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**DOI**

[10.1080/00397679.2019.1641341](https://doi.org/10.1080/00397679.2019.1641341)

**Publication date**

2019

**Document Version**

Final published version

**Published in**

SO

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**Citation for published version (APA):**

de Jong, I. J. F. (2019). From Oroskopia to Ouranoskopia in Greek and Latin Epic. *SO*, 93(1), 12-36 . <https://doi.org/10.1080/00397679.2019.1641341>

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# FROM OROSKOPIA TO OURANOSKOPIA IN GREEK AND LATIN EPIC

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This article discusses oroskopia, gods looking at human affairs from a mountain, in terms of a topos with a collective intertextual tradition. That tradition was started by Homer who depicts Zeus looking down from Olympus or nearby Ida. After Homer the mountain Olympus as divine vantage point largely disappears in favour of heaven, and we may speak of ouranoskopia. Gods continue to watch events from local mountains in the vicinity of the action, which usually also have a symbolic force in that they are connected to the god via literary or cultic associations.

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**Keywords:** gods; epic; mountains; point of view; topos

## I. *Introduction*

The aim of this issue is to investigate the possibility of connecting intertextuality and narratology. As editor of the series *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative*, which aims at providing a narratological history of Greek narrative literature, I consider this a highly relevant investigation. When writing a history of Greek narrative, we are performing diachronic narratology, which means that looking down from an Olympian point of view at Greek literature we trace the development of narratological categories like narrator, narratee, time, space, and character over time and across genres.<sup>1</sup> But how about the perspective of the authors who make their narrators use these devices? Are they aware that they are part of a history? Are they, when using a certain narrative device, consciously following the example of a predecessor? Are they, in short, using narrative devices in an intertextual way, the way they intertextually rework the myths or words of their predecessors? I think this is hard to claim for the most basic and general of narrative devices, such as analepsis or

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prolepsis. These simply belong to the toolkit of every author, perhaps can even be considered narrative universals. But when we step down to more specific narrative passages which have become *topoi*, there are more chances to find – a form of – intertextual relationship.<sup>2</sup> Stephen Hinds has argued that a *topos* “invokes its intertextual tradition as a collectivity” (1998, 34). Thus a *locus amoenus* is a specific form of the narratological category of “space” which forms part of a collective intertextual tradition. And the same can be said for other epic *topoi* like the divine council (a special form of the general narratological category of “speech”) or the *ekphrasis* (a special form of the general category of “description”).

In this article I will discuss the *topos* of gods looking down from a mountain at human affairs, which I call *oroskopia*. Like *teichoskopia* it is a specific instantiation of the more general narratological category of embedded focalization (or figural narration): when events are looked at via the eyes of one of the characters. Its first, memorable manifestation in the Homeric epics spawned a long collective intertextual tradition – which often, but not always or in its full extent is recognized by scholars, as my footnotes will show – across genres,<sup>3</sup> but for the purposes of this chapter I will focus on divine *oroskopia* in Greek and Latin epic.

## 2. *Divine oroskopia in Homer*

The *topos* of *oroskopia* finds its first, influential manifestation in Homer. In the *Iliad* we regularly hear about Zeus and the other gods watching the actions of the heroes from Mt Olympus:

*Iliad* 7.443–444

(the narrator has just recounted how the Greeks built a wall around their camp)

οἱ δὲ θεοὶ παρ Ζηνὶ καθήμενοι ἀστεροπητῇ  
θηεῦντο μέγα ἔργον Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων.

The gods sitting beside Zeus the lord of lightning admiringly watched the great endeavour of the bronze-clad Greeks.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Olympus is not mentioned here, the detail that the gods “were sitting beside Zeus” evokes the picture of the whole divine family gathered together in Zeus’ palace on the Olympus, a picture that was sketched for us in full detail by the narrator in the first book of the *Iliad* (1.533–536, 606–611).

Occasionally gods sit on other mountains. Thus Zeus sometimes moves to the Ida, in the Troad, to watch the battle before Troy from a more nearby position:

*Iliad* 8.47–52

ἴδην δ' ἴκανε πολυπίδακα, μητέρα θηρῶν,  
 Γάργαρον, ἔνθα τέ οἱ τέμενος βωμός τε θυίεις.  
 ἔνθ' ἵππους ἔστησε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε  
 λύσας ἐξ ὀχέων, κατὰ δ' ἠέρα πολὺν ἔχευεν.  
 αὐτὸς δ' ἐν κορυφῇσι καθέζετο κύδει γαίω  
 εἰσορόων Τρώων τε πόλιν καὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν.

And he [Zeus] reached Ida with the many springs, mother of wild animals, Gargaron where are his precinct and fragrant altar. There the father of men and gods reined in his horses, unyoked them from the chariot and spread thick mist over them. But he himself sat down on the peak, glorying in his splendour and looking down at the city of the Trojans and the ships of the Greeks.<sup>5</sup>

The gods watch human affairs in Homer primarily as a form of spectacle, put on for their entertainment while they sit in their Olympian “sky-boxes”, sipping their nectar and nibbling at their ambrosia. But, as Griffin has well argued, the continuous divine interest in the acts of the heroes also adds to their *kleos*.<sup>6</sup> Finally, their watching also often is the prelude to an intervention in human affairs on earth, which may be of a beneficiary nature, a god helping his or her favourite hero or party, or harmful, a god obstructing a hero’s progress.<sup>7</sup> Thus divine oroskopia in Homer is a symbol of the god’s proverbial life of ease and of their power.

When we turn from Homer to later epic poets we observe that the topos of oroskopia develops in two ways: one, the mountain Olympus as seat and vantage point of the gods is largely replaced by heaven (οὐρανός, *aether, caelum, nubis*) and we may speak of ouranoskopia; two, gods watching human action from a mountain or hill *nearby* the scene of action, type Zeus looking from Mt Ida or local oroskopia, remains widespread.

### 3. *Divine oroskopia after Homer (I): replacement by ouranoskopia*

The replacement of oroskopia by ouranoskopia is illustrated by:

Apollonius Rhodius *Argonautica* 1.544–549

(the Argonauts depart on their mission)  
 στράπτε δ' ὑπ' ἡελίῳ φλογὶ εἴκελα νηὸς ἰούσης  
 τεύχεα· μακρὰ δ' αἰὲν ἔλευκαίνοντο κέλευθοι,  
 ἀτραπὸς ὡς χλοερόιο διειδομένη πεδίοιο.  
 πάντες δ' οὐρανόθεν λεῦσσον θεοὶ ἤματι κείνῳ  
 νῆα καὶ ἡμιθέων ἀνδρῶν γένος, οἱ τότε ἄριστοι  
 πόντον ἐπιπλώεσκον.

As the ship advanced, their armour shone in the sun like flame; the long wake showed ever white, like a path seen stretching through a green plain. On that day all the gods looked down from heaven upon the ship and the generation of demi-gods who sailed the sea, best of all men of that moment.<sup>8</sup>

and Vergil *Aeneid* 1.223–226

(the storm sent by Juno has come to an end)  
 Et iam finis erat, cum Iuppiter aethere summo  
 despiciens mare velivolum terrasque iacentis  
 litoraue et latos populos, sic vertice caeli  
 constitit et Libyae defixit lumina regnis.

Now all was ended, when Jupiter looking down from the high ether on the sail-winged sea and the spread out lands, the shores and peoples far and wide, thus at the summit of the sky he stopped and fixed his eyes on the kingdoms of Libya.<sup>9</sup>

In both passages gods are said to look down from heaven (οὐρανόθεν, *aethere summo*, *vertice caeli*) rather than from Mt Olympus, and this is what we see throughout the history of ancient epic: the gods are primarily located in heaven, a place characterized by the presence of “ether” and “aer” (two different kinds of air), clouds, and stars.<sup>10</sup>

How can we explain this substitution, from Apollonius onwards, of the mountain by heaven as the vantage point of the gods? In the first place, the substitution mentally was an easy one, since already in Homer the gods, called by him Ὀλύμπιοι or Οὐρανίῳνες, are located both on Mt Olympus and in heaven (οὐρανός), the two concepts being used indiscriminately and somewhat illogically at the same time, sometimes even within the same context, as in:

*Iliad* 1.194–195 and 221–222

ἦλθε δ' Ἀθήνη  
 οὐρανόθεν· [...]  
 ἢ δ' Οὐλυμπόνδε βεβήκει

δώματ' ἐς αἰγιόχοιο Διὸς μετὰ δαίμονας ἄλλους.

Athena came down from heaven [...] And she went to the Olympus, to the house of Aegis-holding Zeus and to the other gods.

Athena comes down from heaven but after her intervention goes back to the Olympus.<sup>11</sup>

A second factor which facilitated the replacement of oroskopia by ouranoskopia is versification. Apollonius could simply take over the expression οὐρανόθεν from Homer, since even though Homer never uses this expression of gods watching, it is found in other contexts, such as when gods come down from heaven, as we just saw Athena do in *Iliad* 1.195. The expression was therefore readily available for Apollonius to start employing in connection with gods watching from heaven.

But the main reason for the replacement of the mountain by heaven was, I would suggest, the influence of allegorical interpretation which flourished from Hellenistic times onwards. One of the best known allegorical interpretations of Homer connected Zeus with the aether or highest clear air.<sup>12</sup> It is likely that under the influence of such allegorical interpretations the scholar-poet Apollonius preferred to locate the gods in heaven rather than on a mountain, and allegory also informed Vergil's depiction of Jupiter.<sup>13</sup>

A final factor which arguably may have played a role in the replacement of mountain by heaven is the "globalization" of epic: no longer a purely Greece-based phenomenon, epic poets gave up the Greek mountain in favour of heaven since the latter is everywhere.<sup>14</sup>

As a result of this development even the word "Olympus" itself comes to refer to the mountain (e.g. Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 3.113: βῆ δ' ἴμεν Οὐλύμποιο κατὰ πτύχας), to heaven (e.g. Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 3.159–160: Οὐλύμποιο| αἰθερίας or Nonnus 32.10: ἀστερόφοιτον ... κύκλον Ὀλύμπου), but often simply to the abode of the gods without it being possible – or perhaps necessary – to decide whether mountain or heaven is meant. An example is:

Quintus Smyrnaeus *Posthomerica* 3.90–92

ὃ γε κραιπνὸς ἀφίκετο μακρὸν Ὀλυμπον  
ἄλλων ἀθανάτων ἐς ὀμήγουριν, ἧχι μάλιστα  
πανσυδίῃ ἀγέροντο μάχην ἐσορώμενοι ἀνδρῶν.

He [sc. Apollo] quickly arrived on high Olympus, the assembly of all the immortals, where most they gathered to watch with full fervour the battle of men.<sup>15</sup>

What does Olympus refer to here?<sup>16</sup> Intertextuality pulls two ways. In Homer the combination μακρὸν Ὀλυμπον always refers to the mountain, while in Latin poetry we find *altus Olympus* used of the abode of the gods without any specification (cf. Verg. *Georg.* 1.95–96: *neque illum| flava Ceres alto nequiquam spectat Olympo*, “nor is it for naught that golden Ceres views him from high Olympus”, or Sil. *Pun.* 4.417–418: *Quas acies alto genitor dum spectat Olympo| consulis egregii movere pericula mentem*, “When the Father of heaven beheld this battle from the height of Olympus, his heart was moved by the danger of the noble consul”).

All in all, we may conclude that the idea of the Olympic gods collectively watching human affairs “from above” remains a constant factor in classical poetry, but “the above” after Homer is visualized, if it is visualized at all, more as an airy and starry heaven than as a mountain.

#### 4. *Divine oroskopia after Homer (2): local oroskopia*

While the mountain Olympus thus largely disappears in favour of heaven, gods continue watching human affairs from mountains *nearby* the scene of action. The model for this type of local oroskopia is the passage in *Iliad* 8 of Zeus watching the battle before Troy from Mt Ida already quoted in section 2.<sup>17</sup> Other Homeric examples are Poseidon who sits on the highest point of the island Samothrake near Troy and watches the battle in *Iliad* 13.12–14, and the pro-Trojan gods who sit on the hill of Callicolone in the Trojan plain in *Iliad* 20.151–152 (with the pro-Greek gods sitting on an earthen rampart opposite: 146–150) and wait for the moment to enter the battle actively themselves.<sup>18</sup>

Why do gods seat themselves near a place of action? Their supernatural sight in theory should enable them to see everything from Olympus/heaven, and in practice often does. Thus Jupiter from his “starry dwelling” “surveys all countries, the Dardan camp and the Latin people” (Verg. *Aen.* 10.3–4). In what follows I will argue that gods position themselves on a nearby mountain when they are especially involved in the action they watch. And often the mountains on which the gods are sitting have a symbolic significance in that they are somehow connected to them, as a cult place in the present or as the setting of an event in the past.

Woronoff argued that the Homeric Zeus seats himself on Mt Ida, where he has a precinct (8.48) and where the Trojans sacrifice to him (22.170–171), at moments when he wants to support the Trojans, of course as a

result of his *Dios boulē*: he thunders and flashes from the Ida to support them morally (8.75–76, 170–171), and later raises “a storm of wind from the mountains of Ida”, which “fools the minds of the Achaeans and grants glory to Hector and the Trojans” (12.252–253).<sup>19</sup> Spatial proximity in the case of oroskopia thus suggests emotional involvement. In the specific case of Zeus, who in principle is impartial, as is symbolized by his golden scales (8.69–74; 22.209–213), his exchanging Olympus for Ida also indicates his temporarily giving up of that impartiality. Against this background it is all the more piquant (or ironical) that Hera briefly stops Zeus from supporting the Trojans by making love to him on his very strategic seat, Mt Ida, in 14.292–353. I will come back to this passage at the end of this article.

This Homeric model of local divine oroskopia created a collective intertextual tradition, as the following series of examples from the whole history of Greek and Latin epic (and some, often intertextually related, passages from other poetic genres) will show.

Pindar *Paean* 12.8–14

Κύ]νθιον παρὰ κρημνόν, ἔνθα [  
 κελαινεφέ’ ἀργιβρένταν λέγο[ντι  
 Ζῆνα καθεζόμενον  
 κορυφαῖσιν ὑπερθε φυλάξαι π[ρ]ονοί[α,  
 ἀνίκ’ ἀγανόφρων  
 Κοίου θυγάτηρ λύετο τερπνᾶς  
 ὠδίνος.

to the slope of Mt Cynthus, where they say that dark-clouded, thunder-flashing Zeus, sitting on its top, kept watch with forethought, when the gentle-minded daughter of Coeus [Leto] was being released from her sweet birth-pains.<sup>20</sup>

Pindar recounts how Zeus once sat himself on Mt Cynthus on the island of Delos, in order to follow closely Leto’s delivery of Apollo.<sup>21</sup> The same story of Leto giving birth to Apollo on Delos had been told in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, but there Zeus did not leave the Olympus and thanks to his jealous wife Hera Leto had a prolonged and painful labour of nine days. In Pindar’s paean, which as a “cult hymn should praise the deities involved” and which seems set up as a conscious rewriting of the Homeric hymn,<sup>22</sup> Zeus actively and we may assume benignly oversees Leto’s labour, which as a result is “sweet”.



Zeus' choice of Mt Cynthus is also symbolic for two reasons: it is (1) the mountain that overlooks the sanctuary of Apollo in the poet's own time where Pindar's paean to Apollo was probably sung and (2) a place where, probably, Zeus himself was worshipped too.<sup>23</sup>

Apollonius Rhodius *Argonautica* 1.549–552

ἐπ' ἀκροτάτησι δὲ νύμφαι  
 Πηλιάδες σκοπιῆσιν ἐθάμβεον, εἰσορόωσαι  
 ἔργον Ἀθηναίης Ἴτωνίδος ἠδὲ καὶ αὐτοῦς  
 ἥρωας χεῖρεςσιν ἐπικραδάοντας ἐρετμά·

And on the highest peaks the nymphs of Pelion gazed in wonder at the handiwork of Itonian Athena and at the heroes themselves whose arms plied the oars mightily.

The context here is the same as the passage quoted at the opening of section 3: the moment when the Argonauts depart with the Argo on their dangerous mission. While the Olympian gods watch this festive moment “from heaven”, nymphs look at it from the local mountain Pelion. They have a special interest in the ship, since groves on “their” mountain had supplied the wood from which the Argo was made (2.1187–1188), an event recalled in their focalization of the ship as “the handiwork of Itonian Athena”.

Apollonius Rhodius *Argonautica* 4.956–960

τὰς δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἄναξ κορυφῆς ἔπι λισσάδος ἄκρης  
 ὀρθός, ἐπὶ στελεῆ τυπίδος βαρὺν ὤμον ἐρείσας,  
 Ἥφαιστος θεεῖτο, καὶ αἰγλήεντος ὕπερθεν  
 οὐρανοῦ ἐστηνῖα Διὸς δάμαρ, ἀμφὶ δ' Ἀθήνη  
 βάλλε χέρας, τοῖόν μιν ἔχεν δέος εἰσορόωσαν.

Upright on the very top of a sheer rock stood the ruler himself, Hephaestus, watching them (sc. the Nereids) as he rested his heavy shoulder on the handle of his hammer; high above in the gleaming heaven the wife of Zeus stood and watched also – so great was her fear that she threw her arms around Athena.

The context is very similar to that in Book 1. Once again, a remarkable moment in the Argonauts' voyage is emphasized with the help of the oroskopia topos (in combination with ouranoskopia). The moment here singled out is the Argo being carried through the Clashing Rocks by Nereids and it is watched by Hephaestus from a nearby mountain

(and by Hera from heaven). The mountain is not specified but must be one of the Wandering Islands, the place where Hephaestus' forge is (3.42). His watching at leisure, as the posture of resting his shoulder on the handle of his hammer brings home, flows forth from Hera's request to stop working, i.e. refrain from causing volcanic activity, during the risky operation (760–764, 775–777).

Callimachus *Hymn* 2.90–93

τοὺς μὲν ἄναξ ἴδεν αὐτός, ἑῆ δ' ἐπεδείξατο νύμφη  
 στὰς ἐπὶ Μυρτούσσης κερατώδεος, ἧχι λέοντα  
 Ὑψηῖς κατέπεφνε βοῶν σίνιν Εὐρυπύλοιο.

These [Theraeans dancing with Libyan women in honour of Apollo] did the god [Apollo] himself see, and he showed them to his bride [Cyrene], standing upon horned Myrtussa, where the daughter of Hypseus [Cyrene] killed the lion that was the plunderer of Eurypylus' cattle.<sup>24</sup>

The context is an aetiological vignette about Apollo, the god hymned, which recounts how he once watched for the first time the Carnean festival in the presence of his bride Cyrene, the eponymous nymph of the city. He watches from the hill Myrtussa near (or in?) Cyrene, of course so as to have a good view of and show his interest in a dance performed in his honour.<sup>25</sup> But at the same time the hill is also symbolic in that 1) it is the place where Cyrene once killed the lion that had been ravaging the cattle of the Libyan Eurypylus and 2) its “horned” shape recalls the horned altars which are typical of the cult of Apollo and about which the hymnic speaker had spoken earlier in the poem (δείματο μὲν κεράεσσιν ἐδέθλια, πῆξε δὲ βωμὸν ἐκ κεράων, “he constructed the foundations with horns, and fitted the altar from horns”: 62–63).

Callimachus *Hymn* 4.59–69

τῷ ῥα καὶ αὐτὴ μὲν σκοπιὴν ἔχεν αἰθέρος εἴσω  
 σπερχομένη μέγα δὴ τι καὶ οὐ φατόν, εἶργε δὲ Λητώ  
 τειρομένην ὠδίσι· δύω δὲ οἱ εἶατο φρουροί  
 γαῖαν ἐποπτεύοντες, ὁ μὲν πέδον ἠπειροιο  
 ἤμενος ὑψηλῆς κορυφῆς ἔπι Θρήικος Αἴμου  
 θοῦρος Ἄρης ἐφύλασσε σὺν ἔντεσι, τῷ δὲ οἱ ἵππῳ  
 ἐπτάμυχον Βορέας παρὰ σπέος ἠυλίζοντο·  
 ἠ δ' ἐπὶ νησάων ἐτέρη σκοπὸς αἰπειάων  
 ἦστο κόρη Θαύμαντος ἐπαΐξασα Μίμαντι.

ἔνθ' οἱ μὲν πολίεσσιν ὄσαις ἐπεβάλλετο Λητώ  
 μίμνον ἀπειλητῆρες, ἀπετρώπων δὲ δέχεσθαι.

So in consequence she [Hera] herself kept watch within the aether; angered greatly and beyond speech, she hindered Leto, who was suffering from her labor pains. Hera set two guards set to keep watch over the land; the one, sitting upon a high peak of Thracian Haemus, bold Ares, in armour, kept watch over the land of the continents, while his two horses he stabled near the cave of Boreas with its seven recesses. And the other established herself as watcher over the steep islands, the daughter of Thaumias [Iris], having darted to Mt Mimas. There, as threats to as many cities as Leto approached, they remained and prevented them from accepting her.

The context is (again) the delivery of Apollo by Leto on the island of Delos. While in Pindar's version Zeus benignly watched the birth of his son from the nearby mountain Cynthus, here Hera, watching (σκοπιῆν ἔχεν) from heaven, wants to delay Apollo's delivery as long as possible and therefore places two watchers (σκοπός) on earth to prevent cities from receiving Leto and allowing her to give birth. The mountains the watchers sit on are strategically chosen in that from Mt Haemus in Thrace Ares can overview the continent, and from Mt Mimas, a promontory of the coast of Asia Minor opposite Chios, Iris the islands in the Aegean. Choosing a Thracian mountain is also particularly apt for Ares, who had a cult there and who was associated with the region in literature (e.g. *Il.* 13.301; *Od.* 8.361).

Vergil *Aeneid* 8.704–705

Actius haec cernens arcum intendebat Apollo  
 desuper:

Actian Apollo watching these things from above bent his bow;

This is one of the more speculative instances in my series since there is no explicit mention of a mountain. The context is the description of the scene on Aeneas' shield that deals with the battle at Actium between Octavian (and some Olympian gods) on the one side and Cleopatra and Antony (and eastern divinities) on the other. By merely bending his bow the divine archer creates such panic among the Eastern forces that they flee. But where does Apollo find himself? Is he looking down from heaven? This is certainly possible and there is a Vergilian parallel which unequivocally depicts Apollo as watching from heaven.<sup>26</sup> But the reference to the

god as “Actius Apollo” strongly suggests as his standpoint the promontory of Actium where a temple of Apollo Actius (rebuilt by Octavianus after his victory) stood. Or he could be imagined to stand on the famous cliff of the nearby island of Leucate, which also had a temple of Apollo (cf. 3.274–275). Indeed, both of these places, which overlook the bay in which the naval battle was fought, had been called to mind at the start of the Actian scene (8.675, 677). All in all I am therefore inclined to read this passage as an instance of local oroskopia.<sup>27</sup>

Vergil *Aeneid* 11.836–840

At Triviae custos iamdudum in montibus Opis  
 alta sedet summis spectatque interrita pugnas;  
 utque procul medio iuvenum in clamore furentum  
 prospexit tristi mulcatam morte Camillam  
 ingemitque deditque has imo pectore voces:

But Opis, Trivia’s sentinel, already for a long time sits high on a mountain top and, without fear, watches the combats. And when far off, amid the din of raging warriors, she saw Camilla worsted by sad death, she sighed and from her heart’s depth uttered these words:

Opis has been sent by Diana (Trivia) to monitor Camilla’s prophesied death, and then set in motion revenge and proper care for her body (587–594). The narrator does not specify the mountain on which she sits<sup>28</sup> but both *spectat* and *interrita* evoke the traditional associations of divine oroskopia:<sup>29</sup> gods watching a spectacle from a safe distance.<sup>30</sup> The functionality of Opis’ oroscopic role is made explicit in her being referred to as *custos*, “sentinel”; she watches from a nearby mountain in order to be able to come into action quickly. In the sequel she will shoot down the killer of Camilla, Arruns.

Vergil *Aeneid* 12.134–137

At Iuno e summo, qui nunc Albanus habetur  
 (tum neque nomen erat nec honos aut gloria monti),  
 prospiciens tumulo campum aspectabat et ambas  
 Laurentum Troumque acies urbemque Latini.

But Juno looking out from the hill-summit now called Alban (at that time the mount had neither name nor fame nor honour) gazed upon the plain, upon the double lines of Laurentum and Troy, and upon the city of Latinus.

At the moment Trojans and Italians have struck a truce and decided to settle their conflict by a duel between Aeneas and Turnus we find Juno on a hill nearby, who one last time tries to thwart Aeneas' success. She does not intervene herself (she leaves the scene in 160) but acts via an intermediary, Turnus' sister Juturna, who several times will try to save her brother. In his commentary Tarrant notes the intertextual background of Juno's position: the Alban mount "functions as a divine viewing post, like Mount Ida in the *Iliad*".<sup>31</sup> He continues to suggest that "Virgil probably chose it ... because of its place in Roman and Latin religious ritual. It was the location of the very ancient cult of Juppiter Latiaris". The mountain on which Juno sits is thus symbolical, this time not because of an event in the past but because of its cultic status in the future (which is the present for Vergil's readers). Perhaps we may even go one step further and read into the narrator's choice of this very mountain for Juno to sit on a hint that her final attempt to delay the fulfilment of Aeneas' destiny will be futile: the mountain's later status as a Roman cult place confirms that Aeneas will become forefather of the Romans.

Ovid *Metamorphoses* 5.363–364

... videt hunc Erycina vagantem  
 monte suo residens natumque amplexa volucrum ...

him [Dis] Venus Erycina sees wandering to and fro, as she was seated on her mountain, and embracing her winged son (she said) ...<sup>32</sup>

In the preceding lines it had been told how Dis left the underworld in order to inspect Sicily which has been shaken by Typhon. As Lovatt (2013, 69–70) suggests, we might at this point have expected Dis to catch sight of Proserpina and start his famous rape of her, but instead Ovid makes Dis himself become the object of Venus' gaze, who spots him while sitting on Mt Eryx. She asks her son Cupid to aim an arrow at him and thus takes the initiative in what so far was known as a story with only passive female figures. When Ovid calls Eryx "her mountain" (*monte suo*) he is alluding to the temple of Venus which in his own time stood there and which was also known from literary tradition (e.g. Verg. *Aen.* 5.759–760). Once again an oroscopic god sits herself not just on any mountain nearby the scene of action but on one to which she is especially connected.<sup>33</sup>

Valerius Flaccus *Argonautica* 1.574–577 and 597–600

Interea medio saevus permissa profundo  
 carbasa Pangaea Boreas specularatus ab arce  
 continuo Aeoliam Tyrrhenaque tendit ad antra  
 concitus.

[...]

nuntius hunc solio Boreas proturbat ab alto.  
 “Pangaea quod ab arce nefas” ait, “Aeole, vidi!  
 Graia novam ferro molem commenta iuventus  
 pergit et ingenti gaudens domat aequora velo ...”

Meanwhile fierce Boreas from the heights of Mt Pangaeus spied the sails set to the wind in the midst of the deep, and straightway turns his rapid course to Aeolia and the Tyrrhene caves. [...] Him [Aeolus] Boreas, coming as messenger, drives from his lofty throne: “Ah! what monstrous deed, Aeolus, have I seen from the heights of Mt Pangaeus! Grecian youths have devised a novel engine with the axe, and now go forward triumphing joyously over the seas with a huge sail ...”<sup>34</sup>

The context is (again) the departure of the *Argo* on its great mission. Its sailing out is first focalized anxiously by the mothers of the Argonauts looking at the ship from the shore until they no longer can see it (1.494–497); then by the gods looking on from heaven, “the starry citadel” (*siderea ... arce*: 1.498), who, like in Apollonius Rhodius, rejoice at the sight (498–573); and finally by the wind-god Boreas from Mt Pangaeus in Thrace, who is *not* amused. He hastens to Aeolus in Italy, who will send a storm.

Why does Boreas fulfil the traditional oroscopic function here<sup>35</sup> and why does he, and later Aeolus (and Neptune), react so negatively to the sight of the *Argo*?<sup>36</sup> The answer is twofold. In the first place, the sea voyage of the *Argo* is emphatically presented by Valerius Flaccus as the first such voyage by mortals ever (cf. *prima ... freta pervia*, “the straits first navigated by”: 1.1), and the gods of wind and sea consider it an infringement on their territory and power.<sup>37</sup> Ever since the moment the *Argo* was being built and its impending maiden voyage proclaimed by Juno (1.96–99) Aeolus will have been waiting for its departure to come into action, making Boreas his look-out (*specularatus*). In the second place, storms at sea were a stock element of epic, especially since the famous storm in Vergil *Aeneid* 1, and wanting to include one in his epic Valerius makes Boreas act the role of hostile divinity played by Juno in Vergil’s storm scene.<sup>38</sup>

Locating Boreas on Mt Pangaeus in Thrace makes sense in several ways: 1) Thrace is generally regarded in Greek literature as the home of all winds, Boreas in particular (cf. e.g. Call. *Hymn* 4.65, already quoted); 2) Mt Pangaeus is – relatively – near to Iolcus, the point from where the Argonauts depart, and thus a good vantage point to monitor their departure; 3) at the same time the mountain it is at a distance from the other gods who watch from heaven, and thus gives Boreas the freedom to undertake his destructive mission.

Valerius Flaccus *Argonautica* 3.27–29

quae postquam Haemoniam tantae non immemor irae  
 aerisono de monte ratem praefixaque regum  
 scuta videt, nova monstra viro, nova funera volvit ...

But she [Cybele], nursing her great rage, after beholding from the cymbal-clashing mountain [Mt Dindymon] the Haemonian ship with its border of kingly shields, devises against the hero [Cyzicus] deaths and horrors unheard of ...

The Argonauts have just departed after a friendly reception by the inhabitants from Cyzicus, a peninsula in the Propontis, and their eponymous king (2.629–3.14). The narrator then inserts a flashback to tell about Cyzicus once killing a lion on the local mountain Dindymon (3.15–26). Sitting on that very mountain and from there seeing the *Argo* depart, the goddess Cybele decides that now the moment has come to take her revenge on Cyzicus. She will make the Argonauts return and unwittingly attack their former hosts and kill many of them. Once again the mountain chosen for a divine oroskopia is symbolical: Mt Dindymon was devoted both in literature and in cult to the goddess Cybele<sup>39</sup> and it is the scene of an event from the past (Cyzicus' unfortunate hunt) which causally leads to the divine action of the present.

Valerius Flaccus *Argonautica* 7.190–192

Caucaseis speculatrix Iuno resedit  
 rupibus, attonitos Aeaea in moenia vultus  
 speque metuque tenens et adhuc ignara futuri.

Juno takes her seat upon the rocks of Caucasus to watch the issue, keeping her wondering gaze turned in hope and fear toward the Aeaeon walls, and ignorant yet of what will befall.

Juno has talked with Venus on Olympus and asked her to put an end to the wavering of Medea who, though inflamed with passion for Jason, still hesitates to help him get the Golden Fleece. Venus instructed her to bring the two together in the grove of Diana and promised that she would now finally make Medea surrender to her passion and help Jason. Eager to see her request fulfilled Juno takes up a seat on the Caucasus, mountains near the Colchian land of Aea where Medea and Jason find themselves, to watch the developments. Valerius here varies the usual connotation of divine oroskopia with power: Juno does *not* know whether her plan will succeed, and her emotions oscillate between hope and fear. As Lovatt (2013, 60) notes, “her ignorance of the future is loaded with irony in this overdetermined myth with its multiple literary predecessors, both epic and tragedy”; we all know what Juno at this stage does not yet know.

Stattius *Thebaid* 9.678–682 and 709–711

... cum lapsa per auras  
 vertice Dircae velox Latonia montis  
 astitit; agnoscunt colles notamque tremiscit  
 silva deam, saevis ubi quondam exserta sagittis  
 fecundam lasso Nioben consumpserat arcu.

[...]

illum et Sidoniae iuga per Teumesia Nymphae  
 bellantem atque ipso sudore et pulvere gratum  
 laudant, et tacito ducunt suspiria voto.

... when the swift daughter of Latona [Diana] glided through the air and stood upon the top of Dirce’s mountain [Cithaeron]. The hills recognize her and the woods tremble at the goddess they know, where once bare-breasted she had consumed fecund Niobe with cruel arrows and a weary bow. [*Parthenopaeus successfully pushes back the Thebans*] Even the Sidonian nymphs on Teumesian ridges praise him as he fights, attractive by his very sweat and dust; and fetch sighs in silent longing.<sup>40</sup>

The context is the expedition of the Seven against Thebes. Diana seats herself on Mt Cithaeron near Thebes in order to give her doomed favourite, the young and beautiful hero Parthenopaeus (cf. 4.256–261), at least a glorious *aristeia*. Of course Diana chooses for her oroskopia the famous mountain of Thebes, Cithaeron, but the place is also symbolical in that it is (made) the scene of her killing, together with Apollo, of the children of Niobe. The story of Niobe had been told before by Homer (*Il.* 24.602–



617) and Ovid (*Met.* 6.146–312), neither of whom had located the killing on the mountain however.<sup>41</sup> Statius arguably chooses the place in order to charge Diana’s vantage point in a negative way: indeed, when the final hour of Parthenopaeus has come she goes down to the battlefield and replaces his arrows by her own divine ones that never fail their mark, with the result that many Thebans are killed before he dies himself. Thus the analepsis about Diana killing the children of Niobe on Mt Cithaeron functions as a prolepsis of the massacre she will bring the Thebans through the hands of Parthenopaeus.<sup>42</sup> The topos of oroskopia is doubled in that next to Diana on Cithaeron there are nymphs looking on in erotic longing at the attractive youth from another nearby range of mountains, Teumesus.<sup>43</sup>

Statius *Thebaid* 11.420–423

ipse quoque Ogygios monstra ad gentilia manes  
Tartareus rector porta iubet ire reclusa.  
montibus insidunt patriis tristisque corona  
infecere diem et vinci sua crimina gaudent.

The ruler of Tartarus himself orders the gate set open and the Ogygian ghosts to go and view the monstrous doings of their countrymen. They sit on their native mountains and in sad circle pollute the day, rejoicing that their sins are surpassed.

This is the climax of the *Thebaid*, the duel between the two brothers Eteocles and Polynices. The terrible spectacle of brother fighting brother is marked both by a teichoskopia (416–419) and an oroskopia. The second topos is given a gruesome spin however in that the spectators are not the gods but the ghosts of Theban sinners who actually rejoice at what they see, viz. “their own crimes surpassed by fratricide” (Lovatt 2005, 272).<sup>44</sup> Statius does not name the mountain (probably it is Cithaeron again) but instead focuses on the detail of *patriis*, “native”, which continues *gentilia*, “of their countrymen”, and reinforces the central issue of compatriots, indeed, brothers fighting each other.

Silius Italicus *Punica* 1.548–551

Sed Iuno, aspectans Pyrenes vertice celsae  
nava rudimenta et primos in Marte calores,  
ut videt impressum coniecta cuspidis vulnus  
advolat ...

But Juno, surveying from the summit of the lofty Pyrenees his [Hannibal] youthful prowess and martial ardour, when she saw the wound inflicted by the point of the flying spear, hastens thither ...<sup>45</sup>

The context is Hannibal's siege of the city of Saguntum, a Roman ally, which forms the start of the second Punic war. The city is situated on the Spanish Northeast coast, and hence for Juno the Pyrenees are a logical choice to watch from nearby the fighting in which young Hannibal excels. The vicinity of the mountain allows her to come into action quickly and prevent Hannibal's wound from becoming fatal.<sup>46</sup>

Silius Italicus *Punica* 6.597–600

nam Tyrrhenos Poenumque secundis  
Albana surgens respexerat arce tumentem,  
qui ferre in muros victricia signa parabat.  
tum quassans caput:

For aloft on the Alban mount he [Jupiter] had seen the land of Tuscany, and Hannibal puffed up with success and ready to carry his victorious standards against the walls of Rome. Then, shaking his head ...

Hannibal has defeated the Romans at Lake Trasimene and the population of Rome fears his arrival before the walls of the city any moment. The Senate discusses strategies to stop him and decide that what they need most is a new commander. At this moment Jupiter intervenes, who had been watching events from Mt Alba, and halts Hannibal's advance by sending a lightning and instructs the senate to choose Fabius as their general. Jupiter's activities from Mt Alba symbolize his support of the Romans and have a contemporary ring in that an important temple and cult were located on that mountain, as we already saw in connection with Vergil *Aen.* 12.134–137.<sup>47</sup>

Silius Italicus *Punica* 6.697

haec Eryce e summo spectabat laeta Dione.

Dione [Venus] looked at these events rejoicing, from the heights of Eryx.

This passage illustrates the conventionality of the divine oroskopia topos, in that it here appears in an ekphrasis. The ekphrasis concerns a series of wall paintings in Roman porticoes in Liternum which depict scenes from the First Punic war. The last scenes show the defeat of the Carthaginian fleet by the Romans off the Sicilian promontory of Lilybaeum, the

Carthaginian general Hamilcar being taken prisoner of war, and the striking of a treaty. It is these events that Venus (in the painting) looks at from Sicilian Mt Eryx, which is both nearby the scene of action and associated in cult with her (cf. e.g. Ovid *Metamorphoses* 5.363–364, discussed above). The detail that she watched “rejoicing” at first sight is striking, since at least ostensibly we look at the depictions through the eyes of Hannibal (cf. 653–657, 670, 671, 698–699) and his fellow Carthaginians (690–691). But, as has been argued by Manuwald (2009, 42), “even though the paintings are presented while Hannibal surveys them, most of the scenes are described from an omniscient Roman perspective”.<sup>48</sup> This applies to Venus’ oroskopia too, in that from a Roman perspective of course it may be assumed that the goddess was rejoicing about what she saw.<sup>49</sup>

Quintus Smyrnaeus *Posthomerica* 7.561–563

Τροίην δ' αἴψ' ἀφίκανε, πόδας δ' ἐπέθηκε κολώνῃ  
 Σιγέου ἠνεμόεντος· ἐδέρκετο δ' ἔνθεν αὐτὴν  
 ἀγχεμάχων ἀνδρῶν· κύδαινε δὲ πολλὸν Ἀχαιοῦς.

Soon she [Athena] arrived at Troy and set her feet on the hill of windy Sigeum.  
 From there she viewed the battle between the men fighting at close quarters.  
 And she gave much glory to the Achaeans.

At some point during the fierce battle between Neoptolemus and his men and the Trojan ally Eurypylos and his troops Athena comes down from Olympus and positions herself on a nearby hill at the north-west promontory of the Troad, Sigeum, to be closer to her party, the Greeks, and assist them in battle. The passage is entirely in Homeric spirit, except that there Sigeum is never mentioned. The Athenians settle in Sigeum in about 600 BC and from then onwards this hill and others in the Troad become associated, both in literature and in reality, with the tombs of heroes from the Trojan war (cf. e.g. S. *Phil.* 355; Her. *Hist.* 5.94.2; Verg. *Aen.* 2.312; and Strabo 13.1.32).<sup>50</sup> Quintus’ choice of Sigeum as the hill on which to situate Athena follows that tradition.

Nonnus *Dionysiaca* 35.262–272

ἔγρετο δὲ Ζεὺς  
 Καυκάσου ἐν κορυφῆσιν ἀπορρίψας πτερὸν ὕπνου·  
 καὶ δόλον ἠπεροπῆα μαθὼν κακοεργέος Ἥρης  
 Σιληνοῦς ἐδόκευε πεφυζότας, ἔδρακε Βάκχας

σπερχομένας ἀγεληδὸν ἀπὸ τριόδων, ἀπὸ πύργων,  
καὶ Σατύρους κείροντα καὶ ἀμώνοντα γυναῖκας  
Δηριάδην ἐνόησεν ὀπίστερον, ὄρχαμον Ἴνδων,  
υἷέα δ' ἐν δαπέδῳ κατακείμενον· ἀμφὶ δὲ νύμφαι  
ἐγγυὸς ἔσαν στεφανηδόν· ὁ δὲ στροφάλιγγι κονίης  
κεῖτο καρηβαρέων, ὀλιγοδρανὲς ἄσθμα τιταίνων,  
ἄφρὸν ἀκοντίζων χιονώδεα, μάρτυρα λύσσης.

Zeus awoke on the peaks of Caucasus and threw off the wing of sleep. And he understood the beguiling trick of Hera the mischief-maker when he saw the Silens in flight, when he saw the Bacchant women hurrying in herds from the threeways and the walls, and behind them the Indian chieftain Deriades, cutting down Satyrs and mowing down women, and his own son lying upon the ground. Nymphs were all around him in a ring, but he lay in the whirling dust heavy-headed, half-fainting, breathing hard, sputtering white foam to witness his frenzy.<sup>51</sup>

This instance of divine oroskopia is closely modelled after the awakening of Zeus on Mt Ida in *Iliad* 15.4–11, as verbal echoes (highlighted in bold) show:

ἔγρετο δὲ Ζεὺς

Ἴδης ἐν κορυφῇσι παρὰ χρυσοθρόνου Ἥρης,  
στῆ δ' ἄρ' ἀναΐξας, ἴδε δὲ Τρῶας καὶ Ἀχαιοὺς,  
τοὺς μὲν ὀρινομένους, τοὺς δὲ κλονέοντας ὀπισθεν  
Ἄργείους, μετὰ δέ σφι Ποσειδάωνα ἄνακτα·  
Ἔκτορα δ' ἐν πεδίῳ ἴδε κείμενον, ἀμφὶ δ' ἑταῖροι  
ἦαθ', ὁ δ' ἀργαλέῳ ἔχετ' ἄσθματι κῆρ ἀπινύσσω,  
αἴμ' ἐμέων, ἐπεὶ οὐ μιν ἀφαιρότατος βάλ' Ἀχαιῶν.

And Zeus woke up on the top of the Ida, next to golden-throned Hera, and leaping to his feet he saw the Trojans and Achaeans, the former running in confusion, the Greeks sweeping them on from behind, and among them lord Poseidon. And he saw Hector lying in the plain, and his companions sat around him, and he was gripped by painful gasping, being dazed in his mind and vomiting blood, for it was not the feeblest of the Greeks who had hit him.

Like all poets before him Nonnus carefully chooses the local mountain from where a god watches the mortal action: since that action takes place in India, he seats Zeus on the Caucasus. But in both Homer and

Nonnus the ironic effect is the same: all powerful Zeus finds himself near the action but still has to conclude that, while he was sleeping, his party has suffered losses and his protégées have been wounded.

### 5. *Conclusion*

In this article I have defended the thesis that, next to words and myths, narratological devices, provided they take a specific form, can be looked at intertextually. In particular a narrative topos can form part of, as Hinds calls it, a collective intertextual tradition. I have argued my case with the help of a newly defined topos: oroskopia. Just as teichoskopia, oroskopia is used first by Homer, in connection with the gods who watch human affairs from Mt Olympus or a mountain nearby the action. From Apollonius onwards oroskopia from Mt Olympus largely disappears and is replaced by ouranoskopia, the view from heaven, usually imagined as clouds or the sky. But the other form of oroskopia, that from a nearby mountain, continues to be used. The picture of Zeus on the Ida set a trend that was eagerly and creatively taken up by all later (epic) poets. Far from being merely a “play” or “a mechanical device”, as Spaltenstein has suggested,<sup>52</sup> the local mountains are chosen very carefully, not only for the practical reason that they happen to be nearby the place of action but also for symbolic reasons: the mountain is associated with the god watching because of events from the past and/or contemporary cult.

### Notes

1. See de Jong, Nünlist, and Bowie (2004), de Jong and Nünlist (2007), de Jong (2012), and van Emde Boas and De Temmerman (2017). For diachronic narratology, see Fludernik (2003) and de Jong (2014).
2. The concept “topos” originally derives from rhetorical theory and refers to a cliché argument but was extended by Curtius ([1948] 1953) to refer to recurrent literary themes. See also Hinds (1998, 34–47).
3. For a full discussion of oroskopia (divine, mortal and metaphorical) in the whole of Greek and Latin literature, see de Jong (2018). Examples of divine oroskopia have been discussed by Fehling (1974, 39–58); Lovatt (2013); and Poiss (2014).
4. I quote here and elsewhere the OCT text of Monro–Allen; translations are my own. Cf. 5.711–712; 7.17–18; 11.80–83; 16.431; 19.340; 20.22–23; 21.388–390; 22.166–173; 24.23, 331–332. There are no instances in the *Odyssey*.

5. More instances will be given in section 4.
6. Griffin (1980, 179–204).
7. See Lovatt (2013, 34, 35, 41, 49, 61).
8. Here and elsewhere I quote the text of H. Fränkel, OCT (1961) and the translation (with modifications) of R. Hunter, *Apollonius of Rhodes: Jason and the Golden Fleece (The Argonautica)*, Oxford 1993.
9. Here and elsewhere I quote the text of H.R. Fairclough, *Virgil, I–II*, Cambridge, MA/London 1928; the translation is my own.
10. A full description of heaven in terms of the Milky Way is given by Ovid *Met.* 1.168–176. For ouranoscopic passages, see Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 2.286–287 (κατὰ ... αἰθέρος ... | οὐρανόθεν); 4.958–960 (αἰγλήεντος ὑπερθεῖν| οὐρανοῦ); Callim. *Hymn* 4.59–61 (αἰθέρος εἶω); Verg. *Aen.* 9.638–640 (*aetheria ... plaga, nube sedens*); 10.1–4 (*sideream in sedem*); 12.791–792 (*de nube*); Ov. *Met.* 1.163–167 (*summa arce*), 601–609 (*ab aethere summo*); Luc. *B.C.* 7.447–448 (*ab alto| aethere*); Val. Flac. *Arg.* 1.498–573 (*siderea ... arce*); 3.487–488 (*poli summo de vertice*); 8.318–321 (*summo ... aethere*); Stat. *Theb.* 1.197–201 (*rapidi ... atria caeli, interiore polo*); 3.218–219 (*e vertice mundi*); 10.73–74 (*alto ex aethere*); Sil. *Pun.* 2.475–513 (*caelo ... alto, aethere*); 17.341 (*aeria ... nube*); Quint. Smyrn. *Posthom.* 8.427–442 (οὐρανοῦ). See also Lovatt (2013, 39–45).
11. Cf. also μέγας οὐρανός Οὐλύμπός τε (*Il.* 5.750). For discussion of this phenomenon, see Sale (1972, 1984), with older literature. He posits next to Olympus and heaven a third celestial region “heaven-Olympus”, which I do not find convincing.
12. See e.g. Heraclitus *Homeric Questions* 23, scholion ad *Il.* 15.18–24, and Buffière (1956, 106–110, 213–214).
13. See e.g. Servius’ comments ad *Aen.* 1.47 and 78, and Feeney (1991, 138): “Jupiter will simultaneously be associated with one of the world-elements, and realized in anthropomorphic terms.” His localisation in heaven also symbolizes Jupiter’s (Stoic) status as ruler of the world (*omnipotens*); thus Olympus itself is regularly called *omnipotens* (e.g. 10.1 and 12.791).
14. Perhaps for the same reason epic poets often do not specify at all where gods find themselves when watching human affairs: Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 3.7–8; Verg. *Aen.* 1.34–37; 4.90–91; Ovid. *Met.* 9.241; Val. Flac. *Argon.* 4.1–7, 667–669; Stat. *Theb.* 7.1–2, 145–147; 10.917–920; Sil. *Pun.* 3.497–499; 9.524–528; 12.201–202; 17.278–284; Quint. Smyrn. *Posthom.* 2.492–494; 13.415–419. Cf. for the *Aeneid* Heinze ([1915]1994, 250): “on the whole the scenes with gods are less visual than those presenting the actions of mortals”. Literature here may reflect society, cf. Feeney (1991, 80): “It is a commonplace that the Olympian gods, however assiduously their cults were maintained, were felt to be more distant from the people of the Hellenistic world than they had been from their ancestors.”
15. Here and elsewhere I quote the text of A.S. Way, *Quintus Smyrnaeus: The Fall of Troy*, Cambridge, MA, 1915; translations are my own.
16. The same question can be asked for Quint. Smyrn. *Posthom.* 8.194–196 and 10.47–49.
17. And cf. 11.182–184, 336–337; 13.1–9; 14.157–158; 15.4–12. In 17.198–199 and 441 it is not clear whether Zeus finds himself on the Ida or on the Olympus.

18. And cf. Poseidon sitting or on a mountain in the territory of the Solymoi (= Lycia), on his way back from the Ethiopians, and spotting Odysseus at sea somewhere between Calypso's island and Ithaca in *Odyssey* 5.282–284.
19. Woronoff (1995).
20. I quote the text and translation (with modifications) of W.H. Race, *Pindar. Nemean Odes, Isthmian Odes, Fragments*, Cambridge, MA/London 1997.
21. Rutherford (2001, 366) recognizes the Iliadic intertext: "Zeus" supervision of the birth from Mount Cynthus is similar to the way in which he surveys the battle from Mount Ida in the Iliad".
22. Furley and Bremer (2001, 112). The idea that Pindar's paean rewrites the *HHAp.* derives from Rutherford (1988). See further Rutherford (2001, 364–372).
23. Rutherford (2001, 367).
24. I here and elsewhere quote the text and translation (with modifications) of S. Stephens, *Callimachus The Hymns*, Oxford, 2015.
25. Williams (1978, ad 90) has recognized the collective intertextual tradition of the oroskopia topos, speaking of "the motif of the deity watching from a hilltop", but only mentions two parallels, both from Callimachus (1.80–82 and 4.61–69).
26. *Aeneid* 9.638–640: *Aetheria tum forte plaga crinitus Apollo| desuper Ausonias acies urbemque videbat| nube sedens*, "Then it chanced that in the realm of the sky long-haired Apollo, sitting on a cloud, was looking down from above at the Ausonian lines and town"; note the crucial *desuper* in the same *sedes*.
27. For discussion, see Miller (2009, 72–74), who suggests as another intertext Apollo looking down from the citadel of Troy (*Il.* 4.507–508).
28. It might be that she finds herself on one of the mountains described in the topographical introduction of the scene in *Il.* 5.22–531 (cf. esp. 526: *summoque in vertice montis*).
29. Horsfall (2003, ad 837) refers to *Il.* 10.4 and *Il.* 8.52 as other instances of gods watching from above.
30. Cf. Williams (1973, ad 837): "*interrita*: conveying that she is immortal, above and beyond the usual hopes and fears of battle".
31. Tarrant (2012, ad 134). He mentions one more parallel for the oroskopia: *Sil. It. Pun.* 6.598–599.
32. I quote the text and translation (with modifications) of F.J. Miller, *Ovid Metamorphoses I*, Cambridge, MA/London, 1977.
33. Anderson (1997, ad 362–364) has not observed the traditional nature of Venus' oroscopic position but gives a (valid) *ad hoc* interpretation: "Eryx lies in the far west of Sicily, so Dis has indeed wandered miles from the centre of geological instability near Mount Etna on the east coast. It does have a commanding view of the landscape, and Calliope [who is the secondary narrator of the story] makes Venus seem like a powerful queen on her throne."
34. I here and elsewhere quote the text and translation (with modifications) of J.H. Mozley, *Valerius Flaccus*, Cambridge, MA/London, 1963.
35. Spaltenstein (2002, ad 1.575) has recognized the collective intertextual tradition of the oroskopia topos, speaking of "l'idée traditionnelle que la divinité observe d'en

- haut” and referring to Verg. *Aen.* 12.134; Hom. *Il.* 8.51; 13.12; Val. Flac. *Argon.* 3.28; 7.190; Sil. *Pun.* 1.548; 6.598.
36. The negative tone is already conveyed by the choice of the verb of seeing, *speculari*, in 575, which Zissos (2008, ad 574–575) notes has “a military undertone”.
  37. See *nefas*, “monstrous or even godless deed” in 598 and earlier Jason’s own qualms (“I know that I alone of mankind am venturing on unlawful (*inlicitas*) paths and do deserve tempests”: 198–199) and Zissos (2008, ad locc.).
  38. For the intertextual reworking of Vergil, see Zissos (2008, ad 574–692).
  39. For the association in literature, see Manuwald (2015, ad 19) who mentions Ap. Rh. *Arg.* 1.1125; Catull. 63.13, 91; Verg. *Aen.* 9.617–20; 10.252; Prop. 3.22.1–4; Sil. *Pun.* 17.20–1; and Claud. *Rapt. Pros.* 2.269; for the association in cult, see Spaltenstein (2004, ad 3.27): “Val. s’interesse à l’image contemporaine de ce culte” and Manuwald (2015, ad 1–461), who mentions Hdt. 4.76, Strab. 12.8.11 and many modern studies. Neither commentator connects the passage with the collective intertextual tradition of local oroskopia.
  40. Here and elsewhere I quote the text and translation (with modifications) of D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Statius Thebaid, Books 1–7* and *Thebaid, Books 8–12, Achilleid*, Cambridge, MA/London 2003.
  41. In Homer the location is near Mt Sipylus (in Phrygia), in Ovid a plain near the walls of Thebes (6.218–220). When the story of Niobe is referred to by Statius in *Theb.* 3.191–201, the location also is the city of Thebes itself.
  42. Cf. Dewar (1991, ad 679f.): “Diana is here a baleful divinity (*infesta*, 669) come to bring woe upon the Thebans”. He has observed the collective intertextual tradition of the oroskopia topos: “Gods regularly take up positions on high mountains in order to survey the battles of men: *Il.* 8. 51f., 397, 11. 183f., *Virg. A.* 12. 134ff., *V. Fl.* 7. 190ff., *Sil.* 5. 206f. etc.”. Cf. also Micozzi (2015, 327): “the geographical horizon of the Statian poems is completely “occupied” by previous poetry: a “palimpsestic world” inscribed with its own poetic past and all the myths for which it has been the theater ... in the *Thebaid* many places are linked forever to their crimes ... think of Dirce’s mountain, traumatized by the fate of Niobe”.
  43. For a full analysis of the figure of Parthenopaeus in Statius, see Lovatt (2005, 62–79), who argues that he “is beloved by everyone who watches” (68), including us as readers (71).
  44. Venini (1970, ad 420) notes that the idea to make the ghosts of the dead watch a battle from nearby mountains is already found in Val. Fl. *Argon.* 4.258–260.
  45. I quote the text and translation (with adaptations) of J.D. Duff, *Silius Italicus Punica*, Cambridge, MA/London 1968.
  46. Spaltenstein (1986, ad 548) refers to Verg. *Aen.* 12.134 and 411 as intertexts, but does not note the collective intertextual tradition of the topos of local oroskopia.
  47. Cf. Spaltenstein (1986, ad loc): “une imagination habituelle qui s’inspire dans ce cas du célèbre temple de Jupiter sur cette montagne”.
  48. For a full analysis of the many focalizations going on at this point of the ekphrasis (artists who made the paintings, Romans who built the porticoes, Carthaginians who watch the depictions, and Roman narrator and narratees who write/read the text), see Fowler (2000, 99–106).



49. One more instance of divine local oroskopia in Silius is *Pun.* 4.667–668, where Vulcan and Venus sit on an unnamed hill nearby the scene of action.
50. See Erskine (2001, 98–112).
51. I quote the text of D.G. Piccardi, *Nonnus Panopolitanus: Le Dionysiache I (Canti I–XII)*, Milano 2006; the translation is my own.
52. Cf. Spaltenstein 2002, ad 1.575: “les auteurs se plaisent aussi parfois à adapter cette idée générale au contexte particulier”; or 1986, ad 1.51: “Cette notation est mécanique”.

### *Disclosure statement*

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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