, all together, for you, to supply your divine offerings').<sup>829</sup> In return Ramesses expects some form of recompense, and he is sarcastically critical of Amun for failing to provide this (*Qadesh* §2.108-9): *iḥ kš.tw ḥpr sp-šri r pš nty ḥr hn=f n pšy=k šḥr* ('What will one say – "Disaster occurs for the one who assents to your plans"?').<sup>830</sup> The second reason –perhaps more persuasive, given it begins the king's speech (*Qadesh* §2.92-3) – is that Ramesses II is the son of the god: *ḥc.n ḏd.n ḥm=f iḥ-rk tri it=i imn is-pw n it ḥm ḥr sš=f* ('Then his Person said: "Look, what is this, my father Amun? Is it right for a father to not be aware of his son?").<sup>831</sup>

There is therefore a genealogical element in the king's human/divine nature. It is encoded fundamentally in his societal position, the title 'Son of Re' preceding the birth-name and asserting divine parentage on an official level. Equally, however, the king could conceive of himself also as the son of Amun, as seen in *Qadesh 2*. Though the two gods could be syncretised (Amun-Re), they were not identical, and at any rate they were not the only fathers of the king. *Qadesh 2* describes

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<sup>826</sup> *KRI* II.34.1ff.

<sup>827</sup> Baines & Froot (2011): 16.

<sup>828</sup> A fragmentary inscription of Amenhotep, High Priest of Amun under Ramesses IX (~100 years after Ramesses II), also seems to narrate Amun's help in battle, though on a smaller scale than *Qadesh 2* (Froot 2007: 77-81).

<sup>829</sup> *KRI* II.37.1-4.

<sup>830</sup> *KRI* II.39.1-11.

<sup>831</sup> *KRI* II.34.1-9.

three gods in that role (Montu, Amun, Pre),<sup>832</sup> which prevents us from giving a simple answer to the question of genealogy. Further, when Ramesses mentions the times of his ‘father’s fathers’ (*Qadesh* §2.189),<sup>833</sup> he does not mean the fathers of Amun/Re/Montu: in addition to being the son of Amun (addressed as father the line before), he is also the son of a king. Double parentage is hardly confined to Egyptian culture: Heracles is the most obvious example among the Greeks, son of Alcmene and Zeus/Amphitryon, though it is never in doubt that Zeus is his biological father; Helen manages to have both two potential fathers (Zeus/Tyndareus) and two potential mothers (Leda/Nemesis), though again she is always biologically Zeus’; more problematic and uncertain is Theseus, whose parentage varies between Poseidon and Aegeus.

The Greeks, however, show a greater anxiety about such double parentage, especially before the Hellenistic period. In Euripides’ *Heracles* (416 BC), the identity of the eponymous hero’s father is brought up in the first three lines of the play and remains a theme throughout: Amphitryon identifies himself as ‘the one who shared a bed with Zeus’ (τὸν Διὸς σύλλεκτρον) but also as ‘father of Heracles’ (πατέρα τόνδ’ Ἡρακλέους);<sup>834</sup> Iris (line 826) states that it is only rumour that Heracles is son of Zeus, but she and Hera nonetheless cause him to murder his wife and children. His family is destroyed as revenge for Zeus disrupting his own and Amphitryon’s marriage, Hera’s act of revenge a tacit admission of the truth. Helen’s parentage is only obliquely alluded to by Homer through epithets that identify her as daughter of Zeus (Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖα *Iliad* 3.199, 3.418, *Odyssey* 4.219; κούρη Διός *Iliad* 3.426), and her mother is never identified.<sup>835</sup> Although across early Greek epic there was considerable uncertainty as to Helen’s birth, she is frequently linked to the partial destruction of mankind: Hesiod (*Works and Days*) 164-5 has Helen as one of the two causes of the end of the race of heroes; *Cypria* fr. 1 West describes Zeus planning to unburden the earth by causing the Trojan War, a part of which involves his rape of Nemesis to conceive Helen (frr. 10-11

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<sup>832</sup> *KRI* II.15.1-5; II.34.1-9; II.93.6-11.

<sup>833</sup> *KRI* II.61.6-9.

<sup>834</sup> Ferguson (1969): 113.

<sup>835</sup> Rozier (2017): 1, 13.

West); *Catalogue of Women* fr. 155.94-106 connects her marriage and birth of Hermione to the impending war, again as part of Zeus' plan.<sup>836</sup>

Theseus' true parentage was much debated by the Greeks, different authors preferring Aegeus or Poseidon; the Athenians after the Persian Wars seem to have promoted him as son of Poseidon externally (to claim a semi-divine, panhellenic hero for themselves and justify their growing thalassocracy), while internally acknowledging him as son of Aegeus (and thus a legitimate Athenian king/citizen).<sup>837</sup> But it remains true that for Theseus, perhaps more than for any other, his 'paternity and legitimacy haunt so many of the episodes of his early life-story'.<sup>838</sup> So in Bacchylides 17 he is confirmed as (human) son of Aegeus and immediately proceeds to Crete to kill the Minotaur, on the journey out being confirmed instead as son of Poseidon and causing the death of his now ex-father; throughout *Hippolytus* humans only mention Theseus' father as Poseidon, and the play ends with him using his divine father's promises to kill his human son.<sup>839</sup> The disastrous domestic lives associated with these three uncertainly fathered figures perhaps reflect Greek anxiety over paternity.<sup>840</sup> familial instability – often connected with divine parentage – breeds personal instability.<sup>841</sup>

The Egyptians seem less concerned with this issue, and an example of their approach is Hatshepsut's narrative of her conception in her mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahari: Amun takes the form of Thutmose I and impregnates his wife Ahmose. The motif is known from Middle Kingdom sources, in Senwosret III's pyramid at Dashur (though in a fragmentary state) and in the fictional Papyrus Westcar, but both of these have the king as son of Re and so serve as explanatory narratives for the 'Son of Re' title.<sup>842</sup> Hatshepsut's use of Amun rather than Re simultaneously evokes her own

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<sup>836</sup> Rozier (2017): 12.

<sup>837</sup> Turner (2015): 83-8.

<sup>838</sup> *ibid.*: 74.

<sup>839</sup> *ibid.*: 92.

<sup>840</sup> *ibid.*: 75.

<sup>841</sup> This is, of course, closely interconnected with the issues of gender discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>842</sup> Coyette (2015): 87.

semi-divine status in archaic motifs and proclaims the significance of Amun in the New Kingdom. The narrative legitimises kingship and divine status in multiple ways: through parentage, since she is daughter of Amun;<sup>843</sup> through analogy, since the narrative portrays Amun using royal motifs found in the *Königsnovelle*;<sup>844</sup> and through oracular proclamation, an increasingly common phenomenon in the New Kingdom.<sup>845</sup> Visual elements, such as the *nemes*-headdress and solar imagery, also emphasise Hatshepsut's divinity,<sup>846</sup> and we are presented with the divinely ordained birth of a powerful future king; there is no hint of anxiety or uncertainty. This motif is paralleled by the story of Heracles' birth (Zeus adopting the form of Amphitryon), and in this approach to divine parentage the integrity of the marriage is essentially preserved (or has plausible deniability). Perhaps due to this similarity the Egyptian narrative appears in the *Alexander Romance*, though in subverted form: rather than Amun pretending to be the king to father Alexander, Nectanebo II pretends to be Amun.

This inversion, however, is perhaps a better way for us to understand the relationship between king and god. The king is essentially a sanctified vessel for the god to possess and enact their will (in this case fathering Hatshepsut), and is therefore not so much a god as able to become a god: the king and the king alone has divine potential, but while alive is not himself a god in the same way Amun/Re/Thoth are.<sup>847</sup> Hatshepsut is simultaneously the child of the god and the king.<sup>848</sup> This accords better with the terminology used to describe the king: the common epithet *ntr-nfr* indicates his divinity while also separating him from the true gods (called instead *ntrw-Gw*).<sup>849</sup>

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<sup>843</sup> The narrative legitimises the entire notion of patrilineal descent, casting it as the model practised by the gods (Murnane 1995: 188).

<sup>844</sup> Coyette (2015): 89.

<sup>845</sup> Szpakowska (2003): 49; oracles began to take on increasing legal force during the Ramessid period (Trapani 1993: 541). For an Old Kingdom example of an oracle see Baines & Parkinson (1997).

<sup>846</sup> Coyette (2015): 106-7.

<sup>847</sup> Bickel (2002): 82.

<sup>848</sup> Baines' statement that 'the king was bound by *metaphorical* bonds of kinship' (emphasis mine) to the gods (2011: 53) is problematic; from an Egyptian perspective the king *does* have familial connections to the gods, as well as to his father, and describing the relationship as only metaphorical undermines the king's very real divinity.

<sup>849</sup> Baines (1998): 21.

Conventional words used to link the king to the gods include *mīty* and *twt*, both of which suggest only a similarity (*mīty*– ‘likeness’) or embodiment (*twt*– ‘image’) of a god.<sup>850</sup> The limited application to the king of the adjective *nīty*, which has a much stronger sense of ‘godlike’ than the English ‘divine’, also suggests a potential for true godhood that cannot always be fulfilled.<sup>851</sup> The idea of only temporary access to full divinity is also suggested by the king’s ability to take on the gods’ attributes by wearing cloth associated with them.<sup>852</sup>

A similar motif is present when the king battles: the narrative of *Qadesh 1* begins by stating that *šsp.n=f hkrw nw it(=f) mntw* (‘he (Rameses II) took the panoply of (his) father Montu’), and so from this point on Rameses II is temporarily invested with the god’s powers. The familial variations reflect the role the king is currently playing: when he is king he is son of the god of kings (Amun), and when he is at war he is the son of the god of war (Montu). As he acquires clothes to acquire the divinity of specific gods, he perhaps also acquires fathers to the same effect: Sety II is called ‘Montu son of Montu’ in a decree from Karnak,<sup>853</sup> his possession of the war-god’s status dependent on his filiation. The king is a divine and human being who can acquire the status of the god but only for a limited time.<sup>854</sup>

This was not always true, and some kings clearly viewed themselves more as gods than others. Thus Amenhotep III for example used gods’ names in place of titles (e.g. calling himself ‘Re of the Nine Bows’) and also to replace his *nomen*: instead of ‘Nebmaatre Amenhotep’, he becomes ‘Nebmaatre Montu’ or ‘Nebmaatre Re’, and so the divine displaces the human.<sup>855</sup> Rameses II also

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<sup>850</sup> Bickel (2002): 67. The sense of *twt* is profound: it is not the ‘image’ of external appearance, but of true, inner self (Nyord 2020: 12). It is reflected also in the name of Tutankhamun – ‘Living Image of Amun’, a theological statement that the god is present in the world through the person of the king (Ockinga 1984: 23).

<sup>851</sup> Baines (2011): 76.

<sup>852</sup> Goebis (2011): 59; cf. above (p. 181).

<sup>853</sup> *KRI* IV.265.9.

<sup>854</sup> As Bickel points out, comparisons of the king to a god only accompany specific actions or moments, again suggesting a momentary rather than permanent godhood (2002: 67).

<sup>855</sup> Bickel (2002): 68.

engaged in self-deification, though outside the depictions of war under discussion.<sup>856</sup> ‘Self-deification’ for Ramesses may in fact be slightly misleading, the king in fact creating a new god who shared his name but was distinct from his identity as a king: in reliefs Ramesses II makes offerings to this Ramesses-Meryamun, and ‘Ramesses-Meryamun’ as the name of the god is not written in the royal cartouche.<sup>857</sup> The creation of the god, who was depicted crowning Ramesses II in his mortuary temple at Abu Simbel, parallels Akhenaten’s use of the Aten as a divine being able to guarantee kingship without requiring legitimisation by the priests of Amun,<sup>858</sup> and the god Ramesses-Meryamun should be considered a deified, distinct form of the king, rather than the deified king himself.<sup>859</sup> But Amenhotep III and Ramesses II were exceptional: most other Egyptian kings distinguished their divinity from that of the gods, and this is the basis for the following analysis.

The Hellenistic Greek rulers differ at least in this regard, and repeatedly cast themselves in the same terms as the already existing gods. Alexander seems to have based his own divinity not on hero cults, which were largely chthonic and focused on death, but on the Olympian gods, whose cults focused on their power and immortality. This concept was continued by the Ptolemies, whose cult statue of Alexander depicted him as Alexander *aigiochos* (‘aegis-bearing’), wearing the aegis as a chlamys and therefore identified with the greatest Olympian, Zeus, who is repeatedly given the epithet *aigiochos* in the *Iliad*.<sup>860</sup> It is noteworthy that his deification was particularly stressed towards the Greeks as a way of overcoming their distrust towards autocratic rulers,<sup>861</sup> since Plato and Aristotle held that a ‘good’ ruler would have to be divine; in reverse, therefore, a divine ruler would have to be ‘good’.<sup>862</sup> This created a self-fulfilling cycle: Alexander’s successes brought him

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<sup>856</sup> Bickel (2002): 82; Habachi (1969) provides a detailed study of Ramesses II’s (self-)deification.

<sup>857</sup> Habachi (1969): 1, 7.

<sup>858</sup> Lurson (2016): 173-4.

<sup>859</sup> For a potentially similar distinction between individuals and their statues, which could sometimes be given different names, see Froom (2019): 9.

<sup>860</sup> Lorber (2011): 314.

<sup>861</sup> Mitchell (2013): 102.

<sup>862</sup> *ibid.*: 97-9.

divinity,<sup>863</sup> and this in turn legitimised his kingship and, with the loyalty of the Greek cities, enabled him to continue his military successes. The proclamation by the oracle of Zeus-Ammon that Alexander was son of Zeus added religious legitimacy to this claim.

Alexander's successors were more cautious concerning their divinity. Early on they did not publicly take the initiative, and it was left to thankful *poleis* to establish royal cults.<sup>864</sup> For his aid in helping the Rhodians resist Demetrius Poliorcetes' siege in 304 BC, the *polis* sent an embassy to the oracle of Zeus-Ammon which, as it had done with Alexander and presumably under direction of Ptolemy I, decreed that Ptolemy was a god and should therefore be worshipped with a cult at Rhodes.<sup>865</sup> Both his divinity and assimilation to Alexander helped Ptolemy to legitimise his kingship, though the fact that he was only officially a god abroad indicates his hesitance towards over-asserting his position with his internal Greek subjects. His deification in Egypt after death should be seen within the context of hero cult,<sup>866</sup> though on a much larger scale as an official part of the Ptolemaic kingdom.

Greek anxieties over double parentage, however, seem to have prevented Hatshepsut's approach to divine birth being used by the Hellenistic kings; instead, by fully deifying their parents the kings combined divine and genealogical legitimacy to avoid the uncertainties surrounding the mythical heroes.<sup>867</sup> Ptolemy II avoided officially claiming divinity for himself and Arsinoe II while alive, although increasingly suggested it: coins were minted bearing the heads of Ptolemy I and Berenice I on the obverse, accompanied by the legend ΘΕΟΙ ('gods'), and the heads of Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II on the reverse with the legend ΑΔΕΛΦΟΙ ('siblings'). At the very least the coins publicly proclaim that the current rulers are semi-divine as the children of two gods; the symmetry

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<sup>863</sup> Mitchell (2013): 101.

<sup>864</sup> Erickson (2018): 106.

<sup>865</sup> Worthington (2016): 168.

<sup>866</sup> For the rise in prominence of hero cults in the Hellenistic period see Alcock (1994).

<sup>867</sup> Both Ptolemy I and Seleucus I do seem to have engaged with this idea, if we assume that stories making the former a secret son of Philip II and the latter a son of Apollo were spread by the royal court (Iossif 2011: 239).

strongly implies that Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II are as much deities as their parents were. Similarly, Ptolemy II officially called himself ‘King Ptolemy son of Ptolemy Theos Soter’,<sup>868</sup> the identical names implying equally identical godhood. Gold octadrachms minted by Ptolemy IV depict his deceased father with a plethora of divine imagery. Although Ptolemy III is only identified as ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΠΤΟΛΕΜΑΙΟΥ (‘King Ptolemy’), and is therefore in the legend only human, his portrait bears the *aegis*, trident, and radiant crown, icons of three different gods (Zeus, Poseidon, Helios).<sup>869</sup> Despite being superficially identified as just *basileus*, Ptolemy III is iconographically three gods in one.<sup>870</sup> By Ptolemy VI there was no longer any doubt: divine titulature appeared officially in royal decrees and letters, and the king was integrated into the dynastic cult while alive.<sup>871</sup> But the concept of the living king being a god was clearly present from at least the time of Ptolemy II; so too with the Seleucids: although explicit claims to godhood only occur with Antiochus IV,<sup>872</sup> it was almost certainly implied by bull-horned statues of Seleucus II,<sup>873</sup> and Antiochus III and his wife were equated with Dionysus in a decree from Teos (*SEG* 41.1003, I).<sup>874</sup> From Ptolemy II onwards, Greeks were certainly not discouraged from considering the *basileus* to be a god, and were subtly encouraged to do so.<sup>875</sup>

The Roman emperors also began in a fairly reserved manner, although from the start there was a strong emphasis on their divinity. To an extent – at least in the Greek world – an aggressive promotion of deification seems to have depended on the initiative of the people:<sup>876</sup> Philo (*Embassy*

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<sup>868</sup> Johnson (1999): 53.

<sup>869</sup> *ibid.*: 50-2.

<sup>870</sup> He is not literally a syncretism of the three (‘Zeus-Poseidon-Helios’): individual icons simply associate a king with a god without implying identity, and pile up here to emphasise how divine Ptolemy III is/was (Johnson 1999: 51).

<sup>871</sup> Johnson (1999): 52.

<sup>872</sup> Erickson (2018): 110.

<sup>873</sup> *ibid.*: 104.

<sup>874</sup> Haubold (2017): 115.

<sup>875</sup> As Ma (2003: 186) points out, the official institution of royal cults imposed an imaginary unity on the disparate Ptolemaic kingdom, and imposed Greek control on Egyptian religion, which was twisted to suit their purposes and so gave them legitimisation by invented Egyptian traditions (*ibid.*: 182).

<sup>876</sup> This seems to coincide with a change in Greek philosophical thought to viewing a divine ruler as something essential for the universe; if the Roman emperor was not going to fill this position himself, others needed to make him do so (van Nuffelen 2011: 114).

to *Gaius* 20) claims that in Alexandria the placement of statues of Caligula in temples (and synagogues) as a god was an idea of the Greek citizens and an escalation of Ptolemaic practice, which avoided enforcing royal deification on the Jews.<sup>877</sup> Caligula himself sided with the Jews, saying (*Embassy to Gaius* 45): ‘οὐ πονηροὶ μᾶλλον ἢ δυστυχεῖς εἶναι μοι δοκοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι καὶ ἀνόητοι μὴ πιστεύοντες, ὅτι θεοῦ κεκλήρωμαι φύσιν’ (“The people seem to me to be not wicked but rather unfortunate, and fools for not believing that I have been allotted the nature of a god”). Indeed the wording of Caligula’s declaration of divinity (he only has ‘the nature of a god’, rather than actually being a god) suggests hesitation in claiming full deification, and appreciation that the imperial cult should not be forced on groups. Over time, however, the imperial cult became an increasingly essential component in the management of the empire: piety towards it was a fundamental demonstration of loyalty with harsh penalties for those who refused.<sup>878</sup> By the time of the Severans (193 AD onwards) the living emperor was the primary focus of the cults,<sup>879</sup> and so when the *Posthomerica* was composed the emperor would have been a publicly acknowledged living god, and part of an extensive cult of many previous imperial gods.

Across all the periods under study the king was always at least divine – by which I mean that he was closely associated in quality with the gods – and always presented as the son of a god. But with the Greeks it is only with Ptolemy II that we begin to see the king as of equivalent nature to the traditional gods, and even this is not explicit official ideology. Quintus’ ruler many centuries later would have been not only a living god but also perhaps the most important living god in the machinations of empire, whose divinity was inseparable from the legitimacy of Roman rule. In every period, the king (at times with his family) was the only individual able to ascend to the status of the gods, and so in nature and position was always, in every context, above all.

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<sup>877</sup> Leon (2016-2017): 45.

<sup>878</sup> Johnson (1999): 54.

<sup>879</sup> Fishwick (2002): 198.

## Gods or Godless: Divine Interventions in Battle

As the most famous ancient narration of a war, the *Iliad* has been the stereotypical choice for comparisons with other cultures' descriptions of war.<sup>880</sup> In that poem there are a number of anthropomorphised gods who take part in the battle, the two most active being Apollo and Athene. Their fighting has crucial influence on the plot, particularly in the two main deaths of the poem: Apollo strikes Patroclus, removing his armour and leaving him defenceless (16.788-93), while Athene deceives Hector into fighting Achilles (22.224-31) and when Achilles misses his first spear throw she returns it to him (22.276-7). They have a very physical presence, and are constrained by many of the same things that constrain humans though to a much smaller degree.<sup>881</sup> Ares and Aphrodite are even wounded by a human, Diomedes, albeit with divine support from Athene. They often do not appear directly to mortals, instead giving general support to either side,<sup>882</sup> but at times they interact with their favoured humans: Athene in particular appears to and helps Diomedes, Odysseus, and Achilles.<sup>883</sup> In Book 21 the gods even battle against each other (330-513), though only Athene and Ares engage in a typical duel. Throughout the poem, we see the gods very involved in the fighting, and playing multiple roles within their favoured armies.

Later Greek texts tended to minimise interactions between gods and humans,<sup>884</sup> making it a past phenomenon both 'historically' (gods increasingly indirectly interact with mortals after Troy) and literarily (gods did not directly interact with mortals after the Homeric poems).<sup>885</sup> Nor do the

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<sup>880</sup> Early discussions of *Qadesh 2* immediately compared it to the *Iliad* (e.g. Salvolini 1835: 7 – 'elle consiste en ce que ... le compositeur, pour rendre intéressant son récit, a fait usage du même artifice qu'Homère chez les Grecs employa bien des siècles plus tard'); see more recently (and sceptically) Lazaridis (2016: 191-4).

<sup>881</sup> Burkert (1985): 183. Apollo's statement to Diomedes at *Iliad* 5.441-2 that οὐ ποτε φύλον ὁμοῖον / ἀθανάτων τε θεῶν χαμαὶ ἐρχομένων τ' ἀνθρώπων ('the race of the immortal gods is in no way the same as that of men who move on the ground') perhaps overstates the dissimilarities between them to emphasise the importance of mortality.

<sup>882</sup> Burkert (1985): 187.

<sup>883</sup> *ibid.*: 141.

<sup>884</sup> *ibid.*: 187.

<sup>885</sup> Divine – human interaction is seen in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (set before the Trojan War), for example, but is cast by Hesiod as a thing of the past. Supernatural interventions in battle are still narrated, as in Herodotus' account of the Battle of Salamis (8.84), but these interactions between gods and humans are through indirect means such as signs or omens, and humans are given more credit for any resulting

gods play a similar role in the Egyptian depictions of war, particularly in terms of their physical participation in fighting. There is no physiological reason for this, as there might be for the Christian God. Egyptian gods were often depicted anthropomorphised, able to move and grasp tools. Indeed Merenptah in his *Great Libyan War Inscription* describes Ptah physically handing him the *khepes*-sword (in a dream),<sup>886</sup> so the gods could clearly be conceived of as wielding these weapons. But in both textual and pictorial depictions the gods are rarely presented actively participating in battle.<sup>887</sup> The one divine being that does explicitly kill enemies alongside the king is his personified uraeus: at *Qadesh* §2.281-2 Ramesses II says that *ḥrt-tp ḥr šḥr-n=i ḥftyyww=i d=s hh=s m nsrt m ḥr n ḥrww=i* ('She-on-the-head [the uraeus] was felling my enemies for me; she cast her breath of flame into the faces of my foes'), and Thutmose III makes similar claims in his Poetical Stela (lines 9-10) and Gebel Barkal Stela (line 6).<sup>888</sup> Although personified, the uraeus is nonetheless a physical part of the king's regalia, and can be seen as an analogue of sorts to the *khepes*-sword, a manifestation of divine military power that he can use to kill his enemies.<sup>889</sup> Elsewhere only the king kills.

The gods can, however, intervene in other ways. The most clear case of a god actually present during combat comes in *Qadesh 2*, when amidst the Hittite attack Ramesses II turns to Amun. The king's speech begins with the forcefully apostrophic *-rk* particle,<sup>890</sup> and then emphasises his familial relationship to Amun (as discussed above) and his hierarchical position in comparison to the god (§95 *is bn šm.n=i ḥḥ.n=i ḥr r=k bw th=i šḥr wḏ.n=k* – 'Do I not go and stand on your command, without having disobeyed the plans that you ordered?').<sup>891</sup> Ramesses II casts himself as a model soldier, obeying his divine general who is absent from the fighting; the idea is repeated at

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victory, as in Simonides' *Plataea Elegy* (Fantuzzi 1998: 108). While gods do interact with humans in tragedy, there is a very physical separation between them due to the *machina*.

<sup>886</sup> *KRI* IV.5.10-12.

<sup>887</sup> Note however the presence of a divine falcon in the smiting scene on the Narmer Palette, as discussed in Chapter 1 (pp. 22-3).

<sup>888</sup> *KRI* II.86.6-15; *Urk.* IV.613.15-17, 1230.3.

<sup>889</sup> As an almost omnipresent presence in depictions of the king, it symbolises the fundamentally destructive nature of divine kingship (Goebis 2011: 90).

<sup>890</sup> *KRI* II.34.1-4.

<sup>891</sup> *KRI* II.35.1-6.

the end of the speech, Amun apparently having ordered the king to attack the Hittites.<sup>892</sup> The god's powers in war are also stressed, as Ramesses II states (§117-19):<sup>893</sup>

*gm.n=i 3h-n=i imn r hhw n ms<sup>c</sup> r hfnw m nt-htrw r s db<sup>c</sup> n sn hr hrdw iw=sn dmd m ib w<sup>c</sup> bn  
k3t n rmt knw 3h imn r=sn*

I have found that Amun is more efficacious for me than millions of infantry, than hundreds of thousands of chariots, than ten thousand brothers and sons united in one purpose. There is no use for many people: Amun is more efficacious than them.

Although the king's infantry, chariots, brothers, and sons have all deserted him, if his commander arrives all will be well and the king will be saved; in war, all one needs is Amun.

The god immediately appears, despite Ramesses' distance from Thebes, and is described by the king: (§123-8).<sup>894</sup>

*gm.n=i imn iw dr 3s=i dw=f-n=i drt=f hn<sup>c</sup>=i tw=i h<sup>c</sup>.kw 3s.n=f n-h3=i m-hr r-hr n-hr=k tw=i  
hn<sup>c</sup>=k ink it=k drt=i m-di=k 3h.kw r hfnw ink nb nht mr knt gm.n=i ib=i wnty h3ty=i m r3wt*

I found Amun coming, because I was calling to him; he gave me his hand and I rejoiced. He called out behind me: "Forward, ahead, in front of you! I am with you, I am your father, my hand is with you! I am more efficacious than hundreds of thousands! I am the lord of strength, the lover of valour!" I found my mind stout, my heart joyful.

The verbs *gmi* ('to find') and *3h* ('to be efficacious') have oracular and revelatory undertones,<sup>895</sup> and suggest the supernatural nature of the god's help. It is a very physical form of help: Amun comes – implying that he physically travels – and the king takes his hand. He is emphatically present in battle and beside the king. Repeated vocabulary and ideas emphasise the closeness of the king to the god in their shared thoughts: the repetition of *gm.n=i* indicates that Amun's coming (§123) is the first 'effect' that the king 'found' (§117), the second being the mental reinforcement (§124-8). The verb is repeated again at §132,<sup>896</sup> when Ramesses begins to describe his counterattack, showing that this

<sup>892</sup> KRI II.42.6-12.

<sup>893</sup> KRI II.41.6-42.5.

<sup>894</sup> KRI II.43.1-44.5.

<sup>895</sup> Shirun-Grumach (1993): 125-8.

<sup>896</sup> KRI II.45.6-10.

is Amun's beneficence for the king; by contrast, at §134 we are told that *bw gm.n w<sup>c</sup> d<sup>r</sup>t=f r c<sup>h</sup>3 im=sn* ('none of them [the Hittite chariots] could **find** their hand to fight').<sup>897</sup> While the god's interference helps the king, it equally harms his enemies. So the god's physical presence in battle does not result in Amun himself taking part in the melee, but rather mentally fortifies the king to inspire his counter-attack and carry out the physical consequences of the god's appearance.

This intervention is the fulcrum around which *Qadesh 2* hinges:<sup>898</sup> the king calls to Amun, Amun appears to the king, the king destroys his enemies. It is important to note, however, that this is only mentioned in the account of *Qadesh 2*. For *Qadesh 1* the turning-point is the discovery of the Hittite deception and the king's reaction; in the reliefs the king's destruction of the Hittites coincides with the arrival of relief troops, but is not causally linked. The three narratives are complementary but have different aims, and conflation of them can obscure these differences to make Amun's intervention appear greater than it actually is.<sup>899</sup> Amun's intervention is to fulfil his duties on the highest rank of Egyptian society by imbuing the king with courage, a psychological rather than physical act.<sup>900</sup>

Fundamentally, this action of Amun is a resumption of the norm in terms of Egyptian conceptions of the gods in battle, where their role is not to defeat the king's enemies for him, but to give the king the strength necessary to triumph.<sup>901</sup> Thus in Thutmose III's Poetical Stela Amun's description of his role in war (repeated ten times) is *ii.n=i di=i titi=k ... di=i m3=sn hm=k m ...* ('That I have come is to let you trample ... I will make them see your Person as ...').<sup>902</sup> He will not physically

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<sup>897</sup> *KRI* II.45.6-16. We have seen above in the discussion of the verb *msy* (pp. 126-7) this text's repeated inversion of military language to indicate the topsy-turvy nature of the battle.

<sup>898</sup> Spalinger (2020): 167.

<sup>899</sup> E.g. Baines & Frood (2011: 15): "[t]he centre-piece of the narrative of the Battle of Qadesh is the crisis when the king invokes Amun. His prayer is heard in Thebes, and the relief troop appears'; the Egyptian sources emphatically do not connect the troops' arrival to Amun, since this would diminish the personal relationship between king and god.

<sup>900</sup> Cf. Ockinga (1987): 40-1.

<sup>901</sup> Normally this reciprocal relationship was established at the beginning of the narrative, and the overall success of the campaign was typically credited to the gods; *Qadesh 2* is a major exception to this (Lundh 2002: 144, 236).

<sup>902</sup> *Urk.* IV.614.15-618.3.

act against the king's enemies, but allow him to defeat them in his various guises (as a bull, as a star etc.).<sup>903</sup> In the *Annals* too the actual battle between Thutmose and the army at Megiddo is described very briefly (columns 85-6) as *imn m s3 ḥc=f r-ḏyḡw pḥty [stḥ ḥt] c̣t=f c̣ḥc.n sḥm.n ḥm=f r=s ḥr-ḥst mšc=f* ('Amun was protecting his body in the melee, and the strength [of Seth was coursing through] his limbs. Then his Person prevailed over it (Megiddo) before his army').<sup>904</sup> The king's victory is framed as an action of the gods, who defend him and give him the power to defeat his enemies. The physical destruction of the enemy is done by the king, but this depends on the help of the gods.<sup>905</sup>

Amenhotep II presents the same motif. In his Great Sphinx Stela, the sudden switch at lines 3-4<sup>906</sup> from the description of the close relationship between the king and the gods, and in particular Amun's placement of the uraeus on the king's head, to the description of the king's power in war again implies that this derives from the gods.<sup>907</sup> One of the king's major achievements in this stela – his superhuman shooting of the targets – is also attributed to Amun (lines 17-18): *sp-ḥs-pw n p3.tw irt=f ... wp-ḥr nsw wsr=f 3w snḥt.n [imn] nsw-bity 3-ḥprw-ṛc* ('Truly, it was an event that had not been done in the past ... until the king rich in splendour, whom [Amun] made strong, the Dual King Aakheperure').<sup>908</sup> Similarly, for Thutmose IV the power of the gods is key to his military success in his Konosso Stela.<sup>909</sup> After piously consulting Amun on whether to go to war, we are told (line 9) *sb.n=f-sw m kn nḥt* ('He [Amun] sent him [the king] in valour and strength');<sup>910</sup> the result of the battle is also attributed to Re (line 19): *dī.n ṛc snd=f m 3w* ('Re has put his fear in the lands').<sup>911</sup> Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, the gods' effect in battle is to superhumanly empower the king, not

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<sup>903</sup> Klug (2002): 119.

<sup>904</sup> *Urk.* IV.657.13-15.

<sup>905</sup> The inscription is preceded by depictions of the king making offerings to Amun, which reinforces the idea that these wars succeed by the grace of the god (Baines 2008: 31-2).

<sup>906</sup> *Urk.* IV.1276.20-1277.7.

<sup>907</sup> Klug (2002): 232.

<sup>908</sup> *Urk.* IV.1281.2-6.

<sup>909</sup> Klug (2002): 352.

<sup>910</sup> *Urk.* IV.1546.5.

<sup>911</sup> *Urk.* IV.1547.15.

to physically take part in combat. This effect is portrayed in reverse in Tutankhamun's Restoration Stela, characterising Akhenaten's reign by the fact that the gods refuse to empower him and cause his failure in battle instead.<sup>912</sup> The gods' intervention in battle is essential to the king's, and Egypt's success.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty this conception of the gods' participation in battle largely persists. The speech of Amun in Sety I's Karnak Triumph-Scene<sup>913</sup> emphasises the influence of the god through the repetition of the first-person singular (*ink it=k di=i šftw=k m rtnw ... di=i iwt n=k wrw ḥšwt rsyw* ('I am your father, I put your awe in Retjenu ... I make the chiefs of the southern foreign lands come to you')). As with Tutankhamun, the Hittites are made to attribute their failure in Ramesses II's Hittite Marriage Stela to the lack of support from their own god (line 31 *nb=n swth špw m-di=n* – 'our lord Seth is angry with us'),<sup>914</sup> though divine support for the enemy is conceived as being for the entire army (through the first-person plurals), rather than just for the king.<sup>915</sup> Merenptah seems to emphasise the physicality of his relationship with the gods more than his predecessors. In his *Great Libyan War Inscription*, as we have seen, Merenptah is presented with the *khepesh*-sword by Ptah in a dream.<sup>916</sup> Unlike Amun at Qadesh this god is not physically present, though his dream-appearance is contrasted by him giving the king not just abstract 'strength', but the physical *khepesh*-sword. The king is armed with his killing weapon by the god, and the god's influence on the battle is given tangible form in the sword; it is a more concrete way of aiding the king's massacre of his enemies. That the account of this dream follows mention of an oracle of Amun from Thebes<sup>917</sup> indicates that Merenptah has support from all of Egypt's gods (Ptah in Memphis standing for the gods of Lower Egypt, Amun in Thebes standing for those of Upper Egypt).<sup>918</sup>

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<sup>912</sup> *Urk.* IV.2025-7; Baines (2011): 51

<sup>913</sup> *KRI* I.26.8-27.10.

<sup>914</sup> *KRI* II.246.7-12.

<sup>915</sup> On the contrast between the multiplicity of the enemy and the uniqueness of the king see Chapter 3 (pp. 119-22).

<sup>916</sup> *KRI* IV.5.10-12.

<sup>917</sup> *KRI* IV.5.6.

<sup>918</sup> Manassa (2003): 120.

Similarly, in the heading to Merenptah's Triumph Stela Amun-Re tells the king to 'take for yourself your *khepesh*-sword',<sup>919</sup> the gods' connection with the weapon giving it divine qualities that enable the king to triumph. Later in the stela (line 15) we are told of the Libyan leader Maryu:<sup>920</sup>

*iry-sw t psdt m ḥr btw=f ddw nb r-ḏr imm p3 ḥpš n s3=i ḳ3-ḥ3ty ncy sfny b3-n-r-c-mry-imm  
p3 nhp ḥwt-k3-ptḥ*

The Ennead judged him unjust for his crimes. The Lord of All said: "Give the *khepesh*-sword to my son – honest, lenient, merciful – Baenre-Meryamun, the carer for Hutkaptah [Memphis]

The contrast between the piety of Merenptah, son of the Lord of All, who looks after the gods (Memphis named here through its connection to Ptah), and Maryu, condemned by the same gods, is clear. The *khepesh*-sword is the chosen tool for divine retribution through the hands of the gods' agent in Egypt; it is a divinely guaranteed weapon, a physical manifestation of their support for the king.<sup>921</sup> The gods' support for Merenptah is more physical than for his predecessors,<sup>922</sup> and in this respect the relationship between the king and the gods mirrors the escalation in violence with the king and gender.

This context underscores how remarkable the *Qadesh* narratives are in their presentation of the gods in war. Nowhere else does a god fail to help the king as Amun does in *Qadesh 2*, and nowhere else does a king wreak so much destruction amongst the enemies without explicit support from the gods as Ramesses does in *Qadesh 1*. To an extent one can use the three narratives to supply details absent in others, but all three stand on their own to indicate different aspects of Ramesses II's relationship with Amun. In *Qadesh 1* Amun is entirely absent: in fact, the god's name only appears once, as a standard element of the king's name (Ramesses-Meryamun). The king is not as dependent on the help of the gods as previous ones were, and his own superhuman abilities

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<sup>919</sup> *KRI* IV.12.14. Amun-Re giving the *khepesh*-sword is also depicted on the south side of the wall containing the Karnak Inscription (Manassa 2003: 117-18).

<sup>920</sup> *KRI* II.45.6-16.

<sup>921</sup> Vogel (2013): 79.

<sup>922</sup> Manassa (2003): 121.

can crush the enemy. This is emphasised textually in *Qadesh 1* because every simile applied to the king compares him to gods or supernatural creatures.<sup>923</sup> As the king enters battle (§85-7) we are told that Ramesses was *ḥꜥrw r=sn mi it(=f) mnṯw šsp.n=f ḥkrw ḥꜥ ḃy=f-sw m pꜣy=f ḃ-r-ynḃ sw mi swṯḥ m ꜥt šḥm=f* ('raging at them like (his) father Montu ... he was like Seth in the moment of his power');<sup>924</sup> later (§96) he is *mi swṯḥ ꜥ pḥty mi šḥmt m ꜥt nšny=s* ('like Seth, great of strength, like Sekhmet in the moment of her rage').<sup>925</sup> The text concludes with a speech by the king, which begins by stating that *iw=i m-sꜥ=sn mi ḥḥ* ('I was behind them like a griffon').<sup>926</sup>

Amun is responsible for Ramesses II's success in battle in *Qadesh 2*, but he had failed to do so before the king's harsh speech: he must be reminded of the king's previous favours and that he is failing in his duties. It would be a mistake to suggest a serious breakdown in the relationship between the king and the god, but it does not seem as harmonious and well-defined as with other kings.<sup>927</sup> As Ramesses points out, Amun has failed, and while he eventually makes up for his absence by allowing the king to triumph, thereby re-establishing his position of power as the king's guarantor of victory, the narrative as presented in *Qadesh 1* suggests that Ramesses is less dependent on divine assistance, and a greater warrior in his own right. It may be to Amun that the king owes his victory, but he makes clear that he played a significant part himself. The idea that he is a god himself is stated by the Hittite king (§298-9),<sup>928</sup> suggesting this notion through the mouth of the enemy to distance it a little: constraints of tradition perhaps prevent Ramesses from explicitly claiming a more godlike status for himself, but with a degree of removal the possibility is mooted. Amun's initial failure in *Qadesh 2* and complete absence from *Qadesh 1*, and the king's superhuman actions to fill the god's vacuum all suggest a slight rebalancing in status between the king and god:

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<sup>923</sup> For the effects of divine similes in general see above (pp. 122-30).

<sup>924</sup> *KRI* II.119.5-120.5.

<sup>925</sup> *KRI* II.121.6-10.

<sup>926</sup> *KRI* II.123.6-10.

<sup>927</sup> Cf. Kelly (2014: 50) on similar issues in Sennacherib's *Annals*.

<sup>928</sup> *KRI* II.90.7-11.

Amun is fallible, Ramesses is not. The most remarkable feature of the *Qadesh* narratives is that they provide the only example of (albeit temporary) divine failure in depictions of Egyptian victory.

The presence of goddesses such as Sekhmet in battle is of a slightly different sort. She is usually depicted with a human body and the head of a lioness, and often accompanies the king. So while Ramesses II rampages through the Hittite army, the soldiers exclaim (*Qadesh* §2.287): *mk šhmt wrt b nty hn<sup>c</sup>=f sy m-di=f hr ssmwt=f d<sup>r</sup>t=s hn<sup>c</sup>=f* ('Look, great Sekhmet is the one with him: she is with him on his horses, her hand is with him').<sup>929</sup> She is also, as discussed in Chapter 3,<sup>930</sup> a frequent object of comparison to convey the king's more aggressive qualities. Her presence is not an issue in terms of gender: despite visible differences (for example Montu and Sekhmet are clearly depicted as masculine and feminine respectively in visual art) there is little obvious difference in abilities or function between war gods like Montu and goddesses like Sekhmet or Neith.<sup>931</sup> The major difference concerns the etymology of the goddesses' names: both are nominalised verbs (from *sh<sup>m</sup>* – 'to be powerful' and *nri* – 'to fear'), with the nominal feminine *.t* ending.<sup>932</sup> The typical interpretation of these names is to take them as euphemistic nominalised participles: Neith is *n(r).t*, 'the (female) one who is dreaded, the dreadful one', and Sekhmet is *sh<sup>m</sup>.t*, 'the (female) one who is powerful, the powerful one'.<sup>933</sup> The *.t* ending was also, however, used to create abstract nouns, so the names could also be read as 'Dread' or 'Power'; either way, the names of the goddesses make their identity fundamentally linked to aspects of the king's relationship with war. They are physical manifestations of the king's power and dreadfulness, externalised and so given greater presence in war.

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<sup>929</sup> *KRI* II.87.11-15.

<sup>930</sup> pp. 127-8.

<sup>931</sup> These two are goddesses associated with war from a very early period; they were supplemented by a number of Near Eastern imports (including Astarte and Anat) during the New Kingdom (Hoffmann 2008). Neith is rarely mentioned in the New Kingdom sources, probably because her cult centre was in the Delta at Saïs, while Sekhmet was primarily worshipped in the major royal city of Memphis; as a consequence most of the textual evidence we have for Neith comes from after the 26<sup>th</sup> Saïte Dynasty (El-Sayed 1982: 74), though she was associated with war from at least the Old Kingdom (*ibid.*: 17).

<sup>932</sup> Doetsch-Amberger (2004): 46.

<sup>933</sup> Doetsch-Amberger (2004): 46.

In this regard they are similar to Merenptah's depiction of the *khepes*-sword as a physicalised instrument of the gods' retribution: when the king wields the *khepes*-sword he battles while equipped with divine justice; when he battles alongside Sekhmet or Neith he fights with a power or dread that is so great it has a physical, divine presence. As the *khepes*-sword is simultaneously a symbol of divine support and a physical manifestation of the king's *ḥpš* (muscular strength),<sup>934</sup> so too are Sekhmet for the king's *šḥmt* (power) and Neith for the king's *nrt* (dread). Although the language used of Sekhmet in *Qadesh 2* is similar to that used of Amun (her hand is with the king, as Amun's was), an important difference is their respective perceptibility. Whereas Amun is seen only by the king, Sekhmet is seen by the Hittites.<sup>935</sup> She therefore has a presence in battle of a slightly different kind to Montu's and Amun's, acting as a divine manifestation and source of the king's 'great power' (*šḥmt wrt*) that allows it to be comprehended by his enemies. She answers two questions: 'Why is the king so powerful?' – 'Because he has the Powerful One with him in battle'; 'How powerful is the king?' – 'His power is divine'. She provides the king with the godlike power he requires to triumph. But even so she does not kill for him, and the physical act of destruction remains a prerogative of the king alone. In a society with many gods, their presence in war was required: one could, after all, hardly be successful in battle *without* the gods involved. But the overwhelming dominance of the king similarly required that he do the killing himself, and the gods' involvement consequently constituted the provision of tools, whether physical (the *khepes*-sword), mental (encouragement and support) or abstract ('power' and 'dread').

Throughout the other sources under discussion the gods play an even smaller role in battle and exert very little influence on military activity. In the few battles of the *Argonautica* the gods are entirely absent, the victories attributed at times to the demigods Heracles and Polydeuces,<sup>936</sup>

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<sup>934</sup> Vogel (2013): 79.

<sup>935</sup> In general Sekhmet was more frequently metonymised than other gods, used to personify sacrificial fire (Labrique 2005: 166) as well as the king's power.

<sup>936</sup> Both the Dioscuri and Heracles have their divinity mentioned at different points in the poem, so we are constantly reminded that they *will* be gods – only they are not quite there yet (Hitch 2012: 135). They, like Ptolemy II, remain semi-divine and must wait until death for their apotheosis.

at others to heroes dependent on magic charms and trickery (Jason) or on the strength of their people (Sesostris). When the gods are connected to war it is tangential. In Book 2 the Argonauts arrive at the island of Thynias, and Apollo appears to them while on his way to the Hyperboreans in his military aspect (2.678-80):

λαιῆ δ' ἀργύρεον νόμα βιόν, ἀμφὶ δὲ νότοις  
ιοδόκη τετάνυστο κατωμαδόν· ἦ δ' ὑπὸ ποσσὶν  
σεῖετο νῆσος ὅλη, κλύζεν δ' ἐπὶ κύματα χέρσῳ.

In his left hand he wielded his silver bow, and round his back  
the quiver had been strung from his shoulders. Under his feet  
the whole island shook, and the waves rose onto the land.

His equipment is verbally identical to that from the beginning of *Iliad* 1, when he destroyed the Greek army: *Argonautica* 2.678 ἀργύρεον ... βιόν ≈ *Iliad* 1.49 ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖο; his quiver (ιοδόκη) is the holder of the ἰόν (*Iliad* 1.48) he will fire at the Greeks. But despite this Iliadic appearance, the god immediately moves on to continue his journey;<sup>937</sup> he is no longer the battling god of the Homeric poem.

Apollonius' Hera, so often an agitator of war throughout the *Iliad*, prevents rather than encourages battle: as the Argonauts pass through the tribes of the Celts at 4.646-7, Hera cloaks them in mist so that they can travel without fighting. Rather than help the Argonauts to sack Colchis – as the Greeks will do to Troy – Hera and Athene instead decide at the beginning of Book 3 to find another solution, and journey to the house of Hephaestus.<sup>938</sup> Thetis makes this journey in *Iliad* 18 to obtain new armour for Achilles which will prolong the war; the two goddesses here seek Aphrodite instead, whose son Eros' wounding of Medea prevents war occurring.<sup>939</sup> By consciously

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<sup>937</sup> A lack of direct interaction between humans and Olympian gods is characteristic of the *Argonautica*, and the gods typically carry out their plans through omens or less powerful intermediaries such as Thetis (Lye 2012: 225). Unfulfilled encounters repeatedly recur in the *Argonautica* (Fusillo 1985: 160); cf. their approach to the Amazons (pp. 166-71).

<sup>938</sup> Feeney (1991): 78.

<sup>939</sup> That Eros' intervention is modelled on the Trojan warrior Pandarus' actions at *Iliad* 3.105-26 emphasises this: the Homeric soldier has been replaced by Love itself (Feeney 1991: 81). The purpose of the goddesses' journey contrasts also with *Iliad* 14.187-223, when Hera seeks Aphrodite's help to seduce Zeus and thus intensify the battle.

alluding to previous militaristic depictions of his gods, Apollonius makes their absence from his own battles more clear, and stresses that the best warriors are the demigods Heracles and Polydeuces (and so implicitly, as discussed earlier, Ptolemy II).<sup>940</sup>

Across the other Hellenistic authors too the gods are absent from battle. The conflicts Callimachus narrates in his *Aetia* (e.g. frs. 80, 82, 106) all seem to be without divine intervention; in his *Hymn to Zeus* he goes so far as to deny the god his greatest battle (lines 57-8), the Titanomachy that traditionally legitimised Zeus' superiority. The closest a Callimachean god comes to war occurs in Apollo's speech at *Hymn to Delos* 162-95, when he refers to the invasion of the Galatians as 'a struggle common to us' (171 ξυνός τις ... ἄμμιν ἄεθλος), i.e. to both him and Ptolemy II. But Apollo makes no mention of his own participation in battle, whereas the king 'has toiled much' (187 πολλὰ καμόντος); the only warrior and fighter is the king, though the god is at least notionally involved and supportive.<sup>941</sup> Nor in Theocritus' encomiastic *Idyll* 17 have the gods helped Ptolemy II in battle; the focus is always on human achievement, a continuation of classical compositions such as Simonides' elegy for the dead at Plataea.<sup>942</sup> The *Alexandra* also minimises the militaristic aspects of the gods, particularly Apollo, who is characterised instead by epithets relating to prophecy and sex.<sup>943</sup>

But despite the gods' absence from battle in Ptolemaic literature, they could still be believed to take part in battles. The depiction of the Gigantomachy on the Great Altar at Pergamum shows the deities in all their military glory, but they serve as a parallel to the Attalid victories over enemies of the Greeks,<sup>944</sup> and there is no intrusion of humans into divine wars, nor divinities into

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<sup>940</sup> p. 117.

<sup>941</sup> The cosmic nature of this conflict has been discussed above (pp. 132-5).

<sup>942</sup> For discussion see Fantuzzi (1998).

<sup>943</sup> See Cusset & Kolde (2012) for an extensive analysis of Lycophron's use of epithets for the Olympian gods, which tend to focus attention not on the dangers of battle for men, but on the dangers of male lust for women.

<sup>944</sup> Quinn (2013): 347.

human wars.<sup>945</sup> The effect is broadly similar to that found in the New Kingdom sources: the gods are present and help the Greeks, because how could they triumph otherwise? Their help is, however, more remote than in the Egyptian texts, and this absence from court-based literature<sup>946</sup> reflects the delicate balance required for assigning credit for military victories, between gods and divine kings. The minimisation of divine warfare magnifies the achievements of the royal victories. The Egyptian king was, as noted, very close to the gods in familial and conceptual terms; the Ptolemies were more distinct from theirs. Apollo might proclaim that his and Ptolemy II's battles against the Gauls are a shared venture, but the two do not support each other in the same way that Ramesses does with Amun in *Qadesh 2*. Divine participation in battle in the New Kingdom and Hellenistic period is essentially different in quantity rather than quality, distinguished by the frequency of the support provided. Divine kings dominate the battlefield and monopolise killing: the gods enable and encourage this, but ultimately they leave the slaughter and the glory for their sons.

### **Withdrawal Symptoms or Fledging the Nest? Presence and Absence of the Gods post-Conquest**

In the *Posthomerica* the gods are more present than in both the Hellenistic and New Kingdom material, though still less than in the *Iliad*.<sup>947</sup> Athene intervenes very early in the poem, sending a deceptive dream to Penthesilea at 1.124-33 that promises her victory. But the closest she gets to actually fighting in the next day's battle is when Penthesilea is compared to her (1.179): there is *an* 'Athene' fighting at Troy, but it is not the goddess herself. At 1.363-6 a Trojan says that due to her achievements Penthesilea must be one of a number of possible goddesses: Athene, Enyo, Eris, and

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<sup>945</sup> Heracles, as ever, proves a liminal exception. For his use as a mythological model for defeating cosmic enemies and so acquiring godhood see Chapter 3 (p. 122).

<sup>946</sup> For the dynamics of Hellenistic literature at the royal courts see Chapter 1 (pp. 29-32).

<sup>947</sup> In terms of statistics, they are mentioned around once every twelve lines in the *Iliad* but only once every twenty-one in the *Posthomerica* (Bär 2016: 218).

finally Artemis. All are themselves absent from battle, and Penthesilea cannot help the Trojans in the same way that they could. The suggestions for her 'real' identity conclude with Artemis, the least warlike of the four.<sup>948</sup> Her most prominent appearances in earlier epic similes are *Odyssey* 6.151-2, applied to the young princess Nausicaa, and *Argonautica* 3.876-84, applied to Medea as she re-enters Colchis. In the latter, Medea's dominance over her onlookers is stressed (as Penthesilea's is here), but she is nevertheless about to be 'conquered' by Jason – an ominous precedent for Quintus' Amazon. So, contrary to this anonymous Trojan's opinion, there are no goddesses present to save them, and Penthesilea needs to be more than a Nausicaa to succeed.

Penthesilea's death prompts the first direct intervention by a god in battle: Ares (her father) grieves and decides to enter the melee. His entry is compared to the fall of one of Zeus' lightning-bolts (1.677-80); the simile looks back to another (1.153-6) also comparing Penthesilea's entry into battle to a bolt, though that was just a portent of a coming storm. Penthesilea is simply ἀστεροπιῆ δ' ἀτάλαντος ('like a lightning-bolt'), while Ares is σμερδαλέω ἀτάλαντος ἀεὶ κτυπέοντι κεραυνῶ ('like a terrible, always crashing thunderbolt'). The fuller description indicates his greater power, while 'always' suggests that whereas the bolt of Penthesilea has been extinguished with her death, as an immortal his will never be. We are led to believe that Ares' participation in war will be lengthier and more destructive than Penthesilea's, which has only just ended. But Zeus immediately stops him σμερδαλέης στεροπιῆσι καὶ ἀργαλέοισι κεραυνοῖς (1.691 'with terrible lightning-bolts and grievous thunderbolts'). Quintus reuses the wording that described both Penthesilea and Ares to show that Zeus has ultimate power over both the real and metaphorical thunderbolts, and for all Ares' destructive power he is forced to withdraw from battle by the much greater god.<sup>949</sup>

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<sup>948</sup> At least in epic, as seen by her humiliating beating by Hera at *Iliad* 21.489-96.

<sup>949</sup> The non-verbal nature of this threat is characteristic of the poem, in which the gods only rarely talk to one another: they are remote not just from humans but from each other (Bär 2016: 224).

Throughout the poem, Ares is of all the gods most involved in the battle. He spends the longest uninterrupted time present in the war (8.237-353), though he remains unseen and is forced to withdraw just before he can make himself visible (8.340-2). He is still, therefore, to some extent removed from the battle amongst the mortals, even though at 8.275-6 we are told that ἐδέυετο δ' αἵματι πολλῷ / δεινὸς Ἄρης ('terrible Ares was drenched with much blood'). His descent (8.241-3) also suggests his physical presence on the battlefield:

φόρεον δέ μιν ἐς μόθον ἵπποι  
 Αἶθων καὶ Φλογίος, Κόναβος δ' ἐπὶ τοῖσι Φόβος τε,  
 τοὺς Βορέη κελάδοντι τέκεν βλοσυρῶπις Ἐριννὺς

Horses bore him into the toil,  
 Burning and Fiery, and with them Din and Fear,  
 whom a grim-faced Fury bore to the roaring North Wind

Two of the horses bringing him into battle are embodiments of elements of battle, the loud crashing of men rushing against each other and the panic that arises for the losing side. But Ares is not the only god involved during this battle: at 8.325-6 we are told that ἀλγινόεσσα δ' Ἔρις μέγα μαιμώωσα / ἦυσεν μάλα μακρόν, Ἄρης δέ οἱ ἀντεβόησε ('grievous Strife, greatly raging, gave a great bellow, and Ares shouted in return'). Again he is associated with a personification of an abstract concept.<sup>950</sup> Even the precise nature of Ares himself is not always clear, since 'Ares' can also be used simply to mean 'war'. At 7.17-18 Quintus says that ἐν πεδίῳ ἔτι μαίνεται λοίγιος Ἄρης / ὄρτο δ' ἄρ' ἀμφοτέρωθε μέγας κόναβος ('on the plain deadly Ares still raged, and a great din arose on both sides'), where 'Ares' is not necessarily the anthropomorphic god himself (who has not been described coming from Olympus) but a word for 'war', given personification to seem more alive.<sup>951</sup>

<sup>950</sup> These divine, personified concepts are a very old Greek phenomenon (Burkert 2005: 18), and play a key role in earlier epics: Agamemnon blames Ate ('Delusion') for his quarrel with Achilles (*Iliad* 19.134-6), and Eros ('Love') kindles Medea's desire for Jason (*Argonautica* 3.275-98). They can best be understood as divine cues of psychological pre-dispositions which, as realised concepts themselves, realise in turn some latent aspect of an individual without taking the credit/blame away from them (Lesky 2001: 196-7; Stöppelkamp 2012: 364-6).

<sup>951</sup> In Homer both Ares and Hephaestus ('fire') are used in this way (Ratinaud-Lachkar 2010: 154), and this practice continues throughout Greek literature: Ares is, for example, the only god used metonymically in the *Argonautica* (Feeney 1991: 76). To what extent by Quintus' time the distinction between Ares as god or

Although Ares clearly *is* the god as an individual in Book 8, his association with anthropomorphised concepts and features of battle diminishes this aspect of him and makes it easier to view him only as a metonym. Despite being a physical character, Ares does not actually do anything human: he only makes loud shouts that must be interpreted by Helenus, and does not kill or fight himself, only encouraging the battle to continue. When a god who cannot be just a metonym for battle (Athene) prepares to enter the fray, Zeus immediately summons both gods back: Ares has been allowed to take part in the fighting only as long as he is not clearly present as a god, and when he intends to remove the ambiguity as to his nature (whether god or concept) he is prevented by Zeus. The gods as characters rather than concepts are repeatedly kept from the battle, and only abstract concepts such as Strife remain.<sup>952</sup> During the sack of Troy in Book 13, the gods are (with the exception of Aphrodite protecting her son Aeneas) absent from the fighting. Instead the book ends with a non-specific deity granting Laodice's prayer and having the earth swallow her up (13.548 θεῶν τις), and Quintus concludes the narration of the entire war at 13.563 by saying Ἔρις δ' ἔχε πείρατα χάριμης ('Strife governed the completion of the battle'). At the culmination of all the battles so far, it is not an Olympian god controlling things but an abstract concept. Although Quintus thinks that there is a place for the gods in human battles, they are not the traditional gods of the Homeric poems but personified features of war. In this way war remains conceivable as a phenomenon with divine elements that are not easily explicable otherwise (sudden breakthroughs or shifts in morale), while the role of traditional anthropomorphised gods, with individual motivations and aspirations, is minimised.

The other Olympian gods play small parts in the battle throughout, making only infrequent interventions. One such comes at the beginning of Book 3, as Apollo comes down from Olympus

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Ares as concept is a conscious one is therefore unclear, and there is considerable ambiguity with many of the occurrences of his name (Wenglinsky 2002: 143).

<sup>952</sup> Throughout the poem the personified Fates also appear more frequently than in Homer (Bär 2016: 229), though the influence ascribed to them by the narrator is somewhat reduced (Gärtner 2014: 125); cf. the discussion concerning Paris above (pp. 204-5).

to stop Achilles. His descent is broadly modelled on *Iliad* 1.44-52: he is angered (*Posthomerica* 3.30  $\chi\acute{\omega}\sigma\alpha\tau\omicron$  θυμῶ  $\approx$  *Iliad* 1.44  $\chi\acute{\omega}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$  κῆρ) and comes down from Olympus (3.32  $\acute{\alpha}\pi'$  Ουλύμπιοι κατήλυθε  $\approx$  1.44  $\beta\eta$  δὲ κατ' Ουλύμπιοι) with a sinister comparison (3.32  $\theta\eta\rho\acute{\iota}$  εἰοικῶς  $\approx$  1.47  $\nu\kappa\tau\acute{\iota}$  εἰοικῶς); he has his bow and quiver on his shoulders (3.33  $\iota\omicron\delta\acute{\omicron}\kappa\eta\nu$  ὤμωισιν ἔχων καὶ ἀναλθέας ἰούς  $\approx$  1.45  $\tau\acute{\omicron}\xi'$  ὤμοισιν ἔχων ἀμφορεφέα τε φαρέτρην), takes his position (3.34 ἔστη δ' Αἰακίδαο καταντίον  $\approx$  1.48 ἔζετ' ἔπειτ' ἀπάνευθε νεῶν), and his weapons make a great noise (3.35  $\gamma\omega\rho\upsilon\tau\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  καὶ τόξα μέγ' ἴαχεν  $\approx$  1.49  $\delta\epsilon\iota\nu\acute{\eta}$  δὲ κλαγγὴ γένετ' ἀργυρεόιο βιοῖο).<sup>953</sup> Apollo repeats his warning to Patroclus (*Iliad* 16.707) to Achilles (3.40  $\chi\acute{\alpha}\zeta\epsilon\omicron$ , Πηλείδη  $\approx$  16.707  $\chi\acute{\alpha}\zeta\epsilon\omicron$  διογενὲς Πατρόκλεες), and the reminiscences of Apollo's previous killings emphasise that Achilles is doomed.<sup>954</sup> When he kills Achilles, however, Apollo makes himself invisible before firing the arrow (3.60-2) and then returning to Olympus (3.88). Although the god has a concrete effect on the battle by killing the greatest Greek hero, he does this from a removed position and immediately leaves the battlefield.<sup>955</sup> This turns out to be Apollo's only major achievement in the *Posthomerica*, in contrast to his frequent actions in the *Iliad*, and Hera (3.118-22) points out that the killing of Achilles is ultimately pointless: Neoptolemus will quickly come to replace him, and he is 'equal in strength to his father' (3.121-2  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\kappa\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  ἀλκὴν / πατρὶ ἐῶ).<sup>956</sup> Even the most significant effect that the god has on battle is immediately stated to have made no difference at all.

When Apollo descends from Olympus again to kill Neoptolemus at 9.291-8, the different phrasing and vocabulary compared to the previous examples indicate that there will be a different result this time; even as god of oracles he prepares to disobey evil omens (9.307-9) before Poseidon reminds him that to kill Neoptolemus would be against the will of Zeus (9.314-15). He is forcefully driven from the battlefield, and is again incapable of making a real change to the war. His final

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<sup>953</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 99.

<sup>954</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 99.

<sup>955</sup> Apollo killing Achilles himself, without the aid or disguise of Paris, appears to be unique to the *Posthomerica*, and reflects the separation of gods from men (Wenglinsky 2002: 231).

<sup>956</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 163.

participation in the battle comes at 11.129-42, when he appears to Aeneas and Eurymachus disguised as Polymestor; after a brief speech (11.137-41) 'he mingled with the winds and became unseen' (ἀνέμοισι μίγη καὶ ἄιστος ἐτύχθη). He remains unseen for the rest of the poem: after watching the fighting (11.168-79) he takes no further part in the narrative. Apollo makes the most notable killing in the poem, but is otherwise peripheral and ineffective. To an extent this parallels the *Iliad*, in which Apollo also does little in battle after killing a hero in Achilles' armour (in that case Patroclus), but his future killing of Achilles is predicted, and throughout Homer's poem Apollo is tightly connected with war,<sup>957</sup> while his interventions in the narrative often drastically change the course of events.<sup>958</sup> In the *Posthomerica* his role and abilities are much reduced, and there is a greater distance between him and his favoured Trojans that emphasises his inability to save them.

Apollo's Iliadic counterpart amongst the Greeks is Athene: they are the greatest helpers of the Trojans and Greeks respectively, and are responsible for the important deaths of Patroclus and Hector. In the *Posthomerica*, however, Athene has an even smaller presence (touched upon above). Like Apollo, she has one great and impressive descent from Olympus to the battlefield (8.341-50), as she attempts to stop Ares rampaging. Lightning-bolts flash from her armour and serpents breathe fire on her shield (8.347-9), creating a terrifying image of a warlike goddess. But Zeus again thunders (8.353) and the gods leave, and Athene's awesome description makes her absence from battle even more incongruous. Her help with the Trojan Horse is also minor: she appears to Epeus in a dream to give him instructions (12.108-12), but her words are only related in indirect speech, and her action in this decisive moment is therefore minimised. Her appearance (12.107) is as an 'innocent virgin' (παρθενικῆ ἀταλάφρονι): though virginity is key to her identity (particularly as Athene Parthenos),<sup>959</sup> the adjective ἀταλάφρων is a Homeric *hapax* used at *Iliad* 6.400 to describe

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<sup>957</sup> Cusset & Kolde (2012): 2-4.

<sup>958</sup> Creating plague in the Greek camp (1.43-52); stunning Patroclus (16.788-804); petitioning Zeus to have Hector's body returned (24.31-54).

<sup>959</sup> Her virginity is indeed crucial to maintaining Zeus' rule over the world by preventing him having any male descendants (Kelly 2020: 283).

Astyanax in his nurse's arms. Even at one of the most crucial moments of the Trojan War, and one of her most well-known achievements, Athene remains very un-Iliadic.

Her most warlike moment in fact comes at the end of the poem, after Troy has been left behind, when she destroys the Greek fleet for Locrian Ajax's sacrilegious rape of Cassandra.<sup>960</sup> The *aegis* in the *Iliad* is a powerful military tool, used by Athene (5.738-42), Apollo (15.307-11), and Zeus himself (17.593-6), and made by Hephaestus 'to be carried for the routing of men' (15.310 φορήμεναι ἐς φόβον ἀνδρῶν). At 14.452 it finally appears in the *Posthomeric*, and is described in great detail (14.452-6), recalling particularly its lengthy description at *Iliad* 5.738-42, when Athene puts it on as she prepares to help Diomedes wound Ares.<sup>961</sup> But despite this recollection of Athene's military activities in the *Iliad* (and one of her most memorable interventions in particular), in the *Posthomeric* she only takes on this military role after the war has ended, and uses it not to kill the Trojans but her previously favoured Greeks. That the only militaristic descriptions of two of the gods most involved in battle in the *Iliad* (Apollo and Athene) come when their action is not so much to battle as to punish those guilty of sacrilege (Achilles in Book 3 for attempting to sack Troy against the will of Zeus, the Greeks in Book 14 for failing to punish Locrian Ajax) suggests that Quintus has a very different idea of the role of the gods. The differences are also made clear through comparison with Triphiodorus, for example, who has Athene play a much more active role in the battle than Quintus.<sup>962</sup> They are not partisan warriors as much as executors of divine retribution.<sup>963</sup> Athene and Apollo's killings are framed as fulfilling Zeus' desire to punish Achilles and the Greeks,<sup>964</sup>

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<sup>960</sup> For Quintus' treatment of this see above (p. 207).

<sup>961</sup> Carvounis (2019): 200.

<sup>962</sup> Miguélez-Cavero (2013): 22.

<sup>963</sup> This may be a more 'Odyssean' view of the gods (Carvounis 2007: 245), in which they take more targeted retributive action than in the *Iliad*, even if the principles of divine justice are the same (Allan 2006: 15-27). Quintus combines this role with an Iliadic setting to bridge the two poems and reinforce his 'temporality of the interval' (Greensmith 2020: 291).

<sup>964</sup> Apollo takes Zeus' opinion for granted in his decision to kill Achilles (3.58-9), though he is not rebuked when he returns to Olympus.

and the impression we are given is that these two gods act as agents of Zeus' justice<sup>965</sup> rather than as independent actors.

Zeus, meanwhile, remains remote and indeed fearsome for much of the poem, preferring (as we have seen) to use thunderbolts rather than words to enforce his superiority,<sup>966</sup> and he literally terrifies the gods into stopping their brief theomachy (12.200 ἀθανάτοισι ... ἔμπεσε δειῖμα – 'fear fell on the immortals').<sup>967</sup> His dominance over the other gods is absolute, and his behaviour as king is despotic; there is none of the hierarchical ranking caused by the *Iliad's* theomachy, and the other gods consequently become a homogenous mass in terms of status, all equally inferior to Zeus.<sup>968</sup> Similar violence from Zeus is found in the *Iliad*, for example with his threat to Hera at *Iliad* 1.565-7, but this terrifying aspect is also counterbalanced by more gentle interactions between him and his family elsewhere: Hera's deceptive seduction of him in *Iliad* 14, and his comforting of Artemis on his lap at *Iliad* 21.505-13. These are absent from the *Posthomerica* while the battle is ongoing, and Zeus remains silent and aloof: when Hera attempts to fight with him about the death of Achilles (4.48-55), Zeus (4.56) stays silent and makes no reply.<sup>969</sup>

Although Quintus' portrayal of the gods may depend to some extent on Middle-Platonist philosophy, there are also political and moral reasons for their differences from the Homeric poems. We noted above that the gods were involved in war because they had to be, military success requiring their support. We have, however, also seen that Quintus writes from an anti-

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<sup>965</sup> Belief in the gods as arbiters of divine revenge was still common in Roman Asia Minor in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-century AD, and they had a quasi-legal function, particularly in cases of defamation (Chaniotis 2004: 10), so Quintus' portrayal broadly reflects contemporary attitudes.

<sup>966</sup> Carvounis (2008): 65-6; Wenglinsky (2002): 205.

<sup>967</sup> Though the purpose of both this theomachy and its model narrated in *Iliad* 20-21 is to reinforce Olympus' hierarchy and Zeus' supremacy, the methods by which this is achieved differ: in the *Iliad* Zeus encourages the fight and at its end the gods all gather round him in their ranks; here they fight only when his back is turned and flee when he returns (Carvounis 2008: 63).

<sup>968</sup> Although Quintus is often analysed as a Stoic (e.g. James & Lee 2000: 11-12), they tended to view the gods as having a divine society without a strict hierarchy; Quintus' emphatic depiction of Zeus' absolute power over the other, relatively equal gods suggests he subscribes to a more Middle-Platonist conception (van Nuffelen 2011: 152).

<sup>969</sup> Bär (2016): 224.

Greek perspective, frequently emphasising their moral failings. He is therefore caught in a bind: he cannot avoid the fact that the Greeks win the war, and thus require the support of the gods; equally, the gods cannot support people repeatedly compared to Giants and Titans. While the war rages, their presence is thus diluted, particularly on the Greek side: Athene and Hera in particular do very little throughout the poem.<sup>970</sup> This absence is underscored by the relative lack of prominence for both Achilles and Agamemnon, the two heroes with greatest official proximity to the gods in the *Iliad* (Achilles through his semi-divinity, Agamemnon through his monopolisation of the act of sacrifice),<sup>971</sup> meaning there is no easy route by which the gods can interact at least with the Greeks. They still win, of course, due to fate and the increasingly inscrutable will of Zeus<sup>972</sup> that prevents Ares and Apollo helping the Trojans. As Calchas points out in Book 13, however, Aeneas will conquer the Greeks in turn, favoured as he is by the gods and helped directly by Aphrodite.

The only time the gods *can* get involved, and return to their more Homeric characteristics, comes when their actions and Quintus' moral and political beliefs align: the annihilation of the Greek fleet at the end of Book 14.<sup>973</sup> It is telling that this moment is when the gods become more Homeric. Zeus, previously remote and terrifying, engages in a familial conversation with his daughter Athene and promises her his help;<sup>974</sup> Athene, markedly uninvolved thus far, finally reverts to her Iliadic self by donning the *aegis* and going to war with the Greek fleet. The gods finally co-operate to destroy the Greek wall, no longer acting individually, and this co-operation is more complete than in other versions of the story.<sup>975</sup> They are able to act in their familiar roles only when

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<sup>970</sup> Wenglinsky (2002): 49-52, 58-60.

<sup>971</sup> Hitch (2009): 141-203.

<sup>972</sup> The two are to a great extent identical in the *Posthomerica* (Wenglinsky 2002: 318).

<sup>973</sup> Other authors tended to resolve issues concerning the morality of the gods by allegorising them; Quintus simply removes them until the opportunity for them to act morally arises (Wenglinsky 2002: 169). The importance of moralising to Quintus' poem is indicated by the presence of 33 *gnomai* spoken by the narrator throughout the poem, far more than the 3 found in the *Iliad* and 2 in the *Odyssey* (Greensmith 2020: 126).

<sup>974</sup> For the meta-poetic significance of this conversation – Quintus as Athene asserting his ability to inherit Homer as Zeus' legacy – see Greensmith (2020): 273-8.

<sup>975</sup> Wenglinsky (2002): 186-7.

Quintus feels the cause is just, and these actions are presented as an exemplar for divine justice.<sup>976</sup> While the differences in representations of the gods in battle between the *Posthomerica* and the Hellenistic (and New Kingdom) sources do reflect philosophical changes in religious beliefs, the principle remains the same. The gods should help, support, and enable the conqueror to win, because otherwise this conquest cannot be explained. When the writers *are* the conquerors, the gods are consequently free to play as great or small a part as necessary to glorify the king; Quintus, who may be a Greek but who favours the Trojans instead, makes them play a small part in battle to emphasise the moral illegitimacy of the Greeks, and then unleashes them after the war is over, when the Greeks can, and indeed *must*, be punished. In fact, it is Aeneas (despite being on the losing side) who is the only hero to receive divine aid on the battlefield,<sup>977</sup> and so he – even in defeat – is cast as the equivalent of the New Kingdom and Hellenistic kings in battle. Through his closeness to the gods and assimilation to conquering kings Quintus legitimises his descendants' conquest of the world.

If in the *Posthomerica* the gods are less actively involved than in the *Iliad*, in the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle the gods are more absent than in any other period under discussion, both from combat<sup>978</sup> and indeed the narratives in general. They are responsible for the conflict breaking out in *Armour*, dispatching demons to urge Pami the Younger and Wertyamonnit to fight (1.4-7),<sup>979</sup> but after this initial push they take no part in the fighting between humans that breaks out; they do not appear at all as characters in *Serpot*. *Benefice* again is the exception, and this is unsurprising given the battle is fought over a religious priesthood. Column 1 of P.Spiegelberg, part of the prelude to the conflict, features a theological description of the god's bark of Amun, and the god's bark goes

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<sup>976</sup> Wenglinsky (2002): 185.

<sup>977</sup> *ibid.*: 250.

<sup>978</sup> There are, however, one or two fragmentary papyri that seem to narrate the gods leading armies against unknown enemies (Quack 2016: 28-9).

<sup>979</sup> Osiris' command for the demons Merah and Horteb to stir up strife between Pami and Wertyamonnit (*Armour* 1.4-11) is one of very few examples of him acting in a military capacity, and is therefore atypical in its representation of the god (Kákosy 1977: 286-7).

on to be the location of the fighting throughout the narrative.<sup>980</sup> At 2.12-13 Petubastis is told to ask Amun to solve the dispute over who should get the benefice, and he duly does so: *šn pr-ḳ ʿ.w.s. m-bšḥ imn ḏ in pš ḥm-ḥl pš nt ir-šḥy n pš sʿnḥ rn=f imn iw r b ḥb.t n wʿ.t tks.t iw=s ys ḏ mtw=f pšy* ('Pharaoh I.p.h. inquired before Amun, saying: "Is the Young Priest the one who has a claim to this very benefice?" Amun came before him at great speed, saying: "He is"'). Despite Amun's decree, however, Petubastis refuses to give the Young Priest the benefice and fighting breaks out.

After his failure in battle, Petubastis returns to consult Amun (6.1-8): his request to fight is denied, and instead Amun (presumably in statue-form) is set up in a decorative palanquin to watch the battle. Following this interaction, we are given an overview of the topography of the battle (6.12-16):

*m-sš nšy pr-ḳ ʿ.w.s. pš-ti-bšst.t ḥr mtkḏ ḥr pš ʿ.(wy) imnḏ n šmʿ nt we niw.t iw imn pš nṯr ʿ ḥtp ḥr wʿ.t ḥb.t n šs n nsw iw pš mšʿ n kmy ḥk ḥr nšy=w šbše.w iw pš 13 n ʿm ḥr mr.t n pš wtne n imn*

After this, Pharaoh I.p.h. Petubastis was with the army on the west bank of Egypt, which is opposite Thebes, while Amun, the great god, was under a tent of king's linen, while the army of Egypt was bound in their armour, while the thirteen Asiatics were on board the bark of Amun.

The god sits in a luxurious tent, placed in the middle of the Egyptian army both literally and textually (*mtkḏ... imn... mšʿ*), while the Asiatics hold the boat and prevent him from accessing his bark. Amun acts as a figurehead for the Egyptian army and a legitimisation of their actions; his presence is invoked as a sign of encouragement by Pekrur (10.7).<sup>981</sup> After further inaction, Petubastis again consults Amun (10.11-25) and asks him a series of questions as to the correct course of action. After being reassured that the Asiatics will not triumph, Petubastis asks his final question (10.22-5): *ḏ=f pšy=y nb ʿ in iw iw=k ti n=y nḥt r nš ʿm.w r ti bše=w pš wtne n imn imn iwḏ r b ḥb.t (n) wʿ.t tks.t iw=s ys ḏ iw=y* ('He [Petubastis] said: "My great lord, will you give me strength over the Asiatics, to

<sup>980</sup> A theological subtext seems to run throughout the narrative (Hoffmann 1995: 30-8).

<sup>981</sup> This would appear to be a development of the god's presence in New Kingdom armies: reliefs of Ramesses III from Medinet Habu show Amun's standard on a chariot near to the king, indicating his presence within the army and proximity to the king (Heinz 2001: 66).

make them abandon the bark of Amun?” Amun came before him at great speed, saying: “I will”). The language of this question, in terms of *nḥt* and defeat of Asiatics, is reminiscent of New Kingdom war texts, and as a dialogue between king and Amun during a battle it thematically recalls Ramesses II’s prayer to the god in *Qadesh 2*, which would also have been addressed to the portable Amun statue in the camp.<sup>982</sup>

Whether there is direct allusion here is hard to say, but the contexts are certainly similar and Petubastis comes off badly in comparison. Whereas Ramesses II had pointed out that Amun failed in his duties, the narrative of *Benefice* so far has shown us that the blame lies entirely with the king, who failed to follow Amun’s initial command. Amun’s intervention at Qadesh gives Ramesses the strength to single-handedly defeat the enemy soldiers, and therefore emphasise his legitimacy as king, but his intervention here is not to give Petubastis strength, but merely to approve generals for the king to call upon, Pami and Petechons (11.2-3). Amun maintains his position as the ultimate commander of the Egyptian army by giving orders for the king to carry out,<sup>983</sup> but there is little overtly divine in his actions: though Amun does encourage the king to send for Pami and Petechons, he seems to have nothing to do with the arrival of Minnebmaat and his victory over the Asiatics. Theoretically both he and Petubastis remain at the head of the Egyptian army’s hierarchy – and are treated this way by the Egyptians – but their minimal presence in battle enables the warriors outside the royal family such as Minnebmaat to obtain greater glory for themselves. The close connection between the king and Amun in war, emphasised throughout the New Kingdom, means that when the king’s military abilities diminish, so do Amun’s.<sup>984</sup>

The relationship between the king and Amun in battle is replicated multiple times for almost all the major characters in the Demotic texts. During conversations in battle, many of the

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<sup>982</sup> Spalinger (2020): 167. Accounts of dialogue between human and god are known from the New Kingdom, but these are typically presented in indirect speech (Luiselli 2005: 42).

<sup>983</sup> For the quasi-legal force of oracles after the New Kingdom see Trapani (1993: 541).

<sup>984</sup> Attempts have been made to see *Benefice* as an allegory of various myths, different characters representing different gods (e.g. Jay 2016: 135; Quack 2016: 69), but none correspond perfectly to the complex web of relationships in the text.

fighters phrase their exclamations with reference to a god. In answer to the Asiatic's attempt to bribe him, Minnebmaat expresses his disgust with the idea (15.13), swearing: *hr hnm [...] nb yb pꜣy=y ntr* ('by Khnum [...] Lord of Elephantine, my god!'). The specification of geographical location and personal affiliation emphasises the very close bond between soldier and god that will theoretically grant divinely-ordained success in battle.<sup>985</sup> Elsewhere in *Benefice*, Petubastis exclusively swears by Amun, and (unsurprisingly) the Young Priest of Horus of Buto calls upon Horus of Buto (3.9); the choice of deity is a key expression of personal identity. In *Serpot* only two gods are sworn by, Isis and Osiris. The fact that Serpot and the army of the women swear by Isis, named (3.41) as *b hry.t n pꜣ b nꜣ s-hm.wt* ('the mistress of the Land of the Women'), asserts their femininity, since no other fighters call on goddesses in battle.<sup>986</sup> When the Indians call upon Osiris 'the great Agathodaimon of India' (9.4 *pꜣ šy ꜥ n hntw*), this is perhaps to invoke Dionysus (who was equated with Osiris) and therefore Alexander,<sup>987</sup> rather than to characterise the Indians in any particular way. *Armour* is closer to *Benefice* in its use of the gods and oaths: Minnemei (=Minnebmaat), for example, braces himself for battle at 24.22-3 with an almost identical oath to the one in *Benefice* (*ꜥnh hnm nb <yb> pꜣ ntr ꜥ pꜣy=y ntr*). Other characters swear very similar oaths to their own gods: Wertyamonnit with Banebdjedet, god of Mendes (9.10), Pkrur with Sopdu, god of Pisopdu (21.5), and Petubastis with Amun-Re, who is associated both with Karnak *and* Tanis (7.32), connecting the city of the king of the gods with the city of the Egyptian king despite the distance in between. These oaths allow the speaker to express their civic identity through reference to a god, and in the case of Petubastis also reinforce their social position: his ability to swear by Amun-Re legitimises his kingship.

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<sup>985</sup> This idea of a close connection between an individual and one chosen god is found throughout Egyptian history (Baines & Frood 2011: 3).

<sup>986</sup> Foreigners in the Demotic narratives could pray to foreign gods: an Assyrian prays to Ahura-Mazda in the *Inaros Epic* (Ryholt 2012: 152). That Serpot does not do so here suggests her liminal identity, discussed in Chapter 3 (pp. 146-7).

<sup>987</sup> Ryholt (2013): 76.

More complex are the cases of Montbaal and Pami the Younger. After arriving with an army of Medes, and before introducing himself by name, Montbaal utters a prayer to Baal (19.19): *i.ir n3.w=y nh3.t sp-sn i bl p3 ntr 3 p3y=y ntr* ('give me strength, give me strength, O Baal, the great god, my god'). The wording of the prayer is different: instead of simply swearing by the god, this unknown warrior asks for *nh3.t*, the very militaristic concept of 'strength' omnipresent in New Kingdom texts. He asks the god to allow him to triumph in battle, as Petubastis did with Amun in *Benefice*, and so calls more directly for divine intervention in combat. That he chooses to call on Baal, rather than Montu (the other element of his syncretised theophoric name) emphasises the foreignness of Montbaal despite his familial relationship to the other Inarids (19.21). The repetition of this prayer for military power immediately before he joins the battle and is compared while fighting to Sekhmet (22.7-13) suggests that he does possess some divine fighting abilities, though any action by Baal is implied; that Montbaal was told to come to Egypt by a *hs.(t) n mt.(t)-ntr* ('song of divine speech') in a dream (19.27-33) also indicates that he interacts with the gods to a greater degree than the other heroes.<sup>988</sup>

Pami is the most unusual of the characters in *Armour* because he uniquely calls upon multiple gods. As the chief of Heliopolis, the god Pami should be swearing by (following the examples of the other warriors) is Atum, and his first oath at 2.10 fits this pattern: *nh3 itm p3 ntr 3 p3y=y ntr* ('by Atum, the great god, my god'). When he swears another oath (4.x+8-x+9), however, he swears by both Atum and Nefertem, and claims double divine support for himself. The latter god was associated with Pami's home of Heliopolis, but from the New Kingdom was also viewed as the child of Ptah and the war-goddess Sekhmet, and thus associated with the traditional royal city of Memphis.<sup>989</sup> By invoking him Pami associates himself with royal violence and power. In two

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<sup>988</sup> Penthesilea, as we have seen, was also commanded by a divine dream to come to fight in the *Posthomerica*, and her connection to the divine (as daughter of Ares) is unquestionable. Montbaal will, of course, prove drastically more successful. The description of a character named Montbaal as a 'prophet' in another story from the Inaros Cycle suggests that his proximity to the divine extended beyond *Armour* (Bresciani 1963: 4-8).

<sup>989</sup> Kühn (2002): 32.

conversations with Petubastis, Pami calls upon Re-Horakhty as well, naming him (5.6, 8.3) as *r<sup>c</sup>-hr-  
 ih.ty hry ntr.w p3 ntr 3 p3y=y ntr* ('Re-Horakhty, Chief of the Gods, the great god, my god'): though Re-Horakhty was also a Heliopolitan deity, Pami stresses his social status as foremost of the gods. Both of these oaths are within conversations that describe Pami having to act for the king in a military capacity (he narrates at 5.7-9 how he, rather than Petubastis, defeated the Assyrians); by invoking the 'Chief of the Gods', and emphasising his personal connection ('my god'), Pami asserts his own claims to divine royal authority that complement his royal achievements in battle.<sup>990</sup> But despite all of these invocations, none of these gods actually appear in battle, and do not seem to take any obvious actions. Pami links himself to Re-Horakhty, and it is the deeds of his own hands that make this claim possible: human warriors win glory by themselves, and the gods' absence from battle makes this glory all the greater.

The multiplicity of different warrior/god relationships across the Demotic texts renders the most simple ones (including Petubastis' with Amun-Re in *Armour*) banal, and emphasises the significance of the exceptions (Montbaal and Baal, Pami and Atum, Nefertem, and Re-Horakhty) and the warriors involved in them, to the detriment of the king. As with the *Posthomerica*, the absence of the gods reflects the absence of a suitably successful divine king with whom they can work; indeed, the previously familial and omnipotent relationship between the king and Amun becomes dysfunctional in *Benefice*. And similarly to Quintus' examples, the gods are most active when they are punishing the Egyptians for their transgressions, as Osiris does at the beginning of *Armour*. The difference lies in the timing: Quintus' gods become involved at the conclusion and their hostility is open-ended, stretching to the present day and thus legitimising the continuing Roman conquest of the Greeks. In the Demotic texts their action comes at the beginning and is resolved by the end. Their anger with the king is legitimate, and he is – and historically, was –

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<sup>990</sup> The gods' opposition to the king and promotion of an Egyptian rival is mentioned in the *Demotic Chronicle* with relation to Hakoris' deposition by Psammuthes, so Pami's implied threat plays into this way of viewing Egypt's past failures.

unable to avoid military defeat. But whereas the gods of the *Posthomerica* exhibit a lasting anger towards the Greeks, the same is not true of the Egyptian gods. The Greek gods may have turned against their people, but the Egyptian gods have not abandoned theirs.

### **Life at the Bottom: Wars below the King**

Beyond the leaders of the armies, there are many individuals occupying ranks of various power and significance, from high-ranking generals who could personally advise the king(s) to the most basic infantry. All, however, are essentially treated the same, and play very little part in any of the wars or battles being described. The New Kingdom sources provide clear examples of this phenomenon. Most representations of war, in text and/or image, from the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty come from royal inscriptions on temple walls or on stelae, although mentions of warfare are found in a small number of private inscriptions. Battles are narrated in detail in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty tomb biographies of Ahmose son of Ibana and Amenemhab, and more concisely in the biography of Ahmose Pennekhbet;<sup>991</sup> in the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty the disparity between royal and nonroyal is even more stark, with depictions of warfare essentially confined to royal spheres.<sup>992</sup>

Within all these depictions, royal and non-royal, the king is always dominant, and little attention is given to other Egyptian participants.<sup>993</sup> The most balanced view of soldier and sovereign is presented in the tomb biographies, though even in these the character of the tomb owner is either (at best) given similar prominence to the king,<sup>994</sup> and more typically is presented as

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<sup>991</sup> *Urk.* IV.1-11; 889-919; 35-6. For translation of the biography of Ahmose son of Ibana see Lichtheim (2006), for that of Amenemhab see Redford (2003: 167-70).

<sup>992</sup> A notable exception is the biography of Setau (and in a stela from a member of his group); this use of warfare is one of the most marked ways in which Setau (viceroy of Kush) casts himself in a 'quasi-pharaonic' role (Frood 2007: 27). Scenes of the king smiting his enemies appear on private stelae from the late-18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty onwards, at roughly the same time that private narratives seem to cease (Schulman 1988: 8).

<sup>993</sup> This focus on the king seems to grow during the New Kingdom, especially after Akhenaten (Guksch 1994: 27).

<sup>994</sup> So in Amenemhab's biography he is grammatical subject and actor for the first 11 columns, but after Thutmose III appears in the narrative (column 12) the king becomes the central actor (Di Biase-Dyson 2015: 138). The same is true for Ahmose son of Ibana (see below, pp. 255-6).

an 'extra' rather than a protagonist. The biography of the herald Ahmose Pennekhbet, inscribed in his tomb at Elkab and on two statues,<sup>995</sup> is very sparse in its detail of the royal campaigns (from Ahmose I to Thutmose II) from a narrative viewpoint, and instead mostly lists Ahmose's achievements in each campaign in terms of plunder; neither king nor soldier are particularly prominent here,<sup>996</sup> but the text in its stripped-down form anticipates the later surviving sections of Thutmose III's *Annals*, which describe the king's campaigns with little narrative and frequent, long lists of the spoils. The compilation of these lists succinctly emphasises one's success in war, and highlights the success of the king as well: Ahmose's extensive rewards are part of the much greater spoils that the kings took.<sup>997</sup> This biography, however, only provides a very basic outline of war that depicts success purely in terms of material gains.

In contrast to this utilitarian attitude to war is the roughly contemporaneous Elkab tomb of the admiral Ahmose son of Ibana. Inscribed over two walls in his tomb chapel and consisting of 66 columns (column 32 was left blank, and the last 18 columns each list the name of a slave he captured), his narrative – unlike that of Ahmose Pennekhbet – consists almost entirely of campaigns under the first three kings of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty.<sup>998</sup> Despite its lengthier narrations, it is also rather selective, since Ahmose typically only includes one or two campaigns for each king in order to glorify himself by association with each king he served under.<sup>999</sup> If we examine the narratives of the various campaigns, it becomes apparent that there is a significant imbalance in their lengths: the

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<sup>995</sup> *Urk.* IV.32-9; for discussion of the tomb see Davies (2014).

<sup>996</sup> The section of his biography detailing the military campaigns is physically compressed, the hieroglyphs carved in a smaller size than the rest of his biography; the focus is instead placed on his non-military roles, particularly as tutor to Neferure, daughter of Thutmose II and Hatshepsut (Davies 2014: 395).

<sup>997</sup> Both this biography and that of Ahmose son of Ibana adopt features of the royal annals in their descriptions of their plunder, associating themselves with the king both inside the narrative and intertextually (Gnirs 1996: 230).

<sup>998</sup> For discussion of the tomb see Davies (2009).

<sup>999</sup> It was probably his grandson Pahery who either finalised or composed the text, emphasising his grandfather's closeness to the kings to explain how he himself had become 'tutor of the king's son Wadjmose' (Davies 2009: 153-4). But the effect is the same.

first campaign to expel the Hyksos from Lower Egypt occupies around ten columns (6-16), whereas the other six take up between three and six columns.

It is true that the expulsion of the Hyksos was a hugely significant moment in history from a military point of view, but so was Thutmose I's invasion of the Naharin in the north Levant, which is in comparison only briefly described (columns 36-9). Instead, the first campaign (or series of campaigns treated as one) against the Hyksos is made the longest because it is Ahmose's first. It immediately characterises Ahmose as a valiant and successful fighter: we had already been told that his father had been a soldier for Seqenenre Tao,<sup>1000</sup> showing that soldiery ran in the family. Ahmose introduces the military narrative by stating that he was transferred to a new boat *hr km=i* ('because of my valour'),<sup>1001</sup> and places this idea in our head before any evidence is given. Having taken up this theme, Ahmose very emphatically repeats it over and over, signified by the constant repetition of the root *wḥm* to mean either 'repeat' or 'herald'. So in his description of his fight against the Hyksos, Ahmose describes his actions (columns 9-10):

*ḥꜥ.n ḥꜥfꜥ.n=i in.n=i dꜣt smi.t(w) n wḥm-nsu wn.in.tw hr rdt-n=i nbw n knt ḥꜥ.n wḥmw ḥꜥ m st-tn wn.in=i hr wḥm ḥꜥfꜥ im in.n=i dꜣt wn.in.tw hr rdt-n=i nbw n knt m-wḥm-ꜥ*

Then I made a seizure and I brought back a hand; then it was reported to the royal **herald**, and then I was given the gold of valour. Then fighting **was repeated** in this place, and then I **repeated** making a seizure there and I brought back a hand; then I was given the gold of valour **once again**.

Instead of providing one list at the end of the campaign against the Hyksos, Ahmose punctuates the battles with lists of his deeds, and this sense of repetition convinces us of his courage and skill in battle.<sup>1002</sup>

In his biography (inscribed in his tomb chapel from the West Bank at Thebes), the general Amenemhab uses many of the same techniques as Ahmose to construct a narrative of his life that

<sup>1000</sup> *Urk.* IV.2.9-11.

<sup>1001</sup> *Urk.* IV.3.4.

<sup>1002</sup> Schulz (1995): 326-9.

focuses on his role as a soldier.<sup>1003</sup> Amenemhab's tomb is among the largest in Thebes,<sup>1004</sup> and contains a lengthy biographical narrative running over 47 columns that is entirely concerned, like Ahmose son of Ibanah's, with war; it also contains a series of large reliefs, including one depicting him battling against a colossal hyena. He too immediately characterises himself as a military man, and also relates a (probably selective) set of campaigns in which he achieved distinction; similarly, his repeated achievements and rewards (including a lion) are emphasised by the frequent use of *wḥm*. Thus Amenemhab's journey towards the Euphrates is characterised by a series of battles (columns 4-9):

*iw ḥf<sup>c</sup>.n=i ḥr ḥḥst nt ng-bḥ ... wḥm ḥf<sup>c</sup> n wdyt-tn ḥr ḥḥst tḥ tḥst w<sup>c</sup>n ... wḥm kf<sup>c</sup> n wdyt-tn ḥr ḥḥst  
nt kḥ-ry-kḥ-my-š<sup>c</sup>*

I made a seizure in the land of Negeb ... a repetition of seizing on this campaign, in the land of the ridge of Wan ... a repetition of seizing on this campaign, in the land of Carchemish.

There are also short but highly dramatic episodes, in which Amenemhab kills a horse of the leader of Qadesh (columns 27-8) and helps assault the city (columns 30-1). It is notable that the only two living things Amenemhab explicitly says he injured are an elephant (column 24)<sup>1005</sup> and a mare (columns 27-8),<sup>1006</sup> and only the horse is said to be killed.<sup>1007</sup> Killing (or indeed injuring) enemy soldiers appears to have become problematic in non-royal representations of war: it is only the king who can kill other humans.

After Amenemhab, long narratives of battle become much rarer, with even less focus on the private individual. Thutmose III and Amenhotep II's war narratives, which increasingly focused on the physical presence and skill of the king in battle, perhaps allowed little room for textual non-

<sup>1003</sup> *Urk.* IV.889-919. For recent studies see Di Biase-Dyson (2015) and Baines (2020b).

<sup>1004</sup> Baines (2020b): 62.

<sup>1005</sup> *Urk.* IV.893.16-17.

<sup>1006</sup> *Urk.* IV.894.6-11.

<sup>1007</sup> In so doing Amenemhab emphasises his mastery over animals as well as humans, as he does with the relief of him battling against the hyena (Di Biase-Dyson 2015: 132).

royal intrusion into this field, especially given their continued successes.<sup>1008</sup> Where other private individuals do display prominent links to the army, they often portray themselves in relatively harmless (and non-violent) positions, as with the army scribe Tjanuny, whose tomb biography<sup>1009</sup> contains many mentions of war as an administrative event, but no battling.

In tandem with this decreasing importance of the private individual comes the increasing prominence of the king in these texts. Already in Ahmose son of Ibana's biography there is a tension in the relationship between soldier and king: in the first part the narrative focus is largely on Ahmose (the soldier) and not Ahmose (the king). Later, however, the soldier takes on more of a background role, and although occasional episodes feature him prominently (especially his forcing of the fleet over the cataracts of the Nile,<sup>1010</sup> crucially a non-violent deed), he as a participant becomes little more than a third-person narrator of the king's deeds. This can be seen through the verbs in the text: between the first *hr-m-ht* ('afterwards') that introduces the military narrative of Ahmose's life and the next that moves on to the other campaigns of the kings,<sup>1011</sup> the main clauses are almost entirely either first-person or impersonal, with 'his Person' not acting as subject of a main clause until the end of column 14 when the king rewards Ahmose.<sup>1012</sup> By contrast, after the second *hr-m-ht* almost all of the main verbs are in the third-person, and the first-person is mostly used only to describe Ahmose's plunder. Amenhotep I's Nubian campaign is narrated in this way (columns 17-18):<sup>1013</sup>

*wn.in=f hr hntyt r hnt-hn-nfr r sksk iwntyw-sty wn.in hm=f hr irt h3yt 3t im=sn 3h3.n in.n=i h3kt im ...*

Then he sailed south to Khenthennefer to destroy the Nubian bowmen, and then his Person made great slaughter amongst them. Then I brought back plunder from there ...

<sup>1008</sup> Gnirs & Loprieno (2008): 270.

<sup>1009</sup> *Urk.* IV 1002-5.

<sup>1010</sup> *Urk.* IV.8.8-9.

<sup>1011</sup> *Urk.* IV.3.2; 5.4.

<sup>1012</sup> *Urk.* IV.4.13.

<sup>1013</sup> *Urk.* IV.5.5-8.

Two semantically parallel phrases further reveal this change of subject: at column 8 Ahmose describes his fighting at the siege of Avaris: *wn.ḥr=i ḥr knt ḥr rdwy=i m-bḥ ḥm=f* ('and then I was valorous on my legs before his Person').<sup>1014</sup> This contrasts with column 26, when Ahmose describes his fighting in Amenhotep I's Nubian Campaign: *iw ḥḥ.n=i r-wn-mḥ mḥ.n ḥm=f knt=i* ('I fought truly well, and his Person saw my valour').<sup>1015</sup> Whereas before the king had been an onlooker in an essentially passive sense, with Ahmose the active fighter, here the king is the actor, exerting his gaze on Ahmose.

There are no more special deeds of heroism from Ahmose in battle, and the king is now effectively the sole fighter. At column 25 Amenhotep I apparently kills his Nubian enemy alone *m ḥry-ib mš=f* ('in the midst of his army'),<sup>1016</sup> and Thutmose I manages to kill his enemy counterpart (column 33) with a single arrow: *wdt ḥm=f šsr=f tp mn m šnbt nt ḥrw-pf* ('his Person shot his first arrow, and it stuck fast in the throat of that enemy').<sup>1017</sup> In these later sections there are still ways for Ahmose to claim military glory for himself, largely by association with these glorious deeds of the kings: the description of such acts indicates a spatial and personal closeness between Ahmose and his rulers. Just as he had opened this narrative with a lengthy narrative of a hugely important event, he closes it in a similar manner, with a description of his capture of a chariot and its team,<sup>1018</sup> as one of the most elite status symbols in Egypt at that time,<sup>1019</sup> Ahmose's deed here creates a more personal parallel to the expulsion of the Hyksos that began his military career. He may well have continued fighting after this campaign, but this was clearly what he or his family wanted him to be remembered by, and so this is where his narrative ends. The relative lack of focus on Ahmose in the second part of the text may seem odd to us, but the overall effect is that Ahmose and the kings come out very well from it, and this, after all, is the point.

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<sup>1014</sup> *Urk.* IV.3.8.

<sup>1015</sup> *Urk.* IV.7.9.

<sup>1016</sup> *Urk.* IV.7.3.

<sup>1017</sup> *Urk.* IV.8.14-15.

<sup>1018</sup> *Urk.* IV.9.17-10.2.

<sup>1019</sup> For the social significance of the chariot see Díaz Hernández (2014).

The biography of Amenemhab shares a similar tension in the balance between soldier and king as subject of the narrative. The earlier episodes, as with Ahmose, feature Amenemhab as the primary actor, possibly because they narrate battles in which the king was not present.<sup>1020</sup> Unlike Ahmose, however, the later narratives are very dramatic and vivid, as the biography moves thematically from demonstrating Amenemhab's mastery over humans to showing his mastery over animals.<sup>1021</sup> The sudden, rapid switch from the elephant hunt and resulting rewards to the battle against Qadesh at column 26 (*ḥbs-ꜥ 5 ḥꜥ.n rd.n pꜣ wr n ꜥdšw pr wꜥt ssmwt* ('[the king gave to me] five pieces of clothing for the arm. Then the chief of Qadesh sent a single mare out ...'))<sup>1022</sup> creates a marked sense of drama and speed, and links all the episodes together narratively and ideologically.<sup>1023</sup> Both episodes show Amenemhab fighting against non-human 'Others', and both are prestigious (an elephant and a horse sent by the enemy chief). A description of the wall of Qadesh being 'newly made' (*pꜣ sbty n mꜣwt ir n ꜥdš*) at column 30<sup>1024</sup> makes Amenemhab's forcing of it all the more glorious; the emphatic use of the independent first-person pronoun *ink* (columns 30-1: *ink sd-sw* – 'I was the one that broke it')<sup>1025</sup> suggests its personal importance. Although the king plays a smaller narrative role in these episodes, he is still ideologically connected with warfare: Amenemhab describes himself presenting the slaughtered mare's tail to him, showing the need for recognition by the ultimate soldier, and it is the king that is the driving force for the siege of Qadesh, even though he does not seem to have taken part in the fighting.

The techniques seen in this biography to glorify the king and the soldier (the king slightly more) can also be seen in the inscriptions of Minmose, overseer of works in the temples of the gods of Upper and Lower Egypt, on a statue in the temple of Montu from Medamud, and the royal

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<sup>1020</sup> Di Biase-Dyson (2015): 126.

<sup>1021</sup> *ibid.*: 132; Baines (2020b): 62.

<sup>1022</sup> *Urk.* IV.894.4-5. For military rewards from the king see Binder (2008).

<sup>1023</sup> The temporal marker *ḥꜥ.n* is probably intended here to mark a sequence of thematic events rather than close chronological progress; 'later' might be a more suitable translation for the context (Di Biase-Dyson 2015: 136).

<sup>1024</sup> *Urk.* IV.894.17.

<sup>1025</sup> *Urk.* IV.895.1.

steward Montuiwy, on a stela from his tomb in Thebes; both served under Thutmose III and Amenhotep II.<sup>1026</sup> Minmose goes further than Amenemhab in side-lining himself: he portrays himself as little more than a witness of the king's actions in war, and functions almost as a window through which we can see the king's valour for ourselves. For example, in columns 4-5 he says that *m3.n(=i) rd[t ǰ hm=f hr [h3st-nb r] pḥ t3 ... m3.n(=i) shr=f t3 3msy* ('I saw the [arm] of his Person being strong against [every foreign land to] the end of the earth ... I saw him overthrow the Asiatic land').<sup>1027</sup> At the end of his narrative (column 14) similar phrasing is repeated: *m3.n(=i) rdt 3 hm=f hr hpr m 3ḥ* ('I saw the arm of his Person being strong when fighting occurred').<sup>1028</sup>

Between these two descriptions of the king in battle Minmose portrays himself as much more active, acting as an administrator for the conquered lands. But in battle we are told little about Minmose other than that he accompanied the king in battle and witnessed his glory, which is universal (*r pḥ t3*) and cyclical (through the repetition of *m3.n(=i)*). Montuiwy also describes himself acting in battle only as a witness to the king's strength (lines 9-10): *[m3].n.tw pḥty=f [hr] nḥtw n [3wy=fy h3] w hr wr[rt=f]* ('one [saw] his strength [in] the victories of [his arms, when he appeared] on [his] chariot').<sup>1029</sup> In this case the effect is more extreme: the use of the impersonal subject, rather than the first-person seen in all other examples, almost erases Montuiwy from the action completely. Yet even this impersonal viewing of the king's power was clearly felt to be enough to obtain glory.

The role of private individuals in representations of war seems to be minimised in the later New Kingdom.<sup>1030</sup> Rare examples of military content in private inscriptions are stelae of the viceroys

<sup>1026</sup> *Urk.* IV.1441-5; 1466-8. For translation of Minmose's inscription see Redford (2003: 173-4).

<sup>1027</sup> *Urk.* IV.1441.15-16.

<sup>1028</sup> *Urk.* IV.1442.16.

<sup>1029</sup> *Urk.* IV.1467.3-4.

<sup>1030</sup> Similarly, the awarding of the Gold of Honour to a private individual, frequently connected to military actions in the early New Kingdom, became dissociated from warfare under Amenhotep III and honours for military activities are rarely mentioned at all in the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty (Binder 2008: 223, 248). For a partial exception, a stela depicting the king rewarding a squadron, see Raedler (2006: 152-7), though note that the king is rewarding the valour of a group, not an individual.

of Nubia Paser and Setau, and that of the marine standard-bearer Khetef, all three serving under Ramesses II.<sup>1031</sup> Khetef, like Ahmose son of Ibana, was an officer in Egypt's navy but, unlike Ahmose, makes no mention of war, which emphasises the changes in nonroyal access to warfare. Paser's mention of warfare, in a stela set up near Abu Simbel, is only a short encomium of the king's activities. Even Setau's exceptional (for his time) use of war in his stela set up in the temple of Wadi el-Sebua is minor compared to its prominence in the biographies of Amenemhab and Ahmose son of Ibana, and all violent acts are ascribed to the king. So, while his administrative duties are described using the first-person (lines 12-13), the subsequent description of his military actions is framed instead by the king's actions (lines 13-14): *ḥꜥk pꜥ ḥpš tnr n pr-ꜥ pꜥy(=i) nb nfr pꜥ tꜥ n irm ḥs ... sšmw(=i) wšt ḥr-ḥꜥt mšꜥ=f* ('The strong muscle of Pharaoh, my perfect lord, plundered the land of vile Irem ... I was leading the way before his army').<sup>1032</sup> The fighting and victory is done by the king; Setau, like Tjanuny and Minmose, presents himself fulfilling a largely administrative rather than soldierly role.<sup>1033</sup> His extremely high rank – as Viceroy of Kush he was second only to the king – and the location of this stela in Nubia, the area under his control, perhaps helps to explain this exceptional private narrative of warfare in the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, but even so his participation in battle is secondary to that of the king.<sup>1034</sup>

In battles in royal texts, non-royal Egyptians vanish completely, at least as individuals. One of the most common aspects of the king to emphasise in battle is his total aloneness in the fighting, especially in contrast to a stereotypical multitude of enemies. Thutmose III's Gebel Barkal Stela emphasises this notion, particularly in the context of its Megiddo episode. The description of the enemy army (lines 3-4) emphasises not only their numbers (*ḥšwt-nb ... skw ꜥꜥw nn ḏrw m rmt*

<sup>1031</sup> *KRI* III.76-7; 91-5; 265.

<sup>1032</sup> *KRI* III.93.8-11. Similar phrasing is found in the papyrus narrative of the Late Egyptian *Taking of Joppa*, in which the general Djehuti, who has sacked the town, describes the event (3.4-5; *LES* 82-5) as *pꜥ ḥpš tnr n pr-ꜥ ꜥ.w.s. ḥr mh m pꜥ dmit* ('the strong muscle of Pharaoh l.p.h. was seizing the town'). Thutmose III, like Ramesses II, is an absent actor (Di Biase-Dyson 2013: 238), Djehuti and Setau extensions of the king's power.

<sup>1033</sup> Frood (2007): 209.

<sup>1034</sup> Cf. the nearby stela of Setau's subordinate Ramose, which mentions military action carried out by Setau but narrates only the command received from the king (Frood 2007: 211-12).

*ssmwt* – ‘every foreign land ... numerous troops without limit in men and horses’) but also, unusually, their confidence in a broadly positive way (*ii.n=sn ibw=sn šhm nn hryw m ib=sn* – ‘it was with stout hearts that they came, without dread in their hearts’).<sup>1035</sup> This is, of course, highly ironic (given the king’s brief and therefore easy defeat of them immediately following), but also contrasts with the typical descriptions of the enemy army that cast them as more arrogant than brave: in Amenhotep III’s Semna Stela, for example, we are told of the enemy army (lines 8-9) that *ibht kt Gyw m ibw=sn mšl-ḥsšw pš ḥkš smš.n=f-st* (‘Ibhet had been boastful and arrogant, but the lion, the ruler, he slaughtered them’).<sup>1036</sup>

The Gebel Barkal Stela instead emphasises both the valour and numbers of the enemies to further glorify the king’s victory, rather than to denigrate the foreigners. Later (line 6) we are also told that *mš<sup>c</sup> šš n mtm šhr m km n wnw<sup>t</sup>* (‘the large army of the Mitanni was overthrown in the space of an hour’).<sup>1037</sup> The numeric contrast between *šš* and *km n wnw<sup>t</sup>* is emphatic, and again shows the king’s ability to overcome any numerical disadvantage. Amenhotep II also repeatedly uses this motif: in addition to being the only soldier necessary in an army, a passage in his Great Sphinx Stela also makes him the only sailor necessary in a crew, able to do all the rowing for them.<sup>1038</sup> In his Memphis Stela, during his expedition to Khashabu (line 12) we are told that the king is *w<sup>c</sup>w nn wnt snnw=f* (‘alone, without any companion for him’),<sup>1039</sup> effectively disregarding the entire Egyptian army. The idea is repeated at line 25, when we are told that he is *w<sup>c</sup> nn w<sup>c</sup>-nb ḥn<sup>c</sup>=f* (‘alone, without anyone at all with him’) and that *pš mš<sup>c</sup> wš r=f* (‘the army was far from him’).<sup>1040</sup> The emphasis on the spatial separation between the king and his army describes a physical as well as ideological aloneness in battle for the king, the only one who triumphs. No gods or man can detract from the king’s prowess in battle.

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<sup>1035</sup> *Urk.* IV.1229.8-9.

<sup>1036</sup> *Urk.* IV.1660.8-9.

<sup>1037</sup> *Urk.* IV.1230.5.

<sup>1038</sup> *Urk.* IV.1279.17-1280.7; Klug (2002): 233-4.

<sup>1039</sup> *Urk.* IV.1304.10.

<sup>1040</sup> *Urk.* IV.1307.16.

The tension in the relationship between the king and his army is made most clear in Ramesses II's two *Qadesh* texts, both of which deal with the position of different ranks within the army.<sup>1041</sup> *Qadesh 1* is concerned largely with the king's relationship with his generals. After learning that the Hittites are about to ambush him, Ramesses II gathers his top generals and tells the news.<sup>1042</sup> The speech is vituperative, quoting his officials' previous reassurances and ending by pointing out their failure (§64-7):

*ptri-st ḥḥ ḳḫw n-ḥḫ ḳdš t̄ ist iw bw rḥ n̄y=i mw-r-ḥst ḥnḥ n̄y=i srw nty n̄ t̄w n pr-ḳ ḥ.w.s. r-ḥt=sn ḳd n=n st iw*

Look, they [the Hittites] stand hiding behind Qadesh the Old, with my overseers of foreign lands, and my officials whose domains are the lands of Pharaoh I.p.h., unable to say to us "They have come!"

The blame for the current danger is laid at the feet of the king's generals; they immediately acknowledge this and so assert their subservience to the king.<sup>1043</sup> Ramesses II quickly orders his vizier to speed up the army to be able to come to his rescue,<sup>1044</sup> and demonstrates that his highest officials must nevertheless be micromanaged by the king. This is their last appearance in this text, the rest being dominated by the king, and so the final impression we are given of the king's generals is that they are failures who must be rescued by the king's single-handed counterattack on the Hittites.<sup>1045</sup>

In *Qadesh 2* the focus is on the failure of the king's army: the narrative of the generals' failure is omitted, and the ultimate cause of the Egyptian failure therefore rests on the easy defeat of the Egyptian infantry and chariots rather than on the officials' failure to gather intelligence.

<sup>1041</sup> And, as noted above (pp. 231-2), with differing relationships between the king and Amun.

<sup>1042</sup> *KRI* II.112.9-115.16.

<sup>1043</sup> *KRI* II.116.6-117.4.

<sup>1044</sup> *KRI* II.117.1-10.

<sup>1045</sup> This depiction of the relationship between the king and his officials is typical, especially in texts of the *Königsnovelle* format, if more dramatically developed and narrated here. It therefore seems unlikely that these texts were exceptionally composed to weaken the political/military power of higher officials, especially given what we know of the early 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty's control of the army (Murnane 1995: 209-10).

Already in the encomium that begins *Qadesh 2* there is an emphasis on the potential weakness of the Egyptian army and the necessity that the king save them: Ramesses II is *sbty dr m-rk mšc=f p3y=sn krw hrw n ḥ3* ('strong wall around his army, their shield on the day of battle') and *šd mšc=f hrw ḥ3 nḥw 3 n 3y=f nt-ḥtrw in šmsw=f nḥm mnḥt* ('rescuer of his army on the day of battle, great protector of his chariotry, who brings back his followers, who guards his infantry').<sup>1046</sup> The comprehensive list of different positions within the Egyptian army, including both the elite (chariots/followers) and non-elite (infantry), emphasises Ramesses's dominance within the hierarchy, and foreshadows their helplessness. In contrast to this introduction to Ramesses, with the focus entirely on the individual king and his dominance of the army, the introduction of the Hittite king instead lists his many allies/subjects<sup>1047</sup> and essentially subsumes the ruler into his army: the enemy king is presented as just another soldier without distinction,<sup>1048</sup> while Ramesses II is *wḥw ḥr-tp=f* ('alone, by himself').<sup>1049</sup> The juxtaposition of the two kings and their armies indicates the stark contrast between their relative statuses. The characterisation of the Hittites and their king as an overly numerous mass continues: the king is 'in the midst of' his army (rather than at its front),<sup>1050</sup> and the detail that the Hittite chariots have three men rather than the Egyptian two further emphasises the disparity in number between the two sides,<sup>1051</sup> and consequently the respective bravery or cowardice of their leaders.

After the Hittite attack and the rout of the Egyptian army this disparity in number becomes much greater. The language of aloneness used by Amenhotep II in his Memphis Stela reappears,

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<sup>1046</sup> *KRI* II.6.6-10; 10.1-10.

<sup>1047</sup> *KRI* II.16.1-19.8.

<sup>1048</sup> His kingship is recognised when he is named (as e.g. 'Chief of Hatti'), but always qualified with a negative adjective, either *ḥsy* ('vile') or *ḥr* ('fallen'), and the letter he presents to the king in *Qadesh 2* (*KRI* II.92.7-95.11) uses language characteristic of diplomatic correspondence from vassal kings (Mynářová 2011: 137-8).

<sup>1049</sup> *KRI* II.21.5-10.

<sup>1050</sup> The reliefs take a different approach to depicting the cowardice of the Hittite king, placing him far away from the fighting and avoiding Ramesses (Prakash 2011-2012: 150).

<sup>1051</sup> *KRI* II.24.8-25.11. For similar Greek insistence on numerical disparity see the epitaph for the dead at Thermopylae (recorded by Herodotus at 7.228), which claims the battle was fought between four thousand Greeks and three million Persians.

and we are told of Ramesses II (§2.82) that *iw=f w<sup>c</sup>w hr-tp=f n ky hn<sup>c</sup>=f* ('he was alone, by himself, with no other with him'),<sup>1052</sup> while the Hittites possess 2500 chariots surrounding him.<sup>1053</sup> The phraseology of the king's aloneness is repeated during his speech to Amun,<sup>1054</sup> and then in greater detail after Amun's intervention (§143-6):

*ist p3 wr hsy n hb<sup>c</sup> h<sup>c</sup> m hr-ib mš<sup>c</sup>=f hn<sup>c</sup> nt-htrw=f hr ptri p3 h3 n hm=f w<sup>c</sup>w hr-tp=f iw bn mš<sup>c</sup>=f hn<sup>c</sup>=f bn nt-htrw=f iw=f hr h<sup>c</sup> nnw tnbh<sup>c</sup> sndw*

Now, the vile chief of Hatti was standing in the midst of his army, with his chariots, watching the fighting of his Person, alone, by himself, without his army with him, or his chariots – he (the Hittite king) was standing, turning back, shrinking back, afraid.<sup>1055</sup>

There are repeated verbal contrasts, between the Hittite king and Ramesses II (the former has his army and chariots, the latter does not), and also between the present and past situation of the Hittites: earlier (§2.55) they were 'standing, hidden, prepared',<sup>1056</sup> but after the king's attack, although still standing, they are terrified and forced to retreat.<sup>1057</sup> Despite the king's emphatic abandonment, he has completely defeated the Hittite army and single-handedly pushed them away from his own troops; the Hittite king is part of the mass of soldiers, while Ramesses stands alone – and wins. The significance of this idea can be seen in the repetition of this phrasing in Ramesses II's Beth-Shan Stela (lines 12-13),<sup>1058</sup> suggesting that the king wanted to extend it beyond the immediate context of the *Qadesh* texts.

As the king destroys the Hittite soldiers, he then turns his anger onto his own army and lambasts them in a speech. He opens (*Qadesh* §2.170) by verbally linking his infantry to the earlier description of the Hittite king (*ptri=ta piy=i nhtw iw=i w<sup>c</sup>.kw* – 'you see my victory, **although I am**

<sup>1052</sup> *KRI* II.30.10-15.

<sup>1053</sup> *KRI* II.31.6-9.

<sup>1054</sup> *KRI* II.40.6-10.

<sup>1055</sup> *KRI* II.48.6-49.11.

<sup>1056</sup> *KRI* II.29.1-4.

<sup>1057</sup> The accompanying reliefs display them in a state of total disarray, denying them any offensive capability whatsoever (Spalinger 2020: 160).

<sup>1058</sup> *KRI* II.151.4-5.

alone'),<sup>1059</sup> and then proceeds to use the same argument he had used with Amun by stressing his previous good deeds for which he expects recompense.<sup>1060</sup> In doing so he emphasises his position in the middle of the social hierarchy, above humans but below the gods.<sup>1061</sup> The relationship between king and soldier is later given a new dimension by the introduction (unique to this text) of a named soldier into the narrative, the king's charioteer Menna. Whereas Ramesses II easily destroys the Hittites, Menna's reaction is very different (§207): *wn.in=f hr bdš ib=f hsy sndt ʕt wrt ʕk.t m h<sup>c</sup>=f* ('then he became faint, his heart became weak, and a very great fear entered into his body').<sup>1062</sup> The vocabulary is drawn from standard descriptions of the enemy (both *hsy* and *sndt* were used to describe the Hittite king above) and indicate the essential similarity between all soldiers, both enemy and Egyptian, in terms of their relation to the king; in war, everyone suffers the same fears and terrors other than the king.<sup>1063</sup> The crucial difference between Egyptian and foreign soldiers is that Menna accepts Ramesses II as his king, and so instead of being utterly destroyed is instead treated gently: the king encourages him to take heart (§215), offers himself as a role-model (§219),<sup>1064</sup> and then justifies this by immediately charging back into the enemy; thereafter Menna disappears from the narrative, his role – to represent the cowardice of the army without actually describing their rout – completed once the king has achieved victory.<sup>1065</sup> Ramesses' bravery has the desired effect, because when his army sees him like this, we are told (§229) that *wn.in=sn hr msy=w w<sup>c</sup> sp-sn* ('then they presented themselves one by one').<sup>1066</sup> The difference between the behaviour of the army here and in other victorious depictions is marked, and the failure of everyone but Ramesses is clear.

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<sup>1059</sup> *KRI* II.56.1-4.

<sup>1060</sup> *KRI* II. 58.12-60.10.

<sup>1061</sup> Spalinger (2020): 175-7.

<sup>1062</sup> *KRI* II.66.12-15.

<sup>1063</sup> Spalinger (2002): 137).

<sup>1064</sup> *KRI* II.69.1-70.10. In the structure of *Qadesh 2* Menna is cast as a human opposite of Amun: he is with the king (and as his charioteer is physically closer than anyone else), but afraid and urging him to flee; Amun is far from the king, but comes to him and urges him to fight (Spalinger 2020: 175-7).

<sup>1065</sup> Spalinger (2002): 140.

<sup>1066</sup> *KRI* II.73.1-4.

A further rebuke of his army (§253-75)<sup>1067</sup> reinforces the abject failure of the Egyptian soldiers: not only are they hugely insignificant compared to the king, who kills millions of enemies alone,<sup>1068</sup> they are also negatively compared to the king's horses,<sup>1069</sup> and this humiliating comparison emphasises their comparative worthlessness in battle. Throughout both *Qadesh* texts Ramesses stresses his superiority both positively (by describing his achievement) and negatively (by describing the failures of his army); it is more aggressive in its attitude towards the rest of the army than other royal texts, where little mention is made of any actions by the other Egyptians. The verbal connections of the Egyptian soldiers to the Hittites show that in comparison with the king they are both the same: the difference depends on the king's generosity to his people, though this is not unconditional. The army's failure to pay back Ramesses II's kindness once is overlooked, but the text suggests that next time it may not be. This message to the army should be seen in the same way as his reframing of his relationship with Amun, as ultimately rhetorical:<sup>1070</sup> the king is just as unlikely to decide not to save his army as he is to stop worshipping the god. Many military crises prompt strong ideological responses: Merenptah, as we have seen,<sup>1071</sup> frames his response largely in terms of gender and virility, but Ramesses bases his on social status and an affirmation of the king's power. He asserts and re-establishes the social order (with even greater authority for himself) that was disturbed by the Hittite attack.

Despite the clear difference in status and focus between royal and non-royal soldiers in these Egyptian works, they nevertheless often appear in the same text: although Ramesses II is undoubtedly the focus of *Qadesh 2*, his army participates in the battle. Such joint appearances, however, are not a feature of Hellenistic court poetry, which tends to limit any given text to either royal or non-royal soldiers.<sup>1072</sup> The latter are found in poems of both Herodas (*Mime 1*) and

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<sup>1067</sup> *KRI* II.78.6-84.10.

<sup>1068</sup> *KRI* II.81.13-16.

<sup>1069</sup> *KRI* II.82.13-83.5.

<sup>1070</sup> Spalinger (2002): 154; see above (p. 231).

<sup>1071</sup> pp. 184-6.

<sup>1072</sup> This division is obviously not found in Polybius, not least because the Romans had no royalty anyway. But individual generals do tend to dominate his narrations of wars, particularly Hannibal and Scipio

Theocritus (*Idylls* 14-15); *Idyll* 14 is the only one in which soldiers are actual characters, rather than simply mentioned individuals. The theme of both *Mime* 1 and *Idyll* 14 is the benefits of serving as a soldier under Ptolemy. So in *Idyll* 14 Aeschinas decides that he will go to serve as a mercenary after having his heart broken, and Thyonichus says that the best paymaster would be Ptolemy (14.57-9). Asked why, Thyonichus launches into a long list of reasons (14.61-4):

εὐγνώμων, φιλόμουσος, ἐρωτικός, εἰς ἄκρον ἄδύς,  
εἰδὼς τὸν φιλέοντα, τὸν οὐ φιλέοντ' ἔτι μᾶλλον,  
πολλοῖς πολλὰ διδούς, αἰτεῦμενος οὐκ ἀνανεύων  
οἷα χρὴ βασιλῆ' ...

[He is] kind, a lover of the arts, amorous, the absolute sweetest,  
who knows his friend and knows his enemy better,  
who gives many things to many people, who does not deny when asked  
the things which a king should ...

It is notable that none of the reasons one might want Ptolemy as a king/general are to do with his abilities in war; the focus is on the king not as a warrior but as a patron, perhaps for Theocritus as much as for these soldiers.<sup>1073</sup> *Mime* 1 has a similar concept but from the opposite point of view: Metriche is upset that her husband Mandris has gone to Egypt and forgotten about her, and Gyllis explains why, listing at 1.28-35 all the good things Egypt has to offer (including but not limited to wealth, wrestling-schools, an excellent king, and beautiful women). The other appearance of 'ordinary' soldiers comes at *Idyll* 15.51-4, when the two Alexandrian women encounter a war-horse rearing out of control amongst the crowd. The focus is less on the soldiers (who are speechless), and more on the benefits of their presence as policemen, apparently one of the 'many fine deeds' (15.46) that Ptolemy II has achieved. Even in texts where the king is absent or tangential, any reference to soldiers or war is made entirely with respect to him. His dominance in war is absolute

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Africanus, and indeed the Carthaginian is perhaps used as Polybius' model for a monarchical constitution (Walbank 1995: 225).

<sup>1073</sup> As Hunter (2003: 34-7) points out, these were all traits expected of the Hellenistic elite, but the absence of military skill (perhaps the most critical criterion of Hellenistic kingship: see Gehrke 2013: 77) is notable.

and unquestioned, the unprecedented military success of the Greeks reflected by an unprecedented concentration of military power and glory in the hands of one individual.

The absence of non-royal soldiers is also keenly felt in the epigrams of Callimachus and Posidippus, whose sepulchral epigrams (theoretically for private individuals) make no mention of war. A rare exception is Callimachus' *Epigram* 21 for his father, who boasts of being the son of Callimachus (the general) and father of Callimachus (the poet), though the point would seem to be that one can achieve equal fame through poetry as through war, if not greater: there are no soldiers present and able to be made famous in Callimachus' epigrams, while the poems themselves perpetuate his own fame. Although these texts are not as negative as the New Kingdom ones on the helplessness of soldiers, all war is still framed round the king and his qualities, rather than the soldier and theirs. Sepulchral epigrams for citizens of the free *poleis* of the Greek world show a different picture. The lengthy sepulchral epigram of Eugnotus of Acraiphia in Boeotia, dating to the early 3<sup>rd</sup>-century BC, uses many of the motifs we have already seen (anonymity and numerousness of the enemy versus an individual warrior) though with the situation reversed: the Hellenistic king (probably Antigonos Gonatas) is nameless, and his non-royal enemy Eugnotus is the only named protagonist.<sup>1074</sup> These themes were evidently applicable both to private and royal individuals, but the increased dominance of textual production by royal courts skews the evidence; even within a democratic *polis*, the citizen army is ignored in favour of a focus on the individualism of Eugnotus.

In poems concerned with the king, soldiers become just another metric by which the power of the ruler can be stressed. So at *Idyll* 17.90-4 we are told that

οἱ νᾶες ἄριστα  
πόντον ἐπιπλώοντι, θάλασσα δὲ πᾶσα καὶ αἶα  
καὶ ποταμοὶ κελάδοντες ἀνάσσονται Πτολεμαίῳ,  
πολλοὶ δ' ἰππῆες, πολλοὶ δὲ μιν ἀσπιδιῶται  
χαλκῷ μαρμαίροντι σεσαγμένοι ἀμφαγέρονται.

the best ships  
sail the sea for him, and all the sea and land

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<sup>1074</sup> Ma (2005): 150.

and roaring rivers are ruled by Ptolemy,  
and many cavalymen and many shield-bearers  
loaded with gleaming bronze gather round him.

The king's soldiers have no identities, but are just parallels to his territorial possessions and essentially objectified to indicate the king's power.<sup>1075</sup> It is not these soldiers who guard Egypt and ward off invaders, but 'golden-haired Ptolemy, skilled at wielding the spear' (17.103 ξανθοκόμας Πτολεμαῖος, ἐπιστάμενος δόρυ πάλλειν),<sup>1076</sup> and the role of the army is presented as being little more than making up the numbers.

When the king is described as victorious in battle, the army is also generally absent. Though the description of Ptolemy III's invasion of Asia is missing from Callimachus' version of the *Coma Berenices* (fr. 110), Catullus' version (*carmen* 66) has him as the only soldier on this expedition. At 66.12 we are told that *vastatum finis iverat Assyrios* ('he had gone to devastate the lands of Assyria'), and (66.35-6) *is haud in tempore longo / captam Asiam Aegypti finibus addiderat* ('he in no long time had added captured Asia to the lands of Egypt'). The act of invasion and its completion are presented as enterprises of the king, and there is no mention of any army with him; his only helper, as it were, is the queen's hair. As discussed above, the only one who takes any action in defeating the Gauls in Callimachus' *Hymn to Delos* is Ptolemy II, the 'king who toiled much', and neither Apollo nor the army apparently play any part. The lack of any alternative to the Ptolemies in a military capacity is striking, and shows a different way of emphasising royal supremacy from the New Kingdom texts: those take care to emphasise both the king's power and the people's insufficiency, while the Ptolemaic authors simply take this insufficiency for granted.

In stark contrast to both the New Kingdom and Ptolemaic representations of royal warfare is the world of the Inaros-Petubastis Cycle. There are many distinct changes in the social hierarchy

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<sup>1075</sup> Hunter (2003): 169.

<sup>1076</sup> Skill with the spear was central to Macedonian soldiery, and Alexander was often represented wielding one; Ptolemy is thus cast as heir of the ultimate warrior-king (Hunter 2003: 176).

of the army from the New Kingdom, not least of which is the vastly increased presence of soldiers outside the royal family best seen at  *Armour*  17.22-18.3, when a long list of Pami's individual allies is given. But beneath these elites, each of whom is effectively ruler of their own city, their own soldiers remain anonymous.<sup>1077</sup> There are two distinct styles of battle in these texts. The first – and perhaps most idealised – is an almost excessive focus on duels. The fact that the Young Priest's 'army' in  *Benefice*  is comprised only of thirteen men, against the entire army of Egypt, is a good example of the extent to which duelling is considered the only proper way of conducting a battle: the disparity in numbers is unimportant because the generic conventions prevent action by an entire army. This is given religious justification, since – as we have seen – Amun forbids Petubastis from arming the Egyptian army for combat against the Asiatics (10.13-15) in favour of summoning other important individuals (10.25-11.6) to duel the enemy. When Minnebmaat arrives he makes no use of any soldiers and instead fights in single-combat against the Asiatics for three days (17.10). One feels that this fight would be over much quicker if Petubastis were to use the Egyptian army instead of relying on one warrior duelling (without victory), but Amun and the genre prevent this.

So too in  *Armour* , instead of the two sides clashing in a general melee, Pekrur assigns every hero and their men an opposite number to fight against (18.28-19.9).<sup>1078</sup> This seems to be done not in the interest of achieving a decisive result for either side, but to ensure that everyone is fighting against someone of relatively equal ability, since at 19.9-11 we find that  *r-iw-f ti.t rmt wb rmt r-h 3 p3y=w tnf irm 3 by=w ph.t htby nt m-{nt m-}s3=w w<sup>c</sup> sp-sn*  ('he [Pekrur] was setting man against man according to the greatness of their value and the greatness of the strength of their troops who were behind each of them'). In essence this obsession with duelling seems to be to ensure fairness for both sides, perhaps to create greater tension in the narrative: the outcome of a duel between Pami and Wertyamonniut or Petechons and Ankhhor (the King's Son), for example,

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<sup>1077</sup> For potential historical reasons for this changing hierarchy see Quack (2016): 63.

<sup>1078</sup> This assignation of duels is paralleled by Aeschylus'  *Seven Against Thebes* ; though this is contrary to previous versions of the battle (Hutchinson 2004: 112).

is far less certain due to the reputation of the characters than a duel between Pami and Ankhhor son of Helbes might be. The benefits of this duelling system for the narrative are most clear in *Serpot*, where the climactic duel between Petechons and Serpot is described in great detail (3.46-4.12) before the two eventually fall in love with each other (4.26-7).<sup>1079</sup> The inherent tension in their personal duel gives way to the release of them falling in love, and emphasises the momentous nature of this event and the benefits of their future marriage-alliance.

The other method of battling is rarer and more akin to depictions of war in the New Kingdom, in which one individual devastates the enemy army.<sup>1080</sup> It is typically in these texts described using the formula ‘X [the warrior] made/gave massacre and destruction amongst them [the enemy army]’. The terms for ‘slaughter and bloodshed’ are normally *ḥḥ* and *wty*, though there are other words with roughly equivalent meaning (*šcy*, *ḥtby*) used outside this formula with the same effect. Examples can be found at *Serpot* 12.32, describing Serpot amongst the Indians (*ir=s ḥḥ wty iwḥ=w*) and *Armour* 22.11, describing Montbaal entering battle (*t[i=f] ḥḥ wty iwḥ=w*), and 25.15, describing Minnemei’s rampage (*iw=f ir ḥḥ wtey ḥn pḥ m[šḥ]*). It is notable that all three have connotations of foreignness: Serpot and Montbaal are not Egyptian and half-Egyptian respectively, while Minnemei arrives at the battle with an army of Nubians (24.13-14). That they battle in this way rather than duelling is perhaps an indication of their lack of adherence to Egyptian customs, but also of the weakness of the king, whose method of battling has been appropriated by the ones who should least do so – indeed, both Montbaal and Minnemei use this traditionally royal technique against the king’s own faction. This is reinforced by the fact that the only non-foreign soldier to use this formula is Pami, in his speech to Petubastis at *Armour* 5.6-9:

*wy bty [ḥnḥ] rḥ-ḥr-ḥ.ty ḥry ntr.w pḥ ntr ḥ... r pḥ wr iḥ[w] iḥḥny sḥ w[ḥr-m=f...] r t kmy <n>-  
dr.t pr-ḥ ḥ.[w.s. pḥ]-ti-bḥs.t pḥy=y r-ḥn [... ir]=y ḥḥ wty r-iw=s ḥḥ r-m-šs tw=y ti.t sḥ.t=f r pḥ iḥḥ*

“Woe, grief! [By] Re-Horakhty, Chief of the Gods, the great god ... when the Chief of Ass[yria] Esarhaddon son of U[sechrenef came(?)] to take Egypt <from> the hand of

<sup>1079</sup> See above (pp. 193-4).

<sup>1080</sup> Jay (2016): 174.

Pharaoh I.[p.h. Pe]tubastis, I leapt into [...] and I [made] massacre and destruction in very great quantities: I made him return to the East

Pami appropriates both the king's god<sup>1081</sup> and also his stereotypical method of fighting, single-handedly destroying an entire enemy army to repel them from Egypt; it is a powerful claim to royal authority through royal connections to the divine and royal military actions.

Nor is this Pami's only association with earlier royal accounts of war: after arriving at the battlefield early and being ambushed by Wertyamonnui and his soldiers he is forced to fight alone, and when his allies arrive they are told (14.14-16):

[i<sub>w</sub>]=f qnqn bn-iw gl-šr rmt-rt.wy.t=f ht<sub>3</sub> htby.t r wr-ty-*imn-niw.t* wb=f na t<sub>3</sub> [d<sup>c</sup>ny] pr-b-tt na-t<sub>3</sub>-h.t fb<sub>n</sub>-ntr st ir ty[m n w]r-ty-*imn-niw.t* p<sub>y</sub>=w hry n p<sub>3</sub> bnr [na p<sub>3</sub>-dw]-r<sup>c</sup> n<sub>y</sub>=f sn.(w) n<sub>y</sub>=f iry.w n<sub>y</sub>=f rmt.(w)-qnqn ir [n=f tym] tr=w

He is fighting, without a kalasiris, a foot-soldier, a horse, troops, while Wertyamonnui is against him, and the men of [Tanis], Mendes, Natho, Sebennytos; they are protect[ing W]ertyamonnui their master, as well as [the men of Padju]re, and his brothers, his companions, his warriors: they are all [protecting him].

The situation – one individual warrior, deprived of his entire army, against an enemy leader accompanied by a number of geopolitical entities and their men – is highly reminiscent of New Kingdom narratives of the king at war. It could, for example, be viewed as an expansion of *Qadesh* §2.143-5, discussed above.<sup>1082</sup> Through this appropriation of royal battle motifs, in addition to his appropriation of royal imagery,<sup>1083</sup> it is emphasised that Pami, not Petubastis, is closest to the powerful militaristic Pharaohs of the past. The later Egyptian rulers of Egypt were evidently not up to the task of defending it.

Ordinary soldiers in the *Posthomeric* similarly represent a faceless mass who support their own individual leaders and are only named when acting as cannon-fodder for an enemy warrior.

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<sup>1081</sup> Discussed above (pp. 250-1).

<sup>1082</sup> *KRI* II.48.6-49.5; p. 262.

<sup>1083</sup> Discussed in Chapter 3 (pp. 140-1).

The first Greeks mentioned in battle are part of a long list of names (1.227-9) of victims from Penthesilea's initial charge: their entire identity revolves around their death. Whereas they are characterised by their ends, the elite warriors are characterised by their ability to kill indiscriminately: Achilles' enters into battle on the second day (2.228-9):

ἔνθ' ἔλε Πηλεΐδης Θάλιον καὶ ἀμύμονα Μέντην,  
ἄμφω ἀριγνώτω. βάλε δ' ἄλλων πολλὰ κάρηνα

Then the son of Peleus killed Thalius and noble Mentès,  
both well-known, and he struck the heads of many others

In addition to two important victims, Achilles is killing more people than Quintus feels the need to mention, such is his superiority. Memnon's entry (2.235-6) is similar:<sup>1084</sup>

ὣς δ' αὐτως ἐτέρωθεν εὐς πάις Ἡριγενείης  
Ἀργείους ἐδαίξει κακῆ ἑναλίγκιος Αἴση

So, in the same way, the excellent son of Eos on the other side  
was slaughtering the Argives like an evil Fate

The use of the imperfect ἐδαίξει underlines Memnon's repeated killing of the Greeks, seemingly without end, as does his comparison to an unstoppable fact of life. So whereas the first appearance in battle of a non-elite soldier is dying, that of an elite warrior (and Achilles and Memnon as demi-gods are the elite of the elite) is endless killing.

The instantaneous transition from appearance to death means that these soldiers have no space to do or say anything, and Quintus also deprives them of a political voice. Thersites in the *Iliad* is marked as being essentially different from the *basileis* who normally speak at councils; he quarrels with the leaders rather than working with them (2.212-5) and is ugly and physically deformed (2.216-9), very much not the idealised Homeric fighter.<sup>1085</sup> These flaws are compounded

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<sup>1084</sup> For the parallelism of Memnon and Achilles at this moment see Greensmith (2020: 145).

<sup>1085</sup> Postlethwaite (1988): 125.

by the fact that Homer does not give him a patronymic and thus deprives him of a (noble) family<sup>1086</sup> and integrates him with the mob of soldiers, who are also characterised (as it were) by their lack of familial identity.<sup>1087</sup> To what extent Thersites speaks for the rest of the army is unclear: his arguments and insults echo those of Achilles, and Homer is also conspicuously silent on any reaction of the army to his speech.<sup>1088</sup> Whether elite or a commoner, Thersites' deliberately ambiguous nature in the *Iliad* makes him a destabilising social force that Odysseus must quash, using Agamemnon's sceptre, the embodiment of royal authority, to do so.<sup>1089</sup> By asserting this authority over Thersites, the social hierarchy is re-established over the army as well. Given that Thersites only appears at one point in the *Iliad*, when Agamemnon's superiority and the Greek hierarchy are at their weakest, and that he only appears after disorder has already run rampant, it may be better to view Thersites not as a cause of unrest but a symptom of it, a personification of the troubles amongst the Greeks. His arguments are neither explicitly accepted or rejected by the rest of the soldiers, and it is left to Odysseus to temporarily lance this abusive boil.

Quintus makes Thersites much more unpleasant: his speech in the *Posthomerica* (1.723-40) is a crude insult of Achilles for grieving for Penthesilea, and culminates in him saying that 'sleeping with women is pleasing for a coward' (φυγοπολέμῳ δὲ γυναικῶν εὐαδεν εὐνή), which seems somewhat absurd.<sup>1090</sup> It is a far cry from his speech in the *Iliad* (2.225-42), which while insulting is founded on genuine concerns and criticisms of Agamemnon.<sup>1091</sup> In return he is killed by

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<sup>1086</sup> Certainly in later tradition Thersites had a distinguished family, so whether Homer chooses to ignore this background, or it simply did not exist at his time, is unclear (Rankin 1972: 44-9); at any rate, Homer has certainly made an active choice not to give Thersites any family at all, whether noble or not.

<sup>1087</sup> Postlethwaite (1988): 135.

<sup>1088</sup> Marks (2005): 18.

<sup>1089</sup> *ibid.*: 15.

<sup>1090</sup> Thersites is perhaps suggesting that Achilles is not behaving in the proper Greek way, and he associates lust for women with the Trojans at 1.735 (Maciver 2012: 76). But lust for women is surely just as Greek a trait as Trojan: it motivates both the plot of the *Iliad* (Agamemnon's desire for Briseis) and the entire Trojan War (Menelaus' desire for Helen).

<sup>1091</sup> Scheijnen (2018: 75-6) interprets Thersites' words in the *Posthomerica* as chosen to provoke Achilles to return to the battlefield, and there are allusions to Hector's reproaches to Paris at *Iliad* 3.39 and 13.769. But Thersites' words are excessive and inappropriate to the current situation (Achilles is still on the battlefield and not in the bed of a woman), and the complete approval of his death suggests that the army see this too.

Achilles with a single blow and suffers a gruesome death (1.742-7), which makes the army rejoice and state (1.751-2) that οὐκ ἀγαθὸν βασιλῆας ὑριζέμεν ἀνδρὶ χέρηι / ἀμφοδὸν οὔτε κρυφιδόν ('it is no good thing for a lesser man to abuse *basileis*, openly or in private'); more strongly, Achilles (1.758) says οὐ γὰρ ἀμείνονι φωτὶ χρεὼ κακὸν ἀντιφερίζειν ('a bad man must not challenge a better one'). These moral judgments of Thersites' actions contrast with the reaction of the army at *Iliad* 2.276-7, which mocked rather than condemned him. Thersites' integration with the army is undone, and there is no sense of community between him and the other soldiers who enjoy his death.

In this Quintus also departs from the *Aethiopsis*, in which Achilles was condemned by the rest of the army and forced to travel to Lesbos for purification; now it is Thersites, even in death, alienated from the other soldiers.<sup>1092</sup> The king, Achilles, is given licence to kill those who insult and criticise him, and when he does so he is applauded, a sinister view of the absolute prerogatives of rulers. Quintus completely isolates Thersites from those he was identified with in the *Iliad*, depriving him of allies to support any criticism of the *basileis* and the soldiers of anyone to speak for them in public, capped off by his murder. Class solidarity is violently denied and then crushed, and the ordinary soldiers rejoice in this fact. Any criticism of Quintus' own Roman rulers should perhaps meet the same fate.

Thereafter the masses remain the masses, and there is no criticism from them, nor possibility of revolt. When Menelaus (6.9-31) suggests that the Greeks leave Troy (recalling Agamemnon's failed test in *Iliad* 2, which had provoked Thersites' criticism), Diomedes reacts very violently to the possibility (6.47-9):

εἰ δ' ἄρα τις καὶ τῶνδ' ἐπιείσεται ὡς ἐπιτέλλεις  
 αὐτίκα οἱ κεφαλὴν τεμέω ἰόντι σιδήρῳ,  
 ῥίψω δ' οἰωνοῖσιν ἀερσιπέτησιν ἐδωδὴν

If any one of these men [the army] obeys what you command,

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<sup>1092</sup> Thersites' death is described in similar terms to Penthesilea's (1.757 ≈ 1.644) – to criticise a king makes you equal to the enemy (Scheijnen 2018: 71).

I will immediately cut off his head with my dark sword,  
and throw it as feed for the birds that fly in the air

This is a much harsher presentation of the relationship between the *basileis* and the soldiers,<sup>1093</sup> and their unquestionable dominance within the army is made clear.

Quintus does at times call attention to the general melee, distinct from the duels between the major leaders on each side. Achilles and Memnon begin their fight (which Achilles explicitly links to his duel with Hector in *Iliad* 22)<sup>1094</sup> at 2.452, and this is described in detail until 2.467. At this point Quintus diverts from the Homeric model – which is entirely focused on the duel between Hector and Achilles – and instead presents us with a panoramic view of the battlefield, leaving Memnon and Achilles behind to focus instead on the battle raging around (2.467-89).<sup>1095</sup> We then return to another reference to *Iliad* 22, as Quintus takes us to the gods watching the duel (2.490-513 ≈ *Iliad* 22.165-85) before coming back to the two heroes (2.514-24), only to then pull back again to describe the general fighting happening all around (2.525-37); we are then brought back to Achilles and Memnon for the last time (2.538-48), and Achilles is victorious.<sup>1096</sup>

Quintus seems, therefore, to have more interest in depicting the rest of the soldiers, and not just the major heroes. But rather than dwell on the pathos of the mass deaths of these soldiers, their fundamental lack of identity makes them instead a dramatic backdrop to the real focus: the duel of Achilles and Memnon. There is no real mention of the dead or dying, or the emotions felt by the combatants. Quintus prefers to use the fighting and the deaths to describe the geographical surroundings: 2.485-6 *πάντη δὲ περὶξ ἐφορύνετο γαῖα / αἵματος ἐκχυμένοιο* ('all around, the earth was defiled with pouring blood'); 2.487 *στείνεται δὲ κταμένων πεδίων μέγα ἰππόβοτόν τε* ('the plain,

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<sup>1093</sup> As Scheijnen (2018: 164) puts it, 'the words of the Homeric Diomedes are usually more eloquent'. Cf. Hector's similarly violent threat to Polydamas at *Iliad* 12.248-50, though there is an important difference in social status: Hector threatens a member of the elite for trying to persuade the people to retreat; Diomedes threatens the people for potentially being persuaded by another member of the elite.

<sup>1094</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 89.

<sup>1095</sup> On the programmatic significance of this delay see Greensmith (2020: 296).

<sup>1096</sup> Scheijnen (2018): 91.

great and nourishing for horses, was weighed down by the dead'). He ends the final panoramic shot with a simile (2.535-7):

τοὺς δ' ἵπποι χρεμέθοντες ἐπεσσυμένοις ἅμα λαοῖς  
τεθναότας στείβεσκον, ἅτ' ἄσπετα φύλλα κατ' ἄλσος  
χείματος ἀρχομένου μετὰ τηλεθόωσαν ὀπώρην.

Neighing horses together with charging men  
were trampling the dead, who were like countless leaves in a grove  
as winter begins after a flourishing autumn.

This is descriptive rather than emotive: there are no emotions or feelings of the dead to create sympathy, but rather just their presence and great number to emphasise the scale of the battle<sup>1097</sup> and Achilles' and Memnon's duel in particular. The ordinary soldiers have more presence in Quintus' narrative than in Homer's equivalent, yet this is not for their sake but Achilles'.

This focus on the role of individual, high-status warriors is seen repeatedly throughout the poem, and is made clear by the fact that the *Posthomerica* is structured according to the arrivals and deaths of different heroes.<sup>1098</sup> Book 1 is Penthesilea, Book 2 is Memnon, Book 3 is Achilles (dying); Book 6 is Eurypylus, Book 7 is Neoptolemus, Book 8 is Eurypylus (dying); Book 9 is Philoctetes, and Book 10 is Paris (dying); the last four books then concern the fall of Troy.<sup>1099</sup> It is a clearly defined narrative based entirely around these individuals, making the poem dominated by a sequence of warriors whose deaths progress in a linear fashion until the final destruction of first Troy and then the Greek army. This focus on individuals is compounded by the fact that the leaders of the respective armies have little presence throughout. For the Trojans this is because Hector is dead and there is no obvious replacement for him, though Aeneas begins to fill this role in Book 11; the leaders of the Trojans are instead presented as being the three major heroes who come to help them. Agamemnon – theoretically ultimate commander of the Greeks – has his presence drastically

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<sup>1097</sup> Quintus frequently uses such similes to describe the mass slaughter of soldiers and so emphasise the scale of the battle (Scheijnen 2017: 17).

<sup>1098</sup> This structure is fairly common in Roman-period epic (Maciver 2012: 24).

<sup>1099</sup> For the transience of the Trojan heroes see Greensmith (2020): 236.

reduced in the *Posthomerica*: his name appears 167 times in the *Iliad*, and only 24 here. The patronym 'son of Atreus', by which either Agamemnon or Menelaus can be named, is used 162 times in the *Iliad* and 27 in the *Posthomerica*. Despite this disparity in absolute usage, the plural 'sons of Atreus' (used to refer to Agamemnon and Menelaus jointly) appears 15 times in the *Iliad* but 18 in the *Posthomerica*. Agamemnon's position as absolute leader of the Greek army is therefore minimised by assimilating him with his brother, and indeed his most notable action in battle is the simile at 6.527-37 in which he and his brother are compared to animals in gladiatorial games.<sup>1100</sup> The removal of Agamemnon from the narrative increases the prominence of the *basileis* under him: for the Greeks largely Achilles and Neoptolemus. The effect is the same as with the Demotic texts: weak/non-existent kingship in war increases the focus on the lesser rulers and warriors theoretically subservient to them, though in the case of the *Posthomerica* this focus is often more negative than positive. The Greek leader is weak and absent, and although his generals dominate the action with their strength, they do not do so in an acceptable way, and at the end of the poem are punished accordingly.

Quintus adopts a two-fold approach. On one hand the Greek kings of the past are minimised and their military strength diminished, and as with Petubastis this explains how the Greeks could be conquered: Aeneas and his descendants, whose virtues mean that the gods side with them rather than the Greeks, are evidently superior leaders, and even though fate means that Troy must fall, the eventual Roman conquest is no accident. Simultaneously, however, dissent from the lowest classes is violently suppressed: criticism of one's rulers is forbidden, and it is not hard to see in this a veiled threat against any who might criticise Greece's conquerors. It is a crucial difference between the *Posthomerica* and the Demotic texts: although the notion of kingship might remain inviolate, and Petubastis' occupation of the title is unchallenged, there is still plenty of criticism. Being king is, for the Demotic characters, not a shield from scrutiny or criticism, and

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<sup>1100</sup> Cf. above (pp. 155-6).

neither should it be for the audience; in the *Posthomerica* criticism of rulers is a shortcut to an entirely deserved death. Both Quintus and the Demotic authors share criticism of specific past kings, but markedly differ in their depictions of the generalised relationship between a king and his subordinates: Quintus actively and enthusiastically constructs an unquestionable dominance for his Roman conquerors; the Demotic texts suggest a more nuanced and open-minded attitude to one's king.

### **Conclusion: The Decline of the King**

Throughout these representations of war there is a constant tension in the assignation of credit for victory amongst the hierarchy of the army, from the lowliest soldier to the greatest god. At no stage are the infantry, or the soldiers as a collective, given any great responsibility for a victory: they can be passed over (e.g. in the New Kingdom or Ptolemaic material), criticised (as with *Qadesh 2* or Thersites), or are just absent altogether (the Young Priest's 'army' in *Benefice*, and the Argonauts). Any achievements of theirs are treated as, at most, contributions to the greater glory and achievements of the king. The enemy army's frequent role of being cannon-fodder for one great individual shows that in depictions of war a soldier's primary role is to die in order to glorify someone of greater status.

The position of the gods in the hierarchy of battle is more fluid and varies more across sources. The New Kingdom material consistently shows the gods not directly taking part in battle – the king is the only one to kill – but supporting the monarch and allowing him to conquer. For some kings this relationship is more positive than others: Thutmose III presents a very positive picture of the role Amun plays in his triumphs, the Poetical Stela indicating that Amun has enabled him to conquer the entire world; Ramesses II, however, depicts a more problematic god in his *Qadesh* narratives, who initially fails to help the king and only rescues him when harshly reminded of his duties. But in *Qadesh 2* Amun's support is nevertheless necessary for the king's victory, and

the close familial relationship between god and king – both working together to ensure Egypt's victories – remains. Both are crucial to military success, though Ramesses II perhaps views himself as a little more crucial than previous kings did.

In the Demotic texts, the *Posthomeric*, and Hellenistic literature the gods are almost entirely absent from battle, which means that responsibility, guilt, and credit are less ambiguously given to human warriors. In Ptolemaic literature, however, the kings may be the only ones fighting, but they clearly do so by the will of the gods: *Idyll 17* connects Ptolemy II to Heracles and ultimately Zeus; the gods of the *Argonautica* unambiguously favour the Argonauts over their enemies; and the *Hymn to Delos* explicitly connects Ptolemy II's victory over the Gauls to his relationship with Apollo. The kings and their battles are divinely sanctioned without direct divine participation.

The absence of the gods is more pointed in the texts composed post-conquest, and there are signs of reaction against the idea of a productive military co-operation between god and king: the ubiquity of the beneficial relationship between king and god in earlier Egyptian depictions of war makes this relationship conspicuously absent for Petubastis. He is clearly no Thutmose III or Ramesses II, but Pami in particular makes a claim to this status in *Armour* by connecting himself to Re-Horakhty and describing his battling in Pharaonic style. If there is to be Egyptian resistance, and a renewed favour from the gods, it will not come from a king like Petubastis but from a general and warrior like Pami or Petechons.

Quintus displays a similar reaction against positive relations between the gods and kings. In the *Posthomeric*, the violence with which Zeus enforces the separation of gods and humans on the battlefield emphasises the wrongness of this mixing; a concern with 'wrongness', and the need to punish it, governs the rare militaristic actions of Apollo and Athene in the poem, in contrast to their frequent presence in battle in the *Iliad*. The gods are separate from humans, rather than acting together with them and, as in the Demotic texts, this contributes to a markedly less positive view of war that demeans the Greek victory. Throughout these periods, the gods' role in war is

dependent on the king: when Egypt and the Greeks were conquering, the gods actively took part in war in tandem with their kings, though taking different amounts of credit; when conquered, they along with their kings fade into the background, ceding the floor to the next hierarchical rung on the military ladder, the generals. And all the time, the mass of soldiers serving these gods and kings remain faceless, speechless – and they die.

# Conclusion

## Reactions ... and Resistances?

This thesis has compared Greek and Egyptian reactions to conquest – and any potential resistance they may display – in order not to dwell on nor search for genealogical links between sources, but with a view to emphasise what distinguished these different reactions. At times Graeco-Egyptian interactions have been relevant, particularly in the case of Alexander, who had perhaps greater intercultural influence than any other secular figure in the ancient world; when there have been clear similarities (and there have been many), I have tried to make clear why these arose within their distinct historical contexts and how they relate to broader Greek and Egyptian cultural traditions. One cannot simply isolate similar elements out of context to generalise about human commonality as earlier comparativists did;<sup>1101</sup> any source is the product of a cultural continuum and centuries of change, and it is this continuum, these changes, that this thesis has attempted to trace. Rather than focus on complex questions of literary transmission, I have tried throughout to emphasise the distinct contexts and causes for Greek and Egyptian representations of war. And in tracing these changes I have also attempted to show how the Greek and Egyptian ‘conquered’ authors engaged with the literature of their pasts. Whether innovating (by increasing the number of protagonists in war), modifying (by adapting similes to different figures in different contexts), or subverting (by rejecting the notion of eternal temporality), the Demotic texts interact with the Egyptian tradition of royal military inscriptions dating back at least to the New Kingdom, and future studies will hopefully be able to build on this relationship despite the very different contexts of composition.

It is perhaps not overly surprising that both the ‘pre-conquest’ Hellenistic and New Kingdom sources, as products of military supremacy, adopt broadly similar strategies in their representation

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<sup>1101</sup> Spivak (2009): 611.

of warfare. The semi-divine king, to whom victory is attributed, dominates any scene in which he appears, supported by the gods (how else could he triumph?) but unique in his ability to kill enemies in battle. Standing as symbols of Greek or Egyptian ethnicity, kings such as Ptolemy II or Thutmose III entrench their people's geopolitical supremacy through comprehensive victories: their strength in battle – emphasised through divine and celestial imagery, as seen in Chapter 3 – legitimises Greek or Egyptian control over all other peoples. And as we noted in Chapter 2, this control is, of course, eternal, cyclical only inasmuch as the king will triumph over his enemies again and again. The effects of war (i.e. the victories of the kings) are permanent.

Yet there are differences in the focus of the sources. Although the Greeks and Egyptians treat the issues of time and ethnicity similarly, there are more pronounced differences in how they present the issues of gender and social status in war. We saw in Chapter 4 that both New Kingdom and Hellenistic Greek societies were highly patriarchal and elitist. It is the Hellenistic texts that display the greater concern with gender and the dangers posed by women, who are largely passed over in the New Kingdom sources and made to act in war only as possessions to be won. Although there are exceptional representations of Tiye and Nefertiti killing women, there is no trace in the monumental sources of the important diplomatic role played by women. Hellenistic worries about gender may be less pronounced than in earlier (and indeed later) periods – Apollonius self-consciously avoids having his Argonauts violently defeat the female Amazons – but their continued manifestation indicates that Greek worries about the dangers posed by women, evident from their earliest and most central myths, were still present and strong enough to permeate and help to define the theoretically masculine battlefield.

When we consider social status, as in Chapter 5, the reverse is true: while the Greek texts take the king's supremacy for granted, suggesting the superiority of semi-divine warriors over the rest of the army (the *Argonautica*) or simply ignoring the king's soldiers completely (*Hymn to Delos*, *Coma Berenices*, *Idyll 17*), some of the Egyptian sources (particularly those adopting the format of

the *Königsnovelle*) emphasise the king's power by both elevating him and denigrating other Egyptians. While this may not be motivated by the same kind of paranoia as felt by the Greeks towards women, it does reflect a greater Egyptian concern towards maintaining their social hierarchy. And this is unsurprising: the Egyptian king was far more central to the cosmology of Ancient Egypt, and thus any destabilisation of his position could potentially destabilise the entire world, requiring it to be more aggressively maintained. Even in these periods of military and geopolitical supremacy, and even while the ethnic domination of the Greeks and Egyptians was considered to be eternal and unchanging, concerns about justifying and preserving this dominance continued to manifest, and pacifying these concerns required greater prominence (relative to other concepts) in representations of war.

Both Quintus and the authors of the Inaros Cycle react to their respective conquests – how could they not? But there is a far greater divergence between the Greek and Egyptian reactions to loss of military and geopolitical power. Whereas the New Kingdom and Hellenistic Greek sources had broadly agreed in their attitudes to time, ethnicity, gender, and social status – though with different areas of particular focus to reflect their particular preoccupations – we do not see the same in the post-conquest material. Kefala argues that after defeat a culture undergoes processes of both endogenous and exogenous inferiorisation, rationalising defeat by portraying oneself as deserving to be conquered, but maintaining still that the victorious enemy are in some way inferior.<sup>1102</sup> This is where Quintus and the Egyptian authors differ. The Demotic texts do show both these processes being carried out: although the conquest of Egypt is rationalised by emphasising historical weakness of the king and elevating non-royal warriors such as Pami and Petechons, the Egyptians nevertheless still portray themselves as superior to foreigners. Pami describes himself ahistorically defeating the invasion of Esarhaddon; Petechons conquers both Serpot and the Indians. So while Egypt may have deserved to be conquered, its people are still powerful in war;

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<sup>1102</sup> (2021): 12-13.

the changing representation of war's temporality – the results everlasting and unable to be overturned – means that one day they may return to power. There is no open hostility towards the Greeks or Romans, nor any call for active rebellion. But these texts do show a quiet resistance, a desire to remain Egyptian and to remember that the Egyptians were once, and still are, strong.

The same cannot be said of Quintus – perhaps unsurprisingly, given his Roman name, though as noted in Chapter 1 all that can be drawn from this fact is that he lived under the Roman Empire. He certainly engages in endogenous inferiorisation: his similes repeatedly cast the greatest Greek heroes as enemies of the gods, and make it clear that they are entirely deserving of their catastrophic shipwreck after the war and, far in the future, their conquest by Rome. But there is no hint of any exogenous inferiorisation. Aeneas, ancestor of the Greeks' future conquerors, is characterised as virtuous and powerful, and most significantly as an analogue to Zeus; he (and his descendants) are worthy kings of the world. And by maintaining the same view of war's temporality as his conquering predecessors, Quintus emphasises that Roman rule will last forever. Instead of resisting, Quintus displays a reactionary attitude to social structures that is violent and disturbing: any questioning of the elite is suppressed by threats of beheading; any female diversion from typical gender roles is met by horrifying deaths that result in the consumption of the woman, metaphorically and as the object of the reader's moral and erotic desires. Quintus advocates for a society in which class and gender are firmly entrenched, and the elite male who accepts Roman hegemony – i.e. he himself – can exert as much power as possible in a world that is no longer ruled by the Greeks.

I suggested in Chapter 1 that Quintus and the authors of the Inaros Cycle might provide instructive examples of how to react to the loss of power. It has been made clear, I hope, that Quintus provides an example of what *not* to do: in his representation of war he sets forth views that are offensive, dangerous, and concerned solely with maintaining his own privileges under foreign rulers. A study of Nonnus, writing after a longer period of acculturation, might reveal how

atypically nasty Quintus' views are, but this is a task for the future.<sup>1103</sup> Do the Demotic texts provide a better example of how best to react? Perhaps not: tracing cultural continuity is always dangerous, but certainly Egyptians never regained geopolitical and military supremacy in a way that the Greeks of Constantinople did – however acculturated to their identity as 'Romans' they were. Certainly the texts do not provide an example to follow in every respect: their xenophobia and misogyny (even if less violent than Quintus') are noticeable. But in their presentation of a self that is still strong and a future that is no longer fixed, the authors of the Inaros Cycle display something completely lacking from the *Posthomerica*: hope. And hope is, surely, something to cling to.

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<sup>1103</sup> As Agosti (2016: 646) remarks with regards to Nonnus in his Late Antique context: 'research is still just beginning'.

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