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THE SHAPE OF EARLY GREEK UTOPIA*

ABSTRACT

The paper offers a new approach to utopia in early and classical Greek texts from Homer to the fifth century. The model is based on four motifs regularly occurring in 'utopian texts', that is, descriptions of places that are distant in time and/or space. A comparative analysis of such texts (drawn from Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Old Comedy and Herodotus) and of how they manipulate the four motifs sheds new light on specific problems (as, for example, the relevance of Herodotus' Ethiopian episode, or the role of the myth of Perseus in Pindar's Pythian *10) and encourages more nuanced readings of famous texts, such as Homer's account of Scheria.*

Keywords: Golden Age; Phaeacians; Hyperboreans; Old Comedy; Ethiopia; utopian discourse

UTOPIA AND UTOPIAN DISCOURSE

This paper offers a new, flexible model of utopia, which will account for the breadth of its uses in ancient Greek texts down to the fifth century B.C. For each passage discussed, the interpretative efforts will go in two directions: to provide a better understanding of early Greek utopia by using each text as an illustrative specimen of the model (bottom-up) and, at the same time, to secure an interpretative gain by applying the model of utopia to the individual text (top-down).

The breadth of the topic and of the evidence calls for a few initial caveats. The first problem is constituted by the very noun 'utopia', coined by Thomas More in his eponymous work,[1] which has been applied throughout the centuries to a wide range of texts. Even though this concept lurks in countless studies, there is still much confusion about its precise contours; there is no consensus on what defines a text as utopian, or on which texts contain or represent utopias.[2] In classical studies, the aspect usually foregrounded in order to define a text as utopian is its ideological content: for example, that it should 'manifest a dream of a society for a better life'[3]. In fact, a similar statement can already be found in Moses Finley's seminal article on ancient and modern utopias.[4] I will call such definitions 'content-based'.

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[1] T. More, *Libellus vere aureus, nec minus salutaris quam festivus, de optimo rei publicae statu deque nova insula Utopia* (Louvain, 1516).

[2] R. Levitas, *Utopia as Method: The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society* (New York, 2013), 178. For a survey of the relationship between utopia and classical texts, from More to the nineteenth century, see L. Bertelli, 'L'utopia greca', in L. Firpo (ed.), *Storia delle idee politiche economiche e sociali. L'antichità classica* (Turin, 1982), 462–581, at 463–71.

[3] A. Giesecke, *The Epic City: Urbanism, Utopia, and the Garden in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Washington, DC, 2007), 1; also R. Levitas, *The Concept of Utopia* (New York, 1990), 8 and ead. (n. 2), 3–19. Cf. B. Zimmermann, 'Utopisches und Utopie in den Komödien des Aristophanes', *WJA* 9 (1983), 57–77, at 59: 'Utopie ist hauptsächlich eine inhaltliche Kategorie'.

[4] M.I. Finley, *The Use and Abuse of History* (London, 1975), 178: 'All Utopianism has an element of fantasy or dreaming, or at least of yearning, for a better life and a better world.'

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Since my purpose is to flesh out a taxonomy of early and classical Greek utopias, these content-based definitions are too loose to provide the analytical criteria required. Instead, I outline the contours of utopia not by looking at content but via a 'morphological' analysis. In this sense, I attempt to arrive at a de-finition without a definition,[5] taking my cue from Vladimir Propp, who defines morphology as 'a description . . . according to its component parts and the relationship of these components to each other and to the whole'.[6] Building on this idea, I trace some recurring features and common denominators, or *motifs*, shared by several Greek texts, and examine the economy of such motifs (both their presence and absence, as well as the amount of space devoted to each motif); finally, I draw conclusions about the significance of the economy of motifs for each text. Taken together, the motifs form the nodes of a textual network and thus delimit a field of reference, which I call 'early Greek utopia'.[7]

But why use the name 'utopia' to designate this textual network? Another viable name would have been 'Golden Age', which has been discarded for two reasons. First, it is used by scholars most often to refer to a particular utopia, the Hesiodic one. Since I make no claims about genealogy (I do not claim that Hesiod or any other author is necessarily the *prôtos heuretês* of early Greek utopia), a term not specifically connected to any of the texts under examination is preferable. Second, 'Golden Age' points exclusively to the dimension of time; 'utopia', instead, while being etymologically linked to space, is commonly used by scholars both in a temporal and in a spatial sense.[8] 'Utopia', then, adequately reflects the range of uses that we encounter in our texts.

Before we begin, a guiding criterion for selecting utopian texts is needed. When using the word utopia, which carries both *ou-* and *eu-* in its root,[9] I avoid the former connotation (*ou-topia)*: it would be extremely problematic to assert, at least as regards early and classical Greece, that utopian places (the oxymoron is only apparent) simply do not exist. Does Ethiopia as described by Herodotus in his third book exist? Or do the Isles of the Blest, a fundamental piece of Greek and Indo-European myth,[10] exist? These questions cannot be answered with a simple yes or no, although 'utopia' seems to be often used as a shorthand for 'non-existent place' in many studies.[11] Regarding the second connotation, *eu-topia*, we will see that, by virtue of sharing some motifs, the texts examined usually (but not always) describe a positive and desirable condition in comparison with the actual world: that is, life 'there' is happier than life here. Even so, the only real common ground in my selection will be distance: all the texts describe a place far from the here and now in space and/or time.

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[5] By de-finition I mean a delimitation of the range of texts that can be deemed utopian in the absence of a content-based definition (I elaborate on this below).

[6] V. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* (Austin, 1968 [first ed.: Leningrad, 1928]), 19. Even though Propp's formulation neatly encapsulates the concept of morphology I adopt in the analysis of utopia, my methodological framework is not related to Propp's analysis of the folktale.

[7] 'Early' refers to the starting point of the utopian discourse, not to its end: in fact, I will discuss texts down to the fifth century.

[8] Cf. L.T. Sargent, 'African Americans and utopia: visions of a better life', *Utopian Studies* 31 (2020), 25–96.

[9] More himself taps into the homophony of *outopia* and *eutopia* ([n. 1], 'Meter of IV verses in the utopian tongue').

[10] M.L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 2007), 349–50.

[11] Outside classical studies, see e.g. L.T. Sargent, 'The three faces of utopianism revisited', *Utopian Studies* 5 (1994), 1–37, at 9. In a similar vein, I am not concerned with utopia as a literary genre (on which, see M.F. Pinheiro, 'Utopia and utopias: a study on a literary genre in Antiquity', *AncNarr* 5 [2006], 147–71), both because of the limitation of the time period under examination and because the categories of 'literary' and 'fictional' applied to the texts examined would constitute an entirely different problem.

As for the temporal scope of the evidence, the enquiry is limited to the period between Homer and the late fifth century. Going into the fourth century would entail discussing the abundant utopian evidence from Plato, which would itself require a separate study.[12] As for the fifth-century material, it may surprise that Aristophanes' *Birds* will not be discussed, but its exclusion will be explained in the conclusion (below, page 481). Finally, we will be looking at *texts*, not at their referents in the world 'outside' them:[13] for example, in the case of Ethiopia I will examine the textual construct put forward by Herodotus in the third book of the *Histories*, not what we can reconstruct of its historical reality.[14] Similarly, I will not treat texts as sources, as sometimes has been done in order to 'reconstruct' utopias.[15]

The delimitation of utopia that I am attempting to achieve via a morphological analysis presents several advantages. One of the most important ones is that the identification of the motifs giving shape to the early Greek utopia allows us to uncover a cohesive utopian *discourse*, which cuts across time periods and genres.[16] In other words, if we posit a stable morphology of utopia, we enable its content and function to vary in each text: the utopian texts can thus be analysed as refunctionalizing and reactivating the utopian discourse in a different context and through a different content. This possibility encourages us to perceive the variety of functions that utopia can perform in early and classical Greek texts.

The requirement for a morphological analysis of utopia is a taxonomy of the motifs that regularly occur in connection with distant places. I have identified four:

a) automatic food (spontaneous production of food without human effort);
b) *eunomia* (a society based on peace and/or justice);
c) bodily health (eternal youth or longevity and/or lack of diseases);
d) gold (plenty of it).

These motifs do not necessarily appear all together in each single utopia: therefore, 'the morphology of early Greek utopia' is intended as an abstract model, only partly actualized in each textual instance. For this reason, to participate in the utopian discourse is not a matter of, as it were, putting all the pieces of the utopian puzzle together; instead, it consists in a dosage and balance of the four motifs, where each text tends to emphasize some elements while reducing or suppressing the others.

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[12] See e.g. C. Quarta, *L'utopia platonica* (Milan, 1985) and D. De Brasi, 'Platone, padre dell'utopia?', *LEC* 75 (2007), 207–26.

[13] My notion of 'text', which includes specimens that range from twelve lines of the *Works and Days* to several books of the *Odyssey*, can be questioned. The working criterion adopted is that all the information that can be gathered about specific utopias are part of a single 'utopian text' (e.g. all the parts of the *Odyssey* that deal with Scheria). The resulting expansive notion of text will, I hope, not be seen in a hindrance to the argument but as a valuable offshoot of the discussion.

[14] This is not the place to discuss whether there is anything 'outside' the text in the first place, and what a historical con-text looks like. On this question, see R.D. Hume, *Reconstructing Contexts* (Oxford, 1991); also B. Holsinger, '"Historical context" in historical context', *New Literary History* 42 (2011), 593–614 and P. Bourdieu, *Les règles de l'art: genèse et structure du champ littéraire* (Paris, 1992), 284–7.

[15] See B. Maclachlan, 'Feasting with Ethiopians: life on the fringe', *QUCC* 40 (1992), 15–33, who talks specifically about the Ethiopian utopia as drawing on sources from different ages, and P.A. Bernardini in B. Gentili et al., *Pindaro: Le Pitiche* (Milan, 1995), 630–1 on 10.30, tracing the Greek sources of the Hyperboreans.

[16] The concept of discourse I will work with is a gross—but heuristically useful, it is hoped—simplification of M. Foucault's *discours*, most fully developed in *L'ordre du discours* (Paris, 1971).

A MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF UTOPIA

Hesiod's Golden Age[17]

> χρύσεον μὲν πρώτιστα γένος μερόπων ἀνθρώπων
> ἀθάνατοι ποίησαν Ὀλύμπια δώματ᾽ ἔχοντες.
> οἳ μὲν ἐπὶ Κρόνου ἦσαν, ὅτ᾽ οὐρανῷ ἐμβασίλευεν·
> ὥστε θεοὶ δ᾽ ἔζωον ἀκηδέα θυμὸν ἔχοντες,
> νόσφιν ἄτερ τε πόνων καὶ ὀιζύος· οὐδέ τι δειλὸν
> γῆρας ἐπῆν, αἰεὶ δὲ πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ὁμοῖοι
> τέρποντ᾽ ἐν θαλίῃσι κακῶν ἔκτοσθεν ἁπάντων·
> θνῇσκον δ᾽ ὥσθ᾽ ὕπνῳ δεδμημένοι· ἐσθλὰ δὲ πάντα
> τοῖσιν ἔην· καρπὸν δ᾽ ἔφερε ζείδωρος ἄρουρα
> αὐτομάτη πολλόν τε καὶ ἄφθονον· οἳ δ᾽ ἐθελημοὶ
> ἥσυχοι ἔργ᾽ ἐνέμοντο σὺν ἐσθλοῖσιν πολέεσσιν.
> ἀφνειοὶ μήλοισι, φίλοι μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν. (Hes. *Op.* 109–20)

Golden was the race of speech-endowed human beings | which the immortals, who have their mansions on Olympus, made first of all. | They lived at the time of Cronus, when he was king in the sky; | just like gods they spent their lives, with a spirit free from care, | entirely apart from toil and distress. Worthless old age | did not oppress them, but they were always the same in their feet and hands, | and delighted in festivities, lacking in all evils; | and they died as if overpowered by sleep. They had all good things: | the grain-giving field bore crops of its own accord, much and unstinting, and they themselves, | willing, mild-mannered, shared out the fruits of their labors[18] together with many good things, | wealthy in sheep, dear to the blessed gods.[19]

In the short compass of twelve lines, Hesiod's Golden Age[20] displays all four utopian motifs presented above. The most conspicuous motif is gold (motif d), which stands in relation to the other metals as the defining and structuring principle of the whole myth.[21]

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[17] Text and translation from G.W. Most, *Hesiod: Theogony, Works and Days, Testimonia* (Cambridge, MA, 2006).

[18] Most's (n. 17) 'shared out the fruits of their labors' departs, both here and later in the text when the same expression ἔργ᾽ ἐνέμοντο recurs (231), from the interpretation of M.L. West (*Hesiod: Works and Days* [Oxford, 1978], 181 on line 119), who glosses ἔργ᾽ ἐνέμοντο as 'lived off their fields'. West compares *Il.* 2.751, but in the Hesiodic context (both here and in line 231) the reciprocity and mutual agreement conveyed by Most's translation seem entirely appropriate. This reciprocity is in fact reinforced in line 118 by the adjective ἐθελημοί (cf. below, n. 20).

[19] West ([n. 18], 181 ad loc.), unlike Most (n. 17), athetizes line 120 ('wealthy in sheep, dear to the blessed gods'), although he thinks that 'it has a Hesiodic enough appearance' to be borrowed from 'a similar passage in the *Catalogue* or some other poem'. R. Janko, reviewing Most's text (*BMCR* 2007.03.31), puts this line among the ones that are 'perhaps [spurious]'.

[20] I use 'Age' to refer to the passage as a whole and underscore its temporal dimension. The section it belongs to is usually called the 'myth of the Races' (Hesiod uses γένος, not χρόνος), but cf. H. Van Noorden, *Playing Hesiod: The 'Myth of the Races' in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2014), 75, who argues for a shift of γένος from 'race' to 'era' over the course of the myth.

[21] I am not concerned here with tracing the diachronic origin of the symbology of gold and metals in the overall structure of the Races, on which see M.L. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 1997), 312–19 and G.W. Most, 'Hesiod's myth of the five (or three or four) races', *PCPhS* 43 (1997), 104–12.

In a general discussion of gold in early Greek texts, Adam Brown shows that it is often associated with the power of the divine, and in many cases demarcates the domain of gods from that of mortals.[22] As noted above, early Greek utopias tend to function as points of comparison with our world; motif d (gold) fits perfectly into this picture, magnifying the boundaries between us and the Golden Age. Moreover, the humans of the Golden Age lived their whole life without ageing (motif c, lines 113–14), while the earth spontaneously (αὐτομάτη) yielded abundant fruits (motif a, lines 117–18). Finally, motif b (*eunomia*) appears in the last line: the humans of the Golden Age shared among themselves the fruits of their labours willingly[23] and without fighting (ἥσυχοι).

Hesiod's Golden Age is a paradigmatic utopia: almost none of the other texts under examination displays all four motifs together, and none pays the same amount of attention to each utopian motif. On the contrary, Hesiod strikes a perfect balance in the economy of utopian motifs by devoting one to two lines to each one. The conciseness of the description, therefore, works in tandem with its exhaustiveness. It will be easier to see how exceptional this text is in the panorama of Greek utopia after a survey of the other specimens; as an illustrative example, one could point to Telecleides, fr. 1 (quoted and discussed below), in which, in the span of fourteen lines, we get three motifs out of four, but with an extremely uneven distribution (one line for peace, one line for bodily health and twelve lines for automatic food). It is not unlikely that the perfect balance achieved by Hesiod's Golden Age could have been a factor in the lasting success that this text enjoyed in classical antiquity as the paradigmatic example of a distant and idealized age.[24]

Another important element of Hesiod's utopia is its relationship with the divine. We will see how early Greek utopias and their inhabitants enjoy, perhaps not surprisingly, a privileged relationship with the gods. In this case, the dynamics of the relationship are straightforward: the gods simply created, or 'made' (110 ποίησαν), the golden generation. Although this is true of the other generations too (128, 144, 158), we should not underestimate the symbolic importance of gold, which foregrounds the proximity of the golden men to the gods (Brown [n. 22]). The proximity is also reinforced by the ring composition at the end of the text—at least if we accept line 120 as genuine (n. 19 below). From a comparative survey of the other peoples who inhabit early Greek utopias (the Phaeacians in Homer, the Hyperboreans in Pindar, the Ethiopians in Herodotus), the divine element will turn out to be characteristic of this textual network; and if we now turn to Homer we can see a case where the presence of the divine emerges not only in its positive and creative power, as in Hesiod's Golden Age, but also in its potentially destructive consequences—a condition of, and at the same time a threat to, a utopian society.

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[22] A.S. Brown, 'From the Golden Age to the Isles of the Blest', *Mnemosyne* 51 (1998), 385–410, at 392–4.

[23] More precisely, West (n. 18), 180 ad loc. glosses ἐθελημοί as ''as they pleased', casually and unforcedly'.

[24] On the success of Hesiod's Golden Age in antiquity, see Van Noorden (n. 20). The paradigmatic value of this utopia is already established in Hesiod's text, in which the Golden Age functions as a point of reference for the other Ages and in the subsequent description of the 'just city', which displays some of the same motifs and several linguistic points of contact (West [n. 18], 214, 216 on lines 231, 236–7).

Homer's Scheria

I now examine how the utopian motifs are interwoven into the Phaeacian narrative. This particular utopian text spans several books of the *Odyssey*, but I start close to its beginning in the sixth book, where we learn that no one comes to Scheria for the sake of war: the Phaeacians, in fact, live secluded from other humans and are characterized as a peaceful people (6.201–5, motif b). Later in the text, we are told that they enjoy an abundance of gold (motif d): golden doors, golden handles and golden statues of dogs (7.88–94), then golden statues of boys carrying torches (7.100–2). As for the motif of automatic food (motif a), in the luxuriant garden inside Alcinous' palace there are abundant fruits (notice in particular the effect of accumulation in 7.120–1) that are constantly generated and ripened by the west wind without human intervention (7.114–21).

The only motif absent throughout the episode is motif c: the Phaeacians do not seem to enjoy any special longevity. What is more, this motif is explicitly contradicted at the end of the Phaeacian episode.[25] In 13.59–60 Odysseus takes his leave from Queen Arete with the following words: χαῖρε μοι, ὦ βασιλέα, διαμπερές, εἰς ὅ κε γῆρας | ἔλθῃ καὶ θάνατος, τὰ τ' ἐπ' ἀνθρώποισι πελόνται 'goodbye, queen, be always happy, until old age and death will arrive, things that come onto humans'. Odysseus is leaving a utopia, but the audience is reminded that not even the Phaeacians are eternally young or immortal: they are, in this sense, fully human. Given the presence of all the other utopian motifs, the absence of motif c is all the more significant: in a poetic tradition that designates gods as 'immortal' (ἀθάνατος) and humans as 'mortal' (βροτός, θνητός), the Phaeacians, who live, as it were, three-quarters of a perfectly utopian life, are denied the feature that would bring them closest to the status of gods. The fact that they display almost all the features of a utopian people and then some—living in such a remote, safe place, where athletic contests replace war—makes their mortality stand out. This mortality becomes particularly salient in at least two places:

1) In the eighth book the Phaeacians set up athletic contests, in which the 'undoing of the agonal ideology' takes place.[26] Such an undoing is operated by a mortal, Odysseus, who initially refuses to take part in the competition, considering it inappropriate to his painful situation (8.153–7). However, after having provoked and mocked Odysseus, the young Phaeacians are outdone by him (8.195–8). Their blessed, utopian life is not matched by an equivalent athletic prowess, as proven by their inferiority to Odysseus, a human who comes from outside their utopia. Their humanity is here embodied in their athletic failure.

2) An audience familiar with the utopian discourse would likely take the explicit denial of immortality in 13.59–60 (motif c, quoted above) as a gloomy foreboding of the Phaeacians' future, working in tandem with the prophecies given to Alcinous by his father Nausithous about Scheria's destruction (8.567–9). In fact, some ten lines after Odysseus' departure Poseidon threatens both to turn the Phaeacian ship into stone and to wipe out Scheria with a mountain (13.149–52). He definitely carries out the first part of his plan, but the fate of Scheria remains an open question—the scene

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[25] The connection between the beginning of the episode in Book 7 and its end in Book 13 is reinforced by the close similarity of the two scenes: I. de Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey* (Cambridge, 2001), 315 on 13.36–63.

[26] V. Di Benedetto, *Omero: Odissea* (Milan, 2010), 455 on 8.100 ('lo smontaggio dell'ideologia agonale'). Cf. de Jong (n. 25), 203 on 8.147–8, who emphasizes the rather unheroic idea of *kleos* that the Phaeacians entertain.

ends with the Phaeacians' terror and prayers (13.146–87). Whether we imagine that, beyond the boundaries of our text, Scheria will be ultimately destroyed or saved by Poseidon,[27] Odysseus' reminder of the Phaeacians' mortality in 13.59–60 ('until old age and death shall arrive'), which should function as a wish of a happy and long life, is quickly, and with an irony not alien to the *Odyssey*,[28] twisted into an omen of destruction: 'until' becomes 'now'—death might come upon the Phaeacians much earlier than Odysseus wished, and quicker than their utopian life would have had us imagine.

In this case, the utopian schema allows us to add weight to the foreboding: the humanity/mortality of the Phaeacians is thrown into relief by the fact that they partake of all the qualities of a utopian people except for one—the one which ends up being most essential to their perpetual enjoyment of a utopia. To this extent, through the suppression of motif c and the dire consequences it engenders, Scheria emerges as a singularly dysfunctional utopia.[29]

Pindar's Hyperborea[30]

> Μοῖσα δ' οὐκ ἀποδαμεῖ
> τρόποις ἐπὶ σφετέροισι· παντᾷ δὲ χοροὶ παρθένων
> λυρᾶν τε βοαὶ καναχαὶ τε αὐλῶν δονέονται·
> δάφνᾳ τε χρυσέᾳ κόμας ἀναδήσαντες εἰλαπινάζοισιν εὐφρόνως.
> νόσοι δ᾽ οὔτε γῆρας οὐλόμενον κέκραται
> ἱερᾷ γενεᾷ· πόνων δὲ καὶ μαχᾶν ἄτερ
> οἰκέοισι φυγόντες
> ὑπέρδικον Νέμεσιν. (Pind. *Pyth.* 10.37–44)

And the Muse is no stranger | to their ways, for everywhere choruses of maidens, | sounds of lyres, and pipes' shrill notes are stirring. | With golden laurel they crown their hair and feast joyfully. | Neither sickness nor accursed old age mingles | with that holy race, but without toils or battles | they dwell there, having escaped | strictly judging Nemesis.

These lines are part of the larger mythical section of the ode. *Pythian* 10, the earliest epinician dated by the scholia, is dedicated to Hippocleas, protégé of the Thessalian

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[27] For this notoriously difficult problem, see Z. Giannopoulou, 'Middles and prophecy in the *Odyssey*', *Yearbook of Ancient Greek Epic* 1 (2017), 137–58.

[28] Cf. e.g. the suitors' laughter in *Od.* 20.345–9.

[29] Since Scheria is often set as a positive example against the dysfunctional island of the Cyclopes in Book 9 (A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey, Volume II* [Oxford, 1990], 21–2 on 9.116–36), it is relevant to notice the differences between the two islands. The only utopian motif to be found on the island of the Cyclopes is automatic food (9.107–11), which explicitly connects them to the gods, who let the food be automatically produced (9.107). Given the importance of the relationship with the divine in early Greek utopias, this motif and this connection, surfacing at the outset of the episode, would lead us to expect the presence of other utopian motifs on the island. However, no other motif will occur in the episode, and in fact none *could* occur: motifs b, c and d refer in all the other texts to individuals that, while being above the human level, still present distinctively human traits (on such traits see below, pages 474–5). The Cyclopes lack several such traits: for example, their society, predicated on nature rather than on culture (G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* [Baltimore, 1998], 180–1), is a complete perversion of the motif of *eunomia* (106, 112–15, 275–6); no gold is to be found here, nor are the Cyclopes endowed with special longevity. In this sense, the lack of all utopian motifs other than automatic food on the island of the Cyclopes supports the opposition between them and the Phaeacians (cf. Heubeck and Hoekstra [this note], 21 on 9.106–15: '[The Cyclopes] are a negation of human values, and a negative counterpart to the Phaeacians who enjoy all the benefits of civilization; they are the embodiment of the non-human').

[30] Text from Gentili et al. (n. 15), translation from W.H. Race, *Pindar* (Cambridge, MA, 1997).

tagos Thorax, who commissioned the ode.[31] The mythical section is introduced, as often in Pindar, by way of contrast: in lines 28–30 Phricias, father of Hippocleas and himself an Olympic victor, is said to have reached the peak of human glory ('he reaches the limit of the sailing') through his own and his son's victories. None the less, no human can go beyond that point and reach the land of the Hyperboreans, which is inaccessible to normal humans: 'neither sailing nor walking you could find the marvellous way to the feast (ἀγῶνα)[32] of the Hyperboreans' (29–30). At this point Pindar adduces by contrast the example of a human who has been able to reach their land, the hero Perseus (line 31).[33] The introduction of Perseus offers the occasion to describe what the hero saw when he was among the Hyperboreans: their close relationship with the god Apollo, who rejoices in watching their rites (34–6), and their feasting and dancing (the passage quoted above). Motif d is toned down, since gold appears only as an ornament on the hair of the Hyperboreans (line 40). Motif c is more prominent: the Hyperboreans lack both old age and diseases (line 41). Peace (motif b) is represented in line 42 by the absence of battles, and is probably strengthened in lines 43–4 by the idea of 'escaping Nemesis'.[34] The only motif that, tellingly, does not feature in Pindar's Hyperborean utopia is automatic food, but before proceeding to a closer scrutiny of the economy of these motifs we must first discuss the myth of Perseus and the Hyperboreans.

The possibility for a mortal, Perseus, to reach Hyperborea has led scholars to question the relevance of the myth in the ode: is it meant to assert the limitations of contemporary humans, even of the happiest ones like Pindar's patrons, or does it present, with the *exemplum* of Perseus, the possibility of transcendence through the *kleos* of athletic victory? Important arguments have been put forward on both sides:[35] one of the most balanced positions is Peter Rose's, who advocates for the inherent ambiguity of Pindar's language and *exempla*.[36] Most recently, Felix Meister ([n. 33], 123–7) has provided an extensive treatment of the issue, defending the idea of a temporary blessed life (like that of the Hyperboreans) bestowed on Hippocleas and Phricias. In what follows, I show how the morphology of early Greek utopia can positively help us to defend the opposite thesis: set against the backdrop of other utopias, the myth of Perseus in *Pythian* 10 cannot be other than a reminder of human finitude.

To reach this conclusion, we should examine what kind of individuals can access, within early Greek utopian discourse, utopias placed in marginal spaces such as Hyperborea. I call this role in the schema of utopia 'bridging'. Two *comparanda* from the network of early Greek utopia can be adduced: Odysseus on Scheria and the Fish-Eaters in Ethiopia (Hdt. 3.17–25). We will have more to say about the complex role of the Fish-Eaters in Herodotus, but for now it suffices to say that in the Ethiopian utopia they play the same bridging function that heroes such as Odysseus and Perseus play in earlier utopias—that is, to access what is regularly inaccessible to mortals. More importantly, the characters who bridge the gap between our world and utopias are consistently marked by exceptional features that put them above the ordinary human level.[37] For this reason, to designate them and the inhabitants of utopia I use the term 'superhuman' instead of 'demigod', to emphasize their superiority to mortals, rather than their inferiority to the gods. It follows that the superhuman characters cannot be compared to contemporary, ordinary humans: only individuals above normal human status can access the blessed state granted to the inhabitants of utopias. If this is right, in *Pythian* 10 Perseus and the Hyperboreans cannot function as a positive point of comparison for the *laudandi* Hippocleas and Phricias.

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[31] On the historical and performative background of the ode, see Bernardini (n. 15), 263–9.

[32] For the meaning of ἀγών in this passage, see Bernardini (n. 15), 631 ad loc.

[33] On the place of such visit in Perseus' myth, see further F.J. Meister, *Greek Praise Poetry and the Rhetoric of Divinity* (Oxford, 2020), 118–19.

[34] The meaning of these two lines, as well as the role of Nemesis, is debated, but the connection of Nemesis with Justice (Δίκη) is broadly accepted: C.G. Brown, 'The Hyperboreans and Nemesis in Pindar's *Tenth Pythian*', *Phoenix* 46 (1992), 95–107, especially 102–3, and Bernardini (n. 15), 636–7 on 10.41–4.

[35] See Meister (n. 33), 124 n. 141 with references.

[36] P. Rose, *Sons of the Gods, Children of Earth: Ideology and Literary Form in Ancient Greece* (Ithaca, NY, 1992), 179.

This conclusion can be supported by the emphasis laid by Pindar on the constant and pervasive presence of a god, Apollo, among the Hyperboreans. The proximity of the divine marks a contrast if compared to the precariousness of the athletic *kleos* achieved by humans.[38] Moreover, the Hyperboreans are explicitly described in opposition to mortals: they are 'free from' the evils that fall upon mortals (41–4), which justifies their designation in line 46 as ἀνδρῶν μακάρων ὅμιλον.[39] The superhuman status of both Perseus and the Hyperboreans reinforces the conclusion that no ordinary human could bridge the gap between our world and Hyperborea: any comparison between Perseus or the Hyperboreans and the *laudandi* would thus be impossible.

Now we can discuss the economy of the motifs in relationship to the myth. The space of the Hyperboreans is one of feasting and joy, where the practices associated with the Muse capture most of our attention—dance, lyres, *auloi*, all the elements of Greek *mousikē* are cultivated here. Boris Maslov has drawn attention both to the presence of Apollo (34–6) and to his substitution by the personified Muse (37), arguing that the relationship of the Muse with the Hyperboreans engenders a reconceptualization of poetic inspiration: no longer a singular encounter with the poet as in the epic tradition, but a 'communal phenomenon'.[40] Moreover, the description of the feast of the Hyperboreans has been often interpreted as a mirror for the Thessalian festive context in which the ode was first performed.[41] Accepting this interpretation, the importance accorded to *mousikē* in Hyperborea reflects the prime role of the poet in the Thessalian celebration, which would also explain the exceptional prominence of *mousikē* in this particular utopia—a prominence even more marked from our analysis, since the only *comparandum* for such a *mousikē*-driven utopia is Scheria.[42] The commonality of *mousikē* (37–40) and the privileged relationship with the divine (41–4) constitute the structuring principles of the passage,[43] and shape the treatment of the four utopian motifs: gold (motif d) is present only as an ornament of the spinning dancers, drawing attention to the musical element (38–40), while youth and health

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[37] Both Odysseus and Perseus enjoy a heroic status; as for the Fish-Eaters, see Hdt. 3.19, discussed below, on their special alimentary regime and language competence. As for the bridging role of these special individuals, something similar happens in Hesiod's *Theogony*, where the class of heroes, born from a goddess and a mortal father, is used to establish connection and continuity between gods and humans, as persuasively argued by C. Pache, 'Mortels et immortelles dans la *Théogonie*', *Mètis* 6 (2008), 221–38.

[38] See the analysis by Rose (n. 36), 179–81.

[39] On the superhuman status of the Hyperboreans, see also Meister (n. 33), 121–2.

[40] B. Maslov, *Pindar and the Emergence of Literature* (Oxford, 2015), 210–12.

[41] See Meister (n. 33), 125 n. 144 with references, and more extensively Rose (n. 36), 171–82.

[42] Compare e.g. Hom. *Od.* 8.248–9. This is not the only parallel between the Pindaric Hyperboreans and the Homeric Phaeacians: see Brown (n. 22), 401–4.

[43] Cf. Bernardini (n. 15), 633–4 on 10.33–4.

(motif c) are attributed to the ‘sacred race’ of Hyperboreans (line 42), thereby emphasizing the boundary between humans and superhumans.[44] At this point, we are finally able to assess the exclusion of automatic food (motif a) from the musical universe of Hyperborea: its absence redirects our attention from the material advantages of a superhuman life to the higher plane of its proximity to the gods. The company of the Muse overshadows the pleasures of food (cf. above, n. 29 for the opposite case of the Cyclopes in the *Odyssey*).

In this way, the Hyperborean utopia acquires a double function in the ode: it sharpens the boundaries between humans and superhumans, firmly establishing the limits the *laudandi* cannot cross; but by emphasizing the Hyperboreans’ enjoyment of *mousikē*, it fosters the identification of some elements of the Thessalian performance context with the Hyperborean utopia, and thus presents the *kleos* bestowed by the ode as the ultimate blessing accessible to humans.

Telecleides’ archaios bios

If we search for a contrast to the *mousikē*-driven, food-less utopia of the Hyperboreans, there is a good chance that it will be found in the world of Old Comedy. Interesting material for our purposes is located in some comic fragments transmitted by Athenaeus (*Deipn.* 6.267e–6.270a). In a sense, Athenaeus has done the work of selection for us: he cites ancient comic poets to demonstrate how the ‘ancient life’ had no need of slavery, focussing heavily—and somewhat surprisingly—on automatic food and drink.[45] It is thus to be expected that other utopian motifs will fall into the background, although there is no way to know whether this is due to Athenaeus’ abridgements or to the original comedies themselves. None the less, in Athenaeus’ selection there is a fragment that displays almost all utopian motifs, from Telecleides’ *Amphictyones* (fr. 1.1–6 K.–A.):

> λέξω τοίνυν βίον ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὅν ἐγὼ θνητοῖσι παρεῖχον.
> εἰρήνη μὲν πρῶτον ἁπάντων ἦν ὥσπερ ὕδωρ κατὰ χειρός.
> ἡ γῆ δ᾽ ἔφερ᾽ οὐ δέος οὐδὲ νόσους, ἀλλ᾽ αὐτόματα ἦν τὰ δέοντα·
> οἴνῳ γὰρ ἅπασ᾽ ἔρρει χαράδρα, μᾶζαι δ᾽ ἄρτοις ἐμάχοντο
> περὶ τοῖς στόμασιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἱκετεύουσαι καταπίνειν
> εἴ τι φιλοῖεν, τάς λευκοτάτας.

I will tell you then the life that I provided to mortals from the beginning: | first, there was peace for everyone, like water dripping from the hand. | The earth did not bring forth fear or diseases, but all that was necessary grew spontaneously: | a whole stream was flowing with wine, loaves were fighting with cakes | around the mouths of mortals, begging them to swallow down the whitest ones, if they liked.

The list of foods continues for nine more lines, expanding motif a. The *archaios bios* is represented from the beginning, even before mentioning food, as peaceful (motif b, 2 εἰρήνη) and healthy (motif c, 3 οὐδὲ νόσους). But here every aspect is structured according to the theme of abundance and food: even peace is not just the absence of war (as, for example, in Pindar's Hyperborea or in the Homeric Scheria), but one can be provided with *a lot* of it, and this abundance or easy availability is expressed through a metaphor itself connected with food ('like water dripping from the hand', which points to a dining context).[46] The hand-washing sets the stage (both in metaphor and in practice) for the upcoming automatic banquet. In fact, right before the catalogue, the keyword 'automatic' appears (αὐτόματα ἦν τὰ δέοντα), leading us back to motif a, and the catalogue that follows finally brings this motif to a comic climax: the food is not only automatically and passively produced, but actively begs humans to be eaten (5–6), as in several other fragments quoted by Athenaeus.[47] What is more, the motif of peace is now put into question by the food itself ('loaves were fighting with cakes', 4). The emphasis on food is so pervasive that it not only structures the utopian discourse but almost contradicts it ('almost' because it is the loaves, not the inhabitants of this utopia, that engage in a fight). Automatic food takes centre stage in comic utopia, and shapes the discourse into which the other motifs are interwoven.

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[44] Cf. Meister (n. 33), 121. For ‘sacred race’ (usually γένος, instead of the rarer γενεά used by Pindar here) connoting gods and superhumans, see Hes. *Theog.* 20, 104, 345; Pind. fr. 29.1 S.–M.

[45] Athenaeus’ criterion of selection is not entirely perspicuous: H.C. Baldry, ‘The idler’s paradise in Attic comedy’, *G&R* 22 (1953), 49–60. Cf. also M. Farioli, *Mundus alter: utopie e distopie nella commedia greca antica* (Milan, 2001), 197.

The passage as a whole is a utopian description of ancient Athens,[48] and the speaker of the fragment might be the Athenian king Amphictyon (see K.–A. ad loc.). Here I will not discuss the larger ideological compass in which the theme of automatic food can be placed, because my interest is limited to the role of Telecleides' fragment within the network of utopian texts.[49] Given both Athenaeus' criteria of selection and the importance of food in the Athenian comic world,[50] it is all the more remarkable that in Telecleides' fragment two other utopian motifs survive. These three utopian motifs together can be taken either as a reference to Hesiod's Golden Age (an important point of comparison for the other fragments in Athenaeus' selection too),[51] as scholars usually do, or to the whole early Greek utopian discourse, as I have argued. In fact, these options are not mutually exclusive: the convergence of Telecleides' *archaios bios* with Hesiod's Golden Age depends not only on the fact that they share the same model of utopia but also on the fact that Hesiod's text actualizes such a model most extensively and effectively. To point to Hesiod's Golden Age is to point to utopian discourse itself.

This explanation for the presence of the motifs in Telecleides has a crucial advantage, in that it allows us to show analytically that Telecleides' *archaios bios* is no less a utopia than Hesiod's. Some scholars would deny this: Bertelli ([n. 2], 484) deems comic utopias a mere 'vulgarization' of the Golden Age myth, while Ceccarelli ([n. 49], 132–3) argues that the 'intentionally paradoxical and excessive' comic treatment of the Golden Age does not allow us to see it as a utopia. These statements imply a functional definition of utopia (as if utopias, to be such, need to play the same role in different texts and genres). Against such a position, it has been argued that the flexibility of early Greek utopia, capable of serving different functions in different texts, is precisely what makes it so vital in the Greek tradition. The flexibility is achieved through the four-motifs model, which enables comic poets such as Telecleides to participate in the discourse of utopia while radically altering its function by zeroing in on a single element: food.

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[46] ὕδωρ refers to the water used to wash the hands at the beginning or end of a meal: W.G. Arnott, *Alexis: The Fragments* (Cambridge, 1996), 733–4 on 263.2.

[47] Cf. A. Grilli, 'Funzioni simboliche del tempo nelle "Vespe"', in *Le Vespe di Aristofane. Giornata di studio in ricordo di Massimo Vetta* (Pisa, 2020), 113–33, at 120.

[48] Cf. P. Ceccarelli, 'L'Athènes de Périclès: un "pays de cocagne"? L'idéologie démocratique et l'αὐτόματος βίος dans la comédie ancienne', *QUCC* 54 (1996), 109–59, at 109, 122.

[49] On such ideological compass, see Ceccarelli (n. 48), 141–58; cf. I. Ruffell, 'The world turned upside down: utopia and utopianism in the fragments of Old Comedy', in F.D. Harvey, J. Wilkins and K.J. Dover (edd.), *The Rivals of Aristophanes: Studies in Athenian Old Comedy* (London, 2000), 473–506.

[50] J. Wilkins, *The Boastful Chef: The Discourse of Food in Ancient Greek Comedy* (Oxford, 2000).

[51] Ruffell (n. 49), 476–81 and Ceccarelli (n. 48), 122.

Food is the point of connection between the two domains of early Greek utopia and Athenian Old Comedy. It constitutes a motif, in its 'automatic' version, in the schema of early Greek utopia, but it is also one of the most important forces driving the characters' actions in comedy.[52] It would be tempting therefore to think that it was precisely this shared interest in food that caused early Greek utopia to be brought onto the comic stage, especially when considering that one of the defining features of the comic hero is the aspiration to achieve his desired objects (sex, money and food) without giving anything in exchange.[53] What environment would indeed be more appropriate for the comic hero than a world, or a discourse, in which there is no need to pay for food, as the earth automatically yields it?

The morphological model has the added advantage of not requiring any proof about the intention of the author: no matter what Telecleides had in mind, the power of the description of this *archaios bios* comes from the fact that it can be received by the audience as part of a utopian discourse that was born in a much earlier age, but is still extremely vital. And all the more vital in fifth-century comedy precisely because, in a genre where the critique of the present is so central,[54] it offers a compelling way of visualizing a past age of splendour in contrast to the much harder present of the *polis*. The fact that this utopian discourse can be associated with an earlier age (the *archaios bios*) means that what is perceived as 'ancient' is not only the content of the lifestyle described but the form of discourse ('early Greek utopia') that channels it too: the effectiveness of comic utopian discourse lies in this convergence of form and content.

Herodotus' Ethiopia

We come finally to the only prose specimen of early Greek utopia, Herodotus' Ethiopian episode (3.17–25: the text will be Wilson's [n. 60]). Several scholars have recognized some features of Herodotus' Ethiopia as 'utopian',[55] but there is no sustained attempt to define what this adjective means or its overall significance in the narrative. To fill this gap, I will examine if and how Herodotus' Ethiopia participates in the discourse of early Greek utopia.

In the third book of the *Histories*, the Persian king Cambyses conquers Egypt and plans to expand his campaign against three more peoples: the Carthaginians, the Ammonians and the Ethiopians (3.17.1). Against the first two, the king sends directly the navy and the army (3.17.1). On the other hand, the king's first attempt against the third people, the Ethiopians, is presented as an act not of war but of knowledge:[56] the king sends explorers/spies (κατόπται can carry both meanings) to enquire about a particular place—the so-called Table of the Sun—and about the rest of Ethiopia, but also to bring gifts to the Ethiopian king (3.17.2). Herodotus then (3.18.1) explains what the Table of the Sun is, and concludes: 'the locals say that the earth itself brings forth these things each time' (φάναι δὲ τοὺς ἐπιχωρίους ταῦτα τὴν γῆν αὐτὴν ἀναδιδόναι ἑκάστοτε). The verb used in this last sentence, ἀναδίδωμι, is frequently used after Homer in connection with γῆ and with the growth of fruits.[57] The use of this verb, associated with seasonal growth, and the remark that the earth herself (αὐτήν) produces meat point to the first utopian motif in Herodotus' Ethiopia: automatic food.[58]

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[52] For automatic food in other comic fragments, see the parallels cited in K.–A. on Crates, fr. 17.7.

[53] See A. Grilli, *Aristofane: Gli Uccelli* (Milan, 2006), 42–108.

[54] Most of our automatic-food fragments from Athenaeus probably belonged to epirrhematic *agones* (Ceccarelli [n. 48], especially 119), suitable for contrasting two lifestyles (the ancient and the new) embodied by the opposed characters—as witnessed by Aristophanes' *agônes*.

[55] M. Hadas, 'Utopian sources in Herodotus', *CPh* 30 (1935), 113–21; T. Säve-Söderbergh, 'Zu den ätiopischen Episoden bei Herodot', *Eranos* 44 (1946), 68–80, at 79–80; D. Asheri, *A Commentary on Herodotus Books I–IV* (Oxford, 2007), 425, 417, 423 on 3.17–25, 3.17.1, 3.23.4.

Who are the explorers sent by the king? Cambyses chooses the Fish-Eaters (Ἰχθυόφαγοι), who live in Elephantine, an Egyptian city, and know the Ethiopian language (3.19.1). This name is attributed by the Greeks to several coastal populations around the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.[59] Setting the external evidence aside, what is crucial here is the mere fact that they are, as their name says, fish-eaters. Alimentary regime is one of the prime elements of cultural differentiation in the Greek world and, more generally, in ancient societies.[60] The cultural importance of food is, in fact, explicit in the Ethiopian episode: the first questions posed by the Fish-Eaters to the Ethiopians concern the length of their life and their alimentary regime (3.23.1 τῆς ζόης καὶ διαίτης πέρι). Broadly speaking, most Greeks conceive of themselves as bread- and meat-eaters (Longo [n. 62], 11–12): in this respect the Fish-Eaters cannot be humans in the same way as the Greeks are. More to the point, their un-Greek diet, together with the epithet *makrobioi* (3.21.3, 3.22.3) which is usually used for quasi-divine creatures such as the Nymphs, raises their status above the human level (Vernant [n. 62], 246–7). Their intermediate status between human and divine, together with their role of 'cultural mediators' in the Ethiopian episode (Longo [n. 62], 20), enables them to take on in the schema of early Greek utopia a role otherwise only played by heroes, as argued above (pages 474–5). On the other hand, Cambyses, not marked by any superhuman feature in the narrative, will not be able to reach the Ethiopian utopia—he will have to come back after a disastrous march in the desert (Hdt. 3.25). Herodotus' innovation is to historicize the bridging role of superhumans by giving it to a people that is presented as interacting with the Persian king Cambyses. To this extent, Ethiopia is paradoxically presented as a historical utopia.[61]

Let us now come back to the utopian motifs scattered throughout the narrative. The explorers arrive in Ethiopia and talk to the king, starting to gather information about the place, but the Ethiopian king sees through their questions: he accuses Cambyses of

[56] E. Irwin, 'Ethnography and empire: Homer and the Hippocratics in Herodotus' Ethiopian *logos*, 3.17–26', *Histos* 8 (2014), 25–75, at 27–42.

[57] Thuc. 3.58.4 (ὅσα τε ἡ γῆ ἡμῶν ἀνεδίδου ὡραῖα); Aesopus 42.3; Eur. fr. 484.4 Kannicht; Anaximander B22.7 DK; Asius, fr. 8 Bernabé.

[58] Mehler *teste* N. Wilson, *Herodoti Historiae* (Oxford, 2015) emended manuscript αὐτήν to αὐτομάτην, making the link to the motif of automatic food even more explicit.

[59] Their presence in Greek sources is 'semi-legendary or utopian' (Asheri [n. 55], 418 on 19.1), but cf. also Asheri (n. 55), 418 on 3.19.1 and Säve-Söderbergh (n. 55), 68–9.

[60] O. Longo, 'I mangiatori di pesci: regime alimentare e quadro culturale', *MD* 18 (1987), 9–56, at 13–14; J.-P. Vernant, 'Manger aux pays du Soleil', in M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant (edd.), *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec* (Paris, 1979), 239–49.

[61] My use of 'history' and 'historical' here would require a separate paper: see E. Baragwanath and M. de Bakker (edd.), *Myth, Truth and Narrative in Herodotus* (Oxford, 2012), especially C.C. Chiasson, 'Myth and truth in Herodotus' Cyrus *logos*', 213–32.

being unjust in desiring to conquer a land different from his own (3.21.2). The quiet Ethiopians, who live secluded from the rest of the world and without military ambition, are thus implicitly recognized as a just people by contrast (motif b).

The Ethiopian king does not seem worried about the possibility of a campaign against his land: he agrees to talk to the explorers and to give information about the Ethiopian lifestyle, explaining in 3.23.1 that 'most of them [the Ethiopians] reach 120 years of age, and that someone lives even longer than that' (motif c). By virtue of this extraordinary longevity the Ethiopians are also called *makrobioi* (3.23.3). The king then shows the explorers around, and a surprising detail appears when they arrive at the prison (3.23.4): gold is so abundant that the prisoners' fetters are made out of it, while—with a perfect reversal—the rarest and most precious thing for the Ethiopians is bronze. The abundance of gold (motif d) adds the last piece to the utopian picture of Ethiopia.

Herodotus' Ethiopia is, together with Hesiod's Golden Age, the only specimen of early Greek utopia within the temporal purview of this study where all the motifs are actualized in a single text.[62] Differently from Hesiod, the motifs are not found in the short compass of a few lines, but an audience familiar with early Greek utopia can easily follow their accumulation throughout the episode. Piecing the motifs together as the narrative unfolds, the audience can gradually discover the utopian nature of Ethiopia.

The perfect adherence of Ethiopia to utopian discourse makes the question of its function in the narrative particularly urgent. Early Greek utopias entertain a special relationship with the gods, and can be accessed only by superhuman individuals. Cambyses is thus defeated by utopian discourse itself: the Persian expedition will never reach Ethiopia, and the Persian king will only be able to access it through the reported words of his explorers, the Fish-Eaters—in the same way as an audience of Homer and Pindar could access the Phaeacian and Hyperborean utopias only through the words of the poet.

This conclusion has an important impact on the characterization of Cambyses and his sacrilegious behaviour, as illustrated by the Ethiopian episode (Asheri [n. 57], 415 on 3.17–25). By modelling the episode on early Greek utopian discourse, Herodotus makes the characterization of Cambyses even more effective: utopias are not accessible to normal humans, and Cambyses fails in trying to defy this axiom of early Greek utopia. Such understanding of the Persian king can only be reached by following how Herodotus scatters clues (the motifs) about the utopian nature of Ethiopia throughout the narrative: in this way, we are able to gradually assemble and understand, piece by piece, the magnitude of Cambyses' *hybris*, and the inevitability of his failure.

CONCLUSIONS

I have privileged the network of utopia, that is, the connection of each text to the others, at the expense of other contexts (socio-historical, literary, etc.) which have been only marginally discussed. The texts identified as specimens of early Greek utopia constitute only a representative selection: other passages, analysed morphologically, might be fruitfully inserted into this network. Texts traditionally considered 'utopian' have been excluded from the selection, in so far as they do not focus primarily on the four motifs that characterize early Greek utopia: Aristophanes' *Birds*, for example, dilutes the motifs into a variety of other ones.[63]

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[62] Beyond the fifth century, one could also point to Theopompus (*BNJ* 115 F 75c), who in his *Philippica* divides up the four motifs between the two imaginary cities of *Eusebes* (motifs a, b, c) and *Machimos* (motif d): M.A. Flower, *Theopompus of Chios: History and Rhetoric in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 1994), 214–17.

The exclusion of *Birds* offers an opportunity to sum up my method and findings. In this analysis, 'utopia' has been repurposed as a descriptive term for a sum of features (the utopian motifs). Such use of the term has allowed—indeed, forced—us to look at several utopias through a comparative lens. With the de-finition of utopia, the ascription of each text to the network led to study how they interact and illuminate each other. It has then been argued that the success of Hesiod's Golden Age as a prototypical utopia in the classical tradition might be due to its perfectly balanced representation of the four motifs; that the absence of the motif of bodily health in the Phaeacian episode emphasizes their humanity, and consequently the fragility of their dysfunctional utopia; that the utopian paradigm sets some firm boundaries for accessing Pindar's Hyperborea, thereby making the myth a reminder of human finitude; that Old Comedy can appropriate the utopian discourse by zeroing in on a single motif, food, for its own comic purposes; and finally that Herodotus' mapping of Ethiopia onto early Greek utopia not only reveals the cultural complexity of the Fish-Eaters but also contributes to the dark representation of Cambyses in his hubristic attempt to overcome human boundaries—that is, in his attempt to conquer a utopia. The morphological analysis has thus shown how each text can use the same devices, the utopian motifs, to communicate a different meaning, or to communicate the same meaning differently.

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[63] See e.g. Ar. *Av.* 731–4 for an exemplary overdetermination of utopian motifs.