The Rhythm of the Gods' Voice. The Suggestion of Divine Presence through Prosody*

El ritmo de la voz de los dioses. La sugerencia de la presencia divina a través de la prosodia

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Abstract

In this article, I draw attention to the gods' pickiness in the audible flow of their utterances, a prosodic characteristic of speech that evokes the presence of the divine. Hexametric poetry itself is the

Resumen

Este estudio se centra en la meticulosidad de los dioses en el flujo audible de sus expresiones, una característica prosódica del habla que evoca la presencia divina. La poesía hexamétrica es en sí misma el lenguaje de la per-

language of permanency, as evidenced by wisdom literature, funereal and dedicatory inscriptions: epic poetry is the embedded direct speech of a goddess. Outside hexametric poetry, the gods' special speech is primarily expressed through prosodic means, notably through a shift in rhythmic profile. Such a shift deliberately captures, or recalls, the well-known rhythmic profiles, phrases, and clausulae from epic and wisdom literature. Embedded in other prosodic profiles, these audibly alienating and isolated utterances both bewilder through their unexpected appearance, and reassure because of their familiarity for the listening audience. Resembling and evoking the language of permanency for embedded divine speech, quotations in hexameter lend a sense of ritual to their performance in other rhythmic environments. A performer temporarily impersonates a speaking divinity, as the audience experiences the revelation's premiere staging.

manencia, como pone de manifiesto la literatura sapiencial y las inscripciones funerarias y dedicatorias: la poesía épica es el lenguaje directo integrado de una diosa. Más allá de la poesía hexamétrica, el habla especial de los dioses es principalmente expresado mediante recursos prosódicos, especialmente a través de un cambio en el perfil rítmico. Este cambio deliberadamente captura o evoca los bien conocidos perfiles rítmicos, frases y cláusulas de la literatura épica y sapiencial. Incorporadas en otros perfiles prosódicos, estas expresiones audiblemente alienantes y aisladas desconciertan por su inesperada apariencia al mismo tiempo que apaciguan gracias a su familiaridad para la audiencia. Al asemejarse al lenguaje de la permanencia y evocarlo para el habla divina incorporada, las citas en hexámetros revisten de un sentido ritual su interpretación en otros contextos rítmicos. El ejecutante encarna temporalmente la divinidad que habla, mientras que la audiencia experimenta el estreno de la puesta en escena de la revelación.

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1. Introduction

From Herodotus' rendering of divine and oracular voices, audiences are familiar with the notion that the gods voice their utterances in metrical rather than in non-metrical speech.[1] In a prose text like the *Histories,* the gods' voice appears as embedded direct speech, keeping its metrically characterised prosodic shape.[2] Well-known examples from Herodotus' *Histories* are the Delphic prophesies to the Lydian king Croesus in I 47, 3 and 55, 2:[3]

οἶδα δ᾽ ἐγὼ ψάμμου τ᾽ ἀριθμὸν καὶ μέτρα θαλάσσης,
καὶ κωφοῦ συνίημι, καὶ οὐ φωνεῦντος ἀκούω.
ὀδμή μ᾽ ἐς φρένας ἦλθε κραταιρίνοιο χελώνης
ἑψομένης ἐν χαλκῷ ἅμ᾽ ἀρνείοισι κρέεσσιν,
ᾗ χαλκὸς μὲν ὑπέστρωται, χαλκὸν δ᾽ ἐπιέσται.[4]

"I know the number of sand and the sea's measure; the dumb I can understand, and I can hear without one speaking. To my mind the smell of a strong-shielded tortoise has come, being boiled in bronze together with meat of lamb; with bronze stretched underneath, it is clothed in bronze".

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1. In addition to the recent interest in Greek gods' utterances and diction, cf. the international 24th Corhali Conference "Voice and language of the gods in the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the Homeric Hymns" (13-15 June 2019).

2. Alternatively, only the message is kept in indirect speech, as in Hdt., I 53, 2, τῶν δὲ μαντηίων ἀμφοτέρων ἐς τὠυτὸ αἱ γνῶμαι συνέδραμον, προλέγουσαι Κροίσῳ, ἢν στρατεύηται ἐπὶ Πέρσας, μεγάλην ἀρχὴν μιν καταλύσειν, "the answers of both oracular sites came down to the same thing, declaring to Croesus that he would destroy a great empire should he march against the Persians", or Hdt., VII 178, 1, καί σφι ἐχρήσθη ἀνέμοισι εὔχεσθαι· μεγάλους γὰρ τούτους ἔσεσθαι τῇ Ἑλλάδι συμμάχους, "and they (the Delphians) received as an answer the advice to pray to the winds: for these would be powerful allies for Greece".

3. Primary texts from which Greek quotations have been taken are listed in the bibliography. All translations are by the author.

4. Hdt., I 47, 3.

ἀλλ᾽ ὅταν ἡμίονος βασιλεὺς Μήδοισι γένηται,
καὶ τότε, Λυδὲ ποδαβρέ, πολυψήφιδα παρ᾽ Ἕρμον
φεύγειν μηδὲ μένειν μηδ᾽ αἰδεῖσθαι κακός εἶναι.[5]

"However, as soon as a mule becomes king of the Medes, at that precise moment, soft-footed Lydian, flee along the pebbly Hermus, and do not hold your ground; nor feel ashamed for being a coward".

Whether originally produced in hexameters or merely rendered as such by Herodotus, in their presentation as metrical text the words of the gods maintain a level of stylisation that wilfully deviates from the prose environment.[6] Thus the gods' voice stands out with regard to both the content of the words (as prophetic, enigmatic, conclusive, or at least extraordinary), and the shape of the wording: the latter is rather reminiscent of gods speaking in other genres that are primarily poetry. In a prose context, like Herodotus', the metrical shape of the divine words stands out, "flickering" like a poetic emblem that draws attention to its other-worldly origin and impact. As a poetic emblem, the flickering itself recalls the poetic genres in which gods were staged speaking in metrical lines (archaic epic and wisdom literature), and the language of permanency of dedicatory and funereal inscriptions. In this article, I will argue that the occasional metrical flickering in prose contexts indicates that, starting from, and driven by the conventions of (didactic) epic, the divine voice continued to be expressed in hexameters, and was experienced as divine because of its metrical shape.[7] In metrical contexts apart from the hexameter, as

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5. Hdt., I 55, 2.

6. Maurizio, 1997, pp. 312-315. Herodotus' literary activity appears to be untouched by the propagation of rhythmic prose by Gorgias, the rules of which were later allegedly described by Hegesias; cf. Hutchinson, 2018, pp. 6-7. But cf. the prose version of an oracle in Hdt., IV 163, discussed below.

7. Cf. Maurizio, 1997, pp. 331-332: "Tellers of oracular tales were interested in how oracles were divine utterances which eluded human comprehension because of their tropic nature. That is, they were interested in the interstices of language, its capacity to hold multiple meanings that can make manifest the presence of the divine breaking in on the human world. These authoritative tale tellers created oracular narratives that emblematized their *Sitz in Leben*, which always involved human and divine interaction, the gap between human and divine intelligence, and the tragedy of the human condition that resulted, as it inevitably did, in the space where human strivings to hear and comprehend the divine on earth often failed. The community of believers, who authored the Delphic oracles as well as their narrative frames, have left us a tradition of oracular tales containing authentic oracles whose very purpose was to transcend the particularities of time, place, and circumstance in favor of establishing Apollo's presence on earth".

well as in non-metrical contexts, hexametric flickering has an evocative effect: in perfor-
mance, it evokes the human ritual and the presence of the god.

2. THE PROSODY OF THE GODS' VOICE

To gauge the impact of the gods' utterance in other contexts than the hexameter, I
will start from the isolated instances of divine speech. Let us therefore first turn to
oracles in an early prose work like Herodotus' *Histories*, and place them against the
background of divine utterance in epic poetry, the isolated wisdom sayings, and the
use of the hexameter in inscriptions.

In Herodotus' work, a number of oracular prophesies appear (in addition to
I 47, 3 and I 55, 2, already cited), and almost all are more or less dactylic in shape.[8]
Whether presented as Apollo's own words, or as a human-fashioned version of the
divine utterances, the persistence of their dactylic shape is remarkable. At times, it
proved necessary or desirable for Herodotus to comment on the outer shape of quo-
tations. In several cases, he explicitly introduces an oracle as ἐν ἐξαμέτρῳ τόνῳ ("in
hexametric rhythm", i.e. in dactylic hexameter; Hdt., I 47, 2 and 62, 3), or as ἐν ἔπεσι
ἐξαμέτροισι ("in hexametric verses"; Hdt., VII 220, 3). This latter specification may
surprise the audience of the integral *Histories*: the introductory remark ("in hexamet-
ric rhythm") on the oracles in Hdt., I 47 and 62 (the first and the third in the *Histories*)
apparently sufficed for a proper understanding of the prosodic format of oracles for
over seven and a half books. It may equally surprise those who enjoy self-standing
episodes from the *Histories*: why specify the metrical format here? Similar, seemingly
random, specifications of hexametric formats are found in Hdt., V 60 and 61, 1, both
dedicatory inscriptions:

> ἕτερος δὲ τρίπους ἐν ἐξαμέτρῳ τόνῳ λέγει·
>   Σκαῖος πυγμαχέων με ἑκηβόλῳ Ἀπόλλωνι
>   νικήσας ἀνέθηκε τεῖν περικαλλὲς ἄγαλμα.[9]

"Another tripod reads the following in hexametric rhythm:

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8. Of the oracular sayings in the *Histories*, 25 (I 62, 4; 65, 3; 66, 2; 67, 4; 85.2; III 57, 4; IV 155, 3; 157,
2; 159, 3; V 92, β2-3 and ε2; VI 19, 2; 77, 2; 86, γ2; 98, 3; VII 140, 2-3; 141, 3-4; 142, 2; 148, 3; 220, 4; VIII
8, 2; 77, 1-2; 96, 2; IX 43, 2) are in hexameters. One oracle (Hdt., I 174, 5) is presented in iambic trimeter
(cf. Parke, 1945 on the "warrantable suspicion" against non-hexametric oracles). In Hdt., I 91, 1-6; IV
163; VII 169, 2 the words of the Pythia are rendered in prose (De Bakker, 2007, pp. 60, n. 30 and 61-62).
9. Hdt., V 60.

Scaius the victorious boxer dedicated me to far-darting Apollo, a beautiful gift for you".

τρίτος δὲ τρίπους λέγει καὶ οὗτος ἐν ἑξαμέτρῳ·
  Λαοδάμας τρίποδ᾽ αὐτὸς ἐυσκόπῳ Ἀπόλλωνι
  μουναρχέων ἀνέθηκε τεῖν περικαλλὲς ἄγαλμα.[10]

"A third tripod also reads an engraving in hexameter:
Laodamas the king himself dedicated a tripod to far-aiming Apollo, a beautiful gift to you".

Such inscriptions had been presented earlier in the *Histories* without any comments on their shape (usually in hexameter lines [Hdt., V 59, 1], or distichs [Hdt., IV 88, 1; V 77, 4; VII 228, 1; 228, 2-3]). A related, equally random, remark on format is made when a dream vision delivers a riddle in hexameters to Hipparchus:[11]

ἡ μέν νυν ὄψις τοῦ Ἱππάρχου ἐνυπνίου ἦν ἥδε· ἐν τῇ προτέρῃ νυκτὶ τῶν Παναθηναίων
ἐδόκεε ὁ Ἵππαρχος ἄνδρα οἱ ἐπιστάντα μέγαν καὶ εὐειδέα αἰνίσσεσθαι τάδε τὰ ἔπεα·
  τλῆθι λέων ἄτλητα παθὼν τετληότι θυμῷ·
  οὐδεὶς ἀνθρώπων ἀδικῶν τίσιν οὐκ ἀποτίσει.[12]

"Now the vision of Hipparchus' dream was as follows: in the night preceding the Panathenaia festival Hipparchus had the impression that a tall and good-looking man stood by him and presented the following verses as a riddle:
Endure, lion, with an enduring heart, victim to what cannot be endured: no wrong-doing mortal man will escape due punishment".

Herodotus is thus sporadically careful to avoid the quotation presented from being misunderstood, that is, as anything other than the proper rendering of a divinely inspired truth. At the same time, he appears to struggle with the need to clarify what hardly needs any clarification: the god of Delphi speaks in hexameters.[13] The more remarkable then is the single example of a prose-shaped oracle in direct speech:

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10. Hdt., V 61, 1.

11. The use of ἔπεα is interpreted as a reference to hexametric verses, though not without doubt or criticism, cf. Hornblower, 2013, p. 174.

12. Hdt., V 56, 1.

13. Except for the oracle given to the Cnidians as they tried to turn their peninsula into an island in order to resist Harpagus' advance. As they suffered from unexplainable setbacks while digging, they turned to the Pythia in Delphi, who replied ἐν τριμέτρῳ τόνῳ, "in trimeter rhythm" (i.e. in iambic trimeter; Hdt., I 174, 5). Herodotus adds ὡς αὐτοὶ Κνίδιοι λέγουσι, "as the Cnidians themselves report", thus

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ἡ δὲ Πυθίη οἱ χρᾷ τάδε. «ἐπὶ μὲν τέσσερας Βάττους καὶ Ἀρκεσίλεως τέσσερας, ὀκτὼ
ἀνδρῶν γενεάς, διδοῖ ὑμῖν Λοξίης βασιλεύειν Κυρήνης, πλέον μέντοι τούτου οὐδὲ
πειρᾶσθαι παραινέει. σὺ μέντοι ἥσυχος εἶναι κατελθὼν ἐς τὴν σεωυτοῦ. ἢν δὲ τὴν
κάμινον εὕρῃς πλέην ἀμφορέων, μὴ ἐξοπτήσῃς τοὺς ἀμφορέας ἀλλ᾽ ἀπόπεμπε κατ᾽
οὖρον· εἰ δὲ ἐξοπτήσεις τὴν κάμινον, μὴ ἐσέλθῃς ἐς τὴν ἀμφίρρυτον· εἰ δὲ μὴ ἀποθανέαι
καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ ταῦρος ὁ καλλιστεύων.[14]

"The Pythia prophesized thus: Up to four Batusses and four Arcesilauses, eight gener-
ations of men, Apollo grants you to be kings of Cyrene, but he warns you not even to
attempt more than that. You, however, should keep quiet once you have returned to your
own land. If you will find the furnace full of jars, you must not heat the jars – just let
them go with the wind. Should you, however, heat the furnace, then please do not enter
what is surrounded by water. If you do not heed my instructions, you will die, both you
and the fairest bull of all".

Apparently, Herodotus is deviating from the traditional prosodic format re-
quired for Apollo's words, and complies with the norms of prose composition. But
this is only partly true: as the reconstruction of the passage by Parke and Wormell
has shown,[15] "traces of hexameter can be discerned".[16] Time and again, in phrases and
clausulae, hexametric patterning can be found, for example in ὀκτὼ ἀνδρῶν γενεάς
(-|- -|- ‿‿|-, allowing for hiatus), ἀλλ᾽ ἀπόπεμπε κατ᾽ οὖρον (|- ‿‿|- ‿‿|- -|), and καὶ
αὐτὸς καὶ ταῦρος ὁ καλλιστεύων (|- -|- -|- ‿‿|- -|- -|).[17]

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suggesting that there may have been some alterations to the original rendering of the Delphic utterance.
Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella, 2007, p. 196 point to the possibility of an alternative format tradition at the
nearby oracular sanctuary of Didyma (Hdt., I 157, 3; cf. Parke and Wormell, 1956, p. 44, n. 73). Another
mention of the iambic trimeter (Hdt., I 12, 2) is equally considered suspect ("an interpolation", Asheri,
Lloyd and Corcella, 2007, p. 84).

14. Hdt., IV 163, 2-3.

15. Parke and Wormell, 1956, p. 31, n. 70.

16. Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella, 2007, p. 691.

17. "Traces of hexameter" may also be found elsewhere in Herodotus: usually as dactylic patterning
comprising of a clause that "nearly scans as a hexameter" (Grethlein, 2010, p. 162). Hornblower, 1994,
p. 66 (on Hdt., VII 159), noting that Herodotus avoids hexameters in general, treats Hdt., VII 159 as
an example of this Herodotean avoidance, whereas others do trace a couple of hexameters or hexame-
ters *manqués* in the *Histories* (Grethlein, 2010, p. 162, n. 49 cites Hdt., VII 178, 2 ἐξαγγείλαντες χάριν
ἀθάνατον κατέθεντο). Boedeker, 2001, p. 124 states that some hexameters in Herodotus deliberately
'create an epic effect' or are 'adapted from epic or elegiac accounts of recent events'. Grethlein, 2010, pp.
161-163 argues that Syagrus' words in Hdt., VII 159 (forming the larger part of a hexameter) "echo a
specific passage from the *Iliad* and create a dense net of meanings".

These hexametric cola have certain remarkable features in common with other oracles in Herodotus; features whose frequency makes the Pythia's verses quite different from the hexameters of early Greek epic, like Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (8th cent. BCE), and Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Work and Days* (*ca.* 700 BCE). Compared to the verses of the Homeric epics, Herodotus' oracles (cf. the clausula ταῦρος ὁ καλλιστεύων |‒ ‿‿|‒ ‒|‒ ‒| cited above) feature a relatively high number of spondaic verses. In the Homeric epics, the ratio of spondaic verses to non-spondaic verses is 1 : 21.8 as the spondaic fifth foot is generally avoided or amended.[18] In Herodotus' metrical oracles, this ratio is 1 : 10.5. In the first book of the *Histories,* a five-line prediction contains three spondaic lines:

> Ἀρκαδίην μ᾽ αἰτεῖς· μέγα μ᾽ αἰτεῖς· οὔ τοι δώσω.
>   πολλοὶ ἐν Ἀρκαδίη βαλανηφάγοι ἄνδρες ἔασιν,
>   οἵ σ᾽ ἀποκωλύσουσιν. ἐγὼ δὲ τοι οὔτι μεγαίρω·
>   δώσω τοί Τεγέην ποσσίκροτον ὀρχήσασθαι
>   καὶ καλὸν πεδίον σχοίνῳ διαμετρήσασθαι.[19]

"You ask me for Arcadia – you ask me for a lot. I will not grant it to you. In Arcadia there are many acorn-eating men, who will surely ward you off. But I put nothing in your way: I will give you well-trodden Tegea to dance in, and a beautiful plain to measure and divide with the line".

The oracle in Hdt., VIII 96, 2 consists of a single spondaic line:

> Κωλιάδες δὲ γυναῖκες ἐρετμοῖσι φρύξουσι.[20]

"Colian women will roast barley with oars".

Another prosodic feature of the oracles also showed up in Hdt., IV 163, 2's prose rendition: the allowance for hiatus after a word-final long vowel through the impossibility of correption on the foot's thesis (cf. ὀκτὼ ἀνδρῶν γενεάς cited above). In Hdt., IV 157, 2 similar hiatus appears:

> αἰ τὺ ἐμεῦ Λιβύην μηλοτρόφον οἶδας ἄμεινον,
>   μὴ ἐλθὼν ἐλθόντος, ἄγαν ἄγαμαι σοφίην σεῦ.

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18. Van Raalte, 1986, p. 6.
19. Hdt., I 66, 2.
20. Hdt., VIII 96, 2.

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"If you know sheep-nourishing Libya better than I do – without having been there, whereas I have – I totally admire your wisdom".

Other examples may be added to show that the Herodotean oracles, despite showing "many Homerisms",[21] use a format that differs considerably from the model they apparently try to imitate: the dactylic poetry of ancient Greek epic, of wisdom literature, and of metrical inscriptions. In Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the gods' voice in narrative does not stand out amidst the thousands of flawless hexameters. On the narratological level of the primary narrator, however, it does: speaking through the inspired poet Homer, the Muse is politely summoned with a hexametric proem, and she delivers her account of wrath or *nostos* in hexameters.[22] The proem (by the poet) is prosodically identical to the epic narrative it introduces.[23] Thus the entire epic narrative counts as the words of the inspiring goddess.[24] Or at least as long as the series of stichic dactylic hexameters continues. Epic language is the language of the gods, and transcends the transience of human existence in various ways. It is the vehicle for the expression of κλέος ἄφθιτον "imperishable fame", and continues to function as such beyond the pinnacle of Homer's poetry and its contemporaries. In epic, the claim to fame is explicitly connected to the monumentality of epic song (e.g. *Od.* III 204; VIII 580; XXIV 197) – a

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21. Hornblower and Pelling, 2017, p. 193 (on Hdt., VI 77, 2). Criticism concerning the quality of the oracles, both with regard to format and content, in Plut., *Moralia* 396d τοὺς δὲ πολλοὺς τῶν χρησμῶν ὁρῶμεν καὶ τοῖς μέτροις καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασι πλημμελείας καὶ φαυλότητος ἀναπεπλησμένους, "we observe that the majority of oracular sayings is rather lame both with regard to meter and words, and full of nonsense": (397c) οὐ γὰρ ἔστι θεοῦ ἡ γῆρυς οὐδ᾽ ὁ φθόγγος οὐδ᾽ ἡ λέξις οὐδὲ τὸ μέτρον ἀλλὰ τῆς γυναικός, "for neither the voice, nor the sound, nor the utterance, not even the meter finds its origin in the god, but in the mortal woman".

22. Or so is her spirit, a divine presence "taking possession of an individual", representing the "reason to associate prophecy and verse in the Archaic period" (Parke, 1981, p. 99; cf. Maslov, 2016, pp. 413-414, 428). Bierl, 2017 argues for the Homeric Hymns as epiphanies, that accomplish divine presence: "*Homeric Hymns* aim at making the gods present and alive through narration" (p. 237). He explains *HHym.* III 156-164 as not only the transfer of the undying glory and memory of the heroic past to the very presence of the Olympian god and his medium, but also as signalling eternal epiphany through the unfolding chain of performances and re-performances (pp. 258-259).

23. E.g. the poet's invocation in *Od.* I 10 τῶν ἁμόθεν γε, θεά, θύγατερ Διός, εἰπὲ καὶ ἡμῖν, "start from wherever you like, goddess daughter of Zeus, and tell us as well".

24. Maslov, 2016, p. 436 argues that the "prooimial Muse" is mnemonic, as opposed to the inspiring solitary Muse in *Od.* VIII 63. Liapis, 2017, p. 197 describes the relationship between poet and Muse as "ambiguous", as "it involves both synergy between human and divine performer under the latter's benign patronage and fierce antagonism that may result in the human performer's incapacitation (poetic or even physical)". Cf. Calame, 1995, p. 53; Bakker, 2008, p. 67; Richardson, 2011, pp. 16-21.

monumentality that results from the special poetic language and the specific prosodic shaping. The hexameter may well have been inherited by the Greek poets together with the notion of monumentality through poetic "imperishable fame".[25]

Within epic poetry, the hexameter further developed into the isolated authoritative saying, heralding (or signalling) its use, beyond epic, for the sustainability and immortalisation of deeds, doers, and monuments. Their prosodic format makes the sayings sound as divinely inspired, and the performer as the gods' mouthpiece. Examples are found in the dactylic poetry of Homer's alleged contemporary Hesiod, a Boeotian poet known for his "didactic" poetry.[26] In his *Theogony,* he describes the origin of the gods, their genealogy, and the teleological supremacy of Zeus. In *Works and Days,* he admonishes his good-for-nothing brother with a mix of exemplary rural activity in accordance with "nature's calendar", moralising mythical stories, and proverbial sayings. That his words, too, are meant as the language of the gods becomes famously explicit in *Theogony* 22-34; the poet claims to have encountered the Muses, and to henceforth function as their mouthpiece.[27] Hesiod exploits the shape of the hexameter for a combination of riddle + answer:[28]

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25. Nagy, 1974, pp. 103-116. There is no consensus, however, on the origin of the hexameter. Nagy, 1974, pp. 49-101 claims that the hexameter originally operated on an inherited principle of isosyllabism, as do the Aeolic meters. His conjectured prototype of Greek epic verse matches the syllable-count of the basic unit of Indic versification, the śloka. Kiparsky, 2018 explains the hexameter as an iambic derivation: a syncopated realisation of the quantitative iambic octosyllabic dimeter. The iambic octosyllable, "the basic Indo-European line" and functioning in dimeter distichs by a fusion process that began already in Vedic, is also deemed "the most likely vehicle of Indo-European epic verse". In their introduction, Lidov and Becker (forthcoming) refrain from comments concerning the hexameter's origin.

26. Koning, 2010 pointedly labeled Hesiod the "other poet" as he shares Homer's authority (through collective memory's "lumping") as an archaic hexametric poet, but is generally considered the lesser poet in comparison with Homer ("splitting") by later audiences.

27. Maslov, 2016, p. 418.

28. Danielewicz, 1996, p. 64. Cf. the riddle in Hdt., V 56, 1. Note that the 7th line of the oracle in Hdt., VI 86, γ2 ἀνδρὸς δ᾿ εὐόρκου γενεὴ μετόπισθεν ἀμείνων, "the race of the man who swears truly will be better hereafter", "reproduces exactly Hesiod *WD* 285 […] echoing a proverb" (Hornblower and Pelling, 2017, p. 207). Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella, 2007, p. 130 describe the five-verse oracle in Hdt., I 67, 4 as riddle + answer:

ἔστι τις Ἀρκαδίης Τεγέη λευρῷ ἐνὶ χώρῳ,
ἔνθ᾿ ἄνεμοι πνείουσι δύω κρατερῆς ὑπ᾿ ἀνάγκης,   } riddle
καὶ τύπος ἀντίτυπος, καὶ πῆμ᾿ ἐπὶ πήματι κεῖται.

ἔνθ᾿ Ἀγαμεμνονίδην κατέχει φυσίζοος αἶα,   } answer
τὸν σὺ κομισσάμενος Τεγέης ἐπιτάρροθος ἔσσῃ.

μὴ κακὰ κερδαίνειν· κακὰ κέρδεα ἶσ᾽ ἄτῃσιν.[29]

"Do not get base gain: base gain equals stupidity".

νήπιος οὐδὲ τὸ οἶδ᾽· ἑκατὸν δέ τε δούρατ᾽ ἀμάξης.[30]

"Fool, for knowing not even this: it takes a hundred timbers to build a wagon".

The second half of the hexameter containing the answer developed into a separate metrical phrase,[31] the paroemiac (catalectic anapaestic dimeter), eventually singled out as the prosodic shape for wisdom sayings.[32] As language of the gods, the hexameters not only present what the gods have to say, they also enable communication with the permanent beyond the human register.

Other text types copy or imitate elements from the Homeric epic when they aim for similar effect: to take a person, an event, or an object out of the human sphere of mortality and decay, and to think of him, or it, as lasting forever and imperishable. So authoritative was the format of epic language, and so successfully evoking the eternal and the permanent, that its prosodic format kept being applied to make objects and individuals outlive the moment of performance, the life of the poet, and the memory of the audience. In its capacity to make men, their great deeds, and their monuments transcend the realm of the human and the ephemeral, special poetic language evokes the superhuman and the otherworldly; its specific prosodic format is momentarily suggestive of a change of surroundings, and the presence of the immortal and imperishable. Hexametric poetry thus becomes the language of permanency, and its performance creates a sense of immutability. Hence the use of the hexameter in dedicatory and funereal inscriptions: a grave or an object that is to last much longer than the individual buried underneath it, or the man dedicating it to the gods, is inscribed in the language of the gods.[33] Reverse, the inscription itself is instrumental in mak-

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"There is an Arcadian Tegea in a smooth place, where two winds blow under the force of necessity, and there is blow and blow in return, and trouble heaps upon trouble. Life-giving earth holds Agamemnon's son there; if you bring him with you, you will be master of Tegea".

29. *Op.* 352.

30. *Op.* 456.

31. Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella, 2007, p. 128 consider the *first* hemistich of the oracle in Hdt., I 66, 2 as an "independent saying".

32. Blankenborg (forthcoming a).

33. Some 200 hexametric funereal and dedicatory inscriptions from the archaic period are extant, of which roughly 100 are presented in Friedländer, 1948 with commentary. Several of these inscriptions

ing the grave or the object last forever. [34] The gods' voice is also found in epigraphy: on the walls of the temple of Apollo in Delphi the sayings γνῶθι σεαυτόν, "know yourself", ἐγγύη πάρα δ' ἄτη, "pledging and delusion go together", and μηδὲν ἄγαν, "nothing in excess" stood engraved.[35] The sayings resemble dactylic-shaped metrical phrases familiar from archaic Greek poetry. The gnome γνῶθι σεαυτόν is shaped like an adonius: |– ∪∪|– –|.[36] Its format is reminiscent of the dactylic clausula, as it is found in Hdt., IV 163, 2-3. There is a dactylic ring to μηδὲν ἄγαν as well: |– ∪∪|–.[37] The third Delphian gnome ἐγγύη πάρα δ' ἄτη is equally dactylic: |– –|– ∪∪|– –|.[38] The words of the gods tend to take a stylised prosodic shape when quoted in isolation. The legendary Athenian lawgiver Solon (presumably *floruit* 590 BCE) is said to have used hexameters to state his laws.[39] Early Greek philosophy applied the hexameter to

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expand beyond the hexameter with a single word; others appear to be a mix of verse and prose.

34. The hexameter remained a conveyor of religious potency until the end of antiquity. Faraone, 2011 attributes the special power of hexametric magical incantations to their physical presence, preserved in writing. Karanika, 2011 shows that the effectiveness of a late antiquity *homeromanteion* depends on its prosodic format rather than its content.

35. According to Pausanias, *Description of Greece* X 24, 1 (cf. Plato, *Charmides* 164d-165a). Plato, *Protagoras* 343a-b attributes the sayings to the Seven Sages, whereas *Charmides* 164d-e considers them the words of the god Apollo, materialised by an anonymous scribe.

36. That is, without contraction; Pausanias, *Description of Greece* X 24, 1 quotes the contracted variant γνῶθι σαυτόν.

37. Compare ἄγᾱν in Hdt., IV 157, 2 μὴ ἐλθὼν ἐλθόντος, ἄγαν ἄγαμαι σοφίην σεῦ cited above. In the hexameters of Theognis, ἄγᾱν is found in 219-220 μηδὲν ἄγαν ἄσχαλλε ταρασσομένων πολιητέων, Κύρνε, μέσην δ' ἔρχευ τὴν ὁδὸν ὥσπερ ἐγώ, "Don't be too vexed at the confusion of your townsmen, Cyrnus, but stick to the middle of the road like I do", and likely in the distich 335-336 μηδὲν ἄγαν σπεύδειν, πάντων μέσ' ἄριστα· καὶ οὕτως, Κύρν', ἕξεις ἀρετήν, ἥντε λαβεῖν χαλεπόν, "Don't be too eager, as midst is best of all; and that way you will have virtue, Cyrnus, which is hard to come by". Late poets exclusively use ἄγᾰν.

38. Though identification as a anapaestic shape (i.c. acephalic paroemiac |– – –|∪∪ – –|) may be preferable given the positioning of the first syllable of ἄτη (ᾱ- < *αϝα-). In epic, location of the first syllable of ἄτη on the hexametric thesis only occurs in *Iliad* XIX 88 οἵ τέ μοι εἰν ἀγορῇ φρεσὶν ἔμβαλον ἄγριον ἄτην, "who put damaging infatuation in my mind during the assembly"; cf. *Od.* XI 61 ἆσέ (ᾱ- < *αϝα-) με δαίμονος αἶσα κακὴ καὶ ἀθέσφατος οἶνος, "a god's evil dispensation infatuated me, in addition to irresponsibly large quantities of wine".

39. Solon *fr.* 28 (Diehl) cited by Plutarch, *Solon* 3, 4:
ἔνιοι δέ φασιν ὅτι καὶ τοὺς νόμους ἐπεχείρησεν ἐντείνας εἰς ἔπος ἐξενεγκεῖν, καὶ διαμνημονεύουσι τὴν ἀρχὴν οὕτως ἔχουσαν:
   πρῶτα μὲν εὐχώμεσθα Διῒ Κρονίδῃ βασιλῆϊ
   θεσμοῖς τοῖσδε τύχην ἀγαθὴν καὶ κῦδος ὀπάσσαι.
"Some say that he took the trouble to shape his laws like epic verses and then had them published, and they quote the following opening lines:
Let us first pray to Zeus the king, son of Kronos, to grant these prescriptions success and fame".

signal that the ultimate source of the text was divine.[40] In a ritualistic sense, hexameter poetry functions as the "tribal encyclopaedia": what is said in hexameter is said, uncomplicatedly, as a fact.[41]

3. THE IMPACT OF PROSODIC DEVIATION

The capacity of the hexameter to represent the divine voice becomes a feature of stylized speech outside hexametric poetry. In a non-hexametric environment, "traces of hexameter" stand out. In addition to the maxim stating that "what is said in hexameter is said as a fact", there has always been a ring to hexameters that makes them elevated or even "sublime".[42] In general, there is a special ring to metrical speech: Greek ears prove to be sensitive to the heightened level of metrical speech's stylisation when compared to the rhythmicality (inherently iambic according to Aristotle, *Rhet*. III 8, 1408b) of natural unplanned Greek speech. Such sensitivity underlies Herodotus' special attention for the prosodic shape of the oracle in Hdt., I 174, 5 (ἐν τριμέτρῳ τόνῳ), a shape that is reminiscent of the spoken verses of Attic drama,[43] in a stylisation that still closely resembles common everyday speech.

To the ear, however, hexameters have nothing to do with everyday unplanned utterances. Hexametric rhythm wilfully deviates from the rhythm(s) of unplanned speech.[44] Whereas iambic rhythm (within the stylised trimeter or outside the metrical formats) evokes a steady *di-DUM di-DUM dum-DUM*, hexameter rhythm results in an awkward *DUM-diddy DUM-diddy DUM-dum*. Awkward, since it requires a level of artificiality: compared to the iambic rhythm of everyday speech (as it happens, practically a linguistic universal), hexameter rhythm features a larger number of non-prominent syllables (*diddy* equals ⌣⌣).[45] To the Greek ear, even a short metrically shaped phrase (either iambic, or hexametric, or other) will have heightened audience's attention and enticed some sort of emphasis on content or delivery when read aloud.[46]

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40. Most, 1999, pp. 253-254.
41. Dalby, 1998, p. 202, n. 50. Cf. Olson, 2020.
42. Pseudo-Longinus: "all in Homer is sublime as it is divine".
43. I.e. in iambic trimeter (tragedy) and trochaic tetrameter (comedy).
44. Most, 1999, p. 353: "no merely human being, unassisted, could possibly compose a string of perfect hexameters – as Aristotle pointed out (*Poetics* IV 1449a26-28) epic dactyls were quite foreign to the ordinary rhythms of vernacular speech".
45. Blankenborg, 2017, pp. 23-27.
46. Kramarz, 2013, pp. 115-118; Hutchinson, 2018, pp. 6-11. Cf. Willi, 2010.

Sources from antiquity comment on the impact of the perceptible stylisation of speech through deviant prosody. Regularly, comments focus on stylised speech's *ethos*, a qualification of prosodic shaping that attempts to account for stylistic register.[47] Especially comprehensive are the observations by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his *De Compositione Verborum*. In the 11th chapter,[48] Dionysius comments on the impact of rhythmic deviance, especially when in performance music takes the lead instead of the rhythm of natural unplanned speech:[49]

ἡ μὲν γὰρ πεζὴ λέξις οὐδενὸς οὔτε ὀνόματος οὔτε ῥήματος βιάζεται τοὺς χρόνους οὐδὲ μετατίθησιν, ἀλλ' οἵας παρείληφεν τῇ φύσει τὰς συλλαβὰς τάς τε μακρὰς καὶ τὰς βραχείας, τοιαύτας φυλάττει· ἡ δὲ μουσική τε καὶ ῥυθμικὴ μεταβάλλουσιν αὐτὰς μειοῦσαι καὶ παραύξουσαι, ὥστε πολλάκις εἰς τἀναντία μεταχωρεῖν· οὐ γὰρ ταῖς συλλαβαῖς ἀπευθύνουσι τοὺς χρόνους, ἀλλὰ τοῖς χρόνοις τὰς συλλαβάς.[50]

"Non-metrical prose does not violate the syllable weights of any noun or verb, nor their interchangeability, but it keeps the syllables, long and short, as it received them by nature. Music and arrangement change them through shortening and lengthening: as a result they regularly pass into their opposites. They do not regulate the rhythmical weights in accordance with the syllables, but rather assimilate the syllables to the rhythmical weights".

In chapter 17, Dionysius attributes aesthetic qualities and judgements to various rhythmical prototypes. Judging from the examples he provides, Dionysius considers rhythms, i.e. metrical feet, phrases and verses, as higher and lower, as more elevated or humbler. His main focus appears to be the preponderance of heavy syllables in a rhythmic environment: the more heavy syllables, the nobler the rhythm.[51] Along similar lines, the foot-final heavy syllable (and hence the prepausal heavy syllable ‑/, the so-called "masculine pause") is preferred over the foot-final light syllable (and, as a

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47. Biber, 1995; Blankenborg (forthcoming).

48. Roberts, 1910, pp. 120-131.

49. The prevalence of music over speech probably stems from "New Music" (Kramarz, 2013, pp. 128-135).

50. *De Comp. Verb.* 128.15-130.2 (ed. Roberts).

51. Rhythmical patterning according to the molossus (‑ ‑ ‑), for example, is considered noble and dignified (ὑψηλός τε καὶ ἀξιωματικός ἐστι καὶ διαβεβηκὼς ἐπὶ πολύ, "it is elevated and worthy, and it has a mighty stride": 172.2-3 ed. Roberts), whereas phyrric (∪∪: οὔτε μεγαλοπρεπής ἐστιν οὔτε σεμνός, "it is neither impressive nor solemn": 168.18 ed. Roberts) or tribacchic (∪∪∪: ταπεινός τε καὶ ἄσεμνός ἐστι καὶ ἀγεννής, καὶ οὐδὲν ἂν ἐξ αὐτοῦ γένοιτο γενναῖον, "it is base and lacking dignity and nobility, and nothing decent can come out of it": 170.20-172.1 ed. Roberts) patterning is judged inferior.

consequence, the prepausal light syllable (◡/) of the "feminine" pause).[52] Remarkably
enough Dionysius passes favourable judgement with regard to the hexameter rhythm
(– ◡◡), despite its inherent preponderance of light syllables (ratio heavy : light = 1:2)
when realised as non-contracted.[53] According to Dionysius, dactylic rhythm is "no-
ble" and "heroic":[54]

> πάνυ δ' ἐστὶ σεμνὸς καὶ εἰς τὸ κάλλος τῆς ἑρμηνείας ἀξιολογώτατος, καὶ τό γε ἡρωϊκὸν
> μέτρον ἀπὸ τούτου κοσμεῖται ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ.[55]

> It is very impressive and more than any other capable of producing beauty of style, and
> the heroic rhythm receives its grandeur from this in the first place.

In comparing the sophist Hegesias' description of Alexander killing an enemy
king by tying him to a chariot with Homer's account of Achilles mutilating the corpse
of Hector,[56] Dionysius attributes the appropriate nobility of the latter's description
"chiefly, if not entirely" (πάντων μάλιστα, καὶ εἰ μὴ μόνη) to the use of the hexameter.
In doing so, he values the impact of prosodic shape over that of content; a valuation
that resembles the psycholinguistic phenomenon nowadays referred to as *situational
context*:[57] a specific combination of form and content that both elicits and addresses
audience's expectations. Expectations are primarily guided by prosodic features, and
pertain to what is being said: specific prosodic features and patterns prepare for spe-
cific anticipation and evaluation of content. The sensitivity of the ancient ear to the
stylisation of speech through a metrical profile creating a rhythmical phrase suggests
that metrical rhythm alone may evokes a situational context as a result of rhythmical

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52. With (next to the dactyl) the exception of the bacchius (– – ◡: ἀνδρῶδες πάνυ ἐστὶ τὸ σχῆμα καὶ
εἰς σεμνολογίαν ἐπιτήδειον, "the patterning is very manly and appropriate for solemn speech": 174.17
ed. Roberts).

53. Dionysius' example of hexameter rhythm, *Od.* IX 39 Ἰλιόθεν με φέρων ἄνεμος Κικόνεσσι
πέλασσεν, "From Troy the wind carried me and brought me to the Cicones" is holodactylic: |– ◡◡|– ◡◡|–
◡◡|– ◡◡|– ◡◡|– –|, *DUM-diddy DUM-diddy DUM-diddy DUM-diddy DUM-diddy DUM-dum*. "This is of
course the very start of Odysseus' adventures as recounted by himself. He sails away from Ilium on as
many dactyls as possible": Roberts, 1910, p. 173, n. 19).

54. Blankenborg, 2017, pp. 18-20. Modern approaches regularly fall in with Dionysius' concept of
"ethos": it is not uncommon to find that spondees are described as "solemn" or dochmiacs as "reflecting
emotional turmoil" (Blankenborg, 2017, p. 17).

55. *De Comp. Verb.* 172, 16-18 ed. Roberts.

56. In chapter 18 of *De Comp. Verb.* 190, 6 – 192, 12 ed. Roberts.

57. Blankenborg, 2017, with further bibliography.

deviance.[58] Dactylic hexameters suggest a "heroic" or "didactic" context, on the authority of the audience's acquaintance with the Homeric epics and the works of Hesiod and others; dactylic lines speak of the great deeds of exemplary men and women from the distant past, as well as of the wisdom of old. As mentioned above, what is said in hexameter, is (meant to be) permanent, and coming from, or belonging to, the divine rather than the human realm. Hexameters prepare the listening audience for the evaluation of content as divinely inspired, and signalling the presence of the divine; the wisdom sayings and proverbs in hexameter shape are experienced as authoritative because of their impressive content and their specific rhythmical profile.

In other than hexametrical environments, the presence of hexameters counts as prosodic deviation: an audible indication that prepares the audience for evaluation of content as the words of a god, delivered in the format of the divine voice. The examples from early historiographic prose show that, when given the choice, the sacredness of divine words is highlighted by either dactylic or iambic metrical rigidity rather than by the inherently iambic rhythm of non-metrical speech. Even in an attempt to render an oracular utterance as embedded indirect speech (as in Hdt., IV 163, 2-3, thereby adapting the format of the oracle to the non-metrical prose environment), the hexametric "original" shines through via phrases and *clausulae*. In prose, *in casu* Herodotus', the divine preference for metrical speech generally becomes audibly evident. Whereas in epic and drama the gods' metrically motivated choosiness remains inconspicuous amidst those of all other, mortal actors, in prose the gods' voice stands out, deliberately creating a specific setting and context for the listening audience. The prosodic format of the oracular utterance evokes the re-enactment of the divine answer, either through the power of memory or through the reading out loud of a materially fixed oracle.[59] Thus the prosodic format re-enacts a ritualistic setting in performance: it captures the actual moment of the rendering of the gods' voice. The hexameters evoke the presence of the god, and momentarily turn

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58. Carey, 2009, pp. 21-22 states that genre categories in archaic and classical Greece admit enough firmness "to generate a set of audience expectations". When perceiving an orally delivered text, the aurally perceptive mind interprets the performance both through its content and through its prosodic format. Iambic trimeters are interpreted as the stylization of everyday speech; anapaests ($\cup\cup$ -) as the verbal accompaniment of rhythmic bodily movement, e.g. the marching of soldiers, tug-of-war, or even sex; cf. Blankenborg (forthcoming a).

59. Cf. Hdt., VI 98, 3:

καὶ ἐν χρησμῷ ἦν γεγραμμένον περὶ αὐτῆς ὧδε·
κινήσω καὶ Δῆλον ἀκίνητόν περ ἐοῦσαν.

"Even in the oracle it had been written down as follows with regards to Delos: 'I will move Delos as well, though it is considered unmovable'".

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the audience into worshippers. The prosodic deviance results in situational "re-con-texting": a momentary displacement of the audience, away from the expectations up till then (in the case of Herodotus' *Histories*, regarding informative and entertaining small-scale accounts featuring Greeks and non-Greeks), and into the solemn setting that accompanies the disclosure of an oracle. The situational context of the reading out loud, the combination of content and prosodic format of the recited utterance, addresses the listeners as the premiere audience: the words are spoken as if to the first people ever to hear them.

4. Prosodic Deviation as "Situational Flickering"

Hexametric poetry is the prosodic format for epic (like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*), didactic poetry (like Hesiod's Theogony, Works and Days), elegiac and exhortative distiches (Mimnermus and Solon), hymns (like the Homeric Hymns), metrical fune-real and dedicatory inscriptions, and early philosophy. Outside these text types, use of the rhythm *DUM-diddy DUM-diddy DUM-diddy DUM-diddy DUM-diddy DUM-dum* is restricted and scarce, a sort of exoticism.[60] As mentioned above, its audible appearance in Herodotus transposes the listeners to the original ritualistic setting of an oracle's disclosure. In non-hexametric poetry, especially the Aeolic rhythms, hex-ametric sequences equally stand out as exoticisms and conscious aberrations of the metrical environment. It is of course not unthinkable that hexameters appear at the surface level of Aeolic poetry.[61] As Aeolic poetry is based on the glyconic ($|xx|- ⌣⌣ -|⌣ -|$) and the pherecratean ($|xx|- ⌣⌣ -|-|$), both centred around the choriamb ($|- ⌣⌣ -|$),[62] the sequence $- ⌣⌣$ seems to present itself regularly. It is not primarily meter, however, that determines the analysis of surface structure as either rhythmically dactylic, or other. Identification of prosodic phrasing rather depends on rhythm; that is, on the recurrence of rhythmical word shapes and, more importantly, of word end. Together, recurring word shapes and recurring word end determine the rhythm of the metri-cal text's surface structure.[63] Lines with a hexametric metrical surface structure may

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60. Graff, 2005, p. 333. Cf. Gurd, 2016, p. 13 who states that acoustic awareness surfaces through ma-terial-semiotic nodes or knots in which diverse bodies and meanings cohabit one another.

61. As one explanation of the hexameter's origin assumes a basis in isosyllaby, the defining character-istic of Aeolic meters, rather than in syllable quantitivity, cf. *supra* n. 25.

62. As are the hipponactean ($|xx|- ⌣⌣ -|⌣ - -|$), the hagesichorean ($|x|- ⌣⌣ -|⌣ - -|$), the aristophanean ($|- ⌣⌣ -|⌣ - -|$), the tellesilean ($|x|- ⌣⌣ -|⌣ -|$), the dodrans ($|- ⌣⌣ -|⌣ -|$), the reizianum ($|x|- ⌣⌣ -| -|$), and the adonius ($|- ⌣⌣ -| -|$). Cf. West, 1982.

63. Ruijgh, 1987; Blankenborg (forthcoming b), p. 39.

thus be rhythmically anapaestic when word end is frequently and recurrently in a long syllable on the foot's thesis. In dactylic metrical surface structure, anapaestic word shapes (◡◡ –) on prepausal positions (◡◡|–/) further strengthen this so-called *metarrhythmisis*, the shift from one rhythmical direction (or *rhythmisis*) to another.[64] The shift does not alter the metrical surface structure (it remains dactylic), but stems from the varying starts and ends of words and phrases, from rising to descending, from blunt to pendant, and *vice versa*. Along similar lines, various and varying rhythmical phrases may be identified within metrical environments that are themselves identified in accordance to the repetitiveness of verse structure, couplet structure, or stanza structure. In mutually subsidiary metric-rhythmic pairs, like dactyl-anapaest and iamb-trochee, the gradual shift of rhythmical direction is known as *epiploke*.[65] Metarrhythmisis may be exploited to highlight deviant rhythmical phrases in metrically uniform environments.[66]

Dactylic rhythm may thus appear in metrically non-dactylic surface structure environments. To be experienced as such by a listening audience, the metarrhythmi-

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64. The terminology *metarrhythmisis* (μεταρρύθμισις, Tz on Hes., *Op.* 42) is used in Koster, 1953 with regard to iambs. In the dactylic hexameter, metarrhythmisis may be on the level of the rhythmical word as the result of an orphaned or isolated thesis, or on the level of the phrase due to syncopation of feet: Blankenborg (forthcoming b), p. 33. Heliodorus is credited for the metrical term ἐπιπλοκή "conversion", a shift from one rhythm to another through change in the sequence of syllables, or the mismatch of word end and the end of the foot or the metron (Päll, 2007, pp. 32-33). Modern terminology complements metarrhythmisis and epiploke (Cole, 1988, p. 3: "readers familiar with modern poetry would probably speak of falling and rising versions of identical rhythmical types"); Nagy, 1974, pp. 279-301 speaks of "dovetailing" when discussing the conscious mismatch of word-end and metron-end: in his view, dovetailing keeps the rhythm moving on, with the consequence of a shift in rhythmical direction through the avoidance of the completion of one rhythmical phrase, and the acknowledgment of arriving at the completion of another.

65. Cole, 1998, and see previous footnote.

66. An example of such highlighting is the emphasis on (anapaestic) paroemiacs as the (underlined) closure of hexametric couplets in Hesiod, *Op.* 23-24 and 217-218:

οἶκόν τ᾽ εὖ θέσθαι, ζηλοῖ δέ τε γείτονα γείτων

εἰς ἄφενος σπεύδοντ᾽· ἀγαθὴ δ᾽ Ἔρις ἥδε βροτοῖσιν.

"To put the household in good order, one neighbour is jealous of another | as he hurries after wealth: this is a worthwhile competition among mortals"

κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια· δίκη δ᾽ ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει

ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα· παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω·

"The better path to justice: justice controls outrage | when it comes out in the end: a fool only learns this after suffering".

See West, 1978, p. 211; Danielewicz, 1996, p. 64; Blankenborg (forthcoming a). The examples show the repetitive rising start and the blunt ending of words and phrases, both characteristic for anapaestic rhythm.

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sized dactylic rhythm must extend over several feet, and preferably form a recognisable colon.[67] In prose, it does not very often do so: Herodotus' hexameters, for example, are isolated verses rather than unexpectedly surfacing rhythmical phrases. In lyric poetry, the typically solemn, heroic dactyl is not very prominent.[68] In the lyric meters, dominant units are the ionic (∪∪ – –), the choriamb (– ∪∪ –), the trochee (∪ –), and the iamb (∪ –).[69] At surface level, verses are formed as metrical units are attached to a central element, often the choriamb. When a sequence of dactyls does appear, as for example in dactyl-epitrites, word end that makes the dactylic phrase stand out may give an epic ring to the lyric line. An example is Pindarus, *Ol.* VI 17 ἀμφότερον μάντιν τ' ἀγαθὸν καὶ δουρὶ μάρνασθαι. τὸ καὶ which appears to scan beginning with a dactylic tetrameter: |– ∪∪|– –|– ∪∪|– –|. Several features, however, seem to undercut such analysis: dactylic word end does not occur, not even at the conclusion of the tetrameter. Word end is rather on the foot's thesis (enclitic and elided τ' prevents word end), creating a colon shaped |– ∪∪ – – – ∪∪ –|. Despite the epic ring, rhythm does not make the dactyls of metrical surface structure stand out. With reference to the flickering of dactylic rhythm, a case in point may well be made, I argue, for the rhythmical realisation of the dodrans (–∪∪– ⁞ –) as an adonius (|–∪∪|– –|, dactylic dimeter). In order to be perceptible, and perceived, as an adonius, phrase-final word end must meet the requirements of spondaic word end in dactylic rhythm, i.e., of the hexametric verse-

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67. Hexameters appear, for example, as heroic "flickering" in lyrical cola, as do the frequent iambs and iamb-shaped words. Their frequency, however, is generally considered insufficient to make for recognisable "heroic" sequencing; cf. Segal, 1986, pp. 30-51. In his phraseology, as well as in his themes, Stesichorus appears to be closest to epic dactylic phrasing. Kelly, 2015 considers him the first lyric poet interacting so deliberately with the Homeric poems (cf. Haslam, 1974; West, 2015).

68. Golston and Riad, 2005 approach lyric meter from the proposition that the dactyl and the trochee are the basic units. From their phonological point of view, the dactyl and the trochee are treated as stress-feet though, not primarily as metrical building blocks. They explain the discrepancy between the stress-feet and the patterning of the rhythmical prominence as a willful violation of linguistic constrains (notably NOCLASH and NOLAPSE) for aesthetic purpose.

69. The denomination "dactylo-epitrite" for certain metrical phrases (usually consisting of dactylic tetrameter + anceps + iambic metron) that are prominent in Pindar and Bacchylides and frequently applied in choral lyric, suggests the use of dactyls as metrical units in lyric poetry. In antiquity, the patterning of dactyls + trochees (or anapaests + iambs) was labeled "logaoedic" and considered suggestive of the rhythm of everyday speech due to its irregularity – a scholarly practice that was extended to all Aeolic meters well into the 19th cent. In ancient discussions on the "ethics" and aesthetics (cf. D'Angour, 2015) of specific rhythms (like the "heroic") and melodies, the meters of lyric poetry are treated as both "prose-like" and "reminiscent of spoken language": in a well-known analysis of a Simonides-fragment (Lidov, 2010), Dionysius comments explicitly on the dimming of lyric meter as a result of the prose-like rhythm in performance. In the 20th cent., analysis as logaoedic gave in to attempts to analyse all Aeolic meters as consisting of four-syllable metra, like the choriamb.

final word end.[70] Examples can be found in the concluding lines of several Sapphic stanzas, for example, κωὐκ ἐθέλοισα (*fr*. 1, 24), and σύμμαχος ἔσσο (*fr*. 1, 28).

The rhythmical profile of lyric's metrical surface structure, centring around the choriamb(s), turns out to be applied only rarely for rendering the gods' utterances in direct speech.[71] When considered as enactment, their poetry at best re-enacts the original performance of the poet. The written form of their poetry serves as a screen-play for re-enactment by a performer or a choir.[72] For the choral lyrics of Attic drama the same holds true. Still, I would like to suggest an interesting example of possibly hexametric divine direct speech in lyric poetry, in Sappho, *fr*. 1. In this poem, the singing and fictional I-person implores the help of Aphrodite as she struggles with overwhelming passion and oppressive anxieties: she wishes for some respite from her suffering.[73] At a certain point, she remembers and quotes the words of the goddess

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70. What are these requirements? First, word end needs to be phonetic word end, without any influence from the subsequent syllable. In addition, word end must be on the arsis, the non-prominent *longum* of the dactyl. Finally, the pause following the word-final syllable must allow for either additional phonetic lengthening or true silence, without the risk of disruption of rhythmic regularity. Cf. Blankenborg (forthcoming a).

71. B., III 78-84; Pi., *O*. VI 63-64 and VIII 42-46; *P*. III 40-42 and IX 20-37; *N*. X 80-88; *I*. VIII 38-48.

72. González, 2013, *Appendix*. Prins, 2019 proposes "metametrical" reading as a model for critical reflection on the complex dialectic between rhythm and meter in an attempt to answer the question "if, and how, the rhythms of Sappho's poetry can be read as if it could be heard, still".

73. Steiner, 2015. Bierl, 2016, p. 350 compares *fr*. 1 to the newly discovered "Kypris Song" and observes with regard to the latter: "Instead of the mimesis of personal dissent leading to the exposition of alternative measures in a flow of thought, we have an appeal to an implied audience, probably the Sapphic Circle, to follow their leader's example. […] The maidens of the chorus can reenact Sappho's poetic 'outcry' when in love, when desire causes her pain, reaffirming her wish to retain relief following her sharp analysis facilitated by clear self-awareness. Again performing the singing 'I' become the speech-act of being in love and suffering. To some degree, the song is equivalent to being in love, and its performer, compensating for her loss, also woos the constantly absconding erotic object. The Kypris Song might also find its *Sitz im Leben* in some festival of Aphrodite or at Messon […]. Later reperformances will have brought the song to the symposium, changing its performance mode and its meaning. The originally choral song becomes monodic and a reflection about love and its corollaries in an educational context assumes the violent outcry of a biographic voice, of the personal Sappho in love". Power, 2020 argues for a "parachoral Sappho", whose wedding songs are "monodic, involving choruses as 'characters' represented or quoted within a solo song rather than as actual performers" (p. 108). Bowie, 2016, p. 152 suggests a "movement of Sappho's songs into a male sympotic repertoire", stating that "'public' performance took place in the restricted space of the symposium, a place both private and public. Thus the girls addressed by the singer are her fellow-entertainers". D'Alessio, 2018, p. 35 argues that "fr. 1 is not in fact a 'fragment', but a complete poem. Its dialogical situation does not present itself as part of, or as compatible with, a ritual, nor indeed does it have a song-*performance* frame. […] No further audience is implied in the text. The notional situation of the utterance is not presented as part of a song performance (which, of course, does not imply that the poem could not be performed as a song), and the dialogue is

Aphrodite,[74] who allegedly answered her prayer for help. Aphrodite's words in direct speech (*fr.* 1, 18b-24) are suggestive of the presence of the goddess:[75]

> τίνα δηὖτε πείθω
> .ͺ. σᾰγην ͺὲς σὰν φιλότατα; τίς σ᾽, ὦ
> Ψάͺπφ᾽, ͺἀδίκησι;
> καͺὶ γͺάρ αἰ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,
> αἰ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ᾽, ἀλλὰ δώσει,
> αἰ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει,
> κωὐκ ἐθέλοισα.

> "Who must I convince with my powers this time to give in to your longing? Who, Sappho, is doing you wrong now? If she flees now, she will soon give chase; if she does not accept gifts, she will soon give in turn; if she does not feel longing, she soon will – even unwillingly".

Lines 1, 18b-20 pose various editorial problems: the beginning of 19 is corrupt, and the remainder is disputed. Various readings have been proposed for the start of 19: metrically, the space to be filled (.ͺ.) must result in a single long syllable. The clausula of Aphrodite's second question, *fr.* 1, 20, is an instance of rhythmic realisation

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not framed in formally cultic context" (but cf. Nagy, 2020). On the role played by "voice" (as the identity constructed by the text) in songs sung in religious settings, see Carey, 2017.

74. Bierl, 2016, p. 351 states that "Kypris thus functions, to some extent, like the poet's Muse. However, Aphrodite does not really inspire her according to the traditional epic concept, conveying her words through the performer's voice, rather the 'I', with her personal and rational analysis and her individual wish to understand the paradox of love and bemoan its effects, i.e. Sappho herself, acts out the song as compensation. Thus she is inspired by Aphrodite in a new sense: love makes Sappho produce song. As choral leader she can even make her entire choral group perform her words, and by performing these stanzas the girls, as plural 'I', discover the mechanism of love within themselves. In reenacting Sappho's pain and near-death experience, the girls become imbued with love and consequently more attractive and marriageable to aristocratic men".

75. Against what seems believable: "In addition to the task of curing loneliness and bringing her friends in contact with one another, the work Sappho's poems perform is occasionally to coax the goddess Aphrodite into living presence. Now we can understand easily enough the task of working ourselves up to feelings of sexual excitement, and we can appreciate in the abstract a priestess of an extinct creed charging the air with holiness and a divine presence. Unfortunately what these poems demand is the real presence of the living goddess. But we cannot believe in Aphrodite, that she was ever *really* there" (Bagg, 1964, p. 46). Bowra, 1961, pp. 202-203 most strongly advocates that *fr.* 1 records a genuine religious experience. Page, 1965, p. 18 suggests that the arrival of the goddess was experienced through the presence of real sparrows in *fr.* 1, 10. Zellner, 2008 traces the tradition in scholarly literature to interpret *fr.* 1 as light-hearted and humorous.

that runs counter to metrical structure: in line 20, the metrical dodrans (choriamb + long syllable, ‒◡◡‒⋮‒) results in the dactylic-spondaic rhythm of the adonius (|‒◡◡‒ | ‒, heroic rhythm's clausula, *DUM-diddy, DUM-dum*). All three requirements for the identification of dactylic-spondaic phrase end are met: phonetic word end, word end in the *longum* on the arsis, the possibility of additional lengthening and pause without the risk of rhythmic disruption.[76] Tracing the prosody of Aphrodite further back, line 19 equally ended in dactylic rhythm through skilful audible punctuation: due to the strong sentence end in an "audible" question mark, the word-final syllable of φιλότατα was phonetically lengthened in realisation, both as a result of, and allowing for, a substantial pause.[77] If I indicate the boundaries of the phonetic words using comma's, and the strong pause on the audible question mark with a semicolon in the parsed verse, the deviant parsing of the ninth syllable of line 19 becomes visible:[78]

.˳. σᾰγην ˳ἐς σὰν φιλότατα; τίς σ᾽, ὦ　　　　　　‒ ◡ ‒, ‒ ‒ ◡◡ ‒ ‒,⋮ ‒ ‒.

Starting from the third syllable of line 19, a full dactylic hexameter appears, culminating in heroic rhythm's clausula, the adonius, *DUM-diddy, DUM-dum*:

-]γην ˳ἐς σὰν φιλότατα; τίς σ᾽, ὦ Ψά˳πφ᾽, ˳ἀδίκησι;　　‒, ‒ ‒ ◡◡ ‒ ‒,⋮ ‒ ‒ ‒, ◡◡ ‒ ‒⋮

Even Wernicke's Law is skilfully avoided: the apparent spondaic word end in the fourth dactyl is phonologically bridged (ὦ‿Πσάπφ᾽). More problematic is the prepausal spondaic word end on the third foot; in hexametric poetry, this never occurs. Alternatively, lines 19-20 are experienced as metarrhythmisis, twice, to spondee + adonius:[79]

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76. Cf. *supra* n. 62.

77. Cf. *brevis in longo* for the prepausal syllable on the arsis (Van Raalte, 1986, p. 17), and metrical lengthening for the prepausal syllable on the thesis of the hexameter. See Blankenborg (forthcoming b), p. 33.

78. The use of comma's also shows that line 19 ends in what used to be called a *cyclic dactyl*, a long syllable in dactylic or anapaestic metrical surface structure that does not allow for word end due to phonological constraints: Rossi, 1963; Ruijgh, 1985; Blankenborg (forthcoming a); Lidov and Becker, "Introduction", in Lidov and Becker (forthcoming). In the case of the phrase-final syllable of line 19, it is subject to phonological and syntactical proclisis and hence straddles the verse end while maintaining the dactylic rhythm that started with the line's second syllable (Devine and Stephens, 1994, p. 303).

79. Analogous to "traces of hexameter" in Herodutus' prose (cf. *supra* n. 17), apparently dactylic rhythmical phrasing in lyric poetry attracts attention as, possible, embedded indirect speech: a trace of the original hexameter format of divine direct speech. In such cases a situational flickering may be assumed, as in e.g. lines *fr.* 1, 15-16 ἤ˳ρὲ ὄττ˳ι δηὖτε πέπονθα κὤττι δη˳ὖτε κ˳άλ˳η˳μμι: an echo perhaps

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-]γην ˌἐς σὰν φιλότατα; τίς σ᾽, ὦ Ψά ˏπφ᾽, ˌἀδίκησι; |‒, ‒ ‒ ◡◡ ‒ ‒,||‒ ‒ ‒, ◡◡ ‒ ‒|

The goddess is indeed speaking in the rhythm that is appropriate for the divine voice. Citing the goddess' words, the performer momentarily impersonates the divine, and makes the listening audience witness a suggested epiphany.

As in the examples of hexametric flickering in Herodotus' prose rendering of oracles, turning the listening audience into the premiere audience of divine revelation, lyric poetry sporadically preserves the traces of original, ritualistic phrasing. Future research must determine how and where other types of rhythmical flickering evoke or constitute situational contexts when embedded in non-corresponding metrical environments.

5. An End to Pickiness?

The gods' pickiness with regard to the prosody of their utterances decreased over time though. Centuries after Herodotus, Plutarch notes that not even the Delphian oracles are given in verses anymore. In his *De Pythiae Oraculis* (*Moralia* 394d-409d), he has the dialogue's characters complain about this fact, allegedly already normal practice in the 4th cent. BCE.[80] Oracles' rendition in prose, it is claimed, undermines their credibility.[81] Plutarch has one of the discussion's participants, Theon, explain the four reasons behind the god's apparent shift from poetry to prose:[82] 1) there used to be prose oracles in the past as well; 2) the earlier Pythia used to be poetically more gifted and prone to take every opportunity to indulge the tendency to express herself poetically; 3) the god chose to distance himself from verse as humanity renounced it as being vague, commercially exploitable, and

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of original, direct speech δηὖτε πέπονθας, "have you suffered this time?", and δηὖτε κάλησι, "you call on me again".

80. *De Pythiae Oraculis* 19, 043E Θεόπομπος οὐδενὸς ἧττον ἀνθρώπων ἐσπουδακὼς περὶ τὸ χρηστήριον, ἰσχυρῶς ἐπιτετίμηκε τοῖς μὴ νομίζουσι κατὰ τὸν τότε χρόνον ἔμμετρα τὴν Πυθίαν θεσπίζειν· εἶτα τοῦτο βουλόμενος ἀποδεῖξαι, παντάπασιν ὀλίγων χρησμῶν ηὐπόρηκεν, ὡς τῶν ἄλλων καὶ τότ᾽ ἤδη καταλογάδην ἐκφερομένων, "Theopompus, who studied the oracle more diligently than any other man, sharply criticized those who did not believe that the Pythia prophesized in verses at the time (i.e., in the 4th cent. BCE); however, when he wanted to prove his point, it turned out that he could only produce a very few such oracles, obviously because the rest was already presented in prose rendering even then".

81. *De Pythiae Oraculis* 17, 402B ἄλλοι τοῦ θεοῦ μὴ εἶναι, ὅτι φαύλως ἔχουσιν, "others (presume) that they cannot be from the god, as they are poorly composed".

82. Schröder, 2010, pp. 147-148.

too pretentious stylised for everyday matters; 4) Delphi is now successful because the Pythia's simple answers cannot possibly hide ignorance.

The steady development of prose as the preferred medium for material fixation somehow diminished the gods' prosodic pickiness.[83] Well into the second half of the 5th cent. BCE, poetry remained the preferred form for both composition and writing down. As soon as prose as a medium took the stage,[84] it was used to convey the fruits of research, as Herodotus' *Histories* and Xenophon's work evidence. Soon, philosophy (Anaxagoras, Protagoras) turned to the more austere medium as well, quickly followed by the orators. Later generations, as late as Plutach's Theon in *De Delphorum Oraculis* assume, or rather, confirm, that prose was the preferred medium for distributing information that needed to be clear and unidirectional rather than pleasant to the ear or beautifully composed. Aristotle's comments on prose composition as opposed to poetry appear to touch on the idea that prose renders *actual*, rather than *possible* things (*Poet.* 1451a36-b10) as well, and points to the likeness of good prose to naturally unplanned speech, giving it the capacity to persuade an audience (1404b18-21). In addition, in his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle pays attention to the formal distinction between poetry and prose. Both, he states, need to be rhythmic, as unrhythmic prose becomes "unlimited", and hence "unpleasant and unknowable" (1408b27-30). Prose rhythm in excess should be avoided, lest prose turns into meter (1408b22-23). "Speech should have rhythm" Aristotle says, "but not meter; for the latter will be a poem" (1408b30-31).[85] He therefore dismisses the dactyl, the trochee, and the iamb, as either "removed from everyday speech", "too closely associated with comic drama", and "not sufficiently dignified and moving", to settle on the paean, as it will not strike the audience as contrived (1408b32-1409a9).[86] The use of hexameter in

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83. The rise of prose is linked to broader intellectual and cultural developments under way in the classical period. In the earliest accounts of prose style (e.g. Aristotle), the criteria for what constitutes an acceptable level of poeticality in prose were unstable (Graff, 2005).

84. Pherecydes of Syros (*ca.* 550 BCE) is the oldest known prose author, a contemporary of semi-historical Aesop, to whom later generations attributed fables in prose. Hecataeus of Miletos, an important source for Herodotus, also used prose for his writings on history and geography (Kahn, 2003, p. 143).

85. The sophist Gorgias considers meter the only difference between poetry and prose (*Helen* 9). Gorgias' "Encomium of Helen" itself is to such an extent "near to poetry as possible without being it" (Päll, 2007, p. 143) that Aristotle (1404a) labelled his style "poetical". Dionysius compares Gorgias' prose to dithyrambs (*Pomp.* II 13, 8).

86. Graff, 2005, pp. 322-323. To us, this may come as a surprise, but analysis of Greek rhythmic prose sufficiently shows that rhythmic clausulae are regularly (resolved) forms of the cretic (as are the first and fourth paean). In prose, a high density of paeons and cretic dimeters as clausulae calls for heightened attention in the listening audience. As a qualifier of situational context, density of paeon or cretic prose rhythm characterises narrative. Cf. Hutchinson, 2018, pp. 6-9 and 25.

an otherwise "prose" environment, like everyday speech, is a deliberate "divergence from the colloquial register" (1449a26-27).

Plutarch's *De Pythiae Oraculis* also underlines that there is, or that there should be, a relation between the voice of the god on the one hand, and the religiously characterised situation on the other. Plutarch's antagonist Theon states that "not even the meter finds its origin in the god", pointing out that many aspects of the production of oracles (the sound, the wording, the prosodic shaping, the interpretation, the material fixation in writing) are the work of humans, only somehow "inspired" by the divine. In earlier times, when people were more used to poetical, stylised speech, and more susceptible to the message thus conveyed, it was not surprising, he claims, that the god of Delphi chose to speak poetically as well – it was merely a matter of catering to taste and habit. Since taste and habits, including religious ones, change over time, the gods' voice had to change with it in order to remain authoritative and sufficiently relevant. A modern no-nonsense political and social environment, in other words, required a no-nonsense communication with the divine.

To his fellow participants in the discussion, Theon's theorising appropriately explains the shift from poetry to prose. To us, however, Herodotus' rendering of divine words as poetry points to an experience of oracles that goes beyond taste and habits. Plutarch's Theon hints at such an alternative dimension when he mentions the threat to oracles' veracity and credibility in passing. But even this aspect is secondary to audience's and society's predominant taste in his view. The waning of the special prosodic properties of the divine voice over time was the result of broader cultural developments that changed the listening audience's perception of metrical language, as rhythm in performance shifted from natural to musical rhythm, and gradually diminished the ritualistic importance of performance.[87]

6. CONCLUSION

In describing the difference between poetry and prose, scholars in antiquity allow for characteristics that these two, seemingly mutually exclusive, categories of texts share rather than divide among them. Both text types are expected to be rhythmical, and meter is not exclusively the domain of poetry. Both types are also supposed to be ornate and authoritative, and conveying reliable information is not restricted to prose. The denomination "poetry" or "prose" appears to depend on a "more of this,

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87. Following Aristotle, later literary critics did not consider performance as belonging to the exegetical practice (Schironi, 2020).

less of that" rather than on an "only this". When asked for the defining aspect of prose, sources from antiquity mention the "absence of the verse format". Meter, however, may still appear in a prose environment, be it merely to conclude clauses, sentences and phrase (functioning as "audible punctuation"), or to emphasise the structure of the thought. Its occurrence in prose hardly ever exceeds the dimetron; otherwise, as Aristotle reminds us, "it would be poetry".

Longer citations in metrical format are singled out as poetic quotations in the prose environment. As such they maintain the metrical format of the source quoted from. In Herodotus, one of the first Greek prose authors, single-verse and multi-verse quotations from the Delphic oracle are introduced as citations; sometimes their metrical format is commented on.

In literature that is performed, or read out loud, reading a poetic quotation in a prose environment is not without aesthetic and situational consequences. As the performer re-enacts the first performance of the metrical utterance, so the listening audience re-enacts the witnessing of the original performance. When Herodotus carefully quotes the metrical text of the oracle, the performer speaks with a voice like the god's. For a moment, he impersonates the god, just as his listeners impersonate the original worshippers.

Apparently, the gods preferably speak in dactylic verses, the language of permanency used for what is thought to last forever: epic, funereal and dedicatory inscriptions, wisdom sayings, and legislation literature. They continue to do so when poetry as a means of utterance gradually makes way for prose in a number of genres and text types, notably historiography, philosophy, and oratory. It is one thing to observe the gods' pickiness in their choice of format, but quite another to consider the impact of this format. Due to the recognisable, deviant rhythmic profile of the gods' voice, the highly idiosyncratic combination of format and content, the audience is temporarily transposed to another context, another situation in performance. The situational context evoked by the poetic quotation is that of ritual and solemnity. For a moment, the listening audience *is* the premiere audience of the original rendering of the divine utterance. In archaic poetry, where similar formatting can only be detected through the rhythmical phrasing of the metrical surface structure, the divine voice still flickers sporadically. And once more it transfers the listening audience from the secular surroundings into the realm of the divine and the religious ritual re-enacted. Not limitlessly though: the rise of prose, its supposed correlation with veracity, and the diminishing ritualistic importance of performance cause the divine voice to wane from the 4th cent. BCE onwards.

The identification of the divine voice in the rhythmical phrasing of metrical patterning in early Greek prose and archaic lyric is merely one instance of the impact

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that metrical rhythm may pertain in contexts where other, or non-metrical, rhythms are predominant. In this article, I dealt with rhythm's impact in terms of situational context, the specific combination of text format and content that evokes a temporary sensation of displacement in the listener. Rhythm's impact, both the metrical and non-metrical, will doubtlessly be much wider and much more various and multifarious. It will be worthwhile to further explore the impact of the many different rhythmical realisations of metrical and non-metrical surface structures, and observe the auditory and aesthetic consequences of *epiploke* and *metarrhythmisis*, perceptible shifts in the rhythmical profile. We only need to make the text speak.

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