

BLOOD-COLOURED SWANS: HOR. *CARM.* 4.1.10 AND HOMER'S PURPLE DEATH*

1. PURPLE SWANS: REALITY AND LITERATURE

In *Carm.* 4.1 Horace asks Venus to stop waging war against him, who is now over fifty (1–7), and suggests that she should set her aim instead on Paulus Maximus, a young and passionate nobleman who will be happy to obey Venus' orders (9–20).

The poet asks the goddess to visit Paulus Maximus on the wings of her purple swans (*purpureis ales oloribus*, 10). Swans, like sparrows and doves, were sacred to Aphrodite/Venus.¹ Nevertheless, the epithet 'purple' (*purpureis*) raised some eyebrows, from ancient commentators down to the present times.² For the Greeks and the Romans, the swan was, without exception, the symbol for whiteness,³ so much so that the expression 'black swan' meant something that was impossible (Juv. 6.165 *rara auis ... nigroque simillima cycno*).⁴ Horace's description of the purple colour of Venus' swans remains unparalleled.⁵

* I am extremely grateful to Dr Luis Rivero García and to the editors and the anonymous reader for *CQ* for their kind and helpful suggestions.

¹ R.G.M. Nisbet and N. Rudd, *A Commentary on Horace, Odes, Book III* (Oxford, 2004), 344.

² e.g. G. Thome, 'Die Funktion der Farben bei Horaz', *Acta Classica* 37 (1994), 15–39, at 22. This is not the place to attempt a discussion of the psychology of colour in ancient times, for which see e.g. M. Platnauer, 'Greek colour-perception', *CQ* 15 (1921), 153–62; C. Rowe, 'Conceptions of colour and colour symbolism in the ancient world', *Eranos* 41 (1972), 327–64; and J.P. Harris, 'The swan's red-dipped foot: Euripides, *Ion* 161–9', *CQ* 62 (2012), 510–22, at 511. On the use of purple in the ancient Mediterranean, see A. Dedekind, *Ein Beitrag zur Purpurkunde* (Berlin, 1898); K. Schneider, 'Purpura', *RE* 23 (1959), cols. 2000–20; and M. Reinhold, *History of Purple as a Status Symbol in Antiquity* (Brussels, 1970). The last reference was kindly supplied to me by the editor for *CQ*.

³ e.g. Aesch. *PV* 795, Eur. *HF* 692, *Heracl.* 215, *Bacch.* 1365, *Rhes.* 618, Ar. *Av.* 1065, Arist. *Soph. el.* 168b, Theoc. 25.130, Hor. *Carm.* 2.20.10, Verg. *Ecl.* 7.38, *Aen.* 7.699, 9.563, 10.192, 11.380, 11.580, G. 2.199, Ov. *Her.* 7.4, *Met.* 2.373, Prop. 3.3.39, Paus. 8.17. Latin poets used adjectives that denote a shining whiteness, such as *albus*, *candidus*, *canus*, *candens*, *canens*, *lacteus*, *niueus*. See H. Gossen, 'Schwan', *RE* 2.A.1 (1921), 782–92, at 784; J. André, *Étude sur les termes de couleur dans la langue latine* (Paris, 1949), 360; A. Sauvage, *Étude de thèmes animaliers dans la poésie latine. Le cheval, les oiseaux* (Brussels, 1975), 232; H. Schoonhoven, 'Purple swans and purple snow (Hor. C. IV 1, 10 and *Eleg. in Maec.* 62)', *Mnemosyne* 31 (1978), 200–3, at 200; Thome (n. 2), 23.

⁴ André (n. 3), 360. The Black Swan (*Cygnus atratus*), a native species of Australia, was unknown in Europe until the eighteenth century. See Gossen (n. 3), 784.

⁵ Sauvage (n. 3), 232; Schoonhoven (n. 3), 200; M.C. Putnam, *Artifices of Eternity: Horace's Fourth Book of Odes* (Ithaca and London, 1986), 45. The ὄρνις φοινικόπτερος mentioned by Cratinus fr. 121 K.–A. cannot be a swan, *pace* J. Henderson, 'Pursuing Nemesis. Cratinus and mythological comedy', in C.W. Marshall and G. Kovacs (edd.), *No Laughing Matter: Studies in Athenian Comedy* (Bristol, 2012), 1–12, at 4, 10 n. 27. Rather, it must be a flamingo or another similarly coloured bird (W.G. Arnott, *Birds in the Ancient World from A to Z* [London and New York, 2007], 275). On the other hand, *purpureis* cannot allude to the swan's feet, which were wrongly described as crimson by Eur. *Ion* 162–3 and Ov. *Met.* 2.375. Swan feet are, in actual fact, unmistakably black.

Several suggestions have been made in order to explain Horace's epithet. Some of them are naturalistic or ornithological in nature. From an ornithological point of view, *purpureis* might allude to the rusty stains that iron-rich water sometimes leaves on swans' feathers.⁶ Other scholars believed that the adjective described the curious optical phenomenon whereby extremely brilliant whiteness (like that of snow) proves so dazzling as to make human eyes see purple.⁷ Some scholars, on the other hand, guessed that an artistic depiction lay behind the epithet, and that Horace might have meant by it the golden-rosy tints of the swans that carry the goddess in some vase-paintings,⁸ or that he might have been inspired by the non-naturalistic colours in Pompeian wall paintings.⁹

None of these hypotheses has received universal or even significant support, and thus it would seem that the explanation for the curious epithet in *Carm.* 4.1.10 ought to be literary and rhetorical in nature, and not naturalistic or artistic.¹⁰

With regard to literary interpretations, nearly all scholars (beginning with Horace's commentator P. Porphyrio)¹¹ were inclined to believe that *purpureus* in *Carm.* 4.1.10 had no colour-value at all. Rather, it meant simply 'beautiful' or 'resplendent' (*pulchri, nitidi*),¹² taking as their cue such parallels as *Elegia in Maecenatem* 1.62 (*bracchia †purpurea† candidiora niue*) and Valerius Flaccus 3.422 (*hic sale purpureo uiuaque nitentia lympa*).¹³ However, it is far from certain that *purpureus* might at times mean simply 'brilliant, lustrous' to the exclusion of any hue,¹⁴ be that rosy, ruddy, reddish, purple or scarlet.¹⁵

⁶ Arnott (n. 5), 182. A. Dedekind (n. 2), 164 and 173 thought implausibly that the use of *purpureus* pointed to the swiftness of swans on the wing.

⁷ P. Cassel, *Der Schwan in Sage und Leben* (Berlin, 1872), 61; V. Pöschl, 'Liebende Schwäne bei Horaz und später', *Humanitas* 47 (1995), 531–43, at 533–8. On Virgil's *lumine ... purpureo* (*Aen.* 6.640–1), see below, n. 45.

⁸ Schoonhoven (n. 3), 201.

⁹ O. Keller, *Die antike Tierwelt* (Leipzig, 1913), 2.219. More interpretations and emendations (currently disregarded) may be found in D. Lambinus and A. Turnebus, *Qu. Horatius Flaccus* (Paris, 1604), 255; A. Dacier, *Remarques critiques sur les œuvres d'Horace. Volume IV* (Paris, 1689), 420–1; C. Combe, *Q. Horatii Flacci Opera. Tomus I* (London, 1792), 423. See also the entry for Hor. *Carm.* 4.1.10 in the website *Repertory of Conjectures on Horace* (<http://tekstlab.uio.no/horace>), accessed on 16 June 2016.

¹⁰ O.J. Schrier, 'Love with Doris: Dioscorides', *Anth. Pal.* V 55', *Mnemosyne* 32 (1979), 307–26, at 318–19 n. 37; P. Fedeli and I. Ciccarelli, *Q. Horatii Flacci Carmina Liber IV* (Florence, 2008), 97–8.

¹¹ In Hor. *Carm.* 4.1.10 *purpureis oloribus quomodo dicitur, cum albi sint potius? sed sic purpureum pro pulchro dicere poetae adsuerunt*. Cf. Serv. *Aen.* 1.591 *purpureum pulchrum ut Horatius purpureis ales oloribus*.

¹² A few examples will suffice: G. Baxter, C.H. Klotz and M.C.D. Jan ap. Combe (n. 9), 423; André (n. 3), 99–100; B. Marzullo, 'Afrodite porporina?', *Maia* 3 (1950), 132–6, at 132; J. Gow, *Q. Horatii Flacci Carminum Liber IV* (Cambridge, 1955), 30 ('lustrous swans'); A.S. Hollis (ed.), *Ovid Ars Amatoria Book I* (Oxford, 1977), 84.

¹³ See C.J. Fordyce, *Caullus A Commentary* (Oxford, 1961), 206. However, Valerius Flaccus 3.422 refers by metonymy to the sea, not to salt. See R.J. Edgeworth, 'Does *purpureus* mean bright?', *Glotta* 57 (1979), 281–91, at 283; G. Manuwald, *Valerius Flaccus Argonautica Book III* (Cambridge, 2015), 177.

¹⁴ There are serious doubts on the validity of *bracchia †purpurea† candidiora niue* from *Elegiae in Maecenatem* 1.62, the sole indisputable example in which *purpureus* cannot have a reddish tint. See H. Schoonhoven, *Elegiae in Maecenatem* (Groningen, 1980), 130–2; R.J. Edgeworth, *The Colors of the Aeneid* (New York, Paris, Bern and Frankfurt am Main, 1992), 215–16, 221–2. E.J. Kenney ap. W.V. Clausen, *Appendix Vergiliana* (Oxford, 1966), 90, who printed *purpurea* between daggers, believed that it was a repetition of *purpura* from line 60. See also Fedeli and Ciccarelli (n. 10), 97–8.

¹⁵ Edgeworth (n. 14), 260. Cf. Serv. *Aen.* 1.337 *purpureo aut pulchro aut russati coloris*, Donat. *Aen.* 9.235 *purpura quippe nigra est cum rubore*.

It is my contention that the description of the swans as *purpureis* must indicate the presence of a colour in the purple/dark-red range. When used to describe a bird's plumage, both *purpureus* and πορφύρεος signal a colouring that is wholly or partly dusky, often with a reddish or purplish cast.¹⁶ It seems hard to believe that, out of all the possible instances from Greek and Latin literature, *Carm.* 4.1.10 should be the sole instance in which a bird's plumage is described as purple with no intention of pointing to colour. Furthermore, all cases in which Horace uses *purpureus* or *poenus* show that a reddish-purple tint is clearly meant.¹⁷ For Horace, the vestments of tyrants are purple (*Carm.* 1.35.12 *purpurei metuunt tyranni*), as are the bunches of autumn grapes (*Carm.* 2.5.11-12 *autumnus racemos | purpureo uarius colore*), the blood-stained sea (*Carm.* 2.12.2-3 *Siculum mare | Poeno purpureum sanguine*), Augustus' mouth after drinking red nectar (*Carm.* 3.3.12 *purpureo bibet ore nectar*), a rose (*Carm.* 3.15.15 *flos purpureus rosae*) and a grape (*Epod.* 2.20 *uuam purpurae*).¹⁸

Thus, it ought to be taken into consideration that *purpureis* in *Carm.* 4.1.10 might not mean just 'shining' without the addition of shade or colour. The epithet might seek to provoke a rhetorical effect that readers in antiquity would not fail to find surprising.¹⁹ In point of fact, in the single other instance in which Horace mentions a swan's colour, the bird is called, to the surprise of no one, 'white' (*Carm.* 2.20.10 *album ... alitem*).²⁰

Other scholars believe that *purpureis* alludes to Venus herself through hypallage.²¹ Greek poets and artists considered swans one of Aphrodite's favourite animals, and such a link between goddess and bird grew only closer and stronger in Latin literature.²² Just as the oxen of the Sun are as *candidi* as the sun itself,²³ the (silent) swan as musical as its lord Apollo,²⁴ or Proserpina as dusky as her dark realm (*Carm.* 2.13.21 *furuae regna*

¹⁶ Such is the case of the Purple Gallinule (πορφυρίων: Ar. *Av.* 707; *porphyrio*: Mart. 13.78, Plin. *HN* 10.135), the Satyr Tragopan (Κόσπιος ὄρνις: Ael. *NA* 17.33) and the Kingfisher (ἀλιπόρφυρος ὄρνις: Alc. 26.4). The bird called πορφύρις (Ibyc. fr. 317b *PMGF*, Callim. fr. 414 Pf.) might be the Blue Rock Thrush, whose feathers are a vivid dark blue (Arnott [n. 5], 288). The phoenix has wings of purple and gold (Ach. Tat. 3.25.2 κεκέρασται μὲν τὰ πτερὰ χρυσοῦ καὶ πορφύρα). The exact species of the λαθιπορφυρίδες mentioned by Ibyc. fr. 317a3 *PMGF* is not known. The wings of Zetes and Calais, the sons of the North Wind, are purple (Pind. *Pyth.* 4.182-3 Ζήταν Κόλαϊν τε ... ἄνδρας πετροῖσιν | νῶτα πεφρίκοντας ἄμφω πορφυρέοις), perhaps owing to the darkness of their and their father's wings (cf. Bacchyl. 13.91-3, Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 1.219-20 ἐρεμνάς | ἀειρομένω πτέρυγας, Strabo 4.1.7). The entries for πορφύρεος and *purpureus* in LSJ and *OLD* are unfortunately of no great help.

¹⁷ According to Thome (n. 2), 22, for Horace *purpureus* mainly described hues in the red range ('Horaz' Hauptbegriff für den Rotbereich ist *purpureus*'). In addition to *Carm.* 4.1.10, Horace uses *purpureus* in the following lines: *Carm.* 1.35.12 *purpurei metuunt tyranni*, 2.5.12 *purpureo uarius colore*, 2.12.3 [sc. mare] *Poeno purpureum sanguine*, 3.3.12 *purpureo bibet ore nectar*, 3.15.15 *nec flos purpureus rosae*, *Sat.* 2.6.106 *ergo ubi purpurea porrectum in ueste locauit*, 2.8.11 *gausape purpureo mensam pertersit*, *Epist.* 1.17.27 *alter purpureum non exspectabit amictum*, *Ars P.* 15 *purpureus, late qui splendeat, unus et alter [sc. pannus]*.

¹⁸ J. Clarke, *Imagery of Colour and Shining in Catullus, Propertius and Horace* (New York, Berlin and Bern, 2003), 130-4.

¹⁹ Schoonhoven (n. 3), 200.

²⁰ Horace mentions swans in the following passages: *Carm.* 1.6.2 *Maeonii carminis alite*, 2.20.10 *album ... alitem*, 3.28.15 *iunctis ... oloribus*, 4.2.25 *Dircaeum ... cynnum*, 4.3.20 *donatura cynni, si libeat, sonum*.

²¹ R.F. Thomas, *Horace Odes Book IV and Carmen Saeculare* (Cambridge, 2011), 92.

²² Cassel (n. 7), 4 n. 16; Keller (n. 9), 216-19; Gossen (n. 3), 789.

²³ Keller (n. 9), 292.

²⁴ R.G.M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace Odes, Book II* (Oxford, 1978), 342.

Proserpinae), so too are the swans and doves of Venus purple or reddish, like the goddess herself.²⁵ In fact, this was one of the explanations for the epithet put forth by ancient commentators (Schol. in Hor. *Carm.* 4.1.10 *nitidis aut pulchris aut reginae Veneri dicatis, ut pro regno purpureos dixerit*). *Purpureus* and πορφύρεος describe often Aphrodite/Venus and her son Eros/Cupid,²⁶ as well as their clothes, their instruments²⁷ and the radiant rosy look of youthful beauty,²⁸ over which the gods of love preside. Therefore, in *Carm.* 4.1.10 the goddess' swans acquire Venus' epithet (*purpureis*), whereas Venus herself receives the swans' denomination (*ales*):²⁹ although it is of course not strictly true that the goddess has wings, she is able to fly on the wings of her swans.³⁰ Similarly, the birds are purple because that is the colour of their mistress.

I wish to stress that the transference by hypallage of Venus' colouring to her favourite animals is not limited to swans. According to Aelian, doves sacred to Venus are purple precisely because that is the colour of the goddess: μίαν μὲν διαπρεπὴ τὴν ὄραν ἔκ γε τοῦ πελάγους τοῦ κομίζοντος ἐκ τῆς Λιβύης ὀράσθαι ἐσπετομένην, οὐχ οἷαν κατὰ τὰς ἀγελαίας πελειάδας τὰς λοιπὰς εἶναι, πορφυρᾶν δέ, ὡσπερ οὖν τὴν Ἀφροδίτην ὁ Τήιος ἡμῖν Ἀνακρέων ἄδει, πορφυρέην που λέγων (*NA* 4.2.)³¹ This parallel, as far as I know, has not been mentioned in support of the hypallage explanation. It may be inferred that the appearance of *purpureus* in the description of the swans arises from a literary, not physical, reason, which is connected to the traditional attribution of the colours *purpureus* and πορφύρεος to Aphrodite/Venus and Eros/Cupid.

²⁵ J. Desprez, *Q. Horatii Flacci Opera* (Philadelphia, 1828), 215, 'forsitan et color purpureus attribuitur cynis Venerem trahentibus, qui ipsius Veneris est, per hypallagen'; Putnam (n. 5), 45; Thome (n. 2), 23; Fedeli and Ciccarelli (n. 10), 98; Clarke (n. 18), 131.

²⁶ Anac. fr. 357.3 *PMG* πορφυρῆ τ' Ἀφροδίτη, Phrynichus fr. 13 K.–Sn. λόμεπει δ' ἐπὶ πορφυρέαις παρῆσι φῶς ἔρωτος, *Anth. Pal.* 16.210.2, *Ov. Am.* 2.1.38 *purpureus Amor*, *Ars am.* 1.232, *Rem. am.* 701, *Apul. Met.* 5.22.5, *Claud. Carm. min.* 25.104. See Schrier (n. 10), 322; Clarke (n. 18), 190; J. McKeown, *Ovid: Amores Volume III. A Commentary on Book Two* (Leeds, 1998), 24–5; A. Fountoulakis, 'The colours of desire and death. Colour terms in Bion's *Epitaph on Adonis*', in L. Cleland, K. Stears and G. Davies (edd.), *Colour in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Oxford, 2004), 110–16, at 113–14. Other epithets denoting a dark purplish colour that are associated with Aphrodite are ἰστέφανος (*Hymn. Hom. Ven.* 6.18, *Thgn.* 2.1332, *Solin.* 19.4, *Anth. Pal.* 12.91.6) and ἰοδερκῆς (*Bacchyl.* 8.1–2).

²⁷ Sappho fr. 54 *PMG*, Anac. fr. 302.1–2 *PMG* σφαίρηι δητῆ με πορφυρῆι | βόλλων χρυσοκόμης Ἔρωσ, *Anth. Pal.* 5.194.6, 12.112.2, Bion, *Epitaphios Adonidos* 3, *Sil.* 7.447, *Ach. Tat.* 2.11.4, *Dracontius, Romulus* 6.78. See Edgeworth (n. 14), 217; Clarke (n. 18), 190, 279; A. Sens, *Asclepiades of Samos. Epigrams and Fragments* (Oxford, 2011), 233.

²⁸ Simon. fr. 585 *PMG* πορφυρέου ἀπὸ στόματος | ἰεῖσα φωνὴν παρθένος, *Enn. Ann.* 361, *Catull.* 45.12, *Verg. Aen.* 1.590–1 *lumen iuuentae* | *purpureum*, 11.819, *Hor. Carm.* 4.10.4, *Tib.* 3.4.30, *Nonnus, Dion.* 18.113–14. See Edgeworth (n. 14), 151; J.D. Reed, *Bion of Smyrna. The Fragments and the Adonis* (Cambridge, 1997), 29–31; Clarke (n. 18), 275.

²⁹ *Ales* not infrequently means 'swan'. See e.g. *Hor. Carm.* 1.6.2 *Maenonii carminis alite*, 2.20.10 *album ... alitem*, *Sen. Phaed.* 301 *candidas ales modo mouit alas*. There is a parallel for the exchange of epithets between a swan and one of its characteristics in Pratinas fr. 3 Sn.–K. (οἷά τε κύκνον ἄγοντα | ποικιλόπτερον μέλος): the swan's song has wings, just as its owner does.

³⁰ Fedeli and Ciccarelli (n. 10), 96–7; Thomas (n. 21), 92.

³¹ Compare with the crimson-billed doves, sacred to Venus, in *Prop.* 3.3.31–2 *et Veneris dominae uolucres, mea turba, columbae* | *tingunt Gorgoneo punica rostra lacu*. Aelian's notice about the consecration of a purple dove to Aphrodite makes it unwise to believe that *Claud. Carm. min.* 25.104 (*florea purpureas adnectunt frena columbas*) and *Dracontius, Romulus* 6.75 (*florea purpureas retinebant frena columbas*) must have necessarily drawn on *Hor. Carm.* 4.1.10, as André (n. 3), 99 thought.

As for the use of *purpureus* in hypallage, at least one other instance can be documented in Horace: in *Carm.* 1.35.12 (*purpurei metuunt tyranni*) the poet calls tyrants ‘purple’ in an allusion to the colour of the kingly clothes they wear.³²

To sum up the preceding paragraphs, Horace may have called the swans ‘purple-coloured’ because Aphrodite/Venus and Love were associated with that hue.³³ The epithet would not denote a physical quality but rather a literary one. There is at least one celebrated precedent in which ‘purple’ was used as literary non-realistic ornamentation:³⁴ famously, Ion of Chios (*FGrHist* 392 F6 Jacoby) reported that Sophocles, noticing a young man’s bashful blush, quoted a line by Phrynichus in praise of the light of love that shone on the purple cheeks of a beautiful youth (λάμπει δ’ ἐπὶ πορφυρέαις παρήσι φῶς ἔρωτος, fr. 13 K.-Sn.). Some pedant objected to Sophocles’ use of the epithet, noting that painting the youth’s cheeks purple would not have a beautiful or a realistic effect.³⁵ Between laughs, Sophocles retorted that, as was the case with other poetic colour adjectives, such as χρυσοκόμης and ῥοδοδάκτυλος, its beauty lay in the literary resonance, not in a strict and literal adherence to reality.³⁶

2. THE COLOUR OF BLOOD: PURPLE IN WAR AND FUNERARY CONTEXTS

So far it has been claimed that Horace used *purpureis ... oloribus* in hypallage. My contention is that the literary and rhetorical context in which Venus’ swans are called purple has a decisive bearing on the interpretation of the epithet. I shall support my hypothesis by appealing to parallels from Greek literature, which of course Horace knew inside out.

Let us begin at the beginning, with Homer. As is well known, for Homer a few colours in the red range, such as δαφνοῖός, φοινός, φοινίης, φοινικόεις could mean

³² Edgeworth (n. 14), 217. Two further examples might be quoted, although they inhabit murkier grounds and might just be pregnant nuances rather than hypallages: *Carm.* 3.3.12 (*purpureo bibet ore nectar*) paints young Augustus’ mouth purple, a colour that denotes his youth, triumph and divinity (Thome [n. 2], 23). In *Carm.* 3.15.14–15 (*non citharae decent, | nec flos purpureus rosae*) the purple colour of the rose is linked to an old woman’s closeness to the grave, given that purple is one of the traditional literary colours of death. See F.E. Brenk, *Clothed in Purple Light: Studies in Vergil and in Latin Literature, Including Aspects of Philosophy, Religion, Magic, Judaism, and the New Testament Background* (Stuttgart, 1999), 319.

³³ Clarke (n. 18), 131.

³⁴ According to A. Grand-Clément, ‘Sophocle, le maître d’école et les “langages de la couleur”’: à propos du fragment 6 de Ion de Chios’, in M. Carastro (ed.), *L’Antiquité en couleurs: catégories, pratiques, représentations* (Grenoble, 2009), 63–81, at 68 and 78, the allusion is neither an offence against taste nor an attack on realism, but rather the colour purple hints at seduction and desire in the sympotic context in which the lines are quoted.

³⁵ Ion of Chios, *FGrHist* 392 F6 Jacoby ὅμως μέντοι γε οὐκ εὔειρηκε Φρύνιχος πορφυρέας εἰπὼν τὰς γνάθους τοῦ καλοῦ. εἰ γὰρ ὁ ζωγράφος χρώματι πορφυρέωι ἐναλείψει τοῦδὲ τοῦ παιδὸς τὰς γνάθους, οὐκ ἂν ἔτι καλὸς φαίνοιτο. οὐ κάρτα δὴ <καλὸν> τὸ καλὸν τῷ μὴ καλῷ φαινομένῳ εἰκάζειν.

³⁶ Ion of Chios, *FGrHist* 392 F6 Jacoby ἀγγελάσας <δ’> ἐπὶ τῷ Ἐρετριεῖ Σοφοκλῆς ‘οὐδὲ τότε σοὶ ἀρέσκει ἄρα, ὦ ξένη, τὸ Σιμωνίδειον [fr. 585 *PMG*] κάρτα δοκέον τοῖς Ἕλλησιν εὐεῖρησθαι ‘πορφυρέου ἀπὸ στόματος ἰεῖσα φωνὰν παρθένος’, οὐδ’ ὁ ποιητῆς (ἔφη) <ὁ> λέγων ‘χρυσοκόμαν Ἀπόλλωνα’ [Pind. *Ol.* 6.41]; χρυσέας γὰρ εἰ ἐποίησεν ὁ ζωγράφος τὰς τοῦ θεοῦ κόμας καὶ μὴ μελαίνας, χεῖρον ἂν ἦν τὸ ζωγράφημα. οὐδὲ ὁ φᾶς ‘ῥοδοδάκτυλον’; εἰ γὰρ τις εἰς ῥόδεον χρῶμα βᾶναιε τοὺς δακτύλους, πορφυροβάφου χεῖρας καὶ οὐ γυναικὸς καλῆς ποιήσειεν <ἀν>’. Compare this with Porphyry’s observation (in Hor. *Carm.* 1.35.11) on the contrast between the real and the literary in the use of the colour purple: *purpurei pro purpurati? purpureum enim aliud est, si proprietatem adtendas.*

both ‘blood-red’ and ‘bloody, blood-covered’,³⁷ sometimes even simultaneously. Could the same be said of πορφύρεος? Some of the Homeric uses of this difficult colour need not concern us.³⁸ However, I wish to highlight that one of the primary contexts in which Homer used the adjective πορφύρεος was in the narration of a warrior’s death in combat. According to an oft-repeated formulaic line, ‘purple death’ (πορφύρεος θάνατος) seized battle-fallen warriors.³⁹ This formula was, in all likelihood, motivated by the resemblance of πορφύρεος to the colour of spilled blood.⁴⁰ The presence of the epithet is explained by the purple-like colour of the blood rushing from the deadly wound sustained by the hero.⁴¹ In a more general sense, Death personified is called ὁ πορφύρεος, ‘the Purple one’ (*Anth. Pal.* 11.13.2). According to Artemidorus, dreaming of purple flowers heralded death, given that the colour purple and death have some sort of affinity (ἔχει γάρ τινα τὸ πορφυροῦν χρῶμα συμπάθειαν [καί] πρὸς τὸν θάνατον, 1.77). Latin literature is not unaware of the link between blood, death and the colour purple.⁴² It is not unknown to Catullus⁴³ or to Virgil⁴⁴: to mention just a few examples, in *Aen.* 9.349 (*purpuream uomit ille animam*) the life-force of the deadly wounded warrior is stained purple, in *Aen.* 9.435–6 (*purpureus ueluti cum flos succisus aratro | languescit moriens*) Euryalus, who is in the throes of death, is likened to a purple flower, whereas in *Aen.* 11.818–19 (*labitur exsanguis, labuntur frigida leto | lumina, purpureus quondam color ora reliquit*) the purple light of youth leaves the lovely face of the dying Camilla.⁴⁵ The adjective *purpureus* is linked frequently to *sanguis* in Latin literature,

³⁷ Platnauer (n. 2), 158–9; Harris (n. 2), 521.

³⁸ Schneider (n. 2), 2010; Rowe (n. 2), 336: ‘πορφύρεος, “purple”, can be applied to the rainbow, a supernatural cloud, clothes and carpets, the sea in motion, the wave of the enraged river Scamander, and to blood and death’; E. Irwin, *Colour Terms in Greek Poetry* (Toronto, 1974), 28.

³⁹ *Il.* 5.82–3 τὸν δὲ κατ’ ὄσσε | ἔλλαβε πορφύρεος θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταιή, 16.334, 20.477, *Il. Parv.* fr. 21.5 Bernabé; cf. Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 2.203–4 κάρως δὲ μιν ἄμφοτερόθεν | πορφύρεος.

⁴⁰ André (n. 3), 97; F. Goheen, ‘Aspects of dramatic symbolism: three studies in the *Oresteia*’, in M.H. McCall (ed.), *Aeschylus. A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1972), 106–23, at 109–10; Nisbet and Hubbard (n. 24), 186; Brenk (n. 32), 219; Clarke (n. 18), 132; Fountoulakis (n. 26), 113–14. Compare also two passages that bring together, with varying degrees of explicitness, blood and the colour purple: Plin. 9.135 (*laus ei summa in colore sanguinis concreti, nigricans aspectu idemque suspectu refulgens. unde et Homero purpureus dicitur sanguis*) and Ach. Tat. 2.11.4–7 (καὶ τῷ στόματι τοῦ κυνὸς περιρρέει τοῦ ἄνθους τὸ αἷμα, καὶ βόπτει τὸ αἷμα τὴν γένυν καὶ ὑφαίνει τοῖς χεῖλεσι τὴν πορφύραν ... ὁ ποιμὴν ὄρᾳ τὰ χεῖλη τοῦ κυνὸς ἡμαγαμένα καὶ τραῦμα νομισσας τὴν βαφὴν προσήει καὶ ἀπέπλυνε τῇ θαλάσῃ ... τὸ αἷμα λαμπρότερον ἐπορφύρετο).

⁴¹ *Il.* 4.140–1 αὐτίκα δ’ ἔρρειεν αἷμα κελαϊνεφές ἐξ ὠτειλῆς. | ὡς δ’ ὅτε τις τ’ ἐλέφαντα γυνὴ φοῖνικι μὴνῃ, 17.360–1 αἷματι δὲ χθὼν | δεῦτε πορφυρέω, Stesich. S15, 2.12 *PMGF* ἐμίαινε δ’ ἄρ’ αἷματι πορφ[υ]ρέωι, Aesch. *Pers.* 315–16 πυρσὴν ζαπληθὴ δάσκιον γενειάδα | ἔτεγγ’ ἀμείβων χρώτα πορφυρά βαφῆι, Bion, *Epitaphius Adonidis* 26–7 στήθεα δ’ ἐκ μηρῶν φοινίσσαστο, τοῖ δ’ ὑπὸ μαζοῖ | χιόνεοι τὸ πάροισθεν Ἀδώνιδι πορφύροντο, Quint. Smyrn. 14.319 αἷματι <por>φύροντι θοῶς ἐρυθθαίνεθ’ ὑπερθεν, Nonnus, *Dion.* 4.450 πορφυρέη ῥαθάμιγγι χιτῶν ἐρυθθαίνετο Νίκης, 34.156 αἷματι πορφύρουσαν ἀναστείλειεν ἀκοκίην. See G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary. Books 5–8* (Cambridge, 1990), 62. Compare this with the famous purple cloth on which Agamemnon treads in Aesch. *Ag.* 910 (πορφυρόστροφως πόρος), 957, 959: the cloth’s colour brings to mind all the blood that has been spilled in the house of Atreus (Goheen [n. 40], 107–15).

⁴² Clarke (n. 18), 132.

⁴³ Clarke (n. 18), 57, 131.

⁴⁴ B. Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation, and the Epic Tradition* (Ithaca, 1990), 102; Edgeworth (n. 14), 26–9, 36, 52–3; Brenk (n. 32), 220–3; J.T. Dyson, ‘Lilies and violence: Lavinia’s blush in the song of Orpheus’, *CPh* 94 (1999), 281–8, at 284.

⁴⁵ J.D. Reed, ‘A Hellenistic influence in *Aeneid IX*’, *Faventia* 26 (2004), 27–42, at 29–31. The association of *purpureus* with death in Virgil might account for the lovely expression *lumine ... purpureo* from *Aen.* 6.640–1, which might describe ‘the supernatural (non-solar) illumination of

more often than not in connection with Homer's formulaic line quoted above.⁴⁶ Servius confirms several times that there was a perceived link that tied death, blood and the colour purple.⁴⁷ Horace himself used the colour purple in *Carm.* 2.12.2-3 in order to describe the look of the blood-stained sea after the great bloodshed of a naval battle (*Siculum mare | Poeno purpureum sanguine*).⁴⁸

3. THE COLOUR PURPLE AND *MILITIA AMORIS*

To sum up the preceding points, there was a strong traditional link that joined together death in combat, spilled blood and the colour purple. Such a link was first attested in Homer and reappeared in both Greek and Latin literature.

How does this association, which was originally developed in an epic war context, relate to *Carm.* 4.1.10? The epithet *purpureis*, which describes both the swans that carry the goddess and Venus herself by hypallage, fits well within the great amatory motif of *militia amoris*,⁴⁹ present in the first part of *Carm.* 4.1.

Horace himself had used the *militia amoris* motif in two programmatic poems: in the *recusatio* from *Carm.* 1.6, he points out that he sings of girls' love-battles (*proelia uirginum*, 17), not of grand epic themes, whereas in the *renuntiatio amoris* in *Carm.* 3.26 he states that he was a glorious soldier under Venus' standards (*et militauit non sine gloria; | nunc arma defunctumque bello | barbiton hic paries habebit*, 2-4). Military lexicon turned to erotic use is not lacking in *Carm.* 4.1.⁵⁰ Porphyry himself (*in Hor. Carm.* 4.1-2) had taken notice of this fact (*in superiore libro ostendimus [sc. Carm. 3.26.2] allegoricos bella et militiam Veneris Horatium pro amoribus dicere*). After a long truce, Venus shows her willingness to renew old love wars (*intermissa, Venus, diu | rursus bella moues?*, 1-2); young Paulus Maximus will bear the standard of Venus' army (*late signa feret militiae tuae*, 16). Within the erotic and martial context of *militia amoris*, *purpureis* would not simply allude to youth, love and beauty, the traditional domains of Venus. The funerary and martial connotations of the colour

the land of the dead (...) suffused with a purplish (reddish) glow' (Edgeworth [n. 14], 287-8). The affinity of purple and red flowers with blood, death and eroticism was already present in Catullus. See Dyson (n. 44), 281, 286; Clarke (n. 18), 190-2, 300; Reed (this note), 29.

⁴⁶ André (n. 3), 354; M. Bradley, *Colour and Meaning in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, 2009), 190-1. Cf. *Ov. Tr.* 4.2.6 *uictima purpureo sanguine pulset humum*, *Sil.* 4.168 *purpureo moriens uicticia sanguine tinguis*, *Stat. Silv.* 2.1.41 *o ubi purpureo suffusus sanguine candor*, *Theb.* 9.883 *ibat purpureus niueo de pectore sanguis*. The association of death, purple and blood might explain the curious lines in Valerius Flaccus 3.178-9 *frigidus orbes | purpureos iam somnus obit*, which appear to be an idiosyncratic adaptation of Homer's formulaic line *Il.* 5.82-3 τὸν δὲ κατ' ὄσσε | ἔλλαβε πορφύρεος θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κραταῖη (Schrier [n. 10], 319 n. 39). The connection between blushing and the colour purple is due to the onset of blood rushing onto the blushing face (see e.g. *Ov. Am.* 1.8.12 *purpureus Lunae sanguine uultus erat*).

⁴⁷ *Serv. Aen.* 5.79 *purpureosque iacit flores: ad sanguinis imitationem, in quo est sedes animae*, 6.221, 6.884 *purpureos flores: ut saepe [V 79] diximus, propter sanguinis similitudinem, quia aut anima est, aut animae sedes*.

⁴⁸ See also *Ov. Fast.* 6.565 *flumen ... | purpureum mixtis sanguine fluxit aquis*. There is of course also a play on the colour terms *puniceus* and *punicus* ('scarlet, crimson'), as the editor suggests.

⁴⁹ This motif grew in importance in Hellenistic poetry, but it was Latin literature that made it into a literary code. See on that head e.g. P. Murgatroyd, 'Militia amoris and the Roman elegists', *Latomus* 34 (1975), 59-79; J.A. Estévez, 'Milicia de amor', in R. Moreno Soldevila (ed.), *Diccionario de motivos amorios en la literatura latina (siglos III a.C.-II d.C.)* (Huelva, 2011), 275-86.

⁵⁰ P. Fedeli, *Properzio. Il primo libro delle Elegie* (Florence, 1980), 182-3; Fedeli and Ciccarelli (n. 10), 87, 90, 102-3; Thomas (n. 21), 85.

purple, first seen in Homer, would also hint at Venus' most harmful and dangerous face. *Purpureis* would thus refer both to the blood that is spilled figuratively in a war of love, and to the notion of Love as a metaphorical or real killer.⁵¹ It is perhaps not otiose to mention that in the same poem Horace had called Venus *mater saeua Cupidinum* (5), and that her method of attacking her prospective victim will be described in such aggressive terms as *torrere iecur*, 'to scorch his liver' (12).

Complaining about the harshness and cruelty of the gods of love is an amatory commonplace attested already in archaic Greek literature.⁵² The association of Aphrodite and Eros with homicide, bloodshed and death in war is well attested in classical and Hellenistic literature.⁵³ Horace would know it well. In the Hellenistic epigram, Meleager called love-sickness *μιαφρονία*, 'murder' ('Ερωτος ὄρα, ξείνε, μιαφρονίαν, *Anth. Pal.* 5.215.6).⁵⁴ He also gave Ares' usual epithet *βροτολογός* ('homicide') to Eros (*Anth. Pal.* 5.180.1).⁵⁵ In point of fact, in *Carm.* 2.8.14 Horace called Cupido *ferus*, an epithet that is 'significantly used of Mars',⁵⁶ as are οὖλος and βροτολογός. According to the same epigram by Meleager (*Anth. Pal.* 5.180), Love's mother Aphrodite is shared by fire and the sword (κοινὰ καὶ πυρὶ καὶ ξίφεσι, 4). That is the reason why she loves Ares' bloodstained arrows (Ἄρεως δ' αἰματόφρυρα βέλη, 8). The connection between the love gods and bloodshed is acknowledged by Tibullus 1.2.41-2 (*is sanguine natam | is Venerem e rapido sentiet esse mari*) and by Horace himself (*Carm.* 2.8.14-16 *ferus et Cupido | semper ardentis acuens sagittas | cote cruenta*) in a passage that appears to wish to go one better on Meleager's αἰματόφρυρα βέλη.⁵⁷ Therefore, it is plausible to believe that Aphrodite's and Love's links to figurative bloodshed in a martial context were sufficiently known to the Latin elegiac poets.

In sum, Horace may be supposed to be aware of the Hellenistic association of love with blood, warfare and death in the context of *militia amoris*. By using *purpureis*,

⁵¹ W.R. Nethercut, 'The ironic priest. Propertius' Roman elegies, III, 1-5: imitations of Horace and Vergil', *AJPh* 91 (1970), 385-407, at 393 believed that a similar idea underlies the surprisingly scarlet-tinged beak of Venus' doves (Prop. 3.3.31-2 *et Veneris dominae uolucres, mea turba, columbae | tingunt Gorgoneo punica rostra lacu*): the adjective *punicus* ('scarlet') 'emphasizes that the elegist engages in warfare, but the precise nature of this warfare is symbolized by the doves ... as it replaces the subject of Ennius' *Annales* with the gentle turmoil of Love'. See also Clarke (n. 18), 228-9.

⁵² Fedeli (n. 50), 69; P. Murgatroyd, *Tibullus I* (Bristol, 1991), 83, 263.

⁵³ Thgn. 1231-2 *σκέτλι' Ἔρωσ ... | ἐκ σέθεν ὄλετο μὲν Ἴλιου ἀκρόπολις*, Eur. *Hel.* 238-9 ἂ πολυκτόνος Κύπρις | Δαναΐδας ἄγουσα θάνατον [Πριαμίδασι], Eur. *Hipp.* 551-3 *σὺν αἵματι, σὺν καπνώ, | φονίοισι νυμφείοις | Ἀλκμήνας τόκωι Κύπρις ἐξέδωκεν*, Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 1.802-3 *οὐλομένης δὲ θεᾶς πορσύνετο μήτις | Κύπριδος*, Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4.445-6 *σκέτλι' Ἔρωσ, μέγα πῆμα, μέγα στύγος ἀνθρώποισιν, | ἐκ σέθεν οὐλόμενά τ' ἔριδες στοναχαί τε γόοι τε*, Theoc. 23.46-7 *γράμον καὶ τὸδε γράμμα τὸ σοῖς τοίχοισι χαράσσω ἢ | τοῦτον ἔρωσ ἐκτείνειν*, Orpian, *Hal.* 4.2 *ὄλοῆς τ' Ἀφροδίτης*, *Anth. Pal.* 9.157.2 *ὁ δ' ἀνθρώπων αἵματι μειδίει*, 3-4 *οὐ θοὸν ἐν παλάμαις κατέχει ξίφος; ἠνίδ' ἄπιστα | τῆς θειοδηίου σκύλα μιαφρονίης*, 7-8 *καὶ ταῦτ' οὐτ' Ἄϊδος οὐτ' Ἄρεος, ἔργα δ' Ἔρωτος | λεύσσομεν, οἷς παίξει κείνος ὁ νηπίαχος*. For Latin literature, see e.g. R.G.M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace, Odes, Book I* (Oxford, 1970), 239, M. Librán Moreno, 'Maldición', in R. Moreno Soldevila (ed.), *Diccionario de motivos amorios en la literatura latina (siglos III a.C.-II d.C.)* (Huelva, 2011), 262-4, at 264.

⁵⁴ This idea was picked up by Propertius. See K. Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands. Hellenistic Epigrams in Context* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1998), 299 n. 137.

⁵⁵ Eros is called by that epithet in Dioscorides (*Anth. Pal.* 12.37.2) and Marcus Argentarius (*Anth. Pal.* 9.221.5, 12.37.2). Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 3.297 and 3.1078 had termed Eros οὖλος, which is another epithet originally used of Ares (*Il.* 5.461, 5.717).

⁵⁶ Nisbet and Hubbard (n. 24), 129.

⁵⁷ Nisbet and Hubbard (n. 24), 130.

Horace might on the one hand allude to the lyric, tragic and epigrammatic tradition that depicted Love as a homicide and Aphrodite as delighting in manslaughter (see above, n. 53). On the other hand, the epithet would point towards the Homeric and epic value of purple as a symbol of death in battle. This play of allusions would fit well within the mixture of erotic and funerary terms, the superposition of the amatory and the macabre, and the use of the motif of *mors et amor*, all of which were very frequent in Hellenistic and Neoteric poets.⁵⁸

Therefore, Venus' swans are purple because that is the colour of the goddess. Venus herself is purple-coloured because, in addition to her seductive ever-young beauty, she can prove deadly and bloodthirsty in the battle of love.⁵⁹

4. TWO GREEK PARALLELS: THE COLOUR PURPLE AS LITERARY ALLUSION

Some may no doubt wonder whether such a play of associations and transpositions based on the epic use of *purpureus* and πορφύρεος is believable. To show that it is, I shall provide two parallels for the similar use of a colour term by poets who may be presumed to be well known to Horace. In the first, two verbs are given a funerary and martial meaning that overlies their usual erotic connotation. In the second, the bare mention of a colour suffices to convey an array of literary allusions. Both examples take as their departing point the use of a purple or a purple-like colour, and both capitalize on their meaning in earlier epic poems.⁶⁰

I shall begin with an instance that mixes together Aphrodite's and Ares' involvement, blood, eroticism, the colour purple and death. Bion, *Epitaphius Adonidis* 26–7 mentions Adonis' death-wound (στήθεα δ' ἐκ μηρῶν φοινίσσεται, τοὶ δ' ὑπὸ μαζοῖ | χιόνειο τὸ πάροιθεν Ἀδώνιδι πορφύροντο). I wish to call attention to the use of purple or purple-like colours to describe the blood that spurts from the young man's wounds (φοινίσσεται, πορφύροντο). Such verbs, and the images and colour they convey, belong in the *sermo amatorius* and are usually mentioned in the context of the amatory motif of *descriptio pulchritudinis*, more specifically in the description of the young beloved's reddening blush.⁶¹ Bion's originality in handling those colour terms lies in the fact that, while they signal Adonis' youthful beauty, they also refer to Homer's famous

⁵⁸ A.S.F. Gow and D.L. Page, *The Greek Anthology. Hellenistic Epigrams* (Cambridge, 1965), 637; Reed (n. 45), 32.

⁵⁹ As mentioned above, for Homer some colours in the red range are similarly able to convey both chromatic colour ('blood-red') and the notion that something, usually a wild animal, is a deadly killer: Hom. *Il.* 10.23 (δαφνίνον δέρμα λέοντος), 2.308 (δράκων ἐπὶ νῶτα δαφνίνος), 12.202 (φοινίηντα δράκοντα); cf. *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 304 πῆμα δαφνίνον (the dragon Python).

⁶⁰ The idea that reference to a colour may foreshadow a coming event has been proven by Edgeworth (n. 14), 52 and Harris (n. 2), 510–22, who writes regarding the ornithologically incorrect epithet φοινικοβαφή in Eur. *Ion* 162 (see above, n. 5): 'by having Ion describe the swan's foot as φοινικοβαφή, "red-dipped" in 162–3, Euripides is hypallactically anticipating the potential outcome of Ion's threat' (516).

⁶¹ Bion 2.18–19 καὶ τόσον ἄνθος | χιονέαις πόρφυρε παρησίη, Nonnus, *Dion.* 4.130–2 ὡς ῥόδα φοινίσσουσι παρηίδες, ἀκροφαῖ δὲ | δίχρῳα χιονέων ἀμαρύσεται ἴχνα ταρσῶν | μεσσόθι πορφύροντα, Tib. 3.4.30 *et color in niveo corpore purpureus*, Anth. Pal. 5.35.5–6 φοινίσσεται χιονέη σάρξ | πορφυρέοιο ῥόδου μᾶλλον ἐρυθροτέρη, Stat. *Silv.* 2.1.41 *o ubi purpureo suffusus sanguine candor*. The contrast between the red/purple and the white in the colouring of the beloved is an amatory and epithalamic τόπος. See P. Fedeli, *Catullus' Carmen 61* (Amsterdam, 1983), 122–3; R. Moreno Soldevila, 'Descripción de la belleza de la amada', in R. Moreno Soldevila (ed.),

description of the nearly fatal wound sustained by Menelaus in his thigh (*Il.* 4.140-1 αὐτίκα δ' ἔρρεεν αἶμα κελαινεφές ἐξ ὠτειλῆς. | ὡς δ' ὅτε τίς τ' ἐλέφαντα γυνῆ φοίνικι μίηνῃ and so on).⁶² The transposition from the erotic to the martial and back again, as well as the superposition of the sensual and the funerary in the narrative of a beautiful youth's death, was not exclusively Bion's invention. It appears, memorably, in Virgil, in particular in the deaths of Pallas, Lausus, Euryalus and Camilla. In that respect, Virgil set up an example that was faithfully followed by later epic poets.⁶³

My second example parallels the usage of *purpureus* as an implicit allusion to one of the meanings of πορφύρεος in earlier epic tradition. According to Sappho fr. 166 L.-P., Leda had found the divine swan's egg from which the Dioscouri were born (φαῖσι δὴ ποτα Λήδαν †ὕακινθινον† πεπυκάδμενον | εὐρην ὄιον). The egg, which was the consequence of Zeus' rape of Nemesis, was hyacinthine in colour, a hue that Sappho herself had described as purple in fr. 15c L.-P. (ὕακινθον ... | ... πόρφυρον ἄνθος). Real swan eggs are, obviously, white and not purple, as are the birds that lay them.⁶⁴ Nemesis' egg may be hyacinthine and not white on account of the hyacinth's association with deceitful seduction or furtive eroticism in epic poetry.⁶⁵

5. CONCLUSION

Purpureis ales oloribus in Hor. *Carm.* 4.1.10 implies a transference of Venus' colour to her swans by hypallage. The birds, and the goddess herself, are purple for two reasons. In the first place, the colour purple refers to Venus' patronage of love and youthful beauty. However, it signals also the goddess' connection to death and bloodshed through allusion to the Homeric use of πορφύρεος within the context of the amatory motif of *militia amoris*, with which the ode itself begins.⁶⁶ Such a play on the different

Diccionario de motivos amorios en la literatura latina (siglos III a.C.–II d.C.) (Huelva, 2011), 134–41, at 139–40.

⁶² Reed (n. 28), 213; Reed (n. 45), 29–30, 32; cf. Harris (n. 2), 518. I wish to note that Fountoulakis (n. 26), 114 had reached a conclusion very similar to the thesis of the present work in his discussion of the use of πορφύρεος in Bion, *Epitaphius Adonidis* 3 and 79: 'The Homeric resonances [*sc.* of πορφύρεος in Bion, *Epitaphius Adonidis* 79] illuminate the connotations concerning the idea of youthful, violent, and bloody death, which derive from the image of Adonis' funeral bed.'

⁶³ Reed (n. 45), 32, 40.

⁶⁴ D.A. Campbell, *Greek Lyric I. Sappho. Alcaeus* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), 171.

⁶⁵ A. Giesecke, *The Mythology of Plants: Botanical Lore from Ancient Greece and Rome* (Los Angeles, 2014), 49. The hyacinth is present, among other flowers, in scenes that portend or contain deceitful seduction or illicit passion, such as *Il.* 14.348, *Hymn. Hom. Cer.* 7, 426, *Cypr. fr.* 4.3 Bernabé. On the flowery meadow as the dominion of Eros and as a metaphoric space for love, see C. Calame, *The Poetics of Eros in Ancient Greece* (New Jersey, 1999), 153–170. On the association of the hyacinth with love, Aphrodite, and Eros, see *Anac. fr.* 346.7–9 *PMG* τὰς ὑακιν[θίνας ἀρ]οῦρας | ἴνα Κύπρις ἐκ λεπάδων | ...] [.]α[ς κ]ατέδησεν ἴπους, *Eur. IA* 1298–9, *Theoc.* 11.26, *Anac. fr.* 31.1 and Calame (this note), 165.

⁶⁶ Curiously, a passage from the Byzantine love-novel *Hysmine and Hysminias* (10.12) by Eustathius Macrembolites shares with *Hor. Carm.* 4.1 a few ideas and concepts: love as war ('Ἔρως ἐστράτευσε καθ' ὑμῶν, καὶ τὰς ἡμῶν καρδίας ἐπολιόρησεν. Ἔρως τὴν ἐν ὑμῖν πορφύραν τῆς παρθενίας ἐσύλησε, καὶ κατὰ κόχλον ἡμεῖς ἀπερράχθημεν; cf. *Hor. Carm.* 4.1.1–2), love as a fire that burns up its victim's entrails ('Ἔρως ἀφροδισίῳ πυρὶ τὴν τῆς νεότητος θέρμην ὑμῶν ἐξεπύρωσε; cf. *Hor. Carm.* 4.1.12), the contrast between youth and old age (καὶ γεραῖα σπλάγχνα πατέρων ἡμῶν εἰς βάθος κατέκαυσε καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀπηνθράκωσεν; cf. *Hor. Carm.* 4.1.6–8). Finally, Love, after waging war successfully on the lovers, takes their virginities as if they were purple spoils ('Ἔρως τὴν ἐν ὑμῖν πορφύραν τῆς παρθενίας ἐσύλησε).

traditional meanings of a colour in the purple, red or violet range was not unknown in Horace's time.

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